

Chronicles of April
(Preaching To The Wall)

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There are times, as an inmate, that we have to try to appeal to the prison authority when things seem to go wrong. If you have read a number of my entries, you know the problems that we often have here at USP Prison concerning resolvment of issues.

The problem we often have here is that the prison officials often don't try to solve the problem, even when it's in plain sight. More times than not, they try to sweep the problem under the rug, rather than admit that SOMETIMES they make mistakes, or that some of the people that work here are worse than the inmates.

Still, in order to proceed with any legal venues, the BOP, or Bureau of Prisons, forces us to exhaust all venues before we can seek a lawsuit. While that sounds legit, the problem is that this venue is loaded with obstacles to prevent an inmate from getting to court on time, which is called "time barring".

It sucks when you have to play their game, knowing the odds were stacked heavily against you to prevent you from getting the justice that you were supposed to have. The following email that is included is perfect proof of this.

In federal prisons, inmates do have limited email capability to contact staff regarding prison issues. Others do have email to family and friends, but for now, we're talking about emails to staff. Inmates are allowed to send a "request to staff" on such matters.

In this case, I emailed the Camp Administrator regarding a very serious issue, our mail privileges. Most of society has no idea that inmates do retain many rights when it comes to mail. But here at USP Tucson, we have staff that routinely violate inmate rights, such as mail.

Consider if you will; your boyfriend or husband, or son is here at USP Tucson, and you order a subscription of "Sports Illustrated" for him. He should get every issue... but not here at USP Tucson. The Swimsuit issue... forget it. Mailroom staff will steal that. And if there are other issues they may like, they will take that as well.

"Wait, that's kinda harsh, isn't it?"

Yeah, but not without a ton of proof. Dozens of inmates have complained, filed tort claims and sued this prison for losing their books and magazines. These things just don't disappear like magic.

And what about legal work? If you have a loved one here that is filing an appeal, they have to fight tooth and nail with the mail room, to keep them from destroying, delaying or simply not mailing the legal mail. I cannot understand how people who work here are so hell-bent on preventing inmates from access to courts.

After awhile, you get tired of it, and try to find an answer by contacting the administration. But when you do, you get the old "runaround". Even when all the evidence points to the fact that the prison was wrong, they won't correct the problem, and even go so far as to defend the wrong side... theirs.

I understand that this might sound trivial, but take a closer look at what I am sharing. Every person in prison, every inmate here at USP Tucson, is still a person, and ought to be treated as such. No matter what they've done, they are still human beings. It is horrid that staff and officers here believe they have some God-given authority to persecute people, and hide behind the BOP as if they are the righteous.

Look, I get it, we all make mistakes; prisons are full of them. But would YOU like to know that your husband is being raped right now, and the prison is doing nothing about it? Would you like to hear tomorrow that your boyfriend was put in a cell with a violent guy, and was killed? Would you want to hear that your son, who was fighting for his appeal, is having his legal work destroyed by the mail room, and then lying to him by saying the US Postal Service was responsible?

So we are trying to resolve issues by contacting the staff. But what do you do when the staff is failing miserably in resolving the issues? After awhile, it turns in to a fool's quest, knowing these people really don't care about solving issues, even if it involves constitutional rights. Thus my email...

You'll notice the sarcasm immediately, because let's be honest; they're not going to solve the problem... they never do. USP Tucson's tactic seems to be to stall and recover. We can quote 100 case laws to them about what is going on, and they will still find some loophole to escape from doing what they are supposed to do... or just ignore it altogether.

We have had issues with the mailroom officers here for a long time, and yet the prison continues to allow them protection. Any other job in this country and they are FIRED. But because it's in a prison, they can do whatever they want... after all, we're just inmates.

I wrote this email not intending for any answer; I kinda lost respect for the prison to help us, because it's clear they don't care. But I needed to do something; I am not going to let the prison violate rules and laws and not do anything about it. I have to at least try to make a difference. Thus, the email...

You'll get an idea of the tone I used, and hopefully you will feel the same way I felt after you've read it. I honestly don't expect the prison to resolve it... as I said, they never do.

Anyway, check it out...