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The Pandemic Journals

(Day 120: Gender Agitation)

Today is August 3rd, 2020, but I wanted to jump back a couple of weeks in my pandemic journal, to touch on an issue we had on July 16th, 2020. This issue deals with women working in a male penitentiary. Let's begin, and as I usually do, I'll "pause" to color in any necessary details. Let's begin:

July 16th, 2020 - 11:37am on Day 120 - 4 months. I've battled a difficult headache making it hard to sleep. God bless Mack, who slipped me some 800's. I feel much better, but it still lingers.

(PAUSE: This journal was made 4 months into this pandemic. We were on a 22-hour lockdown, meaning we normally had only 2 hours out a day. However, during this particular period, we were on a 3-week lockdown because several staff tested positive for the virus.

So, you might ask, how did we take showers? Let's continue and see...)

Today was Shower Day, our first since Monday. Ms. Flores ran the showers, and I will go on record saying she has NO business running showers. She was so busy trying to finish, so that she could leave, that she rushed the guys. She told them to take their shower first, then get ice and hot water, but she rushed people in and out of the shower, letting only half the guys get ice or hot water.

Guys would get out of the shower, and while going back to their cell, she would lock them back in - without getting ice or hot water. It was sad that of the COs in the dorm, a MEN'S dorm, the ones rushing the guys the most were Flores and another woman in the dorm. How is it that the women, in a male penitentiary, are rushing men taking a shower - one we haven't had in 3 days?

She was so busy trying to allow 125 men a shower in record time, so she could leave. But her priority is sanitation; we needed showers, and each shower needed to be cleaned. It was never cleaned.

(PAUSE: This is not a sexist statement; there are a few good females working here. But I will be the first to tell you that you cannot run a male penitentiary if you don't know men. Ms. Flores is the Counselor here, and on this day, she was in charge of letting us out to get showers. Here's how it works: With 64 cells, there are 10 shower cells; 5 on top, 5 on the bottom tier. With

these 2 tiers, they let out 5 cells at a time (2 inmates per cell) and let them go take a shower, one they haven't had in 3 days. And because no one had been out the cell in 3 days, some guys wanted to go to the ice machine to get ice for cold water from the hot water machine, to make some coffee or make a soup of ramen. This is reasonable; it's been three days.

The problem is that Flores showed no sympathy. Listen, I'm not apologizing when I say this, but no woman can tell a man how long to take a shower... especially after 3 days. Flores was trying to run guys in and out so she could leave, but her greatest priority - and her job - at that moment, was to ensure that every man had a chance to take a good shower. And in actuality, she shouldn't even have been there; this borders on sexual harassment, when females are looking at men taking showers.

Now don't lose me here; I'm not saying the showers were so open that she could see them naked; the shower gates had bars, with blinds at mid-section. But you could still look in to see a man taking a shower. At a women's prison, this is sexual harassment if a male did exactly what Flores did.

I also didn't like how Flores lied to the guys. The carrot: get the ice and hot water after you take a shower. But once they got done with their shower, she locked them back in the cell. Few people here respect a person who treats people like that - don't get me started on that.

And, as I mentioned before the pause, the showers weren't properly cleaned. (Let's continue...) They had Mack and JB spray the showers with pink chemicals, then ran the next dude in. But the instructions on the chemicals clearly said it had to sit 10 minutes - not 60 seconds! So, no shower was really disinfected, let alone clean. Well, it's 11:46, may be down for a bit; would like to do some writing. Hope Thunderhawk is ok, I didn't see him come out to take a shower - thought for sure he'd at least come by to get coffee. Maybe more later - (End of entry)

So, Flores was so busy rushing us, that none of the showers really got clean. With 120+ inmates in here, each shower was used 12 times... and not once was it cleaned. But, Flores didn't care. To her, what these men needed - a good shower - wasn't important. Only "checking a box".

"Give the inmates a shower... check".

Anyway, until next time -