

Action... Slavery is in Full Effect

essay

June 3rd, 2020

by: Emis R. Patterson

Poem

Actions speak louder than words. This phrase suggest the doings of persons are more likely to show their true feelings, or their true ideology more-so than what they say. If this apply to politicians of Ohio in regards to Ohio state prisons, and I ween it does, talk relating to criminal justice/prison reform ought to be totally ignored. Instead, one can reach an exact tangible understanding about how state officials feel about inmates / the general prison complex of Ohio by examining policies and daily operations. That includes vile laws of the solon implemented long ago and how today's politicians support these laws as is reflected by their inaction to do anything to change those laws.

Some of the happenings in prisons have nothing to do with laws at all; rather, these happenings are associated with daily prison life. Some happenings may be petty, others are quite significant in a humanity sense. The actions/happenings one may consider petty is only because inmates may have the power, at times, to ~~off-set~~ negative effects of questionable policies/doings, hence, leaving inmates no reason to carp. Even still, being a ward of the state should not mean unless a inmate take it upon her/himself to ensue humane treatment, they will be exploited or abused.

Turn Off the Lights

Here at Belmont C.I., eye-blinders are very popular since the lights never truly go out. At about 9:30 p.m. every night — depending on what corrections officer is working as very little here is standardized — lights are turned off... well, ... one third of the lights are turned off; and if you're not a person accoutered with ad hoc sleeping apparatus (eye-blinders stitched by inmates), or some other means of blocking out the light, good luck with a good nights rest.

Being in the position I'm in, incarcerated, I have no access to case studies or expert assertions as to the deleteriousness which may arise from attempting to get sound sleep with lights on. My educated guess would be negative affects do occur.

In some countries lights on all day and night are torture tactics used against captured enemies during war. If I remember what I read correctly, the stress of a enemy combatant due to being captured, then adding the torture tactic of being in constant light, causes psychological imbalances. In prison inmates are stressed for a myriad of reasons, including lack of activities (mental and physical), poor nutrition, being away from family, etc. So when we lay down at night to try to rest and rejuvenate our bodies and minds but are unable to achieve relaxation due to antagonizing lights, it may be safe to say we're being treated inhumanely... even tortured. For the love of Teddy RendaGuss... Turn off the lights.

Sheet-metal Dreams

Even if and when the lights do go out, some inmates must contend with another sound-sleep roadblock. There's many bunks here at Belmont outfitted with sheet-metal that have replaced the springs that provided give for body size and movement. In fact, springs are no longer replaced once they become worn or broken. In lieu, sheet-metal about a sixteenth of an inch thick is soldered to the bed frame... problem of worn-out springs solved forever. Coupled with mattresses no more than two inches thick and stuffed with foam-like material, many inmates are coming to realize — not to sound like Eurythmics but — sweet dreams are definitely not made of this.

Coldblooded

Let's be real — under no circumstances should a ward of the state be made to endure freezing temperatures while wearing pajamas-like pants or other scantily stitched clothes. Some people are in prison for terrible crimes — I get that; but ought they be treated as if they are prisoners of middle-ages where cruel treatment was the norm? In

Ohio inmates are forced out into sub-zero temperatures as if it's priority of some authoritative figure as part of contrivance for crimes. (Note: when I say 'forced' I'm mainly in reference to reception institutions where wards of the state have no say-so as to whether or not they can go to chow or other grounds of the institution, or remain behind. One is forced to accompany the entire pod to chow, as well as other places, whether they want to or not). As far as I know not one, or at least none of the three institutions where I've been housed, of Ohio's prisons dole thermal wear to prison populations.

Inmates whom figure out creative ways of keeping themselves warm using pieces of clothing or fabric material; e.g., making scarfs and such, endangers themselves of being written-up. In-turn one may be hampered from participating in, or being eligible for a slew of activities/perquisites, including transfers, bed moves, programs, commissary, etc.. In essence, the state foment 'bad' behavior, then punish inmates for it. Is it not natural instinct of humans to do whatever they can to avoid being exposed to the elements? Is the state suggesting persons in their custody have no right to act on human instincts?

I'm positive there's some illogic state official who'll probably gesticulate commissary do sale thermal wear and that no one is stopping inmates from purchasing such items. This is of course to remove the onus from the state and place all responsibility/blame on incarcerated individuals. But what about the fact that not all inmates have money on their books? And state pay, which is about \$18.00 to \$20.00 per month for most inmates, a rate that has been unchanged in Ohio for at least twenty years (regardless of inflation), is hardly enough to cover monthly needs and purchase thermal wear. Mind you, thermal wear tops cost anywhere from \$6.00 to \$7.00, while bottoms are anywhere from \$5.00 to \$7.00. Mind you also, prices of commissary items are constantly rising; state pay never rise.

But these are the things to be expected when prisons are more, or all, about business and pecuniary concerns more-so than rehabilitation or locking away dangerous persons. The State of Ohio is in over their heads. They are locking away more persons than they can properly manage. To deflect this ironic fact whenever it is put to state officials, they impromptu shift the blame and result to marvelous grandstanding based on pseudological assertions that seems to make sense to ill-informed citizens; citizens whom are, by the way, becoming increasingly aware of corrupt politicians.

Under Where?

Upon my arrival here at Belmont C.I., it was standard for inmates to be issued three new pairs of underwear (T-shirts/drawers), and three pairs of socks every six months. It can easily be argued three pairs of underwear and socks twice per year is well below what one would consider to be ample for a grown man; especially when the product issued is of low quality. But what should one think when the state decides that doling six pairs of underwear and socks yearly is too much, and instead decide three pairs of underwear and socks issued once per year is sufficient?... yep — you heard right; beginning in 2019 the State of Ohio decided inmates at Belmont C.I. ought be issued three pairs of underwear and socks once per year.

Just a little imagination ought be enough to visualize issues arising from policies as described; issues such as the frequent need to wash, and to sew-up holes in this low quality material.

* Prisons filled beyond double capacity are exceedingly difficult for the state to manage as is demonstrated by their doling of three pairs of underwear and socks once per year to grown men. Considering business aspects (cutting cost, maximizing profits), as prisons (the prison industry) are without question businesses these days, it becomes a no-brainer with regards to wards of the state and why we are denied adequate underclothing.

Tetanus

All inmates are issued metal locker-boxes to store their personal and/or state issued belongings in. Some institutions, or at least one I've witnessed (Corrections Reception Center in Orient, OH), have hard plastic locker-boxes which is very smart considering some cells — such as ones at Lorain Reception Center in Graton, OH, are high in humidity/condensation. Such conditions are of course conducive to rusting of metal. In some cases the rusting of locker-boxes at LRC was so extreme, as in the one assigned to me, that everything stored within, or any handling of the box resulted in a stench of rust on one's items, or one's person.

The smell of rust was so bad I made up my mind that my bare hands would never again come in contact with this dangerous oxidized substance. I began to use toilet paper to act as a buffer between my hands and the locker-box as to avoid any serious adversities lurking. From what I understand tetanus can be a serious infection. If the state, by way of actions, is conveying they have no interest in protecting me from bodily harm, then I must protect myself. In my view, lawsuits should be considered when one has to deal with these hazards.

Just to note, using toilet paper for any reason beyond what it's intended for put inmates at serious risk of running short of this essential product. Reason being — all Ohio prison institutions dole one roll of toilet paper per week to each inmate.

\$ 1.00 per month for Electricity

Up until sometime last year, 2019, all persons incarcerated here at Belmont whom had a T.V. or fan (or both) in their cubicle was made to pay \$ 1.00 for electricity. It is unclear when this policy began, but it was in full swing in April, 2017, when I arrived. According to assertions of several inmates, Belmont had been deducting a dollar from inmates accounts since at least 2014.

These water-horse-type prisons are without air-conditioning. In the summer-time temperatures, I'm positive, exceed 100° Fahrenheit at times. The 'water-horses' here at Belmont are designed in such a way that stymies sufficient airflow; ~~hence~~ hence, it's essential for those whom can afford a fan to obtain this vital piece of equipment in order to beat the depressing heat. (Note: in 3 house at Belmont C.I., where the author of this essay is housed, the air ventilation fan has not been working for at least a month (as of 5-25-2020). Thus, this dorm is not being replenished with fresh air... perpetuating COVID-19 infection; and the heat on hot days is amplified greatly).

By deducting monies from those whom are attempting to do what human nature calls for, i.e., cooling ones self down during sultry weather, the state is implying we have no right to take necessary precautions to ensure our survival; or they are possibly unaware that extreme heat kills. It's as if someone of particular status at an Ohio prison institution is saying: "I'll be damned if they do what they have to to survive and I get nothing out of it."

Taking out a dollar from inmate funds for a T.V. is foul too. Ennui heavily pervade Ohio prisons; and for many, maybe most, T.V. is the one thing assisting in passing hours. However, the state is conveying, or was conveying by way of actions, it's not their problem if you're bored... and if you wish to off-sat your boredom in a way most Americans enjoy, you must pay albeit you're a ward of the state.

In my opinion the State of Ohio owe every single person they pilfered monies from as it relates to persons in state custody — here at Belmont or elsewhere — whom owned a fan or television.

Go Fly a Kite

Beginning in the month of March, 2020, Belmont went from a paper kite system

to strictly a digital Kite system. Inmates must now log-on to one of three (some dorms have four) kiosk units within their dorm and type their grievances, concerns, or questions as it relates to Belmont operations. Keep in mind, as have been mentioned in this piece, this prison is double capacity filled... even beyond. And with the advent of coronavirus all visitation have been suspended and inmates must now resort to video visits via kiosk units. What this means is about 270 persons are now made to visit, email, download entertainment items, perform particular educational processes, and perform a few other task on three kiosk. At times there may be a kiosk or two not functioning at all. Waits are noticeably longer. For some the waiting period may be all day long.

The State of Ohio, during these highly trying times, have stalwartly, by way of actions, told inmates whom just wish to connect with their loved ones, or perform non-essential task, to go fly a Kite.

Greed Over Calamity

Though Belmont C.I. have made several changes in its daily operations in response to the coronavirus pandemic, the institution didn't get serious about implementing those changes until the second week of April, 2020. Up until that time staff members ~~was~~ were not required to, and did not, wear masks.

Many inmates here at Belmont, myself included, have been sent to IHS (Inmate Hospital Services) with a wide variety of flu-like symptoms only to be sent back to our dorms the vast majority of times. Many of us were sent to IHS without a pass; and staff at IHS, in my instance, made no documentation of my visit that I noticed. This is highly unusual and have led many inmates to believe Belmont is purposefully avoiding documenting how many have had flu-like / COVID-19 symptoms. With more than 1,900 testing positive at Marion Correctional Institution in Ohio, it seems the state is apprehensive of those kinds of numbers being revealed at other prisons.

Obviously, the State of Ohio has chose to place greed over safety. Even the most rudiment minds as it relates to what ought be done to mitigate the human toll of COVID-19 would likely agree to the corollary that lessening the prison population is the absolute most logical move to make. However, the forte' of many state politicians is to use fear mongering tactics and grandstand as to why these 'dangerous' inmates should not be let go. State politicians, some with a closet full of skeletons themselves, seems to be itching to point the finger at 'violent' incarcerated persons and glib as to why it would be detrimental to society if particular persons are released.

In actuality, state politicians are very well aware of the fact their colleagues (the solon/representatives) have used trickery to satisfy their agenda in getting bone laws on the books; that is, by way of base behaviors, state representatives some whom just want to be known as prolific in their work when in truth they are subtle maniacs, find ways of convincing other state reps to adopt laws that attach terms like 'violent' and 'predator' to criminal charges. All the while reps are aware these maneuvers will increase — even overcrowd — prison populations, thus increasing state revenue.

So when tragedy such as a deadly virus strikes the prison population, including striking corrections officers whom the state could give a damn about, the instincts of vile politicians is to ensure money interest are protected first and foremost. Afterwards, there may be some politicians whom pretend to champion humanity and do a interview where he/she will not necessarily present themselves as a proponent of letting loose a significant amount of prisoners based on facts that would support such a position; but rather they briefly spun a propaganda filled speech loosely hinting they are for a type of redivation so as long as 'violent persons', or 'predators', and a slew of other labeled dangerous persons/career criminals are out of the question.

If a person incarcerated is truly violent, or display other abominable behaviors, of course they should remain locked-up. But often particular labels and particular/peculiar reasons prosecutors use in convictions are a result of crafty tactics and class use of judicial means.

Herd Ideology (Reasons)

Herd ideology is the ideal of groups of politicians supporting legislation or ways of governing explicitly or implicitly.

Herd ideology was demonstrated by the governor of Ohio during one of his daily briefings amid the coronavirus; the date was April 7th, 2020, when the governor asserted people in prisons are there for reasons. This is absolutely correct. And while a good number of people are here and should be here, the majority (probably about 55 to 60 percent) are here as a result of intricate trickery of political actors, treacherous maneuvers of prosecutors, drug possession, drug use, violations of release programs, and other 'reasons' emanating from the rhetoric of fear mongers and grandstanding state representatives. This is the sad fact of states throughout the country.

Since the governor assumes the tax paying people to be unsophisticated in their thinking, he believes he can, probably but not necessarily at the behest of advisors, use broad illucid terms such as 'reasons' when in reference to why people are locked away/prisons are overcrowded, and the citizens will gawk in regards to these statements. He feels he ought not go into detail lest he inadvertently, yet explicitly, expose the truth of himself and phalanx. What he fail to realize is the people are already well aware of untold corruption in government and are on the cusp of muckraking endeavors. The 'reasons' for this inevitable muckraking is solid and merited.

The governor also had the nerve to say he would release 160 prisoners whom are 'eligible' for release, out of some 49,000, and this should free-up space and

assuage the spread of coronavirus. Seriously?!

What this all boils down to, that is, the 'reasons' prisons stay afloat with inmates, is because the cash-cow must remain corralled to ensure money interest stay as is. And if it was not for the voices of prison reform groups whom truly do champion reform, the governor of Ohio, or any other state, is likely to elect silence and ambiguously promote 'social distancing' in prisons, without regards for the well-being of inmates or prison staff.

Allow me to lastly note in this segment that inmates here at Belmont have had our temperatures taken every day since the second week of April, 2020 (as of May 26th, 2020). And though there's been a minuscule number of persons sick during the months of April and May, the extreme vast majority of us were not tested. This is important because temperature checks does nothing to show the many asymptomatic persons whom, according to medical professionals, are still able to spread the virus.

Furthermore, the nurses whom are taking our temperatures using some sort of digital device, often read out a temperature of 94.5 (or 94.6, 94.7, 94.8) then expeditiously move on to the next person. Seems to me if someone's temp is as low as 94, there would be immediate consternation. Some believe the device being used is calibrated low. Whatever the case, it's obvious the entire routine is symbolic; possibly so it may appear the state is doing all they can to combat an outbreak, and/or it may serve as a defense for any civil claims asserting the state didn't do enough.

Make-shift Altruism

Once coronavirus became a serious issue the State of Ohio suddenly began to do nice things for inmates; these things include: free ebooks, free five minute phone calls, discounted video visits, incentive meals, free movies and games on tablets, all commissary items 20% off, free bowl with lid, free premium

Hygiene packet, etc.

Could it be the state feel pacification will off-set prospects those imprisoned may have to sue? Maybe the state, knowing how devastating the situation may become, believes being nice may quell any possible rioting. Whatever the reason for this pop-up altruism, it is unlikely a signal of compassion or concern for inmates, but instead insurance to protect assets — those assets being the many persons crammed into prisons for mandatory 'reasons'.

Some may ask how is it assets are protected by altruism of the state. Here's the answer — the state receives funding based on the number of persons housed in prisons. If we (inmates) begin to angrily protest for whatever reasons, and those protest morph to violence and destruction, and possibly death, the state, specifically the institution where rioting occurred, will fall under heavy scrutiny; thus, monies may be dailed-back by the feds and others. Less revenue equates to less job creation, less tax, and most importantly from the eyes of politicians and bureaucrats thereof, less chance to cheat and scheme on how to incorporate those monies into their own personal coffers.

You Are a Slave

All in all, every issue spoke of in this paper about those incarcerated confirms one very important thing — inmates are slaves! According to the Ohio Constitution, Article I, section 6, ^(a) there shall be no slavery in this state; nor involuntary servitude, unless for the punishment of crime". So there you have it — if you are imprisoned, you are a slave.

There's no way of making it sound pretty. There's no intercalations that can change it; according to constitutional law inmates are slaves.

So there's no need to wonder why inmates of Ohio, or entire U.S. if applicable, are tortured by light, sleep on sheet-metal (or floors), are made to endure harsh

weather conditions, are not provided ample underclothing (clothes in-general), have monies pilfered, are paid mainly about \$20.00 per month, are served food marked "not for human consumption", etc., etc. When you are a slave you have no rights... you are property... to be treated like an animal is fair game. If you are sick or if you die, it means nothing to the state besides ensuring you are replaced asap, and quashing lawsuits that may arise.

Correctional officers are a quasi of slave overseers. (Note: most C/Os here at Belmont appear to be good respectable people). As far as the state is concerned, C/Os knew the dangers of their job when they were hired. Therefore, the state wish to hear nothing of the nagging when particular quandaries occur that put them in danger; notwithstanding, state actors are masterful at projecting the image communicating they care. The unheard translation of such projection's asserts the state wish to protect money interest and personal image.

Do the actions of the state not prove Article I, section 6 of Ohio Constitution is apodictic? Also notice through the years more and more institution across the country are operating in communities by way of programs releasing inmates from traditional type prisons, to facilities in common neighborhoods. This reconstruction will expand mass incarceration and enhance on slavery if successful. This is being done right under the Peoples (tax payers) noses.

Slavery in America is in full effect by way of mass incarceration thanks to low-down, conniving, reckless public officials and their bureaucratic parables whom assume the tax paying people are, and will be forevermore, quietist; they are sadly mistaken.