

My voice behind the Wall : Fear

By: Ricky Vincent Pendleton II

I see this *fear*, all of the time in here. I think there is hidden protocol when it is towards black inmates, I really do. What I had experienced in this place and can bear witness to the episodes which leads me to that conclusion. *Fear* is a disease, based on an indoctrination of something. It doesn't matter what information, people will believe it as the truth, and if they can't change they will come mindset on that information as fact. They have been spreading lies about black people for a long time. We have been going through so much stereotype, that it becomes clear whenever a prison personnel acts zealous when writing us up for a prison violation, they would lie about the incident to justify sanctioning us and placing us in lockup.

I was working in the store which is called (the exchange). Now, prison assignment is a demanding job. I worked and didn't say anything to the female personnels there. Now, they called me in and try to imply that I'm mentally slow, and said that they were going to give me another chance. I'm thinking, *this small as store how in the hell I'm having problems remembering where the requested food items are ?* So, the next time I was called back in and they had addressed the situation again, *my position was you have a lable for a certain item and they're in another area.* They tried to test me, by asking me to get a particular item, so I went there to get it and brought it back to them. But, they still was going to fire me, then they started to make other excuses which doesn't make sense. I would finish lines of inmates shopping each nights and they praised me on bagging up their food because they couldn't believe if I could put all of their items in a doubled bag. When the store was closed and they were calling us to leave one of the female personnels had handed me a big box of tea boxes of 48, so as I was being rushed out I just set the box on the shelf, to get it after lockdown count because the store had opened the even hour that day. They try to say that I was lazy, dumb, and just standing around, which is a lie. Because I would have just been fired, but instead, I was just transferred to Foodservice. I know they didn't want me in the store, because of the stereotype a blackman and four white females, *what!!!* So, I think I was sabotaged and they used every excuse in the book, I kept challenging those excuses because they didn't have any legs to stand on it was a lie. They used this excuse to get rid of me, *at the time that I was woking in the store, they didn't have any*

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bottled water, and finally they had gotten some in and one inmate had asked for a case of bottled water and I had asked one of the female personnel if there were some water, and she said yet, so I got the case of water. They used that to say I was lazy. The next day, I was transferred to Foodservice. One of the female personnel had gestured to another who does the hiring and firing to not give me a chance and to get rid of me, so she did.

Now, I'm in the foodservice department and I had experience another phase of a stereotype. There are three guards and three foodservice personnels, along with the foodservice director and his assistant. One of the guards who was a racist, and kept warehouse watching me. (warehouse watching means that a staff member would pretend to be a customer at a supermarket and follow a black family, person, et cetera to make sure no one steals anything). This guard was watching me, peeking around corners on me and everything. There was this foodservice personnel, this racist guard knows her. She would be around me for service related matters and he was jealous and made some racist remark about me. I was told this by another foodservice personnel, but she only told me to stay away from her. I challenge that bullshit, and she corrected herself, because I have to interact with the foodservice personnels, they are the one with keys for me to get into the coolers to get things I needed for preparation each of the meals. They would let caucasian inmates go even when they were caught in the act of pilfering. There would be 300^{lbs.} of ground beef taken out of the kitchen, and they seems to turn a blind eye to who was stealing that much everytime. If a black imate were to have a couple of packs of sugar in their hand, they are fired on the spot. I bear witness to caucasian imates getting fired and hired right back that same day. Black inmates don't get that chance instead, we get watched and accused of stealing. I was fired before... there was a styrofoam tray with the name written on it, during the evening hours and I'm serving dinner. This caucasian inmate had called out a tray and his name was on that styrofoam tray sitting off the side. So, I sat the styrofoam tray in front of the foodservice worker, she had opened it up and said, "oh, my." Then shoved it to the caucasian inmate. Later, she addressed that matter to me and made an issue about it to her boss and he fired me. I filed a grievance on the wrongful

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termination and I gotten my job back, but the director of foodservice was arrogant too, he think that the grievance process doesn't work, boy was he fooled.

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