

CONTAGION PROTOCOL

It was nearing the end of the year 2022 and the news media was broadcasting the coming disaster of a new wave of infectious diseases. COVID-19, flu epidemics and the terror of Monkey Pox!

The CDC was advocating quarentines, travel restrictions, mandatory face mask and immunization and verified documentation of them.

In prison there were classes on keeping yourself and others safe from the spread of communicable diseases, walls are plastered with posters, STOP THE SPREAD OF GERMS! Cover your cough, don't rub your eyes, clean surfaces, avoid contact with others, wash your hands frequently. Dr. Messonier of the CDC says, "Avoid being exposed to the virus." Dr. Jay C. Butler of the CDC says, "Older adults are at greater risk of severe illness," he also says it is important to keep surfaces clean to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

PREVENTION! PREVENTION! PREVENTION!

Amid this bombardment of hysteria about disease control I had a particular experience I found puzzling in the face of the hue and cry about controlling this epidemic.

I am a 70 year old man, and consequently fall into that older adult catagory that is at greater risk. It started this way. While seated at a table with 3 other inmates in the chow hall for lunch One of the, also an older adult sneezed, not once but 3 times. And in doing so sprewed bacteria and surely virus containing mucus through the air and onto my food tray.

I politely got up and turned my tray into the scullery, having suddenly lost my appatite.

I joined the line of men who were returning to their dorms and as we began to walk down the hall I sneezed. I of course covered my sneeze inside the elbow of my jacket. I thinking I should cover my sneeze as I would a cough according to the posted safety protocols.

As we passed through one of the crash gates there was a line of officers performing pat downs. I was waved over to be searched and as I approached the guard I said, "would you mind changing your gloves before you pat me down?"

She gave me a puzzled look and so I endeavored to explain what I thought was a reasonable and rational reason for the request.

I began by asking her, "Why do you wear gloves?" She smiled at me and responded by saying, "For your protection."

I answered that absurdity by saying, "I am not trying to be difficult but how does they keep me safe when you pat down someone with that pair of gloves, potentially contaminating the outside of them with germs and or viruses and then spread them over me in your search for contraband?"

At this point I had garnered the attention of one of the male bulls who came over and asked whats the problem, in a manner that to me was meant to be intimidating.

I answered saying, "There is no problem officer, I only requested that she change her contaminated gloves before she searches me."

"Your refusing to be searched!" and there was a touch of beligerance in his voice.

"No sir. I simply request she..." and thats as far as I got when he said, "I'm tired of this shit! Come with me!"

I idly fell in behind him and suddenly found myself surrounded by two more Bulls, and was promptly marched to the lieutenant office.

I was stood in front of the desk as the officer leaned back in his swivel chair and looked to the lead Bull with an unspoken question of, "What."

"He's refusing to to be searched," the Bulls stated.

Now I began to respond to that accusation by saying, "I have not refused to be searched. I..." and here again I was interrupted as the lead Bull said, "Shut the f..k up." and then to the lieutenant he added, "I had this same problem with this shit the other day."

Whether he meant me or the issue was being called "shit" I am uncertain, But he and I had had a simular discussion a few days earlier. At that time he said he had just changed his gloves, nad I having no reason to doubt the verasity of his words had him proceed with the pat down.

The lieutenant looked at me and said, "I don't have time for this. Are you going to let us pat you down or are we going to escalate this to writing you up for disobeying a lawful order."

Well looking around at the four of them I realized that meant

being cuffed and stripped searched with my body cavities being probed in the process for good measure.

So I took the cowards way out and took off my jacket and held it out with my feet and arms spread wide and declared, "I am at your service sir, search away!"

Which the lead Bull performed while the others watched to be sure I gave him no problems. He started by sliding his gloved hand over the sleeve I had sneezed into...

Funny thing about the whole experience is that a week later, I found myself at a new facility.

