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The staff of FCI-Gilmer is, once again, conducting an inspection of my housing unit. The rules they are seeking to enforce through these inspections are clear, and it would seem odd (except for human nature) that such inspections are necessary multiple times. However, the population being controlled has never demonstrated group strength in compliance, and those assigned to manage this population are attempting to accomplish a very difficult task.

Managing a BOP facility in this era has multiple challenges. The law and rules regarding sexual activity are clear, yet outside of the private prison operators, the BOP is not willing to consider homosexual conduct sexual assault. As the postings in every GEO facility make clear "No means no, and yes is not allowed."

A federal inmate cannot consent to sexual activity, so any sexual activity by an inmate is sexual assault. However, the BOP norm is to condone such activity; no doubt that approach makes population management easier (except for the periodic lovers quarrels). To attempt to end such activity, and prosecute the activity as the federal crime it is, would face assertions that the BOP is not tolerant of alternative orientations. Prisons, like Gilmer, know that some federal laws must be ignored or they will be condemned by their own federal agency.

Tattooing is another area where the law and health implications are clear. It should never be tolerated in a BOP facility, yet there is nothing more common than the prison tattoo industry. Even if Gilmer recognized the obvious facts:

1. Tattooing compromises the immune system;
2. Tattooing requires supplies and equipment that are defined as contraband by the BOP;
3. Virtually every tattooing results in some level of needless infection;
4. The contraband supplies necessary for prison tattooing are either obtained through smuggling or theft of government property, and
5. The fees paid, by inmates to other inmates, for tattooing all relate to, and are generated by, other illegal commerce within and outside of the prison facility.

Gilmer cannot change this mentality in the BOP; it is too pervasive. The tolerance assures illegal activity, and forces Gilmer to, hypocritically, pick its battles.

Instead of ending illegal conduct relating to sex or tattoos, this forces Gilmer to re-arrange deck chairs with inspections involving clothes lines (in a prison where laundry service is limited since 2020), bedding accountability, and other somewhat superficial areas. They are doing their best, but the contradictions of the culture make the operation a farce.

There is a dark justification for tolerating both of these areas as they contribute to frequent flyers. Inmates that become socialized to a homosexual prison environment will not be able to duplicate that type of interpersonal structure in the free-world, so returning to prison will have an upside. The massive tattoos assure these humans are easily identified for the short months, between prison sentences, that they spend not incarcerated.

Gilmer will continue to count bedding, look for clotheslines, and the beat goes on.

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