

"Colored Time"

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*For your perusal,
get sure you have this
Jm*

"There's colored time and white time, and the worst time to do is colored time" - Mr. Tibbs, (In The Heat Of The Night, 1967)

Question: Why does it feel like we're doing "colored time" here at USP Tucson?

I write this under two scenarios; during Black History Month, and during a lockdown under questionable rationale. But I write this after watching the classic movie, "In The Heat Of The Night", from 1967, starring recently deceased (Jan. 2022) Sidney Poitier.

There are some eerie comparisons between our current lockdown, and the story that is told in the movie. Clearly, the movie addresses justice, and racial differences. In the movie, Mr. Virgil Tibbs, a black man, played by Sidney Poitier, is originally arrested for false pretenses, then released after Police Chief "Bill" finds out that Tibbs is a cop from Philadelphia.

Already, there's comparisons. USP Tucson has a history of punishing people based on poor intel, or prejudice. Staff never investigates to solve a situation; they punish first, then do a poor investigation- then punish some more. Mr. Tibbs was wrongly accused, simply because he was black. Too often the inmate population is punished simply because they are inmates.

Today, a situation in B2 caused 4 inmates to be removed and taken to the SHU. When we come in from recreation at 3pm, we went on lockdown, and remained until the count. During that time, two lieutenants came in to give every inmate in B2 a breathalyzer- all were clean. We then remained on lockdown until chow, when we were let out to walk to chow. But, when we came back from chow, we were put back on lockdown for the rest of the night.

What did WE do wrong?

What was the protocol to allow us out to eat, then punish us by putting us back on lockdown? Are we guilty simply because we're inmates, or because staff had to work? In either case, it doesn't seem fair, and there is no rehabilitative value in it.

At times like this, it feels like we're doing "colored time", where non-black officers punish us without validity, simply because of prejudice. It seems like staff is trying to teach us a lesson, much like the scene where Mr. Tibbs was almost lynched after Mr. Tibbs returned a slap by Mr. Endicott, a white man who thought he had the right to slap a black man. To his surprise, after Mr. Endicott slapped Mr. Tibbs, Mr. Tibbs returned fire.

While leaving the Endicott house, he was run off the road by some white men, and they cornered him in a warehouse. They said, as they cornered him, "Ok black boy, we come to teach you some manners". The intention was to either brutally beat him- or kill him.

There seems to be similarities in how staff treats us, and how Mr. Tibbs was treated. The idea of such treatment both implies that the "teachers" were righteous- when they were not.

Group punishment for the sake of punishment is no different than the malicious treatment that African Americans STILL suffer through; when a Caucasian

officer can accidentally shoot and kill a young black man, and get a gentle slap on the wrist. Meanwhile, a young black kid is dead. Have we changed at all since 1967, when "In The Heat Of The Night" was filmed, and 2022, when injustice is far too common?

I understand protocol, but blurred with prejudice and apathy, we see too often that whenever something happens, and the problem is extracted, the prison still punishes everyone, regardless of whether they had anything to do with it or not. To punish simply to punish seems to imply that we're doing "colored time", which is the worst kind.

I loved watching the movie, and legendary actor Sidney Poitier at his finest. As Mr. Tibbs, he felt his duty to do the right thing, and help solve a murder. And throughout the movie, there were numerous scenes where he was treated as less than a man, simply because he was black. He was called the "N" word, refused to be served in a restaurant, and almost lynched more than once by "citizens".

Is it any different here? Does staff punish simply to "George Floyd" us?

Black History Month will pass with USP Tucson doing absolutely nothing to celebrate my history. I can live with that if the opportunities during COVID-19 did not allow us to do so.

B But to see how we're treated, with a lack of compassion, and employing group punishment as a weapon seems to show that, during Black History Month, USP Tucson seems to employ "colored time" instead of a fair application of discipline.

We're not progressing as human beings, and no one seems to care about the inmates...