

TAKIN' THE GOOD WITH THE BAD
"Change In Spite Of Oppression"
Chapter III

THE GOOD

Have you ever heard of a prisoner "Bake Sale"? Yea, like a school bake sale only this one raised some funds so that a few old, sick and dying prisoners, who keeping in prison no longer serves any purpose, would be able to have just a few comfort items during the holiday season. Thanks to two "Earth Angels", Sarvi & Helen, the first known "Prisoner Bake Sale" was held in Harvard Square and all reports have it that it was a great success and the girls caused quite a ruckus over there. They even delivered the leftover cookies to the homeless shelter on Albany Street and residents there were seen eating "Stinky Prisoner Cookies" with wide grins on their faces! I am a better human being for knowing Sarvi and Helen and I cannot wait until we organize an interactive "Prison" theater event in Boston Common this coming spring. These two beautiful ladies are effectuating change in this world with brilliant humanity! Shine on ladies!!

A great man here at the prison, let's call him Woody, did a great thing up in the hospital unit (HSU/SNF or Denied-oh's Death Chamber) for the Christmas Holiday. He took many of the extra food trays that were full of turkey and stuffing and divided them up between some of the very sick and terminally ill men housed there. Woody actually had to argue with some of Deputy Denied-Oh's "hand selected" companion workers (Shame On Them) as they wanted to take the extra food back to their own cells for them and their friends. It is not enough that they are paid \$22.50 per week (unheard of in this prison system) but they also wanted to take the food right out of the mouths of their dying brothers. I have the utmost respect for Woody and what he did. I have several folks up there in Denied-Oh's Death Chamber who give me full reports on what goes on up there (and then I make "full reports" on this blog as well as to the right government officials) and how well Woody treats these dying old men is always one of the topics. God Bless Him!, and may God have mercy on the souls of those Stockholm Syndromed men who bow at the feet of Deputy Denied-Oh. Keep up the compassionate work Woody, your a great man.

My dear friend Fish (you have read Shawn Fisher's work here on the blog) put together a great Christmas for many of us here. He sewed Christmas stockings and hung them around a homemade tree in his cell. Each stocking was packed with gifts (mine had a bag of rice, a bag of chili with beans, some dried fruit mix, some jelly beans, and a block of provolone cheese!) which he "recruited" from men who are blessed with a few funds. Our Community of believers met and said our Christmas prayer before eating the meager meal the DOC provided for us. We opened gifts with each other and did our best to have a "Family" atmosphere here behind the razor wire. Fish was the catalyst for it all! He is a fine man and a good friend. I am also personally grateful for the wonderful birthday card the guys put together for me. So many men signed it and all had such humbling things to say. I am so blessed to be part of something so good in prison. This is what we do: in spite of oppression. We are indestructable! These fine men are my family!

THE BAD

The library here at the prison (which is the "information" center of the facility according to DOC policy) was without a librarian here for 14 months. I had previously reported on this blog how the former librarian, Dangerous Dan, walked out without even saying goodbye after Deputy Denied-Oh chewed him out for just doing his job (he had about 30 years in and was at retirement time and did not have to take Denied-Oh's crap). It took them 14 months to find and hire a new librarian. Well I am not surprised to report that she did not even last a month! She gave her notice and walked out of here Friday: she could not take all the "restrictions" Deputy Denied-Oh put on her job. You see this librarian was a real librarian, nit just a "prison" librarian, and she thought her job was going to be one that was close to what the DOC described on their hiring website: but she found out very quickly that the DOC is one giant con game. She was shocked to learn that the whole point of a "prison" library is to deny men services: and there is no better denier than Deputy Denied-Oh! The library is where men can learn how to change their lives and this joint, and the system in general, ain't in the business of helping men change their lives. Deputy Denied-Oh placed the verbal shackles on this woman and she had to free herself from that oppression. Better to go hungry than to get your pay out of the evil slop troth that is the DOC. Good for this librarian and I will be praying she finds a real position where she can be helpful. I am quite certain Deputy Denied-Oh will win one of the DOC's awards they pass out each year, probably for her exemplary "administrative skilss". That is Team DOC!

You may be shocked to hear that Deputy Denied-Oh APPROVED a "Long Termers Group" here! Now wait a minute, this is the BAD column, why would I report that? Well it is because the first meeting of this group was a total debacle. Deputy Denied-Oh ran the meeting (it was supposed to be a prisoner run group). The two Stockholmed "inmates" (they ain't prisoners) who were supposed to be the group facilitators just sat there and let ole Deputy Denied-Oh gut the whole effort. 120 men signed up to go: she cut the list to 50. She immediately declared that she would pick 12 to 15 men to continue the group from here on in. When asked if that meant that other men could not attend she declared, "That's right." When men brought up the needs of the long-termers/lifers (like education and community involvement) Denied-Oh let them know, in no uncertain terms, that this was not something the group was going to cover. She made it crystal clear that this was HER group and everyone knows it is so she can say she has a "long termers group" here (make get her another award) but just like everything else it is a DOC lie/propaganda. Men wanted a "Lifers' Group" like the proud group at MCI Norfolk, which fights for the rights of long-termers and lifers, and Deputy Denied-Oh gave them a suppression/oppression group through which she will get advanced notice of what the prisoners are focused on and she can work to head them off at the pass! I am ashamed of

the two "inmates" who sold out to Denied-Oh, but I know that the system has beat them down, "Stockholmed" them, and they cannot even see that they are done: destined to die at the feet of the deputy. This is why we went to the street and had our supporters, the supporters of PRISONERS, form a "Group" for us: the TRUE VOICE OF THE PRISONER! If we are destined to die it will be with our boots on, back turned to the evil deputy! Viva La Revolucione! Support BREAD & WATER! Support CURE-ARM!!

Frank Soffen is still at the Shattuck. Peter Ladetto is still at the Shattuck. These two men with over 90 years in prison between them had to be taken out of the "Death Chamber" and transferred to the Lemuel Shattuck hospital in Jamaica Plain. The poor care they received in the Death Chamber rendered them so sick they had to be sent out. Glen Breese, who worked three (3) jobs for the prison administration at one time, has shrunk down to skeleton size up in the death chamber as he battles cancer. Do you think any prison official has called the governor's office and let them know that these dying men are perfect for sentence commutations? Of course not: these dying old men are job security. You have four men up in the Deputy's Death Chamber who no longer even know they are in prison??? Their dementia is so advanced that could just as well be on Mars or Pluto and they would not have a clue. How does keeping these men in prison serve society? What does it have to do with public safety? What is the depth of the damage it does to the social order? The Denied-Ohs and prison doctors care not about these men: they care about continued pay checks. You would think that a prison administrator would pick up a phone and let the powers that be know that these profoundly sick men are ripe for release? Not a chance. This is a system of abuse and self-preservation. NO ONE is to be released if they can help it: NO ONE!!!

Can you make some phone calls? Call the Governor's office and ask why men with full blown dementia are held in prison and do not have their sentences commuted? You can reach the Governor at: (617) 725-4005. Call this prison and ask for the Deputy of Classification and Programming. Ask her why no one at the prison advocates for the release of these dying old men? You can reach her at: (978) 425-4341. If you can please send a "Get Well" card or note to Frank Soffen and/or Peter Ladetto and the Lemuel Shattuck Hospital in Jamaica Plain.

More To Come...