

H A R L A N R I C H A R D S

April 18, 2019

Tablet Update - They Tricked Me!
And a Short Canteen Comment

We have been able to purchase 5" tablets for 6 months. They are too small to use with ease but they're all we have so we make the best of it. They are more convenient than the kiosk in the day room.

Six months after 5" tablets were made available, we are now permitted to purchase 7" tablets for only \$5 more. If I'd have known that 7" tablets were going to be made available 6 months later I would have waited to buy one. I can't afford to fork over another \$135 for a new tablet no matter how badly I'd like to have one. They tricked me and I'm not going to let them take advantage of me. I'll keep my 5" tablet until it dies or I'm released from prison. I'm assuming they planned this to get more money out of us but it is possible that they actually were forced to trade up based on "security concerns." The 5" tablet has an SD memory card slot that can be used to upload banned stuff like porn while the 7" tablet is entirely self-contained with no way to upload banned items.

At the same time that the new tablets were announced, movie rentals were approved. Movies can be rented one at a time, for 48 hours, and we can play them for up to 1½ times. These restrictions are necessary so they can make money off us. If we had unlimited watching or we could purchase the movies we would share them with each other and they would only sell a few movies. The purpose is for them to make money. I am waiting for the new app to download and show the movies and prices. I'll add it before I submit this posting.

Our tablets also have a photo gallery function but they are not in any hurry to enable it so we can use it. They can't make much money off it because all it does is allow our email contacts to send us photos. That is something I am eager to have but probably won't see any time soon.

They could also sell us books if they wanted to. But once again, book sharing by prisoners would make it hard for them to make any money off us.

I don't intend to rent any movies unless they are dirt-cheap, like 25¢ or 50¢. There are plenty of movies to watch on the TV channels and the prison shows 3 Netflix movies every weekend. Keefe will have to depend on the prisoners who have families that send them money. You can tell who they are. They spend \$80 on canteen every 2 weeks, have new personal property sent in all the time and have downloaded hundreds of songs at \$1.95 each. Some families can afford to be generous. Other families deprive their kids of necessities so they can meet the demands of their imprisoned loved one.

As long as I'm talking about money, Keefe lost the contract to supply us with canteen items and we'll soon have to buy canteen from Union Supply - a vendor known for its high prices. Most likely we'll have poorer product selection and higher prices. It will devastate the majority of prisoners who are forced to survive on prison wages. But for those aforementioned lucky few with generous families they will have no problem paying more for less. This is another case where I'm not optimistic but I hope I'm proven wrong. Maybe we'll have a greater selection and lower prices. Hopefully, I'll have to eat my words and post a future blog extolling the virtues of Union Supply (but if their property catalog is any indication, I won't have to worry about that).

Movies cost \$3.00 each to rent. I will not pay that much to view a movie on a 5" tablet. It just isn't worth it to me. Many of the guys in here will spend that much money but maybe they just like movies more than I do. I buy songs for \$1.95 but that's only because I own the recording and can play it as much as I want. I would buy movies or ebooks under those conditions but renting at that price is like throwing money away.