

Good Afternoon. My name is Bernard Venesky, Jr. and I am employed as a corrections Officer II at S.C.I. Camp Hill. I was involved in the first day of rioting on Wed. Oct. 25, 1969.

On this day I was assigned as Sergeant on Blocks 'E' and 'F' and had four officers assigned to me (2 per block). At approximately 2:45 p.m. I was on F block and alerted to the disturbance by an inmate that was sweeping the tier. I asked Officer Wright if he had been notified of any problems. He responded that stockade was coming in, and it then came over the radio to secure all doors in groups II and III. Officer Wright had secured the door and I calmly ordered him and Officer Bickel to secure all inmates (about 5-6) who had already entered the block. As I gave this order, a second order came over the radio to open the doors and clear the walkways. All three officers believed the problem had been resolved and complied with the order. I told both officers to open cell doors as I left the block and stated I would clear the walkways of inmates from E and F block. As I left the block, there were about twelve inmates outside the door and they began to enter the block. When I was approximately 15-20 yards from the door, I heard a large roar and looked down in front of Kitchen number two. I saw Officer Johnson get struck twice and fall to the ground. I turned toward the block and saw Officer Wright by the door. I shouted for him to secure the door because I felt that if he waited for me it would put them in jeopardy. I then responded to help Officer Johnson realizing by this time that the group of officers were being surrounded by the inmates in the compound. As I picked up Johnson and began to carry him I shouted for all officers to clear the compound. It was about thirty yards to E Gatehouse and ^{when} we were halfway there the inmates began to chase us. I got

(2)

to the other side and placed Johnson down as I turned to close the gate. I helped Lt. Carey through and Sgt. Baker helped Capt. Keith. I then slammed the gate and three officers held it as a fourth officer locked the gate. The inmates backed off of the gate and began to enter various buildings reappearing with various weapons. During this time is when Officer Arnold was attacked and severely injured. Approximately 20-30 ~~minutes~~^{minutes} passed and the inmates rushed the E gate and broke through chasing us about 200- 250 yards to the Control Center. The inmates opted to enter and trash the modular units and crash the rear fencing instead of attacking control. At this time, I was put in charge of a group of three officers and assigned to leave Control through the visiting area and escort the doctors in to treat the wounded. This accomplished, the remaining staff evacuated by the same route and reported to the rear gate to suit up in riot gear. We then were accompanied by the State Police and began sweeping and securing various areas of the institution. Approximately four to four and one half hours into the disturbance we had all the inmates involved pushed back into Groups II and III. The inmates then brought out two host gear (Officers Hargrove and Atherton) and began to beat them until we stopped advancing. Shortly thereafter I began to experience severe chest pain and was taken to triage and then the hospital. I was treated and released from the hospital at 10:30 p.m. and returned to the institution for debriefing. I was told that it was announced that the institution was secure and locked down at 10:00 p.m., but as I left at ~~11:45~~ 11:45 p.m. I saw inmates being escorted to various cell blocks.

On Thursday the 26th I returned to the institution after I heard the disturbance had broken out again. I assisted on the perimeter and remained at the institution several hours after the State Police regained control.

(3)

I have been medically cleared to return to work and attempted to do so on November 15th. However, Dr Russeck spoke with me after this shift and gave me additional time off until I receive further counseling.

I have several pieces of information which are relevant to this investigation. I believe that not only the second day of rioting, but the first day could have been avoided as well.

The first paper is dated Feb. 16, 1989 and was issued by Superintendent Freeman. In this memo Mr. Freeman acknowledged the increase in assaults and weapons being found in the institution.

The second set of papers are minutes from a Sergeants' meeting, dated May 10, 1989. The items circled are new policies and procedures that inmates had to adjust to.

The third set of papers are minutes from a Sergeants' meeting on August 6, 1989. At this point various sergeants including myself expressed concern that the hearing examiners sanctions did little to curb further misconducts by inmates and that the inmates showed little concern of receiving a misconduct.

On Sept. 10, 1989, I received information that a demonstration would take place; the information was forwarded. Attached is copy of my report. *(I INADVERTENTLY DELETED THIS REPORT, BUT CAN SUPPLY A COPY.)*

The fifth set of items was found on Sept. 11, 1989, almost seven weeks before the riot. I located a list of F.O.I. members and a list of their apparent demands on the institution. This material was found in the cell of the inmate who is known to be the secretary of the F.O.I. Again this information was immediately forwarded but little was done. This was prior to the family day and sickline changes. So it appears that those changes were all it took to put the inmates over the brink.

I submit these copies for your review and will now answer your questions to the best of my ability.

DATE: February 16, 1989

SUBJECT: K-Block Honor Status

ADM. MANUAL
Volume II
C-OM-003

Cross Reference
Volume VII
C-OM-102

TO: ALL CONCERNED

FROM: *Robert M. Freeman*
Robert M. Freeman
Superintendent

Because of the changing nature of the inmate population at the State Correctional Institution at Camp Hill, it has become increasingly difficult to find inmates who meet the criteria for Honor Block Status.

As a result, there have been an increasing number of serious misconducts and incidents occurring on the block or involving its inmates. A review of misconduct records indicates far too many situations involving possession of drugs, drug paraphernalia, money, and food items; commission of sexual acts; assaults; weapons being found; and deliberate destruction of State property.

Administrative Staff have given very serious consideration to revoking K-Block's Honor Status, but have decided not to do so because this would be unfair to the majority of K-Block inmates who live by the rules and deserve to have Honor Status.

However, the issue of lack of appropriate candidates for K-Block must be resolved and, therefore, the following policy is effective:

Inmates placed in K-Block PRIOR to March 1, 1989, will retain all the current privileges of Honor Status.

New inmates placed in K-Block AFTER March 1, 1989, will NOT have any of the privileges associated with Honor Status. They will be treated no differently than inmates housed in the other General Population cell blocks.

Deputy Smith will coordinate the implementation of this policy change. Any questions may be addressed to Deputy Smith or Mr. Palakovich.

RMF/lp

cc: K-Block Inmates
Administrative Staff
Department Heads
Commissioned Officers
File

May 10, 1989

SUBJECT: 10/6 Shift Sergeants' Meeting

TO: Mr. Leidy
SCIC Training Coordinator

FROM: Lt. G.K. Legge and Lt. R. Miller

Please credit Sergeant Nichols and Acting Sergeant Buks with one (1) hour of training for attendance during the 10/6 Sergeants' Meeting. The following items were covered during the meeting:

1. New Hospital and Medical Contract that is effective 6-01-89.
2. New Rear Gate Complex.
3. Sex Offender Treatment Center.
4. New Values Trailer received from T.M.I.
5. Policy concerning Termination of Inmate Visits, temporarily banning of a visitor.
6. New Van Transfer Policy. Change from Huntingdon to Smithfield.
7. Open House on May 8th and May 12th.
8. New Inmate Numbering System.
9. Experimental Inmate Door Card System.
10. New Officers starting on April 7th and more starting May 1st.
11. New Inmate Diet Tray Procedure.
12. Elimination of Metal Tray Changing to Cambro.
13. ~~New~~ RHU Feeding Procedure.
14. Renovations to the Parking Lots.
15. Policy on Work Orders. Maintenance need only two (2) copies.
16. Abattoir working on new meat products.
17. Factory removing surplus and changing over to production of modular furniture.

18. If a problem is discovered in the Furniture Factory, slip a note under Mr. Lambert's door so he can institute corrective measures.
19. Inmate Grievance Quarterly Report.
20. Restroom of Satellite Dispensary, request made to install a door on it.
21. Aspirin and Tylenol Procedures.
22. Inside Lawn Mowing Policy.
23. Torn mail bags. Establish a procedure to eliminate problem.
24. Weekly Zone Checks of Del Norte System to be phased in with security lock and locking mechanism checks.
25. Institution getting a separate frequency for the Del Norte Alarms.
26. Upcoming Training Suicide Prevention and Weapons Qualification.
27. Experimental Personnel and Annual Leave System.
28. Radio System and Implementation of new radio.

GKL/RM:dz

cc: Deputy Smith
Major Stover
Lt. Detrick
All Sergeants On All Shifts
File (2)

Venesky
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
STATE CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTION
AT CAMP HILL
August 6, 1989

(2)

SUBJECT: Sergeants Meeting
2/10 Shift

TO: John R. Stover
Major of the Guard

FROM: *D. Bowser*
Captain D. Bowser/Captain R.L. Keith
2/10 Shift Commanders

On the above date at approximately 2115 hours, a Sergeants Meeting was held in the Captain's Office. Following are the Sergeants who attended:

B. Baker
Sellers
Gardner
Venesky
Simoncini
Beam

Captain R. Keith
Captain D. Bowser

The following items were discussed:

1. Silverware - The amount of silverware being found in the trash cans is far too excessive. Everyone must be alert to this problem and be observant to this problem.
2. Computer Building at the Training Academy - We should continue to check the Academy but do not go into this area.
3. The new whistle policy was discussed and it was emphasized that whistles would be blown only in emergencies.
4. It was again emphasized that the policy on inmate property be closely followed. Losses exceed reasonableness.
5. When assigned to a Community Hospital, a small radio may be used. However, under no circumstances are ear phones to be used.
6. The Sergeants were asked to become more active in the training of the trainees, as well as the documentation of the same.

The meeting was then opened for the Sergeants to voice any concerns that they may have.

1. The majority were rather upset about the apparent disparity in sanctions that are being given by the Hearing Examiner.

2/10 Shift Sergeants Meeting
Page 2
August 6, 1989

2. The Control Desk Sergeant again voiced a concern that the desk is not receiving a copy of the Medical Lay-ins. This creates problems for our 1730 count.
3. There also were growing concerns about the inmates showing any concerns about receiving a misconduct.

The meeting was adjourned at 2200 hours.

DB/RLK:djk

cc: Deputy Smith
All 2/10 Sergeants
All 2/10 Lieutenants
Mr. Leidy
File (2)

DAILY INCIDENT REPORT, SCI-CAMP HILL

To: LT. RENNINGER,
From: B. VENESKY
Title: COOK, OFFICER, II.
Date: 9/11/89.
Signature: B. Venesky

Institution: SCIC
Date: 9/11/89.
Time: 2020.
Area: QTR. 'E'
Occurrence: RANDOM SEARCH.

Inmates Involved:
Name, DOC No. & Block
DESEIGNORIA, ANTONIO - AMERICA E

Staff Involved:
Name & Title
VENESKY CO. II.
SWALLOW COE
RENNINGER CO. II.

Witnesses:
cc Deputy Smith
Major Stone
Shift Commander
Security Office
Felt

9-12-89
SWS

Actions Taken:

CONDUCTED SEARCH FOUND PAPERS ; NOTIFIED LT. RENNINGER ; PAPERS
CONFISCATED ; INCIDENT REPORT FILED

cc. Security Office
Deputy Smith

Description of Incident, in Detail: (Use other side if necessary)

ON THE ABOVE DATE AND TIME OFFICER SWALLOW AND I
CONDUCTED A RANDOM SEARCH ON INMATE DESEIGNORIA'S CELL. THIS INMATE
IS A CONVICTED MEMBER OF THE FRUITS OF ISLAM (FOI) DURING THIS SEARCH
I LOCATED TWO (2) PIECES OF LEGAL PAPER WITH A LIST OF SEVEN (7)
APPARENT DEMANDS ON THLM AND A LIST OF FOI MEMBERS LISTED AS
INVOLVED IN A MEETING TH'S DATE. I CONTACTED LT. RENNINGER WHO
CAME TO THE CELL AND REVIEWED THE PAPERS. I WAS THEN ORDERED
TO CONFISCATE SAID PAPERS WHICH I DID AND ISSUED C.I.R # 256136.

DC-154A

No. 286136

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

Confiscated Items Receipt (Inmate)

DC Number <i>AM6223</i>	Name <i>DESEIGNORIA.</i>	Cell <i>F. 4-5</i>	Institution <i>SCIC</i>	Date <i>9/11/89</i>	Time <i>2020</i>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Random Search	Misconduct Report Prepared		Comment: <i>PAPERS CON. FOR INVESTIGATION</i>		
<input type="checkbox"/> General Search	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
<input type="checkbox"/> Investigative Search					
Items Confiscated			Items Confiscated		
<i>1 RADIATOR KEY.</i>			<i>/</i>		
<i>1 PC. PLASTIC WARE.</i>					
<i>1 RAZOR.</i>					
<i>3 PCS LEGAL PAPER w/ LISTS.</i>					
Signature and Title of Officer <i>Vince By...</i>					

1. DC-15

2. Deputy Superintendent for Operations

3. Inmate

9/11/89.

OFFICIAL meeting.
MONDAY AFTERNOON

- BRO. MINISTER KAREEM MUHAMMAD —
- BRO. ASST. MIN. ALI MUHAMMAD —
- BRO. SECRETARY. YAH, YAH, MUHAMMAD. ✓
- BRO. INVESTIGATOR TYRONE X ✓
- BRO. ACTING SQUAD LEADER HUKIM MUHAMMAD ✓
- BRO. TREASURER HAMID MUHAMMAD ✓
- BRO. KENNETH X BENSON —
- BRO. BRIAN HARRISON —
- BRO. ISLAM DICKERSON —
- BRO. HANIF MUHAMMAD —
- BRO. ALI - EDWARD. ✓
- BRO. ABDUL. —

What must be done

1. The Food in the dining Room must be Cooked well done and Hot! And we should have something for the none pork eaters: when pork is being served, And something for the none meat eaters when meat is being served.
2. We want to use the Law Library five days a week, Morning, Afternoon and night, Also we want to be able to go to the Library for general reading and studying.
3. We want to be able to participate in the School Activities, Vocational and Academic.
4. We should not have to double up with any one - unless we sign the proper consent form at the Counselors office.
5. The Shower conditions should be improved Right away. All Shower heads should kick out hot water. And there should not be Fungus on the walls as well as overpowdiness.
6. We want our due 90 minutes to 120 minutes in the morning - 90 minutes in the Afternoon and 90 minutes night yard, (until night yard is over)
7. Inmates that sitting idle, All day everyday, should have the opportunity to go to School or work.