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March 24, 2006

Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction  
1050 Freeway Drive North  
Columbus, Ohio 43229  
ATTN: Office of the Director

Dear Director of the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction:

I heard recently in the news that longtime director of the ODRC, Reggie Wilkinson, has announced his retirement from his position with your department and that a new director will soon be selected. From what I understand, Mr. Wilkinson's resignation is effective April 30th and Governor Bob Taft will appoint a new director before that date to take over for Reggie. I note that Mr. Wilkinson has been the director for about 15 years (and he devoted over 33 years to the corrections vocation throughout his career). That is true dedication, but like so many other situations, it was probably about time for a change.

With new leadership comes new ideas. If we do not develop new ideas, we become a stagnant society. If we aren't moving forward, we are moving backward! The last area where we want to move backward is with our incarcerated criminals.

I am an idea man and I come up with new ideas. Last week I came up with what I think is a breakthrough idea (even for me) in the field of incarceration. I want to share that idea with you now. If you think it is something that you might be interested in, we can discuss compensation details at a future date.

I came up with this idea the other day just after a rainstorm. (Which is funny because most of my best ideas usually come after a brainstorm.) My idea is that all prisoners incarcerated in Ohio be clothed in rainbow colored jump suits. My reasoning for this new plan follows...

One of the most powerful tools in rehabilitating our misguided citizens is positive reinforcement and imagery. Negative treatment only makes people angry and defensive. Meanwhile, a positive idea gives them a future goal they can look forward to. It's all about attitude. A positive attitude leads to gratitude. A negative attitude leads to something I like to call "bad-itude". The positive imagery or goal in this case is colorfully symbolized by rainbows. Even the darkest storm can result in a beautiful rainbow once the sun comes back out. If they are wearing rainbow colored jump suits, they will have a constant reminder of the positive outcome that they are always working toward.

You can even tell the prisoners that there is a pot of gold at the end of every rainbow and that they are each working toward their own personal pots of gold. But you might want to be selective in whom you tell that to, or at least emphasize that it is a figurative expression. You don't want to give false impressions to those inmates still holding a propensity to steal. You don't want them to get any ideas of stealing another inmate's gold and have things turn violent!

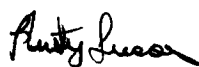
Bright multi-colored rainbow jump suits would have other practical advantages as well. Rainbow clothing would be very easy to spot in the event of a jailbreak, unless the escaped inmates end up in the middle of a hippie tie-dye convention (which has to be fairly unlikely). Of course, all it takes to avoid looking conspicuous is to strip off the jump suit. Maybe you could also dye their hair rainbow colors and give them rainbow tattoos (in case the escapees shed their clothes AND shave their heads).

I imagine this is probably something that would need to be tested out first on a small scale before statewide implementation. It would also need a catchy slogan to appeal to the general public because the funding necessary to design and manufacture new jump suits and hair dye will likely have to go to the voters on the state ballot at some point.

Not only am I an idea man, but I am also a slogan showman. How about the "Prism Prison Rehabilitation Referendum"? That's a catchy slogan that could generate positive PR in the public sector.

Remember, change for the sake of change is never a good idea, but change for the sake of defining a new era in leadership is never a bad idea.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rusty Lucas".

Rusty Lucas

p.s. My idea is available and open for acceptance for 45 days. Upon the expiration of the 45th day, if I do not hear from you, I am going to open this idea up to other states. I hope that this is enough time for you to review my proposal. If not, I would be happy to extend that 45 days. I really think that this idea will work best for Ohio, with the new director coming into power. But if you do not take action on this idea, I will present it to the authorities in Indiana or Michigan. Even if their directors are not resigning or retiring, they can still use new ideas to build for a new future. If you would like an exclusive option on my idea, please provide me with a free Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction baseball cap. If I receive a free baseball cap from you within that initial 45 day period, I will hold this offer open for 180 days before pitching it to a neighboring state.