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A Prison From Another Planet

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[00:00:00] **x:** KALW

[00:00:13] **GREG:** I'm Greg Eskridge, coming at you from the San Quentin side of Uncuffed. Today we have something special for you. We're gonna take it out of San Quentin, out of California, out of the United States, even. That's right. Uncuffed is taking you to Norway. So last summer we heard that a bunch of Uncuffed staff and former participants on the outside were taking a trip to Oslo.

You may be like, Why Norway? Well, when we heard, we knew exactly why. Norway is known for having a very unique prison system. It's often called the most humane in the world, and we've heard things like they get to wear they're own clothes. The prisons are beautiful. And the food is good. So the Uncuffed team went to check out some of these prisons, and we sent them over with a few questions.

What's the worst thing about being in Norwegian prison? And what's the best thing?

If you could change one thing about living in a Norwegian prison, what would it be?

How do the correctional officers treat incarcerated people?

Uncuffed producer Tommy Shakur Ross was one of the guys on that trip visiting these Norwegian prisons we've heard so much about.

[00:01:38] **SHAKUR:** You know, I just got out of prison after doing 36 and a half years, and, and that was a little over a month ago. So it's, in the words of time, it's bananas that I'm going, getting ready to go into a prison in Norway.

[00:01:56] **GREG:** And he took a tour of one of the most famous high security Norwegian prisons called Halden. Halden has won awards for its architecture and has been featured in documentaries. Let's listen to what Shakur shared back with us.

Just a note: Here at Uncuffed, we do not use the word inmate. We prefer to go by incarcerated folks. However, in Norway things are different. So you'll hear that word used a couple of times.

[00:02:27] **LINDA:** One at a time, leave everything in the boxes and then you have to go through without the beep. It's the same procedure as... so if one, just keep the door, I will.

[00:02:38] **SHAKUR:** After spending so much time in an American prison, it was a trip to check myself in voluntarily to a prison in another country.

[00:02:46] **AMBI:** Good morning. Hi. Good morning everybody. Good morning. Hi.

[00:02:52] **SHAKUR:** When we arrived at Halden, a correctional officer named Linda Hansen met us out front. She was friendly and engaging. She'd been a guard here for almost 10 years. Today she was our tour guide.

[00:03:05] **LINDA:** So this is where all inmates are coming. Either they're leaving or entering the premises.

So here they will be taken into either checkup or straight into the cells.

[00:03:17] **SHAKUR:** In California, I was taken into prison in the van with no windows wearing shackles. In Norway, Linda says a lot of guys just check themselves in.

[00:03:28] **LINDA:** Yeah. Oh yeah. Yeah. They show up. They have gotten a letter that they are supposed to show up for the, doing their sentence, and many of them actually do need that, so yeah.

[00:03:37] **SHAKUR IN NORWAY:** Wow.

A lot of them are coming in by themselves.

[00:03:41] **SHAKUR:** Hard to imagine just strolling up to the gate and be like, okay, here to serve my time. But it probably helps to know that most people in Norway only serve a few years.

[00:03:52] **SHAKUR IN NORWAY:** So we are entering, going to the prison grounds. And what I see is, it doesn't look like a prison in California.

I could say... looks like, almost like a college campus, some type of dormitory.

[00:04:14] **SHAKUR:** Yes. We walk past concrete buildings and chain link fences, but there are no guard towers. Instead, there are big windows and lots of natural light. There's trees everywhere and in front of us, a beautifully maintained soccer field.

[00:04:32] **SHAKUR IN NORWAY:** See a couple of guys soccer field kicking the ball around. Their colors are red. That's probably, that's probably why they were looking at me in my shirt.

[00:04:43] **SHAKUR:** I learned later that the red clothing was only what newly incarcerated people wear. But once it's been approved, they can go back to wearing their own personal clothing.

Yes. Their own clothes. No prison blues like in Cali.

[00:05:00] **LINDA:** So this is the library. So when the inmates go shopping, they also have access to this. So they can rent movies, film series, series is the high thing right now. So. Yeah. This is a really good library. Uhhuh. The...

[00:05:12] **SHAKUR:** We saw the library with books that you'd never be able to get in California prisons.

But maybe my favorite spot was the band room. They had an amazing drum set.

[00:05:27] **SHAKUR IN NORWAY:** I'm, I'm playing the drums in a Norwegian prison. This is Tommy Shakur Ross with one of his elementary school beats.

[00:05:37] **SHAKUR:** And then there were the living spaces. When you walk in, you first enter a common space, kind of like our shared day rooms at San Quentin.

But this one had a fancy TV and video games, a dart board and a kitchen.

[00:05:54] **SHAKUR IN NORWAY:** This is the kitchen. This is what they make their food?

[00:05:59] **SHAKUR:** It smelled like pizza. And very quickly we found the chef.

[00:06:03] **SILVA:** We are 10 men here, and 10 men can cook whatever they want.

[00:06:09] **SHAKUR:** This is Silva, who is cooking for the rest of his dorm.

[00:06:13] **SILVA:** They can use this initial oven to whatever they want.

They can watch TV, they can play cards. And...

[00:06:21] **SHAKUR:** But what impressed me the most is that when Silva's cooking, he's got big old knives that he can just pick up and use whenever he wants. But let me tell you about their individual single cells. I had some good cellies over the years, but your own cell?

[00:06:39] **SHAKUR IN NORWAY:** So I'm looking at this. In this particular cell, they have a refrigerator, right?

They have a bed, they have a a dresser, and a desk. And even have a whiteboard. Yeah. This, this doesn't look like a, a jail cell, looks like a hospital room. A door to your own bathroom? That

doesn't exist in any prison in the state of California. Even having your own cell is rare. California prisons are notoriously overcrowded and San Quentin is no exception.

Tell any guy at San Quentin, they can have this cell over their four by 10 cell, and they jump at the chance.

[00:07:26] **LINDA:** So this is the grocery store, and all units are coming down here to shop once a week.

[00:07:31] **SHAKUR:** Yeah, you heard that, right? A grocery store. And it does really feel like a little shop you might walk into off the street.

[00:07:40] **SHAKUR IN NORWAY:** So they have tomatoes, oranges, apples. There are spices. Look at this, they have actual meat that you can buy. They have hot dogs. They have bacon, right? This is a, this is a real grocery store, y'all. I heard about it, but now I'm seeing it for the first time.

[00:08:04] **SHAKUR:** This store was blowing my mind. So I asked an incarcerated store clerk named Andre to give me the lowdown.

[00:08:11] **SHAKUR IN NORWAY:** Can I just ask you a few questions? Of course. Okay. So, say for instance, I lived in this prison and I wanted to make a purchase, how would I make a purchase here?

[00:08:23] **CLERK:** You would come inside, grab a basket.

[00:08:27] **SHAKUR IN NORWAY:** A basket.

[00:08:27] **CLERK:** And just pick out your, the items you would like to purchase.

[00:08:32] **SHAKUR IN NORWAY:** Yeah.

[00:08:32] **CLERK:** And you will have an inmate card. Looks like this.

[00:08:38] **SHAKUR IN NORWAY:** So he's pulling out what looks like a, a debit, turn it, turn it on the other side. The backside. Yeah. It looks like a debit card, actually. It is a debit card. Yeah. So the prison back where I came from, you can only shop once a month.

[00:08:49] **CLERK:** Once a month.

[00:08:50] **SHAKUR IN NORWAY:** And if you missed that and look, you had to wait in line, it would be like chaos.

[00:08:55] **CLERK:** Yeah.

[00:08:55] **SHAKUR:** Isiah Daniels was one of the formerly incarcerated guys on our trip, and he was just as amazed as I was.

[00:09:03] **ISIAH:** I mean, this is just outrageous. I've never seen. These guys are still in prison. No matter how we look at it, they're still in prison. But it looks like, they try to make their lives as easy as possible, and as I keep hearing from the guards, they keep saying, we're not here to punish them.

They have already punished themselves by putting themselves here. And so what the guards here do, or this here type of prison, the model that I'm seeing, it helps them to build back the self-esteem that they lost.

[00:09:36] **SHAKUR:** That thing that Isiah's talking about, the relationship with officers, it's one of the major philosophies behind Norway's prison system. In California, all guards get is a 13-week academy. Guards here go through two years of training, the equivalent of an associate's degree.

[00:09:58] **LINDA:** Well, we learn all from criminology until ethics. We learn about communication skills. We learn first aid. We also learn, you know, about the communication skills. It's like deescalating conversation.

[00:10:15] **SHAKUR:** In Norway, guards don't carry guns. They're trained to only use force when absolutely necessary, and help counsel incarcerated people through problems. Another guard told us they're encouraged to socialize and eat together and play games.

[00:10:34] **GUARD:** We play cards, backgammon, table tennis. Yep. We go out for walks. And, and like, they have their issues, they have their stories, and I spend quite a lot of time talking to each and every one of them when we have the time.

[00:10:54] **SHAKUR:** When we were walking around the grounds, we came across a bunch of incarcerated folks hanging out, sitting around a picnic table, smoking with some guards. We first chatted with a guy named Patrick.

[00:11:05] **SHAKUR IN NORWAY:** What, what is it that you really like about Norwegian prisons?

[00:11:10] **PATRICK:** It's a three-star hotel.

[00:11:12] **SHAKUR IN NORWAY:** Three star hotel.

[00:11:13] **PATRICK:** It's like the Holiday Inn.

[00:11:14] **SHAKUR IN NORWAY:** Okay. And what is it that you don't like?

[00:11:18] **PATRICK:** The court system.

[00:11:19] **SHAKUR IN NORWAY:** The court system.

[00:11:20] **SHAKUR:** I cannot believe it. But when we walked up to this group, one of the incarcerated guys put his arm around a female guard's neck. And he gave her a noogie. In California, he would've been taken away in handcuffs, heading straight to the hall.

[00:11:36] **PATRICK:** They, they, they don't try to punish us. They just try to help us through it.

[00:11:40] **SHAKUR IN NORWAY:** I think that really works because it, it gives you opportunity to feel witnessed and seen, like, yeah, I see you.

[00:11:46] **PATRICK:** Yeah. You don't get so far away from society here as you probably over there.

[00:11:50] **SHAKUR IN NORWAY:** Right, right, right, right, right.

[00:11:52] **SHAKUR:** But they said that even so, a lot of Norwegians don't love the idea that prisons are getting all this funding to have big sales, full service grocery stores, and great relationships with guards. So a few years ago, people voted in politicians who cut a bunch of funding to prisons. Here's another incarcerated guy named Torstone

[00:12:12] **TORSTONE:** Prison was the flagship of Norway.

Got, got the most funding, it got the most programs, but some people reacted and when the government changed, they changed the, they lose the election.

[00:12:22] **SHAKUR IN NORWAY:** Yeah.

[00:12:22] **TORSTONE:** Eight years ago or something, right? They start taking away the money because they was like, if the older you cannot eat, the old people cannot eat good, then live good.

Why should the inmates do that? But they don't understand that this inmates is gonna be your neighbor next, next week, next month, next year. This prison is made for, let's say, to have 80 guards on duty all the time on shifts, you know? But then now they have 40, so sometimes we, they close.

[00:12:48] **SHAKUR:** And these cuts, it's more than just staffing.

We could see the effects in the next location we visited: the family visiting space. It's beautiful. There's all sorts of toys, a treehouse deck, a barbecue, but no one can use it right now. That's because in order for incarcerated people to use the space, they have to complete a parenting class. But because of the budget cuts, that class wasn't available at the time we visited.

[00:13:17] **SHAKUR IN NORWAY:** So what about, what about self-help groups?

[00:13:20] **TORSTONE:** No, the funding is gone.

[00:13:22] **SHAKUR IN NORWAY:** Yeah, the, the, no, the funding.

[00:13:23] **TORSTONE:** It's no funding here. The only education you can have here is like basic school. No higher education here now.

[00:13:31] **SHAKUR IN NORWAY:** No higher education.

[00:13:32] **TORSTONE:** They had it before, but they taken it away.

[00:13:34] **SHAKUR:** And they don't have no, like, they don't have no programs.

[00:13:37] **TORSTONE:** No, it's finished. Everything is cut to the bone there. They have one, but...

[00:13:41] **SHAKUR:** And those big old cells we saw? When there are staffing issues, like during the pandemic, some people were getting locked in those cells for up to 22 hours a day. Near the end of our visit, we walked outside, passed some basketball hoops, and met Eric, who was sitting cross-legged on a bench with his yoga mat.

He also had some heavy critiques of the system.

[00:14:05] **ERIC:** Like you say, it's very nice here. Mm-hmm. But there's no rehabilitation going on here. Mm-hmm. That's, that's sort of a farce. They like to pretend that there is a, a rehabilitation because they they have sort of a model that is supposed to look like how a pro-social lifestyle is, but there's no, there's no cognitive change in the process here.

And that's sort of, that's one thing. I don't know if it comes out clear enough when international people are, they're sort of, look at, look at what's going on in Norway.

[00:14:38] **SHAKUR:** Norwegian prisons aren't punishing people the same way American ones may be, but there aren't nearly the amount of classes or self-help groups that San Quentin has to offer, though San Quentin is really unusual in that respect.

[00:14:52] **ERIC:** And the last couple of years they've cut down on the, the finances. So it's even worse here. People are actually getting more criminal by being here because, well, when you don't have any programs, what do you expect from, you know, antisocial individuals hanging out to just kind of continue being more antisocial?

You know? Yeah.

[00:15:15] **SHAKUR:** As I left prison for the second time in just a few months, I thought back to my time in San Quentin.

[00:15:21] **AMBI:** Shots, take care.

[00:15:23] **SHAKUR:** It's the rehabilitative programs that had the most profound effect on me, that made a difference in helping me prepare for life on the outside. But I also would've left prison in better shape if I had the kind of freedoms they had in Norway.

Freedom to have your own space, and chop your own food, and have meaningful relationships with the guards. So there you have it, Greg. I think that if the Norwegian prisons have more access to rehabilitative programs, and if the U.S. prisons had more access to the Norwegian

way of not punishing, given the guys an opportunity to be seen, to be witnessed, to be understood.

I think it could really make a difference. For Uncuffed, this is Tommy Shakur Ross, I'm out.

[00:16:19] **GREG:** So welcome back to the studio. I'm Greg Eskridge inside of the studio down here at the media center. I got two special guests that I just got through listening to some Norway footage with. To my right, go ahead and introduce yourself, sir.

[00:16:32] **JUAN:** Yeah. I'm Juan Haines, senior editor for San Quentin News and contributor to Solitary Watch.

[00:16:40] **RAHSAAN:** I'm Rahsaan “New York” Thomas. Multimedia, social justice.

[00:16:45] **GREG:** Welcome, welcome, welcome. So let's jump straight in it. So, so did anybody hear anything in the recording about transferring to Norway?

[00:16:52] **JUAN:** I'm not. I'm not going.

[00:16:53] **GREG:** Can we do a prisoner? Can we do a prison prisoner swap?

[00:16:55] **JUAN:** No, I'm good. I'm good cuz prison is prison no matter where you're at, you know?

So you know, like what stood out to me, what Shakur was talking about is this relationship the incarcerated folks there have with the guards, and, you know, how it's normalized. This, this normal attempt for normalization. Still, they have the same problems that we have at San Quentin, where programs that are available, at least at San Quentin, not universally, but like, specifically to San Quentin, the transformative ability for people to not do what they did to get them in the situation that they're in today.

The opportunity to change your life. In Norway and in San Quentin, what's common is the lack of availability for people to get to those type of programs. And there's one reason why, and the narrative that prison officials like to put out, staff shortages. In Norway, I heard about funding cuts. That's not the narrative.

The truth is that there's too many people locked up on this planet

[00:18:12] **GREG:** Hmm.

[00:18:12] **JUAN:** You know, you know, so that, that's really stood out to me.

[00:18:15] **GREG:** What about you, York?

[00:18:17] **RAHSAAN:** Yeah, a lot stood out to me. The first of all, on this maximum security prison, they got butcher knives. That's just unheard of, right? Mm-hmm. Like, like you wouldn't even imagine, like somebody in the maximum security having access to a butcher knife.

And when you see one, you think riot, fear. All kinds of things, not chopping up vegetables. And so I think that's amazing that it's safe enough, and I think anywhere could be safe enough. I think it's just about having relationships with people and treating 'em like people. Cause when you treat people like animals, you're going, you know what I'm saying?

They act like animals.

[00:18:51] **GREG:** Mm-hmm.

[00:18:51] **RAHSAAN:** And so I think just taking the cages away and, and, and putting into a humane setting makes a big difference.

[00:18:57] **GREG:** Mm-hmm.

[00:18:57] **RAHSAAN:** Also, though, it's crazy that if, if you are gonna be locked down, being locked down in your own cell with your own bathroom is the best way to go. When we were locked down during Covid, it's two men to a cell.

You're not going anywhere. When, when it, when Covid was at its height, it was like two, three weeks straight. You didn't get no yard or nothing. It was just straight cell time, and it was horrible. I hate the conditions of San Quentin. It's the worst conditions I've ever experienced anywhere, ever. It's a metal bunk that's beating up our backs.

It wasn't designed for people to, to spend the rest of their lives on. It's just archaic. I mean, this place was building in 1850-something.

[00:19:32] **GREG:** Hmm.

[00:19:32] **RAHSAAN:** And so it, it reflects that. But it's the best opportunities, and opportunities are more important cuz these are gonna get me out soon. These are what get got me out sooner, and will keep me out forever.

[00:19:41] **JUAN:** The comparison is like, Rahsaan was talking about the sale, right? I, I try to explain people that have never seen it, it's like the size of your average parking space. And so imagine two people having to live in that space that you go to Walmart in, and get outta your car, you know? So that's the space that Rahsaan's talking about, that two people have to live in.

[00:20:05] **GREG:** But you know what's so interesting and one thing that kind of, that kind of stood out to me about the audio, and I want both of you guys to chime in on that. Juan, you touched on a little bit earlier, we were talking about the humanity as far as how, how the guards treat people, right? And so you hear, you heard one of the people talk about being a Norway officer, you have to go to school for two years, right?

[00:20:25] **JUAN:** Yeah.

[00:20:25] **GREG:** And then as opposed to the CDCR goes.

[00:20:28] **JUAN:** 13 weeks.

[00:20:29] **GREG:** Yeah, 13 weeks. And I heard somebody in there talk about ethics and things of that nature, the social scientists, and how that just transcends into the treatment of people inside of the prison.

[00:20:40] **RAHSAAN:** Yeah, I think at its very nature, a correctional officer is a people's person's job, but correctionism, and think of it like that. They think of... They think of it as a pepper spray job. A a a a, a billy club job, a handcuff job. And how you can tell that is that everything in California, the automatic response is, "lock 'em down."

[00:21:00] **GREG:** Mm-hmm.

[00:21:00] **RAHSAAN:** A riot happens, you ain't got nothing to do with it. "Lock 'em down!" A virus happens that they let in, lock it down. Right. And you can see that. As long as you keep that us versus them mentality going, it's gonna be hostile, it's gonna be anti-social. And anti-social is a byproduct. It, it is one of the root causes of crime.

And so socialization is one of the cures. And why aren't we implementing a cure here?

[00:21:23] **GREG:** So fellas, we said we, so we talking about treatment. And York, you're talking about socialization. And so now hear the one that people in Norway say, the relationships out there are friendly.

[00:21:36] **RAHSAAN:** Yeah.

[00:21:37] **GREG:** So much so, that to the point to where the guy said he's giving one of the officers a noogie. And now...

[00:21:44] **JUAN:** What, what's a noogie?

[00:21:45] **GREG:** So, from what I remember, a noogie being is when your big brother or uncle grabbed you and put you in the headlock, and put his knuckles on your head and rubbed your, and rub, vigorously, rub you upside the head, right.

[00:21:59] **JUAN:** Okay.

[00:21:59] **GREG:** Now, I can't imagine that happening inside of California prison yard.

What, what, what would happen if, York, what happen to me if I went and seen a female officer.

[00:22:09] **RAHSAAN:** Yeah.

[00:22:10] **GREG:** Put her in the headlock and start be, started giving her a noogie, what happened to me?

[00:22:13] **RAHSAAN:** You would get pepper sprayed, thrown to the ground, handcuffed, taken to the hole.

[00:22:19] **GREG:** That's in the, that's to the extreme, the noogies, but... just on a, on a human, a human basis of a good morning, sir.

Or how you doing, sir? Or just a overall better treatment. Like, how do you think you would, how would your, how would your prison sentence be, your time in prison be if somebody treated you like you're a human being?

[00:22:40] **RAHSAAN:** I also think, like, I, I wanna go back before I even got to prison. I, if I would've felt like part of society, if I'd have felt like a human being, like, like recognized as a human being by, by society, by the police, and I wouldn't be in prison in the first place. I wouldn't have felt like I needed to take the law into my own hands.

I wouldn't have felt like I wouldn't have made the bad decisions that I made. Right. And so it started with me with like policing.

[00:23:03] **GREG:** Mm-hmm.

[00:23:03] **RAHSAAN:** And then you get to prison and the cycle continues, us against them, right? This, this, this blue wall, the green wall, and nobody's communicating. And that, that was never gonna make me a safe, sane person. That was gonna keep my insanity going.

It was gonna justify my sanity. Give me excuse to rationalize it, right? It's the socialization that I got in San Quentin that changed everything for me. Because once you, and it's mostly through volunteers, but there are COs that allow that to happen in administration. And that sees us also treat us like human beings and are also social.

And knowing that now has changed my allegiance, right? It broke down to us and them. Now it's more about right or wrong, right? Because when you are treated by, well by society than despite your crimes, despite the harm you've done to society, it makes you love and honor and respect society. And now it makes you pro-social and breaks that anti-social behavior away. And that, and that's one of the greatest things that ever happened to me. Now, I love society. I wanna fix society. I'm, we all in prison trying to figure out how to way to make it better for them. And they might not even let us go.

[00:24:02] **GREG:** Exactly. Exactly.

[00:24:06] **RAHSAAN:** My changes happen in spite of prison and because of prison. I needed socialization and socialization works.

I needed a positive outlet to find a career that can sustain me in society that I love doing. And the media center, I found that, and it works. And so I found these places, but I fumbled into this space. And most prisons in California aren't like this. So I always say it's because I got here I found these things.

But I'll also say where my boy, Meldon Weaver always says, we could have did this in Hawaii. On the beach. You gave me a free vacation to Hawaii, I would've went. You told me therapy's part of the cause. I gotta take some training or something like that. As long as Hawaii's part of the deal, I'd have went. And we coulda did this for 50,000 instead 108.

[00:24:46] **JUAN:** I was an unwilling transfer to San Quentin when I came here, so I didn't like it. I didn't wanna be here. But what changed me were people. The people here.

[00:24:57] **GREG:** Mm-hmm.

[00:24:58] **JUAN:** Incarcerated population, the correctional officers and, and the fact that I'm a fast learner.

[00:25:03] **RAHSAAN:** Yeah. I think it's also interesting that in Norway they wear their own clothes.

[00:25:07] **GREG:** Hmm.

[00:25:07] **RAHSAAN:** But they still call 'em inmates. They treat people like human beings, and people get to dress like human beings, but they still call 'em inmates, which is dehumanizing, in my opinion.

[00:25:17] **JUAN:** What a person wears, you know, like, and how a person looks. Just plays into their own psyche, their own ego, their own, you know, identity.

And so to, like, order a person like, you have to wear these, you have to wear this, only increases the inability to connect to a, a person on a, on a personal basis, you know, and so it, it, it sustains a separation that you are this and I'm that, you know? So, and it makes it more difficult to have that conversation about who are you and where are you going?

What, what's in your future.

[00:26:01] **GREG:** It doesn't make sense, but I think, but I know, I know the, I know the dress code. It is definitely a... it definitely changes a person's perspective. I definitely can agree with you on that one. Cause I knew when I was young growing up, walking around with holes in my pants, you know, missing pockets, pants that were too short and I was flooding.

I don't, that just destroyed my self-esteem, right? And so... I know when I look around, you know, up in us in here, you know, we got these blue shirts on, elastic pants. I've never had a pair of elastic pants in my life.

[00:26:31] **JUAN:** With a pocket in the back.

[00:26:32] **GREG:** With a pocket in the back.

[00:26:33] **JUAN:** That's it.

[00:26:33] **GREG:** Like no front pockets, you know what I mean?

And, and... you know what I mean? So, so to be out there like they doing in Norway, to be able, to be able to wear your own clothes, I mean, that's... it's like a touch of freedom.

[00:26:43] **JUAN:** Yeah, it is.

[00:26:44] **GREG:** Any, any, any time you can get close to freedom is always a good thing. And, you know, and just thinking about that, like how do, how does the United States system adopt this Norwegian model of prisons?

Like how do we, how do we begin to do that when there's been so much, so much dark catastrophic history of, of abuse of power in, in United States, and especially inside the prison system. You know, how do you begin to, to change that model?

[00:27:16] **RAHSAAN:** Yeah, I think that it is changing a little bit and we can speed it up.

And what I mean by that is a lot of the old mentality is retiring. You know, they did their 20 something, 30-something years, and the new mentality is coming in. Unfortunately, you have small towns where that mentality is inherited. It's part of that, that culture, that town. And so if you have a negative town with, with a negative relationship with a prison, you need to get the prison out that town.

[00:27:42] **GREG:** Absolutely.

[00:27:43] **JUAN:** If, if we really want to change, you know, like how people are treating people, then it's, I mean, it's just like a parent-child relationship. You gotta teach. Yeah, a different thing right in the beginning. That has to be a part of the curriculum. With the Norwegian style, from what I understand, it's, that's what they're teaching.

That's what they're looking for. You have to have that, that mentality that, oh, I'm here to help. You see, I'm not here to guard you. I'm here to help you. I'm here to help you get back to your family because that should be the objective of corrections.

[00:28:23] **GREG:** Now we to now, so now fellas, we talked about a whole lot today.

But one thing we didn't talk about is the grocery store.

[00:28:31] **RAHSAAN:** Yeah.

[00:28:32] **GREG:** Inside of the Norwegian prison.

[00:28:34] **RAHSAAN:** In no way. I can't ima - do they get fresh vegetables? I mean, all the meat we, we eat has been dead for centuries. They put in these forever pouches. Like you don't even have to refrigerate 'em. Throwing in your, your plastic bin under your bed, or it comes out the can in the kitchen. Like, they can, they buy like fresh meat, like fresh vegetables? Are they

organic? And if that's so, that's freaking amazing and phenomenal and healthy. And we need that.

[00:28:59] **GREG:** Just, just a grocery store. I mean, they can go out there and just put a empty building in the middle of the yard and just label it grocery store, I'll be excited.

So look man, so this is what I think we need to do. I think we need to go get a petition and put it together, Juan. And go petition the, the warden to do a prisoner swap out there in Norway.

[00:29:20] **JUAN:** Bring Norway to San Quentin. Change the model.

[00:29:22] **GREG:** So, Juan Haines, New York Rahsaan Thomas. Man, it's been a pleasure having you guys, man.

Thank you guys for lending your brilliant voices to the Uncuffed. Appreciate this, man. I'll definitely, definitely look forward to working with you guys again. Thank you. I just wanna say thank you on my behalf of the Uncuffed team. Appreciate you guys, man, and hopefully one day we all get a chance to go to Norway.

Outside of being incarcerated, we can just go over there and fly over there just to go hang out with the fellas.

[00:29:49] **JUAN:** Yeah, y'all, I'll do it that way.

[00:29:51] **GREG:** I appreciate y'all. Man, I'm Greg Eskridge signing off for Uncuffed.

That's it for this week's episode of Uncuffed. There were no restrictions on who we could talk to in these Norwegian prisons or what they could say. Norwegian staff did not have to listen to this story before it broadcast. Thanks to RøverRadion and Amend at UCSF for coordinating our trip. And thanks also to all of you who donated to help send the team to Oslo.

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