

DeSantis-Guantanamo documentary pulled due to fear of retaliation



Miami, July 26 (RHC)-- A Vice documentary investigating claims that Florida Governor Ron DeSantis authorized the force-feeding of prisoners while stationed as a Navy officer on Guantanamo Bay was shelved by its broadcaster's parent company Paramount due to fear the Republican would subject them to the same lawfare tactics he has wielded against their competitor Disney, Semafor recently revealed.

Paramount's lobbyist in Washington, DC, DeDe Lea, allegedly raised concerns about the political consequences of airing 'The Guantanamo Candidate', causing the entertainment giant to mothball the

documentary the day after DeSantis announced his candidacy for the 2024 Republican presidential nomination, an insider source told the outlet.

The half-hour film had already been vetted for content by Vice and cable network Showtime when the former was informed, just four days before airtime, that “the broader network teams are taking a deeper internal look” at the documentary, delaying its premiere indefinitely.

One source at Vice called the decision “blatant corporate censorship for political gain,” claiming Showtime never gave any explanation and suggesting executives had delayed it out of fear DeSantis would retaliate. The candidate apparently already held a grudge against Paramount, which was dealing with falling ratings even as Vice was declaring bankruptcy, and his full frontal assault on Disney may have cast a long shadow.

Vice’s exposé included interviews with a former detainee who claimed DeSantis was “present at force-feedings that were condemned as torture by the UN” during the year he served as a legal adviser to the US Navy at Guantanamo. The man said he “noticed DeSantis’ handsome face among the crowd” of officers watching him struggle as he was brutally force-fed by a nurse, “smiling and laughing with other officers as I screamed in pain.” The Florida governor rejected the claims when confronted by Vice’s reporter earlier this year.

However, DeSantis admitted in a 2018 interview to advising a commanding officer that “you can actually force-feed” hunger-striking detainees, even offering the officer “kind of the rules for that.” The UN declared force-feeding to be torture in February 2006, just a month before DeSantis arrived at Guantanamo, and the candidate has since modified his telling of the episode to place the responsibility for decision-making on his superiors.

The documentary also mentions DeSantis’ alleged role in covering up the killing of three hunger-strike leaders. Former prison guard Joe Hickman told Vice that the men were killed by US officials and had not died in a suicide pact, as Washington had officially claimed. He also claimed that DeSantis would not have had authority to sign off on the coverup, contradicting the Florida governor’s former commanding officer, who declined to be interviewed.

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