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RACE RIOT DRILLS  
by LA CIN ACHIM ACHIM 18:21

On the way to the mailbox this morning, I witnessed a fight between a White and Mexican. No officer was present, so the onlookers urged the two guys on. The fight seemed to end in a draw with the Mexican having the slight edge. But that isn't the real concern; this is an interracial fight and it <sup>will</sup> most likely will up in a race riot. That is the way things are done in the Arizona State Prison. True to the insecure, cowardly mentality of many Arizona prisoners, that night after chow the Whites and Mexicans posted up (~~grouped~~ <sup>separated</sup> together in large numbers). As a defensive posture, Blacks and Indians similarly posted up. When it was revealed that this conflict was between Whites and Mexicans, the other races then stand down (began to move about cautiously, resuming some of their normal activities).

The unwritten rule is that if the conflict isn't between someone of your race, then you do not get involved. Even if an individual felt so inclined, members of his own race would stop him! Not merely as a matter of political correctness to adhere to prison law, but more as a self-defense position to prevent that entire race's entry into the fracas or potential riot. You should see the relief upon the faces of several inquirers when they were told that no member of their race is involved. Therefore, whatever happens, it's none of their business.

Indeed, it is a most unnerving and disturbing sight to witness hundreds of potential antagonists face each other off, awaiting a signal or a stupid move from either side to begin charging into each other with knives and shanks to stick, maim, or possibly kill each other. In reality, as my prior experiences dictates, these "race-riot drills" (as I have so quaintly named them) are no more than some macho, penis-wagging, strutting and showing of face (loyalty, courage). While the probability is high against a riot occurring, it is most certainly a reality that one has to deal with.

Here comes a couple of female guards with video-camera, taking pictures of the yard and all of the guys. It's a tactic used by the guards to scare the inmates. It works in this manner, If indeed a riot, were to have broken out, all those captured on video in conjunction with their appearance, actions, prior to and during the riot would be charged as participants and subjected to inside punishment and outside punitive new charges, along with additional time to be served in prison. The trick of the video camera once again works its magic, and two antagonistic races begin to move back into their respective dorms and activities to avoid capture by the video. CAMERA

There is some humor in this little play—how dangerous men can be frightened back into reality by a video camera. Maybe the camera brings them back to the reality that prisoners don't have a vested interest in engaging or participating in a riot.

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I discuss with my students the stupidity of what could have just happened and the fact someone could have been injured or killed. ~~And~~ I would wager that over 99% of the participants in the race-riot drill didn't even have a clue as to why they were willing to put their lives, security, and freedom on the line on the basis of race to be a stand-up Whiteboy or a stand-up Mexican. While my intelligence utterly, viscerally, and unequivocally condemns the absurdity of a race riot, I know all too well that when my race is involved, I too have no alternative save to post up with members of the Black race. —the reality being either to stand together or fall separately.

*100-year-old*

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RACE RIOT

About three-hundred combantants(Mexicans and Whites), faced each other to engage in a race riot! As the ASPC-Douglas, Gila-yard prison at about 1830 hundred hours(6-20-96), it became obvious that this wasn't to be just another RACE RIOT DRILL!

Prison guards began a panicky, scatto voice, repeatedly screaming over the P.A. system: LOCKDOWN! LOCKDOWN! RETURN TO YOUR HOUSING! The prisoners were not moving. Assigned to work in the Chapel Office as a clerk, I was alone as I began to gather my belongs to take to my room next door.

Not having a shank(knofe or weapon), I tapped two ink pens together and trippled socked my padlock and tied it off. My housing is next door to my work assignment. My thinking was to stand guard next to the Chapel to prevent any of the rioters from entering, by running inside and lock the door. Admitted, my ulterior motives was purely selfish and self-serving. If my place of work was burned(a common tactic, burning down building - like these dogs won't rebuild) down or tore up, i would be out of a job and more pointedly out of a hustle. A job I had admittedly learn to tolerate.

The riot was happening on the opposite side of the yard from where I was standing. Unlike probably many of the human herd of prisoner who had assembled to engage in rioting, I knew exactly what I would do if attacked; I was going to stab, beat and kill(at least ONE) whomever put their hands on me in an act of violence.

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The next day lock<sup>down</sup> is lifted. Brotha Sam goes over to the phones to call one of his girlfriends and check to hear if she had sent him some money. Part of the survival ritual of a prisoner is using the telephone, begging, cajoling and reasoning with loved ones and friends to send you money of which will allow you to ~~buy~~<sup>buy</sup> decent food to eat. Prison work assignment pay, assuming that you even have a prison work assignment is eight cent, dime and maybe a quarter an hour. it is nearly impossible to survive at any level of minimum human standards *OF DECENCY* solely on prison allowance. Brotha sam allows me to talk to his girlfriends; that was a treat to speak ~~to~~<sup>AND HEAR</sup> a friendly female voice, to get some attention. I make a few stiff tired jokes and surprisingly get a laugh, then moving on to the case in point: was she gonna fix me up with one of her girlfriends to write etc. She laughs again, promising she'd do her best.

After our good byes are said, brotha Sam and i resume our daily constitutional walk around the track in this infamous circle. Walking seems to be the prisoners greatest therapeutic means of releaving stress and dealing with the extreme "unbearable" and "ugliness" of our most unfortunate predicament. Walking further symbolizes a prisoners' conscious and unconscious search for freedom. It is only a short time before we are once again restricted to "our" individual rooms with permission and access only to visit the restrooms and return. Brotha Sam and I compare notes and discuss whether or not his girlfriend will send him money; our conclusion, it was dubious. Receiving<sup>money</sup> is a constant stress point to augment the dogfood being served at the chow hall.



Having left Brotha~~h~~ Sam to turn in, then making a pit stop at the restroom, washing my hands; I am left with my own unsettling thoughts. For some reason or another my handss never seem to ~~be~~<sup>get</sup> clean.

I look in my barren locker for a snack and it is empty; then I turn on my television hoping the prison staff censors are feel<sup>ly</sup> charitable and have rented a steamy rated "R" viodeo from the inmate A&R funds for our viewing. I was in luck.

Late at night is usually the most reinvigorating and relaxing, when all is quiet. I've turned over in nearly every body position possible, attempting to find a comfortable sleeping position on this sliver of cotton called<sup>r</sup> mattress; while cursing my captors with the most vile racial and sexual epithet I can think of. I smile to myself and I am off hopefully to an erotic, exciting dream as a free man in a free country.

Some time during the night I was awoken by the most piercing noise that I have ever heard: it: It's a fire alarm. The dorm are ten-fifteen years<sup>old</sup> wood trailers with rotten plywood, once fully engulfed, it wo~~uld~~ burn down in less than three minutes: as explained by the fire marshall who had told us prison<sup>ers</sup>, that when we heard the alarm, we had bet~~ter~~ get our ass out.. We didn't dare take the chance that this was a false alarm(we were also told that we would not be rescued); I nosily staggered outside to stand in the cold morning air. It's a false alarm and once again I return to my/worn-harder<sup>d</sup>, one inch ~~bunk~~<sup>mattress</sup> to try and get some sleep to calm my stressful-anxiety, to gather enough strength to face another challenging day(either violent~~e~~ or unbearable boredom) in this **Abandoned** place of NOTHINGNESS

by Brothat Achim

I saw about fifty black prisoners at the far end of my "L" shaped housing, yelling out "O.G." (a name given to most all older black prisoner) "Come over here!" Not being one into groups, either for shelter or protection, I hesitated. Then realizing that I'd be best suited to lead them if they were attacked. My Adrenaline was pumping and my Testosterone was at a murderous peak, I was feeling it...I was smelling blood, so I elected to join them.

As soon as I reached the black's position, I could smell and see fear in most of their faces. It is both heartrending and nauseously-revolting to see fear and terror on the face of another human being.

I began to calmly speak to the guys and I could sense that these guys were all potential victims in a trance like state awaiting an accident without a clue as to what they should or would do if attacked.

The Mexicans had a seemingly larger number than the whites and they were the aggressors, by jumping on the old wooden bleaches, ripping off rotted planks to be used as weapons. Having acquired substantial weapons, the Mexicans began to charge into one of the three separate groups of whites.

Interesting, that the whites had chosen such an indefensible strategy as to depoly themselves or to allow themselves to be separated into three separate groups. Unless, this division was based on the lines of gang affiliation. The group of whites being charged began to retreat from the Mexicans who were at least three-times their numbers. In what had to be a comical bewildered look the other two groups of whites just watched. In fairness to those whites who didn't come to the aid of their race (other white prisoners being assaulted), the average sane person's psychology is simply not conditioned to readily volunteer to engage in possible life-threatening mass acts of violence. The retreating groups of whites retreated to the buildings and to the fences.

Fortunately for the retreating whites and everyone concerned, here comes - finally in numbers, the SS GESTAPO, with riot guns on foot and the gates open and in flys several highway patrol cars with lights and sirens blasting jumping out with shotguns and automatics(truly a sight to see).

Prisoners weapons are hastily dropped as the front line of rioters are being herded off to a holding area, to be transported to prisoners all over the state. Of course the yard is on lockdown status.

In parting - i need tell you, those of you out in the not so free world, your son, daughter, fathers, friends and relatives in increasing numbers, these are the combat, mind altering events we are forced to endure in these manmade forgotten places of nothingness(sewer disposal). To many theses daily traumas are permanent, no different than a soldier experiences in combat, battle fatigue, POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS.

by Brotha Achim