

December 18, 2011

Hello World!

Thanks for your collective prayers on my father's behalf. He is growing stronger everyday and is scheduled to be home from the rehabilitative center soon. God is great!

Okay, back to San Quentin. My friendship with Mo and my new job as the 103-B card clerk in the area called the "Captain's Porch" had coveted benefits. Oh, it is called the Captain's Porch because in the old days, remember, San Quentin as a prison began in 1835, the captain of the prison would sit on a raised area (a porch) to survey his convicts. As time passed, the 30' castle walls were built around the porch and contained several offices including the captain's, the assignment lieutenant's, and the watch commander's.

My friendship with Mo, he being from Pakistan, an 'Other,' not white, black, or Hispanic, gave me the opportunity to associate with 'others' and not be pigeon-holed as a 'good wood' - a white boy. Others are Asians, Native Americans, Pacific Islanders, and Middle Easterners. With this opportunity I made a conscious decision to be what I call a floater. I would move within and among the different races, making friends with the shot-callers, but not aligning myself with any. I would find ways to make myself valuable to each in that I helped with legal matters, typing, and being a resource for information - not rumors. I never charged for my work and when I couldn't do something and said, "No," it was understood that "No" meant just that and not because of a person's race.

I've never understood racism, but so many in prison live their lives based on the color of one's skin, a thing that no one has the power to choose.

My decision to assist where the need arose led to a surprising event. That I will share next time. Keep in mind, in prison, someone is always watching.

The benefit of working on the Captain's Porch was a shower and a bathroom. The cell block showers consist of a row of 15 shower heads along the wall with a 12" step-over border. In the block an inmate is allowed a shower every other day. These 15 shower heads are shared by 50 inmates (a tier). The officer turns on the water. Ten minutes later he turns it off. As I said, the showers are shared. The step-over border wall holds in the water the drain is unable to swallow, making an 8" wadding pool of - yeck!

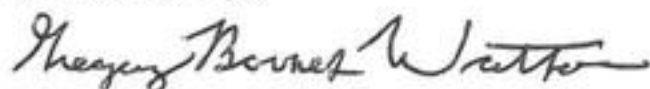
The shower in the Captain's Porch is shared, one at a time by five inmates. It's a stall with hot and cold knobs and a curtain for privacy. Yes! Privacy.

I showered every day. A coveted and cherished blessing.

I vowed to be the best friend and 103-B card clerk ever.

Thanks for checking in on me.

Sincerely,



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Novel: A Thundering Wind
(Amazon.com)