

August 19, 2012

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My cellmate passed away in his sleep this morning, somewhere between 4:15 a.m. and 7:30 a.m.--he was my friend.

Out of respect for him, and his family, I'll only refer to him by the nickname we all knew him by: Fry. Which I'm not entirely sure, but I believe it was from *Futurama*--a favorite show of his.

Plus, he did kinda make you think of the character. Just a lot smarter.

Fry was about 59-years of age, and last night had complained of heart-burn, but thought nothing too unusual about it; it was a common thing for him every few days. But this time was different.

He'd been imprisoned for 35-years!

To last that long off prison food is an achievement in itself of great magnitude.

Fry didn't smoke, do drugs, drink, steal, and he was not one of the many homosexuals that populate the prisons. He was a good guy that the legal system had failed to recognize. No danger to anyone, a completely moral individual during the short time I knew him--Yet he was sentenced to die under the false hope of parole.

Those entering the prisons after 1999 don't even get the idea of parole; those sentenced before 1999, get parole dangled like a carrot just out of reach. And in Fry's case, his six-decade-old heart, after three-and-a-half of those decades waiting for said parole, gave out in his sleep.

Fry thought it was cool that I took the time to write this blog, and often read my posts before I mailed them--but neither of us seen this post coming.

It was a failure of humanity that he died in prison.

After every decade, the state should evaluate inmates, have an outside, unbiased, real psychologist do it; and they could better determine whether the inmate should remain in prison or deserves to be put back in society. This whole Christian eye-for-an-eye life-for-life tooth-for-tooth thing is too much like elementary school kids fighting over candy and wanting the one that got more candy, or took someone else's candy, to be spanked horrifically no matter the circumstances.

I don't even know what Fry was in here for, but what I do know, is that whatever it was, the man he was after 35-years of state servitude was capable of functioning in society, and would've been no harm to anyone.

Fry and I had watched a show, *StarGate Universe*, *SGU*, at 3 a.m. up until 4 a.m.--he went to sleep after that, and when I woke back up myself at 7:15 a.m. or so when the guards started morning count, I knew, the moment I climbed down off the top bunk, and seen him there in the bottom bunk--he was dead.

Any attempt at CPR would've been futile.



He had lost all of his color. like one those bugs that sheds its skin leaving a creepy looking copy of itself for kids to find--Fry was an empty shell.

When I called out for the guard to contact medical and get the nurse down here--he knew too the moment he seen Fry, that he had passed away in his sleep.

I was taken to a holding cell while they removed Fry's remains, and cause of death was determined.

Heart failure.

The guards promptly packed up Fry's belongings, and while doing so had to fend off many of the other inmates who'd attempted to steal anything they could from the deceased. Like vultures descending on a corpse, they went for his things. I was still in the holding cell at the time, but other actual friends (of Fry, and myself), stood by to help the guards determine what items in the cell were Fry's to pack up, and which were mine that would stay.

I'm back in my cell now, and have did a full cleaning of the small walk-in-closet-like room, wall-to-wall. Scrubbing with what actual little chemicals we have access to. I was offered the chance to move to a different cell, but declined. If I moved cells because someone died in it, I'd never have a bed space because I don't think there's a cell in the prison system that at least one person, or more, has not died in. I don't know really, it's just a guess, but it seems about right.

In an episode of Gray's Anatomy, they talked about how a patient seems to know when they're going to die, how they sense death in the room waiting for them; and if they don't even actually say anything--the doctor still knows because he can see it in their eyes that they sense it.

I wonder though, if Fry sensed it--Death in our cell, waiting, maybe deciding *which one*.

And if he did, why didn't he say anything.

Or, after 35-years of hell, did he welcome Death like an old friend finally here to take him home...?

