

SHARKS IN A SMALL POND
By Joe Labriola/Prisoner

You can almost hear the music from Jaws...Dump...Dump...Dump...Dump! Here they come in a hunting pack...The water bottle police. Don't stir the water or churn up any foam. You can keep your water bottle, just put Kool-Aid, Orange drink, lemonade, tea or urine in it. As long as the water is not clear you can drink when you're thirsty. Water on the other hand is verboten. In the heat of August you will see the screws with bottles of ice-cold water sticking out of the pockets of their cargo-pants. Unlike prisoners they are allowed to drink whenever their mouths feel dry. It gives you chills to watch as sweat pours down your neck into the crack of your ass. No problem, you can get a nice warm drink from your cell sink once you are allowed back to the cellblock. Just put your thirst on hold. 300 men in the yard under a sweltering sun and one small warm water bubbler to handle them all. The highly-paid water bottle sharks are on alert lest some miscreant convict attempts to smuggle a bottle to the yard taped under his armpit or stuffed in his sweat socks. Look, there's Lieutenant Irwin, pulling down about 70K a year. She has a large trash bag full of empty soda bottles that she confiscated from offenders of this ridiculous rule. She gives Deputy Superintendent DiNardo a slamming high-five. Another bite has just been taken out of crime!

Dump...Dump...Dump...Dump. The antenna sharks. There are ballasts in the flurescent lights that kill any chance of radio reception in your cell so we stick a thin piece of wire through the screen so that we can get perhaps one or two stations. The antenna sharks will pull the wire from the outside and break your radio as it is dragged off the desk. We are all allowed to buy radios at seriously inflated prices from the "Company Store" called "Canteen". We just aren't allowed to listen to them. A \$19500 Sangean receiver becomes merely a \$195.00 clock. Alvin Notice, the Deputy Of Security takes a sick and perverted pleasure in pulling the wires out with angry force. Guess he just likes to yank more than most.

Dump...Dump...Dump...Dump. The I.D. Card sharks! They want them clipped to your person wherever you may be inside the ~~prison~~ ASYLUM.

There is no compelling need to have them clipped on your clothing. The sharks cannot read the information contained in small print on these cards unless they place their noses right on top of them. I think the true reason for making us wear I.D. cards is just to prove they can actually MAKE us do something so foolish. To clearly demonstrate how idiotic these cards are; I wore a friend's I.D. card on my chest for a week. He wore mine. I am white. My friend is black. The I.D. sharks never noticed.

Dump...Dump...Dump...Dump. The nurse sharks. Do not get sick. Do not grow old. Do not have a heart attack and survive. Do not contract cancer. MCI Shirley is most likely where you will end your life. After a few days in the wards you will want to end your life. You will be placed in what was once the Health Service Unit and now called the Skilled Nursing Facility (SNF). The Health Service Administrator is Nancy Elmers. She is the alpha shark and has the final say-so on your conditions of confinement. The wards hold five men each and there is no more room at the inn so they are thinking of ways to add a sixth bed in these crowded wards. The stench of urine and feces in these wards will choke you. One of the beds is next to the toilet and has a curtain between it and the person using the toilet. Elderly and dying men lay in bed with diapers on. When they let go with their bowels the nurse sharks find something else to do rather than change them right away. Sometimes the man will change himself and place the soiled diapers in the trash can so everyone in that ward can appreciate fully the outrageously reeking and fetid odor. One man was found to have maggots in his diaper last year but the sharks were forced to rectify that when it was reported by a caring convict. All us lifers will have a chance to die in prison. Once back and hidden away in one of the wards your friends of thirty or forty years will not be allowed to go back and visit you and you in turn will not be allowed out to population to visit them. Not even for law library or church services. When I asked why men could not be seen I was

informed; "Because you will bring germs in with you." Apparently convict germs are more dangerous than shark germs from nurses or guards who bring in flu and colds from the outside. Prisoners must remain in a constant state of depression as they await God to call their name. We will lay in a ward that resembles an overlit crypt. The super bright lights will burn holes in your retina and will not be turned off until after the shift change at 11 p.m. Basically the nurse sharks want you to just stay in your bed until mercifully you die

Dump...Dump...Dump...Dump. Some of the sharks now have fur and four legs. You will recognize their dorsal fins immediately. They will be the ones with their wet noses in your crotch when you come to visit.

The sharks continue to circle and the circle is getting smaller by the day. So are their minds.....