

H A R L A N R I C H A R D S

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Stealing From Other Prisoners

There are a lot of thieves in prison and in general stealing is considered socially acceptable - except when prisoners steal from other prisoners. It still happens occasionally, but it's rare.

There is one kind of stealing from other prisoners which occurs regularly. The perpetrators don't think of it that way, but the victims do. I'm talking about guys who steal food from unit serveries instead of passing it out at meal times. The main kitchen sends enough food to each unit to serve full portions to every prisoner housed there. There is no extra food provided. Not every prisoner eats every meal so there is often leftover food at the end of the meal. The serverly workers are allowed to have double portions made up of the leftover food. Any additional food is supposed to be passed out to the prisoners - which ever pod was served last based on a rotating schedule.

The guys in the serverly have figured out that they can increase the amount of leftover food by serving less than the designated portion to each prisoner at meal times. Much of the food, such as vegetables or casseroles, are not highly desired so they are always available to be passed out as seconds. But for the food that serverly workers want more of, such as peanut butter or beef, it's a different story. They skimp on the servings - just a little bit less for each person - so they have a lot left over. They hide the extra food and sneak it back to their cells to eat (or sell) later.

The thieves justify their actions by saying they are stealing from the state so it's okay. I say it's stealing from their fellow prisoners which, in my opinion, violates their own code of conduct. If they were working in the main kitchen and taking extra food, it would not affect fellow prisoners at all. The cooks would still load each cart with enough food to provide full portions to every prisoner in every unit. But when it's taken from the portion allotted to serve a unit, it's taking the food out of the mouths of fellow prisoners. And that, in my opinion, is stealing from their fellow prisoners.

What do you think?