

Date: 6/3/2020 7:53:56 AM

(CHAP. #8 PG. #1)

* CUTTING A CHECK * \1/

After a few weeks had passed, I began realizing that the majority of my fellow inmates were rather observant individuals. (ex. : catching on to the pattern of the daily routine, memorizing the officers work schedules, keeping a close eye out for trouble, and appreciating every time a man walked by who had a set of tits) It all seemed rather interesting at first, but then things got a little disturbing. Their findings began to include what MY characteristics were. My eye opener to this reality occurred one day when one of my neighbors suggested I run a hustle, by means of operating a grocery store.\2/

Before I proceed, please allow me to elaborate on the subject of "Running a Hustle." The last thing I need is for you to start thinking, that after only a few weeks in the county jail, I was already beginning to take on the unethical characteristics of my fellow neighbors.

I realize that many times, when a person first considers the term "Running a Hustle" in the prison system, a particular category of occupation and individual usually enters their minds. The occupation, for the most part, can be defined as : An illicit or unethical way of doing business or obtaining money.\3/ The individual can be described as. . . Well, to save me a little paper, please refer back to my preface, under the subject of "Typical Prisoner."

In spite of these first impressions, there actually are a few hustles that a prisoner can manage, without the result of causing any form of negative effect on those around him. The occupation, for the most part, can be defined as : An income - producing activity.\4/ The individual can be described as. . . Well, to save me a little paper, please refer back to my preface, under the subject of "BACKGROUND."

As he expounded on the procedure of operating such a business, I was experiencing a viewpoint of skepticism, while -- at the same time -- appearing disinterested. I didn't want to look as if I was actually falling for such a crazy idea. I mean, why the hell would someone pay me \$4.50 \5/ worth of canteen \6/ for a bag of coffee \7/ he could purchase for only \$3.00 ?

* FOOTNOTES *

1. Prison term for earning a living by means of running a hustle. (While my title is a rather up-to-date term, "Hustle" is a term that has been around for decades. I just thought I'd use a more modern expression for my title, so as to not appear to be too old fashion.)

2. A hustle in which a prisoner earns a 50% profit by purchasing certain canteen items and then selling them to other prisoners who are stupid

enough to pay one and a half times as much for them.

3. Ex. : smuggling, stealing, or selling of : drugs, kitchen food, laundry bleach and other cleaning detergents, other people's property, medical supplies. . . Basically, anytime a typical prisoner can get his hands on something, he's going to steal it and sell it.

4. Making bunks, tutoring, rolling cigarettes, selling your artwork, shining boots, rewriting law work, running a grocery store.

5. Please note, this is the price of a bag of coffee back about 20 years ago. Due to my lack of finances, the keeping up with the prices of many items seems meaningless. (HINT ! HINT !) Oh, wait. You already bought this book, didn't you? Okay. In all honesty I just don't drink coffee.

6. Always remember that currency isn't something that is used in the jail and prison system. So, the vast majority of business transactions are usually carried out by the use of canteen items according to their value.

7. A resealable bag containing 4oz. of dried, roasted, and ground beans used to prepare, approximately 30 cups of, a stimulating aromatic beverage.

Date: 6/3/2020 7:53:55 AM

(CHAP. #8 PG. #2)

* CUTTING A CHECK * (cont.)

Instead of trying to quote this guy's answer from memory, let me just lay it all out for you, clear and simple. Since we could only order canteen one day out of the week, that required determining how many of which items you wanted for an entire week. Then, after receiving your groceries the next day, you were required to exercise the self discipline necessary to make the groceries last that entire week, even though they were easily accessible from your locker at the head of your bunk. If you knew these guys -- like I do now -- you would realize that just ain't gonna happen, because that requires planning ahead and the omitting of any spur-of-the-moment splurges.

It can all be summed up in one word -- CONVENIENCE. As I would discover later, these guys were willing to pay an additional 50% more for their canteen items if they could just come to my cell throughout the week, choose whatever looked good at the moment, and get my bill at the end of the week. But take into consideration, I was still just the new kid on the block. So my question to his suggestion was, " Well, if it's such a great way to reap in the benefits, why aren't YOU doing it ? " To which he replied, " I don't have the willpower that you've got. I'd be eating all the inventory. "

So after convincing me of all the easily obtainable, hunger craving munchies I could get my hands on (without the spending of my own money) my neighbor persuaded me to include something on my next canteen order form that I didn't even want, but was certain to be a top selling item -- a bag of coffee.

The " Now-For-Sale " bag of coffee sat in my locker no more than two days before I was visited by my first customer. After handing him the merchandise and watching him walk out of my cell, I began to realize that convincing these guys to TAKE my canteen items really didn't seem as difficult a task as COLLECTING the items back, with the 50% markup. It was going to be interesting, come " Delivery Day. "

With my store having just opened, order day consisted of nothing more than handing a small piece of paper to my one and only customer that included the list of items I wanted him to buy for me : 1 - bag of coffee (\$3.00), 6 - Ramen noodle soups (\$1.50). He had no arguments with my request and informed me it would be taken care of. My choice of canteen items obviously wasn't determined by my own gluttonous desires for snacks, but rather by my own greedy desires to build up my inventory. It wasn't time yet for me to start reveling in the profits. Plus, I had to be sure the other half of this transaction was even going to take place.

The next day, the canteen operator arrived with a cart of clear plastic bags that contained our groceries. When MY name was called, I stepped up to the operator, received my " Well planned

and budgeted group of items that would -- due to my self discipline -- be available throughout the entire week, " signed my name to signify that I had received my order, and returned to my cell. After dropping my bag on my bunk, I glanced out between the bars and noticed my customer receiving a bag of items as well. (So far, so good. At least he had money in his account.) It wasn't long before he walked into my cell, pulled his payment out of his bag of items, and tossed it on my bunk.

" Thank you." I replied, while eagerly dreaming of future figures. (ex. : \$6.75, \$10.12, \$15.18 . . .)\1/

* FOOTNOTES *

1. In case you're not aware of this, those numbers are rising in increments of 50% profits.

Date: 6/3/2020 7:53:55 AM

(CHAP. #8 PG. #3)

* CUTTING A CHECK * (cont.)

So that one transaction is what initiated the whole process of : Opening my grocery store, Running my first hustle . . . Or, to put it in more civilized terms: My operation of an industrious, systematic activity, especially when directed toward profit . . . Perhaps that last remark was a little intense.\1/ Because after looking up the words operating and industrious, I realize a reader could easily presume that I was really working up a sweat or something to maintain the routine of managing my store. Howbeit, in all actuality, it simply consisted of having to let the guys look at what I had to offer, writing up the lists of what I wanted them to buy me, delivering each list to my customers, \2/ and having to watch them dump all the goodies on my bunk. Of course, there was the rather demanding chore of having to eat enough of my profit, so as to keep my inventory to a moderate level. (Oh the turmoils of life in jail that some of us must endure.) \3/

* FOOTNOTES *

1. It was actually the definition of the word : Enterprise.
2. Please take into consideration, the dorm was only 50 ft. in length.
3. Sentence wrote in the most vainglorious tone of voice I could generate on paper, while at the same time endeavoring the most facetious reaction possible.

Date: 6/13/2020 9:39:44 PM

(CHAP. #9 PG. #1)

* WHEN A SERIAL KILLER CAN REALLY COME IN HANDY *

Naturally, in any business there are going to be inconveniences. You would think, because of my location and clientele, that I would have endured problems on a regular basis. However, if my memory serves me right, there were only two problems that I came across throughout the months of managing my grocery store. The first problem ended with my intimidating enforcer and myself having a good laugh, while the other (which I'll share in the next chapter) landed me in maximum custody confinement for the remainder of my stay in the county jail.

It was a typical delivery day for the canteen operator. However, due to my thriving business, I no longer had to listen up for my name to be called. I was no longer placing any orders against my own account. Instead, I would just stand in my cell and watch as my customers received " THEIR " orders of "MY " groceries.

As usual, everything appeared to flow smoothly as the guys received their groceries and made their way over to my cell to unload from their bags the items that appeared on their lists, with some guys just simply dropping their whole bag of items on my bunk and walking out. Of all the lists I had on my roster, there was only one individual who still owed me a visit. As I stood there, trying to convince myself that his name would be called any minute, the canteen operator got together his equipment and exited the cellblock. I stood there hoping it was a simple mistake on my part, of just not seeing the guy go up to collect his order. Unfortunately, after a substantial amount of time had passed, I still had one list of outstanding items. The method of solving such a problem was not a procedure I was readily familiar with. Yeah, sure, we always see on T.V. about how some guy goes and beats the \$#!+ out of the dude who owes him a few bucks. Shoot, I even knew a guy who was really pissed \1/ at someone who owed him about \$5.00. \2/ So one day he went into the weight cage to exercise, while keeping an eye on the dude who owed him the money. Then, when the debtor was in the midst of bench pressing over 200 lbs., the debtee grabbed the weight bar and rammed it down on his chest. \3/

For some strange reason I had the desire to go about solving MY collection problems in a bit more civilized manner. I mean, was it really worth getting into a fight over, considering how much I was bringing in every week. Then again, would I be bringing this in every week if I allowed guys to get away with not making their payments ? There had to be a way to handle the situation that was easygoing, coolheaded, and effective all at the same time.

After taking a few minutes to ponder my thoughts, I devised a scheme that would fit the criterion of all three demands. However, my plan required the aid of another individual -- but not just any individual. I was in need of someone who fit the description of an " Intimidating Enforcer, " and I knew exactly where to find such a person. Without wasting any time, I reached into my locker, grabbed a Snickers bar, and made my way over to the cell next to mine. As I walked in, I

realized my timing couldn't have been any more convenient. Of the six prisoners that resided in the cell, the guy I wanted to talk to was the only one there. (I didn't need this conversation to be overheard.)

* FOOTNOTES. *

1. Vulgar/Slang : Extremely irritated or angry. (I just thought I would clarify that, because I didn't wish for any of you British individuals to get the wrong idea and assume this individual was just drunk.)
2. Let me spell that out for you : F-I-V-E D-O-L-L-A-R-S. Yes, that's right, only 5 one dollar bills.
3. I hope to God you're not expecting me to have to explain to you that, "YES" that debtor did die. It was the very reason the debtee was still serving time in prison.

Date: 6/13/2020 9:39:43 PM

(CHAP. #9 PG. #2)

* WHEN A SERIAL KILLER CAN REALLY COME IN HANDY * (cont.)

At this time, I believe it would be wise of me to familiarize you with the individual I considered to be qualified in making my objective successful.

Hawk was assigned to our little nest about two or three weeks after I arrived. Word immediately spread around that he was a serial murderer who had already served a few years in prison for his crimes, but was back in town for the purpose of an evidentiary hearing.

Please allow me to point out something here. I have learned throughout the years that many times rumors can get started in the prison system. (Ooh, what a surprise !) Hence, a nickname has been assigned to this particular source of information : www.inmate.com. I'm informing you of this so as to clear my name of any inaccurate information I may have just supplied regarding this individual. This is, after all, a memoir. I guess what made it tough for me to NOT believe the information myself was when I comprehended the relation of the words hawk \1/ and serial murderer. \2/ However, I'm sure that could all be totally coincidental.

After hearing all of that, and sizing up this 6 ' 4 " African American, whose physic resembled that of Arnold Schwarzenegger in his early career, I decided that Hawk was the type of guy I would always want behind me. . . (Let me rephrase that.) He was an individual I would always want to be on MY side. (There, that sounds like a safer location.)

(BACK TO MY STORY)

I laid out the whole process of what I was wanting him to do. Then, specified the reason, " I'm simply wanting you to stand there with me and just look mean while eating the candy bar. If he starts anything with me, I want you to get the hell out. I don't wish to get you into any kind of trouble on account of MY business problems. But I think, by bringing you along, everything is going to flow nice and smooth. " He readily agreed with my reasoning, and we made our way over to the cell of the non-paying customer.

After entering the cell, I respectfully asked his cellmates who were in there to give us a minute alone with their " On - thin - ice " neighbor. I walked up to the now scared \$#!+less individual who, in all honesty, was probably more worried about what he saw in his peripheral vision, while his eyes were focused on me.

* FOOTNOTES *

1. A person who preys on others.

-
2. A person who preys on and kills victims one by one in a series of incidents.

Date: 6/13/2020 9:39:43 PM

(CHAP. #9 PG. #3)

* WHEN A SERIAL KILLER CAN REALLY COME IN HANDY * (cont.)

I'll go ahead and write this scene in the present tense form, so you can enjoy being there when it actually happened. Please understand though, I was totally focused on the message " I " needed to get across, but I'll do my best at including any statements I can remember Hawk making as well.

Hawk : (rip, chomp, chomp)

Me : Hey, man. How ya doing ? I noticed you didn't receive any groceries. Is there going to be a problem making your payment ?

Customer : Hey, look, I'm real sorry.

Hawk : (chomp, chomp)

Customer : My girl deposited the money. It just didn't get turned on in time.

Me : Well, you know, this really causes me some problems. I make out each of my lists with the confidence that you guys are going to keep your end of the deal. Now, because of you, I'm not going to have certain items that I know my customers are relying on me to supply for them. \1/

Hawk : (chomp, chomp)

Customer : Well, look man. I'll definitely have the money on my account next week.

Me : You're sure about that, huh ?

Hawk : (chomp, chomp)

Customer : Yeah. Absolutely.

Me : All right. I'm definitely going to be here to collect next week. . . and don't be thinking I'm going to let you do any shopping this week.

Customer : No. No. Of course not.

Hawk : (GULP)

Me : (turning around) Okay, let's go.

While exiting the cell and walking to Hawk's bunk, our appearances resembled that of a couple of irate individuals. However, after reaching our destination, those undertones changed to one of an individual with a half satisfied sweet tooth, and that of an individual going on a crazy rampage to control his head from exploding on account of his egotism. \2/

Before I end this chapter, let me just clarify that, yes, that guy did pay in full on the next canteen delivery day.

* FOOTNOTES *

1. That wasn't true. I always planned in advance for such a situation and would spread the more desired items among all the lists.

2. Egotism : An " inflated " sense of one's importance. Conceited. (Please don't expect this footnote to explain to you which description applied to which person.)
