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RACE RIOT DRILLS

On the way to the mailbox this morning, I witnessed a fight between a White and Mexican. No officer was present, so the onlookers urged the two guys on. The fight seemed to end in a draw with the Mexican having the slight edge. But that isn't the real concern; this is an interracial fight and it <sup>most likely will</sup> up in a race riot. That is the way things are done in the Arizona State Prison. True to the insecure, cowardly mentality of many Arizona prisoners, that night after <sup>separati</sup> chow the Whites and Mexicans posted up (grouped together in large numbers). As a defensive posture, Blacks and Indians similarly posted up. When it was revealed that this conflict was between Whites and Mexicans, the other races then stand down (began to move about cautiously, resuming some of their normal activities).

The unwritten rule is that if the conflict isn't between someone of your race, then you do not get involved. Even if an individual felt so inclined, members of his own race would stop him! Not merely as a matter of political correctness to adhere to prison law, but more as a self-defense position to prevent that entire race's entry into the fracas or potential riot. You should see the relief upon the faces of several inquirers when they were told that no member of their race is involved. Therefore, whatever happens, it's none of their business.

Indeed, it is a most unnerving and disturbing sight to witness hundreds of potential antagonists face each other off, awaiting a signal or a stupid move from either side to begin charging into each other with knives and shanks to stick, maim, or possibly kill each other. In reality, as my prior experiences dictates, these "race-riot drills" (as I have so quaintly named them) are no more than some macho, penis-wagging, strutting and showing of face (loyalty, courage). While the probability is high against a riot occurring, it is most certainly a reality that one has to deal with.

Here comes a couple of female guards with video-camera, taking pictures of the yard and all of the guys. It's a tactic used by the guards to scare the inmates. It works in this manner, If indeed a riot, were to have broken out, all those captured on video in conjunction with their appearance, actions, prior to and during the riot would be charged as participants and subjected to inside punishment and outside punitive new charges, along with additional time to be served in prison. The trick of the video camera once again works its magic, and two antagonistic races begin to move back into their respective dorms and activities to avoid capture by the video. CAMERA

There is some humor in this little play—how dangerous men can be frightened back into reality by a video camera. Maybe the camera brings them back to the reality that prisoners don't have a vested interest in engaging or participating in a riot.

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I discuss with my students the stupidity of what could have just happened and the fact someone could have been injured or killed. ~~And~~ I would wager that over 99% of the participants in the race-riot drill didn't even have a clue as to why they were willing to put their lives, security, and freedom on the line on the basis of race to be a stand-up Whiteboy or a stand-up Mexican. While my intelligence utterly, viscerally, and unequivocally condemns the absurdity of a race riot, I know all too well that when my race is involved, I too have no alternative save to post up with members of the Black race. —the reality being either to stand together or fall separately.

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