

Gopher Broke



One night last August, I was walking the prison yard with a buddy when we noticed about a dozen people on the basketball court standing around what looked like a small animal. This was upsetting on a few levels, first because the trapping of any wild thing in a prison, by prisoners, strikes me as especially perverse; and second, whatever they were up to seemed unlikely to be good, as this group didn't exactly ~~exude~~ exude a vibe of animal lovers playing nicely or tending to a wounded bird. But then, who could say for sure? I've certainly been surprised by people's intentions and actions before, and not even always in a bad way. Anyhow, we walked on, a bit uneasy but convinced that whatever was happening (which at that moment appeared to be very little) was nothing we could do much about.

Shortly after, we ran into two other inmates clearly talking about the same group, and we learned that those guys had captured a gopher and were trying to feed it to an owl perched on a nearby wall. Looking over the scene with this new information, I saw the owl (which appeared uninterested) and now could clearly make out the gopher on the court, being corralled by the feet of three or four guys. The four of us stood by at a table, and I grew more and more unsettled, pacing about with an increasingly anxious, angry energy until one of the guys spoke up: "Dude, it's ok. It's just nature." I knew he was only trying to calm me down, but his comment backfired and really set me off, so I snapped back, "No, that's NOT nature! In nature the prey isn't chosen and served up to the predator by a third party. This is totally un-natural; It's murder by sacrifice."

That caused the guy and his partner to give up on me, leaving me alone with my original buddy, who then also tried to assuage me, seeing I was getting pretty riled up. "You can't be mad at the owl," he said. "They need to eat, too." Again I was blown away by the obliviousness of the comment and replied a bit too angrily (~~anger born~~ of frustration and shame at my own cowardly ~~reluctance~~ reluctance to intervene): "I'm not mad at the owl, man. Come on! Obviously that bird's not to blame any more than the lions that tore Christians to pieces in the Colosseum in ancient Rome. There's no moral indictment for hungry and abused lions... I'm pissed at the assholes who set up bloodbaths for their own sick entertainment. They're the guilty ones, and it's basically the same thing from the slave's ~~or~~ gopher's perspective."

I then saw someone pick the animal up while another guy egged him on, yelling "Just throw that

motherfucker!" At that point, I really didn't know if I could take any more of what I was seeing, but thankfully no one actually threw the gopher. They just handled it none-too-gently until someone set it right back in the center of the court again, a furry little high-contrast dark spot scurrying conspicuously across the white concrete; a pitiful sitting duck with nowhere to hide, tragically unaware that its biggest threat was not the two-legged giants that wouldn't leave it alone.

I noticed that no one in the group seemed to claim the creature as their property, so I made a decision: I could keep standing by silently to watch the abuse and wait for the massacre, so I walked onto the court and asked the last person who'd held the gopher (someone I knew, which gave me courage), "Is that yours?" Since he was totally non-committal, I didn't even stop but just kept walking toward the gopher, which wasn't moving any more. As they began to realize what I was doing, some guys yelled out, "Leave it alone! It's for the owl!", but no one seriously tried to stop me so I ignored them and moved ahead with a purpose, picking up the terrified little fuzzball which now tried to run and then immediately bit me when I foolishly used my bare hands rather than putting him in my shirt. I just wasn't thinking clearly in my adrenaline haze from both anger and fear, since if someone did claim the animal, I'd have a major dilemma on my hands: give up and leave the defenceless victim to his ~~unfair~~ fate, or disregard the guy and face the wrath of enraged gangbangers who felt I'd "disrespected" them. I knew I wouldn't abandon the gopher at that point, as I was his only hope, so luckily no one called it "theirs" and I only had to endure a chorus of catcalls and malicious laughter as I walked away with the struggling little guy, obviously being bitten repeatedly.

In the end I got six fairly deep little wounds on both hands, but I just tried not to feel it as I carried the panicky rodent to a fenced off area completely in the dark and with a few structures on it, hoping to give him at least a fighting chance to survive the night. I got bitten so badly because I didn't want to squeeze too hard, fearing he might already have injuries I didn't want to aggravate. His frantic squirming in my loose grip brought my fingers into striking distance over and over again. But at least he got to something like safety.

This story doesn't quite end there, though. There's still one more villain to unmask.

After this event, I went in search of something like neosporin (I was really afraid of infected puncture wounds) and some clean tissue to wipe away the blood that now trickled down my forearm. At the medical building, the nurse who wasn't even staffing my window went ~~out~~ of her way to come interfere once she heard what was happening, cutting right in front of the nurse who was actually trying to help me, stopping him and squawking about how "we can't do anything for you. This isn't a veterinary clinic."

Because I was already angry and full of adrenaline, I replied, "Yeah, I know you're not a vet clinic, and I'm not an animal; I'm a human being, bitch!" Of course, this brought the cop over to move me along, but he seemed sympathetic since he didn't yell at me for cursing at her, but just gently told me to go, that nothing else was going to be done for me that night. I appreciated that he seemed to be telling me he knew she'd deserved it, but still I had to walk away with a hand full of bloody bite holes, worried about possible infection but not regretting anything I'd done, except ~~for~~ maybe for just taking so long to act.

Interestingly, as I left the nurse's window, some people from the basketball court were passing and heard my exchange with the nurse. One guy asked me, not maliciously, "So did you get bit bad?" His tone made me think he maybe never was very comfortable with what had been happening, but he was just too paralyzed by peer pressure to speak against it. I suppose that's one advantage to my not being very well liked in this place — I can follow my conscience without having to worry too much about what the mob thinks of it.

(Incidentally, following my conscience with little regard for others' opinions is also a big part of why I'm not well liked here by many people, so there's a bit of a chicken-or-the-egg phenomenon going on. Oh well.)

New Pictures!

Pg 1 of 1

I finally got some updated photos. If you check out my posts occasionally, you likely noticed that for the past year or so, I've been putting them on paper with a small picture of myself at the top. So far, I think I've only had 2 different photos, one of which was taken before I was kidnapped and held hostage by the state... so it's a few years old at this point, to say the least. (It's a favorite pic of mine, though, with my "I ♥ COPS" t-shirt I used to wear everywhere. 😊 Some folks didn't see the irony in it, which shocked me every time). The other picture was about 4 years old, taken in prison.

These two new ones are just a few months old now, both taken during a video call around April 2022. I wasn't prepared for either, but both still came out pretty decent. Luckily it was a good day for me, appearance-wise. Most days I think I look pretty hideous, but I probably won't be posting any pics of that on here! 😊

So yeah, this is recent me. I'll be using these on future posts as well. If you'd like to contact me directly (and it seems that some of your comments on this site haven't been reaching me lately, so it's not that I'm ignoring commenters here, just that I haven't seen any since about 7 or 8 months ago!), here's my address:

* Thanks For Reading!!

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