

Date: 12 Jul 23
Subject: * WHAT A...

* WHAT A WAY TO START THE DAY *

In these next few chapters I'm going to take you through a bona fide non typical day. Not only because the occurrences are that of a bona fide non typical prisoner, but also because all of these events did not actually occur on the same day. As you read each chapter, just picture the events taking place at some point in time during my incarceration. (Believe me, prison could never be this eventful for some monotonously minded hermit such as myself.) I've just placed them all together like this for your convenience -- and of course mine.

The time was somewhere around 5:00 A.M. when DOC's concept of an alarm clock was set off.

This alarm clock I'm referring to is when the guard in the control room starts flipping all the switches on his panel to turn on all the bright fluorescent bulbs in our rooms, and to trigger the 32 electronic unlocking mechanisms located in metal boxes above each door.

The whole process of it all sounded like a short hail storm on a tin roof. Then, a few seconds after that, came the sound of about 15 doors slamming back into the locked position. (Obviously those prisoners had no interest in what was being served for breakfast.) The whole process of it all sounded like an even shorter hail storm on a tin roof, except with bigger pellets.

So this isn't anything like awakening out of a sleep from the sound of an alarm clock that can just be shut off at the press of a button. It's more like a sensation or being startled into consciousness. The amount of time that follows after this experience to the time breakfast is called varies from 15 minutes to 90 minutes, depending on which order they call the dorms to eat -- which is subjected to a whole other set of variables.

I tried to think of a justifiable reason to get myself up and start preparing for breakfast. Unfortunately, I couldn't come up with one before I had already fallen back asleep. As for my cellmate, he was also unsuccessful, and had fallen back asleep as well. This made for a hectic scene when suddenly the guard on the intercom and half the guys in the dorm started yelling, "CHOW! CHOW!" So once again I was startled into consciousness. (Just to let you know, it's pretty much a routine thing here in prison.) However, I knew there was no time to fall back asleep again. This time I only had about three minutes before the last guy -- who so wisely got prepared in advance -- was going to be walking through the now open door to the sally port. And once that door shut. . . Well, let's just say I wouldn't be going to breakfast.

So now, my cellmate and myself -- while stumbling over each other in our two man cell -- threw our clothes on, laced up our boots, and did what we could with our hair while passing the mirror above the toilet (of which neither of us had had time to use). As a friendly gesture to my fellow prisoners, I quickly snatched my toothpaste from next to the sink, squeezed a more than usual amount in my mouth, and threw it back on my bunk while exiting the cell. We then hustled down the stairs and across the day room while still tucking in our shirttails -- making it to the door with at least five seconds to spare. (This rapid process of getting ready is known in prison as "Parachuting.") So after crowding into the sally port with all the other breakfast bound guys, I stood there for a few seconds to make sure and swish the well now agitated toothpaste

throughout my entire mouth. A confused look appeared on the face of the guy a few feet away as he studied my involuntary impersonation of a blowfish with Tourette's syndrome. \1/ Then, after completing a large gulp, I had my one man audience in an even more intensified state of perplexity.

* FOOTNOTES *

1.) Tourette's syndrome: A severe neurological disorder characterized by multiple facial and other body tics.