

Date: 12 Jul 23

Subject: \*...

\* WHAT A WAY TO START THE DAY \*

Before I admit to doing this. . . this. . . what's considered a horrific infraction amongst your more institutionalized prisoners, let me just lay out the scene for you. As a tray was pushed to the edge of the opening, the two guys at the head of the two lines had to -- in a fraction of a second -- decipher if it was a regular meal or an alternate, and then grab the tray or stand back. If the next person in line had time to blink their eyes before someone grabbed the tray then there was going to be some complaining about how long it was taking. Under these circumstances, I'm not a very quick minded individual, and can easily lose my sense of discernment.

Six regular trays had come out and I was now standing at the window, ready to grab the -- what I hoped to be -- seventh regular tray at lightening speed, so as to not have to hear the guy behind me. The next tray came into sight. Unfortunately, I didn't allow my brain enough time to register whether it was a regular or alternate tray. I snatched the tray by the corner and pulled it out. It was at THAT point that it registered -- I had grabbed an alternate tray before the guy in the alternate line had time to even say anything.

Me: (Kind of handing the tray his direction, hoping to God he wasn't institutionalized.) Oh, hey. I'm sorry.

Him: (Looking at me in an unhappy manner for even suggesting that he would have taken the now-contaminated tray.) I don't want that tray. You touched it.

So now I was stuck between a rock and a hard place, because not only could I not get anybody to take the tray I DIDN'T want, I was also not going to be able to have a tray that I DID want. Or, you could just say I was encompassed about by a bunch of institutionalized morons who weren't about to admit in front of one another that in all honesty they couldn't have cared less, and just took the tray so I could grab the next regular one. So I got a good look at the guy, took the tray to a seat at an empty table, and spent my time eating/sulking.

It's not like I have a problem admitting when I make a mistake. Okay? But when the whole problem can be solved by simply setting aside some irrational beliefs, or stupid. . . I mean, think about it. First of all, the trays here in prison -- I can guarantee you -- are not getting any kind of sterilization job that my finger tips could counterbalance, and hence, bring about some form of disease harmful to my fellow prisoners. Next, think about the workers back in the kitchen who not only prepare the trays, but prepare the food as well. I wanted to tell that guy right then and there about how a cellmate of mine -- who use to work in the kitchen -- had been locked up in confinement for. . . Are you ready for this? Gunning down the female worker in charge of the kitchen. And, no, I'm not referring to shooting her with a gun. (Remember what gunning means?) Also, anyone of these guys would gladly accept a cellmate-prepared goulash from anyone else in the dorm, without even knowing what procedures were carried out in the

preparing of it, or when the last time the guy who cooked it had washed his hands. Oh, and how about this one? These very same Don't-Touch-My-Trayers will more than gladly buy my piece of chicken on the night they serve chicken for dinner in the chow hall. You're probably thinking it's some kind of sterilized procedure of them coming over to me and taking the piece off my tray that I was so careful not to breath on, or touch with more than four fingers on the outer edge. HA! Get this. Most of these guys want to eat the chicken later in a goulash back in the dorm. So here's the procedure I follow in making such a delivery:  
First, I carry my tray to a table, shove the chicken aside, and start eating all the other food on my tray. Then, after checking to see if any guards are watching, I pick up the piece of chicken with my bare hand, and wrap it up in a piece of cellophane I've usually obtained from some guy in the dorm who had previously used it to transfer a peanut butter sandwich.