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After passing through two sets of gates, the bus made its way to the place of welcome, and came to a stop. As soon as the rear door was opened, we were informed of the step by step procedure of backing out of the bus, stopping on the rear steps to have our shackles removed, and then proceeding to a place assigned to stand in line.

At first the process was much like that of the gracious salutation we received at the reception center. Mainly an authoritative show for the purpose of emphasizing to us just who the boss was, and all kinds of threats as to what would happen if we tried to prove otherwise. We were then directed to a multipurpose building where we were given another performance by a group of strippers. Fortunately, the show was nowhere near as long and meticulous as that of the one at the reception center. This was due to the fact that we didn't have too much of anything left to be stripped of.

After putting our clothes back on, we were taken through the formalities of what was expected of us, and what we could expect from them -- it didn't sound like much of an even exchange. Then a spokesperson from each of the programs (ex.: education, chapel, library, medical department) was given a few minutes to share the opportunities available to us, and the necessities required to make their availability possible.

After completing the formalities in the multipurpose building, we collected our belongings, exited the rear door in a single file line, and headed for the laundry department. After the line was situated against the outside wall, a couple of fellow prisoners with measuring tapes in their hands called each of us forward for the purpose of sizing us up for our future attire -- otherwise known as "Blues and Whites."

Yeah, sure, we had already been given the same form of clothing back at the reception center. However, the sizing of the blues had all been guesstimated, and the whites (ex.: T-shirts, boxers, socks) were all -- VERY MUCH -- well worn. It was nice to know I would no longer be wearing underwear with the question of what could have possibly caused all the ungodly looking stains absorbed into them, along with the question of who they could have possibly originated from. Or... Well, at least now there would no longer be the question of who they originated from.

After the tailors finished, we were each handed a bedroll and pointed in the direction of the single bunk mattresses and pillows stacked against the wall. As I approached, my eyes made a swift search for the appearance of what would be the most preferable selection (ex.: more thickness, no rips, less decorative stains). However, my short list of preferences seemed to be a bit too demanding. So I grabbed the next best thing that fit the criterion, and proceeded out the door with an unsatisfied look on my face.

At first this may not seem like too important of a subject, but please take into consideration that we prisoners spend a lot of time on our bunks. We don't have soft chairs or

comfy couches throughout the dorm to sit on, so our mattress is our only form of comfort. So let's take a look at what a mattress is SUPPOSED to be.

Mattress: A usually rectangular pad of heavy cloth filled with soft resilient material or arrangement of coiled springs, used as or on a bed.

First, let's get one thing perfectly straight right here and now. There is no RESILIENCE involved in the usage of a prison mattress. Even after pounding around the sides and puffing that thing up as much as I can every week, all that thing's going to do is continue to go flat. The guys who have learned to just accept this, and somehow not let it bother them, are the lucky ones. However, let us not forget the other lucky guys who have enough money to pay the laundry guy to make and bring them a nice thick mattress filled with something other than the customary combination of sawdust and wool. I realize that sawdust and wool may sound like a cozy combination. But never underestimate the ability of the prison system to somehow make it feel like nothing more than a bag of sand. Although, I'm quite sure the years of previous usage, by God knows how many other prisoners, probably plays an important role in the matter as well. The search for softness is of such an objective that when word gets around that some guy has been arrested and taken to confinement, there's an almost immediate examination by a number of guys in the dorm to see if the now available mattress is softer than theirs, and if so a quick switch is made. So as we see, the quality of a mattress is truly an important part of a prisoner's life. It can make the difference as to whether he wakes up in the morning feeling good, feeling sore, or whether he wakes up at all because he was never able to fall asleep to begin with.

After exiting the laundry department, the unsatisfied look on my face changed to that of uneasiness, as I reached the center avenue of the prison and noticed the dorms at the other end -- a distance of about two football fields away. Fortunately, even with the addition of the lopsided +/- 30 pound mattress over my shoulder, the hard as a rock pillow under one arm, and the bedroll under the other, the trek to my future residence wasn't really all that laborious of a trip -- THIS TIME.

You see, after a few years of having the opportunity to "buy one of those," "find a couple of them," and "not have the heart to get rid of that," I've discovered that the task of packing my belongings has become more and more difficult each time I'm transferred to a different prison. A number of years ago I learned the trick is to decide what your limit is, and hold to it. I came to the conclusion that ONE canteen mesh bag, about the size and shape of a brown grocery bag, would be my limit.

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However, a few years later I accepted my judgment to be incorrect, and decided that TWO canteen mesh bags would be my limit. That way any transfers or any lengthy trips across the prison grounds that included me having to carry ALL my property and sleeping necessities wouldn't seem like such a burdensome trip.

LOOK! I realize that 600 feet is only. . . (writer thinking real fast) 11.36% of a mile. But when you're bogged down with so many belongings that you resemble a humanized form of a U-Haul truck, it tends to make a trip of ANY length a real nuisance.

I suppose now I should give you an idea as to what kind of belongings a prisoner might be carrying with him during his transfer. (writer opens his locker) Okay, let's see:

- 1.) Pocket radio with ear buds or headphones.
- 2.) Deck of cards.
- 3.) Plastic bowl with lid and spoon.
- 4.) Plastic coffee cup.
- 5.) Scrabble game.
- 6.) 2 pairs of shorts.
- 7.) Set of long johns.
- 8.) 2 sweatshirts.
- 9.) Various canteen items (ex.: soups, chips, cookies, condiments).
- 10.) Battery powdered shaver.
- 11.) 22 oz. plastic tumbler.
- 12.) Photo album.
- 13.) 6 books (ex.: Bible, dictionary, thesaurus, the one I'm writing).
- 14.) A few cubic inches of odds and ends.
- 15.) 10 folders of miscellaneous information.
- 16.) The 2 mesh bags. . . What? I'm still having to carry them.
- 17.) Pair of tennis shoes.
- 18.) Pair of boots.
- 19.) State issued clothes (4 sets of whites and 3 sets of blues).
- 20.) About half a dozen -- somewhat -- necessary hygiene items. And of course. . .
- 21.) A roll of toilet paper.

Anyway, after reaching the section where the dorms were located, I glanced at the rectangular layout of the eight buildings, and spotted the one with a big letter "H" above the entrance. I had been informed back up front as to which dorm to report to, but it was the sergeant in the dorm who would let me know which cell I was assigned to.

While approaching my new residence, I noticed how the dorms had a truly awkward design to them -- nothing like I had ever seen on T.V. Whoever came up with the nickname "Butterfly Dorm" had the right idea, because from a bird's-eye view the outline of the dorm



resembles that of a . . . butterfly. (Ooh! What a surprise.) Now just divide the wings in half with a couple of thick walls, and put a control station with a sally port (prison term for vestibule) wrapped around it where the body should be. You now have an awkward shaped building that will hold four groups of 72 prisoners.

If you can't quite grasp the overall style of this place from my well laid out description, well I'm sorry. But in all honesty, I had a lot more important things on my mind as I approached the place than the concern of having to describe it to you.

After entering the sally port, I approached the drop box of the control station to exchange a few choice words with the sergeant in charge. First, I informed him of the name my parents had chosen for me, and in return he informed me of the cell he had chosen for me. After our short conversation was completed, I stepped over to quad number two of the dorm, and he pushed the button on the control panel that unlocked the door so I could enter.

My arrival in the quad seemed pretty much unnoticed, because hardly anyone was there to . . . notice me. This caused for less tension in my mind as I walked through the day room reading the numbers on the doors, and entering the two man cell with the correct digits. Fortunately, my cellmate was one of the crowd who was elsewhere, so I had time to scope out everything without an audience. My new residence was a 10.5 ft. × 7.5 ft. cell, with the upper and lower bunks against the left wall, and two floor lockers against the right wall. The back wall included a 12" × 24" window you couldn't see through unless you turned the knob to open it about five inches. Then, right there by the door, was the stainless steel thingamajig that consisted of a sink and toilet -- much like the one I described back in the county jail.

After dropping all the items I was carrying on the bottom bunk, I took the few property items I could call mine, and placed them in my locker. Next, I spread my mattress out on the bunk and used the contents of my bedroll to give it a somewhat decent appearance of a bed. I wouldn't learn how to make a "tight bunk" until sometime later, as you'll read in a future chapter. As I was just about to finish the process of moving in, I was startled by the entrance of a fellow prisoner who lived a couple of cells away.

Now don't go jumping to conclusions. I'm not about to go into some terrorizing story of how some fat, ugly, mammoth shaped, sex crazed maniac -- who was willing to stick his dick in anything that was warm and wet -- was about to try to rip my pants off and rape me. Nah, THIS sex crazed maniac -- who was willing to stick his dick in anything that was warm and wet -- who was about to try and rip my pants off and rape me was a rather decent looking guy with a well-shaped physique. So naturally, ignorant-me didn't see the need for much concern when he first came in with the appearance of a fellow prisoner just wanting to help the new guy.

After about ten minutes of small talk, he seemed to find it necessary to assure me that he wasn't one of the guys who I would need to be afraid of -- I could TRUST him.

THAT, my dear readers, is when he made his biggest mistake possible. He used that one word my counselors back in the county jail had warned me about -- TRUST. Remember when I shared with you about those four guys coming into my cell to tutor me after they had seen me on the news? Well, obviously those guys knew what they were talking about. Because the next thing I knew my neighbor pulled the door closed, lowered his pants and boxers to his ankles, and then told me to do the same and turn around.

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He said his reason for wanting me to do this was for the purpose of showing me that I could trust him not to do anything to me. Well, after telling him to pull his pants back up, I unconvincingly reassured him that his word was good with me, and that no form of physical verification would be necessary.

Even though I appeared relatively calm, I was very anxious to follow the advice I had received in the county jail -- which was "Run like hell." However, the guy who was saying the word "trust" was presently standing in the midst of my evacuation route -- with his pants and boxers down around his ankles. I guess my previous advisors didn't take into consideration the possible layout of certain rape scenes, and perhaps were more accustomed to the raper using the word "trust" BEFORE taking off his pants. You know, so as to give a little more time. Either way, the whole scene was definitely something new to me. My history as a free man didn't include things like getting into fights with guys, nor did it include having sexual intercourse with them. And in all honesty, I'll admit I was not in the mood to make any sudden changes.

Fortunately, I began to realize a couple of things I had going in my favor:

- 1.) My aggressor had not really been ALL that aggressive. And. . .
- 2.) Apparently I wasn't all that much of a turn on, because. . . Well, from my point of view it was quite obvious that his penis, shall we say, had not risen to the occasion.

Now I realize that this may not seem like an important factor from where you're standing -- or sitting. But from where I was standing, this whole situation could have been devastating for me psychologically. I mean, I'm quite sure the confidence of my masculinity would have been shattered if that guy had lowered his pants, and it . . . showed UP that he was experiencing an erection. In fact, the only thing I can think of that could have possibly been worse was if. . . I had experienced one.

So with him not being able to convince me to pull my pants DOWN, and me not being able to convince him to pull his pants UP, I was counting on the possibility of just coming to an agreement that we obviously had a conflict of interests, agree not to tell anybody what had just occurred (unless I were to write a book), and be on our way without any form of conflict. Unfortunately, my neighbor didn't seem to be of the same thought pattern that I was, and our borderlines of patience didn't seem to be like-minded as well. I was able to decipher these suspicions due to the fact that his next action was to lunge toward me, grab the sides of my pants, and try to yank them down. (Please notice I said "TRY." In another words, my pants were high around my waist for the remainder of this confrontation.) From there, the wrestling match began. However, please remember this wasn't all taking place in some big square wrestling arena, with nice soft ropes to bounce off of. This was a 7.5' x 10.5' prison cell, made of not-so soft concrete, and corners of metal bunks and lockers protruding the area.

With my main goal being that of exiting the cell, I attempted to step on to the floor lockers and maneuver AROUND him, rather than fight my way THROUGH him. However, this left me



prone to his next grasp, where he wrapped his arms around my waist and yanked me from the direction of the door. From there, our minor mayhem of entanglement only included some prying (that is PRYING not crying), rolling, pulling, and of course, the attempt to uncloth my body (those were HIS attempts by the way).

Now whether you want to believe this or not, I actually had the ability to decipher something that made a difference in my way of handling this situation. It was dawning on me that -- once again -- my aggressor was not REALLY being all that aggressive. It's not like he was throwing punches, threatening me with a shank, or relying on the aid of two or three friends to hold me down (I've read a few autobiographies by prisoners, and scenes of this nature can turn out quite dreadful). So I figured that instead of throwing punches when I could, or perhaps thrusting my thumb into his eye during one of our entanglements, I would just try to solve this misunderstanding of characteristics by way of a roughhousing wrestling match. I realized that to be successful, I was going to have to be the one to persevere, because if I didn't. . . stick it out, he would then have the chance to. . . stick it in.

After a little while of proving ourselves to be unsuccessful goal achievers, MY goal finally came within reach when I somehow slipped out of the entanglement, and rushed for the door. However, if you remember correctly, he had closed it just prior to his. . . repugnant request. Now when I say "closed," I mean he pulled it ajar, so it wasn't locked. However, I'm talking about a thick metal door -- weighing approximately 250 pounds -- that I had to slide over to the open position, so as to exit before he could get his hands on me again. Unfortunately, my task of pulling the door open far enough was not accomplished before he got back on his feet, streaked up behind me, and seized his arm around my neck. The headlock wannabe resulted in an awkward positioning of his forearm against my windpipe. At that point, he yanked me back two steps, and just fell at a diagonal angle -- so as to land on the bottom bunk approximately two and a half feet below the top bunk. As we fell back past the upper bunk in route to the bottom one, I reached out to grab the edge of the upper bunk. As soon as my fingertips grasped the edge, I flexed my arms and was able to stop our decent at midpoint.

So now the scene consisted of ME (one virgin wannabe) holding myself and my attacker just inches above a. . . bed. While my attacker was holding himself up by use of his forearm across my windpipe.

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After a few seconds, it didn't seem like my arms were going to give way anytime soon, but I couldn't say the same for my air supply. Be that as it may, every few seconds I was able to gasp a gulp of air and put out a yelp or two consisting of certain phrases that I considered to be very useful advice on how he should handle the situation (ex.: "Let me go!", " Find somebody else!", "Not me!").

After seeing my ability to withstand a couple of violent jerks to pull me down, he finally let his arm release from around my neck, and dropped to the bottom bunk.

So now with the weight of my attacker shed like a backpack, I yanked my body to the upright position on my feet, pulled the door open, and hightailed it out of there. . . Or let's just say I exited at a rather rapid pace. Because if I had a tail, I would have been keeping it REAL low right about then.

So, had I just finally wore him down? Or, had I actually convinced him to just change his ways, and become a more respectful human being? I honestly don't know, and I certainly wasn't going to turn around at that point to ask. Instead, I decided to spend the remainder of my time in the big open day room -- just in case anyone else from the Welcoming Committee wanted to. . . extend an informal greeting.

When the sally port began to fill with a bunch of guys wearing shorts and T-shirts, rather than the required Class-A apparel, my intuition discerned that the rec yard had closed. (Nothing gets past me, huh?) Before the door was unlocked to allow them in the quad, I planted my back against a wall. I wanted to get a good look at my future cellmate without being less than five feet away from him when doing so.

After about half the crowd squeezed through the hour glass of the doorway, I noticed a particularly disturbed looking guy headed straight for his/my cell. The reason for my use of the word "disturbed" in my description is because he didn't walk in talking and looking around. His focus was straight at our cell, as though he was totally oblivious as to what was going on around him as he kept a steady pace toward his destination. I guess if you think about it, there could have been a logical reason for his behavior. Like maybe he just had to do a #2 real bad. Right? Wrong. This new cellmate of mine was a bona fide BUG (A person who has withdrawn from society and lives in a psychological solitary existence).

I stayed where I was for a few minutes, expecting to see the door get pulled ajar, and a towel get hung up in the window of the door (a privacy procedure if a prisoner is using the toilet, or doing God knows what else). However, the door remained wide open, and my cellmate didn't step back out looking for a new guy who would connect with the unfamiliar items that had been added to his cell. In all honesty, I would be willing to bet that he didn't even notice them.

After a few minutes had passed, I stepped over to the door of my cell, and found my cellmate lying on the upper bunk -- staring at the ceiling. My hesitant salutation resulted in no form of movement or answer on his part. So I assumed the wisest thing to do was just sit down

on my bunk, and keep my mouth shut. I assumed the call for chow after count time would initiate some form of communication between us. However, throughout our hustling around in our two man cell to get ready to go, not a word was spoken.

Upon returning from dinner, I decided to just stay out in the day room. I guess I just felt more comfortable being in a wide open day room with dozens of guys, rather than in my two man cell with ONE bug. So now my time consisted of watching T.V., strolling around the day room, and having a few conversations -- none of which I started.

After a significant amount of time had passed, I came to the conclusion that what was on T.V. was so boring that it could no longer hold my interest. So I decided to go to my cell -- bug infested or not. As I approached my cell from the side, I noticed the light was off, but the door was wide open -- obviously indicating that there was no reason for me to be hesitant to enter. Then, as I reached the doorway, and turned to step in, I immediately encountered my cellmate sitting on his locker about three feet away, facing the doorway. I immediately came to the conclusion that what was on T.V. wasn't really all that boring after all, and decided that it was much more interesting than what I was seeing in my cell. The reason for that surmise was due to the fact that my abrupt first glance at my cellmate displayed to me that he obviously didn't mind putting himself on display. The reason for THAT surmise was due to the fact that my cellmate was sitting on his floor locker, facing the wide open door, and his pants were down around his ankles. Then, as if THAT wasn't enough. . . Well, he was conducting a particular activity well known in prison as. . . gunning (Excitation of one's own genital organs, usually to orgasm, by manual contact or means other than sexual intercourse, especially by use of one's own hand).

My first -- AND ONLY -- glance was all I needed to fully grasp the situation at hand. . . (Let me rephrase that.) That's all it took for me to realize what was going on, and I immediately vamoosed. From what I noticed in that fraction of a second, I can honestly say I don't believe I disturbed my cellmate much at all. Hell, I don't think my intrusion even caused him to lose his rhythm.

So between that moron, who I was going to have to live in a two man cell with, AND the overanxious-to-be-pleased neighbor a couple of cells away, it didn't take much evaluation on my part to realize that some changes needed to be made.



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Look, I'm sorry if I may appear to be a bit picky, judgmental, or perhaps unfair by not being a more openly minded individual. However, the thoughts of how I was going to be getting myself moved to some different living arrangements was already the number one priority in my mind.