

Date: 14 Apr 25

Subject: (Beginning of: " SO-CALLED TYPICAL. " ...

(Beginning of: " SO-CALLED TYPICAL. " April 14, 2025)

At this point in time, I suppose I should familiarize you with the basic layout of a prison day. That way, as you read the upcoming chapters regarding my personal experiences throughout a typical day for a non-typical prisoner, you'll be able to better relate with the overall schedule of the plot. However, considering the fact that this chapter will only contain the ordinary everyday events of prison life, I would be willing to bet that before I'm even finished with everything regarding this subject you'll probably become so bored that you'll just have to interrupt me with some kind of stupid question, so as to change the subject. Please, try do refrain from such actions.

After my first few weeks in the prison system, I began to adjust. . . (Adjust: To achieve a psychological balance with regard to one's external environment, one's needs, and the demands of others.)

Hold on a minute. It's just dawned on me after checking the definition of that word that even after 20 years, I STILL haven't been able to accomplish all of that yet. So let's just say I began to grow familiar with the routine of prison life. I also began to realize that deep down somewhere amongst the hustle and bustle of interruptions throughout the day, there was a basic layout as to what the Department Of Corrections (DOC) anticipated to be a normal day, and it goes something like this:

- 1) Wake-up +/- 5 A.M.
- 2) Breakfast +/- 6 A.M.
- 3) Count time +/- 7:30 A.M.
- 4) Morning events +/- 8 A.M. (ex.: classes, jobs, rec yard, call outs)
- 5) Count time +/- 11:30 A.M.
- 6) Lunch +/- 12:30 P.M.
- 7) Afternoon events +/- 1:30 P.M. (ex.: classes, jobs, rec yard, call outs)
- 8) Count time +/- 4 P.M.
- 9) Dinner +/- 5 P.M.
- 10) Count time +/- 7:30 P.M.
- 11) Master roster count time +/- 10 P.M.
- 12) Lights out +/- 11 P.M.

Please take into consideration that this schedule is as basic as it gets, and could actually be carried out with no form of difficulty provided: there are no types of mechanical malfunctions throughout the camp, there are no kinds of outside interruptions, the guards do their jobs in an ethical and efficient manner, and all the prisoners behave like mature gentlemen. IT'S JUST THAT SIMPLE!! However, one can be rest assured that the chances of such a thing are between nil and none. So let's take a look at just a few of the common forms of interruptions that cause DOC's idea of a normal day to be nothing more than a dream:

- 1) Weather. (ex.: thick morning fog, rainstorm that includes lightning)
- 2) Chow time falling behind schedule, due to some difficulties in the preparation of a meal.
- 3) Too many guards calling in sick on the same day.
- 4) Some form of medical emergency. (ex.: some inmate having an epileptic seizure at an inconvenient time)
- 5) Some form of practice drill being conducted. And. . .
- 6) A miscount of the prisoners during count time which leads to a recount, and perhaps even a master roster count.

These examples, along with many others, are the daily forms of interruptions. A couple of the more infrequent forms would be things like the arrival of some bigwigs from Tallahassee to check out the place, which only occurs a few times a year. With people like that walking around on the grounds, there is very limited movement permitted by the prisoners. And of course my favorite: "Office's Appreciation Day?" My best bet is a couple of officers suddenly came up with this wild idea to throw a big party for themselves while at work that lasts all day, and all the other officers really appreciated it. It's basically a decorative title for: "Prisoners Not Permitted To Leave Their Dorms All Day" day. . .

YOU: HOLD ON!! What about all those exciting and more theatrical scenes that I see at the movie theaters, and read about in books regarding prison life.

ME: I knew it. (said in a disgruntled tone of voice)

Well,. . . it's like this. I'm not going to sit here and say that none of those events ever occur. However, thanks to the ideation of Hollywood and authors of fictional-fun-reads, people usually have an incorrect idea about the true life style here in prison. Our entertainers focus primarily on the events that grab your attention, and perhaps stretch the truth -- just a tad. To better explain, let me do some highlighting on a couple of attention-grabbing situations that we are all familiar with, because I'm obviously not satisfying you with the basic stuff. The first two that come to mind are. . . Uh, oh. Looks like you'll have to wait until next week.

(Be sure to check out this blog next week for the more exciting parts of a typical day in here.)

Date: 20 Apr 25

Subject: (Continuation of: " SO-CALLED TYPICAL. ...

(Continuation of: " SO-CALLED TYPICAL. " April 21, 2025)

Okay, it's next week. So let's get started on the two subjects that came to mind:

- 1.) Fistfights. And. . .
- 2.) Fightings with the use of some form of weapon.

#1. One of the most common portrayals of a fistfight in prison is the scene where two guys -- who obviously are a bit uptight with one another -- meet out on the rec yard to duke it out. There's around thirty other guys who form a big circle around the two contenders, and begin rooting the fighters on to bust one another's butts. Oh, and of course while all of this is going on, the guards standing around turn the other direction, so as to appear totally oblivious to the whole ordeal. Sound familiar? Then, the two guys begin exchanging punches in a manner that wouldn't even require a referee if the match was being held in a professional boxing ring. After maybe about three minutes, you have one of the fighters who just can't take anymore of it, drops to the ground, tries to get up, but then just lies there admitting his defeat. At that point, his opponent makes some form of scoffingly statement, and walks away as does the audience who was watching. So as we see, these convenient confrontations are always carried out in a smooth and orderly fashion, so as to allow any little disagreements to be settled with no form of problems resulting. YEAH! RIGHT! (written in the most sarcastic tone of voice I could type up)

Now I'll admit, before I came to prison, I had seen this event on T.V. so many times that I just assumed it was something of a weekly occurrence out on the rec yard. However,. . . Well, before I continue with my objective opinion on this subject, I suppose I should take a poll, to see if these occurrences are as rare as I'm thinking. Because in the twenty years I've been locked up, I have witnessed only one confrontation of this kind, and I've served time in ten different institutions.

( 2 days later )

Okay, I'm sorry it took so long. However, you've got to understand, I can't just go asking anybody. I believe it takes asking guys who have been around, and been down for a sufficient amount of time to obtain a valid answer. At any rate, it's like this. After asking twenty guys who fit the criteria for such a poll, I discovered that only two had ever witnessed such a fight. And get this, in both cases it was over 35 years ago.

First of all, a fistfight in prison very rarely goes uninterrupted. There's almost always going to be somebody -- or some bodies -- jumping in the middle of it all for the purpose of trying to break it up, help their friend, or maybe just getting in a sucker punch for a little gratification. However, if the audience is decent enough to stay out of it, then be rest assured the guards won't be. It's as though some of these guys are looking for any kind of reason to use their authoritative power to do some roughhousing, or perhaps just to get a chance to spray someone in the face with their can of mace. Another good point to open your eyes to is the fact that a

fistfight is very rarely anything like a boxing match. The vast majority of the time the guys get all tangled up in some kind of human mayhem -- sometimes making it impossible to even see who's winning the fight. I can see why Hollywood wouldn't waste their time portraying the majority of the fights I've seen in this place. Tell ya what. Let me just share a good example of a more common type of fistfight, except this one includes an interesting form of vin-DIC-tiveness (marked by, or resulting from a desire to hurt).

I was still located at my first institution, sometime during my third year of incarceration. The majority of us were sitting in the day room watching T.V. when two guys by the water fountain suddenly went at it. In a matter of seconds they had each other to the floor, however, they were behind a grated stairway -- not completely hidden, but difficult to identify. The only way for the guards in the control room to decipher what was happening was if they were to look that direction and do an analysis. With this being one of the rare situations in which the rest of the guys were able to mind their own business, everyone just remained seated, and the message to keep looking at the T.V. was being repeated in a quiet undertone throughout the audience -- so as to not make the whole ordeal obvious to the guards in the control room.

There was very little movement or sound emanating from the twisted configuration of male anatomy. However, after a couple of minutes of entanglement with one another, a noise began to evolve from one of the two contenders that resembled that of an agonizing whine by some guy who was getting his testicles squeezed very -- VERY -- tightly. (The reason it sounded like that is because that's what it was. Sorry, but I didn't know how to spell the noise he was making. And, no, it isn't in my dictionary.) Apparently, the victor of the confrontation was able to perform just the right maneuver so as to bring his opponent to his. . . Well, . . . way beyond his knees by now, believe me.

Suddenly, the main door was yanked open, and two or three guards came running in to break up the fight. Evidently, one of the guards in the control room had done the analysis I spoke of earlier, and called for backup. The guards untied the two guys, cuffed them up, and took them out. So, we all returned our full focus to the television.

(Be sure to check back next week for the details of just what exactly happened in this particular confrontation, and for the start of the kinds that involve the use of weapons.)

Date: 27 Apr 25

Subject: (Continuation of: " SO-CALLED TYPICAL. ...

(Continuation of: " SO-CALLED TYPICAL. " April 28, 2025)

Please let me clarify that we were not actually aware of what was taking place during the time of the . . . Manhandling? It's not like there is some form of specific whine we all recognize anytime a guy is getting his testicles crushed. In fact, it wouldn't be until later that night when the medical orderly who lived in our dorm returned from work, and explained to us just what exactly had taken place.

#2. Just like with the art of firefighting, fighting with the use of weapons is also a well known event in the prison system that Hollywood likes to portray in a more shrewd and macho style. Usually, the only things you see on the screen being used as a weapon is some form of homemade knife, or perhaps the handle from a broom or mop. However, when dealing with this subject, you cannot allow your mind to be limited to what appears to be ordinary. Please notice how the definition of the word weapon (Something used to injure, defeat, or destroy.) is not limiting itself to only the articles you are most likely familiar with out on the streets (ex.: guns, switchblades, billy clubs). That's because practically ANYTHING can be used as a weapon. And since there aren't any pawn shops within the prison system -- so as to purchase something like a gun -- a prisoner must improvise. So let's take a look at just a few of the improvisers -- ranging from rational to outlandish -- that I've become familiar with by means of stories I've heard, or actually witnessed with my own eyes.

- 1.) Almost any piece of hand size metal.
- 2.) Walking cane.
- 3.) Broom / mop handle.
- 4.) Mop ringer.
- 5.) Locker
- 6.) Hot, hot, hot water.
- 7.) Lock in a sock. (I'll explain later.)
- 8.) Pen or pencil that's been saturated with fecal matter.
- 9.) Partial / Denture plate.

{1-2-3} Obviously there isn't a whole lot to say about my first three items, because those are the more rational weapons that Hollywood has pretty much infixed in your minds. I guess the only thing you might not have thought about is the fact that blades and stabbing implements can also be formed from hard plastic, or even wood. So naturally pen, pencils, toothbrushes, and any other kind of unbending device is easily utilizable. It just takes a bit of time and a rough surface to shape it into what the prisoner really wants.

{4-5-6} These are more of the irregular style of weapons. They aren't weapons you'll come across too often on the screen, but any prisoner will tell you he's quite familiar with their usage. In all honesty, I can't say I've ever witnessed the usage of any of them, but I do have a logical

reason as to why that might be. In regards to the mop ringer, I've read in a number of autobiographies of how their usage was quite a regular event. However, before I arrived in "2001", I would be willing to bet that the prison system had finally gotten tired of supplying the prisoners with a readily accessible weapon made of hard plastic that had a metal handle protruding from it, and decided to switch to the all plastic strainer type device that doesn't even work effectively at what it was designed for. In another words: Prisons quit using that style of mop ringer before my arrest. At least in Florida, that is.

As far as the use of a locker as an effective weapon. . . Well, please take into consideration that the average weight of an empty locker is somewhere around 40 pounds. So naturally the individuals who use such a device would be limited to the more muscular crowd. I mean, think about it. What are your chances of having any form of accuracy when you're heaving some box shaped hunk of metal that weighs that much? After taking that question into consideration, I'm convinced that a locker would certainly not be a wise choice of weaponry for somebody like me. Between my inability to think quickly, and the fact that I only weigh about 150 pounds, one could only imagine how long it would take for me to get a pen and paper, do the calculation for Newton's Law of gravity (so as to be sure my trajectory would be correct), and then hope to God that I could throw that thing with any kind of damaging force behind it. I mean, wouldn't that be embarrassing if I went through all that work to hurt some guy, and all he did was catch it?

The last of the irregular weapons on my list also has its limitations. When it comes to the hot water scene, I've noticed it pretty much remains a weapon used amongst the kitchen workers -- kinda makes sense. However, as I mentioned in an earlier chapter, some prisoners have the ingenuity to come up with a way to get what they want -- wherever they want it. So if there's some guy who is especially ticked off at somebody, but doesn't work in the kitchen with him, he can still use the hot water scheme if he wants to mess up somebody real bad. They're known as Stingers here in prison, (A prisoner's homemade version of an immersible heating element.) and they have the ability to heat a gallon jug of water from room temperature to steaming hot in around 10 minutes. Now, imagine that water being thrown in your face -- the damage it would do not only to your skin, but to your eyes as well. I've also been informed of certain ingredients that are sometimes added to make the experience a bit more rememberable (ex.: bleach, Magic Shave powder, numerous seasoning packets from soups). There are of course a number of other items, but I'm sure you're smart enough to understand the point I'm trying to get across. Something like a black eye or a fat lip will soon go away, and you'll no longer be reminded of the fight you lost. However, getting your face deformed by means of this kind of weapon will continue to annoy you for a long time. Remember, they don't do cosmetic surgery in here.

(Be sure to come back next week to read about the three OUTLANDISH forms of weapons that get used in this place, and my own personal experience of witnessing one of them. See ya later.)