

Date: 08 Jun 25

Subject: (Conclusion of: "Chapter Between 19 and ...

(Conclusion of: "Chapter Between 19 and 21" June 9, 2025)

When count time came we both had to sit up, but due to our location what we were wearing wasn't important. So my cellmate only had shorts and a T-shirt on. As for me, I was almost in class-A (minus the I.D. card and boots). Because when the doors opened I had to make six bunks, and then be dressed, and ready for an 8:00 AM call-out to the medical department.

You: Excuse me. Why did you have to make so many bunks?

Me: I'm glad you asked.

Back somewhere around my second year of prison, the camp I was located at had been taken over by a particularly strict warden. He was obsessed with the concept of every cell looking perfect. The picture of a perfect cell, along with the description of how everything was to be arranged, was hung on the bulletin board of all the dorms. He even had two little lines painted on the sides of all the bunk frames, signifying where the 6" cuff of the perfectly made bunk was supposed to be located. On top of that, he ordered an inspection of all the cells five days a week -- not just one random day like most camps. After hearing about his history at other camps, and reading the bulletin, I decided it would be to my advantage to learn how to make -- what is known in prison as -- a really tight bunk. So after a few practice runs, I finally got the hang of it -- confident there would be no complaints, no matter who was inspecting. And since the education department had temporarily closed, I was no longer teaching math for the GED students. So I could be right there to hear anything the inspectors had to say.

Now that I've brought you up to date on what led to these circumstances, let me answer your questioning. The inspection team had just walked in our dorm, and those of us who weren't somewhere else were standing just outside the door of our cells as the two guards inspected each room for any flaws. With two guards looking through all the cells, an inspection rarely ever went without a few flaws -- at least in the OTHER guy's cells. So imagine my surprise when one of the guards had this to say after stepping out of MY cell.

Guard: Is that your bottom bunk ?

Me: Yes, sir.

Guard: Go stand out in the middle of that day room.

The two men continued with the remainder of the bottom floor, completed the second floor, and made their way back down stairs. The whole time I'm freaking out, wondering what I could have possibly forgotten to do -- or did do, but incorrectly. I figured it obviously must have been

pretty bad, and he was going to use me as the guinea pig to make a spectacle of. After the two men finished their decent, the one who had made the earlier inquiry approached me.

Guard: What are you, ex-military or something?

Me: (???) No, sir.

Guard: Where did you learn to make a bunk like that?

Me: (Oh, okay. I'm not in any kind of trouble.) Just a little bit of practice.

Guard: Huh. (Said in a tone of 30% surprise and 70% indifference)

Then, after stepping over next to me and turning to face the still-by-their-door prisoners, he made this announcement.

Guard: Sometime today I want everyone of you to stop by this man's cell, and see how he has his bunk made. That is how I want every bunk in here to look.

Me thinking real loud: (Oh my God! I have just made at least a dozen enemies. This is going to make me look like some kind of teacher's pet or something.)

Guard: I don't care if you have to get him to show you how to do it. I don't care if you have to PAY him to do it for you. That is the way I want them to look. (He then turned and headed toward the door.)

As I turned to watch the two guards exit the door, I surmised my only form of protection was slipping away. The thought to run to the door before it swung shut in the locked position quickly entered my mind, but I knew I couldn't run that fast.

Remember, I was still pretty new to all of this. So in all honesty, I was actually scared of what was going to happen to me once those two guards were out of eyesight. I fully expected to turn around and see a bunch of eyes all focused on me -- the eyes of a bunch of guys who were sizing up my new identity (ex.: traitor, rat, nark, Judas, sneak, snitch, betrayer, turncoat. . . ).

As I turned around, I was devastated at my discovery of just how bad I was at judging someone else's character. Because, instead of everyone's eyes being focused on me, there was a line of guys all looking in my cell to check out my bunk. (???) I slowly approached my cell -- perhaps they were ransacking the place, and had full intention of doing the same to me when they were finished. Instead, I was approached by a few of them with the question, "How much you charge?"

It developed into an honest hustle that I have continued with -- on and off -- even up to this date. Except now I only do it on the day sheets are washed. However, it still earns me an extra five to seven dollars. That's not bad for an hour of work in here.

(Okay, back to the original story I was telling before you asked your question.)

After the guards were finished with their count, I put my boots on, and tried to amuse myself for the next twenty minutes. Finally, the short-hail-storm-on-a-tin-roof clatter began, and by the time I jumped out of my bunk the door was open. I slipped out the door in search of which of my clientele was already out of my way. By the time I finished with that bunk, I knew the other five guys would have found somewhere else to be -- other than in my way. I basically had these guys trained pretty well. Or maybe it was just the fact that they actually did have somewhere else to be. Then, just as I was finishing the sixth bunk, an announcement was screamed over the intercom, "ALL 8 A.M. CALL OUTS!"

(I know you won't believe the title of next weeks chapter if I told you, so I'll just type it out for you. "What It's Like To Have A Raisin Super Glued To Your Anus." Until next week.)