

Date: 06 Jul 25

Subject: (Beginning of: "Mind Over Matter" July 7...

(Beginning of: "Mind Over Matter" July 7, 2025)

* MIND OVER MATTER *

The time was somewhere around 9:30 A.M. when I stepped out of the medical department with a tube of "Raisin Remover" in my hand, and a whole new sense of appreciation for the advancements women in the medical profession have achieved through the years.

The 100 yard walk down the center sidewalk led me from the main administration and medical section of the camp, through the center gate, and to the more residential areas. My eyes were drawn to the more obvious points of interest: dorms, barber shop, shave shop, and canteen windows. After a few seconds of pondering my choices, it seemed the most logical place to pay a visit was to the shave shop. This was not only because of the lengthy whiskers on my face, but also because of the lack of finances in my account and lack of hair on my head.

While walking toward the line of 8 guys standing in front of the shave shop, I began calculating in my mind how much time this would take under NORMAL circumstances (8 guys \times 5 minutes to shave \div 4 sets of electric clippers = 10 minutes of waiting). However, I knew that under these ABNORMAL circumstances my waiting time would easily exceed 45 minutes. The reason for this lengthy wait was not only due to the fact that usually the guys would spend just as much time talking as they would shaving, it was also caused by the amount of traffic coming in and going out. You see, this little 10 ft. \times 18 ft. building was not only a place where a guy would go to trim his beard. It was also a centrally located hangout joint, trading post, and delivery station. It was maintained by an appointed inmate, and overseen by an assigned guard who rarely ever came over to see it. All of these factors made for a very busy location that had a continual flow of guys coming and going while the guys standing in line outside looked on. Each time a guy entered the shop you wondered if he was going in to pick something up, drop something off, have a talk with some friends, or simply just skip ahead of everybody in line. It was always very frustrating to watch some guy go in, and about ten minutes later walk out while brushing whiskers off his shirt.

Almost an hour had passed before I made it to the head of the line, and was signaled by the inmate running the place to come in. As I entered I took notice of my surroundings. The inmate in charge had remained up front by the window to keep an eye out for trouble. Along the mirrored wall on the right were four guys (two of which had been ahead of me in line and two of which had not) contributing 70% of their time to trimming any undesirable whiskers from their faces, and spending the other 30% jabbering. Then there were the two guys hanging out in each of the rear corners who also had been endowed with the gift of gab. So all in all, the hustle and bustle of conversation, whether it was one on one or throughout the crowd, made for a hectic disarray of communication. But I'll be damned if all nine of those guys didn't know exactly what the other eight were talking about. I had been there enough times to know I had nothing interesting to say, as neither did the crowd of guys I was amongst. So I simply leaned back against the wall across from the guys shaving, and waited for the next available set of clippers.

After a significant amount of time had passed, one of the shavers flipped the switch on his set of clippers to the "OFF" position. Fifty percent of my attention was immediately drawn to the now-silent set of clippers in the guy's hand, while the other fifty percent was focused on maintaining my willpower to hold back from screaming, "FINALLY!" After sanitizing the clippers with a toothbrush and cup of disinfectant provided on the counter, the guy set the clippers down and proceeded toward the door.

Now please understand, it had been almost an hour since I first stepped into line. So my ambition of getting this five minute task done and over with had built itself to an impatient level. However, all that remained was the time it would take for me to walk the eight feet from where I was standing to the counter across the room.

You: What could possibly go wrong?

Me: I'm glad you asked.

With my eyes zeroed in on my destination, and my legs doing what was necessary to get me there, I suddenly noticed in my peripheral vision what appeared to be one of the guys from the left rear corner about to walk into me (the reason it appeared that way is because that's what it was). Apparently, the point he was trying to get across to his one-man audience required walking backwards for a substantial amount of distance without looking to see where he was going (if it looks as if I'm about to blame this upcoming mishap entirely on the incompetence of this other guy and portray myself as a completely innocent individual. . . Well, I'm glad to see that you're paying attention). Due to the moderate force of impact when he. . . I guess you could say rear-ended me, neither of us experienced much of a negative effect on our sense of balance. However, in the amount of time it took me to turn 90° toward him so as to accept his apology for having backed into me, he had already turned 180° toward me so as to NOT accept the apology from me that I had no intention on giving him in the first place.

Him: WHAT'S YOUR PROBLEM, CRACKER !?! Coming up behind me like that !!

(Okay, you all. I'll continue with the next page next week.)