

Entry 13

When you're serving time in a serious penitentiary you quickly learn to be aware of what's going on around you at all times. As I've stated before, things can completely change in the blink of an eye. One minute everything is running along smoothly with everyone doing whatever it is they are doing, and in the next minute you might glance across the rec yard and see two or three people stabbing someone multiple times and then simply disappear into the crowd of people when they are done leaving the victim either standing there bleeding away or on the ground bleeding out. A common thing was for one person to grab the victim from behind, pinning their arms behind them and holding them so they could not defend themselves while one or two other people stabbed them over and over again. It was very rarely ever a one-on-one situation.

There was an unwritten rule across the board that applies to everyone serving time there, it was called the "No Hands Policy". What this meant was, if two people were having serious problems with each other they were not allowed to have a fist fight. If it got to the point of fighting, then they would both go into a room somewhere, each of them with a shank and they would fight and stab each other until only one person was left standing. Most of the time this would have been arranged and there would be someone watching out to make sure nobody else got involved since it was a one-on-one problem.

Then there were the situations where someone might be making their race look bad by doing bad business deals or simply disrespecting other races. Things like this could lead into race riots very easily. So, in order to avoid a race riot, most of the time a shot caller (this is someone who makes all the decisions and speaks for their race or their car), would talk with the shot caller of whomever is causing the problems and let them know they need to be dealt with to make peace. When a person was dealt with for these types of reasons it sent a message letting others know that if you cross the line this is what will happen. Plus, it makes peace with everybody by dealing with the person who caused the problems for all to see. Now remember I just got done saying there was a "No Hands Policy"? Well, when someone was being taken care of for these types of reasons it was up to the shot caller to determine what level of violence was to be used. If they had done something extremely serious, then they would end up stabbed multiple times or possibly even killed. But if they did something that was wrong but not that severe, then they would just get beat down really bad. I'll give you an example that really stands out in my mind. There was a guy in my unit who was the nicest guy in the world when he was sober, but when he got to drinking white lightning, he completely transformed into someone else. He had gotten really drunk one night and after lockdown he started yelling out of his cell taunting and completely disrespecting the other races in the unit. So, first thing the next morning a meeting happened about what had occurred and someone was sent into his cell to beat him up to make peace in the unit. Since he had never been a problem before they didn't completely beat him down, but he got a good tune up!!! Well, not but a week or so later the same exact thing happened with the same person, and this time they sent a serious message with what they did to him. He was taken into an empty room on the third tier and two people went in and beat him for what seemed like forever. A lot of people were standing on the tiers watching as they knew this was going down. When the door finally opened up, I remember seeing him trying to crawl out of the room on his hands and knees. They had kicked his teeth out, broken his leg and just plain beat the hell out of him. Everyone watched as he slowly tried to make his way down the stairs with a broken leg to the officer's station to let the officers know he needed to check in to protective custody and leave general population. The officers were aware of his actions the night before and they knew that what just happened to him was done to keep the overall peace, so they simply took him to medical and nothing else became of it.

When a race or a certain car deals with one of their own in this way, it's called "House Cleaning", or "Cleaning House". The prison staff can usually tell when an incident is house cleaning and when it is, they might put the people involved in the hole for a few days, but they won't get into much trouble. They understand that incidents like these are necessary in order to keep the peace on a much larger scale throughout the prison.

Sitting here writing this has caused me to remember about another incident that occurred in my living unit. This wasn't house cleaning though, the target owed money for drugs and he was about to receive an extreme message that he had better pay what he owed.

Every now and then I would step out of my cell up on the third tier and lean against the railing to people watch and see what's going on in the unit? Well one day I stepped out and was standing there when I noticed two people creeping down the flats towards the end of the unit and one of them was carrying a board that was about 30 inches long (to this day I don't know how they got that board into the unit?). They crept up behind a guy who was sitting in his chair with his headphones on watching TV and they hit him square in the top of the head with the board. It broke his headphones and knocked him out and he fell out of his chair. Everyone around simply moved their chairs out of the way so the people involved could handle their business. I watched as they grabbed his legs and started pulling him into one of the end cells, but just as they got to the cell the guy came to and started struggling and got away from them. He didn't run to the guards though; he went to someone's cell and began cleaning the blood off his head while keeping an eye out for the two guys as they were still trying to sneak up on him and it turned out to be a game of cat and mouse for about ten minutes or so before the two guys let it be and went off to do their own thing. Later on, things got worked out between them and the guy paid his debts, but it sent a message to anyone doing business with that group that you had better pay your debts or there would be a price to pay.

If you take the time to just sit back and watch what goes on around you in prison from a distance you would be

amazed at what you will see!!! I didn't watch because I was intrigued by what was going on though. I watched because I was a loner in a very violent world and I wanted to be aware of my surroundings so that I could avoid things that went down. My goal the entire time I've been locked up is to reach my release date in one piece so that I can become a free man once again and go home to my friends and family and try to put all of this behind me. I honestly don't think I will ever truly be able to put what I've been through behind me though as it's been scarred into me...