

Feb 25, 16

PRISON WRITER'S WORKSHOP

I recently moved, exchanging a passive-aggressive old man for Josh, a guy a year younger than myself, who also likes to write. We've known each other for twenty years; he was my second cellmate. I also gained a nice view of the yard.

A week ago, Josh and I decided to do a prison writer's workshop: We wrote different genres on small pieces of paper, place them in a prison-orange stocking hat (once provided to all offenders years ago), shook them up, and pulled "suspense fiction." I have four pages written for my short story; Josh has thirty. If this was a presidential race, he'd be Trump in the lead and I'd be Bush dragging ass. When I first moved in, Josh wanted to bet me twenty push-ups that it will be Bush and Clinton in the race for the White House. Maybe I should have taken the bet.

The creative process is different for every writer. I tend to be slow and methodical, creating the story as I write instead of first doing an outline. I write mostly nonfiction but this exercise will be good for my writer's muscle. Josh didn't have an outline either, but I have a sneaky suspicion his story idea was already formed within his mind's eye.

Although it's subjective for me to say I feel confident that my story will be a good read when finished, the only way to truly know if I am any good at writing suspense fiction will be from the readers' feedback once it's published. And that too is subjective; publishing a short story, fiction or nonfiction, is not an easy endeavor, just ask Stephen King.