

## Double-Bladed Guilt

Frederick Mason #55487-056

USP Tucson PO Box 24550

Tucson, AZ 85734

It's easy for society to hear about how prisons have to deal with inmates who get out of hand. Most of what you hear about inmates isn't good; very rarely will officers tell you the good things inmates do. Now, I grant you, there's a LOT of bad behavior going on, but I'll argue that much... well, some, is based on how they are treated.

The problem with what you hear from officers is that much of it is prejudiced. Ok, if we screw up, there it is. But what about when we do right? What about when officers do wrong? Nobody tells you about when officers make mistakes... so let's shed light on this.

The following testimony took place today, July 7th, 2015. Now, the challenge here is to try to be objectionable. Can I give you the fairest view I can? As an inmate, I'm going to be biased to the inmate, but I'd like to think I can try to give two sides to this. In the following, both inmates AND officers were wrong. But it was handled poorly, and didn't bring resolution, only contempt.

Today, a male and female officer was doing the count. They make the announcement that it is Count Time, and for all



inmates to stand up. This is procedure; nothing new. I can argue whether inmates really need to STAND, since the only reason for count is to have an accurate count of inmates on the compound, and to verify that they are alive. I personally think the standing point is about control, but I can debate that another time.

So, it's count time. As most inmates do in the dorm of almost 120, we stand in our cells so the two officers can count. Not a problem. However, the issue is that there are some idiot inmates that are so hard-headed that they have to be reminded nearly every day to stand up. One is the cell across me, the other right beside me. It's like they have to hit the door of their cell to get them to comply. Just get your butt up; it's only a couple of minutes! The officer isn't asking us to do handstands!

Guys, I'll defend inmates as best I can... but some guys here are complete idiots!

So, as the two officers do their count, a few of the inmates don't stand. Both include the cells I mentioned. How somebody can be so stupid, I don't know.

Now, the count is done, and they're unlocking cell doors, because it's near chow time. Our dorm, B2, goes 2nd on the compound, so we eat early. But as the officers were nearly finished unlocking doors, some STUPID inmate says "clear". The officers are supposed to say that when they're finished



unlocking doors. Until then, no inmate is supposed to come outside their cell. But, if somebody, playing a prank, says "clear", other inmates won't know who said it, and assumed it was an officer.

And that's what happened.

A few inmates, thinking an officer actually said "clear", came out, only to be told, "get back in your cell". I remember hearing the inmate say "clear" and seeing the confusion it caused. That call came from either the cell across from me, or beside me. I'm not sure, but I know it was ONE of them.

The officer apparently didn't take too kindly the disruption, and decided to punish the entire dorm. The idea of inmates not standing up, and the idiot who said "clear" caused the male officer to take matters in his own hand. He turned off the TVs, to punish the dorm. He then called the cafeteria and told them that we would be last.

This was about 5pm, and several inmates were upset at this. I was personally upset, because I see no rehabilitative benefits in punishing me- or those who did what they were told, if you're still going to punish us for what someone else did.

I'm not arguing the idea that we have to stand at count; it's the rule, so do it. I don't argue the punishment



of the moron who said "clear"... but punish HIM! There's about 120 inmates in the dorm; why punish everyone for what one person ~~on~~ did? Why discipline the ones who do right? I took this personally, because prisons do this all the time. They expect us to go by the rules, but often times they don't follow their own rules. Yet inmates are punished wholesale for something one or two guys did.

If the officer had a problem with the people not standing up, punish THEM. You know who they are, because they're in the cell. We're not responsible for disciplining inmates. These guys are supposedly called "Correctional Officers", though they do very little correction.

At any rate, I was upset...and when I get upset, I write. I shot an email to the Camp Administrator regarding the unprofessionalism of the male officer. I overheard him say, as he was passing out mail, "They don't know who they're \_\_\_\_\_ing with..."

I think you can correctly fill in the blank.

Instead of going to dinner, I got on the computer and wrote my email. Do I expect them to answer? They never do... cowards. They never want to address an issue, but quick to make knee-jerk edicts based on half knowledge...

Ok, I'm venting a bit... so sue me!



So, I send my email. I'm voicing my opinion, something most inmates DON'T do. Everybody runs their mouth, but nobody wants to "step up to the mic". Many inmates were upset at this officer, because this borders on harassment, certainly poor judgement. So all seemed to be over...

Until the shakedown, during our evening rec.

Apparently, the officer wanted to show us who's boss, so they kicked everybody out, and did cell searches. This can be a huge inconvenience to inmates, and to me, a cheap way for officers to mess with you. We were not due a shakedown, because we had one like 3 days ago. But because this officer wanted to establish male dominance, he called for a shakedown.

Needless to say... NOBODY liked it. If they were upset at 5pm, they were INCENSED at 8:30. Guys were talking about what to do. Most knew it was because of the idiot who said "clear". I had a pretty good idea who said it, but without absolute proof, I dare not say. It's clearly one of 3 guys, but I can't put somebody out there like that, especially if I wasn't 100% sure.

Yet, here's the problem the ignorant officer created. By punishing the dorm, he's set "prison politics" in motion. Two guys were taken to the SHU (Special Housing Unit) because they had contraband in their cell. Other guys had stuff taken. Nobody liked it. If they KNEW who did it... that person would



be in danger. Imagine if you cried "wolf", and 115 guys knew it was YOU, and got them all in trouble? What do you think they'd do to you, if they knew?

Yes, to say "clear" was definitely wrong; there's no defense of that. But I believe the officer showed poor judgement, and may have put that person, or an innocent person, in harm's way. What if some inmates come to the WRONG conclusion, and accuse someone who didn't do it? Now we're pointing fingers, and somebody's gonna get blamed. This compromises security, which is supposed to be job one to that officer- not to flex his self-serving authority.

Stuff like this brings out the worst in people. Out on the yard, I heard one guy, who's normally a Christian-talking man, talk about "Christian stuff" with another inmate. But after the shakedown, this same guy, upset to near rage, threatened to harm whoever was responsible for causing this shakedown.

A response like this proves that what the officer did was based on poor judgment. Where was the warning? There wasn't any. If you know who's guilty (I say to the officer), you deal with that person, not the dorm. What's the point of doing right, if you're still going to punish me anyway?

So, there's blame on both sides. Yes, inmates screwed up. But officers are supposed to use their wisdom...clearly lacking in the BOP (Bureau of Prisons), to discern a matter.



Over 100 inmates paid respect to the officers and the rule; a few didn't. Sadly, officers aren't trained to see the right, but rather look for the wrong.

So the blade cuts both ways...who's more right?

Neither.

Still, I don't appreciate being treated like the wrong when I did what was right. I pray there are no repercussions that put anybody in harm's way- sadly, the officer may have set it in motion.

I wonder, who then is holding the sword?