

## Seven Hot Topics Concerning North Carolina's Prison System

### Violence: Gangs And The Hustle Game

I can honestly say that out of the eight prisons where I've served my prison term violence was inescapable! Violence before my incarceration was my life but I can in almost seventeen years say I have not had a violence episode with anyone and God gets the glory for that. As stated earlier in the topic of authoritative officials and authority police youth institution was filled with violence inmates stabbing each other hitting each other in the heads with master locks. The officers were also violence hungry, they longed for it and provoked inmates from time to time to keep that atmosphere.

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→ At Polk youth institution you had only three main gangs: The bloods, folk nation, and the crips. and when you entered polk if you were not a part of either one of the gangs then you had to fight, or beat the door and correctional officers would put you in safe keeping. The only reason why I did not have to fight when I arrived at Polk was only because my cousin K.W. (a high ranking blood) and his partner J.B. (a high ranking folk) sent word that anybody who messed with me would suffer a great price, and for that reason I was untouched. Men are territorial and that mind follows them in prison. Let me explain: Territory as pertaining to prison's is all about surviving (or the Hustle game)

→ At odum correctional Inst you had gangs but to stay from under the radar (administrations eye) they clicked together as cities. In the dining hall you (as an inmate) could not sit where you wanted, each table was designated for inmates from a particular city. At that time only three major cities ruled the inmate population: Greensboro, Durham, and Raleigh all in north-carolina. If you sat at a table that inmates from greensboro claimed and you were not from greensboro you paid a terrible price the same applied to durham and Raleigh tables. During this time odum was a cash facility and it was not about violence, but about the hustle game. I was housed on a unit called one side.

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→ One side consisted of four dorms  
A, B, C and D. A and B dorms had  
a commissary operation that was ran by  
inmates from Greensboro. If an inmate  
had no money to spend at the prison  
authorized store (canteen) then he could go  
to the A and B dorms, and whoever the  
inmate was from Greensboro that ran  
the commissary would give him a sufficient  
amount of food items or money, however  
that same inmate had to pay double to  
the Greensboro dorms when he finally got  
some money. You could not run a commissary  
operation in A and B dorms if you were  
not from Greensboro, in fact you could not  
run a commissary operation no where on  
one side if you were not from Greensboro.

→ I witnessed inmates come to Odum and try to run some type of commissary operation, and it became violent and the bloodshed was great. On one side clarks and O Raleigh and Durham ran the card games (seven-card and lowball) the same principal that applied to the Greensboro commissary operation applied to the Raleigh and Durham card games. At Odum it was never about violence, but about the hustle game, when that hustle game was disrespected then it became violent. Most of the inmates did not have family members sending them money through the mail, all they had was the little bit of money they earned from job assignments at the prison and the hustle game.

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→ At eastern Correctional Inst (which is now a women's prison) in the year 2011 a different gang and hustle game resided. A gang called the "45thirteen" (Latinos and Mexicans) they're hustle game was tobacco, and drugs which involved a little outside help (correctional officers) which increased the bloodshed amongst the inmate population there. Many times I witnessed inmates get cut severely and no one charged (infracted) although correctional officers knew who did it. The hustle game ruled. I must say that one of the most violent prisons I've ever served at concerning my prison term was called Alexander Correctional Institution located in Taylorsville, north Carolina a close custody facility. This prison was on the news and in news papers.

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→ In fact in the year 2007 three correctional officers had their throats cut. Alexander was and still is a prison made to house gang members, the prison was full of them. I was at Alexander in the furniture plant/school, which was only two medium dorms, residing in those dorms were inmates who did not cause problems and wanted to graduate and go home (like myself.) The rest of the prison was close custody. There was no specific type of hustling there, inmates were selling anything they had access to, that would bring them commissary prison clothes, shoes, stamps, radios etc. not to mention a lot of inmates were selling themselves (homosexual activity) I remember in the year 2015 an inmate who was a clotheshouse worker -

→ had a big hustle concerning clothes him and two other guys were in charge of making sure our dorms received clothes every week. If your money was right you could pay the clothes house man some stamps or food items, and he would deliver brand new clothes to you, while everybody else had to go through clothes exchange and receive used clothes. A female correctional officer was fully aware of the clotheshouse hustle and she made it her duty to harass and search the inmate clotheshouse worker when she worked, until finally the inmate was fired. upon being fired he was telling other inmates that he was going to get her, and one evening during commissary hours she entered the dorm where the inmate was housed -

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→ and as she made her rounds in the  
clooms) she got to the inmates room and he  
jumped on the female correctional officer  
and stabbed her fifteen times with a knife.  
She never fully recovered, and the administration  
never put her back on the unit's again.

I remember being in the dining hall eating  
and witnessing the bloods (gang members)  
assault a captain. However on the other  
side of things officers were just as brutal.  
A lot of inmates have died from cruel and  
unusual abuse, a vast majority of the  
inmates that came to alexander were/are  
young and violent in society, and they come  
to prison with that same mind set. When these  
inmates come face to face with correctional officers  
that hate inmates, or believe that inmates —

→ should be treated like dogs, then  
the blood shed between the two is unreal!

A lot of situations I witnessed could've been  
resolved if two things were present:

understanding and communication. The

mind of a violent inmate must be understood

in the sense that those inmates who  
make victims through violence, were once

victims of violence themselves, a lot times by

the hands of family members. These type of

inmates are sensitive towards any type/form

of ill feelings towards them they can easily

detect when they are not liked, so they must

be entreated concerning prison policy and

procedure in view of the mind they have!

When dealing with correctional officers or any  
administrative official, they're position (job) -

→ must be understood in the sense that  
a vast majority of correctional officers don't  
make the rules that govern(s) a prison, but  
must reinforce (carry) them out. For example  
here at Nash Correctional (presently) we  
inmates are not allowed to wear prison  
issued hats in the dorms. If an inmate has  
a hat on in the dorm and the officer will  
approach him and ask him to remove his hat  
because it's against policy. That officer did  
not make the rule but still has to make sure  
that rule is followed by inmates. I've seen  
correctional officers get blamed and even  
assaulted for just doing that which was their  
job, and I believe that this is wrong!  
Correctional officers have a job to do and  
violent (gang oriented) inmates have a mind —

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→ That must be understood. When it comes to communication, I don't mean that correctional officers and violent gang oriented inmates should make an attempt to be social towards each other. What I am saying is that when the time for communication arrives there should be no verbal altercation words have the power to give birth to violence. All of the fights that I've witnessed were always preceded by the wrong choice of words between two inmates, and an inmate and correctional officer(s). Prison is a place of correction. The prison staff administration must establish an environment that is contrary to the life that gang oriented inmates have been accustomed to, this can be done without being mean, disrespectful, and indifferent.

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→ As stated earlier in this topic  
violence used to be my life, it was the  
air that I breathed, but now I have  
a new life and I breath christ, if it can  
happen to me it can happen to anyone!

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