

-1-

Anger Management

Frederick Mason #55487-056

USP Tucson PO Box 24550

Tucson, AZ 85734

Ira furor brevis est- Anger is brief madness.

(Pronounced EE-rah FOO-rawr BREH-wis est)

It is said that Horace uses these words in his Epistles to say that anger is a momentary departure from reality, and he cautions us not to let our passions control us.

Proverbs 14:17 "A quick-tempered man acts foolishly..."

Proverbs 14:29 "He who is slow to wrath has great understanding, but he who is impulsive exalts folly."

I'm trying to build a case to support what I should do when an officer has clearly crossed the lines of professionalism- and foolishness. We are expected to obey officers without fail...ok, I'll buy MOST of that. But I contend that in order to respect the officers, they must first be RESPECTABLE. You don't get respect simply because you're wearing BOP (Bureau of Prisons) uniform. If your heart is as black as midnight, the uniforms are tarnished too.

2-

MOST officers here are ok- some are pretty cool. But there are some that likely failed to get a job at Wal-Mart greeting customers because their attitude is so terrible. When we as inmates encounter such officers, we are put to the test of anger management. In the real world, if we "speak our minds", the results are minimal. Here in prison, they try to suppress your words, or deny them altogether.

So, what do you do?

I'm writing this essay as of 11:58pm... almost midnight on a Sunday/Memorial Day weekend. And while most of it went well, at about 8:30pm, things went bad...

and I'm angry.

"Why? What happened?"

Glad you asked...

Here at USP Tucson, we have a lot of events on holidays, to kinda raise morale. Cool, I like that. Lots of events for prizes for the inmates, and the band playing on the yard; a lot of fun. What I do is the Bingo games...at least I USED to.

About a year ago, guys in Recreation needed a "voice", someone to call the Bingo games. The "Bingo Announcer" would use the mic to address the inmates, and call the letters and

numbers (i.e. G56, 072, and so on). I was approached because guys know I used to work in radio and had a "radio voice". So, I was hired to be the voice of the Bingo games on special occasions. I did Bingo on Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Day weekends. I got paid...3 Chick-O-Sticks and 3 packets of Crystal Light for each event...

Big money, I know...

But we also got popcorn. The Recreation Department popped fresh popcorn each Bingo night. It was a big hit. People sometimes RAN to rec for the Bingo and popcorn. It was a full house. And I enjoyed it. As a DJ, I know how to talk pleasant, and have fun with the audience. My job was not only to manage the Bingo, but to keep people happy.

So from New Year's to Memorial Day, we had no Bingo, But when I was told about this weekend, I got excited. I was gonna have fun and help give out prizes. So tonight, Sunday (although it's 12:09am now- Monday) I go to indoor rec to call Bingo, I get there about 6:15pm, and would be there for 2 hours. The first hour is for Northside inmates, the second for Southside inmates. Cool, I'm ready.

The first hour goes well. We're having fun, and give prizes away. The second hour, much the same. Now, as we always did, we have our popcorn saved in a bigger plastic bag than the paper bags given to the other inmates. After all, WE'RE working, and as an ex-DJ, you don't eat popcorn before going

on the mic (it could choke you). So, they save our bags and we get it after we're done. Cool.

So after the Bingo is over, we're cleaning up, helping out, and I realize my popcorn bag is in one of the smaller rooms, and it was locked. So, I go to the officer working tonight, Ms. D. Huffstuttler, and calmly say, "It appears my bag of popcorn is in the locked room", to which she says, "Then you'll have to wait until tomorrow to get it."

WHAT? TOMORROW? WHY?

It's right there, in the room! All she has to do is unlock it...SHE locked it, so she has the keys! Why do I have to wait until tomorrow to get what's right in front of my face?

But I didn't "bear fangs"... I let it be, for awhile.

But I was NOT happy about this at all. Ms. Huffstuttler clearly had the authority, and time, to simply open the door, and let me get my popcorn. I wasn't being unreasonable. She knew I worked there; she watched me for TWO hours, with the microphone, managing the Bingo games. Everybody that came got popcorn. As "employees" we had ours set aside. Why is she refusing to give us popcorn that was already set aside?

Come and get it tomorrow? There's no guarantee it

will even BE there. There's no name on it; anybody can claim it, and because I'm on Northside, I won't be able to come back until 1pm... IF it's even there.

Upset, I slowly walked away, thinking I was the only one shafted. Until Shelby, the guy who worked with me, said he didn't get his either...and then several of the rec orderlies said the same thing. Apparently, several of us hadn't gotten our popcorn.

They then called "Yard Recall" and immediately Ms. D. Huffstuttler began to run people out, saying "Recall, go back to your dorms". Many of us waited, to see if Huffstuttler would allow us to get our popcorn that was locked in that room. It was then that some of the other rec orderlies came over, and she unlocked the VERY ROOM, to let them get their stuff...but refused to let us get ours.

The difference? The 2 or 3 she allowed in that room to get their stuff...was white.

The 6 or so that wasn't allowed...were black.

When the other guys asked Huffstuttler if they could get their stuff (and my popcorn), she said "Recall, go back to your dorms." She let 3 white inmates in the room to get their stuff- but nobody else.

Now, as of 12:30am, as I recall it, I noticed later the

racial difference. I didn't factor that then, because I was quite angry over the situation- but not livid. As I left, in such disgust, I told John, one of the white rec orderlies that "I quit". I told him to tell Chile, the head inmate rec orderly, since I could not catch up with him. Both John and Chile are good people; I've known them long enough to easily say that. But THEY were 2 of the 3 allowed to go in there... and Tom (who is also white) was the 3rd. Why were THEY allowed to get stuff, and WE weren't?

While outside, going back to the dorm, I managed to catch up with Chile and told him that I quit. He didn't argue one point, rather said, "I understand". He saw what happened, and understood. He told me, "You did a good job"...

OF course I did. I used to be a DJ!

But I told him, "I enjoyed it, but I'm not working for her anymore."

To that point, I have heard many people speak of her- almost NONE in a good way, with examples to prove it. But because I had no personal experience, I couldn't judge. I had nothing to base it on. But NOW, in light of this situation, "I have seen all I need to see", to quote a line from a "Jeffersons" episode...

(or was it "Benson"?)

Anyway, I was upset. And when I'm upset... I write. As soon as I got back to the dorm, I wrote an e-mail to the Recreational Supervisor. That's on the way, but he may not read it until Tuesday. The next step was to write down the situation in my journal, so I don't forget. Then...I did pushups, thinking of how to write this essay. And then...we're here, at 12:41am.

Guys, I'm upset, disappointed, but not in a rage. If I WERE, I would have acted irrationably, and likely cussed the old bag out...

(Ok, I get to throw a few shots, so sue me!)

And I CERTAINLY didn't get physical. That solves nothing...especially when it's over a bag of popcorn.

Yet, it was more than that. It was about respect. Huffstuttler clearly rejected certain inmates, favoring others for no real reason... but possibly skin color. I'm not saying she hates blacks, or non-whites, and only loves whites. There are many white inmates that don't like her either.

So what am I arguing? Equality? Fairness? Respect? Yeah, all of that. D. Huffstuttler failed at each one- and apparently this is the norm.

So, am I angry? Yes. But my anger isn't defined by the Latin phrase I gave you, or Proverbs 14:17. I don't believe I

reacted irrationably by NOT causing a scene or writing my argument to staff. And I don't think I was irrational in quitting. At some point, you have to make a stand when the lines of integrity are crossed. When someone insults your integrity with impunity, you have to DO something.

Nemo me impune lacessit- No one provokes me with impunity.

(Pronounced NAY-mah may im-POO-neh lah-KES-sit)

It's the motto of the kings of Scotland, but I remember it from Edgar Allen Poe's story, "Hop Frog"...and from Serpentor of "G.I. Joe"...

(so I like cartoons, sue me again!)

The two latter ones said "No one insults me with impunity". Shall Huffstuttler be allowed to treat certain inmates like trash, and give favor to others without merit? If I do nothing but gripe, she doesn't change, but rather continues to do it. She isn't well liked by most of the inmate population- how she got a job here I'll never know.

But I sit here, at 12:58am, wondering what to do. I did what I ought- sent an e-mail to the Recreation Supervisor clearly detailing my disgust. I can only send one e-mail to staff a day, and the library isn't open on Memorial Day, so I can't type this up just yet. I want to get the ball rolling on this; I want to have my say.

Am I doing this right?

Am I missing something?

What's funny is that before I went down there tonight, I prayed on it. I asked God to help me do the best I can. I wanted it to go well for everybody. I wanted everybody to have fun, even if they didn't win. I have a lot of friends here, and I enjoyed seeing them come out for a night of Bingo. If everybody had a good time, I'm fine with that.

And that DID happen. Nobody got unruly. Nobody got mad at me. People laughed. Some won prizes. The room was packed. We ran out of Bingo cards. It was great!

But Huffstuttler killed the moment by her unprofessional- and possibly racist attitude. So I sit here wondering...did my prayer fail? No, it didn't. I prayed for a good evening, for God to help me, and He did. But perhaps this situation is an attack on my faith.

I did what I was supposed to do. I came to work, and did it with gladness and humor. And when it was over, I helped clean up. Yet, when denied my popcorn, I did not react rashly; I walked away...it's not like I'd cuss; I may have uttered 5 profane words in 3½ years here. And even in anger, there was no profanity near my mouth. But I was angry, and did the best things I could do...write.

I think there are shades of differences between anger, rage and wrath...even displeasure. Anger Management is dealing PRODUCTIVELY with levels of anger... but rage and wrath are irrational and often uncontrollable. Clearly, I wasn't in a rage or wrath...

Perhaps I should have been. Huffstuttler was no less respectful to me.

Perhaps the smartest thing I did wasn't to write this stuff... perhaps, it simply was to quit. Easier to manage your anger when the source is removed. Good riddance to Ms. Huffstuttlerheimer... or whatever her silly name is. Many inmates have a much shorter word to name her...

(OUCH! Low blow... had to throw that one in...)

Anyway, it's 1:17am, and I'm done writing for now...anger temporarily abated.

Frederick MASON
#55487-056