

Chronicles of July

Frederick Mason #55487-056

USP Tucson PO Box 24550

Tucson, AZ 85734

Not every day in prison is off a movie or some television show; some days are pretty calm. But there are obstacles every day. I wanted to share some insight of things that happen on a more regular day... not that any day in prison is regular. As I always do, I will "pause" between parts to kinda color in the situation for you. Ok, let's begin...

July 9th, 2016: 10:08pm- why am I sweating? I'm eating Corn Chips with a REAL hamburger. First bite... oh, how delicious...onions... what else... something spicy mixed in the meat. Delicious. I bought it off a guy for \$2.50 in stamps. I gave him my last \$3, so I can't mail anything now- but this was worth it. I saved it until after lockdown, so I can enjoy it at my pace- and in peace... time for another bite...mmmm either I'm hungry or the burger is that good.

(PAUSE: It sounds trivial, but this is very important. Something about doing something out of the norm can be very helpful when you're doing time. Sometimes you get caught doing the same old thing over and over again. Changing it up helps.

So why was the burger so important? Because the food

here is cheap, and we don't get REAL burgers; REAL beef. Guys that work in the kitchen can sometimes get food out, and may sell it in the dorms. Yeah, I know, likely against the rules...so sue me. the \$2.50 was worth it for that burger! Let's continue...)

The turkey burgers they serve here are dry. So today wasn't so bad, it coulda been better, but what can ya do?

I've been ashamed of my face; I've got a bump by a zit or hair bump, and I tried to burst it, making it worse...ugh.

(PAUSE: An embarrassing time, I felt like a teenager with a bump on my face. I'm not saying I'm a model, but many have said I look "cute", so I'm getting self-absorbed in myself. Walking around with a big zit on my face, and failing to burst it now made me look like I had a swollen face. I was embarrassed to go outside the cell. Vanity, I know. Let's continue...)

So now, two or three days in, I gotta figure out how to deal with it. I was supposed to meet Tino at the library, to help him with his GED studies. But he didn't show, so I watched a video of Alton Brown's "Good Eats" on ham. I love that show, because before I got locked up, the family and I used to watch all the cool shows on Food Network: "Ace of Cakes", "Iron Chef America", "Diners, Dives and Dive-ins" and "Good Eats". I miss that.

(PAUSE; Here at USP Tucson, the library allows us to watch a variety of videos on about 18 monitors. We have a couple hundred DVDs of various programs, from travel to history to food. I usually watch the travel videos, but today I changed up to food. I loved that show. It almost felt like I was home... ok let's continue...

oh wait! I mentioned "Iron Chef America"... I HATED that show. I liked the ORIGINAL Iron Chef, out of Japan; FAR better.)

This burger is GOOD...anyway. Tino wasn't there. Now I have to change my plan with other activities. The Diversity Committee has asked me to co-host the Diversity Day... ugh! I was asked to host their Jeopardy games, but I turned it down because it was held in Recreation. I'm still self-banning myself from there. The "Empire" game, the one "G" commands, has been trying to pull me in again; Armstrong is now the President (for whatever that means) and has asked me to be the Vice-President (whatever that means). I don't really want to get involved, it's a time eater and no value at all.

(PAUSE: I have been involved in quite a number of events, because people have heard of my background; college degree in Radio and Television, with studies in Communications, Speech and Theatre Arts and Journalism. They know I used to do college football and basketball games, and was a DJ for 5 different radio stations (not at the same time!) as well as other things. So I have been kinda in demand

for speaking events, but I tried to keep a low profile. Sometimes when you try to live on an island, everybody sees you in the fishbowl.

I mentioned the "Empire" game; this is a sort of game devised by an inmate to supposedly teach political science to inmates, but right now, let me just say this... there are GLARING holes in how this is being done, and there are red flags everywhere... trust me on that for now... anyway, let's continue...

did I mention the burger was THAT good?)

I looked at Tino's GED Math packet; who put this stuff together? Some of their questions don't make sense:

A cube has a volume of 9 cubit feet. What is the length of its base? A) 9ft B) 6ft C) 3ft D) 1ft

Yet, the formula for the volume of a cube is Length X Width X Height. What number times itself, times itself, is 9? None of the answers make sense. And the next one is ridiculous:

Mr. Peters recently opened a new distribution center for his company. The floor has an area of 2 square kilometers and the volume is 1 cubit kilometer. What is the height of the distribution center?

A) 5km B) 0.5km C) 2km D) 2.5km

What the heck is he building? The Tower of Babel? Even the smallest answer, 0.5km, is half a kilometer...500 meters. Since a meter is equal to 3.28 feet (still eating the burger) then .5km= 1640 feet (thereabouts). How tall is the Empire State Building?

My gosh, that's like a third of a mile HIGH? The question doesn't make sense...

(PAUSE: If there are any mathematics majors out there, then maybe you can tell me if I'm wrong here. I wrote the questions exactly as they came out the book. Not all are like this, but some are clearly too difficult for a person taking a GED to do. I used to teach GED at a community college after I graduated from college, so I got a good idea of what is too much.

Tino is like my little brother, he's like 23 and trying to get his GED. We spend a lot of time hanging out, and I wanted to help him if I could. Of course, the kid had to SHOW UP when he said he would... but that's another issue. Let's continue...)

sigh... oh well, I'm almost done with my burger; Lavont's listening to my MP3, since I added "Love is Stronger Than Pride" by Sade. I also added "Personality" by Najee. Well, 10:34 as I finish my burger...yum.

(PAUSE: I mentioned my MP3; as you are aware, if you follow my writings, inmates in Federal Prison are allowed an MP3 (though GROSSLY OVERPRICED). I have currently 236 songs, some of the last ones being added was the one by Sade (pronounced SHAR-day) and Najee (pronounced nah-GEE). The song by Najee is from the late 80's, maybe 1989, and Sade's song is from the same era, late 80's. I can't tell you how important music is to me, but then again, I've written like 7 or 8 essays on MP3 in prison; hope you have read that.)

Anyway, that's all for now, hope to share more later... and yeah, that burger WAS that good (:

Have more if you  
want to read more

Fred M.