

"My Last Celly"

"Cuff up. Were the words directed to me from the mouth of the six foot one officer looking out of my cell window. I began searching for the next possible cell mate that I would be sharing a steel toilet and shower with, inside of a seven foot in height and fourteen feet in width concrete box, that had only two steel bunk beds.

Do you hear me. The officer asked? I glance toward the officer, than at the other officer that was now escorting a tall black male. The guy easily outweighed me by a hundred and fifty pounds. I knew this because of the pudge that was protruding underneath the orange issued uniform. Though I couldn't see his face, I could see the shiny bowling ball head that sat between his shoulders. Taken my attention away from the guy, I looked toward the officer. Are you refusing a direct order. The officer glared at me? Absolutely not. Cornball. I said to myself. As I turned around to submit to restraints, I caught movement out of my peripheral vision. It was the black inmate shaking his head, indicating I should not be handcuffed. Yeah, but only the officer has control of this

I admitted to myself. So I turn and submitted to hand restraints. The coolness of the cold steel touch my wrist, next I heard the bang of the food slot being shut. I stood inside the cell waiting while the officers orchestrated the control panel, enabling the cell door to open. But it didn't. Taking position back in front of the cell window, the officer stood frustrated, as he held the handcuff key in his hand. I scanned the tier in search for the inmate, but there wasn't a soul occupying the tier, but the officer. Sliding the tray slot open I turn and place my wrist into the open slot. As he remove my restraints, I ask.

"Am I going to be given an incident report I asked, after returning the handcuffs?"

"You, didn't refuse. He did. The officer stated, before slamming the food slot again. I quickly walked away from the cell door, re-taking my position on my bunk. Honestly I didn't want to have a celly this soon. After having three celly's in the past month was enough for me. I sat thinking to myself. Then I thought,

Cool. I ~~thought~~^{said} to myself. I could not take a chance at losing any more good time. After all I was already in the shu (Special Housing Unit), waiting on a transfer for a threat assessment against a staff member. But, I wondered why the guy didn't want to come into the cell I occupied.

Here in Shu the staff members have a bulletin board with each individual inmate bio, status, and reason for being placed in confinement. They use this to place compatible cell mates together, also to keep violent altercations down. After all each inmate is living inside a bathroom, for at least twenty three hours out of a day, weeks or months at a time.

After the incident, I decided to begin my workout. Today would be five hundred burpees, a thousand squats, and five hundred situps and crunches. Drenching from an intense workout, I grab my shower things, and grab a hot shower. An J1 was very fortunate to have a hot shower this late in the evening. Usually during the afternoon everyone is moving about utilizing the water system causing the water temp

ature to decrease, and I personally dislike cold showers. As I wipe myself of any excess H_2O , I applied hygiene products, then grab a pen to finish writing this profile page for an upcoming pen pal site. As I was just finishing the last sentence, a second shift officer approach my cell door.

"Inmate cuff up, you are getting a cellie. The officer stated. "After already being giving a request from the earlier shift I knew I would be getting a cell mate sooner or later. So I walked to the slot and submitted to restraints. As the officer push buttons on the control panel, the cell door slid open, and this time a inmate was placed inside the cell. But what surprise me, was it was the same guy that had refuse to enter the cell earlier. I let him remove his handcuffs first, skeptical because of his size. If he was to assault me I would be in a vulnerable position. Yet, he shifted to the other side of the cell, waiting as the handcuffs were taken off of me. The officer shut the slot, then completed his round on the tier, before disappearing.

"What's up guy? My name's Mikēl. I took the initiative to introduce myself, producing a fist that bumped against his. Sort of a mutual greeting. I personally do not shake hands with other inmates, and I would encourage others to do the same.

"Everyone calls me [REDACTED]. He replied." The words came out soft spoken and very feminine.

"[REDACTED]. Hey [REDACTED]! My next door neighbor yelled his name through the side of the toilet outlet."

Who is that? [REDACTED] squatted beside the toilet to communicate with my neighbor.

"This [REDACTED]."

"Oh, hey [REDACTED]. What's up. I thought you had transferred. [REDACTED] has been in the shu for twenty months. He was being investigated by staff for drug related activity. He was pending prosecution, possibly going to be charged and given more time for smuggling drugs. I have conversated with him a few times a day since I've been in this cell. He [REDACTED] is a cool dude, never showed me any fake characteristic. No. No, I didn't bring nothing this time [REDACTED] [REDACTED] stated."

"Dang. [redacted] answered." I figured the two was talking about drugs. I let the two of them get re-acquainted. Re-taking my position on my bunk, proof-reading the pen pal site profile, I busied myself immediately. I don't know how long did the conversation last, but when [redacted] stood, I quickly caught his movement.

"I can't believe im in the shv. He stated, standing in the center of the floor, unfolding a sheet to be placed on a naked mattress. Like seriously im so tired of this yard. He admitted.

"What did yw do? I asked?"

"Nothing. I just refuse to go back inside of the cell i was assign, thats all.

"How long have yw been on this compound?"

"Almost a year"

"Almost a year, i repeated."

"Yeah. There's nothing for me on this yard, beside a whole bunch of frustrated men, that can drive yw crazy. He stated

"Well look im in shv because an officer lied on me. I suppose to be transfered soon. Walking over to the wall where i had some hygiene products stacked up against the wall. I grab a Dove soap, Degree deodorant, and Colgate toothpaste. Giving

each to him. Commissary has already come this week. I have a few stamps, if you need any to write your family." "Thanks. He replied. Stepping out of his way so that he could make his bed. I don't think that in suppose to be in this cell. He stated, while making his bed."

"Why do you say that. I asked, standing by the door?"

"Because i'm different than you. See before i came in here, i talk to the staff about coming into this cell."

"What do you mean. I asked, confuse?"

"I'm a transgender."

"Huh? The words or better yet letter t-r-a-n-s-g-e-n-d-e-r, echoed inside of my brain. Then after the words settle in, i begin to understand. This was the reason why this guy didn't want to come inside of the cell.

This explain his name [REDACTED] and his feminine ways. Though im straight and have never indulge in anytype of homosexual activities, i do not feel bitter or any less masculine because of a person sexuality. Still, i had a question. Why did they bring you back to this cell, instead of placing you with another transgender. I asked?"

"The Lt. said that the shu is full and your cell was the only cell open. I mention to him that i am

gay and that I should be house with another transgender, but he refuse. They even threatening to run team on me. (Team is a six man squad, orchestrated and commanded by an Lt. Each member suits up in armor bullet proof vest, and gas mask for protection. Left palm on each other left shoulder. They all wait on the command of the Lt, before they rush inside of any cell that has an out of control situation. The team is a next to last resort of calming down a situation.) Hearing this guy speak of a six man team being executed on him for refusing to enter the cell that I occupied, was so pathetic on the administration behalf. I look toward my cell mate who was still explaining himself. I just didn't want to be gas."

"Yeah. It isn't that serious. I responded. An it really wasn't. No matter, gay, gunner, or a gang member. No one deserve to be threatening or threaten by an officer. Neither physically abuse all because they feel that their cell mate could or could not be ~~in the most~~ compatible

"Bro, don't trip. As long as we both have an understanding about each other we good. Cool."

"Cool." We both bumped each other fist. That

night I had learn alot about my cell mate. He had told me about his life an about his participation in the gay community. Explaining that he had been dealing with his homosexuality since a child. But what shock me was his military backaround. He was an [REDACTED], a soldier in the Iraq war. After being station overseas, he return back to the U.S, where he made a mistake [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. Costing him [REDACTED] months of his life in a federal prison. Hearing him explain hisself to me, gave me a better insight of the person that occupied the body of [REDACTED] [REDACTED], but, dare needed to know how he got that name. Though im not a person of judgemental crisis. Judging a person by the way he or she talk or conduct themselves. A person could barely read or spell in prison, but have a very good heart, when it comes becoming an ~~acquaintance~~ acquaintance or associate. So, i treat each an everyone as my equal. Nothing makes me any better than the next person. After another few minutes of getting to know each other, our conversation switched to religion. A very interesting subject, being im a Baptist. An i found out he too was a Baptist. Both believing in christianity, i couldn't

understand why would he continue to indulge in the type of lifestyle with the beliefs and knowledge of our religion. Yet once again its not my job to judge a person, only God will do the ~~judgement~~ judging on judgement day. When the conversation switch to me and my life, I told him about my career as a song writer, an a local song artist. I was skeptical about presenting my music career. Revealing my life of being in the music business was an always seem depressing to me. I guess that's because I walked away from potentially becoming famous, to be in the streets indulging in drug and gang activity. This lifestyle paid off too, I was given a hundred and twenty months for felon possession of a fire arm. The streets didnt pay me one cent for all the hard work I put in. That's when Blacc Chyna reveal that he too had been an active gang member, not in the same gang, but he use to be in a gang. This is when i begin to breakdown a person character. For some strange reason guys in prison like to have the cutest chick, the more violent stories, the attention of other inmates. Its as each has to be better than the other or they like to portray an image of a person.

that the person isn't. I don't understand this side of prisoners, I guess inmates portray this image so they could be feared by others or to buy friends for protection. Why a person couldn't just be themselves? Is totally out of my reach to give a correct answer. As the time tick away, darkness approached vs. Having to send out a few letters, I retired for the night. Lying in my bunk while my cell mate slept, I begin to replay our conversations, using each detail to break down the person who was now sharing the cell with me.

The next morning I woke up to perform my early morning hygiene. I notice my cell mate sitting on his bunk.

"Good morning bro. How did you sleep. I asked?"

"OK, I guess. I can't do this. He stated."

"Can't do what. I asked? Brushing my teeth."

"I have to get out of this cell. These officers know me, I really have to get out of here."

I observe him writing something on a piece of paper, but continued doing my hygiene.

"Listen bro. These people do not care you know that. There ain't no way you can get out of this cell."

"Yeah there is. He stated assured."

Well, that's up to you. What do you plan on doing?

"Hunger strike

"Psst. Man these people don't respect no hunger strike. Hunger strike is a food refusal requesting relief by not eating a meal serve to you. I've tried it a few times, but I was subject to being force fed by medical. There would be a tube stuck in my nostrils with liquids that would enter my body. I haven't experience this, but I've heard it hurts, badly. I don't think that's a good idea. I answered."

"It'll work. Watch."

Whatever you say. I said to myself. At Six o'clock the officers passed out the morning meal. Grabbing my tray, I ate my food.

laid in his bunk. When the C/O approach the cell, he place a paper on the cell window, stating he was indeed on a hunger strike. The officers picked up the trays and continued on doing their job. Not once stopping asking why was he refusing his trays. Around lunch time again I ate my tray, before taking a nap. When I woke was standing on the floor with a piece a paper, explaining that he had written a military note to the officers

informing them of an emergency, when the officer made his evening round, he gave the note to him. The officer read the content of the letter than pull out his handcuffs

"Cuff up. He stated." My cell mate submitted to restraints, than i submitted. The cell door was open and my cell mate was taken away. I sat in the cell waiting on his return, but he never did. Later that night i was given another cell mate. I went through the same routine, thinking no more of [REDACTED]

The following day, after receiving a hour of recreation, an officer approach my cell request ing me to be handcuffed, someone needed to speak to me. I was cuff than taken to speak to SIS (Investigation officer) Investigation...

"Do you know why you are here?"

"No. I don't have a clue."

"Do you know inmate....."

"Oh my cellie. Yeah. What did he do?"

"Well, actually its what he claim you did."

"I did. I didn't do anything to dude"

"I believe you, but due to the claim i have to investigate the situation. Sort of protocol."

"Wait a minute. What protocol?"

According to inmate.... He claim yw ask him to perform a sexual act.

"A sexual act. Sir im not gay an i didn't ask dude for no type of sexual favor. This is crazy."

I couldn't believe it. Dude wrote a note to the officers claiming i did something as fraudulent as this. I was upset, overall i was embarass. Not once in my whole life had i ever felt or thought sexually attractive to my own gender. But that didn't stop the SIS investigator from completing his investigation. I was taken to medical where the nurse conducted a PREA medical check. All i could do is watch the officer who force dude inside of my cell walk around talking amongst each other about what transpired. I tell yw all this story today in total honesty and to open yw all eyes to exactly how much a person could go through, regardless of going by it the correct way. Here in prison yw have to take licks sometimes so yw want get knocked out. Though my case has been long gone, dis miss, and destroyed. It doesn't matter how honest yw could be to a person, that person could still dis loyal. People do not trust inmates, never share any type of documents or addresses. I've learn this from being around

these type of individual. One day you could be sitting chatting about politics or sports. The next day you could be under investigation because you shared too much information with a person. What to do if this happen to you? This shouldn't happen to you if you live your life honestly, do not throw rocks at the penitentiary. Prison house some of the most horrible criminals and convicts in the world. Do the right thing, don't ever come to prison. Ever

Written by MIKEL Ashford

Could you all contact me whenever you receive my story? Thank you.