

## Day One

Frederick Mason #55487-056 USP Tucson PO Box 24550 Tucson, AZ 85734

It's been awhile since I've shared my very first day here at USP Tucson. I figured this would be a good time to share with you a description of my first of many days I would have at this prison.

For many of you, you've read a number of my journals through the past several years. Many of you have read the things I have experienced, both the good and the bad.

At the time I write this, it's now March 22nd, 2018. I got here at USP Tucson on December 7th, 2010... day One. So it's been awhile. Considering all I have been through, it seemed good to go back to the first day.

The first day I got here, "Day One" if you will, I remember bringing my khakis and towels and linens as we left the main building of the prison, headed to my new locale- B2.

I'll be honest, I was very nervous. What was I walking into? Sure, I believed God would be with me, I saw that and believed that from the day I left Raleigh, North Carolina. So I had some faith, but as I walked down the lane towards B2, I couldn't help but be nervous.

About 12 of us came off the bus that day, but of those, only 2 of us was going to B2. The prison has 6 units, or 12 dorms... although now the F Unit is empty. Each Unit has 2 dorms, so in my case, B Unit was in two parts: B1 and B2. At any rate, two of us went to B2, walking to that dorm in the cold December evening in Tucson.

I remember stepping into the dorm, nervous as over 100 inmates looked at the "new blood". Maybe it would have been different if a dozen of us came in; less guys to look at me. But with only two, EVERYBODY was looking at us.

I had to draw on my lessons in acting, which I did in high school, college and beyond. Treat every situation like a scene in a play or movie... just act the part. So, as I looked about the huge dorm, with 2 levels, one guy called down to me;

"Hey! Where you from?"

"North Carolina," I answered.

Immediately a few guys started moving around, for what reason I don't know. My concern was to find my cell, 219, which was upstairs. The other guy I came with had a cell downstairs. I went to get my mattress, and looked for my cell. I had to carry the heavy mattress up the stairs myself... I only weighed about 160, but a nice frame... something that I got comments on later, but that's another story altogether...

Cell 219 would be where I would begin my sentence... but moreso, it was here I would begin something much greater. I had

a plan, but I had to get my bearings first. I had to get a feel of the world I was now in. I had to get over being nervous. As one of the 12 newest faces out of 1500+, I would most certainly draw a LOT of attention by others.

My first "cellie" was a guy named "DC Dave"... a character that was both an ally and a thorn... moreso a thorn. Some called him "Jackhammer"...

...uh, do you REALLY want me to explain that one to you...  
we'll just leave it at that...

Dave would be my cellie for about a week, when I would then end up moving to another cell. But for the time being, this was my "home".

My first day in prison was, no doubt, stressful. I was in a prison environment, and I certainly didn't look like an inmate. No tattoos, no gang affiliation, no violent nature, and I looked like a college grad. Many guys told me that I ought to get on "Tagged" because I would get a lot of people writing or emailing me, since I looked "handsome".

But for the moment, I had to adjust to prison; I had a plan, but it required me to figure out what to do once I understood the world I was in and now lived. The plan was to start writing about prison, to share with people what inmates go through, so those with loved ones in prison can have some understanding of the incarcerated, and support them while they are doing their time. I would begin my first journal one week later, December 14th of 2010, and have been writing since.

Hundreds of days later, heck, over 1000 days, here I am, remembering the first day I got here. Much, so much more, has happened since then, and I continue to write journals of my life here. Much of it was of a Christian nature, to inspire those to not give up on people. Much was my struggles to get finances to take care of myself. Much was about prison abuse, from beatings, rape and numerous constitutional violations that the prison should have been sued for multiple times, but managed to weasel themselves out of... but continue to violate. So much I have written, and over time, many people started to listen, and write back, and support. For awhile, I wondered if anyone cared, or if I was a fool to try to share the human-side of being a prisoner. I was trying to find people willing to listen, to sympathize and support someone trying to help others.

I hope my plan continues to unfold, trying to make an impact for those who have loved ones in prison. It's not been easy, and I have paid the cost through retaliation by the prison, but I cannot give up. We have much to say, and I hope people will listen and support those in prison to let them know that someone cares.

I am pretty sure that's what God would want... so I'll keep writing. Until next time...