

Old address

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New Address

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Gargle , Rinse, Repeat

You are an adult, you've broken the law, you are in prison, but there's nothing else short of killing you that anyone can do to you, now add, *YOU ARE NOT GOING TO TELL ME WHAT TO DO!* Certainly, not some ignorant inmate that *you didn't ask* for an opinion from. You get into a scuffle with another inmate. Off to the jail within the prison or SHU (Security Housing Unit) you go.

You are in SHU. You are in your cell 24 hours a day. You get a break every other day, when they escort you to a piss hole, they call a shower. You are suppose to get an hour of recreation time, but there is always a fight on the yard before you can get out there. There's also inclement weather or a hundred other excuses for why you can't go outside. Let's face it, the officers get paid the same whether they, intervene in a fight or not. I've heard the *refusal of yard time* renamed *fight prevention*. The officers' shifts are easier if the inmates stay locked down, preferably asleep.

You become your own entertainment center. You make a menagerie of soap animals. You do origami with your mail. Perhaps you just count bricks or try to make spitball art. All these items are taken from your cell during searches, considered altering materials and contraband. You think of all things yellow, (bananas, Big Bird, and Bart Simpson) which you paint on your pillowcase with mustard and leave for a friend in the shower drain for a Christmas present. Of course, you read anything and everything available to you. You have read every religious tract ever printed. Wow, you are sober but it's a rabbit hole trip, if there ever was one.

You are cuffed everywhere you go. You have the handcuffs, hooked through the black box, attached to the waist chain that is run down to your shackles. You spit on your enemies; add spit mask to your travel gear. You look like Hannibal Lecter any time you are transported. You fought other offenders, so you are violent, you are deemed a problem.

Why can't you just get a book when you want? What possible harm could that cause anyone? You get two books, twice a week. The answer is always that you shouldn't have come to jail or put yourself in this situation. If you were a fortune teller, you would have planned out your life much better!

If you are of a certain age, you remember N.W.A.'s song (F*CK the Police). You remember that feeling, *YOU ARE NOT GOING TO TELL ME WHAT TO DO!* For some unknown reason, the officers seem to want to get in on the action, to provoke situations. You've got rage for days, locked up- locked down.

You try to get a routine down. Every day, you get up, get cleaned up. Clean your cell, collect your food then work out, eat your food. It seems there is never enough food. You are always hungry. You take a bird bath, lie down, read, collect food, and repeat until tired.

Some days, you don't actually use your shower time to bathe but to yell to other inmates. This is not allowed and you find you have been written rule violations that will cause you to spend more time in SHU. You flood the tier, they shut your water off. You must request your toilet to be flushed , if and when you can catch an officer.

You throw your tray at meal time, you are put on finger food status. All your food is put in a blender and baked it into what they call a nutritional *loaf*. You are in your cell not bothering anyone. Your disruptive behavior had subsided.

Officers tell you to cuff up; you don't have any recreation time coming, this can't be good. Why cuff up? The officers gear up in Kevlar vests, clear face masks, they have their batons and a body size plexiglass shield. The officers start their turtle march, it reminds you of a Trojan horse, of sorts. The officers command you to back up toward the bottom lock-hole in your door, kneel so that they can place leg irons on you. You don't comply with the first step, so they can't cuff you. Some prisons want your wrists cuffed first. It doesn't really matter. They open the door, reach

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around the shield and spray you with some form of pepper spray and carry you to a new cell. Checkmate, you hear them say in your head.

You have been put in a room with a camera. You ask yourself, what do they need to see? Officers have clearly tracked all your activities by taking your contraband, writing you up for talking to others, and saw your wrath in throwing the tray. You cover the camera and block the door window. The officers have said to uncover the camera and window or they will come in and do it for you. The officers think they can control you, watch you like a mouse, but they don't even bother with cheese. What do they know? We can do this all day, I have nothing but time. Gargle, rinse repeat.

You're in a stripped down room. You hate your life. You don't even remember exactly how it all came to this, but you're not going to let the system keep picking on you. You can't have lotion in SHU, but you can have soap, so you soap up for when they come for you again, so they can't get a hold of you. You have figured out how to get a break from your cell. You smear your feces on the walls. OSHA (Occupational Safety and Hazards Administration) mandates that someone has to clean it up. Ha Ha! The cops have to clean your poo.

Oops! You didn't think this out well, as the officers suit up, rush you and put you in four point restraints. Now, they bring a bedpan when you have to use the rest room. Your hand is uncuffed to wipe and/ or get a drink, then restrained again. You are talked to like a five year old. After four hours of this, with video reports being made every hour, you are asked if you are let out of your restraints if you are going to act out.

You're thinking, albeit not exactly straight, with much rest, or sense: Does it really matter what I say? I mean, NOW you're going to listen to the criminal? How long can they keep you this way? Isn't there a Geneva Convention or Amnesty International or something?

You get out of four point restraints and are placed back in the cell with the camera, **naked** without a paper gown, blanket or mattress. Of course, you did use the mattress as a shield and the blanket to try to throw on the officers.

What is all this suppose to accomplish? I have no idea. But sometimes after one of these episodes, when you get your uniform, mat, blanket and meals back: sometimes the officers are tired of dealing with you and don't feel like going rounds and sometimes you get lucky and when you ask , you can get a book.

Was it worth it? Absolutely **not**, days with dignity would have been better, persistence in asking for a book would have been better. You have unwittingly been a crash test dummy for new officer training. You set yourself up for failure, with all types of new charges with weapons and assault on officers.

I see the kids coming in, those just like me, full of rage and I see the young officers. Gargle, Rinse, Repeat. -End