

Chronicles of February
(You bought a WHAT?)

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

It amazes me what the government will spend just for the sake of blowing money, even in the prison system. Those of you who read my blogs or essays know that I cover a number of topics, and for those who have not done so, look for my essays or write me about questions you may have about prison.

Today's essay is off a journal I wrote on February 3rd, 2018. I'll jump right into it, and as I always do with my journals, I will "pause" in between the journal to kinda color in some of the details you may not be too familiar with. Let's begin:

Feb. 3rd, 2018- Wow, it's been a full WEEK since I last wrote. Why? I had a headache much of the week... and had a big shakedown Wednesday (Feb. 1st), but really didn't lose anything, but also had to move to cell 120 from 122 because one of the guys in 120 uses a G-Pap and our cell had an outlet inside the cell. So, that sucked.

(PAUSE: I love writing, but there are some times you just can't get going. All writers I suppose go through it, but in prison, I find it very difficult to find my "zone". Having a headache doesn't help either.

I mentioned the "shakedown". In prisons, you, as an inmate, are subject to have your property looked through... ALL OF IT. It can be very frustrating when officers go through your personal belongings, trashing your cell for little to nothing. Of course, the reason for this is to make sure the inmate isn't holding contraband- items that they are not supposed to have- like knives, drugs, wine (or hooch), and other things. But often, they "shakedown" dorms to clean out the stuff that isn't supposed to be there. That's worth an essay on it's own.

I mentioned moving from one cell to another; not every cell has an outlet, very few do, but the prison must accomodate for health care inmates, so some have outlets. For that reason, I had to move from my former cell to the one I currently have now. Ok, let's continue...)

I get roped into playing a D&D game with Aiden, which isn't of itself bad. The problem is that I'm the guy with the LEAST amount of experience in playing D&D. The others play it religiously, I don't.

So, I tried to use the excuse of "they took my character sheet in the shakedown"; didn't work-they had another Cleric character sheet ready for me. Ugh... but I gotta play.

So, Region is coming through, so now we gotta play the "dog and pony show" for these idiots. So the prison blows money to make it look like they're compliant. New Sanitation Dispensers in the cafeteria, even though it's been empty for a YEAR!

And who's STUPID idea was it to buy an ELECTRIC LIGHT ADVERTISING BILLBOARD in Education? For WHAT? To show the latest stock market prices? Couldn't buy a third printer, since we used to have 3, or new DVDs, since a lot are scratched, or even pay the inmates a few more dimes more- NO, you had to buy something completely useless! Why not buy a VHS recorder, or some 8-track tapes!! Idiots!

(PAUSE: Yes folks, your tax dollars at hard work. Now, I grant you, most folks don't understand the necessity of having things to keep inmates busy and productive. We haven't really broken that stigma about prison, so some of what I share might sound "soft", but trust me, prison isn't all what the officers tell you.

My anger here is how the Education department blew money, YOUR money, on something as stupid as an electric billboard.

What the....

And at the same time, they cut the pay of some of the inmates here. Guys who were making about \$17 a MONTH are now making about \$10. How in the world are you cutting the pay of GED instructors, yet blow money on useless garbage? Arrgh, don't get me started...

And I mentioned the D&D... you may have to find my other journals of how I am playing as a half-dragon, half-angel planetar, monster of legend. And I'm a cleric... gamers unite!!! Ok, let's continue...)

Well, I did get a blessing; mom put \$50 in my account- YAY! Now I gotta make it to Tuesday our canteen day. I'm down to spooning the last of my peanut butter and my last spoonfuls of Nutella. I just need to make it to Tuesday.

The Superbowl is tomorrow; Eagles vs Patriots. I'll take Eagles by 3; 27-24. We're supposed to have chicken wings (8), 2 pizzas, dessert, can soda, cup of cheese, candy bar and other stuff. That's worth like 12-15 dollars in stamps. I hope we can bring it all back.

(PAUSE: I can't tell you how important it is to be able to receive money while you're in prison. If you have a loved one in prison, I am here to tell you, it is a heck of a lot better when you can buy coffee, snacks, clothing and other things; the prison does NOT take care of you as you'd think. The morale of an inmate goes up much higher when he has a few dollars to spend than when he doesn't.

I have received much support from readers, but there are times where I have to go without for awhile. It sucks, but it's kinda humbling; you learn to appreciate any finances you get.

I mentioned the meal for the Superbowl, and the "value" of it. It's sad to think of selling your meals, but often in prison,

guys have to sell their meals to pay debts, or get money in stamps to buy the things they need. And special meals like the one we had over the Superbowl are worth a lot of stamps. I didn't sell mine, but I seriously thought about it. Ok, let's close out the journal:)

Well, it's after 4, about 4:10, so I better get a few minutes of rest; got 50+ scores to get between now and 9:30- ugh-

(end of journal)

The "scores" I was talking about was basketball scores. I actually get "paid" a few stamps for getting scores for some of the guys here. Hey, every stamp helps!

Anyway, you get some idea of what I go through on some days, and I wanted to share with you how the prison here at USP Tucson can act quite foolishly, blowing money on garbage, when they ought to be paying the inmates that work here. It's like they have no value of those who work here, but value things that mean absolutely nothing.

Really? An ELECTRONIC BILLBOARD?

Ugh, until next time...