

## MP3s In Prison

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Ok, let's talk a little today about a subject not too often mentioned in prison; music. Now, for the purposes of this entry, I'm talking purely about using MP3 players. Now, we know that many prisons allow radios; some allow NO music. Every prison has different rules. But in the Federal Prison system, or FBOP (Federal Bureau of Prisons), most if not all prisons allow purchase and use of an MP3.

Now, before I go any further, let's clear up something for the casual reader. By "casual", I'm talking about readers who come across my entries and are unsympathetic to inmates.

No offense... this essay isn't for you.

This essay, and the hundreds I have written in the last several years, is for those with loved ones in prison, and for those who may have lost hope. Please remember, every person has value, and also keep in mind that just because a person is in prison does not mean they were fairly tried. Hundreds of case laws point to this, in that federal courts are more concerned with a conviction, not finding justice.

Most folks think that every inmate in prison ought to be "bustin' rocks". To those I ask, who are you to judge? Far too often, the Public Defender sells out his client to prison, not giving him or her effective assistance, and the person gets to prison to find out that there were elementary steps that his or her defender failed (or neglected) to tell his client. So, that person has to turn into an attorney to fight for his appeal to get back to court...

Folks, what I'm saying is, don't judge...

Now, let's continue. This entry about MP3s in prison helps others understand how this is very helpful to those doing time. This is fairly new, and certainly desirable for those who can afford one. Here at USP Tucson, they have two types of radios, or you can buy an MP3. I've found the MP3 to be quite a blessing to me.

When I first got here in December of 2012, I said I'd buy one by June of 2013. The prison sells the one I currently have for \$90... a painful expense, since it's worth about \$30 on the streets. It's a SanDisk, version 1.09...

Now, excuse me a second. Before I tell you how important it is- and it is -, let me first rip a new one on SanDisk, and the prison for cheating us out of a decent product.

The MP3, first, is grossly overpriced, second, it is stripped of several features, like the podcasts and audiobooks, which are not included. Pictures of albums are not included, and other features. We also have to pay for each song in units, either 16 units, 24 or 31. Each unit is 5¢, so on average, we're paying



about \$1.50 a song. Consider: I have, as of June 10th, 2019, a total of 361 songs... so I've spent about \$500.00 on songs...

(whoa, that's a LOT...)

Some guys have over 1000 songs... do the math on that! And while I do enjoy my music, it sucks that we're being fleeced. What also sucks is that they knowingly sold us these defected MP3s, knowing that the first golist is corrupted. After a period of time, it fails, and you can't use it anymore. You now have only 2 golist to use. By then, the warranty is gone, and the prison will fight you tooth and nail to get it replaced or fixed.

But, despite the wickedness, I do like my MP3. I am typing this while listening, on repeat, Paul Hardcastle's "Golden Gate" which is very cool. Many guys have to save for months, some years, to buy one. I wanted one because I can then download the music I like, and listen to it when I wanted to. Here in Tucson, gospel music is rare, because there is no gospel radio station. I used to work in radio, and of the 5 radio stations I worked at, not all at the same time, two of those were Christian stations. So I wanted to find gospel music, and getting the MP3 allowed me to do that. I'm also a jazz fan, as well as other genres, so I was able to customize my music list.

Once we buy a MP3, we have to validate it, then charge it from a charger in the dorm. Once you do, then you have access to the Music Library, where we get a total of 60 minutes a day, in 15 minute increments, and up to 30 samples (30 seconds each). There are tons of genres, from Afro Pop to Celtic Music, to Jazz, R&B, Rock, Soundtracks, Spoken Word and World. I love meditation music, and have about 7 hours worth. You oughta try "Meditation II" by Dave Stern & Friends. It's a 20 minute piece that is really quite relaxing... perfect for one in prison, or anywhere.

Having a MP3 allows me some control of my environment, because I don't have to listen to the noise of guys cursing, hollering and the other stuff they do. It really gives you some sense of comfort and quiet time, or "me time".

There's so much more to share on this, in fact I originally wrote a 7-part series on this, so if you care to hear more on this, feel free to let me know. I am open to questions about the MP3, and how it affects those in prison. Until next time...

Songs I currently have:

"A God Like You"	Kirk Franklin	"Ariana"	Spyro Gyra
"Billie Jean"	Blackstreet	"Centuries"	Fall Out Boy
"Cookie Disco"	Cookie Monster	"Forest I"	Peter Davison
"Free"	Stevie Wonder	"I Am"	Cece Winans
"Icy Tea"	Skye Dream	"Jesus Saves"	Daryl Coley
"Juni"	Petter	"Peg"	Steely Dan
"Siulil A Run"	Celtic Woman	"Tar Baby"	Sade

And MANY more...