

KITCHEN THEFT

By James W. Harkleroad

There should be no surprise in learning that most imprisoned criminals continue to be criminals while in prison. Being a criminal is seen as being a "game", after all. Having to do a few years in prison is simply a vacation from the real action. Not a reason to stop playing the game.

Nor should it be a surprise that the place most often stolen from is the kitchen. Food is easy to hide, transport and sell. And everybody eats. So there is a ready market for it. So how is it done?

Let us count the ways.

Take an extra tray, or five (5), at meal time.

- (1) Grab two (2) trays and walk off with them, one in each hand.
- (2) Grab two (2) trays and stack one on top of the other and walk off with them.
- (3) Grab one (1) tray, go and set it on a table, and then go back for another.

If the entry and exit doors are on opposite sides of the building then you slip out the entry door.

- (1) Crawl out on your hands and knees.
- (2) Don a hair net and walk out as if you are counting the number of people waiting to be fed. Once outside remove the hair net and rejoin the line.
- (3) Simply walking out the entry door and rejoining the line.
- (4) Go to the head of the entering line.
- (5) Rejoin the entry line inside the dining hall.

If the entry and exit doors are on the same side of the building.

- (1) Walk out the exit door and join the line waiting to come inside.
- (2) Walk out the entry door (with or without a hair net) and rejoin the line waiting to come inside.

(3) Go to the head of the line.

(4) Rejoin the line inside the building.

Some other options -

Go into the kitchen from the dining hall.

(1) Grab a tray and return to the dining area.

(2) Walk through the kitchen and into the second dining hall and join the line there (if there is one), or rejoin the line to the first dining hall.

Returning to your dormitory simply turn around and join the next group of prisoners who are headed to the dining hall.

If you know someone in the kitchen they may -

(1) Bring you an extra tray, with or without extra food on it.

(2) Hand you a package of that you can carry back to your dorm.

For those who work in the kitchen the traditional practice is that they get to have any leftovers. It is going to be thrown away, after all. Some of these leftovers will, of course, end up on the compound.

But there are always those who think that it is their right to take what they want. These individuals -

(1) Package food up and pass it to a confederate to carry to the dormitory.

(2) Package food and strap the packages to their bodies.

(3) Package food and hide the packages among others that are required to be delivered to one or more dormitories.

(4) Package food and carry it out openly. A single package or bags of packages.

The author is a former death row prisoner who has been incarcerated in Florida since 1971.