

What I Have To Offer

My name is Frederick Mason, currently an inmate at UPS Tucson, in Arizona. I wanted to contact you about the opportunity to write journals and share them to the public about prison life. I realize that sounds rather common, but I wanted to share with you what I can offer.

First off, I have written blogs online. From 2001 to 2010 I wrote close to 8000 pages online, some of which may still be online. If one was do to a search of "Nolaw97", "Nolaw96" and "masonik4", one may find some of the things I wrote inside of those years.

What I hope to offer is a unique view of prison life, not the likes of what "Prison Break" was about, or what people see on television. There is so much more that goes on in prison, and not all of it is about violence. Granted, there is much violence in prison, but there are many places of incarceration that are filled with men that are not violent. When men can live under a controlled society that isn't violent, it is easier to see that these people, regardless of their charge, are still men.

I have been incarcerated since June of 2010, having been "dragged" through the Federal System, and finally sentenced and arrived here in Tucson in December of 2012. About a week later, I began to journal my life, every few



days, to keep myself informed of what I was living though. Most of my journals talk about my faith in God, and other situations in prison concerning people I have come to know.

What do we do in the course of a day? I can explain it in a way that puts the reader right there with me. For example, right now, I am typing this letter in the prison library, using a word processor called "Neo" by Alphasmart. the library here at USP has about 10 tables where many guys are working on their appeals. We also have about 12 monitors where inmates can watch prison -approved videos like National Geographic History videos, travel videos and others.

But so much more goes on than just the location. So many thoughts are in my head about what is going on in my life, some quite stressful. But I try to give color to what I am experiencing, without taking away from what prison is about. For example:

It's about 2pm on a Tuesday as I am working on the Neo. I've done a bit of typing, trying to get some letters off. We had a late move, because apparently there was a fight in the cafeteria, and when the officers broke it up, one of them may have lost their cuffs... so they took the entire kitchen staff outside on the softball field. For what reason I do not know. but I DO know this, at 108 degrees, I am sure nobody liked it. It set everything back an hour, so while we normally would have been here at 1pm, we lost an hour. When things like that happen, I feel sorry for guys that are

fighting their appeal. The courts won't budge for inmates who are working as best they can, with limited resources, but when they are submitted, the courts can extend time as they fit... hypocrites.

(Note: in the situation above, it was first assumed that an inmate STOLE the pair of handcuffs...later to find out that the officer FORGOT that he left them somewhere else...)

I'm listening to "All I Can Give" by Nyoki, a gospel singer. I have the song on my MP3 set on repeat, because I like the song. Me and this MP3 have gone through quite a bit, just over a year. I bought this SanDisk MP3 player in June of 2013... with a 3 month warranty, at the cost of almost \$70. In January of 2014, the display started screwing up, and after a week or so, it was gone. So I can't navigate the MP3 as I should, which has caused a long headache. I'm stuck with it, but I need it. Now, they have a new MP3 player... but at \$89, I can't afford it. But I need it, because I can't keep adding songs here. I have 98 songs, and it's difficult enough scrolling blindly to find my songs... I can't imagine what it would be like with 300, 400 or more songs.

Still, it has become quite invaluable to me. I think it was money well spent, even if the display is gone. I can listen to my jazz, gospel and other music when I want. And in here, while typing, I can zone out pretty good when there is too much noise in here.



Right now, it's quiet...outside of the tapping of the typewriter keys. I count about 40 people in here, some watching videos, some working on their briefs, others just reading magazines and books out of the book rental area. I find myself coming here quite often, because I can escape the visuals of prison by checking out my favorite video, "Visions of Germany". I have seen it about 20 times...each. It's a 2-disc set, one about life along the Rhine, and one on Bavaria. When I watch the video, and listen to the soothing classical music in the background, it calms me, as I look at places I wish to go immediately to.

For now, I have to wrestle with my current issues. I missed commissary this week because I didn't get money in my account on time. We went this morning at 7:30... I didn't get any money until about noon, and about \$75. Certainly thankful for that, but I still need shoes. The prison issues boots, so you have to buy your own shoes. Thank God "G" gave me a pair, although it is a bit worn. I'm worried about the last chat I had with mom... she lost her job. What am I supposed to do? I feel powerless, having no venue to help. Last night I prayed about it, finding out that I have to spend a lot of energy believing God than I ever have before. To be sure, I have some success in prayer...and I need it now.

This is just an example of a journal I would have written; I have written many entries since late 2012, some I have typed for possible review. If I am able to find a venue, I would like to provide entries to be published either in a

paper or online as a blog. I would be more than happy to write
for or with you in any way I can. I hope to hear from you
soon, so that I can begin submitting journal entries.

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*PS. I have written a journal since Dec 12th 2012, to
now (Sept 3rd 2014). I've also written other essays that could be
helpful. Im always looking for responses.*

F.M.