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ENG 121
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Day in the Life at Englewood

I found that when you live near the communal restroom shower area on a sixty man tier here at FCI Englewood you really don't need an alarm clock any longer. I live on a tier with 60 other men who choose work, rather than just laying around all day.

At Unicom Prison Industries here at Englewood where we make leather gloves for the military. Work starts at seven, but the flushing, the coughing, and blowing of noses begins around 5:15 am. I choose to lay in my rack until about 5:30 am.

I get up and use the bathroom, wash my hands and face I proceed to make a cup of coffee and hang around the tv room waiting for the C.O.

(correction officer) to call the morning meal (chow). Chow is called weekdays between 6 am and 6:15 am

where they line us up and run us through the cafeteria for brown bag containing a piece of cake, an apple, and some bran flake cereal. Finish with breakfast and get dressed in our khaki uniforms for the day. 7:00 am everyone has somewhere to be, I make my way to education for my 1st semester of college classes where an instructor from Arapahoe Community College comes to the prison to teach. In fact its through that class that I am writing this essay. The semester has been a rewarding challenge that have definetely helped the last 10 weeks go by fast.

Class ends at 10:00 am.. and its time for me to report to Unicon for work. The compound opens and I walk from education to the gates of Unicon, most days I'm

Stuck waiting at the gate until 10:30 am for someone to come open the gate. At 10:30 Union workers make their way from the jobsite to the cafeteria for lunch. The food here is generally pretty good and they give us plenty of food. The menu rotates on a five week

schedule. Lunch is over at about 11:00am and I head to work. I head in the front door and go through the metal detectors, pick up my tools (scissors and rotary cutter) from the tool room. Proceed from there to my leather grading room. It is my job to inspect each hide before it is allowed to go on the production floor. I inspect each hide for holes, cuts, scrapes, and blemishes. Basically anything that I don't want to show up on the final product I mark with a fabric

marker so they don't cut it and use it. So I spend the next few hours of my day inspecting leather hides for blemishes and preparing the next days work. Sometimes I will finish a little bit early and I will have a chance to sit down at a machine and sew some pairs of gloves. Work ends at 3:00pm and we are all recalled back to the housing units.

I arrive back at the unit about 3:05pm I make sure my chair is set up in the TV room and proceed to my room where I go and get my shower gear together and take a quick shower and relax before count. 4pm is a mandatory standing count prison wide where we are locked in our tiers until the staff ensures that everyone is present and accounted for.

Count clears around 4:30 pm and the gate to our tier opens and your able to go to the computer to check your email, make phone calls, and generally hang out until they start passing out the mail.

Around 5 pm they starting calling the units in order to chow for dinner. The order we are called in is determined by a judgement of how clean the unit is when the weekly walk-thru is conducted. Chow ends around 6 pm and this time of day is more hanging out and relaxing, watching tv or go outside and walk track or one of the many other things to do that eat up our time here in prison. (playing sports, wellness ctr. hobby, craft, lift weights, play music) the recreation department has a lot of different items to help keep us

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busy.

They recall us from the yard at around 7:30, back to the units for the rest of the night. Time to relax for the rest of the day and find a TV show or a book or just get ready for the next day. I usually hang out and watch TV. At 9:00pm we have another mandatory standing count that clears around 9:30 and the CO. lets us back out of our tier until lights out at 11:30 weekdays. What I've learned most about prison is that its not as bad as TV movies make it look, but the alienation and loneliness I've felt perhaps are the greatest punishment. Now I am starting to see some light at the end of the tunnel roughly 4 years in on a ten year bit. And I wonder how my life would have been different had I not come to prison