

Sunday 6:13 PM

For my prison job, I clean the gym that the CO's (correctional officers) use. Above the gym are bathrooms and showers, a banquet hall, and a conference room. Today the gym is empty as I clean and I am happy about that. While cleaning, I hear stomping upstairs. Actually, it's more like running and it's very loud. There's no reason to be running in the banquet hall and I think that something might be wrong. Perhaps some kind of emergency is going on.

I quickly head upstairs and open the door to make sure everything is okay. As I step into the banquet hall, an older, retired CO comes barreling towards me in his boxers. No shirt, no pants, no socks, just boxers.

He runs to the wall, touches it, looks at me, and says, "Don't worry, I'm just working out."

Caught a bit off guard, I reply, "Oh...okay."

As I turn to head back downstairs, he calls out, "Hey, don't worry if you see me naked in the bathroom, I'm just weighing myself."

I just turn, walk away, and think to myself, "*what the fuck?*"

Back in the gym, two COs are working out now. One is telling stories about how he interacts with inmates. "So I see this fucker walking and I ask him for his ID," he says, "You can never be too sure with these fuckers..."

I silently go on cleaning the gym and the CO goes on loudly telling his story, "...So I have this fucker on the ground now and he keeps wanting to get up. You never know with these fuckers, so I hold him down."

I hurry to finish my work and head back to my unit.

Before I came to prison I interviewed my good friend and musician, Ceschi (pronounced Chess-key) who spent some time in jail. I asked him if there were ever times when he didn't feel like he was locked up.

"Yes, when you sleep," was part of his response.

At the time, I wasn't satisfied with his answer. I wanted something more meaningful, more profound. But, it turns out Ceschi was right. When you sleep, it's one of the few times you forget about prison. And that's what I wanted to do. I wanted to sleep, I wanted to forget

about COs standing naked in the bathroom or harassing “fuckers” like me. I wanted to forget I was in prison just like Ceschi did sometimes.

By the time I’m back to the unit, it starts to rain. It rains like I’ve never seen before. Like we pissed off God and he wants to teach us a lesson. It didn’t take long for the rain to leak into the prison. The halls started to flood and men grabbed squeegees, brooms, and snow shovels to try and prevent the water from reaching the bays where we all sleep. The men do their best, but they are no match for a pissed-off God. The ceiling begins to crumble, insulation falls out, water is everywhere, men are yelling for backup, the prison is literally falling apart.

Suddenly, the fire alarm goes off (triggered by all the water). A deafening sound fills the prison along with rapidly flashing lights. Eventually, the rain stops but the alarm and flashing lights remain on. Hours go by and it is time for the 10 PM count. The intense noise and the lightning quick flashes continue to overwhelm the senses.

After the count clears, men attempt to sleep. They wrap t-shirts over their eyes to help shield them from the flashing lights. They play headphones on full blast to help cover up the abrasive noise of the alarm. Nothing works though. The alarm seems to be of super industrial God strength and will not be overcome. The lights have been flashing for so long and so rapidly that the men are getting nauseous and the non-stop noise has given everyone a terrible headache.

It’s been hours of this and it’s getting unbearable. Not sure they will make it through the night, a few guys approach a guard to ask if he can shut off the alarm somehow. He informs them that it is a holiday weekend and it will likely remain this way for two more days.

“Deal with it,” he says and orders everyone back to their bunks.

Sweet dreams guys...