

SOME TIPS TO SURVIVING IN AMERIKKAN PRISONS

(Thanks to Shaun Attwood)

1 If you don't want to end up with the mystery-meat slop the inmates call "red death" then when you first enter the jail tell the booking officer you need a religious diet. Claiming Hindu will get you vegetarian food. The Jewish food is considered the best, but you'll have some explaining to do to the Aryan Brotherhood.

2 When you arrive at your assigned pod, dorm or tent do not hide your charges or else you will be suspected of crimes against children and get smashed. If the inmates tell you to "roll up" as soon as you get there and offer no further explanation then you are in imminent danger, so ask to be moved unless you are the type of person who enjoys fighting five people at once.

3 Immediately ask who the head of your race is and be aware of the political rules he is enforcing. For example, if you are white and an Aryan Brother is running the whites and you go and sit at a table with the Mexicans, Mexican Americans or African Americans you may get smashed.

4 When you get your first chow, sit down last because you don't want to sit on the seat of someone who likes to knock people out for the slightest affront. Find out who sits where, and ask someone where it's safe for you to sit.

5 Don't run up drug or gambling debts. Debts are the number one reason for jail violence.

6 If you brag or act tough – no matter how big you are – someone will want to smash you. The gangs go in like packs of hyenas on big men.

7 If you must do drugs clean the works. There are hundreds of men sharing one dirty syringe throughout Arpaio's jail system. Hepatitis C is rampant, and TB not uncommon. The way Arpaio runs the jail constitutes a public-health risk.

8 Same goes for tattoos. One inmate I met had contracted AIDS from getting a jailhouse tattoo.

9 Don't flaunt money or get a lot put on your books all at once. If you do you are asking to be extorted. Don't give store items away for free or else you will be perceived as a soft touch and have the inmates lining up to take everything you own.

10 When a riot happens the whole area is usually pepper-sprayed or maced. Wet your eyes and blink rapidly, so the chemical agent comes out in your tears. Wrap a wet towel around your head to protect you from further effects of the spray.

11 Don't pal up to the guards. The inmates will assume you are providing information and smash you.

12 Don't talk about someone behind his back. Beware of inmates telling you they heard someone say something bad about you – like someone calling you a punk – because they may be inciting you to fight their enemy. A good response for such a situation is: "Anyone who thinks I'm a punk needs to man-up and say it to my face."

13 Don't tell the guards you are feeling suicidal or they will four-point you, meaning all four of your limbs will be shackled to a bunk and you may have to urinate and defecate where you lay.

14 When store items are being collected for indigent inmates or men in the hole contribute if you can. You do not want to be viewed as being unsupportive of your race.

15 Be cognizant of your body language. The inmate with a spring in his step and his chin up is less likely to get preyed upon than the inmate with his head down staring at the ground giving off vibes that he's afraid or got something to hide.

16 Maricopa County is paying out a fortune in inmate lawsuits because of the inhumane treatment of prisoners by the Arpaio regime. If you are mistreated, request for and fill out all of the necessary grievance and medical paperwork otherwise your claim will not stand up in court. I encourage inmates to sue the jail and Arpaio as much as possible – maybe then changes will be made. So as to avoid court cases and bad publicity, inmates are often paid out-of-court settlements. This is a good earner for inmates who have suffered illegal treatment.

18 Stock up on the free toothpaste, AmerFresh, in case you end up in a cockroach-infested area. It effectively blocks the cracks the cockroaches swarm from when the lights are turned off.

I was just released after doing my 24 hrs. It was boring and cold! There were 3 of us in a holding cell and we got along great. The biggest thing I would say is DEFINATELY wear a long sleeved shirt(the concrete benches are VERY cold and if you're laying down you're arms freeze!) Bring the fattest sweatshirt you have(same reason) and a towel to use as a pillow.

We three were moved from the holding cell at LBJ after 10 hours to Estrella. We were put in what I can describe as a cage. During our stay we were never in physical contact with any of the "Stripes" girls, just separated by steel mesh. At about the 16th hr. we were transferred back to LBJ to another holding cell where we sat and waited... We played tic tac toe with a bar of soap, played poker with the \$40 in ones I had and pitched quarters. It really wasn't such a bad time, I guess it depends on who your with. But really..... Bring a sweatshirt and a good attitude and you'll be fine.

We were released at 3:30 a.m- 4 1/2 hrs before we were supposed to be. It's no coincidence all the cab drivers who wait outside charge \$40 to go just about anywhere-They know your out early, you can't get a hold of the person who's taking you **home** and all you have is 40 bucks!!!

What a load of crap. If you get arrested and taken into custody for anything;

1. Be polite.
2. Shut the *F* up. Never, never never talk to the arresting officer or any Law Enforcement personnel about anything other than Name, age, address without an attorney present.
3. Call a bondsman. They don;t "flake out". They find that you have more legal issues than you let on, that you can't pay the 10% premium or additional charges are pending on other jurisdictions that make you release impossible. Time is money and you ain't worth their time.
4. Get an attorney or have one appointed to you. Once the cuffs go on this should be you first and

most frequent request. The cops know the rules, the judges know the rules....you don't. Simple as that. Get yourself somebody who knows the rules on your side. If you can't afford one request a public defender. Until you meet that person face to face you say nothing to anybody about anything other than the weather or what tv shows you like.

A fish is a new prisoner, usually someone unschooled in prison etiquette. If you know someone who is heading to prison for the first time, you may want to send them this guide. It could save that person's life. This survival guide was compiled with the help of Xena who is aware of dozens of people who have been smashed, stabbed or killed for violating these guidelines.

1. Stay out of debt – especially drug debts. If you use drugs, know how to pay for them. More people die from being unable to pay drug debts than for any other reason.
2. Know who the gang members are in your race, and know what their rules are. There are two sets of rules: Department of Corrections' rules and the political rules enforced by the gangs – play them in conjunction. For example, befriending someone from another race may get you smashed.
3. Don't flash money or property around. Most inmates have little or none, and will take yours if they can. If you have money, help your indigent friends, especially with hygiene products. If you have no cash, get a job or try private enterprise (drawing and tattooing are common).
4. Do not be perceived as being friendly with prison guards, or you may be suspected of snitching, which can get you killed. If you know a guard prior to coming to prison, keep it secret.
5. Do not talk about people unless they are present. Do not whine or complain – especially around lifers – or you may get smashed. Don't lie, and always keep any promises you make. If you're a short-timer don't talk about it. Don't ask people how much time they are serving, or for why. Wait until you get to know them and they are comfortable around you, if you want to ask these questions.
6. Don't act like a big shot unless you can fight. Bear in mind that if someone challenges you, and you don't fight, you may be perceived as weak and be taken advantage of by others.
7. Don't show weakness or let your emotional barrier down. Especially youngsters, who can easily become extortion and rape fodder for the hardcore. Never cry.
8. If you are gay, stay in the closet unless you are prepared to fight people who will want to stab or rape you. If you are openly gay, find a man with power who can protect you.
9. Don't become obese or you'll be perceived as unhealthy and weak, to be preyed upon. In prison, more people work out than in any other society.
10. Learn prison slang. Beware of becoming a "torpedo" – usually a youngster manipulated to smash (beat up) someone so that the manipulator doesn't get his hands dirty. Beware of someone doing an "okey-doke" on you – for example, an inmate lying to you about being called a punk, so that you will fight his enemy. Beware of becoming a "trick-bag" – being manipulated into saying something offensive to another, not realising that you were being insulting.
11. Stay hygienically clean. Being dirty is considered disrespectful, especially to your own race.

12. If you practice a minority religion, you may want to keep it secret rather than risk being smashed.

13. Don't cut your life short by contracting a deadly disease from using dirty tattoo instruments or syringes. If you have to inject drugs, bleach the works first.

Keep your place where you sleep clean. Don't eat in your bed or you will have mice and rats over the night. Make sure to take shower with a friend. When you are in the shower he is checking nobody harm you and then he will take the shower and you check. Don't drop the soap into the shower floor or the inmates can take advantage of you.

Make sure to sleep with one eye open and your butt hole tight.

- **TRY NOT TO FREAK OUT**

This is the first, most important, and often most difficult thing you need to do when you've been arrested. Confronting a cop can be a stressful event in itself, and when they decide to put the cuffs on you, it's very easy to lose your grip in one way or another. Your brain is very likely going to be pumping gallons of adrenaline through your system in order to set up your fight-or-flight reflex, but you absolutely have to ignore that impulse and be as polite to and cooperative with the arresting officers as you can.

Most cops deal with all sorts of crazy assholes all day, and if you make a point of being helpful and pleasant, they will remember it and note it in their report, which might be really helpful if/when your case goes to court. Besides, it's best to keep as clear a head as possible for the next few stages of your arrest/jail experience.

- **YOU CAN BOND OUT DURING BOOKING**

After your arrest, you might spend an hour or two in a paddy wagon until whatever police division (city, county, state, etc.) decides that the rickety old armored van you're sitting in is filled with enough people in handcuffs to drive out to the most convenient jail. When you arrive there, the corrections officers will bring you out one by one, confiscate your wallet/phone/keys/shoes/etc., swap out your clothes for a jumpsuit that may or may not fit you, and herd you into a holding cell with 10 or 20 other men or women while jail staff sorts through the paperwork of your arrest.

During this time, you will probably be presented with a few posters, or maybe a bilingual video that briefly touches on your rights as an American citizen in jail, which is mostly worth listening to but generally fails to provide you with any sort of useful legal information. The time spent in this holding cell is best spent taking naps to sober up, talking to fellow cellmates, and using the bathroom and the water fountain (especially if you've been drinking a lot or otherwise getting dehydrated).

The one time you need to be fully awake and sober is when they call you into their little office to verify your personal details and possessions, because at some point they'll offhandedly mention your right to a phone call and it's extremely important that you make use of that right however you can. Typically, they won't allow you to look at your cellphone to get the numbers of your friends and family, and sometimes they won't even allow you to call anything but a landline, but remember that you absolutely have the

right to phone a bail bondsman while they are processing you. The corrections officers will almost never mention this, but you can ask for a list of bail companies and put in a call that very hour which may well save you a day or two of jail time.

- **THE “CORRECTIONAL OFFICERS” WILL PROBABLY NOT HELP YOU**

After years of hard-fought civil-rights cases, most police officers are required by law to inform you of your rights as an American citizen and human being even as they are placing you for arrest against the hood of their car. There are no such laws that apply to jail-based correctional officers.

That means that you can expect every request, no matter how reasonable, legal, or constitutionally mandated, to be flatly rejected and mocked, and that if you try to complain

about such treatment, you’ll be targeted as a troublemaker and problem inmate. Outside of a few exceptions, the men and women guarding you have an enormous legal advantage over you (few juries or judges will value the word of a prisoner over a guard).

Stay quiet and obedient for at least as long as you’re stuck in the “processing” cellblock. No matter how legally solid your case is against the guards, they have an enormous advantage against you that you can overcome only by waiting it out.

- **YOUR CELLMATES WILL TRY TO HELP YOU**

This is apparently very important: no, you are not going to get raped in jail, you’re not going to get stabbed in jail, and you’re almost certainly not going to have anything bad done to you in jail by the people you’re sharing a cell, cellblock, or building with. Too many people think that a city or county jail is somehow a microcosm of “Oz” and is rife with all sorts of gangs and intrigue, when most people in a jail are going to spend at most two weeks there before either being released or moved to real prison.

During that time, inmates try to communicate with each other as much as possible, sharing information about the least cruel guards, the best parts of the jail to get rehoused in, and general legal tips on how to eventually get out of jail. While your cellies mean well, their legal advice may not be ideal. They’re usually concerned with getting out of jail as soon as possible, so generally they’ll tell you to plead guilty as soon as you’re arraigned, which may get you back in your house or apartment sooner rather than later, but can also result in crippling long-term punishments like driver’s license suspension, heavy fines, and even house arrest.

You may be desperate to get out of jail (because jail really is awful) but think carefully when presented with a court-offered “get out of jail free” card. There’s no such thing as a free lunch.

- **YOU CAN AND SAVE WHAT YOU CAN’T**

Your first night in jail is likely to be scary and anxious and crazy and weird, and the first time you get offered jail food, it’s quite possible you’re going to maybe take two bites before throwing up everything you drank or ate over the last 24 hours, hopefully into the

little sheet-metal toilet right next to your bunk. The guard (and your cellmate) will probably assume you're coming down from some assortment of pills, and may take back the rest of your meal tray.

This is the only time you can let this happen. Every other meal you're served in jail represents the bare minimum of nutrition necessary to carry you through a third of the day, and if there's a part of the meal you can't eat, you need to save it or trade it with your cellmate. The food is going to be incredibly awful -- I remember eating some kind of fried patty that neither I nor anyone else could distinguish as chicken or beef -- but it's all you're going to get.

- **PLAN AGAINST BOREDOM**

If you weren't able to bond out during processing, you're going to need to hunker down and buckle up for a lot of random cruelty, pointless boredom and naps. During your first 24 hours, you're probably going to get stuck in the jail's processing block, which is as absolutely bare-bones as a modern jail cell is legally allowed to be. You'll get three meals a day, you usually have a cellmate to talk to, and depending on your position in the cellblock, you might be able to hear or even see the one television in the common area that is typically left on throughout the day.

While talking to your cellmate can be extremely educational as well as intellectually stimulating, it's generally best to spend as much time as you possibly can asleep, because there is literally nothing else to do.

You can't have books, paper, pencils or really anything else until later in the jail process, so if you're awake and bored and going crazy, you need to look within yourself to find something to do. Were you thinking about a story or song or poem or whatnot? Try to perfect it in your head without pencil or paper, or maybe try to confront some sort of philosophical problem you've always wrestled with.

GET MEDEVACKED

Every jail has a special medical wing for prisoners with digestive, circulatory or neurological problems, and this wing is always staffed, it seems, by the few corrections officers who have a sense of empathy and kindness. Something as seemingly insignificant as high blood pressure can get you rehoused to the medical wing, where you get a cell all to yourself, you have access to the tattered remnants of whatever books have been donated to the jail, and (most importantly of all) you can talk to a corrections officer who can and will actually help you contact relatives

or bondsmen.

The people working in the medical wing will probably treat you the nicest, and in some cases they'll even honestly explain the rules and regulations of the jail to you, and even help you get in touch with a bondsman. In the meantime, you can often find a wrecked paperback book that can keep you entertained until your next free period, or maybe even a stubby pencil and paper to write on. Bottom line: if you've ever had any sort of medical issue that required medication or hospitalization, make sure you mention it to the jail's medical staff in the hopes you get moved to the medical wing

- **GETTING ARRAIGNED**

If you've missed all your chances at bonding out (because believe it or not, some bonding agencies flake out and never show up) your other way to get out of jail is through the arraignment process. In America, arraignment must occur within 72 hours (three days) of an arrest, and is a way of formally announcing the charges against you and your legal options.

At this stage, you are not required (no matter how much you're told to) to enter a plea of guilty or innocent or crazy (and please bear in mind that an insanity plea is much, much

harder to establish than TV and movies make it look). This initial stage of arraignment can actually be conducted by video. You may be able to teleconference some judge on the weekend or some other holiday in order to work out the first part of your arraignment.

Otherwise, arraignment is typically a tedious and confusing process in which you're shipped from the jail to a courthouse, wait through what seems like hundreds of other court cases, and finally get to talk to a judge who will typically offer you the chance to plead guilty.

Many of your cellmates will urge you to take that chance, and you'll be tempted to do so just to get out of jail as soon as you can, but if you keep a clear head and understand your financial situation, you may well find that pleading innocent is the best and cheapest way to keep on living

GETTING THE HELL OUT

Regardless of what the corrections officers may or may not tell you, bond agents will generally get you out of jail for 10-15 percent of your bail plus tax, so you may be able to get out of a \$500 bail for \$87 as long as you have that much cash available in your wallet or on your debit card.

If you can remember your friends or relatives' phone numbers without your cellphone (and if your friends or relatives have land-line phones -- some jails feature phones that dial only to land lines) you can call them during the

booking process, or you can call a local bonding agency and arrange for them to show up at the jail, formally take possession of your wallet and debit/credit cards, and pay your bail that way.

If you can't get in touch with a bondsman who bothers to show up (and really, you should talk to your cellmates to figure out which bondsman is the most reliable) there's still a chance that you'll be released on your "own recognizance," particularly if you're a first offender.

This is a long shot, but if you're in jail long enough and you're pitiful enough, you have a decent chance of finding a judge who'll take pity on you and get you out of jail before your arraignment.

You failed to mention the two most important other reglas (rules) for inmates.

1. Mind your own business. NEVER mingle, comment, or involve yourself in anyone else's affairs. Doing so can result in capital punishment by inmates.

2. If you are being challenged to a fight, never back down, no matter how big your opponent is. Failing to stand up for yourself will show your weakness and you WILL BE PREYED UPON. A 30 second fight against a much bigger opponent, you will be surprised what you are capable of when you are fighting for your life. Plus, if you fight in front of the guards your fight will not last longer than a minute (which I remember seems like an eternity). You will be seen as someone who is not weak and will stand up to defend themselves.

P.S. I cannot even begin to tell you of the white kids who came in acting like they were black and how they were extorted, beaten, and left with no front teeth.

Sticking to your race is absolutely critical.

Fish Survival Guide

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2. Know who the gang members are in your race, and know what their rules are. There are two sets of rules: Department of Corrections' rules and the political rules enforced by the gangs – play them in conjunction. For example, befriending someone from another race may get you smashed. [Click here to see a video of an Aryan Brother slaying a prisoner who crossed the gangs.](#)

3. Don't flash money or property around. Most inmates have little or none, and will take yours if they can. If you have money, help your indigent friends, especially with hygiene products. If you have no cash, get a job or try private enterprise (drawing and tattooing are common).

4. Do not be perceived as being friendly with prison guards, or you may be suspected of snitching, which can get you killed. If you know a guard prior to coming to prison, keep it secret.

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Tips for an Easier Prison Stay

When you might want to feign mental illness in the pokey, and why you never enter someone's cell without permission.

SO THE FEDS NAILED you for insider trading. Or maybe you lied to a grand jury to cover for your boss. Either way, you're about to trade your tailored suit for an orange jumpsuit, and you're freaked. Your trepidation is the livelihood of prison consultants, who, for a fee, will help prepare you for a stint in the pokey. We asked a few of them to share their tips for surviving hard time.

Leggo your ego: Be humble. New prisoners will "lock eyes with the wrong person and have problems," says Steven Oberfest, an ex-bouncer and personal trainer who won't say what he did time for. "This is not Fifth Avenue and their penthouse anymore. They're just a number."

Hard knocks: Never enter someone's cell without permission, says Steve Scholl, a former management consultant who now goes by the moniker Dr. Prison. "It's about respect. People get killed over that."

Presumed innocent: Don't go asking what someone is *in for*, advises Oberfest. Ask what he's *accused of*.

Ethnic cleansing: Don't mix with prisoners of other races, Dr. Prison warns. "Things we don't even consider a problem between races here are a very extreme focus inside. If there's a fight, every race needs to depend on their own race to protect them."

Sleeping dogs: "Miserable people want to be miserable...treat them with extreme caution," advises Robert McDorman, a former Texas car dealer who did 26 months for federal bank fraud.

The best defense: Just in case, Oberfest says you must learn to "drop someone incredibly fast."

Unwanted interest: Says Oberfest, "If you bum a smoke and the guy with the cigarettes says, 'Sure, it's a twofer,' you should know a twofer means, 'I give you one for two, so now you owe me.'"

Alone time: Oberfest advises high-profile clients such as politicians to request solitary confinement, or even feign mental illness to get into the psych ward. "If you're segregated, you're going to have a much easier time."

SOME PRISON SLANG

bo-bos: prison-issued tennis shoes

bone yard: trailers used for conjugal visits

brake fluid: psychiatric meds such as liquid Thorazine

Buck Rogers time: a sentence with parole unimaginably far in the future

chalk: prison moonshine

chin check: to punch an inmate in the jaw to see if he'll fight back

clavo: (Spanish for "nail") dangerous contraband

diaper sniper: child molester

diesel therapy: a lengthy bus trip, used as a punishment

ding wing: mental health ward

erasers: chunks of processed chicken

high class: hepatitis C

iron pile: weightlifting equipment

jack book: any magazine with pictures of women

the monster: HIV

ninja turtles: guards dressed in riot gear

robocop: guard who writes up every infraction, no matter how small

six-five: warning that a guard is approaching

stainless-steel ride: lethal injection

13 1/2: 12 jurors, 1 judge, and 1/2 a chance; seen in prison tattoos