

ADVICE FOR
SURVIVING
AND
THRIVING
IN LOCK UP

by anarchist prisoner
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Since the murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis, a number of protesters and rioters of the dumpster-fire and ski-mask variety have found themselves detained for noble acts that change the world - like toppling statues of racists or torching cop cars or inflicting necessary violence.

No good deed, it seems, goes unpunished.

But, many of these savage cannibal maniacs have never previously experienced lock up, either because they got lucky or because cops are just that incompetent. At any rate, as this is a new experience, they would benefit from a kind of primer on how to navigate this world.



**I have a bit
of experience
at this shit.**

So, here goes...

Analyze every aspect of the jail routine as though you are an enemy combatant behind the lines.

What are all the things prisoners can do to disrupt the orderly operations?

To make the operations impossible to maintain?

How can you collaborate with others beyond the fence?

Document and detail what works and what doesn't, and share it on an online database so supporters anywhere can communicate strategies to rebels locked up everywhere, creating networks that will destroy the carceral system entirely.

Captivity is only a question of geography.

You are on one side of the fence rather than the other. But being inside the jail only presents you with a new set of opportunities for resistance.

You have no job.

No matter what you do, you have shelter and clothing.

No matter what you do, they bring you three meals a day.

If you wild-out or don't wild-out, if you inspire others or you don't, your captors will continue meeting your basic needs.

That's a kind of freedom too.

Take advantage of it.

When first facing lock up,

DON'T PANIC.

Everything will feel overwhelming, so breathe deeply and remember that all this is temporary.

Metal doors crash and echo, people yell and thump plexiglass windows, and it feels dark and stinky. Lock-up always smells like mothballs and rotten cabbage and man-ass until you get nose-blind to it.

But what you are going to experience is probably a lot less hectic than what you imagine. While violence occurs, just like in the outside world, it's usually not random. It's usually connected to some situation where violence is a foreseeable outcome.

So, some things NOT to do if you want to decrease the odds of interpersonal violence:

DON'T TALK TO JAIL STAFF

more than absolutely necessary, and try to never talk to them out of earshot of other prisoners. No sense stoking paranoia and suspicion getting labeled a snitch.



DON'T BORROW.

Debt is a method for exploiting and manipulating. Decline even free stuff from those you don't know.

DON'T LOAN.

If you loan, you become a potential mark, and some may fabricate cause to be insulted if you loan to someone else and not to them.

To avoid loaning, don't let others know what you have. When declining to loan, be polite:

"It's not personal, I just don't have much and I gotta make it last."

Be polite but be firm.

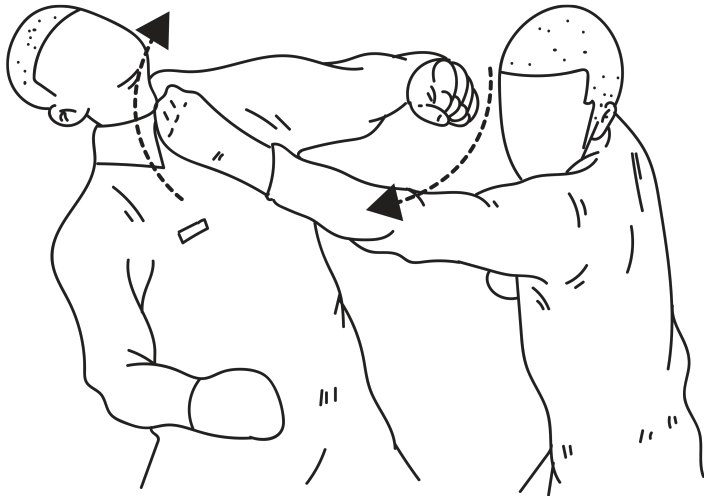


Now, advice specifically for those whose rebellion has gotten them locked up: the fascist police state you hated in the so-called free world is the same fascist police state running that jail.

You are inside an essential institution for the continuance of the fascist police state.



If violence is unavoidable, you have to accept the inevitable.



IT IS BEST TO SWING FIRST, SWING HARD, AND KEEP SWINGING.

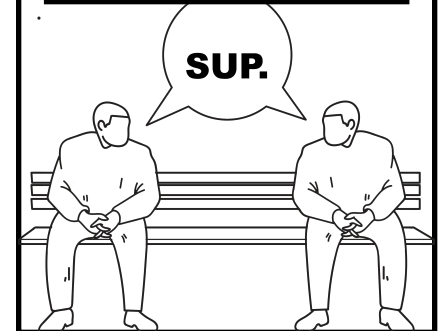
Even if you're no good at fighting, the fact that you will fight is a deterrent to anyone else. Also, fights in captivity are normally just flurries of very inexpert violence that last about two minutes. By then, guards show up and break it up, someone gets knocked out (by accident), or all parties involved get winded and start sucking air with hands on their knees.

DON'T GAMBLE.



Remember that something like a candy bar might not have much value to you, but others have killed over a candy bar. No shit.

GET TO KNOW OTHERS *but cautiously.*
Don't share too much with too many too fast.



DON'T TRY TO BE SOMEONE YOU'RE NOT.

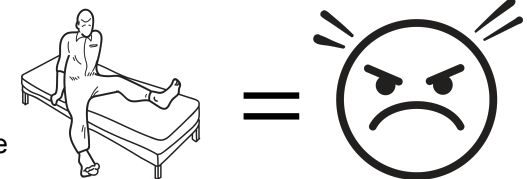


People in lock up develop a kind of acute social radar.

DON'T SIT ON ANYONE ELSE'S BUNK

even with permission.

Don't enter others' space without asking, including sitting down at a table where others are already sitting.



*DON'T APPROACH
THIS AS IF YOU
DON'T BELONG OR
THIS IS JUST A FEW
DAYS.*

Prepare for
long-term and
immerse yourself
in this world as if
you are not a foreigner
passing through.

You want to **arrange your bunk and personal space for relative comfort**. Keep your property as secured as you can. Set reasonable boundaries with others and be sure to maintain them.

Be polite. But don't be a pushover. Be aware that others are paying attention and may be contemplating how to cross lines and boundaries.

Be constantly aware of everything but don't make it obvious. If you know others' routines you can avoid disrupting them. If something bad is brewing, you can anticipate it and avoid getting pulled into it.

People will talk to you. They'll tell you about others. Like any other social scenario, not all of it is true. But information is valuable for mapping out who hangs with whom, what conflicts exist, and general sentiments about who might tell on you.

You're dealing with human beings, not so different than in the outside world. You'll get to know people much faster and maybe even make some good friends. I met a guy in jail in the early 90s and gave him good legal advice. We worked out together. To this day, if my mom took her car to his family's auto shop for repair, they would only charge her for parts, no labor.