



Introduction

I'm a first time offender detained at Her Majesty's pleasure at HMP X a holding prison that is considered one of the hardest to handle. Not because it's full of Category A prisoners but because the rules of bang up are the worst in terms of prisoner liberty. You are locked up 22 hours a day ... yep a day!!!! In a 14 ft by 8 ft cell between two of you.

As a first offender you have no idea how the system or a prison works, you are clueless about it all and it is frightening for both the person going in and the family and loved ones you leave behind.

It occurred to me that the *Little Book of Prison* (LBP) would prove useful to you as a first time offender and help you get through what is surely the most difficult time in your life. I wish I had been given the information between these pages, the first weeks would have been better and the learning curve not as steep.

I have dedicated the LBP to my three daughters at the start of the book, but it is also for all my loved ones as well as my fellow prisoners who helped bring together these invaluable guidelines for getting on behind bars. To every reader, good luck with your bird and do yourself a favour and don't go back ... Frankie.



Getting To Court

2.1 Getting Nicked

Well I'm not sure why you got nicked but it usually has a combination of the following factors:

- money
- drink
- drugs
- women
- cars
- respect
- revenge.

Mine was three of the above: women (separating from my wife); drink (about 30 units a day); and drugs (about five grammes of cocaine a week). I was arrested 25 times in a seven month hyper manic bender, when you're feeling unhappy or in a dark place like I was you just don't think straight. But let me save you from feeling too stupid about how you wound up inside as there is always someone less fortunate than you and a story even more absurd than yours.

Truth is we all do fucked up things and in some cases are worthy of being banged up, sometimes you're just unlucky, sometimes it's for your own good ... ultimately even the innocent can go to prison (I hope that's not you by the way). In my case I had been too stupid and suffering from hyper mania for too long. Everyone said if I carried on that way I was going to be either dead, sectioned in a mental institution or in prison.

You are where you are and it is what it is ... I think it's safe to say the only one to blame is me, myself and I.

2.2 Police Custody

I learnt a lot from so many arrests and detainments. You will be meeting the following personnel:

- arresting officer
- desk sergeant
- jailers
- cleaners
- solicitors
- interviewing officers
- inspector.

Arresting officers are the front line, I got to know a lot of them in my area and they knew me by name. I was arrested once by six officers in three panda cars, slight overkill if you ask me. Whilst handcuffed and over a bonnet, a BMW (a real police car) pulled up, the window went down and the officer said,

“Evening Mr Owens, will you be doing a fake heart attack with the desk sergeant tonight?”

“Evening Simon you’re looking well, I’m not sure yet why.”

“Cause if you are we are coming back to the station to watch.”

I milked every opportunity to make life difficult for all the personnel except my solicitor ... but don’t. There’s no point giving the jailers grief they will feed you, get you coffee, let you out in the yard for some air and even get you a shower. Always be nice to the jailer.

The food was terrible as it is pre-packed with no sell by date (says it all there, nuclear proof). The breakfast box is a gastronomic crime, it says two succulent pork sausages on the front of the box. I can tell you they ain’t fuckin pork and they ain’t fuckin succulent!!

Amuse the cleaners as when you can’t get the jailer’s attention a cleaner can help you to get the jailer. Being angry, shouting threats,

banging the door cause you are nicked is no good to no-one especially you.

I am a little claustrophobic so complained of chest pains due to the anxiety which leads to a visit from the ambulance and then a trip to the local A&E. This can burn some time while the arresting officers investigate the alleged crime. You get an escort to the hospital, are handcuffed, put in a wheelchair and flanked by two officers to the A&E department. I am not recommending this of course but I find looking at pretty nurses is better than the four walls of a police cell.

You should only be in for 14 hours or so although my record is 23 (what a beast that was). If you go in drunk don't tell the desk sergeant you are pissed, say you had three pints. If you're a nut bag or behaving nutty calm it down me old son otherwise they will recommend an appropriate adult for the interview. This slows down the process and you'll be in for longer. Ultimately you're a doughnut for getting nicked ... I bet if I pushed your nose jam would come out of your ears ... if you had a brain you'd be dangerous.

The interview is up to you but if like me you were out of your brain at the time prepare a statement with your solicitor apologising, going guilty and say no comment to everything else. The interview will be quicker and you'll be out sooner. The arresting officer will

go off duty and pass on a “case pack” to the next officer on shift. If they can’t get further with enquiries they only have 24 hours to hold you. After the interview its back to the cell for the CPS (Crown Prosecution Service) lottery. The case pack is sent to the CPS and they will decide if you are going to court for the arrest or if the desk sergeant will deal with it. I’ll give you a clue: you want the desk sergeant.

If it’s dragging out to 14 hours plus in the police station then you’re unlucky. The cells are terrible, and you’re going to meet the inspector who is responsible for all detainees. He or she reviews your case and informs you officially what is happening with your detention. I met the happiest inspector singing and whistling and telling me I was staying in. He even offered me a coffee. I asked why he was so chirpy he replied, “Last day today then I retire!”.

2.3 Doctor Blag

I have had hyper mania and been sectioned for six months back when I was younger. It lasted three weeks as the nurses clubbed together and told the chief psychiatrist that I should get out as I was driving everyone NUTS!!

I started to feel this coming back and went to see my doctor years later and took part in trials of medication (meds) to stop me going on uncontrollable benders. It was trial and error really, there are loads of meds they could try you with. I had six or seven different types, all bollocks. My wife brought me a book *The End of My Addiction* and I was introduced to Baclofen a wonder drug that will stop you abusing alcohol or drugs (I had to explain things to the doctor to get to try it).

Most addictions derive from anxiety, a deep-rooted anxiety from some point in your life that makes you take a substance to excess. Baclofen is a muscle relaxant primarily but a secondary effect is that it takes that anxiety away. It works. I went from 30 units a day and five grammes of cocaine to no cravings whatsoever. I was still in a dark place and suffering episodes I fed with drink and cocaine but since being banged up I have not craved a thing. RESULT!

Baclofen will never become a household name for addiction and addicts as the IP (intellectual property) has lapsed so like paracetamol any drug company can make it, so no drug companies can make billions from it like they did with Viagra.

An alcoholic or drug addict can be abstinent for years but still crave the substance everyday. With Baclofen you stop craving completely, you are set free from the binds of self-abuse.

Anyway I would recommend Baclofen if you are going to be banged up. It will definitely help you, Jesus Christ... you need every bit of help you can get.

However the trouble with Baclofen is that it's not on licence for treating alcohol according to the British Medical Council. HMP X has no doctor, currently rumour is he escaped... so only relief doctors are available and the head nurse. On review with him to re-prescribe Baclofen he refused based on his fear of being taken to court if I had a medical problem.

"I've been prescribed this from my doctor safely since December."

"You might get appendicitis, we might get taken to court, I will be held responsible (blah blah blah)," he replied.

What a twat!! Baclofen improves your quality of life as an addict but it hasn't been formally recognised by the British Medical Council (because there's no money in it £!). He had all my GP's notes but was too by the book to prescribe it. His defence:

"GPs do funny things."

I assured him this was not an attempt to ruin his fantastic cutting-edge career and that my GP had 20 years experience and was a

professional. These people have a duty of care, take a Hippocratic Oath to help people. What a jobsworth. Still I brought in a few weeks' worth to get through the re-adjustment and also applied for Nicorette patches. You will always run out of burn before the next pay day so get some patches to see you through. Funny though, my probation interview, she didn't recommend that I gave up smoking while banged up. The only place where they are promoting smoking, Jesus!

Also try to get a remedial gym pass referral. You can try knee injury, bad back or stress to enable more sessions in the gym and more time out of the cell is a RESULT!!

2.4 Court Appearance

If it's likely you are going to be remanded or convicted (we'll get back to this later). The following are essential:

- money (as much as you've got, £100 ideal)
- fags/tobacco (prison currency)
- new trainers (prison status)
- toothbrush
- skinhead hair cut
- being clean shaven

- names, addresses, telephone numbers and dates of birth.

I was already in a police cell then straight to bang up. I managed another trip to A&E before my Reliance van (see *Chapter 3*) took me to my new home at HMP X. The holding cells at the court are tiny, a third of the size of the larger police cell. I had four hours in there as my case was complicated (gutted, no-good).

Do everything on the form they give you to show how much money you owe out, in my case it was 30K. This should reduce any fines. Also you need legal aid as the cost of a solicitor for me with all the charges and previous court appearances was another few grand.

It makes me laugh the way a solicitor can get a case adjourned because they are not sure they can get paid for their time. I thought the system was about crime and punishment not money in solicitors' pockets.

You need tobacco as it gets you currency to trade for food, toiletries pens, paper ... life's little luxuries. So even if you don't smoke you will need tobacco. New trainers will give you some status with seasoned inmates, Nike Air Max new design or originals, Addidas Gazelle or some classic Nike Cortez. No High Tech as you're more likely to get pushed around the landing, dropped down the queue for a game of pool, or when using the phone or at dinner.

Take your own toothbrush as the HMP standard issue rips your gums to pieces. A skinhead haircut will earn you some status with your fellow inmates and will give you time to find and bribe the wing barber. Be clean shaven as it will look better in court but also gives you a few days banged up before you have to rip your face up with the razor issued by HMP. If you're ever told you're as sharp as a prison razor you're as thick as shit and twice as runny (but you already knew that didn't you?).

As to names, addresses etc., it is a job and a half remembering your own age and date of birth if you were in a similar state to me before I was detained at Her Majesty's pleasure.

If you want to get visits and you have been sentenced (remand visits are easier to arrange than those for convicted prisoners) you need every detail to get your visitors on the list and permission to phone them (phone PIN list). No mobile phone to grab numbers from now Amigo, it's a sheet at induction that makes your mind go blank or blanker depending on your condition.