

CONVICT CHRONICLES: A Tribute to a Bad Man

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This is your loyal war correspondent reporting from behind enemy lines, inside the wire. These are the convict chronicles--

Malo is a bad man, they tell me. Malo, ~~is~~ my first celly upon arrival to the concrete jungle, ~~is~~ is a convict who knows how to bit. Malo is a mean-muggin', three-time loser, crank. He is probably obsessive compulsive. He is definitely institutionalized. He is locked-up for something you'd see on Dateline and cringe, but he won't talk about it. If you ask, he'll look at you sideways and walk away.

Yet, Malo and I are cool. He is straight, old school, and strictly adheres to the convict code. Malo took the weight on some of my contraband just so

I wouldn't lose my Industry job. Malo will hook you up with a warm honey bun on your birthday without looking for anything in return. He'll go to Chow just to give away his tray to someone hungry. He doesn't care what race you are, what you're locked up for, or who you ride with--if you're hungry, he's got you. I saw him give Mad Dog his jean jacket simply cause he mentioned he liked it. I heard he gave an on-the-new State Baby a care package so big the kid staggered to carry it. Malo posts the day's TV schedule on his door. He pins up articles in the Dayroom about new laws helpful to inmates. He won't post positive articles about prison--privately he tells me, "They are all propaganda. You can't piss on my leg and tell me it's raining."

But, Malo don't play. Malo follows the Convict Code. Malo once threatened to beat down Gozor (a known thief) with a hot pot even though Gozor is built like a meat freezer with tree stumps for legs. Malo went at Gozor with it in the Dayroom and the punk ran so fast around the corner that he slipped, clonking his head off the concrete floors. Malo stared expressionlessly at Gozor on the floor and said, "Well deserved," and calmly walked away.

Yet, when I.A. finally caught up with Gozor's shennanigans and was looking for witnesses, Malo refused to say a word against him, because the only thing Malo hates more than a thief is a rat. Nor did Malo rat out his porter co-worker even though Blood Bath was clearly a cell-slug and a viking. Blood Bath made a whole show of having a bad back to avoid cleaning the bathrooms. So, Malo did all the cleaning in the building alone until Blood Bath was fired for horseplaying with another inmate. Malo explained to me, "These things have a way of working themselves out in the Joint."

But, Malo doesn't always keep his mouth shut. Malo bugs up on twelve rds

when they try to spin him. He calls out the kitchen supervisors when the portions are too small or the slop is overcooked. He checks anyone who doesn't do their jobs. He hasn't spoken to Shotgun, his oldest friend, for weeks cause Shotgun jumped him in the laundry line. "Believe people," he told me, "when they show you who they are."

Yet, Malo has heart. When our neighbor's Deadpool, mom passed from COVID and refused to go to Chow, Malo made him burritos for a week. When the 21st Century plague locked down our prison and LTS refused to play any new movies on our inmate channel, Malo quietly ordered "Game of Thrones," "Stranger Things," and the new "Star Wars" series for everyone to watch. When everyone else shunned the Colonel, an alleged child molester, and threatened to hurt him, Malo made a point of avoiding the drama. When asked why, Malo stated, "I've been judged enough to ever judge another."

But, when I tried to give Malo props, he denied all of it and accused me of being a gossip. "Stay on your square or get small," he told me and stormed out of the cell.

That was then. Malo went home last month. I think about him as A pull a honey bun from my box. See, it's the Colonel's birthday and he's got no one looking out for him; I need to make sure I get this honey bun to him before we lockup for the night.

Glossary:

Celly=roommate

Bit=do prison time

Mean-muggin'=resting bitch face

Three-time loser=third conviction, meaning serving a long sentence

Crank=curmudgeon

Straight= decent person, not referring to sexual orientation
Old School= over 40
Took the weight = took the blame
Contraband = anything we are not allowed to have, like fresh fruit or plastic butter knives
Industry job = best paying job in prison
Hook you up = give
Chow = Meals
Ride with = gang affiliation
On the new = recently arrived inmate on first prison sentence
State Baby = an inmate who lives off the prison's measely \$10/month allowance for everything from toiletries to snacks
Dayroom = shared living area in a prison housing unit
Hot pot = a coffee machine sized appliance with a large handle and steel plate inmates use to heat up water for cooking
I.A. = Internal Affairs, aka prison's police
Rat = snitch
Porter = janitor
Cell-slug = inmate who spends alot of time in his cell
Viking = dirty inmate
Bugs up = gets upset
Twelve = correctional officers
Spin = talk around the issue, placating
Checks = calls out
Jumped = skipped
Has heart = stands up for what is right
LTS = Leisure Time Services, prison department dedicated to extracurricular inmate activities
Inmate channel = internal closed circuit prison TV channel where memos are posted and new movies are played
Stay on your square = mind your own business
Get small = kick rocks, get lost