



**SHAUN ATTWOOD**

AUTHOR OF *HARD TIME* AND *PARTY TIME*

**PRISON  
TIME**

As featured in  
**BANGED UP  
ABROAD**

One man's journey through the  
Arizona Department of Corrections  
and his deportation to England

## About the Book

Sentenced to 9½ years for distributing Ecstasy, 'English Shaun' Attwood finds himself in Arizona's state prison living among gang members, sexual predators and drug-crazed psychopaths. After being attacked by a 20-stone Californian biker in for stabbing a girlfriend, Shaun writes about the prisoners who befriend, protect and inspire him. They include T-Bone, a massive African American ex-Marine who risks his life saving vulnerable inmates from rape, and Two Tonys, an old-school Mafia murderer who left the corpses of his rivals from Tucson to Alaska. They teach Shaun how to turn incarceration to his advantage, and to learn from his mistakes.

Resigned to living alongside violent, mentally ill and drug-addicted inmates, Shaun immerses himself in psychology and philosophy to try to make sense of his past behaviour, and begins applying what he learns as he adapts to prison life. Encouraged by Two Tonys to explore fiction as well, Shaun reads over a thousand books, which, with support from a brilliant psychotherapist, Dr Owen, speed along his personal development. As his ability to deflect daily threats improves, Shaun begins to look forward to his release with optimism and a new love waiting for him. Yet the words of Aristotle from one of Shaun's books will prove prophetic: 'We cannot learn without pain.'

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Also by Shaun Attwood

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# **PRISON TIME**

ONE MAN'S JOURNEY THROUGH THE ARIZONA  
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS AND HIS  
DEPORTATION TO ENGLAND

SHAUN ATTWOOD

For the prisoners whose stories made this book possible: Two Tonys, Jack, Shannon, T-Bone, Iron Man, Weird Al, Long Island, She-Ra, Gina, Mochalicious, Midnight, Max, Magpie, George, Bud, Ken, Booga, Cannonball, Hammer, Blackheart and Jim Hogg.

For my team of proofreaders, whose eagle eyes swooped on my many errors: Barbara Attwood, Callie Meakin, Debs Warner, Claire Bishop, Jill Rawstron, Mark Coates, Ian McClary and Penny Kimber.

## AUTHOR'S NOTE

*Prison Time* is a story in its own right, but it is also the third instalment of the 'English Shaun' trilogy.

Chronologically, the books start with *Party Time*, the story of everything that led to a SWAT team smashing my door down - my English upbringing, my move to Arizona as a penniless graduate, my rise as a stockbroker and millionaire day trader, and how I formed an organisation that threw raves and imported Ecstasy.

The second book, *Hard Time*, charts the 26 months that followed my arrest for drug offences. It tells how I survived the Maricopa County jail, which has the highest death rate in America. It's run by the infamous Sheriff Joe Arpaio, rarely out of the headlines because of his controversial tactics for racial profiling in Arizona. In the Maricopa County jail system, gang members and even guards were murdering inmates. I witnessed people being beaten to death in the jail.

*Prison Time* starts on 18 November 2004, half a year after I received a nine-and-a-half-year sentence for drug offences. It begins at Buckeye prison, 43 miles west of Phoenix, where each housing unit is named after a guard murdered by the prisoners.

During my incarceration, the brutality continued, but I also gained an insight into the less aggressive sides of my fellow inmates, whose intimate relationships were far more complex than I could have imagined.

Prison transsexuals find it offensive when referred to as 'he' or 'him', so throughout *Prison Time* I've used 'she' and



'her' for my transsexual friends.

# Timeline of the English Shaun Trilogy

Party Time 1968-2002



1968 - Born in Widnes, Cheshire, UK, a small industrial town between Manchester and Liverpool

1984 - Made first investment in stock market, double money in British Telecom shares

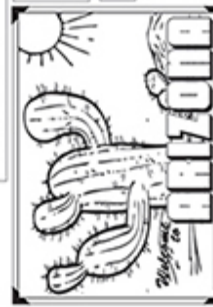


1985 - 1987 Widnes Sixth Form College, studying A levels Mathematics, Economics and Physics



1987 - 1990 Liverpool University - BA Business Studies

1989 - Raving in Manchester, take Ecstasy and speed for first time



1991 - Fly to Phoenix, Arizona

1997 - 2001 Ecstasy Dealer- Rave Organiser



1991 - 1997 Stockbroker



1998 - 2000 Stock-Market Millionaire

2002 - May 16th SWAT team



May 2002 - May 2003 medium-security Towers jail, Phoenix

May 2003 - July 2004 maximum-security Madison Street jail, Phoenix



Prison Time 2004-2013

Nov. 2004 - July 2005 medium-security, ASPC Lewis, Buckeye

July 2005 - Aug. 2006 medium-security, ASPC Tucson, Tucson

Aug. 2006 - Nov. 2007 minimum-security, ASPC Tucson, Tucson

Nov. 2007 - Dec. 2007 Federal deportation, Florence

Dec. 2007 - Feb. 2009 Penniless, unemployed, living with parents



2010 - Public speaker and author

2013 - Banged-Up/Locked-Up Abroad Raving Arizona

## DEFINITIONS

**ADOC** - Arizona Department of Corrections  
**Aryan Brotherhood** - white supremacist prison gang  
**celly** - cellmate  
**cheeto** - transsexual  
**dawg** - mate  
**DOC** - Department of Corrections  
**dope** - crystal meth or heroin  
**DW** - Deputy Warden  
**feds** - federal law-enforcement officers  
**fish** - new prisoner/guard  
**headcount** - an inventory taken by counting prisoners  
**hole** - a prison within the prison used for punishment  
**homey** - a fellow gang member or close friend  
**L&R** - love and respect  
**lockdown** - a prison within the prison used for punishment, or a security measure that requires all of the prisoners to be locked in their cells  
**meds** - medication  
**meth** - crystal methamphetamine, a strong form of speed  
**shank** - homemade knife  
**supermax** - super-maximum-security prison  
**trustie** - a prisoner trusted to work  
**UA** - urine drug test  
**whack** - murder

Be like the promontory against which the waves continually break; but it stands firm and tames the fury of the water around it.

- Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*

# 1

'I've got a padlock in a sock. I can smash your brains in while you're asleep. I can kill you whenever I want.' My new cellmate sizes me up with no trace of human feeling in his eyes. Muscular and pot-bellied, he's caked in prison ink, including six snakes on his skull, slithering side by side. The top of his right ear is missing in a semi-circle.

The waves of fear are overwhelming. After being in transportation all day, I can feel my bladder hurting. 'I'm not looking to cause any trouble. I'm the quietest cellmate you'll ever have. All I do is read and write.'

Scowling, he shakes his head. 'Why've they put a fish in with me?' He swaggers close enough for me to smell his cigarette breath. 'Us convicts don't get along with fresh fish.'

'Should I ask to move then?' I say, hoping he'll agree, if he hates new prisoners so much.

'No! They'll think I threatened you!'

In the eight-by-twelve-foot slab of space, I swerve around him and place my property box on the top bunk.

He pushes me aside and grabs the box. 'You just put that on my artwork! I ought to fucking smash you, fish!'

'Sorry, I didn't see it,' I say in a soft contrite voice, hoping to calm him down.

'You need to be more aware of your fucking surroundings! What you in for anyway, fish?'

I explain my charges - Ecstasy dealing - and how I spent 26 months fighting my case.

'How come the cops were so hardcore after you?' he asks, squinting.

'It was a big case, a multimillion-dollar investigation. They raided over a hundred people and didn't find any drugs. They were pretty pissed off. I'd stopped dealing by the time they caught up with me, but I'd done plenty over the years, so I accept my punishment.'

'Throwing raves,' he says, staring at the ceiling as if remembering something. 'Were you partying with underage girls?' he asks, his voice slow, coaxing.

Being called a sex offender is the worst insult in prison. Into my third year of incarceration, I'm conditioned to react. 'What you trying to say?' I yell angrily, brow clenched.

'Were you fucking underage girls?' Flexing his body, he shakes both fists as if about to punch me.

'Hey, I'm no child molester. And I'd prefer you didn't say shit like that!'

'My buddy next door is doing 25 to life for murdering a child molester. How do I know Ecstasy dealing ain't your cover story?' He inhales loudly, nostrils flaring.

'You want to see my fucking paperwork?'

A stocky prisoner walks in. Short hair. Dark eyes. Powerful neck. On one arm, a tattoo of a man in handcuffs above the word 'omerta' - the Mafia code of silence towards law enforcement. 'What the fuck's going on in here, Bud?' asks Junior Bull - the son of 'Sammy the Bull' Gravano, a Mafia mass murderer who was my biggest competitor in the Ecstasy market.

Relieved to see a familiar face, I say, 'How're you doing?'

Shaking my hand, he says in a New York Italian accent, 'I'm doing all right. I read that shit in the newspaper about you starting a blog in Sheriff Joe Arpaio's jail.'

'The blog's been bringing media heat on the conditions,' I say, nodding, smiling slightly, staring at Bud in the hope of gaining his acceptance.

While in the Maricopa County jail, I documented the human-rights violations on sweat-soaked scraps of paper,

using a tiny pencil sharpened on the door. Hidden in legal paperwork and the bindings of books, my writing was smuggled out of Visitation by my aunt Ann – right under the noses of armed guards – and posted on the internet as a blog, Jon’s Jail Journal. In recent months, as the result of a BBC article about me – ‘UK blogger takes on “toughest sheriff in US”’ – it had drawn international media attention.

‘You know him?’ Bud asks.

‘Yeah, from Towers jail. He’s a good dude. He’s in for dealing Ecstasy like me.’

‘It’s a good job you said that ‘cause I was about to smash his ass,’ Bud says.

‘It’s a good job Wild Man ain’t here ‘cause you’d a got your ass thrown off the balcony,’ Junior Bull says.

I laugh. The presence of my best friend, Wild Man, was partly the reason I never took a beating at the county jail, but with Wild Man in a different prison I feel vulnerable.

When Bud casts a death stare on me, my smile fades.

‘What the fuck you guys on about?’ Bud asks.

‘Let’s go talk downstairs.’ Junior Bull leads Bud out.

I rush to a stainless-steel sink/toilet bolted to a cement-block wall by the front of the cell, unbutton my orange jumpsuit and crane my neck to watch the upper-tier walkway in case Bud returns. I bask in relief as my bladder deflates. After flushing, I take stock of my new home, grateful for the slight improvement in the conditions versus what I’d grown accustomed to in Sheriff Joe Arpaio’s jail. No cockroaches. No bloodstains. A working swamp cooler. Something I’ve never seen in a cell before: shelves. The steel table bolted to the wall is slightly larger, too. *But how will I concentrate on writing with Bud around?* There’s a mixture of smells in the room. Cleaning chemicals. Aftershave. Tobacco. A vinegar-like odour. The slit of a window at the back overlooks gravel in a no-man’s-land before the next building, with gleaming curls of razor wire around its roof.

From the doorway, I'm facing two storeys of cells overlooking a day room, with shower cubicles at the end of both tiers. At two white plastic circular tables, prisoners are playing dominoes, cards, chess and Scrabble, some concentrating, others yelling obscenities, contributing to a brain-scraping din that I hope to block out by purchasing a Walkman. In a raised box-shaped Plexiglas control tower, two guards are monitoring the prisoners.

Bud returns. My pulse jumps. Not wanting to feel like I'm stuck in a kennel with a rabid dog, I grab a notepad and pen and head for the day room.

Focused on my body language, not wanting to signal any weakness, I'm striding along the upper tier, head and chest elevated, when two hands appear from a doorway and grab me. I drop the pad. The pen clinks against grid-metal and tumbles to the day room as I'm pulled into a cell reeking of backside sweat and masturbation, a cheese-tinted funk.

'I'm Booga. Let's fuck,' says a squat man in urine-stained boxers, with WHITE TRASH tattooed on his torso below a mobile home, and an arm sleeved with the Virgin Mary.

Shocked, I brace to flee or fight to preserve my anal virginity. I can't believe my eyes when he drops his boxers and waggles his penis.

Dancing to music playing through a speaker he has rigged up, Booga smiles in a sexy way. 'Come on,' he says in a husky voice. 'Drop your pants. Let's fuck.' He pulls pornography faces. I question his sanity. He moves closer. 'If I let you fart in my mouth, can I fart in yours?'

'You can fuck off,' I say, springing towards the doorway.

He grabs me. We scuffle. Every time I make progress towards the doorway, he clings to my clothes, dragging me back in. When I feel his penis rub against my leg, my adrenalin kicks in so forcefully I experience a burst of strength and wriggle free. I bolt out as fast as my shower sandals will allow and snatch my pad. Looking over my shoulder, I see him standing calmly in the doorway, smiling.



He points at me. 'You have to walk past my door every day. We're gonna get together. I'll lick your ass, and you can fart in my mouth.' Booga blows a kiss and disappears.

I rush downstairs. With my back to a wall, I pause to steady my thoughts and breathing. In survival mode, I think, *What's going to come at me next?* In the hope of reducing my tension, I borrow a pen to do what helps me stay sane: write. With the details fresh in my mind, I document my journey to the prison for my blog readers, keeping an eye out in case anyone else wants to test the new prisoner. The more I write, the more I fill with a sense of purpose. Jon's Jail Journal is a connection to the outside world that I cherish.

Someone yells, 'One time!' The din lowers. A door rumbles open. A guard does a security walk, his every move scrutinised by dozens of scornful eyes staring from cells. When he exits, the din resumes. The prisoners return to injecting drugs to escape from reality and the stress associated with the length of their sentences. This continues all day, with 'Two times!' signifying two approaching guards, then 'Three times!' three and so on. Every now and then, an announcement by a guard over the speakers briefly lowers the din.

Before lockdown, I join the line for a shower, holding bars of soap in a towel that I aim to swing at the head of the next person to try me. With boisterous inmates a few feet away, yelling at the men in the showers to 'Stop jerking off!' and 'Hurry the fuck up!' I go inside a cubicle that reeks of bleach and mildew. With every nerve strained, I undress and rinse fast.

At night, despite the desert heat, I cocoon myself in a blanket from head to toe and turn towards the wall, making my face more difficult to strike. I leave a hole for air, but the warm cement block inches from my mouth returns each exhalation onto my face as if it's breathing on me, creating a feeling of suffocation. For hours, my heart drums so hard

against the thin mattress I feel as if I'm moving even though I'm still. I try to sleep, but my eyes keep springing open and my head turning towards the cell as I try to penetrate the darkness, searching for Bud swinging a padlock in a sock at my head.

## 2

With Bud and his coterie of clones constantly in the cell, cracking jokes about raping me and boasting about former rapes, smoking, gambling, tattooing, and injecting heroin and crystal meth, I spend as much time in the day room as possible. After getting grabbed a few more times by Booga, I learn to creep or dash past his cell. He seems to genuinely believe that we're destined to have sex.

During the second day, I take breaks from writing to challenge the chess and Scrabble champions, holding my own with the former but getting smashed by the latter, who own Scrabble dictionaries and have memorised every two-letter word. I contest the word 'ai', delighted to have trumped my opponent, but he snatches up a dictionary and, with an expanding smile, reveals that 'ai' is a three-toed sloth from South America.

As using the toilet requires that I return to the cell and ask Bud and company to leave, I fight the urge until I'm on the verge of an accident. When I enter the cell, my request for privacy is met with mockery, threats and chastisement. When the subject turns to 'tapping my ass', I decide to outdo them in shock value. In prison, acting crazy can be a useful strategy. The last thing they expect me to do is moon them. I doubt they'll try to knock me down to rape me. If that happens, I'll go one step further: I'll smear their faces with my own faeces. I'm neither big enough nor possess the skills to fight them all, but I will go to any length to avoid getting raped. I doubt it'll come to that. I hope to take them by surprise.

Dropping my jumpsuit and boxers, I say, 'Who'd want to rape this pale hairy English arse?'

'Goddamn, England!'

'Is that a nest of tarantulas?'

'He's got some crazy-ass werewolf shit going on down there.'

'Put that away, England!'

Smiling, cackling, they shake their heads, eyes wide, incredulous, on faces pale in all of the wrong places. I'm finally speaking their language. Bud hides his tattoo gun: a piece of guitar string inside the outer casing of a pen with a needle on one end and the motor from a Walkman on the other. I'm left alone in the smoky cell.

On the toilet, I'm far from wiping when my name is called by a guard, summoning me downstairs to receive deck shoes, followed by a chorus of inmates yelling, 'Hurry the fuck up!' With everyone wearing sneakers, I'm suffering a handicap in sandals if I have to fight. Clenching my behind to retract what hasn't fully emerged, I grab toilet roll and speed-clean. I rush out but in my haste forget to exercise caution passing Booga's cell. He leaps at me. Jumping away, I hit the railing. *Clang*. I bat him off and dash away to laughter below.

By the time I get downstairs, the guard with my shoes is leaving.

'I'm Attwood!' I yell, catching up with her.

She turns and squints with disdain.

'Can I have my deck shoes, please?'

'What deck shoes? You took too long.' She exits the building.

Perhaps feeling sorry for me, more prisoners introduce themselves. Reading newspaper articles about my blogging against the much-hated Sheriff Joe Arpaio has earned me their respect. They give me old T-shirts, trousers, deck shoes and a sweatshirt, as I only have what I'm wearing.

Three times a day, guards escort 100 of us out of the building, yelling at us military-style to stay in a straight line. We filter into the chow hall, a massive warehouse with tables and chairs bolted to the floor, ringing with an aggressive, deafening noise that's a multiple of the din in the day room. Compressed between a wall and a wrought-iron fence, I'm nudged along by the flow of prisoners until I arrive at a narrow slot in the wall. A tray of kid's-meal-size chow emerges as if by magic. I barely have time to see the hands of the kitchen worker hovering it towards me from the other side. The anonymity is an attempt to prevent 'homey hook-ups' - extra portions of food given to friends by kitchen workers - but it prevents nothing. Our carefully crafted starvation is the foundation of a black market. Stolen food had been taped underneath tables before we arrived. Kitchen workers wiping tables and mopping are passing items such as cheese wrapped in plastic to prisoners.

The convict code requires that we sit with members of our own race, so I join some of the less intimidating whites. The chow teases my hunger. It's sufficient to finish if swallowed with minimal chewing in the 15 minutes permitted to eat. I discover a caterpillar wriggling on a salad leaf. The prisoners laugh. An almost seven-foot Lakota Indian reaches over from the next table, takes the insect and eats it.

Special diets that have no medical basis must be approved by the chaplain, so, to get vegetarian food, I registered as Hindu upon arrival - a trick I learnt at the Jail (Sheriff Arpaio's infamous Maricopa County jail) to avoid the mystery-meat slop called 'red death'. With freedom of religion guaranteed under the constitution, prisoners have won certain rights over the years and prisons lose money in costly lawsuits if they violate them. The Jewish diet is considered the best, so there are Mexican Mafia Jews, Italian Mafia Jews such as Junior Bull, and Aryan

Brotherhood Jews whose neo-Nazi tattoos include 88 – a code for HH, Heil Hitler!

I'm eating toast when a sumo-size prisoner with bulging eyes growls like a wounded bear, marches to the slot in the wall for tray disposal and stands guarding it.

'Fuck, Slingblade's on the hunt for leftovers,' says the prisoner next to me.

'What's the deal with him?' I ask, worried about getting by him.

'Slingblade's a Vietnam vet who had a flashback and murdered someone. If he grabs your tray, just let him have it.'

With a nimble sidestep, Slingblade blocks a young Mexican-American, locks his eyes on the tray and emits a guttural, 'You gonna leave that?' Before a response is issued, Slingblade snatches the tray. Without looking back, the inmate rushes for the door. Slingblade sits, devours half-eaten spaghetti, stands and licks his lips. He roams the room, giggling, and grabs more trays. When his head convulses, he stops eating. The sack of skin below his chin quivers. His right arm shakes as if strumming a banjo. He stands and guards the slot again.

My body tenses as I approach him. 'You want this?' I ask, holding my tray at arm's length, as if feeding a dangerous animal. He burps vaporised tomato sauce and ground beef onto my face. I jump as a shovel of a hand swoops on a glazed cake. I put my tray in the slot and exit.

Outside, guards are selecting prisoners at random, patting them down, confiscating food hidden in socks, armpits and underwear.

I'm allowed to fill out a commissary form once a week. Those of us lucky enough to have money in our inmate accounts deposited by family and friends or accrued from prison work, with wages ranging from 10 to 50 cents per hour, can spend it. That's how I get stamps, envelopes, pens and paper. In the hope of better managing my hunger,

I order two jars of peanut butter, crackers and squeeze cheese. Most of the items on the form are overpriced sweets that, along with cigarettes and coffee – the two mainstays of prisoners – provide massive profits for Keefe, the largest vendor of products to prisoners in the US.

I'm thrilled to learn that I'm allowed one hour each week in the library. Prior to my arrest, I never read fiction. Upon being told that reading would improve my writing, I decide to set myself a goal of reading 1,000 books before my release. The books I've read so far either came from family and friends via Amazon or from the jail library via a trustie going from cell door to door with the books on a trolley. Having never set foot in a prison library before, I feel excitement at entering the tiny room with limited books tended by a soft-spoken Mexican-American librarian with a round face and gentle eyes. The company of fellow readers gives me a feeling of safety. Most of them grab paperbacks by John Grisham and Stephen King, then disappear. Wanting to prolong my time in this sanctuary, I browse each aisle to see how the books are categorised, relishing the musty odour. I crouch down to scan the dusty classics section and gravitate towards *Great Russian Short Stories* – due to my new-found passion for Chekhov and Tolstoy – and *The Norton Anthology of World Masterpieces*, featuring Voltaire's *Candide*. Returning to my cell with five books, I worry about Bud derailing my reading programme.

Besides books, the two things I live for are mail call and visits. Because of my blog, I receive letters from kind strangers around the world. Their outpouring of support has helped restore the trust I lost in humanity after experiencing the conditions in Sheriff Joe Arpaio's jail. In medium security, I'm allowed a weekend visit from 7.30 a.m. until 3 p.m. My parents are flying over in just six weeks for Christmas 2004. Each day, my excitement to see them grows. Writing letters home, I feel less isolated and

I'm distracted from the feelings of abandonment I've struggled with since the split from my fiancée, Claudia, after almost two years in the county jail.

I'm allowed outside twice each day for two-hour recreation sessions in the mirage-inducing heat of the Sonoran desert. The earliest at 6.30 a.m., the latest at 4.30 p.m. The rec area is a large field edged by a running track, enclosed by chain-link fence, razor wire and security floodlights on tall poles. There are two basketball courts, a volleyball court, workout stations, six picnic tables, eight reverse-charge phones, one urinal and a drinking fountain. Guards with rifles patrol the top of the gun tower overlooking the area. My first time out, having been confined to medium-, maximum- and super-maximum-security cells for over two years, I'm overwhelmed by the amount of space. It feels as if the world is opening up to me again in all directions. Surrounded by battleship-grey prison buildings scattered across a desert landscape as barren as the moon, and a sky clear except for funnels of steam rising from the Palo Verde Nuclear Generating Station, I call Barry, Claudia's father, who insists we speak every week and accepts expensive reverse-charge calls even though Claudia and I split up months ago.

'How's it going, Barry?'

'Same old, same old. But I've got good news. Claudia wants you to call her.'

'What?' I say, overjoyed.

'She wants to come and see you, buddy.'

Deliriously happy, I walk around the track, daydreaming about reuniting with Claudia. Eventually, I find a space on the field away from people to do yoga - which I started at the Jail, where it contributed to saving my sanity. Seeing the grass is rife with ants, and the odd tiny transparent scorpion and giant orange centipede, I put a towel down. I don't want to project any signs of sexual availability, so poses such as cat and dog, which involve bending over with



my behind sticking up, are out of the question.

Apprehensive about being watched, I start with ten advanced sun salutations, which include kicking my legs back into a push-up position and up for a handstand, almost like a gymnast. I heat up fast. Stiff and awkward muscles rejoice at being stretched and loosen up. After arm-balancing postures such as crow and crane, with my body raised off the ground and my knees resting on the back of my upper arms, I move on to inversions.

Eyes closed, focused on breathing, stilling my mind into meditation mode, I hear, 'Stop doing headstands!' from a megaphone. I think I'm imagining things until it's repeated.

'Better drop that, homey, before they shoot your ass!' a prisoner yells at me.

I lower my feet and stand up, dizzy, blood draining from my head. The prisoners have stopped parading their physiques, dozens of topless tattooed men in knee-length orange shorts, Walkmans clipped to their hips, staring at me through thick dark sunglasses. I blush.

'Headstands are not allowed!' a guard yells from the gun tower, another guard next to her toting a rifle. 'Stop doing them or else I'll throw you off the field!'

'Are you gonna ban push-ups next?' an inmate yells.

Others join in, protesting. *So much for not attracting attention to myself.* Shook up, I walk the track, to be quickly joined by inmates offering advice.

'You need to put a grievance form in on that guard!'

'That's bullshit! Have a guard tell the Deputy Warden!'

I don't want to cause a fuss, but an incensed prisoner fetches a guard and explains what happened. The guard - wanting to prevent the outrage from escalating - radios the Deputy Warden, who gives him permission to allow me to do headstands. With the inmates urging me to resume headstands, I have no choice but to disregard my fear of the guards in the tower. I lay my towel down and stand on my head, bracing to hear a gunshot.

As we are heading back to the building, the inmates tell me why the guards are on edge. The yard had recently been the scene of the longest hostage crisis in US prison history. During a botched escape attempt, two prisoners serving life had seized control of the gun tower for fifteen days, holding a male and female guard hostage, repeatedly raping the female.

### 3

'Bud's one of the biggest psychos on the yard,' Junior Bull tells me. 'He's a serial home invader torturer. He was breaking into houses and taking hammers to people's kneecaps. He has hepatitis C, so don't share anything like his shaver with him.' Hepatitis C is the deadliest form of the disease and the hardest to treat. Bud has been offering his shaver to me.

One night after lockdown, when the lights are dimmed, I climb off the bunk to use the toilet. Aware of Bud on his bunk a few feet behind me, watching my every move, I'm concentrating on trying to urinate, aiming my penis at the centre of the bowl because Bud freaks if I accidentally hit the rim, when a flashlight shines on my crotch. I look up. I'm almost face to face with a big female guard outside of the cell, her brow wrinkling angrily.

'I'm gonna write you up for indecent exposure!' she yells, maintaining the light on my penis.

Bud laughs.

I'm under instructions from my lawyer to avoid serious disciplinary tickets, as the prison can deny my half-time release, which would add over two years to what I must serve. In a panic, I yank my trousers up. 'How was I supposed to know you were there?'

'You could hear me walking the run.'

'I didn't hear anything. I waited for lights out to take a pee.'

'Stupid fucking fish,' Bud mumbles, revelling in my misfortune.

'You weren't peeing. There was no pee coming out. You were masturbating.'

'I was about to pee!' I yell, shocked. 'If I was masturbating, it would have been hard.'

'His dick's as small as mine. I'm surprised you could even see it.' Bud laughs.

'Would you like me to search this cell?' she snarls at Bud.

Bud turns serious. 'He just got here. The fish is clueless. I would have smashed his ass if he was jerking off.'

'You're just backing your celly up,' she says.

'You know how I feel about sex offenders,' Bud says in a grave tone.

Exhaling loudly, she eyes Bud. 'OK. I'm gonna give him a pass 'cause he's a fish.' She turns to me. 'If that ever happens again to me or any other female staff, you'll be going straight to the hole!'

As soon as she walks away, Bud leaps up and lectures me on the need to be aware of guards walking the run. 'If this cell ever gets searched 'cause of you, I'm gonna fuck you up with my padlock.'

It dawns he only rescued me to prevent his drug and tattoo paraphernalia from being discovered. He probably knew she was walking the run and let me get caught for his own amusement. To get his mind off smashing me, I climb up to my bunk and say, 'Hey, Bud, I heard your arrest made headline news.'

'You wanna hear the whole story?' Bud puffs his chest out.

'Yes, I love a good story.'

Bud tells me about breaking into a house. He held three occupants at gunpoint, then split a man's nose and head open with a hammer, knocking the man out. He attached the man's arms to a shower with duct tape. When the man's eyes opened, Bud 'played tic-tac-toe [noughts and crosses] on his chest' with a six-inch knife until the victim gave up a safe combination. Bud stuffed a duffel bag with

\$10,000 cash and crystal meth worth \$50,000. He was about to leave, but more roommates arrived, spotted blood, fled and called the cops.

Bud hopped a fence and landed in a back yard. A lady cradling a poodle opened a French window. Pointing a .357 Magnum at her face, he yelled, 'Freeze, police! In the house now!' In the living room, he came across a scantily clad, dishevelled young couple who'd ventured downstairs to investigate the commotion. 'Freeze, motherfuckers! On the ground!' Bud yelled. Keeping an eye on a German shepherd, he locked the windows and doors, and switched the lights off. 'I've done killed nine people tonight. Let's not make that twelve.'

They watched Bud on the news. The police knocked on the door, shone flashlights in the back yard and left. After a few hours of drinking beer and smoking weed with hostages keen to get inebriated to steady their nerves, Bud left in their truck.

Two days later, acting on a tip-off, Bud's house was surrounded by a SWAT team, a helicopter, an armoured vehicle and news crews. He barricaded himself in the garage. A negotiator threw him a black box containing a phone that he grabbed with a rake.

'Hello.'

'Today's a good day to die,' Bud said. 'What do you think?'

'I'm here to help get you out. Have you got any hostages?'

'Yeah,' he lied, worried about them storming in.

'We're not coming in. Is there anything you need?'

'A pizza.'

'What else?'

'A helicopter.'

'You've been watching too many movies.' The negotiator laughed.

A girlfriend who saw the stand-off on the news arrived.  
'Hi, honey. Are you gonna give up and come out?'

'I've got dope and smokes. I'm OK.'

'You're big-time surrounded. Look down the street.'

Bud noticed an armoured vehicle with a battering ram ready to knock the garage door down.

'They're coming, honey. They promised that no shots will be fired and I'll get to talk to you if you come out right now.'

With his hands in the air, Bud emerged ...

Bud finishes his story excited, content. He gets on his bunk, puts on a set of headphones and watches a tiny TV, both made from clear plastic so no contraband can be concealed inside. Feeling the beginning of a bond with him, I sleep better.

In the morning, I wake up to Bud standing next to me, holding a chest hair. 'I woke up with one of your fucking pubes in my mouth!' he yells, setting the tone for the day.

Other than headcounts, I spend the day out of the cell.

After lockdown, I ask Bud for another story. He says that in a 14-man cell at Alhambra, a processing unit for new prisoners, a sex offender arrived. Presiding over a kangaroo court, Bud ordained the man be tortured.

'Read this,' Bud says, waving legal paperwork.

The paperwork states that, after tying the sex offender, 'They stuffed strips of cloth in his mouth prior to the stabbings to see how the muffle worked.' His boxer shorts were pulled down and he was mocked for having 'a little one'. According to the sex offender's testimony, 'At that point was where I got stabbed in the stomach several times.' Bud stabbed him 11 times and put the shank to the face of a witness who said, 'He put it to the corner of my eye like he was gonna shove it in there and he says, "You say anything, and I'm gonna take this and shove it in your eye, and pop your eye out. Then we're gonna eat it."' For