

## Letter 41

5-27-26

B.B. 2

Our cellblock has 8 cells, each could hold two inmates. We tend to average 8-10 inmates, though. Despite our fluctuating population, we always have three tablets. We use these tablets for electronic messaging, movies, and for making phone calls from the relative privacy of our cells.

There tends to always be two or three people who never use the tablets. There is always someone on that seems to have one in their hands whenever we are awake. Then, the rest of us use them intermittently throughout the day.

At night the tablets sleep on a charger in the day room. During the day however, there is recurring drama about where the tablets spend their time.

Recently we fell into an unspoken routine where I would get a tablet after breakfast and it would hang out with me throughout the day. I send messages at least hourly and make at least one call a day. So, I would have it next to me in my cell or beside me while watching TV or playing cards in the day room. It's my connection to family on the outside, as they are for everyone. For me, though, it is also a connection to my job, which I am still supervising from in here.

Even though the tablet was beside me, there are two people that regularly ask for it, borrow it, and return it.

Wart has a similar relationship with a tablet. He messages his wife pretty constantly throughout the day. He is continually stationed at the card table with a tablet within two feet.

Shady is our current talker. He spends every waking moment in conversation. Half of the time he is making a call on a tablet. He makes these calls in his cell, in front of his cell, as a video visit, or even while playing cards.

Shady pretty much keeps exclusive use of "his" tablet. I keep "mine" and share it with two others who barely use it. Wart keeps "his" and shares with everybody else. Nobody is ever denied use of a tablet and you pretty much always know where to go to get one.

This routine was good until B.B. decided it wasn't. Part of the issue was that B.B., despite being in his thirties, never learned how to get along in a group. I'm guessing he never played team sports or had jobs that required that type of interaction. The other part of the issue is that he does not have good control of his emotions. This lack of emotional regulation has brought him to tears or yelling multiple times.

One of the ways that his lack of social skills is evident is when he tries so hard to be funny. He gives it an admirable effort, trying hard and often. The problem is that he isn't clever

or funny. This is compounded by the fact that he has no idea. The result is that he ends up rubbing everyone the wrong way. (In the annoying way, not the touchy way. Which come to think of it, would also be annoying).

Last week both Shady and Wart had about enough of B.B. He had been inserting himself in card games, but due to his lack of both charm and skill, made this a tedious experience for those involved. I always avoid games when he is likely to play, so I wasn't quite so fed up... yet.

On a particularly active day, Shady, Wart, and myself were simultaneously on the tablets for an extended period. This annoyed B.B. He signaled his frustration to Wart. Since Wart was already fed up with B.B., this resulted in Wart going even slower and taking longer on the tablet.

B.B. came to my cell to ask if he could use the tablet after I was done. I was in the middle of some work, but told him yes, when I was finished he could have a turn.

A few minutes later I heard B.B. yelling at Wart. A lot. This resulted in a CO coming in to investigate the commotion. B.B. continued his rant at the CO. The end result was that we lost all three tablets for an indeterminate amount of time.

I was livid. Not at the CO for doing his job. Not at Wart for being fed up. I was pissed at B.B. for losing his shit in a way that impacted me.

He went to his cell and the rest of us sat in the day room. As we sat there and fumed, B.B. emerged from his cell and stood at the top of the stairs. I could not stand to look at him at that moment, so I told him to go to his cell.

Like I was scolding a child, I told this grown man to go to his room. He froze at the top of the stairs, gears turning agonizingly slow in his brain. In an effort to aid his decision-making process, I stalked up the stairs with murder in my eyes. I had expected him to retreat immediately, but he either found some bravery or was indeed too dumb to move.

So, I found myself confronting him face to face. More than anything, I wanted him to swing on me. I was confident in my ability to end a confrontation forcefully, but without striking him. When he refused to swing, I had to resort to verbally releasing my frustration.

The gist of the conversation was him saying that the others hogging the tablets wasn't fair, everything was their fault, and he wasn't going to let them talk shit about him. I suggested that perhaps jail is not fair, and he either needed to stop being a pussy and go downstairs and do something about it, or shut up and go to his cell. Bitch.

When his lip started quivering I wasn't sure which way I wanted this to go. I'm pretty sure yelling at him until he cried was going to make me feel better. Before I could fully explore that option, the Officer In Charge (OIC) came into the cellblock.

The guards had been watching everything from their command center (the bubble). They had also heard him yelling through the walls. Since Haven and Mike taught me well, I knew that the one yelling the loudest was the one that got in trouble. I had been careful to make my points in a forceful yet seemingly calmer manner.

The OIC came up the stairs to join us. He asked what was going on. B.B. very loudly explained all of his feelings. He even added a few threats towards Wart to really drive the point home. The OIC had heard enough, he sent B.B. to his room.

Then the OIC went with me into my cell so he could ask me privately who on the block was the real problem. He suspected it was Shady. While Shady can be a thorn in the side for staff, he wasn't an issue for the inmates. I let him know that if there ever is a problem, it's probably a B.B. problem, the guy just irritates everyone.

So, within twenty minutes, B.B. was moved to C block, which is just another block. Unfortunately for him, he only lasted a few hours there. I'm not sure what the story was there, but I can imagine his winning personality was quickly exposed and dealt with. The only option left for him was E block, the hole. Because he was likely moved for being incompatible with people, not actual misconduct, he is allowed to "free roam." The other inhabitants of that block are locked down twenty-three hours a day, out for one. A free roamer is out for the times the others are in lockdown, then he would be locked down while they are out.

Because that's where the bad kids all go, they aren't allowed to have nice things, because they break them. That means they can't change the channel on the one TV in the day room.

At least they have a TV. In a cruel twist of fate, they don't have tablets.