

Phil's story

Phil was in prison for 35 of his 60 years, mostly for drug trafficking. When I interviewed him, he had been out of prison for five years and living at O'Hanlon House for about a year. Phil is a born story-teller, and he fascinated me over five long interviews with his stories of prison life. After reading my write-up of his interviews, Phil decided that he wanted to write his story himself. Maybe that was because I excised about 95% of all his 'fucking hell's, leaving only about five per page. He got a calligraphy set through a special fund, and gave me the following story. Phil has a serious lung disease.



A debt list is what a Drug Dealer as wrote the names & amount of money what is owed to them, when they let people have the drugs they require, and they pay at a later date. This debt list is a great evidence fucker for the old bill. I have met & come across so many people convicted in Court by the dreaded debt list. Even I'm not exempt from this.

I was given six years imprisonment at Exeter Crown Court in 1999, for possession of Heroin & with intent to supply. After receiving the six years, I was moved from Exeter Prison to Dorchester Prison, where Dorchester Prison allocated me to for the first time a Category C Prison. Normally I end up in Category A dispersal prisons.

I was allocated to Guys Marsh Prison, just on the outskirts of Shaftsbury in Dorset. I arrived at Guys Marsh Prison & I was put straight into the segregation unit. I had never been to Guys Marsh Prison before. I couldn't work out why I had been placed in the segregation unit. The Deputy Governor attempted to explain to me that Guys Marsh Prison did not want me in their establishment, so I thought why the fuck didn't they say this whilst I was still at Dorchester Prison. The reason why I was immediately placed in the segregation unit was my reputation for causing and being in trouble had preceded me. Unknown to me at the time, I would learn that I knew the majority of the screws there from Category A Prisons. The screws were at Guys Marsh Prison because they were near retirement.

A Principal Officer (P.O.) who knew me convinced the governor to give me a chance on normal location, on the wing with other prisoners, on the condition that I gave my word I would behave myself. As the P.O. was putting his neck on the line, so I was moved from the segregation unit to the induction wing. This was totally a new experience for me: being amongst other prisoners, walking from A to B in the prison without screws, dog patrols, being handcuffed to a screw to stop me attacking other prisoners, or climbing on to the

prison roof and smashing the roof up. I have been on three prison roofs, protesting & smashing them up: Parkhurst Prison roof, Gartree Prison roof & Dartmoor Prison roof.




Being on the induction wing, you're on this wing for approximately one month, then allocated to another wing where you will probably remain until you finish your sentence. I soon learnt the rules in a Category C prison are totally different from rules in a Category A Prison. The rules in a Category C prison are petty, trivial & pathetic, i.e. (1) not allowed to walk on the grass, (2) when going from A to B, the prisoner must go straight from A to B, and not go anywhere else.



The next thing I learnt was I had to get a job in the prison. To be moved from the induction wing, you had to have a job. Fuck me, I don't work when I'm on the outside, in the normal world. I've never worked in prison. If I was put in a prison workshop against my wishes, I made fuckin' sure the prison regretted making that decision to put me in a workshop. I'd make sure the workshop was closed, i.e. putting incendiary devices in the workshop & they go off after everyone has left, & the incendiary devices ignites when the workers are back on the wing. Now I find that I have to get a job. I tried every fuckin' workshop – laundry, wing cleaners. The answer I received from all of them was, under no circumstances would 'the shop instructor' have me in their workshop. Another screw I knew said I have to sell myself. Most of the screws that knew me said "I was well past the fuckin' sell by date". I couldn't get a job in any of the workshops.




I had been on the induction wing for about twenty weeks – the normal length of stay as I said was four weeks on the induction wing. I was in my cell, locked up, when the cell door opened, and an old screw, Jesus, he was well past the retirement stage – this old screw, I knew him from Gartree & Parkhurst – said he'd give me a chance to do the course he ran, a course doing Braille for the blind or people with partially impaired sight. I thought a fucking course. The old screw said, there's only eight people doing the course. He said tea & coffee was there to be had when the inmates required it. It's a clean, tidy workshop. I'd earn money to spend in the prison canteen. But the selling point to me was, when the old screw said to me, I know you can do this, plus it will get you out of the cell.

All the other shop instructors, screws, governors, said to the old screw, "Are you insane, having him in your workshop". The old screw's response was "He's given me his word that he will behave himself." The old screw had faith in me.

At the time of me starting this Braille course, the Home Secretary who is in charge of all prisons was David Blunkett, who as you know is blind, and had a great interest in the Braille course. This was a new project – the Braille course – and it was easier than I thought, & the old screw was correct, I could & did learn how to do. It kind of came natural. Braille is all

about six dots, in a block. By that I mean, like this  . For single characters A  ~ B  ~

C  ~ D  etc. Then they take the most popular words, like, and, the, then, that, which are abbreviated into their own characters. By that I mean, instead of writing, and, the, this,

that in full, the dots were placed in different positions. And would be . So instead of writing each letter separately, the most popular words were abbreviated. Another word, the  or that would be .

I was copying books for sighted people into Braille for the blind. I found it interesting & fascinating. I got right into it. I could write Braille, but I couldn't read it, like the blind do with their fingertips, sliding over the raised dots. It's unbelievable to watch a blind person read Braille. So when a book was completed, the old screw had to get it proofread, to see if there were any errors, spelling mistakes etc. The old screw had a blind pianist who played at the Albert Hall. He'd played in front of the Queen. He would every six months come to the course at Guys Marsh Prison to proofread the books we had completed. I got on great with this guy.

I think I had been doing the Braille course for about four to five months, when the old screw announced that the Right Honourable David Blunkett would be coming to Guys Marsh Prison to visit the prison. Of course, him being blind, it was obvious that he was going to visit the Braille course. Fuck me, that's when the sheer panic from the governor to the ordinary screw down set in. The governor asked the old screw running the course, would it be possible that I wasn't at work in the Braille course shop, the day the Home Secretary David Blunkett visited. The Governor was fuckin' terrified that I would do something whilst the Home Secretary was there. The Governor was shitting it.

The old screw wouldn't have it. He actually stood in my corner fighting for me, which was a real first. The old screw, even he on the day of David Blunkett's visit, was showing signs of nervousness, and had to ask me "please behave myself". I said I would. I thought fuck me, it can't be that hard for me to behave myself. But at the same time I was trying to get rid of the little seed in my head saying to me "He treated you like a cunt when you arrived at this prison – what a perfect opportunity to get revenge on this Governor." The nearer the day of Blunkett's visit, I suppose I could see and smell the fear from all the top fuckers who ran the prison, because all those fuckers who ran the prison all believed that there was no way I could behave myself.

The day arrived, and David Blunkett arrived at Guys Marsh Prison, armed police, sirens wailing, police helicopter. Fuck me, he must have had an entourage of at least fifteen to twenty fuckin' ass lickens with him. Even the Black Labrador got treated with more respect than the inmates received. The Governor must have been stuck so far up Blunkett's ass – the Governor was using his bollocks as wedges. The snivelling fuckin' asshole.

So I'm at my Braille typewriter doing my thing, when they all arrived. Even the Black Labrador came with him. I'll never forget this as long as I live. The governor asked one of the other inmates to get a bowl of water for the fuckin' dog. My first thoughts were "Governor, please get your tongue out of the blind fella's asshole".

Better was to come, when the governor realised David Blunkett was talking to every inmate individually. By this time I'm just watching all this, the chit chat. As David Blunkett got nearer to me, you could actually see the fear rise on the governor's face. Then Blunkett was there, within touching distance. The old screw made the introductions. Blunkett said to me "how long have you been doing the course". I replied four to five months. Did I enjoy it. I replied "yeah". Then one of the ass licking followers asked me, what my sentence was for & how long had I received, how long I had done of it. The Governor was hanging on the edge of a cliff - & he must have thought phew!!! – nothing can go wrong now. How fuckin' wrong can one be.

The fatal question was asked by David Blunkett himself – "Why was I doing the course and what did I expect to get out of it". My answer just came out, I said, I was convicted of possession of heroin with intent to supply. The debt list of everyone's name & the amounts of money each person owed me sealed my conviction. So I'm here on the Braille course to learn Braille to write my debt list out, to fuck the old bill. But knowing my luck I'm having at the moment, I'd probably get nicked by a blind fuckin' copper, that would be able to read my Braille written debt list. Fuck me, I even think the Black Labrador stopped panting. All I could see was Blunkett's mouth opening and shutting like a goldfish. The home secretary was in complete shock. Even the entourage were fuckin' speechless.

After the Home Secretary had left, that's when the fun started. On the No. 1 governor's instruction, I was taken to the segregation unit, where the No. 1 governor spoke to me. All he kept saying was "I knew it would be you (me). I knew it..." The final words from the No. 1 governor to me were "I'm having you transferred to H.M.P. Dartmoor as soon as an escort van is available."

An hour later a P.O. came to my cell & said "You're not going to Dartmoor because Dartmoor refuses to accept you, because you've already been on the prison roof there & caused over two million pounds worth of criminal damage." I started laughing: I was thinking "You're fuckin' right P.O.". I then said to the P.O. "It was even better when the judge on the Dartmoor roof trial fucked up the sentencing & it ended up that I received no prison sentence, as the judge thought I was on remand for the criminal damage to Dartmoor Prison's roof. But I got bail from the Crown Court & had been arrested for drug trafficking: that was what I was on remand for, not the criminal damage to Dartmoor Prison roof. Now that did piss the prison authorities right off – all that damage to the prison roof, & all the screws' fuckin' lies, they spoke from the witness box to make sure I was convicted & would receive the longest sentence they could try to get the judge to impose on me. But in the end the judge fucked up the sentencing. Haha, my luck had changed that day."

What shithole as carved in the stone above the main prison gate entrance "ALL YE WHO ENTER HERE, ABANDON ALL YE HOPE" – Eh!

I was eventually transferred from Guys Marsh Prison to Horfield Prison in Bristol...