

D.J. Interview

By: Javier M.

1. May you please give me a brief description on your duties as a D.J.?

I make sure every electronic is ready to be used at all times; power points, videos, music and making sure the restrooms are clean. I also do my best at setting the atmosphere for the participants and executives.

2. What are the pros and cons of being a D.J.?

PRO: Making people do Fonda's (which is getting in a plank position and scissoring your legs). That definitely gets the crowd going.

CON: On the flip side, prison is a very diverse place, so sometimes it gets hard to please everyone by playing their choice of music; Remember, executives do ask for music too and of course they always come first.

3. How many hours do you put in a week?

34 hours plus!

4. What's your favorite quote?

"Boys do what they want to do and Men do what they have to do."

5. Do you have some advice or insight you would like to share with our PEP brothers?

I started off as a janitor when I graduated and moved up to being a D.J. That's why they call me D.J. Clean. It's all about finding what you enjoy doing. I was also separated once and had the privilege to come back. Don't be a crash dummy! I love this brotherhood. Develop healthy relationships with people who will stick by your side. I do plan on doing some D.J. work once I'm released.

To the back of the room! :)



**Adrian T.
AKA "Nacho"**

EXECUTIVE QUESTIONNAIRE

Why do you choose to give your time to PEP? I had the privilege of experiencing PEP from the other side, as an inmate and I greatly appreciate the value in people offering their time to inspire and guide me on my path. I want to bring the same to other people.

What inspires you to push yourself every day? My “why”, the long term vision and goals I want to bring to fruition for my family.

What is the one thing you have learned at today's event? A fresh reminder of how precious our time is and the privileges we have in the free world.

Will you come back to PEP? Absolutely.



Justin AKA Forest Gump

Any words of wisdom that you would like to share? Do something every day to work towards your goals, even if its a small thing, the day wasn't wasted.



prison
entrepreneurship
program

Saturday, October 13th—what an exciting day it was for both our Fearless Fall `18 class and the college students from the Wolf Center of Business who brought their energetic personalities with them.

I have to say that it was an awesome learning experience for ALL of us. Seeing the sense of reality and enthusiasm on the students faces, as well as the knowledge that we shared with each other, gave them the understanding that we truly aren't any different than them. Other than us being incarcerated; we come from similar backgrounds. I quickly found out that they were a lot better at dancing than we were and the conversations we had were surrounded with common interest, as well as questions which provided a very useful source of knowledge that we can use to better our business plans.

Jason W. AKA Mr. Crabs



BP Workshop Event

The Prison Entrepreneurship Program hosted the Fearless Fall `18 Business Plan Workshop Event. We had a great turn out from our PEP volunteers that consisted of many executives and numerous seniors from the University Of Houston Wolf School Of Business willing to invest their time, knowledge, wisdom, and understanding in business to help us. This has helped many of us critique our business plans and we were all able to gain valuable insights for our businesses, from marketing strategies to branding our companies through social media. This experience was awesome and our guests were extremely intelligent. These volunteers were **AMAZING**! Not only did they show up with their 'A' game, but they wore their dancing shoes and put on quite a show for us when the DJ ed "to the back of the room." Great job participants! I have to say the advice I received at this event has provided me with new ideas and has boosted my confidence for the Business Plan Competition Event.

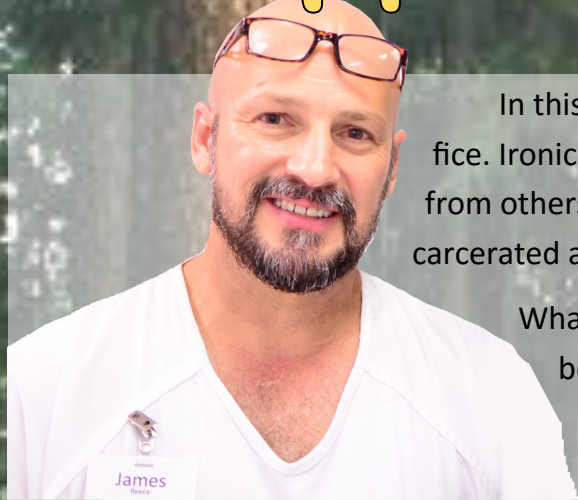
Arturo C. AKA Cuddle Chicken



EXPRESS YOURSELF

A little birdie told me

James R. AKA Biscuits and Jelly



In this environment, you hear a lot of guys talk about devotion and sacrifice. Ironically though, it always seems to be in the context of what they expect from others. I'm going to go out on a limb here and say that most of us are incarcerated as a direct result of the selfish choices that we have made in life.

What I mean by that is, has we truly been devoted to our loved ones and been willing to sacrifice our wants for their needs, we would probably be receiving our mail at a more hospitable address. Be that as it may, many of my brothers in white expect their loved ones to keep that commissary account full and those letters rolling in.

Now you might be thinking to yourself, "Well yeah, that's what it's about, right?" I've got a question of my own, what sacrifices do you make for them? Hmm? Do you even know what it means to truly sacrifice? There was an article in National Geographic that provided a penetrating picture into the subject of which I've chosen to write.

After a forest fire in Yellowstone National Park, forest rangers began their trek up a mountain to assess the fire's damage. One ranger found a bird literally petrified in ashes, perched statuesque on the ground at the base of a tree. Somewhat sickened by the eerie sight, the ranger reached out to knock the bird over with a stick.

As he gently struck it, three tiny chicks scurried out from under the dead mother's wings. The loving mother, keenly aware of impending danger and instinctively knowing that smoke would rise, had carried her offspring to the base of the tree gathered them under her wings. Sadly enough, the fire was not contained to the trees, alone, and soon devoured everything in its path.

She could have flown to safety, but she refused to abandon her babies. When the blaze reached her and the heat scorched and crusted her little body, the mother remained steadfast. Because she was willing to die, those under the cover of her wings had lived. What a beautiful and heart wrenching example of devotion and sacrifice. It's amazing what we can learn from God's little creatures.

Who is under your wings?



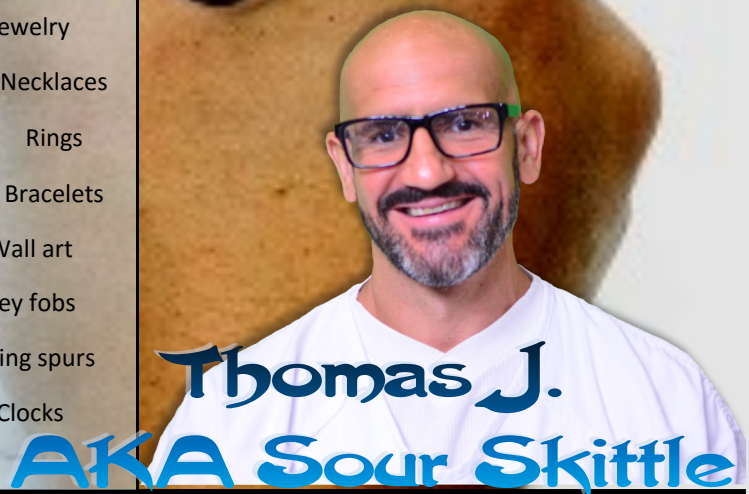


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			Riding spurs
			Clocks



Every start-up begins with an idea sprouting out of desire or discomfort. As entrepreneurs, we have an intuition inclined to bridge the gap between supply and demand. We possess the innate ability to assemble and apply resources in a productive manner that advances the betterment of man. While providing a service that enhances the quality of life of our fellows, our own life is improved in many ways. Our desire for victory and success has overcome the paralyzing fear of failure. We persevere and shine brighter in our darkest moments.

Nowhere is this desire more evident than in Texas prisons where we receive zero monetary compensation for our labor and our overseers don't even provide deodorant to indigent inmates. This activated my entrepreneurial spirit and sprouted the idea that I could create art for other inmates in exchange for commissary items satisfying my basic needs. As I continued to practice and hone my craft, I gained access into TDCJ craft shops. There, I met many other craftsmen who were creating exquisite handcrafted works with wood, leather, basic art and metal supplies. I spent north of a decade toiling in the trenches, cultivating trust and developing an exclusive distribution network with these men. We often spoke of one day one of us getting out and showing the world what we can make. Many of us just want to send some form of beauty back to society and contribute in a positive capacity.

This is where CONNEC2CONS CRAFT CO-OP becomes a reality "CONNECTING" reformed incarcerated craftsmen and discerning passionate collectors who are also philanthropically spirited in their acquisitions. CONNEC2CONS.com will be the primary communication hub between craftsmen and collectors. We will provide an efficient purchasing process and an option for customization and personalization of any product. We aim to create a true connection with the ultimate purchasing experience. CONNEC2CONS.com will have biographies of all contributing craftsmen and a photo gallery of their merchandise being utilized in the free world. Our website will also be one of many advertising platforms we will use. I will additionally advertise and sell at trade and art shows, collectors' online forums and print media and philanthropic societies.

CONNEC2CONS is unique in its business model because profit, in its monetary sense, isn't the ultimate goal. The craftsmen behind CONNEC2CONS aren't overly concerned with lining their own pockets. Aside from funding their operations and commissary accounts, I will be providing them with options such as college-fund savings accounts for their children, various charitable donation options, and IRA investment opportunities. In addition, 10% of my proceeds from each transaction will be invested into a savings account that will eventually fund an overseas missionary trip. Pictures and testimonies from this trip will also be shared on the website and with our dedicated craftsmen.

This mutual and widespread benefit is what makes CONNEC2CONS a CRAFT CO-OP. Our mission statement here at CONNEC2CON is "seeking mutual advancement by putting life and interest into every transaction". It will be managed with an open suggestion box in reference to which charities and foundations we will contribute to. In essence, I will be a connector of two different societies; one that has made some mistakes but has corrected its ways, and another that believes in blessings and second chances. Together, we will be part of the solution.