

TONIGHT I WILL BOND WITH THE BOY'S

PLT 1069, Spring 1992

The Senior Drill Instructor (SDI) is responsible for the conduct of the assigned Drill Instructors who assist him in the training of the platoon and is ultimately responsible for the needs of his recruits being met.

Some SDI's will initiate this connection in the first days of recruit training; others will wait about 7 – 14 days to initiate this connection. Sadly some of the SDI's will never connect with their platoon and their performance will show it.

In the big picture the goal is to let the recruits know they can talk to someone who cares about them and will be their advocate. In reality preventing allegations of misconduct against the team of Drill Instructors assisting the SDI in the training of the platoon is the unsanctioned goal. The Chain of Command calls it obstruction of justice, a violation of article 92 of the UCMJ. If the recruits end up speaking to the Lieutenants about their problems then the cat really will be out of the bag and the team will likely to be relieved, punished and held accountable. The goal of this unsanctioned practice is not to suppress serious physical abuse but to keep the little stupid shit from getting command attention. The SDI will inflict the necessary discipline on the errant DI to get him on the straight and narrow path of righteousness.

For Platoon 1069 I had decided that I would create that bond tonight, approximately TD-10 (Training Day-10). I had told the three DI's assisting me that I would take the boys to evening chow alone and they were to go home and return after the morning meal the next day. My DI's were happy because they had been working 17 hour days for two weeks since picking up the platoon and were going to be home early and actually see their families instead of arriving and leaving while the family is in bed. Yes, the sacrifices of the DI's are rarely known or appreciated by anyone.

I had the platoon fall out for a motivating improvised close order drill session on the way to the chow hall. The boys were in heaven, the pressure of my unrelenting DI's watching their every move were not present tonight and my cadence had a motivating tone to it. When we finally returned to the

squadbay after evening chow and drill I held a school circle in the back of the squadbay and spoke to them like they were my young Marines in the fleet. My eyes and smile said it all, "I'm on your team, I am here for you, I will protect you when necessary, bring your concerns to me if you have any".

In my two platoons as SDI I had always left my office blinds fully raised so that everyone knew that I could see the conduct of activities in the squadbay. I wanted to know what my team of DI's was doing and I also wanted the recruits to know that I condoned their aggressive behavior.

After about 45 minutes of dialog and expectations from here out I began the execution of the BDR (Basic Daily Routine).

"WHEN I GIVE THE COMMAND, YOU WILL RETURN TO YOUR PLACE ON LINE. DO IT KNOW"

"AYE AYE SIR" said the recruits and they scampered to their place on line at the foot of their racks standing at the position of attention.

SDI: "STARBOARD SIDE SHOWER UP, PORT SIDE SHINE'M UP"

Recruits: "STARBORAD SIDE SHOWER UP, PORT SIDE SHINE'M UP AYE AYE SIR"

SDI: "READY...MOVE"

The recruits all raised their left foot together and slammed them on the deck in a thunderous thud as they shouted with passion "KILL". Kill was a word I had them shout in unison whenever I gave them a command of execution to do something. I was trying to program a deep appreciation for aggression in everything they do. Hearing 75 motivated recruits do this instantaneously at the same moment is music to my ears.

Recruits on the port side immediately got out their shoe shine and brass shining kits and commenced shining brass belt tips, buckles and leather boots. The recruits on the starboard side quickly stripped removed all their clothes, wrapped a towel around their waist and with flip flops on their feet and their shaving / shower kit in their left hand with forearm parallel to the deck as if at left shoulder arms resumed their place on line awaiting my next command.

SDI: "PREPARE TO MARCH TO THE HEAD"

Recruits: "PREPARE TO MARCH TO THE HEAD AYE AYE SIR"

SDI: "FORWARD MARCH" The recruits took three steps forward, did a flanking movement to the left and marched in single file toward the quarterdeck and then a column left through the doors into the head. I called cadence the whole time, engraining into them my passion for close order drill and my expectation that they shall always think about drill when marching at any time anywhere.

The last of the recruits in the head I entered my office and began doing paperwork while the recruits showered and shaved. At about the five minute mark one of the recruits still in the squadbay shining his brass and leather walked up to my office door and meekly attempted the process for requesting permission to speak.

The recruit pounds the bulkhead outside the door with moderate force and in a nervous manner request permission to speak "SIR, RECRUIT ANDERSON REQUEST PERMISSION TO SPEAK TO SENIOR DRILL INSTRUCTOR GUNNERY SERGEANT CROUCH SIR"

"LOUDER BOY"

"SIR, RECRUIT ANDERSON REQUEST PERMISSION TO SPEAK TO SENIOR DRILL INSTRUCTOR GUNNERY SERGEANT CROUCH SIR"

"What is it recruit"

Recruit Anderson was fumbling his words, looking away toward the quarterdeck outside my office and back towards me and back again while pointing to the deck

My patience was running very thin, I didn't choose to bond with the boys so that they could act like nervous school girls. "WHAT THE HELL IS IT" I asked.

"SIR, SIR, AH, SIR, AHH AH SIR"

"SPEAK ENGLISH YOU SON OF A BITCH, WHAT THE FUCK DO YOU WANT"

"SIR, SIR, AH, SIR, AHH AH SIR" he continued to utter why gesturing at the quarterdeck with eyes wide open.

"WHAT THE FUCK IS IT RECRUIT"

"SHIT SIR, THERE IS SHIT ON THE QUARTERDECK"

At this moment time seemed to slow down so I could use all my senses to understand this peculiar situation that was quickly developing. I got up from my desk and walked toward the open door to see a huge steaming turd sitting on my quarterdeck, its owner having pooped it out while marching across the quarterdeck with the others on their way to the showers. I knew it had to be one of the very last recruits to march past me because it had not been stepped on.

I was livid, so much for bonding with the boys. I was in the mood to torture them instead.

"EYEBALLS"

"SNAP SIR" The recruits still in the squadbay shouted as they looked at me.

"WHO SAW THIS TURD FALL ONTO MY QUARTERDECK", nothing was said, pure silence. I told them to lock it up and wait online. I had the recruit near me come stand guard around the turd should someone step in it when I flushed the recruits from the head.

I then stormed into the head and commanded "ZEROOOOOO"

"FREEZE RECRUIT FREEZE" they shouted in reply and froze their body positions as required when hearing the command.

"WHEN I GIVE THE COMMAND YOU WILL LEAVE EVERYTHING YOU BROUGHT WITH YOU AND ONLY TAKE YOUR TOWEL. YOU WILL NOT ALLOW THAT TOWEL TO TOUCH YOUR BODY, YOU WILL HOLD IT ABOVE YOUR HEAD WITH BOTH HANDS AND RETURN TO YOUR POSITION ONLINE. SHAVING CREAM ON YOUR FACE AND WATER AND SOAP ON YOUR BODIES HAD BETTER STAY THAT WAY. YOU WILL NOT ALLOW THAT TOWEL TO TOUCH YOUR BODY" the recruits did as instructed.

Once they were back online I instructed them "TAKE THAT TOWEL AND WITHOUT TOUCHING YOUR BODY HOLD THE SHORT END AND PUT IT IN FRONT OF YOURSELF FOR INSPECTION. AFTER I LOOK AT THE FRONT OF THE TOWEL YOU WILL TURN IT SO I CAN SEE THE OTHERSIDE" I commenced my very slow inspection of the towels. I expected my culprit to be near the very end of the line. Sure enough, the second and third recruit from the end both had soaked towels in one spot the size of a bowling ball.

I figured they wet the towels so that the guilty one would not have any skid marks on it. Recruit Patel was the one I suspected as my turd boy, I figured he got his bunkmate to wet his towel to create doubt of who the guilty party was.

I went into my tirade of emotions, threatened to play pass the turd so the owner could identify it. Finally told the two pigs to go pick it up and clean my quarterdeck. I put them on fire watch for the next few hours and punished them with PT whenever convenient for the rest of training until graduation.

Several weeks later we had just finished qualification at the rifle range and recruit Patel knocked on my office hatch requesting to speak to me.

"WHAT DO YOU WANT PATEL"

"SIR, RECRUIT PATEL REQUEST PERMISSION TO SPEAK AT EASE"

"BULLSHIT, JUST BECAUSE YOU QUALIFIED ON THE RIFLE RANGE DOES NOT MAKE YOU A MARINE. YOU SPEAK TO ME LIKE A RECRUIT"

"SIR, WHEN ARE THE BEATINGS GOING TO START"

Dumbfounded is an understatement to my emotions at his stupid request. Of all the recruits I wanted to beat him the most, I often fantasized about beating him because I truly believed he was the scared recruit who squeezed out a turd onto my quarterdeck several weeks ago as he marched to the showers. "WHAT KIND OF A STUPID QUESTION IS THAT, WHAT MAKES YOU THINK THE DRILL INSTRUCTORS ARE GOING TO BEAT YOU"

"SIR, ALL THE WEAK ONES HAVE LEFT PLATOON 1069, THE PLATOON IS LOOSE AND NEEDS TIGHTENED UP, THEY NEED BEATING SIR"

"PATEL, YOU'RE THE FIRST RECRUIT I WANT TO BEAT, GET THE FUCK OUT OF MY OFFICE BEFORE I DO IT"

That was nineteen years ago, every time I meet someone named Patel I inquire if they or someone they know with the name Patel had been in Marine boot camp back in 1992. I hope to meet the idiot someday and get a truthful answer out of him.