

# off the fence.

## Behind Bars: The World's Toughest Prisons (Series 1)

6 x 60'

### EPISODIC BREAKDOWN

#### 1. San Pedro Prison, La Paz, Bolivia

A prison with guards on the outside but not on the inside because they fear for their lives. On the inside, the prisoners are in control: murderers, violent offenders, drug bosses. This is the prison city of San Pedro in La Paz, Bolivia, where the inmates rule and anarchy prevails. Money, violence and power. Only the strongest survive this lawless place, and they rule over the weak, demand protection money, rent for sleeping areas and determine what rights and obligations the prisoners have.

#### 2. Dalls County Jail, Dallas. Texas, USA

The Dallas County Jail in Texas - a mega-jail with room for 7,100 inmates, where everyone from small-time criminals to serial killers wait for their day in court. Mass processing of new inmates occurs on a daily basis: Up to 300 new arrivals per day are registered by prison staff. Those who enter must be aware of the turf wars. Gang warfare and turf battles are even more critical on the inside where there is less real estate to divide up. Gang warfare is even more relentless within these prison walls.

#### 3. Antanimora Prison, Madagascar

Desperate overcrowding, rats, disease - welcome to Antanimora Prison in Madagascar. A prison in the middle of the capital Antananarivo and bursting at the seams. Originally built for 800 prisoners, the complex houses more than 3,000 prisoners. They sleep crammed together, body against body, some on the bare floor. In the cells: darkness, cockroaches, lice and the unbearable odor of latrines. One meal per day consisting of a bowl of cassava [maniok]. No meat, no fruit - everything a tasteless mush. Malnutrition is said to be one of the main causes of death in Antanimora. Only those who have the support of friends and relatives have a chance to get better food and other amenities such as water for washing and showering or enough small change to secure a bunk bed.

#### 4. Tent City Jail, Phoenix, Arizona, USA

Tent City Jail - a prison in the desert of Arizona, USA. If you're in this place, you are in for tough times. As the name indicates, tents instead of cells make up prison housing, old army tents left

over from the Korean War. The problem with tents - no insulation so it gets unbearably hot in the summer, freezing cold in the winter. Summer daytime temps can get up to 140 degrees Fahrenheit with nighttime temps often dropping to below freezing.

Sheriff Joe Arpaio came up with the idea of tents. He is a hardliner and won't spend any more than he has to on his prisoners. Harassment is part of the deal and is officially known as a 'prison program.' Male prisoners are required to wear pink underwear. And while the same monotonous meal is served daily, the food channel is on, taunting the prisoners. Prison work troops are chained together. Chain gangs were prevalent in the late 19th century - in Tent City Jail, they still exist to this day.

## **5. Sofia Central Prison, Sofia, Bulgaria**

Sofia Central Prison - a Bulgarian detention center, crumbling foundations and fit for demolition - derelict conditions too much to ask of anyone - even a criminal. Multi-prisoner cells, bunks stacked three stories high as well as a large count of isolation cells where prisoners spend 23 hours a day behind rusty bars, with nothing to do, vegetating their days away. Although the European Union requires 43 square feet space per inmate, prisoners in Sofia Central Prison have on average less than half. Central heating and hot running water are considered a luxury. But that's not all: This jail is a place of violence - inter-prisoner violence is rampant and many reports have emerged describing regular abuse by the prison guards.

## **6. Miami, Dade County Jail Boot Camp, Miami, Florida, USA**

The Miami-Dade County Jail and the Miami Dade Boot Camp - the two toughest divisions of the Miami Dade prison complex but they couldn't be more different. Boot camp doesn't give its participants a minute to themselves, the inmates in prison have nothing but time to themselves. Two extremes, united in one world. One, a protocol to break the inmates by bootcamp drill, the other, old dilapidated group cells with its own special hierarchy within prison walls. Behind rusty iron bars, murderers, rapists and robbers adhere to their own rules to survive.