

After battling severe alcohol and drug addiction for many years coupled with long-unaddressed emotional issues - and immediately following the abrupt, jarring conclusion of a relationship with my son's mother and disheartening separation of my sons and I - I lost all sense of belonging and subsequently killed three people.

Despite investing absolutely no effort in being evasive as I travelled through several states committing the tragic, regretful crimes, I was the number-eight wanted fugitive in America in August 2005, and featured on 'America's Most Wanted' (web exclusive pending broadcast), FOX news, Greta Van Susteran, et al.. Eventually I was arrested by the US Marshals in Madison County, TN in late-August 2005.

After bouncing around between TN, NC and GA for many years then receiving a jury sentence of Life in GA in April 2011, I was returned to NC in June 2011 in order to await trial there. Due to my then-pending NC charges being violent in nature and the GA conviction, I was held in a state prison as a pretrial detainee - what is referred to in NC as a "safekeeper."

North Carolina DOC facilities are extraordinarily punitive and mind-numbingly boring - uniquely so. While all but possibly only a couple other state prison systems permit access to numerous privileges and incentives for good

behavior, and allow personal possessions and offer positive activities for recreation and educational purposes, NC allows nothing more than a circa 1970's AM/FM radio and the ability to view a dayroom television generally tuned to Jerry Springer-type programming. Reading material is strictly censored - applying a radical Bible-Belt standard - and due to there being no law library access or any reasonable alternative, prisoners are virtually precluded from successfully challenging the oppressive, exclusively-punative conditions. One's mind slowly but surely reacts to the absence of positive mental-stimulation by dumbing-down and noticeably deteriorating; and due to the absence of "positive" activities prisoners join gangs, get high and obsess over "pulling mules." Prison administrators ignorantly disregard this reality, while wondering dumbly why gang affiliation, activity and violence against DOC staff and other prisoners increase annually at alarming rates.

This was the reality in which I existed in late-2012 when I asked my sister to assist in posting online a pen-pal profile.

For many months I had little luck in connecting with someone seeking the same kind of interaction as me; mainly I received letters from down-on-their-luck, mid-twenty year olds who desired to talk about murder. It was disheartening, and definitely not my thing.

Then, in the Fall of 2013 I received a greeting card at mail call. Although I'll never be able to convey exactly how I immediately knew it represented something unique and special, I was certain it did. It wasn't necessarily the rich stationery, nor the old-timey, feminine handwriting... But there was just something about the simple phrase expressed within the card: "Just to let you know there is someone who cares", that convinced me the author was exceptional, and caused me to wonder and imagine so much.

I quickly responded to the thoughtful card by writing to the post office box included within the return address, informing the author - for a brief period she fictitiously identified herself as "Kate Cache", so in keeping with that I'll refer to her herein as "Kate" - that I was quite lonely and hoped she would like to get to know one another. She replied immediately, writing that she "would be delighted to." What followed - in spite of my confinement, and perhaps somewhat due to it - was the most purely intimate relationship I've ever experienced in my life.

To provide a bit of context, I was arrested several days prior to my 29th birthday. In retrospect, I tend to believe that people in their twenties generally treat each other pretty bad in relationships, thereby reducing the possibility of much actual intimacy. Nevertheless, as a free guy I experienced no shortage of lovely female companionship prior to confinement. In addition to the myriad of brief

excursions throughout my teens and twenties, I did experience genuine love a couple times, and immediately prior to the bad events in 2005 had my heart broken by my youngest son's mother.

That said, and however, after only a couple short months of corresponding with Kate via several letters per week, I realized that all relationships I'd experienced up to that point were incredibly shallow, not thoughtful, and greatly lacking in true intimacy. Kate taught me what it truly means to be intimate.

When using that term, intimate, I don't mean sexually so, although there was never any lack of that particular variety. To my happy surprise Kate suddenly introduced that element into our correspondence within the first couple weeks, describing a public, picnic-table dream she had. Even that, although certainly arousing, was different than any sexual "experience" - however virtual in nature - I had previously been exposed to, due to its raw purity, lack of obscenity and the obvious way it affected Kate, thereby affecting me.

No matter what it was Kate was fully invested, heart and soul. Whether she was excitedly describing a painting in the works and its many "wonderful colors", or the music she so dearly loved - the Avett Brothers - or the awesome love developing between her and I. Her childlike enthusiasm for everything that meant something to her was so refreshing and contagious.

After my criminal charges in NC concluded via a plea agreement - following 8½ years being "pretrial" and literally begging appointed counsel unsuccessfully to file a trial demand on my behalf - in February 2014 I was transferred to a more permanent facility in the furthest eastern part of the State.

As such, I was suddenly eligible to receive "contact" visits. Kate and I immediately made plans to finally meet in person as we awaited approval of her visiting application. I also obtained telephone access at this time, so we happily took advantage by talking several times daily.

During a call in March 2014, Kate was audibly shaken at the outset of our conversation. After persistently assuring her that she could tell me anything, she cried while revealing that she had been "dishonest" about her name and why she actually began corresponding with me. She then revealed her real name, and explained that the reason she used a fake one was because her husband was one of the district attorney's who had prosecuted me.

In an effort to lend to the drama of this story I could claim that Kate's declaration shocked me, but in reality I wasn't especially surprised, for I had always felt that there was something unique about the situation, in addition to Kate's singular uniqueness. My recollection of that phone call - which began with her severely upset - is of her giggling girlishly with obvious relief after I promised that I did not care at all about her initial dishonesty...

And that I was just grateful and very happy to have her in my life. I loved her deeply by then.

She revealed around this time that she initially had no intention of falling in love with me when she first reached out. She explained that her husband — who I'll refer to herein as Richard Flaccid — was strangely "obsessed" with my case and discussed me excessively — and apparently daily — within their home, to Kate's admitted disinterest and increasing annoyance. She informed him repeatedly that she did not wish to talk about me, and rather preferred to discuss more normal, husband-and-wife topics. After Richard Flaccid lamely failed to regard her suggestions, Kate became curious and googled me. Upon doing so my pen-pal profile surfaced. She said I looked like I could use a friend, and she could use one too.

She was an absolutely wonderful friend, and I know now how much more meaningful a dating-type relationship can be when it's based on real friendship. In addition to Kate's regular visits and sharing incredible moments with her in the visiting room — having pictures taken, laughing like carefree kids or occasionally crying when opening up about something quite deep — we continued to talk on the phone numerous times daily and write extensive, lengthy letters, both enjoying and taking great comfort in the profound connection neither of us had experienced previously.

In an effort to be closer to Kate in proximity and thereby decrease her visiting travel, in June 2016 I transferred

to a facility in the western part of the state. It was and continues to be notorious for chronic abuse and general mistreatment of prisoners. A fair reflection of the ugly dynamic may be accurately conveyed by citing, as just one example, a matter-of-course practice that existed there until only a few years ago in which guards placed segregation prisoners in actual neck "leashes" when escorting them to a medical appointment, the shower, etc.. That inhumane custom and numerous others is the revolting product of the absolute non-existence of law libraries in this state - or any reasonable alternative - which tend to very effectively serve as a governor of sorts for maliciously-motivated prison staff. (While there exists an advertised source of legal "assistance" called "NC Prisoner Legal Services," they expressly do not provide individual assistance whatsoever in conditions-of-confinement cases. In my observations in over seven years they have provided assistance in only a couple civil cases: ones that affected several prisoners - eight in one such case - presumably because those particular cases promised healthy awards).

After transferring to this facility, for approximately nine months I was mainly unaffected by the prison's grimy administration, and during that time Kate and I enjoyed many incredibly memorable visits. The precious moments we spent together and the tender memories that remain will forever be as deeply ingrained within my psyche as early childhood memories with my mother.

In mid-March 2017, I made the terrible mistake of submitting a grievance against "SRG" staff at this facility - who I'll refer to herein as Richard Rubber and Richard Hole - for keeping me labeled as a gang "associate" and not properly reviewing me for declassification. I am not a gang member, but in the NC system SRG policy and procedures are so ridiculously broad that improperly-motivated SRG staff can and often do classify without any tangible evidence. It breeds arbitrariness, and facility-level staff habitually and maliciously use classification as a means to harass non-gang affiliated prisoners. It happens to many, and due to NC prisoners' general ignorance of the law - again, the result of the absence of law libraries - countless prisoners are done wrong but so often aren't even aware of it.

The grievance I submitted was a mistake because in NC it is very well-known that if a prisoner specifically identifies DOC staff within the grievance, the prisoner is subject to immediate retaliation and normally is retaliated against in some form, and without delay. And unfortunately, SRG staff tend to be the worst bad actors: The most corrupt and integrity-lacking. I knew better, but in retrospect simply grew intolerant of the injustice of the false, injurious gang classification.

Immediately following the submission of the grievance a blitzkrieg of harassment and retaliation began like nothing I could have reasonably imagined, orchestrated by the cretins Richard Rubber and Richard Hole. Among other things they intercepted then destroyed

over ten only-copy family pictures sent by my mother in a greeting card; they opened outgoing mail sent by me then deviously switched the contents of the envelopes; and directed the search and utter ransacking of my cell, instructing the searching guards to find "anything" to write me up for... which turned out to be nothing more than a few semi-nude celebrity photos received properly through the mail.

Most damaging, they contacted Kate's husband, Richard Flaccid, and informed him that Kate was visiting me nearly every week. I'm guessing they weren't aware that he had actually prosecuted me, and upon realizing it it was undoubtedly a twisted bonus of sorts for them.

On March 29, 2017, seventeen days after submitting the regretful grievance and only two days prior to a much anticipated, long-awaited visit between my mother and I, I was summarily placed in segregation (i.e. the hole) under "investigation" per the directive of Richard Rubber and Richard Hole.

After remaining in segregation with no explanation for over a month, the alleged investigation concluded with Richard Rubber and Richard Hole charging me with "attempting" to introduce contraband into the facility via visitation. The infractions report listed the "Date of Offense" as May 3, 2017 - thirty-five days after I had been placed in segregation and where I remained on that date, thereby rendering Kate and I literally incapable of committing the alleged wrongdoing because while in segregation only non-contact visitation was allowed - with the sole "evidence"

being an alleged "confidential informant" who they refused to identify. It was all so clearly and unjustly fabricated. I had actually heard many similar accounts from other prisoners but viewed them with naive skepticism because I honestly could not accept that state actors - "professionals," albeit the prison variety - could be so thoroughly despicable.

The morale-shattering knockout followed on May 16, 2017, when Kate and I both received notice that she was "suspended indefinitely" from visiting any NC facility.

Later the same month, less than two weeks later, Kate - a talented artist, dog lover, extraordinarily beautiful person inside and out, and my adored friend - committed suicide. I cannot begin to describe how I felt - the awful shock and sorrow - upon learning the terrible, heartwrenching news.

I'll never know what all transpired - particularly what all Kate suffered at home once Richard Flaccid was informed of our relationship - but have learned from believably credible sources within DOC that Richard Flaccid conspired with Richard Rubber and Richard Hole to fabricate the allegations that Kate endeavored to introduce contraband via visitation - something she never would have done. She was a licensed therapist and worked tirelessly in her community battling the opioid epidemic. Years prior to that she served passionately as an addiction counselor at a recovery center.

Sadly, and deplorably, Richard Flaccid wanted "evidence" to introduce during divorce proceedings, exhibiting - or its

face, however fabricated - that Kate was introducing contraband into a State DOC facility while committing infidelity with a prisoner, in a paranoid effort to keep intact his financial situation - which Kate was not even remotely interested in, even as she was aware that he had engaged in a host of sexting relationships with numerous women along the east coast.

Nearly two months after Kate's tragic death I managed to effectuate a transfer from that facility via a hunger strike. I knew two things with absolute certainty: That at all costs I had to be away from the place where so much truly, bad stuff transpired;

Their hateful acts toward me - not a pillar of society, clearly - are forgetful. The way they deliberately affected Kate - an incredibly sweet, gentle, sensitive woman who sincerely never harbored malevolent intentions toward any person in her too-brief life - is unforgivable, They are substantially worse than many of the prisoners under their control.

The NC prison system is one that permits and in many cases even encourages harassment and retaliation by prison staff who are inclined to engage in that sort of behavior due to the following: They have a predisposition to such

conduct when their environment doesn't prohibit it; they become desensitized and eventually adopt such behavior after being repeatedly exposed to it and are influenced by their peers; or, they are inherently sadistic and the prison environment provides the opportunity to act upon their pleasure.

Unfortunately, there exists a very prevalent, feces-trickle-down effect that begins at the top of the prison hierarchy with the facility superintendent, all the way down to common guards. The tone is set by those who administrate, always. As demonstrated year after year by NC prison managers, their chief objective is to oppress... oppress... oppress, by any means necessary. This is exhibited not only by the absence of recreational-type "privileges", but moreso the lack of access for many prisoners to meaningful, rehabilitative programs; and the indefensible, ignorant restrictions on reading material and general lack of access thereof. I subscribe to 'Rolling Stone' magazine, and all but three issues have been rejected during the previous year. Rehabilitation in the NC system is a great, laughable myth.

Despite transferring, the harassment continues at my current facility to a lesser degree thanks to the good-old-boy network here. Many months after leaving Richard Rubber and Richard Hole's facility, they entered into the Statewide system a "security alert" against me notifying all DOC staff that I am an escape risk - although I've never been accused by anyone of even privately conspiring to escape - knowing that the bogus alert will cause me significant grief time and time again,

in many ways.

My mail continues to be improperly interfered with, because realistically mail is about the only "given" here and there isn't much more they can do since they cannot take what I've never had (i.e. privileges, activities, possessions, etc.).

In any case, no amount of harassment or abuse by prison staff could ever begin to torment me the way I'll forever be tormented and pained by Kate's death. I think of her every day, usually numerous times. So often I recall something she said or did - something only Kate would have said or did in her unique, funny, candid way - and I get stuck in the memory. Or listening to the radio I hear a certain INXS or Def Leppard song, which arouses endless thought and longing. She was much too gentle and sensitive for the gutter-world introduced to her because of me, and for that I'll always carry the most distressing, weighted remorse; I'll never be the same.

I'll never stop thinking about or missing or loving my sweet Kate. There is no one else like her, and I sincerely cannot imagine any relationship-type association hereafter not paling in comparison or seeming bland and meaningless.

This account, as it applies not to my relationship with Kate and losing her but rather to prison matters, conditions and the ugly dynamic, is not meant to be a representation of prisons throughout the country. In fact, writing from experience and with authority, NC is in a league all its own and far from consistent with contemporary correctional norms. If it didn't

affect me daily it would be slightly amusing to observe the humanity-lacking administrative numskulls scratching their seemingly clueless heads wondering why violence against staff and gang affiliation increases noticeably every year; and why concerning staff there exists a constantly-revolving door. They seriously don't get it.

They don't "get" that if a prisoner is occupied with a reasonable variety of meaningful, mentally-stimulating activities he is less inclined to join a gang or participate in gang activity or violence. Under current conditions he is hopelessly bored and without options, and has literally nothing to lose... And the ripple-effect of that is violence against staff, followed by staff resignation, and so on.

Unfortunately, the exclusively-punative, tyrannical mentality of administrative staff is such that conditions are only going to get increasingly worse - for prisoners and properly-motivated staff.

Cabe LaKemper

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