

## PROLOGUE

I walked into that prison and it felt like I was walking into a medieval castle from the dark ages, and I couldn't help but wonder if I was ever going to leave this place.

The humiliation of "processing in" was overcome only by my fear of the unknown. I had never been to prison and now, I was not only going to prison, I was going to death row. The home of men like John Wayne Gacy and the so-called "I-57 Killer." I had only read about such men in newspapers and heard about them on television. I never thought that I would be counted among them and even considered one of them. It was then that the reality of the situation smacked me in the face so hard that I could almost feel the sting followed by the bruise; and it was then that I came to grips with the fact that I was in a life and death situation, that these men were hardened killers and I meant nothing to them.

At that moment, right then and there, I decided that they wouldn't mean anything to me either. That I was ready to do what I needed to do in order to survive.

I hardened my heart and dismissed all thoughts of the outside world. The only reference material I had was movies that I had seen, and in all the movies the convict guy had acted as though the outside world didn't exist. It sounds funny now, but when you're 21 and have never been to prison you cling to whatever can work for you, and that worked for me.

I lifted my head a little higher and I took a deep breath. I then walked to the cell that would be my new home. I had expected to hear all kinds of prison noises. You know, the names and calls that always seem to happen on television when the new guys get to the prison, but to my surprise (and relief) there was none of that.

I arrived at my cell, and as I was watching the key being put into the lock it all seemed to be happening in slow-motion.

The opening of the door; the placing of my bedroll on the bunk;  
the closing of the door; and worst of all—the locking of that  
door.

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