

A Confined Reflection[©]

I am someone you never knew existed. How is that so, you question? Well, because I've been raised in a place that's the equivalent to Hates. The place where all the 'bad' people get sent to... yep, that place. How did I come about to be raise there? Not, because I was birthed badly, nor, my surroundings were such, though, it was. There are many who've come from far worse situations and made good. So, I will not provide some sort of excuse as to why I went from the bowels of the Ghetto, so young, to be ingested in the bowels of the beast – that's labeled "The System". Really, it's all the same, the ghetto, prison system... The dimensions are definitely the same. One form of oppression, to another, just different geography.

For most part, based upon research of self, and life; it's been concluded that my journey has profoundly orchestrated a millennium before my birth. By those who knew I would exist, or at least someone like me. See, I've always been quite the loner, I guess that's why Loneliness felt I am her 'life partner'. And, well, you know when you marry a person; it's like marrying into the whole family; and all of the disfunctionality that comes with it.

It's still difficult to battle Depression with wild turkeys and the snow-covered trees just beyond the electrified fence of this "*secure minimum*", truly an oxymoronic title for one of 30+ Wisconsin's prisons. Bitterness leans against the wall scoping me in this dock area in the Restrictive Housing Unit – the Hole or Segregation, folding outta shape and over used underwear. No, I'm not a resident as I have been for many times in these past 23-years, it's where I'm employed... doing

menial work; washing the inmate's seg. Clothing, preparing meal-trays before the officers (COs) deliver them to the residents through slots in a door. Something that I've begrudgingly had to grow accustomed to during this imprisonment that begun when I was the tender age of 14-years old. For 1st degree homicide; stemming from "a naïve kid who pulled out a gun and took a man's life because he told him to go home," as the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel newspaper reported it...

I've grown up behind barbed-wired walls and towers, confined to cells equipped bathrooms amenities with showers; no end in sight. Truly, I have been raised in captivity; there are times when the prison's administration allows the Public a 'walk-through', as though we are an exhibit. It's almost a kinship I feel, when I ponder back on those times when we ventured class field-trips to the County Zoo, or my mom took my little cousins and me to the Circus. I can now understand, why those lions, tigers and bears... paced back and forth, so effortlessly, the way I remember them. If I could speak animal, I know exactly what were their thoughts and intentions were. But, I'm no Solomon, when I use to pray, it was for his 'wisdom, knowledge and understanding', I humbly beg the Grand Architect. Some told me how they prayed for the health and safety of their family and friends... I possessed neither.

At 14-years old waived into Adult Criminal Court, there sentenced to serve 30-years in the State Prison System. But, I was too young to enter the said Prison System, to Ethan Allen School for Boys until my sweet 16th birthday I was transferred. There, I was kept in their segregation unit under Administrative Confinement (AC), because by law I was an 'adult', yet not "adult enough" to go to an adult prison... *the irony*. This pretty much conditioned me for what I was about to

suffer. Once I become 'law legal' {16-years of age} I was sent to Dodge Correctional, which is the Intake for all of Wisconsin's Convicted. My stay there lasted only 30-days; there we were given \$20 bucks to spent how one wish, before you're shuffled elsewhere. I journeyed to Green Bay, better known as {Gladiator's School} because, of my time structure {more then 15-years, its max}. Entering the Cell Hall, the Sergeant warned, "I don't want no fuckin' or fightin'. I'm not doing no paperwork, and if I do, something of yours *will be* broken." You quickly got the picture, the smells were cigarette/marijuana smoke, and music of all kinds permeated my new home. Given a cell number, 'I was here' B-70, second tier from the ground. That was just my intake cell.

I put my linen on this hard bunk, that I will be laying down and waking up for the next generation, always on the same damn side... the wrong side. I spied my dwellings, taking this all in, a toilet sink and small cabinet, the smells, the sounds, voices; not just ones in my head. When this gorilla built fella approached the cell. If I were to say I wasn't afraid, even with steel bars between us, you can stop reading this. My spider senses were definitely up! His inquiry was where I come from and 'what am I'. That's asking rather I am 'People or Folks'; what affiliation. He taps the bars twice and walks off, and moments later the bars whined and parted, my little ticker was slamming against my chest. He reappeared with a care-package; of a pack of; Newports, matches, a bag of cookies, toothpaste, two joints and a nudie magazine. I smiled; this is a good start to a bad existence. He proceeded to inform me, that I will be moving to the South Cell Hall, where I was to go to school to acquire my High School Equivalency Diploma and any Vocational training of my choosing... it became Cabinetry.

Growing up, Loneliness forced me into this shotgun wedding, I vehemently rejected, with Rage and Bitterness presiding over the exchange of nuptials. I've spent a great amount of time the hole fighting, learning, and lashing out at [in]correctional officers, my family, god, and the world, even self. Loneliness, the bitch, chuckles, knowing how I wrestled with deep sadness, despair and self-annihilation. There have been times when the 5 of us got together in one accord, if you can label it 'a unity', to scribble letters to individuals about this plight of injustice I've found myself in. Loneliness, always wished to play the role of 'Devil Advocate'. My belief is that she just wanted to impregnate me with indecision and self-doubt, so discouraging she was. Depression has informed me, that her motto is: 'if I can't have him, no one can.' There are a couple of insists where Suicide paid me a visit, inquiring if I would journey with him. Although, his proposal was so seductive; Loneliness, thinking if she added her 2-cents, I'll participate in their little ménage a trois in Heaven. Little did she know, they knew, I've ceased prescribing to that notion of religious belief. And, like on Shark Tank, I was out... Though, that still never stopped Suicide and Depression from paying their visits from time-to-time. They always orbit my existence, a shadow of sorts.

Over the years, I've discovered, I'm quite the rabbit; in the sense that I'm unable to be content to be in one location for too long. So, no matter the circumstances, I will devise a way away from whatever wherever I'm currently imprisoned. Whatever program that was available, some sort of Academics Studies, I could get into, I did. I mean, the pursuit of knowledge was my savior. Knowing the unknown, and not being the least intimidated by it. Although, it did place me in some

situations and around certain individuals, that has altered my perception about the hearts of men, forever. Unlike other States' Department of Corrections, that has a 'lateral transfer' program in place, meaning... after a prisoner has been in an institution for too long, they're transferred to another, shuffled around, if you will. Wisconsin doesn't have that, so in order for me to satisfied, this propensity to sightsee, if you will. I had to 'be good' or 'act up'. Again, it made no difference to me, I just had to go; and a lot times, it was be transferred from segregation. Still, I was on the move, from;

- Dodge Correctional Institution {DCI} 18.February 1997
- Green Bay C.I. 25.March, 1997
- Super Max C.I 21.May, 2002
- Waupun C.I 15.December, 2002
- New Lisbon C.I 14.June, 2005
- Wisconsin resource Center {nuthouse} 9.August, 2006
- GBCI {2nd time} 19.December, 2007
- Oshkosh C.I. 5.September, 2008
- GBCI {3rd time} 25.January, 2011
- Fox Lake C.I. 3.December, 2013
- Oakhill {Jokehill} C.I. 27.July, 2016
- Wisconsin Resource Center {nuthouse-2nd time} 2.July, 2018
- Racine C.I. 22.August, 2018

Yet, though it all I've managed to completed pretty much every program within the Department of [in]Corrections (DOC), done several vocational, including AutoCAD-Computer Mechanical Drafting when it's only allowed one vocational *per* inmate. Even obtained a Fork-lifting license, before I've acquired a driver's licenses; these days I speak with High Schoolers. The Depression laughs at me, because, here I sit, as Bitterness watches over me; Rage has run off somewhere, he'll be back, he's never far away. I am admitted to two Universities, Platteville for Business Administrative and Oshkosh University for Film/TV/Radio. Yet, my next P.M.R. {Presumptive Mandatory Release} parole hearing is in October. Still, no September "move in" day for me. Ha! Bitterness mocks.

The slight Depression clings to me, from yesterday's P.M.R. {Presumptive Mandatory Release} parole hearing, my 9th parole hearing, 3rd since the Wisconsin Parole Commission has decided to hold me past my mandatory release date. Under the most draconian excuse: "*for further protection of the public*" a tech in the legislature. I swear Loneliness has something to do with this, I just know it! Nothing concrete, the phrase is synonymous with "*not sufficient amount of time served*", which was ruled by the Courts that that excuse can't be used as a means to deny parole to those eligible for release, because it within their 'discretion'. The language varies, but the intent is still the same balderdash to keep those similarly situated imprisoned. What's it said about 'power'... 'absolute power'... yeah, that's in full effect, here.

However, I am under Wisconsin §304.11 (a) a subsection in the Wisconsin legislature to keep ALL people in prison, by any means – another form of Truth-in-Sentencing, minus the wording. Keeping with the old Governor Tommy Thompson's directive to Secretary Sullivan and Governor Walker who first order of business was to eradicate the Pardon Board when he took office, now to do away with the Parole Commission altogether. Yes, Depression's whispers are hard to ignore. The irony with this all is the Parole Commissioner told me to tell my people to call and complain about this proposed parole eradication, when they are the ones that are upholding my present confinement. Wow!

At 15-years old I was given a 30-year sentence, which the Sentencing Judge forecasted that due the overcrowding of prisons and parole system, I would be release much sooner... oh, how wrong was he. I have become a ripe fruit, which the Wisconsin Parole Commission

refuses to pluck. It's been whispered in the corridors of the Capital to treat *ALL* inmates as Truth-in-Sentencing. In this case, the key that has turned the lock of my cell has been melted for another purpose. Bitterness, just embraces me as if it will make me feel any better. Touch, she has always been the elusive, truly the opposite of her cousin Loneliness. Rage looks at me shaking his head, at my present thoughts; of how did I ever find myself connected with *that* family.

Where in the Universe where it's justified to keep a 14-year old juvenile in prison for 23-years absent a 'life sentence'? Mr. Patrick Henry's eternal words sometimes drown those deleterious whispers, "Give me liberty or give me death." Bitterness crosses his arms and *sighs*.

Written by

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