

I was first locked up when I was 9 years old. That's when it all went down hill for me. I went from foster homes, to group homes, to boys shelters, to Juvenile Detention Centers. I've been to bootcamps, different placements in and out of the state. Childhood I never had one, a normal family, what's that? Hi, my name's Terry Lynn Watson Jr. I'm 22 years old and am currently incarcerated in Huttonsville Correctional Center. Doing a 5-50 and this is my story about me & being incarcerated in "American Prison."

I was 17. Just got out of lock up. I was staying with my mom. I was going to John Marshall High school and in the 12th grade. 3 months away from graduating. I started getting in with what people would call "the wrong crowd." I wanted to be cool like them so I started smoking weed and snorting coke and pills on a daily. My mom had found out and knew I was stealing, so all we did was argue. Seem like no matter what, that's all we did. So I moved out. I started out living with one of my friends nick named Thumper. He lived by himself. His mom would drop in once a day to check on things. She said I could move in if I stayed in school. So I moved in. Everything was good until we both found out we liked the drugs and partying. Talk about partying. We would have the hole town over it seemed like. Everyone in school the next day would ask us when we were going to have another party. It made me feel like I was really something. We had girls, drugs and not a care in the world. Except for his mom. It was funny cause his mom would come in and wake us up ^{for school.} we would go to school, eat breakfast, then meet after 3rd or 4th period. and go home. That's when we would start planning on how we were going to get the money to party. That became a daily thing for us. That and the cops telling us to keep the ~~noise~~ ^{music} down. It got so bad, I ended up dropping

out of school my 12th grade year. His mom found out and out of her house I went. I found myself going from my step sisters to sleeping in a abandoned house. Talk about feeling nasty, I slept on an old abandoned couch that was left in the house. ~~Talk about feeling nasty, I slept on an old abandoned couch~~ The house was all boarded up. I took two boards out of the side window so I could gain access. I would have to hurry up and climb in the window so no one would see me come and go. I'd go back and forth from my step sisters to my biddys house. And my moms to take a shower, change clothes, then get right back to partying and finding girls. I was stealing everything I could get my hands on from stores and other places and anything that the dope men wanted, requested or would take. Little did I know my future had prison written all over.

I met the first true love of my life. After a month her mom found out where I was living and let me live with them. They lived in a small town called Glendale wv. If you walked wrong, you would get a ticket. The crime rate was 1 1/2 percent and the 1 percent was me. I was well known because of my Juvenal back round, and the name I made for myself on the streets & with the cops. It seemed like I started working my way to prison when I bought my first car. It had no brakes, No working lights, The paint was peeling from wear it set under a tree that had things falling from it. The tires were semi flat and it was so loud. It was the middle of summer and everyone was outside. I only lived 7 streets away. 2 problems tho. I had to cross the main intersection to get to my girlfriends house. and I didnt have a license. But what could possibly go wrong? I was 2 streets away and decided to cross over the intersection to get to my house. Before I got to the other side, one of the parking officers sees me. Just my luck. So I pressed the gas and crossed the main road. Went down a street, ran a stop sign, took a sharp right and tried my best to ^{stop the} ~~stop the~~ park car by the curb. I managed to get the car to stop by pulling the brake. I grabbed the keys and took off threw some

houses. Wow, the adrenaline rush. It was something I couldn't describe. A feeling inside me I had to fulfill. I ended up doing a month of mistermerer time in the regional jail. But it wasn't enough to take that craving for more out of me. I got out, got on drugs really bad. I started trying new drugs and was hooked instantly. Not only on weed and beer but coke, Olys, You name it, I had my hands on it. Not only me tho, my sister two. We were going threw \$500 dollars a day essally. Just in drugs. I ended up loosing a job I had. Had no money to feed my addiction. So I started robbing things. One night I went nuts. Couple of friends and I went and hit a couple licks. But all it ended up being was a quick fix for a couple weeks and some charges & ~~that~~ enemies that were soon to come. That night I didnt realize what I did till it was to late. I had stole from hard working people and jeopardized there lifes and mine.

I'm currently doing a 5-50. A 4-40 in one county and a 1-10 in another. These suppose to be ran together so it will be a 4-40. Its in the progress know. I have 2 night time B&Es. 2 Daytime B&Es, a Petty larceny 2nd offense and Etimidation of a witness. I remember the day the Judge said guilty and slammed his hammer down. I was 19 years old, going to the Mens Penitentry with a 5-50. I felt like killing myself. Every thing I knew or had went out the window. Eventually friends, Girlfriend, and most of my family turned there heads. So it all started sinking in. A 5-50. One day, I woke up and just went wild. Out of one year in the Regional Jail, I spent 7 1/2 months of it in the hole. Fighting, tattos, assulting an officer, you name it, I was doing it. TALK about rough. I took a couple beat downs from COs. Lost my stuff. Pics, letters, stuff of that short. It would just come up missing. So I'm in the hole in the

Northern Regional Jail. It was hard. See people in other States go to prison after there sentenced. Not in WV. They consider the regional just like a prison till you actually get to one. Any way in the hole, I was in a 8-10 cell. A steal toilet and sink. 3 Hots and a cot as they say. In this little cell, I had my kitchen, bathroom, bed room, workout space, everything all in one. Its as big as a trailer size closet. Its not really any better out in population in the regional either. Living wise that is. Because the WV prison system is so over crowded, some people have to sleep on the floor. I was one of them. Theres only one bunk in most cells. The other person goes on the floor. And if theres not enough room in the cells, they sleep out in the day room till there is. Anyways back to the hole, All day long, people screaming, kicking walls, flooding there cells, screaming at COs. Theres trash and human waste everywhere in the hole. To top it off, we're only allowed out every other day for ten minute showers. And thats only 3 times a week. Then we clean are cells the following day. And its in rotation like that till the 7th day of the week were we do nothing. Were allowed to have one hour of rec at 7am. M-Friday. Thats if certain COs dont try getting us on it. Besides all that, I walked back & forth, counting bricks on the wall, counting every hole & crack. And always thinking about the past. About everything. Books, there just like phone calls. We were lucky to get one. Then theres the sleeping part. You can only sleep so much. In the hole you have to get on a routine and keep saying to yourself, Its going to be ok. Because if not, you can loose it. And quick. In the hole you have to do the time and dont let it do you. Thats prison period tho. As far as the one hour of rec goes, everytime we go out side ~~for~~ from the hole, are cells get torn up and we get stripped searched. Pride, dignity, all of it goes out the window

everytime I have to get naked infront of another man. Every time we go out, Its "let me see your hands, ok take your fangers trow your mouth, now your hair, know lift up your sack, turn around lift up both feet, then squat & cough. It sucks Its not fun at all. On most days it makes me not even wanna go outside. But its prison life. The hole is a prison inside this prison. After a month of Good behavior. I got to make a phone call. It was, try calling home or try calling my ex. I wanted to call her to see if we could somehow work it out? She was all I lived for at one part in my life. Still is to some point. So I call and a guy picks up her cell phone... Nothing in this world or the next to come can explain how I felt. My girl in another mans arm. I lost it! Even tho she was my ex, she wasnt suppose to move on that quick right? She knew it was me calling, why did he have to pick up? I ended up crying for days. Dient eat, sleep, and when I did get to sleep all I did was dream about her and this mystery man. It seemed like it was non ending. Awake or asleep, it was in my head. The tears I cryed, the agony, the pain I felt in my heart and in my fists from hitting the wall over & over till I couldnt stand no more from the pain. I had to live with his voice in my head. And it wouldnt go away. I was like that for 3 or 4 months. Still to this day I have my days.

So I recieved a 5-50, lost my home, friends and girlfriend all in a 6 months span. I also had 3 dogs that I lost. They were my world. Anyone who knew me knew that. I called home when I got out of the hole and my mom didnt know how to tell me my dogs were put to sleep because they would not eat without me there. My sister was actually the one who told me. I had enough. I wanted to die. I hated my life and the cell & the yards reminded me of it everyday.

It seemed like nothing was getting any better. I was in so much pain and didn't have one single comfort in the world. All this because I used drugs and became addicted and a totally different person. I ended up getting into another fight and back to the hole I went. In prison, mail is the biggest priority. Besides getting out. It can make or break someone. I remember being in the hole and the guard would come in with the mail. I'm not expecting none, but hoping, someone, somewhere would write me. My heart starts pounding like always, the guard a couple cells away. I'm holding my breath now, and then he walks by. Another one of those lonely feelings. Day after day, thinking to myself that everyone's forgot about me. I've laid in bed, with lots of pain, plenty of nights and cried myself to sleep. It's sad how everything I own; I can pick up and carry it with one hand.

In prison, you're just a number. Nothing more, nothing less. I finally made it to prison after my long months in the Reformat. My dad's been locked up for 19 years state. He was the first person I met when I walked thru the doors of Huttonville. I didn't know my dad or dad's side of the family. Only stories I heard from when I was a kid. Because I was locked up pretty much my whole survival life and my mom never moved me back there. So walking thru these prison doors and embracing my dad was very hard and strange for me. Trying to get set into this lifestyle but still check up with my dad was hard. I've heard one side of the story my whole life about my dad, know it was time to hear the other half. Prison, what is prison? I'll tell you. A living hell. The beds, the food, the living conditions. It's all bad. It's like being a dog locked up inside a cage cause he did something wrong and he needs to learn his lesson. But after he knows he's done wrong, he still has to stay in till otherwise. The state gives us just enough to get by. Nothing more, sometimes less. I'm not

blessed like some people. I don't get money from the streets. And when I do, it's a blessing. So I have to eat what the state gives me and I use what the state gives here. There are jobs here at Huttonsville prison. The best paying job pays \$300 dollars a day ^{for 8 hours} if you're lucky to get it. But then you have to turn around and spend it on medical bills & things we need. Then if there's enough left we can take care of some of our wants. Everything in here is way too much. A pair of shoes are \$50.00 to \$100.00 dollars. And the shoes they sell are probably \$25.00 dollars on the street. It's the same way with everything they sell. A little tupperware ball is \$5.00 dollars 30¢ at a dollar store. Commissary is crazy here. There's making a killing off the inmates. But people buy it cuz they don't want to go without. Besides that I'd have to say the best paying job is the kitchen. \$61.00 dollars a month. It's the hardest, but the nastiest. They work us harder than any fast food restaurant I've ever worked at. Plus you have stricter rules. It's so nasty in the kitchen. But in order for me to not starve, I have to eat most of it.

I don't know about all the other WV prisons and how they work, I just know about this one. The education system here is great. Welding, Electrification class, computer tech, all of them are offered here. It's just hard to get in one. GED is also offered here along with College 101 and advanced class's two. They also offer slots of classes here. And there are great teachers, but some of the things are just crazy. There used to be a letter shop and a furniture plant, where things were made for guards and inmates to buy but the new warden stopped that. There's taking everything from us little by little. Are coolers, are ordering privileges, splitting the prison up on recreation cells & sporting cells. It's getting worse by the day.

I struggle day by day waking up and looking at

myself in the mirror. A man that let an addiction and a bad choice ruin most of my life. And it put me here with no one or anything. If only I could describe to you what it feels like to be called into the counsers office and him tell me that my grandmas passed away. And I cant go pay my respects cause the prison wont let me. Or just listening to the radio and hearing one of them songs that take me back out to a sunny day on the streets with my dogs and girlfriend. Then I here someone calling my name and it pulls me back behind these cold and lonely walls, called prison. Just to know that I cant have that for a long time herts. All because of a bad lifestyle. I hate walking up and seeing a fence with bob wire for as long as I can see. Or guards telling me what to do 24-7. But I have to if I want to be free again. This is the way I look at it. 3 things happen when you come to prison. Either you get enough & learn your lesson, and dont come back, or you do what you have to do to manipulate the system and get out knowing your coming back. Or you just dont care, and do what you want. I've seen all 3 types of people some people dont mind being in here. Its normal to them.

The key word is suppose to be Rehabilitation. Thats what were suppose to be doing right? Well the truth be told, its far from it. Theres nothing really here thats rehabilitating. Maybe 2% out of 100%. All we do is lift wrights, play cards, gamble, watch TV, trade are stories and learn from each other how to manipulate the system better. So we dont come back or get caught the next time. Thats how alot of people are. I've seen it. The problem is the judges say "Here, this is your sentence, go get 'rehabilitated', and when were ready to let you go or need your bed or dont meet the limits of the month, you can go home. And then when we do get out its "Get out and make sure you pay your monthly fees, keep a job and dont brake the law." what the state needs to realize is were not a bunch of dogs even tho

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people think we are. Its crazy, look how bad the wu system is overcrowded. And its not just new people desiding to get ~~help~~ into more trouble. Its the same people coming back again and again. Im in here because of my bad choices. But I had a pretty bad drug problem too, whats going to stop me from snorting that first line or breaking the law when I get out? Me!!! Deffently not anything Ive learned here in prison. But because I dont want to lose everything I love and have again. I dont want to be just another number lost in the system. I believe that intill someone opens there eyes and truly wants to help us and not just lock us up till times severd, then this is how its going to be. We need some programs thst are going to work. Not just a couple of anger mangsment class. We need some programs also for when people get out, they can still have help to fight off there addictions and criminal thinking. All of us are not helpless. Most of us are just a bunch of people who made mistakes. Theres people that come in here and leave worse then what they were when they came in the first place. Prison life can make someone more violent, manipultive, and crazy. I know this cause I fight the temptations of it everyday.

Theres one thing I always find funny. we have a greviance system we have to go by that follows into a policy directive. "Procedure & guidelines. But Im going to tell you this about prison. The guards do what they want. when they want and how they want. And we have to do what they say. IF not we live miserable. Things of are's "just come up missing". we'll get alot of write ups. write ups are something that put us in the hole or prolong us from going home. we get beat up. Put in the hole. Its crazy but its prison life. Out of sight out of mind is what most people try to do. Theres few that buck the system but learn quickly not to.

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Here's an example I'll give you about us inmates "following procedure". Couple of us wrote to the Health Inspector. we complain about the living conditions and the food we get that has been giving people food poisoning. ~~we~~ They always come and check it out. But by the time they come, the prison already knows 3 or 4 days in advance and they have us cleaning like some slaves till this place is cleaned up. The day there here, at lunch time, we'll have more food on our plates, and not left overs from the day before. We'll have fresh sealed and not an old week. Roaches are laid down in the kitchen. They put roach traps down. And traps mice. And besides that they have all the maintenance men running around trying to patch up or temporary fix things ~~to~~ ^{until} they leave. So when these people come they never see what we live in and go thru everyday. That's just one of many things. This prison worries more about taking away from us and making sure we aren't smoking tobacco or getting tattoos then they are worried about if we are taking these classes and trying to better our selfs so we can be released back into society. Most of the class that are here aren't going to help us on the streets. Maybe in a Alice & wonderland world. I don't understand that if prison is a billion dollar industry, and then how come we're not getting all the class's & Rehabilitation we need?

At Huttonsville there's two sides to this prison. North side and southside. One side has dorms. The other side has cells. The south side is open with beds going down 2 sides. No air conditioning, only fans and windows. Hot in the summer, cold in the winter. They do however have 3 pipes going thru the walls for heating. There's 1 shower, a day room, washroom and a bathroom that has 4 toilets and one big urinal. There's 42 people per dorm. On the south side. On the Northside, it's newly refurbished. They have cells that hold 6 people on one side of the day room and on the other side of the same

dorm, theres 2 man cells. This side has air conditioning. And in the cells, its bunk beds. Three of 2 sets. Theres a TV, sink and toilet. Individual boxes to put are stuff in. Its hard sometimes to get along if you get in the wrong cell. And theres not big enough for 6 people. But in order to live comfortably, we have to adjust to every mans way of living and there day to day routine. Sometimes it can be very hectic. The 2 man cells are way better. But way harder to get into because of how many there is. Usually people who hold jobs for a while get them. Or the prisons undercover snitches. The dorms on the Northside hold 80 people. Per dorm. For recreation here we have a gym with a basitball court, ping pong table and weights. They call it 2 times a day. Theres the big yard and center yard. The center yard is confined inside the walls of the prison. It has weights, horse shoe pits, and a little square side walk to walk or jog around. Its called all day long. Every hour. The big Yard has wrights, soft ball field, horse shoe pits, basket ball court and a vally ball area. And a big running track around it. Its of to the side of the prison but has fences with bob wire around it. They call it 3 times a day. These are the things we have to help us with are time. Theres also a library and legal material down here. were allowed going to all of these things. itrew the day as long as it ant count time. Count time is when every one has to lock down in there cells or on are beds intill the Guards cant and make sure that every one is accounted for.

Sometimes tho, the things I have are not enough to cope. But I have to. If not Ill never make it. Its all about ~~adapting~~ adapting. I ply cards, sports, write poems and work art. Ive done all

the class here. Here in prison, people have to get into a daily routine and then we do it everyday. I've found if I keep my mind busy, then it don't wander off out into the real world. In prison, the only person I have is myself. Regardless of who I think is my friend, weather I come back or not, I'm a different person because of this experience. But the truth is I'm a good person. And I want to do right. In susity's eyes and gods. But because I'm labeled as a felon, It's going to be hard for me to make it. My mom always told me, "son you have to live and learn". And I have in so many ways. I was 19 when I started this sentence and I'm 22 right know. I still have a little bit to go. I just got to keep on keeping on. You have to keep a positive thinking pattern in this place. This life becomes normal no matter how susicity views it. In prison, little things become important. I've learned not to take anything for granted. And to pay better attention to little things. Living behind these walls, I've also learned one thing. Nothings ever guaranteed.

I've always believed in God. Went to church when I was a little kid. In prison, church is a peace of mind. It is the place that changes many lifes. It makes the hardest soft and the strongest cry. God does things for a reason. there is chapln service offered here on a daily. And other church serves come in and teach us, sing to us. It is always comforting to here that God loves me and forgives me.

I've seen alot of things since I've been down. If you could only seen what I've seen. ~~in~~ here On the TV shows, they only show you what they want you to see. In prison its alot different. In here tho, its real simple. Mind your own bussness, choose a select few and dont trust nobody.

I've seen Guards beat an inmate down because he told them he wasn't telling on a guy for something and it made the Guards upset. I've seen a guard get stabbed multiple times because he wouldn't give an inmate toilet paper when he needed to go to the bathroom. I've seen other stabbings, people getting robbed, abused, manipulated, people beat with locks. It's not just the movies, anything can and does happen at any given time. A lot of how you're treated in prison depends on your charges and who you know. If someone doesn't want you to live in a dorm, they tell you to leave. If you don't, they get three bags, do three things then throw you and your stuff out with you. That usually happens only to people who have sex charges or rats. Two things in prison we have to keep good. That's our word and our name. Once either one of them are gone, we have nothing. Except a hard time. I've learned to keep my hands clean. And to remember that to some people, this is fun and games. I've learned that many people believe that by being honest and open, that everyone's going to like you and you're going to win their respect by showing them good nature. People are greatly confused. Especially in here. Honestly is likely to offend people in some case. Sometimes it's better to tell people what they want to hear, than what I really think or believe or feel. More important, by me being open, to people I'm making myself so predictable and familiar that it is impossible to respect or fear me. Dealing with this time has been hard for me. Especially at this young age. It's been far from easy. Lots of hate and pain that I've had to forgive and overcome in my time being down to. It's hard in prison when your a loner. What I mean by that is by not having people on the street to support me financially.

or Physically. I've had one person that has rode with me ^{most of it.} ~~trav~~ well 2. My step sister and my mom. Even tho its not everyday mail or money, they let me know Im loved. It took a little bit but there coming ^{around} ~~trav~~.

Just like all the other prisons, you have your color issues. Its not real bad here. Most people just shut up about how they feel but thats a the way they set says it all. Theres only been a couple of problems here and there, but if something was to go down there would deffently be sides. Theres been gang issues here lately. People clammung this and that. But the warden put a stop to that real quick.

Theres also a prison hospital. If thats what you want to call it. You pretty much have to be dremg before anything gets done or throtter with a law suit. And thats the truth. Its really sad. But just like anything eles in the prison. Its the best hospital in the world and they do everything ^{right} ~~withe~~. This prison stay so far is far beyond what I ever wanted for myself. I wrote a poem to help you better undrotand me and my situation. Its called "IN THIS PRISON CELL" Its here close in this prison cell I sit, No one to talk to, no ciggis, no dip. Thinking about my younger years, of all the love, laughter and warsted tears. All the partys, drugs, and one night stands, I never would of thought that prison was in my future plans. A number on my shirt and a record filled with dirt, I left a lot of people filled with anger and mostly hurt. I lost my home, my dogs and the girl I loved, the last person I was close to it was my mom I hugged. The things I lost can never be replaced. This is a rude awsking, an unpleasit place. My lifes been changed in more ways than most,

my eyes have been opened when I received this dose. Alone in this prison cell, I set and cry, wondering why my dogs had to die. I never even got to bury them or give them a kiss goodbye. Alone in this prison cell, I think about you, wondering what would of happened if we both said "I do!" Would our love been stronger, would our love even lasted, I'll never no, out to prison I was casted. Alone in this cell, I will sit, soon to go to sleep. in a little bit. I'll think about the ways my life turned out and what the rest will be like the day I get out.

So thats my poem. For me this is it. I'm done with this life. Being in jurnal lock up pretty much my hole life and know this has almost broke me. My spirit. I'm done with crimmul things. I want better for myself. This prison exeparence has been a rude awsking. I didnt need all this to see I was wrong. But these are the cards I've been delt. I'm tired of waking up every day with no one to love. I'm tired of always having that empty feeling. I'm tired of doing without and just being another number lost in the system. I still have a chance to change my ways and be something. And I want to be. I know I can, who says you cant teach an old dog new tricks.

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