

DYING INSIDE by Randal Lefevre

In June 1997, I was released from prison after spending 7½ years in captivity. My loving mother was right there, eager to take our lives off the pause button.

By September 1997, I had violated my probation for smoking weed. Rather than risk going before the judge and receiving an additional 7½ years, I left Florida on the run.

In May 1998, I was arrested in Detroit for Carjacking, and Assault with Intent to Murder. The judge sentenced me to 22 to 30 years in April 1999.

I didn't receive my mother's first letter until September 1999. It was 16 pages long and a real heartbreaker. Mom had moved 3 times since I left, and was on the verge of being evicted from her current place.

Mom already had a nervous breakdown when I was a teenager, and was now laid off from her job due to nerves. She had been diagnosed with a lump in her breast and was urinating on herself when she coughed.

My heart was ripped in two. I'd left my mom all alone in a cruel world. How could I do this to the lady who loved me more than I even loved myself? It wasn't right, mom deserved so much more.

I immediately sent mom \$140 of the \$160 I had in my account. It didn't reach her in time, and mom had to check herself into a home for the mentally and physically ill. I sent her my tiny black & white tv, and Panasonic radio.

Mom soon discovered once people arrived at the home, they very seldom ever left. They were nothing more than a paycheck. So mom packed her purse, went to church and didn't come back.

I vowed to return home to mom, and provide her with the love and financial security every mother deserves. I began studying law and writing all day long, believing I'd earn the finances necessary to change our circumstances.

Mom worked just as hard on her end, enduring one set back after another. During the first 12 years of my incarceration, mom lived in approximately 17 different residences, mostly homeless shelters.

Mom landed a McDonald's job and joyfully worked her fingers to the bone. We both worked diligently, and believed that God was going to make a way for us to be together again. Although, on May 12, 2010, mom was pronounced dead, and so were our plans to be reunited.

Before passing, mom bought herself the diamond ring she always wanted, and planted fresh flowers directly on the floor in a heap of dirt. She gave herself the burial she knew she'd never receive as a pauper in the state of Georgia.

Death is a part of life but what kills me is that mom never truly lived. Despite my pain, I couldn't throw in the towel. I had to ensure mom's love, hardwork and sacrifices weren't in vain.

This required me to locate our estranged family, pass on mom's heirlooms, and give mom a proper burial in her homestate of Michigan. I also needed to write her life story and share it with the world.

My righteous goals have not been accomplished, and the pain is overwhelming. I have both the know how and ambition to make such a difference in this world but my incarceration and lack of support prevents me from doing it. I'm dying inside.

The judge sentenced me to 22 to 30 years in prison. Unfortunately, prison isn't designed to rehabilitate me. It is designed to sever family bonds, quench all hope, and isolate potential. I'm dying inside.

I have been in prison for 18 years without a single visit. I cannot get on the phone and call anyone collect. I don't get mail from family, and only had 9 family photos until I sent them out in 2012. I'm dying inside. Yet, I'm not alone.

Prisoners are dying inside where educational, vocational and rehabilitation programs are scarce and biasly distributed. Also where medical, dental, and mental health treatment is outright denied or so inadequate that it doesn't even matter.

Prisoners are dying inside where they are financially extorted through vendors, commissary and phone rates while receiving inadequate job wages. Also where they lose hope and find themselves in self-destructive behavior which keeps them in prison longer and ensures their return after release.

Nevertheless, neither myself or prisoners have a monopoly on dying inside. Just because you are in free society doesn't mean you aren't in a prison. Perhaps you too are dying inside. If so, then I encourage you to fight with all your might. Do not allow your pain to be in vain. Vow to make a change.

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