

Cruel Irony

Being locked up and incarcerated is not so bad. If I were a wealthy enough old person I could retire and end up in some retirement community with the same amenities: lots of peace and quiet and a large enough window with a view.

In a strange way it helps that I have a life sentence in here. I have checked out on any thoughts of the outside and ever living in the free world outside of this place. It was too stressful to contemplate and wrestle with.

I could do everything right, stay out of trouble for years on years, and still get denied parole for one made up and imagined reason or another; my mind has been freed to just not give a rat ass flying fuck.

Please excuse my language, I can cuss like a sailor, I chalk it up to the fact that I was raised in my formative years in the Richard Pryor generation. 'Expletives' for me, are just that, a higher form of expression.

Verbally, I can say 'no' or 'hell the fuck no', which one do you think would cause a faster response in the affirmative? My point exactly, but for your sake, I will bite my tongue most of the way through this.

Just a quick snapshot of who I am, for your reading entertainment, I was raised Christian and am now serving a 15 to life sentence for second degree murder. I killed the gentleman who raped and molested my teenage daughter.

I say 'gentleman' because in here we are taught incessantly 'not' to ever blame our victim. The reasons are understandable enough. If I justify what I did, I just might do it again, maybe.

I have of course learned better since my incarceration. Judgement belongs to God, he will pay everything back, so it is best to defer

Cruel Irony

entirely to his very well and capable hands. One has only to look at my situation to realize this.

At the time? I was doing what I absolutely had to do. It is a long story, but I restrained myself if humanly possible. I was always taught that it is better to err on the side of mercy, because if you ever judge another person, God will judge you. So, a word to the very wise, never take matters into your own very capable hands. Always, always, always call the police and report the crime, then press the district attorney for the maximum sentence if the guy deserves nothing less.

It is extremely cruel to have to suffer the sexual and physical abuse of a sexual predator against your child. I do not wish that on anyone. As stated above, I really did desperately attempt to hold my horses, pull back on the reins, and 'whoa Betsy'! But how would you like to look your little girl in the face knowing you did nothing to help her after the fact? It is a fate worse than death; I assure you.

A crime of passion is defined as a circumstance where 'the provocation is such that a reasonable thinking person is pushed beyond his ability to use rational thinking and judgement'. What if it was your little girl? Believe me, it is enough to drive the best of us to doing the most.

Lord forgive me, because 'an eye for an eye' and 'a tooth for a tooth', I believed all of it. I swallowed it whole, hook, line, and sinker. 'Better for a millstone to be hung around your neck and you were thrown into the sea than for you to ever harm one of Gods little children'.

Forgive me, but I have always believed in the full potential and harmless possibilities of a child's wide eyed and wonderful vision of our

Cruel Irony

big and amazing world. Life is a true gift and treasure. Shame on anyone who would ever diminish or stifle that view.

I have a lot of experience with trampling of a rose and its long-lasting effects. My wife was abused in a foster home as a toddler and it truly wounded her for life. I admired her tenacity and her ability to grow as a rose that grew from concrete, but it does not change the fact that she was shattered inside.

I was assaulted in my sleep as a child and I did not realize until years later what happened. I had a friend with a brain injury who was unable to speak for a year or two as a child. He told me years later about an uncle who raped him in the still quiet of a lonely night. He said, 'he got me' and 'damn', I think he said it best.

The way he described his own feelings of helplessness were daunting to say the least. He brushed past it, accepted it, buried it, and moved beyond it. Some people are able to do that and others are not. I guess it depends on your mentality. You never know what your made of until you are tested.

My wife used to cry foul. I do not know, for a while there maybe she liked playing the victim and all the sympathy that it won her, to each their own.

I know another beautiful lady that was damaged as a child, but she never mentioned it. She never gave it strength of voice, but she was a staunch advocate and a keen-eyed mother hen. I respect her more than the other because of what she did with all that she had learned. She used to fight off wolves and be a voice for the silenced. There is still, to this day, healing balm in her arsenal. She is the one who taught me the most.

Cruel Irony

Two of my own babies were molested. I did not do anything because I did not know what to do, besides report it. My anger impulse was locked up tight like a chained-up dog. I was encouraged by my Christian values to acquiesce. I gave in to my mercy and gave it to the lord. But what did he do with it? I never heard of any convictions or jail time. Back then, I did not know how to follow up with the district attorney's office. I was embarrassed to ask for help. Any father worth their salt already knows what justice demands.

There is a pain worse than death and a coward dies a thousand deaths. It is 'free shame' I tell you, 'free shame'. I could not even adequately explain, but I was unable to look in the mirror and love the person I saw staring back at me. This, that, and the other happened and what did I do?

Then he (who shall not be named) would come around and I would see him smirk at my teenage daughter. Maybe he thought nobody saw him laugh at her to her face, but I was aware. It never escaped my notice and it happened more than once. Maybe he thought nobody believed her. Maybe he thought he got away with murder. Yeah.... he killed her spirit a little every time he mocked and jeered at her. He killed my spirit too.

We did not call the cops. 'Omerta' is a mafia term that means, if you need to call the police because you cannot handle things yourself, you are less than a man. I am not Italian, but it is the unwritten code of the streets, snitches get stiches. Besides that, I could not even bring myself to ask for help, I assumed everyone would think less of me, like 'he did what now?' and 'you didn't do anything?'. What a coward I was. I swept it under the rug. I even tried my dead level best to give it to the lord, but the provocation was such that a rational man was pushed beyond his ability to use sound judgement.

Cruel Irony

I am not reinventing the wheel here. I did get charged with second degree murder and not murder in the first degree. The district attorney acquiesced and eased my punishment a little. In California they say, 'if you use a gun, you're done'. Most guys will get 25 to life for murder and another 25 to life for gun enhancements, for a total of 50 years to life. I guess I should be grateful, although it remains to be seen if it even makes a difference.

My victim's family got justice by seeing me slapped with a 'life sentence'. For their sakes, I submit to the hands of blind justice and lady liberty's balanced scales. They are good people and none of them deserve the pain I caused them. I hereby apologize whole heartedly, if I could change what I did, for their sakes, I would. I am sorry.

It is a cruel irony though, because in order to avoid getting caught up in gang politics I dropped out of any gang affiliations. So, I have a target on my head for giving up on the prison gang mentality. For my safety I am being housed in what is called a 'sensitive needs yard', which also houses sex offenders and child molesters, because they have targets on their heads too.

I do not know why the prison administration does not distinguish them from me. I am in here for killing one of them and now for the whole entire term of my life in prison I am forced to be on a yard with them.

I tell them all to give me six feet. Especially now with Covid 19. Now they cannot fault me for being aloof or slightly judgmental. To me it is like the scene in the movie Shawshank Redemption, where ol' boy has to crawl hundreds of yards of sewage to grasp his freedom. His own hands brought him salvation. This is the freedom that I get from

Cruel Irony

writing. If I write down the struggles and discombobulations, somehow, they do not overwhelm me.

I was a night supervisor at a fruit packing house in their industrial refrigeration department. I made a good living. Anyway, in our refrigeration system we had what was called a pressure relief valve.

If the pressures in any part of the system got too great, a spring-loaded valve would open. It usually held the pressure in, but in order to avoid being turned into a bomb, little bits of pressurized NH₃ (ammonia) gas is released into what is called a diffusion tank of water. The water diffuses the ammonia, the pressures return to normal and safe limits, and the spring-loaded valve closes, and lives are spared injury or death.

When I write, I am being saved. Writing helps release the built-up pressure and I can share my story, hopefully this will help me someday. If I could add any advice to this, I would first say, be that keen eyed mother hen and watch over your children. Warn them of all of life's dangers vigilantly. Secondly, call the police and report all crimes. Do not be the nosey neighbor but report real crimes. There is no shame in making our streets, your streets, safe. If you are not happy with the results, pursue further actions through the district attorney's office.

Most of us in prison learn to deal with our new reality of what normal now is, but it is enough of a torture to be locked away from family and loved ones, with no release date. The parole process and the possibility of ever being released are so cumbersome and strenuous that only superheroes are ever freed.

We must go through such a gambit of tests, with multiple checks and balances, that they make sure you are mild mannered and rehabilitated. Then they still deny you and force you to think about

Cruel Irony

things for five to ten more years before giving you another shot at the tittle of freedom. If we are ever released, I imagine we would be filled with such overwhelming feelings of astonishment and gratitude that all crushed essence of our spirit would emanate truly divine love in all our services to others. For it is only in being a giving person that we can ever be free. My writings are my gift to the world. Although I do earnestly hope to one day be paid and obtain gainful employment and sustenance from it.

I do not want to return to industrial refrigeration. Ammonia that is pressurized is a terrifying thing. Especially in an old and antiquated facility.

I have seen things that would make you have goosebumps. The scariest of which was a high pressurized liquid ammonia line that was eroded from the inside out, pocked marked and only fractions of an inch from killing somebody.

I cringe to think how often I had traversed over the top of it, even stepping on it with all my 200 plus pounds of body weight. All I can say is, thank God for CAOSHA!

They do have scanners that gauge the depth and wearing down of all the heavy gauged piping in an ammonia system. Some companies will even fix the bill. My salary of twenty dollars an hour (plus) is hardly worth a guy's life though. Innocent men should continue to leave. Industrial refrigeration is now only a pipe dream and a distant fall back plan. I am grateful for the wisdom of my department manager and the foresight it took to replace yards of eroded piping. I would not want to find myself on the failing end of that mess.

My dad was a journeyman level welder and he use to stress education and never ceased to say, 'work smart, not hard' and 'you don

Cruel Irony

not want to be like me and have to bust your ass every day for a living'. I used to look up to him coming home with grimy welders' clothes, I still do.

He taught my brothers and I what it was to be a man, and to work for your family. He always put food on the table. Heartbreaking enough though, he broke his back. Then he played it off and went back to work again and tore up his back muscles even worse all over again. Not many men can say they broke their back twice to put food on the table and make them damn ends meet. That is my Popa Bears' life story. I love that old man. For a while there, I even made him proud, it is a jewel in my life's crown.

To make a long story short though, if I ever get out of here, I plan on being involved in prison reform and youth advocacy in one form or another.

Ever since I was an 'at risk' youth, I have wanted to steer kids away from lives of crime and incarceration. I got my juvenile record sealed when I was 19 years old. I have looked kindly on the juvenile justice system ever since. We used to say in California Youth Authorities and juvenile halls, 'make a homie, don't break a homie'. We did not know then but those are Christian values at their best. We are admonished as Christians, Muslims, and Buddhists to build each other up and encourage each other.

Now, I would jump at the opportunity to steer some kid in the right direction and give him another chance, even if he were full grown. I never cease to tell people Bill and Ted's motto, 'Be excellent to each other dudes.

Cruel Irony

Love God and love your fellow human beings. Give them dignity, worth, and the benefit of rehabilitation. We can not continue to chop them down and wonder why their seeds do not grow.

Ask any farmer worth his salt or watermelon money (two for a nickel and five for a dime) and he will tell you. A lot of work goes into planting, nurturing, and harvesting a crop. The seeds you plant, is what will grow. You can not sow weeds and thorns and expect the whole crop to survive and thrive. It does not work that way.

The greatest lessons I ever learned is that you must build your house on a strong and sure foundation and to look at your foot's path and where it leads. If it leads somewhere you do not want to go, change your course. Even a small course correction will change the outcome of your future immensely.

Alexander Graham Bell failed a thousand times, and then some before he discovered a light bulb filament that lasted and that worked. The American astronauts only landed and stepped on the moon by correcting their course hundreds of little bits at a time. The first certifiable motivational speaker that I ever heard said, 'my dad used to say a steady drip makes one hell of a puddle'. In other words, determination and consistency pay off. Even a steady stream can erode its way into the Grand Canyon. Have you ever been to Nevada?

It is true when an adult tells a child, 'you can be whatever you want, all you have to do is work hard at it', I think the problem growing up is that I never set my sights high enough. I remember meeting a girl in high school that said she wanted to be a judge. I was surprised. To me that was like shooting for the moon. But there really is no limit. Ever met Judge Judy?

Cruel Irony

Time and chance happen to us all. One guy said, 'chance favors a prepared mind'. If you are ready, you can strike while the iron is hot and shape your life's iron into whatever you want it to become. Like the man said, 'a steady drip makes one hell of a puddle'.

If prison taught me anything at all, it is that patience is king. I may not win today or even in the near future-but I have a long-term goal of being present for my grandkids high school and college graduations. When I first got incarcerated, my oldest grandson was one year old. That gave me at best, a 16-year goal. I will do my part and let God, providence, and life do the rest. I may not win today, or even in the near future-but chance favors a prepared mind.

When I first got locked up 'Lifers' were not even going home. Last year alone I seen 15 plus got paroled and 3 got commutations from the governor. A commutation is when your indeterminant sentence changes and you get a release date. No more throwing away the key.

You can learn a lot from a crash dummy, and in the bible even dumb donkeys speak. Wisdom can be found if you stop and listen. God still saves; and all men are redeemable. I hope this helps you.

It is said that in the American legal system, "It is better for 100 guilty men go free, than for one innocent man to suffer".

Everywhere I look I see "Lifers and "LWOPS" (Lifers without possibility of Parole). Most of them would not even hurt a fly. Especially after a certain age and years, or their mistakes being thumbed in their faces-they are harmless. They now really do honestly know better. Many of them have five decades without any meaningful write ups, which is all proof positive that they know how to function and obey even the most tedious and miniscule rules. I would even seriously

Cruel Irony

doubt if they'd risk going pass the speed limit out there. They might even stop to smell the roses.

Nothing will open your eyes wider than a "Life" sentence.

I use to sit in the county jail facing years and years and I'd hear some youngsters talking about buying a gun or ounce of drugs to ball up (earn money) and get high AF-as soon as they got out. I always just scratched my head. Sometimes I even told them to get their head out of their ass.

Many Lifers are now wise beyond their years, they'd do everything they could to go outside and throw a ball back and forth with their children-and will never get the chance. They have such valuable wisdom and gentle grace to offer the world that it is a disgrace to humanity to continue to keep them/us incarcerated.

I know the powers that be, are now realizing the exorbitant cost of incarceration-which is in the billions. All of which would be much better spent on Youth Organizations for "At Risk and starving children and educational programs, such as tutors and grants.

I submit and admit that some people "need" to be locked up forever. Their violent levels of behavior in prison is a clear indicator in California there are Sensitive Needs yards where countless individuals-like me-stepped away from any gang involvement and can no longer be housed with the more dangerous types of inmates. Many of which have not committed crimes or broken any rules since their controlling cases. They have been locked up since the '70s and '80s and still pose no threats to the public. Why not release them back into a society that needs them.

I'm here for 2nd Degree Murder. In the Wild West maybe they would have just hung me up out in the town square and been done with me. Even that is better than the exorbitant costs of years of incarceration,

Cruel Irony

prison health care, and mental health issues that stem from being isolated in prisons. I see Polly Klause's grandfather on the news, and they said he's going to die before ever seeing his granddaughter's attacker being executed on Death Row. Where is the justice in that? The guy that forced the issue and caused the writing of the 3 Strikes Law...He's still alive while countless Non-Violent Criminals have been locked up for Decades because of him, and they didn't even kill anyone. Is there no hope for them? What does that say about me and my chances of freedom??? That just baffles my mind to no end. It's a sorry thought.

I can understand the concept of a "Life for a life", or even striking a sex offender out who does more damage than any murderer can ever do. Kill us both and save money, or accept our rehabilitation after "X" amount of years and a show of decades of Non-violent years and obeying all the rules as proof.

It's a cruel irony to keep us alive, rehabilitate us, and yet, never acknowledge our true character changes. But its even more so for the non-violent guys, and Property Criminals. Its worse than a lifetime of indentured servitude and slavery. History will judge us if we don't make necessary changes now. We are falling behind in the world scene. America's innovations are not what they once were, and we Americans are the only ones who can change it, because nobody else cares. The Nation that has been the "Hammer and Builder" of the World, can we not build up ourselves?

This is me on my Soapbox, "Give me Liberty, or give me Death". It is worse than Chinese Torture tactics. Like dangling a carrot in front of my face, that I can never reach. What worth does my life hold if I cant be of service to my Fellowman?

Cruel Irony

Where is my reach extended positively, if I'm locked in a box forever? My hand is all the way in the pockets of America. As fast as you make it, I will spend it. Without the ability to give anything back. Sending us off to war would be better, Give us a chance at a military enlistment if we prove we can follow the rules. Ten years of being a good solid service to my Homeland. At the end of my sentence would be better than a Ten year Parole Board Denial, and being a further drain on the system. Let me earn a medal with my life-giving my blood, sweat, and tears. Give me a chance to prove my worth, or cart me off to the chopping block. It would be better to die than to live in this way. Give me Hope, and a chance at a future that is supportive of my (King and) Country.

Like the guy singing Bob Marley's, "Redemption Song", I know why the caged bird sings. It's because my worth and hopes extend beyond this life. But when I get there, will I look back and see a wasted life? Talent and treasures lain dormant while the world starves and languishes because of my hands in its pockets. What kind of sense does that make?!

This place drives me nuts. I have to struggle and fight every day to maintain my dignity and composure. Because of my crime, I already know what its like to lose my mind and ability to reason. I didn't even remember till months later all that actually took place the night of my crime. It came back to me in bits and pieces-like Déjà vu. Reading my police report helped jog my memory.

When I was first confronted with thoughts of what I had done, I even asked myself, "Did you really kill 'So and So'?" It was heart wrenching to think of the pain I caused his loved ones. It feels like a hurtful joke. Unseen forces threw boulders at me, and eventually I broke. Try as I might, I couldn't hold the lines.

Cruel Irony

In here, I have been suicidal-because I just wanted it all to end. It has been difficult to cope with living on a yard with sex offenders, and multiple child killers and molesters. When I go to church to try and gain strength to deal with it all, I am surrounded by weirdos who went running scared into church. I've had to balance it all and walk the tightrope of absurdity.

I have been placed in a 'Suicide Smock' and Rubber Room twice. I am no longer suicidal. Even if I want to check out early-and give myself a "Get out of jail free card"-I won't. My whole life validates my daughter's feelings of worth, and I'd be robbing her of that if I killed myself. Sometimes, I just want to knock these weirdos down flat-seriously. But if I have learned anything, its that it is not my place to take matters into my own hands. Any violent reaction I succumb to only hurts myself in the long run. I have already lost in the Game of Life, in a major way, and miserably so. I can look myself in the mirror though; and that's a big plus. It's worth more than its weight in gold, but it has cost me everything. So, take a lesson from a fool's advice-Don't buy a gun because you might end up relying on it and using it one day, and the long term, far reaching affects of your crime may never end. Put boundaries in place so you never get close to crossing the line.

If you want to catch criminals slipping, join the military or law enforcement. If you want to mete out Justice, become a District Attorney, or a Judge. They say its better to have a gun and not need it, than to need a gun and not have it", and I guess there is some truth to that. But if you say, "its better to be judged by twelve, than be carried by Six", Well?..then, I'll leave the light on for you. But be warned, this is a place where your worth and potential will be dashed to pieces and stifled; and only the Super Heroes go free. If you can't run with the foot soldiers, you will never be able to keep up with the Calvary.

Cruel Irony

Horses are made to run fast for long distances. You'll have need of endurance, even though you may not last. This a place where hope goes to die for many. Better to avoid it altogether. Unless, of course, you are a superhero, but I haven't met any!

King David praises God in songs endlessly and cautions all to, 'Stop', and 'Consider'. So, I caution you to 'Stop', and 'Consider' this-if it helps you, I have regained some of my worth. If it entertains you, its not a complete loss.

Protect your babies, and be a keen eyed Mother Hen, or Papa Bear. Then? Hibernate as long as you wish. One day you may even take a load off and retire. Hopefully then you can live in peace, kick your feet up, and have a window with a kick ass view. But unlike me-you'll get to walk outside and throw a ball, or take a walk with your grandbabies. My heart gently weeps with the thought of this

Go to the fair one time for me, eat a corndog and some cotton candy. Open up your fridge and get a cold glass of something to drink. Go outside and go wherever you wish, and do any one of a million things that I cant even enjoy. Again, breathe in, and count your lucky stars-STAY FREE-and keep pushing forward! And when satan comes a knocking, tell that bastard, "NO!; tell him, "Hell, Fuck, No!-one time for your brother in chains, because, "All I ever have ARE Redemption songs...These songs of freedom". Ha! I do know why the caged bird sings. "But I'd sure sho' rather be free. "Get these shackles off my feet so I can dance". One day I will dance and sing forever. I'll see you there, but until then, keep your seatbelt on, stay safe, drive sober or walk. Call somebody for a ride or stop somewhere and sleep it off. I tip my hat to you, for now, for being free. Pat yourself on the back and look in the mirror and say, "Hell, Fuck, Yeah because you are living the

Cruel Irony

dream! With that, I'll make like Davinci and paint this effort to regain my life's meaning to a priceless and world renowned completion.

Meanwhile, during the interim of 2020-2021, I got the Covid. Through the whole year of 2020, I had fleeting flu-like symptoms three different times, which passed so quickly as not to warrant any real concerns. I actually thought that maybe I was asymptomatic and just hadn't been identified as such. Maybe my body was building up its own immunity. The prison administration had been really careful-exercising an abundance of caution. In the prison where I reside, we were given five fabric masks made by the P.I.A. (Prison Industry Association), and our yard privileges were minimized for our safety.

Finally, at the end of 2020, Covid cases began to soar and skyrocketed here. I was careful enough, rarely went outside, and always maintained social distances of six feet or more-so I'm not really sure how I got it. I had a feeling I would be testing positive during the next weekly test because I felt my body temperature was higher than normal and was experiencing some light fatigue, and flu-like body aching. That only lasted a few days though, and I was already back to 100 percent, but I was put on 15 days quarantine, tested every day for temperature, blood pressure, and oxygen levels. Thankfully, my numbers were always good. I don't even actually think I ever had a fever. I almost feel like it was a fluke, and I never actually had Covid at all. It passed by so unassuming. The only way I could have got it was by putting my finger in the Oxygen/Heart rate sensor thingy. One day a nurse had suggested that I wash my hands afterwards because they ran out of disinfectant wipes and were not cleaning it between Inmate/Patient checks. Like, "Really?!" It sure spread like a 'son of a gun! Just under 20 people died in this prison alone. "One Flew Over the

Cruel Irony

Cuckoo's Nest", if you ask me? It was just a blessing in disguise. Their suffering in prison is over. The Defense Rests.

I am not scared to die. I would actually embrace it, and go running to the chopping block. I just figure that if my curtain doesn't close, that the Universe, and God still have stuff in this life left for me to do. I suppose I should be appreciative, and I am too, I guess. If and when I am eventually released, I will inevitably be grateful for getting through this.

The prison administration have fought a good fight against the onslaught and impending contraction of the Covid virus. They should all receive Gold stars next to their names. It takes a village though, so I'm sure we all played our part. I'll breathe easier when the world is vaccinated, and this is all behind us.

My condolences for all the priceless and precious lives that we lost here in the USA, and all the rest who died all over the world. I anxiously look forward to crossing the 'Finish line of life" Until then, I will have a new day, if she'll have me, I reckon. My congratulations to all of you who have survived these past several months. If Covid cant take you out, you are stronger than you realize!

The End

AUTHOR WELCOMES ALL CORRESPONDENCE,
Respectfully,

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