



The mathematician

By Night Hawk, 35 years old, 3 years on death row

I used to think I had a problem. My problem was with numbers, and their connection with my life. How is it that numbers take up so much space in my life?

Since I was a young boy, I have been counting quarters and nickels at school to buy candy during lunch. If I had known then what I know now, I would have done something with my hidden math skills.

We learn to count before our ABC's we learn that there are 26 letters in the alphabet. We learn that we have 1 house, 2 parents, 2 shoes, 1 pant, 1 shirt, our world quickly revolves around numbers.

Like Neo in the Matrix in a different sense.

We also learn to subtract quickly because we go on and gain friends, but life teaches you what it gives you, it can take. It's the same when you learn to love, you learn that it can be taken away quickly.

Birthdays and age become big, we can never wait to grow up, at 16 you become a young adult. You go on to get a driver's license, now you're counting dollars for some gas to fill up your tank.

Numbers subtly become your world, now you're counting miles trying to see the world. We take a bite, but more than we can chew off life is our first mistake. We're all just dying to live.

The sad truth is when we're grown we just wished we could go back and be young again because we didn't appreciate those days enough. It took 12 years to get my diploma; I was 17 then. I started packing pipes and rolling blunts first, then I began weighing grams.

The numbers of money quickly took over my life. Every dollar counts dollar, dollar bill ya.

Then I started counting misdemeanors and felonies. Now every time I leave the cell, I count the steps to and from in my head. I count the stairs going up and down. I count the seconds from the last time someone spoke to me to pass time and reach a number so high I forgot what I was counting about.

I count my last soups 3, I'm going to have to make these stretch. Now I count the days to store. I count the dollars in my account; I'm going to have to make these stretch. I count every day because I try to make them all count.

The officers count us every other hour, while they do 12-hour shifts. I count all 3 meals every day.

I count the summers I have been here, 7 summers. It took 1 something million dollars to send me to death row. It took one mistake. It took one murder. Now I count every letter. I count every visit. I count all my writings.

I count all the people I've lost. I count every moment I've lost. It took 12 jurors, 1 judge, and 3 district attorneys to make all this happen. I count the days because I don't know how many I got left.

All these numbers and I never got a mathematician degree. A life full of obsession over numbers.

All these numbers add up to my life. So much that I became a number.

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