



## We dance on - The day of my scheduled execution on April 28<sup>th</sup> 2015

By Robert Pruettt, 37 years old, 17 years on death row in Texas

My eyes snapped open at 4:02am, April 28th, 2015. I slept lightly for about 4 hours, plenty enough to keep me alert and aware the rest of the day, no matter how it might've turned out. I wanted to get up early to finish sorting through and packing up my property. No matter what, I would be leaving that cell for good, or so I thought, and there were things that needed to be done. Plus I wanted to holler at my friends there on the pod. It felt good talking with them with the music in the back ground. These might be the last songs I ever hear, I thought. Surprisingly "Dust in the Wind" by Kansas came on. And "All your money won't another second buy..."

The energy between us was high as I thanked them for the awesome moments and love we shared over the years. Each one of them knew that one day they might take the same walk ahead of me that day, so they were slightly serious, but they loosened up as I cracked jokes and impersonated a few people! ;) I reminded them that we're all eternal energy, that they could kill the body and all sense of self, yet part of us remains infinite and immortal. I asked them not to grieve me long, as I'd likely soon return in some form. My hope was that they could feel my centeredness, my peace, and that it would comfort them some. At some point Jeff said, "One thing's for sure: if they do get you they don't kill your body and we'll see you someday." I replied, "Yeah, but time is also an illusion. There's no place we'll get to someday at some other location; heaven or eternity is here now, always. It's all about a shift in perception..."

At 8am they escorted me to my potential last visits. How could we match the previous day? The day before was incredibly beautiful. We all seemed to flow freely in the moment for the most part. The conversations were mostly deep, metaphysical and mystical, but we also laughed a lot and undoubtedly felt each other's' energy. I definitely felt their strength, support and love. In spite of being in that cramped little booth for nearly nine hours, I never once felt tired on Monday. So how could Tuesday match that?

Well, it was beautiful in its own right. I felt the joy of Being and so utterly interconnected to the fabric of existence, and immediately the power of the love and light of those that could be there physically. I also felt the love and energy of those that couldn't be there but truly wanted to. I felt you all, and it was pure light... We got very emotional at the end. As I hoped to ease the situation for my friends on the pod, so too with some of my closest connections out in the world that could be here for it. I understand how painful it is to "lose" someone you love so deeply. I've seen nearly 300 people be executed in the 13 years I've been here, and many of them were close connections. But the pain comes from the thought that you'll soon be separate, possibly forever, when all separation is illusory. I wanted to help raise their awareness to our eternal nature, and it felt like they were feeling the unity and flow of the spirit that I was vibrating to!

They took me out of visitation at noon. The hallway was filled with the high brass of the unit and the TDCJ. Suddenly, all that positive energy I felt from the visits was gone. It was now replaced by utter hate and malice. Here were people that wanted me to die badly and they stared at me with fierce intensity as a lieutenant barked out sharp orders. It was the single most intense and thorough strip search I had ever undergone once they got me back to the death row building. After they ran me through metal detectors and got me into brand new clothes, they carefully placed me in about 15 pounds of chains, shackles and restraints, then they walked me out of the building and into the death van. As they slammed the doors I saw only smiles from the region I director Alford, wardens, major and captains as they slapped each other on their backs through the tinted back window...

The death van is windowless on the sides. I could see through the front window, but without my glasses everything's a blur. There was a captain driving (a very angry middle aged white man), a captain in the back compartment (a middle aged black man) and a captain in the middle compartment, a middle aged black woman. Warden Smith of the Walls Unit was riding shotgun. I first met him in September of 2007 when he caught me with a cell phone and some weed. I was obviously highly upset that day as I'd just finished smoking a joint when they ripped me out of my cell, so I cursed him and said a lot of really ugly things. Once we got to the Walls Unit I could face him from the cell and I said, "Warden Smith, if I haven't ever told you before I apologize for the way I talked to you when we first met." He seemed confused at first so I reminded him when he first made major and they put him over death row, how mine was the first phone he caught. He smiled and thanked me, then told the other guards about other inmates he had caught with phones afterwards... But all of that was exchanged after I arrived at the walls Unit.

On the ride there it was mostly silence and negative energy emanating from them. We were five vehicles in total. A police cruiser in the back; both police cars with sirens blaring and flashing lights, and we must've been going 100 miles an hour most of the way. Everyone pulled to the side for us, and once we got to Huntsville the streets were cordoned off and empty for us...

I sat in the middle of the metal bench most of the ride there, eyes closed and facing forward. I meditated; Om. I'm not this body. I'm not this personality. I'm not this self. I didn't allow their cloud of negativity to enter me. I reflected back only love and light and hope for increases awareness in them. I felt centered. And I kept thinking I would be a golden eagle when I return to form. Part of me didn't want to return to form, that I could just release from it totally, without returning, but then I thought there was more to be done here. I just wasn't sure what was next and tried to be open to anything and I hoped that might be me as a golden eagle!

We arrived at the Walls in record time. They joked about "The Fast and Furious" having nothing on them as they escorted me into the death house. The death house is a narrow hallway, dimly lit, with about 10 old style type cells, a shower and the death chamber to the end of the run where they removed all of the chains and restraints, stripped me out

and searched me, then put me in boxer shorts. I was finger printed and then walked freely to a cell about 10 feet from the execution chamber.

Three chaplains showed up, all men I knew from Polunsky. They are basically good men trying to ease the situation for the condemned and the families. The captain that was driving the van told me the head Warden would soon arrive to talk to me, and then said they'd treat me with respect as long as I treated them likewise. Warden Jones is the head warden and he arrived shortly to explain the process. He's also middle-aged and black, as is the female major over there. Like Smith, he also worked as a major and warden over death row in the past.

I was amazed by his calm and collected demeanor as he outlined how they'd methodically kill me and what I could and couldn't do... should the execution go through. It occurred to me that the cornbread fed director, Alford, a white man who stood next to Jones as he spoke, probably referred to Jones and the black rank at the Walls in only derogatory terms to his buddies at the Masonic lodge. Couldn't Jones and his staff see that they were doing the dirty work? Didn't they associate what they were doing to the lynching of blacks in the past? And did they really think they'd ever be allowed into the inner circles of people like Alford?

Chaplain Collier then spoke to me for a few minutes and told me the rules about using the phone and the last meal, as well as what to expect should the execution go forward. He said I could have a spiritual book from my property and I selected The Bhagavad Gita, which I read from between phone calls. He and the other chaplains and lieutenants that were left in the death house with me were very nice and courteous about everything. I guess they want to keep people around you at that point that are passive and friendly to keep you that way before they murder you...

It was nearly 2pm before I got to use the phone. I couldn't dial the numbers myself; they chaplain or one of the lieutenants did that for me. I was happy to speak to everyone I got through to. I wanted to assure everyone that I wasn't able to visit that I was okay and that if it came down to it and they got me I hoped they would be okay. My approach to all of this has been that whatever is gonna happen will happen. All we can do is all we can do. I trust that the universe only gives us what we need for the evolution of consciousness, and I am open to that completely. I wanted to convey the peace and love and light I felt to everyone I spoke to. The conversations were highly emotional, obviously, but I felt all of your love and strength. It was surreal, trying to maintain balance and let you all know how much I thank you, how much I love you and am grateful for everything. Even the ones I couldn't visit or speak to, I felt you.

There was such a strong showing of support and love and light from you all through letters, visits and calls, and it meant so much to me. I love you all, eternally!!

Around 3:10pm the phone on the wall rang. It only rings when someone from overseas calls or the attorney calls. It was my attorney. David Dow said, "Robert, I have Kelly and Jeff in the room. I wanted to be the one to tell you that today is NOT the day you will be executed!" And the room he was in burst with applause and cheers. I told him all thank you and that I love them!! I totally do!! They have been fighting so hard for me. I felt

their own raw emotions through all of it. Dow told me that the judge granted additional DNA testing on the murder weapon. Later I learned that they have 30 days to do the testing. Guess that shows that they can expedite these things when they want to...

I now know that the other three issues I had filed in the Supreme Court have been denied. All I have left is the DNA issue. If they again cannot develop a profile off the weapon then it's inconclusive and that's not good for me. It could mean that we'll soon be going through this all over again. Only this time it could turn out differently.... But I cannot dwell on that. I think I'm still here now for a reason, and I am open to discovering it. There are things unfinished, so I'm prepared to do whatever is left. Of course it would be cool if that means freedom someday, freedom physically, and experiences beyond these walls, but I'm open for whatever...

They let me use the phone until they got official word of the stay. I ate my "last meal" and got to hear the excitement in everyone's voices at the hospitality house, as well as people who couldn't be there. From the moment I heard the news of the stay I was in a very excited state myself—I might've even done a little dance in the cell ;)— so it was awesome to ride those waves of relief and exhilaration with you all ...

Then about 4pm they loaded me back into the death van and took me back to Polunsky. The same crew that took me there brought me back. On the ride over to the Walls I slid to the end of the bench and asked the black male captain how many times he had done this and how he could be so detached from it? He said it's just his job and ordered me back to the middle of the bench and told me to keep my legs spread. On the return trip he wasn't nearly as intense. He asked me how I felt and I told him great. I used that opportunity to explore his mentality further. It just confounded me that anyone could do such a job and keep a clean conscience. He said he believed in what he was doing, that the bible said an eye for an eye and that people who break the law must pay for it. I almost asked him what he thought about Jesus's words on love and forgiveness, but I didn't.

It was clear that he was so indoctrinated in this culture of killing and that I wouldn't be able to break him out of it. The same for the female captain. I couldn't help but wonder about her and if she was in touch with her female instincts at all? She believed in it. It all just seemed so strange to me. That nearly all of the rank at the Walls are black or Hispanic. It seems like an oxymoron; an extremely right wing conservative that's also a minority. Weird.

Once we arrived back to Polunsky's back gate the region I director opened the back door of the van with pure hate and venom spat, "Congratulations! Now you can go back to your concrete box. That ain't livin'!" ...as he slammed the door. These people were clearly upset that they couldn't kill me Tuesday. I didn't let him or any of them steal my cool or peace. See, the previous Saturday I totally lost my cool and got angry when they wouldn't allow my niece to visit. I later felt ashamed and disappointed in myself for being knocked off balance. And I didn't want that to happen again through the most difficult storm of my life. Somehow, I made it through the 28th feeling very centered and calm. I was fully prepared to release form completely if that was how it played out. I was deep in

the process of detachment. I was even a bit excited about the next part of the journey. And I often felt the pure joy of Being. How many others that encountered me that day felt it? I thought more than a few did. It was such an awesome experience, knowing that they felt what I was feeling. Knowing that they had glimpsed eternity with me that day.... I love you all so fucking much!!!

I spent my first night back in the same cell I left from. I just knew that the director had a hand in that, but I didn't let it prevent me from sleeping a solid 11 hours!! I needed it! ;) I'm now on C-pod in a cell that faces the sunset. I plan to take advantage of that every evening, I assure you!!

Again, thank you all for your love and support. You were with me every step of the way. I don't know what the future holds. But we have the moment, and I hope we all can appreciate it ....