



The events that led me to death row were already in motion

M., 48 years old, 26 years on death row in Florida

There is an old song from the 80s, Phil Collins did it, it's called „Take me home”, and in it he says “I've been a prisoner all my life”. I guess it could mean a lot of things to a lot of people, you never know what confines or restrains someone, unless they tell you.

So, there is the prison I'm locked in, there is the hold they have on me that will not let me say what I want to say. Some things I just can't put on this paper for anyone to see..... I've always felt that I was made into something I was never meant to be. Children aren't born this way or that, they are shaped, molded, taught how to be this or that. Sure, all of us grow into ourselves, we begin to make up our own minds, develop our own feelings and personalities but all of these things are the products of our experiences, what we see, hear, and feel, as brains begin connecting those dots before we are born.

Did I know from the womb that my parents didn't want me? I certainly heard that enough growing up. There were times in my life when I lived in a void of emotion, an absence of feeling. I started faking emotions. I pretended to care, I acted like I saw others acting in given situations, I created an entirely artificial person, started living a lie before I was five years old.

It was only after I left home that I thought of changing, but I didn't know how to become a part of this new world. It meant trusting someone, I did not know how to do that, I was never taught. It meant loving someone, I did not know how to do that.

Many of the people I had come to associate with were of the same mindset, criminals, faithless, untrustworthy, that is yet another world, an underworld, Tartarus.

And there are relationships in that world too, feigned relationships where people pretend to be friends or lovers but in the end teaching you only the worst lessons how to feel less, trust less, and love less.

Yet, as I've often said, here and there along the way you might chance to meet someone in whom you could plainly see something different. I tried to learn from that, made some good progress in my late teens - early twenties, but the events that led me to death row were already in motion. I did not see it then, but the play was written, the actors on stage, it had started.

I do not blame anyone for how it started, only myself for how it was for so long, too long.

I will die in this prison, where I am is where I will be and it cannot be undone.

There are people on this planet everyday who endure far worse than I do, and they do so with more grace and greater composure. How? Why? Because they believe in something greater, they hope, or maybe they love.

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