

April, 2023 V.17

TWO ROADS



Trauma : Narratives of Resilience

An honest chronicle of the stories and service of the incarcerated women and men of the Illinois Department of Corrections

ATTENTION READERS

Although Two Roads e-zine is produced in Kewanee Reentry Center, it is a state-wide platform for **ALL** confined contributors and voices. Through sharing your personal stories, you enlighten, inspire, empower, grow and heal.

Therefore, join the conversation and be a value added to our collective consciousness by contributing your writings and poetry. ***However, we strongly ask that you limit your personal expressions to the chosen topic and requested length.*** (See back pages for the details for upcoming topics: **Peer Pressure, Mothers Day.**)

Two Roads

Mission Statement

“We are committed to empowering those most impacted by harmful systems to become servant leaders and agents of change. Using the connecting, restorative power of stories, we hope to do our small part in bringing us all together to overcome societal ills such as violence, poverty and mass incarceration.”

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Trauma Issue

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TWO ROADS

(House Artist)

Charles Murray



TWO ROADS is now ONLINE

We strongly encourage your family and friends to share the link below of this issue (and other informative issues) with lawmakers, advocacy groups and other power-wielding stakeholders in four easy step:

- 1) Go to "**IDOC HOME PAGE**" (idoc.illinois.gov)
- 2) Click "**ABOUT**"
- 3) Click "**NEWS**"
- 4) Select "**TWO ROADS E-ZINE**"

Not only will you see our current issues, but this will allow you to see past issues and submissions from the many souls who've spoken.

Although your insightful analysis, strong feelings and creative policy suggestions are real and deserve to be considered, this humble opportunity is limited to just relating your story to other human beings, so that they may make courageous decisions with our humanity in mind.

Overcoming

(Guest Contributor)

Lt. Decoster

****U.S. Marine****

While working with the juveniles at Illinois Youth Center Kewanee, I and most of the staff I worked with had to overcome a great deal. Personally, I dealt with many assaults to myself. I received my first concussion while breaking up a fight and was punched in the temple area a few times. Not a big deal at the time, but as I went forward in my career, it became a problem for me.

In November of 2013 I was promoted to Juvenile Justice Specialist Supervisor (Lieutenant); soon after that is when most of my assaults happened. I broke a finger when a youth was trying to kick me. Once I returned back to work from that, I was dealing with the same youth and broke the same finger again. I came back to work after a short time of recuperating only to be bitten on the leg. The bite left a bruise for more than two months, luckily it did not break the skin. The very next day I was checking a cell when I was punched in the side of my face, and got another concussion.



Overcoming (cont.)

Two months later another JSS and I were dealing with a youth when the youth suddenly struck me in the side of the head multiple times, and in the process of restraining the youth, I separated a shoulder. I ended up spending eight months off recovering from my injuries. About eight months after returning from those injuries, again I was attacked and punched in the side of the head and received another concussion. It was my third in about eighteen months, and fourth while working for IDJJ. This time I was off four months recovering.

During this time off I made the decision that I was going to transfer to an adult facility to get away from the assaults. Before I could return and put in my paperwork for transfer, IDJJ made the announcement that they were going to close IYC Kewanee. Soon after that, IDOC decided that they were going to take over the Kewanee prison and turn it into Kewanee Life Skills Re-entry Center. I decided that I would stick it out at Kewanee and see what changes would be made before transferring somewhere else.

Once the last of the youths were sent out at the end of July 2016, we had six months of fixing and getting our facility ready for the future. That included changing our perspective of how we operated and dealt with the individuals in custody in our care. Personally, I had to decide within myself to be a better person and not hold our new residents responsible for what the youth did. Once I made that choice the changes became natural to me.

Through such practices such as: therapy, games on my phone and relaxing my mind, I prioritized my personal wellness and then began to look outwardly. I learned that a smile, handshake, good morning, good afternoon, good evening and general politeness went a long way. Also, setting the example to treat people the way you want to be treated is indeed true leadership.

In the almost six years that Kewanee LSRC has been open we have not had a single staff assault; in fact, I cannot even remember the last time I was threatened or even cussed at. I'm sure it was when the juveniles were still here.

Editor's Note

Keith P. Talley

****U.S. Army****

Trauma, for many, strikes at the heart of our affair—confinement. Most of the thinking, attitudes, and behaviors that have led to our many troubles can be less characterized as rational self-directed actions, and understood better as misdirected reactions. Our inability to adjust and cope healthily to the difficulties and challenges that we've experienced changes the question from "What's wrong with us?" to the more appropriate question, "What happened to us?"

The personal accounts in this issue, **Trauma Resilience**, are resounding affirmations that we are not victims; we have agency!



Editor's Note (cont.)

Therein lies the dynamic power of the *Two Roads* e-zine for the state's confined citizens. Through sharing our personal stories of active hope, purposeful striving, and determined grit, we breathe life into each other and empower each other through exchanging proven tools, techniques, and internal resources.

Service, the antidote for my selfishness and self-centeredness, is an indispensable pillar for my personal wellness and ability to successfully navigate beyond my traumatic past; hence, serving as the Editor-in-Chief of *Two Roads* for the past year has been a therapeutic experience to say the least. I was afforded the gift to sit, oftentimes emotionally full, with your personal stories in a more involved way than the average reader. I felt your victories and defeats, your hopeful yearnings and crushing disappointments, as if they were my own; indeed, I am you, and you are me.

I am humbly grateful to all who have helped me to serve us. From the mission-driven staff (Ms. Rowan and Mr. Warnsing) and our host of staff, guest contributors (Ms. Wilson, Sgt. Flagg, and Lt. Decoster)—the entire *Kewanee Horizons* team, a supportive branch from the same tree—the *Two Roads* editorial team, thanks for supporting my leadership—all those who graciously acquiesced to my incessant harassing throughout the campus for submissions—and finally, all those sisters and brothers in confinement who answered the call to join the community conversation by sharing their voices.



Associate Editor

Kenji Haley

Trauma, by definition, is *"a wound; an injury to living tissue by an extrinsic agent."* The dictionary further goes on to define it as *"a behavioral state resulting from emotional stress."*

Many of us have endured this emotional stress caused by the injuries of life. Emotional, mental or physical stress has mounted for years by either poor choices or poor circumstances that we have engaged in.

I find it interesting that we as men and women in custody have developed a callous mind to events that have taken place in our lives. Now, this is not to say that a person should not learn how to deal with things and move on, but there is a systematic issue when we become "desensitized" to the trauma that we have been dealt time in and time out.

An example that comes to mind is living in the confines of prison: a cubicle of a space with another human being, where you learn to eat, sleep, and maneuver over days, months, years, decades. To evaluate this and say "its okay" is a travesty, especially knowing that these conditions were never meant to serve a comfort.

Associate Editor (cont.)

Furthermore, your mind becomes callous to this and you adapt; yet this becomes your emotional depot where you have no choice but to deal with all the workings of daily life.

This issue is built on the activities that one has had to work through, as well as how to make changes in them. It is amazing to see how many of these men have progressed and succeeded in life due to their circumstances. But yet trauma is still there, and it becomes more challenging to deal with as we age. The fights, the battles, the scars, the treachery . . . all these things do damage to a person on the inside. We collectively have to learn how to process these things and find ways to heal these wounds.

Epictetus says: "*Who, then, is the invincible human being? One who can be disconcerted by nothing that lies outside the sphere of choice. . . . Both I and my body bears witness to that truth.*"

I hope that you look forward to these articles and to take the time to reflect. Don't allow your callous mind to hide the scars that have plagued you for years and left you desensitized by life. There are no invincible human beings, but we healing from the traumatic stress something we need to do.



Forgiveness

Evelyn Jackson (Logan C.C.)

I've been incarcerated for 23 yrs. At 18 I was charged with First Degree Murder and Aggravated Kidnapping. I was convicted and sentenced to 45 years in IDOC. When walking into Cook County Jail, I shut all my feelings off. Being raised by men I had a complete sense of how to control my emotions. So much so that the judge and state's attorney said that I was unremorseful at my sentencing and that I was a menace to society. Yes, I was guilty of some things within my case but not the actual offense of murder.

When I first came to Dwight C.C., I was told to fail my T.A.B.E. test so I could get into school. My failing the test got me an 8.7. However I still got right into G.E.D. classes and brought my score to a 12.9 to pass the G.E.D. on the first try. Quickly, I enrolled in college classes and then started beauty school.

My mindset was to stay in school and not get into any trouble. But then my appeal was denied. Actually, I never challenged the charge, just the sentence. After the denial I lost all hope and stayed in and out of segregation.

Fortunately, in 2010 I was given the

Forgiveness (cont.)

opportunity to tell my story on “Women Behind Bars”, after which I received a lot of positive feedback. That experience put the fight back into me. After that, all I could think about was being a mother to my son outside of prison. I picked myself up and got back on track with school, good jobs, and self-help groups.

Unfortunately Dwight C.C. closed in 2013; consequently, we were transferred to Logan C.C., which was a 3 hour drive away from the Chicago area. I quickly began to spiral out of control again. I wasn't able to have constant visits with my son. I didn't care to stay out of trouble because I felt that I had nothing to lose. I accomplished nothing in Logan C.C. but a long ticket history in 3 short years.

One day, February 25, 2016, I was sitting in segregation and the officer told me to get dressed; however, he didn't say where I was going. I turned around to be cuffed, but to my surprise he just opened my door. After I asked, “Where are we going?” he responded, “I'll tell you when we get downstairs.”

The sergeant said that I had a visit and needed to be in proper uniform. So I changed out of my seg uniform and was then escorted to the visiting room where I was told to be prepared to receive some bad news. Needless to say, the wait before they allowed my family to come in seemed like years.

Immediately, I knew something wasn't right when I didn't see my son. They were trying to get me to sit down, but I kept asking for my son. Nobody wanted to tell me that my 17 year old son got shot and didn't make it. To make matters worse, I wasn't allowed to view his body due to my security level and being in C grade with four years left on my sentence.

Forgiveness (cont.)

A year after his death, I was on 10-minute suicide watch. One day while being alone with my thoughts, I started crying and praying. That day I vowed to get my life back on track. I had to take accountability for my actions. I had to own the fact that my loyalty to others had been more important than my loyalties to myself and my son. I put others' feelings and needs before my own. Slowly, by the **Mercy of Allah**, I dug myself out that hole. I changed the people that I was around. In 2017, I finally got a job in the commissary where I still work at today.

I changed my way of thinking as a whole. My experience has humbled me. I recently renewed my beauty school transcripts by paying for my own classes through a correspondence college. Upon my release, I can apply to get my Beautician's license.

I disappointed my son and family with my past actions. Today I've made them proud of the woman that I've become. All Praise due to Allah for opening my eyes to forgiveness. By forgiving the young man that murdered my son, I forgave myself and asked for forgiveness form Allah and my victim's family. I know firsthand that undying hand, that undying pain.



Chihuahua

Leo Cardez (Dixon C.C.)

****U.S. Army****

I was a loser. Growing up I was a below-average kid, unremarkable in every way, much to my dismay, and especially my father's. I lived fearing I could do nothing right, and always carried the idea that I wasn't doing enough by my dad's standards, fearing that I wasn't enough.

My father was a hard man. Five feet, six inches of old school Latino machismo with a Napoleon complex, like a mean Chihuahua. He criticized everything I did or tried to do. I learned to avoid him, and the first chance I got I left. The day after my seventeenth birthday I joined the Army. (Although, looking back today, I am not certain I was aware of what I was doing and why I was doing it.)

We all have stories in our past we're holding onto, tragic plot lines that seem to run through everything we do. The more we believe them the stronger and more real they become. I became a decorated veteran, college graduate, and successful business executive. I thought rising to the highest ranks would prove to everyone—especially my dad—that I was worthy and had value. Unfortunately, no matter what I did, what I accomplished, I felt a deep emptiness. I tried everything to fill it, even drugs. I soon found there is not enough cocaine in the world to fix an old story that says
you're not enough.

Chihuahua (cont.)

To make matters worse, my new reckless lifestyle was catching up to me.

I was arrested and looking at six-to-fifteen years in prison. My father came to the county jail to bail me out. When I saw the disappointment in his eyes, it tore my guts out. We spoke for hours on the drive home. I told him I knew I had let him down yet again. He was angry, but quickly shifted to speak about his love and admiration. I felt thirty years of pain and shame well-up in my chest. ***As I sat next to him, still unable to make eye contact, I felt the tears start streaming down my face. I begged for his forgiveness. He simply took my hand in his and whispered, I love you son.***

This exchange began the kind of father/son relationship I had always dreamed of. He shared in my highs and consoled me in my lows. We spoke often, and with every conversation I realized I had wasted so much time being scared and angry at him that it had clouded my perception. Now, I could finally see him. He wasn't a mean Chihuahua. In fact, every day I saw more of his love and kindness. He was a nice Chihuahua.

Now, with my father being my best friend, I became less angry and started treating myself better. Despite being in this place, I have become the kind of man he could be proud of. I've worked as a G.E.D. tutor, volunteered to teach yoga to special needs inmates, and am writing a book that I hope can help others endure what I have survived.

It strikes me that behind every trauma we endure, there's a core story we tell ourselves, things like, "I'm not good enough," "I don't deserve love." As long as these stories exist, we find ways to perpetuate them. There's a funny thing about these stories though: they tend to crumble under examination.

I have re-written my story and although I may still be stuck in prison, I am living a life better than I could have ever imagined. Letting go of the old internal narratives of who I thought I was has allowed me to see and live my life with newfound hope and purpose . . . and that's the best ending anyone could ask from their story.

"Real" COVID-19 Survivor

Darren B. Anderson

****U.S. Marines****

Everyone knows me as "Mr. A". I am 61 years of age, and trauma is definitely no stranger to me. At the age of 59, I contracted the deadly virus COVID -19. On November 13th, as I was going through my weekly routine of football watching, I decided to eat a snickers bar and could not taste the chocolate, caramel, peanuts or nougat. I rushed to pack up my property and bed. I then reported my situation to the duty officer, and on November 14th I was diagnosed with COVID 19 and moved to the quarantine deck.

On November 15th, the nurse came around to take everyone's vitals. It was 9:15 a.m.. When it was finally my turn, everything was fine—considering I had COVID—except for one thing: my oxygen level was at 72. I didn't truly understand the significance of this, but the nurse panicked.

The nurse tested me four times before calling a code. They brought me an oxygen tank and had me use it for about an hour; after being tested again, my oxygen level was still 72. It was then that an ambulance was called.



"Real" COVID Survivor (cont.)

I was immediately rushed to the Lincoln Medical Hospital and observed for more than six hours. I was brought dinner, but I still couldn't taste anything and soon found myself drifting to sleep. I didn't wake up until November 24th. I was told that when I had drifted off to sleep, I had actually died and was resuscitated.

I was whisked away to Memorial Medical Center's ICU in Springfield. When I woke up, I had IVs in both arms, an oxygen tube down my throat, a feeding tube in my neck, all kinds of electrodes on my temples and body. I had a contraption on my ankles to stop blood clots. I was wrapped up like a caterpillar in a cocoon with a catheter in you know where.

Within seconds of my awakening, all the doctors, nurses, and technicians surrounded my bed and clapped and praised GOD and sang for joy because out of all the people, at that point, that came to their ICU and were ventilated, I was the first to wake up. After being in a coma for 9 days, GOD raised me from the dead. There was no cure for COVID 19, no vaccine, no treatment. All they could do was try to keep me alive.

When I realized where I was and saw my surroundings, I panicked. My heart monitor was going haywire. They had to talk me down and reassure me that the worst was over, but to me, it was just the beginning. This road to recovery was traumatic in itself. I was weak, couldn't talk because of the big black tube going thru my mouth down into my lungs. Yes, GOD did wake me up as HE said HE would. During my time away from myself, I could hear HIS voice, "Don't worry Darren, it's going to be fine," and I could see HIS angels hovering over me singing and chanting "Don't worry." I also saw a dark place where large black worms were devouring something that they were covering; honestly, I believe it was me under all those parasites.

I was wrestling back and forth with the good me and the bad me for approximately nine days. Then I woke up. Again I was weak, scared, sorry, and most of all, worried! I was treated with the utmost care and felt the love of strangers, human beings that genuinely wanted me to live. I communicated with my eyes (blink once for yes, twice for no). I also had to follow directions by squeezing the nurse's and doctor's finger.

"Real" COVID Survivor (cont.)

I lay there, almost totally immobilized for another three days with nothing to do but pray and think about my life, asking GOD to forgive me for all of my sins and begging HIM to allow me to live, to get healthy, and to be able to rectify all the wrong I've done to others in my lifetime.

Then it happened, the oxygen tube came out. My voice was raspy and low, but I could talk. No damage to my vocal cords. For the next few days, I was scared to close my eyes for fear I would never open them again. I watched them take blood from me what seemed like every three to four hours. I cried continuously. I didn't even have enough strength to use the remote for the television.

Thanksgiving day, I was able to get up out of the bed and have a visit via snapchat with my mother and baby sister. They cried and cried and cried for the first five minutes. Then we talked, and that's when I found out that prior to waking up, they were told to prepare for my demise. During those nine days that I was in the coma, they were contacted every evening about my status.

They asked my mother after the 7th day if she wanted them to "pull the plug," and she told them, "No, he will fight it out; give him a little more time." Thank GOD, because that is why I am here to tell my story. Statistically, I was one in a thousand that lived through this ventilation process. There were two other men who had to be ventilated, one younger, one older. Both died.

When I returned to Lincoln Correctional Center, I was considered a "miracle man"! When I returned to my unit, everyone came out and met me at the door with nothing but applause and love. Some of the men were told that I had died. They all offered their help and encouragement. I had lost over 50 pounds. during the ordeal, but look at me now: healthier than ever—physically, mentally, and most of all, spiritually.

Thank GOD for giving me another chance at life and giving me the opportunity to tell about the "trauma" that took my life, and the GOD that gave it back!

There Was a Time

John Williams

There was a time, when all was dark
So dark, I could not see.
When all the things, I thought were real
Somehow, had ceased to be
When all the good, had turned to bad
When sunshine, turned to rain
I can't explain, or make it plain
The reason, for all my pain



There was a time, when all was lost
At least, that's how it seemed
When the beautiful things of this world
Somehow, had left my dreams



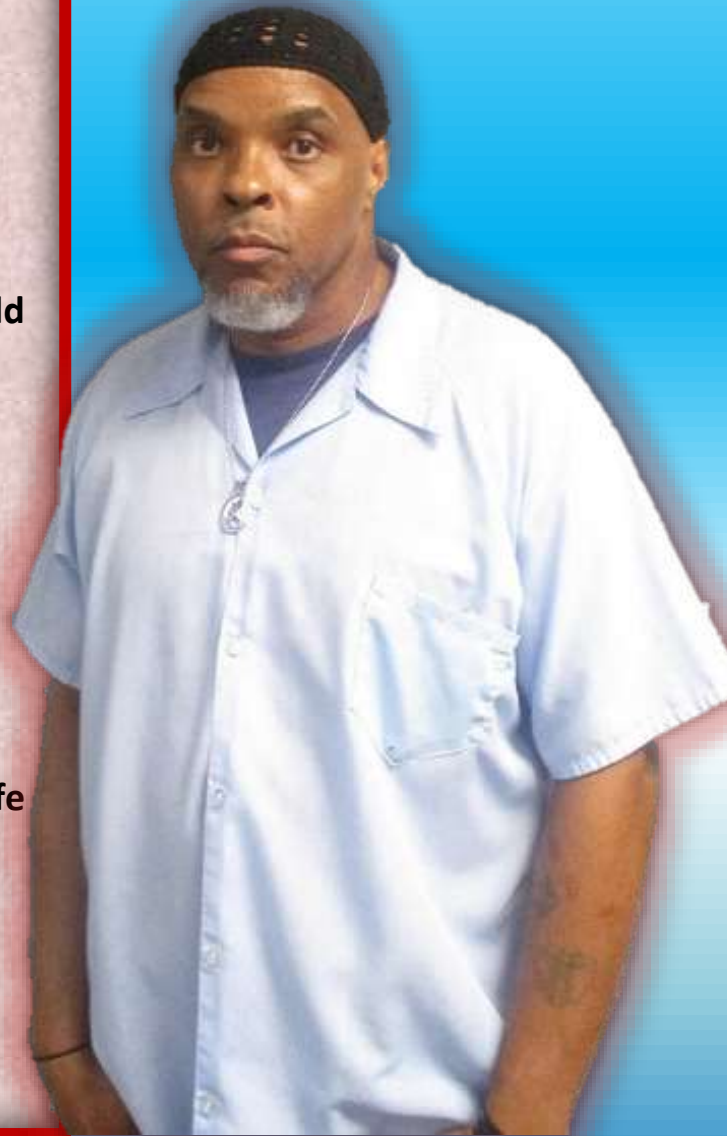
For the life of me, I could not see
I could not understand
I did not know, which way to go
My life, I had not plan



There was a time, I could not feel
I could not find my way
Stumbling through, this thing called life
Struggling, from day to day



A gentle voice, came to me
It pierced my very soul,
It spoke to me, so truthfully
And here's what I was told



There Was a Time (cont.)

The problems in life, will surely come
In this, just rest assured
A test of faith, with every break
For all, who can endure



No loads beyond, what you can bear
There's nothing that you can't do
All the keys, are in your hands
A gift, I gave to you



Take a deeper look inside
Far beyond the lies
There you'll see, reality
And truth, shown in your eyes



Believe in self, right from the start
To thine own self, first be true
For all the answers to life's questions
All rest, inside of you

There was a time, I did not care
My heart, was made of stone
Holding onto all the things
I knew deep down were wrong



But then one night, I seen a light
A light, that shined on me
Showing me a better way
My life could truly be



Don't call it strange, this talk of change
(Though "yes," it's something new)
For lines like these, contain the keys
That unlock the inner you



In a Blink of an Eye

Tammy Englerth (Decatur C.C.)

Hello, my name is Tammy Englerth. I have been incarcerated for eighteen years now. I was charged with the death of my abusive husband. I almost died that day, but he died six days later. I spent over twenty days in a coma on life support. I woke up to realize that I couldn't talk because I had a tracheotomy and my abusive husband passed away. The media painted me as a horrible person before they even knew what happened. I learned that the media promotes falsehood.

Previously, I was facing a charge of four years for theft. I took this charge because my abusive husband altered my checks. My boss told me not to, but I feared for my life. The morning I was supposed to report to serve time was when the incident occurred that put me in a coma.

Although I didn't know what I was facing with the death of my abusive husband because of my condition, I was shortly shipped to prison. The first two years were difficult coping with everything and being away from my children. My selfishness kicked in; I fell into self-pity. I tried committing self-harm several times and almost succeeded, not thinking how I'd hurt my children.

Two weeks before I was supposed to get out, I was charged with my abusive husband's death. The sentence I received was forty years at 100%; this was in 2005. In 2015, the Governor granted my clemency. My doctor, lawyers, advocates, and others were able to speak on my behalf, and all my orders of protection and

In a Blink of an Eye *(cont.)*

records were shown. My abuse was substantiated and the governor took twenty years off my sentence

Prison has changed my life. I have transformed from a silent onlooker to a vocal activist. My outward circumstances have not changed. I am still another prisoner, but my inner world has changed dramatically. I am an overcomer. I am a survivor.

Many individuals in custody lose hope. No matter if you get days or not there is hope. I can't change what happened, but I can use it to help others in hopes what happened to me won't happen to them.

People will always judge you; don't allow that to change you. You're better than that. Don't look at prison as a punishment, look at it as a opportunity to better yourself. Take every opportunity to go to school, groups, counseling, etc., even if it is not giving out good-time days. Don't let the time do you; do the time. Things change every day. So tickets for fighting and acting out will only hurt you. Change your direction of thinking. When you just walk away, it is your choice to become a better person.

Today, I am a determined woman who stands on her two feet and will never allow someone to hurt me again. I am now waiting to go to work release any day. Remember, no matter what you're facing, you will overcome it! Use your voice. Don't stay silent. Your story could help others.

The Pain Within

Jeff Kennedy

****U.S. Air Force****

Frodo says, "How do you pick up the threads of an old life? How do you go on when in your heart you begin to understand, there is no going back? There are some things that time cannot mend. Some hurts that go too deep . . . that have taken hold." (JRR Tolkien, from the Lord of the Rings)

Tolkien, a WWI 2nd Lt., was pinned down in a trench for six months (that's right, six months) during the "Battle of Somme" in 1916. Suffering from PTSD after the war, he began channeling his pain, creating fantasies, eventually putting his stories in books, and as they say, "the rest is history." Writing was his form of therapy, thus creating his own trauma resilience.

Many of us are suffering from one variation of trauma or another, mine is PTSD. Although I was serving in the Air Force during war time (1991), I did not see combat. My PTSD stems from an inexcusable murder I committed in 1993.



The Pain Within

(cont.)

I have carried that guilt for nearly 30 years. The crime went unsolved for 17 years, during that time I spent my life drowning in alcoholism, despair, and depression. My “demons” tormented my soul and I questioned my own existence; I attempted suicide 4 times. Some people have said that I have a “Greater Purpose,” meaning my attempts were thwarted by “Divine Intervention.”

Ultimately, I confessed to murder in 2010, and I have been trying to forgive myself ever since. I can say with certainty that it has not happened yet. I kept trying though, and actually, doing things like writing this helps. I’m not creative or artistic, so my therapy is telling my story, sharing my experience, relating to people, and hopefully I can help someone.

I’ve recently learned how you approach trauma and recognize its impact on you is how it dictates your life. Take me for example, I chose to live in the suffering, and my life has been a painful rollercoaster of emotions. However, if you look at Tolkien, he chose a creative, more positive path, and you can see everything he gave the world.

Today, here at a Kewanee Life skills Re-entry Center, I try to be an open book. I try to talk about my pain, but I usually break down in an embarrassing, tearful display of emotions. I apologize to the groups, and do you know what the guys tell me? “It’s OK.” “You got to get it out.” “We don’t judge you.” “We’re proud of you.” Is it easy? Not even close. I am constantly unpacking the baggage that has weighed me down for three decades.

I have allowed my pride to build walls around my heart, and the “pain within” has been building and boiling. It’s time I let it go. The walls must come down, because I can’t live like this anymore. *I finally want to be free!!!*

“Everyone is more than the worst thing they’ve ever done.”

Bryan Stevenson

Deliverance

Ronnie Carrasquillo

Two Forms of Trauma

Physical: A wound, especially one produced by sudden physical injury.

Psychological: An emotional shock that creates substantial and lasting damage to the psychological development of the individual, generally leading to neurosis.

Many sudden wounds from physical injuries that I have acquired and the trauma attached to that involve others that didn't make it, but I am here to give testimony of the psychological aspect of trauma. For the sake of time and

Resilience: the ability to recover quickly from illness, change or misfortune; the ability to remain.



Deliverance

(cont.)

space, I will just mention a few "Traumatic Valleys" that I've walked through, like, how to find resilience through living decade after decade in prison as a C-Number with 200-600 years attached to you—How to find resilience when tens of thousands of dollars are lost after denials, decade over decade—How to find resilience after decades of parole loss—How to find resilience when your loved ones pass and you're not there to console the family—How to find resilience from not being able to raise your family—How to find resilience from the trauma of being separated from your family by sheets of plastic in your face? These traumas can traumatize you into an emotional shock which could create substantial and lasting damage to the psychological development of the individual, and generally can lead to neurosis.

I should have been gone due to my wounds, but I'm not; I should have lasting damage to my psychological development, but I don't—because GOD has chosen me to be an agent of overcoming trauma. HE allows through HIS Grace my resilience, giving me the elasticity to stretch above the "Traumas" that have tried to hold me back.

GOD delivered my consciousness to see liberty through it all, as well as enabled me to pass this consciousness on to others. My prayer is that you too, raise above! "I hold not and am not defined by my Valleys of Traumas." Neither should you be!

PRAISE GOD

My Story

Asia Jackson

**** (Logan C.C.) ****

When I gave my dog to the no-kill shelter and walked out to my own screwed-up destiny, I knew life was not going to be kind. My heart was broken; the dog was my love, my companion of eight years, my friend, closer to me than anyone. We had been through hell and back and clung to one another safe together.

I had lost my apartment after losing both of my jobs and being denied the unemployment I needed to stay on my feet. Really, I had no choice; my dad's house where I was going to stay at had a pit-bull there, and I couldn't bring my strange Corgi Mix, so I gave her away.

I want to bring awareness to mental illness in the prison system. Because little did I know this act upon others would be a spark to a match that would light the flame to a long journey of me battling a dragon of mental illness, alone and without proper medical care and moral/emotional support!

Other things were substance abuse and physical violence, random unexplained acts of physical violence against me that spiraled me into a vortex of confusion and anger-fueled chaos, which allowed me to lash out at the people



My Story (cont.)

who could provide me with help—“the authorities”. I didn’t know at the time, due to the substance abuse, that I was looking insane while asking aggressively and wildly for help.

So a lot of the times this resulted in my imprisonment instead of my perpetrators'. This only further fueled my rage, feeding me the gasoline that my internal fire needed for me to become a total loose canon. I was overwhelmed by my own mental illness, the violence of others, and the injustice of the system was harming my mind, cracking the one thing that kept my world together. I was about to break!

During a long period of unjustified incarceration, I finally got to talk to a psychiatrist and be put on medication. I’ve been healthy ever since, and now realize that I was in the midst of a mental breakdown for about two years before I actually exploded. I was helped by medication, moral support, and psychiatry.

I wish to bring mental health awareness to everyone. Take care of yourself, your mind is important. Your spirit needs safety. Sometimes what we need is not to be imprisoned, but a trip to the psych ward, a shoulder to cry on, or just some actual help! I just happened to find my help here . . . in prison.



The Demon that Became an Angel

Joshua Scott

I grew up and was raised around **Trauma and Gangsters**. In fact it was so normal it became my everyday behavior to inflict **Trauma** and pain on others, including myself, for the benefit of my ego and organization.

Even though I was young, I quickly picked up on the gang members' mannerisms, lingo, the way they walked, carried their guns, and dressed. I wanted to be the modern day "Big Meech". I grew up around chiefs of my organization, and hearing stories of various notorious gang leaders; they were in fact the role models in my life. The Mob, the Opps, the guns, the drugs, the violence and trauma that surrounded me were all I could see on a day-to-day basis.

I never really thought about all the things that I could be in life, or all that life could offer me, because the truth is, "Trauma" had its grips on me from the start, and I was scared of becoming anything else but a "Bad Guy". Good guys don't survive long in the streets of Chicago, or so I thought. I was certain of this when I would witness good people, men and women, get shot, stabbed, bullied, jumped, robbed, and even killed. Bad guys don't live forever but they sure as hell didn't die that easy.

See we all start off as good guys, innocent and pure-hearted. Then things happen. I saw things, did things, and had things done to me that changed the Good Guy fabric of my DNA. I lived a life of drug dealing, countless shootings, and armed robberies on strangers, businesses, and even backdoor sliming out on my own people. Inflicting trauma on everyone around me eventually would catch up with me, and it did.

The Demon that Became an Angel (cont.)

In 2014 I was sentenced to 24 years in prison for similar crimes. It is now 2023 and I must say that it took **GOD HIMSELF** to remove all of my evil thoughts, behaviors, actions, and life-style choices. Over 9 years I had to **UNLEARN** everything. I completely cut my ties to the mob and old friends on the outside. I had to develop morals, learn to love and care for humanity in a selfless way, and only GOD could show me how.

“I did not have plans to come from prison a positive person. I wanted to be a Demon all my life in order to survive the streets, but GOD has transformed my mind my spirit and my soul in an Angelic way that I can't explain.”

I no longer desire to bring harm to you or my community for my financial benefit and ego. I only wish is to add value to you and this world in any way I can. Trauma had caused me to become a very bad person, but I made it through the darkness just as we all can. I am not afraid to begin again, Good, Godly, and Humane. For the sake of our lives, freedom, and families, and for the sake of the present state and future of humanity . . .

Black Lives Matter, All Lives Matter!



Trauma at Sea

Steven Hanserd

****U.S. Navy****

During my fifty-two years on this earth, I have suffered through several traumatic experiences. But there was one incident in 1988 that will be forever emblazoned in my spirit and in my memory.

As a new graduate of boot camp, I was shipped out of Great Lakes Naval Base to meet my squadron on the other side of the world aboard the U.S.S. Nimitz. The monstrous weapon of defense was scary enough by its size and capabilities alone, without having the knowledge of navigating my way to and fro as a member of its crew.

One night, not long after coming aboard and beginning my new seafaring career, there was a series of explosions that ignited above the berthing that I was housed in. It sounded like “Bombs Over Baghdad” jumping off above me. As a result, the alert for general quarters



Trauma at Sea

(cont.)

and all men to man their battle stations was sounded.

Struggling to find my way to my battle station, amongst the chaos and confusion of the fifty-five-hundred-man crew, I arrived to the flight deck to witness an inferno of epic proportions taking place. Aircrafts were exploding and men were exploding and men were running around on fire and some were even jumping off the side of the ship, which was ninety feet high above the sea level, as the blaze was fought throughout the night and into the wee hours of dawn.

I was in a trance, as I was caught in the middle of the event at hand: realizing I did not have enough experience to be aboard the flight deck at night. I was ushered below to safety, as I helplessly sat through the nightmare I was living through.

At first I thought that the Russians were attacking us, as we were already on high alert in the waters of the red sea, on the brink of Desert Storm. Only to find out later that an accident caused on our own behalf, had taken place due to complacency and not following general rules of thumb, while performing maintenance on war vessels that patrolled the air above us.

The fire and injuries, along with the trauma of death and desolation haunted me in my sleep for years to come. Causing me to be forced to live with PTSD and having to somehow learn to cope with the incident. Night terrors and voices inside my head were a part of the aftermath that troubled me into my latter adulthood years.

Only after becoming willing to accept mental health counseling, and finding the right medications to help with it all, was I willing to ask GOD to intervene and please take the pain away. I had suffered long enough from this nightmare I couldn't shake from within me. And, I believed a power greater than myself could restore me back to sanity.

Trauma at Sea *(cont.)*

I eventually wrote and had published a book titled “Wounded”. It is a tell-all story about my past, drug addiction, and criminal history. The writing of this memoir became very therapeutic for me, and the healing process began. Today I am free from the night terrors and voices that haunted me. I am far from being back to normal, but I can function without fear from within and the guilt of my troubled past. If you are suffering from something traumatic from your past, you are not alone and should seek help from a friend, mental health counselor, and/or higher power.

Freedom is near and all you need is the faith inside of you to find it.

I'm so glad, trouble don't last always . . .

Let Go & Let GOD



Carlos McDougal

Trauma for me came in all shapes and sizes, but none was like the trauma I received from the one person I thought would never hurt me. My mother was the epitome of trauma: my days were spent trying not to anger her and my nights were filled with endless anxiety hoping that when she came in the house she didn't set her sights on me. The physical and mental trauma I endured from her were by far the worst thing I've been through.

Now don't get me wrong, I loved my mother, but she could be brutal and in the same breath make me think I'd done something to deserve the abuse. The most frightening thing was that no matter what she did, I couldn't stop loving her.

The fact is, she was and will always be my mother and there was nothing that I could do to change that, no matter how much I tried to wish her away.

Things were so bad that I had to run away, but I had nowhere else to go because I didn't know anyone in the state of Washington and I was only seven years old. I hid inside myself not wanting to deal with the reality that my own mother was my protector and my abuser: there was no refuge from the pain she inflicted on me every day. They say that when you've been abused by someone and you get the chance to escape but you choose to stay it's called Stockholm Syndrome; however, can that be true if the person that's abusing you is your mother?

Let Go & Let GOD (cont.)

I ask the question simply because I truly want to know the answer. How can you escape the wolf if you're in the pack? I've forgiven my mother for the pain and trauma she put me through, but the scars still remain to this day, so much so that I find myself exhibiting some of those same attributes she had. Am I a victim? How can you tell someone how to raise their children? The last time I checked there wasn't a handbook on how to raise a child, at least not when I was coming up.

**Mother I forgive you for the pain you put
me through, but the scars still feel the
same.**

**The physical ones don't hurt anymore but
the mental ones feel like they just
happened just yesterday.**

**I could only imagine what you had to
endure when you were a kid. I guess your
pain was something that I had to pay for,
like I was the source of the trauma that
turned you into a monster.**

**I never hated you even though sometimes I
wanted to. You and I both know that I
would've died for you if given the chance.**

**I guess that's why GOD called you home
and took the weight of you off of me and
placed you in HIS hands.**

Jekyll & Hyde

Franklin Heindricks



This is a story of trauma
Yeah we talkin' bout my life
The demons I had to fight
To even get a glimpse of the light
See the addiction blurred the lines
Between wrong and right
Everyday was a fight
It wasn't even bout getting high no more
It was bout feeling normal
Too much or too little
Had me like Jekyll and Hyde
Had to find the right dose
Between chill and comatose
And not another overdose
All my faith and hope were lost
Family at a loss for words
At the damage I caused
I didn't realize how great the cost
This life of addiction would cost
It aint 'bout the dollars
Its 'bout the heart and soul
And all the pieces of me I lost
Never thought I'd find my way again
Being loved by the ones I hurt again
Locked up and locked away
They threw away the key

Jekyll & Hyde *(cont.)*

Told me I had time to do
So I had two choices
Do the time
Or let the time do me
See I could've fell back
Into that come old act
Or I could fight back
And turn my life around
This my second act
It's the encore
And I ain't going back
See we all come from trauma
That manifests itself into drama
A raging storm
that tosses our seasick bones
Everywhere but home
So how did I survive
A life of addiction and crime
I didn't give up when they gave me this time
When I fell, I got back up
When I failed, I tried again
So don't waste your time
You never know how much you got left
See the thing about trauma
Is your never rid of it
**But you can move past it
With the Grace of GOD
Forgiveness & Love.**

Hurt People . . . Hurt People!

Antonio Aguirre

****U.S. Army****

As a child growing up in a single parent home stricken with poverty and abuse, I could not help but wonder: what prompted my father to abandon us without warning and/or support? I guess the reality of parenthood was too much for him to bear. "What a coward," I thought. In any case, we never seen or heard from him again, good riddance!

My father's actions greatly stressed my mother, causing her to have a meltdown that would create a ripple effect of pain and distrust which would haunt us for the rest of our lives. Someone once said; "Hurt People, Hurt People!" I didn't get it at first; until mom relayed how much pain and suffering she was in, and boy . . . did I get it then, COL!

I know people always like to blame their parents for their misfortunes in life. But in this case, I don't believe I had much of a choice in the matter. Don't get me wrong, I love my mother to death and I greatly appreciate



how much she sacrificed for our survival; but damn, nothing hurts more than to get hurt by those you love.

I was only eight years old when she started leaving me on the church's front steps in the middle of the night. The first time lasted about an hour or so, but then, the next couple of times, the noises in the dark became terrifyingly unbearable. On one occasion, I had been there until the break of dawn. I thought, wow, how beautiful the skies looked at that very moment, all the while chewing on a piece of gum that I had found on the side walk to help subdue my hunger.

At age eleven, my mother had found "True Love" again and got remarried. "Yeah!" I thought, thinking that my "nightmare of a life" had finally come to an end. I wasn't so lucky though—in fact, my troubles "Double Bubbled!" Here I was, hoping for a loving and righteous male role model to help with my homework, or to at least show me how to ride a bike. Nope! Instead, I was blessed with a "Drunken Master" for a stepdad. He would always be intoxicated, shouting out commands. Like, do this and do that and do it again, this time better! He basically had me clean the entire house, the yard and the cars. Hell, I felt like his own private butler, janitor and landscaper. Didn't they outlaw child labor? I guess he never got the memo!

So, I finally got pissed and mustered up the courage to defy him and that's when he introduced me to my very first Kung Fu lesson.

He karate kicked me so hard, I flew across the living room and right onto the kitchen floor, where I was holding my chest, in pain and gasping for air. I cried out, "Please mom, help!" And I'll never forget it, she looked down at me, shaking her head in disgust saying, "Well, maybe next time, you'll do what you're told," and then stepped right over me to continue preparing his supper. Talk about adding insult to injury.

Once, I had even taken a very bad beating for protecting her from his drunken rage, but when the police arrived, she actually lied to them about what had happened and left. I couldn't believe it, how could she, after all I went through? And that's the day my beloved mother broke my heart. I couldn't help but wonder if that's what she felt like on the day my father left us, so long ago.

Well, now thinking that I truly have nothing and no one left in this world, I began to act out. I had become more intolerable, rebellious, and menacing, behaviors which would eventually lead to homelessness and becoming an astute "Ward of the State," being placed in alternative homes and juvenile detention centers for my own safety, knowing that's where "Hurt Kids, Hurt Kids." How traumatically ironic, right!

Search for Redemption



Toola O. Taylor
(Western C.C.)

It is no secret. And I have no qualms about admitting it. I have a history of being an idiot. Over the years, in the most inopportune moments, I've made some really bad choices. And to this day, I still catch myself entertaining thoughts that don't actually represent the person that I and the people who love and care about me know that I am.

But I am only human: combatting the levity, friction, trauma, and dysfunction of my youth is an uphill battle and will probably be a lifelong struggle. I still catch myself, at least once a day, slipping back into my old ways of thinking and reasoning. I'd like to imagine that it is simply because of my environment. I hesitate to offer that up as an excuse, but rather as an attempt to reveal one—of a few—real, possible explanations.

Search for Redemption *(cont.)*

Eventually, amongst other things, I got sick and tired of being locked up. But the choices of my youth had helped create a wall from success and achievement. I experienced setback after setback, which made me feel as though I was trying to chisel through a brick wall with a butter knife.

Knowing that my son was coming, and after having previously lost three babies due to miscarriages, I learned what it is really like to fight and maintain hope in the midst of uncertainty. Unfortunately, when he came into the world, I was in jail. When I was finally able to look into his little eyes, it renewed my spirit and ignited my fire to strive for the things in life that people whose paths that I've crossed, at one point or another, have hoped against. It sparked my desire to prove that I can be successful, despite my past.

I am not the person that people who don't know me—or would really care to know me—would like me to be. I will prove that I am not the worst thing that I have done or been accused of. Ultimately, I will be evidence that any person who really wants it can be redeemed and rehabilitated if given real opportunities, tools, support, and motivation.

As a man who has made more than his fair share of mistakes, I am committed to fighting to do and be better, and am working towards leaving something behind that my loved ones can be proud of. So I figured that even if the entire world hates me for the rest of whatever days that I am graced with upon this earth, then, perhaps, that is all the redemption I should care to seek. After all, in this day and age, more than likely it is probably the only redemption that I will ever get. And I accept that—just like I have accepted full responsibility for the actions that have led me back to prison. So yes, I guess, for me, redemption is worth fighting for!

Search for Redemption *(cont.)*

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Sounds a Lot Like Weakness to Me

I'm talking about trauma-driven behavior. Don't get me wrong, I'm not a trauma-science denier. I understand the long-lasting and sometimes permanent consequences of traumatic experiences.

I still call it weakness.

Over the past few months I have developed plantar fasciitis, an inflammation in the sole of my left foot. That foot does not experience any greater or different pressures than the right. It carries the same weight, takes the same number of steps. It is simply more sensitive to those same stressors. I have a weak foot. And if the nervous systems of some persons are more sensitive than others' to shared environmental stressors, they are weak nervous systems.

My foot is weak. My nervous system is not. I have been in my share of sketchy situations. A few were genuinely terrifying. I can't imagine that anyone wouldn't consider them to be plausibly traumatic. Their impact on me is trivial. Less trivial is the store of thousands of pedestrian events I have been involved in or witnessed—betrayals, deceits, basic pettiness, outright stupidity (sometimes my own), and every other variety of generally shitty human behavior. They are why I am a kneejerk misanthrope. And no, they are not "microtraumas". Just memories. My reactive nature is not the result of a handful of exceptional events. It is a conscious and willful playing of the odds.

Sounds a Lot Like Weakness to Me (cont.)

What troubles me most about trauma-informed care, especially in the context of criminal behavior, is its abrogation of will, of human agency and personal responsibility. Many in the field make the distinction between rationalization and justification. It is a flimsy line, and those with a stake in subverting the concept of personal responsibility are rarely masters of nuance (but when they are, watch out—they will lawyer their way out of all accountability). I have watched prison trauma groups at work. When their participants are not playing the game of "my trauma is bigger than yours", they are using it to renounce culpability for their often violent and unconscionable actions.

(Full disclosure: I don't believe in free will myself, not ultimately. The notion is absurd. We are only nature, nurture, and perhaps a soupcon of quantum unpredictability. Philosophically, I am sympathetic to the trauma-informed stance. But absurdity is the price of humanity. I have bought into the consensus illusion of personal agency. This illusion is one of the many that make us something other than beasts—though probably only delusional beasts.)

Owning weakness does not repudiate agency or responsibility. If I am late to an appointment because my fasciitis is acting up and my gait is slower than usual, I cannot blame whatever environmental factors allowed my weak foot to become inflamed. I cannot even fault the weakness of my foot. What I can blame is the fact that I did not account for my infirmity by leaving for the appointment a few minutes early. The failure to own my known weaknesses and compensate for them would demonstrate another frailty altogether: a weakness of character. Strong characters with a weak nervous systems are likewise obligated to find countermeasures for trauma's influence on their behavior.

A Not So Unique Story

Antony Bell (Illinois River C.C.)



When I do anything that references criminal justice reform, I precede it with the statement, "Understand that the majority of people incarcerated aren't merely perpetrators of crime, they're victims as well."

Usually, when someone says the word *trauma*, one pictures extreme acts of violence, abuse, and neglect. However, the majority of individuals have been victims of many forms of abuse, on a sliding scale of severity, that has caused long-term trauma—a lot of it being generational and cultural. The most problematic forms of abuse are those that persons don't identify as abuse because those incidents have been the norm of certain families and communities. These patterns of abuse not being recognized as such have an adverse effect that consequently perpetuates the cycle of abuse to the next generation.

Like so many of us in here, my trauma is of this kind. I dealt with physical and emotional abuse, neglect, and abandonment, as well as economic and socialized deficiencies. Although none were to their extremes, those experiences had a profound cumulative affect on my well-being that I didn't understand until years later.

Growing up in a culture of poverty, with a single mother in her 20s, working two jobs to take care of three kids, definitely had its disadvantages:

A Not So Unique Story (cont.)

there wasn't much to eat, we shared clothing, and we were left to our own devices more often than not. My mother had to work, and there was no money for a caretaker, which combined kept me in a state of survival. Life and socialization was within the context of surviving—anything else was a luxury.

Discipline in that culture was strictly retributive, as physical discipline was the preferred method; we were beaten with belts, switches, kitchen utensils, hairbrushes, etc., to the point that I was left with welts and bruises. There was a very thin line between what was considered discipline, and what was considered abuse.

As a boy, masculinity held a firm connotation. It was defined by stoic strength, bottling up emotions, because expressing them was considered weak and feminine. As the oldest male, without a stable father figure, I was forced to bear the responsibility of a masculine role before I was ready, and hated myself when I couldn't live up to expectations—like protecting my family from certain harms. It was hell trying to be a man when I didn't know how to be one.

The thing about emotions, they demand to be felt; instead of being seen as weak, I turned to drugs, alcohol and gangs (specifically gang violence), which were culturally accepted forms of expression.

*"Live as if you were to die tomorrow;
Learn as if you were to live forever!"*

A Not So Unique Story *(cont.)*

By 14 years old, I was on the streets, fending for myself, and found myself locked up for the first time.

MY STORY ISN'T UNIQUE!

None of these things by themselves were considered extreme, and most of those actions were considered normal; there wasn't anything considered abuse. So many of us in prison brag about the ways we were disciplined (beat), and wear it as a badge of honor; we take pride in the fact we became self-sufficient at a young age (skills we had to learn to survive), but we fail to characterize the toll those cumulative abuses took as forms of trauma.

It took me years to realize that the mistrust, anger, misogyny, depression and anxiety I felt had come from the various abuses I had endured during my childhood. I never viewed these things as trauma-causing abuses because they didn't fit the definition of what I was taught (molestation, rape, aggravated violence, etc.).

A lot of the trauma we have experienced was passed along generationally and culturally, mainly because what we experienced wasn't recognized as abuse. If we don't take the responsibility to get help, and identify, the trauma of those abuses, we will pass it onto our kids, if we haven't already, continuing the line of generational and cultural trauma.



Lost Boys

Tyrone Delaney

****U.S. Army****

On the surface, you'll never know what a person is carrying, nor what they've had to endure, be it grief, guilt, shame, hurt, or loss. I'm sure there are amazing stories that accompany those endeavors, but we must never capitulate.

I am a father of nine grown children, three of them grown men; I take extreme pride in them all, of course. And although I am overwhelmingly proud of my six daughters, there exists between fathers and sons a connection that cannot be quantified. Seeing smaller, spitting images of yourself running around is quite alarming, yet endearing. Parts of you want them to be like you, but maturity steps in and changes that desire.

Unfortunately, I lost my two older sons to violent deaths, which have had a very profound effect on my mental psyche and the trauma that came thereafter. There have been many dark days and nights, which have left me numb and void at times. Nothing, I mean nothing, could have prepared me for such a loss, but my resilience to overcome is much deeper than my desire to give up.

Everything GOD permits us to go through will ultimately be good for us—no matter how much it hurts, how unfair it may seem, or how difficult it is. I have found the paradox that if you love until hurts, there can be no more hurt, only more love, and that's how I've been able to navigate through the pain of losing my two beloved sons.

Healing Through Grieving

Herbert Stewart Jr. (Graham C.C.)

Last year at the end of October, I got a phone call around 4:30 a.m.; it was my youngest daughter (27) telling me my oldest daughter (30) had been in a car wreck and lost her life. Well, needless to say, I was on dope at the time and kept saying to myself, "it ain't true." Unfortunately it was true.

My daughter had left her abusive husband and travelled to Alabama where she had met a guy from there and became pregnant by him. I didn't know this until later on after her death that she was 7 months pregnant. Well, when it was time to bring her back home to Pike County, Illinois, I discovered her abusive husband had also travelled down there to get her. I was informed by my youngest daughter that she and my oldest daughter's husband were going to rip that baby out of her and leave it down there. I told all of them that if they did this, then GOD would destroy them all, and would disown every last one of you.

Well, I got a phone call from Alabama saying they were going to have a funeral for the baby. My fiance', mother,neice, my two sisters and I travelled to Alabama to attend the the baby's funeral. I met the guy who got my oldest daughter pregnant, along with his family. What a wonderful family they are. Well after all was said and done, I went back to Illinois and attended my oldest daughter funeral. I discovered my oldest daughter's husband, Jake, had knocked out two of her teeth sometime in the previous months. This really angered me.

Healing Through Grieving (cont.)

When I attended the funeral all except maybe 3 or 4 in-laws out of probably 30 or 40 spoke to me. My two granddaughters, ages 12 and 2 were there. My oldest granddaughter didn't even acknowledge me. This hurt me something awful. Well, my oldest daughter was cremated. After the funeral, I walked out to my car with my fiancé and we left.

Anyway, with Mother's Day approaching, I was thinking of my oldest daughter and especially her two daughters – my two granddaughters – and my newest granddaughter who I just had to bury.

In January of this year, I was incarcerated and am now serving my sentence in Graham C.C. I'm still grieving and needed to get this out to someone who might listen, besides my fiancé. Writing all this down really helps me to express more without breaking down and crying. I wanted to share my story with you and other individuals in custody to discover if anyone out there is going through the same or similar situations.

Next Man Up!



As I pivot today, to focus more intently on my tomorrow (Insha'Allah), I am comforted in knowing that the legacy of editorial excellence that I so graciously inherited will continue and thrive under the leadership of brother Kenji Haley. With pleasure I pass the iconic red folder; Mr. Haley is more than capable, incredibly creative, and above all, as with his DEI advocacy work, *he cares!*

-Keith Aquil Talley



Two Roads *Staff*



Mission Statement

“We are committed to empowering those most impacted by harmful systems to become servant leaders and agents of change. Using the connecting, restorative power of stories, we hope to do our small part in bringing us all together to overcome societal ills such as violence, poverty and mass incarceration.”

MOTHER'S DAY

For this year's Mothers Day, we would like to center our conversation on not just biological mothers, but any and all women who may have had a positive impact in our life. Believe us, she would love to go on the IDOC website to read about how you've chosen to honor her.

(idoc home page → about → news → two roads [Name of Issue]).

Mail submission NOW, no later then:
April 28, 2023

With staff support:

Have staff member electronically send submission and photo (if possible) to:

penny.rowan@illinois.gov

Without staff support:

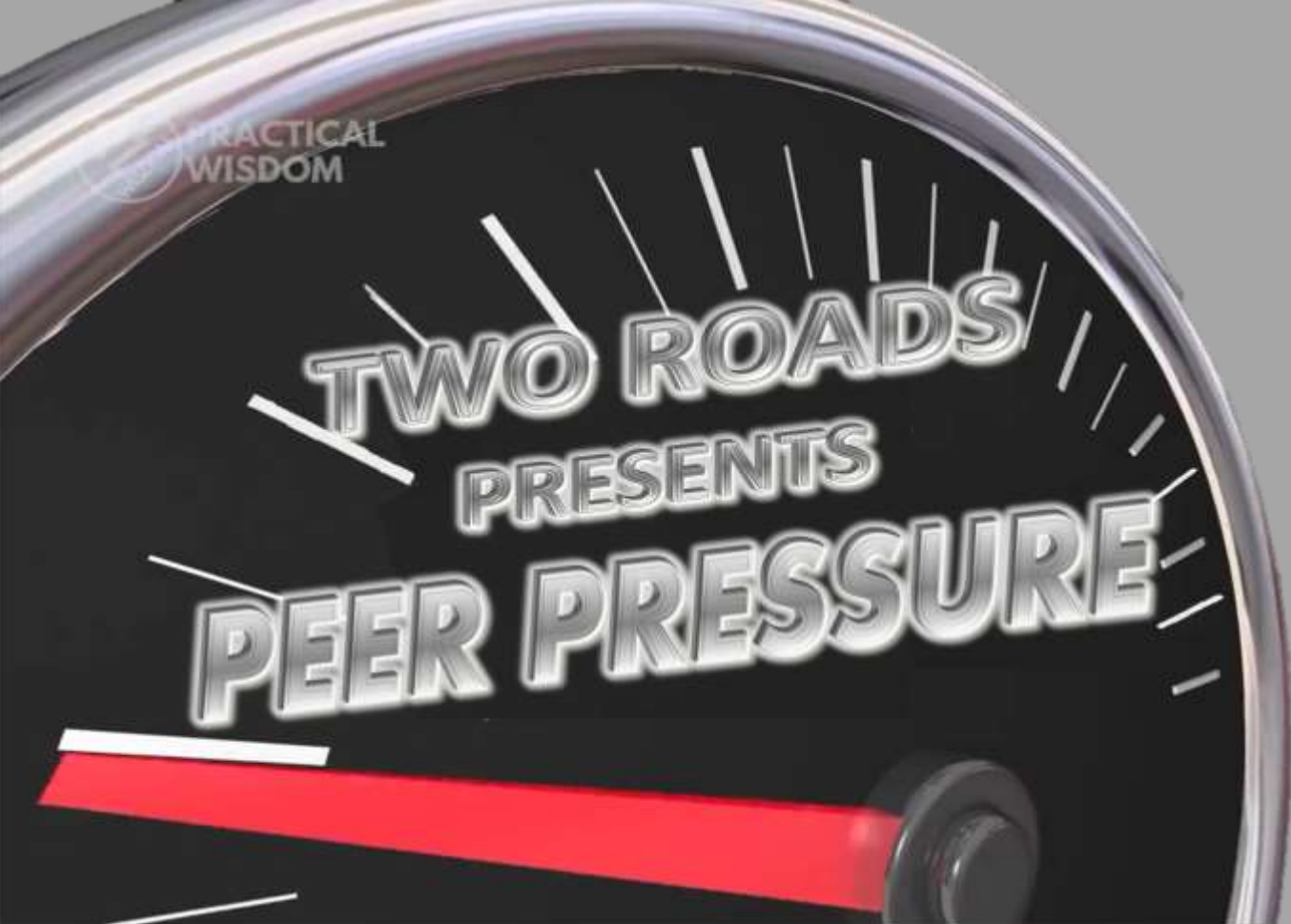
Mail submission, photo with name and title to:

Attn: Ms. Penny Rowan—Two Roads

Kewanee Life Skills Reentry Center

2021 Kentville Road, Kewanee, IL 61443





We would like to share your unique story to our confined and non-confined readers concerning how has **PEER PRESSURE** had on the lives of you, your family and community. If this has impacted you, we would like to hear your story. In addition, your family and friends can then share their stories as they are impacted by these situations as well. Feel free to have them share their experiences from your incarceration.

Please encourage them to send a submission.

No later than May 19th

With staff support:

Have staff member electronically send submission and photo (if possible) to:

penny.rowan@illinois.gov

Without staff support:

Mail submission, photo with name to:

TWO ROADS EDITOR

Attn: Ms. Penny Rowan

Kewanee Life Skills Reentry Center

2021 Kentville Road

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