

My First Death Warrant

On March 15th, 1999, a lieutenant & 2 C.O.'s (corrections officers) came to my cell in the late afternoon to inform me that Governor T. Ridge signed my warrant to be executed April 29th, 1999 at SCI-Rockview. Although my neighbors warned me to expect this after my appeal was shot down, I was terrified and angry. This was only my first appeal and I had many more to go. These people of justice was so callously cavalier with my life just to jockey for some political points. (A stance to look tough on crime.) Just as I was mistakenly convicted for this crime, I could've been just as easily mistakenly executed despite all of their safeguards.

I was strip-searched, shackled, then escorted to Intake for processing (fingerprinted, photographed, & arrangements for my body). I was then brought back to the unit where I was stripped of my possessions, put into a striped jumpsuit & slides, and placed on Phase II (Death Watch).

Phase II was a bare cell with only a bunk & toilet/sink combo set. You're isolated behind a plexiglass wall, 24/7 surveillance under constant illumination (a camera is mounted on the door), and I was provided 1 set of underwear, 2 sheets & a mattress. All of my possessions were stacked in front of my cell between the cell door & plexiglass wall. If I needed anything I had to ask the C.O. for it, or send a formal request to the Unit Manager or lieutenant.

It was very uneasy. I jumped everytime I heard their keys or boots stomping around because I thought they were coming for me. I tried to sleep through it, but it seemed as if time just dragged on endlessly. It was as if every second was being counted. My mind was in a constant state of panic & fury over how I got screwed by the Supreme Court. They weren't interested in the truth or justice. I had a very valid claim of ineffective assistance of counsel, and that my arrest was illegal. But they went so far as to change established law to affirm my conviction.

On March 22nd, 1999, I was granted a Stay of execution. The experience was nauseating, as I was terrified of being executed for a crime I didn't commit, while being pushed around like some political pawn. I've learned that I'll never find justice in these State Courts. so I must make the most of the time I have left.

