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"ReckLESS ABandonment"

Page 1 OF 5

man what a life. Here I am 44 years old. I've been incarcerated for 22 1/2 years. Confined to a 9x7... 63 square foot cell. The days seem to blend together, as does the weeks months and years. Twenty two and a half years - half my life confined to this cage. But we have other men who've been here 30, 35 years or more, so 22 years isn't that much, when you consider the old timers.

I've been thinking lately, had I accepted the plea bargain they offered me, I'd be getting out soon. But I didn't want a plea, I wanted to go to trial. Cause I was a 21 year old Fool kid, who believed in the American justice system. Oh well - live and learn.

I often think back to my first day on death row, it was February 22, 1991. When I arrived at those back gates at Florida State Prison (FSP) and had that flash back to January 1989. When I was in Oklahoma. I was walking through my mom's living room, she was sitting on the couch watching the world news and they were doing a story on Ted Bundy's execution that had taken place earlier that day. I stopped sat on the edge of the couch and watched the story, which showed the hearse leaving out the back gate and showed this building FSP, the green monster. I'd watch the story, get up and walk away and wouldn't give it another thought, until this day February 22, 1991 sitting here at the back gate, where that memory flooded my thoughts. And as I layed there on my bunk, in that little 9x6... 54 square foot cell. (note cells are smaller at FSP) I hoped and prayed that this was all a bad dream, and that I'd wake up in the morning in the comfort of my bed in my

mon's house in Oklahoma, and that this was nothing more than a dream brought on by the news story that I had seen that day in January 1989. But that wasn't the case. Nope, this was the result of some really bad choices, and some terrible mistakes.

see I had left Florida in early January 1989 after a falling out between my Father and I. Which was brought on by drugs and alcohol. my Father and I started selling drugs in around October 1988. This was the second time we would be involved in selling drugs, the first time was 1983 when I was 15 years old. That time I was selling for him, this time in 1988, we were partners 50-50. Although a lot of his payment was in stolen goods and mine went toward's drugs and alcohol. I was 20 years old, and my life was a mess. I told my wife that summer, that we needed to get off drugs, but she didn't want to hear that. she liked getting high.

We smoked weed, popped pills and did LSD together. I kept the cocaine away from her, and never let her know that I was even doing it. And potheads don't pay a lot of attention to the signs of cocaine use. so she didn't have much of a clue.

one day I was sitting in a chair, in our little 35 foot Camper trailer that was set up in my Dad's back yard. my step mother came in complaining about a cup being broken. And she loved to argue, and I hated arguing, she had been arguing with me since I was like 6 years old. so I exploded up out of the chair. I screamed B— get the F— out of here and I threw a punch at a glass cabinet that had a black vase inside. my fist went right through the glass and the

vase, glass shattering every where and when I pulled my hand out, blood was pouring from my hand and arm. while my wife is trying to argue with me, I'm trying to find the keys to my 1978 Z-28, so I can get out of there, and go some where so I can cool down. I don't like to get mad and be out of controll, but that's what happens when I get mad. I can't find the keys to the car cause my wife has hide them, I've been drinking, smoking weed popping pills and had just done a couple of line's of coke. The more I search for these keys the madder I get, so now I'm screaming and yelling throwing punch's at the wall. and my hand's going through the walls. As I was headed back to the living room my wife hit me in the stomach with a 2 to 3 foot steel pipe. I went to my knee's and I was right there by the door, I watched as she was headed for my Dad's trailer. I jumped up, I ran up behind her scouped her up, and then I thought about my Dad, and how he use to hit my mom, and I put her down, and I went back into that trailer and I destroyed it. I then tryed to hot wire my Z-28. which I didn't know how to do, so I messed my car. I beat on it. And I had my gun's out, Fixing to shoot the poor car. when my Dad stepped to the trailer door and called me over. I walked over and he said, "Ronnie you need to leave." Hell that's what I had been trying to do. I got a .32 Pistole in one hand and a .38 special in the other. He's got his .357 by the side of his leg, and I can tell he's scared. Now I'm mad at him for having the gun out. I come close to raising my gun's. And so as I

turned and was walking off, I pointed both guns at the ground and Fired, emptying them. I then threw the gun's in the woods. I knew it was best to get them out of my hands. For I had just come close to shooting my Father.

I'm a Convicted Felon, I have 2 Fire arms, 7 grams of Cocaine, 4 oz. of Marijuana and all types of pills zep's and downer's, all illegal.

And my Father calls the Cops on me. I'm hiding in the woods, I get away from the Cops. my Wife knew the Cops were coming, and she didn't warn me, and I never forgave her for that, I got away made it to a Friend's house, called my mom, told her what happened and said I need to get out of here. Nineteen hours later she was down here picking me up. I poored the coke out, dumped the pills and gave the weed away. I've never seen weed as being a serious drug. I believe alcohol is far more dangerous than marijuana. And if it wasn't for alcohol I wouldn't be in here, two men would still be alive for I wouldn't have went along with any of the things my co-defendant was planning or doing.

I went to Oklahoma and tried to get away from drug's and alcohol. I thought I could do it on my own, and that was a mistake. I had my wife with me and we went from drinking, to smoking to doing LSD, she left and came back to Florida, cause we just weren't getting along. I could never overlook the fact that she didn't warn me that the cops were coming. I was staying high and drunk and my mom was on my butt about coming in at 2 and 3am drunk. So if I got home late, I'd pull

the seat back in my 1982 Z-28 and sleep in the drive
away. I had a new girl friend who was also into
drugs and drinking, she was about 4 years older
than me. And she was wanting to marry me. I
wasn't even divorced and she's wanting to get
married. I left town telling everyone I'd be back
in several weeks. And I made a terrible mistake —
I came back to Florida. But my life has been
one continuous mistake, one right after another.
I make really bad decisions. and when I was on
drugs and alcohol my decision making skills were
even worse.

"What a life!" I wasted it, and left a trail of
heartache. I wish I could have gotten a grip on
the drugs and alcohol. But I wouldn't get a grip on
them, until August 1996. When I finally gave it up.
And I did it out of anger. I got mad because I
couldn't find anything to get high or drunk on. And
I said, "That's it. I'm done." I seen the way it was
controlling me, it's responsible for me being on death
row, and I had enough. The next week there was
plenty to be found, but I had had enough. And
I've been clean for 16 years now. That's one achievement
that I'm proud of. I just wish I could have
done it in 1983 or 87 or 88 or 89. For those are the
years that I tried to quit. without success. I hope
someone reads this, and it makes them think
about what their doing. cause life is too fragile
and too short, to be acting with reckless abandon-
ment. Trust me, I know.

With much Regret.

Donald W. Clark Jr.