

December 8, 2012

Hello World!

Can a man be handcuffed, chained about the waist, shackled at the ankles, stuffed into a rolling cage, and still be happy? Yes he can. I was cruising highway 99, leaving Mole Creek State Prison for Valley State Prison, going from a level III to a level II. A lower level prison based on my good behavior. Did I mention that Valley is a women's prison? It is, but that is not why I was happy. I was seeing you World and you are looking good.

The two-hour journey from 9 AM to 11 AM, travelled out of fog-shrouded foothills covered in vineyards. The vines were bare, resting for the winter, but their harvest would in time provide for fine sipping at your table. On reaching the flat lands of the Central Valley, cows and goats munched among mighty oak trees on the deep green grass shoots, products of recent storms. So sweet would their milk be - so tasty their cheese. The latter as an hors d'oeuvre for the wine.

As the bus rumbled south on 99, I along with 37 other bound men gazed like parched desert dwellers at the passing sites to slurp it all in: restaurants, car dealerships, homes, and construction work. The things of every day life. Growth and change. Motorists zipped past sipping Starbucks delights and singing along to tunes on their car stereos. They were going somewhere to do something - what I could only imagine. I briefly saw a man on a 10-foot lift washing an Exxon sign, an advertisement for passing vehicles to fill up here. Being one who is uncomfortable with heights, I thought - crazy man! Then without a moment's hesitation, I wished I was that crazy man.

One of the many rules on a prison bus is no talking. Severe consequences occur if the rule is broken. The restriction, however, is a blessing. Quiet and

peaceful. No distractions from the passing scenery. I wished the bus would roll on forever. Unfortunately, my ugly reality reared its head and too soon we were passing the electrified and barbed wire fences into Valley State Prison. Instead of feeling sad, my mile wide grin stuck to my face because I was privileged to see you, my dear World. I will carry the sights of you with me, keeping each vine, cow, business, and person as a keep sake of what one day I will re-enter. That day will be glorious. That day, we will embrace as friends long missed.

As to Valley State Prison being a women's prison, it is, but it is being converted to a men's facility. The few females that I have observed from a distance - scary.

Thanks for checking in on me.

Cordially,

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Novel: A Thundering Wind

Journal: A Year in a Life Sentence

Available at Amazon.com