



Waking up to a dead body in my cell last August has made more of an impact on me than I was willing to admit.

Especially after it being someone I'd come to know.

I would consider him to have been a friend.

The world judged him by what he'd done, and seen him only for that. I, on the other hand, could only see him for who he was at the time I come to know him--who he was before was, and is still, irrelevant to me. His past was not my business, nor was I wishing to judge. All I knew, was that he was an honest guy, old and jaded, he worked hard and long hours every day for the State in the prison's "commissary" making leather belts for police and guards--belts worth a good bit too; and he done it for absolutely no pay at all for years and years without complaint. It gave his days purpose, and he liked working with leather.

As I, he had a life sentence, and as T. E. Lawrence ('Lawrence of Arabia'), has said: "Many men would take the death-sentence / without a whimper to escape the life-sentence". ('The Mint', 1955, pt.1 ch.4)

That morning last August, shook me, to say the least. But prison is not a place I can show weakness, and not once did anyone representing the "State" offer to help me in what I'd experienced--Although that morning's guards were sent to later see a counselor for their "shock" and experience in the death of a prisoner and someone they'd come to know, whose fingers suddenly they found cold.

Because I am not the Southern Baptist "Christian", all religious amenities are unavailable to me here. I study science. I study astrophysics. I study life. Death saddens me just as it does any other. Yesterday I walked into another inmates cell I'm friends with and his cellmate was sleeping; he was in the exact positioning Fry was in the morning I found him, and I felt my bones physically shake. I left that cell, quick.

"The dead don't die. They look on and help."



--D.H. Lawrence 1885-1930
letter to J. Middleton Murry,
February 1923