

December 7, 2016 to January 11, 2017



December 7, 2016

I want to compile a few weeks together here with a themed entry set, to best portray the holidays.

Today being the birthday of my first ex-wife, being a good place to start as any. There's a joke of grandparents about walking so many miles in the deep snow to get to school. Well, back when I was a teen, I really did walk a few miles--in the snow--to see Opal, and it was kinda like school--if school consisted only of one class: Sex Ed.

We were young, snowed in, and the alternator was busted on my car--a Nissan Pulsar that I'd purchased after crashing my Pontiac Fiero through a brick wall (backwards). I drove that quarter-million-mile ridden odometer Pulsar for months; until I was able to get a new Mitsubishi Eclipse with all-wheel-drive. But, while snowed in--I walked over the ice-covered road--to Opal's while her mom and older sister (Mom 2) were at work. It was an old farm, covered with as many "fainting" goats as snow; and there was an old fireplace that constantly fought against the leaking roof and walls in its battle against the cold.

It was romantic--in a San Fernando, California, Southern boy meets Jenna Pressley's thick sister kinda way. Needless to say, I was hooked, yes. But, in love as a teenage boy could be. I had just come off of a downward spiral set by my 23-year-old girlfriend, that I'd moved in with when I was 16; and Opal managed to get me back on track, somewhat, for a while at least.

Unfortunately, I still had a lot of maturing to do.

Opal hung with me though, like a trooper--for many years.

December 10, 2016

In prison--this one at least--they hand out little care packs. Inside, we get a name brand soap, 5 stamped envelopes, a toothbrush with a descent brand of paste, and a pack of Mentos!

Thing is, I shouldn't be--getting--anything; I should be the

one GIVING. I'd like to be able to help my children. Especially on special days like a birthday or holiday. On a day like--for example: my daughter Michaila's birthday--I should be able to help her enjoy such a special day; and I would, if I could. But not only do I not have the financial means, I don't know what it is she might want, or need....

The South Carolina legal system is not designed with the respect to the family unit in mind. In fact, the county in which I was supposedly tried, did everything within its power to purposely estrange me from my family--and society in general. Now, of course, I wasn't doing that great of a job of it myself; but that's beside the point--I needed help. Instead of rendering assistance, the county (those in charge and in positions at the time) just kept burying me deeper, in interest to their own agenda(s).

To say the system was flawed; was the understatement of 2006!

Still, today--the cost of my release is approximately \$30,000. give or take a few grand. The cost of an ACTUAL attorney, not under thumb of the prosecution, or lack of interest due to no pay (the appointed attorneys get like \$600.00 bucks for a \$30,000 job; or, that's the theory--because from what I saw of my own defense, \$600 was too much: they should be reprimanded for their ineffective assistance ... but, this IS South Carolina--and change or doing the "right thing" is a slow going process.).

I recently got hired here for Prison Industries, P.I., to do graphic designing--but even with the plant manager's direct, written request for my hire, and verbal (and written for one) approval from all three wardens--I was not given the transfer. The decision was vetoed by the "job board" for some unspecified reason. I even gave a two-week notice at the Education Dept. after the current principal assured me the transfer was okay, and that she would "do nothing to stand in anyone's way" that wanted to leave for a different job--in fact, she wished us luck. All the teachers/teacher assistants left within a three week time period. Everyone got the job they left to take; I was the only one given the cold shoulder after it was all said and done.

I'm told to "be patient"--that was November 14, 2016. Two other guys were hired last week for P.I., though the graphic designing position still has not been filled--because I'm the only qualified person for the spot, and the plant manager does still want me, I just have to remain patient. I guess. Fighting against the shunning won't do me--or anyone--any good.

I will remain perseverant, and composed--on the higher road.

The transition for me to P.I., would (will) provide me with a way to help my five (5) children! It only pays 0.50¢ an hour, and the State takes half for room & board (that's funny :) right?). But, that room & board money, in my case, would instead be sent to my ex (split up between them). Something's better than nothing. And one thing I've leaned here--is how to stretch money. I can do a lot with very little on my Jpay.com account. I just wish I didn't face such adversity here, so I could be a dad....

Higher road, right?

Sorry, Michaila.

December 19, 2016

Things always get shut down here around the holidays--truth is, it's one of the things I dread. No mail. No activities whatsoever. It's just sort of ... dead time. Every prisoner is basically just trying to occupy his time until it's past.

Unfortunately, that's how many are doing their whole bid: five, ten, fifteen, twenty, or more years--nothing. Not so much as a book read. It's not like there's a lot to do, rehabilitation-wise that is. Most of these guys will just be regurgitated back into society, worse than they were before. Spending years behind bars being mistreated, fed like dogs (food that dogs wouldn't, and shouldn't, eat), taught absolutely nothing, given no job skill, and released under strict rules ... when they couldn't follow the basic ones in the first place. Any hope of rehabilitation lost to prison expansionism.

Though, those that exemplify such an ex-con stereotype do not represent about 5 percent of us that are either rehabilitated, or never needed rehabilitated to start with. Fact is, there are many that either should never have been arrested in the first place, or should have gotten much less time than what was given.

The system needs to be dramatically downsized.

The whole legal system's ego put in check; because it resembles a little too much of totalitarian secret society operating behind a democratic veil.

In 2005, my last December 19th as a free man--it was (and is today) my daughter Shylynn's birthday. There was an ice storm that had power out all over. My world was in chaos, but I was trying not to let it show. Failing at it I might ad. What I needed was help. My fiancée had other guy issues, job issues, and a slew of her own problems to deal with--she didn't have the time, or ability to deal with what I was going through. We were toughing it out, each lying to ourselves (and each other)--for the sake of our young daughter. What I do actually regret, is not coming clean with her about the trauma I had suffered. Who knows? Maybe she would've stepped up and helped; but, I don't know. I tried to get her to go with me to couples counseling, but she wasn't hearing that. "We're not married." She spat, along with: "Why should I go--you're the one with the problems."

"You can never be completely sure that you won't lose a partner to someone else [mate-poaching]. But you can make uncertainty work for you by keeping yourself from becoming complacent and reminding yourself, in the best way possible, that no one can ever truly possess another person. We can only hope to connect, for as long and as deeply as possible."1

Most relationships die exactly how they start; if they start as cheating, hidden with lies ... chances are that's also their own fate. My advise to EVERYONE, is don't date a married person,

an engaged person, or otherwise involved person. If they'll do that to who they're currently with: they won't hesitate to do the same to you. Thinking you're the exception only opens you up for a whole world of hurt. And this works vice versa: If you are in a relationship, don't date outside of it and think that the affair can replace the current relationship without some serious drama and backlash--plus this person that came to you, "on the side," is most likely going to cheat on you, or always suspect you of doing to them what you did to their predecessor.

Bottom line: Avoid cheaters; and don't be one.

I speak from horrible experience. Every love I had, I got through some form of cheating, and in the end--some form of drama. Every time, ending with hurt. Never a clean break. It's like that saying, live by the sword and die by the sword; except, it's: Born out of a lie and die by a lie. That's the fate of such love. If I ever get chance at love again, she WILL be single. Anyone with a husband, fiance, significant other of any kind--can stay clear of me. And if I did find love, she would have me 100 percent.

Earlier I put some blame on my ex, for not being there for me when I needed her; but I wasn't there when she needed me either. Things were rough for us when she was pregnant, I figured that if I got the financial problems sorted out--the relationship would heal. But, by the time I managed to do that, too much damage was done and she'd moved on. My goal that December 19th was selfish, I wanted to keep us together--at least through Christmas. I didn't know that things were worse than I'd suspected; just like, she didn't know that I was screaming inside for help, not having words to even begin to describe what I was going through.

I didn't know that the traumatic events of my childhood, had in fact, predisposed me to "hypervigilance in [my] later relationships." ²

I didn't know, at the time, that I was exhibiting PTSD.

I still carry those issues; the only difference, is that now I both acknowledge and understand them. I still suffer. I'm still in that pain. I can still feel the barrel of a gun against my head, I can still hear the robbers, and later how my boss, the owner, in a drunken rant as he reprimanded me for giving the robbers money. Prison has NOTHING to do with it--if I was free, I'd still be reliving every trauma as each uncontrollably plays out in my head at times, trying to figure out why me and what could I have done. Always remembering some new element that my mind had previously blocked out. Even free; I'd still be alone most likely, and in mental anguish. Oh I WOULD function, start a business, etc. Maybe find some way to reconnect with my kids and family.

That December 19th, 2005--If I'd opened up, and admitted the truths that were in my face, that I denied--this day in 2016 would be completely different.

Now, my *raison d'être* is to live in affirmation of such failure(s). Mary Pickford said of failure, it's "Not the falling down, but the staying down." But what of when I'm chained down? Both literally and figuratively--with no hand in sight?

December 25, 2016

Some people used to find it amusing that I--as an atheist--take part in the holidays. Christmas being the one in question; but, they failed to realize there's more to the holiday than their own borrowed use. Though, some are aware of the Pagan roots hidden within the Christmas celebration: things like mistletoe charms, bringing evergreens into the home, decorating a tree, gift giving, festivities. This was all being done long before Christianity even came to be. Connected, originally to December 21, the Winter Solstice. The Romans celebrated "Christmas" before there was a such thing, and after Christianity was legalized in Rome, instead of getting rid of the Pagan-Earth-life festivities--they simply adapted them, and rewrote a little of their own history; so after a generation (or so) the origins of the acts were not in question.

Like Easter: there's an old Pagan tradition of dyeing or painting hard-boiled eggs, then balancing the eggs on their ends to symbolize equilibrium. It's a god's rebirth. The god is at that time, green youth, and the Goddess is in her maiden aspect! The Saxon goddess of spring, Ostara/Eostre--it all represents fertility. There's even a connection with the rabbit that lays eggs.

So when I used to put up a tree in my home (a fake evergreen), decorate it, and get gifts, and the Christian "friends" of ours found it amusing--the joke was really on them.

I see the holidays as ... American tradition, with all of the religious connotations aside, even the original Pagan roots. As children we are conditioned with the proposed significance of certain days--our family members, classmates, and virtually every location around us all pay tribute to the days. Now, there are monetary consideration for the American business world, one that contributes to the profit margins of manufacturing companies in places like China (and others where child labor proliferates). Some pay attention to where their purchased items originated; many do not.

I do see the holidays as inherently good.

Although, growing up poor, for me as a child, they were often a source of heartbreak and embarrassment. I think that I connected my lack of material items, with self-worth.

It's as if, I was conditioned by society to do that....

Here in prison, in this "Character-Based Unit, CBU" we have a slew of Pagan-Christian decorations. Evergreens (with lights even), Santa's %-), elves (and not the Bridget the Midget kind I'd prefer), and stuff just EVERYWHERE. On my cell door is a big gap-toothed camel in an ugly Christmas sweater--an innuendo, of sorts.

Ghetto-drones peeled open the metal door to the prison store, and made off with its goods. The dorm the drones originated from is on lock-down--but what it did, was knocked us from shopping before the holiday. So, everyone is out of food, coffee, etc.. So Merry Christmas to us? Right.

We also had one of the CBU Coordinators reprimand a large group of individuals, because of ONE of them--not present--had

said something of the coordinator's close relationship with one of the female officers, things about the officer being racist against whites, etc. The whole thing was very unprofessional and personal on the coordinator's part--I spoke out on it, but the guys wronged by it wouldn't put their face behind their complaints, so that was that. All in all, in my ten years of incarceration, this was the dumbest, most annoying, and worst "Christmas" I've witnessed so far.

But it could be worse.

Luckily, for me, I have some canned goods stored back--so, I'll make some dinner. I get along with my cellie, we often throw in items together to create "set-ups" as they're called here. Food dishes made with what's available, in attempt to make something more akin to real food. As apposed to the bellow-dog-food-grade carcinogenic slopmeat ladled at us in the "chow hall." I'll mix these items:

- 2 Maruchan instant soups, Spicy Beef flavor
- 2 cups of Souther Home (instant) Potato Classics
- ½ stick of Imperial (fake butter)
- 1 teaspoon of Mrs. Dash Original Blend
- Pepper as needed
- Water as needed

Mix up and cook all that.

Top with:

- 6 slices of cheese
- 1 Brushy Creek Beef Stew, 11.25 oz
- ½ Yellow onion
- 1 chopped up Klement's Cajun style beef summer suusage. (fried in the microwave with the onion)
- 2 bags of hot & spicy Cheez-It (crushed as a crumb topping)
- 1 Brushy Creek whole kernel sweet corn

Actually, I got a little ahead of myself there. I mix the top ingredients, cook (in the microwave). Then, mix in the corn, cooked onion & suusage. Lay the slices of cheese on top. Spread the Beef Stew, top with the Cheez-its. Done.

It's a salt-mine special so drink lots of water.

January 1, 2017



A new year? Hmmm. Time doesn't have much sway here. I am alive though; and that's a big deal. So ... there's that. I have "The Mick" with hottie Kaitlin Olson to look forward to today. It's no "It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia, but it's Kaitlin.



January 4, 2017

Another special day--missed.

My little sister is all grown up with kids and a family of her own. I wish I'd payed her more attention when we were kids; but, I was naive. I believed culture. We followed the mold set out for us by many TV shows of our time--late '80s to early '90s --depicting the older brother annoyed by the little sister, and the little sister preferring to have had an older sister. It was a mistake on my part. I should've treated her better, been there for her more.

In hindsight, I see how much she needed me; but I was too busy struggling with my own issues. I could've (should've) taken a time out for her every now and then. When I started working at thirteen; I should've shared some of my money with her. When I was fifteen, and started driving; I should've taken her wherever she would've wanted to go. When I left home at sixteen; I should've considered that I was leaving her behind to face the same issues with our mother that I was so anxious to escape, that she--without me--was all alone. I left home and didn't look back; but, what I should've done, was stayed around another couple of years until she was big enough to defend herself better, or until she was big enough to leave too.

Having a little sister is very special; and I'm proud of her. I think we both did the best we could with what we had.

My disappointment is in the society that cold-shouldered us.

January 11, 2017

This new year is just SOOOOO much fun.

I didn't expect this "Journal" would go on for so many pages; but, when the words flow, they pour. Eventually I'll publish my memoir, and a lot of this blog will be in better context, and vice versa. My fiction novels (still forthcoming) are also sprinkled with memoir-ish-narrative-scenes and characterizations. As cliché as it sounds: Words can say a lot. I'm glad to have them.

M

REFERENCES



1. Sara Eckel, "Listening to Jealousy"
"Psychology Today" November/December 2016 issue, pg. 59
2. *Abid* pg. 55