

Mr. Patrick Melling,

I have been wanting to write this letter to you for some time now, and I wanted to be sure that when I did write to you, that my words were coming from the right place of my heart, and that it was being done for the right reason.

About two (2) years ago, I found out that your father (Jack Melling) was a resident of Frankton, IN, and living in an assisted-living facility due to his being legally blind as a result of macular degeneration. I had attempted to write your father a letter, asking for his forgiveness and letting him know that he was in my prayers. But my letter was returned to sender.

Then when I seen the post you wrote on Between the Bars, I wanted to respond to your comments, but I had other matters going on that required my attention. Plus I wanted to be sure that I could write you from a heart of peace and forgiveness, and not just respond emotionally to your comments. So now with everything going on in the world, this is a better time than any to express how I feel...

PLEASE UNDERSTAND THAT ON FEB 1, 1985, I HAD JUST THREE (3) MONTHS LEFT ON MY SENTENCE FOR PETTY THEFT BEFORE I WAS TO GO HOME. SO I DID NOT WAKE UP ON THE MORNING OF FEB 1, 1985, EVER THINKING THAT I'D BE INVOLVED IN A PRISON BOUT. I DID NOT WAKE UP THAT MORNING WITH THE MIND-SET OF HURTING OR KILLING SOMEONE. THE ONLY THOUGHTS THAT WERE ON MY MIND THE MORNING OF FEB 1, 1985, WAS THAT I WAS ONE DAY CLOSER TO FREEDOM, AND SEEING MY FAMILY AND LOVE ONES.

PATRICK MALLING, I AM VERY SORRY FOR THE EVENTS THAT TOOK PLACE ON FEB 1, 1985, AND IF I COULD GO BACK IN TIME, AND CHANGE THE EVENTS OF THAT COLD FEB 1, 1985 DAY, AND MY REACTIONS TO THE EVENT, I SURELY WOULD DO SOME THINGS DIFFERENTLY... LIKE NOT GETTING INVOLVED. BUT BEING THAT I CAN'T TURN BACK THE HANDS OF TIME, ALL I CAN DO IS HOPE THAT YOU FIND IT IN YOUR HEART TO FORGIVE ME FOR THE PAIN AND SUFFERING I HAVE CAUSED YOUR FATHER, YOU, AND YOUR FAMILY.

PATRICK, YOU HAVE EVERY RIGHT TO FEEL AS YOU DO, AND IT'S NOT UP TO ME OR ANYONE ELSE TO JUDGE THE PAIN AND HURTS THAT YOU FEEL. BUT I HOPE THAT YOU CAN ONE DAY FIND IT IN YOUR HEART TO FORGIVE ME, SO THAT YOU CAN HEAL THAT PAIN INSIDE OF YOU. I KNOW THAT MY SAYING THAT I AM SORRY

for the stabbing of your father, and the pain and suffering that I've caused will never be enough, but I hope that it's a start. I truly now know how you feel because I too have experienced pain and suffering.

Since the 1st of Feb 1, 1985, I spent over twenty (20) years in solitary confinement in a windowless cell 23 hours a day, and both of my beloved parents (mother and father) died while I was in the very dehumanizing confinement. My beloved parents were all that I had, and part of my soul died with them. The only way I was able to survive at that time was with the GRACE of God, and it was through that GRACE I found redemption. The time I spent in solitary confinement gave me time to reflect on the decisions I made, and how they impacted others.

Patrick, I don't want to make this letter about me, but please allow me to share with you the changes I've made since I have been released from solitary confinement. I have been violence free from that day and I've completed various programs including: getting my high school diploma, Anger Management, Thinking for a Change, Shakespeare in the SHAL,

P.L.U.S. (PURPOSE, LIVING, UNITS, SERVE) program, Victim Impact, House of Healing, Conflict Resolution, Errors in Thinking, and I have completed 320 hours of community service making quilts for veterans. Most people don't know that I am an U.S. Army veteran with a honorable discharge, and I'm a member of the American Legion - Kyle Snyder - Post 398, here at the prison.

Patrick, I know my accepting responsibility and changing my life are only small steps. And they can't change the events of Feb 1, 1988 or the pain you and your family have experienced. But I hope that as a start to let you and your family know that I am truly remorseful and sorry for the hurt and pain I have caused you.

I will continue to keep your family in my prayers as I have done over the years, and I hope and pray that you can find it in your heart to forgive me.

God Bless
Christopher Teather