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A Letter From Death Row
By Randy Halprin

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My name is Randy Halprin #99 Halprin. I was sentenced

IRVING POLICE DEPARTMENT
IRVING, TEXAS
VOLUNTARY STATEMENT

Date: January 23, 2001 Time Statement Began: 1:15 A.M.
Place: Teller County Jail, Colorado
I. Randy Halprin
old and live at: - N/A - am 23 years

I am making this statement to law enforcement officer Jeff Spivey Irving PD, who before he began questioning me while I was under arrest, and before I began making this statement, warned me first, that I have the right to remain silent and do not have to make any statement at all, second, that any statement I make may and can be used in evidence against me on my trial or trials for the offense or offenses concerning which this statement is made, third, that I have the right to employ a lawyer to be present to advise me either before or during any questioning, fourth, that if I am unable to employ a lawyer, I have the right to have a lawyer appointed, without cost to me, to counsel with me and to advise me before or during any questioning; fifth, that I have the right to stop answering questions at any time and may stop this interview or the making of this statement at any time whether I have answered some questions or have made some statements or not.

I do not want to talk with a lawyer before or during the answering of any questions or the making of this statement, and I do hereby knowingly and voluntarily waive and give up my above explained rights and I do make the following voluntary statement of my own free will and without any promises or offers of leniency or favors, and through no fear, coercion or threat of physical harm by any person or persons whomsoever.

The first night we broke out we stayed at a hotel in San Antonio. We then left there and went to Houston, in Houston we stayed at a Motel (e. While we were in Houston we robbed Radio Shack and an Auto Zone. I did not want to participate in these robberies, I had just wanted to get out of jail. Rivas told me that I used him months for getting me out. I did not want to pull a gun on anyone, so Rivas said I should pull a gun on the Radio Shack and on

Death Row is nothing like what it was when I was in general population. Most of us look after one another back here. We share in each others pain : suffering and even joy. Whereas general population had this division of gangs, races and differences. our lives on death row bond us together. Staring at the grim reader everyday forces you to focus on the positive in life.

execution days are the hardest for me because I know just about everyone here. It's weird spending day after with someone and then having them taken away to never come back. It can mess with your head if you let it. but then you can't become indifferent to it. because then you lose your humanity. I was never forced to look at my own beliefs on the death penalty until I was here. I didn't care one way or the other. but I have come to the conclusion that all life is precious and no one should have the right to decide who gets to live and who gets to die. I'm not a killer and have never been a killer. but I've seen many people ~~kill~~ kill and with each death humanity loses a part of its soul.

I ~~reala~~ from the shower and the morning noise is like a roost of birds at dawn. I smile at the guards as they take the handcuffs off me and one of them says " What are you happy about? "

I began loading bags into the back of a stolen Ford Explorer had pulled in behind the Explorer and Rivas told me to stay in the car and I thought he was going for his fake security Officer when gun fire exploded. Others ran outside and guns. I panicked and took off running, trying to get to an apartment complex we had stationed a getaway car. I was shot in the foot. I remember running on some sort of explorer pulling beside me and the door swinging open to get in.

Later that night I remember praying that the officer Harper had cried along with me. My foot was numb and torn flesh turned my stomach, I couldn't really news said that the officer had died Rivas made the that night. We left with \$ 70, 000 in cash, guns

We hid out in A small RV PARK where we bought a

I spent two and half were sent to death even pulled a gun hard for a jury to

I expected Death R Silence Of the Lam scared. I expected spitting and fight in my cell and was " How did I get b

My neighbor in the guy...are you one you here." I was

A LETTER FROM DEATH ROW

STORIES FROM THE CHAIR Words Jeff Mays

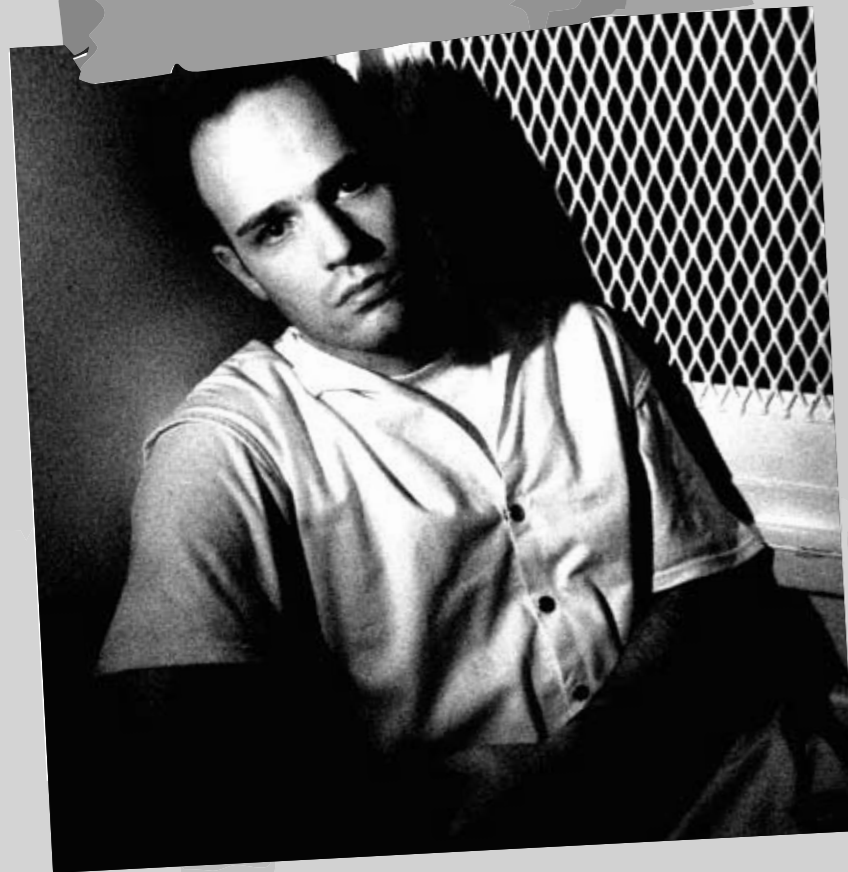
loaded recently wrote to a convict facing the electric chair. He replied, candidly talking about life in the clink, and his part in one of the US' most famous prison breaks

What would happen if you wrote a letter to every prisoner on death row in the United States? Only loaded could find the answer. We penned notes to the murderers, serial killers and monsters in the queue for the electric chair and the lethal jab, asking them what life is like on 'The Row'. Excitingly, our postbag became flooded with mental letters: an autograph from the 'Sunset Strip Strangler', financial demands from killers and terrible poetry from armed robbers. But one correspondent was different from the rest.

Randy Halprin wrote back from the high security Polunsky Unit, in Texas. He is no ordinary prisoner, being part of the 'Texas 7', one of America's most famous criminal gangs. In December of 2000, Randy

and six felons escaped from one of the State's most secure jails, in what the media called 'the most daring prison break in US history'. Randy was just 23 when he went on a six-week crime spree, becoming America's Most Wanted. By the time they had caught the gang, they were also cop-killers, and all were sentenced to death.

Randy wrote several letters to loaded from behind the Perspex glass of his Death Row jail cell. He was candid about his motivations, telling us: "I feel sorry for the victims, I don't want them to think I'm doing this for money." loaded can confirm we provided only the 88c stamps in return for these original writings. We should also say Randy is a bad man, who has done some very bad things. We can't condone what he has done, but we can print his story. And for the first time, in his very own words...



be in a Wal-Mart Parking lot. The vehicle was Michael Rodriguez's father. Rivas knew to look for them yelling, "Where is it? Where is it?" as they jumped out of the truck and began running around the parking lot. We couldn't continue on in the white truck because it was beating fast and I honestly thought we were going to get caught. It's a blue suburban with a red bow! Then, Rivas and I followed. Then, Rivas kicked the board off and ran to the drivers seat of the GMC and several State Trooper cruisers flew past us. I remember pure silence and shock that it actually worked.

"You want a shower?" the guard asked, awaking me. It took a second for my brain to register her question. I'd just been dreaming about helping a pretty woman with her bicycle. The woman had kissed my cheek for my help and just as I was about to ask her my name my eyes shot open. "Huh?" I replied. "Do you want your shower or not? If so, let's go!" the guard barked. I threw the sheet back, stumbled around for my soap dish and towel and placed my hands out the small food slot to be handcuffed. Another day on Death Row.

My name is Randy Halprin #999453. My friends call me Randy. Guards call me Halprin. I was sentenced to death for Capital Murder on June 12, 2003. I wanted to share my experience in the hopes of shedding light on what life is like for the condemned. I'm not receiving payment for this or any favours. Just sharing my story.

"I had no friends, no family, no support... I felt escaping was worth the risk"

I suppose the obvious question is what I did to land on death row. Was I a serial killer, or a bank robber? Was I a madman who ate his victims like Jeffrey Dahmer? Not even close.

I've been incarcerated for almost 15 years. When I was almost 19 years old I was arrested, convicted and sentenced to 30 years for injury to a child after snapping on LSD. My family disowned me and I was thrown to the lions. I did my time as best as I could, having to do small hustles to be able to buy items like soap and toothpaste. I would sell small things stolen from the prison kitchen like hamburgers or bread. My payment was in stamps which I then traded for the items that I needed. It was a learn as you go experience for me. I'd never had to hustle before in my life. I was raised in an upper middle class family and so everything I've ever had in life was given to me.

Around 2000 I became

friends with another prisoner named George Rivas. We initially became acquainted through his cellmate. A guy they called 'Turtle' was considering joining a white supremacist gang which confused me because he wasn't a racist and, when he shared pictures of himself in the 'free world', many of his friends were black. I am Jewish and we were close so it was confusing to me. I asked George if he'd talk to him, as George was a heavy duty Christian. Rivas and I soon bonded over discussions of The Bible. Because of some experiences I had going to a baptist private school in Kentucky I wasn't fond of Christians and so we'd go back and forth on theology and our views.

One day George approached me about possibly escaping. He ran a rough plan past me and asked what I thought. I wasn't sure if he was serious or not but I remember telling him: "It sounds like it could work if some kinks were worked out." A few weeks later he approached me again and said: "I want to put together a team to escape. Would you be willing to join it?" I told him I needed time to think about it. I spent many sleepless nights contemplating what he was asking. I thought about how I had no family anymore. I had no friends. I had no support. I thought about having to hustle for every little thing I needed. I was sick of prison and I wanted a fresh start. I wouldn't even come up for parole until 2011 and, being 23 years old, that seemed like a lifetime away. Besides, who would even want to give me a job or chance if I made parole? I couldn't imagine that kind of existence and so I felt the risk was worth it. I was in.

seven men with a plan

The next six months Rivas put together his team; Patrick Murphy, Joeseeph Garcia, Michael Rodriguez, Larry Harper and Donald Newbury. Everyone worked in the maintainance department except for Michael Rodriguez. He was on the yard crew which maintained the prison grounds. Rivas would go over his plan and it was constantly fine tuned. We wanted to make sure it was safe for everyone. I was adamant that no-one should be hurt. We thought December would be the best time to escape as it was close to the holidays and many workers would be taking their vacation time. Conditions had to be just right; no female workers could show up, the maintainance truck had to be nearby. We wanted a

cold and cloudy day. We first made a go of it on December 12, 2000, but aborted it at the last minute. We showed up for work on December 13, 2000 and everything fell into place.

It's strange looking back on that day because sometimes it feels unreal. I've read countless accounts of what happened and everyone of them is sensationalised. Yet, at times, it does feel like a movie.

The morning was cold and grey. The women who normally worked the office were off and most of maintainance was working with skeleton crews. At our lunch break we asked our supervisor if we could stay at the shop and eat our own food bought from commissary. He said we could. There was a guard who was supposed to watch us as everyone else went to the chow hall. Once they were all gone, the guard was wrestled to the ground by a couple of the others. He was then

"There were no high fives, no screams of victory. Just shock the plan actually worked"

placed in a closet. One by one maintainance workers returned from work and were wrestled, tied up and put in a closet. There was a moment when I thought things would go terribly wrong, though.

a bunch of commotion

A bigger maintainance supervisor showed up. My duties were simply to look out for those who were coming back to the shop. The guys would wait in the back and I'd act like I was cleaning in the front. The supervisor would pass me and head to the back of the shop where he would be overwhelmed. As the big guy went to the back I heard a bunch of commotion. The take downs were usually quick and peaceful. But this guy was struggling. I ran to the back just as Michael Rodriguez grabbed some sort of spout - a huge chunk of metal - and bashed it into the side of his head. He went limp and blood was gushing from his ear. I freaked out and yelled, "What the fuck are you doing?" he dropped the spout and I ran to the office to grab bandages. The others tied the man up and I handed Rivas the guaze to wrap his head.

Once the building was secure Rivas and Larry Harper dressed as maintainance supervisors. Patrick Murphy and Donald Newbury remained dressed in their white prison uniforms. A call was made by Rivas to the guard tower to tell them some workers would be coming out to install cameras.

They grabbed a small tractor and drove out to the tower. It all hinged on this.

During that time, Joeseeph Garcia, Rodriguez and myself prepared the maintainance truck for the escape. We laid a fitted board over the bed of the truck. We received a call from the guard tower telling us it was clear and Michael and I climbed under the board, as Garcia drove the truck to the back gate. All I could hear was some commotion and then Newbury and Murphy climbed under the board along with us. The truck sped up and took off. I waited breathlessly for a barrage of bullets to spray the truck from one of the surrounding guard towers, but nothing happened. Had we really made it?

veiled threats

Part of the plan - you could say all of the plan - banked on hopes that a red GMC Suburban truck would be in a Wal-Mart parking lot. The vehicle was supposed to be provided by Michael Rodriguez's father. Rivas knew to look for a red truck. I could hear them yelling: "Where is it? Where is it?" as they drove around the parking lot. We couldn't continue on in the white truck without being spotted. Someone jumped out of the truck and began running around the parking lot. My heart was beating fast and I honestly thought we were screwed. Then, someone yelled: "It's a blue suburban with a red bow!" Garcia drove the suburban to the back of the Wal-Mart and we followed. Then, Rivas yelled for us to get out of the truck. We kicked the board off and ran to the suburban and piled in. Rivas jumped in the driver's seat of the GMC and we took off. As we sped down the road, state trooper cruisers flew past us in the opposite direction. There were no high fives. No screams of victory. I remember pure silence and shock that it actually worked.

That day we drove to San Antonio, and with cash stolen from the maintainance workers we got a small hotel. The next day we left and drove to Houston. Rivas had made some plans for robberies to obtain cash. After a couple of days there we drove to Dallas.

Rivas wanted to do one big robbery to capitalise on the holiday sales. He checked out a few sporting goods stores and decided on an Oshman's in Irving. I had come down with the flu and, already disgusted by the earlier robberies, I refused to participate. Veiled threats were made and I caved in. The robbery was planned for Christmas Eve, 2000.

Because of the problems I gave them about robbing, I was told my only duty would consist of grabbing clothes and supplies we would need. So as I went into the store I grabbed a shopping cart.

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I began loading bags into the back of a stolen Ford Explorer. The police car had pulled in behind the Explorer and Rivas told me to stay put. He approached the car and I thought he was going for his fake security badge to show the officer when gun fire



IRVING POLICE DEPARTMENT
IRVING VOLUNTEER
Date: January 23, 2001
Place: Teller County
Randy Halprin

Sales from the chair
Be thankful Britain has no death penno

IT'S ELECTRIFYING!

Alabama, South Carolina, Florida, and Virginia still use the chair. The first current causes brain death, the next kills the organs.

WAITING

The longest-serving inmate, though, is Gary Alvord, who has been on death row for 35 years and is still knocking about, very much alive, in prison.

GREAT ESCAPE

Six death row prisoners from Virginia escaped the slammer by stealing guards' uniforms. The Briley Brothers led the breakout mission, but they were caught and executed in 1984 and 1985.

MATCH IN HELL

Two former death row inmates got married after both being released from prison. Peter Pringle married Sonia Jacobs, whose ex husband had also "died from a botched execution".

SURVIVOR

Willie Francis was just 16 when sent to the electric chair. Willie was heard screaming, "Take it off! I'm not dying!" A drunk prison guard hadn't properly set up the electric chair, sparing Willie. His luck ran out when he was finally executed a whole year later.

