

"What I Did The Day After My Execution"

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As Told by: Jose Briseno – (TX Death Row #999043)

"Bang"! Was the first sound I heard as I lay in my bed. I was awake. Just laying there with my eyes closed, listening to the sounds around me. The guards slamming doors, prisoners waking up and talking, and prisoners going to recreation. Yesterday was my execution day. Life of death row would have went on. All of this would have been happening and I wouldn't have been here to hear it...But I am here...

A lot of people wonder what goes on through a condemned man's mind on his execution date. It's a myriad of thoughts. I don't know that I can accurately express them to you. But perhaps after reading this, and considering the things said in their totality... You may be able to get an idea.

I remember looking around my cell yesterday. Looking at the little things that I have gathered over the years. My possessions. As I did, it occurred to me that none of them matter. Tomorrow I'll be gone. These things are no longer as important to me as they once were. I was having these thoughts just yesterday. Today I am still alive. I will put my things to good use again. But never will I value them as I once did.

On the days that lead up to my execution day. I had time to reflect on my life. I've had times when I was treated like a king. I've also had days when my name was "Mud". I'm sure you've heard that expression, " My whole life flashed before my eyes...I had days of that. I reflected on opportunities missed, and decisions made. The full account of my life. Good deeds and transgressions. The culmination of events that in some way led to this day.

This wasn't my first time looking at the "Roller Coaster Ride". In 1985 I got my first execution date. I got inside the park gates before they stopped the ride last time. This time I made it to the ticket window. Next time? Only God knows. Many of my friends were not so lucky. Many got on that ride and I never saw them again.

When I was given that first date. I was flown from Huntsville, Tx. to Laredo, Tx.

A car was waiting for me and my Texas Ranger escorts at the airport. I was driven directly to the courthouse. I stood before a Judge wyou read me a little statement informing me of the execution date. I remember standing there looking at him. He wouldn't look at me...He would not face me. I had hoped hat he would. I wanted to see what was in his eyes. Would I see glimmer of doubt? Perhaps hope, courage, or humanity? Anything! I got nothing. He told the Rangers to get me out of there. But he NEVER LOOKED AT ME.

When I returned to Huntsville (The Ellis Unit), I told my friends about the date.

They all told me not to worry, that the first execution date was never serious.

I played it off. But secretly I was worried. What if they lost the paperwork letting them know that I was given a stay.? They could execute me by mistake. I had heard of that happening before. Finally, the stay did come. My life went back tonormal. Things were different with this last execution date. This time it was serious. This time there was very little hope and a lot more reality. I thought I was gone this time. I had gone through all of the motions. I had filed my "14 Day Plan". With it, you let them know things like who you want present at the execution, your last meal request, etc. I ordered lots of food for my last meal. Fried chicken, pecan pie, and several other things. I knew I wouldn't be able to eat them all. This was a symbolic meal for me. I ordered a feast in honor of my family and friends. I told them

about it at our last visit. I wanted for them to share of this food in spirit. I

wanted it to be a celebration of my life, not a sad event.

On July 10, 2002, I had what I thought would be my last visit. It was a Wednesday. Visitation on Wednesday's end at noon. The rest of the day is dedicated to the media. Looking back on that visit...I've come to think of it as a mistake. A selfish mistake. I never again want to see sorrow and pain on those beautiful faces. The experience was nothing short of torture for them. We did manage to have what we thought would be our last conversation. We said our "Good Byes" at noon. They left only to be called back. When they were called back, they had worried that I was resisting, fighting them not to take me.

They thought they would have to calm me down. Truth is, I was given more visitation time. Behind the scenes my attorney's were still fighting for my life. But, I knew that I would soon see them leave again. I had prayed that somehow, the last thing I would see on their faces would be happiness. As we continued our visit. I kept hearing officers taking other prisoners back to their cells. Everytime I heard a door open. I thought they were coming for me. Finally, I did hear a tap on the door behind me. I turned and said to the officer, "I'm ready to go". That's when he told me that I had gotten the stay. I turned and told my family. They erupted in cheers of joy! My prayer was answered. The happiness that I had wanted to see on their faces had at last arrived...We now knew that I would live to see another day. We're going to kill you...No, we've changed our minds. We'll try again another day. Is it cruel and unusual punishment to put a man and his loved ones through this time and time again?

