

ROLLER COASTER RIDE

by: Humberto Garza III, Texas

Being here on death row in the state of Texas is similar to being on a roller coaster ride. It's full of ups and downs and you never know what's around the next turn...

It's an emotional ride that can break you mentally and also physically. And I've learned to hold on tightly throughout the ride... and not let this place break me down... I can't let myself down and those people that love me and stand with me and by me through all this living hell...

I have always been an optimistic person and always tend to see the bright side of life. I was raised that way. To keep my head and my chin up regardless of what life may throw at me... and if it knocks me down... to pick myself up and dust myself off...

When I first arrived here in this gray concrete world void of any real color; I could never understand "WHY" a person here would give up on life and drop their appeals and give up the fight... and allow the state to execute them... Just simply give up on life...

But, slowly through the years I have come to see "WHY" and to also understand "WHY" someone here would decide to do that. This is "NO!" place to live. It's a gray gloomy lifeless world that will break a person... The conditions here are absolutely terrible. A person here is locked up in solitary confinement for 22 hours a day and sometimes for all 24 hours. People were not made to be locked up like caged animals by themselves without any form of human contact. People are social creatures and need human contact of some form. Having no physical contact can break a person and if that is not enough... then being thrown in a concrete cage and seeing others around you slowly go crazy and broken into a million little pieces... can also make you wonder if that will ever be you...

I have seen some men here slowly lose their minds through the years and it's very unsettling to see someone you've known and have had conversations with... just deteriorate before your own eyes... It has made me question my very own sanity at times... To see someone gradually lose their own mind and see that person talking to themselves and rubbing their own feces on their faces and chest... can make anybody question their own sanity... Or to hear the constant screaming of some of those people all day long like they are being tortured can even reach you in your dreams... only to wake you up into the very world that you were trying to get away from with a few hours of sleep...

Some people give up because this gray concrete world takes everything out of them and leaves them with no strength or "desire" to want to keep living and fighting. This place will suck your very soul out of you if you let it. Some people would rather just not suffer through this and want to move on to whatever may be waiting for them in the next world. Because they believe that whatever may be waiting for them on the other side... it can't be as bad as it is here... And so... I do understand WHY some choose to give up.

I am a stranger in a strange land... But, I won't give up on life and in my fight and let those that love me down... or let myself down... So, on this ride... that sometimes feels like it's going 100 MPH... I hold on tightly... and sometimes even close my eyes on some of the turns... never knowing what to expect... but never giving up... Knowing deep down that it's going to be all right...