

## Chapter 10

January 4, 2012

I was at my absolute rock bottom, and today was D-day. I was about to walk out the door to check myself into the Vancouver Detox Center. Just before I left, I had a gut feeling that it wouldn't be long before I was going to have my life back. I felt that I should call Robb or Tracy and ask if they would at least allow me to quit my job so my record didn't show I was fired. Robb agreed to that and asked me to just send an email stating for the record that I quit.

A few hours later, we pulled into the parking lot of the VDC, and although I was a broken man at this point, I did have a little tiny glimmer of hope. I knew it wouldn't be long before the nightmares were over and I would be back to being myself again. Especially now that WCB was going to take good care of me. I hugged Arco and my Angel goodbye and knelt down on one knee to pet my best little buddy Meathead goodbye. Meathead gave me that look like, "You got this dad, I believe in you." If I had any more tears left I would have shed the last of them right there. I hugged my Angel and said, "Sorry Peachy, but don't worry, Bunns going to get better now, OK? For real this time."

I buzzed the buzzer, and the door opened like a prison cell. Oh man, what the hell was I in for?

I walked in about 10 feet and looked to my left into a small cafeteria. There sat a few people in hospital gowns, and as I looked down the hallway, it was like the wing of a hospital. Mind you, the people walking around didn't even look at you; it was a real life place of the walking dead. I'm not big on zombie movies, but I imagined this is where the producers came up with such a crazy fairy tale. Mind you, this was real.

A man walked up and said, "Hello, My name is Nozar and I'm going to help you check in in just a few minutes." As he shook my hand, he said, "We know each other. You're going to be OK my friend, you're in good hands here. Just sit down in that office and I'll be right back to take care of you, Terrance."

I sat down and felt more at home, more at peace, more hopeful than I had in over 2 years. All I needed to hear was that they were there to help and I was going to be OK. But did that guy just say his name is Nozar? Like, Nodar but with a Z? I looked up at the ceiling and just smiled and thought, "Aha, this is how it works, huh?" I'd never in my life heard the name Nodar before, and here it is, 2 years after Nodar was killed, I check myself into this detox center and the intake guy's name happened to be Nozar, and he said he knew me. What was going on here? Maybe I actually had finally overdosed and this was the next stage in life as a human. I had to believe in something at this point, so I accepted this as my destiny and accepted this as my next life.

The man walked in and said, "Hello Terrance, remember me?"

"No sir, I don't."

He said, "You are the medic who helped my son many years ago when the Vancouver schoolkids came up to slide at the track. My son had a pretty bad crash and you were right there immediately to

help him." I looked at Nozar, totally ashamed that years ago I used to be the guy who helped rescue injured people, and now, here I was sitting in a detox center.

He smiled and actually thanked me again for helping his son, and said he was now there to help me. Those words of love and respect from Nozar made me sit up proud in my chair, and gave me the feeling in my soul that I was really going to be OK. Finally, 2 years later, someone remembered the good guy I was, and who I really was before the Olympics. I felt safe, secure, and confident that whatever powers there are up in the universe, I was in good hands now, and my future looked a lot more golden than I had ever imagined. I mean seriously, what were the chances of any of this actually happening?

Out of nowhere, I grabbed the garbage can and boooooom, puked blood everywhere. It was dripping out of my nose, and it felt like it was coming out of my ears too. At this point, puking blood didn't bother me anymore. It was a regular occurrence, a few times a day for weeks now. Nodar looked at me, and said, "Let's go get you in to see the doctor now. We'll finish these papers later."

He walked me down the hallway to the doctor's office. I sat there for about 20 minutes puking and puking and puking. The doctor came in, looked at me and said, "Umm I'm just looking at your PharmaNet records here and it shows you were just prescribed a few hundred Percosets 3 days ago. How many do you have?"

I looked at him as I wiped the blood from my mouth, and I said, "I just ate my last 40 in the parking lot before coming in here."

The doctor nodded and said he'd be right back.

Within a few minutes, 2 paramedics walked in the office and strapped me down to a board. Before I knew it, I was being rushed to the hospital in the back of an ambulance. When we got to the hospital, I had no idea what was going on really, but they hooked me up to all these wires and started making me drink this black charcoal drink. They said that I needed to get it into me as soon as possible or I could die from liver toxicity. I was like, pffft, I've been puking like this for weeks.

The ER doc came in and said, "I have no idea how you're even alive right now. I've looked at your records and it's not even humanly possible to consume that much acetaminophen."

I told him, "Pffft, For nearly 2 years now, I've actually taken double what the scripts say, on top of copious amounts of cocaine, meth, and sleeping pills."

The expression on his face is not one I can explain in words.

After a few hours, my body started going into withdrawals. My arms started flailing around and every second seemed like an endless eternal nightmare that all came back again. One of the main reasons I chose to go to VDC was the way they slowly tapered you off of the opiates, so I started asking the nurses, "Hey, I'm getting pretty dope sick here eh? I need a few Percs, or however you plan to taper me off."

The nurses just kept saying, "Hold on, the doctor will be back in a bit."

Each minute that ticked by seemed like months. Keep in mind, I had been consuming nearly 10 Percs a day for a very long time, with Oxy 80s every few hours. When your body is that dependent on them, you would actually kill someone in a minute to relieve the symptoms of opiate withdrawal—without a second thought.

I got up a few times and tried to get someone's attention, but nobody was listening to me. They told me that I needed to stay in that hospital for at least 24 hours before I could go back to the detox facility, and that's where they would start my taper. I was furious, and every 3 minutes I'd get up to just walk out the damn door to go get my own fix Downtown.

But this was not an option. My Angel and family all knew I had checked in to get help, and I couldn't just go get more drugs. The whole reason for being here was to get off this shit, but fuck man, I surely thought it was going to be a lot easier than this. My mind just kept telling itself, "Hang on, be strong, any minute someone will come in and ease the pain, ease the withdrawals. They promised me on the phone I would get not have to go through all this. And here I am, sitting in a hospital on my 13th hour sweating uncontrollably, legs shaking, and I can do is scratch my arms and try to dig through my skin to try and just get hold of one my veins so I could pull on it." Ugh man, that feeling was unbearable.

I laid there and kicked and screamed like a madman, yelling out loud, "Fuck you, fuck this place!" as most of the other patients just laid and listened, some of them going through the same shit. It seemed the nurses had heard it all a thousand times before, which actually made me even more furious. "I'll fucking tear this place a new ass, goddamn it!" I was uncontrollable and all I could think about was how I did this to myself. Nobody did it to me, I did this, I asked for this... or wait, when did I ask for this? At what point in my life was I made aware that these were the consequences? Where did I make that wrong turn? Was it even a wrong turn I made, or a matter of not being made aware and educated in the first place?

About 8 hours later, the nurse said I could get my clothes on and leave. I dressed as quickly as possible. Finally, I could get back and get my damn drugs in me.

When I got to the counter, the nurse just looked at me all puzzled when I said, "I'm ready to go back to Vancouver Detox, when are they coming to get me?"

She laughed. "They are not coming to get you, and we are not responsible for you now. You're on your own."

"Listen lady, I have no idea where this place is. I checked in 20 hours ago, and they rushed me here via ambulance. I don't even have a penny on me to catch a cab." She told me to hold on, she had a few things to do and then she'd look up their number.

Hold on? Was she kidding me? My withdrawals were brutal. I felt like I couldn't breathe, and my anxiety and stress were far above any words. About 10 minutes later, the nurse came back and called to

verify that I had a bed waiting for me there, as if I was trying to hustle her out of a taxi voucher. I couldn't believe the way I was treated, like I was a criminal.

The nurse finally gave me a voucher to take a cab, and told me go outside where there was a taxi phone on the wall.

Off I went. I got outside, but just before I picked up the taxi phone, I needed a fucking cigarette right away. Since I was Downtown, I assumed that there would have been a 7-11 down the street and I made a mad dash for it, running as fast as I could looking for the nearest store. As my luck had it, it was nearly 6 blocks away. Totally out of gas, I walked in and asked the man for a Prime Time. He said sure, and gave it to me. I reached in my pocket and realized I didn't even have 2 cents to pay for it.

I lowered my head and told him I'd be right back. I walked outside and there was a lady on the phone. I said to her, "Please ma'am, do you have 2 dollars I can have for a Prime Time cigarette?" I told her a quick story about what just happened to me and said I was on my way back to detox where they didn't allow us to smoke. The lady reached into her purse and gave me 5 bucks, I gave her the biggest hug ever, and almost broke down in tears, my emotions were so out of control.

I walked in, and bought 1 prime time and 2 Kit Kat bars. When I came back out, the lady was off the pay phone, and I thought that I had to call home and tell my Angel all that I just been through. I called collect and she answered.

First thing I said was, "I'm free, haha!"

"What the hell are you doing now?," she demanded. I told her the story and had to cut it short because I needed to get back to detox ASAP. I felt like I was on the run, but I actually took a long walk back to the hospital eating my Kit Kats. Once I got to the hospital, I called a taxi and sat on the side of the curb smoking that Prime Time like it was my final wish before dying.

When I got back to the VDC, I really felt I was about to die if I didn't get some opiates in me right away. When the lady checked me in, she told me, "Sorry, the doctor has left for the weekend and won't be back until Monday."

"Are you fucking kidding me? He didn't leave a script for me?"

She didn't even look at me, and said, "Nope," playing a card game on the computer as if I didn't even exist.

There was no way in living hell I was going to endure even 2 more minutes without some sort of drug to take this devil out of my skin. Nobody there had any answers, nobody there was going to help me. They simply assigned me to a bed and left me there to walk around the crazy ward by myself. No food, no aspirin, no opiate taper like I was promised.

This was hell.

I sat there in the loonie ward with all these other people walking around going through the same shit I was going through, but nobody talked to me. It was like I was invisible. It was like I'd really just been sentenced to hell, and all I was allowed to do was sit and suffer every single second.

I wish more than anything I could explain this feeling of being completely broken and humiliated: the feelings of shame and the overwhelming amount of guilt. On top of your mind being lost, your soul is looking down at you laughing at the truly pathetic example of a human being that you have become. All you can think about is how when that door opens, fuck it—you're going to escape and go straight down to the East End, grab a triple shot of down and just inject it and die.

I was sure that one day, they'd look into my suicide and see the fuck up in their bullshit system. Because of my death, maybe they'd make some changes so that nobody else had to die that way or live through that nightmare.

As I roamed around the ward I took a good look at all the people I was in there with, looking for maybe another fireman, or someone that looked like they could make some good sense of what this place was about. But reality set in. This hellhole rat trap was certainly not the so called "hospital" I thought it was going to be. Detox center? I'm not sure I would call it that at all.

Imagine this. Go take 16 men and 16 woman out of the darkest alleyways from the Downtown Eastside, take all their drugs away from them, strip them naked and put 20-year-old hospital gowns on them. Jack them up with more synthetic drugs, antipsychotics, sleep meds, and side effect meds, and don't allow them to smoke. See what you get.

Zombies. Utterly disgusting, those people I was now housed with. Wait a minute, "*those people*"? I shouldn't say that, because I was one of those people, too!

I went to a washroom that had piss and toilet paper all over the floor. looked into the reflection of the smashproof plastic mirror. I washed my face, looked at myself and saw the same kind of zombie that was there out in the ward. I was no different. My mind was being judgmental, and thought I was something better. I thought I was someone special, but I thought wrong. I was a zombie, I was a creepy little drug addicted troll, 40 pounds underweight, no money, no job. I certainly didn't have any more than the next guy. My story was no different than anybody's in a place like that.

All of us had families, or used to have them. All of us had careers, all of us had friends, all of us had homes. All of us had goals, all of us had dreams, all of us had direction, love, and compassion at some point in our lives. But 9 out of 10 of us had an accident along the way. Some had a car accident, some a workplace accident. Some had been left to the wolves and fended for themselves their entire life, completely abandoned by family and everyone else. For some, just one simple step in the wrong direction landed them there.

When talking to some of the new friends I met in this place, I couldn't believe how similar our stories were. I'll tell you this right now: if you think for a bloody second that your job, your great

insurance, your bank account, friends or family mean that you will never end up in a hellhole like VDC, you're sadly mistaken.

I invite you to go down to the Eastside and take an hour out of your day to make friends with someone who needs one. Make friends with someone who needs you to care, and love them. I assure you that life is a brutal hell without even so much as a hug from someone. Life is a brutal hell of self-medicating when you wake each day knowing what you used to have, and how the system you think is there for you isn't.

Truly, I invite you to go down on the Eastside and just give your Starbucks money and a hug to someone. Don't worry about where the money is going—I mean, we don't worry when our government taxes us on every single step we take, or the insurance companies completely rob us blind from the chairs they sit in in their nice toasty-warm offices every day. So why should a 5 dollar coffee make any difference to you? Just make that human contact, period. You have no idea how much that in itself gives another human a glimmer of hope, just that acknowledgment of existence is enough to let another human being who is suffering know that they are not alone. It might just prevent them from ending their own life that day, and may even give them enough hope to pass that love on. A smile and a warm tingle in the soul is enough to give us the strength to carry on to another rainy-day tomorrow.

I contemplated just running from detox place every second. The withdrawals were pure hell, but I'd made a promise to my Angel and my family. And I already had no job to go back to; I was awaiting word back from WCB as to where they were going to send me next to get this help they promised.

This was by far the toughest thing I had ever had to endure in my life. The puking blood I could handle, the paranoia, sure. The voices and the nightmares were unbearable of course, but opiate withdrawals, Geezus H. Christ. If you think you just lay there and rest, or sleep while you await some help, forget about that—help's not coming anytime soon. This was going to be the worst battle I had ever fought in my entire 37 years.

It wasn't just the physical withdrawals. The mental aspect of it all was the worst, on top of what your body starts doing uncontrollably. I assure you, not more than 2 minutes passed for the next 72 hours that I didn't contemplate suicide.

I tried my hardest for half an hour to explain my entire story and beg her for understanding, but all she did was sit there and continue reading recipes on the internet. I was so broken at this point that I had no idea what to do. I knew that I could not leave, but I also needed to go get checked out by a shrink and start on the road to my recovery. I called the lady at WCB every hour on the hour for 2 days, begging them to please come see me there, or even change the date to when I got out the following week. I never got a call back.

I wish I could tell you how frustrating it was that I was even in this place, with its shit food, no smoking, and nurses who were the coldest, rudest people I had ever met in my life. I would watch them

sit there in their chairs sit there scanning the internet while I suffered. I wondered how they would feel if they got in a car accident, and we drove by in our fire truck looking at the internet while they pled for help. I thought, wow, I actually used to risk my life for people like that, but they only seemed to care when they needed my help. The feeling of that realization was one of the hardest things to live with.

I tried to sit and wait patiently for these WCB people to call back, but they never did. They only called my home and left me a message as if I was there. I had left at least 20 messages to 2 people at WCB, telling them I was in detox dying, and really needed the psychologist badly. I couldn't even believe they just left a message at my home with my Angel, saying my date had been changed to 3 weeks later.

I picked up the phone again and called and called and called for days on end, explaining how suicidal I was, how I was in a detox center and how bad I needed to get to see a shrink and get some help when I get out of this place Where was I supposed to go? The guy on the phone said there was psychiatric help at the detox, but there wasn't anything even close. This was an insane asylum for the broken. By the looks of three quarters of the inmates (I mean, "clients") I stated feeling that this was some sort of drug testing lab and that we were all just guinea pigs. The sounds of the women screaming for all sorts of reasons, the sounds of the men dragging their squeaky rubber shoes, the sights of those hospital gowns, the mad rush for shit food in the cafe. They just ate me alive. And to think I willingly checked into this place to get my life back!

I think it was my 4th day when a man came up and said he was there to talk to me. He asked how I was doing and told me to go to his office.

Finally, a shrink, finally someone who would listen! Finally someone who saw my name and would surely be able to point me in the right direction and how long I had been suffering, and that my case was special.... Yeah right. Good luck with those thoughts, bud.

I sat in his office and finally felt some sort of relief, but that was short lived because the man didn't even look me in the eyes. He looked right through me and just started asking how much money I could afford to spend at a treatment center. I'm like, "Treatment center? What kind of treatment center?"

"A treatment center that treats patients for drug addiction," he said.

I said, "I'm not a drug addict sir, I need to see a psychologist for something they call PTSD."

He said, "Ah, yeah," and handed me a book of treatment centers to look at.

"I think I need to talk with WCB because they should be paying for it," I told him. "I'm just in the process of seeing someone, but I can't because I'm in here and they won't let me leave and come back."

He giggled and left the room. Did I really think anything like that was even possible? This really made me feel crazy. Why was it wrong to think that I should be let go or taken to see a shrink or even have one come to see me here? What was the hold up, why was there a wait? I thought that the 40% of

my biweekly pay cheques that went to taxes funded our ever-so-faithful free health care service, and that we lived in a country that took care of the people?

I would be outside every day from morning till night, spending hours on end trying to do push-ups and dips on the chair while thinking about just how fucking criminal it was of these people at WCB to take money off every one of my pay cheques and make me, the worker, feel that if I ever did get injured, all the money I paid into this crooked criminal enterprise would go back into getting me the help they say they would provide. All day I would just wait for a call back.

Finally, a woman came out and said that someone needed to see me in his office.

I went back to the giggling man's office and he asked me what my plans were when I got out of here. I told him I had no idea which place WCB was going to send me to next. He giggled again, and had kind of a shit-eating smirk on his face. I grabbed the book again and sifted through the countless pages of treatment centers.

I just kept looking for one that was out in the mountains, out in the forest, with a beautiful lake or river, someplace with wildlife and beautiful scenery. But to my surprise, there was nothing of the sort. They were all in the city.

I went and asked a few other clients what they had heard was the best treatment center for people with PTSD. Each person I asked had a different opinion. "Oh my bro went here," or, "I know a guy went there." One guy said, "Oh I think there's a place called Edgewood on the island that treats PTSD, they have the best of the best doctors, the food is good, they allow you to exercise and you even get your own room."

I looked them up and gave them a call immediately. The lady who answered the phone was very helpful, like the first lady from WCB I spoke with. But when I mentioned to this lady that I was in detox and had no money, and that I was waiting for WCB to come through with my next direction, her mood shifted. That was the end of that conversation.

I called my Angel's mom Crash and asked her to make some calls for me because I just didn't have the strength or patience, and didn't even know what to say or do next.

Eventually I got a call, and it was my Angel. She said that the WCB lady would be at her desk tomorrow, and told me what time to call.

Finally, my patience had paid off, and I had a wee little bit of hope in my soul. The next day I called the lady and she said that they had an appointment for me to get assessed in 3 weeks. I asked her what I should do in the meantime. She said, "Well go home and wait till your assessment."

"Listen lady, I don't think you understand. Home is not an option for me, I need help NOW, not 3 weeks from now."

She went on to say that what I was getting in 3 weeks wasn't help, it was just an assessment. After that assessment, they would see about getting me some help.

I told her, "Listen, I need to go to a treatment center 3 days from now, period, and you guys are supposed to pay for it."

She said that if I did go to a treatment center it was no problem; WCB would pay us back once our claim went through. That I just needed to go through their procedures and protocols.

I said, "Well, how much am I going to be allowed to spend on a treatment center, and what are the limits to treatment? How much will you guys cover?"

She said it didn't matter; all I needed to do was pay first, and once I was diagnosed, we would go to the next stage of the claim and they would pay me back. I just had to keep all of the receipts.

I said to her, "Listen lady, what makes you think for a fucking second I have a penny to my name? Need I remind you I'm in a detox center on my death bed? I don't have the upfront money, and if I did, I would have spent it all on drugs by now."

She said she was sorry, but this was the procedure. But she said that by the looks of my claim and what I had been through, she truly felt I had nothing to worry about. I just needed to find the money first and it would be reimbursed.

I called Crash, and told her of this conversation. She too had talked to WCB on my behalf and was told it all would be just fine. Crash told me to look into what center I wanted to go to, so I spent the rest of the day sifting through hundreds of centers, reading about each one over and over. None of them said anything about PTSD, and they all mentioned 12 step programs: AA meeting, God this, higher power that. Narcotics Anonymous... group therapy... art class... required daily AA meetings... shared rooms....

I was very discouraged, because each and every one of those centers only talked about drug and alcohol recovery, nothing about psychological help. I wasn't a drug addict. I had a job, a family, a career, and a car. I didn't use needles, and I played hockey and worked out every day. Come on now...drug addict? Not me!

I needed some psychological help already. I was already very well aware I loved my drugs at this point, but how about why I was taking so many of them? How about some professional mental health help? I already felt I was a professional drug user, but I had no idea why I couldn't stop taking them.

I remembered that one time in my doctor's office the year before, I asked him if he could please just do a lobotomy to cut the connection that was making me make all these bad decisions. I just wanted to cut off the endless visions, thoughts and sounds, the ill, gutted feeling that I was enduring whether I was awake or sleeping. This was my only reason for taking the drugs, so I assumed if we could just cut that out of my head, all would be fine.

We don't take drugs because they all of a sudden make us happy or laugh, or turn the day into one big party. That's certainly not the case at all. We only take them because it is an escape from all pain that's not just in our veins, but in our soul. The sort of pain that we are trying to escape from goes far deeper than pain from our muscle tissue, ligaments, or even our bones. We learn to deal with those pains. The pain that we escape from is the pain of our souls, the pain of our spirits being torn from us.

I eventually narrowed my search down to 2 treatment centers. Edgewood was over on the island, and the pictures in the tattered old book looked nice—they even had a swimming pool. But my main reasons for choosing them were that they said they had doctors in house 24/7 and that I felt I would get the psychological treatment I needed every day.

The other was "Together We Can." I chose that one because I had heard a few guys around the detox say that it was the best. If I could afford it, though—it was expensive.

I spoke with Crash a few hours later and she said Edgewood was not a choice. I was like, "Ahh no, how come?"

She said it cost nearly \$37,000.

Per month.

My jaw hit the floor, "Ahhh, fuckin' no way man!"

She said the good news was though, that she spoke with a man named Stacy Wilson, the intake coordinator from Together We Can. They were sending someone to come and talk to me later that day.

I asked her how much that place cost, and she not to worry about it, she had it all under control.

It was visitation time on my 4th day, and my Angel brought my best little buddy in to see me—my bulldog Meathead. I can still feel my heart beat twice and my veins tingle with happiness and hope at that feeling: the first time I ever saw my Angel and Meathead when I was clean from the Percs and sleeping pills. As I sit and write this, I must say that it was the first time I felt anything like that in nearly 2 years.

My buddy's li'l tail wiggled and waggled, and I hugged my Angel so tight. Ah, my love, my beautiful Angel! It was a feeling I will never forget: hope, love, friendship. I was so proud of myself for sticking it out for 4 days that seemed like an eternal hell, and this made it all worth it.

We talked for about a half hour, and it was all I needed to keep going. I felt I looked healthier, and I was really close to my next step of getting my life back. She smiled as always and that's all I needed to see. I still to this day carry so much guilt and shame for all I put my Angel through, and I have come to accept that that heartwrench will just never go away no matter what. I knew I broke her heart into a million pieces, and I could never change that. But what I could do was get better, get some psychological treatment, get off the drugs, and get a fresh start on tackling this life head on. It wasn't going to be long, I told myself. Maybe another 2-3 months and I'd be happily working another cool job, laughing with my

family and not looking back at the heartaches anymore. Instead I'd look back at a successful recovery and getting my family, friends, and life back.

Later that night, a guy named Jordan from TWC came in to see me. This is the first time someone actually came to see me to provide treatment. I thought WCB sent this guy, but when we spoke, he told me my mother in-law arranged it. He told me that if I wanted a bed, one was ready for me the minute I got out in 4 more days.

I was so stoked, and gave him the biggest hug ever. I held his hand with tears of hope in my eyes. "Thank you sir," I said to him. "Thank you for coming to rescue me, brother."

It was snack time, and we had our usual 1/2 sandwich with 1/2 slice Kraft single cheese. No mayo, nothing but a 1/2 slice of Kraft single cheese. What kind of bullshit fucking snack was this? Were they kidding me, man? It was bad enough that we had absolutely nothing to do in this place. It'd been raining outside for a week, so nobody took us for a walk for fresh air, and I had been told I was going to be kicked out if I was caught shadow boxing in the corner by myself again.

Wait a sec, did I leave that part of the story out? Earlier that day, one of the staff came up to me and said I was not allowed to even shadow box ever again, as it was triggering some of the women in there and I was being disruptive to the other clients. That's strange, because I was shadow boxing off in a dark corner by myself, very quietly, and never did I ever come off as a threat to anyone except for this staff member.

Aside from Nozar, and one other staff member from the Vancouver Coastal Health service who I'll tell you about later, the employees there were 20 times as fucking nuts-ass crazy as any of us clients who were housed there. I won't get into all my feelings and opinions on these staff members, because I really don't want to waste another breath on these people. They are not even human, and I can assure you one thing, they have wrongfully played God and sent many, many people to their graves, and did it knowingly and happily. I swear to the day I die, those people working at these centers must have been reincarnated from the concentration camps in Auschwitz.

Believe me, I know that's a pretty bold statement, but try checking in sometime while you're on your death bed as I was. These are the only words to describe such a disgrace. I'm only alive today after years of dealing with people like that because I stayed strong in order to speak out for those who can't speak any longer because they're 6 feet deep now. I stayed strong so I could speak out for those who still get treated sewer rats every day.

Later that night, I was my usual self, spending hours pacing up and down the hall way, one slow step at a time. The extreme sleeplessness was brutal, and I totally refused to take any sleeping meds. That was the opposite of what I came there for. I wanted to get off the drugs, but it seemed when I got to this place, they offered me 3 times more than I took before I got there.

Anyhow, as I was passing by the staff counter, the staff member looked up. I smiled at her, and she said, "Hey, go get your stuff. You're outta here."

I looked around. "Umm, you talking to me?"

"Don't get smart with me, go get your stuff now, you're outta here."

I walked over to her desk and asked, "What are you talking about? What do you mean I'm outta here?"

She said, "You were just smoking in the bathroom, so go get your stuff and get out."

"Have you lost your mind lady? Where in the hell would I even get a damn cigarette? You guys stripped me of all my belongings when I checked in here 4 days ago. I was not smoking, and to top it off, I wasn't even in the bathroom!"

She said, "Go get your stuff now, or I'm calling security."

I said, "You most certainly better call security 'cause I ain't going anywhere. You're nuts man! What the hell are you talking about smoking, I haven't had a fucking cigarette in 4 fucking days."

She got on the phone and said, "I have a problem, please get security here now."

I stepped back from the counter, "Are you fucking kidding me, man?"

This tall dude showed up and says, "Go get your stuff, you're outta here."

I said, "Listen man, this lady is just making this up. Do I smell like smoke? And where in the hell would I get a fucking cigarette anyhow? I've been pacing these damn hallways for days, back 'n forth, back 'n forth, and this lady outta nowhere just says I was smoking in the bathroom. Let's go to the bathroom and take a smell."

The guy said that he didn't need to prove I was smoking. If she said I was smoking, that's all he needed to kick me out.

I said, "Listen bro, I'm a fireman, I'm a family man, I'm not here to cause problems. I'm here to get my life back, I have had a very rough road these last 2 years, please sir, I did not smoke in the bathroom." I looked up at the cameras and said, "Let's go rewind the tape and you'll see I didn't even go in and certainly didn't come out of any of those bathrooms back there."

He said, "If you're not changed and ready to get out in 5 minutes, I'll call the police and you'll be charged."

"Where is the manager? Let's call Nozar, this is total bullshit. It's 2 o'clock in the fuckin' morning bro, I'm not from here, my family is 2 hours from here and I have nowhere to go. I don't even have a penny to my name."

He said, "I am the manager, and this conversation is done. Get your stuff, pack it up. Let's go, you're out."

Now, there's certain kind of beast that lives in all of us. When it's woken, it can be very dangerous to one's health, life, and future on this earth. I'll tell you right now, this beast was well awake. As his claws grew and fangs drew, I had that little gut feeling that said, "You're not wrong, stay strong. You have a claim with WCB, you have not been diagnosed yet. You are supposed to be checking into a treatment center in 3 days, and you still need to keep tapering off these drugs."

The inner voice said to me, "Everything you have endured up till today over these last 2 years will all be flushed down the shitter if you react now. If you hurt these people now, you'll only be guilty as charged."

Was this crazy woman worth it? Was it worth losing my career, my life, my family, my health, my future for yet another person who had done me wrong? I thought of what VANOC had done, of Mario, Tracy, Liz, Chris, Frank, everyone else who had pissed on me while I was down. The last thing I was about to do was let this dumbass crazy douche bag be the straw that breaks this Lion's back. I looked within myself to find yet more strength to continue on and just get my opportunity.

I prepared myself to head out into the streets at 2 o'clock in the morning with nowhere to go and nothing in my pockets. I had to stay strong, I had to overcome all of this torture, and all of these struggle. One day... one day I would prevail. One day I would take all of this, use the pain as strength, and make changes.

I went to my bed, where there was 6 other snoring, farting men puking and moaning. I grabbed my stuff. Fucking A—I was outta this shit hole. I could do this. I'd just go Downtown, score some dope, and be done with it. Fuck these people. Maybe they would investigate my overdose and fire this woman. Ah man, so much nonsense goes through your mind. Especially when you haven't slept for 2 years and now you've been pumped full of a drug you've never even taken before.

What the hell was going to happen next?

I assure you, if you've read this far in my book, this isn't even the beginning of the next 2 years of hell I was about to endure.

I changed my clothes and thought that I'd call that treatment center in the morning and see if I could check in early. Good luck though, it was tough enough already for my mother-in-law to get me that bed for 3 days from then. I guessed I'd see when the sun came up.

I walked out the door, and guess who was standing there smoking fucking cigarettes? Both the lady and the manager who booted me out. I shook my head. "What a joke, man," I thought. "One day, I'm going to write a book about all this and look back and say, ha, fuck you guys."

This is that moment. Can you say it with me?

**FUCK YOU GUYS !**

I didn't have much other than my patrol pack. I looked at that first aid cross on it and thought of Nodar. I thought, man, if I can just get myself better, I am going to one day really write a book and tell the damn truth about it all. Everyone's ass that hung me out to dry, and everyone who is responsible for that boy's death will learn the truth about all the cover ups, and all the crooked ways our so-called free health care system offers us.

I walked and walked that night, all alone. Yet again, I was too ashamed to call my Angel and tell her what happened to me. She thought I was in a safe place getting better. The last thing I wanted to do was call her and tell her I just got kicked out. I just couldn't break through the look of hope in her and Meathead's eyes when I saw them last.

Ah man, what was I going to do? What would you do? 2 o'clock in the morning, in the city. No money, no idea where you are, walking around hungry with no direction and still going through the worst physical withdrawals ever. The games and tricks your mind starts to play on you are brutal. The fantasies of killing yourself actually bring you peace. How shit awful is that, when thoughts of killing yourself are actually soothing? You know you're not doing well when your only options are death, or more torture and then death. How do you find any more strength, where do you find hope when the one place you finally just surrendered to totally dehumanized you, stripped you of your clothing and self, put you on a bunch of fucked-up synthetic heroin and now booted you out the streets at 2 AM in a city you're unfamiliar with? Where on earth are you supposed to go now?

Call your friends? No, wait, you have none left.

Call your boss? No, wait, he fired you after stabbing you in the back.

Call your in-laws? No, wait, they think you're still in the detox center.

Fuck it, go Downtown. You know exactly where to find medication, cigarettes, and a nice easy escape from all of this life.

I wanted so bad to there, and just started walking to where I thought the city center was. As I rounded the corner, I could see all the high rises in the distance. There was no way in hell I was about to walk that far. I didn't have enough strength in me to even make it 2 more blocks. I walked until I got to the Skytrain station, and there I just said fuck it. I didn't do anything wrong, I'll call my Angel and tell her. We will figure something out.

I called her, and thankfully she answered the phone.

"Hey Peachy," I said, "Ummm, slight problem. I just got kicked out of detox."

"What the fuck Bunn, what the fuck have you done this time? Why are you always getting in trouble, when are you ever gonna get your shit straight?"

I just looked up into the sky and thought to myself, "Man, I really have not done anything to deserve this. I didn't do anything wrong. "

She made a call to our friend Harmony who lives downtown. Harmony said no problem, I could come over and sleep on her couch.

The minute I got there I said to her, "Get me some fucking dope Harmony, call your dealer and let's smash a few grams."

But as I said that, I gritted my teeth and thought, "Nah man, there's no way I can do that. I was given another opportunity by even just having this roof over my head and a couch to sleep on. No no no no." I needed to be stronger this time.

I laughed it off. "Nah, forget it, I'm just joking."

We stayed up for a few hours smoking cigarettes outside on her deck. When the sun came up, I called the treatment center and told them what had happened. They said to call the detox center to get my daily dose of methadone transferred to a local pharmacy. I could continue my taper that way.

So I called detox, explained the situation and asked to talk to Nozar. He was finally back from his days off and made arrangements for me to have my taper picked up from the pharmacy near Harmony's house the next day.

This was a huge relief. In fact, it was great. Now, I could walk around the streets all day, stop and have a coffee, read a newspaper in the park, and just people watch for 3 days instead of sitting in that hell hole.

Harmony, I know our bridges have been burned over time, but as I write this, I'm so grateful and so extremely appreciative for you letting me stay at your home for those 3 days. I would have ended up in some serious trouble if you hadn't helped me during that time, maybe dead. Thank you, Harmony.

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