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JUDGE ROBERT ALEXANDER

Former Prison Guard at Attica Prison

Hello and praises to the name of Jesus,

My name is Robert Alexander and I would like to share a marvelous testimony of God's grace and mercy. I was a prison guard in New York State's Attica Prison from 1973 to 1981. In 1978 I was working on a Bachelor's degree in criminal justice at Rochester Institute of Technology. At that time a new inmate came to Attica - his name was David Berkowitz, the "Son of Sam" murderer that had terrorized New York City. My job at Attica was to supervise the inmates who shoveled the coal from train cars into the powerhouse. They were called the "Coal Gang." I also covered the breakfast and noon meal in the tear gas booth overlooking the mess hall. After the noon meal was over I would leave the Coal Gang inmates in their cells or let them go to the exercise recreation yard while I would go to talk to David. What better scientific laboratory for my college psychology courses could there be than Attica prison inmates - especially David Berkowitz. I spent many, many hours talking to David. I saw his struggle with the occult forces that plagued him. Have you ever looked into the face of evil? Not many people have ever scared me physically or spiritually, but David scared me spiritually. I wasn't a Christian and had little knowledge of the occult and satanism but I could see the effect it had on David. When he first came to Attica he struggled but was able to control the demons within him. He would show me the letters that satan worshippers would send him. Most of the letters had the blood of people - including babies sacrificed on satanic altars.

I was there when an inmate cut David's throat. In fact, I comforted him at our prison hospital as the nurse stitched his throat. The fact is, the inmate that cut his throat was a former Coal Gang inmate.

Over a period of two years I saw David slip into satanic despair and torment. He would howl and was engulfed in porno literature. He digressed out of control. David was so demonic, we started to call him - David "Bezerkowitz." Finally, we transferred him out of Attica to Clinton Prison, far up in the Adirondack Mountains. I lost contact with David after his transfer. In 1981 I had finished my Master's degree in counseling and became a counselor at the prison. You were in the minority if you had a Master's degree at Attica. I was excited about being a counselor. When you've been a guard for eight years you don't get much satisfaction out of coming home and saying, "Only five men got raped today, only three stabbed, only seven fights and only one went crazy, but no one escaped, boy, did I have a great day!!!" I always felt I owed most of my degree to the inmates of the Coal Gang, especially David. They were my test lab for all the psychological theories.

We had another famous inmate come to Attica in 1981 (just when I had become a counselor). His name was Mark David Chapman. Most people know that he was the man who shot John Lennon, of the Beatles. Since I was the only person with a Master's degree in counseling I was assigned to counsel Mark. It was great to decrease my 225 man case load to one person. As I worked with Mark over a period of time, I got to know his wife, Gloria, who had moved to Attica from Hawaii. Counseling Mark was extremely interesting and very challenging. Mark shared that he was a Christian and had lead his wife (who had been involved in the occult) to Christ.

I knew a lot about Jesus in my head since my stepmother and most of her family were Christians, but I didn't know Jesus personally. The fact was that I was an extremely high functioning alcoholic. I wondered how a criminal like Mark David Chapman could be a Christian. My wife, Gerry, knew that I was counseling Mark but thought I was crazy when I called the Billy Graham crusade (that happened to be on TV that evening) to ask if they had anything to help me counsel with a Christian inmate. My wife had religion, but no personal relationship with Christ. Gerry thought Billy Graham was a "screaming meme!" She said, "I can't stand those Baptist screamers." She just shook her head as I let them pray for me and take our address to send the literature.

God works in strange and mysterious ways - His wonders to perform! A few days later Mark told me he wanted a new counselor because of a disagreement we had. I told him, "That's fine" and went back to a regular case load. In the meantime I mentioned to my wife that I wasn't counseling Mark anymore. A few days later the envelope from Billy

Graham was delivered to our house. My wife tossed the envelope in the kitchen trash, knowing that I no longer needed the information. For the rest of the day she threw things on top of the envelope in the trash. Every time she went by the trash it called out to her in her spirit and she finally picked it up and opened it. She pulled out all the material and was led to open the Gospel of John that was tucked inside. My little wife read the entire book of John; got on her knees, repented, and asked Jesus to save her. Wherever I go to speak, I tell every man that if his wife gets saved and starts to pray for him, he might as well give up because she won't shut up! The fervent prayer of a righteous wife availeth much! She prayed for me for three years. God finally brought me to my knees and I came to Jesus in 1986, praise God!

Not long after I was saved I saw Mark in the exercise yard and he asked me if I had become a Christian because he heard that "Alexander" had gotten religion. He told me it was all over the prison how I would praise God and tell everyone about Jesus. Mark shared that he had heard from Don Dickerman that David Berkowitz had been gloriously saved. Mark asked Don to send me David's testimony. I put it in my desk and told Mark that I would "time test" David's salvation since I had seen hundreds of jailhouse conversions. That testimony was in my desk until two years ago when I wrote to David and shared my testimony.

I have since had the privilege of visiting David at Sullivan prison and I can attest to the change in David's heart. Once, at Attica prison, I looked into his eyes and saw the darkest evil I have ever encountered. I remember the first time I saw David again at Sullivan. I was looking into a new man in Christ - a man with peace, peace that passes all understanding. Once where I could only see darkness and demons I could now see David was overflowing with rivers of living water. We currently have the most wonderful fellowship in JESUS CHRIST! The lost inmate and the lost guard - together - both praising our Savior!

I hope this testimony lifts and encourages your heart.

Judge Robert Alexander 03/08/2001

Son of Sam testimony is (https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/newbb/viewtopic.php?topic_id24293&forum35&2) here