

### **Just a few questions...**

Have you ever stop to wonder about a life a prisoner? A death row prisoner? Being confined 23 hours a day in a 6x9 cage ? Think you can handle it? Can you begin to imagine the roller coaster ride of emotions and physical toil they must endure, knowing that they will one day be killed, euthanized, like some animals; strapped to a gurney as lethal doses of poisons are injected to course through the i.v. placed in their veins, chasing out every flicker of hope and condemning a life that could have been...to walk through the valley of death ?

Can accept something like that happening to a friend , a family member, a loved one? Them having to say good bye, and then watching the tear that are shed for no longer being able to laugh, smile and talk to you?

Could you deal with that ? How might you feel it if I told you I know the feeling and answer to some of these questions?

Hello. My name is Son Tran . I am a Vietnamese male. Incarcerated since 1997, at the age of 117 , I was ultimately sentenced to death row.

This month (October 2003) makes the sixth year of institutional confinement for me. It's not like counting and keeping track, one can't help but reflect on the years lost.

During these years I've fought, survived and endured the dreadful conditions , the brutality of guards, and the inexperienced first-hand the inhuman existence of prison life. My eyes have witnessed so much that I am no longer surprised but what they see.

I wake each day with an heavy burden, this arching blade upon my neck as I fight to seek relief from the courts of appeal. I strive daily to maintain a positive composure and outlook towards life, and not let incarceration plant the seed of bitterness, or allow hatred to grow ---fester within my spirit. At times, it's tough, but I've learned to live and adapt to each situation I face. I still laugh and smile in the worst times, and hold strong to my dreams and beliefs. I can't---won't give in to the self pity nor, will I give in the systems design: to ensnare me and program my mind; to break and take away from me any desire to think, to fight, to live; in short: to be me.

I face life's trials with my head held high, and do all I can to better myself, in the eyes of what has become for me the beast: The system.

Hopeful that I eventually share with those believe my death sentence is just, I am not the monster the Courts led them to believe, nor I am the monster---to justify their views---that they need me to become.

So how am I then?

I am a dad, I am someone's son. I am a person who would like to make a difference. I am a human being. I am sitting on the death row sharing with you my life.

I am Son Tran.