

On the Rec Yard

Interview with Pamela Perillo

LOCATION: Remote

DATE: March 28, 2022

INTERVIEWER: Jennifer Toon

FORMAT: .MP4

TYPE: Audio Interview (podcast)

TRANSCRIPTION: Murphy Anne Carter

JENNIFER TOON: Pamela was on death row in Gatesville in the state of Texas for 20 years [00:00:06] and she is now free and we're going to hear about her journey. So Pamela, start off by telling us, what did it feel like that moment that you were sentenced to death row? What did that feel like?

PAMELA PERILLO: When I came to Texas, because I'm not from Texas, we were just passing through [00:00:31] Texas when my crime happened. I really have never been out of California, so I wasn't used to how Texas works. I had already been in prison twice in California, but never here. So I really didn't give much thought to the death penalty.

And when I got taken before the judge and they told me 1:02 they were going to seek the death penalty on me – honestly, I thought when you got the death penalty that they took you right then and killed you. I didn't know about the appeal process and that you stay years and years on death row. But in 1980 I was 24 years old, and I went to my first trial and they convicted me solely on my confession. I had no character witness to speak for me, anything good about me, and – so all the witnesses that testified were all negative and I got the death [00:01:44] penalty. So I went to death row, which it was at the Goree Unit at that time and I stayed on death row at Goree until '81, when they transferred us to the Mountain View Unit.

And – so it was really scary when I went there [00:02:08] Linda Burnett was the only female on death row at the time, and I really didn't know her at all. So it was – she kind of took me in under her wing as if I was her daughter and kind of gave me the ins and outs of good officers, bad officers, how the warden was, all that stuff. So, um [00:02:38] which I thank god – I don't thank god that she was on death row – but I do thank god that she was there with me to help me through that process, because I didn't know anything about it.

So after we got transferred to the Mountain View Unit, it was a whole different thing. I had my first hot meal at Mountain View. The Warden had fixed up [00:03:01] our cells really cute. It was the first time that Warden Plane had any death row inmates on her unit, so she kind of – it was a big deal for her to get us there and she made sure we were comfortable and that we had hot food, and that things, you know, the officers didn't know how to take us.

I remember one incident where I freaked everybody out. They had [00:03:32] these huge, large roaches and – or water bugs, whatever you call those big wood roaches, they're huge. I have never seen a roach that big. I heard that everything is big in Texas, but I had never heard – I've never seen a roach that big in my life.

TOON: Yeah.

PERILLO: And so, I was deathly afraid. I'm afraid of bugs anyway, so one of those things got in my cell [00:03:57] and I was freaking out, and the officers would not open my door to get that roach out of there and they called the Warden. The warden came down there because I was totally about to pass out – I was just freaking out. And Warden Plane came down there, and I told her, I said, Ma'am, I just want this thing out of here. So she had the officers open my cell [00:04:25] and they went in and got the roach, and then she left an IOC that said anytime there was a roach in my cell to open it, get me out of there, and take the

bugs out. So I was very grateful for that, but I was so scared of those things. Of course, years later I kind of got used to them, but it was a big thing for me and the [00:04:47] officers were freaking out because they didn't know – you know, they thought that I was probably pulling some kind of thing for them to open my door or something. But I really, I really just wanted that roach out of my cell.

TOON: (Laughter) And I remember those, Pam. (Laughter) Those are some big monster, radiation-into-the-world-type of cockroaches.

PERILLO: And they fly, they fly, and it just freaks me out. I can't stand those [00:05:15] things.

TOON: (Laughter) Well, you know, you may – you mentioned something that I didn't know, so this was – you had not had a hot meal or any hot food up until that point?

PERILLO: Yes, because all of our food came downstairs and sit in the – heating, little things that they push around that has your food, and it would sit out in the hallway for [00:05:45] hours before they even fed us. So, yeah, every food that we got was ice cold. So when I went to Mountain View, and I had my first hot meal I felt like I had gone to heaven or something. It was very different after a year of ice-cold food.

TOON: So you acclimate to death row at Mountain View with Linda and, like you said, you weren't glad that she was on death row, but you were glad that she was there to help you through that – and we'll talk a little bit more about [00:06:22] what relationships mean to us – but tell us, so as the years begin to pass, I saw an interview that you did back in '83 and the you were telling the reporter that I used to feel all kinds of emotions but now I don't, I don't feel anything like it. What does, what does that time in death row – and it's not just solitary confinement which is one other person being cut off but this pending doom of, you know, at any moment they're going to announce that they're going to execute me – what did those years feel like?

PERILLO: [00:07:04] I felt like I was on an emotional roller coaster, you know. You go in one court, and they give you a little bit of hope. And then you go to another court and you get knocked down. And I don't know if I mentioned this before, but I had actually gotten the death sentence twice. My case was overturned in '83 on a jury error during my jury selection [00:07:34]. So they overturned my case, and I was given a new trial and that was in '84. I got the death sentence again, so I went back to death row in '84. I had stayed 22 months in the county, waiting for a new trial because at that time I had cancer and I was going through a lot of [00:08:03] treatments and stuff for the cancer, and then after my surgery, they gave me my trial and I got sentenced to death again. So it was kind of strange because 24 people had sentenced me to death, and I knew on my second trial I was going to get the death sentence again. My fall partner had turned state evidence against me and her husband and testified against both of us and we both got the death sentence [00:08:36] so I was expecting it the second time also. So but – yeah in '80, I got the death sentence, and then '84, I got the death sentence.

[speaking to the cat] So, Karla, get down.

TOON: And cats. So yeah, I can see that like, the little bit of hope and then to be let down again. It almost to me, it would have felt like this – There's a twilight zone episode where it's a person being put on death

row, and [00:09:14] the characters all change. But every time they get executed, it starts over, and it's like this continuous loop and they're steadily trying to tell everybody – you know, Hey this keeps happening. It's like a loop, a nightmare. And, that's what you're telling me um, that's what it reminds me of – I can't even fathom that. So you know you go from this hope, and having a little bit of hope, but then going back to this baseline of not feeling anything just day after day, monotony of prison.

So you mentioned the last time we talked [00:09:51] that they actually set two execution dates for you – what was that like?

PERILLO: Well, my first execution date, I came three weeks away from it before I got a stay. And my second execution date, I came two days away from it before I got a stay of execution.

TOON: Oh my god.

PERILLO: I was supposed to be executed Sunday night and I gotta stay Friday morning [00:10:22] and I was on my way to the visiting room to say goodbye to my family for the last time, because Warden Moton and Warden Baggett actually let me have a contact visit with my son and my mom. And so I was on my way over there when my attorneys called and told me that I was given a stay and that the state had given – the Fifth Circuit had given the state 120 days to retry me or let me go. [00:10:55] And so, I actually got to go in the visiting room and tell my mom and my son that I had gotten the stay. And my son said, I was just gonna grab a hold of your neck and not let you go, Mom. I wasn't gonna let him take you.

And I'm glad that I didn't have to go through that incident with him, because my son is very, very protective of me [00:11:21] and even though he was only one and a half years old when I got locked up, over the years, we have become best friends. He always wanted to be there for me no matter what.

When I had to go back to the county jail to get my date set – because the court knocks you down, but you go back to your county for them to actually set you a date. And at the time my son was only 16 years old and I did not – I have always [00:11:55] tried to be careful about doing interviews and things like that, because I never wanted my son to be affected by anything that I did, for people to treat him differently. So I told him, I didn't want him in the courtroom, and he said, I'm coming in that courtroom anyway. And so, he did. They stand you before [00:12:18] the judge, and they tell you, Your peers have sentenced you to death, and on such and such date, you will be delivered to the Huntsville Unit to be executed by lethal injection. I knew that those words were going to affect my son, so when I went out of the courtroom and I was fixing to get on the elevator, I wanted him to know I was okay. So I turned and I winked at him just to give him some kind of sign I was okay [00:12:51] and when I did, a reporter turned her camera right on my son. My lawyer went up and knocked the camera out of her hand, and said, That is a minor, and if you show anything on the news about him, I will sue you. So I was grateful for that and [00:13:11] they didn't show anything. But it's very hard when you try to protect somebody, and you're so high profile and in the media so much. It's really hard. But my son has always been a big supporter of me, and I'm really grateful for that.

TOON: Gosh, you know, I always told the women in Gatesville, I'm not a mother, so I don't know what that's like, but [00:13:41] to know that you've survived all of that as a mother is – being away from your

your child, and doing what you could to protect him, given the situation, is just a testament to your strength and your faith. I'm honored that you even share that with us, because I too – I can be very protective of my family [00:14:08] when it comes to the stuff that I've done, you know, not wanting them to be affected or hurt or embarrassed or ashamed. So I'm really thankful that you shared that. Let's also talk about in terms of – you mentioned how important Linda's friendship was to you when you first got there, so you and Karla Faye Tucker, who many people might know that name, were extremely close friends. I would love [00:14:42] also if you could share with us, and everybody that's listening, what Karla's friendship meant to you then and what it means to you now.

PERILLO: Well, I think when I was back in the county for my second trial Karla had actually been arrested, and she's from Houston also. She was 24 or 23 [00:15:09] – she was 23, and one of the officers came up to my tank and said, There's a young girl, and they're seeking the death penalty on her and we thought maybe you could go talk to her. So they took me, and it was Karla. And so, I met her in the county jail. So we were in the court tank every day because we were both going to court at the same time in different courtrooms. [00:15:41] We established a friendship there, and then Karla got the death penalty and went to death row and about two months later, I got the death sentence again, for my second time and went back to death row. So we, for 14 and a half years, were on death row together and we [00:16:06] became very, very good friends. We were like sisters and we went through a lot of things together, and I don't think I've ever been as close to anybody in my life as I got to her.

So we were together on death row for 14 and a half years, and then Karla got her execution date right after I got a stay on the three-week date for my sentence. [00:16:40] Karla got a date, and her date was a very serious date. In fact, her court set her a tentative date because at that time – I didn't tell you this before – but Erica Sheppard had gotten – [00:17:00] came to death row, and she wanted to drop her appeal. And a death sentence is an automatic appeal, you can't drop it. But at that time she had a lot of people get involved in her case, like Jesse Jackson, and a real, great, big known preacher – I can't remember T.D. Jakes got involved in her thing. It was a very political time because [00:17:34] for females. No female had been executed in over a hundred years, and it would have been political suicide for Governor Bush to execute a 19-year-old black female. And so they said set a date for Karla. She had already been on death row for 14 years. Erica couldn't drop her appeal, because it's an automatic appeal, and so it became a very political issue [00:18:11] in the media. Should they execute females for the same thing the men get executed for?

Her religion became a big thing in the media because she was a Christian. So she was getting attacked on every turn with the media, and it became a very big [00:18:37] thing because of the time lapse and women being executed, her being a Christian, and also her being a female. And so I had to watch my friend go through all of that, and at the time she fell in love with Dana Brown, who was my barber's prison coordinator for his ministry. [00:19:04] That was very hard, because it caused a lot of conflict between Dana and Mike, and then Karla was put in the middle of it. So it was a very hard thing. I saw my friend's spirit being crushed and at the same time she was ready to go meet Jesus. And it was hard for all of us.

Karla moved out of death row to the MPF [00:19:34] area, where she was in a cell by herself on November 16th, Two days before her birthday. Warden Baggett let me and Francis Newton go to the visiting room every two weeks and visit with Karla. It was hard because I wanted to be there for her and

with her, but because it was so publicized and everything, the media was constantly in death row. It made some people on death row [00:20:04] uncomfortable that the media was there all the time. So Karla felt like she needed to remove herself.

I knew in my spirit that that execution was going to go through, just because of the way everything was being handled. I had very bad nightmares. One of my dreams, I was on a gurney next to Karla, and we were holding hands really, really tight [00:20:35] and I kept telling Karla, Karla, don't let go. Don't let go – and I don't want to start crying. She released my hand during my dream, and I knew that that meant she was gonna – the execution was gonna go through. She kept sending me messages that it's okay, I'm gonna be face to face with Jesus and know that this might not help me but it'll help you guys later on [00:21:08]. And so, I think Karla became a poster child for the death penalty at that time, because the Pope got involved, the Parliament got involved, all these big, big people, even Pat Robinson from the *700 Club*, who believes in the death penalty said he didn't believe Karla should be executed. [00:21:36] When it became the reality, they had Mike Barber Ministries on the unit. They had a lot of TDC aftercare people talking to people about what they felt on the unit, and Karla was supposed to be executed at 6 o'clock. Her actual execution didn't happen at 6:45. They had a big [00:22:13] togetherness in the chapel for all the inmates that wanted to have a little get together and pray for Karla. And what you said the other day was that at the same exact moment Karla was executed, the light in the chapel over the podium blinked on and off. You said – which I thought was really neat that, you felt that that was Karla letting all of us know that it's okay, that she was okay. And that meant a lot to me to hear you say that because it's true. I really believe that that was Karla blinking that light in the chapel. And so that was you know – it was very, very hard for me to lose her [00:23:02]. It still affects me today because I feel if anybody should have got off death row, it should have been Karla.

It was me, Karla, Betty, and Francis, and out of all four of us, I'm the only one that didn't get executed, made it off death row, and made it home. And that doesn't happen with a lot of death row inmates – very seldom does a [00:23:35] death row inmate get off death row, let alone come home to the free world.

TOON: Yeah.

PERILLO: And so, I have two cats. I have a female named Karla Faye, and I have a male named Tucker. So I have Karla Faye Tucker in my home. Everywhere you look I have a [00:23:59] big plaque that Shannon made for me, and it has my old death row number, which was EX-665, and Karla's, which was EX-777 in my room. I have a big picture that a friend did in my living room, and I have a picture of her grave in my bedroom also. So I think Karla will always be a big, big part of my life, but [00:24:33] – even Francis and Betty, I miss them, too. We were all on death row many years together and we all created a big bond together. I still can't believe I'm here today, but I am. I think that God had a reason for that. Probably because I'm stubborn and he's not finished with me yet. (Laughter)

TOON: Right. So I appreciate everything you shared about Karla, and it just really highlights the special, unique [00:25:05] bonds and friendships that see us through those dark times of incarceration, especially for y'all that were on death row. So I know it was shortly after Karla's execution that you won your appeal and you signed for I believe it was life with parole in [00:25:32] 30, if i'm correct. And so tell us, what was that journey like? Now you're off a death row, you've been there for 20 years, you've been through

losing your best friend, and now the biggest transition hits you pretty closely after that. You are now thrust into the wild of TDCJ. What was that like? [00:26:02]

PERILLO: Well, actually because my case was 20 years old, the D.A. was pretty sure – a lot of the witnesses that were involved in my trial. When I left California, I was wanted on a pro-violation and a armed robbery warrant, and the man that I actually robbed came and testified in my trial. He had passed [00:26:33] before my case was overturned, so he wasn't going to be there as a witness. I won my appeal based on conflict of interest and ineffective counsel, because the star state witness against me was my co-defendant and her attorney – I mean my attorney and her was having an affair, which my attorneys that I had pro bono [00:27:04] found out about. My case was actually overturned on ineffective counsel and conflict of interest because of their relationship, and he was handling my case, which I'm grateful for whatever they were doing helped me. And so, the D.A. really didn't know if she was going to be able to get the death sentence again. I had Warden Plane testifying on my behalf. I had Mike Barber [00:27:37] at my trial and a lot of people that were there that were going to speak positive on my behalf to where before I never had that. And so Mike Barber wanted me to take it to trial again and my son said, Mom, please don't take that chance – because I had already gotten a death sentence twice, and I was convicted on [00:28:05] my confession. They could have always used that and got me a third death sentence, so he said, Please, don't take that chance. I plead bargain with them where they drop two capital murders down to two aggravated robberies, gave me life on one and 30 on the other. I went back to TDCJ. They took me to Plane State to give [00:28:30] me a population number, because I had a death row number. And so, I went to Plane State and then, I went to Goree for 15 days, and then I went to reception. Nobody knew what to do with me. They knew they didn't want to send me back to Mountain View, because I had just gotten off death row there. So finally they accepted me at the Hilltop Unit.

At that time, it was very publicized [00:29:05] because I was a female that got off death row, so there was a lot of officers at Hilltop who were not happy about me getting off death row. They felt like I beat the system. They had a lot of – I call them, Rednecks, very hard Texans there that totally believed in the death sentence and they put it in my face all the time that I shouldn't be there. I don't want to say I got picked on, but [00:29:40] I got messed with a lot. I had my house searched almost every day. Just stupid stuff. And then I went to seg one night, two officers came to my dorm and handcuffed me and took me to seg. They said the Warden and the Major said that [00:30:05] two phone calls had come into Hilltop stating that my mother and my son was going to break me out of prison at 12 o'clock that night. So they locked me up. They wouldn't allow me any visits. Eight days later, they sent me back to Mountain View and they put me in seg, pending investigation.

I was in transient and investigation for an [00:30:35] escape. Then my mom finally called up there and told them, Either you charge her with something or you let her go, or I will have a lawsuit on your desk. And so that night at five o'clock in the evening, they let me out of seg and put me in population. I kind of felt like I was thrown in a lion's den because everybody knew who I [00:31:0] was – and not only the inmates, you know, who all were very – I never had a negative thing said to me from an inmate. They were always very supportive and always willing to help me.

I was very glad to be back at Mountain View because I knew a lot of the officers there. I grew up on death row there, so I knew a lot of the officers. But I felt like a lot of [00:31:33] what I went through I was

given a taste of reality. You were in prison, and I got case after case. I got 12 minor cases for the pitiest stuff you could imagine getting a case for. I never had a major case in prison, but I did have 12 minor cases for stupid stuff. After a while, it all died down, you know. They got used to [00:32:03] who I was, and they could see that I wasn't gonna try to cause any problems. I just wanted to do my time and be left alone.

At first, I got a job in the boiler room because I could be by myself. So I worked in the boiler room for about four years, and then I became a peer educator for eight years, which to me being a peer educator brought me out of myself. I learned so much in that [00:32:37] job about things I never even dreamed could happen to us – even staph infection in prison and stuff. I learned so much in that job, but the most that I got out of that thing was it brought me out of myself. Because I was a very reserved kind of quiet person. I wasn't real good at talking in front of people [00:33:02], and that job brought me out of myself.

And then in 2009, I was sent to the Lane Murray Unit, and that was a horror. I walked into a dorm of 102 people in one dorm. It was just a huge room with all these people in it. I felt like I was in a barn [00:33:32]. Yeah, it was very crazy trying, to get to commissary was crazy. I think they put me in the laundry, in the sewing room, or something at first. There, they didn't have peer educators, as that was their job. It was a volunteer thing, which I still did on a volunteer basis at the Murray Unit. It was so totally different than Mountain View, and [0:34:05] then I went into the faith-based dorm for 18 months. And then, I went into the dog program, and I stayed there for seven and a half years training service dogs for disabled veterans. I went home from there, so it was a long journey to get where I'm at today.

TOON: That indeed, ma'am, is a long journey from the road to Hilltop, then back to Mountain View, then to Lane [00:34:36] Murray. Golly, that is a whole shock in and of itself. Yeah so, what did it feel like when you were finally granted parole? What emotions did you go through when you found that out?

PERILLO; Well, I never – I had seen parole seven times, and every time I got a set off it was [00:35:03] usually a two or a three-year set off, mainly three. I think I got one, too. It was for nature of crime and past criminal history, which we all know your past won't change nor will your crime. One of the Commissioners Troy Fox, I think, was his name. He said, Well, Perillo, if you never [00:35:32] make it home, just be glad you're still breathing. And he gave me a three-year set off, so, you know, at that point, I actually came to terms with myself that was it, you know. I wasn't doing life without parole, but these people were not going to let me go.

I had hired an attorney Randall Smith in '03 and – my family paid him \$8,000 [00:36:04], and he said he could get me out. And several years later, I was still sitting there. So it was – I just never thought I would come home. And then, I met a young man, a little young guy named Louis wrote me. He was a student, and he was taking criminal justice, and he became my pen pal, and we wrote each other for a very long time. And then he asked if he could come see me, and I said sure, and he said, Well, my mom will wait in the car [00:36:41] and I'll come. I said, Don't have your mom wait in the car, Louis, just – I'll put her on my list, and she can come in with you. So they did. They came to see me every month for years, and I became very close.

Shannon is an attorney, and Louis is a criminal justice major and he [00:37:03] graduates in May. And they became very, very good friends to me and my family, and Shannon told me I want you to hire this attorney, Allen Place, in Gatesville, Texas. I said, I'm not asking my family to put out more money for an attorney. I'm not going to go anywhere. This is it you know. And so she went over my head and put \$1,000 [00:37:34] retainer down on this attorney and called my son and my mom without me knowing. And, of course, they were gonna say we'll help her get the attorney, so they did. They had a 45-minute interview face-to-face with the Commissioner in Gatesville. He said, I think I need to go talk to Perillo, which I never got a pass to go see him, and then I was called to the picket one [00:38:04] night to get my mail. And I got a J Pay from Louis and it said, Congratulations, Sis! You got a FI-1. And I just about laid down and died in the hallway.

It was really funny because the officer got on the microphone in F dorm, which is dorm A,B,C, and D. (Inaudible)

TOON: Yes!

PERILLO: It's huge in there, and she announced on there that I had got a FI-1 and the whole dorms – all of [00:38:36] them were going crazy, and then the Lieutenant came down there and says, Perillo, what is going on? You've got this whole unit in a riot, girl. Went down to the K dorms and told everybody I got a FI-1, so they were all going crazy. I said I got a FI-1, Lieutenant, and [00:38:57] she gave me a high five. Everybody was so supportive – all the girls in seg was raising their windows, Congratulations, Pam – and everybody was really, really happy for me. I was just in another world looking like I was watching somebody else's life on a movie screen, because I could not believe I got a FI-1 and a FI-1 you go home within 35-40 days. And mine took 74 days. Of course, that would happen to me. I did.

My son came with Shannon and Louis, who had a camera [00:39:35] rolling, and picked me up. I was just the whole way home, I was in awe, and I paroled home with Louis and Shannon and her husband, Ron. I couldn't even believe that they would allow me to come in, to live in their home, but they did. And we became very, very good friends. They have helped me so much in the transitioning out here, of technology and just learning how to take care of myself. [00:40:09] It's been an adventure. But I'm so glad I'm out here.

I go places, like the Capitol and different death penalty rallies and stuff like that. So I'm really, really – I try to get involved where I can get involved and help people and especially the ones I [00:40:29] left behind, because some of my friends there have lost their cases. Melissa Lucio's – how do you say her [00:40:41] name?

TOON: Lucio

PAMELA: Yeah, Lucio – and I can only imagine what she's going through as well as the girls that are living there with her. I feel like it's kind of like a deja vu of what I went through when I was there with Karla and Betty and Francis. So I just want to help where I can. I talked to her son [00:41:08] for a long time on the phone, and I know what it feels like for him and his family. It's just hard. I just hope that they realize that where there's life, there's hope, and that we just got to keep pushing the fight.

TOON: Pam – that part of your story is it's that [00:41:32], you got me you finally got me, just seeing all just imagining all the girls supporting you and, you know, I, we talked about last time how we didn't always get along, but we were still family. We were this strange, a very unique family, the women that were incarcerated together, and – to have the officer announce it [00:41:57] and everybody just be full of joy. That – because it symbolized something, right? It wasn't just a long-timer has finally made parole and got the magical FI-1 because that's pretty rare for a person that does a long time, but to know that you were so close [00:42:20] to the state of Texas killing you, and for you to have that love and support from from everybody in the system. And then for like you said Louis and Shannon and their family to embrace you. It's amazing, and what we would have lost in you as a beautiful spirit and as an advocate, had the state had their way, [00:42:47] – I don't even have words for it. So thank you for sharing all of that with me, and I'm glad that you reached out to me to tell your story to the people that watch my videos. But to tell your story to me.

Like you mentioned Melissa Lucio, [00:43:11] it's been on my heart lately, because I was just arriving to TDCJ when Karla was about to be executed. I was 18, and I just remember watching all the hoopla and the media circus, and it was like they're going to kill that woman, you know, and she's going to be gone and she was one of us. I looked around my – from the cubicle [00:43:40] there was no difference between her and any of us there. When you're incarcerated for – whatever crime it is – you're all the same. You're all one. It really struck me, the gravity of it. I'm just so grateful that you decided to try technology out one more time with me and share your journey. [00:44:04]

PAM: Sorry I got to plug my phone in.

TOON: No, it's okay – to share all of this with me. Is there anything else that you would like to share about your story before we stop?

PAM: One thing that really, really touched me out here was [00:44:27] the people that got involved in my life when I came home. I mean the mayor of San Marcos has been so supportive of me. She's always dropping boxes of stuff at my house, and she wrote a letter for me to get off my GPS monitor. When I came home I was on a leg monitor as well as the GPS box. That thing drove me crazy for over a [00:44:54] year, until my P.O. (parole officer) called and said you can cut it off. And I was so happy. I had Shannon go wake Louis up, so he could come cut it off my ankle. He would have died if he missed it.

But I've gotten so close to people out here. One of my best friends is an ex-parole officer, and her husband is an ex-cop [00:45:18] and I've gotten real real close to them. A lot of people that are involved in my life – I could not even imagine ever liking me in the way that I used to be, you know. But they have opened their hearts and their doors to me, like you wouldn't believe out here. When I moved into this little house that I'm [00:45:43] in now, because I live alone, I had so many people bringing me stuff to help me, to giving me money, giving me food processors, and I mean all kinds of stuff just to fill my little apartment up. It's people I would have never imagined would have taken a liking to me [00:46:07]. But they are so supportive, and they believe in me, and that's what you know – I've been on parole for a little over two years now, and I've never had a late report, a late phone call, dirty tests, you know. I'm scared to [00:46:29] spit on the sidewalk, so scared of ever doing anything to go back to that hell hole.

It's just been an amazing adventure for these people to support me like they do you know, and I'm just so grateful. My son spoils me rotten. I feel like I have a second chance [00:46:50] with his two kids and being able to be a part of my grandbabies lives. It's been a really amazing step in my life that I never dreamed in a million years.

I've been having really bad dreams lately about getting put back on death row and getting executed, and I know it's because of what Melissa is going through right now. I'm going through a deja vu, and so I've been having some bad dreams. I just wish they would abolish the [00:47:23] death penalty all together and stop this craziness of killing people. People are able to change. The state of Texas says they are hard on crime – and they are. But they're killing people that kill people to show that killing people is wrong, and it doesn't make any [00:47:46] sense to me. You're doing the same thing. I just hate the death penalty and I wish it would stop. I hate TDCJ and the way that they treat people you know. I just – I'm trying to get a letter of approval to go back into the prisons so that I can give people hope that it could happen for them, too, and to visit my friends on death row. And [00:48:16] so I'm just living day-to-day, and whatever I can do to help others.

TOON: Well, thank you, Pam. You remain an inspiration to me, and you have really moved me to tears today and –

PAM: Sorry.

TOON: No, it's okay. It's not easy to do that, but you've done it. I just

PAM: I'm sorry.

TOON: No – it's okay. I have so much love and respect for you. I just – you're [00:48:50] amazing and thank you.

PAM: Thank you for having me, and thank you for redoing this because everybody was like, I didn't understand a word you said. You better do that again.

TOON: Yeah, yes. I'm very grateful that we tried it again, and hopefully we can get it sent out, and [00:49:09] people can enjoy what you have to say and be as touched by it as I am.