

The Execution
(Based on the Iranian Hostage Crisis)

Jerry Miele's Account - February 4, 1980 12:18 p.m.

It's been three months since our capture. I'll never forget that day. The confusion, the sudden fear that squeezes you in its tight grip, that fear you never hope to experience. It was all too surreal. I'm still not even sure if it happened, if this is actually hell and I'm being punished for my lifetime of sins. I don't know if I still believe in God. Love no longer exists in this world. Compassion is unrecognizable in my captors' faces. They are young, yet full of bitter life and hate. Screams echo from the jail cells around me, as the sickening splatter of blood washes over the dried, rust red that coats the walls. I cannot bear it. At times, our captors drag us by our metal handcuffs into a dark room, playing a sick game of Russian roulette. They play with death. I think that if I forget to breathe one day, I will meet Death. I will shake his hand politely and tell him that I have been waiting for him for some time.

Amir's Account - February 4, 1980 4:07 p.m.

Holding 52 Americans hostages sounds more fun than it actually is. It gets repetitive and boring; bringing the prisoners food, giving them time to crap, putting them in handcuffs, and watching them sleep. The only fun we get is the occasional beatings of misbehaving prisoners or when they attempt suicide. But we have no choice, we are serving our country and raising country moral. The people *love* that we held the Americans captives as our "guests." The general population even adopted the slogan "America can't do a thing" because we hold all the cards. And quite literally too: I started to play Russian roulette with the prisoners after their beatings to keep the boredom at bay. It was nicer than having to lock them up in solitary confinement for weeks in a dank and hellish room. However, as the days grew longer and longer, my boredom reached an all time high. I was craving their fear and their blood.

Amir's Account - February 4, 1980 6:45 p.m.

"Joey!" I shouted to the funny American as he entered the dimly lit room. His shadowy outline drifted to one of the seats of the cards table and he asked if he could sit down. I smiled at the handsome young verman and said, "Anything for our favorite American traitor! What stories will you give us today?" When he hesitated to speak, I passed him a piece of bread and watched as his pathetic nimble hands scuttled for it and started to nibble on it. That night he gave us some more names of military officers, their ranks, and their jobs. Joseph continued to give us a vague description of the military compound where he worked. It was nothing special, but it was entertaining to watch him crumble under his fright and to give away his loyalties so easily for a piece of bread. Americans were so pathetic and worthless, but that's what made it fun to crush them. The torture of silence and starvation was just icing.

As Joseph got up to leave he turned back with desperate smile and joked, "No execution today?"

The American, pathetic enough to try to joke with his captors, made him all the more useful. I nodded and he turned to return back to his detestable hole. No executions? Maybe I could change that.

Jerry Miele's Account - February 4, 1980 6:56 pm

The night is still, strangely. The raucous laughter of my captors has disappeared, replaced by the heavy breathing of the young man next to me. I want to ask him if he is okay, if the wounds on his back have healed, but I cannot. I am old and weak, a coward. Often my captors threaten me with a electric chair, mocking my crippled legs, my crippled mind. They say it's my fate to die like this, that I'm a sorry man with a sorry life. Maybe they're right. As they bring down the stick on my leathery back, I sit there, unmoving and unseeing. I cannot see what the bleak future will look like, if we will stay in these disgusting, inhumane cells for years or if we will get out tomorrow. I don't know if the wounds on my back will ever heal. It is hard to stay optimistic. Suddenly, I hear a loud footsteps clatter outside. An Iranian man named Amir and Sgt. Joseph Subic stopped in front the cell adjacent to mine. I could hear Amir speak in a thick accent, "Thank you for your cooperation, Joseph. You will be rewarded." Subic mutters a your welcome and his door clangs shut, with an ominous finality I could not shake.

Jerry Miele's Account - February 5, 1980 3:57 a.m.

I can't sleep. I've been up for some time. I'm not sure how long, Time's become a sort of enigma for me, a concept so bizarre and foreign. Minutes, days, hours, it's all the same to me. I sit on the cold floor, staring into the darkness, imagining what could be and couldn't be. I imagine I would kill them with the electric chair they mocked me with, to slip away into the innocence of shadows and taste the moon on my lips and feel the rich soil on my back. Yet I know I couldn't. My weakness continues to betray me. BANG! There is a sudden gun shot emanating from the darkness. The dim lights flicker on and I see twenty men in black ski masks pushing bewildered and frightened prisoners out of their cells. My hands suddenly turn cold as I begin to sweat. What was happening? The guards handle us roughly, tightly binding our eyes with dirty blindfolds. Mine is still sticky with blood. My feet stumble unsteadily as the guards prod us ruthlessly, threatening us with biting comments. Whimpers float past me, and sobbing echoes within the cavernous corridor. The pain, the panic never quite set in. I was dead already, only watching as my mind crumbles to dust, as Fate finally snips that yarn, ending the faded tapestry of my past. And we kept marching, marching on to our Death, as Time inevitably counts down our last moments. Perhaps I've been waiting for this. Perhaps that's why I forget to breathe sometimes.

Amir's Account - February 5, 1980 4:01 a.m.

BANG! I shot my gun twice in the air and watched as the Americans released cries of fear and

scuffled to their feet. "Line up! And none of you shits speaks," I yelled at them through my black ski mask. Slowly, but obediently, the rats lined up in formation with their heads drooping like pigs ready to be slaughtered. Their nonexistent pride wouldn't allow them to look us in our eyes. My companions and I started to wrap blindfolds around their eyes as their whimpers turned into a sobs. We ordered them to march out of the room and into the corridor, all while being blindfolded. The defeated shuffling of their feet in harmony with their gasping sobs was the sound of complete victory over the Americans. They were in *our* control. We finally triumphed over the Americans and I was going to relish it, to bathe in their nothingness. In our pure, consummate power. We passed the maze-like green hallways like ghosts. The dim lighting painted us as dark shadowy figures escorting their prey to dinner. Drip. Drip. The drops of sweat on our prey's necks plunged into the cracks in the concrete. Their necks and foreheads glistened with fear and the stench of desperation filled the air. I could see how some of them were so desperate to live and carry on their sorry existence. And the others, the cowards, craved death, how a starving man craves food. Death, the easy way out of their suffering, the cowards way, was became their only heaven and hell, their only God. However, regardless of whether the rats wanted to live or die, they all felt the teeter-tottering of life and death on that death march. I finally ordered them to stop in a dark room. Then the fun really began.

Jerry Miele's Account - February 5, 1989 4:12 a.m.

"Take off your clothes!" the guards suddenly roared. The prisoners whimpered as they guards began to push and slap us. I was frozen. They were going to torture us. Images flashed through my mind, pictures of rotting bodies, infected, bloody, wounds festering with maggots. I couldn't die this way. A sharp hand suddenly slapped my face violently. "Take off your clothes old man! Or we will drive our knives into your eyes!" A man yelled fiercely. He spat into my face. My hands were shaking with fear. I slowly undressed, leaving my body exposed. The cold air was sharp, cutting deep into my skin bare skin. The humiliation shriveled in comparison to the choking fear I was feeling. I could almost taste the blood creeping into my mouth. The overwhelming certainty of death was dizzying. We all knelt to our knees as the guards continued throw blows at us. Fear permeated the room.

A strong voice spoke out, "Guns ready men! Let's shoot these bastards." A small whimper escaped me. Does death hurt? Or will I finally feel relief? The cold metal pressed against my head. Screams echoed around me. Click. Then shocking silence. Nothing had happened. The gun was empty. The Iranians started laughing loudly. I shook violently, stunned that death had not come for me. We were silent as we put on our clothes, listening to them laughing crudely at our humiliation. We were objects for their humiliation. The dark blindfolds were removed and like broken creatures, we crawled back to our jail cells, once again waiting for time to pass by.

Amir's Account - February 5, 1980 5:07 a.m.

After watching the prisoners squirm, we finally told them to get dressed and some guards

escorted them back to their cells. I made my way across the room to the guard who was holding the gun. His hands were shaking and I could see tears in his eyes. The guard's eyes accused me of hatred, deception, and murder. "Joey! American's are so sensitive! It was just a little fun!" I took off my ski mask and smiled. He just committed the highest treason by cooperating with his supposed enemy and attempting murder. I watched as his blue eyes darted from his gun, to the prisoner, then to me. Deciding who to murder. Kill a fellow American and save his own skin. Kill one guard to show his loyalty to America but die in the process. He could have, with a loaded gun and past experience in the American Army. Choices. Choices. But as soon as I saw his hand shake with fear, I knew it was not from the fear of murder of an American or me. His hand shook from fear of himself. Joseph feared how much he wanted to kill the American and how much he craved our acceptance. It was human nature, the overwhelming desire to be acknowledged, that tormented him.

With tears streaming down his face, Joseph asked, "Why? Why put me through that agony?"

I first gestured for the gun back. He hesitated, but eventually succumbed to his worthlessness and gave me the empty gun. Joseph's eyes were pleading for an answer; they were gripping me, strangling me to explain why we gave him an opportunity to kill that man. To explain how he became such a recreat, despicable creature. I put my mouth up to his ear and cradled every word, "Because I can and will do it over and over again. I like to watch you break into a million pieces and to shatter everything you are, until you can't even recognize yourself." I smiled cruelly at his crying face and I slowly picked up my arm and wiped a tear from his face. He resisted my touch but he couldn't move. "I've made you cry like a newborn. Now there, every baby needs to grow up." With that I knocked him out with one swift punch and had him carried to his cell. I concluded I would have fun until Reagan won his election and we released the prisoners. Oh, yes. Tons.

Jerry Miele's Account - February 5, 1980 7:19 a.m.

I don't remember falling asleep. It felt good, after those sleepless nights of fear and panic. I wanted to rest, to put my mind at ease, flashing with dark images of screams and whimpering, sounds of empty clicking. I mechanically walked over to the wall and began banging my head on the wall. Blood ran down my cheeks as a deep gash began to form. I felt no pain. A dizzying drowsiness crashed into me, pushing me headlong into an uncertain future. I still don't remember how to breathe.