Transported to Hell

Donte Riley

Just Like My Uncle Described

It was like being transported to hell! In my life, I’ve heard many stories from my older relatives about the trip to prison. My uncle once told me that prison is hell and that there’s no place like it. He described several people being physically harmed. He told me that once he was in a deep sleep and he was awakened by sharp pains all over his face which he later discovered to be stab wounds. My experience was exactly how I remembered their stories to be and so much more.

A couple of weeks after being sentenced, I was escorted to a school bus. It was not actually a school bus, but it was the same shape as one. And it was white, not yellow.

It was hotter than a jalapeño on that bus. The seats were hard, and it smelled disgusting — maybe because of the hot sweat that’s been sticking to this huge vehicle on its many trips taking people to prison. The driver huffed and puffed whenever he took his seat. I don’t think he liked his job.

Prison May Be Hell, But It’s Better than Jail

I heard the engine come to life and I felt the floor start to vibrate. Reality hit me as the bus left the gates of the parish jail, and I suddenly felt sad, depressed, and lonely. But I also felt some relief. Maybe in the prison, I would have a little bit more freedom than I had there in the parish jail. The other prisoners confirmed my hope. I listened to them talk about their last trip “up state.” They actually sounded excited about being in prison where conditions are better than jail. They were looking forward to better food, sports, and other activities that made prison sound like a big sleepover.

My Journey to My New “Home”

As we passed by my hometown, I glued my eyes to the window to look at the beautiful things I was now leaving behind. It felt like I was being captured by an army of enemies, and they were taking me away from my own team of soldiers.

I fell into a deep sleep, and then I woke up and observed my surroundings. I saw tall trees and a bad stream of water on both sides of the road. The road was long and the bus seemed to be moving like a giant tortoise. Later, I drifted off into another deep sleep.

Honk! Honk! I woke up to the sound of the bus horn. I saw a huge sign that read, “Welcome to Elayn Hunts Correctional Center.” I saw lots of two-story white brick buildings. The bus engine died. At last, the long ride was over. When two enormous guards climbed up the steps to do a count of the prisoners transported to this facility, I got hit with reality again. I guess this is my new home for now.

AFTER YOU READ: What stands out about this article? Why might people feel that prison is better than jail? Find out more about how prison affects people and families. See Issue #40 of The Change Agent.

Donte Riley, 20 years old, takes HiSET classes at Allen Correctional Center in Kinder, LA. He says, “I want to get my HiSET and maybe learn a trade while I am here. I love to work with dogs and one day I want to work at an animal shelter.”