

L. Wheeler

17-20, 18-20

Could You?, Only One Way Out

L. Wheeler has become a self-taught, award winning, international artist using ~~both~~ <sup>both</sup> paint and ink. With a background in project, engineering, and operations management, he used to help municipalities recover from disasters by managing F.E.M.A. grant efforts. In prison L. Wheeler's efforts to help others has been via such things as meaningful art, training service dogs, and teaching financial classes. For what he had nothing to do with, he is serving two life sentences for one life not taken. Every aspect of both pieces submitted was created purely from memory; from "life" experiences.

• Artwork ① ONLY ONE WAY OUT: Many feel trapped (imprisoned) with only one way out - a grave. Maybe it is a bad relationship, an abused child or bullying at school, a job, one's town, or something else. For L. Wheeler it happens to be a literal prison with razor wire and dirty windows.

• Artwork ② COULD YOU?: Prisoners must eat, sleep, shower, work, use the bathroom, share common areas, and just generally live ~~very~~ close 24/7/365. It's a restrictive, meager existence with zero privacy and frequent berating. Many free people who love each other probably could not maintain their relationship living like this. Could you? Now consider that prisoners forced to share a cell often have nothing in common from a race to religion, values to continued criminal activity, possessions or income to speech, country to city or hood upbringing, gambling to sexual orientation, education to (sleep) schedules, violence tendencies to humor, manners to (gang) affiliation, cleanliness to window position, goals to addictions, age to hygiene, conviction(s) to time served or to serve, TV shows to music, exercise to art or crafts, flatulence to lights, attitudes to disorders or diseases... etcetera. Now imagine it's not a cramped 2-man cell, but, rather, an 8-man... or more. Yet, prisoners are expected to live like this without incident. Could you?