



Prison Journal: An Irreverent Look at Life on the Inside

Joseph F. Timilty, Jack Thomas

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Successful Boston politician Joseph Timilty was indicted in 1993 for conspiracy to commit fraud in a condominium development project. "Technically, I'm guilty, " he admits. "I put my name on a HUD form stating there was no secondary financing. I'm guilty of stupidity, but not conspiracy to defraud." Other defendants cut deals with the U.S. Attorney in exchange for information on suspects the government hoped to implicate. But Timilty refused to falsely inform against those he knew were not involved in the case. As a result of his resistance to a plea bargain, Timilty was arrested at home by the FBI, convicted, and sentenced to serve time at Schuylkill, a federal penitentiary in Minersville, Pennsylvania. For the next four months he kept a secret journal, a diary that he smuggled out of prison in coded notes and letters to his wife. His poignant and frequently hilarious observations about his arrest and trial, his imprisonment, and the aftermath of his experiences are now compiled in this volume. A blend of drama and black comedy, *Prison Journal* captures the paradox of life behind bars - the alternating tedium and tension that develop into monotony and fear and eventually into passivity and violence. Timilty writes with insight about racial tensions among blacks, whites, and Latinos, and with sensitivity about homosexuality at Schuylkill. Amid the horror and the humor, he also comments on hypocritical efforts at rehabilitation and on a rigid, hostile bureaucracy that squanders government funds to preserve an expensive and unsuccessful prison system.

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