

2023

Echoes of Freedom: A Dutchman, Memoirs from Leuven Central Prison

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A Dutchman,
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A TRUE STORY

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GLOSSARY

Bajes: Informal term for prison in Dutch.

Visitors' Cafeteria: The cafeteria/visiting area for family, friends, and acquaintances where the inmate can be visited and snacks or drinks can be consumed.

Cheffen: A Belgian term for a prison guard.

Contraband: All items that are not allowed in prison, including drugs, weapons, alcohol, telecommunications devices, and accelerants.

Perseverance: The determination to keep trying, even when things get difficult.

Echoes of Freedom: The title of the book, referring to the lasting impact of experiencing the loss and regaining of freedom.

Inmate: A person who is in prison as punishment for a crime they have committed.

Hollanders: A term used to refer to people from the Netherlands.

Canteen: A shop where inmates can obtain groceries through a written request.

Leuven Central: One of the largest prisons in Belgium, and the place where the author served his prison sentence.

Memoirs: A written account of the author's personal experiences and memories.

Murderer: Someone who has killed someone else.

Pedophile: Someone who is imprisoned for molesting children.

PSD: Psychological Social Service.

Reintegration: The process by which a person who is released from prison is helped to become a part of society again.

Rehabilitation: The process of helping a person to become a productive and useful member of society again after a period of punishment.

Ring: The floor where the inmate is located, usually circular in layout, hence "ring."

Sensational Stories: News or stories that are intentionally made sensational.

Stigma: A mark of shame or dishonor placed on someone based on a certain characteristic or behavior.

Struggles: An English term often used in Dutch to refer to difficulties or challenges.

Relapse: In the context of this book, a situation where a former inmate reverts to criminal behavior after being released from prison.

Determination: A quality that enables someone to stick to their decisions or plans despite difficulties or opposition.

Rapist: Someone who sexually assaults and abuses women.

Prejudices: Preconceived attitudes or beliefs one holds against another person or group based on their characteristics or behavior.

Yard: The outdoor area where inmates can daily enjoy fresh air and where space is available for activities, sports, and games.

Welcome to my in-depth, personal account titled "Echoes of Freedom: A Hollander, Memoirs from Leuven Central Prison." In this narrative, I will take you on a journey through the twisted corridors of my memory and unveil life behind bars. Brace yourself, as we are about to expose the grim reality of my time in one of Belgium's most notorious prisons.

BACKGROUND

First, let's go back to my life before I stepped through the heavy doors of Leuven Central. Believe it or not, it was far from a fairytale. I was already no stranger to Belgian Police and Justice. Those guys had had me in their sights before and had sent me to another slammer, named "Turnhout Prison." There, I had already served 24 out of a 30-month sentence for what they called "excusable homicide." Yes, I had an illegal weapon, a gun, with no legitimate reason or permit, and I had also shot someone... Well, that's how it goes. Those foolish mistakes landed me in Turnhout Prison, a preview of what was yet to come. But that chapter of my life had already been closed for four years and nine months before the unthinkable happened—the moment my feet would lead me to that infamous Leuven Central Prison.