

## THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS

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1. When we first met Dadgar, I immediately knew he was different from the average Iranian. He was cold and gruff and made no effort to be hospitable to Paul and I or the two Iranian interpreters. Dadgar's opening offer to cancel the meeting if we were not prepared to post bail was a spine chilling beginning for someone who was supposed to be "favorably disposed" to our cause.

Several thoughts ran through my mind. I wondered what game Dadgar was playing with us. Was he trying to intimidate us with a sick joke or was he seriously considering not allowing us to leave the country. Either way, this wasn't the type of meeting I had anticipated. My other thoughts centered on what we had been told by the U.S. Embassy staff prior to our coming to the meeting. Their advice to come alone without representation from our lawyers or someone from the American Embassy quickly appeared to have been a mistake. I knew we were on our own and that this was probably the Embassy's way of not getting too involved in our situation.

My mood was appropriate for the physical surroundings there at the Ministry building. The day was cold and dark. Inside, the building was the same. There was no heat and only a few lights were turned on because of

the fuel shortage in Tehran. I knew that this was not going to be a good day. But, hopefully when it was over, we would be free to finally go home. At last, we were going home.

As the questioning sessions wore on, however, I realized we were headed for trouble. Paul's questioning was supposed to take an hour. Instead, it had taken over five hours. During my wait, I watched Iranian soldiers in the street shooting at cars and beating up the drivers. The scene told me that this was a country going down the drain. The Shah had lost control of the situation and the Revolutionaries were determined to drive him from the country or kill him. I felt sorry for the people in the cars. They were the victims of circumstance, and had no alternative but to hope for the best. Looking at their situation, I knew we had to get out of this country as soon as possible because if the Iranians weren't safe, Americans and other foreigners would be in even more danger.

When Dadgar finally began my session, I knew that Paul was very uncomfortable. I wondered what had happened. From his facial expression, I guessed that things were not going well for us, but we had no opportunity to talk about any details of his session. My gut feelings told me to watch out, this guy Dadgar was trying to trap us so he wouldn't have to let us leave the country. His line of questions increased my concerns.

One after another, Dadgar asked his initial series of questions, just like a machine. I began to understand what was taking so long. With the two-way translations taking place, the time for each question doubled. And, since

the subject was sometimes very complicated and technical in nature, I knew there was a lot of room for misunderstandings--or errors in translation. I thought that what Dadgar was attempting was impossible. No one could understand the complexities of the entire Ministry project with a handful of general questions. It seemed like a game. Was Dadgar just padding his records, or was this a farce?

I clung to the hope that we were going to be released. Otherwise, why would Dadgar sit in this freezing room all day and question us for hours and hours. I was convinced that Dadgar was going through some Persian exercise, intended to protect him from criticism, prior to granting our release. At the absolute worst, he might keep us in the country a while longer before letting us leave. But, either way, it would be just a matter of time.

When Dadgar finished my questions, he asked Paul and I to sign our names beside each one of our answers on his notes. But, it was all in Farsi! I couldn't read a word of it. I sensed a trap, this was a trick to get us to admit to murder or spying or some other crime that Dadgar had invented. I just knew we shouldn't sign those papers. But, we really didn't have much choice. If we were to have any chance of going home, we had to sign those papers.

Abolhasan

Finally, [REDACTED], our interpreter told us that the papers generally contained Dadgar's questions and our answers and he advised us to sign them. So we did. Everyone in the room was tense. It was like waiting for a

balloon to explode. And it did! At this point, Dadgar juggled the papers in a neat stack while he talked to [REDACTED] for several minutes--like he was giving [REDACTED] instructions. We sat there wondering what was going to happen next.

Then [REDACTED] gave us the bad news. Paul and I were shocked. I was mad! I was mad at the American Embassy! I was mad at the world! We had been set up for a trap and had been caught. Now, we were really in trouble. Dadgar was arresting us and sending us off to jail. What a thought! Arrested! Going to an Iranian jail!

A few quick phone calls to one of the EDS managers and to the American Embassy were our last efforts at getting help. They promised to try to help us, but I knew there was little they could do in a short period of time. We asked [REDACTED] to get back to EDS fast and to tell them what had transpired. We were not looking forward to being prisoners in an Iranian jail. The stories we had heard about the torturing of the Shah's political prisoners were not a pleasant thought. I tried to block out these mental pictures and think about getting free, but the dangers associated with any prison were too real to shut out completely. I was scared and I think Paul was too.

Then, two burley Iranian plainclothes policemen entered the room. Dadgar gave them their instructions and then spoke to [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] informed us that Dadgar had decided that it would not be necessary to handcuff us as they did most prisoners. Dadgar was being Persian all the way.

2. As Paul and I drove off with the two policemen who were taking us to the Ministry of Justice, I realized we were passing through the middle of a revolution right there in the streets of Tehran. I wondered where we were being taken and if we would make it alive. All around us cars and buses were overturned and burning. Young teenagers could be seen throwing bottles of burning gasoline at any car they chose for a target. Shots were heard occasionally, but because of the darkness it was hard to see who was shooting at who.

My mind raced ahead to our eventual arrival at the jail. Would someone from EDS or the Embassy be there to meet us and get the bail reduced so we could go home instead of to jail? Surely, the staff at the U.S. Embassy was outraged by what Dadgar had done. Surely, Ambassador Sullivan would intervene to get us released at once. After all, it was an outrage to put two Americans in an Iranian jail--especially when no crime had been committed and when bail had been set at the exorbitant amount of \$12,750,000. The whole situation was ridiculous, except for the reality of Paul and I sitting there in the back of this car silently looking out the windows and wondering what would happen next.

3. Our arrival at the jail was a big disappointment. No one was there to help us. We were on our own and about to begin a very dangerous experience.

After we had been registered into the jail, we were taken downstairs to a cold dimly lit cellblock. I wondered what would happen now. What would the guard do to us, and what would the prisoners do to us? Obviously, we were the only Americans in the jail, and the rest of the prisoners looked like

thugs and murderers. Everything I'd ever heard of or read about in terms of being a prisoner came to mind, and all of these thoughts were bad. Stubbornly, I keep thinking that any minute someone would come to the jail and get us released.

When we were finally assigned to a cell, it looked pretty grim. The room was small, cold, dirty and crowded with lots of other prisoners. They seemed to come alive with curiosity when the guard brought us into the cell.

We tried to communicate with our cellmates. I thought we needed some friends fast, and the best way to win them over was to initiate some Farsi, some sign language and even some French so they would know we were trying to bridge the language barrier. Their interest eased the tension somewhat. At least it seemed they weren't going to kill us outright.

4. When the Embassy staff came to visit us the next morning, our hopes soared that we would be released from the jail. We quickly realized that this wasn't going to happen. The Embassy people were fairly low ranking staff and knew little about our situation or what would happen next. It seemed like they had come to play out a diplomatic game where they notified the Iranians that the U.S. Embassy was concerned for our welfare, but at the same time officially notified Paul and I that they couldn't do much to help. They made it fairly clear that the burden was on EDS to get us out of jail. They did succeed in getting us transferred to the upstairs

cellblock area, but otherwise they offered little hope or assistance and it was very disappointing to see them leave without us. I began to think that we were a problem that the U.S. Embassy wanted to ignore. This really made me mad.

5. Later that day, we were moved to a new cell and found that one of our roommates was Reza Neqhabat, the ex-Deputy Minister of Health and Social Welfare who had been one of our prime contacts for our Ministry contract. In addition, in a cell down the hall were two other Ministry officials, Mr. Pasha and Dr. Towliati. Both had been in key roles in dealing with EDS and were well known by Paul and I. At the time, it seemed very fortunate to be joined with some Iranian associates who spoke English and perhaps had some insight as to what was going on regarding Dadgar's investigation.
  
6. Several days later, on New Years Eve, our cellmates threw a small party for us to boost our morale. We sat on the floor telling stories and jokes and eating fruit until 10 p.m., then it was time to go to sleep. Even though we were joined by a number of very high ranking officials from other cells who tried to cheer us up, it was not much fun to lie in my bed that night and wonder what the new year would bring. I had hoped to be home for the New Year's holiday and had even purchased plane tickets for the flight from Tehran to Paris to Washington, D.C. which was scheduled to arrive just in time for a big family party that was being given to celebrate my return home. This was one of the low points during our stay at the Ministry of Justice jail.

Paul and I did have an interesting visitor on New Year's Day. It was an Italian fellow in the construction business who had been our cell-mate until his release the day before. He brought us two very large bars of imported Italian chocolate and some good news. He told us he had talked to the Italian Ambassador in Tehran about helping to get us released. Evidently, the Italians had figured out the secret and were prepared to meet with the Ambassador Sullivan and intercede with the Iranians on our behalf. His visit was very encouraging and helped lessen the tension of our situation. His release from jail and the courage of his visit gave us hope that it was possible to get out of our dilemma, even if it might take some time.

7. As January wore on, we had good days and we had bad days. Our EDS visitors brought us food and books and clothing and most importantly they brought us news from the outside world. Our brief meetings every four or five days were spent discussing our situation and what was being done to gain our release. Time seemed to be the key factor. Sooner or later, something would work in terms of convincing Dadgar to release us. However, time was also the enemy in that the country was going down hill fast. The revolution was gaining momentum and the Shah's government was starting to fall.

Paul and I weren't the only ones in danger. All of the EDS'ers in Tehran were at great risk just being in the country and were in extreme danger every time they went out on the streets or came to the jail to visit us. I was amazed at their bravery and really appreciated their efforts to help us. Every one of the EDS'ers had a wife and family. Every one of them had

been safely out of Iran and had come back to play some role in the rescue mission. One of the fellows, Bob Young, had come to Iran from Kuwait because of his knowledge of our Ministry contract and his familiarity with Tehran. I knew from a visit that my wife Emily and I had made back in November that Bob and his wife had a brand new baby--yet here he was in Iran about to get himself shot or arrested trying to help Paul and I.

We also knew from the radio and TV reports and from our fellow prisoners how dangerous it was for any foreigner to be in Tehran--especially in the southern part of the city where we were being held. We never knew when the next visit would come or even if there would be a next visit. We realized that all of our people might be forced to leave Tehran at any time to save their own lives. The situation was similar to when the American troops had been forced to evacuate Vietnam with the last Embassy officials fleeing that country on helicopters from the Embassy rooftops. Mentally, it was possible to see that same scene recreated at the American Embassy in Tehran.

8. In between the visits from our people, we also had visits from various Embassy personnel and our Iranian lawyers. We appreciated the Embassy visits because they too were a link to the outside world and because they were also taking a risk coming to see us. But unfortunately, they never had any hard news regarding what the American Government was doing to help us and it was discouraging to see first-hand how inept and helpless our State Department really was.

Our Iranian lawyers on the other hand were encouraging. In their typical Middle-Eastern style, they promised much and produced little. At first, Dr. Hooman almost guaranteed to have us out in a week. He told us that Dadgar was way out on a limb having arrested us without cause and for setting the ridiculous bail limit, which was without precedent, even in Iran. Dr. Hooman told us that we should prepare ourselves for a meeting with Mr. Dadgar to discuss our request for a bail reduction. He thought he had made the necessary arrangements with the higher ups at the Ministry of Justice to force Dadgar to back off his hard line position on holding us in jail.

When the time came for the meeting, we were eagerly anticipating our forthcoming release. Again, our morale soared at this prospect of freedom. The meeting, however, was a failure. Paul and I were tortured, mentally, by Dadgar in a cruel ploy he had improvised to offset Dr. Hooman's strategy. In separate individual sessions, Paul and I were shown a letter that Dadgar had supposedly received from various officials now in charge of the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare. In a broken English translation, the letter contained a demand from the Ministry that our bail be doubled or tripled to offset the problems that had been caused by EDS since the Ministry's computers were now silent and totally inoperable.

It was obvious that the letter was arranged by Dadgar and that he was in collusion with the new Ministry officials. But, it was also obvious in a very deadly sense that Dadgar had beaten Dr. Hooman and had destroyed his efforts to get us released. Paul and I had a long walk back to our cell

that afternoon, and we spent a sleepless night wondering what would happen next. It was frightening to see how hard Dadgar was fighting to keep us in jail. He had even commented to Dr. Hooman during my session that he felt sorry for Paul and I and knew we weren't guilty of any crime--but never-the-less, he wasn't going to release us unless the bail was paid.

9. The bail was a story in itself. \$12,750,000 was a staggering amount of money. No one had ever paid that much ransom for anyone. I recalled stories of kidnappings of American businessmen in South America who were held for ransom for one or two million dollars. They were usually killed because the hostages' family and company were unwilling to pay the money demanded. Other sensational news stories of kidnappings of millionaires, or political figures, or celebrities had never involved ransom demands of more than three or four million dollars. In our case, \$12,750,000 was out of the question. No one would ever pay that much money to get Paul and I out of jail.

Besides, even if the bail was paid, Dadgar had never fully agreed that it would buy us the right to leave Iran. Unfortunately, we knew that paying the money might only get us out of jail, but we would still be under house arrest in Tehran. This "catch-22" made it even more unlikely that we would be released in time to escape the collapse of Iran. From a mental standpoint, the bail was more of a trap than an escape mechanism.

10. Our days in jail were long and boring. Time didn't pass, it stood still. We were forced to follow a fairly strict schedule at the first jail regarding when we slept, when we ate our meals, when we were allowed to go

outside for exercise (once a week, for a half hour we were taken outside to walk around a circle in the courtyard, like cattle or horses being exercised), and when we could have a hot shower. This last luxury was a privilege that we received only once in the three weeks we spent at the first jail. On this grand occasion, each cell was allowed to shower as a group for five minutes. Many of the prisoners took advantage of the opportunity to wash some of their clothes and other belongings. Everyone stayed in the hot water right up to the last minute for this was the only chance we had to wash in anything but cold water from a sink. Modesty was not a consideration, for in jail you learn to adjust and make the best of a bad situation. And we did just that.

We learned to ignore dirt and bugs. We learned to eat new food that we had never eaten before. We learned to live within a small clearly defined personal boundary that in jail becomes your "turf". We made a number of mental and physical adjustments in order to cope with our restrictions and the confines of our prison environment. Some of these adjustments we made to make our circumstances more bearable, such as draping small towels around our bunks at night to block out the lights so we could sleep.

Some of the adjustments we made in order to survive. For example, as the time went on and the situation in Iran worsened, Paul and I began to withhold information from our cellmates and our Ministry friends in particular. We realized that they too were desperate to gain their own freedom, and it was possible for them to betray us to the guards or to Dadgar if they could trade the right kind of information, such as plans to escape or news of a visit from someone like Ross Perot.

The remainder of our thoughts and activities were spent in an effort to pass the time and keep from going batty. We read book after book. We played chess. We walked, we talked, and we sat silently on our bunks and thought about our families and the good times we were going to have when we got home.

I spent some time daily writing notes in a diary about the events of the day. I wrote about our visitors and about news in Tehran, anything that seemed important enough to want to remember. All of the information was written with the assumption that my diary might be confiscated and read by the guards or perhaps even Dadgar. To protect identities, I used initials rather than names. I created news to throw off an unauthorized reviewer of my notes or changed events just enough so I could remember what had happened without actually recording the full details. In some cases, I'd spent hours carefully measuring the dimensions of our cell and the rest of the jail. Then I'd sketch out a drawing as a pictorial record of our surroundings. As it turned out later, I had actually created just the information the rescue team would have needed for an assault on the Ministry of Justice jail. It was just another way to pass the time.

Somewhere along the way, I developed a simple formula for the conversion of real time to jail time. It went something like this:

<u>Real Time</u>		<u>Jail Time</u>
1 Second	=	1 Minute
1 Minute	=	1 Hour
1 Hour	=	1 Day
1 Week	=	1 Month
1 Month	=	1 Year

Psychologically, time was a burden--especially for an American. In our situation, once several weeks had passed and we realized that there would be no quick solution to our problem, time took on a new dimension. Since we weren't being held for a specific fixed length period of time, such as 90 days or 5 years, we had nothing to look forward to time-wise. There was no point in scratching tic-marks on the wall to count the days or the years. It didn't matter how many days had passed, at least as far as determining how many days or months or years we had left before we would be released. Therefore, there wasn't much light on the end of the tunnel to look forward to for morale purposes.

The American prisoner aspect was interesting, particularly for Paul and I who had been trained in EMS to seek results in a minimal period of time. I wanted to get out--fast! I didn't want to spend another minute more than

was absolutely necessary to get out of that jail and back to my family in Washington. I'm sure Paul felt the same way. Therefore, our situation became extremely frustrating as the days and weeks wore on.

I wondered what were our people doing that was taking so long? What had happened at the American Embassy? Had they all gone back to the United States and left Paul and I behind? Considering the circumstances in Iran and the bail amount, I sometimes wondered if we had been given up on as a lost cause. Fortunately, we had just enough contact with our EDS'ers and our Embassy visitors to keep our hopes alive and to enable us to be patient enough to wait another day.

By contrast, our Persian friends seemed less annoyed by the passage of time. Their culture and society was oriented to "Farda", tomorrow not today.

11. One other personal activity was letter writing to my wife, Emily. Under the circumstances, I had a lot I wanted to tell her and my kids regarding my feelings for them--just in case something happened and I didn't make it back. The letters were like the ones a pilot would write before he went on a dangerous mission. Generally, they were given to a friend to mail, if the pilot didn't return. In my case, Keane Taylor was the friend that I gave my letters to for later transmission to my wife back in the States. Keane would take my letters back to his apartment or to his hotel and call my wife through the EDS switchboard in Dallas, Then, he would read her the letter and tell her how things were progressing in Tehran. Occasionally,

EDS got mail to us from our family, including one letter from my wife which included a snap shot of my six year old son standing in front of their Christmas tree. This picture in particular gave me something to hope for and strengthened my resolve to hang on and to somehow get home again.

Paul also got a picture of his two daughters in a letter from his wife Ruth. He gave the picture to one of our Iranian cellmates, as a present, when we were transferred to the Gashre prison. To me, this was a touching gift of friendship in a very unusual situation.

12. Finally, the day we had all dreaded suddenly came. The Shah and his family got on a plane and left Iran. With him went the last chance for a pro-American solution to the revolution. I can remember the day just like it was yesterday. The Shah's exit got full coverage on radio and TV and in all the papers. We saw it all on the prison TV, and even though the sound was in Farsi, there were plenty of translations available. The Iranian prisoners also had good sources of news from their friends outside the jail who came to visit them on this historic day. We were right in the middle of things and knew exactly what had happened and what would likely happen next.

Everyone knew that Khomeini was coming home to Iran from his retreat in Paris. It was inevitable, just a matter of time. The only obstacles to Khomeini's return were Shahpour Bakhtiar, the new Prime Minister who had been appointed by the fleeing Shah, and the Iranian Armed Forces which

were still commanded by the Shah's loyal Generals. There was still a chance that the revolution might cool down, now that the Shah had been driven out of the country.

What Paul and I didn't know was what this event would mean to us as far as our detention and safety in jail was concerned. We knew that the Shah was considered by many Iranians as an American puppet. Therefore, it seemed logical to assume that the danger-level for Americans in Iran would increase rapidly. Time was running out on our chances to escape.

That day in particular was terrifying in many ways. We didn't know what would happen next. The revolutionaries were running wild in the streets in a mad celebration of the overthrow of the Shah. All across the country, and especially in Tehran, statues and monuments of the Shah and his father were being pulled down and destroyed. We wondered what the mobs would do next. We also wondered what the guards and the Iranian prisoners would do next. It was not inconceivable for Americans to quickly become the targets of this pent-up Iranian vengence. Paul and I stayed in our cell and tried to be as inconspicuous as possible for the rest of that day. It was impossible, however, to block out the noise of the mobs outside the jail on the streets. The sights and sounds of this event were like a nightmare.

13. Several days later, Paul and I were told to pack up our belongings quickly; we were being transferred to some other jail. The alarm bells were ringing in my head at the thought of being taken to another jail. I wondered what would it be like. Would it be as safe as the jail we were in

now, or would it be one of the prisons where we would be tortured or killed? Would our friends at EDS be able to find us? Could they still visit us and tell us what was being done to get us released? It was very depressing to be singled out and moved away from our Iranian associates and our familiar surroundings, which weren't great--but had been safe, so far.

We were herded onto a mini-bus with six or eight other prisoners and guards. One prisoner was a Frenchman who said he was being released that day. This was good news, maybe we would be released too! Another prisoner was the same Iranian who had been in charge of the cell where we slept the first night. I wondered why he was being transferred along with the other Iranians. Surely, they weren't being moved so they could be safer. It made me wonder what was really going on; why were they transferring Paul and I to another jail?

The ride through the streets of Tehran was interesting. There was absolute chaos around the Government buildings near the Ministry of Justice. Everywhere, you could see signs of damage from the mobs and revolutionaries. It was obvious that it was just a matter of time until the weak Bakhtiar government would be overrun. The Army was everywhere with soldiers and tanks, but they made no effort to control traffic or maintain order. I wondered what had happened to our people in Tehran. Had they been forced to leave the country when the Shah fled, or were they still there trying to get us free?

Somehow, I knew they were still there trying. I began to believe that this transfer had somehow been arranged by EDS. Instead of taking us to a new jail, I hoped that the bus would divert and instead take us to the airport where a plane would be waiting to fly us out of the country. For a while, I believed that everything had been arranged for our release. Since the Shah had been forced to flee, the American Embassy would now realize the great danger that Paul and I were in, and surely they had interceded and arranged for us to be freed--with help from EDS, of course. I imagined that this bus ride was just a cover story to get us out of the Ministry of Justice jail without arousing the suspicion of the Iranian authorities, such as Dadgar.

For a while, our release seemed possible. The bus was driving north through Tehran and we were now passing sections of town that I knew and was familiar with. I felt safer being out of the southern part of the city.

Later, the bus pulled up in front of what looked like a fortress. There were high stone walls surrounding the area. There were machine gun emplacements on the top of the walls. There were high metal gates built into the walls. We had arrived at the new prison. It was awesome and ominous. It was scary to even see such a place. I knew then that we weren't being released. My hopes for freedom were gone. This jail was a new nightmare. I wondered what would happen to us here. Life was really rotten. What had Paul and I done to deserve this fate?

14. We registered at the jail office and were then taken to meet General Mohari, the commanding officer of all of the jails in Tehran. He spoke English and appeared friendly. He told us that he had arranged our transfer to this jail because it was larger and better protected and we would be safer here than at our former jail. We didn't know whether to believe him or not. We hoped that somehow EDS or the American Embassy had contacted this General, or some other Iranian official, and had helped arrange our transfer. This jail was definitely safer from outside assault. But, we didn't know how safe it would be on the inside.

15. Our new building was a definite improvement compared to our cell at the first jail. Our room here was much bigger--maybe 25 by 30 feet square, and we had only one roommate, an Iranian lawyer who spoke both French and English. Our building was enclosed as a separate compound and we were free to go outside anytime during the day; so this was definitely better quarters as far as the jail was concerned. The food was better too. Our roommate, several other Iranian prisoners, and Paul and I were able to buy food from outside the prison. The whole environment was better, at least on the surface.

The reality, however, was different. We were still prisoners. Time still dragged on and on. There was still a revolution going on in Iran and it was getting worse and worse every day. It appeared that we were no closer to being free than we were the first day we had been captured. In many ways, our situation had worsened. It appeared that little progress was being made by EDS or the Embassy to gain our freedom. Badgar was still

firmly in control. It was tough to keep hoping that everything would work out before the country was destroyed. Time was definitely running out for all of us. We had to get out of this jail as soon as possible.

16. Here at the Gasre Prison, we still had visitors from time to time from EDS, our Iranian lawyer Dr. Hooman, and occasionally the U.S. Embassy. The Embassy's visits had fallen off because of the danger to their staff traveling in the streets of Tehran and perhaps because of their reception when they came to the jail. Paul and I left little doubt in their minds that we thought we had been set up by the Embassy through their ineptness and stupidity. Nevertheless, visitors were our only contact with the outside world and we looked forward to their every visit in hopes that sooner or later the good news would finally come that we had been freed.

The frequency of our visitors was also very important to our morale. Because there were restrictions, imposed by the Iranian authorities regarding when and who could visit us, a pattern resulted with someone coming to the jail at least every 3 or 4 days. Once in a while, five or more days would pass between visits and we would quickly become alarmed that something adverse had happened outside the jail which would leave us stranded. Fortunately, that didn't happen often.

All of our visitors were important for many different reasons. Regardless of who it was, they showed that someone was still trying and that conditions in Tehran had not deteriorated too far--yet. It was very emotional for Paul and I to talk to our friends such as Keane Taylor, John Howell, Bob Young, Rich Gallagher, Jay Coburn, and even some of our

Iranian associates. Their bravery was exceptional and despite the danger they were in, they never showed any concern for their personal safety. Their personal strength helped drain off some of our fear and provided us a constant input of optimism and hope. I sometimes wondered if they were making up some of the good news just to keep our morale high.

Although all the visits were special and important to us, two visits stand out as extra-special. The first of these was the visit by Ross Perot in late January of 1979. In some ways his visit was a surprise, but in others it was not. We had some hints that Ross might come to the jail and we knew he was actively involved in trying to get us released. But one day, there he was walking across the courtyard, coming to see us in person. The smile on his face and his good cheer reminded me of what it would be like for a child to actually see Santa Claus on Christmas Eve. There he was, bringing us food and presents and news of all their efforts on our behalf. Words can't describe what it meant to see Ross in person--right there with us in the middle of the jail. His presence seemed to defy the dangerous situation in Tehran and we knew for certain that everything possible was being done by Ross and EDS to get us out. I knew they would succeed if time didn't run out first.

Our second special visitor was Father Williams, an eighty year old priest from the Catholic Church that Paul and I attended there in Tehran. Despite the fact that only a handful of Americans, and even fewer Catholics, remained in Tehran at this time--which was about the 9th of February, 1979, Father Williams was still on duty as the Pastor in charge of the Church. He had stayed in the country, per his own decision, even though

his superiors had given him the option to leave--an option seldom given to a Catholic Priest. Well, one day we had a new visitor along with one of our regulars Keane Taylor; it was Father Williams.

Despite the risks, Father Williams had come to see Paul and I to help boost our morale and to strengthen our spiritual resolve. Besides granting us absolution for our sins, he told us about some of his trials as a younger man. Twice, he had been in great danger in China as a missionary. The first occasion was when China had been invaded by the Japanese during World War II. And, the second occasion was during the Mao Revolution. Both experiences had been dangerous for Father Williams and had involved some amount of personal captivity, so he knew what we were going through.

His visit was very inspirational for me, especially since it came at a time of great danger. In a direct and positive manner, his presence gave me new strength and hope to face the difficult days ahead. I didn't know that we would get out of the jail alive, but I felt I was better prepared as a Catholic to face death if that became necessary.

He left us in good spirits saying that he would return on the following Monday, February the 12th, and that he would bring the Host so we could receive Communion. As it turned out, Father Williams never made his second visit. Paul and I had escaped from Gasre on Sunday, the 11th of February.

17. There were other occasions for religion for Paul and I during our time in jail and also during our escape overland into Turkey. Using a small pocket rosary that I had been allowed to keep while a prisoner, I daily said

numerous prayers including the old Catholic standbys, the "Our Fathers" and the "Hail Marys". We had plenty of time for prayer and numerous extremely dangerous situations where only God could possibly have saved us. I don't know whether anyone else on the rescue team said prayers or not, but I probably said enough for all of us.

18. The time finally came when it was obvious the jail was going to be attacked by the Revolutionary mobs. All during the previous day, fighting and shooting had increased markedly between the Revolutionaries and the Police and Armed Forces still loyal to the Shah's government. Time was running out for the EDS escape plan--whatever it was.

Every time a helicopter flew overhead, I watched for a ladder to come dropping out of the sky into our compound courtyard. Mentally, I had practiced such an escape dozens of times during the previous week and I thought I knew what to do if this was the plan that the escape team tried. Actually, I didn't know for sure who the escape team would be. Maybe it would just be a small group of EDS'ers. Maybe it would be a large force of American Military. Either way, I was ready.

In preparation for an escape attempt of one type or another, I had spent a good deal of time carefully inspecting every aspect of our building and compound for escape routes. I had walked around the perimeter of our courtyards, both in front and behind our building, looking at the walls and fences in particular. I had also spent a fair amount of time watching the guards, counting them and mentally noting that they were primarily armed with rifles.

I had decided that an alternative to helicopters would be a mini-invasion through the high brick wall immediately outside our compound. The houses that could be seen on the other side of this wall, from the windows on the second floor of our building, made it obvious that we were very close to freedom. I wondered how it would happen. Would the escape team blow a hole in the wall for us to scramble through, or would we use rope ladders to climb over the wall? Mentally, I was about convinced that I could get over that wall, with or without a rope ladder. I certainly was ready to try.

19. This was the day! One way or another, Paul and I knew this would be our last day in this jail. The mobs were close by the jail and the shooting was rapidly intensifying. Many of the officers at the jail had fled in civilian clothes. We wondered what would happen next. Some of the prisoners were beginning to leave our compound. We watched one of them, a notorious Iranian millionaire, running toward the back of the prison. What was back there, a rear exit? We didn't know.

Paul and I went outside on the front porch of our building to see what was happening. It was a wild scene. People were running in every direction. Many of the prisoners like us weren't sure what to do. Bullets were flying all around us. You could hear them hitting the tree limbs and occasionally the buildings. One bullet landed right at Paul's feet. He picked it up and we went back inside, where it was safer, to discuss what we should do--stay or run. Finally, the decision was made for us, or so we thought at the time. Someone had set fire to the buildings at the front of the

jail--way up by the main entrance gates. It now appeared that our choices were to run and try to escape somehow, or stay in the building and eventually burn. The choice was easy.

As we went through the metal gates of our compound, we stopped to shake hands and to wish each other good luck. At that moment, both of us knew we could die at any second. Mentally, I estimated we would probably be shot in the next several minutes. I imagined that it would be a stray bullet that would hit us, not necessarily one aimed directly at us.

Amazingly enough, I wasn't afraid that I was about to die. All I could think of was my family. I regretted all the things that I would miss now, such as my children growing up. I felt anger that I was about to be robbed of my future. I wondered what difference this would make to my wife and children, what would happen to them.

These thoughts didn't last long--just a moment or two. Then I began reacting, just trying to stay alive a while longer. Paul and I were swept up in a sea of prisoners pouring from the cell-blocks and headed for the front courtyards of the prison.

We ran past the Officers Club where we had been visited by Ross only two or three weeks before. It seemed like years since he had been there. Now, the club was being ransacked by the prisoners who were bent on revenge and destruction. Cars, windows, you name it--they were destroying it. I ran along seeing all this like it was a dream.

At last, we are in the front courtyard! We have been joined by eight or ten of the other foreign prisoners. All of us are looking for a way out of this jail. One or two of the foreigners are joking about the situation. They think it is really a blast. In a way, their humor rubs off on the rest of us and for a moment I begin to believe we are somehow going to get out of this mess alive.

Then it happens! Suddenly, I see a prisoner waving to anyone that cares that he has found a way out of the prison. We follow him through the door in the wall, then through several rooms, then over a wall onto the street. We are free, we are free! I feel like dancing in the streets. But, we aren't safe yet. A car full of revolutionaries races by with guns sticking out of every window. The sharks smell blood. We realize we need to get away from here fast--but where to go is the problem.

American Embassy? No! They would probably turn us back over to the Iranian Authorities. French Embassy? Good idea, but we don't know where it is located. Therefore, we decide to start walking away from the jail. Anywhere is better than here; the more miles we can put between us and the jail, the better. For all we know, the Police might come at any minute to recapture the escaping prisoners.

20. Later, we got up enough nerve to try to hitchhike a ride. In our situation, we thought it was obvious that we were escaped prisoners. Actually, no one knew and few Iranians cared--but we didn't know that at

that time. In addition, we weren't sure whether Americans were safe on the streets or not. Because of the close relationship between the Shah and America, we assumed we were still in grave danger.

The first ride from two Iranian men got us half way to our new destination--the Hyatt Hotel, in the Northern suburbs of Tehran. These men were friendly enough; however, they didn't have time to take us further than an area several miles south of the hotel.

As we walked along looking for another safe ride, we suddenly heard someone calling to us from a car on the other side of the street. "Mr. Paul, Mr. Bill, hello!" It was one of our guards from the jail!! He was smiling and waving at us like we were his best friends. His smile and the look in his eyes said it all... "I won't tell who you are, if you don't tell who I am!" We waved hello and kept walking. I thought to myself, this world is crazy.

Several minutes later, we got our second ride. This time, it was a young Iranian couple. Eventually, they took us all the way to the Hyatt Hotel; but on the way we passed through numerous situations which exposed all of us to extreme danger. Actually, they were quite brave to pick us up and to drive us through the demonstrations we passed. Some of their countrymen might not have liked their passengers, and they might have paid a steep price for helping us.

But, finally we were there! Safe at last at the hotel! And, several minutes later, we in fact have found our people and are having a joyous reunion in Bill Gayden's room. We even get a chance to talk to Tom Walter and Mitch Hart back in the U.S. They promise to call our wives at once to tell them the good news--we are free and safe!! At last!!

I remember thinking that our ordeal was finally over. Now all we had to do was get on the American military planes that must be standing by to fly us to freedom. It was somewhat disappointing to find out that no planes were waiting. But, Paul and I were getting used to disappointments, so I wasn't too worried. After all, the Iranian Government was down the drain. Dadgar had either been arrested or was in hiding himself. That's what I thought.

It was a startling jolt back to reality, when the Colonel and his boys raced us out of the hotel to the Dvoranchik's apartment. I couldn't believe it was true. We weren't safe at all! Matter of fact, now we were the object of a man-hunt throughout Tehran. The bloodhound was Dadgar, and he was hot on our trail. For a while, I wondered if our people weren't overreacting a bit. It was impossible to believe that any legal Iranian authority was still functioning. After all, the city was in the middle of a revolution and anyone representing the Shah's government was in danger of being shot. Even if Dadgar had somehow survived the overthrow of the government, who were the policemen that would carry out his orders? We had seen the guards fleeing the jail, and we had passed a number of burned-out police stations. So, who were the policemen that were looking for us now? The Devil and his men were the only answer I could think of.

21. During the next several days, there wasn't much I could do but wait to be told what we would do next. The escape plan called for an overland trip into Turkey, by car. I thought we had too big a group to succeed, but the Colonel was calling the shots and everyone followed his lead without too much discussion. Our weakness in my mind centered around the number of people in our group which was large enough to require three vehicles; and Kathy Gallagher, who was experiencing severe medical problems; and the Gallagher's dog, which couldn't be counted on to stay quiet. I knew the dog would be resolved one way or the other, but I thought the other two problems were serious enough to get us all killed.

The only alternative I could think of was for Paul and I to turn ourselves in at the American Embassy and hope that they would help us escape from Iran. It didn't make sense for ten or twelve people to get killed to save the two of us.

I discussed this alternative first with Bill Gayden and later with the Colonel. As it turned out, they came up with a better alternative. Their solution was to split off part of the group, the safest people, to the American Embassy. The rest of us would still go out overland. This plan seemed like it had a much better chance of success for everyone involved.

22. Preparing for the trip was an experience like something from the movies. It was hard to believe that this was really happening to us. We packed food, we hid the money, we traded clothes so everyone had warm shoes and

coats, and everyone quietly prepared for the trip. That is, except the Colonel and Jay Coburn. They were having major problems lining up one or two Iranians to drive out of the country with us.

Here we were within eight hours of the time we were to leave, and we didn't have one confirmed Iranian driver there in the apartment ready to go. Most people would have given up or postponed the trip. But, the Colonel and Jay didn't give up, they kept trying to reach one Iranian after another. There wasn't a thing the rest of us could do to help. Finally, it was done. <sup>Rashid</sup> [REDACTED] was on the way over, he would be our guide.

I thought this was asking a lot of someone so young and inexperienced. <sup>Rashid</sup> [REDACTED] had shown a lot of promise as a future system's engineer with his outstanding work on the Ministry Project, and he had helped our people try to find Paul and I after our escape from the Gasre prison, but the upcoming escape trip was different. We needed a man, not a boy. In our situation, we had run out of choices. We were now in a countdown that couldn't be stopped.

- <sup>Rashid</sup>
23. The trip out of Tehran went like a breeze. [REDACTED] quickly showed that he was smart and he was brave. He and the Colonel made an excellent team. It was interesting to see the way they worked together--just like they had made this trip before.

The Colonel was definitely in charge, but he somehow knew what [REDACTED] could handle by himself. [REDACTED] in turn knew when he was over his head, and when to let the Colonel call the shots. Keane did some of the driving so [REDACTED] could rest, but except for that, he and I were just passengers going along for the ride.

The trip itself was extremely interesting. The scenery in the mountains was fantastic and the people we passed and their villages were straight out of a National Geographic magazine. Every now and then, we were snapped back to reality by the next road block. We couldn't forget for long how dangerous our trip really was. The time passed rapidly during the first day, with lots of stories from the Colonel about his Army days and the time he had spent in Turkey. Late in the afternoon, it seemed like we were home free.

We were now so far from Tehran, I thought it might be possible to get to the border that night. I began to wonder what it would be like riding a horse through snow covered mountains in the dark. This was the plan and everything else had happened just like it was supposed to, up to this point in time.

Then it happened! Hard stop! This roadblock was real. [REDACTED] wasn't going to be able to sweettalk his way through this one. The Iranians in this town knew what they were doing, and they wanted to know in detail who we were and where we were going. So off we went to see the man in charge--at his house. The Iranian guards came along to keep us company.

It was time for me to get out my pocket rosary and to say a few prayers, just in case.

Eventually, everything turned out well, here in Mahabad. We had a great dinner and we spent the night as guests in a villa built especially for the Shah. The people were so friendly they even escorted us to the next town in the morning. We also learned that the serving of tea was a good sign and meant your answers had been believed. I don't believe these people served tea to someone they were about to shoot. We never found out for sure.

24. Rezayeh was our next hard stop. We spent most of the second day as guests in this city. We saw an Army parade, just after they had surrendered to the local townspeople. And, we had the opportunity to visit the local religious school, where the Mullah had established himself as the new man in charge of the local government.

We spent the entire afternoon wondering whether or not we would be shot by our friend the Communist guard, or whether we would be sent back to Tehran for questioning by the newly installed Revolutionary Council.

Rashid

Finally, just after dinner, [REDACTED] returned from a long absence and informed us that we had just eaten our last meal in Iran. We were relieved to find out what he meant--that we were free to leave and cross the border into Turkey.

We put our Khomeini campaign posters up on our Range Rovers and set out for the hinterlands to drum up some votes from the locals, who we hoped would be sleeping and off the roads.

25. As luck would have it, we had one more major roadblock to overcome. It turned out to be the toughest one of them all. Once we were stopped and the questions began, it was immediately apparent that we were in deep deep trouble. We tried every possible explanation to get these fellows to let us drive to the border and into the safety of Turkey.

It was maddening to be that close to the border, to have come so far, to have been through so much danger and adversity--and then to get stopped by a bunch of dumb farmers in the mountains of Iran. All we could do was keep talking and try to convince them that we weren't American military and we weren't Russian spies.

The guards weren't buying our story. We had a major problem with passports. Paul and I didn't have ours and the guards thought there was something very suspicious about our entire group. Besides that, we had two beautiful Range Rovers and probably some money, that I'm sure they wanted to steal from us if they thought they could get away with the crime. Murder was something they could have justified in a minute. Besides, who would have ever known?

Rashid

Rashid

█████, and the Colonel through █████, were doing all the talking for our group. They told me to try to look less conspicuous since I didn't have a passport. It was hard for me to hide. I had nowhere to go in the back seat of that Range Rover.

Besides that, I wasn't bothering anyone. I was sitting there minding my own business saying my prayers with my pocket rosary. I said every prayer I knew over and over a dozen times. I prayed harder than I had ever prayed before in my life. This was not a joke. We were in God's hands now. It was going to take a miracle to get us out of this mess.

The tension grew and grew. The guards were getting meaner and meaner. Any minute, one of them might have gotten carried away and started shooting. Even <sup>Rashid</sup> █████ was scared. He warned us to do exactly what he said to do, without hesitation. I don't think he knew what was going to happen next. Finally, the guards got into the cars with us and drove off into the darkness. I thought we were almost to the end of the line. Our luck had just run out. Surely, they were taking us off somewhere to shoot us.

Instead, we drove up to some farm houses that looked like the group's headquarters, judging from the number of cars and jeeps parked there. We were taken inside the main house, told to remove our shoes, and guided to a dimly lit back room--where we sat on the floor in a semi-circle across from the man in charge.

Later, when the questions were over and our answers were believed, our hosts brought out the tea. This was a good sign and we knew it. We drank a second round of tea to show good hospitality, but we passed up an offer to spend the night as their guests. Keane got out his pocket camera and pretended to take their pictures. Unfortunately, he had run out of film and we didn't get any pictures of these wild Iranians who were now our great friends. This turn-around in their behavior towards us was unbelievable and unforgettable. Even Reza was surprised that we were still alive. As we drove away, and continued on toward the border, <sup>Rashid</sup> told us that we were lucky that we spoke little Farsi. Otherwise, we would have known what they had said about us and how close we came to getting shot. We knew he was right. It had been bad enough without knowing exactly what was being said by our captors.

26. The rest of the trip through Turkey was equally exciting. Although we continued to face one dangerous situation after another, it was somewhat dulled by what we had already been through. At some point, the human body and mind can only accept so much danger. Then, the system is full and more danger runs off like water from a roof. You are scared and afraid of the new danger, but you peak out and are not more afraid. At least this was true in my case. Once we crossed the border into Turkey, we were safe as far as I was concerned. Paul and I and the rescue team had made it back safely. Nothing could prevent us from getting back home to our families now, or at least that's what I thought at the time.