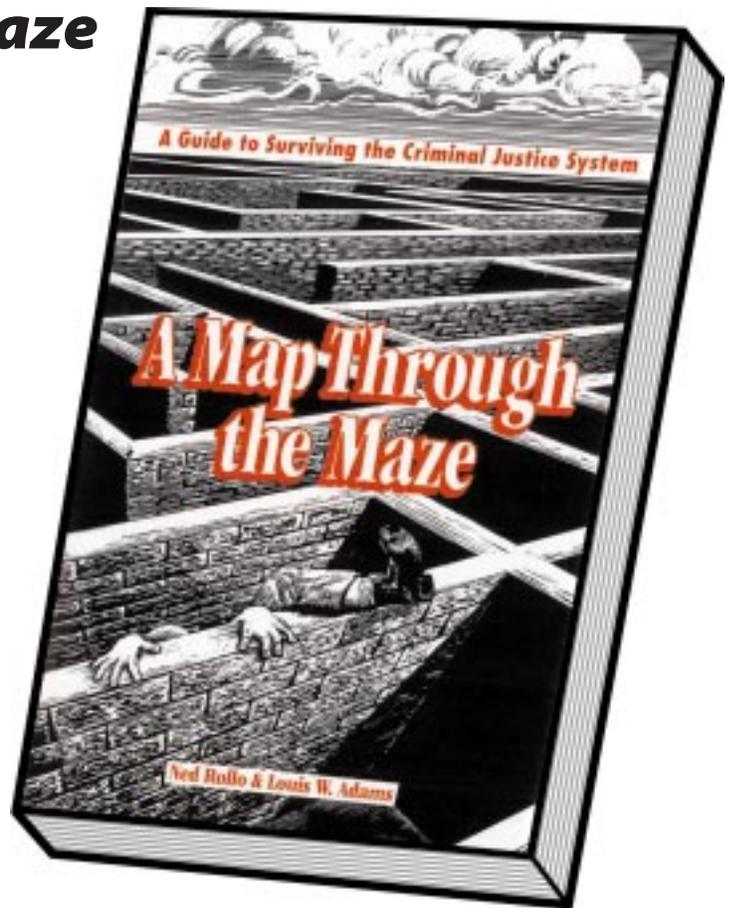


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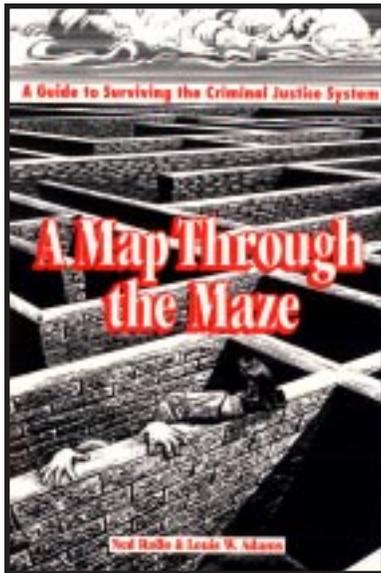
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A MAP THROUGH THE MAZE — Table of Contents

Introduction

The Nature of Freedom

Just Cut Me Loose! • True Freedom • Making Yourself Free

Beating the System

Growth Is the Key • No Escape from Ourselves! • Inside the Razor Wire • Making the System Work for You • Taking Action • More Than Survival

The Correctional Experience

Welcome to the Maze

Waking Up in a Cage: Arrest to Conviction

Falling Off into Hell: Life in Prison

Rebirth and Beyond: Release to Success

Advice for Families of Offenders

by Louis W. Adams, D.Min.

Dealing with Loss • Fighting Depression • Your Relationship with Reality • Your Relationship with Your Loved One • A Word on Helping Children • Dealing with the System • The Homecoming • A Final Word

BEATING THE SYSTEM

"Little brother, beating the system is the name of this game!"

Every convict searches for ways to defeat the "system." But just how does a person **really** get over? I've asked myself this question for 26 years. Do you become a jail house lawyer or a militant reformer, dig a hole under the east wall, or do dope deals over the pay phones? Or are there better ways? Just what does one have to do to "beat the system"?

If you go to war with the Man, what happens? In comes the goon squad to strum on your head. If it's a riot, up drives the national guard. If the weekend warriors cannot do the trick, they call in the army to drop the hammer. The body count is always the same. The Man: a few, mostly innocent bystanders. Convicts: **MANY**, most also just innocent bystanders. Therefore, direct physical assault achieves *nothing* but a blood bath. Plus it gives the administration an excuse to tighten the screws yet another turn!

Note: I am not saying you should just roll over and play dead. But be careful not to draw your sword and step off into quicksand. Maintaining your dignity is one thing, but setting yourself up for a fresh dime or a load of #00 buckshot is just plain silly. If you really think that making your problems worse is a way to make them better, I suggest you reconsider. I know one con whose way of getting over was to make a hundred grand selling truck loads of dope from inside the walls. He actually did it. Of course, he is still doing the extra 25 without parole they dropped on him. In the end the only thing he "beat" was himself.

So if you really want to beat the system, two things are necessary: **you've got to out-live them and outgrow them!** This means using every drop of energy and every opportunity to improve yourself on *every possible level*. Because until you learn to grow beyond the maze, you are doomed to remain a resident of some high security tomb with well-polished floors.

GROWTH IS THE KEY

"Change is certain, growth is optional."

Change Is Certain

Going to prison is like being sent to a hostile alien planet, where you face a long series of extreme hardships and strange, unnatural ways of thinking and acting. It's a three-shift graveyard full of distant memories and false dreams. A prisoner looks around and thinks, "There ain't **nothing** happening here but fools talking trash!" And, in fact, all you actually see and hear are people constantly shuffling to cope with day-to-day survival.

But that's only on the surface of things. While every day brings the same old boring routine, what's going on *inside* of people never stands still. Like any war zone, a prison is a place which **demand**s change! The question is, what types of changes are going to occur inside of YOU? Will they be positive or negative? Useful or harmful? Will you come out of it better able to cope and be content, or end up a stone basket case?

— from *A Map Through The Maze*, page 7

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