

BADGE, BARS, TO BEYOND

HOW I CAME BACK FROM
SINNING TO WINNING!

BY JOE KELLEY

CAPE COD TIMES

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What Joseph "Joe" F. Kelley III hopes participants at the "Breaking the Chains: Addiction and Mental Health" event at the Sea Crest Beach Hotel see before them is an individual who recovered from opioid addiction to lead a life he loves — and who can help inspire others to do the same. PHOTO BY PHOTIS

Chain breaker

Ex-Mashpee police officer comes back from addiction to speak in Falmouth

Cape bridge replacement costs may soar to \$4B

Allston megaproject price also up by \$300 million

Chris Libinski
STATE HOUSE NEWS SERVICE

The public sector is feeling the strain of soaring inflation, too: officials now expect that a once-in-a-generation infrastructure overhaul in Allston will cost \$300 million more than estimated, and the price of replacing the Cape Cod bridges could more than double.

Outlining a series of projects that will feature in an upcoming application for competitive federal grants, Transportation Secretary Janey Treleer presented the Department of Transportation's board with a \$2 billion price for highway, rail and pedestrian work in Allston, up from the \$17 billion estimate offered in the fall.

Similarly, a 2020 projection that it would cost \$1.4 billion to \$1.65 billion to demolish and replace the Bourne and Sagamore bridges — which the Baker administration expects will be

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Front



Side

From hometown sports hero to scholarship collegiate athlete to a K-9 officer quickly rising through the ranks of the profession he'd wanted his entire life, this husband and father never imagined he'd end up in prison but that's exactly where Joe Kelley's story begins.

Badge to Bars and Beyond details how law enforcement officer turned inmate # survived prison and eventually re- built a life that addiction and poor choices had destroyed.

If you've ever felt down-and-out, been ashamed of what you've done, or embarrassed by the choices you've made and the people you've let down, this book is not only a redemption story that will inspire you, but the practical guidebook you need. If you feel you've let the world down, failed publicly, been exposed — and judged — for the worst moments of your life... or know someone who has... this book will show you how to rebuild a life worth living. If you've ever seen the life you loved burn down around you, lost hope for the future and confidence in yourself, this book will help you rise from the ashes.



Written equally for fallen leader, addicted parent, convicted felon, bored retiree, bankrupt professional, grieving parent, reluctant divorcee, Badge to Bars and Beyond is a wake up call and GPS system for anyone ready to rebuild their life with meaning... starting now.

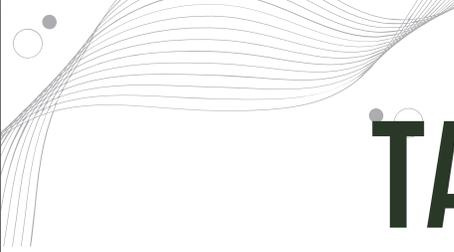


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“Mr. Kelley, I don’t know how you’ve been free for so long. You’re a menace to society. I’m setting a \$10,000 bail.”

CHAPTER TWO

“I could have been voted least likely to end up in prison with Whitey Bulger. I was a good kid, active and accomplished in sports, a high school football star, collegiate athlete and eventually a law enforcement officer who rose through the ranks, FAST. Yet, maximum security prison is exactly where I landed.”

CHAPTER THREE

“From my earliest memory, I imagined being a LEO, a helper, a community hero. I never imagined being an addict.”

CHAPTER FOUR

“My job isn’t coming back, My wife and kids aren’t coming back, So I didn’t give a fuck. Just when I thought I was at rock bottom, everything went from bad to worse.”

CHAPTER FIVE

“The physical withdrawal of addiction was bad, but the clarity and emotional regret was way worse. It wasn’t the shakes that bothered me the most, it was the feeling of regret.”

CHAPTER SIX

“I was out of prison, and I was sober. But I was miserable. Watching my cousin, who was more like a sibling, die tragically in front of me... sent me back to drugs. This life was not worth living.”

CHAPTER SEVEN

“Until this moment, I’d never left Cape Cod, except to go to college. But I gathered all of my doubts, one bag and moved to Florida hoping for little more than the freedom of not having everyone know my business, my past, my story. This is the move that changed everything.”

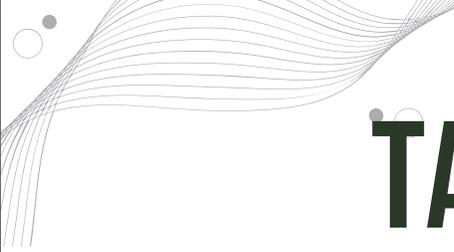


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CHAPTER EIGHT

“I finally figured out how I got here. Growing up, anything I lacked fueled me. I exchanged want for work. So, whenever there was lack in my life, there was equal leverage. But when I was down and out, when I was totally broken, the automatic exchange didn’t happen. There was no fire, no fuel. And this had to change. “

CHAPTER NINE

Rebuilding a life was all consuming, and I gave it all I had. Then, I fell in love. To impress my girlfriend, I was open to trying new things... things that would be instrumental to my future... things like NeuroLinguistic Programming.

CHAPTER TEN

More tools in my toolbox allowed me to build emotional intelligence and a real community.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

The softer habits this football star and 3-sport collegiate athlete relied on, not just to recover from addiction, but also to heal my heart, rebuild my life, embrace my purpose and create a proud life, family, and legacy.

CHAPTER TWELVE

This is the letter I wish I’d received, the one that changed everything, the words that every person failing at life needs

SAMPLE CHAPTER 1

“Mr. Kelley, I don’t know how you’ve been free for so long. You’re a menace to society. I’m setting a \$10,000 bail.”

Shock. Anger. Fear. Disbelief.

I was feeling all of these things as I heard the judge’s words and watched my attorney struggle to overcome a ruling that had clearly already been laid down.

I’d never been given a bail before – always released on my own recognizance – and in the state of Massachusetts, there are no bail bondsmen. You had to put up the entire \$10,000.

No one I knew had that amount of money. Not to mention, I wasn’t a very safe “bet.” Since my first arrest, I’d wracked up even more charges, instead of being scared straight. At the time, I’d already spiraled from a married police officer and father of two to a couch-surfing addict.

The night before I was taken to prison, I’d slept on my Aunt Betty’s couch and that morning, my Mom dropped me off at court. While it was my first appearance in Superior Court, I had no inkling that I’d be staying.

My peers were in that courtroom, standing – respected – as I had so many times before. They avoided eye contact with me. But as soon as the judge indicated that he was sending me – a police officer – to jail, they came forward to slap the cuffs on me. My heart leapt instantly from shock to fear. Were they really going to put me in the jail full of people I’d put there?

It turns out, they weren’t going to keep me in the county jail... with others who were awaiting trial. Because I was a former law enforcement officer, they were sending me to Plymouth, a maximum-security state prison. I wasn’t just going to jail. I was going to prison... pre-sentencing.



Shaking and feeling sick (partly from the drug withdrawal and partly from sheer terror, fear and powerlessness), I hobbled – shackled at my wrists and ankles – into the “wagon” and taken to Barstable County Jail for processing. I knew everyone there, including every guard and nearly every inmate. As I passed the holding cells, the inmates began shouting at the guards, “Why don’t you put him in here with us?”

Fortunately, I was placed in a holding cell by myself. Cold, alone and feeling sick, all I could focus on was how I might be able to manipulate my way out of this situation.

Maybe if I told my Dad that I was going to be murdered in prison, or convinced my Mom that I’d hang myself if I had to stay, maybe... I could pressure them into finding the money for my bail.

I was eventually moved from the county jail – where I was in isolation – and was processed again at Plymouth State Prison,

where I was put into another holding cell, this time with other inmates. Holding my breath, I waited for the inevitable “outing” that these inmates were being housed with a cop. But it never came. No one seemed to recognize me.

Finally, the cuffs were taken off of my hands and I could focus on my top two thoughts at that time: getting pills after my medical exam and pulling on my parents heart strings with my one phone call. The pills were a hard no. I’d have to crash hard this time. Sick, shaking, and still trying to manipulate the situation, I started making phone calls. No one would pick up except for my Mom, who I knew didn’t have the money.

I hoped that if I convinced her that my life was in imminent danger, being a cop in prison, she’d at least try to raise or find the money to get me out.





“It took me a solid week before I realized that I would not be able to make bail, and would be staying in prison. As fearful as I was, I couldn't believe I was in a situation that I couldn't manipulate even a tiny bit. I wasn't just a cop. I was a star cop, who'd worked his way up the ranks, achieved a coveted spot on the K-9 team and made a name for myself. I literally didn't want to live, so I declined protective custody and was released in general population.

It was then that I received my pathetic crate of personal belongings. Two sets of green scrubs and sandals, essentially. When I went somewhere, I walked in a single file line. My room included two bunk beds, a toilet (offering an unobstructed view to everyone in the room) and a sink. I'd never used the bathroom in front of anyone before.

I was sick, physically withdrawing from heroine without so much as a soft couch to writhe on. The cold sweats, leg cramps, excessive sweating and constant running to the toilet were wearing on me. While emotionally I wanted to die, physically I didn't want to be attacked. So, I forced myself to walk around the block to see who was being housed with me. My officer training kicked in as I scanned the room for any possible threat.

As I walked towards the plastic couches and TV, I instantly saw a familiar face. My heart dropped as soon as I knew that he recognized me as well.

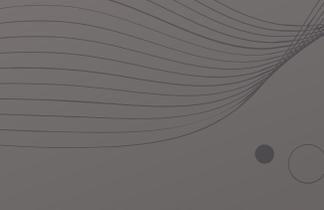
“Hey,” he said, “You know that I know who the fuck you are.”

We'd gone to high school together.

“I really don't give a fuck,” was my instant tough guy reply. To my relief, his response was,

“I don't give a fuck. You didn't arrest me.”





He was doing a ten-year bid. To my knowledge he never told a soul in Plymouth that they were being housed with a former cop.

I tried to acclimate to my new “home.” I couldn’t eat for a week. I did a lot things wrong and was redirected by other inmates. I was slowly learning the unspoken rules of life in prison. Example: You don’t look in other people’s rooms, and you never call anyone else a bitch, unless you’re looking for a fight. While my focus was still on getting out and getting back to the drugs, I was also learning the ropes.

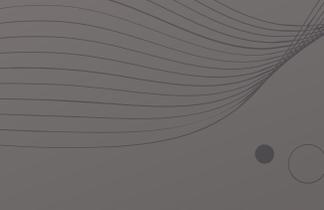
“My first guest was a week later, from my court appointed attorney. I was looking forward to this visit, still thinking that we could push for a plea that allowed me to be released on probation. I can still hear her words, “Joe, you’re looking at time either way.” My “wrap sheet” had expanded from the original trafficking charge to include 50 additional charges I’d wracked up while awaiting trial. Facing a minimum of 5 years if I got convicted, I came to a new level of acceptance.

After serving approximately four months, I pled out to a distribution charge, with a 30-month prison sentence, counting time served, with the ability to get paroled after serving 15-16 months.

With an official conviction, I had to move off the pre-trial block and go through another formal processing process. At this time, I was offered the option of going to the “drug block,” which I accepted not because I was interested in giving up drugs, but because there were less people on the drug block.

I was assigned to a new cell, a new block, with new people. That same fear came up again. I had to make my rounds, and see who would be on this new block. Again, I came face to face with someone who knew me. Again, I was welcomed with open arms and – more importantly – discretion about my former occupation.





My stay was relatively non-dramatic. I never disclosed my past, not even to therapists on the drug unit. I met Whitey Bulger. I got a job that took me off the block during the day. My Mom – and eventually my Dad – would visit. My kids never did. Calls were expensive.

Il hung onto the goal of seeing my kids again. I relied on my tactical training and the fact that I did know how to fight. I cherished the pictures my Mom would send in and focused constantly on getting out. Without drugs, my thinking got clearer. I came face to face with my emotions and thoughts. I took advantage of the counseling on the drug block. Eventually I stopped trying to manipulate and control and just did the best I could do.

The worst part of being in prison was being away from my kids, and the antagonistic behavior I experienced from my former co-workers. The canine sweeps were the worst, as I had been on the K-9 unit. These were my friends at one time, and now I had to strip down naked in front of them as they performed body cavity searches. They read my journals, and even tore out certain pages.

After 19 months, I was paroled at the first opportunity. I was released better, stronger and grateful. Somehow, during almost 2 years in prison, either no one knew they were housed with a former cop, or they ignored it. I emerged determined to stay sober, start over and rebuild. But it wouldn't go exactly that way.



JOE KELLEY

Originally from Cape Cod, MA, Joe Kelley has a bachelor's degree in Sociology from Hartwick College in Oneonta, NY, where he was also an All-American collegiate football player. Joe has been passionate about working to better the lives of others since he was a boy, leading him into the public sector as a law enforcement officer for 9 years (K-9, Emergency Response Team and Interview Interrogation) and as a Adolescence social worker for the Massachusetts Department Of Family And Children. But Joe Kelley's story isn't just a highlights reel.

After an on-the-job injury as a Police Officer, he developed an addiction, which led to him being incarcerated for 2 years in a state penitentiary. This experience didn't destroy Kelley, it just delayed him. After he emerged, clean and determined, he re-engaged with his commitment to better the lives of others through working in the private sector, first as a clinician in the substance abuse field and for the past 11 years a business developer.

Working in addictions facilities for a number of years, Joe knows that the issues go deeper than drugs and alcohol and his unique experience helps him get to the core of the individual. Now, the "why" no longer being a mystery, it's know surprise that Joe's senior thesis explored the stigma of addiction while at Hartwick College. Joe's core principles are hard work, perseverance, and determination.

On or off the field, in or out of the office, at home or at the playground Joe is truly an inspiration to all of those in his life. Joe is a father of 5 with the ages ranging from 17 to 3 years. Kelley has continued to further his education, he is certified in children's yoga, a Trainer of Hypnotherapy, Trainer of NLP, Trainer of time techniques and EFT. He is also a high in demand Trainer of Life Coaching.

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