



An excerpt from the teenage autobiography,
From the Inside

The Menninger Foundation is a psychiatric care facility located in the heart of America: Topeka, Kansas. It sits on about thirty acres of land surrounded by a cemetery, a highway, and a zoo. Driving into the place, it has a strangely pleasant atmosphere which hides the pain and mental torture that goes on there year after year. The grounds have large trees and a nice landscape job. I was brought there as a juvenile in 1976 after running away from home and being arrested numerous times for various crimes like possession of marijuana, disorderly conduct, prostitution, and robbery. I was admitted to the institution on the same day as another angry young man who had just murdered his mother, father, and sister by shooting them all at point blank range with a shotgun. He was released a year and a half before me.

I had been diagnosed as a psychopath at Evanston Hospital in Illinois.

How to assemble a featherproof mini-book:

- step 1** Fold each sheet in half horizontally, so that the text is facing outward.
- step 2** Now stack 'em according to the number in the margin on the front. #1 goes on the bottom.
- step 3** Fold the whole stack in half vertically. Crease it like you mean it.
- step 4** Finally, bind your mini-book by stapling along the brown edge.



www.featherproof.com

For more swell stuff, pay us a visit at:

From the Inside will be
available in July 2017

They searched through all my personal belongings when I got there, but I still managed to smuggle in six grams of Lebanese hash, and that kept my spirits up for the first couple of weeks until it was gone. I did not know how long I would be there. You see, under this system there is no set time limit on punishment for a specific crime. They can keep you until they declare that you are cured, which they hardly ever do for fear of legal retribution if someone they've released flips out

But through a bizarre set of circumstances, I ended up in the psychiatric care system instead of the criminal system because my parents were rich and supposedly wanted the best for me. Menninger's was the most high-class institution of its type, or so I was told. Johnny Carson went there to straighten out his head during troubled times. The Shah of Iran left his son there for safekeeping. James Taylor wrote "Fire and Rain" in the same cell as I was in, but we were there at different times. Two members of the million-selling rock group Kansas were there under the care of my psychiatrist, Dr. Petersen. Such was the true folklore of the place. I was unimpressed. I wanted to be free.

Now, I was being transferred to Menninger's for a more in-depth examination to figure out what treatment would be "best" for me. I was a troubled youth who longed to grow up and be out from under the thumbs of all the authority figures around me. If you do not conform to the norms of society, they will put you away and treat you like a common criminal. And from these criminals, you will learn how to be a criminal. It's a great education, all right.

and goes on a rampage. The entire time I was there, only five people were released as "cured." Strangely enough, the guy who murdered his whole family in cold blood was one of them.

The general plan of action was that I would undergo a six week examination. After that I could be subject to as much as three years' treatment. It felt to me almost like I was getting the death sentence. That is a long time to take out of a young person's life. But my parents could foot the bills.

The first night I was on the ward there, a sixteen-year-old girl who was very attractive tried to commit suicide by slashing her wrists with some broken glass from a Coke bottle. The goons in white coats saved her life, then strapped her down to her bed and injected her with drugs. I bet that made her very happy to be alive. As you can see, it was insanity from the beginning.

The first day I was there, I was shown my lovely room, which was actually a cell with bulletproof glass. My parents bid me farewell, telling me they'd be back in six weeks for the results of the tests and for some scheduled group meetings between me, them, and the doctors. My parents showed little emotion as they left me there. It was like they were glad to get rid of me. Now they could go make love on the beach in the Cayman Islands and forget all about me. I was well taken care of.

Suicide was the farthest thing from my mind. I wanted to get out and live, live, LIVE!!! It felt so bad to have my freedom taken away. I found myself filled with hate, and the need to get revenge on those who had put me there. I still believe to this day that there was really nothing wrong with me. I did not belong there. But read on and judge for yourselves as the plot thickens.

again they seemed to take me very seriously. I did myself great harm by acting out in this fashion. Menninger's was basing their evaluation and recommendation on the results of these tests. Consequently, they declared that I was a "psychopath with schizophrenic overtones, in need of two to three years treatment," otherwise I was "on the path to self destruction, perhaps suicide."

On the second day I was there, they subjected me to a brainwave test in which electrodes were fastened to my head. Impulses in my head were recorded on paper by a machine that converted brainwaves into patterns. It is then easy for the doctors to spot a psychological disorder if there are abnormalities in the patterns. But some people, like me, can throw the machine off by thinking about music. I was thinking about the soundtrack to Led Zeppelin's *The Song Remains the Same* while taking the test. Jimmy Page's wild guitar solos turned up on paper as static indicating some sort of disorder. I looked over the printed readout and saw that the patterns went crazy at the times when I was playing the intense parts of songs through my head.

On the third day, they gave me the standard inkblot test in which I was to tell them what shapeless images reminded me of. I said, for example, "That looks to me like three elephants making love to a men's glee club." I was being rebellious, giving ridiculous answers that they appeared to be taking seriously. They wrote down everything I said in their log books, and I felt like an insect being probed under a microscope. I was just as rebellious during the word association test, when the doctor would say one word and I had to reply with the first other word that popped into my brain. The female psychologist whose name I can't remember, she got a kick out of saying words like 'vagina' or 'breast,' to which I would jokingly answer 'rape' or 'murder.' I figured I had nothing left to lose. I was already locked up. The worst was over. Why not toy with these fools and play games with them? There was no sincerity whatsoever in my answers to the word association test. Still,