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*A true story of recovery  
from addiction*

**TED ADAMSON**

**UP FROM DOWN**

*A true story of recovery from addiction*

**Ted Adamson**

Smashwords Edition

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## **DEDICATION**

*To all young people struggling with an addiction, especially Abigail*

### **LUKE 7:40-43:**

40 And Jesus answering said unto him, "Simon, I have something to say unto thee." And he said, "Master, say on."

41 "There was a certain creditor that had two debtors. The one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty.

42 And when they had nothing to pay, he freely forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most?"

43 Simon answered and said, "I suppose that he to whom he forgave most. And He said unto him, "Thou hast rightly judged."

## **Rev. Jesse Lee Peterson Forward for Up From Down**

*Up From Down*, much like the heroin addiction it chronicles, grabs the reader from the first page and refuses to let go.

It's a first-person, utterly compelling look - not just at the hellish life of a heroin addict, but most important, at the motivations that have literally driven Ted and millions like him to do that which they have not wanted to do.

Sin is an ancient word that has lost much of its power in modern times. But the real power of sin seizes men and women beyond their ability to control.

It seizes a person to destroy themselves with drugs, but less discussed, it seizes the spirit with anger and fear, and drives us to use one kind of "drug" or another to quell the pain of our own self-judgment.

Adamson lays this morality play out in vivid detail, and succeeds in showing us how spiritual principles (and principalities) operate in the "real" world.

And finally, *Up From Down* offers real hope for those seeking to overcome the "hell" we are born into, live out, and harbor inside. I love this book. You will too.

- *Rev. Jesse Lee Peterson*

Founder and President, the Brotherhood Organization of A New  
Destiny (BOND)

Host, *The Jesse Lee Peterson Radio Show*

## **Prologue**

**April 1956**

I woke up with the morning sun streaming through the bedroom windows, the window frames forming a pattern of crosses on the hardwood floor. I leapt out of bed and scrambled for the blue jeans and T-shirt on the chair, putting them on fast. In all my five years I couldn't remember a morning so grand. The birds twittering and chirping outside my window couldn't be as happy and carefree as I was at that moment. An inner glow of brightness, happiness, and light filled my soul. What great adventure awaited me that day? Then I remembered the new pencil box.

I ran to the nearby desk and there it was. It hadn't been a dream!

Grandma had given it to me the day before. It was a brown wooden box with darker swirls of grains running through it in several places. It was only an inch high but had its own wooden handle perched on top, crowning it with glory. Inside there was a long compartment with pencils and three smaller compartments: one held erasers, one paper clips, and the last had a bright yellow pencil sharpener. *I had to be the luckiest boy in the whole world.* I could barely hear the faint voices arguing in the other room.



**SECTION 1: DOWN**  
**(The Journey into Corruption)**

## **Chapter 1**

### **“The Pusher Man”**

**(May 1956)**

The day didn't seem much different from any other. The sun was beginning its upward trek above the rooftops and shone on the little house on the corner, still with its blinds closed. The house looked newer, as did all the houses on that street. Voices could be heard coming from inside.

“Damn,” a loud voice shouted and the front door opened. A man with dark hair, thirties looking, walked out on the porch and slammed the door behind him. He stomped down the sidewalk shaking his head while he fumbled for the keys in his pocket. When he got to the panel truck parked at the curb, he turned around and looked at the house. A puzzled look came over his face. Shaking his head again he opened the car door and put the key in the ignition. After a brief grind the engine roared to life and the truck pulled away from the curb.

Inside the house two young boys, still in their pajamas, were on the floor playing with blocks shaped like large Cheerios. A woman with dark hair and a sharp nose charged into the bedroom.

“I told you kids not to play with those damned blocks!”

“Run!” said the younger blond-haired boy as he scurried around the woman's legs and headed into the kitchen. The woman wheeled around and took off after him. The older dark-haired boy fled in the other direction to the living room.

The screams and wails coming from the corner of the kitchen couldn't be heard outside the house, but the dark-haired boy could hear them clearly, until the eerie silence came. After a few minutes, the silence was broken when the woman came careening wildly through doorway into the living room in a violent, seething rage.

“Now it's your turn,” she yelled. The woman grabbed and held the dark-haired boy tightly by one arm and hit him with full force on the butt. The boy looked up into her contorted face with its vicious, inhuman look of hatred. The woman's arm rose up again and again, and the only sound was the rhythmic slapping of flesh on cotton, over and over. The boy looked up from the vice-like grip into the woman's face and his face began to mysteriously contort as the blows landed. Still it continued. Finally, the woman dropped him from her arms and he crumpled into a heap on the living room floor, like a puppet whose string had been cut.

“Now, go to your room,” the woman said sternly. The little boy picked himself up off the carpet and pattered off to his room, closing the door behind him.

The sun was setting behind the rooftops when the panel truck pulled up to the curb. The man walked up the sidewalk and opened the front door. The little boy looked up with sudden hope, saw him coming through the front door and ran to meet him, but the woman was there first.

“The children have been really bad today,” she said.

Without hesitation, the man got a stern look on his face and bellowed in a loud, disapproving tone, “Go to your room, Ted!”

Alone in the room, he thought of the injustice of what had just happened and was filled with an all-consuming hatred toward both the man and the woman. Quietly he raged against them both until sleep, forgetfulness, and amnesia overcame him.

\* \* \*

**(January 1973)**

I became painfully aware of it when Don came to my small apartment and sat down in the shabby armchair in the corner. He had a serious look on his face. He coughed a little, as if clearing his throat to say something crucial.

“Ted, I’m strung out,” he said, waving his hand in a big circle like a man who had just made an important announcement.

I was a little startled but I looked at him and said, “Well, I must be too. I’ve been fixing every time you did.”

Don nodded his head.

“I think I’m going to quit for a while,” I said. “I want to get control of this thing.” I certainly liked using drugs but didn’t want to feel I was totally out of control.

“They have places you can go to for detox,” he said.

I was starting to get worried. *What had I gotten myself into? How bad was this going to be?* I didn’t like the idea of committing myself anywhere so I had decided to kick at home. *Why couldn’t I give up heroin that way?* I had done it with other drugs.

I decided to ask Don the one question we had never talked about. “What is it like to withdraw from heroin?”

“It’s not as bad as you think.”

“You’re bullshitting me.” If there was one thing I knew for sure it was that Don was a liar. I had seen movies where addicts were writhing in bed with their backs arched, screaming in agony from the pain. I worried it would be like that.

“No really, it’s not that bad. You shouldn’t do it, though. Why kick when we can get loaded?”

I expected him to say something like that. When I bought a spoon from him he usually took half for scoring. I didn’t like it but what could I do? I had no other connection. I went to bed that night determined that tomorrow would be the day, but not knowing what to expect.

The next morning I awoke and my skin felt cold and clammy. I felt good enough to go to my job as a cook at Mike’s coffee shop, the local mom and pop restaurant. When I got there, I went into the bathroom. This was the same bathroom where I had fixed midway through a shift. I went into the stall, closed the door, and pulled down my pants. As I sat there I looked at the graffiti scrawled in various colors on the walls. It formed a multi-colored collage of slogans, gang names, initials, and drawings. Someone, not me, had drawn an image of a hypodermic needle with a black marker, and gigantic black tear-shaped droplets were drawn from the tip down to the bottom of the stall. Looking at the graffiti made me feel people were rotten. I knew I was no better. I flushed the toilet and pulled up my pants.

Outside the stall I looked in the mirror. I was shocked. It was as if I was looking at a stranger. His hair was disheveled and his shirt was rumpled. The face looked hard and there were dark bags under the eyes.

That can't be me, I thought. I peered closer at the image in the mirror; the skin on the face looked pale and clammy. I saw the scar under the left eye from the drunk-driving accident. Yes, it really was me.

For some reason an urge to curse at the reflection came over me. I raised my voice, "You son of a bitch, you're the one that's been after me." The image in the mirror didn't answer.

Trying to straighten out my hair, I ran my black pocket comb through it, but the unruly mop stubbornly popped back up. I left the bathroom and sat down at the counter to have a cup of coffee before starting my shift. The coffee seemed to help as I sipped from the steaming mug.

One of the waitresses sensed something wrong. She walked up to me and said, "Cold turkey, huh?"

"Cold turkey is a sandwich," I said. She squinched up her face and gave me that "who-do-you-think-you're-kidding" look and went back to filling the creamers on a bus tray, getting ready for the morning rush. I felt weak and miserable and was hoping that maybe Don would show up unexpectedly with some good dope like he had a few times before.

I returned to the kitchen and started working. One of the waitresses came to the window and hit the little bell on top of the counter.

"Hey, buster, why are my orders taking so long today?" she asked. I felt the anger rising up and wanted to throw something at her, but I needed the job.

"I'm not feeling well," I said, giving her a dirty look. What a bitch, I thought. I worked my shift reluctantly and headed back to my apartment.

When I got home, I immediately went to bed. My bones were beginning to ache. The ache wasn't unbearable, but rather a dull pain with an occasional sharp sting to remind me it was there. *Maybe this isn't the drugs. Maybe I'm coming down with something.* I was lying there with my nose running when I heard a key slip into the front lock. The door opened and the harsh afternoon sun streamed into the room. I winced.

"Hey," Don said with a grin on his face, "I copped." He held up a small red balloon, the size of a large marble. The bag of dope had been knotted at the top and folded over. Don had that excited maniacal look in his eyes I knew so very well.

He walked into the small kitchen. It was hidden from my view but I heard the metallic clink and ring of a tablespoon being dropped on the counter.

"You want some?" he asked.

It didn't seem to matter that I had told him of my decision to quit just the day before. Don was the kind of guy who never shared his drugs with anyone. I couldn't remember a time when he gave someone a "pinch" or even left a "wet cotton". I was strongly tempted, but I wasn't going to let this get the best of me. I ran my fingers through my hair, pushing back the unruly locks.

"No," I said, "I'm going to kick. Remember, I told you that yesterday."

"Oh, yeah, I forgot about that."

He went about the business of preparing his fix in the kitchen. I heard the lighter click and hiss as the butane ignited. Don had an unusual lighter. It was about a third of the size of a man's hand with a burnished silver-gold look and shaped like a dragon. When he clicked it, the flame shot out of the dragon's mouth in an upward arc, perfect for cooking heroin.

I began to smell the pungent odor of Mexican brown heroin wafting in the air. I rolled over in bed and tried to blank it out of my mind. Soon, mercifully, the pungent sweet odor faded. Don walked back into the dual-purpose living room/bedroom with one shirtsleeve rolled up above the elbow while a thin trail of blood trickled down his arm. He was oblivious to the tiny drops of blood dripping from his middle finger onto the soiled carpet. He dropped himself into the corner chair and nodded off into opiate dreams. A few minutes later he was jolted awake when his chin fell toward his chest. He scratched the side of his neck and rubbed his cheeks. Then he looked at me through pinpoint pupils. "Teddy boy," he said, "that's some pretty good dope. I left you a big taste out there."

I got out of bed and walked to the kitchen. There it was all right, a big bent spoon lying on the countertop. Somehow the spoon itself seemed larger than normal. Inside the spoon was a plump, dark little cotton ball and a small pool of brown liquid, slightly tinged with blood. Usually he would have used it all, and left only a sucked dry, arid cotton. I turned away and leaned my forehead against the refrigerator. The cool metal felt comforting against my feverish forehead. God, I thought, I really do want it. I kept my head on the freezer door as if communing with it to tell me what to do. The dope was only an arm's length away, and though I wanted it, something told me I better not. I tried to listen to that voiceless voice.

"It looks good," I said. "But I think I'll pass." Every fiber of my body was screaming something different.

"Okay by me," Don said. "I'll do it in the morning for a wake-up."

I got through the distressing evening and went to bed. Most of the night I tossed and turned, barely sleeping. Don was curled up on top of his air mattress in the corner, sleeping peacefully.

I awoke in the morning after sporadic sleep. I called work and told them I was sick and wouldn't be coming in. The whole day was miserable. My nose ran continuously and my aching bones were screaming for a fix. I stayed inside watching TV, wondering how long this was going to last. An old horror movie was playing on the TV screen. I watched as Count Dracula walked down the hallway looking for something as dark gothic music poured out of the TV speaker. The Count stopped at a door, sensing his victim inside. Then, suddenly, he turned into a puff of smoke and slowly the black vapor seeped mysteriously under the door. I turned off the TV and tried to read a little but just couldn't concentrate.

About the same time as the day before, a key slid into the door. Don had that look of expectancy on his face again. It was like a rerun of the day before. I got out of bed and went into the bathroom, where I took a warm shower. When I finished Don was still in the kitchen. I went to bed and fell into a light sleep right away and slept fitfully for several hours. When I awoke, Don was in the armchair, dozing from the effects of the shot.

I got out of bed and walked into the kitchen. The spoon was still on the countertop. I peered into it and there was only a dry wad of cotton where once had been a refreshing brown lake of smack.

*To hell with it.*

I walked into the living room and poked Don in the arm. "Wake up." I said. "I want some dope."

He opened his eyes. "Hey, man, I ain't got any. I shot it all."

I didn't have enough money to score. Frustrated, I screamed at the top of my voice, "I want drugs!"

Don looked startled. "Keep it down - they'll hear you next door."

I didn't care whether anyone heard me or not. "I said I want some goddamn drugs."

"There's nothing left. Even the connection is not holding until tomorrow. You're out of luck."

"I'll rip off a pharmacy then," I said.

The maniacal look returned to Don's eyes in expectation of drugs to come.

I had burglarized pharmacies before - twice. I recalled the last time, four years ago, when things had not gone so well. I had climbed on the roof of the pharmacy and then dropped into the adjacent store that shared the building. With a claw hammer I had started banging a hole in the drywall. Bits of debris flew everywhere as I hacked away. When the jagged hole was large enough, I had slipped through into the treasure trove of the pharmacy. I ransacked the shelves. It didn't last long, though - as I was doing it, I saw the bright halo of a flashlight through the pharmacy's window. The brilliant beam of the light shone on my pant leg and then a loud voice rang out through the dark night: "Freeze." I could vaguely see a drawn pistol in the dark. The officer ordered me over to the glass double doors and demanded I get down on my knees. After I complied, he ordered me to put my hands behind my head and lean my torso against the glass door. Then he had leveled his shotgun at my exposed midsection.

"Now just don't make like a rabbit and run and everything will be okay," he had said.

But the memory of the experience and the subsequent conviction weren't enough to overcome my urgent need of the moment.

"Yes," I repeated, trying to convince myself. "A pharmacy burglary is a very good idea indeed."

Don drove me to the local pharmacy. I got out of the car and approached the building. It was dark outside. I looked down the street - no one was in sight. The store's concrete side loomed up as I approached the rear of the building where a metal maintenance ladder embedded in the side of the building made it easy to clamber up. On the roof I found a large hooded vent of galvanized metal, kicked off the cover, and crawled into the duct. It was the first time I had ever been inside an air conditioning passage and it felt weird. I guessed they made them that large so maintenance workers could get inside. *They should think a little bit more about burglars.* It was smooth inside except at the seam where the sections fit together.

I saw a light shining into the duct up ahead. Crawling forward, I peered through the louvered vent at the store below.

The store was brightly lit and I could see the vacant aisles and stocked shelves. The vent hole wasn't large enough for me to drop down into the store so I crawled farther along the duct. Soon I came to a larger ceiling vent. I gazed down into the hole. This spot was away from the aisles and there was plenty of room to land.

I turned over on my back and extended my leg so my shoe heel was right in the middle of the vent. I started kicking but it resisted - a dull metal thud mixed together with a clatter of the louvers echoed in the duct. After four good whacks, though, I heard the sound of the slats in the vent clatter to the floor below. I busted through with several more thrusts. Several electrical wires dangled from the vent cover but I didn't give them much thought. I dropped 20 feet to the floor, landing hard, but I didn't care. Nothing was going to stop me now.

The drugstore's pharmacy was in a walled-off section in the corner. I opened the low, swinging door and entered into my Shangri-la. Going up and down the aisles, I examined the large quart-size plastic containers on the shelves. All of the jars had labels and many of the names were unrecognizable, but I

did see they were in alphabetical order. I walked back to the beginning of the shelves, running my fingers across the front of the labels on the white, plastic jars. Finally, I came to one I recognized: Amphetamine. I grabbed a nearby cardboard box and placed the three amphetamines jars in the box. Putting it under one arm, I walked farther down the aisles.

Then I spied another name I recognized: dextroamphetamine sulfate. I picked up the jar and unscrewed the lid. Inside were hundreds of orange heart-shaped tablets with a line down the middle. And there were five jars! *This is going to be great.* Into the box they went and I proceeded down the shelf. I recognized another name: Seconal. I picked one jar and unscrewed the lid. Inside, clustered together, were bullet-shaped, red capsules. Each side of the capsule had Lilly in white flowing script and F40 underneath. Oh shit, I thought, I've hit the jackpot. Lilly F-40 bullets! Red Devils! I took three out of the jar and popped them into my mouth. *I should feel better now.*

After I swallowed the Red Devils I started to think maybe three was too many, especially since I hadn't taken any lately. I decided it would be better to offset them with some of the speed so I grabbed the three jars of reds off the shelf, put them in the box, and then opened one of the Dexedrine jars and grabbed four heart-shaped capsules and gobbled them up. *That ought to do me for a while.*

Ten minutes later, midway through the ransacking, I heard a sound like rodents scurrying. But I quickly realized it was the scuffle of shoes on the store's vinyl floor. The police were getting into position to shoot me if necessary. In a panic, I realized I had triggered a silent alarm.

A harsh, demanding voice rang out. "Police department, come out with your hands up." The awful reality suddenly overwhelmed me. I did as ordered but not before I stashed all the drugs I could into my underwear. At least I wanted some drugs to take to jail.

Slowly I raised my hands up from behind the pharmacy counter. I saw several police officers kneeling with their revolvers drawn and trained on me.

"These punks work in twos," said the officer in charge. "Start looking for the other one." They were right about there being two of us, but apparently Don had skedaddled in my car. They handcuffed me and led me off to one of the waiting patrol cars.

During the booking process they confiscated the drugs I had stashed in my underwear. I was fingerprinted and photographed. They drew sketches of the "tracks" on my arms. Then I was taken to the back of the jail and put in a cell.

The next day I was shackled on a chain with twelve other inmates and sent off to the county jail. I had already gone through the worst of withdrawal symptoms prior to the burglary so my pain was mostly mental from being locked up again. As the loaded bus full of prisoners snaked its way through the morning rush-hour traffic, the city howled its morning sound, and I wondered if the county jail was going to be as horrific as it had been the first time I was there.

## Chapter 2

### **“I Fought The Law And The Law Won”**

The deputies marshaled us off the bus in our chains and walked us into holding cells, which were jam-packed. Other cells held inmates that were departing to court or prison. We were herded in like swine. I stood with the others for hours in the cell, waiting to be processed without room to even sit down. When I got tired of standing, I knelt down and cramps formed in my legs. For breakfast we got a stale cheese sandwich and a paper cup with Kool-Aid.

The stench was horrendous. Sweat, urine, feces, and vomit mingled together to form a blended odor that kept me on the verge of wanting to gag. There was one toilet in the cell for fifty inmates. When I used it, I had to thread my way between bodies and then wait my turn.

We waited for hours in the holding cell.

Finally, we were moved from one holding cell to another. They fingerprinted us, issued jail uniforms, and then led us to the showers. My hair was long so an officer grabbed an entire box of laundry detergent and dumped it over my head in front of everyone, smirking as he did it. I felt like I was less than human as I went into the shower and washed it off. Then we stood in line and were sprayed with insecticide to kill any lice or crabs. It left a slick dampness in my groin.

After the shower I lined up with the others. Standing naked with water dripping off me onto the concrete floor, I felt as if the last vestige of my humanity was leaking out. The overhead electric lights buzzed and glared like they had on thousands before us. We formed two rows with our clothes and meager belongings piled in front of us.

“All right, listen up,” one of the deputies yelled out, a clipboard in hand. Two muscular deputies stood behind him silently. “The sooner you guys do what I say, the sooner you will get upstairs and have a hot meal and get a bunk.” He walked down the line, eyeing each inmate. He stopped in front of one of the inmates and looked down at his clipboard.

“Are you Bobby Brown?” he asked. The white inmate with black hair looked back at him and quietly said yes. The deputy nodded his head and turned his back. Then, suddenly and explosively, he whirled around and let loose with a karate sidekick directly into the inmate’s groin. The inmate grabbed his scrotum, winced in pain, and doubled over. He did not fight back but looked up at the deputy, his face contorted in pain.

The room became very, very quiet. None of the other inmates said a word. The deputy with the clipboard continued on as if nothing had happened. I was shocked - I had never seen the police act this way before. I expected things to be a certain way and this was unsettling. My anxiety level ratcheted up a notch.

“All right, you guys, turn around, bend over and crack a smile,” he ordered. He walked down the line inspecting anuses, looking for contraband. After he was done, he spoke to the group again. “Pick up your clothes, get dressed and go to that holding cell there,” and he pointed. After I got dressed, I sat in the holding cell and thought about what had happened. I wondered if the assaulted inmate had been charged with a sex crime, maybe rape.

Although I had been in jail for forty-three days on my previous pharmacy burglary, this was to be a longer stay. Upstairs there were fifteen cells to a tier, and an upper and lower tier. Each tier backed up to



another, which made four tiers to a module. The deputy in charge of the module had a command post (a large cell, really) at the front of the cell block, separated and protected from the inmates, where he opened the gates electronically. The smaller ten-by-twelve cells had four bunks; the larger cells had six bunks. The four-man cells often held six people with two people forced to sleep on the concrete floor under the metal beds hung on the wall. The bunks were only two feet off the floor but there was enough room to slide under.

After what seemed an eternity, they marched us up the escalator single-file to the large chow hall on the second floor. The chow hall was filled with rows of metal tables with fixed stools. A row of steam tables was in the front and several inmates in brown trusty uniforms stood behind them. Single file we picked up metal trays, spoons, and metal cups. The uniformed inmates placed a dried hamburger patty, two slices of bread, and a ladle of hot mixed vegetables on each tray.

When I sat down to eat, I made a sandwich of the burger. It was dry but warm and I was grateful for something to eat. None of us had had anything except the stale cheese sandwich that morning.

After we had finished eating, a deputy appeared at the head of the table. "Pick up your trays and get in line at the exit door," he said.

We did as were told. Then the line was marched off to the modules.

I was assigned Cell Two in Charley row. The deputy in charge buzzed open the electric gate and I entered the tier. I walked down the tier and he buzzed open Cell Two. I entered.

I saw four bunks attached to the walls in the cell. One inmate in a top bunk was reading a book. In the other top bunk the inmate was rolled over to the wall, apparently sleeping. On one bottom bunk a dark-haired inmate lay and looked at me without comment. On the other bottom bunk was a fellow sitting on the edge. There was a Bible on his lap. He extended his hand in greeting.

"My name's Frank."

"I'm Ted," I said. I shook his hand. "You'll have to sleep on the floor." "I can see that."

"It's not too bad. You get used to it."

"I know," I said. "I've been here before." He nodded in understanding.

For the first week I slept on the concrete floor with a blanket and mattress. My head protruded out from under the bunk but the rest of my body was underneath. The biggest problem was the toilet was at the back of the cell and if someone used it, your head was near the smell.

When one of my cellie's was called out on the court line in the morning, I would get to spend the day in his bunk. That was a definite improvement. We spent the entire day locked up except for meals. Inside the cell I played cards, talked, or read a book from the jail library cart, which came around the tiers once a week.

One day a deputy came on the intercom and made an announcement:

"Okay, listen up, guys. I know it's boring back there. I'm going to pipe music over the intercom and open the doors for 'freeway time.' If there is any trouble it's back in your cells and I won't do this again." I could sense compassion in his voice.

Freeway time meant walking up and down the walkway along the tier rather than being locked up all day. Very rarely we were put into the dayroom, a large space where we could play cards with other inmates. But that had its dangers as inmate assaults often took place in moments like that.

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