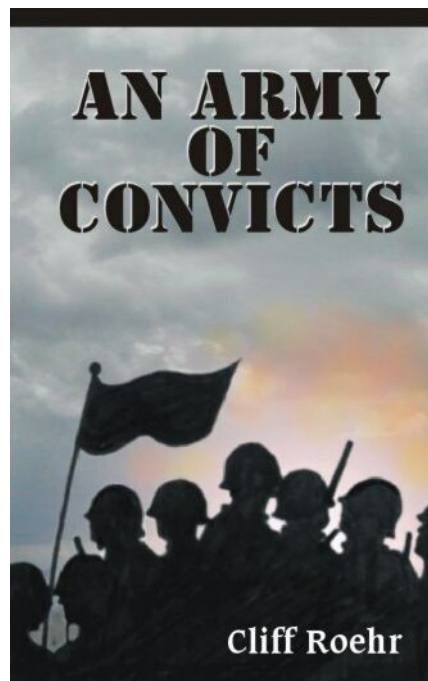


# An Army of Convicts

By Cliff Roehr



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They combed America's prisons to find men suitable for military service,

then used them to form an Expendable Force to be placed on the front lines.

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Aside from putting forth my political agenda I tried to make it as interesting and entertaining as I possibly could. I think I succeeded, please let me know what you think after reading it. Send me mail to [pahrumpsters@yahoo.com](mailto:pahrumpsters@yahoo.com)

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- CHAPTER 1 -  
YOUNG ADAM

He was christened Adam Tallchief Harcrow. Adam was the name of his paternal grandfather and Tall Chief was the name of his maternal Cherokee grandfather. At nine Adam was a healthy normal kid. His mother, Carman, half Cherokee and half white, was a registered nurse at one of the UMA Quick Care Clinics in North Las Vegas, Nevada. His Father, Clarence, was a sergeant on the North Las Vegas Police Department. Adam was their only child.

Adam had skipped the fourth grade and was now attending Greenbrier Elementary School as a fifth grader although he was only nine. Carman, Clarence and Adam were a happy family. They were buying a brand new home in a new tract of three bedroom, two bath, stucco houses with red tile roofs, which most of the housing tracts in the Las Vegas Valley were in those days.

When Adam was nine, his father started suffering intermittent stomach pain. Clarence thought it was just indigestion. At Carman's insistence he made an appointment for a checkup. The Doctor had ordered the usual tests and then ordered more tests. Finally the diagnosis was made, it was not good news and the family was devastated. Although only in his early thirties, Clarence had been diagnosed with stomach cancer at a most advanced stage.

He was forced to resign from the police department and he underwent three surgeries over the next two years. It had spread to all his organs before it had ever been discovered. He underwent chemotherapy for several months and while on home hospice care Clarence passed away peacefully one morning when Adam was in school. The body had been removed before Adam came home. There was a large funeral, attended it seemed, by the whole North Las Vegas Police Department. It was a beautiful service and Clarence was laid to rest.

His father's passing had been difficult for Adam and it left a big void in his life. With his father's life insurance and his mother's employment they were able to keep their home and maintain a decent standard of living. There was no abundance of money and Adam learned the value of a dollar early on.

During the two years of his father's convalescence Adam had spent a lot of time with him. They had taken turns reading the Classics to each other. They had discussed all kinds of things that were very enlightening and fascinating to the boy. Their discussions were about things that most boys his age had never been exposed to. Adam had enrolled in a local Kids Karate School when he was eleven and progressed rapidly. He obtained his black belt when he was thirteen. Along the way Adam had played soccer, basketball, little league baseball and Pop Warner football. He liked all sports and was better than average at all of them. He was the quarterback on his Pop Warner football team and the pitcher on the Wildcats Little League baseball team. The Wildcats won the league championship the last year that he played and Adam was

named the league's most valuable player. Adam had continued on at the Karate school after getting his black belt, instructing the younger children and in the process, earned his spending money.

Adam was blessed with the olive skin of his mother. He had the high cheek bones and black wavy hair of the Cherokee and deep inset steel blue eyes of his Caucasian father. At fourteen he possessed the startling good looks that had all the girls crazy about him and clamoring for his attention.

## - CHAPTER 2 - WELCOME HOME HENRY

It was after midnight on the last leg of his flight that had brought him from his duty station near Seoul in South Korea to Japan, then Hawaii and then to his wife Lilly's Apartment in Portland, Oregon. Lilly had wanted to remain in Portland while he was overseas because Portland was where her parents lived. He was Master Sergeant John Henry Adams, United States Army. Henry had been relieved of duty two days early and was on his way to pick up his wife. Henry planned to buy a new car in Portland, maybe something small and gas efficient. While he was in Korea he had the opportunity to tour a couple of the Korean automobile factories to see how the Korean cars were made. He certainly wouldn't rule one of those out. After a few days off and a third, or was it a fourth, honeymoon with Lilly they would head for his new post of duty at Fort Lewis, Washington.

Henry, as he preferred to be called or Hank had just completed eighteen years of outstanding military service and was an E-8 Master Sergeant at age thirtysix. He was sure that he would retire as Master Sergeant-Major E-9 by the time he had his thirty years in. He would then be only 46 and would have plenty of time left to enjoy his retirement years. He had thought about opening a little fishing camp on the Seminole Reservation in Southern Florida where he was born and raised. But plenty of time to think about that later on, twelve more years to be exact.

Although Hank had no actual Indian blood, he was nevertheless an enrolled Seminole Indian. Back before the Civil War there were several hundred escaped slaves that made their way into the Seminole Nation and took asylum. Over the next one hundred seventy five years or so, many of them remained and were regarded as members of the tribe. When the Bureau of Indian Affairs started enrollment of certifiable Indians who were eligible for Indian benefits Hanks parents not only enrolled as Seminole Indians they had also enrolled Hank. He was therefore what was known in those parts as a Black Indian.

As daylight was breaking and the plane was on its final approach to Portland International Airport anxiety rose in Hank's throat. He hadn't seen his lovely wife, Lilly in almost two years, and he could hardly wait. He bought her flowers and a box of Candy at the Airport gift shops then caught a Taxi home. Lilly expected him home in two more days but he thought he would surprise her by walking in early so he had

not called to give her his change in plans.

Her apartment was on the second floor. He took the elevator up then found her door and tried it. It was unlocked so he let himself in without knocking. He laid the flowers and Candy down on the coffee table then noted that it was still only a little before 0600. She must still be in bed. The bedroom door was open a crack and Hank peered in. She was in bed all right but not alone. There was a white man in the bed with her. They were both sound asleep.

He was shocked beyond belief, she had never given any indication that she was being unfaithful to him. Without thinking the situation through properly Hank went into the kitchen and withdrew a boning knife from the knife rack. He then entered the bedroom and with no hesitation whatsoever he sank the knife deep into the sleeping mans temple and within less than one second withdrew it and stuck his lovely wife under the chin all the way to the hilt so that the blade penetrated her brain. Neither of them ever woke up, nor would they ever. Henry then went to the wall phone in the kitchen and dialed 911. He reported what he had done then sat down and waited for the police to arrive.

Within the hour he had signed a full confession and used his one phone call, not to call an attorney but to call his new duty station at Fort Lewis to tell them that he doubted he would be reporting in. He pleaded guilty at his arraignment and was promptly sentenced to twenty-five years in the Oregon State Penitentiary without the possibility of parole. By the next morning he was at the Oregon State Penitentiary at Pendleton to commence serving his sentence.

### - CHAPTER 3 - ADAM'S FRESHMAN YEAR

Adam went out for the football team. Although he was large for his age he had no expectations of getting much playing time during his freshman year. He did make the team and was installed as the third string quarterback.

Two days before the start of the season the second string quarterback, a junior, blew his knee out in practice and was through for the season. Adam was moved up to the second string and had an active role from the first game on.

Just before half time of the third game of the season the starter took a vicious blow to the head and was out for three weeks with a concussion. His team trailed by a score of sixteen to seven when Adam came out and started the second half. He completed twenty two of twenty four passes in the second half and led his team to a thirty two to thirty win. He was on his way and never looked back.

The fourth game of the season found Central playing at home against an older and more mature team from Grant High. The night before the game Adam had accompanied his mother to do some shopping at the Meadows Mall. He had finished

looking at the things he was interested in and decided to have a coke in the food plaza. As luck would have it, he ran into Jeff Dawson, one of the wide receivers on his team, in the food court. They sat down at an empty table and were talking quietly between themselves about the upcoming game when three big burley guys, all well over two hundred pounds, came in and took a seat two tables over from them. The big guys were the macho blowhard types. As Adam gathered from their conversation, they were defensive linemen from Grant High. One of them, a big blond bruiser was saying to the others "Have you guys heard that Central has lost their first and second string quarterbacks and they are having to start some little freshman at quarterback. Man am I going to have a field day. I can hardly wait. The center of the Central offensive line are all Freshmen and sophomores, we can just blow them away. I am going to get a sack on that little kid every other down." Adam and Jeff just kind of smiled to themselves and Jeff said "Now we can't let them treat our little kid that way, can we?"

It turns out that the big blond guy's name was Carl Farmer. He was indeed their starting defensive tackle and a senior. He had been held back a year and was now nineteen years old. In one respect he was right; Adam at fourteen was just a kid, but not a little kid. At fourteen he was big for his age. He stood six feet tall and weighed almost two hundred lbs. Because of his athletic lifestyle, he had developed early. He didn't have an ounce of fat on him. He was already big enough to have been playing in the defensive line himself but because he had a cannon for a right arm he had been steered toward quarterback.

The band played the National Anthem while they all stood with their hands over their hearts. They had the flip of the coin and Central kicked off. Central held on downs

and Grant was forced to kick. After the kick rolled into the end zone Central took the ball on their own twenty. The first time Adam took the snap from center he faded back deep looking for either Jeff Dawson or Tommy Rich streaking down the sidelines.

Sure enough Carl Farmer had easily knocked the offensive tackle on his rear and was bearing down on Adam, arms waiving in the air. Adam saw him coming and whirled around as though to take off scrambling but made a full circle and brought his right leg up high, Karate style and nailed Carl hard right in the face mask. Carl's head snapped back, his feet went out from under him and he went down hard on his back. One of the officials had seen what Adam did but, thinking it just a fluke didn't call a penalty. After all, how often is a quarterback called for messing up an interior lineman. After disposing of Carl Farmer, Adam looked around quickly and determined that the rest of the offensive line had held. His guys were the only ones in the backfield. He spotted Tommy who had by this time ran out of pass range and was doubling back across the field. Adam hit him with a bullet twenty yards beyond the line of scrimmage, for a first down. When Carl Farmer hit the ground, it knocked the wind out of him and he had to be carried off the field to sit out a couple plays.

Central got one more first down but ended up punting the ball away.

Central finally stopped Grant and forced them to punt the ball but they had reached

midfield. The ball rolled into the end zone again and Adam's team took over, first and ten at the twenty. By now Carl Farmer had returned to the lineup and once again burst into the backfield in quest of the easy sack. Adam was definitely on the lookout for him this time; he once again did his karate pirouette, this time catching Carl square in the breadbasket with his instep. After completing his pass for a thirty-yard game he noticed that they were carrying Carl off the field with the wind knocked out of him again. "That guy's a slow learner," Adam remarked to no one in particular as he returned to his huddle to call the next play.

The third time that Carl returned to the lineup he was held at the line of scrimmage for the whole series of downs and Central drove down to the ten yard line before being forced to settle for the field goal.

On Central's next possession Carl once again broke through and came bearing down on Adam with hate in his eyes. It was obvious to Adam that Carl had lost it; he just wanted revenge. As Carl left his feet and hurled himself through the air at Adam's head Adam ducked down and then stood up quickly as Carl was going over the top. Carl flew up into the air, did a full gainer at about six feet off the ground. His helmet, which had not been snapped on, flew off and he once again came down hard on his back. This time when they carried him off the field, he did not return. Adam heard later that he had suffered a mild concussion as well as having the wind knocked out of him for the third time. "So much for the big guys from Grant beating up on our little kid quarterback." Jeff said.

Adam continued to improve with every game. Central lost three squeakers during the regular season, won seven games and made the playoffs. They lost their first playoff game but finished better than they were supposed to with so many Freshmen and Sophomores on the squad.

#### CHAPTER 4 THE PADRE

Father Jose Villa was the Parish Priest of a small out-of-the way church on the Oregon coast. He was happy in his work and enjoyed his relationship with his congregation and the community. He took great pride in the choir and in the beauty of the small church. He was active in all kinds of civic projects and even townspeople of other faith's sought him out for help in times of family crisis. He always rendered what help he could to anyone who required it whether they were Catholic or not. He always felt that deep down everyone was Catholic but a lot of them weren't aware of it.

Father Villa had been at his post for almost five years, since graduating from seminary and being ordained as a Priest. He particularly delighted in the children of the church and spent a lot of his time supervising their activities. He also spent a lot of time with the sick and the elderly, but the children were what fed his soul. He was about as thoroughly good through and through as a human being can get.

One day a Priest from a church in Portland was arrested for molesting a little boy

sexually. It was a terrible scandal and the news media made the most of it. They ran a film clip over and over of the Priest being led from the church in handcuffs. There was a long trial, resulting in a conviction. Then the media ran the clips of him being led from the courtroom in manacles to begin serving his twenty year sentence in the state penitentiary. The Bishop appeared on a Portland talk show to assure the people that priests like this were not typical of the Church and to assure everyone that the man had been excommunicated from the Church. A week went by and then word came that he had hanged himself in his prison cell. The whole ordeal had lasted almost six months and had done irreparable harm to every Catholic church and every Catholic clergyman in the state.

At this time there was a barber in town named Max Ruggles. Max had no religion, but his wife was Catholic, so his children were being raised Catholic. Max was one of those bigoted, narrow minded individuals that seem to be so plentiful in society. Watching the nightly news and closely following the story of the downfall of the Portland priest, he got the idea that maybe that priest was just the tip of the iceberg. He figured that maybe all priests were not of that ilk but that in all probability a lot of them were. His own two small children, one a boy and one a girl spent, it seemed to him, all of their free time at the Church, and they just adored that Father Villa. The more Max got to thinking about it the more worked up he became. He began to discuss his concerns openly in the barber shop and began to get a lot of the other men worked up also. Now we all know that a question posed by one man becomes a quotation when repeated by another.

Soon the whole town was up in arms and they sent for the psychologist from Portland who had done such a splendid job in nailing the Priest there. She interviewed all the children who participated in activities at the Catholic church. She was fond of using anatomically correct dolls in her interviews and in wording her questions so as to get a child to give her the answer she wanted to hear. Of course every child that left an interview was besieged by the other children with questions. Children will be children and so as to gain in peer group status many of them embellished their account of what had taken place in their interview.

It wasn't long before the police became involved. Father Villa, although completely innocent was arrested. The prosecutor visited him in jail and threatened him. Father Villa appealed to the bishop in Portland to furnish him with defense counsel but the bishop had a better idea. Upon his arrival in town the bishop went directly to the jail and talked to Father Villa himself. Father Villa tried to explain that he was innocent but that is what the bishop expected him to do. "Listen to me now Father," the bishop said "Do you love the Church?" "Of course I love the church." "Then this is what you must do, if you do not, it could put the church in a very embarrassing position and bring irreparable damage. "You must plead guilty and put a quick end to this mess. Quite frankly I don't know if the Church in Oregon could survive another fiasco like the one we have just gone through."

Father Villa was devastated but if that is what it took he would have to do as his bishop had instructed, to save the Church. He knew he was being martyred but there



was no other way out. At his arraignment two days later, he was represented by an attorney he had never before met. The man had been sent down from Portland by the bishop to make sure that he pleaded guilty and minimized the damage. When the judge asked "How does your client plead"? Father Villa's attorney responded "Guilty as Charged Your Honor." "This is quite unusual," responded the judge. "Mr. prosecutor, is this a plea bargain for a lighter sentence?" "No, Your Honor, it comes as a complete surprise to me, I was going to approach the defense after the arraignment to see what could be worked out, but now that hardly seems necessary." "In that case the law is clear, mandatory sentencing guidelines require me to sentence you to twenty years in the state penitentiary, without possibility of parole." With that the trial ended and Mr. Villa was led out of the courtroom in manacles.

## - CHAPTER 5 - BASIC TRAINING

Adam came home from school one day about a week before the end of his freshman year and handed a printed form that he had filled out in his meticulous block letter printing and then signed with his full name and rank of private, and his serial number. "What's this" she asked? "Just a form you need to sign, Mom," he said. "What kind of form?" she asks. "It seems that I need your written permission," says Adam, "so I can attend Summer Camp with the ROTC." "Where is the camp being held, and how long will you be gone?" "The Camp is at Fort Ord; it is an old closed down army fort over on the coast, by Carmel. The Army Reserves, National Guard and ROTC have it now," he responded. "Actually, attendance is mandatory, in order for me to stay in the ROTC program, so I don't even know why you should have to sign it." "Be that as it may, Adam, I want to know more about it." "Well it is army basic training, mom." "It's required, like I said. I will be gone most of the summer. It starts the week after school lets out, and I'll get back by late August." After much thought, Adam's mother relented, remarking "Seems like a nice cool place to spend the summer; I'll sign the form and you go and have a good time."

About two hundred boys gathered at the school parking lot, with their families and friends present to see them off, early on the morning of June twelfth. They were all dressed in their army fatigue uniforms and carried all of their army issue clothing in duffle bags. The duffle bags were tagged and loaded on a truck and then the boys were loaded onto brown U.S. Army busses and found their seats. They waived goodbye to their loved ones through the windows and the busses pulled out. The trip took the entire day, with "rest" stops and a lunch break, arriving at Fort Ord just before dark. Adam was seated beside another young private, Darrell Good, who lived in his neighborhood and was also on the football team. The boys had known each other most of their lives and were buddies. They had spent many hours playing together as little kids. The boys sang and laughed and horsed around on the bus trip and had a grand time.

Upon their arrival, the busses pulled in side by side in a large parking lot and the driver opened the door but hollered to the boys to remain seated. The driver left the bus, returning in a few minutes accompanied by four young men, in their late teens,

wearing yellow helmet liners with the word "CADRE" printed on the front and the back of each helmet. They were wearing army khaki uniforms with their collars open and combat boots polished to a high sheen. They looked really sharp, but not too friendly.

One of the cadre climbed up the steps and entered the bus; he wore the stripes of a Sergeant First Class, three stripes pointing up with two rockers below. "Good morning gentlemen" he said. "I am Sergeant Winslow and before you leave here, you will come to know me very well. When I tell you to leave the bus, I want you to debark quickly. You are to double-time to that area in front of the busses over there and form up. I suppose all of you know what squad and platoon you are in." He stepped off the bus then looked back and hollered "MOVE!"

The boys hastily assembled into their familiar formations and were marched to the huge mess hall in the reception area where they were fed a mediocre meal of fried chicken, mashed potatoes and gravy with green beans and a dinner roll. All of which would have been much better three hours earlier when it was still warm. They thought they would commence training immediately but instead spent their first week in something called pre-cycle. During that week they underwent a complete physical, had their heads shaved, received their shots and filled out about a hundred forms. Then one day the trucks showed up and they were trucked up to their company areas.

They formed up again after debarking the trucks and were addressed by the Company Commander, Captain Dubois. "This fort has a great history, men," he said, "It once served as the primary basic training fort West of the Mississippi." "Then the Army closed it down about twenty years ago. Now it has been reactivated for the convenience of training ROTC, National Guard and Army Reserve units. We, meaning your cadre and officers will attempt to recreate for you, army basic training as it was enjoyed by almost a million GI's in from the nineteen thirties to the nineteen eighties. Enjoy this little speech of mine gentlemen it is probably the last civil word you will hear from any of us for the next two months. Any questions? No, good, now Cadre, shape these men up."

Once again he and Darrell Good were thrown together in side to side bunks. Sergeant Winslow appeared at the front of the barracks and said "Now gather around men, I have a foot locker and a wall locker set up here. It contains all the clothing you have been issued and nothing else. Everything you see here is to be arranged exactly as you see it in your own foot locker and wall locker. Any man who has anything in a different place will regret it. I expect this barracks to be the best on the hill and have mercy on the man that lets me down.

Just before you boarded the trucks that brought you up here you were marched before the paymaster who gave each of you one of the army's famous "flying" twenties. We will later today be taking each platoon to the PX where you will purchase the things that you lack from the list that I have posted on the wall here. These are personal items of tooth paste, tooth brush, razor, shaving cream, shoe polish, liquid starch,

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