

My name is Ryan Hopkins. I'm 43 years old and serving a 42-year sentence for murder-robbery, a crime I committed shortly after my 22nd birthday. I've now served over 21 years.

During my first weeks in jail, I was consumed with shame, unable to believe what I had done. Recognizing the trauma I carried from childhood that was marked by extreme abuse and neglect, eventually helped me understand my behavior, but it never justified it.

The day before my crime, I called every rehab center I found in the phone book, but the minimal wait was nine months. Once in jail, I tried to again seek treatment for my addiction, but instead of receiving treatment, my confession of substance use resulted in a separate 10-year federal sentence. Understanding the criminalization of addiction in 2004, I relied on my own will for rehabilitation and have remained clean for the entirety of my incarceration.

After completing my federal sentence, I arrived in Maine and enrolled in the college program in 2017. By 2022, I achieved a Bachelor's degree, and immediately began a Master's program in Industrial-Organizational Psychology, which I'll complete in May of this year.

Throughout graduate school, I worked remotely, paying my own tuition and gaining professional experience through research with RTI International and Johns Hopkins University. Currently I work in the role of Business Development and Operations at Nucleos, a tech company that provides educational and work training opportunities for incarcerated individuals. I've also earned professional certificates from Columbia University in software engineering, Stanford University in product development, Google in UI/UX design, and am currently pursuing studies in Computational Science.

Time and dedication have fundamentally changed me. Though my challenges with PTSD and ADHD still remind me of my childhood traumas, I've learned forgiveness, healing, and accountability. Today, I continue to grieve deeply for the victim of my crime, understanding the harm I've caused. Although I cannot remove what I have done, I give my best to life and others.

Thank you