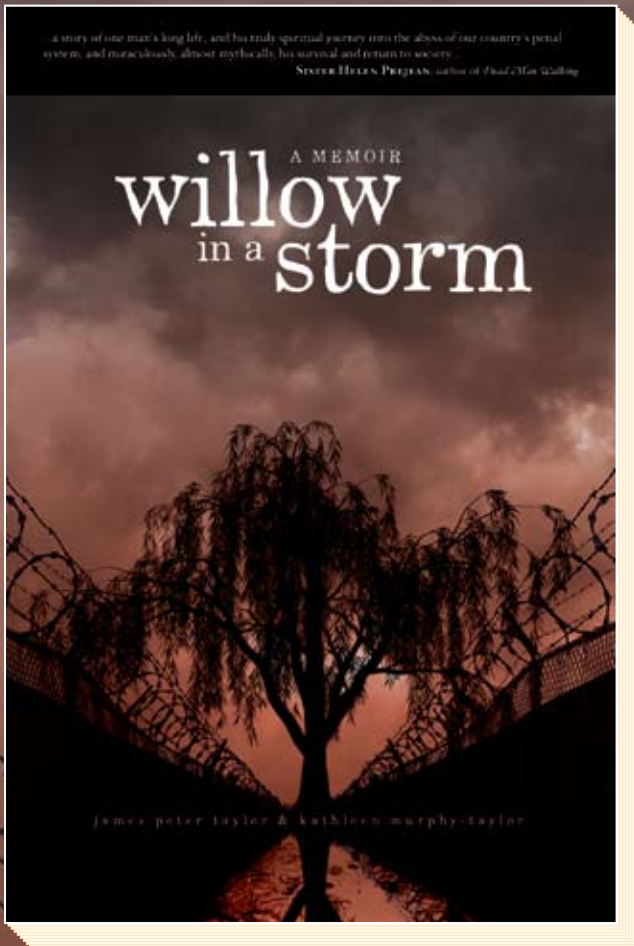


# Prison lifers aren't meant to see freedom. Beaten and blinded, one man makes it to parole.



"I was stunned by *Willow in a Storm*. It is the story of one man's long life, and his truly spiritual journey into the abyss of our country's penal system, and miraculously, almost mythically, his survival and return to society. With the assistance of his wife, James Peter Taylor tells this harrowing and inspiring story with class, directness and honesty."

– Sister Helen Prejean, author of *Dead Man Walking*

"My goodness, what an engrossing read! Having served on the South Carolina Parole Board for 19 years, I sure could identify with *Willow in a Storm*."

– Rhett Jackson, past president, American Booksellers Association

This memoir centers on James Peter Taylor's remarkable survival in prison, where he lived from the 1950s until his release in the mid-1990s. Now elderly, he reflects on how he made it for so many years when most other lifers die in confinement. He survives, not by being a stable, sturdy oak, but by bending like a willow to new and horrible situations.

As a child, "Jimmy Pete" is abused by his father. He marries young, has a daughter, and continually leaves the family until he is gone for good. Also a terrific athlete, his recurring injuries alienate him from the only talent he feels he has. He becomes a loose cannon, traveling the country leaving women, children and jobs in his wake.

Taylor unintentionally kills Kenneth Lindberg, a banker with a young family, during a botched robbery. He receives life as punishment. In prison, unlike many inmates, Taylor does not join a gang. Instead he adopts the role of a female for survival, depending on men for protection.

Taylor uses many anecdotes about insane prison mates and cruel guards to color his story. Physical and sexual violence is prevalent. Taylor himself is the victim of several violent attacks, causing the permanent loss of certain brain functions, including sight. But there is hope even in confinement. He learns to give his time, intelligence and money to others. Likewise, prison supervisors and outside friends begin to assist in his struggle for a stable life. He begins to understand that he can never undo the horror he committed. **S**

Publication Date	September 2007
Title	<i>Willow in a Storm: A Memoir</i>
Authors	James P. Taylor & Kathleen Murphy-Taylor
ISBN	978-0-9765201-5-3, 0-9765201-5-X
Specifications	6x9 inches, 320 pages
Price	\$14.95 \$16.00 Canada
Publisher	Scarletta Press www.scarlettapress.com
Contact Information	David Unowsky 651.698.3178 david@scarlettapress.com
To order	<i>Individuals:</i> available from your local bookstore <i>Trade distributor:</i> Publishers Group West/Perseus 800.788.3123 Also available from national wholesalers (Baker & Taylor, Ingram or your favorite vendor)

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