

## **800 Meters by Mikael K. Luman**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **How Did This Happen To Me?**

*On Friday, October 20, 2000 at approximately 2053 hours, members of the Columbia Enforcement Narcotics Team (CENT) with the assistance of the Columbia County police department and the Oregon State police executed a search warrant at 50291 Columbia River Hwy in Scappoose, Oregon for a suspected methamphetamine lab. The search revealed an active methamphetamine lab in operation, along with a large amount of controlled substance methamphetamine that was in both marketable form and in solution. I led the team members to the rear entry door of the residence. I knocked on the rear door and three (3) times very loud announced "Police!", "Search warrant!" After I knocked for the third time, I forced open the door with a (key) ramming tool. —Police report xi*

Scappoose, Oregon. October 20, 2000. I was getting high after manufacturing a batch of meth when I saw the lights outside the patio door. Then someone pounded on the back door and shouted, "Police!", "Search warrant!" Running from the cops was usually fun for me. I liked the rush. Besides, I always thought I could get away because I was an athlete. But this time I was scared—because I was tired, because I'd been on the run too long—and because I didn't think I was going to get away again.

"Police!", "Search warrant!" usually means the house is surrounded. I went through the front door with my shoulder down expecting to knock through somebody. Miraculously, no one was out there. I bounced off the porch and across the wet grass. Then I leapt over the fence and ran for my life. *This is it*, I thought. *I'm done. The dogs and police must be right behind me.* Running was part of my life then, not just from police but from problems. I always slept with my shoes on, just in case. When you're doing drugs and living the lifestyle the way I was, you're worried about getting locked up, but not worried enough to stop doing what you're doing.

Before, I would have just moved to another place, another town—I'd done it enough times. This time, I didn't. Maybe I was tired of running. Could this be you? Have you assumed, as I did, that you can get away with anything just because it feels good at the start? For me it was the cockiness that came from my years as an athlete. I had the mindset, "Once an athlete, always an athlete." Despite the fact that I was now a drug addict, in my head I still saw myself as a track runner. Running from the cops just seemed like another race I was sure I could win. How wrong I was. I'm not going to preach to you, but I would like to share what happened to me—a confident, good-looking star athlete, the guy who could talk his way out of anything and verbally tap dance around any issue and anyone who questioned him.

Much of what happened to me—both the ups and the downs—had to do with what I think of as my special calling. We all have a special calling, of course, but I was reminded of mine from as early as I can remember. My mother said that she saw me in my infant chair one day and just knew that I was different from her other children. She said a warm kind of feeling came over her that this child of hers was a special spirit. My grandmother had a similar vision. Once they shared their visions with me, those visions became my visions, and ultimately my burdens. At first, I thought that calling had to do with my athletic abilities. As you will soon see, my early life revolved around those gifts. Still, I was never able to change my athletic expectations from sixth grade to high school or even after prison boot camp. I always tried to get by on natural ability alone, and I

had a lot of it. As I grew older, I could neither adapt my expectations nor change my habits. If I was at a practice, I gave it one hundred and ten percent. But if it was a weekend, and if I had more important things to do—or probably just more fun things to do—I usually lacked both the discipline and the desire to train. There's a difference between physical training and mental training. I think that I was born with the physical talent, but it was a long time before I started developing the mental capacity to cope with life's many struggles—which I am still working on today.

Looking back, I think I was an addict from the start. I was hooked before my first kiss, my first drink, my first bowl of weed, my first acid trip, my first tab, my first line of coke, my first pipe of crystal meth. There was a void in my life and I filled that void with sports. The less I was able to compete, the more there was to fill. Finally, it got to the point where I was filling it with partying, girls and drugs beyond anything I'd imagined. I was never very open with my feelings before I started to drink and use, because I didn't think anybody would understand. I think that ties into the sports. I was ADHD and I was obsessive compulsive, and the only times I felt really comfortable was if I was competing, acting out, hanging out with my friends or anything else to fill the void.

### **On The Track**

Track is not like team sports. Track is you alone. If something goes wrong, you don't have anyone to blame but yourself; the pressure is on you. There were two races that I ran during my track career that stood out from the others: the 800 meters and the 400 meters. The 800 meters is a mental race. You have to think, pace, learn and plan. You can't be all on or all off. Then there's the 400 meters. You just go out and run as fast as you can from start to finish—just sprinting when you hear the sound of the gun. I lived my life the way I ran the 400. I was only looking toward the finish line and trying to get there the fastest way possible. I was always able to talk or lie my way out of almost any problem I brought on myself. If all else failed, my parents would help bail me out. I didn't learn until recently that I should have been running the 800 from the get go. I didn't go from being perfect to using drugs, and I don't think people in general do that. I think it's a process. The more bad things you do, the less effect the good things have. The more depressed you get, the worse you feel, and the easier it is to make poor choices. This book will show you the decisions that led to my arrests, to prison and to my rehabilitation and redemption. At the time, many of them seemed like the wrong decisions, but now I'm not so sure that decisions can be right or wrong. I believe that good decisions and bad decisions are ultimately judged by what you learn from them. At the time, a bad decision might feel wrong, but the ultimate outcome may be good. We're all potential winners; it just depends on our choices. These are the choices I needed to make to get where I am today.

Maybe you think your life could never get out of control. Perhaps you think that you are too strong to let addictions rule your choices. That's what I thought too. After all, I had a special calling.

Writing this book has been both a painful and a cleansing experience for me. It's important that you know before we continue that all of the people I write about in the following pages are real, although of course, their names have been changed. I didn't invent them. I didn't combine them. There are no composites or fictional characters, and all of the events and conversations are as accurate as I can recall.

### **Strange Encounter Of The First Kind**

Close to Cooper Mountain—our elementary school—was a field and an old barn. I was at the school with my dad and sister playing basketball. My friend James and his neighbor Blair were checking out a barn across the street. They said they'd heard there were boats in it. The run-down structure didn't look as if it would hold anything of value. My dad and sister stayed at the school, and we went to the barn. One of the windows was open, so we went inside and started walking around. There were some really nice boats inside that place. We couldn't figure out who'd put them there or why. The next thing I knew, a couple of guys were standing in there with us.

"You need to get out of here," one of them said.

My friend had a really scared look on his face. Then I saw why; one of them had a gun and was pointing it at us. They were in their twenties, and I don't know if it was a real gun or a pellet gun, but it looked real to me. We climbed out the window and ran back to the school yelling and screaming. Once my dad saw what was going on, he climbed out of the Suburban, jumped over the fence and started chasing those guys. He never found them. After that, my friends and I were always talking about the boat barn and making up stories about why the boats might have been there, but we never went back. It was the first time I had a gun pulled on me, but not the last.

### **Looking Back**

At this age, most kids probably don't think about more than immediate gratification. Although I knew the difference between right and wrong, I didn't realize that poor decisions lead to more poor decisions. I tried to do right most of the time, but if doing wrong benefited me more at the moment, I didn't think about the long-term consequences. Perhaps if there had been some type of proactive education available when I was in grade school, I might have made different decisions.