

There's a guy like me in every state and federal prison in America, I guess--I'm the guy who can get it for you. Tailor made cigarettes, a bag of reefer if you're partial to that, a bottle of brandy to celebrate your son or daughter's high school graduation, or anything else within reason, that is. It wasn't always that way. I came to Shawshank when I was just twenty, and I am one of the few people in our happy little family willing to own up to what he did. I committed murder. I put a large insurance policy on my wife -- who was three years older than I was -- and then I fixed the brakes on the Chevrolet coupe her father had given us as a wedding present. It worked out exactly as I had planned -- except I hadn't planned on her stopping to pick up the neighbor woman and the neighbor woman's infant son on their way down Castle Hill and into town. The brakes let go and the car crashed through the bushes at the edge of the town common, gathering speed. Bystanders said it must have been doing fifty or better when it hit the base of the Civil War statue and burst into flames. I also hadn't planned on getting caught, but caught I was. Maine has no death-penalty, but the District Attorney saw to it that I was tried for all three deaths and given three life sentences, to run one after the other. That fixed up any chance of parole I might have for a long, long time. The judge called what I had done "a hideous, heinous crime," and it was; but it is also in the past now. (...)

Have I rehabilitated myself, you ask? I don't even know what that word means, at least as far as prisons and corrections go. I think it's a politician's word. It may have some other meaning, and it may be that I will have a chance to find out, but that is the future - something cons teach themselves not to think about. I was young, good-looking, and from the poor side of town. I knocked up a pretty, sulky, headstrong girl who lived in one of the fine old houses on Carbine Street. Her father was agreeable to the marriage if I would take a job in the optical company he owned and "work my way up." I found out that what he really had in mind was keeping me in his house and under his thumb, like a disagreeable pet that has not quite been housebroken and which may bite. Enough hate eventually piled up to cause me to do what I did. Given a second chance, I would not do it again, but I'm not sure that means I am rehabilitated. Anyway, it's not me I want to tell you about; I want to tell you about a guy named Andy Dufresne. But before I can tell you about Andy, I have to explain a few other things about myself. It won't take long. As I said, I've been the guy who can get it for you here at Shawshank for damn near forty years. And that doesn't just mean contraband items like extra 2 cigarettes or booze, although those items always top the list. But I've gotten thousands of other items for men doing time here, some of them perfectly legal yet hard to come by in a place where you've supposedly been brought to be punished. (...)

I've gotten men chocolates on Valentine's Day; I got three of those green milkshakes they serve at McDonald's around St. Paddy's Day for a crazy Irishman named O'Malley; I even arranged for a midnight showing of Deep Throat and The Devil in Miss Jones for a party of twenty men who had pooled their resources to rent the films . . . although I ended up doing a week in solitary for that little escapade. It's the risk you run when you're the guy who can get it. (...). I don't get all those things gratis, and for some items the price comes high. But I don't do it just for the money; what good is money to me? I'm never going to own a Cadillac car or fly off to Jamaica for two weeks in February. I do it for the same reason that a good butcher will only sell you fresh meat: I got a reputation and I want to keep it. The only two things I refuse to handle are guns and heavy drugs. I won't help anyone kill himself or anyone else. I have enough killing on my mind to last me a lifetime. Yeah, I'm a regular Neiman-Marcus. And so when Andy Dufresne came to me in 1949 and asked if I could smuggle Rita Hayworth into the prison for him, I said it would be no problem at all. And it wasn't.