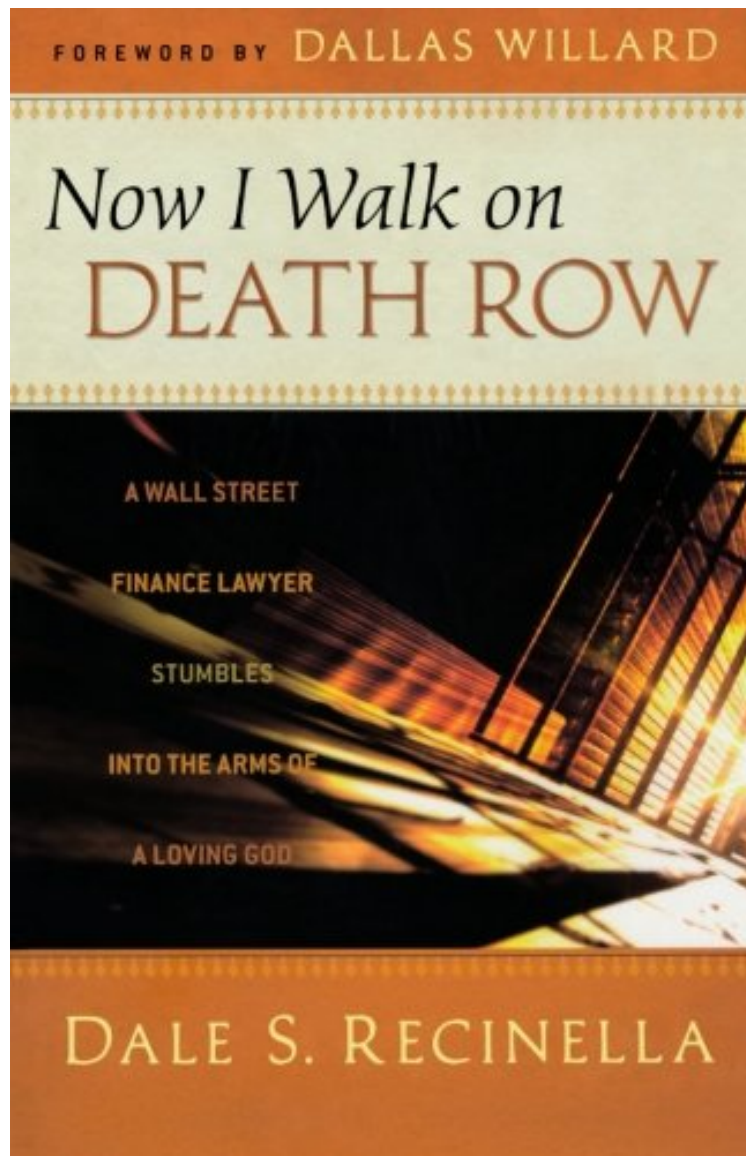


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## Now I Walk on Death Row: A Wall Street Finance Lawyer Stumbles into the Arms of A Loving God

*Dale S. Recinella*

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**Dale S. Recinella : Now I Walk on Death Row: A Wall Street Finance Lawyer Stumbles into the Arms of A Loving God** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Now I Walk on Death Row: A Wall Street Finance Lawyer Stumbles into the Arms of A Loving God:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Inspiring and enlightening  
By Lillian Ammann (Lillie)The amazing story of a man and his family who believe Jesus meant what He said. The author was a high-powered Wall Street finance attorney with two failed marriages and a lot of hard living behind him when his brother led him back to Christ. He married a woman he met in Bible study who was as serious about her faith as he was. His encounter with a sick homeless alcoholic and reading the Scripture about Jesus' conversation with the rich young man convicted him. With the support of his wife and their children (three children from his previous marriages lived with them, and they had two more), he spent more and more time in lay ministry until his wife became the primary wage-earner so he could volunteer his time on Florida's death row. The commitment of this family to serving God is inspiring, and learning about the reality of life in prison and the problems with the death penalty is enlightening. The only reason I didn't give the book 5 stars is that it is written in present tense, and I found that distracting and occasionally confusing.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. A book on death row full of human warmth and candor  
By Anne B. Gardiner  
Now I Walk on Death Row: A Wall Street Finance Lawyer Stumbles into the Arms of a Loving God. By Dale S. Recinella. This fast-paced autobiography is a downward ascent, to use the author's phrase. Dale Recinella goes from being a prosperous lawyer to a lay chaplain on death row. A Catholic who came to believe that Jesus meant what He said, Dale considers his apparent decline in social status to be something like the raising of Lazarus: I was imprisoned in a life I had made for myself, and God resurrected me and gave me a second chance. Born in 1952 to Italian immigrants, and the eldest of eight children, Dale studied at Thomas More College and Notre Dame Law School. At age 30 he was getting rich representing state and local governments on Wall Street and in the world capital markets, but he realized that his life was empty. In 1986, after building an expensive home, he dreamed that a beautiful voice was calling him, but he was chained to the bricks of his new house. Soon Dale, his wife, Susan, and their children moved to a smaller house, and later to an apartment near Good News Ministries, where he started volunteering. After he pared down his law practice to 20 hours a week, friends and clients rebuked him: Dale, this is not the best use of your talents. In 1993 he embraced full-time volunteer ministry, emptying his law office of hundreds of closing reports, some of them half-billion-dollar deals. Dale loves human beings in all their nitty gritty. At age nine he helped his mother wash the cloth diapers of his younger siblings. In 1988, while attending a posh conference in Baltimore, he spent hours finding a shelter for Dennis, a smelly derelict with open sores. At one point Dennis sobbed against his shoulder and Dale ended up hugging him. Later, he visited a youth dying of AIDS, shackled to a bed in a prison hospital. Kneeling next to the bed, Dale offered to take him into his arms and cry with him. The two cried together, and the youth (who died three days later) said, a thousand pounds has been lifted off of me. In 1998 Susan, who has a doctorate in psychology, took a job in a hospital in Macclenny, Florida. They visited the local Catholic church and met Pastor Joe, who had been praying for 15 years for someone like Dale to help him on death row at Union Correctional Institution (UCI) and Florida State Prison (FSP). The following chapters are riveting. Most people don't know how subhuman the conditions are on death row. Pastor Joe takes Dale on a gate walk at UCI's main death-row building, which houses over 330 condemned men. Each prisoner lives in a six-by-ten-foot cell with only walls to look at some [men are] white, some black, some Catholic, most not, some young, some old, but all dressed only in their shorts, the attire of choice for those living in a solar oven. Here Dale sees men my age and even my dad's age, suffering in concrete and steel boxes with no air-conditioning, shade or air movement. They soak their sheets in the water of their toilet and then wrap themselves in them while they lie on the floor, hoping that some evaporation will occur, reducing their core body temperature. Dale calls it the bowels of hell and asks, What is our standard of care for men we are holding in cages until we kill them? After covering 90 cells, they go to another tier where the inmates are locked behind solid steel doors with a small window and a flap for sliding in a food tray. Pastor Joe unlocks the flap to give Communion and slips reading material through a quarter-inch gap between door and wall. In one episode reminiscent of Dantes Inferno, a young man asks to say his confession, and Pastor Joe puts his ear to the flap. Dale hears a voice near him saying, Brother, if you're a man of God, please talk to me. He finds a tall black man pressing his face against the gap. Pressing his own lips to the rusted metal and moldy wall, Dale offers to lead him in prayer. Please, the man whispers. We pray for forgiveness, Dale intones, for healing, for deliverance, for protection, for hope and for perseverance. We pray the name that is our victory, the blood that is our protection, the empty tomb that is our hope and the Spirit that is our strength. The man thanks him: I needed to pray so bad, but I didn't know how to get back. The next week they enter FSP through eleven steel-barred doors the last with simultaneous locks on both sides. Pastor Joe points to the execution chamber and says he still has dreams of the last execution he witnessed: the man had flames shooting from his head. Dale falls into a routine: two days a week at UCI, two at FSP. Those nearing execution start asking him to be their spiritual advisor. On one man's last day, a sergeant who has known the prisoner for 20 years visits him and says, The man I've known inside these walls is more of a Christian than I am. I know that you will get in heaven long before me. Goodbye, good man. Evidently, the man executed was no longer the same man who had committed the crime. In 2001 Dale goes to a state-sponsored seminar on death-penalty law, teleconferenced to nine locations. In attendance are a Florida Supreme Court (FSC) justice, a state senator, and the whole death penalty industry costly state lawyers. Laughter erupts when an expert says, Florida jurors almost always believe that execution is cheaper than life imprisonment without possibility of parole. These insiders know the death penalty can be two to

three times more expensive than life in a maximum-security prison and that Florida could save \$50 million a year by abolishing the death penalty. Besides its cost, the death penalty can be monstrously unjust. Among the examples Dale gives is of a decorated Vietnam veteran executed in October 2006 even though another man had confessed to the crime. The FSC wouldnt allow an evidentiary hearing because of the procedural bar a common law doctrine that prevents new proof of innocence (except DNA) from being admitted after a certain time. In Florida the bar is 24 months post-trial, after which the court will only decide whether proper procedures were followed. In the veterans case, one judge dissented: Justice Harry Lee Anstead wrote that the confession of another person raises the most compelling and fundamental doubt about a prior determination of guilt. Here, we have not only a claim that someone else has confessed, but we have sworn testimony attesting to its validity. Indeed! What an egregious miscarriage of justice. Dale Recinella writes with warmth and candor and, despite his grim subject, has a great sense of humor of the self-deprecating kind. This book is highly recommended. - Anne Barbeau Gardiner

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. An Amazing Story of a Life Transformed By Mike Brown Full disclosure: I have known the author and his wife for more than 25 years. I worked with Dale at a couple of the same law firms in the same practice area. I lost touch with him over the last six or seven years and did not know he wrote this book until I stumbled on it while looking for something else. He did not ask me to review the book and has no idea I am writing this review. My review is completely unsolicited. I am trying to be as objective as possible, but admit to some bias because reading his story carries personal interest for me. Dale writes about how he started out as an extremely ambitious, high-strung lawyer spending most of his waking life working on major transactions with Wall Street colleagues. I can attest that all of that is true, as I was witness to it. He was generally disliked by the associates that worked under him because he was very driven and demanded that they work equally as hard, well into the night, and be at his beck and call at all times. He was paranoid about anybody who was a threat to his ambitions. In short, at least at work, he was--I'll say politely--very unpleasant to be around. (I'm sure Dale won't deny it and he certainly alludes to it in the book.) Outside of work, he seemed to be a nice guy. Thank God he chose a path that brought out that side of him. The book contains many details of the pain and depression he suffered during that period of his life, none of which I was aware of at the time. Apparently, he kept it well hidden from his colleagues. I began to see changes in his outlook on life a number of years later as he slowed down in his law practice and devoted more and more time to his religious endeavors. All of this is well documented in the book. Finally, he simply became transformed. His personality completely changed, or, perhaps, more accurately, he chose to bury the unpleasant side of his personality and allow the good, caring, charitable and warm side to fully manifest itself at all times. I have never witnessed a more dramatic personality transformation in anybody. Nor have I encountered anybody else who "gave it all up" to literally live the life that Jesus preached, with the full blessing, cooperation and participation of his family. In itself, Dale's spiritual rebirth is as inspiring as anything else he writes about in the book. Dale's story is amazing to read. He writes in clear, concise and understated prose, keeps the story moving and interjects humorous but gentle sarcasm on a few very appropriate occasions. He is a person with many talents, and we can now add writing to that list. Terrific job. Read it. You can't help but be inspired and moved.

As one of the most influential finance lawyers in the country, Dale Recinella was living the American dream. With prestige, power, and unthinkable paychecks at his fingertips, his life was perfect. . . at least on paper. But on the heels of closing a huge deal for the Miami Dolphins, Dale's life took an unfathomable turn. He heard and heeded Jesus's call to sell everything he owned and follow him. Thus began a radical quest to live out the words of Jesus no matter what the cost. In this quick paced, well written story, Recinella shares his amazing journey from growing up in the slums of Detroit to racing through "the good life" on Wall Street to finally walking the humble path of God the path of ministry on death row.

About the Author Dale S. Recinella has served for 20 years a volunteer chaplain and for 13 years as a lay chaplain for Florida's death row and solitary confinement. Dale has worked as a licensed Florida lawyer for over 30 years. He and his wife, Susan, have five children and live in Macclenny, Florida.