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ESCAPE ARTIST: MEMOIR OF A VISIONARY ARTIST ON DEATH ROW
BY WILLIAM A. NOGUERA • KIRKUS REVIEWS

TITLE: Escape Artist: Memoir of A Visionary Artist on Death Row By William A. Noguera

AUTHOR BIO: William A. Noguera —is an award-winning artist, author and speaker, gaining international attention and received accolades for his photographic hyper-realistic ink compositions, profound mixed-media paintings, hybridized abstract expressionism and neo-constructivist wall sculptures—exhibiting in Paris, New York and San Francisco. Noguera has been the subject of over 35 articles in such publications as Forbes, The New York Times, The San Francisco Chronicle, and BOOM! A Journal of California. Besides being an artist and lecturer, Noguera is a former Hapkido Middle-Weight Champion. Since writing his memoir, Noguera has aspired to help others through lectures at MBA programs and as a radio guest speaker, concentrating on prevention and intervention. Noguera's inspiration is simple: pay his debt to society by creating art for charitable causes and encouraging others, and writing and speaking about what it takes to make progressive self-change and the continuous effort that is required for someone to have a positive influence on others. Noguera's talks share an eye-opening, thought-provoking narrative on the realities of wrongdoing, prison life, ethical responsibility, prison gangs, their culture, the ramifications of destructive behavior, and the rewards of constructive rehabilitation.

FOREWORD: Walter A. Pavlo Jr. —is the co-author of *Stolen Without A Gun: Contributions from Inside History's Biggest Accounting Fraud*, and a contributor to Forbes.com. Pavlo is also a business professor and a professional-speaker who has addressed the FBI, top-ranked business schools and universities, accounting firms, law enforcement agencies, professional societies, and corporations on the subject of white collar crime. He is a frequent contributor to CNBC and Fox Business, and he has made television and radio appearances, and public speaking.

OVERVIEW: William A. Noguera has spent 34 years at the notorious San Quentin Prison, home to the nation's largest and deadliest death row. Each day, men plot against you and your life rests on a razor's edge. In *Escape Artist: Memoir of A Visionary Artist on Death Row*, he describes his personal growth as a man and artist and shares his insights into daily life and the fight to survive in the underworld of prison culture.

After being sentenced to death, he arrived at San Quentin Prison and was thrown into a rat-infested cell—it was there that he discovered the key to his escape: art. Over the next three decades, Noguera rebelled against conventional prison behavior, and instead forged the code he lives by today—accepting responsibility for his actions, and a self-imposed discipline of rehabilitation. In the process, he has explored his capacity to bring focus and clarity to his artistic vision. An unexpected transcendent moment occurred while Noguera lay face down in the prison yard as guards fired shots at two men locked in battle. He realized the prisoners around him, their lives and experiences behind these walls, possessed significant worth.

Escape Artist exposes the violence, politics and everyday existence within the underbelly of society that is prison life. Noguera's story includes having been an abused child and a victim of racial discrimination and bullying. Ultimately, these challenges led him to the martial arts—and the lethal unknown side effects of Roid-Rage Syndrome caused by steroid use. In an unprecedented narrative, Noguera reveals the emotional and heart-wrenching loss that landed him on death row and the journey he has taken to become an award-winning artist, speaker, and author, a tale of one man's transformation through tragedy.

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[How a death row inmate acquired solace and inner penance through education and art.](#)

"Currently serving a death sentence at San Quentin State Prison, Noguera writes candidly and unrelentingly about his abusive childhood and his irreversible brushes with trouble as a youth. The bulk of the book details the vicious, unpredictable culture, survival tactics, and tangled hierarchy within the prison where he has spent the past 34 years. Through his fascinating and frequently shocking jailhouse memoir of San Quentin life (with its ironically coveted "million-dollar view of San Francisco"), readers will learn the art of "keistering," the hazards of integrated prison yards and segregated gang affiliations, and how books on distinguished poets, artists, and philosophers at the prison library awakened in the author the "passion, love, hate, fury, and all of the human emotions that would later be the basis for my own work." Noguera discusses his past as a primal, animalistic young man who became a targeted prisoner in Orange County Jail and his present struggles reconciling a dark, inescapable fate with the production of painted artwork, his "vehicle of escape" (liberally displayed throughout the book), offering a creative outlet for his frustration and inner angst. The author's reflections focus primarily on his time in jail, leavened with guidepost life principles that he learned and adopted while behind bars. In the final chapters of the book he shares the intimate details of the vengeful 1983 homicide of his then-girlfriend's abusive mother when he was 18. This event's description is as lucid as the passionate tone Noguera adopts when describing his ongoing efforts of atonement, including the formation of a charitable foundation that donates art sale proceeds and remote speaking engagements on professional ethics and corporate responsibility. The author's obvious remorse and firm commitment to self-rehabilitation are honorable and very much apparent throughout a moody, divergent memoir in which his impressive artistic oeuvre invariably wrestles with a murderous past and an irreversible death sentence. A provocative and sure-to-be-controversial portrayal of repentance through art."