

# Tennessee death row inmate shares story of innocence in new book; preaches at Franklin, TN church

*Kevin Burns sits on Tennessee's death row awaiting execution. Maintaining his innocence, his only hope is a stay of execution issued by Tennessee's Governor.*

FRANKLIN, TENNESSEE, UNITED STATES, September 3, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Today! The Best Day of My Life

“

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*Kevin Burns*

Death row inmate shares story of innocence and hope, while pulling back the curtain to reveal an unjust system

[Justice Sonia Sotomayor](#) called 2023 appeal denial “disheartening” and said lower court rulings were “indefensible” in dissent

With no appeals remaining, [Kevin Burns](#) sits on Tennessee's death row awaiting his execution for his

conviction of murder in the 1992 shooting deaths of Damond Dawson and Tracey Johnson in Memphis. Maintaining his innocence, his only hope is a stay of execution issued by Tennessee's Governor.

Despite his situation, ask him how he's doing, and he'll tell you “[Today is the best day of my life](#),” which is also the title of his book. Burns shares how he is able to maintain this positive outlook, while providing a glimpse into life on death row. He tells what led him to prison in the first place, and the few bad decisions he made almost 30 years ago on his 23rd birthday.

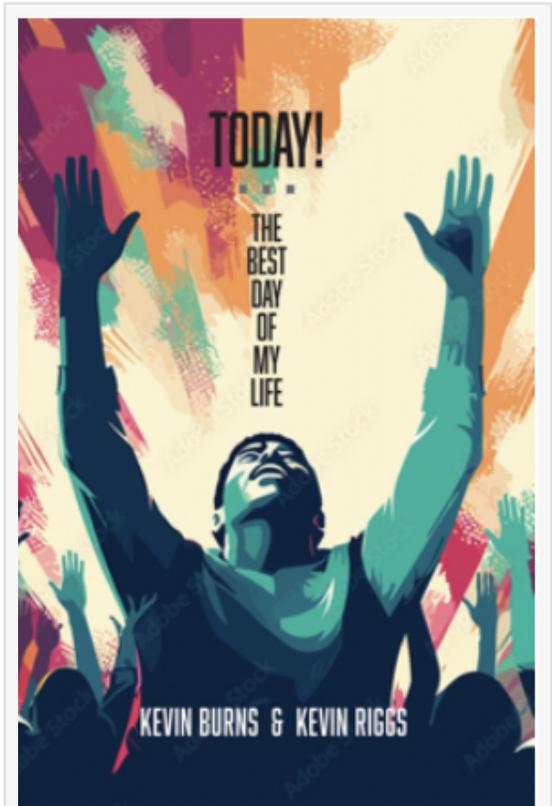
At his 1995 trial, his counsel failed to challenge the state's narrative that Burns pulled the trigger of the gun that killed either of two men, despite witness accounts and a description of the shooter that conflicts with his appearance. Burns is the only one involved in the incident who is in prison and sentenced to death. Two other men, presumably the gunmen, are out on parole.

According to Richard Tennent, Burns' lawyer, “Any competent attorney would have had a different outcome at trial. A good attorney would have won, and KB would have never gone to

jail.”

In spring 2023, three U.S. Supreme Court justices, including Justice Sonia Sotomayor, protested the court decision not to intervene in Burns’ case. Sotomayor called the denial “disheartening” and said lower court rulings were “indefensible.” She wrote that Burns faces execution despite “a very robust possibility” that he did not kill Dawson “but that the jurors, acting on incomplete information, sentenced him to death because they thought he had.”

“The system muzzles you, keeping you in the background so they can tell the story they want to tell,” said Burns. “I did make some decisions that I regret, but I did not murder anyone. This book is my opportunity to be heard and tell my story in my own words. When KR suggested the project, my first thought was, someone’s finally listening. That’s all I really wanted to accomplish from this book.”



Today! Book Cover

KR is Kevin Riggs, a pastor at Franklin Community Church in Franklin, Tennessee, that has been visiting death row for many years. In addition to co-authoring the book, Riggs supported Burns during his two-year journey to become an ordained pastor.

“My purpose in telling KB’s and other inmates’ stories is not to romanticize them, nor is it to disregard the victims and their families,” says Riggs “I believe the victim’s lives need to be honored and remembered, and the victim’s families need all the love and support they can get. I just don’t believe the way to honor victims is through more violence.”

Currently in Tennessee, there are 44 men and one woman on death row. In April 2022, Gov. Bill Lee put a hold on all executions following a report that found the Tennessee Department of Correction was not testing the lethal injection drugs as required by its own protocol. Lee tasked officials with TDOC to create a new protocol before another execution takes place in Tennessee.

“Proximity changes things,” says Burns. “I challenge everyone who reads this book to come and talk to us and listen to our stories. Through building relationships with each other, we will both be changed for the better.”

Today - The Best Day of My Life is available online at [fojworldwide.com](http://fojworldwide.com) and on Amazon.

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\* All proceeds from the book go to Floods of Justice, an advocacy ministry of Franklin Community Church.

\*\* State of Tennessee v. Kevin Burns, Case Number: 02S01-9708-CR-00073

\*\*\* SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES, KEVIN B. BURNS v. TONY MAYS, WARDEN, ON PETITION FOR WRIT OF CERTIORARI TO THE UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS FOR THE SIXTH CIRCUIT, No. 22-5891. Decided April 24, 2023

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Franklin Community Church

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