



# You Got Nothing Coming: Notes From a Prison Fish

*Jimmy A. Lerner*

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## **You Got Nothing Coming: Notes From a Prison Fish** Jimmy A. Lerner

A memoir of astonishing power—the true story of a middle-class, middle-aged man who fell into the Inferno of the American prison system, and what he has to do to survive.

It is your worst nightmare. You wake up in an 8' x 6' concrete-and-steel cell designated "Suicide Watch #3." The cell is real. Jimmy Lerner, formerly a suburban husband and father, and corporate strategic planner and survivor, is about to become a prison "fish," or green new arrival. Taken to a penitentiary in the Nevada desert to begin serving a twelve-year term for voluntary manslaughter, this once nice Jewish boy from Brooklyn ends up sharing a claustrophobic cell with Kansas, a hugely muscled skinhead with a swastika engraved on his neck and a serious set of issues. And if he dares complain, the guards will bluntly tell him, "You got nothing coming."

Bringing us into a world of petty corruption, racial strife, and crank-addicted neo-Nazis, Jimmy Lerner gives us a fish's progress: a brash, compelling, and darkly comic story peopled with characters who are at various times funny, violent, and surprisingly tender. His rendering of prison language is mesmerizingly vivid and exact, and his search for a way not simply to survive but to craft a new way to live, in the most unpropitious of circumstances, is a tale filled with resilience, dignity, and a profound sense of the absurd. In the book's climax, we learn just what demonic set of circumstances—a compound of bad luck and worse judgment—led him to the lethal act of self-defense that landed him in a circle of an American hell.

Electrifying, unforgettable, bracingly cynical, and perceptive, *You Got Nothing Coming* is impossible to put down or shake off. What the cult favorite *Oz* is to television, this book is to prose—and all of the events are real.

*From the Hardcover edition.*

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