

IHfL



Initiative Hoffnung fürs Leben



Web: www.ihfl.de Galerie: www.armstrongkunst.wordpress.com
Nachrichten-Blog: www.lancelotarmstrong.wordpress.com



deliver us from evil...

Foto: Peter K.

Contact : Initiative Hoffnung fürs Leben - c/o Peter Koch - Naumburger Str. 23A - 34127 Kassel - Germany
Mail: info@ihfl.de / Phone: +491520 - 2546262
Web: www.ihfl.de / News-Blog: lancelotarmstrong.wordpress.com
Galery: armstrongkunst.wordpress.com

Donate for our fight against the death penalty please on our donations account
Initiative Hoffnung fürs Leben (IHfL):

Peter Koch (IHfL) - Postbank - IBAN: DE62 1001 0010 0341 6051 12 - BIC: PBNKDEFF

Foreword

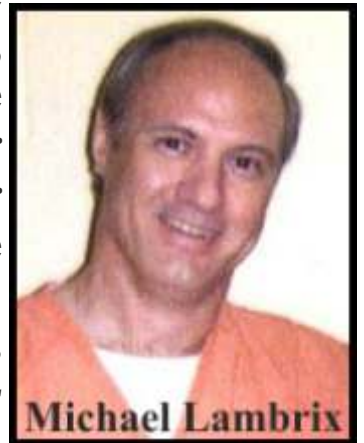
In our work against the death penalty, we meet again and again people who are full of hate - yes they wish the prisoners on death row the worst mutilations and agony - and say they would like to do the prisoners these torments themselves. Their views are shaped by the image of the "monster" and they deny the death candidates any right to be human.

We want to counter this with this little booklet.

Peter K.

Michael Lambrix was executed 4 hours after the scheduled date (Thursday evening / local time), on October 5, 2017, by the US state of Florida. He had to experience the torture of Florida's death row for about 34 years. Lambrix was sentenced to death in 1984 for allegedly killing Aleisha Bryant and Clarence Moore. He has always asserted his innocence.

Michael Lambrix was able to talk to the press shortly before his execution. There he said, *"That will not be an execution. It's going to be a cold-blooded murder!"* - He tried to prevent his execution by a hunger strike.



Michael Lambrix wrote in the face of his upcoming execution:
Date With Death: Contemplating My Last Words - By Michael Lambrix

(source: minutesbeforesix.blogspot.de/2017/10/date-with-death-contemplating-my-last.html)

What if someone approached you today and told you that you only had two days to live - and that you had to spend your remaining days in solitary, away from all those that mattered to you. Alone, you slowly count down each moment of every day, each tick of that clock, drawing you closer to a date with death.

You will be allowed to say a few (and only a few) "last words". Whatever you decide to say is what you will be remembered for (or forgotten, if all you do is waste that last breathe of life).

That is where I am today. As I write this, it is Friday, September 15, 2017, and I am in Cell One, formally known as Q-2101, only feet away from Florida's execution chamber. And in the early evening of October 5, 2017, at precisely 6:00 p.m., the State of Florida intends to put me to death for a crime I did not commit.

After 34-years on Florida's Death Row, I've become familiar with how this process

unfolds. I've seen many others where I am today (please check out "Execution Day-Involuntary Witness to State Sanctioned Murder"). I've survived three previous attempts by the state to take my life, but I know that this time is different. This time, the odds of surviving this date with death are significantly stacked against me. I don't expect to make it out alive. The Governor is running an election for a tightly contested U.S. Senate seat, and he needs to rally the votes by executing as many as he can. To him, all my life is really worth is the hope of winning a few more votes. He has already sent more people to their death than any other Governor in Florida's history and, after he kills me, he will move on to his next victim.

The Warden came down to Death Watch the other day and asked me why I'm doing a hunger strike. I explained that I am protesting the injustice of putting me to death without allowing all readily available evidence substantiating my innocence, including DNA evidence, to be heard. He responded by sharing with me that in all the years he has worked in prisons, he has never seen a hunger strike actually accomplish anything.

Continuing our casual conversation, as if the set of steel bars that separated us didn't exist, the morning sun now shining through the windows behind the Warden, I offered my observation that, from the prisoner's perspective, it's not about actually winning whatever issue compelled you to take that drastic act. I don't expect a tangible result.

Rather, in prison, a person has extremely limited options available with which to protest perceived injustice. Even the slightest bit of expressing anger on the part of a prisoner escalates the situation and punitive sanctions are a standard response.

By the time most get to where I am today, they are already broken. The long journey from being condemned to death, to confronting that date with death is, itself, a deliberate process intended to slowly erode your will to do anything but passively submit to state sanctioned execution.

When that time comes, I am expected to walk into the execution chamber and those waiting within that room will gently, without even the slightest hint of malice, assist me as I climb up on to the gurney where a moment later they will then firmly pull the straps down to render me motionless and unable to physically resist, so they can proceed to expeditiously insert needles connected to long I.V. tubes in each of my arms at the inside of the elbows.

Then the white curtain that separates me from a panel of witnesses safely seated behind a single pane of polished glass will be pulled open. I will quickly scan that small group of people, not more than ten-feet in front of me, desperately looking for a friendly face, or at least a familiar face, but likely to be met with blank stares by

most gathered, who have waited many years to watch me die.

Then, in a predetermined and all but imperceptible gesture, the executioner hidden behind a nearby partition will push that first plunger down, forcing a presumably cold lethal liquid into my veins.

It's a ritual, and every aspect of that ritual has been planned to precise detail, and everybody performs their part. And I will too.

But I don't want to just lay down and die, exterminated like nothing more than a glorified cockroach.

And, so, I am doing a hunger strike. I don't expect to gain anything but to protest against this deliberate injustice, and that, itself, is my only objective. It is my way of saying that I accept that I am powerless to change the outcome, as this cold machinery of death grinds its gears.

For now, though, I sit in this solitary cell. Twenty-days to my date with death doesn't seem to be that long, and yet I find it to be way too much time. I find myself trying to pull up the memories of the life I once had so long ago, as a means of escaping the thoughts of my relatively imminent death.

But try as I might, like the invisible force of a blackhole slowly consuming the universe around it, I am pulled in again and again, dragged back to envisioning what that last moment of my life will be - and what my last words will be.

Part of me wants to put all I can into a concise statement that will be something to remember. But no matter what I try to say it, I imagine it will be forgotten. Nobody's coming to witness my execution to hear what I have to say. They're coming to watch me die.

I think a lot about the young woman's family. They lost their daughter and, through all these years, have believed that I was the one who took her life. Their need to seek justice can only be satisfied with my death. This has given them the strength to cope with their loss. But I didn't kill their daughter.

I've prayed for them, that they might find the strength to forgive - not because the person responsible for taking the life of their daughter is worthy of their forgiveness, but because carrying around that much hate towards any other person for so long is like a cancer that will eat at their own soul.

Maybe my death will bring them peace and, if it does, then I can go knowing that there was a purpose in all of this.

Years ago, I tried to reach out to them, to explain the circumstances that transpired that night, and how much I wished I could take their pain away. Their response was to contact the prison - they found it offensive that I wrote them and demanded the prison punish me.

But still, as the years have passed, I've kept them in my prayers, wishing that I could turn back the hands of time and change it all. I do that a lot, escaping the reality of this place by picking my memories apart and trying to identify that one point in time, so long ago, where it all went off the tracks.

Maybe I should use my last words to ask for their forgiveness, even though I didn't kill their daughter. Maybe they need that. Then again, maybe their need for vengeance has consumed so much of them that they cannot forgive under any circumstances, and anything I may attempt to say to them at that time would only make them suffer more. I don't want to bring any more pain into their lives. I wish I could take all their pain away. My death won't accomplish that. Only they can make that decision to let it go.

Then there's my family. They've committed no crime, but they've suffered just as much. They will stand by helplessly as their son, their father, their brother, and their best friend, is put to death for a crime that they know I am innocent of.

Those in my life who have been there for me through the years have been the "Wind Beneath My Wings"; nurturing my hope and sustaining my strength. I have been so incredibly blessed by these who sacrificed so much to be a part of my life. I know it has not been easy. They have suffered along with me, at every setback, and felt the pain of injustice with each appeal denied.

Most families quickly fade away, and all but forget you once you cross over to that death row life. And, as the years passed, there's been times that my family did too. But we always were drawn back together, and are now stronger than we've ever been. Having to go through this Death Watch process and endure our last visit will cause them so much pain.

Maybe my last words should be to tell them how much it has meant to me to have them in my life.

Not only my family, including my children, but also the small group of friends, spread out across the world, that have been there for me.

What would I say? What few words could possibly convey what I feel in my heart??

When they visit, at each visit I hug them like I never would let them go. Like I knew that this day might come.

I can no longer hug them. Once my execution date was set, my contact visits were immediately terminated and restricted to non-contact. They still come, now more frequently, driving many hours, even through the aftermath of Hurricane Irma, to spend a few hours of communion with me. We talk, and I try to make them laugh, but I can see in my mother's and my sister's eyes how hard this is for them.

There are the moments of silence, when I see the tears forming in their eyes, and I quickly work to find something to talk about, to get their minds off what lies ahead.

They are worried about my health, fearing that this hunger strike will only cause me to suffer more. Just as with the Warden, I patiently explain why I feel I must do this. But nothing I say is enough to comfort them. They beg me to eat. They are allowed to purchase sandwiches and snacks from the prison canteen, which the guard will then bring around to me. But I refuse, and then they refuse to eat too.

I explain that they do not have to worry. The nurses check on me each day, taking my weight and blood pressure. As of today, I've only lost 17-pounds - and, truth be told, I really needed to lose some weight anyways.

When I return to my Death Watch cell, I lay down and put my MP3 player on, and then relive every moment of the visit to prolong it, as if it never had to end. But my moment of meditation is broken, as someone on the floor above me is kicking at his solid steel door.

I get back up, and look at the pile of old cards and letters I've stacked against the wall of my cell. As the days pass, I slowly go through them, rip them up and throw them away. Some I've had for many years, some not as long. But each was saved in the very limited room I'm allowed for storage of personal property for a reason. And now, I find myself destroying the things that I treasured the most.

I must do this before I'm placed on "Phase II", and all my property is removed from my cell to ensure that I cannot cheat the state out of its intended act of murder by committing suicide. I still cannot destroy so many. And the stack of what means too much to throw away soon grows high. I've accomplished nothing.

The pictures are much harder. In my world, it's the photos of the smiling faces of those you love that keep you going. And photos of the past, of family and of my children, and of my grandchildren.

I go through them one-by-one, remembering each as if I just received it yesterday and, in the end, I throw very few away. A few years back, I lost all my pictures, so what few I have left are part of me and I cannot bear to toss away the memories reflected. Many are of visits I've had, and each photo allows me to think of that special day.

Try as I might to think of other things, that one thought keeps pulling me back - my last words. I find myself becoming consumed. What will I say?

I think of my spiritual advisor of many years, a man who gave up a successful career in law to become a Catholic lay minister devoted to Death Row prison ministry. Dale Recinella has visited me more times than I can begin to count, and is family too. Before me, he has been there for many others, patiently listening to their words and offering an inspiration of spiritual comfort. When my day comes, he will be here. Contrary to movies, they will not allow him to walk with me into the execution chamber. But he will share time with me in the hours before my execution is carried out, and they will allow him to join the panel of witnesses to watch my execution. He has witnessed many executions of those he has come to know and provided spiritual comfort to; not only us in our final hours, but to our families too. (Dale Recinella has written numerous books relating to his death row ministry that can be found at www.Iwasinprison.com)

Although long disillusioned by what contemporary Christianity has become and those who claim to be Christian, I have never doubted my spiritual faith. I find strength in it.

So, when that final moment is upon me, and the opportunity to express what will be my last words I will ever utter in this life arrives, maybe I will say the Lord's Prayer. Nothing I could come up with could possibly be more profound than that.

I sit silently at the edge of my bunk and look outside the window on the other side of the cell bars. Not more than ten-feet from where I sit, the green grass of a lawn that stretches from that window to the distant perimeter fence begins. A few days ago, a lawn mower outside that window came so close that I could smell its distinct exhaust.

I can smell the grass. Only a few feet away in another direction, the execution chamber patiently awaits me. I can close my eyes and imagine laying out on that grass - preferably at night, so that I can see the heavens above and count the stars, and, if by chance a shooting star passes, even make my wish.

Maybe I won't die. That's the thing about being down here and facing that date with death. As each day draws to a close, you find yourself thinking about how these are

your final days, your final hours, and your final minutes. It becomes real. No matter how much you try to think of anything else, you cannot escape those persistent thoughts that this won't end well.

I've been down on Death Watch now for two weeks, and I have less than three weeks to go. So far, my lawyers haven't been able to do anything to stop my execution. Hurricane Irma (what they are now saying is the worst hurricane in Florida's history) shut everything down across the state, including my lawyers' offices and the courts.

I talked with them yesterday, finally, but they can't get up to visit me until next week. By then, we will have two weeks left. That clock continues to tick. This time is lost forever.

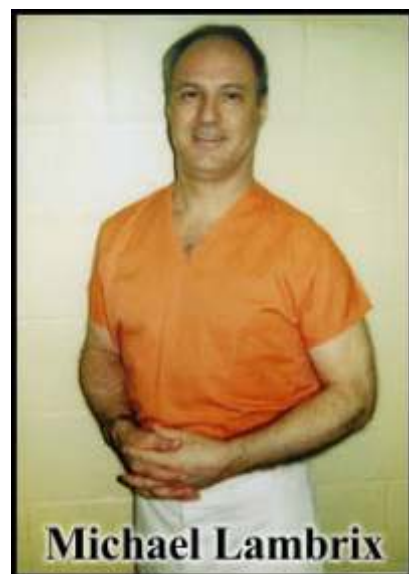
I've already had numerous appeals pending. The two still before the United States Supreme Court could even result in my exoneration and release, if only the court would grant a review. But that's a long shot. I know, only too well, that the Supreme Court only looks at a handful of cases of the many thousands filed each year.

My lawyers continue to believe that the most favorable issue is the challenge to my illegally imposed sentences of death. The jury did not unanimously vote to sentence me to death. But, by marginal vote, the Florida Supreme Court decided that only those illegally sentenced after June 2002 would be allowed relief, and that those, such as myself (and almost 200 others), sentenced to death prior to June 2002, are still to be executed.

If the Supreme Court agrees with my lawyers, that this is unconstitutionally "arbitrary" and that my death sentences must be vacated, then I would have my sentences reduced to "life" and become, almost immediately, eligible for parole.

I struggle to keep that hope alive. I don't have faith in the court doing the right thing.

Maybe that's just what I should tell them, as they so deliberately put me to death for a crime that I did not commit. I should tell them that they are committing an act of murder, and quote Socrates by saying "To which of us go the worst fate, you or I?" And then breathe my last breath.



In his last words right before his execution, Michael Lambrix prayed the Lord's Prayer and ended with the lines: "... **deliver us from evil...** "

The State of Florida executed on 8 November 2017 Patrick Hannon (53). Hannon was found guilty of two murders in 1991 and received the death penalty.

He was tortured half his life on death row, the conditions prevailing there.

We do not want to go into his case here. There are enough sources on the internet for that. Rather, we would like to use the space here to let him speak, with his essay written in 2005.

(source: murderpedia.org/male.H/h/hannon-patrick.htm)

An Essay By Patrick Hannon - Florida's Death Row

As men and women alike await the ultimate punishment for the crimes alleged against them, days turn into months, months into years and years into decades. Most of America's condemned are securely locked away in one state's or another maximum - security prison. These people condemned by society, dreadfully face unthinkable consequences for the unthinkable crimes he or she may be accused of. This is not a debate of any individual's guilt or innocence; rather it is but a mere glimpse into a day in the life of the condemned.



Contrary to the mainstream media hype, today's prisons, especially maximum security facilities are far from being country clubs; but remain as some of the most outdated, rundown and dilapidated dungeons that might well shock the good conscious of any decent, compassionate individual.

Time seems to lose all significance, and the extended periods of confinement are a challenge to the most stable of souls. Very often the solitude and combined degradation take its toll on the frail human psyche; each day a semi carbon copy of the last, with no change expected in the future. The many people I've met on death row have hopes, dreams, and a strong will to contend with the predicament of being sentenced to die. Still, there are a few who are sadly resigned to surrender to the government that seeks to steal, kill, or destroy in the name of justice. For the indigent, the illiterate, and the incompetent there is virtually no reason to expect anything but certain death.

The truth of the matter is, many of America's condemned have already died in spirit; to be left alone in a foreign world of the capital crimes justice system,

abandoned by loved ones) is a terribly difficult challenge. Probably because of the natural human instincts, many of today's condemned hope to be spared the ultimate experience of suffering their demise at the hands of America's justice system.

At the death row facility where I am housed, prisoners are confined to one-man cells 24 hours a day, that's all day every day unless the prisoner has a lawyer visit or occasionally receives a visit from a family member or friend. The cell is a 7x9 cubical comprised of three solid concrete walls and the traditional steel-bar grill serving as the front wall, providing an open view of the cell to all passerby's. Accommodations in each cell include a steel bunk with a flat cotton mattress, a locker for personal possessions, a black and white 12" tv, and a combination sink / toilet as well as a fluorescent light. There are fourteen one-man cells on each cell block and there are 24 separate wings.

This facility was designed with close security interests in mind; it's a technologically advanced structure with remote control locks, doors, etc. And throughout each day one can hear the seemingly incessant buzzing of doors, locks and the slamming of solid steel doors. There is no carpet or central heat or air conditioning, meals are delivered to the prisoner in his cell, each prisoner is fed three times daily, the regular but often very bland and scanty institutional meal served on a plastic tray. A diet hardly sufficient to satiate the average adult appetite. Prisoners who enjoy the financial support of family and friends can counter balance the poor diet with canteen items such as sandwiches, soups, candy bars, chips etc but all too often many prisoners face long hungry nights; it's very unfortunate.

Day to day activities include talking, playing chess, watching TV, listening to the radio (if a prisoner can afford to buy one) or writing letters to friends and family or to an overworked public defender, or a post defender, or a post conviction attorney whose equally overburdened.

Death row, not unlike any other part of the prison is tattered with all sorts of individuals, there is no single description that would describe every prisoner, and while there are some truly sick and evil prisoners may well be victims have been sentenced to die, this is the exception rather than the rule, as most death row prisoners may well be victims of circumstances themselves, or persons guilty of killing someone, but not guilty of the death penalty, but not being fortunate enough to have a qualified attorney representing them at trial, they were and are wrongly convicted of first degree murder and subsequently wrongly sentenced to death. From day to day one can lie back on his bunk and listen to one legal horror story after another, as fellow prisoners attempt to get the next to see his point.

A condemned prisoner can survey his whole "house" with one quick sweep of his

eyes. It's essentially a bathroom with a bunk where the tub would be. He spends so much time in his cell that he knows every crack and rusty paint chip. If its winter its extremely cold on the wing; if its summer its extremely hot. It stinks the same regardless of the season, the air thick with the odor of smoking, sweaty, dirt defecating men.

The staggering task that is every mans burden on the row is filling the hours until he can sleep again. The options are few, there is talk, endless disembodied, mostly insane talk, the prisoner steps to the front of his cell and begins talking loudly and his voice echoes along the wing. No one can see him because all cells face the same way with thick wall between them. Talking this way is called "getting on the door" and some men will be on the door for hours, yammering about cars, politics, sex and every possible subject. They'll bet whether it will rain by sunset; some men are insane and will rave about astro projection of screaming vaginas or men coming through the vent at them at night. Fourteen men live on each wing so the conversations get stale, yet it continues month after month, year after year.

Reading passes more time, at least among the men who can read. Books, magazines, and newspapers make their way from cell to cell. After lunch, perhaps an hour can be killed by a nap, and then a literate prisoner has writing to do to his family, friends and lawyers. Bad poems, bad novels, journal entries spun from empty days, convoluted claims of innocence to be shipped off to journalists, legal briefs challenging prison conditions. We used to be able to paint, draw, or even crochet but prison officials put a stop to it under claims of security. And still all of these activities don't begin to fill the time, not when there are 365 identical days of the year and the years pile up. A condemned man learns to make picture frames from aluminum foil. He plays chess with the man three or four cells away by shouting his moves.

Caged in a cell, even the most stable man belt on self destruction needs something more powerful than his own wits to get him through. That something is TV, it drives the hard liners in the legislature crazy to think that the death row prisoners have TVs in their cells. It would be hard to find a guard who opposes TV. TV is the only thing that makes death row manageable. Prison staff call the TVs the electronic tranquilizers, we call them idiot boxes. Once a law maker told a prison official he should take all the TVs from us vermin; the warden told him, you take them, this place could not exist without them.

The luxury that makes time barely endurable is the canteen. For each man, the prison maintains a sort of bank account where the inmate collects the money he gets from family and friends. He is allowed to spend \$45 a week on canteen items. Since he can't get out of his cell, the canteen comes to him. On Saturdays we fill orders (if

the man has money in his account) and bring it on Mondays. Cigarettes, chips, sandwiches, soup, soap, pastries and various other items. People on the row can make nearly anything for any purpose. He uses a hand held mirror as a spook to look down the hall to see if a guard is coming or not. He learns to make a water bug, a crude wire heating element that can boil water for coffee and soups.

Twice a week, two wings go outside for recreation, there is just enough space for half a basketball court, a volleyball court and a little extra space to stand out of the way. More blacks than whites play basketball and more whites than blacks to play volleyball. A chain link fence separates the death row inmates from the yard prison population.

Some men don't come outside at all for reasons of safety. Three times a week after dinner there are showers. A man strips down to his boxers, puts on his shower slides and walks with the guard down the hall to the shower which is the size of his cell, he is locked in to wash for 5 minutes then put back in his cell.

And being human, death row prisoners also have a sense of humor and spend many afternoons "kicking the bobo" that is jocularly teasing and jesting one another. Over time, you can come to know, like, and even have genuine friendships with a fellow prisoner, sure in the back of one's mind, he or she may never know whether their friend was once a murderer, but at the present time he or she is simply another human being that reciprocates one's friendship.

There are bad days on death row, days full of stress, confusion inexplicable heartache, the heart of the condemned is not always callous and unfeeling. I've heard the news reporting on capital defendants who showed no remorse, but I've heard grown men cry into their pillows. Did anyone take the man seriously when he earnestly and sincerely apologized for an act the man himself still is hard pressed to comprehend?

The light goes out at 11 pm but only the cell light go out, the corridor lights always stay on. The TVs stay on 24 hours a day.

The prison is never completely quiet, gates are always clanging, there's the tread of guards feet, nightmare ravings of the insane, muffled sobs of despair.



The night eases into morning and another day begins on death row.

Lancelot Armstrong has been threatened with death since 1991 for allegedly murdering a police officer. He has always claimed his innocence and there are indications that he is innocent.

Lancelot wrote in a letter to his friend Peter K.

Dear Peter,

sometimes i sit silently on the edge of my bank here in my solitary cell and look around me and am overwhelmed by my loneliness and the dark cloud of despair.

Out then i am reminded that focusing on what matter is more important what get done each day.

*No matter how dark my days and nights might become,
no matter how much my prison of steel and stone might separate me,*

*from the world that lies beyond there
razor-wive fines,
and not matter how alone and
abandoned i might feel,
all of that quickly passes, when my
solitary existence in momentarily
touched by those such as yourself who so
generously reach out and extend that
touch of compassion that defines the best
of humanity.*

*But as inadequate as my worlds might be
to truly express my gratitude, allow me to
simply say thank you...*

*As when simple words come from the
depths of our heart, they remain written
in all of eternity and transcend this
temporal form of written prose, i cannot
the you how much your willingness to
reach out means to me, but just know my
gratitude come from the heart.*

Sincerely

Lancelot Armstrong





Freedom by Lancelot Armstrong & Peter K.

Träume aus der Todeszelle

Visit our internet gallery with paintings by
Lancelot Armstrong

armstrongkunst.wordpress.com



Love



armstrongkunst.wordpress.com



Hoffnung durch Patenschaft



Become godparents of Lancelot Armstrong

Give Lancelot Armstrong your solidarity...

... hope and the knowledge not to be alone

...to eat healthy food

... a good defense

... the opportunity to practice his art (he must buy his own colors and paper).

As godparents they send monthly, by standing order, a sum of money of their choice to the donation account for Lancelot, without any obligation.

We will send you receipts by e-mail for every transfer we make to Lancelot.

Become godparents of Lancelot Armstrong

More informations on:

www.ihfl.de/pate.htm

Write us: info@ihfl.de

Phone: 491520 - 254 62 62



IMPRINT

ViSdP : Peter Koch

Contact : Initiative Hoffnung fürs Leben - c/o Peter Koch - Naumburger Str. 23A - 34127 Kassel - Germany

Mail: info@ihfl.de / Phone: +491520 - 254 62 62

Web: www.ihfl.de / News-Blog: lancelotarmstrong.wordpress.com

Galery: armstrongkunst.wordpress.com / Facebook: www.facebook.com/lancelot.armstrong.5

Donate for our fight against the death penalty please on our donations account
Initiative Hoffnung fürs Leben (IHfL):

Peter Koch (IHfL) - Postbank - IBAN: DE62 1001 0010 0341 6051 12 - BIC: PBNKDEFF