

# The Hostage

Tom Paxton

I'm a guard in the great iron prison, at least I was 'till now.  
It was never a picnic social, never a date.  
They never come in laughing and you know they never taught them how  
It was damn hard work, and you wouldn't believe the pay.

It was early in the morning, Lord, I wasn't but a half awake,  
When the Cons went nuts, and took us by surprise.  
I never was one for shaking, but I found it hard to stand,  
With a six-inch blade held right between my eyes.

We could hear a siren blowing, somebody yelled in pain.  
Then it got so quiet, you could hear a bird walk by.  
They all had masks on their faces, and they spoke with a voice of Cain  
"If they come in shooting, then you know you're bound to die.  
If they come in shooting, then you know you're bound to die."

I turned to a buddy named Willie, I said "Willie It'll be all right,  
If they meant to kill us we'd be half way down to Hell.  
See, they high-jacked a plane in the dessert, and the government screamed and cries,  
But to save some lives, they opened up a prison cell".

So the days kept coming and going, tension was getting high.  
But I wasn't too worried, I figured I knew the score.  
I knew they were talking to someone, I knew they were willing to try.  
So I figured my freedom was a matter of a day or two more.

But, Jesus, early this morning, the whirlybird dropped the gas,  
It made me puke and it brought me to my knees.  
The bullets came like hail-stones, I heard the first ones pass,  
Then they cut down Willie, and they got Jim Kelly and me.  
They cut down Willie, and they got Jim Kelly and me.

They come in yelling curses, like they were caught in the River Rhine  
Shot down every God damned thing they saw.  
And while I lay they wounded, I took another one in my spine,  
Poor Jim Kelly took another one in his jaw.  
Oh, Poor Jim Kelly took another one in his jaw.

They say we had our throats cut, by a band of desperate men,  
Say they saved as many of us as they could.  
Well the governor he should know it, but I think I'll say it again  
That the governor cut my throat and he cut it good.

Let them take the governor, hold him for a couple of days.  
See who goes in shooting to set him free.  
Hell they'll open every jail in the country, they'd send them on their way  
They'd never do to him what the governor done to me.  
They'd never do to him what the governor done to me.