

## The Hostage

Words and Music by Tom Paxton

I'm a guard in the gray 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 we 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 the voice of Cain  
"If they come in shooting, you know you're bound to die,  
If they come in shooting, you know you're bound to die."  
Well, 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 highjack a plane in the dessert, and the government  
screamed and cries, But to save some lives, they open 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.  
Then, Jesus, early this morning, the whirlybird dropped the gas,  
It made me puke and it brought me to my knees.  
The bullets came like hailstones, I heard the first ones pass,  
Then they cut down Willie, and they got Jim Kelly and me,  
Oh, they cut down Willie, and they got Jim Kelly and me.  
They come in yelling curses, like they was crossing the River Rhine,  
Shot down every Goddamned thing they saw.  
And while I lay they wounded, I took another one in my spine,  
And 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 just 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.  
Yeah, let them take the governor, hold him for a couple of days,  
See who goes in shooting to set him free.  
Hell, they'd 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.