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VOICES FROM INSIDE...

SPEAKS

SEPTEMBER 2007

Impact of Crime on Victims

Teaching Restorative Justice

Bernie Farmer

Envision a roomful of hardened criminals—murderers, rapists and robbers—incarcerated in a maximum security prison. What do they look like? If you're like most people, you'll picture a group of snarling, tattooed animals planning future crimes. What do you think happens when a panel of crime victims is introduced into the room? Do the two groups begin to yell at each other or start to fight? What happens to the inmates when the victims begin to describe how they have been terribly hurt by people just like them? Do the criminals laugh? Are the victims re-victimized?

I've seen this same scene unfold monthly for three years, and I can tell you what happens every time. The roomful of criminals sit nervously as

the victim panel enters the room. They pay close attention as the victims tell their story. Their heads will nod as they recognize elements of their own lives. Often times men cry as the stories awaken their long repressed sense of humanity. Many of the inmates will express sincere sorrow, both for the things that the panel experienced and for the pain that they've caused their own victims. Even the most hardened criminal will leave the room deep in thought, qu5(eep ihe)Ti10 03 Tw I would like to acknowledge and apologize for the pain and suffering that is brought into this world. Ignorance and self hate are manifest in violent acts against people. For myself I apologize and am truly sorry for the pain and suffering I have caused others.

When we think about the act of forgiving someone, what shall we say? Shall we say, we see forgiveness as absolving the guilty of the offense by allowing them to escape accountability for their actions? Or shall we say, forgiveness is a necessary element in our own growth and development?

Sometimes we must be willing to even forgive ourselves for what we have done.

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Publisher: Bill Ryan

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by strengthening rehabilitation, reforming sentencing
and implementing programs to advocate positive

We've C



PROPOSALS AND PERSUASIVE EDITORIALS

participant in the benefits this program would offer the rehabilitated inmates.

Thank you for your time. May God Bless.

Bert Berrios

Can We Change?

Donald "Talib" McDonald, Editor

Dear Brothers,

It has come to my attention that a lot of us have failed to notify families and friends about the Committee for Earned Release, and its mission to work for some of us to have an opportunity to earn a sentence adjustment. We have, so far, failed to talk to each other to make sure every one knows about the committee. Don't assume someone knows!

Brothers, regardless of the popular belief to lock everyone up and throw away the key, it's human to make mistakes. You know how babies crawl before they walk? We have the opportunity to change. Some of us have hurt a lot of people in our ignorance. But if we have the ability to change our minds, we can change our conduct and deserve to earn our release from prison.

In other words, play time is over. Let us come together with our friends, family and each other and work for our freedom. If you would know (y)tntalypnowpnyno-2.4(o.8(ou)sTjT#gareh! a elf.4(e-0.hT#ggn)-dwell(no T


Dear _____,

I am serving a 40-year sentence and have 11 1/2 years in counted towards my prison sentence. I have read about some of the proposed criteria presented by Citizens for Earned Release. I agree with this program as a financial solution and as much needed relief to inmates who have been reformed.

There are many men who have been incarcerated much longer than I, but I am a living testament to change of thought, change of life; in other words, reform. The most important thing in my life that I have changed was the willingness to accept compliance in my life. I have accepted God into my life and that has made a profound difference in how I think and act. I know that may mean little to the committee, but it has been the only thing that could change me.

I have received a Heating, Ventilation, Air-conditioning Certificate. I will graduate with my Associate's Degree in two months and continue to seek the programs that I.D.O.C. offers.

I hope some way, somehow, I can be a



The National Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression – Chicago is gathering evidence about medical care in Illinois prisons. The denial of medical care to prisoners who are sick or injured is a denial of the Constitutional right of all prisoners under the Eighth Amendment to be free from cruel and unusual punishment. We are interested in all prisoners with undiagnosed or untreated medical problems. Prisoners with chronic diseases and conditions seem to have the most difficulty, especially people with hepatitis C, diabetes, cancer, high cholesterol, high blood pressure, multiple sclerosis and other debilitating conditions, and mental health issues.

If you are interested in participating in this process, write to Ted Pearson, National Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression – Chicago, 1325 S. Wabash Ave. Suite 105, Chicago IL 60605, 312-939-2750.

Now is the time for people interested in reforming the criminal justice system to step up

Pro Se Litigation Tips

A. Fillmore

Requirements for the Healing Art
Malpractice Act: 735 ILCS 5/2-622

Those seeking relief in any state circuit court or the Illinois Court of Claims alleging medical negligence, malpractice, or other form of improper medical treatment by I.D.O.C. medical staff, you must provide an affidavit by a health professional or medical doctor stating that said medical professional has reviewed your medical records and determined that indeed you have a “reasonable and meritorious cause for filing of such action”. 735 ILCS 5/2-622(a)(1). If you claim malpractice, etc. and fail to attach said affidavit, your complaint will get dismissed. Obtaining this affidavit from an outside medical professional is almost, if not entirely, impossible for an incarcerated person.

However, there is a way to avoid the requirements of the Healing Art Malpractice Act. That is, by “Common Law Negligence – Violation of Statute” or “I.D.O.C. Rule, Regulation, Institutional Directive or Administrative Directive” for which caused your injury. For example, for those of us incarcerated within I.D.O.C., the law mandates as well as Administrative Directives, that we receive medical care and treatment. 730 ILCS 5/3-2-2(1)(a); 730 ILCS 5/3-7-2(d); Administrative Directives #04.03.121; #04.03.101; #04.03.103; #04.03.105. Illinois law also mandates that inmates do not receive “arbitrary or oppressive treatment” 730 ILCS 5/1-1-2(c) and also mandates I.D.O.C. restore offenders to useful citizenship” 730 ILCS 5/1-1-2(d).

If you were denied adequate medical care and were injured which did not amount to “deliberate indifference,” then “Common Law Negligence – Violation of Statute or I.D.O.C. Rule” will be an avenue for you to pursue. Example: “Plaintiff alleging injury from statutory violations rather than any breach of the standard of medical care do not need to comply with Section 2-622 of the Healing Art Malpractice Act”.

Collins v. Lake Forest Hospital, 343 ILL. App 3d 353, 360; 798 N.E. 2d 143 (ILL. App. 2nd Dist. 2003).

Your arguments would be that medical



propagates our divisions. We are all connected. Everyone's actions affect the next person. We all have a responsibility to the other. This is good will. Societies, tribes, nations, and governments are built upon this premise. A commonwealth looks out for the common good of each and every member of that culture. Nevertheless, this notion has fallen by the wayside in our nation.

However, times are changing and a growing number of people are becoming more politically, socially, and spiritually conscious. Underneath all the hard-boiled hawkism and conservatism there is a compassionate mindset being born. These are the people who realize we can bomb the world into pieces but not into peace. They also see that packing prisons is not the answer. The way I see it, severe sentences with no chance for parole is not the answer.

Society must come to grips with the causes of the criminal mindset, which include environmental, social, and cultural conditioning. In plain



three sources:

1. Get e-mail notification of Bureau of Justice Statistics releases from JUSTSTATS. Subscribe for free at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/juststats.htm>
2. Sign up for Prison Legal News' free listserv to receive prison and jail news and court rulings by e-mail at www.prisonlegalnews.org
3. Get bi-weekly lists of all new grants, publications, and press releases from the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority's periodic emailing called the CJ-Dispatch by signing up at <http://www.icjia.state.il.us> or cja.irc@illinois.gov

Notice of New Studies

The following Research Bulletins were released in January 2007 by the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority. Both were authored by ICJIA research analyst Jessica Ashley and can be obtained free of charge by calling (312) 793-8550; or by writing to Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority, 120 S. Riverside Plaza, Suite 1016, Chicago, IL 60606-3997; or online at www.icjia.state.il.us.

1. "Examining incarceration trends among minority youth in Illinois." (Research Bulletin, Vol. 5, No. 5,

Prestamped

Cari Carpenter

Another thing
I cannot say--
squelched before
it makes the page.
My travels--
literal or otherwise--
across Time
Space
Imagination
And if I censor
so much
Have I said
anything
at all?
So many things
I cannot send--
Stamps
Address labels
Postcards--
What are they
Afraid
I'll send?
a piece, prestamped,
of Humanity?

Concrete and Iron City

David A. Smith

Concrete and iron city

what an awesome sight,
From outside it looks peaceful
inside there's nothing but fright.

Men housed in cages
stacked row upon row,
The Despair, hopelessness and fear
from outside, who would know.

It's a battle from within
waged from dawn to dawn,
To overcome the feelings
of a life gone wrong.

Segregated, denigrated,
deprecated and worse,
Times more than your sentence
It's been your life your lifelong curse.

Always struggling within yourself
to make it day to day,
To maintain a shred of sanity
to help you along the way.

But the way is fraught with dangers
of the most fearsome kind,
Self-destructive behavior
products of a diseased mind.

The world outside moves on
without giving any thought,
The diseases most suffer
are ones society has wrought.

It's easier just not to care
than to take responsibility,

It's easier to simply say:
"Lock 'em up, throw away the key."

But that is not the answer
to this problem that we face,
A problem with no boundaries
of religion, class, or race.

Instead we need solutions
to heal the sickness in our land,
To help restore the dignity
of this fallen man.

Help him understand the man
God intended him to be,
Lift him up, make him realize
his noble destiny.

Now the time is growing short
and something must be done,
A faithful voice must be heard.
Question is: "Will yours be one?"

Trapped in Time

Teresa Heater

Isolation, degradation, captured lives
inside a cage.
Repression, inhibition, a domain of
bottled rage.
Corridors of madness, a challenge of the
mind,
Beckoning one's sanity, a factor in its
design.
Some fold within its grasp.
The strong will prevail and the weaker
will collapse.
The key lies not with repudiation.
It rests within the burden of reality, and
man's self-preservation,
conditioning of the temple and
discipline of one's wits.
These things combined enable any man
to survive life's most hellish pits.

...TINGS. CONNOTATIO

A Poem

Mandi Heater

I said I didn't do it, Mom
But still they say I did.



