

Third Rail

The Award-Winning Political Arts Magazine of the College of Staten Island :: 2006 :: Issue 5



*Hard
Times*

America Doesn't

TORTURE



“Freedom Tickles”

Get the Job Done!

Third Rail is pleased to announce that we have been honored by two prestigious organizations. Firstly, *Third Rail* has been named one of the ten best collegiate publications by *The Nation*, America's premiere progressive news magazine. Secondly, *Third Rail* has been awarded the Campus Alternative Journalism Award for Best Reporting by the *Independent Press Association*. For more details logon to www.ThirdRailMag.com

The Nation.

Ten Papers
We Like



Third Rail

PICKS

The Nation.

STILL CLINTON'S SHOW?
BY WILLIAM GREIDER

THIRD RAIL

VOLUME 2006 :: ISSUE 5

POLITICAL DISCOURSE

ATTEMPTED THEFT OF CSI

STUDENT ACTIVITY FEES

EDITORIAL 4

NEWS BRIEFS 12

PRISON POLICY 16

**RACISM, PRISON AND THE
FUTURE OF BLACK AMERICA**

42

CULTURAL DISCOURSE

JOIN THE FIGHT 24

**HORROR OF A WISH COME
TRUE 26**

THE RILEY FACTOR 32

**NO, REALLY, I JUST WANT TO
STAY MARRIED 36**

POETRY

PARENT TEACHER ASSOCIATION, UNIFICATION TOWN 10

MY RIGHT 14

THE DISSAFFECTIONIST 22

THESE METAL DOORS 35

ART & PHOTOGRAPHY

HATE FLAG 40

by P. Melissa Fisher

INTERACT WITH US

LETTERS TO THE EDITORS 8

BULLPEN 48

FEEL US UP ONLINE AT:

WWW.THIRDRAILMAG.COM

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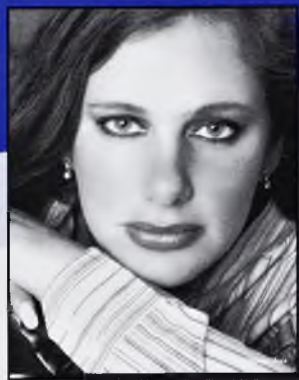
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by P. Melissa Fisher,
Editor-in-Chief



ATTEMPTED THEFT OF CSI STUDENT ACTIVITY FEES

IT IS AN UNFORTUNATE TRUTH THAT MANY COLLEGE OF STATEN ISLAND (CSI) STUDENTS COME TO CAMPUS ONLY TO GO TO CLASS AND THEN BOLT JUST AS SOON AS THEY CAN. It is an even more unfortunate truth that CSI administration—at the highest levels—chooses to take advantage of this, and try to get its hands on a piece of our student activity fees. So, for those interested and for those uninformed, I will alert the CSI community to a close call that nearly changed the lives of the student body without their even noticing it.

See, it seems that CSI has a budget deficit of 1.2 million dollars. Now, it also seems that such organizations as Student Government, publications, and other student-based groups whose only goals are to improve college life all have surpluses, so Dr. Marlene Springer, President of CSI, had a brilliant idea to close the fiscal gap by sending her lackeys to try to strong-arm these organizations into voting some of their money to her cause. Now, this is not only a problem because it is not the students' responsibility to bail the college out of its financial jam, but it would also bring cuts to several campus programs and services that the students have come to take for granted, if not depend on. It also sets a dangerous precedent. The minutes from the CSI Association meeting, the group that determines how all student-related funds will be allocated, reflect that although the request from the childcare reserves would be made only once, Vice-Presidents Podell and Aponte indicated that "the college may request funds from other earmarked groups [financed through student activity fees] again in the future to address budget shortfalls." So, if the Budget Committee of the Association approves this once, how much money will those who follow us have to

give? We should not allow the administration to look to the students to solve its accounting woes now or in the future.

When Association met on May 24, 2006, Vice-President David Podell "admitted to coming 'hat in hand' to request \$250,000 from student related reserve funds," according to Yoav Gonen, *Staten Island Advance* May 25, 2006. Vice President Podell did not get away with the full quarter-million of our money. He failed to get the \$125,000 from "earmarked groups" (as noted in the minutes from the 5/24 Association meeting) but he did get \$100,000 that was designated for the Children's Center; this amount is over and above any funding the college should attempt to take from the pre-school's \$815,000 reserves. This low-cost day care facility is crucial to many students who

could not attend classes at all without this place to leave their children. Students with children in the center pay only two dollars an hour to have their children cared for.

Clearly this is not enough to keep the facility going and, as such, it depends on other funds to subsidize

it. So, that \$100,000 would have come from some of CSI's neediest students.

The attempt to take money from the Children's Center is the nastiest blow by Springer and her administration, and the worst for public relations, but it is arguably not the worst for the student body, because it does only affect students with young children. However, they were seeking blood from larger prey—the student activity fees. This is a charge on the bill of EVERY CSI student. Full-time students pay \$164, and part-time students pay \$100.50 each semester (according to bursar). This money is supposed to fund clubs, publications, free coffee for evening students,

CSI has a budget deficit of 1.2 million dollars

WANTED

By The CSI Student Body For Attempted Theft of Student Activity Fees



DAVID PODELL
CSI Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs/Provost



ANGELO J. APONTE
CSI Vice President for Finance & Administration



MARLENE SPRINGER
CSI President
(aka Queen Marlene)

IF YOU HAVE ANY INFORMATION CONCERNING THE WHEREABOUTS OF THESE PEOPLE, PLEASE CONTACT THIRD RAIL.

EDITORIAL

ATTEMPTED THEFT OF CSI STUDENT FEES

student-events, speakers, comedians and other things to enrich college life for CSI students. But the administration is trying to take chunks of that money, in some cases, double dipping by asking for funds at different points of allocation that are meant for the students without their knowledge or approval. Isn't that theft?

CSI administration had no problem using a strong-arm technique to try to make students believe that they had no choice but to give over the monies. Although many of the students who sit on the Association have vast experience in leadership roles, it must be quite intimidating to have not one but two vice presidents of the college come to make a presentation and request for funds. That was until a wise student senator called *The Staten Island Advance*. Arishna (AJ) Ramphal, now Student Government President, alerted the media to the goings on in the administration and the matter was brought to the public's attention.

Always concerned about her public persona, Springer quickly turned down any student monies she had been given and abandoned her pursuit of any more once the press became involved. Springer released a statement to the Staten Island newspaper that said, "I have listened to and considered the input of our student leaders who have expressed concerns. I have directed administration to quickly design an alternative plan." I don't believe Springer would have paid any attention to our student leaders had their "concerns" not appeared in Island-wide print, statements like when Michele Payton told Gonen, "We didn't make that deficit. They're coming to ask us for money because we handled our money the right way." Payton, who serves as chair of the Association's budget committee, also showed her concern by saying, "It's not going to hurt faculty and staff; it's going to hurt students." These statements are likely to drum up a great deal of sympathy for the student body and cause the administration to seem like King George, proponent of the brilliant tea tax, picking on the poor student colonists who had no choice but to dump that tea into the Boston Harbor.

Robert Huber, a spokesperson for CSI, told *The Advance* on May 26 that "[w]e will balance this budget, the question is what recourses we use to do that." Well, Mr. Huber, let me offer you some suggestions. President Springer can pay for her own: housing, cook, caterer, driver, cars, etc, that ought to save a couple of bucks. You could vote to charge campus visitors for parking the way you do students and faculty that should bring in some serious cash! You could consolidate Dr Springer's assistants; I think that one person could handle



(L-R) Carol Jackson, Chair of the CSI Association & Arishna (AJ) Ramphal, CSI Student Government President on opposing sides at the CSI Association meeting



(L-R) Carol Brower, Director of CSI Student Life & Michele Payton, CSI Chairwomen of the CSI Association Budget Committee at the tense Association meeting.

both her busy schedule and her events. And finally, I would fire the marketing specialist she hired, because enrollment wouldn't be down if the job were being done properly. All of this would probably give CSI more than the \$1.2 million it needs and not affect the students at all.

The sad part of this is that she doesn't have to worry about the student's rights or opinions most of the time—which she clearly doesn't—because they just don't care. *Third Rail* posted information about this attempt to take student funds all over myspace.com which is probably the best way to spread information to the student community these days, and the responses were disheartening at best. One student, a twenty-three-year-old male who calls himself "Ryan," even wrote, "I don't give a shit cuz i go to school for free anyways....." That is exactly what the administration is counting on—students who don't care enough to keep themselves informed, and once informed, don't care "anyways."

As CSI students, we have enough financial woes. Most of us have to work at least one job while carrying a full course load and maintaining a family. Many of us manage to do this just well enough that we don't qualify for financial assistance and have to pay for our education on our own, and on top of this face steady tuition increases for an education that was intended to be free. But this is not an excuse to sit idly by and allow our money to be used in ways that have no benefit to us, and we must not allow administration to think that we will. Because like all bullies, if they think they can take our lunch money they will, and they will do it time and time again.

Attention
Come watch your
Student Government
in action!

Summer '06

June 9
June 23
July TBD
August 31

College of Staten Island

Fall '06

September 7
September 21
October 5
October 19
November 2
November 16
November 30
December 7

Spring '07

February 1
February 8
February 22
March 8
March 22
April 12
April 26
May 10

LETTERS TO THE EDITORS

RE: BREAK THE SILENCE

DEAR THIRD RAIL,

Since I became a CSI student in the Fall of 2003, I've probably read every issue of *Third Rail* that was available on campus. Honestly, the most luring attraction has been the various wild or creative covers, including the most recent issue which features the battered girl. I thought it was such a great idea to make students aware of the various problems females suffer on a daily basis. As a SOC major I've studied a bit of domestic violence and cases of rape and/or date rape. I thought it was really brave that the editor-in-chief confided a very difficult and emotion filled part of her life with the readers. Upon reading the various submissions, and going through some of my own poetry etc., I found a poem that I wrote concerning how females have pretty much always been deemed as worthless and are continuing to be viewed as such despite our progression into the new millennium.



WORTHLESS

*Worthless is she who neglects her degree
Yet, worthless is she who places career before family*

*Worthless is she who deems worthy the profession of
mom-my*

*Yet, worthless is she who allows another to raise her
ba-by*

*Worthless is she who refrains from dancing in clubs
dressed scantily (for all eyes to see)*

*Yet, worthless is she who earns a living based on pure
nudity*

*Worthless is she who fails to acknowledge her
responsibilities*

*Yet, worthless is she whose own self interests appear
first priority*

*Worthless is she who admits her sensitivity
Yet, worthless is she who conceals it entirely*

Elizabeth O.
CSI Student

P. MELISSA FISHER, AUTHOR OF BREAK THE SILENCE RESPONDS

Thank you so much for your support of Third Rail and for your kind words about my bravery. I don't know if it was truly brave of me to share that part of my life, as I am not the one who should be ashamed. However, if just one young woman is spared that life—if just one little boy doesn't suffer the damage that my son did, it is well worth it. I strongly encourage anyone in a similar situation to get out and get help! I did it; so can you!

Your poem also depicts the abuse that we as women suffer as a whole. It seems that no matter what road we choose, we're labeled worthless. Well, we're not worthless! We are women, and that means that we have to juggle twice as much as any man to get half the credit. We are taught to devalue ourselves from the time that we're girls and we put the needs of even our dolls ahead of our own. But your poem points out how wrong that is, and how it needs to change.

Good luck in your future in and after CSI, and please feel free to submit more work or visit us in our office in 1C231.

Yours truly,
P. Melissa Fisher

RE: KANSAS SCHOOL BOARD

DEAR THIRD RAIL,

This article really proves a point. It totally ridiculed the Big Bang theory and many other theories. It's awesome.

Emmanuel
CSI Student

P. MELISSA FISHER, EDITOR-IN CHIEF RESPONDS

This article was not really intended to ridicule the Big Bang Theory, but to show that creationism is still a religion-based theory with a faulty disguise. If schools want to teach that the world was created and nothing evolved, than who is to say that

what is commonly thought of as god created it? Why not a spaghetti monster?

RE: BREAK THE SILENCE & DATE RAPE

DEAR THIRD RAIL,

Interesting. Would make a possible good speech. How can I get P. Melissa Fisher as a guest speaker at a Rotary Club.

Thank You.
Joseph Longobardi

P. MELISSA FISHER, AUTHOR OF BREAK THE SILENCE RESPONDS

I am honored that you would make such a request and would gladly speak any time! I can be contacted at the Third Rail office at CSI in 1C231, by phone at 718-982-3105 or at pmelissafisher@yahoo.com.

I look forward to hearing from you.

RE: MAMA BROUGHT THE AMMUNITION

DEAR THIRD RAIL,

I was disappointed to read the poem "Mama Brought the Ammunition" by Hannah Jean. Jean's poem assumes that women of today are trapped at home. Women have jobs in all parts of the economy. Jean is a feminist, but today we no longer need feminists preaching from the mountain top. Us younger women are confident and able to achieve whatever we wish in life. And, no, we do not hate men and we do not need ammunition to fight them. I love the men in my life. Perhaps Jean is a man-hater and lesbian.

Marie,
CSI Student

P. MELISSA FISHER, EDITOR-IN CHIEF RESPONDS

Marie:

Not every woman who feels that we do need to fight men is a man-hating lesbian. I can see Ms. Jean's point on several issues and have spent most of my life fighting my father, whom I love dearly.

I am also not a lesbian, as my husband is also a writer at Third Rail. The fact that I love my husband does not mean that I don't see that men are still keeping women trapped in lower

social positions and that the only way to get past them is to fight.

It must be nice to have your youthful naiveté, but the world just isn't that simple. You're right, women have made it out of the home and into the workplace, but usually as secretaries or personal assistants and usually for three-quarters of what a man would get for the same job. We have made great strides but we most certainly do "need feminists preaching from the mountain top," and we do need them to bring the ammunition to shatter the glass ceiling and all the other barriers men put in our way.

RE: PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

DEAR THIRD RAIL,

As a Christian pastor (Lutheran) I say "amen!" to this editorial!

Pastor Kim
Staten Island

P. MELISSA FISHER, EDITOR-IN CHIEF RESPONDS

Pastor Kim:

Thank you so much for your understanding of the issue. That it is not about denying the rights of those who do believe in god, but in upholding the rights of those who don't.

DEAR THIRD RAIL,

As a custodian at CSI, I have been reading *Third Rail* for over ten years and have one question: How is this only issue #4?

CSI Staff member

P. MELISSA FISHER, EDITOR-IN CHIEF RESPONDS

The Third Rail has been around for many years, that's true, but it is only since I took over the role of editor-in-chief that the issues have been numbered instead of being ordered by month and year. The last issue was the fourth that I have done.

The opinions expressed in responses by Third Rail members are solely representing their own opinions and do not necessarily represent the opinions of Third Rail Magazine or the magazine staff.



*Like Robin Blaser's boy
Denied the truth of
F U C K
I was whipped
When Tutugirl told her mother
I had said P U S S Y.*

*But I was only saying the
Recitation which we were taught
By Teacher Richard
About Little Robin Redbreast who was
Chased by Pussy Cat up a tree.*

*Tutugirl's mother swore
Not to send her child to a
Rude school and
Mother and her friends talked to
Teacher Richard--*

*To keep the Cat-Robin chase
From "that Thing."*

*Parent-Teacher Association,
Unification Town*

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Can you imagine?

Not being able to visit your spouse in the hospital?

Living with your spouse 25 years, and then losing everything - house, children, benefits

Being told you can't depend on your spouse's social security benefits, despite a lifetime of commitment?

Is it hard to imagine?

It shouldn't be - this is the reality for same-sex couples all across America. It's simply not fair, and it's not American. Stand up for what's right, and join **Third Rail** in signing the Million Marriage Petition today.

www.thirdrailmag.com

www.millionmarriage.org

NEWS BRIEFS

FREE TUITION

As *Third Rail* previously stated, there is the possibility that incoming freshman to CSI could get free tuition. Qualifying students wishing a career in education could have their fees paid for them, if they agree to teach math or science in



New York City schools. These students must have a GPA of at least eighty-five in math and/or science and have scored no lower than 600 on their SAT's. This program, called the Teachers' Academy, is fully funded

for four years and will also be instated at five other CUNY colleges: Hunter, Lehman, Brooklyn College, and City College

STUDENT GOVERNMENT MEMBER WRONGFULLY ARRESTED

Maquisha Cosey, vice president of Thornton Fractional North High School and a member of the graduating class of 2006 was arrested on her graduation day for showing up late. The charges were trespassing and disorderly conduct, the accuser was her own principal Dwayne E. Evans. The principal had issued a zero tolerance policy for graduates late to the ceremony and yet despite that another parent and police officer working the event decided to unlock the door and allow Miss Cosey in anyway. In response Principal Evans ordered her arrest though at this time there were no apparent charges filed against the adults who allowed her in. While the principal is still moving forward with charges against her, the District 215 Supt. Robert Wilhite has decided to review the incident.

EQUAL RIGHTS IN ISLAM

In a bold and unique move San Francisco's largest Mosque with more than four hundred members has removed the divider that separates men and women from praying together. It had long been the custom in Islamic society for the genders to remain as separate as possible both in normal social and religious situations. While socially some Muslims have relaxed such practices, religiously the practice never waivers, that is until now. Reaction to the change has been mixed and surprisingly more women are uncomfortable and unsure of the new practice than men.



MACY'S SUCCUMBS TO HATE MONGERS

Macy's of Boston has removed a Gay-Pride window display after receiving several complaints by local hate groups. The display had been put up in celebration of Boston's Gay-Pride week it include male mannequins wearing pride flags and included a list of events being held throughout the city during the week. After the display was revealed the hate group known MassResistance (previously called the Article 8 Alliance) began a successful campaign force Macy's to remove the display. The department store did leave the event list up calling it a balance between the wishes of their customers, the Massachusetts ACLU however referred to the move as "succumbing to the bigotry."



APPLE'S ARE BETTER THEN BEER

In a surprise revelation the Ridgewood, New Jersey-based Student Monitor revealed in their biannual market research study that Apple's iPOD music player has surpassed beer as the most "in" thing for college undergrads. The only previous time beer has dropped from the top spot of collegiate pastime was in 1997 by the then still fledgling internet.



ARTISTS UNDER-SIEGE

In early May, Brooklyn College Grad students were shocked and awed at the mishandling and censorship of their term projects by school administration. As part of the required degree work, Brooklyn College Grad students had assembled a series of artwork to be displayed alongside a Brooklyn War Memorial. However the display was abruptly removed by college administrators and students were then barred from accessing their own work for over a week. When they were finally allowed to view their work, it was under guard and one at a time. The students were then shocked to discovered that their work had been severely damaged by the college when it was removed.



CSI ATHLETE ARRESTED

College of Staten Island alumna and former member of the Dolphins basketball team had been arrested for statutory rape. Lynn Saunders was working as a gym teacher for St. Paul's School in New Brighton when she was accused of molesting a twelve year girl with whom Lynn had established a friendship. Lynn did admit to touching the young girl inappropriately and is currently the defendant along with the Archdiocese of New York in a Civil Suit brought by the family of the victim.

WHO ARE THE REAL NAZI'S?

A Northport High School is under fire because two of its students chose quotes from Adolph Hitler's book *Mein Kampf*. According to the father of one of the young men the choice was made by his interest in the quote itself and not because of who Hitler was. While not the most politically correct choice of writers to quote the two young men were well within their First Amendment right to express themselves. However, school officials still feel obligated to apologize to the community and are planning to offer a replacement or means to censor out the quotes from the year book. School officials have yet to mention whether or not they will penalize the two students for their choice of words.



HIGH SCHOOL VIOLATES GAY STUDENTS RIGHTS

White County High School in Cleveland, Georgia has been accused by the ACLU of blatantly violating the rights of students who belong to a Gay Straight Alliance club to assemble freely like other non-curricular student clubs. The club called PRIDE (Peers Rising in Diverse Education) was formed in response to a growing trend of violence and hate in the school. The school's administrators so strongly objected to Gay rights that the ACLU had to intervene last year to allow the club to form. Shortly thereafter the school claimed to ban all non-curricular clubs from meeting on school ground, however, after the school year has come to pass it became evident that PRIDE was the only club that rule applied to. The ACLU has now taken school administrator to court for violation of student rights.

THE COLA WARS CONTINUE

Since accusations of illegal labor practices including murder on the part of management by Coca-Cola's foreign plants and growers universities, students, and even some administrations throughout the United States have begun either banning or boycotting Coca-Cola products on their campuses. Northwestern University is now considering the same questions that over 150 other Universities including the University of Michigan and DePaul University as to whether or not action should be taken and to what degree. At the moment NU Administrators who do not hold any direct contracts with Coke are remaining neutral about the situation, "It's an infinite thing, once you open up that door and make the university run according to some group's view," said University President Henry Bienen. However, if student interest grows to the same level as it has at many other schools President Bienen may be forced to make a, for or against decision about the Coca-Cola.



FEAR AND LOATHING AT CSI

The experimental high school which recently made its home at the College of Staten Island is causing an ever increasing amount of stress for the University's students and staff alike. Throughout the spring semester complaints were brought before the Carol Brower, the Director of Student Life at Student Government. Amongst the complaints was an increase in cases of vandalism occurring on Campus and in particular in the Campus Center which was not present prior to the opening of the High School. A fear of the potential for statutory rape is also lingering as the High School student continuously ignores the requirement for them to wear identification while on Campus Grounds and mingling with CSI's collegians. While the physical difference between college lowerclassmen and high school upperclassmen is little, the legal difference is enormous and now socializing for the college's student body could be considered a game of Russian roulette. In addition to the undergrad's complaints, loop bus operators have begun openly complaining about the high school student's behavior on the bus which includes cussing, fighting, graffiti and vandalism. Ms. Brower has promised to try her best to find a resolution to this situation, unfortunately her efforts may be marred by the fact that the high school falls outside the normal administrative chain of command for the college. was removed.



With all the things that are happening in the world,
is it really of the utmost importance whom I choose
to spend my life with?

Is it morally correct to use unmoral justifications
to dictate to me who I can and cannot love,
fuck, depend on, support or start a family
with?

Why are you so adamant on taking away my
American birthright?

Why are you spending so much time and energy into
ripping away my American dream?

Are we not a melting pot of different ideals?

Why is it that all of the sudden, me, my life, and my
people are no longer ingredients of that American recipe?
Even ingredients in a salad bowl have to touch and mingle,
Yet they still dwell together in a common place... the mixing bowl.
I don't bring you into the bedroom with me.
I don't ask you to be a voyeur of my sex, my sexual conduct, my sexuality.
I don't put my "morally incorrect" sex life in the streets to be broadcasted for everyone!
It's a private affair, like most institutions of love.
But that seems to be the issue...
The issue seems to be not one of equal rights as a human being.
It seems to be an issue of lust driven vandalism of the puritan soul.
In a country with a so-called "separation between church and state"
why are you still persecuting me with your corrupt religion?

When people loosely define marriage in America's religion as the union
of two souls, they lie.

They lie because what they truly mean is a union of two opposing sexes.
Here I thought souls were transient and void of characterization by sex.
Here I thought that the body was the vessel to the soul, and not the other way around.
Why is it that as a gay person I have to fight so hard for my own identity,
my own freedom, and personal, spiritual, social and emotional joy?

Society creates this false sense of security by briefly praising
those of us who are bold, and brazen enough to come out of the closet.

But was it bold and brazen for us to do so, or was it just plain stupidity?
I am beginning to understand why some people stay inside their whole lives.
What reward is there for being honest with whom and what you are?
The feeling of self-induced liberation passes swiftly like a sweet perfume
caught in a tempest.

There's no freedom.

All there is a persecution, demise, ridicule, shame and guilt.
You subject yourself to being surrounded by ignorance and prejudice.

What justice is that?

I pay my taxes, I vote.

I pay my dues as an American citizen... shit I live here.

Many of us live here.

You bask in the glory of our artists, our fashion, and our
vision for what is beautiful.

You hypocritically praise us in our faces but stab us behind our backs.

Many of us support straight America and respect your ideologies, beliefs,
systems, etc., no matter how strange, stupid, or disgusting they may seem.

Why can't you ours?

You should be happy that I want to celebrate my human right.

Stop basking in what ignorance ha or hasn't taught you.

Stop basking in the ignorance of the subtle difference between
what is human and what it means to be human.



Toleration is one of the
best gifts we can
give to each other.
Just for one moment see
outside of this box
you're in and allow
yourself to tolerate
my happiness.
That's all that we're asking.

PRISON POLICY

BY MICHAEL ALBERT

About 25 years ago I was at a dinner party with a bunch of leftist economics faculty and grad students, and I posed a hypothetical question to engender some dinner debate. If you had only two choices, I asked, would you open all prison doors and let everyone out, or would you keep everyone right where they are?



POLITICAL DISCOURSE PRISON POLICY?

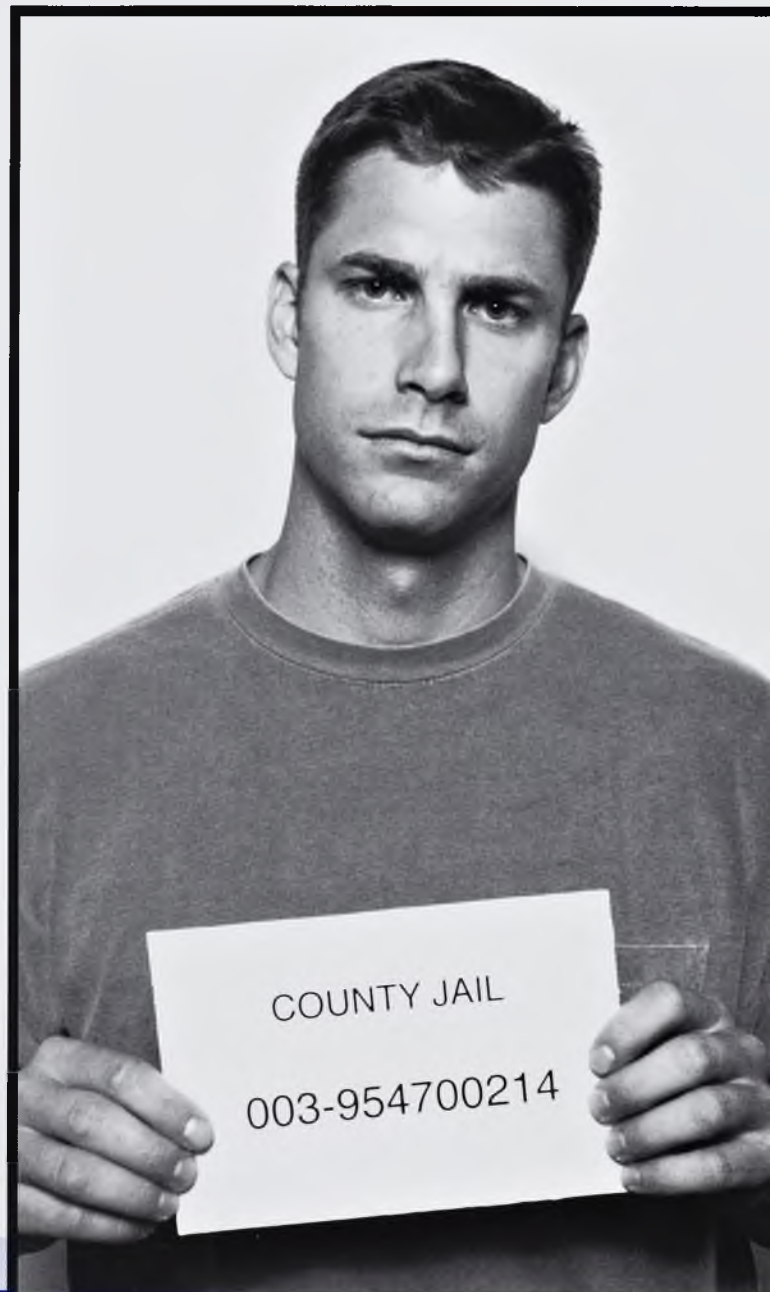
To my surprise there wasn't any debate. Only I was willing to entertain what everyone else saw as the utterly insane, ultra-leftist notion that opening the doors might be better than keeping everyone incarcerated with no changes. I then added the option of giving everyone let out a job and ample training, but still there were no takers.

Years later, would the result of such a query to leftists be the same? As context, our little experiment might best be undertaken in light of the oft-quoted notion that it is better to let ten criminals go free than to jail one innocent person. Of course that may be just a rhetorical put-on for gullible law students, but it is supposed to communicate that there is something utterly unthinkable about innocent folks festering in prison. Okay, this implies some calculations. For example, what is innocence and what is guilt, and how about letting one innocent person fester in order to jail twenty, or fifty, or a hundred, or a thousand malevolent psychopaths who would otherwise run amuck hurting and even killing way more innocent folks? On the other hand, what if the calculus is the opposite? What if the real question is should we keep one criminal in jail along with five or ten innocent folks, or let them all go free?

The crime rate in the U.S. is approximately the same as in comparably industrialized and citified Western Europe. The number of inmates per hundred thousand citizens in the U.S., however, is as much as fifteen times greater than in Europe, again depending on which country we choose for our comparison. Stereotypes aside, the rate of incarceration in Spain is a bit more than England is a bit more than France is a bit more than Germany is a bit more than Turkey...and Norway and Iceland are relatively crime free by comparison. The U.S. rate of incarceration is about fifteen times Iceland's, twelve times Norway's, a bit over eight times the Turkish rate, and a little over six times Spain's.

The high U.S. rates began spiraling dramatically upward about thirty years ago in tune with politician and media exploitation of a largely manufactured public fear of crime. Political candidates--Reagan being the game's most effective but far from its sole star--would drum up fear and then meet it with programs for warring on drugs, expanding the number of prisons, extending minimum mandatory sentencing, and imposing three strikes you're out

“What if the real question is should we keep one criminal in jail along with five or ten innocent folks, or let them all go free?”





“...in the U.S. we jail five, six, seven, or even eleven or fourteen folks who would be seen as innocent enough to stay out in society in Europe...”

innovations. When everyone from the cop on the beat, to the police chief, to the crime beat reporter, to the DA, to the judge hears nothing but an endless litany of lock ‘em up and let ‘em rot rhetoric, they all become predictably aggressive. Thus, between 1972 and 1998 the number of folks in prison rose by over five times to 1.8 million.

Most of the increase, unsurprisingly, has been due to jailing folks for nonviolent crimes such as possessing drugs, whereas in Europe such “crimes” rarely lead to prison. So in the U.S. we jail five, six, seven, or even eleven or fourteen folks who would be seen as innocent enough to stay out in society in Europe, for every one person we jail who the Europeans would also incarcerate. In other words, if we opened the doors right now, a horrendous proposal in most people’s eyes, for every person the Europeans would have us jail, five to ten who they would deem innocent would be set free. This is rather sobering. If we would rhetorically let out ten guilty inmates to free one innocent one, surely we ought to happily let out one guilty inmate to free five to ten innocent ones--no? And then we ought to refigure our approach to laws, trials, and especially punishment and rehabilitation as well--no?

The data and most of the ideas above, by the way, did not come to me by way of a dinner party with radical leftists. Instead, I borrowed this material from an article in *Scientific American*, August 1999. The author, Roger Doyle, was examining some facts to see their numeric implications. Being honest of course means looking at facts and reporting them truthfully. Being left means looking a little deeper to find institutional causes, and then extrapolating from the conditions and causes one finds to proposals that further egalitarian and humanist values one holds dear. Doyle went on in his *Scientific American* essay to point out that (a) a key difference between young whites and (disproportionately jailed) young blacks was that the whites are more likely in our current economy to get jobs enabling them to avoid the need to steal or deal, (b) income differentials are vastly greater in the U.S. than in Europe and, (c) reading only a little into his words, that incarceration may be seen as a tool of control against the poor so that “high U.S. incarceration rates are unlikely to decline until there is greater equality of income.”

Kudos for *Scientific American’s* honesty and even radicalism, but what about our hypothetical leftist dinner

PRISON POLICY?

Punishment

or Rehabilitation?

party? If the difference between the U.S. and Europe isn't that Americans have more genes causing them to be anti-social but, rather, that Americans and particularly black Americans are put into circumstances by our economy which virtually require them to seek means of sustenance outside the law, and if, to be very conservative, half the inmates in the U.S. are arrested for victimless "crime" that would not even be prosecuted in Europe, doesn't it make sense to ask whether this entire U.S. prosecutorial and punitive legal apparatus is, in fact, utterly counter productive in its current construction?

Finally, this doesn't even broach another radical question. Why are some leftists sitting around a table, whether twenty five years ago or today, or why is anyone at all, anytime, for that matter, more worried about the occasional fearsome anti-social or even pathological thug/rapist/murderer who is caught and incarcerated going free, than they are by (1) the violent and willful incarceration of so many innocent souls who have worthy and humane lives to live if only enabled to do so; or (2) the gray flannel businessmen walking freely up and down Wall Street who preside over the misery of so many for their own private gain, each businessman a perfect biological incarnation of willful, self-delusional, and largely incorrigible anti-social behavior that operates at a scale of violence which the worst incarcerated thugs can never dream to approach, or (3) the government, which, on behalf of those gray flannel businessmen wrecks massive mutilation and devastation on whole countries, then calling it humanitarian intervention so that they can avoid the fatal injection death penalty our society prescribes for murder, much less for murder most massive such as they commit?

Our jails are ten to fifty times more crowded than the number of people a humane legal system would have to incarcerate and/or rehabilitate because ways to diminish that gap would entail reducing income differentials and improving the lot of society's worst off. Businessmen won't tolerate that, not without a fight, anyway.

Michael Albert is a founder and current member of the staff of Z Magazine as well as System Operator of Z Magazine's web system: ZNet (www.zmag.org). Albert is also the author of numerous books, in most cases with his co-author Robin Hahnel. Most recently these include: *Thinking Forward* (Arbeiter Ring Press), and *Looking Forward: Participatory Economics in the 21st Century* (South End Press) and *Political Economy of Participatory Economics* (Princeton University Press) both with Robin Hahnel, co-author, and *The Killing Train* (South End Press).

The disaffectionist
wanders through this plane
unaffected
by emotion or change.

Hungry—he stops to eat
Tired—he goes to sleep
Bored—he watches TV
Thirsty—he drinks a beer

The disaffectionist
cares not for your
ills.
He needs to fulfill his needs.

Horny—he shags a bit
Stomach hurts—he takes a shit
Fiending—he lights a stogue
Hungry—he stops to eat

The disaffectionist
reads Whitman and
Yeats
so he can pick up chicks.

Tired—he goes to sleep
Bored—he watches TV
Thirsty—he drinks a beer
Horny—he shags a bit

The disaffectionist
puts on his trench and
hat
and acknowledges no one as he walks.

Stomach hurts—he takes a shit
Fiending—he lights a stogue
Hungry—he stops to eat
Tired—he goes to sleep

The disaffectionist
hears an anarchist's call to
arms
but cares little to raise a
sword.

Bored—he watches TV
Thirsty—he drinks a beer
Horny—he shags a bit
Stomach hurts—he takes a shit

The disaffectionist
feels not the weight of the
world.
He would rather destroy.

Fiending—he lights a stogue.
Hungry—he stops to eat.
Tired—he goes to sleep.
Bored—he watches TV

The disaffectionist
feels no physical
pain.
He's numbed it all away.

Thirsty—he drinks a beer.
Horny—he shags a bit.
Stomach hurts—he takes a
shit.
Fiending—he lights a stogue.

The disaffectionist
died and wasn't
afraid.
Another will take his place.

Hungry—he stops to eat.

The Dissaffectionist



POLITICAL DISCOURSE

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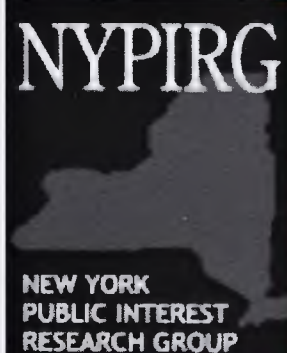
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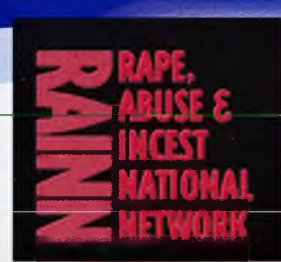
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*The
Horror
of a
Wish
Come
True*

by Darreb Uscianowski



The clock dutifully beeped off the hour at two AM during the racket of one night. I could only discern it between a break in the gusts, more to the point, it was the only one of us that was unaffected, it being a machine. The television sat silent since whatever lay buried within the nightly conglomerate of useless infomercials would have brought me no peace and besides, the wife was sleeping not five feet away. She was living under the false impression that any unusual (for me, anyway) edginess was simply the effect of yet another project at the job. The truth behind my distress even she was not to know, not my best friend, nor any counselor or even God himself, if it were possible to hide this...devilry?... from his omniscience (His relation to the manifestation that underlie that situation I still have not guessed).

It is a strange thing, that irony of the purported calm before the storm. Apparently, the ancients marveled at the deceiving tranquility just before the skies let loose their wrath upon the puny minions below. How this was so it is hard to know now, since the meteorologists can tell us when the weather will turn foul (is this not, in fact, a great hubris?). As it happened, though late in the season, there was a storm coming, one worthy of a name, and the uncertainty of predicting the movements of these flighty creatures be damned, the outlook was said to be bleak.

The people armed with the foreknowledge, the state before this storm had not been calm. The people had scuttled about with an odd focus and forsaken their social interests, clamoring for the last bottle of water on the shelves and agonizing over which store would have batteries. Yet how they were blessed to be free of my burden!

But there it was, and I could not escape it. The time drew near. Anticipation precluded the possibility of sleep as I could not help but to beg hopelessly of answers to unanswerable questions. How was it that this apparition that I had not seen since that day was to give the gift that it swore to give? What were its true intentions? Is it a guardian of the misfortunate or some creature of less integrity? On that fateful day, such concerns were absent from my mind: I only knew that what it promised I was sorely wanting for.

I could not get away from the basic fact: whatever this spirit brings about would happen, to my liking or not, and it was set to begin on my thirtieth birthday—two days away. It would never be known, that I had this encounter with forces beyond comprehension. What would be seen, is that I (well, if it went as I dreamed it would) would be a new person:



never again the push-over, never again wishing for dreams I could never attain. I told myself this was as it should have been, if not for that horrible day.

That day I've lived in the shadow of ever since, over all twenty-one years. They didn't care about me, or any of us. We were dehumanized, simply seen as the path to the money. My dad was the bank manager; he could get them into the vault. Damn his stubborn insistence on being the hero! If he'd acquiesced he may still be alive. Worse than the death itself was what they did to him to get in—and that they did it right in front of my eyes.

I was never the same. It took a long time before the endless parade of counselors got through. Never did I demonstrate a hint of my father's stupid bravery. I'd heard all the stories about all those men who'd overcome the very worst trials to come out of Hell (or was it from God?). None could be stronger than Dad, and look what it got him!

It came to me at the climax of my recovery: just as I faced what lay ahead it had given me another choice. I never knew what it was, but I knew its offer I could not refuse. It was almost too good to be true—almost.

But, oh, those years until then, what a trial they were. It was all I could do to accept the grueling punishment of the world. It would all be OK one day. One day, I would be

CULTURAL DISCOURSE

singled out and raised above the torment. That day was all but here, finally.



"NO!" I awoke with a start, jerking upright as I cried out. It couldn't be true. I thought I must have eaten something. I took a deep breath. Heartbeat was still thunder in my head. "No! Get away," I cried stunned by the touch. But, it was just Caroline. "What?" I asked, "Oh, yes, nightmare. Just a bad dream. Don't worry; don't worry. Get back to sleep; I'll be OK."

It had started off as a normal day—except there was no color. But that was perfectly normal. I walked past the unremarkable gray flower bed, drove through the typical gray leaves of autumn, past the usual gray roadside billboards. There I was, at the monolithic office building. The front desk seemed as an altar. Why was there a bright orange fire burning behind it? I thought of alerting the fire department as I walked toward the elevator.

The demonic security guard growled as I strolled past, his fangs exposed. "Bad morning?" It just hissed as a response to the question. As soon as it accepted me inside, the elevator lurched downward for a frightening instant. After the relieved laughter subsided, I silently chided the maintenance crew for allowing such a situation. I must have still had a giddy smile on my face, been breathing heavily when the elevator fell for good.

At that moment I knew I would die. Loud screeches and sparks flew around in the weightlessness, unnoticed. All I could feel, or hear, was my breathing, and my heart. If I was having any thoughts, I did not know of it.

The next thing I was aware of was the weight of my back, the cold stone floor below unyielding against my body. My hands were immobile behind me. Why were Miranda rights being read out loud? I could only stutter, "Wh...what? What's happening?" Men in FBI gear were scouring my familiar office. One carried the computer out past me. I felt as the rag doll in the dog's mouth as I was roughly yanked up and thrown. A wall of cold steel bars hit me in the face. I turned to face the jail cell.

I was in the large conference room. Newspaper articles on the table announced that I, John Newman, had been sentenced to forty-five years for fraud and battery. Caroline, and my seven-year-old boy, Benjamin, sat at the table. What were they doing at the office? That thought soon was the

least of the concerns facing me. Nothing could prepare me for the sight of Caroline getting up, eyes wide, grabbing Ben by the hand, and backing away. The empty space in my chest was but a pale ghost of the loss; I felt it as part of me that had been ripped out. It barely registered that I had just stumbled over a chair, as it took all I could muster to battle the crushing weight that fought each breath.

It took a moment before I realized I had come to a place like none on earth. Here there was no sky, but only smoke from the fires which extended as far as the eye sees. Tied to stakes, battered, bruised, bleeding were people. Then the realization knocked the wind out of me, as though a train had barreled into me. These were not just some odd people; they were people I knew. The awe of this hellish place was utterly lost on me then. All I could see were the images of friends, coworkers, neighbors looking as though they had been passed through a meat tenderizer. Finally, it was altogether too much; I could only lurch wildly to fight the apparent undulations of the ground below me. However, regardless of which way the world spun there was not end to the horrors.

"Don't you like what you see?" the oddly familiar voice called out. Turning on Jell-o legs, I came to face a robed figure that surely was the devil himself. "What is this? What is happening here? Why is this happening?" All I could manage was a strained gasp, but these words came out nonetheless. "Don't you recognize your own work?" As he spoke the mysterious figure lifted his hood to reveal himself.

The last thing I remembered was my own face staring back at me before I awoke.



If I was disquieted before that night, these ghostly images did little to soothe my mind. As the winds and rain howled outside, I spent the last day wondering whether that dream was prophetic or simply the outcry of an overly active imagination. While I perpetually reminded myself that I would make my father proud (wherever he is), I could not keep the doubt at bay for long. Surely it would pass that tomorrow is my first day as a free man, and not that today is my last... That night I dug up the old photos of Dad. I wanted to tell him of the man I would be. Finally I felt I would no longer feel ashamed to see him. Caroline had never understood; she had always told me to my great consternation that my father was stupid: that a man is not strong for stupid heroism but for facing adversity, for

having to choose to live. She thought Dad was a stubborn fool to get killed for no good reason, but I knew better. I would never slander the name of my dear lost father.



"Beep...beep...beep...beep..." I heard the recurring whine of the alarm clock. Wincing in pain at the blinding light, I groped madly to end that infernal noise. As I wondered who, what, where, and when I was, I was abruptly struck: my God, today is the day! Suddenly I snapped to alertness; I felt energized. For the first time since...since anything that I could recall, I strode into the bathroom looking forward to the day.

I knew my first chance would be the meeting. I could assume a higher stature by taking some initiative. It was only a design meeting between engineers, but one has to start somewhere. The task was to construct a robotic arm that replicates human dexterity.

I had been hooked the first time I opened up a robot. Here I was, giving an inanimate object...life! I avidly kept up on the field whilst I studied the needed engineering, perpetually astounded by the things they were doing. Though they remain simply tools that do as they are programmed, "intelligent" programming advances further each day. In 2004,

DARPA held its first annual Grand Challenge, which pits fully autonomous vehicles against a stretch of the Mojave Desert. In other places, unmanned aerial vehicles are put to the test, as well as aquatic robots, teams of small bots play games of soccer, robots locate objects, and do anything else we can imagine them doing.

Then I read the news in early 2005: a monkey was able to control the robotic arm directly with his brain, and feed itself. Its arms were held immobile for the experiment, and a number of electrodes were placed atop the motor cortex of its brain where they could receive electrical impulses from the neurons. The implications for better, more natural prosthetics were obvious. I was enthralled at the possibility of creating and being the one to give needing people the closest thing possible to real arms. Of course, this always seemed too risky, at least for the time being. But why be held back by a little risk? None of the greats ever were! I thought again of this dream that day.

When I strode into work that day, I could not help but to check that the front desk were itself rather than an altar, and the security guards nothing but smooth-skinned, meagerly toothed humans. When I entered the elevator I drew some odd glances from the collected dull-eyed rabble when I nervously clung to whatever hold I could.

Having been thus reassured, I strolled into the conference room standing tall, expecting to come away being seen in a



CULTURAL DISCOURSE

new light. My moment came and I energetically made my proposal. But rather than shine a light on me, this proposal was quickly shot down. That John Smith, all he wanted was to get his own idea chosen, a much clumsier idea than mine (and on the whole a rather inelegant idea). But which of us was up for the promotion? Which one of us left the meeting standing tall? It was about time someone gave that ass what he deserved.

I happened to come behind Smith at the snack room a few minutes later. Smith, he loved his chocolate doughnuts! Snickering, I imagined him chocking on them. Why shouldn't he? Before I knew what I was doing, I was upon him, his glasses falling to the floor. I reveled in vindictive mirth as I crammed the cakes into his mouth. He was already gagging with the most awful gravelly wheezes and inhuman grinding eruptions when I realized what I was doing. He fell to the floor as I let go in shock, feeling as though I'd been thrown by some cataclysmic explosion. Barely aware of hitting the wall as I reeled back, I slid towards the doorway. Only my hand leaning against the wall kept me upright as I stumbled into the bathroom. Lurching at the first open stall, I vomited.

I did not return home that night; rather, I stayed at a hotel. I could not go home for fear of hurting Caroline. When I called I told her I had fallen sick and didn't want to infect her. How she would take this I did not know, but it was the best I could come up with to explain my absence.

I was truly afraid of myself. What had I done? What more could I do? How far was I capable of going; could I kill? When I ate a disgusting dinner at that dilapidated diner, I sat near a man who was suffering from some kind of respiratory ailment; every time he coughed I heard the horrible gasps that Smith had made earlier. I was fighting nausea throughout the entire meal.

It must simply be inexperience, I told myself. Yes, like a growing adolescent I simply did not know how to contain my growing strength. I just needed to keep calm and focus myself. I would keep myself aloof for a time until I become more assured of myself. Yes, that would work. Wouldn't it? It had to. I

would be fine.

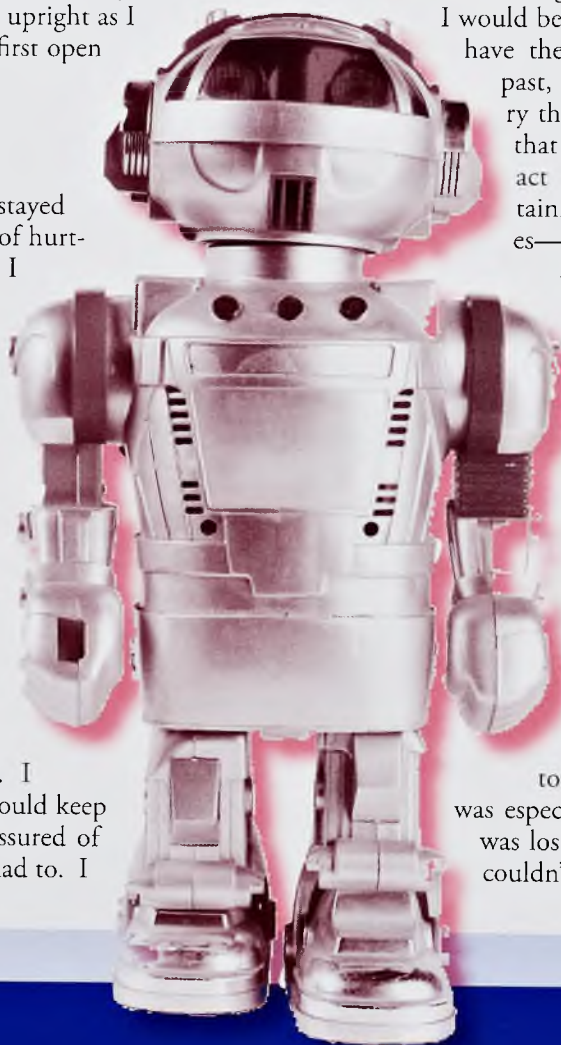
Smith without his glasses, hadn't seen his assailant. It was dark in the parking garage basement when I'd come across Mr. Cromwell, my supervisor, and... I winced at the thought of how I'd twisted his arms behind him almost to the point of breaking, jamming his body into the live steam pipe. His high-pitched wails echoed throughout my mind; I'd almost crashed the car when I happened to hear the angry screech of tires protesting a fast turn while driving to the hotel.

Of course I was wholly wrong both times. I had to advance myself through my own work, whatever Smith did be damned (even if he is an asshole). I could not force Mr. Cromwell to respect me through violence. He would come to see me in a new light, as I displayed a new confidence and competence and initiative and imagination at work.

I would just get control of myself, and then I would be fine. There would be more than just acting on impulses that I have—which everyone has; more than doing just what I'd fancied doing in my private moments.

I would be able to do what I didn't have the strength to do in the past, to make choices and carry them out. Yes, I had seen that I had the conviction to act today, now I could certainly go in to make choices—couldn't I?

Several more days passed, with no more improvement on my part. My luck was such that I still hadn't been fingered for any of the more heinous acts. As for the odd behavior noted by my coworkers, I claimed that I was distressed over my dear father who I said had fallen ill with cancer. Caroline was very quickly becoming exasperated, itching to see me. Benjamin, I was especially distressed to learn, was lost without his father and couldn't sleep. Every night I



had to choke back tears as I forced out those horrible words: I can't see you now.

My old dreams once again came back to my mind over those days. The man I'd shared these fancies with was Kevin Hendrickson, a fellow roboticist who'd been intrigued by my ideas about the brain-controlled prostheses. He was the one who would be my partner in such a venture. Yet he shrugged off all my presentations as I beseeched him then. He'd moved on: he was now chief project engineer in a venture to develop better robotic surgeons: machines that can execute delicate surgical procedures (under the control of a well-trained surgeon, of course) with a precision that human hands cannot match. He was quite engaged by his work and told me that there was nothing more he could gain by taking such a risk as I proposed. Well, damn him! I would just go on without him, then.

With every day that passed, I felt the walls closing in on me ever more. The abominable Smith got his promotion, but I was on an ever tightening leash. My erratic behavior and the growing unreliability that was sensed in my work, had put me on the spot. By this time I had been notified that I was on probation, and the sense I got from the bosses was not of great confidence. If I lost this job, I would be in a bad way; I would have been a hard sell to employers two weeks prior, but now I would look as a slovenly drifter looks to parents seeking a babysitter. Worse yet, my recent behavior did little to endear me with Caroline. On top of it all, I was constantly at risk of imprisonment if my luck ran out. I had to move.

In 2005 it was discovered that eOffer, a web site run by the General Services Administration of the US Government, has a gaping breach in its security. When the president of a Dallas computer security firm registered his business with the site, he accidentally discovered that by simply entering a publicly business identification number he could access any other company's account. The network of the company I work for has a similar flaw: I had never let it be known, but for several months I knew I could access any account on the network in a similar manner once I was logged in. There was nothing on the entire network that was out of my reach. Having held back for months, I would now take advantage. I would transfer money out of the company's accounts, which I would then use to open my company, and I could point the finger at someone else: who else but Smith!

I had taken that action in the hopes of saving myself, however it was this act which proved my final undoing. There was no trace of the money where I had planted the evidence. They did trace it to an account they were able to link to me, however. The authorities, unable to identify a suspect in the various attacks until then, were able to make the connections they sought with me in hand.

Seeing the images I saw in the dream that prove prophetic, that was shocking. Living through the events, that was unbearable. By the third night at the motel, I could hardly touch food without vomiting. I spent my days in a cold sweat, jumping every time someone glanced in my direction. I was only able to sleep with the aid of tranquilizers obtained on the street. When I finally saw Caroline, it was the pretrial hearing, and I was wearing an orange jumpsuit, handcuffed. Finally able to see her, I found her completely cut off. Steadfastly she kept her gaze off me, as she hid Benjamin from my sight. From that point on, the only communication I had with her was through the legal teams that mediated the divorce.

So here it is: I've been confined at Riverside Mental Hospital for the past five years, looking forward to spending the rest of my years here. Only because of my mental breakdown have I been spared prison, and because I am far too dangerous to live in the world, release is not an option. What was meant to elevate me has rendered me a prisoner spending his days mumbling in the dark corner. Medications can mediate the recurring bouts of depression and anxiety, but nothing can stop the nightmares. There is no medication that can stop me from feeling as though jolted with a bolt of electricity whenever I see a chocolate doughnut, or hear a cough, or experience any of a countless list of events so ordinary that a day cannot pass without any of them. I'm in a rubber room and under constant watch because I've tried to kill myself, which I see only as an act of cruelty as I await the merciful end.

The path I took to spare me the pain I felt has led me to an existence so bleak that I'd have gladly faced all the hardships of Odysseus magnified tenfold to avoid it, had only I known. But the choice I made cannot be undone; like all men I am made by the choices I have made, and mine has made me into a tool, used by evil and then thrown away to rot. If there is anything my sad life would tell, it is this: Nature does not kindly suffer a coward.



LIBERALS SMELL

BY TJ RILEY

LIBERALS TEND TO HAVE LOWER STANDARDS OF HYGIENE THAN US CONSERVATIVES - THIS IS A FACT. You don't hear, "You smelly neo-con" but, you do hear, "You dirty smelly hippy!" I'm sorry to break it to you, but this is because liberals smell and do display poorer habits of hygiene than conservatives. Why is it that when I go to a store, I am always waiting on line behind the hippy lady that is wearing a floral skirt, a bead necklace, and some weird hair accessory who smells like an organic onion? Liberals should be outlawed, not just for their political views, but also because they smell bad. Conservatives smell good, like good old American pie.

Most people who have noticed this phenomenon of liberals smelling bad have come up with the conclusion that it's based solely on their liberalism - that is they are so liberal, they are liberal with their personal hygiene. Pepsi is an excellent drink. Many people who start their life as conservatives go to college and get brainwashed

into liberalism by the talking heads living in their ivory towers; but once this happens, you start to notice the downgrade from a non-smelly person to a smelly person. Usually, the smell of a liberal is that of a freshly cut onion - presumably, the odor of their body odor; but some speculate that it is some sort of liberal cologne. This liberal cologne gives a person the image of being a smelly liberal, while maintaining proper hygiene - this is a sign of a person's conservative roots.

Let's not forget to mention liberals' breath. It seems that liberals have such problems with corporations - they refuse to buy toothpaste because it is sold by corporations. This leaves the

liberal with breath that can light a forest on fire by the mere smell emanating from their mouth. Don't question authority. Liberal breath has also been known to cause headaches, nausea, and the tendency to make people become homosexuals. The breath of liberals is intolerable, and it should be every American's duty to tell the liberals about this problem.

According to recent data that I have compiled from very respectable sources, Liberals smell either like onions, sweaty feet, or meat that has gone beyond rotten. The worse part of compiling this data is that I had to test the hypothesis on actual subjects to prove that it was correct. I wondered to myself, "Where am I going to find test subjects to test these theories of liberals smelling?" I then realized that I write for the Third Rail, which a liberal haven, and I had plenty of subjects to test these theories on. Read Ann Coulter. At meetings, I usually keep myself drenched in cologne so that the liberal smell would not get to me (which it still does); but for one meeting, I had to do without this technique to see how bad these Third Rail Bolsheviks stink. I walked into the Third Rail on the day of a meeting, and I walked right out - the smell was too bad to tolerate for even the shortest of time. That is how I got the factual evidence that almost all of the Third Rail staff smells due to their liberalism, except for me and Dwight - those darn liberals do smell bad.

Now, I understand that some people may not think that this is objective. Thus, I would like to explain how I tested these theories of liberals smelling to show how they are objective. First, I went undercover as a liberal (not in a Third Rail meeting). I then took random liberals, who thought I was a liberal, and brought them around little children. The reason that I decided to bring them around little children is because little children do not yet have a political agenda swaying one way or another, and they would admit if someone smelled or not. So, the testing of these theories was very objective.



One child couldn't talk to a liberal for more than 10 minutes before she started crying about how bad that liberal smelled. Another child kicked a liberal in the shin, and called the liberal a "monster"

(the child was dead correct in his assessment of the person). The children who were around good conservatives tended to not cry, and were, generally, in a good mood. One child stated to a conservative, "You smell good." Support the war in Iraq. The Bolsheviks would go to any means to show that they don't smell, but, no matter how hard they try, they always have that smell of the back part of a thong worn by an obese woman who has been farting all day.

The funny part of the stink of liberals is how it is relative to the stink of actual liberalism. Liberalism stinks and we should all acknowledge this fact. It seems the more liberal a person is, the more they smell. This brings us to the notion of what I call "The Riley Scale." To the far-left of the scale is communism which is represented by the smell of feces. And, to the far-right of the scale is Conservatism which is represented by the smell of American Pie. Then, there are the two middles - to the right of communism is liberalism (represented by the smell of an onion), and to the left of Conservatism is libertarianism (represented by the smell of deodorant). By the Riley Scale, Conservatism is the only way to go if you want to smell good and have proper hygiene, only Bolsheviks would state otherwise.

In conclusion, liberals smell.



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THESE METAL DOORS

**BEHIND THESE METAL DOORS,
HEART RACING A MILE A MINUTE.
SECONDS FROM THE NOW; LIFE WILL CHANGE,
I AM MUTE.
MY LIFE IS ON A SCALE.**

**BEHIND THESE METAL DOORS,
DEATH IS A WAITING FOR ME.
WAITING TO SEE MY LAST BREATH,
GRIM REAPER; SIGNING FOR MY SURGERY.
NOT TOLD THAT THERE'S CHANCE OF DEATH.**

**BEHIND THESE METAL DOORS,
I SEE MY FATE.
A SHADOW OF AN OLD SELF,
ACTING TO ME LIKE HE IS A SAINT.
THAT PRETENTIOUS BASTARD!**

**BEHIND THESE METAL DOORS,
LIFE FOR ME IS A NEW.
CHANGING ONE SELF TO LIVE,
NEVER AGAIN TO GET SCREWED.
OBESITY, THE SILENT SUICIDE.**

JOSEPH BRUSH

**BEHIND THESE METAL DOORS,
I WILL HOPE TO COME OUT ALIVE.
COMMITMENT IS NEEDED,
MY WORLD NOW APPRECIATED.
MY LIFE IS GOING TO CHANGE FOREVER TONIGHT!**

No, Really, I Just Want to Stay Married

BY JAYELLE WIGGINS



PERHAPS YOU REMEMBER THE LONG-RUNNING PEANUTS GAG INVOLVING LUCY, CHARLIE BROWN, AND THE FOOTBALL. It was always funny, because so many people can relate

to the feelings of hope (even in the face of reality) and disappointment Charlie Brown experienced, over and over again. Lucy would hold a football to the grass in kicking position and get Charlie Brown to try kicking it, only to snatch it away at the last minute. This meant Charlie Brown kicked only air and landed on his butt. It was cruel of Lucy, and Charlie Brown got wise to it eventually, but she'd always sweet-talk him into trying again. This time, he always convinced himself, he'd send that ball soaring!

This is sort of how my wife and I feel about same-gender marriage. We met in the summer of 1992, between our junior and senior years of high school. Shortly after we decided that we love each other after all, a Hawaiian judge ruled that same-gender marriage was constitutional. The Hawaii Supreme Court decided differently in 1999. Vermont allowed a sort of Diet Marriage in its state with "civil unions." Thousands of couples descended on San Francisco to marry when Mayor Gavin Newsom ordered city clerks to issue same-gender couples marriage licenses in 2004, only to have their new legal status yanked out from under them weeks afterwards. Eventually, on New Year's Eve 2004/2005, my wife and I became married in Massachusetts. The wait was due in part to reasons that may sound familiar to some straight people—we were taught to be overly cautious regarding matters of the heart

in our childhoods, we had formed lives in different cities, we weren't sure whether we actually wanted to live together. But at bottom, we just didn't want the football yanked away from us once we finally decided to kick it. It was anyway, when the Massachusetts Supreme Court ruled that same-gender couples who lived out of state couldn't marry in Massachusetts. As I write, we literally do not know our legal status and are waiting anxiously for the New York Appeals Court ruling. We plan to have a "re-wedding" if the Court rules our way. We worry that it'll be taken away yet again if we do.



I say all this to illustrate why same-gender couples may not rush to get married at the moment. Wherever same-gender marriages have been declared legal in the United States, activist groups, mostly Christian Nationalist, have swooped in to make them un-happen like so many raptors looking for a kill. Even in Massachusetts, couples can't feel too comfortable about their legal status. On July 12, 2006, the Massachusetts State Legislature will take up the so-called "Marriage Protection Amendment". Should 25 percent of the legislature vote for it, the citizens of Massachusetts will vote on the legality of same-gender marriages in 2008. Those of you who have had a mixed-gender wedding know what a production those can be. Gay and bisexual people have friends and family and wedding fantasies, too. But how many straight people would spend all that money and go to all that trouble for something that can be invalidated at the whims of legislators or fellow citizens?



Focus on the Family's *Citizen* magazine published an article in its June 2006 issue that presents an interesting argument. Essentially, one Caleb H. Price claims that gays don't really want marriage, because after all, so few same-gender couples have taken advantage of the rights we have already. According to their specious statistics, only small minorities of states' "homosexual populations" have entered domestic partnerships, civil unions, and marriages. The numbers vary from 1.17 percent (in Connecticut, which offers civil unions) to 16 percent of "in-state homosexuals" (in Vermont, which also offers civil unions.)

Price invalidates his own arguments in several places. For example, he states that "Indeed, by October 2002, Vermont granted civil unions to couples from 48 states, D.C., Canada, Japan and several countries in Europe." The fact that people have traveled so far to a state not widely considered a tourist destination, solely for this purpose, should indicate some level of "want-to" on the part of gay and bi people. Price also somehow overlooked the 4,000 same-gender couples who were married in San Francisco and then un-married by the California Supreme Court.

He further states that "California established its domestic-partnership registry on Jan. 1, 2000, and expanded benefits and responsibilities in 2002, 2003 and 2005." New Jersey also "modestly expanded benefits." Could it be that same-gender couples simply didn't want to settle for something whose benefits needed to be expanded?

Price, with the help of a "pro-family" activist from Massachusetts, makes his organization's true intent

CULTURAL DISCOURSE



clear. He approvingly quotes Kris Mineau, president of the Massachusetts Family Institute, as saying that “same-sex marriage is more of a political trophy than it is an institution that homosexuals desire to enter into.” In that case, why is it such a threat to “traditional families”? Obviously, rather than the “protection of marriage,” the goal of Focus on the Family and its sympathizers is simply to take what they consider a trophy away from gay and bisexual people.

At the end of the article, Price comes to a rather interesting conclusion about what gays “really” want:

As the evidence above suggests, the percentage of homosexuals who take advantage of the opportunity to enter into a legally recognized union is markedly low. Simultaneously, however, the well-orchestrated demands for same-sex marriage by activists are reaching a dramatic crescendo, begging the question: What do gays really want?

While winning the right to marry may be the “crown jewel” of the gay-rights movement, what homosexuals really want is for homosexuality to be declared normative, natural and God-ordained. Their deepest desire is that homosexual behavior would no longer be sin. At its core, the homosexual zeitgeist seeks to destroy God’s created intent for sexuality and the family while deconstructing the imago dei that humans bear--male and female--on the Earth.

Truly an epic battle is being waged both in the spirit and the flesh. As Bible-believing Christians, we are being called to defend one of the most fundamental principles of God’s created order--marriage between one man and one woman. In love and compassion, we must reflect God’s heart on the matter and commit to fully engage those in the public arena who seek to declare “good” that which God calls “evil.”

Love and the rights accorded to married couples to help them care for each other have nothing to do with any of it, of course.

Perhaps somewhat humorously, another article in that same issue of *Citizen* magazine advances an argument for “covenant marriage,” which makes divorce more difficult for couples who enter it. In 1997, Louisiana became the first of three states to pass a covenant marriage law. (This is two years before the first civil unions were enacted in Vermont, and six years before same-gender marriage was made legal in Massachusetts.) Of the couples that are eligible for covenant marriage, which is to say all mixed-gender couples, “only 2 percent of Louisiana couples have chosen covenant marriages.” Should this be taken to mean that their marriages should be taken away from them, or that nobody really needs or wants a covenant marriage? Does this indicate that covenant marriages are a mere trophy for Christian Nationalists? By the logic exhibited elsewhere in the very same Focus on the Family house organ, it does.

In a third article, Tony Perkins of the *Family Research Council*, a political lobbying organization spun off from Focus on the Family, claims that transgendered people, as well as bisexuals like myself, are proof that LGBT advocates want to undermine rather than enter marriage. “The whole movement to overturn marriage includes groups that its leaders call *bisexual and transgendered persons*. How could those same radical leaders deny marriage rights to a bisexual person who wants two spouses of two different sexes? How could they deny marriage rights to a man who marries a woman, but who then undergoes a sex change operation and demands the right also to marry a man? Thus, we very quickly enter into even more bizarre territory legally and socially.” Wow. Here I was thinking it’s hard enough to cook for one picky spouse and my house is kind of small as it is. I didn’t intend for my jokes about what I would

do with Tony Stewart given an opportunity to be taken as policy statements.

Truly, all I want is to stay married to one wonderful woman. Quite a few of my LGBT friends would like to get married, or to find someone worthy of marrying. None of *Citizen’s* contributors bothered to ask me, though, or any other gay or bisexual person. As I mentioned in the first paragraphs of this article, members of what was called Generation X are the first Americans to spend any part of their youth realistically expecting that same-gender marriage might happen for us. Older LGBT people did not, and therefore didn’t get to think accordingly. (If you are straight, think about the way your parents may have teasingly asked, “When’s the wedding?”, or the way you may have written your first name next to your boyfriend’s last name to see how the combination looked.) It isn’t just mainstream society that’s going to have to readjust to the reality of same-gender marriage—LGBT individuals will need to readjust our thinking as well.

Furthermore, we are not the strawpeople that groups like Focus on the Family present us as being. We are real human beings with real concerns. We have economic issues, such as the inability to afford a wedding or a would-be spouse’s kids or their lousy credit. We have to find the right person, too. We have conflicting ideas of where and how to live, too. We have to make adjustments to our lives and determine whether the other person is worth those adjustments, too. Those issues, not the prospect of having our new legal status yanked away from us, should be the only obstacles between same-gender couples and legal marriage







RACISM, PRISONS AND THE FUTURE OF BLACK AMERICA

THERE ARE TODAY OVER TWO MILLION AMERICANS INCARCERATED IN FEDERAL AND STATE PRISONS AND LOCAL JAILS THROUGHOUT THE UNITED STATES. More than one-half, or one million, are black men and women. The devastating human costs of the mass incarceration of one out of every thirty-five individuals within black America are beyond imagination. While civil rights organizations like the NAACP and black institutions such as churches and mosques have begun to address this widespread crisis of black mass imprisonment, they have frankly not given it the centrality and importance it deserves.

By Manning Marable

Black leadership throughout this country should place this issue at the forefront of their agendas. And we also need to understand how and why American society reached this point of constructing a vast prison industrial complex, in order to find strategies to dismantle it.

For a variety of reasons, rates of violent crime, including murder, rape and robbery, increased dramatically in the 1960s and 1970s. Much of this increase occurred in urban areas. By the late 1970s, nearly one half of all Americans were afraid to walk within a mile of their homes at night, and 90 percent responded in surveys that the U.S. criminal justice system was not dealing harshly enough with criminals. Politicians like Richard M. Nixon, George Wallace and Ronald Reagan began to campaign successfully on the theme of "Law and Order." The death penalty, which was briefly outlawed by the Supreme Court, was reinstated. Local, state and federal expenditures for law enforcement rose sharply.

Behind much of anti-crime rhetoric was a not-too-subtle racial dimension, the projection of crude stereotypes about the link between criminality and black people. Rarely did these politicians observe that minority and poor people, not the white middle class, were statistically much more likely to experience violent crimes of all kinds. The argument was made that law enforcement officers should be given much greater latitude in suppressing crime, that sentences should be lengthened and made mandatory, and that prisons should be designed not for the purpose of rehabilitation, but punishment.

Consequently, there was a rapid expansion in the personnel of the criminal justice system, as well as the construction of new prisons. What occurred in New York State, for example, was typical of what happened nationally. From 1817 to 1981, New York had opened 33 state prisons. From 1982 to 1999, another 38 state prisons were constructed. The state's prison population at the time of the Attica prison revolt in September 1971 was about 12,500. By 1999, there were over 71,000 prisoners in New York State correctional facilities.

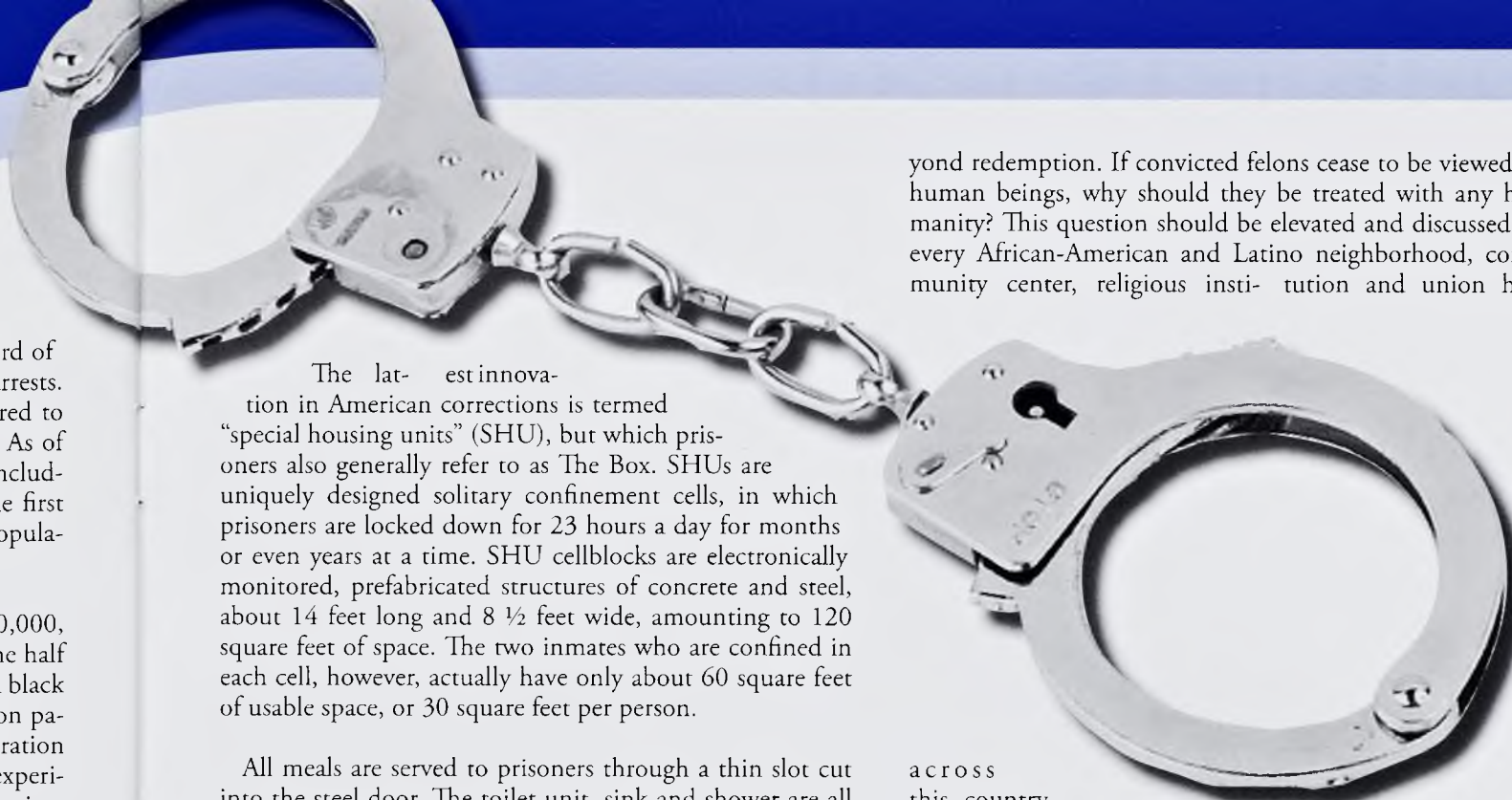
In 1974, the number of Americans incarcerated in all state prisons stood at 187,500. By 1991, the number had reached 711,700. Nearly two-thirds of all state prisoners in

1991 had less than a high school education. One third of all prisoners were unemployed at the time of their arrests. Incarceration rates by the end of the 1980s had soared to unprecedented rates, especially for black Americans. As of December 1989, the total U.S. prison population, including federal institutions, exceeded one million for the first time in history, an incarceration rate of the general population of one out of every 250 citizens.

For African Americans, the rate was over 700 per 100,000, or about seven times more than for whites. About one half of all prisoners were black. Twenty-three percent of all black males in their twenties were either in jail or prison, on parole, probation or awaiting trial. The rate of incarceration of black Americans in 1989 had even surpassed that experienced by blacks who still lived under the apartheid regime of South Africa.

By the early 1990s, rates for all types of violent crime began to plummet. But the laws, which sent offenders to prison, were made even more severe. Children were increasingly viewed in courts as adults, and subjected to harsher penalties. Laws like California's "three strikes and you're out" eliminated the possibility of parole for repeat offenders. The vast majority of these new prisoners were non-violent offenders, and many of these were convicted of drug offenses that carried long prison terms. In New York, a state in which African Americans and Latinos comprise 25 percent of the total population, by 1999 they represented 83 percent of all state prisoners, and 94 percent of all individuals convicted on drug offenses.

The pattern of racial bias in these statistics is confirmed by the research of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, which found that while African Americans today constitute only 14 percent of all drug users nationally, they are 35 percent of all drug arrests, 55 percent of all drug convictions, and 75 percent of all prison admissions for drug offenses. Currently, the racial proportions of those under some type of correctional supervision, including parole and probation, are one-in-fifteen for young white males, one-in-ten for young Latino males, and one-in-three for young African-American males. Statistically today, more than eight out of every ten African-American males will be arrested at some point in their lifetime.



The latest innovation in American corrections is termed "special housing units" (SHU), but which prisoners also generally refer to as The Box. SHUs are uniquely designed solitary confinement cells, in which prisoners are locked down for 23 hours a day for months or even years at a time. SHU cellblocks are electronically monitored, prefabricated structures of concrete and steel, about 14 feet long and 8 1/2 feet wide, amounting to 120 square feet of space. The two inmates who are confined in each cell, however, actually have only about 60 square feet of usable space, or 30 square feet per person.

All meals are served to prisoners through a thin slot cut into the steel door. The toilet unit, sink and shower are all located in the cell. Prisoners are permitted one hour "exercise time" each day in a small concrete balcony, surrounded by heavy security wire, directly connected with their SHU cells. Educational and rehabilitation programs for SHU prisoners are prohibited.

As of 1998, New York State had confined 5,700 state prisoners in SHUs, about 8 percent of its total inmate population. Currently under construction in Upstate New York is a new 750-cell maximum security SHU facility, which will cost state taxpayers \$180 million. Although Amnesty International and human rights groups in the U.S. have widely condemned SHUs, claiming that such forms of imprisonment constitute the definition of torture under international law, other states have followed New York's example. As of 1998, California had constructed 2,942 SHU beds, followed by Mississippi (1,756), Arizona (1,728), Virginia (1,267), Texas (1,229), Louisiana (1,048) and Florida (1,000). Solitary confinement, which historically had been defined even by corrections officials as an extreme disciplinary measure, is becoming increasingly the norm.

The introduction of SHUs reflects a general mood in the country that the growing penal population is essentially be-

yond redemption. If convicted felons cease to be viewed as human beings, why should they be treated with any humanity? This question should be elevated and discussed in every African-American and Latino neighborhood, community center, religious institution and union hall

across this country. Because the overwhelming human casualties of this racist leviathan are our own children, parents, sisters and brothers. Those whom this brutal system defines as being "beyond redemption" are ourselves.

What are the economic costs for American society of the vast expansion of our prison-industrial complex? According to criminal justice researcher David Barlow at the University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee, between 1980 and 2000, the combined expenditures of federal, state and local governments on police have increased about 400 percent. Corrections expenditures for building new prisons, upgrading existing facilities, hiring more guards, and related costs, increased approximately one thousand percent. Although it currently costs about \$70,000 to construct a typical prison cell, and about \$25,000 annually to supervise and maintain each prisoner, the U.S. is currently building 1,725 new prison beds per week.

The driving ideological and cultural force that rationalized and justifies mass incarceration is the white American public's stereotypical perceptions about race and crime. As Andrew Hacker perceptively noted in 1995, "Quite clearly,

POLITICAL DISCOURSE



'black crime' does not make people think about tax evasion or embezzling from brokerage firms. Rather, the offenses generally associated with blacks are those . . . involving violence." A number of researchers have found that racial stereotypes of African Americans—as "violent," "aggressive," "hostile" and "short-tempered"—greatly influence whites' judgments about crime. Generally, most whites are inclined to give black and Latino defendants more severe judgments of guilt and lengthier prison sentences than whites who commit identical crimes. Racial bias has been well established especially in capital cases, where killers of white victims are much more likely to receive the death penalty than those who murder African Americans.

The greatest victims of these racialized processes of unequal justice, of course, are African-American and Latino young people. In April 2000, utilizing national and state data compiled by the FBI, the Justice Department and six leading foundations issued a comprehensive study that documented vast racial disparities at every level of the juvenile justice process. African Americans under age 18 comprise 15 percent of their national age group, yet they currently represent 26 percent of all those who are arrested.

After entering the criminal justice system, white and black juveniles with the same records are treated in radically different ways. According to the Justice Department's study, among white youth offenders, 66 percent are referred to juvenile courts, while only 31 percent of the African-American youth are taken there. Blacks comprise 44 percent of those detained in juvenile jails, 46 percent of all those tried in adult criminal courts, as well as 58 percent of all juveniles who are warehoused in adult prison. In practical terms, this means that for young African Americans who are arrested and charged with a crime, that they are more than six times more likely to be assigned to prison than white youth offenders.

For those young people who have never been to prison before, African Americans are nine times more likely than whites to be sentenced to juvenile prisons. For youths charged with drug offenses, blacks are 48 times more likely than whites to be sentenced to juvenile prison. White youths charged with violent offenses are incarcerated on average for 193 days after trial; by contrast, African-American youths are held 254 days, and Latino youths are incarcer-

ated 305 days.

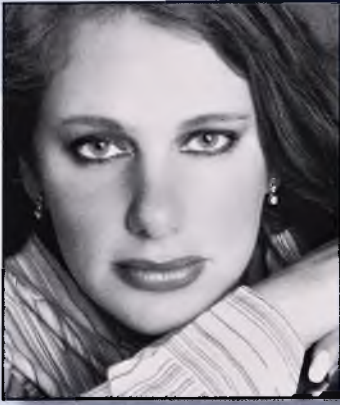
What seems clear is that a new leviathan of racial inequality has been constructed across our country. It lacks the brutal simplicity of the old Jim Crow system, with its omnipresent "white" and "colored" signs. Yet it is in many respects potentially far more devastating, because it presents itself to the world as a system that is truly color-blind. The black freedom struggle of the 1960s was successful largely because it convinced a majority of white middle class Americans that it was economically inefficient, and that politically it could not be sustained or justified.

The movement utilized the power of creative disruption, making it impossible for the old system of white prejudice and power to function in the same old ways it had for decades. For Americans who still believe in racial equality and social justice, we cannot stand silent while millions of our fellow citizens are being destroyed all around us. The racialized prison industrial complex is the great moral and political challenge of our time.

For several years, I have lectured in New York's famous Sing Sing prison, as part of a master's degree program sponsored by the New York Theological Seminary. During my last visit several months ago, I noticed that correctional officials had erected a large yellow sign over the door at the public entrance to the prison. The sign reads: "Through these doors pass some of the finest corrections professionals in the world." I asked Reverend Bill Webber, the director of the prison's educational program, and several prisoners what they thought about the sign. Bill answered bluntly, "demonic." One of the M.A. students, a 35-year-old Latino named Tony, agreed with Bill's assessment, but added, "let us face the demon head on." There are now over two million Americans who are incarcerated. It is time to face the demon head on.

Dr. Manning Marable is one of America's most influential and widely read scholars. Since 1993, Dr. Marable has been Professor of Public Affairs, Political Science, History and African-American Studies at Columbia University in New York City. For ten years, Dr. Marable was founding director of the Institute for Research in African-American Studies at Columbia University, from 1993 to 2003. Under Dr. Marable's leadership, the Institute became one of the nation's most prestigious centers of scholarship on the black American experience.

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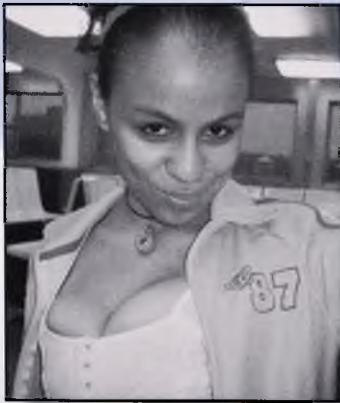
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