

WELCOME TO "SHIRLEYWORLD"

BY Timothy J. Muise

In my youth I was blessed to have been able to do a bit of traveling. made it to a few tropical islands, crossed a few borders, and saw some pleasing sights. my beloved parents even took me to DisneyWorld, as undeserving as I was, when I was a young man. It was amazing. I was a teenager and could not believe the vastness of the complex and the scope of the youthful entertainment it provided. The memories stuck with me all these years.

Since about 1997 I have been on a bit of a different "World Tour". Draconian former Massachusetts Governor William Weld like to use the term, "Tour through the circles of hell", to describe his dream for the Massachusetts prison system. Well my new world tour through this system may not have sunken to the depths of the biblically described "hell", but it is pretty close for my life experience. This current segment of my tour has brought me to the surreal confines of "ShirleyWorld" and I don't feel at all welcome.

MCI Shirley medium is a kingdom, far from magic, all to itself in the world of Massachusetts corrections. It abides by no rules that apply to similar facilities. They call it a medium security prison, but by all true applications it is a maximum security facility with as much "lock down" time as the state's maximum security facility across the street. It is also a medical wonderland. If you had a phobia of wheelchairs this place would be a true nightmare. The public would be outraged to see the hundreds of disabled prisoners, many no longer posing any type of risk to the public, who make up the "SpaceMountain" marquee ride of this non-amusement park. It is tragic.

In the past when I traveled I used to enjoy nature and nice weather. Here at ShirleyWorld you better like the weather because they have a policy of forced exposure. Three times a day, in rain, sleet, snow, lightning, and gail wind, you are forced to walk to the chow hall where you are subjected to a culinary nightmare of gastrointestinal distress. The elderly, the infirm, the wheelchair bound, and all sorts of "Theme Park" customers must battle the elements in order to partake of their daily sustenance. If you don't like it - don't eat, that is the ShirleyWorld motto.

Now to get the full picture on the insanity of this prison you would have to walk it grounds for a few days, and that I would not recommend. But please allow me to give you a few more examples. We have men here who are fully bed ridden. They could not leave if the fences were melted and pathways were paved. We have prisoners suffering from full dementia, this is truly sad, they are still being punished for there crimes, but they do not even know it. Each and everyday here they close the most important buildings in the prison, those being the programs and school building. Programming and education are the mainstays of reducing recidivism, but at ShirleyWorld this means nothing. If a guard calls in sick because he stubbed his toe at the gay parade the whole rehabilitative machine here comes crashing to a halt. To hell with public safety and damn the torpedos. After all they are walikng the toughest beat in the

state as the guards union used to say. the only problem is that many times you have to wake them up from a dead sleep in order to get them to walk that beat. Now don't get me wrong they do face some daily dangers. The evils of prisoner clothes lines, the terror of too many books in ones cell, the horror of an unmade bed or unlocked footlocker certainly make their occupation one on par with true danger fighters. Do they really think they can sell their bill of goods to men who rush into battle or storm into a burning building? Of course not, but in order to create job security they need to make the fantasy case that they are fending off violent prisoners and ferreting out drugs, weapons, and escapes. Nothing could be further from the truth. The most dangerous situation they face each day is the possibility they may get their toes run over by one of the many wheelchairs that parade the walkways. Thank God for steel toed shoes! We cannot forget that this is ShirleyWorld and fantasy is all part of the package.

The real tragedy of this theme park of the macabre is that it is creating crime and promoting murder. Many in the public may laugh at the push for humane treatment of prisoners, but trust me when i tell you it is no joke. Men enter prison desperate, on the heels of a life changing experience. Many want to obtain the services they feel will help them change their lives. When they pass through the razor wire turnstiles of ShirleyWorld they find out that this place is not interested in their eagerness to change or their desire to become a productive member of society. they soon find out the the purpose of these "death camps" are to provide jobs for generations of guards and administrators. They also find out that you better not mess with that plan. Do not demand programming. never ask for an education, and do not expect to be connected to community services when you get close to release. Just put your head between your legs and kiss you ass goodbye because here at ShirleyWorld their purpose is to keep you as a customer until the day you die. Same idea as Walt Disney, just with different results. You can come in a low level drug dealer or thief take a tour of the rides at ShirleyWorld and return a murderer. Sad but so true.

We need to display to the public that they are far less safe with amusement parks like MCI Shirley inoperation. The streets of the cities and towns they love are less safe because the DOC is failing them in every imaginable way. It is time to push for change. This system cannot be allowed to create more Dominic Cinellis. Men like him are indeed personally responsible for thier crimes, but places like ShirleyWorld also hold a large portion of the blame. We need to go back to a system like the one that created the changes in men like Malcolm X. He changed his life at MCI Norfolk when it was the most progressive prison colony in the USA, possibly the world. It allowed men to make the change, if they desired it, while also keeping the public safe from men who did not want to, or were not ready to, make that type of change. The time is now to push for reform.

If you are outraged about the failure of ShirleyWorld and the other DOC runned theme parks in the state there is something you can do about it. Call your local state senator and representative and demand a full overhaul of the system. Now is the time as they are taking a hard look at why men leave this sick world and commit even more serious crimes. tell them what you know about ShirleyWorld and let them know you do not support the DOC jobs program that has so damaged efforts for public safety reform. Ask all your friends to call or Email. You deserve safe streets and lower taxes. Please help us to close down the sadistic realm of ShirleyWorld and rebuild it with a progessive healing factory that can, and will, produce fine citizens and maybe, just maybe, another leader like Malcolm X.