

So Whatcha Want?

What do most prisoner-bloggers post here? I don't want or plan to copy others' style, especially since in my experience the typical prisoner writing ratio is about one readable composition for every thousand or so totally uninteresting, incoherent ramblings. So, why should I care what others are scribbling here? I suppose it's to get a better idea of what our visitors like to read. I may not tailor all of my entries to the popular taste, but I could at least make sure some of my stuff is on the right track, right?

Hmm... two handwritten scars and I'm already selling out. ☺

As the Beastie Boys famously asked, then: So whatcha whatcha whatcha want? Do you like prisoner atrocities? Last week an inmate was airlifted and is now in a coma after being bashed from behind with a big rock. Why would anyone do that? The rumor-pushers immediately flocked to "It's because he's a sex offender!!", which is what a certain type of inmate always says, and which is almost never true. A slightly more reliable rumor is that the guy was too friendly with "someone else's" transsexual girlish boyfriend. Ah... who says chivalry is dead? Or slavery, for that matter. Finally, hot off the rumor press just this evening, word is that the attacker just wanted to "get off the yard", and this seemed like their ticket. I'd have imagined there were easier ways. In any case, at least it was clearly a well-reasoned act of thoroughly justified violence. Of course, prisoners are generally known for their rationality.

Many people are outraged, but I believe their anger is more a manifestation of their envy rather than a sincere reaction to injustice. Don't get me wrong, there IS injustice ~~illuminated~~ by this story, but not where most observers are looking. Did this 16 year old's wealthy family essentially buy a less harsh sentence for him? Basically, yes they did. But that less-harsh reaction is NOT injustice; in fact, I'd argue that this relatively non-punitive reaction looks a whole lot like ACTUAL justice. The injustice is that it cost his family nearly half a million dollars a year (the cost of the treatment center he was sent to), and that most of us would not have had that option for lack of funds. But because we would've likely been thrown in a cage to rot and he will instead be examined and treated to address the root causes of his antisocial actions is no reason to spite and condemn HIM or his family. What we'd suffer for what he did is wrong, and two wrongs don't make a right, do they? Be angry over differential treatment, sure, but never lose sight of what's really right and fair, and if you must blame someone, pick the ones who deserve it. In this case, the blame lies with all of us for endorsing and funding a system of punitive, retributive mindlessness, and for delegating our moral responsibility for understanding and addressing root causes of individual and social ills — poverty, wealth accumulation, "authority", and hierarchical coercive control, among other causes — to power mongers and profiteers who exploit our fears and our desires for revenge and, ultimately, our laziness. I don't believe chains, cages, sticks, and guns are ever the appropriate response to injury... just the easy response

* A Joke and a Quote: ~~Three~~ Three blondes walk into a bar. You'd think one of them would've seen it. BA-DUM-DUM! ☺ Sorry, that's my sense of humor. ☺ Finally, the promised quote. "The true measure of a man is not where he stands in times of comfort and convenience, but where he stands in times of challenge and controversy." ~MLK Jr. Too true! And, if any of my friends or family are reading... Please think about that. **END OF BLOG # 2 ***

Blog #2, Continued.

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4-25-14

Is that what you like to read? There's certainly plenty of it to share. Or maybe you'd prefer something with even more source material — abuse by prison staff. About 3 weeks ago, all of the near 1000 inmates here were subjected to intentional cruelty that appears half-innocent at first glance. After a few weeks of "lockdown" over a missing piece of metal, which was soon found, guards still took the opportunity to ransack every cell, stealing things like our sheets, blankets, boxes, buckets... I even lost half of my pens and a few unfinished letters, including the blog entry I'd been working on. All that was bad enough — such a small-minded and callous power trip! — but the real abuse is that when they came to pillage, they sent us all to wait in the direct sun for six hours, from roughly 10 AM to 3 PM, with no protection at all, just flimsy boxer underwear and a t-shirt. Not even hats were allowed. A few inmates sought shelter in the only sliver of shade available, along a wall, then the cops screamed at them to move away and handcuffed those who refused. Many of us were painfully fried, even though any person with half-normal intelligence could have predicted the damage these careless pigs caused (and the prison could easily have opened the empty gym or dining hall so we could get some relief).

If nothing in this parade of horrors is your cup of tea, perhaps you'd enjoy some musings about ideas like contra-causal free will (which I no longer believe in), or my thoughts on the implications of our growing understanding of the mind and the ability to technologically enhance our biological intelligence? I really enjoyed the book, The Singularity is Near, and others like it, and I'd love to write more about those ideas if they interest anyone.

How about current events-based social commentary/critique instead? Were you outraged over the young driver in Texas, whose reckless drinking and driving resulted in a handful of dead pedestrians, yet who was sentenced to 10 years of probation rather than the 20 years in prison that prosecutors sought?