

A Place He called Hell

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Hello Friends

I'd like to begin by introducing a young "poetess" - Gabriella Duncan.

Sir Robt. Hood (1893-1968) said,
"The task of ART is to TRANSFORM
NOT PERCEPTION INTO FEELING, BUT FEELING
INTO PERCEPTION." - IN OTHER WORDS, TAPPING
INTO EMOTIONS, AND THEN PRINTING THEIR
PICTURES ONTO THE CANVASES OF ANOTHER'S
MIND.

In the epic poem "INFERNO" by
Dante Alighieri (part of his "Divine Comedy")
there is a sign above the entrance to
hell which reads "Abandon Hope All ye
who enter here" - When an INMATE is
SEPARATED from Society by "RAZOR WIRE",
and from his family by FENCES which
SEEM A MILE HIGH, 'hope' can begin to
FEEL like a candle FLICKERING in the
WIND - However, on the other side of
those cyclone fences, topped by RAZOR
WIRE, are the friends, families and
LOVED ones who ALSO serve A SENTENCE...

Gabriella pulls back the CURTAIN and
gives us a peek at her soul in this piece
written for her father: A PLACE HE CALLED HELL.

A Place He Called Hell

Every day when I was just a little girl,
When playing on the playground
Was the most amusing thing in the world
And playing with barbies was my hobby,
Every evening would be story time
As you guided me through my homework
Like job trainers training beginners.

Suddenly, things changed so fast, faster than you can say pineapple.
Sitting calmly I received my last phone call
From you as you desperately told me you were on your way
To a place you called hell.
As I tried my hardest to hold back as many tears as I could,
I gave up and began crying immensely,
Like a toddler that doesn't get its way.
Tears shooting down my face, I could form a river.

Taking a loved one and putting them behind bars
Is like locking your dog up in a cage for years.
Watching you get imprisoned right in front of my eyes
Is like having the world crash on my shoulders in the blink of an eye.
Just imagine,
My role model, my inspiration, the reason I woke up every morning, my idol,
The person that supported me through my hardest times and most importantly,
The person that provided a shoulder for me to shed my tears on suddenly gets taken.

The thought that I can't do anything about it kills me.
I could almost feel the organs in my body crush
Like fruits being crushed in a blender machine.
As I bend down on my knees praying for the best but expecting the worst,
And it feels like God can't even answer my prayers.
As I stare hopelessly up at the ceiling late at night,
Many thoughts ran through my mind imagining what life could've been like if you were free.
So many thoughts flowing in and out, my mind became
An impossible to figure out maze.

Having timed phone calls with my own father is like
Taking timed showers in your own house.
Watching what I say on the phone whenever we speak so the guards don't listen,
Is like being spied on nearly all the time.

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Watching you suffer whenever i visit you for something you didn't even do is the worst feeling in the world.

Whenever I head home from our visit and I can't take you with me,

Tears me into many pieces like a paper cutter.

The idea that whenever something great happens at school

And I can't pick up a phone whenever I want to tell you

And the only thing I can do is hold it in, like trying to hold in vomit,

Hurts, as I begin to feel my heart sink like a child drowning in a swimming pool.

And now I can say, I've never truly experienced pain till the moment you left my side.

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Ben Bradlee said "News is the first rough draft of history" - News articles today tell of how the prison population has grown from about 400,000 to over 2,400,000 in the space of 40 years. - A 500% increase in just 40 years... Have we become 500% more wicked as a people? How can we claim to be a Beacon of Freedom to the free world - and yet produce 25% of the world's prison population while making up just 5% of the world's ACTUAL population?

Justice may be blind, but she's NOT INVISIBLE! However, she must be MISSING IN ACTION because it is certainly NOT 'JUSTICE' which has swollen the ranks of America's prisons.

How many of you believe that all inmates have had their "day in court" and that justice was served? Let me shed a little light on that situation for you - up to 97% of all criminal cases are resolved through 'PLEA BARGAINS'. Only 3% actually have their so-called "day in court".

Because prosecutors know the system - they pile on the "POTENTIAL" charges in order to "accept" the plea that looks like a "downward departure".

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IT'S CALLED A 'DEAL' - A PLEA DEAL, BUT IT WEARS THE ROBES OF JUSTICE.

" IN 600 BC. OR SO, SOLON SAID (LAW IS LIKE COBWEBS, FOR IF ANY TRIFLING OR POWERLESS THING FALLS INTO THEM THEY WOULD HOLD IT FAST; WHILE IF SOMETHING WEIGHTIER IT WOULD BREAK THROUGH THEM AND BE OFF."

(Solon 636-558 BC.)

IT'S SAID TO SAY THAT NEW COUNTRY, A BEACON OF FREEDOM TO THE FREE WORLD, HAS BEGUN TO TREAT A LARGE PART OF ITS POPULATION LIKE TRIFLING AND POWERLESS THINGS - BY DECLARING A WAR ON DRUGS AND "GETTING TOUGH ON CRIME", WE HAVE ENRICHED DRUG CARTELS WHILE CRIMINALIZING A PORTION OF SOCIETY. - THE NET COST TO CATCH THE "MENACE TO SOCIETY" HAS ITSELF BECOME A MENACE TO SOCIETY.

WHEN YOU CONSIDER 2.4 MILLION INMATES (STATE AND FEDERAL PRISONERS) OUT OF A POPULATION OF 315 MILLION - IT DOESN'T SOUND LIKE SO MANY. BUT WHEN YOU ADD IN THE 5 TO 7 MILLION WHO ARE ON SOME KIND OF PROBATION OR PAROLE - THE 5 TO 7 MILLION WHO HAVE ALREADY PAID THEIR DUES AS "EX-FELONS", BUT HAVE LOST THEIR RIGHTS AS CITIZENS BECAUSE OF PAST CONVICTIONS -

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When you consider the 8 to 9 million who are circling and cycling through local, municipal and county jails - a 3rd degree of separation from a person sentenced - you begin to see the scope of the problem.

1 in 31 Americans are entangled in this "NET" - close to 10% of our total population... each of those is a father, a son, a husband, a friend - a mother, an aunt, a sister, a wife -

A poet has said
"All things by immortal power
Near or far, hiddenly
To each other linked are -
That thou canst not strike a flower
Without troubling a star."

I know GABRIELLA'S father -
He is a good man - and he does
NOT belong in prison.

There are no simple solutions
to complex problems - but one day
history will judge us - and there will
be no plea deals allowed.

"Indeed I tremble for my country
when I reflect that God is just, and
that His justice cannot sleep
forever."
Thomas Jefferson.

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Before closing, I'd like to
SHARE THE NAME OF AN ORGANIZATION
THAT PROVIDES FREE EDUCATIONAL MATTER
FOR INCARCERATED PARENTS AND THEIR
CHILDREN - PLUS THERAPEUTIC SERVICES
AND FAMILY REUNIFICATION.

CENTER FOR CHILDREN OF
INCARCERATED PARENTS
P.O. Box 4-286
EAGLE ROCK, CA
90041

May God CONTINUE to MAKE HIS
FACE TO SHINE UPON YOU ALL AS HE
POURS OUT AN ABUNDANCE OF BLESSINGS
INTO ALL OF YOUR LIVES

AMY

P.S. TO my Son Brandon -

I CONTINUE to pray without ceasing
THAT THE LIGHT OF GOD'S LOVE MAY
SHINE THROUGH YOU -
AMY

www.betweenthebars.org/blogs/1398