

# ANDERSON VALLEY ADVERTISER

AMERICA'S LAST NEWSPAPER  
customers permission and forged client

THEAVA.COM

September 21, 2016

## PRISON STATE

Dear AVA,

The majority of American citizens would not agree with the statement that the United States is a police state. But the majority of those same citizens doesn't know and doesn't want to know any of the hard facts. Such as: there are an estimated 2.2 million people sitting in jail and prison on any given day. And that is not counting the 8 million people who are under some other form of state control like probation, parole, etc. That's about one out of every 23 adults. It's doubtful that most people know that there are an estimated one in four adults who have criminal records. These

are all current numbers and are for the most part news even to me who has a vested interest in this information.

I am one of those "sorry bastards." Besides the insane number of convicted people there are tens of millions of people who've never spent a day in jail or even been arrested who have been adversely affected and had their minds formed (and deformed) by America's lock 'em up policy. I'm talking about the families of prisoners. Millions of children are growing up with a parent in prison. In some cases for their whole childhood. Or even their whole lives. My youngest son was one year old when I went to prison for protecting his mother. He will be 18 this year.

With just 5% of the world's population, the United States is home to 25% of the world's prisoners and almost a third of all the women in jails and prisons worldwide!

Time for prison reform is now! And the only reason that it is on the table is money. So much is being spent on locking people up and the impact is hurting everything else. There are millions of dollars wasted on California's concentration camps that could be used *for* the people rather than *against* them. The only people the current system helps is prison guard unions, law enforcement groups and the private corrections industry and they all stand in the way of prison reform, rehabilitation and any cuts to the prison population. They want longer sentences, life terms for all and no rehabilitation. That's the only way for them to have "job security." Stopping recidivism is not in their best interest. They want the transition from prison to the streets to be impossible. They do not want you to make it or to have any help reentering society. No educational, vocational, housing or economic help. Why would they? They need you to fail! I know this sounds very cynical, but it's no exaggeration.

The incarceration rate in the United States is the highest in the world. Higher than the Soviet Union or Nazi Germany ever were. The cost of running the police state is starting to take its toll and there is talk of cutting prison costs. In fact this is really the only reason there is talk of prison reform and of reducing the prison population. The only way to cut all the spending on "corrections" is to shut down prisons and lay off guards. Long prison sentences for relatively minor crimes just creates bigger problems. Turning petty criminals into hardened convicts is not good for public safety. What can a man do upon release when the deck is stacked against him? Re-entry is important but you can't just focus on the soon to be released. What's needed is to reduce the number of people who are sent to prison in the first place. Prison should be reserved for people who continue to pose a serious threat to the public, not for property crimes, drug possession, etc. We need to repeal mandatory minimum sentences and habitual offender laws including the Three Strikes nightmare. And as to the newly paroled — condemning people with criminal records to second-class citizenship needs to end so that re-entry is possible. Ex-prisoners should be able to vote, serve on juries, and be able to access public benefits like student loans etc. Employment and licensing restrictions should only be inflicted on people who have very specific records where there is a real public safety concern like keeping sex offenders from working around children, service jobs, etc.

There are so many people serving long prison sentences even though they no longer pose a serious to society. Until there is some serious prison reform I will be convinced the United States is a police state. Don't waste your time trying to change my mind. This is a truth that cannot be denied. I sincerely hope you don't become a victim of this so-called "land of the free."

Scot Pinkerton  
CSP/iAC  
Lancaster, CA



September 7, 2016

**YES ON 57**

Dear Editor,

I just read your comments concerning Proposition 57 in the July 27 AVA Off the Record. I am compelled to toss my two-cents out there.

I am one of the Americans who Proposition 57 will possibly affect being someone who has been convicted of assault with a deadly weapon.

First of all let me give you some background on my case: in 1997 I was at a concert with my new girlfriend who was only 19 at the time. To make a long story a bit shorter she got jumped by six wannabe tough guys — male and female — who I had a "history" with. I beat up a couple of the guys years before.) Basically they jumped on my girl because they heard she was my girlfriend. In their drunken state they fail to realize I was not in jail like they thought. But I had grown out my hair and was standing right next to her! So I stupidly ended up with a knife in my hand and with all six of them stomping on her face, back etc., I reflexively tackled the whole pile off of her. What I didn't realize at the time was I ended up "injuring" one of these wannabe gangbangers with the tip of my knife leaving a half-inch nick that didn't even need stitches. These people were using deadly force on my girl, kicking her in the face and head and leaving bootprints on her neck and back that lasted for weeks. I had every right to use deadly force to stop it even if I had intentionally tried to stab someone, which I didn't. But I was on parole and had no business with a knife and I was in Bakersfield (which is the asshole of the universe). So now I was facing a third strike. (My prior strikes were from an "armed robbery" in 1985 where I tried to recover some drugs that three guys stole from a friend. I got all three strikes from that one case because there were three people there!

Anyway, I was convicted of assault with a deadly weapon and given 32 years to life. I have been in prison for over 17 years for defending a girl. By the way, assault with a deadly weapon only carries a maximum sentence of four years.

So on to Proposition 57. Yes, it could help me get out. If my assault with a deadly weapon had a "great bodily injury" on it I would be ass out of luck, but my "victim" was barely scratched and didn't even realize it at first. (Funny how these so-called tough guys who want to play gangbanger games cry for the police when they get hurt!)

I realize from your comments that you are for locking up and throwing away the key for most anyone who gets arrested. But that is not the answer in most cases. I have very little violence since I've been down — a couple of fistfights that were unavoidable. That says a lot for someone who has spent almost two decades in Level 4 prisons. I have four boys who have grown up without their father because of the three strikes law which is more than a farce.

I agree that some people have had more than enough chances. But I didn't have a 32-to-life sentence coming, just for stopping some a-holes from stomping my girl out. How would you feel if I was out with your daughter? Would you want me to stop the ass-whooping or would you want me to run away and call the police and hope they get there in the next hour before she was stomped to death? I did what any man should do: no matter the odds, no matter what kind of hoodlums it is, you stand up and defend your girl at all costs. And in this case the cost was high: the state took my life and left my four sons fatherless.

Not all the people who Proposition 57 affects are bloodthirsty dope fiends. Your neighborhood will not be more dangerous if they let me out. The days of "death by incarceration" are over. No one benefits from caging people forever. Governor Brown's other idea/proposition of allowing all inmates to earn good time credits is a way to curb prison violence. What reason does a life prisoner in a Level 4 prison have to not stab etc. other prisoners, guards, staff etc.? When there's no hope then people don't care. When you are given 25-life for a petty crime and the state has basically taken your life, your kids, your world, you tend not to give a fuck! What do you have to give a fuck about?

In the years before the politicians got the "truth in sentencing" crap started, all prisoners got half time which meant that if you obeyed the rules and if you worked or went to school you could earn day for day credit, every good day earned you another day. This encouraged prisoners to not fuck up and gave people a reason to act right. Would you rather a person was in the habit of following the rules and being productive and getting out of prison with this mindset a few months early? Or would your hate-filled revenge demanding self want someone who had no reason to follow the rules who inflicted violence on others at will but did all their time even though it wasn't that much more to begin with?

Is there really a question? The latter will have a very fucked up mindset and your revengeful insistence on him doing every last day will feed his need for revenge.

I have been down for 17+ years and believe me I have heard so many revenge plots due to these Three Strikes and Truth in Sentencing laws that I can't even count them. Why wouldn't you want American prisoners to participate in rehabilitation programs? Why wouldn't you want to help prisoners want to follow the rules and laws? This so-called tough on crime BS has been poisonous to our society. Prisoners are not "them," "we" are the prisoners. A percentage of Americans are prisoners but that does not make us the enemies. We are all part of the American society. The politicians want you to look at us as others, not your sons, husbands, friends, wives, etc. The attacks disguised as laws are not making society safer. They are just creating a bunch of pissed off people with nothing to lose. That's not the kind of neighbors I would want.

Yes, Proposition 57 may let some people out who would otherwise do much more time, but that's not necessarily a bad thing. The state is not going to just release a bunch of maniacs. Proposition 57 only allows people to go in front of the prison board and plead their case if you've been behaving and if you've been participating in rehabilitation programs and if they feel you are no longer a threat to society and you could get parole. Don't let Propositions 36 and 47 influence you. This has nothing to do with letting a bunch of drug users out of prison. And if you don't think there's a bunch of people doing way too much time for way too little then you need to open your mind and seek the truth and stop blindly believing what district attorneys and cops tell you. They have an interest in keeping humans in prison: all that blood money.

Anyway, this is just my case. I've done more than enough time for a case the should have been dropped. Bakersfield! What a shithole!

CSP/WAC  
Lancaster, CA.

Take care,  
Scot Pinkerton.



*Fanning the Flames of Discontent*



**ED REPLY:** Assuming the facts of your case are as you've described, you got a nearly medievally cruel amount of time. You also must have had a very bad attorney. I've railed for years about disproportionate sentences, and I've complained about the preponderance of crime victims on parole boards. I agree that our DA and Sheriff have selected worst-case felons. But at the legislative level of state and federal government we suffer the most abysmal group of unprincipled time-servers perhaps in the history of the country. Some of the black officeholders address the issues you've raised since black people are in prison out of all reasonable proportion to their numbers in the population, but the few humane and principled legislators are a small minority of the rancid whole. There is no remedy for people like you. Serious crimes that used to earn people ten years in 1950 now earn them upwards of twenty years because there is a lot more crime and lots more shocking crime. Every day in Mendocino County there is an episode, or more than a single episode, that would have had people talking for months in times past. And our media, natch, plays this stuff up and people get more scared, creating what we have now — a nation of 'fraidy cats well down the path to fascism, the philosophy of the fearful.

THEAVA.com

PS. Check out my art, etc. at  
[www.betweenthebars.org/blogs/1347](http://www.betweenthebars.org/blogs/1347)