

Peace continued

for later.”

there's been wedding cake under pillows  
and also children's teeth.

we should be saving it all for later;  
trading away sweetness  
for yet another chance.

no, I don't want my piece  
of the pie.

**Massachusetts Prisons:  
Abuse Is Nothing New**  
Timothy Muise, SBCC

Guard upon prisoner abuse is nothing new here in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Recently it has been brought into the spotlight by the rape and sexual abuse of female prisoners in Suffolk County, the killing of defrocked priest John Geoghan in Shirley, and the recent murder of a prisoner at Bridgewater State Hospital. Some of the aforementioned abuses were directly at the hands of guards and some of the others a bit more indirectly, but rest assured that in more instances than not, the underlying cause of these violent acts is the attitude and ineptness of prison guards.

The newspapers have run stories detailing our Governor's "Crack" Commission, that was put together to look into these instances of abuse. Even after the release of the "Harshbarger Report", which detailed the recommendations of the Commission, and with the new Commissioner of Corrections, Kathleen Dennehy's plans for an extensive overhaul of the system, the unfortunate and tragic incident at the Bridgewater facility still occurred. A dangerous prisoner was housed with less dangerous prisoners and he committed an act which resulted in the death of one of the less dangerous. The violent perpetrator must certainly bear responsibility, but responsibility must also fall on the shoulders of those charged with these prisoners's care.

The attitude of indifference toward prisoner safety that permeates the ranks of the prison guards plays a major role in these violent incidents. The guards look upon prisoners as something less than human, and in some cases, actually take joy in the suffering of those in their charge. Prisoners being treated like animals go a long way in assuring they act like animals. The ironic part of all this is that this violent acting out on the part of the prisoners, sparked by guard abuse, works in those same guards' favor as they use these incidents to make a case that they are understaffed.

Each time there is an incident in our prison system, the guard's union representative, Steve Kenneway, uses it to tout his job protecting and self-serving fantasy of understaffing. His claims could not be further from the truth. The Massachusetts prison system has one of the highest guard-per-prisoner rates in the nation. The guards here are also among the highest paid (they are in the top 3 in the country), and have excellent benefits compared to most systems.

Our Governor has recognized that the guards have long been abusing the amounts of days off in which they take, and has vowed to put an end to such. In response, the guard's union dragged their feet, even more than usual, in their duties, causing such delays in prison operations that time allotments forced the cancellation of prisoner activities. The plan behind this was to spark a revolt or riot, which would lend false legitimacy to the union's claims of understaffing.

Fortunately, the union's perverse plan never came to fruition.

The guards have also been engaged in waging some wars against each other. Guards who followed orders to attend the Democratic National Convention, as part of the security force there, had their cars keyed in prison parking lots by other guards. The reason was that the union was against following this order from the new, and, in their opinion, "enemy", Commissioner. The Boston Globe even reported that Commissioner Dennehy feared the guards were going to retaliate against her at her home, as threats of such had been brought to her attention. Such over-the-top anger on the part of

the guards toward her planned reforms is a glaring and undeniable sign of the root of the problems in the system. It is almost surreal that a commissioner would express fear of her home sanctity being violated by her subordinates.

The situation is serious. The guards are angry at the administration. They cowardly vent this anger toward the prisoners with whose care they are charged. Recently at the maximum security facility in Shirley, some guards were demoted and transferred, and one fired, for false reports filed surrounding the beating of a prisoner. Rather than being angered at the foolishness of the guards and supervisory officers who filed these reports, or at the guards who beat the handcuffed prisoner, the guards as a group, chose to blame the prisoner population. The proper place for the blame should be upon the shoulders of those guards who perpetuate the climate under which all guards are seen in abusive light. Anger vented toward prisoners for mere sport creates an animalistic attitude in these men and women who will someday be returning to our cities and towns.

This counter to the guard's sworn duty to protect public safety. The fact is that today's Massachusetts prison guards make Massachusetts less safe.

What can be done to change this situation? The fact must be faced that nothing short of a total restructuring of the system must take place. The training academy, which guards attend, must teach care, custody, and control, with a focus on compassion for the human condition and the application of progressive corrections philosophies. These intended caretakers, **not** punishers, must be trained in the importance of putting forth an honest effort to rehabilitate. The attitude of punishment for punishment's sake has proven too costly, both economically and morally. The system must move forward with modern times. Realistic programming, which addresses societal reentry issues, must be made available to all prisoners. The classification system must be revamped to allow the vast majority of appropriate prisoners to move to lower security situations where they can secure jobs, housing, and support systems **before** they exit the prison system. The administration, supervisory

staff, and rank and file all must be on board to initiate such.

The bureaucrats have started to speak of change, but the sad fact veiled effort to show they are putting new policies in place. The truth is we are no better off than when women were raped and impregnated in Suffolk County, when known violent and mentally ill prisoner, Joseph Druce strangled and beat to death the frail, elderly, defrocked priest John Geoghan mere feet from the guard's station, or when one known violence risk prisoner being evaluated for possible mental defects murdered another yet-to-be-convicted prisoner at the Bridgewater State Hospital. Real change must be initiated at once. If a clean sweep needs to be made then so be it. The change needs to start right from the core.

Rehabilitation, public safety, economic responsibility, and basic human compassion and morality all go hand in hand toward leaving the barbaric attitudes of times gone by behind, while moving toward a modern, progressive, and viable corrections/rehabilitation system. The time is well at hand.

### **Domestic Violence: What is it?**

Daryl Golstan, MTC

Domestic violence is any physical violence or threat of violence on a person. Whether it be by physical abuse or destruction of someone's property or through coercion, control, revenge, or punishment upon one who is involved in an intimate relationship.

There are four types of domestic violence; emotional, sexual, physical and verbal. These types are brought out during a cycle of violence which manifests itself in three phases. The first phase is tension; the victim can sense the abuser becoming somewhat edgy and more prone to react negatively to frustration. The second is battery; the batterer knows that his or her rage is out of control and he/she may not stop until their victim learned a lesson or until the batterer becomes tired. The third is the "honeymoon" phase; this happens after the

alone, they have cut in half the dose of these meds for many and stopped them completely for others. I speak from personal experience. My psych meds have been cut and stopped. A medication that I've been taking for 18 years and another for 5 years. I have heard personally at least twenty stories like mine and that represents only 2 units and we have, I believe 19 units.

What this reader was told by a very credible source is that this new provider's goal is to eventually bring as many people as they can of meds and to limit the people that really need meds to one or two medications to cover the worst of that particular person's symptom. The writer goes on to explain that this amounts to mental torture and he is right. Mental pain can't be seen by others. Apparently, this new provider is telling those that seek help that they will have to be put in observation while their meds are adjusted. This is nothing more than an intimidation tactic and it is dead wrong. I'm also interested in hearing if they take the people's clothes to add to their humiliation like the other provider did.

I truly hope that MCLS and the Disability Law Group bring this bunch of losers in their class action lawsuit. I believe that will happen sooner rather than later.

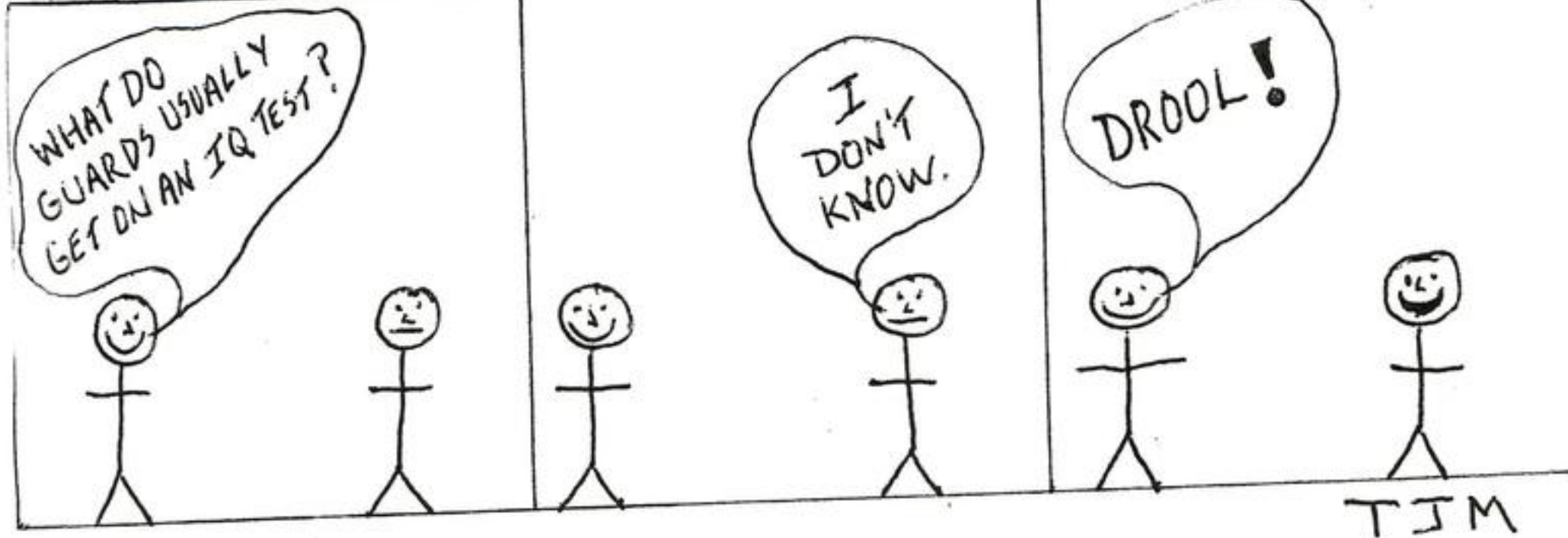
There is one thing that I need to mention. For those of you who contact me for help with

medical issues, there is a section on page three of the intervention form that all of you so far have not completed. It asks what city or town you are from. This info is important to me in your advocacy. You need to complete that part of the form. I have made some changes in the form to bring attention to this section.

## HUMOR



# NO TALENT COMIX

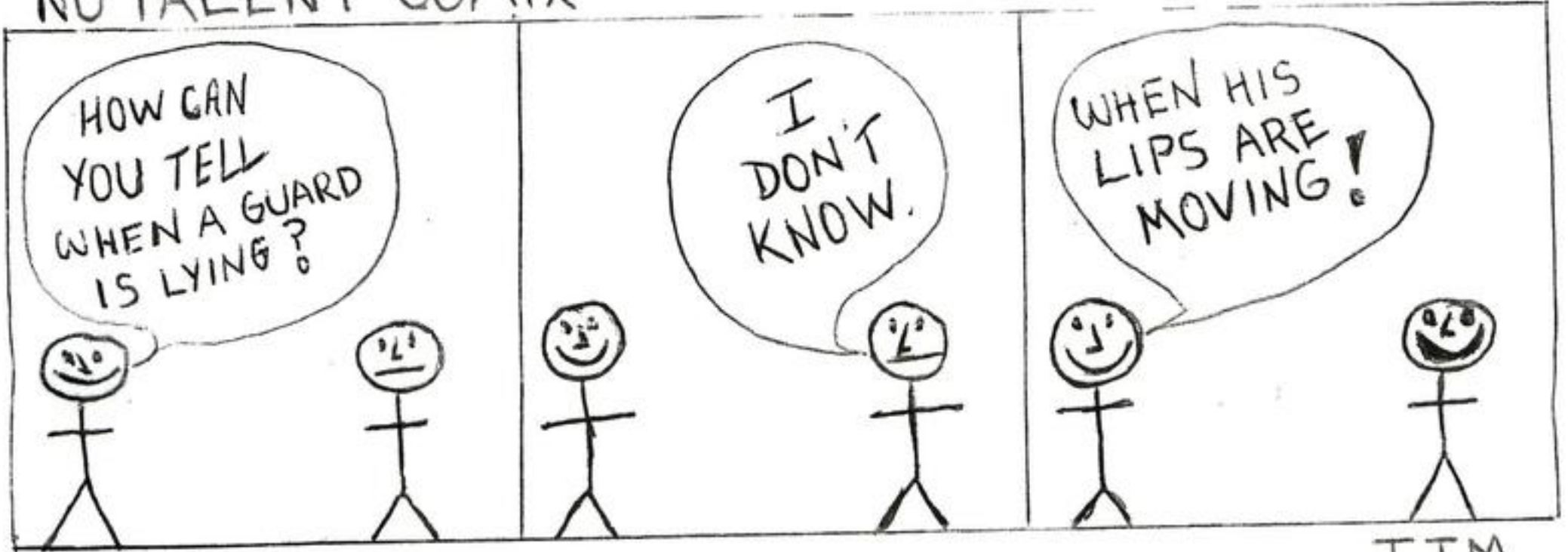


## MOTHER GOOSE & GRIMM by Mike Peters

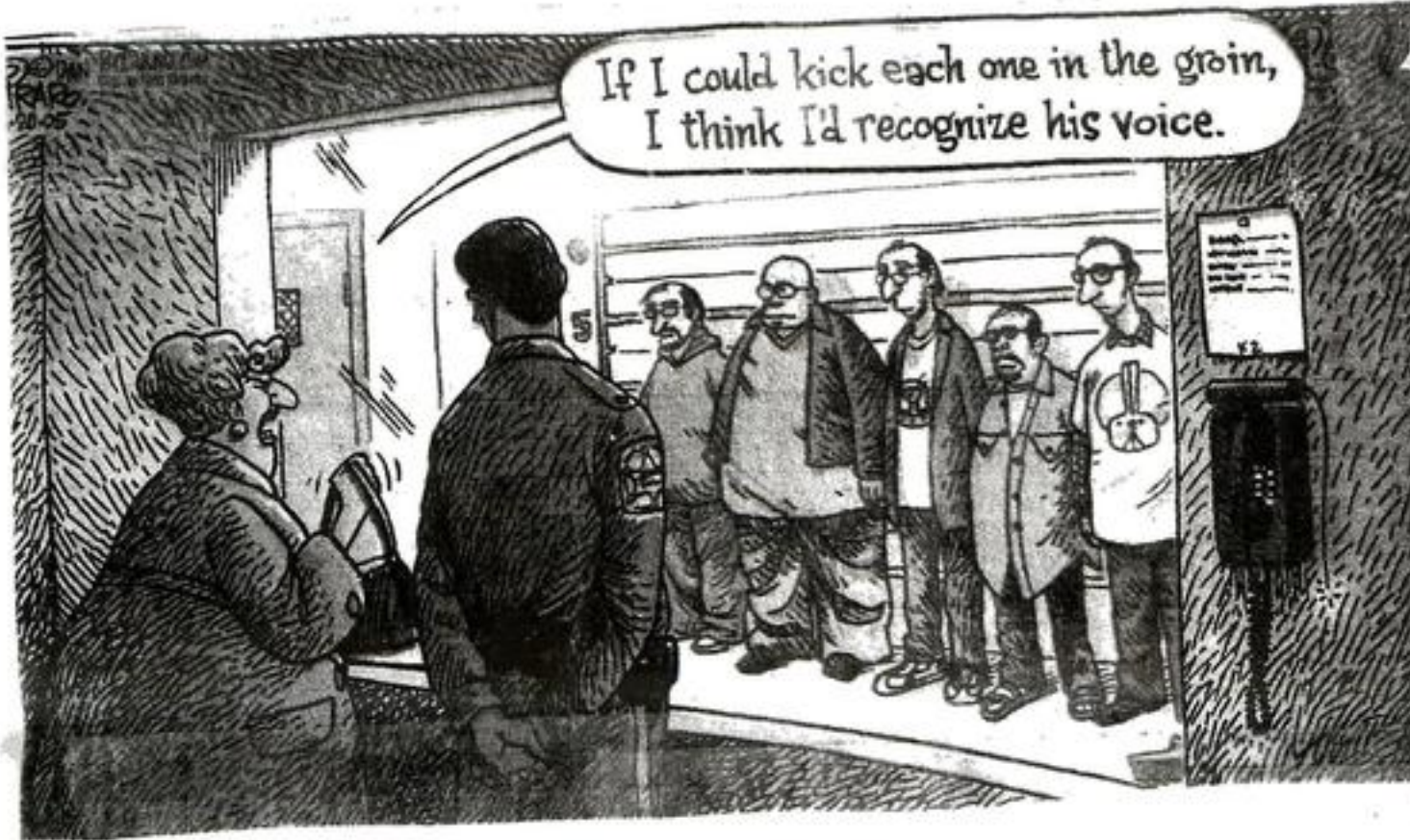


HUMOR

NO TALENT COMIX



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