



APWA Writer Spotlight

Robert Outman

California

Robert is an 81 year old prison dog, armed with facts that he refuses to go gentle into that good night, barking, biting and raging against prison abuses.

FOG OF JUSTICE

By Robert H. Outman

Fair is foul, and foul is fair, Hover through the fog and filthy air, "Macbeth" -Shakespeare

Everyone readily recognizes the "Fog of War"; which conveniently excused the multi-trillion dollar mistake of the greatest minds in government, absolutely convinced, Saddam Hussein possessed weapons of mass destruction. However, in society's rush to judgement, few recognize the Fog of Justice, which also leaves a path of destruction.

The United States' war on crime has produced 25 percent of the world's prisoners, at a cost of \$62+ billion a year, yet the U.S. represents only 5 percent of the world's population. Are people in the U.S. exceptionally evil, or is the Fog of Justice blinding us?

Warfare requires a mind set that the enemy must be neutralized at any cost. Our public guardians have declared "War" on crime, establishing an ironic parallel, and unintentionally, giving rise to a miasmic fog.

In one of many incidents, the Washington Post on the weekend of April 18th 2015, reported how the miasma manifests itself: "The Justice Department and FBI have formally acknowledged that nearly every examiner in an elite FBI forensic unit gave flawed testimony in almost all trials in which they offered evidence against criminal defendants over more than a two—decade period before 2000." One of the many victims of this Fog of Justice, was Santae Tribble who served 28 years in prison for murder, based on FBI testimony about a single strand of hair, which many years later was found to be a dog hair. Fallacious testimony and evidence is not exclusive to the FBI, it is a systemic fog in the war on crime.

Prosecutors, police and crime lab technicians think of justice as winning at all costs. Bear in mind, none of these warriors in the War on Crime are promoted on acquittals; convictions bring praise and promotions. The more felony convictions an agency can chalk-up, the larger the budget to wage war on crime.

Prosecutors do not see their careers flourish with "Not Guilty" rulings. To lose a case brings shame upon a pride driven "justice" warrior. Nothing could be further from the truth when a jury is told "This officer has no reason to lie." A distinct Fog of Justice sprawls through the halls, backrooms and battlefields of our War on Crime.

In a typical police action, once an arrest is made and a conclusion is drawn, a perverse Rubicon is crossed. The investigation is driven to prove the conclusion, not to establish innocence. All too often, the case needs to be "tweaked" to conform to the conclusion, after all, "All is fair in love and war." People have to realize, every war has its collateral damage.

The collateral damage of this war is too great to ignore. Not only are people losing their precious freedom and billions of dollars squandered, but society's soul is being compromised. This insanity has to stop, justice should be treasured not bastardized.

<http://betweenthebars.org/blogs/895/>

Originally submitted in 2015, after reviewing his essay for inclusion in this newsletter, Outman had the following to say:

"Revisiting this essay, ten years later, sadly the media and empirical evidence confirms the Fog of Justice continues to linger obstructing the essence of Justice."

Ways to Engage with the APWA

Please share this newsletter and our Call for Essays (found at the bottom of page 10)

If you are interested in being contacted about collaborative opportunities, opportunities for republication, and exhibits, please write to us expressing ways you wish to further engage and the types of opportunities you're interested in. We will do our best to connect you when these arise, though interest does not guarantee opportunity.



Loni Krick

Pennsylvania

I am a 61 year old female that has been incarcerated for 32 years now. I have been writing poetry since thirteen years old. In the beginning, it was to express years of abuse, anger and pain. Now, my poetry is positive, about God and the beauty all around us. I want what I write to move people and express not only emotion but actual truths and facts.

A Lifer's Legacy

By Loni Krick

Someone bought me a ticket and threw me on a ride,
But there's no getting off till the day I die.
Endlessly spinning, circling and spiraling;
A sick merry-go-round, of sorts.
The ride is fast, never slowing for anyone
It just keep on going, year after year.
The rumors, the lies, the playing and all;
Till you just can't take anymore.
There's hustling and promises that never come true.
There's caring and sharing from hearts made of stone.
There are so many games and stories to hear,
That you just can't tell if anyone's sincere.
Little by little, you lose all your wits,

Note: Krick's poem, "A Lifer's Legacy" is not yet up on the APWA website but is in the next batch of writing to be digitized.

And find yourself trapped, a part of the ride.
You get on unwillingly, trying to get off,
But you find yourself helping to give it a turn.
You are part of that merry-go-round,
A horse that cannot move,
As everyone rides you and you dance to a tune.
Is there no end to this madness in here?
Or do I just keep on spinning,
Till the ride is me, too?
I'm tired of fighting to get off this ride.
So I'll just sit back, close my eyes, and
hide in this system of fear.

Call for Essays

The American Prison Writing Archive (APWA) is a growing public, internet-based collection of non-fiction writing about direct experience with the U.S. prison system. Anyone who has been incarcerated or has volunteered inside can send handwritten or typed pieces. All writing skill levels are welcome. 5,000 word limit.

Visit us at: PRISONWITNESS.ORG

We read and respond to all writing. No reading fees or SASE required. A signed Permissions-Questionnaire (PQ) form is required for writing to be included in the APWA. For more information, or to receive our PQ form, please write to:



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