

Heya Fr. John, it's always such a pleasure to get one of these Between The Bars envelopes and see a comment from you insider 😊 You're sure right about that mob-mentality / jumping-on behavior, groupthink, etc. Even long before prison, even in grade school, I often found myself being one to say, as you said, "enough". Bullies, whether individual or collective, must be opposed.

Where I disagree with you, sharply, is when you note - rightly - that you maybe can't say whether some specific punishment, 4 years in Diddy's case, is justice, but THEN you add, "when a jury says so, we must trust the system. No?" No!! Absolutely not. I'd expect you of all people to advocate consulting one's own conscience to assess "justice", ~~not just defer~~ to the pressure-laden judgement of 12 laymen who typically have no idea (they're supposed to not know) what the actual punishment will be. A harshly punitive, impersonal system determines the punishment (also not to be deferred to), and the jury just says either "let him go" or "do your worst". No dilemma for me - I couldn't care less what a jury, judge, or law code says. I'm perfectly capable of evaluating whether something like "justice" is served... and it almost never is by any sort of retribution. In my view, anyway. Stay in touch, my friend! 😊 - Dimitri