



# MASS PRISON VOICE

## THEY SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES



JDMC Massachusetts Chapter

2014: The late, late, late edition

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### The Things That Should Not Be

Michael Skinner

It is very late, and I've turned the light out. It's way past midnight and my cell is very dark. It is now November 1<sup>st</sup>, also known as All Saints' Day, a day we in the Catholic faith celebrate as we honor the Saints who bring to light in creative fashion quite new human potentialities. For me, it is also the anniversary of my father William's passing away in 1990. So you could say that it's a solemn occasion for me.

For the next few hours, I will be completely alone in the universe. Rather than lay on my bunk, I've chosen to sit on the floor with my back against the concrete wall. For some strange reason, this gives me a different perspective on where I am in the world. The sensations are real: dark, confined, alone. There is nothing to see, and I find myself

running my hand over the smooth concrete wall. I picture myself in a casket, buried alive. Surprisingly, I don't feel trapped or in a state of panic. My train of thought seems much sharper and my mind is comfortable enough to wander wherever it desires. I've let go of every worry and my thoughts take me on a journey. Events in my life flash by in thousands of still photos, and in each brief millisecond I play each one out. I recognize my faults and attributes. Not by others' standards, but by my own. As we grow older and perhaps even wiser, we see life through reflective eyes. What actions seemed so prudent so many years ago are not as clear today, at least not to me.

Youth can destroy the future. So can ignorance, when it becomes a sickness, as it appears to be with certain staff here in this place known



as Shirley Medium. Earlier in the morning, some friends and I went into the Chapel during the adoration hour to pray, as a community, for my Father. My friends and members of our Church community showed up with me, for me, to show both me and the memory of my Father honor and respect. I was humbled to my very core. And before we began to pray en masse, someone made a little coffee for us to enjoy, as we sat in fellowship inside our Chapel quietly reflecting upon the spirituality of the moment. And then the captain looked through the window and saw what we were doing. Sitting in community and fellowship, supporting a friend on a solemn occasion. Here's what we were not doing; getting high, making weapons, stealing, gambling, fighting, plotting gang activities or harassing staff. Yet this captain flipped out and made a scene out in the hallway. And all because we were sitting inside the Chapel, unsupervised, praying and seeking some much needed spiritual guidance amongst one another as well as from those we pray to and for.

I can't remember when the caliber of the inmate and the staff changed. I guess it was a slow process over the years. Because on both sides, the "new breed" is

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pathetic! Don't get me wrong, not all of the new breed are lacking honor, integrity, discipline and some sense of commitment to what's right, but the majority are only interested in themselves. The inmates about getting high and getting over on one another, and the staff about making money and implementing petty and foolish rules and policies which do absolutely nothing to address the brokenness of this system: drug addiction, gangs, and ennui. Rather than address those issues, they implement rules about I.D. cards and proper placement of such. Proper placement of movement passes, cell decorum, clothes lines and hooks on the wall.

Henry David Thoreau once said; "Any fool can make a rule, and every fool will follow it." That is what is going on inside these places.

So when a captain, the shift commander of the entire institution wigs out about a dozen men sitting inside the chapel praying and drinking coffee, I'd say that there is something seriously wrong with him and the entire mind set of the powers-that-be.

So what should I do? I believe you must look upon such people as having a sickness. It's a sickness that corrupts the human spirit by trying to reduce us to their low levels and violating our impulse toward goodness and caring for one another, our families and our communities. True strength lives where fear cannot gain a foothold because it lives at the center of belief. Remember, strength is not a force. It is an attribute of the heart. Its opposite is not weakness and fear, but confusion, lack of clarity and lack of sound intention.

Horrible and all-powerful as evil sometimes seems to be in a world like ours, in the larger picture love is always overwhelmingly dominant, and will ultimately be triumphant. Evil is necessary because without it, free will is impossible and without free will there could be no growth - no forward movement, and no chance for us to become what God longed for us to be. So the captain did

his thing and eventually left. And then Joe Labriola went and found a passage in the Bible.

Psalm 56, reads in part:

"O' God, have mercy on me,  
For people are hounding me.  
My foes attack me all day long.  
I am constantly hounded by  
those who slander me,  
And many are boldly attacking  
me."

Psalm 56:1, 2

"They are always twisting  
what I say;  
They spend their days plotting  
to harm me.  
They come together to spy on  
me -  
Watching my every step, eager  
to kill me.

Psalm 56:5, 6

As Lao Tzu said, "The best fighters display no anger. The best conqueror seeks no revenge."

Remember the words of the Tao te Ching: "The only true strength is a strength that people do not fear."

Strength based in force is a strength people fear. Strength based in love is a strength people crave.

And so, here I sit. Entombed by choice in this small area and entombed by actions in the greater. My physical space in life has been determined. My mental space has yet to be realized. I'll continue to push forward, despite these obstacles, and have faith in my path.

We live in a pluralistic world and only the most hard-headed refuse to accept the fact that truth - whether spiritual, cultural, political, or otherwise - is given to different people in different ways.

Only a fool refuses to walk in the sunlight because he cannot see the shape of the sun.



## Where's Waldo, Martha?

Edward Pepyne

The thoughts of an NCC Inmate strike an increasingly recurrent theme; as surveillance on American citizens increases, government finds more ways to operate in secrecy. The gap between personal privacy and government secrecy is increasing. I've recently noted a few examples here in Massachusetts and in the State Attorney General's office under Martha Coakley.

As I followed the "Whitey Bulger" trial track a career beginning in 1956, it was obvious that Whitey was being sheltered by the government. Just as all politics is local, crime is local also.

To make a Bulger possible there has to be political cover from local police departments right to Washington. Is it just historical coincidence that Bulger's reign of terror occurred during the era of the Kennedy influence? That he wasn't tried until the last brother was dead? The public has a right to know and understand the political web that allowed Whitey to exist.

Where is Martha on the issue of Bulger and Massachusetts corruption? It's like trying to find Waldo.

You can find Martha Coakley knee deep in the Annie Dookhan case. Annie Dookhan is more than a single case, it symbolizes law enforcement and judicial tolerance for manufactured and tainted evidence. And more importantly, the individuals that use it. The "Dookhan" philosophy highlights the breakdown of the Massachusetts judicial system. While Annie has been the sacrificial lamb, the wide web is being sheltered.

Attorney General Martha Coakley is using the C.O.R.I. law to redact all the names of prosecutors and police that were working with her. Those with Dookhan cases are receiving thousands of emails in discovery with the names of those working with her withheld. Like Bulger, Dookhan could not have operated in a vacuum, yet I've not heard of a single detective or prosecutor being implicated.

In my own case I learned of something known as "white noise". The rationale for this "white noise" is to block out background noise to make for better sound quality for electronic recordings, and in turn, transcription. The court room I was tried in has served the public in a reasonable fashion for nearly 100 years. Recently, this "white noise" was installed by the Commonwealth such that it blocks the recording of side bar conversations. Those side bar conversations are where two lawyers and judge argue law. The Commonwealth is preventing the discussions about the law getting into the record. How white of you, Martha!

So where are all the Harvard scholars arguing for the citizens' right to know the politics of prosecution, law enforcement and the application of law? They're in the Attorney General's office, the corner office on Beacon Hill and the Oval office of the White House. Even Teddy went to Harvard. Secrecy in government is making a mockery out of our judicial system and turning our democracy into a tyranny.

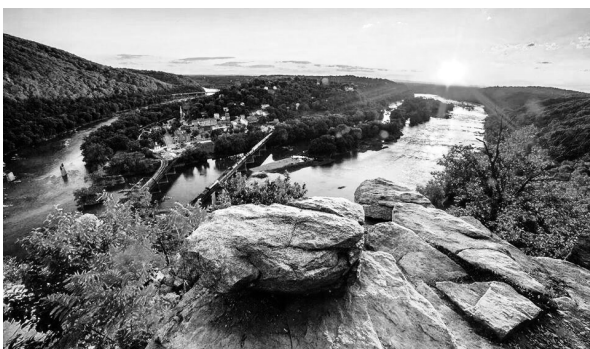
Just one man's thoughts....

(Editors comment: Middlesex DA Marian Ryan and Essex DA Jonathan Blodgett found that the Special Investigations Section (cops) "did not engage in any criminal wrong doing or negligence in the performance of their police duties...": despite 2 overturned convictions and 17 dropped cases.)

## Freedom Fighters of the DOC

Joe Labriola

Who will speak for me when I am gone? Where are the writers and demonstrators? Where are the friends that I have made in my life? Is there anyone out there?



Harpers Ferry, West Virginia

I came to prison on May 17<sup>th</sup>, 1972. I was 26 years old and had been to the war in Vietnam on two tours of duty. I went to college on the GI Bill and made the Dean's List my very first semester. I was married and had a three year old daughter named Elizabeth whom I adored. I had never been to prison before so Walpole was an eye-opening experience for me.

Men were sitting in the corridor shooting drugs and smoking pot openly. The guards were nowhere to be seen. I was met by Hoss Harding in 2 Block which at the time was called Death Valley because so many of the murders happened in that block. The cells in the max end had no toilets or sinks as they had all been smashed. There was a body lying on the floor and someone on the third tier was pissing over the railing onto the body and laughing hysterically. Soon as we got to Hoss' cell he gave me a knife and told me to carry it everywhere I went and even into the shower. Walpole was a very dangerous place.

My first two years was a blur of fights, drugs, booze, and blood. It wasn't until 1975 before I began to appreciate a life sentence for what it was. My choices were that I could stay high until I died or I could fight the system and make changes. I was a Marine and I had a discipline in me forged in combat. I chose to fight. I began by organizing a work stoppage. If no one made the license plates then they would be forced to negotiate with us for better living conditions. That was my first of many long trips to the infamous "Ten Block", where before it ended, I would spend several years. While in Ten Block I forged my writing skills and sent out copious missives to the press and certain friendly senators like Barbara Gray and Jack Bachman. I read, I wrote, and I persevered. Segue to 40 years later.....

My body is wracked with pain from bullet and shrapnel wounds as well as many knife wounds. My

earlier exposure to Agent Orange caused my lungs to deteriorate and I am diagnosed with severe COPD which has me in a wheelchair and coughing my guts up several times a day. I sleep on a mattress that feels like it has body parts in it as stuffing. There is no way my tired old ass can ever get comfortable enough for a decent night's sleep. I have an arthritic spine that I administer with copious amounts of ibuprofen. Nothing helps so I have to suck it up. I want to fight the way I once did but I don't have the energy I once enjoyed. Fortunately, I have great friends like Tim Muise, who is a force to be reckoned with, as well as Shawn Fisher and a few others who choose, like I did, to fight rather than drink the Kool Aid of the DOC. I truly love these wonderful friends and I know that when my time comes to wither away in the misery that is the prison hospital, that they will be fighting for me with their very blood, sweat, and tears. I am comforted in that knowledge.

I have always wanted to form a prisoner-run group that represents the views and opinions of all prisoners and not just the few. There are things we can change with unity both inside and out. The only way to accomplish this task is to have a street person(s) file a 501c with the Secretary of State and keep the books out there while we in here are the committee of prisoners whose voice fuels the machine out there, instead of the other way around, as it is and has been in the past with some groups who purport to represent us without even asking what our goals are. We do not care about the food in the chow hall, canteen, or other small issues. We want compassionate release for the sick and dying. We want a fair parole board; we want a reasonable assurance that when we fall sick that the "hospital" does not kill us with its dirt. Sepsis, C-Diff, MRSA, Hepatitis or other contagious bacteria, as I believe it did to my dear departed friend, Billy Barnoski. We would like to know that men will never again be made to lie in bed with maggots in their diapers, or

covered in their own feces for hours on end. We want a place where DiNardo's appointed "inmates" do not steal from the infirm. We want our deaths to have decency and dignity. We want our families treated with respect. We want meaningful programs to prepare men for release and not just token programs to make the DOC look good but which have no real relevance in the world. We know that the more education a person has, the less likely they are to re-offend. We want to break the chain of violence in our neighborhoods by addressing the causes while the men are in prison. That means giving them a chance. Just a chance to be successful and productive once they are released. We want to expose the DOC for what it really is, a warehouse that generates pork barrel jobs for people who get paid large sums of money by insuring that prisoners do indeed fail and come back to prison so the cycle runs on into perpetuity. We want a voice so that the public at large can see how their tax dollars are wasted and how the DOC ensures their streets are not safe.

These are our present goals. Some things we will change, some will be out of reach but I began fighting forty years ago and will not stop till my last dying breath. I have like-minded friends as I have mentioned, and as I sit here typing these words I am comforted in their strength and determination. I will die with a smile: my last gesture to the DOC. **They will know by my face that in the end, I won.**

**"I see little difference between the world inside prison gates and the world outside. A million million prison walls can't protect us, because the real dangers --- militarism, greed, economic inequality, fascism, police brutality --- lie outside, not inside, prison walls."**

- Phillip Berrigan  
Veteran, former  
Catholic priest,  
peace activist



*Phillip Berrigan, 1923 - 2002*

## **Parade of the Living Dead**

Timothy J. Muise

I recently had some medical problems, always scary but even scarier in the prison environment where we are almost always subjected to substandard care. These medical problems forced me to be around the hospital unit here at the state prison in Shirley. One day while in the "Cage"\*, where all prisoners wait for treatment, I saw a parade of old men emerge from the bowels of the hospital unit. These six men looked like a parade of the living dead as they shuffled out to get their medication in the medical line here at the prison (think of the medication line scene in "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest"). I had a very real and visceral reaction at this site: disgust and anger. What are these octogenarians still doing in prison? All of these men were over 80 years old and two had to lean on wheelchairs as make-shift walkers. A sour build-up in the pit of my stomach built up to a volcanic eruption of disgust.

This is what corrections in Massachusetts has come to: a torturous system where men are kept well past their ability to be any type of threat so that hordes of guards and administrators can keep their jobs and ensure jobs for their offspring.

Now it is really easy for me to fly off into some anger-filled diatribe as regards lay-about guards, unqualified and uncaring prison administrators, or any of the other destined-for-failure aspects of the Massachusetts prison system, but I am going to do my best to refrain from that. What I

want to focus on is the need for humanity in this system. You hear and read every day about social decline and human indifference. It seems to me that stories of real compassion and love are rapidly becoming more the typical scenario. With political correctness such a behavior modifying mantra these days, there are very few classes of the weak upon which people can visit injustice without being criticized. One of those classes is the prisoner. Now do not get me wrong: there are human beings who are so flawed, so destructive to society that they must be kept segregated from the masses. In what way and for how long is a story for another time, but I just cannot see any caring society, once they are enlightened on the true depth of the topic, agreeing that keeping dying old men behind bars until they rot to death - at an unbelievable cost both financial and social - is the way to go. The immediate damages are clear to me from my view on the prison hill.

First, the prison population sees that their future could well hold them being hidden away in the bowels of some dark prison hospital, adult diaper full of feces, just praying that someone would clamp the pillow down over their face. This creates such an attitude of hopelessness in the prison system that men become entrenched in true despair; they feel they "can't" succeed. When you instill that self-defeatist attitude in the prison population you wind up with the 47% recidivism rate we have here in the Commonwealth - one in two come back to prison (after visiting more harm upon society).

The next major damage is that the prison employee, from the hospital worker and mental health counselor to the line guard and administrator, develops a feeling that prisoners are less than human. When they see men and women being dehumanized day in and day out they cannot help but view their captives as some sort of animal. With that perspective you can never create an environment conducive to rehabilitation. You can never achieve

that "I can" state of mind that would overcome the "I can't" mindset I alluded to previously.

When you have both the prisoner and the jailer in mindsets of defeat how can we ever even imagine that the system would produce anything but failure? The Parade of the Living Dead has such deep and scarring effects, through the hopelessness embedded in this system, that we must do something about it. It is clear that the financial and social costs are too high and the answer must be that we employ a real system of compassionate medical release. Some people wonder how these releases would actually save money as "someone" would have to pay for the care of aging prisoners. The answer is very easy: you get an immediate elimination of security costs. Whenever one of these aging prisoners has to be transported to the outside hospital they must be accompanied by two paid security staff members. Often times they are transported by independently contracted ambulances which are extraordinarily expensive. You see, these hospital units do not have the specified care staff that a nursing home or managed care facility would have. So each time elderly prisoners need the care of a specific specialist they are sent out (many times in a private contractors ambulance) to an outside hospital with two guards riding along who are often times being paid overtime. The burden on the taxpayer is overwhelming, approximately \$98,000,000.00 was spent on health care last year, according to the DOC, but the even deeper tragedy is that it is all so unnecessary. With a viable compassionate/ medical release measure elderly prisoners could be properly treated at a drastically reduced cost to the taxpayer. This commonsense practice (commonsense practices are more often the exception rather than the rule in 'corrections') would allow hope within the walls to build. Men and women may not see their future as one of despair and hopelessness in our state prisons allowing for the "I

Can" attitude to breath that rarefied air of hope to penetrate the bars and razor wire that confine flesh and blood just as surely as they can confine heart and soul.

Fill the heart with real hope and the soul will foster change. Your streets will be safer and your children will live in a world that values the protection of the truly downtrodden. Our sacred American values, those of redemption and second chances, will be honored through such compassion, and our children will know that all human dignity, even the human dignity of the prisoner, must be respected.

I ask that you please contact your local state representative and state senator and let them know that you support State Senator Patricia Jehlen's bill for the medical release of prisoners: Senate Bill No. #1139. Tell them that you respect the dignity of **all** persons and want them to ensure that such respect is passed on through the law of the land here in the Commonwealth. The choice is yours: do you support the Parade of the Living Dead or do you support the hope that can change our troubled society? Please vote for hope.

*(Editors comment: a 4' x 4' x 8 steel cage, containing a seat and an opening for shackled legs at its base. Norfolk prisoners were forced to construct these barbaric items in 2008. The Commonwealth was charged \$15,000 for each euphemistically named "Custom Therapeutic Module". Not a single legislator or 'reform' organization queried in 2008 about the invoice and CTM photographs we obtained would comment.)*

*About the author: Timothy J. Muise is a prisoner rights activist who has written extensively about the failures of the prison system and its impact on society. Tim is the current director of Bread & Water as well as an avid blogger at: <http://betweenthebars.org/blogs/101>*



## Care and Custody - Where is the Care at MCI-Norfolk?

Milton Rice

Francis Gallagher, Franie to his friends and acquaintances, tragically committed suicide at MCI-Norfolk within an hour of being lugged on June 24, 2014 to "the RB" (SMU - Security Management Unit).

By all accounts it was a beautiful summer day to be enjoyed. Franie had the morning off because the area of the shop where he was employed was closed. Just several days into occupying a single cell (the golden standard - especially for 1<sup>st</sup> degree lifers), he signed out to the Gym from his housing unit (6-3). The Gym, as usual, was closed (why should it be open?). The circumstances of his "situation" are still somewhat cloudy but some facts are that he was found to be "out of place" (determined by who is yet to be discovered). We do know that he went to see a case worker in 4-2, and at some time before this had gone to the property window to have stickers placed on two appliances. An exchange of comments was made at the property window not the least bit favorable to Franie regarding the property in question. It is presumed he at some time left the window to speak with his CPO and was apprehended in unit 4-2, determined to be "out of place" (not where he was signed out to) - and there he was cuffed and lugged to the aforementioned establishment ("The Hole").

Unbeknownst to many, Franie was under the care of mental health and is purported to have asked to see his mental health professional and furthermore stated that he "was going to kill himself if they lugged him" (for what purpose we can only suppose what he judged to be his continued unfair treatment and

further intolerable punishment for just trying to live). Bear in mind that prison, in and of itself, is the punishment meted out by society (the Courts). No one comes here to be punished or abused. There are some however who work here who have other aims and objectives (as Devil's disciples). They prey on the weak all too often.

It's a real shame. Twenty-seven (27) years into his sentence, mild-mannered, unassuming, with a wry sense of humor – he didn't bother anyone and was trying as he may to make his way in the world "we live in." I remember him living in (or tolerating) a five man ghetto in 6-3 for the longest time. Prior to that, according to others, he didn't have an "easy bid". So, he must have "had it" with the dilettantes and d.... b....s who are employed at MCI-Norfolk. A lug and a ticket usually mean losing everything: the single cell, his job (a means of support), much of his personal property along with creature comforts whatever he judged them to be. Don't get me wrong – there are some good and fine men and women at work for the DOC and at MCI-Norfolk.

The problem is that the worst of the worst are put into positions of authority and/or administration. And micro-management is the norm wherein contemporary publications that could otherwise be purchased at any news stand by a 10 or 11 year old are contrabanded at an alarming rate because depictions of scantily clad females are now considered sexually explicit (oh, my!). And for more than 50+ years where sun bathing has been popular in the "real world" and enjoyed also at MCI-Norfolk – one can no longer lie on the ground or in any horizontal position out-of-doors within the confines of this venerable institution because either someone has too much time on their hands (to write a new policy/regulation) or the recent visit via helicopter by another d/b, the governor felt unmanned by his eyeballs when viewing the sunbathers from above. Who knows – but dumb and dumber are surely at work here.

Frannie's unspeakable suicide and death was the result of an unreasonable intrusion into the quality of what is left of a personal life... by the uncaring cascade of bravado, abuse of power and stupidity of persons supposedly charged with care & custody, who believe "they" are untouchable and to be held harmless.

After all, he was only a lifer... serving "THE OTHER DEATH PENALTY".



Malcolm X, 1925 – 1965  
Minister, Human Rights  
Activist

### To Help or to Hinder

Marc Brown Sr.

I had believed that my time spent in the Department of Correction would be to help me become a better person, for a few major reasons. First for the big wakeup call of seeing my family and friends lives go on without me and watching my children grow up through photos and visits.

Before I go on, I would like to share a quote that my father gave me, with the photo of the man who made it. That quote changed my outlook on how I was going to do my time to make sure I would never come back to a place like prison again.

*"In the hectic pace of the world today, there is no time for meditation or deep thought.", "A prisoner has time that he can put to good use.", "I'd put prison, second to college as the best place for a man to go if he needs to do some thinking.", "If he's motivated, in prison, he can change his life".*

Malcolm X

My father died two years after giving me these quotes; they were my motivation, and bettering myself to have a future was the goal.

Here's where this is no help. I'm dealing with an incompetent administration. I have no problem pointing this fact out to them, as much as they help me do so. I say that because of the replies to simple requests this administration gives as denials. Makes me ask the question: should they be drug testing the administration? I truly think they believe that the sentence you received from the court was not enough and are doing everything they can to make life as hard as possible for the inmate population, other than those inmates that work for the DOC Industries Silk Screen Division. Don't get me wrong. Any inmate that can make some real money before he goes home should be able to, but this administration has pitted inmate against inmate, because the Silk Screen Division gets a free pass on treatment, but still gets full Earned Good Time Credits. The DOC is being sued right now because they believe some inmates should get full good time when others don't that are living in the same TC Housing Unit Program and are doing the same work. Or not. My request was simple. I wanted to do the only program I have not done: the Computer Class. I wanted to be placed in a Therapy Group that would allow me to go to the computer program, be a tutor in the GED program, work and make all required programming for where I'm at, with no free passes.

But their most used incompetent statement is as follows, "In terms of the SOTP, it's a voluntary program that you opted to participate in to address your treatment needs to reduce the risk associated with you re-offending". So we're not going to put you in a Therapeutic Community Primary Group, where you can do as much as you can before your release, unless you're making money for the Department of Correction Industries Silk Screen Division, or quit the program if you don't like it. The MTC (Mass Treatment Center), at any

given time has more than 50 to 70 inmates not in Treatment, sitting around for 3 to 6 months costing the tax payers 3 times what it cost to house any other prisoner in the DOC. I know I can only speak for myself. I made a victim out there and am paying the price for my actions, but I am not going to be victimized by a Superintendent and his lackeys who are doing everything in their power to make sure most of us will come back because we're not educationally prepared for the community we will be returning to. Shame for where I'm at is long gone, as well as for putting any DOC Administration or their subcontractor FHS' (Forensic Health Services) maladaptive actions that are counterproductive to at least my rehabilitation out there, and you all should do the same. Send copies of your Grievances to the Governor's office and any other Representative in your area.

If you don't fight for your Rights, who else will? And to anyone in the free world reading this, 90% of us do want to walk out of here better off than when we came in. Not just with a few dollars in our pockets, but really ready for the world we haven't been a part of.

**If you ever doubt  
the power of your  
voice - just look at  
what they do to  
silence you.**

### **The Truth**

Robert LeSage

It is time that the taxpayers of Massachusetts are told the truth about what goes on in this place they call a Sex Offender Treatment facility.

First of all, trying to get proper medical treatment is all but impossible. It practically takes an emergency such as a heart attack, stroke, etc. etc... Most of the medical treatment consists of insulin

injections, bandaging open wounds, blood testing, so called physicals, (which consists of the question, "How are you today?"). Then they take your blood pressure and temperature).

Second, this institution has more brass (sergeants, lieutenants and captains) than any other prison I have ever been in. These highly paid men work as much over-time as they possibly can. Some sergeants are making over \$105,000 a year. Also, many of these men are going to other institutions, and returning as being in the upper echelon and using this place as a retirement home until they retire.

These officers hold several "banquets" and parties a year at the taxpayers' expense, yet they have succeeded in removing any semblance of treating the residents with the dignity of allowing us to have a Christmas Party, even going as far as to tell us not to use the name of Christ in Christmas, but to use the words "Seasons Greetings" or "Xmas".

To the Christians in here, this is just another slap in the face. Their own time schedules are not kept for various reasons. The programs according to their schedule are supposed to begin at seven o'clock, yet most nights they don't begin until seven thirty. Medical lines are scheduled to begin at 7:30 AM and at times they are kept, but other times it isn't until 8:00 o'clock that the line begins.

The so-called therapy programs are nothing more than another scam to bilk the taxpayers. All these therapy programs do is to continue rehashing what the person did in the past. Even Abraham Lincoln gave warning against such programs when he said, "Some people teach you a mind-set which keeps you in bondage; they keep reminding you of your past, and you keep someone in bondage by making him think he is incapable of change by always putting him down, by making him believe that he's no good, stupid or childish."

The way the therapy program is operated in here keeps the men in bondage to their pasts. The therapists use the same techniques on us that we used on our victims and they say it's okay for them to do this because they aren't molesting the men. We used such tactics as bribery, grooming, coercion, threats, lies, deception, intrigue, broken promises, fear, etc. to get our victims to cooperate with us and this is what the therapists do to us.

Examples: if someone refuses to go to therapy, for whatever reason, they are punished by being ostracized and kept locked down while other units have movement. The powers-that-be use what is called a "cabana" to entice the men to go to therapy. Yet the men themselves are paying with their own money for the food they are 'given'. What kind of incentive is this really?? Anyone who doesn't go to therapy is not allowed to attend the house (or unit) meetings and is not qualified as being a member of that unit. If a person misses three meetings, for any reason, he may be suspended from the program for any length of time decided upon by the therapists. The program indirectly condones homosexuality, yet at the same time punishes anyone who is involved in such activities. The therapists claim that religious activities are nothing more than a crutch, but they don't have the guts to deny a person's desire to be involved in such for fear of being sued.

Someone once said, "Hope once crushed is less quick to spring back alive." This place is designed to remove the hope of the men, while attempting to make them believe that through therapy they are more likely to be released. This is just another one of their fallacies they present. Every one of us, including the staff members in here, bears the seed to ruin others; no one is above anyone else. We are all human beings who have the capability to do what others have done but it's what we do with these capabilities that make each one of us different from the other person.

When someone can recognize in themselves the capability to destroy someone else's life and turns it around to benefit the other person then there is a change taking place.

Jeremy Bentham (1748-1830) stated, "All punishment is evil, it is mischief, all punishment inflicted by the majority is not true punishment, but downright oppression of the weaker." Force of any kind is never a remedy for crime, nor can it become an end to such.

*Just remember, "No man can justly censure or condemn another because indeed because indeed no man truly knows another nor ever will."* (Sir Thomas Browne 1605-1682) You can never plan the future by staying in the past. One has to come away from their pasts to see where they are going and to gather strength to face what the future holds. There is scarcely a single man sufficiently aware to know all the evil that he can do and the object of punishment is prevention from doing evil; yet I can never be made impulsively to do good. This has to come from the individual himself.

One thing most people forget on the Outside is that if you want to keep the majority under your thumb



and have them do what you want them to do, all you have to do is say what you are doing is a necessity. This is what the media purports. But the truth is that necessity is the plea used for every infringement on human freedom. Look at the Nazis. They told everybody that they had to rid the Fatherland of the Jews because they were an inferior race. They claimed it was a necessity to keep their race pure. Necessity is merely an argument of tyrants, and it is a word that we hear almost every day when it concerns an ex-Sex Offender. The newspapers like to rile

up the population against certain individuals or point out a certain group of people for discrimination.

Maximillian Robespierre (1758-1794) said, "Any law that violates the infeasible rights of a man is essentially unjust and tyrannical, should be considered no law at all." Take a close look at the Sex Offender Law and tell me that it doesn't violate the infeasible rights of every man convicted under it, compare it to the Constitution of the United States. I am not saying that there shouldn't be some kind of law to protect the public against sex offenders, but I am saying that it should not be designed to keep people in prison for all their lives just on the presumption that the person will commit another crime if released. At present the law is designed to punish people for crimes that haven't been committed. Already I have spent thirty two plus years in prison for a crime committed over forty years ago and because I refuse to allow myself to be bullied and forced to do something I don't believe in, I cannot see the end of this dark tunnel. I am 73 going on 74 years old and don't have a chance to get out except through the courts. I ask you where is the justice, where is the compassion and empathy that these people talk so much about and that we need to have toward our victims?

Oscar Wilde (1854-1900) once said, "I know not whether laws be right or whether laws be wrong, all that I do know of those lying in jail is that the wall is strong and tall and that each day is like a year, and a year whose days are extra long." This is how it is to a prisoner. A day seems like a year and each year seems like an eternity. So when does punishment cease and forgiveness take place?



## Of Mice and Men

Mike Skinner

Not too long ago, I am sitting in the waiting room at the Shirley Medium Skilled Nursing Facility, or HSU, when out of the corner of my eye I notice something scurrying across the floor and down the hallway, towards the back. All of the very, very sick patients are held back in the area. I stepped out and saw the little fur ball run across the boots of the guard that was standing there. He made absolutely no effort to stop the creature. I approached the guard and asked him what that was, and here is a part of our conversation:

**Guard:** "Oh that. That was one of the mice."

**Me:** "One of them? How many are back there?"

**Guard:** "Three I think - they're coming up from beneath now that the weather is getting cold."

**Me:** "And no one is trying to catch them?"

**Guard:** "(shrugging shoulders) "They'll be putting traps out eventually. Why?"

It was at that point that I turned around and walked away. Why? He asked me. Well, I can think of a few reasons.

**ALLERGIES:** any foreign substance that is capable of causing an immune response. The Allergens in mice that cause reactions is not on the fur or hair itself, but rather a sticky substance produced by the rodents' sebaceous glands. Allergens cling to hair, fur and skin cells and are distributed when this dander is shed by the mouse.

**HANTAVIRUS INFECTION:** an acute infection caused by the Hantavirus which is transmitted from rodents to humans. Hantaviruses have been found in wild rodents, deer mice, rats and moles throughout the world. Mice



transmit Hantavirus via the respiratory route, and humans contract it through inhalation of infectious airborne droplets of saliva or urine or through dust from feces of infected mice.

PLAGUE: a bacterial disease that is transmitted among rodents by the bites of infected fleas. Plague may be contracted by humans when they are bitten by a flea that has acquired the infection from a rodent or mouse. There are three types of plague: Septicemic, Pneumonic, and Bubonic. Of the three types, Bubonic is the most common. In the mid-1300s the "Black Death" spread throughout Europe and killed between twenty and thirty million people. In China, in the mid-1800s, the Bubonic Plague spread for 75 years to every country, killing over twenty million people worldwide.

The American Medical Association released guidelines

which are intended to prevent infections carried by rodents (mice). Key points include: storing all food in sealed containers and screening or sealing possible points of entry into buildings can help avoid exposure to rodents, as can professional extermination.

When working in areas where rodent excretions may exist, HEPA (High Efficiency Particulate Air) masks can be used to trap dust and prevent inhalation of dust particles that cause infection. Pouring bleach over a deceased rodent and its urine and droppings before removal disinfects a possible infected animal and its excretions.

On May 6, 7 and 8, 2013, an inspection of MCI Shirley Medium was conducted by the District Health Officer from the Executive Office of Health and Human Services, Bureau of Environmental Health, and Community Sanitation Program. One

of the violations listed for the inmate dining area was "Structural Maintenance". "Area not rodent and weather tight. Door to kitchen damaged." In the dish room, there was an "Uncovered electrical box behind the dryer rack". The doors are supposed to have weather-stripping attached to the bottom so that the mice can't slip through. None of them do. About six weeks ago, the dishwashing machine blew out, and the motor was fried and needed replacing. While awaiting parts, the maintenance staff searched for a cause as to why this happened. After 13 days, someone finally opened up the circuit board, where upon they found a dead mouse that had been electrocuted, and was burnt to a crisp on the board itself. The mice are coming up through the pipes as well as the doors

because of all the unsealed food trays that are being left out at night.

Three months ago, the electricians were summoned to the hospital to replace some of the burnt out lighting fixtures in the ceiling. An inmate worker went up the ladder to remove one of the ceiling panels, and upon doing so, he was showered with mouse droppings. It covered his hair, eyes, ears and mouth. This very same inmate became extremely ill for the next two weeks with some sort of a virus that they could not identify. It should also be noted that the same inspection report also violated the hospital building for not having rodent-proof doors.

The administration has consistently blocked my friends and I from visiting our sick friends who are housed in the back of the HSU. We were told that because of how very, very, very sick these men are, our germs might get them even more sick, and kill them. While my friends and I were physically blocked from going back there, I have yet to see one staff member try and stop any of the mice that are running around back there. I listed what the mice can carry into that place, and I am NOT a carrier of any of those germs. Yet another reason that we must always question those who tell us what to think.

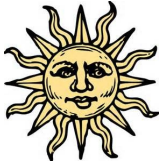
The Hospital Building, the chow hall, the programs building, the visiting room, gym, and the Voc-Ed building are all temporary - modular housing units that were built to last 10-15 years - all of these buildings are celebrating their 24<sup>th</sup> birthday. And it shows. The roofs leak, the floors are rotting, despite how much plywood, star-plates, and tiling are laid over it. The walls are pulling away from some of the structures and black mold is rapidly growing underneath all of the buildings, mixed with dead animals. None of this is healthy. Putting lipstick on a pig does no good, nor does putting a band-aid on a bullet wound. There was a reason that snake oil salesmen were successful at one time - because we can persuade ourselves of absolutely anything, from the

### Twass The Night Before X-mas....

Scott Burgess

Twass the night before X-mas 2013  
And all throughout the great nation,  
The Left-wing and Lame-stream media  
Pushes socialized medicine with narration.  
No mention is made of how they're  
Using propaganda to lead folks astray.  
No conversation is being held  
On how our way of life is in decay.  
Nobody seems to really care that  
Big Brother is stripping our right.  
They just keep bowing to their messiah.  
The man made from black and white.  
The rich folks who dared flip the script  
With words of nothing but the truth.  
Were scrutinized with IRS audits  
Exposing the Marxist corruption with proof.  
The poor folks were categorically labeled  
As being racists with a smear,  
Causing the populace to remain  
Silent out of such deep Fear.  
While others didn't want to hear it  
And instead just wished it would stop,  
Preferring dishonesty to discomfort  
As long as they can still shop.  
But one great nation is truly changing  
And people better wake up to see,  
Or else one day soon they'll be  
Wishing they'd listened to Folks Like me!

efficacy of snake oil to the existence of God, which to me, makes the world a more interesting place. But in this case, the facts are the facts, and there is no shame in asking for help. It's not what you look at that matters, it's what you see.



### CLASSIFIED AD

#### Willing to kill for \$22.50

Shawn Fisher

Americans have always had a personal affinity for those who have made the sacrifice to defend our freedoms. Every day we pass by veterans without a second glance, except for those who bear the wounds of their past with scars and missing limbs, evidence that they continue to fight long after they have left the battlefield.

It was not until the Gulf War that we got to witness first-hand the battle these heroes face when the conditions at the Walter Reed Army Hospital were exposed. For the first time, we as a nation got a glimpse of what they had to endure just to get proper medical care. From across the nation people were outraged by the conditions. What's more is that no one could believe it... or wanted to. How could anyone allow such things to happen?

There are a few answers to that question. One such theory is that we looked at the surface, saw that it was okay, and never thought to look much further. Another; and more likely theory, is that people knew of the conditions but made the conscious decision to not do anything. Whether to preserve their jobs or deliberate indifference, both played a significant role in the hospital's deterioration.

Here at MCI Shirley, conditions in the medical unit called the "Skilled Nursing Facility" (SNF) or the Death Chamber, as we call it, conditions were absolutely deplorable. Feces on and around the toilet, showers that had not been cleaned in years, maggots in a patient's diaper, and one patient had the tip of his finger fall off, and it wasn't found until a week later when they changed his sheets!! These were the conditions that the main medical facility of the DOC operated under. However, since the arrival of Deputy Karen DiNardo, those conditions have drastically changed. She instituted a companion program and now whenever you enter the SNF the first thing you smell is bleach and not feces or urine. To the outside observer, the SNF on the surface looks great. But for those of us who live here we know where to look to find the dirty secrets. And for those who work in the SNF, they know better than anyone else, what closets hold the skeletons.

So, on August 5, when State Representative Benjamin Swan and Senator James Eldridge came unannounced to tour the SNF, it presented the perfect opportunity for those who work in the SNF to speak out and reveal what goes on under the surface. But, like most, they reverted to self-preservation. They decided that what they have is not worth losing for someone else, especially someone they hardly know. It is a human flaw that we all struggle with: some more than others. It's what made the hit television show, "What would you do?" so popular.

That flaw was on full display on August 5, when the SNF workers, called "Companions", sat quietly as Deputy DiNardo, escorted both legislators on a tour through the Death Chamber. Of course anyone who spoke out would have fallen on the proverbial sword, as they would have been terminated as soon as the tour left the room.

Effectively making them unemployed and losing a gig that pays them \$22.50 a week; a king's ransom to most that live in prison.

It calls to mind a quote from Edmund Burke; "the only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing". A sentiment that epitomizes the whole of the SNF, and that can probably be attributed to "Stockholm Syndrome": a mental illness in which persons start to sympathize/empathize with their captors'. This "illness" is abundantly displayed in the SNF, where prisoners, who have had their souls stripped from them by petty dehumanizing control efforts, see a vivid fantasy of how a man left in a soiled diaper for "hours" is "doing okay". They witness the guard allow a prisoner to steal a man's legal work so that he can read aloud his crimes to other prisoners and guards. Yes, the "companions" tout how much good they are doing for the dying men up there, as they sit idly by. The "companions" steal food from the blind, electronics from those who are dying and clothes from those who have passed, all the while they look the other way as they eat extra trays of food designated for dying men with dementia.

At \$22.50 a week, who would have thought that a soul could be purchased at such a bargain rate? Men here worked harder than you can ever imagine to get a legislative tour to come through, yet these Stockholmed companions dared not speak. They swung their mops while our friends lay dying in their beds. They smiled as their bellies were full from the food they stole from someone's locker. They laughed as the Deputy steered the tour away from the men who would have spoken out: sick men, kept in observation cells at the back of the Unit.

Neither Tim, nor I, like it when someone throws a blanket designation over a class of

people, and we know that not all the companions are the soulless sycophants of Deputy DiNardo, but we have seen too much ass-kissing, ball-washing, and commiseration with the enemy not to profess that this crew of green & white “trustees” are more cop than con. Deputy DiNardo has stated that she “hand-picked” this crew. That certainly ain’ t good. If you are on her “okay” list, then you are on our shit list. We fight for dying men. Tim, more than anyone, takes great personal risk for fighting for these dying men. When is the last time any green & white-clad thief called the Deputy by her real name: Satan? She has sparked the death of humanity in the SNF.

We are putting together a proposal that would change the uniform colors from green & white to red & white: as this would more accurately reflect the colors of the flag of Stockholm, Sweden. Maybe we could run an ad in the Boston Herald offering \$23.50 for souls in purgatory: one dollar more than what the Devil DiNardo offers. Possibly we can save a few men up there. You never know.

Our message to those companions who have sold their souls is this: just place the tag on your toe now, climb into the body bag, cut your own throat and take your place in the fires of Hades. Deputy DiNardo will hold

that glass of ice water just out of your reach: like you did to the men in the SNF!!

### The Dangers of Wearing “Beach Shoes”

Timothy J. Muise

Prison can be a dangerous place. Most of the violence I have seen over the course of the past 15 years can be attributed to situations “created” by the prison. Lock men in a unit with no positive activity opportunities and eventually the pressure cooker over boils. No one who “exists” in here (because no one really lives in prison) is surprised. The Boston Herald will write a story about “killer cons” or “sex change operations” and do their best to incite the animus of the public. If the public knew the level of incompetence that exists amongst operating procedures they would really get their dander up. Failed negligent operating procedures endanger the public. But it can’t be all that dangerous in here as this seems to be the new “French Riviera” to some. Let me explain.

One of our assistant wardens here, a five foot nothing, 165 pound, a bit long-in-the-tooth, woman, walks around this prison, unescorted, wearing “slip-on beach shoes”. These K-Mart specials are the same that trod the piping hot sands of Gloucester’s Good Harbor Beach.

They are the same podiac surf combers that high school girls wear to the lake for a keg party. This diminutive warden roams this men’s prison freely, not with the usual jackboot of the oppressor, but with a rubber soul flip-flop like she is seeking the Beach Boy’s endless summer. Let the

guards’ union tell it and this place is like an ongoing attack on Pearl Harbor, but from the footwear of the warden I don’t think she sees too many bombs falling.

Now this warden “patrols” the sands here looking for the scourge of clotheslines. You see the laundry here ruins your clothes. One wash in the prison laundry and your whites are a nice shade of dog turd brown. Now this color may have been popular when Jim Brown was rushing for Cleveland, but myself I’d rather keep my whites white. In order to avoid the ruin of one’s wardrobe you must wash your stuff in the shower or in the sink. Most of us live in two (2) man cells that are designed for only one man. (This caphole - “Shirley World” - operates at 140% of capacity) You cannot have stinky laundry laying around as it causes a “safety” issue. Men will fight over much less in prison, but if you had to sleep in a closet size cell with someone else’s ripe gym clothes I don’t think you would go for it either. So we do what is rational - we wash them. After washing we make small clothes lines out of shoelaces and dry them. Not a big deal, but this “Gidget” of correctional surfing will order your breach of security laundry day shut down faster than Moondoggy would hang ten in a rip curl. The hell with rehabilitation. We must scrub out laundry felons! That will surely enhance the public safety. Her shoes will at least be appropriate for the Ship of Fools she embarks on each day.

Myself, I’m going to try to stay off the beach. I will hang my laundry in protest of the endless summer. I will break her surfboard, drain her sunblock, and poke holes in her parasol with my pen. Like Belushi said in the classic film Animal House, “Did we give up when the Germans bombed Pearl Harbor? Hell No!”, and I will not give up reporting the madness. This puts a whole new spin on political “flip-flopping”.



## Principles of Harm Reduction

**Harm reduction is a set of practical strategies and ideas aimed at reducing negative consequences associated with drug use. Harm Reduction is also a movement for social justice built on a belief in, and respect for, the rights of people who use drugs.**

Harm reduction incorporates a spectrum of strategies from safer use, to managed use, to abstinence to meet drug users "where they're at," addressing conditions of use along with the use itself. Because harm

reduction demands that interventions and policies designed to serve drug users reflect specific individual and community needs, there is no universal definition of or formula for implementing harm reduction. However, HRC considers the following principles central to harm reduction practice.

- Accepts, for better and or worse, that licit and illicit drug use is part of our world and chooses to work to minimize its harmful effects rather than

simply ignore or condemn them.

- Understands drug use as a complex, multi-faceted phenomenon that encompasses a continuum of behaviors from severe abuse to total abstinence, and acknowledges that some ways of using drugs are clearly safer than others.
- Establishes quality of individual and community life and well-being—not necessarily cessation of all drug use—as the criteria for successful interventions and policies.
- Calls for the non-judgmental, non-coercive provision of services and resources to people who use drugs and the communities in which they live in order to assist them in reducing attendant harm.
- Ensures that drug users and those with a history of drug use routinely have a real voice in the creation of programs and policies designed to serve them.
- Affirms drugs users themselves as the primary agents of reducing the harms of their drug use, and seeks to empower users to share information and support each other in strategies which meet their actual conditions of use.
- Recognizes that the realities of poverty, class, racism, social isolation, past trauma, sex-based discrimination and other social inequalities affect both people's vulnerability to and capacity for effectively dealing with drug-related harm.
- Does not attempt to minimize or ignore the real and tragic harm and danger associated with licit and illicit drug use.

### **Letter to Deval Patrick on Commutation of Patrick's Cousin Gordon Haas**

December 30, 2013

His Excellency Deval Patrick  
Office of the Governor  
State House – Room 280  
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Governor Patrick,

I see from the news that your cousin, one Reynolds Wintersmith, Jr., after having served more than eighteen years (18) on crack cocaine charges, had his sentence commuted by President Barack Obama. While the newspaper account stated that you were not involved in the clemency process and that Mr. Wintersmith's family ties to you "had no impact on [the] clemency petition," I am sure your family was thrilled and thankful for the mercy shown your cousin. Unfortunately, such mercy has been distinctly absent in Massachusetts as there has not been a commutation of a life sentence here since 1997, more than fifteen years ago. Would it not be fair and compassionate, if families of some of those serving life sentences could share in the same joys of forgiveness and exultation now being experienced by your family?

The members of the Lifers Group here at MCI-Norfolk wish Mr. Wintersmith good fortune in the new year and hope that you might be as open to commutation petitions from lifers in Massachusetts as President Obama was to your family member.

Sincerely,

**Gordon Haas**  
**Chairman – Norfolk Lifers Group**  
**MCI-Norfolk**  
**P.O. Box 43**  
**Norfolk, MA 02056**

cc: File

Harm Reduction Coalition (East Coast)  
22 West 27th Street, 5th Floor  
NY, NY 1000  
[www.harmreduction.org](http://www.harmreduction.org)



**Over-crowding at the Max**  
Edward Pepyne

The Commonwealth's maximum and medium correctional facilities are being over-crowded by the failure of the Department of Correction to follow legislative mandates at the minimum and pre-release levels.

The DOC slows the flow of inmates to lower security levels at minimum facilities like MCI-Plymouth. This is being done directly to counter recent legislative efforts to reduce sentences and increase "good time".

Here is how they do it:

They don't hold the required six month class boards, to avoid change of status issues.

Arbitrary "lugging" is used contrary to the CMRs which require a finding of a particular security risk. This ties up a bed in a medium that could be available for someone at the Max.

Reducing good time for community work crews. Rather than giving good time for participating on the crews as set out in the regulations in the traditional manner, they now require actually going out

for 15 days, but they don't schedule the crews to go out that many times. So the result is: no good time.

Most important, they are not moving inmates from the minimum level to the pre-release within 18 months as authorized by MGL 127 Chapter 49 and as done in the past. Now they are making up their own standard of 12 months to wrap up, which has no regulatory or statutory basis.

The slowing of flow at the minimum level not only impacts the Max; it also causes problems with parole. The Board is now paroling inmates to minimums and pre-release because it hasn't seen inmates function in those environments.

There should be more accountability for the figure head administration at the DOC and more inmates in pre-release. Following existing laws and regulations will reduce the inmate numbers at the Max and create safer parole conditions.

*(MPV has said for years: Over-crowding is not necessary; it is deliberate!)*

**Sharks in a Small Pond**

Joe Labriola

You can almost hear the music from Jaws: ...Dump...Dump...Dump ...Dump! Here they come in a hunting pack...The water bottle police. Don't stir the water or churn up any foam. You can keep your water bottle, just put Kool-Aid, Orange drink, Lemonade, tea or urine in it. As long as the water is not clear you can drink when you're thirsty. Water on the other hand is verboten. In the heat of August you will see the screws with bottles of ice-cold water sticking out of the pockets of their cargo-pants. Unlike prisoners they are allowed to drink whenever their mouths feel dry. It gives you chills to watch as sweat pours down your neck into the crack of your ass. No problem, you can get a nice warm drink from your cellblock. Just put your thirst on hold. 300 men in the yard under a sweltering sun and one small warm water bubbler to handle them all. The highly-paid water bottle sharks are on alert lest some miscreant convict attempts to smuggle a bottle to the yard taped under his armpit or stuffed in his sweat socks. Look, there's Lieutenant Irwin, pulling down about 70K a year. She has a large trash bag full of empty soda bottles that she confiscated from offenders of this ridiculous rule. She gives Deputy Superintendent Di Nardo a slamming high-five. Another bite has just been taken out of crime!

Dump...Dump...Dump...Dump. The antenna sharks. There are ballasts in the fluorescent lights that kill any chance of radio reception in your cell so we stick a thin piece of wire through the screen so that we can get perhaps one or two stations. The antenna sharks will pull the wire from the outside and break your radio as it is dragged off the desk. We are all allowed to buy a radio at inflated prices from the "Company Store" called "Canteen". We just aren't allowed to listen to them. A \$195.00 Sangean receiver becomes merely a \$195.00 clock. Alvin Notice, the Deputy OF Security takes force. Guess he just likes to yank more than most.

*In Memoriam*

**Eric Garner**

**Joseph Vyce**

**Bernard 'Bee' Baran**

**Michael Brown**

**Joshua Messier**

**Francis 'Franie' Gallagher**

**William Lopez**

**Peter Ladetto**

**Maryanne Hamilton**



Dump...Dump...Dump...Dump. The I.D. Card Sharks! They want them clipped to your person wherever you may be inside the asylum. There is no compelling need to have them clipped on your clothing. The sharks cannot read the information contained in small print on these cards unless they place their noses right on top of them. I think the true reason for making us wear I.D. cards is just to prove they can actually MAKE us do something foolish. To clearly demonstrate how idiotic these cards are; I wore a friend's I.D. card on my chest for a week. He wore mine. I am white. My friend is black. The I.D. sharks never noticed.

Dump...Dump...Dump...Dump. The nurse sharks. Do not get sick. Do not grow old. Do not have a heart attack and survive. Do not contract cancer. MCH Shirley is most likely where you will end your life. After a few days in the wards you will want to end your life. You will be placed in what was once the Health Service Unit and is now called the Skilled Nursing Facility (SNF). The Health Service Administrator is Nancy Elmers. She is the alpha shark and has the final say-so on your conditions of confinement. The wards hold five men each and there is no more room at the inn so they are thinking of ways to add a sixth bed in these crowded wards. The stench of urine and feces in these wards will choke you. One of the beds is next to the toilet.

Elderly and dying men lay in bed with diapers on. When they let go

"If you want to know what God thinks of money, just look at the people he gave it to."

"The cure for boredom is curiosity. There is no cure for curiosity."

"The first thing I do in the morning is brush my teeth and sharpen my wit."

~ Dorothy Parker  
Poet, writer, satirist

with their bowels the nurse sharks find something else to do rather than change them right away. Sometimes the man will change himself and place the soiled diapers in the trash can so everyone in that ward can appreciate fully the outrageously reeking and fetid odor. One man was found to have maggots in his diaper last year but the sharks were forced to rectify that when it was reported by a caring convict.

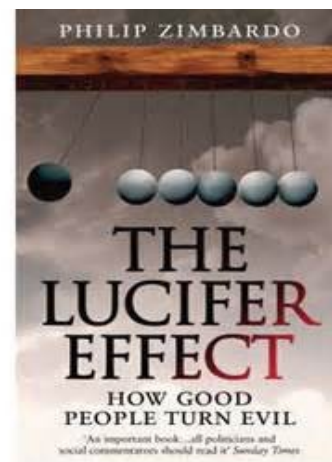
All us lifers will have a chance to die in prison. Once back and hidden away in one of the wards your friends of thirty or forty years will not be allowed to go back and visit you and you in turn will not be allowed out to population to visit them. Not even for law library or church services. When I asked why men could not be seen I was informed; "Because you will bring germs in with you." Apparently convict germs are more dangerous than shark germs from nurses of guards who bring in flu and colds from the outside. Prisoners must remain in a constant state of depression as they await God to call their name. We will lay in a ward that resembles an over lit crypt. The super bright lights will burn holes in your retina and will not be turned off until after the shift change at 11 p.m. Basically the nurse sharks want you to just stay in your bed until mercifully you die.

Dump...Dump...Dump...Dump. Some of the sharks now have fur and four legs. You will recognize their dorsal fins immediately. They will be the ones with their wet noses in your crotch when you come to visit.

The sharks continue to circle and the circle is getting smaller by the day. So are their minds.....



Dorothy Parker, 1893 - 1967



## COMMUTATION

George Magrath

The issuance of a commutation in this state in the last sixteen years has been non-existent. Is it that there is not one person in a pool of one thousand who is deserving, based on the Governor's guidelines for filing? Is there not one person who has made **exceptional** strides? Or is it that no one has been able to make any better than remarkable strides in development?

Or, how about medical issues? Is there not one who has terminal illness, or debilitating disease that would be better managed in the community? Is our medical care in the prison system that extraordinary?

There are too many first degree lifers in our system that meet the Governor's guidelines for commutation, yet are not filing! For those who have exhausted their appeals, you now have two choices:

Resign yourself to the fact you are **surely** going to remain imprisoned. Or, prepare your best arguments for a return to the community and your family, then file for a commutation!

There is help for those who need it. Prisoner Legal Services has a time proven commutation manual available. It contains a step-by-step process for gathering and presenting that information in a comprehensive manner.

Whatever the institution you are housed at, there are lifers who have filed for commutation in the past or

have helped others. These individuals will help if asked. Many institutions have lifers' groups that are geared towards helping those who request their assistance.

It is time we begin fighting for our rights. We have a right to be heard. We have a right to be judged on our merits. We have a right to make use of the avenue of release that was built into our constitution. An avenue that was designed to be free of the politics of the day, yet has been perverted by politicians.

***"You just can't leave those who create the problem in charge of the solution."***

Tyree Scott  
Labor leader



*Tyree Scott, 1940 - 2003*

## **INVITATION TO M.C.O.F.U.**

By Shawn Fisher

In the Summer/Fall 2013 issue of Mass Prison Voice, there were several articles written regarding MCI-Shirley that focused on policies and conditions of the Health Services Unit/Skilled Nursing Facility (HSU/SNF) and the foolishness of isolating prisoners and/or punishing someone for being sick. The articles' authors – Joe Labriola, Mike Skinner and I - primarily focused on not allowing sick, dying men to see their friends from the general population. The feedback we received among fellow prisoners was one of encouragement and affirmation. Every prisoner I spoke to expressed

their gratitude and appreciation for writing about something they wish they could write – but can't.

The only negative opposition came from the guards and staff themselves. Three nurses were overheard talking about the issue and one of them said, "... they should be punished for writing that." One guard said to me, "freedom of speech, huh?" Most of the other guards mainly spoke about it among themselves but were animated enough to be overheard. The officers who are a part of the Massachusetts Correctional Federated Union (MCOFU)\* are upset because we're complaining about valid issues that reflect a prisoner wanting to maintain his dignity as a human being. Apparently, to them, we're less than that.

The truth is, I can look in the mirror each morning and know that I am an A-hole for all the things I have done in my life: the murder I committed, the untold lives I changed because of it, and all the other crosses one must bear in doing a life bid. My question is, "can you?"

My best friend in the whole world, William Barnoski, died at the age of 74 on September 9, 2013. In the time leading up to his passing, it was the guards who went to the superintendent to have us separated as cellmates. It was the guards who then put him in the "HOLE" for four months because of it. And in the last six months of his life, it was the guards who enforced the policy of denying everyone access to go see him. Granted, most of them disagreed with the policy, but not one of them spoke out about it. Where was MCOFU then?

Another friend of mine, Frank Soffen, is dying alone in the HSU/SNF and is not allowed to go to religious services, programs or see the men in general population. Will MCOFU challenge this absurd policy? Of course not, yet you're mad at us for speaking out about it. When Marc Finstein over-dosed in the HSU, a lieutenant snidely remarked, "Oh well, I guess I get to give another

single away today." But I am the bad guy... imagine that.

In a conversation I had with a staff member, I asked, "Is there anything you can do to prevent one of your loved ones from becoming a victim of crime?" He thought for a minute and answered, "No. I have no control over whether someone decides to get behind a wheel drunk or if some addict chooses to do a stick-up."

On the contrary, you see, you get mad at me for wanting to effectuate change in the prison system; for bringing to light absurd and tortuous policies that are killing people; for wanting something more than accepting to die alone.

You see, I am trying to protect those that I love and those that you love from becoming a victim of crime. What are you doing? You work for an agency where your job is to "correct" deviant behavior, not encourage it. When was the last time MCOFU spoke out about cutting funds to prisoners for education? When has MCOFU advocated for vocational training for prisoners, so that when they leave prison they will be better prepared to handle the transition, which in turn would protect the public safety? As a matter of fact, if prisons worked, there would be fewer. So, when was the last time MCOFU came out publicly to close prisons or wanted to curb recidivism?

They haven't. MCOFU's existence is predicated on people coming to prison. In effect, our attitudes pay your salary. The more murders, rapes, kidnappings, robberies and addicts, the better it is for your wallets. No wonder you're mad at us. MCOFU is more concerned with jobs, hiring more recruits, getting more over-time and warning the public about how dangerous it is for them to be in here. Don't get me wrong, there are times when you are definitely put in harm's way and for that you will get no argument out of me. However, how many times could those instances have been avoided? How often could a little communication or understanding have prevented an altercation? But instead, let's single

out the guys who are trying to change the dehumanizing ethos of prison. Let's get mad at the few men who have the courage to stand up and speak out about the direction in which the DOC is going. Let's retaliate against the men who want to change the cycle of prisoners leaving prison unequipped to live in society as law abiding citizens, all because of some imaginary "blue code".

The irony of all this is that you bust our balls everyday over stupid crap: confiscating water bottles, clotheslines, "IDs out", "no white t-shirts in the building" late movements, closing the church, cell decorum, patting down people for milk or bread... and for what? *This is how you protect public safety?* This is the "Master Plan" of curbing recidivism and aiding rehabilitation? All this is designed for is to create 'climate issues'. We take it on the chin every day, yet, "it's not you, it's the administration". THEN SPEAK UP! We do and then we're labeled the bad guys by you.

Keep getting mad, just as you're going to get mad at this article. Someone has to protect the public safety because it is certainly not you. That is of course; unless you want to ... In any event, you can prevent those you love from becoming victims of crime. You just have to care about it enough to prevent it. It starts with you actually caring about what happens to a prisoner. It starts the moment you punch the time-clock and it begins the second you start speaking up and speaking out.

*About the author: Shawn Fisher has authored several articles for Mass Prison Voice, as well as for the Solitary Watch and Real Cost of Prisons websites. He has authored position papers for CURE-Arm and Bread and Water. He has also been published in the Journal of Prisoners on Prisons. Shawn can be reached at: P.O. Box 1218, Shirley MA 01464. To learn more go to: [betweenthebars.org/blogs/101](http://betweenthebars.org/blogs/101) or Bread and Water, Inc., 171 Congress St., Milford, MA 01757.*

*\*MPV editor: MCOFU is not a true union as its members are overseers, not workers.*

## Benjamin Franklin, Friend of Libraries



Benjamin Franklin was born on January 17, 1706 in Boston, Massachusetts. Franklin is probably best known in the library community for founding the Library Company of Philadelphia in 1731. It was America's first lending library and can lay claim to being the predecessor of the free public library. For a brief period (Dec. 1733-Mar. 1734) Franklin actually served as the librarian for the Library Company. He also served as its secretary from 1746 to 1757. Franklin considered the Library Company to be the "Mother of all North American Subscription Libraries ....". Franklin appeared on the first United States postage stamp and has been depicted on more U.S. postage stamps than any other American except George Washington. He facilitated many civic organizations, including Philadelphia's fire department and a university. One of Franklin's notable characteristics was his respect, tolerance and promotion of all churches. "He helped create a new type of nation that would draw strength from its religious pluralism."



## Where's the Money!!!

Gordon Haas

Thank you for the great articles on Compassionate Release in the Summer/Fall 2013 issue. It was a joy to read the work of old friends such as Joe Labriola, Tim Muise, and Michael Skinner, as well as Shawn Fisher, whom I have not had the pleasure of meeting. Their writings were, as always, insightful and heartfelt. Sitting in my cell, I have been contemplating the awful conditions inflicted upon those who are so ill and wondering what will it be like when it is my turn? I can see a few of the NEADS dogs and their trainers out in the yard behind my unit. What occurs to me is that I would rather be a NEADS dog here than be housed as a terminally ill prisoner at Shirley-Medium! I say that not because the dogs will eventually be released from behind the walls, but because the dogs are treated with compassion and respect. It says a lot about the DOC where dogs are treated better than terminally ill prisoners.

Compassion, unfortunately, is no longer a word that can be applied to treating terminally ill prisoners humanely in the DOC or releasing those who pose no risk to society so they can die with dignity outside prison walls and among family and friends. There is no compassion in the DOC or, seemingly in society, for terminally ill prisoners. The watchword now is money. Common sense, however, would dictate that releasing terminally ill prisoners would save taxpayers' money with no attendant risk to public safety. But, obviously, common sense does not win the day.

The facts are that the fastest growing age group in the DOC is age 60 and above (13% from 2009 to 2011) and the second is age 50-9 at 9%. Other age groups increased by not more than 2%. It does not take a math scholar to realize that as the DOC population rapidly ages, the costs of incarceration will rise concomitantly. Older prisoners cost more, and there is no way around that. One factor contributing to the aging problem is the Parole Board



since 2010. Dirk Greineder, Vice Chairman of the Norfolk Lifers Group, has prepared an excellent report on the costs attendant with the precipitous drop in parole rates for state and county prisoners after the Parole Board was reorganized. The bottom line is that in 2010, Deval Patrick's Folly, i.e., reconstituting the Parole Board, has cost the Commonwealth over \$200,000,000. That's right - \$200 million!! The annual cost exceeds \$73 million. Those on the outside, go to: [www.realcostofprisons.org](http://www.realcostofprisons.org) website to access the full report.

In addition to wasting over \$73 million a year due to the obtuse Parole Board, there is even more money sitting around unspent by the DOC, actually nearly \$500,000. "Where Is the Money?" you ask. The answer is in the DOC's self-created Program Account and Law Library Fund (103 DOC 476). Each month, Inmate Benefit Funds (IBFs) in the seventeen institutions are assessed 10% for the DOC's Program Account and 35% for the DOC's Law Library Fund. Remember - over 90% of the money contributed to IBFs comes from commissions kicked back to the DOC by Keefe Commissary Network (KCN). The commission rate is 18% on sales to prisoners. Thus, 18¢ of every dollar you and I spend with KCN, goes back to the DOC. So, we provide the money that the DOC spends from its Program Account and Law Library Fund. In response to a public records request, I received printouts of the sources and uses for money that goes in and out of the Program Account and Law Library Fund for Fiscal Year 2011 (July 1, 2010 to June 30, 2011) and Fiscal Year 2012 (July 1, 2011 to June 30, 2012). The expenses for the Program Account are determined by the Director of Program Services and some boggle the mind. Why, for instance, was over \$91,000 paid to Spectrum for a Diversion Unit at SBCC? Spectrum,

by the way, was found by the state auditor to have misappropriated \$17.4 million in DOC funds from 1992 to 2002 and then let off with having to repay only \$7.5 million, leaving a tidy sum of nearly \$10 million in Spectrum's pockets - for any of us that would be prosecuted as embezzlement. Or, why was \$25,000 spent for a floor in Gardner's Culinary Arts area, and close to \$3,000 for wristband I.D. bracelets for Bridgewater State Hospital? In the end, for the two years, nearly \$30,000 was left unspent out of a total assessment of \$397,837.70 for the Program Account. The Law Library Fund for the same two years had a whopping surplus of \$468,690.05, out of an assessment totaling \$1,392,873.98! Please access: [www.realcostofprisons.org](http://www.realcostofprisons.org) website for the full report. The Lifers Group thanks Lois Ahrens of the Real Cost of Prisons Project for posting these and several other reports on the website.

So, the money to treat terminally ill prisoners sensibly and humanely is, and has been for years, available to the DOC without their having to go hat in hand to the legislature. What is missing, it appears, is the will to use those funds simply because the DOC does not accept their obligation owed to terminally ill prisoners, i.e.; humane end-of-life care. To understand why the DOC fails so miserably at this responsibility, one need only know that Commissioner Luis Spencer, upon being openly taken to task for not publicizing the good programs in the DOC, like Boston University's Higher Education Program, opined that the fault lay not with the DOC, but with prisoners who continually criticize the DOC. Rather, the Commissioner suggested we should, on visits and telephone calls, talk about the positive and not the negative. Well, if that were the criterion, my next visit and/or telephone call would be the shortest on record. It hardly seems worth the effort - not unlike the attitude the DOC displays toward terminally ill prisoners.

## From Sue's Desk

There isn't too much going on with me. Just working and trying to survive. I have noticed that requests for medical intervention have slowed down. I know that it isn't because you people are getting the medical attention that you should be getting. I'm thinking that a lot of you may not realize that I am still advocating for you. Well, I am.

Every so often the DOC changes up the way they do things. One of the changes are that now, when I send you an intervention form along with the medical release form and you send me back all the paperwork, you must have someone from medical witness your signature on that form. Before, anyone could sign it. Not now. So make sure when you send me the paperwork back that you have had someone from medical witness the release form. Many of you may not have my address so I'm putting it below:

Susan Huskins  
137 Bells Point Rd.  
Port Mouton, N.S. B0T1T0

I may be in another country but I am still here for each one of you who might need help.

One more thing I want to let you know is that there is no need for you to go through the expense of mailing me your medical records. Just tell me on the intervention form what is going on with your care or lack of it. Only send me paperwork if you absolutely feel that it is something I need to have. I will copy it and return it to you.



\_\_\_\_\_ (\_\_\_\_\_) Print Name (DOC#)

**Information about Polygraph Assessment**

As part of SOTP program changes, you may be recommended to participate in a polygraph assessment. The polygraph assessment will involve asking you questions about your offending history, personal history, sexual interests, and current sexual thoughts and behaviors.

You do not have to participate in a polygraph assessment.

If you decline participation in the polygraph you may be asked to participate in higher intensity treatment, which could require moving to a different treatment unit. Outcome data from a polygraph assessment may also lead to a change in treatment intensity, which could require moving to a different treatment unit.

The polygraph assessment results will be documented and placed in your MHM/FHS Clinical File. Your file is subject to review by members of your treatment team as well as anyone else with the legal authority to view your file.

This document is not a consent to participate, it will not be placed in your Clinical file, and you may decline to participate at any time. The intent of this document is to ask if you would be interested and/or willing to participate in a polygraph assessment if recommended for you at a later date. If you participate in a polygraph at a later date, you will review and be asked to sign an informed consent.

At this point, if it were recommended that I participate in a polygraph assessment:

Yes, I would participate in a polygraph assessment

No, I would decline to participate in a polygraph assessment

Greetings. Welcome to our better-late-than-never edition of Mass Prison Voice. We missed you too and hope you enjoy this issue!

For newer subscribers who may not know, we are a small unpaid group who've been affected and educated by the experience of having loved ones Behind the Wall. We know how this unjust system operates. We know that prison reformists are often in cahoots with the DOC. We are not. This newsletter, sent free to more than 500 folks on the Inside, is an expression of solidarity.

We believe this publication is unique. We pride ourselves on not censoring your submissions, though there occasions when we may disagree with you. We appreciate how difficult it is to function in an

environment where might is right and the DOC culture encourages staff to make life more miserable. If we can negate some of that outrageous behavior AND counter the media propaganda we will feel we have succeeded.

**Take care of yourselves and each other!** *Susan M., Andrea*



Do you know folks on the Outside who'd be willing to distribute a few copies of MPV to their local library, town hall, house of worship or community center?

Please let us know.

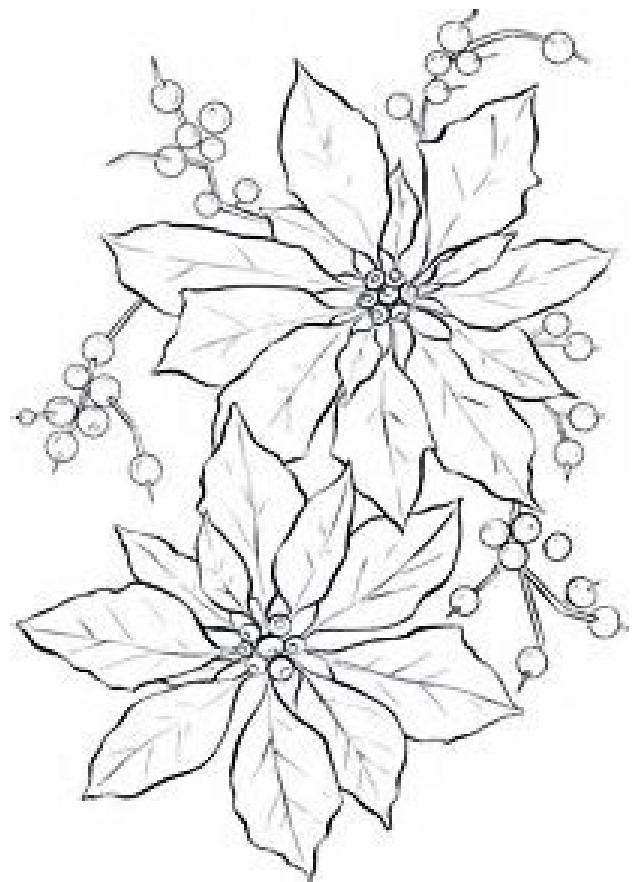
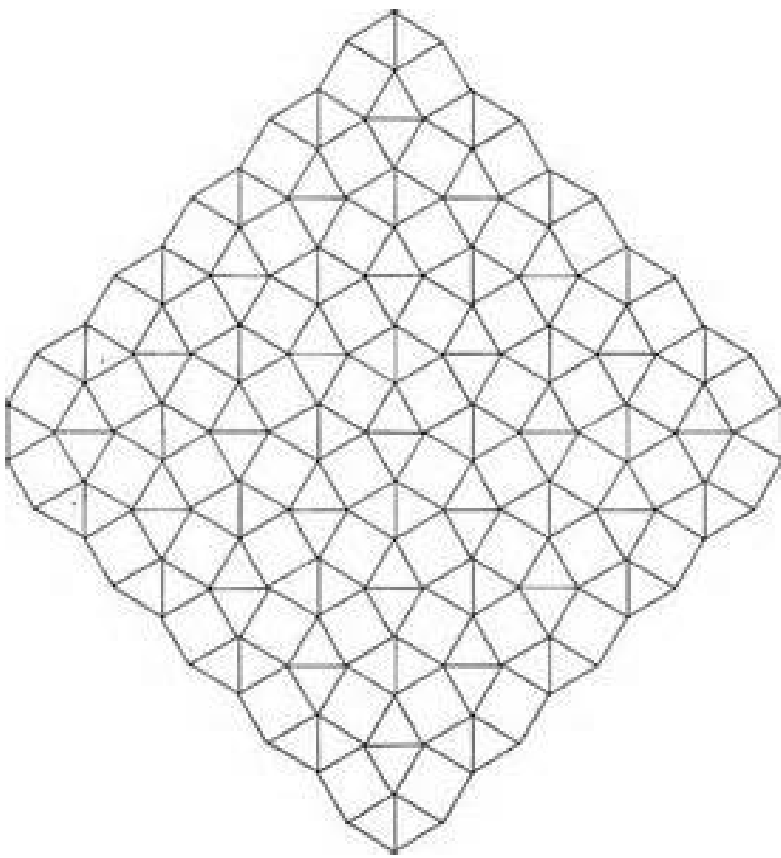
Thanks!



R.I.P. Maryanne Hamilton

On May 28th, 2013 Maryanne was sentenced to 1 to 2 years at MCI-Framingham. She had made parole and was due to be released in Mid-November. On Monday October 20, 2014 between 8:00 and 8:15 P.M. she allegedly committed suicide. She was revived and placed on life support until Thursday morning, October 23, when she died. She was a day away from her 31<sup>st</sup> birthday.





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