

A Most Serious Noise

To my family, I give my sincerest gratitude. It is to them that I owe my strength, my will, and my persevering drive. My work, I dedicate to my children, Kilie and Ahren, for it is with a mind toward their future that I labor. This treatise, I dedicate and direct to all those who have an interest, either vested or proclaimed, in mass incarceration in the U.S.

A broad overview of the situation reveals that the United States incarcerates more of its citizens than any other country in the world; 2,217,700, as of 2015, according to the 2018 Almanac. Of the twenty-five countries listed under the title, "World Prison Populations," the United States had not only the largest prison population of all, but indeed had a larger prison population than all the others combined, by nearly half again. Texas prisons alone are more populous than those of twenty-two of these countries; California more than twenty-one. The U.S., as of 2015, had more people serving life without parole sentences than twenty of these countries had total in prison. Armed with these statistics, intuition guides us to conclude that the system is broken. Many would limit this to the Criminal Justice System, but they would err in doing so. The break goes much deeper to permeate the whole of the State's and national legislatures, the very heart of our government institutions.

Some will find this discourse objectionable, taking offense at the depth of my commitment, at my passion, at the severity of my speech; perhaps they will label me a fanatic, or worse, but is the cause not severe? Does it not provoke a passionate response? The weight of oppression is real; it is not imaginary. 2,217,700 citizens in prison are real; they are not imaginary, so I will be harsh, and unashamed of it. Borrowing the words of William Lloyd Garrison, January 1, 1831:

I will be as harsh as truth, and as uncompromising as justice. On this subject, I do not wish to think, or speak, or write, with moderation. No! No! Tell a man whose house is on fire to give a moderate alarm; Tell him to moderately rescue his wife from the hands of a ravisher; tell the mother to gradually extricate her babe from the fire into which it has fallen - but urge me not to use moderation in a cause like the present. I am in earnest - I will not equivocate - I will not excuse - I will not retreat a single inch - AND I WILL BE HEARD.

I have petitioned a variety of organizations seeking to build rapport, to assemble advocates and activists to contend in this cause, to create comradeship and solidarity. Some have responded with letters, newsletters, or other information explaining their positions, purposes, and platforms; others with only silence. One must wonder: How is it that an organization can postulate an interest in acting in, or advocating a cause when they will not even respond to an inquiry from a party with a vested interest in the cause? Such an organization can be of no help to anyone. Organizations such as this create a false sense of hope and cause the unsuspecting prisoner to waste financial resources (stamps and envelopes) that, in many cases, are already scarce and precious.

Organizations that do respond to prisoner's inquiries can be arranged into four general categories: 1) Ministries; 2) Sales; 3) Proponents of hate and discord (thankfully I have only encountered a small number of these); 4) Advocates and activists. Each of these is addressed in the text that follows.

Ministries are among the first resources introduced to prisoners; some are religious, others philosophical. All are valuable. All prisoners owe a debt of gratitude to these organizations, as their books, magazines, bible studies, etc. have helped us all to get through some of our darkest days. Many who have lost contact with family and friends on the outside depend on mail from ministries to confirm there still exists a world on the outside. Our greatest needs, however, go beyond bibles, bible studies, and 'feel good' literature. What we need most of all are advocates, activists who will pick up the torch, who will stand against the oppression that subjects more than two million citizens to bondage, and many of those to involuntary servitude. The Thirteenth Amendment did not abolish slavery; it only re-organized it. Slavery, courtesy of this legislative action, was simultaneously abolished as a private enterprise and re-established as an enterprise under governmental control.

There are several companies that seek to sell their products and services to prisoners, but my only concern is with those whose vendibles are purported to benefit the prisoner's legal position in some way. Typical products being sold are: legal books, magazine (legal genre) subscriptions, and membership subscriptions. It is an unfortunate truth that those who are most likely to

find benefit in these products and services are also the ones who can least afford to pay for them. In the end it seems there would be more fertile fields for the capitalist to plow. Prisoners, by and large, would greatly benefit from a little less capitalism and a little more compassion.

Hate groups are the worst of the worst. They disguise themselves as advocates and activists for justice only to be discovered sowing discord. These organizations (thankfully they are few) aspire to spread militant, separatist, and racist ideologies. Perhaps they would benefit from the oration of the late Malcolm X. He told a Chicago audience:

I am not a racist and do not subscribe to any of the tenets of racism. In all honesty and sincerity it can be stated that I wish nothing but freedom, justice, and equality; life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness - for all people.

Even if love and affection are not sought between the races, we should, at the very least, promote acceptance, tolerance, and cooperation. The Establishment may want us to hate one another: for they benefit from our disunity, but we (society's plebians) have no cause; we have nothing to gain from hate. This agenda of hate is outdated. If you belong to one of these organizations, or subscribe to their ideologies, you have been left behind in an ancient and decaying world. It would benefit all (you included) if you would catch the next shuttle to the current decade. Those of us who are fighting oppression by the state - instead of each other - could use your help.

Advocates and activists, I salute you. It is to you, along with my family, friends, fellow prisoners, and the common citizenry of the United States that the remainder of this expose is directed.

The United States legislative and criminal justice systems are appalling; they are anathemas to the whole of the democratic world. The land of the free and home of the brave has, during our charmed slumber, been transformed into the land of the incarcerated and the home of the oppressed. While prison terms imposed in European democracies have steadily declined (or been eliminated) over the past decades, those prescribed in the United States have, in equal or exceeding proportions, inclined during the same period. While other democratic societies seek alternatives to prison sentences, the United States embraces

them as their end-all punishment solution. While others reform their prison facilities and programs to achieve more favorable results from them, the United States sits idle, wallowing in her legislative excrement.

Punishment in the United States is draconian across the board, but, with regards to repeat offenders, the system is critically unsound. Rather than following a reasonable and concrete punishment schedule, with allowances for assigning predetermined penalties to repeat offences, the punishment schedules in use present the sentencer with extremely flexible punishment ranges that fall somewhere between "oh my" and "OH. My. God!" Perhaps such arbitrary flexibility is intended to accommodate the sentencer's mood, or worse, prejudices. The courts have taken on a baseball game aura, so, generally speaking, "Three Strikes" laws make sport and short work of repeat offenders, and anoint the U.S. the undisputed king of life sentences; more than 200,000 as of 2015; approximately 50,000 of these being without any possibility of parole. Now that is a Grand Slam for certain!

As Constitutional Articles I-IV blighted the character of the nation by encouraging the spread of slavery (more on this later), so do today's state and national legislatures by encouraging the spread of corruption throughout the justice system. The legislators have been hard at work, and their tenacious fixation has yielded its unjust reward. Five decades it has taken to accomplish, but an abiding role reversal has emerged in courtrooms all across the U.S. The legal demands on the State have ebbed, while those on the accused have flowed, and justice is lost at sea, adrift on the tide. The presumption of innocence so prevalent in 1970 has fallen by the wayside, being replaced with a presumption of guilt in today's courtroom. The burden of proof that rested firmly on the shoulders of the State fifty years ago, is now crushing the accused. No longer is the State required to prove the guilt of the accused, beyond a reasonable doubt; but, in many cases, the accused must prove their innocence, irrefutably.

Adding fuel to this fire of corruption is police profiling (targeted enforcement and harassment). For two very clear examples of this type of activity see the infamous events of Fergusson, MO and the "Stop and Frisk" campaign in New York City. Who is targeted in these activities, and why? First the who:

Police frequently set up sting operations in, or on the outskirts of low income communities. Most will recognize the disparaging names given them: ghettos, slums, projects, hives, etc.

The individuals targeted are usually, but not always minorities.

Now, for the why:

These communities are targeted because they are known, or at least believed, to support elevated levels of drug, gang, and other illicit activities.

These individuals are targeted because they are believed to be easy marks.

They are likely to be carrying drugs and/or weapons on their person, or so it is believed.

They are believed to lack both education and the financial resources to mount a successful defense.

The "why" of this is simple: greed, and greed can never be sated. This activity stimulates the economy, providing support for the justice system. Do you believe this unjust? You should; it is. Do you feel violated? You should, for you have been; we all have. The State has transformed from protector to predator; our government from a democracy, where the people are the power, to an oligarchy, where the power is in the hands of but a few. C.S. Lewis, in Mere Christianity, postulated that:

The State exists simply to promote and protect the ordinary happiness of human beings in this life...[t]hat is what the State is there for. And unless they are [doing that]...all the laws, parliaments, armies, courts, police, economics, etc. are simply a waste of time.

Having said this, it must likewise be acknowledged that the citizens of this group are not without responsibility. In many ways they serve as antagonists in their own repression. Their conduct and behavior is the academic sustenance of social scientists worldwide. To state the matter simply: These individuals, through their own actions, attract unwanted attention; they make targets of themselves. I say this not to excuse the actions of the police, or of the State; no, on the contrary, they are inexcusable, but, at the same time, one cannot dive into the water and expect not to get wet. These citizens have the means to positively affect their situation. If they choose to not do so, the fault is theirs and theirs alone.

More distressing, even than police profiling and all that goes with that, are the conditions of poverty that our States - This problem falls more directly under the purview of the State government than the federal - have allowed to persist within their borders. Nearly 13% of the U.S. population live at or below poverty level income; some, far below. This begs the question, "Why?" How is it that the United States, one of the most advanced societies in the world and the wealthiest nation in the world neglects the academic and social development of their poor to such an extent as to allow, even encourage, forty million of their citizens to exist in festering and squalid poverty? How can a government, (proclaimed to be) "of, by, and for the people" be so consciously indifferent to the condition of so many of their citizens? Three of the leading contributors to crime are: poverty, poor education, and lack of social development programming. Those persons involved in our government know and understand this. Unlike our poor, our politicians are some of the best educated individuals in our country. Why then do they not address the problem? Is it because of the expense involved? Be assured, the expense involved is not an issue, at least not directly; much of this condition could be relieved at little or no actual expense at all (more about this lies ahead). Well then, what other reason could there be? Here we hit a gold mine, for this is the billion dollar question.

As the ante-bellum South had grown dependent on slavery to support their economy, so has the whole of the United States grown dependent on crime for the same. The states give lip service to helping the poor and to reducing crime, but nothing more. In truth, they have no genuine interest in doing either. Do not be deceived: Our welfare programs do not relieve poverty.

It might be said, in fact, that they contribute to it, because they fail to provide their recipients with the means necessary to remedy their situation. There is an old proverb that says:

Give a man a fish, and feed him once;
Teach him to fish, and feed him for life.

How can our welfare system provide relief for poverty when it provides neither employment, nor job skills, nor vocational training, nor education? This system does not promote healing, but dependence; and it comes with countless negative side-effects. Truth be told, the states do not wish to relieve poverty, because it is from this squalor that their multi-billion dollar criminal justice systems receive the majority of their fodder. A State committed to relieving its poverty would be akin to a plantation owner in the ante-bellum South committed to manumitting his slaves. Government propaganda would have us believe that "crime doesn't pay," but that is a lie, a misdirection to hide the truth. Crime does pay; it pays the salaries of politicians, judges, attorneys, police, investigators, and more; it provides revenue streams for office supply stores, office equipment providers, restaurants, parking garages, etc.; it generates business for real estate companies; it funds, at least in part, many municipal projects; and the list goes on. Then also, we must consider the spawned grant monies received by various government entities to aid in their "fight against crime." There are literally billions of reasons for the States not to relieve the poverty conditions that exist within their borders, and all of these reasons have George Washington's picture on their face.

Poverty could be relieved, lives and communities improved, and crime reduced, and all without incurring any additional expense by diverting monies that are presently being spent to fund prisons. There is a catch, however; to do so would mean reducing prison populations, necessitating a realignment of punishment schedules, revitalizing parole systems, and a host of other reforms throughout the criminal justice system. Additionally, enacting such sweeping reforms would mean losing federal and private funding that pays for the current - over fat - system; and, in the case of Texas alone, it would mean losing more than 100 million hours of exploited slave labor annually. Life, liberty, the pursuit of happiness, and equality were never intended for the masses; they were to be the benefits and rewards of the elite, to be paid for by the proletariat.

Having identified a number of problems we are now prepared to - and we must - move forward. Identifying problems is only the beginning of the journey, and anyone can travel that road. We must identify solutions to those problems. We can no longer leave our State and national representatives to contrive solutions of their own. Doing so has led us to where we are today: festering poverty encroaching ever deeper into our society, the quality of public education declining steadily, and the criminal justice system growing more corrupt by the day. We have to recover the reins. Left to their own devices they will seek to serve their interests above those of the people they have been charged to represent. This truth has revealed itself time and again throughout our history. These representatives are our agents, not our brains. We cannot surrender our thinking processes to them and hold on to any hope of retaining our freedom. With solutions in hand, or at least in mind we are ready to take the next step, making ourselves heard.

Since our activities are not dominating every media broadcast in the United States, every day of the week, we must admit, to ourselves and to each other, that we are not doing enough. We must admit that, while our professed ambitions have been noble, our actions have been inadequate. Wanting, wishing and hoping for correction will not effect it. Talking amongst ourselves, in our little groups, and within our organizations will not accomplish our goals. The newsletters and resource lists sent to prisoners, without positive and momentous actions behind them, are empty, serving only to remind us of the severity of our situation. If we are to have any hope of correction we must be serious in our commitment, and we have to unite, person to person; organization to organization. We can leave no one out, we can leave no one behind. We must become ONE! And we must resolve to make some serious noise. We can allow no one to ignore us; not our municipalities, not our States, not the Congress or the Senate, and not the media; most definitely, not the media.

When was women's suffrage finally achieved? Only when the women made some serious noise; nearly 150 years following the United States break from England; 50 years following universal male suffrage.

When did civil rights for blacks - This is a work in progress - begin to get some serious attention? Only when the blacks (and some others) made some serious noise; 100 years following the U.S. Civil War.

When will "We the People of the United States" see corrective action within the criminal justice systems of the U.S. and of the individual States? Only when "We the People" make some serious noise.

How do we make this serious, this glorious noise? We draft letters to engage persons of influence in our municipal government, our state government, our federal government, the United Nations, the governments of every democratic government on the planet, and anyone and everyone else that we might persuade to plead our cause. We make our displeasure known the world over. We have remained silent for too long. We commit ourselves to sending as many of these letters as we can personally send, and then we distribute them to others to do the same. We generate so much postal mail that the Post Office knows not whether to love or to hate us; to make our leadership both dread and fear us. Then, what is done in postal mail must be complemented with electronic mail. If someone in a leadership position has an email address we must overwhelm it daily. We must send so much email that governmental email servers all across the nation crash continually. We must then reinforce our email campaigns with a commensurate telephone campaign. We must put enough people on the phones to jam the government's switchboards; not for minutes or hours, but for days and weeks at a time. And do we stop here? Not. On. Your. Life!

We must not allow the media to accuse of neglecting them. They are used against us continually; it is therefore only just that we reciprocate in kind and make this tool our own. Every address to our leadership must produce a corresponding address to the media. Every letter, email, or telephone call to our leadership must elicit, educe, evoke a like address to the media. It is time - indeed, past time - we gave the Washington Post, New York Times, and USA Today something worthwhile to report. Is this all then; are we finished? Not. On. Your. Life!

To make sure that our leadership understands the depth of our displeasure we must put thousands, tens, scores of thousands of people in the streets every day. We must mobilize everyone that can walk, and everyone that can push a wheelchair for those who are infirm. We must make ourselves seen, our voices heard, and our presence felt. If someone gazes out the window of a government or media organization office they should have a fine view of one of our parties. In his first address to Congress, in December, 1829, President Andrew Jackson told them:

The people are the government, administering it by their agents; they are the government, the sovereign power...
The people are sovereign, their will is absolute.

Our leadership appears to have lost sight of this inherent truth. They appear not to understand that they are merely agents of the people. For too long we have allowed our agents to impose their will upon us, when it is our will, the will of the people, not theirs, that is absolute. He went on to say:

Where the people are everything...there and only there
is liberty.

We have surrendered our country to our agents; we must reclaim it for ourselves. Our liberty awaits us, but we must claim it; it will not be imparted upon us freely. Liberty is not free; it comes at a cost; one must work to gain it, and work harder to maintain it. In the words of George Bernard Shaw:

Liberty means responsibility: That is why most
men dread it.

Our objective must be to fill the streets, the cars and public transportation, the homes, and every business establishment with the buzz of conversation, and we must make certain that, of all the words being spoken, most of those words are about our activities.

We must engage every person, organization, and entity that can be engaged, both foreign and domestic. We must give every Civil Rights and Human Rights organization, as well as every democratic government in the world, cause to stand tall, to raise their own voices, and to flock to our banner. We must

attract and engage the support of any and all that can bring pressure to bear against the decision makers, policy makers, and lawmakers upon whom we are dependent. We must not relent until what we seek has been gained, and is IRREVOCABLE!

Now we know how to get the attention of our agents, but we must be prepared to dictate an acceptable response once we have it. Several times I have been asked, "What cause do we pursue?" To this, I say, "Take your pick: there is a smorgasbord of causes to choose from." Some of the more popular ones are:

- Elimination of the death penalty.
- Elimination of life sentences.
- Capping prison sentences with a twenty year maximum.
- Elimination of solitary confinement and Super-Max prisons.
- Elimination of the sex offender registry.

These are only a few of the more popular causes; there are many more, and not all of them so obviously associated with prison. There are indeed plenty of causes; we need only the people to advocate - really advocate - for them. Before any cause can be advocated for, however, as previously mentioned, a solution, or at least a proposed solution, must be identified. We make our displeasure known, and then we chart a path to appeasement.

To facilitate our efforts further, we must organize and promote public education campaigns. I cannot count the number of times, in talking with people, I have heard, "I didn't know that." Then we move to engage the public at large, circulating petitions advocating to change or abrogate laws or disagreeable public policy. We initiate civil suits aimed at the abolition of slavery, of all types and by all names, once and for all; sweeping reforms throughout the criminal justice system, including, but not limited to:

- Legislation,
- The Judicial System,
- Policing and Enforcement,
- Prisons of all types,
- Public Education,
- and more.

We identify poverty relief measures and make it known that we expect such measures to be implemented. Poverty and poor education are key contributors to crime, criminal activity, and the resultant consequences. It is up to us to fix the problems that we face. I propose, for the sake of fairness, you strip away the prejudices and ancient beliefs that envelop your mind. I challenge you to step through the veil of these preconceived ideas, to gain an unobstructed perspective. Ponder this: Is your ideology even genuinely yours, or was it indeed provided by others and accepted perhaps without due scrutiny? I ask that you consider objectively, and maybe for the very first time, not only what you know about crime, criminals, and the criminal justice system, but also what you do not.

Our survival then, as a nation depends neither on words nor professions, but on actions, your actions. More than two million Americans are mired in quicksand and seek your helping hand. We need your help. Join us now, because we cannot win this war without you. Power comes in numbers. Victory comes in unity. I welcome your thoughts, but what I need is your action, because today I am the one caught in this web. Tomorrow, it might be you.
Real justice is our cause.