

*This is unedited*

## THE PURPOSE OF PRISONS... / Introduction

I **BEGAN** drafting the attached article in brief clips of time (20 to 45 minutes) in September 2013. On November 27, 2013 it was erased from the hard-drive of the computer it was saved on by prison staff. What follows was re-drafted in a rush. With absurdly limited access to the computer producing it I simply could not sufficiently edit it. As they say –“it is what it is.” AND, WHAT “IT IS” IS THAT MAINE STATE PRISON is an institution that is horribly mismanaged by administrative officials and their immediate subordinates. Most of those who rise to positions of authority in the MSP hierarchy are the absolute last types of people who should be managing the daily lives of *convicts* –cut and dried.

It is extremely difficult –if not impossible– to reasonably argue that the standard operating procedures (SOP’s) at Maine State Prison are not *designed* to do what they do –keep prisoners in a constant state of “*spring-coil tension*.”

At Maine State Prison prisoners are shuttled in and out of their cells constantly. Only 1 percent of the reasons for this are justifiable –that is, “justifiable” in a morally sound correctional institution. I assure you that Maine State Prison is not such a place; in fact “it,” is awful close to enforcing, performing and facilitating on a daily basis the diametric opposite of those policies, procedures and programs that should be, in keeping with the mission of a morally sound correctional institution as an *actual* service to the public. All Maine State Prison is doing for the *most* part is breeding criminals who upon rejoining mainstream society are more likely to commit acts of violence against innocent citizens than before serving their sentence. I assure you this is true.

“WHAT HAPPENS INSIDE JAILS AND PRISONS DOES NOT STAY INSIDE JAILS AND PRISONS. IT COMES HOME WITH PRISONERS AFTER THEY ARE RELEASED AND WITH CORRECTIONAL OFFICERS AT THE END OF EACH DAYS SHIFT.....there is still too much violence in America’s prisons and jails, too many facilities that are crowded to the breaking point, too little medical and mental health care, unnecessary use of solitary confinement and other forms of segregation, a desperate need for the kinds of productive activities that discourage violence and make rehabilitation possible, and a culture in many prisons and jails that pits staff against prisoners and management against staff...WE MUST CREATE SAFE AND PRODUCTIVE CONDITIONS OF CONFINEMENT NOT ONLY BECAUSE IT IS THE RIGHT THING TO DO, BUT BECAUSE IT INFLUENCES THE SAFETY, HEALTH, AND PROSPERITY OF ALL.”

The above-quoted is from a June 2006 report “Confronting Confinement” conducted by The Commission on Safety and Abuse in America’s Prisons.

As I write this introduction, just last week another murder occurred at Maine State Prison, the fourth in five years. The conflict that leads to “incidents” resulting in security lockdowns at Maine State Prison is largely attributable to MSP’s standard operating procedures (SOP’s) and because the right types of educational programming are not available to a population of prisoners who spend 90 percent of their waking life cooped up in cellblocks that have become increasingly dense since the early months of 2013. In the abovementioned report on page 12 is stated: **PREVENT VIOLENCE: RECOMMENDATIONS: 1. Reduce Crowding.** States and localities must commit to eliminating the crowded conditions that exist in many of the country’s prisons and jails and work with corrections administrators to set and meet reasonable limits on the number of prisoners that facilities can safely house.” This expert opinion is meaningless to the current powers-that-be who lord over most State Prison Systems, especially those in state’s with struggling economies of which Maine is among if not the absolute worst.

Many of the changes that the above-referenced report brushes across have been understood and strongly suggested by policy experts for decades. It is no surprise that they have never sufficiently developed *because* the American crime control industry-prison industrial complex is a multi-billion dollar corporate monster whose wishes are facilitated by politicians who are essentially prostitutes to these entities; AND, in part because of the below stated apathy, these sociopaths (corporate thugs), and their servants such as the appointed DOC administrators and their minions –in varying levels– profit from this business of bottom feeding off America’s poor.

“I have sent many letters to various legislators over the years advocating for inmate needs and never once received a reply! There are road blocks with reentry advocacy as I talk with people in the community too.” (These are the words of a longtime prisoner advocate in Maine)

The reality as stated in the abovementioned report is that “Most Americans feel that life in a jail or prison does not affect them. It takes an awful event to remind people that the dangers inside can affect them...a corrections officer who is killed on the job leaving a family behind; the spread of infectious disease from cellblock to neighborhood block, because the prison’s medical Dept. –like at MSP– charges prisoners for health-care preventing many prisoners from seeking to be seen by medical regarding a variety of illnesses that tend to spread in prison. When the headlines fade [the public is] left only with the sinking feeling that prison is a problem with no solution.”

There are solutions. Restructuring the System from the top down is where positive change must begin. The wrong people are in charge. So long as the same politicians and administrators lord over the prisons the problems will continue; they will pump onto the streets *ticking time bombs*.