

## The Confused Stat of American Criminal Justice

Incarceration is an interesting reality in these united states and perhaps its most interesting aspect is the confused and contradictory state in which it resides and thrives. This state of confusion is most profound and pervasive throughout our criminal justice system. Criminal justice practices within our society are arguably, one of the world's most confused and contradictory. It is believed that our system, with its elaborate and extensive penal component, serves the greater good of our society as a whole. We, Americans exalt our system of justice as superior to all others and yet, we are by in large utterly ignorant to the confuse and contradictory state of its existence.

The electorate and public at large are clear in their expectations of their criminal justice process and response. So to, are operators and actors within the criminal justice system. They all claim shared goals and expectations, but all have differing motives. There is an inherent symbiosis amongst these various entities and it is unclear who develops whose expectations. An interesting dynamic at work for sure. Regardless, each works to influence the other purely in the service of their own interest. This disparity between their motives and expectations suggest the absence of coherence and yet, they are inter-dependent upon one another. This exaggerated state of confusion, with its competing expectations and interest, has fostered and birthed a system susceptible to corruption, inefficiencies, and exploitation. There are some who currently make such assertions. America, as a capitalistic society has pursued improvement of the human condition with vigor. Our pursuits, although profoundly successful, are perhaps too narrow as it relates to this aspect of the human condition. We have either evolved or de-evolved in our principals and reasoning. Regardless, your perspective there has been a fundamental shift in our values. As a society we have never assigned much value to our penal system focusing instead on criminal justice process. It could be argued then, that our assignment of value has been, or is rather shortsighted. Reality is, our criminal justice process is only as good as its results. What then are its results, or in other words, what does it produce towards the improvement of the human condition? How can its results be improved? These are important and relevant questions that don't seem to be being asked. Certainly not with sufficient force to influence the process anyways. The failure to ask, explore, and answer such questions contributes to the state of confusion and contradiction that exist with its competing interest, expectations, and ideas of value.

I believe, that if all these various entities; the public, legislators, criminal justice system operators and actors shared a common set of principals they too would share common expectations, goals, and ideas of value. Such would not only produce real and tangible results, but also improve our standing within the community of nations of which we are a part. The world would no longer be a witness to the contradictions between our exaltations and the reality of our actions. We were once guided by a different set of principals that influenced the entirety of our actions as a nation. Biblical principals are what we subscribed to and shared with fellow citizens of faith and religious belief. Somehow our adherence to such principals eroded to near complete abandonment for

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fear that our value of such might imply our surrender to some form of religious or denominational dogma of some kind. It is the abandonment of these principles that is responsible for the current state of confusion and contradiction within our criminal justice system, along with its temptations, selfishness, contempt and corruption. The wholesale abandonment of our founding principles produces diminishing returns. These diminishing returns come at the expense of individual lives, entire families, ethnic groups, communities at large and the human condition as a whole.