

MOCKING BIRDS ARE ENDANGERED

In an effort to awaken our social conscience to the evils of injustice, intolerance, discrimination, vengeance, and hate, author, Harper Lee, wrote, "TO KILL A MOCKING BIRD", a classic novel, set in the 1930's, published in 1960, and a Oscar movie in 1962.

Lee, chronicled the confluence of innocence, and evil, in the human condition. She illustrates how evil flourishes, blooms, and dominates, when innocence is indifferent.

Mocking Bird's 1930's, lack of social conscience saw Tom Robinson, a black man, innocent, yet convicted of rape and executed, and Boo Bradley, a white man, mentally challenged, accused of being evil and malevolent, because he was different. Lee, shows how the lack of a social conscience allows, fear and ignorance, evil's acolytes, to insure evil will reign supreme.

Fast forward to the 21st century, Mocking Birds are endangered, and evil is on steroids. Police are shooting people like it's open season, justice refined hands out life sentences like parking tickets, and incarceration is so bountiful for the first time in history, prisons are listed on the stock exchange. Human incapacitation is suspected to be a \$80+ billion dollar a year industry in the United States.

Under the tutelage of evil, fear is killing the Mocking Birds of reason. In the absence of reason, through the collective genius of those without a social conscience, by refining intolerance, and retribution with a vengeance, the convicted's debt to society can never be paid. The Internet assures electronic branding, discrimination, and unemployment, thereby guaranting an interminable cycle. The discrimination and intolerance is so insufferable, parolees will reoffend just to escape back into prison, trading one hell, for another.

One of those psychologically broken parolees is, Peter Sostre, 48 yrs old, California prisoner serving twelve years. Peter describes "rehabilitaion" as, "Not as advertized, you ask for help, and they give you hate." He has the same sentiment for the self-applauded parolee guidance program. Like so many parolees, Peter ran into walls of discrimination and intolerance, at every turn.

Peter saw two fellow parolees' commit suicide, an act to familiar with California prisoners and parolees. With no means of income, homeless, sleeping under cardboard, cold, and hungry, rather than commit suicide, Peter chose to rob a gas station for \$34. knowing the act would send him back to prison. Peter's story is all to common, and a shameful inditement on "rehabilitation."

Further evidence, the evil tail wags the dog of reason, one only needs to see how the elderly are treated in prison. Any person with a social science, has to be brought to ad nauseam to see a jackboot guard bulling and screaming at a frail old prisoner in a wheelchair. In every sense of the word, this is state sanctioned elder abuse. Civilized countries, and societies, do not punish old men to death, yet fostering a societal thirst for vengeance, thousands of old men, and women, wait for death in United States' prisons.

One of those thousands, is Jerome Babineau, 79 yrs old, a California prisoner having served 18 years into a life sentence. Beyond frail, old, and totally confined to a wheelchair, Jerome suffers from congestive heart disease. His lungs are so weak from mesothelioma, he requires for the rest of his life 24/7 oxygen supplied by an oxygen generator, without AC power, it has to be recharged every two hours. Problem prosthetics in his L/hip give him constant pain, aggravated by advanced osteo-arthritis. A chronic blood clotting problem requires dangerously high doses of blood thinning medication. Diabetes, and medication demand close monitoring, and if all of this isn't enough, he was recently diagnosed with kidney cancer.

Clearly, Jerome is no threat to society, and becomes less every day, as he degenerates. Yet, California is going to punish him to death.

To put Jerome, and others like him, in social conscience perspective, most people can remember the bombing of Pan American Airlines 747, over Lockerbee, Scotland, killing 266 people. The bomber was sentenced to life in prison, in Scotland. While in prison he developed prostate cancer, and received a compassion parole. He walked out of prison, and on to the plane taking him home, where he died a year later.

Jerome, can not walk anywhere, his health is worse than the Pan Am. bomber's, and although it shouldn't make a difference, his offence is less, California does not have an ounce of compassion. Do the moral math.

Those without a social conscience, will ignore the facts, and statistics, dismissing this essay as disaffected.

Those whom have a social conscience, know the value of Mocking Birds, and will step-up demanding change.

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