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In every developed and even most semi-developed countries there exist a formal "justice" system; comprised of rules and laws derived from social norms and the prescribed consequences, or punishments for infringing upon these regulations. Here in the U.S., there has developed the inexplicable use of mass incarceration and an entire industry known as the P.I.C. (Prison Industrial Complex). The famed and highly over-celebrated Department of Corrections is the creation of a justice system and industry fine-tuned for mass incarceration. Through these numerous departments of corrections (also private prisons, most notably C.C.A.; Corrections Corporation of America) the justice system tackles the problem of those who offend against the peace and order of society. Its objective is two-fold: to correct and rehabilitate; and to protect society from those incapable of living within society. The second half, protecting society is obviously achieved quite regularly. But does the Department of Corrections accomplish its goals of correcting and rehabilitating "delinquents" and "criminals"?

This is a question that has two answers, depending on who you ask. If you were to ask anyone within the P.I.C. or justice system; their answer is in the affirmative. Then, in support of such, they'd begin offering up statistic after statistic and figure after figure. This many "offenders" have completed this or that cognitive thinking program. This many offenders participated in such and such re-entry program. This many offenders have graduated with G.E.D.'s, or vocational degrees, or innumerable other similar diplomas and certifications. Then, their conclusion is that all of these "rehabilitative"

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programs and "educational advancements" being participated in and completed by offenders must be working; thus achieving the Department's goals of correction and rehabilitation.

Yet, the very opposite is true when you ask reformers, activists, prisoners and victims of the "justice" system. These also state statistics and figures such as: recidivism rates, crimes due to drugs, minorities being overly represented, individuals sentenced to life imprisonment, the growing number of prisons and prison populations, etc. All of which are important because, they contradict the authorities at almost every turn. This creates a very perplexing situation. On the one hand, you have all of these education, rehabilitation (related to cognitive thinking, violence, anger management, drugs, etc.) and re-entry/post-entry programs. Programs that the prisons and prisoners are availing themselves of. On the other hand, you have the undeniable and often avoided recidivism rates, successful re-entry numbers (disimal and low), rise in prison populations, a steady growth in prisons and the P.I.C.; not to mention the habitual official abuses to continue a profitable growth in the industry. How can so severe a contradiction exist? Are the authorities correct and the reformers, activists, prisoners, victims and families and supporters wrong? Or, is it the reverse?

If the Department of Corrections were achieving its aforementioned goals then inadvertently it'd also be eliminating itself. How so? Simply put, were the many states' departments of corrections actually rehabilitating individuals then there'd be no need for so many. One facility per state, at most two and there'd be no C.C.A. at all. But that is not

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the case. Reality is that the P.I.C. is close to six percent (6%) of the G.D.P. (Gross Domestic Product), an impressive chunk of the economy. So if the departments aren't achieving their goals, then what are they doing? Answer: skewing the data, making nominal instead of qualitative changes and avoiding the ugly truth; the various departments operate as finishing schools, turning rehabilitatable offenders into hardened, unsalvageable criminals. The reality of the situation is brutal.

A staggering 6.98 million people were under state control through the P.I.C. and justice system in 2011. That equaled close to three percent (3%) of the total population then. Another example of its failure was reported by Misty Rojo in "California Prison System Co-opts Reform Language While Increasing Budget." California's Alternative Custody Program which removes offenders from their communities, to somewhere different; who then isolated from their support group, mostly commit new offenses, or violate the conditions of their release. Or, how about the lack of preparation most offenders receive prior to being released? Do the authorities ever mention that the vast majority of those "participating" in the abovenoted programs; do so because it's compulsory? For instance, in Colorado, Thinking for a Change (T4C) is a mandatory program for those leaving maximum security (formerly administrative segregation) and Management Control Units. Many other programs are forced, such as anger management, E.E.D. and a lot more. Considering this, it seems much less impressive when authorities start rolling off a litany of figures and statistics.

Unfortunately, these examples and analyses are not anomol-

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ies. In fact, they are in keeping with the normal course. It all begins, not with the court process, but rather with the formation of the justice system. Its configuration is conducive to the growth of the P.I.C. and mass incarceration. Due to this the Department of Corrections is able to focus on promoting high prison populations by compounding the original causes for incarceration in the first place. Lack of education, employment opportunities, violence, gangs, drugs, etc. The attentions paid to excavating the roots of the problems which cause people (overwhelmingly Latino and black) to commit crimes are given only peripheral considerations and less than half-measures. Offenders are shuffled and cycled through the system as one would a deck of playing cards. If one or two cards escape here and there, it's nothing to worry about. Those one or two cards are held up as the very best examples of what the Department of Corrections can produce; not the unintentional accidents they are. Sadly this magic trick doesn't fascinate, the illusion doesn't hold and the reality is harrowing.