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The Worst Experts

Proverbs 17:7 "Excellent speech is not becoming to a fool, much less lying lips to a prince."

Proverbs 17:16 "Why is there in the hand of a fool the purchase price of wisdom, since he has no heart for it?"

The worst "experts" about prisons are most often the people who work there- Mason

If you've been following my writings, you know that I used to blog for people with loved ones in prison. Well over 8000 pages may still be online, before my arrest in 2010. I wrote from 2001-2010, and had thousands of people read my works.

I wrote based on experience and compassion; I knew that for the most part, millions of people have no idea what goes on in prisons. This is largely because most inmates, or ex-felons, don't write about their experiences. But I LOVED to write. It was exciting, knowing that what I shared touched many people's lives.

If you get a chance, check out (if the feds haven't

shut it down) two sites: Prison 101 and Prison Chains Broken. Both contain my writings. I'd really like to get copies of my writings, so I'll have to find someone who can first find the sites, and to be kind enough to send me a few of my entries.

I wrote because I cared, and because I knew about doing state time. That, by experience, made me an expert. However, a person working in a prison could say that they too are experts. I disagree.

An officer or staff member may be an expert of WORKING in prison, but they're no expert on who lives there. And often, they're the WORST experts, because often, they have no idea what they're talking about. Case in point:

Years ago, before I was arrested by the feds, I wrote on a very popular prison-support site called PrisonTalk Online. It was, at the time the largest site for people looking for help and sympathy because of loved ones in prison. The site was actually started by an ex-federal inmate. The site was VERY popular, and I was one of the biggest writers (I went originally by Masonik4, then Nolaw96, then Nolaw97).

I wrote more on prison issues than anybody. But because I was from North Carolina, most of my posts were there. I most often wrote on three separate areas: Mothers with Sons in Prison, Wives/Girlfriends with Husbands/Boyfriends in Prison, and my home state. I got a LOT of responses and replies.

But one day, some officer from a prison decided to join the site. From day ONE, I didn't like it. His avatar was a badge of a correctional officer, his name was something like "CO Officer" or something like that, and at no time did he add anything of value to the site. He never started an original post; he tagged on to other posts, usually co-signing to a rule of the prison, rather than lending sympathy. I think I even remember his "quotes" under his avatar, something listing the top excuses of inmates.

Folks, these are not the signs of a compassionate person, which is what the site needed. Prison-support sites are for people looking for help and encouragement during trying times, not some self-righteous officer who feels he's the expert of the site simply because he works in a prison.

That doesn't make you an expert... that makes you a jerk.

Sometimes your "expertise" can be worthless if applied in the wrong realm. A Dallas Cowboy "expert" isn't gonna likely be welcomed at a Washington Redskins party if all he talks about is how good the Cowboys are against the Redskins. With your "expertise" there still needs to be a temperament, an application of wisdom added to a little compassion. That officer on the site lacked that.

I remember making like 6-8 posts on the site, and

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while everyone else appreciated what I was sharing, he'd always try to recite what the rule was, according to the prison. If I share experiences of what the prison did wrong, he'd try to counter with the rule- but that doesn't answer why the prison was in error. He was only there to "defend the shield".

One member shared an experience about her loved one in prison, and how the prison did something which wasn't right. I wrote to her, explaining how the prison was in fact in error; how they should not have done what they did. But the officer added his "expertise", merely pointing out the rule- which the prison clearly failed to do. The lady who originally wrote the post was upset at the officer, because it clearly looked like he was protecting the prison, rather than showing sympathy. It turned into an argument, and the thread removed.

I sent a pm (private message) to the Moderator, warning her of this officer. Since he had joined, he had added nothing of value, defended the prison at every post, and seemed uncompassionate to the people there needing encouragement. For all his "expertise", he added nothing at all to the site.

I realize I don't know it all; not even close. But when it comes to "expertise" in prison issues, it seems to be equally important not just WHAT you know, but HOW you share it. Knowledge means little without wisdom, because knowledge breeds arrogance; wisdom breeds compassion.

An expert would be well served to know the difference...the worst ones don't.

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