

-KUL  
#21  
-April 2014

## -Kevin's Update Letter

-Kevin F [REDACTED]

Well, this is Kevin's Update Letter (KUL) 21, and if you look on my calendar at the red-ink circle of April 6, you know that I've now been here 3 YEARS. That's 3 years into a 72-month sentence at Elkton-FSL, a low/minimum satellite facility in Lisbon, OH. Prior to life here at Elkton, I was a college professor for seven years. Before that I had been a medical researcher with degrees from Duke (B.S.) and The University of Chicago (Ph.D.). At the time of my arrest, I was a first-time offender and had never been arrested. I didn't have a history of making many big mistakes--none really--but I guess I made one really big one....

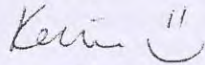
This is my occasional missive of life here on the prison compound. What follows is an update on my life (mostly for my friends and family), life on the compound, character sketches, opinions, quotes, and a blotter of crimes around the country (for everyone). I wax philosophic, amazed, cynical, frustrated, frightened, emboldened, and (increasingly) hopeful toward the day that I get out of this place and resume my rightful place in the world.

I think we should always live in the moment; reference the places we find ourselves. Currently, I'm in Southeastern Ohio, and I like to reference an old R.E.M. song. So, in a nod to a Cleveland, a place that had a "river on fire"...

"...This is where we laughed and swam--  
hunted, danced, and sang.  
Take our picture here.  
Take a souvenir.  
Cuyahoga"

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Cuyahoga and enjoy,

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\*  "

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Kevin F [REDACTED], PhD

## LIFE ON THE COMPOUND

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### LIFE ON THE COMPOUND

IMPORTANT LEGISLATION UPDATE- Well, there is some good news coming out of Washington--even if it excludes me (for the moment). A new piece of legislation has moved through the Senate Judiciary committee. It allows the BOP to give extra Good Time credit for things accomplished like earning GED, work, etc.. All of this is good. Except that it excludes Sex Offenders. Now we need to fix this.

NEW CUBE/NEW CELLIE- Well, the biggest news lately is that I've moved from a crowded three-man cube to a more spacious two-man cube. The cubicles here were designed for either 1 man or 2 men. They were never intended to be one of the over-stuffed 3-man cubes that I was in until recently. Years ago, the cubes were expanded to accommodate the 40% overcrowding of the Federal BOP. They had to shoehorn these folks (and me) somewhere, and the 3-man cube was born. I never appreciated how crowded the stuff for three guys-- lockers, bunks, shoes, hangers, bodies--was until I left mine. Oh, I knew it was crowded when I arrived, but over the course of the last 3 years, I guess I just became accustomed to it. Well, my cellie in the 3-man cube (white, middle-aged, college-educated, same crime, relationship-oriented, softball player, similar interests), and I basically had an agreement that we'd ride out the next two years in the same cube and tolerate whatever third cellie we got ("The devil you know is better than the one that you don't know" and all that.) We would basically ride shotgun for the rest of the time together. I passed on the opportunity for a few 2-man cubes a couple of times. Well, there was a miscommunication, and that cellie jumped to a 2-man cube when one became available. Suddenly, it didn't make any sense for me to endure the hardship of a 3-man cube with two cellies with whom I either didn't share any similarities or didn't know. So when the next offer

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was made for me to go to a 2-man cube, I jumped at it.

And it's a nice cube (as far as prison goes). It has 50% less of everything than the 3-man cube, and my new cellie is pretty great. He's this big, well-built black/Hispanic guy (think former NFL Steeler's Jerome Bettis) who is very quiet, polite, and super-clean. He doesn't have a lot of stuff, and he sweeps and mops everyday. About all he does is read, study math (!! walk the track, listen to music, and go to his job. Oh, and did I mention sweeps and mops everyday!! He hasn't asked me what I'm here for and don't suspect he will. I can't imagine he doesn't have his suspicions. He mentioned that he was here for drugs, but doesn't make a big deal of it. He has no tattoos and doesn't yammer incessantly about the "drug game," "baby mommas," "gangbanging," or a bunch of other non-sense. We have a window that looks out on the woods, and I can stand in the 3 o'clock afternoon sun coming through the window and listen to Fresh Air with Terri Gross on NPR. We're just past the bathroom, and this cube generally get less traffic than my old spot. There's much less noise from the phone and TV rooms which are across the unit. I hate to say I "hit the jackpot" (cause I'm in prison). But it could be a lot worse.

If I screw up or get in trouble, I'm moved back into a 3-man cube, so I have to be on my best behavior and keep the cube clean and stay out of trouble. I guess the cube is sort of a privilege in that way.

REC- Not much new here. Still doing spin class and looking forward to softball. We've had a lot of older, kind of geeky guys arrive lately, and few to none of them seem like A-league softball players. I think the softball skill level will drop and the league will have to lower its expectations. But we'll adapt.

NEW ARRIVALS- In one of my recent letters, I bemoaned the fact that we had a lot of really young, urban, loud arrivals, and it made the unit much worse (at least for me). I guess if they are your "kind of guys," it was better for you. Recently, we've had a bunch of older, white guys (even older than me) arrive. Some of them are here for child porn. Another is educated (pharmacist) but was caught up in a drug distribution ring. He moved into my old cube. So this most recent bunch is quieter and more respectful. Several of them came here from other prisons (Petersburg, VA; Louisiana; county jails), so it's interesting to hear how their experiences there were worse or better for sex offenders and prisoners generally. Usually, the story is that the last place had few sex offenders and it was a more isolating experience, but that the rec, classes, programs, commissary were much better. Folks generally say that Elkton-FSL is the worst place to be in terms of amenities, but if those things aren't important to you (and they generally aren't to me), then you can appreciate that it's a more relaxed, safer atmosphere than most places.

Today (4/1), we just received 5 new guys. They're not much like me. We'll see how it affects the dynamic here.

GED- The GED class that I'm tutoring/teaching just had a round of pre-tests. We were able to learn how prepared several of our students are for the actual exam (close but not there yet). One guy who has had a really tough/rough life and is in my psych class took the pre-test and is moving on to the actual exam. He had to drop out of high school to support his family and that's why he didn't finish high school. So in a way, GED is his prison trip's silver lining. He has really worked his butt off and will be one of the next success stories. He's one of those guys that reminds you how much you can matter in someone's life. Sometimes, it can be frustrating to have guys in class who need their GEDS that don't work hard, but as long as you have that ONE source of inspiration and someone to work with, it makes every bit of the effort worthwhile. There are a couple of other guys that'll step up and take his place when he graduates, and the circle continues to spin. The cycle will produce yet another success story. One gets to point and say "I helped do that..."

PSYCH- I continue in the psychology class here. I can discuss it more when it's over. There's more good than bad, and most importantly, it's giving me the time and the space to work through some stuff to get where I need to be. The specific issues of why I'm here are obviously part of the discussion, but also a lot of the back-story issues help answer "Why that?", "Why then?", "Why me?". This work will hopefully help folks take ownership of their lives more broadly and become better men. Hopefully, you can see and hear (or at least read) in small ways it already coming through.

PRE-RELEASE CLASS AND PLANS- I mentioned awhile back that I had been to pre-release class to begin getting ready for my release. One hiccup of being incarcerated (I'm sure there will be others) is that my driver's license will expire while I'm here. Of course and maddeningly, I cannot renew my IL license by mail. So, I'll return to IL without a valid driver's license and need to find a job and all of those things. Will I have to "re-establish" residency for some amount of time before I get my driver's license? How do I drive to a job without a driver's license? Or interviews? How do I do many of the things for which one needs a valid ID? Can you say "set up to fail"? I'll figure something out, but I can imagine how some folks wouldn't be able to do this...

RESUME AND ONLINE HELP- So, I'm now starting to put things together for my job search for when I get out. We have an inmate here who has an office to help inmates create a resume'. I'm glad for the resource. However, the program he uses is

somewhat limited and, worst of all, the resume' that I create cannot be saved as an electronic document (disk, email) that I can take with me. If I want to update it when I get home, I'll need to totally create a new one. That seems like a waste of an effort, and I'm thinking about just having someone on the outside create one for me that I'll save as an e-document. Thoughts? Volunteers? Want to earn a few dollars? This would actually be a great resource for someone on the outside to offer to inmates.

**TOUGH THING ABOUT DEATH HERE-** One of my friends here has been dealing with the surprise diagnosis and quick death of his brother to cancer. It's always difficult when someone dies, but even more so when it's unexpected and prison keeps you from attending to the person's needs and then the funeral. We do the best we can to get each other through. I've now seen this with inmates' parents and siblings in prison. It's tough. And when we talk about the consequences of being here, this is what we mean.

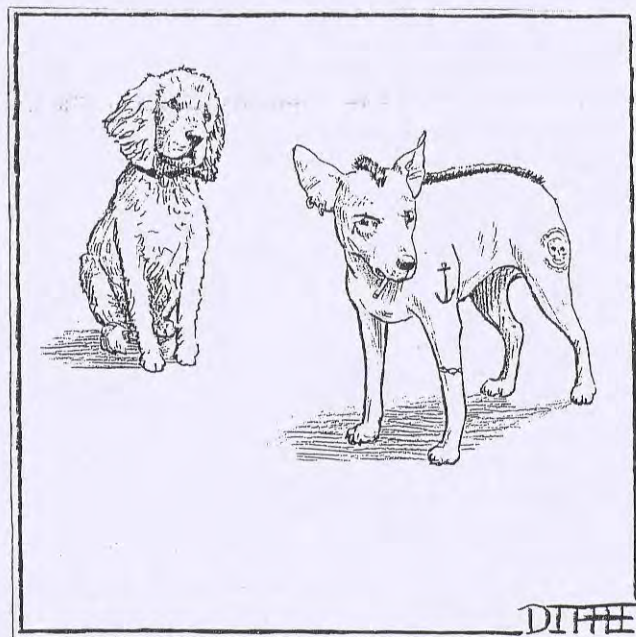
**LETTER TO THE WARDEN-** I'm working on a letter to the warden to note the accomplishments of some of the more impressive staff here. And I generally mean those going well beyond just the job description. I have four in mind. I won't name them here. I'm sure the warden gets so much bad news and grief that he'll be glad to hear it. And since there aren't really any formal mechanisms for good staff to be recognized (We can and do "write up" bad staff for their shenanigans), I think highlighting the good job that some do might encourage more to do the same. Hopefully, the kudos will mean something to the warden and do some good for some folks doing work "above and beyond the call of duty."

**WE BARELY KNEW YOU-** There has been a lot of folks I know shipping off to other places from Elkton. Corey, an inmate whose folks are involved with Caution Click and sentencing reform issues, just went up the Hill to the RDAP drug program. Justin, an inmate from Illinois and former softball teammate, was just shipped off to a drug program in Texas. Several other guys that I've known for several years have left to go to camps, halfway houses, or just home. Everyone's time eventually arrives. We miss them...

**PAST THE HALFWAY POINT-** I'm past the halfway point now, and I'm hoping that the back-half-of-the-trip is shorter than the front-half. My cousin Peggy wrote and used the analogy that travelling to a place always seems to take longer than coming back from there. I hope she's right.

**MARCH MADNESS-** I loved it on the outside, and it's been a source of inspiration for me here. Duke stunk it up, but it's still a distraction.

**BACK IN GA/AL/IL-** There aren't any huge reports from back in my old "stomping grounds." My family is good by all accounts. Dad just had a big birthday. My brother's families and my nieces and nephew continue to achieve and lead happy lives. If the saying "no news is good news" is true, then we're doing okay. About the only news has been the crazy weather. Everyone goes on and on about the snow and ice and how it's disrupted everything. All's well in Chicago.



"Kennel changes a dog, Muffin."

DEARLY DEPARTED- In a letter several months ago, I mentioned that Nathan Dean, a GA state senator and father of one of my childhood friends, passed away. Recently, another town leader and father of a friend died. Dr. John Atha was a town doctor in Rockmart, GA. He was also the team doctor to the football team and assisted the county coroner. He served on various medical boards throughout the state. He held a private practice and then saw patients at our local hospital. For many years, he sat on the Polk County School Board and, for about a decade, served on the City Council. He was also a leader in his church. He and his wife raised five respectful, intelligent children who are all now distinguished in their own fields and have great families of their own. Dr. Atha is survived by his wife and family. I mention his death here because he and his wife are among the folks who always had a great influence on me. He could have cloistered himself in his home, taken a well-deserved break from work (or gone to the golf course), and patted himself on the back for his accomplishments. Instead, he made himself available for the town he lived in and made it a better place to live. He's one of those people that helps take "a bunch of folks that live near one another" and turns them into a community. We are saddened at and diminished by his loss and count ourselves fortunate to have known him.

VISITATION SEASON- Well, it's thawed out here some, and I already have news that some folks are visiting. My friend Bruce will visit over Easter weekend. My friend Hoyt and his cousin David will be visiting in early May. My friends Al and John are planning to visit over the summer. Dan F. will be coming soon from Columbus. Mom and Dad should be up at some point soon also. I know some others of you have mentioned coming over to see me, and I'd love to see you. Just let me know when you want to come, and I'll get you the correct weekends (and any Friday night) that you can come. There are still some slots on the visitation list for folks, too.

JUSTICE REFORM NEWS- Lately, Eric Holder's Justice Dept. has mentioned reforms that will help federal offenders a lot. Mostly in good ways. I mentioned earlier in this note the sentencing reform that's been proposed for earned Good Time for rehabilitative programming. There are also suggestions by the US Sentencing Commission to change drug law sentencing. This now sits with Congress and the Senate. In addition, Holder has made comments encouraging states to restore voting rights to felons. He has also directed Halfway Houses that serve federal inmates to adopt changes that would make the transition for offenders better. These include the ability to have cell phones at Halfway Houses, transportation vouchers for residents to get to and from job interviews and work, and things that would help offenders become more productive citizens. As inmates and families, we hope these come to fruition, and we keep our eyes and ears hopeful for more news and more change.

READ THE ARTICLE- A few weeks ago, I had a call-out for a 6:30 a.m. for "mailroom." Okay, I thought, I must have a response letter from a Congressman or Senator that is considered legal mail and has to be opened by staff in the presence of me. I arrived, and when my time came, I stepped forward and said, "Here for pickup." Well, it wasn't a pickup. The staff member said that about 10 copies of an article had arrived for me and that I couldn't have mail arrive for "distribution." He asked if I wanted to pay to have the articles sent home or did I want them to shred them? Well, I told him I didn't know what article it was (I would receive a copy and an explanation letter later that day). He told me it was "the Bernie Kerik article." I told him to just shred the extra copies; I didn't want to pay to have them sent back. I'm not sure if the issue about receiving extra copies to distribute is actual BOP policy (...we have a copy machine here I can use if I want to...), but I imagine they'd prefer NO ONE see the Bernard Kerik article about the BOP and federal sentencing policy, especially in prison. So, if you haven't seen the article, I encourage you to look it up. Again, the website is <http://www.bernardkerik.blogspot.com/>. You can probably Google the part of the title ("U.S. Criminal Justice System in Dire Need of Repair") and come up with it, too.

APPEALS FOR HELP ON THIS ISSUE- The folks at Caution Click, the organization that works for reform for men who have downloaded child pornography (sentencing, registry issues, family reconciliation) needs your help. If you're not a member, please consider becoming one. If you can help volunteer with just even a small amount of your time, please consider it. Even a small financial contribution would be appreciated. Like I've pointed out and learned, we can't expect other people to help us, if we're first not prepared to take the initial steps (of course, that's so true about everything, right?). Their website is [CautionClick.com](http://CautionClick.com).

ANOTHER APPEAL FOR HELP- Every now and then, you see a story that makes your heart hurt, appreciate your blessings, and wish there was more you could do to help. Well, there's not a lot I can personally do from prison in what I'm about to share, but maybe you can. A few weeks ago, I read a story in my local paper (Rome, GA) of a kid in a nearby community, Ethan Little, who suffers from Dandy-Walker syndrome, a condition that affects brain development ("Little family raising funds to get son's service dog", Rome News-Tribune, March 24, 2014). The symptoms leave afflicted children in a situation that's sort of like severe autism. One of the ways that these children can be helped is by a service dog that can assist them with tasks and

TRULINCS [redacted] - F [redacted], KEVIN - Unit: [redacted]

provide comfort in their attacks that come with sensory overload. Unfortunately, service dogs need to be trained and that costs money. The family is trying to raise money to get their son one of these service dogs. I don't know this family, but I thought that I'd use this platform to share their story. More information about Ethan and the efforts to raise money for his dog can be found by email at paws4ethan@att.net. Also, you can contact his family to make donations at 706-233-1420. Donations can be mailed to P.O. Box 355, Silver Creek, GA, 30173. Pass this along to your friends. Maybe together we can help be a bright spot in Ethan's life. Thanks.

THEY GROW UP SO FAST- I mentioned above that everything with my family and friends continues to be okay in GA/IL/AL. But just to show that the kids grow up so fast, my aunt shared with me that her grandson, Ethan, will soon be turning 5. FIVE? It seems like he was just born!! My nephew, Cal, is now in HIGH SCHOOL and playing JV and varsity baseball. My niece has taken her SAT and ACT as she begins to decide on COLLEGE. Say it aint so, Joe. They can't be growing up this fast can they? Wow.

and FINALLY...

EDITORIAL FROM CANADA- Below is a synopsis of an editorial that appeared in Canada about a proposed public sex offender registry. It appeared in The Week.

Editorial/ National Post/ Toronto

"Don't copy US Sex Offender Registries"

Conservative Canadian politicians are pushing for a bill that would create a public registry of convicted sex offenders, opines Robyn Urback. "There's just one problem: public registries of sex offenders have proven to be an abject failure in the United States," she writes. "Offenders have a much harder time reintegrating into normal society and embracing rehabilitation when their name is on a public list. Thus, they become more likely to reoffend....Without distinguishing between crimes, all registered sex offenders share the same pariah statue" and become vulnerable to violent acts of vigilante-style justice.

Well, that's an update on the things happening on the compound and in issues related to me in general. I hope your life is good. I continue to appreciate your letters when you're able to send them and hear about the good things in your life. To the folks on the email list and with whom I share phone calls, we'll talk/email soon.

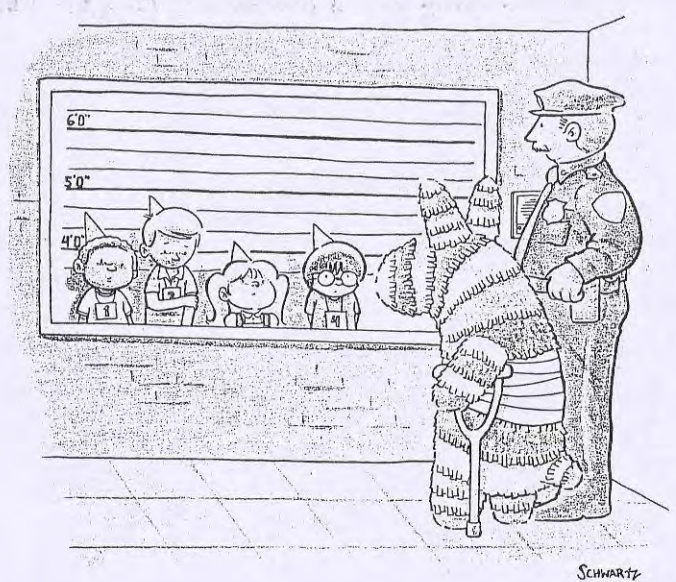
I continue to survive here at Elkton with and because of your support. If I don't say it enough, realize that it's invaluable and appreciated. This period will pass. I'll have become a better person for it. We'll be stronger for it.

Please enjoy the rest of the letter. May it answer some questions and hopefully raise some others. And bring a few smiles to your face, too.

Peace and Best,

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\* Kevin Fuller  
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# DISMANTLING THE PUBLIC SEX OFFENDER REGISTRY

## DISMANTLING THE PUBLIC SEX OFFENDER REGISTRIES

Public Sex Offender Registries (SORs) need to be dropped--plain and simple

Below are 10 facts about SORs and why America needs to drop the system.

### 1) SORs DO NOT reduce crime.

Common sense would suggest that giving the public information about sex offenders and limiting where these ex-cons can live, work, and recreate would reduce crime, but study after study (below) don't bear this out. What follows is a summary of an article by Charles Montaldo which debunks the SORs' effectiveness. These facts alone should be reason enough for us to drop the charade and wipe the slate clean of SORs.

First, one study did find that requiring sex offenders to register with POLICE can significantly reduce the chance they will reoffend. But the same study, conducted by researchers at U. of Michigan and Columbia, found that making the same information available to the public can backfire.

Reviewing data from 15 states over a 10 year period, they found that registration with police reduces new sex crimes by preventing re-offending rather than deterring first-time offenders.

However, when a state has both registration laws and public notification laws, it can actually hamper the sex offender registry's crime-reducing ability. The researchers found 1) public notification may deter first time offenders, but it appears to make released offenders more likely to reoffend. 2) States which added public notification to their registries saw slightly higher levels of sex crime rates. 3) Registration with police discourages sex offender recidivism, but public notification encourages it.

Another study showed no correlation between where sex offenders lived and where sex offenses occurred--shooting a hole in the myth that sex offenses occur near where registered sex offenders live.

In a nutshell, one researcher summarized, "Convicted sex offenders become more likely to commit crimes when their information is made public because the associated psychological, social, or financial costs make a crime-free life relatively less desirable."

### 2) SORs hurt children.

Kids want to go outside and play. Unfortunately, there are bogeymen in this world of all types. The world is not risk-free. But the good news is that a child in America is less likely to experience sexual assault than ever before. So why do we terrify our nation's parents (and by extension their children) by creating a registry that points to threats that really don't exist? (and one that isn't particularly effective at predicting the threats that DO exist). Add to that the children of the nearly 1 million registered sex offenders who are socially ostracized and cannot have friends visit, who cannot have parents attend their ballgames, who must live in poverty and on food stamps because their fathers can't find work, who must live in marginal communities and who suffer under the shame of their parents' convictions. What about those kids? Some children of sex offenders have gone so far as to commit suicide due to the extreme shame and difficulties of living in the home of a sex offender parent. What about those kids?

### 3) SORs create a false sense of security.

What follows is a true episode--a cautionary tale-- from Indiana about a year ago. A woman learns that her father, who lives in an isolated mobile home park, is sick and needs care. In order to care for her dad, she decides to move with her young daughter to the mobile home park. Unfortunately and frighteningly, the mobile home park is full of registered sex offenders who have been unable to find suitable living arrangements elsewhere because the state of Indiana limits where sex offenders can live. So, SOs concentrated in this mobile home park, one of the few places available to them. At one point, the mother has to go somewhere and needs someone to watch her daughter. She rules out asking any of the men on the sex offender registry to watch her daughter and instead asks a man whom she barely knows but WHO IS NOT ON THE SEX OFFENDER REGISTRY to watch her daughter while she's away. This man proceeds to rape and kill her daughter. The SOR had convinced this woman that she knew who the bad and good actors were, when, in fact, it couldn't and didn't. This sad story raises the question: Does the sex offender registry create false "shortcuts" that don't really exist for parenting and protecting our kids?

You might know who the sex offenders are in your neighborhood, but what good is it if it's not "actionable intelligence"? What if

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instead of being signal; it's noise? Better questions to ask include:

Which families have unfenced swimming pools in your neighborhood?

Which of your children's friends' parents have unsecured, loaded guns around the home?

Which neighbor has large, vicious dogs?

Which neighbor has repeated DUI citations? Will she run down your children in the street or cross a center line and hit them head on?

Which neighbor has a conviction for selling drugs to teenagers (Most of them will recidivate and bring drugs and gun violence to the neighborhood)?

Which neighbors allow their kids to smoke pot and drink alcohol at home?

Which neighbor has a conviction for beating his child to within an inch of his life? Will he do it to your child?

What does the public SOR tell you that you need to know? Obviously, not much.

What information that you need to know does it not tell you? Apparently a lot.

Wasn't as clear cut as you thought, huh?

The only way to KNOW your neighbors is to KNOW your neighbors.

4) SORs encourage bad policing.

Would you rather have your police officers on the street solving and preventing actual crime or sitting at a desk registering men who are not going to commit another crime? Do police organizations want SORs? No. Don't believe me? Just ask them.

5) SORs are unconstitutional penalties and civil liberties nightmares.

Only a sentencing court can impose a punishment on a criminal defendant. Registries can only exist when they are civil "regulatory mechanisms." However, when we recognize that public registries don't predict, prevent, or solve crime; often impose regulations that have no relationship to past crimes; and can't be shown by the state to serve any compelling state interests, then those aren't regulatory. They're simply "scarlet letter" punishments.

It's bad enough that public SORs do not provide any benefit and give communities a false sense of protection while simultaneously terrifying us. However, maybe the worst things about sex offender registries are how they go against every concept of self-determination in our nation's creed and push back against every civil liberty this country stands for. Once an offender has served his time, shouldn't he get almost all of his liberties back?

Is it fair that a state-sponsored, public website exists that contains an offender's picture, the model of car that he drives, and the name and address of his employer?

Should there be limits on where an offender is able to live, work, and loiter? Is it fair that a sex offender cannot use libraries, parks, pools, and bike trails--even when he's expected to pay taxes to support them? And often the crime of the offender had nothing to do with a public arena or a contact victim?

Should the state be able to dictate if a sex offender can attend a holiday party with his family and his children? Should the state be able to tell someone what adult he may or may not date?

Should a registered sex offender be unable to own a gun to protect himself, when, after only a few keystrokes on a computer, a crazed vigilante can learn his address and come to his home intent on killing him? It's not hypothetical; it happens.

Should a sex offender be treated as second-class citizen in his own country for the rest of his life, particularly if he's never had a contact sex victim?

6) Public SORs may make some offenders more likely to reoffend.

Of course, the stated goal of the sex offender registry is to serve as a regulatory mechanism to reduce crime. Many courts have found that instead they are simply punitive measures intent on further punishing offenders and, worse (or better depending on your perspective), driving sex offenders from some communities. And the sad, perverse consequence of this is that some offenders become MORE likely to reoffend. Studies have shown that public registries and housing restrictions put sex offenders in urban, blighted or distant, rural communities. Sometimes there are literally no places for these offenders to live, and they become homeless. In all of these scenarios, offenders are less likely to find work, mental health counseling, a social life, and effective community reintegration--all things that correlate positively with offenders not re-offending. Ultimately, the responsibility of not reoffending lies with the offender, but we don't need to make their lives needlessly more difficult and drive them to despair and the self-fulfilling prophecy of re-offending.

7) SORs focus on the wrong people.

Most sex crimes, about 90%, are committed by someone not on a sex offender registry. And those people won't be the strange person down the street but instead will be (again, about 90% of the time) a father, brother, uncle, other relative, boyfriend, family friend, teacher, or someone else close to the family. While SORs operate on the idea of recidivism of sex offenders, they simply perpetuate the stereotype of "stranger danger" which is, in fact, not who will likely commit the next sex crime in the neighborhood. Indeed, most sex offenders won't be re-arrested for another sex crime. Recidivism rates for federal child pornography offenders have been shown to hover about 5%.

Rather than stigmatizing and scapegoating past sex offenders, we should educate families and children to recognize the real threats within their own family spheres and how to talk about, understand, and report this sex abuse when it occurs by someone close to the victim.

8) SORs are too overbroad to be effective. Even if we accept the fact that some offenders belong on a public sex offender registry, as they are currently crafted, SORs are too overbroad to be effective. With nearly 1 million men on the lists across the U.S. (and the lists will continue to grow as men are released from prison, and many will serve their entire lives on these lists), these lists have become too large to afford any real sense of who the threats truly are.

9) SORs are counter to the motives of our justice system. Our justice system is built on the Judeo/Christian foundations of due process, punishment, forgiveness, and redemption. That's essentially what justice is. A lifetime sex offender registry that doesn't allow for a belief in change and rehabilitation goes against every principle of justice that our country professes to believe. The SOR diminishes victims and offenders as well as the judicial and legislative systems that create and impose the registries.

10) SORs are the product of the Fear-Industrial Complex, unique to America, and expensive. Without getting too conspiratorial, it's fair to ask, "If SORs are so effective, every country is using them, right?" In another nod to American exceptionalism, public sex offender registries are a creation of the United States and are unique to our country. Canada doesn't use them. Neither does Australia. Or the UK. None of the developed Western countries that we like to compare ourselves with have them. So why do we? Well, it all goes back to money and fear mongering. The folks that created the sex offender registries were often reacting out of sincere concern for the safety of children. However, too often the SORs and SOs have become the scapegoats and whipping boys for those that have money to raise. One can always rally with the cry of "It's about the children." Hot button issues. Red meat politics. There are lots of politicians and advocacy groups that depend on the money and the attention the phrase "child sex crime" generates. It doesn't matter if science, policing, civil rights, and a host of other reasons say SORs are bad ideas. The money trumps all else for these folks.

And SORs aren't cheap and keeping nearly 1 million Americans on them costs families, communities, employers in incalculable ways.

So, how to improve a busted SOR system

- 1) Remove the SOR from the Internet (NOTIFICATION) so that only police have it (REGISTRATION).
- 2) Make the repeat, contact criminals the focus of SOR
- 3) Use science, actuarial data, and forensic psychology to determine who should be on the SOR. Remove everyone else.
- 4) Remove people from the SOR who have never had a contact sex crime.



# "INCARCERATION NATION" BY ROSA BROOKS, GEORGETOWN LAW SCHOOL

By Rosa Brooks  
Georgetown Law School  
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## Incarceration Nation

You won't find it in an atlas or on Google Earth, but our prison system is a country unto itself.

You already know that the United States locks up a higher percentage of its population than any other country. If you look at local, state, and federal prison and jail populations, the US currently incarcerates more than 2.4 million people, or roughly 25 percent of the world's total.

A population of 2.4 million is a lot of people -- enough, in fact, to fill up a good sized country. In the past, the British Empire decided to convert a good chunk of its prison population into a country, sending about 165,000 convicts off to Australia. This isn't an option for the United States, but it suggests an interesting thought experiment: If the incarcerated population of the United States constituted a nation-state, what kind of country would it be?

Here's a profile of Incarceration Nation

### POPULATION SIZE

As a country, Incarceration Nation is on the small size. But it has a larger population than about 50 other countries, including Namibia, Qatar, Gambia, Slovenia, Bahrain, and Iceland. Although the population of Incarceration Nation has dipped in the last couple of years, the overall trend is toward growth: Over the last 30 years, it has gone up by a factor of four, or more than double the rate of India.

### GEOGRAPHIC AREA

We have to do some educated guessing here. There are more than 4,500 prisons in the United States. Let's assume that each one takes up about half a square mile of land-- a reasonable (and probably low) estimate given that most prisons are, for security reasons, surrounded by some empty space. That gives Incarceration Nation an estimated land area of about 2,250 square miles: small, but still larger than Brunei, Trinidad and Tobago, Luxembourg, Bahrain, and Singapore.

### POPULATION DENSITY

No matter how you look at it, Incarceration Nation is a crowded place. If we assume a land area of 2,250 square miles, it has a population density of roughly 1,067 people per square mile, a little higher than that of India. Of course, the residents don't have access to the full land areas. Most of them spend their days in small cells, often sharing cells built for one or two prisoners with two or three times that many inmates. In 2011, federal prisons were operating 39 percent above capacity; in many state systems, overcrowding is much worse.

### IMMIGRATION

Like many of the smaller Gulf States, Incarceration Nation relies almost entirely on immigration to maintain its population. You might even say it is a nation of displaced persons: most residents were born far away from Incarceration Nation, which has a nasty habit of involuntarily transporting people hundreds and sometimes thousands of miles away from home communities, making it extraordinarily difficult for residents to maintain ties with their families. In New York, for instance, one study found that "70 percent of incarcerated individuals are in prison over 100 miles from their homes"-- often in "isolated rural areas that are inaccessible by direct bus or train routes."

### BIRTHRIGHT CITIZENSHIP

Though most residents are immigrants and displaced persons, an estimated 10,000 babies are born each year in Incarceration Nation. Most of those babies are deported within months, generally landing with foster families. But Incarceration Nation does have its own form of birthrights citizenship, if you can call it that: as many as 70 percent of children with an incarcerated parent end up incarcerated themselves as some point.

### GENDER BALANCE

International attention to gender imbalances has tended to focus on China, India, and other states, but Interaction Nation has

the most skewed gender ratio on Earth: men outnumber women by about 12 to 1.

#### RACIAL AND ETHNIC MAKEUP

If Incarceration Nation were in a geographic region matching its racial and ethnic makeup, it would probably be somewhere in the southern Hemisphere, perhaps near Brazil. Roughly 40 percent of the incarcerated population is of African descent, another 20 percent is of Hispanic descent, and the remaining 40 percent are Caucasian or mixed. For the average American, the odds of spending time in Incarceration Nation depend greatly on gender and race: A white woman has only a one in 111 lifetime chance of ending up incarcerated, while a black man has a whopping one in three chance.

#### HEALTH

Incarceration Nation doesn't do so well here. One recent study found the incarcerated are "more <sup>likely</sup> to be afflicted with infection disease and other illnesses associated with stress." Tuberculosis rates, for instance, are 50 to 100 percent higher for inmates than for the general U.S. population. (If Incarceration Nation were a real country, it would have the highest TB rate in the world.) More than half of Incarceration Nation's citizens are mentally ill, with depression rates roughly on par with those experienced by citizens of Afghanistan. Another recent study found that for every year spent incarcerated, the life expectancy dips by two years.

#### HUMAN RIGHTS

Incarceration Nation is a police state. 'Nuff said.

#### PER CAPITA SPENDING

Incarceration Nation is a rich country. It's government spends an average of about \$30,000 per year on each incarcerated citizen. Internationally, only little Luxembourg spends as much on its citizens as Incarceration Nation; among the generally wealthy states of the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development, average per capita spending is under \$15,000, and Sweden, France, Germany, Canada, the U.S. and the U.K. all spend under \$20,000 per year on each citizen.

#### GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT

Incarceration Nation doesn't have a GDP, per se, but that doesn't mean it doesn't turn a profit--sometimes and for some people. Looking at just 40 states, the Vera Institute of Justice found that the cost to taxpayers of incarceration in these states was \$39 billion. Overall, federal and state governments spend an estimated \$74 billion on prisons each year (This doesn't count spending on state and local jails.) How much is \$74 billion? It's higher than the GDP of more than half the countries in the world, including Lebanon, Paraguay, Nepal, and Lithuania.

Incarceration Nation employs about 800,000 people as guards, administrations and the like-- almost as many are employed as in the U.S. auto industry--and in some rural areas, prisons are the main employers. But the real money goes to the operators of private prisons and the companies that make use of prison labor. Overall, private prisons house roughly 10 percent of Incarceration Nation's residents, and large private prison companies (such as CCA, the Geo Group, and Cornell Companies) boast impressive annual revenues. In 2011, for instance, CCA--which urges potential investors to take advantage of "highly compelling corrections industry dynamics"--had an annual revenue of more than \$1.7 billion.

#### LABOR STATISTICS

If you think low labor cost in countries such as China and Bangladesh are a threat to U.S. workers and businesses, labor condition in Incarceration Nation will dangerously raise your blood pressure. Take UNICOR, a.k.a. Federal Prison Industries, which employs 8 percent of "work eligible" federal prisoners. Hourly wages range from 23 cents--about on par with garment workers in Bangladesh--to a princely \$1.35 for "premium" prisoners, comparable to the hourly wages of Chinese garment workers. That's a good deal less than the \$2 hourly average manufacturing working in the Philippines, or the \$5 an hour average for Mexican manufacturing workers.

Who benefits from these low wages? The U.S. Dept. of Defense, for one. The DOD is UNICOR's largest customer; in fiscal year 2011 it accounted for \$357 million of the company's annual sales. UNICOR makes everything from Patriot missile components to body armor for the DOD.

This is a great deal for everyone except the population of Incarceration Nation, since they're stuck with forced labor at wage levels that would make many third world employers blush. No one likes to talk about this, of course: "We see products made by prison labor" isn't a slogan likely to generate consumer enthusiasm. But those in the know--as an online video promoting UNICOR's call-center services boasts--"prison labor is "the best kept secret in outsourcing."

Maybe Incarceration Nation really is a foreign country.

# QUOTES/READING

"Got it at a little place called Elkton." -- an actor in the FX TV series Justified, describing where he received his swastika, prison tattoo. I don't think this prison is on anyone's radar--not in the national consciousness. You don't think of Elkton the same way that you do as Alcatraz, Leavenworth, Sing Sing, or Folsom Prison....yet.

"In the United States and in the West, you have a certain way. You feel you are advanced and you are the best. Blah, Blah, Blah. You follow all these rules and have all these protocols and laws and regulations. You need somebody to change it. To blow it up. For the last 500 hundred years, you have been leading the way with innovation. We are no longer interested in following.-- Jian Wang of the Beijing Genetics Institute, the world largest DNA sequencing organization. (New Yorker)

"And every year, inmates leave solitary cells to join the ranks of parolees outside prison, their minds altered by an experience so fraught with risk that scientists require special dispensation to do it with animals." --on the brain/mind damage caused by solitary confinement, "Going Crazy in Solitary", The Week, Mar. 28, 2004.

"Life is easier to take than you'd think; all that is necessary is to accept the impossible, do without the indispensable, and bear the intolerable --poet/essayist Kathleen Norns

"Work finally begins when the fear of doing nothing exceeds the fear of doing it badly." --Alain de Botton

"If you are immune to boredom, there is nothing you cannot accomplish." -David Foster Wallace quoted in FT.com

"Comparison is the thief of joy. --Theodore Roosevelt

"I believe in evolution and I trust scientists on climate change. Call me crazy" --Gov. John Huntsman and Republican 2012 presidential candidate in tweet prior to 2012 election [He's probably actually the GOP's best shot. Call me crazy.]

"In practically every idea we have as humans, the older version of it is not better than the newer version. With the invested effort of generations, and centuries, and sometimes millennia of smart people who have been born since the idea came out, we have improved ideas." --Neil deGrasse Tyson commenting on progress in "Starman" (Feb 17, The New Yorker)

"An out-of-date library is also known by another name--an archive." -Rome (GA) News Tribune editorial. \$50,000 is being cut from the library budget which will not allow the library to buy new books, magazines, music, etc.

"Coming to prison was probably the best thing that ever happened to you." --Comment made by a facilitator to me in my psychology class. [Intervention, yes. Arrest, probably. Counseling, absolutely. Difficult conversations with family and friends, necessary. 72 months in a federal penitentiary. Hmmm.... I'd have to put that into the list of "one of worst thing that's ever happened to me" not the "best"]

"So have you done research before?" --Question posed to me by my Case Manager after I mentioned that science research was one of the work areas I could enter after I left prison. Thanks for knowing so much about me and my case.

"There are two ways to slice easily through life--to believe everything or to doubt everything. Both ways save us from thinking." --Linguist Alfred Korzybski quoted in the Associated Press

"Several NFL players have said the locker rooms around the league aren't ready for Sam [openly gay Missouri football player]. But they are ready for men who beat up their wives and drag them by their hair down a flight of stairs; they're ready for murderers, drunk drivers, dog murderers, rapists, players who are caught with drugs and prostitutes in their rooms, and various other felons. But not a gay guy? Maybe the NFL needs to take a hard look at itself." --Sports columnist Norman Arey in "Arey on Sports" in the Rome (GA) News-Tribune. [Preach it brother. Oh, and could somebody get this guy some syndication?]

"Somehow the study of Morse code seems useful to me. It makes me feel like my life isn't seeping down the drain for nothing. Maybe someday I'll be stranded somewhere with a flash light and will be able to code my way to safety. Actually, I know that's bullshit. I study Morse code because I need the challenges like this to survive." --Shane Bauer, hiker and journalist [As quoted in "780 Days in Solitude" in Mother Jones. It described the 780 days he and 2 friends spent in an Iranian jail after being captured while hiking.

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"Science is principle and process of seeking truth. Truth cannot be purchased, and thus, truth cannot be altered by money. Professorship is not a career, but rather a life's pursuit. The people with whom I work daily exemplify and remind me of this promise." --Tyrone Hayes, UC Berkeley professor who studies the effects of atrazine on frogs commenting on his battles with the makers of the product. As reported in the New Yorker

"A good scientist spends his whole career questioning his own facts. One of the most dangerous things you can do is believe." Hayes again.

"By the end of the decade, more Americans had died from guns than had been killed during the Yugoslav civil war, the Persian Gulf War, and the Somali civil war combined. We continued to think this was normal, where by most definitions that kind of body count--over 300,000 children, women, and men in 10 years--would signal a nation was at war, or had lost its mind." - "The 1990's" (Vanity Fair, October 2013) commenting on gun violence in America. I'm going with "lost its mind"

"There's no reality except in action." --Jean Paul Sartre

"The whole key to a fight is throwing the first punch." --Tom Steyer, Hedgefund billionaire and NextGen Climate Action Committee activist (Men's Health)

"If America decides that if you won't accept basic science, you're too out of touch to hold a basic position [governor]--that's good. That's really important." --Steyer commenting on the Virginia gubernatorial race loss by Ken Cuccinelli, a climate change denier.

"The greatest teachers are the ones who can turn B-students into A students or failing students into A-students. A-students are going to be A-students no matter who's teaching." --Neil de Grasse Tyson (NPR)

"By perpetuating the stigma and isolation imposed on formerly incarcerated individuals, these laws increase the likelihood they will commit future crimes." --U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder commenting on voting rights restoration for felons. ["Stigma", "isolation," and "likelihood to commit future crimes". Where else have we heard that connections? Oh, that's right....a public sex offender registry that has too many folks on it for far too long.].

"On the list of periodicals rejected [by the Conn. Dept. of Corrections] this month was the August 2013 issues of GQ magazine and the July 22 edition of the New Yorker because their 'contents pose a threat to the safety or security of staff, other inmates, or the public, facility, or discipline or rehabilitation..." --As reported in Prison Legal News

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READING

In the Shadow of the Net

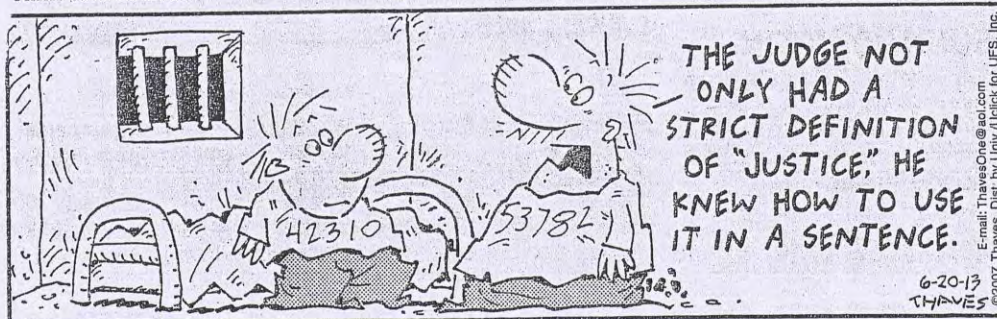
The Loudest Man in the Room- Book about Roger Ailes and the rise of Fox News.

December 10th- (George Saunders)

The Little Friend- (Donna Tartt)

Frank and Ernest

By Bob Thaves



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# BLOTTER

## THE BLOTTER

EVERYWHERE- Corrections officers are responsible for about half the sexual assaults in prison, a new Justice Department study found. Authorities dismiss about 90 percent of inmate allegations of sex abuse as "unsubstantiated." (from ProPublica as reported by The Week, Feb 7, 2014) [Of course, "sexual assault" involves agreed-upon relationships since inmates can't give "consent."]

THE MILITARY- The military seems to be well ahead of the federal government and the U.S. Sentencing Commission when it comes to child pornography. Those in the armed services found to possess or distribute child pornography are sentenced to 28 months because that's the length of its treatment program. (CautionClick). [2.5 years, treatment program...how progressive]

THE MILITARY- ...however, the military seems to be behind on sexual assault prosecution. Army Brigadiere General Jeffrey Sinclair was allowed to plead guilty to lesser charges stemming from an initial investigation around sexual assault involving a female. Instead of facing sexual assault, he plead guilty to the use of profanity, misuse of a military credit card, and adultery. As part of the deal, he won't do any jail time, keep his job, and his pension, and he won't be required to register as a sex offender. The charges were reduced and a deal was reached when it was claimed that his charges were brought in the wake of political calls for greater attention to sexual assault in the military. [Anyone else see the painful, ironic illogic here? Political pressure to focus greater seriousness to an issue results in "spin" that results in exactly the same outcome that the political pressure was meant to avoid....sweeping sexual assault under the rug. Priceless....I would say "Only in America" but probably not.]

THE VOTING BOOTH- Ours is an optimistic nation that believes in redemption. "We want ex-convicts to give up crime, and become upstanding members of our communities. Denying them the basic right to vote sends a strong message that they don't belong in civil society. Is that really in the public interest?... In a free country, the right to vote is as important as the rights to free speech and a fair trial. Such fundamental rights should not be taken away." as stated by Attorney General Eric Holder (As reported in "Controversy of the Week: Voting", The Week magazine, 28,, 2014)

IN THE MOVIES- From a review of the new documentary, Kids for Cash, "In 2009, two former Pennsylvania judges pleaded guilty to multiple felonies after taking \$2.6 million in kickbacks from a private-prison developer and sending scores of children to his facility--for offenses as trivial as trespassing or the unwitting possession of stolen property. Through interviews with the kids, their parents and attorneys, and Mark Ciavarella one of the bad-apple jurists, first-time director Robert May crafts powerfully affecting scenes, including a climactic confrontation between the stone-faced Ciavarella and a mother whose son was pushed to suicide by the harsh sentencing. Kids for Cash is a cautionary tale of what happens when you put zero-tolerance policies in the hands of unscrupulous grown ups." (from Mother Jones, March 2014) [When we talk about a Prison-Industrial Complex, we're not joking. See the next entry]

IDAHO, CALIFORNIA, AND PRIVATE PRISONS EVERYWHERE- "In July 2000, Idaho's then-Governor Dirk Kempthorne made a decision similar to Jerry Brown's [in California] in bringing in the private prison operator CCA. But it wasn't long before the facility, built and operated by CCA, began to draw concerns. Prisoners in the 2,000 bed facility dubbed it "Gladiator School" for the rampant fighting that took place inside. A 2009 study by the Idaho Dept. of Corrections obtained by the ACLU showed that there were four times as many prisoner-on-prisoner assaults there than in all the state's seven other prisons combined.

The ACLU sued the CCA in 2010, alleging that violence had become an "epidemic" in the facility, and the Associated Press released a video showing a prisoner beaten unconscious while correctional officers stood around watching. A 2011 settlement required the CCA to keep more officers on staff, but the company apparently didn't bother to do that. Last year, a review of CCA's staff records showed that prison employees had falsified as many as 4,800 hours over the course of several months: they had understaffed the prison on purpose and fudged records to boost their personal incomes. The end result: Idaho will terminate its private prison experiment with the CCA in June." (quoted as reported in a digest from Access Legal Aide summarizing Politico's article "The Private Prison Racket: Companies That Manage Prisons on Our Behalf Have Abysmal Records. So Why Do We Keep Giving Them Business?") [ My thoughts: When you combine the ethic of "Good enough for government work" [running prisons] with a crass concern of generating profits and the corporate bottom line and investor interest, this is the type of trouble that you run into. Oh, and this is the "money grab" drives the overcriminalization, overincarceration, and criminal recidivism that we see in this country. When people use the phrase "Prison-Industrial Complex," it is an absolutely spot-on characterization. It should really make you ask, "Why would we ever send non-violent

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criminals to a place like that" and "Who's watching the watchers?"]

CHICAGO- Richard J. Vanecko, nephew of the former mayor Richard J. Daley of Chicago, plead guilty to involuntary manslaughter in the 2004 death of David Korschman and was sentenced to 60 days in jail. It took 10 years to bring closure in this case because the case was initially investigated and then suspiciously closed while "da Mayor" was in office. It was reopened in 2012 after Daley was out of the Mayor's office. In reviewing the re-opened case, Cook County Circuit Judge Michael P. Toomin declared "the system has failed" the deceased and criticizes "the fiction of self-defense" he says was "conjured up by police and prosecutors" and questions why Vanecko wasn't initially charged: "He was identified as the killer-- make no mistake about it. This is not a whodunit. In this building, when you have a dead body, someone's going to jail. Not in this case." Hats off to The Chicago Sun-Times for staying on this story and making sure that justice (?) was done. [I got 6 years in prison for a bad habit on the computer, and this guy gets 60 days after killing someone....and he almost got away with it. Wow. Sad.]

BRAZIL- A Brazilian soccer star who admitted to having his model-girlfriend killed and fed to dogs because she was pregnant with his child that he didn't want to support will be released from prison to play soccer for the state league. Bruno Fernandes de Souza was sentenced to 22 years in prison. Now that he's served 3 years of his prison sentence, he's eligible for furloughs that will allow him to play soccer during the day under the watch of police escorts that will be there for practice and games. He will have to return to prison at night. [Unbelievable, right? I'm not a fan of the death penalty, but I'm also not a fan of this. So, he basically is a professional soccer player with a less-than-ideal "apartment" and all of his needs taken care of. Nice work if you can get it I guess. Sheesh...]

DELEWARE- The grandson of the the founder of DuPont was recently convicted of having sexually molested his infant son and, later, digitally penetrating his 3-year old daughter. After pleading guilty to these charges, he faced a recommended minimum of 10 years on each charge. Instead, he was sentenced to...sit down for this one...PROBATION. [In NOT sending him to prison his judge opined that prison wasn't really the right place for him and that prisons don't rehabilitate. She's sort of late to the party on the rehabilitation part, but he surely belongs in prison for what he did...at least if what I did calls for 6 years of it. Those were her words. Her actions suggested that the sexual assault of an an infant and a toddler don't matter. Again, like the last KUL that highlighted the "affluenza" defense in the vehicular manslaughter deaths of four people, we see again that those who are politically connected and have money can get away with almost anything. And it's interesting, the ideas that his judge used to spare him time in prison weren't close to the words being spoken at my sentencing hearing...]



"Water is on sixteen."

# "THE GANG'S ALL HERE"

CHOMO-RICKY- Ricky's an example that in prison, you can be just about whatever you say you are. You just have to have enough guts to say it and hope that no one wants to check up on what you've said. Ricky is an inmate who has just left. He had integrated himself in with the Knuckle draggers (white drug dealers and white collar criminals) so well that he had everyone convinced that he wasn't a sex offender. In fact, everyone sort of assumed that he was and had just begun to sort of accept that he had carved out his own place for himself. Ricky, now off to the religious program in Petersburg, VA, was supposedly here for some sort of patent infringement in electronics, his field of study from Purdue University. He arrived and just didn't seem like the kind of guy who would have stolen a patent--or anything really. Con men don't seem to change; stripes run deep. If you don't act like a thief or con man, then you probably aren't one. He just didn't seem slick or needy enough to be one.

He was really nice, college educated, and a good softball player. But he didn't really want to be associated with the sex offenders here, so he chose a different path. He played on the softball team with the drug offenders (Who we beat, BTW--bad choice) and watched sports, NASCAR, and hillbilly television in their TV room. Of course, we had our doubts. The 5 year sentence seemed too long for theft. His explanation for not being able to go to a camp (that he owned property in another country with his foreign-born wife) seemed possible but highly unlikely. Someone checked; Now we know.

CATFISH- The rule at FSL-Elkton is that when you arrive, you are assigned to either G or H unit. If for some reason you are injured, and it's decided that you cannot go up or down the stairs from the second-floor H unit, you are transferred down to G unit on the first floor. One exception to this is Catfish. Catfish lived downstairs in G unit, and a reason that no one can seem to explain, he was moved up to the H unit. Catfish does not have a very strong jaw and thus his nickname (I think). Catfish is gay and a nasty (unsubstantiated) rumor is that he was friendly with lots of folks downstairs (thus the move..???) and upstairs. I can't confirm any of that. And it could just be a nasty rumor. He's a local, and he gets plenty of visits. I do know that he doesn't like the nickname "Catfish." I don't know how much time he received, but he spent some of it up the Hill.

GERALD- An interesting man from some rural outpost in North Carolina, Gerald looks like Santa Claus when he grows his beard and Sasquatch when he takes off his shirt. He's a large man with a deep, mumbly voice. Gerald is here for child porn charges, and when I told Gerald that I was surprised that they had Broadband that far deep into the hills of North Carolina, he hung his head and sheepishly mumbled, "Yeah, boy, we got broadband there...". If you don't like the meal at the chow hall, just ask Gerald how it was, and you will instantly feel better about it. According to Gerald, this is the best food he's ever had. I once offered Gerald some pepper for his salad, and he said he'd never heard of such a thing. He really enjoyed it. He asked me how long I'd been putting black pepper on salad. "Uhhhh....25 years?" I commented. Someone remarked that he would have freaked out to have seen a pepper mill or a peppercorn. Other than this crime, I can't imagine Gerald ever having committed another crime. Maybe he was late paying taxes or caught speeding over the hills or got into a dust-up defending someone's honor. Another guy here, a gentle giant really, who doesn't have a truly criminal bone in his body and has no sense being here. Self-esteem, body issues, isolation, and a bad computer habit are his problems. Too bad America decided prison was what he needed when it clearly isn't. He has a few health issues (diabetes, obesity) to deal with, so for him the Elkton Experience is at least 5 years of his life and \$250,000 of your money down the drain.

HIGHPITCH- Highpitch is a youngish (maybe 28, older than he looks since he looks about 15), elfin, skinny new arrival. He's from the Ithaca, New York area and is here for the same thing I'm here for. He bounced through several prison and county jails on his way here. He was a school bus driver (YIKES) on the outside before his arrest, but I imagine he was pretty harmless. He has a weirdly angular body (all elbows, knees, and a bird chest), a small head, and a high pitched voice. Whenever, I hear him over the din of the unit, I first think, "There's a woman in the unit!" but then realize that it's just Highpitch. I have heard him several times remonstrate loudly to other folks that "I'M NOT GAY!!" Okay, chief. He does have an ex-wife who divorced him before/during this incarceration. He's joined GED, and he'll probably get it. I think he was sentenced to 7 or 8 years. Totally harmless. Over-punished.

YOOPER MACK- This is a recent addition to our unit. Sort of my height but heavier with a reddish/brown goatee, big round friendly face and slightly thinning hair. Maybe 45. In gay circles, Mack would be referred to as a "bear." I don't know anything about Mack's charges but I'm willing to guess what they are. Mack was at a prison in Louisiana but was sent here to do the psychology program. Mack is from the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. Don't know a lot about Mack but he's decent to say hi when he passes. I think he has about 2 years to go in a 5 year charge.

ANGRY ARAB- This guy from Detroit is in one of my GED classes and is finally coming around to start working. I've tried to impress upon him that he's smart enough to get his GED if he'll work, but it's taken some effort. EVERYTHING is such a

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CHORE with this guy!!! Since he loves to talk basketball, we at least bond over college sports. He gives me grief about Duke. I give him the same about Michigan and Michigan State. Prison should've/could've been a wake up call for him, but since he only received onyear, it's just a hiccup for him. He's used it to get into better shape, but it could've been a lot more with some structure that you can't force on someone. Here for either drugs or fraud but I'm not sure which...probably fraud. Shouldn't be back since he seems to have a decent support network, but he could/should also demand a lot more from himself.

CHUCKY- AfAmerican fellow who has spent many, many years in prison. Has a bushy mustache and a frizzy afro that he strangely parts down the middle...so that he looks like a caramel Bozo. Chucky does all of his thinking out loud in a mumbling voice. His nicknames include "Chucky" and "Mumbles." You basically know when Chucky is about to ask you something because he has already thought through the question out-loud in your vicinity. Then he will come to you and ask you the question he was just verbalizing a few steps away. There's a term that folks use here called "burnt out," and Chucky clearly fits that (too many years in prison, too many drugs, ??, !!). He's institutionalized at this point, and I don't think he could or would even want to "make it" in society at this point.

TEFLON- "Teflon" is an AfAm guy who lived downstairs. He's moved onto another prison by now. He was called Teflon because the police always came after him but neither charges nor convictions ever "stuck." He's in federal prison; he might want to rethink his nickname. I suggest "Glue."

SELF-REPRESENTING ATTORNEY- There's a fellow across the hall from my new cube who is not a very sharp guy. He is on his second or third prison bit for drugs. In his most recent case, he is representing himself in his appeal. He's claiming through some strange, obscure set of reasons (that you cannot possibly follow when he tells his cellie for the thousandth time) that his 4th, 5th, 6th, and 7th Amendment Constitutional rights were violated in his case and that his judge should be censured, disbarred, publicly flogged, or something else. It won't change the outcome of the trial but it'll get him a new judge--or maybe just make a point. He makes almost no sense and his cellie looks at me with eyes that plead, "Help me..." Anyway, this is not a smart man. And he's a conspiracy theory nut who likes to blame everything on the Jews--sure, why not. Can only be taken in exceedingly small doses. Sometimes, he'll jump into a conversation from the sidelines where he's been lingering with a "Do you folks mind if I jump into this?" and my first thought is "Yes" followed by "Please don't " and then "Well, I was just about to be on my way....."

PAPA STRONG HAND- There is a guy here that we call "Strong Hand." Because of cerebral palsy, he has a side that he "favors" and only one hand that he can use well. So, another older guy arrived who had similar problems. Turns out that he has a different issue. He was in a motorcycle accident and suffered a severe brain injury. I don't know if his physical problems (limp, palsy, paralysis on one side, slurred speech) are caused by the physical injuries of the accident or from the brain trauma or both. He had trouble coming up and down the stairs, so he was moved to the G unit downstairs. He has a wife and family that still visit, and you wonder if his child porn problem (which he's obviously here for) didn't stem from some brain injury issues that affects impulse control. His issues and injuries aside, he isn't such a bad guy, but it's hard to get past his slurred speech issues to get to know him.

BRUCE- One of our latest additions is Bruce. Bruce is from Toledo and is lucky to have family that visits. I'm fairly certain Bruce is gay though he doesn't make a big deal of it. Like most of the guys here for child pornography, he's totally harmless and doesn't belong in prison. I knew he had some short-term memory issues and every now and then he seemed a bit off. Turns out that Bruce fell off a multi-story scaffold years ago, landed on his head, and was in a coma for about a month. That explains it. Former Marine Corp, he talks about his experience there with other former military types. [Seriously, could someone do some functional MRIs on all of these brain injured/Aspergers/autistic/cerebral palsy guys and see what's the connection between their malfunctioning brains and child porn? There seems to be A LOT of those guys here. Surely, someone can get a grant to study this, right?]

CHUCKLES- So we have this guy that nervously laughs all the time. And loudly. Therefore his nickname became "Chuckles" (the black guys call him "Giggles", but it's the same thing). Now that I think about it, he doesn't do it as much as he used to. Maybe he settled in, and that's helping. I almost never talk to him since he only hangs out with the Dungeons and Dragons guys. I did sit with him at dinner one night and he went on about working as a store clerk at a GameStop store, his young Asian girlfriend, anime, living at home with mom and dad, gaming, porn, etc. etc. Interestingly, he did live in Asia for a long time as a child. You get the picture. Totally harmless but pretty immature. Not sure how much time he got. We did talk one night about my teaching and research, so my opinion of him went up (grin).