

CORRECTIONAL RELIGIOUS HYPOCRISY:  
SCAMS WITHIN SCAMS, OR THEISTIC OCD?

By: William A. Larson, MDOC #046176

Within the Missouri Penal System, nothing is too sacred that prevents it from being turned into some sort of prisonistic scam. Prison officials encourage such behavior, by deliberately playing into, and empowering the gallimaufry hustles.

This is not even considering that prisons are nothing more than a typical bureaucratic boondoggle, played out on the uninformed and apathetic citizens, of the State. Prisons, for the most part, do not prevent crime, they just delay it.

Religions and prisons have been united like a two-headed snake, since the apocryphal days of the Apostle Paul. Leading up to the first penitentiary (Philadelphia Walnut Street Jail), instituted by the Philadelphia Society for Alleviating the Miseries of Public Prisons, and governed by the Quakers. The most dangerous prisoners were kept in the dark, dungeon-like, cells. Their only visitors were the Quakers, who would read the Bible to them. Many of the prisoners went insane, due to the long-total isolation. [1]

Since its inception, the Missouri Penal System has forced its personal Christian morality onto its prisoners. The early Missouri State Penitentiary (MSP), leased out its prisoners, to the local merchants and farmers, in the Jefferson City area. [2]

When I was at the Algoa Reformatory, in 1963-64, attendance at the Sunday Christian Services, was not optional. Prisoners, from each housing unit, would be marched to the small auditorium,

used as a chapel. The only prisoners who did not attend, were those in the "hole". Who wished they could attend the services.

Each week, there would be a different minister. They were ordinarily from the Salvation Army, or various local Catholic, Lutheran or Baptist churches; if I am remembering correctly. Somehow, I endured it without lightening striking the building.

When I was at Potosi CC, in the early 90's, I wasn't so fortunate. I went to the chapel to get some Christmas cards, to send to family and friends. As I entered the chapel, lightening struck the building. I quickly picked out my cards, and left, to avoid enduring any further wraith, from the Christian God. I had someone else pick up my cards, after that.

In October, of 1981, I found myself in the antiquated, St. Louis City Jail, awaiting trial on a Capitol Murder charge.

A few weeks after I arrived, a young man, hardly out of his teens, walked onto our tier. He carried a plastic basket, with his property in it. On the top was a Bible, as if for protection.

He had just been arrested/charged, with the brutal murder of a local, socialite, businessman. I found it rather perplexing that someone who had just, hours before, allegedly, slaughtered another person, with a meat cleaver, would be carrying a Bible.

They moved him into the cell next to mine. At night, when the noise quieted down, we would talk, back and forth. He would invariably slip his newly found belief, into the conversation.

Being the theistic deviate, that I am, I couldn't resist the opportunity to stick the knife in, and twist it a little bit.

I facetiously suggested to him, if he truly believed what he was proselytizing? He should confess to the murder, plead guilty and throw himself on the mercy of the court. That way he would earn the forgiveness of his God, by sparing the victim's family from the agonizing, tribulations, of sitting through the trial.

He took his case to trial, was found guilty; but was spared the death penalty.

While in the City Jail, I discovered how religiously naive some prisoners are. I was watching some prisoners play cards. One prisoner kept winning. Each hand he won, he would praise Jesus for the win. I jestingly asked him is he really believed that Jesus was watching the card game. He responded that Jesus was always on his side, in card games.

I put forth to him, who he thought was more powerful, the devil, or God. He replied God. I then dared him to test his God, to see who was more powerful. If God was more powerful, he would continue to win. If the devil was more powerful, he would not win another hand. He eagerly agreed to the test. He never won another hand, until I released him from the test.

In January, of 1983, I returned to MSP. While I was being processed, by a prisoner-clerk, he asked me what religion I was. I responded Zen Buddhist. He looked at me like I was the devil.

The clerk informed me he could not put Zen Buddhist, on the form. He could only record a Christian religion, because I was "white". I really do not know what religion he typed on the form, and I really did not care. I had other, more important matters

to worry about. Such as surviving the day, and the day after that.

I next went to the prisoner-barber. I had not shaven, or had a haircut, since October of 1981. At the City Jail, they required everyone (16-20 prisoners), to share a single Gillette-style, double-edged razor.

The unsanitary aspects of this made me refuse to use it. I ended up looking like a cave-man. This was before the onset of the AID's and Hepatitis C, epidemic.

I asked the barber to shave off everything. He replied that he was only allowed to shave my beard. He could not shave my head. He could give me a military-style buzz-cut, which he did.

I was soon sent to Super-Max, for my 9-month complementary vacation. While there, I purchased a three-headed, electric rotary razor, and started shaving my head.

At the time, the Missouri Department of Corrections (MDOC), had a hair-length policy, that they selectively enforced. Your hair could be no longer than your shoulders. [3] No-where, in the policy, did it state how short you hair could be. I did notice, I was the only prisoner with a shaven head.

Some staff acted perturbed when they saw my shaven head; especially when I never allowed it to grow out. Most staff just seemed mildly amused. I was arbitrarily labeled a "Skin-head" or "White-Separatist", by some staff and prisoners.

Every time staff asked me why I was shaving my head, I just told them I was a Zen Buddhist; it was a cleanliness requirement. They usually just shook their heads, and walked away smiling.

The U.S. Supreme Court, in 1972, made a defined ruling upholding a prisoner's right to practice various Buddhist beliefs. [4] The indigenous State of Mizzery, didn't seem to recognize the authority of said outside-the-state courts, and still doesn't. [5]

I was occasionally threatened, by some staff, with a conduct violation, if I didn't stop shaving my head. Staff eventually gave up, and stopped saying anything, about my shaven head.

I still shave my head today, albeit, I have a lot less hair to shave off now. A shaven head is now common within the MDOC, for both prisoners and staff.

While I was in Super-Max, there was a prisoner, Clovis Green. He was, and still is, renown for being the most litigious prisoner, in the nation. [6] At the time he was litigating his rights to have conjugal visits, wear long hair/beard. He wanted the MDOC to pay him, as they pay the MSP chaplain, to hold services for his newly created "Human Awareness Universal Life Church". [7]

It was, and still is, not uncommon for prisoners to manufacture religions, in order to try to receive special privileges. One prisoner recently filed an action to force the MDOC to recognize his "Monotheistic Sanctuary of Abraham" religion. [8] Very seldom are these attempts successful.

One of the most abused religions, within the MDOC, is the Moorish Science Temple (MST). The U.S. Department of Justice, has determined that the St. Louis branch, MST #1, controlled by Jerry Lewis-Bey, was nothing more than a religious facade, that was used as a cover for a drug-trafficking enterprise. [9]

A prisoner, at PCC, sued his fellow MST members, alleging they were not "real" Moors. He is the original Moor. [10] Others have sued the State, alleging they are being held illegally, because as "Moorish-Americans", they are not subject to the laws of the State and Federal Governments. [11]

In 1983, there was no doubt that a faction of the Moors were one of the primary sources of drugs, and were operating a staff-sanctioned, "white-slavery" consortium.

I watched, while I was in H-Hall, as the Moors, and others, were allowed to come up and inspect the new-meat; as if they were preparing for a slave-auction. I didn't have a specific problem with the Moors until 1988-89.

Sometime in late December, 1988, the caseworkers moved a youngster into my cell. I was told it was just temporary until he picked himself a "daddy". The "booty-bandits" were on the prowl immediately, led by FC and BJ, who were both Moors. I was forced to warn them several times to stay away from my cell. I knew, I was just wasting my time. You can't stop a horny male dog, sniffing out a female dog, in heat. I knew sooner, or later, things would not turn out well.

This went on until January, when I received word that the Moors (FC and BJ), had put out a staff-sanctioned "hit" on me.

One night, prior to the evening meal, my cell-door slid open. I exited the cell and told the youngster to stay put. Most of the hall lights were off, and no-one seemed to be out on the tier-walks. I walked down to the tier control-lever box. There was

no-one there. I imagine my cell-door had been opened by a "malevolent spirit of booty-bandits past". I then walked down the narrow steps, leading to the bottom tier (flag). Still, no-one was in sight, not even staff. I felt like a burglar in a mortuary. The entire housing unit was as silent as a grave-yard. Everyone seemed to know what was happening, as they stood at their cell-doors, silently watching. I exited the housing unit, into the darkness. Someone had turned out the yard lights, which never occurs, before the evening meal, after it gets dark.

I walked out between the two large doors, onto the concrete stoop. I could sense movement on either side of the double-doorway. I quickly walked out to the edge of the stoop, and turned around. I faced LG and NH, who were on both sides of the doorway, with shanks in their hands. I was sort of insulted that the Moors would send their "lightweights" after me.

Acting like the back-stabbing cowardly-snakes they were, they slithered back into the housing unit, without saying anything; much less doing anything.

I turned and walked down the steps and started towards the messy-hall. I could see KB standing at the short hedges, that circled the quadrangle, across from the steps of H.U.3. He had a befuddled look on his face, as if he didn't believe what had just happened.

I ate with A-Hall, without any problems. The few staff, in the messy-hall, didn't say anything to me. When I returned to H.U.3, all the lights were on, and they were releasing everyone for mainline.

A few days later, the youngster told me he was going to move in with BB, one of the "white" H.U.3 clerks. The next morning he moved out. That afternoon, he was wearing hot-pants and make-up. I didn't have any further problems with the Moors, after that.

For some inexplicable reason, I guess only known by their particular God, as soon as some prisoners reach the jails, or prison, their religious soul wakes up. Prisoners magically become born-again Native Americans. [12] They seek out their Scandinavian heritage through Asatru/Odinism. [13] Messianic Christians turn into Jews, who not too long ago, they spit on. They embrace such religions as: Shikism, Wiccanism, Sufism, Hare Krishna, Rastafarian, Satanism, Vedanta Society, and any other religion that makes them feel special. [14]

The religious scams are endless, in the attempt to gain special privileges from staff. JAG, who used to be a devout Jehovah's Witness, now has mysteriously evolved into a Native American. He produced, as proof of his ancestry, a photocopied document that stated he is a member of a specific tribal unit.

At MSP, in the 80's, a prisoner received such a document, through the mail. As usual, the scam was started. Copies were made of the document, with the individual's identity "whited out". He then sold the blank documents to those who wanted to become instant Native Americans.

The document that JAG showed me was the exact same document, with his personal information, typed onto it. I just smiled and said: "Wow, you are really a Native American".



LT, in the 90's, used to carry his Bible everywhere he went, at PCC. One day a CO stopped him and searched the Bible. He found hollowed-out pages, with a small shank hidden in the Bible. It is very common for prisoners to hide small weapons, such as razor blades, in with their religious material.

Staff searched the MST Mosque, that was located next to the commissary, near the MSP control centre. When they removed the panels and pictures/flags from the walls, they found enough weapons to equip an army.

During this time period, the MST and Nation of Islam (NOI), were allowed to spew their racial hatred, for all of the "blue-eyed devils", over the internal television network.

I filed a grievance against them being allowed to openly spread their racial hatred. I am "blue-eyed" and do not consider myself a devil.

The MDOC responded back saying: "if I was offended by it, I didn't have to watch, or listen to it".

During this same time period, the MDOC was refusing to, and still does, allow the "Christian Separatist Church Society" (CSCS) to hold religious services. Their exaggerated excuse is that the services: "poses a threat to public safety, safety of staff, safety of offender population". [15] I wonder why the MDOC didn't apply the same standard that they apply to the MST/NOI racial hatred rhetoric, "don't watch, don't listen", to the CSCS.

Albeit, I imagine hiding weapons in the mosque, or the same individuals causing a riot situation at the All-Faiths Chapel [16]

isn't posing "a threat to public safety, safety to staff, safety of offender population".

LL was well-known as the Microwave Preacher. Winter, or Summer, he would wear a long-faded-green, military-surplus, over-coat. He would stand at the base of the MSP guard-tower, opposite of the H.U.2 exit doors. He would preach, in a very loud scream, his personal version of the Bible, to the tower-guards. He would hold his Bible, high in the air, like a weapon. He was more well known for putting a baby in a microwave oven.

During the Christmas Season, at MSP, staff and prisoners alike celebrated. It was a time where the peace-pipe was smoked, and everyone seemed to make an extra effort to behave themselves. Sort of like calling a truce between battles.

A Christmas tree was fully decorated, with the usual Nativity Display, out in the quadrangle, near the newly built All-Faiths Chapel. We made sure we kept the child molesters away from the Baby Jesus.

A few days before Christmas, each housing unit, in turn, would walk around the quadrangle, in a single file. There were large card tables set up out in front of H.U.3, filled with everything one could imagine (except release papers). Most of it donated by various religious groups. Staff, standing behind the tables, would pass you paper sacks filled with: peanuts, peanut brittle, candy, Christmas cookies; plus decks of cards, and of course, cancer sticks. We also got gloves-handkerchiefs-socks.

There was so much junk food, you could hardly carry it all back

to your cell. MSP would also place \$5, on your canteen account.

On Christmas Day, as with Thanksgiving, staff would personally serve us our afternoon holiday meals. You generally received two regular trays and a paper-plate, full of food. On Easter Sunday, they had the proverbial Easter Eggs, and special meals all day. On Fridays, they had the mandatory meatless, Catholic fish. They still serve fish every Friday.

Religious holidays are no longer celebrated with super-meals. These super-meals have disappeared somewhere within the new Correctional money pit. They continue to give us a small kiddie bag of junk food around Christmas. To avoid insulting the Muslims, they call it an "end of the year treat bag". Makes one feel like a real grown-up.

On Memorial Day, 4th of July and Labour Day, we used to have outdoor, all-you-can-eat BBQ's. They served chicken, pork, hot dogs, hamburgers, and sometimes steaks. This also has disappeared into Correctional oblivion.

Due to individuals who refuse to eat pork, under religious pretenses, and staff laziness, they now only serve pork three times in six weeks. The spoonful of canned pork they serve, comes with a half-spoonful of water-like BBQ sauce, so they have put BBQ on the schedule menu.

This does not keep staff from having their chicken, pork and real beef BBQ's. Well to be fair, they do allow us to smell it. They also grant us the right to wash their greasy pots and pans.

The Catholic Chaplain, at MSP, in the mid-90's, had a bad habit

(excuse the pun). He would send his prisoner clerks to the mailroom, to pick up his mail. One day the Protestant Chaplain was up in the mailroom, picking up his mail. He noticed a box addressed to the Catholic Chaplain, so he picked it up also.

When he got back to his office, he noticed the box was mailed by the Catholic Chaplain, to himself. He immediately got hold of the Catholic Chaplain and asked him about the box. The Catholic Chaplain knew nothing about the box. The investigator was called and the box was opened. The box was filled with drugs. Every prisoner, who worked in the chapel got locked up on investigation. They never found out who sent the box, or how long drugs have been coming into MSP, like that.

Anti-Semitism is a problem that has plagued Missouri and the MDOC, since the beginning of time. As a child, living in Christian neighborhoods, and going to parochial schools, until the 6th grade, I was never allowed to mention that my grandmother was Jewish.

The MDOC, in its flagrant contempt for Jews, and their right to adhere to Jewish Dietary Laws (Kashrut-Kosher) [17], has rancorously devised what they call CRD's (Certified Religious Diet).

This alleged "kosher" diet gives Jews the Hobson's Choice, of eating from the regular-fare (6-week) menu, and receiving hot meals; or eating the "kosher" CRD's. The CRD's are a 2-day menu, of ice cold foods, such as: unwashed fruit, moldy broccoli or spinach; rubber-like peanut-butter/jelly packs; various cold beans; salty crackers. On the Sabbath, they add a slice of ice cold turkey mystery meat. In other words, if a Jew wants to eat Kosher, he

has to give up all rights to a hot meal.

I used to help prepare the CRD's (2016), until I filed a grievance over them (SCCC-16-595). The CRD's are not Kosher. They have never been approved by a qualified Rabbi. A Rabbi has never inspected the food preparation area; or the specific foods that are placed on the trays, or in the Sad.Seg. bags.

The CRD's preparation even violates Missouri State Statutes (§196.165 RSMo. Title 12), as other foods are prepared in the same room, and at the same time, as the alleged Kosher foods are.

Somehow, somewhere, someone has made the arbitrary determination that "vegetarian" and "Kosher" somehow mean the same thing. The trays/bags are as Kosher as Adolf Hitler.

To heap insult upon injury, Jewish prisoners, who desire to eat "Kosher" are prohibited from participating in any of the religious food banquets. They are also prohibited from purchasing the program, fund-raising, foods that are sold through the commissary. Such as: fried chicken, hamburgers, pizza, various cakes and donuts. That all other prisoners are allowed to order.

PD recently asked if I would help him get his confession thrown out, on grounds of temporary insanity. He explained that he had sexual relations with an under-age girl. His conscious tormented him, until he turned himself into the authorities. He confessed, signed a statement. The police found the girl and confronted her. To her parent's anger and her embarrassment, she confirmed what had happened. PD pled guilty, and threw himself on the mercy of the court. The court had no mercy.

I fully agreed with PD that he was insane, but not temporary.

PD is typical of the prisoners who are inflicted with Theistic OCD. Their interpretation, of theology, is all they think and talk about. You can not have a rational conversation with them, without them invoking their version of the Words of God, as if they were this God's personal defender.

PD has been fired from the kitchen (two times), the school, as a tutor, and every other job he has had, while incarcerated, due to his proselytizing. This is not even counting how many times he has been punched in the mouth, when he keeps it up incessantly.

In 2006, I was acting stupid, while in Sad.Seg.. I deliberately overdosed on my blood-pressure medication. I was taken to the Houston hospital. According to the doctors, I died. I then came back after they had given up, with their resuscitation protocol.

I was returned to SCCC the next day and placed in a suicide cell. The mental health assistant came to see me. Almost the first words out of his mouth, was that I needed to find Jesus. I replied that I didn't know Jesus was lost. He didn't appreciate my jocularly. He kept me in a suicide cell until I agreed to start reading the Bible.

The psychiatrist, later, determined the medications they had me on, most likely caused the depression. So I stopped taking them, and have been my wonderful self, ever since. I would never want to deprive the MDOC, of my companionship.

I am not professing to be making any moral judgment concerning the validity of other prisoner's religious convictions. As an

Aspie, I admit I don't know, and really do not care. Prisoners who turn their religious beliefs, off and on, like a water spigot; do not seem to have much credibility. But then I may be wrong, none of them have been struck by lightning!

SOURCES OF AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- [1] World Book Encyclopedia
- [2] Handcock, Roach & Co v Ewing 55 Mo 101 (SC 1874)  
State ex rel Perry v Clark 54 Mo 216 (SC 1873)
- [3] Iron Eyes v Henry 907 F2d 810, 818 (8th Cir 1990)
- [4] Cruz v Beto 405 US 319, 328; 92 Sct 1079, 1084 (1972)
- [5] Jackson v Crawford 2015 US Dist Lexis 14222
- [6] Green v Camper 477 F.Supp. 758 (DC WD 1979)
- [7] Green v White 605 F2d 376 (8th Cir 1979)
- [8] Sefu v Smith 2007 US Dist Lexis 93959
- [9] Lewis-Bey v U.S. 2016 US Dist Lexis 91904  
U.S. v Darden 70 F.3d 1507, 1516-17 (8th Cir 1995)
- [10] Seals-Ali v Perkins 2017 US Dist Lexis 96354
- [11] Missouri v Fullilove 2014 US Dist Lexis 169768  
Clay v State 2015 US Dist Lexis 162113
- [12] Fowler v Crawford 534 F.3d 931, 938 (8th Cir 2000)
- [13] Roberts v Miller 2015 US Dist Lexis 54292
- [14] Jackson v Crawford 2016 US Dist Lexis 130983  
Silvey v Schriro 1997 US App Lexis 17804
- [15] Murphy v MDOC 372 F.3d 979 (8th Cir 2004)
- [16] Fletcher v Moore 1993 US App Lexis 1618
- [17] Toler v Leopold 2007 US Dist Lexis 55531