

The Injustice of the Justice System: Normalcy is not normal

Beep... Beep... Beep... The Texas Department of Criminal Justice - Institutional Division (TDCJ-ID) is one of the most perplexing, controversial and contradictory criminal justice systems in the United States of America (USA) - nay, the world or ever known to man. This perplexing, controversial and contradictory system can be easily identified - and is most identified - in its name. Virtually every punitive system in the USA is known by its acronym D.O.C. (Department of Correction). This manifests as Tennessee Department of Correction (TDOC), Mississippi Department of Correction (MDOC), so on and so forth. Not Texas! Texas had to be an anomaly, different and hence unique.

Beep... Beep... Beep... In a previous article, I highlighted the way Texas criminalizes and punishes its mentally incompetent citizenry. See my article entitled Justice Awry. In this article, we'll take a closer look at Texas and its archaic, draconian and wild, wild western brand of meting out justice - which is no more than organized, state-sanctioned vigilante revenge (not justice and definitely not rehabilitation).

Beep... Beep... Beep... In breaking news, a young man who brutally murdered his mother because she would not continue supporting his drug habit has been apprehended and identified.

Beep... Beep... Beep... After confessing to the savage and brutal

murder of his own mother for drug money, the suspect has been found guilty of capital murder - by a jury of his peers - and has been sentenced - scratch that condemned - to death.

Beep... Beep... Beep... It's now been roughly four and a half years, and the Anytown, Texas, Killer of his own mother has exhausted his appellate process. The U.S. Supreme Court has declined to intervene into this heinous case. Although the convicted - and condemned - Killer raised nineteen points of error in his appellate review stage, presenting everything - a wide range - from Denial of Effective Assistance of Counsel, Denial of Effective Assistance of Appellate Counsel, an Illegally Induced Confession, Trial Court Error by denying there were any mitigating factor to lessen the condemned culpability -- being on drugs doesn't count, not having a father in the house doesn't count, not receiving a proper education doesn't count, living well below the poverty line doesn't count, not having a vocation or any job skills doesn't count. NOTHING COUNTS!!! Only, you'll DIE CONVICT!!!

Beep... Beep... Beep... It's now up to the Governor of Texas to issue a reprieve or commutation to commute or postpone the condemned Killer's death sentence to life imprisonment without the possibility of parole. Oh, did I mention since the mid 1990's, no Texas Governor has EVER intervened into a matter such as this? Texas is by far the most proficient Killer in American history. How's this for normalcy: When Anytown, Texas man killed his own mother for drug money, and it was reported on the news, or better yet, when it was right next door to YOUR HOUSE, you didn't get alarmed. You went on with your day (or night) as usual. Drugs are common, right. Drugs are, well

NORMAL - an everyday reality and like cotton, the fabric of our lives. Anytown, Texas condemned killer only did what druggies do, right? Kill and steal for a living, all and anything to support their drug habit. In fact, looking at it optimistically - or normalcy - better his own mother than yours, right?

Beep... Beep... Beep... Normalcy... Poor young man - and probably a man of color -- in fact, although African-Americans make up only 12% of the U.S. population and African-American males (men and boys) make up a paltry 4% of the ENTIRE U.S. population, African-American males make up a stunning 47% of the U.S. prison population -- which has soared to over 2 million (and counting). This same 4% of the U.S. population comprises - get this - 53% of those on Death Row throughout the United States of America. So yes, statistically, this Anytown, Texas, condemned killer is more than likely a man of color.

Beep... Beep... Beep... Normalcy... Doesn't the law say a citizen cannot be coerced into giving a confession... from a... well... intoxicated... high... or... mentally challenged individual? I'm sure my civics or government teacher taught me this euphoric concept and said it was rooted in the 5th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution and a bedrock of our democracy (or really, republic).

Beep... Beep... Beep... Normalcy... Due to the irreparable harm that can occur, isn't there more safeguards for a person facing the Ultimate Penalty (Death), such as automatic review by all appellate courts - both state and federal - in that jurisdiction and review by the United States Supreme Court, as well as final executive (Governatorial) review?

Beep... Beep... Beep... Normalcy... Didn't they tell us from statistics that a person on death row will sit on death row for 20+ years BEFORE he's anywhere NEAR actually receiving that lethal injection?

Beep... Beep... Beep... Normalcy... Oh, and did I mention the Great State of Texas puts to death more of it's condemned killers than ALL OTHER STATES COMBINED? And No, the wait to die in Texas isn't 20+ years.

Beep... Beep... Beep... Normalcy... I thought some news outlet said there was a severe shortage of the lethal elixer cocktail, to the point other States have had to place a moratorium on State-sanctioned executions. I guess besides Business As Usual (Normalcy) Texas doesn't like to share - and doesn't ~~to~~ their lethal drugs. Kudos to the Founding Fathers for their foresight into every State being a sovereign.

Beep... Beep... Beep... Today, condemned Killer of Anytown, Texas, has been transferred from his cell in the Polunski Unit in Texas, where all male condemned killers are held. Oh, Texas is unique, it has a different unit in Gainesville to house it's condemned FEMALE killers - and in case you're wondering, YES, Texas WILL kill a woman) to the Huntsville Unit - commonly referred to as the Walls Unit, to a tiny cell. Condemned Killer from Anytown, Texas is on what's officially known as Death-Watch, which means only the governor can/will if s/he so chooses to stop the execution. The judicial branch as in toto said execute the condemned killer.

Beep... Beep... Beep... Did I mention the Governor NEVER makes a last minute phone call (like they do in the movies or on your favorite episode of Law And Order) to halt the execution?

Beep... Beep... Beep... Oh, I guess I should have told you in the beginning, the Beep sound is the TDCJ-ID van backing into the Huntsville Unit to deliver its prized possession - the condemned killer - to the Huntsville Unit for execution. Why back in and not drive forward you ask? I'm glad you inquired. The Huntsville Unit in Huntsville, Texas is Texas' oldest prison, being built in 1845, with additions, such as the hospital/clinic coming in circa 1933 and other additions as needed. So, this Unit wasn't built nor designed for vehicles. This execution farm had it's initial cargo brought in horse and buggy - or mostly, walking.

Beep... Beep... Beep... Normalcy... As condemned killer from Anytown, Texas makes his way into the maze of complex routes, gates, checkpoints, searches, identification (please) into this imperialistic prison industrial complex, he'll be outfitted with a new set of prison whites (white pants, white shirt, white hat), and asked his request for a last meal. As condemned killer from Anytown, Texas comes to Huntsville Unit and unloaded from the TDCJ-ID van, he enters the outdoor recreational area which is, oddly speaking, bustling with life. Men playing basketball, handball, running or jogging, Commissary, picking up property from the Unit property room, men in the Unit clinic where the condemned killer will be examined and given a physical. For a brief moment,

While the van is being unloaded, the prison guards halt all activities and usher the prisoners on the recreational yard to one side. What!? He broke the routine. OK, it only takes a few minutes, and then, back to normalcy. Whew! In the meantime... Who is he and what did he do, the fellow prisoners on the Unit yard ask one another in hushed tones. I'm glad I'm not him one prisoner says, who's been down 3 previous times and now on his 4th, has spent the last 27 years of his life. 35 years aggregate.

Beep... Beep... Beep... A few reporters might ask to interview this latest condemned killer - but no reporters you heard of, nor representing a news organization you're familiar with. You know, the reporters we think are "alternative" (euphemistically speaking) and has this necro-fantasy. But, deviant or not, wanting to interview the condemned is not likely. Who cares?! His friends and family will not show up... because... remember... he killed ^{the} ~~the~~ one person who [even] remotely loved him in spite of his dysfunctionality.

Beep... Beep... Beep... Normalcy... The warden of Huntsville Unit - or his/her designate will be there at the execution. So will the Unit chaplain. So will someone representing Any County, Texas, District Attorney General's Office - possibly a Texas Ranger. A coroner will be there. Well yea, how else will we know the condemned killer's dead and this entire process can stay... well... Normal.

Beep...Beep...Beep... Normalcy... Back to that Last Meal request. Mr. Condemned Killer from Anytown, Texas, what did you say you wanted? Oh yea, I thought I heard you... Fried Chicken, Onion Rings, Fried Plantains, 6 oz Steak (medium to done, of course, no blood, some pink), Red Velvet Cake, and my favorite, a Diet Coke. Well, maybe Tea with a Freshly Squeezed Lemon, but you know we're all watching our weight these days.

Beep... Beep... Beep... Mr. Condemned Killer from Anytown, Texas, do you have any last requests or statements? Well, yes Sir, I do: I'd like to ask my family to forgive me. I'd like to say I'm sorry for being such a screw up all my life. I'm Saved now, (or I've converted to Islam) and I'm going home to be with Jesus (or Allah) and my momma. I haven't really done much in my 37 years on this earth, but I'm Saved. I give you my body, and the Lord my Soul.

Beep... Beep... Beep... No, no, no!... Why didn't you ask for a meal it will be IMPOSSIBLE for them to prepare, like Unicorn Meat? When they say they don't have any, tell them you'll wait. or, when they ask any last requests, say blah, blah, blah 'DO NOT KILL ME.' I can wait to see the Lord and anyone else for that matter.

Beep... Beep... Beep... Slowly the drugs are administered. At 6:47, condemned Killer from Anytown, Texas is pronounced dead. There were no power outages, no mass demonstrations, no work stoppages. The world continued to function.

Beep... Beep... Beep... Normalcy... The men of the Huntsville Unit are ordered to the Northeastern side of the recreational yard. They huddle in small groups. A slight murmur is indistinctly heard. They're talking about the condemned Killer who was just killed. What's his name one inquisitive prisoner asks? No one knows. Oh, but that's the guy from Anytown, Texas, you remember, the one who killed his momma for drug money. Oh yea, now I remember, but what's his name? The door to Huntsville Unit Clinic opens. Armed guards bring the condemned Killer out on a gurney, with a black plastic bag covering his entire body. Is he dead? In the van he goes. The guards close the back of the van, then nonchalantly both get into the front of the van. Lights on, horn honks. A correctional officer walks beside the van as a buffer between the van and prisoners. A guard opens the sallyport gate, van goes through, closes the gate, locks it back.

Beep... Beep... Beep... Normalcy... OK, the guard on the recreational yard screams, resume normal activity. Who's ball was it? No, it's 7-5 in points. Jake, I can lift 25 more pounds than you, an inmate tells his buddy. What's for chow another asks. Yep, back to normal...