

Another One Bites The Dust...

And down goes NY Gov. Eliot Spitzer, Mr. Law and Order. Not only did the Crime-Fighting Crusader cheat on his wife, but he used his government position and its resources to conceal his repeated purchases of women's services. He learned a little over the years as he vigorously prosecuted prostitution rings, but apparently not enough to get away with it himself.

We see this hypocrisy all the time, and the usual response is, "How tragic. The poor (rich) man has suffered enough (by just getting caught). He has lost his reputation and his position." What truly tragic ^{is} the abuse of power and the age-old double standard. We don't see Mr. Average American on CNN LIVE, his wife beside him ("poor thing"), apologizing for being caught with crack cocaine or for stealing a lawn mower, nor will you. The average American will be demonized as a criminal and will serve a long prison sentence, while the rich and well-connected, as well as the government official, will walk. So goes the War on Crime, also known as the ~~War~~ on The Poor.

Over the years that I have been locked-up in Kentucky, I have had the privilege to watch two prior KY governors involved in corruption scandals, as well as one lt. governor. Despite overwhelming evidence of abuse of power and criminal activity, not one has spent one day in jail. The new governor only elected a few months ago is already being investigated by the FBI for corruption. I am never surprised when they get caught; I am never surprised when they get away with it. The American Justice System: The best that money can buy.

Many prisoners see this kind of double standard all the time. I cannot count the number of times that I have seen a

guard get caught bringing in dope for an inmate to sell. The guard is told not to return to work. (They usually can find a job in corrections elsewhere.) The prisoner? He gets thrown in the hole, losses good time, losses his visits, and faces outside criminal charges. Sounds fair, right?

I could wax on forever and give you innumerable examples, but I will leave you with this: What prisoners and ex-prisoners must do is become involved through letter writing campaigns, blogging, participation in politics and activists groups, donations to appropriate organizations that promote our ideals, VOTE, and encourage friends and family to do the same. For example, recently a Tampa cop purposely and maliciously and without provocation dumped a paraplegic man out of his wheelchair onto his neck and face. This occurred in a police station with numerous cops laughing at the spectacle. It made their day. The man was hauled in for an minor unpaid fine. CNN played the video. I took my anger & directed it in a positive way (and not just on the weight pile). I sent typed letters home for my friends and family to sign and distribute. I asked them to make phone calls about the abuse of power. The cop that assaulted the man resigned without a hint of remorse or apology, and charges were filed, though I doubt she'll be convicted. I can see her having a brilliant career in corrections now.

These and similar situations are the ones that we must pursue. I can't get mad at the injustice and complain all day, and then just do nothing. And I know that when we get out, the thing we most want to do is put it all behind us, but who else will fight this fight? How many times did I watch the abuses around me and think, "This just isn't right. Does no one care?"

I always laugh a little when someone gets PV'd or gets more time for next to nothing, and comes back to only say how unfair the system is. What did they do when they were out to make a difference? People do care and I want to be one of those fighters for real justice in the world. The fact that you are reading this right now is only due to the fact that people

said, "Enough is enough."

Now it's our turn. With quite literally millions of us not only can we make a difference in our local communities - we're a damn voting bloc and conceivably a force, that if organized, to be reckoned with. **The Convict Vote**

Corey John Richardson

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