

PRISON CAN BE ENLIGHTENING

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BY JUSTIN-CASE

I use this time in my cell, 23.5 HRS. a day, reading, drawing, and Bible study. I try to get as much reference material from different public libraries around the country.

By the way, the best one I've found so far is the University of Hawaii Library, 2550 THE MANN, HONOLULU, HI. 96822-2274.

They don't limit you to five pages like most of the ones here on the main continental U.S. Lately, I've had to get the info. using another prisoner's name because of jail administration retaliation for my legal action in constitution violations.

So they prevent my mail from reaching me.

When I look at how poorly the S.C. prisons and county jails are operating, the horrible feeding, no recreation, terrible medical service, and zero rehabilitative efforts, I know from what I have learned about the U.S. government that the prison system is defective thereof.

So retailed and regulated by the government, it operates as it does because the government does not work as a democracy (for the people) any more. When did this happen? It started some 50 yrs. ago. Slowly and

unnoticed by most. Some of the most talented Americans used the First Amendment, due process, and their financial and legal ingenuity, the free markets and free trade, meritocracy and even democracy to chase the American Dream. They work, but only for themselves.

Then they consolidated their money, outsmart and coopt the forces that might have reined them in, then closed the door so no one else could share in their success or challenge their primacy. They created an independent nation within the U.S. that was protected against accountability and the damage their success caused in the larger population of America.

The word "MERITOCRACY" means: "A system in which advancement is based on achievement or ability. 2. Leadership by talented achievers." Our country is run by a small group of super wealthy people who feel they deserve to run the country because of their achievements and money. Trump is a member of this nation. The one percenters.

This is the reason America is not a Democracy but is now a meritocracy.

The one percenters make the president. Not the Democrats or Republicans, Not the vote of the people.

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In 2010 when the Supreme Court decided on the Dodd-Frank Act campaign finance Citizen United, it allowed large amounts of money into the political system and converted it into an oligarchy - depending on wealth instead of democracy to decide who becomes president. It took 6.4 billion dollars for

Trump to win the presidency in 2016. His personal worth was only 3 billion. So his associates, the elite 1%ers paid his way in. "OLIGARCHY" means: "Government by a few, especially a small group or class."

Most of the time, our elected and appointed representatives are no match for these overachievers. The pile of money they have gives them special privileges and comprise mostly white men. The community-binding equality promised by democracy had no chance of achievement once money and power became king in Washington. This is why the government does not work any more. Soaring income inequality, bitter polarization, and a penal system that thrives on recidivism.

The very core values that make America great became the instrument the one percenters used abusively for wealthy to stamp down democracy and make them

filthy rich. The First Amendment helped block ⁴ the government from enforcing job-safety rules, holding corporate criminals accountable, and protect the unprotected. That's us. The average working American. The unprotected. Elections reforms meant to enhance democracy wound up undercutting democracy. Ingenious financial and legal engineering turned our economy from one engine of long term growth and shared prosperity into a casino with only a few winners.

That's what it has come down to now in this country. Two classes: the protected - super rich, and the unprotected - that's the rest of us.

I would have never known this had it not been for the time incarcerated reading and finding enlightenment on the politics and "THE DEEP STATE". A term used to identify the other government depts within our government that actually runs it. So in a real sense, prison has enlightened my view of our government.

How and who really operate it. The protected overmatched, overran and paralyzed the government. The unprotected were left even further behind. Inflation-adjusted middle-class wages have been nearly frozen for the last four decades, while earnings of the top 1% have nearly tripled. The recovery from the crash of 2008 - which saw banks and

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bankers bailed out while millions lost their homes, savings and jobs - was reserved almost exclusively for the wealthiest. Their income in the three years following the crash went up by nearly a third, while the bottom 99% saw an uptick of less than half of 1%.

Only a democracy and an economy that has discarded its basic mission of holding the community together, or failed at it, would produce those results. If the S.E.C. had done their job, to monitor bank lending practices, there would never have been a catastrophic collapse of the stock market in 2008. I honestly believe it was orchestrated for the rich to get richer and more powerful.

Most Americans with average incomes have been left to fend for themselves, often at jobs where automation, outsourcing, the decline of union protection and the boss's obsession with squeezing out every penny of short-term profit have eroded any sense of security. In 2017, household debt had grown higher than the peak reached in 2000 before the crash, with student and automobile loans starting growing claims on family paychecks. We are still the world's richest country, yet we rate third highest poverty

among the 35 nations in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, (OECD), behind Turkey and Israel. Nearly 1 in 5 American children lives in a household that the gov. classifies as "FOOD INSECURE" meaning they are without access to enough food for active, healthy living."

The protected don't need the government for much and even have a stake in sabotaging the government's responsibility to all of its citizens. For them, the new broke America works fine. An understaffed IRS is a plus for people most likely to be audited. Underfunded customer service at the Social Security Admin. is unimportant to the rich.

The unprotected look to the government to preserve their way of life and maybe even improve it. To provide good public schools so their children have a chance to advance. Right now American children rank 31st in math proficiency and 19th in science. Awful.

The unprotected need a level competitive playing field for their small business. A fair shake in consumer disputes and a realistic shot at justice in the courts.

President Clinton, another member of the

meritocracy nation, signed the Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act in 1996. This abruptly dismantled the federal courts safety-value because hidden in its interstices was a provision that has pretty much shut out the federal courts from granting habeas relief in most cases, even when they believe that an egregious miscarriage of justice has occurred. Namely, 28 U.S.C. § 2254(d) provides that a writ of habeas corpus shall not be granted unless the adjudication of the claim on the merits in state court "(1) resulted in a decision that was contrary to, or involved an unreasonable application of, clearly established Federal law, as determined by the Supreme Court of the United States; or (2) resulted in a decision that was based on an unreasonable determination of the facts in light of the evidence presented in the state court proceeding."

Yes, the protected have even the influence over the Supreme Court, and with Trump's most recent judge added, Brett Kavanaugh the court will decide on issues in favor of the meritocrats.

The unprotected need government to provide safety net to ensure their families

have access to good health care, that no one goes to hungry when shifts in the economy or temporary setbacks take away their jobs and get help to rebuild after a natural disaster. They need the government to ensure a safe workplace and a living minimum wage. No one would be safe, even the elite, to eat foods in this country without the F.D.A. We need mass-transit systems that work and call centers at the Social Security office that don't produce busy signals. We need government to keep political systems fair and protected it from domination by those who can give politicians the most money. To provide fair labor laws and promote an economy and a tax code that tempers the extremes of income inequality and makes economic opportunity more than an empty cliché.

The protected see labor or consumer-protection laws, and fair tax codes as threats to their winnings - which they have spent the last 50 years consolidating by eroding these common goods and the government that would protect them.

It is not the Democrats or Republicans Americans should be fighting over, but the polarization is caused by the protected

vs. the unprotected, the common good
vs. Maximizing and protecting the elite
winners' winnings. The general public is not
even aware that this is what divides us and
this is what has broken the United States.

The meritocracy - aristocracy has snuffed
out the American Dream for almost every one
else. Trump claimed he was going to
"drain the swamp". How on earth can he
when he is the swamp?

the conclusion, money should not be the
source by which a government is composed.
It should not be able to override the common
good for the people, but it has in the
past half century. Nothing in government
works for the people any more. We should
not have more people incarcerated than
any country on earth. What happened to the
"LAND OF THE FREE"? The Prison Industrial
Complex was created. A way to make huge
profits with a full prison.

This enlightenment in prison has helped
me see the underlying reasons why things
don't work as they should in this country
any more. To be accurately informed is a
prerequisite to prevent frivolous pursuits.

Unproductive and wasting your time. So it is so vital that you make your prison time useful.

Read to learn, to educate and to be informed.

It pays off now and for the future.

Reading to entertain is fine too, but don't let it take all your time and that is the only reason you read. The Roman empire fell because the leaders were so caught up in entertaining the sensual gratification.

We have moral and spiritual issues that need attention, not just for our own good, but for the common good. So use your prison time to read to become enlightened.