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Greetings, my name is Benjamin Rzacca, and I'd love to speak to the realities of incarceration in the United States of America. For the benefit of the reader let me begin by describing myself and my criminal background. I was born in 1980, to Catholic parents, in Detroit, Michigan. In 1984 we moved to St. Louis, Missouri, and it was there that I grew up. I attended parochial schools, graduated high school, and an associates degree from the local community college. Achieved eagle scout rank back in the old BSA, remained an active Catholic my whole life, and joined the Marine Corps in 1999. My M.O.S. was in computers, and I've been stationed on both coasts and even trained in NATO exercises in Norway.

My criminal background is that I'm a recidivist sex offender having spent time in all military, state (Missouri), and federal custody. I don't say this lightly and this is certainly nothing to be proud of, but the law is the law. I will not address what my felonies consist of, but I will point out how the nature of said sex offenses affect one in prison. It is important not only for society to see, but for those who may one day fall into the claws of the legal system. Once one becomes a part of the system it is hard to change it or to even get out from under it. So please do enjoy.

From my opinion and experience each prison serves as its own reality of whether it is good or bad. I've been to the best and worse prisons from my perspective, but another



prisoner may think differently based on their experience. Like when as a Marine, I was first incarcerated at Camp Lejeune Brig, in North Carolina back in circa 2001/2002. This was before they built the new Brig, and this was considered a disciplinary Brig, which was by far the oldest still in use. To get hot water was to triple up per shower head, and rotate around for the heat only lasted for ten minutes. Further it was an open bay and even the guards were treated by their superiors like inmates; especially if they weren't stern with the inmates under their charge.

It was an awful place to be whether sex offender or not, but I had an out. Being an S.O. I requested a transfer to the Miramar Brig, California, which was considered a rehabilitative Brig for S.O.'s who'se orientation was toward children, not adults (rapists went to Charleston, South Carolina). The greater majority of inmates were S.O.'s and they had co-ed-women serving life sentences- as well. Being a newer facility, with perfect weather, with opportunities, and guards who were respectful, made it a sweet spot. I actually cherish some of the experiences there, but it was the difference of night and day from the Camp Lejeune Brig. I met a few friends there, learning a little of the filipino culture even, during my time there from 2002-2006.

In my estimate Miramar was a better facility mainly due to the number of S.O.'s located there, particularly those who'se orientation were of children. This isn't to sound in anyway profound, but I think it is an interesting scenerio



that any place I've been with majority S.O.'s proves to be quite decent facilities. Decent with friendlier staff, cleaner and newer housing, and greater opportunities that prisoners can use to their advantage. Feedback I've had from others is implicative of the inmates themselves being the reason: more educated, family-oriented, professional, respective community men and women, who were quite stable and achieving in their lives prior to their downfall of finding children sexually attractive.

Staff will attest that inmates who are conformative and nonviolent in nature- even as their crimes are said to not be, as sexual offenses usually are- to be favorable for them and the facilities they are at. I spoke to different people regarding the Charleston, South Carolina Brig in the comparison to Miramar, California Brig, and the dichotomy of the two is terrific. Charleston can be tough and violent, gang-oriented, and disrespectful, while Miramar is the polar opposite. This I can only theorize is due to the inherent nature of the different sex offenses toward adults versus children. The point is that it actually takes violence to offend against an adult (for other adult-oriented sexual outlets are lawful), while child-oriented sexual offenses may not involve violence in vast cases, so goes the behavior when in prison. Hence the disparity of the different environs.

Upon release I found it difficult to find a job and residence, even if qualified or diligent in my search,



it still didn't matter. For example, I was kicked out of my father's apartment when my name was added to the lease. This effectively made me homeless and at the mercy of some landlord sympathetic to an S.O. whom had accommodations in compliance to residency restrictions on registered S.O.'s. Another for instance, was when after studying for being a realtor I discovered that Missouri Legislators were to vote to restrict S.O.'s from applying and receiving a realtor's license. This because a S.O. could have a key to residences that were still occupied, yet for sale. Then again a wide range of companies wouldn't hire me for the insurance was too much. I don't claim to understand such things as corporate insurance on employees, but this was significant to my inability to find a job.

So one may wonder how this time on and off supervision, and being unable to have stability and success matters. Well, I reoffended. The anxiety with instability and uncertainty of the present- let alone the future- degraded my resolve to follow societal demands placed on me. This is not to be some sad story, but an explanation of what happened to my lawful compliance. Such anxiety could drive people to drink, drugs, sex, and other vices; I myself am not excluded from this. I went back to my comfort zone which was adult and then child pornography, see? So as much as the registry, residency restrictions, public shaming, and so forth may give a false sense of security and may be innocuously called non-punitive, it still is a punitive thing that drives some to reoffense.

If you don't believe it then I hope that my testimony



is the exception to the rule. For I'm sure currently as we read this these same social controls- that are both inhumane and counterproductive really- are driving others to such said behavior. Worse still is such therapeutic tools such as the polygraph and plethysmograph. These have no accuracy in the readings, which are subjective interpretations made by the administrator. These cause even more anxieties for you know not what subjective results will be rendered and the very consequences thereof. Meaning I could tell the truth on all questions beyond the control questions, and still reading false, and vice versa. These can be misleading to the authorities such as therapists and parole officers alike, even causing stress unnecessarily unto the most honest being supervised.

Being reincarcerated hit me hard as I quickly realized that my irresponsibility- though caused by anxiety- had compromised my freedom once again. This was even before I knew exactly the severity of the sentence I was yet to receive. When at the St. Louis County Justice Center Jail I asked to be in solitary confinement. The staff was professional there and besides certain hoodlum inmates, they ran a tight facility. Through hearsay, I had a different impression of the St. Louis City Justice Center Jail, for I heard the opposite. I was here in 2008/2009 and being separated from the other inmates of general population was probably a good thing. I've had at least one inmate tell me he did alright there in G.P. as a S.O., yet sometimes all it takes is one hate-filled, self-right



righteous idiot to change things for an S.O..

I'll expand on this for the reader to get the picture. Public sentiment regarding paedophilia- whether justified or not- is certainly stigmatizing the behavior outright. Well, the stigma doesn't stop at the prison gate. We are basically locking up persons who are stigmatized for their sexual-orientation to children and subsequently acting on it, locking them up with others who are indoctrinated to hate them. Then we act surprised when there are assaults, harrassment, extortion, and the like. I've never found that the government helps to mitigate such stigma and consequences thereof by promoting such terminology as "monsters" or "predators" and then legislating laws like those of Nazi, Germany.

I apologize regarding referencing Naziism, but S.O.'s are as low as snitches and a few others on the totem pole. Inmates and even some staff have resorted to vigilantiism against S.O.'s like it is their right and common expectation. Of course, this has changed with time to a lesser degree as hundreds of thousands are now registering, and certain prisons are being dedicated to S.O.'s incarceration. In the B.O.P., I've seen a couple S.O.'s who were brought to S.O.M.P. yards because they were physically attacked on another yard. One guy had to have his ear reattached surgically just to give the reader the idea.

Once sentenced at the federal level and state level for the same criminal behavior on my part, the Missouri Department of Corrections (MDOC) took custody of me for



the four year sentence. I did time then at Bonne Terre, Farmington, and Charleston, Missouri. With the exception of maybe one or two staff and inmates, the time went as professional and neutral as prison can get. I was able to have a T.V. in my cell, but honestly there was little to nothing as far as work opportunities and programming. There was "protective custody" at certain facilities, but P.C. at all others was being put in the hole (segregation) with few possessions. So S.O.'s would be on par with those being punitively segregated till sent to a P.C. area of some other facility in the state.

I quickly learnt, as in the case of Charleston where Lifers are sent, how to manage as a S.O.. I always kept my nature of offense secretive and never spoke of matters regarding criminology. When outside of my cell I'd walk with a purpose to and from my objective, eyes down to the ground, avoiding persons by five feet separation when passing. Very carefully did I befriend anyone, seldom "hanging" out with them unless only to appear accepted on the compound. Once in a good cell with another underground S.O. we'd strive not to get into any trouble less we be separated. Naturally any inmate could get any S.O.'s information from the outside by various means. Then it is all damage control by minimizing the offense and denying any deviancy.

So with a federal detainer I was transferred into the custody of the U.S. Marshalls in 2010, this was to commence my federal sentence. After a series of different county jails, I was able to fly ConAir, as a refurbished gutted 747. To



Oklahoma City Transit Center. Everything was fluid, professional, and grandiose as all federal Bureau of Prisons operations are. In all these bids of incarceration this was different. The B.O.P. had it's own terminal-like an airport- then it was all in-processing.

Soon enough I was transferred to Seagoville, Texas, considered a low-custody compound as a Federal Correctional Institution. This is also a S.O.M.P. facility, as are a number of others throughout the B.O.P., that house majority of S.O.'s. I was astounded for it seemed like a college campus, which until recently was an open compound. Most of the staff I've come to appreciate for they don't go out of their way to screw with inmates. Maybe certain prisoners will be targetted for reasons beyond this text, but these are few and far between. The B.O.P. has a decent amount of work and programming opportunity, and I'm sure more will be endeavored.

This is where I'll be for the foreseeable future. I anticipate that I'll be transferred to Devons, Massachusetts, for their Residential Sex Offender Treatment Program, which I've willingly applied for. Then if Butner, North Carolina is not applicable then I look forward to returning to St. Louis. I'll have 30 years of supervised release that is becoming the norm for those convicted of federal sex offenses. In the remaining time of prison and subsequent supervision, I hope and pray and strive for compliance with success in life. Then this will be of benevolence and beneficence to those around me.

That said, I can't do enough justice to the facilities, staff, inmates, and others who have been there for me as I've



walked hand-in-hand with our legal system. Further, I don't believe I can fully indicate the necessary changes that our legal system needs, let alone in a convincing and understanding way, to the reader in just this piece. I can't even claim to have any special knowledge or understanding that'll qualify my writings. Yet, I will try my best now to explain what I think will only help prisoners in the near future. What I mean by "help" is quite limited in reason and scope, so bear with me.

First and foremost, I'd like to clarify my position on the United States Legal System. I believe that we have a great system of justice; that is, when compared to the world, and when we'll never have the ideal or perfect system. There naturally remains some necessary changes in the laws and punishment, but those are for me to advocate elsewhere. My point is simply that some subtle and simple things can be addressed here, yet my criticisms and suggestions is not meant to be derision of the system as a whole.

So, when the state has laws that cover a range of behavior, and the ever expanding federal jurisdiction of laws eventually covers the same behavior, should they charge the same illegal act as separate sovereigns? Meaning, that one can do a sentence at the state level as well as another sentence at the federal level for the same criminal act, and this would not be double jeopardy. Well, I've seen many inmates, including myself, that this has been done to. There are no policies at the federal level that "directly" tells



a federal sentencing judge- who supercedes any state judge- that any discharged or undischarged state sentence should automatically run concurrent to a federal sentence when they result of the same (relevant) conduct. Instead, inmates who know nothing of such procedural laws depend on indirect ways- such as downward departures, pro nunc tunc, and so forth- that federal judges and the B.O.P. should do, is the right thing to do, but don't because it benefits the accused or convicted. This has to change, if not out of concern for the law, but so that people aren't tricked into longer sentences than what they actually plea to.

As a source of stress or anxiety upon prisoners at any level is usually caused by other prisoners based on the nature of their crime, gang- affiliation, degree of turning king's evidence, and other things. State's, and the fed's prisons, jails, holding facilities, and transfer centers, need to increase classification and awareness of such groups so as to seperate them. Missouri had seperate housing units for Bloods and Cripps, and even a separate dorm for sex offenders at their intake and processing facility. The federal B.O.P. has the S.O.M.P. type of facilities or compounds in most districts. The military attempts to put S.O.'s at Miramar Brig or Fort Leavenworth Brig, not only for protection, but also for treatment. It is absolutely important that people realize that inmates need a stable environment to just begin rehabilitating themselves through programming and treatment.

To continue on this wave on stress or anxiety it is weird that as most states allow individual prisoners to have



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their own T.V.'s and Tablets, while the B.O.P.- though well funded- has communal televisions and no prospects of Tablets. It's circa 2019, and any advantage technology can give to inmates for education, resources, isolation, etc., federal prisoners don't have. You may ask why personal T.V.'s and Tablets are important to an inmates welfare, it is of a matter of politics in prison and also accessibility. I'll speak to these.

Prison politics has to do with inmates regulating inmates. Case in point, with communal T.V.'s in federal prisons, I believe I've seen more fights and potential riots because of these. Often the politics says that the whites (non-S.O.'s), blacks, legal hispanic/latino, illegal hispanic/latino, and any subgroup with numbers claim a number of T.V.'s. Within these are the gangs or shot-callers (leaders) who will control the T.V.'s. Then it is who'll pay for sitting spots in the areas in order to watch the T.V.'s. Even then how will the B.O.P. use the T.V.'s for mass punishment, which only a few inmates screw up. All of this has led to- in my experience- inmates fighting inmates for control and viewing of T.V.'s, even in the same race, and riot-like situations.

Once in my unit, ninety S.O.'s grouped together to threaten just two dozen white haters, to take control over all their T.V.'s for they turned them all off to keep any S.O. from watching. It was a sight to see, but the S.O.'s took control of two T.V.'s, had them moved to our own area, and the drama continues B.O.P. wide. I've never seen such



situational stupidity before at any state joint. This isn't a good situation, having 110 men ready to come to blows for televisions, and then staff will have to get involved. So you see how televisions in a communal thing is idiocy at it's finest; it is equipping inmates to self-regulation and power. Hence politics is a dangerous game in prison. Having our own T.V.'s and cable in our own cells is cheap, pacifying, and practical to the welfare of the inmate and institution.

Tablets, these are essentially the tools of the future that many inmates need to familiarize themselves with. This could involve college courses and credit by inmates, video-interface visitation with distant relatives, e-books ranging from therapeutic to entertainment, movie videos, e-mail, planners, and other necessities inmates can use from the safety of their cells. S.O.'s, so-called snitches, former police, and other vulnerable inmates can actually live a life behind prison walls. The federal B.O.P. can make policy and impliment such changes very quickly if need be, but first it must be on their radar.

It is an inmates transition to the outside that can make or break their potential recidivism. It really is a matter of finances that inmates struggle with in their release: they don't have any. So I can compliment the B.O.P. with having work, but the pay is only enough for most to get hygiene and a few candy bars. Industrial work such as U.N.I.C.O.R. should really be expanded, or give inmates with two years or less minimum wages while working for real corporations even within



the fence. This can build job experience, help them build a release financial plan, and give them hope for the future. State institutions need work altogether for inmates.

Another thing is rebuilding credit and investment knowledge, experience, and scores. Currently, nearly all inmates keep their earnings on a B.O.P. account drawing no interest on savings. It would be great if we can have real accounts through banks, access to the banks investment opportunities, and even establishing brokerage accounts for the long-haul. I believe this can help build credit for an inmates release, increase their knowledge in finances and investments, and allow for financial security as they are reintegrated into the community.

Parole officers are having ever increasing caseloads to deal with for the courts are giving supervised release extensively: especially to S.O.'s such as 30 years or life-time supervision. P.O.'s are almost to a point of being incapable of helping the supervised released in finding employment and residency. They can only become the type of P.O. that monitors and violates. The vast majority of P.O.'s as well as therapist's actually care about the success of the supervised in their life. So it would be great to give them a tool listing residences and companies available to felons, and in particular S.O.'s. What an idea! It'll make the P.O.'s job easier as well as the supervised, and those companies deserve worker's who want to prove themselves. Maybe I'm wrong in this.



Now, these are just a few things that in my experience would help inmates before, during, and after their incarceration. I could keep going, for instance, the idea that a paedophile or one of paedophilic interests could go to a confidential therapy 'prior' to ever getting legally entangled. That they could go somewhere for support of who they are and to be rewarded for compliance of the law somehow. A profound idea, considering what we demand of them, that we can help them in their sexuality. This can be applicable to even those who has transgressed the law and still are- even if they deny it- sexually attracted to children, even if only minutely attracted to them. They can be virtuous, by no offending or reoffending. I suggest this as we're asking that they be abstinent like the pope.

In my experience, an inmates credibility is often not taken in stride, and their perspective can be ignored. Worse, those who've never been in the extensive legal system may feel that felons shouldn't be afforded protections, rights, liberties, an education, and other necessary privileges. Only we need to understand how integrated the legal system is with society. Consider that a person's friends and family are probably or even potentially in the system. Heck, that person themselves can easily end up in the system too. So it's not like some far and foreign thing- the legal system- that we should not be concerned of the ethics and improvement of it. These inmates, most of them will be returning to society one day as coworkers, neighbors, friends, family, acquaintances, church attendees, so let's help them, help us. Thank you.