

From behind the wall



A couple of sheets of paper
A blank envelope.
With pen in hand,
I sit down to write.

But why?
Or how?

All of a sudden, there's no one
There -- and the night grows cold.

With ten more years to go.

by Skillful Davis #36651

Prisons, Rehabilitation and Recidivism

Society feels that rehabilitation somehow isn't working in institutions, and their tax dollars are being wasted. There are numerous institutions that have college programs for prisoners who are seeking higher education.

But what's one to do if he should or would like to learn some vocational trade? Does the prospect of becoming a short-order cook or a dish-washer sound inviting? There are a few more menial vocations that are offered, and in my eyes these programs defeat the purpose of rehabilitation. These types of programs have not supported their effectiveness in reducing recidivism.

Society is responsible, to a large extent, for producing criminals -- and an intelligent and humane society would attempt to eliminate these conditions. Their backs should not be turned to a prisoner who is advancing back into the community. But should lend a helping hand toward an individual to become a productive member of society.

It also remains highly unlikely that crime will ever be eliminated entirely, but with just a small amount of concern and attention crime will decrease considerably. The word rehabilitation means

"to restore to a former state," and if used in this sense it may be a realistic approach with former law-abiding citizens who have made a mistake.

However, there are many criminals who because of environmental or other reasons have not learned to respect the rights and feelings of others, nor do they comply with the expectations of society. To turn all of these different kinds of people loose, all at once, would surely be stupidity.

But they should be entitled to a program also, to eliminate their negative feelings. Which again is of little concern to society. Society nor administrative staff can say that punishment is not a deterrent to crime. Sure society needs to be safe-guarded against dangers.

Let's not only proceed on the basis of safe-guarding society from those who prey on the innocent by sequestering or segregating them apart from society, permanently or semi-permanently. Especially dealing with first or second offenses dealing with harmless crimes.

Let's also let society do other constructive things. Instead of sending first offenders off to prison, which serves as an undergraduate school for crime for periods of even a year to five years. Let's give them a deeply frightening experience of prison, of no more than two or three months. Let's do something effective on a national scale to enable released convicts or should I say inmates, to earn a living honestly.

Perhaps counseling on experiences, in regards to conditions of institutions, to prevent younger people from making mistakes that can be corrected, or government work as last resort.

CAN YOU REMEMBER

Can you remember
waiting
in line to
take a
bath
down at
the harbor
&

steve's
house
beyond
the
junk
yard
can you remember
the early
morning
at that
Ital., restaurant
(the women really dug paul)
and making
a fire
in that old
pot belly
stove

Can you remember
the
abolone
greg
&
steve
turned
us
onto

&
the puppies
(all thirteen)
plus
dog
and
the
turtle
remember

the elec., blanket
and the tai sticks
wine and music,
casper's inn
where we
had
the
run in
with
the pigs

&
the next
day when
you & paul
come to
bail me out
can
you remember

going back
to S.F.
in the turtle
when we
stopped
in that
field to
give thanks
to such
a beautiful
night
can you remember

can you remember
leaving
the
turtle
for a
bus -
&

the lady
who
said
"what a cute puppy"
here's
two dollars
can you remember

the
day
I
said -
I love
you

can you remember?
Julius Snowden

Legal technicality may reopen King murder case

by Donald Freed

MEMPHIS, TENN., NOV. 7 (PNS) -- Lawyers for James Earl Ray are confidently predicting that the convicted assassin of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. will get his day in court -- in the form of a full re-hearing into the King murder case.

Attorney Mark Lane, recently hired as Ray's principal defense lawyer, claims he has uncovered a rarely used provision in Tennessee law that guarantees his client the new trial he has been seeking for the past eight-and-a-half years.

According to Tennessee Statute 17-117, if a defendant appeals his conviction but the trial judge dies before rendering a decision on the appeal, then the defendant wins a new trial.

This, according to Lane, is precisely what happened in the James Earl Ray case. Ray pleaded guilty on March 10, 1969, then fired off a letter and a motion for a new trial to the judge who presided over his case, W. Preston Battle.

However, Judge Battle died suddenly of a heart attack less than three weeks later without ruling on the Ray motion. Ironically, Judge Battle was found slumped over his desk top with Ray's petition beneath him, according to the court clerk who discovered the body.

As Lane reads it, Statute 17-117 is so specific that it alone would be enough to guarantee Ray his first full-length public hearing into the evidence of the case. Lane's staff is currently preparing the motion for a new trial.

"If the law of Tennessee is respected by the courts of Tennessee, then Ray will get a new trial," Lane said. "If he does, we are confident he will be acquitted."

However, one Tennessee prosecutor was not convinced that Ray's guilty verdict would be automatically reversed. The prosecutor, who did not wish to be quoted because of pending litigation in the case, said the statute may only apply to

civil and not to criminal proceedings.

Ray's attorneys have filed nearly a dozen other legal challenges in an effort to win a new trial, including motions on these issues:

- Ray contends he was "coerced" and even blackmailed by the FBI into pleading guilty by threats to put his elderly father into prison. In an affidavit, Ray claims that just two days before he went to trial in 1969, both he and his brothers were visited by federal agents who claimed to have discovered that Ray's father, George Ray, had violated a parole condition in the state of Iowa in the mid-1920s.

According to the affidavit, Ray was told by the FBI that his father "would be returned to die in prison" if he (James) failed to cooperate with prosecutors by pleading guilty to King's murder.

- Ray also alleges in a similar sworn statement that an FBI agent named Robert Jensen, the special agent in charge of the Nashville office, visited him in prison within 48 hours of his conviction in 1969. Ray charges that Jensen warned him to "go along with the Bureau" by not appealing his conviction. He claims Jensen told him he would be "sorry" if he attempted to win a new trial, and says he was warned that if he persisted in his appeal efforts, one or two of his brothers would join him in prison.

Even if Ray does not win a new trial, he may get his chance to speak out publicly in the King case -- if he chooses to do so. According to Lane, the House Select Committee on Assassinations has said it would like to question Ray about the King assassination during open, public hearings in Washington, D.C., perhaps next spring.

Lane reports that, in preparation for the upcoming public sessions, House investigators are scheduled to question Ray in his Brushy Mountain penitentiary cell on November 14th.

by Larry Baker
O.S.P. Correspondent

- SINCERELY YOURS -

A candy bar, a cigarette.
A stack of dusty letters,
To thumb through

An iron bunk,
An old thin mattress,
And a worn-out blanket,
Becomes my only companion.

All of a sudden, --
With ten more years to go.

A smelly toilet, and a sink,
Thirteen rusty bars to look through.
A cement floor, a couple of books,
Becomes my closest friends,

All of a sudden --
With ten more years to go.

Vice Principal enthusiastic over Jefferson

by Lauri Green

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is the 3rd in a series of interviews with Jefferson High School administrators.

JHS -- This year is Ms. Shirley Hakanson's second year as vice principal of Jefferson High School. Before working at Jefferson, she worked throughout other western and midwestern states as a teacher, counselor for a junior high school, psychologist, and budgeting and testing coordinator for the Area I office. She received a bachelor's degree in teaching from the University of Northern Iowa, a masters degree in counseling and guidance from Indiana University, and she's had additional course work at Portland State University, the University of Portland, and Stanford University.

REPORTER: What are your goals for this year?

HAKANSON: I'm aiming for more organization in the performing arts unit. I'd also like a more effective recruiting system for the magnet programs and to establish special education programs that are consistent in meeting the state laws. I

want to provide efficient student programs but most of all, to have a smooth school operation.

REPORTER: Do you feel kids are getting a better education these days?

HAKANSON: I think in general, kids get a far better education now. There's a lot more to be taught than there was twenty years ago. Considering the amount to be taught, we do a good job.

REPORTER: How do you feel about Jefferson?

HAKANSON: I love it! It's a neat school. I don't know of any other school where we could be playing a championship football game and also have a dance company of national reputation performing to a public audience all in one evening. This is an exciting school.

REPORTER: How do the students relate to you?

HAKANSON: In general, I think they like me. They're friendly to me.

REPORTER: Do you feel that the students activities are working out well?

HAKANSON: Yes. I'm pleased with the growth in both quantity and quality. There are still more things I would like to do. It's not ideal but I am pleased.

REPORTER: Which budgets are you

in charge of?

HAKANSON: I'm in charge of the preparation for all of them. I share the authorization for purchase with the other administrators. We all have a conference to discuss the budgets and how the spending will be dealt with. However, all the paperwork goes through my office.

REPORTER: How are decisions made on what to spend on and how much should be spent?

HAKANSON: The administrators share those decisions. We discuss it among ourselves and then with the unit leaders and/or program leaders. Very few decisions are made alone by one administrator.

REPORTER: Are you optimistic about this school year?

HAKANSON: Yes! Definitely! We're going to have a good school year. We've already had one and that's how it will continue.

Ms. Shirley Hakanson is an optimistic and cheerful vice principal. Her attitude rubs off on the students as one revealed "Ms. Hakanson is a pretty dedicated person who wants to make this school and the students something important. I don't know her really well but I like her."

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Oregon trains paramedics

Wilbur Gregg, is one of fourteen paramedics enrolled in the new advanced paramedic training program at the University of Oregon Health Sciences Center. Both Gregg and another student in the paramedic training program, Dennis Howarth, have been working for AA Ambulance in Portland.

Beginning this fall, the new program is funded through a three year grant from The Collins Foundation. It's anticipated that fourteen paramedics from fire departments, ambulance companies and hospital emergency rooms will be trained every six months to meet national standards for certification as advanced (III level) emergency medical technicians.

The program is based on the nationally approved paramedic program developed by the U.S. Department of Transportation at the University of Pittsburgh.

Training includes combination of classroom lectures, experience in University Hospital's Emergency Department and other clinical areas as well as onsite and practical field training in mobile intensive care units provided by private and public ambulance companies.

Part of the coursework will include advanced life support training to help the paramedics effectively utilize physician-paramedic communication in saving lives. The UOHC School of Medicine is now the third medical school in the country to have an academic division or department devoted to emergency medicine as a specialty.

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