



Behind the Walls

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TO BUILD A PEN

By David Crawford

The wolf slid effortlessly along the path through the woods. As he passed between the remains of two fallen giants he sensed a wrongness in the narrow path ahead. But before he could stop to puzzle it out the ground erupted with steel teeth and burning pain. Jagged jaws embraced his foreleg, driving every thought from his mind except escape. He jumped, intending to reach the safety of his den, but the chain attached to the steel jaws held fast, jerking him off his feet and wrenching the offending leg until the world was filled with only agony. Trapped...held fast and unable even to lessen the terrible pain.

After ripping lips and tearing teeth on hardened steel to no avail, the wolf had but one alternative to death at the hands of the trapper. He must free himself at any cost. And so he set about the grisly task of chewing off his own leg. When he was done, freed from the clutches of the trap, he returned to his den, legless, toothless, and all but harmless, bleeding from a hundred cuts...but alive.

Not far away a man walked down a similar path. Unheeding of the sign which clearly stated "Beware" in blood-red letters, he boldly stepped between two hoary trees, directly upon the trigger of the trap. The ground came alive and bit into him with steel teeth just above the ankle.

Pain was immediate and excruciating. His mind screened for relief, rejecting all else for a time. Struggle as he would, he only felt the jaws clamp deeper, becoming more a prisoner with every lunge. But realization of his plight seeped in, displacing shock and panic, allowing him to do what separates mankind

from the animal kingdom...THINK! He looked beyond immediate relief, relegating pain in secondary place in his torched mind and he applied himself to his problem. Dredging up all he knew of traps, he analyzed that which held him captive and in the end identified its workings, its source of power and finally a means of reversing the tension of its springs.

After extracting himself, the man bound his leg, placed the trap at the end of its chain across a fallen log for others to note, and limped back to his home to treat his wound and recover. As he retreated down the trail, bleeding and in pain, but whole, he vowed to remove the threat of such traps for those of his kind in the future.

The people of Oregon as a collective entity have been led into a trap. Its jaws have snapped shut with a viciousness hard to imagine for those not intimately involved in Oregon's corrections system. A war is being waged with opposing camps polarizing the people by insisting they must choose...a choice for more and harsher punishment for societal offenders on the one hand, or a choice for treatment insuring those offenders released are not likely to offend society again on the other. If we are to believe what we are told, there is no middle ground.

The pro-punishment camp has succeeded nicely in lengthening time served in prison by offenders, and in insuring many who would have been diverted into treatment programs are sent to prison instead. This "get tough" attitude has extended itself to the parole board as well as the Corrections Division and Judicial system, creating an unbalanced flow. More people are being sent to prison, with longer sentences, and are being kept for longer periods of time by the parole board. The result

is more people coming in than are going out.

Oregon State Penitentiary is inundated with bodies. Originally designed to house less than 1000 men, there are nearly 1600 in residence presently. County jails have backlogs of people waiting to go to prison who cannot because there is no room! The prison today hold those with such vicious offense as "driving while suspended" and "driving while intoxicated." There is no treatment in a penitentiary for drunks or reckless drivers. The trap is sprung.

The short-sighted immediately suggest that what we need is another prison...another warehouse which upon completion guarantees by it's very existence that it will be filled. Another trap? When the second prison, which was to be an end to Oregon's needs, is full, these same people will cry out again for another warehouse to fill...because tradition calls for it. Warehouses are simply intermediate holding tanks. They only delay an offender's return to society. For treated or not, most offenders do return. If we warehouse without changing attitudes through treatment, "do it time" only aggravates the original problem. Prisons then fail to protect society. And with every lunge, the trap cuts deeper.

Economically, prisons are expensive. The cost of building even a medium security prison runs into seven figures...approximately \$55,000 per bed! And when built, operating expenses are nearly as expensive as building costs. It cost about \$34 per day per person to hold a man in prison. As a contrast, cost of supervision in a parole or outpatient program runs to perhaps \$5 per day.

It is time we stopped struggling blindly against rising crime rates. We must push back rash reactions which only worsen the problem, look carefully, deliberately at the jaws that bind us and carefully deliberately remove the cause of our captivity.

The only answer to uncontrolled crime is certainty of apprehension and effective treatment of social disorders (attitudes, mostly) in the individual before return to a "normal" life in the community. These factors and these alone will effectively deal with crime. Punishment, in the form of a prescribed but incomprehensible sentence length without dealing with attitudes and treating disorders is senseless and plainly vindictive.

We need not chew off our leg and cast it aside, as in the building of a new prison. To do so is to reset the trap further down the trail for ourselves and for others to fall into unware.

The sensible thing to do is beat the pain long enough to extricate ourselves, removing the trap and exposing it's danger to the future. There will be a wound, but that will heal. There will be a scar, but that will serve only to remind us of the traps along the trail. And in this way, society is not crippled by loss of valuable resources or misuse of much needed and hard won revenue. In this day of economic crisis, waste of resources...be they monetary or human...is nothing short of criminal.

A PERSONAL MOMENT FOR THOSE WHO CARE

Some of the arts can be learned through study. By showing another person how it's done and then following with a great amount of practice almost anyone can draw an acceptable picture. Hand crafted items are made by all but with proper instruction and directed practice all of us can become accomplished in this field. The exception is music and it, like love, comes from the subconscious and must be felt from within.

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CELL TALK

By Asmar Abdu Seifullah
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SEXUALITY AND PRISON

An inmate stood slightly slumped over, his shoulders hunched, his head tilted gently to the right, he conversed with a large shiny face Blackman who peered at him through the bars of cell C-451. The men passed a picture between themselves and smiles instantly appeared, laughter erupted in wholesome smooth overtones. The watcher is instantly attentive because it's seldom that even the watcher hears laughter in such rich full tones; laughter filled with life and love and joy; uninhibited laughter that leaps from the souls of men when the moment is pregnant with the vibrations of life.

From the watcher's vantage point he sees that the picture is of a Black woman, a sister whose face isn't distinct or exceedingly beautiful. The only feature that's remotely catching are the eyes. "Large brown eyes that smile and say hello. I miss you eyes. I love you, need you eyes," that give depth and beauty to a very ordinary face. Suddenly, the laughter stopped; like the abrupt slamming of a heavy door, all prevailing silence, hard cold empty silence fills the air; the silence of two Black convicts staring at a picture of a sister with unforgettable eyes, while the realization dawned on them that she's a thousand, million, trillion --lifetimes away. They stand there staring at each other, speechless in the realization that they're confined and that one of them has a Blackwoman with mesmerizing eyes out there waiting for him.

"The denial and reprobation of the moment cascades down upon them like the shattering finality of death." The yearning desire for human contact, to touch -- to be touched in return -- is the horror of confinement, the curse of incarceration and the lot of every man and woman confined in the Oregon penal system. The hard cold fact that assaults every prisoner from the moment he or she enters an institution until the day that the last bell is rung -- "No natural sex!" It's now necessary to state that prison is far from sexless. There is always that unspoken word "homosexuality" that lingers in the air much too long. That ugly word "homosexuality" that lurches up into the consciousness of those who care to be conscious -- of those who're morally alive and of those countless numbers of men and

women who face the threat of being turned -- out; pressured through loneliness, frustration and despair into willful acts of homosexuality and the threat of violent homosexual assaults while being incarcerated.

It's not my intention to step on any gay toes or to cast aspersions on the officials of this institution. I wish only to shed some very valuable light on the sexuality of prison, a sexuality that's condemned in free society but freely exist in most institutions; is it right or wrong? I shall leave the general answer up to those who care to be general but in specifics and in prison specifically; it's wrong -- all the way --100% wrong!!!

It's wrong that the system that the people have chosen as a means to reform or rehabilitate convicted felons produces unnatural sex acts, that men and women are forced into sexual situations that deform them for the rest of their lives; that sexuality or prison stinks and that it's time that we all got a good strong whiff of it's putrefaction. Sure it's alright if you're gay but what if you're just young and weak or old and lonely? What if an innocent friendship turns into a

violent sexual attack? What if the society you exist in is infested with the practice. "Everybody else is doing it, so why not?" or better yet, how about this one, "it's the only game in town."

There are a thousand different reasons why this situation exist in all prisons and none of them have any moral substage. The lack of appropriate funds for housing and maintenance or the general unconcern of the public doesn't hold water, morally. It's a morally wrong situation and it defeats all humane attempt at reform. No man or woman deserves to be subjected to the sexual pressures that prison life brings about.

I realize that most people could care less if the sexual atmosphere in prison is healthy, but don't you think that prisoners should at least be given an alternative to masturbating over Playboy centerfolds or acts of "HOMOSEXUALITY." It's not that we desire to turn prison into a whore house but I think that it's far more desirable to permit a man to legally spend time with a love one, than to spend time illegally and immorally with the gay boy down the tier.

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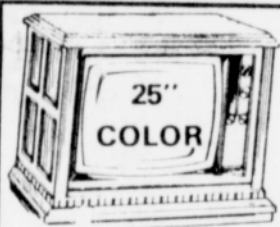
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If you are a spiritual seeker who needs help not promises--call me. I am a "God Gifted" man. I can help you in a hurry.

TESTIMONIALS

- 1) Miss Joyce J.W., Portland, OR., was in a fix where she could not find or keep a good man. I, Rev. Hoskins, removed the fix and the jinx from her. NOW she can draw the man of her desire to her like a magnet.
- 2) Mr. & Mrs. C.P. of Compton, CA., could not win the BIG one. They called Rev. Hoskins and Rev. sent them a for-sure win blessing money hand. They went to Las Vegas and their luck kept on coming, winning more than \$16,000.
- 3) Ms. Barbara T., Inglewood, CA., had a man who left home for another woman. She called Rev. Hoskins with tears in her voice. She wanted him back!! Now he is back and eating out of her hand.
- 4) Mr. Paul, Los Angeles, CA., was in a fix and rooted by this woman. As a result he lost his nature for other women, but through Rev. Hoskins' work, Paul regained his nature and became luckier than ever with women, money and his business.
- 5) Mrs. O.I., Long Beach, CA., had demons in her body, and in her home, causing all kinds of bad luck, and unnatural sickness. She called Rev. Hoskins and in 72 hours her home and body were free of unclean spirits.

(The names in the above testimonies have been changed for the protection of the individual.) I guarantee to do what I say I can do. I have a big reputation to protect.

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REPORT

Exodus Forums are becoming Community Forums. During the month of January many community citizens joined our forums, seeking to share our concerns on making our community a better place to live. ENLIGHTENMENT and ENRICHMENT is the food for better understanding our own responsibility to our own community.

GENERAL STATEMENT TO BLACKS OF OUR COMMUNITY

February is Black History month!... Let's account for ourselves individually.... What have I done today and every day as an individual who will help write a positive line on the history pages of this future toward the development of respect and responsibility to my Black family, to my Black children and to my Black community? Remember each brick of a brick movement must first support it's own weight, then together all the bricks become the movement. Before celebrating, each Black person should see to it that he/she has been accountable, respectful and responsible to his/her family, and especially the children, to beyond the best of his/her legal obligations. History is an account of the events of the past, but it is you and I, here and now, who will help write the history for the future -- good or bad, responsibly or irresponsibly.

Thomas Boothe, Ph.D.