Michigan Lifers Association, Inc. and National Lifers of America, Inc. Michigan Liters Re JUNE 2022

RONALD MELLEN, PH.D. RESPONDS TO THE SIX QUESTIONS WE ALSO ASKED RICHARD ALTHOUSE, PH.D. WHICH ARE LISTED BELOW (Part 2 of 2)

Willis X. Harris

Imprisoned sexual offenders, correctional staff, pastors, parents with sexually abused children, sexually assaulted women and men, and the general public want to know the reasons and motivating factors behind paraphilia and sexual deviancy.

In our initial article on the above subject, we had Dr. Richard Althouse, psychologist, give his professional experience and understanding on the following questions:

- 1) When and where did sexual deviancy start?
- 2) What was the purpose?
- 3) Why are children, especially boys, targeted?
- 4) What do we call predators who rape animals, i.e., sheep, cows, pigs, dogs, and horses?
- 5) Are there any cures or treatments to reverse these perversions? If so, what?
- 6) Lately, Catholic priests and Catholic sports doctors and leaders are being arrested and charged with sexually molesting young girls and boys. What roles, if any, does religion play in sexual deviancy and paraphilia?

Below are Dr. Mellen's full response to the above questions.

(Dr. Mellen) Always good to hear from you brother Willis and to read your publication. Sex offenders are not a population that I usually worked with when I was Director of the Arkansas Special Programs

(Cont. on p. 3)

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MICHIGANS LIFERS REPORT NEWSLETTER

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VICTIMS OF CRIME DESERVE BETTER * THAN STOPGAP MEASURES

Bryan Noonan

One of the things I've struggled with a lot in prison is balancing what I know victims of crime need and the often moronic legislative and prison policies that solve nothing. When someone suffers harm at the hands of another person, that person should be held accountable. I believe this before prison, and I believe it even after 13 years in prison. But I also have a keener sense of justice now, and I know that simply locking up offenders for long periods of time does not accomplish justice.

If I or someone I loved were a victim of crime, especially violent crime, I would want the offender punished for the harm he or she caused. But getting my pound of flesh would solve nothing. It might make me feel better temporarily, but having the state accomplish my vengeance would do nothing to address the WHY of the crime. It would not reassure victims that offenders are safe to return to society (which happens with most offenders). Yet, punishing crime is essential to maintaining order in society. We cannot let crime go unpunished.

So, how do we balance society's need to deter crime by punishing criminals with the larger needs of justice, like addressing the causes of crime? How do we ensure those who commit crimes are not returned to society as bad or worse off than they were when they committed their crimes in the first place? I don't have all the answers to this dilemma, but here are a few places to start:

1. Let victims have a greater voice in the process.

Instead of the state usurping the offense and making it about a violation of state law, let victims participate in crafting a punishment, and use the legal framework as boundaries of what punishments are allowed. Some victims would be better served by acts of restitution and repentance than long terms of incarceration. And prison sentences should be flexible enough to factor in changes in offenders (including time cuts for milestone achievements). Restitution and restoration should be the goal whenever possible, not solely incapacitation.

2. Start offenders on a pathway of rehabilitation early in their prison term.

Instead of waiting until an offender is ready to leave prison to address their emotional issues, thinking errors, moral failures, and addiction problems, start this process early so their incarceration becomes a proving ground for change. Prison ... (Cont. on p. 7)

(Ronald Mellen, Ph.D., from p. 1) ...
(Arkansas Department of Corrections).
Those fellows were assigned to a program that dealt strictly with sex offenders.
So my database is limited but I'll respond to each of your questions best I can.

First, what comes to my mind with sexual offenders are three possibilities, early childhood experiences, head trauma, and cortical variables associated with addictions. However, life can be quite creative, so I'm sure there are other possibilities.

The human brain is like a computer only on steroids. The world chess champion Gary Kasparov was defeated by a supercomputer in 1996. The computer's success was impressive. But that supercomputer weighed in at 32 tons and cannot cook eggs for breakfast. The human brain weighs three pounds, is 75 percent water, and can carry out 10,000 trillion operations per second. One beautiful aspect of the brain is that of constant change, which empowers us to create ourselves anew.

For treatment I would recommend a program that included brain stimulation devices which can bring about more permanent positive physical changes in brain operations. Examples might include the Alpha-Stim for increasing brain production of serotonin. Many addiction related relapses occur during times of unusual stress. Also training in meditation techniques and mindfulness would be important.

Video games where the inmate receives positive reward points creating the appropriate brain reactions (reduced/increased energy levels where appropriate) when he is viewing stimulating pictures (this needs a EEG device to read and reward the inmate's brain responses) could be very important. These cortical improvements would tie in with individual and group counseling that

could help him understand and utilize introspection.

Counselors must have compassion and an understanding that at any given moment a person is doing the best he can with the tools (beliefs, life experiences, etc.) he has. Deepening self-understanding is essential.

Second, I was raised Roman Catholic and became an Episcopalian at the age of 28 years. There is a difference between love and dogma. To often religions move from a cornerstone of love, to love grounded in dogma, a serious error. this case the dogma was a priest was required to be celibate (no sex, no marriage). For some deeply spiritual men that was the perfect path. Unfortunately, it also attracted men who were pedophiles, and the church did little to identify, expel, and report The Catholic Church is such priests. paying for its sins now.

Third, behind the emotion of anger is the hidden and true issue ... many times it is fear. Many rapists want power and part of the pathology is a poor sense of personal worth. Variances in targets may be explained via earlier life experiences.

Fourth, the patterns found at the individual level are also found in city, state, and federal levels. Sentences of 50+ years suggest, to me, fear. And these are being carried from population to the court level. The nations of Northern Europe, after WWII, are no longer guided by such philosophical/moral systems.

Fifth, I addressed this question in my response to question one and can't think of anything else to add at this time.

Sixth, my understanding is that many, if not most, child sex offenders were sexually abused as children. It is not uncommon for them to target children at the same age they were abused.

EDITOR'S NOTE: The Michigan Lifers Association and the National Lifers of America would like to thank Dr. Richard Althouse and Dr. Ronald Mellen for their willingness to answer Willis X. Harris' questions concerning sex offenders for this two-part article.

THE UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES OF VICTIMS' RIGHTS (Part 2 of 2)

Mick Fletcher, J.D.

In the first installment of this two-part article, I focused on our modern conception of victims' rights and its incompatibility with the design and function of our criminal justice system. In this concluding segment, I mean to draw attention to the harms brought upon the accused, the victims themselves, and society at large.

As noted previously, the prevailing notion of victims' rights abandons the interests of The People (that is, society as a whole) and demands instead that our criminal justice system serves to avenge aggrieved individuals. And again, while the breadth of those "services" is debatable, it is well established that, at a minimum, the police and prosecutors are meant to "seek justice" for those most directly harmed.

Even a casual observer of the evening news is familiar with this scenario: Police and prosecutors have identified, arrested, and charged John Smith with the commission of a heinous crime. Immediately they announce their intent to seek justice for the family of the victim, who are then paraded before the cameras and microphones, ostensibly to garner sympathy and support. But in truth there is another end in view.

While John Smith remains locked away (at least in most cases) from the cameras and microphones, the public's perspective and attitude are being shaped in his Whether true, half-true, or regard. outright falsehood, the community (along with the prospective jury pool) is inundated with statements concerning the alleged crime and the character of the And whether relevant accused. irrelevant to the case at bar, such conjecture is freely admitted before the opinion, public not of accordance with evidentiary standards, measure with its rather in entertainment value. The more disturbing of salacious, the more sensational. And nothing is so sensational (or profitable)

as scandal and suffering.

While one may argue the subjective merits of public consumption, none may honestly deny that this practice works against our ideals concerning personal rights -- the right to a fair trial, the right to be presumed innocent till proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt. can police and prosecutors legitimately claim to represent the interests of The People, including the accused and those who stand with him, when they have, even in advance of the trial, made a public show of hand-selecting their "clients?" Likewise, how can a judge be expected to act as an unbiased arbiter -- and the final protector of the rights of the accused-when she knows her decisions will be scrutinized under the taint of this her campaign philosophy, or when literature is overblown with promises to respect this mode of thinking? And thus, when John Smith is inevitably convicted, will he be sentenced fairly, or in accordance with the expectations of a vengefully-minded mob?

And what of the victims themselves? Once they've been used to shape the public sentiment, and thus spent as so much political currency, what of the justice they were promised? There must surely come a time, after the defendant is carted off to prison, that they "justice" is their realize indentured to serve the needs of John Smith--his every need. And what's worse, they must also come to see they've been duped or lulled into the incongruous belief that the longer their servitude endures, the more emphatic their justice will be -- a cruel absurdity on its face.

Adding further injury to this insult, any ability the victims had to pursue meaningful recompense from the wrongdoer has now been denied them. For while the one who harmed them may have once owned property and/or other means to pay monetary relief to the aggrieved, that means expired on ... (Cont. on p. 7)

THE TIME HAS COME TO REVISE THE MDOC'S 5-YEAR REVIEW POLICY (Part 2 of 3)

Scott Wynne

This is the second in a series of 3 articles about the deficient and defective MDOC policy governing the Parole Board's 5-year reviews, and what needs to be done to fix it.

To reiterate, there are many LWOP prisoners within the MDOC who are worthy of being granted interviews as a result of their 5-year reviews. But due to the Parole Board's cavalier and dismissive interpretation of the 'Lifer Interview' section (paragraphs M, N, O) of PD 06.05.104, this has not been happening. As a result, the department amended the relevant portions of this policy 3 times in 2021 to encourage greater consideration of this class of lifers.

Unfortunately, the Parole continues its deficient and defective policy of summarily denying virtually all LWOP prisoners interviews, and thus rendering the new policy requirements completely illusory. During one such 5year review conducted not long after the latest new language of PD 06.05.104 went into effect, this author experienced this Documentation within my first hand. Central Office File clearly illustrated that I have: served all 27 of my years misconduct ticket free, earned a college degree, completed more than a dozen selfand rehabilitative programs, obtained 25 letters of recommendation from former MDOC staff members. completed formal a victim-offender mediation program with members of my victim's family. When the board subsequently issued its Notice Decision (CFJ-279) denying me an interview, none of these positive factors were listed as having been considered.

The Parole Board instead only stated that my crime: (1) resulted in loss of life, (2) involved a dangerous weapon, (3) involved excessive use of force, (4) involved a family member or acquaintance, and (5) involved the touching with or discharge of a weapon. Aside from #2 and #5 being essentially redundant and #4

patently false, these 5 stated reasons for denial are generalized and common factors virtually to every resulting in a LWOP sentence. While not minimalizing these factors, the fact is that they can only be germane to an interview denial if the board concludes they will somehow govern future behaviorconclusion that is simply supportable. Moreover, these 5 factors will exist indefinitely, so using them as the reasons for such a rote denial renders any future reviews pointless as they can never be changed.

Even more aggregious was the fact that the Parole Board recommended I "provide additional demonstration positive prison behavior during period of continuance as a corrective action." This is both unreasonable and illogical and very stunning in apparent lack of awareness and quidance. While there are a lot of LWOP prisoners who have served more time than I have, the board would be hard pressed to identify many who have served their time better or who have made better use of it. And yet, the board's recommendation not only completely ignored everything I have accomplished over the past 27 years, but it utterly failed to explain how the 5 stated reasons are related to or affected by my behavior while incarcerated, and how they could be mitigated or negated through an additional years "positive prison behavior."

After receiving my Notice Decision, I consulted nearly a dozen other LWOP prisoners who also underwent reviews during the same time period. What I discovered was that every single one of them received a denial remarkably similar to my own. In most instances, the board even employed the same types of generalized and common factors in those rote denials. Wardene Anderson from Safe and Just Michigan subsequently informed that the Parole Board conducts approximately 800 ... (Cont. on p. 8)

DESERVING OF A SECOND CHANCE

THIS ISSUES FEATURED LIFER: JAMIE MEADE

In 1993, at the age of 19, Jamie Meade (Prison No. 232516) was charged, tried, and convicted of accessory (theory) to felony murder. Jamie was sentenced to life without the possibility of parole (LWOP), also known as "Death-By-Incarceration," for his role in the crime. Jamie's codefendant (i.e., the principal) was found guilty of a lesser included offense and sentenced to 12 years in prison. Jamie's trial and sentencing judge, Sharon Tevis Finch (retired), supports his release and called his mandatory life sentence an injustice.

Jamie is presently accepted in the Chicago Theological Seminary Online Master of Divinity (MDiv) program taking online classes at the Macomb Correctional Facility. In May 2015, Jamie was awarded a bachelors in interdisciplinary studies with concentrations in criminal justice and legal studies from Adams State University. Jamie also has completed certifications in Victim Advocacy, Alternative Dispute Resolution, and Paralegal Assistant. In addition, Jamie has completed 3 MDOC vocational trades and over 60 rehabilitational programs.

Jamie is a long-standing member of the National Lifers of America and presently sits on the National Board as the National Resource Director and Internal State Director. Jamie is a Core Member of the Chance for Life Organization, an Inside Director and Advisor to The Adolescent Redemption Project, and a Trained Facilitator for the Alternatives to Violence Project-Michigan. Jamie also actively participates with TARPPodcast.com with Emma Axtell and AmplifiedSilencePodcast.com with Kyle Robinson doing regular interviews about criminal justice reform and everyday experiences as a LWOP prisoner. In addition, Jamie is the editor for the Michigan Lifers Report Newsletter giving those forgotten lifers a platform to be heard.

Jamie is a Member in Discernment in the United Church of Christ Michigan Covenant Association on a path to ordained ministry. He is committed to serving God and the community. Jamie is an activist working hard to end mass incarceration, to reform the criminal justice system, and to tackle the tough social injustice issues people face on the inside and outside of prison. Jamie Meade is deserving of a second chance.

You can follow Jamie on social media at

www.freejamiemeade.com
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MOTHERS IN PRISON

Sybil Padgett

Life is kind of an obstacle course, isn't it? Just when the road appears smooth, we've got difficult people to contend with, stressful months to face, and another unbearable year away from our children.

Women present a special challenge because their needs and interests are different from those of men. Socially, women come from situations where they were already imprisoned: childhood sexual

assault, domestic violence, rape, and male codefendants who instill fear, manipulate, and create a stockholm syndrome.

Imprisoning women expands the social consequences, tripling that of men, because their absence from the houshold has a traumatic affect on their children and extended family. The mental strain of being away from their children has caused many women to ... (Cont. on p. 8)

(Victims of Crime, from p. 2) ... should also reinforce and reward self-directed rehabilitation.

3. Provide opportunities for offenders to address their own trauma.

Many offenders have long histories of trauma. This is not an excuse for them turning their pain onto someone else, but addressing this trauma and helping them heal from it could go a long way to preventing future victimization. It could also result in significant reductions in addiction issues. It's not a cliche that hurt people hurt people. It's a reality.

4. Provide education and job training that is comprehensive and multifaceted.

It does no good to train someone how to fix plumbing and electrical problems, for example, if he fails to show up to work because he is still deep in his addictions. It also does no good to train someone how to have a legitimate job if he knows nothing about managing his finances, filing taxes, paying bills, budgeting, and living within his means. In addition, it does no good to train someone how to fix cars if he can't get past the interview stage. offenders need training in basic interpersonal communication skills, which is essential for job interviews and working with others.

These ideas are just a start. Victims of crime have to become more important to the criminal justice system. While incapacitation is important, for a time, the end goal ought to be ensuring offenders are safe enough to return to society. Our current system fails to aim for that goal, and it leaves victims in the dark about whether or not offenders are even working to change. Victims of crime deserve better than that.

Michigan's Governor recently signed a bill into law allowing the parole board to keep violent offenders longer by extending the time between parole consideration. This is nothing but a bandaid meant to avoid the real problem: Michigan's prison system does little to nothing to reform its offenders. That is the real travesty. That is nothing but the state multiplying the injustice victims have already experienced. Victims of crime deserve better than stopgap measures. They deserve

real reform.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Bryan Noonan #739416 blogs about prison at HopeOnTheInside.blogspot.com, and he coauthored "Insider's Guide to Prison Life," a book that seeks to demystify prison and build stronger relationships between prisoners and their loved ones. Bryan was awarded a BA from Calvin University in 2021, and he is housed at Richard A. Handlon Correctional Facility, 1728 W. Bluewater Hwy., Ionia, MI 48846.

(Unintended Consequences, from p. 4) ... the day he was sentenced to prison. And while it is true the sentencing judge may impose restitution, that represents the smallest fraction of damages that might have been available to them under civil law. What's more, there is no effective means of enforcing that restitution order. If the victims receive anything, it will be paid in dribs and drabs over the years by an inmate earning 0.17¢ per hour--and then only if he feels included to work at all.

Lastly, I would give mention to the broader harm inflicted on The People themselves, society as a whole, by the vindictive atmosphere and expectation fostered by our modern conception of victims' rights. For our system affords no satisfaction for the vengefully-minded, when it is well known that convicted persons are neither punished nor corrected, but merely lodged in what amounts to a bizarre form of summer camp, where all are treated alike, regardless of offense.

The result of this is widespread resentment, and that most often expressed by viewing prisoners as a subclass of individuals upon whom we may freely heap our ire and indignities. But in the end this unwholesome sentiment injures only those who cleave to it. For as Augustine wisely observed: harboring resentment is akin to drinking poison in the hope that another will be harmed.

What then must be done? We must first reassert the principles upon which our criminal justice system was founded, a system which seeks to promote the good social order by a fair and dispassionate application of our laws. We should never accept the notion that our police and prosecutors operate as private thugs employed at the public expense, nor should we tolerate that image being projected by them. Second, we must encourage, or even assist, victims to seek ... (Cont. on p. 8)

(Unintended Consequences, from p. 7) ... actual recompense by way of the civil system that was designed with that end in view. And if we recognize some deficiency, we must address that need while respecting the framework and function of our institutions.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Michael (Mick) Fletcher (Prison No. 315903) is a recovering lawyer. He is currently enjoying the hospitality of Thumb Correctional Facility (3225 John Conley Drive, Lapeer, MI 48446-2987).

(The Time Has Come, from p. 5) ... LWOP reviews annually, and that most, if not all, of them are being handled in a similar cavalier and dismissive manner.

It is important to note that no appeals process exists for these 5-year of denials regardless their So I exercised my only deficiencies. I wrote the Parole Board requesting a comprehensive and equitable I argued that both the reconsideration. letter and spirit of PD 06.05.104 were ignored and that I was denied due process. I also explained how the primary goal of these reviews is not merely to revisit the unchangeable factors of my crime which, again while not minimizing, have the least relevance decades later. I further urged the Parole Board to look at who I am today, to weigh the truly relevant factors such as the quality of my conduct, character, and accomplishments, and fairly determine my fitness to productively rejoin society. My reconsideration request was summarily denied by a Parole Board member who would not even identify themselves in the letter.

I speak with Virtually everyone suspects the rote denials of 5-year reviews are likely the result of the governor not wanting to incur the potential political risk that accompanies granting freedom to LWOP prisoners, and that this aversion has been communicated to the Parole Board either explicitly or implicitly. If true, then the board would have no reason to expend its time conducting interviews that will bear no fruit. But might there be a solution that eliminates this unjust review process and replaces it with one that restores due process to LWOP prisoners, provides some measure of relief taxpayers, requires the Parole Board to replace rote denials with true merit-based recommendations, and mitigates much of the potential political risk that currently accompanies reprieve, commutation, and pardon decisions? Yes, there is!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Scott Wynne #247226 is serving a LWOP sentence at the Thumb Correctional Facility, 3225 John Conley Drive, Lapeer, MI 48446-2987. Scott is a 2017 graduate of Adams State University's Distance Degree Program in the area of business.

(Mothers In Prison, from p. 6) ... become severely depressed and even suicidal.

A mother's incarceration is disruptive to children since mothers are frequently the primary caretakers of their children in the home setting. The majority of mothers in prison had sole custody of their children. Yet, many women never see their children during their period of incarceration. Even sometimes the prison fails to inform them of custody hearings in a timely manner. So, incarcerated mothers whose children are in foster care must overcome numerous obstacles to maintain their parental rights and have them reinstated upon release from prison.

I know firsthand the challenges and on-going frustrations a mother must endure in the criminal justice system. children were 4 and 7 years old upon my incarceration. I was in the middle of a divorce due to domestic violence and had shared custody of my children. I'm over 2,500 miles from them because I was denied an interstate compact back to Florida. Over my 22 years of incarceration serving a life without the possibility of parole (LWOP) sentence for aiding and abetting first degree murder, I have tried every possible way to reconnect with my children making up for years I have lost with them. The strain on us has been unbearable at times, severely affecting us physically, emotionally, and mentally. Yet, as a mother in prison, I continue to everything within my power to maintain that relationship enduring the pain of being away from my children.

The unintended consequences of the tough on crime era has drastically affected women and children, causing them great suffering, much more than men. Criminal justice reform is needed in response to the suffering women and children are enduring. The focus of reform ... (Cont. on p. 9)

should be on human needs rather than punitive sentencing. The role of the offender, whether she was an accessory or principal could be a starting point for the reform efforts. Most women were accessories and strongly influenced by their male codefendant. Tax dollars could be reinvested in programs reuniting and enriching the lives of women and their children.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Sybil Padgett #325532 is serving a LWOP sentence in the MDOC and is housed at the Women's Huron Valley Correctional Facility, 3201 Bemis Rd., Ypsilanti, MI 48197. Sybil is the External State Director on the National Board of the National Lifers of America, Inc.

THE POET'S CORNER...

Fatal Attractions!

On my way to recovery!

Just a few more steps!

But just one slip back down the rabbit hole, and I'm back where I start, drowning in depression.

For the moment I'm fine.

The momentary high is where I mess up!

Just to numb the pain, just for a day or so...

Until it comes.

The dreadful come down.

And I'm back drowning in anxiety of what the people see.

What I can't hide
I can't pretend to be okay!
my face says it all.

Imagine that's what it always been to pretend like your okay.

But deep down I'm broken!

SCREAMING

But he is finally DEAD!

The problem is now...

What about the other one...

By: Ashton Paynter #608392 Message Ashton directly: Jpay.com/AshtonPaynter608392 Women's Huron Valley Correctional Facility 3201 Bemis Road Ypsilanti, MI 48197

TO OUR SUBSCRIBERS IN PRISON

Almost monthly, we receive returned newsletters because prisoners are transferred to different facilities and fail to notify us of their transfer.

In April, 10 newsletters were returned because two were paroled, two hospitalized with COVID-19, and six were transferred.

It is the prisoner's responsibility to update or inform us on his or her status or location. Each newsletter costs us 0.88¢ in postage to mail. Ten returned newsletters is a loss of \$8.80.

--Willis X. Harris

TO OUR SUBSCRIBERS AND READERS

CHANGES IN PHONE NUMBERS

Due to technical problems we repeatedly experienced with T-Mobile Phone Services,

we are now with two new services.

Our new telephone numbers are:

(734) 748-0920 and (313) 282-3889

Please discard and do not use

(313) 442-3629

--Willis X. Harris

NOTICE

The June 2022 issue of the MLR Newsletter is late due to overseers displeasure in the editors advocacy work and desire to earn a formal education. Sorry!

-- Jamie Meade, Editor

HAPPY FATHER'S DAY!
HAPPY JUNETEENTH!
HAPPY PRIDE MONTH!

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SUBSCRIPTION FORM

The expressed purposes of the Michigan Lifers Association, Inc. and the National Lifers of America, Inc. to publish the "Michigan Lifers Report Newsletter" are to educate and uplift the lifer population, to seek changes in laws that restrict clemency and parole, to educate the general public, and to encourage criminal justice reform, especially in corrections.

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