

## 9 About This Document

This document should be viewed as a work in progress. The author currently enjoys limited access to a computer with word processing capabilities in conjunction to a college program, under which this paper was developed to be submitted as part of a class assignment. There are no proofreading services available to the author at present, so there may be grammatical errors. Also, as some of this has been done with very spotty access over prolonged periods there are places wherein the same point may appear in one or more places, where one might do. Since time for access to computers is limited and sporadic, there are aspects of this document which lack full development in consideration of producing something cohesive within the allotted time.

As the author has composed this document while incarcerated, the many limitations placed on access to information for prison inmates have prevented the author from being able to fully reference his citations. Missing citation information is noted throughout. The author has also begun adding notes beside the missing citations on where such information might be located. While the author asserts the verifiable validity of all statements made herein, and these statements are the result of exhaustive research into the various subjects touched upon throughout this document, the author did not foresee the need for keeping track of citations for much of this information in the years leading up to this project. Given a few hours' internet access, the author could easily reassemble the appropriate references, in the meanwhile he is attempting to communicate the specific research requests to a handful of people who have been providing

some aid in this process. Furthermore, due to the limitations mentioned, in making up for these gaps in reference information, it has been difficult to obtain primary sources to cite, and therefore the author has relied heavily on secondary ones including to the Encyclopedia Britannica as well a few radio shows and documentaries (though some of these were also the originating sources of information discussed here), while these may be adequate for the purpose, the author recognizes that a greater balance of primary sources would be preferable. It is the author's hope that some number of interested and capable readers will come forward to aid in filling in the gaps in the proper citation of sources.

There are a few peculiarities to the formatting of this document which are worthy of immediate comment. While generally speaking this document is written following the APA format, the author has elected to use footnotes throughout the document, which the APA format generally discourages. The author however, being particularly fond of the books of the late neuroscientist Oliver Sacks feels, as did he, that these are the best vehicle for allowing the addition of various details sets of facts and data which are not wholly necessary to the understanding of the ideas presented, but which add depth to the various points made. Footnotes are also easier on the reader than endnotes, which require the reader to do unnecessary extra work to keep track of the information being presented in context.

The reader may also note that, past this author note section, the author has elected to use the first person in various instances and generally more accessible language than might be typical of research papers of this sort in the hope that this will result in a paper which is more widely accessible than the typical academic

work, more in line with the so-called popular science format. Finally, this is a paper which advocates a particular idea and makes strong recommendations based on the data examined. This appears to be atypical in this day and age wherein the typical style of research papers is to present facts and leave the reader to decide what—if anything—should be acted upon as a result of the findings. It is the author's feeling that this approach in this area is ineffective. There are mountains of papers illustrating why we should be doing something other than punitive justice. For the most part these papers seem to exist in an echo chamber of academic thought and lead to little if any action beyond the writing of more papers. What is needed is action. The business plan included here as Appendix 3 aims to act as potential blueprint for such action. The paper itself and other included appendices aim to provide the basis for that in research.

This document offers only a start into the field of what PCJ may need to entail in moving from concept to reality. Several ideas this paper brings up call for additional documentation, in order to flesh them out. To that end, the author has generated both a sample business plan and marketing and fundraising plan for a hypothetical PCJ center (both of these sub-documents also lack necessary data). There are also two other papers which the author wrote in conjunction with this project, *The Real Costs of Incarceration*, and *Cost Differentials Between Punitive and PCJ*. These, along with the business plan are included as Appendices A, B and C of this document. It should be noted that the papers contained in the appendices, due to time constraints have not been properly correlated to the information contained in the body of this text. The marketing plan was intended be added as an appendix as well, however, the original file has been deleted, and

only the hard copy currently exists, this therefore is being sent out as a separate item. The author hopes to get the time over the course of the coming months to revisit this paper to complete entering the available citations and complete the tying together of the appendices with the main body of the work. In the meantime, it seemed best to print what has been done to this point to at least get these ideas out to those who might be interested.

There are also many related areas for further discussion touched briefly upon within this document, which call for further development and therefore, the need for additional documents covering these. These include aspects of PCJ compatible community intervention programs<sup>1</sup> which would largely compete with contemporary law enforcement mechanisms such as policing, and detailed expositions on the workings of the PCJ conflict resolution and mediation mechanisms and services, which would compete with courts of criminal justice, and would operate on a basis of civil law, Restorative Justice compatible approaches and scientifically vetted best practices in the area of decision making. The specific day-to-day operations of a PCJ center also lie far beyond the scope of this paper and suggest the need for the creation of a handbook or set of handbooks that spell out the ways these things might best be addressed. The author is also of the opinion that the details of how PCJ might best be approached

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<sup>1</sup> There is a model that is currently being employed to great effect toward the goal of violence prevention in a few areas globally (having been successfully piloted in Baltimore MD called Safe Streets (The Violence Paradox, 2019; Charm City, 2019). This organization, rather than acting as a vigilante policing organization, employs people from the community, many with previous run-ins with law enforcement, to work as Violence Interrupters. In the years covered by the Charm City documentary, there was a 26% drop in gun violence, and of homicides in the three neighborhoods served from averages of twelve or more down to zero.

are themselves subjects for supplementary research, modification, elaboration, expansion and community input. The author aims to write more on these subjects as time and access to research materials permit. It is also the author's hope that other might contribute to this process as either co-authors or contributors of their own related ideas for how PCJ might become a reality. While the author has shaped this idea into something which may be unique in both formulation and name, he claims no ownership to the ideas expressed here and only the hope that someday, somewhere they will be implemented to their fullest potential.

### Pending Work

Opportunities to work on this document being inconsistent, it made sense to me as the author to drop my work, print what I have to this point and get it out.

There are numerous things I would like to add to this paper and will strive to do so as time allows in the near future. The following is a list of topics which I intend to discuss in future iterations of this paper, and furthermore welcome others to chime in on these subjects:

- Add/Update citations
- Write conclusion
- Possibly rework sections on language into standalone section and reference as needed elsewhere.
- Break off section on decision making re: both criminal acts and what to do in response to crime.

- Social and environmental influences on decision making, re: especially how these account for the stark regional variations in crime rates, both among the individual and groups.
  - Correlation of crime rates to lead exposure.
  - Preponderance of different types of crime relative to climactic regions.
- Deleterious effects of housing people in prison or classically institutional environments.
  - Psycho-social effects of living in closed box shaped spaces or cages, and the corresponding neurological effects of such spaces on brain development or plasticity.
  - Dangers associated with housing two or more people in a small space (bathroom).
  - Perils of being locked into a small space without means for communication with others in the event of an emergency.
  - Psychological and social impact of being immersed in a noisy environment.
  - Psychological and social impact of being surrounded by nothing but hard and or mechanical objects.
  - Psychological and physiological impact of being deprived of sunlight.
- The application of mindfulness and other meditative techniques toward reducing destructive emotional reactions.
- Section on how those who are not committed to personal change and who have developed socially or destructive or otherwise dysfunctional patterns

might be encouraged to adopt a pro-social and functional outlook, without the use of force.

- Statistics on violence in law enforcement, especially re: how many people are killed in the process of fighting crime in the US versus other countries and what tactics have been shown to work better in both policing and non-violent, non-militaristic, or non-paternalistic intervention.
- Less violent means to incapacitating actively violent individuals than those currently employed.
  - Negotiation.
  - Reducing or rethinking which sorts of harms merit hot pursuit of people who are in fight or flight mode.
  - Specific alternatives to pain inducing or deadly weapons in law enforcement and institutions.
  - Non offensive martial arts techniques or other means for disarming without harming.
- Discussion of distortions of recidivism statistics, re: the fact that most recidivism is either for so-called technical (i.e. minor) violations such as curfew, alcohol or drug use, or lifelong behavioral issues which the penal system has failed to resolve with a small subset of individuals who are counted multiple times in the data.
  - In this context, shortcomings of so-called Intensive Supervision (ISP).
  - In this context, misuse of and shortcomings of monitoring and surveillance technologies.
- Prisons as a breeding ground for racism and class divisions.

- Segregation of inmates by race tolerated or encouraged by prison officials and staff.
- Institutional pecking order re: different categories of crime.
- Effects of economic disparities among inmates and their support networks in driving black market activities within the institutional environment and extortion.
- Racial disparities in law enforcement, prosecution and inmate housing.
- Elaboration on the ideas of community and mutual ownership and the historical basis for these in the context especially of so-called self-help organizations, which were more popular in Great Britain around the turn of the 20th century (from the 19th) than here in the US (Woodin, Crook, & Carpentier, 2010).
- The use and misuse of technology and mathematics in furtherance of both the punitive and Positive-Cooperative Justice models.
  - Predictive algorithms.
  - Actuarial or statistical prediction of so-called criminogenic potentials.
  - Neurological and other physiological imaging and reaction testing.
  - Surveillance technology, privacy, fairness and public safety.
  - Location monitoring.
  - Technologies for restricting or monitoring usage of motor vehicles, firearms the internet and etc.
  - Social media or other centralized shared data platforms for organizing re: Positive-Cooperative Justice.
- What prisoners can do to work toward Positive-Cooperative Justice.



- Oases of positivity within the institutional environment.
- Self-work: development of mindfulness and functional lifestyles.
- Meaningful positive action.
- Utility of approaching Positive-Cooperative Justice as a business or marketing problem
  - Competing with business aspects of punitive system
    - Addressing marketing/media image of punitive system
  - Possibility of bypassing difficulties of needing substantial changes in law to get started
- Check continuity between main paper and appendices
  - Fix discrepancies in numbers between document sections wherein different source materials were used (prefer latest figures, or highest wherein costs are being estimated).
  - Check for unnecessary duplication of topics or areas wherein one section can be better tied to another.
  - Integrate Appendices 1 and 2 into main paper.
  - Re-type marketing plan and add as appendix.
- Revisit all sections to bring to completion.
- Fix long sentences and passive voice wherever possible.
- Transition this paper into a book
  - Add more visual elements.
  - Layout.
  - Formal chapter structure.
- Glossary
  - *decision fatigue*

- *narrative memory*
- *neuroplasticity*

## Requests

As mentioned in the author note of this paper, as a prison inmate, the resources and avenues open to me necessary to put most of the ideas presented here are limited. For this reason, I ask that the interested reader consider volunteering some of her or his time or resources toward getting what I am tentatively labeling the Initiative for PCJ off the ground. There are several things which have occurred to me that could be helpful in facilitating this effort. This list is by no means exhaustive. There are likely to be a thousand and one things that would need doing in order to see this become a success. The following are the things that occur to me at the time of this writing.

- Secure the name Positive-Cooperative Justice, or find some useable alternative. In conjunction with the above, I would like to see something perhaps called The Positive-Cooperative Justice Initiative brought into existence as charitable organization, or as outlined herein, a business whose profits go to this cause.
- As my credentials are essentially nil, and furthermore I have chosen anonymity, it seems to me vital that those with academic backgrounds relevant to the various aspects of PCJ, whether they be legal, business related, economic, socio-psychological, neuroscientific, or otherwise weigh in on these ideas. I see this paper as a potential starting place for a fully developed idea. I have done my best to this point to elaborate on the basic ideas, to think through how some of them might be accomplished and to

assemble some of the research necessary to back them up. Nonetheless, there is much more I would like to do if I had better resources, and it is my hope that others might be able to pick up from where I have left it for now.

- As mentioned in the preamble, there is a need for additional materials describing or fleshing out the ideas of PCJ. I would like to suggest a simplified pamphlet to be able to hand out to people at events or perhaps throughout a given community should take top priority. I will attempt to create something like this in the time I have remaining to work on such things, but it would not hurt to have more than one such take on this. I am proposing the title *What is Positive-Cooperative Justice?*
- As I would like to continue to add to this body of work, it is clear that I will have an ongoing need for research materials. Unfortunately getting such materials into the prison environment presents challenges. To this end, if there is any attorney willing to assist in this process, it would be helpful if such person were willing to make arrangements with the person running the forum in which this document resides to send me such materials.

### [A Final Word from the Author: My Personal Stake in All of This](#)

As mentioned in the preamble, I am currently living within the existing punitive system. I think it is appropriate in the context of this fact that I say a few things about my situation to shed some light on why I have chosen to publish this paper in anonymity, and what my personal reasons are for putting this set of ideas forward. The critic might suggest that the fact of my incarceration naturally predisposes me to desire some softer situation for myself. In truth, there is no likelihood, with the amount of time it would take under the best of

circumstances, for anything along the lines of what I am proposing here to reach where I am in the system before I have long since been released.

I would very much like to see a day when PCJ reaches the place where I came from, and every corner of the world, but I can't honestly see my hometown or even the state in which I reside as being a prospective starting place for it. The place where I am from has perhaps not yet grown weary enough of the current paradigm. That is not to say things are not bad there, *they are*. I grew up in a scene wherein my observations were that the children of a lot of arguably socially conscious people, carried forward not their parents' high ideals, but our greater culture's tendencies towards settling disputes through violence and permanently ostracizing those who have done certain sorts of harms, while at the same time socially elevating, or holding in high esteem, those who have done certain other sorts of harms. This place perhaps has the potential to swing back, but I do not see it at the vanguard of any movement of the sort which perhaps speaks most directly to the immediate problems of poverty.

Hitting the walkways of these odd city-states we call jails and prisons opened my eyes to a lot of things. Some of them about myself, some of them about our society and its people. I grew up, like most of us, fearing these places. There *is* a lot to be feared here, however, it is very little like what one sees in most of the movies and television shows. The people here are just people. One cannot say, some of them are good and some of them are bad, that would be overly simplistic at best, dishonest, if we are being frank. Most of my neighbors here have been damaged. That much is true. That includes me. That also includes the people that run the places, and to greater or lesser degree the ones that work here in their

various capacities. The number of inmates I've met that have harmed mostly only themselves and yet *think of themselves* as "bad people," was one of the first things I didn't expect to find here. The number of people that have done tremendous harm to others yet would sacrifice anything for practically anyone under the right set of circumstances (often a much lower bar than one might imagine) was another. When they are willing and able to tell the whole story of how they got to these places, the people here leave me being able to see how I might have wound up making the same choices they did to wind up here, if I'd been through the same things and had their same capacities. I include the people that run the places when I say this.

A lot of the particulars of why people wind up here are tied up in things like addiction and similar things along the lines of impulse control issues (whether recognized as diagnosable impulse control disorders or otherwise indicative of what might be casually observed as poor self-control in various areas which intersect with the social sphere including sex, violence, and money). Others are mixed up in things as simple as bad circumstances and poor (long-term or big picture) decisions, but of the sort which might have seemed not so dumb in the moment. A more dumbfounding set of causes that might lead to incarceration are, more often than I ever expected to encounter, tied up in morality, but not the lack of morality typically associated in the public imagination with crime. Many of the violent crimes, maybe most, stem from people perceiving that they need to stand up for themselves, their loved ones, their neighborhoods, or what have you, against some wrong or some threat, whether real or believed. I was also somewhat surprised to learn that not as much theft, scamming and black-

market activity is as selfishly motivated as the TV might lead one to think (growing up among the poor, I already kind of knew this). Some number of economic crimes, perhaps most, stem from people just trying to get by, or wanting to provide for their loved ones. It's by no means all greed.

The completely out-for-himself type whose crimes center on the economic sphere seems from my observation no more prevalent in this category than violent crime.<sup>2</sup> In a startling number of cases, people who grew up in poverty just don't see any compelling evidence around them that there might be better options within the civic framework. *That* is a systemic failure. My subjective, anecdotal observation, is that prisoners are *not just* on the whole moral people, when at their best, or when free of conflicting factors. Rather, they are among the most moralistic if not morally fixated groups of individuals one could ever hope to encounter (Author, 2020).<sup>3</sup> These things acknowledged, there are among us some

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<sup>2</sup> It has been noted in various recent studies that there are as many or more such individuals among the free population (citation information unavailable), causing as much or more damage to society and individuals as anyone behind bars while typically being able to avoid criminal prosecution or even very impactful civil punishments. Many such individuals, rather than gravitating toward overtly criminal ventures find their ways into positions of power in business and politics, others simply barrel through life with little regard for what harm they inflict to others and for whatever reasons either don't get into legal trouble, or if they do somehow avoid major entanglements.

<sup>3</sup> In fact, this has a strong correlation in the literature. Research indicates that a disproportionate number of prison inmates in the U.S. describe themselves as adherent to some religious faith or spiritual tradition, in particular, many identify as Evangelical Christians, regularly attend services while in prison, profess strong moral positions in concert with their faith, and even in relationship to the crimes for which they personally were convicted (Citation information unavailable). It has been observed that this is most likely not in any way indicative of some generalized lack of moral fiber within the evangelical community, but rather correlates to the fact that a significant portion of the traditionally working poor segments of our population happen to be of this faith group, and in turn that the poor for any number of reasons tend to be more religious than other segments of the population at present (this

number of people who do violent, or economic harms only for personal gain or some kind of psychological satisfaction, but I must stress, these are *not* the people you tend to meet in your typical prison, there are handfuls of them. It is probably true that a significant number (but probably not all) of these individuals could be diagnosed with what psychologists call anti-social personality disorder (mental disorder, 2014), otherwise labeled as sociopaths (psychopaths being, as I understand it, a more nuanced subset of these). In brain science terms, these are people with diminished neural interconnectivity between the areas which attenuate survival behavior and other impulsive type behaviors with capacities such as empathy and compassion. Others might have other more complex psychological motivations which do not rise to the level of sociopathology, or do not suggest any generalized lack of social awareness or capacity, but nonetheless indicate problems in psycho-neural areas. The thing is, in my observations and interactions with others in this environment of the course of numerous years, and at various facilities of the low to high end of medium security type, these are *not the majority* of those of us who wind up in prison, though it has been observed that most of us who do wind up incarcerated do have some deficits in the relevant psycho-social and cognitive areas (citation information unavailable; probably Adrian Raine).

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has not always been the case). The research suggests that having a moral code and the means for strong adherence to that moral code are not one and the same (citation information unavailable). So, as discussed throughout the body of this paper, poverty of one sort or another (material, educational, psychological, emotional, social, or otherwise categorized) remains the keystone issue, not (probably in most cases) morality, which our society seems to have plenty of to go around.

Whatever the case may be regarding the underlying factors which lead to the kinds of harms that people get incarcerated for, people, even those of us with problems which manifest around brain injury, do respond to treatment specific to these sorts of problem areas. Research indicates that even people such as serial killers can in all likelihood be taught the emotional skills they would need to function in the community without causing further harms (citation information unavailable; probably Emotional Intelligence). Whether or not community members would feel okay about having them back among them is a separate issue. This also means that if we got just a little bit better at looking ahead, getting past our current paradigm of waiting until a tragedy presents to address such issues, these are areas in which problems that might suggest the need for attention, could be addressed well *before any significant harms have been done*.<sup>4</sup>

Under a model such as PCJ, wherein the stigma of mental health problems might more readily overcome and wherein a person in need of help could get treatment simply by walking in and asking for it, or wherein loved ones or concerned community members might bring skilled experts from the PCJ community in to aid in an intervention (but not necessarily any kind of detention, unless the need for such is a clearly demonstrable), such a person might be helped ahead of time, thereby averting the more catastrophic outcomes which arise when treatment has not come in time.

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<sup>4</sup> It should be stressed here that this does not mean that we should ever entertain the idea of locking people away in anticipation of harms that we fear they might cause in the future. A person's so-called criminogenic tendencies are not reliable predictors of harms yet to be done by that person.



Relating these points back to the question of what motivated my writing, I am one of those who fell somewhere in this group, that is to say, I had psychological problems which manifested in harms which landed me in prison, and I am pretty sure that a number of what at the time were seen as minor head injuries in my youth contributed to the manifestation of these psychological problems, *though I remain undiagnosed in this area, after numerous years of incarceration and various complaints to medical staff which should under normal circumstances have led to thorough brain imaging.*<sup>5</sup> I cannot say for certain what might have happened differently had something such as PCJ existed prior to my spiraling out of control, but I know that I looked for help and was unable to find it. I believe that if I knew where to find the right kind of help a lot of harm could have been avoided. This seems to me like something of a no-brainer. I wanted help, and was scared to death of the consequences of seeking it through the normal channels. Nonetheless, I did try to find treatment and even eventually found a psychiatrist I was able to talk to for some time until that individual violated my trust leaving me feeling as though I had no options but to try to work my problems out on my own.

So in many ways, my interest is personal, but not in that I think I might get something out of it. Rather, it is personal in the sense that this matters a lot to me. I feel daily waves of misery, whenever thoughts arise about the harms I have caused both directly, and indirectly in relation to those who care about me and

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<sup>5</sup> In spite of the kinds of things one sees on television, when I brought these issues up as mitigating factors to my attorney, I was informed that this kind of information is largely irrelevant in criminal proceedings, and I was unable to have brain imaging done in conjunction with my trial, or in light of any treatment I might someday receive within the institutional environment.

are distressed to have me stuck in this situation, or who never found out why I simply fell off the face of their Earths one day. I don't want anyone else to have cause to feel this way, and I don't want the people I hurt to feel that hurt, but it is too late or otherwise impossible under the current set of conditions for me to do anything to alleviate much of that pain, or prevent anyone else from travelling down the same sort of path that lead me here. My only remaining hope where these things are concerned is that I can help to create something which could potentially reduce the harms others might do to themselves or those around them, in the future, or in those situations wherein harms have already occurred, to help in the healing process. That is where this idea of PCJ comes from. I figure maybe if it gets off the ground I can do some kind of volunteer work within that framework or maybe even a paying job, but I don't expect it to be my primary source of income no matter how things unfold.

It is true that being incarcerated has been a factor in getting me to self-examine and come up with some ideas which might be good, and might help others. Nonetheless, it is truer still that if PCJ existed when I went to jail, instead of jail, I could have done all of these things and more, and more importantly, I could have done them without doing anyone any harm, or bringing so much stress to my loved ones. I have no doubt that this stress was a major component of what lead to my mom's health declining and her dying several years, if not decades before her time. If PCJ existed, my grandmothers who counted on hearing from regularly would not have spent their last couple of years in this world thinking I'd forgotten about them, because my family didn't know how to tell them what happened to me. My father and stepmother wouldn't have to spend as much money on me as

though I were a high schooler with a part-time job, just to keep me generally healthy and mildly entertained through my mid-life.

On the other hand, it *is* also true that incarceration is allowing me the free time to get some work on myself done as well as to develop this idea of PCJ. This acknowledged, I cannot help but to think I could be doing more of greater or at least more direct meaning and impact to make up for the harms I've caused. I also cannot help but to recognize that just being here is *not* what made me able to reassess the way my life was going. That ability came from a combination of things, some of which I had actually started working on *before* prison, as soon as I came to realize that I had problems that might be leading to this kind of outcome. Primarily, these consist of things I figured out after doing some research into what in the arena of self-help might actually help me. *None* of these is among the things that I learned from the prison system itself.

I can identify three general things which in have influenced my overall progress towards personal change. The things that I perceive have actually helped me—and on whose effects I have received positive feedback from others—have come to via my own motivation to find some way to resolve my own problems. The first helpful thing I learned was a form of cognitive therapy (Rational Emotive Therapy) which enables one to see how one's beliefs influence one's experiences and actions, in addition to how one develops these beliefs. The second was the introduction of various meditation practices, which included mindfulness, or that is to say, the act of attempting to direct one's attention away from actively engaging with one's thoughts and instead putting it on to noticing that the thoughts are just there, along with whatever feelings or emotional reactions that

might go along with them.<sup>6</sup> In conjunction with this practice, another set of meditative practices that have affected my outlook, thinking and actions has been those that center on the development of compassion, or to put it simply, learning to try to appreciate the suffering of others at both the mental and emotional level. The third, was the time away from *some* (but not all) of the stimuli with which my problems centered around, and along with this the time to work on the above two things.

While none of these exercises nor the time to allow them to percolate has perfectly transformed me into the person that I strive to be, they have made it easier for me to see (at least in times of relative calm or those wherein I am to harness the strength to able to take a mental step back from my raw emotions) things from other people's perspectives. At the same time, the introspective and perspective taking ability fostered by these practices along with the ample time I have had to steep in this environment have also made it impossible for me not to notice that within this third piece of this puzzle, the component of incarceration is on the whole deeply flawed and ill-conceived. Noticing this, and more importantly, what was working toward the overall improvement of my outlook, relationships and overall trajectory contrasted with that which was otherwise being thrust upon me-led me to the unavoidable conclusion that the systematic effort of doling out harms to address other harms, the central theme of imprisonment, can never be made into a good idea.

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<sup>6</sup> This is a practice, which although originating in Buddhism, does not depend upon any kind of specifically Buddhist belief system.

This incoherent concept of punishment for punishment's sake called prison just does not make any sense to me. What does society get out of this? I guess I somewhat bought into it up until I got to see it from the inside, but I admit that never really thought it through until it hit home. I feel badly that I hurt people, but what am I supposed to do with the idea that the state or whoever feels justified in doing harm to me and my family with the irrational aim of somehow bringing things back into balance? The whole notion of this seems truly bizarre when I step back and really look at it. Even if the reader's world view is that people "deserve" this or that and that it is somehow better for some indirectly interested party to dole out punishments than those who have been harmed, what about the loved ones and communities of these pain deserving people? In certain circumstances, it might be that there was some measure of responsibility that roots back to these, but what about when it does not, and in any case, when was *their* day in court?

Harm seems to me a communicable disease. I do not blame anyone else for the harms I have caused in my life, however, I cannot ignore that there is some clear connection back to harms that have been done to me which found their way to others through me. I have no doubt that those who harmed me had themselves been the recipients of harms toward themselves. In my experience, the only thing that stops the communication of harms from one person to the next is when there is some kind of healing, some kind of railing against the impulse to carry that harm forward. I see no evidence to support the idea that prisons serve that purpose. They just perpetuate the harms, the very things which they are supposed to address.

The way we are going is not sustainable. We can soften, or as we like to call it *reform* criminal justice, but until we truly embrace the scientific method and marry this to a wholly consistent ethical foundation, we will continue to sacrifice masses of people to the altar of law and order. Desperate people will continue to have nowhere to turn. A desperate society will still rely on primitive reactions. Far too many will suffer. I do not believe we will ever achieve perfection, as long as people have brains that capable of becoming screwed up, we will do terrible things to each other that look downright deliberate. But, I believe, we know enough by now, that we could be doing a heck of a lot better with this stuff, and because we could, we should. *That* is what I want to be a part of. *That* is what motivates me. If I can be involved with some part of getting things moving in that direction, I will feel a little happier, that is why I wrote this.