



THE CORRECTIONS JOURNAL FOR NJ-ACA

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Our Mission: To shape public policy and provide information, training, and networking opportunities, thereby promoting professional growth and organizational effectiveness in New Jersey's criminal/juvenile justice system.

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear NJACA Members,

After a lengthy absence, the **Corrections Journal for NJ-ACA** is back in print. The return of this publication is primarily due to the efforts of Steve Troyanovich and Matt Sheridan of the Juvenile Justice Commission. It is a time-consuming effort to gather, to edit the articles and to prepare the publication layout. On behalf of the membership, I offer them many thanks for their initiative and dedication in returning the **Corrections Journal for NJ-ACA** to print.

Their efforts point out an important aspect of the NJACA. We are an organization of correctional professionals who volunteer our time to the association. Matt and Steve are just two of the individuals who make the organization work. All of our functions and activities are planned, organized, and conducted by volunteers. Whatever NJACA event that you attend, a group of our members has made it happen.

As a member of NJACA, I hope that you will consider becoming an active participant in your organization. Through your participation, you can make the NJACA stronger and more energetic. All it requires is your time and commitment. All of our activities require some time to plan and carry out. This involves meeting and communicating with your fellow members. Whether working by email, in-person, or on the phone, the follow-through on the project is critical, and this is where some find it difficult to maintain their involvement.

Currently, we are involved in planning the annual conference. The conference will again be held in Atlantic City. We are moving to a new site this year - the Hilton Resort and Casino on the boardwalk. We hope this new location will be an exciting change of pace for the conference attendees. This is our largest event of the year and requires months of preparation to meet our goal of presenting a diverse group of sessions that appeal to all sectors of the corrections field.

Several members of the conference planning committee have been meeting to develop a conference theme and corresponding workshops and plenary sessions. In addition to this, other members are involved in working with vendors to participate in the exhibit hall. Anyone wishing to take part in the conference planning should contact the NJACA voicemail at 609-393-7282. It can be a rewarding experience, volunteering with others in your profession.

Finally, I would like to thank Howard L. Beyer, the Executive Director of the Juvenile Justice Commission, and Judge John D'Amico, Chairman of the State Parole Board, for their unwavering support of the NJACA during the past few years. Their support and participation in the organization is deeply appreciated by the Board of Directors and the membership of this organization.

I hope to see you at the Annual Conference.

Sincerely,

George Yefchak, President

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SAVE THE DATE

Annual NJ-ACA Conference: October 5 & 6, 2006

Location: Atlantic City Hilton on the Boardwalk



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BECOME A NJ-ACA COMMITTEE MEMBER

All NJ-ACA members are invited to serve on the Association's various Standing Committees. The participation and enthusiasm of our members is always welcome. Any NJ-ACA member interested in serving on one or more of our committees should contact our voicemail at:

609-393-7282



The Corrections Journal NJ-ACA

*Editors: Dr. Matthew Sheridan & Steve Troyanovich
Layout/Design: Julie K. Hanley*

Questions, comments, and suggestions for future newsletter content can be e-mailed to matt.sheridan@njcc.org

Executive Director of New Jersey Juvenile Justice Commission selected as President of the Council of Juvenile Correctional Administrators

Howard L. Beyer, Executive Director of the New Jersey Juvenile Justice Commission (JJJ) and resident of Highland Park, was recently selected to serve as President of the Council of Juvenile Correctional Administrators (CJCA).

The CJCA is a national, non-profit organization committed to the improvement of juvenile correctional services and practices. Incorporated in July 1994, the CJCA has served to unite the nation's juvenile correctional chief executives to promote and aid advancements within juvenile justice. The organization has developed the Performance-based Standards (PbS) program, which creates standards for juvenile correctional facilities, and utilizes self-assessment and self-improvement to evaluate performance and effectiveness of juvenile justice programming. Over 150 facilities in the country, including three JJC facilities, have implemented PbS. The program is funded by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) of the U.S. Department of Justice.

"Howard Beyer is a tremendous leader with an outstanding commitment to, and passion for, juvenile corrections and improving the lives of troubled youths. As a devoted juvenile justice professional, he has inspired leaders across the country to create programs and services for youths in the juvenile justice system so they will succeed in school, at home and upon returning to the community. The CJCA is proud to name Howard L. Beyer as its new president, and we are all looking forward to all he will contribute," said Edward J. Loughran, Executive Director, CJCA.

Beyer is a career correctional professional with 30 years of distinguished service. Beginning his career with the New Jersey Department of Corrections in 1975, Beyer held numerous management positions at East Jersey State Prison before becoming Assistant Superintendent of the New Jersey State Prison in 1981. After serving as Assistant Commissioner with the Department of Corrections for five years, Beyer was appointed Deputy Executive Director of the JJC in 1999. In June 2002, the New Jersey Senate

confirmed Beyer as Executive Director of the JJC.

"The CJCA is an important organization that is truly dedicated to the young people of our country. I am honored to be a part of an outstanding organization that has made significant and lasting improvements to juvenile justice programs and facilities, not only in New Jersey, but throughout the country," said Beyer. "I look forward to serving as president and working with such an outstanding team of juvenile justice professionals from across the country."

As Executive Director of the JJC, Beyer is responsible for more than 2,000 young people including 1,000 committed juveniles, 300 probationers and 800 juvenile parolees. One of his highest priorities has been to establish education as the foundation through which the JJC helps young people realize their potential and change their futures.



Howard L. Beyers, JJC Executive Director

Beyer received his Bachelor of Science Degree in Criminal Justice from The College of New Jersey (formerly Trenton State College), and his Masters Degree in Public Administration from John Jay College of Criminal Justice in New York City. He and his wife, Yvonne, have three children, Samuel, Jeremy, and Rachel.

Juvenile Justice Commission Employee Earns “Worker of the Year” Award

Social Worker from Atlantic County Detention Center Recognized for Excellence

The New Jersey Juvenile Detention Association (NJJDA) recently presented Floretta Palin-Miller of Newtonville, with its Worker of the Year Award for Atlantic County.

Ms. Floretta Palin-Miller is a Senior Youth Worker at the Atlantic County Juvenile Detention Center which is operated by the State of New Jersey, Juvenile Justice Commission (JJC) through a contractual agreement. Ms. Palin-Miller has been employed by the New Jersey Juvenile Justice Commission since November 1994. Recognized for her outstanding work with the residents on special projects such as bulletin board and art

“Ms. Palin-Miller serves as a role model for our residents as well as our staff.”

displays throughout the facility, as well as her participation in the 2nd Annual “Stop the Violence” Basketball Tournament. Ms. Palin-Miller also visits local schools to promote open discussions with students.

“The JJC is committed to realizing the potential of the young people in its care and helping them change the direction of their futures. Our dedicated and experienced staff play a critical role in fulfilling this mission,” said Howard L. Beyer, Executive Director. “Ms. Palin-Miller serves as a role model for our residents as well as our staff.”

The “Worker of the Year” awards are presented by the New Jersey Juvenile Detention Association to

recognize an outstanding staff member at each of the 19 juvenile detention centers in the State of New Jersey. The award was presented at the 7th Annual New Jersey Juvenile Detention Association/Juvenile Justice Commission’s Training Conference at Trump Marina in Atlantic City on September 23, 2005.

Ms. Palin-Miller and her husband, Charles, of eighteen years are the proud parents of two children, Devin and Doshelle.



Pictured from left to right: Mr. Robert Murray, President of the NJJDA, Mr. Kimery Lewis, Superintendent of the Atlantic County Juvenile Detention Center, Ms. Floretta Palin-Miller, Senior Youth Worker of the Atlantic County Juvenile Detention Center and Mr. Howard L. Beyer, Executive Director of the Juvenile Justice Commission.

CONGRATULATIONS!

JJC Youth Graduate Culinary Program

The fourth class of culinary students graduated recently from a collaborative vocational program between the New Jersey Juvenile Justice Commission (JJJ), Respond, Inc. and Union Local 54. The sixteen graduates were joined by fellow JJC residents and staff, community members and John D'Amico, Chairman of the New Jersey State Parole Board to celebrate the milestone.

The JJC is dedicated to realizing the individual potential of young people and working to change their futures,”
- Howard L. Beyer,
Executive Director, JJC

The Respond Culinary Program is an innovative culinary course for residents of the JJC's Camden and Campus Residential Community Homes located in the City of Camden and Blackwood respectively, and parolees at a day reporting center in Atlantic City, which is operated by Behavioral Interventions, Inc. The program provides the young people with a myriad of culinary-based vocational skills to prepare them for jobs in the restaurant industry.

“The JJC is dedicated to realizing the individual potential of young people and working to change their futures,” said Howard L. Beyer, Executive Director, Juvenile Justice Commission. “The JJC is stepping up its efforts to help juveniles transition successfully back into their communities. By providing them with career skills, we can help them overcome the challenges they face once they leave the structure of the JJC. The Respond Culinary Program not only provides excellent career opportunities, but also helps young people establish relationships

in their communities. This inter-agency and public/private collaboration is yet another example of combining all available resources to help enact positive change in the lives of New Jersey's troubled youth and its communities.”

The culinary program is a realistic, work-based learning experience. The intense 16-week course allows the participants to experience everyday situations such as punching a time clock, and the inspection of their uniforms by a Chef Instructor, in addition to sanitary practices and food preparation.

“The partnership between the New Jersey Juvenile Justice Commission, Local 54 and Respond, Inc. has brought creativity in programming and a local neighborhood-based capacity to the training of selected students. Respond is looking forward to the expansion of the program at the present site and at a larger facility that is currently under renovations. For more than 38 years, Respond has



worked with local communities to determine needs and to provide exceptional services to children, youth, adults and families. This partnership highlights what Respond is about,” said Wilbert Mitchell, Executive Director of Respond, Inc.

Local 54 provides the curriculum and funding for this innovative program, which is managed by a JJC Youth Transition Coordinator, who was an executive in the food industry prior to joining the JJC. In addition to classroom and hands-on kitchen exercises, the

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Respond Culinary program staff teach youth the skills to become employed within the redstaurant industry and helps them to develop healthy work habits needed to stay employed.

Culinary Program

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curriculum includes field trips to the Taj Mahal’s main kitchen and Borgata’s Pastry Shop located in Atlantic City, the Hilton Hotel’s banquet hall in Cherry Hill, and the Sysco Food Show in Philadelphia, allowing students to observe the food industry first hand.

Local 54 was awarded a New Jersey Department of Labor Youth Transition to Work (YTTW) grant in 2003. One prerequisite of this grant project was to develop partnership with schools, post-secondary institutions, community-based organizations, and employers to provide apprenticeship opportunities to New Jersey's youth.

"This project is a perfect example of partnership at work. Aside from the conventional training, this program gives the youth confidence in themselves and instills a work ethic, which many have never experienced. This program works together to provide the youth with a comprehensive

background in the hospitality industry as well as life skills," said Floyd C. Williams, Training and Education Director, Local 54.

"This marriage is one of mutual respect and admiration which includes a sense of urgency to see these young adults succeed and thrive. Local 54, the JJC and Respond, Inc., an admirable resource and source of support to the City of Camden, could not provide these opportunities without one another. This relationship should be an example to other organizations that partnerships do work. The old saying, "It takes a village to raise a child", holds true to this program. Though the youth in the program are not children, it takes all parties involved to help them become the people we believe them to be," continued Williams.

The students have worked very hard to achieve the skill level necessary to complete the program. The JJC, with the help of its partners in the community, will assist JJC youth who complete this program locate employment in the food services industry.

We would like to congratulate the following individuals for their hard work and dedication~

2005 NJACA AWARD OF EXCELLENCE RECIPIENTS

NJ State Parole Board

Lieutenant Steven Tallard, Unit Commander, Sex Offender Management Unit, NJSPB

Juvenile Justice Commission

Ms. Mattie Kirkland, Supervisor, Northern Region Juvenile Parole Office, JJC

Juvenile Detention Association

Mr. Gregory Lyons, Superintendent, Union County Juvenile Detention Center

Administrative Office of the Courts

Chief Probation Officer Anthony Casale, Hudson Vicinage Probation Division, AOC

NJ Department of Corrections

Ms. Patty Friend, Director, Office of Educational Services, NJDOC

Community Corrections Providers of NJ

Mr. Kevin McHugh, Director of Community Programs, NJSPB

Wardens Association

Warden Theodore J. Hutler, Ocean County Jail

Re-entry Realities

By: Leonard Ward, MPA

District Parole Supervisor, New Jersey State Parole Board
Community Programs Office
and

Edward Bray

Acting Deputy Executive Director, New Jersey State
Parole Board



The best ignored fact of the criminal justice system and the political debates surrounding crime and punishment is that **Inmates leave prison**—invariably over 95 percent of those residing behind bars today will be released. The numbers alone are staggering—more than 650,000 offenders are released from prison nationwide every year, almost 1,800 per day. In New Jersey alone, over the next five years more than 85,000 people will be coming home from serving a term in a state prison, or county jail.

The challenges faced as a society and by community corrections professionals goes far beyond the volume of returning offenders. It expands to include the costs, both hard and soft, and the resonating effect offenders will have on our communities. Consider the following:

- ⇒ The State of New Jersey spends close to one billion dollars annually for the Department of Corrections.
- ⇒ Each of the state's twenty-one counties spends tens of millions more for their jails.
- ⇒ The majority of offenders return to the same urban centers from whence they departed.
- ⇒ Virtually none will have education or training past High School, and most won't have a High School diploma or GED.
- ⇒ The illiteracy rate in prisons is 70%.
- ⇒ Approximately one in five will have a **diagnosed** mental illness
- ⇒ An overlapping forty percent will have a **diagnosed** substance abuse condition.
- ⇒ Many will also have a pronounced inability to cope with life's setbacks, little and large.
- ⇒ Many have a record of poor decision making and a lack of self-control of their anger and impulsiveness.
- ⇒ Clustered in urban centers, having emerged from the lower echelons of socio-economic status, they are the unwanted, the unemployable, and – to many—the unredeemable.

Upon release, they will be seeking to satisfy the bottom levels on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, shelter, clothing, food, and safety. Left to their own, with limited resources, to face the challenges, many will resort to the same behaviors that led to their incarceration.

States are faced with increasing incarceration rates and ballooning corrections budgets, ranging from \$80 **million** per year in Vermont with 2,000 inmates, to \$9 **billion** in California with 166,000 inmates. In response to the staggering costs associated with the construction, maintenance and operations of the corrections infrastructure a "new" strategy has emerged that promises great results: "Re-entry."

Re-entry is many things to many people, with few agreeing on all the parts. The goal is so poorly defined that achieving consensus on what success means is effectively impossible. Every silver lining of success has its own dark cloud of failure. The liberal application of the term *Re-entry* and accompanying fanfare furthers the confusion. Every old program or new idea that can be connected to a person who served prison time is now a "*Re-entry* initiative." Yet, we have not significantly increased the funding for service for returning offenders. The federal government's pledge of \$600 million for *Re-entry* initiatives amounts to about \$1,000 per inmate for this year only. This vagueness lends itself to the application of Martinson's misquoted mantra: "Nothing works."

There are innumerable stories of failure. Routine chores become an insurmountable blockade to a returning offender. The Associated Press recently reported on a newly released offender, who two months after release was still attempting unsuccessfully to get his birth certificate and a picture ID. A more appalling fact of the case is that after 35 years of incarceration neither he, nor the state, could provide him with proof of his own identity. This comedy of errors exists in every state, every city, every day. Ex-offenders, just trying to get by and stay out of trouble, are blockaded by minutia.

How much simpler it would be to wash our hands of the problems (1800 daily releases to distressed neighborhoods and the challenges of documentation, training, illness, addiction), declare defeat and go home.

The difficult truth is that inmates are coming out if we

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Re-entry Realities

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prepare for them or not. It is only logical to prepare - to care about these individuals and their plight. We pay billions of dollars for corrections infrastructure, the criminal justice system of police, prosecutors, public defenders, and courts. We pay for neighborhoods that suffer economically due to crime and accompanying violence. We pay through the victims of crime in the costs of money and emotional losses. We pay through

President Bush noted in his 2005 State of the Union Address, that when a person leaves prison, they should be afforded a second chance. A central tenant of our nation has long been the opportunity of all for redemption, atonement for past failures, and beginning a new life.

Coordinated efforts that address basic re-entry needs of ex-offenders, families and communities is the core. Usually the paroling or supervising authority bears the brunt of criticism for the high recidivism rate when assessing outcomes of ex-offenders. This blame is misplaced. The lack of proactive planning and implementation by custodial

“The difficult truth is that inmates are coming out if we prepare for them or not. It is only logical to prepare - to care about these individuals and their plight.”

the broken families left behind. Moreover, we pay incalculable opportunity costs in unfulfilled goals and potential as we expend our resources on this zero-sum endeavor, rather than investing in our communities’ future.

Preparing offenders for release is necessary from the moment incarceration begins. Failing to do so is whistling through the graveyard. The \$600 million federal pledge is incapable of making a meaningful or prolonged impact, unless states and cities make a commitment to reform. As a nation, we must not get lost in rhetoric and posturing, but confront the uncomfortable reality that we are guilty of negligence when preparing for returning offenders. The reality is not black or white, Democrat versus Republican, or an Andy of Mayberry versus Andy Sipowitz police mentality. It is a nonpartisan social issue, which affects us all.

Second, as the leaders of this society we see the effects frayed edges have on the whole of society, the untended thread that unwinds deeply into the heart of the cloth.

institutions that have had the offender for years, and the lack of investments and commitment by our communities in those specific point-of-origin neighborhoods, should truly be the focus of reform.

Strategies that plan for the return of offenders, that encompasses not only individual offenders but also the community they return to, is no longer a luxury; are an absolute necessity. Realistic timelines and expectations coupled with effective tactics of response to the challenges offenders face are critical to success. A process that removes barriers to affordable housing and meaningful employment, that takes aggressive steps to prepare ex-offenders for re-entry, and that includes the goals of sustainable offender’s reintegration and neighborhood recovery should be part of re-entry policies. Impacted neighborhoods require sustained investments enveloping them in economic development, community based anti-crime initiatives and focused social services designed to interrupt the status quo. Simply calling inmate’s release “re-entry” is not the answer.



Prison Rape Elimination Act of 2003 (PREA): Listening to Staff

By Ania Dobrzanska, CCM

The Moss Group, Inc.

Sexual violence has been raised as a critical correctional management issue of the 1990's. For some inmates, rolls of razor wire and walls of concrete hold them captive to the sexual predation of fellow inmates and even staff; cells with steel bars offer no sanctuary but instead highlight raw vulnerability. Overcrowded, underfunded, and insufficiently staffed, corrections continue to implement and plan training to prevent, educate, and collect data related to prison sexual assaults in order to protect inmates and safeguard communities.

It was not until the late 1960s that U.S. courts began to take an active role in monitoring prison conditions and mandating prison reform. National tragedies such as the infamous Attica and Santa Fe prison riots raised public awareness and made some prison conditions appear unjust as well as counterproductive, placing corrections in the spotlight and raising some eyebrows. It was not until the last decade, however, that the problems of sexual violence received heightened scrutiny and public attention, coming to the forefront of agendas of correctional administrators.

Growing awareness of sexual violence, including staff sexual misconduct and offender-on-offender sexual assault, has pushed penal facilities to implement reforms. On September 4 of 2003, President George W. Bush signed into law the Prison Rape Elimination Act. This marked the first time the U.S. government has passed a law to deal with sexual assault behind bars. Under this Act, the National Institute of Corrections (NIC) was mandated to provide information and assistance to the corrections field in the areas of prevention, investigation, and punishment. In December of 2003, the leadership of NIC initiated early planning activities in response to this mandate. As a part of these early planning efforts The Moss Group, Inc. was awarded a cooperative agreement to assist the Institute in initial planning and activities to build NIC's approach to compliance with the law.

As a first order of business, the team assembled by The Moss Group, Inc. determined that, to provide policy-makers and practitioners with valuable information on the nature and extent of the problem, it would be necessary to investigate staff response to this national concern. Consequently, under Cooperative Agreement between NIC and The Moss Group, Inc., a series of structured focus-group interviews was conducted in 12 jail and prison facilities. Key findings pertaining to staff perspectives on the dynamics of sexual assault in corrections were summarized in a publication, *Staff Perspectives on Sexual*

Violence in Adult Prisons and Jails: Results from Focus Group Interviews.

The 12 sites were chosen by a purposive sampling method, resulting in a sample that contained large and small prisons and jails, facilities that were located throughout the United States, and facilities that housed male and female inmates. The project was lead by two principal investigators, Barbara Owen, Ph.D. and James Wells, Ph.D.

A structured protocol, developed by The Moss Group, Inc., was used to conduct the focus group interviews. Using open-ended questions, this protocol elicited staff perspectives on the dynamics of sexual assault, staff knowledge of training and procedures, problems and successes in responding to sexual violence, and recommendations for improving staff response. Staff expressed concern over incidents of sexual assault as expressed here:

I wish we had a way to protect the inmates. That is my job and if we can't protect them, what is the point? That is my biggest problem—for them to trust us without repercussions. We need more of a presence for us to feel like we can protect them and they can trust us. We have too many criminals and not enough staff.

Some of the difficulty of responding to sexual assault was described by this respondent:

{We respond to every assault situation}... however with rape we don't always know the situation so it's difficult to respond {when we don't have all the information}. When we get the information, we act on it and take appropriate measures. We respond well when we know about the situation, but with assault, {we don't always know all the facts}.

Participants offered insightful recommendations for improving staff response to sexual violence. The importance of good policy was illustrated in this comment by a jail administrator:

The staff are clearly aware of the zero tolerance policy and the expectation that they conduct themselves professionally and not abuse their authority toward males or females...we are well aware that there may have been a few gaps that it (policy) could be tweaked or tightened up. The appropriate people are responding to each part of the policy, as we have correctional staff, our medical, and our outside law enforcement support people that play a role. I would say that clear lines are being delineated for who should be doing what.

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(PREA): Listening to Staff

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Information obtained through the interviews was transcribed and then analyzed using Ethnograph, a qualitative analysis software package.

A total of 332 individuals participated in interviews. About half of all participants were custody staff (27% line staff and 22% supervisors), with executive and non-custody staff making up about one-quarter each. Almost 90% of the participants were employed by a government agency; 65% were male and had been employed in corrections for an average of 11 years, with 6 years experience at their current facility.

Staff sexual misconduct and offender on offender sexual assault are subject to careful review. The Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) collected data from more than 2,700 correctional facilities holding 79% of all adults and juveniles in custody. Fully 8,210 allegations of sexual violence reported nationwide in 2004. The BJS study found that staff sexual misconduct accounted for 42% of allegations, 37% involved inmate-on-inmate nonconsensual sexual acts, and 11% staff sexual harassment.

Staff Perspectives on Sexual Violence in Adult Prisons and Jails: Results from Focus Group Interviews, suggest reasons and solutions to sexual violence, providing a detailed picture of staff perspectives on sexual violence. Responding to sexual violence is part of good correctional practice, and the report is an invaluable resource as we begin to improve practice in this critical area.

Staff Perspectives on Sexual Violence in Adult Prisons and Jails: Results from Focus Group Interviews is made available by contacting The Moss Group, Inc. at a toll-free number (877) 546-1444. The Moss Group, Inc. strategies to assist the field of corrections through NIC can be found on the NIC website at <http://www.nicic.org/>. Information regarding training programs at The American University, Washington College of Law is available through the NIC program plan on the website. Technical assistance is available through contacting NIC Program Manager, Dee Halley 1-800-995-6423, ext. 40374.

About the Author: *Ania Dobrzanska is affiliated with The Moss Group, Inc. in Washington, D.C. She holds a BA in Psychology and Administration of Justice from Rutgers University and an M.S. in Justice, Law & Society from American University. She is a Certified Corrections Manager. Dobrzanska has published extensively on correctional topics, including refereed articles, reports, a book chapter, and is co-author of The Crying Wall.*

BOOK REVIEWS



The Big House: Life Inside A Supermax Security Prison

(Bruton, J. (2004), Stillwater, MN: Voyageur Press)

By: *Matthew J. Sheridan, Ed.D. and*

Aviva Twersky-Glasner, M.A., M.Phil.

The Big House is James Bruton's personal account of his five years as Warden of the Oak Park Heights supermax prison. His remarks are tempered with his 35 years of correctional experience noting that the supermax was different from anything else he had previously experienced. He says a walk inside the walls is like "entering a bizarre new world." This is not the prison described by Duffy of San Quentin, Ragan of Statesville, or Osborne of Sing Sing. Very few are invited to enter in or are allowed to see the inner workings of a supermax prison. In great detail, he relates from the insider's perspective what can only be called unimaginable events to highlight circumstances that make the warden's job different from almost any other line of work and distinct from the work of most prison wardens

Bruton's experience was with both state and federal prisoners. At Oak Park Heights, he utilized an incentive based system that allowed even the highest risk offenders to be out of their cells for most of the day. This is a sharp contrast to other supermax facilities that confine convicts for most of the day, every day, every week, month and year.

Bruton goes to great lengths to provide glimpses of the convicts of the supermax prison – the violent, the difficult to manage, child molesters, predators, drug smugglers and more. He takes us through the harsh issues and the human dilemmas that any concerned warden would lose sleep over. The harsh include incidents like the book's opening scene of a football game in which the quarterback doesn't throw a forward pass but uses the play action to stab the running back. Later, Bruton grants a lifer an escorted compassionate furlough. He also relates incidents that take the reader by surprise and include the well-liked officer who is arrested for conspiring with a convict serving a term for murder.

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One wishes that Bruton had discussed some of the more mundane aspects of prison life in the big house-like the repetitive nature of some of the daily activities for convicts and guards *and* how that plays a role in the development of some of the more spectacular events he includes in the book. Additionally, it would have been interesting had he been more informative about *himself*, his career, and how his 30 previous years of experience prepared him for his role as warden of The Big House. Otherwise, a very good book for practitioner, student, and observer of the prison.

For those who work in the correctional field, Bruton offers descriptions that almost all would readily recognize except that they occur in the extreme of the supermax. For those uninitiated to the world of prison, *The Big House* is a snapshot of the latest evolutionary development in prison history. For those considering a career in corrections as an officer, or in administration or some other capacity, there is adequate material to consider and upon which to begin making a personal decision. However, and while *The Big House* shares real events that do occur in the prison world, the casual reader, uninitiated to the prison environment, will be exposed to the more extreme occurrences of life in prison. While Bruton's *The Big House* is not exemplary of the daily grind in prison, almost every reader should find something of interest.

The Crying Wall and Other Prison Stories



(Victor Hassine, Robert Johnson, and Ania Dobrzanska. 2005. Port Angeles, WA: Infinity Publishing Company)

By: Matthew J. Sheridan, Ed.D

What happens when a distinguished professor of criminal justice, a convict serving a life term, and a criminal justice practitioner come together? A magnificent work of fiction, poetry, prose and drama! Not just any work of fiction but a well-written and well-crafted collection of writings. They reflect the ability of the convict to utilize his personal experience to inform through fiction and drama what incarceration means; the professor to contribute a career of research background that translates his knowledge, lament and concern about a social system with poetry and prose that reflects his personal disquiet with a failing system; and, the practitioner to illustrate that someone need not be incarcerated to understand in a powerfully written yet uncharacteristically accurate portrayal of doing time in the hole.



Lending

additional distinguished support to the potent descriptions of prison existence are a foreword by Joycelyn Pollock and an afterword by Barbara Owen, who have both achieved personal acclaim and awards for exemplary research and writings about the correctional system. Pollock sets the stage briefly describing today's prison and how the system evolved to its present state. She offers an excellent analysis of what the authors' writings have captured. Owen, with the greatest of brevity, sums up what prison means for present day society. Their analysis confirms the authenticity of the stories that make up the body of the book.

Fiction may easily be dismissed because it is not real life depiction. *The Crying Wall*, as often happens with great works of fiction, transcends reality. Those who know prison will recognize and identify with the characters of the story including the officer who, after acting as a guinea pig, recognizes what the death row convict undergoes during his final minutes before the executioner dispatches him from this life.

The Crying Wall evokes in the reader questions about the purpose prison serves as opposed to what it is supposed to accomplish. Hassine and Dobrzanska's stories about being in the hole demonstrate the inhumanity, degradation and individual personal destruction that come from so much time alone, so much uncertainty about what will come next, and the inability to do anything for oneself. Hassine, in the tradition of Miguel Pinero, contributes two powerful vignettes and employs great dramatic technique in the *Circle of Nod* as his characters address the audience exploring the hypocrisy of prison to fulfill its purpose.

The Crying Wall is a collection of stories to be appreciated (enjoyment might be difficult) for the intensity of emotion they evoke. The reader will feel the desolation of the hole, come to know the fear that men feel from their fellow man, guard and convict alike, recognize that the rules of prison are different from the rules of society, the desperation of final moments, and the ability of the prison to transform those who live in it so that prison is the only acceptable way of life.

The Crying Wall is a must read book about the prison experience.

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