

## Plush Prisons Just What Outlaws Like

**D**O-GOODERS keep telling the public that we have been looking at crime control from the wrong viewpoint. They maintain that those who break the law should be pampered instead of punished.

The traditional idea that housing felons in ugly, uncomfortable buildings, two or more to a cell, has been denounced and condemned as depriving convicts of their constitutional rights. It is widely believed that such circumstances would discourage law breaking because potential violators would not want to go there.

The ACLU and others seem to want plush prisons so inviting that outlaws might want to go there for rest and recreation.

Support for such a move sometimes comes from unexpected quarters. For example, last fall the Beckham County Farm Bureau sent this resolution to the state Farm Bureau convention:

"Because of his concern for the prisoners of the state, we would like to see the air conditioners in Judge Luther Bohanon's office removed and relocated in the McAlester

state prison."

This kindly thought suggests that prisons might be made comfortable enough to lure some judges and do-gooders into joining their beloved outlaws in luxuriant facilities. This could relieve a number of problems in the outside world.

Further improvements must be made first, though. Drab brick buildings will need to be replaced with decorative modern construction, complete with balconies, atria and escalators.

Civil libertarians lost their plea that it is unconstitutional to house prisoners two to a cell a few days ago. Such amenities as private telephones and cable TV were left undecided. If a true country club atmosphere is to be attained, more is needed.

Wives and girl friends (or husbands and boy friends) ought to be allowed visiting privileges in the dormitories, in line with practices allowed at other "educational institutions."

However, convicts should not be required to work or try to acquire

vocational skills. They didn't have to do these things before, so why should they start now? An exception might be those "scholars" who search the prison law library seeking new ways to legalize outside interests or copyright their memoirs.

Current problems with illicit liquor and dope inside prison walls could be solved by having built-in bars in all facilities, with tobacco and soft drinks provided as courtesies of the house.

By making prison life so attractive and enjoyable that thieves, burglars, rapists and white-collar criminals would volunteer to go there, judges and juries would be relieved of their distasteful duties of imposing sentences provided by law.

Judicial attitudes now being sought might even lead to prisoners setting their own sentences. Thus the Pardon and Parole Board would not face tough choices about who gets out soonest.

This ridiculous trend isn't cutting the crime rate, but it does seem to be inducing more youngsters to try outlawry.

No: Freddie J. Deering  
Columnist  
01-29-82

To Editor on staff:

Daily Oklahoman

Dear Sir:

As per your Editorial, on Thursday, 28, 1982; page eight, by Freddie J. Deering. I am appalled at the attitude, this man has. This person in question, evidently, is one of those so called Do-Gooders, that run rampant in our Society. Personally, I have never encountered such a person! Because! Every living soul has, or have committed an offensive action against the Law at one time, or another. We! Beyond all your expectations, are not pampered. At best, far from this viewpoint, I asked this question of myself many times. "Who of you without sin, can cast the first stone". But! It seems that there is one fellow, who can by his appalled article. People do make mistakes in life. You it seems, have not been caught. So in a different light, don't knock the ones who have. I can forgive you. Can you forgive me? Of not Sir; I'll know the rest of your story, and where you come from. I hope you find yourself, and what is causing you so much pain and agony in life. Even so; My prayers are with you for a speedy recovery.

Lewis Woodyard

Inmate 113256

Lexington, OKLA.

P.S. Come and see me sometime! You are welcome. Bring an open mind....?

# Plush prisons idea not true

## TO THE EDITOR:

There was published an article by Ferdie J. Deering, "Plush Prison Just What Outlaws Like." I feel that Mr. Deering should really take a look at what he is writing about. First, the plush prisons idea is Mr. Deering's and not that of the prisoners. All the prisoners have asked for is to be treated in a humane manner in that they be given medical and

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mental treatment, that certain types of punishment (prison inflicted) be restricted or done away with, that they be allowed to worship in their religious beliefs, that they be allowed to seek an education and that they be allowed access to the courts and media.

Mr. Deering wrote in his article: "However, convicts should not be required to work or try to acquire vocational skills. They didn't have to do these things before, so why should they start now? An exception might be those 'scholars' who search the prison law library seeking new ways to legalize outside interests or copyright their memoirs."

Mr. Deering should do some research into the area of how he got most of his rights under the United States Constitution to protect him from the powers of the state, if he should ever need them. If it were not for the "scholars," the United States Constitution would not be enforceable against the states.

But let's look at reasons for these "scholars" being in the prison law libraries. In the first place, the greatest percentage of people are indigent persons with no money or education. Most of them pled guilty to the charges; most of them had public defenders.

Now, for the beauty of Mr. Deering's last paragraph: "This ridiculous trend isn't cutting the crime rate, but it does seem to be inducing more youngsters to try outlawry."

Maybe Mr. Deering should look at the age bracket of the criminals today and relate it to the birth rate of the 50s and 60s. He would find that the United States had a big increase in birth rates. If he would notice the comparison between the birth rate increase and the increase in the rate of crime, he would be shocked to see that a relationship does exist.

People are not induced to try outlawry. To anyone who has studied the cause and effect of crime, this type of reasoning is totally misleading.

The issue of prison is like a big balloon with everybody pushing in on it while more air is being added. No matter how much pushing and pulling, the balloon will only hold so much air and no law of physics will ever change that.

Now, let's look at some simple facts that Mr. Deering did not cover. The prisons suppress aggression, and aggression can only be suppressed for so long in a human before it erupts in violence. The riot at McAlester is a good example of this. For as long as mankind has been on this earth, there have been prisons. The sad part is that prisons are not stopping crime. Prisons are not causing crime, but they are teaching (via inmates) new ways to commit crime.

If all the parties involved would sit down with one common goal in mind, instead of pushing and pulling, and deal with the issue, they may find an answer to the problem. Anything less than this is wasted energy and only confuses the issue.

If Mr. Deering would like to really understand the issues, he might ask the governor to allow him to spend 30 days doing time in one of these "plush" prisons.

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A and R Center