



The INSIDE REPORT

JULY 2020

Breaking News From Behind the Walls

VOLUME 1 ISSUE 2



Sit down with Dean Williams at Fremont Correctional Facility

Dean Williams Pushes for a Culture Change

Interview with Executive Director Dean Williams

BY BRANDON MOSS / FCF

On March 6, 2020, Executive Director of the Colorado Department of Corrections, Mr. Dean Williams, met with team members of The Inside Report in an attempt to better communicate the premise of normalization. In a deeper conversation later that morning, Williams sat

down for an interview about everything CDOC related. The following article is part one. Part two of this interview will be profiled in the next issue of The Inside Report. The Director was asked about the state's prison system having a long history of punishment, to which he simply responded "it doesn't work." Colorado's 48% recidivism rate does not go unnoticed, and it amplifies the desperate

need for a change. Normalization committees have been formed and his administrative team's efforts have focused on training and investing in smart, forward-thinking staff. The team sought clarification on the now common phrase "normalization." Williams described two paths he believes converge into normalcy in the context of corrections. The

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Chocolate Cherries, A taste of life...

BY DOUGLAS L. BAKER / FCF



Christopher A. Pernell, a man perceived by many individuals at the Fremont Correctional Facility as "the best damn bass player on the yard," was born in the late 1950s, when the Christian song "He's Got the Whole World in His Hands" was popular. Growing up through the Seventies, when disco and funk skyrocketed through the charts, Pernell was immersed and influenced by many musical sounds, developing an ear for jazz and gospel. "Music helps in so many different areas of your life; it gets you through certain moments. And it's no different from this moment in my life than any other moment before. It's like a type of therapy. It helps get me through, to release emotions in a positive manner

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Courtesy of IR, Photo of Christopher A. Pernell

Culinary Arts

BY AMANDA DELEON / DWCF

Have you ever looked back at your life and wondered, "How did I end up here?" Do you ever think back to elementary school when your teacher asked you, "What do you want to be when you grow up?" How many of you actually went after your dreams? Crazy, even though I am in prison, I am living my dreams. Like I said, crazy.

Growing up my dream was to become a chef. I would sit in the kitchen and watch my dad, mom, and grandma cook. It amazed me how the smells, love, comfort and creation would come out of the kitchen when they served us a meal. My dreams growing up were to be just like them; cooking good food that made people happy. I

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Photo courtesy of Amanda Deleon

Culinary

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wanted to open a family restaurant where all the family could work to earn money and gain experience, and to use their gifts to bring happiness to the world.

In high school, I decided to pursue that dream. My mom enrolled me into a technical school to study French cuisine. Sooner than later that school became a safe haven. Every time I put on my chef jacket and stepped into the kitchen, my world transformed and felt invincible. Learning the ins and outs of a high-quality restaurant came easy and I excelled in the industry.

When I graduated, they offered me an opportunity to become an apprentice and a certified chef by time I was 21 years old. Of course, I accepted. Unfortunately, though, my bad habits in high school screwed me in the end and I had to put my dreams on hold. Life happened too fast and instead of things getting better, they got worse and I made one too many

bad decisions and I ended up in prison.

After receiving 40 years, I felt my life was over. I was lost, alone and I had nothing to lose. Like most people, I wanted to end my life. I cried out to God. In the midst of my biggest loss, and deepest pain I leaned on the only thing I had left: A God I couldn't even see much yet believe. I prayed. I surrendered. I forgave and I strengthened my faith. Day in and day out, God showed me He was there and He was faithful. After a while, I started feeling different. After a year in prison, God reminded me of my passion to cook, and this is where my new life began.

I reached out to my case manager but got shot down because there was no culinary program here at La Vista. I cried out to God and I told Him that He wouldn't have put this desire in my heart if He wasn't going to equip me and make it possible. Next thing I know I'm getting called to my case manager's office, and was told they found a culinary teacher and I was enlisted for the class. I was so excited.

After four months, I completed the course and became a teacher's assistant. After about two years of working there, we were told that we had to start a coffee cart. We did all the research, experimented on a lot of coffee and opened up Java Jolt. Shortly after, we opened up a second coffee cart at DRDC, Java Jolt II. Business was good, but the location of the program was too small. We took over a whole hallway that catered to our plans to expand.

Expand we did! We went from the coffee cart to a snack bar serving breakfast burritos, hotdogs, and nachos. Then, we went from a snack bar to a small deli that served soups, salads, and sandwiches to a full-scale restaurant.

Five years later, we have our kitchen with eight different stations, seating area, and a full staff of graduates that run the kitchen. Five years of being told no, five years of jumping through hoops, five years of pursuing my dreams and guess what...we are about to have our grand opening. Through all of the planning, setbacks, and diligently

pursuing God, my dreams have come true.

My team of eight women on and off throughout the years have become my family. They have changed their lives, gained work experience, and have something to be proud of. They have brought continued happiness to the world around us and I couldn't have asked for anything less or anything more.

I can sit here and say that God has equipped me for my career when I get out. I will have completed the food service manager apprenticeship program. I am serve-safe certified, customer service certified and I have completed two culinary



Amanda Deleon / DWCF

courses. Who would of thought any of this would have been possible behind these walls? Eight years ago none of this would have been possible, but today I wholeheartedly believe with God anything is possible.

Dean Williams

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one path is to make "conditions behind the walls, as normal as they can, that are comparative to outside the walls." Williams went on to give examples of those conditions like cooking his own food and doing his own laundry, implying that such "everyday" chores might be available to CDOC residents with normalization efforts. He also gave illustrations of normalcy exclusive to prisons that include *The Inside Report*, Redemption Road Fitness Foundation, and The University of Denver Prison Arts Initiative (DU PAI). These programs are just road maps to a more conducive environment for staff-resident interaction, and even more, for the possibility for exchange between residents and the outside world. Williams showed his emphasis on residents providing their insight on normalization stating clearly "I want your ideas." Williams himself suggested ideas like residents wearing their own clothes.

The second path he believes promotes normalization is the giving to wardens and management teams the discretion to define normalization in their own unique settings. He has empowered staff to work collaboratively with the resident populations of Colorado's prisons to craft normalization to suit their circumstances. Williams says he is not mandating certain expectations which constitutes normalization.

He acknowledged that getting staff on board will be a big hill to climb, but he also stated that he had no time to waste. Williams is bringing in a whole new culture, through and through. He is implementing changes in the academy which trains incoming staff, constructing a new mentality of "dynamic security," that has been adopted in other systems. One example of this correctional approach is the system in Norway, a prison system that Williams has previously toured. The take on doing time in that prison culture is completely different than the one tried in Colorado and the U.S. The Norwegian system believes



The Inside Report picks the brain of CDOC Executive Director Dean Williams. Brandon Moss/ Julia Rada / Joseph McGill / Ashely Hamilton / Douglas Baker

that healthy, functional relationships are normal, an idea Williams recognized in saying that this "will change how we see each other." Informing the "culture shift" concept (a term used interchangeably with "normalization") is the Director's views on staff-resident interactions. Dynamic security doesn't require the old school "us

the way it's been?" The Director was very passionate in saying that what this system has done in the past is unacceptable. He wants the readers of IR to ask themselves the question: "Is this the best it's going to be?" adding, "If your answer was yes, then this [shift] isn't for you, you will be left behind." Director Williams also spoke to

stresses that incarcerated men and women can really make the most of their time, rather than simply doing the time, or worse, letting the time do them. Director Williams also has the highest regard for staff who actually want to be a part of making something better. He emphasized that he isn't preaching, but he does believe that God puts the most unexpected people in positions that they — and others — may not feel they are qualified to hold. "Nothing will change until the people who live here believe," says Williams, adding that a culture shift will obviously get push back from all angles, but this will be combated by the believers. In the end, it proves that everything is done for a reason and that God's plan may not always be our own. During his tenure as the Executive Director of the Alaska Department of Corrections, Williams received a lot of negative feedback and, at times, felt attacked and unwanted. Williams used those experiences as fuel and training for the transitions he has been bringing to CDOC. He concluded this thought by saying: "Anything good and noble and powerful has never been done easily, and that's why we are on this together."

"Anything good and noble and powerful has never been done easily, and that's why we are on this together."

versus them" mentality. Rather, Williams encourages professional handshake greetings (in pandemic free times) between all members of the CDOC community, and relationships and interpersonal skills that will translate into free society. He states that to hinder this change, or fail to achieve these developments, would be completely detrimental to his overall goal. Williams was also asked about the population who may not care about or believe in the culture shift. He quickly responded, "Do you like

the "knuckleheads" — as he likes to call them — about the nonsense and negative effects of not caring has on family and friends of our community. "Why involve them?" He asks, adding "Do your own time, don't involve them." Speaking to those believing in the push for "normal," the Director urges patience and leadership. It is the responsibility and calling of the "believers" to create new ways and positive relationships across all lines and prove the "unbelievers" wrong. Williams

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The Inside Report is a DOC-wide newspaper, partnering with DU PAI (University of Denver Prison Arts Initiative) that will provide you with relevant, inspiring, and entertaining information. Also included will be creative arts that pertain to your life both inside prison and while on parole.

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The Inside Report
 P.O. Box 999
 Canon City, CO. 81215

One Fight, One Mission



Photo courtesy of William Connolly / SCF

BY TREVOR PAUL JONES / FCF

Having served his country in the U.S. Army, been deployed for three tours in Operation Enduring Freedom, William Connolly has seen the best and worst of the world, things which most of us never will, nor would ever want to see.

He is familiar with confusion, trauma, high stress and intense situations. Returning from service was not so much a “homecoming,” as it was another world he would now have to engage. He came back from tour, far from the man he was when he left. The family he came home to felt like strangers, and to them he felt like a stranger too. In his words, “The effects of war don’t fall on just our troops who return, but to their families and society.”

Veterans are returning home in waves from our nation’s longest wars. For a myriad of reasons, some eventually get incarcerated. In Colorado, nearly 1,400 veterans are currently incarcerated. Nationally, there are about 200,000 veterans in prison.

The burden of two decades of war—which accounts for approximately 7,000 dead and more than 50,000 wounded—has been largely sustained by 1% of the population. Adding to the stress and gravity of the situation, 2019 marks the first year someone born after 9/11 will be eligible to enlist in the armed forces, potentially to serve in Afghanistan or another theater in the global war on terror. Never before in our history has an American been able to fight in a war that is older than they are.

Service left a deep mark in Connolly’s psyche. Reality can slip and shift for those like Connolly whose daily experiences consisted of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and firefights month after month, year after year. On Christmas Eve 2009, Connolly’s group was ferrying a soldier to the airport for a two-week R&R (rest and relaxation). Their group was hit by an IED as they passed through an area between an Iraqi police department and an Iraqi Army Checkpoint known notoriously as the “Widow Maker.” No sights or sounds; he was out—the only survivor.

Survivor is a strong word. Connolly woke up in Walter Reed National Military Medical Center nearly three weeks later

with shattered hips, his lower lumbar and tailbone crushed together, nine slipped disks, shattered ribs, a traumatic brain injury, and the loss of hearing in one ear. Obviously, the physical wreckage of his body was only a reflection of the damage to his heart and mind.

Attempting to get back to his life stateside was difficult and perplexing. Helping his kids with homework and washing dishes would not sync with his developed internal rhythms. Mental health hospitalizations became common. Painkillers and alcohol blurred some of the anxieties and symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and the sorrows of survivor’s guilt, but were no cure for one broken by war. Connolly realizes, “Warriors don’t just come home and reenter the life they had left behind as if they hadn’t changed. They return with a war that keeps haunting their dreams, their memories, and their behavior.”

According to the National Institute of Mental Health, 1.7 million veterans receive treatment for a variety of mental health needs, the most common being PTSD, depression and suicidal thoughts, relational conflicts, embarrassment from service related injuries, and drug and alcohol abuse. Symptoms of PTSD include shock, continued recollection of the traumatic experience, dulled responses to new experiences, sleep disorders, and more.

Traumatic Brain Injuries (TBIs) affect many veterans who have endured the horrors of war. TBI is a condition caused by the impact of external forces and can result in cognitive, physical, and psychosocial disorders.

In early winter 2015, incapacitated by substances and behind the wheel, Connolly crashed, killing one and injuring two others. He was charged with vehicular homicide and vehicular assault. Sentenced to 14 years, he was sent to Sterling Correctional Facility to begin his sentence.

While there, Connolly began to see so many veterans incarcerated, lost, alone and confused, with no purpose or mission to complete. Others had noticed the same thing. El Paso County Jail has “Warriors First,” which seeks to address the specific needs of incarcerated vets. Crowley County Correctional Facility also

created a veteran’s program. Connolly, and others in Sterling, began meeting weekly to engage each other about the issues they confront as incarcerated vets. These small communities help the men process their unique situations and find ways to not only cope, but also to reach further into the world with a new mission. “One fight, one mission. Get ‘em home, stay home.”

Connolly and several other residents pulled together and worked with the staff in Sterling to create a substantial, live-in vets program. Warden Long, Associate Warden Scherbarth, and Captain Machintosh worked with the vets to construct an early rendition of the program, and it quickly progressed into a completely new way of viewing vets in a correctional context.

Commonalities run deep for vets. Those who have been through basic training have similar experiences, thinking, and views. Comparable to their enlisted days, these men prefer to be addressed with their last names, even while in the joint. The brotherhood, camaraderie, and serviceperson sense of humor permeates their conversation—often to the dismay and disorientation of the non-initiated. For many, the heart of service lives in them forever. Communal meals, protocols, uniforms, stations, company formations (count time), gear maintenance, “boots and utes” (pants), medical calls, living units, KP duty, and tough as nails attitudes are the daily fare for those in the service.

Prisoners also have commonalities. The loss of freedom, politics, ranks, gangs, addictions and crime, all from different walks of life. They wake up, put on uniforms, and go to job assignments. Medline, chow halls, rec, pods and cellmates, authority structures, count times, and posted operational rules are the daily fare for those locked up.

Subsequently, vets in prison have overlapping commonalities. In fact, institutionalization occurs in many societies. The frightening truth is that many vets enter prison and recognize the lifestyle it necessitates. What these men and women have become accustomed to in the military can all too easily translate into the context of prison. Such adaptations become yet another burden

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Daring to Defy the Stereotype



“One Defy Colorado is a community that believes in redemption, second chances, and that all people deserve to feel that they belong.” — Stacey Putka

BY ERIC DAVIS / FMCC TREVOR JONES / FCF

For decades, Colorado State Penitentiary was a desolate dungeon of hardened and broken souls; a maze of cages built to remove 750 men from any type of human contact; a place of lost hope with no sense of community. There was a widely-held belief that it was constructed solely for the purpose of deconstructing the men buried in its steel and concrete coffins. CSP became synonymous with every negative impression of how rotten life could be inside of Colorado’s prisons.

On Tuesday, February 4, 2020, a group of 20 men currently residing at CSP couldn’t possibly see how their day equated with these stories of dread from the past. Instead, a mix of men from both the Management Control Unit and the Incentive Unit came together — along with eight peer facilitators and nineteen volunteer mentors from the free community — as they began Defy Colorado at CSP, becoming the third facility cohort. Included in the group of volunteers were individuals from Denver, Boulder, Gunnison, and Crested Butte, along with three Defy Board members. All were looking to add something to the resident’s lives. This was a far cry from the days of feeling like the State was doing all that it could to break them down. Simply mixing the MCU and Incentive residents is itself an enormous step forward. By exhibiting trust in these men, the CSP administration was encouraging them to believe in themselves and believe they had a right to take a hand in shaping their own future.

On the snowy evening prior to the event, Stacey Putka, Executive Director of Defy Colorado, along with Program Manager Ismerai “Izzy” Heep, braved the conditions to make the trip to Fremont Correctional Facility for an interview with two journalists from The Inside Report. They came together to discuss the impact Defy is having in the lives of hundreds of Colorado Department of Corrections residents. Putka and Heep were in Cañon City preparing for the event at CSP the following day.

The “kickoff” event signifies Defy’s engagement with the sixty residents at CSP. The inaugural Arkansas Valley Correctional Facility and CSP cohorts graduated a combined 78 (EITs) or Entrepreneurs-in-Training. The recent graduation at the La Vista Correctional Facility added another 30 women EITs.

These events, as well as two others at both CSP and AVCF, have brought Defy’s growing total to nearly 200 EITs. The kickoff introduces participants to the eight-month program, with its standards, expectations, and the goals of participants. “CEO of Your New Life” is the first introductory course.

Putka — who holds a Master’s degree in social work from the University of Denver, as well as a Bachelor of Science in psychology from Colorado State University — was named Executive Director January 1, 2020. She began with Defy as a volunteer at their initial CDOC event in 2017, at AVCF. She now oversees all Defy Colorado programs in CDOC. She has the reins of the vision, manages the team, and ensures that Defy has enough funding to be able to operate and fulfill their purpose. Putka expressed to us what

released. That way we can not only engage our community, but engage them with intention. We can then also start making partnerships with people who can provide us with certain post-release services.”

For those who have taken the program and have been released, Defy has post-release networking and continued planning, workshops, mentoring, and partnering with the community if the participant wants their help. Defy connects people with Cross Purpose, a training and certification center for specific job needs and requirements. Defy and the University of Denver hosted a workshop on LinkedIn for post-release EITs. They are also associated with Remerg, a web-based resource organization which helps with housing, health care, and substance abuse. Rocky Mountain Micro Finance, which specializes in helping people with lifestyle type small business starts ups,

“Defy Colorado employs a long-term collaborative approach that encourages the participants to explore their entrepreneurial spirit, while gaining useful training and education that will assist them in any business related ventures that they may encounter in their future.”

that vision entails, stating, “Our vision at Defy is to build redemptive communities, and that economic independence is a right, not a privilege. First and foremost, we build community and provide opportunities for education and growth.”

Heep began with Defy as the Post-Release Manager, and has since moved into the role of Program Manager. Heep has a Master in Child and Family Development Degree from Denver Seminary, as well as a Bachelor of Science in Psychology from Colorado State University. She is in the facilities on a weekly basis, working with the EITs, and also coordinates all of the volunteers. Her enthusiasm is evident. “We’re an inside-out approach. We engage our participants once they’ve been released,” she said, and added, “What we really try to do is start engaging that post-release (contact) prior to release. We have a post-release assessment that we have them fill out. We have the benefit that we have a team member — myself — inside on a weekly basis. So that means I get to come out and report back to Putka what our participants are looking for when they get

articles of incorporation, low interest loans and taking businesses public — is one more fascinating link in the Defy chain. Rocky’s Venture Club is a Defy resource which invests with stunning commitment to Defy participants. For those who have participated in Defy’s program but have not been released, Defy offers alumni events to keep them in community and to expand their training and keep the skills and learning of the EITs fresh.

Defy brings together remarkably diverse groups of people. Their networks include Tech Stars, a Boulder-based group which teaches people how to start businesses and has been present at every in-prison event hosted by Defy. Jason Mendelson and Brad Felds, who created the venture capital firm The Foundry Group, with over 50 people from Google, 30 people from Checkr (a background check company based in San Francisco with a second headquarters in Denver), stay at home parents, and a variety of teachers and more, are all involved and invested in the Defy program. These networks are developed solely for the purpose of encouraging the participants to

pursue their entrepreneurial dreams. Even more so, though, Putka adds, “They are saying, ‘Hey, I’m here and I believe in you.’ And that is really the thing that matters the most.”

The pride Putka has for these networks and the way they communicate worth and value is apparent, as is the joy she has for the whole endeavor. She explains, “I think that no matter who you are — whether you’re incarcerated or not — we have this thought sometimes that we have to go through life alone, and I imagine that being here it might feel like that more often than not. You don’t. There’s community, there’s volunteers, there’s people that come in and care about everyone who is here. If you want to live a more values-driven life, and change and transform — which I believe every human should be doing — don’t try and do it alone. Try and find a tribe, a community, a group of people that believe in you, and that have a common value-set; those who can help you get there.”

Those who have completed the Defy curriculum and have been released have an astonishingly low recidivism rate. The recent numbers show that graduates have a 92.8% success rate in regard to staying free. This defiance of the odds (which shows the contrast with the general recidivism rate of 47.2% over a three-year period) is what “Defy” is all about! Recognizing their success and potency, former Governor Hickenlooper declared a Defy Ventures Day in December of 2018.

Heep offered profound and thoughtful advice for CDOC residents who are looking for new paths in life. “Be very intentional about the relationships you choose. Life isn’t meant to be done on your own. Growth rarely happens when you’re by yourself. It’s not until you start saying your thoughts out loud and hearing others that all of the sudden that starts being impacted. If you’ve ever told a friend a thought that you’ve had about yourself that is way off base, you automatically see it in their face. They’re like, ‘How are you thinking this of yourself?’ You need that mirror in someone else’s eyes to change. Not only that, you can be that mirror for someone else. There’s a lot to be said about doing life in community, about doing it intentionally, and seeking out people who are going to tell you, ‘What are you thinking?’ And are interested to hear that as well — to hear what your thoughts are — because maybe it’s an awesome thought. You need someone to tell you that. Maybe you need to be told, ‘That’s a great thought, keep on that process.’”

Fair chance hiring is an initiative Defy is vigorously pursuing this year. Thirteen Denver-area executives and Governor Polis went with Defy into Arkansas Valley Correctional Facility to host a fair chance hiring event (a story covered by CBS 4 News late last year). Defy makes these connections so that businesses can effectively incorporate the hiring of men and women leaving prison. Checkr and Sage Hospitality (hotels and food services) have been their largest partners for this initiative.

For the time being, Defy is only at the three facilities mentioned. Putka explained that they want to scale the growth to best utilize their resources and provide the most opportunity to the EITs. But they are invested in the CDOC population and free society to a make real and lasting impact on the world. Learn more at www.defycolorado.org. LinkedIn, Instagram, Facebook and Twitter.

The Future, the Evolution Train, the Inmate

BY WILLIAM P. MAESTAS / AVCF

I like to think of myself as an observant and thinking type. Correct me if I am wrong, but everything does begin in the mind with a thought, so I think. I think?

As I look around and observe my environment, watch TV, read books, newspapers, and magazines, I cannot help but notice the many drastic changes going on and taking place around me, not only outside in society but around me here in prison and in our environment, in general.

Many people look at the inmate as being insignificant. That may have been true in the past but it is wrong to continue to think that way. The inmate is the very real present and not so distant future.

Even though many people take no notice of these changes taking place, as life moves forward, many people do (citizens and inmates) and I am one of them. I hope you are too.

Some changes taking place are some of the words being freely tossed around in prison these days; words like resident instead of inmate and the big word, normalization.

As much of society moves forward (young and old), getting high on recreational marijuana, still very much enjoying being drunk and out of control on alcohol living the so called “good-life” in a drug-induced haze from pharmaceuticals like OxyContin, the

inmate remains sober.

As most of society (young children included) moves forward with their faces planted into, and oh-so-dependent on their smart phones, the smart (vice free) inmate moves forward with his or her face in a textbook and/or a Holy Bible.

So, being the thinking observer that I am, I cannot not help myself from asking the question – What about the future and the inmate?

“A society should be judged not by how it treats its outstanding citizens, but by how it treats its criminals.”

Evolution can be, and is, a very strange thing depending on your perspective of it.

Who would have ever thought that evolution and prison would have come together in the same sentence for everyone to read and contemplate? It has because I have brought them together. Prison is evolving and it is creating change in us

all. Most important, it is changing the way we look at and see the inmate.

With that said, what kind of future does this prison evolution bring to the inmate? Can we, or do we, intend to drive and direct this evolution change in the inmate and the future prison system. Or, will we just let it take place and go where it will like we have in the past?

With this evolution rapidly taking place another question I have is who should have say in which way this evolution takes us? Shouldn't we expect and allow more input to come from the inmate?

As an inmate, it is my hope that we all can come together and gain control of this very fast moving train and direct it to a place that creates safety and benefits citizens, staff, and inmates as a whole.

Yes, the prison evolution train has arrived. We get on board or get left behind.

Is the inmate insignificant or is he or she turning out to be an extraordinary kind of person? Shouldn't we at the very least look into this thought and try to find the real reality to these few new questions, or am I asking too much?

Dostoyevsky once said, “A society should be judged not by how it treats its outstanding citizens, but by how it treats its criminals.”

Instead of just crime and punishment, which hasn't been working, maybe we should be thinking more along the lines of crime, evolution, and treatment.

“I think there will be skeptics...”



BY TRAVIS HAYNES / FCF

You can't tell me what's normal; you don't live here, I do! Why should we make it easier for the inmate? It's not easy for us to work here. At one time or another, have you found statements like these drilling into your mind? The billows of smoke coming from the word normalization are clogging the flow of operations in the Colorado Department of Corrections.

The Director of Prisons sparked our attention with the possibility that the Department might implement a system to build a community where both staff and residents can function better, thus ushering in a culture where reformation and transformation is the norm for all. Right now, we're caught in a cluster of confusion, resentment, and hope as we attempt to unmask this “superhero” — normalization. One thing for sure is both, staff and residents, want the crooked path made straight. But, how?

Hypothetically, would it benefit CDOC employees if normalization could look more like normalizing relations? How about breaking the cycle of indoctrination of green vs. blue? Or the aggressive mentality between some staff and residents and learning how to handle each other with human dignity? From a staff's point of

Normalization is a reform issue. Reform is a culture issue. Culture is a community issue.

view, this could be a confusing transition and not an easy walk in the park. A lot of comments, conversations, and responses might lead individuals to believe a great deal of staff are against this idea. I'd like to know if this is true and why?

The following is dialogue that took place between myself and a staff member:

TH: If normalization could water the relationships between staff and residents, possibly making prison a better work environment for you, what would it look like?

Staff: (Long pause) I don't know.

TH: You can't even imagine it?

Staff: (Another pause) Well, you have two more years, right?

TH: Yes, I do.

Staff: Well, you have time to think about that, and I got time to think about keeping you safe.

I had a chance to speak with a few other staff members about normalization and its capability of bringing in a higher work expectation for them. “How good is the worker presently? And in the near future how able is he/she to do his/her work with respect to work demands, health and mental resources?” One staff member unknowingly caused me to question whether my point of view was really objective. I felt that if it

was possible to get him to agree with the view that normalization is a better fit for staff members, as well as residents, then he needed to relieve himself of any other view that doesn't support normalization. (That's a version of self-interest on my behalf.) I then learned/decided/realized that we have to keep in mind all the elements involved in keeping order in a prison system. Safety is important for residents and staff. I was relieved to be able to receive a clear and objective view from him instead. We must also face the fact that everything has a process; people's attitudes towards change don't happen overnight, they evolve and people deserve enough time to allow a new process to emerge and then possibly redefine the way they perceive it. In order to productively coexist, we must cooperate.

“Normalization,” as the staff member understood it, can make life in prison resemble life on the outside. When an individual is released, he has a better chance at functioning in society. He continued by saying, “It's a security issue; normalization would cause staff members to lose some control over the inmates because of newfound freedoms.” Point taken, but isn't prison a controlled environment, regardless? By definition, right?

Another unexpected and interesting statement the staff member made was, “I'm for it, but it should be progressive. Starting in a high/medium facility then full blown in a minimum restricted/minimum facility.” From a security point of view that makes sense. The more you progress in your security level, the more staff are already in place and available to deal with the

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BURN-NOTICE

Burn-Notice focuses on an ongoing conversation. Ask questions regarding burning topics, and have those questions answered with blazing truth by the editorial team and its affiliates. This platform is made for your voice to be heard in debate, feedback and statement form, on topics in, and outside of the Department of Corrections. Vent, speak and follow the movement.

Peep this scenario...

A person gets mugged in front of a store, the mugger is running towards you and being chased, you recognize him from the prison you did time in. Do you stop him? If you do, are you a snitch? But I thought you were going to get out and do better? I thought the criminal mentality would be rehabilitated. I bet you would stop him if the victim was close to you. Wouldn't that also be snitching? I mean, it is all on camera after all. The burning question is this:

At what point do you draw the line between criminal/convict and regular citizen?

Submit and be heard

We anxiously await your voice on this topic. Please refer to “Volume 1 Issue 2 - Burn Notice Reply” as the title of your response to Brandon Moss #167442 at FCF. Media release must accompany submission.

7 -Habits for John Mill

BY BRUCE NOZOLINO / FCF

I recently completed the 7-Habits On The Inside program at Fremont Correctional Facility (FCF). During this program, I found myself reflecting back on a Philosophy 101 class I took 40 years ago.

One of the (lesser known) classic philosophers is John Stuart Mill (1806-1873). He posed an interesting philosophical question: Is it better to be a human dissatisfied or a pig satisfied? This article will explore this classic philosophical dilemma, and then attempt to draw parallels to 7-Habit's principles.

First off, understand that this is a philosophical question. As such, there is no right or wrong answer. The question is designed to make you assess aspects of your own life and values – much like you did during the 7-Habits program.

Let's start off by asking what Mr. Mill meant by the term “pig satisfied”. Taking it at face value, using the literal term (“pig satisfied”), we can infer a simple life with no complexities. A pig's life consists mostly of sleeping, eating, pooping, and (occasionally) “making some bacon” when a sow wanders their way.

•Habit 1: Be proactive, or “I'm a product of my choices, not circumstances.” Do pigs make choices? Not really, their life is the epitome of circumstance.

•Habit 2: Begin with the end in mind, or live by design, not default. Do pigs

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A 12th Chance

Inspirational testimonies about the hard, beautiful, and emotional experiences trying to rebuild a marriage, and parent from within.

BY DOUGLAS L. BAKER / FCF

THE PHONE CALL

It's been three years since I'd heard her voice, six years since she said, "I love you," over eight years since I felt her touch, and in less than a millisecond I could've potentially ruined my 12th chance.

My wife and I had been separated since November of 2013. She'd been involved with another man since then. To be quite honest, our marriage was an on-again off-again endeavor since my arrest in 2011. I don't blame her, I put me in prison. I didn't ruin our marriage, I destroyed it, and subconsciously pushed her and our children into the arms of another man. Through years of growth and maturity, I hoped that she had found someone that would be able to give her the things I couldn't like stability, security, intimacy, and most importantly, someone she could trust.

As an inadvertent blessing of the "Read to the Children" (RTC) program, provided by the Colorado Department of Corrections, my wife would receive a DVD and book, play my recorded DVD for our children and watch it along with them. I never thought that, not only would the program help bridge the gap between my kids and I, but also that she would watch it as well and something magical would happen. She would see me in a different light through our children. Undeserving as I was, God answered those prayers.

She reached out, and I soon had another chance at a fulfilling life. She would later tell me "Our children want their father in their lives."

With the inadvertent help of the RTC program, I was blessed to hear her voice on the phone one February evening. Her voice was angelic and euphoric in sensation. Prison itself completely disappeared for a brief moment. I wanted so badly to blurt out and say, "I love you! I'm so sorry! Please forgive me! Give us another chance! I'm not the same man I used to be! I've changed!" But, as the words, "I'm not the same man I used to be! I've changed!" echoed in my head, my train of thought stopped. I knew that what I was thinking, and wanted to say, were words that I had time and time again spoken. They were words that I thought I was speaking with solemn sincerity, only to figure out later they were empty and without form. I was full of it then, and every time previous to that.

My next thought was crucial: "The very next words that come out of my mouth could quite possibly be the last for many more years to come. Be the man you are now. Speak from your heart and your head. Don't blurt out anything in some distorted train of thought thinking that you're going to be Rico Suave and sweep her and the children off their feet, thinking that they will magically forget about the last eight plus years. You're about to say the same thing as the last 11 times. Haven't you learned anything in these last years?"

"SHUT UP AND LISTEN TO WHAT SHE IS SAYING! OPEN YOUR EYES TO THE OPPORTUNITY THAT IS BEING PRESENTED TO YOU! DON'T MAKE THE SAME MISTAKES!"

The conversation didn't last as long as I would've liked it to, but it was the beginning of many more beautiful ones to come. It was the first time in my life that I just shut the hell up and listened. It was also the first time in my life I really thought about what I was going to say before I said it. It was one of the hardest things I've had to do, not to just yell out how I feel in order to make me feel better. I had a ton of fear in my heart that day. I'd never done anything like that before: engage in active and effective communication with her.

We now work TOGETHER, everyday, on getting to know who we are as a 'new couple.'

It was so easy. All I had to do was listen, be selfless, and shut up. Sometimes, that's the hardest thing for anyone to do, whether they're in prison or not. When we speak now, if a thought comes in my mind, I pause and think about what I'm about to say. I question how she might possibly receive it and consider my tone of voice.

I check myself before I say anything and ask myself, "What is the purpose for getting ready to say what I want to say?" I've had to explain to her that the reason for my pauses in our conversation is because of my effort to think before I speak, and you know what... as cliché as it may sound, it works. Sometimes we all need to just shut up from time to time.

The Incredible True Story of How Yoda and the Cheshire Cat Helped Me Get Out of Prison

BY JOHN RED CLOUD / CTCF

Imagine a hospital for a second. Depending on your experience with hospitals, your perception can be quite extreme. Maybe hospitals are cesspools of germs and disease; a place full of suffering and death. Another may see a place where people go to heal and get well; a place where the miracle of life unfolds. I encountered this Jekyll and Hyde perception when I began asking people about halfway houses. Mostly, it's the doomsday warnings: "It's a set-up for failure." Or, "They're just making money off you." And my favorite, "It's a bunch of bulls**t." I can't wrap my head around that. If being in the community is a bunch of bulls**t, SIGN ME UP! Believe it or not, some guys prefer prison to community. The opt to waive community and roll the dice at parole. Not me. Some freedom is better than no freedom.

All convicts have stories about how they got here. Equally diverse is what we are doing to get out. This may depend on how much time you got. It also depends on what it means to be "out." My definition is simple: NOT IN PRISON. Anything that is not prison has got to be better than this. Case in point: community corrections, a.k.a. the "halfway house." Why should you put in for the halfway house? Why do anything? That is free will at its best. Remember in "Alice in Wonderland," when she first meets the Cheshire Cat?

"If no mistake you have made, yet losing you are. A different game you should play."

—Yoda

She's at a fork in the road and asks him which path she should take. He asks, "Where are you trying to go?" She responds, "I don't know." "Well then," he simply tells her, "it doesn't matter."

In this warped "Wonderland" called prison, you have to figure out where you want to go. One path can lead you to a halfway house or parole. The other path leads you from write-ups, to orange pants, maybe a stay in restricted housing, followed by loss of good time, and straight past your parole eligibility to your mandatory release date. We all know parole is no guarantee, but there is no better way to shoot yourself in the foot than by taking the wrong turn down the path of self-destruction. How many guys do you know who got paroled on their first try? I have talked to more guys than I can remember who said, "Screw community," and did roll the dice with parole only to be "recommenced" to transition through community corrections. Back to square one.

Several months before you are "community eligible," put in

some work. Sign up for open labs in Pre-Release for starters. You can create a rough draft of your community referral and have it typed. Find out exactly what the Pre-Release instructors can do to help. Community placement is not a guarantee. You will be evaluated by factors such as: your offense, institutional conduct, C-TAP score, program compliance, and community support. Halfway houses are proven to help bridge the gap between the false realities of prison and the pro-social expectations of responsible citizenship. Everything you do is documented in DOC, whether you are getting write-ups, or earning your GED. No matter how far away you are from community eligibility, now is the time to start building your résumé.

What you perceive the halfway house "to be," will shape how you approach it. It's either a place to get out for a few months and taste freedom before getting regressed, or it's a chance to get back on your feet and use the resources to make a successful transition back into the community. Halfway houses are not for everyone. Maybe you prefer living in a bathroom with another man. To each their own. As long as staying in prison is the game, you can never win. Play a different game. Give community a chance. You're still in prison if you get denied. I made no mistakes in prison. Parole still set me back. I took Yoda's advice. I put in for community. I was accepted to the halfway house. Now I'm waiting for a bed.

Creating Hope

BY JOY PHELAN / LVCF

There is chaos happening in the world, a global pandemic changing normal activities for everyone and our lives will never be exactly the same. As they say at HopefortheDay.org, "it's okay to not feel okay" and it's imperative that we, as a community, recognize the signs of stress, anxiety and depression in ourselves and those surrounding us.

In his book, "What to Do When You Don't Know What to Do: Discouragement and Depression," Dr. Henry Cloud defines depression as being "disengaged and disconnected from...others. It is as if some vital part of you is lost and frozen in time." Reconnecting with others can help you feel better but that can be challenging with stay at home orders, social distancing, modified operations and lockdowns, whether you are incarcerated or simply safer at home by choice and governor order.

Warning signs of distress could

be a change in eating or sleeping habits, activities, routine, altered communication, appearance, or hygiene practices. There is a damaging stigma attached with mental health needs and, as a society, we need to work on reducing that unfavorable connotation. Proactive prevention is the idea of beginning a dialogue on mental health needs before negative impact arises.

People manage stress or anxiety in a wide variety of ways: journaling, talking, coloring, meditation, deep breathing, physical activity and even medication are all valid coping mechanisms. Methods works for one may or may not work for someone's friends, family, coworkers or significant other. Please practice positive self-care: drink plenty of water, get enough sleep, shower regularly, physical activity as normal, get small things completed, take medications as prescribed and don't make any emotionally

charged decisions rashly. Accept people as they are and don't be hesitant to request help if you are feeling a little bit off. Respect the dignity of the individual if you are asked to provide support.

In his book, "The Four Agreements," Don Miguel Ruiz offers four principles for transforming attitudes:

Be impeccable with your word – say what you mean and mean what you say

Don't take anything personally – it's not always about you

Don't make assumptions – give as much grace as you would like to receive

Always do your best – your integrity matters

These values remind us all that we have way more in common than we think. Please remember that you are not alone and we will get overcome adversity and tough times together.

One Mission

Continued from 3

and hindrance for incarcerated vets to overcome as they unravel the psychic knots that have entangled them.

It is these shared experiences the founders of the Sterling Veteran's Program (housed in Unit 32) explored in order to craft something that contributes meaningfully to the treatment and rehabilitation of vets as they serve their correctional sentences.

Vets are accustomed to routines and structures, so the program incorporates these in layers to help people make sense of their days. People with the various struggles of drug addiction, alcohol abuse, PTSD, and anxiety disorders along with physical injuries and disabilities need the extra support of communities and programs designed to assist their recovery and equilibrium. Everyone wants to be with others who may understand them. All of us also want to successfully transition back into free society.

The veteran's program is advancing these needs and desires by forming live-in pods and units for veterans and for those deemed "Patriots" (non-military residents who wish to both honor the vets' service and glean the many virtues of the culture which is created in these organizations). Working in collaboration with staff, teachers, and volunteers, as well as incorporating the vast resources and talents in their own population, the vets work through anger management, Why Try?, substance abuse and treatment programs, victims impact classes, and of course the ubiquitous 7 Habits program. Currently these classes are holding a couple of positions to fill with vets. These efforts are geared toward examining and healing the mental habits which have become instinctual for those trained so thoroughly as service people, as well as the damages acquired through the harsh experiences they've endured in that service.

When the participants enter Unit 32 they take an oath, swearing to live to the highest standards of conduct and be the best versions of themselves they can be, for one another, their families, and their county. The atmosphere is one in which everyone is trying to improve themselves and each other. Gardens, a mini-yard, and murals add to the ambiance which the participants find conducive to correction and healing. These touches offer activities and hobbies to the vets and tends more toward rehabilitation



Courtesy of SCF

than the beige and concrete that engulfs prisons. In the garden the vets can get their hands in the soil and work toward the production of life in the delicate plants.

"The program gives us an outlook, something to work on and focus on, away from drugs, to focus on the good and know what we're about," says Jose Madrid, who has lived in the program for about a year. Upon leaving the service veterans can feel discarded, and long for that devotion and purpose for which they left home. For people who found that purpose in the service, and who have felt it lapse—either in discharge or ruined in incarceration—this program strives to recreate that meaning and calling. Working to create, to build, to protect, and to fulfill obligations is in the blood of these vets, and the program renews opportunities for people to strive toward these aims.

The programs of Unit 32 work to both rehabilitate and enrich veterans, as well as to prepare them for parole, resentencing or halfway house applications, and transition plans. The time, opportunity and resources are given to members to work through their various challenges, blind spots and personal needs. It enables them to be ready not only to face the fears and challenges of the steps toward release and freedom, but strengthens them for successful futures in the free world. Astonishingly, the success rate for being released on parole after these preparations is over 95%!



Courtesy of SCF

Daryl Ridgell, who waived his community corrections opportunity to see the program implemented in other facilities, believes this program offers a chance for people to still serve and give back. Jackie Smith says that the program is a win-win for CDOC and vets, and by extension, all of us. He notes "vets have certain special needs, as well as opportunities. DOC is helping provide for these and in return DOC gets guys who are looking to invest in the lives of others."



Courtesy of SCF

Veterans interested in the program need only apply and provide their DD-214. Everyone is welcome since, as Madrid says, "we bleed the same blood and there is an equality amongst those who've served." The other divisions prisoners know too well are covered over by the shared service veterans have. "We work with our brothers. Life in the military itself breaks down walls," says Ridgell, adding that "incarcerated veterans can create unity, and a new community."

They're supposed to be there. We have to do our just dues, we're held to the same principles we protected."

The position of these laws and the great symbol of them (the American Flag) is ceremonially honored in Unit 32. The Color Guard (a group of people selected for raising and lowering of flag) performs its duties with military regularity and pride. To honor those killed in action, or who are missing in action, they practice leaving a seat open at shared tables, an exercise known as the "Place at the Table." This vacancy is, according to Veteran Affairs, "reserved to honor our missing loved ones, our missing comrades in arms, and veterans who are not with us." There is a deep love for the pageantry and the ceremonies, which imputes dignity to the participants, not to mention the spectators.

While still facing their own struggles, the men of Unit 32 work to bring the best into the lives of all of the people they can touch. Connolly and the rest do not take Unit 32 or their lives for granted and believe "each day is precious—take the best and make the best. We believed we truly helped in the service; that a service really was provided for our country and for those in which we served. We saw real, deep and tragic poverty and conditions in some of the places we served. These things motivate us still."

Future articles will feature the lives and efforts of these and other veterans, and the expansion of veteran programs into other sectors of CDOC.



Courtesy of SCF

Applicants are accepted no matter how long or short their time in the service. According to Connolly "Even if you were hit by a truck on your first day of basic training, you're welcomed into Unit 32."

During an interview with several of the members of the Sterling program the men were asked about the possible conflicting feelings that may arise from being incarcerated by the country they served and in several cases for which they fought. It was obvious the men had considered this paradox, but all agreed that breaking the law requires accountability, and in a sense, they are living examples of the rights and laws which they fought to preserve and promote. Joel Market, a resident and founder of the newly formed veteran's program unit at FCF says starkly: "We made mistakes; the answer is 'are we willing to fix it?' Are we willing to make amends for it, to account for it? We should try to better ourselves. If we don't, then we are missing the purpose. The rights we defended worked in our incarceration. Those rules are in place and you have to have the right mindset when you're held accountable for breaking them.

We helped put those laws in place.



Importance of Art Inside

BY JOSEPH T. MCGILL / FCF

I believe that all people are creative. Some people will deny this when they look at a painting done by one of the greats saying, “I could never do that.” The thing is, that painting isn’t yours. That painting came from someone else’s creative soul.

Art is the expression of something that you are passionate about. That passion is expressed in many creative ways that aren’t isolated to people that can draw, paint, sculpt, write a beautifully crafted poem or short story, or who have an angelic voice they sing with. No, creativity is something that is done daily, by everybody. Some perform in front of people by giving a speech, like on a baseball or football field, or even in the way teachers pass on their knowledge to a child or a follower. Each of those performances is a creation from that person, unique to that person. Take Michael Jordan as an example, what he did with a basketball in his hand was nothing short of a masterpiece, being performed in front of

millions of people every time he walked onto the court. Even Jesus Christ was an artist using parables to teach, and it’s still a way that shocks the world today.

Whichever art form you practice, the most critical part is that every act of creativity is important, especially to those that are residents of a detention facility. Being able to create gives you the ability to escape the confines of the cell walls and leave an impression on the people that view your masterpiece; an impression that could change the very core of what that person believes. And in changing that one person, you have just changed the world. Don’t stifle your art form’s flame. Don’t let it die thinking that this isn’t the place to express yourself, for then you are just killing a part of who you are. No, we are meant to shine, every single one of us. Pursue your masterpiece.

Thank you to the University of Denver Prison Art’s Initiative in giving the men and women in the Colorado Department of Corrections the opportunity to strive for their masterpieces.

Nire – Part 1

BY RYAN J. KRUEGER / AVCF

A seemingly endless rain drummed a steady rhythm against the hood of Nire’s cloak, the heavy droplets collecting along the brim before forming tiny rivulets that eventually ran down the sides to her shoulders, spilling onto the forest floor below. Despite that it hindered her movement somewhat, Nire was glad for the cloak. The supple, leather wrap kept her mostly dry, a bit warmer than she would have been without it, and it helped her to blend in better with her environment.

In spite of the rain and the near complete darkness of the moonless night, Nire’s elven vision allowed her a decent enough view of the forest around her. She crouched low near a tree, motionless, surveying the area around her for any sign of the enemy. She watched and listened, but all was still and quiet, the wildlife having sought refuge from the rains. If she weren’t on scouting duty perhaps she too would have been tucked into a nice, warm bit of shelter somewhere, but she was on point, scouting for a recon force not far behind her. As such, she needed to endure the cold, wet night if for no other reason than it was her duty to do so. The recon squad was relying on her. She moved out.

For more than two hours Nire made her way through the dark forest, each step taking her nearer to her objective. The sodden ground made moving silently easy enough and she slowly picked her way through the trees, keeping to the shadows. As she crept ahead, always sure to keep the road in sight from her vantage point in the tree line above, she continued to scan her surroundings for any sign that something was amiss. And, of course, to make sure that her passage had not been noticed.

A nearly imperceptible sound, and a slight flicker of movement ahead, stopped Nire in her tracks. She raised her crossbow, looked down the sights, and slowly scanned the source. It took only seconds for her to identify the culprit. The dark silhouette of an owl sat perched on a tree branch just ahead. It didn’t seem to have noticed her though and, as she watched, the nocturnal hunter seemed concerned only with finding a meal, scanning the forest floor for

some unwary bit of prey.

Nire slowly approached, closing the distance without difficulty, curious to see how close she could get to the predator before she was spotted. The hunter hunting the hunter. It took only moments for her to get within range. If she wanted to take a shot at the bird she could have, but something about the situation seemed off. The small hairs on the back of Nire’s neck and on her arms raised and a shiver coursed down her spine. Again she froze, and slowly she scanned the area, being careful to move only her eyes.

As she did, time seemed to slow. Even the rain seemed to fall more slowly, each individual droplet flashing as it passed before her eyes. It was then that she noticed how quiet it was. There was no sound, not even that of the rain on the leaves above. She glanced back to where she knew the owl sat perched and was shocked to find the bird staring directly at her, the creature’s eyes glowing a preternatural soft-blue.

“No!” Nire thought as the realization hit her. She reached for the stone tied tightly at the base of her neck but movement seemed slowed, lethargic, and as she grasped it, pressed it to her throat, she whispered, “Ambush!” But there was no sound when she spoke. Nire tried again, louder this time, but she heard nothing when she tried to speak through the magical stone, trying to alert her allies that they were walking into an ambush. Nire tried to turn to run, to somehow make it back to her allies, to warn them before it was too late, but she couldn’t move her feet. She was locked in place!

How could she have allowed herself to be fooled so easily? How could she have not noticed?

How could she have been so stupid? These thoughts and more raced through her mind. She’d walked right into a trap and now she couldn’t escape! Nire tried desperately to move but it seemed the harder she tried, the more paralyzed she became. Nire tried to calm her thundering heart, tried to clear the panic from her mind, but it was no use. She couldn’t even look away from the owl, her eyes fixed on its gaze, mesmerized. If she didn’t figure a way out of this, and soon, her friends would certainly walk straight into an ambush. Straight to their deaths...

Freedom

BY FRED HILL / FCF

Freedom is a word that’s misused when it rolls off our tongue, Many men have been hung, a myriad of songs have been sung.

This portion is for my convicts, my brothas, and my fam,
If you think you’re free, then why don’t you give a damn?
The chains of bondage have been broken a long time ago,
But there’s still so many things that we need to outgrow.

The shackles are gone, but our minds are still enslaved,
County jails and prisons are overcrowded
because of the way we behaved.

We’re so myopic we can’t see past our nose,
Now it’s us, spraying each other with a fire hose,
Or disrespectful words, or bullets from an AK,

Nobody’s listening ‘cause everybody’s got something to say.
In the meanwhile, we got mass killin’s and school shootin’s; tell me
when is all this gonna end?

Now we got this guy in the White House saying, “Let’s make
America great again.”

When I first heard that, I couldn’t believe how it sounded,
‘Cause these are the very people that change the laws on how
America was founded.

Yet I’m the one that’s censored, I can’t say how I feel,
We got parades, lawless acts, and the police have a right to kill.
What’s crazy is, we’re teaching our kids that God is not cool,
Our teachers are silenced; they can’t even mention him in school.

If we’re not teaching love, then by default we’re teaching hate,
When I was young I use to love singing that song by
Katherine Lee Bates.

“O beautiful, for spacious skies, for amber waves of grain...”

In this day and age, I’m still treated inhumane.
America! America! I love you but you don’t love me back,
Is it because I’m one of those thirty-three
shades that make you attack?

Or should I state the fact that it doesn’t matter what you say,
Every day I pray, that I won’t be the prey,
Or stray from the way, and use my fists to repay.

Let my yea be yea even if you betray,
Everything’s alright as long as Mama’s okay.

Today is the day that I won’t let you say,
This man right here lived his life as a cliché.

Jewell

BY JERRY BLAIR / LCF

Drowning in a heartache, the story of my life, her
green eyes could see right through and set my soul on fire.

She could stand alone through wind and cold,
like a beacon in the night,

and then, my jewell, I’d run to you lest someone take my life.

It’s hard to think of something anytime or anywhere,
could take my breath away when moonlight
shimmers off her hair.

Now my jewell, I dream of you,
still the heartbeat in my chest.

I’ll be your fool like a bell rings true from a
Sunday morning church.

I’ll be yours forever, have it tattooed on my chest,
in a flaming heart, a ribbon that would be there till my death.

Then my jewell, I’d run to you and crash upon your feet,
then sink into the ocean and wait there in the deep.

My heart would last forever, made of solid stone,
broken in the ocean, at the bottom, all alone,
I will wait for you to notice that I am the only one.

My Mom

BY TRAVIS HAYNES / FCF

My mom was a mother when I needed one
I couldn't imagine what it felt like
looking at our hungry faces, and knowing that
no food on the table was not an option.
I couldn't understand how your heart feels, to do
cartwheels,
Seeing a son going downhill, when his destiny is uphill,
But it is not real till it's real to him.
You met with principals, talked with teachers
Suspensions.
You wrote letters, sent pictures, talked to parole officers,
Disappointments.
You loved me better than...
Doctors appointments, prayed for me with oil
Anointed.
Took my temperature, took pictures.
My mother was a mother when I needed one.
I love her
I don't deserve her,
I adore her,
I honor her.
I'll grieve with her,
Speak of her, think of her,
Pray for her that God will cover her,
Call her up and prosper her.
I can't owe her,
Can't repay her, I don't deserve her
I honor her, I adore her
I'm pleased with her, I'll pray with her.
One things for sure.
I look like her, talk like her.
Try to be strong like her, Stay firm like her,
Turn like her, change like, stay young like her.
Become like her.
That's far-fetched one thing's for sure,
that's my mom,
and my mom is a mother when I need one.

Proud to Call You Mom

An Uh-nonymus! Collection

BY ANONYMOUS

I'm proud to call you mom,
Because you stand and call me son.
And by my side you continue to stand,
Whether the fight's been lost or won.
I'm proud to call you mom,
'Cause you're always there when I call.
And you always seem to forgive me,
No matter how bad I'm at fault.
I'm proud to call you mom,
'Cause in your faith you stand firm.
And you're patient when you teach,
Because you know that I can learn.
I'm proud to call you mom,
Because your heart's always been open;
And overflowing with encouragement;
Always giving me something to hope in.
I'm proud to call you mom,
Because you've seen me at my worst;
And always tried to remain to strong;
Even though deep inside it hurts.
I love you with all my heart;
When it's rough, you keep me calm.
And it's all these things about you,
That makes me proud to call you mom.

BOOK REVIEW

Green Eggs and Ham

BY RICHARD JOHNSON / FCF

If you are in the mood for a real "Nail-Biting" book, one that is authored by a PhD, and is commonly described as a "Suspenseful Page Turner", then look no further than Green Eggs and Ham. The doctor himself, Theodor Seuss Geisel, a grandson of German immigrants, has created scenarios in which the unnamed main character has no choice but to fight out both an external battle with Sam I Am, but also a deep rooted internal battle with his personal disdain and disgust for protein in the form of green eggs and ham. Never before has a vegan had to argue so intently and stand his ground so firmly through a litany of locations in which to eat this poultry and pork dish. Sam I Am, who is a yellow-y drawn antagonist, only wishes to share this delicacy with his buddy, who is clearly not getting the nourishment his protein-lacking body needs to grow. Mr. I Am offers him a place in a box for safety; he offers him a plate with a fox for companionship. He makes available this dish to eat both here, as Sam puts it, as well as there, but it is not received anywhere. This build up continues to grow over the course of the novel as many other venues are made available to dine on this carb-less entrée. All I can say is that religion hadn't featured much in my life until I got to the last page and saw Heaven appear by what was written by Theodor himself. My recommendation is that you will like this book in a box, with a fox, in a boat, wearing a coat, you will like it here, and you will like it there. You will like it anywhere. Just be ready for the emotional roller coaster you will embark on. If you manage to survive this book, then I encourage you to check out Dr. Seuss's other manuscripts: One Fish – Two Fish, Horton Hears a Who, Oh the Places You Will Go, and of course the drama filled breaking and entering book, The Cat In The Hat. Enjoy!

Time to Discover

BY MONSEL DUNGEN / BVCF

There was a time when my mind had its freedom to wander aimlessly through the days, to travel to distant lands, or soar among the clouds and to hold imaginary lovers through the night. But now things have changed and it seems my mind has been detained and can never get too far from thoughts of you...

I was always afraid to tell you, with movements or even words, about the passion I was born with but feared. I kept it covered with jackets, long sleeves, pendants and masks. Hidden in journals, secret poems, day fantasies, dark night dreams and a quiet heart. And when I dared share it, I camouflaged it with dry-lip lectures and several more masks, and a purity so stern that the feminists would have etched them in stone for all women to read and study...

Last night, I conquered all my fears, and in doing so

I put out waving flags, smoking flares, road signs, and flashing arrows pointing you to the secret places where my passion waited feverishly only for you. With closed eyes you discovered secret places I never even knew existed...

Now life can frequently be difficult especially for such a fragile heart, and sometimes it was bruised and a few times it was even broken. But time healed the wounds and its beauty increased. Anyone who is willing to listen can hear what is really being said even when no words are being spoken...

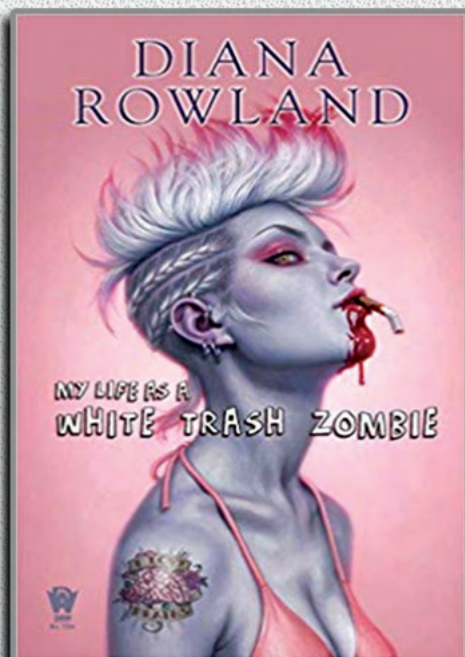
For discovery comes with exploring the oneness of falling in love for it is like getting hit by a huge truck yet you're not fatally wounded. Just sick to your stomach, high one minute, low the next. Hot, cold, forever lustful, full of hope and enthusiasm with a momentary depression that wipes you out. It is also not being able to remove the smile from your face and loving with a mad passionate

intensity that makes you feel ten years younger...

You know in the midst of nothing I see your wanting face. Your smile brightens the abyss, your eyes show me the meaning of being, while your essence gives off a softness that eases all. In the darkness I hear you speak my name and your voice is like a favorite show song, you know like that one you never get tired of hearing. Having you positioned in my mind has given me my own heaven, for Allah (God) knew exactly what I needed foremost, it's no wonder why you can tolerate my madness...

Now this revealing scroll is meant to awaken the hardest of the hard to a realization that you and the so-called soft are one and the same. For when it is all said and done you are going to have to ask and answer yourself one very important question and that is "Was this script meant for the discovery of your significant other, or for the discovery of yourself?"

You decide...



Book Review: My Life as a White Trash Zombie

BY MARK HORTON / FCF

I love to read, and I love to share and encourage others to read! As I looked back on what I read this past year I marked several books that I wanted to share with *The Inside Report* community. Should I first share what inspired me? Educated me? Challenged me? What I kept coming back to was the deep-fried-butter-at-the-state-fair of books. Something that sounds so trashy, corny, and generally unhealthy for you that I fake shame when I recommend it. And that is Diana Rowland's *My Life As A White Trash Zombie*.

Sounds bad, right? The cover even looks like those books that our librarians look on with disdain. *But I promise you*, this book is freakin' amazing! On the surface it's about a woman in her 20's, Angel, who is in the throes of active addiction. Drinkin', druggin', and sleepin' her life to the brink of death daily. Then one night after an over dose and a car wreck she awakes in a hospital with no memory, no scars, and no idea that she has turned into a zombie. As a zombie, Angel, discovers a newfound outlook on life. She matures and becomes a productive citizen, albeit, a zombie citizen.

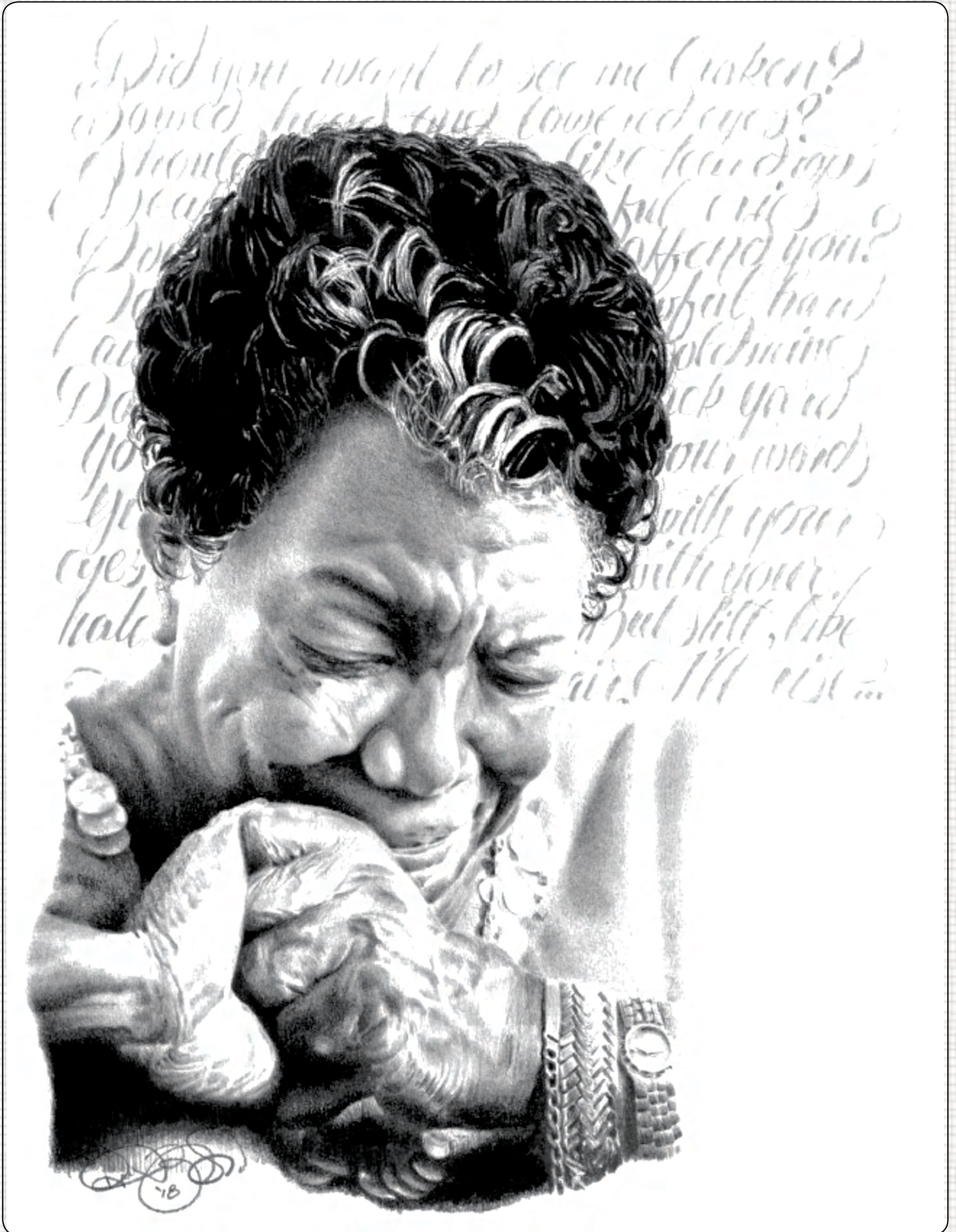
From death comes life! And that is the underlying story of hope that I identify with and hope that you can, too. For me, a life of addiction came the death of incarceration. From the death of incarceration came a *Life* of sobriety, sanity, and safety.

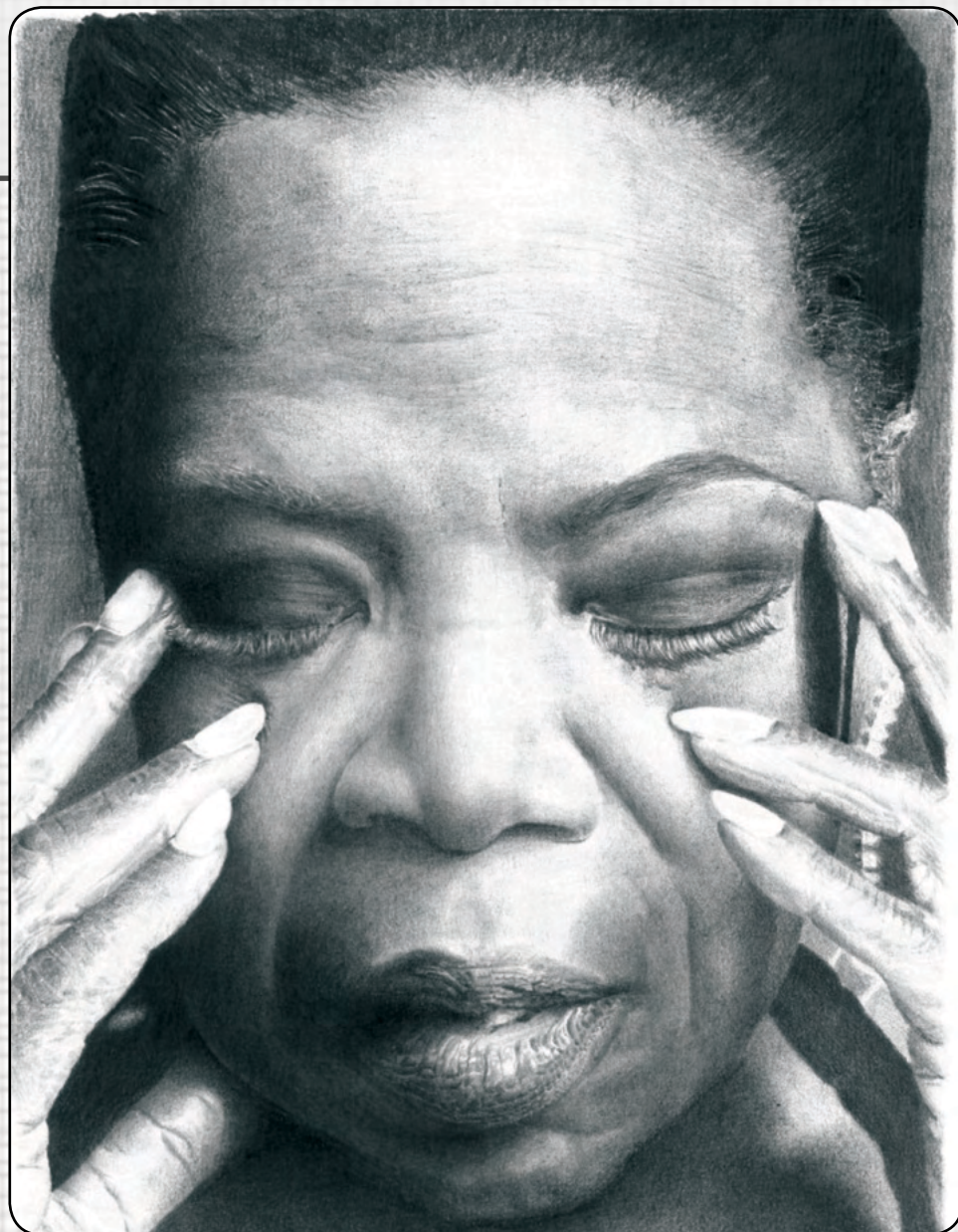
This is a book that sticks with the reader. An overwhelming sense of hope. Hope for the addict that still suffers. Hope for the addict in recovery. And for me personally, hope for the girl I loved and left behind when I came to prison.

Robert Zeigler

/FCF

Born July 16, 1970 Perry, Georgia





*"Graphite artwork harkens back to the days of black and white TV."
~Zeigler*

"From my perspective, it brings about a classical approach to the present, as I strive to capture the feeling within the projects through the various degrees of H's and B's. I find myself slowly going back to the simpler times of my life when there was less stress and drama."
~Zeigler





BY LYSANDER HARVEY / FCF

The Rise of an Airness: A Jordan Shoe Theory



What's your favorite pair of J's? The red, white, and black 4's? The black and white 9's? Maybe the gray on black 13's? Even though it's been over 30 years, Michael Jordan, legendary shooting guard for the Chicago Bulls is still king. A legacy which was created with two dimensions. One being the intensely passionate NBA superstar, who propelled himself into the position of G.O.A.T. (Greatest of All Time), winning six straight championship rings. Second being the re-imagined kicks that revolutionized the sneaker game. It's difficult to speak about one without the other; together they generate a flair that is timeless.

So why do people obsess over these Air Jordans? They're built for performance and style. He partnered with Nike in 1985 and created a buzz when he got fined up to \$5,000 every time he wore the first pair. The hype would catapult the brand into history. Through the late 80's and 90's, MJ became the most written about athlete. He dazzled audiences with his silky smooth

fade away jumpers, and unbelievable buzzer beaters. Jordan became must-see-TV, his extraordinary trend became a legendary epidemic. Fans would eat it up; virtually everyone wanted a pair of Jordans. Back then, if you considered yourself a hooper, you had to have a pair of J's or you weren't official.

Jordan successfully captured the minds of fans with the movie Space Jam, and memorable catchphrases like, "It must be the shoes", a mantra kids were taking literally. Young ballplayers genuinely believed if they strapped a pair of Air Jordans on, they would magically become better. And in a sense, some players did have more game just from the unwavering belief they possessed. J's would sweep the standard basketball shoes quickly, making him incredibly famous, raising his status to Basketball god. Whole basketball teams would buy a pair of matching Air Jordans so they could represent his greatness. To this day, if you ask around, everyone seems to agree that Jordans were the shoe to have. 7-Habits core group member, Andrew Kachik stated, "If you wore a pair of Jordans on the basketball court, you wouldn't be the last one picked up."

The Chicago Bulls' Hall of Famer's influence could not only be boxed in hardwood. As an African American man, young black kids were able to identify with Michael Jordan. Born February 1, 1963, from humble beginnings, it was easy to admire a man who made out of poverty to stardom. MJ provided inspiring hope that you could be accepted and "be like Mike." He became the hero you had to know everything about, and follow all his actions. But to say he only affected the black community would be a huge understatement. He would go beyond racial affairs, and reach heights only legends have. Connecting the vast demographics,

as well as the social economic classes, Jordan broke through barriers. FCF resident, Gregory Freiling, growing up in a white, middle-class family was self-described as an Air Jordan superfan, expressed, "If you're a hip family you wore J's. My dad wears J's; I wear a suit with J's." Jordan inspired standards which made it okay to be a part of something bigger than one's self. The brand invoked strangers who commonly held love of Jordans to play better, be better, and built self-confidence.

The brand wouldn't miss a beat after

MJ provided inspiring hope that you could be accepted and "be like Mike." He became the hero you had to know everything about, and follow all his actions.

Jordans NBA retirement. The traction of his awe-inspiring career had already pushed itself into full effect. Jordans success is largely due to the culture that was created around his mega celebrity status. His name would appear in an average of 100 newspaper articles a day during his electrifying NBA era. The moment "His Airness" stepped off the court and into a suit, he and his strategic business partners created a culture that was on another level. According to Advertising Age, he "virtually singlehandedly created the modern sports marketing industry

and transformed the role of celebrity endorsers." This unimagined culture allowed for people to not necessarily ever have had to pick a ball up to thoroughly enjoy the variety of Air Jordans. You could wear Jordans because they were incredibly comfortable, they went marvelously with your new outfit, or simply because you needed a pair of fashionable shoes that would allow you to fit into most social groupings. If you had on a pair of J's you were saucy; if you had on a pair of J's you were socially accepted; if you had on a pair of J's you were official. Air Jordans dominated this generation in regards to shoes. His brand was historic, giving birth to a culture that would become the inspiration to hit songs, as well as inspiring fresh gear from bags to eye glasses to fragrances. A plethora of youth camps, sport teams and events are endorsed by his mind boggling brand.

Jordan's Jumpman logo, resembling his legendary dunk from the free throw line, became the symbol of confidence for millions of inspired believers. Jordan once said, "I've never had my vertical leap measured, but sometimes I think about how high I get up. I always spread my legs when I jump high, like on my Rock-a-baby, and it seems like I've opened a parachute, like, that slowly brings me back to the floor." The brand earns a whopping estimated 3.9 billion dollars a year. What more can I say? "It must be the shoes."

In today's modern era, it's rare not to have heard of Jordan, whether it's basketball, activism, or business. Still, it's the shoes which continue his legacy as a global phenomenon. "Growing up, shoes were always about status, and Jordans were the top pair you could have," said Jesse Wilkinson, a DU PAI leader at FCF. His shoes represent a statement and sometimes a pair can speak louder than words.

Workout of the Month

BY BRANDON MOSS / FCF



The monthly workout routine can be posted or "challenged" by a member of our IR community (staff or resident). Each workout will have the ability to gather times and scores so that we can feature top contenders around the CDOC community in upcoming Inside Report issues. Bragging rights are the prize!

This is your "Workout of the Month."

THE WALKING DEAD

This is a workout that has gained a lot of attention in recent months and is 100% sure to leave you sore, tired, and most of all, fulfilled. Keep your technique strong and don't break form for effort. Leave it all out there and most of all, good luck and enjoy.

FOR TIME

225LB Deadlift 225 Times

Scaled versions include lower reps with matching sets.

Prescribed woman's weight is 155LB, same reps.

Submit your scores for a chance to be posted as a top athlete

Look for the WOM emoji "Swolie," and feel free to give feedback and opinions. Most importantly of all, submit your "challenges" on workouts and nutrition.

The Breath

BY NATE FISCHER / CTCF

Have you ever wondered how we breathe? It seems simple because we normally do it without thinking about it. But each breath you take affects your whole body. You may think that each time you breathe you are sucking air into your lungs.

Your lungs are like an accordion or a bellows: as their volume increases the pressure inside decreases. This causes the greater pressure of the outside atmosphere to force air into your lungs.

We can define breathing as: the process of taking air into and expelling it from the lungs; it is caused by the three dimensional shape change of the chest and stomach cavities. This shape change is caused by the diaphragm.

The lower edges of the diaphragm are attached to the lumbar spine, inner surfaces of ribs 6-1, and the xiphoid process of the sternum. These muscle fibers all travel upward into a dome like shape that becomes the central tendon. This tough, fibrous tendon is the anchor point for the connective tissue that surrounds the heart, lungs, and from the bottom of the abdominal organs. When the stomach cavity changes shape it is more like a water balloon, where you squeeze, it bulges out somewhere else. It changes shape but not volume. When the base of the ribcage is stable the upper

attachments of the diaphragm are pulled down, bulging the stomach outward (belly breath). When we stabilize the diaphragm's upper attachments and relax the ribcage, a diaphragmatic contraction causes the ribcage to expand. Both these actions cause an increase in the volume of the lungs and thus an inhale.

The bony components of the torso — the spine, ribcage, and pelvis — are all knit together under mechanical tension, like coiled springs restrained by elastic bands. This, along with the abdominal and chest pressures, create an intrinsic equilibrium that lends the body the tendency to be supported all on its own.

When we are overweight, have bad posture, or muscle imbalances our breathing can be obstructed. All our abdominal muscles and several layers of muscle lining our ribs assist with inhalation and exhalation. When we have bad posture it puts strain on these muscles.

When we are overweight the excess abdominal pressure pushes upward on the chest cavity limiting your ability to breathe. If your muscles are over worked and under stretched your ability to expand your cavities becomes limited and your breathing hindered.

It's important to exercise your chest, back, abs, sides, and lower back as well as stretch them all to maintain equilibrium, and the ability to breathe.

Chocolate

Continued from 1

instead of being negative and walking around with an attitude of ‘woe is me, poor me.’ As long as I got God, and as much as he allows me to have, the last thing I want to be or have is the ‘poor oh me’ attitude,” remarked Pernell during an interview about his recent diagnosis of advanced stage prostate cancer in the summer of 2019.

In 1913, Fred Wells paid two hundred and fifty dollars to a local dairy farmer for a horse, delivery wagon, a few cans and jars, and the goodwill of a business that would become the Blue Bunny Ice Cream Company. Chocolate Cherry Ice Cream is one of their latest flavors, introduced in the 21st century. Its deeply intense texture is complimented by its extraordinary flavors. Reasonably priced at two dollars and fifty cents—a modest eighteen percent of the monthly budget given to individuals in prison—it’s well worth it when you begin to think about life; how two weeks prior you turned sixty; how easy it is to disregard life’s simple luxuries. A single spoon of cool, refreshing, and deliciously tasteful Chocolate Cherry Ice Cream that only costs a mere two dollars and fifty cents would be the very thing to create ripples reaching far beyond anything Mr. Wells dreamed his ice cream would ever provide to his customers.

“We were eating ice cream, having a good time, when I just happened to look over at Pernell and noticed his face was different, almost like it was sliding down on his right side. The first thing that came to my mind was ‘He’s having a stroke!’ I told him what I was seeing and that he should get to medical as soon as possible. Looking back on that moment, knowing what I know now, I would’ve never have thought for a second that this moment could’ve been the last time that Pernell and I would eat Chocolate Cherry Ice Cream together,” stated Fred Hill, long-time friend and cellmate at that time. Fred was sitting on the bleachers with Pernell eating ice cream, giving witness to his stroke. Pernell, unaware at that time that he was having a stroke, followed up with the medical services unit where it would be later confirmed that a stroke had occurred causing Pernell’s face to droop. Rushed to a local hospital for further evaluation and treatment, it would then be only by the divine intervention of some form of higher power, a higher power that Pernell calls God, during routine blood tests, X-rays, and the like that doctors would discover something unusual. Something that would devastate all Pernell had ever held to be true.

“At first, the doctors thought I might have Bell’s Palsy, facial paralysis, as a result of the stroke. But then they did some more tests, and found that I may have a couple of different issues all together. One in particular being a growth that they had found in my lung. I thought to myself ‘, ‘What? I don’t smoke. I don’t do drugs. I’m not a drinker. That can’t be right.’”

With the discovery of a growth in Pernell’s lung, additional testing was ordered to include a consultation by experts in the field. “I went in for the PET scan that following week.” Positron Emission Tomography – allows for doctors to scan for diseases in the body to reveal metabolic changes in an organ or tissue. “They ended up finding more lesions in my body, all of which were mostly in my bones. “You have cancer. We think it was caused and originated with your prostate.” That’s what the doctors told me. I remember

thinking, ‘Wait a minute, I’ve never had any symptoms of prostate cancer. I don’t have anybody in my family that has had prostate cancer that I know of. Maybe there’s a mistake. It’s just a misreading or something.’ It has to be a mistake,” stated Pernell when describing the events leading up to his official diagnosis.

Pernell consulted with the doctors, pleading with them to check the results again, run the test once more, and get a second opinion; there had to be a mistake. Unfortunately, there was no mistake. Medical science had gotten it right. “After they went back and did some more blood tests, the doctors came

it. And I knew she was trying to be strong for me. And here I am trying to be strong for her. ‘Pernell, the one thing that I didn’t want to ever happen is for any of my children to go before me. I wish God would take me instead.’ I completely understood that... I just didn’t want my mom to know how bad it was. I didn’t want to say it; I didn’t want to tell her I had cancer because then it would become real.”

Pernell intuitively knew that something was seriously wrong. And no matter how much it hurt him, he felt he had to stay strong for his family. They couldn’t see him struggling, depressed, or angry. He would only divulge

it right now in my mind, the nurse’s face. It said, ‘It’s worse than we want to tell you.’ It’s like they didn’t want to discourage me. They would say things to me like, “Well... you know there are different kinds of treatment we can do. There is major progress happening in cancer research and treatment all the time.” But they would never say it. So I researched the diagnosis myself. Once the cancer spreads to certain parts of your body, like the bones in my case, that means there is no cure. The only thing they can do is give you more time, and slow it down. They can’t stop it.”

When society is plagued with difficulties, it is common and natural to question one’s beliefs and spirituality. So it’s not a shock that Pernell had done the same in the course of processing his emotions. “To be honest, I was kind of confused, and I was kind of pissed at first. I spoke with God asking, ‘Why is this happening to me? I haven’t really done anything to deserve this. I don’t understand why this would be put on me and my family.’ I prayed about it a lot, and I just couldn’t understand, ‘Why?’ My family and I have been praying over the years, praying for so long, faithfully, being as Christ-like as we could be, and then this comes up. I thought, ‘I just wanted to be able to get out of prison and spend time with my family. I feel like now I may not have that time.’”

Falling down, getting up and dusting yourself off, taking the punches and rolling with them, and all the other clichés told to us throughout life, could never lift the spirits of someone who has been dealt a blow like that. Exceptions could be made with the words of someone in a similar situation, or for Pernell, a higher power. Turning life’s lemons into lemonade is easier said than done. But what does resiliency look like in the face of adversity? “One day I asked myself, ‘Where do I go from here?’ Just when I began to enter into that “poor me state,” my perspective of life completely changed. Like I was given a newfound vision from God. I thought: my life’s not over. I began to look at life differently. Things that I thought were important to me, weren’t important anymore. What mattered was people, relationships, and getting rid of grudges. How can I get the best of me out of the time that I have left? What can I do to help somebody else? How can I help others and leave a good impression on somebody today? Maybe, just start by saying something kind and simple will make someone’s day, make a difference in somebody’s life.”

Could society ever evolve to a point where our worst days and most troubling events become the best thing life could ever give us? Could a potentially life-threatening malady ever be seen for the beauty that it truly might be? “I would’ve never known I had cancer if it were not for that stroke. It’s not a good thing, because it was a stroke and it freaked me out, but in a sense of the doctors finding the cancer because of that, it was a blessing. Otherwise, I would’ve never known. It would’ve just been festering and building up until one day I fall out, and pass away never knowing I could’ve had a chance to fix it; to change the course of my life; to stop and play the music with my family.”

Two dollars and fifty cents for a taste of life’s lessons in sympathy, love, and compassion; two dollars and fifty cents for a taste of insight into life’s mysteries; two dollars and fifty cents to be told you have advanced stage prostate cancer, and that there is no cure... Quite possibly even to capture moments in time. This time, with some help of a higher power, gave someone a second chance at life.

"Wait a minute, I've never had any symptoms of prostate cancer."

back and said, ‘No, this is what you have.’ I was shocked, I was in disbelief for a minute, and then I was shocked again. I was saying to the doctors, ‘How come I never knew or had any sign of this before it spread throughout my body?’ It was mind boggling for me to think, ‘Why weren’t there any warning signs? Usually there is something telling you, ‘Hey, something’s wrong, you need to go get checked out.’”

Symptoms of prostate cancer are not as prevalent as one may think, according to the National Cancer Data Base and doctors Miller, Hafez, Stewart, and Montie, who co-authored a medical report which was published through the National Institute of Health. Miller said, “Early prostate cancer usually has no clear symptoms. Sometimes prostate cancer does cause symptoms such as frequent urination, increased urination at night, difficulty starting and maintaining a steady stream of urine, blood in the urine, or painful urination.” A study based on the 1998 Patient Care Evaluation in the U.S. found that, about a third of patients diagnosed with prostate cancer had one or more such symptoms, while two-thirds had no symptoms.

Pernell re-lived the moment when he told his oldest son, who admired his father so much that he ended up following in his footsteps with a passion for music, graduating from Yale with a degree in musical arts. “I said, ‘Don’t tell anybody, not until I get the official results back.’ Well... that didn’t work out very well, because he immediately started to call everybody, my mom, my sister; everybody was just freaking out. And I’m like, ‘Well... I haven’t gotten the results back yet; we don’t know for sure.’”

With the sudden shock of a potentially life-threatening cancer diagnosis looming over his head, Pernell gives a rare inside glimpse of how someone begins to deal with the news. Where and how do you turn and face life’s adverse moments in a resilient manner? How do you tell the ones you love what’s going on? How much information is enough or too much to tell in such a sensitive situation? Pernell began by speaking about the emotional challenges of breaking the news to loved ones, most importantly his mother, who only six months ago buried her husband, Pernell’s father—not to mention the constant battle with health problems, financial constraints, and the unending fact that her son is still in prison. “It was tough. She simply said, “‘Son, I’m sorry,’ and started to cry. ‘Well, Mom this may not be as bad as we think it is, so I don’t want you to worry about me. I need you to take care of you and I’ll be okay.’” I knew though, that she was having a hard time with

as much information as needed in order to spare them the emotional discomfort he was engrossed in. The emotional and physical pain that is caused by such startling news can feel life-threatening at times. Medical science has termed it the “Broken Heart Syndrome” (Tako-Tsubo Cardiomyopathy). Published in the Journal of American Medical Association’s (JAMA) magazine in 2011, “...occurring mostly in postmenopausal women, it has been diagnosed following some stressful event... emotional stress.” It owes its origins and namesake to the feeling, and sometimes clinical cases, of a partner dying and their significant other finding no reason to continue and live life. Could this possibly be what Pernell wanted to spare his mother from? A few days later, Chris’ worst fears would be confirmed: cancer in a very advanced stage, originating from the prostate. Doctor recommendations included immediate treatment with chemotherapy and radiation.

Arguably, the love and compassion that is created at birth between most children and their mother is timeless and universal. As humans, we generally possess this innate endowment of compassion for others in times of loss, distress, and suffering. Pernell’s yearning to spare his mother the pain that would be caused by the disclosure of bad news is common and in some cases appropriate. When asked what it feels like to lose a child, someone close to this story, who chooses to remain anonymous, remarked, “It’s like a hole is inside of you when you lose a child. I felt destroyed when my son passed away. It’s something no mother should go through. I literally felt like I was dying inside. The loss of a child is like no other.” This was the pain Pernell wanted to spare his mother, and his motivation behind not telling her the full extent of his diagnosis. Psychologically, when information of this magnitude is relayed, the receiving party almost intuitively knows that what is being told to them is shared being done so with “kid gloves.” And systematically, they in turn discover the truth and magnitude of the situation.

Chris’ impulse to protect his mother and not communicate the full extent of his cancer is understandable. Similarly, is it possible those with whom we aren’t close may do the same, protecting the listener from the full extent of a situation? Could the medical staff have helped Pernell with his newly diagnosed cancer accessing that same compassion, those same protective traits? Pernell recalled what his read on the medical staff was when they began to tell him, or not tell him, about the extent of his cancer. “They wouldn’t say it, but I could see it in their faces. I can see



LOOKING FOR SPORTS WRITERS
submit your articles to the bureau chief in your facility

Rethinking Prisons and Prisoners

Creating tomorrow's neighbors

BY MICHAEL J. McCARTHY / SCF

After decades of building prisons in Colorado, I witnessed the removal of razor wire from a good portion of Sterling Correctional Facility (SCF) as part of the Colorado Department of Corrections (CDOC) normalization plan. The symbolism was as great as the act.

Prisoners and staff alike were on top of a divider wall with grinders and tin shears dismantling the security measure that was deemed no longer necessary. For someone like myself, with a 30-year history of recidivism, it was akin to watching the Berlin Wall come down, and equally important.

In practice, the normalization plan creates an environment in prison that resembles society's, including the responsibilities incarcerated men and women will face upon release. Ultimately, the goal is to produce a greater number of successful ex-offenders worthy of being one's neighbor.

For Colorado citizens, the residual effect will be safer communities, reduced crime, and additional tax dollars directed toward constructive areas of government besides corrections, such as education and infrastructure.

The basic operation of prisons in the United States has gone relatively unchanged for over a century. Prisoners' lives were dictated by the daily grind, and until their release, felons were simply warehoused. They were told what to do and when to do it. Almost every aspect of their lives were micromanaged by the system. Everything was provided in a fairly monotonous fashion. After spending years in prison, incarcerated men and women were no more prepared for release than a polar bear dropped into the Sahara Desert.

Since 1990, over a ten-year period a whopping 80 percent of all released prisoners in the United States were rearrested. Parolees are either doing something wrong or something is wrong with the system. This century old model of incarceration doesn't work and instead perpetuates the system. A new approach is necessary.

A key component in the normalization process is the prison administration encouraging and empowering prisoners to play a major role in their own reintegration, including making decisions on just about everything in their daily walk.

SCF Warden Jeff Long, welcomes all inmate proposals and ideas. But he doesn't just want a wish list. Warden Long wants to hear the benefits of the proposal and how the author intends to take the idea from concept to fruition. If the proposal is well thought-out, can produce a win-win effect, and the petitioner is committed to seeing it through, Long will give the idea the green light, which could include funding the materials to make it happen!

CDOC Director Dean Williams has promoted a partnership relationship between correctional staff and

Continued on 18

Debt Paid, Rights Regained

BY DAVID WELCH / FCF

People struggle against authority. Authority may abide in a gang leader, a mob boss, a school teacher, a police officer, a president, a king, an emperor, a judge, a senator, a family member, a business associate, a supervisor, a religious leader, a parent, maybe even God. Wherever authority resides, we find strife. When we believe we know a better way, we resist accepting or affirming decisions made by authority figures. This conflict — disagreements about society's governance — we call politics.

Over time, various societies constructed governing institutions — theocracies, kingdoms, empires, democracies, republics, etc. — building arenas in which politics could find peaceful resolutions. Each institution embodies fundamental beliefs about which governing powers rest in the body politic and which rights the citizenry enjoy.

In 1776, our nation's founders shocked the Western World with an astounding declaration — all people are created equal and endowed by their Creator with certain, unalienable rights, among them life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. The founders also believed a democracy balanced by separated powers best embodies government's purpose — protecting our God — given rights. The Constitution of the United States of America and the Bill of Rights established that democracy. Each state in the Union structures itself by that standard, legislating and enforcing laws as needed; yet, the governing powers cannot infringe upon our unalienable rights. But what happens when a person feloniously interferes with the life, liberty, and happiness of his or her fellow citizens? Should that person's rights be stripped away? Or limited? Debate ensues and each state freely enforces its course of action.

Few people will argue against crime's punishment, some crimes violate people's lives so terribly that a term of imprisonment is justified. In such cases, certain rights must, at least, be suspended or modified; and, if a breach of social trust is egregious enough, some rights may be entirely removed. While one serves a term of imprisonment, he or she may not exercise certain rights of citizenship. But Article VII, section 10 of Colorado's constitution states, "...every such person who was a qualified elector prior to

such imprisonment, and who is released therefrom by virtue of a pardon, or by virtue of having served out his full term of imprisonment, shall without further action, be invested with all rights of citizenship, except as otherwise provided in this constitution." In Colorado, however, parole was considered part of one's "full term of imprisonment." Recently, that interpretation changed.

Argument about whether voting is an unalienable right or whether it is a political privilege continues to this day. One thing is certain; the constitution secures the right to vote for any U.S. citizen eighteen years old or older. The right to vote is one of our primary means of exercising and securing our liberty. On May 28th, 2019, the General Assembly of the State of Colorado and Governor Jared Polis enacted House Bill 19-1266, having become effective July 1st, 2019. This bill "...intends that individuals sentenced to parole on account of a felony conviction be entitled to the full restoration of their voting rights," [HB19-1266, section (2)]. The general assembly then asserted their authority to define legal terms, stating, "full term of imprisonment" means, "...the period during which an individual is serving a sentence of detention or confinement in any correction facility, jail, or other location for a felony conviction," [HB 19-1266, section 2(49.3) (a)]. The bill explicitly restricts "term of imprisonment" from being interpreted as "being on parole." The bill also ensures parolees get access to everything they need to be informed voters. HB 19-1266, section 4 list various instructions for the Division of Adult Parole. At the initial meeting, they shall provide information about how and where to register as a voter. They shall also provide the necessary forms, applications, mailings, and a copy of the state's ballot information booklet. This bill has made major strides in protecting and restoring one's right to liberty once a social debt has been paid, and the General Assembly of the State of Colorado didn't stop there.

When the founders spoke of the pursuit of happiness, their main emphasis was the ability to freely pursue and acquire private property, i.e. working to acquire and sustain a comfortable life, without fear of capricious molestation. House bill 19-1025 provides a small step in restoring an ex-prisoner's right to the pursuit of happiness. The Colorado Chance to Compete Act limits how employers

inquire about criminal history. As of September 1st, 2019, employers with 11 or more employees shall not advertise or state on an application that persons with a criminal history cannot apply. Employers also shall not, "inquire into, or require disclosure of, an applicant's criminal history on an initial written or electronic application form," [HB19-1025, section 2 (3) (III), emphasis not in original]. Exceptions are made for employers required by current federal, state, or local law to conduct criminal history checks. On and after September 1st, 2021, this act applies to all employers.

Healthy debate about the legislation's efficacy continues. Some people believe it's unfair to offer criminals these opportunities. Others argue these measures make society less safe and encourage, rather than deter, criminal behavior. Many people think these laws don't truly affect meaningful change; they are just futile and superfluous ramblings born of ambitious bids for re-election. While people have their reasons for holding such perspectives, I encourage everyone to pause, take a breath, turn off the talking heads on T.V. and social media, and give a moment for humble reflection.

Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. These rights are given by our Creator. Government exists to protect these rights. It means, when I choose to violate another person's rights, government is there to protect the person from me. The authority decides what penalty must be paid as recompense for the damage. Our thoughts often stop there. Both offender and victim are forgotten when our considerations stop at the gavel's rap.

There are moral truths frequently neglected on both sides. Some of those truths involve mercy, forgiveness, and redemption. Other truths involve humility, repentance, and restitution. This involves justice. These bills reveal our representatives' attempts, imperfect, to uphold the principals of justice implicit in our constitution by extending encouragements toward mercy and redemption. But bills are not enough. Our hearts and perceptions must change. Damaged people can heal; wayward people can be redeemed. Our nature compels us to resist, we are incumbent, under the principals of self-government, to nurture every opportunity for life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness to the benefit of our neighbors.



THE JURY'S IN...TOP 12

What is the "Bombest" dish you've made while in prison?
*canteen/package ingredients only

12. Pasta Salad (with chicken, bacon or Italian)
11. Homemade Green Chili
10. Chicken Parmesan
9. Reese's Peanut Butter Pie
8. Enchiladas
7. Banana Cream Pie
6. Breakfast Burritos
5. Philly Cheese Steak Bagels
4. Calzones
3. Fried Rice
2. Chicken Alfredo
1. Fat Bastards

*This is a contribution from DWCF library clerks and patrons, for fun only. Look for *Jury's In* list next month.

Us vs. Ourselves

BY DA'NAIRE MARCHMAN / FORMER RESIDENT

What is “Us vs. Them?” The human mind has a tendency to categorize people in social groups. It’s not hard to see how this “Us vs. Them” mentality can be destructive to both ourselves and society as a whole. It is scary to think how susceptible we are to these biases, even under completely random circumstances. In spite of this, it also makes sense that we’ve evolved to notice these social categories. During tribal times, it was beneficial to perceive unfamiliar people as a potential threat and treat them as such for protection and security.

In a prison setting, we often see that social groups can create a “Us vs. Them” mentality toward people who may be different. Some examples are position (Correction Officers vs. Offenders), race, gender, age, nationality, culture, religion, socioeconomic status, or even gang vs. gang.

My insight about Limon Correctional Facility comes from my experiences and my understanding from what DOC employees have told me. How does the “Us vs. Them” mentality affect the environment in which we all find ourselves facing? Is there a mental state we’ve created to establish boundaries between correctional officers and inmates? Is this simply a prolonged game of cops and robbers? Does an “Us vs. Them” thought process take away from energy that can be used to help each other understand the reason why we’re here, which is rehabilitation?

Amazingly, studies on this outlook have shown that people tend to favor a group bias, even when they are categorized on relatively meaningless distinctions. Examples include eye color, what kind of hairstyle you keep, or even the places we are came from.

This tells us that we have the potential to separate ourselves from a certain group of people based on any random or arbitrary characteristic. Therefore, everyone is susceptible to be a perpetrator and/or victim of social prejudice and ostracism, from a warden to a gang leader. It appears that thinking of ourselves in terms of groups

automatically leads us to a kind of irrational group favoritism.

In the early 1970s, British social psychologist Henri Tajfel explored a phenomenon he called the “minimal group paradigm.” The basic idea behind this concept was to investigate what minimal conditions were required for discrimination to occur within groups.

Also in the study on “minimal group paradigm,” participants were given an opportunity to allocate money or “points” to other participants but favored giving points to members of their own groups as opposed to members of another group. Even more interesting, participants were more willing to see their group “win” rather

"We shouldn't ignore the common differences between us, but we certainly shouldn't use them to judge people."

than have outcomes where all participants end up better overall.

Is this the way things have always been and always will be? Or can we redirect this thought process? The first step to finding a solution to any problem is to first acknowledge that a problem even exists. It is said that communication rules a nation, but what does lack of communication do to one? From the time that we first sling that green duffel bag over our shoulder, awaiting the determination of our fate and where we will be placed within DOC, to the first time that a DOC employee steps foot onto a prison yard, keys in hand, mace on hip, we are filled with assertions and assumptions about how to interact amongst each other. What to say, ways to act, and what to do to hide our weakness from each other.

We dehumanize ourselves to a point where we create two different realities:

But one thing is guaranteed — each meal is prepared with skill and care by an offender in the CTCF culinary program. Each course, from the salad to the dessert, is cooked and presented with the same quality one would expect from their favorite restaurant.

"One thing is guaranteed—each meal is prepared with skill and care by an offender in the CTCF culinary program."

Staff and culinary offenders serve each course with the attitude that this is the best experience of their week. On most meals, the warden and/or other members of the management team can be found making their way around the room, welcoming both families and offenders as if they were the maître d’ at the Broadmoor Hotel. All through the meal there is someone from Programs to make sure that all the participants’ needs are filled.

The family meal program at CTCF provides a unique and relaxed setting in which offenders can continue the

Inside the walls and the outs. We learn how to function inside the walls even though we’re here to correct actions on the “outs.” We lose sight that we’re here due to the actions of a person on the outs, who often finds his or herself put up on a shelf somewhere waiting for the moment when we finally step off of the yard or clock in at night. In here, I am either the convicted or the officer. I am either with those like myself or against them. No one wants to find themselves in the minority on either side. We then contribute to popular culture. We become either a better convict or a better DOC employee. In all honesty, we neglect the person who we really are and we don’t deal with the reasons why we’re here or sometimes we even distract others from finding their own solutions and contribute to more problems. Maybe we should consider a third viewpoint. Maybe we should take the time to ask ourselves, “What do we want for ourselves, for others around us, and what do we want for our relationships?” We see the “Us vs. Them” mentality in almost every aspect of life from politics (Republicans vs. Democrats), to war (Palestine vs. Israel), to even sports (Mets vs. Yankees). We shouldn’t ignore the common differences between us, but we certainly shouldn’t use them to judge people as “superior” or “inferior” — or see them as a battle between “Us vs. Them.” So with that being said, have pride in who you are and where you come from, but remember where you are going. Take the time to ask if you’re promoting a better tomorrow for your group and the ones to come. The goal is a better tomorrow and to “better ourselves,” am I right? If you choose to associate with a group identity, it doesn’t have to be a bad thing, but don’t make it one through your actions.

Maybe upon closer inspection of our situation, we realize that the first step to answer the rough questions in this environment is to accept the fact that we have no greater completion than ourselves. So maybe, just maybe, the view shouldn’t be “Us vs. Them,” but “ME VS. MYSELF.” I leave you with this quote from William James: “The greatest discovery of my generation is that a human being can alter his life by altering his attitudes of mind.”

rebuilding of damaged relationships. The sit-down family meal has been a major factor in the family bonding practice since the dawn of civilization. There is something about this setting that is conducive to pleasant, shared conversation and open jovial emotions. It is one of the cornerstones in a strong family foundation of love, understanding, and togetherness.

Over the years, I have had many visits in numerous facilities. I have sat with my family, eaten vending machine food, and played countless card games. While it’s nice and a highly valued part of my life, the family meal is much different. The staff at CTCF have created an environment for this event which is unique and separated from the prison norm. It is a relaxed and conducive setting in which to nurture those familial bonds.

I encourage anyone at CTCF who has not yet taken advantage of this wonderful opportunity to do so once visitation reopens. I have been here for a while, over three years now, and have been to several of these events. I think that you’ll be pleasantly surprised by the experience. I also ask those who shared in this opportunity to let the programs people and the management team know how special this family meal program is. Perhaps this concept can be carried beyond this facility to others in the state.

Hindsight is Not the Only Thing That is 20|20

BY RICHARD JOHNSON / FCF

20/400. No, we’re not doing fractions — that was my eyesight before choosing to undergo Lasik surgery. Lasik was the best decision I have ever made. Being that it is now the year 2020, what better thing to write about than when my vision became perfectly clear. It was 2010, and I could not see more than six inches in front of me. In case you are not familiar with how optometrists scores vision, it’s based on how clear something appears if you were 20 feet away. All that to say, 20/400 meant that something 20 feet away from me appeared as if it were 400 feet away. That is more than a football field. The only thing that was clear to me was that I was blind.

As visually impaired as I was though, I remember the doctor visit clearly. It took about 45 seconds to be affirmed that I was a good candidate for the operation, and was told to come back in 10 days. When I came back, I was met with some drops to dilate my eyes, and some pills to sedate me. It was at this time that I got wheeled into the laser room and had my eyes held open with a contraption I had only previously seen in the Stanley Kubrick movie, *A Clockwork Orange*. Next, the doctor grabbed a miniature tomato dicer that he used to slice and peel back my cornea. Panic would have certainly set in at this point, as my vision went black, had it not been for the pills. Sixteen seconds later, as I smelled the smoke coming from my laser-burned cornea, he moved on to the second eye. In less than one-minute total, both eyes were done and I sat up and immediately saw my wife, clear as day, in another room under a sign that I could read. 20/20! My eyes were perfect. As a matter of fact, they kept healing to 20/15.

As I look forward to life and what the years to come will bring, I am reminded that “foresight is also 20/20” and that my future is looking clear.

Family Meal

BY DAVID SCHULERUD / CTCF

On a chilly day in January of 2018, I was afforded a wonderful opportunity. For the first time in close to 30 years I sat down and had a meal with my father. No microwaved burritos or sandwiches from the vending machine, but a steak dinner. This meal was prepared magnificently and served to us as if my father and I were the most important people in the room. This event occurred in the CTCF visiting room on an ordinary Tuesday!

At CTCF, the administration has taken the Re-Entry family meal program and expanded it to include the general population. Every other month offenders here at CTCF can submit a request to be included in the event. It is open to anyone who is on their approved visiting list. Then on a chosen weekday afternoon, usually a Tuesday, the visiting area is turned into a dining room.

The menu varies from one meal to the next. Usually it follows a theme. One dinner might be Italian and the next could be based on a Mexican cuisine.

Mile High Workshop

13280 East Mississippi Ave
Aurora, CO, 80012

Hello@MILEHIGHWORKSHOP.ORG

Our mission is to create employment opportunities and provide job training for members of our community seeking to rebuild from addictions, homelessness, and incarceration.

When: 1st & 3rd Wednesday of every month

Time: 9-11:00 am

For: Application/Interview

*One on one meetings with support counselor available

Integrity Counts

BY ROBERT FRY / CTCF

I am an old convict with a lot of old and outdated bad habits. I took 7-Habits class twice, once in 2006 and again in 2012, because I have way more than “7” habits; I graduated both times. I’ve successfully completed the T4C, MRT, and Anger Management courses. What was my purpose for these classes? Why have I been studying the Bible for the last fifteen years? Because I’ve learned a valuable truth, which is, “No matter where you go, there you are.” When a person goes from place to place, city to city, or even state to state, and the same problems continue to happen over and over — well, the smart move is to look at the common denominator — the person in the mirror. I looked into that mirror and did not like the man that I saw. I have made the decision to become a man of integrity.

The best definition of the word integrity is, “Doing what’s right, even when no one is looking.” Also, doing what’s right even when it hurts or has embarrassing consequences. It means being willing to humble ourselves. When it comes to taking classes, none of us would bother taking any if we did not want to change our lives. The only way any of us can accomplish change is to first “unlearn” just about everything

that does not benefit life. For instance, many men were born into a gang and were taught that they must hate and maybe even kill another man simply because he is from a different “hood.”

To unlearn these wrong teachings, look around your pod... we have men who are black, white, Latino, Native American, and Asian all together. We are all in the same hood now! It only makes sense for all of us to strive together for peace and achieve that goal through mutual respect.

Being a man of integrity is not always easy, not for any of us. It might even be harder for us who’ve been down longer and who are older, we are set in our ways and we are more stubborn today than we were in our younger years.

I honestly believe that the three main ingredients to a better life are courage, commitment, and communication. Courage leads us into the commitment to make whatever changes are necessary and gives us a willingness to communicate in a rational manner with any adversary we encounter. These are the character traits of a good leader. And like anything else, it requires a lot of practice and patience. None of us are perfect. Not me, and not you, so it will be a matter of trial and error. But as long as there is forward progress, we are still in the game. Let us all strive to be men of integrity.

Beyond Gridlock

An analysis of the frozen American political apparatus.

BY JOHN COAD / AVCF

There is a monkey wrench in the gears of the United States government. I can smell the acrid odor of the grinding bearings...but what caused it? Can anything be done to restore us to sanity?

Let’s examine the root. All the fuss, they say, is over one man: Donald John Trump. One camp says he’s the problem. Another says he’s the solution. But let’s look beyond that man and look instead at what really matters: The State of the Union upon his arrival, and what he truly represents. Were we in good shape in 2016, already? Or were we broken and heading off a cliff like Trump said?

Based upon the habit of the United States to keep borrowing money hand over fist, mostly from China, running up an enormous debt, I hesitate in making the claim that we were alright. A financial house of cards, I’ve often wondered if it will come crashing down in my lifetime, or my children’s? Or their

children’s? But just because America was, or is, off track does not automatically mean Donald Trump is the solution.

Why then all the fuss over him? Because he is unconventional? Perhaps. He definitely has his ways. He calls people out on social media. He is definitely egotistical, and thinks he should replace Lincoln on the five-dollar bill. Does he just irritate the conventional people like a burr in your sock? Perhaps.

Is he really fixing something, and like a dentist — nobody likes the drill? Or is this just the end of the two party system, caused by both of them coming to their logical conclusion of extreme expression? I suspect so. Like acid and alkaline at the maximum 0 and 14, on the PH scale, we’re looking at a neutralization.

The good news is, I do believe the reaction will be messy somewhat, but relatively harmless, and will get a clean slate to build something new. Something better. More sustainable.

Afterwards, how is it a good idea to have two diametrically opposed philosophies tugging against each other, in control of our very lives? It will, in such a case, always be two steps forward, three steps back, as power changes hands ad infinitum. So, let’s watch it play out.

Barber Shop

BY BRANDON MOSS / FCF

The “Barber Shop” talks the talk and motivates people to walk the walk. My experiences in the shop not only shaped my head but my mind, as well. I learned how to talk to and treat women, defend myself, focus on my health and I even learned how to play chess as I waited my turn to get cut. I swept hair for money, learned to hustle from the “CDs! DVDs!” man, and ultimately looked at the men giving out those cuts as role models. I built relationships in and out of that chair. The purpose of this section is wisdom, young man. So listen up.

“The Chair” was my first experience with a grown woman. I remember sitting there as the ladies strolled by on their way to the next room. You see, they had their own side of the place called the salon. It was cut off from the dudes. I guess they had their own talks to go through.

Anyway, they walked by and one looks me up and down. I’m only 19 and she’s like 30. My pops looked over and was like, “Aye man, when a woman looks at you like that, you go.” I was like “Aight I hear you.” But it really hit home when everybody, like 40 deep, started chiming in like, “Yea you trippin’, what you scared?” Different stuff like that. But I’m young, I don’t know how to talk to a grown woman. So right in the middle of my cut, my barber, his name was “Butch,” spun me around, looked me in my eyes with his 50-plus years and told me to go over there in front of all those women and introduce myself. “With

confidence, young man.” Women dig confidence is a saying I learned to love. So I was like, “And after that?” They all looked at me like I was crazy. So the barber on my right, he was like 40 and his name was “Chi Chi,” he was, like, “Man go over there and tell her you want to steal her beauty for the night and show it off to the rest of the city.” Can you believe the dude’s hair he was cutting was like, “Yeah, I know a spot on 35th she would love, cool lil’ jazz spot with great food.” These dudes set it all up and I still didn’t have the mind to go through with it. “The pick-up line is easy youngin’, she already digging ya style, and my man’s just gave you the spot, all I need to know now is do you got the ends?” I’m looking at this old man like what? Where did you enter yourself in this conversation? I mean he was right, though. “Yeah I got some money.” I said. And in what seemed like unison, they all said, “Well what you waitin’ for?” Little did I know my hair was being brushed and dusted off, and my time was up. The sting from the alcohol hitting my line up was invigorating and it must have given me a boost of confidence because my brothers just stared at me as they watched their big bro enter into a new realm of role model. My walk was tall and the cool breeze hit me as I entered into the salon and right up to her speaking proud as ever as she waited for a chair. I’ll forever remember that smile. Sure enough we started dating that weekend and we are still good friends. I’ll never forget that day in “The Chair.”

The Value of Life

BY THOMAS SIMON / FCF

Why do black lives matter when the death, oppression, and inequality imposed upon us is perpetrated by the “other?” Why do black lives become more precious and valuable when the actions are of “another?” Why don’t black lives matter when we are the death dealers, ones who oppress, and those who impose inequality?

Why do the “community leaders” only come out of hiding when an atrocity is brought about by the “others?” Where are these leaders when the crime rate in our communities is on the rise by our own doing? Why don’t these leaders step up and become the real, true leaders of the community when the necessary programs are underfunded or funding is just cut?

As a community within a larger community who has suffered at great lengths since the colonization of this country, what would our ancestors think of us as a community? All that Harriet Tubman, Ida B. Wells, George Washington Carver, Malcom X, Martin Luther King Jr., and even Bobby Seales suffered through and fought for — what would they have to say?

We can only continue to blame the system and the invisible obstacles placed before our paths as the reason for our slow and sometimes nonexistent progress for so long. When will we stop finding blame in everyone and everything else and fix what we’ve broken?

Oppression, inequality, and brutality are never justified or condoned, but our people have suffered through this practice for centuries. We easily recognize the obvious and familiar practices of those responsible for those inhumane acts. But in doing so, we overlook, deny, and outright fail to address the ever present and growing issue in our communities — being the deterioration in our own community.

I am disappointed and pained by the fact that we only want our lives to matter when we are unjustly done wrong by someone else. Why don’t our lives

matter when we’re shooting up the neighborhood, or selling drugs to our neighbors, friends, and family members? Why don’t we rally, march, and protest these much more profoundly demoralizing acts?

Until the mid-to-late 1980s, many of our communities were nurturing environments that were prosperous and havens for hope. Then somewhere, some people decided to bring about the demise of the community. They did so by failing to be leaders, and by compromising their morals and principles at the expense of the entire community.

I can, like countless other do, once again complain about the systematic discrimination by the government, but why? Our problem is us! We’ve allowed our morals and principals to deteriorate to nothing.

Why are we continually being brutalized and oppressed? We’ve forgotten how to love, appreciate, and respect ourselves. We’ve allowed our “leaders” to acquire their positions without question. Our most prominent “leaders” are silver-tongued serpents sent to lead us astray.

When black lives matter to us again, like they once did, then they will matter to everyone else. I cannot expect you to respect or honor my presence and being if I do not hold the same value for myself.

Black lives do matter. Now let us begin to show the nation and the world how much our lives matter to us by cleaning up our own communities. Let us become our own leaders and live and grow as a community of people deserving of what it is we seek from the world. But first we must want for ourselves what we want from the world. In closing, black lives must matter to those who are black before anyone else will ever think our lives matter and are of value. When we are quick to call out police brutality, systemic discrimination, et cetera, we must, and have to, call out the atrocities we commit to ourselves because that is a much more debilitating problem.

The Inside Report is a community paper which presents various opinions of the members within it. The opinions do not necessarily reflect those of The Inside Report or its readers. The Inside Report invites submissions and letters to the editor which present respectful perspective and responses to this opinion, as well as any other opinions or articles.

CTCF Graduation

BY ANDREW McCLAY / CTCF

Colorado Territorial Correctional Facility is proud to announce that on December 19, 2019, a graduation was held in the facility's gymnasium. There were 139 graduates from the months of June to December of 2019, and there were a total of 83 attendees. The following programs were all recognized: Culinary Arts, Why Try?, T4C, MRT, Cosmetology, PCC Beginning Office Assistant, Janitorial, HVAC, Field Leadership, Electrical, and GED. The keynote speaker was

Ms. Joan Carson, who is the Assistant Director of Education for the Department of Corrections. Her central message was about change, explaining how no one can change anyone else, and that we are all responsible for changing ourselves. This graduation was Teacher II, Ms. Bell-Lujan's second graduation at this facility. I asked Ms. Bell-Lujan if she was happy with the number of graduates that were recognized, and she stated that she was, and she was confident there would be more GED completions

at the next graduation. She is also hopeful that, in the future, GED will be able to have its own graduation, therefore allowing graduates to invite their family members to attend and celebrate this important milestone with their loved ones. Ms. Bell-Lujan stated, "It is important for us to see these accomplishments, and recognize when these are made. Even though these may not seem like a big deal to them at the time, what they learned through their accomplishments may come through later in life."

John Mill

Continued from 17

plan, or design anything? Again, a pig's life is the epitome of default living.

•Habit 3: Put first things first, or put important things first, not the urgent. Do pigs prioritize their day? Nope, a pig's day is typical of moment by moment existence.

•Habit 4: Think win/win, or there is plenty for everyone, and more to spare. Ever watch what happens when a pig farmer tosses a bucket of food into a pig pen? Do the pigs begin by politely divvying up the food so that everyone gets a portion? Nope! In fact, we have terms like "pigging out" to describe the free-for-all that occurs when pigs eat. Pigs are the epitome of a win mentality (7-Habits speak). When the dinner bell rings, there is no win/win in the pig world.

To summarize what I've covered so far, it's safe to say that the 7-Habits program doesn't work well for the literal definition of "pigs" (i.e. farm animals). If Stephen Covey was alive today he probably wouldn't expand his 7-Habits program to pig farms.

Fortunately, when Mr. Mill concocted the term "pig satisfied" he wasn't referring to a four-legged farm animal. He was referring to a human being who spends most of his life focused on what Mr. Mill calls "lower pleasures." These lower pleasures include eating, drinking, having sex, and resting. Note: Referring to a human being as a pig may be considered politically incorrect today; political correctness is a concept that goes back about 40 years. This is well after Mr. Mill conceived this philosophical question.

Well, if "pig satisfied" refers to lower pleasures, then "human dissatisfied" must refer to "higher pleasures" undertaken by human beings. These higher pleasures include high culture, scientific knowledge, intellectuality, and creativity. These pleasures also cement themselves in relationships and minimize suffering.

The basic philosophical question of this article (Is it better to be a pig satisfied or a human dissatisfied?) has been restated over time to, "Is it better to be Socrates dissatisfied or a fool satisfied?" in reference to the great intellectual philosopher Socrates. In addition to being more politically correct, this helps to state that all humans want the lower pleasures, but they also desire the deep relationships, intellectual ability and appreciation of art, culture, and wisdom, that comes from the higher pleasures.

Remember, this is a philosophical discussion, so there is no right or wrong answer. Many people are happy to live their lives as a pig/fool satisfied. Mr. Mill has been criticized for being an elitist by unduly favoring the intellectual over the sensual. Many philosophers have argued against Mr. Mill's

position that higher pleasures are more desirable than lower pleasures. Mr. Mill argues that surveys of those who experience both pleasures universally prefer the higher pleasures.

It is fairly intuitive that a life centering on being a pig/fool satisfied is analogous to the 7-Habits win/win paradigm. This is easily explained by a moral view called "ethical egoism." Ethical egoism is a concept that everyone should always do those things that best serve their own interests, with no consideration given to others.

What then is the philosophical equivalent to the 7-Habits win/win paradigm? Well, the opposite of ethical egoism is altruism. Altruism is selfless behavior, with no consideration for oneself. For example, if someone were to donate their entire paycheck to charity, they would then be demonstrating altruistic behavior.

Unfortunately, altruism is not analogous to the 7-Habits win/win paradigm. Win/Win implies that one's self wins as well as others around them. Giving away your entire paycheck each week will cause you to lose (as in 7-Habits lose/win speak) and be very hungry all the time. Philosophers and sociologists generally agree that altruism (i.e. lose/win paradigms) can exist in family relationships, but Dr. Covey would strongly disagree. He feels that lose/win paradigms result in repressed feelings that destroy relationships.

There is a special form of altruism called "reciprocal altruism." Reciprocal altruism is based on the field of sociobiology, and is driven by the idea that humans and other species can cooperate specifically for the survival of their species. Reciprocal altruism includes morality, behavioral patterns, and other social structures. Morality becomes an evolutionary strategy for the species (i.e. winning).

In reciprocal altruism, all members of the group exhibit altruistic behavior towards each other. The group, and its inter-relationships, become the focus, not the individuals. This results in an evolutionary strategy that is analogous to Dr. Covey's win/win paradigm!

John Stuart Mill created the pig satisfied/human dissatisfied philosophical arguments and maintained that there is no correct choice between the two extremes. Dr. Covey created the 7-Habit win/win paradigm that provides a roadmap to exist (and thrive) in the human dissatisfied realm. Clearly, Dr. Covey advocates that human dissatisfied is the correct choice!

Author's Note: The book *Ethics: Discovering Right and Wrong* by Louis P. Pojman and James Fieser was an invaluable resource for this article.

Skeptics

Continued from 5

freedoms that come with normalization.

This staff member's statement, "I'm for it," is worlds apart from another staff member I spoke with, whose opinion on normalization was, "You guys get too much already." He continued by saying, "Normalization should be you guys getting up every morning and going to work. It should be mandatory that everybody works." What a great way to prepare men and women for life in the real world. Creating a value-added workforce in prison for residents crafts a profound sense of dignity within, and in return constructs a safe and functioning environment.

According to a housing unit officer, working in prison affects her family life. When asked about the work environment and its ability to affect the mental state of an employee, she said, "I don't curse in front of my children but because of stressful days at work I've been letting the B-word and the F-bomb slip around them and they're calling me on it." Being a parent myself, I was taken aback by the response.

During the conversation, we also talked briefly about training at the academy, and how there is a lack of training in dealing with residents that have mental health issues, nor are there sufficient social skills curricula. This is surprising when the prison population statewide is that of a small city (17,936 as of November 2019). Considering the enormous amount of interaction between staff and residents, coupled with the closed-in environment prison inherently offers, training in social skills is ideal. The lack of these training classes was attributed to a shortage of staff, time, and money.

Normalization is a reform issue. Reform is a culture issue. Culture is a community issue. Not one of these alone is the answer, but I imagine this idea, normalization, as a seed that is growing in the culture of DOC. The conditions could be a desert or a greenhouse. In a greenhouse, everyone buys in: staff, residents, volunteers, executives, tax payers.

A 2013 study by psychologist Caterina Spinari, published in *Newsweek* March 12, 2019, shows "31 percent of correctional officers suffer from PTSD, which is four times the

national average and on par with veterans returning from armed conflict, 17 percent were suffering from PTSD and depression." Spinari's study also showed a "high rate of alcoholism among officers suffering from PTSD," coupled with 30 percent more missed work days and double the number of people who call off compared to those not suffering from PTSD. Also cited in *Newsweek* was a study by the New Jersey Police Suicide Task Force which found that corrections officers had double the suicide rate of police officers.

A study conducted in Spain between two prisons, one large and one medium, found officers "face a major challenge to handle their daily task while keeping emotions of anxiety, anger and fear hidden so as not to interfere with their job performance." Something interesting we all can identify with, as human beings, was also found in this study: "Research identified high workload, emotional demands, need to hide emotions, low control and influence, poor social support and negative social image among the most common work-related psychosocial hazards predictive of prison workers' strain." The bottom line is this job is difficult, "especially with the participation of aging staff." With heartbreaking research like this, we should all be more receptive to change. Can normalization stabilize or support this greenhouse?

In an interview with John Herrick of *The Colorado Independent*, in response to the question of opening up the prisons to more community partners to help residents with work training, mental health counseling, and substance-abuse disorder treatment, CDOC Executive Director Dean Williams stated, "I think that there will be skeptics. There always are. That kind of comes with the territory. I would say this to them: I've seen some facilities here where the staff works really well. There are some others that are struggling. I think staff will come along if they know there are results." Prisons are mentally demanding environments that provoke stress. For goodness sake, if normalization is not just some shot in the dark, and it's spearheaded by a strategic, organized, flexible and charismatic individual, even if the process appears to be unconventional, this could be exactly what we asked for.

Lessons

BY SAMUEL MULLIKIN / DRDC

As a child I frequently watched my mother prepare our dinners with a sense of awe. I stood on tiptoe at her side, full of questions, my eyes hovering at counter's edge, watching her work her magic at a cutting board. It wasn't long before she asked me to help.

I started with simple things like fetching the ingredients from the fridge and cupboard. Under her direction I learned the secret language of measuring cups and fluid ounces. She taught me the fundamentals of cooking in the oven, the slow-cooker, on the burner, and in the skillet. I'll never forget the stirring of everything with long-handled wooden spoons.

Growing up we'd sit down to eat our meals at a table perfectly set with plates and bowls on top of placemats. Our glasses tinkled with ice, echoing the sound made as the knives, forks, and spoons were laid over napkins. In my mother's home our meals were about family, the food an expression of love.

I followed her example when I had a family of my own. I developed a love for it, but not because others liked it. In fact, the meals I made for myself were always simple. The ones I made for others were the ones that were special.

There's just something about those moments when I'm watching someone take their first bite of a dish I've prepared for them. Their heads tilt slightly upward as their eyes slide shut; their mouths working the flavors around. Then the deep, audible sigh. After the first swallow, satisfied

"Mmmm's," punctuated by smiles, let me know in a way they are experiencing my love for them. It isn't surprising when I watch someone eat my food now. When I see the pleasure my cooking brings, I am reminded of my own mother's secret smile.

These days I measure everything by the eye. My ingredients are pulled from a locker box and cooked in a microwave. There are no glasses with ice, no silverware. If I'm making something special, the invited show up with their own plastic bowl, spork, and cup. Anymore that two guests and the room is crowded. I have no adequate table to serve them at, but we all find our places as we can: A few on the bed, one on the locker box, another on the toilet.

Neither the family I grew up in, nor the one I began, were ideal. But we all shared in that communal and familial bond that bespoke of Home when we sat

down to eat together. When I first came to prison all I could see was the gulf of time and distance, steel and concrete, that separated me from my family. It felt as though all love and sense of connection had disappeared from my life.

But I've found it again.

In a room smaller than some closets are five men packed elbow to elbow, all smiling around mouthfuls, nodding in approval. I may no longer be able to use the lessons my mother taught me all those years ago, but I'm thankful that I've finally come to understand the truth that she was trying to teach me. As I looked around that room of contented souls, and smiled that secret smile, I knew that in that moment, we were all one.

Rethinking

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prisoners that never existed to this extent before. To wardens, correctional officers are noticeably more courteous and professional. Throughout U.S. prison history, there has been an "Us against Them" mentality that created unsafe prisons and even deadly riots. In the past Sterling Correctional Facility was considered a dreadful place to serve time. This is no longer the case.

Sterling warden, Jeff Long, is an "in the trenches type of leader," constantly improving the environment. Similar to General George Patton, he walks amongst the troops. Long is one of the boys. He was on the yard supervising the razor wire removal. Two-days after I arrived at Sterling, I met Warden Long.

He extended his hand in a firm handshake and offered a welcoming smile. He remembered my name thereafter.

What does normalization look like at Sterling? The DU Prison Arts Initiative and Sterling prisoners put on a full scale production of One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest. A valued play in which DU students and teachers collaborated

CDOC to live, learn, and contribute. These veterans pull together as a team to engage in all aspects of reentry back into society. Jeremy Hubbard, FOX31 News – Denver, interviewed prisoners in the Veteran's unit has aired in a 30-minute special.

A recently developed PATH program allows prisoners at Sterling to volunteer

Assistants. These prisoner aids help their fellow brothers reduce stress and suicidal thinking, and deescalate violence.

Sterling has more free movement. Prisoners are responsible for managing their own time and obligations. There are prisoner-led classes like Blueprint Reading and Music Theory. God Behind Bars associated with Red Rocks Community Church links their church with several facilities and the outside community. Sterling holds festivals and fundraisers. Sterling has two reentry centers on the low-side and one on the high-side to prepare men for their release. Just recently prisoners at Sterling were given the option to wear their sweats and tee shirts practically anywhere on the yard.

The normalization plan is in its infancy, but already violence is way down and prisoners are happier and more productive. Most importantly they will have a better chance at succeeding upon release.

Prisoners' lives were dictated by the daily grind, and until their release, felons were simply warehoused.

with prisoners to produce the show. The New York Times and The Denver Post featured rave reviews about this theatre arts troupe.

On Sterling's minimum side incarcerated military veterans took an ordinary living unit and turned it into one of the finest housing units in the

hours of their time to contribute to the facility by doing a chore or job to earn points that can be accrued for culinary food or loaner appliances, such as televisions or radios. The PATH program has amounted to thousands of hours of constructive labor around the prison.

There are trained Mental Health Peer

Keeping Up the Morale

BY ANDREW McCLAY / CTCF

With the uncertainty of what the future holds, the staff are doing what they can to keep the morale up for us here in CTCF. Special events have been held in the gym over the past few weekends that have been enjoyed by the population. The gym staff have held special events like a one-hour concert with the facility's band, a card tournament, a bench-press tournament, and the yard has an additional seven stations that were put in the allow pull-ups, push-ups, dips, and sit-ups, which are ideal for creating bodyweight circuits.

The kitchen has been doing their part, as well. Each day there is something different for us to enjoy that is in line with the menu, but is made specially. For example, instead of just plain rice, they have made vegetable fried rice to go with

the chicken. For breakfast, they have made breakfast pizza and coffee cake. These have been enjoyable changes, and the majority of the population appreciate the extra effort from the kitchen staff.

With visitation being suspended, video visits have been approved and started March 30, 2020. This is something that is vitally important, and while it is not a contact visit, it is something that allows us to see our loved ones while speaking with them. Global Tel Link (GTL) has also allowed us to have two free ten-minute phone calls each month while these visitation restrictions are in place.

I would like to extend a sincere thank you to the administration, staff, and inmate workers here in CTCF who are going the extra mile in these uncertain times. Hopefully we are all doing our part in ensuring that we stay safe and healthy while we wait out this virus.

THE INSIDE REPORT WOULD LIKE TO THANK STAFF AND RESIDENTS FOR THE SUPPORT IN A TIME OF HARDSHIP



BY JOHN EDMONDS / FCF

Music comes from many origins in many styles, and variations are grouped and subdivided into genres. Along with the general sound, instrumentation, and rhythms of a particular genre come other social elements. Faithful followers identify with these, and include fashion of clothes, politics, religion, and even automobiles. Music shapes, and is shaped by, these social elements often while extolling opposing ideas.

Religious leaders, political

propagandists, and social reformers, amongst others, understand that music's power comes from the common thread beneath the style of sound—shared human experience. Banjos and beat boxes have harmonized cries against social injustice, Stradivarius and Stratocasters accompany expressions of the most intimate emotions. Various genres of music (country, rap, bossa nova, classical, tribal, rock, gypsy, etc.) are simply alternate packages for the thoughts, feelings, beliefs, hopes and fears of our lives.

People are often united by common experiences but fail to realize it because they're divided by the unfamiliar appearances. Experiencing a different genre helps us to understand human experience in a different context. We may not agree with all of it, but understanding and agreement aren't the same, one is a function of education, the other a function of opinion.

History has proven that truly exceptional music will escape the limitations of its own genre to be experienced and understood by ordinary minds in another. Thus, the reciprocal is true, a truly exceptional mind will escape the limitations of its own genre to experience the ordinary music of another.

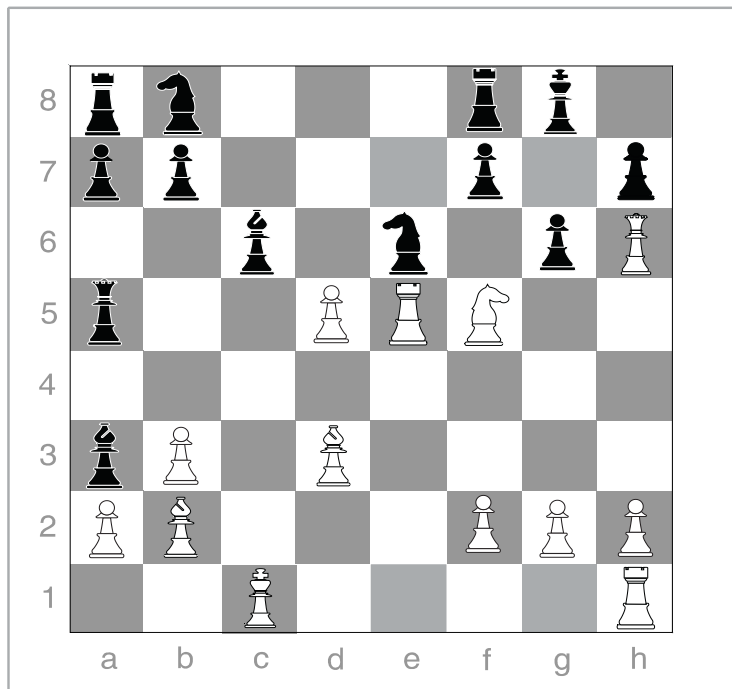
Chess Tactician

Studying chess tactics can help you visualize a sequence of moves to gain an advantage over your opponent. "What one does not see the other does."

To solve these chess puzzles, use a chessboard to help assist you in figuring out the sequential moves for the checkmate. If white moves first, then black will move next until you figure out the checkmate.

This example is not part of the puzzles below, use a chessboard or in your mind to figure out the problem: 1. Qa6 x Nb7; 2. Rb8 x Qa6.

PUZZLE #1 ★★★★★



White to move... Checkmate in 4 moves.

Brain Mashing Sudoku Puzzle # 1

	9	6		4			3	
	5	7	8	2				
1			9			5		
		9		1				8
5								2
4				9		6		
		4			3			1
				7	9	2	6	
	2			5		9	8	

Brain Mashing Sudoku Puzzle # 2

		7				9		8
	3		1	7				4
					6			
6	9	8	7	4		3		
		3		1		4		
		1		3	9	7	6	2
			4					
9				5	1		4	
4		5				1		

The Inside Report encourages residents, custody staff, volunteers and others outside the institution to submit articles.

Submissions will become property of The Inside Report.

Please use the following criteria when submitting:

Limit your articles to 300 to 1500 words.

Featured Artist's bio's keep word count 100 to 150 words.

Articles will be edited for content and length.

The Inside Report will not be used as a medium to file grievances.

We encourage submitting articles that are newsworthy and encompass issues that will have an impact on the prison populace.

Poems and artwork (cartoons and drawings) are welcomed.

The Inside Report does not return original works, please contact your Facility Liaison on the procedure to submit copies of original works.

Do you have a talent for cartooning, puzzles, or games?

Submit your artwork to The Inside Report through your facility liaison

3050 LIFE

THE RAP SHEET

In honor of Mother's Day

I Made A Toilet Paper Rose
I'm Sending It To My Mom

Mailed UPS

I Love My Rose

Sorry Son
I Gotta Go
I Need To Use
The Bathroom
Call Again Soon
Love You

Happy Mothers Day, Mom

Love You Mom

OOPS! Out of Toilet Paper

BY IVAN STAMPS / FCF

Tell Us About the Educational & Vocational Programming at Your Facility

The Inside Report wants to hear from you about... Any new, exciting or ongoing opportunities in educational programming where you reside. We want to highlight successful completions, valued teachers, excelling students, and state-of-the-art programs that represent the shifting attitude toward moving forward in life.

4th of July

BY TREVOR JONES
IR Journalist

The Fourth of July is the day the Citizens of the United States of America celebrate the independence of their county from the political bonds which previously existed between them and the British Empire. This date is the recognized day upon which the country's ultimate founders declared independence, which declaration is marvelously made, explained and defended in the "Declaration of Independence." Many of those who contributed to this document also labored, over a decade later, to create a new nation with a Constitution and Bill of Rights. The provisions in those documents allows the publication of this document (IR). The nation has struggled ever since the ink dried on these documents to understand and apply their grand notions (or correct the not so grand notions written into them—a freedom and process which was also written into them). In time, the Star Spangled Banner, our Flag, came to be the logo, or representative, of these ideals and the people which live under them. In time also, many men and women had to sacrifice their lives to promote, protect or equitably apply these ideals.

This year's celebration is different than it has been known in the recent past. Limited fire work displays and minimized crowds are all in the "new normal," but they take nothing away from the meaning of the celebrations. With all that the people of this land are experiencing, for good and bad, there has been a new appreciation for simplicity, for family, and for hard fought contests against those things which are oppressive. The adjacent artwork by Andrew Montano honors the realities and reminds the viewers of them, and much more, all the while the work continues for that "more perfect union" for the remarkably diverse citizens of it.



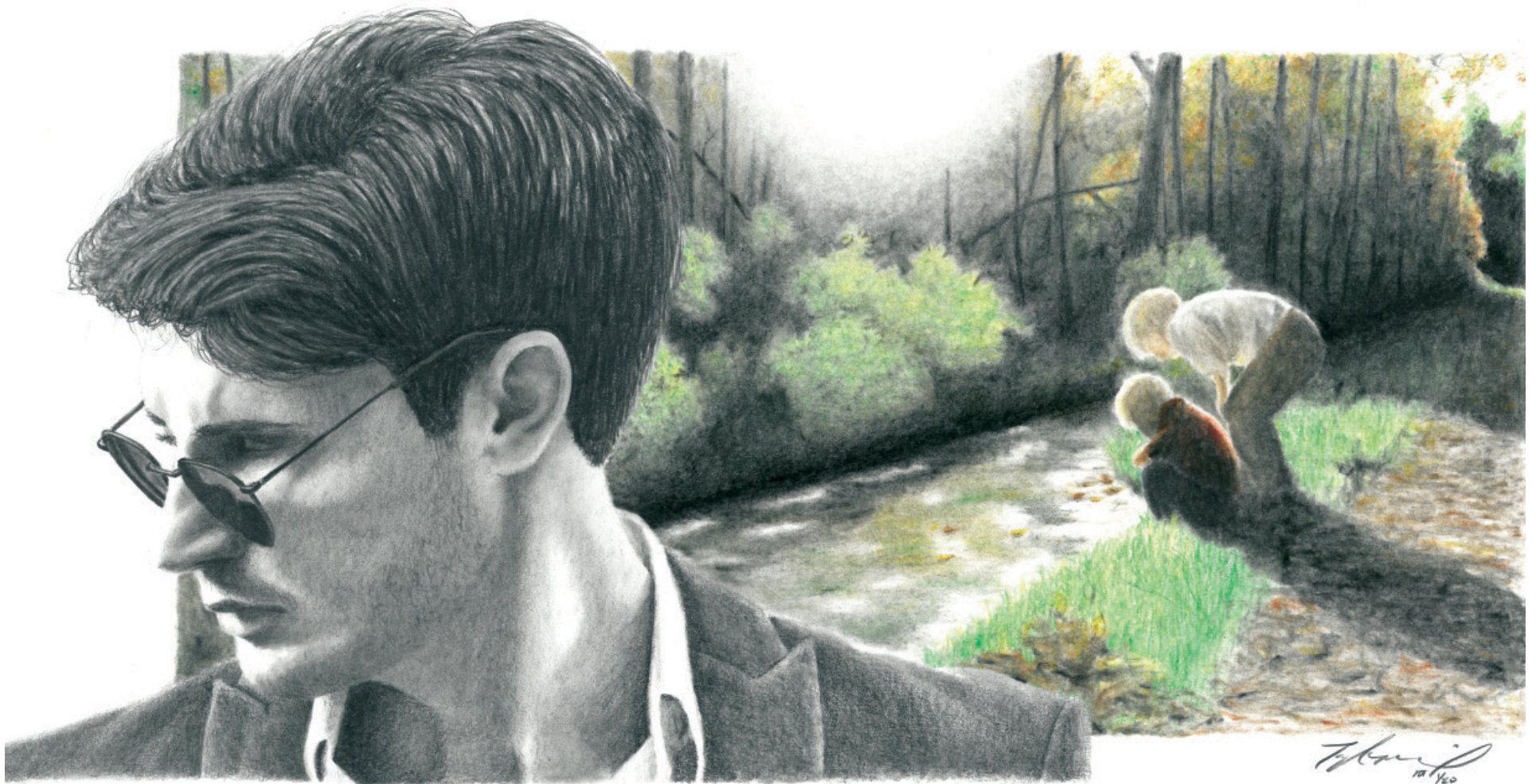
Artist is Andrew Montano currently residing at CCCF.
Art medium is colored pencil.



Artist is Andrew Montano currently residing at CCCF.
Art medium is colored pencil.

FEATURED ARTIST

Joseph McGill



Colored pencil and graphite mixed medium by Joseph T. McGill / IR Image Editor

FEATURED ARTIST SUBMISSION - INCLUDE ARTIST BIO WITH ART

ARTIST BIO:

AGE? WHERE WERE YOU BORN?
WHERE DID YOU GROW UP?
HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN CREATING ART?

ARTIST STATEMENT:

WHAT INSPIRED THIS PIECE?
WHAT TECHNIQUES DID YOU USE?
ANY TIPS YOU'D LIKE TO SHARE WITH OUR READERS?

PROFILE QUESTIONS:

WHAT WAYS IS CREATING ART SOOTHING FOR YOU?
WHAT AREAS WOULD YOU LIKE TO IMPROVE AS AN INDIVIDUAL ARTIST?

ATTENTION: COMMUNICATE WITH YOUR FACILITY LIAISON IN ORDER TO GET YOUR ARTWORK SCANNED WITH A COMPLETED MEDIA RELEASE FORM