

Hell Behind Prison Walls

Shams, charades, and circus from 25 years of instructing inmates.

Hell Behind Prison Walls is the story of a Vocational Instructor teaching and working for twenty-five years in a New York Prison system.

This author talks about his experiences of being locked away in an all-male, maximum security prison, the Elmira Correctional Facility. This prison is well known as one of the worst and more dangerous prisons in New York State.

John Pecchio says, "One must look at prisons as a small town isolated from civilization. They are infested with fear, greed, ignorance, manipulation, and power."

Lawmakers passing humanitarian laws for prisoners without knowing the impact of them, prison officials eager to pacify prisoners, by catering to their demands, and rehabilitation programs directed only at learning a trade leaves the prisoner in control of the prison, uncomforted by a lack of personal discipline, the same thing which brought the prison to his sad state of unlawfulness to begin with.

The result is a situation where prison employees' needs are ignored, inmates' Civil Rights take administrative precedence over all else, and the administrators play a political game of offending everyone but the prisoners. It is a nightmare of shames, charades, and circus.

To deal with murders, rapists, drug pushers, and mentally disturbed prisoners wandering freely throughout the compound unguarded, who can attack you at a moment's notice, is enough to send chills up and down your spine.

The prison system should be designed to instill personal discipline, and to instill inmate personal discipline responsibility to their dependents and to society.

Prisons should have facilities to gainfully employ prisoners on a daily basis to produce goods and services marketable to society at large. Their salaries should be used first to pay for the support in prison and then to support their dependents and/or for victims' benefits.

A daily routine of strict military-type training will enforce and teach self-discipline out of which respect for authority and society can arise.

The high rate of recidivism disclosed that feel good rehabilitation efforts are a sham. The control by prisoners of the environment of our prisons disclosed the charade of who is in charge. The self-serving games of politics and career protection required of administrators and employees to survive under existing circumstances create a circus of egos.

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