

Gahrad Harvey

December 27, 2004

Dear John

I have read your book "Hell Behind Prison Walls" with great interest. I saw an article in the Press-Enterprise of Bloomsburg, PA several months ago. The article drew my interest to purchase the book. My wife and I were in a bookstore in the Columbia Mall in Bloomsburg when I saw your book on display. I requested she purchase it as a Christmas present for me. She did. Christmas Day evening, I read the book from cover to cover.

I spent 13 1/2 years working for the Pennsylvania DOC (Department of Corrections) as an Arts & Crafts teacher. My primary task was teaching cabinetmaking. Not every year was hell as you experienced; however, much of what you described is exactly what almost every employee is subjected to on the job with DOC.

Pennsylvania is just as bad as the New York system and getting worse. My years from 1999 to 2004 were my hell years; although, the worst time was from 2000 to 2002. I was royally put through the ringer. I have learned that unions are basically useless; except, they take your money with promises that never come true. They are in bed with management at the top levels. As a state employee, you have absolutely nowhere to turn for help. I retired in June of this year. It took about two weeks for reality to settle in; however, the first day that I was retired it felt good not having to punch a time clock and begin to watch my back for a staff member or especially an administrator that was going to stab me or relieve me of my job. We weren't allowed to be one minute late to punch the clock. That is another story. It is wonderful to be FREE!

I must close because I am meeting a former college for lunch today. I wanted to take these few minutes to make contact with you. I appreciated the fact that someone who was associated with the system has told his story of abuse to the public. I believe there are more of us who need to be telling it too.

Gahrad Harvey

Bloomsburg, PA