
THERE MUST BE SOME MISTAKE

Just Another Casual Casualty
of the Drug War



By Brian Wright

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Dedicated to:

*All American law enforcement professionals who
uphold their oath of office and refuse to take part
in any violations of the Bill of Rights or of the
Sacred Nonaggression Principle*

*Anyone who does anything for pleasure
to indulge his selfish soul
will surely burn in Hell.*

—
Lenny Bruce

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FOREWORD

The publication of this essay on Lulu stems from a delayed realization of what my humble story of being modestly pummeled by the Drug-Prohibition System (DPS) back in the 1990s might mean to others. Particularly to multitudes who have suffered imprisonment, and worse, for their own consensual (victimless) “crimes”... drug-related or not.

Many DPS victims are like me: white middle class occasional marijuana meddlers who were in the wrong place at the wrong time. But the greatest number of victims of drug prohibition are the poor, the powerless, and, yes, the minorities. They get the hardest time, and get beat up—figuratively and literally—the worst.

I’m not asking for sympathy on account of my own experience (though it was awful). Rather, please view my story as a sardonic account of just how bad it can be, *especially* for the millions of others who have had their lives destroyed by the DPS. Most of these individuals have no voice. Humbly I dedicate my story to *them*.

A word on authenticity. Yes, what I describe really happened; I could never have made it up. Some names and places have been changed as a barrier to further police-state criminality. *bw*

1: HOUSTON ROADKILL

It was late August 1998, and I couldn't put it off any longer.

Time to stand in line for Texas, get a driver's license. Having already experienced the rigmarole of car registration with Harris County and been soaked for the Texas sales tax (~\$650) on a vehicle leased in Michigan, I just want to get the whole bureaucratic mess behind me.

Similar to the county clerk, these folks at the motor vehicles department (DMV) have their panties in a bunch about extracting Social Security numbers from you. Whatever. So I give them some proof-of-SS stubs and write my numbers in the boxes of their form in firm, bold strokes. Immediately the clerk sends the form to a scanner.

The reason I know it goes straight to a scanner is because as I leave—I have a smile on my face because I'm finally done with this crap and even took a decent picture—a large black trooper, fully accessorized in the Lone Star law-enforcement package, i.e. Stetson hat, cowboy boots, Colt Border Patrol .357 Magnum, and bulletproof vest, stands in front of me pointing emphatically to the right:

“Come this way.”

“Thanks, but I don’t need a driving test today,” I counter.

From his stern demeanor, it’s clear something of more importance than a driving test is on the agenda. So with a quick jolt of primal apprehension my mind races into the realm of things I might have done that could generate unpleasant system attention... IRS? Red Squad? Donut Pilferage?”

“Damn!” I know what it is.

Trooper Roy asks me my name again, then indicates he has a record in the LEIN (Law Enforcement Interstate Network) database that matches. To make a long story short, the SS# has drawn a hit on me for an outstanding arrest warrant from Michigan. Knowing they publicly justify their SS# fetish by nabbing out-of-state deadbeat dads I tell him there’s no way I’m a deadbeat, I don’t even have kids.

“There must be some mistake.”

Bo’ you in a heap o’ trouble.

While Trooper Roy is checking it out, he makes special seating arrangements for me in the DMV office. The handcuff to the steel folding chair symbolizes the new relationship I would have with the state of Texas for the next few days: unwilling guest, varying degrees of discomfort, caged or tethered in proximity to hard surfaces.

Hard surfaces for a hardened criminal. “Drugs and guns,” basically felony possession charges for which the search warrant was tainted and the arrest warrant, as far as anyone knew, had never been issued. It’s a long story, and we’ll get into it later, but the actual “crime” had occurred 6½ years ago! Obviously, some Michigan official had finally written up a warrant and recently put it into the LEIN.

So on account of some presumably malicious blunder, here I wait, a fugitive from justice, 1400 miles away... waiting for the bailiff to come and cart me away to the Harris County Jail. “Look, trooper”—I have quickly discerned these DMV officers see themselves as military special-forces types and like to be called troopers—“how about I just go out to my car and get a few things?”

No dice.

Roy’s mind also enters a more agitated state when he reads the official charges from the warrant. The pitch of his voice rises and even shakes some as he’s asking me questions.

Like *he’s* nervous.

My one phone call, to a coworker (who might be able to get my car from the lot, hence avoid its impoundment), goes to his answering machine. Internally, my adrenaline-drenched central nervous system has gone into full-tilt panic, and I

can barely point and grunt, much less generate full sentences.

Eventually the bailiff arrives in his county car and strolls amiably into the office. Trooper Roy is a big man, but this “County Mouny of Fetching and Toting” I thought was a tree, easily 6’8” and 350# and not chubby either, a giant. I’m referrin’ to him as Trooper *Sir*. Then Sir, Roy, and Roy’s supervisor start chewing the fat, talking about the wives, girlfriends, jobs, partying, working out, etc.

After maybe 25 minutes, during which I’m just sitting there cuffed to the chair, dry-throated, wide-eyed, like a dead fish on a rope, trying to mentally adjust to what is obviously going to be a very bad day, Sir decides it’s time to mosey with his charge. But he does put on the cuffs with deft consideration, clamping them *in front*.

The rear seat behind the bulletproof plastic is small and your legs have to crook and go sideways. For me, 5’10” and 180#, it’s like sitting horizontal in a telephone booth. But I can hear through small holes in the Plexiglas and, with some pulmonary exertion, actually breathe the stale, humid Boomtown air making its way languidly rearward from the A/C.

Sir gives me the surreal courtesy of piping in public radio at 80 decibels for the half hour it takes to drive me to the Jail Annex at 701 N. San

Jacinto. Even if I want to chat, or if he could hear me, I figure he probably exhausted his scintillating repartee on his buds at the DMV, and is now wholly focused on world affairs with Nina Totenberg and “All Things Considered.”

And considering all things, I’m thinking: “Geez. How’m I gonna pay my bills? Keep my job, get paid? Who will draft my fantasy football team in Michigan. And mostly, how the hell do I get out of here and when?”

In a way I’m lucky not to have any family in the area. It would be nice to have some close people to call here, though it would upset them. And it could be a lot worse, too: What if I’m the single father of a small child due home from school? What if I have a wife who needs me? A sick mother? A barmaid via my absence now facing unemployment? Pets? Plants?

Sorry Charlie, when the system takes you down you’re pretty much out. Say your prayers for anyone or anything depending on you.

In the criminal justice system apprehension and transport provide you with some variety: someone might think they got it wrong and let you go, the cops can be friendly or annoying little pissants, you’re moving around sometimes, occasionally outside, escape is even a remote

possibility. I mean you're not free, but at least you're in transit somewhere.

When, however, you reach the actual place of steel bars and concrete, everything forward is a locked-down process, excruciatingly boring, unyielding and systematic ... not for a moment to imply rational or efficient. The preliminaries—appearing briefly before a magistrate (required for show of due process), fingerprints, checking in your stuff, answering some questions for filling out forms, getting some papers—are perfunctory.

The fundamental jail-entry process is a multi-hour period of moving from one crowded concrete-block and grated-steel enclosure to another. When you move, and with what select group of detainees, is totally random and arbitrary.

You will pass through approximately three milestones leading to the ultimate objective of getting a bunk with a mat: 1) shower and uniform, 2) a formal hearing in court, and 3) medical interview and assignment to a cell block. In between each of these milestones you move several times to different holding cells—I easily marched to 15 to 20 cells and only repeated one or two of them.

This is when the system starts the psychological war against you, too. When you're

moving from holding tank to holding tank, you keep thinking or hearing rumors that *this* is the cell from which you will directly get your uniform or whatever-next milestone. And when you first get there, sometimes there are only a few of you, so you can stretch out and maybe get some Zs.

But it takes forever to reach a milestone. Further, the random number generator keeps sending new groups of detainees into your holding tank. And before long it's like the Star Trek episode where no one on the planet believes in birth control; you can hardly find a spot to sit, even on the floor.

Naturally, you tend to strike up conversations with the normal-looking guys who speak English. When you're in line to transfer between holding tanks the guards don't want you to talk, but in the tank it's okay provided it doesn't get too loud. Which is fine with me, too, because often I want sleep, don't want no jive crackheads or pontificating rednecks carrying on in loud tones.

You begin to get an idea of the cross-section of people who have been caught in the web. There's obviously a basis for conversation, i.e. "...man, does this suck, what'd they get you for?" A few DWIs, some spouse-abuse types, lots of small-time drug possessors or traders, petty transgressors of firearms laws, parole/probation

violators, several DWBHS (driving while black or Hispanic), and a jaywalker or two.

Just kidding about the jaywalkers. Not much though. One guy, call him the Baleful Turk, though he is perhaps an immigrant from some other Middle-Eastern country, has a remarkable story. Seems he, his wife, and their four-year-old daughter are leaving a department store, when, unbeknownst to the parents the girl grabs a video from a display stand and tosses it in their bag.

Store alarms go off and the manager calls in one of Houston's finest. Convinced the act was intentional and unimpressed by the Turk's obvious professional standing (master's degree, civil engineer for a local firm), he hauls them in. Mom and Dad go to their respective sides of the jail for processing, and the terrified, screaming kid gets shuttled to some other Harris County bureaucratic pit for protective custody. The Turk is frantic and in tears.

So what kind of system lets some wannabe-Nazi cop and his jailer buddies rip apart a family over an inadvertently displaced copy of *The Lion King*?! Later, after getting uniforms, the Turk is finally able to arrange bond and get the flock out of here. Had to be about 10 hours for them though. Welcome to Amerika.

Meanwhile, I'm still only halfway through the first drill. The uniforms are comical, obviously part of the "psy war:"

Orange, they consist of a pocketless short-sleeve, heavy-cotton pullover shirt and pocketless pants. The pants have elastic waistbands in varying degrees of disintegration, and in many cases the bands have given way entirely and the separated sections have been ingeniously though crudely kept together with what looks like rope from a mop. On the back is stenciled "Harris County Jail," in case you escape and people mistake you for a deranged hospital orderly.

I'm lucky in that my pants will stay up without having to tie any knots in them and the shirt doesn't have too many holes in it. The hard plastic sandals are another story:

[One thing you need to do if you expect imminent incarceration by Amerika: wear "tennis shoes" (Nikes, Reeboks, etc.) and white socks. They let you keep only tennis shoes for footwear. This custom may have started with letting some of the more prideful brothers keep their Air Jordans. Whatever the origin, keeping your own shoes and socks is hugely preferable to standard issue.]

The sandals are elevated at the heel, and it's difficult to lift your feet to walk in a normal fashion. What you do is shuffle along trying to

minimize the chafing of the wide hard-plastic strap that rides over the top of your bare foot. Socks are not standard issue, and neither for that matter is underwear. I learn later that underwear you can order every Wednesday from the commissary once you reach your cellpad.

WEDNESDAY, 8/27 (1998)

It's Wednesday morning now, and I figure for sure I'll be reaching the cellpad in a few hours. I've been marched around all night, since six o'clock p.m. Tuesday, meeting new guests, striking up an occasional conversation, seeing them come and go depending on the holding-tank roulette.

I even manage to catch some cold-concrete-floor shuteye maybe fifteen fitful minutes at a time. Shortly after the longest stretch of sleep, about 0700, we get roused for the court hearing, which is actually a more formal arraignment process in my case. Seven of us are accommodated in this cold, dank, dismal ~ 20'x20'x20' anteroom with iron-clad walls and an iron bench.

A tall, lanky guy is in here shaking from the cold. Has a bad back, and in fact that's what got him here. He was taking Vicodin®, the only painkiller that worked for him, but it had an

unsuspected side effect of causing some erratic driving. So a Houston police professional nabs him, thinking it's a DWI case, and brings him down to the pokey. Like he needs to be *here* for sure.

Partly because I feel sorry for this guy, and partly because I'm cold, too, I decide to look into some relief. From this chamber you can see out to an office through a narrow slit of bullet-proof glass, and I position myself near this opening, knocking on the door. The officer walks over.

"Sir, would it be possible to turn up the thermostat in here? It's freezing and one of the guys is really suffering."

Well, I'll tell you.

This guy's ears start spewing little steam puffs. I thought this oversized oinker was going to take his oversized pistol off his oversized butt and either pistol-whip or shoot me. He did mutter something about never speaking to him again unless somebody dies in there.

Friggin' herder cops!

Anyway, our time to go before the judge finally comes. We have attained the status of petitioners in a courtroom, so naturally we are shackled and cuffed together. Walking in a line wearing these goofy orange pajamas. Several people fill the courtroom benches, along with the

judge and prosecutors in front, and various defense attorneys, mostly court-appointed.

The judge proceeds through each case. My grasp of the technicalities of the session is a little loose, but basically it's a form of disposing of you until a trial or plea agreement can be arranged. If bail is admissible, then the judge will determine how much and arrangements will be made, then you will be released until the formal preliminary court hearing.

My case is not a good one for getting bailed. Technically, I'm a fugitive charged with two felonies from a different state, and my only choice is to fight extradition or to accept it. If I fight, bail is permissible until the preliminary hearing, but my court-appointed lackey-attorney informs me it means giving ~\$50,000 to the state of Texas, with "right-now" money of ~\$10,000.

The irony is that the system has caught me just a few weeks before I expect to take a new contract back in Michigan. I had planned to give notice to my current Houston client and Dallas consulting firm in a couple of days.

I can't realistically make bail and so according to state law, Texas can keep me in jail for 45 days before the Guv (former coke-head and party-prince GW Bush) even gets to hear my appeal. Plus, there would be the attorney fees, the

attempt to find one—I hardly know anyone outside of work—, and so on. I doubt I can make much of a case anyway, certainly not from jail.

The choice is easy: extradition. The public defender recommends this course, too, and hands me his business card. Naively, I assume I'll be able to contact him for free legal advice down the line. The bunch of us that had collected in the antechamber, then the courtroom, now resume routine entry processing in the jail proper.

WEDNESDAY, 0900

Now that we have jail clothing, one might wonder about food and drink, sanitary provisions, and other basics. Well, during this prep phase, they figure you're going to be here a while, so whatever holding tank you're in gets a bag containing bologna sandwiches and peanut butter and jelly sandwiches. No napkins, and the beverage requires a stroll to the water fountain.

As for the sanitary thing, the stainless steel crapper(s) give one all the privacy of an open air latrine except for the open-air part. My recollection is in half the holding tanks a small amount of toilet paper was available. You sure don't want to be really sick in here or have a bad case of the runs (and obviously you don't want anyone else to have these problems either).

So the day wears on, going from tank to crowded tank, I'm thinking any time I'll arrive at the cellpad and actually have a soft surface to sleep on. Aside from the discomfort an incredible tedium grinds you down. But I do keep meeting interesting people. One of the young Hispanics strikes up a conversation:

“Hey mon, wha’ ju in for? Ju know somethin’, ju look jus’ like Carlito..., in Carlito’s Way.”

I was wearing my prescription blue-tinted shades when they so rudely apprehended me at the DMV. Apparently one possible advantage of not having my regular glasses is some of the esteemed guests here think I have that tough criminal-enterpriser look. I explain my situation, he asks animatedly how much weed you can get from a Phototron system. I tell him what I remember.

I also ask him, “Why the hell do these pretend DMV cops in Houston strap those big .357 cannons on their hips and wear bullet-proof vests, especially when it’s so damned hot?”

“Man, mos’ people here hate the pigs.”

Somewhere in the afternoon from one of the larger holding tanks we visit with a medical professional: a frail, pleasantly comatose elderly lady in a nurse outfit who outlines the procedure for acquiring aspirin and asks if we have a

medical condition. I tell her a nerve in my leg bothers me and also my back is a little sore now from all the concrete; “I was taking Ibuprofen.”

“You can also get that from the commissary. Next.”

By early evening the holding tanks are varying their appearance. Nothing that overwhelms you, but you’re not repeating any. The herder cops stand you in more lines along new corridors, and an occasional internal guard shack appears here and there housing the more-sedentary monitor-cops. Plus we’re rising to higher floors.

At a point before actually reaching the cellpad, I strike up a conversation with a white guy who’s been in the system previously, and in fact has gone to the state prison at Huntsville. So what’s it like? Apparently, it has some advantages to the county because most of the guys perform work and are not constantly confined in a cell.

It seems violence is normally not a problem if you exercise a little caution and are fortunate enough to avoid being locked up in proximity to big, mean, crazy fucks. Here, in the whole time it’s taken to be processed, I saw three or four out of 400 or 500 guys who had that unfazed psycho aspect. Anyway, at Harris County the herder and

monitor droids keep pretty close watch, and would prevent most assaults they weren't taking part in.

Some of my cohorts have been in here before: one brother in particular, a worn-down thin man in his 50s. I conclude he prefers the county jail to whatever homeless shelter or street chamber he inhabits otherwise. I ask him a few questions and he's a veritable fountain of knowledge on how the Harris County system works.

“They keep the jail full because the county gets a bunch of state money for it.”

That's a fairly common refrain among the population: your state tax dollars at work for your county tax dollars. At midnight Wednesday in subdued light, walking into the cellpad with a pillow and blanket like a kindergartner late for his nap, I finally reach what will be my home for the next six days.

2: HARRIS COUNTY HILTON

Some faint conversation in the background, almost everyone is sleeping; two rows of double bunks and some overflow cots bring the total occupancy to about 40. I get an upper bunk next to a wall and climb up carefully, close to exhaustion. I really need this semi-soft surface to catch up on the sleep missed over the past 30 friggin' hours of crawling over concrete floors.

Turns out tonight is an unusually quiet midnight. A brother two bunks down is awake and asks me what I did.

"Grew some weed in a closet, had an illegal gun... in Michigan."

"Man, they ain't going to come to get you for that."

"Dunno." And I'm out.

THURSDAY, 8/28

About 0300 the lights come on, a guard wakes us up with an announcement over the intercom, and some trustees wheel in racks containing trays of food. This is universally referred to as "chow," and chow is an apt term; it's a nondescript mass with low nutritional value on which to chew. As for being fed at this unusual hour, I don't have that figured out yet.

So everyone gets up. I mistakenly step down on the bunk below me, narrowly missing the head of the individual there still ensconced. He is not happy with this literal *faux pas* of mine and expresses his displeasure in unmistakable terms. He is also a large black man not as big as Trooper Sir but maybe 6'6" and 250#, who I later learn goes by the name Big Boy.

"Hey, man, I'm really sorry, really, really... "

He slowly, reluctantly half-accepts the apology and I come away with a useful point of cellpad etiquette: "Don't Tread on He." Geez, last time I slept in a bunk bed was with my brother when we were kids; I think there we had a proper ladder. These bunks are 3'x6' steel shelves connected by angle iron. Getting to the top bunk requires a semiathletic maneuver.

So that was breakfast. Afterward, most of the guys are awake and dialoging up a storm. Difficult to sleep. I check out the sanitary facilities, which are Spartan: one communal crapper—a handmade sign says "Shiter (sic) only, no pissin"—, two pissers, and a shower in the corner with a four-foot-high concrete modesty wall.

"Privacy? Privacy? You got no stinkin' privacy!"

Back to the mat, this time being very careful of how I place my feet. More sleep for me, even though the general population is boisterously awake. The next chow time is 1000, and again the message comes over the intercom after which everyone stands in line to get his tray. Unlike roll call these mealtimes are optional, so no rule prevents you from ignoring them.

But I sense this is lunch and everyone will be active now for the day. Time to get up and start figuring out how things work here. One thing I notice fairly quickly is there isn't much to do. The common area has two concrete and steel picnic tables, in the top of which are embedded checkerboard patterns.

You can get a box of chess pieces and checkers, and some of the guests are playing those. There is another steel table without the checkerboards, occupied with a dominoes game, at the end of which are socks, t-shirts, and underwear drying, hanging off the bench edges. A few tenants are reading the Houston Chronicle, delivered daily, but there's a distribution pecking order of slow readers, so most of us get old news.

I begin to work my way into the social system. A lot of primal socializing is associated with barter, particularly trading food. At lunch, someone offers me an apple for this drippy

hockey-puck sweet roll, which I take him up on. (I have decided to angle for the most healthful food I can, and eventually even learn to properly peel and eat oranges!)

Some chess, dominoes. Then I start rapping a little with one of the brothers, Irwin Jones, who seems to have the King Rat position—*King Rat* being the famous movie starring George Segal as a WWII POW who flourishes through wheeling and dealing in a Japanese prison camp—within the cellpad. He's asking me if I could use a pair of socks. Hell yes.

He's just going to give me the socks, though they're on the short, thin side. The expectation is when I leave, he'll get the majority of the stuff I have to leave behind. No problem.

"Could I get a pen and some paper somewhere?" A cheap pen and three sheets of paper cost me a chocolate milk, which someone tells me I paid too much for.

Irwin is an artist of sorts, using a lot of his commissary resources to purchase handkerchiefs, cardboard items, and ballpoint pens. He then creates ink sketches on the handkerchiefs and cardboard mostly of a Christian theme—Jesus in the manger, Jesus teaching, Jesus admonishing the moneychangers, Jesus on the cross, and so on—

and colors them using extreme pressure. Breaks lots of pens.

Irwin, too, is a long-timer, but I never do find out his transgression. My guess is his sentence is a few more months, and for something like shoplifting or reading bad poetry in the Galleria, then “resisting arrest.” Houston cops are big in the news, just a few days ago six of them gunning down (and killing) an unarmed Mexican teenager on whom they found traces of marijuana.

Regarding basic necessities, you need to get a commissary order in by Wednesday of the week, and that's when I was all caught up in entry-processing. Then the commissary fills the order on Thursday, which is today. Not good for me, but when the order arrives today for the others, it's like winning the lottery at Christmas.

And I notice how loud it gets in general, not just when there's a party going on. Particularly, now that I decide to use the telephones. Yes there are telephones, three of them, two of which actually function. A detainee can make as many collect calls as he wants—calls do not come in, they only go out—and whoever you contact gets this banner message in an automated, loud officious male voice:

"This is a collect call from the Harris County Jail... (subliminally implying "from a nefarious criminal." To accept the charges, press *"

Mom hardly expects is to get a call from the jail, and she has no clue of the particular incident back in Michigan behind all this. But she has long been dimly aware of my political notions and of my antipathy toward the state in general. So eventually figuring out the key to push, she picks up on the second call, imagining it could at least be a friend of mine.

"Hi, Mom. Well, geez, you're not going to believe this, but ..."

Really depressing. I'm telling her the circumstances that led to my confinement, then I try to remember some telephone numbers for people I had planned to be visiting up there in three days.

Poor Mom. This can't be easy for her either. She's back in Michigan and 72 years old, trying to get all the instructions right, press the right keys, talk to the right people, etc. Worrying about me.

"No, Mom, it doesn't really seem dangerous in here or anything. Just boring and noisy. I get to watch a lot of TV, particularly all those black sitcoms I missed the first time. Everyone seems to get along all right."

Eventually, I get her to look up some telephone numbers then to ask for one of my fellow fantasy football owners, then have her indicate to those guys to tell the others that I'll need a substitute for draft day because I'm "detained" in Houston.

Then I ask her to call the secretary of the company where I work in downtown Houston. I had planned to give them a month's notice tomorrow, but now I have no idea when I can even get back to my desk.

"Tell her I have some legal problems, and it'll be a few days."

Then I try to reach my court-appointed attorney, but no one takes the collect call there. Duh. Man, if you're a jailbird and the only help you have is a public defender, you have prospects of remaining in jail for quite a while.

It's mostly too loud for making phone calls, and when it isn't loud the telephones tend to be monopolized by certain individuals. The guys who stay on the phones longest are usually your basic hillbilly sort with an old lady they beat up and to whom they now intersperse a few sweet-nothings with a continuation of verbal abuse.

Generally the blacks, who make up about two-thirds of the population in this cellpad, are communicative and friendly enough. There are

exceptions to the nice-guy observation; this Islamic brother just scowls at me whenever we happen to make eye contact. And the three or four teenage crackheads seem oblivious to everyone and everything.

The language barrier isn't too wide between the brothers and me, but I'm all the time saying "Excuse me?" Usually they repeat what they were saying. The Hispanics are friendly, but have English problems. A few IQ-challenged skinhead types, who ironically disdain the "lower orders" are in here, too, and some good ol' boys who mostly become sociable as the stupor wears off.

FRIDAY, 8/29

Not a solid stretch of sleep last night.

"What you sayin' 'bout pimpin', you dunno nuttin' 'bout no pimpin', mah girls dey be da finest...

"I ain't sayin' you dunno nuttin' 'bout pimpin', jus' only dat mah man, Stanley, out west had an OPERATION goin'. An' he kep' his niggah ass outa jail, which *you* obviously ain't done yoSEF."

This turned into an extended and ultimately heated dialog with a number of others chiming in, including Big Boy, who it turns out has quite a comic flair. The participant who mentioned Stanley was newly arrived and lacked a few front

teeth, so he spoke in a distinctive manner easy to mock. Our local pimp took to calling this guy (who wasn't really named Stanley) Stannleeey, making fun of him, as did most of the others.

0300 chow, then at 0500 the guards do a roll call.

"Yo." "Yo." "Yo." ...

Roll call at 0500 is plain harassment, psy war. No way anyone can disappear in here and you sure can't get out. Concrete block on all sides except for some bulletproof glass and a door that exits to a central area where the guards staff an electronic control console inside a steel and bulletproof-glass enclosure. Vent-shaft grates are the size of an envelope.

Regularly scheduled activities? Three, if you don't count the infirmary:

- Religious services and study groups—Christian, Muslim, Jewish. If you're a Buddhist, or you believe in the Great Pumpkin, or you have a more unconventional religion, you're out of luck.

- Library visits—the library contains some legal material, but mainly Bibles and Christian literature, precious little else.

- Exercise sessions.

I volunteer to join an exercise session, just to get out of the cellpad. We go downstairs to this

non-airconditioned gym, where a volleyball net has been set up and a make-shift handball court set up off a section of wall. If you don't get into one of the games, you can walk around aimlessly absorbing Houston in deep summer.

Eventually an opening occurs on one of the volleyball teams and I play for half an hour, actually doing well enough to earn some attaboys from the veterans. This despite tromping around in the hard-plastic deck shoes, which have begun to draw blood on the top right foot. We file back to the cell after an hour and a half, drenched in sweat.

A shower would be fitting—forgot to mention that towels and sheets (in various stages of decay) are also standard issue, and the shower has soap and a brush—but just like when you use the crapper, you maneuver for a time when there's a routine dispersal of activity in the cellpad so as not to draw attention. At least with the shower you do have that modesty panel I mentioned earlier.

Most eschew the scheduled out-of-cell activities. TV-In-a-Box is on all the time, except when lights-out is officially called, and the brothers mainly control the program selection process. During the day it's the soap operas. Soaps is BIG.

There is virtually no theft, certainly nothing of your major *stuff*, which everyone keeps unsecured near their bunks. The social environment has a natural laissez-faire quality, a spontaneous order. Nobody tries to be a dictator. When it seems right to vote on something, like a TV program, we do it and accept the vote.

Heck, if you lived in this society, no one would put you away for smoking a joint or having a gun. They wouldn't draft you into the army or launch wars in your name or with your money. Wouldn't roust you for gambling or whoring, etc. I.e., they'd pretty much leave you alone.

As I told a friend later, "It may sound odd, but basically I think these guys are my kind of people."

Like Irwin, several others are absorbed with the Christian message, displaying high biblical understanding. And you have to admit there is an appeal and comfort in believing you have some father-figure or big brother in the sky who watches over you and cares about you personally ... especially under these circumstances or worse ones that can easily be imagined.

The absolute worst part of incarceration is loss of freedom: these massive impervious walls closing in on you. Confinement. Knowing there's a world out there but you can't get to it.

Something in the human soul has to at least *be able to* move without restraint in the fresh air, to feel the sun and see the sky. Not knowing whether I'll be here for 3 days or for 45 is excruciating.

I keep from falling apart by meditating a lot. Dial down my life force to conservation mode, refusing to panic or indulge emotions of outrage, hate, or anger, and empty the heart of desire for immediate freedom. Accept and relish the small things... like the fact that I'm breathing.

Reading. Books, good or even bad works of fiction, novels, long stories of people living in other worlds. Truly remarkable how excited one becomes finding a random piece of decent literature. It's scarce. Novels, anything that might fire the imagination or offer vicarious pleasure, are obstructed. Bibles on the other hand are friggin' everywhere.

Once a week is uniform cleaning. They call roll and you trade in your orange jammies, marking them with a pen in some way. The uniforms come back early in the morning (4:00 or 5:00 a.m.) in a damp pile, and we sort through it to find our stylish monogrammed threads. They dry to an array of dense wrinkles by afternoon.

WEEKEND, 8/30 AND 8/31

This hyperconversational brother arrived a day ago. Cousin of a star baseball player in the St. Louis organization, he's the one the others derisively are now calling Stanley. His family is fairly well-to-do even, but he made the mistake of picking up a hitchhiker years ago.

The hitchhiker wanted to stop at a party store, so while Stanley is parked outside the hitchhiker robs the store. Stanley doesn't know anything about it. They get caught. Texas justice, lousy court-appointed lawyer, sentence is 10 years.

After three years, Stanley is paroled and put on a tether. He throws the tether on a passing truck, then takes off to California for work. Pulled over for some car problem in California, he's arrested on the parole violation and after 45 days extradited to Texas. And now he's here, probably going to spend another year or two in jail.

Okay, so don't believe the story. I do, and it's representative. All I know is if you're looking for dangerous criminals who need to be put away for the safety of society, they ain't here. Mainly, the jail and prison system is a ruling-class trap for people who drew a bad set of cards or a holding pen for people who defy the ruling class.

HOME COMING

Little was I aware this Sunday would be my last night in the Harris County Hilton. It had already seemed like an eternity, and I was doubtful any of the narcocops in Michigan would care enough about a nothing case like mine to hustle down here to retrieve me for it.

So about 0500 Monday morning I awake to my name spoken over the intercom, with a mixture of astonishment, relief, and apprehension. This is it: they had come to get me, and I have only a few minutes to get my items together—a folder containing my papers, and the jammies on my back. Everything else, mainly just some nonperishable food items, pens, paper, soap, TP, I leave to Irwin.

For the past few days I've been troubling my mind with thoughts of what these narcs were going to do with me on the way back. I had an image of being cuffed and stuffed in the back of a van, beaten regularly with a battle mace, and showing up in the Oakland County jail three days later as a smelly—well, smellier—black and blue hulk.

It wasn't going to be like that. Two 30ish white middle-class, mild-mannered plainclothes cops driving a big airport-rental car show up at the check-out room. I assure the lead guy, "Hey, it

only *says* fugitive, I didn't know about the warrant and I'm sure as hell not dangerous."

Everything's cool. I'm even helping them with instructions to get back to the airport. We take a 727 from Houston Intercontinental to Detroit Metro. Cuffed in front while walking or in the car, but not cuffed on the plane—FAA regulations prohibit that. Walking through an airport with handcuffs escorted by cops just like in the movies. "Real badass comin' thru, hide away your sisters and daughters."

As we're leaving Metro, recognizing that it never hurts to pay a compliment to someone who might put in a good word for you with a judge, I say, "You guys aren't the drooling psychopaths I expected and I want you to know I appreciate that very much."

Another night in the slammer, this time my hometown Oakland County Jail. Like Houston, worse in some ways, better in others, smaller, just as crowded, less supervised, slightly more-menacing gang types. So through Monday night and into Tuesday I'm once again playing the holding-tank-sleep-on-concrete Mambo, until these escorts of mine from narcotics come back to the jail to take me to court.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 2

Today is the point of release, a lucky set of circumstances. Keep in mind, there are a lot of poor blokes in this jail, too, innocent victims of the state who got stuck mainly because they're nonwhite and/or poor.

One DWB (driving while black), a Chrysler worker picked up in West Bloomfield on a profile traffic stop, supposedly had an outstanding warrant from Wayne County. Wrong guy. So he was going to be let go, but he had to sit for **12 hours!!!** in this crowded exit tank until the paperwork cleared.

I'm fortunate to have managed to reach a Michigan attorney through calls to Mom and to my ex-wife, Arianna¹. He's Walt Falkowski, personal acquaintance, former beau of Ari's twin sister, and a former prosecutor who's now an occasional criminal defense attorney. I've known him for a while. He agrees to take the case.

Step one is arraignment before a magistrate for setting of bail.

¹ I'm using some pseudonyms and changing the names of some of the Michigan locations, and the times... mainly because I'm scared of the actual men who committed the real crime of arson—*especially* if they work for the state.

My ex—whatever caused us to drift apart, she’s always been there for me in my hour o’ need—and her sister Amy are there. They’ve arranged with Falkowski and Mom to get my brother and my two aunts from Battle Creek, along with themselves, to the 24th District Court in Pontiac.

This is an important show of moral support and community ties. Amy takes it on herself to get the correspondence from my original attorney which shows my genuine attempts to surrender back in ’92 and ’95 (in the absence of an actual warrant, merely a reasonable presumption of one).

Magistrate Janice Haviland presiding. As she reads incredulously through the warrants and the recent history of the case, my mind drifts back to the fateful day...

3: JANUARY 16, 1992

On the evening of Wednesday, January 16, 1992, at approximately 8:30 p.m., in the storage unit of Building 6, at the Plainview Apartment Complex in Drayton Plains, Michigan, one or more persons intentionally started a serious fire.

Minutes before, Anne Lewis, living on the second floor, heard loud, angry male voices and violent crashing sounds in or near the third-floor apartment directly above hers. Indeed, according to the fire report, she thought someone had broken the window of that overhead apartment. She went to her balcony and looked up.

She then smelled smoke, gazed down, and saw billows lapping up toward her window. Quickly, she called for help and while the fire trucks were on their way she worked frantically with the apartment manager and other residents to get everyone out of the building.

Thanks to these efforts, everyone who had been at home in their apartments that night made it to safety. One older woman in the adjoining set of apartments suffered severe smoke-inhalation and had to be helicoptered to an intensive care facility in Ann Arbor. She recovered, but had she been in the hallway minutes longer she'd have certainly perished.

Many firefighters that night were treated for smoke inhalation at Beaumont Hospital in Royal Oak. So was Jim DuPree, a well-known hyperactive Drayton Plains traffic cop and Walter Mitty wannabe. As officer DuPree was running to and fro without a mask, firefighters informed him that in a bedroom of the third-floor unit they had located a device growing marijuana.

When DuPree left the hospital early the next morning, he valiantly returned to the scene and dutifully called his buds at the State of Michigan Narcotics Enforcement Brotherhood (NEB), a county-wide, state-funded collection of rotating municipal cops specializing in investigating and/or busting people for, like, you know, “drugs.”

Without obtaining a search warrant, NEB detective sergeant Jeff Goodman, entered the premises, examined the growing system and made a determination that marijuana, indeed, was present. At that point, the apartment was identified as a “crime investigation scene” and sequestered along with the fire-damaged surroundings.

Early Wednesday morning, Goodman obtained a search warrant. With fellow narcs he ransacked this third-floor apartment, turning up an illegal firearm, some cannabis literature, a

3: January 16, 1992

Phototron growing device, and a handful of plants holding approximately a half-ounce of weed.

He left the search warrant and seizure report on the dining room table. Significantly, the charges on the search and seizure document were separated, one for “manufacture and/or delivery of a controlled substance” and the other for “short-barreled shotgun.”

ALIBI LOUNGE

On the evening of Wednesday, January 16, 1992, I’m working a little later than usual at my office in Northville, Michigan. I had agreed to help a friend with a resume, and because he lived in Warren, it would be a straight shot down I-696 and a quick trip if I waited until after rush hour. I get to Don Baylor’s place about 1900.

Don is at home with his wife Debbie. Over beers and other residue of the Christmas past, we labor a little bit at his existing brag sheet and come up with fairly good copy, which along with his drawing portfolio he will be presenting to the tank plant down the street. I leave around 2030.

I stop off briefly at a favorite West Bloomfield bar, then arrive at my unit at close to 2230. The yellow-taped area gives up the fact that a fire has occurred. A crowd mills about. My neighbor downstairs, Anne Lewis, majorly geeked

and all aflutter, tries to give me an idea of what's been happening.

“Where were you? It was exciting, we got all these people out. I almost fainted from the smoke. We were running and yelling, and the firemen got here really fast. You know somebody up there was *really loud* tonight, like having a fight.”

I'm trying to think, "What the hell, who could possibly have come by that evening? I don't have that many friends, certainly few who would drop by, and no enemies that I know of either. And nobody has a key." I make arrangements to spend the night elsewhere, and return to the scene late the next morning.

THREADING THE HIDDEN MAZE

The guy who escorts me in is fire-department cleanup. My plan is to gather up a few things, then see if some other friends or family can put me up for a while. The apartment is lost to smoke damage, which has made an acrid stench everywhere that's hard to bear even through the disposable breathing filter they give you. As I gaze around, it slowly registers that my crib has been ransacked.

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Then I see the search warrant and list of property seized on the dining room table, and I get that primal fear of apprehension in the pit of my gut. The growing system is gone along with the weapons (and some coins and other valuables that don't show up on the seizure list). Now I realize what this is all about and, shaking, I quickly put a few items in an athletic bag along with the search papers, aiming to get out of there fast.

My fire-person escort mentions some officials have come through and hauled out some things but "we don't have anything to do with those guys." He suggests I go down to the Drayton Plains police department and check it out. I think, yeah, right, and how 'bout *you* just go over to that balcony there and do a swan dive.

One of the men walking through the building, apparently a fire department employee, pulls a badge and asks me to stick around to talk with a fire investigator. My heart is in my throat but I say sure. I get to a phone in the temporary Red Cross unit, call work, return a call that my ex-wife has left with the fire department, and assure her I'm fine but may have some other problems.

The fire investigator, Riley Hughes, interviews me. He's polite simply inquiring where I was (Don's, W. Bloomfield bistro) and whether anyone has it in for me. (No.) As an

arson investigator Riley is no ball of fire just a county employee going through the routine motions of his crummy job. And that's fine with me at this point.

“Anything unusual you can think of?” he asks.

“Nope.”

I leave him and drive to work where I ask an esteemed colleague the name of his divorce attorney (I need a lawyer, any ol' lawyer, pronto). Hal Crockett is an old salt who knows the rules in the criminal world, too, and his assistant will handle the matter of contacting the detective and giving me up voluntarily upon service of the arrest warrant if/when one exists.

The next days are filled with insurance claims, removal and restoration of items from smoke damage, moving in with some friends for two weeks, and of course trying to find out the status of the arrest warrant.

WHO ACTUALLY TORCHED IT?

I remember going to the apartment that weekend with a friend to pick up some things. He's taking some boxes to the truck and casually asks two women who live downstairs across from the storage area:

“Anybody have an idea of what started this?”

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“We heard it was the cops.”

But as far as I know no official including NEB personnel or their boys have been considered suspects, nor has any work gone forward as to who the two (or more) men were near my apartment the night of the fire. I get a twinge of conscience, in case no one has mentioned these dudes to the fire investigator Hughes, and express my misgivings to Crockett:

“You know a lady almost died at that place. I’m thinking the reason NEB isn’t coming after me is they don’t want to open any investigation into their own activities that night, or activities of people who may have been working under their guidance or authority. I’m thinking of going back to Hughes, tell him what I’ve heard, maybe go to the newspapers about it.”

Hal, the veteran barrister, leans back slowly in his chair, then issues a carefully weighed response:

“Are you out of your fucking mind?!”

Well, as Ayn Rand says, “Morality ends where a gun begins,” and in this case maybe it ends where a fire begins. More collateral damage from the war on drugs. How many real crimes transpire without apprehension or punishment because potential witnesses feel they’ll reveal

some victimless crime for which *they* will be prosecuted?

After more contacts by the attorney with Goodman and others at NEB, no arrest warrant is forthcoming. They don't return calls. We get written notification of a forfeiture hearing on the guns, which there is no point in fighting. ***Three years later***, a "come-in" letter arrives in my mailbox in Farmington Hills, and again my attorney contacts the signer. And again no one knows jack about a warrant. Nothing in LEIN.

Time to forget about it and move on.

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A year and a half later I go to Houston for that contract job.

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Two years more and here I am in handcuffs standing before the magistrate.

4: THE CRIMINAL INJUSTICE SYSTEM

Magistrate Janice Haviland shakes her head, having a hard time accepting 1) this is a seven-year-old incident, 2) the prisoner volunteered to come in back then, 3) the arrest warrant was just made public (put in LEIN) six months ago, and 4) the county had suddenly gone to all this trouble to bring him in. My escort cops even somewhat gratuitously testify:

“Your honor, we don’t think Mr. Wright poses any risk of flight.”

That’s me, a tired and smelly ‘bad hombre’ in my gray pajamas from the Oakland County Jail. She gives me what Falkowski calls the “Get Out of Jail Free” card (a personal recognizance bond of \$10,000) with the proviso I can travel to Texas, wind up my affairs there, and return for the preliminary exam in three weeks. No out-of-pocket money.

You cannot imagine how good it feels to get out of there, mix with my family and friends, get a shower, put on some clean clothes, use a telephone, play with the computer, drive a car, the things we take for granted. The other thing I need to realize, once more, is ***I’m one of the lucky ones***, having some means to free myself of this quagmire.

After a day, Mom and I tag-team her '89 Ford Aerostar to Houston, pick up my car 50 miles away from where it was towed off (some vultures in Baytown relieve me of \$200.00 for that valuable service), then we crash at my efficiency near the Galleria. Mom leaves for Michigan next day in the van with most of my apartment contents. I hang around and give notice, then finish up work there in ten days, and head north with the rest of my stuff.

So now it's time to face the music. I want to run through it here, mainly because some readers will also become victims of the state for peaceful, voluntary acts that for various incomprehensible and unconstitutional reasons are designated felonies. This may help you know what to expect, maybe save you and your families some grief. But I'm sharing it also for my own cathartic reasons and to close the book.

THE PROSECUTORCRACY

In a normal criminal court proceeding, you have two stages: a preliminary examination to determine if there is reason to go to trial and, assuming no plea agreement is reached, a trial. In Michigan, preliminary exams are held in district court, and any subsequent felony proceedings in a circuit court.

The cards are stacked against you, as a defendant, even with a good attorney, and I have arguably a decent one. The cops and the prosecutors are against you, as a matter of system function and job security—they represent the state. Judges with few exceptions function as cheerleaders and sacerdotal scorekeepers for the prosecution.

The prelim is quite an eye-opener. Detective Goodman testifies to the events of the early morning of January 17, 1992. His manner upon examination by Falkowski is apologetic: “did not have a warrant initially..., somebody at Oakland County said it was OK..., long time ago..., remember most but not like yesterday..., physical evidence disappeared..., we may have pictures....”

Falkowski: “Move to dismiss.”

Assistant Prosecutor: “Inevitable discovery.”

Visiting judge: “The court will adopt the argument of the prosecution and bind the defendant over on both of the charges.... Bond will continue.”

Goodman knows Falkowski from Falkowski being a former assistant prosecuting attorney, and he indicates to Falkowski in private that the cops have no axe to grind here against his client and hopes the case can be dismissed or a good plea

deal made. I.e. acknowledging the royal fuckup it is. And maybe that's *all* it is. Just a normal NEB SNAFU after a fire it had nothing whatsoever to do with.

My next milestone is the evidentiary hearing before Circuit Court Judge Clyde Williams for which Walt puts together a formal motion consisting of five due-process reasons to dismiss the case:

- Delayed justice
- Illegal search
- Loss of physical evidence
- Questionable and nonverifiable conclusions from the evidence
- Improprieties in issuing the warrant

Quite a compelling document. Naturally the circuit court prosecutor finds nothing there to cause him to deviate from his customary punitive course. And his friend Judge Clyde may dwell on the left side of the Bell Curve intellectually, but he also lacks any psychological independence.

“Yes, yes, I understand we’ll deal with all that at the pretrial,” he says.

Failing to grasp that, no, the judge is supposed to listen to and rule upon evidentiary issues *now*. That’s why it’s called an evidentiary hearing (you robe-festooned pinhead). Walt is astounded that Williams doesn’t even realize how the system

works, especially when this is a case due to all its irregularities that normally “gets kicked.”

In the meantime I want to get the fire investigation report. I call Oakland County Arson and find out the case is still open and they won't release the report. Falkowski gets a court order and they give us an incomplete report. It contains nothing of Hughes' interview with me. Nothing of his exculpatory interviews with Don or the West Bloomfield barmaid.

But the fire investigators do narrate what Anne Lewis reports about the noises made by the men upstairs, so they've known about that all along. Who *were* those guys? Now if you're a real fire investigator you'd want to find them, wouldn't you?

But so what.

If we go to trial, the question of who set the apartment fire will not be considered relevant, unless we have clear proof it was set by police to obtain evidence. Even then, Falkowski tells me the evidence issues can't be resubmitted after they've been ruled upon in the evidentiary hearing. Which hearing never happened anyway because Williams was such a royal dimwit.

So if the cops bust down your door without a warrant, kill your wife and rape your dog, then catch you rolling a joint, don't expect to bring up

any issues of unconstitutional police behavior at trial. “Inevitable discovery,” etc. absolves any police action if drugs exist. Probably 90% of the judges in Amerika are pro-stormtrooper-whackjob moron, at least in the people’s republic and budding fascist theocracy of Michigan.

Sorry, lost it there. Where was I?

Eventually, the persecutor offers guilty to the “manufacture” felony and dropping the gun charge. Probation is acceptable to him, no need for doing time on a first offense, which is in accord with Michigan sentencing guidelines. Plus with only the one felony I can get it removed by petition to the judge in five years. So, Judge, all that stuff about you being clueless...

Some have asked me why not go to trial?

There are several reasons, not the least of which is the additional attorney expense and various fees the prosecutocracy (P-cracy) hits you with. But the main reason is I see how the system has limited my ability to defend myself, e.g. I can no longer bring up the unconstitutionality of the processes used to arrest and charge me. Combine that impediment with a hanging judge’s browbeating a jury that they cannot refuse to convict on the basis of bad law (or they will face contempt charges), and I realize unless a particularly brave liberty-loving soul emerges

from jury selection then I'm toast. If you fuck with the P-crats—who love pleas to get their conviction numbers up—the P-crats will go out of their way to fuck you worse, literally, with hard time. Who's going to stop them?

Remember I said it was significant how the charges were eventually written up against me, separately. If the firearm charge had been connected with the other charge, then *by statute* it's an ***automatic two year prison sentence!!*** So Goodman did me a big favor; he could have majorly messed up my life with the stroke of a pen.

Would a poor minority or person of white-trash ancestry get the same consideration? Nah!

PROBATION NATION

The probation interview precedes the sentence. One question is “Are you a homosexual?” to which I answer “No.” Rather emphatically as I remember, because Falkowski told me one of his other heterosexual clients—who eventually had to do some time—got it mistakenly marked “Yes” by some careless or malicious probation officer (PO).

When the sentencing day arrives in January, sure enough the report notes me as a homosexual. Further, it suspends my driving license for a year.

This last is a consequence of another get-tough-on-drugs statute, but the statute was implemented after my “crime” was committed. Both issues Falkowski handles successfully with Judge Dimwit. I can’t say this enough: get a good lawyer!

No need to go into detail about probation. It’s like sitting in a secretary of state’s office every month for about two hours, talking for a few minutes with someone who has a crummy job, and pissing into a bottle in front of someone else who has a crummier job. Drug tests! How can a whole nation sink to such depravity and cowardice that... never mind, *no mas, no mas*. I’m getting old enough I need to start worrying about my blood pressure.

A few months later, early release, it ends as it began, sitting on my butt in a state office waiting for its Byzantine machinery to process me and spit me out. I’m thinking the same at the end as at the beginning, “What a stupid, evil waste of time, money, and life. And not just mine!”

Why? I grew a natural plant that George Washington and Thomas Jefferson grew a bunch of. I liked it. My actions were peaceful and friendly (and uncharacteristically considerate, if you really want to get into the whole Tony

Robbins motivational story²). Did I deserve this treatment? Does anyone else? It's *JUST.....NOT.....RIGHT!!*

This is the most common sentiment expressed or implied, running through the minds (and crossing the lips) almost constantly of the people on the receiving end of the state's criminal injustice system. Until you've been there—through a tax audit, a profile traffic stop, a BATF raid, any of a growing number of police-function assaults on peaceful, consensual activities—you can't feel the violation.

Today I was pumping gas and thought, “What if someone came up, held a gun to my head, stole my money, and drove off?” The *last* thing that crossed my mind was that I'd call the cops. Saving people from coercion is an annoyance for them now, a dying art. Their main task is harassment of ordinary people for victimless acts. In fact, you have more to fear from an average policeman now than you do the garden-variety holdup man.

² For the record, my own weed use was about half a joint *per week*. Truthfully, I was giving 90% of what came out of the Phototron to a lady friend suffering from cancer.

But cops are only the blindly obedient tip of the whip wielded by judges and prosecutors, then ultimately legislatures and the ruling class (ostensibly through a voting majority) that puts the law into effect.

The law has become an ass, a grand oppressor of major proportions: it has turned the nonaggression principle on its ear and made crimes of things that are not crimes. It has turned the government itself into a predatory criminal enterprise resting on odd new forms of slavery, where ANYONE—and this means you, gentle reader—can be shanghaied and tied to the next spoke on the iron wheel on the gritty road to the neighborhood detention center.

There's this dream I have where a group of people are milling around at a garden party talking about football scores and movies, what Britney Spears and Paris Hilton are up to, or the price of tea in China, while this 900-# gorilla loudly, methodically destroys the furniture. If we don't pay attention quick to the police state, do something smart and brave to counter it, our entire civil society will break into pieces before our eyes.

AFTERWORD

In earlier versions of this essay, I had adopted a pseudonym, partly out of shame I suppose, partly to keep the “felony” record concealed. But now I know that the shame and criminal activity belong to DPS personnel and the P-cracy. The stigma is on them.

And no sense getting on their good side.

As a Free State Project early mover to New Hampshire³, I learned from a reliable source that the law-enforcement community here regards Brian Wright as a ‘person of interest’—a former fugitive who is a threat to pursue criminal enterprises, i.e. deal drugs and/or guns. It would be comical if it weren’t so literally insane.

And that’s all we need to know about the drug laws: They would be comical if they weren’t so dangerously psychotic.

But they’re here and it’s clear: We have no alternative but extermination. Kill the drug prohibition laws and restore the Bill of Rights. Free from jail, and expunge the records of any adult convicted of peaceful, consensual activity.

Today!

Sweet land of liberty, for thee I sing.

³ Please check out FreeStateProject.org and my journal of the experience of the Free State of New Hampshire, *New Pilgrim Chronicles* (newpilgrimchronicles.com).

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Brian Wright is a freelance writer and editor specializing in technical systems and marketing documentation. He acquired his bachelor of science in mechanical engineering (BSME) from Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan.



Mr. Wright resides in Merrimack, New Hampshire. He is the author of a series of journals on his experience of the Free State of New Hampshire, compiled into a book *New Pilgrim Chronicles*. And he is currently working on his third political monograph, *The Sacred Nonaggression Principle*—as well as a detective novel set in the lake country of Southeastern Michigan.

Brian also is proprietor of the ‘wholistic libertarian’ Web opinion and review site: the Coffee Coaster (www.thecoffeecoaster.com).