

## Colorado's Department of Correction in Need of Correction

### Part 1

In most instances the law is a simple matter of doing what you should rather than what you want. One consequence of continuing to do what you want regardless is that a conscientious legislator someplace may find it necessary to propose a law to compel you to do what you should do.

Just such a circumstance has come about in the state of Colorado's Department of Corrections (C.D.O.C.) of whom some are known to say the reason they're called the "Department of Corrections" is because they're always getting it wrong.

The C.D.O.C's execrable practice of warehousing the mentally ill in lockdown 24/7 is unconscionable. To sentence men without due process to a solitary existence in a lonely cell with only the company of their psychoses' and personal demons for interminable, indefinite periods, some lasting decades would and does appear on the surface alone indefensible. To further exacerbate their evil usage by holding them thus until their mandatory release date only serves to discharge infinitely more dangerous parolees into the public.

Enduring this type of incarceration has many debilitating effects the most common being depression with accompanying apathy and lethargy. The minimal activity and lack of meaningful exercise can atrophy their legs and some can barely walk after years of inactivity and you can bet that there is little market for ex-cons who can even work a quarter mile after release.

Then there's the other end of the spectrum, motivated, active, angry inmates that compulsively work out 2, 4, 8 hours a day in the fashion of the hardened vengeful convict portrayed by Robert DeNiro in the movie "Cape Fear." For months, then years then decades driven by their isolation, not even allowed IN PRISON to even walk out of a cell with a two or three man escort. In restraints, handcuffs, shackles, bellychains, lock-boxes. Surrounded by thick concrete walls, high fences, barbed wire, razor wire, armed town and perimeter guards electrified kill fences.

Ominously and inevitably their long awaited day arrives and when it does the C.D.O.C. dutifully in prison in full restraints escorts them to the prison gates where and when they unleash them upon the public. Not, surprisingly their recidivism rate is exponentially and in some cases

horrifyingly higher, as is their toll on society...you know the public the C.D.O.C. ostensibly exists to defend.

The public may want to consider if perhaps the Prison Industrial Complex (of which the C.D.O.C. is definitely a part of with its Incarceration Capitol of the World designation and proud title) finds it more profitability to release their home-made monsters. After all we all know that high profile horrific crimes can and often do drive new cycles, and have for years. Surely after all these years of high profile horrific crimes that lead the news cycles somebody, anybody, everybody must have noticed that they drive incarceration rates.

Even so no one is surprised that the C.D.O.C. has come out in fierce opposition to the Senate Bill 176 (introduced by Sen. Morgan Carroll, if passed the C.D.O.C would need to limit the solitary confinement of mentally ill prisoners -*Denver Post*, March 14, 2011) , as they claim it is because they say there is no indication officials are abusing the use of solitary confinement. Please allow me from my true insider perspective to disabuse you of that notion because for those of us actually in solitary confinement we say they are abusing the over-use of solitary confinement.

They also make the preposterous claim that the average stay is 18 months. Let me tell you that those numbers are about as an off the books C.D. O (Collateralized Debt Obligation) at AIG. I personally have been in Ad Seg for 7 years. Let me to a survey, to my immediate right 7 years, to my left 8 years, next to him 4 years and under me 10 years. In my 7 years, I've only witnessed 2 men get of Ad Seg. 2!

The C.D.O.C. is in need of correction and the honorable Senator Morgan Carroll and Rep. Claire Levy are the conscientious lawmakers trying to write another C.D.O.C. with Senate Bill 176 which is a start, a good start, at least, at long last.

I (we) don't have much hope up here in the shame shameless incarceration capitol of the world, and maybe, just maybe these venerable legislators can compel the C.D.O.C to stop doing what it wants and force it to begin doing what it should.

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