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Eng Comp. 100

Formal Assignment #2

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Imagine yourself watching someone so dear to you getting put into handcuffs because they made such a horrible mistake. You want to be able to forgive them but no matter how hard you try you just can't seem to shake that this person had the nerve to show up to your loved one's funeral after breaking and entering and robbing said loved one the day they passed away. The loved one was her Mother and she was so hooked on drugs that she stole from her just deceased mother and her step father had raised the felon as his own since she was young. Would you forgive them? The American Prison system shouldn't mirror Norway's prison system because they are too laid back with the amount of staff they have, too comfortable and lenient with their inmates.

In the documentary, "Where to Invade Next" by Michael Moore, he travels to Norway to discuss the prison system with them. Their inmates have their own housing, able to roam free in the jail surroundings. They basically teach them what it's like to be part of the real world again after they've been in jail for X amount of time. One of the inmates committed murder and was sentenced to 5 years in jail. He was currently cooking in the kitchen as a job. They have their own houses of which only the inmates have keys too, are able to take classes, play sports and the only BIG consequence they get for their crimes is loss of family visitation.

Would you want to interview a cold blooded killer where sharp objects were around him and he or she could be triggered at any moment? The very thought of my family member getting murdered and the killer was given a 5 year sentence would make me sick to my stomach. Killing someone is no joke. It can effect the lives of the victim's family, the inmate and the inmates

family. It's almost hard to believe that Norway just lets their inmates roam free and pretty much live a normal life with the only punishment of getting visitation of family taken from them. They have rights to vote but when sentenced, don't you pretty much lose all your rights the moment you get arrested and get read the rights you probably have left? Some of these inmates are insane that they shouldn't be left alone in a room with their families when being visited here in America.

Josh White, a writer with the Washington post, went to three different jails to interview three different criminals about their crimes and how they are today. One in particular really stuck out to me. Kevin Ricks was a high school English teacher and was arrested in February of 2010 for "indecent liberties" with minors. He had moved around while teaching at several schools in several states for 30 years, always leaving without explanation. While talk of gossip that he had inappropriate relationships with students, he was hitting the road to his next location. White spoke to Ricks over the phone and was "adamant that he done nothing wrong". After speaking to several of victims, they begged to differ. White spoke to a former student of Ricks' who was a foreign exchange student back in 1999. Upon telling Ricks' he told him that white had interviewed the victim, Ricks' interrupted White and asked with a lot of interest.. "What does he look like now?"

If we were to follow Norway's prison systems, would this really be the kind of people we want to rehabilitate and put back on our streets? After reading Business Insider, it said that 76.6% of American inmates get re-arrested within five years. Being in jail doesn't help you change. The Norway prison system is basically a half way home, teaching others how to get back on their feet after doing drugs for a long while. The maximum you get sentenced for in Norway is 21 years. Just 21 years. I would want more justice than 21 years if a serial killer murdered my

loved one, I don't want to walk around when I see my loved one's killer just say to myself "Oh hey, I haven't seen him in a while, let me go see how he's doing." I want to have the peace of mind that they got the punishment he or she deserved.

According to Business Insider, American prisons aren't just plain walls that keep the inmates completely sheltered from the outside world. The inside of a prison has windows to let in a little light for the criminals. Granted they are four inch windows on the inside of their cell but at least they still get a window, right? Back in Norway, they give their inmates showers in their cells, a TV set, and are able to use real silverware in the dining room. We allow our inmates to have a timed shower in their cell, a TV set for good behavior because a fork for an American inmate is considered a weapon. America also keep inmates in Solitary Confinement for 23 hours a day, they sleep on concrete beds but they still have a four inch window to look out of. Just like Norway, our prisoners also still get to work-out too. The one thing we do offer our inmates that Norway does not, are family visitations. Although they talk to their family members through a glass window and a telephone, if they are in for a life sentence, they still get to see their family members for a certain period of time. Norway looks at taking away family visitations as a punishment.

From the looks of it, the American prison system doesn't seem all that bad. Our inmates can serve their time they did for their crimes and get picked up after being released and being shown around the new improved 21<sup>st</sup> century if they've been in jail since before the turn of the century. That's what Carlos, who served 11 years, and Roby, who served 12 years, do for inmates just coming out to the real world again. In 1994, California came up with the "Three Strikes Law". If the offender had two strikes under his or her belt, the law would force life sentences for "serious" crimes. The definition for "serious" crimes in California is stealing a bike

from someone's garbage, but in the mid 2000's the "Three Strikes Law" basically came to a halt when they realized the "iron law of imprisonment". "Each of the 2.4 million we've locked up, if he or she doesn't die in prison, will one come out" is what was explained in the New York Times article. Then in 2012, California got rid of the "three strikes law" and a group from the Stanford Law School put together a petition for the inmates serving life sentences be released with time served. 2,300 have so been released.

The inmates are thrown into the world with \$200 they eventually have to pay back to the prison but that's just enough to get them started. Carlos and Roby have done over 3 dozen pick ups on inmates. They drive them around to get food, get them some new clothes and even have the released inmates call loved ones from their phones. Some inmates react very well to coming back to reality. Others need time depressurize. The inmates that can't quite seem to get the hang of getting back to reality, have issues going out to eat while looking for a sniper as if they were still in the dining commons on the inside. From what I've read, it sounds like the inmates feel like other people know they are fresh out of the dog house. Being treated like they have never been to jail is a way to help these guys and gals get back to reality. But what happens if they didn't run into someone that was nice to them after being in the dog house for so long? God only knows how they would react.

The American Prison System in my opinion, is just fine the way it is. The prisoners are serving time for crimes they committed, not to be given the chance to get a second chance. From the looks of it, there are programs that have ex-convicts pick up released convicts and show them how to go about getting back into the game of life. Although, they don't get treated well on the inside, they don't get treated terribly. They still get family visitations, they can take up some hobbies such as mediation and art. When they get out, it is their job to make the better decision

to become a greater version of themselves. That being said, the American Prison System should not mirror the Norway Prison System.

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