

Housing unit for prisoner rehabilitation



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

PRISON STATE

Abstract

This paper explores a video called “ Prison State.” It is about Beecher Terrace apartments in Louisville, Kentucky, and four souls that reside there when they are not imprisoned in the nearby Louisville Metro Department of Corrections, or another jail or prison within the proximity of Louisville. The lives of these four people, who are very different but, in some ways they are the same, are outlined along with the reasons they live part-time in these two very different types of dwellings. The question as to what can be done to break the cycle of recidivism for these four people is explored. Programs that inmates can participate in before they leave prison, as well as programs available when they are released, are also explored. The question that we do not have the answer to is whether these four souls will make the right decisions. Will they take advantage of everything they are offered to stay out of prison (What is Reentry, 2018)? If not, will they go back to prison because it is easier for them, and much more comfortable than life outside of the prison walls?

Prison State

Every year one in six of the residents of Beecher Terrace rotate in and out of prison, and every year the State of Kentucky spends over \$15 million incarcerating them along with residents of the surrounding communities. (Lentes, 2018). Beecher Terrace is in the neighborhood of East Russell. East Russell is a historic area that is located in Downtown Louisville, Kentucky, which has Antebellum churches, Victorian mansions, shotgun houses, and

school buildings. It dates back to the 1830s, and the majority of the neighborhood is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. In the 1960s and 1970s, many residents moved to the suburbs leaving empty homes behind. In the 1990s, city leaders began renovating the historic homes. Since 2000, the property values have increased. (Beecher Terrace, 2018). Within East Russell, you can find Beecher Terrace which is a 760 unit housing project (Family Living Sites: Beecher Terrace, 2014) where the four lives featured in this video reside.

Renovations of this neighborhood, due to a \$29.5 million HUD grant (Louisville, Ky, 2018), will be underway this fall beginning with the demolition of the existing buildings. (Family Living Sites: Beecher Terrace, 2014). One setback that they found was asbestos in the old buildings which required special handling. (Louisville, Ky, 2018). Residents are being moved out of Beecher Terrace in three stages, and the first phase has been completed. About 50% of the residents have been relocated. Phase two has begun, and Phase three will begin in 2019. Once construction is completed, the current residents will be given the opportunity to return to Beecher Terrace. (Lentes, 2018). Part of the \$29.5 million implementation grant is being used to fund portions of the Vision Russell Transformation Plan. They invited every resident to participate in case management to help their own transition go smoothly. A needs assessment was included so they could match them as closely as possible to their housing requirements. They involved the current residents in the renovation by using them in focus groups. They will have a say in how it will be rebuilt. Those who return will choose from one of 640

units and have use of a fitness center. Office space will be available for rent, and there will be a resident bike repair shop. (Louisville, Ky, 2018).

Louisville Metro Department of Corrections, with a capacity of 1, 792 beds, is just a few hundred yards from Beecher Terrace. To be exact, the Corrections building and Beecher Terrace are 0. 6 miles (3 minutes) apart. They are usually over capacity with between 2, 000 to 2, 200 inmates per day. To accommodate these inmates, they have to use the floor and any available space. They detox up to 90 people at a time, so if the residential detox beds are full, they go to the jail. (Edge & Mucciolo, 2014). Michelle Alexander, Assoc. Prof. of Law, Ohio State University, discussed that communities like Beecher Terrace, where imprisonment has become normalized, practically operates from the cradle to the grave. It is their destiny to go to jail just like their parents and other relatives. The schools that these children attend have zero tolerance policies. Police officers patrol the halls and any disagreement with teachers or fights are treated as criminal violations. The message children get is that it does not matter if you follow the rules or not. (Edge & Mucciolo, 2014).

The Kentucky legislature passed a law in 2011 overhauling incarceration to reduce their prison population. Because of this legislation, thousands of non-violent offenders will be released early over the next decade. Some of the money saved by early release will be used for the treatment for addicts. (Edge & Mucciolo, 2014). Reform is planned for Kentucky's juvenile justice system, as well, and Kentucky will be a model for other states interested in following suit.

Let's begin the stories of the four people featured in this video with Keith Huff. Keith is from Louisville, Kentucky, and has spent more time in prison than in society, and around half of that time was for non-violent crimes. He has been imprisoned five different times and has spent a total of 27 years in the Kentucky prison system. Keith admits that he does some "stupid stuff" and that he flourishes in prison. He enjoys the structure of prison life and people telling him what to do. His last sentence of imprisonment was five-years for burglary, theft, and impersonating a police officer. He likens his in-prison and out-of-prison time to a revolving door, a cycle, and a curse. He says everybody in the neighborhood he comes from gets locked up. (Edge & Mucciolo, 2014). Keith was released six months early, which will save the state more than \$15, 000. He said he was going to do everything he could to stay out of the penitentiary. He was worried if Social Security and Medicaid would pay for his medication for his schizophrenia. Keith has prior arrests for burglary, fraud, theft, and substance abuse. (Edge & Mucciolo, 2014). He will have to report to his parole officer, and they will do intensive supervision accompanied with random alcohol and drug testing. He must be at his address seven nights a week, and their goal is to give him his final discharge in six months. Keith said that he was not going back to Beecher Terrace, but will be staying in a group home for ex-prisoners. When he left, he was not confident that he could stay drug-free and alcohol-free and only had a 30 day supply of his medicine. Keith does not think that anyone will give him a job since he is a convicted felon. (Edge & Mucciolo, 2014).

Ted Luckett, Deacon, Catholic Charities, feels that the system sets people like Keith up to fail. Keith has no coat and no money. He is wearing the only

clothes he has. He worries because people like Keith know only one way to get money for what he needs. (Edge & Mucciolo, 2014).

Continuing Keith's story, he failed to report to his parole officer. He was supposed to report regularly under the prison reform early release program. The police found Keith. He had stopped taking his medication and gone back to Beecher Terrace. He admitted that he did it to himself and that he is on the way back to state prison. He said the reason he is back again is that they kicked him out on the street and told him the rules. He is wearing the only clothes he has. He has no coat, no food, no money, and no transportation. He wonders what they expect a man to do. Keith wonders what will happen when he has nothing and no hope. (Edge & Mucciolo, 2014).

Demetria Duncan's Story is next. Demetria's mother, father, brothers, and cousins on both sides have been incarcerated. She feels that she does not learn any lessons when she goes to jail and that it just makes her mad. She likens it to fighting world war three. She went to juvenile jail three times, and at the age of 14, has 11 charges against her. She admits to having an anger problem, especially when people talk crazy to her. They have explained to her that fighting and violence makes matters worse because people go to prison for extended periods of time and some for life. Her mother died from a gunshot wound from either suicide or murder when she was nine years old. She said she fights because she is still mad about her mother's death. They tell her she needs to break the cycle. If the court finds her guilty of assault against her aunt, she will go to juvenile detention for a year. She wants to go to her mother's gravesite on her birthdate, but it does not look good because her aunt does not feel she is ready. (Edge & Mucciolo, 2014).

Some time passed, and Demetria escaped from the juvenile shelter. “ She could be released on home incarceration, but her aunt told the courts she’s not ready to take her back” (Edge & Mucciolo, 2014). Demetria feels that she does not need anyone which makes her angrier. (Edge & Mucciolo, 2014). The judge sent her back home, but she is now on probation for six months. Within 24 hours of going home, she was gone. Once again she went back to court and promised not to leave. She was remanded to the state detention camp for teenage offenders pending disposition because the judge did not feel she could trust her. She ended up spending almost a year locked up. She says she wishes her mother was alive because she would not have done these things. Because her mother is not alive, Demetria says she doesn’t care any longer. She was released back home to her aunt in early 2014; however, she violated the terms of her probation and is now on the run again.

Christel Tribble is our third soul. Christel is 15 years old and is in jail for skipping school. She began acting out in elementary school. Last year she was diagnosed with ADHD and bipolar disorder. When she got into a fight in her classroom, they sent her to an alternative school for disruptive children. When she reached middle school, she had spent most of her life not knowing her father because he had been in prison. She refers to Beecher Terrace as a regular ghetto. Christel wants to go on American Idol or be a detective when she gets older. She lives in a two-bedroom Beecher Terrace apartment with her mother and four brothers and sisters. Christel’s mother, Rose, feels that she is filled with anger because her father was in prison and not there for her. During the interview, Christel said that she does not like her father and

does not care about him anymore because he lies to her. She was just summoned back to court for truancy because she discontinued going to school. Her mother attempted to give her a pep talk to encourage her to go to school, graduate and go on to college. (Edge & Mucciolo, 2014). Christel only went to school on Monday of that week and had picked up another charge of resisting arrest which she got after a classroom fight. Christel wrote a prayer to God and said she is ready to give up and wants to die. She stole pills from her mother and overdosed three nights before her court hearing but was unsuccessful. (Edge & Mucciolo, 2014).

A month after her overdose the court offered her a deal that if she pleaded guilty to resisting arrest, she would go on home incarceration. Under this deal, Christel must attend school with no unexcused days and have good behavior at home. Christel decided to take the deal. She chose the option to go on electronic monitoring for 20 days. Three days later Christel skipped school. Now she will be facing up to 65 days in juvenile detention. The Judge decided to place her on probation to the Department of Juvenile Justice. She has a curfew, and if she violates it, she goes back to court. This is her one last chance. (Edge & Mucciolo, 2014). As the video ends, Christel has been on probation for two months. She is staying out of the court system. (Edge & Mucciolo, 2014).

Charles McDuffie is our fourth and final resident soul. Charles is 67 and is serving a five-year sentence for burglary. Charles is a veteran and served with the 11th Cavalry in Vietnam 45 years ago. He started his habits of drinking and drugs in Vietnam. He began smoking marijuana to get through the war. At the time of this video, Charles was to be released from prison in

two months under Kentucky's prison reform. So far it has cost \$200, 000 to keep him locked up over the years. He got new shoes to walk out with and said he is not coming back. He is on his way to St. Ann's, a drug treatment facility, for six months. He has nightmares about Vietnam that will not let him sleep, and he wakes up sweating. On top of addiction, he has PTSD stemming from his service during Vietnam. He thinks about the fact that he had 19 confirmed kills. Dreams and nightmares still haunt him concerning a man he shot about 30 times that did not have a weapon, which in his mind he now considers murder.

Charles' therapist suggested that he write a letter to the man he killed. He did and felt a sense of relief, and it took some of the guilt away. Charles is in St. Ann's for six months, he will start therapy for his alcohol problem there, and he also needs treatment for PTSD. He is feeling very strong. (Edge & Mucciolo, 2014).

There are several reentry programs for released prisoners in Louisville, Kentucky. All four of the people discussed here could utilize one or more of their programs. The Kentucky Department of Corrections Division of Reentry Services has the following programs:

“ Family Engagement Q&A” sessions which were developed to educate families about the corrections system. It answers the basic questions that a family member may have. (Community Reentry Councils, 2017). The Contract Management Branch is responsible for overseeing community service centers that house state probationers, inmates, and parolees. It is

also responsible for the monitoring of private prisons having contracts with the Department of Corrections.

The current private prisons are Marion Adjustment Center and Otter Creek Correctional Center. When inmates are classified as community custody and are near their parole eligibility dates, they are placed in these centers/Halfway Houses. The Halfway House program has an average daily population of approximately 617. The average daily population of parolees/probationers is about 640. Here they can get reacquainted with their families and the community. It gives them a head start in seeking employment. Offenders in need of substance abuse care are located at one of the Recovery Kentucky Centers. Many of the inmates are enrolled in vocational schools and/or college programs. There are currently twenty-four Halfway Houses involved in this program. (Community Reentry Councils, 2017).

The Division of Probation and Parole enhances public safety and promotes offender reentry in the community. They do this by being proactive and obtaining referrals for community-based resources. They also provide services for Community Centers, Halfway House pre-release programs, and jail-based Class D programs for over 9,000 offenders. (Community Reentry Councils, 2017). The Division of Mental Health offers services consistent with the legislative mandate to assist offender reintegration into society. (Community Reentry Councils, 2017). The Kentucky Parole Board has nine full-time members who conducted 20,429 hearings/reviews in 2012/2013. Their mission is to make decisions that maintain a balance between public safety,

victim rights, reintegration of the offender and recidivism. (Community Reentry Councils, 2017).

Kentucky Reentry is a website that has a motto “ A Second Chance to Make a First Impression.” The Kentucky Department of Corrections: Division of Reentry Services is who runs the Kentucky Reentry website. (What is Reentry, 2018). Things can get in the way of a successful reentry. The obstacles would be job acquisition, transportation, child care, education, and housing. They operate on the premise that if they educate the community about reentry and get support from area businesses, local governments, faith-based organizations, non-profit organizations, and individuals, the returning citizens will be better prepared for reentry. They give support, not a free ride, to reentry people and want them to be on track to being a success in their various communities. They understand they need jobs to make money, pay for housing, get transportation, and buy food and clothing. If they can get a person to the place where they can work and pay for these things, their desire to commit a crime to get the money is greatly reduced. They use a variety of programs to assist offenders in the reentry process. The programs are called pre-release programs, and they offer drug rehabilitation, vocational training, and work programs. Kentucky Reentry is made up of councils. The Kentucky Department of Corrections Reentry Branch broke the state up into Regions. This was done to help the Reentry Councils and help Reentry within each Region. Louisville Metro does have a Reentry group. People can find Kentucky Reentry on Facebook, and they can Tweet it. Under “ Resources” on their website (<http://www.kentuckyreentry.org/resources/>), there are many options as to the kind of service that can be found. Some

examples of services are anger management, caregiver support, childcare, children, and clothing. Under the “ Family & Loved Ones” tab, they invite families to “ Join” one of several groups. These groups give people insight into what a person may be dealing with in their life during reentry. The tab “ Join” has a list of the different groups, and a person can sign up to join the group on this page. (What is Reentry, 2018),

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