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One of the most interesting cases I worked on involved a 17-year-old girl that one day disappeared without a trace. The police traced her last day to an acquaintance who observed her get into a car driven by her ex-boyfriend who was known to sell drugs. She then disappeared. The ex-boyfriend claimed he dropped her off at her new boyfriend's house not far from where she was last seen. An extensive search lasting over two weeks turned up no sign of her body. The woods were searched using bloodhounds, as was the nearby lake and the homes where she could have visited. After several months with no leads, the case turned cold. It was then a largely forgotten file stored at the police station. Her parents did what they could to reopen the case, but failed to generate interest.

Then, about a year later after she disappeared, a former acquaintance of the victim dropped by the police station with an incredible story. He claimed his friend had murdered her in his parents' home, dismembered her body, and burned the remainder in a barbecue pit in the back of his parents' home. Lastly, he threw the ashes out of the window as they drove to buy beer. They then drove back to the house, and carefully cleansed the home where the murder took place so that his parents would not suspect what had occurred in their home.

Without a body, they believed, they could not be charged with murder. They were right about this claim. The police must have a body to prove murder. They were the last persons she was seen alive with, so consequently would be suspects. Therefore they had to destroy all evidence that would lead them to the crime. The police concluded the man's story was incredulous, but were obligated to investigate. After

a careful examination of the location where the informant claimed the murder occurred, all they found after two days of careful inspection using luminal and other modern techniques, was one blond hair, what appeared to be a drop of blood in a floor register, and possible small bone fragments in the barbecue pit in the back of the parents' home. DNA confirmed the hair, the blood and the bone fragments were those of the missing girl. These finds were, to the surprise of the accused, legally a body. The accused, an illegal immigrant, had by then fled to his home country, Mexico. Due to the cooperation of the Mexican police, he was apprehended and brought to the U.S., tried, found guilty, and given a life sentence.

The judge vented his anger after the trial by firmly stating, "I am tired trying the parade of worthless %\$#@&* offenders I see in my court convicted of sick crimes. This is the 17th life sentence I have handed down in my 13 years on the bench." He then added that the 80,000 dollars a year for the 65-years life expectancy in prison of the illegal immigrant will cost taxpayers 5.2 million dollars. The costs for searching for the body was an additional 30,000 dollars. The state must also pay for both sides of the trial, costing the taxpayers another 18 thousand dollars.

In prison, the offender will have the best medical care offered in America, the same care Congress receives. He will have excellent, free psychology support, and many activities paid for by the state to keep him busy, including baseball, football, golf, and a very well-equipped exercise room including treadmills and weight lifting machinery. He will also have the use of the extensive prison law library to appeal his conviction, which is now doing.

And, if he would rather be in the women's prison, which is much safer and far-less stressful, all he has to do is to claim to be a woman and begin transitioning. This will cost the taxpayer another 1.2 million dollars if he elects all of the available transitioning options. If the prison warden, or the state, balks, the ACLU will gladly take the case to court. The total cost to taxpayers will come close to six million dollars. In short, although most Americans would not trade places with the convicted offender, he will be, in some ways at least, better off than many Americans.

Bergman's Comments

Corrections (which includes prisons, jails, probation, and parole) cost U.S. taxpayers around \$74 billion annually. The United States has about 4.2 percent of the world's population, but houses around 20 percent of the world's prisoners. About 1.9 million

people are currently incarcerated in the United States, the second highest documented incarceration rate in the world. Seventy percent of all violent crime in the United States is committed by young Black males reared in a fatherless home by a mother on welfare. Young Black males consist of less than three percent of Americans.

The proportion of drug offenders compared to total prisoners is only 21 percent. The number of persons in prison for murder, though, is close to 20,000. The five countries that execute the most people are, in descending order, China, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and the United States. The main deterrent to crime is a stable, father-supportive family with active church family involvement, which should be the main goal of our government, society, and especially the Church.

- 8 views

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