

## 02-May-2017 – Privatized Prisons Make a Come Back – Is That How Trump Plans to Boost the Economy?

### Description

Privatized prisons were supposed to be fading into the past like a bad dream, but the new U.S. Attorney General, Jeff Sessions, says they are here to stay. No matter that the previous Administration determined that privatization does not make prisons more efficient. No matter that they are likely to increase the rate of the revolving door, as prisoners receive less counseling to help them integrate into life on the outside. No matter that conditions there are more likely to worsen any mental health issues they may have.

Is it really only the shareholders who matter?

Sue Binder's new book [Bodies in Beds: Why Businesses Should Stay Out of Prisons](#) shows us how it matters to those inside, the workers and the offenders:

James was a mental health priority for me. He had a history of prior suicide attempts, self-mutilation, depression, and anxiety. I had been worried about James ever since he arrived, but was extremely concerned when he was placed in segregation. Inmates who already have serious mental health issues have been known to deteriorate when placed in segregation.

I spent a little more time with him than I did with some of the other mental health clients because of the necessity. I cringed because I did not have the staff or the time that these mental health inmates needed. I tried to make time when it was an emergency, when I saw a need. James was crying out for help. His help was not to be found in tossing him into segregation.

The Colorado Department of Corrections has actively integrated reform with new practices. The goal was to phase out long-term isolation of inmates. A report, *Open the Door—Segregation Reforms in Colorado*, states that administration segregation had shrunk from 1,500 to 160. [Earlier], some offenders had been housed in administrative segregation for more than twenty-four years.

Research shows that seriously mentally ill prisoners were less able to successfully negotiate the complexity of the prison environment, committing infractions at three times the rate of non-seriously mentally ill counterparts.<sup>7</sup>

I thought about the medications he had arrived with. Had he been taking them regularly? I wondered. I knew he hadn't had time to see the psychiatrist yet.

Because I understood the ramifications of a mentally-fragile inmate being in segregation, I made a special trip to see him. As I entered the segregation unit, I looked at the large white board on the wall. James' name remained there.

"I thought James was to leave this morning," I ventured. "No, not yet," the officer on duty informed me. Puzzled, I traversed the room, heading straight toward James' cell. Perhaps he could tell me what had happened. Another charge? Had some emergency interfered

with his release?

I stopped dead still. "James!" I yelled. "James! Officer! NOW! Hanging! Hanging!"

Immigrants are the newest category of bodies to be delivered in wholesale quantities to the prison industrial complex—just in time to make up for the reduced number of convicts in detention. Business is business. No wonder prison corporation stocks are rebounding.

Immigrants, who often consist of minorities, are, in some cases, being swooped up and detained in a brand new form of punishment for simply crossing a border without paperwork. Illegal entry has become more than just deportation. In fact, it has become another enormous profit-maker for the private prison systems. Interestingly, this all comes when fewer offenders are entering the system due to a reduction in crime. Some of this reduction may be due to the legalization of marijuana in several states. Most people would think that if fewer offenders are entering the system—there would be fewer offenders entering the gates of CCA facilities.

From the very beginning of the private prison concept, CCA has made provisions for such a phenomenon. ... Namely, they noted that if laws changed and the courts began assigning lawbreakers to programs instead of directly to prison, they might be in trouble. This was never a secret.

Immigrant detention presented them with an opportunity from the outset; it could prevent significant loss of profits and stabilize CCA's future. Whether they planned it or not, the very first facility they opened paved the way for their future profits. By incorporating the U.S. Government into their packaging, they have been able to avoid serious financial problems, in spite of the declining crime rate. Thus, immigrant detention coupled with the restructuring under the aforementioned Real Estate Investment Trust (REIT) enabled CCA to further acquire enormous profits. All of this was taking place right under the noses of taxpayers.