

ICON CONSOLIDATED NEWSLETTER, 2023A (Jan to June 2023, #87-#92)

The Informational Corrlinks Newsletter (ICoN) provides a variety of legal, treatment, activism news & practical info for incarcerated SOs via CorrLinks. This consolidated version covers all legal cases and articles covered in the ICoN newsletters for the first half of 2023 and are offered as a space-saving measure. To better make use of Corrlink's 13k character limit, abbreviations will be used, so ICoN readers need to familiarize themselves with the following acronyms: SCOTUS (Supreme Court of the United States, an acronym in current Internet use), RC (registered citizen, an "SO" currently forced to register), ARM (Anti-Registry Movement, a term sometimes used to describe our reform movement), SOR (SO Registry), AWA (Adam Walsh Act), SORNA (the part of the AWA covering Registration & Notification), Admt (Amendment) & the many abbreviations for states & court jurisdictions. Time dated announcements & resources are not included in this consolidated newsletter. – Compiled 7/3/23

ORDERING BACK ISSUES OF THE ICoN & DONATING TO THE CAUSE

Due to a limited budget and manpower, **I do NOT have a regular physical mailing list for these newsletters.** Those with Internet access can print past issues from my site and the other resources I offer at <https://oncefallen.com/icon/>

Consolidated ICoN newsletters are sent out upon request and a payment of two stamps to help offset costs. Please note that some prisons place limitations on mail which may require a higher cost (example: some prisons limit printouts to five single-sided pages per envelope, so a printout taking up 22 pages would require 5 stamps.) Please note your facility's limitations before making a request. Checks/ MOs must be made out to Derek Logue. You can contact me for further info and a list of what I offer at:

Mail - Derek Logue, 2211 CR 400, Tobias NE 68453

Email – iamthefallen1@yahoo.com (this is also the email I use for signing up for the ICoN)

Phone – (513) 238-2873 (No collect calls)

YOUR LIFE ON THE LIST: Edition 3 (A registry survival guide) by Derek Logue

“Your Life on The List: Edition 3” is a registry survival guide, covering a variety of common concerns like housing, employment, compliance checks, travel, and other common questions. It also contains a housing list and a comprehensive overview of the registry, residency/ proximity laws, and other post-conviction laws you may experience as a Registered Person.

To download a free PDF Copy of the guide, visit the front page at oncefallen.com

To order a printed copy from Amazon.com (\$14.95 plus tax & shipping):

<https://www.amazon.com/Your-Life-List-Derek-Logue/dp/B0BSZWQCWV/>

If you are thinking of becoming an activist, consider ordering a copy of “The Anti-Registry Activist Manual: A Guide to Effective Advocacy” by Jonathan Grund. It is available for \$13.50 on Amazon.com:

<https://www.amazon.com/Anti-Registry-Activist-Manual-Effective-Advocacy/dp/B09T893TNR/>

LEGAL ROUNDUP

People v. Kastman, No. 127681 (Ill. 2022): In 1994, Kastman was found to be a sexually dangerous person & was committed to the guardianship & custody of the director of the DOC under the IL Sexually Dangerous Persons Act. Kastman was granted conditional release from institutional care & subsequently filed a petition requesting that the director of the Dept be compelled to provide financial assistance to cover his treatment costs & living expenses. In doing so, Kastman asserted that he was unemployed, disabled, & could not afford his \$300/mo treatment costs & the \$1800/mo rent for housing that complied with SORA & the numerous requirements of his conditional release. IL Sup Ct concluded that the Circuit Court has the authority under the Act to require the Director to contribute financial assistance to cover the treatment costs & living expenses of an SDP on conditional release. The Court noted that nothing in the language of the statute limits the Directors duties to persons housed in an institutional facility & notes that the term “custody” used in the Act extends beyond physical custody to include the care & control of a guardian.

State v. Larson, No. A21-0220 (Minn. 2022): In August 2019, Larson refused to sign the required registration paperwork. The corrections agent asked a special agent of the MN Bureau of Criminal Apprehension for help in obtaining the necessary paperwork from Larson. The Special Agent met with Larson twice & Larson refused to sign both times. The State then charged Appellant with two counts of FTR under MN law, one for each month’s refusal. MN Sup Ct opinion ruled under MN law, separate convictions for failure to register involving the same assignment of a corrections agent violated prohibitions against double jeopardy.

Jackson v. State, 2022 OK CR 29: Jackson appealed a revocation of probation order, raising the following propositions of error, arguing that Under the facts & circumstances of the case, the trial court’s revocation of Appellant’s suspended sentence in full due to technical violations was an abuse of discretion & revocation based on a failed polygraph examination was improper use of polygraph results. OK Sup Ct ruled that Jackson was not given proper notice to participate in SO treatment. Thus, the trial court committed “plain error” in revoking the entire sentence when the penalty should’ve been only 6 mos.

John Doe, et al. v. US Dept of Justice, et al., EDCV 22-855 JGB(SP_x) (CD CA 1/20/23): CA Dist Ct granted a preliminary injunction against the DOJ’s new rule that would force people to register under AWA rules even when their states of residence no longer require registration, or share information required by the AWA but not by their states. The court ruled that it was likely an unconstitutional violation of due process to require John, or anyone else, to affirmatively prove their innocence only after being arrested & charged; requiring disclosure of internet identifiers violates 1st Amdt protections of anonymous speech, & ruled it was bound by 9th Cir precedent to reject a challenge to the DOJ’s power to issue any rules at all, but the order noted the “significant, even disturbing” threat to the separation of powers that arose from the rule. (This only affects CA but a final ruling could be binding across the US)

Ohio 135th Leg. – Passed SB 16, which bans all Tier 2/3s (ore pre-AWA “s*xual pr*dators” & “habitual offenders”) or anyone with offenses against anyone under age 18 from “commenc(ing) service in a position as a volunteer with any person, group, or organization, in a capacity affording extensive contact with minor children.” “Capacity affording extensive contact with minor children” means any capacity in which a person would be working directly & in an unaccompanied setting with minor children on more than an incidental & occasional basis or would have supervision or disciplinary power over minor children. "Working directly & in an unaccompanied setting" includes, but is not limited to, providing goods or services to minors. Note: SB passed 2 days after the new legislature convened, & this provision was added to an existing bill that was fast-tracked through legislature. No one had an opportunity to oppose it.

McDeid v. Johnston, Nos. A21-0042; A21-0043 (Minn. 2023): This case arises out of the delayed transfer of two individuals civilly committed to the Minn. SO Program (“MSOP”) following court orders directing their transfer to Community Preparation Services (“CPS”), a less restrictive environment within MSOP control. The Appellants claim that State Officials violated their due process rights by delaying transfer for over 2 years following the court orders & seek relief under 42 USC §1983. The State Officials seek to invoke qualified immunity against the Patients’ section 1983 claims. MN Sup Ct held that MSOP patients had a clearly established right to transfer to CPS within a reasonable time following issuance of a Minnesota Commitment Appeals Panel transfer order, reversing an App Ct ruling & remanded to the App Ct to address whether the State Officials’ clear obligation to transfer the Patients to CPS within a reasonable time following a CAP transfer order gives rise to a federal due process right & whether the State Officials’ failure to do so is a violation of the Patients’ federal constitutional rights sufficient to support a section 1983 claim.

People v Allen, 2023 NY Slip Op 00496: NY 1st App Div Ct overturned an unhoused man’s conviction for failing to verify his address every 90 days as requested by SORA. The law is unconstitutional when applied to homeless defendants who lack an address, as it deprives them of due process.

US v. Navarro, No. 19-50662 (5th Cir. 2022): Held, in a matter of first impression, that an FTR conviction under federal SORNA is based on violation of federal SORNA’s registration requirements, which are independent of state law. Still, the 5th Cir determined that Navarro had no duty to register under state or federal registration laws in 2019 & vacated Navarro’s FTR conviction, concluding that the factual basis supporting Navarro’s guilty plea was insufficient as a “matter of law.”

North Carolina v. Lamp, No. 18A22 (N.C. 2022): Lamp was charged with submitting incorrect address information to the sheriff “willfully” & “under false pretenses.” Lamp was formerly homeless found & lost permanent housing within a seven day period in June of 2019. Although Defendant reported his housing changes within that same week, he was charged with failing to comply with registration requirements when a police officer was unable to verify Defendant’s housing arrangement. NC Sup Ct overturned FTR conviction for homeless RP because state law only “willful” registration violations.

Matter of Stevens, No. 201,997-8 (Wash. 2022): WA Sup Ct granted Stevens’s admission to the Washington State Bar after considering the applicant’s “past wrongful behavior” alongside “the steps he has taken to improve himself & hold himself accountable” concluding that applicant had adequately established his good moral character & fitness to practice law. In so ruling, the Court stated, “like all of us, [the applicant] is more than the sum of the worst moments of his life.”

People v. Superior Court of Santa Cruz County, No. H049691 (Cal. Ct. App. 2023): A CA community attempted to bar the release of a soon-to-be released civilly committed “SVP” by creating a private school within 1/4 mile of the proposed placement home. A superior court found the statute would not prohibit the proposed placement because the school in question is a private home school that did not exist until after the community was notified of Cheek’s pending release—suggesting the school was created for the very purpose of preventing placement in that area. CA App Ct concluded that, although the concerns raised by the lower court were not unreasonable, the SVP Act prohibiting placement of certain individuals near a school does not exempt home schools or require the school to have been operating for any particular time. The Court issued a peremptory writ of mandate directing the superior court to vacate its placement order.

Stradford v. Secretary Pennsylvania Department of Corrections, Nos. 21-2655 & 22-2027 (3d Cir. 2022): PA considers “community sensitivity” as one concern when placing individuals granted parole in halfway houses in the community. This meant that RPs granted parole remained incarcerated for longer periods of

time than individuals w/o a sex offense record. 3ds Cir reversed & remanded the US Dist Ct, holding that (1) plaintiffs were not similarly situated with parolees who had not committed a sex offense, & (2) policy considering community sensitivity was rationally related to legitimate government interests. Court concluded this did not violate the Equal Protection Clause.

People v. Talluto, No. 98 (N.Y. 2022): Talluto moved from MI to NY. The NY Board of Examiners of SOs recommended that County Ct classify Talluto with no sexually violent offender designation. But the court concluded that the plain language of SORA, Correction Law §168-a (3)(b), required it to designate defendant a sexually violent offender because he was convicted in MI & thus required to register under SORA's foreign registration requirements. Although the court believed the result illogical, it concluded that any error or perceived injustice in the statute was a matter for the legislature. The NY Ct of Appeals (their highest court) affirmed the decision of the Appellate Division, holding that SORA requires persons subject to its foreign registration requirements to be designated as "sexually violent" regardless of whether their underlying offense was violent in nature. In so holding the Court states, "Defendant—and the many learned judges, lawyers, & legal scholars—may well be correct that subdivision (3)(b)'s foreign jurisdiction clause contains a legislative drafting error, but that does not give the courts license to ignore it." Assuming the provision was in error, the Court went on the call upon the legislature to remedy the error.

Chapdelaine, et al v. Neronha et al, Civil Case No. 15-0450 (USDC RI, 3/16/23): US Dist Chief Judge John J. McConnell Jr. struck down as unconstitutionally vague a state law that prevents Tier 3s from living within 1000 feet of a school. "Because neither an ordinary person, nor law enforcement, could understand the statutory language that attempts to define the boundaries of residences & schools... After all, if the State's process involved law enforcement, school officials, & attorneys collaborating to make precise individualized determinations on these boundaries, how could an ordinary person ever be expected to faithfully follow this process, let alone come to the same conclusion about where these boundaries lie? Not to mention that these difficulties facilitate arbitrary & inconsistent enforcement." The RI ACLU successfully argued the state could not determine if the amended restrictions, passed in 2020, applied to playgrounds, fields & parking lots, how often property must be used before it constituted a school, or if a parking lot was frequented by faculty & not students. Every scenario would need to be determined by authorities on a case-by-case basis.

State v. Cesare Decredico, No. 21-138-Appeal (RI Sup Ct, 4/4/23): appealed a determination by the RI SO Board of Review (board) that Decredico poses a level II, moderate risk of re-offense. Decredico asserted that that the trial justice erred in accepting the decision of the Superior Court magistrate determining: (1) the board used a validated risk-assessment tool for noncontact offenders in deciding that he poses a level II risk to reoffend &(2) the board used reasonable means to collect the information used in the STABLE-2007 risk-assessment tool. RI Sup Ct determined that the trial justice erred in determining that the evidence in the record justified the Tier placement.

Minter v. State of Wyoming, 2023 WY 35: Minter pled guilty in 1999 to misdemeanor sexual battery in GA. In 2019, WY authorities discovered Minter's GA conviction. Even though DCI had insufficient information that the crime Mr. Minter was convicted of qualified as a "registerable offense" under the WY-SORA, it directed the Natrona Co. Sheriff's Office to inform Minter that his conviction required him to register. WY Sup Ct determined that DCI may not use dismissed charges to determine the facts & circumstances out of which a conviction arose. WS §7-19-302(o) does not authorize DCI to require an individual to register before it has determined he was convicted of a registerable offense.

Brian Hope v. Commissioner of Indiana Dept of Correction, et al., No. 22-2150 (7th Cir. 2023): Reverses a lower court ruling which found that IN's 1994 SORA violates the equal protection clause of the 14th Amdt. SORA contains a provision stating that RPs moving to IN from another state must register even if

their offense took place before the enactment of the law in contrast with the SORA's treatment of those who committed sex offenses while living in IN prior to SORA's 1994 enactment, & those who continued to live in IN after their pre-SORA offense. In-state offenders don't have to register if they weren't required to do so prior to SORA or its subsequent revisions taking effect. IN "satisfies rational basis review because the state has a legitimate interest" in registration.

Does 1-5 v. Whitmer, et al., Case# 22-1925 (6th Cir. 05/30/2023): Five RPs seek 42 USC §1983 damages from high-ranking MI officials, alleging that they oversaw & failed to stop the MI State Police (MSP) from continued enforcement of the provisions of MI's SORA that the 6th Cir declared unconstitutional. The Dist Ct granted the motion to dismiss "sovereign immunity"; 6th Cir upheld dismissal as RPs failed to state a claim of supervisory liability. "The plaintiffs do not plausibly allege that the defendants authorized, approved, or knowingly acquiesced in any unconstitutional conduct. While Etue and Gaspar oversaw the MSP, many of the complaint's allegations appear to target the behavior of local law enforcement, which the MSP directors did not supervise. The plaintiffs' allegations of knowledge thus cross the line from conceivable to plausible only barely, if at all."

WE CAN'T JUST "LIKE IT OR LEAVE IT"

Anyone who has ever criticized the US has likely heard the retort, "like it or leave it." It seems many prisoners dream of doing just that. I field many questions about which state is the most lenient or if there's a way to emigrate. None of these have easy answers. It's easy to tell you which states are the worst (AL, FL, LA, TN, IL, & OK are my top 6 worst) but as I've stated in my book, "Your Mileage May Vary" (YMMV). I can never make a guarantee you'll find a better life by moving to a new location. Maybe you will, maybe you won't. But this statement from FAC is worth sharing with you because many are discovering we truly have few options, & sometimes, our only option seems to be "hate it & stay."

From FL Action Comm. "A response to the 'If you don't like it, leave' commenters." 12/9/2022

"When someone complains about FL, or any other state for that matter, & other commenters reply with 'then you should move to another state,' let's just keep in mind that's not a viable solution for everyone.

1. If you are on any form of supervision, you can't just leave. There's a process that involves the cooperation & willingness of two jurisdictions. Some are on lifetime supervision. The bottom line is; there are a percentage of us who would give our right arms to leave but simply can't.

2. Many have family or community ties to where we are. Some are caregivers to a loved one, some are parents to a child in school. Uprooting yourself is one thing, but uprooting your dependents is another. Taking an elderly parent away from the doctors they are comfortable with or moving a child away from friends they grew up with is not an easy thing to force on someone. Also, many are divorced & can't expect an ex-spouse to cooperate in relocating children to another state to facilitate visitation. Given the choice of not seeing their children or suffering in FL, for many there's no choice.

3. Many of us are dependents ourselves. Can't find jobs, can't afford housing, live with parents, siblings, or friends & can't afford to just pick up & relocate to someplace they have no support. Sure, if you have an Uncle in VT who will let you stay in his guest house & give you a job at his furniture factory, great! You have an option. But if you're going to get off the bus in Burlington & survive off the \$1375 in your bank account, it's not happening.

4. Some of us are intransigent & unwilling to be stepped on. This is their cause, this is their life. You will find gun owners who would sooner have a firearm pried from their dead fingers than give up their guns. That's how some people feel about their humanity, their dignity, their family & their rights. To use a

maritime metaphor, there are some that will abandon ship & some that will go down with the ship. Respect to those.

By no means is this a judgment call for anybody who actually has the option to leave & chooses to stay or go. There are very valid reasons for both & every individual has their own personal considerations when it comes to making that decision. I only want to make two statements; if you're going to make statements telling others to leave FL, please remember not everyone can, & if you're going to make statements telling others to stay, grab an oar & help us paddle!"

One respondent posted to the FAC post noted that "there is no way for a fresh start anywhere that I know of because we're basically dead. That, & 'angel watch' & the State Dept will bad mouth you to your new country when you apply for a Visa."

FloriDUH is arguably the worst state for an RC to live; however, there still nearly 30k FL RCs living there. I don't know what keeps them in FL. Recently, a woman who corresponded with me since 2015 was recently released into central FL. She was told she could not live in her own home, and so her husband was considering selling, yet when I encouraged her to leave the "Land of 'Duh'" she refused. She has family ties there & moving to a new state is intimidating. So she remains in FL.

For those without ties, the most onerous laws are as follows, updated as of 11/2022:

1. Mandatory Lifetime Registration Requirements for ALL Registrants (15): AL, AZ (except kidnapping & false imprisonment w/o sexual element), CA*, CO, FL, GA, HI, ID (except juveniles), MS, MT, NJ, OR*, SC*, TN, WY (Note: States marked with "*" allow at least some Registrants to petition for removal from the registry after a set number of years but removal is NOT guaranteed.)
2. Registry Fees (24): AL, AR, CO, DE, GA, ID, IL, IA, KS, LA, ME, MA, MI, MS, MO, NH, NY, OH, OR, TN, UT, WI, WY
3. Residence Restrictions (Living Restrictions):
 - A. Applies to all RCs (15): AL, DE, FL*, GA*, ID, KY*, MS, NC, No. Mariana Is., OH*, OK, RI, SD, TN, WY ("*" denotes states where law cannot be applied to convictions preceding the passage of the law)
 - B. Applies only to "high risk", higher Tier/Level placement, or offenses against minors (11): AZ, AR, IL, IN, LA, MO, MT, ND, SC, VA, WA
 - C. Can be added as a rule to those "on paper" (6): CA, CT, HI, NY, OR, WV
 - D. Municipal ordinances can create living restrictions exceeding those codified into state law (9): CO, FL, IN, ME, MN, NE, TX, WA, WI
4. Presence Restrictions (Also called anti-loitering or proximity laws; Defined as various restrictions on where Registrants can go, such as schools, parks, libraries, malls, recreation areas, or other places one might expect to find children; the laws are too varied to discuss here, but each state listed has some kind of restriction which may apply to some or all RCs;) (31): AL, AR (Lv.3/4), CA, DE, FL, GA, IA, ID, IL, IN, KY, LA (offense against minors), MD, ME, MN*, MO, MS, MT (Lv3), NC, ND, N. Mariana Is., OK, OR (Lv.3), SC (on paper), SD, TN, TX*, UT, VA, WI, WY ("*" denotes no state law but allows local ordinances)
5. States that place humiliating marks on your State ID/DL Cards: (12) AL, AZ, DE, FL, KS, LA, MS, OK, TN, UT, VA (only on CDLs for passenger transport vehicles), WV; In addition, passports of those with offenses against minors have marks placed on their federally-issued passports.
6. States requiring annual renewal of State ID/ DL cards (increasing financial burden): (7) AZ, IL, KS, MS (quarterly), NV, OK, TX
7. Work Restriction Proximity Laws (Laws that prevent registrants from living within a set distance from prohibited areas): (9) AL, DE (if LII/LIII), GA, MI, MT (If considered high risk), RI, SC (only if on supervision), TN, WV (only of on supervision)

8. States considered “substantially compliant” with the Federal Adam Walsh Act (AWA): (18) AL, CO, DE, FL, KS, LA, MD, MI, MS, MO, NV, OH, OK, SC, SD, TN, VA, WY
9. States with Halloween restrictions listed in their state statutes: (5) AR, FL, IL, LA, MO (Applies to all SOs in LA & MO, applies to Tiers 3/4 in AR, Applies to all on parole/ probation or SOs w/ offenses against anyone under 18 in IL, applies only to those on probation/ parole in FL.) In addition, CA, CO, GA, ID, IN, MD, NV, NY, OH, SC, TN, TX, VA, WI conduct named compliance check operations or allow the option for POs or local authorities to pass restrictions against those on probation/ parole.
10. States that prohibit registrants from receiving Medicaid: (1) AR

I’m certainly not going to downplay the humiliation of registration, but registration pales in comparison to residence or employment restrictions. Halloween restrictions may bother RCs with kids of their own more than those w/o kids. All I can add it is make the best out of whatever situation you find yourself in but make a plan to move if things get out of hand (such as harassment by vigilantes or LEOs).

A CORRECTION TO THE DECEMBER 2022 NEWSLETTER

The guest post article “Societal Grooming”, it was reported that “Federal Bureau of Prisons UNICOR facilities alone earned a hefty \$11B in 2021.” The author sent me the following correction: “For fiscal year 2021 UNICOR earned \$404.1M, which is indeed a far cry from the \$11B I quoted from CPR. However, the Ashland UNICOR plant has earned \$3.1M for the month of December with 2 weeks (or about half a month) left to go! Even a conservative projection of \$2.5M per month from ALL 80 UNICOR facilities puts earnings for 2022 at a staggering level (\$2.5M per month x 12 months x 80 facilities). While \$11B was indeed way off, the point remains the same - The BOP uses slave-wage labor to turn a multi-million dollar profit each year.”

It is often difficult to get accurate numbers, especially since many government agencies made convoluted reports that are difficult to access. Prisons are still corporations, as is the registry, the prosecutors’ offices, and victim advocacy. Never assume the posted numbers by an agency are always an accurate reflection of the money these organizations collect. There are plenty of shady, under-the-table deals in every government agency.

PRELIMINARY RESULTS FROM ARM ACTIVIST SURVEY FINDS SURPRISING RESULTS

I have concluded a survey of people directly associated with ongoing efforts to reform or abolish the registry. Amazingly, all the major groups participated—NARSOL, ACSOL, WAR, FAC, & TX Voices, & other smaller groups. Roughly 700 people responded, about 2/3 of them were fellow RPs. Because this was a huge survey (99 questions), it will take time to fully analyze the results. However, I wanted to share some of the more surprising results with ICoN readers.

Demographics: About 450, roughly 2/3, of Respondents are RPs, mostly male (97%), white (88%), over age 45 (78%), holding at least an associate’s degree (63%), but with household incomes under 50k/yr (57%); 11% of RPs not retired were unemployed with an equal amount of SSI/Disabled; 9.6% were either currently homeless (3.5%) or homeless w/in the past year (6.1%); nearly half were either married (36.5%) or in a relationship (11.5%), & just more than half (53%) met their partners after conviction; 24% stated the registry laws are directly related to personal mental health issues.

Struggles: About half (53%) report having no friends or only associates within the cause; 57% reported feeling frequently bitter about being on the SOR; only 1/3 reported not ever being the victim of scams or vigilante incidents like harassment, & 9% reported being assaulted; 31% were driven out of a home; 37% were forced to leave a public venue, church, or business; 72% say going to the registry office is the source of pain/stress; 57% at least somewhat agree that registry officers are “passive-aggressive” or

disrespectful; 20% stated they are treated poorly at registry offices; & 47% believe the registry is a beta test for more large-scale gov't intrusions.

Attitudes: Most shocking to me is despite the high levels of negative effects of the registry, only 54% of RPs who took my survey wants the registry completely abolished. An equal number (22% each) are divided between supporting a police access-only registry & a limited registry for only those deemed "high-risk"; Of those who should remain on the registry, the top choices were recidivists/repeat offenders (40%), Sex Traffickers or CP producers/creators (25% each), & those deemed or admitted to be "pedophiles" (18%); 47% have never participated in any form of anti-registry activism, & 20% can't/won't participate in future events; 23% believe those who identify as MAPs have no place in activism & 8% wouldn't work with a MAP or actively attempt to oust one altogether.

RPs still largely proclaim they are still willing to help others in need—only 13% stated they would refuse to help a lost child (46% would call 911 but keep their distance, 27% would directly help); only 15% would turn a blind eye to a harassing neighbor if they saw a burglar enter the house, but 86% wouldn't donate to charities that refuse services to RPs.

While 80% believes society is too strict on sexual matters, 40% believes porn increases sex crimes, 51% believe society is "grooming" children into more sexualized lifestyles, & 18% believe in Satanic Ritual Abuse (SRA, the modern form being QAnon).

While 2/3 consider themselves patriotic, 2/3 believe the gov't tracks us beyond registration; 62% believe the gov't is setting us up to fail; half believe RPs won't benefit from the collapse of the US, while 23% do; half believe a self-governed community would help RPs, 37% supports the idea of a "sovereign nation," but only 10% stated they would move to one w/o exception while 9% stated they would move only to a community that remained a US community, not a sovereign nation. Half would leave the US if they had the resources to leave.

Activism: RPs think somewhat positively about anti-registry activism; 40% believe activism has only slightly positively influenced the narrative (near 15% strongly agree, while 20% disagree); yet 30% believe we will not succeed w/o help from victim advocacy; 46% believe the registry will only be reformed, 26% believe the registry will get worse & 20% believe the registry will be abolished. RPs think we should focus primarily on litigation (91%) & influencing legislators (90%) & the media (88%), & values public awareness events/protests (60%) & public speaking events (69%) the least.

Cops: RPs have little faith in police—65.5% distrust the police while 23% at least partially trust police; 12% would allow a warrantless search even if they weren't on supervision, half would support efforts to "Defund the Police"; 7% support at least some community notification through social media & 9% support community meetings; & only 10.5% at least somewhat agree the gov't adequately separates "high risk" RPs from low-risk RPs.

Media: Nearly half of RPs have no faith in the mainstream media; 85% believe the media merely acts as advertising for the registry or pushing more registry laws; 2/3 believe RP stories are aired for sweeps week & shock value; only 29% believe media that caters to their political ideology would offer better cover; only 6% believe the media should be allowed to report on RPs in the community; 8% stated registry info should be removed from social media.

Politics: Finally, political alignments & affiliations are nearly even (ever so slightly leaning Democrat); however, of those who don't believe all parties treat us equally bad, RPs largely see Democrats & Libertarians as most open to reason; Republicans & conservatives are seen as most hateful towards RPs &

most responsible for bad legislation; 70% would be willing to vote for a candidate for the opposing political party if that candidate promised to repeal most RP laws.

Overall, those engaged in anti-registry activism have varied beliefs about the registry & the role we play in changing the narrative. Of course, this is only a survey of current activists & because people who were unhappy with the direction this movement has taken & quit likely didn't take the survey, I can only speculate as to why they quit. Sometimes it because only out for themselves, they did not feel like the movement wanted to abolish the registry, the cause is "going nowhere," they're afraid of being targeted, or reading constant bad news is bad for mental & physical health. But I'd love to hear my readers tell me what they think of these results. Please send a separate email with your thoughts & I will share some the best responses in the newsletter & in the published results of the survey.

NEW BOOK: "CAN I TELL YOU SOMETHING? WORDS OF HOPE & ENCOURAGEMENT FOR THE MODERN DAY LEPER" BY BOB VAN DOMELLEN (2021)

If you are looking for a Christian book with an emphasis on the struggles faced by those with sex-related offenses, then there is a new book you may find helpful. This book is a collection of 28 "Into the Light" main articles written since 1997. Each article speaks directly to issues that those who committed sexual offenses will face while on the journey to recovery. "Someone understands me" is the most frequent response to the newsletter. Retail Price: \$14.95, sold through Amazon, Barnes & Noble, & other book retailers.

The author is a ministry director at Broken Yoke Ministries, a non-profit jail/prison ministry emphasizing support for those with sex-related offenses. Broken Yoke Ministries provides newsletters to prisoners who personally request a copy through the mail (no email). If you want a copy of the newsletters, send a request to Broken Yoke Ministries, PO Box 5824, De Pere, WI 54115-5824

SCAMMER SENDS OUT SPOOF EMAILS POSING AS REGISTRY OFFICES

A fellow activist in NE recently warned RPs that someone posing as an agent at the NE "s*x offender unit" sent out a suspicious email. The name was of an actual agent but the link provided was to a fraudulent website. It is likely the intent was to infect the computer with malware, or to convince individuals to send them money.

It is commonplace for scammers to spoof local registry offices to attempt to scam PRs by phone. There are phone services that allow you to spoof a phone number. But it is also possible to spoof email addresses. In one recent scam not directed at RPs, scammer sent emails that looked legitimate down to the address (for example, contact@paypal.com). PayPal is a legitimate online payment service, but the scammer had spoofed the address using characters that look similar to our alphabet but are not (such as characters in the Russian or "Cyrillic" alphabet).

It is also possible that the actual email account was hacked into. Scammers who hack into emails can then access the owner's online address list. Commonly, the hacker will pretend to be that person & send out request for money or send a link that downloads malware.

Either way, any time you receive an email or a phone call claiming to be from the local registration office, hang up the phone, look up the number to your registration office, then called to confirm the phone call or email was legitimate. Always assume such calls & emails are fraudulent, & do not assume the information on the email is legitimate. The point is to make you think you are in some kind of trouble so you will be gullible enough to turn over information or money to the scammer. That is why I suggest you

look up the number to the local registry office independently, or keep it in your phone at all times, so that you may contact them directly to confirm the legitimacy of the contact.

WRITING UNDER A PEN NAME AS AN RP

Recently, I was asked about writing under a “pen name.” That’s a good question since the term “pen name” (aka, “nom de plume” or pseudonym) invokes a different kind of action than an “online identifier/screen name” or an alias. Throughout history, famous writers like Voltaire (François-Marie Arouet) to Mark Twain (Samuel Clemens) to George Orwell (Eric Arthur Blair) wrote under pen names. It is a way to write anonymously.

We are required to register “aliases” & many states also require registration of “online identifiers” (i.e., screen names or nicknames you use while on the Internet). On the other hand, the 1st Amdt guarantees the right to free & ANONYMOUS speech. Yet, it seems the courts are hell-bent on abridging that right.

There is scant evidence RPs have gotten into trouble for using pen names. In 2012, an IL man who wrote books through Amazon under the pen name “Lex Fonteyne” was harassed by local media; the IL media outlet proclaimed that pen names “are not exempt” from registry laws. Fonteyne was arrested, but based on media reports, it was seemingly for FTR as he failed to register at all in IL, not as the result of his pen name. He is currently on the IL-SOR & his pen name is now registered. An RP in OK wrote a number of books for sale on Amazon; his pen name is also listed on the OK-SOR as an alias.

Courts have been divided on allowing RPs to post anonymously. Below are a couple of examples:

In *Doe v. Nebraska*, 898 F.Supp.2d 1086 (D. Neb. 2012), a federal judge struck down NE’s internet identifier law in a scathing rebuke. “Earlier I paraphrased Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes & observed that if the people of NE wanted to go to hell, it was my job to help them get there... I can only help Nebraskans get to the figurative hell that Holmes spoke of if they follow a constitutional path. For three sections of NE’s new SOR law, NE has violently swerved from that path.” The NE statute was stricken as overly broad, hopelessly vague, forced people to choose between 1st & 4th Amdt rights, unnecessarily chills political speech, & motivated by legislative animus. NE does not require RPs to register online identifiers.

In *Cornelio v. Connecticut*, No. 20-4106 (2d Cir. 2022), the 2nd Circuit declared forcing a registrant to disclose internet identifiers violated the 1st Amdt. The 2d Cir. reversed the dismissal of Plaintiff’s 1st Amdt claim, concluding that (1) the statutory disclosure requirement for Internet communication identifiers burdened protected speech under the 1st Amdt, triggering strict scrutiny, (2) the State’s asserted governmental interest in such disclosure requirement was too speculative to support dismissal of the 1st Amdt claim, & (3) the Plaintiff plausibly alleged that the disclosure requirement was overbroad in violation of the 1st Amdt. This case was sent back to the US District Court for further hearings.

But in *State v. Jackson*, No. 2018AP2074- CR (Wis. Ct. App. 2019), the WI Court of Appeals found that, facially, the statute was not an unconstitutional abridgement of the Defendant’s right to free speech, & that because the statute included at least some protections against public disclosure of that information, it did not infringe on the right to anonymous speech. In *Doe v. Shurtleff*, 628 F.3d 1217 (10th Cir. 2010), the 10th Cir ruled registering online IDs doesn’t violate the 1st or 4th Amdts. Changes to UT Code §77-27-21.5 lessened the code’s chilling effect, plus the Doe “did not have a reasonable expectation of privacy in regard to his internet identifiers.”

Online identifiers/screen names are used for more than just publishing anonymous statements online. But they are still different from pen names because pen names are names that are typically simply attributed

to a literary work & intended to help the writer remain anonymous. While you can use a screen name to publish on a blog, online identifiers are often used for social media & emails, where there is direct contact with other people through the Internet. Unfortunately, even the courts confuse the two terms. (Example: State v Christensen, 102 So. 3d 984 (La. Ct. App. 2012), where under the “Facts & Procedural History” section, what is obviously a screen name or Online ID is referred to as a “pen name.”)

If you want to become a writer but you are afraid that writing under your real name might tank sales or may bring negative publicity to you or your loved ones, then you may have to consider the following options:

1. Writing anonymously: You can simply not add a name at all to your work.
2. Find a friend or loved one willing to publish on your behalf under a pen name.
3. Use your initials or at least your first & middle initial & your last name.

Thanks to Amazon’s “Print on Demand” book service, becoming a published author is easier than ever. That is why I use it for Your Life on The List.

A lot of people get confused because they know that they have to create a "publisher's account" at Amazon & the others with their real name & SSN. This is so you can be paid. It's for EFT (Electronic Funds Transfer), & checks. You also have to provide all your own banking information, so that you can receive the Wire Transfers. But, just because you have to use your real name on your Publisher's Account doesn't mean you have to use it for your author name.

A lot of authors use a Kindle publishing pseudonym. It's not even hard to do. You log into your KDP Publisher's Account, go to your Bookshelf, & then "Add New Title." Then, under 1, "Enter Your Book Details," you'll do two things. You'll type your Publisher name, which is optional. Then, you'll click "Add Contributors." In that section, you'll type the Kindle publishing pseudonym that you've chosen, as the Author. Doing this creates your Amazon self-publishing pseudonym.

If you are looking more for a traditional publisher, one piece of advice from a legal site states, “There is nothing legally required to use a pen name. You would just notify the publisher. Your contract & payment would come under your name/SS# or the S Corp & EIN. Also, you may want to discuss your situation with an IP attorney, you may be able to file a trademark for the pen name if it is used for a series of books, but not the name itself or just the title of one book. You should file for copyright protection on the works as well.” That is something you should discuss with your local registry office as well.

REVIEW OF THE 3/7/23 DC VIGIL

About 75 anti-registry activists braved the cold to stand in front of the SCOTUS Bldg in DC to memorialize those who have died in the 20 years since the infamous ruling in Smith v Doe, 538 US 84 (2003). For those who don’t know, 6 SCOTUS justices ruled the registry is not punishment & the constitution doesn’t apply to the registry. John Roberts, current chief justice, was at that time the atty representing the state of AK, & he likened the act of registration as no more intrusive than signing up for a “Price Club” (Costco) membership. I had read off the names of hundreds of individuals who died due to the registry. Of these names, nearly 100 were directly murdered because of the information on the registry. Over 100 died in “civil commitment” centers, many have committed suicide, & others died a premature death due to neglect & denial of services including housing & medical assistance. We also honored the anti-Registry activists who died. Others gave speeches encouraging individuals to join the effort to abolish the registry.

During our presentation, hundreds of tourists, many of them juveniles on field trips, asked by us as we gave our presentation. Someday, some of the minors on those field trips could land on the registry. The pandemic & the election fights had taken focus away from increasing sanctions against RPs, but this year, using RPs to score cheap political points has returned. FL & KY want to bring back the death penalty for some offenses, NM is considering chemical castration, FL wants state ID cards for RPs to use scarlet letters, NE & other states are adding “grooming” language to legislation, etc. So we must start discussing how to address these issues in an increasingly fast-paced & confusing world.

ACSOL & others have considered making a DC vigil an annual event. The next big milestone year is next year; in 1994, the Jacob Wetterling Act, part of the controversial 1994 Omnibus Crime Bill, was signed by Bill Clinton. This bill, championed & defended by current President Joe Biden, has impacted not just RPs, but increased the prison populations for all offenses & increased the number of crimes that allow for use of the death penalty. It also contains the “Violence Against Women Act” (VAWA), which funds private victim advocates that argue to keep you locked up forever. This is why we need more than 75 attendees next year.

For those with access to Youtube, the link to the vigil video is –

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MisKQgTKPKA>

ISOLATION AS AN RP

Americans are feeling more isolated than ever. A 2/22/23 article from “The Hill” cited Pew research that found 63% of young men (mostly in their 20s) & 34% of women are single. Sexually active Americans are at a 30-year low; 30% of young men & 20% of young women reported no intimate encounters in the past year. There were many reasons offered as to why this is happening—more social interactions are online, porn, more females identifying as LGBTQ+, women getting choosier with who they date, cultural & political issues, & COVID. The isolation extends beyond romance—15% of men report having no close friendships, either.

It is understandable given the political & social climate of today. There is little civil discourse online. There are online movements like “NoFap” making (mostly false) claims that abstaining from all sexual activity, especially self-pleasure, grants health benefits to nearly superhuman levels. Many are openly advocating killing RPs & “p*dophiles” & accusing people of either being “pedos”, “chomos”, & “groomers” as the new ultimate insult.

But how does that compare to experiences from RPs? The results from my 2023 anti-registry activist survey, which included 464 RPs, found 37% of RPs are married/civilly partnered, 28% are single & not looking, 21% are single & looking, 11% were in a relationship, 3% are widowed, & 1% are in a non-monogamous relationship; 28% met their partners after placement on the registry. (Compare that to my my 2016 employment survey, limited to RPs, of 305 respondents, 37% are single/ divorced/ widowed, & never had kids, 4% were single/ divorced/ widowed, with children living in the home, & 24% are single/ divorced/ widowed, living separate from their children)

When asked how the registry has impacted social life, 32% of RPs felt their lives were “completely ruined,” 21% only have friends within anti-registry groups, 31% have friends outside the cause, 15% reported the registry has only a slight impact, & 1% reported no impact on social life. Only 7% reported having no anxiety at all (11% chose “rarely”) about going to public events out of fear of harassment or other negative consequences; 30% reported facing online harassment, 36% faced offline or “real world” harassment, & 9% were physically assaulted; 37% were forced to leave a public event or business (even church) due to RP status. (In my 2022 social media survey, 41% reported online harassment.)

It should be noted that most RPs in the 2023 survey are aged 45+ whereas the results listed by The Hill were primarily from people under 30. The point is, while the degree to which the registry creates barriers to social interaction may not be clear cut, the reality is some of you may experience social isolation. Turning to the Internet isn't a guarantee of making friendly or romantic connections.

Comradery can come in the form of fighting for a common cause. That is why I encourage my readers to get involved with anti-registry activism upon your release.

EMIGRATION MAY NOT SOLVE YOUR PROBLEMS

Last year, people gained hope of emigration as potential relief from the SOR when Steven Whitsett was granted asylum status in Germany. The German court did NOT condemn the US registry (even stating it served a legitimate purpose); asylum status was granted because they felt 18 yrs for FTR & potential civil commitment (what FL told German officials they'd give) was excessive punishment.

By contrast, an RP who emigrated to Germany along with his foreign wife in 2021 has reported experiencing similar harassment issues they faced while living in the US. The Angel Watch program had notified Germany of the RP's status to German officials, & not long after settling into their new home, began experiencing social ostracism they attribute to US agents telling German officials about the man's RP status. The couple reported that a number of services have been refused to them, including services from doctors, landlords, lawyers, shopkeepers, even the post office. They even stated they experienced hardships while traveling to Italy during vacation.

For those who don't know, in 2016, the US passed Int'l Megan's Law (IML) under the guise of deterring "sexual tourism." IML marks passports of any RP with an offense against a minor (<18) & created a system called Angel Watch, which lets other countries know when an RP is traveling outside the US. This year, Europe is instituting a visa screening process called the European Travel Information & Authorization System (ETIAS). We don't know what this means for both travel & immigration but it could lead to RPs turned away at the border.

Germany's immigration laws must also be considered. A post on the Reddit forum "SexOffenderSupport" noted that generally, anyone who was sentenced to 3+ yrs in prison will likely be denied asylum status & deported and for "less severe" crimes, "the question of whether to deport is up to the authority in question. The decision is based on two factors: how severe the crime was & how high the perpetrator's need for protection is. A man who committed a misdemeanor & who's facing torture or even death in his home country will not get deported. A foreigner with a German family or a steady job is also less likely to face deportation, if the crime he committed was minor. A general rule says that a foreigner sentenced to at least 2 yrs in prison can be deported..."

The responsibility for ordering deportations from Germany is shared by two different authorities – the Foreigners' Registration Office ("Ausländerbehörde"), which is run by the regional state governments, & the Federal Office for Migration & Refugees (BAMF)... in asylum procedures, the BAMF also has the right to issue a deportation order once the application has been rejected. Even in those cases, the registration office is responsible for enforcing the deportation. Since most deportations are not voluntary, the registration office can call in (federal police to assist in deportation). Authorities can also apply for a court order for a 'deportation detention,' which can last up to 18 months, if they have evidence that a deportee intends to disappear to avoid deportation."

In short, emigration is not impossible but may be a difficult & expensive option for those hoping for a life w/o a registry. Your mileage may vary.

UNDERSTANDING STOCHASTIC TERRORISM

One day after I delivered a speech at the steps of SCOTUS, reading off the names of many who died because of their status as RPs, a man whose only sex offense conviction was in 1979 was murdered by a neighbor who had been harassing him for years. An outpouring of support for the murderer soon followed, the killer's family raised thousands for the killer's defense, & calls for the killer's release gained traction. Anyone who dared denounce the killer's actions were labeled as "pedo sympathizers" & threatened into silence. I had written OpEds criticizing the murder that went unpublished. This support was unwavering even after news reports had pointed out facts like the killer had a previous conviction for a violent act, the killer made multiple reports against his victim that were never substantiated, & that the killer posted memes on social media calling for the murder of "pedos."

We are once again becoming the political football used in the ongoing political culture wars. Much of what some RPs experience today can be summed up by a phrase gaining traction online. The term "Stochastic terrorism" is defined as, "The public demonization of a person or group resulting in the incitement of a violent act, which is statistically probable but whose specifics cannot be predicted." The labeling of all RPs in society as "chomos" & "pedos" doomed to reoffend at the first opportunity results has resulted in the canonization of the vigilantes. This has also fueled an increase in laws designed to harm RPs; FL passed a death penalty for sex offenses not involving murder with the consent of only 8 out of 12 jurors, & NM attempted to pass chemical castration laws.

To help you understand the current cultural climate, I'm sharing this OpEd from Scientific American. But keep in mind that like every other potential issue you may face after your release, your mileage may vary.

(Source: Bryn Nelson. How Stochastic Terrorism Uses Disgust to Incite Violence. Scientific American 5 Nov 2022. <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/how-stochastic-terrorism-uses-disgust-to-incite-violence/>)

How Stochastic Terrorism Uses Disgust to Incite Violence

Pundits are weaponizing disgust to fuel violence, & it's affecting our humanity

A week & a half before the midterm elections, a man broke into Speaker Nancy Pelosi's house, screaming "Where's Nancy?" & attacked her husband with a hammer. David DePape, charged in the attack, had posted a slew of rants that included references to a sprawling conspiracy theory known as QAnon, which claims that Democratic, Satan-worshipping pedophiles are trying to control the world's politics & media.

Several hours before, Fox News's Tucker Carlson interviewed right-wing activist Christopher Rufo, who claimed drag queens participating in book readings were trying to "sexualize children." The people who support these events, he said, want to create "a sexual connection between adult & child, which has of course long been the kind of final taboo of the sexual revolution."

With the support of former President Donald Trump, the pedophile conspiracy theory has contributed to a widening spiral of threats & violence, including the deadly January 6 Capitol insurrection. A revival of the "groomer" smear against the LGBTQ community (a reference to a pedophile) has ramped up the aggression. Right-wing media personalities & activists have created or amplified conspiracy theories about Pelosi, Hillary Clinton, Bill Gates & others.

Dehumanizing & vilifying a person or group of people can provoke what scholars & law enforcement officials call stochastic terrorism, in which ideologically driven hate speech increases the likelihood that people will violently & unpredictably attack the targets of vicious claims. At its core, stochastic terrorism exploits one of our strongest & most complicated emotions: disgust.

In my new book *Flush*, I describe how psychologists have come to view disgust as a kind of behavioral immune system that helps us avoid harm. Whether in response to feces or rats, disgust triggers an aversion to things that can make us physically sick. The emotion has a darker side, however: in excess, it can be weaponized against people.

Propagandists have fomented disgust to dehumanize Jewish people as vermin; Black people as subhuman apes; Indigenous people as “savages”; immigrants as “animals” unworthy of protection; & members of the LGBTQ community as sexual deviants & “predators” who prey upon children.

That horrifying history is now repeating itself, as political extremists create dangerous new strains of contempt & hatred. During the COVID pandemic, there has been a surge of racism & xenophobia, as well as violence against foreigners who are baselessly blamed for importing disease & crime.

Even when disgust doesn’t incite outright violence, it can still cause harm. Clinical psychologist Steven Taylor, author of *The Psychology of Pandemics*, told me that the ongoing monkeypox outbreak has further amplified bigotry. The disease’s mode of transmission through close physical contact & its symptoms of pus-filled sores, he says, make it a perfect vehicle for eliciting disgust. Its name & origins in Africa have stoked racist misinformation about how it spreads, & its link to men who have sex with men has fueled stigma & homophobia as well.

People who are trying to outlaw gender-affirming care for transgender kids & purge pro-gay books from library shelves have stirred up disgust by invoking the specter of sexual “grooming”; others have made the same accusations against those speaking out against such legislative efforts, & some have used the idea to fuel disinformation about the cause of scattered pediatric monkeypox cases. The manufactured grooming mythology has spurred another round of moral disgust & outrage.

In response to Rufo’s diatribe, Carlson—who has an average of over three million viewers—explicitly linked drag queens to pedophiles: “Why would any parent allow their child to be sexualized by an adult man with a fetish for kids?” Rufo then suggested that parents should push back & “arm themselves with the literature” supposedly laying out the child sexualization agenda. Carlson replied, “Yeah, people should definitely arm themselves.”

Some people have. Researchers have estimated that transgender people are more than fourfold more likely to be the victims of violent crime than their cisgender counterparts, & while not a direct link to violence, other scientists have linked disgust sensitivity & authoritarianism to a higher opposition to transgender rights. Over the past few months, assailants repeating the groomer slur have threatened to kill drag queens & LGBTQ people, as well as educators, school officials, librarians, parents & lawmakers who have come to their defense.

In the lead-up to the midterm elections, a blitz of far-right radio ads targeting Black & Hispanic stations in swing states has repeated falsehoods about transgender people & a QAnon warning that the Biden administration will make it easier for children “to remove breasts & genitals”—an attempt to evoke disgust. Other ads aimed at white audiences claim minorities are the true aggressors & destroyers of social norms. One decries “anti-white bigotry.” Another warns ominously, “Stop the woke war on our children.”

The cynical appeal to protecting children by attacking minorities has exposed a bitter irony: disgust is an emotion that evolved to keep us out of danger, but people have long misused it to inflict cruelty & catastrophic harm.

No single intervention is likely to reduce the boil of this toxic stew. But a better understanding of how disgust works & how we can be manipulated by our sense of revulsion may help us turn down the heat. Just as we can overcome our fears, Taylor said, we can break free of disgust. Desensitization & habituation can lessen its potency. Other research suggests that interventions based on compassion, empathy & trust-building can help weaken its contribution to prejudice. Awareness & education can uncover unconscious biases & expose the tactics of those who weaponize it, like those inciting the current wave of ugly antisemitism.

A day after the attack on Paul Pelosi, Hillary Clinton reacted to the suspect's apparent far-right influences by tweeting, "The Republican Party & its mouthpieces now regularly spread hate & deranged conspiracy theories. It is shocking, but not surprising, that violence is the result. As citizens, we must hold them accountable for their words & the actions that follow." In response, new Twitter owner Elon Musk tweeted a hateful conspiracy theory by a notoriously misleading news site that blamed Pelosi's attack on the LGBTQ community; Musk later deleted the tweet, but then joked about it.

What can stop stochastic terrorism & break the cycle of disgust-fueled vilification, threats & violence? Turning off the source of fuel is a start. Programs to counter violent extremism, particularly those that emphasize early intervention & deradicalization, have yielded some successes in at-risk communities. Other programs disrupt the ideological ecosystem that creates radical conspiracies through counseling, education & other community interventions. Beyond understanding how our emotions can be exploited to demonize others, we can refuse to buy into "both-sides" false equivalence & the normalization of dangerous rhetoric & extremism. We can do better at enforcing laws against hate speech & incitement to violence. & ultimately, we can disengage with media platforms that make money by keeping us disgusted, fearful & forgetful of our own decency—& shared humanity.

Bryn Nelson is a science writer & author based in Seattle. He is the author of *Flush, The Remarkable Science of an Unlikely Treasure*.

--Unfortunately, studies have shown that many RPs will suffer social ostracism, denial of services, harassment, acts of vandalism, or assault as the result of inclusion on the registry.

VIGILANTE FACT & FICTION

"When I come home at night, I bolt the door real tight! People call me on the phone, I'm trying to avoid, But can the people on TV see me or am I just paranoid? When I'm in the shower, I'm afraid to wash my hair, 'Cause I might open my eyes & find someone standing there. People say I'm crazy, just a little touched, But maybe showers remind me of Psycho too much ... Who's playing tricks on me? I don't know anymore! Are the neighbors watching me? (Who's watching?) Well, is the mailman watching me? (Tell me, who's watching?) & I don't feel safe anymore, oh, what a mess, I wonder who's watching me now (who?), the IRS? I always feel like somebody's watching me & I have no privacy (oh, oh) I always feel like somebody's watching me, Tell me is it just a dream?" – "Somebody's Watching Me" by Rockwell

In recent years I have received many calls from RPs & loved ones of RPs swearing they're being stalked by multiple people & are seeking solutions. Some are real, but others are not. However, there many cases when it is merely paranoia. It seems I'm always giving far more bad news than good news. Every year, new restrictions are passed into law, more stories of vigilantes committing crimes against RPs are published, more court cases uphold draconian laws, & more police stings round RPs up for FTR cases. All these things, in addition to the fact that detailed registry info is available to the public, make RPs & the loved ones who live us susceptible to beliefs that people are out to get us.

In my 2023 anti-registry activist survey, only 40% of RPs, their loved ones (LOs), & others in the anti-registry movement stated they have never experience any crimes committed against them, 32% experienced off-line or “real world” threats or harassment, 27% experienced online threats or harassment, 19% were targeted by extortionists or scammers, 18% experienced property damage, 16% chose “other”, & 8% were physically assaulted. “Other” answers included ousted from or not allowed entry to public places or social clubs, false accusations of wrongdoing, interference with employment, SLAPP suits, bumper stickers & T-shirts promoting violence against registrants, & denial of various services. If looking solely at RPs, only 35% stated they’ve never experienced any harassment.

This unsurprisingly leads to high levels of fear & anxiety among RPs & LOs. RPs (29%) & LOs (27%) most often chose “always” when asked if they fear of going out in public due to possible attacks (Others, 6%). Only 3% of RPs & 12% LOs (vs 60% others) expressed no fear of public events. LOs are more likely than RPs to choose “frequently/often” (LOs 27% vs 21% RPs) or “Regularly” (LOs 33% vs 27% RPs) when asked if they fear being physically assaults due to the registry (Others chose 10% frequent & 18% regularly); LOs (8%) were the least likely to choose “never” (vs. 12% RPs & 42% Others); 48% of RPs cite fear as a reason for not participating in future anti-registry events, while 26% feared attending the DC vigil.

I have personally engaged in numerous public events as far back as 2007 & have not been physically attacked. At worst, I’ve been called vile things online. I’m not, however, going to downplay the fact many RPs are victims of harassment or worse. However, we must recognize the difference between real harassment & the kind that many imagine.

It is fitting that the modern prison slang for the rumor mill is “inmate dot com” because misinformation spreads by the real world Internet. There are online communities where people claim they’re being “gang stalked.” The reason I posted the partial lyrics from the Rockwell song is because many people who believe in “gang stalking” describe actions that sound ripped from the song. For example, an unknown car may pull up nearby, so the person fearing gang-stalking assumes it is a spy, when in reality it was a city road worker, a person who got lost, or maybe a delivery driver. The only studies on those who make these claims found nearly all suffered from mental illness.

There are indeed individuals & groups engaging in vigilante activities. Most are online & never engage in offline activity. Vigilantes who travel great distances to commit crimes are extremely rare. Most vigilantes who have engaged in offline harassment are members of the local community. If a neighbor yells he’s going to assault you or yells vile things at you when outside, there is no doubt it is harassment. But, if at most you get a dirty look, a cold shoulder, or you simply feel like someone is out to get you w/o evidence, then you may only be suffering from the paranoia the registry can bring. A brick through your window is definitely harassment; a small scratch on your car may just be a rock that hit your car as you were driving. If you see the same people at your local shopping centers, chances are they live in the community & this is where they also shop regularly.

Think of it this way, most accusations in court require some kind of evidence. So, if you only FEEL like you’re being watched, ask yourself if there is actual evidence that you’re indeed under surveillance. If you are concerned about your neighbors, then look into surveillance equipment. Home security cameras are cheaper & easier to operate than ever, now that many are wireless & easy to conceal. Be reasonable in your assessment. A minor ding on your car is likely just a careless shopper or a runaway cart, not a targeted attack. But someone scrawling a message onto your car is undoubtedly an act of vigilantes.

It is important to remember that your mileage may vary. Many RPs have no problems with neighbors. After all, just over a third of RPs experienced no harassment at all. But it is up to you to decide how to deal with it. Is it better to let things go altogether, file a police report, or take a neighbor to court? You

must weigh the benefits & drawbacks of each. Retaliation could escalate the harassment, but the harassment may not stop when the harasser is not confronted. The police may choose not to help. Lawsuits can be costly & take years to progress. Do you have conclusive evidence? So weigh each option carefully before you proceed.

GYM USAGE AS AN RP

Admittedly, I've never been able to keep up a workout regimen. I was a skinny kid, fat teen, skinny young adult, & fat middle aged guy, though I've recently lost a little weight in my mid-40s. In prison, there is ample time to exercise assuming you're allowed to use it, but in the free world, many have to make time out of their busy schedules to exercise.

I was recently asked if RPs can use gyms open to the public. The short answer is that gyms are private businesses & can make their own rules which can exclude RPs. If you have a PO, discretionary rules could be applied to ban you from using the gym. Since some gyms may have daycare facilities, some state or local laws may prevent you from using a gym.

The YMCA has a policy in place since the mid-200s that "conducts regular SO screenings on all members, participants, & guests. If a sex offender match occurs, the YMCA reserves the right to cancel membership, end program participation, & remove visitation access. In addition, the YMCA reserves the right to deny access or membership to any person who has been accused or convicted of any crime involving sexual abuse."

Planet Fitness, YMCA, 24 Hour Fitness, Gold's Gym, Life Time Fitness, Crunch Fitness, & Equinox all allow minors as young as age 12, though they require younger teens to have a chaperone present at all times. Planet Fitness has no anti-RP use policy but they do allow those age 13-17 to use the gym (13/14-yr-olds must have a chaperone at all times). Gold's Gym seemingly has more individual rules but most state teens can use the gym only if a chaperone is present at all times; some have a "kid's club" area so that may be a problem for areas with presence restrictions. Smaller, non-franchise gyms may ban minors altogether due to liability concerns (bigger chains can absorb lawsuits easier than smaller chains).

Personally, I'd advise seeking out an adults-only gym if one is available in your area even if your offense did not involve minors. Alternately, you can buy basic workout equipment at many major retailers & skip the worry.

On a related note, presence restrictions could interfere with going to public pools & running trails, or with certain other physical activities. So far, I can find no evidence of RPs being banned from marathons like the Boston Marathon & the Ironman. However, publicity stunts such as feats of strength & endurance may be rejected due to registry status. A Tampa Bay, FL man named Thomas Edward Lynch attempted to break the Guinness World Record for longest wheelchair wheelie in 2010, but after it was revealed he was on the registry, the event was cancelled after everyone involved withdrew support & condemned Lynch. (Lynch maintained his innocence.)

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