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Boise

Free Thought Treasure Valley Coalition of Reason www.tvcor.com.

June 2016

Seven Years in a Human Warehouse

By Ketema Ross

Editor's note: Ketema Ross is a nephew of the editor.

On the morning of June 24, 2007, I kicked in my elderly neighbors' door and brutally beat them with a broom handle. I then immediately called the police to tell them what I had done. I was arrested and charged with first-degree burglary, second- and third-degree assault and third-degree unlawful imprisonment.

If my motive for this attack had been a dispute over money or drugs, my story would be common, hardly remarkable. Had there been noise complaints from either side, a tawdry affair, a parking dispute or any other conflict, the public would have understood. Not approved, but understood. The community would rightfully have demanded justice, in the form of punishment, stating: "You did the crime, now do the time." Based on a plea offer I received, that time would likely have been three years in prison. Then, despite the fact that there would have been an approximately 75 percent chance that I would reoffend, I would have been released, likely on parole but otherwise a free man, and rejoined society. The fact that most convicted criminals remain dangerous does not provide grounds to keep them locked up forever. They still have rights.

But my motivation for the attack was very different. It was caused by a mental illness. I sincerely believed that I had to attack them, at the order of the president and CIA, in order to stop a terrorist attack. I did so despite the fact that I very much did not want to. I had no conflict with my neighbors; I had never exchanged even a word with either of them. While I now regret what I did with every fiber of my being, at the time I thought I was doing the right thing. I was found not guilty of the charges against me, by reason of insanity. But with the way our society operates, I may have been better off had I been motivated by evil, anger, greed or malice and been found guilty. Society understands malice. We understand retribution. But we do not understand mental illness and are often unable to see the humanity in those with mental illness. Thus, instead of being locked in a prison for three years, I was locked in a mental hospital for seven years. In my early adulthood,

I completed my Bachelor of Arts degree at Colorado College, worked as a claims adjuster for a major insurance company and attended Yale Law School for one year. I was, and still am, a good and decent human being with compassion for others and a loving heart.

During my time at Yale, after becoming increasingly angry, frustrated and disillusioned with the law, I had my first "psychotic break." I believed that the federal government was following me and would kidnap and torture me because of my "revolutionary" beliefs. I fled the country in the fall of 2001 for Caracas, Venezuela, in fear for my life. I returned a few weeks later, destitute and homeless.

I would be in and out of various psychiatric wards more than a dozen times over the next six years. I strained or ruined several relationships with friends, family and romantic partners, would struggle with unemployment and was using drugs in an attempt to "self-medicate" the voices in my head, the virtually constant overwhelming fear and anxiety, and the crisis of losing my identity as a successful scholar and academic.

I had completely given up hope of a fulfilling life and believed (and often attempted to prove) that death would be a better state to attain than my own nightmare existence. When I committed those atrocious acts, I believed I was the only one who was sane, that everyone else was wrong, evil or actively conspiring against me. I believed I was following the will of the Almighty when I did what I did. This scares people. I understand completely, because it terrifies me as well.

On June 24, 2007, still believing that I was working for the federal government, I called the police after the assault. I thought they would take me in and debrief me about the violent action I had just taken against my neighbors. It was not until after sitting in a cell at the Whitman County jail for a full two months that the reality would hit me: I was not a member of the CIA. I had been tricked; my own sick mind had led me to commit an act that I will forever regret. I was not to be rewarded, but punished.

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West Valley Freethinkers, Nampa Contact Charlie B deep-bluesigh@gmail.com wvfreethinkers@gmail.com

C of Southern Idaho Secular group see Facebook "Secular Student Alliance at CSI". For Freethinkers Twin Falls Contact is Erica, erical@eaglemail.csi.edu

COSMOS COFFEE CLUB conversation v begins at 6:30pm 1st & 3rd Mondays at Papa Joe's. Contact Sander Karas at <http://www.meetup.com/CosmosCoffeeClub>

Humanists in Idaho Falls meet at the Unitarian Universalist Church. Ask Doug at gerstner_doug@yahoo.com

Idaho Society of Reason is part of Treasure Valley Coalition of Reason. <http://meetup.com/nontheist/events> 2nd 3on Boise, & 4th Sundays Nampa at noon. Check meetup for summer changes, events.

Local Objectivists meet monthly, last Wed 6pm at varying restaurants. Ask Tim Scharff at scharffdesignworks@icloud.com

Meet An Atheist or several, socialize 2nd Tuesdays, typically at The Reef. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/IdahoAtheist/>

Human KIND project <http://www.human-kind-project.com/>, Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/humankindproject2014> Sunday Assembly Boise: music, presentations, activities; see FB

... in a human warehouse *continued from page 1*

If I had taken a plea offer from the prosecutor, the form of that punishment would have been three years in a state penitentiary. There was another possibility, though: I could plead not guilty by reason of insanity and, if I confessed to my criminal activity on that terrible day and the court agreed, I would be sent to a mental hospital for an "up to life" maximum commitment.

The six months after the assault would pass very slowly as I waited to learn my fate. I was treated for my apparent mental illness with medications and eventually transferred to the jail's general population. The dangers of life in the jail as well as the realization, guilt and pain related to what I had done took over my days.

Then came a blessing: After pleading not guilty by reason of insanity, I was committed to Eastern State Hospital in Medical Lake, Washington. I was diagnosed with chronic paranoid schizophrenia, the chief symptoms of which were deeply ingrained delusions that I worked for the CIA, command-type hallucinations that I was receiving orders from the CIA and president via satellite, which resulted in the violent actions of that horrific morning. I steadily took the medicine I was prescribed to treat symptoms of psychosis. I began the process of recovery.

The medication worked. After about two years, I was no longer experiencing the psychosis that caused my earlier conduct and thus was no longer dangerous. I was able to walk the grounds of the hospital and take supervised trips into the community, without ever doing or saying anything even vaguely dangerous. I assumed that I would soon be allowed to leave the hospital, with continued treatment and monitoring, and spend time with my family again.

But I was very wrong. The state was going to keep me locked up for another five years, at a cost to taxpayers of approximately \$250,000 per year, simply because it could.

The reality that I would not be leaving the hospital took time to set in. It happened after my first "offense" of using a pillow stuffed with books as a weight for working out. I was accused of "destroying state property" and lost weeks of time toward the all-important next category. I was angered, hurt, devastated. This experience served as a prelude to the next several years. No matter what I did, or how well I was, I could not overcome the system. The system works to serve its own ends, not those of patients.

This was made crystal clear by another event in 2009, after I had recovered enough to walk the hospital grounds and take supervised trips into town. One patient abused the privilege and [walked away from an outing](#). He was eventually found and didn't hurt anyone; he just couldn't resist the urge after decades in the hospital. The media whipped up a panic. The state legislature responded by passing a bill requiring all patients to obtain [a court order before being allowed supervised walks](#) on hospital grounds or trips beyond the facility. These orders could, of course, take months to get. This bill passed both chambers unanimously. The citizens of the state, through their representatives, chose to act entirely out of fear and punish all of us collectively, rather than see us as individuals and trusting the doctors who know us best.

In Washington state, many patients who would have served six months in county jail if they had pleaded guilty ended up "maxing out" their five-year maximum commitment to the hospital. Others were found not guilty of more serious offenses and so will likely never be released, even when they have substantially recovered, even in a supervised conditional release. A recent study of Washington state hospitals found that patients are more likely to be released to the coroner's office than to the community on conditional release.

While I am grateful for the care I initially received, life in a mental hospital is often torment, with constant loneliness, hopelessness and depression. It can also be terrifying, as patients who are truly dangerous are often on the same ward as people who were charged with check fraud.

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Humanists of Idaho, a chapter of American Humanist Association & Council for Secular Humanism, is a nonprofit corporation promoting ethical, democratic, and naturalistic Humanism through public awareness, education and community involvement. We meet 3rd Mondays, Jan-Nov, upper room of the Flicks, Boise. Open discussion and dining at 6:30pm; business 7pm; program 7:30pm. We next meet June 20. *Find more at our meetup page, address below.*

“The Job .. of a New York City Cop”

In his interview on National Public Radio, the author of this book, Steve Osborne, was articulate and personable with the recognizable accent and colorful lexicon of a native blue-collar New Yorker. He fit the popular media mold of a New York cop – a local kid, son of a cop, and totally enthralled about a career in law enforcement from his earliest memories. Further, he was reared in a tough multi-ethnic neighborhood laced with violence, alcohol, and testosterone-laden male role models. His stories caught my attention because they had credibility – Osborne’s strong persona bespoke truth and genuine honesty in his description of his two decades in law enforcement. I had to sample more of him, so I reserved “The Job” through my library’s web site.

A first impression of “The Job” could be that it is the autobiography of a New York City policeman – nothing more. It describes the twenty year career of an enthusiastic cop totally dedicated until a personal burn-out and retirement. Osborne has a dozen stories representing his time in uniform, and later, plain clothes, as he fought crime and encountered the best and the worst citizens of the Big Apple. The reader encounters innocent and not so innocent victims, and a kaleidoscope of characters from several of New York’s seediest boroughs. This includes more cops, Osborne’s relatives, usually oppressed citizens, pimps, thieves, addicts, hippies, prostitutes, students, stock brokers and bar flies. Personal risk and even mortal danger are common on the streets of the city and in its subways.

As an adjunct to the fast moving stories of “The Job”, the author presents both his work persona and its alter ego. One side, of course, is the wise cracking, foul mouthed, hardnosed cop, morphed by the job to be always skeptical and usually cynical about life, police work, and his interfaces with the public. He claims to have loved every second of his cop’s life. But Osborne shows a second side of himself, one that is protected by the wall he admits to building to isolate him and his family, and to avoid succumbing to the strongly negative influences of law enforcement in the mean streets. He is a seething crockpot of emotions. He is sensitive to the pains and misfortunes of those he encounters on the job, even to the point of showing empathy to some of those he arrests. He is protective of the emotions of victims, sometimes shielding them from the more unpleasant aspects of their plights. At home, he is a faithful loving family man. One of Osborne’s more touching stories describes his father’s difficult and painful death. The author lied to his father about completing a career milestone so that the dying man could let go of his grip on life and expire in peace. In another story, Osborne relates the short and tragic life of the first family dog, a traffic fatality.

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President’s Message

Human Rights advocate Robert Franklin was the featured speaker at our May meeting. Robert had an active part in the creation of the Anne Frank Memorial (just north of the main library), and he gave us an interesting overview of the evolution of Human Rights over the century, how far we have come, and a look at things still needing to be addressed. A sapling from the tree that stood outside Anne Frank’s window was planted at the memorial. For more information on the memorial and other Human Rights projects, check out the Wassmuth Center for Human Rights website at: <http://wassmuthcenter.org/the-memorial/>.

A reminder to everyone that Boise Pridefest is Saturday, June 18, and we will again have our booth up for the event. This year it will be centered at Capitol Park, across from the Capitol building. Details will be posted soon on HOI’s meetup page, and specifics on times/events can be found at the Pridefest website: <http://www.boisepridefest.org/>. Also, TV CoR will have an entry in the parade, so wave when they pass by. Hope to see you all there. Note: Any of you who might be interested in putting in an hour or two as a booth volunteer

HOI election was certified at May’s meeting. D G Van Curen (Van) will continue as President, Britini Gates is our new Vice President, Jan Rowe is still Secretary, and Paul Rolig is still Treasurer. We currently do not have a Program Director. The primary duty of this position is to schedule a monthly speaker, presentation/, and/or discussion. Anyone who is interested in that position can contact us at humanistsofidoaho@gmail.com, for details.

D G Van Curen President, Humanists of Idaho



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All of this became exponentially worse when the legislature took away what little freedoms we had and the hope of being released. You can imagine what effect it would have to not be able to take a walk and get fresh air, leave your house on occasion or visit family. Now imagine that instead of being trapped in your home, you are trapped in a mental hospital, even though you are well. Add to this the realization that your confinement is indefinite. You would struggle not just for your sanity, but also your humanity.

The sheer drudgery of living in a state hospital, combined with the countless pitfalls that beset patients, has convinced me that I recovered despite, not because of, my confinement to Eastern State Hospital. Life at the hospital feels like an enormous, endless exercise in futility. Hours pass like years, and years pass like hours. We suffer because we cannot express our remorse for the criminal activity we committed and be truly heard by our treatment teams, let alone our victims. We suffer because the cold, sterile environment that is to make us better sucks away our identities and, if we're not careful, our very humanity.

Life at the hospital was difficult when I arrived in December 2007. Yet patients were allowed to visit each other's rooms, play musical instruments with one another, share food and compact discs and otherwise be social. But then the walk-away happened and all hell broke loose. Patients were placed on lockdown—even those patients who had court-approved visits to town could not leave the hospital grounds. At a record pace, state laws were passed taking away re-integration trips and placing a state panel over the hospital as another level of scrutiny to any form of release. Hopelessness abounded on the forensic wards at the hospital. Shortly afterward, a patient was murdered at the hands of another patient.

Then came the mandate from the federal government that visiting one another's rooms was too dangerous. Everything from guitars, to compact discs, to stereos, to shoelaces, belts and potted plants was deemed a "dangerous" item. They were henceforth removed from patient access. On my ward, there was almost a full-scale riot when these mandates were passed down. More policy changes followed making it a punishable offense for a patient to share food with another patient. While staff potlucks were carried out mere feet away, patients could help one another only by passing food in a bathroom or to a roommate, as these were the only places on the wards not monitored by camera 24/7.

"Long-term stability" is the name of the game when it comes to seeking release from the hospital. This translates to remaining cool, not giving in to the temptation to voice human emotions (such as frustration or anger) and following a laundry list of rules that can take away category levels (a hierarchical numbered system of labeling patients and granting them privileges), at any given moment. It also means participating in a monotonous routine of waking up early for breakfast, taking medications, then lining up for the walk to another building to participate in the "treatment mall" for five hours on weekdays.

The treatment mall is the part of the program most despised by patients. Though all classes are considered by the hospital to be "active treatment" (and thus it's a mortal sin in the eyes of the treatment team to not participate), classes (such as "Table Games," "Sewing," "Journaling" and "Volleyball") are rarely changed and become a sign of the drudgery, boredom and hopelessness that pervade the hospital environment.

The routine continues back at the ward, where patients are distributed mail (an intense 15 minutes), followed by yard time, dinner, then ward store, community meeting on some nights, more medication distribution, then snacks and most patients going to bed. Most patients' lives revolve around phone calls from attorneys, visits from loved ones or trips to court.

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Boise State

SECULAR STUDENT ALLIANCE

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BSU SSA is a home for secular students., encouraging critical thought, open, rational, scientific examinations of the universe and our place in it. We believe ethics and morality can be based on humanistic and rational values. We present a positive view of various -isms and non-religious worldviews through debates, workshops, speakers, movies, book club, discussion, and social gatherings.

Fall 2015 officers

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... **Life in a Human Warehouse** *from page 4*

Adding to the state of despair is that some patients have nothing to lose because they know they will literally die in the hospital. Unsurprisingly, some are known to try to sabotage patients who are “working the program” by trying to start fights with them. This does not deter treatment teams from punishing the cooperating patient one iota when it comes to the enforcement of policies and rules—despite the knowledge that they are being provoked by someone who is known for aggressive behavior. I was granted my release by a judge who, despite the testimony of hospital employees, was willing to give me a chance in the community. The stories of patients who are not so fortunate are too numerous to count.

I and a group of other patients, represented by attorney Andrew Biviano and the watchdog organization Disability Rights Washington, filed a [federal suit](#) against the Washington state system last fall. It is our claim that patients at Washington state hospitals are being denied their constitutional and legal rights when they are punished for minor transgressions, denied access to the outdoors and the community and held for years past the point they could have been re-integrated into the community. None of the plaintiffs, including myself, will profit monetarily and, as I was conditionally released in January, I do not stand to gain in any way with the exception of seeing a grievous injustice addressed.

I am now applying for positions in the mental health industry as a “peer specialist,” hoping to use my training and experience to counsel others who are currently suffering from mental illness. I work out at the local YMCA, stay active in Narcotics Anonymous and am making connections in the local community. And for the first time in almost a decade, I prepare my own meals. I am responsible for my own rent and bills. I wash my own dishes. I don’t pretend to be perfect. I don’t pretend to have answers to some incredibly difficult questions about what to do with those who commit horrible acts in the throes of psychosis.

What I do is wonder. I wonder what it would be like to live in a society in which everyone admits that they are not perfect and we do not blame people for having a mental illness that they most certainly did not ask for. chance of re-offending

The fact is that, statistically, I have a 0.6 percent chance of re-offending. The fact is that if I so much as have a beer in my refrigerator, break curfew, smoke marijuana in a state where that is legal or break any of a number of other stipulations to my newly found freedom, it will be taken from me. I do not want that to happen, so I take care not to break any of these conditions. But I still wonder. Is it fair? Is it fair that I must have practically perfect behavior in order to avoid being thrown back in the psychiatric hospital at a moment’s notice? Is it fair that I find my skin crawling when I hear the words “crazy,” “delusional” and “psychotic” tossed around without regard for those who live the reality of mental illness? Probably not.

I am encouraged by the stories of recovery I hear from others. I am encouraged by the words of wisdom I find in the Bible. I am encouraged by the changes I see in myself when I continue to take the medication I am prescribed because I want to continue living the new life I have been granted. I am encouraged by the people who are doing God’s work in this world—the Ebola workers, the nonprofit employees, the charity volunteers.

I had become isolated from the rest of the world long before I broke down my neighbors’ door and assaulted them in 2007. Society did not care about me until it felt the need to protect itself from me. But perhaps the next chapter in my life will be filled with a moral, and perhaps legal, victory on behalf of patients who otherwise have no voice. Perhaps the liberties and freedoms that this nation cherishes will be afforded even to those with no power. Perhaps we will all commit to the difficult task of reflecting on ourselves and discovering what it is that makes us feel so afraid, and how we can be more understanding. Perhaps there will be many more meals prepared for the forsaken, the demonized, the scapegoated of our nation. Not in the confines of mental hospitals, but as part of a larger conversation on what mental illness truly is. Until then, I have some more dishes to do.



Sages will meet as usual, June 9 and 23 at Kopper Kitchen, for a timely presentation, conversation, and no host breakfast. Those eager for a return of our summer breakfast potluck can get alerts from Tom by emailing him and asking to be on his list.

Humanists will meet, too, on June 19, 11:15 am in the library. Our topic this month, considering the holiday, will be reflecting on the legacies of our fathers, and what that means for us.

May 15 at BUUF we asked ourselves, what about us is uniquely Human? And is this the wrong question? We began with Frans de Waal, a primatologist who believes that we share with many mammals a desire to assist each other. The caretaker/infant bond, a blend of protection, support, comfort under discomfort or threat—also encourages each of us to become independent. As we mature, attachments to others are essential to being part of community. Even impulses that can be destructive, the male bonding essential to defense of the troop/community, can be evolutionarily useful. Successful leaders of chimps and humans are good at reading the needs of others; their confidence gives confidence and a feeling of belonging to others.

Our complex of capacities, intelligence, ability to direct our actions and work together, form partnerships personal and for tasks, common purpose—to express personal power, commit to compromise, foresee consequences, focus, submerge ourselves in a larger good—and to rebel, avoid responsibility, evade facing personal error or poor choice—these are part of being human and many of these qualities are found in other life forms. Frans de Waal's observations of 25 years, his and that of others, are summarized in many books, including his latest, **Are we Smart Enough to know how smart animals are?** Several provocative new studies demonstrating animal smarts were mentioned in our class discussion.

Conservatives insist upon the moral superiority of humans and reject the idea that chimps or elephants experience compassion. Wesley Smith, member of the Discovery Institute, believes that 'moral beliefs,' knowing that we know, cognitizing about and justifying our actions, sets us apart. This may be true, but not in a good way.

The gifts of connection, combined with reflective capacity, encourage but do not guarantee self-correction. Mercy toward the weak does not, as we observe, require language. It simply is, and no belief in gifty deities is needed.

BUUF Humanists meet 3rd Sunday, 11:15:am, Boise Unitarian Universalist Fellowship library, June 19 Sages meet June 9 and 23, 9:30am, at Kopper Kitchen, near the Boise airport.

Some observations on our shared animal qualities:

One human pleasure is that of grand parenting, to be part of the changes characteristic of our young, without the drudgery. Rick's two year old granddaughter now sings while 'reading' to herself when alone.

Paul R: In the London zoo, when a child climbed a wall by the gorilla pen and fell in, then was injured, two teen gorillas approached before being sent away by a gorilla mother, who stood guard until the child was rescued. Helen heard of a similar incident, this with a two year old inside a cage, protected by a mother gorilla.

In another study: a team taught sign language to an orangutan, that learned many words, learned even to drive a car and drove one around the campus. But when funding for this research disappeared, the subject orangutan was sent to live in a zoo, where it found life to be depressing and deprived. John M: : corvids can plan ahead, can know when they are being observed and deceive their observer by pretend-hiding food, then moving it when no longer observed. AND corvids, as a group can support a chick in trouble. Helen has seen an example of a crow feeding an abandoned, starving kitten.

Becky recognizes the importance of play in human development—supported by at least one example of a psychopathic killer, the Texas man who climbed up in a tower and started shooting. As a boy he wasn't allowed to play, and if caught doing so, was whipped and sent in to practice the piano by his father. A contrast: Bonobo apes play constantly, at all ages; older ones play with younger ones. [sexual play is common and indiscriminate, also].

We mammals (for an instance) can create circumstances that allow learning capacity to emerge: John trains horses, begins by gaining rapport. He has seen rapport allow the animal's intelligence to emerge. Rapport, what emerges depends on an animal's genetics: horses are prey; dogs are predators. Still, training begins the same way. John wryly gave examples of how convictions can interfere with appreciating novel information. He said, I'm a scientist, belief does not enter here. Facts, testing, evidence do. Creativity can isolate you, if you are too far from the common understandings." Gregor Mendel's findings were ignored for forty years..

And on the subject of dangerous convictions: Woody observed, "It's human to believe that we will live again after we die. As for the Muslim dream of multiple virgins awaiting them in heaven: "If you've had one virgin you'll never want another." He says he wants to leave his property and knowledge for the benefit of others—property goes like that! 'But my kids won't listen to me."

June 2016

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Snake River Alliance is partnering with local installers to offer free site assessments and bids for installation of photovoltaic panels on your house or business. It's a limited time-offer, with a goal to add 50 new installations in the Treasure Valley.

The assessment is FREE and does not obligate you in any way. Sign up by July 31. If you decide to go forward with an installation, it can be scheduled to suit your needs (and based on the availability of parts and labor, of course).

There are local workshops being held if you want to find out more about the program and opportunity, meet the installers, learn about financing options, or just enjoy refreshments and good company:

June 8, 6:30 pm at the Hilton Garden Inn, 145 E Riverside Dr, Eagle

June 22, 6:30 pm at the Boise Co-op at The Village, 2350 N Eagle Rd, Meridian

from **Coalition of Reason** Dustin Williams
Summer is fast approaching and that means it's parade season! The Treasure Valley Coalition of Reason will be running floats in two parades this year, for Boise Pride and the 4th of July. Pride Festival will be June 18 at Capital Park. Before the Festival we will have a float in the parade, so show up at the Capital and look for the TVCoR banner at the rally. After the parade, stop by our member organizations booths; volunteer to staff a booth if your organization has one.

This year's 4th of July Parade's theme is "Everything Idaho" and we will again have a float in the parade. The parade starts at 11:00 AM on Monday, July 4, so find us in the staging area around 10:00 AM if you'd like to join us. It'll be hot, so be sure to bring water. October 6 we will again be participating in the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society's Light the Night Walk. We will be formally launching our team in the next few weeks, so expect more details in next month's Secular Idaho News.

Changing without Supernatural Assistance

There are 2 secular addiction recovery groups in the Treasure Valley. The first is a secular 12 step AA group which meets on Tuesday nights, 7 pm, in the Fahs room at the north end of the Boise Unitarian Universalist Fellowship in Garden City.

The 2nd is called Reason & Recovery and meets Thursday nights at 7pm at the Nazarene Church, 2701 S. Five Mile Road in Boise. The contact people for both groups are Robert F. at 208-501-6568 and Wally K. at 208-283-4756. (both have given permission to use their name & number for contact info). They can also contact Aria at 805-363-2961. Both of these groups are open to anyone with any type of addiction--alcohol, drugs, food, etc.

A New York Cop's Job... *continued from page 3*

A reader aware of events of the past decade will see other aspects of “The Job”, probably never intended by the author. An obvious one of these is the stereotyping of groups of individuals, an activity ubiquitous within today’s society. One example stems from a dozen or more controversial police shootings compounded by racial overtones. The result is an archetypical image of policemen, typified as rapidly racist, trigger happy, cruel and ignorant. One could attribute this to the media attempting to gain the readership and viewers necessary for a for-profit news industry. Or it may be one or more groups’ emotional surges in support of social justice and racial equality. Or perhaps it’s driven by grief and frustration – or groups’ seeking support for their political or philosophical causes. Regardless, author Steve Osborne’s book can remind readers that stereotyping is one of today’s very serious flaws. In reality, each human is an individual, no matter how ardently he or she attempts to become part of a crowd, a movement, a philosophy, or some other segment of society. By failing to recognize this trait, each of us can cause ourselves and others unpleasantness or add to the momentum of active destructive aspects of our society. A careful reader will find more than a shadow of “Black Lives Matter” in Osborne’s book and even a faint lilt of Kumbaya, on this particular issue. The message is embedded in the text for the reader sensitive enough to detect it.

Concluded below..

Humanists of Idaho

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The staffing of police departments. arises from meeting Steve Osborne and his peers. What characteristics should society seek in its law enforcement personnel? Are today’s candidates acceptable matches with the requirements of the jobs? If not, what sorts of candidates are more desirable? And from a pragmatic view, could police departments find adequate numbers of ideal candidates? Realistically, would these alternate ideal candidates be effective and efficient in monitoring and enforcing the law? Would they accept today’s pay scales for the rigors and challenges of modern police work? Or should society only cull a tiny but odious destructive minority?

The curious will find entrance into a rabbit warren of issues from a thoughtful and open minded reading of Osborne’s “The Job”. Human stereotyping and staffing choices for law enforcement noted above are just two. Many other lines of inquiry could be drawn - law enforcement and the homeless, mitigation of big city drug problems, the inadequacies of mega-city life for the poor, or tolerance of crime, just to cite a few more. “The Job” could have positive influence on its readers, causing them to pause, think, and even opine on a more informed level and with more sensitivity for the police and their interface with the many faces of the public. This reviewer was surprised at the ramifications of digesting a superficially entertaining tale of a New York cop and his robbers. There’s meat on the bone of this literary morsel, and an admonition to read all books more carefully in the future. One could benefit.

Wally Keltner