

Do Law Abiding Average Citizens Need to Fear the Criminal Justice System?

Written by Tony Hill

In the United Kingdom a large proportion of the prison population are innocent. Many of these people are factually innocent: They did not commit the crimes for which they are imprisoned. Others are technically innocent: They are in prison on remand and have not been convicted of any crime. Politicians complain about the cost of running the prison system, but yet the most important factor influencing the cost is the number of people incarcerated. So why are so many people in prison? The answer of course is that a large industry profits from this scenario. Yes, there really is a Criminal Justice Industry that makes lots of money, mostly from taxpayers, while convincing the gullible voters that they act in the best interests of the public. You are all victims of this financial crime, but many of you could so easily become victims in a much more physical and life shattering manner.

I was raised to trust and believe in the police. I was the product of a comfortable middle class upbringing. When I was a child my parents told me that if I was ever lost or in trouble I should go to the nearest police station and ask for help. But how realistic is this rosy, innocent view of the police? Much later in life I learned the sad, and indeed frightening, reality; the police are corrupt, incompetent and a serious danger to the safety and freedom of gentle and honest citizens

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My journey to this realization was a long one; it was not easy to break the mental programming ingrained since childhood. The process was both slow and painful, and frequently restrained by doubt. Even after years of abuse by the Criminal Justice System I would still find myself thinking that the system was the fount of respectability: I frequently regressed to doublethink, simultaneously knowing that the system is frequently willfully wrong while at the same time thinking that the only credible belief is the one purported by the system. When other people told me that they were falsely accused I couldn't ignore a nagging thought that they must be guilty because they were convicted by a court of law. When I could clearly see excessive and unreasonable punishments handed down by the system I still had this invasive thought that they must be acting for the best.

But not any more. It took over a decade to deprogram myself; to elevate logic and scientific method back to their rightful place of absolute supremacy over dogma and blind faith. I no longer have any confidence in the police, crown prosecutors, judges or any other component of the Criminal Justice System. I see clearly now what the system is, and how it works. It is a sordid game played by system insiders. There is a win column and a loss column. The players care only about maximizing the number of wins and minimizing the number of losses. It is a childish game, revolving around bragging about wins and deriding the losers. It is about reputation, but not honorable reputation. No, the only reputation that matters is for loyalty to the

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team. In particular there are two values that play absolutely no part whatsoever in scoring the game, or in maintaining a reputation: The system does not care in the slightest about truth or justice.

Perhaps the deplorable ethics of the British Criminal Justice System is summed up most succinctly by Lord Denning, at the time the most senior judge in the United Kingdom. He publicly stated:

We shouldn't have all these campaigns to get the Birmingham Six released if they'd been hanged. They'd have been forgotten, and the whole community would be satisfied... It is better that some innocent men remain in jail than that the integrity of the English judicial system be impugned.

Not only did Lord Denning want to cover up the fact that many innocent men had been imprisoned for decades, but indeed advocated judicial murder of innocent citizens as part of this foul perversion of justice. I am not ashamed to admit that even today reading that quotation brings real wet tears to my eyes, running down my face uncontrollably. That attitude is disgusting beyond belief.

I have been to prison twice now. On both occasions I was the innocent victim of a street attack. On both occasions I defended myself with the minimum necessary force, and on both occasions nobody was hurt beyond a few scratches and bruises. Both times I was sent to prison on remand. The law is quite clear that remand should not be a punishment. All defendants should be considered innocent until proven guilty in a court of law. A prisoner on remand has not yet, and may never be, convicted of a crime. Thus a defendant should never be remanded as a punishment. Regrettably the British Criminal Justice System does not play by these rules. They openly defy this basic principle of law. If they cannot get a conviction they use remand as a way of imprisoning the defendant without a trial. They also use remand as a tool of interrogation. The detained person is offered a choice: Either make a false confession and be released immediately, or insist on their innocence and go to prison for 3-6 months while their life is destroyed, they lose their job, mortgage, house and all their possessions.

How does the system justify remanding so many people? In my case the judge said remand, for the usual reasons. He couldn't even be bothered to state for the record what those reasons were. Perhaps he had long since forgotten, having been allowed to get away with his nebulous comments for so long. On another occasion the judge did itemize his reasons. He said I was

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being remanded so that I could not intimidate the witnesses or abscond. His reasons were asinine: How could one old man possibly intimidate a street gang? Why would I abscond when the maximum sentence if convicted was less than the time I had already served on remand? My own lawyer, appointed to me for free at the police station, said that I was being remanded for my own protection so that the offenders couldn't make any more accusations against me. That is so ridiculous on so many levels. How can it make sense to lock up an innocent person just in case someone accuses them of committing some unspecified crime in the future. If that justification was valid the entire population of the country should be in prison.

I spent months sitting in a cell on remand. Nobody likes to be locked up in a prison cell 23 hours per day. But at least if you are guilty of the crime that you are locked up for then you can rationalize that it is justice. Maybe you kick yourself for getting caught, for being careless, for making a tactical error. But unless the law itself is unjust you can accept that you deserve to be in prison. At the very least you can accept that you are imprisoned for an act that you actually committed. But when you are imprisoned for something that you did not do there is no sense of justice being served. To imprison an innocent person is itself an unacceptable injustice. The prisoner feels anger at a system that is punishing them, stealing time from their lives, doing immense damage to their life on the outside. But it gets so much worse when you are not only innocent of the crime that you are imprisoned for, but are the victim of that very crime. The prisoner's mind rages at the injustice. The prisoner has no respect for a system or a government that would punish them for being the victim of a crime. And as for the true offender, the person who actually committed the crime for which an innocent person is doing prison time, the manipulative coward that accused their victim of being the perpetrator, well that is a score that cries out to be settled eventually. The system even finds a way to exacerbate that rage, treating the true offender as if they were the victim, pandering to their whims, protecting them from having to give evidence at trial, putting measures in place to protect the violent offender from their gentle victim upon the victim's release from prison. Yet another layer of injustice that percolates and festers into rage.

This imprisonment of the innocent is an absolute waste. It cannot lead to rehabilitation; it only serves to destroy a life that was just fine before imprisonment. It cannot be a deterrent for there was never a crime to deter. It wastes taxpayer's money feeding, housing, guarding, clothing innocent inmates. It wastes taxpayer's money on lawyers, bailiffs, police, judges, magistrates and a whole host of other parasites upon respectable society. And it wastes a great deal more taxpayer's money on dealing with the long term consequences of this brutalization of innocent citizens. The long term cost to society is not purely financial: It also creates physical danger for society. The prison estate is often referred to as hate factories, and with good reason. Many a prison governor has commented that they wouldn't want to live near a released inmate that has been subjected to the worst abuse, and especially to long periods of solitary confinement. Such treatment changes the bio-chemistry of the brain and alters the mind in ways that most people could not imagine unless they have experienced it for themselves. Even those that escape the mind altering torture of solitary still often emerge from prison with a completely altered attitude

to life.

One way in which perceptions are altered is the acquired belief that prison is just an inevitable, repeated, phase of life. As one goes about living one's life there will be periods of time that one is in prison. These periods are unpredictable, occurring at random times during one's lifetime. Prior to being exposed to the injustice of the system a person tends to believe that there is a causal relationship between crime and punishment. If you commit a crime you are likely to go to prison, if you do not commit a crime you will not go to prison. But after a few trips around the system one loses this belief in the causality of punishment as a consequence of crime. Now one just accepts that from time to time one will get arrested and end up in prison. One's life is interrupted, all one's possessions acquired thus far in life will be lost. It is pointless to invest in the future, for all such investments will be taken away from you periodically. The inmate is reprogrammed to think only of the short term, only the immediate needs should be addressed.

Example 1: A young man in his early twenties was released from prison on license. One week later he was back in prison on the same wing he had left just a week earlier. When asked what happened he replied that he had been hungry. He asked his probation officer for money to buy food, but this was denied. So, with no money, unemployed and unemployable, he just walked into a supermarket and started eating whatever he wanted. He satisfied his immediate need for food. He was arrested and charged with shoplifting. He was then sent straight back to prison. He was actually surprised to find himself back in prison. He thought that the shoplifting would serve as a message to his probation officer that he needed money, and nudge his probation officer into finding him a job. And was this expectation so unreasonable? The probation service spreads so much propaganda that their role is to help and support prisoners released on license. But that of course is just another institutional lie. The reality is that the probation officer is rewarded for sending inmates back into the prison system. But soon the young man decided that his actions were for the best after all. Even if he had known that his actions would result in his return to prison he would have behaved in exactly the same way. Although he didn't like prison he was at least fed, warm, had a roof over his head and his laundry taken care of. But most of all he was now surrounded by his friends, young men like himself who understood his situation, kindred spirits to whom he could relate. He was once again amongst friends. And so, taxpayers of Britain, you need to work hard, earn lots of money and pay lots of taxes to support this criminal justice system that you love so much.

Once the Criminal Justice System has got its claws into you they are extremely reluctant to let go. When the time comes for an inmate to be released the system takes great delight in setting them up to fail. This often takes the form of license conditions that are impossible to adhere to, or a restraining order that prevents them from returning to their home or living in the town they have lived in all their life. This cuts them off from family and friends, and from the job they had prior to being remanded. Even if their former employer would give them their old job back the

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system has engineered conditions that would make it a criminal offense for them to accept that offer. A released prisoner finds themselves homeless, banded from their town, unemployed and with no hope of finding a job. And this array of vindictiveness is directed at an innocent person not convicted of a crime. Indeed, in a Kafkaesque display of utter nonsense, the system has created a special kind of restraining order that can only be placed upon an innocent person upon their acquittal in a criminal trial. The effects of this order, called a 5A order, are similar to, but more severe than, a suspended prison sentence. This order cannot be imposed upon a guilty person; this heinous punishment is reserved solely to punish the innocent. So, what is the purpose in creating such an unjust order? It is like a game of pool where an expert player is not just looking to sink the current ball, but controls the final stopping place of the cue ball to line up the next shot. The Criminal Justice System is thinking that if they can't convict an innocent defendant this time, then at least they can set up conditions to make it easy to convict them in the future. The system is setting up the defendant to fail.

Many inmates still have some remnants of faith in the system. They reason that common sense must eventually prevail. No matter what unsubstantiated accusations are made against them surely there must be some savior, some check and balance, further along in the process that will put a stop to this ridiculous and unjust railroading of an innocent defendant. If there is no evidence of wrongdoing surely they must eventually be set free. If the police are corrupt then surely the Crown Prosecution Service will put a stop to the fiasco. If CPS are also corrupt then the defendant pins their hope on the court. Surely an honorable judge will put a stop to this. But no, there is no safety net. The entire system is corrupt end to end. Eventually the defendant is overwhelmed by a tidal wave of injustice. They just give up and become compliant, passively allowing the injustice to roll over them, to drown them. They can no longer find the energy to defend themselves. Now they are just going along for the ride with no hope whatsoever of being able to influence the outcome. This is one of the many reasons why they stop believing in any causal relationship between crime and punishment.

Example 2: A former British soldier was sentenced to a restraining order for protecting his own mother from a violent attack. The order restrained him from going near his mother's house because the attacker was a nearby neighbor. This fact in and of itself illustrates the absurd levels of incompetence of the courts: Clearly the wrong party was punished. Then the same attacker once again tried to force his way into the soldier's mother's house. His mother called him for help, and he had no choice but to return to her house to protect her. In a situation like this the defendant cannot pay any heed to the consequences of their actions. They have to do what is required by the situation they are facing at the time. Indeed, this situation should rightly have been considered a lawful excuse for violating the restraining order, but don't expect any common sense from the system. The soldier ended up back in prison for violating the restraining order. After his subsequent release his landlord would not allow him to return to his home, and his former employer would not allow him to resume his previous job. He was now homeless and unemployed, and with severe health problems unrelated to his incarceration. Once a strong and courageous man that had fought for his country in many military campaigns,

he was now back in prison for shoplifting a small amount of food from a large supermarket chain. He told us of the training he had received while in the military designed to enable him to endure overwhelming adversity and not give up. He described to us how he had to carry railway sleepers over a long distance until he was exhausted, and then yelled at and physically punished if he showed any signs of dropping this heavy load. He told us of how he was drilled to keep going when every muscle in his body wanted to quit. He told us how this training saved his life in the Gulf War when an artillery shell explosion had caused him to be buried in sand, how he was suffocating and just wanted to give up and die, but his training had allowed him to claw his way out and live. Then he told us how the incessant grinding treatment he was subjected to by the Criminal Justice System had worn him down to the point that he just couldn't fight it anymore. If the system can break a man like that it can break anybody. This once strong soldier was now gravely ill from injuries and illness, a shadow of the man he used to be. He was living rough despite a medical condition that should have him confined to a hospital bed. He was starving. So he selected a large supermarket chain with a reputation for dishonesty towards their customers, and stole just enough food for one small meal. An amount that would have no measurable impact on the profits of that large chain. For this he was sent back to prison.

So, is it possible that the courts really do impose a restraining order to protect some vulnerable member of the public from an ongoing threat? That is what they would want us to believe. But in real life restraining orders often have the opposite effect: They escalate a violent situation. There is a considerable volume of academic research that supports this assertion. When a restraining order is placed upon a real abuser they are just as likely to be angered by it, and increase the intensity of their abuse, as they are to be intimidated by it, and stop their abusive behavior. But, when the restraining order is not placed on the offender, but rather it is placed on the victim, no good can possibly come from it. The offender is emboldened by the restraining order. The offender is told loud and clear that whenever they attack their victim, it is their victim that will be going to prison. The offender is told that the system will believe, or pretend to believe, the offender's lies, because once the system has picked a side they will not change. No matter how much evidence that subsequently comes to light proving that the police are siding with the offender they will never willingly admit their mistake. The police, and their close colleagues the Crown Prosecution Service, go into full on cover their ass mode. They are psychologically incapable of admitting their mistakes. They set up elaborate processes, and entire departments, designed to frustrate valid complaints and hide the truth. Once the police have chosen a side they become the loyal co-conspirators of the abusers. Knowing this the abusers will continue their violent assaults with impunity. But what will be the effect on the victim? That depends on the strength and personality of the victim. Some victims are cowed by this situation and run away from their home and all they have known. They become voluntary refugees, fleeing their town, and if they have the means, fleeing their country. Other victims achieve a level of blind rage that empowers them to fight back against seemingly insurmountable odds. They take the view that next time they are attacked they will defend themselves. But whereas before, or in a fair system, they would defend themselves with the minimum necessary force, now they will be unrestrained in their fury. If they are going to prison for five years for lawfully defending themselves, then they might as well get their money's worth. They might as well cause injuries to their tormentors that would result in a five year prison

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sentence. If they have to do the time, they might as well do the crime. Now the offender will not get away with a few scratches and bruises. Now the offender will be fucked up real bad, imprisoned for the rest of their life in a body broken beyond repair. The goal will be to render the attacker blind and tetraplegic, on a respirator for the rest of their lives. This is bio-chemistry at work: It is called Amok .

When I publish my experiences with the British Criminal Justice System it often results in a social media backlash. Respondents accuse me of being a bad and evil person because I criticize the police. They state that any good law abiding citizen would support the police and trust the courts. They say I must be a criminal because I don't believe in law and order. On this last point they couldn't be more wrong. I have a strong sense of ethics, and I believe that the world should be fair. I detest those that hurt others, or steal other people's property. But I know that the police, and the rest of the Criminal Justice System, are not on the side of law and order. Those people that I meet on social media are usually polarized in their beliefs either for or against the police. If I post in a forum of people that hate the police I am cheered and encouraged. But there are also forums that are composed of fans of the police, fanatic supporters, colloquially called cop suckers . These people get very angry whenever I posts any comment critical of the police in *their* forums. When presented with hard evidence they go to extreme lengths to discredit it. Humans have a propensity to believe what they want to believe; indeed this is a well known and much studied aspect of human psychology. If presented with an article that agrees with their existing personal beliefs they will often believe it without question. It makes them comfortable to think that such an account is true, and so their mind tricks them into believing it. But when presented with an article that contradicts their deeply held beliefs they feel very uncomfortable, even angry. They resist believing this new information, and often turn that anger against the speaker. Online this is manifested as derogatory comments, name calling, personal insults and standard cliches. But neither of these reactions lead to enlightenment. In order to find the truth one needs to apply scientific method.

I would very much like to live in a country with an honest and honorable police force. I would love to be able to trust the police to help me when I am in danger. It saddens me deeply to know that in the United Kingdom this just isn't the case. It scares me just how pervasive the corruption and cover ups have become in British society. The very institutions that should detect and remedy these problems have themselves become corrupted and perverted in order to perpetuate these failures.