

What If? ...Cancer Prisons

Some say drug addiction should be regarded as a medical rather than a criminal problem. I disagree. In fact, I think all medical problems should be regarded as crimes, with punishment proportional to the severity of the illness. I foresee huge cancer prisons, where solitary confinement will be meted out to inmates experiencing the most severe degrees of metastasization.

Cerebral palsy, muscular dystrophy and other congenital diseases would be grounds for filling child prisons. Yes, there will be bleeding hearts who say we should coddle sick kids. There will always be those who are soft on disease.

Mental hospitals would be converted into prisons, with inmates involuntarily locked up, told what to wear, what pills to take, when to stroll around the grounds.

You might say that all of this is dystopian fiction, that cancer, child and mental prisons could never come to pass in enlightened societies like ours, just as prisons will always be filled with drug addicts.

Except for mental prisons, you might be right.

By Lanny Beckman