

America: The Punishment Society. “Violence is the Defining Hallmark of the US”

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Once upon a time, a dental or medical exam was an opportunity to read a book. No more. The TV blares. It was talking heads discussing whether a football player had been sufficiently punished. The offense was unclear. The question was whether the lashes were sufficient.

It brought to mind that punishment has become a primary feature of American, indeed Western, society. A baker in Colorado was punished because he would not bake a wedding cake for a homosexual marriage. A county or state clerk was punished because she would not issue a marriage license for a homosexual marriage. University professors are punished because they criticize Israel's inhumane treatment of Palestinians. Whistleblowers are punished—despite their protection under federal law—for revealing crimes of the US government. And children are punished for being children.

But not by their parents. Police can slam children around and seriously injure them. But parents must not lay a hand on a child. If a child gets spanked, as everyone in my generation was, in comes the Child Protective Services Gestapo. The child is seized, put into “protective custody,” and the parents are arrested. The CPS Gestapo receives a federal bonus for every child that they seize, and they want the money.

About all parents can do today is to restrict TV or video game playing time. Even this is dicey, because the kids are taught at school to report abusive behavior of parents. For many kids being told what to do by parents is abusive behavior. Kids have learned that they can pay back parents for disciplining them by reporting the parents to teachers or by themselves calling CPS. Kids who retaliate in this socially approved manner do not realize that they run a high risk of ruining the lives of their parents as well as their own and ending up in foster care where the risk of sexual abuse is present.

As society has made it possible for kids to prevail over parents, the kids think this right also applies to teachers, school administrators, and School Resource Officers, psychopaths with police badges who maintain discipline with force and violence. The kids quickly discover, as Shakara discovered in her encounter with Ben Fields, that whereas parents are constrained from using corporal punishment, School Resource Officers are not. Shakara's desk was overturned as she sat in it. She was slammed onto the floor, dragged across the floor and handcuffed. Any parent who did that would be facing jail time.

Schools are no longer places of learning. They are places of punishment. Kids are punished for the most absurd reasons. Nothing more than behaving as a child brings on punishment. As

Henry Giroux has written, schools have become places of control, repression, and punishment.

17,000 American public schools have a police presence. All common sense has long departed.

Five and six year-olds who get into a shoving match are arrested and carried off in handcuffs. Police issue tickets and fines to students for what was ordinary behavior in my school days. Suspensions result as do police records that hamper a child's prospect of success.

The violence that Ben Fields used against Shakara is routine. Mother Jones reports that a Louisville goon thug, Jonathan Hardin punched a 13-year old in the face for cutting into the cafeteria line and of holding another 13-year old in a chokehold until the student became unconscious. A dispute over cell phone use resulted in a Houston student being hit 18 times with a police weapon.

The police violence extends beyond the schools. Any American unfortunate enough to have a police encounter risks being tasered, beaten, arrested, and even murdered.

Protesters, war and otherwise, are beaten, tear gassed, arrested. The American police state is working hard to criminalize all criticism of itself. Violence has become the defining hallmark of the United States. It is even the basis of US foreign policy. In the 21st century millions of peoples have been killed and displaced by American violence against the world.

With our public schools and police forces working overtime to teach the children who will comprise the future generations that violence is the solution and submission is the only alternative, expect the United States to be unliveable at home and an even worse danger to the rest of the world.

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