



FRIENDS OF THE MIDDLE NEWSLETTER #280 — NOV. 29, 2012

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A Jump Off the Alleged 'Cliff'

(posted by Steven W. Baker / SteveB, Nov. 29, 2012)

The Lie Machines keep turning out their only product, which would be...well...lies...

"The 'Fiscal Cliff' Deal Is Wall Street's Latest Scam" by Richard Eskow, Huffington Post

Nov. 28, 2012, (http://www.huffingtonpost.com/rj-eskow/the-fiscal-cliff-deal-is_b_2205058.html?utm_hp_ref=politics)



It's like a *Woodstock* for plutocrats, or an *Avengers* for the avaricious: The CEOs of America's largest corporations have banded together to lecture us on the importance of debt reduction. And despite their lack of qualifications and their very obvious self-interest, the media can't get enough of them.

Why? They're not experts in economic policy. Quite the opposite, in fact. Many of them got where they are by persuading people to buy overpriced crap that's bad for them. So a better way to look at this seemingly endless PR campaign would be to say: There they go again.

And yet their cynical campaign continues to capture national venues like 60 Minutes and conduct local blitzes in areas like Raleigh-Durham, North Carolina. Reporters are even hounding Warren Buffett -- a CEO with much deeper economic knowledge -- with the words of a less-informed and more self-interested colleague.

Think of it as Wall Street's latest scam. If you liked toxic investments and the 2008 financial crisis, you'll love their deficit deal.

The Economy's Most Wanted

The list of "Fix the Debt" CEOs includes executives from Wall Street's largest and most notorious bad actors. These banks have committed serial fraud and gotten away with no criminal penalties and only nominal fines -- fines paid by shareholders, and not the misbehaving bankers themselves.

GE's Jeffrey Immelt is there, seemingly unashamed of GE Capital's fiscal and legal record. So's the CEO of Morgan Stanley, where bankers would boastfully shout "I ripped his face off!" after selling a worthless investment -- *to their own clients*. Erskine Bowles, co-author of the "Simpson Bowles" plan the CEOs are promoting, is on the Morgan Stanley Board.

The gang's all there: JPMorgan Chase CEO Jamie Dimon? Check. Bank of America CEO Brian Moynihan? Check. Goldman Sachs CEO Lloyd Blankfein? Check.

In fact, Blankfein's become something of a spokesperson for the group, working to sell the public on a package of cuts to Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security, combined with nominal tax increases that would primarily target the middle class.

Returning to the Scene of the Crime

Some spokesman. Blankfein's institution paid the largest SEC fine in history for fraudulently deceiving investors about mortgage-backed securities which it sold while knowing full well that these securities were toxic -- a fact it concealed from its clients.

The list of deceived investors includes many of the large pension funds that provide financial security to working Americans when they retire. Now that Wall Street's struck these private-sector funds, they're targeting public retirement programs, too.

"Deficit reduction" and the "fiscal cliff:" They're this year's mortgage-backed securities.

Their Real Business

Most of these CEOs aren't bankers. But today, in a very real way, everyone who runs a giant U.S. corporation is a "Wall Street CEO." As Warren Buffett and others have rightfully observed, modern corporate leaders no longer care about long-term value. They only care about making their quarterly numbers -- by any means necessary -- so they can get their promised bonuses and options. That won't change until we change the way we pay CEOs.

Whatever industries they represent, these CEOs are primarily in the relationship business. And some of their most valuable relationships are political. That's why the companies on this list paid nearly one billion dollars in lobbying and campaign contributions in the last four years alone.

It has a Dr. Evil ring to it: *One billion dollars*. The lion's share (57 percent) went to Republicans, but the remainder went to friendly Democrats, which undoubtedly helps lend a "bipartisan" gloss to all this "deficit" talk. And a lot of it was *your* money, especially the lordly sums that Blankfein and his pals threw around after we bailed them out.

Seeing Scorpions

Don't be angry. It's like that old fable about the scorpion and the frog: They're doing this because it's their nature.

But let's be clear: These CEOs don't really care about the deficit. If they did they'd propose much higher taxes for themselves, a major jobs program to get our economy moving again, investment in our crumbling infrastructure, and expanded education funding to build the middle class of the future. And they'd be demanding that we do it *now*, while international bond markets are essentially paying our government to lend it money rather than the other way around.

They'd also focus on health care costs -- not by proposing to cut Medicare and Medicaid benefits, but by removing the greed factor which makes our medical costs so much greater than that of any other developed nation. But they're not likely to do that -- not when some of them represent the for-profit health industry and others reap big profits from health care investments.

What these CEOs *really* care about is bigger tax breaks -- for themselves and their corporations. That's why they've come together to use what may be their greatest collective talent: selling crap that's bad for you. Let's hope that this time nobody's buying.



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20121128-01	13:46	MarthaH	An Open Letter to a Senator
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Dear Senator:

In teaching about political philosophies and governance, I explained that one takes one's philosophy from one angle but governs from the middle. It's not about personal issues--as in style of ties or shoes. It's about the WHOLE of our legislative branch and way past time to do the honorable thing for ALL.

Please take this to your caucus and explain it to them:

Compromise defined:

1. A settlement of differences by mutual concessions; an agreement reached by adjustment of conflicting or opposing claims, principles, etc., by reciprocal modification of demands.
2. The result of such a settlement.
3. Something intermediate between different things: The split-level is a compromise between a ranch house and a multistoried house.
4. **An endangering**, especially of reputation; exposure to danger, suspicion, etc.: a compromise of one's integrity.

Thank you for your service. I found a signed copy of your last book and my pastor, serving in Kuwait with the Guard, was delighted to receive it. I also sent him Adlai Stevenson's speeches among other books!

Red Ryder steps it up a notch!



[Tom, this is how it starts—with Daisy! I miss my BB gun! My Mom was always worried about our eyes, but our eyes survived to see a future world awash in guns. Are we any safer? –SteveB]



20121128-04	14:26	Trudy	Re: Bolivia's National Census Day (reply to SteveB, FotM Newsletter #275)
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That was interesting—life somewhere else! Thanks.

20121128-05	14:57	Art	"New Scientist Special Report: 7 Reasons Climate Change Is 'Even Worse Than We Thought'"
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While the Republicans try to focus on really important issues like whether Susan Rice had a hamburger for lunch before she went on the air a month ago, spaceship earth has a really big hole below the waterline.

(I am not trivializing Benghazi, but this witch hunt is all a very silly waste of time. We now have a virtually complete picture of the sequence of events in Benghazi. (The Republicans aren't even really focusing on that, because other than using the death of four Americans to hide behind, they don't really care about that part of it and are focused on who said what to who back here in the following days. Just read.) The security of US diplomats in overseas assignments has always been the responsibility of the host country – period. Maybe many of you have more personal experience than mine, but I did serve two embassy tours in NA and the ME, one in Morocco and one in Oman. Additionally, I have visited probably over 70 US Embassies and Consulates throughout the world including our Embassy in Tripoli. Beckie and I once visited our Consulate in Oran, Algeria in the late 70s during the Camp David discussions. It consisted of one person, not even married, so he was really all alone. We call these "Mom and Pop Consulates". We have a lot of them. Assignments to countries like Libya always have been dicey but that's part of the job. We've actually still have had more American embassy personnel killed in Europe post WW II than the ME, I believe.)

Back to real issues: The fiscal cliff is important but for me at least, I say let's go over it. This myth that the rich shouldn't pay taxes, when 1% control 46% of the wealth of this country, is ridiculous. On 1 Jan, the Democrats can offer a tax proposal that lowers taxes for 95% of Americans and the Republicans can tell their real boss, Grover Norquist, that they are not voting to increase taxes. Everyone is happy.

What is going to get all of us and cost trillions is the climate. We are already seeing the beginning. One of the new things to worry about now is the release of Methane gas from the melting ice. Just read a stat that said something like over 11,000 climate scientists agree humans are causing global warming and only 24 see it another way. That's pretty conclusive to me. The article below is worth a look:

["New Scientist Special Report: 7 Reasons Climate Change Is 'Even Worse Than We Thought'" by Joe Romm, ThinkProgress](#)

Nov. 26, 2012, (<http://thinkprogress.org/climate/2012/11/26/1219981/new-scientist-7-reasons-climate-change-is-even-worse-than-we-thought/?mobile=nc>)

The *NY Times* isn't the only major publication going apocalyptic on climate change. *New Scientist* has a new dedicated issue that makes the *Times*' stories seem down-right Pollyannish.

Nearly 3 years ago, the late William R. Freudenburg discussed in an AAAS presentation how new scientific findings since the 2007 IPCC report are found to be more than twenty times as likely to indicate that global climate disruption is "worse than previously expected," rather than "not as bad as previously expected." As he said at the time:

Reporters need to learn that, if they wish to discuss 'both sides' of the climate issue, the scientifically legitimate 'other side' is that, if anything, global climate disruption is likely to be significantly worse than has been suggested in scientific consensus estimates to date.

So it's good to see *New Scientist* make just that point in its special issue on climate change:

Five years ago, the last report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change painted a gloomy picture of our planet's future. As climate scientists gather evidence for the next report, due in 2014, Michael Le Page gives seven reasons why things are looking even grimmer.



The 7 reasons are below, with links to their respective articles. Since they are all behind a paywall, I'll provide links to Climate Progress articles on the same subject:

- 1. The thick sea ice in the Arctic Ocean was not expected to melt until the end of the century. If current trends continue, summer ice could be gone in a decade or two.** [Read more](#) (or see "[Death Spiral Watch: Experts Warn 'Near Ice-Free Arctic In Summer' In A Decade If Volume Trends Continue](#)").
- 2. We knew global warming was going to make the weather more extreme. But it's becoming even more extreme than anyone predicted.** [Read more](#) (or see "[NOAA Bombshell: Warming-Driven Arctic Ice Loss Is Boosting Chance of Extreme U.S. Weather](#)").
- 3. Global warming was expected to boost food production. Instead, food prices are soaring as the effects of extreme weather kick in.** [Read more](#) (or see "[Oxfam Warns Climate Change And Extreme Weather Will Cause Food Prices To Soar](#)" and links therein).
- 4. Greenland's rapid loss of ice mean we're in for a rise of at least 1 metre by 2100, and possibly much more.** [Read more](#) (or see "[Greenland Ice Sheet Melt Nearing Critical 'Tipping Point'](#)" and links therein).
- 5. The planet currently absorbs half our CO₂ emissions. All the signs are it won't for much longer.** [Read more](#) (or see "[Carbon Feedback From Thawing Permafrost Will Likely Add 0.4°F – 1.5°F To Total Global Warming By 2100](#)" and "[Drying Peatlands and Intensifying Wildfires Boost Carbon Release Ninefold](#)").
- 6. If we stopped emitting CO₂ tomorrow, we might be able to avoid climate disaster. In fact we are still increasing emissions.** [Read more](#) (or see "[The IEA And Others Warn Of Some 11°F Warming by 2100 on Current Emissions Path](#)")

7. If the worst climate predictions are realised, vast swathes of the globe could become too hot for humans to survive. [Read more](#) (or see "[An Illustrated Guide to the Science of Global Warming Impacts](#)")

And people say Climate Progress has too much gloom and doom! Still, if we didn't add that all of the above impacts will be happening simultaneously and "largely irreversible for 1000 years," then we wouldn't be true to our name, would we? [Note to self: Look up "progress" in dictionary.]

It's too bad the articles are behind a paywall, but at least the accompanying editorial plea, "Obama should fulfill his 2008 climate promises," isn't. The editors' bottom line is inarguable:

What's needed is very clear: emissions cuts, and soon. The best way to do that is to change our economic systems to reflect the true long-term cost of fossil fuels. That means ending the \$1 trillion of annual subsidies for fossil fuels and imposing carbon taxes instead.

20121128-06	15:20	Ben	Photos: Today's Seafood Lunch & Dinner at Apple
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Never forget to check the Pasta station... never forget to check the Pasta station... never forget to check the Pasta station...

Following yesterday's fine cod lunch and unexpected sumptuous lobster dinner (see 'way below), I was drifting through Seafood Heaven as I slogged through my Tuesday evening Marathon match. I figured I'd shot the odds on more seafood today in the foot, statistically, after a score like that. So my expectations were pretty neutral as I paged through the menu before heading down to Caffe Macs, figuring maybe the Indian-spiced Madras shrimp, but glanced down at the Pasta offerings.

Chef Patricia had it for me: wahoo! Wahoo (Ono in Hawaii) is a very fast predator; it looks like a super-streamlined mackerel on speed, with long, narrow, muscular tapered body, trim sleek dorsal and ventral fins, and tall, slender, nearly vertical tail fins. It looks like a fish-dart, and can grow to nearly 200 pounds. It's delicious fish, although like swordfish, care must be taken not to over-cook it. Chef Patricia took that care: my thick filet was moist all the way through, just at the edge beyond rare where it first reaches opacity. The flesh is very dense, so it doesn't flake almost by itself like cod does, but separates almost as easily into bundles defined by the path of your fork. Chef's searing created a tasty pellicle around the filet which was served with her deliciously minty spinach-basil pesto over awesomely tasty creamy-buttery-garlicky Pamigiano polenta. (I avoid pasta too often not because I do not like it, rather because I do...) Patricia further rewarded me with a scoop of her sauteed eggplant-tomato-peppers-zucchini side, which was a perfect way to round out an already lovely meal.

Urp!

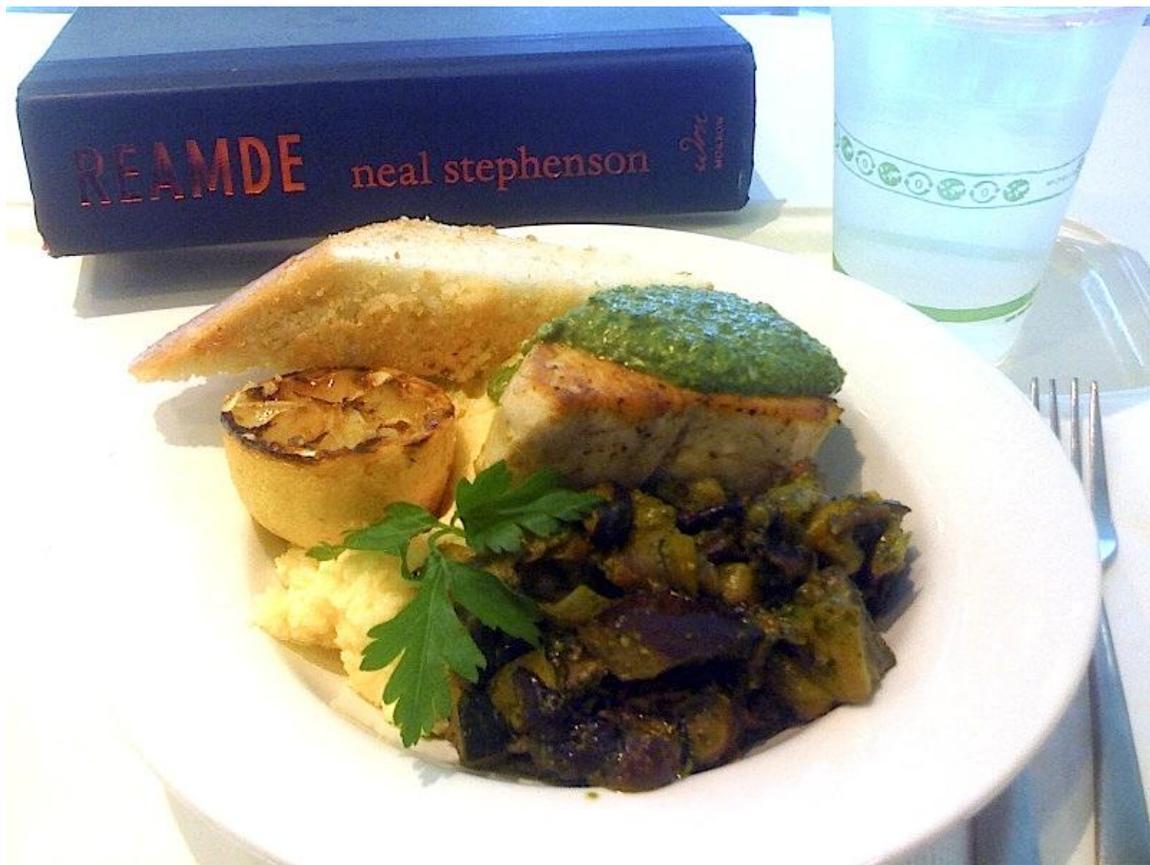


Photo #1 -- Lunch today -- Wahoo

Last night, Chris Smith commented about an hour before I thought I'd be leaving, that Caffe Macs had an unusual dinner offering. I had to check it out, and with no hesitation at all, bought two go-boxes so Susette and I could enjoy lobster with drawn butter at home. As mine were To Go, I persuaded the gal in line in front of me (who was quite incredulous at the offering) to let me snap a quick photo of hers, as presented on a china plate:



Photo #2 -- Dinner yesterday -- Hot Buttered Lobster

20121128-07 16:57 SteveG "Private Prison Company Used in Drug Raids at Public High School"

Arizona...Land of Wonder...and Insanity...

"Private Prison Company Used in Drug Raids at Public High School" by Beau Hodal, AlterNet

Nov. 28, 2012, (<http://www.alternet.org/drugs/private-prison-company-used-drug-raids-public-high-school>)

(Corrections Corporation of America used in drug sweeps of public school students in Arizona.)

In Arizona an unsettling trend appears to be underway: the use of private prison employees in law enforcement operations.

The state has graced national headlines in recent years as the result of its cozy relationship with the for-profit prison industry. Such controversies have included the role of private prison corporations in SB 1070 and similar anti-immigrant legislation disseminated in other states; a 2010 private prison escape that resulted in two murders and a nationwide manhunt; and a failed bid to privatize nearly the entire Arizona prison system.

And now, recent events in the central Arizona town of Casa Grande show the hand of private corrections corporations reaching into the classroom, assisting local law enforcement agencies in drug raids at public schools.

Trick or Treat

At 9 a.m. on the morning of October 31, 2012, students at Vista Grande High School in Casa Grande were settling in to their daily routine when something unusual occurred.

Vista Grande High School Principal Tim Hamilton ordered the school -- with a student population of 1,776 -- on "lock down," kicking off the first "drug sweep" in the school's four-year history. According to Hamilton, "lock down" is a state in which, "everybody is locked in the room they are in, and nobody leaves -- nobody leaves the school, nobody comes into the school."

"Everybody is locked in, and then they bring the dogs in, and they are teamed with an administrator and go in and out of classrooms. They go to a classroom and they have the kids come out and line up against a wall. The dog goes in and they close the door behind, and then the dog does its thing, and if it gets a hit, it sits on a bag and won't move."

While such "drug sweeps" have become a routine matter in many of the nation's schools, along with the use of metal detectors and zero-tolerance policies, one feature of this raid was unusual. According to Casa Grande Police Department (CGPD) Public Information Officer Thomas Anderson, four "law enforcement agencies" took part in the operation: CGPD (which served as the lead agency and operation coordinator), the Arizona Department of Public Safety, the Gila River Indian Community Police Department, and Corrections Corporation of America (CCA).

It is the involvement of CCA -- the nation's largest private, for-profit prison corporation -- that causes this high school "drug sweep" to stand out as unusual; CCA is not, despite CGPD's evident opinion to the contrary, a law enforcement agency.

"To invite for-profit prison guards to conduct law enforcement actions in a high school is perhaps the most direct expression of the 'schools-to-prison pipeline' I've ever seen," said Caroline Isaacs, program director of the Tucson office of the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), a Quaker social justice organization that advocates for criminal justice reform.

"All the research shows that CCA doesn't properly train its staff to do the jobs they actually have. They most certainly do not have anywhere near the training and experience--to say nothing of the legal authority--to conduct a drug raid on a high school," Isaacs added. "It is chilling to think that any school official would be willing to put vulnerable students at risk this way."

Welcome to Prison Town, U.S.A.

CCA, the nation's largest for-profit prison/immigrant detention center operator, with more than 92,000 prison and immigrant detention "beds" in 20 states and the District of Columbia, reported \$1.7 billion in gross revenue last year. This revenue is derived almost exclusively from tax payer-funded government (county, state, federal) contracts through which the corporation is paid per-diem, per-prisoner rates for the warehousing of prisoners and immigrant detainees.

And, CCA has a substantial presence in Casa Grande and throughout Arizona's Pinal County (Casa Grande is the largest town in Pinal County). The corporation owns and operates a total of six correctional/detention facilities in the county, distributed through the towns of Florence and Eloy.

These facilities hold a mixture of prisoners from the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the U.S. Marshals Service, the Hawaii Department of Public Safety Division of Corrections, TransCor (a detainee/prisoner transportation subsidiary of CCA), the Pascua Yaqui Tribe, the U.S. Air Force, the Vermont Department of Corrections, and the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. In September of this year, CCA was awarded a contract with the Arizona Department of Corrections (ADC) to house 1,000 medium security prisoners at the corporation's Red Rock Correctional Center in Eloy.

In 2009, the Central Arizona Regional Economic Development Foundation listed CCA as the largest non-governmental employer in Pinal County. To boot, CCA is a "Board Level" member of the Arizona Chamber of Commerce and Industry, a powerful trade/lobby organization, and is active in the Eloy, Florence, and Casa Grande chambers of commerce. (For more on CCA's political influence in Arizona, see *Brownskins and Greenbacks*, DBA Press, June 2010.)

This CCA presence, coupled with the location of two correctional facilities operated by GEO Group (the nation's second largest for-profit prison/immigrant detention center contractor) in the county, as well as two ADC-run prison complexes, makes Pinal County -- which once cited mining and agriculture as its economic bedrock -- a de facto prison industry community.

Despite the obvious differences between CCA and actual law enforcement agencies, those involved in the Vista Grande High School drug sweep seem unable to differentiate between CCA employees and law enforcement officers.

"CCA is like a skip and a hop away from us-- as far as the one in Florence," said Anderson. "We work pretty closely with all surrounding agencies, whatever kind of law enforcement they are-- be they police, or immigration and naturalization, or the prison systems. So, yeah, this seems pretty regular to me."

For his part, Hamilton seems equally unable to differentiate between law enforcement officers and employees of a for-profit prison corporation. "To be honest with you, I couldn't tell if they were Casa Grande Police, Pinal County police, Gila River, the sheriff's department-- they all look the same," said Hamilton.

But they are not the same.

Questions of Legality

Aside from the fact that CCA is a private corporation that derives its profits from the incarceration of human beings -- such as minimum and medium security drug offenders -- Arizona Administrative Code provides that, in order for any individual to engage in the duties of a "peace officer," that individual must obtain certification from the Arizona Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) Board. Arizona Revised Statutes defines "peace officer" to include such law enforcement personnel as: municipal police officers, constables, marshals, Department of Public Safety personnel, and community college/university police.

The POST Board is comprised of the Arizona Attorney General, the director of the Arizona Department of Corrections, the director of the Arizona Department of Public Safety, municipal police department chiefs, county sheriffs, state university personnel, and other public safety/law enforcement personnel. POST's essential purpose, as defined by Arizona law is to "prescribe reasonable minimum qualifications for officers to be appointed to enforce the laws of this state and the political subdivisions of this state and certify officers in compliance with these qualifications."

And, Arizona Administrative Code is very clear on this point: "a person who is not certified by the Board or whose certified status is inactive shall not function as a peace officer or be assigned the duties of a peace officer by an agency..."

According to POST Executive Director Lyle Mann, POST provides two types of certification: standards and training certification for "peace officers," and standards and training certification for correctional officers. Arizona Administrative Code mandates that ADC officers be POST certified. However, according to Mann, employees of private prison contractors are exempt from this standards and training requirements. As such, said Mann, no CCA employee is POST certified -- as either a "peace officer" or a correctional officer.

It is important to note that Arizona Administrative Code explicitly states that non-regular "peace officers" -- secondary parties engaging in certain limited aspects of law enforcement under the command/supervision of regular peace officers -- must also be POST certified.

According to Arizona Administrative Code, a "limited-authority peace officer" is defined as "a peace officer who is certified to perform the duties of a peace officer only in the presence and under the supervision of a full-authority peace officer." The Code goes on to state that duties which may be performed by a "limited-authority peace officer" in the presence of a "full-authority peace officer" include: "investigative activities performed to detect, prevent, or suppress crime, or to enforce criminal or traffic laws of the state, county, or municipality."

This definition seems to fit the description -- with the exception that CCA employees aiding CGPD "peace officers" are not POST certified -- of what occurred at Vista Grande High School on the morning of October 31, 2012.

According to Officer Anderson and Principal Hamilton, the raid was organized and conducted at Hamilton's request.

"We need to keep drugs off our campus," said Hamilton when asked why he requested the raid. "We wanted to make sure our campus...we wanted to send a message to kids that we don't want that stuff on our campus."

Hamilton stated that, outside from this desire to send a "message to kids," he had no knowledge of any particular drug use problem on his school's campus.

CGPD then issued a request for assistance to what it considered to be other local law enforcement agencies -- including CCA.

According to Anderson, CCA provided two canine units (handlers and dogs) to aid in the high school "drug sweep." These CCA canine units worked under the command of the lead CGPD canine unit.

According to Anderson, there is no contract or formal agreement for such services extant between CGPD and CCA. Rather, said Anderson, CCA simply agreed to participate in the raid when approached by CGPD "K-9" officers. Anderson stated that he does not know whether CGPD ever contacted POST-certified correctional canine units at either of the two nearby ADC-operated prisons.

As to the general role canine units play in such school "drug sweeps," Anderson stated that the dogs and their handlers are typically utilized to detect the presence of illicit materials in classrooms and school parking lots.

This activity, as was conducted by CCA employees, would seem to fall squarely under the Arizona Administrative Code description of duties performed by "limited-authority peace officers" -- officers who may perform "investigative activities" for the purpose of detecting, preventing, or suppressing criminal activity, and who are only authorized to do so while in the presence of "full-authority peace officers," such as CGPD. Such "limited-authority peace officers" are required to be POST certified.

Regardless, according to both Anderson and Hamilton, this type of activity has been going on for years in Pinal County.

According to Anderson, a similar "drug sweep" -- utilizing CCA canine units -- was conducted at Casa Grande's Union High School in 2011. Anderson has been unable to provide further details relating to this event.

According to Anderson, the Vista Grande High School raid is unlikely to be the last instance of CCA partnership with local law enforcement, as he assumed CGPD would use the corporation's canine teams again, if needed.

And, according to Hamilton, he requested and had executed "drug sweeps" utilizing CCA canine units "two or three times a year," while serving as principal at Coolidge High School in Coolidge, Arizona -- also located in Pinal County, roughly ten miles from the private prison mecca of Florence. Hamilton was principal at Coolidge High School from 2003 through 2007.

CCA did not respond to multiple requests for comment regarding their involvement in law enforcement operations at public schools in Pinal County.

Conflict of Interest: From the Cradle to the Cell

According to Anderson, three students were arrested as a result of the October 31 Vista Grande raid: two female students, ages 15 and 17, as well as one 15-year-old male. According to Anderson, the 15-year-old female was found in possession of .10 grams of marijuana; the 15-year-old male student was found in possession of .50 grams of marijuana; and the 17-year-old female was found in possession of 10 ounces of marijuana. According to Anderson, this last quantity was "individually packaged."

According to Anderson, the students were referred to the juvenile division of Pinal County Superior Court. All students were then released to their parents/legal guardians. According to Hamilton, the school will commence expulsion hearings against all students arrested.

It is worth noting that, while (as of November 12, 2012) charges have yet to be filed against students arrested in the October 31 Vista Grande drug raid, it is possible, under Arizona law, for the 17-year-old female allegedly found to be in possession of 10 ounces of "individually packaged" marijuana to be sentenced as an adult if charged with possession with intent to distribute -- a felony which would could carry a prison sentence.

In addition, it is important to note that, under Arizona law, individuals arrested for illicit activity/possession of illicit substances on or near school grounds may face "drug-free school zone" sentencing enhancements. Those convicted of drug (including marijuana) offenses in Arizona courts, and sentenced through the stringent criteria of "drug-free school zone" sentencing enhancements, lose the possibility of sentence suspension, parole, or probation (which would rule out the possibility of a deferral or diversion). This sentencing enhancement also adds a mandatory year to any prison sentence handed down by the court.

While the recently-awarded 1,000 CCA Arizona prison beds have yet to come into operation, it is exactly this kind of low risk, minimum to medium security prisoner that corporations such as CCA derive much of their profit from.

Furthermore, according to Anderson, the Vista Grande High School marijuana arrests have sparked a broader, ongoing investigation.

Given the fact that such high school raids may serve as the foundation for larger narcotics investigations which may net additional adult offenders -- and given the tremendous pressure for information a prosecutor may exert on a student through discretionary use of "drug-free school zone" sentencing enhancements -- concerned citizens say that CCA's involvement in such raids constitutes a clear conflict of interest.

"They're [CCA] not the criminal justice system. They are benefactors of the criminal justice system," said correctional specialist and prison reform advocate, Carl Toersbijns.

Toersbijns, now retired (he retired in 2010), served as a deputy warden of operations at ADC-operated Arizona State Prison (ASP) Eyeman, as a deputy warden of operations at ASP Safford, as a deputy warden of operations at New Mexico Department of Corrections-operated Western New Mexico Correctional Facility (Grants, New Mexico), and as an associate warden at the Central New Mexico Correctional Facility (at Los Lunas, New Mexico). Collectively, Toersbijns' career in corrections has spanned over 25 years in both Arizona and New Mexico. Such work, said Toersbijns, has entailed everything from details with prison canine units, to prison gang units.

"They [CCA] use the criminal justice system as a means of making income -- for profit," added Toersbijns. "So, their interest in the criminal justice system is totally opposite of the police officer. The police officer is public safety. The primary interest for CCA and associated entities is profit. So, there most definitely is a conflict of interest."

Profit-Driven Roadmap to the Present: "Tough-on-Crime" Mania and the Introduction of the "War on Drugs" to the Classroom

As some opponents of prison privatization attest, CCA embodies the worst pitfalls of public-private partnerships, in that the corporation has worked in the past to advance criminal justice legislation that has contributed to both a swell in U.S. prison/detention center populations and, consequently, CCA's bottom line.

For example, CCA was active (both as a co-chair and member) in the American Legislative Exchange Council's (ALEC) Public Safety and Elections Task Force (formerly the ALEC Criminal Justice Task Force) through the 1990s, to the end of 2010.

ALEC bills itself as "the nation's largest, non-partisan, individual public-private membership association of state legislators," working toward the advancement of the "Jeffersonian ideals" of limited federal government. In reality, ALEC is almost entirely funded by corporations and sources other than legislative dues, and it is overwhelmingly comprised of Republican state lawmakers and an untold number of large corporations and influential law/lobby

firms (although at least 41 companies have announced they have stopped funding ALEC in the wake of public exposure of its activities). ALEC's primary objective is to adopt and disseminate "model legislation," much of which is drafted entirely by its private sector members. ALEC boasts that nearly 20 percent of this "model legislation" introduced in state legislatures nationwide is passed into law annually.

In the wake of reporting outlining CCA's involvement with ALEC and the spread of immigration law based on SB 1070, CCA told the Arizona Republic, in September 2011, that the corporation left ALEC at an undisclosed time in 2010.

Records obtained by DBA Press show the direct sponsorship of both CCA and of Management and Training Corporation ("MTC," currently the nation's third largest for-profit prison/immigrant detention center operator) of the August 2010 ALEC Annual Meeting, as well as the likely involvement of lobbyists employed by both CCA, MTC and GEO Group in the December, 2010 ALEC "States and Nation Policy Summit".

Arizona lobby reports also show clear GEO Group involvement with ALEC during the December, 2009 ALEC States and Nation Policy Summit -- the meeting at which then-Arizona State Senator Russell Pearce introduced legislation (that would later be introduced in the Arizona legislature as SB 1070) for adoption as a piece of ALEC Public Safety and Elections Task Force "model legislation." Subsequently, copycat legislation similar to this ALEC model bill -- the "No More Sanctuary Cities for Illegal Immigrants Act" -- began appearing in state legislatures throughout the nation.

Furthermore, the ALEC Public Safety and Elections Task Force was instrumental, during the years of CCA's membership and leadership, in proliferating such 'tough-on-crime' legislation as: "three strikes," "truth in sentencing" and "mandatory minimum" sentencing guidelines.

And ALEC also advanced the model "Private Correctional Facilities Act," which allowed private corporations to operate state prisons.

These guidelines and pieces of "model legislation" (including the "Private Correctional Facilities Act") were advanced by ALEC in partnership with CrimeStrike, a division of the National Rifle Association ("NRA," a longtime ALEC private sector member), throughout the first half of the 1990s. Critics of this effort saw CrimeStrike largely as a response to the Clinton administration's desire to strengthen firearms violence prevention laws. As such, the CrimeStrike campaign spawned the saying, "guns don't kill people, people kill people"-- and posited that the solution to crime would be found through the use of greater criminal penalties. This strategy took advantage of, and perpetuated, the "tough-on-crime" sentiments of the day.

Largely as a result of model laws/sentencing guidelines advanced by the ALEC/NRA CrimeStrike partnership, the United States experienced a boom in the number of incarcerated individuals (in state and federal prisons, as well as in jails)-- from just over 1.1 million incarcerated in 1990, to nearly 2.3 million in 2010.

During the years of CCA's Criminal Justice/Public Safety and Elections Task Force involvement, ALEC also advanced and advocated "model legislation" that not only resulted in greater drug law enforcement presence on public school campuses, but that also mandated tough sentencing enhancements for drug offenses committed in "drug-free school zones."

The ALEC "Drug-Free Schools Act" called for the use of federal funds provided through the Drug Free Schools and Communities Act of 1986 for "enhanced apprehension, prevention and education efforts" in joint cooperation between law enforcement agencies and local school districts.

Multiple ALEC publications (including the ALEC "Sourcebook for American State Legislation 1993-94," which lists CCA among the organization's private sector members and advisors), along with the ALEC "Use of a Minor in Drug Operations Act" reference the "model Drug-Free School Zone Act," although it is unclear whether this "model" bill originated with ALEC.

It is clear, however, that the model "Drug-Free School Zone Act," which establishes "drug-free school zones" and carries sentencing enhancements similar to the enhancements codified in Arizona law, was promoted by a broad coalition of public interests groups during the 'tough-on-crime' fervor of the early-to-mid 1990s. The model bill

enjoyed such support that the 1992 National Office of Drug Control Policy (NODCP) established federal assistance in establishing "drug-free school zones," as well as mandatory sentencing enhancements nationwide.

Interestingly enough, this NODCP initiative, which was set forth in a report discussing the agency's "national priorities" for 1992, advocated state adoption of several other known pieces of ALEC model legislation, such as the "Use of a Minor in a Drug Operations Act," as well as other ALEC "models" calling for the suspension or revocation of occupational licenses for professionals convicted of drug crimes, the eviction of drug offenders from public housing, and the use of "mandatory minimum" sentencing guidelines.

Not surprisingly, ALEC, along with several other public policy groups, was credited by the NODCP as having been "especially helpful in the formulation of this strategy."

In April of 2012, following widespread criticism and loss of corporate sponsorship due to such pieces of "model legislation" disseminated by the Public Safety and Elections Task Force as the "Stand Your Ground Act," the "Voter ID Act" and the "No More Sanctuary Cities for Illegal Immigrants Act," ALEC announced that it would disband the task force (an announcement that PRWatch has critiqued as a "PR" maneuver).

Unfortunately, as the October 31 Vista Grande High School drug raid illustrates, the purported discontinuation of this task force comes only after the damage of two decades of private prison industry influence in the legislative process has taken its toll.

Is Any of this Right?

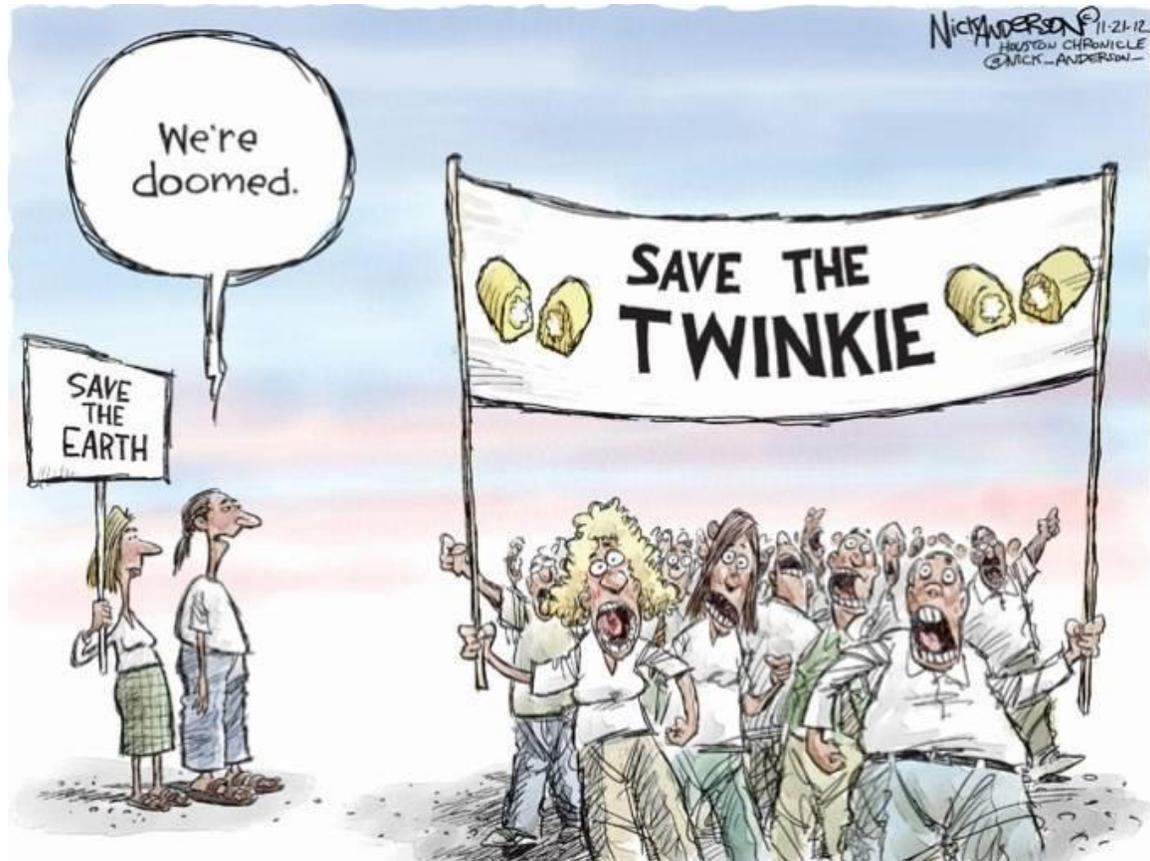
Vast differences between law enforcement agencies and private, for-profit corrections corporations aside, former ADC deputy warden and corrections specialist Carl Toersbijns said he sees a greater underlying problem in the practice of using any prison -- public or private -- personnel in school drug raids.

The simple fact is this: correctional officers -- people who work on a continual basis around adult criminal offenders -- have a much different mentality than a teacher, principal, or police officer. This mentality, he believes, may not be the most suitable mentality to subject school children to.

Children are different -- they don't act like adults, and I don't think you ought to use corrections officers around children," said Toersbijns. "It's a different culture, it's a different setting, it's a different approach. It's inappropriate." For example, the term "lockdown," said Toersbijns, may mean an entirely different thing to a corrections officer than it means to school personnel, students, or police.

They use that terminology, 'lock down,' in the police department too. When they've got something going on in the neighborhood -- a robbery suspect in the neighborhood -- they lock the schools down... If you have a group there, that you've called in to do a job, and some of them are correctional officers, and they hear the words 'lock down,' it has a different meaning -- it has a total different meaning... You don't tell a correctional officer 'this school's on lock down,' because the mentality is: 'oh, I can go anywhere I want and tear up anything I want and grab anything that I want. That's the mentality we use in prison. Prisoners don't have rights -- you and I both know that -- when it comes to search and seizure, they don't have no rights. Children have rights.

(Thanks to Alex Friedmann, associate editor of *Prison Legal News* (<http://www.prisonlegalnews.org>) for his contribution to this article. CMD staffers Rebekah Wilce and Alex Oberley also contributed to this article.)



Read and wrote this on Benghazi today. Can you believe the minds of Republicans are so twisted that now the alleged (fantasy) cover-up CAUSED the deaths? Geez!

from GOPUSA:

Benghazi: The Making of a Scandal

On Tuesday, U.S. Ambassador Susan Rice -- **a key figure in the political cover-up that resulted in the murder of four Americans in Benghazi, Libya** -- met with GOP senators to discuss her original ill-worded statements. The senators came away with more questions than answers (go figure), and the American people are left wondering why a president of the United States would put politics ahead of the very lives he swore to defend.

<http://www.gopusa.com/theloft/2012/11/28/benghazi-the-making-of-a-scandal/?subscriber=1>

reply to GOPUSA:

This is as big a lie as I have ever seen in my life! You should be ashamed!

"U.S. Ambassador Susan Rice -- a key figure in the political cover-up that resulted in the murder of four Americans in Benghazi, Libya..."

What BS! There was no cover-up that resulted in any murder, no matter how you cut it. Not even your radical-right Senators are making any such claim. Any cover-up would have come after, right? Or are you telling me they

covered-up beforehand? Before they would have known they needed to cover-up? Maybe they covered-up in advance, just in case? Ludicrous! Isn't it the words that were spoken/written after the incident that you are alleging is a cover-up? How could those be the cause of the incident?

GOPUSA is a bunch of liars! Otherwise, let's see your proof that some alleged cover-up caused the deaths.

[20121128-10](#) 19:48 Art Re: Benghazi: Too Many Damned Lies (reply to SteveB, above)

They somehow have long ago stopped caring about what is real. They've told so many lies about the President they no longer know how to stop.

I want this kind of quality craftsmanship. Check this site out! You can put this on my wish list....

<http://powning.com/jake/swords/>

GALDRGRIMM

2012

Pattern-welded Viking sword with mammen style ornamentation

Length - 83.5cm
Weight - 1.105kg

BY JAKE POWNING

©2012 JAKE POWNING

[I love my two antique samurai swords, though they're in my storage area in Indiana and I miss them... --SteveB]



<http://www.taiwanrock.50webs.com/pictures.html>



—Friends of the Middle,
Steven W. Baker (SteveB), Editor/Moderator

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