

LC 19

I support the legislature passing this bill, because of my experience:

On September 4, 2008, my stepson, Matthew Solomon, was murdered, along with his friend, Noel Espinoza, while walking down the street in the Mission District of San Francisco--what the police called, at the time, "a case of mistaken identity."

That murder had a profound effect upon me and caused me to examine myself, ruthlessly, to discover my own responsibility for Matt's death. I record some of my thoughts and feelings in a small book of poems, *Looking for Matthew* (the apocryphile press, Berkeley, CA, 2012). Ten years later, in March of 2018, Homeland Security arrested three young Hispanic men and charged them with the capital crime of murder, under the early 20th century racketeering act. This arrest and the charges facing these three young men and my extensive interactions with the judicial system, trying to get in touch with them and speak, heart to heart, with them has caused me to re-evaluate our entire justice system. I recorded my thoughts in *What is justice? a personal exploration* (Fernwood Press, Newberg, OR, 2019).

I am interested in fostering any and all legislation that will help change the culture policing and incarceration currently in place.

I believe LC 19 takes a most important step in that direction by removing the element of secrecy surrounding our police departments. This secrecy is counter to our democratic principles and allows for police officer's behavior to be hidden from the general public and therefore replicated over and over again without consequence.

I imagine a culture where accountability is the foundation of all of our behavior--not just police officers. By accountability, I mean, as Danielle Sered points out in her outstanding book, *Until We Reckon*, first of all being honest about our actions and how they have harmed another; secondly, learning to see the harm that resulted from those actions; thirdly, from that experience, expressing, openly, our remorse for creating that harm; fourthly, "doing sorry"--which means taking restorative actions to help repair the damage done; and fifthly, never doing that action again.

This is the culture I would like to live in and would like for my children and their children, my grandchildren. I am 78 years old so I may not live to see the full realization of this dream but I may live long enough to see the Oregon State Legislature pass this significant reform legislation. I sincerely hope so.

Blessings,

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