

## POVERTY IS A HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATION

Things began to look up once I started collecting disability, although now I cannot get food stamps. My income is considered too high. But I am able to get by with the help of friends and warehouse outlets that sell dented cans of food.

I know that the reason so many people have so little is so that a few people can be rich. And I buy lottery tickets and I dream of being rich and oppressive and I know full well this is a drug used to keep us believing in the capitalist/patriarchal. If I could just become rich, everything would be all right. I could buy this and that and go here and go there and step over beg-ladies with their palms raised in the icy air.

"This society underutilized as its people." My friend Sue Rose said that. The lawmakers and law followers are so concerned with what people look like and what people who have money will spend it on, that they will pass over those of us who could otherwise be useful to society. I feel I am being paid for my disabilities and not recognized from abilities.

If cuts are being made to convince the taxpayer that their government is saving them money, think again. Poverty makes people mad. Mad people don't follow the rules. Mac people can cost lots of money, and Mac people can be very destructive. Remember the French Revolution?

Remember how loud our leaders cried out about human rights violations in communist countries? I hate the constant denial that there is poverty in America. When will we realize that poverty is a human rights violation? What I want to know is how the government, which poor people help pay for, can justify looking past the homeless.

When we have money, we are allowed to fantasize that the poor don't exist or that they got there because they are crazy or invalid. Or they just work hard enough or they should have saved their money. I have heard wealthy people talk this way. I'm not making that up. This fantasy comes from the same mentality that took the hunting grounds from the Native Americans and then called them lazy, but refused education to slaves and called them ignorant.

Corporations are fashioned like pyramid schemes like chain letters. A few people get a lot of money and most get little or nothing. I don't understand why there is a law against forming pyramid schemes. After all, isn't that capitalism at its best? Everyone hopes she is next in line for the big money. She mustn't look at those who were shafted. She must ignore them because they're hard luck may be contagious.

I was very ill during the time and was applying for disability. I have a disease tip from a childhood injury. I remember that at times I thought I'd rather die than be rendered useless in this society. I went to the general hospital and waited 4 and one half hours for my appointment. There were 119 appointments scheduled that day and only three doctors. One doctor and two

interns. I couldn't find a place to sit and neither could some other sick people. Staff raised in an out of doors with their strong legs and healthy bodies. They look past us. They talked among themselves and laughed until an inpatient patient threatened a staff member because he had waited so long for his appointment.

I was finally called and sat half nude, waiting again. I was there to have my get checked. The intern rest in my chest x-ray. He couldn't find my hip x-ray. So he didn't check me, and he left the room. And I ask myself, "Why is it every time I go to these doctors I feel like I don't deserve to live?"

I had a dream where I was frantically trying to get out of my body -- to shed it another dream of a coiled snake slowly eating a city.

Remember those new newscasts with a reporter is trying to drum up money for some very poor and unfortunate person? The rich lawmaking class to not see this, or if they do give money, they feel excuse to give a very small amount because those poor slobs should be grateful to get anything at all. It is the pensioners and poor people who give to each other. Oral Roberts figured that one out years ago.

It's hard work getting on welfare. When the doors open at 8 a.m. you'd better be right up next to the front door and beat able-bodied enough to charge and can get a number before they are gone, in which case you will have to come back the next day and try again. What you get this far, you must wait with others who are as angry about all of this is you are, who slapped their kids, who quit his fights with someone who accidentally shot them in mind, who freak out and began screaming from the rear of the room. They finally fired the security guard who used to pull his gun on people who stood in the wrong line and do move fast enough. Maybe a war vet? They have first dibs you on the government jobs.

All those who got numbers to be processed for food stamps and welfare are sent to a church for orientation. The room was packed with oppression. It was early morning, and many came from sleeping in doorways. They found out that if they didn't have a place to live they couldn't get on welfare. If you had a place to live in or able-bodied you were told you must work sweeping the streets three days a week in order to collect a welfare check. That meant the unemployed secretary addressed for job appointments and to forgo her welfare check for the month because she was able-bodied and couldn't show up for work to clean the streets. I got to go home because I had a place to go home to and I didn't have to sweep the streets because I'm disabled. Lucky me. Too bad for them. Serves him right! Don't blame me. This is the way I'm supposed to feel about it.

I fantasize about winning a multimillion dollar lottery and make it a list of all the people I would give money to. I decide it is not enough money to save the world. It's going to take something more than money. It's going to take genuine caring and the open sharing of ourselves we need to recognize that there is a commonality between us that we lose when things become more important than people.

My schizophrenic sister lived on the street for five years. She ate out of garbage bins and was so disoriented and psychotic that she had nothing, not even a sleeping bag or a spoon with her. Instead she collected garbage from the streets. When I found her, she had seven or eight garbage bags full of other people's trash. She was physically ill. Should bugs crawling on her. I went to the police station to have her put in a hospital.

When neighbors where she roamed asked me what I was doing, they were glad and said it was about time someone help poor woman. I told them they pay taxes so go home and called police City Hall call the Governor - call the president -- tell them you pay taxes in this mentally disabled woman can't get help because she doesn't know how. One policeman said," I ask her if she had a job and she told me she did. So what can I do?" I told him that job was as a teacher six years before.

People who are mentally ill are not happy living on the streets. The police took my sister and a hospital. There I learned the staff who have the least amount of contact with people at my sister at the most power in the most money. Did you know that all a doctor has to have is a social security number to get paid for something they may not have done for someone they don't know? And poor people are blamed for costing too much. It is easy for professionals to cheat. They are rarely caught but let someone like me make an honest dollar and dollar for dollar will be taken from my SSI. Being poor can create a spiritual poverty. The system set in place force us to lie. If we are not careful, we can lose the ability to feel and know love. This is the worst poverty of all.