

Hello this is Tom Cookman for Community Comment

The double homicide in Arcata has left an uncomfortable feeling in everyone's heart. It's not that crime doesn't happen, it's just that we seem to be having our fair share lately. The individual arrested for this heinous crime had a criminal record. I read in the Times Standard newspaper that "in October of 2011 he was arrested following a high-speed pursuit by Humboldt County sheriff's deputies that began at the Bear River Casino parking lot and ended with the suspect arrested on suspicion of vandalism to a patrol car, resisting arrest, assault with a deadly weapon and public drunkenness." Wow, how is it that this guy wasn't behind bars? Yes, our prisons are overcrowded, but letting people out that are violent leads to tragedy. We have laws that when broke, carry a penalty of incarceration. The criminal today doesn't fear this. He is processed through the system and is slapped on the wrist for serious crimes. The District Attorney's office number one tool used to solve these cases is plea bargaining the crimes to lesser offenses. The judges hand out sentences that are a fraction of what they could be and once they are put behind bars, they only serve a fraction of the time they were given. This practice of shuffling these criminals through the system has really hurt Humboldt County. The murderer who killed the woman in Hoopa and then ran down the three joggers killing one should've never been on the streets. The double homicide last week was committed by an individual who slipped through the cracks as well. These murders are on the shoulders of our judicial system. Four families have had to pay the ultimate price for this process; they have had someone in their family MURDERED. Yes

MURDERED, not only by the cold blooded killers, but by our government, who, in the name of budget cuts, releases hardened criminals to prey on the rest of society. The judges and prosecutors who let the two murderers skate along with minimal sentences should have a hard time sleeping at night. They indirectly killed these people. Is that harsh? Yes, but how can the crimes these two people committed before they took another human's life not be worthy of extended time in prison? The system has failed miserably. People lose their lives over this process of letting thugs back out onto our streets. We need to allocate our tax dollars differently. We need to build more prisons, if the DA's office is short handed; we need to increase their budget. We need to spend our money on making our community safe before we hand out half, yes half, of our budget in the form of welfare type programs. We need to do everything we can to help the poor, not the lazy. I have compassion for the poor, not the sluggard who never tries to improve his situation. The resources we waste on the lazy sluggard is creating an unsafe atmosphere where our citizens are getting murdered by people the system lets back onto the streets in the name of budget cuts. The four murdered victims families should be able to look the judge or the prosecutor in the eye and ask them why they allowed these thugs to be roaming our streets. Why were they not held accountable for the crimes they committed before they murdered our loved ones? This craziness needs to stop before someone else is murdered by someone who should already have been behind bars.

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