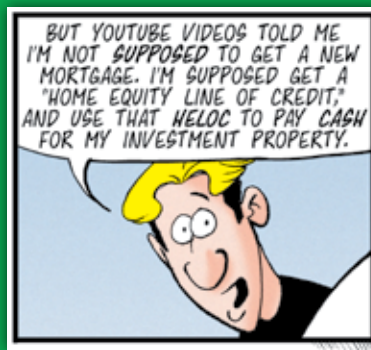


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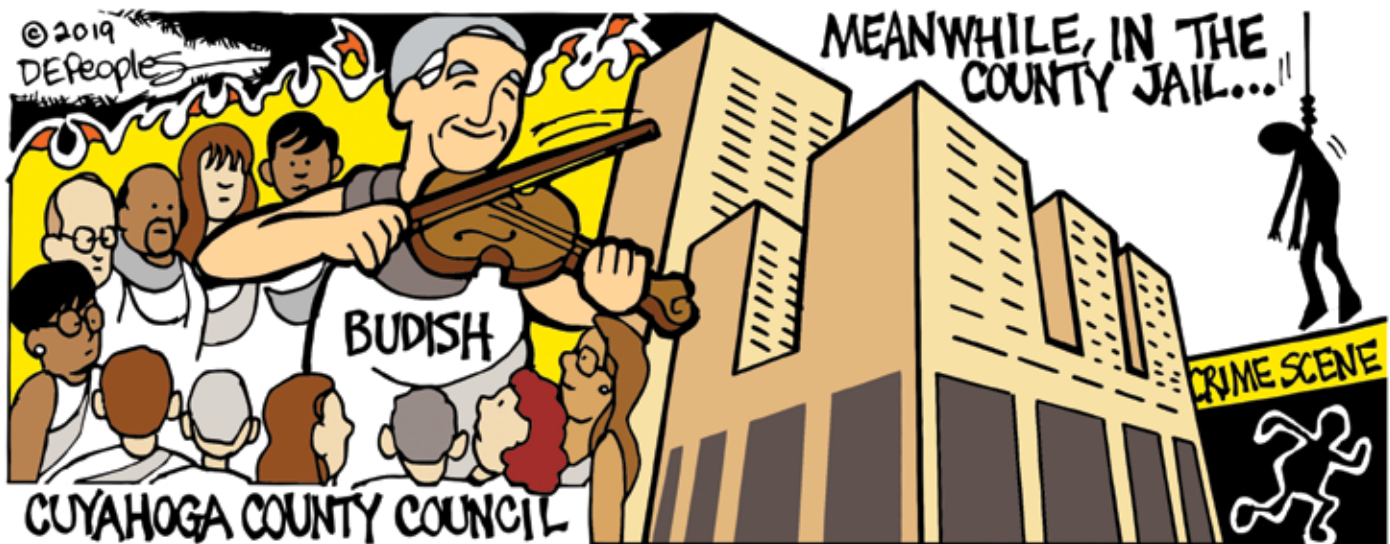
THE REAL DEAL

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PRESS

EDITORIAL

The Jailers and the Jailed



The euphemistically named Justice Center, at 25 stories one of downtown Cleveland's largest buildings, stands as a towering symbol of this community's dysfunction.

This assertion is hard to refute, whether the observer's lens of choice is political, historic, fiscal, architectural, social justice, or just the naked eye.

To begin, the building was never designed to be attractive from the outside. Its profile is both pedestrian and brutish, perhaps reflecting the community's attitude towards its innards: the county jail (which now holds prisoners

from city courts throughout the county), an assortment of courtrooms, mostly used for criminal trials, and Cleveland police headquarters.

Most county residents can count themselves fortunate never have to ventured inside. A pervading sense of gloom pervades even the multi-story central atrium, not to mention the courtrooms, elevators, hallways and even what was, on my last visit — thankfully not recent — a public cafeteria that would struggle to measure up to a Greyhound dinette in Schenectady.

The building is Cleveland's truest Factory of Sadness.

The Justice Center opened in 1976, replacing in part the old criminal municipal courts that were housed in ancient police quarters at 21st Street and Payne Ave. That was a totally inadequate facility; yet even though it always seemed more crowded than Ellis Island on a busy day in 1919, it was somehow less depressing than our current judicial dispensary.

This Justice Center is a monument to the community's

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The Jailers and the Jailed

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profligate ways with public dollars. Here I refer readers to a post by retired *Plain Dealer* reporter [Dick Peery](#), whose community institutional memory and research chops set out necessary history for a long overdue discussion about our local criminal justice system. Suffice to report here that the original budget of \$60 million was overrun by \$68 million and produced both fewer jail cells AND fewer courtrooms than taxpayers were originally promised. A subsequent jail addition adding more beds did not alleviate overcrowding; today the jail reportedly has almost a third more prisoners than its rated capacity.

From a social justice standpoint, most of the prisoners are black, almost all of them are poor, and none of them have any power. Many are awaiting trial, unable to avoid bond. Some are homeless, while others are fighting addictions to drugs or alcohol. Still others have serious mental or physical ailments that require urgent care in an environment mostly bereft of adequate medical records.

All of these individual human beings are confined, along with a mix of undoubted bad guys, in a facility that is overcrowded, under equipped, and unsanitary. They are badly guarded

by a jail staff that is chronically under capacity, inadequately trained, and poorly supervised. This is all detailed in a recent study conducted by the local U. S. Marshal's office, which used the word "inhumane" to describe what they found.

Where is the outcry?

Many of the incarcerated are constituents of Cleveland mayor Frank Jackson, who has said more than 100 times that he and we will be judged by how we treat the least of those among us. Well, in less than eight months eight prisoners have died in the jail less than two blocks from City Hall. The silence from the mayor's office is deafening.

But the elected official most responsible for the current crisis is county executive Armond Budish. This is not to say the situation wasn't horrid long before his watch began in 2015. But in acting to turn the jail system into a profit center, he bought the system politically, must be assumed to have been either aware of its near criminal state of operation or willfully ignorant thereof, and has made it a death trap.

Gentle readers, this has all been done in our individual names. Our county council members have been complicit or cowering. What is to be done?

THE REAL DEAL PRESS

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Area women assemble for solace, strength, action



By R. T. Andrews
Editor

A domestic violence forum conceived in response to the tragic murder of Aisha Fraser bore strong resemblance to an old-fashioned revival meeting yesterday.

Survivors of domestic violence and relatives of those who did not survive abuse, violence and death — most often but not always at the hand of an intimate partner, family member, or acquaintance — shared detailed and excruciating memories of all manner of episodic domestic violence. The confessions and stories were invariably poignant, whether they had been shared hundreds of times, like Yvonne Pointer's recounting of her teenage daughter Gloria's rape and murder in 1984, or were fresher accounts of abuse by a step-brother, a mother's boyfriend, or other family circle member.

Throughout this sharing period, before a panel discussion designed to get at solutions to this widespread societal problem, the large meeting

room at the main Cleveland Hts.-University Hts. Library on Lee Rd. took on the sound and feel of church, as speakers and audience engaged in the familiar call-and-response of the black church. Testimonies of faith were heard and shared from many perspectives.

As the women shared their stories, some themes began to emerge:

- The problem of abuse is often generational. Conscious attempts must be made to break the cycle.
- Domestic violence often starts with verbal abuse. Physical abuse will follow.
- There are many types of abuse: verbal, physical, emotional, financial, etc.
- Low self-esteem and self-hatred can be both precursor and product of domestic violence and abuse.
- Police and other authorities need better training in how to respond to DV complaints.

There were also a number of common sense tips.

- Women and girls who are under assault must find people in whom to confide.

- A person who will try to fix the problem must be avoided; they are a threat to the one being abused.
- When girls and women are acting differently, it is a cry for help and must not be ignored. Family and friends must ask questions.
- Old-fashioned landlines are preferable for calling 911 in an emergency. The address is automatically conveyed to authorities; even a hang up requires an immediate premises visit by police. [This from former Warrensville Hts. police officer Nakia Jones, whose story went viral when she posted a video on Facebook in 2016 after the shooting death of Alton Sterling in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.]
- Where domestic abuse occurs, what goes on in your house must not stay in your house. Find a way to speak up.

Plain Dealer reporter Rachel Dissell was at the forum to report. Her account can be found [here](#). She drew a warm response from the 70-plus women in attendance when Pointer credited

her reporting with the arrest of her daughter's murderer.

Some drama occurred when Mary Ann Lorient took the floor and respectfully but insistently called out Congresswoman Marcia Fudge for her actions in support of former county judge Lance Mason, who served nine months in prison for brutally beating his wife Aisha Fraser and now sits in jail accused of her murder. Lorient continued to insist Fudge must be defeated until the moderator, TV 5's Danita Harris, was able to restore order.

Lorient later told this reporter that Aisha's fiancé, Rob, had come to the forum to address the meeting but was overcome with emotion and left the area.

A subsequent meeting will be held to discuss action steps, including calls for legislative action. State Rep. Janine Boyd, D-9, a late arrival, said that she has two bills to introduce, including one called Aisha's Law.

A final note: I arrived late due to a change in venue of which I was unaware. I was the only male in the room, notable only for the fact that my presence had zero impact upon the proceedings.



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Iota Phi Lambda induction



Carly Hill of Cleveland, Kellee Bacote of Bedford Hts., Laura Bonner of Euclid, and Tiffany Holland of Warrensville Hts. are the newest members of the Zeta Gamma chapter of IPL Sorority. The ceremony took place yesterday at the Cedar Center branch of the Cleveland Hts.-University Hts. Library. Dr. Bonnie Reynolds is chapter president.

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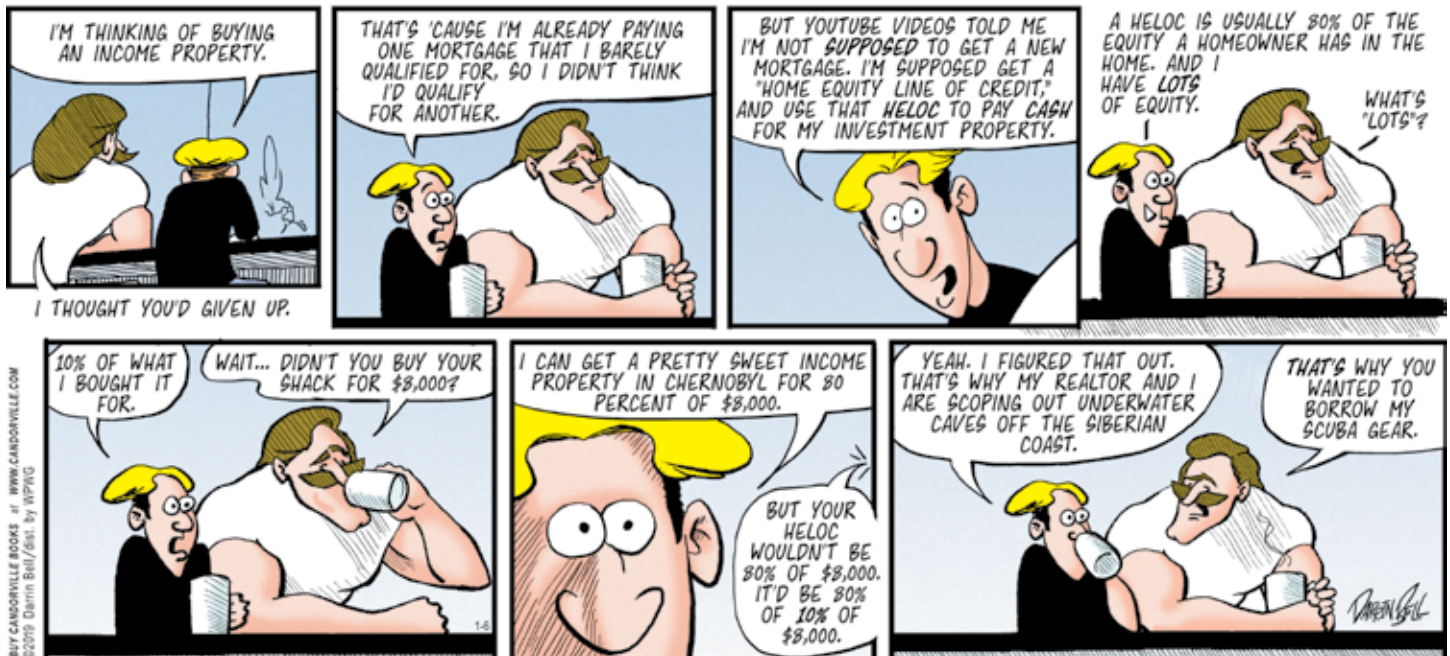
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BY DARRIN BELL



Panel 1: A man in a white tank top and sunglasses says, "I'M THINKING OF BUYING AN INCOME PROPERTY." A man in a black shirt replies, "I THOUGHT YOU'D GIVEN UP."

Panel 2: The man in the white tank top says, "THAT'S 'CAUSE I'M ALREADY PAYING ONE MORTGAGE THAT I BARELY QUALIFIED FOR, SO I DIDN'T THINK I'D QUALIFY FOR ANOTHER."

Panel 3: The man in the white tank top says, "BUT YOUTUBE VIDEOS TOLD ME I'M NOT SUPPOSED TO GET A NEW MORTGAGE. I'M SUPPOSED TO GET A 'HOME EQUITY LINE OF CREDIT,' AND USE THAT HELOC TO PAY CASH FOR MY INVESTMENT PROPERTY."

Panel 4: The man in the white tank top says, "A HELOC IS USUALLY 80% OF THE EQUITY A HOMEOWNER HAS IN THE HOME. AND I HAVE LOTS OF EQUITY." The man in the black shirt asks, "WHAT'S 'LOTS'?"

Panel 5: The man in the white tank top says, "10% OF WHAT I BOUGHT IT FOR." The man in the black shirt asks, "WAIT... DIDN'T YOU BUY YOUR SHACK FOR \$8,000?"

Panel 6: The man in the white tank top says, "I CAN GET A PRETTY SWEET INCOME PROPERTY IN CHERNOBYL FOR 80 PERCENT OF \$8,000." The man in the black shirt replies, "BUT YOUR HELOC WOULDN'T BE 80% OF \$8,000. IT'D BE 80% OF 10% OF \$8,000."

Panel 7: The man in the white tank top says, "YEAH. I FIGURED THAT OUT. THAT'S WHY MY REALTOR AND I ARE SCOPING OUT UNDERWATER CAVES OFF THE SIBERIAN COAST." The man in the black shirt replies, "THAT'S WHY YOU WANTED TO BORROW MY SCUBA GEAR."

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