



## Newsletter July 2020



### From the Director's Desk

Andy O

Let us remember there are bad guys out there. Over the last two years, I have been called by scammers posing as law enforcement on five occasions telling me there is a warrant for my arrest for some supposed infraction. (That's not counting the one who came to my door.) The most recent was several weeks ago. Supposedly, I hadn't responded to a request for a DNA test. I played along with the guy for a while, but when I told him that I don't deal with scammers, he got mad and said he would be right over to arrest me. I told him that would be fine and to have a nice day. I am still waiting. What made this call a problem though wasn't what this scammer said to me but what he said to my wife who took the call. This was the first time she had talked to one of these people, and she was pretty shaken up. Be sure to brief any of your family members who answer the phone, so they are not taken by surprise if this happens to them.

But can the bad guys be the actual police, not just the pretend police? The Oklahoma City PD posted individuals on their Facebook page whose registration was in arrears. The article offered cash for tips and used demeaning terms to describe these people. Not surprisingly,

commenters believed that they were encouraged to be vigilantes and bounty hunters.

Is there a takeaway from all of this? I believe so. Follow the rules. Keep your registration current. If you register faithfully, then you don't need to second guess a scammer or worry about a "one-way ticket to the Oklahoma City Hotel."

NARSOL has launched a new website, NARSOL resources, <https://resources.narsol.org/>. It provides resources to help registrants in their day to day struggles. It has information on jobs, housing, finances, attorneys, and much more. Michael McKay, one of the developers of this new website, will be talking with us about it as part of his discussion on our next Spotlight call.



### Spotlight calls continue to be successful

In June, we had a Zoom webcast featuring Vicki Henry as our guest speaker. Vicki, who has served as the President of Women Against the Registry since 2011, spoke eloquently about her mission to give a voice to the women and children who are being wrongly and unfairly punished because they have a family member

who has been convicted of a sexual offense. She compared her present advocacy to her long career in the telecommunications field, where she literally spent her days connecting people, one to another. She stressed the importance of learning how to tell our stories and how to connect with legislators to effect change. Vicki discussed the social upheaval currently in the news and the resultant calls for criminal justice reform, saying she hoped that registry reform would not be left out of the wider movement. She also noted that it is often the women in our society who effect real and lasting change, and that she is proud to be part of that heritage.



**Zoom with Michael McKay**  
Marketing Director, NARSOL  
August 11, 2020

Our next Spotlight call on Zoom will be Tuesday, August 11<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 PM. In this presentation, Michael McKay explains how to use the media to accomplish your organization's mission while avoiding the most common traps that can be catastrophic for your cause. McKay, NARSOL's Director of Marketing and an editor for LifeTimes Magazine, will share his twenty-plus years' experience from working in marketing, public relations, publishing, and the media. He will also talk about the new website he helped develop.

To join us on this call, use this link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84610857884> and enter meeting ID 846 1085 7884 when prompted. You can join with your cell phone or laptop using your device's camera (if desired) and microphone. If your computer does not have a microphone, dial one of the following numbers for audio:

**346-248-7799**                      **669-900-6833**  
**253-215-8782**                      **312-626-6799**



## **NARSOL webcast conference goes well**

*By Wayne B*

Despite the move to a virtual meeting due to Covid-19, the NARSOL 12<sup>th</sup> annual conference went well with an outstanding group of speakers. The meeting on June 12-13 had originally been planned to meet in Raleigh, NC.

A few glitches surfaced at times in reception of speakers, as people have experienced nationally during this amazing change to our civilization in using Zoom and Skype and other technical devices. But overall, the production and direction by the NARSOL staff was commendable.

According to Richard Earl, Board Member, and chair of the conference operations committee, the NARSOL LIVE webcast had 330 registrations, representing 45 states and two countries. Besides some registrants and their families participating, there were a significant number of attorneys, social service providers, and criminal justice personnel that had not participated in the past.

Presentations varied from the explanation of the recent Michigan registry reform to suggestions on advocacy to lawmakers and the media and a thorough breakdown of paraphilias. A look at irrational laws that reveal problems in the justice system was something we all know but hearing it so well presented made it compelling.

The 13<sup>th</sup> conference is planned for June 18-20, 2021 at Houston.



## Entitled Authoritarianism

By Andy O

I read an editorial from the *Washington Post* Saturday entitled “George Floyd’s death shows exactly what police should not do.” One paragraph really stood out:

We’re still learning more about the case, but the episode suggests poor training, insufficient supervision, a dangerously adversarial mind-set, a **culture of entitled authoritarianism**, and a disregard for the lives and good opinions of people of color. Those are all values at odds with good police work — values that rigorous training programs and quality supervision seek to stamp out.

Note the phrase that I emphasized “a culture of entitled authoritarianism” as this phrase epitomizes the mindset of many police officers as well as correctional officers and others in law enforcement-related fields. In prison I was regarded as almost but not quite human, and fortunately, that was long before Covid-19. Now the disease is spreading in many of our state and federal lockups, and despite the typical reasons for not protecting inmates (lack of supplies, stupidity, etc.), it really boils down to a lack of concern. They’re just inmates. In “Staying alive, a doctor’s guide for prisoners on staying safe during COVID-19 pandemic,” published in *Prison Legal News*, there is this statement, “State agencies cannot protect their staff and local communities without protecting the prisoners.” One must wonder if this is the only rationale for protecting inmates.

I remember in 2009 when I was first in treatment, I was required to take a class to learn about the deviant cycle. The first thing the instructor told us was to turn off our cell phones so that we didn’t disrupt the class. That was a reasonable request, and in any other context, it would have been completely sufficient. But then he added, “and if your phone rings, I’ll make you dance to the tune of your ringtone,” the key phrase being “I’ll make you.” Implied but not stated was “and if you don’t, you’ll be kicked out of treatment for non-compliance, revoked, and sent back to prison.” I considered asking if the instructor had considered a second career as a prison guard but didn’t dare.

At my initial polygraph, I was told to sign a statement saying that I was there voluntarily. I told the examiner that I was definitely not there voluntarily and that no one in their right mind would voluntarily consent to this exam. He said that if I didn’t sign, he wouldn’t test me. I wanted to thumb my nose at him and walked out the door. Instead, I told my first and only lie, and signed his form.

I got an email from a registrant yesterday as a result of the mass mailing of newsletters we recently did. He wrote in part,

So, Dr. X, my treatment provider, sent a referral to my judge, and I appeared at a revocation hearing. My sentence was revoked, and I immediately began serving a fresh 10-year sentence with no credit for time served and no appeal bond. Dr. X was actually sitting next to me at the hearing and spoke to me reassuringly implying that the whole thing was just a technicality. I’ve had several attorneys since then, and at least one of them said that there was no documentation at the revocation hearing that said why my suspended sentence was revoked. The consequences that occurred as

a result of the referral Dr. X sent to my judge was my immediate sentencing of 10 years in prison.

This culture of entitled authoritarianism is so deeply rooted in law enforcement, that it cannot be easily changed. When this manifests in a public way such as the treatment of George Floyd, the public is livid. They get angry. They demonstrate. They may loot and vandalize. But this is the tip of the iceberg, the visible part. This culture is pervasive on a level not seen by the public, and I fear that it will never change. For all I know, the registrant who emailed me failed to dance when his cell phone went off. We will probably never know why he was sent back for another 10 years in prison.

Why are registry scams so profitable? It is because the scammers project entitled authoritarianism, and registrants become fearful. The scammers know this and intentionally prey on these fears. I know exactly what went through my mind and how I felt the first time this happened to me.

So, is there a fix? Probably not, but we should continue to call awareness to this issue as best we can. And when we choose to buck up against this mindset, let's make sure it's worthwhile and not just because we don't want to dance to our ringtone.

Disclaimer: The treatment providers and other professionals mentioned do not necessarily represent the mindset of others in similar disciplines. Every profession has both good and bad apples.



### My Story...

In 1993 I was convicted of two counts of lewd acts with a minor. That was a devastating time for my victim, family, friends, co-workers, church members, and myself. It seemed all was lost. While in a prison treatment program, my therapist told me that there is no excuse for my sexual deviant behaviors but there are reasons - which we explored.

I was born in the mid-fifties and grew up in a strict dysfunctional family. My parents and older half-brother and half-sister seemed to always be fighting among themselves. Dad was an alcoholic and mom drank a lot too. I grew up in a house of alcohol, smoking, cursing, yelling, and harsh spankings (with paddles and belts). The atmosphere at home was tense much of the time. Frequently I felt fearful or on edge.

As a pre-teen I preferred to be quiet and not speak what was on my mind. Otherwise mom or dad (when he was home) would chastise me for talking back followed by a slap across my mouth. I learned to play alone quietly to feel safe. My parents were not affectionate. My younger brother and I learned to be afraid of adults. As a teen-ager I was shy and kept to a small group of friends my age. Mom and dad were separated when I was six, then divorced when I was twelve, so mom had to raise four kids by herself. She had cancer but worked as a waitress in a bar to pay bills and put food on the table.

At an early age I started using drugs, alcohol, and sex with boys and girls as a way to release feelings that had to be kept bottled up at home. I also enjoyed learning to fight and use a knife. These behaviors allowed me to feel an internal release – a freedom. My friends accepted me

and welcomed me in their gang. We were like a second family to each other. But I still had feelings of loneliness.

My mom passed away during the night when I was sixteen. That morning mom's boyfriend (almost stepdad) called me in to say goodbye to her. Without a concept of parental affection my feelings were numb. It wasn't until years later during counseling that I cried about losing mom.

When I was a young man, my past was hard to shake loose. In the seventies I hoped to live a better life as a Christian. It was not too difficult to stop drinking, smoking, and cursing. But the sexual experiences as a teen seemed too engrained. My sinful sexual thoughts and behaviors were taboo in those days, so to speak of them would bring much shaming, and I feared rejection. For years I tried to control my deviant fantasies on my own. Prayer, fasting, and meditation produced little or no help. Eventually I thought those desires were fading away.

Amid my emotional struggles I consistently worked and received good reviews, served honorably in the military, earned a Bachelor of Arts Degree, served the community, and did my best to live a good honest life. However, there were problems brewing within me that I was too afraid to reveal. The thought of being rejected, ridiculed, or shamed silenced me.

Denial may seem advantageous but in the long run it leads to ruin. In my mid-twenties I wanted to get married and have a family. In the past my dating wasn't very successful caused by physical abuse from neighborhood girls and my mom when I was younger. Truthfully, beneath my denial, I preferred guys. There was no way I would admit it though – I wanted a "normal" life. So, I briefly dated several women over the years and eventually became engaged with little knowledge about women. She had two children (red flag) who I accepted as my own. While engaged, it became obvious that my bride-to-be had some unresolved issues. She was very

insecure and a very possessive, jealous person (red flag).

It didn't occur to me at the time how many unresolved issues I had too, but we decided to marry after just six months (I wanted to wait a year). Soon we had two sons whom I loved very much.

To make a long story short, our marriage was a disaster. It was like living in the home I grew up in. She was a dominant, abusive woman who often screamed at me and the children. We were all screaming at each other most days. Sex was usually on her terms. My wife was a bully. This was the only time in my adult life that I acted out in anger against someone. I could not reason with my wife. The worst thing was her constant accusations about me looking at other "pretty" or "skinny" women in public or on TV. In frustration and anger I started punching holes in doors which also affected the kids. I felt traumatized too, totally unloved, and full of guilt, shame, and anger.

I felt lost. My thoughts and feelings of the past took over. My desire to feel loved and accepted became a selfish obsession. I was caught in a vicious cycle of inappropriate thoughts and feelings which led me to molest one of my stepchildren. There seemed to be nobody I could turn to for help. My wife was the last person I'd ever talk to about it. It was too shameful to discuss with friends or family. Counseling centers, that I spoke to for help, told me if I already did molest a child, I'd be reported and sent to jail. I was consumed with fear.

Eventually my abuse was reported. After DHS separated me from my family and months of legal hearings, I was sentenced. While in jail, I attempted suicide. After going to prison, my wife filed for divorce and removal of my parental rights. That same year, my dad passed away from heart issues and cancer. There was so much loss to bear. Treatment staff accepted me into the "Sex Offender Treatment Program"

where I received a lot of helpful therapy from staff and fellow inmates. Completing an exceedingly difficult treatment program and helping counsel other offenders gave me valuable tools to use in my daily life. My lifetime goal was to never re-offend. If only treatment could have been an option without going to prison.

When I was released from prison, there was a feeling of new birth within me. I felt hope for a better future and thought I could at least reunite with my sons (sadly that never happened). Then I reconnected with a lady I dated in the past. We soon married and are still happily together. Life, after prison as a convicted "Sex Offender", presented more emotional challenges from registration, driver license laws, living restrictions, community notification, and then even more changes to the restrictions and registration. It was insane then and has become worse for other registrants. My crime was over thirty years ago, and I was released over twenty years ago. I am no longer a "Sex Offender". I'm a tax paying, productive, American Citizen who

paid for his crime and should not be labeled for life.

Over the years I have been dealing with PTSD, anxiety, great loss, and remorse. Registry requirements only made these issues worse. It caused loss of employment, loss of relationships, difficulty finding a place to live, animosity from neighbors, and increased registry expenses. None of the requirements have protected society. It only increased my emotional instability which could have pushed me to re-offend. Sex offender registration and restrictions and DHS have done more harm than good, but I chose to rise above abusive registry laws by using what I learned in treatment. I am especially grateful for support from my current wife, friends, and family for helping me to live a better life.

#### **Do you have a story to tell?**

Contact us at [ok-rsol.org/contact](http://ok-rsol.org/contact) or call 405-294-4299 and tell us about it.



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