



# REENTRY

National Media Outreach Campaign

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## COMMUNITY SCREENING TAPE OFFER — BORDERLINE: *The People vs. Eunice Baker*



If you missed BORDERLINE on FreeSpeech TV or on selected PBS stations, organizations can now

apply for a copy of the film. **BORDERLINE** is the story of Eunice Baker, a borderline mentally retarded woman who was sentenced to 15 years to life in prison for murdering a young child, despite evidence that the death was accidental.

When she was first brought in for questioning, Eunice, who did not understand her Miranda rights, signed a false confession. The document states that while babysitting young Charlotte Kurtz, Eunice intentionally killed the child by locking her in her bedroom and turning the thermostat up to 90 degrees on a hot June day. The defense in her trial claims that a short in the thermostat's circuitry caused the sweltering heat inside the home, a fact that is confirmed by the sworn testimony of an electrical expert. Eunice's lawyer also asserts that his client, due to her limited cognitive capacity (her IQ is between 65 and 78), did not realize that the heat posed a severe threat to the three-year-old child.



From day one, Eunice was tried in the media and found guilty. Not until the midst of the trial were any articles printed that were sympathetic to her, though evidence supporting her innocence had surfaced. With no audio or video recording of Eunice's confession, jurors were forced to decide whether or not she possessed the intelligence to have understood her Miranda rights or realized that Charlotte was in danger.

By following this controversy as it unfolds in the rural upstate New York courtroom of Judge Vincent Sgueglia, **BORDERLINE** draws attention to the problem of how mentally handicapped individuals are treated by the legal system across the nation, especially in rural communities and small towns. With more than 4 percent of the national prison population considered mentally retarded, this issue, which has been overlooked for decades, is only now gaining the national recognition it deserves. Ultimately, the film proves that the legal system, while seriously flawed, has the potential to right itself and correct injustice.

Please visit the Reentry National Media Outreach Campaign Web (<http://www.reentrymediaoutreach.org/borderline.htm>). site to learn more about the film, download the community screening application, and access additional materials, including data on mental health and corrections.

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## NEW CAMPAIGN PRODUCTION – *I WAS IN PRISON AND YOU CAME TO VISIT ME*



The Reentry National Media Outreach Campaign is working with a small church in Neptune Beach, Florida to produce *I Was in Prison and You Came to Visit Me*, a message from one pastor to pastors and church leaders everywhere. The upcoming film speaks to what they can do to awaken their congregations and mobilize them to assist prisoners in life changing ways. Pastor Steve McCoy and [Beaches Chapel Church](http://www.beachschapel.com) began their work with Florida's Lawtey Correctional Institution in November 2002; the new all-volunteer Faith Based Dorm at Lawtey was dedicated on March 1, 2003. Then, based on that dorm's effectiveness, on Christmas Eve 2003, Governor Jeb Bush rededicated the 30-year-old, minimum-security state penitentiary as the nation's first entirely Faith Based and Character Building Prison.

*I Was in Prison and You Came to Visit Me* chronicles the creation of this church-sponsored faith based dormitory and its effective impact on the dorm members and general population of the entire institution. A companion for *To Serve This Present Age*, the film will help the faith community to understand the broader scope of prison ministry and the issue of restorative justice. It will be used to motivate pastors to mobilize their churches into prison ministry and to help former inmates reenter their communities.

The Reentry National Media Outreach Campaign anticipates being able to offer this enlightening production this summer. For information about Pastor Steve McCoy and Beaches Chapel Church, please visit <http://www.beachschapel.com>.

*"I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me."*

*(Matthew 25:36)*

## REENTRY CAMPAIGN PROFILE – *CASA GRANDE TRANSITIONAL HOUSING, LAS VEGAS, NV*

In an effort to support the goals of successful prisoner reentry, Governor Kenny Guinn recently announced the official opening of the Casa Grande Transitional Housing Facility in Las Vegas. Casa Grande, a state of the art residential facility, will provide services for up to 400 offenders preparing to transition from prison back into communities.

The \$23 million center is designed for prisoners who have been granted parole and are seeking employment. Individuals in the program will participate in a range of programs, including counseling, housing services, and employment training. Most will go to jobs during the day and return to Casa Grande at night. The program charges about \$16 per day for room and board and individuals can remain in the program for up to four months. At a recent executive forum of the National Governors Association, Dana Serrata, Nevada Department of Corrections' Reentry Coordinator, indicated that it costs approximately \$17,000 per year to incarcerate an adult in Nevada, but only about \$2,900 per six months of services at Casa Grande.

The goal of Casa Grande is to reduce recidivism rates by half and avoid the costly churning of individuals moving in and out of prison. The facility is surrounded by about 1,000 warehouse, manufacturing, and service businesses that the state hopes will employ many participants.

The State of Nevada believes that its investment in Casa Grande is crucial – that reentry planning and transitional services make a difference for offenders, and for the communities in which they will live after they have completed their sentences. Casa Grande also makes excellent business sense: the cost benefit will save Nevada millions of dollars each year.

## REENTRY CONFERENCES AND EVENTS

### The Martin Luther King, Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change - Atlanta

The Reentry National Media Outreach Campaign will be featured as part of the 38<sup>th</sup> observance of the anniversary of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s death on **April 4, 2006** at The King Center in Atlanta. Using OMAR & PETE as its opening, the day's theme will be "*Re-Entry & the Criminal Justice System.*" Project director Denise Blake will provide an overview of the Reentry National Media Outreach Campaign, and then screen the community version of OMAR & PETE. The screening will be followed by panel discussions featuring criminal justice professionals, elected officials, as well as individuals who have successfully reentered society following incarceration. The day will culminate with a call to action addressing reentry issues and wreath-laying at the crypts of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Mrs. Coretta Scott King.



Hosted by the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, the event will take place in **The King Center's Freedom Hall, 449 Auburn Avenue, Atlanta, 9:00 am – 1:30 pm.** Each attendee will receive a copy of the Reentry National Media Outreach Campaign's faith-based DVD, *To Serve This Present Age: Reentering Through Faith*, which also includes the community screening version of OMAR & PETE. This event is free and open to the public. For more information, please contact Elaine Mbionwu, The National Re-Entry Resource Center, 770.771.4707, or Brenda Davenport, Southern Christian Leadership Conference, 404.522.1420.

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### 2<sup>nd</sup> National Offender Workforce Development Conference – St. Louis, MO

The Reentry National Media Outreach campaign is providing DVD copies of *To Serve This Present Age: Reentering Through Faith* for two upcoming national conferences. The production provides an introduction and orientation on reentry issues facing formerly incarcerated men and women. The Reentry Campaign and The Annie E. Casey Foundation collaborated with the National Alliance of Faith and Justice to develop this video/DVD. *To Serve This Present Age: Reentering Through Faith* supports hands-on training through offering clear examples of faith-based practices and mobilization opportunities. The goal of the video is capacity building and competency training for lay people and clergy.

Ms. Elaine Mbionwu, director of The National Re-entry Resource Center, based in Atlanta, is facilitating a faith-based reentry workshop at the 2<sup>nd</sup> National Offender Workforce Development Conference in St. Louis, MO, **April 11-13, 2006.** The title of her workshop is *The Faith-based Response to Individuals with Incarceration Histories.* Ms. Mbionwu will use OMAR & PETE as a teaching tool for this workshop. Learn more about this conference or register online at: [http://www.proworkdev.com/first\\_annual.htm](http://www.proworkdev.com/first_annual.htm).

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### 8th Annual Lonnie E. Mitchell National HBCU Substance Abuse & Mental Health Conference – Washington, DC

Ms. Mbionwu is also a presenter at the 8th Annual Lonnie E. Mitchell National HBCU Substance Abuse & Mental Health Conference scheduled for April 5-8 in Washington, DC. Her workshop at this conference is *Recidivism: Developing HBCU/Faith-based Prevention Collaboratives for Individuals with Disabilities (Mental Health / Substance Abuse) and Have Incarceration Histories.*

The Dr. Lonnie E. Mitchell Conference had its beginning in 1987, when the National Institute on Drug Abuse approached Coppin State College (where Dr. Mitchell was president) to develop a position paper on the Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and their role in preventing substance abuse. Following a survey of the HBCUs, few offered alcohol, tobacco, and other drug abuse curricula, the exceptions being Coppin State College, and Jackson State and Southern Universities. None had held substance abuse conferences, but all of them were interested in attending a conference devoted to the issues of drug abuse and dependence, if the opportunity were available.

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## REENTRY CONFERENCES AND EVENTS, *Continued from Page 3*



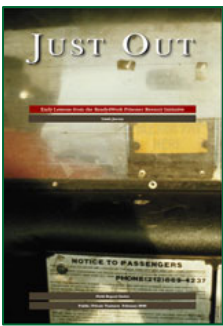
Having just left the National Institute on Drug Abuse where he had created national policy related to the drug abuse field, Dr. Lonnie E. Mitchell accepted the challenge of developing a conference that would address the issues about which Coppin, the community, and the HBCUs were concerned. A conference seemed to be the best approach to assisting the colleges and universities in acquiring information and developing plans and strategies to deal with the problem.

The first conference was held in May 1987 at Coppin State College. Dr. Mitchell also communicated his vision by establishing a national consortium for Historically Black Colleges and Universities designed to inform, educate, and stimulate students, researchers and faculty on issues related to substance abuse. Please visit <http://www.lemconf.com> for more information on this event.

## REENTRY NEWS AND RESOURCES

### Public/Private Ventures Issues New Report

*Just Out: Early Lessons from the Ready4Work Prisoner Reentry Initiative*, by Linda Jucovy, examines the early implementation of P/PV's prisoner reentry demonstration, Ready4Work, and reports on emerging best practices in four key program areas. While P/PV provided the basic program design to the 17 lead organizations participating in the project, each site was given creative latitude to build programs unique to their own organizations, resources, partnerships and missions. Through this work, many innovative and promising approaches to effective prisoner reentry emerged, as did challenges for which solutions were sought. *Just Out* focuses on Ready4Work's 11 adult sites (the other six sites serve juvenile offenders). It offers practical advice about recruitment, case management, mentoring, and employment, and documents early lessons in this growing area of study, policy, and advocacy.



Download the report for free at:

[http://www.ppv.org/ppv/community\\_faith/community\\_faith\\_publications.asp?section\\_id=3#pub198](http://www.ppv.org/ppv/community_faith/community_faith_publications.asp?section_id=3#pub198)

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### New Book: "Locked Out:: Felon Disenfranchisement and American Democracy"

5.4 million Americans --one in every 40 voting age adults -- are denied the right to participate in democratic elections because of a past or current felony conviction. In several American states, one in four black men cannot vote due to a felony conviction. How did the United States come to deny a voice to such a large percentage of its citizenry? What are the consequences of large-scale disenfranchisement – both for election outcomes, and for public policy more generally? *Locked Out*, by Jeff Manza and Christopher Uggen, reveals the centrality of racial factors in the origins of these laws, and their impact on politics today.

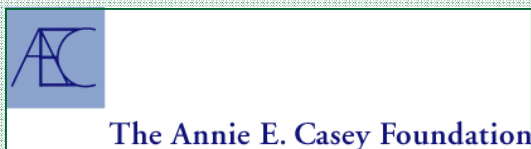


The book can be purchased at major retailers, including Amazon.com

<http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0195149327/104-4321443-0068754?v=glance&n=283155>

The Annie E. Casey Foundation (AECF) is supporting the **Reentry National Media Outreach Campaign** as part of the Making Connections Media Outreach Initiative (MCMOI), which is designed and managed by Outreach Extensions. This vital effort links media broadcasters to local stakeholders and their diverse constituencies, providing outreach strategies and media resources that support their efforts to strengthen youth and families and build effective communities.

The Making Connections Media Outreach Initiative offers media support to local coalitions that are part of AECF's *Making Connections*, a multi-faceted, long-term effort to improve the life chances of vulnerable children by helping to strengthen their families and neighborhoods. The Foundation's intent is to stimulate and support a local movement that engages residents, civic groups, political leaders, grassroots groups, public and private sector leadership, and faith-based organizations in an effort to help transform tough neighborhoods into family-supportive environments.



This e-Newsletter is an electronic publication intended to keep you informed about news and events relating to the Reentry National Media Outreach Campaign. **Please let us know how we're doing through the feedback form on the Reentry Web site (<http://www.reentrymediaoutreach.org/contactus.htm>).**

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**We welcome the names/e-mail addresses of your colleagues so that we can send copies of this e-Newsletter to them as well.**

*Have you missed an issue of the Reentry e-newsletter?  
Past issues can be found on the Reentry National Media Outreach Campaign Web site  
(<http://www.reentrymediaoutreach.org/enewsletter.htm>)!*