

## **To Forgive Is Divine**

Dear *Alibi*,

If you live in New Mexico and don't already know who Dave Siebers is, you must have been in hibernation for the last several weeks. The nightly news has made us all acutely aware of the Michigan transplant, recently released from prison, who's been trying to make New Mexico his home.

Each night we're shown another scene of him leaving a different trailer park, urged to vacate by the local sheriff or mayor. The media again "tells" us what a bad person he is and we should be in fear of our lives, and what a great service to the community they're performing by keeping track of his every move. Megan's Law has a purpose, but this isn't it!

There's a line from Shakespeare that began to resonate in the back of my mind: "Doth protest too much." We've never heard his side, or ever heard a sound bite from him, just the media's slanted take on the situation, i.e. create a crises even if one doesn't exist.

On Christmas Eve I decided to drive up to Cochiti camp grounds and see for myself what this guy was all about. I also decided to bring him Christmas dinner, since I doubted any of the local self-righteous church groups would have thought of that.

As I knocked on the door of his trailer, in the middle of a pitch-black remote camp ground, I was half expecting to be confronted by a Charles Manson re-incarnate. After all, that's what the news has portrayed him to be. I was pleasantly surprised when instead I met a fairly bright, educated, eloquent, well-spoken middle-aged guy and gracious host who invited me in for a while.

We chatted for a couple of hours. He made no attempt to glaze over or water down the severity of the crimes he'd committed 20 years ago. Remember, he's had 20 years to reflect on those errors in social behavior and he's not the rebellious youth he was 20 years ago. That's what prison's all about.

We talked about his plans for the future, they're not unlike those all of us have. Get a job, a house, settle in and hope to have an uneventful retirement someday.

What we all fail to realize, and hasn't been pointed out by the media, is that whether we like him or not, he's now part of main stream America. He's paid his debt to society as mandated by the officials that we've collectively appointed and elected to administrate over crime and punishment. This being said, do we continue to ostracize him from society almost guaranteeing he'll turn to crime to survive? Or, with some caution, allow him to prove himself and meld back into our culture?

I left his trailer with a completely different perspective of what and who he is. I've also risen to one more level on my disgust-o-meter for the TV news media. The nightly news has become more a nightly tabloid more concerned with sensational headlines to boost ratings than with responsible journalism.

Don't get the idea that I'm the unofficial president of the David Siebers fan club. People that know me will quickly tell you my politics are slightly right of Atilla of

the Huns.

However, we are a society that prides itself on our humanity. Our religions all preach compassion and forgiveness. It's time our actions reflect our words. This may sound strange coming from a devout Atheist, that I have to remind so-called "good Christians" of their fundamental doctrine.

Can I offer up any guarantees that he'll be a model citizen? No more than I can guarantee that another cop or priest won't be convicted of child molestation or group of cops arrested for a home burglary ring or another slippery politician caught with his hands in the cookie jar.

But there's no chance of any good coming out of the path we're proceeding down now!

*Krangle*  
*Albuquerque*