

Punishment or revenge?

written by Sandy | April 14, 2023



By Sandy . . . Mary Moore of Clayton County, Georgia, was 21 years old in September of 2022. That is surely very young to be a corrections officer and a security specialist in a county jail, responsible for assuring that jail detainees were secured; but that is what she was.

In late September, she was arrested and jailed for inappropriate sexual relations with an inmate. There is nothing to suggest or even hint at force. The encounter was caught on video, and she confessed. She was later charged with sexual assault and is out on bond.

Reaction to this was swift and condemning.

“That’s ridiculous, absolutely ridiculous”; “. . . doing something stupid”; “She should have been arrested. They need to leave her in there.”; “. . . inappropriate behavior.”

Is it ridiculous? Stupid? Inappropriate? Yes, yes, and absolutely.

Should she be fired? Yes.

Should she lose her corrections officer certification? Of course.

Should she be charged with sexual assault? Should she be sent to prison and “left in there”?

Why? What will that accomplish?

Just this: The state will undergo costly legal proceedings. She will certainly be found guilty, most likely through a plea deal that could give her some prison time – more cost to Georgia taxpayers – and earn her a place on the Georgia sex offender registry. This will assure her of a lifetime of struggling with even basic needs and of diminished earnings, all of which predict possible dependency upon state services – all at more cost to Georgia taxpayers.

Why? All that needs to be accomplished is that she no longer be in a position to misuse her position as a corrections officer, something easily accomplished by assuring that she would never again be credentialed in that capacity. That would be an appropriate, measured response.

This was, after all and as the video will attest, consensual sexual activity between consenting adults. Stupid, ridiculous, and most decidedly inappropriate. But it is consensual and, taking place virtually any place but where it did, totally legal.

To charge her with a sexual crime, to destroy her future, is an emotional response, an over-the-top, unnecessary, costly emotional response.

This has become the norm for sexual activity that is inappropriate or offensive to the public.

[Teens sexting each other are charged with distributing child pornography](#) rather than being mandated training on the dangers of inappropriate internet usage.

Men found guilty of serious sexual crimes are given [sentences measured in hundreds of years](#) "to set an example."

And adults having consensual sex with other adults in inappropriate situations are treated as sexual criminals.

These are emotional responses. They are driven by our distaste for the behavior, our sense of indignation, disgust, disapproval, or fury.

Punishment should not be based on moral indignation nor fury at wrongdoing.

Punishment should be sufficient to deter repeat of the crime. Anything more is not punishment.

It is revenge.