

George Floyd's America (4): "The Texas prison system's mission was to end the type of recurrent incarceration that Floyd experienced by rehabilitating inmates and returning them to society with skills"

The Bethlehem Gadfly George Floyd killing November 26, 2020

 *Latest in a series of posts in the wake of the George Floyd murder* 

"A young kid should expect to grow up in a good family, go to high school, go to college, have a good paying job, but there's a lot of hurdles placed in front of certain kids, and they can't get over those hurdles. You and me [speaking to Councilman Reynolds], we had hurdles, but we were able to get over them."

Mark DiLuzio, Bethlehem Chief of Police, 2014-2020

George Floyd died 6 months ago yesterday. The *Washington Post's* six-part series, "**George Floyd's America,**" examines the role systemic racism played throughout Floyd's 46-year life. Gadfly would like you to join with him in reading one part of that remarkable series each day this week,

"Profiting from prisoners: Communities and companies made money off George Floyd's imprisonment. Inside, Floyd withered"

BARTLETT, Tex. — The prison transport to this tiny city north of Austin took George Floyd past ranch land and cotton fields — worlds away from his home in Houston. But for the then-36-year-old Floyd, the spring of 2009 was another turn through a cycle of incarceration that would be both familiar and futile.

Floyd had been through stints in jail for drug possession since his 20s, spending up to several months at a time behind bars. But Bartlett State Jail was his first taste of extended time. He was sentenced there after pleading guilty to an armed robbery in Houston in 2007 and would spend nearly two years at the 1,049-bed facility.



He was one of several men accused of holding a woman at gunpoint and ransacking her home for money and drugs until they realized they had the wrong house and hustled away — but not before pistol-whipping the woman in front of her children. Floyd was arrested months later, driving what witnesses had identified as the getaway car. He is the only person who has served time for the incident, records show. The victim says she remembers Floyd's face, and a police report states that she “tentatively” identified him in a lineup — though the photo lineup techniques investigators used are no longer approved.

At Bartlett State Jail, Floyd bunked with childhood friend Cal Wayne, who said Floyd long contended that he was innocent of that crime but took a plea deal out of concern that a jury would unfairly judge a man

with previous felonies. He accepted a five-year sentence rather than risk decades in prison. He paroled out in four.

The Texas prison system's mission was to end the type of recurrent incarceration that Floyd experienced by rehabilitating inmates and returning them to society with skills that would help them live law-abiding lives. But Floyd's time in Bartlett State Jail only furthered his downward spiral. Behind its walls, Floyd found few opportunities to better himself, friends and relatives said, and the experience only exacerbated his depression, drug dependency and claustrophobia — the very issues that would play a role in the final moments of his life nearly a decade later.

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the fourth part in a 6-part series

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