

- No.

- Mm-hmm. And you get through the halfway house program. And you get out on your own, and everything is going smooth. And all of a sudden the skies open up, and here comes all this bull caca. Lands dead on your ass. And there's nowhere to go. There's no fallback house.

- Yeah.

- And so you find yourself standing in line, back down at the mission. And you even got three days run at this mission, then three days run at that mission. Next thing you know your identity has slipped away because you have become anonymous guilt. You know, if I'm not successful, then it must be my fault. Therefore, I'm guilty, kind of thing.

And you've got to listen to the sermon before you can get a morsel to eat. Then your life cycle is down. Well, what am I going to do for the next meal? Well, if your life cycle is down to three meals a day, and trying to figure out what to do with the next one, hey, you can go over here and get you a bottle of [INAUDIBLE] and stretch your life out--

- Exactly.

- --for a few hours. But let me down this. Get a buzz on. Pass out. Wake up. Go panhandle-- and then all that you've done has been--

- Well, you lose the self-esteem.

- That's right.

- Because that's one of the first things that we try to do, is help with somebody's-- rebuild people's self-esteem. If you've been in prison, you come out, everybody thinks it's a stigma. It's almost--

- Oh, you're absolutely convinced it's tattooed on your forehead. I did that. I remember that very well.

- And one of the first things that we do is try to work on the person's self-esteem, and get them to realize everybody makes mistakes. As my mom used to tell me, a long time ago, there was only one perfect man. And they crucified him. And nobody's perfect. Everybody's made mistakes. I may have made mistakes that you did, but you unfortunately got caught. And I got lucky and didn't.

And that's the kind of way we look at it. We're going to work-- we want to work with the whole person. We have it where, at Christmas time, we get all of our students come in. They bring their families with them now. The kids, the grandkids, whatever.

- Great.

- And for us, it works. Because then if we have a problem with a student, and we call to find out what's going on, they know who we are. They know who Maureen Dixon is, or whoever the staff person is calling. Because we do have that contact with them.

- So you have this wonderful-- sounds absolutely terrific.

- I think it is.

- And you have a 52% placement--

- Yes.

- --rate to date.

- I have a full-time case manager who does nothing but job development. And the companies that he goes to, he makes sure that they understand, right off the top, that the students that we will be referring to them are ex-offenders.

- Well they had-- back when John Bonner was the warden of the Kyle Unit, which is a wonderful little unit over there. Wackenhut thing-- they had a job fair where they invited companies in, not to find employees. The invitation was, come teach our people how you interview people. It was kind of a back-door, kind of thing. What happened was they met people in their inmate population that they wanted to give jobs to.

- Yeah?

- Because they came in, and they saw the potential of some of these folks. And so the utility companies, and the big oil companies that work out of Austin, and some of the manufacturers in the Austin area wound up hiring some convicts. It's the exposure. The familiarity does not, in fact, breed contempt. It breeds understanding, communication-- and what you wind up overcoming is your own reservations.

- Exactly. We've got-- Houston works has job fairs a lot. And we participate in everything that they do because we want our students to get first cracks at the jobs. We basically work with them on-- we even had a program for a while, which they call work experience, which was to give somebody who'd been out of the job market a long time the skill-- to be able to refine the skills. Unfortunately the money's not there anymore. With Mr. Gingrich-- is that-- whatever that little man's name is, up there in Washington--

- Had a nice sister.

- Yeah, Yes, I understand she's very nice.

- [LAUGHS]

- He's-- they've been wreaking havoc on JTPA. They've tried to do away with the summer jobs program, which, for Houston, employs over 6,000 kids. And they're cutting the funding for the youth programs, which is sad. Because if you don't get them now, then they can wind up in prison later. The kids are out running the streets instead of going to school. And Houston works had some alternative programs that were working.

But when they cut that money, you cut programs. Most of our money comes out of what they call an adult program, but they're looking at cutting that out too.

- Yeah, we're going through some interesting political periods, and, ultimately, everything is political. Ultimately, it all is political.

- JTPA was supposed to be a bipartisan act. It was-- I jokingly say this, this is Dan Quayle's claim to fame. This is the only thing that ever had his name on it. And the Democrat with it was Edward Kennedy. It was different from CEDA, which was its predecessor.

I did the statistics for this program in Houston works for seven years, so I know the kind of success it had, at least for Houston. And when people start talking about it, and saying that it didn't do this, and it didn't do that. I don't think you should look at it as a whole. I think you look at the parts. And where it has helped.

- Actually, you don't spend that much money.

- No.

- Do you have any idea how much money you spend per client? I mean, if you averaged it out.

- No, I don't.

- But it's damn sure not \$21,000 a year, which is what it costs to send them to a Texas joint.

- No. Not at all. I mean, we don't even spend near what they--

- It's damn, sure not \$17,000 a year, which costs-- what it costs to keep them in Harris County Jail.

- No, no.

- You're talking about tuition and books.

- We pay tuition. We pay for books and supplies. So, yeah. It's not a lot. I wished I-- now that's one figure I should have asked for.

- Well, the thing about it-- the point that I'm trying to make, of course, is that all of this economy is false economy. Because if people can't get a job, if people don't have the kind of confidences that your staff can give them so that they can get on with their lives, and become productive taxpayers, then they're going to be this heavy weight over here. Because institutionalization is not cheap.

- No, not at \$21,000.

- Nor is it luxurious. This money doesn't go for down comforters.

- No, no I have--

- It goes for security. And I think if they belong there, you want them to be kept there. So you're not going to be cutting that security.

- No, we don't-- we spend probably nowhere near that kind of money. And hopefully what we're doing with somebody is-- we try-- we're giving marketable skills. The students actually get a chance to use those skills. And that's what we're looking for. That's what we want. And we want somebody to be able to get out there, get a job, and support their family.

- Well, obviously, this is somewhat enthusiastic.

- Yes. I love doing it. Yes, I do. I love it.

- What's your degree in?

- My degree is in sociology.

- Sociology. Applied sociology.

- Yeah, I don't know how applied it was--

- But it is now.

- Yeah, and it's fun. I enjoy it. I enjoy working with the group. I enjoy working with the kids up in New Waverly. Because what we hope is that they don't become TDCJ statistics.

- Earlier you can turn them around, the cheaper, they're going to be on the taxpayer.

- Unfortunately, we've had some though, that have gotten in enough trouble for themselves, and are now up at TDCJ.

- Miss Dixon, I appreciate you coming down here in the middle of the night, and chatting with us.

- I enjoyed it.

- You understand how this radio program works. If we can be of service to you, or your agency, every once in a while, give us a call, and tell us what we can do for you. We are a public utility here. And I've got some of the most excitingly hopeful people in the world in my audience. I've got all of those guys-- and I wished I had the gals, and sooner or later, we'll get an antenna or a cooperating radio station to make that work-- who will someday get out. And will someday live up to some degree of their potential, that they're not now allowed to.

- Truth.

- And I am so glad that you, and your agency, are able to provide the kind of support to make that happen. Maureen Dixon is the executive director--

- No, program director.

- Program director of the agency--

- Gulf Coast Trade Center.

- Gulf Coast Trade Center. And their mailing address is--

- 2600 South Loop West, Suite 210. And that's Houston, 77054.

- What was that? That was--

- 2500 South Loop West, Suite 210. Houston, Texas, 77054.

- And if you are already sprung, and you want to access the things we've talked about tonight, she has a telephone number as well.

- The phone number is area code 713-660-9831. That's 713-660-9831.

- Thank you, Maureen.

- Thank you.

- And Dewey wants me to tell you that you're listening to radio station KPFT, in Houston, the mighty 90.1. And I appreciate the folks, KEOS, and Bryant-College Station for carrying the signal during this hour. Because a local broadcaster, or programmer, had give up his music show-- or her music show-- so that you could hear it. But the folks over there thought what we'd do is important enough to part of their listening audience that they will carry it. And I appreciate that immensely.

My name is Ray Hill, and this is *The Prison Program*. And we have reached the point where we cut it out-- the time that I have been wasting, filling your ears with stuff. And I turn up the ear goggles here, so that we can find out who is on line two. Hello, line two?

- This is Marilyn, I'm calling from Pampa, Texas.

- Well, you're on the air, Marilyn, go ahead.

- Hi, Dale. Just wanted to let things are fine here. Pam's at work. But she said that if she gets off in time, she's going to try to call later before leaving. So we're going to try it that way tonight. And the other two kids are in Skellytown. And Terri-Beth is here. And she wants to tell you something. So, listen carefully.

- [INAUDIBLE]

- No, no tell him your pictures in the paper.

- My pictures in the paper.

- Oh.

- Um. All right, see you.

- Dale, I don't know if you could understand her or not. But anyway her picture's in the paper today. It's on the religion page, page seven. They took pictures at Saint Matthew's school, and they-- so, anyway she's in there. And it was real-- it's a cute picture. So be sure to look for it when you get your paper.

And I can't think of anything interesting to say. It's just, kind of, same old thing around here. And I'm always glad it's Friday.

- Y'all getting any rain up there?

- No.

- We got. We're getting rain every day.

- Oh, you are? We're back to normal.

- Yeah, it sounds like.

- Rains every day.

- And we're back to normal because we're not getting any.

- And it's hot and sticky.

- Yeah, well it's hot and windy here. We never get sticky, usually. But anyway, there's a lot of frogs around here from the rain we've been having. And when we go out and watch Pam close the station, she has to stick that stick down on the gas thing, to see how much is in there out on the driveway. And there's little frogs jumping around everywhere. So we always have fun with them.

- [LAUGHS]

- And that's about the big thrills in Pampa, Texas. Grabbing a frog or something. [LAUGHS]

- Well, you keep her safe over there.

- That's right. We go out every night and watch her close. Because I just don't want to take any chances, and she doesn't either.

So anyway school starts Monday, and I guess we're going to get in some sort of a routine. And--

- Oh, well we're already slowing down the school's out.

- Oh, really?

- Yeah.

- Oh, well.

- Most of the week.

- We're late, then. OK, Pam'll call back later if she gets home in time, and if the line's not tied up. So are y'all real busy the whole hour?

- We're-- it's just like it was on Sunday.

- Is it really?

- Don't have any trouble moving this audience.

- [LAUGHS] We'll give it a shot, and see if we can get through. So she'll call and say hi.

- Well, tell her try anyway.

- OK. And thanks.

- Thank you, ma'am.

- OK, bye bye.

- Line five, where are you calling from?

- Arlington. This is for Larry.

- Hi!

- Hi, how are you?

- I'm fine.

- Hi, son, how you doing? Just wanted to call and say that I love you. And I miss you. And, listen, I talked to Stan yesterday. And he said that they were going to get a mediator, about the middle part of this week, that you would be able to listen in, like you did when they had it before that in Huntsville. So I'm sure you know more about it than I do about that. But he said that way they'll hopefully get something worked out where at least they'll take care of your hand, or do something.

But anyway, Daddy's coming back in from Minnesota. And he said it was awfully pretty up there, hot and dry Lord, I wish we'd get some rain up here, because we sure haven't had any.

- We've had a lot down here. But then we're supposed to. This is tropical climate here.

- Yeah, I know. And it's hotter than you know what down there, too.

- Yeah.

- But it's hot up here, too.

- 98 degrees, and about 80% humidity today. Take your skin off if you out there in it long.

- Oh, my goodness. But anyway, at least we heard something, son. And he said that you could be able to talk to them.

But the kids got back in school this week. And this has been the longest week. I don't know if it's just me getting up at five, or whatever. But they seem to be-- Scoots got a lot of homework. Had a whole-- well, he come home Monday with a bunch of it. So he'll either have to learn, or do something. And Jamie's doing real good, too. But here's JJ.

- Hi, Uncle Larry I love you. I miss you. Bye bye.

- Hi, Uncle Larry, I love you. I miss you. Bye.

- And, Larry, Dad should be in sometime tomorrow night. I don't know what time, or anything like that. But he said he'd see you next weekend.

- Been fooling around with this old hand, how many years?

- Excuse me?

- How many years have we been fooling around with this hand?

- Lord, going on-- Well, let's see. We finally got him in at John Sealy, in November of '89. And they kept him down there because he was-- Oh, I guess about three months, down there. But he got hurt in '88.

- So this has been seven years.

- Mm-hmm.

- This is unconscionable.

- It is. It is terrible.

- When we get through with their fundraising program-- which is going to be a couple of weeks in September-- I'm going to have the director of the healthcare back on. Rake him over the coals a little bit. And--

- I sure would like to talk to him.

- We're going to raise the issue of healthcare again. I've been gathering some information about what it's like in prisons, and institutions, around the country. Thank heavens for the internet.

- Oh, yes. Yes.

- And so I've got-- I'm better prepared than I have ever been to approach that subject. But it's horrible all over. Well, appreciate you folks.

- Oh, thank you, Ray. Thank you so much.

- Give the old fella my regards. And if you call, tell him watch that yellow stripe.

- I sure will. And thank you so much.

- Thank you, ma'am.

- Bye bye.

- Line one, where you calling from? Houston, I hope.

- Yeah.

- You're on the air.

- Hi, Ray.

- Hi. Is this Juan?

- Yeah.

- How you doing, baby?

- Fine.

- Has you gone back to school yet?

- Yeah, on Monday.

- On Monday.

- This Monday.

- Oh, good. Have you got your schedule down so you get enough rest?

- Yeah.

- OK, you go ahead and talk to your dad.

- OK. I want to say hi to my dad, and that I'm fine. And that I'm getting kind of ready for school. And that's all for, right now. Here goes my grandma.

- OK.

- [SPEAKING SPANISH]

- Muchas gracias, Grandma. Hello, Juan?

- Yeah.

- OK.

- OK. And then, that I already have my backpack ready. I just need to separate everything that I need, and that I want. And they might buy me a new-- not a calculator, but a-- a stapler. And that's all for right now. OK, bye.

- We love you Juan. Bye bye. Line four, where are you calling from?

- Ray, this is for Ricky.

- Well, how do, Mr Mara?

- Well, how are you?

- Well, I'm fine, sir. Has Ricky been able to pick up signal?

- Pardon?

- Is Ricky being able to pick up a signal?

- Would you believe the first week-- first Friday night, I forgot about it.

- [LAUGHS]

- The second Friday night, he forgot about it. The third Friday night, last, a week ago, the station would not come in. He said he was about ready to tear the place up.

- Well, I went up there Wednesday. And I'm going to be going back soon, and I'll visit Ricky when I go back. But I went up there Wednesday, and KERA in Dallas was walking on KPFT. Now that's a lot further, from Huntsville to Dallas, than it is from Huntsville to Houston.

- Sounds like I got a message there in that prison.

- Right up to the unit. Now, I could get away from the unit, by the time I got over-- what used to be Two Camp-- the Estelle Unit.

- Well, you know-- I'm not trying to make humor or nothing, but when you was gone. Which I have no [INAUDIBLE] on it. Ricky said it beat anything ever seen. The station come in loud and clear, every time.

- Maybe I'm putting off too much body electricity. I don't know.

- No, we all know that's not so.

- [LAUGHS]

- But anyhow, Ricky, first of all, I got your legal papers mailed back to you about 8:30, 9:00, Monday morning. Surely, hopefully, I got your letter today and-- jumping up and down, afraid they got lost in the mail, or I was sick and hadn't mailed them, and forgot about them. Well, I wouldn't forget nothing like that.

And the other issue you was talking about, my eyes looking so strange last Saturday night-- If you'll recall, when I showed you that little news clipping, you was having a hard time reading it due to the glare on that window pane we have to look through.

- [LAUGHS]

- So apparently that's what it is. My eyes are no different than they've always been. And I'm doing OK. And Ford and old Frances is doing pretty good. So you take care. And I'll see you this next week sometime.

- You take good care of yourself, Mr. Mara.

- Thank you, Ray.

- Bye bye.

- Bye.

- Line one, where you calling from?

- Colorado, for Elliot, in the Wynne Unit.

- Well, you are on the air.

- Oh, thank you very much, Ray. Hi, honey, we got your letter today. And I'll make those copies, and send them to you of what you wanted us to do. And I'm still canning applesauce. But I think I did the last of it yesterday--

- My heavens name, this has been two weeks of applesauce here.

[LAUGHS]

- Oh, yeah. I did it Monday-- let's see. It was nine quarts and 17 pints, Monday. And then six quarts and eight pints yesterday. And I'm about through.

- Well, all my apples come in sauce. I've got four teeth, and they don't line up. So the best thing I can do is applesauce.

- [LAUGHS] Well our trees-- the birds are getting most of them now. It doesn't do--

- Don't take them long to figure that out.

- No, it doesn't. When they start ripening, that's when you know you gotta pick them. Because the birds are all congregating on the trees. Now they're going after my choke cherry so--

- OK.

- OK, hon, everybody's fine. Cherry was here. And we took some pictures, and I got them back today. So we'll get you a letter this weekend and send you those pictures, so you can see. And yeah, I don't have to tell Laurie-- Laurie told me. So there'll be another grandchild coming next year. So that'll make it fine. And here's Daddy.

- Hi, Elliot. We hope everything is going all right for you, honey. And I hope you get the classes that you're applying for. We know that you're really concerned about it. And we want you to know that we support you, and are ready and willing to help you any way we can.

- Yeah, you said you thought that tuition was a little higher than you thought. Don't worry. It's less than half what it is for one hour up here at the school. So you're not getting too bad a deal down there.

[LAUGHTER]

- Well, we hope everything's going all right for you. And you're well and happy, and feeling all right, honey. Just keep writing to us, and we'll write to you. And we want to thank Ray, for letting us call in like this, to get a little personal touch to you. And we certainly appreciate everything that they've done for us. And for the love that we have for you.

Your brothers and sisters send all their love, and we're in touch with them every week. You know that, so--

- Well, I appreciate you folks staying up.

- Well, it's only 9 o'clock here, Ray, so, [LAUGHS] that's better. And if you get a chance, come up and see us sometime, Ray.

- Well, if I head that way, I'll let you know.

- Yeah, that's fine.

- Good to hear from you folks.

- All right.

- Thank you so much for letting us call in.

- Bye bye.

- Bye bye.

- Line three, where are you calling from?

- Hi, Ray. This is Jeanette.

- I missed you. Are you all right?

- I'm fine. My car has got the two front tires off of it. The brakes are getting fixed. And then my plug wires.

- OK.

- It was time for an overhaul. But I thought that it would be fixed by the time the show started, and it wasn't. So I'm sitting here, just listening to you on the radio.

- Well, I appreciate you doing that. How are you doing? How's the kids?

- OK. OK. Everybody's OK.

- Good. By the way, what's that telephone number you answer over at the office?

- 840-7801.

- That's the local number?

- That's the local number.

- 840-7041

- 7,8.

- 840-7841.

- 0,1

- 0,1.

- And the 1800 number is 1800-206-- no. 207-2659.

- 207-2659.

- 5,9 right.

- 1800, OK.

- OK? I want to talk to Wayne.

- Go ahead.

- OK, Wayne, this is mother. I love you. I haven't received a letter from you this week, I hope you're OK. I wrote to Robin. I mailed it this afternoon. I'll write to you tomorrow afternoon. And I'll be there to see you next week. I just hope you're OK. Maybe you went to see Lee, I don't know.

- Tony, your mother, Candice, she loves you. I haven't talked to her this afternoon, but she's doing OK.

Philip, Aunt Ava just wants to tell you hello and I love you.
And hang in there. I guess that's about it, Ray.

- Well, we got real good affirmative feedback this week off last week's show. And I want to express my appreciation for you and the other women that participated in that.

- I enjoyed it, Ray.

- It was real refreshing to have women on the air talking about their situations. And we need to do more of it.

- Yes, we do. We do. And I received some replies in the mail also, about prison life. So everybody seemed to enjoy it. So I guess you got the same response as I did.

- Well, I love you.

- I love you, too.

- If you're on the road this weekend, be careful.

- I will call you tomorrow-- well, I'm not going anywhere. I don't have a way.

- OK, well give me a holler. I'll be at the house most of the day. I'll call you tomorrow.

- Thank you, ma'am.

- Bye bye.

- Bye bye. Line two, where are you calling from?

- Houston.

- Well, you're on the air.

- Ray!

- Yeah?

- I finally decided how you're going to go down in Texas history, especially in the prison system.

- Shh. Why should we tell all these people all this bad news?

- [LAUGHS] This will be-- [LAUGHS] Ray Hill was the number one man in the state of Texas to catch all the corrupt law enforcement men from the prisons, and the law enforcement men in the street.

- No, I just got-- I haven't called anybody--

- The corrupt ones, now. We have good ones now.

- I haven't called in yet-- I know a lot of them. I haven't caught anybody, now. I just have a network of informants--

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

- --put them in prison? Got them in prison?

- But it's kind of like Saint Paul. You know, Saint Paul said that if you did something wrong-- if your brother's doing something wrong, go tell it. That he's doing wrong. And if that don't work, then you go to the elders of the church and you tell them. And if that don't work, then-- Paul kind of just peters out there.

And I think if he were around, he'd say go tell Lois Lane. And I happen to be the Lois Lane that everybody tells. So I'm at the hinge point here. And I can open close the doors when that happened. But, yeah, if I get information, and it's too big for this show-- like the VitaPro story-- I'll turn it over to somebody else that can make a story out of it.

- [LAUGHS] OK. You can-- so, like I said, certainly catch the corruption in the system. I love you for it.

- Yeah. I just wish that we could get the free-world listeners out here to wake up in the morning, and go to the chow hall, or their kitchen, to a hot steaming bowl of VitaPro. Smells just like Alpo. Tastes worse. And later on, you'll be putting out gas that everybody else can get to smell of it.

- Oh, goodness. Oh. OK.

- Now that I've insulted, and made everybody sick-- you called in for some reason or other.

- Oh, I want to say hello to some inmates.

- You go right ahead.

- But I do believe when the story hits the newspaper-- when the people in the prison system see this-- I would probably say they'd probably say, does Hill know about this? [LAUGHS] Don't you think?

- Well, I do--

- What's Hill going to say about this now?

- I do keep a couple of them awake at night. At least on Friday nights.

- Oh. Love you, Ray. I would like to say hello to a few of my inmates out there Freddy, Richard-- Hello, Richard out there! David, and Clarence.

And I would like to tell you guys, what I've been working on. It's kind of an uphill battle, but I think that this could possibly happen. I'm trying to get air conditioning and fans in the Texas Department of Corrections. I cannot believe that this day and time, that the Texas Department of Corrections is not air conditioning for state workers, and prisoners.

If there's any state workers out there, I think all you state workers need to get together and say, hey, why do we have to work in conditions like this? Just because we work the prisons, we're not considered animals-- You know, like most people consider inmates animals. The inmates are not animals. And the state workers that work the prison are not animals. So if the state workers would unite, and the prisoners would unite, and get something done--