

While defunding the police and the prison industrial complex are great starts, it will take more than that to bring the healing that our country needs.

This is why we must **TAX THE RICH**. In order to do this, we must get corporate money out of politics and elect politicians who will carry out the will of the people, not corporate donors.

**This will take active, ongoing campaigning by progressive grassroots candidates whose campaigns are fueled by the work of everyday people.** We need politicians who are accountable to working people and who will fight for social justice through ending mass incarceration and making sure the rich pay their fair share in taxes to help us get the resources we need to keep our communities safe.

We also need to **win more rights for workers everywhere so we can earn living wages and stay out of poverty.** Together, we can build a strong labor movement to make sure that working people get all the fruits of our labor.

Help us win all these campaigns and more by **joining DSA!**



This zine is only an introduction to the issues and solutions presented. Please scan the QR code to check out our full list of references, articles, and resources to learn more! There you can find links to the statistics and stories we have shared inside, as well as a reading list and examples of effective community programs for further learning.



This zine was created through volunteer work for the sake of community education and empowerment. Please consider donating to help us print and distribute more copies!



if YOU'RE NOT mad,  
YOU HAVEN'T BEEN  
PAYING  
ATTENTION





# CSPD DOES NOT KEEP US SAFE

In fact, they harm our community.

In October 2022, CSPD pulled over a 29-year-old veteran who was living out of his car for a missing license plate. The cops claimed to smell marijuana and pulled him out of his car, punching him in the head & back. Body camera footage captured one officer calling him a "dumb fuck." The man sustained injury to his eye and a ruptured eardrum. The DUI charges were later dropped.

**In November 2022, CSPD responded to a call for a 63-year-old man with PTSD who was having a mental health crisis. After being placed in a "bear hug hold," the man died. The coroner's report declared the man's death a homicide. No charges have been brought against the police involved.**

In 2020, police were called to the scene where a 17-year-old girl was having a panic attack. She was a sexual assault survivor. She was thrown to the ground, cuffed, and thrown in the back of a cop car. Supervising Sergeant Gregory Wilhemi pepper sprayed her twice in the face before shutting the door on her. No cops faced any consequences.

In 2019, CSPD officers murdered a 19-year-old man, claiming that he "matched the description" of an assault suspect. They shot him 3 times in the back as he fled.

The officers involved were placed on 3 days of paid leave and then returned to active duty.

It later came out in court that no assault had even occurred.



## Fund Community, Defund Police, Abolish Prisons

Jails, prisons, and policing are all profitable for investors. The combination of private contractors providing services to locked facilities, along with for-profit prisons, halfway houses, and immigration detention centers, generate large profits for private investors. This system incentivizes them to fund the campaigns of political candidates who are willing to continue signing these contracts and passing laws that lead to high incarceration rates — even when we know that better solutions to reducing crime exist. This system is referred to as the Prison Industrial Complex.

There is something very wrong about profiting off the imprisonment of our fellow citizens, and for financially incentivizing high incarceration rates. We can reduce crime and build a safer world for all by funding programs and assistance that will uplift our people. And we can do this by putting less money into militarized police and locked facilities and putting that money instead into mental healthcare, drug treatment programs, violence prevention programs, education, meal and housing assistance, after school programs, job skills training programs, and more.

There is a lot of misinformation about what defunding and abolition mean.

We will always need ways to keep the community safe. However, we can reimagine community safety by asking what it would look like to rehabilitate rather than punish people, and to help rather than criminalize.



These processes will not happen overnight. That would not be safe for anyone because we don't have the systems and programs in place to help people safely transition into the community and get the specialized help they need.

Transformative Justice is an excellent model for holding people accountable when they do wrong and for guiding them to make amends to society through restorative actions. It will take time to find effective ways to make this model work on a societal level.

But the process of defunding police, prisons, and jails to start funding healthy community alternatives can and MUST start right away. We can start by eliminating jail sentences for those who have committed low-level, nonviolent crimes, and by getting rehabilitation programs into locked facilities for people who have committed violence.

The sooner we start putting our money into policies that are led by love, compassion, and empathy, the sooner we can build a healthy, sustainable, safe, and just world for all.



Solutions that have been found to reduce crime include:

Affordable Housing

Living Wages

Education

Universal Healthcare

Mental Health Services

Food Assistance

Violence Prevention Programs

and most importantly,

Community

But unfortunately, none of these things are profitable...



# CSPD WORKS AGAINST OUR NEEDS



In the summer of 2020, as nationwide uprisings were fighting for the defense of black lives, officer Keith Wrede watched a Facebook live of a local protest. In the comments, Keith decided to comment "KILL THEM ALL." He was suspended with pay as a result.

CSPD spent taxpayer dollars to embed an undercover officer in COS nonprofit orgs for over a year.

## WHO THEY SURVEILLED:

**CHINOOK CENTER**  
(Community center that offers free grocery service)

**COLORADO SPRINGS DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISTS OF AMERICA**

(Advocates for workers' rights, free healthcare, and housing for all)

**COLORADO SPRINGS TENANTS UNION**  
(Advocates for renters' rights)

## CSPD ALSO TRIED TO ENTRAP LEFTISTS INTO ILLEGAL FIREARMS PURCHASES.\*

**No evidence of illegal activity in COS was ever found.**

\*This occurred as part of a collaborative effort between the FBI and cops across the front range to target and entrap activists who had participated in the 2020 racial justice uprisings, including BLM activists in Denver.

Meanwhile...

our people have been dying.

IN 2022, NINE\*  
PEOPLE DIED IN  
EL PASO COUNTY  
CJC.

NO TRIAL

NO CONVICTION

DEATH SENTENCE

At the time of publication, a 10th person has died in CJC custody. These deaths have overwhelmingly been due to medical neglect.

"THEY'RE TRYING TO BUILD A PRISON FOR YOU AND ME TO LIVE IN"

The U.S. has a higher incarceration rate than any other country in the world, at 664 per 100,000. Colorado's rate is 614 per 100,000.

The three cities that send the most people to prison are Denver, Aurora, and Colorado Springs, each with an imprisonment rate of over 300 per 100,000.

Most of the people going to prison from Colorado Springs come from Southeast Colorado Springs, the area with the lowest average incomes and the highest BIPOC populations. In the 80920 ZIP code (up north and very white), the incarceration rate is 99 per 100,000. In 80910 (Southeast with high representation of Black and Latinx people), the incarceration rate is 876 per 100,000.

Nationwide, Black people are 5 times more likely to be incarcerated than white people. Latinx people are 1.3 times more likely, and Native Americans are 7 times more likely to be incarcerated than white people.

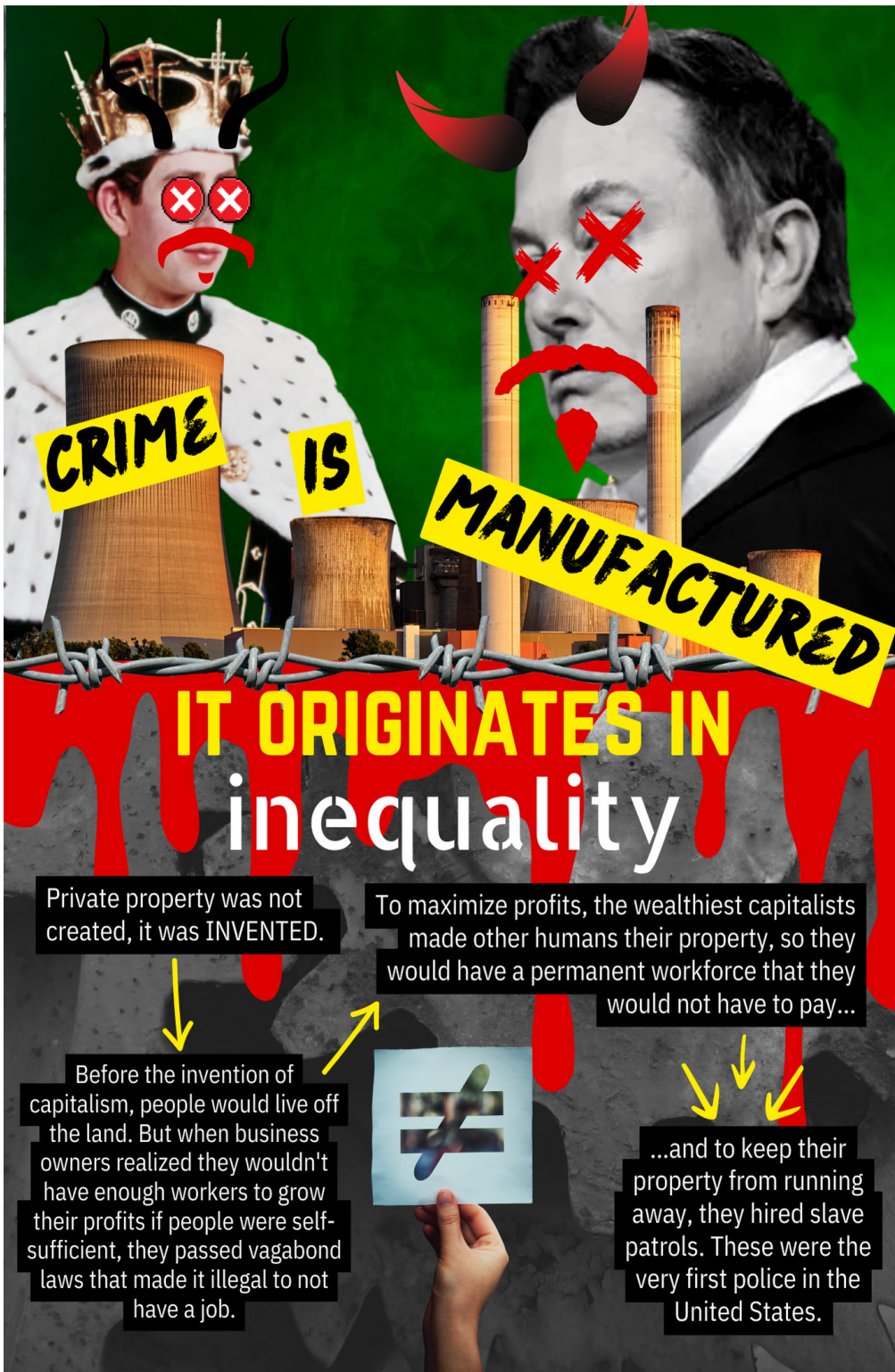
El Paso County has the largest jail in the state. It also houses a for-profit halfway house, ComCor, that is associated with Colorado's high recidivism rate: over 50%, making it the fifth worst state in the nation. This means that over 50% of the people released from Colorado jails and prisons return to incarceration within 3 years, either for new crimes or for violations of parole for previous crimes.

People who have felonies often have no choice but to resort to crime because they are unable to find employment and housing. When they do find jobs, wages are too low to afford whatever housing they can find. In 2022, a person would need to make \$25 per hour to afford a 2-bedroom apartment. Today (2023), the state's minimum wage is only \$13.65 per hour, and the homelessness crisis is getting worse. Meanwhile, CSPD was allotted over a third of the 2023 budget for the city of Colorado Springs.

PEOPLE WITH HISTORIES OF TRAUMA AND MENTAL ILLNESS ARE OVERREPRESENTED IN JAILS AND PRISONS

While 64% of people in the U.S. have experienced at least one adverse childhood experience (ACE), such as witnessing violence or experiencing abuse, 98% of people in jails and prisons have had at least one ACE. 78% of the prison population has had 4 or more ACEs.

15-20% of the people in jails and prisons have a severe, diagnosable mental illness. 25% of deaths in jail are by suicide. Colorado has some of the lowest funding for mental health in the country. This means we are locking people up instead of offering them treatment.



**CRIME**

**IS**

**MANUFACTURED**

**IT ORIGINATES IN**  
**inequality**

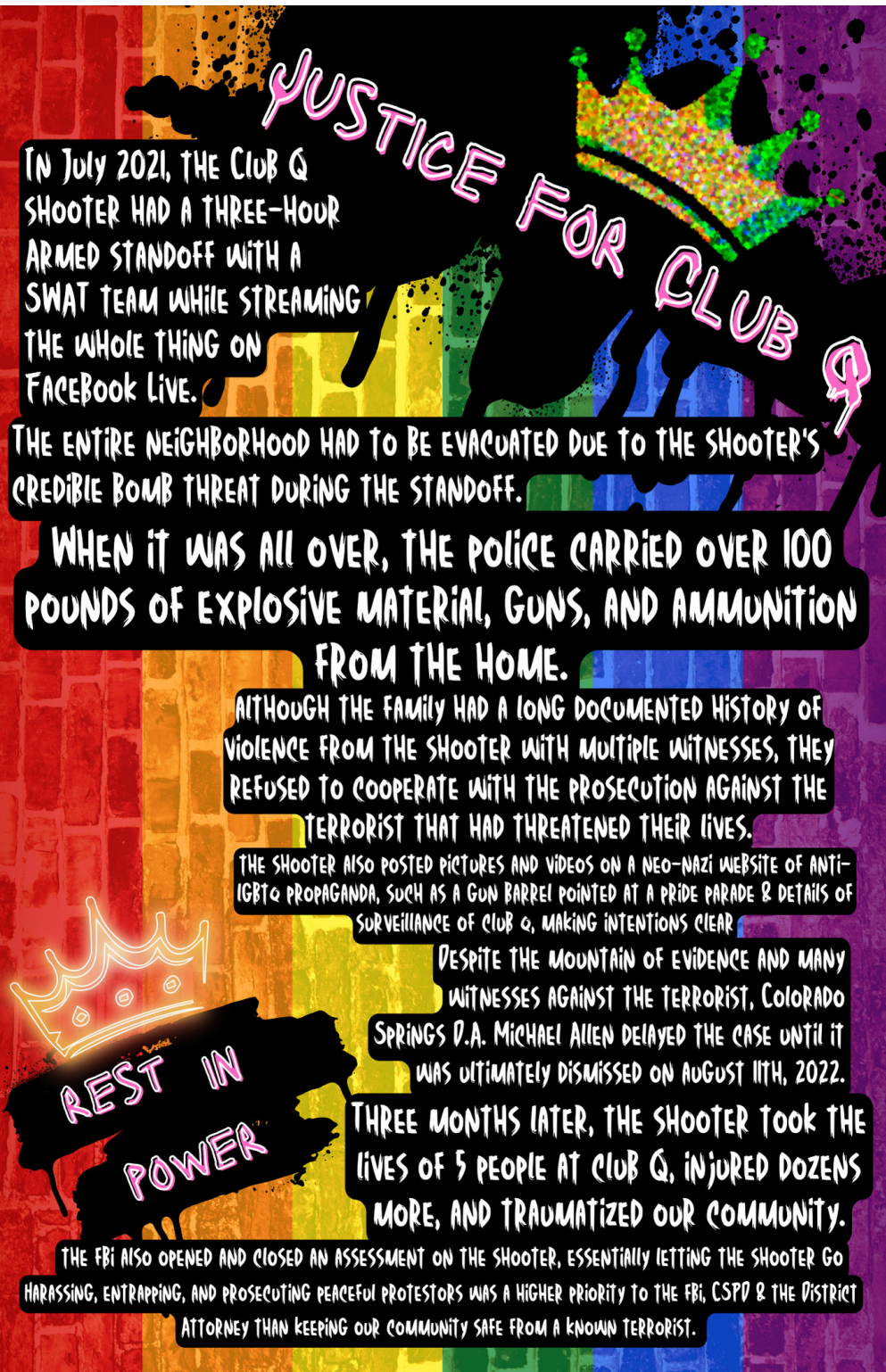
Private property was not created, it was **INVENTED**.

To maximize profits, the wealthiest capitalists made other humans their property, so they would have a permanent workforce that they would not have to pay...

Before the invention of capitalism, people would live off the land. But when business owners realized they wouldn't have enough workers to grow their profits if people were self-sufficient, they passed vagabond laws that made it illegal to not have a job.



...and to keep their property from running away, they hired slave patrols. These were the very first police in the United States.



**JUSTICE FOR CLUB Q**

IN JULY 2021, THE CLUB Q SHOOTER HAD A THREE-HOUR ARMED STANDOFF WITH A SWAT TEAM WHILE STREAMING THE WHOLE THING ON FACEBOOK LIVE.

THE ENTIRE NEIGHBORHOOD HAD TO BE EVACUATED DUE TO THE SHOOTER'S CREDIBLE BOMB THREAT DURING THE STANDOFF.

WHEN IT WAS ALL OVER, THE POLICE CARRIED OVER 100 POUNDS OF EXPLOSIVE MATERIAL, GUNS, AND AMMUNITION FROM THE HOME.

ALTHOUGH THE FAMILY HAD A LONG DOCUMENTED HISTORY OF VIOLENCE FROM THE SHOOTER WITH MULTIPLE WITNESSES, THEY REFUSED TO COOPERATE WITH THE PROSECUTION AGAINST THE TERRORIST THAT HAD THREATENED THEIR LIVES.

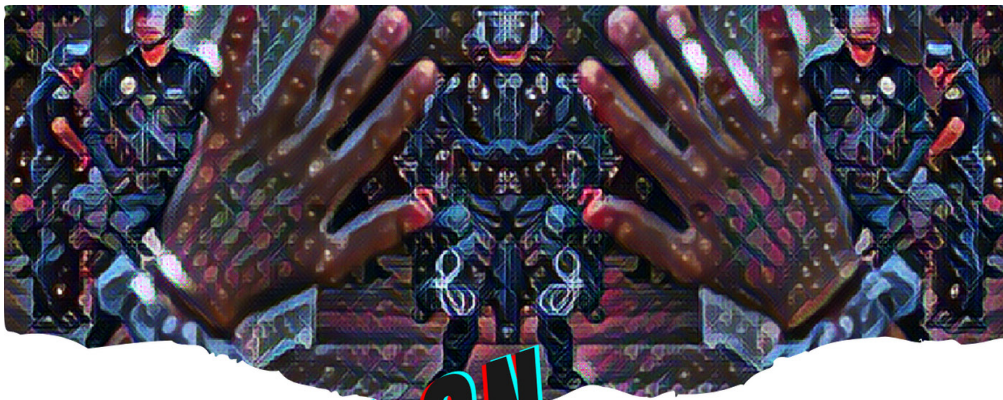
THE SHOOTER ALSO POSTED PICTURES AND VIDEOS ON A NEO-NAZI WEBSITE OF ANTI-IGBTQ PROPAGANDA, SUCH AS A GUN BARREL POINTED AT A PRIDE PARADE & DETAILS OF SURVEILLANCE OF CLUB Q, MAKING INTENTIONS CLEAR

DESPITE THE MOUNTAIN OF EVIDENCE AND MANY WITNESSES AGAINST THE TERRORIST, COLORADO SPRINGS D.A. MICHAEL ALLEN DELAYED THE CASE UNTIL IT WAS ULTIMATELY DISMISSED ON AUGUST 11TH, 2022.

**REST IN POWER**

THREE MONTHS LATER, THE SHOOTER TOOK THE LIVES OF 5 PEOPLE AT CLUB Q, INJURED DOZENS MORE, AND TRAUMATIZED OUR COMMUNITY.

THE FBI ALSO OPENED AND CLOSED AN ASSESSMENT ON THE SHOOTER, ESSENTIALLY LETTING THE SHOOTER GO HARASSING, ENTRAPPING, AND PROSECUTING PEACEFUL PROTESTORS WAS A HIGHER PRIORITY TO THE FBI, CSPD & THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY THAN KEEPING OUR COMMUNITY SAFE FROM A KNOWN TERRORIST.



# "TOUGH ON CRIME"

EVERY TIME ELECTIONS ROLL AROUND, AMERICANS ARE SUBJECTED TO THE SAME MEDIA CIRCUS ...



REPUBLICANS ACCUSE DEMS OF BEING "SOFT ON CRIME"



AND DEMS REACT BY RAMPING UP THEIR "TOUGH ON CRIME RHETORIC" TO PROVE THAT THEY'RE NOT WEAK



FOR EVERYDAY FOLX, THIS TRANSLATES AS MORE POLICING WITH HARSHER SENTENCES & LESS SERVICES

ALL THIS IS TO ENSURE THAT COPS FULFILL THEIR TRUE PURPOSE...

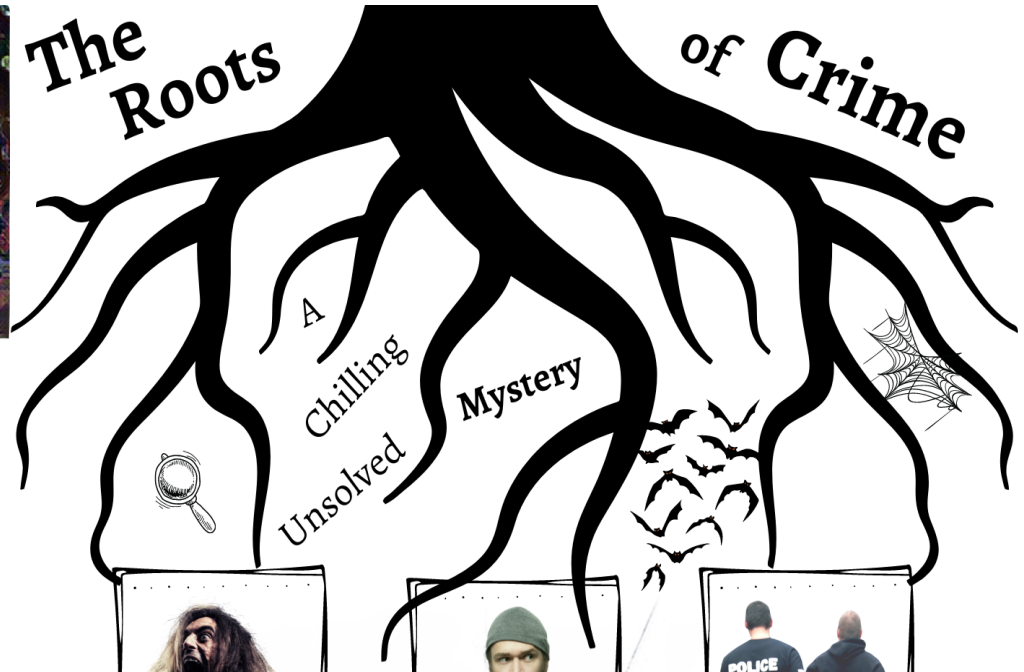
... TO PROTECT THE PROFITS OF THE WEALTHY AS THEY CONTINUE TO EXPLOIT AND OPPRESS THE WORKING CLASS & THE POOR



COPS EXIST TO DEFEND PROPERTY, NOT PEOPLE

IN THE EYES OF THOSE THAT RULE THE WORLD, WE ARE ALL DISPOSABLE

# The Roots of Crime



Some say that those who commit crimes are deviants, born and raised bad, a burden on society...



...irredeemable fools who make bad choice after bad choice, too lazy to work for their keep...



... and that the only thing society can do is lock them up and throw away the key.

The truth is actually scarier than fiction

Read on if you dare...

