

A mile a minute....
that is how fast your child can disappear



A MESSAGE FROM MARC

Rising crime rates and kidnapped children are in the news once more. After nearly 20 years of declining crime rates, incidents of violent and property crime are again rising throughout the United States.

In Cleveland, Ohio, a defining moment occurred when Amanda Berry escaped from the house where she and two other victims had been imprisoned for more than a decade. But more recent searches for missing autistic children in California and Florida ended in the heartbreak of tragedy. This raises the question, is enough being done to protect autistic children from harm?

Here in California matters are even worse. Violent crime has increased 4%, more than twice the national rate, while the rise in property crime is six times higher at 9%, according to an FBI report on national and state crimes over the first six months of 2012. In April 2011, California's Legislature and Governor Jerry Brown announced that the state would no longer take

responsibility for criminals convicted of roughly 500 of what they defined as "low level" felonies, such as assault, spousal abuse, commercial burglary, drug dealing, identity theft, and auto theft. This decision is embodied in AB 109, Governor Brown's "realignment" initiative that forced counties to take responsibility for even the most violent criminals.

As a result, repeat felons are being cyclically arrested and released much earlier and with much less supervision than previously. This pattern is allowed to continue until they commit a violent or serious crime such as rape, robbery, aggravated assault, or murder, leaving a terrible trail of death and

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A MESSAGE FROM MARC

destruction in their wake. I think there is little doubt that the state's abnegation of its responsibility has a great deal to do with the FBI's 2012 statistics.

Once before, in the early 1990s, California experienced a crime epidemic. The chance of being violently victimized was at historic levels, and criminals were being recycled through the criminal justice system at breakneck speed. The October 1, 1993, kidnapping of my 12-year-old daughter Polly was one of the most high-profile crimes during that time. Her case first commanded national attention and then inspired criminal justice reform.

We were fortunate that other factors were also in play during the same period. The Republican Party's Contract with America, introduced six weeks before the mid-term election, promised truth-in-sentencing and effective death penalty reform as top priorities. President Clinton was promoting a massive crime bill that promoted criminal accountability, prevention funds for at-risk youth, and 100,000 more cops on the street. In California the Three-Strikes-And-You're-Out movement picked up momentum and eventually passed.

The results of these efforts were profound. According to the same study, by 2012 you were half as likely to be the victim of a violent crime as you were in 1993. Unfortunately, the pendulum swings both ways – and this new initiative is sending us straight back to the 1990s.

Californians were conned into returning more than 3,000 hardened criminals into society when they overturned the very effective Three-Strikes-And-You're-Out Law.

The KlaasKids Foundation is joining with other concerned organizations and individuals to put a ballot measure on the 2014 ballot that will overturn AB 109 and restore public safety as a governmental priority. This effort will not be as simple as overturning the current law because there are now many moving parts that need to be reconciled including: the definition of certain violent, serious and non-sexual crimes, the re-hiring of State parole agents, and California's ability to comply with prison population requirements. If there is one thing that the last 20 years have taught us, it is that continuous vigilance is if anything more important, not less. Please support our effort to keep our worst offenders in prison.

In this issue, we also hear from a police officer who was concerned that autistic children were falling through the safety net, and he set out to do something about it. Nearly half of all children with autism run away and potentially go missing at least once before their 17th birthdays, according to a study by the American Academy of Pediatrics. Of those who run away, many will be found dead. In 2012, 195 autistic children went missing, according to the National Autism Association (NAA), which tracks the disappearances reported by the media. ■

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PLAYING THE KIDNAP SUPER LOTTO - AND WINNING

On Monday, May 6, 2013, Amanda Berry escaped from the house where she had been imprisoned for more than a decade. This heroic action set off a series of events that have changed the face of kidnapping forever.



Amanda Berry

The miracle in Cleveland is akin to winning the kidnap super lotto! Victims Amanda, Gina DeJesus, and Michelle Knight are apparently healthy. All have been released from the hospital; have returned home to their families or into seclusion, away from the glare of cameras and the probing questions of aggressive reporters. They have expressed their thanks and gratitude, and they have asked for privacy as they attempt to heal from the sadistic torment and torture inflicted upon them at the hands of a despicable monster. We should all honor their wishes, step back and hope that they are able to successfully reenter a world that has rushed past them at breakneck speed.

The defining moment, the one that changed everything for the three young women and little girl who were recently rescued from Ariel Castro's dilapidated hovel in Cleveland, occurred when Amanda took advantage of her first opportunity to escape. Facilitating her rescue and that of her fellow prisoners demonstrated remarkable courage and poise. Had Amanda failed to achieve

her goal, her prospects would have been grim and terrifying at best.

Instead, with the help of hometown hero Charles Ramsey, she was able to say the words that continue to reverberate around the world, "I'm Amanda Berry. I've been kidnapped and I've been missing for ten years, and I'm here now. Now I'm free!!!"

Amanda found something profound stirring in her soul that parents should be discussing with their young children. She found the will to power. Her desire to live on her own terms, and not those of her tormentor, catapulted her through the broken door and into the light. Castro was bigger and stronger than Amanda. He controlled through fear, torture, and intimidation, but she was more intelligent and patient; and her desire to be free ultimately trumped his iron-fisted control.

Midsi Sanchez also had the will to power. In 2000, after nearly three days of being chained inside her kidnapper's car in Northern California, seven-year-old Midsi was able to free herself and make a frantic run for freedom. It was subsequently discovered that he had kidnapped and killed children

prior to snatching Midsi off the street, so her courage and grace under pressure not only saved her own life, but also the lives of countless future victims.



Midsi Sanchez

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HELPING AUTISTIC CHILDREN STAY SAFE

I had hit a dead end and couldn't figure out what to do.

It was supposed to be a routine safety presentation to the Autistic Society of the Panhandle in Pensacola, Florida. But I soon learned there was a major communications problem facing law enforcement officers.

During the meeting, a mother said she was concerned how her autistic son, who is non-verbal, would be handled if approached by an officer and was taken into custody. She wondered what we would do if he couldn't identify himself.

I suggested she get a medical alert bracelet, but she said her son won't wear anything on his arms or wrists. Then I suggested some type of ID hanging around his neck, but another parent spoke up and said her son wouldn't wear anything around his neck.

I pressed forward. How about shoe strings that can have a name and phone number printed on them? A third parent said her son won't wear shoe laces.

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PLAYING THE KIDNAP SUPER LOTTO - AND WINNING *Continued from Page 3*

In 2006, 14-year-old Elizabeth Shoaf was kidnapped while walking home from the school bus. She was forced into an underground bunker where she was held prisoner for ten days. This remarkable teenager outsmarted and outfoxed the monster who took her, directing authorities to her underground prison. When the kidnapper realized that he was being pursued by watching the news on a battery-powered television in the bunker, he actually asked Elizabeth for advice. She told him to run away, leaving her to step through the hatch into the light.



Elizabeth Shoaf

Jeanette Tamayo was only nine years old when a sexual predator pummeled her brother and mother and then kidnapped her from her

home in 2003. Within two days, she gained his trust, and then convinced him that she had asthma and a contagious disease. When he let her go he didn't realize that she had taken trinkets with his fingerprints on them. The authorities arrested him hours later.



Jeanette Tamayo

Not all these cases made national headlines, but the stories are huge. Parents should be talking to their children about these kids who used intelligence and courage to defeat brute force, fear, and intimidation. In each case, a young girl or woman became the mistress of her own destiny. They stayed within their abilities and took advantage of opportunities that allowed them to triumph over evil. Because they were able to dig deep down inside, these girls beat the devil and earned the right to say, "Now I'm free!!!" ■

HELPING AUTISTIC CHILDREN STAY SAFE

I left the meeting that night knowing it was incumbent upon law enforcement officers to come up with something to help these non-verbal citizens. These special individuals have different needs, and each of those needs is unique to that person's personality.

The next day, it hit me. With computers in every police cruiser, we should have a picture database of local autistic children available to all officers on the street.

With that, the idea for the "Take Me Home" program was born. I ran the idea by my chief, John W. Mathis, in the Pensacola Police Department, and without hesitation he said to "run with it." I then contacted Shane Lincke from a local law enforcement software company called SmartCop and we put the program together.

So how does "Take Me Home" work? Actually, it's very simple. In each participating community, parents are asked to fill out a database form and submit a photo of their child. This information is accessible from patrol cars, so that when an officer comes across a child who is non-verbal or autistic, they can query the database to locate the information needed to return them home.

We started off by contacting local Florida organizations and explaining how the program works. Then, we attended meetings and took pictures of everyone who completed a "Take Me Home" information form or had one completed for them. This covers personal data, contact information, physical description, and so on.

Pictures and information were then entered into the program and the program downloaded into laptop computers in the patrol cars. If an officer encounters someone who cannot talk to him/her, the officer can enter a physical

description of the person into the "Take Me Home" program. Pictures that match that description will come up on the screen.

Over the next few months, "Take Me

Home" was tweaked and fine-tuned. We believe we now have a good system to offer to other law enforcement agencies. SmartCop has given the City of Pensacola the rights to this program and we are giving it away for free to any department that signs an agreement with us. The agreement states that:

1. No one can sell this program to another agency.
2. An agency cannot charge anyone to be entered into the system.
3. The information cannot be entered into a criminal database.

The Pensacola Police Department has already distributed the program to more than 300 agencies throughout the United States, Canada, and England.

In Florida, we have disseminated information on "Take Me Home" through the media and agencies focused on these special needs persons. These include The Center for Autism and Related Disabilities, Area Agency on Aging, Alzheimer's Family Services, Northwest Florida Council on



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WHAT THE CALIFORNIA ADMINISTRATION IS NOT TELLING YOU

Assertions by the California Governor's office that prison realignment, as embodied in AB109, is "not an early release program" are deceptive. California's recent "realignment" changed penalties and the level of parole supervision for most felons convicted after November 1, 2011. It shifted the responsibility for tens of thousands of felons to counties where jails are already filled to capacity, and changed the definition of who qualifies for community service programs. Realignment authorizes the early release of these felons.

Convicted felons now sentenced to county supervision instead of state prisons include:

- Career drug dealers
- Commercial burglars
- Habitual auto and I.D. thieves
- Criminals with long criminal histories including felonies involving assault and firearms

A County Sentence is NOT the same as a State Prison Sentence

Under Penal Code, Section 17.5, a felon sentenced to jail rather than prison may be released early subject to day reporting, electronic monitoring, or any number of non-custodial treatment programs.

Realignment also allows judges to split the sentence of felons so that part of their term may be spent in county jail and part subject to county probation (Section 1170 (h)(5)). When county jails are full, where will the felons go?

Under realignment, parole periods have been slashed from three years to one year. Most parolees will be supervised by county probation instead of the state parole authority. Now, each of



Senator Jim Nielson

the 58 counties must create their own parole system. This makes as much sense as requiring 58 counties to establish their own Department of Motor Vehicles.

Starting July 1, most parole revocation proceedings will be conducted before a judge in county Superior Court where the maximum penalty is 90 days in jail instead of 365 days in prison (pre-realignment). Due to overcrowding of county jails, some counties have not incarcerated parole violators at all. Some criminals who have averted parole revocation have committed horrific crimes, such as [Jerome DeAvila](#) of Stockton, who is now charged with robbing, raping, and murdering his grandmother.

The California Board of Parole Hearings is better equipped than the already overwhelmed superior courts to conduct revocation proceedings. State parole officers have more training in tracking and dealing with habitual and dangerous offenders, especially those who cross county lines. This capability cannot be replicated by each of the 58 counties.

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WHAT THE CALIFORNIA ADMINISTRATION IS NOT TELLING YOU

The U.S. Supreme Court DID NOT Order Realignment

- When realigned felons commit new crimes and citizens are victimized, the California state administration blames realignment on the U.S. Supreme Court ruling. This is a pretext. The U.S. Supreme Court directed the state to fix health care services and reduce prison overcrowding. Again, please note: The U.S. Supreme Court did not order the state to reduce sentences.
- The U.S. Supreme Court did not order the state to shift responsibility for habitual felons to counties.

In fact, the U.S. Supreme Court reviewed a state plan which included already funded plans to add 16,000 new cells at existing prisons. These plans and projects to convert unused juvenile facilities for adult use have been largely abandoned by the Brown Administration. The Governor signed legislation to reverse bond authorization for new prison facilities – preferring to dump the problem on counties.

Passing the Buck to Counties; It's Your Problem Now

Californians are not benefitting under realignment. Not only are crime rates up, but so are taxes under the Governor's realignment plan.

Lawsuits costing the state billions of dollars now will begin to be filed against counties. Counties do not have the resources or the facilities to handle the multitude of services ordered by the courts to accommodate long-term inmates. The counties of Fresno and Riverside, for example, are currently facing lawsuits from inmates for not providing adequate services. Other counties will soon face similar costly lawsuits.

Governor Brown justifies realignment based upon his belief that crime is a local problem. As the Governor explained to the *Sacramento Bee*: "I can tell you this: Some counties do better than other counties, and the challenge here is that locking people up at state expense is a free good when people have a problem with criminal activity, and now we're saying, 'No, you have to handle criminal activity where you are.'" ■

HELPING AUTISTIC CHILDREN STAY SAFE



Owen Black, 8 years old
Missing autistic boy found deceased.

Aging, Association for Retarded Citizens, and Deaf and Hard of Hearing of Northwest Florida.

"Take Me Home" is not limited to these organizations, of course: It can be adapted to assist missing persons, young and old, suffering from many types of disabilities and health problems, from autism to Alzheimer's. For more information on "Take Me Home," please contact Sergeant Jimmy Donohoe at the Pensacola Police Department, at 850-436-5416. ■

WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT TO CONTINUE OUR FIGHT

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to the KlaasKids Foundation Today.*

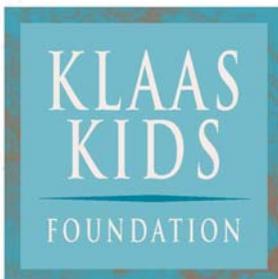
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