

Matchmaker

A matchmaker applies her craft to crime and punishment.

Auntie Aasiya proudly put down her phone. She would be on the next plane to Philadelphia. To imagine, that Philadelphia's District Attorney had requested her services, offering a very high retainer. And a high daily expenses rate, the job expected to last several months! And paid in cash! The DA's assistant, who spoke Hindi in a perfect Awadhi accent heaped praise on her, saying that he had several friends and relatives who had found each other thanks to her wonderful services. She was so flattered, she succumbed to the request, without even asking for any details of the type of match anticipated. The DA had simply said that her services would be required for a period of several months, possibly longer, to help in a major project for the city, designed to improve the DA's dedication to implementing a fair and just criminal justice system. All he would say was that she would be key to helping the poor and weak who were caught up in the criminal justice system.

"How soon can you come?" asked the DA's assistant.

"I have one case almost tied up. I should say in one week," answered Aasiya (let's call her Auntie for short as everyone else did). "I will have to speak with my husband of 35 years first."

"That's no problem. We will pay for him to come with you, if that is necessary."

"Oh, thank you. That will make it much easier for me to get away, especially if it is for a long time."

Auntie had no idea what she would be getting into. The idea was the brainchild of Deputy District Attorney Ace Hole, a recent graduate of the influential University of Pennsylvania Law School, whose job it was to work with prosecutors and defense attorneys to hammer out sentences of a range of felons, usually through the practice of plea bargaining. As most know, plea bargaining, an informal practice discovered and incorporated into the criminal justice system in the 1970s, is used to short-circuit trials, to get

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the prosecution and the defense to agree ahead of an expected trial, for the offender to “plea” (a word rich in meaning, that’s for sure) guilty to usually a lesser offense for which he was charged, thus avoiding the expense of a lengthy trial. Unfortunately, there are many distasteful side effects of this practice. There is the temptation for prosecutors to over-charge the defendant, to make sure he gets a punishment that matches the crime for which he is charged. But in these situations the defendant is often forced to plead guilty to a crime he did not commit. The resultant sentence (the punishment pronounced) is thus an abstract assessment of his guilt, only indirectly of the crime he is supposed to have committed. Even worse, it increases the possibility that the offender will plead guilty even if he has committed no crime at all, in instances where prosecutors and their collaborators, the police, know he is innocent of the crime, or forced a false confession from the defendant.

But that is only the half of it. The actual range of punishment that is available is minimal, especially for “serious crimes” (generally referred to as “felonies”) for which fines or probation are considered no match. Prison is the central and only punishment available, and the bargaining can go on for weeks or more over how much prison the offender should plead to via the DA manipulating the crime for which the offender will plead guilty, regardless of the supposed original offense. For example, a DA may reduce the charge of first degree murder (intentional killing) to one of manslaughter (less intentional killing) if the offender agrees to plead guilty to the latter, usually in the circumstances where the DA is not sure she has a good enough case to get a guilty verdict on the first degree murder.

This system of make-believe justice has been criticized by experts for many years, but the fact that it is so functional, makes it possible to process so many offenders more quickly, and perhaps most important, dispenses with the need of expensive and lengthy jury trials. Probably over ninety per cent of cases in the USA and elsewhere in the Western world, are decided in this way. One is not found guilty by a jury of one’s peers. Rather, one is found guilty by a bargain reached between the prosecutor and defense, with a helpless client stuck in the middle.

How would Auntie Aasiya fit into this rigid system that nobody

in theory wants, but with which all comply? Auntie's expertise lies in matching two people, often strangers to each other, even until the day of the marriage. The expectation (and the statistics bear this out) that the two, once married will stay together for a lifetime, their personalities and preferences and hopes a perfect match, as they say. Auntie was proud of her record of matches. The majority of them stayed together for at least ten years, many for a lifetime, or close to it.

Auntie was whisked away from Philadelphia airport in the DA's personal limousine, and deposited at the apartment reserved for her in Society Hill, not far from center city, and just around the corner to the original site of American Justice, Independence Hall.

Now before we get into the complexities of matching crime and punishment under the newly conceived idea of Ace Hole, a little background is necessary concerning how punishments have been matched to their crimes in recent history. In a duel, for example, the punisher is the victim of a dishonorable insult, and the offender is the one who offends. This is a perfect case of matching the punisher to the offender. The match is, however, one that runs the risk of an awful injustice. If one of the duelists is a crack shot, the other not so good, and if the crack shot is the offender, then there is a good chance that a serious injustice may be done: the offender may shoot, even kill, the punisher (i.e., victim). The victim of the insult is victimized twice over. And of course, being punished by shooting for a mere insult is obviously a failure to match the offense to the punishment. The serious flaw in the duel is that there is no dispassionate third party who has any authority at all to make sure that everything matches: the offender and his offense to the victim and his suffering, and finally to the choice of a punishment that matches the seriousness of the offense.

"That's why we have a modern system of criminal justice," you are no doubt thinking. Unfortunately, although superficially it looks as though that is the answer to this difficult problem, today it falls a long way short. For serious crimes (felonies, let's say, though that is also an overly simple term), there is only one punishment that is made to fit all crimes: prison. The third party, the judge, dreams up, guided roughly by a criminal code, what amount of prison, months, days, years, is equal to what kind of

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serious offense. To give you an example of the impossibility of matching carefully a punishment to a crime; if an offender commits two murders, he obviously cannot in actual fact serve two life sentences—though judges routinely deliver such impossibly matching sentences. You see the point.

An alternative, sometimes allowed in Islamic systems, is when the victim may approve or even carry out the punishment (including the death penalty), or forgive the offender completely, or settle for a monetary amount. But again, if it is left totally to the victim to match the punishment to the crime, forgiving a murder, that is, letting the offender go scot free, fails to match the crime to the punishment.

These and many other very difficult problems of matching punishment to crime are the reasons why Ace Hole and his collaborators have embarked on this history making solution: to focus entirely on matching the punisher, via a third party who is likely more dispassionate, as is a matchmaker of marriages, to the criminal and his crime. The focus is on the criminal as the primary ingredient of determining the punishment, and the seriousness of the crime only secondarily. And it was deputy DA Ace Hole, recently appointed by the new woke progressive DA of Philadelphia, who, having followed all instructions of the DA never to prosecute burglaries or any thefts; the argument being that it is unjust for some people to be richer than others, so it is only right that those who have not, take from those who have. This principle, of course, does not apply to crimes of violence (though there are some extremists who would indeed apply the injustice rule to these crimes as well). In any case, without the necessity to prosecute “property crimes” as they used to be called, the DA office found itself with lots of time on its hands. Hence, at a three martini lunch, as they called it many years ago when corporate executives had that luxury, Ace Hole came up with his idea of using a matchmaker from India to establish a system of matching punishers to offenders. It started out as a joke, but the next day it appeared on the morning’s agenda meeting as a serious project.

Auntie Aasiya insisted on bringing her husband to her first meeting with the DA. She had heard so many stories of men in government preying on women in America, she was taking no chances. The limo picked them up at 10 am, and whisked them

the to the DA's office, passing Independence Square, the Liberty Bell and the rest. "This is a very important place," said her husband. "It is where America gained its independence, and they did it much before India. It is a very great country." The driver smiled and nodded his assent.

Auntie Aasiya clutched her satchel to her breast. She was a little nervous. This was something entirely new. Why would they want a matchmaker, no matter how good she was? Maybe the DA's son or daughter was looking for a match? She leaned forward and called to the driver, "is the DA Indian, perhaps? Mr. Hole, certainly does not sound like an Indian name."

"No Ma'am. He born and bred in America. White as they come, you know." Auntie leaned further forward. She saw that the driver was African American and couldn't help turning up her nose just a little. The driver, fortunately, was watching the traffic, so did not see. The traffic was jammed up, road work on one of the side streets. They were on Twelfth Street, just below Market Street, and her husband shouted, "look! There's an Irish pub." The limo pulled up right outside it.

Auntie and hubby sat still.

"This is your stop. They're all waiting for you in there," said the limo driver with a smirk.

"This is 3 Penn Square?" asked Auntie.

"Not likely, Ma'am. But it's where Holey likes to have his early morning meetings, away from the media, you know."

"Holey? That's how you pronounce his name?" asked Auntie.

"Ah, no. I've known him for a long time, so I call him that 'cos we're friends, you know," the driver answered with a hint of mystery. "You better get out on the curb side. You'll get run down if you get out on the road side." He made no effort to open the door for his puzzled passengers.

"Lucky I brought you with me," muttered Auntie to her husband as she slid out of the car and on to the sidewalk. Thankfully, Ace Hole emerged from the Irish Pub and held out his hand to assist her.

"Ace Hole at your service, Doctor Aasiya, I believe?" said Hole with a very large grin. His rather dark complexion, probably of southern Italian ancestors, though could be taken as Indian heritage somewhere in the distant past, pleased Auntie. He was

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close enough to be like her, that is, her light almost white complexion that was the envy of all her Indian friends. “So pleased to meet you, Doctor Hole, and this is my husband.”

“Welcome to Philadelphia, the city of sibling love,” announced Hole bowing a little. “We are very much looking forward to learning all your secrets of successful matchmaking.”

“I will do my best.”

Hole led the way into the gloom of the Irish pub, empty of customers this time of the morning, but with an attentive bartender, and a few secretaries and hangers on. Already, they all held a glass of Guinness in their hands. The pub manager had set up a large round table for them to sit at.

“Can I get you a Guinness?” asked Hole.

“It is fortunate that I am not a strictly practicing Hindu, or I would have been shocked at this venue. They don’t drink alcohol, you know. It’s the one thing that India refused to take on from the British invaders. However, it is too early in the day for me to take alcohol. I must keep my mind clear, for matchmaking is a demanding intellectual task.”

“Be assured, Auntie—may I call you that?”

“Of course,” answered Auntie, though a little offended by this presumption of intimacy.

“We did our homework, Auntie. We know all about you. And we are very impressed by your accomplishments and success in your business.”

Auntie smiled politely and looked sideways to see that her husband already had a large glass of Guinness in his hand. He was very much at home, having done his Ph.D. in economics at Oxford.

“Then let’s get down to business,” continued Hole, raising his glass of Guinness. “To matchmaking.”

Auntie lifted her bulging satchel on to the table and withdrew her wads of notes.

Ace Hole addressed the participants, many curious, some trying hard to hide a smirk.

“The DA claims to want a “woke” administration, and I am justifying this unusual approach to criminal sentencing as the logical outcome of that. It can’t be achieved simply by not prosecuting crimes, as is now the policy for all property crimes and misde-

meanors. Serious crimes must be punished. We all get that. There's no way around it. But how can we do it in a progressive manner, a way that replaces, hopefully completely, the shockingly complicated, unjust system of sentencing and punishment of criminals in this woke world?"

All around the table nodded seriously and took a swig of their glasses of Guinness. Hole continued.

"A few weeks ago we came up with what we think is a promising solution. Instead of matching punishments to crimes, the traditional method that we know is impossible in most cases, if not all cases, why not match the punishment to the criminal, rather than to his or her crime or crimes. Then we realized that we should, if we are to be consistent, match the punisher whoever that will be, to the criminal. Thus, the matching punishment should emerge from a perfectly matched coupling."

Hole looked around the table. "Are you all with me on that?" he asked.

Auntie shifted in her seat and flipped through a wad of notes.

"I see no problem in using my method," she said, "which is, simply, draw up a list of preferred characteristics of the one, and match them to the same or responsive characteristics to the other. Of course, there will be some disagreements and we rarely get a perfect match, but we should be able to get close. Of course, the list of characteristics would, I should think, be very different from those for marriage match making. The relationship between a criminal and his punisher is hardly a marriage, if you see what I mean. Though, I would want to know whether you see the punishment to be one that continues over a lifetime, or long period. If so, some of the characteristics of marriageability may carry over."

This was a rather long speech so early in the morning, and as well, Auntie's heavy Indian accent made understanding her difficult. And it didn't help that she spoke so quickly. Several of the assistants, just out of law school, had to shake their heads to keep themselves awake. Auntie's husband retired to the bar and sat on a stool, sipping his Guinness, chatting with the Irish bartender, or was she English?

"Could we see what your lists look like?" asked Hole.

Auntie rummaged around in her over stuffed satchel, and

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finally withdrew a handful of dog-eared pages. “Here’s one I used recently for a very successful match of a very shy little girl of eighteen and a large rotund man of thirty three, meek but cuddly. On the face of it you would think they would not match from a physical point of view.”

“How did you determine he was cuddly?” asked Hole.

“That is part of my personal magic. I have a gift to see through the characters of my clients,” answered Auntie proudly.

“Yes, it’s her special talent,” called out her husband from the bar with a proud grin.

“I also found out about his character from his big sister,” added Auntie.

“It sounds as though we would have to give this task to a social worker. We have lots of them anyway. I always wondered what they do, so it will be good to have them make themselves useful,” observed Hole with authority. “And the lists, Dr. Aasiya?”

“I am getting to that,” said Auntie.

Auntie laid out her lists on the table, then glanced around the room, a serious look on her face. “The list is very long, so I will only give general indications of what I consider to be the basic, or essential characteristics to be considered. First, and probably the most important, the caste must match. You do not have this here, I know, but you have something like it. I have friends and relatives in Philadelphia, so I can give some examples. In general, race must be considered as a primary characteristic. A black offender from West Philadelphia public housing should be matched to the same for the punisher.”

Hole interrupted. “Even if the victim is white from the Main Line?”

“That is not for me to say. I am just showing how my methods might be applied to your situation. “Next, how big a dowry will the punisher put up?”

“But we don’t do that here,” complained Hole with a frown. Besides, how could that apply to punishing the offender?” He looked around the table waiting for one of his assistants to contribute. A young fresh law graduate raised his finger.

“Instead of a dowry, the would-be punisher who is also the victim can be compensated by us, according to how much he or she has suffered,” suggested the graduate with confidence.

“Worth considering,” said Hole.

“I should have said,” responded Auntie, “that the same principle applies to gender. If a male offender, it must be a female punisher. Of course, I do not do same sex matchmaking.”

“And this applies even if the sex of the offender is the same as that of the victim?” asked Hole, tapping his fingers on the table.

“Again, that is up to you people to decide, though I would suggest that the same sex victim find a surrogate punisher of another sex. Now comes the next most important factor I consider, and I would think it is very relevant to your situation. When the one gets into an argument, or feels wronged by someone (usually a relative but that’s probably not relevant here), is she or he able to forgive? How caring are they? How spiteful are they? How vengeful? How resentful? Do they have nice happy thoughts most of the time, or do they think dark, unhappy thoughts?”

The law graduate who had spoken was now engaged. “So you would match opposites here, male-female, caring-uncaring, and so on.”

“That is exactly what I advise,” answered Auntie with a big smile.

“Excuse me,” called a voice from the bar, “but you have talked about the offender and the punisher, but what does the punisher do, exactly, what is the punishment and how is it determined?” The room fell silent. The Irish bartender grinned. The voice was that of Auntie’s husband, a clear, perfectly pitched voice, beautifully clipped, the wonderful sound of an Oxford accent. So clever, knowledgeable, and wise.

Auntie smiled and looked back at him, then around the table. “That’s my husband. Isn’t he marvelous? He has a doctorate in Economic Deprivation from Oxford, you know. I call him Hubby and you may do so too.”

“Pleased to meet you all,” said Hubby. “You should read my award winning dissertation on How Deprivation Benefits the Poor. Many of your offenders are poor, I presume.”

“They certainly are,” answered Hole, “but we are doing a lot to change all that. In fact, we no longer prosecute any crimes that are committed by those who have less than \$100,000 in assets.”

“That is a good beginning,” said Auntie with enthusiasm.

Hole continued. “The trouble is that we have only prisons, amounts thereof, to use as a punishment for serious crimes. So the punisher does not have much to choose from. Only differing amounts of prison, essentially.”

“Then you need to balance this off with the contrasting characteristics of the punisher-offender relationship,” said Auntie, “if you will excuse my rather clinical language.”

“That’s right,” said Hole, “a rich punisher gets to prescribe a small prison sentence if the offender is poor and vice versa. We can construct a formula that adjusts the prison sentence to the difference between assets of the punisher and the offender.”

The law graduate stirred excitedly. “This will revolutionize sentencing guidelines,” he chirped.

The entire group erupted into engaged discussion. Auntie had no idea what sentencing guidelines were, but obviously they were something very important to her audience. She got up ready to leave and looked around for Hubby, but he was nowhere to be found. Nor was the bartender.

“He’s fallen for her accent!” Auntie muttered to herself.

“What was that?” asked Hole. “We didn’t quite get that.”

“My apologies,” said Auntie, forcing a smile, “I see that Hubby has left for better things,” so now I can say what I want to say.”

“But we are open to all suggestions and ideas,” urged Hole. “We have open minds here.” The rest of the group muttered their assent.

Auntie rummaged in her satchel once again, and finally pulled out a notebook that itself bulged with press clippings and notes scrawled on every page. “This is a case study that I have prepared to present to you. I was unsure whether to do so, but now that I am assured of your open mindedness, I will take the chance.”

“Do tell us,” said Hole.

Auntie passed out a bunch of press clippings. “No doubt you have all heard of Philadelphia’s most infamous rapist, kidnapper and serial killer, Gary M. Heidnick. Apart from his long criminal career of violence, during the period 1986 through 1987, he kidnapped six women, held them chained in his basement raped and tortured them, and killed two of them through starvation or

denial of medical care. They were all African American. Of course, he was white.”

“The younger people here may not know of this case. I certainly do,” said Hole. He was finally executed for his murders on July 6, 1999, by lethal injection.”

“I ask you,” said Auntie, “how would a matchmaker deal with this offender? All he did, the kidnapping, raping, torture and two murders. And all you have available to you in the present day is prison. And even the death penalty is not enough, don’t you think, since he, apart from killing one person, killed another and tortured and kidnapped others. If you added up the legislated punishments for all those crimes they come to several life in prison terms and two death penalties. Yet he can only be killed once, and only serve one life sentence.”

Suddenly, the group came to life. The group as one stirred uncomfortably in their chairs. The law graduate, proud of his legal knowledge of the Pennsylvania criminal code, said, “it is what it is. The Pennsylvania criminal code lists the possible punishments, the judge has discretion—depending on sentencing guidelines—and determines the most appropriate punishment.”

“Who cares about sentencing guidelines? I have no idea what they are. But as the matchmaker, I do care about matching the punishment to the criminal. Note here: it is matching to the criminal, not the crimes,” lectured Auntie with authority

“Yes, but who or what are you matching to the offender? “complained someone.

“Who does the matchmaker represent? I think we are asking you, Auntie,” responded Hole.

“Exactly the question,” said Auntie with satisfaction. The big difference between match making in marriage and in punishing criminals is that in most cases, when I match husband to wife, they are strangers to each other. Often, they have not even met until the day of the wedding. It is therefore crucial that I have worked out the best match, because they will spend the rest of their lives together. Also, I only work with one side, usually the parents of either a son or daughter. In this case of Heidnick, I represent all the victims as one.”

Auntie hesitated, waiting for a response or disagreement.

“Go on,” urged Hole.

“The fact is that once the criminal has attacked the victim, the victim is no longer a stranger. Her identity becomes entwined with her offender. It is up to the match maker to unravel this forced relationship. One that, you might say, dropped from the sky, like a huge stone from Hell.”

“Oh, I see what you are getting at,” said the law graduate. “It’s another version of restorative justice. Where the identities of each, the offender and victim are brought together and they learn to understand the suffering of each other. They reach an accord, a mutual understanding.”

Auntie stared at him and then saw a number of the younger individuals nodding with approval. “Bakavaas!” she cried, lapsing into her Hindi tongue, “Poppycock!” I never heard such nonsense!”

The room suddenly erupted, all talking at once.

“OK! Quiet down, now!” called Hole. “One at a time.”

A middle aged woman, a sad and sorry face, heavily lined, probably serially divorced, raised her hand.

“Yes, Barbara, what is it?” Hole spoke as if she were going to ask if she could go to the bathroom.

“I have devoted my life to social work and will not sit here and listen to this drivel. There’s no serious difference between offender and victim. They both are responsible for the crimes. They are an essential part of the crime. In fact the crime could not occur without a victim, willing or unwilling. That is why restorative justice makes sense. The offender and victim are treated as equals.”

The room now became hushed. Auntie fingered her notes. “As they say,” she said sarcastically, “I will take that under advisement. In the meantime, let me finish, for I have only just got started.”

Hole leaned forward over the table and looked around the room. All eyes were on him, expecting him to intervene and shut this dreadful matchmaker up. But he said nothing.

Just then, Hubby reappeared from behind the bar, his hair a little ruffled, the bartender stepping forward. “Anyone for another Guinness?” she asked. All raised their hands.

“Coming right up!”

Auntie continued. “As the victims’ representative, here is

what I would suggest as a procedure to match the needs of the victims and the unwanted reciprocal relationship they have with the offender.”

“We are all ears,” countered the social worker.

“Let us list some of the things Heidnick did to his victims. One, he kidnapped them and chained them helpless, in his basement. Two, he administered electric shock to them in a bathtub, killing one of them. Three, he raped them at will. Four, he starved them, denied medical attention. Five, he tortured them in many ways.”

“But why go into all this?” asked Hole, impatiently. “He got the death penalty which is what he deserved. Case closed.”

“But that only accounts for one killing, does it not? Besides, he was put to death without pain. How does that match what he did to his victims?” countered Auntie.

“Auntie, if I may call you that,” said a group member, this time the group’s sociologist, a tall thin fellow with a tiny razor thin moustache, “I would like to go back to your original proposition, that victims are strangers to their offenders until they are victimized. We know that close to 70 percent of all assault victims know their assailants, usually family members, relatives or friends. So your basic premise does not hold.”

“A mere detail, and I compliment you on your attempt to avert this embarrassing discussion away from its proper focus,” countered Auntie. “It matters not whether the victim knew his or her offender. If they did, then I insist that the transformation works the other way around. Once formally victimized, that is, designated a victim by the criminal justice system, then the victim becomes a stranger to that offender even if he or she was known to the victim. In fact, it is important that the identity of stranger to offender be groomed and exalted, for without that distance, it becomes very difficult for the victim to comply with a match-maker’s recommendations: that is, to match the pain of the punishment as closely as possible the pains that the victim has experienced at the hands of the offender.”

The group fell silent. Auntie looked around the room, her eyes met quickly with Hubby’s and moved on. Hubby for his part, sipped his Guinness and did his best to convey to Auntie his approval and support. Auntie continued.

“What I am going to say now,” said Auntie, a very serious frown on her face, “is going to upset some of you. I simply ask that you bear with me, and try hard to put aside your prejudices that favor the so-called enlightened morality of Western civilization, of which I am sure all in this room believe the USA is the shining beacon.”

Hole sat back in his chair and nodded approval. All eyes looked down at the table. What terrible thing could a matchmaker from India say that would upset this well-educated, progressive and tolerant group?

Auntie shuffled her papers some more then looked around at the group. She had prepared them well, and addressed them in her best Indian Oxford accent that she had learned from Hubby.

“Now, we have already acknowledged that one life in prison is nowhere near a match to the six kidnappings, tortures and two murders. But we can enrich the offender’s experience of prison with a slow but methodical application of the pains that reflect what the victims felt and what the offender did. Here, now, is my list of recommended pains.

“One. He chained his victims to the wall of his basement. So he shall be chained to his prison cell for six years, one year for each victim chained.

“Two. He tortured all six with electric shock. So he shall receive severe electric shocks to his genitals once a month. That will give him something to look forward to. Of course, the applications will be supervised by both a qualified medical practitioner and electrician.

“Three, he will be fed tasteless mush every other day, and in between days the odor of grilled steak will be fanned into his cell.

“Four, and this is probably the most important and effective. Over the period of his first twenty years in prison, once a year, a piece of his body will be surgically removed. This will begin with the ten fingers followed by ten toes. The victim’s family members will be invited to wield the chopping instrument. Of course, no sedation or anesthetic will be allowed.”

Auntie glanced at Hubby who stood, his mouth open and eyes almost popping out. He could not believe what he heard. He nervously gulped down a big mouthful of Guinness, and his grip tightened on his Irish Bartender’s pliable rump. She, for her part,

thought it all a joke and ruffled his greying hair with her lily-white hand.

“Five...”

Auntie hesitated. It was time to let them interrupt. And she was not disappointed. Ace Hole cleared his throat loudly as he fingered his phone.

“I think we have heard enough,” grumbled Hole. Then he made a very bad blunder. “I don’t know what you people do back in India, but here in America, the bastion of civilization, we do not do such disgraceful things, or even think about them, no matter how awful the offender is.”

Murmurs of agreement fluttered around the table.

But Hole’s words had incensed Hubby. “I’ll have you know that India’s advanced civilization outdates anything you have here, and far surpasses it in its rich traditions and devotions to justice and caring for all people, including all life. In fact, it is a tragedy that the English came and disturbed the blissful tranquility of Indian life.” All of this said in his very best clipped Oxford accent.

Hole was about to both apologize but also chastise Hubby, but Auntie cut him short. “Let us not get sidetracked with accusations and pontifications. I am presenting a case study, it is an example or outline only. I am opening your eyes to what is possible, and to the considerable parameters that are available to you when you allow yourself to think clearly, without prejudice or preconceptions, in order to determine how one may match the punisher’s preferences with the parameters of the offender’s character and his crimes.”

The room fell silent once again. Hole went to speak, but decided against it. The social worker, incensed, got up quietly and left the room. Hubby grabbed some more of the Bartender and they quietly slipped away and out of sight.

Auntie continued. “Five — and this is where we really get to the question of reparations. During his twenty years in prison, he will donate various organs that he can live without, (an eye, a kidney, for example) to save the lives of at least two people, a deed that will make up somewhat for the lives that he brutally extinguished.”

Hole cleared his throat once again. He stood up and leaned

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against the back of his chair. “Doctor Aasiya, you have certainly given us something to think about. You have given us a new way to look at the matching of punishment to crime. I am not sure that...”

“...it would be constitutional to carry out such punishments, even on the worst of the worst criminals.” Auntie finished his sentence for him.

“Yes, precisely,” responded Hole.

Auntie smiled a little and said in her wisest voice, one full of feeling and empathy, “one day, your great Congress will remove the prejudices and blinders built into your constitution by your founding fathers, who, having themselves suffered at the hands of tyrants, failed to confront the injustices of man against man and man against woman.”

Moral: Though imprecise, punishment is the essential measure of justice

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