

Recovering addicts get second chance

The Observer



Chief Justice Zaila McCalla (fourth right, front row), Assistant Commissioner of Police Bishop Dr Gary Welsh (left), Denise Herbol (front row, second right), Mission Director of USAID/COMET II, and Custos of St Ann Norma Walters with 13 of the 15

graduates from the substance abuse treatment programme. The graduation ceremony was held at Cardiff Hall Hotel in St Ann.

FIFTEEN recovering drug addicts have been given a second chance at life after they recently graduated from a substance abuse treatment and rehabilitation programme.

The graduation ceremony, which was recently held at Cardiff Hall Hotel in Runaway Bay, St Ann, was held under the theme, 'Recovery is not an event, but a journey'.

As symbolic as the event was for the graduates — who had travelled from the parishes of Kingston and St Andrew, St Catherine, St Thomas and St James — so too it was for the stakeholders. It was the first ever combined graduation since the inception of the Drug Treatment Court in 2001.

The nine-month rehabilitation programme provides an alternative to incarceration for offenders who have been in contact with the law as a result of substance abuse.

Chief Justice Zaila McCalla, while commending the graduates, said that the aim is to have a Drug Treatment Court in every parish.

“We are in the process of setting up a drug treatment court in Manchester,” McCalla disclosed. She further disclosed that a special Children’s Drug Treatment Programme has already been established at the Kingston and St Andrew Family Court to assist children who are dependent on drugs.

In addition, McCalla expressed gratitude to the many partners who have worked to make the programme a success. They include USAID/COMET II and the Organisation of American States, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Justice, and the Ministry of National Security. McCalla urged the graduates to be strong and courageous.

“... Resist any temptation to resort to use of drugs again. Those who have supported you and are supporting you along the path to recovery, do not let these persons down. Remember that they are still working to assist you even after you have graduated,” she said.

“I encourage you to make the best use of this chance to turn your life around. I wish you well and encourage you to remain drug-free and to live a productive life so that your families, all the judges and health professionals and others who have participated in the programme can remain proud of you,” McCalla said.

Meanwhile, Mission Director for USAID/COMET II Denise Herbol commended Jamaica for being one of the first countries to accept this model for drug treatment.

— Racquel Porter

Deported former Windies cricketer Franklyn Rose tells his story

The Observer



Franklyn Rose (Photo: stlucianewsonline.com)

KINGSTON, Jamaica – Franklyn Rose, a former West Indian pace bowler who was recently deported from New Zealand, expressed disappointment in that country’s immigration system as he recounted the events that led to his

deportation in a news release today from the West Indies Players' Association.

Read: Former Windies cricketer Rose deported from New Zealand

“I need to let people know what really happened, man. I am disappointed in the New Zealand Immigration system. I am very disappointed,” Rose repeated, before recounting being locked up abroad and then deported.

The following is a description of events, recounted by Rose, according to the WIPA release:

Rose commenced his professional contract with New Zealand Cricket playing and coaching at the club level in 2010. He played two years at the club level before his contract ended, with high hopes of retaining a new one. This, however, did not happen for the Jamaican and former West Indian player.

According to Rose, in 2012 he was victim to a traumatic racial assault – one that changed his life forever. Four Caucasian men slurred racially discriminatory words while attacking him in an attempt to steal his car, he said in the release.

“They beat me down. One [guy] missed my head and chopped me on the hand.”

The former cricketer was subsequently admitted to hospital in the Intensive Care Unit for three days before being released prematurely.

“The nurses kicked me out, [they] said they needed to care for other patients. And after a day, my friend had to take me back to the hospital. I was having some serious pains,” Rose said. “The doctors told me I had a blood clot in my lungs and I had nerve damage in my hand.”

His cricket career was seemingly over. And irrespective of his medical condition, Rose said he was once again thrown out of the hospital after three days.

A few days later, Rose said he had to be taken back to the emergency room but the public hospital refused to treat him.

“They thought that I was addicted to drugs or pain medication or something. They knew I was sick though; that I had a blood clot. I ended up going to a private hospital instead,” Rose said. The refusal to treat him, Rose believed, was racially inspired as well. He emphasised that the private hospital fees ranged as high at US\$1,500 a day, which he had to pay out-of-pocket. He was discharged after a week.

“I was prescribed very strong medication – Warfarin. That’s a blood thinner,” Rose said. “I also had internal bleeding in my brain. That meant more hospital fees and medication, and I was advised by the doctors that I could not travel by air.”

He explained that the severity of his health and the intake of these drugs disallowed him from flying back home to Jamaica. Rose said he stayed in New Zealand for another two years, whilst seeing various health specialists per week to assist with his slow recovery.

According to Rose, a week prior to the attack, he had a promising and continuous future playing cricket. The transition to being bedridden with no source of income was both unpredictable and

calamitous. Depression quickly set in and inspired a feeling of hopelessness for the former cricketer, the WIPA release said.

“One morning, the police came knocking on my door. They questioned me about my immigration status and asked for my medical documents. I told them everything and gave them all my documents,” Rose said. “They put me a reporting order. I had to report to the police station every Wednesday at 9:00 am. I did that religiously.”

Rose added: “Everything was OK up until eight weeks ago. The police came to my house at 6:00 am and dragged me out. That was the last time I saw my house.”

The policemen that escorted Rose reportedly told him that he was under investigation for an alleged rape incident.

“I was so confused. I know that it was a lie and they treated me like I was nothing.”

Upon his arrival to the police station, he was questioned once again by the police about his immigration status and then thrown in jail. Rose was then advised that, irrespective of his medical condition, he would be deported due to his overstay.

He was taken to court and allegedly advised by the judge that there were no flights available for his deportation.

“They threw me in prison for 10 days among murderers, rapists and other convicts. It was crazy; I know I didn’t belong there,” Rose said. “I couldn’t get to use the shower. I couldn’t brush my teeth for 10 days and I didn’t even get my medication until after eight days ... I could have died in that cell. I was so depressed.”

On the eleventh day, Rose said he was taken back to court and advised once again that there were no flights available.

“They said I would have to go back to prison for another 28 days. I know for a fact that there were flights to and from New Zealand every day. That was ridiculous,” he said.

Rose recalled his most scarring experience in prison: “I was finally given shower privileges, but no one told me that each shower lasted for only five minutes. They cut off the water while I was soaped up. I had to wash off myself with the water from the toilet.”

Rose explained that he subsequently suffered from blisters and lesions on his skin, but was denied medical attention.

After spending 38 days in prison, he was taken out of his cell and escorted to the airport, Rose said.

“They put me in one of those prison trucks. They treated me like a criminal. When we got to the airport, two armed police guys were behind me the whole time with huge guns.”

Rose said he was then seated at the back of the plane and placed under high security. He was finally going home.

To date, there has been no arrest related to his assault.

“I reported the incident to the police, but because of the colour of my skin they thought I was in a gang or something,” he alleged.

Rose contends that the New Zealand authorities did not treat the matter justly and that it was not properly investigated, adding that his attorney is currently pursuing the case.

However, he believes it is important to recount his story for public information on racial profiling in predominantly Caucasian environments.

“Yeah, I want people to understand my side of the story, to set record straight,” Rose said adding that he is looking forward to his full recovery, enabling him to once again make a contribution to cricket.

“I want to give back to cricket in some way. I’m just glad to be back,” said the former Windies pacer.

Security Guards' Cocaine Trial Deferred To Tomorrow

The Gleaner

Christopher Thomas

Western Bureau:

The highly anticipated trial of the two St James men who were arrested after 66 kilograms of cocaine was allegedly found inside the Guardsman Limited vehicle in which they were travelling on April 20, 2013, has been put off until tomorrow.

Owen Glaze and Andrew Brown were given the new court date and had their bail extended when they appeared in the Montego Bay Resident Magistrate's Court yesterday, because of the absence of one of the attorneys for the defence.

Although the trial was expected to get under way yesterday, the matter had to be put off after it was revealed that the missing attorney was engaged in another matter in the St James Circuit Court.

WITNESS TESTIMONY

Following that revelation, presiding magistrate Natalie Hart-Hines set the case to be heard on April 20, at which time the trial is slated to get under way.

Seven witnesses are expected to give testimony for the prosecution.

Glaze and Brown were arrested on April 20, 2013 by members of the Major Organised Crime and Anti-Corruption Agency, the Transnational Crime and Narcotics Division, and the Jamaica Defence Force during an operation along the Mount Carey main road in St James.

It is alleged that during the police operation, the defendants' vehicle was stopped and searched and cocaine valued at approximately J\$264 million found.

Glaze and Brown were subsequently charged with possession of, dealing in, taking steps to export, and trafficking cocaine.

- christopher.thomas@gleanerjm.com

Wigs Have No Place In Modern Courts

The Gleaner

THE EDITOR, Sir:

I find it puzzling to understand why Jamaican judges and advocates still sport wigs in 2016, a remnant of our colonial past.

The recent ceremonial opening of parliament was no different, where we saw holders of these high offices entering Parliament in wigs and robes.

It is difficult to understand what value these wigs add; they are neither symbolic nor empowering.

The British no longer require the wearing of wigs in some courts, in civil and family cases, although the practice continues in criminal court. In the United Kingdom's highest court, they have ditched the wigs, opting for more modern attire.

This also applies to lawyers appearing before the Judicial Committee of the UK Privy Council. Justices in the UK Supreme Court do not wear legal dress. Australia has also eliminated the practice of wearing wigs at different levels in its legal system. In Commonwealth countries such as India, Pakistan, Canada, and South Africa, they have also stopped wearing wigs.

Why then, do countries in Africa and the Caribbean, part of the British Commonwealth, continue with this outdated practice of wearing the blond wig? Ironically these are countries with predominantly black populations. I just don't get it. As an independent nation, I find the look humiliating and backward. It also looks silly.

P. CHIN

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Noise Pollution Violates Our Rights

The Gleaner

Although, on the books, our citizens are protected by the Constitution and the Noise Abatement Act, the people who 'eat a food' (make a living) through loud events see it as their God-given right to do they choose to do to earn money.

Consequently, several open-air night clubs, sessions, dances and (commercial) parties disturb innumerable others by blaring 'music' at any hour of any day for however long they please.

The Constitution of Jamaica, Chapter III (Fundamental Rights and Freedoms of the Individual), states: "Whereas every person in Jamaica is entitled to the fundamental rights and freedoms of

the individual ... to each and all of the following, namely life, liberty, security of the person, the enjoyment of property and the protection of the law"

Noisy Instrument

And, the Noise Abatement Act states: "Subject to Subsection 2 and Section 5, no person shall, on any private premises or in any public place at any time of day or night, sing, or sound or play upon any musical or noisy instrument; or operate, or permit or cause to be operated, any loudspeaker, microphone or any other device for the amplification of sound, in such a manner that the sound is audible beyond a distance of 100 metres from the source of such sound and is reasonably capable of causing annoyance to persons in the vicinity"

The act goes even further. If permission for a noisy event is granted and even if no one complains about being disturbed, there must be no loud noise between 2 o'clock and 6 o'clock in the morning on Saturday or Sunday and midnight on Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday.

Good examples of the trampling of the rights of citizens, the flouting of the Noise Abatement Act, and of the ignorance of the authorities can be found in the experience of the citizens of Hope Pastures. This peaceful middle-class and upper-middle-class community has been repeatedly and mercilessly abused by loud events at the Hope Botanic Gardens and Zoo. The citizens have approached the organisers and promoters and have been promised that the volume and event times would be kept in check. Of course, that didn't last long.

Loud, jarring, community-invading, nerve-shattering noises at all hours, on any day, has replaced the confined sounds of the Sunday afternoon melodious renditions of the Jamaica Military Band, the morning roar of the lonely lion, the musical avian chirping, squawks, calls, whistles and soft rhythmic rustling of the trees in the soothing, lazy early morning breeze. Aside from the trauma to the human neighbours, I wondered how those poor, sensitive, caged zoo animals coped.

Meetings with two relevant authorities ended with the assurance that permits for noisy events would no longer be granted but, that instruction was ignored, defeated or circumvented. And,

when the nearby constabulary was called out of desperation, the responding policeman told the plaintive citizen that nothing could be done about it since they had a permit.

But there was no permit, and, in any event, the Noise Abatement Act supersedes a permit if the citizens are being disturbed or if the permissible times are not adhered to. Only a call to a police supervisor saved them from a night of misery. Now they are back to waiting and watching to see what happens next.

Since 1971, the World Health Organization concluded that noise a major threat to our health. Noise is especially damaging to the vulnerable - the children and the elderly. It causes an inability to concentrate (which plays havoc with learning, memory and cognition). It causes insomnia, irritability, fatigue, autonomic dysfunction, increases adrenaline production, hypertension, behavioural problems and anxiety.

CIA Interrogators

In March 21, 1993, the FBI besieged the Davidian compound and blasted loud music to discombobulate those inside. CIA interrogators use loud music to disrupt the thoughts of prisoners so that they are unable to plan an escape. It also used loud music to break them.

Loud noise or music is blasted in many areas and at odd times all across Jamaica. Intrusive loud noise decimates our rights and is a major physical and psychological health hazard, but the authorities refuse to take it seriously.

- Garth A. Rattray is a medical doctor with a family practice. Email feedback to columns@gleanerjm.com and garthrattray@gmail.com.

Give Priority To Road Traffic Act, Says Opposition

Rasbert Turner

Curious residents look at what was left of the Nissan Tiida, in which a brother and sister lost their lives along Brunswick Avenue, Spanish Town, St Catherine on Saturday morning.

The Opposition spokesperson on transport Mikael Phillips wants the government to give priority to the Road Traffic Act in light of the number of road crashes and fatalities.

The legislation was passed by the House of Representatives last November and should have gone before the Senate.

However, with the dissolution of Parliament in February, all items, including the Road Traffic Act, fell off the legislative agenda.

The proposed law would put in place, new road traffic offences and provide increased penalties for current offences, among other things.

In a statement this afternoon, Phillips said he's alarmed by the growing number of road fatalities so far this year.

The National Road Safety Council has released data showing that there have been 124 road fatalities since the start of the year.

The opposition spokesman on transportation said too many Jamaicans are losing their lives in what are seemingly avoidable road crashes.

Phillips is urging road users to act responsibly and obey the rules of the road.

The Road Safety Council says cyclists were most the most frequent victims of road crashes, with 41 motorcyclists and 11 pedal cyclists being killed since January 1.

ROAD DEATHS: Jan 1 - April 18

2016 - 124

2015 - 114

2014 - 101

The End