

# THE DAILY RECORD

WESTERN NEW YORK'S SOURCE FOR LAW, REAL ESTATE, FINANCE AND GENERAL INTELLIGENCE SINCE 1908

## A modest proposal for justice

The underlying act was cowardly enough. It was shockingly and disgustingly spineless. He snuck up behind an unsuspecting clerk he had never even met, a guy working for an unimpressive hourly wage at a fast food store. Without asking for anything, and without warning, he swung a weapon and hit him in the face, a cheap shot that blinded him forever the instant he took out his eye.

How someone can be so amoral, so uncaring and so heartless is very hard to for most of us to comprehend. Although the conviction had been finalized, and some measure of justice was to be meted out, the overwhelming moment of the day was when he looked over at the stranger whose eye he had taken out in one powerful blow. He looked over at him with his two good eyes and smirked.

He actually smirked.

Weeks later, a different defendant was being sentenced for murder, when he laughed at the victim's family.

It seems beyond inhuman that someone could have so little compassion for the grief of those family members. Even if he had had nothing to do with their loss, regardless of who was involved in or responsible for the tragedy they were living through, laughing at that kind of pain, or laughing at the pain suffered by the young man who lost his eye, is truly barbaric — Old Testament-style barbaric.

Although we pride ourselves on the fact that we do not inflict improper, cruel or inhuman punishment, I cannot help but conclude that whatever punishment some of the perpetrators of violence in our society face, it is simply not enough to deter them from such atrocities.

The Old Testament says: "An Eye for an Eye."

My frustration must be miniscule when compared to that felt by the man who lost his eye. It must be in a different universe than the pain and outrage felt by the family who lost their loved one. The animalistic behavior displayed in those courtrooms is beyond all tolerance of civilized society.

Perhaps an eye for an eye is finally attainable — modern medicine can transplant virtually any organ — and an eye transplant is almost child's play.

I wonder if that measure of justice — allowing the victim to see again while allowing the perpetrator to better understand the hell that he has wrought upon the innocent — might not make someone think twice. It might make him think about what it really

means to lose an eye forever, or to even think once about what justice really means.

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Daily Record  
Columnist