

Tekst 8



## From the editor

by Craig Mazer

### Juvenile (In)justice and Media Hype

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- 1 Another child has been lost to the adult prison complex. Nathan Brazill, the 14-year-old boy convicted of murdering his teacher in West Palm Beach, is a victim of our judicial system. That system, meant to enforce the laws of our government, has yet to catch up with the harsh realities of the society it is working within. Worse yet, the media sheds a misleading light on violent crime, and especially on juvenile crime.
- 2 Violence is present everywhere in today's society. It is cheered on football fields and in boxing rings, amazes us in action movies and impresses us through surprisingly realistic video games. These desensitizing interactions definitely have an effect on a child's life.
- 3 The courts need to recognize this. Trying a juvenile as an adult should be a last resort used only for the most vicious of juvenile criminals. But, despite a sharp decline in juvenile crime throughout the '90s, every state but one enacted or toughened laws during that time, making it easier to try people under the age of 18 as adults; and more than 200,000 juveniles were tried as adults in 1998. According to a 1997 U.S. Department of Justice study, 14,500 juveniles were estimated to be housed in adult correctional facilities on any given day in 1997.
- 4 You can consider a majority of those 14,500 to now be lost causes, drifting away in adult facilities. The suicide rate for juveniles held in adult jails is five times the rate of those in the general youth population and eight times the rate for those in juvenile detention facilities according to the Community Research Center in 1980. And while I couldn't find any statistics to prove it, I figure that juveniles housed in adult facilities are far more likely to return there again and again than those housed in youth facilities. I imagine that when you're in the company of career criminals for an extended period of time, it's hard not to become part of that culture.
- 5 Before a child becomes a criminal, he's been shown the bleakness regularly on the news. The media gives a distorted picture of violent crime. For example, while there was a 33% decline in murder between 1990 and 1998, there was a 473% increase in murder coverage on ABC, CBS, and NBC evening news programs. While murders made up 1-2% of all arrests, murders made up more than a quarter of the crimes reported on the evening news. This remains true today.
- 6 Worse yet is the depiction of youth crime. One study quoted by an April 2001 Los Angeles Times article ("Off Balance: Media Coverage of Youth Crime") showed that 68% of local TV news stories about violence in California involved youth. However, youth made up only 14% of violent crime arrests in California.
- 7 So, where does that leave today's youth and what can be done? The problem lies with the news media and the judicial process. The judicial system needs to clearly recognize the difference between a child committing a crime and an adult. They also need to recognize the effect of violent images and take this into consideration when trying juveniles. Those images have a far different effect on children than adults. And adults, those running the news media, need to work at showing more uplifting images of youth on the news instead of the dreary and repetitive images of juvenile crime.

## ■ Tekst 8 Juvenile (In)justice and Media Hype

- 1p **24** ■ How does the writer introduce the subject of this article in paragraph 1?  
A By commenting on the popular view concerning his subject.  
B By describing a case that he was personally involved in.  
C By highlighting one particular aspect of his subject.  
D By outlining the main points of the article.
- “Worse yet ... juvenile crime.” (regels 5-6)
- 1p **25** □ In welke alinea of alinea’s illustreert de schrijver deze uitspraak?  
Noteer het nummer van deze alinea of alinea’s.
- 1p **26** □ Vat de hoofdgedachte van alinea 2 samen.
- 1p **27** ■ Which of the following reflects the writer’s opinion in paragraph 3?  
A Children are as much responsible for their actions as grown-ups.  
B Living conditions in US prisons should be improved as soon as possible.  
C Recent developments in US legislation against youth crime are alarming.  
D US courts have dealt with young criminals in a successful way.
- “You can consider ... lost causes” (regel 19)
- 2p **28** □ Noem de twee argumenten waarop de schrijver deze uitspraak baseert.
- 1p **29** ■ How could the sentence “While murders ... evening news.” (lines 32-34) also begin?  
A And while...  
B But while...  
C For while...
- 1p **30** □ Wat wil de schrijver aantonen met de percentages in alinea 6?
- 1p **31** ■ What is the main aim of this article?  
A To analyse the results of recent research into youth crime.  
B To generate more interest in the causes of youth crime.  
C To stress the need for a more balanced approach to youth crime.
- 3p **32** □ Geef voor elk van de onderstaande citaten aan of het om een feit of om de mening van de schrijver van dit artikel gaat.  
1 “Worse yet ... juvenile crime.” (regels 5-6)  
2 “According to ... in 1997.” (regels 16-18)  
3 “You can ... adult facilities.” (regels 19-20)  
4 “And while ... youth facilities.” (regels 23-25)  
5 “However, youth ... in California.” (regels 38-39)  
6 “And adults ... juvenile crime.” (regels 45-47)  
Noteer het nummer van elk citaat, gevolgd door “feit” of “mening”.