

## Stand your ground, Jean Valjean

Written by Bruce Enberg

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It's 4-20 and if you can't remember reading *Les Miserables* in high school because you were smoking in the boy's room, there is just one aspect of the story relevant to this rant. It's that Jean Valjean got five years in prison for stealing a loaf of bread. He then got another 16 years for several attempted escapes. In the past this was considered shocking, but in the corporate owned prison system of America this would a light sentence.

The Corporate prison system routinely engineers ever longer sentences for prisoners in their custody for simple infractions of the rules. A serious crime like stealing bread on three occasions can get you life without parole in a private prison.

Some of the harshest laws that have been passed by states came as a result of lobbying by, or more accurately wholesale bribery of Republican lawmakers by ALEC (American Legislative Exchange Council), or more accurately Abominable Legislation by un-Elected Corporations. Still, you have to wonder why these mega-corporations would push this Stand Your Ground Law. They don't really need to pander to the gun nuts, the crazy people don't really need convincing to vote Republican.

The idea that it was simply to boost gun sales doesn't make much sense, there's already a shortage of guns and ammo. With a black President they can't make them fast enough. Walmart is the biggest gun seller in the country and a big player in ALEC, but their business model is to suck dry local economies by absolute domination. They are doing just fine already, the increase in gun sales isn't even a rounding error to them.

So why would a corporate lobby make it legal for people to gun down anybody who makes them feel threatened? To quote the possible (however unlikely) next President of the United States, "Corporations are people my friend". That's right, Monsieur Valjean, make the corporation feel threatened, they can then shoot you and not worry about asking questions later. After all, stealing bread is a threatening act. So is union picketing, occupying the corporate owned Zuccotti Park, or entering a private gated community (with permission or without). Even if you paid for the bread (or the Skittles).

Trevon Martin's case was nearly ignored completely like dozens before him. ALEC wasn't expecting to get this much attention, not that this case is likely to get any of these laws overturned. The people who write the checks don't want them changed. You may see them

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amended to restrict this type of “self defense“ for “common” killers, but don’t expect any of the changes to apply to the corporations. They are a special kind of people, my friend.

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