



## Crime & Punishment

James Alan Fox on criminal behavior and the justice system

MURDER AND MAYHEM

# A Fathers Day wish for two dads impacted by murder

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Its Fathers Day. I'm a little sad that this is my first without my son Alex nearby. He's now a flight instructor many states away, and must work this Sunday, like all other Sundays, teaching aspiring student pilots who can only schedule lessons on weekends. But at least I know he's happy doing what he loves -- flying in skies graced with unlimited visibility. And that makes me happy.

Still, my thoughts today are focused on two dads for whom this special day is not anything like it should be. I am thinking about Jon Alenson whose bittersweet gift this year was to be granted some measure of justice for the 2007 murder of his 15-year-old son James at the hands of a schoolmate at Lincoln-Sudbury High School. My thoughts are also with Paul Odgren, whose son John was recently convicted and sentenced to life without parole for the murder. Although Paul can do more than just visit a gravesite, he will pass through several locked gates to reach the visiting room at the Bridgewater State

Hospital to spend a few hours with his boy under the constant gaze of a team of correctional officers.

Murder cases often leave two families stunned and saddened. While all of us easily find compassion in our hearts for the fathers of murdered children, let us not forget those men who have lost their sons (and sometimes daughters) to the custody of the prison system.

My Fathers Day wishes and prayers for strength go out to Jon Alenson, Paul Odgren, and all dads, on either side of murder, with deeply broken hearts and tragically shattered lives.