

PRISON IN THE 21ST CENTURY

PRISON LIFE

JULY-AUGUST 1995

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FRAMED ON DEATH ROW

Kim Wozencraft on Mumia Abu-Jamal

Do the Wrong Thing:
WHEN IT'S OK TO SNITCH
A Convict Code for the '90s

THE TRUTH ABOUT
"RESORT" PRISONS

JIMMY SANTIAGO BACA
From Vato Loco to
Prize-Winning Poet

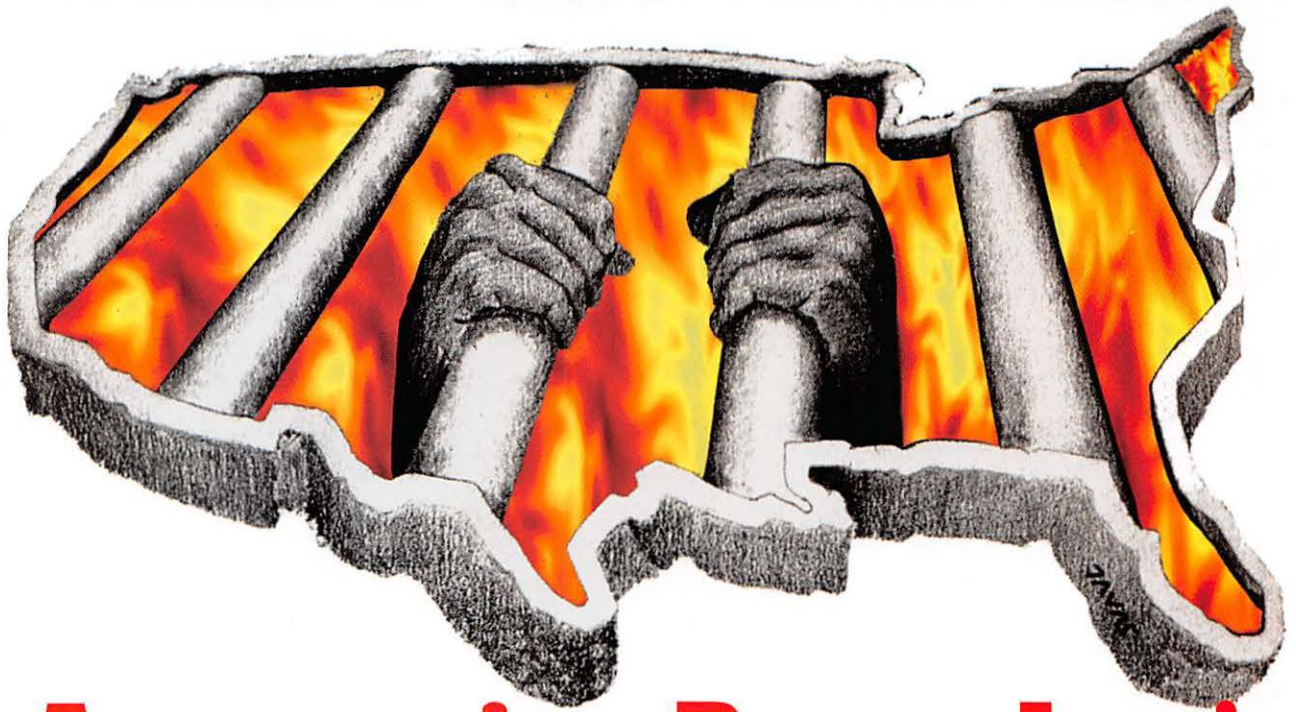
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3rd Prize—\$50 and two subscriptions to *Prison Life*

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Fiction: short stories or excerpts from longer works, up to 15 pages

Nonfiction: essays or articles, up to 15 pages

Poetry: no more than two poems, up to 5 pages

Drama (1st place only): scenes, excerpts from plays or screenplays, up to 30 pages

VISUAL ARTS CATEGORIES

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Contest Rules: Entries accepted only from incarcerated contestants. YOU MUST BE IN JAIL OR IN PRISON TO ENTER THIS CONTEST. Manuscripts must be typewritten or legibly handwritten in English. Name, prison ID number, name and address of institution must be on front page of all entries. Contestants may submit only one entry in each category. Entries will not be returned unless accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Only unpublished manuscripts and art will be considered, with the exception of pieces that have appeared in prison publications. All entries become the property of *Prison Life*, and the winners will be published in *Prison Life* magazine. Send entries to Art Behind Bars Contest, *Prison Life* magazine, 505 8th Avenue, New York, NY 10018.

Contest Deadline: October 15, 1995.

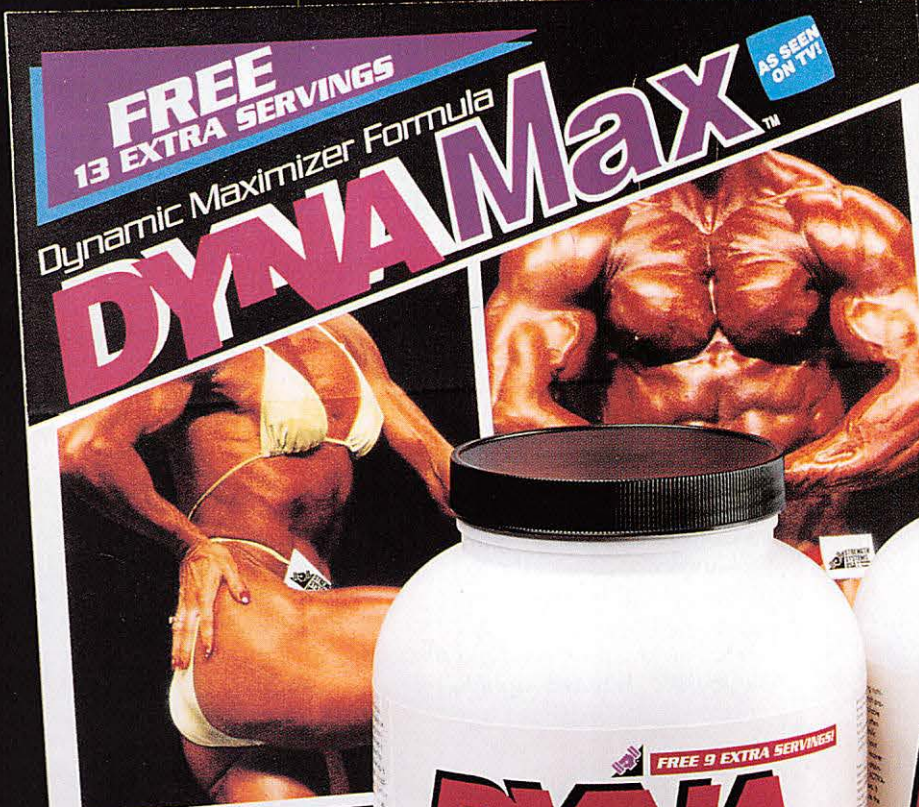
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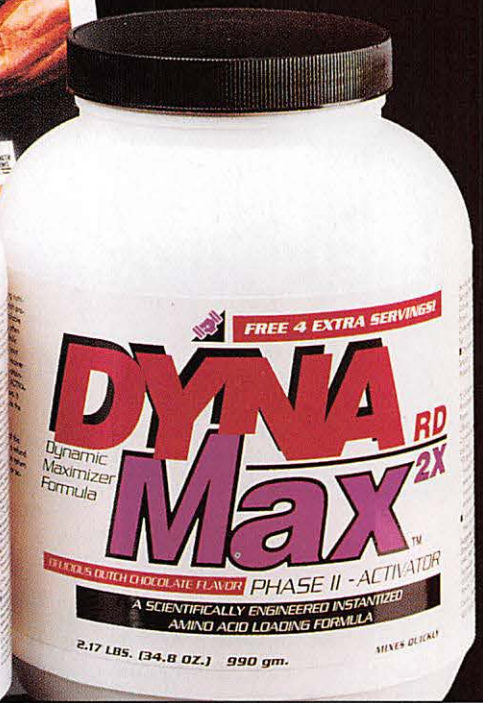
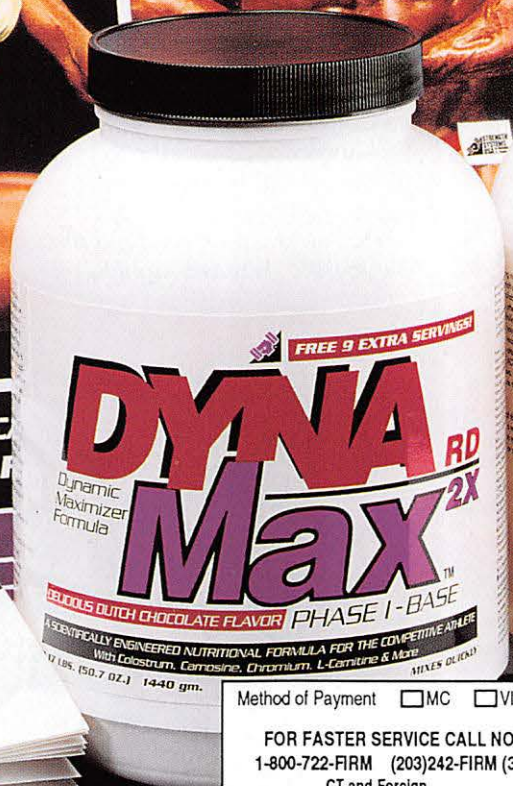
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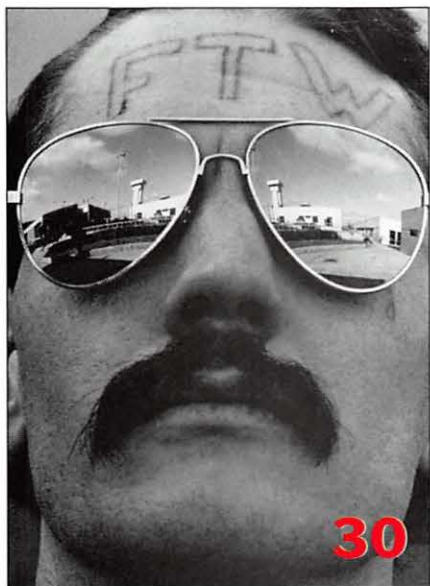
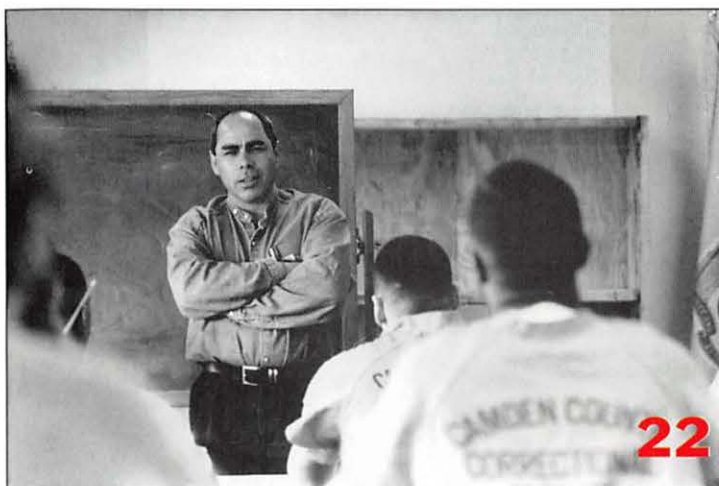
PRISON LIFE

July-August 1995

FEATURES

22 Jimmy Santiago Baca— *Un Vato Con Chingo De Visión*

Jimmy Santiago Baca went into prison a *vato loco* who couldn't read or write. He left Florence, Arizona's hellhole a nationally known poet. He went on to win awards, write novels and make movies. After six-and-a-half years of *la pinta*, Baca learned how to create soul and radiance from dark shadows.



30 Challenging the Convict Code

The Convict Code is an unwritten law. No convict can recite it, but all hardcore cons claim to follow it. We examine the code through the eyes of two men, one a seasoned convict doing time in Texas, the other a world-respected prison activist. Both agree it is time to revamp the most rigid rules of prisoner conduct.

Ask yourself: Is it ever right to rat?



34 Lies About "Resort" Prisons

The mainstream media, in *Reader's Digest* and other biased but widely circulated publications, has been calling our prisons resorts. What do they know?

Three prisoners—who *do* know what life is like behind bars—debunk the myth of so-called country club prisons.

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COVER STORY

44 A Legal Lynching— The Case of Mumia Abu-Jamal

Black Panther at 14, acclaimed print and radio journalist by his twenties, Mumia Abu-Jamal is being held *incommunicado* on Pennsylvania's Death Row. Brutally beaten, threatened and railroaded by the cops, Abu-Jamal still speaks his truth.

Novelist Kim Wozencraft tells why the authorities are so anxious to kill this man.

52 FICTION

The Cats of Savone

When cats creep into the yard of the Savone prison—and into the cold hearts of cons—the unexpected occurs, and then tragedy sets in.

This issue's short story, by David-Michael Harding, won 3rd place in our Art Behind Bars Contest.

Photo by
Lou Jones

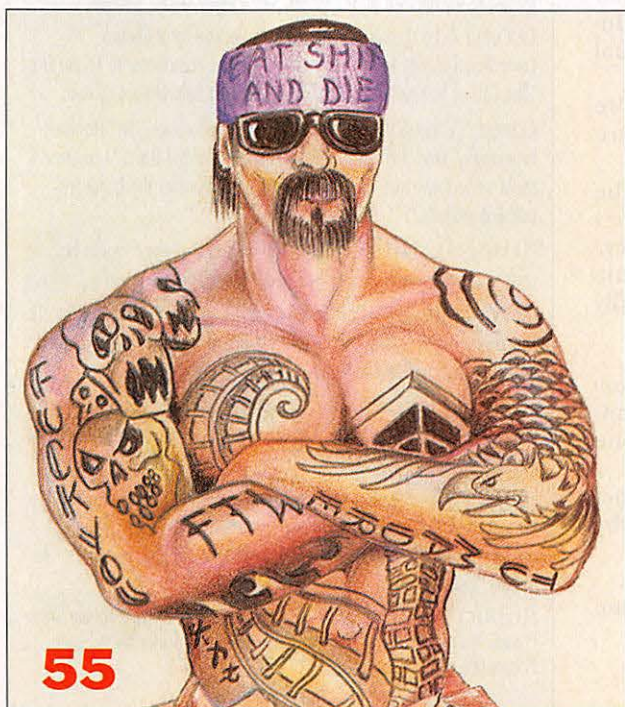


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55



Word

by Chris Cozzone, Executive Editor

People always ask me how much time I did. They ask if I was in a state or federal joint. When I tell them I never went to prison, they look confused.

"You *look* as if you've been to prison," they say.

"Must be the job," I reply, "the long hours and all."

People associated with the magazine, those I interview or photograph, the prisoners I correspond with, they usually leave it at that. But freeworlders just don't get it. "How can you work for a prison magazine if you haven't been there?"

Easy. Thanks to prisoncrats and politicians, Americans live in the midst of a prison culture without spending a day in the slammer. We've entered an era when prisons can no longer be tucked away and forgotten.

Turn on the news or check out your daily paper. What do you see? Prison. Crime. Prison. Crime. So and so got executed in whatever state. So and so got busted. So and so politician wants to build more prisons, get tougher on crime, kill this killer.

It's about time that people realize how far this prison culture stretches. It's no longer just about the 1.5 million locked up. It's about the thousands of ex-cons struggling to shed the stigma and the kids who are headed straight to the juveys and pens.

It's also about the growing number of freeworlders who know somebody in the joint, a brother, sister, uncle or friend behind bars. How many of us know an ex-con on the streets, someone who's either made it back into society or who can't find a job and returned to crime because he or she lacked the skills to compete in a job market that's more competitive than ever?

One dickhead asked me, "Why do you support those lowlife bastards?"

Again, the answer is easy. It's like this: I'm human, they're human. Get it? As for "lowlifers," what does that term really mean to freeworlders? Economically deprived? Environmentally influenced? Unlucky? Or are they hinting at some mutant criminal gene?

I try not to judge hardheaded idiots so much. I figure they're just part of the uninformed public who think all criminals are rapists, baby killers and serial murderers.

These are the same people who think prisoners oughtta be deprived of TVs, weights and windows in their cells. This issue's piece on "resort" prisons, by Jon Marc Taylor, explores that lunacy.

Our cover story, "A Legal Lynching—The Case of Mumia Abu-Jamal," by Kim Wozencraft, also lends credence to the sadly misinformed public.

Brutal killers and rapists?

Think again. Check out "Jimmy Santiago Baca—*Un Vato con Chingo de Vision*" and read a story of personal transformation from somebody who spent seven years in the can only to emerge as one of America's greatest poets.

If that doesn't convince you, read "Challenging the Convict Code," by Jorge Antonio Renaud and Bo Lozoff, and find out why even the hardest cons are questioning the untouchable code.

Stand behind these lowlife bastards?

You bet. I guess I'm just a traitor to society. Hope I don't lose too much sleep.

CONTRIBUTORS COLUMN

Thomas Falater, author of "FuturePen," became a contributor to *Prison Life* while incarcerated at the federal complex in Colorado. "Prisons these days are so out of control," he writes. "I feel so ashamed and pissed off that I spent over a year in a shithole for something that years ago, I would've gotten probation for." Now released and living in California, he's working a "crummy" sales job.

Ed Thompson, the artist for "FuturePen," had his own sign company before he got locked up five years ago. He spends his time at the Delaware Correctional Center doing his artwork and trying to reverse the decision in his case, which he feels was one of ineffective counsel.

Jorge Renaud, author of "Challenging the Convict Code," was the 3rd place poetry winner and the 2nd place nonfiction co-winner in our Art Behind Bars Contest. He writes for *The Echo*, a Texas prison paper. Many of his essays, he says, are rejected because they focus too much on "those who wield power."

Gary Harger is our first published photographer behind bars. While producer Marc Levin was at Joe Harp Correctional Facility in Oklahoma, filming our HBO special, *Prisoners of the Drug Wars*, he came across Gary who showed him his collection of prison photography. His print, "Face of a Convict," is featured with the article "Challenging the Convict Code."

Ray Fernandez, artist for "Challenging the Convict Code," is confined at Pelican Bay SHU. "My outlet to the world," he writes, "is my self-taught art."

Jon Marc Taylor, locked up at Jefferson City in Missouri, is an impassioned speaker against the injustices of the American penal system. One of his op-ed pieces was published in *The New York Times*. In this issue, he turns his rage toward *Reader's Digest*.

Karl C. Johnson is incarcerated in Boise, Idaho. His essay "Doing Time" first appeared in the *Oregonian* prison newspaper in response to an Ann Landers column.

Kenneth Z. Taylor, D.D.S., also known as "Doc Taylor," wrote a response to "some asinine talk show aired on a NJ radio station" where the topic of discussion was prison "resorts." He's since been thrown in the hole for an unrelated "but equally stupid" reason.

David-Michael Harding, locked up at Clinton Correctional Facility in New York, is a first-time contributor to *Prison Life*. "The Cats of Savone" won 3rd place in our Art Behind Bars contest.

Greg Waleski is at Arizona State in Florence. His "Honor is Everything" won 3rd place nonfiction in Art Behind Bars. "I suppose I could write some nice things," he says, "but I prefer the hardcore, militant attitude."

Bruce D. Hill, artist for "Honor is Everything," works his craft at Huntsville, TX, where he's serving a 30-year sentence.

C.W. Pyle, author of "Self-Rehab," is locked up in California. His "Surrendering of Spirits," which tied for 3rd place fiction in Art Behind Bars, was featured in our March 1995 issue.

Joseph Hernandez, the artist for this month's Iron Pile, is at Green Haven in New York. His work has appeared in previous issues of *Prison Life*.

Alex Friedmann, our Resource Editor, spends much of his time at SCCC in Clifton, TN gathering information on agencies and resources. "It's hard to find agencies willing to support prisoners," he writes, "but those that do are invaluable."

Robert R. Reldan is a jailhouse lawyer at New Jersey State Prison. His article, "How to do Legal Research," marks his debut in *Prison Life*.

UPPING THE STAKES

by Richard Stratton
Editor & Publisher

Week one of the revolution. America is shocked; America is horrified. America is terrorized.

This does not happen in the good old U. S. of A. is the common refrain. We are used to hearing of acts of political terrorism abroad. Pan Am flight 103; the hijacking of the Achille Lauro cruise ship; the murder of athletes at the Olympic Games in Germany, to mention but a few. And we are accustomed to seeing the black-masked faces of the perpetrators. We expect them to be revealed as Palestinians, Arabs, bearded and mustachioed foreign types. Even the bombing of the World Trade Center in New York City was understandable in these terms: it was foreigners, aliens, guys with names like Ibrahim and Mohammad.

And New York, well, that's not really America anyway. We can deal with terrorism when the threat comes from outside our hallowed nation. All we have to do is round up all the bad guys, those foreigners who hate America, and kill them. We need not bother ourselves with such questions as why others hate America so much as to kill innocent civilians and children. For, make no mistake, most foreign acts of terrorism are directed at America.

Now I look at the photo on the cover of our local paper. Under the headline, *Suspects Nabbed*, I see a face not unlike the faces of the cops and agents who surround the suspect. An American face, if there is such a thing. This guy has a *crew cut*, that most American of haircuts. His skin is as white as Bill Clinton's. He even looks a bit like our President with the prominent nose, the long face. He's clean-shaven, maybe blue-eyed. But his mouth is set in a tight-lipped gash, his countenance pinched and focused with stony resolve as cries of "baby killer" and "bastard" are hurled at him from an enraged crowd of his fellow

Americans. He makes no attempt to hide his face.

Think of the shock and horror—the *terror*—many straight citizens felt upon realizing that this guy is an American. Americans did this. White-skinned, red-blooded Americans planted a bomb in front of a federal building in Oklahoma City, blew to bits a full third of the huge federal edifice, killing scores of other Americans, mostly federal workers, yet among them many—and here is the word again—*innocent* children. I read from a published list of the confirmed dead: Baylee Almon, age one; Anthony C. Cooper II, aged 2; and a woman, aged 51, with my last



name—perhaps a relative. I am saddened, deeply grieved by the loss of lives that should never have been sacrificed in the violent political arena.

Who does not lament the death of innocent children? All children are innocent. We love them for their goodness, their innocence, and our hearts are rent with grief when we see a tiny body carried in a rescue worker's arms. I have two little boys, one just turned three, the other not quite one. I know how I would feel if my kids had been blown to smithereens in this catastrophic act of homegrown political terrorism. I would want to kill the terrorists. I would want to beat them to death with my bare hands.

My oldest boy could see that his dad had been obsessed with the news over

the past week. When he saw a photo of the devastated Alfred P. Murrah federal building, he asked me what had happened to it. I told him someone blew it up. Then he asked me a simple question, an innocent question most three-year-olds ask thirty times a day: Why?

This is the only question that matters, particularly now that the damage has been done. *Why?* Why would white-skinned crew-cut Americans attack their own government? I spoke to a retired federal agent within hours of the bombing, before anyone knew who the bombers might be, and he called it: "BATF is in that building," he said. "It is two years to the day since the Waco debacle. It could have been anyone. Everyone hates the federal government."

Everyone hates the federal government. Certainly many of the people I know, not all of them radicals or ex-cons, hate the government. Or if they don't hate the government itself, they hate what the government does with the money it extorts from taxpayers.

I said aloud, when I heard of a probable connection to the militia movement, "Thank God it came from the right. Now maybe they will pay attention."

Then I saw our president on *60 Minutes*. He did the most irresponsible thing the president of a supposedly civilized nation could do: He called for more blood, more killing; expressed more anger and hatred. He said, in so many words, that the government will find the people responsible, hunt them down and kill them. The country has a federal death penalty and the president vows he'll use it, as though more death will heal our critically wounded nation.

The president said the government would do exactly what I thought I would want to do had my kids been among the victims. I'm sure the crowd that greeted suspect Timothy

McVeigh outside the courthouse would gladly have torn him to pieces. But the purpose of civilization, and the role of government, is to protect us from our most primitive impulses. We expect more from the head of a government that prides itself on its moral leadership. We know in our hearts that killing is never the enlightened response.

When Mike Wallace mentioned Waco, Clinton got pissed off. His face contorted into a harsh glare reminiscent of the look on Tim McVeigh's face. Waco was no excuse, no reason. The Branch Davidians killed themselves, proclaimed the president. It was their fault. It is all right when the government kills because the government is always right.

Good God, I thought, doesn't this man realize what he's doing? He is upping the stakes. He is threatening with violence men who thrive on violence, men whose modus operandi is violence and destruction. He is challenging dedicated killers and urging them to kill more Americans. By declaring yet another overreaching war, war on domestic hate groups by responding with threats of violence, Clinton is playing into the hands of right-wing militants and precipitating a crackdown that will cause more Americans to hate their government. The government's response is to never ask why people abhor its tactics, never to admit it might be wrong to kill and wage war on whoever disagrees with its mandates.

President Clinton would call me a "promoter of paranoia." Yet are we paranoid when our own government declares bloody war upon vast segments of the people? And not just criminals or drug dealers, but many innocent people whose rights are trampled and whose homes are invaded, whose property is seized, whose lives are destroyed by the actions of federal agents.

Newt Gingrich flew into a rage when a reporter suggested that the people accused of blowing up the federal building in Oklahoma espouse views similar to those mouthed by him and his boys. *Get the government off our backs.* Of course he got pissed. Newt doesn't believe his own rhetoric. That's just politics. Lies. Like Clinton. Clinton lies. He tells us it's okay when the federal government kills American citizens and innocent children. He tells us the children of the Branch Davidians burned themselves to death because their parents weren't ready to knuckle under to the government.

Waco is not an excuse, not a reason. There is no excuse for killing

innocent children and civilians. It is an example of why Americans have come to fear and loathe the government. I can give you many better examples of why Americans hate the federal government. How about when the FBI firebombed MOVE homes in Philadelphia, killing innocent children. Let's talk about how many innocent children the American government has killed. How about the thousands of Panamanians slaughtered by American troops sent in to arrest CIA asset Manuel Noriega for dealing drugs? Who can forget the image of a naked Vietnamese girl running from her village as it was razed and burned by American government troops? And I can tell you true stories of innocent, law-abiding Americans who have had their homes invaded by federal agents, been shot, been arrested, had their property destroyed or seized, all with the OK of some lying informant looking to curry favor with his federal masters. No one is ever called to task for these acts of governmental terrorism.

Thank God this guy McVeigh is not an ex-con. Can you imagine the outcry? But no, he's an ex-soldier. What does that tell you?

Let's get it right. No one condones the killing of innocent children or innocent people for that matter. It is not right when terrorists do it any more than it is right when agents of the federal government do it. Take it further. When agents acting on behalf of the government kill children or citizens—whether innocent or not—it is government-sponsored terrorism. The death penalty is government-sanctioned murder. By vowing to hunt down and kill the perpetrators of the Oklahoma City bombing, Clinton degrades himself and lowers the government he heads to the level of the terrorists. It is gangland logic. You kill one of ours, we'll kill one of yours. The situation perpetuates itself and escalates. Where we needed dignity, restraint and measured leadership, we got bloodthirsty anger and more hate.

Clinton and others in Washington are clamoring for increased federal powers to counteract domestic terrorism. As if this weren't the problem to begin with. Wake up, Bill, Newt and the rest of you fools down there in the Capitol. There are thousands, perhaps hundreds of thousands, maybe millions of good Americans out here who hate our government. And for good reason. They are a bunch of terrorists.



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July-August 1995

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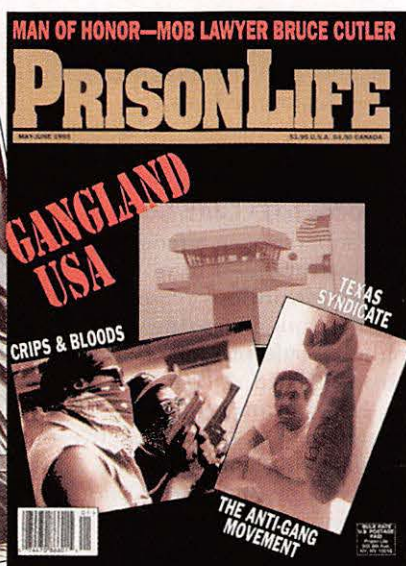
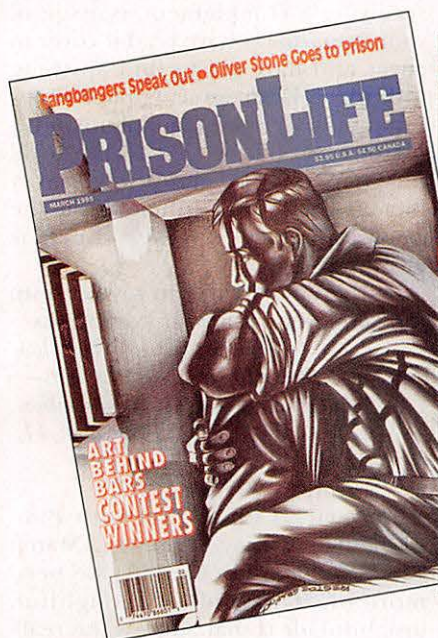
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ART BEHIND BARS WINNER DENIED OWN STORY

Last week, I wrote you and told you that nobody here at Jefferson City Correctional Center had received the March issue of *Prison Life*. I was wrong. I did find someone who had

received a copy, and I was able to trade him out of it—at a high cost.

It took my September 1994, 25th Anniversary *Penthouse*, November 1993 21st Anniversary *Gallery* and October 1992 *Fox*, featuring actress Taylor Wane, to get it. I feel I

received the better end of the deal, though I'm really gonna miss ol' Taylor Wane. Oh well . . .

Seeing my short story, "The Shot," was worth it, not to mention all the other great stuff in the March issue.

I suspect, though, that a lot of people did receive their March issue, only they are keeping them hidden for themselves, the greedy bastards.

As for the copies you sent me, I have been advised by a caseworker that I will not be able to receive them until I get prior approval through the institutional investigator. Seems like we aren't allowed to just receive magazines anymore. We have to actually order them from our inmate account by filling out a voucher, green check, and getting it pre-approved through a caseworker. I certainly hope that you can understand what I have written here because after rereading it, I'm not real sure that I understand it myself.

The bottom line is that I will have to get some type of administrative approval before I can receive your, I mean "our" magazine. Don't trip; I'll get it approved.

Thanks again!

Chester Cornman
JCCC, MO

FORMER TEXAS SYNDICATE MEMBER SPEAKS OUT

My name is Robert "Rove" Leos and I was a made Texas Syndicate member for 16 years. I am now a former member (FGM).

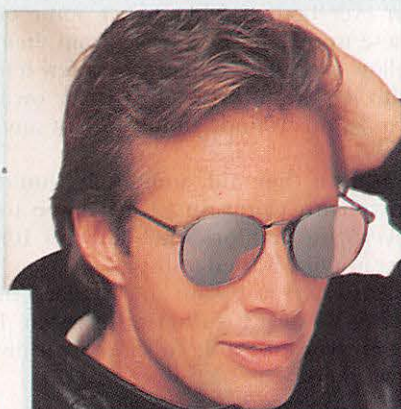
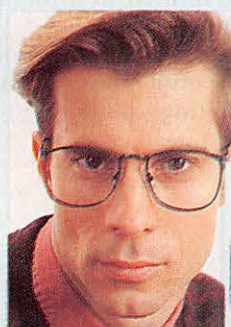
I grew up in *Nucas* (New Braunfels, Texas) and I'm from the same *barrio seco* where Robert "Malo" Delgado (see "Gangland USA," May 1995 issue) grew up.

Back in the '70s when Malo joined the clique (*el sindicato tejano*), I and a few other *barrio homitos* followed suit. We believed it was the right thing to do at the time because the inmate guards, the Building Tenders, had gone unchallenged for too long.

I became a made member in 1979 when I stabbed a BT at the Ellis I Unit. Then I stabbed another at the Ramsey II Unit. Back in those days, I honestly believed and felt that I was a dedicated Syndicate soldier *por vida*. Back in September of '85, when war broke loose *con la Eme* (Mexican Mafia) for power and control of the drugs, one of my *homitos*, "El Buga" Delgado (Malo's cousin), was killed. We retaliated.

Another gang brother and I were charged with the stabbing of one of the assassins (the only one we could get at the time). I was transferred to

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the Wynne Unit in Huntsville and a couple years later, I was released on parole after doing seven years, two months on my eight-year term. I was free for four years, during which I was blessed with a beautiful daughter.

But I continued gang activity 'til I was busted and convicted with my current sentence: 50 years for aggravated robbery and 25 for suspected murder in '91.

Back in the system, doing my time at the Darrington Unit, I was told one day that my homeboy Malo had been hit because he'd left the Syndicate. Fortunately, it was unsuccessful.

This was one of the reasons I decided to step out of the gang for good. I could see and feel in my heart that the old *firme* Syndicate had crumbled. When Malo quit, I and everybody from our *tango* quit, too. I knew in my heart I had nothing in common with these new wave wannabe gangstas.

Back in the old days, I had been a young *barrio pachuco*. I had known Malo since Lone Star elementary school in *Nucas*. He would always speak up when something came up inside the gang and I would see he was always right. For this reason, a lot of the new wave gangstas would falsely accuse him of things and try to vote him out. Then it started happening to me, too. On this sentence alone, the Syndicate falsely charged me and gave me court three different times when never before had I been before the Syndicate court system. The old Syndicate is gone.

I am in my '40s and I'm tired of criminal activity, violence and drugs. I am tired of innocent people being hurt or killed. It's destroying more than me: it's destroying *el barrios*. Now with a young daughter and nephews and nieces to think about, I feel it's time I speak out against all these wannabe gangstas.

Like my homeboy, I'm also doing all this time with a hit on my back. But I don't worry: As of 10/17/94, I have dedicated my life to the Lord Jesus Christ. At one time I was ready and

willing to die for the gang, but now I know that it's not worth anything.

Perhaps Malo's message, and even my own, will make a difference in somebody's life. It may even save a life.

A message for my nephew little Ruben Pina and my daughter I love and miss: Lialonnie Leos.

Robert Leos
Darrington Unit, Texas

DON'T TELL MY BOSS

I'm a supervisor in a federal correctional institution—I'm not going to say where for obvious reasons—and I really like your magazine. At first, I thought it would piss me off, but after reading a little, I couldn't put it down. I read it cover to cover.

It gave me a good perspective on the inmate side and made me think of them as human again. I know the perception we have of them, and they have of us. It's not really right.

We have a job to do. And if it is done professionally, there should be no problems. On the other side, some convicts want to fuck with staff and cause problems. The staff didn't put cons in jail, they did it to themselves.

I've been in this business for 10 years and I've seen a big change in the inmate population. A lot of younger convicts have no respect for staff and fellow inmates. They cause problems for everybody. I'd like to see some of these troublemakers "get it" from their fellow cons. There might be a few left who'd take matters into their own hands, but I kinda doubt it. Not anymore.

Even if they did, somebody would snitch on them and we'd have to investigate and lock somebody up. It's just not like it used to be.

Anyway, I just want to say that I'm going to start a subscription—one I surely won't be able to share with my coworkers!

Name & Location with-
held

SHIRLEY GAYD REIKTZZZ
E-17
SHIRLEY GAYD
MARQUETTE BRANCH PRISON



YOU STINK BUT HERE'S MY MONEY

I recently had the misfortune of receiving a complementary issue of your magazine. I have read it cover to cover and have yet to find anything with which I can agree. Quite frankly, I find most of it just plain obnoxious.

However, I subscribe to the local newspapers and I don't necessarily buy all their stuff either. What the heck, sign me up. My check is enclosed.

By the way, I'd like to say keep up the good work, but your work stinks.

D.L. Wigginton
Stop Turning Out Prisoners—
A Citizens' Activist Organization
Brandon, FL

PART OF SOCIETY

"America's Obsession with Punishment," by Troy Chapman (March issue) is the kind of writing we need more of. It was full of thoughtful, insightful ideas that address the reality of prison and the whole culture we find ourselves caught up in. It's no longer a matter of how we got where we are, it's about where we're going from here.

The politicians and ivory tower dwellers haven't got a clue as to what is really going on. If there is to be a real change in the approach to crime and criminals, then we must make our voices heard and be a constructive part of the dialog. After all, who better understands the system than those of us who've lived in it for 10, 15, 20 years or more?

We need to be real about the problems and our responsibilities, and just as real about offering solutions. After

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Name Tom Beagle
Register Number 69487
Unit SC-1-4
Box Number 1000
City, State, Zip Crawley, Co, 81034



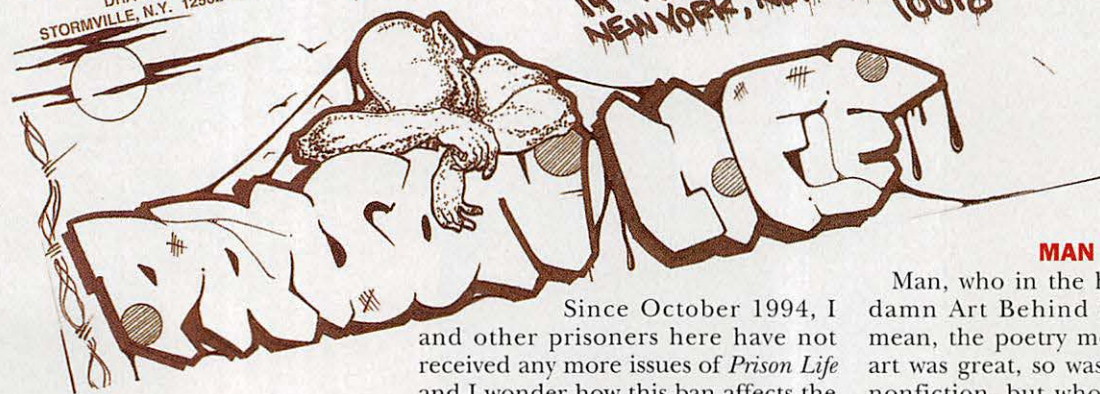
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all, we are *part* of society, not enemies of it. We're just opposed to the government and the corrupt, nearsighted politicians who comprise it.

No one can say with any certainty who will or will not be back: not the parole board, civilians or even fellow convicts. But if we don't come together to provide support systems, to actually care about one another, and society at large, as well as our place in it, no one else will do it for us.

Terry Dyer
F.C.I. Bradford, PA

A NEW AGE OF PRISON RIOTS?

This letter comes to you regarding my subscription to your magazine, as well as other prisoners' subs here in California. It seems that the magazine is not being received here anymore. In December, I received a memo from the deputy director of Corrections stating that the October 1994 issue was being confiscated because of an article that had something about escape.

It's amazing to me that a huge, secure prison system would go to so much trouble as to fax memos to all the prisons and censor/confiscate a magazine because one article allegedly spoke about escape. If a prisoner wanted to escape, he or she would surely not base such a decision on a magazine article.

It is obvious that CDC has stretched the California Code of Regulations, Section #3136 (d), which reads, "Inmates may not receive correspondence which concerns plans to escape or assist in an escape from lawful custody." This rule is being used as an excuse not only to confiscate that one issue but also to ban the magazine entirely.

Since October 1994, I and other prisoners here have not received any more issues of *Prison Life* and I wonder how this ban affects the balance of my subscription. It should also be noted that all sexually explicit books and magazines have been banned here in California prisons as of January 1995.

And again, this year the state legislature and CDC are attempting to bring an end to the family visiting program (conjugal visits), prohibiting married prisoners from visiting privately with their spouses. Such programs should be nationwide!

As valuable and rehabilitative as reading literature of one's choice and family togetherness are, the prison system and the government are making it perfectly clear that they do not care about making prisoners better human beings for reentry into society. All that matters in the '90s is political correctness, moral majority values on everyone. It will not work! These are not the answers to crime.

Issues of censorship, sex publications and visitation were all litigated and fought over in the '60s and '70s. Many prisoners and CDC staff died or were hurt before the system realized there was a better way to treat incarcerated human beings. However, the prison violence shed in Attica, New Mexico and California has apparently all been forgotten or ignored now.

We live in a time when all people's rights and liberties are being stripped away. Even the state and U.S. Constitution is being chipped away at and changed. Such restrictions in prison and in society are not making America better or safer. It's only making America angrier. The result is yet to be seen. Until then, the endless lawsuits, hatred, violence and crime will continue . . . because they just don't get it and they just don't care!

Eric Martin
Pelican Bay, CA

MAN . . .

Man, who in the hell judged your damn Art Behind Bars contest? I mean, the poetry mostly? The visual art was great, so was the fiction and nonfiction, but whoever judged the poetry needs to be checked!

I sent you three of my best pieces of poetry and didn't get mentioned at all! I may not be the great "Poe," but my shit was a hell of a lot better than the one that took first place! I put my soul into the poems I sent you, man. The judges need to be different next year, man. I'm not alone on this either!

I got another beef with you guys, too. I turned one of my ol' road dogs onto your rag and he really liked it. He asked me if I had any problems getting my rag on time and I told him, "Not since the new Editor-in-Chief took over." So, he had his ol' lady send you the cash for a subscription. Well, he got one rag *three* months ago and nothing since! What's up with that shit, man? Now my buddy is giving me hell for causing his ol' lady to waste his money! You made me look bad, man, and I don't take kindly to somebody makin' me look bad! It's a good thing you ain't in here with me!

You got a good rag, man, but you need to get your shit together. And change those damn poetry judges!

Timothy "Gator" Dwiley
Raleigh, NC

We're gonna have to stand behind our poetry judges, Gator, but the sub prob oughtta be dealt with. You need to send a kite down to our Subscription department in Houston (4200 Westheimer, Ste. 160, Houston, TX 77027), or give 'em a ring on the toll-free number (800/207-2659).

Send your letters to *Prison Life* Mail Call, 505 8th Avenue, New York, NY 10018.



Ed Thompson

Art by Ed "Preacher" Thompson, Delaware Correctional Center

FUTUREPEN: THE PRISONS OF TOMORROW

BY THOMAS FALATER

IMAGINE WAKING UP IN A GOLD BASEMENT. YOUR ARMS, LEGS AND EVEN YOUR HEAD ARE FASTENED TO A STRETCHER BY THICK, LEATHER STRAPS. YOU HAVE BEEN HEAVILY DRUGGED. YOU CANNOT MOVE; YOUR VISION IS CLOUDY.

A SURGEON PLACES GLAMPS ON YOUR FOREHEAD TO HOLD OPEN YOUR EYELIDS. HE POURS A THICK, BLUE STERILIZING LIQUID DIRECTLY INTO YOUR EYE. YOU WATCH HELPLESSLY WHILE HE SLOWLY INSERTS A LONG, CURVED METAL TUBE CALLED A "LEUCOTOME" BETWEEN YOUR EYEBALL AND EYELID AND ANGLES IT UPWARD TOWARD YOUR BRAIN. WITH A RAP FROM A SMALL HAMMER, THE INSTRUMENT PENETRATES THE THIN BONE SEPARATING YOUR EYE CAVITY FROM YOUR BRAIN CASE.

THE RAZOR SHARP LEUCOTOME IS NOW INSIDE YOUR SKULL, TOUCHING THE FRONTAL LOBES OF YOUR BRAIN.

THE SURGEON LEANS CLOSER, GRADLES YOUR HEAD IN HIS HANDS AND SLOWLY SWINGS THE TUBE BACK AND FORTH IN FRONT OF YOUR FACE AND BEGINS TO SCRAPE AWAY THE FRONT PORTION OF YOUR BRAIN. ALL YOUR HOPES, LOVES, DREAMS AND REASONS FOR LIVING ARE SWEEP AWAY WITH EACH MOVEMENT OF THE INSTRUMENT.

YOU FEEL YOURSELF SLIPPING AWAY AND YOUR THOUGHTS GROW DIM. EVEN THE ABSOLUTE TERROR OF WHAT IS HAPPENING TO YOU DIMINISHES.

YOU HAVE BECOME A HUMAN ROBOT... A LIVING ZOMBIE FROM A GRADE B HORROR FILM. YOU DON'T RECOGNIZE MEMBERS OF YOUR FAMILY OR EVEN YOUR BEST FRIEND. YOUR MIND HAS BEEN REDUCED TO THAT OF A FOUR-YEAR-OLD. THE SURGEON LEFT JUST ENOUGH BRAIN MATTER FOR YOU TO FEED, WASH AND CLOTHE YOURSELF.

A METAL BRACELET DISPLAYING A BAR CODE AND NUMBER IS ATTACHED TO YOUR WRIST. YOU HAVE BEEN ASSIGNED A BUNK IN UNIT S AND A JOB AT UNICOR AS A SHIPPING CLERK FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE.

WELCOME TO PRISON IN THE 21ST CENTURY.

If you think this scenario couldn't happen in America, think again. We have already crossed the threshold between sanity and insanity, between treatment and torture. In prison, terms such as "psychosurgery" and "sedation" have replaced rubber hose beatings and isolation. The future of our criminal justice system has been plotted, and our destination is anchored back in the dark ages.

Society has always been frustrated with its inability to deal with criminals. No matter how many prisons are built, no matter how many rehabilitation programs are attempted, and no matter how many new laws are passed, crime continues to terrorize us all. We live in an era when men open fire on children in school yards, serial killers travel the highways undetected, and no one trusts law enforcement to protect them. Every day, we are deluged with sensational news reports of brutal crimes: stabbings, shootings, rapes, bombings, child abductions and even ritualistic tortures. There seems to be no end in sight, and no solution to the crime problem.

Since 1980, the prison population has doubled. Politicians, catering to the public's frustration with crime, have pledged to build more prisons, increase sentences and enact new laws. At the current rate of imprisonment, we will have over six million people incarcerated by the year 2015.

Prison budgets are decreasing. There simply is not enough money for prisons to continue operating as they are now. Severe cutbacks will occur in all governmental agencies as our representatives come to grips with the massive deficit and pointless spending. A balanced budget amendment is already being considered, which will force prison administrators to search for new cost efficient ways of operating.

The booming prison population, soaring budget deficits and widespread public fear are acting upon the wheels of justice. Those wheels are large, slow, stubborn and unfeeling, but once set in motion, they are impossible to stop. With the recent three-strikes frenzy, guideline sentencing, asset forfeiture and mandatory restitution, the wheels have already started turning. Under the guise of justice, we have unwittingly begun our horrible journey toward institutional slavery and state-sanctioned slaughter.

1995 TO 2010

The Balanced Budget Amendment has affected all areas of government. Bureaucrats are scrambling to cut costs. Prison officials begin to accept the fact that radical change is needed. New asset forfeiture laws are passed, requiring prisoners to pay for all costs of their investigations, prosecution and incarceration. Victims, family members and even witnesses to crime will sue the perpetrator not only for actual losses but for pain and suffering. As a result, almost all first-time felons will be wiped out financially for the rest of their lives.

In an attempt to obtain more funding, prison officials will use every opportunity to portray prisoners as violent,

AT THE CURRENT RATE OF IMPRISONMENT, WE WILL HAVE OVER SIX MILLION PEOPLE INCARCERATED BY THE YEAR 2015.

and uncontrollable savages. This will convince the public of the merits of psychosurgery and drug "therapy." Any act of prisoner violence will be encouraged by prison officials and sensationalized by the media.

Shock incarceration, commonly known as boot camps, will close. Minimum-security camps and facilities will be replaced by home confinement and intensive probation. Electronic ankle bracelets worn by prisoners on probation will sound an alarm at the local police station if the prisoner leaves his home. Their residences will display large signs reading "Warning: Federal Inmate in the Custody of the Bureau of Prisons. Do Not Approach or Communicate with this Household."

Work programs will expand so that prisons become self-sufficient. The laws restricting prison goods from being sold in the private sector will ease, and all prisoners will be required to work ten hours a day, five days a week. Psychologists

will identify a specific criminal mindset: impulsive, unrealistic, unable to delay gratification, greedy and manipulative. These traits will be considered hereditary, and scientists will attempt to locate a "criminal gene." Talk of sterilizing prisoners has begun.

2010 TO 2030

Public news reports of criminals and violence will spread. The country's "war on crime" will be taken literally and become a national priority. To fund the war, total asset forfeiture will be required of each convicted criminal, regardless of whether or not he obtained the assets through crime. A percentage of the assets will go to the arresting officer, leading to abuse of police power, set-ups and Gestapo-like tactics.

A criminal gene is located and for the first time, science links crime to heredity. All two-time felons are sterilized. This marks a new milestone for American justice: The first medical mutilations will be performed upon intake into prison.

Executions will surge. Victims' families will have the option of pulling the switch, and many actually do. Cable television features live broadcasts of executions. There is now discussion of executing all three-time felons.

Extremely violent criminals will be lobotomized in prison, as it is more cost efficient to lobotomize a serious offender than to keep him in solitary and post guards on him for the rest of his life.

Rule infractions will be punished by electro-shock therapy and heavy drugging. The specter of dazed prisoners wandering aimlessly through the prison yard will be common.

Work programs have greatly expanded, and prison products such as shirts, socks, shoes and underwear now appear at local retail outlets. Prisoners must work a minimum of 10 hours a day, 6 days a week.

Prisoners can receive mail only from family members. Contact with the media is banned.

Due to lower pay and poorer working conditions, the caliber of prison guards has dropped even lower, leading to more prisoner abuse.

2030

Public acceptance of psychosurgery, electro-shock therapy and sterilization of convicted criminals will spur officials to expand these measures. Maximum security prisons, once expensive and difficult to operate, will be replaced by incapacitation techniques, such as prefrontal lobotomies and sterilization. These operations will be performed in an assembly-like process in the prison basement. All first-time offenders will be sterilized and the dorsal nerve of their penis will be severed.

Prisoners will be considered more and more subhuman. Scientists will use them for medical experimentation and research; their "spare" body parts will be sold to organ transplant factories.

The definition of troublesome prisoners will be expanded to include jailhouse lawyers, intellectuals and writers. A prison psychologist merely writes a report sprinkled with such terms as incorrigible, anti-social and psychopathic and recommends a "psychiatric neutralization." Troublesome prisoners will be drugged and lobotomized.

Mail will become a privilege, limited to one letter a week. This relieves the work load of mailroom staff, who now have fewer pieces to open, read and censor. News programs and newspapers are censored to prevent prison uprisings or stir up discontent.

Prison riots will be immediately suppressed. Red pepper gas, mace and other chemical agents will be dispensed through a network of pipes connecting every cell, corridor or room accessible to prisoners. Tactical response teams will be instructed to shoot to kill during uprisings.

Prison industries will flourish. All prisoners, even lobotomized ones, will work 12 hours a day, six days a week, making just about anything that can be purchased at major department stores. High-ranking administrators will receive a percentage of the prisoners' actual profit as bonuses and incentive. They will drive company cars and live in large, expensive homes. Prison servants will mow their lawns, wash their cars and cook their meals.

Prisons will become little more than plantations of wandering zombies, closed from public view.



The concept of FuturePen awaits unless a more thoughtful and enlightened approach is conceived.

We should remember, however, that prisons have become

multi-billion dollar industries, and a great many people and companies rely on them for profit. Imagine what an economic catastrophe would occur if all convicts decided never to commit another crime. Just think of all the prison towns, supply companies and salaries that would be lost.

Rehabilitation programs thus far have only been aimed at reforming the prison rather than the individual. Work programs and weight piles do little more than make the prison easier to operate than correct the criminal. Since the overwhelming majority of prisoners will eventually be released back into society, this method of operating places us all at risk. Prison officials have traded profit and simplicity for the protection of society.

Genuine self-improvement is actually resisted by the system. Programs in prisons are little more than a gimmick for increased profits. Work and volunteer programs have lended themselves to abuse and profit-skimming.

Victims' rights are ignored, and the meaning of punishment has been maligned to make people believe that those rights are being served by building more prisons. What exactly are victims' rights? The right to be protected and not live under a government that creates new criminals and recharges old ones.

We are all residents of the same planet and members of the same society: white, black, young, old, criminal and non-criminal. How many of us have committed crimes that have gone undetected? 80 percent? 90 percent? Will we reach a situation where 10 percent of the population cages the rest

of us? If we placed as much emphasis on dealing with the crime problem as we do on education and other social programs, perhaps we would find more promising ways of treating the number one problem in America.

Ideas such as sentencing drug offenders to work at hospitals so they can witness the horrors of drug abuse and withdrawal first hand, requiring violent offenders to go on police ride-along programs to witness the effects of violence first hand, having white-collar criminals instruct companies and individuals how to protect themselves from cons and rip-offs are all good beginnings.

Driven by frustration and fear, our inability to deal with crime will lead us on a self-destructive path to our darkest century. If history does repeat itself, we will return to the failed brutalities of the past. Slave owners of the future will not wear white sheets or grow cotton. They will wear a suit and a tie and preside over six million of prisoners. ■■■

**PRISONERS
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SCIENTISTS WILL
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TRANSPLANT
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A PRISON LIFE READER WRITES:

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Core Transformations can be ordered from: NLP Comprehensive, 4895 Riverbend Rd., Ste. A, Boulder, CO 80301-9815. \$26.00.

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Titles in the works include the *Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure* and the *Federal Rules of Appellate Procedure* in Spanish. Also coming up is a translation of selected portions of the Federal Immigration and Forfeiture laws. In addition, the organization publishes a monthly newsletter, *Guideline Alert*, which highlights applicable excerpts from the Federal Sentencing Guidelines as well as proposals for amendments being considered by the Sentencing Commission. Contact: *Publicaciones Legales En Español, Inc.* P.O. Box 623, Palisades Park, N.J. 07650. 1-800-432-0004.

KILLER FENCES AND STERILIZED CONS

Caught up in the get-tough-on-crime frenzy, Congressional representatives across the country are introducing some pretty sadistic bills. Representative Wayne Crump (D-Potosi, MO), for example, has found a way to keep convicts inside the state's two maximum security prisons: surround them with a high-voltage electric fence that kills anyone touching it.

Crump added the killer fence amendment to his multi-part prison bill during recent House debate. He said the amendment was prompted by Percy Cooksey, who last November became the first prisoner to escape from Potosi Correctional Center in its six years of operation. "There wouldn't have been an escape with a lethal electric fence," Crump said.

Under his proposal, the Department of Corrections must install an electrical fence—between the pair of 12-foot non-lethal fences topped with razor wire—at Potosi and the state's other maximum security prison, Jefferson City Correctional Center. The amendment also requires hot fences at any maximum security prison the state builds, and gives the agency the option of erecting lethal fences at any of Missouri's seven medium facilities.

Crump estimated it would cost about \$1.5 million to install the fence at Jefferson City, but that the fence would

pay for itself in one year because fewer guards would be needed on walls surrounding the prison.

"The fence won't attack the inmates. If they stay in jail and don't try to escape, they won't have any problems," replied Rep. Quincy Troupe (D-St.Louis) to criticism by Rep. Jon Bennett (R-St. Charles) that the killer fence was a rather harsh form of punishment.

Meanwhile, the Senate Judiciary Committee is considering HB 1100, a bill introduced by Colorado lawmakers

that allows for prisoners to be voluntarily sterilized upon release. It would authorize the state to give prisoners free surgical procedures to render them childless.

"These idiots in Colorado believe that cons breed cons," writes Dave Elliot, a Colorado prisoner. "If that's the truth, then why am I in prison? My parents never had a speeding ticket, let alone a felony. My dad designs missiles for our country's protection. We chose to be criminals. We weren't born that way."

FREEWORLDERS FASCINATED BY PRISON

Get this: Ever since West Virginia opened a new maximum security prison in Mount Olive earlier this year, people have been gathering on a nearby ridge to sit, gawk and con-watch. "Most people drive up, stop, get out and then move on. But some of the locals like to sit all day long," state trooper T.C. Booth reported.

A prisoner said that he and his fellows are worried. "There's always the oddball lunatic with a rifle who could decide to mete out his own brand of frontier justice," the prisoner reported.

Meanwhile, a specialty shop in New

Hope, PA that sells plates and glassware from country clubs, hospitals and other institutions recently added the prison food tray to its line of novelty hot plates. "Take home the diner experience," reads a card that comes with the metal trays.

Even The Gap has jumped on the bandwagon. Baby Gap shops recently added the convict suit to their line of toddlerwear. Though not marketed as such, the black-and-white striped jumpsuit closely resembles the chain-gang uniform that some lawmakers are saying should be reinstated.

Tyson Headed for the Ring

Former heavyweight boxing champ Mike Tyson, who was released from an Indiana prison in March after serving three years for rape, broke his silence to make a brief announcement: He will return to boxing, and he'll be doing it under the auspices of his controversial promoter, Don King.

"Don is the greatest promoter in the world, as we know," Tyson told a mob of reporters who turned out in Cleveland. Many have speculated that Tyson had had a rift with King, but the 28-year-old boxer said he and King had signed a deal

(continued on next page)



FEMALE PRISONERS TAKE ON THE B.O.P.

Tyson Headed for the Ring

(continued from previous page)

Several women prisoners at FMC Lexington, Kentucky filed suit in 1993 challenging the B.O.P.'s installation of the Inmate Telephone System. The ITS as proposed would have eliminated prisoners' ability to make collect calls. Also, prisoners would have been limited to making calls to a very small number of family and friends. In November 1993, the action was certified as a nationwide class action on behalf of all federal prisoners. Since the filing of the suit, and probably because of it, the B.O.P. decided to make FMC Lexington a male prison.

With the announcement that females were being transferred from Lexington, the U.S. District Court issued a non-retaliation order against the named plaintiffs and ordered that the women be among the very last to be transferred. This was done to ensure that the named plaintiffs would be available for court hearings as needed. The B.O.P. kept shipping women until most women, including the majority of named plaintiffs, were transferred to other institutions. The B.O.P. then went to court seeking to transfer the remaining named plaintiffs. The plaintiffs' attorney, Douglas L. McSwain, agreed that the women be transferred to other institutions, but asked that he have access to the named plaintiffs via conference calls and requested cooperation in getting them back to court. The B.O.P. flatly refused. Consequently, the Court ordered that the remaining named plaintiffs stay at Lexington.

Plaintiffs Norma Faye Cook, Conchita Washington and Antoinette M. Frink remain at Lexington. They are confined in the hospital under very bizarre conditions.

"Since the inception of the suit and resultant litigation, we have scored a number of victories," writes Antoinette Frink. "However, the B.O.P. now seeks to bypass the courts and have Congress abolish the Commissary Fund Trust, which is money generated by inmates for the benefit of inmates. The B.O.P. caused a rider (Title VII) to be attached to a bill (HR 667). Passage of HR 667 would wipe out all of the successes we have gained thus far. Readers should petition Congress to defeat HR 667. It would be in the best interest not only of prisoners, but of the American public. Please help us."

with the MGM Brand in Las Vegas to host the upcoming bouts, which will be broadcast on the Showtime premium cable channel.

Tyson said he would be managed by longtime friends John Horne and Rory Holloway, but he did not say when his first bout would be or how much he would be paid to return to the ring.

"I want to associate myself with the biggest and the best, and I look forward to working with them and seeing you soon," said Tyson, who was dressed in a black suit, topped off with a straw hat.

Tyson's statement took only 76 seconds to read, and he left without taking any questions. He avoided the subject of his rape conviction, saying only, "For the past three years I've had a chance to reflect on my life and to develop my mind, and I will continue my journey to making myself a better person so I can help others."

Tyson, who converted to Islam while in prison, closed by saying: "May Allah bless you all."

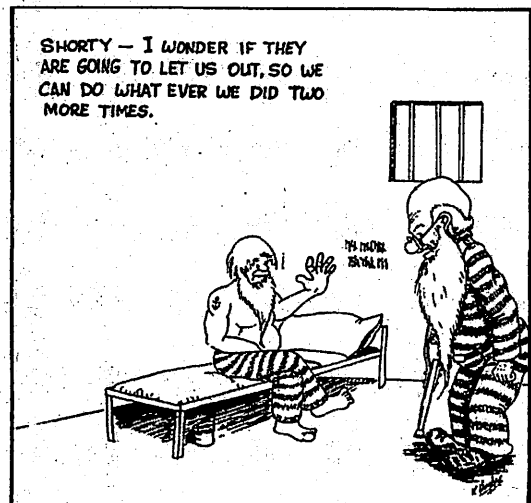
Art, Music Banned in Massachusetts Prisons

Massachusetts' Governor Weld this year terminated all art, music, vocational training and college courses from state prisons, reports Phyllis Kornfeld, a former art teacher in the system. Kornfeld contacted the Mass. Dept. of Corrections, which confirmed that the only exceptions are G.E.D. and E.S.L. classes, and training for skills useful within the system, such as barber school for cutting fellow prisoners' hair, and cooking, so prisoners can prepare meals for staff. Kornfeld said the corrections official believed the cuts were a result of the governor's response to the public's fury over prisoners' privileges, and that he had his eye on the White House.

Apparently, prisoners are also prevented from pursuing art on their own. Kornfeld contacted a Treatment and Programs director, who said that according to a new property policy, colored pencils are no longer sold at the commissary. "He also told me that handkerchief art is considered to be gang-related, and that anyone found drawing on a handkerchief will be disciplined and the handkerchief will be confiscated," writes Kornfeld.

"The effect on prisoner/artists who have been holding on to their sanity, doing their time peacefully, remains to be seen," continues Kornfeld. "Many have been receiving seri-

ous public recognition for their artwork, and have a chance to survive when they get out. And for all incarcerated men and women, not necessarily artists, who add a bit of color to an envelope they send home, or decorate their sneakers, this will close one of the few remaining doors to experiencing the quality of being human."



NEW INFO ON INCARCERATED DADS

According to the Department of Justice, there were approximately 690,000 fathers among the 1,200,000 men incarcerated in the U.S. at the end of 1992. A majority of all male prisoners, whether they are married or single, are fathers.

Dads in prison have complex family networks. At least half of all incarcerated fathers with two or more children have children by different mothers. Most prisoners are not involved in an ongoing relationship with the mothers of the children. In fact, over half of the fathers in recent studies reported that their marriages ended while they were serving their current sentences.

Incarcerated fathers, like incarcerated mothers, are concerned with the well-being of their children. However, unlike women prisoners, jailed and imprisoned dads identify child discipline, lack of guidance or supervision, and the possibility that their children might "get in trouble" as their greatest concern. Many men are worried that their children might forget them, that they might be replaced in their children's lives by another father figure, and that their children might lose respect for them.

Dads behind bars report that they often feel powerless in their role as parents. Male prisoners usually do not expect to be consulted about their children's problems or participate in decisionmaking relating to their children. This is consistent with the fact that many prisoners did not live with their children prior to arrest.

Many dads in jail or prison have no contact with their children at all. One recent study found that almost a third of male prisoners had not seen their children since they entered prison and over half had not seen their children in the six months before the survey. Fathers who do not receive visits say that getting transportation for the kids to the prison and getting someone to accompany them are the biggest obstacles to visitation. About one fifth of these dads say they do not have parent-child visits because the children's mother disapproves of visiting. This is not surprising in light of the fact that most imprisoned fathers do not have active relationships with the mothers of their children.

Some incarcerated fathers who have little contact with their children claim

that they do not want their children to visit them in jail or prison. One study of federal prisoners found that 87% of unvisited fathers claim to have made the decision to skip the father/child visits themselves.

The typical male prisoner comes from a single parent home and has at least one family member who has been incarcerated. About one in seven men behind bars was raised by someone other than his parents, and about one in five spent some time in foster care. About a third have parents who abused alcohol or drugs. One in eight report that they experienced physical or sexual abuse as a child.

The level of education among prisoners has increased during the past six years, but only about one third of all incarcerated men have completed high school. Nine out of 10 had an annual income of less than \$25,000 prior to

arrest, and seven out of 10 lived below the poverty level.

—By Denise Johnston, Director, Center for Children of Incarcerated Fathers

LOOKING FOR IN-HOUSE REPORTERS

What's going on in your prison? Be a *Prison Life* correspondent and send us your newsbits.

Send to:

Prison Life Block Beat
505 8th Ave
New York, NY 10018.



"My husband's doing time.
He needs a 5-15 year battery."

Art by Christian Snyder

Block Beat contributors: Dave Elliot, Brent A. Ellis,
Antionette Frink, Phyllis Kornfeld.

Insider Outlook

Art by Jesse Perez, Newton County Detention Center.



Meatloaf Grease and Warm Skim Milk

Allen Correctional Institution, 4:30 a.m. The roller pops open my door and throws a breakfast sack at me. "Transport," she yells as the sack hits my foot. The pain reminds me that I just spent the night in the infirmary, having broken my foot the day before. Shit, I've only had about 25 minutes of sleep, between hand jobs and the pain in my leg.

I open my breakfast sack—the dreaded transport meal: a cold meatloaf sandwich, two hard-boiled eggs and warm skim milk. Oh, goodie! The sandwich has more grease on it than meat. Before I get to finish my four-star cuisine, two corn-fed rollers come in, pick me up and stuff my big ass in a wheelchair fit for a munchkin. Out the door we go. The stinging cold numbs my body as the rollers make sure we hit every bump in the yard between the infirmary and transport.

The sally port is filled with the

same old faces and the same ol' bullshit lines, as if this was all something new. "I ain't goin' . . . I'll go to the hole next time." "They better never get me up this early again."

See, I go on these trips a lot because I'm losing my eyesight, but that's another lawsuit.

"No underwear! No jewelry! No cigarettes!" a roller yells as he passes out the odd-fitting, uncomfortable orange jumpsuits and gets us in line for the morning squat and cough. Just then, another roller stomps in through the back door laughing his ass off as the cold blast of morning air gives new meaning to the term blue balls. "The old blue bird won't be warm until we hit Marysville (an hour away) and we still gotta go 'cross the street to Lima and get 12 of their inmates," he says.

Now, every prisoner in Ohio who's been to C.M.C. (Correctional Medical Center, in Columbus) knows how long that trip is with 12 dudes, let alone another 12 from another camp. *What else could go wrong?* I think.

So I'm sitting on this freezing cold vinyl seat, nearly bare-assed, with a cold steel shackle around my swollen ankle that I can barely feel anyway because I'm nearly frozen to death, and I keep burping up the taste of meatloaf grease and warm skim milk. At the same time, I'm listening to 23 other guys piss and moan about how uncomfortable they are. But who would believe it if someone said the fun was only about to begin?

Like I've said, I've been on these trips before and it's no big surprise when the rollers pull the bus up behind the Ma and Pa's Gas-n-Go doughnut shop to get some jelly's and eclairs and some thick mud coffee to keep'm awake so we can get there alive. So while we're waiting, I scrape the frost off my window for a peep of the freeworld, thinkin' maybe I can get a good tit shot from a biker mama. Suddenly I hear the roller trying to start the old bird: *click click click*.

Hot damn, I'm thinking, the bus is broke down.

You should've seen the look on the driver's face! He's got 24 felons on a maximum security bus, four officers with 12 gauge, sawed-off riot pump shotguns hanging from their fat, powdered sugar-covered bellies, jelly dripping from their fingers, sitting out back of Ma & Pa's Gas-n-Go doughnut shop in Nowhere, USA.

"Hell to tell the captain," one of the prisoners yells. We shout every sarcastic insult we can think of (and get away with). We even offer to get out and push. Can you picture that Cool Hand Luke shit?

I've always wanted something like this to happen, where the rollers get caught with their hands in the doughnut box, pissing off tax dollars while they get time-and-a-half or double-time. But they could've picked a warmer day.

Our "rescue," or "recapture," was unforgettable. It looked like every statey in Ohio was there. You would've thought it was Lucasville all over again. Of course, they passed us by twice before they found our hide-out in the back of the Gas-n-Go, because the roller forgot to tell them we were behind it.

They had so many guns pointed at us, I thought I was in a Schwarzenegger flick. They were just waiting for the slightest movement of a belly chain, like we were a bunch of

Houdinis or something. The deputy wardens were there, the majors were there, everybody who was anybody was there, pointing a gun at us. Even Ma and Pa from the Gas-n-Go were pointing out the window from the doughnut shop like we were involved in some kind of Alamo stand-off.

If we were so dangerous, why in hell were these rollers getting way with stopping at every greasy spoon and crackhouse with a busload of state property?

Here's my point: Why don't we invest some of the millions that Clinton is giving us on new buses? Maybe buses with new alarms that go off when the rollers are about to fall asleep at the wheel?

What happened to me? Well, I'm still sitting in the infirmary with a broken foot and a sprained wrist, burping up meatloaf grease and warm skim milk, waiting for the next bus ride from hell.

*James Goodall, Jr.
A.C.I., Lima, OH*

Bitten by Spider, Bitter at State

People should know about Arizona prisons. I'm incarcerated at East Unit in Florence and the medical treatment here is terrible. On October 11, 1994, I was bitten by a brown recluse spider, whose bite is many times worse than a black widow's. I immediately went to the yard office to get a pass for medical and was told by the on-duty cop to "get the fuck out of my face." She said I was keeping her from her job and she didn't want to hear anything about it. Needless to say, I received no medical attention that day.

I was seen the next day, but it was too late by then. The flesh was infected. They prescribed antibiotics but that was all. After three months of antibiotics, I was finally seen by a surgeon. He stated that I should have been seen and treated the day the bite occurred.

A month later, I was seen again and this same surgeon told me I needed to go to the hospital for X-rays to see if the bone was infected. He also said I'd be staying at the hospital so he could cut out all the remaining rotten flesh, and he prescribed more antibiotics.

Well, it's a week later and still, nothing. How am I supposed to get treatment?

Now I want compensation, but all the lawyers around here seem to be afraid of the D.O.C. The surgeon says

if the infection is in the bone, I could lose my leg.

So here I sit, with under a year left, and my leg is rotting away.

Tell everyone to stay out of Arizona. It's not nice.

*David Jones
Arizona State Prison, Florence, AZ*

Seekin' Solidarity in Solitary

I'm closing in on my third month of solitary confinement here at S.C.I. Pittsburgh. It's just another day without education, vocational training, work and only limited recreation. The majority of us here sit idle in our cages.

A sense of powerlessness emerges, followed by feelings of hatred and resentment for the people and the system responsible for these abuses. There's not even a legal point a prisoner can use to be removed to a less secure and more productive prison environment. Our feelings of rage and personal impotence only increase as every petty rule is enforced and any infraction, even the slightest, is punished to the max.

What is the underlying purpose of such confinement?

The purpose of solitary is to control those considered a threat to the institution. We are locked down 23 or more hours a day. No one is allowed to use the main law library and we are allowed only limited legal materials. Spanish-speaking prisoners are deprived of the law in their mother language. There are no religious services and outdoor exercise (which is required one hour, five days a week) is spent in a cage not much larger than our cells.

Solitary used to be for taming the most violent prisoners. But prison rules change from day to day and policy enforcement is arbitrary. The bloody history of lockdown has shown us that isolation and repression provoke the very behavior they are supposed to stem.

I've never been one for inaction. Everything I've ever felt strongly about, I've done something about. I am exhausting myself trying to change because the harder I fight the system, the more frustrated I get.

The authorities want total control. They have no con-

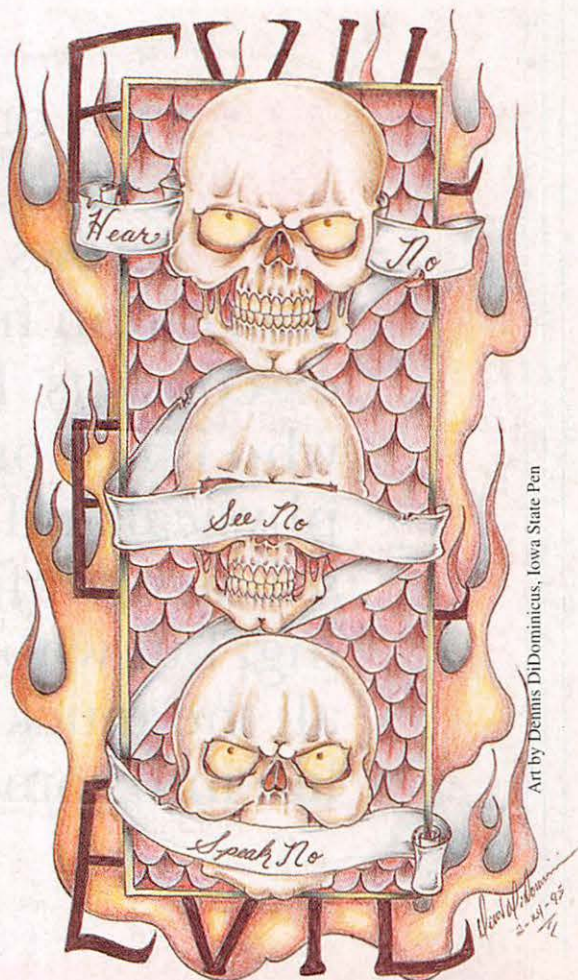
cern with the rehabilitation, wants or needs of prisoners. Although some control over prisoners is necessary, total control is cruel.

I've seen guys in solitary who've been destroyed, broken and turned into vegetables, all for the sake of control. We have nothing to look forward to but long weeks, months and years of enforced idleness and programs designed to destroy our bodies, minds and spirit, rendering us incapable of being any future assistance to our people.

What we need to do is organize the collective activities among us. Our objective in this area should be to change the relationship of forces between the prison administration and us by gaining control of as many areas of prison life as possible.

Control will allow us to effectively recruit, organize and train ourselves. It is a necessary step in the struggle to teach one another. The more control we develop over ourselves in solitary, and the more legal expertise we pick up, the easier it will be to challenge the legality of this prison within a prison in court.

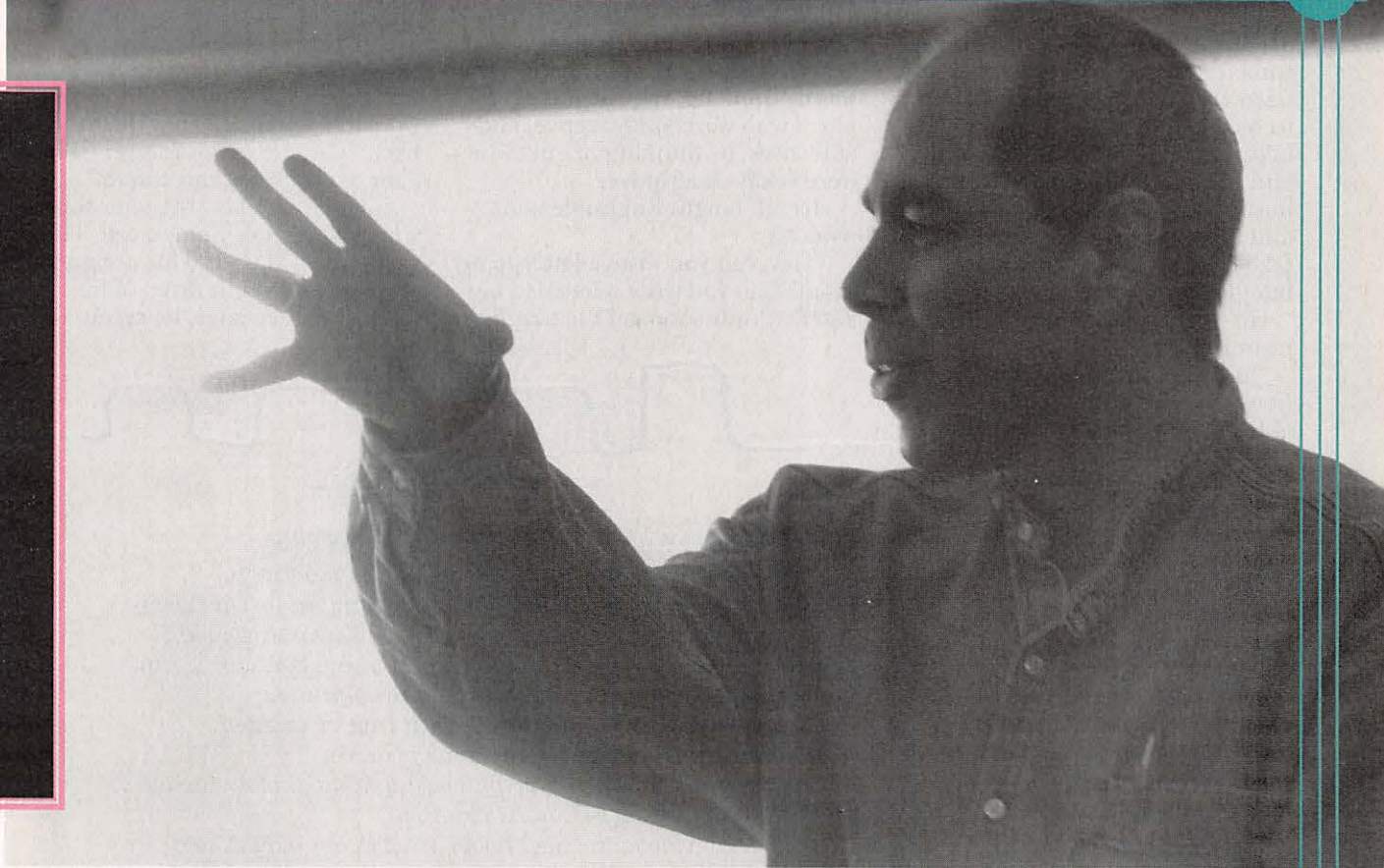
*Anthony Hartman
S.C.I. Pittsburgh*



JIMMY SANTIAGO BACA UN YATO CON CHINGO DE VISIÓN

Story & Photos by Chris Cozzone

Every once in a while, the Correctional Monster Machine screws up and spews out an aberration from its normal stock of ex-convicts. It's usually somebody who is not only able to get past the physical and psychological abuse, solitary confinement and clockwatching, but who is also able to transform all the muck and bullshit of prison life into something beautiful.



Two trainee guards stood at attention in the back of the classroom at Camden County Prison in New Jersey one April day, their legs spread slightly, their Nazi flat-topped, concrete baby faces staring militantly ahead, their battle-black batons swinging now and then as they altered their cramped stances. Behind them, in a Plexiglas-safe room, a real guard, armed with firepower and videoscreens, monitored the adjoining hallways and the 20-plus prisoners in bright orange jumpsuits in the Romper Room-gone-mad classroom. Jimmy Santiago Baca stood before the group of cons, reading his poems and talking about writing.

The cramped classroom was six floors up. Through a looped strand of barbed wire on the ledge outside the Plexiglas window, the prisoners were treated to a free look at sky and unscenic Camden, the employees' parking lot and beyond that, the city's industrial barrios. Walt Whitman's old crib, an historic site now, lies just around the corner. In other parts of the prison, men can look down on the dead poet's gray house, many unaware of what they are seeing.

But today, the cons who'd signed up for this class were meeting a live poet. More than Whitman, who sang of human spirit a century past, this *vato loco* turned *vato de vision* had been right where they were sitting: rock bottom behind bars.

Jimmy told the cons about going into Florence, Arizona's hellhole prison a *vato loco* who couldn't read or write, and about how he had gone before the reclassification committee asking to go to G.E.D. school. "Work in the kitchen two months and we'll see," they told him, and he complied. After two months, he went before them again, but it was still a no go. Jimmy refused to cooperate further and they threw him in the hole.

Long before there was *Hooked on Phonics*, he was locked in a cell, borrowing books from his homeboys, stealing textbooks from attendants. Page by page, he would enunciate each word until he had them down. The words, music and dreamscape images stood in stark contrast to his prison existence and filled him with power and purpose, need and vision. He made a notebook from a

cardboard box, bound it with shoelace.

"Why did you start writing?" a prisoner asked after raising his hand, his beefy forearms stained with the indian ink of jailhouse art.

"The thing about writing," Jimmy answered, "is that unlike most other professions, you do not just learn it. You write from a sense of need. You *have* to write. Like writing in a notebook at the end of a day, or writing about something you can't control. Once you do that, the momentum of that drive carries you into the world of writing. It just takes you there."

His writing angered the Man.

"I would go to the reclassification committee every month. They'd ask me if I was going to work, I'd say no. They'd send me back to my cell and I'd wait for someone to come for me. When he got there, I'd say, 'Don't come in. Please, go away.' They'd say, 'The warden says . . .' I'd say, 'I don't care what the warden says, leave me alone.' They'd open the door, there'd be a fight, I'd go to solitary for a week. Then I'd go back to my cell, go before reclass three weeks later and start it all again the next month. I guess they didn't like me.


"The guns thought I was a leader of a gang inside. I've done some really bad things, true, but I wasn't a leader because I wanted to be a leader. I was a leader because somebody winked at me and I . . . y'know, took care of business. I went and got a pipe and took care of what I had to take care of. So everybody started hanging with me."

His writing alienated more than just the Man.

"Just as I started to realize how powerful and unbelievable language was, I also realized how much most of the other prisoners hated it. 95% of them could not read or write. When I told them that I wanted to read and write, it threatened who *they* were.

"These same guys who'd been following me around because I was such a bad ass and because I took care of business, I told these guys I wasn't gonna work. All of 'em turned on me. 'You're nuthin' but a punk and a sissy.'

"I stood my ground."

 As Jimmy talked, I looked at the cons' faces, then at the junior guards in the back, trying so hard to be tough. My eyes returned to the prisoners, some buried inside their day-glo jumpsuits, others bustin' out of 'em with brawn and jail-house tats. The cons' eyes told all: death and violence and suffering and, yes, buried wisdom they had yet to tap into.

They sat very still in their chairs the whole time, soaking in words from the poet. At first you could smell the stale surrender in the air. I thought it was poor ventilation or uncleaned vents, but Ely, Jimmy's *ése* who was tagging along and who'd done his share of time, assured me it was the smell of despair that prisoners emit. If only for a while, that would clear up. Jimmy told stories of how he learned to read, of success and hardship.

"I remember when I learned what a noun was," Jimmy said, and started to laugh. "I was in a big cellblock with 500 guys. I freaked because the word 'noun' meant a person. So I

yelled to my friend down the tier, 'Hey *ése*, man, you're a *noun* . . ."

Jimmy remembered what a verb was by thinking of guys in his cellblock who were always active, and adjectives, by thinking of guys who were really descriptive.

His self-taught English lessons paid off.

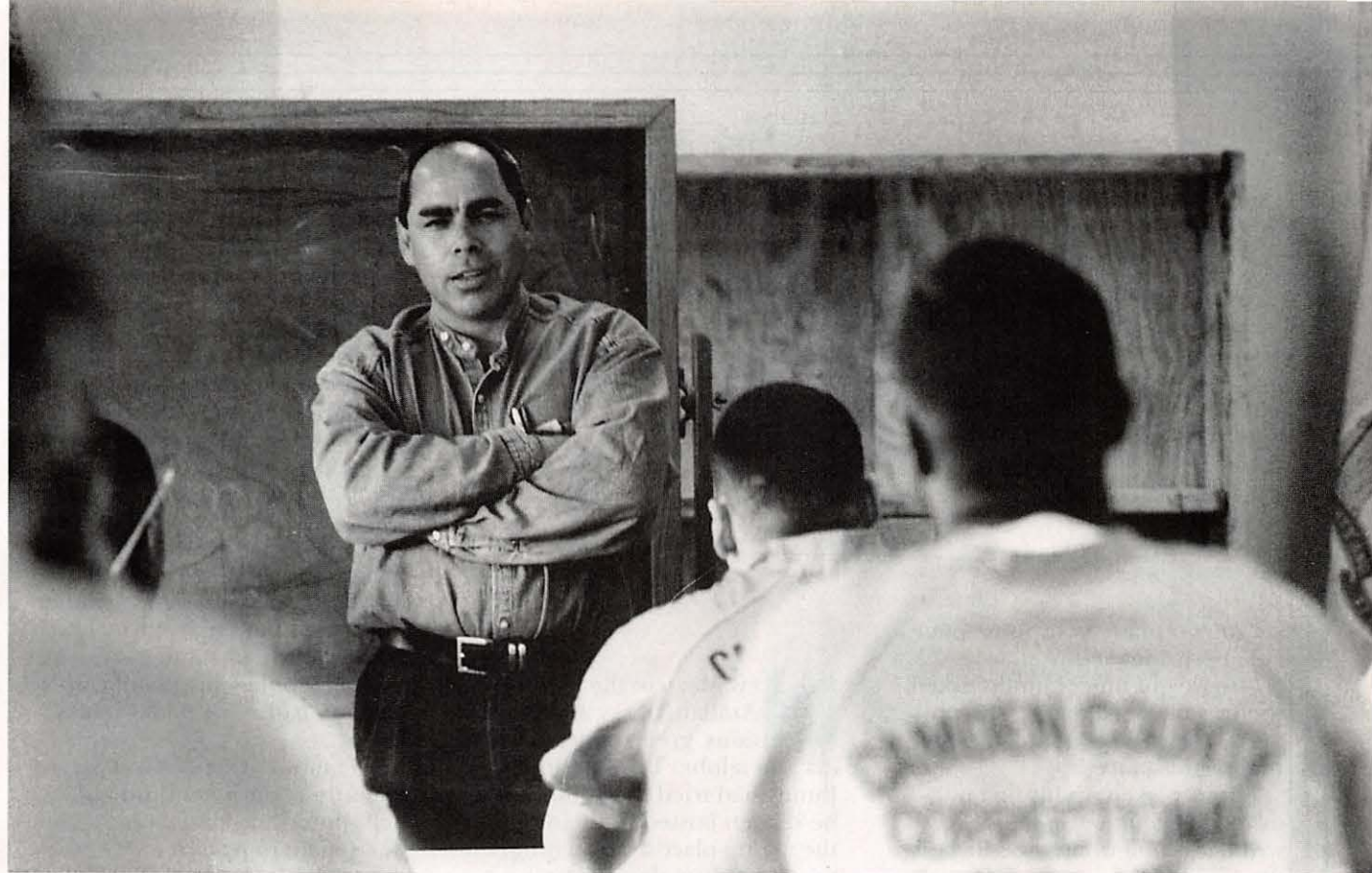
"Hey, can you write a letter to my mom? Can you write a letter to my sister?" Pretty soon, all the toughest

guys in the joint were my buddies. I was getting them all the fine women outside. They'd come to me, hey *carнал*, you got to write this woman a letter . . . They'd write back, 'Oh, I love you forever.' I had a lot of cigarettes and coffee."

One day, a fellow prisoner threw a magazine into Jimmy's cell. The mag was paying \$100 for accepted poetry. Jimmy sent three of his poems. A week later, he received

I Will Remain

I don't want to leave any more or get transferred
to another prison because this one is too tough.
I am after a path you cannot find by looking at green fields,
smelling high mountain air that is clear and sweetly
Odorous as when you fall in love again and again and again.
I am looking for a path that weaves through rock
and swims through despair with fins of wisdom.
A wisdom to see me through this nightmare,
not by running from it; by staying to deal blow for blow.
I will take the strength I need from me,
not from fields or new friends. With my old friends
fighting!
Bleeding! Calling me crazy! And never getting the respect I desire,
fighting for each inch of it . . .
I am not one of those beautiful people,
but one of the old ones, a commoner of the world
You can find in taverns, seaports carrying bamboo baskets with fish,
drinking coffee in a donut shop, weeping in the dark
In a two-for-five ramshackle hotel room,
dreaming and walking along a city street at dawn.
To move about more freely, to meet and talk with new people,
to have silence once in a while, to live in peace,
Without harassment of cops pulling you in as a suspect,
these are very beautiful thoughts.
But I will remain here where the air is old and heavy,
where life is grimy,
Full of hate at times, where opportunities are rare,
anger and frustration abundant,
Here in this wretched place I most wish to leave
I will remain.
I stay because I believe I will find something,
something beautiful and astounding awaits my pleasure,
Something in the air I breathe,
that will make all my terrors and pains seem raindrops
On a rose in summer, its head tilted in the heat
as I do mine.
Here on this island of death and violence,
I must find peace and love in myself, eventually freedom,
And if I am blessed, then perhaps a little wisdom.
I stay here searching for gold and ivory in the breast of each man.
I search for the tiny glimmering grains in smiles and words
of the dying, of the young so old old, of the broken ones.



\$300, part of which he used to buy everyone in his cellblock ice cream.

The poems were seen by many freeworlders. People would write Jimmy, telling him how beautiful his words were. Eventually, it led to his first published collection: *Immigrants in Our Own Land*, published in 1977.

Of course, none of that mattered to the guns. Still refusing to work, Jimmy endured even more bullshit—like electroshock therapy. “You’re a threat to security,” the warden told him.

“How could I be a threat?” Jimmy asked. “I just want to write.”

When Jimmy received a letter from a Christian working for the Good Samaritan organization asking what he most wanted for Christmas, instead of *Playboys* and money, he asked for paper and pencils.

The act of kindness most significant to Jimmy involved a sacrifice by a close Chicano brother. Jimmy was up for parole for the umpteenth time. Unable to face rejection again, he told himself that if he was denied, he would take his frustration out on a dude who’d been jacking with him. After the board said no, Jimmy went back to his cell for his piece. Then he went looking for the asshole who was gonna get what was

comin’ to him.

“This *ése* of mine knew what I was gonna do. And he knew it’d fuck me up. He wanted me to make it with my writing. So he hit this guy first and got busted for it.

“This *vato* did it out of *love*. He did for *me*. Every time I win some award or do some movie or publish some book, I think, this is all because of this guy. I owe it all to him.”



After six-and-a-half years, Jimmy Santiago Baca was released.

“I’ll never forget when I walked out of the dungeon,” says Baca. “It was like a movie scene. All the bad asses, they came up to me, to shake my hand, to hug me. Some of the guys were crying. It was a beautiful thing.

“These were the same guys who’d called me names. These same guys, they were waiting there when I walked out the gate . . . They didn’t know how to say thank you, but they were coming over.

“And I had this incredible power to speak to them. I could see who they were, and I just told them, ‘I love you. I wish there was a way we could stop this. I wish there was a way you could be with your wife, your *familia*, your girlfriend . . .’

“After I walked out that gate,

that’s when the real trouble started.”

For an ex-con, Jimmy had a lot going for him. But he was too full of rage to care. For the next two to three years, Jimmy wanted to go back in.

“People outside didn’t know nothing about *nothing*. They didn’t care about what was happening to people. So I went back to crime and started moving stuff, *a lot* of stuff across country. The whole time, I was almost begging . . . I felt better in.

“At the same time, I knew that was the one thing I’d fought against all the time I’d been in prison. I had fought to retain my sensibility as a social human being, and to not let myself fall below that. I didn’t *want* to thrive on violence. I was a good person. Basically.”

Prison had done something to Jimmy’s soul. It had twisted it, saturated it with hate and rage and pain.

“All those years of fighting and I was gonna end up back inside because I couldn’t live out here. I was on a downward spiral of destruction.” Nods of agreement up and down the rows in the classroom. A guard in the back checked his watch: Jimmy was riding on overtime.

When Life

Is cut close, blades and bones,
And the stench of sewers is everywhere,
Blood-sloshed floors,
And guards count the dead
With the blink of an eyelid, then hurry home
To supper and love, what saves us
From going mad is to carry a vacant stare,
And a quiet half-dead dream.

"You gonna read us some poetry?" a prisoner ventured.

"Do we got time?" Jimmy asked the prison coordinator, who nodded. The irritable guards shifted their rigid stances.

Jimmy picked up his first published collection of poems. "I wrote this one while I was locked up . . ."

He read three poems from *Immigrants in Our Own Land & Selected Early Poems*, a collection of poems mainly about prison life and the Chicano experience.

"How do you pick your topics?" a dude asked. The poet answered, roundabout, "I pick a theme and concentrate on it."

Jimmy writes the way any good writer does. He writes about what he's been through, what he knows, about what is dear to him: the barrio, love, his *familia*, the land, being Chicano, being Apache . . . life.

Angels might have kept Jimmy from getting busted again, but the demons didn't leave him. For three years after his release, he just couldn't kill the beast. He'd had a book published, but he was still waist-high in criminality, and spaced out on valium half the time. Working with the Banditos and Hell's Angels, packing a pistol and calling the shots for two dozen workers beneath him, Jimmy continued to live *la vida loca*.

"I didn't have the courage to face the pain or the damage that had been done to me. I was doing anything I could just to stop me from thinking I could make it out here."

Jimmy went back to New Mexico, his homeland.

New Mexico: the land of Azatlan, of sky and mountains, green chile, low-riders and adobe. The last time Jimmy had tried to venture back, he'd been busted for being in the wrong place at the wrong time, at a drug dealer's house. An FBI agent was plugged and everyone in the house was arrested. The man responsible for the cop's death only served six months. Jimmy got slapped with a ten-year bid at Florence.

This time, though, he made it back to New Mexico without getting tagged by the badges. In Albuquerque, he resumed his love/hate relationship with the Muse and his struggles with the demons, doing the criminal thing until he couldn't take it any more.

"I wanted to write a story . . . I was sick of the criminal life. I wrote a book, didn't think it was worth anything and sent it off."

Jimmy went to Mexico to hang out with Indians in the mountains near Chihuahua. A publishing house in New York managed to track him down and offered to publish his book of poems and another book later. Soon after, Jimmy was flying all over the globe, selling books, speaking at Yale, winning awards: the American Book Award (1988), the Pushcart Prize (1989) and several others.

Jimmy was emerging as a major contemporary poet, yet he was still just a *vato* from the *barrio* trying to cope with post-

prison shock. "All of a sudden, I had to deal with all these college boys comin' around after my talks, asking me what I thought of this or that. 'I dunno,' I'd say. 'That's some heavy stuff . . .'"

In the midst of success, past the thug life but still fighting for possession of his soul, Jimmy wrote the screenplay, *Blood In . . . Blood Out (Bound by Honor)* for Hollywood Pictures. The movie portrays three Chicano bro's, all blood kin and part of the *Vato Locos*, an East L.A. barrio gang. One is a painter; another, a bad-ass-turned-cop; and the third, a half-*gringo* who ends up getting pinched and sent to the slammer where he hooks up with *La Onda*, a shot-calling Chicano gang. The movie is about Chicano life, about choices, paths, life, family and honor.

The movie was filmed at San Quentin and for a month and a half, Jimmy was back behind bars, once again in *banaroos* (prison denims) but this time, acting the part of a *La Onda* warrior. The movie marked the final phase of the poet's inner war.

Jimmy told the cons in the classroom about it.

"They put me in this beautiful executive condo. I had a limousine picking me up and driving me everywhere. Then I'd go into a cell, and all the rage would come back. All the rage and bigotry and violence and hatred. I was a convict again. I actually got into a fight with one of the cons. I was standing in line and he said something. I said, 'Hey, what'd you say?' It had to stop.

"About three weeks into the shooting, which took \$100,000 to set up, something happened, I don't know what. I went right in

Like an Animal

Behind the smooth texture
Of my eyes, way inside me,
A part of me has died:
I move my bloody fingernails
Across it, hard as a blackboard,
Run my fingers along it,
The chalk white scars
That say I AM SCARED,
Scared of what might become
Of me, the real me,
Behind these prison walls.



front of the camera and I told the director, this guy who directed all these bigtime movies, *Officer and a Gentleman* and *La Bamba* and all those films . . . I said, 'I'm getting the fuck outta here.'

"I was having a nervous breakdown. I couldn't sleep. It didn't matter that I was getting paid \$25,000 a week. I was forgetting the life I had made with my family and children and friends . . . suddenly I was thrown back into prison and I couldn't believe that I'd spent seven years in such a small cell, where I could put my arms out and touch both walls. It was unbelievable.

"I went to a bar and just sat there. I went back the next day and from that point on, I stopped taking payments for the movie. I donated all of it to prisoners in California to start schools and stuff."

After the reading, back outside the walls, I asked Jimmy how he felt going back in.

"You feel the leash," he said, lighting up a smoke. "You really do. And the people who are holding the leash, nine times out of ten, don't have the faintest idea what it's like to be human. It's amazing what that does to your sense of

power, to sit at a control panel and push buttons. You are God. It's a hell of a power to have over a human being."

I told him I thought it had gone very well; the prisoners had really liked him. A couple of the guys had even read Jimmy their own poetry, stuff full of guts and heart.

"It must make you feel good," I said, "inspiring these guys."

Jimmy shrugged and took a long drag from his smoke. "I dunno. You start to disturb the complacency of prison. Then they go back to their bunks and they're riled up. You don't know if you're doing good or bad.

"I get them thinking . . . but a lot of them are in that class because they want to be there. I guess that's one of the only reasons I allow myself to talk to them the way I do. If they were just cons, a lot of 'em would shut down. Wouldn't want to hear it. They don't want to hear about possibilities and potential. It's painful—real painful—to go back and think about the kind of man you could have been all your life, the kind of man your daughter or son needs. And here you are, doin' time . . ."

Jimmy, his bro Ely and Lamont Steptoe, the literary coordinator for the Walt Whitman Cultural Arts Center in Camden and also a

nationally known poet, needed to get to New York later that night for a poetry reading in Manhattan. Most poets of Jimmy's caliber would have had agents or travel coordinators planning their every move. There'd be Evian in their face every time they looked for a water fountain, hot plates of food every time their stomachs growled. Not these guys.

"We can take a Greyhound or something," Lamont suggested. This dude practically lived on the damn buses: Every time he does one of his poetry tours, he uses Greyhound.

"You drove, no?" someone asked me before I had a chance to offer.

"Yeah, c'mon . . ." and we finished the interview in my Jeep.

"You fought the Beast in prison and won," I said to Jimmy on the way to New York. "You struggled with making it once you were out, and got through that. But then you were tossed into fame and fortune—how'd you deal with that demon?"

"Fame is strange . . . You can lose your center. Pretty quick. It's not hard when you have a big Hollywood picture, you stay in four-star hotels in every city you go to. When you have beautiful women and limousines and endless amounts of money, you just lose it

no matter what kind of person you are.

"But it's good, it's really good for conditioning. When it happens again, you're not as apt to fall into the same kind of pitfalls. You learn about the *real* stuff of life. Knowing your neighbor, inviting him over, taking care of your trees, watering them, that's the *real* stuff that counts.

"Fame and fortune changed me, then I put the breaks on it. Half of it came before the movie, half of it after it was out. I went through a 15-month slide downhill, then bottomed out. Now I'm back up again."

"Think you'll go offtrack again?"

"Never again. I've been offered so much, unbelievable deals and more. But I've said, 'No, no I don't think so.' I just want to take my kids to school in the morning. If I can write a good book at home, and have that go through the stages, foreign rights, movie rights, I can make a good living like that. I can write my scripts and do my poetry."

Jimmy has just finished two novels, which will be out next year. His next venture is to write another book of poetry—a collection of love poems. While he's writing that, he'll be kicking back at his farm outside of *Burque*, hanging out with his kids Antonio and Gabriel, maybe helping his neighbor build a house. If he's not there, he'll be in an office at the YMCA writing, or shooting hoops on the basketball court outside.

Whatever he'll be doing, he'll be striving to unlock . . .

... the secrets to life. That's what writing has done for me. It unlocks secrets that can't be known rationally but only through deep spiritual instinct.

"Writing is inundated with the beauty of life. You can't write unless you participate in the stream of life. That's the *biggest* reason to write." III

Jimmy Santiago Baca is one of 18 contemporary poets featured in The Language of Life with Bill Moyers, a PBS documentary series premiering June 23rd. The series explores the renaissance in America of public poetry.

Jimmy Santiago Baca's books: Immigrants in Our Own Land & Selected Early Poems, Black Mesa Poems and Martín & Meditations on the South Valley.

Published by New Directions, 80 Eighth Avenue, New York, NY 10011. His autobiography, Working in the Dark—Reflections of a Poet of the Barrio, is published by Red Crane Books, 826 Camino de Monte Rey, Santa Fe, NM 87505.

How We Carry Ourselves To Others In Prisons

I am the broken reed in this deathly organ,
I am those mad glazed eyes staring from bars,
the silent stone look

that knows like other stones the smell of working feet,
knows how long and wide a human can spread
over centuries,

each step, until we now step on dust
and rock of prisons.

I could not throw my feelings away,
shoot them like wild horses,
stone them like weeping dirty prophets,
could not machete them pioneering a new path,
I sought not mountain, no brave deed,

I sought to remain human, to look and feel wind bless me . . .

Chicanos, Blacks, Whites, Indians,
we are all here, our blood all red,
we are all filled with endurance
and have tasted the blade,
smelled the gun's oily smoke of death.

We are steel hunks of gears and frayed ropes,
our hands the toolsheds,
our heads the incessant groan
of never ending revolving wheels
in an empty, gaunt warehouse,
our blood dripping from steel joints
like grease and oil onto granite floors.

I meant to say, you can turn away from all this:

if you can take the hammering, they will give,
if you can hold on while they grip you
and hurl you ragefully at the ground,
if you can bite your teeth when they bend you,
and still, you do not fit,
you can be who you are.

You can see the morning and breathe in God's grace,
you can laugh at sparrows, and find love
in yourself for the sun, you can learn
what is inside you, you can know silence,
you can look at the dark gray machine around you,
souls going up like billows of black smoke,
and decide what you will do next,
you who are the main switch, who turns
everything off.

But you breathing, smiling, struggling,
turning yourself on

All four poems printed with permission from *Immigrants in Our Own Land & Selected Early Poems*, New Directions Books, 1977, 1990.

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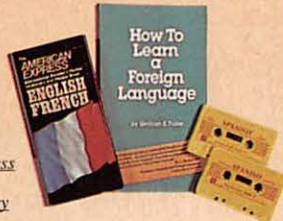
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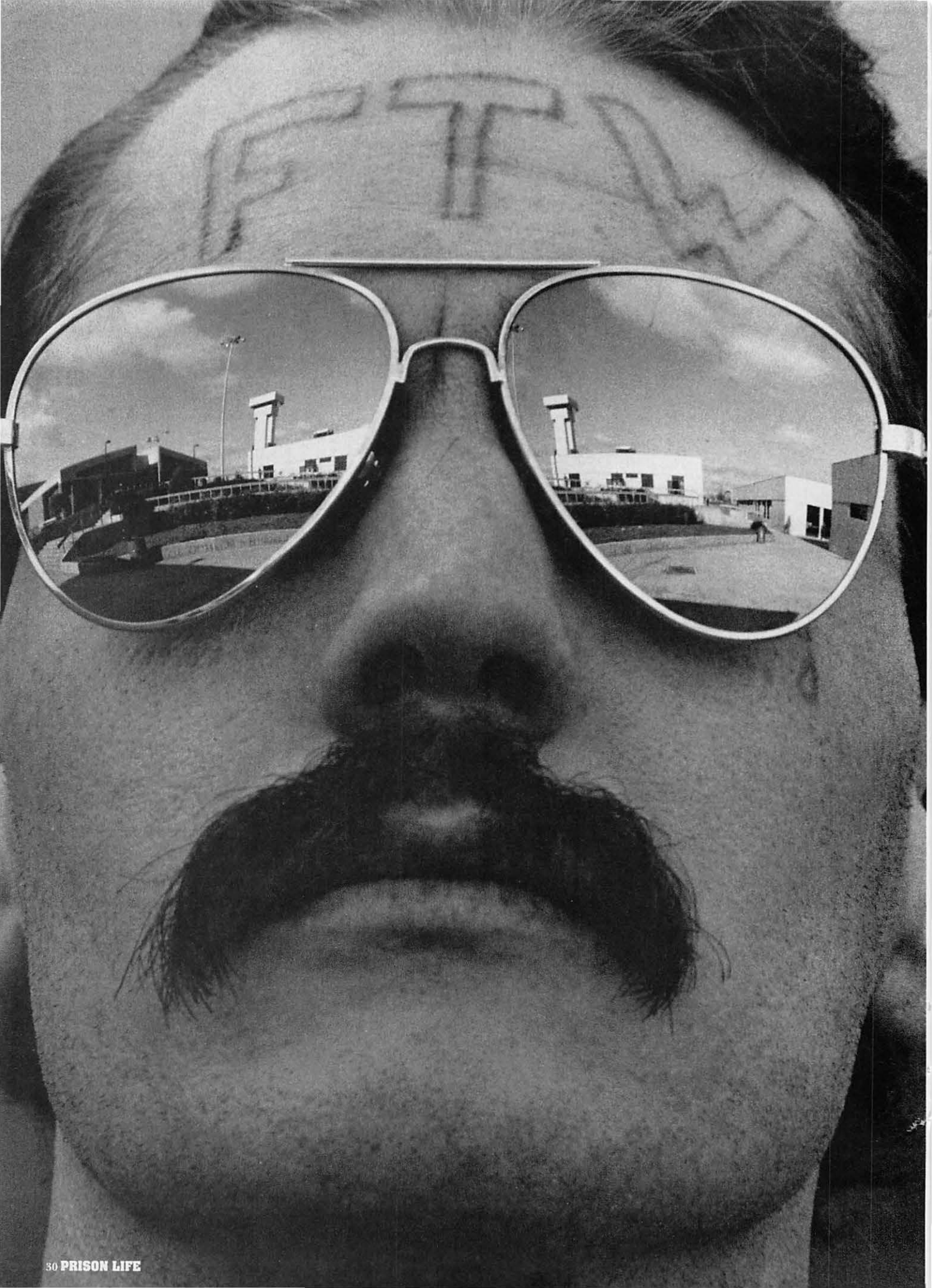
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CHALLENGING THE CONVICT CODE

by Jorge Renaud
Robertson Unit, Texas

The Convict Code is an unwritten law. No convict can recite it, but all claim to follow it. Strangely, the code is religiously adhered to by men who pride themselves on their nonconformist past. The code is a see-no-evil-speak-no-evil-hear-no-evil prohibition against cooperating with officials. The consequence of breaking the code is violent reprisal, no matter what the personal cost. It says that if you mind your business and ride your heat—no matter who started the fire—all debts will be paid.

Maybe, maybe not. I've done 13 years in Texas prisons. I've known hundreds of older convicts, many of whom did time in federal prisons. All spoke in hushed tones of the code and of the pariah's status awaiting those who violated it. These men were the elite, and you knew you'd arrived on the yard when the quiet group squatting around the free weights, bandannas draped over their shoulders, accepted you as "good people."

Recently I've read in Red Hog's *Committing Journalism* and in this magazine's June 1994 profile of Herby Sperling, about the death of the code. Both Red Hog and Sperling bemoan the birth of "newicts," gangstas who prey on each other without caring who gets caught in the crossfire. Older cons lament the passing of courtesy and respect.

I agree with the conclusion but not the premise. It is not the new breed of inmate that killed the code, it's the code's inflexibility that does not account for dishonorable men.

Photo: "Convict with an Attitude," by photographer Gary Harger, Joe Harp Correctional Facility, Oklahoma.

The code assumed a solidarity among all convicts and substituted that for personal honor. It depended on peer pressure from men who did not consider one another peers. Worse, it demanded silence when it was clearly not called for. It sacrificed uncounted convicts—good people—who killed and suffered official retribution instead of forcing official accountability on those who abused the code.

Paramount in the code was a refusal to talk to the Man unless in direct response to a query. Cooperating in any investigation was to be branded a snitch. A convict is expected to face any sanction and accept any punishment rather than give information to officials. This insistence—that under no circumstances does a convict give up another—does more to keep "good people" incarcerated than any official scam could have hoped for. It also points to a serious, deadly flaw in the dearly held code.

It comes down to the snitch. The word itself is loaded. In my mind, it denotes trading information for favors. Not all cooperating is snitching, but the code is so rigid that no middle ground is recognized. But there is a middle

IT IS NOT THE NEW BREED OF INMATE THAT KILLED THE CODE, IT'S THE CODE'S INFLEXIBILITY THAT DOES NOT ACCOUNT FOR DISHONORABLE MEN.

ground—one where personal honor and accountability meet.

For example: I am standing on the street corner and I witness a drive-by. A four-year-old girl is killed. The police request my cooperation. I comply. Am I a snitch?

Example two: Same as above, but I refuse. Two months later, I am arrested for dealing. I offer information of the as-yet-unsolved drive-by in exchange for probation. Am I a snitch?

The code would say cooperation in either instance is snitching, because it sees the Man as the enemy and

demands silence in every confrontation. I would say only the second qualifies as snitching under the definition: trading information for favors.

Example three: It is your four-year-old daughter who was killed and your neighbor has witnessed it. Do you go to him for assistance? Do you plead with him to "snitch them off?" No. You wouldn't even *use* the word "snitch" in this situation because clearly, he's not snitching. He would be helping you, not protecting murderers.

We are convicts. We have devised a code that demands solidarity from

one another in the face of an assumed enemy, one that humiliates us, denies many of us justice and brutalizes others. This solidarity is correct, if it is genuine, but it crumbles when those without honor depend on our silence to serve as cover for their cowardice.

Return to the examples above. Gang members accept the possibility of death by drive-by. It is implicit in their code, and they lose no honor when they slaughter each other so. You kill me, I kill you, and nobody talks. But innocent family members and citizen bystanders do not ascribe to that code, and when a drive-by claims their lives, gang members should not expect silence. The only honor left to them is to accept the consequences of their actions. But the same cowardice that's inherent in those actions prevents them from saying, "I did it." They depend on the code of silence, and on the power of the word "snitch," to shield them, preferring to face a scatter-shot retribution from the bereaved, with more loss of innocent life, to official accountability meted out as prison time.

The same applies in prison. If a gang member kills my cellie and sets me up to take the fall, the code demands my silence. I am supposed to take comfort in the what-goes-around, comes-around axiom. What "comes around" is supposed to be me—shank in hand, exacting revenge in the fashion prescribed by the code.

REVISING THE CONVICT CODE— ONE STEP FURTHER

by Bo Lozoff, director, Prison-Ashram Project

Revising the convict code is something I have been wrestling with for many years. However noble or ignoble the code may have been, it has become a cowardly rule of silence and violence that hurts decent convicts the most. A small number of totally lost, violent people can set the tone for an entire institution, relying on the sacredness of the code to protect them from being snitched out or taken out by the majority of "righteous cons."

I liked Jorge Renaud's examples.

Let me add one more: What if the 18-year-old son of your best friend was shipped to your wing, and you heard that he was going to be raped by the guy in the cell next to yours? The code says you don't mess in another con's business if it doesn't directly involve you. Of course, you might say that an attack on little Johnny Jr., whom you knew since he was born, *does* involve you, so you could stand up for him without violating the code.

But what if it's five rapists instead of one? Your friends don't know Johnny Jr., so would they be violating

the code by helping you to stand up to the five pitchers. And what if it wasn't Johnny Jr., but instead it was the son of a friend of your sister, whom you've never met? Would you still get involved? Would your friends? Would you be violating the code?

The problem is, *every* young kid is somebody's Johnny Jr., and it is sheer cowardice for you or me to allow *anybody's* son (or daughter) to be brutalized. There are 70-year-old grandmothers in crack neighborhoods risking their lives to clean up their 'hoods and protect other people's children

I reject that. Doing more time because a coward will not ride his own heat is not part of a code I accept. The code of silence needs a corollary—ride your own heat.

If my cell is searched and my shank is found, do I remain silent, allowing both my cellie and me to be punished? No. I accept the consequences of my actions. So should all convicts.

If a convict kills another, the only honor left him is to accept the consequences. If I am pinned with the blame, I am not bound by any code to accept responsibility. There is no honor in doing a life sentence for a coward. There is no honor in taking bloody revenge and the time that action will carry.

I will get word to the killer: Ride your own heat. Or, when asked, I will tell what I know. Not more, not less, and not to curry favor, but because this was not of my doing, it was not my business, and you have violated the first precept of the code I live by: A man of honor rides his own heat.

The only code that matters is one of honor. I grant you all rights I expect to be granted. I will act as I expect you to act, given similar circumstances. I will accept responsibility for my actions, never burdening another convict with the consequences. And if you attempt to burden me with yours, you are without honor and unworthy of my respect or my silence. ■■■



Art by Ray Fernandez, Pelican Bay SHU

who have more courage than that!

When we are in prison, the prison is our neighborhood whether we like it or not (you know, a lot of those grandmothers and parents and kids don't like *their* neighborhoods, either). Wherever we find ourselves, we have to be an honorable human being *first*, and a convict or soldier or biker or businessman or whatever else, second. That's the basic *human* code which everyone from Jesus to those conducting the Nuremberg Trials have affirmed.

When I was at Lorton (the Washington, D.C. prison) a few months ago, I was discussing these very issues with a brother who had been there about a dozen years—a good, old-fashioned righteous con. When I asked him

about rape and punks, he got this sad look in his eyes and then told me that a year earlier, five guys had raped this young kid in the middle of his dorm. It's a 70-man dorm, and nearly everybody was in there, and these five dudes grabbed the kid and carried him to a bunk, pulled a couple of sheets around the outside, and had their way with him. Most of the cons hated it—the screaming, the fear, the horrible moaning and crying for help—but no one did anything to stop it, including the brother who was telling me about it. I asked him how he felt about it—don't forget, this is a year later now—and he said "I feel ashamed. But what was I supposed to do against five guys? I didn't know whether anyone would stand with me, because, well, you

know—the code." His eyes got real sad now. Shame is a terrible thing to feel. He felt like he had not been a good man, a decent human being. That's part of *his* life now.

I said, "What you need to do is talk with the cons in your dorm *today*, not while a rape is happening, and say, "Hey, that really felt like shit last year, and it screwed that kid's life up forever. Let's not ever let that happen again in our dorm, okay?" If twenty or thirty cons decided it was never going to happen again, then it could never happen again. No violence, just sheer numbers. Do you think those five roosters are going to stand up to thirty cons? All it takes is basic grassroots neighborhood organ-

(continued on page 69)

“MUST OUR PRISONS BE RESORTS?”
—Reader’s Digest

MUST SOCIETY BE MISLED?
—Prison Life

by Jon Marc Taylor
Jefferson City, MO
photos by Chris Cozzone



Last November, a dangerous and shoddy piece of journalism appeared in *Reader's Digest*, the world's most widely circulated magazine. The title of the piece, "Must Our Prisons Be Resorts?", was as sensational and misleading as the article that followed. Initially, *Prison Life* editors considered the piece unworthy of a response. But, after receiving scores of responses from outraged prisoners throughout the country and seeing how anecdotes from the article have motivated more than a few congressional representatives to introduce bills to make prisons even tougher, we decided to publish a rebuttal. Following are three well-researched and impassioned pieces from *Prison Life* correspondents who know firsthand that prisons are far from resorts.



A prisoner locked down 23 1/2 hours a day uses a spoon to catch a glimpse of the outside world.

"Those who corrupt the public mind are just as evil as those who steal from the public purse."

Adlai Stevenson

Last year, the Mississippi legislature met in special session to deal with the overcrowding of its prison system. (The entire Mississippi system is under federal court order to improve conditions of confinement.) Instead, the august assembly decided to confiscate prisoners' TV's, ban air-conditioning and weightlifting equipment and dress their prisoners in striped uniforms with CONVICT stenciled across the back. Throughout the country, politicians, such as New York State Senator Michael Nozzolio, pontificate that "we have too many benefits and too little punishment" in our prisons.

Fueling the largely one-sided election-year diatribes were press reports, such as Robert Bidinotto's editorially trumpeted "Must Our Prisons Be Resorts?" in the November 1994 issue of *Reader's Digest*. The author claimed to have visited 14 institutions and interviewed officials at dozens of others. Bidinotto wrote of the cushy conditions and the mol-

lycoddling of prisoners in inflammatory language and took an approach that was far from objective.

Overall, Bidinotto's article is a piece of dangerous distortion, careful omission and false information, reflecting a rigorous one-dimensional point of view. Except for the outright lies, which the quoted experts uttered for him, his article is a classic case of Goebbelian propaganda, a pernicious twist on reality circulated to 28 million homes. The article is a good example of why only 13 percent of the respondents in a 1994 Harris Poll said they had a "great deal of confidence" in the news reported by the press.

Bidinotto begins the article by describing the good life at Pennsylvania's Mercer Regional Correctional Facility. He expresses amazement and disgust at the recreational facilities, the psychological counseling and the basically civil treatment prisoners there receive. What Bidinotto failed to report was that the facility was one of the newest in a state system that in 1990 was on the verge of collapse. In 1993, Pat McManus, then prison commissioner, testified in a statewide trial on prison conditions that "overcrowding, in combination with idleness, is a formula for disaster."

That disaster in progress in the late 1980s and early 1990s, led to riots and prison lockdowns throughout a prison system that is crammed to 170 percent capacity. The violent and expensive Camp Hill prison riot of 1989 exemplified the serious problems and inhumane conditions found in the Pennsylvania prison system.

Five weeks into a federal trial convened after the riot, during which prisoner after prisoner testified to inadequately investigated and rarely punished guard brutality and excessive force, the state of Pennsylvania entered into an 87-page settlement to improve living conditions, health care and job and education opportunities. All of these contextual factors were conveniently omitted in the *Reader's Digest* article.

The most distorted allegation made in the article was that the 160-year-old Missouri State Prison (rechristened Jefferson City Correctional Center) is a resort. This is a state penal system bulging at 160 percent capacity, where prisoners are forced to sleep in converted kitchens and where portable toilets are trucked in to meet the demand, a system where barely one percent of the overall budget is used for education and vocational

"If prisons are such resorts, simply open the gates and see how many run out . . . and how many walk in."

training. Bidinotto's claim of cushy conditions stemmed from the fact that the prison has an inmate-operated around-the-clock closed-circuit TV studio that broadcasts "movies containing sex, horror and violence." But to the prisoners at Jefferson City, who must endure roach-infested cells, barely edible food and a health care system so lacking that prisoners liken a serious illness to a drawn-out death sentence, Bidinotto's focusing solely on the prisoner broadcast system totally misses the mark.

"JeffTown" (the name of the closed-circuit system) is a communication/entertainment network com-

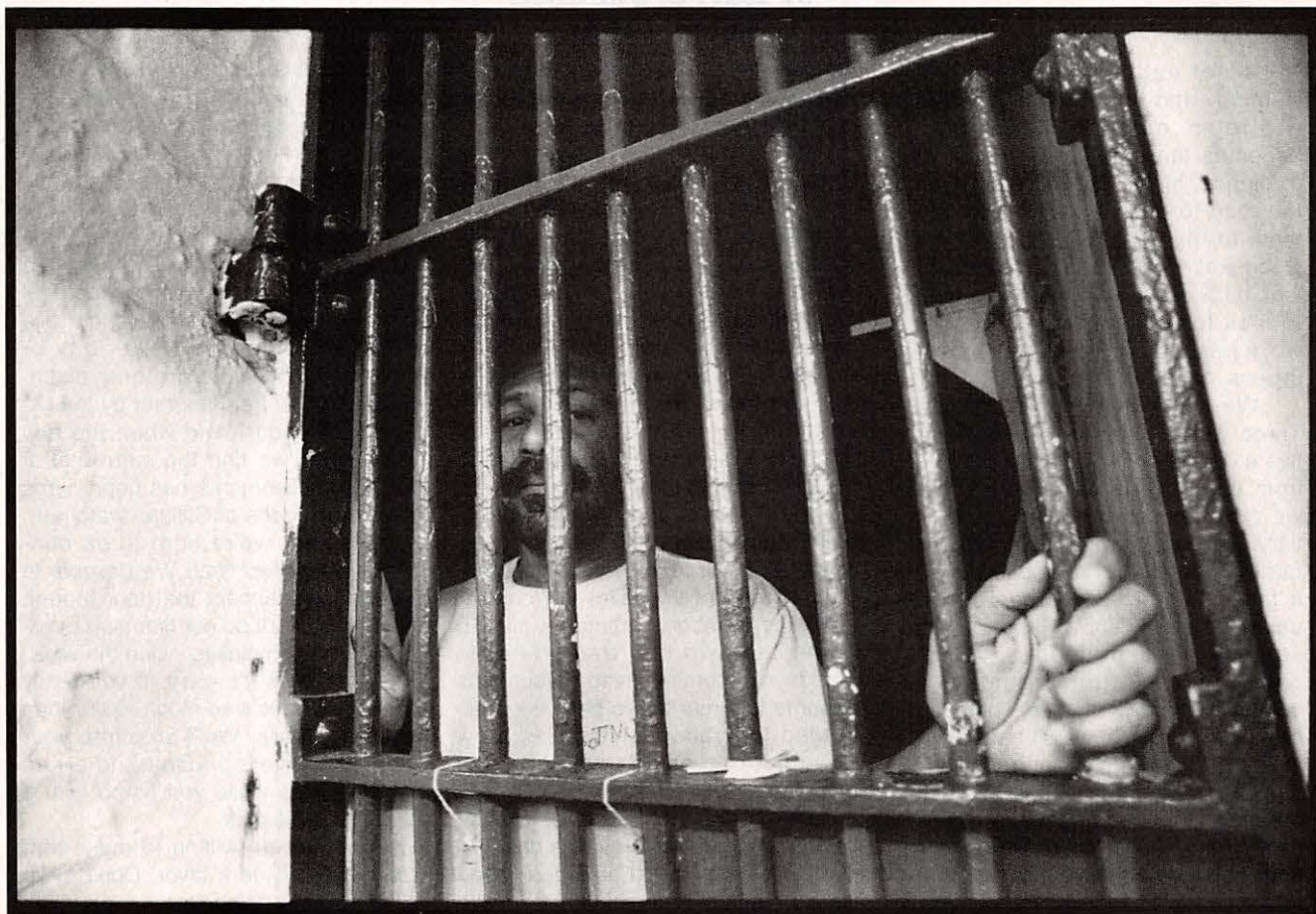
pletely funded by the profits from items prisoners purchase from the commissary. It is watched on prisoner-bought TVs. The percentage of R, PG and G-rated films shown on the system match the ratio of similarly rated films released each year by Hollywood, and are no more violent or sexual than those available at the neighborhood Blockbuster.

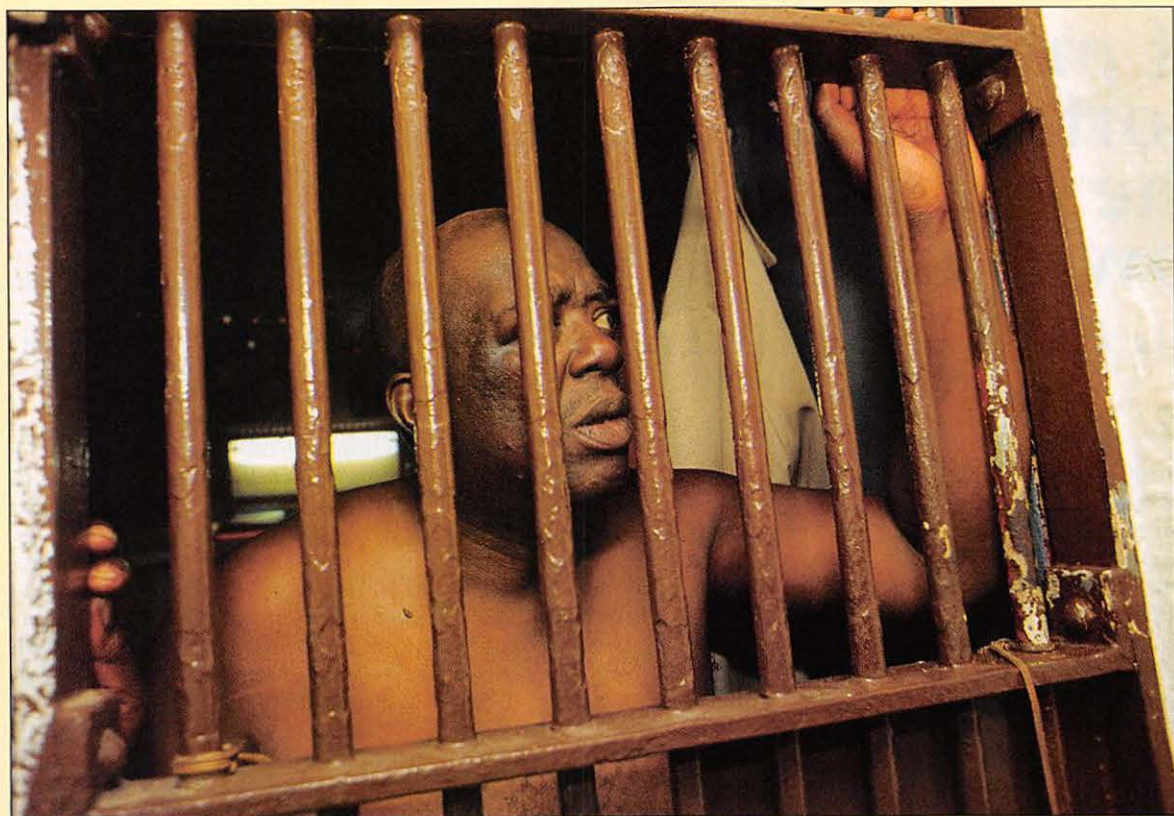
In addition to funding the cable system and user fees, JeffTown weekly rebroadcasts over a hundred hours of educational, PBS and religious programs, another key point omitted from the article. Periodically, the superintendent uses the system to

talk directly to the 2,000-man population, and on one occasion credited JeffTown's service with helping him calm the institution after a major disturbance, thereby avoiding further costly trouble. Beyond the mere entertainment value, Earl Flear, the system's chief technician and newscaster, comments that "JeffTown serves a very needed and useful purpose."

With the recording and studio equipment, the JeffTown staff has produced several high-quality video programs. One video was a sales/production tape on the institution's shoe factory, which helped secure sales to other correctional systems. Other shows have included prisoner-featured substance abuse/recovery stories, one of which has been copied over 400 times and shown by many public and private organizations in Arizona, Washington, Colorado, Kansas and Missouri.

Moreover, JeffTown provides production facilities for other state agencies that simply cannot afford the \$10,000 production fee that the standard one-hour video costs on the streets. JeffTown's additional benefit is the certified vocational training its technicians receive.





"A nationwide Reader's Digest survey shows that felons have access to a startling array of creature comforts," the magazine reports. Looks like this guy is living in the lap of luxury.

DOIN' TIME

by **Karl C. Johnson**
Boise, Idaho

It's not easy doing time. The mind- and soul-numbing hours stretch out until time itself becomes the be-all and end-all of existence. Meals are milestones on the road to another day's end. We stare at the TV and only feel alive when we're pissed. With nothing to look back on but failure and nothing to look forward to but more time, we're trapped in a vacuum of meaningless, never-ending now.

We serve time to pay a debt. Three years, the judge gave us, or five or ten or life. Years are snipped from the fabric of our lives so that we may "do penance" in a penitentiary, "be corrected" at a correctional facility. We pay our debt one day at a time, blunting the edges of our self-pity with a rasp of apathy. On some days a balloon payment comes due—on our birthday, a spouse's birthday, a child's birthday or a holiday—while we sit here playing cards, watching Gilligan's Island.

So don't tell us we have it easy because the commissary carries candy bars. Don't tell us we have it easy because we have a color TV in

our dayroom. We bought that TV with money we earned and spent at the commissary—not your tax dollars.

Don't tell us we have it easy because we have on-call medical staff. Would you like to be treated by undertrained physicians' assistants masquerading as doctors? I think not. We've seen the results of their butchery. We've seen our friend, in his mid-seventies and eight months from release, go in to have an ingrown toenail removed. Six months later we saw him lose a foot to gangrene because our on-call medical staff couldn't clip a toenail.

Time looms over us. The days, months and years left to serve overpower our will to survive. The numbers in front of us never get smaller while the numbers behind us pile up faster than we can track. Missed birthdays become missed graduations become lost marriages become unattended funerals. Our families grow away from us and all we can do is play cards, watch Gilligan.

Don't tell us we have it easy because we get three meals a day. We take no joy from soft potatoes rotted black or stringy liver glazed green. We

take no joy from cold food on dirty trays served with a scowl by our fellow prisoners. We eat three meals a day because the trip to the messhall breaks up the monotony and marks time.

Time that crawls so slowly the day never really begins, never ends. We see the same faces, smell the same farts, hear the same jokes, feel the same sweat, taste the same bile today as yesterday. Week day or week end, the days are only distinguishable one from another by the "X" on the calendar. And when the day finally ends we find the sum total of our accomplishments has been cards played, episodes of Gilligan watched.

Granted, we're here to be punished. We accept that. We deserve to be here. We accept that too, though reluctantly. We'll do our time and mostly keep our complaints inside the walls. But don't think it's easy. If you really believe we have it so much easier than you, let's trade. We'll step into your whining, sniveling, can't-find-a-job, poor-me lives while you come take it easy inside the joint.

If you're not willing to make that trade, then do us a favor: Don't try to tell us it's easy doing time.

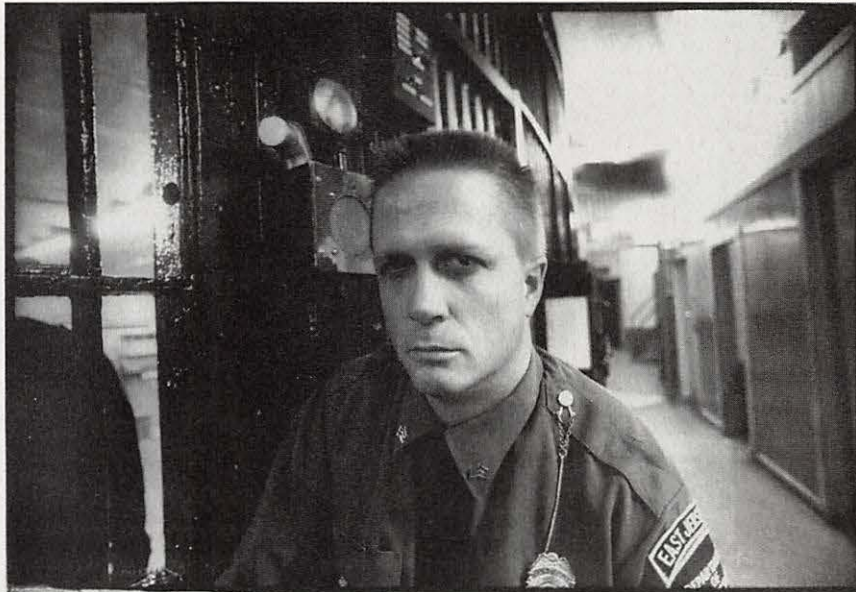
The final interesting twist to the JeffTown story is that no one, from the superintendent on down to the video technicians, was ever contacted by anyone from *Reader's Digest*. The information provided in the story, as brief as it was, must have come from secondary sources.

A SERIOUS OMISSION

Of all the selective examples, half-truths and glaring omissions in the piece, perhaps the most serious was the citation regarding the corrections budget in California. Bidinotto intimated that the \$50 million allocated for education and the \$40 million for vocational training was a ridiculously generous sum, and that the \$57 million for prisoner employment was an outright waste of taxpayers' money.

What we were not told was that the 1993-'94 budget for the California Department of Corrections (CDC) was nearly \$3.2 billion. Nor were we told that the combined education expenditures accounted for less than three percent of the overall budget. Further, the article failed to mention that two-thirds of prisoners have not graduated from high school, nearly the same number lived below the poverty line before their incarceration and almost half were employed only part-time before their arrest.

With education and training, two of the few rehabilitative measures that have proven successful, it is true, as Bidinotto states, that "what we have borders on the absurd." What is absurd, though, is that of every dollar spent on corrections, only three cents goes to education and training. The



A friendly face greets prisoners at the sally port.

absurdity is not the amount of money spent on such programs, but why so little is invested in the first place.

The most contrived implication in the article was that the \$57 million spent on California prisoner employment is a waste. What most Americans don't realize is that the vast majority of prisoner labor is either for necessary institutional services (i.e. food service, laundry, janitorial work) or factory work that produces a profit for the state. At the average wage of 15 cents an hour, divided into \$57 million and multiplied by the average California C.O. wage of \$16 an hour, if prisoner labor was replaced with state employees, the \$57 million would cost taxpayers \$6 billion.

Not only does prison employment provide inmates with something

to do, and with some pocket change to buy medication the prison no longer provides free, it enables the state to purchase labor at one one-hundredth the cost of freeworld rates. How much slavery does it take to please Bidinotto and the editors at *Reader's Digest*?

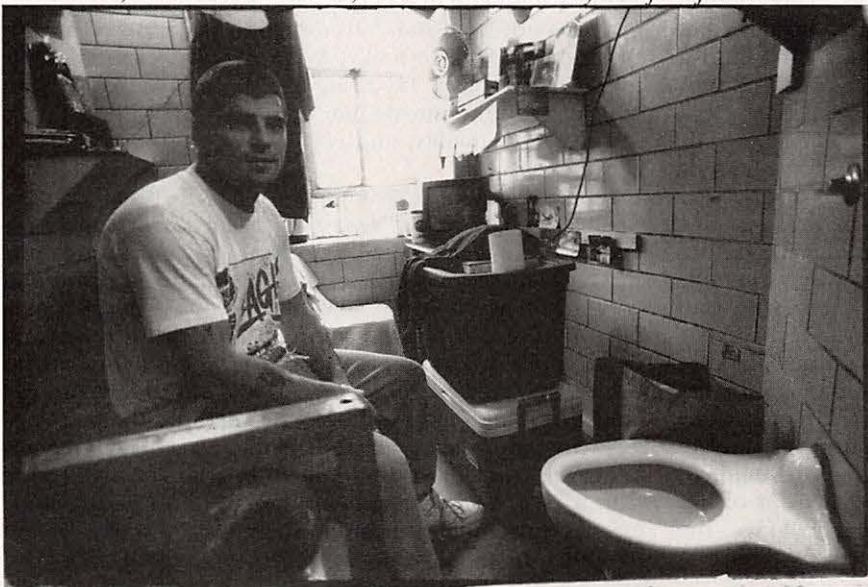
THE "EXPERTS"

Throughout the article, two experts, professors John DiIulio of Princeton University and Charles Logan of the University of Connecticut, were repeatedly cited to lend their "expert analysis" of the luxurious and wasteful state of American prisons. The only problem was that their information was wrong and their political/professional agendas were hidden.

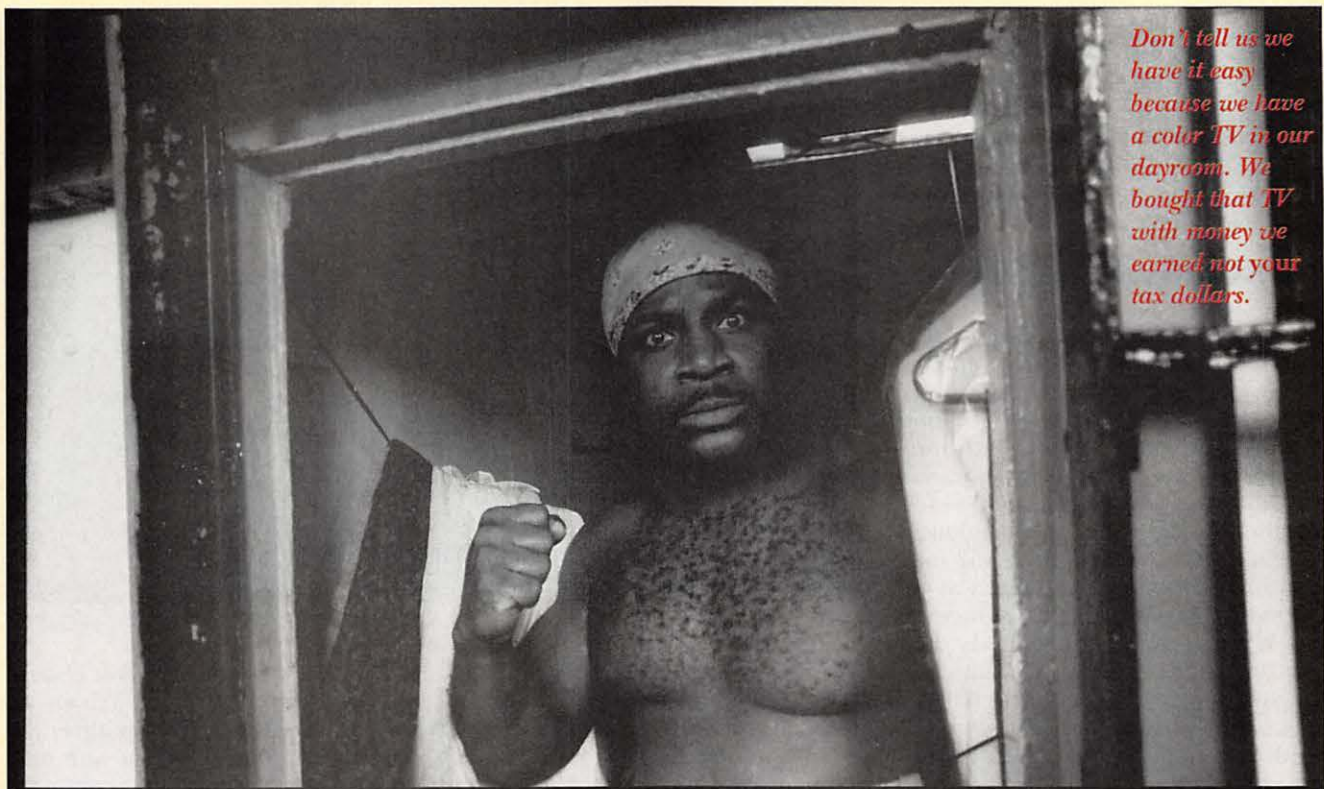
Professor DiIulio, in large brush strokes, painted the evolution of prison conditions from one of "discipline and forced labor, where wardens rul[ed] cellblocks with an iron fist" to the easy and cushy circumstances prisoners find themselves in today. He attributes this to prisoner lawsuits, misdirected court orders and liberal consent decrees. "At first," reports DiIulio, "security-minded wardens resisted the new orders from federal judges. But their resistance was gradually undercut by case managers and psychiatric social workers. In time, treatment personnel became top prison officials.

"When many prisons experienced unprecedented numbers of escapes and had hostage-taking incidents," DiIulio continues, "the remaining

For a real taste of prison life, try living 23 hours a day in your bathroom. Remove everything but the toilet, use the bathtub as a bed, lock the door and make yourself comfortable.



(continued on page 42)



Don't tell us we have it easy because we have a color TV in our dayroom. We bought that TV with money we earned not your tax dollars.

THE REAL DEAL ON PRISON LIFE

by Kenneth Z. Taylor, D.D.S.
Powhatan Correctional Center
State Farm, Virginia

I am a prisoner at a maximum security pen in Virginia. There is no way to portray prison life verbally or in writing. One has to live it to know the chaos, the viciousness, the wastefulness and the sheer folly of our criminal justice system to truly understand it.

For a taste of prison life, remove everything except the toilet from your bathroom. No rugs, no medicine cabinet, towels, etc. Turn off the hot water, as there is no hot water in prison cells. Use the bathtub as a bed, lock the door and make yourself comfortable. Listen to your radio or plug in a *five-inch* black and white TV. Want a cup of coffee? Ask the guard to bring you a cup of hot water. Oh, you're out of coffee? Maybe the commissary will be open next week, maybe not. The next meal? It might be in a few minutes or a few hours.

Today's breakfast was two boiled eggs, a banana, two pieces of soft white bread and a glass of *soapy* tasting milk. It tastes soapy because there *is* soap in it. The kitchen staff can't be bothered to rinse the dishware.

For the last three months we have been on lockdown status, which means we spend 23 1/2 hours in our cells. There was a stabbing in one of the large cell houses here. A love triangle went sour and the scorned lover stabbed two people. We were put on lockdown and all the cells were searched. Fifteen days later we were let out of our cages to resume the normal routine. At 12:30 p.m. the same day we were locked back in our cells. A knife was

determined to have been stolen from the kitchen. Four hours later, knife still missing, we were released to once again resume our usual activities. At 8:00 p.m. that same day we were locked back into our cells. The knife was still missing; nobody had used it during the 3 1/2-hour respite, so the administration decided to lock us down again. We remain in lockdown to this day.

We do not leave our cells except to shower every two or three days. If we're lucky, we're allowed to make a 15-minute phone call. Try living 23 1/2 hours a day in your bathroom, eating meals that are always cold, food that is of the lowest quality, and you have a small taste of what prison life is like.

Yet, according to *Reader's Digest* writer Robert Bidinotto, "a nationwide *Reader's Digest* survey shows that in most prisons felons have access to a startling array of creature comforts." This couldn't be further from the truth. I read that prisoners have cable TV, movies and sports channels. Not here. We're not even permitted to use the washer and dryer in our cell house. We wash our clothes in our sink in our cells in cold water. Try it, you'll like it. Hang your wet clothes on the shower rod over your bathtub "bed."

Eighty-four men live in the cellblock I inhabit, which is known as the "honor building." Apparently we get more privileges. Take the showers for example. There are 2 shower stalls with 3 shower heads in each. I had a shower yesterday. I may have one tomorrow. Who knows? We don't.

Between 150 and 160 men live in each of the other two cell houses. They have three shower heads in each house. Nine men at a time can take a shower while 140 or so wait their turn.

Medical and dental care? I broke a filling six months ago and I'm still waiting to have it replaced. Quality medical care just doesn't exist in prison. Think about it. If you were a reputable doctor, would you establish your practice in a prison?

Visits? Bidinotto writes with horror about conjugal visits and "private family visits." We've had no visitation privileges whatsoever for three months. Why? Just because. Who cares? Obviously, the Department of Corrections doesn't, but we and our loved ones do.

The light bulb in your cell is busted? We'll see if we can get you one in a couple of days. Need a stamp? Maybe the prison store will be open next week. Just put your letter on your 2' x 3' metal desk. Want to work out? Go for it! Have a ball trying to exercise in a 9'x 6' cell. Toilet paper? We'll see if we can find some tomorrow or the next day.

Jobs? Oh sure, I have a job. I get paid 20 cents an hour to clean showers. I am "allowed" to work every other day from 1:30 to 3:00 p.m. I get a whopper of a paycheck to buy stamps, soap, toothpaste, shampoo, deodorant, dental floss, envelopes, pens, paper and any food items I might want. Budget 20 cents an hour to buy those bare essentials. Yeah, we have it made. It's a real picnic in here. But this is only the tip of the iceberg.

Speaking of icebergs . . . It's 52 degrees outside and 52 degrees in here. We don't get heat until late November. We wake up each morning with stiff joints. Go out and sleep in your garage tonight if you want to know what I'm talking about. Only two sheets and one blanket, please. Extra sheets and

blankets are confiscated and a charge for possession of contraband is in the offing. This could lead you to isolation.

Now there's an experience! The isolation unit is, literally, a dungeon. The rules are different in there. It's inhumane and insane. I've known men who've spent six years in isolation. I've spent 10, 12 and 14 months on long stretches, 2 and 3 months on shorter stretches. I cannot begin to describe the deprivation, the humiliation and disregard for life that exists in isolation. I get chills thinking about it. The experience changes you. It changed me. I'll say no more. Sign up and find out for yourself.

Rehabilitation? What rehabilitation? But hey, there's a masonry school here. Education? Guys who really want it can get a G.E.D., but forget college. The college courses we had were terminated by Virginia's new governor, who also managed to abolish parole.

Rape, murder, beatings, robbery? It all happens here. Last year a convict killed the prisoner barber because he wouldn't give the guy a haircut before the others who had been waiting. The barber was scheduled to go home in a month.

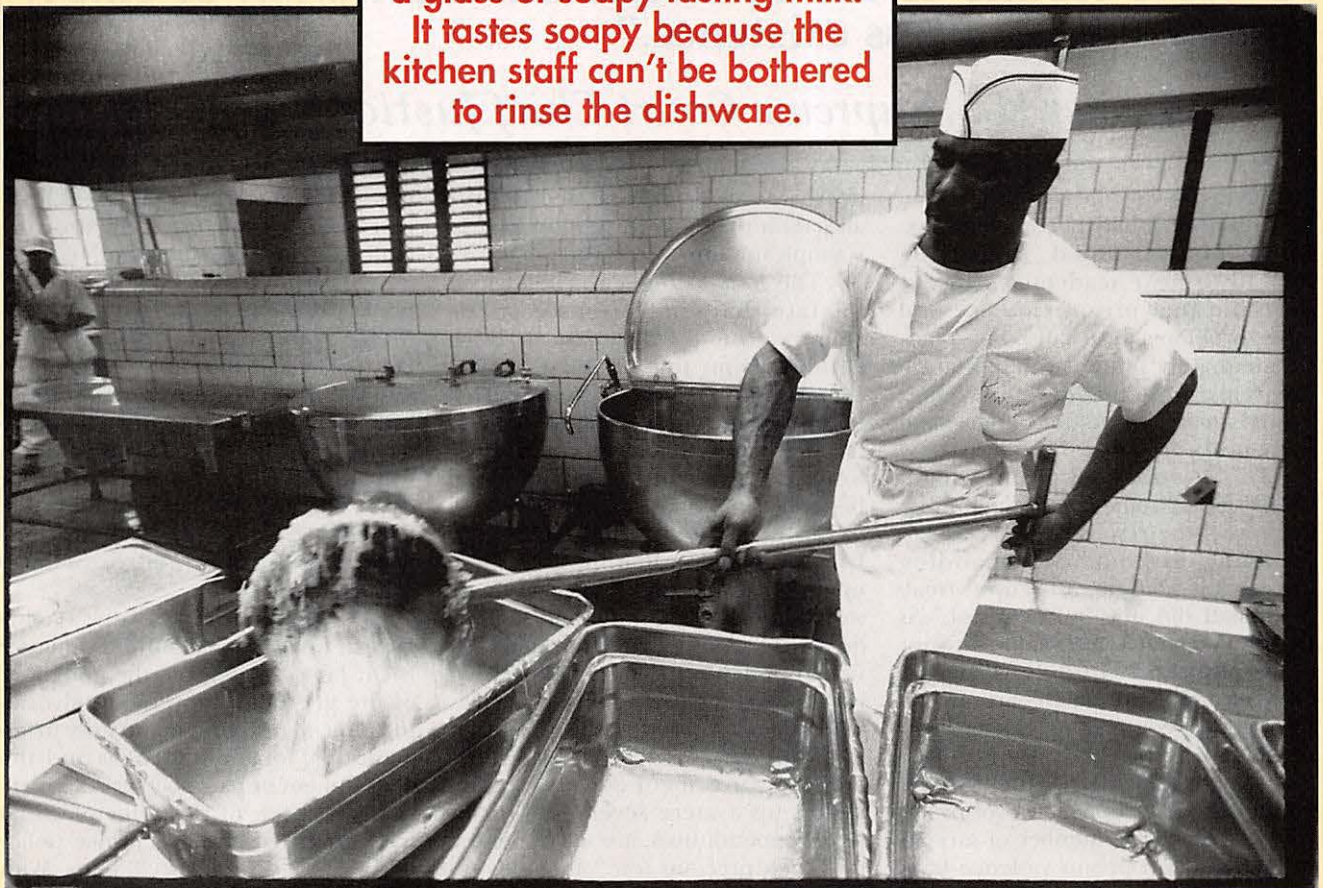
Rape occurs if the victim is weak. So if you plan on coming to prison, you'd better be strong. Expect to be tested from the time you walk in the door. Be strong or bend over.

There is too much to say in an article. Maybe a book could do the topic justice. Justice? Just-us. Maybe the know-it-all *Reader's Digest* writer should have come down and joined us, done some real research, before he wrote his piece.

Oh, by the way, the other two cell houses here have just gone double-bunk. So bring a friend into your bathroom

"cell" and spend the weekend together. Tell me how you like it. Using the toilet in a double-bunked cell makes for an unusually odiferous experience.

Today's breakfast was two boiled eggs, a banana, two pieces of soft white bread and a glass of soapy tasting milk. It tastes soapy because the kitchen staff can't be bothered to rinse the dishware.





"I have visited some of the best and the worst prisons and have never seen signs of coddling, but I have seen the terrible results of the boredom and frustration of empty hours and pointless existence."

—former U.S. Supreme Court Chief Justice Warren Burger

guards from the old school argued that discipline had become too lax. But nobody listened, preferring instead to hear academic 'experts' proclaim that prison violence and other problems were caused by a lack of adequately funded rehabilitation programs. More programs, of course, mean bigger staffs, fatter budgets and more perks."

This is a distorted picture, drawn from a few extreme cases, which in no way reveal the results caused by overcrowding without corresponding increases in staffing. Moreover, treatment staff did not "gain control." As Dr. Manoucheher Khatibi, the director of the Youthful Offender Program Office for the Florida Department of Corrections, comments: "Current correctional practice often places education (i.e. treatment) programs at the bottom of the heap in terms of priority." And since the number of successful escapes and prison violence have

decreased over the past decade, the allegation that custody has lost its grip is simply not true.

The *Reader's Digest* article goes on to state that corrections cost the country around \$20 billion in 1994. DiIulio claims that "at least 40 percent of prison expenses go to rehabilitation programs and inmate amenities that have little bearing on institutional security, and that far exceed basic standards of human dignity."

Notice, though, how Bidinotto failed to mention that the U.S. spent upwards of \$25 billion on prison construction and operations, and the way he defines amenities: "Those small but valued things one does not expect but is pleased to discover in prison, such as hot coffee, tasty food or clean sheets."

With education, vocational training, drug treatment and counseling taking up a mere seven percent of penal expenditures, are we to believe that such precious few "amenities" as

hot java and edible meals (real luxuries, those) consume a third of the national correctional budget?

Since the publication of his 1987 book, *Governing Prisons: A Comparative Study of Correctional Management*, DiIulio has advocated a "control-oriented" prison regime of strict order, with some services and earned amenities. Arguably, then, if one doesn't follow the rules, no hot coffee or clean bedding. One can surmise that the film "Shawshank Redemption" depicts what the professor believes prison should be.

Looking more closely at this expert, we learn that DiIulio's mentor is Dr. James Q. Wilson, the godfather of the get-tough movement advocating judicial restraint, mandatory incarcerations, longer sentences and the abolishment of parole boards, to mention just a few of the principles that have governed criminal justice policy in America for the past 20 years. With

teachers like that, no wonder the Princeton professor sees the world through concrete and barbed wire.

The other expert, Professor Charles Logan, did not lament plush prison conditions. Instead, he slammed correctional programming as a waste of time and money, and as an opportunity for con-wise prisoners to manipulate the system. "Despite claims to the contrary," Logan observes, "no type of treatment has been effective in rehabilitating criminals or preventing future criminal behavior."

This claim is most certainly false. In fact, in another of DiIulio's tomes, *NO ESCAPE: The Failure of American Corrections* (1991), the author concludes after reviewing the compendium of research (presumably the same reports Logan studied) that "the facile notion that 'nothing works' [in rehabilitation programming] is ready for the garbage heap of correctional history." Well structured, adequately supported programs, from education to vocational training to counseling, can and do help reduce crime and reincarceration rates.

Logan, on the other hand, has built his academic reputation on his get-tough theory of crime control. After two decades of the implementation of that concept and its dismal failure, one concludes that the author

must be professionally desperate to try to salvage something from this obvious fallacy.

Canadian criminologists Paul Gendreau and Robert Ross reviewed two decades of research regarding deterrence theory policies and programs. They could not find "a single study in the whole deterrence literature which could support a cause-effect conclusion." Whereas Ross, in reviewing the effectiveness of just prison college programming, concluded that "nowhere in the literature can one find such impressive results with the recidivistic adult offender."

Yet, we already know, after Congress expelled prisoners from the Pell Grant program, that no matter how effective higher education opportunities ultimately are for society in general, they are just too damn luxurious for prisoners.

IN THE END

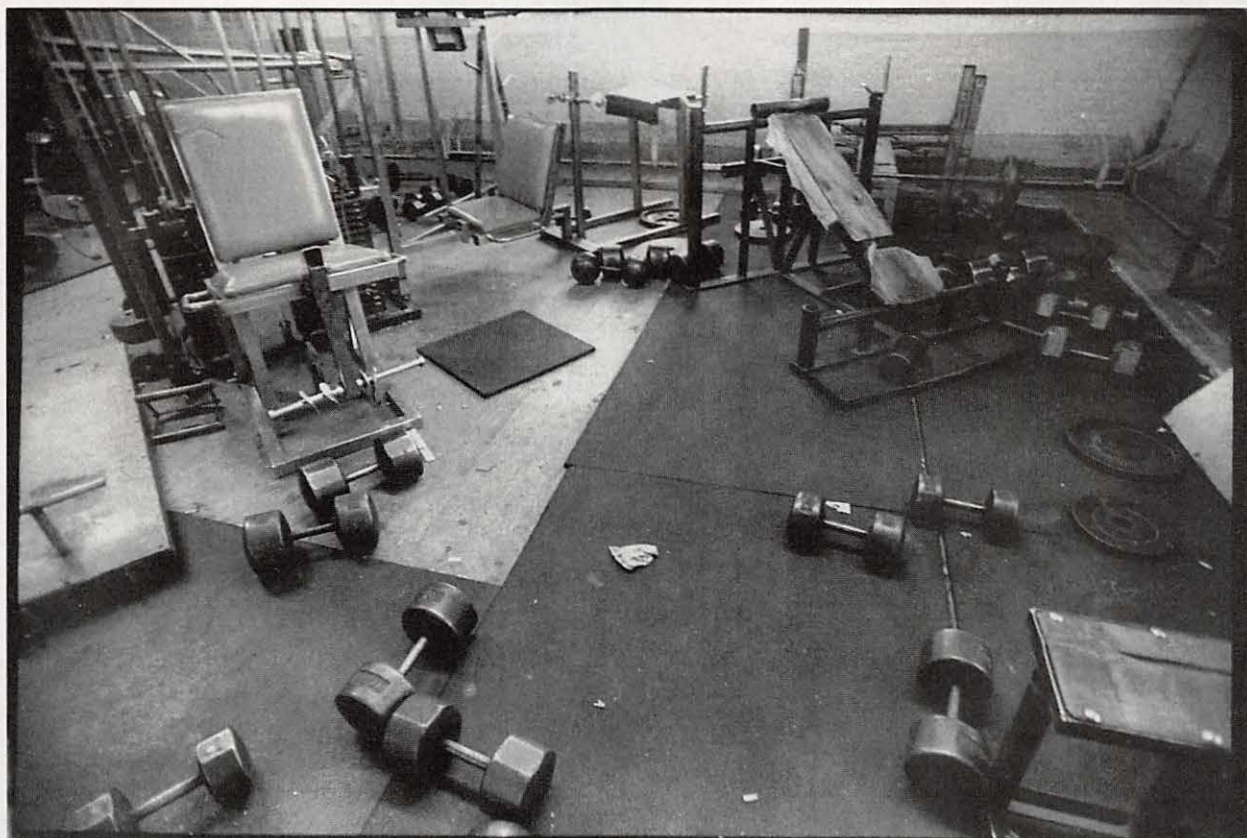
A decade ago, former U.S. Supreme Court Chief Justice Warren Burger said: "If anyone is tempted to regard humane prison reform as 'coddling' criminals, let him visit a prison and talk with inmates and staff. I have visited some of the best and some of the worst prisons and have never seen signs of coddling, but

I have seen the terrible results of the boredom and frustration of empty hours and pointless existence."

Since then, conditions have only grown worse, not better. As a whole, the U.S. prison system is in violation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights. Recently, a Scandinavian commission found the American prison system to be "the most barbarous" among the Western industrialized countries.

No, the nation's prisons are far from resorts. Claims that they are resorts are nothing more than attempts to mislead the public from the real ills troubling society. Why, if per capita crime is the lowest it has been in 20 years, are prisons still expanding? Why, if unemployment is at a relatively low level (job security notwithstanding), are real family incomes still shrinking? Why are we being told that if we just had tougher prisons instead of more equitable economic opportunities, crime would all but disappear? Answers to these questions would reveal a criminal philosophy that dwarfs all the exploitation found in our prisons.

If our prisons are such resorts, simply open the gates and see how many run out . . . and how many walk in. ■■■



"Weight-lifting equipment, all but universal in prisons, is far more expensive than most taxpayers suspect," says Reader's Digest. They must have missed most prisons, including East Jersey State Prison, shown above.



TAKE ALL THE SWIFT ADVANTAGE OF THE HO

Photos by Lou Jones



A LEGAL LYNCHING

THE CASE OF MUMIA ABU-JAMAL

by Kim Wozencraft

There is no little enemy.
- Benjamin Franklin

On Interstate 78, just after you cross the state line separating New Jersey from Pennsylvania, there is a huge red, white and blue billboard that proclaims, "Welcome to Pennsylvania! America begins here." I thought I might see that sign when I drove to SCI Greene in Waynesburg to interview Mumia Abu-Jamal, who's been on death row in the Pennsylvania system since his conviction in 1983 for killing a Philadelphia police officer.

But I didn't make the drive because I was denied permission to speak with Mr. Abu-Jamal. The Pennsylvania prison authorities are holding him *incommunicado*. He is allowed no visits other than with family members and approved lawyers. Paralegals are denied access. Journalists from around the world want to talk to this man, but cannot.

“Many are scared of what Abu-Jamal has to say, frightened that here is a man who has seen or experienced the worst that America has to offer and has been raising his eloquent voice against the status quo since 1968.”

In response to my request for an interview, I received a letter from James S. Price, Superintendent of SCI Greene, which stated in part: “Mr. Mumia Abu-Jamal currently is the subject of an internal investigation for possible violation of department of corrections policy. For that reason, he is not eligible for news media interviews at this time.”

I called to ask what the violation was. The press secretary for the Department of Corrections, a man with the rather Dickensian name of Ben Livingood, answered the phone in the clipped tone I associate with military drill sergeants. After replying several times to my various questions with the same phrase—“it’s an internal investigation by the department of corrections”—he finally confirmed that the actual offense was either (a) entering into a contract, or (b) conducting a business, both *verboden* by the department of corrections.

Anyone who’s done time knows that once you’re inside, you fall under the rule of administrative policies created by those who run the prison, an entire set of regulations that have nothing to do with any rule of law or justice. Infractions against those policies subject you to misconduct hearings presided over by prison administrators who often act as prosecutor, judge and jury at once.

Within death row, Abu-Jamal is held in disciplinary confinement—the hole—for refusing to cut his hair, an act which would violate his religious beliefs. Abu-Jamal adheres to the teachings of John Africa, the man who founded MOVE in the early ‘70s. The religion espouses respect for all living things: soil, water, air, plants, animals, humans. “We are all connected,” says MOVE member Ramona Africa, “and to allow for the poisoning or murder of any living thing is to hurt oneself. The system is hell bent on stopping us so it can continue its present course of pollution, destruction and death, and MOVE is committed to come at that system without compromise.” The name itself was chosen because it means to generate, to be active, the opposite of to stagnate. Movement is life; stagnation the first step toward death.

Though the authorities’ use of disciplinary confinement, coupled with the internal investigation, places Abu-Jamal in the netherworld of administrative policy

and effectively shuts off contact with the outside world, he still speaks his truth.

Live from Death Row, a collection of Abu-Jamal’s essays and commentaries, was published in May by Addison-Wesley over vehement protests from the Philadelphia Fraternal Order of Police and other right-wing groups. (See *Prison Life*’s review in *Prison Papers*, May-June ‘95 issue.) Many are scared of what Abu-Jamal has to say, frightened that here is a man who has seen or experienced the worst that America has to offer and has been raising his eloquent voice against the status quo since 1968. What he has to say has everything to do with how he wound up on death row.

Some Americans are unable to grasp that there are political prisoners right here in our very own country. Political prisoners exist in places like South Africa, the former Soviet Union, or Chile. Our nation was founded on the tenets that free speech, freedom of religion and the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness are basic human rights that no government can deny. Our Constitutional right to speak our beliefs without fear of retaliation from our government is one of the things most of us hold dear about democracy.

Early to Rise

Born and raised in Philadelphia, Wes Cook was thirteen when he went to protest with three friends at a presidential rally in his hometown for then Alabama Governor George Wallace. Things got ugly fast, and he and his friends were beaten brutally. By cops. Cook was beaten so badly that at the hospital his mother walked past him, unable to recognize her own son. That beating by cops knocked wide open what had been a budding political consciousness. Wes Cook emerged from it as a man who had experienced firsthand the brutal fist of state racism in America. He would dedicate his life to fighting the oppression of his race.

Mumia Abu-Jamal sits behind Plexiglas embedded with wire, his hands cuffed, his voice a resonant baritone, definitely a radio voice. His almond-shaped eyes are deep brown; his dark hair falls in long dreadlocks.

“As a youth, in the ‘60s,” he says in a videotape shot before the administrators

locked him away from the media, “I was impressed by the Black Power movement that was sweeping Black America and the Black world in Africa and the Caribbean.” Even at the remove created by a camera lens, this man radiates warmth, intelligence and, against all odds, a sense of humor. Though they’ve had him caged for 13 years, threatened him with execution every minute of that time, they have not crushed his sense of self. They have not robbed him of his dignity; they have not destroyed or even bent his will.

At Benjamin Franklin High School, young Cook fought to change the school’s name to honor Malcom X, and was expelled for distributing pamphlets calling for “black revolutionary student power.”

“From those experiences,” Abu-Jamal says, “I was attracted to the Black Panther Party. I was beaten into the Black Panther Party.”

Revolution is a word that scares a lot of people. They forget the United States of America was born not out of revolution,





“Some Americans are unable to grasp that there are political prisoners right here in our own country.”

but out of violent revolution—armed rebellion against an oppressive, unjust power. But revolution need not always be violent. “Revolution means change,” says Abu-Jamal “It means total change.” He speaks of “people who can’t have basic needs fulfilled. They can’t eat. They can’t have shelter. They can’t have clothes.”

In 1968, at the age of 14, Abu-Jamal co-founded and became Lieutenant of Information for the Philadelphia chapter of the Black Panther Party. “I believe it is a natural right and principle of life for *all* people to defend themselves. I believed that years ago when I was a Panther, I believed it when I got exposed to the MOVE people, and I believe it now. Self-defense is a natural right, and no one can take that away from you.”

In September of 1969, Frank Rizzo, then police chief and later mayor of Philadelphia, personally led a raid on

Panther headquarters. His troops dragged Panthers onto the street, put them against a wall and stripped them.

“They would have shot us then,” Abu-Jamal said, “except for the community presence.” Office files were carried off by the cops; the mimeograph machine disappeared.

In December of that same year, Panthers Fred Hampton and Bobby Hutton were shot by police in Chicago. “The government tried very viciously to wipe out the Black Panther Party,” Abu-Jamal recalls. “They shot, they sent in grenades, they bombed . . .”

The raids and killings were part of the COINTELPRO operation, an illegal federal campaign waged against political dissidents, which hit the Panthers with a total of 768 arrests and almost five million in bail bonds between May, 1967 and December, 1969. Thirty-eight Panthers were killed.

“The COINTELPRO program was a terroristic program,” Abu-Jamal recalls. “Its function was to terrorize radicals, revolutionaries, opponents of government programs, and to stigmatize and isolate them from the general population.”

Abu-Jamal, as spokesman for the Philadelphia BPP, was featured in a *Philadelphia Inquirer* story about the party in January, 1970. He was quoted as saying that the BPP was “doing what the churches are supposed to do.” (The Panthers were operating a free breakfast program for children.) “Genocide is coming to the forefront under [the] Nixon, Agnew and Mitchell regime,” Abu-Jamal said, “and that’s exactly what it is. The Panther Party is an uncompromising party that faces reality.”

During the summer of that year, Abu-Jamal joined the staff of the National

"It didn't matter whether a man was innocent or guilty. It didn't matter what the law says your rights were."

Office of the Panther Party in California and began writing for the party paper. Back in Philadelphia, Rizzo continued his assaults against the Panthers, staging multiple raids on locations throughout the city during August. A week later, the Panther Revolutionary People's Constitutional Convention convened at Temple University in Philadelphia. Abu-Jamal served on the security team. He was later listed in a congressional committee report on internal security in the United States. The authorities—local, state, federal—were aware of him and suspicious of his activities. He was doing things and endorsing ideas that they didn't like.

The federal government's COINTEL-PRO operation took a devastating toll on the Black Panther party, effectively destroying it through the use of terrorism and by creating internal strife through subterfuge. Abu-Jamal returned to Philadelphia and turned his full efforts to journalism. He became an acclaimed radio journalist, heard on the National Black Network, Mutual Black Network, NPR and Radio Information Central for the Blind. His interviews included Julius Irving, Bob Marley, Alex Haley and Puerto Rican independence fighters.

In 1978, Frank Rizzo, with hundreds of cops at his command, laid siege to the Powelton Village home of MOVE. Prior to the raid, Rizzo was asked by a television reporter how he would handle the event. "Deh p'lice will be in dere ta drag 'em out by deh backs a' dere necks," Rizzo replies. The reporter says, "There will be a confrontation this time?" "It's up ta dem," Rizzo says, "Dey're going to be taken by force if dey resist. No question about dat. Children or not."

Cops move in with bulldozers to raze the home. Former Panther Delbert Africa is beaten mercilessly by police; all of this is captured on video. One of the cops actually stops to tuck his shirt back in before continuing to kick and punch. The video of the beating, which predated the Rodney King incident by some 13 years, is all the more vivid in that it was shot in broad daylight, in color. The cops delivering this beating weren't concerned in the least that they might face prosecution for the brutal assault they were committing for all the world to see. The MOVE home was surrounded and cops fired at will. A police officer was

killed in the crossfire. At a press conference afterward, Rizzo said to the gathered journalists, "The press has to take a little of the blame here. They've glorified a bunch of criminals . . . The press is responsible for what's happening in this city."

In 1980, at the age of 26, Abu-Jamal was elected President of the Philadelphia chapter of the Association of Black Journalists. *Philadelphia Magazine* named him in 1981 as one of its "people to watch" and said his "eloquent, often passionate, and always insightful interviews bring a special dimension to radio reporting."

Abu-Jamal brought that same insight to his coverage of the MOVE organization. "I became exposed to them as opposed to reading about them," he says, "and found out that what I read about them had no relationship to the kind of people they were, and what they were about. Every published report was tinged with prejudice and hatred. MOVE members have been active and above-ground in Philadelphia since 1973. They've been through every jail in Philadelphia; they've been beaten in every police district all over Philadelphia for standing up for their beliefs: to defend life."

Nine MOVE members were brought to trial for the police officer's death. "I was . . . enraged," Abu-Jamal says, "sitting in a trial in an official capacity, objective, as a journalist, and seeing that the law really didn't matter. It didn't matter whether a man was innocent or guilty. It didn't matter what the law says your rights are. You just had nine members of the MOVE organization being sentenced to thirty-to-a-hundred years for a crime that everybody knew they didn't commit. Nine people can't kill one man."

"What you had in Philadelphia in '81 was the naked state judicial terrorism of the Philadelphia judiciary against the MOVE organization. It was like, *let's wipe 'em out*. It's impossible for me to say what my feelings were at that time. Sitting in a courtroom seeing that kind of injustice, it rankled me to the core."

Abu-Jamal covered the side of the story no mainstream white journalist would touch. "I became a widely-known, and among the cops, a widely-hated MOVE supporter who went into the jails to get the Africas' side of the August 8, 1978 confrontation," he says.

"I did human, warm pieces on some of the most beautiful folks I ever met."

Without Justice, Courage is Weak
—Benjamin Franklin

On December 9, 1981, in the early hours of morning, Abu-Jamal was moonlighting as a cab driver in Philly's red light district. He had been robbed before while driving a cab, and had in his possession a legally-registered handgun. He saw that his brother's blue Volkswagen had been stopped by the police; he saw a cop beating his brother with a billy club.

According to the government, Abu-Jamal ran up and shot officer Daniel Faulkner in the back and then emptied his pistol into the fallen officer, taking a bullet in the stomach himself as he did. When backup officers arrived, Faulkner lay fatally wounded; Abu-Jamal sat on a curb nearby, bleeding profusely.

Mumia Abu-Jamal was put on trial in the courtroom of the notorious judge Albert Sabo, a man who has put more people on death row than any other sitting judge in the United States. Of the 121 people on death row in Pennsylvania in January of 1991, 26, fully one-fifth, were sent there by Albert Sabo. Prior to becoming the Honorable Albert Sabo, the judge served for 16 years as undersheriff in Philadelphia.

During *voir dire*, Sabo allowed a white man who admitted he could not be impartial to remain on the jury while permitting the D.A. to strike 11 qualified prospective jurors who were black. Abu-Jamal requested to have MOVE leader John Africa as his defense counsel. The court denied this request and forced court-appointed counsel, a lawyer who had never before tried a capital case. Abu-Jamal also attempted to exercise his constitutionally guaranteed right to defend himself. Denied.

The state's star witness was Cynthia White, a prostitute who had been arrested more than 30 times in the two years previous to the trial. She was taken into custody twice in within two weeks after the shooting. There were three charges pending against White at the time of the trial. At her various police interrogations and appearances on the witness stand, she placed herself 7 feet from the shooting, then 24 feet from the shooting. She said she saw the gun in the shooter's left hand. Jamal is right-handed. She said the shooter was short. Jamal is 6'1". She said she saw the flash of the first shots, that she didn't see any flashes, that she couldn't remember what hand the gun was in, that there was no struggle between police officer Daniel Faulkner and Abu-Jamal's brother, William Cook; she said that Cook struck

Faulkner in the face and Faulkner grabbed Cook and spun him around to cuff him; she said the shooter fired the shots all at once; she said that there were two shots, a pause, and then three more shots. The only thing surprising about the inconsistency of her accounts is that she had private meetings with the prosecutor to prepare her testimony. Maybe she wasn't paying attention.

A second witness, Veronica Jones, also arrested for prostitution within weeks of the shooting, testified that the cops told her that if she would support White's testimony, she would be allowed to work the street. "They were getting on me telling me I was in the area and I seen Mumia, you know, do it, you know, intentionally. They were trying to get me to say something that the other girl said." Sabo cut the testimony off as irrelevant. Though Jones had signed a sworn statement that she saw two men running from the shooting, she denied this on the witness stand and Sabo refused to let the defense call the cops who took her statement. A third witness, a cab driver who had been previously convicted of throwing a Molotov cocktail into a public school for pay and had two recent drunk driving arrests, also suffered from confusion. He said the guy was heavy,

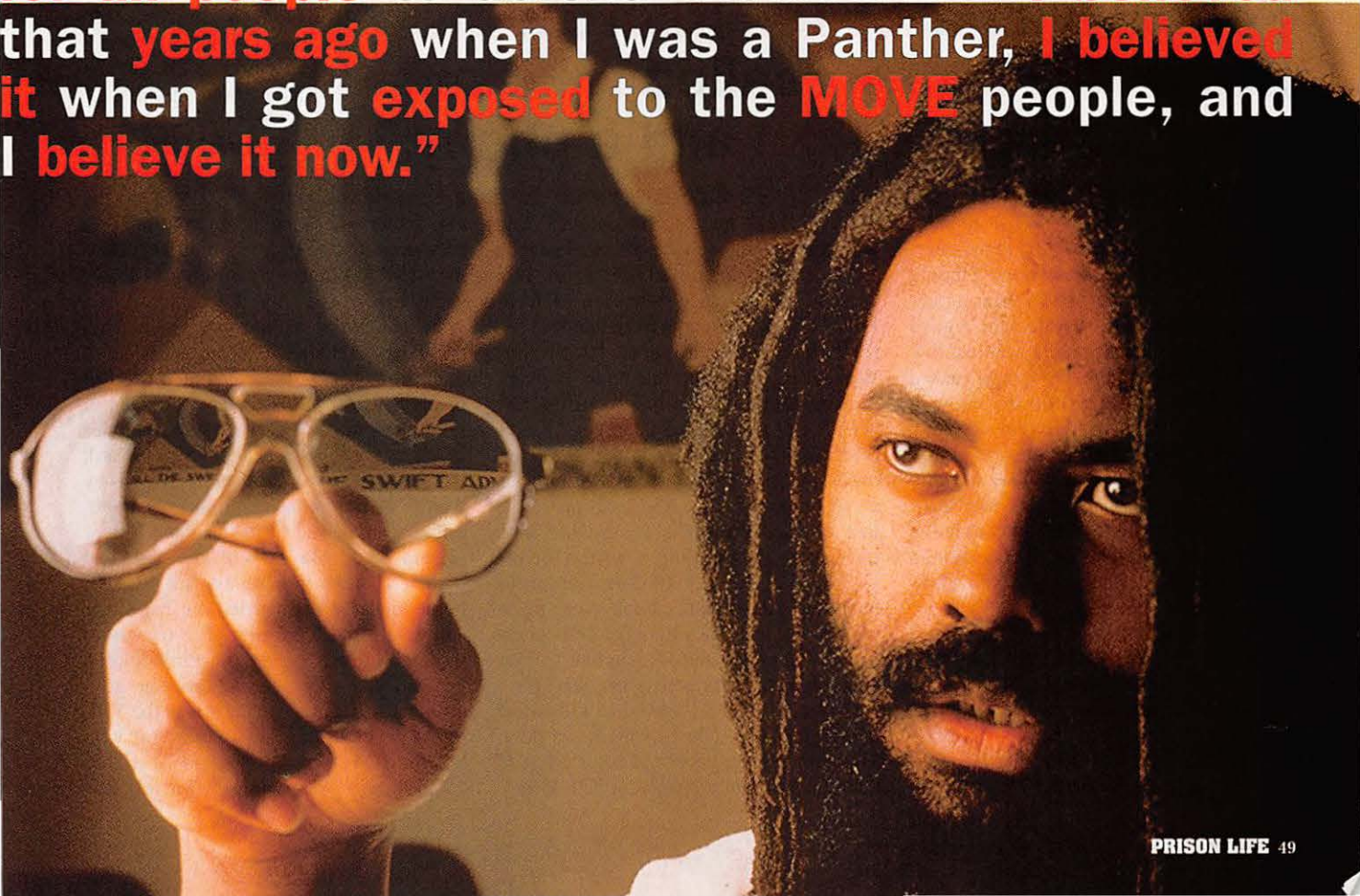
220 pounds, dressed in a tan shirt and fled down Locust Street. Later, he said the guy was in a gray dress shirt with a red and green picture on the back. At the trial, the cabbie denied seeing anyone run away, though three additional witnesses had seen someone fleeing the scene.

Police officer Gary Wakshul, the officer who was with Abu-Jamal from the time he arrested him, reported that Abu-Jamal made no statement while in custody. Yet police inspector Alfonzo Giordano claimed that Abu-Jamal had admitted to shooting Faulkner. Wakshul was away at the time of the trial, and Sabo refused to adjourn for a few days until the officer returned from vacation. Oddly, the prosecution did not call Giordano. They did call Faulkner's former partner, Gary Bell, who admitted that he told the badly-wounded Abu-Jamal at the hospital, "If he [Faulkner] dies, you die." When Internal Affairs began investigating officers for brutality against Abu-Jamal, two months after the incident, Bell said his threat was in response to Abu-Jamal telling him, "I shot that motherfucker and I hope that motherfucker dies." If that doesn't sound like a white guy trying to sound like he's quoting a black guy, I don't know what does. A security guard from the hospital,

Priscilla Durham, also testified she'd heard Abu-Jamal make the statement, but like Bell, she didn't bother to come forth with that information until after the Internal Affairs investigation began. Ballistics could match neither the bullets that hit Faulkner nor the others recovered from the scene to Abu-Jamal's gun. They could not match fingerprints on the gun to Abu-Jamal. They could not say when or where the gun was fired.

Abu-Jamal did not take the stand during the guilt-or-innocence phase of the trial. It was during the penalty phase of the trial, when the defendant exercised his right to speak to the jury before sentencing, that Sabo and the prosecution moved in for the kill. Abu-Jamal rose, claimed his innocence and called the proceeding unfair. Sabo ruled that Abu-Jamal had become a witness and should be cross-examined. The prosecutor jumped. He asked Abu-Jamal why he didn't stand when the judge entered the courtroom, why he didn't accept the court's rulings, why he shouted in anger at an appellate judge, why he engaged in a hostile exchange with the court during pretrial hearings. Then he produced the 1970 Philadelphia *Inquirer* article and proceeded to question Abu-Jamal about his membership in the Black Panther

"I believe it is a natural right and principle of life for all people to defend themselves. I believed that years ago when I was a Panther, I believed it when I got exposed to the MOVE people, and I believe it now."



Party some twelve years previous. The prosecutor took quotations—completely out of context—attributed to Abu-Jamal from a time when he was sixteen years old.

Q: Do you recall saying, 'All power to the people?'

A: Yes.

Q: Do you believe your actions as well as your philosophy are consistent with the quote, "Political power grows out of the barrel of a gun?"

A: I believe that America has proven that quote to be true.

Q: Do you recall saying that, "The Panther Party is an uncompromising party, it races reality?"

A: (Nods affirmatively) Yes.

"When they brought out my Panther history," Abu-Jamal says, "it was like a jolt of electricity to the jury—pow! The prosecutor had already referred to one of Abu-Jamal's 15 character witnesses, renowned poet and Temple University professor, Sonia Sanchez, as a "friend of cop killers." In insisting on the death penalty for Abu-Jamal, the D.A. told jurors the defendant would have "appeal after appeal and perhaps there could be a reversal of the case, or whatever, so that may not be final," effectively assuring the jurors that even if they voted to kill the defendant, they weren't *really* sentencing him to die, they were merely initiating a series of court proceedings.

Pennsylvania State Representative David Richardson called Abu-Jamal's trial "a farce, a fake and a phony."

Leonard Weinglass, a New York attorney handling Abu-Jamal's appeal, describes what happened next in his afterward to *Live from Death Row*: "Having thus elicited a portrait of Mumia as a radical Black militant, the prosecutor argued in summation that Mumia's political history and anger against the system caused him to shoot the officer on the night in question. In returning a verdict of death, the jury overlooked the fact that the quoted words were those of a 16-year-old who had since miraculously grown into manhood without a single arrest or conviction on his record, with a college education, a family, and the abiding respect and admiration of the community."

Sabo took a year to formally pronounce the sentence of death. The appellate attorney assigned to the case did nothing and was removed from the case by the appellate court a year later. The next attorney took an additional year to gather information and file paperwork. Though the

Pennsylvania Supreme Court had reversed a conviction based on a summation by the same prosecutor using the same argument—a vote for the death penalty isn't really final because of the appeals process—in Abu-Jamal's case they denied all relief. Only four of seven sitting justices signed the opinion, but four was the number needed to uphold the conviction and punishment. One justice who should have disqualified himself because of a personal exchange with Abu-Jamal declined to do so. Recently, an investigation of the court has resulted in the indictment of one of the justices.

Lost time is never found again —Benjamin Franklin

Organized by the Partisan Defense Committee, peaceful rallies in support of Mumia Abu-Jamal have been held in cities around the world—Paris, London, Berlin, Hamburg, Toronto, Sydney—calling for an end to the racist U.S. death penalty and urging that Abu-Jamal be released from Death Row, Pennsylvania. At a July 14, 1994 rally in Philadelphia, state representative David Richardson called Abu-Jamal's trial "a farce, a fake and a phony."

But across town, the Fraternal Order of Police were gathered at a rally of their own. FOP President Richard Costello called for Abu-Jamal's immediate execution and said, "If you don't like it, you can

join him. We'll take out the electric chair, we'll make it an electric couch!" The widow of the slain police officer, Maureen Faulkner, seems similarly vengeful. In a crusade to prevent publication of Abu-Jamal's book, she wrote in an editorial letter calling for a boycott, "Addison-Wesley, in publishing this book, is glamorizing and financially rewarding the behavior of a convicted murderer." I have read the book, and there is nothing glamorous in it. There is nothing glamorous about its publication. And it seems to me that Addison-Wesley is doing what book publishers do—paying a writer for his writing, not for any kind of murderous behavior. Abu-Jamal's book gives voice to those in America who most desperately need it—the men and women that various state governments across the land have locked in cages and vowed to kill in the name of justice. Most of them are poor. Most of them are people of color. Most of them haven't got a chance in hell of win-

ning the fight for their very lives against the massive weight of state or federal governments. The death penalty, in study after study, has been shown *not* to work as a deterrent. It has been shown, time after time, to be perpetrated in a wholly racist manner. It has been shown, in at least 350 instances, to have been carried out against people who were not guilty of the crimes for which they were killed. That's more than the number of innocent people killed in the Oklahoma City bombing, a horrible crime that frightened and enraged most of America and the world.

Most of those innocents who were murdered by the state were convicted on the basis of perjured testimony. Think back to the "confusion" of the witnesses in Mumia Abu-Jamal's case, to the police officer who was away on vacation, to the words of the fallen officer's partner: *If he dies, you die.* Think back to the Honorable Albert Sabo's record number of death pronouncements.

"I want to be there when he's executed," says Maureen Faulkner. "I want to look straight into his face when justice is carried out." Anyone who has lost a loved one can understand her grief, and wish for her to heal, to understand and overcome and go on to find love again. But if the state does succeed in killing Abu-Jamal, a man convicted, but not by any sane, reasonable standard proven guilty, I hope Maureen Faulkner gets her wish. Perhaps

she will come away from the murder with some vague understanding of the cancerous nature of vengeance.

Over the years, while Abu-Jamal has continued to sit on death row,

the antagonism between MOVE and the city fathers of Philadelphia continued to escalate. May, 1985: We see a rather ordinary-looking house on a rather ordinary sunny day in The City of Brotherly Love. A helicopter zooms into view, halts, hovers above the house. A package falls out of the open helicopter door and onto the roof of the house. The helicopter zooms out of view. Seconds pass. The house explodes into a mass of flame; debris hurls skyward; women scream. A male voice says, "They won't call the police commissioner motherfucker anymore." Crude laughter.

Democratic Mayor Wilson Goode had ordered the bombing of the MOVE home, and the FBI carried out his order. They killed 11 people; five of whom were children. "It was the Philadelphia Police Department, it was the state government of Pennsylvania, it was the FBI, the ATF of the U.S. Government who bombed MOVE people on May 13, 1985," says Abu-Jamal, "but no one

would call any of those organizations, or their employer—the U.S. Government—terrorists. But why weren't they? They created mass murder, holocaust, in a major city in America, and not one of them have ever been charged with any crime at all."

The list of organizations and attorneys working to free Mumia Abu-Jamal is staggering, and the numbers are growing. Artists and writers are enlisting in the cause: Ed Asner, Noam Chomsky, Ossie Davis, Whoopi Goldberg, Barbara Kopple, Alice Walker.

The Partisan Defense Committee, Equal Justice USA of the Quixote Center, a national religious-based peace and justice center in Maryland, the International Concerned Friends and Family of Mumia Abu-Jamal and the Coalition to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal are all working hard to fight the injustice Abu-Jamal has suffered. Safiya Bukhari-Alston, a legal assistant to lawyer Steve Hawkins at the NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund who works at Brooklyn Legal Services Corporation A, knew Abu-Jamal when the two were in the Black Panther Party back in the seventies. "I'm getting more optimistic every day," she says, "because more and more people are involved in this work. When I started actively working on this case, [then Pennsylvania governor] Casey said he didn't even know who Mumia was, you know, and knew nothing about the case. We brought Mumia to him straight up, head up. We've had an impact. More and more people are speaking out about Mumia Abu-Jamal. It gives me hope."

Meanwhile, Abu-Jamal exercises the only freedom they cannot take away from him: the freedom to use his mind. He writes: "Ordered by brutal boredom, entombed in ennui, imprisoned in a cage of utter idleness, some 100 men across Pennsylvania await death. That these conditions obtain in the cradle of the U.S. Constitution is perhaps fitting. For surely, Pennsylvania is fast becoming the grave of that lofty and unrealized document."

Newly-elected Governor Thomas Ridge, whose campaign platform included a vow to start signing death warrants, has in fact signed five as of this writing. He's alleged to be moving down the list chronologically according to date of affirmation of sentence by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court, skipping over those who currently have court actions pending. Abu-Jamal is in the top forty names, but many of those have

appeals in process. In actuality, his is probably among the next five to seven death warrants Ridge may sign.

Rachel Wolkenstein, legal counsel to the Partisan Defense Committee, "a legal and social defense organization which champions cases and causes in the interest of the whole of the working people," is assisting in the filing a motion on behalf of Abu-Jamal under the Pennsylvania Post Conviction

climate of death, with me as a mute bystander."

"We're seeing additional support every day," says Wolkenstein, "including fifty-one members of Parliament in England and trade unions in South Africa, politicians who are objecting to the death penalty, but also, more importantly, working people in organizations that have the social weight and power to make their voice heard.

"I want to be there when he's executed," says Maureen Faulkner. "I want to look straight into his face when justice is carried out."

Relief Act (Pennsylvania's equivalent of state habeas corpus), which must be heard before Abu-Jamal can enter the federal arena. The state court proceeding puts defendants back into the court of the judge who originally heard their cases, which in Abu-Jamal's case means Albert Sabo. Abu-Jamal's lawyers will file a motion asking for Sabo to be recused based on his pro-prosecution posture, listing various specifics of how he handled the trial which make him incapable of remaining impartial.

Pittsburgh lawyer Jeri Krakoff, an expert on prison law, has taken on the fight to restore Abu-Jamal's first amendment rights, filing suit April 25 in federal district court for the Western District of Pennsylvania. The suit challenges, on First and Sixth Amendment grounds, a series of prison administrative policies which obstruct Abu-Jamal's access to court and prohibit him from speaking to the press. Says Wolkenstein, whose attorney papers have on occasion been confiscated by prison authorities and who is part of the suit, "The prison has even denied Mumia access to paralegals. Policies have been fashioned as a means of retaliating against him because he is about to publish a book which criticizes racially discriminatory and dehumanizing conditions in prison." According to the suit, media organizations denied access to Abu-Jamal include *People* magazine, *Connie Chung*, and *Prison Life Magazine*. Abu-Jamal, in response to the authorities' tactics as well as those of Maureen Faulkner and the Fraternal Order of Police, says, "They're trying to build a

Unions worldwide have sent letters to Ridge, money to the legal defense. But there needs to be ever more support for him from more and more groups. Mumia's case touches on hundreds of legal issues regarding racially discriminatory legal procedures and prison system treatment in general. His case is reflective not only symbolically, but actually, of what every death row prisoner faces. On top of that, Mumia's case is symbolic in that he is a vocal, articulate, compassionate journalist speaking out for the oppressed—being punished to the ultimate for being an activist." ■■■

Contributions for Mumia Abu-Jamal's defense fund may be sent to:

Equal Justice USA/MAJ-LDF
P.O. Box 5206
Hyattsville, MD 20782
(301) 699-0042

or

Black United Fund/MAJ
419 South 15th St.
Philadelphia, PA 19146
(215) 732-9266

Letters of protest may be sent to:

Governor Thomas Ridge
Main Capital Building, Room 225
Harrisburg, PA 17120

ph: (717) 783-1198

Fax: (717) 783-1396

For more information:

Free Mumia Abu-Jamal Coalition
P.O. Box 650
New York, NY 10009
(212) 330-8029

THE
CATS

The wall is 30 feet high and 5 feet thick. It surrounds Savone Correctional Facility, a 150-year-old maximum security prison where I am locked up. It is said that the wall goes 15 feet into the ground to discourage prisoners from tunneling their way out. This is only one of the many rumors that surround the prison.

One such rumor concerns the ghosts of a thousand prisoners, and at least one guard, who have died on this side of the wall. These ghosts prowl the halls day and night, serving a sentence beyond life, looking for the front gate or perhaps a different type of release.

There is a cell in D Block no one wants. Too many have died there and some remain; they float through the bars at night like they wished they could have done in life. These ghosts are real. Even the cats that wander the hallways arch their backs and screech when they approach Deadman's Curve, frightened by the unseen dead who linger there. I myself have felt a chill as I've walked along that long, curved hallway, invisible at points, to the officers stationed at either end. Somewhere in the middle, where the chill comes on, blood has covered the floor more times than anyone can remember.

While the ghosts can be dismissed as rumors, the cats of Savone and how they came to be cannot. It has nothing to do with legend and everything to do with legacy, a legacy that began in 1971, when something tried to get in the prison rather than out.

On the prison side of Savone's wall is a mammoth recreation area known as "the yard." Along its furthest edge are small courts that belong to groups of prisoners. The courts are tiny areas on a small hill where men congregate for conversation and cooking. The smell of fried chicken and ribs fill the air and coax men onto the courts for the food and safety found in numbers. Back in 1971, that same temptation drifted over the wall and caught the sensitive nose of another drifter—a pregnant cat.

Back on the court, where the ribs were sizzling, a steady hand tended the stove. Charlie Dennis had been on this court from the beginning. For 19 years, he had watched the fires as the names of those around him slowly changed. Some had been paroled, others became ghosts in the halls. Even though the names changed, the faces always held the same look that comes when liberty goes. Charlie's eyes were the same as the others', but in the corner there was a spark of kindness. He kept it hidden, for in prison kindness is taken as weakness.

Above his drab prison green, he always wore a knit wool hat. It was worn in place of hair, which had receded over the years until only a few white tufts remained over his weathered ears. The sight of Mickey ambling across the yard under his long hair made Charlie reach up and tug his few strands and shake his head at what once had been.

Mickey was everything Charlie was not. He was young, tall and powerfully built. His blackish hair hung in a tangled mane around his shoulders. He always wore a pair of old wool gloves, the fingers of which had been worn away over his six years in prison. Why he wore them was a mystery, but Mickey's gloves were never challenged. He took them off when he ate and kept them clean.

Mickey walked up the hill to the court. His step was hindered by a bad hip, the result of a stab wound three years before. As he moved, Mickey thought of little. There were no plans in his head today or ever. The ribs were as far as he could see. His shortsightedness had caused him to be the subject of several criminal investigations. The last one had deposited him in Savone, where, according to legal papers he never fully understood, he would live for the next 15 years. Whenever Mickey told anyone how much time he had to do, he always said, "15

by David-Michael Harding
Clinton Correctional Facility, NY

OF SAVONNE

years to life, or whichever comes first.” With his quick temper and strong arms, it was easy to see that “life” might indeed win out before the state could get its minimum out of Mickey.

Charlie stood over the makeshift grill and prodded the ribs as though they needed it. Mickey stepped onto the court and turned to the ribs.

“Let’s go boys,” Charlie said. “Get ‘em while they’re hot!”

As the men ate, the smell of beef drifted up and over the wall and down to a cat pacing below. Despite her distended stomach, she moved with the light gait unique to cats. She paused and put a foot on the wall as if to test it. Her nails came out and bristled at the hard concrete. Even if it had been a carpeted plank she would have had trouble ascending the 30 feet with the extra weight of her unborn babies.

“ATTENTION IN THE YARD. ATTENTION IN THE YARD THE YARD IS CLOSED. LINE IT UP.”

Charlie, Mickey and countless others trudged along reluctantly, funneling into a single line before disappearing into the dark brick building that housed their cages. As the men, heads bowed from worn despair, stepped into the block, the cat slipped beneath the north gate, through the fence and into the yard.

In the cellblocks beyond Deadman’s Curve, gates crashed shut, signaling the end of another day in an endless blur. Frankie tried yet again to write a letter, a kite as they’re called in prison. But again the attempt ended in a crumpled paper thrown across his cell. He pulled out the plastic jug. The peach slices, chunks of apple, raisins and sugar had settled nicely. Frankie drained off a glass and waited for sleep to overtake him. Several cells away, Uncle G was kneeling on his prayer rug, deep in conversation with Allah. After several min-

utes, he crept up off aching knees, solemnly rolled up his rug and went to sleep.

Mickey’s cell was spartan. The toilet bowl was rusty and dust balls jumped into the corners as he whipped back the single tattered blanket of his bed. He stretched out, quickly masturbated and, with nothing on his mind to hinder the descent, dropped off to sleep.

Charlie’s sleep wouldn’t come so readily. Following a tradition he had started years before, he sat on the edge of his small metal bed and reached for his diary. He reviewed the day’s events in his head, lowered himself onto his beat-up mattress and after half an hour, he stood up and scribbled briefly in the book: “Ribs smelled good today. Nothing else.” Then he slept, surrounded by the uneasy breathing of the rest of the prison.

Outside, the cat found the court where the smell of barbecued ribs still lingered. She crept into a crevice between the box and a stone chair and waited. It was only a few minutes until the first hard pains came.

With the morning light, hundreds of men and four kittens came into the yard. While the men, some of the most violent in the state, moved all around them, the kittens sought out their mother’s milk with blind eyes. Their stomachs were full and the day was warm when Mickey stepped onto the court. He plopped down on a stone seat and pulled out his package of tobacco. As he creased his paper and started tapping the cheap tobacco into it, a slight hiss brought his attention to the edge of the box. The smokey gray cat looked like a huge rat. Another hiss caused Mickey to jump and spill his smoke. Still holding his now empty rolling paper, Mickey leaned toward the cat’s nursery. The cat, peering back, spit at the interloper. Mickey jumped again and quickly made

his way down the hill. After each few steps, he looked back at the court, the box and the cat.

Charlie was walking the worn path of the perimeter, head down as usual. In front and behind, prisoners were stretched out like an uncoordinated freight train. Mickey caught up to his friend and grabbed his arm. "Charlie!" Mickey nearly screamed. Then he collected himself and spoke in a whisper. "Charlie, something's wrong on the court."

"What, somebody steal something again?"

"No, Charlie. There ain't nothin' missin'. Something's been added."

Charlie looked annoyed. "What's up, Mick? Somebody throw their garbage on it or what?"

"No, Charlie. Listen. There's a cat next to the box. It's makin' stupid noises."

"A cat?"

"A cat," Mickey said with pride.

Charlie was already pacing off toward the court. "Let's see . . ."

As the two friends neared the court, they unintentionally picked up Uncle G and Frankie. "Morning, gentlemen," G began. "It's a beautiful day to—"

Mickey cut him off. "No time, G. There's a cat on the court."

Charlie said a curt good morning and moved on his way with Mickey hobbling along behind. Frankie and G fell into place, staring at each other and muttering, "A cat?"

As the men, heads bowed from worn despair, stepped into the block, the cat slipped beneath the north gate, through the fence and into the yard.

When they hit the court they approached the box with caution. They heard the hiss of the cat. "See. I told ya," Mickey said. Charlie motioned for him to be quiet and then crouched down and looked into the shadow. A paw, with claws showing, struck at him in front of bared fangs. He backed up and the cat retreated.

"Wow, some pissed, huh, Charlie?" Frankie said.

"Perhaps it's ill, Charles," G said, trying to pierce the shadows with his aging eyes.

"No, I don't think so," Charlie said.

"What's wrong with him?" Mickey asked.

"Nothing, Mick. And it's not a him. It's a her."

"How do you know that?"

"She has kittens in there with her."

G relaxed while Mickey looked puzzled. Frankie allowed himself to smile. "Cool, man. Very cool."

The small group watched the anxious cat for a long time. Occasionally one of the kittens would cry, and with its whine bring contented, almost fatherly smiles to the faces of the men on the court.

"I've got a tuna fish sandwich here," G said. "Perhaps she's hungry." He slipped carefully toward the cat, pulling out his sandwich as he did. "Take it easy my little friend."

The cat spit until her nose caught the smell of the fish. Her

instinct to protect, and hunger, waged a short battle as G tossed a chunk of tuna into the shadow. Her razor sharp claws cut into the fish and held it while needle sharp teeth bit deep. The men took turns throwing pieces of G's snack. It was Mickey's misguided effort that brought the cat into the open. The group stood slowly to block the view from the others in the yard. From his vantage point, Charlie could see into the cat's lair. There were three little bodies piled haphazardly atop on another. A fourth, clearly dead, lay off to the side. Charlie held up three fingers to his friends. The cat picked up the morsel and returned to her kittens.

"How do they look, Charles?" G asked.

"Well, one's dead, but there's two tiger-colored ones and a third one that's mostly white, sorta calico. It looks pretty tiny next to the tigers."

"Awww, shit," Mickey said. "One's dead already?"

"Yeah, Mick. Mighta been born dead."

"Can we bury it later?"

"No way, man," Frankie said. "The mothers eat 'em."

"I don't believe she'd eat the dead kitten. When she allows us, we'll slip it away from her and bury it here on the court."

The remaining hours were consumed by the men and the cat eyeing each other amid talk of how to keep her hidden from the cops. After a quick day, the yard was closed. Once back in their cells, the evening rituals began. Uncle G found himself saying a prayer for the kittens' safety. Frankie wrote a letter and shared the news of the find. Mickey had trouble falling asleep for the first time in years as he fretted over the kittens and wondered why the one had died. Charlie's pen labored furiously at his diary. When he tired, he looked back at his work and was surprised to count five full pages. He clicked off his bare bulb and went to sleep. Like the others, he was thinking of the kittens and smiling.

At the lineup for yard the next morning, Charlie had a towel, an intended bed for the kittens, wrapped secretly around his waist under his shirt. G and Frankie brought food. Mickey had carried his last gulp of milk back from chow in his mouth and spit it into a small plastic bag. When he hit the yard, the others were some distance in front of him. By the time he arrived, they were staring blankly at the dirt floor of the court. "They're gone, man," Frankie said. "They're all gone 'cept the dead one."

Mickey went to the box and looked for himself. "Sonofabitch! Where'd they go?"

"She probably didn't think they'd be safe here. They do that sometimes, Mick," Charlie said.

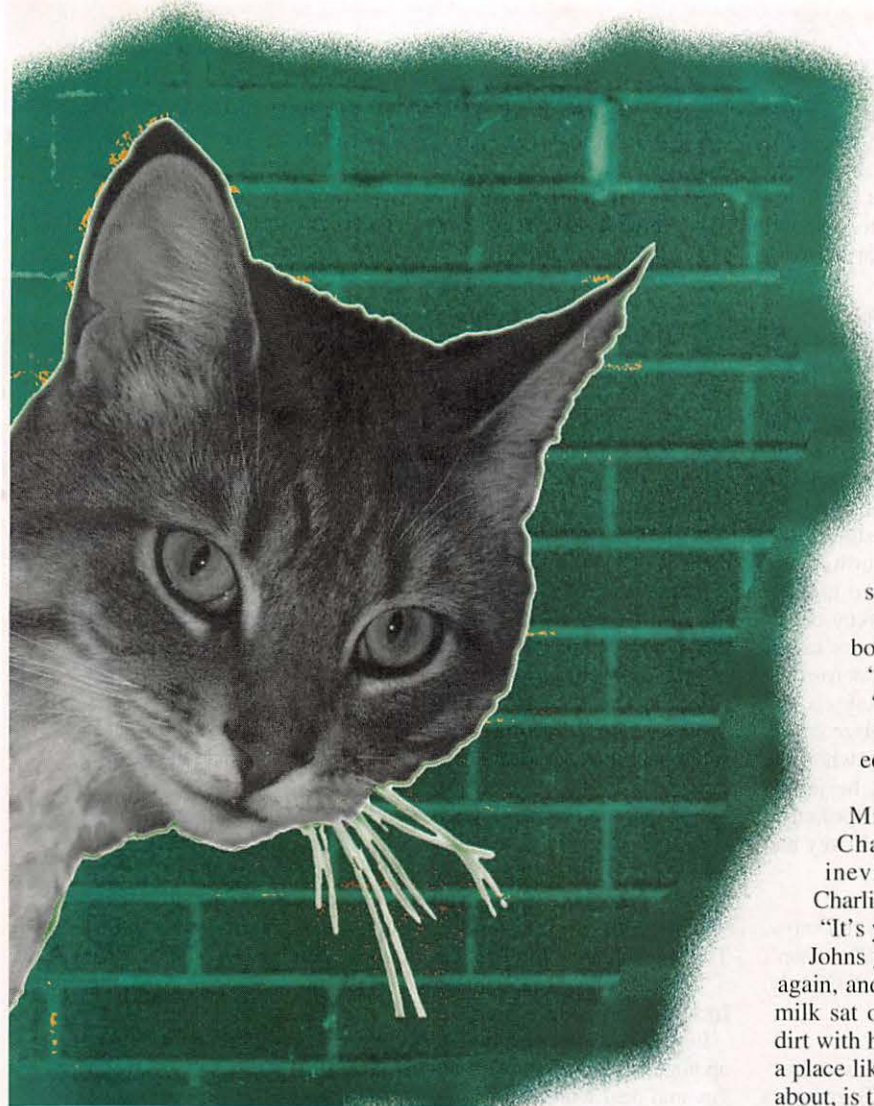
"Bullshit! We weren't gonna hurt 'em! I'd kill the first sonofabitch who touched them!"

Mickey sat down and dug a small hole with the heel of his boot. He watched as Uncle G laid the dead kitten in the shallow grave. It wasn't much of a ceremony. Mickey said he was a good kitten and Frankie started to snicker.

After the funeral, it occurred to Charlie that maybe the cat had kept the kittens in the yard. They began searching. Mickey held his little bag of milk as if it were a talisman as he poked through the islands of weeds.

It was Charlie who discovered the calico kitten. He bent as if to tie his shoe so no one noticed him slip the limp white ball into his pocket. He sauntered back to the court, motioning for the rest of the searchers. As they collected, Charlie laid the kitten by the fresh grave of the other. Mickey looked down as he walked onto the court. "Damn it! Why they all dyin', man?"

"I dunno, Mick," Charlie said as he toed out another new grave. As he dug, a tiny sneeze came from the white kitten. Charlie dropped down and cuddled it, Uncle G said a prayer and Frankie stomped the new grave closed. He pinched a small hole in his bag of milk and held it as Charlie fed the newest member of the court.



Charlie took the kitten into the block that night and wasn't seen for the next several days. He stayed in his cell to nurse the baby with milk smuggled from chow. Within a week, the kitten's health was restored and she was living comfortably in a cardboard box beneath Charlie's bed. Within three weeks, Gretchen, named after Charlie's mother, outgrew the box and was pirated back to the yard.

At the only door from the prison to the yard stood a shack that housed the guards' coffee pot, raincoats and riot gear. For five days out of seven, Officer Johns stood in the doorway as the prisoners filed by. Johns was a big, barrel-chested man with the beginnings of a paunch hanging over his tight belt. On his hip swung a battered nightstick. According to the rumors of Savone, he had put several wayward cons in the ground beneath the new gym back in the days when such things were done. Now Johns was older, and looking forward to the cushy job in the tower to finish his career as gatekeeper.

Besides his nightstick, Johns always had a cup of buttermilk with him. Twenty-three years of voluntary confinement had given him a sour stomach that the buttermilk soothed. As he walked through the yard, he sipped his tonic and paced the same eroded trail as the prisoners. On this particular day, Johns was circling Charlie's court. With each pass, he drew the circle tighter, like a shark circling its victim. Johns stepped uninvited onto the court. "What's goin' on fellas?"

Charlie spoke up. "Not a thing, Officer Johns."

Johns drew his nightstick and walked around the court, using the stick to flip over the stones and part clumps of weeds. "Something's goin' on. I don't know what yet. But I'm gonna

find out, guaran-fuckin'-teed." The members of the court traded worried looks as Johns jammed his stick under the lid of the box and pried it open. He held the top up with the nightstick and leaned over to see inside. Following a few tense seconds, he stepped back and lowered the lid. Johns made one more sweep around the court then stepped off. "I'll figure it out all right . . ."

Mickey was anxious to see into the box himself, wondering, like the others, if Gretchen had hidden or escaped. When he opened it, Gretchen looked back. Mickey gently set the lid down and returned to his seat with a blank look on his face.

"Well?" Frankie questioned. "She there?"

"Hell yes, she's there. I don't see how he coulda missed her."

"Perhaps she was under a pan or something," G suggested.

Charlie stood up anxiously. "This isn't gonna work, boys. Our luck and Gretchen's isn't gonna last."

"Any suggestions, Charles?"

"Not a damn one."

"Well, we better think of something. Johns is headed back this way."

Sure enough, Johns was walking toward them.

Mickey got up from his chair and sat on the box.

Charlie returned to his stone seat to wait out the inevitable. As Johns came to the court, he spoke to Charlie. "Request permission to come aboard, captain."

"It's your world, Officer Johns."

Johns grunted over a sip of buttermilk, drew his nightstick again, and sat on the stone bench next to Charlie. The buttermilk sat on the stone between them as Johns doodled in the dirt with his stick. "You know, Dennis, not much can go on in a place like this that a couple of old timers like us don't know about, is there?"

"No sir, I don't imagine not."

Johns softly echoed Charlie's answer. "No, sir, I don't imagine not . . ."

The men sat in silence for another minute. Johns then rose and started to leave. Charlie noticed the cup of buttermilk and held it out. "Officer Johns? You forgot your buttermilk."

Johns never stopped walking. "No I didn't. Your friend in the box looks a little thirsty."

About a month later, when Gretchen had become impossible to conceal, Johns returned to the court. Without a word, he opened the box and picked her up. He petted her and then set her on the ground. As Johns walked away, he left half a cup of buttermilk on the box as he would five out of seven days thereafter. That night Frankie wrote another letter, G gave thanks for an answered prayer, Mickey couldn't sleep and Charlie filled six pages in his diary.

With her freedom assured by Officer Johns, Gretchen quickly conquered the yard and everyone in it, everyone, that is, except one. While the hardest criminal would smile when Gretchen came near, Alejandro Benerize would clench his decaying teeth at the sight of her. Benerize didn't hate her for something as simple as being a cat, he hated her because everyone else loved her. Though his scarred knuckles and prison tattoos made him look formidable, his resentment of Gretchen was no match for the joy she brought the other men, so he kept quiet, biding his time.

As winter approached, Gretchen became acquainted with snow. Soon she was frolicking about, playing with the other residents of Savone, several of whom had built a miniature ski jump down the middle of a small hill. Gretchen sat on the

oners' laps and, with a constantly twitching calico tail, watched the skiers. Mickey carried her down on one jump, much to Charlie's chagrin, but a few yards from takeoff she abandoned him with a powerful leap of her own. Her jump upset Mickey's balance. He tumbled out of control and crashed into a snow-bank. For her part in the wreck, Gretchen was rewarded with an avalanche of pats, rubs and ear scratches.

Off to the side of the ski jump, Benerize dipped his hand into the snow. As he packed it tight, Gretchen strode defiantly to the center of the takeoff ramp. It was apparent that she knew the next jumper would wait for her to move despite his shouts and flailing arms. The men laughed and looked back and forth from Gretchen to the skier. No one saw the incoming iceball. With a resounding thud it crashed into Gretchen's hip and blasted her off the ramp. Her instincts caught her and, as expected, she landed on all four feet. Those same instincts told her to run, but she had to do it on three legs. The fourth, badly bruised, skimmed along on the snow. Benerize gave himself away with a broad smile and a wicked cackle. Mickey didn't have the intellect for words. A hard right hook hit its target flush on the jaw with a crack that was still echoing across the yard when Benerize slumped to the snow. As Mickey cocked his shabby boots for the kicks that would keep Benerize down, Officer Johns grabbed him from behind. Johns knew whom he had collared, but never looked at Mickey. Instead, he jerked him backward into the crowd. By the time Johns looked at Benerize then turned to the group of agitated cons, Mickey had been successfully swallowed up.

"Break it up! The show's over!" Johns barked.

The crowd broke up as Benerize stumbled through the snow, touching his aching jaw as Gretchen tested her hip. She wasn't hurt badly, but for the rest of the winter she limped slightly, which served as a constant reminder to the others.

The cat brought changes to Johns' yard, the most noticeable of which came in Mickey. He became Gretchen's guardian. As she moved from court to court and danced across the yard in search of food or fun, Mickey was always nearby. She would limp along lightly on her rounds while Mickey sluggishly followed on his own injured hip. Their common handicap formed an unbreakable bond between them.

In the spring, Gretchen disappeared for two days. Benerize would have been severely questioned, or beaten, had he not been serving 30 days in the box at the time. Then, as suddenly as she had disappeared, she was back on the court. Several weeks later, it became clear that Gretchen was pregnant.

"Pregnant, huh?" Uncle G said, with the look of a disapproving father. "You certain, Charles?"

"Yeah, I'm sure. Look at her. She's gettin' wider than the broadside of a barn."

Gretchen pranced around on the box as if on stage.

"Damn!" Frankie said excitedly. "Gretch partied, man!"

Mickey petted her affectionately, but had a cross look on his face as he spoke. "Where the hell's the father?"

Frankie laughed. "Damn, Mickey! That boy is GONE! Done did the deed and split, man!"

"Well, whatever happened, I think we can take care of her," Charlie said, and smiled. "Even without a husband."

Mickey gently lifted Gretchen off the box and handed her to Uncle G who took her carefully and examined her. "We'll take care of you," Mickey said as he gruffly opened a can of tuna fish. Each stab of the can opener punctuated the words of his next sentence. "And if I ever catch that guy cat, I'll take care . . . of . . . him . . . too!"

The following weeks saw Gretchen grow bigger. Officer Johns brought out a saw one day and cut a hole in the box so Gretchen could come and go as she pleased. Extra blankets also materialized on the court along with the cup of buttermilk. By the time the second litter of four kittens was born on the court, Gretchen's box had become a cozy nursery. Though everyone tried not to disturb the new family, the lid of the box was lifted and lowered countless times a day. Men who were paroled came to say goodbye as often as the new jacks came to say hello.

Johns watched all of this from his new post in the tower over the north gate. When things were quiet, he scanned the yard through his binoculars until he located Gretchen and her playful offspring. Sometimes he watched the yard through the powerful rifle scope attached to his Springfield. This practice had no effect on the cats, but served to keep the lid down tight on the yard, something the cats seemed to be able to do from inside the box.

When summer was in full swing, an innocent act of clumsiness led to two killings. Frankie had just sat down in the chow hall next to a new jack. The inmate, with his freshly shaved head and new, green clothes, was nervous. As he ate, he accidentally tipped over his milk. The splash landed on Frankie's pants.

"Yo, Man!" Frankie hollered as he jumped up. "What the fuck are you doin'?"

In an instant, the new inmate had to decide which way to fall: be apologetic and run the risk of being taken for weak, or be a tough guy and deal with the consequences. He looked at the diminutive Frankie and opted for the latter. "Shut the fuck up, man."

Frankie noticed the guards starting to close in. He sat down and whispered his final remark. "See you in the yard, bitch."

"Whatever."

As the chow crowd filed out toward the yard, Charlie and Mickey slid in behind the new jack. "Son," Charlie began. "Generally when there's an accident like that back there, you'd offer to wash the man's pants for him. Saves a lot of problems."

"That's real sweet, but I don't wash nobody's clothes, man."

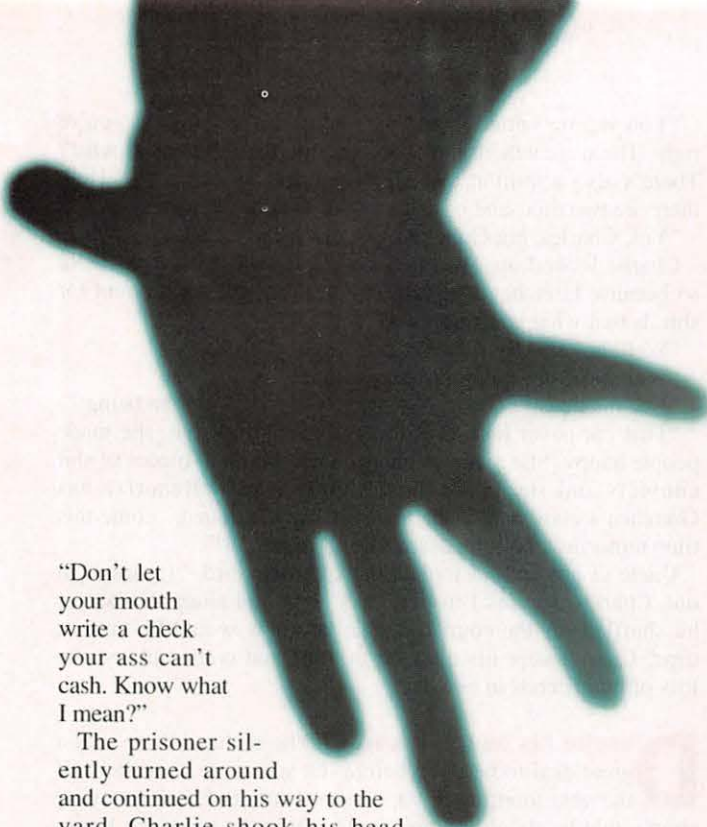
"Have it your way, son. Big mistake, though."

The new man spun around. "Look, old man. It don't cost you a dime to stay outta mine. So back off!"

Mickey put his hand on Charlie's shoulder and leaned his hulking frame toward the new jack. "Hey!" he said with a snarl.



"Benerize would have been severely beaten had he not been serving 30 days in the hole."



"Don't let your mouth write a check your ass can't cash. Know what I mean?"

The prisoner silently turned around and continued on his way to the yard. Charlie shook his head approvingly. "Well put, Mick."

As soon as the new jack's untried boots hit the sand, Frankie cornered him. "Yo! Fuckin' nice haircut! Now, you wanna do my wash or do you wanna get your ass kicked?"

"You want a wash woman, go find a bitch."

"I got one—You! You wanna do the right thing or do I bust your fuckin' ass outta the frame?"

Mickey was confused by all the talking. "Set it off, Frankie! Crash the sonofabitch!"

From the other side of the growing crowd someone yelled, "Frankie ain't crashin' nothin'! He couldn't crash a car if he was drunk!"

The combination of encouragement and embarrassment sent Frankie into the other man. Everyone, including the tower guards, was watching as the pair exchanged punches. The officers moved slowly, content to let the bad blood be cleared.

From everywhere in the yard, cons were running to the fight. Benerize was no exception. As he trotted along the base of the hill, a movement out of the corner of his eye caught his attention. It was Gretchen coming down from the court. Benerize slowed and let other men pass him as he neared the spot where Gretchen's path would cross his. He thought about the shank in his boot, but there wasn't time. Instead, he knelt down swiftly as the two paths intersected. Gretchen saw him only as another man in green. By the time Benerize's hands tightened around her face and throat, it was too late. Instinct drove her claws into his hands as she struggled to break free, but her attacker was too strong. As Benerize violently twisted her head in a single vicious snap, Gretchen's body went limp. The killer stood up quickly and tossed her into the tall weeds and continued up the hill to the fight. It had only taken a few seconds. Meanwhile, Frankie was still swinging, Officer Johns was watching the fight through his rifle scope and the kittens were still playing. In her grave of weeds, Gretchen's body twitched a few times then stopped. Her muscles relaxed and death tightened its grip.

The fight ended with both men leaning on their knees, exhausted. The cops descended and led the tired fighters inside where a lackluster inquiry was conducted by disinterested officers. The fight was also the topic of discussion around the yard, so no one noticed that Gretchen was missing.

It wasn't until the third day that her absence became an issue and then it happened only because of the evidence Gretchen had left behind.

"'Cuse me, Meester Dennis?"

Charlie, Mickey and Uncle G looked up from their grill to see José standing nervously at the edge of the court. José was a small-time burglar with no attachment to any court. He would sometimes get a piece of chicken or a rib by carrying firewood for the stoves, but when he'd been paid, he was told to leave the court in no uncertain terms.

Mickey ignored him and looked back to the grill. G nodded hello, but didn't speak. Charlie, however, spoke graciously. "Good morning, José. Come on in. How are you today?"

"Not so good today, Meester Dennis."

"What's the trouble?" Charlie asked.

José stepped onto the court, but continued to stare at his dirty sneakers.

"Come on, now." Charlie said. "Spit it out."

Mickey looked from the chicken to Uncle G and rolled his eyes, which caused José to speak tentatively. "Someone ez missing from ch-your court."

Mickey moved menacingly around G and Charlie and rammed a pointed finger in José's chest. "Look, shithead! Just because Frankie's locked up for a couple a days, don't think you can just show up and make off with his chicken!"

José was backing up under pressure from Mickey's index. "I no want Meester Frankie's cheekins! It ez ch-your friend, dee cat, ez meeing!"

Mickey stomped back to the grill. "She'll be back in a couple a days, too. So you ain't gettin' her 'cheekins' neither!"

Charlie couldn't conceal a smile at Mickey's comments and busied himself with the chickens, quietly dismissing the beggar. Uncle G had heard something different in José's voice and moved toward him. "José," G began, "what do you mean, the cat is missing?"

"She ez gone, sí?"

"Yes, but there is every indication she'll return soon."

"I hope you are right, Meester G."

"What makes you believe I may not be?"

"Well, Meester G., I saw something yesterday that made me worry for ch-your friend, dee cat. I saw scratches, deep scratches, on Benerize."

Mickey set down the kitten he was holding and turned to Charlie.

"Come sit down, José," Charlie said. "Tell us what you saw."

José related his story anxiously. "I was going by hez house yesterday and he was leaning on dee bars. When I pass, I see big scratches on hez hands. Like dez." José made a claw out of one hand.

The men were quiet as José's news settled in. "Mickey, give José here a good big chunk when the chicken is done," Charlie said. "G, come with me."

As the two elder statesmen of the yard walked down the hill, Uncle G spoke. "It occurs to me, Charles, that Mr. Benerize has not been in the yard for several days. Nor, as I consider it, has he been seen in the chow hall."

"I was thinkin' the same thing. We'd better send someone to give Benerize a look-see."

The men walked across the yard hatching a plan that would confirm or lay waste to José's story. Uncle G talked briefly with a trusted confidante and proposed a visit to Benerize's cell while Charlie considered the options. He decided it would all swing on the clandestine peek at Benerize and whether Gretchen could be found. As G returned, it was decided that a covert search of the yard would have to be done. They picked up Mickey and began their search, but not without first agree-

ing that should they find Gretchen, and if she were dead, they would leave her where she was. If Benerize was responsible, the uproar created by finding her would prevent him from ever leaving his cell again. Charlie was already thinking how to pull Benerize to the yard if it came to that.

Mickey quickly paced the yard. As he walked, he carried a kitten and spoke to it constantly. G meandered around the outer edge of the yard looking carefully and quietly through the weeds. Charlie was canvassing the bottom of the hill. He thought back to when he searched in similar fashion and had found the nearly dead calico kitten. And, as before, first there was a hint of something, a splash of white fur, then the recognition of a cat laying in the tall grass. This time there would be no last minute miracles. The hovering flies, as well as Gretchen's open mouth between her shoulder blades, was proof enough. He struggled back to the court where he sat undisturbed until G and Mickey saw him there and joined him.

"What's up, Charlie? We done? I knew she wasn't here. Old Gretch is just off somewhere. I'll bet she . . ."

A wave of G's hand stopped Mickey in mid-sentence. Charlie's face showed the bad news. "Where is she, Charles?"

"At the bottom of the hill . . ." His words were weak and trailed off. G sat beside his friend and patted him on the knees.

Mickey stood before them with clenched fists and veins that showed in his neck. "Maybe she ain't dead! Remember? She done that when she was a baby, remember?"

"Mickey," Charlie said softly. "She's dead. Her head is twisted completely around. Somebody snapped her neck."

"Somebody? Weren't no somebody at all! It was that fuckin' Benerize! That's who done it. That's who killed her." Mickey bent down and scooped up one of the kittens. As he petted it, he scanned the yard. "OK, Benerize. Now let's see how you look with your head on backwards!"

"Take it easy, Mickey," G said. "We don't know for sure yet if . . ."

"Fuck you," Mickey shouted as he stormed off the court and headed up the hill. "I know plenty!"

"Charles," G said. "You'll have to talk to him. He's going to kill Benerize."

"Um hmm."

"Well, you just can't sit there while he does."

"Why?"

"Why? Because Mickey is ready to murder a man over a cat! That's why."

"Right now, G, that sounds like reason enough to me. In fact, if Mickey don't kill Benerize, I will."

"Charles! Listen to what you're saying! You're talking about killing a man because he killed an animal, maybe! There are a thousand cats just like Gretchen outside the wall. For God's sake, Charlie! What are you thinking?"

"I saw something yesterday that made me worry for your friend, dee cat. I saw scratches, deep scratches, on Benerize."

"You wanna know what I'm thinkin'? I'm thinking you're right. There are a thousand other cats out there. But guess what? There's also a million men like Benerize out there, too. Hell, there are two thousand of them on this side of the wall alone."

"Yes, Charles, but Gretchen was just a cat."

Charlie looked up. His cheeks were stained with tears. "Oh, so because Gretchen was just a stupid cat, she don't count for shit. Is that what you're saying?"

"Well, not exactly, Charles, but . . ."

"Well, does she count or not, damn it?"

"No, she doesn't count! Not against the life a human being!"

"That cat never hurt anyone. And more than that, she made people happy. She made us happy. Two thousand pieces of shit convicts and she made them happy. And if Benerize has Gretchen's claw marks on 'im," Charlie continued, "come this time tomorrow, he'll be dead. You in or out, G?"

Uncle G got up and looked out over the yard. "I guess I'm out, Charles. I guess I'm out." G's hand slid along the box as he shuffled off the court for what he knew would be his last time. Charlie kept his eyes on the dirt and contemplated the loss of two friends in one day.

Despite his heavy losses, Charlie realized there was a great deal to be done before the sun came over the wall the next morning. First, he sent a kite to Frankie, saying simply that he should be prepared to fight the new jack again. He was to look for Charlie as soon as he hit the yard. Next, Charlie used the information that came to him from the prison. He knew, for instance, that a prisoner named Rico was deep into Benerize for cigarettes. Through an untraceable line of cons, word was sent to Benerize that Rico was prepared to pay the next morning. This would lure Benerize into the open. Word was also passed to Rico not to come to the yard.

Last, there was Mickey. He was still sitting on the hill with the kitten. Charlie walked up and stood beside him. "Benerize will be out in the morning. You be close to me." Mickey never looked up as Charlie returned to the court where he watched the yard until it closed. Then he, like all the other in green and blue, filed into the building for the night.

The next morning, the men reclaimed the yard. Charlie came out with Mickey as usual, but Mick went directly to the court while Charlie waited on the other players. He saw the new jack step cautiously into the yard for his second time. Frankie was right behind him, looking for Charlie. When their eyes met, Charlie motioned for him to be patient.

Charlie was still watching for the young Muslim who was to have checked on Benerize. As he waited, Mickey came up beside him holding a kitten. Benerize was some distance away, looking through the crowd for Rico. Charlie looked at the crowd behind Benerize, searching for the messenger. Not seeing him, Charlie shifted his gaze back to the gate. Off to one side he saw Uncle G standing alone. As Charlie watched, G's left hand slipped from its pocket and moved up to his chest. It lay flat while his right became a tight claw. G pulled his curled fingers across the back of his left hand and nodded a prolonged yes. Once the message had been relayed, G's arms dropped limply to his sides and he walked away. Charlie turned to Mickey, but he had already moved off. He, the kitten and the shank were closing in on Benerize.

Across the yard, Frankie was nervously watching Charlie. When the slow and deliberate nod came, Frankie knew it was no mistake. He ran over to the new jack, traded obligatory insults and started swinging. The crowd gathered as if it were part of the script. Benerize, too, played his part and was soon absorbed by the cheering tide of green.

In the north tower, Johns' attention was drawn to the fight. He grumbled as he slid an arm through his rifle's sling and pressed his eye to the scope. When Johns saw it was Frankie again, he slipped his finger off the trigger and started to scan the spectators. He soon found Benerize and centered the cross hairs on his forehead. The con's head and shoulders filled the powerful lens. In a voice that was barely audible, Johns spoke to the prisoner, 150 yards away. "Why don't you try something, shithead? Give me half a reason and I'll splatter what brains you got all over my yard." Benerize turned his head to the side and unknowingly lined up his temple under the cross hairs. "Perfect," Johns said.

A rush of movement shot into Johns' field of vision. It was a shank! Benerize abruptly turned and faced Johns again. His eyes were wide, but lifeless. Then he slumped to the ground. Johns tried to see into the crowd, but it had become a mass of scattering cons. Frankie and the new jack were running anywhere and everywhere as long as it was away from Benerize. Charlie had gone to the court some time ago. On it he found Uncle G. Neither had spoken. Instead, G played with the kittens while Charlie started a fire. In a moment, Mickey would join them. Now he was merely part of the disbanding crowd. Beneath the kitten, Mickey carried the wooden handle of the shank. In one quick move, only seconds before, he saw the rusty nail vanish into the fleshy spot at the base of Benerize's skull. Then he snapped the handle off, leaving he spike buried in the brain of Gretchen's killer.

Mickey stepped quickly onto the court and sat the kitten down. Charlie held out his hand without a word. As the broken handle passed from Mickey through Charlie to the fire, G kept his eyes focused on the kittens.

The prison siren began to scream while an army of blue-shirted officers streamed into the yard. Officer Johns began his tour.

He went to the body, where a dozen guards had already gathered. One was squatting next to Benerize's head, pointing to the spike. "Drove a nail right into the sonofabitch's head."

"Didn't even need a hammer," someone chimed in.

"Yeah, I guess you could say somebody nailed him!"

"Awww, man. That's lame."

"I thought it was pretty funny."

"Well," Johns said, "don't quit your day job just yet. What else you got?"

"There's a little piece of wood left on the shank. Could match it up, I bet."

"All right," Johns said. "Let's get on with this. Start pattin' the bastards down and runnin' them inside." Johns spun around and headed into the heart of the yard. As he walked he replayed the murder he had witnessed through his rifle scope. "There was Benerize," he thought. "The shank. And the hand. The hand . . . Something about the hand . . . It had a glove on it. Or did it? The fingers. I could see the fingers, but not the hand. Like half a glove . . . Fingerless gloves! Mickey!" Johns headed for the court.

From behind his fire, Charlie saw Johns coming. He handed Mickey his wooden poker. Charlie moved fast to the bottom of the hill and into the yard as Johns approached.

"What's up, Dennis?"

"Don't know, Officer Johns, sir."

"Well, I figured that," Johns said with a smile. "Where's Mickey?"

Charlie didn't say anything, but he turned and looked up to the court.

"How long he been there, Charlie?"

"Long time."

Johns stepped around Charlie and headed again toward the court.

Charlie was walking beside the officer with his head down. "He don't know nothin', Officer Johns."

"A rush of movement shot into Johns' field of vision. It was a shank!"

"No one ever does. But I do."

The unlikely pair took a few more steps when Charlie realized they were next to the tall grass that held Gretchen's distorted body. "Officer Johns? Can I show you something?"

"You got piss poor timing. Later."

Charlie reached out and cupped the guard's arm. Johns froze, except for his free hand, which reached instinctively for the stick. He didn't pull it out, but instead stared coldly at Charlie's hand as it held his sleeve. Charlie let his trembling hand fall away. "That could get you six months in the box and a helluva beat down, Dennis."

"And I'll take it, if you just look at something first."

Johns never agreed, but as Charlie took a few short steps to the tall grass, he followed. The burly guard was looking at Charlie firmly until the old man pointed into the weeds. Johns gracefully slid his nightstick from its ring and parted the grass, disturbing the flies that surrounded Gretchen. He stood for several minutes examining the dead cat. He could see her disjointed neck clearly. When he had seen enough, and thought enough, he pulled his stick out of the grass and let the weeds spring back to conceal Gretchen's body. Then he looked long and hard at Charlie, who met his eyes stare for stare. Johns broke it off and stepped once more in the direction of the court.

G was petting the kittens and Mickey was stoking the fire when Johns came onto the court. Frankie had arrived and was sitting behind G, trying to look small. Johns walked to the fire and gently took the poker out of Mickey's gloved hand and began turning over the burning pieces of wood. He took turns looking at the fire and reading the young man's face. "Nice little fire you got here, Mick. Nice little fire." Mickey didn't look up until he felt Johns nudge him to take the poker back. Then Johns turned and looked at Uncle G, still caressing the babies. "Been quite a day, ain't it G?"

"Can't really say, sir. It's just beginning."

Johns motioned toward the stretcher that was carrying Benerize out of the yard. "Oh, I dunno. It already ended for some."

No one spoke. G absently petted the kittens. Johns knelt down and stroked the kittens for a minute then quickly stood. "Frankie, that little fight of yours is gonna cost you 30 days in the box. Let's go."

"Awww, man, Officer Johns," Frankie whined. "You don't wanna go and do all that. It was just . . ." A piercing stare from Charlie cut him off.

"There a problem with that, Frankie?" Johns demanded.

"Uhh . . . no, sir."

"That's good. Now get your ass down there by the gate."

Johns began to follow him, but stopped by Mickey and his fire once again. He stood there quietly, looking out at the prison complex. "This is my yard, but I don't have to live here, you men do. Don't you, Mickey?"

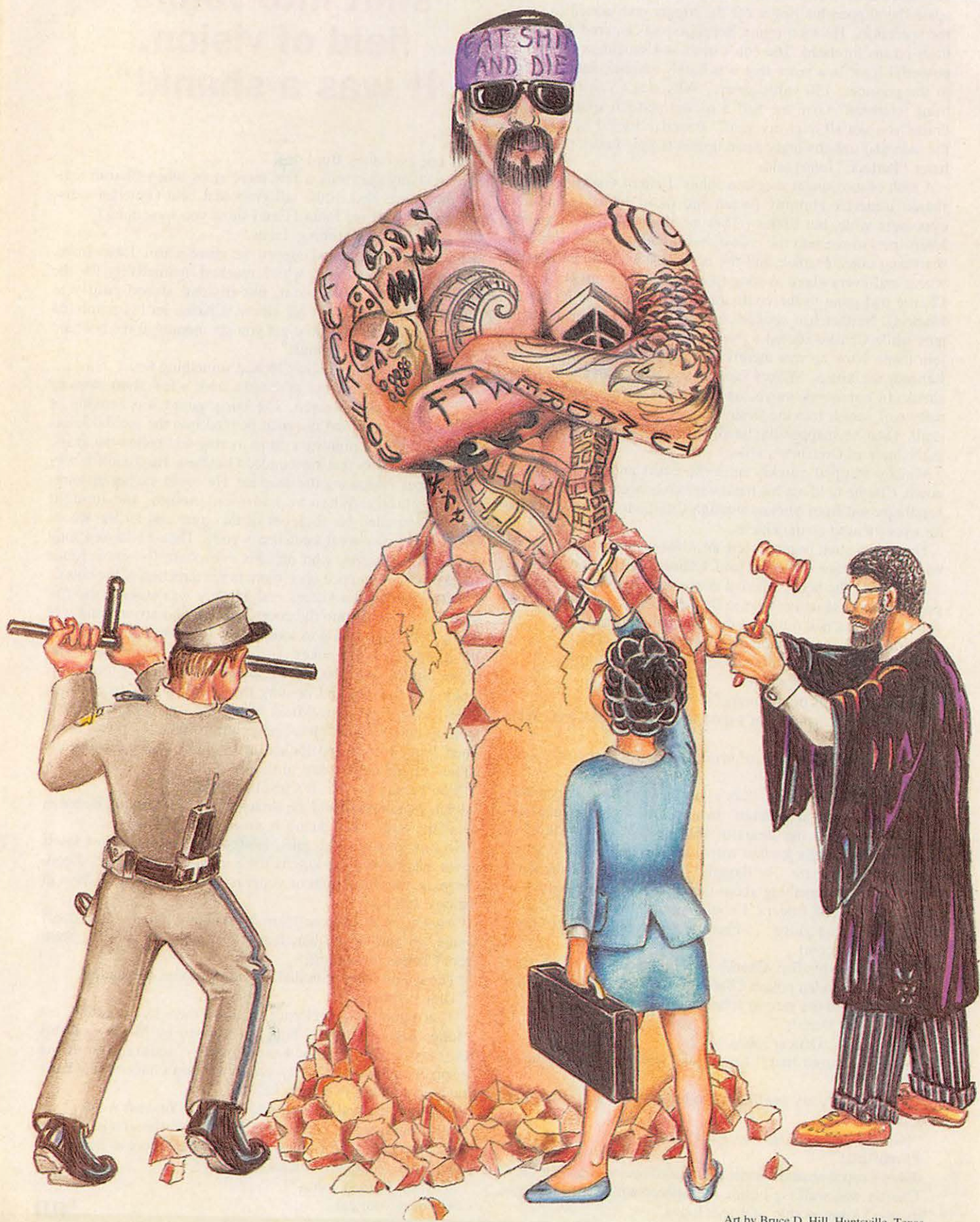
Mickey continued looking into the fire. "Yes, sir, we do."

Johns muttered as he stepped away from the crackling fire. "Yes sir, we do . . ." He hesitated a moment more as he looked down at the frolicking kittens. "Mickey?"

"Yes, sir, Officer Johns?"

"Go bury your cat."





Art by Bruce D. Hill, Huntsville, Texas

Meet the kind of guy
society dreads most:
a true product of prison who's
madder than hell and getting out soon . . .

HONOR IS EVERYTHING

by Greg Waleski
Arizona State Prison, Florence

I WAS BORN an incorrigible, insubordinate, totally disobedient individual. All my life, I have defied authority. I would rather die fighting than bow down to another man and be told what to do. I do not accept human law—I am a Law Unto Myself. I cannot obey some other person just because that's the way they say it has to be. Who the fuck are they? They're not running things here. They cannot threaten, coerce or intimidate me because unlike them, I am not scared. I don't give a fuck. It doesn't matter what happens to me, as long as I stand up to *them*. Consequences do not intimidate me. Threats and punishment do not faze me. All it does is make me even more determined to fight.

I determine for myself what is right and wrong based upon my principles and my conscience. Anything less than that is weak.

The authorities contend that they can't have everyone going around making up their own rules. I don't want to hear it. I can't live in a world where other people make up rules for me, as if to say that I'm just a nobody and I'm not about shit. I will not be disrespected like that. I will fight to the death to get what I have coming: respect, self-determination and autonomy.

This society is ass-backwards. It gives respect and autonomy to scary little cowards who deserve it the least and fuck over people with the balls who stand up for themselves. Weak, impotent, wimpy old men (and women) with a lot of money, social status and influence are running things, deciding how everyone else is to live. These

wanna-be warriors do battle in offices behind the safety of a desk, with a fountain pen and a telephone, using laws, attorneys and police-gangs to control things. Wimpy little sissies rise to positions of authority and political power by telling lies, being affluent and having all the right connections.

The Establishment encourages everyone else to be weak and cowardly. It discourages people from having the balls to take care of their own business and to be self-reliant. They prefer everyone to cry to the authorities for help and rat on their friends, neighbors and even their own family. The police coerce little kids to turn in their parents just for smoking weed. If some dude mouths off and starts a fight with you, and you whoop his ass, like you're supposed to, the police end up taking *you* to jail. Sometimes it's good for a man to get scuffed up—it builds character. But the authorities do not allow men to take care of their own business. If you win a fight, the police offer the other guy a way to get even, encouraging him to press charges and testify against you in court. You may well end up in prison for ten years or so. Where is the honor in this?

I will not settle for a life without honor.

IF I ALLOW AUTHORITY figures to dictate to me, then I am nothing, and I will get whatever they decide to dish out to me. Fuck that shit! I will not live in slavery and servitude to others who, when all is said and done, eat, sleep and bleed just

like everyone else. So who the fuck are *they* to tell *me* anything? I'd like to see just one of them try to make me obey them—all by themselves, with their bare hands. But they don't have the balls to do battle like that.

Rank and official status mean absolutely nothing. It's just bullshit to give them control over everyone else. Since they insist on elevating themselves to such positions of authority, they have become inhuman, because decent human beings should not desire to have control over others. Only tyrants need such control. They are malicious, pernicious, power-mad abominations out to deprive me of my life. They lie, cheat, steal, rob and kill people "legitimately." Therefore, none of them can be trusted. It is my right to defend myself from them.

Spending the rest of *my* life in prison is not my idea of living. The most important thing I have learned is not that I'd better change my ways and go straight (on the contrary, they ain't seen nothin' yet!) but rather, that I'd better start taking things very seriously, that I'd better be absolutely fucking determined to protect my freedom when I get out. So if they try to put their hands on me, arrest me and put me back in prison, I had better defend myself as zealously as I possibly can, just as I would against any ordinary attacker. I have seven prior felony convictions. If I get another, they'll probably put me away for 100 years. So I'd better get off while I have the chance because in a court room, the game is rigged against me and my ass is out.

BEING IN PRISON is like being a dog in a pound. I am deprived and denied things I am rightfully entitled to, and these coward-ass pigs play their little chickenshit games with me. Next time, though, we're going to hold court right there in the street. It would be better to die in a shootout with the police than to be warehoused in a prison for the rest of my life. Hopefully this time when I get out, I can avoid ever letting it get to that point (by being very careful and staying three steps ahead of them.) That's about the only chance I have of making it. Lying down is not an option for me.

In the meantime, I await release. I don't exactly like being here in prison, but my eyes have been opened by it. I see a whole different world now. I

have changed so radically that I hardly recognize the person I used to be, like I was just running around acting stupid back then. Now I'm serious about things. I'm not sure I could've reached the level I'm at today by any other means. It's like they say, "No pain, no gain." I have truly gained. The state of consciousness I have attained is worth more than any creature comfort and partial freedom that law-abiding, conformist citizens are given in order to placate, pacify and blind them. Now I am wide awake. I see right through the bullshit and hypocrisy dished out by the Establishment. It is better to be fully enlightened and in prison than to be free and in a stupor like the masses of sheep—free to eat, sleep, consume and work for the ruling elites. Here, I have become stronger, harder and

sharper, having evolved into a much greater human being. That is something I have to be very thankful for. As Nietzsche said, "That which does not destroy me, makes me stronger."

The authorities are so full of themselves that they mindlessly believe they can break anyone. They're not breaking me, they're *making* me. Their arrogance may well be their undoing. They aren't so smart and they're not invincible. There are covert ways to get over on them. I intend to show them that their narrow-minded, zero-tolerance, no-compromise mentality is a mistake. Money is the one thing they do understand—and if it costs them a high price to be uncool about things, if it's bad business to be assholes, then that just might be the thing to bring them around.

They'll die with their materialistic power. They're going to get what they have coming to them sooner or later. But since millions of people are adversely affected in the meantime, I'm just going to have to see what I can do about causing them a whole lot of problems right now. The longer it takes for bad karma to catch up with them, the more fatheaded they get because they think they're getting away with it.

Only fools measure power in a totally materialistic sense. That power is temporary; it can be lost at any time. You must strive for *true* power—the Power Within. That power is immortal and indestructible. *They* can't even *touch* that.

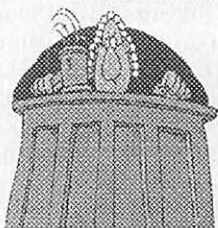
It doesn't matter what they do to me because I've already won. The more they try to keep me down, the stronger I get. I am in a prison cell, yet I am freer than I've ever felt before. Now, I am at one with myself. The half-dead pigs are nothing compared to that. *They* are the ones who are captive.

So I say again: They ain't seen *nothin'* yet. Now that they have given me so much time to get my head together, I am a lot more disciplined, focused and capable. And I am going to wreak some serious damage upon their system of greed, exploitation, oppression and death when I get out.

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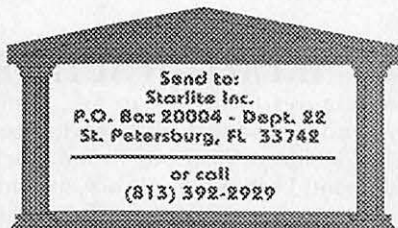
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BUBBA—EXPOSED!

Dear Bubba,

I just finished reading your article and knew immediately you must be one of those know it all, seen it all, done it all convicts. I bet you even claim to have tried one of those state-administered lethal injections.

I was compelled to write to defend the honor of all the Bubbas of the world, because you, sir, are a fraud! By looking at your address, New York Sissy, I mean city, one realizes you are not a true BORN and INBRED Bubba like our boys down South. I guess your real name is Bernardo Venzelini Gambeio, and you just could not resist the popularity of Bubba at this time. He's an icon, an idol, a mystery!

Bubbas are truly good, old boys. They only eat fried foods, or foods that cause gas. I grew up with many Bubbas, I dated a few, and almost married one, but I lost him to one of his female relatives. Real Bubbas love their bird-dogs and Mamas and in that order too! They have class. Why, they attend all of the important social events of the season, such as the animal and farm expo, the tractor pull, and any sportive event that draws blood. They are educated. Many of them have seen the eighth grade, sever-

al times. They are wealthy. You would never catch a true Bubba without enough money in his overalls for his Redman, Pabst and pork rinds.

They are real men and they are not afraid to let others see them cry, like when their pickup truck gets repossessed, the IRS won't allow them to declare their pigs as dependents, or the woman of their dreams hair comes off, make-up comes off, and teeth come out.

You should be ashamed of portraying all Bubbas as stupid, backward, feminine pantywastes. Just because you are a sissy doesn't mean our Bubbas are. They would not be caught dead dressing in drag like a vice officer on Friday night!

Please stop trying to be something you're not, change your name to Bruce or Victor, because you sure as hell ain't no Bubba!

Signed, Really P.Oed,
Bubba's Ho

Darlin',

Hotdamn! At last, a woman who truly understands men. And a Southern Belle! Honey, I would give you all my money—and my plastic, too. I bet you know how to shop.

So, you sniffed me out. Okay, maybe I'm not a real Bubba. But, then, sweet thang, who is real? As you so divine, Bubba is an enigma—the mystery of personality. I am the hero with a thousand faces. I am a chameleon, multi-faceted like the finest diamond. I am who you want me to be—your creation.

It's true, I am not handsome. I can't help the way I look. Everyone is always criticizing my looks. It hurts. Under this rough exterior there is a fully sentient being. I am a poet posing as a brute so as to be left alone in this debased, hostile environment known as prison.

What I am not, little Miss Thing, is a fraud. I may be the realest person you'll ever meet. I like my women lazy, plump and with a taste for the bizarre. And I'm man enough that I'm not afraid to dress up like a queen.

Sissy from New York City, indeed! Sugar, let me tell you, there are some serious sissies in the Apple. I'm not a sissy, nor am I a homophobe like some of the other so-called tough guys around here. Let me tell you, child, I've known several fierce queers in my many years of jailin', and this good ole boy is one who firmly believes in live and let live. If a guy wants to suck a dick, who am I to tell him it's wrong?

I have a good heart. I love all mankind—but I love women best—and have respect for all living—and some dead—things. I didn't want to rob that armored car. I needed the money!

So you almost married one of us, huh? Darlin', you don't know what you're missing. Vice is nice but incest is best. Try to look at flatulence as a way of life. This Bubba admits he hates watching football, plays tennis, smokes Dunhill cigarettes and only the finest weed. I drink imported beer and floss every day.

With love from Bubba—who is all things to all women.

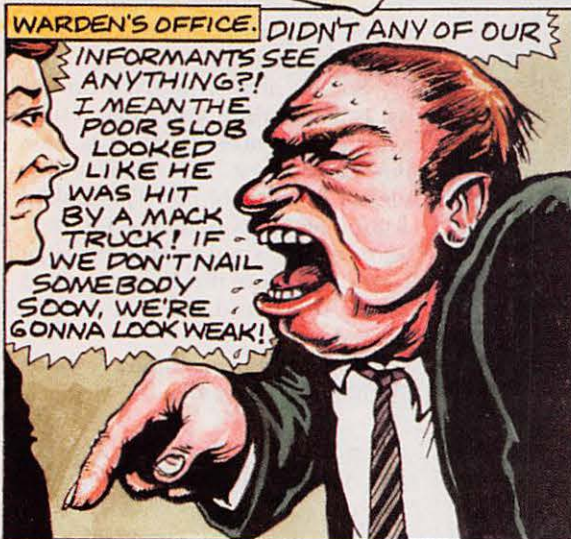
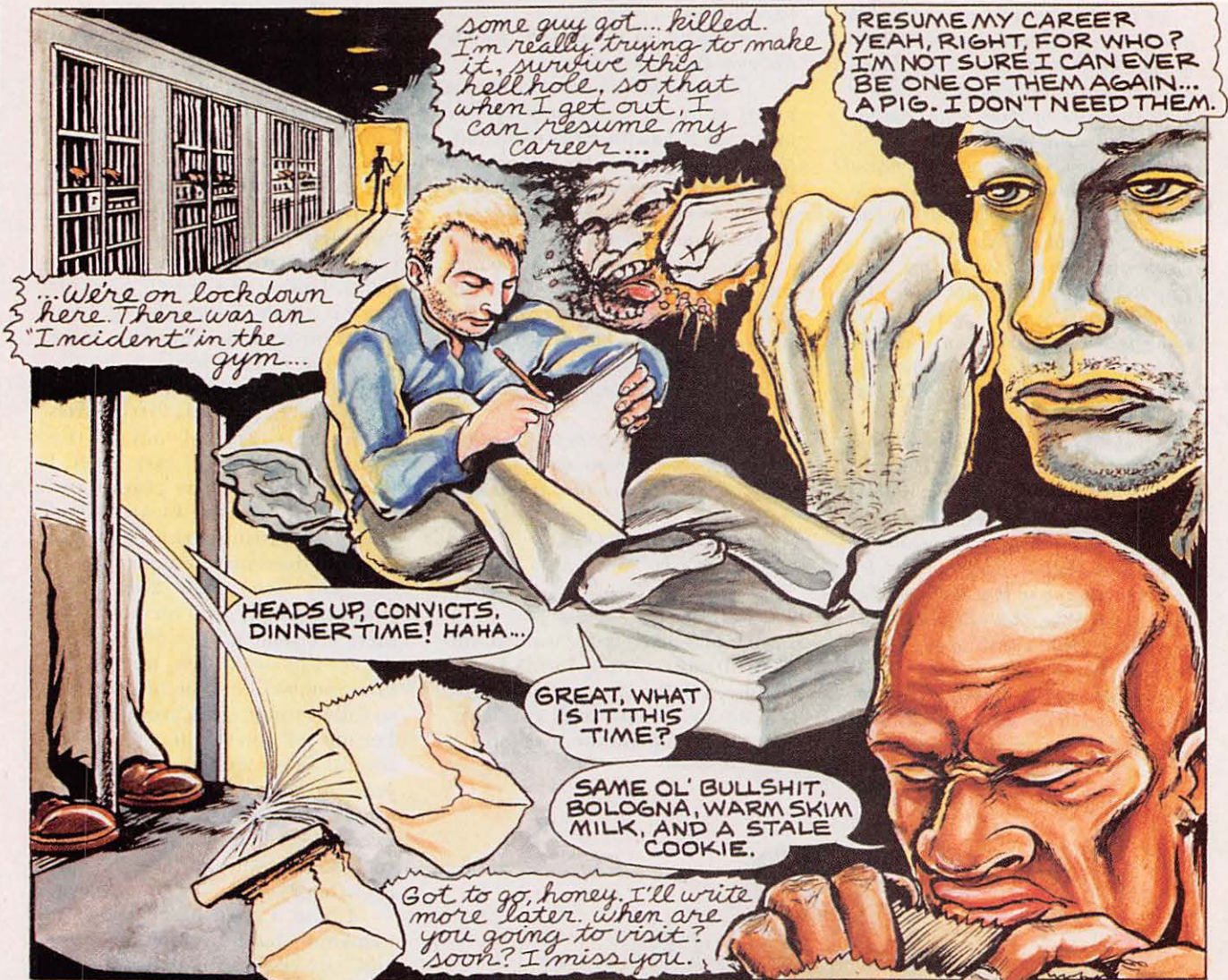
Send your Q's to Bubba, c/o Prison Life, 505 8th Ave., NY, NY 10018.



CRIMEJACKER

#941233449

In his five-year stint as a government-funded Superhero, Crimejacker was the most renowned weapon in America's war against crime. Then, he fell. Busted for conspiracy, he was sentenced to 20 calendars in the state joint. Some say he was set up by the feds who began to distrust their super-steroid-induced creation. Stripped of his powers, Neil Politan, a.k.a. Crimejacker, entered Stonekill Max Penitentiary as one of the "common criminal scum" he once took pride in putting behind bars.





YOU'RE DAMN LUCKY... UHNN... NIN-Y-EIGHT... UHN NIN-Y-NINE... UHNN HUNDRED...

HUH?

UHNN... NOBODY SAW YOU... UHN... BUT SOME STAND-UP DUDES... UHNN

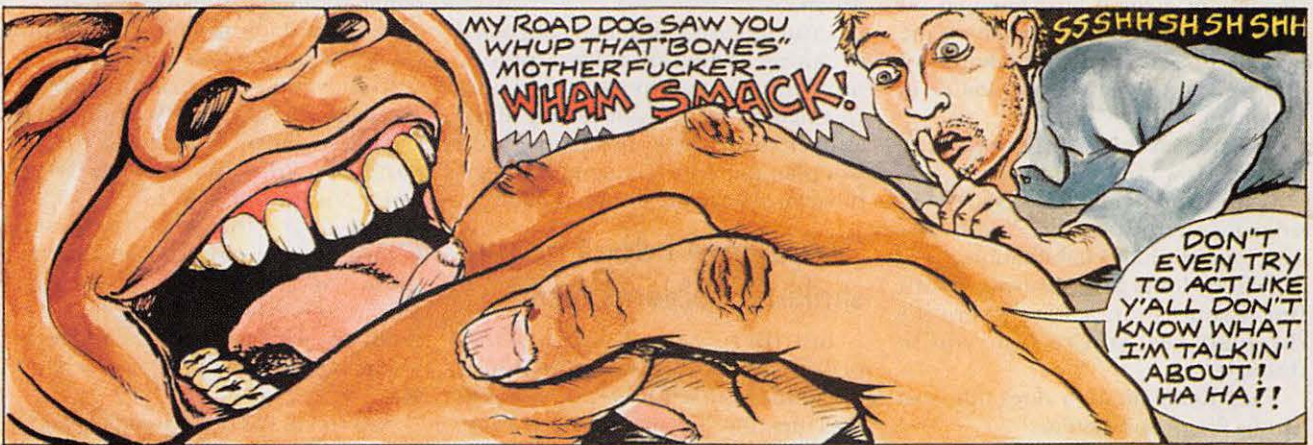
SAW ME?



DON'T BE ACTIN' THE FOOL, BITCH. Y'ALL STILL GOT SOME O' THAT SUPERHERO SHIT INSIDE OF YA, DON'TCHA?

I DON'T...

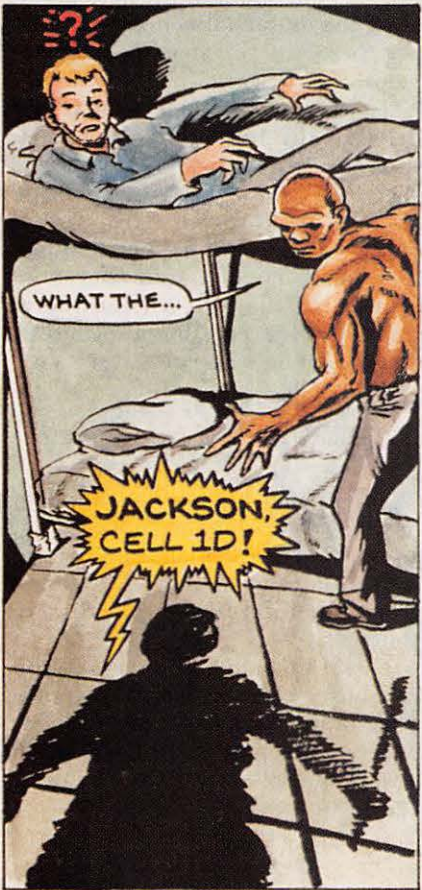
YOU LYIN' ASS!



MY ROAD DOG SAW YOU WHUP THAT "BONES" MOTHERFUCKER-- WHAM SMACK!

SSSH SH SH SHH

DON'T EVEN TRY TO ACT LIKE Y'ALL DON'T KNOW WHAT I'M TALKIN' ABOUT! HA HA!!



WHAT THE...

JACKSON, CELL 1D!



SURRENDER JACKSON...



YOU'RE COMING WITH US!

How to Rehabilitate Yourself —at Taxpayer Expense

by C.W. Pyle
CA State Prison, Sacramento

Reality Check:

Press your face up against the cold steel bars or the smooth cool concrete surrounding you. Study the remains of a small bird impaled on the razor wire outside. Listen to the endless noise. Smell the staleness of dust and life. That's right; you're in prison.

Again? Haven't you figured it all out yet? How not to return?

If not, then you better start considering the other side. You better start considering rehabilitation.

Prison doors are revolving doors. But if you live in a state where it's three strikes, you're out, you're through.

Fact: Rehabilitation does not exist within the prison system.

Myth: It never will.

The only reliable rehab a convict (or inmate) can look forward to—if he or she chooses to look forward to anything—is self-rehabilitation.

Don't laugh. Where have your ideas gotten you? (Yeah, squeezee your face through those bars.)

The lack of educational and vocational resources and programs greatly limits any other forms of rehabilitation other than self-rehab. I should add that 12-step programs such as Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous, although good programs, have to be excluded here because of their abuse as crutches. Many prisoners go to these programs because they're court-ordered, or because they're trying to please the parole board. Others go to the meetings for free coffee and cookies, or maybe to get a glance of a visitor or speaker of the opposite sex. The reason I don't go is simple: I'm looking forward to an ice-cold beer when I get out.

The same thing goes for the "almighty" crutch of religion. (Those who abuse it as such.) For example: "I am now a Christian, therefore, my

past has been forgiven—no matter that I haven't discovered what the problem was in the first place. If I should slip and sin, no problem. I'm a Christian and I'm always forgiven. Amen."

Crutches are synthetic. They need breaking. You can cover up your problems any way you want but until you make the decision to dig deep and uncover those problems, until you plan out a life-changing strategy, those problems are gonna remain.

"Who, me? I don't got no stinkin' problems, pal!"

But there you are, sitting in a prison cell. Unless you consciously discipline yourself to get up off your ass, flip that TV off, toss out those escape novels, quit following the drugs and crowds and start dealing with yourself, you will always be a prisoner. If you stubbornly refuse to break those chains of denial that bind you to your past and deal head-on with your problems, you have no right crying for rehab. Nobody cares about you! At this point, you're just another number in the human warehouse. (What makes you a somebody, except to yourself? Dreams? A person with dreams who fails to implement them through positive action is a person who's still asleep.)

Wake up!

Maybe you lost most of your other rights, but no one can take away your right and will to self-rehab.

Although prison resources are limited, yours don't seem to be. Who was that at the canteen window last week buying \$70 of coffee, cigarettes, cookies and chips? Who walked away with the five cases of Coca-Cola and eight pints of ice cream? It wasn't you, was it? You only have a \$20 pay slot. Aha! A resource! Here's another.

Over 50,000 books are published each year, on every subject imagin-

able. Check out those fist-thick *Books in Print* indexes! There's information out there to help you get started in pursuing or studying whatever interests you, whether it's physical, emotional, vocational or psychological.

Books are cheap and, pardon the cliché, education lasts a lifetime.

Coffee and sodas hype you up for an hour, then you piss them out. Cigarettes burn, chips make you fat and dope kills. But so what? Who cares? Society sure don't.

You've got to care for yourself before anyone else will. (And even then, you're not guaranteed that anyone will ever care.) You've got to do this for yourself and for whatever loved ones you haven't chased off yet.

Self-rehab can be a lonely road in prison. And shouldn't it be, considering the undue influences (i.e. peer pressure) of the prison environment?

To start your engines for that solo drive to the better life, you must form and feed the "Big Vision." Where do you want to realistically be five, 10 or more years from now? Once you have that, chart out a sound path based on your educational research that will get you there. Include a few possible alternatives for an even better chance at success.

**Nothing's easy,
unless it's a crime.**

So get that book about nursing, business management, advertising, sales, writing, real estate, law, personal training, archeology—whatever you want to study—and educate yourself.

Get your habits in shape so you can enter college, a training program or the work force upon release. And never step back, for the past will always be lurking in the shadows, ready to yank you back into its

(continued on page 69)

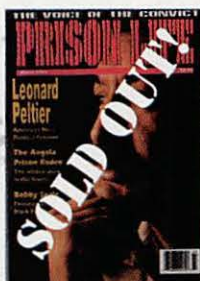


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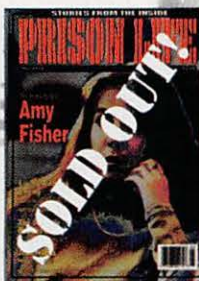
Lock 'Em Up and throw away the key!



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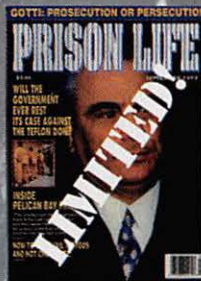
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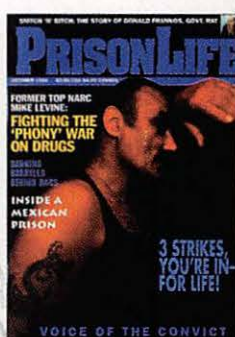


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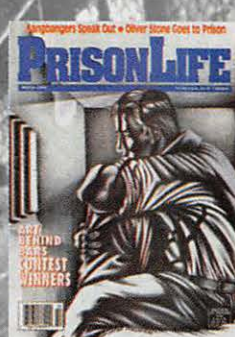
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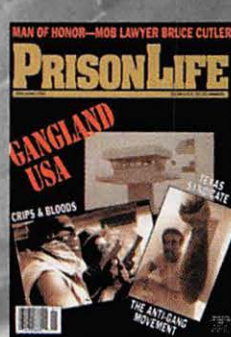
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Smart Time

(continued from page 66)

vicious cycle of hopelessness and claim you as its own.

If nothing else, consider this: Succeeding is like spitting in the faces of those who have imprisoned you.

Out of line? I don't think so. Motivational? You bet.

A few good tips and resources to help get you started:

1. Try the nonfiction section of your prison library.
2. Obtain publishers' addresses from inside books and ask them to send you a book list or catalog of available titles.
3. Send for these free book publication catalogs:

Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402-9325. (Over 14,000 titles available!)

Barnes and Noble Bookstores, Inc., 126 Fifth Ave., Dept. 861F, New York, NY 10011. (Discount books.)

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Convict Code

(continued from previous page)

-izing, just like those grandmothers are doing on the street to save their kids from crack dealers. As Jorge Renaud points out, the purpose of the convict code should not be to protect dishonorable people.

My biggest problem with the old convict code is that even at its best, it has been basically selfish. Its rule of silence allows all manner of brutality to take place, and its rule of action doesn't call for action to protect or defend, it only calls for action to avenge. That's not righteous, it's bull-shit. What's righteous on any of our parts is not only to carry ourselves with dignity and respect, but also to live in such a way as to make our cell-block, our neighborhood, our planet, a kinder and safer place. A guy named Edmund Burke said over 200 years ago, "The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing." And as Jorge pointed out, taking the rap for a coward is not a noble act. And neither is "Eye for eye, bullets fly, idiots die." That kind of code has been going on forever and has wasted countless lives.

(continued on next page)

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THE PRISON RAT
PRISON-RAT
 (KITUS INFORMUS)

rather than the worst. Let's be real nonconformists again. If conformist life on the streets has become "Use people and love things," then the convict code should proclaim, "Use things and love people," and prison life should be an example of it. Convicts can show a lifestyle of respect and honor to a nation that has lost hope that anyone lives by those kinds of values anymore.

Many "newvicts" or gangbangers sincerely think that they don't care whether anyone lives or dies. I think they're fooling themselves, and that they will discover that for themselves at some point, if they live long enough. Don't count them out yet. That's why I try to respect them as people even before they respect me back. We don't have

Another problem with the code is that it was once based around the idea that convicts were mainly nonconformists who rejected the nine-to-five world because their spirits were too free. Whether that was ever really true or not is irrelevant. But right now it is certainly not the case. The biggest conformity in American life is SELFISHNESS. And convicts are right in there with everyone else, sharing the same values that place things over people. Our schools, television shows, movies and magazines all promote selfishness to a degree never imagined by any other nation. Teenagers kill each other over a pair of sneakers. Political candidates lie, cheat and steal. Priests and scout leaders molest young boys. Once every few weeks somewhere in America, some ordinary person picks up a weapon, walks down the street or into a McDonald's and ends the lives of people he never even met.

That's not noble outlaw behavior, that's insanity. It's not just Herby Sperling's "newvicts" and gangstas in prisons who are a new and dangerous breed: As a nation, we're all going nuts. We have reached the pinnacle of selfishness, and have become totally enslaved by everything from that little TV in your cell

to the Ninja Turtles lunchbox by which your kid defines his self-esteem. Pepsi and Nike own Michael Jordan. Why? Wasn't he rich enough from basketball? The Rolling Stones once had Hell's Angels handle security; at a Stones' concert now you walk past Wackenhut guards to buy a \$35 tee-shirt and \$5 popcorn. And then you say "thank you!" Wow, what rebels we are! What tough hombres! Most of us have sold our fucking souls to the very forces we once rebelled against — the corporations whose greed is destroying the whole planet — and we haven't even noticed it!

The real nonconformist in this society is anyone whose spirit refuses to become enslaved by petty possessions and the unending pursuit of selfish pleasures, somebody whose respect and kindness and courage can't be bought or frightened away. Now that's going against the tide! That's "no retreat, no surrender" — refusing to become a materialistic slave even though the culture promotes it. And refusing to become an animal or a silent coward in prison even though the public expects it and the code condones it.

A new convict code must be an ideal that speaks to the best in us

to hate a tiger to be cautious of it. And we don't have to meter our respect to those who "deserve" or "not deserve."

I have been privileged to see tens of thousands of bad-asses change their values so deeply that it continues to inspire and amaze me. Many of my friends are doing ten lives without parole or 200 years plus, or the death-row waiting game — and are now among the finest people I have ever met. People change. You've changed. I've changed. We need a code that allows people the maximum opportunity to become human beings, not one which keeps us and them stuck in the worst parts of ourselves and our past. That's a fool's code.

It may not be easy to change the convict code, but it has to be done, and each one of us has to do our part — like Jorge Renaud has done by courageously speaking his mind and especially by re-defining the word "snitch." We need to wrestle with this and write about it in *Prison Life* — but mostly, and especially, we have to each be a real human being today, wherever we find ourselves. We have to have the courage to live by a personal code we would not mind passing on to our own children.



THE BEGINNING JAILHOUSE LAWYER'S GUIDE TO LEGAL RESEARCH

by Robert R. Reldan, New Jersey State Prison

Legal research is often a long, tedious task. At the beginning, it is also quite confusing. However, research is essential to preparing a petition, motion or complaint, and these guidelines will give you an idea of how and where to begin. (For a beginner's guide to basic writ writing, see "In-House Counsel" in the March '95 and May-June '95 issues of *Prison Life*.) Refining legal research skills is a matter of trial and error and requires continuous practice, so don't give up if it all seems daunting at first.

The law is not an exact science. Though based on federal and state civil and criminal codes, the law is in reality a fluid, ever-changing body of language contained in written rules and regulations, criminal statutes, acts, bills, codes, ordinances and judicial opinions known as "case law." All of this language is collected and published in books that should be available in any well-maintained prison law library. It is all there, everything you need to know about the law; what remains is learning how to find it.

Once you have located and familiarized yourself with the statutes that pertain to your case, you will then have to find and study the latest judicial opinions on the issues you intend to raise, for the law is constantly evolving—and becoming more complicated—as judges seek to interpret exactly what the law means in practical terms. So you have the statutes, or laws, and the various cases, or case law, where judges have made rulings to determine how the law applies to circumstances more or less like those you find yourself in.

Just remember, it is all about language. You must study this language—which often seems like gibberish or Shakespearean English—pretty much continuously to really understand the law so you can argue intelligently.

Also, courts operate under strict procedural rules and time schedules. Miss a date and you may blow your chances. (Recently, a man's death penalty appeal was not heard by the Supreme Court of Virginia because it was filed one day late.) Do your research early and keep reading the latest law through the date of filing and until your case is resolved.



HOW TO USE A LAW LIBRARY

Since many laws and cases seem to conflict with one another, it is crucial to understand the hierarchy of authorities within our legal system. It goes something like this:

At the top is the United States Constitution. Most of its principles are binding on all state constitutions, federal statutes, state statutes, and case law from both the federal and state courts. A law or statute found to be inconsistent with the basic concepts set forth in the U.S. Constitution will not prevail.

In the federal system, United States statutes carry the force of law. Only if they violate the U.S. Constitution will they be struck down. The highest court in the land is the United States Supreme Court. All U.S. Supreme Court decisions interpreting the Constitution, federal and state statutes, are binding on all lower court decisions, both federal and state.

Immediately under the Supreme Court there are 13 Federal Circuit Courts of Appeal. Decisions from the circuit court level are binding on all Federal District Courts within the circuit, but they are not necessarily binding as to other federal courts of appeal. In other words, an 8th Cir. case is not binding on a 3rd Cir. court; however, theoretically, conflicting decisions coming from different circuits on substantially the same issue (i.e., abortion) will produce a decision from the U.S. Supreme Court resolving the issues. Always make sure you are familiar with the leading cases on your issues from the circuit in which your case will be heard.

Decisions from courts at the federal district level, just below the circuit courts, are not binding upon each other. They are binding, though, as to all federal constitutional issues, on all state courts including state supreme courts. Thus, any federal district court can find that a state supreme court has issued a ruling that violates the Constitution and can order the state decision set aside. There are limits involving

issues of procedural defaults, search and seizure claims, independent state grounds and a few others, but the principle that federal courts rule is essentially intact.

State systems have a hierarchy similar to the federal structure: state constitution, state statutes, state supreme court, state appellate court, state court, local county and municipal courts. However, the various states may use different names for their courts.

FINDING THE LAW

The body of law found in a law library is organized under a complex system of referencing and cross-referencing. A practiced researcher can get to the same law from many sources. The law is found in four general categories, listed below.

THE STATUTES

The Constitution and U.S. Codes can be found in a set of volumes called the United States Codes Annotated (U.S.C.A.). By looking through these volumes you can find the Constitution and current versions of all U.S. statutes in the various Titles (Title 18, Title 21, etc.) that comprise federal law, both civil and criminal.

Most of these volumes contain "pocket parts" (found in the back), which provide recent changes in the statutes since the volume was published. Always consult the pocket parts when researching statutes to make certain you are aware of the latest changes in the law. The annotations following each section of the statutes contain citations that direct the reader to case law and authorities that have interpreted that section of the code.

State statutes are found in similar sets of volumes, for example, the New Jersey Statutes Annotated (N.J.S.A.), which contains various titles (the NJ Criminal Code is found in Title 2C, while "Institutions & Agencies" is Title 30). These volumes also have annotations that direct the reader to important interpretations.

CASE LAW

U.S. Supreme Court decisions may be found in any one of three sets of volumes: U.S. Reports (U.S.); Lawyer's Edition (L.Ed.); and Supreme Court Reporter (S.Ct.). These publications all contain the same decisions but

have other features that differ slightly. The books have tables of contents and indices that provide cross-references to other materials.

Federal Circuit Court decisions are found in the Federal Reporter (F.2d & F.3rd), which publish decisions on appeals from the federal district court level. The Federal Supplement (F.Supp.), publishes District Court decisions and rulings.

State case law reporter systems parallel the federal. The state of New Jersey, for example, has reporters for the State Supreme Court (N.J.Sup.), and N.J. Reports (N.J.) for the Superior Courts (Appellate, Law and Chancery Divisions). Again, different states may use other titles.

All of these sets of volumes of case law are supplemented with softcover updates published at intervals between the hardcover editions to ensure that researchers have access to the latest decisions.

SHEPARD'S CITATORS

One of the most important and useful tools in a law library is the *Shepard's Citators* (whence the term "Shepardize"). Their primary function is to provide the most complete and up-to-date listing of references to a case or statute being researched. This is essential in order to find out whether some later court has changed the weight, scope or interpretation of a cited case or statute.

In addition, each statute you are researching must be Shepardized to learn if it has been amended, repealed or superseded by subsequent legislation, or whether it might have been affected by recent judicial interpretation.

Similarly, case law must be Shepardized to find out if the decision was affirmed or reversed by a higher court. Shepardizing a ruling will also tell you if the case has been cited in other cases, and if it has been questioned, criticized, distinguished or followed by other courts.

There is a unit of *Shepard's* to cover each of the fifty states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, as well as sets for the federal court system. *Shepard's* issues the following: a large, hardcover, annual volume; a gold-covered, paperbound, annual supplement; a red-covered, paperbound, quarterly cumulative supplement to update the bound volumes; and sometimes a white-covered, paperbound, quarter-

ly Advance Sheet Edition, which appears midway between the successive quarterly red-covered cumulative supplements, usually about six weeks later. The material in the white edition is then incorporated within the succeeding red-covered cumulative supplement.

Shepard's Citators compose a kind of master index. The volume numbers at the top of the pages work much the same as key words at the top of the page in a dictionary.

Let's look, for example, at a case citation, *Marini v. Ireland*, 56 N.J.130 (1970). *Marini* in this case is the 'moving' party, which means he or she is either the plaintiff at the trial level or the petitioner at the appellate level. In other words, *Marini* is the party bringing the action to court. The name of the party after the v. or vs. (versus), *Ireland*, is the defendant at the trial level, or the respondent at the appellate level. The number 56 means the case appears in Volume 56 of N.J. (New Jersey Reports), and 130 tells you that the case starts on page 130 of the volume. (1970) tells you the year the opinion was rendered.

Once you have this information, find the volume of *Shepard's* on New Jersey Reports, locate Vol. #56 at the top of the page, and look down the column until you find 130 in bold print. There is the case, *Marini*. If you don't find it, it means it's unreported only in the scope of that volume or supplement. It does not mean you won't find it in an annual or cumulative supplement. Be certain your research is thorough.

In our example, under 130 you will see the notation f227NJS469, and e237NJS21404. This means the case is cited in at least two other volumes, 227 NJS and 237 NJS (New Jersey Superior Court Reports).

Turn to the table of abbreviations in the front of the book where you will find that the "f" shows the case was "followed," or cited as controlling in another case. The "e" means the case was "explained", or a statement of the import of the decision in the cited case was given, not merely a restatement of the facts.

The S21, immediately to the left of the page number 404, indicates which paragraph of the syllabus or head note of the cited case pertains to the point of law in the citing case.

Federal citations are read in much the same way. For instance, *United States v. Stratton* 820 F2d 562 (2nd Cir. 1987). The United States was the

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plaintiff and Stratton the defendant at the trial level. The case can be found in volume 820 of the Federal Reporter, 2nd series, on page 537. (CA2 1987) tells us the opinion was rendered by the Second Circuit Court of Appeals in 1987. (See "Just In Case" in this issue to read the entire published case.)

METHODS OF RESEARCH

There are three basic approaches to researching any legal question: by word or topic; by statute; or by case law. The one you use usually depends on the amount of information you have to begin with.

If you have a statute or case citation you can refer to, that is usually the easiest way to begin your research. However, if you know almost nothing about the particular area of the law you are trying to research, you can start by choosing a "key word" or phrase that pertains to the issue you want to learn more about. Look up the key word or phrase in the research sources listed below.

USING THE WORD APPROACH

There are many sets of law books that discuss the law on a word or topic basis, for instance, *West's N.J. Digest 2d*, *West's Federal Digest*, 2nd, 3rd and 4th Editions, and *Corpus Juris Secundum* (CJS), an encyclopedic, multi-volume set of books containing commentaries on the law. Each of these sets of volumes has a word index. Some are very detailed, some quite general. By using the word index, you will be directed to a specific volume and page number in the series of books that discusses the word or topic you have looked up. For example, if you want to learn about the law as it pertains to homicide or to prisons, you would go to the word index and look under Homicide or Prisons, then refer to the pages listed.

The book will give you a broad overview of the topic and direct you to other books that deal with narrower issues concerning that subject. Also, annotations in these reference books contain citations that refer you to cases dealing with the specific subject you are researching. The annotations are listed by jurisdiction and alphabetically.

Therefore, under the word or topic Homicide, you would first find definitions as to types, history and common law origins. Then, by looking under the annotations, you would go to New Jersey or Texas to find specific cases dealing with various aspects of homicide as it applies to courts in those states.

USING THE STATUTE APPROACH

If you are researching a specific statute, look it up in the code books for your jurisdiction. In New Jersey that would be *N.J.S.A.*, *New Jersey Statutes Annotated*. For federal law you would use *U.S.C.A.*, *United States Codes Annotated*. Annotated means the references include brief discussions of cases that have interpreted the statute. Citations in the annotations will allow you to follow up with the case approach as outlined below.

Read and study the statute. Refer to the pocket parts to check on any recent changes. And use the citations in the annotations to refer you to cases dealing with the specific issue you are researching.

USING THE CASE APPROACH

There are a number of sets of books reporting cases that have been decided in the various state and federal courts. "Reports" are the official publications of the state and federal courts, and "Reporters" are unofficial publications put out by commercial publishing companies such as Wests. If you are citing more than one reference to a case, you should list the official report citation before the unofficial reporter version. In other words, cite U.S. before S.Ct.

Every court has an official report. However, these publications do not include all the cases heard and decided by that court. *West's Reporters* publish every case ruled upon by state and federal courts. *West's Reporters* are extremely useful in that they have a key numbering system. A particular point of law will always be referenced with the same key number throughout all West's publications, and you can quickly refer to the *West's Digest* for additional cites on each numbered point of law.

Using a citation, such as *United States v. Stratton*, 820 F2d. 537 (2ndCir. 1987), first find volume 820

of the *Federal Reporter*, 2nd series. Turn to page 537, and there you will find the case. By reading the case carefully and cross-referencing it with other cases cited in the case you are reading, you will gain a good overview of the specific issues you are researching. You then want to Shepardize the case to the present, and in the particular jurisdiction where your case will be heard, to find what cases are leading or controlling in your district. Reading case law and Shepardizing will also provide you with citations for Supreme Court cases dealing with the same or similar issues.

Read all the cases that discuss your issues, whether they help your position or not. If you cannot find facts that are right "on point" (and you rarely can), try to find tenets of law that support your logic and argument. You must be familiar with cases that go against your position in order to show why they should not apply to the specific set of facts in your case. The law is based on precedent and the more law you can find that has set precedent on your side of the argument, with the closest factual content, the better your chances of persuasion are.

Remember, the law is all about language. There are no absolute right or wrong answers to any legal question. There are only rulings, precedents, opinions and arguments. The law is what any given judge decides it is until a higher court rules differently. Only by reading and immersing yourself in the body of the language of the law can you become knowledgeable and capable of understanding complex legal issues. The more case law you read, the easier it becomes to understand complicated legalese.

Good luck and happy hunting. ■■■

Coming in In-House Counsel:

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UNITED STATES of America, Appellee

v.

Richard Lowell Stratton, a/k/a

“Richard Lowell,” Appellant.

No. 937, Docket 86-1504.

United States Court of Appeals,

Second Circuit.

Argued April 8, 1987.

Decided June 5, 1987.

Just in Case is a new Prison Life department highlighting useful case law for jailhouse lawyers and legal eagles. Future columns will include summaries and analyses of the most current case law compiled by a newly released ex-con attorney.

Following defendant's conviction on drug-related charges and imposition of ten-year sentence to run consecutively with sentence previously entered on another conviction, defendant moved for reduction of sentence. The United States District Court for the Southern District of New York, Constance Baker Motley, J., denied motion, and defendant appealed. The Court of Appeals, Oakes, Circuit Judge, held that defendant's sentence was impermissibly enhanced due to his failure to cooperate with Government.

Sentence vacated, case remanded for resentencing.

See also, 779 F.2d 820.

Criminal Law 986.2(6)

Defendant's sentence was improperly enhanced due to his failure to cooperate with Government; in imposing sentence, district court specifically indicated that defendant's sentence would run consecutively with sentence on previous conviction because of defendant's refusal to cooperate with government.

Ivan S. Fisher, New York City, for pro se appellant.

Stuart E. Abrams, Asst. U.S. Atty. (Rudolph W. Giuliani, U.S. Atty., S.D.N.Y., of counsel), for appellee.

Before LUMBARD, OAKES and CARDAMONE, Circuit Judges.

OAKES, Circuit Judge:

Richard Stratton appeals from an order of the United States District Court for the Southern District of New York, Constance Baker Motley, Judge, denying his motion for reduction of sentence pursuant to Fed.R.Crim.P. 35(b).

On November 17, 1983, Stratton was indicted with five others for conspiring to import and distribute over seven tons of hashish in violation of 21 U.S.C. §§ 952, 960, and with engaging

in a continuing criminal enterprise in violation of 21 U.S.C. § 848. Stratton immediately moved to dismiss the indictment, arguing that his prior conviction in the United States District Court for the District of Maine on a charge of conspiring to distribute marijuana and hashish raised a double jeopardy bar to all subsequent charges arising out of the “single criminal agreement.” The motion was denied, *United States v. Stratton*, 583 F.Supp. 1234 (S.D.N.Y. 1984), and this court summarily affirmed on an interlocutory appeal, *United States v. Stratton*, 751 F.2d 373 (2d Cir. 1984). Thereafter, a trial was conducted resulting in a verdict against Stratton and two codefendants on all counts.

On December 7, 1984, Stratton was sentenced by Judge Motley to the statutory minimum of ten years' imprisonment, a \$100,000 fine, and a special parole term of five years. The ten-year sentence was to be served consecutively with the fifteen-year sentence that Stratton had already been given in connection with his conviction in the District of Maine. The court gave the following reason for imposing a consecutive sentence:

I think that your sentence probably should be made consecutive for the reason that it might convince you that cooperation with the government is in your best interest, and so I intend to make your sentence consecutive for this reason—that is, I expect that you will reflect on your conduct since you are in a reflective mood at this time, and I understand that the government can benefit from your cooperation in respect of other people who were involved in this, so if you are interested in getting out of prison soon and really rehabilitating yourself the best way to demonstrate that is to cooperate with the government with respect to this matter.

...

Now, Mr. Stratton, if you decide to cooperate with the government in this matter you have 120 days to apply to the court for reduction of your sentence, and the court will consider reducing your sentence based upon the nature and extent of your cooperation with the government. So that in addition to the 15 year sentence you now have a sentence of ten years to follow that.

Thereafter, Stratton moved for a reduction of sentence pursuant to Fed.R.Crim.P. 35(b). In his motion he argued first that Judge Motley impermissibly increased his sentence because of his refusals to cooperate with the Government. Second, he argued that the structure of his sentence violated the Sentencing Reform Act of 1984, Title II of the Comprehensive Crime Control Act, Pub.L. 98-473, 98 Stat. 2015. He claimed that his sentence was vastly disproportionate to sentences generally imposed in cannabis-related offenses. *See* 18 U.S.C. § 3553(a)(6) (Supp. II 1984). Judge Motley denied the motion, and this appeal followed, with Stratton raising essentially the same issues that the district court considered. The only change is that while Stratton alleged in his motion that his refusal to cooperate with the Government was due to a “deeply ingrained” moral conviction that it is wrong to blame or inform on others for one's own mistakes, he now contends that he refused to cooperate out of fear of self-incrimination. Thus, he claims that his sentence was increased as a result of exercising his Fifth Amendment right.

We write here to address the issue of whether Stratton's sentence was based on an impermissible factor, i.e. his refusal to cooperate. In *Roberts v. United States*, 445 U.S. 552, 100 S.Ct. 1358, 63 L.Ed.2d 622 (1980), the Supreme Court held that a defendant's failure to cooperate was a valid sentencing consideration. This court, however, has drawn a distinction between increasing the severity of a sentence for a defendant's failure to cooperate and refus-

ing to grant leniency. "It is one thing to extend leniency to a defendant who is willing to cooperate with the government; it is quite another thing to administer additional punishment to a defendant who by his silence has committed no additional offense." *United States v. Bradford*, 645 F.2d 115, 117 (2d Cir.1981) (quoting *United States v. Ramos*, 572 F.2d 360, 363 n. 2 (2d Cir.1978)). This distinction may be difficult to apply. See *Roberts*, 445 U.S. at 557 n. 4, 100 S.Ct. at 1362 n. 4; *Mallette v. Scully*, 752 F.2d 26, 30 (2d Cir.1984) (taking *Roberts* n.4 into account). Nevertheless, "even though the distinction is somewhat illusory, it is the only rule that recognizes the reality of the criminal justice system while protecting the integrity of the system." *Mallette*, 752 F.2d at 30.

When applying these standards to the instant case, it is clear that Stratton's sentence was impermissibly enhanced. Judge Motley specifically stated that the sentences would run consecutively because of Stratton's refusal to cooperate. In this case, Judge Motley's comments crossed that fine line between showing leniency, *see id.*, 752 F.2d at 31 ("if Mr. Mallette were willing to assist us to bring the other person to justice, I would find it very

easy to be reasonable and lenient"); *Bradford*, 645 F.2d at 118 (defendants' failure to cooperate is permissible factor along with other relevant considerations), and punishing a defendant for his silence. In *DiGiovanni v. United States*, 596 F.2d 74 (2d Cir.1979), the sentencing court made comments very similar to those made by Judge Motley in the present case. At sentencing, the district court stated:

[I]n the light of what I feel is an unwarranted reluctance on your part to assist the Government and so your desire to turn away from this kind of crime, I feel that I must impose on you a more serious sentence . . .

[I]f . . . you change your mind . . . about the desirability of helping the Government do some thing about this drug scene which has had its consequences on you, as well as many others, you may make an application to the Court for a reduction of sentence, but not otherwise . . .

Id. at 75. This court vacated the sentence and remanded for sentencing before a different judge. Here, as in *DiGiovanni*, the district court improperly enhanced the defendant's sentence.

We find it unimportant that Stratton did not raise his Fifth Amendment claim in the district court. A defendant's position would of course be much stronger if his failure to cooperate was based on assertion on his Fifth Amendment rights; but this court has not limited to the Fifth Amendment context its rule on improper sentence enhancement for refusal to cooperate. For example, in at least four cases before this court the defendant's silence was based on an alleged fear of physical reprisal if cooperation was given. *See Mallette*, 752 F.2d at 30; *Bradford*, 645 F.2d at 116; *DiGiovanni*, 596 F.2d at 75; *Ramos*, 572 F.2d at 361. It is improper to increase a defendant's sentence due to his silence regardless of his motivations.

Stratton's remaining contention that is sentence violated the Sentencing Reform Act is frivolous. The issue of whether the Maine conviction and New York prosecution were based on distinct facts was fully litigated. Thus, concurrent sentences would in any event have been permissible.

Having found that Judge Motley improperly increased Stratton's sentence because of his silence, we vacate the sentence and remand the case for resentencing before a different judge.

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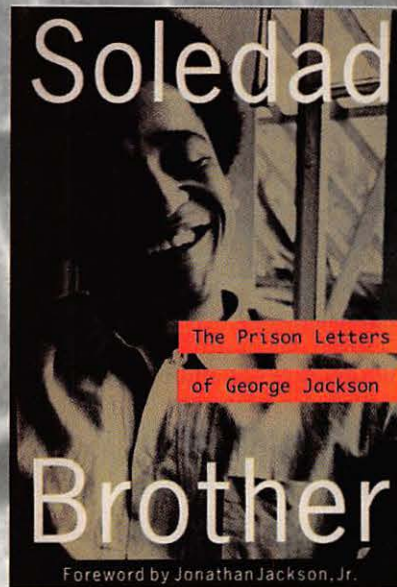
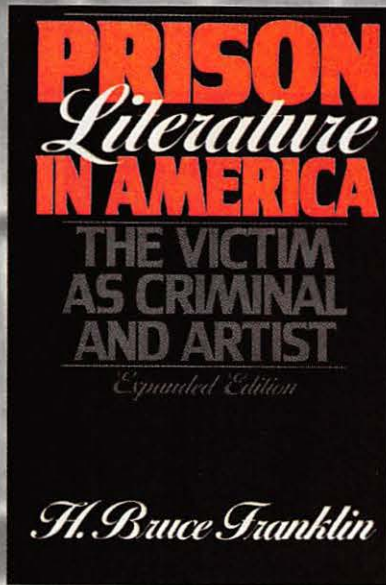
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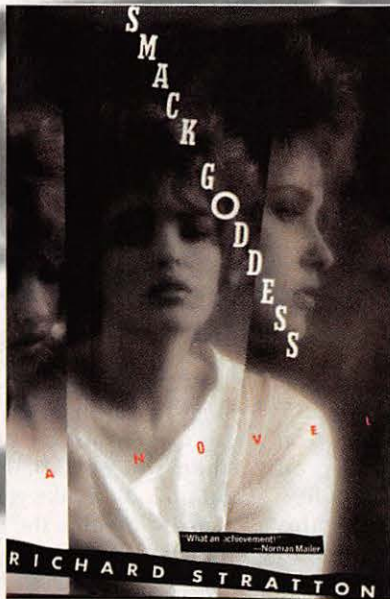
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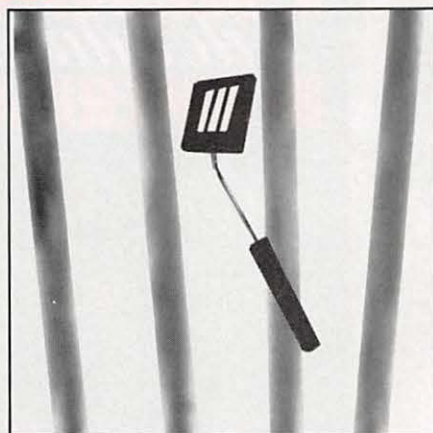
In-Cell Cooking

Chef's Special of the Month: Marsha's Dolphin Delight

- 1 can Tuna (dolphin) in water
- 2 bags of Tokyo Rice (instant)
- 1-2 jalapenos
- 1 dill pickle
- 3 tbsp. diet salad dressing

Put hot water in rice, let sit while you find the can opener and open the fish. Cut up jalapenos and pickle. Mix everything together and throw in some Mrs. Dash or whatever for taste. Eat with crackers. Really good when you've been smoking too much *mota* in the yard and don't want to laugh in the bulls' face at chow!

Marsha Howe
Utah State Prison



For Dessert: Pudding Bowl

- 1-2 pk Chocolate pudding
- 1 lg banana
- 1 pk. graham crackers
- 1 1/4 cup butter

Crush graham crackers, melt butter, slice banana. Coat bowl with butter and crackers. Arrange sliced bananas in bowl and cover with pudding. Sprinkle crackers over top and serve.

William J. Casey
Sheridan, IL

Tuna Rockaroni

- 1 Kraft Macaroni & Cheese package
- 1/3 cup milk
- 1/4 stick butter
- 1 can of Tuna packed in water

Follow Kraft's directions for the macaroni & cheese. Once finished, dump a can of tuna into it and mix it around some. Plug in some Metallica, kick back, and chow down. Guaranteed to take the shitty fish taste from the tuna.

Jimmy "Snake" Tyler
Rikers Island, NY



IRON PILE

by Chris Cozzone, Fitness Editor

MASS WITHOUT ASS

I'm a "li'l man." When I got to the joint, I weighed in at 122 pounds, due to drinking and smokin' crack. For the last year, though, a big bro has guided me past my addictions and now I'm at my normal 142 pounds at 5'6" with a 30-inch waist.

I look all right for my size but I want more mass. My bench press is 205 max, my curl is 85 and my squat is 225.

How can I add more mass to my small frame without pigging out? I don't want a pot belly and a fat ass. All the ol' heads in the pit say, "Shorty, you should be eatin' everything you can get your hands on." And the iron freaks my height say to drink protein three times a day. Wouldn't that pose a health problem?

Talk to me dog . . .

*Scanless/Lowdown
State Prison, South Michigan*

Yo Shorty,

Quality mass takes time. Unless you want that gut and butt, packing on the beef takes years for most people.

The normal human being gains anywhere from 3 to 10 pounds of beefcake a year—if he's hitting the iron hard. It's the kind of weight you're not gonna see on a scale day to day, or even week to week. It may not seem like much but if you get, say, five pounds of steak, then imagine that packed on various bodyparts, that's a lot of mass. Now, you add those five pounds up over, say, five years and you got some serious bulk, minus the fat.

Unfortunately, there are no shortcuts, unless you're willing to pay and pray with anabolic steroids (pay the triple street price in prison, pray you won't eventually die from using it, and suffer anyway from its side

effects). Especially in your case: You wanna go from one drug to another? When you get off the juice, you'd end up lookin' like you did gettin' off crack by the time the effects wore off.

There's only way to do it: serious dedication, time in the gym, smart training and enough rest between workouts. I recommend four kick-ass workouts a week (split the body in two days, each muscle group twice a week). Don't listen to the guys who say you have to spend your life in the gym and do six days a week, 3 to 4 hours a shot. For the majority of people, this will prohibit your body from maximum growth and adequate recuperation.

Remember this: Your body doesn't grow in the gym while you're pumping iron. That only tears muscle fibers apart. Your muscles grow when you're resting.

Forget most of that protein shit, too. Most of the supplement market is a scam. The average bodybuilder could easily make do with as much protein as the average couch potato: 75 to 100 grams a day, max. Too much protein wrecks havoc on your liver over a long period of time.

So when one of the iron freaks tells you to eat everything you can, tell'm you ain't lookin' to get a big ass or gut. You're lifting for *quality* gains.

PROTEINS AND PYRAMIDS

Being that I'm in prison for life, what are the healthiest foods I can eat to help me bulk up? What difference does it make on a pyramid workout if you work out heavy -to-light or vice versa? And does a pyramid workout work for every part of the body?

Thank you for your time. As long as there are people like you willing to teach, you'll always have people like me willing to learn.

Respectfully,

M. Rendon
Calipatria, CA

M. Rendon,

The bulk of your diet should be foods containing complex carbohydrates. Rice (preferably brown, but yeah, I know, it's prison), pasta, whole grain breads and vegetables are where it's at. Fruits are also good for carbs, especially for quick energy boosts. If you insist on a carb drink, I recommend Ultra Fuel because the carbs they're made up of are what's called "medium-chain" carbs, meaning they're somewhere between the carbs found in fruit and complex carbs.

The rest of your diet should be protein with a low-fat content: chicken, fish, beans. Refer to my response to the previous question for more on daily intake of protein. Don't go psycho with protein.

Fat should be watched. You want to bulk up with quality mass, not gain a ton of fat. All that saturated shit doesn't do too much for the body but make you look like you're made of butter. If you're gonna use fat, use a non-saturated variety, like canola oil.

Use common sense when eating. Stay away from shit foods and save your commissary money for healthier stuff.

Pyramiding workouts are designed

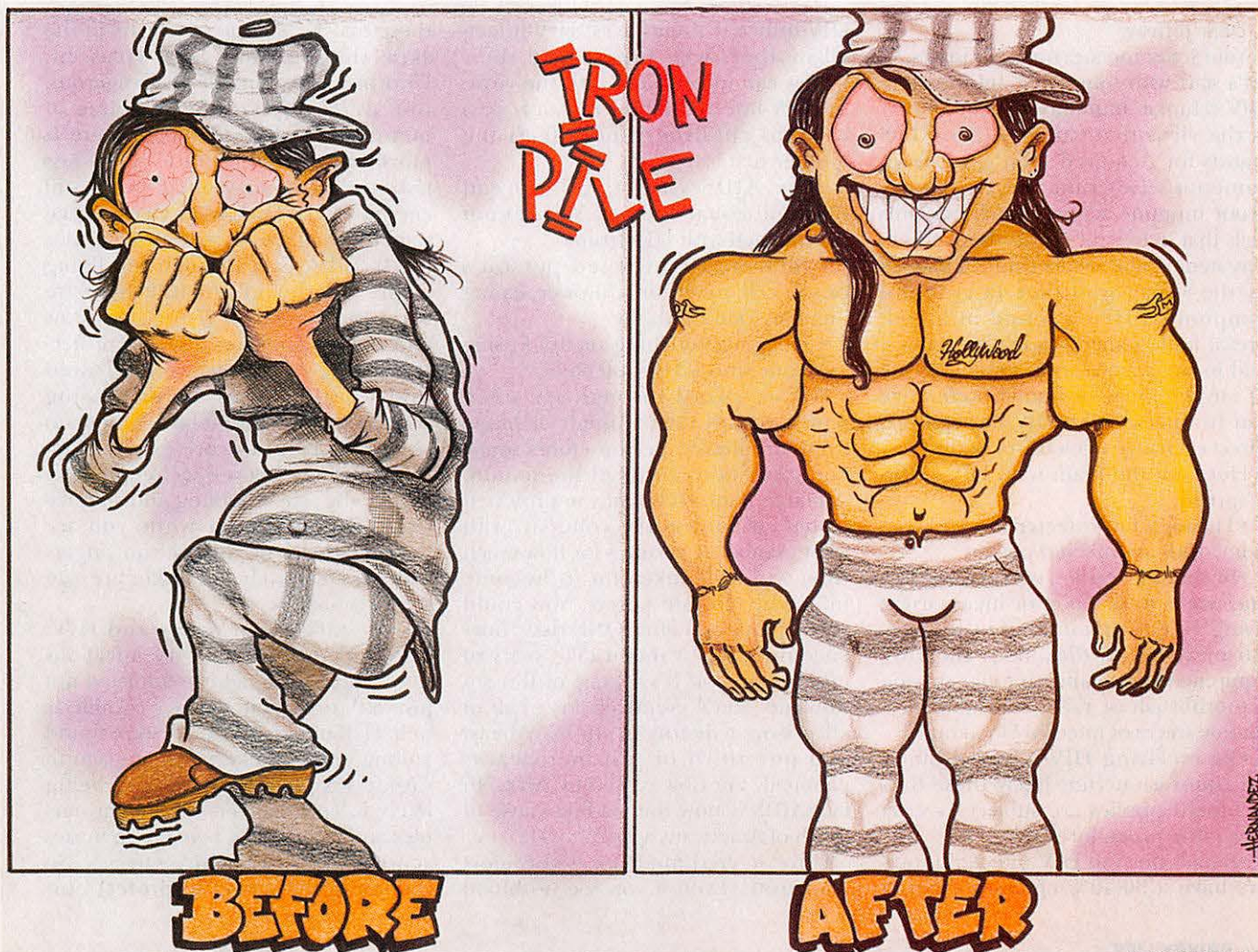
to build strength. If you're out to build muscle, I'd use another method. Muscles grow when you push them to failure, or beyond failure. When you pyramid sets, ask yourself how many of your sets are taken to failure. Not many.

Low reps build strength and tendons, but muscles need reps. If you're doing pyramid sets, most of your sets are going to be below eight reps, which means your fibers ain't gonna get max pump.

If you're set on pyramiding, and you *are* out to build strength, then you should do a combination of heavy-to-light and light-to-heavy (the "true" pyramid) in your workouts. Just make sure you're warmed up before going heavy-to-light. Pyramiding is best done with strength exercises (squats, bench, deadlifts, presses, etc.) or those exercises requiring several muscle groups (unlike curls and pushdowns, or calf raises).

Train hard.

Send your Q's, training tips and photos to: Iron Pile, 505 8th Avenue, New York, NY 10018.



Art by Joseph Hernandez, Green Haven C.F., NY

Ask Da Nurses

EVERYTHING YOU NEVER WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT AIDS

Dear Recipient,

I have a few good friends who are at risk of contracting the HIV virus. I am very concerned about their safety, I have also talked with them concerning this matter. However, I am not a doctor, practitioner, etc. I am contacting you to gain more knowledge about their activities and their chances of contracting this virus. Please give me the best medical answer that you can offer. Your help regarding this matter will be greatly appreciated. Thank you, and here are my questions:

- *What are the chances of contracting the HIV virus by receiving oral sex from an individual who is HIV positive, male or female?*
- *Are there any known cases of receiving the HIV virus by kissing and receiving the intake of saliva? If so what are the chances of contracting the virus from that activity?*
- *What are the chances of an HIV negative man contracting the HIV virus by being penetrated by an HIV positive male? What are the chances of the male who is HIV negative contracting the virus if no condom was used, and no breakage of the skin to the penis or any blood was discovered and the act happened in the maximum time of three minutes?*
- *Is blood the only way of transmitting the HIV virus from the HIV positive person during anal intercourse? If so, please describe the way this occurs.*
- *Can a male contract the HIV virus by performing oral sex on a female who is HIV positive?*
- *What are the physical symptoms that are visually noticeable in an HIV positive individual?*
- *What are the chances of contracting the HIV virus with a person who is HIV positive with the penetrator wearing a condom?*

Sincerely,

Jeffrey

Bennettsville, S.C.

Dear Jeffrey:

Your letter touches on many topics, so let's start with some basic information. HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) is the virus that causes AIDS. AIDS stands for Acquired (you get it from someone else) Immune Deficiency (your immune system, which contains cells that help fight off diseases and life threatening illnesses, becomes damaged by the virus) Syndrome (a group of symptoms). HIV is found in blood, breast milk, semen, vaginal secretions, and in small amounts in saliva. Anyone of any age, race or sexual preference can be infected with HIV through sex, direct exchange of blood, or both.

Here are the main ways HIV/AIDS is spread:

- Through unprotected sex (no condom) with an infected person.
- By sharing needles, syringes, cookers and works to skin-pop or inject drugs; using HIV-contaminated tattoo and ear-piercing needles, body piercing equipment, or manicure tools; sharing a toothbrush or razor that may have unseen traces of infected blood on it.
- By receiving HIV-infected blood via transfusion (not likely these days as blood supplies are subject to strict screening procedures.)
- Babies born to HIV infected mothers have a 30-40% chance of being

HIV-infected themselves; HIV-infected mothers who breast feed their babies can infect them with the virus. An HIV-infected father can only pass it to his children if he infects the mother first.

The AIDS virus is not spread through casual contact. You cannot get infected with HIV from:

- Sharing an infected person's prison cell, toilet, sink, shower, eating utensils, food or phone.
- Hugging, touching or dry kissing someone who is HIV infected.

HIV is spread through sex when semen (cum), vaginal fluids or blood from an infected person enters someone else's body through the mouth, vagina or anus. How many unprotected sexual encounters (no condom) with what number of partners for how much time would it take you to become infected? No one knows. You could become infected after ONE risky, brief encounter. Or it might take years of unsafe behavior. It's a game of Russian Roulette. You'll eventually lose: half of all prisoner deaths in the Northeast and one third of prisoner deaths nationally are now caused by AIDS. In fact AIDS is now the leading cause of death of Americans ages 25 to 44.

Unprotected anal sex is the most dangerous. Even if you see no blood

there may be microscopic tears in the skin that let the HIV virus in. Unprotected vaginal sex is dangerous, too, especially around the time of menstruation for women as there is more blood present. Oral sex is less risky than anal or vaginal, but it still carries risks. The AIDS virus in the semen or vaginal secretions may enter the blood stream through the lining of the mouth and throat if there are sores or abrasions. Using condoms and dental dams are the best protection but if you don't use one, avoid oral sex after brushing or flossing your teeth or eating foods like potato chips. Most health care experts consider kissing—even wet/tongue kissing—to be safe. Fondling and stimulation of your partner while you are wearing gloves or using clean fingers with no cuts or chapped skin are safe sexual practices.

Let's talk about drugs and HIV. Three-quarters of new HIV infections were among drug addicts addicted not just to IV drugs, but to crack cocaine as well. Half of new HIV cases were found among crack smokers who engage in unsafe sexual activity. Besides being likely to contract the virus from needles and drug works, being high makes you less likely to practice safe sex. So there are many ways to protect our-

selves. Abstaining from sex and drugs is best. But if this is impossible, reduce your risk as much as possible. Use your own needles and works, or choose smoking or sniffing instead of shooting. Do not front load or back load with another person's works. If you have to reuse needles, soak them in pure bleach (not diluted bleach) for fifteen minutes, then wash them out well with soap and water, and rinse well. Limit the number of sexual partners. Don't have sex when you have been using drugs or alcohol. Practice safe sex: Use a latex condom with nonoxynol-9 (a "spermicidal" or chemical that kills HIV) for anal or vaginal penetration and a plain condom for oral sex. Always put on a condom before you enter your partner's mouth, anus or vagina. Always check the condom's expiration date. Never re-use a condom. A condom should be rolled over an erect penis all the way down to the pubic hair. Some condoms come with a reservoir tip; if it isn't there, create one by leaving a little slack at the bottom to catch the cum. Remove the condom right after you come; pull your penis out while holding the base of the condom. Never use Vaseline, mineral oil, baby oil or cooking oil

(Crisco) with a condom as they cause breakdown of the rubber. Choose a water-based lubricant like KY jelly. Use a latex condom—HIV can get through lamb skin. If you are allergic to latex, wear a non-latex condom with a latex condom over it. If your partner has the allergy, wear the latex condom with the non-latex on the outside. If you perform oral sex on a woman, use a dental dam or a piece of latex over the vagina. You can make a dental dam out of a latex glove or cut-open condom. **EVEN IF YOU ALREADY HAVE HIV**, practice safe behaviors because you can introduce more virus and different strains of the HIV virus that will make you sicker.

There is no way to tell whether someone is HIV positive or not. To be safe you must assume your sexual partner or drug buddy could be infected. People with HIV can look healthy, strong, muscular or fat, because the virus can stay in your body for years without ever making you sick. You can't tell who has HIV until the illness is advanced, causing what are termed "opportunistic infections"—serious illnesses that the immune system of an HIV negative person would be able to fight off. In addition, someone might take the blood test

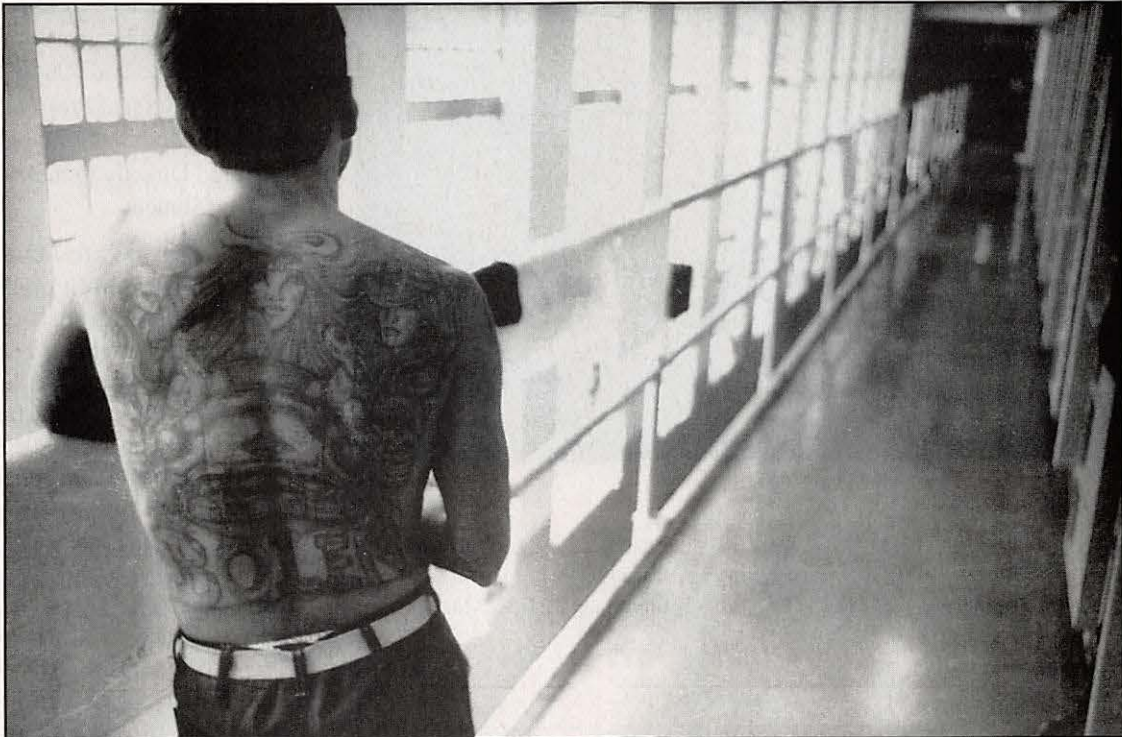
for HIV, test HIV negative (non-infected), and in reality be HIV positive (infected). How could this happen? There could be an insufficient amount of AIDS virus in the blood to show up on the test, but enough to transmit the virus to someone else. So, you could get HIV from someone who was recently infected themselves, or someone sick a long time.

Sex is a great part of life, but HIV kills. For more (free) information, call the National AIDS hotline: 1-800-342-2437; (Spanish: 1-800-344-SIDA). Each state has an AIDS hotline (in South Carolina, call 1-800-322-2437). Or call the AIDS in Prison Project at (212) 674-0800.

Hope this helps,
Da Nurses

Da Nurses are both Registered Nurses and Certified Nurse Practitioners. We caution that information in this column is offered as general advice and we recommend that anyone with health problems seek professional medical care. Although problems presented here may bear similarity to yours, each requires personal and individual attention. We welcome your questions and comments, and thanks for Asking Da Nurses.

Tattoo of the Month



A Chicano prisoner (name withheld) at the New Mexico State Pen in Santa Fe shows us the tats on his back. Photo by Manual "Manny Man" Machuca.

Send your tattoo photos to: Prison Life, Tattoo of the Month, 505 8th Ave., NY, NY 10018.

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Art by Stephen Conway



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Resources

by Alex Friedmann, Resource Editor,
SCGG, TN

The following is a list of organizations available to prisoners. Support agencies usually provide brochures, information materials or referrals to other groups. Advocacy groups try to change criminal justice legislation through political lobbying. Both of these types of agencies publish newsletters; subscriptions are generally low cost and are sometimes offered free to prisoners. Also included in this department are contacts for publications and magazines, catalog companies, book or reading projects and other agencies.

Very few of these organizations offer direct assistance. They mainly provide information. Also, many of these agencies are non-profit and need your support, including stamped return envelopes or loose stamps.

SUPPORT AGENCIES—NATIONAL:

- American Friends Service Committee, 1501 Cherry Street, Philadelphia, PA 19102 (215/241-7130): A Quaker organization that works for peace and equality. Their criminal justice branch can provide literature on a variety of prison issues. There are six regional AFSC offices in the U.S.: CA, MI, NJ, MA, OH and NY.
- John Howard Association, 67 E. Madison #1416, Chicago, IL 60603 (312/263-1901): This organization is mostly involved with prison reform and criminal justice issues in Illinois, but they can provide materials of interest to all prisoners. There is a separate JHA branch in Canada.
- National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), Criminal Justice Prison Program, 4805 Mount Hope Drive, Baltimore, MD 21215-3297 (410/358-8900): Offers referrals and advisory services for prisoners who want to break the cycle of recidivism—especially among minorities. These projects operate through regional offices and are not available in every area. Write for local contact addresses.
- Offender Aid and Restoration (OAR), 301 Park Drive, Severna Park, MD 21146 (410/647-3806): Provides post-release assistance for prisoners in IA, MD, NJ, PA and VA, through 12 local offices.

ADVOCACY AGENCIES—NATIONAL

- CURE, P.O. Box 2310, National Capitol Station, Washington, DC 20013-2310 (202/789-2126): Organization for prison reform, with state chapters and special groups for veterans, lifers, sex offenders and federal prisons.
- Families Against Mandatory Minimums (FAMM), 1001 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, #200, Washington, DC 20004 (202/457-5790): Works for the repeal of federal mandatory minimum sentencing laws.
- Justice Watch, 932 Dayton Street, Cincinnati, OH 45214 (513/241-0490): Works to eliminate classism and racism from prisons.

PUBLICATIONS & MAGAZINES

- Fortune News, ATTN: Inmate Subscriptions, 39 West 19th Street, New York, NY 10011 (212/206-7070): A publication of Fortune Society.
- Inside Journal, c/o Prison Fellowship, P.O. Box 16429, Washington, DC 20041-6429 (703/478-0100): A publication of Prison Fellowship.
- Outlook on Justice, AFSC, 2161 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA 02140 (617/661-6130): A newsletter of the American Friends Service Committee.
- Prison Life Magazine, 505 8th Avenue, New York, NY 10018 (800/207-2659): A national magazine by and for prisoners (\$19.95/year).

BOOKS AND READING PROJECTS:

- Books for Prisoners, c/o Left Bank Bookstore, 92 Pike St., Box A, Seattle, WA 98101: This volunteer program provides up to three books at a time.
- Books Through Bars Program, New Society Publishers, 4527 Springfield Ave, Philadelphia, PA 19143: Provides free books for prisoners.
- Prison Book Program, Redbook Store, 92 Green Street, Jamaica Plain, MA 02130: No books can be sent to prisoners in KS, NE, IA, MI, OR or CA.
- Prison Library Project, 976 W. Foothill Blvd #128, Claremont, CA 91711.

- Prisoner Literature Project, c/o Bound Together Books, 1369 Haight Street, San Francisco, CA 94117: Free books for prisoners.
- Prison Reading Project, Paz Press, P.O. Box 3146, Fayetteville, AR 72702: Free books for women prisoners.

CATALOG COMPANIES:

- Access, 2344 Grissom Dr, St. Louis, MO 63146 (orders 800/546-6283): Sells a large selection of products for prisoners.
- Conaid Company, 2302 230th Street, Pasadena, MD 21122: Sells a wide range of personal goods specifically targeted for prisoners.
- Jack L. Marcus, 5300 West Fond du Lac Avenue, Milwaukee, WI 53216-1348: Sells a wide variety of institutional products.
- M & P Wholesalers, P.O. Box 537, Fallston, MD 21047: Sells products for prisoners—mostly electronics and tapes.
- Walkenhorst's, 1050 Lincoln Ave., Napa, CA 94558: Retail goods.

OTHER—PRISON AIDS PROJECTS:

- American Civil Liberties Union, 1616 P Street NW, Washington, DC 20036 (202/234-4830): Operates an "AIDS in Prison" information project.
- Correctional Association AIDS in Prison Project, 135 E. 15th Street, New York, NY 10003 (212/674-0800): Offers resource information concerning AIDS in prison, especially for inmates in New York.
- HIV Prison Project, NYC Commission on Human Rights, 40 Rector St., New York, NY 10006 (212/233-5560).
- National Prison Hospice Association, P.O. Box 58, Boulder, CO 80306-0058: Helps develop hospice programs for terminally ill prisoners.
- National ACLU Prison Project, AIDS Education Project, 1875 Connecticut Avenue NW 410, Washington, DC 20009 (202/234-4830).
- "One Day at a Time," c/o Richard H. Rhodes #05353-018, U.S.P. Leavenworth, P.O. Box 1000, Leavenworth, KS 66048: An AIDS newsletter for prisoners.
- Prison AIDS Project, Gay Community News, 62 Berkeley Street, Boston, MA 02116 (National AIDS Gay Task Force: 800/221-7044).
- Prison AIDS Resource Center, P.O. Box 2155, Vacaville, CA 95696-2155; or 926 J. Street, #801, Sacramento, CA 95814.
- Prisoners with AIDS/Rights Advocacy Group, P.O. Box 2161, Jonesboro, GA 30327 (404/946-9346): Offers support, educational materials, referrals and political lobbying for prisoners with AIDS/HIV.

OTHER—SPECIAL AGENCIES:

- League for Lesbian and Gay Prisoners, 1202 East Pike St., #1044, Seattle, WA 98122: A project of Gay Community Social Services.
- Native American Indian Inmate Support Project, 8 Dallas Dr., Grantville, PA 17028: A Native American group that supports the introduction of Indian religious ceremonies and programs in prisons.
- Native American Prisoners' Rehabilitation Research Project, 2848 Paddock Lane, Villa Hills, KY 41017: Offers many services for Native American prisoners, including legal and spiritual support, tribal and cultural programs and direct contact with prison administrators.
- Packages from Home, P.O. Box 905, Forestville, CA 95436: Sells mail-order food packages for prisoners, at around \$20/pkg.
- PEN, Writing Program for Prisoners, 568 Broadway, New York, NY 10012 (212/334-1660): Offers a great resource booklet for prison writers.
- Prisoners of Conscience Project, 2120 Lincoln St., Evanston, IL 60201 (708/328-1543): A religious-based agency that works for the release of prisoners of conscience/political prisoners in the United States.
- Prisoner Visitation and Support, 1501 Cherry Street, Philadelphia, PA 19102 (215/241-7117): Provides institutional visits to prisoners in federal and military prisons nationwide.

- Project for Older Prisoners (POPS), c/o Jonathan Turley, Director, The National Law Center, 2000 H Street NW, Washington, DC 20052.
- The Safer Society, Shoreham Depot Road, RR 1, Box 24-B, Orwell, VT 05760-9756 (802/897-7541): Self-help materials for sex offenders.
- Stop Prisoner Rape, P.O. Box 632, Fort Bragg, CA 95437 (707/964-0820); or P.O. Box 2713, Manhattanville Station, New York, NY 10027 (212/663-5562): Provides support for victims of institutional rape.
- The Poetry Wall, Cathedral of St. John, 1047 Amsterdam Avenue, New York, NY 10025: Displays inmate poetry.

PRISONER RESOURCES—FAMILY

There are many organizations that help prisoners who have children. These agencies provide literature, information, advice and support on how to cope with family problems while in prison. Direct and personal assistance is usually available only in the local areas that these programs serve.

- Aid to Imprisoned Mothers (AIM), 599 Mitchell St., SW, Atlanta, GA 30314 (404/221-0092): An advocacy group for incarcerated mothers. Although social services are only provided in the Atlanta area, AIM can provide helpful information for all women in prison who have children.
- Center for the Children of Incarcerated Parents, Pacific Oaks College, 714 W. California Blvd, Pasadena, CA 91105 (818/397-1300): Provides free educational material for incarcerated parents and their children.
- Family and Corrections Network, Jane Adams Center M/C 309, 1040 West Harrison St. #4010, Chicago, IL 60607-7134 (312/996-3219): Provides information about programs serving families of prisoners.
- Fathers Behind Bars, P.O. Box 86, Niles, MI 49120 (616/684-5715): A by-prisoners, for-prisoners agency that helps to set up institutional parent groups for incarcerated fathers. Only the serious need apply!
- Legal Services for Prisoners with Children, 474 Valencia St., #230, San Francisco, CA 94103 (415/255-7036): Legal services are provided in California only, but some general information is available.
- National Institute of Corrections, Information Center, 1860 Industrial Circle, Suite A, Longmont, CA 80501 (303/682-0213): Provides the "Directory of Programs Serving Families of Adult Offenders."
- National Resource Center for Family Support Programs, Family Resource Coalition, 200 S. Michigan Ave., #1520, Chicago, IL 60604 (312/341-0900): Provides information about family programs, including prison projects.
- Parent Resource Association, 213 Fernbrook Avenue, Wyncote, PA 19095 (215/576-7961): Support for child/parenting programs in prison; offers referrals and information to incarcerated parents.
- Prison Family Foundation, P.O. Box 1150, Auburn, AL 36831 (205/821-1150): Works to support family education programs in prison. Sells pre- and post-release books and other publications; works with prison administrations to form institutional family support groups.

PRISONER RESOURCES—LEGAL

There are many agencies that provide legal services for prisoners; most of these organizations dispense information or offer reference material. Note that these agencies do not usually handle personal legal services such as filing appeals, post-convictions or lawsuits—with the exception of for-profit companies (not listed here) that charge very large fees.

Federal:

- U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division, Special Litigation Section, Washington, DC 20530 (202/514-6255): Enforces the "Civil Rights of Institutionalized Persons Act" through lawsuits

against state or local prison officials who deprive prisoners of their constitutional rights or who practice racial discrimination.

- U.S. Supreme Court, Public Information Office, Washington, DC 20543-0001 (202/479-3211): Can provide up to five Supreme Court decisions per term. Supreme Court slip opinions are available through the Government Printing Office. Contact: The Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402 (202/783-3238).

National:

- ACLU National Prison Project, 1875 Connecticut Ave., NW #410, Washington, DC 20009 (202/234-4830): A branch of the national ACLU that works on prison legal issues. Sells resource directories, criminal justice statistic books and legal aid manuals; also offers a prison newsletter for \$2 per year and sells the "Rights of Prisoners" handbook for \$5. Doesn't handle individual cases; they only litigate large-scale state or national prison reform legal actions.

- Americans for Effective Law Enforcement, 5519 N. Cumberland Ave #1008, Chicago, IL 60656-1498 (312/763-2800): Sells monthly legal update publications, including the "Jail and Prisoner Law Bulletin." Although this bulletin is meant for corrections officials, it includes excellent resource material on the latest prison-related court cases nationwide. Annual costs are \$168; perhaps your law library can subscribe. Other bulletins include the "Liability Reporter" and "Security Legal Update."
- Columbia Human Rights Law Review, 435 West 116th Street, Box B-25, New York, NY 10027 (212/663-8701): Sells the "Jailhouse Lawyer Manual" (JLM) for \$30 a copy (\$13 for prisoners).
- Criminal Procedure Project, 600 New Jersey Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20001: Provides low-cost legal materials and publications.

- Freedom Press, 525K E. Market St., #171, Leesburg, VA 22075 (703/771-4699 or 703/391-8604): A prison project run by paralegals. They offer legal services at a reduced rate, sometimes on monthly payment plans; they also offer photocopying services and pre-release/parole planning.
- Inside/Out Press, P.O. Box 188131, Sacramento, CA 95818: Publishes self-help legal guides. Inside/Out is the mail-order business for the Prisoners' Rights Union, which focuses on California prison issues.

- Lewisburg Prison Project, P.O. Box 128, Lewisburg, PA 17837-0128 (717/523-1104): Sells low-cost literature regarding constitutional rights, due process and other legal issues of interest to prisoners.
- National Lawyers Guild, National Office, 55 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10013-1698 (212/966-5000): A national legal agency that has an interest in criminal justice and jailhouse lawyers.
- Oceana Press, 75 Main Street, Dobbs Ferry, NY 10522 (914/693-8100): Sells prison-related legal books, including "The Prisoner's Self-Help Litigation Manual" (\$20) and "Post-Conviction Remedies" (\$20).
- Prisoner Legal News, P.O. Box 1684, Lake Worth, FL 33460: A newsletter published by prisoners in Washington that covers nationwide prison legal issues. Subscription rates are around \$10 per year.

- Southern Illinois University Press, P.O. Box 3697, Carbondale, IL 62902-3697: Can provide "The Rights of Prisoners" brochure at no cost.
- Starlite, P.O. Box 20004, St. Petersburg, FL 33742 (813/392-2929 or 800/577-2929): Sells the CITEBOOK, which is a collection of positive federal and state case law, both criminal and civil. The CITEBOOK is updated quarterly and costs \$28 (\$112 annually). Although this is fairly expensive, perhaps your law library can subscribe; this company also sells other books regarding business, consumer and legal issues.

- West Publishing Company, 610 Opperman Drive, Saint Paul, MN 55123-1340: Publishes "Corrections and Prisoners Rights in a Nutshell" and "Criminal Procedures in a Nutshell," at \$17 each.

PARALEGAL

CORRESPONDENCE PROGRAMS

- Blackstone School of Law, P.O. Box 871449, Dallas, TX 75287 (800/826-9228): Offers a well-known correspondence program.
- Southern Career Institute, 164 West Royal Palm Rd., Boca Raton, FL 33432 (800/669-2555 or

407/368-2522): Offers a complete paralegal course that costs \$1595 to \$1977; monthly payment plans available. This school is accredited by the National Home Study Council.

- The Paralegal Institute, 3602 West Thomas Road #9, Drawer 11408, Phoenix, AZ 85061-1408 (602/272-1855): Offers paralegal courses for fees ranging between \$1290 and \$2750. Monthly payment plans and an Associate degree program available. Accredited by National Home Study Council.

MINISTRIES & BIBLE STUDIES

- Emmaus Bible Correspondence School, 2570 Asbury Rd, Dubuque, IA 52001 (319/588-8000): Offers free Bible courses for prisoners.

- Good News Mission, 1036 Highland Street, Arlington, VA 22204 (703/979-2200): A Christian organization that provides support, witnessing and spiritual counseling to inmates in 110 prisons across 14 states.

- Guideposts, 39 Seminary Hill Road, Carmel, NY 10512 (914/225-3681): A Christian organization that publishes *Guidepost* magazine. Also sponsors the FIND information network, which provides information referrals: FIND Network, P.O. Box 855, Carmel, NY 10512.

- Hope Aglow Prison Ministries, P.O. Box 3057, Lynchburg, VA 24503: A nationwide religious organization that offers Bible study courses.

- International Prison Ministry, P.O. Box 63, Dallas, TX 75221.

- Liberty Prison Ministries, P.O. Box 8998, Waukegan, IL 60079: This Christian ministry publishes the *Liberator* newsletter.

- Liberty Prison Outreach, 701 Thomas Road, Lynchburg, VA 24514 (804/239-9281): Provides religious assistance to prisoners, mostly in central Virginia; Bible correspondence courses available.

- Prison Fellowship, P.O. Box 17500, Washington, DC 20041 (703/478-0100): A nationwide ministry that sponsors spiritual activities in prison.

- Prison Ministry of Yokefellows International, The Yokefellow Center, P.O. Box 482, Rising Sun, MD 21911 (410/658-2661): a religious organization that offers information and literature to prisoners.

- Set Free Prison Ministries, P.O. Box 5440, Riverside, CA 92517-9961 (909/787-9907): Provides an extensive Bible study course.

- Southern Prison Ministry, 910 Ponce de Leon Ave. NE, Atlanta, GA 30306.

- U.S. Mennonite Central Committee, Office of Criminal Justice, P.O. Box 500, Akron, PA 17501-0500 (717/859-3889): Offers many publications concerning crime and religion—most are free to prisoners.

ISLAMIC ORGANIZATIONS

- Islamic Prison Organization, 1212 New York Avenue NW #400, Washington, DC 20005: Mostly works with Muslims in federal prisons.

- The National Incarcerated Muslim Network, c/o Maurice Taylor, #476837, Route 3, Box 59, Rosharon, TX 77583: A prison-based organization that networks with incarcerated Muslims for support and educational purposes.

JUDAISM ORGANIZATIONS

- Aleph Institute, P.O. Box 546564, Surfside, FL 33154 (305/864-5553): A full-service Jewish advocacy agency with regional offices.

- International Coalition for Jewish Prisoners Services, 1640 Rhode Island Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20036-3278 (202/857-6582): Offers support, referrals, guidance, educational and religious programs, and pen pals.

BUDDHIST/MEDITATION GROUPS

- Human Kindness Foundation, Prison Ashram Project, Route 1, Box 201-N, Durham, NC 27705: Provides reading material for spiritual living.

- Iskon Prison Ministries, 2936 Esplanade Ave., New Orleans, LA 70119.

- Prison Dharma Network, P.O. Box 912, Astor Station, Boston, MA 02123-0912: Offers Buddhist meditation literature.

PRISONER RESOURCES—DEATH PENALTY

- American Civil Liberties Union, Capital Punishment Project, 122 Maryland Avenue NE, Washington, DC 20002 (202/675-2321): A branch of the ACLU that deals with death penalty issues.

- American Friends Service Committee, 1501 Cherry Street, Philadelphia, PA 19102 (215/241-7130): a Quaker peace organization that works to ban the death penalty as one of their Criminal Justice projects.

- Amnesty International, Project to Abolish the Death Penalty, 322 8th Ave., New York, NY 10001-4808 (212/807-8400): Works to abolish the death penalty through public letter-writing campaigns.

- Capital Punishment Research Project, P.O. Box 277, Headland, AL 36345 (205/693-5225).

- Catholics Against Capital Punishment, P.O. Box 3125, Arlington, VA 22203 (703/522-5014): A religious organization against the death penalty.

- Death Penalty Information Center, 1606 20th Street NW, Washington, DC 20009 (202/347-2531).

- Death Row Support Project, P.O. Box 600, Liberty Mills, IN 46946 (219/982-7480): Offers pen-pal services to death row inmates.

- Endeavor Project, P.O. Box 23511, Houston, TX 77228-3511: A magazine produced by and for prisoners on death row.

- NAACP Legal Defense Fund, 99 Hudson Street, 16th Floor, New York, NY 10013 (212/219-1900): A legal branch of the NAACP that supports minority rights; also has an anti-death penalty project.

- National Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty, 1325 G Street NW, Lower Level B, Washington, DC 20005 (202/347-2411): Works to abolish the death penalty; provides a state-by-state listing of agencies against the death penalty ("The Abolitionist's Directory," \$2).

OBSOLETE PRISONER AGENCIES

The following addresses are no longer current. These agencies have moved, gone out of business or simply did not write back when we contacted them:

- Askofuk National Committee, 427 N. Broom Street, Wilmington, DE 19805.

- Committee to Abolish Slavery, 324 C Street, #303, Washington, DC 20003.

- CVLP Newsletter, North 46th Street #107, Phoenix, AZ 10017.

- 5-Star Press, P.O. Box 4167, Halfmoon, NY 12065.

- Inmate Assistance Project, University of Texas, Austin, TX 78705.

- Legal Advice to Inmate Program, Texas Southern University School of Law, 3201 Wheeler Avenue, Houston, TX 77004.

- Legal Associates West, P.O. Box 255784, Sacramento, CA 95865-5784.

- Liberation of Ex-Offenders through Employment, 309 E. St. NW, Washington, DC 20001.

- NJ, U.S. Dept. of Justice, 1790 30th Street #130, Boulder, CO 80301

- NTL Law Center, 1337 22nd St. NW, Washington, DC 20037.

- Offender Aid Project, 1325 G Street #620, Washington, DC 20005.

- Prison Ashram Project, 49 W. Jersey Ave., RD4, Pleasantville, NJ 08232.

- Prison Families Anonymous, 353 Fulton Avenue, Hempstead, NY 11550.

- Prisoners' Aid Society, P.O. Box 3219, Oak Ridge, TN 37831-3219.

- Prisoner's Personal Aid, 6001 Gulf Freeway, B-103, Houston, TX 77203.

- People with AIDS Prison Project, P.O. Box 300339, Denver, CO 80203.

- Sentencing Project, 1156 15th Street NW, Washington, DC 20005.

- Southern Coalition on Prisons and Jails, P.O. Box 120044, Nashville, TN 37212.

- Tower Press Publishers, 410 Penn Street, Holidaysburg, PA 16648.

- Women's Prison Survival News, WPSN, P.O. Box 770 Station P, Toronto, Ontario, M5W 1P7, Canada.

Changes, additions and new information should be sent to:
Prison Life Magazine
Resources Department
505 8th Avenue
New York, NY 10018

Pen Pals

Last of the real Blackmen. 32, 6', 190#, handsome. Gets out soon. Will write back all. John Hamilton, #56659, P.O. Box 2017, Buena Vista, CO 81211.

SWM, 38, 6'2", 210#, hazel eyes, light-brown hair, very good shape, college grad, writer seeking female 30-55 for meaningful relationship—less than two years to parole board. Derrick Corley, #90T1984, Box 700, Wallkill NY 12589-0700.

Lockdown in Michigan. From Canoga Park, CA. No Games. SWM, 35, 6', 200#, hazel eyes, brown auburn hair with long tail. Born 7/7/59. You won't be sorry. Johnny Gavid, #E163272, P.O. Box 779, Marquette, MI 49855.

Interested in men who are serious about establishing a healthy relationship. Age 30 up and who know how to treat a woman. I'm doing a 12 year sentence, 10 down already. I'm 34, single and I love to travel and listen to rock 'n' roll. Sandra Rodriguez, #423988, 1401 State School Rd., Cratesville, TX 76599.

Eighth yr. down. 6'5", 39, long hair, attractive Jewish dreamer. Create a future with me. You: A woman whose primary concerns are God, respect and equitability. If all else is negotiable commentary, I'm yours. Letter, photo, dreams to: Wayne Sommerfield, P.O.Box 1989-24894, Ely, NV 89301.

My mail is too depressing. I'm an artist in lockdown looking for correspondence. Would like to write homegirl from Philly or New York; like white and Puerto Rican. George Stone, #806676, Iowa State Pen, P.O. Box 316, Ft. Madison, IA 52627.

SWF, 33, 5'4", 135#, blonde, blue eyes. Down only a minute, many hours to go. Seeking friendship, companionship with SWM, age not an issue. Debra Matthews, #54799, 515-20-I-L, P.O. Box 1508, Chowchilla, CA 93610-1508.

SWM, 21, br hair, 6'1", 175 #, hazel eyes seeks female for friendship, possible love. Getting out in 2000. Anthony Hartman, #CB-6931, SCI Huntingdon, 1100 Pike Street, Huntingdon, PA 16654-1112.

I'm a punk! Faggot and homosexual. Most of all, I'm doing life. But I'm honest, if that counts at all. In today's society, I hope it does. Keith A. Warren, Box 1989-23562, Ely, NV 89301-1989.

"They say there is a woman for every man, where is my woman?, I need you!, Now!, DWM, Italian, br hair, blue eyes, 5'11", 185lbs, 37. Emotionally strong and honest seeking a caring female to take away this dreadful loneliness of incarceration through correspondence that can lead to a possible long term relation, I need a fresh start and second chance. Home in 2 1/2 years. Chris Mirra #85a-7251 2911 Arthur Kill RD, Staten Island N.Y. 10309

In search of ex-boyfriend, Eric Vaugh: Nickname Duracell. Eric or anyone knowing the whereabouts of Eric Vaugh. Contact me at, Susie Factor P.O Box 751434 Houston, TX. 77275-1434

SWM, 43, 5'11' 200lbs Seeks a muscular jockey or booty bandit who is out soon. Can provide a fresh start to an honest sincere man, place to live and employment. Send Photo. All letters answered. G.K.C., Po Box 4036, ClarksBurg WV 26302-4036

WM Lifer, 34, 228lbs. Long Brown hair, Hazel eyes. "Retired" Martial Arts instructor. Interests include bodybuilding, martial arts and beautiful hardbods. I have a B.S. in the marketing and a M.S. in Promotional Marketing from O.S.U. No games. Sorry, but I can only receive letters from noninstitutional addresses. Bill Wanless 211723. Dick Conner Corr. Center, Box 220, Hominy, Oklahoma 74035

I'm a MACA-RONI looking for my TENDER-RONI. I've been down eight total, and I'm looking for photos. In return, I will send Mac-photo. I love a woman with a lot of her wagon dragon'. Same on photos. Angelo Gomez Wright, #20544, U.S.P.-STAR-3-B-11-B, P.O.B. 250, Draper, UT 84020.

SWM, 21, Br hair, 6' 1", 175 lbs. Hazel eyes, seeks female for friendship possible love. Getting out in 2000. Anthony Hartman #CB-6931 S.C.I. Huntingdon 1100 Pike Street Huntingdon, PA. 16654-1112.

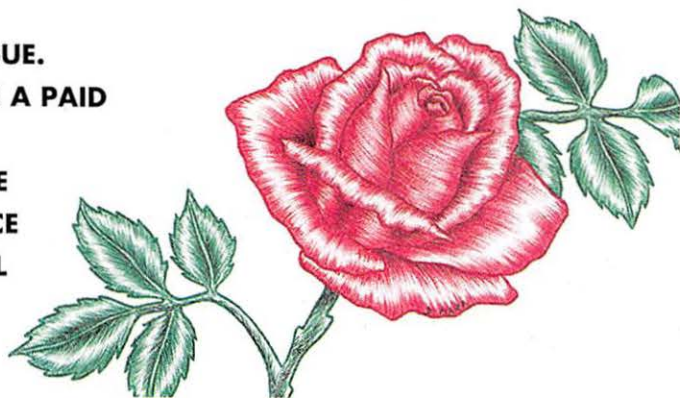
W/M, 35, politically and locally active. Max. release date 7/2003. I'm stuck: Lonely in America's "Dairyland." No one this handsome should be lonely. Charles Yoder, P.O. Box 351, Waupun, WI 53963-0351.

Natural Aryan Warrior lookin' to defilthify the very presupposition of life: sex. That's right, ladies, yes, you too kan assist in loping my mule! I barter art an' depth for your supplements (photos, kites) to my klinikal masturbatory studies. Dennis Lee "Mule" Marsh. Fair fit and solid frame. Swapped photo to konfirm. P.O.B. 351, Waupunk, Wisconsin 53963. Only freethinkers need respond.

SWM, 23, 5'9", 170#, br. hair, hz. eyes, educated. Been down 4 got 3 to do. Would like to correspond with anybody who would like to share a mutual friendship. Peace! Val Haase, #883152, P.O. Box 8907, Michigan City, IN 46361.

36 yr old Indian Warrior looking for compassionate woman to share conversation with thru letters. I have many interests and I'm full of warmth and desires. Don Gingras, A013265, Montana State Prison, 700 Conley Lk Rd., Deer Lodge, Montana 59722.

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