

DRAGON LIFE

NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 1995

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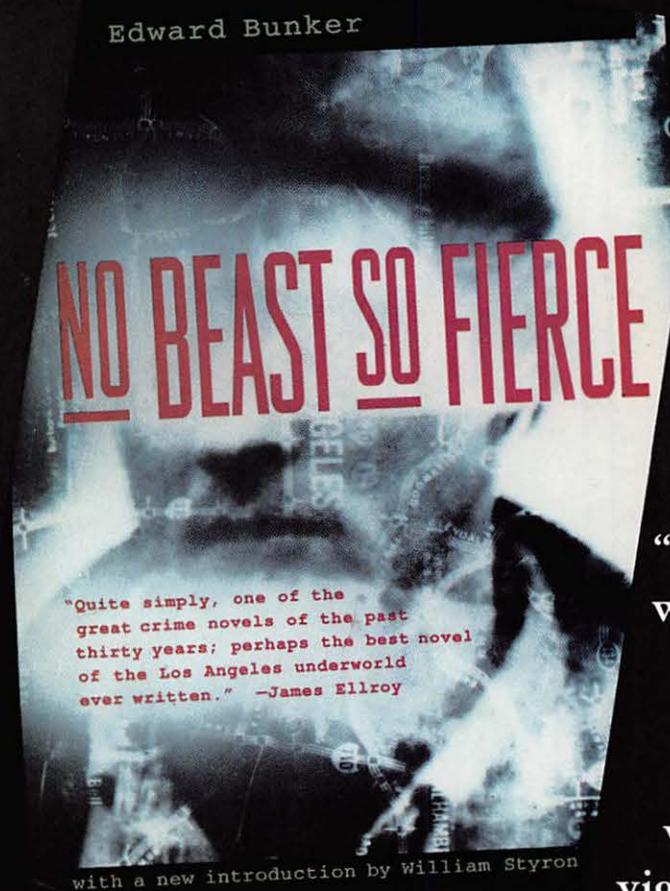
GRIM PHOTOS FROM AN ALABAMA CHAIN GANG

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SPECIAL FICTION
SUPPLEMENT:
**ANIMAL
FACTORY**
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PRISON LIFE

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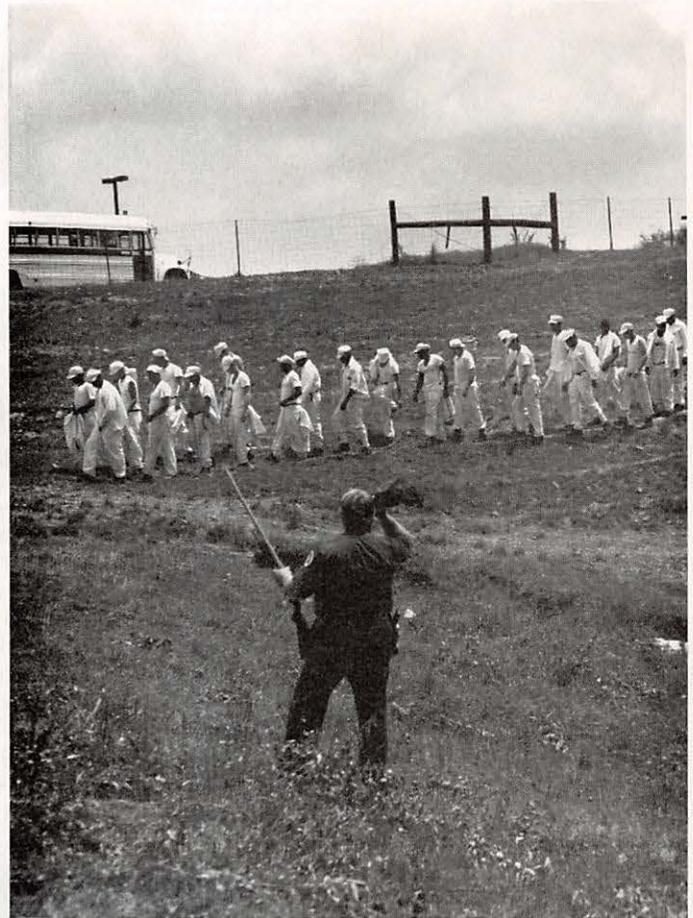
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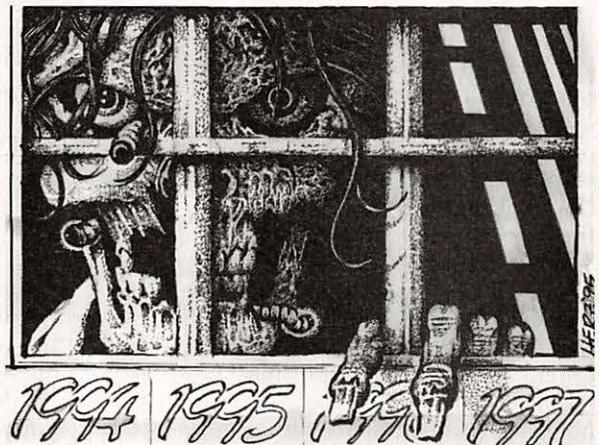
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Cover Photo by Michael Corsentino

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Voice of the Convict

AMERICAN OWNED

by **Richard Stratton**
Editor & Publisher

It had been another marathon day. I was up at 2:30 a.m., wrote from three to five, and by six I was on my way into the city. A full day of meetings wound down around seven in the evening. After consulting with Professor Afghani, an American entrepreneur if ever there was one, by nine that night I was on the road again. Traffic on the Henry Hudson Parkway and over the George Washington Bridge was moderate. I surfed the radio airwaves looking for just the right tunes to carry me into the heartland.

Then I heard a voice, the voice of the voiceless. I recognized Mumia Abu-Jamal and realized once again that this was August 17, the day Mumia had been scheduled to be executed. Cries of outrage and support for Jamal from around the world had resulted in an indefinite stay; I believe they feared riots in the streets. A reporter from WBAI in New York and a German journalist had managed to breach media blackout lines and talk with Jamal while he was being held at a county jail in Philadelphia during several days of hearings before the notorious hanging judge Albert Sabo. Mumia's modulated tones and radical, egoless thoughts ("There are many Mumia Abu-Jamals on death rows all across America.") were just what I needed to prepare me for this journey.

Heading west on Interstate 80, I saw the sign "Welcome to Pennsylvania: America Begins Here" that my wife had written of in her *Prison Life* piece on Jamal. Around midnight, I stopped for gas and food at a truck stop that had tiny pay TV sets before the stools at the counter and in the booths. Flanked by teamsters eating apple pie a la mode and pumping quarters into their mini-tubes, I really felt as though I had entered another America, a twisted land of superhighways, ubiquitous TV, bad food and horrendous architecture. By the time

I checked into the motel my friend's wife recommended in Lewisburg, PA, I had put in a 24-hour day.

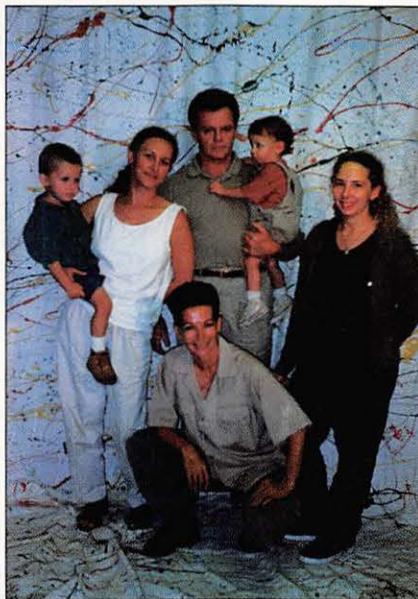
"Which one?" the woman at the front desk answered the next morning when I asked her how to get to the prison. I knew the area, remembered it from the days when I came through on the Bureau of Prisons bus. Then there were just three federal joints: the penitentiary: Lewisburg, with its satellite camp; and Allenwood, one of the first

wire stretched in all directions. It was as though I had strayed into some vast Prisonland theme park: here a prison, there a prison, everywhere a prison-prison. The architecture was an ominous Taco Bell style. I was struck by how closely prisons have come to resemble the new fuel-and-fast-food complexes sprouting along the American highway. Squat, brooding gun-towers and silver rolls of razor wire have replaced the Golden Arches. Get in on the latest hot franchise; be the first in your community to open a new MacPrison.

The road wound through the Federal Prison Complex at White Deer. There was no mistaking the maximum security joint. A sense of doom emanated from its massive walls. The first prison I tried was not the right one. There were gradations in security I couldn't fathom: a few less strands of razor wire; no gun-towers. Still, no one was going to get out. And even if one did, the escape was further into Prisonland.

When I found the right institution and entered, I was reminded of a comment a friend had made when he came to visit me at the federal prison in Otisville in the mid-'80s. "One thing these people know how to do is run prisons." American ingenuity, American efficiency: if you want to see it happen, make it a business. The joint was clean, antiseptic. But when I went to the front desk to fill out the visiting forms, they told me the computer was down. Panic in cyberspace, an electronic riot that meant the cops had to call my friend's Unit Team and check to see if my name was on his approved visitors list. Paranoia took hold. Eight years in prison had only served to strengthen my conviction to question authority. Are they wiring the visiting room? If they let me in, will they let me out?

It was just after eight in the morn-



Richard Stratton, family and friends at the federal prison in Danbury, CT.

of the so-called "country club" prisons. That was ten years ago. Now I had crossed into Prison America, a virtual state of siege, and I needed directions to the new federal prison complex.

I wanted to get there early to beat the crowds. When I drove into the complex, I was stunned. Which one, indeed. I pulled to the side of the road at the top of a rolling hill for a panoramic view. I was surrounded by prisons. Fences and walls festooned with gleaming ribbons of concertina

ing, already a number of the faithful had gathered and were waiting patiently to enter the prison. I watched two Muslim women in traditional dark robes as they struggled with three young children, one of whom was a surprisingly happy and active little boy with a badly deformed spine. They worried over the bizarre questionnaire: Are you bringing any explosives? Weapons? Dope? Two teenage Italian boys and a man I guessed was their grandfather; an old, Eastern European couple; a young, skinny blonde; a Latino man in his early thirties: incomplete couples and families waited for a brief reunion with their imprisoned others.

Gradually we were admitted, first through the metal detector that always goes off on account of my bionic hip. I had to take off my shoes and belt before some young Pennsylvania farm-boy dressed up as a corrections officer stamped my wrist with special ink that shows up under ultra violet light. Then we passed through a series of electronically controlled doors, up a ramp into the parched, denuded compound. Some people say these new prisons look like college campuses; if so, this place was Harvard from hell. The idea seems to be to eradicate all

traces of nature, replace grass, trees and plants with cinderblock, concrete, metal and plastic foliage.

It was eerie going back in after five years on the outside. I have visited other prisons; the previous week I had been to see a friend at the federal prison in Danbury, Connecticut. But that is an older joint, all women now, and more like a real prison than some huge industrial park and regional corporate headquarters. This was the first time I had been inside one of the modern mega-prisons, my first excursion to B.O.P. Prisonland, Inc. The place had all the tenor and atmosphere of a futuristic factory where the product is kept hidden. What unsettled me was how normal it seemed to everyone but me.

None of the prisoners was in the large visiting room when we entered. The furniture, UNICOR modular, was arranged in neat rows. The cops manning the visiting room, a clean-cut pair who could just as easily have been running a convenience store, were all business. Whole families, there to spend a day with dad or brother or son, staked out tables and chairs. The kids flocked around vending machines where they bought armloads of packaged food they spread on tables picnic-

style. A concrete-walled outdoor area furnished with UNICOR patio sets—tables and benches with umbrellas—made me think of poolside at the Motel California, where there is no pool and you can't check out.

In one's and two's, khaki-clad prisoners entered from the shake-down room. I recognized a black convict with whom I had been locked up at MCC New York a decade before. He didn't look as though he had aged a day, but his mother was in a wheelchair. As prisoners and visitors filled the room, I remembered the bitter-sweet feelings a visit stirred in me while I was a prisoner. I watched momentarily as whole families experienced the joy and heartache of being reunited with a loved one, who would soon have to return to his cell.

For nearly three hours, my friend regaled me with his intelligence. I thought about the waste of imprisoning a man like this, a nonviolent, first-time marijuana offender. It cost taxpayers upwards of thirty grand a year to keep him here in Prisonland like some captive specimen from outer America. He should be out working and raising his family. I met a few of his friends, other drug prison-

(continued on page 74)

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PRISONLIFE

November-December 1995

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CONTRIBUTORS COLUMN

Jim Ballard, locked up in Orofino, Idaho, contributed the piece on post-release benefits. "I'm in my tenth straight year of doing time," Jim writes. "Thanks for giving me the chance to write for your mag." Look for more of Jim's work in upcoming issues.

Ex-con **Edward Bunker**, author of such hard-boiled classics as *No Beast So Fierce* and *Animal Factory* (excerpted in this issue), lives in Hollywood, CA, where he writes novels and screenplays. Bunker, who was the cover story of PL's Sept./Oct. issue ("America's Greatest Living Convict Writer"), has been heralded as one of the few American writers who have created authentic literature out of their experiences as criminals.

Michael Chavaux, PL's May Celly of the Month and business editor, wrote "Gettin' Out & Goin' for the Green-Legally." From Michigan's Adrian Temporary Facility, he runs a mail order service for fortune hunters and wrote a book on buying used cars.

Michael Corsentino, the photographer and writer of this issue's cover story, visited Alabama shortly after he heard that

chain gangs were being resurrected. "I knew there was a story there," he says. Corsentino took a break from his job as a graphic designer in NYC to spend an entire week on the chain gang.

Alex Friedmann, our resource editor, has spent two years compiling data on agencies and resources for prisoners, ex-cons and their families. He continues his research at S.C.C.C. in Clifton, TN.

Steve Gressak illustrated this issue's guest editorial. He works as a freelance illustrator in New York.

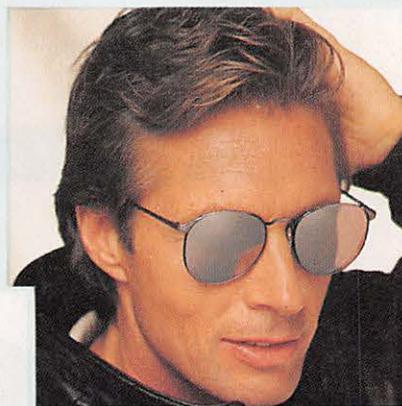
Joseph Hernandez, illustrator of "Who's Got the Money," is a graffiti artist and illustrator locked up at Green Haven Correctional in New York.

Even though he's stuck in the Hole in Texas, **Henry Herz** is able to supply PL with top-notch illustrations and comics, shown throughout the issue.

B.D. Hill, illustrator of the excerpt from *Animal Factory*, is serving a 30-year bid in Huntsville, TX.

Peter Schmidt, formerly a corporate lawyer, writes the "Just in Case" column, a synopsis of relevant federal rulings.

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WORD

by Chris Cozzone, Executive Editor

It's a rare occasion when corrections departments or the B.O.P. give the media any sort of access to a prison. Normally, you have to submit a stack of paperwork and go through a lot of verbal bullshit in order to see a single prisoner. Although they cannot legally deny a prisoner access to the media, the white shirts in charge of media relations can (and do) stall you past your deadline by giving you the "lack of staff at this point" excuse or "Mr. So-and-So is in the Hole right now and not allowed media visits."

Things change when the prisoncrats want the publicity.

Freelance photographer Michael Corsentino was able to shoot the Alabama chain gang featured in this issue for eight days. Hell, the Alabama D.O.C. invited him in. "C'mon on down and git all the pictures you want," they told him, knowing that the public eats this shit up.

Of course, I'm sure the good ol' boys down there had no idea Corsentino's exposé would not only portray the atrocities of life on the chain gang but would end up in the evil *Prison Life* magazine.

The Alabama prisoncrats *want* everyone to know. Those rednecks want the world to see what they're doing, how they're straightening out society's "scum" and getting their highways cleaned for free.

"Yessah massah boss, you sure know how to work us criminals to death . . . Nossir, wouldn't dare comit anutha crime now . . ."

Read on: You'll see how fucked up the whole thing is.

And you wonder why this country is plagued with slanted journalism? Why the public is so unsympathetic to the human rights violations of American prisoners? Easy—because everything is controlled by access and cooperation by the guys in charge. Once people start seeing real images of American prison life, there's hope that things might change. Look at America's reaction to Vietnam. Look at Bosnia. South Africa. Even the bombing in Oklahoma City. What if there had been no images or film clips of those horror stories? Do you think they would have gotten the attention they did if we had to merely visualize the scenes? Doubt it.

Prisoncrats know what they are

doing when they limit journalists. They are protecting themselves from being exposed, from losing control and from facing the truth that prisons are nothing but monster factories. Chain gangs, control units, guard brutality and wretched conditions are not going to produce anything for society but animals.

Case in point: Terry Fitzsimmons, a dark product of the Canadian correction system. Fitzsimmons started his criminal career as a confused, 18-year-old convenience store thief. He ended it ten years later by injecting himself with the HIV-infected blood of his fourth murder victim and turning himself in to the police. Shortly before his death, Fitzsimmons spent time with *Prison Life's* Canadian correspondent Oriana Conti and explained how the lethal combination of years in the Hole, inadequate counseling and zero rehabilitation turned a troubled man into a raving maniac.

The same theme is explored in this issue's fiction supplement, an excerpt from Edward Bunker's prison classic, *Animal Factory*. Bunker, whose ugly mug graced our September cover, tells the story of a young, San Quentin con whose spirit is destroyed by the criminal justice system.

It's people like Charlie and Pauline Sullivan, freeworld founders of an organization called CURE (Citizens Reunited for the Rehabilitation of Errants) who are doing real work in the field of corrections. *Prison Life* attended their fifth national convention in D.C. and met similar-minded people committed to prison reform.

For those of you gettin' out soon, read Jim Ballard's low-down on post-release benefits. And our business editor Michael Chavaux is back with three ideas for legal businesses you can start for under \$300.

The only thing that's missing is Bubba. He's been put in the Hole for running a business, i.e. writing his column for *Prison Life*. Actually, we were hoping they'd transfer him to Limestone and stick his sorry ass on the chain gang, but they couldn't find a pair of shackles wide enough to fit his fat ankles.

For all you dudes missin' your loved ones over the holidays, hang in there and try to make the most of it. We hope this issue will make the time easier.

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PRISONER TO FREEWORLDER: "GET OVER IT"

by Karl C. Johnson

My first ever death threat came in the morning's mail. It was a venomous response from a freeworlder to an op-ed piece I wrote in the *Oregonian* expressing valid concerns about convicted criminals. On behalf of America's incarcerated, I feel compelled to issue a rebuttal. Here are a few excerpts from the freeworlder's letter:

These criminals think they have an opinion because a rag-ass newspaper like the Oregonian gives them one. They think someone believes their sorry story about doing hard time. Even on a good day, the mother of an inmate has to admit that her son is nothing better than a lying idiot.

Sorry, but we prisoners *do* form our own ideas and we certainly have opinions, especially about imprisonment. And Mom said she not only believed my hard-time story, she doesn't think I'm an idiot either. I didn't press her on the lying part—it's an occupational necessity for any criminal. Others who understand our "sorry story about doing time" include the National Prison Project of the American Civil Liberties Union, Amnesty International, the Human Rights Watch, Prison Fellowship and the Fortune Society. Members of these organizations have spent time in prison, either as convicts or as volunteers. They speak with intimate knowledge of the difficulties any human faces doing time. Nationwide, thousands of local religious volunteers and tens of thousands of prisoners' family members have seen the destructive results of prison firsthand.

They think they don't like life in prison, when in fact they love it! They love to brag to all their criminal friends about their pathetic crimes. They love to learn new criminal skills and they love being with other men because their homosexual lust is not only fulfilled in prison but they can also justify it.

If they don't love it, why do they keep going back? The reason is because it 's their home, it's the only place where they truly belong.

All too often this is true. I recently heard a man brag incessantly about the eightball of coke he'd score and the new 'Vette he'd steal his first day out. For each such braggart, however, I can find two men striving to change their lives.

Unfortunately, many sincere ones will return because like most people, they're steering their lives down the path

of least resistance and the lifestyle they know is better than one they don't know.

Prison rape is a problem that has as much to do with homosexuality as street rape has to do with heterosexuality—nothing at all. Bullies will always try to exploit others through sheer physical strength. Rape is one of their tools. It proves a man's brutality, granting him power over those who can't fight him. The truth of the matter is there are many more victims than rapists. A "consenting homosexual" is in no way related to a turned-out boy-toy raped into submission, forced to provide any service to avoid another vicious shower session.

So why do so many people return to prison? In very few cases, it's because the person's truly an animal, belonging nowhere else. More often, prison becomes home. Many prisoners were mandated by the state to spend their childhoods in foster homes, bouncing from one state-regimented institution to another before winding up in the state pen: reform schools to state hospitals to juvenile justice centers. To them, prison is the only place they belong because it's the only place they know.

**People still snivelling
about ruined lives rather
than grabbing hold and
rebuilding, are doing so
because they like the
victim role.**

They think someone else is to blame. Their life in prison is not their fault. They blame the "system," their mother or father, the prison nurse or even Dear Abby for their problems. They do not know how to accept any responsibility.

Listing factors contributing to crime is not shifting blame. Psychologists and sociologists aren't providing excuses when they

point out cultural, social and environmental factors leading to crime. Criminals aren't shirking responsibility by acknowledging events in their lives that led them to commit a crime. It's part of the self-discovery process. I went to prison because I broke the law. I knew I could be punished, but felt the potential gain outweighed the potential loss. I broke the law because I wanted to.

Now I don't want to. I want normalcy. To get that, I must explore what led me to become a criminal. I'm not blaming society or my family or even Dear Abby. I'm not trying to assign blame. I'm trying to fix the problem.

They think they deserve to be treated as humans while they are doing time. In fact, the way they have robbed, raped, assaulted, sold drugs and torn up respectable communities, proves they are not human and not worthy of being considered part of society. A good alternative to "doing time" playing cards and watching TV would be to work these useless animals to death. Another cost effec-

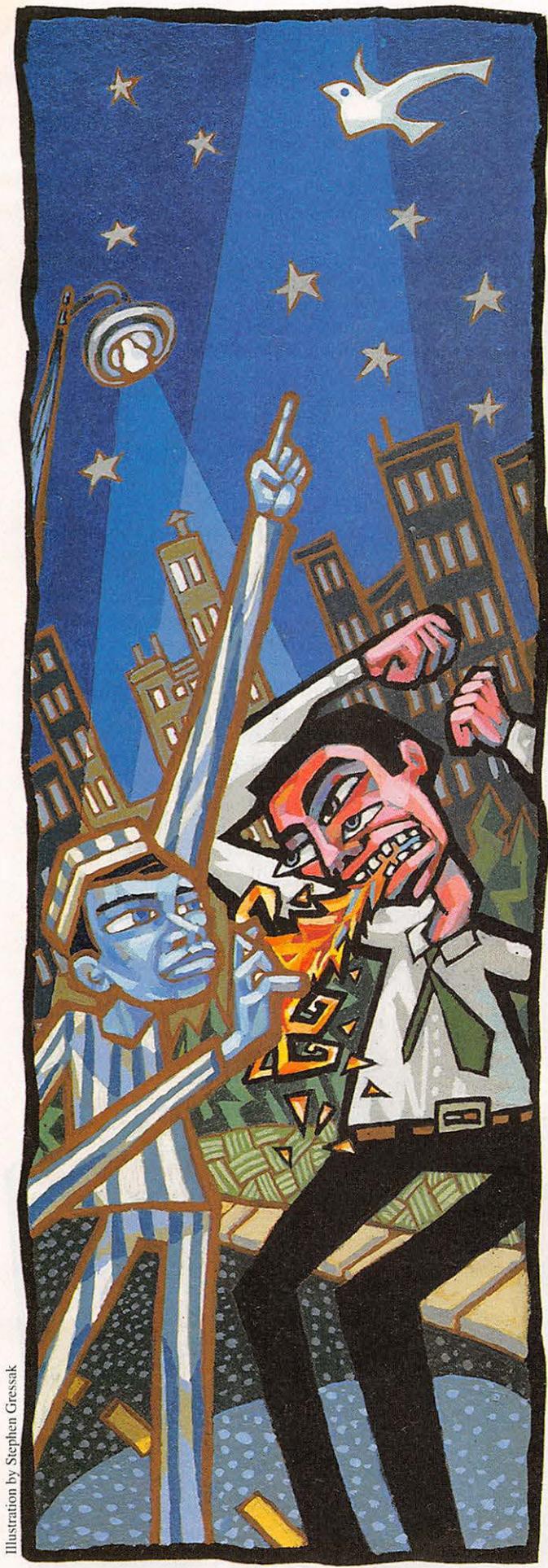


Illustration by Stephen Gressak

live measure would be to shoot habitual offenders and drug dealers right in the courtroom and not waste money in transportation and warehousing.

Increased crime is a symptom, not a cause of our social ills. So, too, is the treatment of criminals. Perhaps we don't deserve human treatment. Perhaps we should appeal to the ASPCA rather than the ACLU when we're mistreated. But we are human. We are the part of society that reflects America's darkest side.

But we refuse to be dehumanized. That is our most human trait. Should slave labor, concentration camps and summary execution become the norm, we'll behave as humans always behave when faced with gross tyranny. Some of us will sell out to our warders, some of us will die refusing to cooperate, but most of us will muddle through, trying to make our lives and our friends' lives better.

As for work—we'll work, but as men, not draft animals. Give us some incentive and we'll line up for it. Why do convicts spend the summer fighting fires for a promised \$1.25 an hour that they sometimes never even receive? A couple of months watching MacGyver and The Equalizer and we'd volunteer for road crews and chain gangs, anything to move the time along and send us to bed tired. Treat us like humans, allow us some hope, let us be productive. Then the money spent in keeping us won't be wasted.

They think that once their time is done they are forgiven. No matter what kind of time they serve it is not enough to make them pay for the scars they have left on their victims and our communities. They may walk away after a few years of easy time, but the victims have to live with the shit that these punks have spread on their lives. No time can erase the feelings of fear, hatred and general mistrust generated by the criminal sub-culture.

You know, I don't really give a damn if I'm forgiven. That's not my problem. People still parading victimization after a year or so, people still snivelling about ruined lives rather than grabbing hold and rebuilding, are doing so because they like the victim role.

It's true, no amount of time I do can heal my victims' wounds. That's because doing time is not constructive—not for my victims, for me or for society. My five-year sentence served no real purpose. I received some counseling; I doubt if my victims received any.

While I was down, I should have been involved in counseling with my victims. Counseling I paid for. Counseling aimed at teaching me the damage I did. Counseling aimed at teaching my victims to let go of their rage, to learn to forgive—not for my sake, but for their own.

The freeworlde's final words: *Johnson, I would bet that this isn't your first prison experience, and I bet that once you get out you're planning to re-offend. I can only hope that you do it in my neighborhood so I can kill you. Until then, I can only continue to arm myself and dream about serving true justice.*

This was my first, and I hope, only prison experience. I'm not planning to reoffend but I can't promise I won't. After all, the fact that I did it once proves that I'm capable of doing it again. Nevertheless, I try to recognize and correct my real thinking errors. But there are so many, the cycle is so ingrained, I may not make it.

One of my counseling handbooks points out that success in recovery is not based on how well I do in life or by how good I feel about myself. Success is measured by having no more victims. Being successful is how I dream about serving true justice.

Mail Call

BONKERS FOR BUNKER

Thank you, Richard Stratton, for introducing us to Edward Bunker in your September/October '95 issue. Edward Bunker is a great writer period. The words "convict writer" are too limiting. Like all great writers, he draws his talent from the depths of his soul and experiences. He is willing to share all that with his readers, while opening up his heart and soul. Bravo! To a great writer and a great man!

Richard Stratton needs to be congratulated for writing a superb biographical essay on Bunker. It is obvious from Stratton's writing style that he, too, is an excellent writer, reporter and editor. *Prison Life* and its readers are fortunate to have him.

Where can we order all of Edward Bunker's books?

Samuel J. Smolen, Jr.
Dannemora, N.Y.

Unfortunately, *Edward Bunker's* books are out of print in the United States. You can, however, order some titles, such as *No Beast So Fierce*, from the *Prison Life* bookstore—*Books on the Block*. See the ad on page 78 for ordering information. *Bunker's San Quentin* novel, *Animal Factory*, is excerpted in this issue of *Prison Life*.

—Editors

COMPTON: YOU'RE COOL

I have just finished reading Virginia Compton's article, "No Place for a Woman," in the September/October issue. The article was com-

PELLING and insightful, a first-rate piece of journalism that courageously addressed the distinct crisis that incarcerated women face every day. I am grateful that you recanted your decision to decline being an "inside" correspondent for *Prison Life* and instead, opted to once again display the proverbial "open for business" sign.

Your unique perspective, intelligent and frank writing is very much appreciated and installs a whole new dimension of respectability to *Prison Life* magazine.

Joseph R. Pulliam
Represa, CA

PRaise FOR BACA

Just finished reading Chris Cozzone's story on Jimmy Santiago Baca in the July-August issue. It's nice to read a success story about a convict! Mainstream media rarely print anything about a con returning to society and doing the right things. As for Baca, and many other convicts out in the real world or about to return, they must be strong enough within the soul to let prison go. Wake up from the nightmare and the next step will be peaceful dreams instead of haunted screams.

Baca said when he was released from the pits of hell that he wanted to return. Either he's a sadist or prison almost got the best of him—as it does to too many. Instead, Baca turned the table of torment into a picnic of positive achievement. Bravo for Baca! He's a perfect role model for convicts who are trying to get something out of their lives.

There are many talented writers, artists and critics within prison walls. Speaking from firsthand experience, with 11 years down, a few of them in solitary, I know that solitude can broaden a prisoner's perspective and increase the senses. Or it can turn a human into a savage.

Yes, Baca has bitten with his fangs into the sweet pie of life instead of the poison of prison. More power to him.

Un Vato Loco,

Georgie Fields
Menard Correctional Institution, IL

GET THE WORD OUT

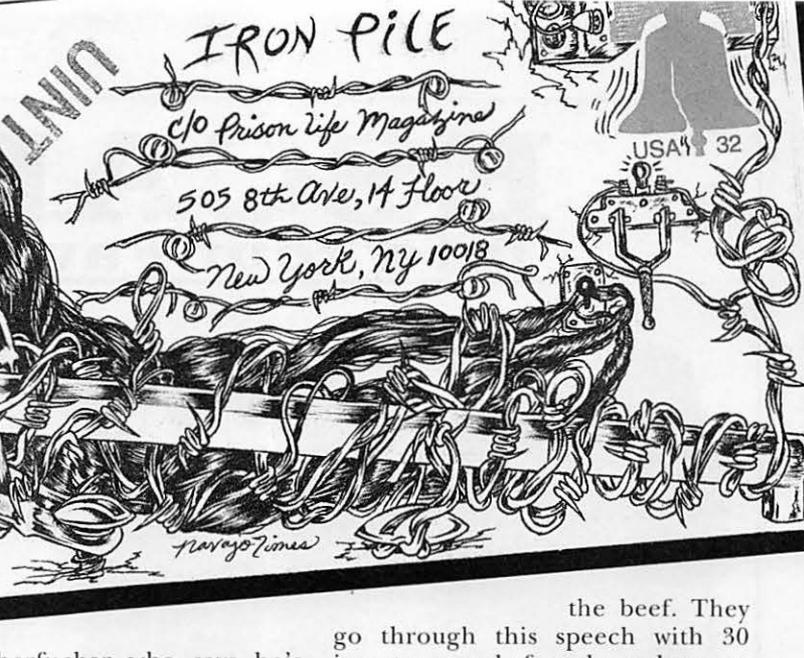
I'm writing in response to the article in the July-August issue by Jon Marc Taylor regarding the *Reader's Digest* article portraying our nation's prisons as resorts. I'm hip to the article's deliberate attempt to "smoke screen" society and was genuinely appalled at the *Reader's Digest* author's ignorance so brazenly displayed by his inability to speak the truth.

The three accounts of real truth behind prison conditions were relayed as poignantly and accurately as any I've ever read. I applaud those fellow cons for their gallantry.

But this needs further exploitation. How many who need to hear these true-life accounts actually subscribe to *Prison Life*? These articles need to make the big time periodicals—the newspapers around the country via the Associated Press and magazines read by the general public: *Reader's Digest*, *Life*, *Time*, *McCall's*, *Good Housekeeping*, etc. What a shame for the talents of these men to go unnoticed. *Prison Life* is a wonderful magazine, but we can't just let it



Inmate Name *Landolph Dan Begay*
Inmate Number # *22593*
Housing Unit *2-2-03-03*
Utah State Prison
P. O. Box 250
Draper, Utah 84020



stop there. We need to educate the public about the show job the media is sending.

Whatever happens, let's get this article out to the world. We cons already know the truth. It's our job to see that everyone else does too.

Thanks for making a difference.
Bryon Mildenhall
Central Utah C.F., UT

RATHER BE HOMELESS THAN HERE

I'm locked down here at SCI-Green, a max security prison in PA, and I think your mag is the real deal. I'm glad you talked about the people who think we have it so good in prison. I don't see where I have it so good. I'm from Philly so I can't see most of my family because they're too far away. I'm in the Hole so only immediate family can come see me—behind a glass. My mom and grandmom passed away this year so that's the end of my visits.

Oh yeah, they were giving out lunch a couple days ago and about five or six of us had spit on our trays. Somebody took time out to spit on our trays. Yeah, we got it real good.

I'd rather be homeless with nothing than here.

Jermaine Thompson
SCI-Green, PA

CONVICT CODE: KEY-RYEST!

Just finished reading your July-August issue, and it's time for me to speak out, which I usually do for all the hardcore mofo's in this hell-hole. As we all share the PL mag here at the Special Management Unit (SMU), we read a story in your last issue of some wanna-tell-everyone-he's-a-hardcore

motherfucker who says he's earned his patch, blah blah blah, and that everyone else is a chump ("Revising the Convict Code," by Jorge Renaud). He tells it all the way from protective segregation. (Guess he didn't brag about that.) Revisions in the Convict Code from broke-down motherfuckers who can't hang no more?

On another note—listen up folks and listen good, 'cause there are hundreds of Greg Waleski's ("Honor is Everything," same issue) comin' in and going out. I may not know him personally, but I know the attitude and it sounds damn straight to me!

What? If the system changes, we're supposed to change and cooperate? Oh, gee, I don't like the attitude of the new guys so I'll take my sorry broken down ass to lockup forever and give speeches on how life just isn't the same anymore? *Key-Ryest!* Can we get some motherfuckers to just stud up and ride the storm?

I've been to death row, did that gig. Now I'm doin' the life thing. Sure hated to leave my bro Mike behind (nothing eats at my soul more). I've been on the yard, didn't have to act like a fool, just stood my ground. They enjoy locking up fun folks like me—standing up for your rights is my job and it's one I do well. I pay the price with their bogus investigative lockups, too. They'll actually write you up when you appeal the lockup status and then tell you, "we encourage you to cooperate." I shit you not. I tell 'em, "Why don't they suck a little cooperation out of the head of my dick?" (Female administrators preferred.)

HA! That's the scoop right now. Many of us white boys are locked up for homicide. First they drop the innuendos and make false allegations, then they tell you how you're gonna ride

the beef. They go through this speech with 30 inmates or so before they ask you to cooperate. The words "blow me" come to mind awful fast then.

I'll stand up and fight for the man next to me as much as I do myself. I may be doing life, but my case is back before the Court by my hard work and determination. Do I shake and quiver because they want to drop bogus homicide allegations on me? Even though that would extinguish the light at the end of the tunnel? Nope. Because it's not merely a code, it's about honor and dignity, it's about telling these sorry-ass wannabe cop motherfuckers to go back home and try their luck intimidating their fag lovers and dusty-ass kids. Because, in a nutshell, homey don't play all that and never will.

No, can't say I support your campaign to modify the code. The next thing you know, you'll be hanging out at the White House wanting to change the Constitution with the girls on Capitol Hill.

Try not to take it personal, troops. I've been in this hell hole for ten years and I don't care if it's another 50. I've seen the change in the attitude, too. But I'll be damned if it'll change me, and you should be damned if you let another change you or take from you what you fought to make right.

Larry Prince
Arizona State Prison

MOM PRAISES PLM

I'm the mother of a just-turned-18-year-old male. When my son was 15, he was arrested for a felony. Things were looking very dim. I lived in terror that he would one day end up in prison. God, being the mysterious entity that He is, worked a bit of magic in my life. The Great One arranged

(continued on page 60)

ESCAPE...

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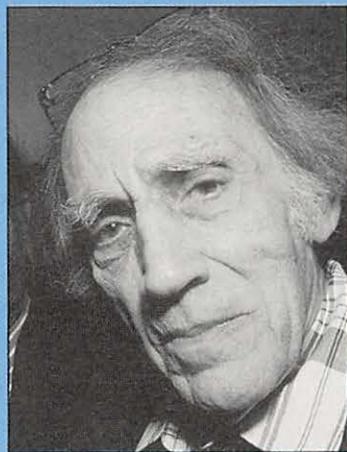
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In Memorium



William Kunstler
1919 - 1995

*A friend, a counselor
and an inspiration.*

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HBO/Prison Life Drug Documentary in the Can

Prisoners of the War on Drugs, the first in a series of documentary films produced by HBO and *Prison Life*, is in the can and set to be aired in January 1996. The powerful, gritty film, shot entirely in maximum and medium security pens, examines the impact of the drug war on America's burgeoning prison population.

Director Marc Levin, a New York-based documentary and feature filmmaker, won an ACE Award for Documentary Special in 1993 and was recently nominated for an Emmy for Best Special Documentary for his last HBO film, *Gang War: Bangin' in Little Rock*, about street gangs in Clinton's backyard. Levin worked closely with the editors of *Prison Life* to give the film the same savvy authenticity as the magazine. HBO's Executive Producer for the America Undercover series, Sheila Nevins, plans to continue the series and Levin is already at work developing a second special.

Prisoners of the War on Drugs is a fast-paced, hour-long look at how the drug war has overpopulated U.S. prisons with dope dealers and addicts whose lifestyles continue unabated behind bars. Wardens, cops and prisoners in the documentary readily agree that the drug war is a costly, destructive mistake.

"The first visit I made was to a women's prison," Marc Levin said in a recent interview at his Manhattan studio. "We went to a federal prison in Dublin, California where I met Amy Pofill, a pretty blond cover-girl from Dallas who's doing 27 years for MDA conspiracy. I couldn't believe that people like Amy were being locked up for what is essentially the rest of their lives, and I was moved by her spirit and her determination to keep up the fight. Amy suggested I put together a photo montage of the faces of prisoners of the war on drugs; let the rest of Amer-

ica see who these people really are."

The biggest logistical problem Levin and his crew faced in making the film was gaining access to the inner sanctums of prison life. "In most places they wouldn't let us film anywhere but in the visiting room."

But Levin—and HBO—wanted the film to have the same insider quality as the magazine. He continued visiting drug prisoners in different pens looking for the right combination of story and access.

in her life and is now doing 24 years in a federal penitentiary, again on a marijuana growing charge."

Eventually, Levin was able to find a few wardens who were not only willing to let him inside their prisons with his crew but who also agreed to go on camera and talk about how the drug war has affected their jobs. "I was surprised by prison officials—officers, wardens, administrators, the front line troops in our war against crime—who constantly challenged the

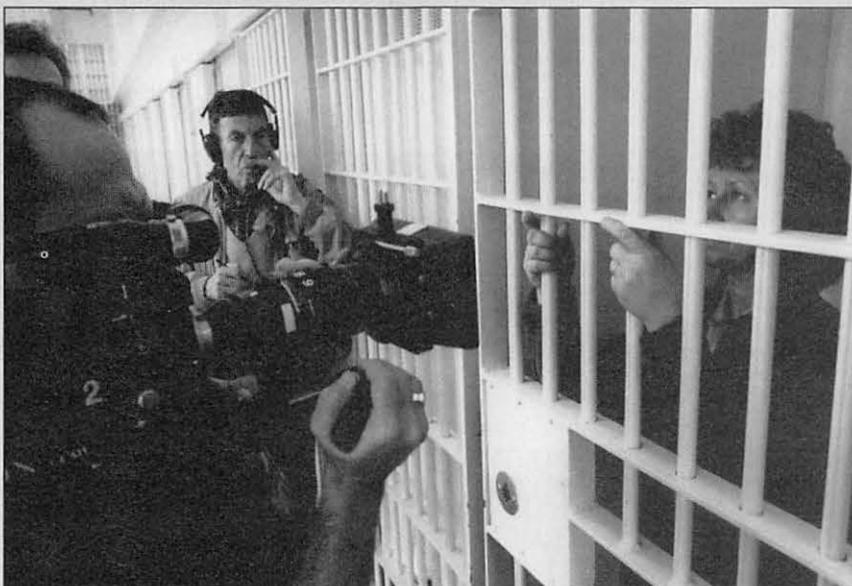
prevalent and popular mood of 'lock 'em up and throw away the key.'"

Levin said he learned a lot while making the documentary and he hopes the film will cause other Americans to question the government's tactics in the drug war. "I never realized how the drug trade defines the convict economy and shapes the hierarchy behind bars just as it does on the street. What is happening in our prisons is the ultimate metaphor for the madness of our

current approach. You can build a wall around them, put them in cages, hire guards to monitor them night and day and you still can't stop them from doing drugs.

"What scares me most is where this all leads. The social welfare state is dead and we're replacing it with the jailhouse state. The criminal industrial complex is replacing the military industrial complex. Drugs have brought the war home, and the way we are fighting it now is laying the foundation for Gulag America."

Prison Life will publish a companion edition to the HBO documentary, the January 1996 issue, due out in early December. The editors are already at work compiling more stories from inside America's toughest joints for future TV specials.



Al Levin and cameraman Mark Benjamin filming prisoner Pat Young at the federal prison in Danbury, CT. Photo by Tony Hardmon.

"Traveling to prisons around the country, I met a lot of people I really liked and admired," Levin said when asked what it was that impressed him most about the convicts he came into contact with. "What frightened me was not the prisoners but the fact that so many of them were like acquaintances and friends of mine. I would return to the hotel thinking how with a simple twist of fate it could have been me locked behind those bars for years and years. I met fathers and sons like Donnie and Duane Clark who are doing time together—the father is doing life for growing pot. I met a man named Raymond Pope who is also doing life without parole in Oklahoma for a few pounds of marijuana. And I met Pat Young, a mother and a grandmother who was never in trouble

PRISONER ACQUITTED OF MURDER CHARGES

Corpus Christi, TX—Marcos Cruz-Estrada, a Mexican National serving a 15-month sentence for illegal reentry after deportation, was found not guilty in federal court here on charges of premeditated murder in the stabbing death of a fellow prisoner. The fatal shanking took place in a cell at the medium security federal prison in Three Rivers, Texas. Cruz-Estrada had 26 days left before release at the time of the murder. Cruz-Estrada took the stand and admitted killing the other convict, Cedric Ross, but maintained he did it in self-defense. The jury agreed, finding Cruz-Estrada not guilty on the murder charge but guilty of possessing a shank. He got an additional four months.

Federal Public Defender Jose Gonzalez-Falla, who represented Cruz-Estrada, called two expert witnesses to testify for the defense. Rod Englert of Forensic Consultants, Inc., a crime scene reconstruction expert, testified that blood splatters in Ross's cell where the killing took place were consistent with Cruz-Estrada's assertion that he was attacked by a shank-wielding Ross when he entered the cell. Richard Stratton, the editor and publisher of *Prison Life* magazine, appeared as an expert on prison culture and told the jury that the role of honor in the convict code calls for personal bravery and a refusal to go to the guards for help when threatened.

Cruz-Estrada was a classic "short-timer" due to be released and the brunt of teasing by jealous cons. Cedric Ross, a petty criminal with a long arrest record, was serving 292 months with no parole for possession of a weapon

by a felon under the armed career criminal act. According to testimony, Ross began baiting Cruz-Estrada mercilessly as the day of his release came closer. During a game of pool, Ross called Cruz-Estrada a "bitch." Cruz-Estrada smacked Ross, and the two convicts went to the TV room to duke it out with Cruz-Estrada getting the upper hand. Ross later called down to the flats where Cruz-Estrada bunked. He displayed a shank and told Cruz-Estrada to "get something" and meet him in Ross's cell. Cruz-Estrada testified that "get something" meant arm himself. He got a shank, went to Ross's cell, and entered.

Cruz-Estrada said Ross attacked him as soon as he walked in the cell. He fought Ross off with one hand and stabbed him a number of times with a shank he held in the other hand. Both convicts were cut. When Cruz-Estrada left the cell, Ross lay bleeding to death.

Richard Stratton testified that, in adherence with the rigid unwritten convict code, Cruz-Estrada reacted in the only way he could to maintain his honor. Cruz-Estrada was described as a quiet but tough man who showed respect and expected the same from his fellow convicts. He and Ross had been friendly prior to events leading up to the fight. But as the baiting and insults got worse, Cruz-Estrada was faced with either backing down and being known as a punk, going to the cops and being known as a snitch, or defending his honor. There is, said Stratton, even in the case of a short-timer like Cruz-Estrada, no middle ground. "He did what he had to do."

STOP THE PRESSES?!

Lansing, MI—Michigan prison officials have revised their opinion of prison newspapers. And they've decided that they are no place for opinions.

Editorials and letters of opinion would be banned from the in-house publications under proposed guidelines issued recently by the Michigan Department of Corrections.

No more criticism of the Legislature, the warden or the food. The department seeks to stick to objective "news and information for the prisoner publication."

Department spokesman Warren Williams said the proposed change is part of an evolution in philosophy about prison management that has been under way for several years. He added that many top department officials think the newspapers should be banned outright. Newspapers and newsletters are published off and on at about half of the state's 30 prisons.

"A lot of the long-standing prac-

tices here have been reviewed and seem to be out of step with current thinking on crime and punishment," Williams said. "We decided if we were going to be publishing newspapers, we wanted them to be more like newsletters. Some of the editorial commentary that has appeared has been contrary to the mission and goals of the department," he said.

Not surprisingly, prisoner journalists have a different view.

"From this side of the fence, it appears that the mission, goals and objectives of the Michigan Department of Corrections are to keep everyone currently imprisoned locked up forever. One could not make that statement in our prisoner newspaper if this policy goes into effect," said Andrew L. Jeffries, editor of Muskegon Facility's prisoner publication, *The Factor*. "Letters of opinion, generally printed as letters to the editor by prisoners or free-world citizens, would be prohibited. Most insulting, the Prisoner Benefit Fund of this facility, which pays for the production of the newspaper, would foot the bill for the use of

prisoner newspaper space for Departmental notices," Jeffries added. "The silencing of the penal presses of this country only further allow our keepers to commit the inexcusable atrocities not seen since the days of the Third Reich. An overly strong analogy? I think not!"

"Bad Bob" Delgado Out on Parole

Former gang member Robert "Malo" Delgado, featured in in PL's gang issue, has been released on parole. Delgado is currently working as a paralegal at a major Houston law firm.

Although Delgado had quit the Texas Syndicate several years ago, the Texas department of correction has refused him parole for the last two years, claiming he was still the "number two" man for the Syndicate.

Not long after the May-June '95 issue of *Prison Life* hit the stands, the parole board reopened Delgado's file. His parole was approved and he was released August 23.

THE CANADIAN SCENE



Female Prisoners Abused

On the night of April 26, 1994, six female prisoners were asleep in the ad seg unit in Kingston, Ontario's Prison for Women. They had been placed in ad seg because they were suspected of drinking several days earlier. Around 10:30 p.m., the Emergency Response Team, consisting of ten men and two women in full riot gear, entered their locked cells, dragged them out of bed, cut off their clothes, forced them to kneel while being chained and shackled, then paraded them naked to the showers.

On May 6, 1994, five of these women were moved to Kingston Penitentiary to await trial on the drinking charges. Kingston Penitentiary is an all-male institution reserved for violent sexual offenders. The women, most of whom had been sexually assaulted earlier in their lives, were within view and earshot of the male population. According to Kim Pate of the Elizabeth Fry Society, a female prisoner advocacy group, this greatly intensified their discomfort. Several months later, they were still in segregation, despite the Correction Services' rule that 30 to 45 days is the maximum time for holding a prisoner in solitary.

Complaints about the ERT's raid on the sleeping women and the fact that they were still being held in ad seg produced no action from a review committee. But the mood changed when Chip O'Connor and Dan Scully, Kingston area lawyers representing the women, fought for and finally obtained the two-hour videotape made by the ERT of their April 26 activities. Immediately after the tape was shown in court, the women were moved back to ad seg in the women's prison.

Next, a CBC radio show, *As It Happens*, featured an interview with one of the recently released prisoners who detailed the indignities the women had suffered. This was followed by a

January 3, 1995 *Toronto Star* editorial asking why the women were still in solitary. The story was beginning to leak, but the public had still not seen the video, so it was the prisoners' word against the officials'.

Monday, February 20 was not a good day for the Correctional Services of Canada. The Office of Correctional Investigations' long-awaited incident report was tabled in Parliament that morning, which effectively made the information public. The contents of the report forced Solicitor-General Herb Gray to create a Commission of Inquiry to independently investigate the events.

That evening, the shit hit the fan when CBC Television's *The Fifth Estate* aired segments of the ERT video. Raw footage of life in the Canadian prison system never before seen was aired to the entire country. The public went ballistic.

On August 9, 1995, Phase 1 of the inquiry took place. It didn't help that the officials at the time of the raid no longer held the same positions. The deputy commissioner of corrections had been promoted to senior deputy of commissions and the warden had retired.

The investigation is still in its early stages, but some surprising revelations have come to light: Kingston's Prison for Women, the only all-women's prison in Canada, houses minimum to maximum offenders. The prisoners are all categorized as "high needs" yet the staff are alarmingly inexperienced. There is also the mystery of the missing segregation logs for the three months preceding the raid plus the lost observation records of the segregation unit's officers, a fact which is just now being announced, some 16 months after the event.

The inquiry resumes as this issue goes to press. Updates will follow in *Block Beat*. —*Oriana Conti*

CON-TV BACK ON THE AIR

He-e-e-re's Rosie!

Contact, a controversial, hugely-popular cable TV program run by convicts in Kingston, Ontario, returns to the air on Monday nights with a new host—former drug kingpin Robert (Rosie) Rowbotham. Rowbotham, 44, is also Canadian managing director of *Prison Life* magazine.

The show, which drew attention for its hard-edge look at prisoners' issues from inside, was yanked last June when host Ric Atkinson and producer Brian Judge ran into difficulties with a fund-raising campaign geared at satellite distribution. The show's producers are currently preparing a pitch to the Rogers cable giant in hopes it will eventually lead to a national broadcast out of Toronto. Until then, Kingston will remain as headquarters.

Rowbotham, 44, who is serving a 17-year sentence at the Pittsburgh farm facility in Kingston for master-minding a multi-million-dollar marijuana importing caper, will replace Atkinson as host on the hit show. Once known as the "chairman of the board" for running the \$54 million hashish and marijuana importing conspiracy, Rowbotham is famous for receiving the longest sentence ever meted out in Canada over so-called "soft" drugs.

Insider Outlook

TOO MUCH VIOLENCE IN THE TEXAS SYSTEM

On August 5, 1994, my 23-year-old son, Randy Payne, while serving time at the Terrell Unit in Texas, was severely beaten by 30 inmates because he would not meet their demands for protection or have sex with them. Randy died seven days later.

My son was the only white boy on that pod. The beating that killed him lasted for two hours. In addition to the 30 men who beat my son, there were another 50 who watched. I cannot believe the guards would not see or hear that many inmates—81—in one place. I want to know why the guards did nothing to stop the brutal beating.

Internal Affairs has told me several stories about the guards. When I do not believe a story, they change it. They've changed their story three times now in the six months I have been fighting them to get the incident report.

Today, I got the report in the mail. It read: "3 Hispanics jumped 1 White." End of Story.

There have been three other inmates killed at the Terrell Unit and there are probably more deaths than that unreported. All four deaths have occurred on the same shift. One of the inmates was killed by the guards; the others, by inmates. They all tell of being beaten by the guards or by other inmates while guards are watching. I know that these men are in prison for a reason but when

they all say the same thing you would believe that at least part of it is true.

There is too much violence in our justice department. I'm going to do everything I can to put a stop to it. I have written to several government and state officials. The only person willing to help is state senator Teel Bivens. Our wonderful governor Bush said he can do nothing to help us. I received a call from a mother in Fort Worth whose son is also in a Texas prison. He has been beaten by the guards and also by the inmates. She's worried that he'll be killed.

I'm hoping that enough attention will pressure the TCJD to change the way they operate.

Vina Payne
Texas

ADDING INSULT TO INJURY

I'm a prisoner in Michigan serving 1 to 7 years for drunk driving. I'm a second-offense, nonviolent offender.

A few months back I got a visit from my sister. She told me that our youngest brother had committed suicide the night before. After the heartbreaking news, I went to the prison officials to find out what had to be done in order for me to attend the funeral. After three days of being lied to, they finally explained all the different procedures that needed to be followed. In the end, I was told I could go and that I was to be in the control center the following morning, dressed in state-issued clothing.

That morning, once they put me in belly chains and leg shackles, I was on my way to share and grieve the loss of my brother with my family.

We arrived early. The C.O.'s, informing me that we had some time to kill, took me on a short tour of my home town. We stopped at a little party store and they bought me a cup of coffee, which I thought was decent of them.

Then we arrived at the funeral home. I noticed there wasn't anyone else there. I figured we were still early and that my family would soon be arriving. Once inside, I asked the funeral home director what time my family would be getting there. Both the escorting officers and the director told me that my family was not going to be there. In fact, my family had been told that if anyone was seen in the parking lot upon our arrival, I was to be immediately returned to the prison. I could pay respects to my brother, but not with my family and not during the service.

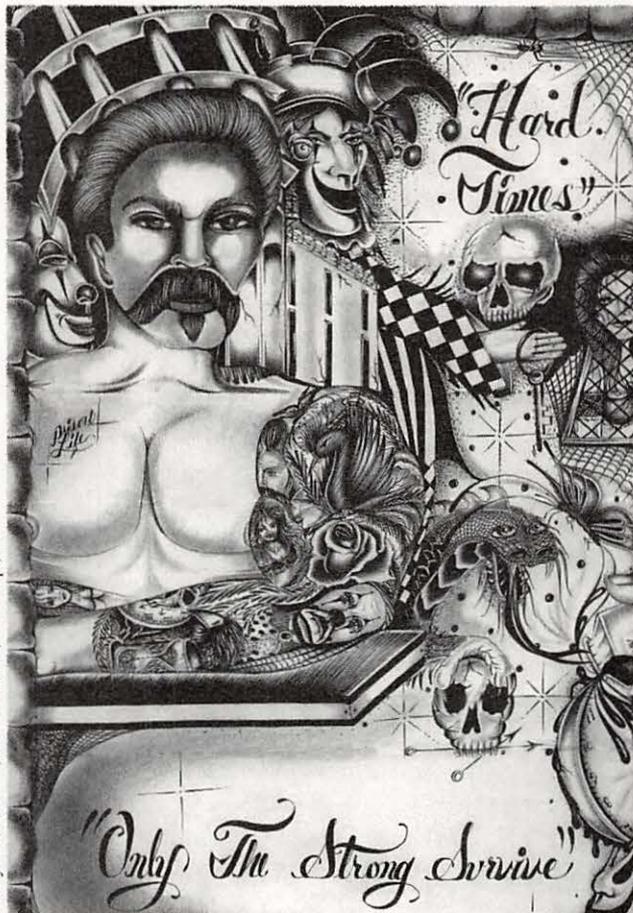
"Why?" I asked. "Who ordered this?"

"Warden's orders," I was told. "We don't know why."

I was crying and I had snot running down my face. I begged them to allow me to see my family but was told flat-out, "No." Due to the belly chains, I couldn't even wipe my eyes or blow my nose. I was forced to stand there and pay my last respects to my brother alone and in complete humiliation.

When we returned to the prison, I was taken into a little room and stripped of my clothes and checked for contraband. When I inquired as to why I had been so inhumanely treated, I was told to go through the grievance procedure if I had any complaints.

After doing just that, I was called out to be interviewed by the warden. At this time, I asked why it was costing me \$350 for less than two-and-a-half hours time and



Art by Alex Shelton, California C.I., Tehachapi, CA.

the 25-mile trip to my hometown from the prison. I was told unconditionally that I was not getting my money back from my trust account. When I asked why I had been kept from seeing my family, the warden said his office was not aware of any such order.

When I and my family asked for receipts along with an itemized statement for the day, we were refused. Is this their idea of punishment?

Not only was I punished, but my family was, as well. It is something my family will never forget. The warden violated all administrative rules and policies concerning funeral furloughs.

I am classified a Level 1 property risk, a Level 1 management risk—the lowest security risk possible. But due to the lack of space in the Michigan system, I had been temporarily housed in a Level 2 prison. Is it my fault that bed space is limited? I should have been treated like the Level 1 prisoner I am and my family should have been able to share their sorrow with me. All the administration accomplished was to cause me and my family further pain and suffering.

Ray Jewell
A.R.F., Kincheloe, MI

ARE WE ON TV?

It was business as usual in the supermarket. I was holding the customers spellbound with the working end of my 12-gauge sawed-off shotgun. My crime partner was cleaning out the cash registers and the safe. A movement caught my eye.

A child, a little girl maybe seven years old, was struggling to break loose from the iron grip her mother had on her arm. She wiggled free and as she came running up to me, I elevated the shotgun barrel to where it was aimed over her head. The kid was excited, jumping up and down.

I don't exactly come across as the epitome of friendliness when I'm working, but the kid's face was glowing. She looked me right in the eyes and grinned. "Are we on TV?"

My response was blunt: "No!"

Her blue eyes widened. "Is this an honest-to-God robbery?"

I like kids as much as anyone. But I don't like *anybody* when I'm working. I spoke harshly. "It's a robbery."

"You ain't gonna shoot me," she told me.

I almost smiled. The kid had heart. I lowered my voice so only she could hear me. "That's right. But if the rest of these nerds find that out, I'll starve to death."

It made perfect sense to her. She whispered back, "I ain't gonna tell 'em, then."

"Good, we'll keep it our little secret, okay?"

My crime partner was giving me worried looks. I motioned for him to proceed with the robbery. I looked at the kid's mother. She was as white as a sheet, ready to pass out.

"Do you do this every day?" the kid continued.

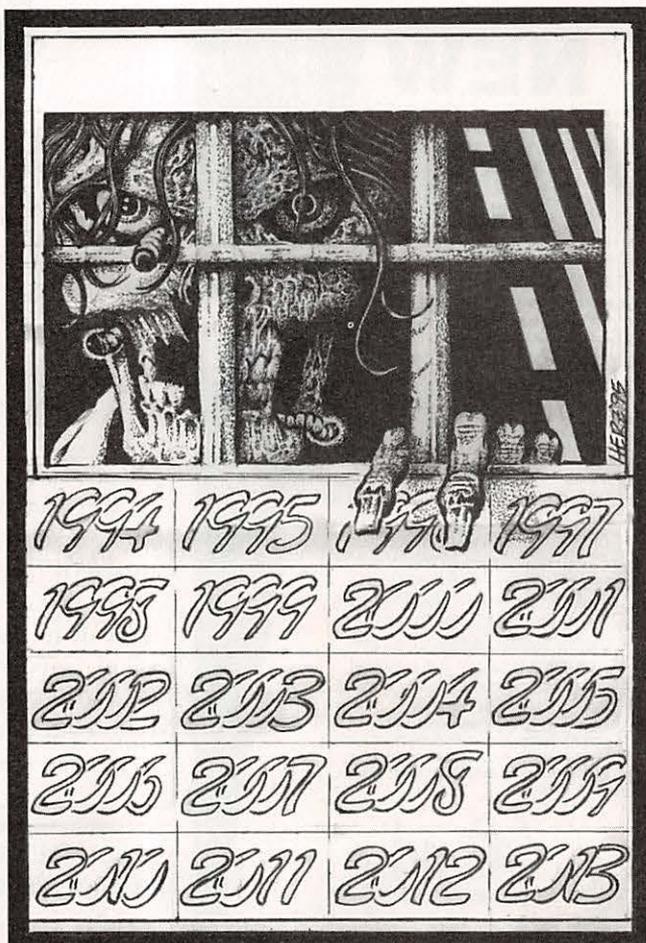
"No," I said. "Only when I'm hungry. Now you better get back to your Mom. She's about ready to faint."

The little girl smiled and went skipping back to her mom. As my crime partner and I left the scene of our crime, the little girl waved good-bye. Hell, I'm human; I waved back.

The next day, upon seeing the front page of the local newspaper, I groaned. Printed was our conversation, word for word, along with a picture of her smiling face.

A guy can only stand so much. I left town.

R. Meengs



Art by Henry Herz, Texas.

FOR COPS ONLY

I'm one of 2,000 wards here at the Youth Training School in Chino, California. Everyone here is 18 to 25 years old so I guess you could call this a junior pen.

The reason I'm writing is that on April 2, about 6 p.m., our water was turned off. Our toilets wouldn't flush. This place has old pipes so it was nothing new. We were told that the water would be back on at seven the next morning. The water came on but the cops said the system was still being worked on. They also said that the water was safe to drink.

But that day, all the units in this joint got two big gallons of bottled water. Here's the thing, though: The bottled water was for cops only.

We asked for a little and they said no. It was for staff only.

So, if the water is O.K., then why were prisoners forced to drink it and not them? Are they saying we are less than human compared to the cops?

It's now April 4, 11 p.m. This is the second day we have to take "cowboy showers" in our sinks because the showers are still out of commission. Some of the people here are saying that the water is bad and complain about stomach problems, including me and my bunkie.

I understand that we put ourselves here because of our own actions. But aren't we, at least, supposed to be treated as humans? The pipes are still torn back and it seems to me that they're not even trying to fix it as fast as they should be. Why couldn't they just say, "Don't fuck with the water," and give us some of their water?

Frank Villarreal
Y.T.S. Chino, CA

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FOR A MORE HUMANE AND PROGRESSIVE CRIME

POLICY: The National Center on Institutions and Alternatives recently started an advocacy project named Citizens for a Safe America (CSA). Its goals for 1995 are to double good conduct credit for nonviolent, first-time offenders in the federal system; to discourage the use of mandatory minimum sentences for first-time nonviolent offenders; to develop an effective program for expunging criminal records; to increase the use of halfway houses, home detention, mandated drug treatment, educational opportunities, parenting training, family visitation, weekend furloughs and voters' rights.

Citizens for a Safe America is trying to organize offenders, ex-offenders, their friends and families into a grassroots network in support of a more humane and progressive crime policy. Members and donors receive a quarterly newsletter, special reports and legislative alerts, making it easy to contact elected officials. "We want to involve this constituency more actively in the process of shaping public policy on crime and punishment," says project director Keith Stroup, Esq. To join, send a membership fee of \$25 to Citizens for a Safe America at 635 Slaters Lane, Suite G-100, Alexandria, VA 22314 (703) 684-0373. For those who can't afford to join, says Stroup, free information is available.

AS A RESULT OF A FELONY OR CERTAIN MISDEMEANOR CONVICTIONS,

you may have lost your right to hold various types of licenses or jobs, such as cashier, real estate salesperson, taxi driver, nurse, pharmacist, notary public, etc. To restore your rights, you need to obtain: a **Certificate of Relief From Disabilities**, for which you are eligible if you have been convicted of only misdemeanors and not more than one felony; and a **Certificate of Good Conduct**, for which you are eligible if you have been convicted of more than one felony.

Certificates are official recognition that you have been rehabilitated. They have the power of removing any legal bar or disability imposed on you as a result of having been convicted of the crimes specified on the certificate. If you have a certificate, not only are most of your lost rights restored, but your criminal record cannot be held against you in applying for work, unless it is specifically job-related. The burden of proof is now on the employer to demonstrate that hiring you would be a risk to people or property, or that your conviction is directly related to the job for which you are applying. Remember that many employers are forbidden by law to hire you unless you have one of these certificates. You can apply for a Certificate of Relief From Disabilities immediately after your conviction. To apply for a Certificate of Good Conduct, you may have to wait one, three or five years. To request an application form for either certificate, write to your state parole board.

—Michele Quick

PRISON ARTIST SECURES SHOWING.

Prisoner artist Anthony Papa secured a showing of his work at the Hudson River Gallery in Ossining, NY. Papa learned to paint in prison and last year had a piece exhibited at the prestigious Whitney Museum in New York City. He is also a contributing writer for *Prison Life*. The show can be seen at the Hudson River Gallery, 217 Main St., beginning November 17.

RAPE DEFENSE HANDBOOK FOR WOMEN. New York prisoner and martial arts expert Sebastian Ventimiglia wrote *The Rape Defense Handbook for Women*, based on information gathered inside prison from rapists. Popular for several years in America, the book will soon be published overseas. *The Rape Defense Handbook* describes types of rape; offenders' motives and patterns; safety tips; when to fight back; keys to self-defense and where to get help. Jack Henry Abott writes in the Introduction: "The book aims at teaching women what every male, in one way or another, takes for granted: street fighting and street violence. Ventimiglia wants women to be sharp, to be ready and able to respond forcefully to violent aggression. The book is a realistic, refreshing and timely approach to the problem." To order, write to Jaz Publications, 32 Garnet Lane, Plainview, New York 11803.

A NEW FORUM FOR PRISONER AUTHORS, *Writing from Prison*, seeks fictional accounts, opinion pieces, short reflective essays and diary excerpts. Future issues of the newsletter will focus on themes of addiction and recovery, women in prison, creativity behind bars and violence in prison. Send material and subscription inquiries to: *Writing From Prison*, P.O. Box 38, Buckingham, PA 18912.

THE PRISON LIFE FOUNDATION is back on track. After several months of reorganization and red tape, the Prison Life Foundation has been accorded status as a not-for-profit organization and is ready to begin its stated purpose of helping prisoners obtain an education while incarcerated. All those who have written to the foundation will receive a newsletter with more information about the programs and projects the foundation is undertaking. Anyone interested in learning more about the Prison Life Foundation should write to: Prison Life Foundation, 200 Varick Street, Suite 901, New York, New York 10014.

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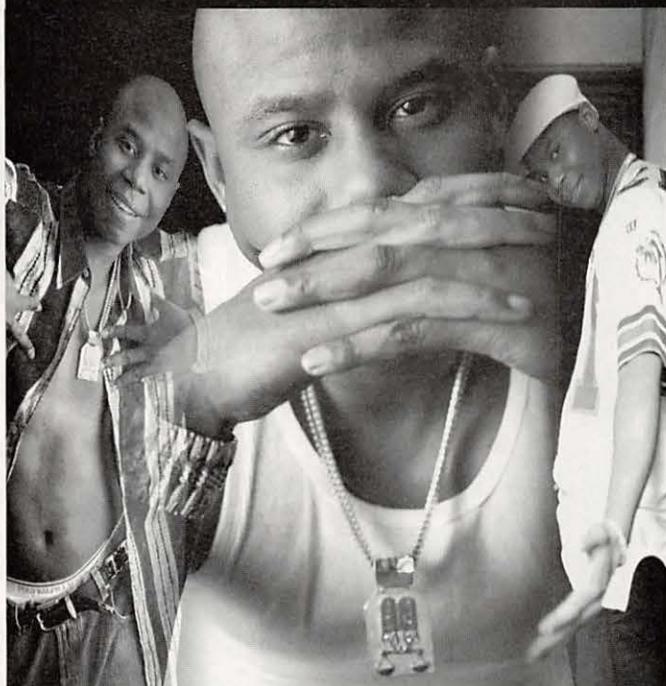
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HOLLYWOOD GOES TO PRISON

THE BLOOD OF A POET

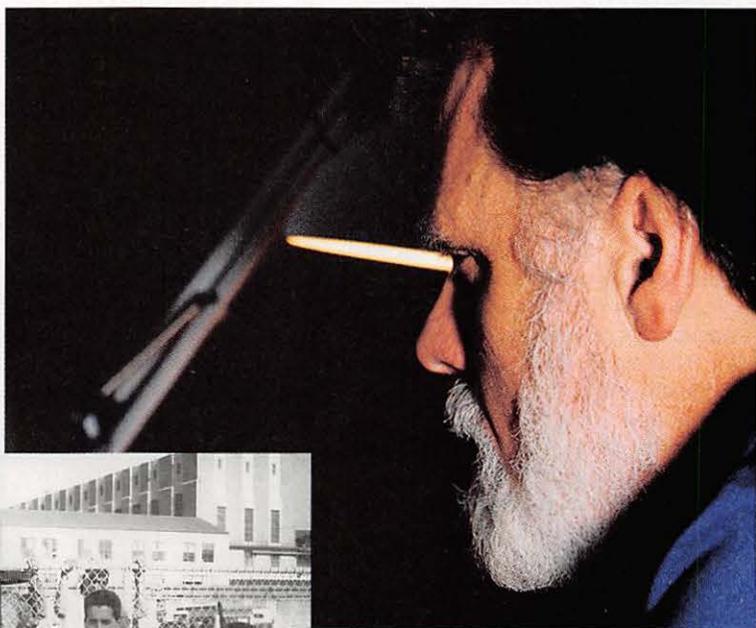
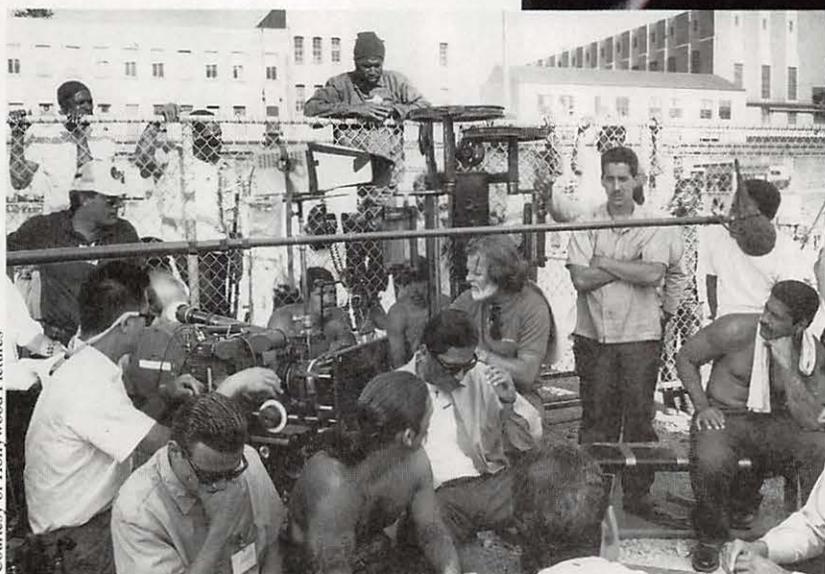


photo by Chris Cozzone



Courtesy of Hollywood Pictures

Taylor Hackford (center) with crew members and prisoners on the weight pile at San Quentin.

A Prison Life Interview with Taylor Hackford by Richard Stratton

In the July-August 1995 issue of *Prison Life* we ran a piece by Chris Cozzone on the penitentiary-educated poet, Jimmy Santiago Baca. One of the finest poets writing today, Baca did it all from prison, and he hasn't forgotten or tried to deny the experience. He turned it into art.

Baca and filmmaker Taylor Hackford teamed up to bring the poet's vision to the screen in an intense saga of life in and out of the joint for three *vatos locos* from East L.A., *Blood In, Blood Out* (Hollywood Pictures 1993.) The film is based on true events that took place in the California prison system beginning in the late '60s—the rise of the powerful prison gang, the Mexican Mafia.

The story follows Miklo Velka, played by Damian Chapa, a blue-eyed half-breed who returns to East L.A. in search of family, both blood relatives and the larger family of man. He reunites with his cousins,

Paco (Benjamin Bratt) and Cruz (Jessie Borrego), and gets caught up in on-going macho clashes that lead inevitably to gang war, prison and death. In a gripping sequence, Cruz, who is a talented painter, has his spine broken by members of a rival gang; Paco goes on a rampage seeking revenge; but it is Miklo who winds up with a murder beef. By the end of act one, Cruz is a cripple, Paco joins the Marines, and Miklo is headed to San Quentin.

From here the story becomes an epic of prison life. Young and pretty when he shuffles onto the yard at Quentin, Miklo is scared to death. He has two alternatives: find protection within one of the cliques that rule the yard, or be preyed upon by roving bands of psychopaths and lone maniacs. Hackford and Baca throw us into the unmitigated world of a maximum security pen that becomes a grotesquery of the masculine.

As a half-caste, Miklo is severely tested. "Blood in, blood out" means that to be accepted as one of *La Onda*, as the Chicano gang is called in the movie, Miklo must first kill an enemy. He learns how to survive and ultimately thrive in prison by cunning, by showing courage and by wielding power and suppressing all emotion except hatred. By the end of the film, the sweet, lonely kid who goes home in search of love and identity has been forged into an alienated, ruthless convict.

When I heard Taylor Hackford was in New York recutting a documentary about Muhammad Ali made by a friend of mine, Leon Gast, I immediately asked for an interview. Hackford was working 12-hour days on the Ali film in an editing room on Lower Broadway. The director's latest film, *Dolores Claiborne*, was about to be released in Europe and Hackford was due to be there for the premiere. I agreed to

meet him at the editing room to keep the interruption as brief as possible.

Throughout the interview, Hackford kept trying to give all the credit for *Blood In, Blood Out* to Baca. But the director's considerable contribution to the artistry of the film is evident in every frame. A couple of weeks after the interview, I watched *Dolores Claiborne* and Hackford's 1982 hit, *An Officer and A Gentleman*, starring Richard Gere and Debra Winger. These are Hollywood movies at their best—character driven, moody and intelligent, but nevertheless predictable. You wait for the plot points. Cinematically, Hackford gives us sweeping, wide-angled transitional shots, then he gets in close and lets his actors be intimate with each other and the audience. He gets real performances. Jennifer Jason Leigh and Kathy Bates are brilliant in *Dolores Claiborne*. *Blood In, Blood Out*, though a very different kind of picture, has a lot of the same visual and emotional effects. It is to Hackford's credit that in making *Blood In, Blood Out* he stayed true to Baca's epic vision and made a difficult, heartfelt film.

Hackford and I ducked out of the editing room for an hour during dinner break. We conducted the interview leaning against the wall in a hallway that could have been a tier on a cellblock. There was the same hurried intensity of a conversation during a controlled move in the joint. I started by asking Hackford about his background and how he came to be a filmmaker.

I grew up working class, got a scholarship to go to college, was into politics in the '60. I was going to be a lawyer of all things. But I went into the Peace Corps first. I started reading about film and thinking about the political context, the power of film. When I got back from the Peace Corps I went to law school for about two weeks and realized that was not a profession I wanted any part of. I walked out, lost my tuition.

I didn't know anybody in the film business, but I went into KCET, a public television station in LA, and asked them for a job. They gave me a job in the mail room, and I just kind of worked my way up. That was my film school. Someone said, "Can you shoot film?" and I said, "Yes." I got a book on filmmaking and read it. I didn't screw it up too badly.

After that I did music shows, political reporting, investigative reporting. I did a law reform documentary. I just kept at it until I found that what I really wanted to do was dramatic work. I made a short film for high schools on sex education called *Teenage Fathers*, which is told from a boy's point of view and is about teenage pregnancy. I wrote it, directed it, produced it. It

was entered in the Academy Awards and it won the Oscar for best short. I was 29 when I made the film and that was my ticket.

I got my first feature, which was *The Idolmaker*, and then I did *An Officer and A Gentleman* and that was very successful. I just went on from there.

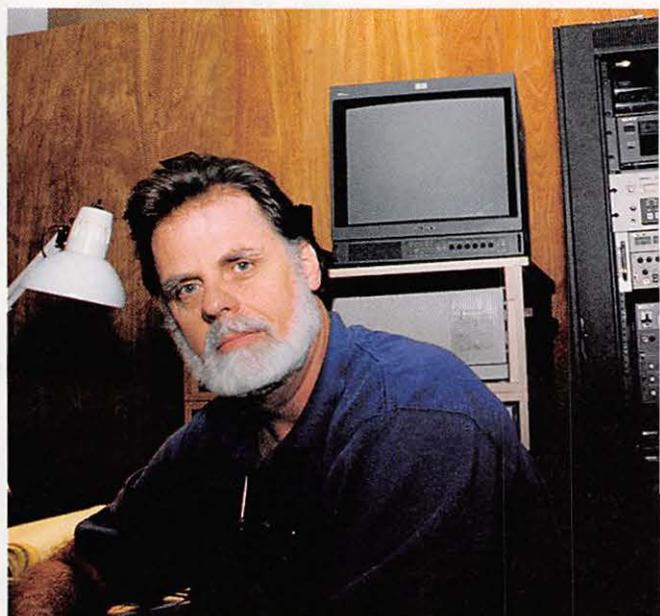
What drew you to the material of *Blood In, Blood Out*?

I've always been interested in Latino issues. I grew up in California, a lot of my friends were Chicano and I love the Latino culture. I went to South America in the Peace Corps; I learned Spanish while living in Bolivia, and later when I was a reporter in Los Angeles I did on-camera news and investigative reporting on the whole Latino scene. The early '70s was my time as a reporter in LA, and there was this immigration explosion going on. Whatever the official figures were about immigration and illegal aliens, you could multiply it three to five times. That was the reality. If you spoke Spanish, you realized that city ran on Latino labor

gauges represented. That's in Hollywood. That's my city.

But this film is about more than Latino culture. It is also about the much more insular and esoteric culture of the penitentiary. What made you want to do a prison movie?

I knew the script, it had been around for a long time. Then I became friends with Jimmy Baca through Luis Valdez, a wonderful playwright who runs *Teatro Campesino*



"I got a job in the mailroom, and I just kind of worked my way up. That was my film school. Someone said, 'Can you shoot a film?' I said, 'Yes.'"

and most of it was illegal.

It was the same situation as in New York in the late 1800s: you have immigrants who are kept out of the mainstream of society, you have young men growing to maturity in that culture, and they're going to lash out, they're going to have a certain anger because they can't get a job. They want a piece of the pie and they're being denied it, so they turn to crime.

Jump ahead 70 years and you've got contemporary California. California is the melting pot. You've got Asians, Koreans, Latinos—it's phenomenal. In one ten-block area there were 147 different nations with 70 different lan-

in San Juan Bautista, California. Luis wrote and directed *La Bamba*, and I produced it. But *La Bamba* is like the Jimmy Cagney movie, *Yankee Doodle Dandy*. It's making it in America; everyone can do it; reach for the brass ring and grab it. People loved *La Bamba* and that's sweet, because they could say we're like a big wonderful melting pot and everyone's the same. Everyone loved me for doing *La Bamba* and for giving Luis a chance.

But there's another side. We aren't the same. I opened myself up for a lot of shit when I did *Blood In, Blood Out*, for portraying the realities of Latino life, the whole dark side of it. You're show-

ing a sensitive side of a culture. And Jimmy Baca was the man who made me open up to that and appreciate it.

Here's a man who literally ran wild in the streets in his teenage years, didn't speak any English, was violent, frustrated and ended up in the joint—he did eight-and-a-half years. When he went in, he was a functional illiterate. He taught himself to read and write in the joint and subsequently he's won the National Book Award. He's a phenomenal poet. This is a man who's inspiring. But at the same time, the thing that is

inevitably, it leads to the joint."

And Jimmy wasn't somebody who researched it, he *lived* it. He lived it and he really knew it. He gave me the courage to make this movie. I said to him, "Look, I'm Anglo and I'm making a film about Chicanos. That's number one. Number two, I'm making it about the dark side of life. And number three, I'm making it about the joint, which is a whole other culture. I need your help."

This film had four different languages. It had English, it had Spanish, it had Chulo, or Spanglish, and it had that entirely different prison language—the adaptive language of the joint.

That was exciting to me. I was amazed that I was able to convince a major studio to finance it. A script existed, one that two or three other writers had worked on. But Jimmy Baca came in and infused it with reality, with a voice that was totally Chicano and fluent in all these four languages. That's what made the piece work.

I wanted to make it real, and it's tough to have to guess, "Well, could this have happened in the joint?"

play-acting the characters, and you might look at them and say, "Oh, this guy looks real, he looks tough." But then you go into a real joint. You look into the eyes of these people; who they are comes out of their bodies, their eyes, and their mouths. These people are so real that you know if you try to fake it you'll wind up with something that lacks integrity.

At the same time, Eddie Olmos was doing *American Me*. It's too bad we had to compete. There were two equally valid points of view here, and we both wanted to go into San Quentin to film. The warden of San Quentin at the time was Chicano. Olmos and I both approached him, but Eddie went to him and said, "I'm Eddie Olmos, the number one Chicano actor in America, and I want you to let us shoot here." The warden said, "Let me read the script." Eddie wouldn't let him see his script. The warden, Danny Vasquez, is a very smart, tough man. Like one of the characters in the film, he was in a street gang and went the other way, joined the police force, went into corrections. I walked in and said to him, "I'm Anglo. I'm here to make a Chicano movie. You're Chicano. I want this to be true to the reality of the joint. I have a writer who did eight-and-a-half years. These are not my words on the page, they're his. What I want to do is tell a real story. Here's the script." He took it, read it, called back and said he wanted us to do the film. The warden, the harshest critic, pronounced the script real, and that was because of Jimmy Baca. Actually, the warden in the film is the real warden, Danny Vasquez.

What was it like trying to shoot a movie in a working prison?

Getting permission from the warden at San Quentin was only the beginning of our problems. Disney was concerned I would have no control over scheduling at San Quentin and would not be able to bring the film in on time and under budget. The studio said no go. When I insisted I wouldn't make the film unless I could shoot it in San Quentin, Disney relented and gave me the green light.

We went forward into this experiment. I took eight or nine actors only. Everyone else in the film is a real con. We shot daily on a live basis for six weeks. Eighteen hours a day. It was crazy.

When you go into a prison, you're going into a different society. It's not America. It's not the society on the street with any of the inalienable rights that we have. It's the warden's



Taylor Hackford (left) in the editing room at work on a documentary about Muhammed Ali.



(Below) Crew members prepare the cellblock for a shot at San Quentin during the filming of *Blood In, Blood Out*.

great about Jimmy is that he said, "I don't want to deny my past. I can circulate in New York with Norman Mailer or Grace Paley or the literati here, or with Chicano doctors or lawyers or people of that ilk." He said, "That's fine, I want people to have education, but the fact is, there's all those *chavalitos* out there, there's all those little guys who are the same people that I was. If you say that they're hopeless, then who am I? The fact is, you've got to talk about that culture, shine the light on that culture and talk about the humanity of it, the frustration of it. And that,

Maybe this is just folderol." But Jimmy was there—and here's a man who was an eyewitness—so I can now as a filmmaker know that I'm not putting any bullshit into this film.

So I got the script and went in to pitch it with real passion for the story. Jeff Katzenberg at Disney said he wanted me to make this movie. Disney is not an easy place to make a film. I told him I wanted to make a realistic film—I didn't want to go into a shut-down prison. I wanted to go into a joint that was real and functioning and had real faces. Actors can come in

prison and they have certain rules or laws you have to live under, and so they break everybody who comes in. They broke me in the first two days. Because I've got a huge amount of pressure from Disney saying, "Okay, we'll let you go in there but you've got to come out in the right amount of time." But the joint worked on certain structures: four times a day every day they count every prisoner in the place. Everything stops during the count. We knew that was going to happen. The problem is that when the count is on, everything stops until every prisoner is accounted for.

We were traveling with between three and four hundred prisoners as extras every day. First day, we're in the yard, we have our extras with us. It comes time for the count. We count our extras and the prison counts the rest of the prisoners. They're missing three prisoners. In our group, there were three extra prisoners. You know, three guys, when they were called in for count, said the hell with that and they joined our ranks. The whole joint shut down. For four-and-a-half hours we sat there unable to work. The first two days it happened twice. The second time they said that if I didn't play by their rules, if I didn't do my counts and make sure it was right, they'd make sure I didn't work.

At first, the prisoners thought this would be a cool thing, because as an extra you got fed twice a day. In San Quentin they only serve real meat twice a year. So we're serving meat twice a day: steak for dinner, chicken for lunch. After the first day, the guys didn't show up. I found out they were sick to their stomachs, in their cells throwing up because the food was so rich.

I took my nine actors in there playing prisoners, and maybe one was playing a guard. For the rest, we had real guards, real prisoners. The head of the Aryan Brotherhood and the second-in-command were actors. The head of the Black Guerrilla Family and his second-in-command were actors. Four or five Chicanos were actors and the rest of the people, the gangs, were all prisoners.

I wanted to get the reality of the joint, and by taking Hollywood actors into a working prison, there was no problem getting authenticity. Instead of having a whole bunch of Hollywood people posing and trying to act like they were in the joint, here these guys were walking in and the prisoners were saying, "So you're supposed to be one of us? You're supposed to be one of the heaviest guys around?"

The pressure on these actors was intense. The people all around them were real cons, real prisoners. Off camera, they had to walk into the yard and the cons were saying, "You're full of shit, punk," or "Hey, man, that wasn't bad." That's the kind of affirmation that a director can give them, but when they got it from those guys, it was a fantastic experience for them.

We've heard from Jimmy Baca about the anguish he went through going back inside. Tell us how Baca handled it.

That was fascinating to me, how Jimmy dealt with being in there. As we got closer and closer to entering, he started to get really nervous. I didn't get it at first, and then I realized that this man was in for eight-and-a-half, he is now going to have to go *back* in for a long period of time. He's truly in the minds of these guys; he's truly going into a house filled with thousands of people he understands; he knows the interior of their brains and it's very painful and very dangerous.

The first day of shooting he freaks out. Comes up to me and says he's got to get out of there, just can't do it. And I said, "Jimmy, I need you man. I've established you on camera, you're one of the characters." And he said, "I don't give a fuck about that, I can't stay here.

"The pressure on the actors was intense. All around them were real cons. Off camera, the cons were saying, 'You're full of shit, punk,' or 'Hey, man, that wasn't bad.'"

If I stay here, it's over." We looked at each other and I said, "I have to have you here because I want to do something real, and you're the only one I truly trust. How do we work this out?"

"When you need me on the set, call me. Find me a place—I don't care what it is, a closet, anywhere—where I can put my typewriter. When you're not using me, I'm going to go in that room and shut myself off and I'm going to write. That's the only way I'm gonna keep my sanity."

So when we were shooting and I needed him, I could find him in his "cell," writing.

But he did it, and we made the film

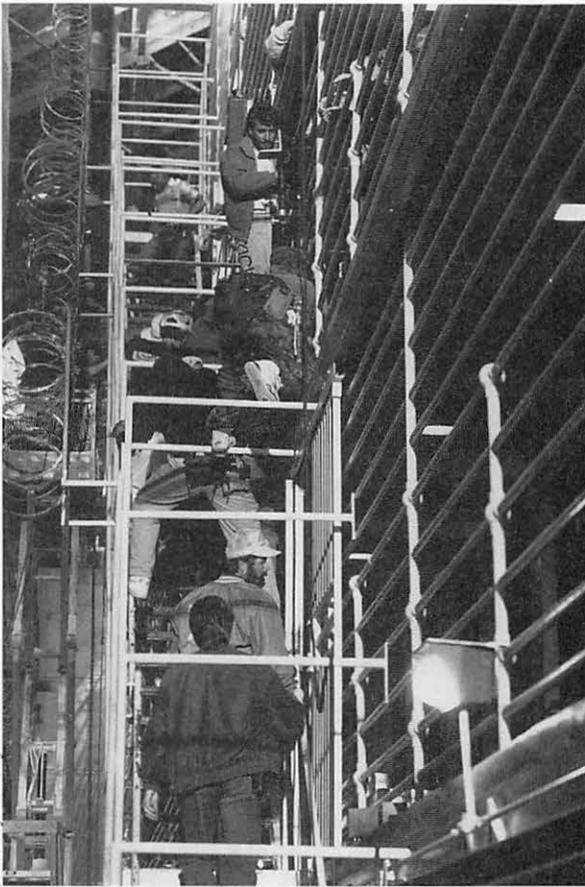
authentic. The people are bona fide. You can see their intelligence. You seldom find people on the outside as articulate as people in the joint, and if an actor is going to focus on their lives, it's a great laboratory, because it's all right there and it's scary. Delroy Lindo, a great black actor who played the head of the BGA, was playing a very smart man. Kiki [Enrique] Castillo played Montana, the legendary founder of the Mexican Mafia, another great man. These are men who came into prison, looked at why they came to prison, looked at their situation, and began to understand the context of minorities in America and what the prison system has done and is doing to their people.

The lead of the movie, Miklo, is a half-breed, somebody who's smart, not an intellectual. But he fiercely wants to belong. He wants desperately to be a part of the brotherhood he finds in prison. So Miklo follows Montana, he kills one of the white guys who is exploiting everyone, and ultimately Miklo is accepted as one of *La Onda*, which becomes his family. When he makes parole and goes out to the streets where he has to deal with the reality of trying to earn a living and get back into society, again he's rejected. By this time his cousin, Paco, has become a cop. And Cruz, Paco's broth-

er, who is a talented artist, is a junkie. Miklo can't stand the frustration and rejection, so he turns to crime. When he meets his cousin Paco during a robbery, he gets his leg shot off and goes back to the joint.

Something has died inside of him. When the guys from the Aryan Brotherhood knock him down and take his artificial leg, make him crawl on the ground for it, there's no way this guy is going to turn the other cheek.

From that moment on, he changes. He takes the point of view of an eye for an eye, believes he must have an iron fist in order to rule over the organization.



Crew members setting up equipment in tiers at San Quentin.

How were you able to sell Disney on the length and structure of a film that goes against everything studio executives strive for in making a movie marketable?

I wanted to make it longer! I had a whole other story about when Miklo comes out to the street 20 years later. A story about what the Mexican Mafia can do and has done. I would love to have completed it.

The film as it exists is terribly ambitious. To do a Hollywood film bilingually, to make a visceral and very tough movie with a lot going on is next to impossible. They did let me make a three-hour movie, but they were really frightened of it. To give Michael Eisner his due, he looked at the movie and said, "I've got a three billion dollar corporation here and I can't afford to put this movie out in theaters and take the chance that young Chicanos are going to come see it and kill each other." I could understand this to a degree. I made this film for those people in LA—that's who Jimmy wanted to communicate with.

Disney did some test screenings. We had a really big response. But in Las Vegas, some rival Chicano gangs got together, and somebody had to throw a punch. The next night, a bunch of people showed up. Disney got nervous

and said if there's even a chance of violence, we're not going to show this movie. Then they kind of wimped out, they changed the title from *Blood In, Blood Out* to *Bound by Honor*. We had a very limited release and that was it.

How did the experience of making a movie in a working prison like San Quentin change your perceptions of crime and punishment in America?

To me the experience was really bizarre. San Quentin is outside of San Francisco, which is the epitome of yuppiedom in the US: extremely expensive, people living the good life. You look out at the bay, at the boats, you see people sipping Cappuccino, and you say, "Jesus Christ, where am I?" There is one world in prison and right outside is another world and that dichotomy

is very much present in America.

One thing people vote for over and over again is new prisons. If they spent a portion of the money they're spending on prisons on education, there would be less need for prisons. Jimmy Baca is an eloquent speaker on the subject of education. I was with him once when he spoke to the California Association of Educators, all these high school principals, and here's a man who didn't graduate from school, didn't go to school, and they jumped up and gave him a standing ovation because he talked about the excitement of learning.

But instead of schools, the politicians say let's build more prisons and just lock 'em up so we're safe. Law and order is important, but ultimately it's not going to cure anything. Ronald Reagan did more to destroy this country than ten presidents. Reagan put through the indeterminate sentence. If you look at the indeterminate sentence in California—which I do in the film—it brought all these people who were low-level drug offenders into an "institution of higher learning" for crime. People caught with marijuana or some little bit of dope are given longer terms than armed robbers. It's nuts. Ronald Reagan sold voters a bill

of goods that we'll all be trying to recover from forever.

Society feels abhorrence toward prisons and prisoners. But look around and you'll appreciate the incredible impact and influence that prison culture has now—in dress, in style, in language, in music. The whole gangsta rap thing had its birth in prison. In terms of the way people dress, the way they groom themselves, shorter hair, the tattoo explosion, all come out of the joint.

What I was interested in doing in *Blood In, Blood Out* was having people on the outside look at what goes on in prison. Some people may think it's too intricate a story, too involved, but the Byzantine nature of the joint demands a certain broad focus. To the outsider, prison life is alien, the language is hard to understand, there's complication there, there's such intensity. Every moment is survival. Every moment is awareness. You don't have that kind of awareness in the street. People walk through New York and think that they're aware, but it's like nursery school compared to the joint. I was hoping the audience would look at the process of incarceration and say, "Hey, the people in there are not animals. Many are there because of bad situations."

For example, there's Paco. In the beginning, he's a real bad ass. He's the guy who's about to kill somebody. Instead, his close friend, Miklo, grabs the gun, shoots the guy to protect Paco, and winds up going before the judge, charged with the killing. There are a number of judges in East LA who give you a choice—go to the military or go to joint. But not if you're facing a murder rap. So Paco goes into the Marines, gets turned around, comes back out and enters the police department. It's an age-old process. One goes to the Marines and becomes a cop, one goes to prison and becomes a gang leader. It is all a matter of circumstance.

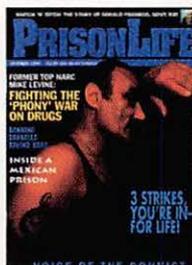
Society is now thoroughly infiltrated with people who have gotten their graduate degree in crime in prison, and you're never going change the cycle until you fill the educational void. Now, when people come back from the joint, they are emulated. When these hardened men come back to the black and Chicano communities from prison, they're powerful entities and role models. But the real question is, what kind of man do you want coming back into society: a poet like Jimmy Baca or a killer like Miklo Velka?





June '94

Herby Sperring: A Legend In His Own Time: Reputed mobster and convicted drug kingpin on doing life without parole at USP Lewisburg; Kim Wozencraft on The Mark of the Convict; Fiction: The Great Escape by Richard Stratton; Bubba's Debut! . . . and more!



October '94

Former DEA Agent Michael Levine Debunks the "Phony" War on Drugs; Snitch 'n' Bitch: Confessions of a Government Rat; 3 Strikes, You're In—For Life!; Prison Fiction: Lee's Time by Susan Rosenberg.



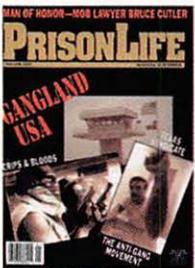
January '95

PLM's First Cover Woman, Karen White—One woman's triumph over 18 years in hell; Ground-breaking journalism exposes the scam on UNICOR: The Economics of Imprisonment; Julie Stewart, founder of FAMM.



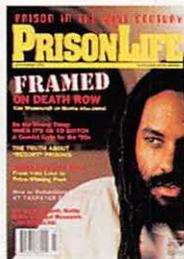
March '95

Art Behind Bars—Winners of PLM's 1st annual Art and Writing contest; Exclusive Interview with Controversial Filmmaker Olliver Stone; First Amendment Rights of Prisoners by William Kunstler & Ron Kuby; From the 'Hoods to the Pen: Gangbangers Speak Out.



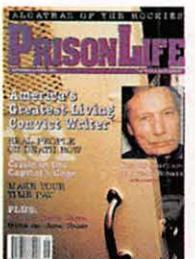
May-June '95

Gangland USA: Part II of PLM's Inside Look at Prison Gangs. Learn the shady history of Texas prison gangs from an O.G.; John Gotti's Lawyer Bruce Cutler Tells Why the Feds Want Him In Jail; Contract On America by Richard Stratton; Liberating Prisoners With Kindness: Jennifer Wynn on Bo Lozoff.



July-August '95

Novelist Kim Wozencraft on the Controversial Case Of Mumia Abu-Jamal—Convicted of killing a cop, this outspoken journalist may have been framed; Revising the Convict Code; Prison Life Reveals the Truth About So-Called "Resort" Prisons; Prize-Winning Ex-Con Poet Jimmy Santiago Baca.



September-October '95

America's Greatest Living Convict Writer Eddie Bunker, by Richard Stratton; Real People on Death Row; The first look into the Alcatraz of the Rockies; Inside the Capital's Cage; plus fiction by Danie Martin.

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A SHORT, BRUTAL LIFE

Canada's correction system has nothing to do with correcting and everything to do with manufacturing the very people society fears. Terry Fitzsimmons, a 12-year career criminal, is a case in point.



BY ORIANA CONTI

In 1984, Terry Fitzsimmons, a confused 18-year-old, began his criminal career as a convenience-store thief. In July, 1993, he ended it by injecting himself with the HIV-infected blood of his fourth murder victim and turning himself in to the police. For 577 days, he waited to die from AIDS. Finally, he got tired of waiting and hanged himself in his cell at Kingston Penitentiary in Ontario, Canada.

In a manner the courts and prison could not, Mr. Fitzsimmons instituted his own brand of capital punishment, at least in part because he understood that Canada's corrections system has nothing to do with correcting the crime problem—that, in fact, it manufactures the very people society fears.

And Terry Fitzsimmons was a star example of what the system can produce. Sadly, the mould that formed him wasn't broken with his death. The lethal combination of repressive high-security facilities and inadequate counseling and rehabilitation mean more convicts like him will mutate in our prisons.

I first spoke with Mr. Fitzsimmons in February 1995 as part of my research for a book about John Hill, a prison-rights lawyer, and about his law clerk, Howard

Massicotte, a former armed robber. Over the weeks leading up to Terry's death, we spent about seven hours together on the telephone. The initial hype and braggadocio about deliberately infecting himself with the HIV virus soon gave way to something more interesting: a dark tour of penitentiary logic.

In our last conversation, five days before his death on March 28, 1995, he said that though there was nothing he could do about his own situation, he would like the world to know just what a creature of the system he had become: "I got nothing to gain by it, like I could sit back in my cell and die, but I want them to know that, hey, I came on this planet one thing and I'm leaving this planet a totally different thing, and how the hell did I go from one extreme to the other. Not that anybody's at fault, but let's see where maybe we could have prevented it."

In contrast to his media billing as a deranged monster, there was an engaging vitality about him. He was a pitiless realist who confronted facts head on. In short, I found him to be a lucid voice from the other side of the law, unresistant to questions, honest in his answers—and only occasionally truly frightening.

Terrence Fitzsimmons was born into an upper-middle class family in London, Ontario, the third of four brothers. His childhood ended at age nine, by which time he had developed a drug problem. His education ended at age 15 when he graduated to the streets of Toronto. He held a series of restaurant jobs, though he never kept a job for longer than six months.

A 1981 conviction for obstructing a peace officer begat a 1982 conviction for carrying a concealed weapon, followed by four robbery charges and a three-year sentence in 1984. In 1986, he killed a fellow inmate. He was sentenced to nine years and served six. He was released in December, 1992, but wasn't on the street for long. At the end of July, he murdered three people over the course of four days.

Between his first conviction at age 18 and his death at age 31, he was out of jail for just eight months.

Was he a natural born killer? Probably not. In describing his initiation to life at the medium-security Joyceville Penitentiary in Kingston, he told me: "When I first came in I was around 5-feet-5. I was 18, 98 pounds, blond hair, green eyes. Just a little cutie at a party which I hadn't been invited to." He was raped during his first week.

Slowly, he learned the ropes: "You get to learn about all the different aspects of crime and all the attitudes of violence that pertain to prison subcultures and life. If you have an altercation, you have to use what you learned—killing someone else, having a fight, taking hostages, attempting escapes from prison. You use the knowledge you've learned. And you lose the humanity of just being a nice person."

One day, he witnessed the fatal stabbing of a close friend by another inmate. Because the Crown wished to call him as a witness, he was transferred for his protection to Kingston Penitentiary, a maximum-security facility.

Shortly after he arrived there at the age of 22, he found himself in the path of rapist-murderer Mark Shannon, who made him a sexual do-or-die offer. "The threats started about 6 p.m. the night before," recalled Fitzsimmons. By morning, he decided he had "no choice." By 10 a.m., Mr. Shannon was dead.

Mr. Fitzsimmons spent a year in solitary, waiting to be tried for manslaughter—for which he got nine years added to his tab. He was then transferred to the Saskatchewan Penitentiary in Prince Albert, an ultra-maximum security prison with one of Canada's two Special Handling Units (SHU).

This was the crucible for the final stage of Mr. Fitzsimmons' development. Howard Massicotte calls SHUs "the Siberia of prisons." As most prisoners know, solitary confinement is designed to maximize sensory deprivation. The units are completely automated, a little more than three-by-three yards in size, lined with steel. The windows of each cell are covered with steel slats; the solid steel doors have a small peephole.

Prisoners are locked up 23 hours a day; outside the

cell, the prisoner is handcuffed to waist restraints and hobble-chained ankle-to-ankle. Only one prisoner is allowed out at a time. Television, radio and reading material are privileges for good behavior.

Mr. Fitzsimmons told me, "I was forgotten for three years when they left me in the SHU. I didn't realize it was doing any damage, to be perfectly honest. You come to enjoy the isolation. I was numb, confused. I became used to screaming into the speaker in the SHU. When you're talking to an inanimate object, you don't give it too much respect."

Dr. Stuart Grassian, of the Harvard School of Medicine and author of *Psychopathological Effects of Solitary Confinement*, consulted on the Fitzsimmons case: "These kinds of units [SHUs] are like factories, and the product they create is rage. Many people who've been in solitary become more rageful, more irritable, more explosive. The kind of thing Terry described is certainly consistent with what I've seen."

Mr. Fitzsimmons was 26 when he emerged, and soon after was returned to the general population at Kingston. On one occasion, he became disruptive after being refused shower privileges for four days. On his way to solitary confinement, he smashed his fist into a steel wall, shattering his hand.

"On the way to the hole, I started freaking out, like within myself, not physically. I said, 'You're going to lock me up for breaking my hand? Obviously you just want a piece of me,' so I ended up biting a chunk out of my arm. It took 24 stitches inside and 12 stitches outside 'cause I started pulling at it as well, ripping it with my teeth."

The new personality had emerged.

The authorities felt his behavior warranted extended time in Kingston's solitary and Prince Albert's SHU, with the result that Mr. Fitzsimmons spent fewer than two years in the general population before two-thirds of his sentence was completed and he was eligible for release.

And so it was that in January, 1993, without a structured and gradual reintroduction to life beyond the penitentiary, he was discharged directly to the street to serve the final one-third on statutory release, which means he had to report regularly to his parole officer.

"They didn't 'gate' [refuse parole to] me because I did a lot of groups [in anger control, problem solving, life skills] and they couldn't justify it. I wasn't a repeat offender. The first time anybody mentioned 'cascading' [gradual introduction into society] was after a parole breach. I turned myself back in and the parole people in Millhayen [Penitentiary] thought I had been on a prerelease program, that I had seen the street prior to getting out."

Lawyer John Hill, a long-time adversary of solitary confinement, says Correction Services was at fault. "They should have realized he was a danger to himself and to society." Mr. Massicotte adds that, "if a policy change has to come into effect, it should be that every person who has spent time in an SHU who is close to statutory release should be flagged automatically for [continued] deten-

Shortly after he arrived, he found himself in the path of a rapist-murderer, who made him a sexual do-or-die offer.

tion. That might seem a negative thing coming from a defense lawyer, but prisoners need it."

Regardless of policy or responsibility, Mr. Fitzsimmons was now on the streets of Kingston. Six months before his release, he had married Tammy Lynn McGuire, the sister of an inmate. The union lasted 10 days into his freedom. He then moved in with beauty-salon owner Sheryl Blackadder, a relationship that lasted until July, when he stole \$10,000 of her jewelry and disappeared into Toronto's gay community.

He soon met up with Don Hebert, an HIV-positive travel agent who was infatuated with him. The two found they had a common interest in cocaine. To get money for drugs, Mr. Fitzsimmons robbed a midtown Canada Trust; a few days later, this time accompanied by Mr. Hebert (who had fancied them as "the first gay Bonnie and Clyde"), he held up the branch again.

Back at their apartment, they were joined by a retired Toronto dentist named Norman Rasky, who had a crack problem and had moved in with them the day before. Dr. Rasky, 62, figured out that they had robbed a bank to buy cocaine and threatened to call the police. Mr. Fitzsimmons, high on drugs, bludgeoned and repeatedly stabbed Rasky while Mr. Hebert looked on. He says it was then that Mr. Hebert asked him to kill him so he could escape the torments of death by AIDS. Mr. Fitzsimmons agreed, and said he wished to die, too. It was likely then that he injected himself with some of Mr. Hebert's blood.

Mr. Hebert and Mr. Fitzsimmons fled to Montreal by train, leaving behind the beaten and stabbed body of Dr. Rasky in the basement of their apartment building. On August 1, their money gone, they robbed and killed cab driver Fernand Talbot.

The next day, they went to Ottawa. They decided that this was the day Mr. Hebert would die. In a secluded spot in a Red Barn restaurant, Mr. Fitzsimmons choked Mr. Hebert into semi-consciousness, then plunged a knife into his chest.

He went to an Ottawa police station and turned himself in. "It's got to stop," he told them. "I'm tired of killing people."

When I first spoke with him, Mr. Fitzsimmons had had time to reflect on the four murders and his decision to end his life by giving himself AIDS. "I wish none of the murders had happened, but wishing isn't going to change it. They're very deep experiences, very violent experiences and I don't think one is easier than the other to live with. I have different emotions for each person. Hatred for Mark Shannon. Rasky? Pity. The cab driver? I wished it never happened. Don, the best friend I ever had? I miss him but I'm happy for him because he's where he wanted to be.

"I believed in our friendship. I believed that if he was willing to die by my hands then I should be willing to die by his blood. I'm giving society exactly what they want. I'm going to give them capital punishment. Instead of it being a five-minute thing, they'll see it for five or 10 years and watch it eat away at a person.

"I believe strongly that I'm more a product of the system than of my own family upbringing. Maybe they should start looking at trying to correct their mistakes before more people like me get out."

Mr. Fitzsimmons died by his own hand on March 28, 1995. A memorial service was held for him at Kingston Penitentiary on April 13th. "I'm hoping my family will at least claim my body," he said during one of our final conversations. "If not, then it's \$135 for cremation and it'll be on the taxpayers' back. It doesn't matter to me."

It is a tradition in Kingston Penitentiary to wait a full 24 hours after a suicide before moving a new prisoner into an empty cell. In this case, a prisoner was placed there shortly after the body had been removed. That night, other prisoners reported that the new resident spent much of the night screaming. Mr. Fitzsimmons' troubled spirit had apparently returned.

There is some debate as to whether Terry Fitzsimmons' death was the final chapter in a nightmarish story or the beginning of a trend. Mr. Massicotte is pessimistic. "We're predicting we'll see a lot more of this coming out on the street. The SHU only opened up 15 years ago. They're getting out now."

Conversely, Mr. John Oddie, assistant warden of Kingston Penitentiary, does not believe Fitzsimmons' case is a portent of the future. "Our programming hasn't changed nor do we see a requirement to change it. For inmates returning from SHU, the process has been the same as with Mr. Fitzsimmons. They are seen by the case management officer and they work out a treatment plan to meet their requirements."

Although he repeatedly expressed an absence of fear, Terry Fitzsimmons fully understood the implications of dying alone. The interviews that led to this article were conducted by telephone because I, along with other members of the media, were not allowed in to see him. In an effort to attend his memorial service, I made renewed attempts to get clearance, but prison authorities did not respond to any of my requests. Afterwards, it was reported that attendance for the service was closed to outsiders.

Father Hail, the prison chaplain, said he had bumped into Terry the weekend before his suicide. "His pain was showing. He looked very tired, very pale." This report contrasts with the voice I heard just 48 hours before. The man I'd spoken to was filled with determination, an absolute resolution to have his story heard, to change the system for the better not for himself but for the next prisoner who might tread the same path. Terry Fitzsimmons may have given up hope with his his final act, but he managed to override the prison's media ban and grant his story a secured place in the public eye. I firmly believe he understood this when he made his decision to leave this world.

"I'm more a product of the system than of my own family upbringing. They should start correcting their mistakes before more people get out."

Reprinted from the Canadian Globe & Mail.

A CURE FOR CRIME

PRISON LIFE AT THE 5TH NATIONAL CURE CONVENTION IN WASHINGTON, D.C.



photos by Alan Pogue

by Richard Stratton & Jennifer Wynn

Crime, politicians tell us and mainstream media duly report, is the country's number one domestic problem. If we are to believe our elected leaders, the answer to the crime crisis lies in administering more of the same short-sighted remedies that have thus far failed to staunch the flow of blood in our streets.

More laws and longer prison sentences. More cops and more federal agents with broader police powers. More prisons and a return to inhumane conditions of confinement. More capital crimes and more executions. Though these snake oil curatives only appear to have made the condition worse, we are assured that larger and larger doses of deadly medicine will eventually heal the nation. All we need to do is give up more of our civil rights and let the police have their way and America will be safe.

Both conservatives who purport to oppose big government and liberals who cry for more government over-

sight favor giving greater power to police agencies, to the courts and to prison officials to wage war on crime. When he was Governor of Arkansas, Bill Clinton ordered a mentally retarded man to be executed so as to appear tough on crime and to deflect bad publicity on his philandering. Speaker Newt Gingrich recently called for mass executions of drug smugglers. The level of violence and brutality in our society plagues many Americans and yet to question official hard-line policies on crime is to commit political suicide. Look what happened to Jocelyn Elders when she so much as suggested it might be time to open dialog on decriminalizing drugs. What we need, our trusted officials seem to be saying, is a Mark Fuhrman on every street corner and we will all sleep better.

Some Americans are beginning to question the government's wisdom and motivation in dealing with the impact of crime on our society. In much the same way as the anti-Viet-

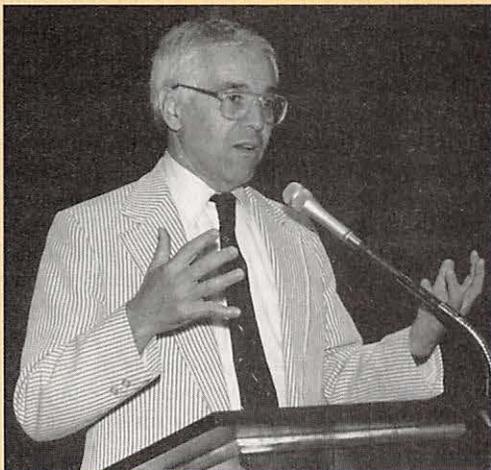
nam war movement started 30 years ago, there is a growing constituency of the citizenry who now distrust and outright oppose Washington's solutions to the crime question. The imperative to wage war in the jungles of Southeast Asia in order to protect America from Communism proved to be a lie; in the real world inhabited by ordinary Americans, "lock 'em up and throw away the key" as a means of delivering us from crime is equally bogus.

It took the families of soldiers killed in Vietnam, and the veterans themselves, to convince the rest of middle-America that the war was a mistake. Now a grass roots organization made up largely of prisoners' loved-ones, family members and ex-prisoners who have experienced the criminal justice system first-hand has brought the war on crime home to the hallowed halls of Congress where insular law-makers jostle for power at the expense of the country's well-being.

CURE, Citizens United for Reha-



Pauline & Charlie Sullivan founded CURE 23 years ago. They have dedicated their lives to reforming the criminal justice system and helping improve the lives of individuals behind bars.



bilitation of Errants, is a national organization devoted to reducing crime through reform of the criminal justice system (especially prison reform). With chapters in 36 states and a national office in Washington, D.C., CURE is the nation's foremost coalition of criminal justice advocacy groups. This year CURE held its Fifth National Convention in the Capital on June 17 through 20. The editors of *Prison Life* attended the conference and were welcomed heartily both by other conventioners and by the organizers. It seems we are saying much the same things.

In the four days of the convention, hundreds of men and women from all over the country gathered at Trinity College in Washington to express concern for the brutal and wasteful tactics embraced by our government in the war on crime, and to discuss alternative methods and strategies for reducing crime through reform of the criminal justice system.

But the CURE cause does not end with talk. CURE is also a lobby group, and as Charlie Sullivan, National CURE's executive director, pointed out to convention participants in his welcoming letter, "The most important events of the convention are the Congressional visits on Tuesday." Conventioners were urged to contact their Representatives and make an appointment to visit. CURE provided each of the attendees with a letter for their Representatives rating the 103rd Congress and urging Congress members to become Public Official Sponsors of CURE.

Saturday, the first day of the convention, was given over to registration and, in the evening, self introductions at a get-acquainted social held in one of the voluminous old halls at the baroque Catholic university. Representatives from different state CURE chapters and affiliate groups stood and identified themselves. Many told of having had no idea just how sick our criminal justice system is until a loved one or family member went to prison. It was extraordinary to be in the same room with so many like-minded people on a range of topics that have divided Americans into two opposing camps: those who believe the way to deter criminal behavior is with more violence and abuse, and those who advocate that the solution lies in understanding the causes of crime, and in educating and rehabilitating those who break the law.

Beginning at nine a.m. Sunday and running until Monday evening, over 50 panels were held on a fascinating variety of criminal justice topics: *Effective Substance Abuse Treatment* and *Understanding Inmate Phone Systems: Your Rights and Remedies* to *The National Campaign to Stop Control Unit Torture* and *Doing Time Today: Debunking the Myth that Prisoners Have It Made*. Perusing the schedule, it was frustrating to have to choose between panels on so many issues vital to readers of *Prison Life*.

We attended a panel on capital punishment, *Update on the Death Penalty: First Degree Murder by the State*, and were moved by panelists who told of having a mentally disturbed son on death row in Texas. A young student from Des Moines, Iowa recalled how she became friendly with condemned poet Willie Otay, and how she endured his execution. In a group discussion after the panelists spoke, it was agreed that the only legitimate way to resist the death penalty is on moral grounds. Thou shalt not kill goes for the state, too.

Next we sat in on a panel chaired by Julie Stewart of FAMM (Families Against Mandatory Minimums) and heard from Julie's brother, Jeff Stewart, a former marijuana prisoner who was released from prison this year and now works with his sister lobbying Congress to end mandatory minimum sentencing. Recently FAMM won a major victory on a sentencing issue the group has been advocating for over two years. An amendment to the sentencing guidelines now sets the standard weight of a marijuana plant at 100 grams per plant

What is CURE?

A national organization to reduce crime through the reform of the criminal justice system.

When and Where Did CURE Start?

CURE began in San Antonio, TX in 1972, when a dozen citizens (families of prisoners and concerned individuals) went to the legislature in Austin to work against the death penalty. In 1975, CURE formally organized with an annual convention and a constitution. In 1985, CURE expanded to a national organization.

CURE's Goals

Are Making Sure that:

- Prisons are used only for those who absolutely must be incarcerated.
- Prisoners have all the resources they need to turn their lives around.

CURE's Outreach Activities

- Providing errands and their families with information about rehabilitative programs.
- Promoting the creation of more rehabilitative programs.
- Convincing errands that change can be brought about more effectively through the exercise of their constitutional rights.

Who Supports CURE?

CURE has a mailing list of over 5,000. This includes prisoners and freeworlders. Five percent of the membership of Congress representing both political parties are Public Official Sponsors of CURE.

Where is CURE Active?

CURE has an organized presence in most states. This is either through state chapters, contact chapters (the first step toward becoming a chapter) or organizations with similar goals that affiliate with CURE.

What CURE is Working on

- Stopping the expansion of the death penalty.
- Removing racism from the application of the death penalty.
- Renewing the Targeted Jobs Tax Credit (which pays for a portion of the starting salary of a newly-employed ex-felon through government subsidies).
- Voting in federal elections by all probationers and ex-prisoners.
- Improvement of the availability of veterans' benefits and services to incarcerated veterans.
- Encouraging prison-based businesses.
- Increasing awareness of the special needs of women prisoners.
- Stronger enforcement of the Civil Rights of Institutionalized Person Acts (CRIPA).
- Establishing a waiting period before the purchase of a handgun.
- Supporting professional accreditation for all correctional entities.
- Allowing prisoners to be transferred to the state where their loved ones live.
- Offering effective drug treatment on request in the community and in prison (CURE is a member of a network that monitors the government's war on drugs).
- Eliminating discrimination in employment for a felon if nature of job does not relate to his or her crime.
- Passing a constitutional amendment that fundamentally changes the criminal justice system.

instead of at the former 1 kilo per plant. The amendment, effective retroactively, will reduce offense scales by 0-10 levels and effects close to 1,000 federal prisoners who will receive substantial sentence reductions and in a number of cases be released. This is good news not only for the prisoners but for all those engaged in sentencing reform. It is great to see real progress being made. F.A.M.M. is to be congratulated for its efforts.

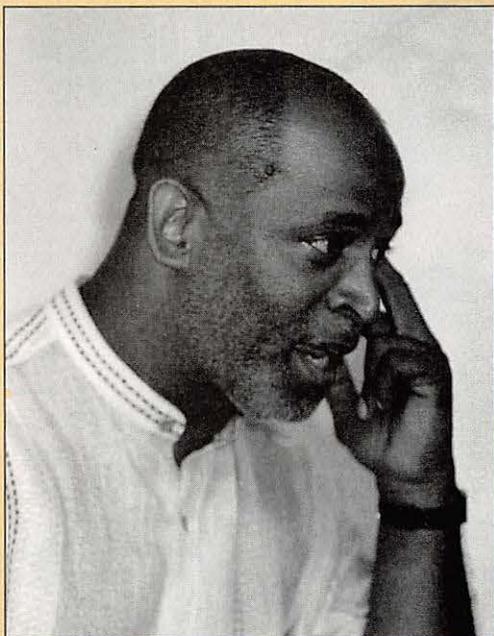
Later that afternoon we joined a panel discussing progress in *Prison Reform Litigation* and were most impressed by an impassioned address by Kwasi Seitu, a former prisoner who spoke eloquently on how prison reform litigation has had what limited successes it can claim largely because of work done by jailhouse lawyers. Seitu was adamant in insisting that the state of prison reform litigation is in retrograde. Lawyers on the panel spoke of work being done by prisoners' Legal Services attorneys. We were reminded that the landmark Supreme Court case *U.S. v. \$405,098.23* was initiated by jailhouse lawyer Michael Montalvo. Seitu was correct in stressing the work of incarcerated, self-taught lawyers in fighting injustice. Who knows better than prisoners the abuses of the system?

Finally that afternoon we joined a group discussing ways and means of *Communicating Criminal Justice Reform Through Publications in a Punishment Era*. This is a subject about which *Prison Life's* editors should know a thing or two. Panelists included editors of *The Turning Point*, the excellent newsletter of Missouri CURE and *Graterfriends*, published by volunteers and prisoners at Graterford, PA. We also met the managing editor of *American Jail Association* magazine and were impressed to see that the Sheriff's organization has come out against the wholesale warehousing philosophy of corrections sweeping the nation. *Prison Life*, the only freeworld-based magazine done by convicts and ex-cons, was a welcome presence at the panel.

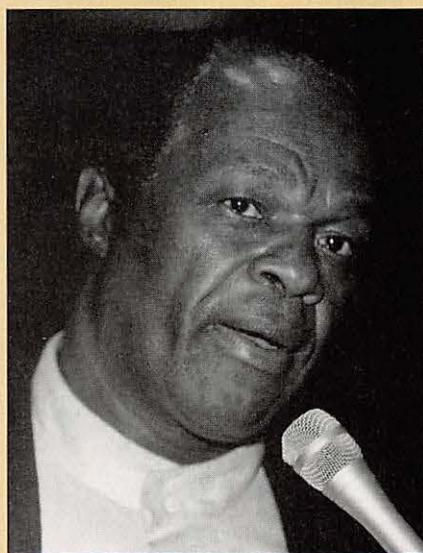
Other noteworthy panels we attended later in the morning dealt with stopping control unit torture and selling prison reform politically, which was led by the charismatic Rozier "Roach" Brown, chairman of the Ex-Offender Coalition and staff assistant to D.C. Mayor Marion S. Barry. Roach was the perfect candidate to discuss the concept of selling prison reform. He himself is an ex-con who did a two-decade bid for murder. After his release, he went to work for the Mayor, also an ex-offender. Mayor Barry served six months in a federal prison on a misdemeanor drug conviction and then miraculously managed to regain voter confidence and win the 1994 Democratic mayoral primary. Mayor Barry did this, Roach explained, with the help of a little-known 1976 D.C. law that unlocked a voting bloc of ex-convicts, who were overwhelmingly supportive of Barry's campaign. Mayor Barry hired Roach Brown to head up his Coalition of Ex-Offenders, and together they canvassed the city's alleys and shelters to spread the word that ex-felons could vote, which got many of them to the polls. The organization was responsible for bringing in thousands of new voters predisposed to elect the man they could identify with, an ex-convict like themselves.

On Monday evening, the CURE chapter for ex-offenders, CURE-ENOUGH (Ex-Offenders Need Opportunities, Understanding, Guidance and Help) met to discuss ways ex-offenders and their loved ones can work together to change laws restricting full participation in society by former prisoners. Chairperson Bob Vieweg raised the example of an ex-offender from Virginia who had served time on a drug offense only to be denied a license to operate a used car lot upon release. Given the unreasonableness of such penalties, Vieweg suggested the group begin to work politically and legally to overturn unreasonable decisions.

Roach Brown agreed to serve as the new co-chair of CURE-ENOUGH and mentioned organizing a national ex-offender day in D.C. to be held in the fall of 1996.



The charismatic Rozier Brown, chairman of Mayor Barry's Ex-Offender Coalition, led a panel on selling prison reform.



Mayor Marion Barry plans to appoint "a qualified person who happens to be an ex-offender" to the next parole board vacancy.

After hours, we met with Stephen Donaldson, head of Stop Prisoner Rape, who is lobbying Congress to ensure that male rape in prison receives the same attention as female rape on the streets. We also had a long conversation with John Woods, a Vietnam veteran and ex-offender who is president of Vietnam Veterans of America. Woods has spent the last 10 years running prison-based programs and support groups for incarcerated Vets and helping to expedite the release of Veteran offenders.

The four-day seminar culminated with a breakfast on Capitol Hill in the Dirksen Senate Office Building. The highlight was an appearance by D.C. Mayor Marion S. Barry, who, despite a work strike at the D.C. prison that began the second day of the convention, attended the Capitol Hill meeting and delivered a rousing 30-minute speech.

"Through the grace of God and a lot of internal fortitude and the help of friends and family," Barry told the CURE audience, "I managed to come back stronger and wiser and better than ever."

He spoke of his strong advocacy of prison reform and his support of ex-offenders. "I have ex-offenders working in our office now, and at the next vacancy on the parole board, I intend to appoint a qualified person who happens to be an ex-offender. Why shouldn't those who are affected by the decisions be part of the decisionmaking process?"

Mayor Barry told the group he is fighting for more money for drug treatment and believes in "treating chemical dependency medically, not criminally." He is also working to reinstate conjugal visits for D.C. prisoners and setting up community education centers in poor D.C. neighborhoods "to tackle problems before incarceration." Barry's final message, which brought him standing applause, was directed to everyone involved in the fight for prison reform—prisoners and freeworlders alike. He urged the group to draw inspiration from his struggle to regain his mayoral position after he was virtually banished from the political scene as the result of a nationally televised bust for smoking crack. "Never give in, never give out, never give up. When you're going through a storm, hold your head up high," Barry exhorted the audience.

A prayer from the Koran was read for prison reformers who had died in the last two years; family members of men and women on death row spoke briefly and poignantly about their loved ones behind bars. Presentations were made to Congressman Lane Evans for his leadership in helping incarcerated veterans; to Congressman Robert Scott for his leadership in prison reform, especially for requiring that all deaths in custody be reported to the U.S. Department of Justice; and to Senator Paul Simon for his work on the Family Unity Demonstration Project.

Appreciation was extended to Alvin Bronstein, the executive director of the National Prison Project, who is retiring this year, and to Leigh Dingerson, executive director of the National Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty, who is also leaving her position.

The final speech was delivered by the enlightened Oklahoma warden, Jack Cowley, who spoke candidly about how Corrections and CURE can and must work together if we hope to see a reduction in crime, and how the growing prison industry in America is doing nothing to help make our streets safer. Before this issue went to press, it was learned that Cowley had been removed from his position as warden and relegated to a regional desk job.

After the conference, CURE arranged for members from each state chapter to meet with their Senators and educate them on pressing prison reform issues. Our only regret at the end of the day was that we couldn't be in fifty different places at once.



Ron Decker, a young, white middle class dope dealer, has been given an indeterminate sentence and sent to prison for two years by a judge who wants to see signs of Decker's rehabilitation before he'll consider reducing the sentence. Decker has gone from a high-rise in West Hollywood and a Porsche Carrera to the L.A. City Jail and a prison bus that deposited him in the animal factory of San Quentin. Now he must learn to survive or fall victim to the psychopaths who prey on fresh fish like Decker.

Earl Copen is a veteran of the California prison system serving his third term in San Quentin when he and Decker meet. Reluctantly at first, Copen takes the "youngster" under his wing and teaches him how to stay alive and do time in the penitentiary.

Illustrations by
B.D. Hill



FACTORY

ANIMALLY

BY EDWARD BUNKER

Some December days in the San Francisco Bay area exhale pure spring, and this was one of them, a Monday between Christmas and the New Year. The sun had burned off the freezing morning fog, and although the lower recreation yard was still crisp, it was dazzling bright. Earl sat shirtless on the worn bleachers along the third base line, finishing a joint in the nearest thing to solitude the prison allowed. A red bandanna was tied around his forehead to keep the sweat from his eyes, though it had dried ten minutes after he left the handball court. A still soaked glove lay limp beside him, and his legs ached from the hard hour of exercise. He played poorly but loved the game. He couldn't bring himself to jog or do calisthenics, because he quit the moment he began breathing hard, but when there was competition he kept going until his body screamed in protest and he had to bend at the waist to draw a good breath. Winter closed the handball courts for months at a time, so he played whenever they were open for a few hours. He sucked on the joint, uttering "dynamite shit" inanely, and the aches went away. He was reluctant to make the long trek to the big yard, and then five tiers to his cell to get a towel to shower with. "Too beautiful a day to be locked up," he muttered, liking the bitter-sweet ache of longing for freedom. It told him that he was still human, still yearned for something more than being a convict. He still hoped.

He'd decided to follow Seeman's advice and avoid trouble by avoiding the situations. He was keeping to his cell during the day, reading a lot, and when something happened, it was over before he heard about it. One of the Brotherhood had killed a man in the East cellhouse, and the next day during the lunch hour two Chicanos had ambushed a third and cut him up pretty bad. If he'd died, it would have tied the record of 36 murders a year; the record for stabbings, 107, had already been broken. T.J. and Bad Eye worked in the gym, and he saw them only at the night movie when the Brotherhood filled two rows of reserved benches. Earl would have come out during the day if heroin was on the yard, but the prison had been dry since he'd gotten an ounce three weeks earlier. Pot, acid and mini-bennies were abundant-through the Hell's Angels—but Earl was not interested. In a paranoia-laden atmosphere, he couldn't risk being spaced out.

Earl did not know about a strike that was to happen the following morning, but it was known by everyone, including the warden. Someone had illegally used a mimeograph machine to run off thousands of copies of a bulletin calling on all convicts to either stay in their cells in the morning or not leave the big yard at work call. The first demand, an end or a modification of the indeterminate sentence—a term anywhere between a year and eternity until the parole board decided—was something Earl fiercely agreed with. It was the crudest torture never to know how long imprisonment would last. And the demand that prison industry wages be raised above the present maximum of 12 cents an hour was also reasonable. But then the writer had turned irrational, demanding that all "Third World" people and "political prisoners" be released to the various People's Republics. This absurdity would attract whatever coverage the press gave the strike and blunt any consideration thoughtful people might give to the demands—not that many cared about what went on in prison. A strike was futile, yet at least it showed that the men had not surrendered. It would bring a lockdown of everyone while the leaders were rounded up, clubbed, and segregated. "And I'd better go get some cigarettes, coffee and food to last until the unlock. Four salami sandwiches a day won't make it."

As he stood up on the top row of bleachers, he saw two convicts climb-

ing toward him at an angle. One was Tony Bork, a chunky young con who was the East cellhouse plumber, not a tough guy but personable and known as a "stand-up dude." He had in tow a slender youth in the stiff, unwashed denim of a newcomer. Even without the clothes, Earl knew the youth hadn't been long in San Quentin, for although he often saw faces for the first time after they'd been around for months, this one he would have remembered. He was too strikingly good looking and young looking, especially because of a clear, pale complexion set off by dark blue eyes that were serious but inexpressive. There was nothing effeminate about him, but there was an extreme boyishness that by prison standards would be considered pretty. Pretty was a bad thing to be in San Quentin.

"Hey now, big duke of Earl," Tony said. "I need a favor. Rather, my friend here does. A show pass." Tony glanced at the youth. "Ron Decker, Earl Copen." A nod of acknowledgment did the work of the usual handshake.

"Are they running the show lines yet?" Earl asked.

"They were getting ready to when we came down."

Earl picked up his sweatshirt and handball gloves and started down the bleachers. Bork and Decker fell in beside him. As they walked, he struggled into the sweatshirt.

"You haven't been here very long, have you?" Earl asked.

Ron shook his head. "Three weeks. Tony tells me you're good at law."

"I used to fuck with it. No more. I don't believe in it. Smith and Wesson beats due process."

"What do you mean?"

"Besides being funny"—Earl smiled—"I mean that law is bullshit. Judges don't have any integrity. They'll spring some big shot on a point of law, but when some poor Hoosier in here has the same point, they shoot it down."

"But when Smith and Wesson won't do anything, the law might be all there is. I don't want to impose, but I'd like you to look at my case. I'll pay you."

"When I get some time," Earl said, not noticing that his brush-off made Ron blush.

"What fuckin' movie are they showing today?" Earl asked. "It's a Monday."

"Blood-donor's movie," Tony said. "I'm on the list but Ron isn't."

Earl glanced at Ron from the cor-

ner of his eye and felt bad that he'd stalled him so coldly. "What kind of thing did you want to know about your case?"

"The main thing is the judge said he'd call me back and modify my sentence in a year or two. Some guy in the bus said the judge loses jurisdiction and can't do it."

"He used to lose jurisdiction, but six months ago a court of appeals ruled that if he sentenced you under 1168 he can call for reports and review his sentence."

"That's what he sentenced me under."

"What kind of beef?"

"Possession of narcotics for sale with a weed prior."

Earl made a silent whistle and looked at Ron more closely. "Ten years to fuckin' life, with six to the parole board. You'd better hope he modifies."

"Don't I know it."

As they reached the top of the stairs, the sound of country and western music from the loudspeakers poured over them. The last line of convicts was going into the mess hall, and the guard checking passes wasn't one Earl could influence. "C'mon to the yard office. We'll get a pass from that big sissy." When they neared the yard office door, Earl took Ron's I.D. card to get his number. He left them outside. Without saying anything to Big Rand, who was dangling a string before a cuffling, scrawny kitten (one of hundreds in the prison), Earl sat down and typed a pass; then dropped it on Rand's desk for a signature. The big man ignored it, continued playing with the kitten.

"Hey, you want me to throw that cat in the Bay?" Earl said, knowing Rand just wanted attention.

Rand picked up the pass. "Two weeks ago—Gibbs, remember?"

"Oh man, that wasn't nothing."

"Nothing happened, but a whole bunch of shit could've happened."

"Whaddya think—I was gonna snitch on you? Sign the motherfucker."

"Who is this asshole?" Rand leaned in his chair so he could look out over the Dutch door, dubiously eyed Ron and Tony. He knew Tony Bork and his wasn't the name on the pass. Rand curled a forefinger and Earl leaned forward. "You're trying to fuck that kid, aren't you?" Rand accused.

"You got a dirtier mind than these convicts, Rand. You really do."

"Well, who is he?"

"A good white brother. Are you gonna sign? I've got business. I wanna



a certainty that he was involved in the strike plans, or at least knew who was. Earl also knew the man wasn't a racial fanatic. When he came out, Earl waved and walked over and told him what he'd overheard. "For whatever it's worth," he finished. The black thanked him.

As he turned away, he saw Tony Bork getting a cigarette lit by another convict nearby. Earl gave a brief wave and started to leave, but Tony beckoned him. The yard was dark except for the floodlights, and convicts were streaming by them en route to the cellhouses.

When Earl stepped over, lowering his head slightly because he was taller than Tony, the plumber put a hand on his shoulder. "My friend," Tony said. "the one I introduced you to today, he's got problems—"

"I guess so," Earl said, snorting. "some cocksucker in Sacramento should get a foot in his ass for sending

him here . . . among the animals."

"Somebody cut him in to Psycho Mike—"

"The Puerto?" Earl interrupted.

Tony nodded. "The glue-sniffer, yeah. And he's scheming on the guy. did him a few favors, banaroo clothes, et cetera, before Ron knew the score. The youngster woke up to what's going on, and he's trying to back off, but Psycho's on the muscle now and he's got that little clique."

"Is that kid Ron a broad?"

Tony shook his head. "No, man, but you know how that goes. He doesn't have any henchmen or—"

"What about you? You trying to turn him out?"

"You know I don't play that shit. I like him and I'm giving him moral support . . . but like I go to the board real soon and I've got a good shot at a parole. Besides, I'm no tough guy."

"So you want to cut me into the action, is that it?"

"Somebody's gonna get him, or drive him into protective custody, or make him kill somebody. Why don't you pull him?"

"I need a kid like I need a bad heart. A pretty kid is a ticket to trouble...and I'm too old to ask for that. Shit, I haven't even booked Tommy the Face in two years. I'm turning into a jack-off idiot."

"He's ten times smarter and classier than the shitbums around here. I was thinking about that blond youngster that Psycho Mike's boys grabbed off the bus last year—ran a gang bang, made him pluck his eyebrows, and then sold him to that old pervert. The kid wound up in the psych ward."

"Fuck it. It's none of my business. If a sucker is weak, he's got to fall around here. I came when I was 18 and nobody turned me out. I didn't even smile for two years."

"Things were different then...a dude could represent himself by himself. There weren't no gangs then. He's not a killer, but he's not a coward."

Earl shook his head and refused to listen further, but when he turned away he found his jaw muscles tighten as he remembered what Tony had described. Raised in reform schools, used to places without women, Earl like everyone else with such a background was not against queens and pretty boys. After several years without a woman, a surrogate could arouse just as intensely. But Earl was against force, and even more than

that, he loathed the practice of buying and selling young boys, a phenomenon of recent years. For a moment he thought of asking Ponchie (whom he'd known all his life), or Grumpy or Bogus Pete, all of the powerful Chicano Brotherhood, to jerk up Psycho Mike. Not that it would do any good; with Mike gone (that was easy), others would move in.

"What the fuck do I care?" he muttered, seeing Paul's figure working with a broom on an open gutter across the shadowland yard. He went to see if Paul had word of any narcotics. It would be easier to go through tomorrow if he was tranquilized on heroin.

Late in the evening, while the clack, clack, clack of cell doors being locked reverberated through the cellhouse, Ron Decker stretched on the top bunk of his cell.

An elbow propped up his torso as he lay on his side, while spread in front of him, as if for reference, were Pamela's letters, her Christmas card, a battered collegiate dictionary, and a photo of her against a background of a field of pinkish wildflowers. The last letter, on pale yellow stationery with a hint of perfume, he studied while he wrote. He adored her letters, for she had a flair for mood and nuance and sometimes included a page of evocative poetry. Sometimes the letters made him imagine an entirely different person than he remembered, and he blotted out memory to respond to the letter writer. Ron was uneasy with the written word. He was well enough educated, but lacked experience in transmitting thoughts with the pen. He'd written more since his arrest than in all the previous years of his life. He wanted to make his letters a journal, and the one he was working on tried to convey what he was seeing and experiencing. He described San Quentin's hideous look, but he could not tell her of the wholesale violence and paranoia, or of the expected strike. A letter with upsetting information would be returned by the censors. He did tell her that the classification committee had assigned him to the furniture factory, and he was to report in the morning. He was unhappy with the idea of sanding varnish from chairs all day, but there was nothing he could do about it for a while. He told her that he had a personable cell partner, without amplifying that it was a 45-year-old queen. He told her that he was disillusioned by the personalities he had found, that he'd expected at least some who were intelligent, but here were the underworld's stunted failures, muggers, gutter junkies, gas station robbers, and those who committed moronic rapes and murders. Master criminals didn't seem to exist. He wanted to tell her about the young men raised in reform schools that so deformed their psyches that institutions and institution values were their whole life and whose status was built on violence. He wanted to tell her about racism that went beyond racism into obsession—on both sides—and how it was affecting him to be the object of murderous hate just because he was white. It aroused fear, and a kernel of hatred in response.

None of these things could be written, so he finally signed the letter. He was putting it in the envelope when the public address speaker blared: "Lights out in ten minutes!"

He swiveled on the bunk so he could put the letter on the bars for the last mail pickup. Then he jumped down. Jan the Actress, so called because he'd lived as a woman for ten years long ago, was cross-legged on the bottom bunk, fingers flying and yarn trailing as he worked on an afghan that would sell for \$90 in the visitor's handicraft store or 5 hits of acid, 20 joints, or 2 papers of heroin on the yard.

Ron stepped to the back of the cell and got his toothbrush, his eye catching his reflection in the mirror. It was odd to see his hair so short and combed straight back—but without a part; someone had told him that some would think a part was sissified. He'd laughed at the ignorance but followed the advice.

Jan the Actress pulled a cardboard box from beneath the bunk and began depositing the knitting gear. "How's the problem with that Psycho Mike coming?"

Ron spat out the toothpaste foam. "Tense. He wanted to know why I was shying him on...and something about owing him."

"I could've told you he was bad news."

"He was friendly at first...and I didn't know anybody. I should've known."

"What happens now?"

"I'm going to stay away from him."

"What if that doesn't work? He's got some friends and it could get rough."

Ron shook his head. He wasn't afraid of Psycho Mike, not really—and yet in a way he was. And it was demeaning to be worried about someone so stupid. That he would go along with what Mike wanted (he stopped short of fully imagining it) was unthinkable. He already knew what he would suffer if he went into protective custody, and rejected that idea. He was willing to fight if necessary, but could imagine what little chance he had against a clique. If he used a knife—Tony had offered him one—it would be resolved, but he balked at that choice for two reasons: it would at least mean a denial of modification by the judge, and even if he got away with it, the vision of running steel into human flesh was revolting. When he finished his ablutions, Jan was waiting to use the sink. The cell was less than five feet wide, and the space beside the bunks was so narrow that they were chest to chest as they passed. Jan's fingers brushed at his crotch and he reflexively shot his ass back. "Damnit!"

"Try it, you'll like it," the queen said, the time-worn parody of a woman's face screwed up with a smile and desire.

Ron quickly jumped onto the top bunk, his legs dangling over the side. "This is supposed to be a place of tough guys. Everybody is some kind of pervert. Wow!"

Jan had turned to the mirror, trying to make thin hair cover loss of pate. "No, they're not. More the pity."

"It sure seems that way."

"Just because you're young, tender sweetmeat."

Ron blushed furiously. When the lights were out (though it was not really dark because lights outside the cell threw a bar-waffled glow inside), Ron could see the blackness of the Bay beyond the cellhouse, and beyond the blackness twinkled the lights of the Richmond hills. It was an insult to put the ugliness of a prison in such a setting. It increased the torment to be walking dead amid so much life. He had another thought and stuck his head over the edge of the bunk where he could see the featureless paleness of Jan's face. "Say, I was thinking about having some guy look at my case today...some older dude with a shaved head, Earl Copen. Know anything about him?"

Jan's giggle was quick. "Do I know Earl Copen? Honey, he was my cell partner years and years ago when I came here. For a few weeks. He ripped me off."

"Ripped you off. Him, too. Yuk."

"Oh, he's another convict. He waited until the lights were out and—"

"Spare me the details."

"You're not interested in my love life?"

"Not especially."

"Earl was just a kid then. He was one step ahead of the wolves himself, but he was a wild sonofabitch. Stoneface, the A.W., was a lieutenant then, and I remember Earl turned his desk over on him and spent a year in the hole. And I remember some wolf eyeing him with that look—"

"I know the look."

"Earl asked him what he was looking at . . . and the guy told him, 'I wanna fuck you.' Earl told him that if he kicked his ass he'd let him. The guy was a light-heavyweight prizefighter and Earl was skinny as you. They were supposed to meet in the back of the block after breakfast. When the guy came in, Earl was on the fifth tier with a big water bucket, the kind the tier tender uses to fill up gallon cans. It weighs about 70 pounds when it's

full of water. I don't know if it was. Earl dropped it, and it would've put the guy's head down around his asshole if it'd landed, but it barely missed and shattered his ankle. Earl came running down the stairs with a claw hammer to finish him, but that fucker managed to get out, broken ankle and all. He was scared to come out of the hospital. Earl could have fucked him by then."

"He didn't strike me that way—crazy and all."

"Oh, he's beautiful people. I talk to him. He's intelligent and seems burned out. When you reach your mid-thirties, you tend to slow down. That's old for a convict. He's tired of doing time."

"I saw him with some youngsters up against the wall. Is that his gang?"

"Probably part of the White Brotherhood. That's not his gang...not anybody's. They don't even think God is boss. I've seen a lot of dangerous men here, but never a bunch of them ganged together."

"What about the Mexican Brotherhood?"

"The same. Maybe worse. There's more of them. But they get along with Earl's friends. Those kids—hell, some of them are nearly 30, love Earl. Paul, too."

"Who's Paul?"

"The guy with the white hair, looks about 50."

"I haven't seen him." When he rolled back and pressed his head to the pillow, Ron decided to keep away from Earl Copen. Jailhouse lawyers were abundant. Earl was too unpredictable. All I need is a serious disciplinary report, Ron thought. The judge'll toss the key away.

When the morning bell wakened Ron, the land outside the cellhouse windows was covered with fog. The edge of the shore, 20 yards away, was totally invisible. The fog wouldn't go over the cellhouses into the big yard, but the lower recreation yard would be blanketed. The factory area was beyond the wall of the lower recreation yard; it had its own wall.

Ron dressed and washed quietly, for Jan never got up until the 8:30 lockup, arriving at work half an hour late. He was clerk to the supervisor of education, who came in at 9:00, so nothing was ever said. Neither did Tony Bork go to breakfast, so Ron stood by the bars and waited to eat alone, wondering about the rumored

strike, wondering if a "fog line" would be called, closing the lower yard to everyone.

The mess hall was abnormally quiet, the customary roaring voices a low hum, exaggerating the clatter of utensils against steel trays. It seemed as if fewer men than usual were eating. Ron's tier was among the last to sit down.

Ron gulped his food, dumped his tray, and stepped into the cold gray morning light. A row of guards waited just outside the mess hall door, nightsticks in hand. Perched on the gun rail above the yard gate stood a guard and a highway patrolman, one with a riot gun, the other with a tear-gas grenade launcher. Ron stopped, surprised. "Industries workers down the stairs," a tall sergeant said, moving his head to indicate the open gate. "Everybody else across the yard."

In less than five heartbeats Ron's eyes panned across the yard to where nearly two thousand convicts waited. The crowd broke in an L shape where the East and North cellhouses joined. The blacks were, as usual, along the North cellhouse wall. Ron didn't know if he should go through the gate or join the throng. One might make him a strikebreaker, bring retaliation from other convicts; the other could get him in trouble with the officials.

"Get moving," a guard said to him—and at that moment three convicts stepped from the mess hall behind him and turned without hesitation to go out the gate. Their exit brought no jeers or catcalls from the crowd, so he lowered his head and followed them.

The fog met him on the stairs. The figures ahead turned into vague outlines and disappeared altogether. He couldn't see the prison walls. He followed the road around the lower yard; the industrial area gate was a quarter of a mile away. No guards were in sight; even on bright days when there was no trouble, the gate had several.

Now he turned and followed the road along the base of the wall, feeling strange in the blinding landscape. Two convicts appeared, trudging toward him, caps pulled over their ears, hands jammed in their pockets.

"Hey white brother," one said as they reached him, "you might as well go back. The niggers blocked this gate."

The other one laughed, the caw of a crow, showing gaps where teeth should have been. "The fuckin' bulls got slick and opened the yard gate

early. The rugs got slicker and blocked this gate. With the fog and shit, it's worse for the bulls."

"Nobody's going to work?" Ron asked.

"They're waitin' down there 'bout a hunnerd yards, waitin' to see what happens. The people blockin' the gate are after that."

"I think I'll go see."

"I learned to get away from hot spots. Some shit is likely to kick off down there. I wanna miss it."

"Don't stay too long. Stoneface is gonna be mad as a Jap. He'll be wantin' to kill somebody, an' convicts all got the same color to him."

"It's the color of shit," his friend said, and they went off through the fog toward the big yard.

Curiosity and excitement flecked with fear grabbed Ron as he went forward upon the back of the crowd. From beyond he heard a voice with a Negro accent screaming, "They can kill me! I ain' no mammyfuckin' dawg!"

Ron stepped to the left, where a fence bordered the opposite side of the road from the wall. There was room to push through and he did, coming to the front ten yards away.

Across a space from the crowd was a tightly knit group of about fifty. Most of the faces were black, but a few whites were there. Some of the strikers had baseball bats and lengths of pipe. One roly-poly black was in front of the strikers, exhorting the workers: "Whatcha gonna do? Get on over here. We all together. Don't be scared!"

A white convict beside Ron shook his head. "I'd go over there if it wasn't all spooks. My fuckin' partners would turn on me if I did."

Ron looked along the summit of the wall. A single guard in a greatcoat stood in silhouette, his rifle hanging like a half-mast phallus. Did the officials know that was happening? What would they do?

The cold was insidious. Because there was no wind, it did not cut; rather, it ate slowly like acid. Ron began to shiver and chatter. He wished something would happen, wondered if he should trudge back to the yard.

A flurry of movement in the workers' crowd made him stand on tiptoe and crane his neck. A chubby middle-aged Chicano was pushing through with a yellow card held overhead. He walked resolutely toward the strikers. The yellow card was a checkout slip that had to be signed by his work

supervisor before he could leave the prison on parole. "Yo vaya . . . la lebere esta mañana."

The front rank of strikers opened like lips to swallow the man without protest, and a moment later the innards churned and crunched and Ron heard the splat of blows and a gurgled scream. His excitement fell away, replaced by horror. "Oh God, they're...killing him." He fought away nausea.

"He shoulda waited," the con beside Ron said. "I'd have waited. Now he's goin' out the back—in a box."

The crowd around Ron suddenly crushed into him, split by some force he couldn't see. Then he did. Men in helmets with Plexiglas masks were wading through, swinging long clubs. One man went down. He wasn't a striker but blood spurted from his head as he drew his legs up. The guards were in formation.

The young convict beside Ron leaped to the fence. Ron was thrown against it. He struggled, turned, dug his fingers through the holes in the wire and scrambled up. The baseball field was on the other side. The fog provided a hiding place of sorts.

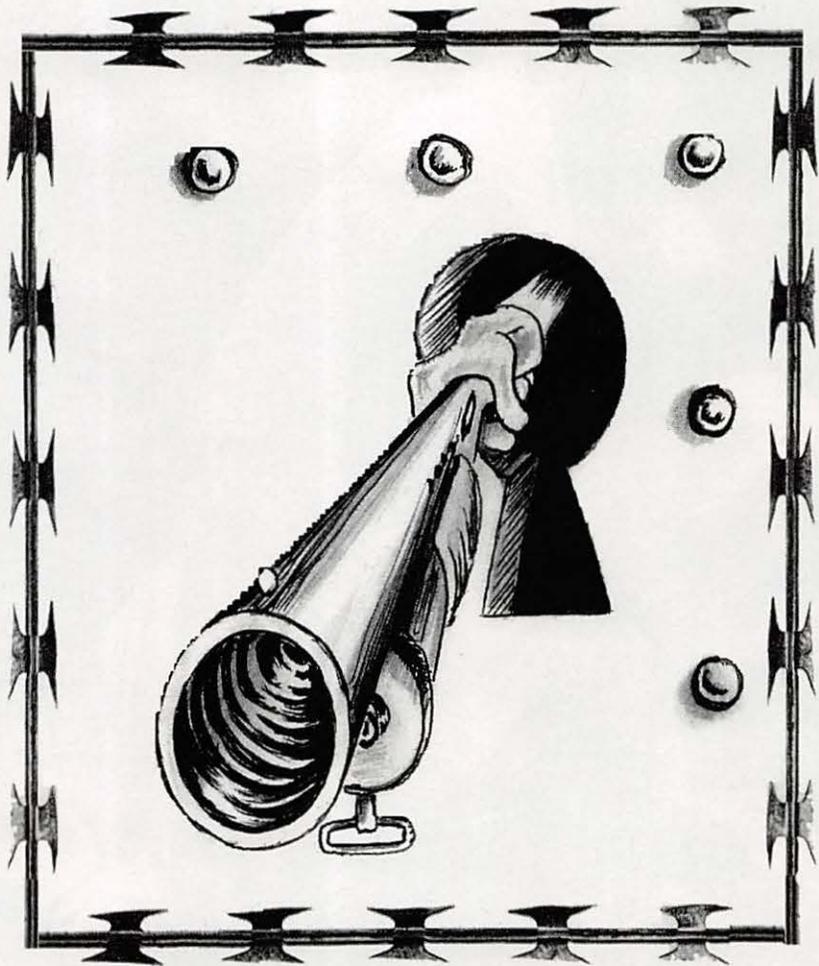
Earl's cell on the fifth tier was a perch overlooking the yard. Just before 8:00 a.m. he looked out. The herd of convicts against the cell-house walls stood quietly. He spotted his friends halfway down. They'd gathered together in a moment of possible trouble, but it seemed that trouble was passing by. Earl put on his heavy coat and gloves and went out of the cell.

As he came out of the rotunda he met other, more timid men, coming in. But Earl had looked and it seemed okay. He ran his eyes along the gun rail. Half a dozen guards were there, weapons held casually except for a sergeant—a weightlifter with a Thompson submachine gun at port arms.

Earl walked along the rear of the crowd until he saw Baby Boy's red hair. Then he pushed through to where his friends were.

All the other convicts were quietly serious, but the clique was grinning and laughing, coming alive in the threat of chaos, which Paul was reducing to absurdity.

"All they want is a white ho an' a Cadillac. That's sure as hell reasonable after all white done did to 'em . . . Check that bull." He pointed to a



chubby rosy-cheeked guard facing the crowd 15 yards away. The guard couldn't decide how to hold his club, at his side, across his chest, behind his leg, in one or two hands—and he kept glancing nervously at the protective cover of the riflemen. "Fool don't know whether to shit or go blind," someone added.

Bad Eye caught Earl's attention and put two fingers to his mouth, asking for a cigarette. Earl started to reach into his pocket when the flatulent report of a rifle echoed, followed by a hollower firearm, either a shotgun or a tear-gas gun using a shotgun charge. The two thousand men on the yard fell instantly and utterly silent, frozen, as hearts leaped to a faster beat and the atmosphere pulsed with tension. The chubby guard fell back a step, and riflemen shook off their casualness.

Even Paul was quiet.

A figure came hurtling through the gate, jerked to a walk, and tried absurdly to be nonchalant. The guards started to close on him, but then others came and the guards let them through.

Two blacks came up out of the fog, one guiding the other, whose

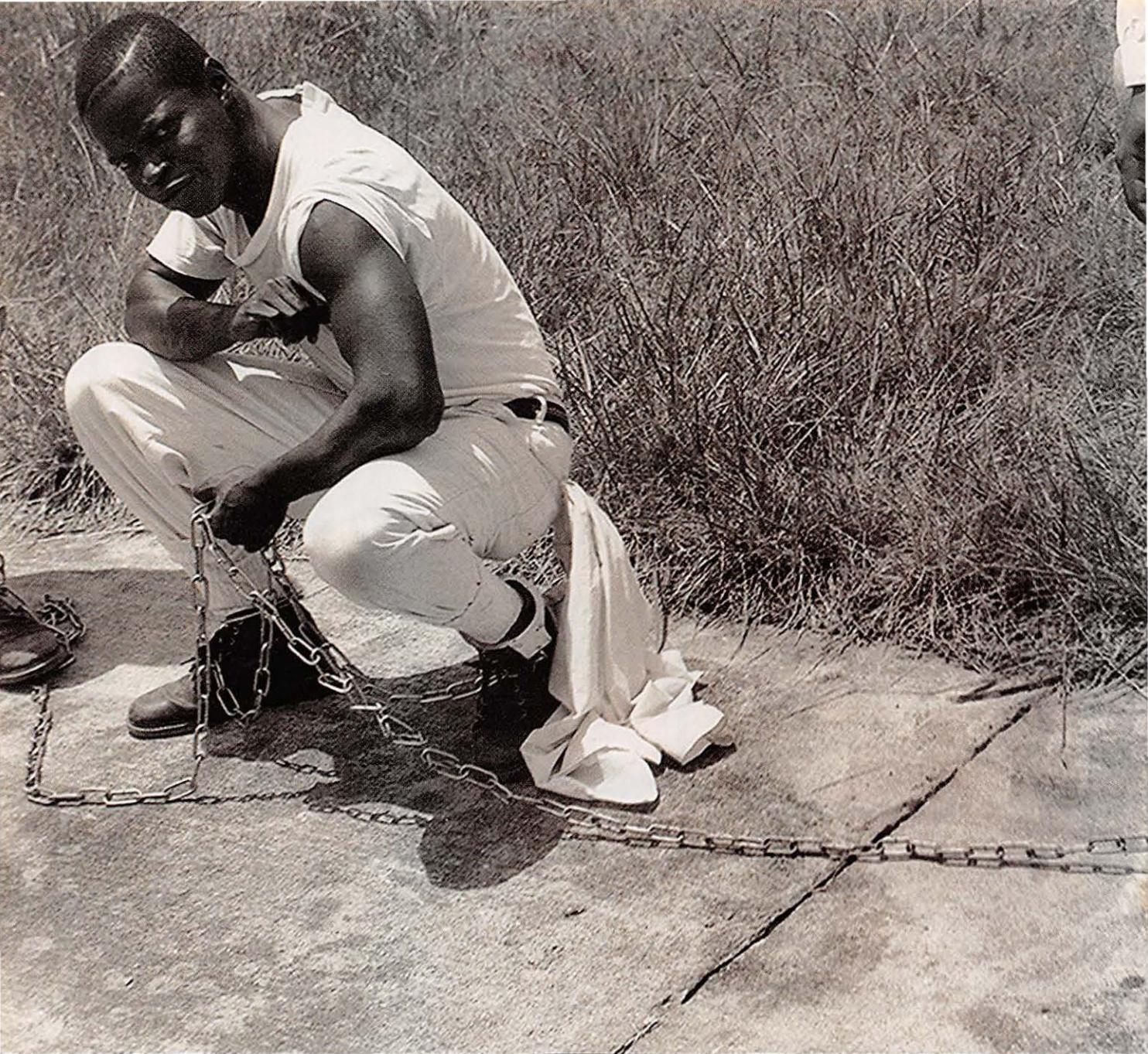
hand held a blood-sopped rag to his forehead. They turned left, heading for their brothers. Two guards went to cut them off, but a massed spontaneous moan that turned into a roar stopped them—a wall of sound. And as they hesitated, the black crowd broke forward, surrounding the arrivals while the guards fell back. The riflemen braced their weapons on their shoulders, squinted along sights, but the blacks stopped.

Earl's heart pumped like a bird's wings. Bodies surged against him, blocking his view. He saw some whites and Chicanos run from the gate into the crowd, and seconds later got word that a Chicano had been stomped to death by the blacks.

The racially divided crowd now pulled apart, like organisms mutually repelled. Earl almost fell, but T.J. grabbed his belt and kept him erect. The sound of voices was like the lowing of cattle before a stampede.

Moments later the spilled gasoline of madness was ignited. A whump sound from a tear-gas launcher and grenade arced down between the

(continued on page 73)



BACK ON THE



**EXCLUSIVE
PHOTOS
AND INSIDE
REPORT FROM
ALABAMA'S
LIMESTONE
CORRECTIONAL
FACILITY**

CHAIN GANG

Photographs and text by Michael Corsentino



It is the middle of a record heat wave when I arrive at the Limestone Correctional Facility near Huntsville, Alabama. The stone guardtower, set in the center of the prison, casts a long shadow in the blazing afternoon sun. I see the forms of armed guards as they move anonymously behind the tower's tinted windows.

The entrance at Limestone is marked by two brick columns with thick black metal bars between them. I grasp the door handle and look up at the video camera mounted to my left as an unnerving clanging sound cuts through the silence. My arm vibrates and I feel the steel bolt inside

the door release. I step through and cross manicured grounds that smell of freshly cut grass on my way to the administration building.

A tall white man with a thick mustache and easy Southern manner introduces himself as Captain Wise. "Don't take anything from prisoners and don't give anything to prisoners," he says, and radios for a guard to serve as my escort.

I am here to photograph prisoners at this medium-security facility. In May, Alabama Governor Fob James Jr. and State Prison Commissioner Ron Jones decided to resurrect the chain gang as part of a much-touted get-tough-on-crime campaign. After hav-

ing been banned as inhumane punishment for over forty years, the practice of shackling men at the ankles and herding them out to work beside highways has become a hot political issue. The return of the chain gang, which required no state or federal legislation, is seen by critics as a step backward to times when men were treated worse than animals.

In fact, parole violators brought to Limestone have traditionally been assigned to work crews that clear brush along the highway and keep the prison grounds clean. The difference now is that they do the same work chained at the ankles like slaves. The purely symbolic program functions as



Chained in fives, the men swing hatchets and pickaxes for ten hours a day.

a means of attracting publicity for politicians and prison officials while humiliating and embittering the prisoners, all of whom are medium-security, nonviolent offenders.

Prisoners who work on the chain gang, 70 percent African American, are housed in separate dorms and denied such privileges as personal visits with family members, educational programs, television, radio, coffee and cigarettes. They are required to spend at least 30 days on the chain gang before they may be redesignated to other work details and living quarters where rudimentary privileges are returned.

I recall movies that portray conditions on a Southern chain gang. Mervyn LeRoy's classic 1932 film, *I Am a Fugitive from a Chain Gang*, starring Paul Muni, told the story of one man's suffering at the hands of the Georgia chain gang system. When the movie was released, public sentiment was stirred by the brutal treatment prisoners endured. Shortly thereafter, Georgia Governor Ellis Arnall abolished chain gangs and the rest of the nation soon followed suit.

Five minutes later a guard shows up and motions for the door to be opened. He gives me a tour of the prison facilities, stopping now and then to indicate such points of interest as the inmate-staffed shoe shine room. As we pass, a black prisoner looks up and smiles over a pile of dirty rags and shoe polish canisters. In the infirmary, the guard shows me a room where prisoners with AIDS lie dying. The room is lit only by the blue-gray glow of television screens. Men with gaunt faces eaten away by disease slowly turn and look my way.

The guard tells me the prison has a population of 2,000 men, with 420 assigned to the chain gangs. "No matter what they say," he says, puffing on a short thin cigar, "these people aren't in prison for singing too loudly in church."

Prisoners see the camera equipment and shout to get my attention. "Hey, camera man. You gonna take my picture?"

"Yo, you gonna be my girl?"

The other men laugh.

In Dorm 31, where chain gang prisoners are housed, men eye me as I walk inside the dormitory.

The room is teeming with men.

A young guard, chewing a wooden match stick, explains his philosophy: "These kind of people just aren't constituted for work. We get 'em out here and show 'em how to work."

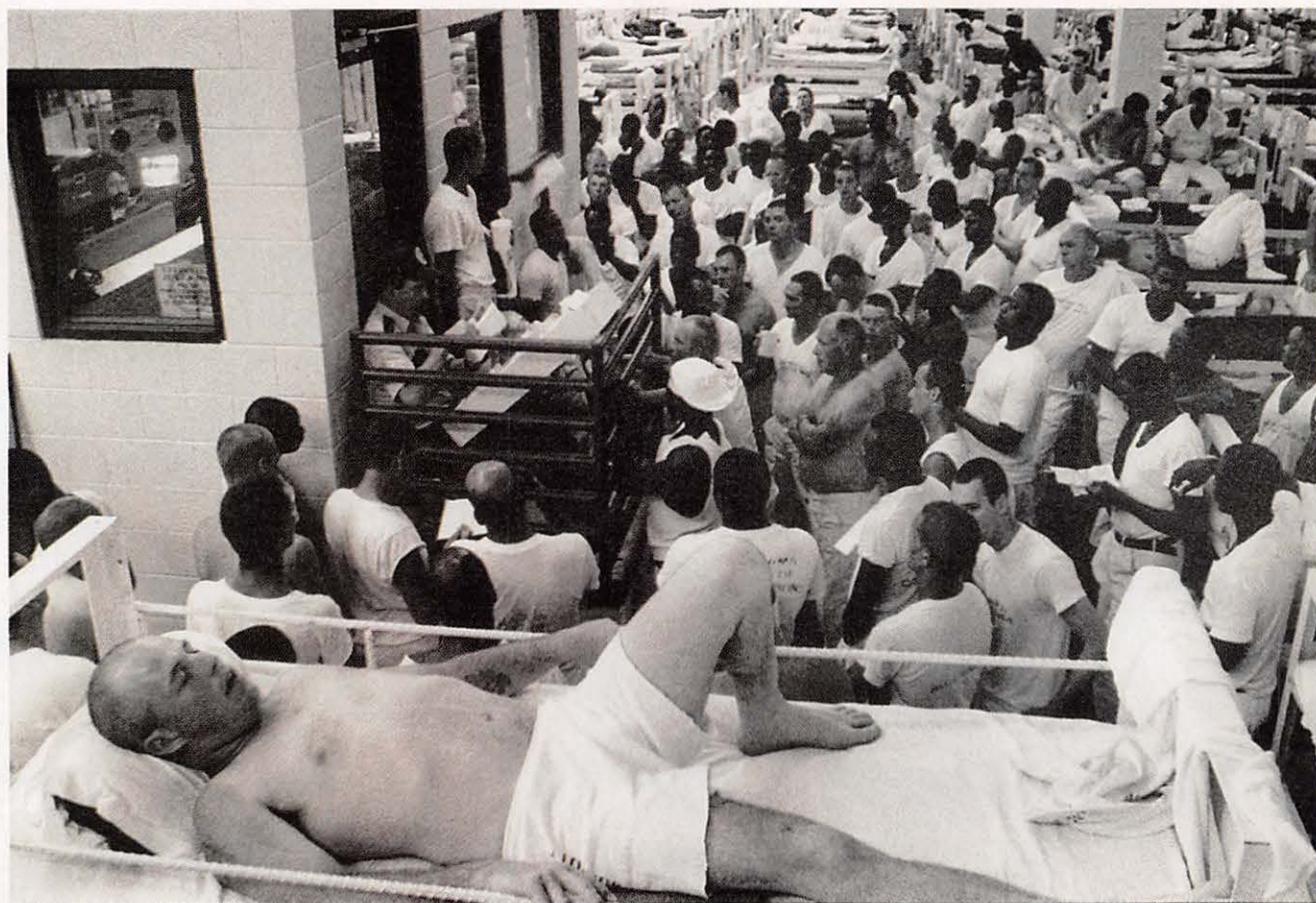


Guards order them onto all fours



and shackle them in groups of five.





With another 200 beds soon to be added, all bunks will be three beds high, bringing the number of men in the already overcrowded dorm to 630.

Bunk beds two and three tiers high are jammed together row after row with narrow spaces between them for walkways. An elevated blockhouse used by guards sits in the middle of the open room. More prisoners, just returned from the chain gang, start making their way inside. My escort leaves me and mounts the blockhouse.

After a strip search, the men troop into an open, tiled room for showering. Nearby, others sit on exposed toilets. The smell of 400 men hangs in stagnant air; a large ceiling fan does little more than push around the stench and humidity.

One prisoner lies on a top bunk reading a worn edition of *The Fugitive*; the man below him is already fast

asleep, his feet dangling off the end of the bed. The prisoners are anxious to share their experiences, to tell me stories about the chain gang. They want people to know how they feel. Many violated parole simply by giving a dirty urine sample. I ask a few how long they've been on the chain gang, and they shout the number of days:

"Eighty-three."

"One hundred and eleven."

"Ninety-eight."

They explain that automatic disciplinary extensions handed out for infractions make it rare for anyone to leave after only 30 days. The usual stay is from three to six months or longer. An orientation sheet for newcomers lists reasons for extension: showing up late for work, not being properly shaved, not having your bed made to the satisfaction of the shift guard or disrespecting an officer. Extensions range from three to six months on top of time already served, and a prisoner with a bad attitude can end up on the chain gang indefinitely.

A few convicts show me their bod-

ies, parts of which are covered with severe outbreaks of poison ivy and other skin diseases from working on the chain gang. One man pulls up his shirt and lowers his pants to reveal scabbed red skin covering most of his body, the result of infestation by chiggers—parasitic, blood-sucking mites that burrow under the skin and cause intense irritation. Another man displays his swollen red feet, raw with large, fluid-filled blisters.

An overhead speaker crackles a garbled announcement. The guards take a head count. Lining up single file, the men enter the dining hall and shuffle along the cafeteria line while servers fill their trays. Meatloaf of soy and gristle is tonight's fare.

Between bites, men speak of rising tension in the prison. If things don't change, they say, a riot will break out. With another 200 beds soon to be added, all bunks will be three beds high, bringing the number of men in the already overcrowded dorm to 630. Just the day before, 20 shanks were found in the unit. Still hungry, the

Chain gang leg irons, returned for the evening, show their age after four months of use.

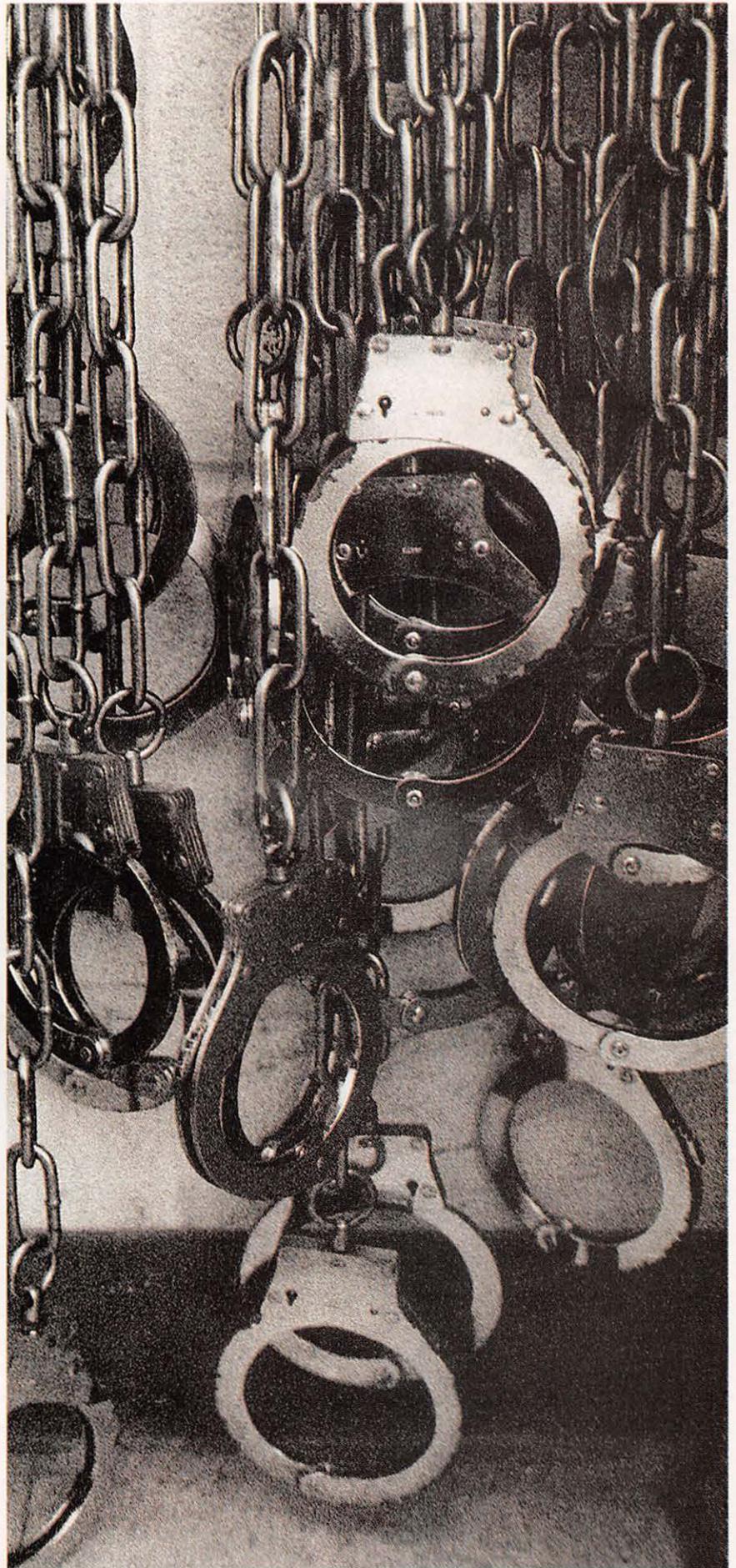
men I sit with ask for the leftovers from my plate.

The next morning at six, prisoners are checked out for the day. After being patted down, they board buses one by one, followed by drivers lugging milk crates full of leg irons. The lead bus pulls out, trailed by a convoy of five others, along with several vans and station wagons. After a 20-minute drive, the buses stop in staggered formation along route I-65.

Prisoners exit the buses slowly and stand waiting. Guards order them onto all fours. Working in two-man teams, guards shackle prisoners together in groups of five. Many men wear two pairs of socks to avoid skin burns caused by leg irons rubbing against their flesh. The chain gang workers pick up rakes, garden sheers and bow saws from an open trailer.

The long work day begins. The men spend hours hobbling around, tripping over the chains and each other as they remove trees and clear brush, clean up litter and pull weeds. As cars and semis speed by, drivers honk, yell and howl at the chain gang prisoners.

Guards sitting by the roadside shout an occasional order. Each guard has his own group of prisoners to watch and his own style of supervision. A young guard, chewing a wooden match stick, explains his philosophy: "These kind of people just aren't constituted for work. We get 'em out here and show 'em how to work. This way when they leave, they won't wanna come back. They'll know what work is." He adjusts the shotgun over his shoulder and continues. "The thing is, we're keeping 'em safe. Without the chains they'd try to escape, and we'd





have to shoot 'em."

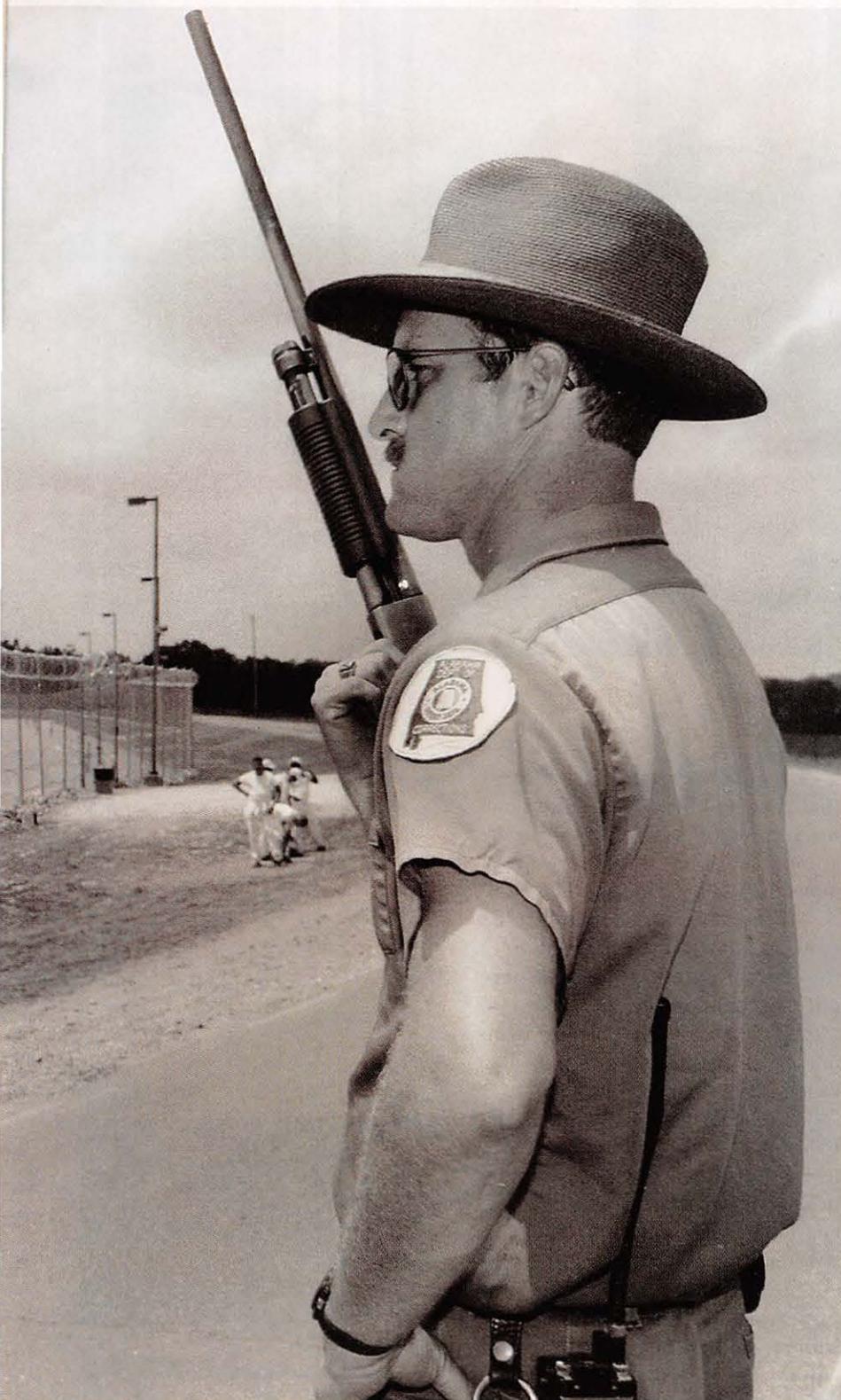
Farther north on the interstate, a bored guard tells the men in his crew that he is dissatisfied with the job they're doing; he explains they are not responding quickly enough to his orders. He pulls a wing-nut from his pocket, fixes on a location and throws

the nut into the weeds and grass. He yells to his group to come forward. They shuffle over and he indicates the general direction of the wing-nut, then orders them to get on their hands and knees and search until they find it. This diversion lasts two hours.

The first break, five hours after

work began, is for lunch. Prisoners complain about meager portions. One man holds a sandwich made of a single piece of crusty processed cheese between slices of dry white bread. In disgust, he throws the stiff piece of cheese on the ground.

"Real cheese would melt," he says.



"If they try anything, I have to put them down. Buckshot spreads out—I might take out more than one."

tion of being chained to other men," a prisoner named Gooden tells me. "The state has made me their slave. I'm not a man anymore."

Men chained to him listen and nod. "We were doing the same work as before, only now they chain us up like animals so the governor can make it look like he's doing something about crime. All this shit is doing is making people angry. When we get out, we're not going to be in a good mood."

The guards have their own story. "On my chain gang," says one, "I try to be as fair as possible, not like some others. I mean, if it's really hot, I'll work my guys in the shade if they're getting tired." He lifts his hat and wipes the sweat from his brow. "If two guys want to beat the shit out of each other, that's okay, too. As long as they don't fight with tools, I figure let them settle their disputes like men. Now if they pick up tools, that's a different story. Then I have to fire on them. If they try anything, I have to put them down. Buckshot spreads out, I might take out more than one. I don't ask questions, though. My main objective is to stop what's going on and regain control. They pretty much stay in line."

The guard smirks and says what I've heard at least five times in the last two days: "You know, they ain't in here for singing too loudly in church."

"Right," says another guard. "That's right."

Prisoners ask if I've photographed the "Mexican prison" or the "hitching post." The hitching post resembles the kind of post used to hitch a horse, only this one is built for men who refuse to work on the chain gang. Stubborn convicts are handcuffed and chained to the post at four in the morning and unchained 12 hours later. Because the post is not tall

Chain gang prisoners from the disciplinary lock-up unit have it worse. The first to leave their cells in the morning and the last to return at the end of the day, they swing hatchets and pickaxes for ten hours. Chained in fives, they tug, pull and hack at tree stumps. The chains make already dif-

ficult work hellish.

After laboring all day in the sweltering heat, men on the stump-digging detail begin walking the six miles back to the prison. They stop at the Limestone Facility farm to cool off and get a drink of water.

"The worst thing is the humilia-



enough to allow a man to stand straight, nor short enough to allow him to sit, being chained to the post forces the prisoner to bend over all day in the Alabama sun.

The Mexican prison is an outdoor cage with barbed wire strung along the top. The floor, embedded with jagged rocks, makes it uncomfortable, if not impossible, for prisoners to sit or lie down. Locked in the pen for 12 hours, the men stand in the sun and wait. "It's called the Mexican prison because inmates locked inside bake in the sun all day," a prisoner explains and kicks the ground, causing a cloud of dust to rise.

On my last day at Limestone I meet Acting Warden Ralph Hooks, a reserved man who sits placidly behind a large wooden desk when I am shown into his office. I notice there are no family photographs on his desk. He has neatly arranged piles of paperwork spread before him. In well-rehearsed sound bites, Hooks explains the benefits of the chain-gang program. He stresses its cost-effectiveness, and quickly points out that leg irons provide a safe work environment for prisoners. "They also build character," Hooks

asserts.

I mention what the men told me, that they had been doing the same work more effectively before the cumbersome leg irons were introduced in May.

"It's a matter of budget," Hooks continues, dropping his argument for character development. Where once it required two armed guards to watch over a detail, the leg irons make it possible for one guard to supervise 40 chained prisoners.

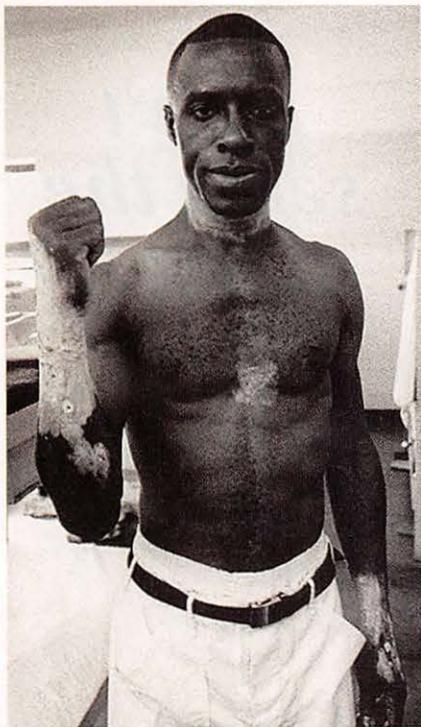
The prison had to lay out an initial cost of over \$17,000 for the leg irons. But chaining convicts allowed prison administrators to reduce the guard staff and cut payroll. The practice has also enabled the governor and prison commissioner to turn Limestone into a media sideshow while winning points with vengeful voters. The real cost of the chain gangs, however, is still unknown.

Two days after I left Alabama, Prison Commissioner Ron Jones, basking in a spotlight of media attention, announced another innovative work detail. Men on the chain gang will spend their days breaking large boulders into small rocks with sledgehammers and pickaxes. Neither the prison nor the state highway department has any need for the crushed

The "Mexican prison," used for punishment, is an outdoor cage whose floor is embedded with jagged rocks, making it impossible to lie or sit. Prisoners are locked in for 12 hours at a time.



Acting Warden Ralph Hooks stresses the cost-effectiveness of the chain gang. "They also build character," he asserts.



Men whose bodies are covered with severe outbreaks of poison ivy receive calamine lotion for treatment.

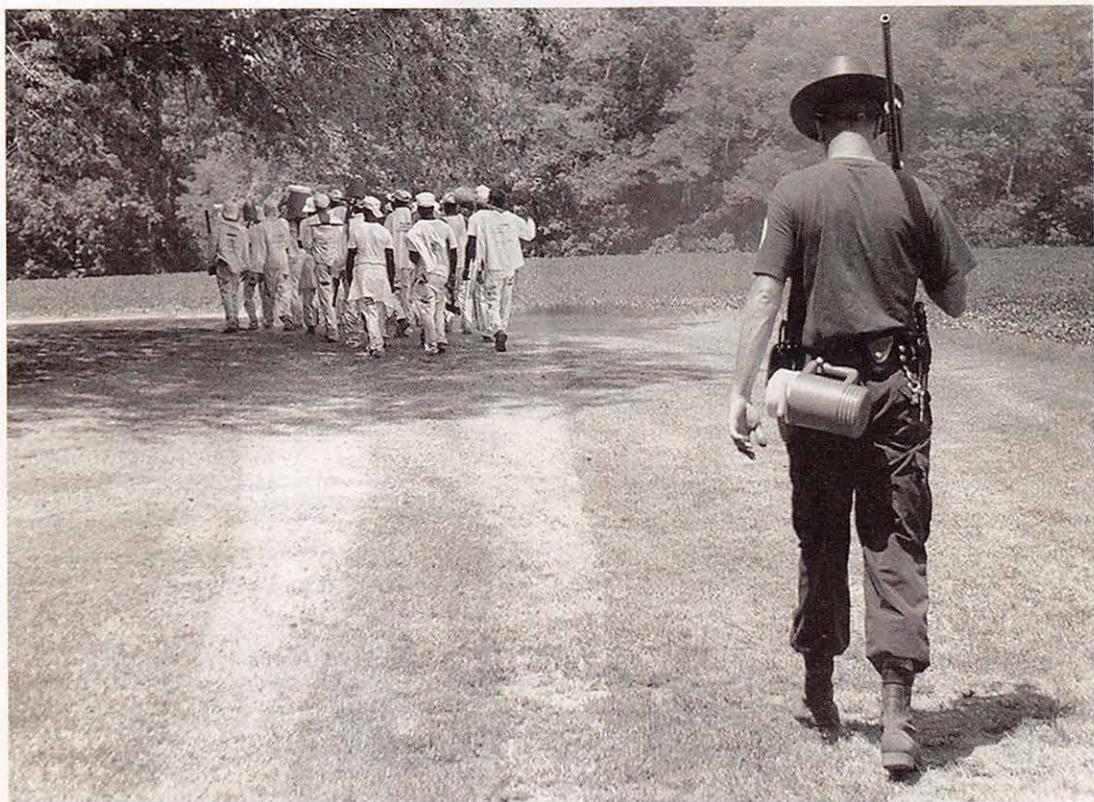


Chain-gang workers commonly suffer from infestation by chigger bugs—parasitic, blood-sucking mites that burrow under the skin and cause intense irritation.

rock. As the work can be done more efficiently by a machine, with no guards required, one can only surmise that this is another program designed to build character.

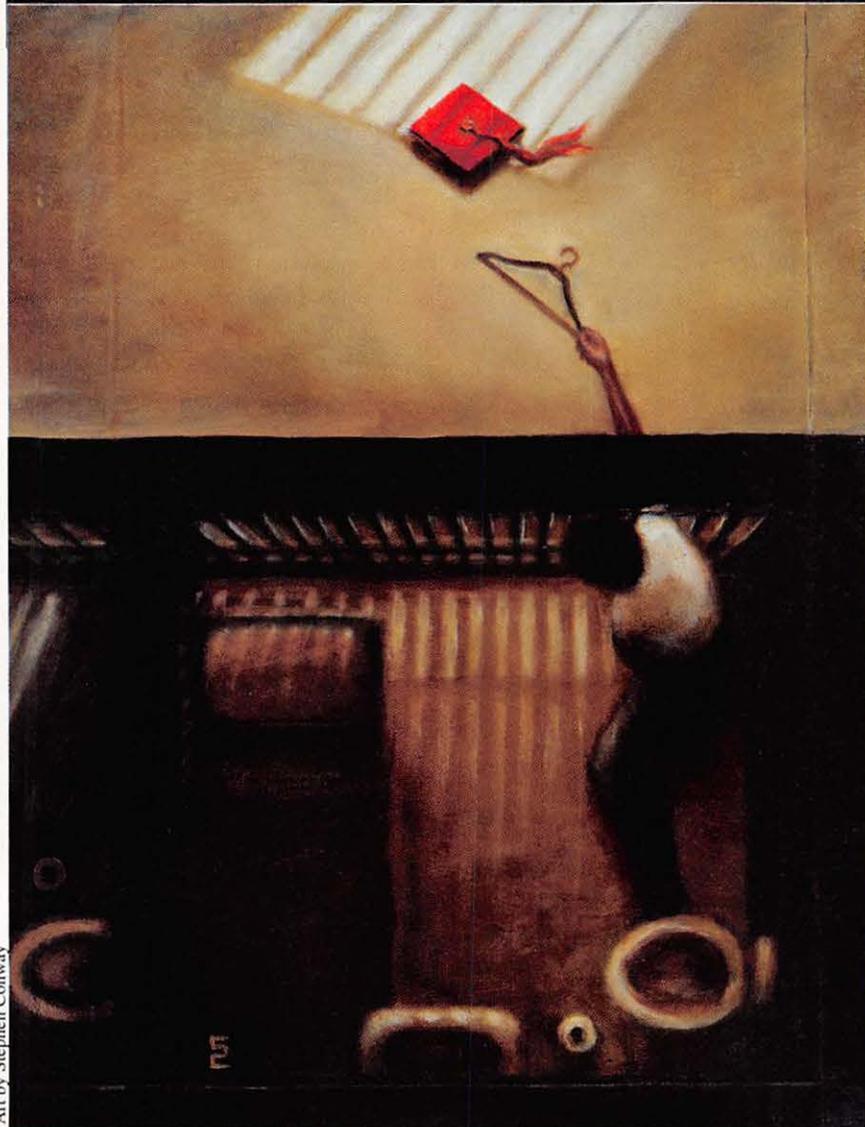
Politicians who champion the use of chain gangs as a deterrent to recidivism may be more concerned with public perception than with social reality. For when they are released, men from the Alabama chain gang will know little more than how to pull weeds, dig stumps and break rocks. Along with these job skills, they will be given \$10 and a bus ticket. Most will feel anger and hatred at having been physically tortured and humiliated so some politician could grandstand for a short-sighted public.

As to what kind of character the chain gangs build, America has seen the damage this degrading and futile form of punishment did to the national character decades ago and rejected it as evil. ■■■



Prisoners return to Limestone Correctional Facility after a long day on the chain gang.

PRISON LIFE FOUNDATION



Art by Stephen Conway

*Don't
serve the
time,
let the
time serve
you*

THE PRISON LIFE FOUNDATION

*Don't incarcerate;
educate.*

- Personal Transformation through Education
- Fully-accredited GED, College and Vocational Degrees
- Scholarships and Funding for Prison Educational Projects
- Courses and Study Materials Delivered Directly to the Prisoner/Student

The Prison Life Foundation, Inc. is a not-for-profit organization devoted to helping prisoners break free from the cycle of crime and incarceration through education. The Foundation, together with Prison Life Educational Services, Inc., sponsor fully-accredited GED, college and vocational courses through correspondence learning. If you are interested in learning more about educational opportunities offered by the Prison Life Foundation, please fill out and return the attached questionnaire to The Prison Life Foundation, 350 Fifth Avenue, Suite 1905, New York, NY 10118.

Please tell us your educational interests.

- GED/H.S. Degree
- Liberal Arts B.A. History Art English Philosophy
- Science B.S. Biology Computer Sciences Chemistry Engineering
- Business Accounting Pre-Law Marketing M.B.A.
- Vocational
- Other (Specify)

Name _____

Address _____

GETTIN' OUT & GOIN' FOR THE GREEN—LEGALLY!

How to Start a Business for Under \$300



Art by Bobo Willkie

by Michael J. Chavaux
Adrian Correctional, MI

So you're getting out soon and you're wondering how you're going to make it—how you're going to get a job, earn a living, pay the bills. You could always take another shot at the quick and easy buck, but do you really want to risk another bid? Haven't you spent enough time in the can?

The average annual income of a U.S. employee is \$26,000, according to Link Resources Corporation, a New York City-based research and consulting firm. The average yearly earnings for a home-based business is approximately \$52,000; twenty percent of all home-based businesses bring in over \$75,000 a year. Most prisoners think it's too complicated and costly to start a legitimate business of their own and that's why they turn to the quick buck on the street.

Regardless of your past, there are numerous, legitimate businesses you can start, and it doesn't take any longer to learn how to start a legal business than it does an illegal one. Looking at it from a business perspective, the poor success rate associated with any type of illegal activity carried out over a period of time is certainly not worth the risk. But home-based businesses have a 95% survival rate. You decide which is the better choice.

Choose your Business

A business can be born from just about anything you have knowledge of, be it education, entertainment, sports, hobbies or the ever-popular product/service area. The key is to find something you like to do and figure out a way to make money from it. Even if you don't know anything about what you want to get into, sometimes all it takes is an ad to hire someone who does.

Ken Koprin is a booking agent for rock n' roll bands. He knew the entertainment industry inside and out, but he didn't have a clue when it came to removing tree stumps. Acting on a tip, he did a little market research and found that there was a tremendous need for this type of service in his area. He had no tools and didn't know an ax from a hole in the ground, but he was determined to cash in on a need that wasn't being filled.

Koprin placed two ads in the classified section of the local newspaper. One was a help wanted ad for stump removal (employees must have own tools). In the other he advertised his services, "Koprin Tree Stump Removal." In less than a month, he had three crews out removing tree stumps. He billed the customers, paid his employees by the job, and he started the entire business for the price of two classified ads.

Test the Market

The most risky aspect of any business start-up is taking a chance on losing the money you've invested. This is why the beginner must look for business opportunities that have good profit potential but are also inexpensive to start. This is a smart way to minimize your risk. If all you need to start is a few hundred fliers, and you get no response, then what have you lost? Starting out with some form of cheap advertising to test consumer interest is called *test marketing*, and it can save you lots of time and money. Whether you do it in the form of a survey, through fliers or through an inexpensive ad, make sure you test the water before diving in.

Mail Order

The mail order business is a billion-dollar-a-year industry in which some thriving entrepreneurs have made a fortune starting right from their kitchen table. You can sell just about anything through the mail. If you don't have anything to sell, then look up some wholesalers at your local library. You could place ads in

STRATEGIES FOR BUILDING YOUR BUSINESS

TARGET YOUR ADS

- Make sure your ads are reaching the right people. If you're selling something useful for rocket scientists, don't waste your money on a mailing list full of Elvis impersonators. And don't try to sell a "do it yourself divorce kit" in a bridal magazine. Your advertising audience should have some sort of interest in whatever it is you're trying to sell. This is called *target marketing*. You are targeting your ads to a specific group of people with specific needs and interests.

If you are placing more than one ad in more than one publication, be sure to key your ad so you know which publications are bringing in money and which ones aren't. For example, if you place an ad in *Rolling Stone* and *Hit Parader* and your mailing address is P.O. Box 999, you may want to list it in *Rolling Stone* as Box 999-RS and in *Hit Parader* as Box 999-HP. That way, when the orders come in, you will know by the last two letters of your box number which magazine is pulling in the most customers. Otherwise, you could make no sales whatsoever from one of these magazines and you'd never know it. You would just keep wasting your money on a publication that wasn't producing any results.

REDUCE MAILING COSTS

- There are several ways to do this through various postal services. Just contact your local post office and they will provide you with a free booklet that describes many money-saving methods such as third class and bulk mailing. But there are other techniques that can help you to save and profit as well.

Instead of paying for mailings, a clever entrepreneur will arrange it so he profits from them before any of his products are even sold. If you are making your own catalog, you can solicit noncompeting businesses to place their own ads in your catalog and charge them for it. Or you could offer to mail out their business literature along with your own. The 32 cents will cover around five sheets of paper. Why waste all that extra space when it won't cost you anything more, and you can charge others to include their inserts?

OFFER INCENTIVES

- Make it as easy as possible for your customers to order whatever it is you are trying to sell. Make them want it bad and make them want it now! Offer discounts if they order within a specified period of time. Or offer something free if they order now! When they order the free item, send some of your other offers along with it. Include a self-addressed, stamped envelope (SASE) for their convenience. Statistics show that businesses receive a better response with these types of offers and incentives.

magazines, send out fliers (direct mail) or make your own catalog.

Most wholesalers offer drop shipping. Say a customer sends you \$10 for an item you had advertised. You check your wholesale price list and find that your cost is only \$5. You send the \$5 to the wholesaler along with the order information and you pocket the difference. That's all you are required to do. The wholesaler drop ships, or fills the order and delivers it to your customer with your return address on the package. This way you don't need any inventory on hand and it saves you all the hassles

associated with shipping and handling. But the package and product is made to appear as if it came right from you. Your customers think they were dealing directly with you all along and are completely unaware of any other company being involved in the transaction.

Information is perhaps the easiest thing to sell through the mail. You can write a report on any subject you have knowledge of. Anything from quilting to auto repair can be sold in the form of a report. But don't offer just one source of information. Just as in any other business,

in order to survive you must offer a selection of goods or services. A potential customer may not be interested in the first thing you have to offer, but might buy the second or third. You will never see this customer or his money if you don't have that second or third product to offer. Even if you cannot come up with a variety of your own reports, you could offer books, tapes and reports done by other firms. Many information companies will sell you their reports complete with reprint rights. Buy them one time and run them off on a copy machine every time you receive an order.

Mail order is an ideal business to start at home. You can begin on a shoestring even while holding another job. No previous experience is needed. If you're ambitious and eager to build a successful business of your own, then this may be the opportunity you've been looking for.

Personal Trainer

Many people want to lose weight and get in shape, but they just don't have the know-how or the motivation. A personal trainer has both and earns anywhere up to \$200 or more an hour. And contrary to popular belief, you don't have to look like Arnold to be a personal trainer. Take a look at Richard Simmons. He's in good shape and knows a great deal about health, fitness and nutrition, but he is far from the massive, chiseled look of a bodybuilder in some monster muscle magazine. So, although it may help, that sculpted look is far from a requirement in order to succeed in this business. But you do have to be in good shape.

Have a printer make some professional looking fliers and distribute them in affluent neighborhoods. Read up on the subject. Get a subscription to health and fitness magazines; attend some classes; obtain a certificate; join some clubs and organizations and list any of these involvements on your fliers in order to give your business some credibility.

In addition to an hourly rate, you could offer extras like house calls, the preparation of low-fat, low-calorie meals, massages, weight training, etc. You could sell vitamins, videos, clothing and equipment.

This type of product line, along with the high rates and low overhead, are the ingredients of a lucrative business.

Auctions

There are many types of auctions throughout the United States. Banks, credit unions and many state or government agencies auction off confiscated, repossessed and used property. You can purchase anything from small appliances to homes or vehicles at far below wholesale prices. For five dollars, the Auto Auction Association will send you a directory of every auction in your area. The National Automobile Dealers Association (NDA) publishes a monthly blue book that lists wholesale and retail prices for used cars. Upon request, many state agencies like the Department of Transportation will send you a yearly calendar that shows the dates on which different auctions are held. The unwritten rule for automobiles is generally: spend hundreds, make hundreds; spend thousands, make thousands.

If none of these ideas interests you, there are still hundreds of other small businesses you can start inexpensively. Lisa Thomas went to garage sales and bought every book she could get her hands on. Most went for under fifty cents. When she felt she had enough books, she rented a cheap store front and opened a used book store. Pamela Cassani had the same idea, only she bought baby clothes and opened a resale clothing store.

After turning his dining room into a bedroom, and building two bedrooms in his basement, Mark Daniels had a total of seven rooms in his house to rent. At \$75 a week each, the man rakes in \$2,100 a month without leaving home.

The opportunities are unlimited. Just use your mind and be creative. When you find something that interests you, research it, read everything you can on the subject and talk to people who are in similar businesses. Get their brochures, literature, opinions and ask a lot of questions. Write down ways to save money and cut costs at every angle. Don't let a lack of funds or limited experience discourage you. Your only true limits are the limits you place on yourself.

*Have any questions or comments?
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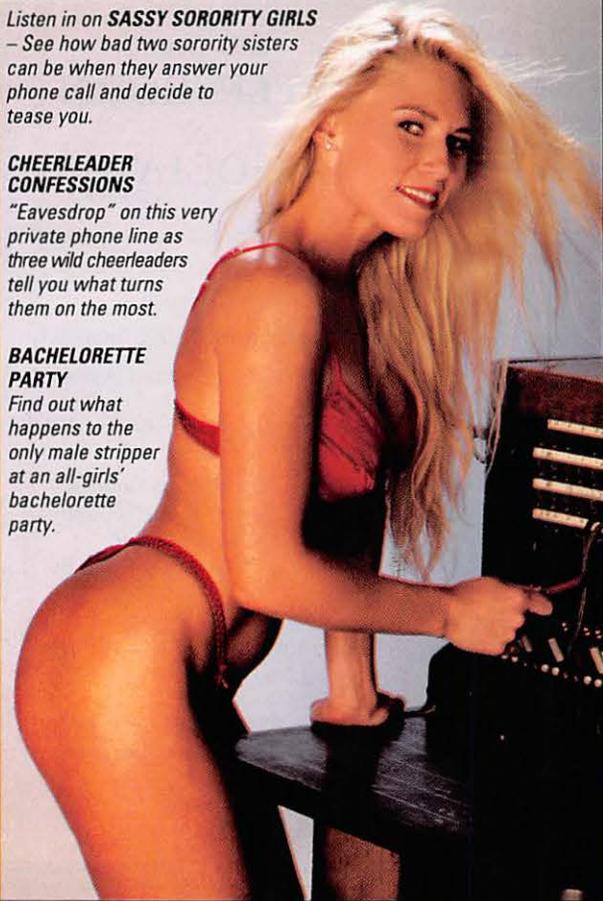
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Mail Call

(continued from page 14)

for me to become pen pals with a man in prison. He had been down for seven years. I fell head-over-heels in love with Allen, who I now fondly refer to as my "prisoner of love."

Allen began an immediate campaign to educate me and my son so he would not end up where Allen is. Part of that educational process involved getting my son a subscription to—you guessed it!—*Prison Life*. The straight-talk and no-frills look at the inside has done wonders for my boy. For kids on the street, prison is romanticized, but as we all know, there is *absolutely nothing* romantic about prison. Some folks said that Allen would be a bad influence on my son, but that has not been the case. My son gets to watch his mother and step-father conduct a relationship via controlled visits, telephone lines and the mail. So now when I say things like, "Who wants to go to prison and not get laid for years?" my words are not the empty pondering of an unknowing mom.

The very last place my son wants to end up is in the joint. For those of you who are incarcerated and feel your life has no meaning, I hope you

will consider the impact you can and do have on the young people of our society. One young life has been transformed, but many others are waiting.

*Nell Villegas
Pasadena, CA*

A FEW WORDS FOR RICKI

First we had *Reader's Digest* spreading lie upon lie that prisons were all country clubs. Yesterday I saw a rather amusing topic of discussion on the Ricki Lake show. "Life is too tough on the street. I want to go back to prison where I had it real good." Crank #1 had a Robin Hood complex. He believed in stealing from the rich and giving to the poor. Crank #2 has been out for 10 years after doing a measly four year bit: "I had a job in prison and got a GED. I want to go back." Crank #3 was a 17-year-old kid who'd just done two-and-a-half years in a juvie joint in Maryland: "I don't fit in. I want to go to an adult prison." Crank #4 said this: "I was in jail overnight and I liked it. Send me back to prison." Please.

Interspersed among the studio guests were the typical ex-prisoncrats

informing the audience that all prisons have 35" color TVs, more weights than Bally's and all the other luxuries that we don't have and never will have.

What the hell is going on here? If the public thinks life behind bars is so sweet, why don't they make an exchange program? Keep the population down by switching someone who wants to live in prison for someone that wants out of prison.

Apparently, there are a lot of wealthy people who pay large sums of money to go to "fat farms" to shed excess pounds. Send one of those rich pricks to prison—let 'em lose the weight without exercise. I lost 13 pounds in three months on the Wisconsin DOC diet plan: no work, no meal planning, just three inedible meals a day will melt those pounds right off! Ricki Lake had a hell of a problem before she went on her diet. Send her to prison and she'll be a svelte 120 within a month or so. Cold cereal and greasy food for a month and she'll need a new wardrobe.

I can hardly wait for the sequel.

*Thomas Reimann
Waupun Correctional Institution, WI*



BUBBA—PINCHED!

The editors regret that our popular column, Ask Bubba, will not run in this issue. Bubba, who writes from inside a large state pen where he is doing triple life under the Armed Career Criminal Act, is in ad seg charged with operating a business (writing his trashy column) from inside the joint.

We were in a quandary, wondering whether to try to replace Bubba with another writer, perhaps run a call out in the magazine asking for candidates, or simply suspend the column pending the outcome of a disciplinary committee hearing which is supposed to determine if Bubba will be allowed to resume writing for PL for no pay—which is ironic as he has been demanding a raise since day one.

Last week, just as we were getting ready to go to press, a mysterious caller who would identify herself only as "Sylvia" left a message at our New York office. We were told to send a messenger to a topless joint on 7th Ave. for an important kite from Bubba.

"Send Cozzone," Sylvia said. "He's cute."

Sylvia turned out to be one of the dancers. After the show, we bought her a beer and she gave us the kite, purportedly smuggled out of the joint by Sylvia's sister who is a CO Upstate where Bubba's doing time.

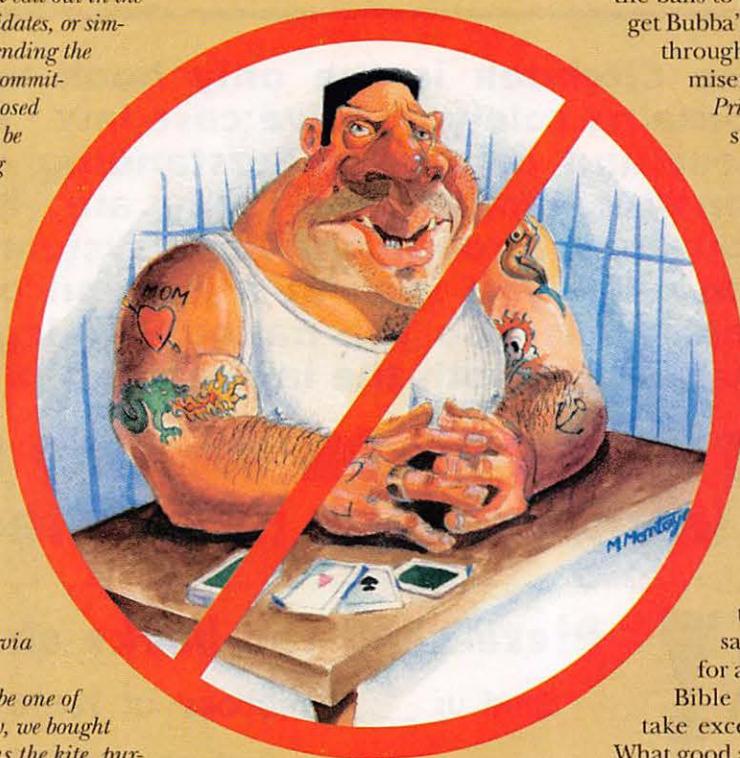
We have no way of knowing if any of this is true or if the kite is genuine. Sylvia claimed to have known Bubba when he was on the street. Her parting comment was that she hopes they keep him locked up, "for his own good."

We have decided to run the kite even though publishing Bubba right now could get him into even more trouble.

Fucking scum! Who cares about these people? What about my First Amendment rights? Bill Kunstler, God rest his restless soul, would have had these communist punks in court and been flailing them with his acid tongue, and what do you do? Nothing! Bitch to me, "Who're we gonna get to write the column?" Nobody,

goddamn it! Get a dog to take my place but don't you dare try to front some liberal poseur off on the suckers who buy this rag.

Listen to me, I told those fools I have never been paid! Not once. What business? Those convicts who run this rag don't pay anybody. What do you expect from a bunch of cons?



This is a motherfucking hobby! I was in the Captain's office and I dared them to produce my books and show me one check or money order I'd received from *Prison Life* or Joint Venture Media or whatever the crooks who run this scam are calling themselves now. You know what the Captain said? "We have reason to believe the money is going street-to-street," as if I'd been caught peddling dope.

I know what this is about. You want to know? It's about fame. Not fame and fortune, unfortunately, but fame, pure and simple. I get more mail in a week than the warden and everyone else who works at this joint gets in a year. I had two guys here from Hollywood who want to do my life story. There's a comic

book and interactive CD-ROM in the works. Bob Guccione wants to hire me to write for *Penthouse*.

The warden is jealous, that's why he had me locked up. They ain't got shit on me. I could beat this case with Marcia Clark for a lawyer. My first and only legitimate gig and these aliens want to give me ninety days hole time! If you people don't have the balls to go after the warden and get Bubba's ass out of lock-up, we're through. I'll never write another miserable fucking word for *Prison Life* and I'll send someone down there to rip your eyes out if you don't take my likeness and name out of your penny-pinching publication.

And tell all my fans not to worry. This is America. Bubba is American. They can't do this to me. I may be a no good convict, but I do have rights. I have a right to write, for chrissakes, and to read whatever the fuck I want. And to say whatever I want, too, for all you little ol' ladies and Bible bangers out there who take exception to my language. What good are the Constitution and Bill of Rights if we let these people shit all over us?

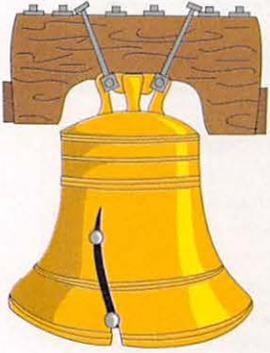
Call Kuby, for God's sake. Call my agent. Call Mike Tyson. Let them know what's happening to me. Send some cigarettes so I can bribe an orderly and get something going around here. I've got nothing. You people leave me to rot in here like a sick animal. Stop knuckling under. And don't even think of trying to replace me. I'll keep getting my column out to you if I have to send it by smoke signals.

One last thing. My mother could use a few bucks. If you decide to pay me anytime soon, send the old gal \$50 or \$100 and the rest to the wife and kids. That's right, I haven't given up on you. Don't give up on me!

Bubba

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Cellmate of the Month

Rap Sheet

Name: Clayton Howard
Age: 30
Birthplace: Opa Locka, FL
Conviction: Murder
Sentence: Life
No possibility for parole for 25 years
Time Served: 12 years
Ambitions: To run an organization for youth at risk



Some readers may have noticed we haven't had a Celly of the Month for the past two issues. "Maybe that's because no one worthy of the title has been nominated," wrote "a subscriber, reader and fan" named David Wood in Florida's Baker Correctional Institution. "If that's the case," he continued, "then you have nothing to worry about. All of us Prison Life readers here at Baker have talked it over and we feel that Clayton Howard is more than worthy of the title." Following is David Wood's profile of Prison Life's November '95 Cellmate of the Month.

by David Wood

As a kid, Clayton Howard felt he never quite fit in. "Something was missing in my life," he says, "and I thought my parents were the reason. At 16 I dropped out of school and ran away from home. I lived in the streets until I got a job and saved enough money for an apartment and a car. This was the life, I thought.

"I didn't get into trouble for a while, not even a parking ticket. I had never seen the inside of a jail. But within two years, I stood in front of a judge in Fort Lauderdale as he said, 'Young man, for the crime of murder, I sentence you to spend the rest of your life in the state penitentiary.'"

After a night of drinking and drugging with a local drug dealer, a violent argument had ensued and Howard ended up shooting the dealer.

When the judge handed down a life sentence with a mandatory 25 years, Clayton felt as if his life was over. "I believed that all the dreams I had for myself would be forever beyond my reach."

After sentencing, Clayton was shipped to Baker for two months, then transferred to Union Correctional Institution, known as "The Rock," and the second worst prison in Florida.

Three years later, just when he thought things couldn't get any worse, he was sent to Florida's most violent pen, the East Unit, where he spent five hard years.

"I was young and thought I could gain respect in prison by staying in trouble," Howard says. But in his mid 20s he decided it was time for a change. "I realized it was time to help myself, not just impress other prisoners."

In 1993, he attended a Christian retreat called Kairos, where he found people willing to help him. Soon after, Clayton decided to start helping others.

He focused on troubled teens, young men who were on the same path that had led him to prison. Clayton realized that some tough talk was needed and asked the administration if groups of teens could visit the prison. But officials nixed the idea. Knowing he would never be permitted to make outside visits, he developed a correspondence program, "Straight Talk," and wrote to young people about his story and the hazards of drugs. He encouraged them to stay in school and steer clear of crime. With help from friends on the outside, he produced a pamphlet and distributed it to schools, churches and youth organizations. Called *Groovin'—Finding the Good Life—The Clayton Howard Story*, the brochure brings home the horrors of prison life in graphic descriptions. "I ate fly- and roach-infested food slid through a hole in the door of my tiny cell. I was given three five-minute showers a week. I saw other teenage boys cut their wrists and jugular veins. Death seemed a better way."

Clayton told his story over and over, hoping others would learn from his mistakes. Kids wrote to Clayton immediately, and once parents got wind of Clayton's "Straight Talk," they

begged him to write to their kids.

Clayton receives about three new teen pen pals a month and adds them to his list of proteges. He recently expanded his project with a newsletter called *Brothers Helping Brothers*. Upon his release (he's hoping to get his sentence commuted to 17 years mandatory time), he plans to establish a full-fledged outreach organization and speak to large groups of youth at risk.

In preparation for that day, Clayton has been honing his public speaking skills through the prison's Toastmasters Club. Since joining, he has won first place in eight speech contests. He wins by writing and rewriting his speeches, memorizing and rehearsing them in his cell into the early morning hours. His humorous and motivational speeches have titillated both prisoner and freeworld audiences.

Today Clayton works in the education department as a clerk/secretary for the education supervisor. He also volunteers his time as a peer counselor in the drug program and tries to get other prisoners involved in self-development endeavors. He greets new arrivals at Baker and explains the prison pitfalls, traps and "boo" games. He is also writing a prison manual/survival guide for first-time offenders.

Clayton's newest challenge is college. "I was the first person in my family to come to prison, and I'll be the first one to earn a college degree," he says with a smile. He plans to receive his B.S. in Business Administration next year.

"Prison can be a place for positive growth," Clayton says, "and I hope I can influence others to make the time work for them, no matter how long the sentence."



Who's Got the Money? The Low-Down on Post-Release Benefits

by Jim Ballard
Idaho Correctional Institution

Some of us have no idea what we'll do when we get out, beyond spending our gate money and making that first appointment with the P.O. But one thing's for sure: We face some pretty tough obstacles out there, and once the money runs out, things will get ugly.

Maybe you've heard the myths about all the benefits awaiting ex-cons. You may even be one of those unlucky dudes who purchased an info sheet detailing all the people and places just waiting to fork over big money to you. Let's face the facts: No one out there is going to hand something over to you just because you've been in prison.

There are, however, some legitimate programs you can tap into if you're willing to use your head, have patience and apply yourself. With a little persistence, these programs could mean the difference between making it or not.

Employment Development Department

The Employment Development Department (EDD), better known as the unemployment office, will not—no matter what you have heard—give you unemployment compensation for a prison job. At one time they did, but that program was abolished in October, 1983.

However, according to Lazlo Toth, author of the *Prisoner's Yellow Pages*, there are still unemployment and disability benefits to be had, albeit limited, for any time spent on a prison job or vocational program prior to July 1, 1982. So if you were breaking your back for Prison Industries before this date, you might have some benefits coming. Check it out with your local EDD.

While you're looking for work, it's a good idea to register with the EDD. This helps out in a number of ways. When you see an EDD counselor, ask about the Targeted Jobs Tax Program. This and other programs like it encourage businesses to hire ex-offenders by rewarding them with tax breaks. An employer hiring an ex-con is eligible for up to \$4,500 in federal tax credits, even more in some states. Find out what the deal is in your state and consider using this as a selling item when looking for work.

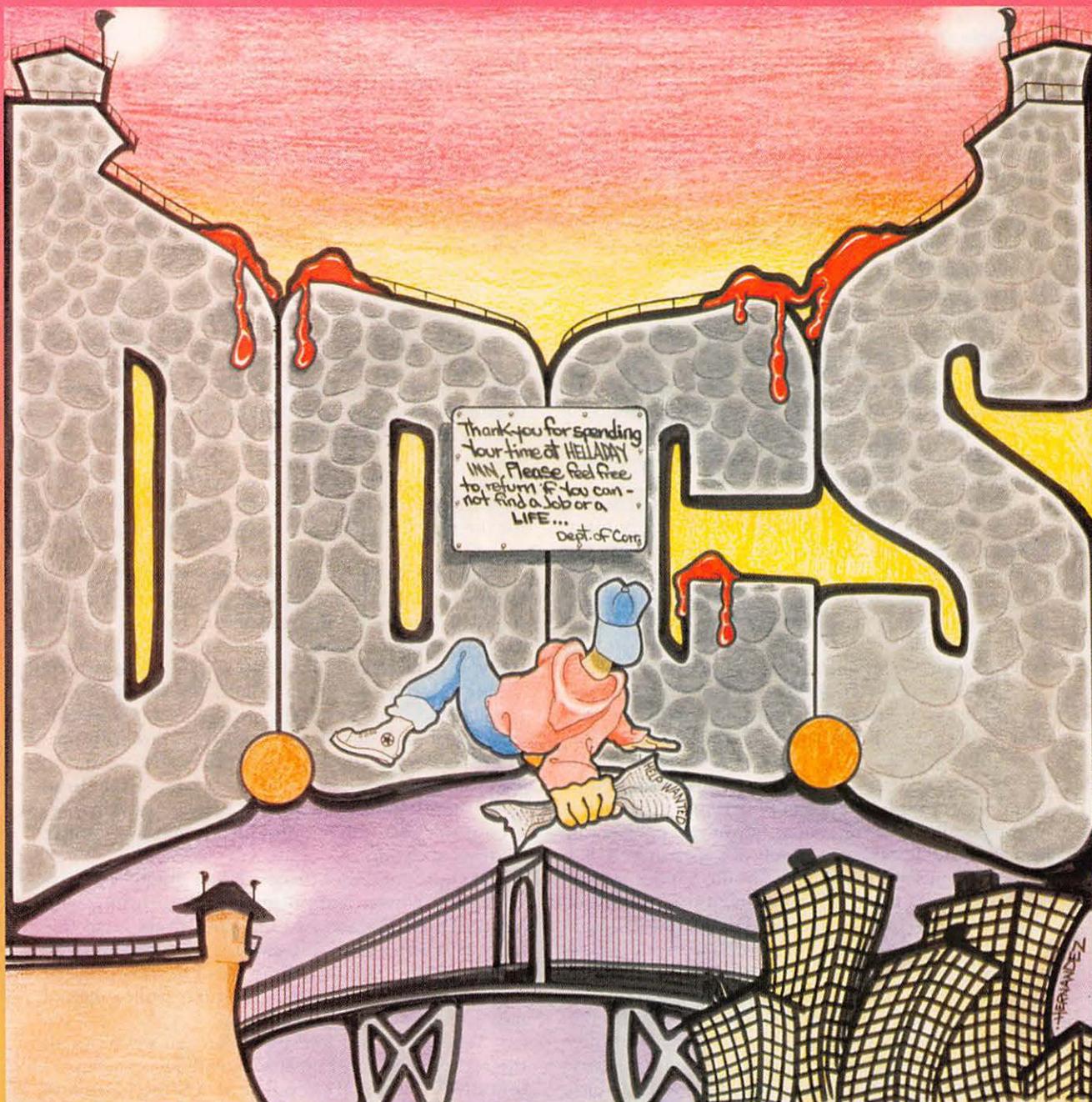
Department of Vocational Rehabilitation

The Department of Vocational Rehabilitation gets a lot of mention, but unfortunately most of it is false. A while back, I had the opportunity to interview Don Eskridge from a California office of the DVR. He said his office receives hundreds of letters asking about their services. In case you've heard the rumors: No, the DVR will not buy you a car or truck to get to work; and no, they will not co-sign a loan.

About 15 to 20 years ago, the DVR really did try to help anyone getting out of prison. But the powers-that-be took a look at the abuses going on and they pulled the plug, fast.

What the DVR *will* do is help anyone who is physically or mentally handicapped prepare for employment. Serious substance abuse problems that affect your ability to work *do* constitute a vocational handicap. So if you had a problem holding down a job because of booze or dope, these folks will help you decide what line of work might be best suited for you. They'll put you on a training program geared for

(continued on page 67)



Art by Joseph Hernandez, Green Haven C.F.

The Scoop on Social Security

by Michael Steinberg, Attorney

If you are disabled due to a severe mental impairment, you may be eligible for Social Security disability benefits. Social Security recognizes illnesses such as drug addiction, alcoholism, schizophrenia, depression, mental retardation, anxiety, personality disorders, organic brain damage and some other types of disorders.

The Social Security Administration places a lot of emphasis on the following four categories to determine if a person is disabled: activities of daily living, social functioning, concentration and episodes of deterioration in work or work-like situations. If you are markedly impaired in at least two of these areas, you have a good chance of being awarded benefits.

So why aren't most prisoners receiving Social Security benefits? The reason is that the Social Security Administration prohibits payment of benefits to persons incarcerated under a sentence that carries with it a prison term of one year or more. Then why bother reading this article?

There are basically two different types of Social Security disability benefits: Social Security Disability Insurance Benefits and SSI. In order to qualify for Disability Insurance Benefits, a person must have worked and paid Social Security taxes for at least five of the past 10 years prior to becoming disabled. (The rules are a little different for persons under 30.) In order to receive SSI, one must be poor and disabled.

Social Security Disability will pay a person one year prior to the date of his application or five months after he becomes disabled, whichever is the later date. In other words, if you were recently sentenced, you may be eligible to receive back benefits of up to one year, even though you are not currently eligible for ongoing benefits. If you wait until you get out, you will lose all of the back pay to which you are entitled. SSI only pays benefits from the date of the application.

In addition to money benefits, if you are found eligible for SSI, you will also be eligible for Medicaid. If you filed for SSI and were denied within the past two years, you may be able to reopen your case and get paid back to the date of the prior application.

Why file now for disability benefits? Besides the possibility of back pay for Social Security Disability Insurance Benefits, it is important to establish a "period of disability" as early as possible. First, the medical and psychological evidence will be fresh. Secondly, the Social Security appeals process sometimes takes as long as two to three years before a finding of disability is made. Wouldn't it be nice to be eligible for benefits the first month you get out?

What to do

The first step in obtaining Social Security benefits is to fill out an application. The Social Security

Regulations and the Social Security Act do not prohibit prisoners from applying for benefits. Nonetheless, Social Security offices refuse to accept and take applications until just prior to a prisoner's anticipated release date. Currently there is a Petition for Writ of Mandamus pending in Federal Court to order the Social Security Administration to accept and process prisoners' applications. In the meantime, sending a letter to Social Security stating your intent to file for benefits should act as a protective filing date of your application.

Why is it valuable to society for prisoners to be found eligible for benefits? As most of you know, it is extremely difficult for a newly released prisoner to get a job. It is even more difficult for an ex-convict with severe mental impairments to get a job. If one is released with no way of making an honest living, there is a high probability that he will return to a life of crime. With Social Security, SST and Medicaid, a person at least has enough money to survive, and insurance to treat his illness so that he can once again (or for the first time) become a contributing member of society.

But how do we know the ex-con won't just use the money for alcohol or drugs? Because Social Security requires that for those persons who have an alcohol or drug-related impairment, or who cannot handle their own money, a Representative Payee will be appointed to handle their money. The Social Security Administration also requires that persons addicted to alcohol or drugs attend such rehabilitation programs as the SSA deems appropriate. If disability is based primarily on alcohol and drugs, after three years the benefits will automatically be terminated, even if the person is still disabled due to alcoholism or drug addiction.

Do you need an attorney? The Social Security appeals process is complicated. Most attorneys who handle these cases must limit their practice to this area. It is extremely difficult for a person outside prison without a mental impairment to represent himself. If you are in prison and suffer from a mental impairment, you need an attorney.

Where can you find one? You can write or call the National Organization of Social Security Representatives (NOSSCR) at 6 Prospect Street, Midland Park, New Jersey 07432. They will provide you with the name of an attorney in your area who can handle your case. Expect to pay this attorney 25% of your past due benefits. If there are no past due benefits, expect to pay this attorney a flat fee (probably around \$1,000) if you win and nothing if you lose. If an attorney wants to charge you a fee regardless of whether you win or lose, don't hire him. You may also contact this writer at 2203 North Lois Avenue, Suite 950, Tampa, Florida 33607.

this new line of work, and they'll work with the EDD to help you find a new job.

The DVR will also help you through an unseen financial crisis should one occur while you're in their program. And if you need books, tools or equipment for this new line of work, they'll help you get them. Finally, although they won't buy you a car, they will help you out with a bus pass. You should know, however, that these benefits aren't available until you've spent a specific amount of time on the job, usually 60 days or more.

You can find these guys in the state listings of your phone book under the Department of Rehabilitation. Write the local office to get the central office's address and maybe you can get the ball rolling even before you get out.

Food

The price of food may shock you upon release. It sure hasn't gone down in your absence. Don't despair. You are eligible for food stamps—up to about \$80 a month depending on what state you live in. But you will need to satisfy two requirements: You need to be an established resident of that state, and you must be registered for work. Remember that trip to the EDD? Well, you satisfied both requirements when you registered for work. Don't allow pride to get in the way, because food stamps could mean the difference between making it in the free world and coming back to the pen.

Small Business Administration

The Small Business Administration shares many of the same myths and misunderstandings as the DVR. I have written to the SBA (and you can bet it took a lot of letters!) to get to the bottom of what they're willing to do for ex-cons. This is what they said:

There are NO benefits available to a person on probation or on parole. Also, an ex-felon is NOT considered a minority for loan purposes.

To make a long story short, if you're out free and clear, you stand the same chances as anyone else of getting something from the SBA. But you better have your act together before you go. They'll want to see substantiation of your expertise in your proposed area, a five-year plan of operations, marketing and consumer stats and lots of other related data: material costs, including amounts and sources as well as tools and any special equipment that'll be needed. This is not to say that once you're off parole, you should not go see them. Just be prepared.

One last note on the SBA: They do not give you the loan. They co-sign the loan for you at a participating bank. One guy I know who got help from them says it's a good idea to already have a bank lined up.

Education

Even though the feds have cut the Pell Grants, make sure you avail yourself of any educational opportunities your institution offers. Once you're out, do some research on grants and loans and consider getting a degree. This will increase your chances of finding a job in the competitive market that awaits you. For additional information, write to : Federal Student Aid Programs, Department DEA-85, Pueblo, CO 81009. Ask them for the booklet, *Five Federal Financial Aid Programs*. Some states offer assistance, too. Call or write for information

at your state's capital city.

That's about it for federal stuff. You may want to check with United Way, too. They'll be more than happy to guide you to all the programs available in your area.

Don't forget to check out all the good programs at the state level. Look for programs that deal with alcoholism, blood banks, dental care, disabilities, drugs, emergencies, environmental health, eye care, hearing loss, hospitals and hospices (lodging if you're really sick), long-term care, medical records, mental health, tax information, health-care deductions, X-rays, etc. Roll up your sleeves and start looking.

On a Positive Note . . .

Now that I've got all that covered, I'd like to end on a more positive note and talk about your parole officer. If you're like me, the first thought to enter your mind is "enemy." If you're screwing up, that's probably going to be true. But the fact is—and you may find this pretty hard to stomach—this guy really would rather see you make it than fail. If you show him you *want* to succeed, and if he takes a liking to you, this guy can steer all sorts of help your way.

In an interview with a California P.O. named Tucker, he told me that a P.O. can even help a client get a car—not only at a low price, but also on a payment plan from the state. Ask your P.O. what sort of programs he knows about to help you get a leg up.

Keep in mind that many organizations specialize in helping their own. I have yet to find one that helps retired dope crooks, but there are folks like the Veteran's Administration and the NAACP. (See *Prison Life's* Resources department.)

If you're willing to put forth some effort and swallow some pride, you'll discover there really is a lot of help out there. I don't know about you, but I'm doing 15 fixed. When this is over, I'll be using every resource to help me make it.



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Iron Pile

by Chris Cozzone, Fitness Editor

FAT ATTACK—AEROBIC STYLE

I've been lifting for years here and I've put on some decent muscle. I'm also pretty strong: at 5'8" and 190 pounds, I can bench press 350 and squat 500. Only, I can't really see much of that muscle because I'm sorta chubby. I read in a magazine that doing more reps will help me get cut. Do you have any other suggestions? Ones that wouldn't involve changing my diet? I'm already watching my fat intake and besides, there's not much control over what you're gonna get served in chow hall.

A. Pinaus
CA State Prison

Chubbs,

Forget the weights, bro. Weight lifting isn't gonna trim a fat body. (True, a body with more muscle requires more calories a day than a body without the extra beef, but if you're carrying fat, you're overdoing your caloric intake anyway.) You can do thousands of reps and it won't do a damn thing to those ugly fat deposits. You can do crunches for hours and still not lose your spare tire; sidebends forever and still be sportin' love handles; thousands of squats and still have fat legs. This is called spot reduction—and it doesn't work!

A lot of guys think that doing reps over the norm (6 to 12) crosses over into the definition, i.e. fat-burning stage. Nope! Not that you *shouldn't* do higher reps: they're great for muscle growth. (Most of the time, weightlifters don't give themselves proper time to "dig deep" and really burn the shit outta their targeted muscle group.) Just keep in mind that it isn't going to cut you up.

If you want to get ripped, or just bring out basic muscle cuts, you're gonna have to do the dreaded "A" word—Aerobic training.

No, you don't have to spend all your hard-earned or swindled cash on a Richard Simmons "Sweatin' to the Oldies" video or round up the cellblock queens and start a Jane Fonda group. Nah, leave that crap to

the sissies and housewives in the free-world. That's only *one* form of aerobic training.

Aerobic training involves training your major muscle groups and your heart through continuous exercise. In the freeworld, there are dozens of options at the local gym: treadmills, Nordic Track machines, Stairmasters, computerized stationary bikes with digital men to race—all kinda shit. There are step classes and low-impact classes with lots of chicks, too. But you can get the same results from running (in place or on a track), jumping jacks, stair climbing, even fast walking. You got plenty of options. You can even do aerobic work in the Hole if you have to.

AEROBIC EXERCISE

PRISON:

Running, Walking

IN THE HOLE:

Running in place,

Squat thrusts,

Jumping Jacks

FREEWORLD:

Stationary bike, Treadmill,

Stairmaster, Nordic Track,

Cross Country Skiing

BASIC AEROBICS: FREQUENCY

You should do aerobic work a minimum of three times a week. Space your workouts, maybe every other day at first. As you improve, increase to four times a week. If you got the energy and attitude (we know you got the time), you can even increase aerobics to five or six times a week. Just keep in mind that training hard every day is gonna burn you out. 'Sides, as a devout weightlifter, you're still gonna want to save some of that juice

for the weights. The last thing you want is to do so much aerobic shit that you not only lose the fat but half your hard-gained muscle.

DURATION

Research has shown that for the average person, a minimum of 15 minutes of continuous aerobic training is a must. Anything less than 15 minutes will show little or no benefit. You see, it takes your body nearly 15 minutes just to reach that aerobic, fat-burning stage. All activity before that is fueled by stored carbohydrates. Start with 15 minutes a shot, but as soon as you're physically able, increase your time.

Work up your duration until you're doing a minimum of 30 minutes per session. You might even want to work up to 45 minutes a session, if you have energy to spare. Research shows there's a big difference between 15 and 30 minutes, a noticeable-but-not-so-great difference between 30 and 50 minutes, and very little difference for any time over that.

INTENSITY

For this shit to work, you need a minimal level of intensity. If you're whistling tunes through your supposed-aerobic workout, you oughtta kick yourself in the ass. But you shouldn't be gasping for air, either. Training at too hard an intensity rate will be too strenuous or impossible to continue for a long period of time.

Your intensity level should be at approximately 65 percent of your maximal heart rate (220 minus your age equals your max heart rate, give or take). Check your pulse during your workouts to keep yourself on target.

COOL DOWN PERIOD

Each aerobic session should end with a cool-down to bring your pulse rate down slowly. Stopping exercise suddenly causes blood to pool in

your legs and this may cause fainting. Take five or 10 minutes to walk around after each session.

INTERVAL TRAINING

As you get used to doing aerobic workouts, you might want to introduce interval training. During your regular aerobic workouts, alternate periods of higher level intensity into your training. For example, in a 30-minute run, you might warm up for 10 minutes, then spend the next 20 minutes alternating slow jogs and fast sprints. Cool down for 10 minutes afterwards.

Although interval training and sprinting will alter the strictly fat-burning process, it can lead to burning more fat than straight aerobic training. Fast-pace training speeds up your metabolism, allowing you to burn fat at a faster rate during the time you're *not* exercising.

If you're training aerobically four times a week, you might want to alternate interval sessions with regular, continuous sessions.

This should get you started. Still, be careful about what you're eating. No, there ain't much you can do

about the state-issued shit, but if you got some dough for commissary, you can supplement your diet with healthier fare. If possible, sub a can of tuna for that slab of mystery meat on your tray; maybe trade it for a piece of fruit or something. Losing

that flab is best done by changing your diet *and* exercising.

Send your fitness questions to Iron Pile, c/o Prison Life, 175 5th Avenue, Suite 2205, New York, NY 10010.

AEROBIC FITNESS

LOW FITNESS	AVERAGE FITNESS	HIGH FITNESS
FREQUENCY (days/week)		
3	3-4	5+
DURATION (minutes)		
10-20	15-45	30-60
INTENSITY (% max. heart rate)		
60-70	70-80	80-90

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Quote by L. Ron Hubbard

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Tattoo of the Month

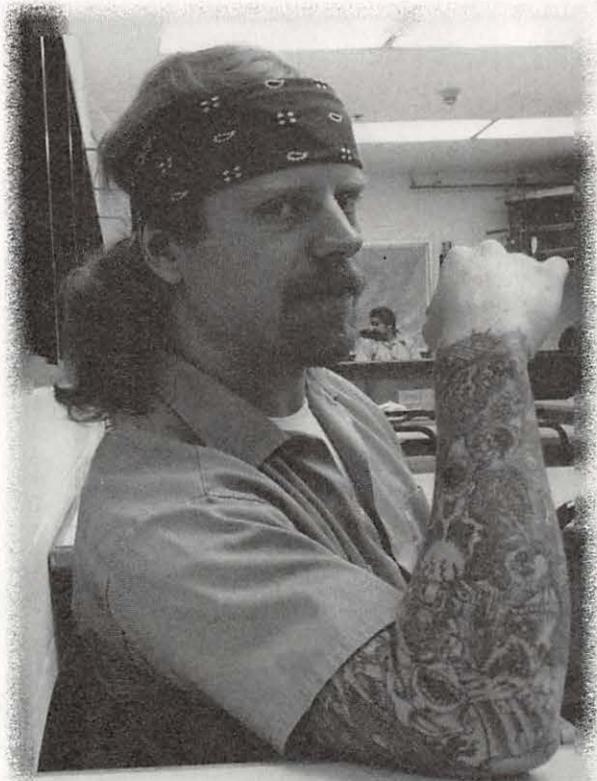


photo by Elizabeth Heimlich

It's my lifestyle.

Just because your arms are sleeved with tattoos, it doesn't mean you're a criminal or you've been in prison.

Yeah, I'm in prison, and yeah, I got a lot of tattoos, but they each have a special meaning. My right forearm is dedicated to my grandparents, who died while I was in prison. My other tattoos are there because they look good, but most of them have stories behind them. They're a part of who I am.

If you're thinking of getting sleeved, you should remember that the tattoos will be there longer than any prison sentence.

*Dan Severson
Montana State Pen*

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A Summary of Recent Federal Criminal Cases

by **Peter G. Schmidt**

United States v. Carr, 56 F.3d 38 (9th Cir. 1995)

Here's one of those crazy cases that makes you think about "justice" in America. The defendant is convicted as a career offender because he had two prior convictions: one for selling a "nickel baggie" of marijuana for \$5, and the other for selling .26 grams of cocaine for \$25 dollars. In this case, years later, he is found guilty of selling 66 grams of crack, and gets sentenced to 262 months in prison—nearly 22 years. On appeal, his sentence is affirmed, and to cleanse its soul the court cites lots of other horrible examples where the Supreme Court has ruled that outrageous sentences are neither "grossly disproportionate" with the offense nor cruel and unusual punishment.

Thomas v. District of Columbia, 887 F.Supp. 1 (D.D.C. 1995)

Check out this prisoner case against Sergeant Charles Ingram, a corrections officer at the Maximum Security Facility at Lorton, Virginia. The lawsuit, under 42 U.S.C. § 1983, alleges that the plaintiff was harassed and retaliated against by Sgt. Ingram because he resisted Ingram's homosexual advances. The defendant seeks to dismiss the lawsuit on the grounds of qualified immunity. The court refuses to dismiss it and orders the case to trial, holding in part that "sexual assault, coercion and harassment of the sort alleged by the plaintiff violate contemporary standards of decency and can cause severe physical and psychological harm."

United States v. Tayman, 885 F.Supp. 832 (E.D.Va. 1995)

This case is an important follow-up of the Fourth Circuit's decision in *U.S. v. Irvin, 2 F.3d 72 (4th Cir. 1993)*, which held that mandatory minimum sentences imposed under 21 U.S.C. § 841 must be based on the amount of drugs that was reasonably foreseeable to the defendant, rather than on the amount distributed by the conspiracy. Here, Judge Ellis holds that the *Irvin* decision is retroactively applicable and that the defendant (who was originally sentenced in 1992) is now entitled to a hearing to determine the amount of drugs reasonably foreseeable to him, even though he never objected to the quantity of drugs attributed to him in his presentence report. This is important because if the issue were not previously raised, most courts require a defendant to show cause why it was not, and some degree of prejudice before it can be raised on a new appeal. Here, the judge rules that the "cause" needed now to raise the issue on appeal was "the novelty of the subsequent decision in *Irvin*". The decision is long and well-reasoned; it should be a bonanza to federal drug defendants in the Fourth Circuit.

Wilson v. Meeks, 52 F.3d 1547 (10th Cir. 1995)

This is another police brutality case that shows the extremes to which the courts will go to excuse law enforcement agents. Here, after the cop shoots a suspect, he handcuffs him, making it difficult for the wounded man to breathe. The guy ultimately dies—not of the gunshot wounds, but of asphyxiation—but not before an EMS staff member arrives and asks the cop to remove the handcuffs so he can administer first aid. The cop refuses, stating he does "not want to get blood on his hands." The deceased man's relatives sue under 42 U.S.C. § 1983 for civil rights damages. The claim is denied, despite serious allegations of cover-ups such as "losing" valuable evidence. In one of the classic lines of American jurisprudence (and justice), the court holds that: "The Constitution does not empower us to command police officers to show compassion for those they injure in the line of duty."

United States v. Hogan, 54 F.3d 336 (7th Cir. 1995)

A revealing case in which a director of personnel for the Cook County Sheriff's department engaged in a fraudulent scheme to make sure that the people he wanted to employ as corrections officers met the necessary qualifications for employment. Acting at the behest of an "anonymous" high level official, he created "at least" 125 fictitious GED certificates for those candidates he wanted—assuring that the corrections staff in Cook County was stocked with illiterates—something that won't surprise anyone who knows anything about the way prisons really operate.

United States v. Lopez-Aguilar, 886 F.Supp. 305 (E.D.N.Y. 1995)

Here's a case that should appeal to all lusty prisoners. Judge Weinstein rules that fertility problems of a defendant and his wife, who was in her thirties, constituted "extraordinary family circumstances" under § 5H1.6 of the Federal Sentencing Guidelines and warranted a huge downward departure of 10 levels. The court took into consideration the fact that if the defendant had been incarcerated for the mandatory minimum term that the law required, it would have reduced the chances of the defendant and his wife having a child to almost zero. This decision is certain to be appealed by the Government; it is another gem from Judge Weinstein.

Sisneros v. Nix, 884 F.Supp. 1313 (S.D.Iowa 1995)

This outstanding case explores in-depth the rights of prisoners, their ability to bring an action for damages and the concept of qualified immunity for prison officials.

Judge Bennett reviews all these topics in a 40-page decision that should be required reading for all jailhouse lawyers. The two main issues are (a) whether an English-only policy for incoming mail for prisoners is Constitutional, and (b) whether a prisoner has the right to sue for damages for retaliatory transfers within the prison system. On the first issue, Judge Bennett concludes that prisons do have the right to establish an English-only policy for incoming mail, but he reviews all the pertinent case law—a great source of information for any jailhouse lawyer. On the second issue, he finds that the prisoner was transferred from Iowa to Arizona without a legitimate penological reason and in retaliation for pursuing prisoner grievances. The court awards compensatory and punitive damages against the two prison officials who ordered him transferred, and grants injunctive relief, requiring the Iowa officials to transfer him back to Iowa. It also warns the Iowa officials not to harass the prisoner upon his return to the Iowa prison system. Any prisoner who wants to study what rights and remedies are available should read this case. If you happen to live in Iowa and need help, contact Prof. Barbara Schwartz, at the Iowa College of Law (313-335-9034), who wrote the briefs in this case for the plaintiff.

Ware v. Barr, 883 F.Supp. 654 (M.D.Fla. 1995)

Here's a great case of persistence paying off. A defendant is convicted on the basis of testimony of a co-defendant who snitched. While in prison, the defendant files a Freedom of Information Act request with the FBI and actually receives a report showing there were some 68 fingerprints on the currency that was seized in the investigation, but none belonged to him. The prosecutor withheld that information from the defendant at trial. Based on that *Brady* violation, the court vacated the conviction; on a retrial the defendant was acquitted after spending some three years in prison. Here he brings an action for damages under 42 U.S.C. § 1985(3), which provides a remedy for persons who have been deprived of their rights due to a conspiracy. The prosecutor moves for dismissal of the complaint based on a claim of immunity, but the court refuses to grant total dismissal, holding that immunity only applies when the Government acts in good faith. It holds that a deliberate decision to withhold the FBI report is not immune from suit. III

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Illustration by Henry Herz



ANIMAL FACTORY

(continued from
page 43)

crowds, sending them farther apart as it exploded, gyrating and spinning as it gave off its fearful fumes. Again Earl was buffeted so that he had to fight for balance. It was like struggling to keep his head above water in a stormy sea. The motes reached his eyes and fluid began to run from them and from his nose. "Cocksuckers . . . bastards," he cursed silently.

Like some mindless beast driven without purpose, the twelve hundred Chicano and white convicts swung in a clockwise motion so that they were against the mess-hall wall. Driven by the tear gas from the North cellhouse wall, the blacks were where the whites had been along the East cellhouse. The two groups, twelve hundred whites and eight hundred blacks, faced each other across a hundred and fifty yards of open space.

A hundred convicts were jammed against the East cellhouse gate, trying futilely to get in away from trouble.

"Lockup! Lockup! Mandatory lock-up!" the loudspeaker blared.

"Open the fuckin' gates," someone near Earl said. Both sides were now spread out. Earl's friends stuck together and his fear became fury. He was certain the officials had deliberately turned a strike into a racial confrontation.

A window of the mess hall crashed out. Then another. Men were yelling in fury. Stacks of stainless steel trays were being passed to the raised hands of whites and Chicanos. Then came other things that would serve as weapons—mop wringers, pieces of the dishwashing machine, heavy wooden ladles used on the kitchen vats.

Across the yard the blacks were ripping benches apart to get hunks of lumber. Earl did nothing, knowing the groups would never get at each other across the no-man's-land. The rifles and submachine gun would erect an insurmountable barrier of death.

A convict pushed against Earl to leap to the window to get something. He landed on Earl's foot when he came down.

"Asshole!" Earl snarled, ramming the heels of his hands into the man's chest and knocking him back. The convict bumped into someone behind

him and kept from falling. His face was already contorted with rage at the blacks. His curse at Earl was drowned in the churning, screaming crowd as he tensed to spring. He had a piece of pipe in his hand and lunged. Earl stepped back, raising an arm, intending to rush under the swing if he could. He wished he had a knife. The convict rushed without seeing T.J., nor did Earl see him until the powerful weightlifter swung the glat of a stainless steel tray as if it were a baseball bat. The man rushed into it, and his feet kept going as the tray curtained his face. His shoulders hit the ground first, and it was a few seconds before the blood came from his squashed flesh. His legs trembled in spasms.

Bad Eye came from somewhere and planted a steel-toed brogan against the man's head, as hard a kick as he could deliver. T.J. gave him the accolade of a pat on the back.

The tumult made it impossible to talk, but they pushed through the crowd toward others of the Brotherhood a few feet away, leaving the supine figure to be walked on—or to die for all they cared.

The two crowds were screaming at each other, brandishing makeshift weapons.

Bad Eye cupped his hands to Earl's ear. "We'll get the black motherfuckers this time. All they've got is some sticks."

Earl said nothing, but looked again at the riflemen. The two crowds started to surge toward each other and the submachine gun hammered three short bursts, tearing up chunks of asphalt in stitches. Then the rifles volleyed. Bullets swept down the open zone and the crowds froze and fell back. The gunfire silenced the screaming.

One black was twisting on the ground. Obviously a guard had shot into the crowd instead of in front of it. The black was holding his thigh and trying to get up. Two blacks started forward to help him, but a bullet whipped over their heads to drive them back.

Some of the hysteria had drained away. Glazed eyes began to narrow, madness was replaced by questions about what to do, what was going to happen.

"Attention in the yard! All inmates by the mess hall will go the lower yard!"

The answering bellow of defiance was a shadow of a few minutes earlier. Some men yelled and shook their fists, but they would have done the same if told to stand fast or go home.

The tear-gas grenades flew over the men, landing under the shed beyond the fringe of the crowd. The gas drove convicts crashing into others, sending a reverberation through the crowd and jamming bodies together again. The route of escape was through the gate. They couldn't go down the road because the visored tactical squad was waiting with clubs and mace, so they surged down the stairs, some falling until another body stopped them.

They were herded like cattle into the thinning fog. All was gray under the lightless sky; the walls looked soft in the fog; lined by faceless silhouettes with rifles. The lower yard was big, and the convicts spread out like water on a plain. Everyone searched for a friend, sensing that this was a dangerous situation, for no guards were on the ground and those on the walls were too far away to see what was going on. It was a chance to settle old grudges. The law of brutality was replaced with no law whatsoever.



APPEALS

WRITS OF HABEAS CORPUS

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Voice of the Convict



(continued
from page 7)

-ers and their families serving insanely harsh sentences. In the middle of the visit, guards swarmed the room and called count, "Visitors outside! Inmates against the wall!" as though they were afraid someone might try to walk off with one of their cherished numbers.

Driving away from the prison complex later that day, back toward the border of America, I saw a sign outside a small convenience store; "American Owned" it said. I winced at the sentiment: Who the fuck do these people think they are? *American owned. America begins here.* What does that make the rest of us and where do we live?

These suckers are thriving on the prison industry. It's one of the fastest growing of the few healthy businesses in the country. I was ready to bet that the rednecks who owned the store made a large percentage of their profits off visitors to Prisonland. Americans of all race and clan and creed have come to this country seeking freedom and opportunity. Some were uprooted and brought here against their will to serve as slave

labor for wealthy white Americans. Disproportionate numbers of the poor, of African Americans and of the latest immigrant wave inevitably wind up in prison. They are the ones Whitebread America, sitting in front of TVs, love to loathe. Sell them crap, treat them like dirt, lock them up, and mutter epithets all the way to the bank.

At one time, the hills of Pennsylvania were quilted with family-owned farms. Lovely old barns decorated with colorful hex signs stood beside the road. The heartland of America was the breadbasket of the world. Then we dominated international markets with American-made goods. Now we build prisons. There are state representatives and Congressmen who specialize in bringing prison industry to their districts. Business is so good private sector companies like Wackenhut and Corrections Corporation of America are competing for a slice of the prisons-for-profit pie. The private companies are already exporting the Prisonland franchise, opening new markets in Canada and France. Just as the military-industrial complex welcomes retired generals and Pentagon heavies, Private Prisonland America, Inc. is top heavy with former security and corrections officials.

With over five million people under the control of the criminal justice system, either in prison, on parole or probation, Prisonland America, Inc. shows no signs of going bankrupt soon. Run by cops and ex-cops, xenophobes, racists, rednecks, Republicans and Democrats, liberals and conservatives, the government or big business, it hardly matters, the prison industry flourishes in bad times. Nations on the verge of upheaval incarcerate and execute more and more of their people, as if pain and death ameliorate social ills.

We need to remind ourselves what this ugly, voracious industry produces. Prisonland America, Inc. makes prisoners, disenfranchised men and women it then despises. Broken families are just one of the wasteful by-products, broken families that provide more raw material for prisoner factories.

When I crossed back into New York state on the way home, I hardly felt any more at ease. There are vistas along the thruway where the night is bright with the glow of high intensity security lamps illuminating prisons. Soon New York will join other death states and start killing condemned prisoners. There is no need to travel to visit the latest theme park. Prisonland America, Inc. is at our doorstep.



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Words from a Prisoner's Wife

by Tricia Hedin

I have been reading letters in your magazine from prisoners bemoaning the fact that their wives or girlfriends ended their relationship after they went to prison. As I read these letters, I find myself fuming: They are so full of self-pity and even vindictiveness toward the women.

I am married to a man who is serving a lengthy sentence in federal prison. I have been visiting him in prison for the past 13 years. Yes, that's years, folks. And now I hear you guys saying: "See? She's a good wife. She stuck by her man. She can do it. Why can't my woman?" And that's my point. Stop criticizing the women you have hurt by your actions and your incarceration. Stop blaming them for your situation and for their unwillingness to join you in being oppressed by the prison system.

Even with the best husband in the world, living in two worlds is very oppressive. The reason my marriage works is that my husband and I do not get bogged down in self-pity. We don't try to blame each other, manipulate each other or demand things we can't provide for each other. We support each other.

Another major factor is that I had the privilege of being born middle-class. I have a good job and a lot of support from friends and family. I talk with your wives and girlfriends while we wait for visits. I hear how they struggle with high phone bills, low-paying jobs, the welfare system and single parenthood. I know the shame society heaps on her for loving a prisoner. I know the emotional abuse and humiliation she experiences from some of the prison guards. I know how much it costs for transportation and motel bills to visit.

I hear her hope that you will change and her belief that somehow it is her responsibility to help you change. I hear about her loneliness. I see how she dresses for you, lives for you, waits for you.

Then I see how she tires from her own efforts and from your demands

and requests. She tires of giving her all to what begins to seem like a hopeless situation. Many of you do not hear it in her voice. You do not listen to her worries. You take and take and take. You want more visits. You want more phone calls. You want daily letters. You want money. You want drugs smuggled for you. You want her to hire a lawyer. You want her waiting by the phone each evening so you know she's being faithful. You want her in your world.

She does not live in your world. She lives in two worlds. She lives in the outside community and she lives in the visiting room. She does not know your world; it is impossible. You do not know her world. What you have to build is a world together, and the prison system, through its policies and regulations, makes that extremely difficult. Remember that she knows what landed you in prison. She may be angry; she may feel betrayed and abandoned. Sometimes she re-experiences that feeling again when you mess up and get sent to the hole. You have to understand those emotions. You have to be patient.

If your loved one is sticking by you, value her. Listen to her. If she is becoming weary, lighten up. Encourage her to live in her world, to pursue her interests. Work and send her money to help with the children or the phone bill, even if it's a small amount. If she is frustrated with the visiting conditions, support her in visiting less frequently so she doesn't burn out and stop altogether. Work together to try and improve the visiting conditions for your family. If she is depressed, encourage her to seek out friends or a counselor. If she is abusing drugs or alcohol to numb the pain, encourage her to get treatment. If she is raising your children, listen as she shares her joys and frustrations. Read some parenting books to help her with new ideas in a nonjudgmental way. Let her know you are interested in her life.

She may leave you anyway. It takes tremendous strength on the part of

both people to maintain a prison relationship for a long period of time. The fact is, people need intimate relationships and intimacy is discouraged by prison authorities and difficult to sustain without privacy. If your wife or girlfriend chooses a relationship with another man on the outside, it is normal. You must stop blaming her. Blame the system. Blame yourself for the mistakes you made that allowed the system to take control of you. Quit the self-pity routine. Above all, begin making changes in yourself so that when you are released, you can stay out and enjoy whatever new relationship you find. But don't blame your loved one; most of the time, she is just doing the best she can.



Art by Enrique Ortiz



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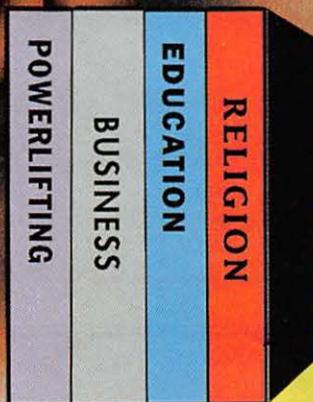
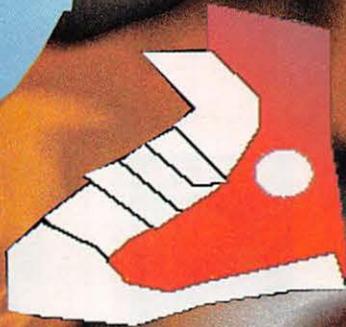
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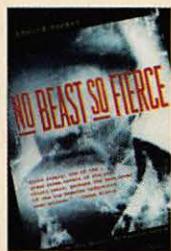
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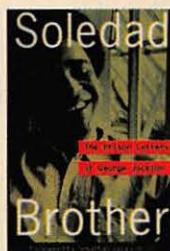
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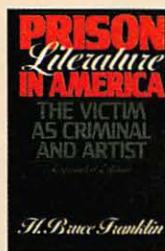
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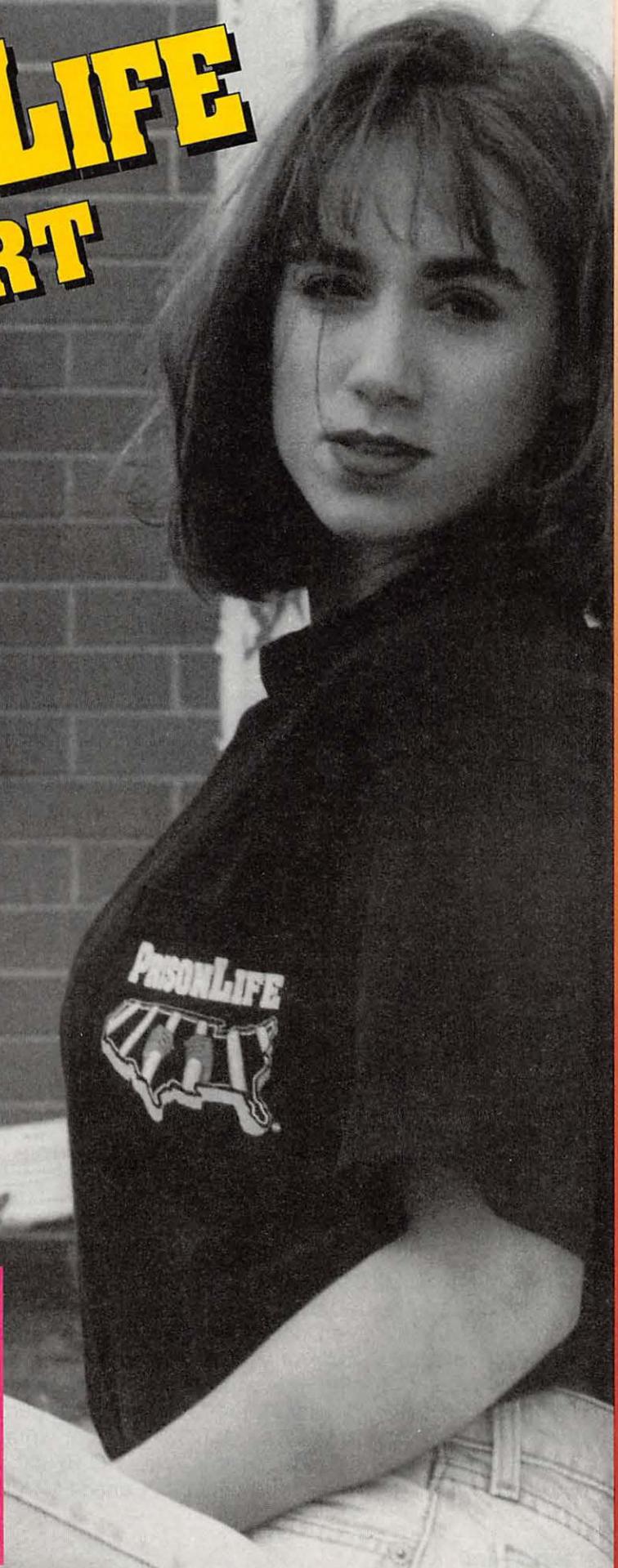
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EDUCATED IN PRISON? Comments sought for book about NYS inmates who attended college programs: Why did you take the course? How did it change you? Why do you think funding was cancelled? What will you do now? All references will be anonymous. M/R Dissertation, PO Box 891, Hartsdale, NY 10530-0891.

Writers Needed for prison perspective section of WAKEUP, a new publication aimed at raising the awareness of American youth. A simple straightforward and honest source of information. For much more information please write WAKEUP, 6637 84th Court North, Minneapolis, MN 55445.

WRITER DOING RESEARCH FOR BOOK. Looking for people convicted of non-violent crimes. Especially interested in fraud, embezzlement, con games, scams, etc. Would like to hear your story; compensation for all stories published. For more information please write to: B. Philbrick, 853 Vanderbilt Beach Rd., Suite 212, Naples, FL 33963.

FOLSOM INMATES PAST/PRESENT. Journalist with 15 years experience writing articles on Old Folsom, maybe book(would be my third). Aim (as always) to cut through myth, present accurate picture. Will explain more, send samples of work: G. Rivlin, P.O. Box 13314, Oakland, CA 94661. Nicknames okay.

Tired of doing time you do not deserve? Have you given up on all possibility of any justice since your confinement? Please write: Freedom Press, Prisoner Support Division, P.O. Box 4458, Leesburg, VA 22075. Include a narrative and copies of your sentencing documents. Phone: 703/866-1446. Collect calls are accepted on Saturday and Sunday only.

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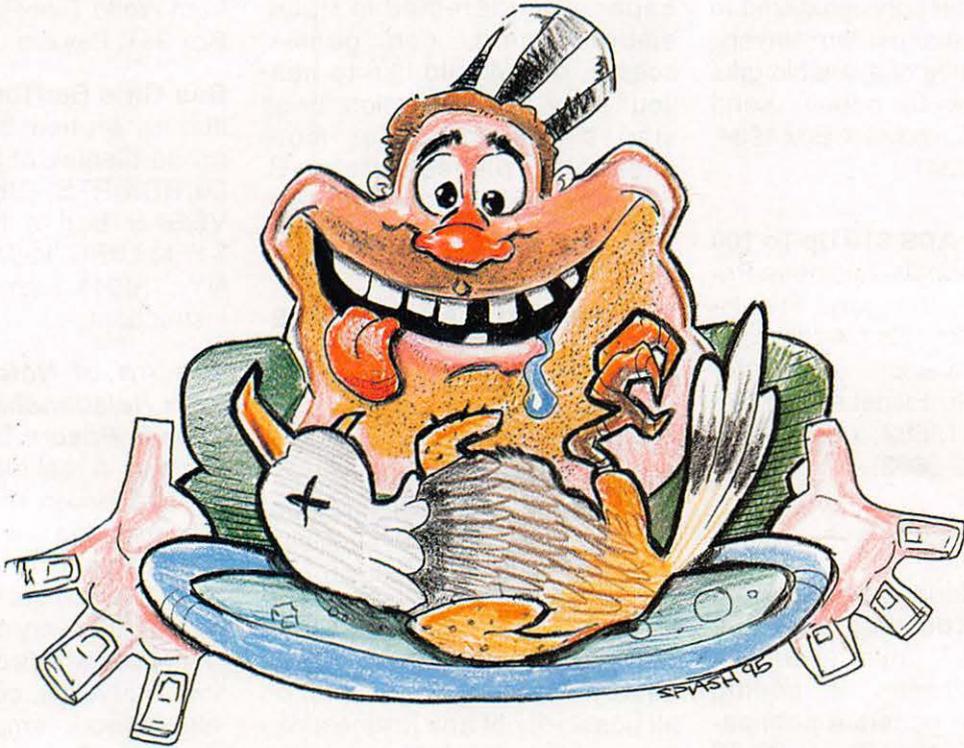
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In Cell Cooking



Chef's Special of the Month: Criminal Carb Cuisine

- 1 cup brown rice (instant or normal)
- 2 cups water (for rice)
- 1 banana, sliced
- 1/2 cup raisins
- 1/3 cup honey
- 1/4 cup brown sugar
- 4 tablespoons cinnamon
- Pinch nutmeg (if you can get it)

Make the rice. Instant stuff easier to make. While rice is hot, mix in honey, cinnamon and sugar. Might want to add a little water to keep moist. Then add in raisins and banana slices. Eat hot or cool for later. Even good at room temperature. Will give you plenty of carbs for the morning workout.

"Big C"
Rikers Island, New York

Thai Tuna

- 1 apple, finely chopped
- 1/2 onion, finely chopped
- 1 jalapeño
- 1 lemon, freshly squeezed (can sub an orange)
- 1 can tuna
- 1/3 cup chopped peanuts or mixed nuts
- 3 cloves garlic, chopped
- 2 packs mayo

Mix thoroughly, chill and serve on crackers.

*Edgar Tims and T. Savage,
recommended by the Dawg
Florence, Colorado*

For Dessert Snorgeldorf

- 1 banana
 - 2 tablespoons peanut butter
 - 1/2 cup cooked oatmeal
 - 1/2 cup granola (or oatmeal)
 - 1 teaspoon honey
- Mix thoroughly, then enjoy.

Kiwi John

Illustration by Steve Lashley

Pen Pals

SWM, 35, 6', 212#, brown hair, blue eyes. Would like to correspond with females, age no problem. Will write to all. Doing 5 to 8 for getting into a fight, with 5 left. Dale Owsley, #17110, I.S.C.L., Unit 1364, P.O. Box 14, Boise ID 83707.

Peckerwood looking for featherwood to exchange letters, good times, friendship and more with the right lady. Brian Nelson, Solono Co. Jail, 500 Union Ave, Fairfield, CA 94533.

Happy about life, 40-year-old Christian. Christ is the basis of my hopes, aspirations and strivings. Joyfully would desire corresponding with caring female willing to share interests, hopes and making God a priority. Excellent physical specimen. Alvin Lewis, #046735, P.O. Box 02-8538, Miami, FL 33102.

SWM, 48, 5'9", 155#, long white hair, hazel eyes, dark complexion. Jesse James past, but looking to trade my guns for a good woman, any age. Free in 1997. I am in great health and need to relocate from Santa Cruz, California in order to leave my past behind. Write Ray Hurt, #H-02215, P.O. Box 921-C5117, Imperial, CA 92251-921.

SWM, 27, 6'1", 205#, muscular, brown hair, green eyes. Seeking honest and sincere person for serious relationship. I enjoy weight lifting, reading, travel, outdoors and sports. Getting out soon. Kevin Porth #40656, P.O. Box 1989, Ely, Nevada 89301.

SWM, 40, 5'9", 165#, long brown hair, hazel eyes, tattooed and muscular. Seeking intelligent, adventurous, righteous white woman into scooters, r & r, beaches, travel and living life to its fullest. No fakes, phonies or wannabes need apply. Bill Kounanis #164089, Racing Corr. Inst./ Dane West Unit, P.O. Box 900-I, Sturtevant, Wisconsin 53177-0900.

Incarcerated 15 years, 35 Years old Mexican. 5'11", 180#. Seeks big beautiful lady with big heart and lots of hot passion. William R. Castro, C-42238, P.O. Box 7500, D-7-106, Crescent city, CA 95532.

SBM, light skin, 5'7", 32 yrs. old, looking for a serious, open-minded, open-hearted, down to earth woman of any age any race. Herbert Burgess, #93A3237, Sullivan Correctional Facility, P.O. Box AG, Fallsburg, NY 12733-0116.

210#, great shape and getting better with dedicated bodybuilding. 1 year to go.

I'm very sincere and open-minded and I expect the same. I'll be a worth-while honorable friend. If we find compatibility we can even love each other. You don't have to be a beautiful queen but you must love yourself and be all woman. Raymond Ruiz, #94R9563, Attica C.F. Attica, NY 14011-0149.

KIGY? Looking to correspond with others interested in Conspiracy Politics, Christian Identity, The Patriot Movement, etc. I have too much time to have a relationship, but welcome all-except inmates. Larry Williams, #911156, CIC-Box 601, Pendleton, IN 46064.

BM seeks open-minded feminine correspondent free or locked down. Age, race, weight, looks, irrelevant. Sincerity an asset. Promise to respond to all. David McGrill, J.T.R.C.L., #292425, 7175 Manor Rd., Columbus, GA 31907.

German lonewolf looking for a pack. Characteristics: Warlock, Artisan. 5'7", 175#, brown hair, blue eyes. Seeks correspondence from like-minded males and females. Pirre Moosebroker, #12314, Louisiana State Prison, Angola, LA 70712.

SWM, 38 yrs. old, br. hair, 5'11", br. eyes, 185#, college-educated. Enjoys writing letters, alternative music, cooking, travel (when allowed), honesty and sincerity. Seeks female penpal. Offers letters and friendship. Jeffrey A. Gears #223298, 3201 Bemis Rd., Ypsilanti, MI 48197-0911.

Irish/Mexican, Tall, dark and handsome, 29 years old, 5'10", 175#. Got a grip plus trying not to trip. Looking to kick it with beautiful interesting ladies. So if your beautiful or interesting, don't delay send your letters my way. Photo for photo. Bill Hankins, #54812, Box 777 C.S.P., Canon City, CO 81215.

Would like to meet prison artists to exchange art and ideas. Only interested in art that has a prison flavor and must have Jesus included or a religious theme. Audrey Revell, 2442 Mission St., San Francisco, CA 94110.

Looking for that real blackman, ex-con or currently incarcerated and out soon. I'm a GWM; want a dominating, take-charge type. Age not an issue; attitude is. Possible long-term relationship. J.E.P., 4724 El Portal, El Paso, TX 79903-4826.

SWM, looking for any sweet girl to share thoughts and feelings with. Been down 3 years now and 7 to go. 175#, 22 years old, 5'11". All letters will be answered, guaranteed. My interests are: skin art, poetry, life and spoiling women! Chris Schmidt, 28385-29957, P.O. Box 389, Springfield State Prison, Springfield, SD 57062.

Latin Brother down but not out. 5'11", 185#. Finishing up bid. Would like to hear from all positive people. John Rodriguez 93R6276, Mt. McGregor, C.F. Box 2071, Wilton, NY 12831.

WM, 34, 185#, big brown eyes, muscular, looking to fill long lonely nights writing to you, honest 1 to 1 communication or erotic adventure. I do it all. Gleen Reyes #657553, Rt. 4 Box 1500, Beaumont TX 77705.

WM, 25, brown hair, 6'11", 190#. Good shape, blue green eyes, locked down in Texas, seeks a real sweetheart for friendship. Possible relationship. May release date 6-97. Marty Webb #545120, Stiles unit Rt.4, Box 1500, Beaumont, TX 77705.

SWM, 24, 5'7", 165#, blue/green eyes, black hair. Me very respectful, level headed and hate any kind of abuse at woman!! Made one mistake in life, (safe-cracking), will be free in 97. You, Coring, sweet, petty, and who likes a gentleman. Please write to: Andrew Lesky, J-254-26, C.M.F. prison P.O. Box #2000, Vacaville, CA 95696.

SWM, deaf, 38 years old, 5'10", 200#, good health, very open minded. Seeks whit female male age 22-40 max. no restrictions on who can write. Steven Christman, #946709, Indian state farm, 1500 west U.S. 40, Greencastle, IN 46135-9275.

Mix male looking for a penpal, male or female that can read and write the language of "the people Kola", Omakiyi Ye! Pilamaya yelo. Erike Holmberg #300108 B4, P.O. Box 53000, Reidsville, GA 30453.

SWM, 26, 5'9", 160#, blond hair, blue eyes. Drug and disease-free. Seeking a SWF 21 to 35 for a pen pal, that with time can lead to more. All letters will get a reply. Kenneth Webb #645486, Hughes Unit, Rt. 2, Box 4400, Gatesville, TX 767597.

GWM, 35 yr. old, 5'9", 160#, brown eyes, Italian, fun-loving individual, looking for other GWM's or any white boys looking for companionship/fantasy letters. Sister's welcomed! All answered...please no games. Gerard J Natiello, #653911, Rt. 4, Box 1500, Beaumont, TX 77705-9631.



Looking for friendship and commitment. SWM, clean-cut Christian, 26, 5'11", 195#, red hair, brown eyes, easy going, good sense of humor, still young at heart, loves the Lord, music, photos (will exchange), sports. Seek other encouraging Christians for friends. I will be released in '96. Steve Picard #61788, P.O. Box 777, Canon City, CO 81215 I am a white, 45-year-old free world dude looking for inmates to have as pen-pals; ladies are especially invited to write. Letters answered at once. My friendship is everlasting. Please write me at the following address: Gary R. Lee, 2418-Bayou Drive, League City, TX 77573-2702. NO FAGS.

SWM, 23, 5'10", 170#, very long brown hair, nasty green eyes, sleeved in tattoos, down 2 years, 10 left. Outlaw scooter tramp walking the talk. Seeks strong, good woman to side with me. No phony bullshit. Letter photos get same, try me, taste me, talk to me. C.W. Pollock, #8701590, EOCL, 2500 West Gate, Pendleton, Oregon, 97801.

Doing life in the belly of the beast. Seeking assistance from anyone with background in English or law. I need someone who is willing to correct my mistakes in syntax to improve my writing skills. It is very important that I be able to write well. In struggle. Anthony Lucero, #76324, P.O. Box 10000, Limon, CO 80826.

SWM, seeking correspondence with white ladies of nationalist dispositions. My boots and braces are on the shelf for a few but I'll be standing tall 'til the end! I'll answer all letters. Dean Adams #H-32535/B-7-224, Pelican Bay State Prison, P.O. Box 7500, Crescent City, CA 95532.

SWM, 26, 5'7", 160#, long brown hair; brown eyes. Muscular and handsome. Well hung. Into music and comedy, sex and having fun. Love to party and travel. 18 months left. Searching for fun woman 18 and up for friendship, maybe more when released. If you're looking for guaranteed fun times, write. Will answer all. Eric Rumberger "Rummy", P.O. Box 595, Ebensburg, PA 15931.

Down but not out 42-year-old WM. I am an outlaw in chains, searching for as loving angel to set me free through letters a phottos. Lenny Kurx #03809-4000, PMB 4000, Rochester, MN 55903-4000.

6'2", 205#, brown-skin brother looking to kick and hear some uplifting knowledge with all sisters. Tysen Ingram #873014, 27B-1D, C.I.C., P.O. Box 601, Pendleton, IN 46064.

Lonely man has 3 yrs left. Brown hair & eyes. Age 36. 250#, 6'2". Would like to correspond with someone special. Please write: Eddie Sims, D.C. 202995, D-202-L, Okaloosa Correctional Institution, 3189 Little Silver Road, Crestview, FL 32539-6708.

Through DNA, forensics, confidential DA records, proved innocent. Framed. Looking for someone to share news articles, legal documents with. 5'11", muscular, white. Attractive inside and out, with nice tattoos. Seeking new trial, freedom, writer, publisher, intelligent female and friends. No games or phonies. Nationality, age unimportant. Send photo and SASE. Paul William Scott, 071615 P.O. Box 221, North East Unit, Death Row, UCI Raiford, FL 32083.

SWM caught up in system, looking for females who would like to pass some time. Will write all interested responses. Hobbies: sex, scooters, boats, fishing, hunting, camping, partying and generally having a good time. Best letter sex in TX. Respond to: Dennis Bower, #631736, Ramsey 2, C14-2-16, Route 4, Box 1200, Rosharon, TX 77583.

Resources

by Alex Friedmann, Resource Editor,
SCCC, TN

The nonprofit and volunteer-run agencies in this list are all working to help us, but they can't help us without your help. If you want to contact one or more of these organizations for information, self-help materials or for their newsletters, then do the right thing—enclose some loose stamps or an S.A.S.E. Better yet, send them some money (that's right, some of your hard-earned, hard-time prison money.) Even one dollar can help. There are over a million prisoners in the U.S. and if every one of us sent just a buck each month to a worthy cause like C.U.R.E., F.A.M.M. or the A.F.S.C., then those organizations would be collecting over \$12 million a year. That's something to think about. If we expect free-world organizations to help us, then we have to help them. The bottom line: What goes around comes around.

SOCIAL SUPPORT AGENCIES:

- 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.
- Woodbourne Long Termers Committee, Pouch #1, Woodbourne, NY 12788: A prisoner support and advocacy group. Send for free brochure and newsletter.

ADVOCACY ORGANIZATIONS

- 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 prisoners.
- Campaign for an Effective Crime Policy, 918 F St. NW #505, Washington, DC 20004 (202/628-1903): This agency works for effective criminal justice reform. Ask your warden to join.
- 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).

BOOK 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.
- 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.

PAROLE & PRE-RELEASE INFORMATION:

- American Correctional Association, Publications Dept, 8025 Laurel Lakes Court, Laurel, MD 20707-5075 (301/206-5059 or 800/825-2665): Publishes a parole planning guide, "As Free as an Eagle," and sells other self-help books.
- Interstate Publishers, 510 North Vermillion Street, P.O. Box 50, Danville, IL 61834-0050 (217/446-0500 or 800/843-4774): Sells a parole planning manual, "From the Inside Out."
- OPEN, Inc. (Offender Preparation and Education Network), P.O. Box 566025, Dallas, TX 75356-6025 (214/271-1971): Sells "99 Days & a Get-up," "Man, I need a Job!" and other great pre-release guides— for \$4.95 each.
- Manatee Publishing, 4835 North O'Conner St. #134435, Irving, TX 75062: Sells "Getting Out and Staying Out," a parole-planning manual, for \$22.45.
- CEGA Services, Offender Referrals, P.O. Box 81826, Lincoln, NE 68501-1826 (402/464-0602): CEGA offers pre-release referrals for prisoners for the area they will be paroled to (such as housing, employment and substance abuse treatment programs.) \$15 fee for each city. CEGA also sells the "Survival Sourcebook" and "The Job Hunter's Workbook."

PRISON AIDS RESOURCES:

- 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 30237 (404/946-9346): Offers support, educational materials, referrals and political lobbying for prisoners with AIDS/HIV.

MISCELLANEOUS RESOURCES:

- League for Lesbian and Gay Prisoners, 1202 East Pike St., #1044, Seattle, WA 98122: A project of Gay Community Social Services.
- James Markunas Society, 245 Harriet Street, San Francisco, CA 94103 (415/775-5445): A resource for lesbian, gay and bisexual prisoners.
- Mothers Opposed to Maltreatment of Service Members (MOMS), 8285 Black Haw Court, Frederick, MD 21701: Advocates for prisoners in military prisons and disciplinary barracks. Can provide a pre-release booklet entitled "New Beginnings."
- The Prison Chess Program, P.O. Box 44419, Washington, DC 20026 (301/530-4841.)
- Native American Indian Inmate Support Project, 8 Dallas Dr., Granville, 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 poetry written by prisoners.

CHILD & FAMILY RESOURCES

- 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 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, CO 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.

LEGAL RESOURCES—FEDERAL/NATIONAL

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 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).
- Georgetown University Law Center, Criminal Procedure Project, 600 New Jersey Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20001. (202/662-9468): Publishes the Georgetown Law Journal, the annual "Criminal Procedure" issue costs \$30.
- Freedom Press, P.O. Box 4458, Leesburg, VA 22075 (703/391-8604) or: (800/370-7052): A prison project run by volunteer paralegals. They offer legal services at reduced rates, sometimes on monthly payment plans; they also offer ministry and counseling services.
- 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, Prison Law Project, 558 Cap Street, San Francisco, CA 94110: A national legal agency with an interest in helping 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 magazine published by prisoners in Washington that covers nationwide prison legal issues. Subscription rates are around \$12 per year/12 issues.
- 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 (800/328-9352): Publishes "Corrections and Prisoners Rights in a Nutshell" and "Criminal Procedures in a Nutshell," at \$17 each.

PARALEGAL PROGRAMS

- Blackstone School of Law, P.O. Box 701449, Dallas, TX 75370 (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 D.E.T.C.
- 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 the D.E.T.C.

MINISTRIES & BIBLE STUDIES

- Emmaus Bible Correspondence School, 2570 Asbury Rd, Dubuque, IA 52001 (319/588-8000): Offers free Bible courses for prisoners.
- The National Convocation of Jail and Prison Ministry, 1357 East Capital St. SE, Washington, DC 20003: A national agency for prison chaplains.
- 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, River-

side, 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 Foundation, 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.

DEATH PENALTY RESOURCES

- American Civil Liberties Union, Capital Punishment Project, 122 Maryland Avenue NE, Washington, DC 20002 (202/675-2319): 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, 918 F St. NW #601, Washington, DC 20004 (202/347-2411): Works to abolish the death penalty. Also provides a booklet listing anti-death penalty resources in each state ("The Abolitionist's Directory," \$2).

Changes, additions and new information should be sent to:
Prison Life Magazine
Resources Department
175 5th Avenue, Suite 2205
New York, NY 10010.

Poetry

Thanksgiving Prayer

In other years I hoped,
And waited for the skeleton
To emerge, stripped clean
As others grabbed
Their share, Hoping
That a knife, in ignorance,
Would not cut through
The wishbone I desired.

This year I grabbed
The leg and held it,
Munching teeth to bone,
Counting my losses and
Thinking about my little boy.

Chewing fowl flesh and
Missing my son.
Little man living
Loss you never chose,
This leg's for you.

Drumstick desires,
Savage and simple,
Bind us all today.

Sherrie Apple

To My Husband in Jail

When I heard you'd been arrested
I put on the silver ring you made for me years ago,
just after you'd gotten out the first time;
you'd hammered and hammered a quarter
'til at last you'd beaten it into a lovely ring.

Our son has grown handsome and tall
that chubby baby in green-printed pajamas
who you cradled on your hip
while you stood over the stove
waiting for his bottle to warm.

Tyrone was the name I secretly gave you
when you were vulnerable and approachable,
when your hair was tapered and soft
and your dark face unlined;

Tyrone in a pale purple shirt,
solemn Tyrone
Tyrone who on that last quiet evening
tongued me until I came.

Two days later you left our apartment for good,
lugging a duffel bag with your belongings
and sucking a pint of Bacardi Dark.

I remember the afternoon you cried for your Uncle Sun,
the uncle who used to take you to play with your
Cherokee cousins in the hills,
the uncle you used to watch the sunset with,
you'd suddenly remembered his sister
shooting him in the head with her shotgun.

You told me about the time your mom and her new
boyfriend
hid you under some coats on the train
and told you not to move
so they wouldn't have to pay another fare.

You told me about the time you were eight
and went out in a blizzard
to get some flour and syrup
so your mother could feed all those kids.

And school, how hard it was for you,
you begged your mother to beat your head,
thinking a head was something you could
literally beat sense into.

There were the deer in the early mornings
that you used to watch
drinking at the river's edge;
there was your old Aunt Mo who'd go
into the henhouse;
you'd hear a flutter and a cackle,
then she'd come out with three fresh eggs
for your breakfast.

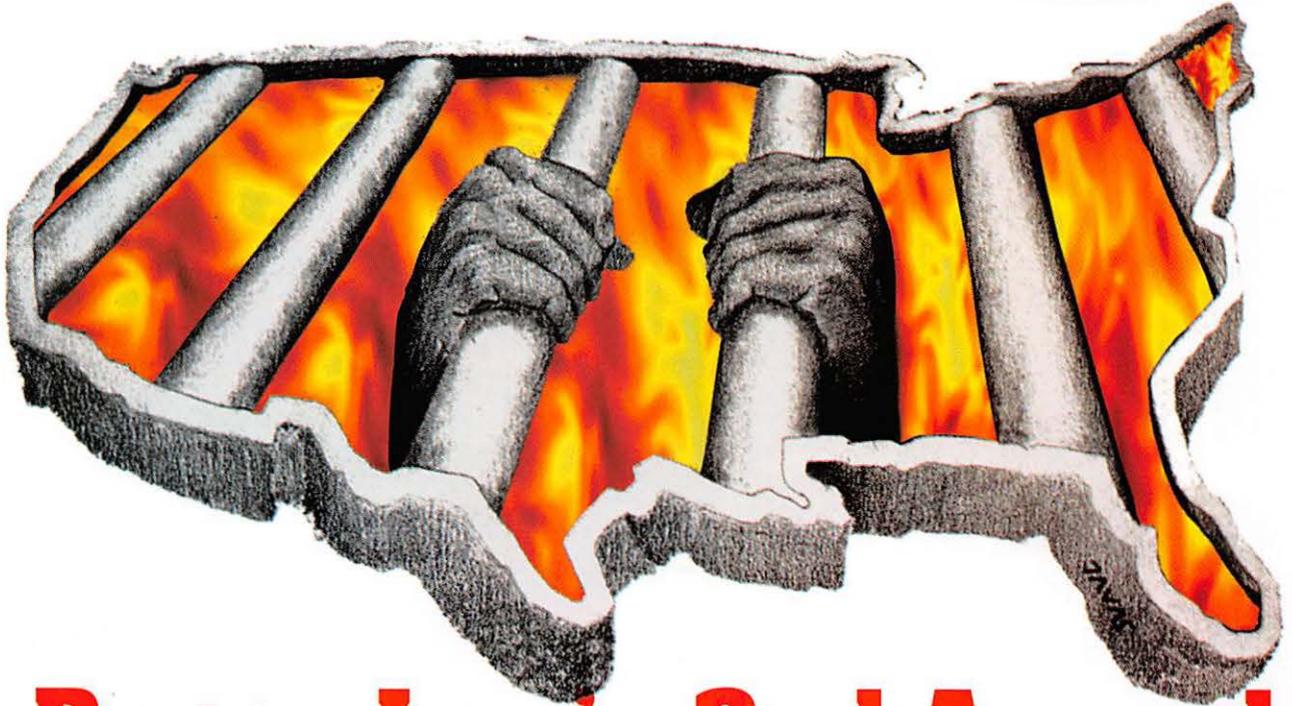
Know that I haven't forgotten
being held in the back room at knifepoint;
the belt you hit our son with when he was five;
all those nights you stayed in Brooklyn;
the syringe I found in your brown tweed coat pocket;
that ride in the back seat of the police car,
looking for you after you'd leapt on my bed
and tried to choke me.

Over and over you've asked to come back.
No place except a head
is big enough to hold these extremes.

Low benches, blank walls
that morning we met at Family Court,
how confusing it was for both of us
that two people who loved each other
should end up here.

Peggy Garrison

THE FIRE WITHIN



PRISON LIFE'S 2nd Annual Art Behind Bars Contest

DEADLINE: NOV. 15, 1995

PRIZES

1st Prize—\$250 and two subscriptions to *Prison Life*

2nd Prize—\$150 and two subscriptions to *Prison Life*

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

WRITING CATEGORIES

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

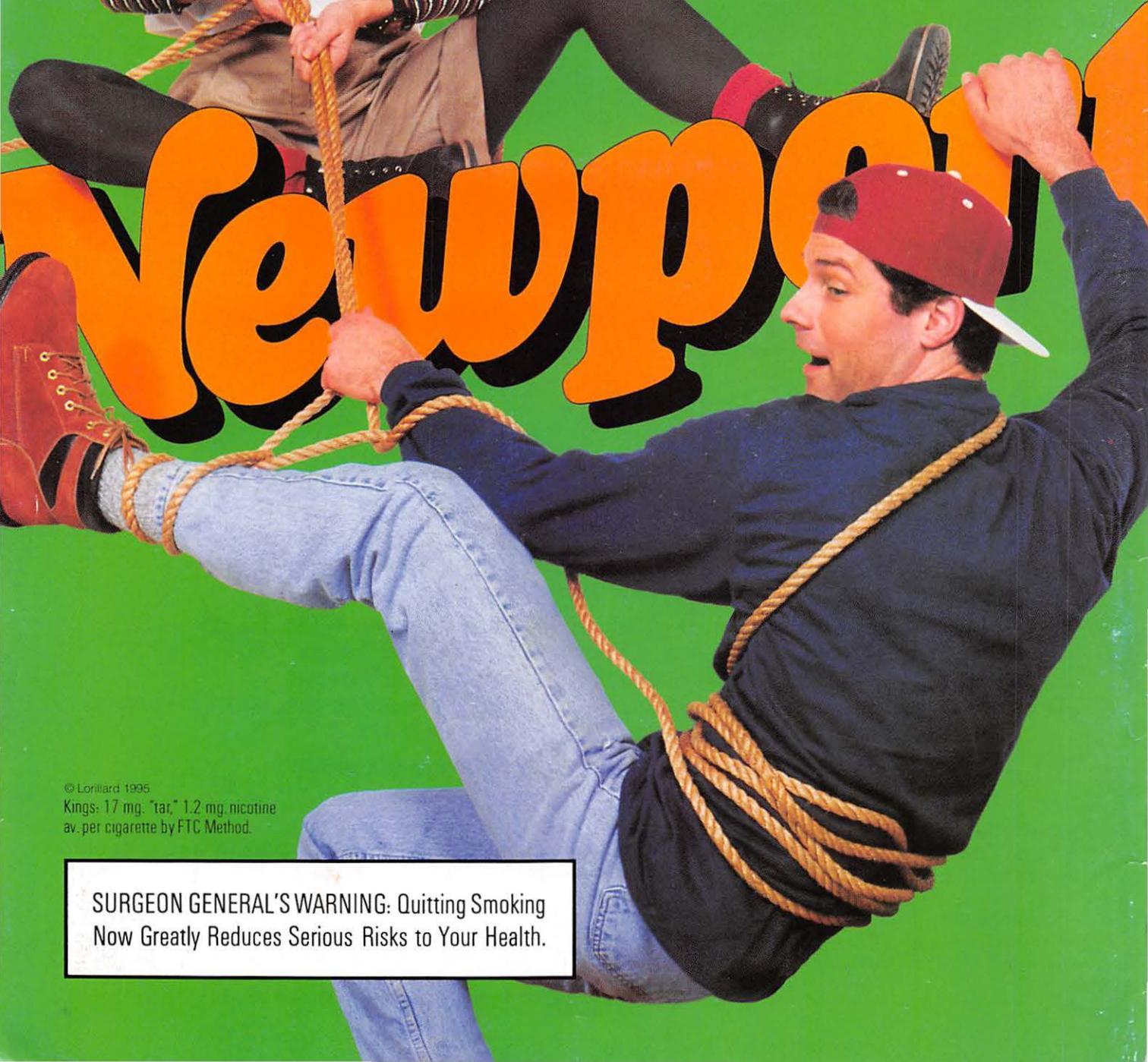
VISUAL ARTS CATEGORIES

Paintings, drawings, collage, sculpture—any medium.

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.



**Alive
with pleasure!**



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Kings: 17 mg. "tar," 1.2 mg. nicotine
av. per cigarette by FTC Method.

**SURGEON GENERAL'S WARNING: Quitting Smoking
Now Greatly Reduces Serious Risks to Your Health.**