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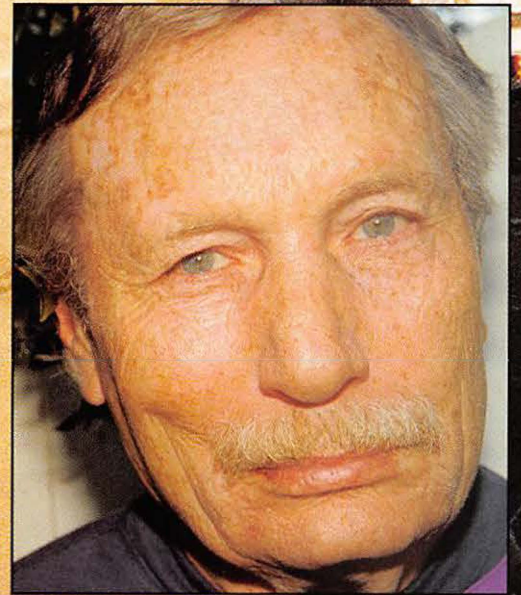
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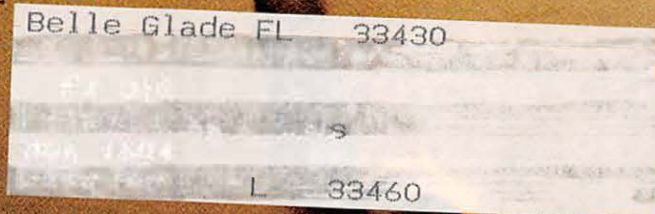
Fiction by Dannie Martin

Mumia Abu-Jamal Update



THE RESURRECTION
OF EDWARD BUNKER

BY RICHARD STRATTON



THE FIRE WITHIN



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Contest Deadline: October 15, 1995.

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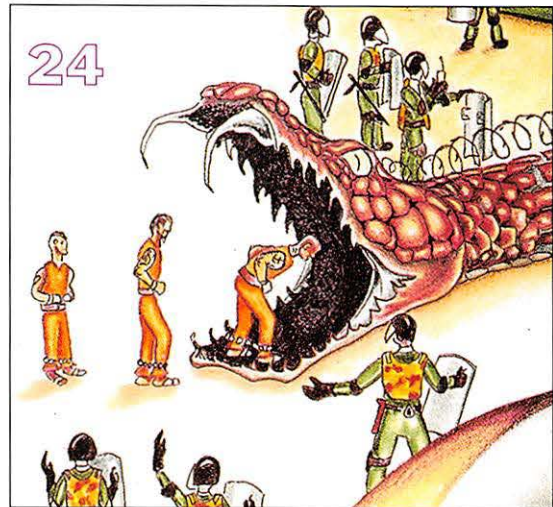
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PRISON LIFE

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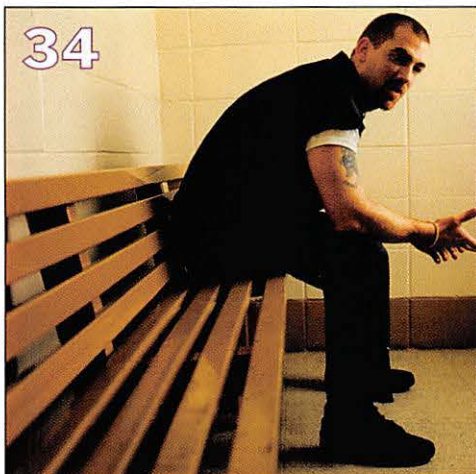
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"An inmate is sentenced to prison *as* punishment, not *for* punishment. Why increase the discomfort level?" says Lorton's radical warden, Vincent Gibbons. Meet the Man who's keeping the lid on the Capital's cage.



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There are over 3,000 people in America who know beforehand the exact moment when they will be killed: the men and women of death row. Photographer Lou Jones puts a human face on society's darkest statistic.

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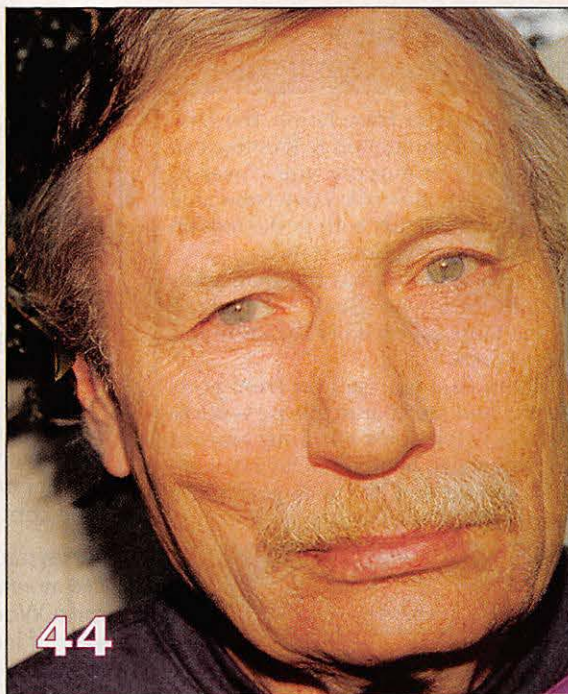
COVER STORY

44 The Resurrection of Edward Bunker

From state-raised convict to premier prison novelist—Edward Bunker, author of such hard-boiled classics as *No Beast So Fierce* and *Animal Factory*, finally gets the recognition he deserves. *Prison Life* pays tribute to the Hemingway of hard time.

52 FICTION The Poet's Game

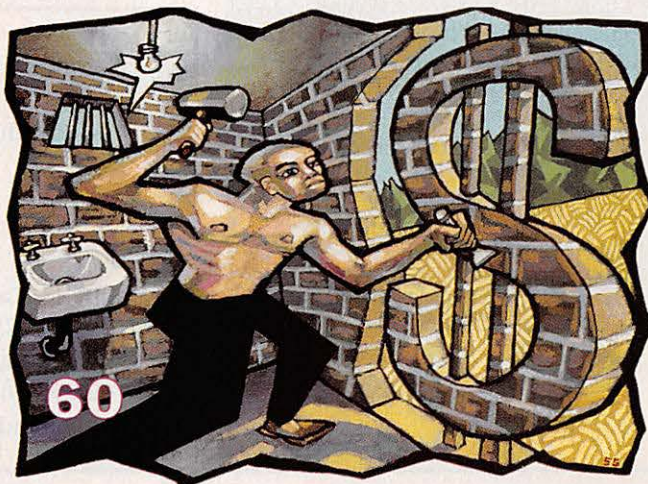
In a new short story by Dannie Martin, author of *Committing Journalism* and *The Dishwasher*, a curious court reporter captures the cool jive rap of a jailhouse toast.



Cover Photos by
Chris Cozzone

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CONTRIBUTORS COLUMN

T.D. Bingham, author of "Maximum Transfer: From Marion to Florence," is locked up in ADX—Administrative Detention Maximum in Florence, CO. He is currently writing a novel about the hustles and hoods of San Quentin in the '60s.

Mike Chavaux, our May Celly of the Month, will be writing a business column for *Prison Life*. From Michigan's Adrian Temporary Facility, he runs a mail order service for fortune hunters and wrote a book on buying used cars.

Veronica Compton, author of this month's guest editorial, "No Place for a Woman," is going on her 16th year of incarceration at the Washington Correctional Center for Women.

Stephen Conway, the artist for our guest editorial, "No Place for a Woman," is a freeworlder in New York City. He has illustrated for *The New York Times*, Bantam Books and other publications.

Larry Fassler, jailhouse lawyer, was recently released from prison in Anthony, NM. He'll continue to write legal columns for *Prison Life* as a freeworlder.

Alex Friedmann, our Resource Editor, has spent two years compiling data on agencies and resources. He continues his research at S.C.C.C. in Clifton, TN.

Steve Gressak, the artist for "Get Some Business," is a freelance illustrator in New York.

B.D. Hill, artist for both "The Poet's Game" and "Maximum Transfer," is serving a 30-year bid in Huntsville,

TX. "The law and drugs I was involved in stopped me from getting my degree at San Antonio college," he writes, "but it didn't stop me from my efforts in art."

Lou Jones, the photographer for "The Death Row Project," is one of Boston's top commercial and art photographers. His client list includes *National Geographic*, *Fortune* magazine, *Discover* magazine, Nike and Federal Express. Lou's work has been shown at the Corcoran Gallery in Washington, D.C., Polaroid Gallery, Museum of Afro-American History in Boston and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art.

Dannie Martin, author of this month's fiction selection, "The Poet's Game," is also the author of *Committing Journalism: The Writings of Red Hog* and *The Dishwasher*, recently published by W.W. Norton.

Peter Schmidt, formerly a corporate lawyer, writes a legal column for *Prison Life*. Author of "Punch & Jurists," a weekly summary of federal criminal cases, and the soon-to-be published *We the Sheeple*, which will be available through *Prison Life*.

Rob Sula and Marty Voelker, artists for "Crimejacker" are freeworlders from Chicago. Marty illustrates children's books; Rob has shown his work at various Chicago fine art galleries.

Ed Thompson, artist for Ask Da Nurses and In-Cell Cooking, had his own sign company before he got locked up five years ago. He now spends his time at the Delaware Correctional Center doing artwork and trying to reverse the decision in his case.

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Voice of the Convict

CON JOB

by **Richard Stratton**
Editor & Publisher

I have always said convicts are a tough audience. Many are bitter, emotionally scarred men and women, products of abusive or loveless childhoods. They can be suspicious to the point of paranoia, dishonest with themselves and others, and predatory because this is how they have learned to survive in a dog-eat-dog world. But they can also be passionate in their loyalty to those they trust, to their own kind.

We've all seen the movies or read the stories about convicts dying rather than betray their brothers. Eddie Bunker, the great American novelist I interviewed for this edition, writes better than anyone I have ever read about the complex, strong bonds that develop between some of society's outcasts. For a long time after I got out of prison I only felt comfortable in the company of ex-cons. My partners in the magazine are either still in prison or recently off parole. I married a woman who had done time.

Nevertheless, knowing all this, I was not prepared for the shitstorm of abuse heaped on me by some readers of *Prison Life* as a result of problems with the magazine that, in the overall scheme of things, can only be seen as petty. In the last year, since I took over as editor of *Prison Life*, I have been called a fascist, a capitalist pig, a punk, a scam artist, a scumbag, a thief, a con man and a crook. I have been threatened, accused of exploiting poor, down-trodden prisoners and of not having sufficient dick heft to take on the various departments of correction that have censored this publication.

All this from men who call themselves convicts. (I don't get these "bitch" letters from women.) I won't go into the hate mail I get from vengeful correctional types and people who

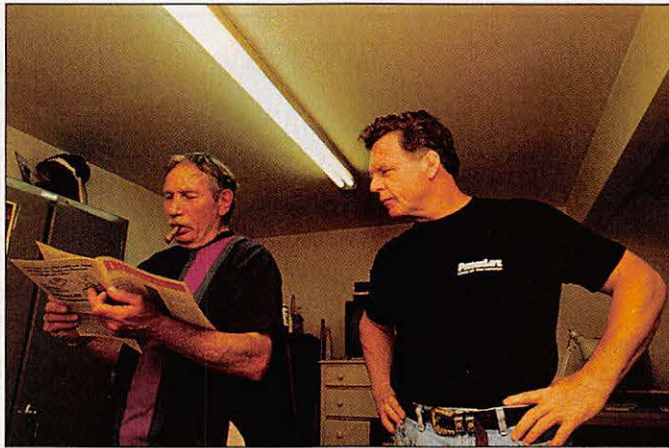
think of themselves as "victims" of crime, as if crime were not a plague which affects everyone. Guilty and innocent, we are all victims of crime; all society suffers from the affliction and the corrupt cure-all known as the criminal justice system.

This past year has been one of the most demanding, stressful years of my life, and I have not had a placid existence. I have begged, borrowed and squeezed money from friends and loved ones to keep this magazine afloat. On Mother's Day my wife reminded me that on the previous Mother's Day I extorted fifteen grand from her to get out an issue of *Prison Life*. The other night we were talking

some of you come sniveling to me, let me bitch back. The magazine you hold in your hands exists against great odds. The reason we are still around one year later, and that we kept our promise to publish six issues, is because the people who put out this magazine care more about *Prison Life* than they do about everything else in their lives with the exception of their families. At one point before I secured the funding to keep publishing this rag, when I was struggling to get the second issue out, I actually considered quitting, and I have never quit anything except Sunday school and some bad habits. My wife said to me, "But what about all those people in there who have subscribed and who love the magazine? You can't let them down." I hit her up for another ten grand.

When I got involved with *Prison Life* under the former owners it was going under. Joe Strahl's publishers had pulled the plug and the magazine was in limbo while Joe looked for new backers. I put up some money I had made writing a screenplay. I convinced my wife and a few gullible convict friends to give me their money, and we relaunched the magazine with a new editorial mission. We agreed to take ownership of the title *Prison Life* in exchange for fulfilling the paid subscriptions to the old *Prison Life* and another magazine for convicts that went belly-up called *Convictions*.

From a business standpoint it was not one of my smarter moves. Once I took over I quickly realized the magazine was in shambles. There was no magazine—simply a name, a lot of debt, some disgruntled subscribers and boxes full of unanswered mail. But I didn't care. I had a vision of what I thought *Prison Life* magazine could be, and I was determined to shape it into a



Richard Stratton with cover man Eddie Bunker.

after putting an edition to bed and we agreed that although we love the magazine we do not love what it has done to our lives. We used to make decent livings as novelists and screenwriters and had time for vacations. Since taking over *Prison Life*, we work a lot harder and have gone head over heels in debt.

In most of the bitch letters I get, the writers assert that they do not like snivelers. I don't like sniveling either. When I was locked up I used to despise prisoners who ran to the Man with one petty beef after another. But since

forum where prisoners and ex-cons could expose the truth on important issues. We relaunched with the June 1994 issue, put the legendary Herby Spurling on the cover and proclaimed ourselves the "Voice of the Convict."

The response to the magazine has been extraordinary. In truth, the letters I get from snivelers and carpers who are pissed off because their subscription got screwed up or we were slow in paying make up a small percentage of the mail that comes into the editorial and business offices. The vast majority of readers praise the publication, call it honest, well-written and hard hitting. Some even extol us for having the courage to put out such a magazine in this vicious totalitarian political climate.

From the outset I was warned that if I made the magazine as real as I wanted it to be we would have trouble with the censors. Censorship has been and continues to be a problem. But I am not one to pull my punches, especially in what I see as a life-and-death struggle. To those readers who complain when issues are held up by the Thought Police, I would ask: Do you want us to shy away from subjects we think might upset your keepers? Then what good are we? And how

can we second-guess a bunch of paranoid prisonrats? Listen to this one: I received a censorship form from one federal pen that claims we print coded messages in our personal ads.

Nor am I backing down from the fight when I urge prisoner subscribers to file the necessary administrative remedies if their First Amendment rights are violated. We are in this together. *Prison Life*, with its attorneys William Kunstler and Ronald Kuby, will join in any well-prepared suit brought against prison authorities who routinely ban the publication. We are not afraid to stand up for our Constitutional rights or we would not be publishing this magazine in the first place. But I know that, unless these actions are prepared properly from within, which means exhausting administrative remedies, they go nowhere and can end up making bad law. The proof is that several subscribers have petitioned the authorities at their prisons and are now allowed to receive the magazine.

We've had a lot of problems with delivery. Not only have we been subject to official censorship, banned and confiscated, but any publication with the word "prison" on the cover is subject to unofficial censorship as well: Issues are "held for review" (a favorite

of the California Thought Police), or misplaced, discarded, stolen. I have personally mailed magazines to people several times before they got through.

The real surprise to some who've watched this magazine grow over the past year has been how much support we've had from the so-called freeworld. My editorial vision for the magazine has always been directed not only toward the imprisoned but also at those who care about the imprisoned and want to hear what they have to say. I see *Prison Life* as a magazine written by convicts and ex-cons, and certainly for readers who are in prison, but also for those on the outside who suspect they are not getting the full story on crime and punishment in America. *Prison Life* is for freeworld readers who want to know what really goes on inside our jails and prisons, and who care about helping to solve the social problems that cause crime. Otherwise, aren't we merely preaching to the converted? Prisoners know what is happening in the prisons of this land; it is the rest of America that needs educating.

My editorial mission for the magazine has always been to have it written and illustrated by men and women who are either in prison or who have spent time in prison and learned from the experience. When I was locked up I used to tell my friends that when I got out I was going to do all I could to get the word out, let the rest of the world know how crime and imprisonment have become big business in America and how those who suck from the crime-control industry teat, (to paraphrase Mumia Abu-Jamal) don't want their gravy train upset. In my writing in this magazine and elsewhere, I have focused on exposing the criminal justice system for the destructive sham it is.

It appears to be working. The rest of the world is paying attention to what you convicts have to say. Without the revenue we get from the freeworld—the number of subscriptions sold to non-prisoners, (consistently, our new subs come in at a rate of 60/40 non-prisoner to prisoner), and newsstand sales, which have increased dramatically, and the income from TV deals—*Prison Life* might have died soon after it was reborn.

We are losing less money with each issue and, with more support from convicts, we'll break even by the end of the year. We were able

(continued on page 74)

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PRISONLIFE

September-October 1995

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WORD

by Chris Cozzone, Executive Editor

PLM Hits the Internet

Why should you care?

Computer use is at an all-time high in the freeworld. "The Web," "Internet" and "Information Superhighway" are household words. But what good is this to the one and a half million behind bars? Most of you aren't even allowed typewriters, let alone fast computers with modems. No, the last thing the departments of correction and B.O.P. want is for its warehoused to connect and—gulp—interact with free society.

So what the hell good is it that *Prison Life* is on the Internet?

The Internet, bros, is just another communication medium. Millions are pluggin' their modems online, and now they'll be able to browse the Net and read *Prison Life*. They'll be reading *your* stories, seeing *your* pictures and *your* artwork. We'll also be posting each issue's pen pal section online to increase your chances of making that "special" connection.

The man in charge of our "page" (that's computer lingo for site) is Stan Dickens. Stan is no stranger to the prison scene. He's done 20 calendars between three bids in Texas' worst. In the six years he's been out, he's moved into the computer consulting business. Stan is also director of operations at No More Victims, Inc., a Texas-based organization dedicated to helping ex-cons stay outta prison.

"*Prison Life* on the Web," says Stan, "is our push to let the world know we exist. Through our web page, the world learns there really are other ways to deal with the crime problem and that the punishment sys-

tem of justice does nothing."

So tell your family and friends in the freeworld that they can access our web site at <http://www.plmag.com/-magazine>. There, they'll be able to read each issue's main features and departments, check out the pen pal listing, even download digital images featured in the magazine: photos or artwork directly from the inside. It's even possible to subscribe online. Those with questions can email Stan at: sdickens@popmail.neosoft.com. If you want to contact the editorial office online, you can email me at: cmzone@pipeline.com.

So, the message here is that people are listening to you. This 'zine has been featured in the country's most respected print media: *The New York Times*, *Newsweek*, *Time*, *Chicago Tribune*, *Utne Reader*, *The Wall Street Journal*. We've been on a zillion radio stations, tons of TV shows, and in January, we'll be watched by HBO's two million viewers. This is a magazine that cannot be ignored.

On a smaller scale, you should see the stares I get in New York when I wear my *Prison Life* T-Shirt. Some people sneer or shake their heads, some nod approvingly, most just stare incredulously, *what the hell?* on their mugs.

Our time—your time—is coming. Thanks to your support, the days of the silent prisoner are over.

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GANG REACTIONS

I am a former gang member of the Barrio Aztecas serving one 99-year and two life sentences consecutively. All three are murder convictions, two from the freeworld and one while in the TDCJ-ID.

The article by Robert Delgado, the former Texas Syndicate member (May issue), really struck a nerve. All of his conclusions are ones that I, too, have come to.

Barrio Azteca was formed in January 1987 by convicts from El Paso, Texas. The gang was originally restricted to Chicanos from El Paso but when the gang leaders saw that they didn't have enough members at Coffield Unit to defend themselves against the TS or MM, they recruited everyone who didn't have a bad reputation or snitch jacket. As a result, the BA spread all over the system.

The BA easily number over 2,000 now. The problem is that they are badly organized, their command structure is built for disaster, their communication is a joke and their discipline is almost nonexistent. To make matters worse, there is discrimination between BAs from El Paso and those who are not from there.

The Aztecas are currently at war with the TS and MM, both conflicts having originated in the El Paso County Jail. There are so many BAs there that the gang thinks they can push around every other organization.

The BA is so big that no one knows who all the members are or who actually snuck in. A vast majority of members

don't even know the gang rules—except, of course, “You're in for life.”

I realize now that the gang was created for no purpose. It has no cause, and as Robert Delgado puts it, “no mission.” The people who founded the BA haven't the faintest idea of how to organize it. People grabbed all the power they could by claiming rank—*capo*, *tiniente*, *sargento*—then they dug in and resisted change or any efforts for gang reformation.

And still they keep recruiting.

All of the Aztecas on the Michael Unit got transferred to Coffield Unit in October '94. They put 80 of us together on a cell block so they could recreate us in groups of ten. It's all part of some new plan to manage gangs.

In January '95, I went back to court for an evidentiary hearing on a writ of habeas corpus for the Gatesville murder conviction. When I came back to Coffield from the hearing, I was no longer a member of the BA.

When you stand in front of a judge, fending off the government, you stand alone. What use is your gang?

You're taking a hell of a gamble when you join a gang. You stand to gain absolutely nothing except a life sentence and a pat on the back—or maybe a death sentence by a rival gang or by the government. You could die and your gang will not shed one tear for you.

Now I live on a cell block with all ex-gang members, or people wrongfully confirmed as gang members: BA, TS, MM, RU, you name it. We all get along fine now that we're not gang members.

It's time to remember that we're not here to serve the gangs, we're here to serve our time and get the fuck out... alive.

Joseph “Tomate” Lopez
Coffield Unit, Texas

While I agree with Robert Delgado's anti-gang position, I disagree with the way he is doing it. It sounds to me like he's out for some sort of vengeance.

Mr. Delgado, you'll have a price over your head for the rest of your life for your FGM position. Don't try to take others to the grave with you. The price for a major mistake is, of course, death. You say this is not true, but you're in Ad Seg where it's extremely hard to take someone out. You think you will live forever with this price on your head?

I am a gang member for the Hermanos de Pistoleros Latinos. This is what I say to would-be and current gang members: Don't be fools. You voluntarily gave your life to your organization, now live up to your words. Rather than fight or abandon your family organization, unite and make peace. Teach our children what we have learned the hard way: To stay out of gangs!

Gangs are not good. Would-be members should think about the responsibilities they'll have after being recruited. Unless one is willing to give life and soul, one should not join a gang.

But also, don't underestimate a family organization just because of what a FGM has to say, especially one with a price on his head. What else can he do but talk shit?

Margarito Valenzuela
McConnell Unit, Texas

CRAPPIN' ON STRATTON

Mr. Stratton, I read the article on you in the *Chicago Tribune*. I think you're a phony! So you're an ex-drug dealer who spent eight years in the slammer writing a book. It must seem logical to you to oppose locking up criminals. Now, if building the required prisons to do so is not the answer, what is? Do you have an answer? I doubt very much it has occurred to you to write a magazine called “The Voice of the Victim.” Has it, Richard? God forbid you should become a murder victim. How would you want the rest of us to treat your killer?

Voice of the Victim

P.S. I enjoyed putting my hot coffee mug on your scowly mug.

AIM LOW, I THINK I SEE THEM DUCKING

I love this mag, I love this mag, I love this mag! I can't believe this mag! Goddamn, *Prison Life*! I mean, I get excited when I read what you have wrought.

This is good shit here, pal. You know how many prison rags I've burned? Those baby fucker Jesus freakin' monthly oatmeal sucking, please I didn't mean to say that, Tampax papers? Oh my God, but now there's this.

I am impressed.

I'm amazed!

Just look at all this friendly fire you keep putting out. Don't look, you'll shoot your foot.

Good timing though, with so many in the D.O.C. now taking our side of things. God, how they must be sweating as the future looms without TV, weights, maybe toss in some rubber tires, an old Samsonite. I know a few who wouldn't know the difference.

But I will. I get out in four months, so I can laugh. Heh. Heh.

Keep shooting guys. Aim low, I think I see them ducking.

Barry "The Bear" Hunwick
Baker C.I., Sanderson, FL

PLM—STRONG TREATMENT FOR DISEASED SYSTEM

Some of the brothers and sisters out there are complaining about *Prison Life* being too risky, or too macho. Tone it down a little, they say.

What the fuck for? Like it says, "Voice of the Convict." Not "What the Man Wants to Hear."

My May issue of *Prison Life* was con-

fiscated by the mail room. Only through a lot of headaches, hassles and a fat dose of luck was I finally able to get the issue back. I don't need that kind of drama right now, but once I read this latest issue I felt it had been worth it. The depth, power and honesty really moved something inside of me. I can't recall the last time I read something with this much raw energy. If anything, I would hope that *Prison Life* turns up the volume.

I now hope some of my future issues will be confiscated. It's gonna piss me off and I'm not going to like it one bit, but that's something that I'm willing to accept, because I know that the issues that get through will be some honest, shoot-from-the-hip journalism instead of a bunch of watered down Pepsi generation crap.

Prison Life is strong treatment for a diseased system. The bitter medicines are often the strongest.

You want something less risky? Subscribe to *Vanity Fair*. You want something less macho? Get a copy of *Women's Wear Daily*.

Jed Miller
San Quentin, CA

CONVICTS ARE COCKSUCKERS, TOO

I read Richard Stratton's article on Oliver Stone (March Issue) with great interest. The Veterans Hospital in the Bronx which he depicted as a house of horrors in "Born on the

4th of July" was the site of my crime. I held up the emergency room and demanded treatment, which got me federal time.

I was disturbed, however, at the sexism and homophobia revealed in your writing, especially when you use the term "cocksuckers" to insult those "conspiring to manipulate history." Would you call them "niggers" or "spics"? No, but it's okay to put down those who engage in a harmless sexual activity—probably including some of your own girlfriends. I have to presume you have never benefited from oral sex, or you would not refer to its practitioners like that.

I guess I expected better of you. You're an editor, someone who weighs words carefully and judges their impact.

You need to pay more attention to the letter from Laura Whitehorn printed in the same issue. Otherwise, *Prison Life* will appear to be not the voice of the convict, but the voice of the ruling class (among prisoners themselves) only. A lot of convicts, after all, are cocksuckers, too.

Stephen Donaldson
New York, NY

My political education continues.
Editor

(continued on page 79)



NO PLACE FOR A WOMAN

by Veronica Compton

Washington State Correction Center

This October, I begin my sixteenth year in prison. For me, freedom is on the horizon but for other lifers here, prison remains the darkest of nights with no daylight in sight.

After over a decade of prison reform advocacy and activism, I am putting up the proverbial "out of business" sign. As a jailhouse lawyer, activist, prison writer, lobbyist and front-line-fighter for human rights, I have grown tired of the unending toil and subsequent punishment. I now relate on a personal level to Sisyphus, whose never-ending task is to roll a huge boulder up a mountain only to watch it roll down.

Recently, I read the July/August issue of *Prison Life*. The editors had asked me to contribute to the magazine as a prison correspondent, and I had declined, saying I was due to be released. But after reading the magazine, I realized there is a serious problem with *Prison Life*. The women's voices are either token squeaks or simply nonexistent. I decided I would take up the voice of the woman convict until other women are ready to be heard.

Statistics say we women prisoners are mostly mothers in our 20s with histories of abuse and addiction, and function at about an eighth grade level. Another common characteristic is our lack of political strength and voice. We are mostly nonviolent. Violence on the part of women is usually in response to abuse or it is self-directed.

I am angered most when I see the loss of female identity that sometimes occurs within the women's prison population. Incarcerated women will occasionally adapt by imitating men to secure a sense of power. Lesbianism is not the issue. Lesbianism is, ideally, women loving women. What I oppose are women who don't love women but instead act as oppressive male figures

wielding control and power over others. This type of relationship does exist here and often stems from a woman having had years of forced submission on the streets. She comes to prison only to repeat her cycle of victimization. What's especially tragic is that she finds her misogynist in other women inmates, not just staff. This is an issue that all women prisoners need to look at. We should not stone the female misogynist, but address her as the lost and misguided woman she is. Educate her, share and forgive. If that is impossible, as it sometimes is, then avoid her and try to reach out to her victims and introduce them to ideas of self-leadership, self-esteem and assertiveness.

*Women prisoners
live in a system
designed to
cope with men's,
not women's,
behaviors.*

We women prisoners live in a system designed to cope with men's—not women's—behaviors. When a man molests a child at a prison visit, all institutions are affected. When a male prisoner kills his wife during a conjugal visit, all prisoners are punished. When a man goes on work release rapes women, all prisoners are affected. When a man leaves prison and stalks, rapes and kills the woman who pressed charges, all prisoners suffer. Each time, women prisoners pay the penalty. Our ability to participate in work

camps, furloughs, pre-release, work releases and paroles are discontinued or restructured. Women who are incarcerated do not leave prison to rape, molest or reap revenge. Neither do most male prisoners, but those few who do give the bureaucrats ammunition to enforce more stringent and punitive guidelines within all prisons.

I'm tired of hearing how women get all the privileges and easy treatment and la-dee-dah. It's a flagrant lie. I've been fed rotten food crawling with worms and contamination. I've been thrown in dry cells and had cavity probes. I've lost months being silent-beefed for rebellion and I've been caged without daylight for an eight-month stretch. I know how to pull the years of I.M.U. when people down the breezeway die from medical negligence and suicide. I've lived through years of freezing and illness and had the clothes on my back literally begin to rot off my body.

Women prisoners get fewer privileges and opportunities than men prisoners because we passively accept whatever "they" dish out. I have been in facilities from California to Washington and what I see as a veteran of prison is this: America's prison system is decades behind the feminist movement of free American society. Where we really need the movement is within the walls, but it's difficult to find good leaders when most of us inside are the least educated about how to lead effectively on a political front.

Further, those of us who are active in the battlegrounds of bureaucracy and media reap oppression and punishment. My mail has been screened and copied to the A.G.'s office and Olympia D.O.C. headquarters. My published works have been banned and I've spent most of my years in either maximum security or the hole. I've been involved



Art by Stephen Conway

in successful suits against the state. I've helped change some state policies and have seen triumphs fall away. I've been locked down and held in segregation for "tank-bossing," "giving legal advice," "threatening the orderly operations of the institution," etc. Women with voices are punished daily for acting assertively, yet we seem to be too busy fighting battles or constructing solutions to write about it.

I want to encourage action and work on behalf of women prisoners by incarcerated women themselves.

Glance at the contributors column of *Prison Life*. See any women's names? I'm not talking about poetry. I'm talking about ideas. We have them and we need to share them on a regular basis.

I think "Challenging the Convict Code," by Jorge Renaud, was a brilliant piece of work that we all need to examine carefully. If we are going to make our societies within the walls civilized and intelligent, we need to make changes from within. We may be in prison, but we don't have to behave without dignity or ethics. Vari-

ous factions within the prisons have their spiritual leaders. They claim to follow Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm X, Zapata, Great Grandfather, Jesus, Marx. They claim to honor their cultural heroes, but many do not even know the full philosophies and life histories of these men. Note, too, the list has no women. Why? Where are they? Gloria Steinem, Maya Angelou, Betty Friedan? Are they out there? Are they accessible?

Try looking into the mirror, sister-me, you might just find your heroine.

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Snitches Rule, Study Says

Highly paid government informants are gaining increasing control over their handlers, and the laws to control the use of snitches are often flouted, a new study says.

"Law enforcement's reliance on informants has grown to almost Orwellian proportions as snitches exert growing control over agents and judges fail to impose any checks or balances," the *National Law Journal* concluded after a nine-month investigation.

The report appears amid mounting publicity over the trial of a band of alleged Muslim terrorists charged with planning to bomb U.S. landmarks and assassinate political leaders. A key witness will be government informant Emad Salem, who was paid \$1 million by the government.

However, the *Law Journal* reports that most abuses by informants and law enforcement officials stem from the country's war on drugs. New forfeiture laws have made drug busts "a law enforcement prize, generating lots of cash both to pay informants and to increase their own operating budgets," the paper says.

And mandatory sentencing laws with steep prison terms have created powerful incentives for criminals to take any steps to avoid jail, it adds.

The study also found "almost no independent judicial oversight of the symbiotic relationship between agents and their highly paid snitches."

Reuters



photo by Chris Cozzone

CALIFORNIA D.O.C. GETS DOWN & DIRTY

The California D.O.C. appears to be eagerly complying with the recently passed Senate Bill 1260, which became effective January 1, 1995. The bill allows state facilities to restrict a range of prisoners' rights, which California has decided to aim mostly at publications. The following text was excerpted from the California D.O.C.'s Notice of Change to Director's Rules:

Inmates shall not possess or have under their control any matter which in the judgment of staff contains or concerns any one or more of the following:

- Any matter of a character tending to incite murder; arson; riot; or any form of violence or physical harm to any peers, or any ethnic, gender, racial, religious, or other group.
- Blackmail or extortion.
- Sending or receiving contraband.
- Plans to disrupt the order or breach the security of any facility.
- Plans for activities which violate the law, these regulations or

(continued on page 17)

SUPREME COURT MAKES IT HARDER FOR PRISONERS TO SUE

A July 1995 Supreme Court ruling will make it substantially more difficult for prisoners to bring constitutional lawsuits against prison management.

Only actions by prison officials that impose "atypical and significant hardship on the inmate" should be treated

by federal judges as even potential violations of an inmate's constitutional right to due process of law, Chief Justice William H. Rehnquist said in his 5-to-4 majority opinion.

Prisoner complaints that fall short of that standard—which could range from bungled disciplinary hearings to temporary placement in solitary confinement—are generally nothing more than complaints about "the ordinary incidents of prison life" and should not be accorded constitutional status by federal judges, the Chief Justice said.

He also noted that a series of Supreme Court opinions that treated such lawsuits as raising potential constitutional problems "has led to the involvement of federal courts in the day-to-day management of prisons, often squandering judicial resources with little off-setting benefit to anyone." Instead, he said, judges should step aside and give prison officials the "flexibility" they need "in the fine-tuning of the ordinary incidents of prison life."

The New York Times

PRETTY IN PINK

The latest from the state that brought back chain gangs: hot-pink uniforms for Alabama's male offenders who habitually expose themselves to female guards.

The Corrections Department has ordered 50 of the garish outfits to be worn by convict masturbators in an attempt to shame them into behaving.

"We've even taken disposable cameras and taken a picture of them and told them we were going to send it to their mothers. They don't care," said Holman Prison spokesman Charlie Bodiford.

Administrators are hoping the sexually aggressive inmates—known as "gunslingers"—will change their ways once fellow prisoners get a look at them in pink pants and shirts.

New York Post

SNAKE IN THE DESERT

Phoenix sheriff Joe Arpaio is known as the meanest sheriff in America—and he loves it.

"If the inmates loved me, I wouldn't be doing my job," he gloated. Arpaio, 62, has become famous for trying to make prisoners miserable, figuring if they don't like the experience of incarceration, they won't want to come back.

"I want all the bad guys to leave this county, to go back to New York or Los Angeles," he said.

Arpaio presides over a jail known as "tent city"—an Arizona desert jail where more than 1,000 inmates live in Army surplus tents without air conditioning or running water, even in the middle of summer, when temperatures soar to 110 degrees.

Arpaio's tent jail was built for \$80,000. A regular jail housing the same number of prisoners would cost tens of millions of dollars.

The sheriff, elected in 1992, never stops scheming to find new ways to deprive his prisoners and save money.

First he banned smoking. Then he took away pornographic magazines; then he cut movies.

He's recently reintroduced the chain gang, and plans to ban violent TV shows such as *NYPD Blue*, replacing them with C-Span, the Weather Channel, local cable broadcasts of county commission hearings and videos of House Speaker Newt Gingrich's conservative-minded course, "Renewing American Civilization."

Arpaio says he's gotten food costs down to 30 cents a meal by cutting out hot lunches and serving inexpensive, discolored green bologna instead, with Kool-Aid to wash it down.

He says the switch to cold food saved \$400,000 a year. Coffee was the next to go—saving \$100,000.

Polls show Arpaio is overwhelmingly popular—outside jail. He's so well-liked that politicians trample one another in their rush to praise him.

One Republican presidential candidate, Sen. Phil Gramm, said at a recent National Rifle Association banquet that he wanted to make Arpaio the head of the federal prison system.

Apparently, 65 percent of the prisoners in Arpaio's harsh county jails are awaiting trial, i.e., they haven't been proven guilty of a crime.

The New York Post

ARE YOU A
RON KUBY
OR

WILLIAM KUNSTLER ?

WE NEED YOUR REPRESENTATION IN
CHALLENGING THIS LAW: **53-1.151 (BI)**

VA's 3-TIME LOSER LAW

THIS IS NOT A NEW LAW. IT HAS BEEN IN EXISTENCE SINCE 1982, EVEN FIRST TERM FELONS FALL UNDER THIS LAW.

ACCORDING TO THE VA. CODE ITSELF, THIS STATUTE VIOLATES ARTICLES OF THE CONSTITUTIONS. EX POST FACTO CRIMES, PEOPLE ELIGIBILITY DATES HAVE BEEN GIVEN AND THEN RESCINDED, PEOPLE HAVE BEEN RELEASED ON PAROLE, RETURNED, AND PLACED UNDER THIS LAW.

THE TRIAL COURTS INTENTION FOR APPLICATION OF SENTENCE IS ALLOWED TO BE OVERRIDDEN BY D.O.C. THERE IS A CLEAR LIBERTY INTEREST UNDER DUE PROCESS RULES.

IT IS CRUEL AND UNUSUAL PUNISHMENT TO IMPOSE NATURAL LIFE WHEN THE TRIAL COURT NEVER INTENDED IT.

IT IS AN ABUSE OF POWER AND GOVERNMENT TO ALLOW A D.O.C. TO MAKE THE DECISIONS.

53-1.151 IS THE MOST AMENDED LEGISLATION IN VIRGINIA'S CRIMINAL CODE.

**WE ARE HELD ACCOUNTABLE -
IT'S TIME THE VA D.O.C. WAS HELD
ACCOUNTABLE!**

SIGNED, THE 300+ CONVICTS UNDER THIS LAW
PLEASE CONTACT MARGUERITE RICHARDSON OR DORIAN SMITH
AT: P.O. BOX 1, V.C.C.W., GOODLAND, VA 23063

Hot Line for the Newly Convicted

For \$2.50 a minute, anyone who has been sentenced to prison can call (900) 945-5511 and get the following introductory message:

"Welcome to going to prison." Touch-tone callers can pick from a menu of seven topics that include: reducing your sentence, what to bring to prison and who to see before going.

The service was started by Jimmy Tayoun, a former Philadelphia city councilman who served 3 1/2 years in federal prison after pleading guilty in 1991 to racketeering, mail fraud, tax evasion and obstruction of justice. While behind bars, Tayoun, 64, wrote a 64-page guide "Going to Prison?"

local procedures.

❑ Illustrations, explanations and/or descriptions of how to sabotage, disrupt, build, modify or repair computers, communications or electronics.

❑ Catalogs, advertisements, brochures and material soliciting a response from an inmate.

❑ Markings on the envelope which are obscene in nature as described in subsection (14).

(14) Obscene material means that material as defined in Penal Code Section 311 and may include, but is not limited to, the following:

❑ Depicts, displays or describes penetration of the vagina or anus, or contact between the mouth and the genitals, and mail containing information concerning where, how or from whom this matter may be obtained.

❑ Depicts, displays or describes bestiality, sadomasochism or an excretory function including urination, defecation or semen.

❑ Portrays conduct which appears to be nonconsensual behavior.

❑ Portrays conduct which is or appears to be forceful, threatening or violent.

❑ Material that is reasonably deemed to be a threat to legitimate penological interests.

Senate Bill 1260, as amended, reads:

Existing law prohibits a state prisoner from being deprived of rights other than those necessary to provide for the reasonable security of the institution and for the reasonable protection of the public.

This bill, instead, would provide that a state prisoner may, during the period of confinement, be deprived of such rights, and only such rights, as is reasonable related to legitimate penological interests.

TEXAS PRISON RADIO SHOW
SEEKS MATERIAL

KPFT, known as "The Prison Show," is looking for experiences and comments on health care in prison institutions. What works; what doesn't. HMOs, AIDS, TB and common health care issues shared by inmates and staff. Send information to: Ray Hill, KPFT, P.O. Box 3624, Houston, TX 77253-3624. Call (713)523-6969 or fax (713)523-6968.

THE CANADIAN SCENE

PRISONER JUSTICE DAY

August 10 marks the annual Prisoners' Justice Day in Canada. Since the first anniversary of prisoner Eddie Nalon's death on August 10, 1974 at Millhaven Penitentiary, Canadian prisoners and their supporters commemorate the day with a show of solidarity. For all of those who have died unnatural deaths in prison, Canadian offenders join in fasting, worship and work stoppages, while supporters in the community hold vigils and demonstrations at local prisons.

According to the Prisoners' Justice Day committee, there's been a steady rise in the number of events on and around August 10, such as radio shows, theater, press conferences and rallies.

Some of the prisoners' and public's demands are:

- ◆ Justice for women prisoners
- ◆ An end to excessive sentences
- ◆ Abolition of the death penalty everywhere
- ◆ Education of the public on prisons
- ◆ Public accountability of prison administrators and staff.

The following groups have been hosting August 10 events in their locales:

Prison Activist Resource Center, P.O. Box 3201, Berkeley, CA 94703

A.B.C. London, 121 Railton Rd., London SE 24, England

Prisoners' Justice Day Committee: Edmonton Box 1, Egremont, Alberta, Canada, TOA OZO.

Books to Prisoners/Joint Effort, 315 Cambie St., Vancouver, B.C. Canada V6B 2N4

Prison News Service, Box 5052, Stn. A., Toronto, Ontario Canada M5W1W4.

For more information, contact: PJD Committee of Toronto, c/o A Space, 183 Bathurst St., Toronto, Ontario, Canada, M5T 2R7. (416) 599-1524.

Compiled by Robert Rowbotham

The symbol 13 1/2 is a traditional tattoo design popular among prisoners. It means 12 jurors, 1 judge and half a fuckin' chance.



callouts

1995 PEN PRISON WRITING AWARD WINNERS

POETRY—**1st:** Romeo Wm. Bartley, Marcy, NY, "In My Bedroom." **2nd:** J.L. Wise, Jr., Mineral Point, MO, "No Brownstones, Just Alleyways & Corner Pockets Full." **3rd:** William Eric Waters, Marcy, NY, "Chronicling Sing Sing Prison." **Honorable Mentions:** David Wood, Sanderson, FL, "The Zen of Razorwire," Danny A. Witten, Huntsville, TX, "Me, Hitler and the Trail of Tears," and Mark Read, Walla Walla, WA, "Over the Lounge on First Avenue."

FICTION—**1st:** Robert Kelsey, Marcy, NY, "Suicide: A Suitable Fifty Dollar Myth." **2nd:** Susan Rosenberg, Marianna, FL, "Positive Woman." **3rd:** Paul St. John, Napanoch, NY, "Behind the Mirror's Face." **Honorable Mentions:** O'Neil Stough, Florence, AZ, "Deliberate Indifference," Jackie Ruzas, Comstock, NY, "Ryan's Ruse," and Jerry R. Mulliken, Jr., Connell, WA, "A Moment in Time."

DRAMA—**1st:** David Wood, Sanderson, FL, "Listen to the River." **2nd:** Jeff Allenzy, Milwaukee, WI, "Another Way." **3rd:** Charles P. Norman, Avon Park, FL, "Hang, Man." **Honorable Mentions:** Randolph Bass, Stormville, NY, "Bums," Stephen Wayne Anderson, San Quentin, CA, "The Hearing," Stephen Fraley, Attica, NY, "William," and Eric Waters, Marcy, NY, "The Homecoming."

NONFICTION—**1st:** Victor Hassine, Bellefonte, PA, "My Friend Howard." **2nd:** Stuart Dawson, Jameston, CA, "Cowboys Don't Really Die." **3rd:** Russell T. Kinkade, Tehachapi, CA, "The Schizophrenic God." **Best Memoir:** Susan Rosenberg, Marianna, FL, "The Airlift." **Honorable Mentions:** Charles P. Norman, Avon Park, FL, "The National Urban League," Jon M. Taylor, Jefferson City, MO, "Just Us," Vanessa Fletcher, Phoenix, AZ, "Inside the Heart and Mind," Jan Joseph Porretto, Jackson, LA, "Confessions of Johnny Carter," and Dennis J. Dechaine, Sinclair, ME, "Prison As Ecotopia."

Deadline for the 1996 PEN Prison Writing Award Contest: September 15, 1995. Send material to: PEN Prison Writing Contest, PEN American Center, 568 Broadway, Room 401, New York, NY 10012.

PERSONAL TRAINER BUSINESS HANDBOOK

If you're one of those muscleheads who spends all your time at the iron pile, this might be the book for you. All that time pumping iron can finally pay off financially. If you think you're gonna learn about exercise and fitness in this book, forget it. This is a handbook for guys wanting to enter the personal training business after release. Topics include: getting certified, finding clients, setting up shop, advertising and publicity. Available from Willow Creek Publications for \$24.95 plus \$2.95 P&H. P.O. Box 86032-E03, Gaithersburg, MD 20886.

NYC PRISONERS: UNABLE TO GET CERTAIN LAW MATERIALS?

The Library Committee of the NYC bar association is thinking about starting a service to provide law materials unavailable in prison libraries to prisoners interested in receiving them. Cost will be minimal, or free. If you're interested in this service, write to A. Lawrence Washburn, Jr., Attorney, 405 West 23 St., Apt. 12C, NY, NY 10011.

KNOWLEDGE IS POWER and freedom comes only through education. For prisoners who want to educate themselves and order books on every conceivable subject at very low prices with a flat-fee shipping rate, write to: Edward R. Hamilton Booksellers Company, Falls Village, CT 06031. Ask for a free catalog.

CORRECTIONS

In the May/June issue of *Prison Life*, we ran a full-page humor piece entitled "Warning." We credited James Machado with writing it but he only gets the credit for contributing it. We're not exactly sure *who* wrote it; so far we've heard from at least six people claiming *they* wrote it.

CORRECTIONS

In the July/August issue of *Prison Life*, an organization working very diligently to seek justice in the case of Mumia Abu-Jamal was inadvertently omitted from the defense fund list. Contributions for Mumia Abu-Jamal's defense fund may be sent to Partisan Defense Committee-MAJ, P.O. Box 99, Canal Street Station, New York, NY 10013.

DEFENDING ~~CHALLENGING~~ THE CONVICT CODE

Hardcore cons have harsh words for convict code revisionists.

Last issue, we published two articles that challenged the Convict Code: one by a seasoned con; the other by a renowned prisoner rights activist. Both articles called for change in the unwritten prison ethics manual known as the Convict Code. Responses, for the most part, reflected disgust that Prison Life would publish "such trash." Here are a few of early responses.

Herby Sperling **U.S.P. Lewisburg, PA**

I was surprised to see these articles in *Prison Life* magazine. With all their propaganda, these pieces belong in something like *Law Enforcement Weekly*. The authors must've been confused because you can't revise a code. They must think the Convict Code is like an area code or a zip code.

Codes are not made to be altered. They are inflexible. Rules, regulations and opinions are another story. Take a look at the military code, the criminal code: codes prescribe a clear course of conduct. You either honor the code or you dishonor it. There is no in-between, there are no exceptions. A very dear friend of mine always says, "It's all just a matter of character." You



either have morals, principals and ethics, or you don't. You're either pregnant or you're not. There is no "little bit." These days, unfortunately, too many people want only the good, the easy, the cream off the top. They're soft, weak and scummy. They think it's clever to win at any cost.

Adhering to the Code is not always convenient and is sometimes very difficult. But real men wouldn't have it any other way. Life isn't easy and convenient. Does that mean we should stop living?

There should never be any exceptions to doing the right thing. Every punk, rat and joker I ever met had an excuse for not doing the right thing. Their lousy behavior was always some-

one else's fault. Bullshit.

We all choose this lifestyle for one reason or another. Maybe it's need, circumstances, poverty, ambition, lack of education, desperation, whatever. But we have ethical standards—high ones, too—that should and must be met at all times. Anyone can manufacture hypothetical situations to justify scummy behavior, but nothing done to you, your loved ones, or any one else warrants or justifies squealing.

If you can't live up to it, choose a different lifestyle. Just don't fool yourself, brothers. Only suckers put up a sucker's holler.

John Narducci **N.C.I. Supermax**

Jorge Renaud, the author of "Challenging the Convict Code," is a cold-blooded, sold-out punk motherfucker. He says our "code hurts more than it does good."

Well, I've been in Ad Seg for over six years because of cold-blooded rats and I don't have time for any more of 'em, including ol' Jorge down in Texas.

Telling the man what he knows about his celly getting booked (killed) is snitching. With the Code, every man takes his own responsibility. If he doesn't, he goes out feet first.

Jorge puts forth hypothetical situations in the article. I'll give you mine: If I get jammed over my celly getting booked, either I get word to the killer to either bone up or go out dead cold and toe-tagged. Simple. If I don't get to him first, my Aryan brothers will.

Sure, if you get jammed up over somebody else's shit, takin' the time ain't right. But neither is advocating snitching. All over the country, these young, punk-ass tough guys are doing just that.

Sharon Lowell **Broward C.I., FL**

I have to say it: You men are dogs! No matter how big and bad you claim to be, you're no better than the weak-

est punk in your block if you don't stand up for what's right. I've been down for eight years on life in a maximum security prison here in Miami, and I have never seen a woman sit idly by and let another be beaten, raped or abused out in the middle of the block like you men do. We have some tough women here doing long and multiple sentences, but it's not the building you sleep in that makes up the kind of person you are inside. We don't live by your dog pack code here. We are individuals with our own minds, and we'll stand up for what we feel is right. We women realize that it may be a stranger crying for help today, but next year, it could be our friend, sister or daughter. So, you big bad-asses, hang your heads in shame. We know who the real pussies are now!

Michael "Papa" Pack **Canon City, CO**

I am appalled you'd print such trash as "Challenging the Convict Code." You claim to be the "voice of the convict," yet you print the story of a common inmate who prostitutes his pride, honor and dignity to the very people who are his keepers!

I'm a three-time loser and I've been doing time, off and on, since 1980. I've watched the rapid deterioration of our prison systems because of motherfuckers prostituting themselves to the system. There ain't no ridin' the fence. You're either a rat or you're not, Renaud.

Let's explore the options of your Scenario Number One.

I'm standing on the street corner and I witness a drive-by shooting where a four-year-old girl gets killed. I get the license plate number. Choice Number One: Run to the cops and tell them what you know. Then get put on the witness stand so that you and your credibility can go on trial. You being an ex-con and all, you're

(continued on page 59)

Insider Outlook

Cash and Cage

Exploit: to make unethical use of for one's own profit.

Parasite: one who lives at others' expense without making any useful return.

I am writing this article from K unit, Cell #104, Bunk B of the Central Arizona Detention Center in Florence, Arizona. This facility is owned and operated by the Correctional Corporation of America, an international private prison industry. CCA has venues as far off as France, Puerto Rico and Australia.

I am one of a contingent of 206 Alaska state prisoners sent here due to overcrowded conditions existing, or purported to exist, in my home state. Alaska has contracted to pay CCA well over \$2 million for housing us for just six months. As part of the contract, CCA retains all rights to any revenues generated by anything we produce or manufacture.

In other words: We have been delivered into slavery.

But let us not speak of slavery or prisoners' rights just now. Let us instead go right for the jugular: I wonder if the victims of our crimes, or the families of the victims, understand that these private corporations are making millions from their personal losses and suffering. They are making more money from our crimes than we could ever imagine.

I can picture the warden of this facility sitting in his breakfast nook reading the morning paper's headlines: FIVE FELONY ARRESTS MADE. I can almost see his ear-to-ear grin.

H.N. Coffey

Central Arizona Detention Center

Wisconcentration Beware

Ol' Guv'nor Tom Thompson of Wisconsin . . . Ordinarily one might look at that name with a fleeting image of a plowboy "done good" cum gin-drinking politico. Whether or not Thompson was a plowboy who developed an affinity for martinis is at this point irrelevant, when one understands his far-reaching powers.

Understand that Thompson has gained national attention for the "work force policy" that his script

writers and he drafted, which led to him being wooed by the Blighthouse and touted as a demagogue to the press. There is now talk of a vice-presidential candidacy.

We must realize that crime is but the inevitable by-product of socioeconomic oppression manifested by the master/slave mentality class struggle. The government, those nefarious "public servants" are not going to hack away at the evil roots of that tree upon which their money grows. Hence, they are not about to admit or address the source of the crime. Misdirection builds profitable prisons and megalomania.

Recently the state budget committee okayed the Thompson Club's plan to build a 1,000-plus super-doooper hyper-deactivator mega-max prison in Wisconsin for the "troublemakers." Outlawing televisions was also in that proposal, obviously to assist in rehabilitating those troublemakers stuck in the box for 23 hours a day.

But praise be Odin, the state legislature shot down the idea. In lieu of the new prison, \$4.3 million was forked over to add 200 beds to the Fox Lake "Korruptional" Facility and 150 beds to the joint at Oshkosh (the "Sex Offender University").

An interesting word, troublemakers. Those who are different from the status quo mediocrity? Those with a backbone, a sense of honor, a willingness to stand and speak? All of the above and more.

Upon hearing that announcement on the radio, I was convinced that the monster factory would indeed be built. Sure enough, the plan apparently flew through the legislature at the speed of sound with a gold star stamp of approval.

Next time, who knows? It'll be 23 hours a day in cold storage without a puppet box. The next step by our benevolent sponsors will be to eliminate indigent *pro se* suits, which will flood the courts. The strangulation of purported "rights" regarding *pro se* litigation is looming. "You're guilty. Shut up and lie down or we'll beat you down!"

Who is going to convince the spell-bound citizenry that as the noose

chokes the incarcerated, it also tightens around the throat of society?

We're being force-fed a stew of deadly bacterium by a political empire bent on profit and brazen misinformation delivered to the voters, who helplessly fund the whole side show. And we have what appears to be a progressively more powerful forum—*Prison Life* magazine—staffed by those convincingly within reach and of heartfelt concern. The rag should be in every home and out-house. Tell your kin that therein exists the word which must be heard. Or shut up and lie down.

*Dennis Lee "Mule" Marsh
Wauupun Correctional Facility*

Return of the Destitute Ex-Cons

I was elated last week to find the following declaration affixed to the door of a subterranean office here at Rikers Island. The sign read: "As of May 12, 1995, due to budgetary constraints, the light at the Welfare Office has been extinguished."

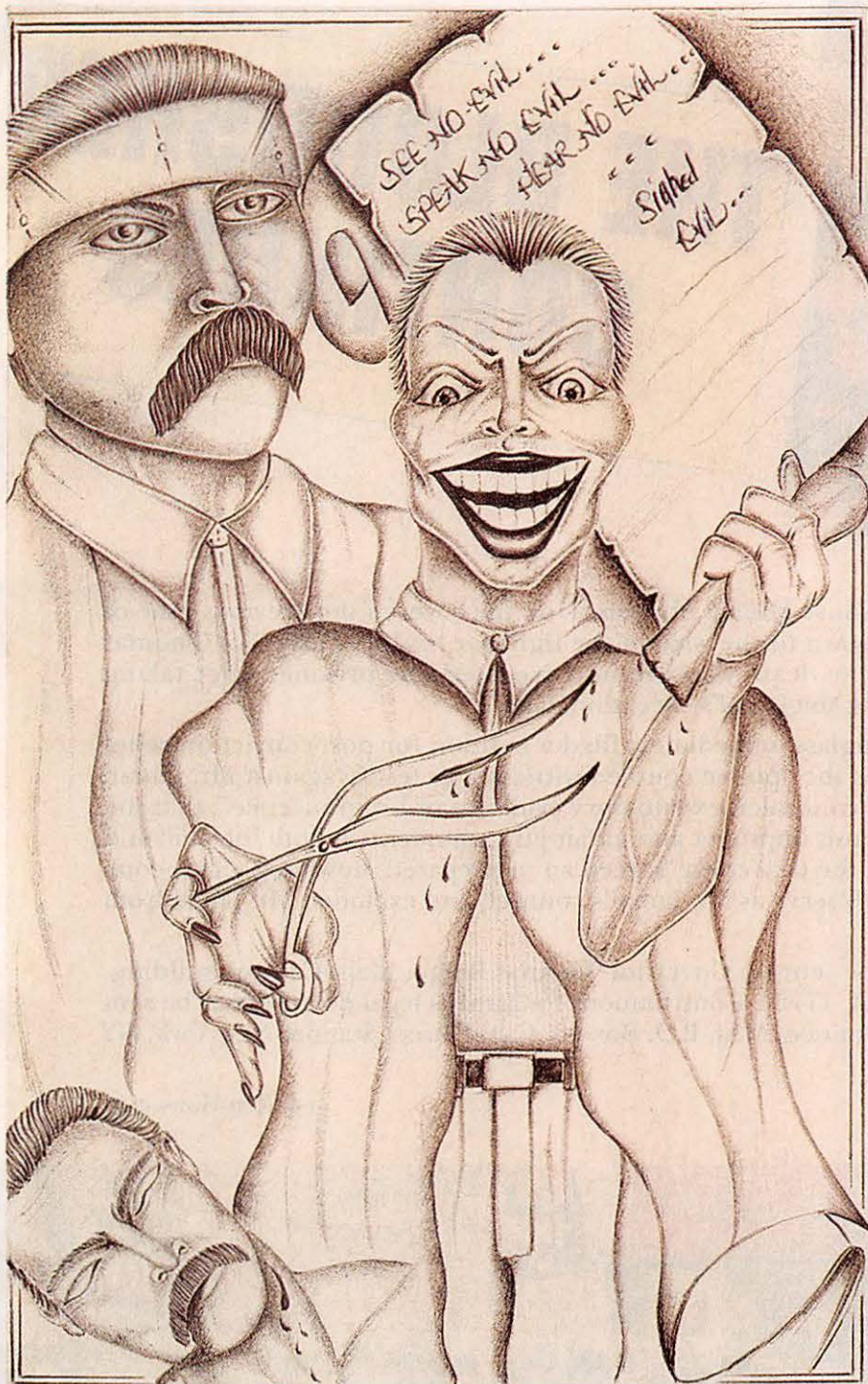
That the budget wonks at the mayor's office had corrected another inefficiency gave me a wave of warm fuzzies.

Normally, departing prisoners are issued emergency welfare checks of \$136. Under the new order, all inmates for discharge will be given a one-time, tax-free, no-strings-attached payment of \$3.75 and a bus token to get them on the subway to their old neighborhoods, their new futures and, I suspect, yours as well.

We are all indebted to New York City Mayor Guiliani and his fat policy people for their no doubt well-researched discovery that \$3.75 is all it takes to kick-start an ex-con along the straight and narrow road to reform.

Do not be alarmed this summer if crime statistics show a surge of arrests around New York City. Rest assured: It will, no doubt, merely be the result of the humidity and a well-heralded increase in police efficiency rather than any increase in inmate recidivism.

*Anthony Wareham
Rikers Island*



Psychological Warfare at I.S.P.

The Iowa State Pen is not a prison. It's a concentration camp. It's a burial ground for tormented souls. Once you're trapped here, there is no escape.

I've often wondered if facing death at the hands of my oppressors would be easier than coping with the insanities of this concentration camp. I've lain in bed at night hearing the

screams of twisted, tormented souls and asked myself if this could really be happening. How did I end up in this dreamland, where the worst nightmares have become reality? There is never an answer—only the sound of my own voice vibrating off the walls.

The administration believes in subjecting us to years of unnecessary back-up time in ad seg—a punishment and brainwashing tactic used to institutionalize a prisoner into adapting into this unnatural environment.

I'm doing a 10-year sentence for a nonviolent crime, and I've been in lock-up for five years and two months. I'm going on my fifth year without seeing the parole board: They won't see me because I'm in lock-up.

What is justice? Is justice making people hate the world? People who can't wait for a chance to get revenge? The day I walk through the front gate into freedom, will I truly be free or will I be a walking time bomb ready to explode at the slightest incident? How will I forget the physical and psychological torment I have endured in this dehumanizing environment? That's one thing I know I'll never be able to forgive.

I'd surely like to see all my oppressors die a painful, slow death. To most, that's the thinking of a sick, demented individual, but is it not society's fault, in part?

I started this number at age 20. Now I'm 26. How much more will I have to endure? I'm angry! I'll be set free with hatred, rage and revenge in mind. Here's your justice, people. Congratulations on a job well done.

*George Stone
Iowa State Pen*

Stateville Shaft's the Mentally Ill

I am writing this letter in Ad Seg. I got myself in so I could spend some time with my brother and have since come upon a difficult issue.

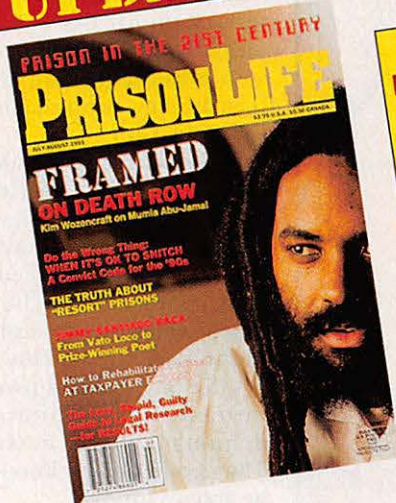
My brother has been locked up since he was 17. He's now 34. He's a classic case of paranoid schizo but the state of Illinois has put its mental health program on the back burner and does not evaluate anyone for mental fitness.

My brother really needs help. He's spent the last seven years locked up in a cell and can no longer relate to the real world.

The D.O.C. has given up on the mentally ill. These people have been put into population where they cannot function. They either make a mistake that gets them killed or they become a victim and slip deeper into their own world of madness. This is a great wrong.

*Larry Harris
Stateville, IL*

ABU-JAMAL UPDATE



THE BLOODSHED CONTINUES

Death Row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal, on the cover of the previous issue of *Prison Life* magazine, is down to the wire in the fight for his life. Governor Thomas Ridge, who has signed nine death warrants and executed one prisoner since taking office, has set August 17 as Abu-Jamal's execution date.

Attorney Leonard Weinglass immediately filed a petition for post-conviction relief which states, in part, that the "police coerced witnesses to testify against Mr. Jamal, rewarded those who did, concealed exculpatory evidence of his innocence"; that the prosecutor made "egregiously improper and unfair jury arguments at both the guilt and penalty phases"; and that the trial court "forced an unprepared, unwilling and incompetent stand-in attorney to serve as Mr. Jamal's counsel, and excluded Mr. Jamal from key portions of the trial."

Letters of protest can be sent to: Governor Thomas Ridge, Main Capitol building, Room 225, Harrisburg, PA, 17120. Contributions for Jamal's legal defense may be sent to: Partisan Defense Committee/MAJ, P.O. Box 99, Canal Street Station, New York, NY 10013.

—Kim Wozencraft





Pictured: A march outside Penn Station in New York City occurred on June 5 to protest the signed death warrant of Mumia Abu-Jamal. Hundreds gathered for the march and except for a minor scuffle with the cops (right), plenty of which were at hand, the 2 1/2 hour protest ended peacefully. Photos by Chris Cozzone.

LIVE FROM DEATH ROW

THE ANTI-REVIEW

by Mumia Abu-Jamal

It's been several months now since the book *Live from Death Row* was released. The book, published by Addison-Wesley, is a pocket-sized compilation of my prison writings. To this date, with the exception of *Prison Life* magazine, it has never been reviewed.

"You're wrong!" some will thunder. "I saw it in the *Inquirer*." "The *Post*," another will claim.

But I would calmly, pointedly disagree.

"Read it again," I would urge the disclaimers, and they would find they are re-reading something else, something called an anti-review.

These anti-reviews feature charges and countercharges from both sides of the controversy of my so-called "trial"—but nothing about the book.

This is not by accident.

The forces in this country that publish big city newspapers are those who labor to shape public opinion; they are corporate, big money backers of the status quo. Every so often they take a politician to task for being drunk in public or for stealing money from some fund, but when was the last time you read of them challenging not a politician but the political system? Think about it.

It ain't in their interest to challenge a system from which their goodies flow.

But *Live from Death Row* does just that. It challenges the so-called justice system, the so-called correcting system, the vampirish political system—The System, and therefore the cash cow from which the big media suck.

So, rather than challenge the book, which is full of truth, they attack the writer on a false premise: a criminal profiting from crime!

A lie, if ever there was one, but coldly calculated to sell newspapers—while ignoring the book.

I dare you to read this book.

You will find that the big media blatantly lied about it, and you will have to wonder, "How come I never read about this kind of stuff in my paper?" (Except for those who do this column.)

It ain't in the interest of the system.

For writing *Live from Death Row*, I've been convicted by the prison system of "engaging in a business or profession of journalism." In a way, that's their review, I guess.

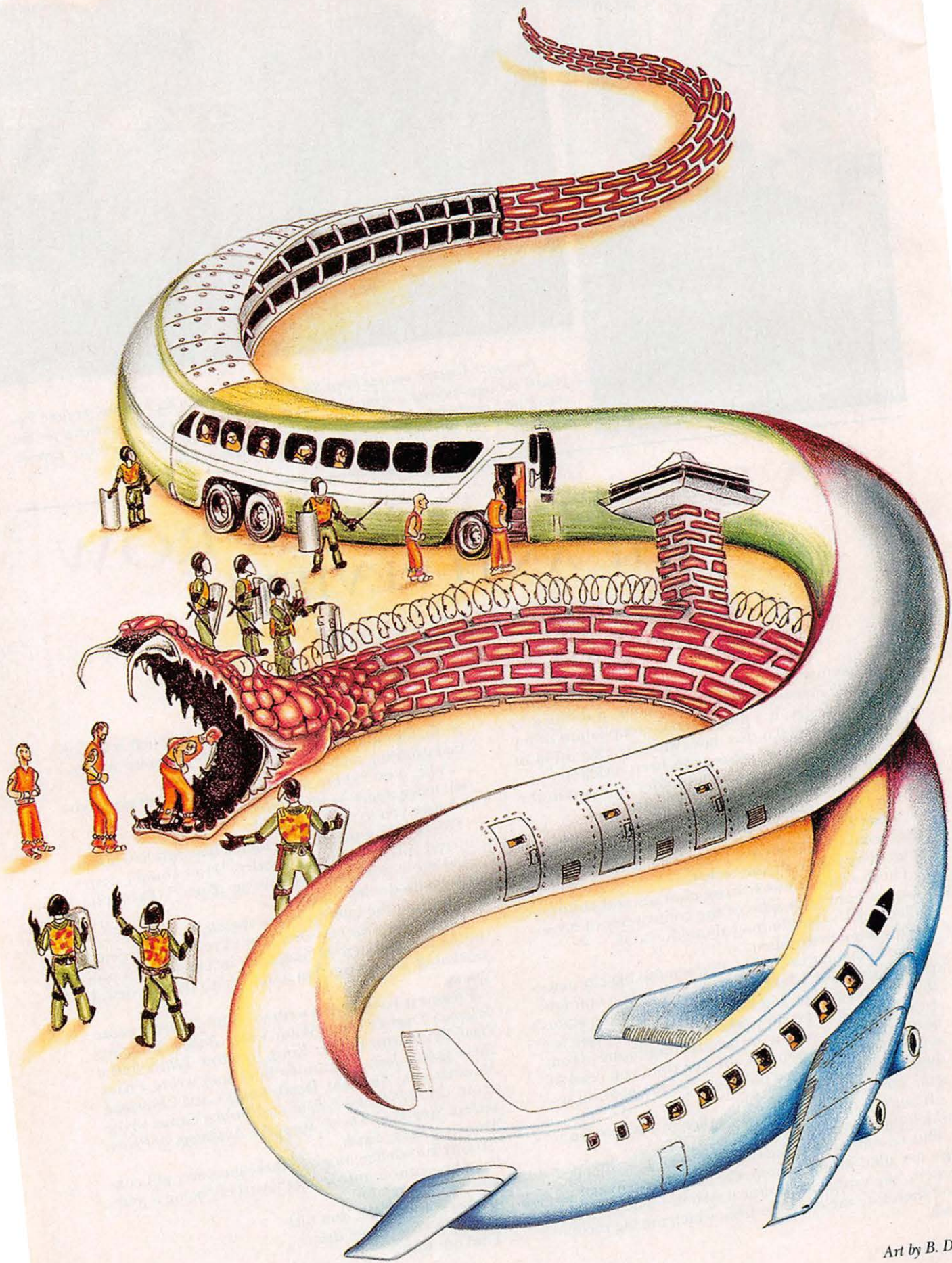
Prisoners have always written. John Bunyon wrote *Pilgrim's Progress*; Oscar Wilde wrote *Ballad of Reading Gaol*; Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. wrote *Letters from a Birmingham Jail*; Alexander Berkman wrote *Prison Memories of an Anarchist*; Death Row's Caryl Chessman wrote *Cell 2455, Death Row*; and Bobby Sands wrote *Skylark Sing Your Lonely Song: An Anthology of Prison Writings of Bobby Sands*.

To my knowledge, none of these guys ever got convicted by a prison misconduct board of "being a journalist." I did.

Makes you wonder, don't it?

Read *Live from Death Row*.

Find out why.



Art by B. D. Hill

WISDOM LIFE

MAXIMUM TRANSFER FROM MARION TO FLORENCE

by T.D. Bingham
Florence Supermax

Prisoner reports from the new supermax in Florence, Colorado are not easy to come by. The facility is designed to disorient its inhabitants and to sever their connection with the outside world in order to force them into a state of stunned submission. These are the convicts the Bureau of Prisons has labeled the most dangerous prisoners in America. Prison Life has several readers and contributors locked up in Florence. We will continue to publish dispatches from this state-of-the-art torture chamber. Here is an account of the road trip from USP Marion to Florence ADX, and the first of our insiders' reports on what has been dubbed the "Alcatraz of the Rockies."

"Get up and get ready!"

is our wake-up call. It's 2:45 a.m. and the guards are shouting and rattling the bars throughout Marion's Cellhouse D. Though it's early, we need little prodding to greet this long-awaited day.

Today we will leave Marion.

The first chain pulled for Colorado ten weeks ago. Those left behind stewed, indignant at not being the first to go, as if the opening of Florence's Administrative Max was a social event we hadn't been invited to.

Some men at Marion have grown up here in the harshest hole ever constructed. Deprived for so long of a normal existence, our measure of self-worth is gauged by our capacity to endure whatever physical or psychological torture is thrust upon us. Men along the tiers boast of surviving brutal riots, of running gauntlets of club-wielding guards, of being starved and beaten in places like San Quentin, Attica and Huntsville. It is both an indictment of society and a human tragedy that the state of imprisonment

in America has been allowed to degenerate to this level.

I stumble up from my concrete bunk in the morning chill. Besides the guards' bantering, all I hear are toilets flushing and the noisy squeal of sink taps as men wash hurriedly. Few of us bother to eat the cold cereal left on our tray slots. Most simply bolt down luke-warm coffee and stand by their doors.

"Yo, Matt," a neighbor calls to a neighbor, "you ready?"

"Man, I've been ready for a move for 19 years," comes the response.

And it's true. Matt's been in Marion almost 20 years, 14 of which were spent in Marion's control unit under the most extreme conditions of confinement this government has devised—until now.

"Did they say you were going?"

"I better be going. Suckers woke me up. Why? They tell you something?"

"Yeah, that ol' cage monster told me."

"Motherfuckers didn't tell me shit," an angry voice echoes somewhere along the tier.

"That don't mean nothing. They woke the whole goddamn building. We're probably all going," a hopeful prisoner yells.

The tier grows silent. Everyone remembers the handful of men moved to D Block from another building after the first chain pulled.

Twenty slow minutes pass. Then the grill gate is flung open, its crashing sound vibrating through the cellhouse. Guards decked out in camouflage bulletproof vests and riot masks stomp down the range.

"Cuff up, cuff up!" they bellow.

Prisoners turn their backs to the bars and extend hands through tray slots. The ratcheting of handcuffs is the only sound now.

"On the box!" the guard in front of my cell shouts. "Cell 12. One. Two."

"Cell 12, one-two," is the repeated response from the secure area where the cell doors' locking mechanism is operated. The door opens with a thunderous clanging and I back out quickly.

Once we're all out,

we are guided along the tier up a short flight of stairs into the main corridor. A lieutenant counts us again and compares our faces to mugshots as if he'd never seen us before. We're then allowed to proceed through several gates and doors, between D Block and the hospital basement, to long, narrow holding cages. We remain here, handcuffed, while Receiving and Release personnel prepare our departure.

From the grill, I watch a guard, known to us as "Springfield Shorty," turn over a canvas sack the size of a man's torso. All manner of restraints spill onto the concrete floor: handcuffs, leg irons, black boxes, padlocks and piles of chain.

The black box, for those unfamiliar with the device, is comprised of two 4"x3" sections of plastic molded to fit over the locking mechanisms of handcuffs. Although harmless looking, this overkill contraption prevents all but the barest finger and hand movements. In addition to the black box, we are also cinched tightly around the waist by a length of chain. The angle of our harnessed arms, plus the weight of the chains, turn the black box into an instrument of torture. It is clear that only those who enjoy pain will be comfortable on this journey.

One at a time, we are taken from the cage to a small side room and ordered to stand on an elevated platform where the handcuffs are temporarily removed. The process is slow: 40 men per interval.

I strip. My body cavities are eyed and a metal detector passed over my flesh in case I have stashed weapons or instruments of escape in my ass. After dressing, I am taken to the hospital for a bowel X-ray in case I've swallowed something that might later liberate me.

Then I am taken to the hospital's top floor, placed in a large, barren room and told to sit on the cold tile floor. Hours pass. The room soon becomes full of men, all camping on the floor. There is morbid joking about medical procedures for removing hemorrhoids. No one is pleased.

Somehow, an elderly black man struggles to his feet. Through a panel of windows, guards threaten the old man: "Sit back down!" He complains of poor circulation but obeys. Chained like dogs, we feel his anger and humiliation.

Suddenly I can stand it no longer. I just want to stretch my legs, so

I struggle to rise, and flounder. A young friend next to me leans his body against mine so my feet won't slip and I inch my way to a standing position. Then I start shuffling across the room, back and forth. Soon a dozen or so more are milling about. The guard is shouting, but we ignore him.

Guards stream into the room and instinctively everyone turns his back to the wall. But it's time to leave anyway. Double lines form and we're led into the main corridor. Each man is shadowed by two truncheon-wielding guards. At each of the five gates en route to Administration, the line is stopped and counted. We are highly prized cattle herded through the federal stock chutes.

Outside, buses wait. The entire foreground of the prison is surrounded by an army of state troopers, guards and military, all armed with scoped rifles and machine guns. They stand in a position of vigilance, alternately facing outer and inner parameters, as if expecting a terrorist attack.

Before boarding the buses, we are frisked again and our restraints are rechecked. Our names and numbers are asked, and we are again compared to mug shots.

The scenery on the way

to Scott Air Force base is hardly picturesque, but to eyes that have looked for years on nothing but Marion's drab cell house walls, the world looks wondrous. I see sights that remind me of my north Texas youth: leafless water foliage, fallow fields, oil pump jacks and tumble down farm houses. Distant trees look like charcoal sketches on cloud gray canvas.

We pass a car. In the rear window, a small child waves wildly. His open innocence evokes faded memories of sons and daughters. What I feel is reflected in the face of the man next to me. I look at him, but he averts his eyes, and I do the same.

The man seated behind me tells me his mother received a letter from a friend transferred on the first chain. The friend's report from the new fed-

eral supermax: The food is not bad, the commissary is fair, and double-door cells ensure silence.

The guards standing in a line in the narrow aisle between our seats are sweating beneath their cumbersome protective wear. One laments his decision to volunteer as an escort, two of his comrades echo him. None of them knew they would be required to stand throughout the first 10-hour leg of our journey.

A prisoner requests water. The supervising lieutenant, riding safely behind the cage door next to the driver, informs his subordinate that water is not available. This sets off a round of grumbling among guards and prisoners alike.

"Next thing you're going to tell us," a con jests, "is that you didn't bring our lunch."

"You'll be fed on the plane," the lieutenant calls back.

The guards locked in with the prisoners exchange quick glances and grip their riot batons a little tighter as a round of curses passes from prisoners' lips. Their apprehension is as unnecessary as our futile expressions of anger.

All are silent for miles. Like those around me, I try to sleep off the boredom, thirst and growing hunger. Every time I shift in my cramped seat, the metal buried in my flesh takes a bite.

Finally, we begin to slow down. Through the breath-fogged window, I see troopers outside halting interstate traffic while our security procession passes. We turn down a road and slow even more. In the distance is Scott Airfield, where a cordon of military personnel encircles a Boeing 727. The bus rolls to a stop near the aircraft's boarding steps.

Once again, our names and numbers are called and checked off against mug shots. We are roughly frisked, our restraints are checked, and we are rushed onto the plane and buckled into seats as quickly as we are capable of moving with our chained ankles.

In the air, the subject of food is raised again. This time, we are told that a hot meal awaits us in Florence. Six-ounce plastic bottles of water are dispensed instead. With-

holding food is no accident or oversight. Promised food is a dangling carrot, just as being roused early and forced to sit in chains on cold

It is both an indictment of society and a human tragedy that the state of imprisonment in America has been allowed to degenerate to this level.

tile for hours is a strategy to fatigue bodies and minds. Or maybe I'm suffering an attack of paranoia.

The flight doesn't seem to take any time at all. Someone identifies Pike's Peak through the clouds and minutes later, we land.

The procedure doesn't

change. After the customary groping and cursory looks at our chains and locks, we board a bus and move out, led and followed by an assortment of armored military vehicles, including a helicopter somewhere overhead. Citizens' cars are stopped along the twisting, cliffed roads. Both parents and children stand by their cars pointing at our bus like we're a float in a parade. Some are even taking pictures.

For miles, all we see are scarred landscapes, workers digging trenches, bulldozers leveling virgin earth, and houses and buildings in various stages of construction. The economic boom brought by the opening of the newest addition to Florence's massive prison complex is apparent.

We turn slowly onto a narrow black-top road and pass Florence's minimum security camp. I don't recognize it for what it is. To me, it looks like an industrial complex. Further along, the F.C.I. and max facilities are recognizable. No one can mistake these places with their high fences and towers. At the base of the hill is the facility that's been dubbed the "Alcatraz of the Rockies." Certainly its facade is impressive: a squat, brooding fortress of seemingly windowless red-bricked buildings surrounded by hurricane fences laced between and atop with great rolls of concertina razor wire. Huge, ominous towers peer over the valley like sentries.

We roll to a stop. An electronically controlled sally port gate slides open; our bus rolls in, leaving the armored detail behind. A sign on the gate cites a penal statute prohibiting the carrying of firearms beyond the next gate. Caged guards in front and back offload and relinquish weapons. The bus eases and turns down a cement drive into an underground parking facility. More guards wait here, shoulder-to-shoulder, lining each wall. They are so laden with riot gear they look hard-pressed to move, much less quell a disturbance. It's all show, to impress

The entire foreground of the prison is surrounded by an army of state troopers, guards and military . . . as if expecting a terrorist attack.

us with their strength of numbers and preparedness. But the impression is lost on men too tired and hungry to think beyond a meal and a cell.

A suited administrator boards, clipboard in hand, and unlocks the gate. "When I call your name," he says, "step to the front and answer with your number."

Outside the bus, trios of guards surround each man descending the steps, frisking and checking restraints in case some slick soul has awaited this moment to flee.

Once inside, I am escorted down a narrow hallway to a large well-lit room. Processing is speedy. We are mugshot and thumbprinted, and then the black box, chain and shackles are removed. I massage my swollen hands and wrists. Release from the pain contraction lends me new energy. The room is crowded with guards but I stand solid with practiced stoicism; I have been subjected to the indignity of having my body orifices ogled by strangers for a lifetime now. I peel off my clothes. A photographer squeezes his way in between two guards, eyes my testicles, looking to photograph marks, scars and tattoos, of which I have plenty. Thinking he's finished, I start to slip on a pair of shorts one of the guards has handed me.

"Need a picture of that," he says pointing to my groin area.

I look down at my shrunken penis, the only telltale sign of my embarrassment, and regret not for the first time a youthful indulgence. I stretch my dick out, and the photographer snaps a picture of a faded blue line that once clearly stated the name of a true love.

As I dress, I notice a pretty dark-haired woman on the fringe of the guards. She, too, is attired in riot gear. I resurvey the room. There are several women and my embarrassment intensifies.

Recuffed behind the back, I move out. I glimpse a friend waiting to be ogled and flash him a smile. He

scowls back. Then I am prodded down the corridor into a room where a caseworker asks me the standard questions: "Do you have enemies? Have you ever been a government informant or witness?" I answer no to each question and

he smiles, not realizing how offensive such questions are to men who have wasted away years in holes because they retain their values. Or maybe he does know and the questions are intended to be insulting.

After that, I am led down another corridor, then another one. There are lots of corridors designed to disorient incoming prisoners, and they do. I have no idea now where the entry to the garage actually is. We pass a solid door and a grill gate. Everything is electronically operated. The corridor widens and slopes gradually into the prison's bowels. I pass several doors bearing letters identifying cellhouses. Electric grills are spaced along the corridor.

By the time we arrive at my new home in F Block, I've been so busy looking for anything to use as a landmark I can't recall the number of gates nor anything of significance along the way except doors and more gates.

F Block's solid door clicks open. We step into a vestibule facing yet another grill. The one behind me shuts, the one in front opens. Thirty feet away is another gate. Beyond that is a wide open floor dominated by a control center with large tinted windows latticed by two-inch bars. The gate whirs open and I catch a glimpse of three double tiers angling off the central floor. Each tier is comprised of 12 cells.

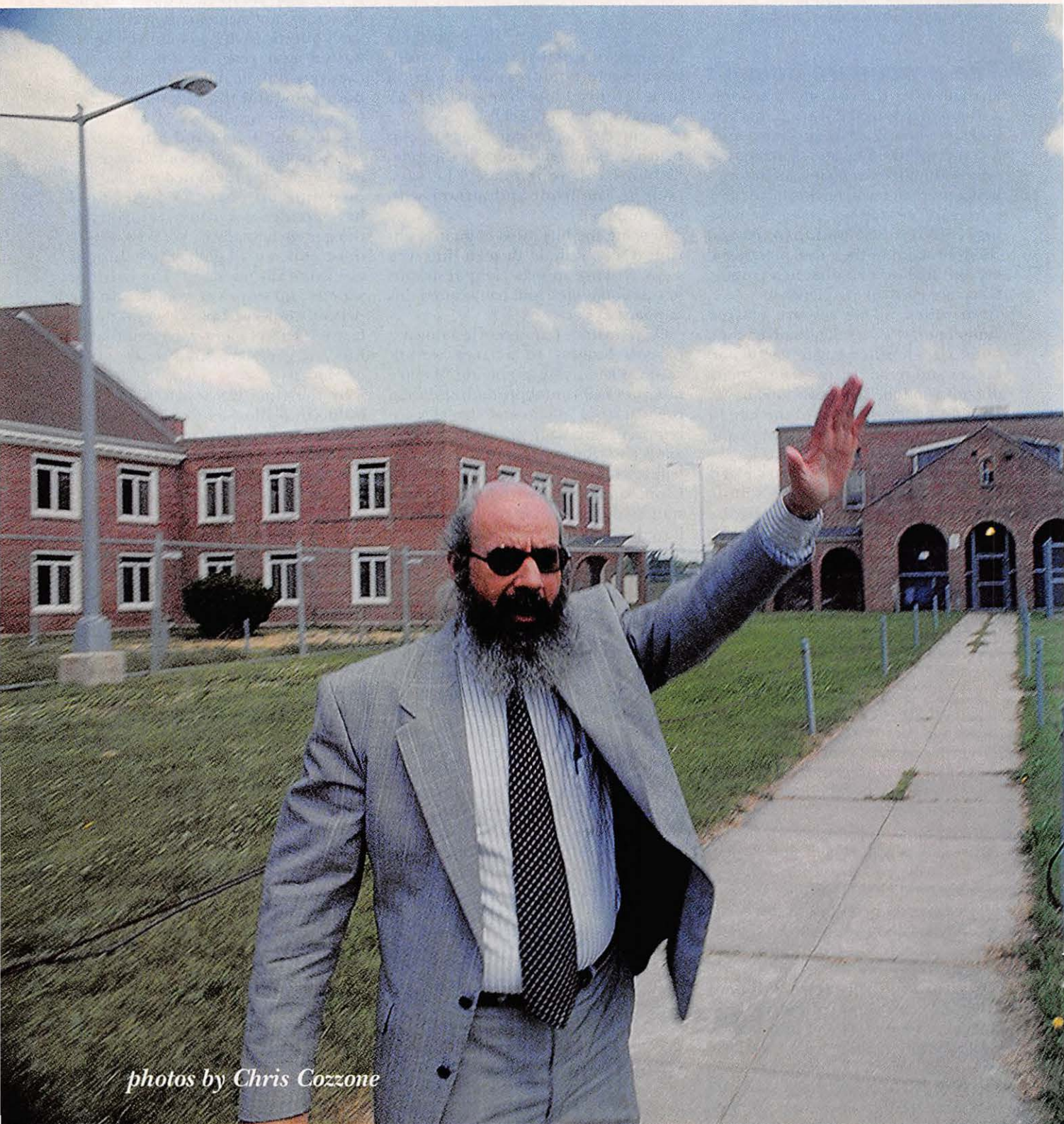
I am marched up a short flight of stairs to another grill which opens, finally, to my cell. Both inner and outer doors have been opened in anticipation of my arrival. My escorts leave, the gates close in their wake.

Alone, I examine the 96 square feet of my cell—a fact I picked up from *U.S.A. Today*. Minus the area of the bed and the shower wedged into a corner, the cell still has twice the pacing room of cells in Marion. A narrow window at the rear looks out to a walled courtyard. That and the sky are my only view.

Weary to the bone, I lie down. As cells go, I assure myself, I've lived in worse.



INSIDE THE



photos by Chris Cozzone

CAPITAL'S CAGE



By Jennifer Wynn

Yo! Who's that white guy in the yard wearin' a suit and high fivin' it with the brothers? Slappin' them on the back like they're good ol' boys and takin' notes on a clipboard? He's got a pony tail and John Lennon sunglasses—must be some kinda poet. Maybe a musician from the '60s tryin' to make a comeback . . . no . . . I got it . . . he's one a them new-age, let's-save-the-criminals, get-in-touch-with-our-inner-feelings dudes. I mean, the way he's so friendly, actin' so concerned and all. But look—everyone seems to know him.

"Mr. Gibbons! You're lookin' fine today."

"Hey Mr. Gibbons! How's it goin'?"

"Over here, Mr. Gibbons."

"Yo, Mr. Warden . . . I need to talk to ya."

That's the warden?

A fresh fish in the Washington, D.C. prison in Lorton, VA is likely to be confused. Warden Vincent Gibbons looks and talks so unlike your typical prisonrat it's almost disconcerting to listen to him. The sign on the desk says he's the warden, but he's so in tune with the convicts you'd swear he had been a prisoner in a past life.

"These are good guys," he says, referring to the prisoners, 98 percent of whom are black. "They're friendly, outgoing, articulate, intelligent, alive to a lot of world issues, a joy to hang

around and talk with. We have really good, stimulating conversations.”

Sounds like he’s talking about his biker buddies. Yes—the warden rides a motorcycle, a 1974 BMW he plans to cruise around Europe on when he retires. “It’s my own form of therapy,” he says.

Gibbons has been the Man of the Capital’s cage for two years. He crawled up the ladder from C.O., a job he took in 1976 to get into the field of corrections. Intrigued by human nature—in particular man’s capacity for change—he went on to become a psychologist, then the chief of Mental Services, then a deputy warden.

“I’ll tell you straight up,” he says. “I’m an idealist. I couldn’t do this if I wasn’t. I’d go drive a truck and get out of here. Because this is a terribly, terribly depressing occupation.

“With human beings, you work and you work and you work and you think you’re getting somewhere and then the guy goes out and does something absolutely opposite of what you thought he was moving toward. He throws it all out the window and comes back to jail with another 5 to 15.”

Which leads to the perennial question: nature or nurture? Vincent Gibbons argues for the latter. He notes the similarities in the backgrounds of the D.C. prisoners.

All of them are city residents (Washington D.C. is the only city in America that sentences and houses its own felons), who come from the same ravaged D.C. neighborhoods and housing projects. The majority are high-school drop-outs with no vocational skills or employment experience. At the point of arrest, 72 percent are on drugs other than alcohol.

Gibbons points out another commonality: The vast majority function at average rates of intelligence. “When I worked in the diagnostic and reception units and we’d evaluate the inmates as they entered, the startling thing we saw was how few suffered from intellectual deficiencies. So the failures we are seeing here aren’t a consequence of intellectual or physical impairment. We have to look at another cause, and the other cause has a lot to do with environment.

“If we were to go for a ride and look at the areas where most of these inmates come from,” he says, “you’d find playground areas bereft of equipment, broken bottles, lawns that are torn up—an overall lack of quality of life. These guys have been subjected to systems in our society that don’t

work. Health-care systems are not present in their communities, the schools are dysfunctional, and churches, libraries and all the support mechanisms that are so necessary to make a community viable are nonexistent.

“As a result,” he says, “these men and women have come into the world with a lower sense of self-worth. They feel that if society cared about them, it would provide schools, hospitals and playgrounds. But it doesn’t, so they figure they must be of no value.”

He throws in a quote from Janis Joplin: “If you have nothing, you have nothing to lose.”

Ever the psychologist, Gibbons theorizes that this deep-seated sense of despair causes criminals to endanger their lives through reckless behavior, drug and alcohol abuse.

“So how can you expect them to value your existence?” he asks. “That’s just incomprehensible, and it’s why it’s that much easier for them to commit a crime against us.”

But it is not white Americans who are the victims of typical Lorton prisoners.

“I’m a warden. I’m supposed to be a big shot. But I go out in society and people don’t care *who* I am. I’ve had people ask me if I’m a *dog* warden.”

“The crimes they commit,” says Gibbons, “are usually against each other.”

We walk into a dorm lined with cots. Each man’s living area consists of a bed, a small table and a locker. Skin mags are kept to a minimum—basically *Playboy* and *Penthouse*. Pin-ups can be found posted inside the lockers only. Because of Lorton’s female staff, Gibbons feels that displaying naked women “is just plain disrespectful.”

The men sit quietly on their beds, reading, playing solitaire, staring into space.

“He’s a nice guy, that Mr. Gibbons,” says Robert Mays, who’s been here eight years. “He’s doing a lot for us and we appreciate that. He encourages education, anything that would bring about the betterment of self. There’s a big difference between him and the last warden.”

Gibbons calls the D.C. prison system a “distillation of the all the negative elements in society,” warden-speak for “this is the biggest hellhole on earth.” For several years, in fact, Lorton has been operating under two court orders. Because of this, and the uniformly disadvantaged population, the warden feels his prison demands a more program-intensive agenda than other institutions. Thus, Lorton has programs up the yin yang: 20 self-help groups, Special Education, G.E.D. and College Prep, Associate and Bachelor of Arts degree programs, 18 vocational programs, an in-patient Substance Abuse program and an anti-violence program, in addition to staff psychologists, caseworkers and social workers whose offices are located among the dorms. That way, they’re on hand to respond to prisoners’ complaints and needs.

“Let’s say a guy gets tragic news from home,” Gibbons hypothesizes, “or someone stops writing to him. It hurts worse in here than if you’re living in the community. But there’s someone here to pull the guy aside

and talk to him so he won’t do something stupid like see the dope man or drink a jar of hooch. “If a guy doesn’t hear from the parole board, he can talk to a case manager to get it straight. The guys understand we’re here to work with them, not to make it harder on them, not to cause them further pain. The pain is getting locked up.”

According to Warden Gibbons, the staff at Lorton—from the c.o.’s to the social workers to the nurses and doctors—take part in the programs, either as attendees, as in the conflict reduction class, or as coordinators. The staff must put in extra hours at no pay because for the last 15 years, no additional funds have been allocated to the D.C. corrections budget. Meanwhile, the prison population has more than doubled since 1985: from 4,800 to 11,200.

Expressing a rather unsettling thought, the warden worries if his efforts to make the Capital’s cage a



model pen might somehow be contributing to recidivism. "What they've learned could be a crippling thing," he suggests, stroking his beard and swatting his pony tail over his shoulder. "Here, they have an academic program, a vocational program, their own personal social worker, their personal dentist and doctor, in addition to their own police force and their mayor. But back in society, they'd be lucky to see a doctor in less than a month. If they had a problem with the city, they'd never see anybody except the deputy deputy of a city council member. The bottom line: They just don't get the support and feedback out in society that they get in here."

At Lorton, prisoners can also achieve status, which again, may or may not be a good thing because it sometimes ends up luring them back. According to Gibbons, "A guy can become a big shot in here with a G.E.D. and a vocational skill or by becoming a head man in the dorm. But in society, achieving status is a helluva lot more difficult. I mean, I'm a warden. I'm supposed to be a big shot here. But I go out in society and people don't care who I am. I've had people ask me if I'm a dog warden."

Gibbons' personal philosophy is that an inmate is sentenced to prison *as* punishment, not *for* punishment.

"Why increase the discomfort level?" he asks.

Instead, he tries to ensure that the prison experience is one of personal growth and achievement, so that the same broken souls who entered do not return to society in the same, or worse, condition.

One of Lorton's most creative programs is called the Alliance of Concerned Men. Headed by the deputy warden, it brings the male offender back into the family relationship by including his wife and children in the program. The goal is to help him understand his responsibilities as husband, father, provider and nurturer. The wives and children let the prisoner know the loss he's caused them. Offenders learn to work through issues with their significant others for the benefit of their children.

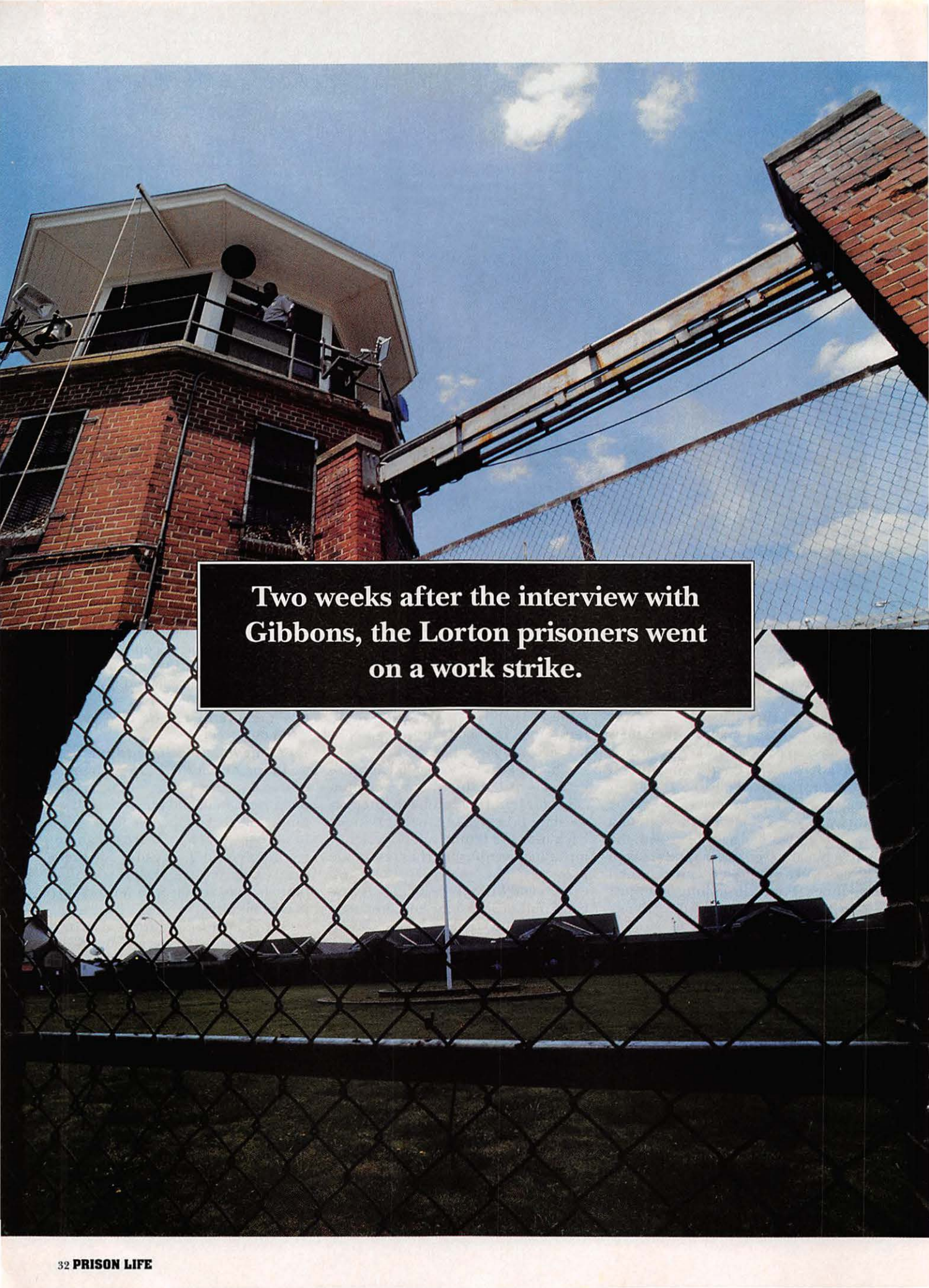
"We tell the guys that this time, gentlemen, it's not you we're focusing on, it's your children. There are entire generations who will continue coming this way until we do something very creative. And I think the whole concept of getting away from the criminal justice system as a panacea for the ills of society is one way."

Gibbons feels society has what he calls a "Cops" and "America's Most Wanted" mentality," which is crippling the economy and doing nothing to

address the root causes of crime and criminal behavior. "People feel there are predators out there who need to be swept off the street, and if we keep working with bigger and bigger brooms, eventually we're going to clean our streets.

"Quite honestly, if we continue to go in the direction we're going, the criminal justice system will bankrupt our government and our society. If we think that locking people up is going to solve the problem, we've got another thing coming, because for every drug dealer on the streets who gets busted, there are three or four waiting to take his place."

A major cause of criminal behavior, Gibbons surmises, is drugs. Like most people who have more than a superficial knowledge of law enforcement and criminal justice issues, Gibbons believes that if the government really wanted to stop the drug trade, it would. "I think it's very telling that when the Drug Enforcement Agency was given carte blanche to determine where the drugs were coming from and to set up a plan to interdict the drug operations, the threads led directly to major governments in Central and South America. And when the threads were followed far enough, and the agency investigators got to a certain point, people at the highest

A photograph of a prison tower and chain-link fence under a blue sky with clouds. The tower is made of red brick and has a balcony with a person standing on it. A chain-link fence runs across the foreground, and another fence structure is visible in the background. The sky is bright blue with scattered white clouds.

Two weeks after the interview with Gibbons, the Lorton prisoners went on a work strike.

levels of those governments went to the state department and they were ordered to back off. So we know where the drugs are coming from. If we really wanted to do something about the drug problem, we could."

So what, then, is the solution to recidivism?

The warden would like to see a kind of halfway house program in lieu of a parole system. He also advocates a continuance of the same programs Lorton offers inside on the outside, especially substance abuse counseling, violence reduction and family therapy. Helping the ex-offender find housing and jobs is an equally important part of the equation.

But what happens when society steps in and starts whining?

"Nine times out of ten," says Gibbons, "these resources simply don't exist in the community. So the citizen is taking a very valid position: Why in hell are we giving all these programs to convicted felons when my son, daughter or I can't find those same services in society? What are you telling me, I have to commit a crime to receive treatment? We're sending a very strange message.

"We should provide these services to our citizens, number one, and number two, recognize that if we don't provide them for inmates to help them turn the corner and become productive citizens, then we pay for them on the streets—for the police, the hospital costs and the violence they perpetrate on society.

"It costs \$22,000 a year to incarcerate one inmate. If there was some way we could divert a sample of the population into an education and training program and keep the person working, then we'd have the opportunity to keep the family together and pick up some tax revenues at the same time."

As we passed through the yard on our tour, one brave soul shouted something to the warden about the food.

"The food here is no different than what I ate in college," Gibbons said. "We have a licensed dietician who checks out the food for nutri-

tional value and quality, and I eat in the mess hall myself on occasion."

A while back, Gibbons thought it would be nice to offer the prisoners Sunday brunch. "On weekends, the guys don't like to get out of bed at 5:00 a.m. for breakfast, so we thought we'd combine the breakfast and lunch meals and have various items on the table so guys could take a little of each." After a few tries, the concept was nixed. The monitoring board felt the warden was short-changing the prisoners one meal.

Two weeks after this interview with Gibbons, the Lorton prisoners went on a work strike. Escapes, riots and strikes are a warden's worst nightmare—in that order. Word had it the prisoners were protesting the food (sources outside the prison said they were being

ers, meaning they'd be shipped to pens all over the country.

Pauline Sullivan, co-founder of the Washington, D.C.-based CURE (Citizens United for the Rehabilitation of Errants), is lobbying against the federal takeover. "If the prisoners' family members are having trouble finding the \$3.00 it costs to get from downtown D.C. to the prison, how in the world will they be able to afford a trip to Texas or Pennsylvania to see their loved ones?"

But maybe losing his job wouldn't be the worst thing that could happen to Gibbons.

"I would like to get out of the governmental arena. I would like to retire and set up some sort of company that would draw from private industry money and community resources to

provide a sort of halfway back program for ex-offenders. It would offer tax incentives for businesses that hire ex-cons and provide services to the inner-city communities. My plan is to establish the organization and then grow out of the position so someone else could step in."

Before this issue went to press, we received word that things at Lorton had quieted down. The prisoners have gone

back to work and negotiations are under way. Warden Gibbons worked around the clock for a week, meeting with prisoners, staff, corrections and city officials to keep the situation from getting ugly.

"It's really rather unprecedented that 1,300 inmates would stick together for five days and get their point across in a peaceful, nonviolent way," said Rozier "Roach" Brown, an ex-con from Lorton who now heads up Mayor Marion S. Barry's Coalition of Ex-Offenders and who worked closely with Gibbons during the strike as a kind of pro-prisoner intermediary. Brown, who's as suspicious of prison-crats as any ex-con, had this to say of Warden Gibbons' performance during the strike: "He came through phenomenally. It's rare to find that kind of compassion in anyone. This guy is really concerned about saving people's lives."



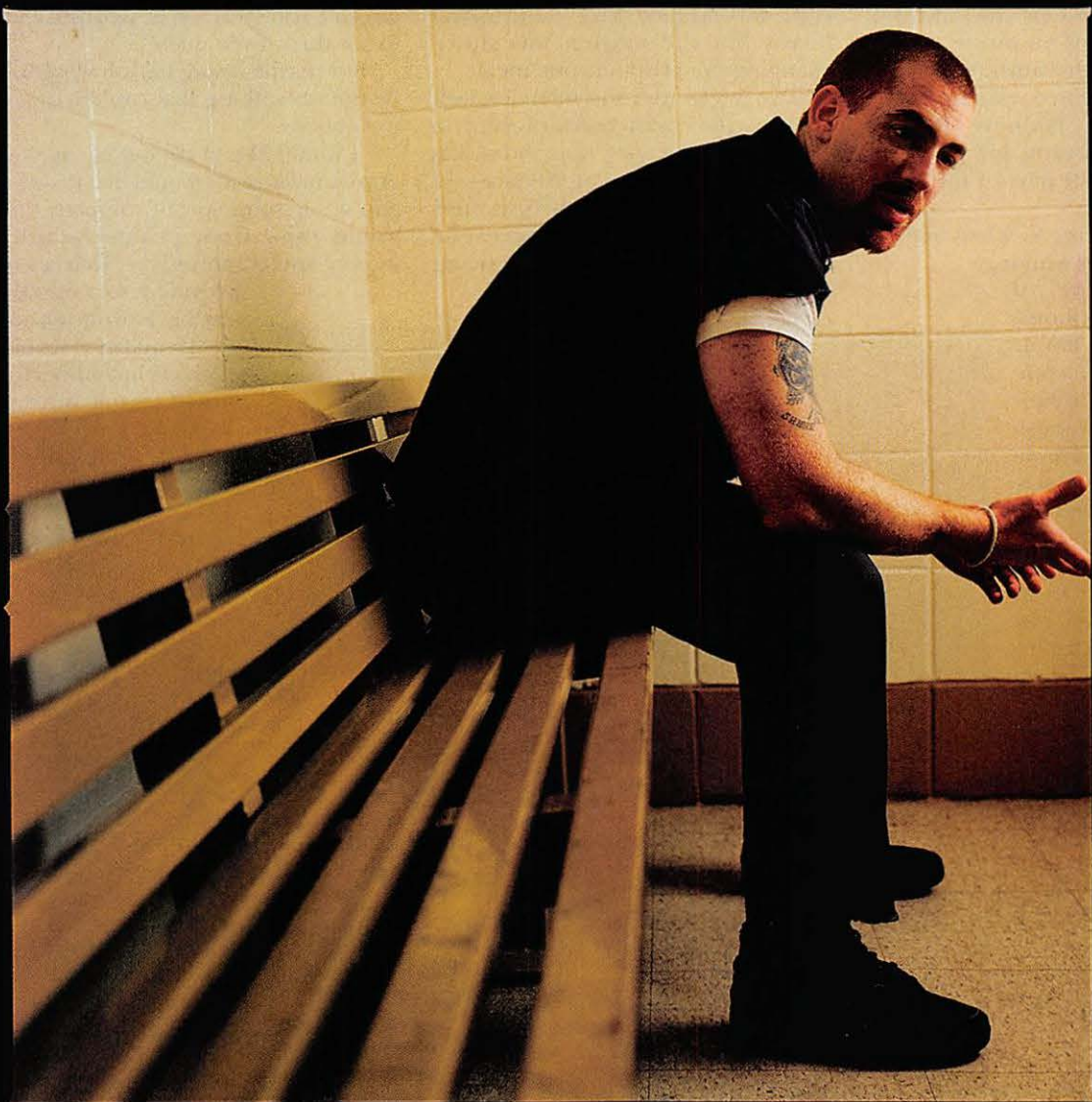
fed old K-Rations from Desert Storm); medical care that's so poor it's on the verge of being monitored by an outside agency; and harassment of family members during visits.

Our public affairs escort laughed, "What do they expect? They're in prison."

In addition to the prisoner strike and the dire financial straits of the D.C. Dept. of Corrections, Warden Gibbons faces the possible loss of his prison. Earlier this year, a bill was introduced in Congress that would close the District's facility and transfer the prisoners into the federal system. This would be a boon to Virginia land developers, who are hot to get their hands on the 3,000 acres of prime property. Four thousand corrections employees would lose their jobs, including Warden Gibbons, and the D.C. prisoners would automatically become federal prison-



JACK OUTTEN
Multi-Purpose Criminal Justice Facility, Wilmington, DE
Photographed in December 1993
Convicted of murdering a man during a robbery.



"I knew the death penalty was happening, but it never entered my mind. I always thought, *I'm not going to be in any situation . . .* So I never thought about it until it hit me."

THE DEATH ROW PROJECT

TEXT & PHOTOGRAPHY BY LOU JONES

There are over 3,000 people in America who will know before hand the exact moment when they are going to be killed.

As a society, we are largely unaware of a subculture our laws created: the men and women who dwell on Death Row. We define these people by the acts that brought them to the row and consider them less than human, beyond hope. It's easier to kill someone you don't know, someone who's just a number.

Five years ago, I started the Death Row Project with the goal of putting a human face on society's darkest statistic. The idea came to me after seeing magazine articles and newspaper clippings of death row prisoners. All the photos were postage stamp-sized images of impassive faces. In most cases, the story-line told only of heinous crimes.

I have photographed 27 men and 2 women on 14 death rows in 10 states. Because the lawyers, institutions and iron bars do not allow for my spending much time with the prisoners, my statements had to be formed in a matter of hours.

It is my hope that if you look into the eyes of the condemned and hear their voices—if you *know* them—you will not be able to sanction their state-sponsored murder, regardless of their crime.



photo by Ian Tuck



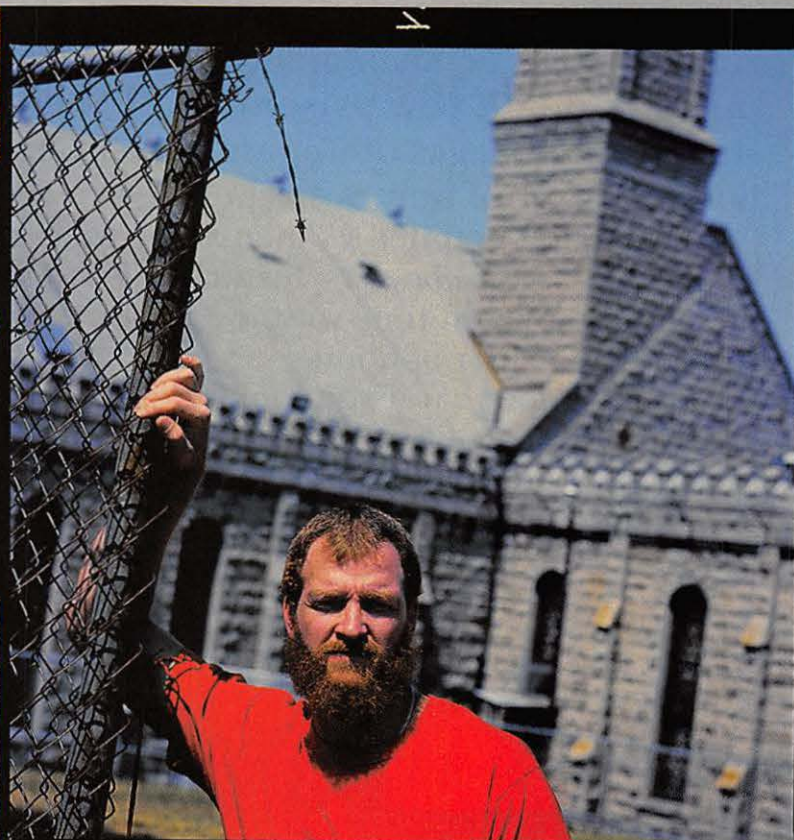
DANIEL WEBB
Somers Correctional Institution, CT
Photographed in July, 1994
*Convicted of kidnapping and murdering
a white, 37-year-old female.*

"The media portrayed me as a monster. It's unrealistic for anyone to think that people or prospective jurors don't look at television.

That's crazy . . . You're only seeing one side—the State Attorney's side. You don't see the defense side."

MITCHELL WILLOUGHBY
Kentucky State Penitentiary,
Eddyville, KY
Photographed in 1992
*Convicted of the January 1983
murder of two men and a woman
in a drug-related incident.*

"I like myself and I know plenty of people who can't say that. I have accepted death since we all have to die someday. Only the living make a big deal out of it."



KODAK PKR 6033

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WALTER CARUTHERS
Riverbend Maximum Security Institution, Nashville, TN
Photographed in December 1992
*Convicted of the rape and murder of a woman who was
hitchhiking with her brother in 1980.*

"It's how you adjust your mind. You can adjust your mind
to anything . . . I'm content. Now that may sound crazy
but I can deal with this day-to-day . . .
I know exactly what's going to take place.
I know what I got to do."

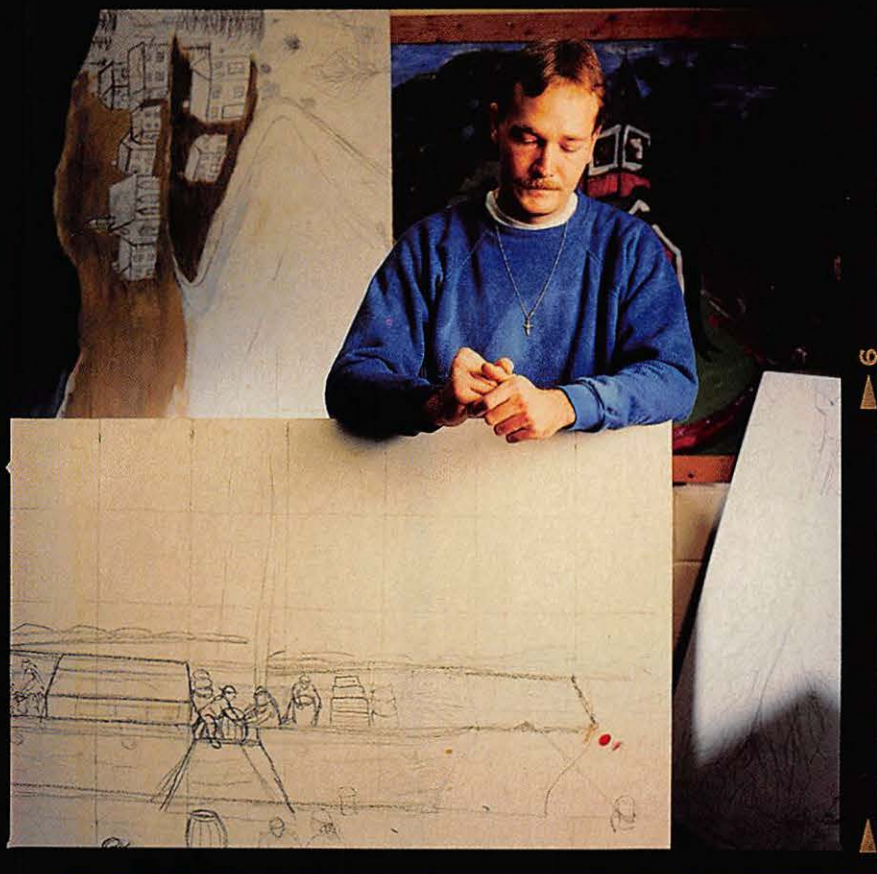


PAMELA PERILLO
Mountain View Unit, Gatesville, TX
Photographed in November 1993
Convicted of killing two men for money.

"Our victims aren't the only victims. Our families are the victims and our children are the victims. They go through this, too. So that, you know, we have not only hurt our victims' families, but we—we're hurting our own . . ."

KODAK PKR 6033

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NELSON SHELTON
Sussex Correctional Institution,
Georgetown, DE
Photographed December 1993
*Convicted of murdering
a man for money.
Executed March 1995.*

**"My dad used to
always call me
stupid. Literally.
And I didn't know
anything. Because
no one showed me
nothing. Not one
person showed
me anything
that was right.
Not one."**

CLIFFORD PHILLIPS,
A.K.A. ABDULLAH BASHIR
Ellis I Unit, Huntsville, TX
Photographed in June 1993
*Convicted of strangling a theatre
manager to death in 1982.
Executed on December 15, 1994*

**"There is still
some light in
the souls of
many men here,
in spite of soci-
ety not wanting
to recognize it.
I haven't gotten
to the point
where I've
given up on
myself. I still
love life."**



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KODAK PKR 6033



JAMES ROANE

Powhatan Correctional Center, State Farm, VA

Photographed in December 1993

Convicted of drug-related murders. Member of the notorious Newton Gang.

"But I never, in my wildest dreams, ever thought that I would get so close to other death row inmates and be like family . . . Because you definitely know that person even though society says, well, he's like this and he's committed a crime. You get to know a different side of people . . ."



DAVID POWELL
Ellis I Unit, Huntsville, TX
Photographed in June, 1993

Convicted of the machine gun killing of a police officer.

"You ask me what I feel about execution, I have no idea. Execution is very hard to accept. But this place is the kind of environment that makes you not fear death. It's a different concept all together. Nobody [has escaped] being executed thus far . . . When it comes time for them to be executed, they're grateful to get out of here. It's that harsh."

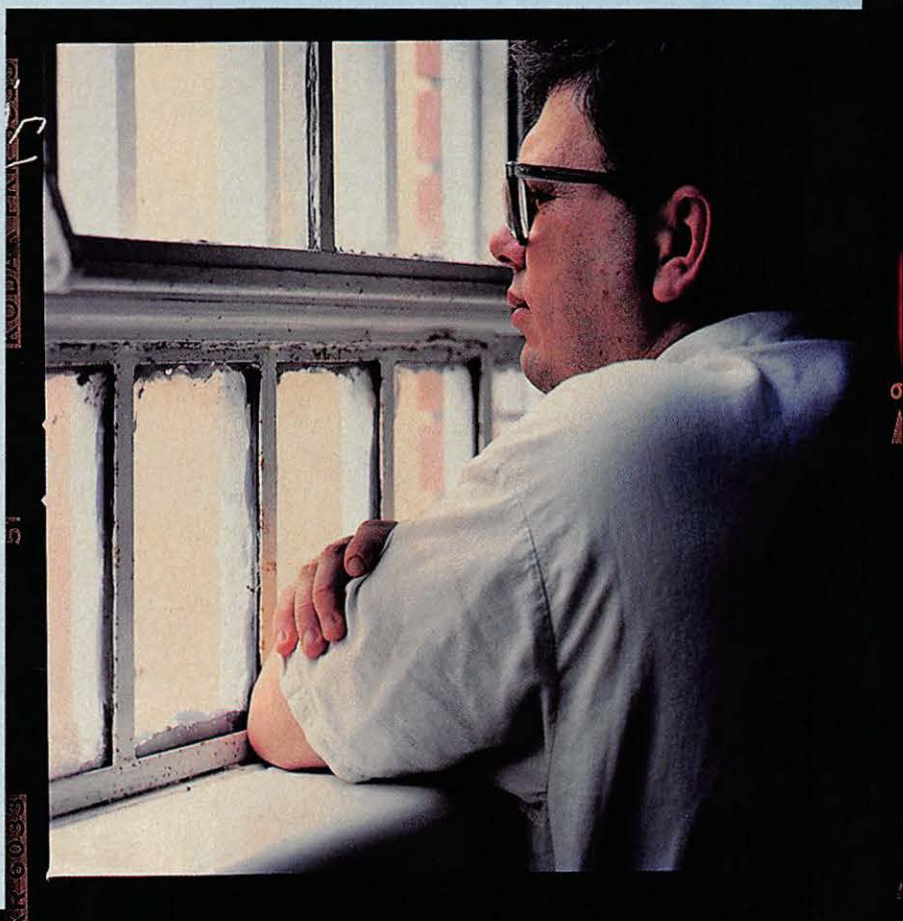


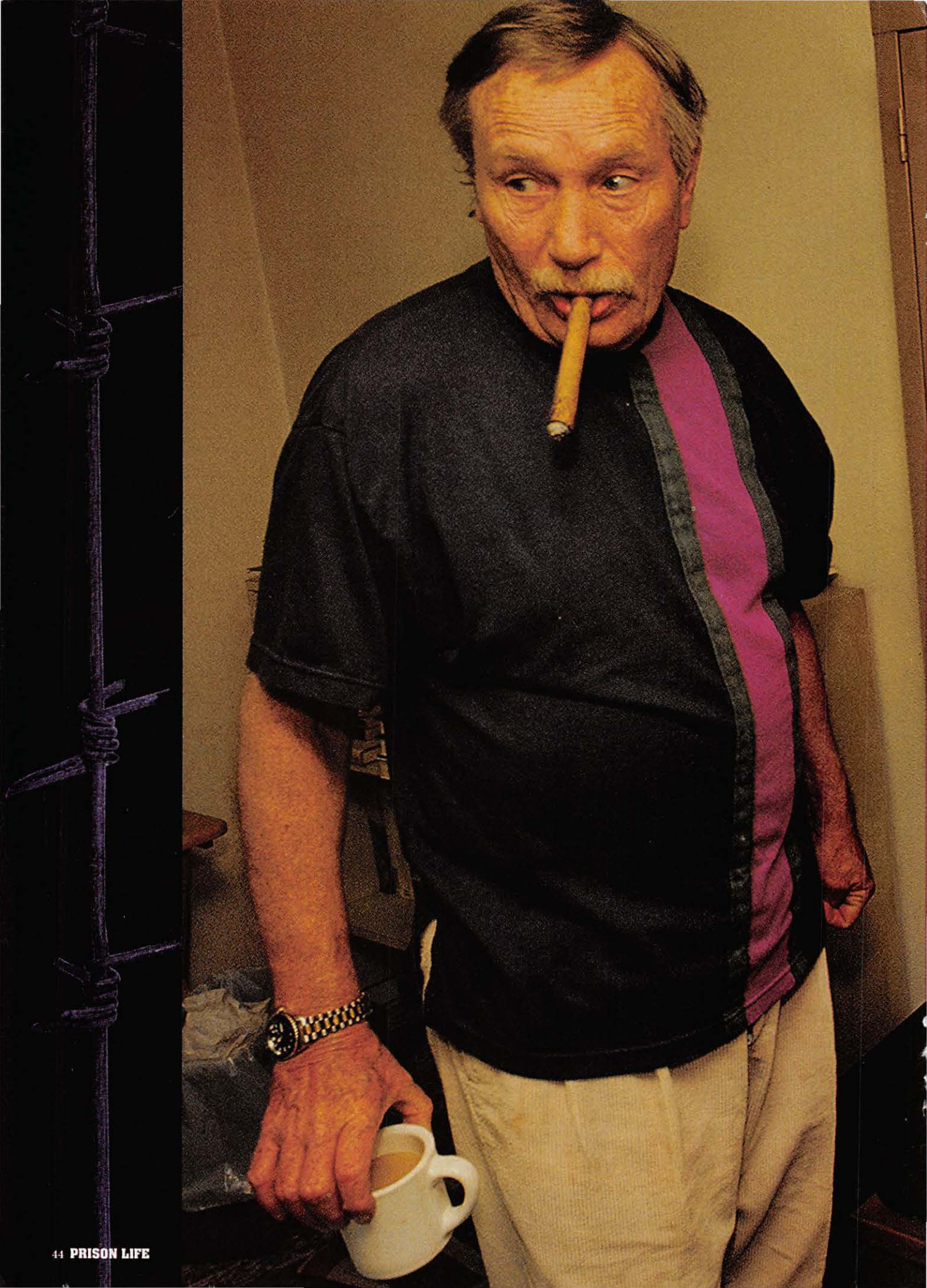
NICHOLAS YARRIS
Pennsylvania Department of
Corrections, Huntingdon, PA
Photographed in January 1994
*Convicted of raping and
murdering a woman in 1981.*

"What I hope is that what people get from seeing faces is that no matter where you put someone, you can't take away their human value."

LESLEY GOSCH
Ellis I Unit, Huntsville, TX
Photographed in June 1993
*Convicted for the December 1985
murder of a bank officer's wife in
an extortion attempt.*

"It's easier for a jury to give a death sentence to a name and number than it is to a human being. I think if the public knew something about the people that they were wanting to execute, they might not want so many people dead."





THE RESURRECTION OF EDWARD BUNKER

by Richard Stratton

The visit was an agony. My father did not recognize me, and when I reminded him who I was it registered dimly. He began a whining harangue about the food, the other old men, and the people who ran the place. Someone had stolen the few dollars in change he had for cigarettes, and he wanted some. They'd taken his watch, too, but he didn't seem to care about that. It was a big, gold pocket watch, the only valuable thing he'd ever owned, and he'd carried it for forty years. I gave him cigarettes and the few dollars I had. He begged me to take him away, reversing the role of half a dozen years before when I'd begged him. I was helpless as he had been. I was fifteen years old, escaped from reform school, and had five dollars in my pocket. I was crying enraged tears of frustration when I left. My father had become a baby, helpless, mindless and alone. At fifteen the concept of death was unreal, but I understood loneliness with vivid clarity. And in the brief episode I saw human destiny starkly illuminated. This was the human condition, far from the glory of books and histories. I came away enraged at the universal indifference."

—from *No Beast So Fierce*
by Edward Bunker

Twenty years ago, Edward Bunker raised from the house of the dead at Terminal Island, the federal pen in San Pedro, California. Bunker was 39 and had spent the better part of his life in reform schools and prisons. Eddie had been a thief, a forger, bank robber and dope dealer. During the '60s he had done seven years straight at San Quentin, and in his last jolt with the feds he'd earned a stay in Marion after refusing to bunk in a dorm at MacNeil Island. He was a con's con, as hard-core as they come and a legendary figure in the California prison system, his battered face and scarred body living testament of the brutal beatings he had received at the hands of cops, bulls and reform school sadists.

photos by Chris Cozzone

Bunker transformed himself from a chronic criminal and penitentiary habitué into America's preeminent convict writer.



Few would have given Bunker more than a couple of years on the bricks before he'd be back in the joint. The chances of a state-raised convict making it in the world are piss poor, and Eddie had no reason to believe that he had undergone the kind of sea change in attitude that might enable him to make it on the streets.

But Bunker's life had changed, though he didn't realize it at the time—it was all still unreal. Bunker was not leaving prison as just another ex-con on parole, like Max Dembo, hero of *No Beast So Fierce*, Bunker's first published novel. Dembo raises from San Quentin wearing ill-fitting dress shoes, with a bus ticket and 65 bucks in his pocket and no family or job waiting for him. Bunker had beaten tremendous odds and transformed himself from a chronic criminal and penitentiary habitué into America's preeminent convict writer.

No Beast So Fierce was published while Eddie was still in prison. Dustin Hoffman bought the film rights to the book and the movie was set to go into production. Bunker had written the screenplay during lengthy sessions

with Hoffman in the visiting room at Terminal Island, and now the actor wanted to hire Eddie to work as technical advisor on the movie set. But Bunker was still locked up.

He was also a jailhouse lawyer. "I got a guy out once who was doing a 15-year sentence," he told me. "Got my best friend out, too—who's dead now. He was a good connection, sent me an ounce of junk every month. I was God!"

Eddie made a motion to the court to receive credit for six months jail time he'd been denied by the Bureau of Prisons. "The judge issued a *nunc pro tunc* order. Now for then, it means. So I got credit for the jail time and that was it. They had to let me out.

"I was in the fuckin' hole, D Block, and this is the truth," Eddie remembered of his last day in the pen. "I was doing two sentences, a nickel for the bank robbery and six years on the drug case. I had about six months left and they wanted to ship me out to Leavenworth. But I got a federal court order not to move me. They were so mad, they kept me there in the hole."

The convicts were going wild in D Block, setting trash on fire and throw-

ing it out onto the tiers, flooding cells, screaming and yelling—a typical day in the hole. "I burned, I sweated," Eddie said. "Trash in front of the cell, the smoke and the water—when they came to get me I waded out, just kind'a stepped over all the trash and waded out through the shit and the water. I got my street clothes. Dustin sent a limousine for me and the bulls were all coming to work in the morning when that big limo pulled up in the fuckin' parking lot. The convicts are all at the windows and the guards are coming in with their lunch pails. I walk out and get into this long limousine. They rolled back the moon roof, I stood up on the seat and raised both hands in the clenched fist salute. We drove around the parking lot a couple of times and the convicts were yelling, cheering. I was waving back. After that, they coulda dumped me in the bay for all I cared."

No Beast So Fierce is the only one of Bunker's three published novels still in print in the dumb-and-dumber United States. I had to get the real deal on Bunker's work from a French editor, Francois Gueriff, who knows more about American crime writing than most New York literati. I'd heard about Bunker, read about him in H. Bruce Franklin's seminal study of American convict writers, *Prison Literature in America: The Victim as Criminal and Artist*, and I'd seen *Straight Time*, the movie Hoffman made based on *No Beast So Fierce*—just happened to pluck it off the rack at Blockbuster one night and loved it. There is an unforgettable scene in the movie where Hoffman, as Max Dembo, hijacks his twisted parole officer, handcuffs him to the divider in the middle of the freeway and yanks his pants down around his ankles in what has got to be the ultimate parole violation. But it took a Frenchman to educate me on my own literary heritage.

"You *must* read Bunker," Francois said when I showed him a copy of *Prison Life*. He was shocked. "You edit a prison magazine and you don't know Bunker? He is the best!"

Bunker's novels, *No Beast So Fierce*, (W.W. Norton, 1973), *Animal Factory*, (Viking, 1977), set in San Quentin, and the extraordinarily moving, autobiographical *Little Boy Blue* (Viking,

THE HOLLYWOOD PROWLER

by Edward Bunker

1982), all do well in England and in France, yet here he is virtually unknown. It is indicative of how out of touch the publishing establishment is with quality writing that only *No Beast So Fierce*, recently reprinted in the Vintage Black Lizard Crime series, is available. I had to get in touch with Bunker's agent, have him send me photocopies of the English editions of *Animal Factory* and *Little Boy Blue*, and a copy of the manuscript of Bunker's new book, *Men Who Prey*, in order to read America's greatest living convict writer.

Once I got the books I settled in for two weeks of the kind of concentrated reading I only do when I discover a writer whose work I truly admire. I read Bunker with the same kind of excitement I'd felt when I read Dostoyevsky, Melville, Henry Miller, Norman Mailer and a handful of other writers whose work seemed to possess the power to change my perceptions. First I read *No Beast So Fierce*, an absolutely brilliant portrayal of an alienated convict whose sensibilities, much like Bunker's, have been imbued and tainted with the madness and violence of a childhood in the California Youth Authority at such places as Whittier and Preston, then forged in the animal factory itself, San Quentin, and finally tempered into hard steel like a shank plunged into the indifferent world he encounters upon release.

The novel opens with Max Dembo polishing his "hideous, bulb-toed" dressout shoes on the night before he is to raise from San Quentin after an eight-year stretch. Against a backdrop of mindless racial hatred and violence, Dembo contemplates freedom. Max has every intention of going straight this time. He's done enough time in joints like San Quentin to know he hates prison and would rather die than continue to live the convict's life of bitter loneliness in a barbaric world crowded with desperate men.

Word had come to the prison that the new jail was worse than the old—that brutality was more freely dispensed—and I remembered being fifteen years old in the other one and having a fight with another juvenile. Three deputies handcuffed me to a drainpipe and took turns punching me in the body. After breaking three ribs they threw me in the hole, a steel box on wheels. It was utterly dark; I couldn't see my hand an inch from my face or know if it was noon or midnight. A quart of water and three slices of bread were the daily food ra-

I was free and sharp as I could be. Five years of San Quentin had provided a unique education. I'd seen murders—and sat with murderers the night before they went to the gas chamber. I could take bets on sports and horses, run a handbook, deal from the bottom of the deck, switch dice, punch, peel or burn a safe—and I was afraid of very few men, or much that walked the earth. At the same time, every week I went to the library and took four or five books. Being in a cell from 4:30 p.m. to 8:30 a.m. provided time to read. Thank God they had no TVs in the cell back then. At first I read best sellers—Frank Yerby, Harold Robbins and Taylor Caldwell—but Louise Fazenda Wallis sent a subscription to the Sunday New York Times, and the Book Review mentioned other writers and discussed books, and soon I was looking on the library shelves for Dostoevsky and Dreiser. A review of William Styron mentioned Faulkner and Thomas Wolfe, and the next week I found *Light in August* and *You Can't Go Home Again*. Over four years I devoured books, fiction and non-fiction, essays, histories and *belles lettres*. I even read a two volume version of Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, and studied Machiavelli, Hobbes, Locke and Gunnar Myrdal. What value did Reisman's *Lonely Crowd* have to me? Or Emil Ludwig's *Napoleon*? I often read by light coming through the bars. I studied psychology because I wanted to know why I was society's outsider. They said that insight equalled salvation. My insights said that I was missing conscience; I had an id-permeated ego. (In my later years I had enough sense to supply the need for conscience by marrying a woman with a Superego large enough for two—at least!) I was a true man alone. I searched through several religions for a belief that I could bite and taste the gold of truth; I found only the brass of deceit. Later I would learn that you must pass through the nausea of existence to understand the truth of being. The way to truth is not intellectual or spiritual, but visceral and existential.

I came from San Quentin to Hollywood at 23, confident that I was the cock of the walk.

Then I met a whore. She fed me red meat and wine; then she took me to her bedroom, turned on green lights—and fucked me into a ecstatic daze. She moved her pelvis in motions that kneaded my penis. She worked the muscles of her vagina with the dexterity of a hand. Never before or since has it been that good: the fuck of a lifetime.

I was crazed about her. Nothing else mattered. She belonged to me. Case closed. It was bizarre, to say the least.

Being herself crazy, the whore dramatized the comedy. She had a great time playing scared. It was another story to add to tales of her adventurous life—how the wild man had carried her off, just like the cowboy carried Marilyn in "Bus Stop."

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tion. Every three days they brought a paper plate with a gruel of oatmeal sprinkled with raisins. Kneeling in the darkness, I lapped it up like a dog. Nineteen days later they took me back to the reform school (it was when I was captured on the escape) and I collapsed. I had pneumonia. And even if I'd now changed my life, I hadn't changed my loathing for such places and those who ran them.

We follow Dembo on a sentimental bus ride down the coast to Los Angeles, to Hollywood, where he, and his creator Bunker, were born. Max dutifully calls his parole officer, a pudgy bureaucrat named Rosenthal who will prove to be his nemesis—and, in a sense, his liberator from a life of humdrum ass-kissing. Dembo does his best to satisfy Rosenthal's stupid and mean-spirited adherence to rules devised to insure that convicts will violate parole and go back to prison. Then Rosenthal busts Max on suspicion of using junk. Although Max's urine test comes back clean, the parole officer leaves him in the county jail for three weeks while he goes off on vacation.

I stepped into the cell. Steel crashed against steel. I was locked in. The familiar sight of bunk, lidless toilet, push-button washbowl and graffiti carved into the paint ("If you can't do the time, don't fuck with crime") combined into a blow that shattered my shell of detachment. Imagine the hurricane of emotions in a man who has served eight years in prison, has been free less than a week, and who finds himself again imprisoned without having committed a crime. A swirl of loneliness, rage, and despair washed me into a tearful, blinded madness. I pleaded silently, "Oh, please help me." The plea was to Fortune, Fate, God, a nameless power, a plea that is torn from every man sometime during a lifetime.

When Rosenthal, still sunburned pink, shows up to get Max and deliver him to a halfway house, Dembo is a whole new animal, though he's crafty enough to keep the beast under wraps until he and the parole officer are in Rosenthal's car headed for the freeway.

We were shooting up a ramp onto the freeway. Traffic was seventy miles an hour. He prattled on, explaining the fullness of his own life in suburbia—

golf and bridge and attending football games were enough excitement for any normal person.

"That's good, Mr. Rosenthal. I'm glad you're happy. You know what I really like?"

"I can imagine."

"Speed. Going fast. I've always wanted to be a grand prix driver—vroom, vroom. Ever thought about doing that?"

"Taking unnecessary risks with your life is immature."

"Didn't you like hot rods when you were young?"

"Not really."

"Man, you should see what it's like. I'd been sliding closer to him. Suddenly I stamped my left foot against his right toe, pressing the gas pedal to the floor. The automobile jerked and leaped forward."

"Hey! What!"

I locked my leg straight out as he struggled to pull his foot away. The car was weaving—but gathering momentum. We were going eighty.

"You're through," he threatened.

"Maybe both of us are."

The speedometer rolled across ninety.

"Please," he said, face ashen.

"Fuck your mother."

He reached for the ignition key. I grabbed his thumb and viciously wrenched it back; then backhanded him across the nose. We swerved over the divider line. A horn bleated in protest, and there was a screech of brakes.

My heart pounded. I was afraid—but

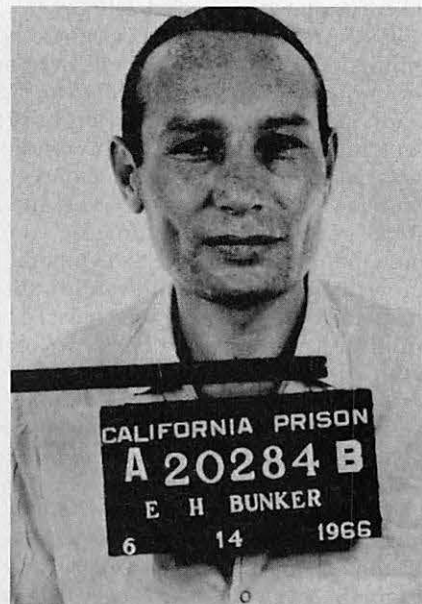
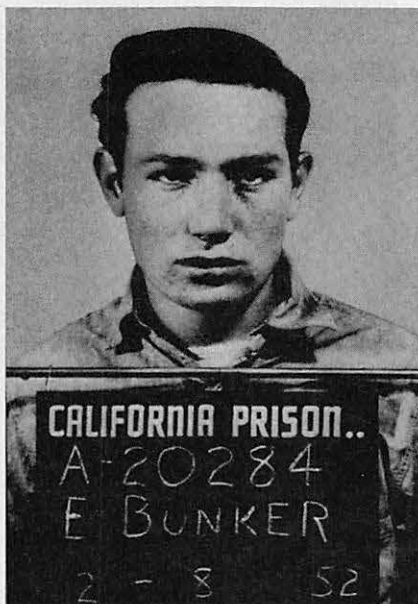
it was insignificant compared to his terror. We bore down on the rear of a bus. He swerved away just in time. He was whimpering. The sound delighted me.

What impressed me most in Bunker's portrayal of Max Dembo was how he was able to create a hero who has all the normal human feelings, including loneliness, love, despair, fear, guilt and even pity for his victims, yet whose emotions have been so steeled by the brutal conditions he has been forced to endure in order to survive that he is unable to bow before a dull and oppressive mentality that seeks to stifle his spirit. In essence, Dembo is the embodiment of the convict code: You may rule my body but you will never dominate my character.

On the lam, Max Dembo is thoroughly transformed.

I missed Allison intensely. I wished I'd kept her with me—even being hated is better than being lonely.

But I shook off the longing, and by the time I stepped outside into the icy afternoon I had the stoicism of accepted hopelessness, even glorying in it. The wind was needles against my cheeks, and I thrust my hands deep into the mackinaw, one clutching the pistol, my magic wand. The hunger for chaos, for my life as it was, swelled to swallow loneliness. I walked the dismal street aware of my freedom, a leopard among domesticated housecats. I felt contempt



Edward Bunker's first two prison mugshots, taken in 1952 (left) and 1966 (right).

for the hunched, bundled creatures, all gray and colorless, hurrying desperately toward warmth and safety.

The rest of the novel is a Nietzschean hymn to the will to power, an expertly plotted and crafted crime story that does not relent, nor show remorse, up to the final words: "They might get me this time.

"Fuck it!"

THE BEAST CAGED

Animal Factory, Bunker's second book and the consummate American prison novel, was written during Bunker's final sojourn within the walls at a time when his writing career showed promise of salvation. Not only had *No Beast So Fierce* been accepted for publication by a respected publisher, an essay, "War Behind Walls," a controversial and unflinching insider's account of the senseless race wars raging in California's prisons, had appeared in *Harper's*. Bunker had a piece on capital punishment, "Remembering Death Row" in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, as well as articles in other widely read publications.

This was at a time when freeworld Americans seemed to want to hear what their imprisoned brethren had to say. "Yeah," Bunker said when I told him—in answer to his question how *Prison Life* was doing—that the magazine was still struggling. "Nobody gives a shit about convicts anymore. In the '60s when you went by in the prison bus they gave you the V sign for victory. Now they give you the finger."

Bunker, who divides his time between Paris, New York and the West Coast, was in Los Angeles in early June working on the new Michael Mann film, *Heat*, with his close friend from San Quentin, the actor Danny Trejo. We met at the Holiday Inn in Hollywood. "I like Holiday Inns. They're all the same," Eddie told me. "Kind of like prison cells." Bunker had once been busted at this particular Holiday Inn when he went there to do a dope deal with Squeaky Fromm of Manson Family fame. "The cops let Squeaky go," Eddie chuckled.

He is a mesmerizing jailhouse raconteur, animated, with his constant cigar dangling from his mouth or waving from his hand like a conductor's baton as he orchestrates his tales. He is gentlemanly, almost courtly in manner,

It took a few days before I came to myself. A look at her under the sun rather than green light was critical to sanity. The decade of heroin and Scotch had taken their toll. She would kill herself three years hence. By then I was long gone. For a moment, however, she had me hooked like a mountain trout.

I wasn't the only one. She had a bartender on the line who was out of his mind over her—and she enjoyed tormenting him at every opportunity. He was an Italian stallion in love with a whore and hating it. The phone would ring, she would take the call and make the date in her sexiest voice. When she finished with the telephone, she would turn on Michael and tell him that he had to leave. It would drive him crazy—and she delighted in what she caused. She was a tangled soul, no doubt of it. I'd read studies on prostitutes and pimps. It had been difficult for me to understand how young women, most of them attractive, would sell their bodies and give the money to a man, who often was stupid and cruel and invariably beat and kicked them at least now and then. Nor did the men understand the psychological dynamic going on. They knew 'the game,' that if they did this or that, the response would be as expected. They were comparable to a race car driver who knows how to drive the car without any idea of what is going on in the engine. I quickly realized that the control was not sexual. Prostitutes are usually undersexed—such pleasure as they do get comes from cunnilingus—and most say that women go down with greater skill because they know what feels best to another woman. No, the control comes because the whores want a cruel father (many were molested as children) who will punish them. The tangle of the pimp/whore relationship is weird to the bourgeois sensibility. In the daylight the hard miles she'd traversed showed on face and body. Additionally, I'd learned to force things through the prism of intellect. My Id came under control.

Flip's residence was an apartment building that still over-looks Paramount studios. She had a third floor apartment with a bathroom and bedroom on the fourth floor. A door led from the bedroom to the fourth floor corridor, making it perfect for a whore to ply her trade: the place could stand traffic. Tricks could come in the front door on the third floor, and exit by the fourth floor bedroom door. That way, one who was arriving would not run into one who was leaving. Flip had once been a beauty contest winner and Howard Hughes had given her a screen test—so she liked to sit in the kitchen window at twilight, sipping Scotch, looking at the Cecil B. DeMille gate and dwelling on what might have been.

This was in the Spring of '57. A serial rapist and killer given the sobriquet of the "Hollywood Prowler," was cutting through screen doors and climbing in windows. He'd murdered a nurse in the Hollywood Hills. It was before serial killers were household words; his depredations, while common by today's madness, were enough for headlines back then.

About 1:00 a.m. of an early summer night, I was awakened by the ringing telephone. It was Flip. "Eddie . . . I want to see you. I need you . . ." The slurred voice announced her inebriation.

"Take it easy, baby. I'll see you in the morning."

"No . . . Now . . ."

"In the morning."

No sooner was the receiver in its cradle than the phone rang again. I picked it up. "Hello."

"I'll kill myself if you don't come."

Although I doubted her veracity in that regard, her nickname of 'Flip' had a foundation in bizarre behavior, plus I had given her my pistol to stash in her apartment. It was best

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“I decided I’d write a book totally from a criminal’s viewpoint and make it as honest, no bullshit a story as I could make it. So I wrote *No Beast So Fierce*.”



and he hits all the right notes in stories he’s played before some of the toughest audiences. Convicts know bullshit when they see it, since many are such good bullshitters themselves.

“All the shit I’ve ever done in my life I’ve never tried to minimize the facts or alter the facts to make a point,” Bunker said when I asked him if he thought of himself as a convict writer. I’m not referring to the narrow sense of the words, but to Bruce Franklin’s definition of the prisoner writer as the creator of the true tradition of American literature, characterized by realism, pace and plot, and a kind of bloody faithfulness to an outlaw morality at odds with the sanctimonious and hypocritical mass mentality. “I really have brought an extreme amount of integrity to my work. I’ve never told a lie. I’ve experienced the truth of the stories I write and I’ve never distorted anything. No preconceptions. It’s always been as

true as I can get it, you know?”

Bunker is now stalking through the end of his fifth decade and the beatings are taking their toll. Though he still has a boyish élan and a marvelous twinkle in his eye that belies twenty years of citizenship, his habits are so steeped in prison life that he sprawls on the bed in the hotel room and props his head and shoulders against the bare wall exactly as though he were in a prison cell slumped on the bunk with his back to the concrete. When we were threatened with a traffic jam while out for a ride in Trejo’s Caddy, Eddie and Danny panicked at the thought of being stuck in a line and drove all over L.A. on backroads. “I’d rather go around in circles than stand still,” they both said at different times.

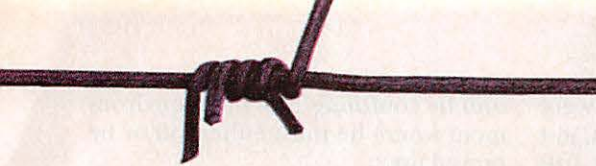
Remembering my own release from prison five years ago (I also had a novel accepted for publication while still locked up) I brought Eddie back

to that time over 20 years ago when the life-long criminal now faced the possibility of profound change.

“The writing gave me hope. I had hope, that was the difference. I’d written like six novels in seventeen years. I’d been out a couple of times, and I’d gotten into a little shit in the joint, but I hadn’t really done anything. Nothing published. I decided I’d write a book totally from a criminal’s viewpoint and make it as honest, no bullshit a story as I could make it. So I wrote *No Beast So Fierce*. It was for them, the convicts, my brothers. If it hadn’t been published, I might have quit. I’d been at it a long time. I didn’t write on the outside. When I got out, between those jolts, I got shackled up, stole and carried on. But when I went back to the joint, I’d jump on my typewriter. Other guys do leather,” he shrugged, smiled. “I started with no education, no formal education at all.

“I started writing because of Chessman, Caryl Chessman, who wrote while on death row. I was in the hole in San Quentin. The hole used to be behind death row. I kinda knew Chessman, met him in jail, so I talked with him. He sent around an *Argosy* magazine that had published an excerpt from the first chapter of his book, *Cell 2455, Death Row*, and it astounded me, it just astounded me that this convict had his name on a book that had been published. That’s when I said, if this motherfucker can do it and he’s on the row, what’s to stop me?”

I think of Eddie during that period in San Quentin as much like Earl Copen, one of two main characters in *Animal Factory*. Earl is a veteran convict in his 30s with a shaved head, a savvy power broker who reluctantly takes a young, good-looking white fish under his wing. The “youngster,” Ron Decker, is a middle class dope dealer who’s been sent to Quentin for a year by a judge who wants to see signs of rehabilitation before he’ll consider reducing Decker’s sentence. The novel explores the friendship and sense of



loyalty that develop between the two men against the drama of life and death in San Quentin.

The sun had burned off the freezing morning fog, and although the lower recreation yard was still crisp, it was dazzlingly bright. Earl sat shirtless on the worn bleachers along 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, muttering "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 bittersweet 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 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 thirty-six murders in a year; the record for stabbings, one hundred and seven, 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.

But Earl, and Ron, are drawn inexorably into the vortex of prison violence as lone psychopaths and packs of predatory men of all color and stripe vie for dominance or merely strike out to defend themselves and band together for mutual protection. I won't go into the

to go get it, not take chances. "Okay, prettier'n most, I'm on my way."

It took about twenty minutes to get dressed and drive my XK140 Jaguar roadster from the Miracle Mile district, where I lived, to Melrose near Gower Gulch, where Flip resided. Right after 2:00 a.m. the streets had a spurt of traffic, vehicular and pedestrian, as the bars closed.

I parked across the street from the apartment building. That side of the street was a dirt parking lot for a liquor store on Melrose; now it is the wall of expanded Paramount. The apartment building was four stories plus green gables on top.

Ringling Flip's apartment aroused no response. Could she have iced herself. Oh no, don't even think that. Still, I had to check it out.

The front door had an extension of steel over the front, so it was impossible to 'loid it. I started walking around the outside of the building. Often an apartment building had an unlocked side or basement entrance.

Not so this time. However, a second floor hallway window was open. It was perhaps fifteen feet above the alley where I stood—and beside it was a pipe coming down the side of the building. It was cool to the touch and would support my weight. I wore canvas shoes with crepe soles and went quickly up the pipe and through the window.

Along the second floor, crepe soles silent. I moved fast up the stairs and along the third floor corridor to the last door at the front.

I knocked. Again.

No answer.

A little harder — but not too hard. It was very late and I had no wish to see other doors open and heads protrude.

The window at the end of the hallway opened onto a fire escape that extended across Flip's breakfast nook window. I opened it and climbed out. The window was locked. Looking in, I could see the glow of green light from the living room, visible through an arch.

I climbed back into the hallway and hurried downstairs and out the front door, this time propping it open with a folded newspaper. When I went back inside, I had a short crowbar, called a "jimmy bar" in some worlds.

Up the stairs, onto the fire escape overlooking the DeMille Gate, stick the bar in the window frame and pop goes the weasel.

I climbed inside, stepping onto a kitchen chair, and headed straight for the green-lighted living room. I could hear loud snores before I passed through the arch.

Flip was zonked out on the sofa. She wore one spike-heeled shoe and brassiere, but no panties. At least she hadn't committed suicide. I shook her into semi-consciousness. "Where's my gun?"

"Don' hurt Michael," was her slurred response.

Michael! What the fuck . . . ? I looked around. Sure enough, there he was, curled up and passed out at the foot of the stairway to the second floor bedroom. "Nobody's gonna hurt Michael. Where's my piece?"

She managed one more "don't hurt Michael" and fell back into drunken slumber. I would have to find the pistol by myself.

I began by leaning over Flip and running my hand down into the back of the sofa. I touched something and pulled it out: a big bladed butcher knife. I carried it into the kitchen and put it on a counter top. Then I began to search.

The snub-nosed .38 was in a broiler pan in the oven, wrapped in the straps of the shoulder holster. I took it and

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absorbing plot of *Animal Factory*, as we plan to serialize the novel in future issues as a *Prison Life Classics* feature.

Besides displaying Bunker's genius for storytelling, the novel depicts day-to-day life in a large maximum security prison with an insight and veracity only a seasoned convict striving to find the truth could bring to the page. I've never been to San Quentin, never done time in a state joint, but I spent a few days in the L.A. City Jail (the infamous Glass House, worst jail I've ever encountered). I was held for long periods in transit at Terminal Island and Lewisburg, and I did time in other maximum security federal joints where I heard war stories from men who had been transferred into the feds to break up powerful prison gangs that emerged during the '60s and '70s in the California prison system. Prison life at all levels and in all prisons bears certain similarities: loneliness in the face of crowds, the humiliation and constant testing of character, and the life of the mind that takes hold once the intelligent prisoner realizes it is all a matter of attitude. Bunker gives us all this in addition to the marrow of life in Quentin, the complexities of symbiotic relationships between prisoners and between convicts and good and bad cops. He shows how smart convicts will ultimately manipulate the rules to suit themselves, the full-time residents of the penitentiary. And he takes us into the ultimate isolation of the hole.

Now he propped a folded blanket as a headrest and webbed his fingers behind his neck, waiting for whatever might happen next. A lifetime of conditioning to bare, dirty cells had given him the ability to endure without letting his mind scream in silent futility at the walls. Such conduct as that was the path to mental breakdown. He didn't care about that either, except that it would give the enemy too much satisfaction. He knew how to be still within his own being.

"In the old days, when I first got there, San Quentin wasn't as violent as it is now," Bunker said when I asked him about those years in Quentin. "There wasn't all the racial trouble, which started with the Muslims. Late '50s. In answer to the Muslims came the Nazis. In the '60s they started getting it on, just between themselves. Then, all of a sudden, George Jackson—the name George Jackson, I remember that plain as day, man, him and maybe six or seven others, they ran down a tier and started stabbing

white guys just because they were white. The guys they cut were fish, just arrived off the bus. They were just standing there and these guys came on 'em and started stabbing. That was the first time, that's when it started. Since then, it's been like a war behind walls. And the war still goes on.

"In the '60s the administration started bending over backwards for them convicts, man. I saw so many funny things in that interlude. They had half the joint on fuckin' pill lines. They had fuckin' lines across the middle of the yard, a hundred yards long, givin' them medication, everybody gettin' loaded. They had guys staggering around. They got more liberal and tried to pacify these convicts, but then they started killing guards. When they started killing guards—MAN! Now they've gotten so fuckin' repressive that it's happening all over again.

"Society's attitude toward criminals changed. I remember Eleanor Roosevelt came to San Quentin and gave a speech. If the President's wife went to a prison and gave a speech to the convicts now, society would scream about it. They'd try to impeach him. It's a whole different thing. Back in 1939 and 1940, they had a broadcast from San Quentin, coast to coast, Sunday evening, San Quentin was on the air. There was a whole different social attitude towards crime and criminals.

"The problem is that a lot more people have been affected by crime. Prisons have become more violent, much more racially charged, and there's much more violence in this society. When I was a child, when I was ten years old, I could go anywhere in this fuckin' city on a street car or a bus. Now, middle class children do not go out alone. They go to play dates.

"Look, they can't stop crime by repression, just by putting people in jail, unless they create a total police state. But, they build more prisons, there's more business for the construction companies, more promotions, more captains—there are big vested interests in all that. It's the prison industry. And the drug laws are insane. I wrote a long article that was in *The Nation* over twenty years ago when Nixon declared his war, mainly about how stupid the whole idea was."

This is one of the many groundbreaking themes in *Animal Factory*: how, because of the insanity of the drug laws, a fairly normal kid like Ron Decker can become transformed into a committed enemy of the society that seeks to rehabilitate

him by confining him in an environment where he must either kill or be preyed upon.

The warden had promised that he, Ron, would get favorable action from the judge if he turned on Earl. It was an insulting offer and he'd sneered, refusing to make any statement whatsoever without an attorney—but it also raised hope. Maybe they needed corroboration. Whatever happened, he wouldn't let Earl be convicted of the assault—fuck what Earl said. Yet his own freedom, which had been firmly in hand, was in danger of oozing between his fingers. Either Earl or himself convicted of the crime would face a life sentence or the death penalty, depending on what the jury decided. Even without that, if the judge in Los Angeles found out, he would deny sentence modification, which would mean five long, bitter years before he was eligible for parole, and the chances of getting it would be small even then. He'd already seen too many men psychologically maimed by the indefinite sentences of California. If one year made him capable of plunging a knife into a man's back, what would a decade do?

"I had stabbed a guard in reform school," Bunker went on. "They brought me out to try me in L.A. county, and they put me in the L.A. County Jail. I was still a kid, fifteen years old. I got a famous lawyer to take the case, a guy named Al Matthews who was Chessman's appeal lawyer and sat with him in the courtroom as his adviser—Chessman defended himself. Matthews was great, he put the corrections officials on trial and proved that they had kicked my ass and stomped me, he brought up all the beatings they had given me, tear gas in the face, kicking me like a dog, blah, blah, you know. Meanwhile, the guard wasn't hurt very bad. Talkin' about how I stabbed a guard. Believe me, he wasn't hurt too bad. He was nicked, you know? Gouged him in the leg, mainly, 'cuz he fell on me. I went to stab him and stuck him in the leg."

"What was going on?" I asked.

"I'd escaped from the hole. They chased me around the prison. Strange shit. They took me out of the hole for a disciplinary court line—ya' know how you stand in the line? And the bull turns his head, so I hooked it. I was loose in the prison and they were lookin' all over the joint for me. Anyway, they put me on trial. That's when I first met Chessman. They booked

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COLLECTOR'S ITEMS—PRISON LIFE BACK ISSUES ARE SELLING OUT FAST!

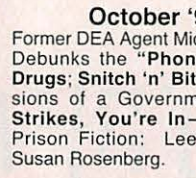
Lock 'Em Up and throw away the key!

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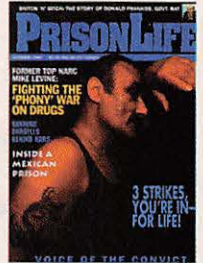
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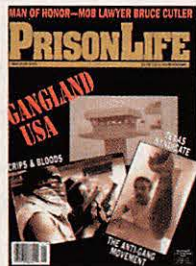
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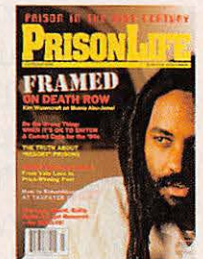
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THE POET'S GAME

by Dannie Martin

A court stenographer took his little machine from the federal court house in San Francisco over to a nearby coffee shop at the end of the day.

He got his usual double cappuccino and sat there reloading paper into the device. Everyone called him Pete The Cat. There was no feline grace about the rotund little fellow with his Sears pastel sport coat and painted tie. But he was curious. Not busy-body nosey, but consumed by a general curiosity.

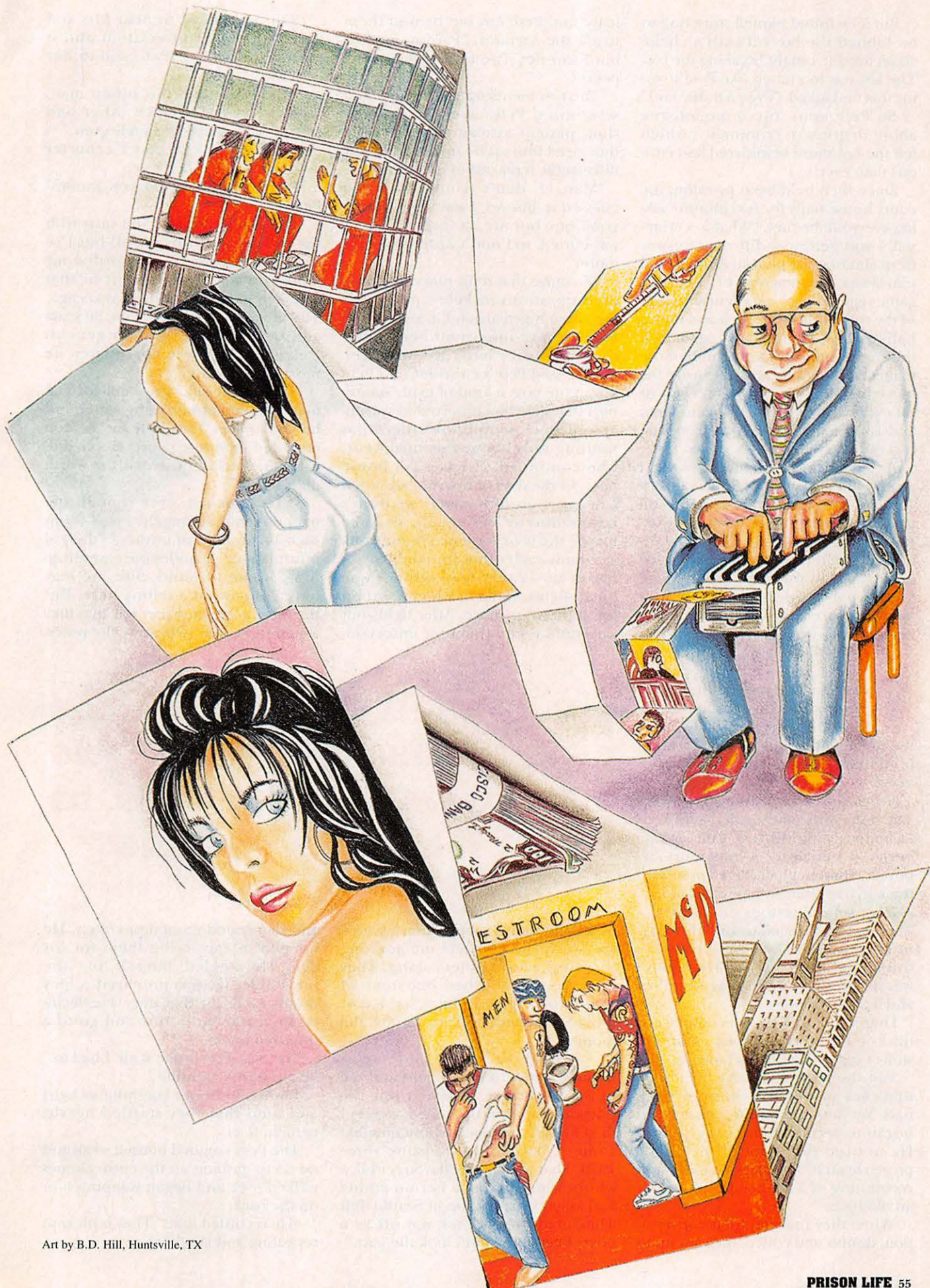
Now and then he'd even ask a witness fresh off the stand something like, "Are you a vet? Where did you attend high school?" Innocuous stuff, but not to him. The worst trouble it ever got him into was the time he asked old judge Vulkalin, an alcoholic curmudgeon, ego-stroked, mean, federal judge if he still fucked his wife.

The clerk told him right after the shit storm, "Goddamn, Pete. You could at least have said intercourse!"

"What the fuck is the difference? If he don't fuck his wife he can fuck hisself. I was tired of working his drunken, half-assed courtroom anyway."

The other judges gave Pete plenty of work. Even patiently explained to him what a writ of mandamus was if he asked about it, which he did.

In the coffee shop, Pete was thinking about what a criminal might be like. His 12-year-old boy had asked him a few months back what a criminal was. The kid was a chip off the old block and Pete had an easy answer for him. At least he thought he did.



Art by B.D. Hill, Huntsville, TX

But if he found himself stuttering so he fobbed the boy off with a cliché about anyone caught breaking the law. The kid was too much like Pete to go for that and asked, "Even a traffic law?"

So Pete went into a monologue about degrees of criminality, which left the boy more bewildered and curious than ever.

Since then he'd been prowling the court house daily for two months asking everyone he met, "What is a criminal?" and getting a different answer from almost every person. A wonderful trial lawyer and somewhat of a semantic genius gave Pete an excellent summary of the root of the word itself and took a half-hearted shot at defining it. Still, they never quite got to the nub of the matter and when he turned to leave the lawyer said to Pete, "Why don't you go on over there to Vulkalin's courtroom and ask him if he's ever fucked or been fucked by a criminal."

An interesting idea, but Pete wasn't quite willing to go that far to satisfy a 12-year-old's curiosity. But he was still grappling with it. He'd sat in court houses most of his life at criminal trials. Hell, he'd recorded the nightstalker's trial. He'd always assumed he knew what a criminal was. He now knew for sure that he didn't and was beginning to wonder if anyone did.

Just then, Pete picked up on two criminals in earnest conversation at the very next table. Like the judge said about porn, he couldn't define it but he knew it when he saw it.

He glanced over at two white men. The one doing all the talking looked to be in his mid-fifties. A bit seedy, perhaps, but clean. A look more of poverty than neglect. Pete could see track marks from syringes and faded reform school tattoos on his arms. The man was articulate and obviously intelligent. The one Pete came to think of as "Homes" or "Homeboy" was an average, middle-aged fellow and a good listener.

There they sat like two complacent ducks on a pond, not even paranoid, shifty-eyed or dangerous-looking.

But they couldn't have been anything but pure dyed-in-the-wool criminals. Yet Pete still had to wonder. He began to record their conversation. He noticed that a lot of the man's prose rhymed. The story he told was a recounting of a chance meeting with an old flame.

When they finished their conversation, donuts and coffee, they got up to

leave and Pete ran out behind them to ask the narrator, "Pardon me, sir, but I wonder if you are by chance a poet?"

The two men stopped, turned and scrutinized Pete carefully. It was a slow, patient assessment and while they sized him up he noticed a barely discernible feral cast to their eyes.

"Man, I don't know how you guessed it, but yes, I was a poet and a good one but my art form died and was buried, so I don't write them anymore."

Of course that reply raised two hundred questions in Pete's mind. His eyeballs jumped around in an effort to ask the most important one before these two exotic birds flew away. The Poet sensed Pete's curiosity, and Pete saw in the poet a kind of hyper awareness that Pete had observed in spiritual and holy people. But there was nothing holy about this raconteur, who continued, "I was a jail house poet. In the days of no-frills jails when I began a crook's career we didn't have radios or TVs in jails. We'd be maybe thirty or forty in a felony tank with only each other for company. A few of us—a very few—wrote these long poems, some of which went on for an hour or more. After lights-out we would recite them for entertain-

"Oh, I chanced to hear bits and pieces of your conversation and it seemed to rhyme," Pete said rather lamely.

The Poet and the other man, Homes, looked at each other and smiled. Then the Poet's smile grew.

"Man, you're a court reporter aren't you?" he asked Pete.

"Why, yes. How did you know?" Pete asked.

"Ah, that little gismo you carry with the holey paper tips me off but I've seen you before. You recorded my bank robbery trial in front of that drunken judge Vulkalin 15 years ago. The intoxicated fool gave me 30 years and recommended I never get out. I'm glad the parole board knew he was a fucking idiot."

"I—don't recall," Pete replied. The man's smile kept growing wider and he said to Pete, "You little fucker. You recorded my entire conversation, didn't you? Verbatim. Word for word, didn't you?"

Pete panicked, even though the man was smiling hugely. Legal terms such as "invasion of privacy," "theft of information," "clandestine eavesdropping" came to mind. Shit, he may have committed a felony here. But the most worrisome part was that they would force him to destroy the notes,

He'd been prowling the courthouse daily for two months asking everyone he met, "What is a criminal?"

ment and moral value. They traveled the world by convicts memorizing them and passing them along. They were never published but some of them would give Robert Service or Edna St. Vincent Millay a run for the money.

"Around 1970 TVs and radios became standard fare in jails and the noise they make drowned out the poets and we shut up, rolled over and died like all true poets whose time has come. I haven't written one since 1976. That was about Pike Street Lil, a whore who became a heroin addict and killed her pimp up in Seattle. But what made you knock me off as a poet? I certainly don't look the part."

and he needed them desperately. He needed to transcribe them for his boy. He steeled himself for the inevitable. He was prepared to pay these crooks for that story. He decided he'd start at twenty and go to a hundred bucks.

"Yes, yes, I recorded it all. I had to," he answered truthfully.

Both men began laughing so hard and loud that they startled nearby panhandlers.

The Poet laughed himself weak and sat down gasping on the curb. Homes walked over and began slapping him on the back.

"He recorded that!" They both kept repeating and laughing.

"Whatever for?" The Poet finally asked Pete.

"I've been trying to find out what a criminal is and you two are criminals. Your dialogue is even illegal," Pete answered.

"Well fuck, we ain't the only two in the world. There's three or four more besides us," the Poet said and they began laughing again. Pete began to really enjoy himself now.

"Well, was it poetry?" Pete asked.

"Nope, you got it right the first time. It's criminal jargon shot with prison yard metaphor, and touched by my own style of rhyming prose where it's convenient. It helps keep a listener's attention and I love to talk," the Poet informed him.

"May I keep it, then?" Pete asked.

"Sure, it's our gift to you, friend. Something from a parallel but unseen world to help decorate your poverty-stricken existence," the Poet said as he stood up, brushing his slacks, suddenly scowling as he remembered how street folks urinate and defecate on San Francisco sidewalks. Then he looked at his watch.

"We got to break camp pardner. We're icky and need a shot of heroin. The dope dealers here now days are illegal aliens who don't use themselves. They send all the money back to Mexico. They close up shop around six. Can you imagine that? A fuckin' dope pusher working on banker's hours? They don't even understand an addict can get sick at midnight. I don't know what this new underworld is coming to. But you take care and good luck to you," he told Pete as they turned and headed for the intersection.

The word 'underworld' had triggered something in Pete's mind, and once again he ran after the pair. They turned and stood patiently waiting for his curiosity to verbalize itself.

"What is a criminal? I know you can tell me," Pete asked the Poet.

Both men remained silent for a good while then they both studied the ground for a moment.

"Should we tell him?" The Poet asked Homes.

"Hell, why not?" Homes replied, looking fondly at Pete. "It has nothing to do with using heroin," he added, then said to the Poet, "You do the honors, man. You define things better than me. Hell, I can't even read or write.

The Poet ruminated silently for a long moment before he answered the question.

"A criminal belongs to a tribe of people who travel in parataxis but not

"Her ass still looked just like a valentine turned upside down. Something in my heart went bippity bop and my nuts felt like warm snot."

in tandem down through the ages beside civilization, preying on all types of society, much as a wolf pack follows reindeer. They have their own customs, language, etiquette and values. They despise order and thrive on chaos. They've been here longer than civilization. He and I belong to that tribe. Our support system is set up right in your midst but invisible to your senses. You need labels to identify concepts. Our people deal in unidentifiable reality. We've got to go, pal. Be cool."

"Well, where in the hell did that first tribe come from?" Pete yelled at their rapidly retreating backs. The Poet stopped once again and yelled back at Pete from across Polk Street.

"Our elders argue a lot about that. But I take the position that we evolved in a linearly—from cannibals. Eating people was in vogue then like vegetarianism is today. We stopped eating people when they began growing food. We steal their food now and eat that. It probably even tastes better."

Then they vanished into the churning maw of the city. Pete looked around at bystanders and was amazed that none of them had paid much attention even though the Poet had yelled that last bizarre theory. But this was San Francisco.

As Pete trudged home a thousand more questions he'd wished he'd asked entered his mind. It would be nice to know how members of this tribe identified one another if everything about them remained secret and invisible.

If the Poet's theory was correct then society had invented the word "criminal" as a catch-all label to identify variant forms of behavior. Certainly there were actions that are evil in one person's eyes and good and noble in another's. Perhaps criminality was a purely subjective concept that we pretend to understand.

Pete began to wonder if all language were counterfeit, the millions of words he'd recorded over the years no more than silly putty used by fools to construct personal symbols and

concepts. Perhaps that's why the judge got so irate over the word "fuck" and wouldn't have minded "intercourse," even though they meant the same thing. Or did they?

One thing was certain about these criminals he'd met. They would keep his mind busy for some time to come. He really looked forward to transcribing the Poet's monologue. It came off the machine fine. Here's what the Poet recounted:

"You know, Homey, seems like only yesterday I loved to mate her then I woke up twenty years later. She'd married a banker and I'd become a stranger. It looked like new houses had ate up all the land. Rip Van Winkle ain't even got a place to lay down no more.

"Today I passed her on the street. She'd aged like good wine and the foghorn sound. Her ass still looked just like a valentine turned upside down. Something in my heart went bippity bop and my nuts felt like warm snot.

"Hank Williams O.D.'d on morphine before he was born and Satchmo wiped his head and blew his horn like a hornblower should. Man, he was good.

"So I became a pimp then got to shootin' dope and fuckin' with bum payers till I lost all hope of becoming a player. My game, like unwashed pussy, turned rank. Thank God they still had banks, so I robbed a couple when I run outta hope. Man can't spend hoe money on dope. Not a dime, not two bits, I'm way too cool for that shit. Be about as low as spendin' hoe money on pussy and nothin' rhymes with that. Too low class to even think about and even a dope fiend can do without when nitty can't find gritty and even his dreams smell shitty.

"But there she was. Like she'd kept cool and milky white in the shade. But when that girl walked by it was a fuckin' parade. Squares lined up to watch her pass. And when she went on by there was still that ass. It was purely top shelf. I mean it done everything but introduce itself.

"But like I said before she prospered along with the bank and I wound up slammin' crank. I'd lost the hook even if I'd ever had any bait. So the lady gave me a look as if to say 'It's way too late.'

"Then she turned around and checked to see if I had my eye on the valentine. I did, she smiled, and for one enchanted moment the world turned fine. Her smile gently bathes me in refulgence and light I can't hardly stand. Even better now days what with the banker and the dental plan. You still with me here, bro? I'll get to the point but I may be slow. There's no advantage to speed or pullin' up too soon unless it's the kind you put in the silver spoon.

"She loved me once you know. She even loved the stuff I never showed that she weaseled out of me at four in the mornin' when my brain was tired and dreams were abornin'.

"In those days we sold that ass at a good price before she found out one steady banker is just as nice as maybe forty pimps and all the dope fiends you can scare out of a McDonalds' bathroom with no lock on the door.

"You better be out of there in thirty seconds, Maurice, or I'm callin' the fuckin' police. That's for customers only, and you ain't bought a Big Mac since they invented heroin and baloney."

"Yeah, she made me for what looked like a leprechaun mixed up with an elf packin' a brain that boiled like stew. The kind of fool who would run a big con on hisself if he had nothin' else to do.

"The girl was right, she never dissed me. Just kind of pissed me on out and set me free. Course I never felt that way. I was living in Folsom prison that same fucking day. Cop hands me a letter, one with none of her perfume. So I knew it was bad news. Dear John, I brought your saddle home. The lady was tired of being used and abused. It wasn't just that I packed a cold deck. Things got too bad, I'd make her write hot checks. Then when the jury finally took away all hope, I'd holler, "Hey, momma, bring the dope!" A balloon or two is all a sucker needs when he can't get freed.

"She walked right by me today, Homeboy, after all them years and my silent tears. Still lookin' good like pure class would, keen, sharp and fit. And I looked like a blood vein with two eyeballs on the end of it. Feelin' icky, emanating tricky, busted, disgusted, and couldn't be trusted; pant cuffs lookin like walked-on, faded rags. Still

out there, chasin' that bag. But you know that's my style and probably what lit up her smile.

"Homey, in the old school where I give her the game I told her things stay the same, don't nothin' ever change. Even when it looks like recently invented fun you got to understand there's nothin' new under the sun.

"You can be forgiven for a lot of the little stuff and maybe drive around a called-for why. But tell one good lie, suck one dick, rat on one person, and you are a lying dick sucking rat till the day you die.

"So here's where it gets strange to a fool, by that I mean a chump who never went to the old school, like her and I did.

"Homey she knows for sure that I still love her and the banker don't and never did. He keeps his heart in a calculator and I keep mine in an incubator without a lid. She's either with me or she ain't and the twenty years in between is like a dead faint.

But that's one subject she'll never crack because she knows for sure I won't take her back. When they break all the way out of my life I put mortar in the cracks. She couldn't find a road back to my heart and wouldn't get on her knees beseeching me hopelessly to take her part. Homey, I never gave it up. She took it all off in a carry sack. I can't put none of it back. The love never changed and not a molecule of it died. But that old solid trust now glitters like fool's gold from the bed of a river that I cried. It's gone Adios motherfucker. You don't revisit trust. Take it off in the sack and it won't come back. But love stays right there, you can't take it nowhere. If it moves it's like that heroin money we steal. It's a piece of paper we trade for dope. It ain't even real.

"But Homeboy I swear I felt her reach out and touch me today. As sure as I've felt a red ball of fire touch the sea and the looks hit our eyeballs and bounced back. I read them clean as the banker reads a fax. They spoke volumes.

"Her eyes said, 'You old desperado, you look tired. But you also look alert for things still to be desired.' My companionship jerked her soul, it was still as young as we were old, and her nearness pleased me.

"I lost her fairly, she got away barely and, Homey, that kind of woman rarely walks this bitter earth. She was a racehorse man. Even when she jumped the track and left a red-faced

clown in the stands, and General Patton didn't have no finer eye for a tanker than when she set her sights on that banker.

"Scooped him up like real fast. Then kicked back and hired little kids to mow her grass. I'm as proud of her right now as I was the day long ago when she told a judge, 'If you won't lower his bail, I'll go find a million fucking dollars!'

"He lowered it and apologized for putting that kind of stress on her. And to this day she's never called him sir or your honor, or even judge. All she ever did was interrupt and yell, 'Hold it right there! This shit ain't fair.' He never dreamed of putting her in contempt, in that area she was totally exempt. Homey, she would cross them legs under a short dress and give him such a hard-on he'd call a recess.

"No shit, Man, if I'm lyin' I'm dyin' and King Tut never had no tomb. That broad could make a Republican judge jack off in the bathroom. Spun him like a yo-yo and had him saying yes when he meant no.

"I beat a kidnap, two robberies and I think a sodomy with explosives. It was all her doing. She took me to fresh air freedom from a sentence that was sure to be life. The judge went home from my trial and fucked his wife while thinking about mine. Finished in two minutes like a true Republican and said, "Honey, I've never seen such a bunch of goddamn thugs in one place at one time!" But I was free and he was referring to witnesses she'd rounded up for me. They scared the jury so bad the foreman went into eternal therapy. She subpoenaed three of my witnesses from death row which gave about four hundred off-duty cops a full-time job. Then had them get up there and say they were friends of the guy I robbed. She had more moves than a three-dimensional chess board. She was a pedigreed whore.

"In closing, Homey, I hope you can forgive me for taking a lot of credit here but man I got it comin. I built that hoe from the clay in mother earth. Taught her to play and worked her from last to first.

"Singlehandedly laid in the good solid frame, then decorated her with a brand new name. You know, Homes, there's some remorse in the remembrance. But when we looked at one another today there was no shame. She never learned it because it wasn't in my game."



Defending the Convict Code

(continued from page 19)

dude now has paperwork on you. Now, let's say you fuck up somewhere down the road and you're headed back to the joint.

Only now everyone knows you're a rat and your life ain't worth a plug nickel. Well, there's always that partner of yours selling dope; you could give him up. Hell, better him than you, right? Where does it stop?

Choice Number Two: You go find the guy who did the shoot and you make sure he never hurts or kills another kid again. You hunt him down and cap the motherfucker—justice is served!

Renaud's Scenario Number Two: My cellie just got killed and I've been blamed. I am innocent. What do I do?

According to the Code, there is only one way to go: Ride the beef and hope your partners will handle the business.

I would rather spend the rest of my life in prison with my head held high than spend it knowing I gave my honor away to the very people I've spent my life fighting. Honor is a gift a man gives to himself. A man without honor is a man with no self-respect, pride or dignity. A man who gives

himself to the system is submissive and weak; not a man at all.

Here's a scenario of my own: A man and his four-year-old nephew stop into a bar & grill to grab a burger. The nephew is in the poolroom rolling balls around the table. Then he runs in and tells his uncle that a dude just put his hands down his pants. You're the uncle, what do you do? Call the cops or handle your business?

Surprise! You stab the motherfucker! Your pride's intact and the prick will never touch another kid again. But Jorge, I'm quite sure you'd have called the law so that he could fuck with more children, right?

Chris Hynes

Shawangunk C.F., New York

It's articles like "Challenging the Convict Code" that justify what those finger-pointing, note-dropping, cheese-eating pieces of shit rats get away with.

When a person, man or woman, decides to live on the "wrong side" of the law, that person is subject to the Code. Call it what you like: "Honor Among Thieves," "Omerta," the "Code," whatever—we all know what it is. You don't rat, you stay loyal to your people.

I bet this issue had no trouble getting through Big Brother's Censor-

ship Committee. I can see the superintendent or warden handing out copies, telling everyone it's okay to "tell what you know, no more, no less," because *Prison Life* sanctions it.

But it's actually good that you printed that bullshit. It lets the real stand-up prisoner see how bad it is in 1995. I don't believe people sanction that propaganda. If so, Richard Stratton would not have appealed his sentence, which was enhanced for his refusal to roll over. He would have told what he knew: "no more, no less!"

I don't blame cops, prosecutors or prison officials for using informants. People do not become rats. They were born that way and were just waiting for the right opportunity. Sammy "the Canary" Gravano was a rat from Day One. He just didn't eat cheese until the Feds put it on a ham sandwich. He waited until the chips were down and played his trump card, double or nothing.

Articles like these, and interviews with people like Donald Frankos (Oct. '94) serve only one purpose: to expose rats for what they are and to demonstrate how rats are tossed aside once their usefulness is no longer needed. Oh, and one other purpose: to entertain real prisoners.



Illustration by Henry Herz

GET SOME BUSINESS

By Michael Chavaux
Adrian, MI

Remember me? Cellmate of the Month in *Prison Life's* May issue? You know, the long-haired, metalhead guitarist who looks like he overdosed on Megadeath? Yeah, that's me. With one exception. I also got an overdose of time. But instead of giving up, I turned it into a profitable experience. I've learned how to make things happen now instead of waiting until I get out to start all over again.

Most convicts don't realize how much they can accomplish in prison without any help from the Department of Corrections. Let's start with the most obvious. What kind of talents do you have? Can you draw? Paint? Write? Make leather products, jewelry boxes, stuffed animals, cards? Whatever your talents are, you can profit from them while still in prison, and I'm talking about showing a profit on a steady basis.

When prisoner Mark Chapman got tired of trading his greeting cards for cigarettes, he contacted greeting card companies and sent them samples of his work. This is how he created a steady cash flow that's perfectly legal.

Card publishers buy art, poetry and words. One of my first tries, I sold 10 words to Innovisions, a greeting card publisher, for \$75.00. That comes to \$7.50 a word. Not bad when you consider most inmates don't make that much in a month. Some card companies pay in royalties, meaning that the artist or writer gets a percentage of every card sold. Publishers also purchase catchy slogans to put on buttons and bumper stickers. These publishing companies can be found in a book called *The Writer's Market*. But don't stop there.

If you can't make anything that's marketable, you can profit from those who can. Ex-con Matt Stefanson didn't know anything about leather work, but he could write one hell of a letter. So he drafted a convincing sales pitch while still in prison and sent it to a retail leather store. His idea was to turn ordinary leather products into a sort of novelty. They were to be advertised as made by prisoners and each leather good came with a mug shot of the man who made it. The business owner loved the idea and made room for a display case in his store. After that, it was pretty easy for Matt to act as the middle man between the store owner and the prisoners. That way, the leather crafters had a steady market.

For those of you who don't have any marketable talents,

all is not lost. Just look around. Find something that has profit potential, come up with a plan and follow it through. I don't know anything about painting, but Larry, who locked next to me, did. He wasn't very good at painting people, but he did an excellent job with animals and landscapes. He could paint anything from looking at a photograph. I got a picture of some of his work and made a flier out of it. Since animals were his specialty, I advertised "Pet Portraits" in the flier. I started the marketing procedure by having a pet portrait made for my girlfriend. Along with the painting, I sent her the fliers. She showed the whole package around to friends and coworkers and the orders poured in.

The artist wanted \$15 each. I charged an extra \$15 for a total of \$30. My girlfriend (the freeworld salesperson) added an extra \$30 onto that for a total of \$60, and they still sold like crazy.

Another good example of a successful business venture is a van service I started. I had a hard time getting visits because of the great distance between the institution and the city. I looked around for a van service but found none. Plagued with the prospect of getting no visits, I walked around the yard looking for other convicts who had the same problem. Many did. That's when I began my extensive marketing research.

I didn't have access to a van or any money, but if I could convince someone on the outside that there was money to be made here, they could do the things I was unable to, and I could do the things they couldn't—like posting advertisements in the units and finding new customers. Then I could solve both my visit and money problems at the same time.

I didn't have a typewriter, so I paid someone to type up what I had written. It was a business plan, sales pitch in one. The first person I contacted liked the idea so much he got a loan on his house to buy the van and "Family Ties Transit System" was born.

If you're interested in starting a van service in your institution, first make sure there's a need for it. Don't be discouraged if some kind of service already exists. You'll just need to make your offer better.

The biggest obstacle you'll have to overcome in the transportation business is last minute cancellations. Visitors can be ready and rearing to go the night before, but anything can happen overnight. Always give your customers a wake-

up call the morning of the trip. This will ensure they're ready by the time you get there and will save you a potentially wasted trip.

Set a schedule for the institution you're going to. You don't want to bring one person every other day. It makes better business sense to bring several people once a week. I've found that customers prefer a van with windows and air conditioning, and extras like coffee and free newspapers will only make your service more desirable.

Advertising is one of the biggest expenses for an average business, but your advertising budget is virtually nonexistent. Advertise by word of mouth and in prison newspapers and keep fliers posted in unit bulletin boards. Offer incentives, discounts and coupons.

A savvy businessman is always looking to expand his service or product line in order to increase his wealth. Here's how you might turn some of the ideas I've already mentioned into greater profit-making ventures. The writer of greeting cards, for example, could also try his hand at newspaper or magazine articles, short stories, books, reports, songs, resumes, etc. The artist could make tattoo and T-shirt patterns. Matt, the leather goods middle man, could contact other leather shops. He could encourage the leather crafters to offer a wider selection of goods to increase sales and place their own ads in newspapers and magazines. The pet portraits could be advertised in *Pet Lovers* magazine; cards and fliers could be sent to veterinary hospitals, pet grooming salons and pet food stores. Deals could be made between the supplier and the retailer whereby the supplier has free portraits done for the store

in exchange for making his sales literature available to the store's customers. The van service could be expanded to other institutions.

Finally, if for some reason you have too many obstacles preventing you from accomplishing any of these things, all is not lost. You can read trade magazines and write to organizations such as the Small Business Administration for more information. Answer business opportunity ads in the back of magazines. Trash the stuff that's questionable and keep anything that sounds promising. Make your own notes and observations.

Many businesses offer free information in order to get a greater response from their ads. Those that don't may be convinced to send you the information anyway. Explain your situation and ask if they will accept postage stamps instead of a check or money order. Once you order any kind of business information, whether it's free or not, you will be placed on a mailing list and you will receive all kinds of business literature in the mail every day.

Even if you never use any of the information you accumulate for yourself, you can still make a profit from it. Reports on subjects ranging from needlework to starting your own business sell for around five dollars each. You could sell what you learn in the form of business reports to other opportunity seekers. I will get into this business venture in more detail in a future issue.

Don't listen to the rumors or even to your own negative thoughts when it comes to starting a business and making money the legal way. Don't believe people who say it will never work. They only say it will never work because it's never worked for them. And the reason it's never worked



Art by Stephen Gressak

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for them is because they've never tried it, or they tried and gave up too quickly. This approach will get you nowhere.

I don't know who may have said it before, but Aerosmith just summed it up pretty well in a song I heard on the radio while I was writing this article: "If you do what you've always done, you'll always get what you've always got."

Life is like a game. You may get set back, you may have to pay the price, but you'll never move on without another roll of the dice. My advice is: Roll the dice now. Today. No one ever won a game of Monopoly by watching everyone else play, and you're never going to win at the game of life unless you play it too, no matter where you are.

Have any questions or comments? Write to: Michael Chavaux, #169378, P.O. Box 1888, Adrian, MI 49221. 

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BUBBA: A REAL AMERICAN

Dear Bubba,

Only *Prison Life* is so fucked up that they would give a fool like you your own column. What a crock of shit! I've been reading this garbage since the magazine began and I'm happy to say that once I saw your stupid looking mug and read the crap you write, I figured anybody dumb enough to print the idiotic ditherings of Bubba won't last long in this man's world.

Imagine my surprise at still being subjected to your puss one year later. What I want to know is, how have you managed to continue producing this slop at a time when real Americans recognize scum like you for the sewage you are and flush this page after they wipe?!

Defecatingly yours,

A Proud Member of the Moral Majority

Dear Shit-for-Brains,

Let's try to elevate this dialogue out of the crapper. The thing I love about you conservatives is that you don't have the nerve to identify yourselves. Everybody knows who I am. I don't try to hide the fact that

I'm a jailbird. You, on the other hand, tell us nothing about yourself except that you hate me. You define yourself as what you hate.

My guess is that you are a cop. Maybe a hack working in a county jail and stealing some sucker's *Prison Life* from the mailroom. Then you sneak off to the toilet to pore over what is written here so you can whip up your fury at us cons before you head out onto the cellblock to make life even more miserable for motherfuckers doing time.

But you asked me a question, and I aim to answer it. I get a lot of hate mail. Almost everybody who writes to me begins by telling me what an ugly, good-for-nothing, stupid slob I am. They're trying to be funny, trying to make me laugh so I'll write back and send them a free sub — at least you didn't ask for that; you'll just go on stealing *Prison Life*.

Let's be serious here for a minute. *Prison Life* is fucked up. They not only give me this page, but they actually pay me—never on

time, and not enough to buy stamps to write back to all the women who send me love letters, but they do come up with a few pesos every now and then. When I first saw this rag, I figured no way it'll ever survive. People like you sneer at *Prison Life*; straight people, citizens laugh at *Prison Life*. But they read it. You read it. You hate it—you hate me—and yet you can't stop yourself from reading this magazine because *Prison Life* is about what is happening here in America. That's why this magazine is still around, because it's about something important. It's about an aspect of American life that affects more and more people every day. Check it out. Do you see the government spending billions of dollars to build new schools? Hell, no. From my cell window all I can see is a giant prison complex that has grown here like a fungus since I've been down on this last bid. It's Gulag America. We're locking up more and more people for longer and longer. People like you think that's the answer. I'm here to tell you it ain't gonna do a fucking bit of good. All it's gonna do is make the people who build and run these joints richer and more powerful. Oh, and one other thing—it's gonna mean more people are going to read *Prison Life*. So, if you really hate me and this magazine, the way to get rid of it is for all you real Americans to get real and help turn this country back into what it was intended to be in the first place: the land of the free, and the home of the brave. Not some cowardly police state run by a bunch of closet nazis who define themselves by what they hate.

And if that's too complicated for your constipated mind, try this: *Prison Life* continues to exist because asswipes like you need toilet paper.

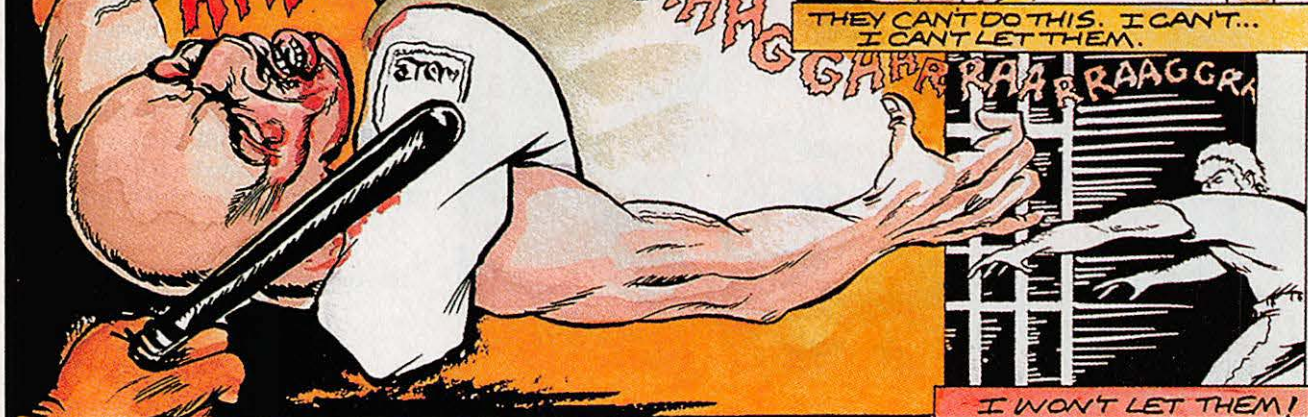
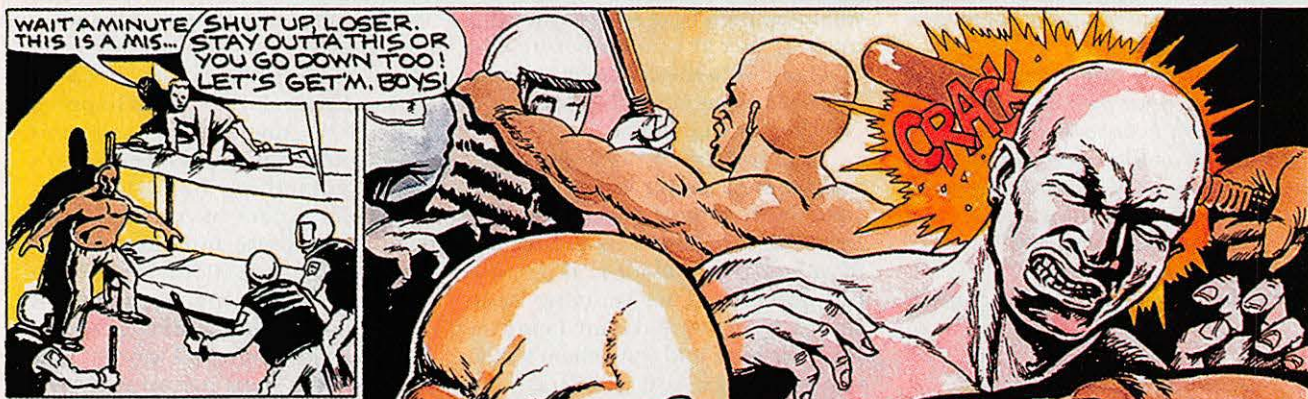
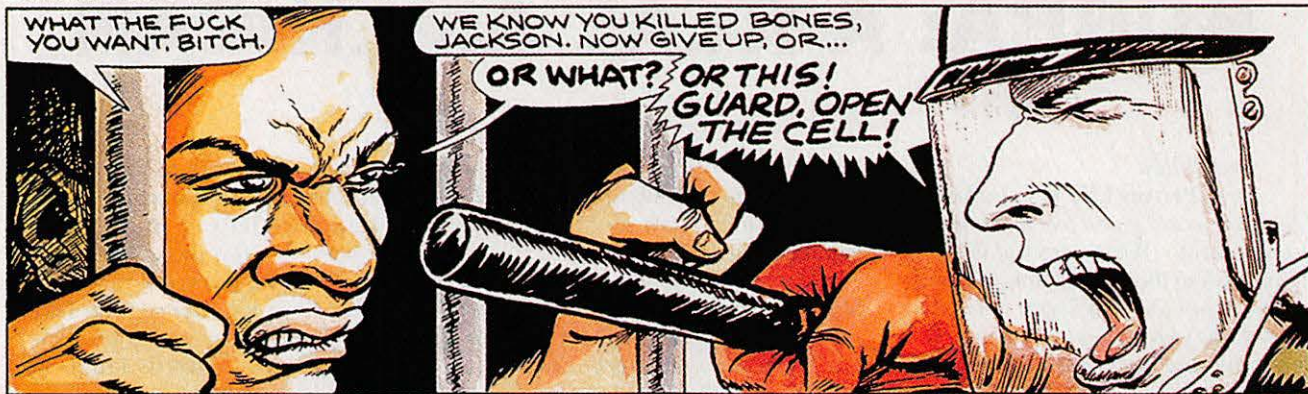
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as real an American as ever there was

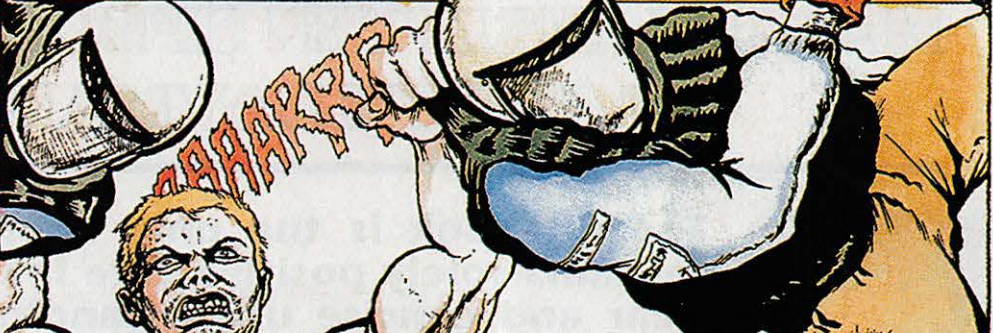


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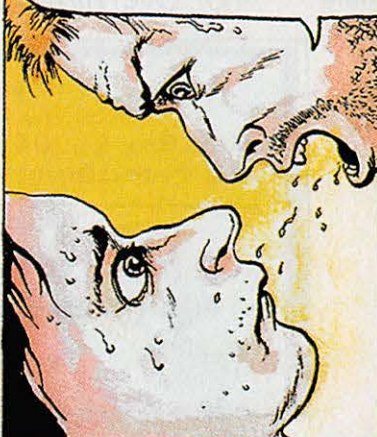
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IN HIS FIVE-YEAR STINT AS A GOVERNMENT-FUNDED SUPERHERO, CRIMEJACKER WAS THE MOST RENOWNED WEAPON IN AMERICA'S WAR AGAINST CRIME. THEN, HE FELL BUSTED FOR CONSPIRACY, HE WAS SENTENCED TO 20 CALENDARS IN THE STATE JOINT. SOME SAY HE WAS SET UP BY THE FEDS WHO BEGAN TO DISTRUST THEIR SUPER-STEROID-INDUCED CREATION. STRIPPED OF HIS POWERS, NEIL POLITAN, A.K.A. CRIMEJACKER, ENTERED STONEKILL MAX PENITENTIARY AS ONE OF THE "COMMON CRIMINAL SCUM" HE ONCE TOOK PRIDE IN PUTTING BEHIND BARS.





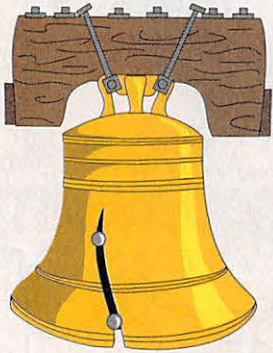
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WRIT WRITING, PART III: NARROWING THE ISSUES

by Larry Fassler, Jailhouse Lawyer



Part I of Writ Writing dealt with drafting a petition for a writ of habeas corpus. In Part II, we emphasized the importance of assembling complete files before writing your pleadings. This installment will help you identify and select the issues best suited for your petition.

It is important to note that most prisoners refer to the papers they submit to court as a "writ." This is incorrect, even though everyone knows what is meant. Technically, a writ is the order issued by the court at the end of your litigation. The correct term for the papers you'll be sending to the court is a petition, or a motion, for a writ of habeas corpus.

The meaning of the term "habeas corpus" varies from state to state. In the federal courts it is known as a "2254" or "2255" motion. In most states it will be known by the number of the statutes which enable an incarcerated petitioner to get his or her case back into court.

If you followed the suggestions in Part I, you should now have come up with several possible issues for use in your motion. Identify each one of these issues by number or, better yet, list each issue on a separate sheet of paper. As you proceed, you may find yourself creating categories for sub-issues or even multiple primary issues. This is normal.

The following steps should be followed for each issue. As an example, I will refer to "Issue X," but the same procedure should be followed with each issue you're considering for your petition.

Let's say that Issue X is a claim of ineffective assistance of counsel. Your lawyer convinced you to plead guilty by promising you a sentence of 36 months or less. But the judge saw fit to give you 108 months—three times what you were promised.

On the paper assigned to Issue X, make notes of anything in your transcripts and case files that support your argument of ineffective assistance of counsel. Make sure your references are easy to understand because you'll need to refer back to them later. Identify documents, page numbers and lines.

I have devised my own code for documenting references. A typical reference might look like this: TT342/2-5. "TT" refers to the document, the trial transcript in this case; the numbers "342" signify the page number; and "2-5" refers to the lines on the page. You should also copy or excerpt particularly important or strong references.

Let's say page 12 of your plea hearing transcript, when you made your guilty plea, reads like this:

- 5 COURT: Has anybody made any promises to you about the
- 6 sentence you will receive?
- 7 DEFENDANT SMITH: Yes sir, Mr. Jones told me that. . .
- 8 MR. JONES (defense attorney): Your Honor, I explained
- 9 to the defendant that this court has the final say as to the
- 10 sentence to be imposed.

- 11 COURT: Is that correct, Mr. Smith?
- 12 DEFENDANT SMITH: Yes sir, but he also told me . . .
- 13 MR. JONES: I also told Mr. Smith that he is subject to a
- 14 statutory sentencing range of 1 to 10 years.
- 15 COURT: All right then, I find that the plea is intelligently
- 16 and knowingly made, and I will accept the defendant's plea
- 17 of guilty.

You realize that these lines support the claim that your lawyer misled you, because they show how he prevented you from telling the judge what you'd been promised. So you make a reference to them on the sheet you have assigned to Issue X: ST12/5-17. ("ST" for Sentencing Transcript; 12 for page 12; and 5-17 for lines 5 through 17.)

As you search through your case file, you will also find material a prosecutor might use to oppose your arguments. Write down references to this material, also. (I use a different color pen for adverse references.) Be as thorough as possible when listing these references.

Sometimes you'll discover that a particular issue is not supported by the record. There may be two reasons for this: First, the issue may not be valid. It may be something you thought had happened during your prosecution, but when you look for it in the records and transcripts, you find that you misunderstood what was actually transpiring at the time. This happens to almost everyone who goes through a criminal trial. The second possibility is that what happened was not recorded in the files and transcripts. This, too, is common. It is this type of issue a habeas corpus pleading is designed to redress. (As a general rule, issues supported on the record are to be presented on direct appeal. If you fail to raise them in direct appeal, you are normally barred from raising them in future petitions. This is called a "procedural bar." In a habeas action, you are allowed to present evidence that wasn't presented at trial or during other proceedings. For instance, you can inform the court about circumstances between you and your attorney, or about

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witnesses your attorney refused to present.)

But even when this second explanation is the reason for an absence of supportive material, you'll probably still be able to find evidence in the record that will support your arguments or that might be useful in refuting arguments the prosecutor may raise.

Maybe you have a letter you wrote to your lawyer telling him you didn't want to plead guilty if you were going to receive more than 36 months. Or maybe there was an earlier hearing at which you were expected to plead guilty, but then decided not to because you and the prosecutor couldn't agree to the terms. Either of these items would support your argument that your lawyer misled you.

Make reference to everything you come across that might (1) prove your argument, (2) disprove your argument, or (3) refute arguments the prosecutor might bring against you.

The next step is to write down references to all case law you can find in support of your issue. Once again, it's critical to see both sides of the issue. So when you come across unfavorable case law, as you inevitably will, refer back to it. In researching Issue X, you will find a plethora of cases in which the courts have denied relief because the prisoner could not prove that his lawyer misled him. It's important that you understand what courts will require as sufficient proof to grant your petition.

If you find a legal decision in which the facts appear to be close to the facts in your own case, you'll want to include key phrases from that decision in your notes. (Such cases are commonly referred to as being "on point," or "on all fours," with your own case.) But even if a case is on point, it can still go against you. By studying the many decisions in which courts have denied Issue X arguments raised by other prisoners, you'll get a good idea of the kind of supporting evidence necessary to win your case.

In a later installment, I will describe how to research your issues and locate relevant case law. Researching case law is a continuous process. For now, just take whatever case law cites you find as they come.

Next, write down all evidence you can think of in support of your argument for Issue X. Identify any documents or other tangible items that

support your version of the facts. List all witnesses, and precisely how they can help prove your argument. For example, say you are claiming in Issue X that your lawyer convinced you to plead guilty by promising 36 months, but the judge gave you 108. List the names of anyone else the lawyer told about his promised 36-month sentence. If the lawyer didn't talk to anyone else, did you? Perhaps you told your wife you were going to plead guilty because the lawyer promised you a 36-month deal. In that event, your wife could bear witness to your state of mind when you entered the guilty plea. Write down her name and what her testimony will be. If your lawyer came to see you in jail, was anyone else present? If you went to his office, did you go alone? Did anyone else speak with him over the telephone regarding your plea agreement?

Repeat the procedure described above for each issue under consideration for your petition, as well as for any new potential issues discovered along the way. If you do this honestly and conscientiously, you'll begin to form intelligent estimates of their relative strengths.

The most difficult part of appealing your own case is forming objective opinions about the strength or weaknesses of your arguments. There may have been something about your case that was unfair, but which has no legal merit when applied to a habeas corpus. By the same token, there may be a technical issue that you were not aware of when it arose during the proceedings, but is a terrific issue for a habeas relief. Being objective about the facts and issues is difficult, but it is critical to success.

Do not make any final decisions about your issues until you've completed your legal research. By the end of this process, you should be able to identify the issues that merit the most additional research, as well as those that aren't so promising. There will be changes as you progress—your number one issue today may become number 6 and number 4 may become number 1 the day after. As you continue to work, you'll form an objective list of the strengths and weaknesses of your proposed issues and that will help to target your legal research. You will also be developing invaluable notes and files that you'll need when you sit down and write a petition that just might get you back on the streets.



Edward Bunker

(continued from page 52)

me in violation of California Penal Code, Section 4500. Well, Section 4500 is for inmates serving life sentences and an assault conviction carries the death penalty. I wasn't subject to that because I wasn't doing life. But when the sheriffs saw I was booked with that charge, they thought I was facing the death penalty, so they put me in high power security in the county jail. I'm fifteen years old. Half the motherfuckers there were under death sentences.

"Man, there was this guy with one eye, famous case, he threw a whole family down a well. They made a movie about it. The guy's eye was fucked up, wouldn't close, so when he kidnapped people they didn't know if he was asleep or not. Anyway, he had killed a family in Missouri and threw them down a well. He was murdering people all across the states. Hitch-hiking, stealing cars. Crazy shit. And there was Chessman and all these other way-out cases. I remember some guy committed a kidnap-robbery and the broad identified him by his eyes. He had a mask on during the robbery, right? So the lawyer said the bitch couldn't possibly recognize this guy just by his eyes. He put her on the witness stand and brought five guys in with the same hoods on and all dressed alike. She pointed out the right guy, screamed and fainted. The jury was out for about five minutes.

"So, I was in the cage with all these guys. The lawyer got me out. When I hit the streets, I didn't have anybody, no people, nowhere to go. This lawyer had defended a friend of Louise Fazenda Wallis, wife of the producer, Hal Wallis. She had been a silent film star. When she died, in her obituary in the L.A. Times, they called her the "angel of Hollywood" because she always helped people. She didn't do it with a camera, she did it one-on-one. She'd go find people and help them privately. She'd get somebody that was pregnant—and in those days, ya' know? Louise would pay for the woman to have the baby, get the kid adopted by some film star or director. Al Matthews cut me into her and she took an interest in me and liked me. That's how it started. I didn't realize what I had. I'd go see her in the daytime and she'd take me around to meet people like Marion Davies, and William Randolph Hearst. This guy started wars. He ran the world. He was in his eighties and had a couple of strokes by then."

Bunker stayed out about two years that time. At 16, he was selling pot and shoplifting. He got busted after a high-speed chase through the streets of L.A. The judge sent him to the county jail, and he escaped. A year later, at 17, he first walked the yard at San Quentin.

It was during that four-and-a-half year bid that Bunker started writing. Louise Wallis sent the young convict a Royal portable typewriter and a subscription to the *Sunday New York Times Book Review*. Inspired by Chessman's success, Eddie began the long apprenticeship of the prison novelist.

"My friends Paul Allen and Jimmy Posten, the three of us wanted to write. I always thought Jimmy had the most talent. He and Paul are both dead now. I took a correspondence course in grammar so I could learn how to punctuate. Malcolm Braley (author of *On the Yard* and *False Starts*) was another one. He published a couple of paperback books, Gold Medal originals, which I thought was wondrous then. I was into fuckin' up, low-riding, gang-banging and getting drugs. Then I'd go to lockup and for years no one knew that I wrote. When I got powerful jobs in the penitentiary, and when I started with the drugs, everyone was my friend. Braley was like a son to me, just a kid when he came in, and by then I was a veteran and a legend. There was a time in San Quentin when they only called me with major incidents—I was the Major Incidents Clerk. Unless it was a murder or an escape, they left me alone and I had the run of the joint.

"During the first jolt, I could've killed somebody. I didn't give a fuck. But after I met Louise, then later when I got out on parole the first time, I realized there was a whole other life. I stayed out about three years. I had it good, some of the best years of my life, mid-to-late '50s. When I went back to prison after that, I would never cross that line. I was aware of the possibility of getting out. The worst thing they can do to you is take away that hope.

"Louise taught me a lot, man. She taught me that you get out of your own problems by helping other people. She taught me that being concerned with other people is good for your own concerns, lessens your self-focus and increases your self-esteem."

This was Bunker's longest term of imprisonment. He had been convicted of forgery and running a check-cashing scheme, but that is just the bare bones of a criminal career that can only be described as wild and inspired with a kind of edge-of-the-abyss convict

humor, like his fiction. One of the reasons Eddie had difficulty getting down to write when he was on the streets is because he was too busy living the fast life. This time he received an indeterminate sentence of 6 months-to-14 years and did 7 straight before being released on parole in the early '70s.

He was 35. He'd had enough of prison life, proved to himself he could survive the worst they had to offer. He wanted to go straight, wanted more of the life he had only glimpsed during his first parole. Before his release he wrote over two hundred letters and sent them out in hopes of securing a legitimate job. No one responded.

THE MAKING OF THE BEAST

Alex Hammond, the child protagonist of Bunker's third novel, *Little Boy Blue*, has just been locked up in the isolation unit at Juvenile Hall for fighting with his only friend until then, a mulatto kid named Chester. He's put in a bare cell with a stripped mattress on the floor and told he'll be given a blanket later. Chester is across the hall.

"Say, Mister," Alex said. "Can I get this window closed? It's cold in here."

"I haven't got the key."

"Well, don't forget the blanket."

"Don't worry."

"I need one too," Chester added, as his cell door was closed and locked.

"I said don't worry," the man said irritably. "This ain't a hotel."

The man slammed and locked the door; the click of the lock sounded emphatic.

"Five-ass motherfucker," Chester said, the salty words incongruous in his piping child's voice. "Ah best get me some blankets or ain't nobody sleepin' in this buildin' tonight. What you bet?" His bravado sounded thin.

The slamming door had been like a slap, and Alex also seethed. The blankets were the focus of a wider indignation. It was slowly being etched into his young mind that those with authority didn't care about right and wrong, good and evil—only about subservience.

From somewhere in the city's night beyond the wall came the sound of a siren rising and falling, a lament for human misery. From somewhere else came a terse screech of brakes followed by the bleat of an automobile horn, reflecting the driver's anguish. The sounds were sharp in the stillness, carried on the crystalline night air. Alex hooked his fingers on the wire mesh and stared out at the grounds of Juvenile Hall. The glare of the floodlights—not merely bright but other-worldly—bleached out

colors so that the trees and bushes were in stark silhouette, casting impenetrable black shadows, a surreal landscape. Inwardly Alex felt quiet, cleansed, as if the fight had sweated out angers and drained away bad things that he'd felt vaguely without realizing them. His father's death already seemed to have happened long ago, the heavy pain slowly melting. Clem had been the most important person in his life, and yet Alex had been conditioned to live without a father. Seldom had he seen Clem more than a couple of hours a week, and even then a barrier had existed between them, so they talked little. It wasn't as if something fundamental to his daily existence had been taken. His anguish was less for a lost reality than for a lost hope. Clem had been his one chance to get away from this, and now Alex had no idea what his future would be. Right now things were unraveling too quickly to do more than deal with the moment, but whenever he had a premonition of his tomorrows, it was bleak. He wasn't going home, no matter what; home had no place, even in a dream. An eleven-year-old could see that much.

Bunker's autobiographical novel of growing up state-raised in California was the first book the prisoner writer would compose as a free man. Like Bunker, Alex Hammond is cast adrift in a harsh, loveless world at age four when his parents divorced.

"My mother was a dancer," Eddie said when I asked him about his childhood. "She danced as a chorus girl in the Busby Berkely movies, and would go flying down to Rio, that kind of shit. My father was a grip and a stagehand with the legitimate theater. Then they divorced and I went from being a pampered only child right into foster homes. A war zone."

He remembered being in a courtroom but nothing about what happened. Then his mother was gone, never seen again, never mentioned. After that began the foster homes and military schools. He couldn't even remember the first one, except that he'd been caught trying to run away on a rainy Sunday morning. His memory images grew clearer concerning later places; he remembered other runaways, one lasting six days, and fights and temper tantrums. He'd been to so many different places because each one threw him out.

At first his rebellion had been blind, a reflex response to pain—the pain of loneliness and no love, though he had no names for these things, not even now. Something in him went out of killer

when he confronted authority, and he was prone to violent tantrums on slight provocation. Favored boys, especially in military school, looked down on him and provoked the rages, which brought punishment that caused him to run away. One by one the boy's homes and military schools told his father that the boy would have to go. Some people thought he was epileptic or psychotic, but an electroencephalogram proved negative, and a psychiatrist doing volunteer work for the Community Chest found him normal. Whenever he was thrown out of a place, he got to stay in his father's furnished room for a few days or a week, sleeping on a foldup cot. He was happy during these interludes. Rebellion and chaos served a purpose—they got him away from torment. The time between arrival and explosion got shorter and shorter.

Little Boy Blue is in many ways Bunker's best book. The prose is understated, proud and poignant in its lack of hyperbole in describing the pain and emotional trauma of a little boy who, like all of us, merely wants to love and be loved. And it is his most accessible novel. Just about anyone can sympathize with a kid who gets in trouble because he misses his dad and won't stand for being threatened or picked on by other kids and beaten by reform school guards. By the time that kid matures into a Max Dembo or an Earl Copen, however, he is too real and scary for the typical American best-seller buyer.

Perhaps this accounts for why Bunker's novels have not received the wide readership they deserve. He is a cult writer, having found his niche with the reader who wants the truest and edgiest of hard-boiled crime fiction. Bunker is unable to compromise his craft to write novels that are more commercially acceptable. "I tried to write some kind of sexy potboiler, but I couldn't do it," Eddie said when I asked him why he felt his books are not well-known in this country. "After *Little Boy Blue* came out and didn't do too well, I said I'll try to write it commercial, but I couldn't do it. It came out shit. Garbage. I didn't have it in me."

The fact that Bunker's brilliant and still timely novels have been allowed to go out of print also has to do with poor marketing. If a novelist's editor and publisher don't get behind the author's work, promote it and nurture the writer through several books while growing the readership through aggressive marketing, the books will die on the shelf. But big corporate-

owned publishing houses spend a fortune promoting and marketing books that don't need it. Viking, for instance, Bunker's publisher for *Little Boy Blue*, is now pushing Stephen King. Yet they won't put out money on an unknown with obvious talent.

Bunker's dialogue is as real and beautifully rendered as the best street blues. There is less plot to *Little Boy Blue* and even more attention to emotional truth. Alex Hammond goes from Juvenile Hall to the state hospital at Camarillo for a ninety-day observation period. There, the young white boy is introduced to a couple of black hustlers, First Choice Floyd and his partner, Red Barzo, who instruct him in the finer points of becoming a career criminal.

"Boy," Red said when he was ready to go, "ain' no doubt you headin' dead for San Quentin, 'cause you got the devil in you. Ain' no stoppin' it, so it's good you fuckin' with me 'n Floyd 'n gettin' schooled. You gotta decide if you wanna be a pimp, a player, or a gangster."

"What's the difference?"

"One's slick and the other's tough."

"I think I'd like to be a little of both."

The two black men burst out laughing. Alex couldn't help another blush, but his embarrassment was mixed with pleasure.

Later, Red Barzo sees Alex throwing stones at a demented patient who stands in the yard masturbating every day and has upset the kid with lewd gestures.

... the black con man-junky admonished him: "Best freeze on that shit, boy. White folks runnin' this camp will get in your young ass if they catch you teasin' that nutty motherfucker. Ain't no money in it, anyway. You can't go wrong in life, un'erstan', if before you do somepin', un'erstan', you say, 'any money made here?' That ain't no bullshit. That's the best way to look at the fast life, can you dig it?" The frequently interjected question wasn't really a question but a rhetorical pause. Yet the advice was intended seriously, and the sincere tone impressed the content on Alex. He would always remember and quote it, even if he didn't always follow it.

Alex escapes, Alex always escapes, just as Eddie Bunker was always escaping from one joint or another and getting arrested again, usually after a high-speed chase and the resultant beating by the cops. "What they did to Rodney King," Eddie cracks, "that was

just your standard ass-whooping for takin' 'em on a chase." When Alex is arrested again, they take him to Pacific Colony, a California Youth Authority institution and his first reform school. There the cycle is repeated: fights, beatings, the hole—escape. The "code" is thoroughly imprinted in the boy's survival strategies: rats are the scum of the earth; might makes right; strength of character will get you through when all else fails. From Pacific Colony Alex goes to Whittier, and finally to the dreaded Preston School of Industry.

Despite the momentary twinge of fear when he heard about Preston, his mood was jovial. Without being conscious of it, he'd learned to derive pleasure from what was available, and at the moment it was his first ride up the California coast, or at least partly up the coast before turning inland. He didn't probe or try to dissect his unlikely good mood. If asked, he would have replied that it came from getting out of the dirty jail.

I asked Bunker if it had been difficult for him to discipline himself to write once he was out of the can. "No. I'd never done it before when I was out, but it wasn't hard."

"Did you get depressed?"

"Nah. I never got depressed even in the joint."

"He didn't know he was there," Eddie's friend Danny Trejo said. "I'd go to his cell to get him, Eddie would walk out and say, 'Every day is a new adventure.'"

APOTHEOSIS

*Hungry man, reach for the book:
it is a weapon. —Bertolt Brecht*

Try as he might, Eddie Bunker was still not quite ready to give up crime. He had written *No Beast So Fierce*, his essays were gaining him serious attention as a writer, but he still hadn't had enough of life on the edge. He quickly got back into the dope business, this time selling Mexican brown heroin to whores in San Francisco. He also planned and executed the occasional robbery with some of his homeboys from Quentin. He was surviving by his wits but not doing much writing.

"The cops were all over me," Eddie remembered. "I got busted for some dope, made a deal to get the connection, but then, as soon as they let me out, I split, went down to Mexico. We had this beautiful set-up. All you had to do was call a number in San Diego and tell 'em, 'I want a kilo of heroin.'

And they'd tell you where to wire the money in Mexico. They didn't care, man, these people did not care. You could call up and say, 'My name is Harry Anslinger,' and they'd say, 'Do you have the money?' We used answering services. The connection would call back after they got the money and leave a message: 'Your shit's in the bathroom at the train station under the sink.' It was so easy. They changed the law because of this, made it illegal to wire more than ten thousand. What they eventually began doing was flooding the area. Brought down all kinds of local and federal task force heat.

"When I got back in the country, I called the number again in San Diego. It was an answering service, and the guy I was dealing with, the connection, I told him, 'Man, I don't want to call this number,' and he said, 'Look, it's an answering service, and I own half of it. If they go there, I'll find out about it.' They had already been there. The manager was cooperating on her own in this thing. I didn't think of that. I didn't know how they got me—both times—until I got in the courtroom. They put one of those bumper beepers, one of those tracking devices in my car. They were following me, thought I was gonna lead 'em to the load of dope. They thought I was going to do a drug deal, meanwhile I was on my way to do a robbery."

Bunker had decided to augment his stake by sticking up a plum Beverly Hills bank. Unbeknownst to him, he had several cars full of federal agents and a helicopter following him through the streets of Los Angeles. When he made his move, he couldn't understand how the cops got there so fast.

"The chase was on—from Beverly Hills, Orchard Boulevard, all the way to Farmer's Market. It was a long chase. I couldn't lose them. I'm going through shopping centers, hitting them bumps, them speed bumps, flyin', hittin' my head on the fuckin' roof. I'd turn in another block, and there they'd be! I said, 'Man, what the fuck?' So I go down Fairfax again. There's an alley at the end, I swung in, did a John Wayne, hoping they'd keep going. As soon as I get down there, to the parking place behind this small building, I jumped out, ran through the building, and hit the door on the wrong side. I probably would have gotten away, but the door opened in and I hit it straight on. I see this guy, he sees me, this maniac who runs in with a pistol. I said, 'Lemme outta here!' I looked out a window and they were just going by, the agents, all carrying

shotguns. I climbed out the window and ran down the alley, but there were more of 'em waitin' there. I couldn't get away. I ducked back into a doorway. It was a stand-off. One of them comes around the corner with a gun, and another one comes around the corner from the other end. I'm dead, I know it. So I said, 'Woa,' and dropped the gun. I dropped the gun, man. You know, put it down and kind of slid it out with my toe. All my friends said, 'Oh, you punk, you gave the gun up.'

"But I was aware of the possibility of getting out. And I got out. I did an article on the L.A. County jail for the Sunday magazine, called it 'The Human Zoo.' I had a lot of support. This was before Abbott and all those guys fucked up. I had about two hundred letters for the judge. This guy's been rehabilitated, blah, blah. And it happened to be a federal judge that I knew. I fought a state prisoner's *habeas corpus*, conducted a nine-day evidentiary hearing once in front of this judge on a 2255. So he knew me from that thing. Four or five years later I'm back on this bank robbery. The judge appointed a young public defender to represent me. I remember he told this guy, 'Pay attention. You may learn something from Mr. Bunker.' *No Beast So Fierce* was accepted while I was on trial."

The limousine that Dustin Hoffman sent to pick Eddie Bunker up at Terminal Island a few years later delivered him to an entirely different life. He went to work on the set of *Straight Time*, where he picked up a regular pay check of \$750 every Wednesday and was introduced to a whole new kind of action—making movies. I remember when I was getting ready to leave prison after eight years I used to worry about what I could do that would give me the same rush I got from smuggling marijuana. When I was hired to work on a documentary about Mike Tyson, I knew I'd found the answer.

Danny Trejo knew it too, the first time he heard a director say: *Action!* Trejo had been out of prison for nearly a decade and was working as a drug counselor when he got a call from a coke addict who said he was afraid he was going to relapse. When he went to see the guy at his job, Danny found himself on the set of *Runaway Train*. There he ran into Eddie Bunker, who quickly got his old prison pal a job on the movie. Trejo, a welterweight boxing champ at San Quentin, was hired to coach Eric Roberts in the fight scenes. But as soon as Russian director Andrei Konchalovsky got a look at Danny's mug, he wanted the ex-con in

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Illustration by Virgil Barfield

After serious consideration into the why's and wherefore's of prisoners being scratched, cut and beaten during forced moves, the prison administration took action: The belt buckles definitely had to go.

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the movie. Trejo hasn't stopped working in movies since.

The 1985 film, based on a screenplay by Akira Kurosawa, follows two convicts who escape from a maximum-security prison in Alaska and commandeer a train that is soon out of control. Bunker was hired to work on the dialogue, give it more American convict flavor. He rewrote the entire script and helped craft a film most buffs agree is a first rate prison escape/action-adventure movie that transcends the genre to become a symbolic, multi-dimensional drama about survival and character.

Bunker also acted in the movie and coached Jon Voight in his magnificent rendition of a convict who is so feared as an escape risk—and so respected by the other cons as the toughest man in a rough joint—that the warden, in an effort to break the convict's will, has had him welded into his cell in the hole for three years until forced by a court order to release him to general population. The early prison scenes, scripted by Bunker and in which he plays an older Earl Copen character right down to the shaved head, are some of the most realistic Hollywood has ever produced in its long romance with

the penitentiary setting. Bunker also wrote all the dialogue between the two convicts on the train, a fine exposition of the convict code: *never give up*, as stated and embodied by the Voight character. From the first frame to the last, *Runaway Train* is spellbinding, as intense, gripping and authentic as Bunker's fiction. Bunker played Mr. Blue in Quentin Tarantino's *Reservoir Dogs*, and when we met he was back in Hollywood yet again working on another movie.

Bunker's life has come full circle. For most of the twenty years since his release from prison, Eddie has been married to the woman who was his counselor in the half-way house. He and his wife, Jennifer, now have a little boy of their own, 17-month-old Brendan Bunker. Bunker works hard, writes every day. "I wish I'd worked as hard when I was in the joint," he told me. "I'd have a lot more done."

In the preface to the French and Black Lizard editions of *No Beast So Fierce* the novelist William Styron wrote, "Edward Bunker is one of a small handful of American writers who have created authentic literature out of their experiences as criminals and prisoners . . . whose work possess- es integrity, craftsmanship, and moral

passion in sufficient measure to claim our serious attention." H. Bruce Franklin called *No Beast So Fierce*, "one of the finest achievements of prison literature, and, indeed, of that much larger body of literature about criminals."

Bunker's new novel, *Men Who Prey*, has the precision plotting and hard core realism down cold. A chilling, remorseless tale of ex-cons on a crime spree, the story never falters, never gives an inch. The characters are beyond the pale of moral compunction, the kind of men our animal factories produce.

Eddie Bunker is not just a great convict writer. His adherence to the canon that distinguishes the best literature—devotion to truth—places Bunker firmly among the pantheon of great writers, including Melville and Jack London, whose artistic conscience was galvanized by the prison experience. In these times, when prison and crime have become the most politically charged domestic issues, Bunker's work is all the more relevant, all the more important. America fails to recognize this most eloquent and inspired voice at its own peril.



Hollywood Prowler

(continued from page 51)

went out, passing through the living room to the hallway door.

As I went back to bed, the hint of early dawn was visible on the eastern horizon. I slept the easy sleep of vigorous youth and clear conscience.

It was early afternoon when I woke up, made a cup of coffee and retrieved the *Herald-Express* from the front porch. Back in the kitchen, I made a piece of raisin bread toast and coated it with butter and peanut butter. Then I opened the newspaper.

The banner headlines read: PROWLER'S FINGERPRINTS FOUND.

Beneath the headlines was a photo of the wide-bladed butcher knife I'd left on the counter top. The headlined fingerprints were mine. Aeeee! Whaaaao!

The story text ran: Actress-model Yvonne Renee Dillon, 29, the latest victim of the Hollywood "Prowler," told Police that she was attacked in her Hollywood apartment, sometime after midnight, by a knife wielding intruder. And so forth.

I was a twenty-three year old ex-convict, out of San Quentin less than a year. They might not look any farther than me. I had to get away from here to think it over.

Ten minutes later, I was in my Jag roadster, heading west on Olympic Boulevard toward the Pacific Coast Highway, the route to Northern California.

As I rolled along the coast, I thought that it seemed like something from a James M. Cain novel. I also realized that it might take a while for the police to identify the fingerprints. In order to send them through the mass of fingerprint records, they needed ten fingers. Otherwise they had to do it laboriously by hand, pulling out all known rapists, or peeping toms, or whatever. Pretty quick they would look at recent white parolees in the area. In some meatball burglary they wouldn't go to that kind of trouble, but this was some sucker raping and killing white folks in their beds. Whewee, that sure got top attention. They'd be checking the files day and night under that kind of pressure. In a very short time they would know the fingerprints on the butcher knife belonged to Eddie Bunker.

From an Atlantic-Richfield gas station in Santa Barbara, I telephoned Louise Fazenda Wallis, star comedienne of silent film, wife of movie mogul Hal B. Wallis, and my personal fairy godmother.

It was a hilarious conversation in a way. I think she thought I must be guilty—when I told her about my fingerprints—and she wanted me to turn myself in right away. She promised to stand by me. She would get the money to hire Jerry Geisler, then the reigning champion of criminal law, heir of Earl Rogers, who defended Clarence Darrow. Geisler represented Errol Flynn and Chaplin and others. He was the man they wanted when the shit got deep. Me, too.

But I wasn't going to give myself up. That was against my principles, guilty or innocent.

At twilight, I stopped at a steakhouse in Pismo Beach. No matter what my troubles at twenty-three, nothing bothered my appetite. When I went to the men's room, I passed a pay telephone and for the first time I thought of calling Flip. That something so obvious should take so long was embarrassing.

With enough change for long distance, I made the call. I don't know what I expected, but certainly not her first words: "It's your dime!"

"It's me," I said.

"Eddie! Oh Wow! Why'd you take so long to call?"

"No, no you tell me what the fuck happened. Am I gonna go to the gas chamber on some bullshit?"

Flip thought it was funny. She burst into braying, whorish laughter. "Tee, hee, bitch," I said—but despite myself I had to smile, the horrible absurdity of the situation did have humor in it. If some convict had told me this tale on the yard at Quentin, I'd have thought it was entertaining bullshit—which is better than boring truth but still bullshit.

"So what happened?" I demanded. "What the fuck made you tell them that story?"

So she told the tale: in the morning, when she and Michael woke up with hangovers and bad tempers, he started slapping her because she was a whore and he was in love with her. Whereupon, to get out from under his abuse she said, "Michael! Michael! I gave myself to save your life." She led him to the broken window from kitchen to fire escape. He found the butcher knife.

"Michael called the cops," she said. "What could I do?"

"You don't know?" It was the classic case of a lie getting its own momentum. "I told them it wasn't you."

"What? Who?"

"The homicide detective, Danny Hernandez. He called a couple hours ago. He wants to talk to you."

"He wants to talk to me—Eddie

Bunker—by name?"

"Uh huh. He said to have you call him. I've got his number here. Lieutenant Hernandez."

"Oh yeah? Well . . . give it to me."

She recited the phone number. It refused to stick in my brain. Too many other thoughts were whizzing through to distract me. I had to borrow a pencil from the bartender. I put the number on a matchbook.

Before making the call, I had a couple of double shots of Jack Daniels. Nerve medicine. When it had me feeling tough again, I called the number and asked for Lieutenant Hernandez. One thing for sure, I wasn't going to talk long enough for the call to be traced.

"Central homicide," said the voice that answered.

"Lieutenant Hernandez."

"I'll see if he's here."

I waited while watching the sweep hand on my wristwatch go halfway around the face. "Hernandez here," said the voice.

"Yvonne Dillon told me to call you."

"Oh yeah, Edward Bunker, that parolee out of San Quentin. You know for a minute you were in a lotta trouble?"

"Oh yeah?"

"Yes indeed. Until I ran a make on Miss Dillon. Her rap sheet has four prostitution arrests, two drug arrests, a conviction for perjury and a drug treatment commitment to Camarillo. We didn't think it was the prowler after that.

"Nevertheless," he continued, "you gotta tell me what the hell happened."

So I told him the truth, or most of it. I neglected to mention the snub-nosed .38. He thought it was funny. The L.A.P.D. had a more humorous attitude back then.

"Do I have anything to worry about?" I asked.

"You're as clean as far as we're concerned."

The L.A.P.D. had a more humorous attitude back then.



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Voice of the Convict (continued from page 7)

to make a deal with HBO for a series of TV documentary films based on special issues of the magazine. The first show, *Prison Life Presents: Prisoners of the War on Drugs*, will air in January. It was shot in several prisons in different parts of the country and gives viewers a real insider's look at this expensive debacle as seen through the eyes of drug war POWs. So for all you cons in the TV room swilling soda and stuffing your faces with junk food while you bitch you can't afford \$19.95 for a magazine subscription, now you can see us on TV.

The mainstream media is fascinated by *Prison Life*. We've been on national evening news debunking the myth of the so-called "resort" prison. *60 Minutes*, *Donahue*, *CNN*, *Canadian Broadcasting* and any number of radio talk shows from coast to coast have had us on to talk about prison issues, to air the convict's point of view on crime and punishment and what is wrong with the system. We consistently argue for radical change in the laws, for abolishing the death penalty and minimum mandatory sentences, for deregulating controlled substances and putting an end to the "snitch" system of justice, for prisoner's rights and for truth in reporting on these subjects.

At the same time we are getting closer to our goal of being a magazine that is conceived and largely created by prisoners and ex-prisoners. Recently I got a letter from one of our imprisoned contributors, Jon Marc Taylor, urging me to attend the Fifth National CURE Convention in Washington, D.C. CURE, (Citizens United for Rehabilitation of Errants) is "a national organization to reduce crime through the reform of the criminal justice system (especially prison reform)." The convention began over Father's

Day weekend, and I would have preferred to stay at home with my family. But I respect Jon, and this is exactly how I envision the magazine working: A prisoner reaches out through us; the prisoner helps to shape our editorial content and direct our advocacy efforts while we in turn empower the prisoner by acting as his or her representative in the outside world.

I went to Washington for the first two days of the convention, Jennifer Wynn was there to cover the last two days, and we will publish a full report on the remarkable four days' events and the dedicated people we met in our next issue. The CURE convention gave me renewed hope. There are a lot of people out here who understand that the net effect of America's crime-control bonanza is that a few profit from the misery of many and it must stop or our society will perish. The people of CURE, like the people at *Prison Life* magazine, are dedicated to trying to bring about change in the system that imprisons you and threatens all of us.

But the people who run this country have got another agenda. Powerful forces are at work to make sure this boom in the crime and punishment business continues. I think back to the early days of the anti-Vietnam war movement and remember how I was called a commie pinko and a coward for refusing to swallow government propaganda and sign up to kill people who wished me no harm but merely wanted to oust a corrupt government in their own land.

Call me whatever you want, but support this magazine. It is your only voice, and it is up to you convicts to prove that you are not the scum those bottomsuckers who feed off this costly civil war want taxpayers to believe you are. For those of you snivelers who are still stuck in the poor exploited me mode, get a life. Better yet, get *Prison Life*.



Just in Case

A Summary of Recent Federal Criminal Cases

by **Peter G. Schmidt**

(Editor's Note: Starting with this issue, *Just in Case* will become a regular feature of *Prison Life*. It is written by Peter G. Schmidt, a former lawyer and an ex-con. *Just in Case* is compiled from Mr. Schmidt's summary of all significant Federal criminal cases published each week in the Federal Reporter and the Federal Supplement. That summary is published under the title "Punch and Jurists" ®, and is available on a subscription basis through *Prison Life* magazine. In addition, Mr. Schmidt is writing a book about the American Criminal Justice System, entitled "We the Sheeple: American Justice Gone Awry" ©. That book will also be available through *Prison Life* this fall.

Boyd v. Wood, 52 F.3d 820 (9th Cir. 1995)

This case is all about the tendency of the courts to tap dance through the muck of their own procedural quagmires in order to rationalize any decision that supports the Government. A Kansas inmate is sent to the State of Washington to serve his sentence, under the authority of the Interstate Corrections Compact. The Washington prisons don't maintain Kansas legal materials in their law libraries. So the inmate sues the Washington prison officials, arguing that under the concept of "access to the courts" they were required to get him the legal materials he needed. In a brilliant display of logic and wisdom, the court says that the inmate sued the wrong parties since Kansas officials—not Washington officials—were required to give him the needed books. The Court also concluded that, because the inmate had no way of effecting service of process on the Kansas officials, the lawsuit should be dismissed with prejudice. It seems to us that when the Washington officials accepted him to serve out his Kansas sentence, they became agents of the Kansas officials—or are we missing something?

United States v. Duke, 50 F.3d 571 (8th Cir. 1995)

This is one of those wonderful cases involving total judicial delirium. A defendant's conviction is affirmed even though the prosecution used deliberately false information about the allegedly impeccable credentials of its chief informant. In his opening statement, the AUSA stated that the Government's informant had "never been arrested, [had] never been convicted of a crime, . . . doesn't use drugs [and] doesn't even drink." Turns out that the informant not only had been arrested a number of times, he also had been convicted. In previous trials he had lied about his criminal record. All that's irrelevant, says this court, because "it is not reasonably likely that the informant's false testimony would have affected the judgment of the jury." Wow, now the judges can even tell what was important in the minds of all twelve members of the jury.

Askew v. Fairman, 880 F.Supp. 557 (N.D.Ill. 1995)

Martin v. Debruyn, 880 F.Supp. 610 (N.D.Ill. 1995)

Here are two prison cases that ought to make you proud to be an American. In *Askew*, the court holds that a pretrial detainee (who is not supposed to be punished before conviction), who had to sleep on a prison floor "infested with mice, roaches and other vermin," didn't have any basis for a civil lawsuit. The good judge rules that while the conditions described were "perhaps unsanitary and uncomfortable," they were not cruel and unusual punishment because they didn't deprive the victim of "the minimal civilized measure of life's necessities." Do you think he should have alleged that the rats had AIDS?

In *Martin*, the court deals with a state prison policy that makes inmates pay for their medical care. In that case, the prisoner had a bad case of ulcers. The prison doctors wrote a prescription saying that Martin must get the medicine "as soon as possible." But Martin didn't have enough money in his commissary account, so he was denied the medication. Sorry, says the Court, you've got no right to free medicine because the prison's list of serious medical ailments didn't happen to include ulcers. And of course, the geniuses who make those lists are always right.

Women Prisoners v. District of Columbia, 877 F.Supp. 634 (D.D.C. 1994)

A sick case that tells a lot about the plight of women in jail. This is a class action brought on behalf of the female prisoners in the District of Columbia, alleging all kinds of violations of their Constitutional rights, including sexual harassment, lack of medical care, absurd living conditions, and enormous disparity in general conditions compared with male prisoners. They win a lot of points, but one particular statement of the court not only defies belief, it shows the false sympathy and ridiculous tokenism shown to women prisoners. The Court sanctimoniously holds that "the manner in which the defendants shackle pregnant women prisoners in the third trimester of pregnancy

and immediately after delivery poses a risk so serious that it violates contemporary standards of decency." Not the *fact* of shackling—just the manner. In other words, if they shackle the women gently, it would probably meet the "contemporary standards of decency."

United States v. Scott, 48 F.3d 1389 (5th Cir. 1995)

A defendant asks for a delay in his trial date on the grounds that his appointed counsel never had a chance to prepare the case for trial. The request for a continuance is denied, but you have to read the concurring opinion by Judge Berrigan to appreciate the lunacy of this decision and to get a picture of a defendant's "right to counsel" in the 5th Circuit. The Court approved the appointment of counsel on April 13, 1993, but that order was not even lodged in the clerk's office until April 22. Counsel agreed to the appointment on April 30, and trial was set for May 24. Unfortunately, the defendant was incarcerated in another jurisdiction, and because he "got lost" in transit (probably with a helpful assist from the BOP's policy of diesel therapy), he didn't even meet with counsel until May 18, six days before trial. The majority refuses to overrule the district court's "discretionary" ruling that no delay was needed on the grounds that counsel had "three and a half weeks or so" of preparation time, and that was "sufficient time" to prepare for a "fairly simple drug case." (We always thought it's kind of hard to prepare a case without meeting the defendant.) But wait, it's not over. The last laugh is that the District Court also refused to approve the payment of *any* fees and expenses to counsel for the work she did on this case, stating that "money was 'tight' and other lawyers would have handled the case" for less. That's called judicial payback to the uppity lawyer for daring to question the Court's omnipotent ruling about how much time is needed to prepare a defense! Ah, sweet justice in Mississippi.

**United States v. Jones,
876 F.Supp. 395 (N.D.N.Y. 1995)**

The death penalty for wire fraud? Leave it to Judge Howard Munson of the Northern District of New York (one of America's meanest judges), and he'll show how

easy it is. Here, defendant "Captain Davy Jones" is indicted for wire fraud. The court admits that Jones is "an obese 76-year-old male who suffers from severe coronary artery disease and diabetes." Jones seeks a continuance on the grounds that he is physically incompetent to stand trial at this time. A court-appointed doctor finds that Jones is at "substantially increased risk of sudden death." Tough shit, says Judge Munson; Jones must stand trial now. After all, it is likely that the "defendant's health will continue to deteriorate" and we can't let him cheat the hangman. Hell, Judge, why even prolong it with a trial? Why not just kill the bastard now and forget the presumption of innocence?

United States v. Beasley, 48 F.3d 262 (7th Cir. 1995)

Here's a case that says it all about the Constitutionally-mandated requirement that a defendant is entitled to an impartial jury. One of the jurors admitted during questioning that (a) her son was a police officer; (b) her brother was a Chief of Police; and (c) her husband was a dispatcher for the State police. When the defendant asked the court to remove her as a juror for cause, the court refused, mostly because the prospective juror said that her connections to law enforcement would not affect her ability to be fair and impartial.

Jackson v. Nicoletti, 875 F.Supp. 1107 (E.D.Pa. 1994)

Want to see how easy it is for a District Court judge to change a long-established Supreme Court rule? Here's a good example. Since *Houston v. Lack*, 487 U.S. 266 (1988), it has been held that a *pro se* prisoner is deemed to have "filed" his court documents at the time he delivers them to "prison authorities." The Court here admits that the *Houston* rule was based on a "palpable distrust of prison officials" and a concern that the prisoner would face huge obstacles if he had to prove that prison officials deliberately delayed sending his documents to the Courts. But don't forget, this is Pennsylvania, where the prison business is probably the largest (and certainly the fastest growing and best paying) industry. To support that industry, Judge Dalzell simply rules that the *Houston* mailbox rule does not apply to *pro se* prisoner complaints; it only applies to limited prisoner appeals. Slimey, and very sick.

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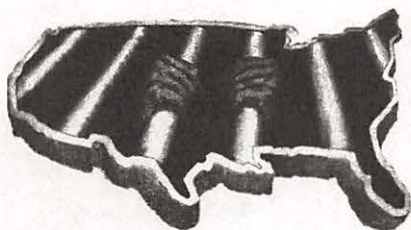
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In-Cell Cooking

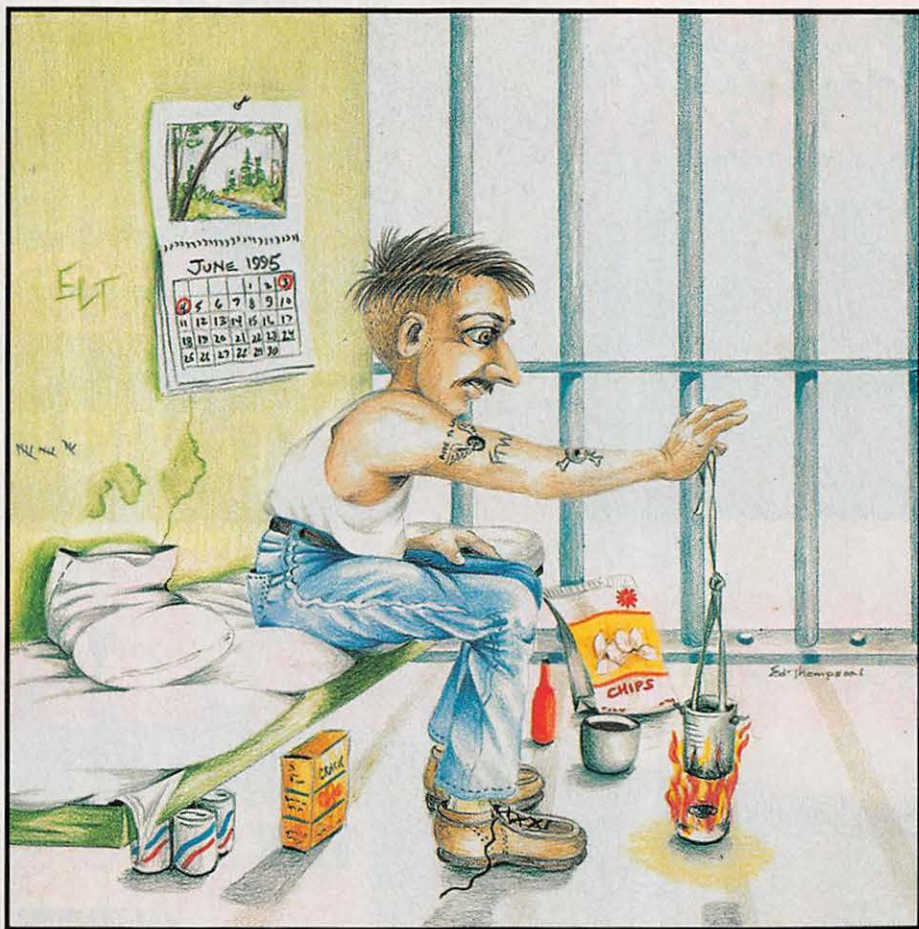


Illustration by Ed "Preacher" Thompson

Chef's Special of the Month: Sharks' Feeding Frenzy

- 2 7-oz. bags white rice
- 1 lb. elbow macaroni
- 2-3 lbs. meat (anything you like: tuna, chicken, beef)
- 1 large onion or 2 small ones
- 2 packets Nacho cheese powder
- 1/2 bottle squeeze cheese (if you want, add the whole thing)

Cook elbows until desired texture. Drain, rinse, put aside. Mix meat and onion with cheese and cook 5 minutes on high in microwave or until cooked on hotpot. Make the two bags of rice. Mix everything together. Cook another 5 to 10 minutes. Serve with salsa or picante sauce if desired. Makes enough to feed 6 to 7 hungry convicts.

Jeff "Shark" Spaeni
F.C.I. Oxford, Wisconsin

For Appetizers

Jail House Jalapeno Cheese Dip

- 1 package Velveeta cheese
- 1/4 package X-sharp or sharp cheese
- 1/2 package cream cheese
- 5 finely-chopped jalapeño peppers
- 1 finely-chopped beef sausage or pepperoni stick
- 12 teaspoons jalapeño juice
- 12 teaspoons water

Melt, mix, cool and chow. Enjoy.

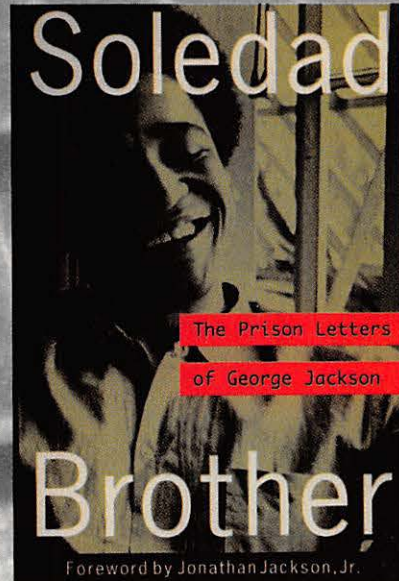
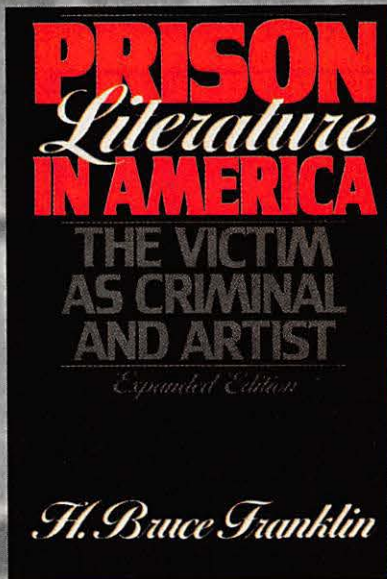
Doug Rose, NHSP

SHU Puff

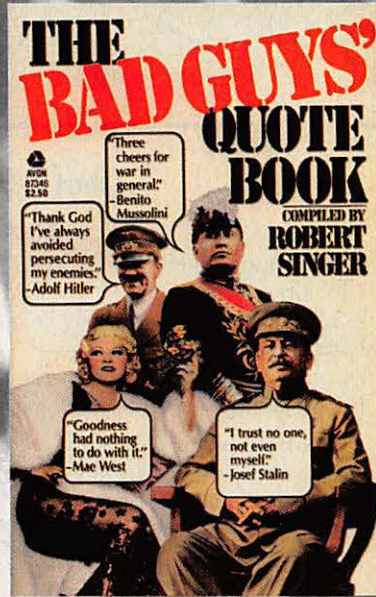
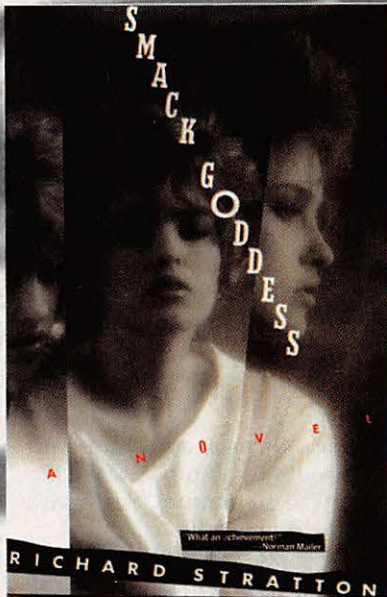
- 1 serving butter
- 1 pk. Kool-Aid (any flavor)
- Bread

Put butter and Kool-Aid in cup and add drops of water. Whip with spoon handle until creamy and grainless. Add more water as needed. Remove the tasteless, cholesterolic meat from your typical mess hall sandwich (flush it down the john). Scrape sog-giness from bread and spread cream mixture over it. Party.

Lofofora "Amazon" Contreras, Pelican Bay SHU, CA



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(continued from page 11)

CANADIAN CONGRATULATES

Although I'm years into a Minnesota life sentence, I was extradited to Canada over two years ago to face old charges. Two years later, I am still sitting in a small town jail wondering if I'll ever go to trial. Twilight zone, Canadian style.

I am honored to have been selected as the first place winner for non-fiction in *Prison Life's* 1994 Art Bind Bars Contest. My essay, "The Prison Toilet," has raised more than a few eyebrows. The most common response I received is, "I will never look at a toilet the same way again." This comes from both citizens and prisoners. There has been the occasional question of "How can human beings live like this?" My natural response to that is, "How can people force other people to live like this?"

Never having read an issue of *Prison Life* before (the publication hadn't made it this far north), I made a blind submission. When I saw the March 1995 issue, I was moved beyond adequate expression. The inspiration was so intense it moved me to tears—of joy, rage and the realization that we finally have a voice. After 17 years of my own dehumanization I am acutely aware of the centuries of suffering that have passed before us. I feel that it is my moral obligation to help this publication succeed in any manner that I can. *Prison Life* is the real deal, the raw deal, the only deal.

I take this opportunity to encourage others to get off their penitentiary soap boxes and to pick up their ink pens and dust off their typewriters. There's no point in having a voice unless we use it. Scream loud and hard, brothers and sisters. Even deaf people can feel vibrations.

I have spent many years spreading the word of trust, honor, common sense and integrity to younger prisoners. I have tried to help them not make the same tragic mistakes with their lives that I have made with mine. Now that I see the opportunity for a national—and even international—format, my nos-

trils are flaring like a bull readying to charge. I can smell it. I can taste it. I love it! Thank you for reminding me that I am alive.

Yours in the struggle.

Gregory J. McMaster
North Bay District Jail, Ontario, Canada

ANY TAKERS?

Bravo on the Prison Resorts story. As long as society is being misled, I, for one, am going to try and make the best of it. So, for those who really believe this place is a "resort," I am willing to rent out my bunk on the "time share" Program. Any takers?

That's what I thought.

David Dwayne Smith
Florida State Prison, Raiford, Florida

MORE CENSORSHIP

It seems that the magazine is not being received here in California anymore for some reason.

In December, I received a memo from the deputy director of corrections stating that the October 1994 issue was being confiscated because of an article that mentioned escape.

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

It is obvious that the C.D.C. has stretched the CA code of regulations, Section #3136 (d), which reads: "Inmates may not receive correspondence which concerns plans to escape or assist in an escape from lawful custody." This rule has been stretched and used as an excuse not only to confiscate what's in one issue but also

to ban the magazine completely.

It should also be noted that as of January, 1995, all sexually explicit books and magazines have been banned here in California.

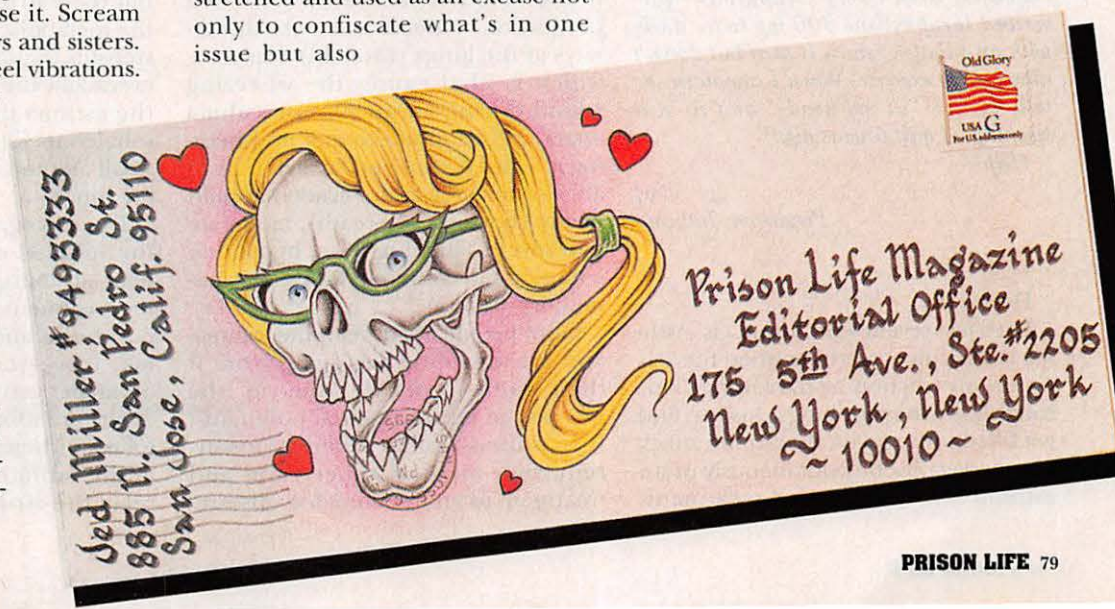
And again, this year the state legislature and C.D.C. are attempting to bring an end to the family visiting program (conjugal visits). Such programs should be nationwide.

As valuable and rehabilitative as reading literature of one's choice and family togetherness are, the prison system and the government are making it perfectly clear that they do not care about what helps make prisoners better equipped for reentry into society. All that matters in the '90s is political correctness and Republican moral majority values.

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

We live in a time when all Americans' rights and liberties are being severely limited. Even the state and U.S. Constitutions are being chipped away at and changed. Such restrictions in prison and in free society are not making America safer or better. They are making Americans angrier. The end result is yet to be seen. Until then, the endless lawsuits, hatred, violence and crime will continue.

Eric Martin
Pelican Bay State Prison



Ask Da Nurses

Illustration by Ed "Preacher" Thompson



ASTHMA ATTACKS & CHRONIC FOOT DISORDERS

Dear Nurses,

I am an asthmatic with allergies to dust and pollen. I stopped having asthma trouble around age 14. About 6 years ago I quit smoking cigarettes; about 2 years ago I stopped smoking marijuana.

Problem: now, at age 30, the asthma is returning, primarily triggered by (even light) exercise. What can I do to improve my ability to exercise without triggering an asthma attack?

I'm asking because the Doc here—who incidentally had four serious malpractice suites on the streets and can now practice nowhere except in a prison where his employers aren't very scrupulous—prescribed theophylline 300 mg twice daily with an inhaler, which is okay but doesn't allow me to exercise. When I complain, he tells me it's "in my head," and to quit smoking. (I quit 6 years ago!)

Help!

Troy
Pendelton, Indiana

Dear Troy:

Let's just review what asthma is. Asthma is difficulty breathing when there is airway obstruction or narrowing. This roughly means your lungs close up and get filled with mucus. An asthma attack may correct itself spontaneously or an asthma attack may need treatment.

The symptoms of asthma are shortness of breath, wheezing, coughing and tightness in the chest.

This means that your airways react abnormally to different things. An asthma attack may be triggered by pollutants (cigarette smoke—good thing you quit), allergens (dust, pollen, animal fur, molds), irritants (gas fumes, paint smells, noxious odors), emotional stress, respiratory infections, changes in temperature, taking aspirin or sulfites (a preservative found in wine and many foods), or exercising. It is believed that substances normally found in the blood stream cause increased production of mucus and make the airways of the lungs (bronchi) constrict, which is what causes the wheezing sound during an attack. An asthma attack can be so severe that no wheezing is heard because no air is moving at all. Asthma attacks are graded as mild (slight shortness of breath), moderate and severe (turning blue, becoming lethargic and confused, with severe respiratory distress).

More people are developing asthma, and more people are dying from it than ever—probably due to the increase in environmental pollutants. It is a disease to be taken seriously, requiring medical supervision and treatment as an inflammatory disease.

An inflammatory disease requires anti-inflammatory drugs. Theophylline is not an anti-inflammatory drug, but the corticosteroids are. These drugs are successful in treating mild to moderate asthma and preventing an attack in the first place. Inhaled corticosteroids are safe and effective and are the first-line medication for moderate and severe asthmatics. Some of the corticosteroids drugs are: beclomethasone (Beclivent, Vanceril), flunisolide (AeroBid), triamcinolone (Aristocort, Kenacort).

Some people are scared of steroids, but these drugs work differently than the metabolic steroids. The metabolic steroids that body builders abuse and eventually die from are different from the asthma medication because the inhaled medications are taken in very small amounts and are sent directly to the lungs.

The next group of drugs used with the inhaled corticosteroids are the beta-adrenergic inhalers—which are the treatment of choice for acute asthma attacks and exercise-induced asthma. Troy—you did not say what kind of inhaler you use—but some of these drugs are albuterol (Proventil, Ventolin), pirbuterol (Maxair), and terbutaline sulfate (Breathaire). These relax the airway muscles, and in this

way are effective, but they can be overused. If you are on one of these medications, and find you have to pump more frequently, this means your asthma is no longer well controlled, and the medication is not working as it should. You need to seek medical help promptly. Theophylline works much like these medications, the only problem is that theophylline can cause many side effects (stomach upset, nausea, restlessness, insomnia), and, because it circulates through the body and does not just go directly to the lungs, patients who are on theophylline need to have blood levels checked.

The last drug we will mention that is commonly and effectively used is cromolyn sodium (Intal). This inhaled drug is very good in preventing an attack because it stops the airway narrowing caused by allergens. It has few side effects. Cromolyn has no value, however, when used during an asthma attack and it must be inhaled four times daily to be helpful.

Asthma inhalers are sometimes misused to enhance the effects of crack cocaine; some crack cocaine smokers believe that the inhaler opens the airway and allows the crack to get deeper into the lungs. Actually, crack can cause sudden tightening of airways (bronchospasm) and an asthma-like attack even in people who have never had asthma. It certainly worsens existing asthma. Let's not forget that smoking crack cocaine allows you to inhale cocaine (a poison or a toxin) and a number of street contaminants (also poisons) heated to several hundred degrees, obviously not too healthy for your lungs. But the damage does not stop there. Crack is absorbed into the blood stream through the lungs. Once in your body, crack makes the blood stickier and causes tiny clots (emboli) that can go anywhere. If the clot lands in the brain, you'll have a stroke; in the heart, a heart attack, in the gut, dead gut.

So Troy, back to your asthma question. Exercise-induced asthma is common. You start running, lifting or shooting baskets, and the attack comes on: wheezing, coughing, chest tightening. These measures can help:

1. Be well hydrated before you begin your exercise. This means drink plenty of water so the mucus in the airways is thin (not sticky), and therefore less likely to clog your lungs and more easily coughed up.
2. Use your inhaler before you

exercise, even if you have been breathing without difficulty up until then. And keep your inhaler handy during your workout.

3. Avoid exercising in very cold places. But if you must, for example, run on a wintery day, wear a mask that covers your mouth, and breath through it so the air you inhale is somewhat warmed.
4. Avoid exercising when you have an upper respiratory infection (URI or a "cold"). And try to prevent colds in the first place by avoiding contact with folks who have colds, getting plenty of rest, eating well, keeping your hands away from your nose and eyes (the way cold viruses can enter your body), keeping your hands clean (viruses love dirty hands), and taking adequate amounts of vitamin C.

Troy, you've got to remember: Ultimately, you, not your doctor, are most responsible for your care. So keep up with the latest info on your specific problem. And for more information, you might contact the American Lung Association at 1-800-586-4872.

Breathe easy man,
Da Nurses

Dear Nurses:

I am writing to procure information, and/or written data, on the various chronic foot-related conditions. Would you send me information on the most common forms of chronic foot disorders? Thank you.

Very truly yours,

*James E.
Amarillo, Texas*

Hello James E.:

Hallux valgus. Flat feet. Ingrown toenails. Hammer toes. Corns. Calluses. Plantar warts. Neurotrophic ulcers. Funny smells. There are plenty of podiatric perils to pick from, Mr. Brown.

Feet take a lot of abuse: stuffed into sweaty sneakers, pounded into the pavement with full body weight for hours, squeezed into stiletto heels (we think some women may be reading this), picked at, blister-popped and then ignored—poor feet! The abuse feet take is a problem especially if you are a diabetic. When you have sugar diabetes you must keep your feet clean and dry, examine them daily for reddened or problem areas, and take good care of all cuts and sores. If you don't do this, eventually it's toot, toot,

tootsie—goodbye. (We aren't kidding. Many diabetics have one or both feet and or legs amputated.)

So, Mr. James E., since you didn't pick the problem (or, hopefully, your feet) we will pick one of the most common problems (and if we haven't answered your question please feel free to write us again)—Tinea pedis, which is better known as athlete's foot. This troublesome condition is caused by fungus. Fungi (plural) like to live in dark, wet, warm areas. So the spaces between your toes make a perfect habitat, especially during these warm summer months. What does Tinea pedis look like? Like this: red, scaly, skin-cracked, skin-peeling patches, sometimes with thickened toe-nails if the fungus spreads to the nail. Prevent this problem by:

1. Wearing rubber thongs in the shower, if you can get them, or try to use a shower with a clean floor and no stagnant pools of water;
2. Keeping your feet clean and dry, washing them daily with soap and water and drying well between each toe;
3. Changing your socks every day; wearing clean white cotton socks is best;
4. Selecting shoes that allow perspiration to escape: leather, canvas, sandals. Avoid plastic or vinyl shoes.

And if athlete's foot does develop:

1. Do all the above
2. Use an antifungal powder or cream specially formulated to kill this type of fungus, such as clotrimazole (Lotrimin, Mycelex), tolnaftate (Tinactin), or nystatin (Mycostatin). This medicine can take a few weeks to work and in some cases stronger oral medication may be needed.

Stay footloose and fancy free,
Da Nurses

Da Nurses are both Registered Nurses and Certified Nurse Practitioners. We caution that information in this column is offered as general advice only and we recommend that anyone with health problems seek professional medical care. Although problems presented here may bear similarity to yours, each requires personal and individual attention. We welcome your letters, questions, and comments. Thank you for Asking Da Nurses.

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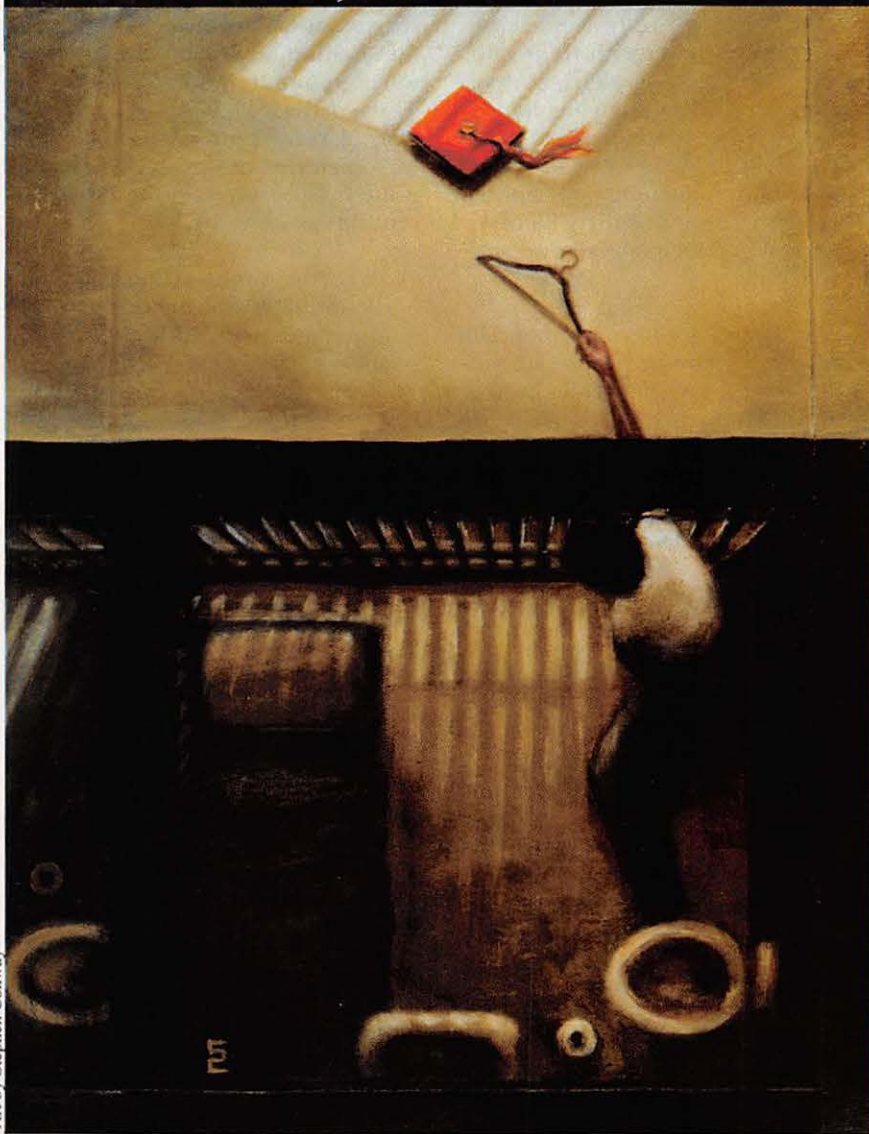
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Art by Stephen Conway



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Authors seeking stories on Solitary Confinement: mental & physical effects, conditions, treatment, coping methods. Write to: Mad Zone, 86-33 89th St., Woodhaven, NY 11421.

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.

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.

OTHER STUFF

For God So Loved The World That He Gave His Only Begotten Son That Whosoever Believeth In Him Shall Not Perish But Have Everlasting Life. John 3:16. Jesus Loves You.

What's there to look at once your head's outta your ass? Try the Sky! That's right—the Sky. The sky is the "daily bread of the eyes." Most of us have yet to get even a crumb. Don't blame the sky. It's one of the few things they can't take away from you. But you take it away from yourself when you fail to look at the sky. To help you *really* see the sky, order the Cloud Chart. Just \$8.95 ppd. Comes rolled in a tube—the mailroom will be surprised to learn it's not a pipe bomb. Cloud Chart, Dept. PL, 54 Webb St., P.O.Box 191, Lexington, MA 02173.

CLASSIFIED RATES

\$75 for 35 words.
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Send to:

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4200 Westheimer, Suite 160
Houston, TX 77027-4426
Call 1-800-207-2659
or (713) 840-7801

Resources

by Alex Friedmann, Resource Editor,
SCGC, 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.

SUPPORT AGENCIES—NATIONAL:

- American Friends Service Committee, 1501 Cherry Street, Philadelphia, PA 19102 (215/241-7130): A Quaker organization that works for peace and equality. Their criminal justice branch can provide literature on a variety of prison issues. There are six regional AFSC offices in the U.S.: CA, MI, NJ, MA, OH and NY.
- John Howard Association, 67 E. Madison #1416, Chicago, IL 60603 (312/263-1901): This organization is mostly involved with prison reform and criminal justice issues in Illinois, but they can provide materials of interest to all prisoners. There is a separate JHA branch in Canada.
- National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), Criminal Justice Prison Program, 4805 Mount Hope Drive, Baltimore, MD 21215-3297 (410/358-8900): Offers referrals and advisory services for prisoners who want to break the cycle of recidivism—especially among minorities. These projects operate through regional offices and are not available in every area. Write for local contact addresses.
- Offender Aid and Restoration (OAR), 301 Park Drive, Severna Park, MD 21146 (410/647-3806): Provides post-release assistance for prisoners in IA, MD, NJ, PA and VA, through 12 local offices.

ADVOCACY AGENCIES—NATIONAL

- CURE, P.O. Box 2310, National Capital 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.
- Families Against Mandatory Minimums (FAMM), 1001 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, #200, Washington, DC 20004 (202/457-5790): Works for the repeal of federal mandatory minimum sentencing laws.
- Justice Watch, 932 Dayton Street, Cincinnati, OH 45214 (513/241-0490): Works to eliminate classism and racism from prisons.

PUBLICATIONS & MAGAZINES

- Fortune News, ATTN: Inmate Subscriptions, 39 West 19th Street, New York, NY 10011 (212/206-7070): A publication of Fortune Society.
- Inside Journal, c/o Prison Fellowship, P.O. Box 16429, Washington, DC 20041-6429 (703/478-0100): A publication of Prison Fellowship.
- Outlook on Justice, AFSC, 2161 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA 02140 (617/661-6130): A newsletter of the American Friends Service Committee.
- Prison Life Magazine, 505 8th Avenue, New York, NY 10018 (800/207-2659): A national magazine by and for prisoners (\$19.95/year).

BOOKS AND READING PROJECTS.

- Books for Prisoners, c/o Left Bank Bookstore, 92 Pike St., Box A, Seattle, WA 98101: This volunteer program provides up to three books at a time.
- Books Through Bars Program, New Society Publishers, 4527 Springfield Ave, Philadelphia, PA 19143: Provides free books for prisoners.
- Prison Book Program, Redbook Store, 92 Green Street, Jamaica Plain, MA 02130: No books can be sent to prisoners in KS, NE, IA, MI, OR or CA.
- Prison Library Project, 976 W. Foothill Blvd #128, Claremont, CA 91711.
- Prisoner Literature Project, c/o Bound Together Books, 1369 Haight Street, San Francisco, CA 94117: Free books for prisoners.
- Prison Reading Project, Paz Press, P.O. Box 3146, Fayetteville, AR 72702: Free books for women prisoners.

PAROLE / PRERELEASE 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."

OTHER—PRISON AIDS PROJECTS:

- American Civil Liberties Union, 1616 P Street NW, Washington, DC 20036 (202/234-4830): Operates an "AIDS in Prison" information project.
- Correctional Association AIDS in Prison Project, 135 E. 15th Street, New York, NY 10003 (212/674-0800): Offers resource information concerning AIDS in prison, especially for inmates in New York.
- HIV Prison Project, NYC Commission on Human Rights, 40 Rector St., New York, NY 10006 (212/233-5560).
- National Prison Hospice Association, P.O. Box 58, Boulder, CO 80306-0058: Helps develop hospice programs for terminally ill prisoners.
- National ACLU Prison Project, AIDS Education Project, 1875 Connecticut Avenue NW 410, Washington, DC 20009 (202/234-4830).
- "One Day at a Time," c/o Richard H. Rhodes #05353-018, U.S.P. Leavenworth, P.O. Box 1000, Leavenworth, KS 66048: An AIDS newsletter for prisoners.
- Prison AIDS Project, Gay Community News, 62 Berkeley Street, Boston, MA 02116 (National AIDS Gay Task Force: 800/221-7044).
- Prison AIDS Resource Center, P.O. Box 2155, Vacaville, CA 95696-2155; or 926 J. Street, #801, Sacramento, CA 95814.
- Prisoners with AIDS/Rights Advocacy Group, P.O. Box 2161, Jonesboro, GA 30327 (404/946-9346): Offers support, educational materials, referrals and political lobbying for prisoners with AIDS/HIV.

OTHER—SPECIAL AGENCIES:

- League for Lesbian and Gay Prisoners, 1202 East Pike St., #1044, Seattle, WA 98122: A project of Gay Community Social Services.
- James Markunas Society, 245 Harriet Street, San Francisco, CA 94103 (415/775-5445). A resource for lesbian, gay and bisexual prisoners.
- The Prison Chess Program, P.O. Box 44419,

Washington, DC 20026 (301/530-4841).

- Native American Inmate Support Project, 8 Dallas Dr., Grantville, PA 17028: A Native American group that supports the introduction of Indian religious ceremonies and programs in prisons.
- Native American Prisoners' Rehabilitation Research Project, 2848 Paddock Lane, Villa Hills, KY 41017: Offers many services for Native American prisoners, including legal and spiritual support, tribal and cultural programs and direct contact with prison administrators.
- Packages from Home, P.O. Box 905, Forestville, CA 95436: Sells mail-order food packages for prisoners, at around \$20/pkg.
- PEN, Writing Program for Prisoners, 568 Broadway, New York, NY 10012 (212/334-1660): Offers a great resource booklet for prison writers.
- Prisoners of Conscience Project, 2120 Lincoln St., Evanston, IL 60201 (708/328-1543): A religious-based agency that works for the release of prisoners of conscience/political prisoners in the United States.
- Prisoner Visitation and Support, 1501 Cherry Street, Philadelphia, PA 19102 (215/241-7117): Provides institutional visits to prisoners in federal and military prisons nationwide.
- Project for Older Prisoners (POPS), c/o Jonathan Turley, Director, The National Law Center, 2000 H Street NW, Washington, DC 20052.
- The Safer Society, Shoreham Depot Road, RR 1, Box 24-B, Orwell, VT 05760-9756 (802/897-7541): Self-help materials for sex offenders.
- Stop Prisoner Rape, P.O. Box 632, Fort Bragg, CA 95437 (707/964-0820); or P.O. Box 2713, Manhattanville Station, New York, NY 10027 (212/663-5562): Provides support for victims of institutional rape.
- The Poetry Wall, Cathedral of St. John, 1047 Amsterdam Avenue, New York, NY 10025: Displays inmate poetry seeking submissions.

PRISONER RESOURCES—FAMILY

There are many organizations that help prisoners with 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, CA 80501 (303/682-0213): Provides the "Directory of Programs Serving Families of Adult Offenders."
- National Resource Center for Family Support Programs, Family Resource Coalition, 200 S. Michigan Ave., #1520, Chicago, IL 60604 (312/341-0900): Provides information about family programs, including prison projects.
- Parent Resource Association, 213 Fernbrook

Avenue, Wyncote, PA 19095 (215/576-7961): Support for child/parenting programs in prison; offers referrals and information to incarcerated parents.

- Prison Family Foundation, P.O. Box 1150, Auburn, AL 36831 (205/821-1150): Works to support family education programs in prison. Sells pre- and post-release books and other publications; works with prison administrations to form institutional family support groups.

PRISONER RESOURCES—LEGAL

There are many agencies that provide legal services for prisoners; most of these organizations dispense information or offer reference material. Note that these agencies do not usually handle personal legal services such as filing appeals, post-convictions or lawsuits—with the exception of for-profit companies (not listed here) that charge large fees.

Federal:

- U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division, Special Litigation Section, Washington, DC 20530 (202/514-6255): Enforces the "Civil Rights of Institutionalized Persons Act" through lawsuits against state or local prison officials who deprive prisoners of their constitutional rights or who practice racial discrimination.
- U.S. Supreme Court, Public Information Office, Washington, DC 20543-0001 (202/479-3211): Can provide up to five Supreme Court decisions per term. Supreme Court slip opinions are available through the Government Printing Office. Contact: The Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402 (202/783-3238).

National:

- ACLU National Prison Project, 1875 Connecticut Ave., NW #410, Washington, DC 20009 (202/234-4830): A branch of the national ACLU that works on prison legal issues. Sells resource directories, criminal justice statistic books and legal aid manuals; also offers a prison newsletter for \$2 per year and sells the "Rights of Prisoners" handbook for \$5. Doesn't handle individual cases; they only litigate large-scale state or national prison reform legal actions.
- Americans for Effective Law Enforcement, 5519 N. Cumberland Ave #1008, Chicago, IL 60656-1498 (312/763-2800): Sells monthly legal update publications, including the "Jail and Prisoner Law Bulletin." Although this bulletin is meant for corrections officials, it includes excellent resource material on the latest prison-related court cases nationwide. Annual costs are \$168; perhaps your law library can subscribe. Other bulletins include the "Liability Reporter" and "Security Legal Update."
- Columbia Human Rights Law Review, 435 West 116th Street, Box B-25, New York, NY 10027 (212/663-8701): Sells the "Jailhouse Lawyer Manual" (JLM) for \$30 a copy (\$13 for prisoners).
- Criminal Procedure Project, 600 New Jersey Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20001: Provides low-cost legal materials and publications.
- Freedom Press, 525K E. Market St., #171, Leesburg, VA 22075 (703/771-4699 or 703/391-8604): A prison project run by paralegals. They offer legal services at a reduced rate, sometimes on monthly payment plans; they also offer photocopying services and pre-release/parole planning.
- Inside/Out Press, P.O. Box 188131, Sacramento, CA 95818: Publishes self-help legal guides. Inside/Out is the mail-order business for the Prisoners' Rights Union, which focuses on California prison issues.
- Lewisburg Prison Project, P.O. Box 128, Lewisburg, PA 17837-0128 (717/523-1104): Sells low-cost literature regarding constitutional rights, due process and other legal issues of interest to prisoners.
- National Lawyers Guild, National Office, 55 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10013-1698 (212/966-5000): A national legal agency that has an interest in criminal justice and jailhouse lawyers.
- Oceana Press, 75 Main Street, Dobbs Ferry, NY 10522 (914/693-8100): Sells prison-related legal books, including "The Prisoner's Self-Help Litigation Manual" (\$20) and "Post-Conviction Remedies" (\$20).
- Prisoner Legal News, P.O. Box 1684, Lake Worth, FL 33460: A 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 CITE-BOOK, which is a collection of positive federal and state case law, both criminal and civil. The CITEBOOK is updated quarterly and costs \$28 (\$112 annually). Although this is fairly expensive, perhaps your law library can subscribe; this company also sells other books regarding business, consumer and legal issues.
- West Publishing Company, 610 Opperman Drive, Saint Paul, MN 55123-1340: Publishes "Corrections and Prisoners Rights in a Nutshell" and "Criminal Procedures in a Nutshell," at \$17 each.

PARALEGAL

CORRESPONDENCE PROGRAMS

- Blackstone School of Law, P.O. Box 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 National Home Study Council.
- The Paralegal Institute, 3602 West Thomas Road #9, Drawer 11408, Phoenix, AZ 85061-1408 (602/272-1855): Offers paralegal courses for fees ranging between \$1290 and \$2750. Monthly payment plans and an Associate degree program available. Accredited by National Home Study Council.

MINISTRIES & BIBLE STUDIES

- Emmanuel Bible Correspondence School, 2570 Asbury Rd, Dubuque, IA 52001 (319/588-8000): Offers free Bible courses for prisoners.
- Good News Mission, 1036 Highland Street, Arlington, VA 22204 (703/979-2200): A Christian organization that provides support, witnessing and spiritual counseling to inmates in 110 prisons across 14 states.
- Guideposts, 39 Seminary Hill Road, Carmel, NY 10512 (914/225-3681): A Christian organization that publishes *Guidepost* magazine. Also sponsors the FIND information network, which provides information referrals: FIND Network, P.O. Box 855, Carmel, NY 10512.
- Hope Aglow Prison Ministries, P.O. Box 3057, Lynchburg, VA 24503: A nationwide religious organization that offers Bible study courses.
- International Prison Ministry, P.O. Box 63, Dallas, TX 75221.
- Liberty Prison Ministries, P.O. Box 8998, Waukegan, IL 60079: This Christian ministry publishes the *Liberator* newsletter.
- Liberty Prison Outreach, 701 Thomas Road, Lynchburg, VA 24514 (804/239-9281): Provides religious assistance to prisoners, mostly in central Virginia; Bible correspondence courses available.
- Prison Fellowship, P.O. Box 17500, Washington, DC 20041 (703/478-0100): A nationwide ministry that sponsors spiritual activities in prison.
- Prison Ministry of Yokefellows International, The Yokefellow Center, P.O. Box 482, Rising Sun, MD 21911 (410/658-2661): a religious organization that offers information and literature to prisoners.
- Set Free Prison Ministries, P.O. Box 5440, Riverside, CA 92517-9961 (909/787-9907): Provides an extensive Bible study course.
- Southern Prison Ministry, 910 Ponce de Leon Ave. NE, Atlanta, GA 30306.
- U.S. Mennonite Central Committee, Office of Criminal Justice, P.O. Box 500, Akron, PA 17501-0500 (717/859-3889): Offers many publications concerning crime and religion—most are free to prisoners.

ISLAMIC ORGANIZATIONS

- Islamic Prison 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 advoca-

cacy 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.
- Iskcon Prison Ministries, 2936 Esplanade Ave., New Orleans, LA 70119.
- Prison Dharma Network, P.O. Box 912, Astor Station, Boston, MA 02123-0912: Offers Buddhist meditation literature.

PRISONER RESOURCES—DEATH PENALTY

- American Civil Liberties Union, Capital Punishment Project, 122 Maryland Avenue NE, Washington, DC 20002 (202/675-2319): 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, 1325 G Street NW, Lower Level B, Washington, DC 20005 (202/347-2411): Works to abolish the death penalty; provides a state-by-state listing of agencies against the death penalty ("The Abolitionist's Directory," \$2).

OBSOLETE PRISONER AGENCIES

The following addresses are no longer current. These agencies have moved, gone out of business or simply did not write back when we contacted them:

- Askofuk National Committee in DE
- Committee to Abolish Slavery in DC
- CVLP Newsletter in AZ
- 5-Star Press in NY
- Inmate Assistance Project in TX
- Legal Advice to Inmate Program in TX
- Legal Associates West in CA
- Liberation of Ex-Offenders through Employ. in TX
- NIJ, U.S. Dept. of Justice in CO
- NTL Law Center in DC
- Prison Families Anonymous in NY
- Prisoners' Aid Society in TN
- Prisoner's Personal Aid in TX
- People with AIDS Prison Project in CO
- Sentencing Project in DC
- Southern Coalition on Prisons and Jails in TN
- Tower Press Publishers in PA
- Women's Prison Survival News in Ontario

Changes, additions and new information should be sent to:
Prison Life Magazine
Resources Department
505 8th Avenue
New York, NY 10018

Pen Pals

SBM, 27, seeks an understanding woman of any race to be a good friend. Enjoys writing, reading and romance novels. 5'10", 185# and looks nice. Will answer all letters. Aaron Collins, #D-30738, P.O. Box 290066, Repressa, CA 95671. FA-6120.

Death Row prisoner seeking correspondence with anyone, anywhere. Gerald W. Bivins, #922004, P.O.Box 41, Michigan City, IN 46360.

Tryin' to survive the war. I'm 5'6", 180#, and a black male looking for a friend to correspond with. Albert McGee, #X70534, 29-7, MS DOC, Parchman, MS 38738.

I'm just a 23-yr-old young brotha from So. Cal. who got caught up out here in the Rocky Mountains. My name and hook up: Angelo Antoine Celestine, #65138, CSP d2-22, P.O.Box 777, Cañon City, CO 81215-0777.

Locked down in Colorado. Long brwn hair, grn eyes, lots of tattoos. Very artistic (see my envelope in Mail Call this month). Would like to hear from some ladies. James W. Green, #63976, CSP d2-21, P.O.Box 777, Cañon City, CO 81215-0777.

SWM, 38, 6', been in jail 4 1/2 yrs. 9 months left. Returning to NM upon release. Will correspond with females from anywhere, preferably AZ or NM. To contact honest, hardworking man doing time on minor drug offense, write James Conn #86602, AZ State Prison-Cameroon Unit, 10000 South Wilmot, Tucson, AZ 85777.

SWM, 40, very upbeat guy. Christian interested in others who are into the Spirit. 13 years to go. Was gay for 31 years—now completely straight for the Lord. Interested in a loving woman or just a pen-pal. B. Neal Francis #265751, WA State Pen, P.O.Box 520, Walla Walla, WA 99362.

SWM, 41, 5'11" 185#, searching for special other half. 3 years left. It's hard being alone—write and let's share some smiles and happiness. Down-to-earth with big heart. I love country music. Seeking the quiet simple things in life. Age, weight, looks unimportant; what's in your heart counts. Will answer anyone. Robert Hansman A-641633-f3-12b, Columbia Corr. Inst. Route 7, PO Box 376, Lake City, FL 32055.

Looking for wild side! In or out of the closet. Your key is safe with me. Looking for homo/bisexual males to correspond with. SWM, 31 yr. old,

green eyes, LT. Brown Hair. Joseph Garino #574904, Eastham, POB 16, Lovelady, TX 75851. No Games.

Free-spirited, 6', 170#, 43, long hair-do, green eyed artist w/ easy-going nature. Would like to hear from intelligent woman, any age, with sense of humor, to share thoughts. Tom Connolly, B38619, P.O Box 99, Pontiac IL 61764.

5'11", 190#, muscular. Attractive inside, white outside. Freedom coming. Seeking writer, publisher, friends and attractive, intelligent female to rebuild life with. Not a game! Don't want money. I love Harleys, children, outdoors, animals, music and down-to-earth, intelligent people. Paul W. Scott, #071615, P.O Box 22, H-E Unit, Death Row, Raiford, FL 32091.

friendship, maybe more. Was in jail 4 years, out late '95. No fakes, phonies or wannabes! Roxey Hulser #53637, Tcf 815 SE Rice Rd. Topeka KS 66607.

Very white single biker, 6'1," 195#. Blue eyes and waist length blonde hair. Into Harleys & driving iron. Seeks easy-on-the-eyes, very much female counterpart for friendship, possibly more. All answers and photos get same. No basket cases please. Mark Brown 20413-086,37910 N. 45th. Ave, Dept.1700, Phoenix AZ 85027-7055.

5'10", 42, WM, 220#, brown hair & eyes. Been in jail 12 1/2 years, w/ 12 1/2 more to go. Would like to correspond with a woman who likes to walk through the rain, ride horses through the woods and take pictures. I paint, read lots of books and play chess. Paul O'Daniel, A-10870, Box 1200, Dixon, IL 61021.

Down for the count, strong & solid WM, 27, brown hair, very blue eyes, 6", 170 #, well built w/ tattoos. Very honest & loyal, no games or bullshit. Seeks female companionship, someone special to grow close to. Jack Blackwell, # 212552, Baraga Max C.F., Rt 1, Box 555, 301 Wadaga Rd., Baraga, MI 49908.

WM, 32, 6'4", 215 #, blk hair, brn eyes. Seeking letters from all ladies (insiders or out). I've been lonely for too long. So come on ladies, lift a bro's spirits. Will answer all. Send letters to: Ray Gabbert, # 151364, 1301 E. 12th Street, Wilmington, DE 19809.



Art by Virgil Barfield, Beaumont, TX

SWM, 28, 5'11", 160#, blond hair, blue eyes. Looking for serious, open-minded, open-hearted woman, 18 to 35. Will trade flicks and answer all. Joe Monetti #n-68109, P.O. Box 400, Vienna, IL 62995.

African American, 29, 6'1", 215#, Leo. I like hip hop, R & B and to hear from any down-to-earth young lady from my race. Maurice Alexander, 59211, C.M.C-east, Rm. 8362, P.O Box 8101, San Luis Obispo, CA 93409-8101.

SWF Beauty, 26, 5'5" long hair & blue eyes. Intelligent, adventurous, righteous and real. Into scooters & bodybuilding. Seeks Indian or white righteous, loyal & real bros. For

SWM, 34 yrs old, 6'0", 160 #, blond hair and blue eyes. Looking for a woman I can love always. I'm a hard worker and will be out Oct '95. William Bobo, # 852202, ISF, 1500 West US 40, Greencastle, IN 46135-9275.

Aryan wolven warrior hunts vixen Valkyrie freethinker. Only the strong need apply. Send foto and resume for same of mein. Sage Advisor/Master Debator/Dr. Lust—the honorable Dennis Lee Marsh, P.O.B. 351, Waupunk, Wiskonsinned 53963.

NOTE: Ads are \$10 per issue. Subscribers get one ad free with a paid subscription. Also: All federal and many state prisons prohibit correspondence between prisoners. All such mail will not go through.

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Newport pleasure!



Kings: 17 mg. "tar," 1.2 mg. nicotine av. per cigarette by FTC Method.

SURGEON GENERAL'S WARNING: Smoking Causes Lung Cancer, Heart Disease, Emphysema, And May Complicate Pregnancy.

