

MAN OF HONOR—MOB LAWYER BRUCE CUTLER

PRISON LIFE

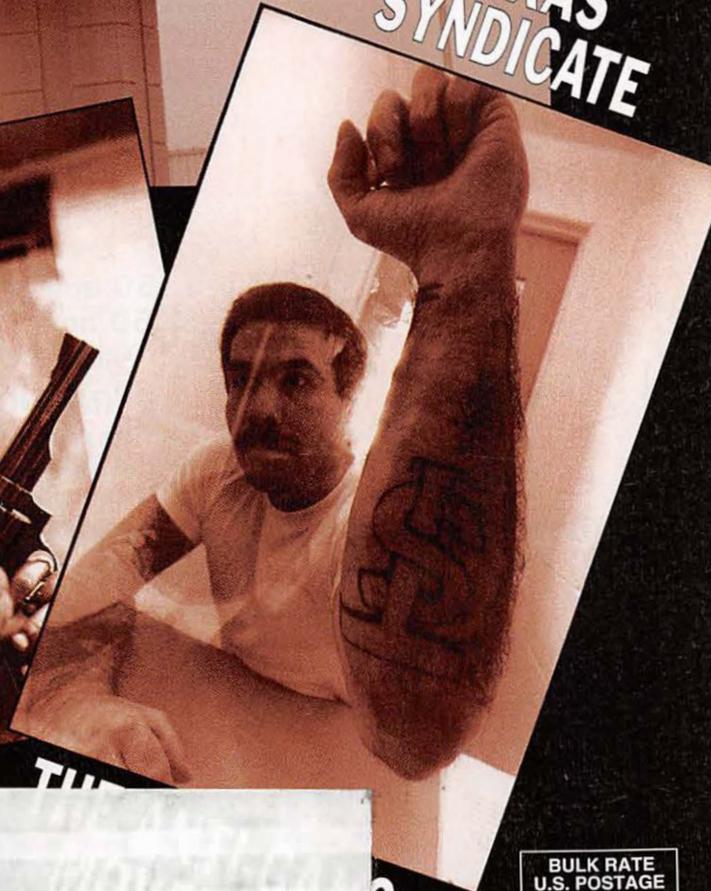
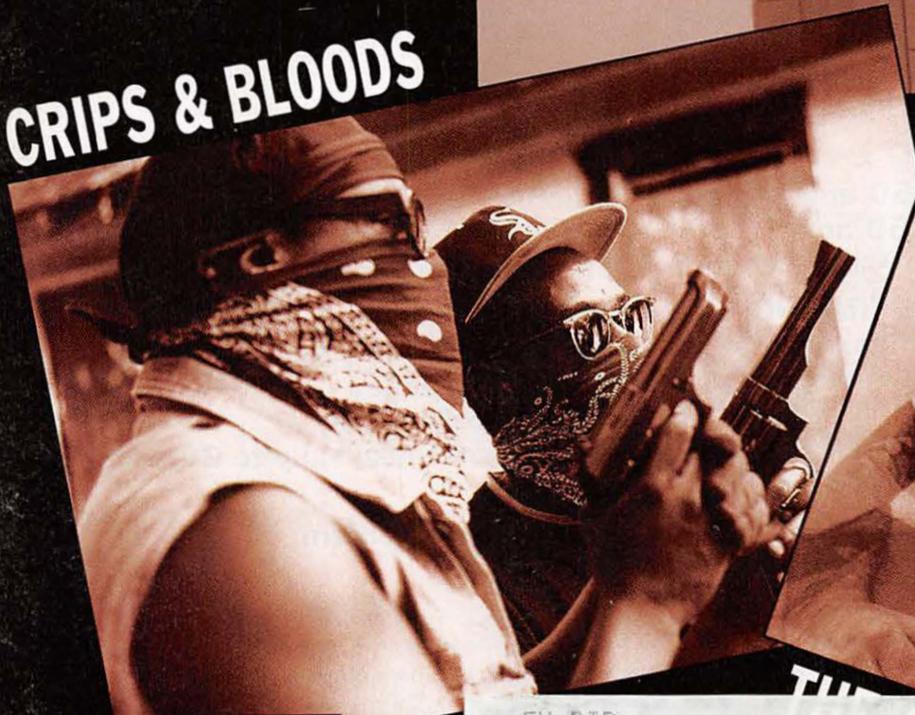
MAY-JUNE 1995

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Announcing PRISON LIFE'S Second Annual Art Behind Bars Contest

PRIZES

1st Prize—\$250 and two subscriptions to *Prison Life*

2nd Prize—\$150 and two subscriptions to *Prison Life*

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

WRITING CATEGORIES

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

Nonfiction: essays or articles, up to 15 pages

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

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

VISUAL ARTS CATEGORIES

Paintings, drawings, collage, sculpture—any medium.

Contest Rules: Entries accepted only from incarcerated contestants. YOU MUST BE IN JAIL OR IN PRISON TO ENTER THIS CONTEST. Manuscripts must be typewritten or legibly handwritten in English. Name, prison ID number, name and address of institution must be on front page of all entries. Contestants may submit only one entry in each category. Entries will not be returned unless accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Only unpublished manuscripts and art will be considered, with the exception of pieces that have appeared in prison publications. All entries become the property of *Prison Life*, and the winners will be published in *Prison Life* magazine. Send entries to Art Behind Bars Contest, *Prison Life* magazine, 505 8th Avenue, New York, NY 10018.
Contest Deadline: October 15, 1995.

PRISONLIFE

May-June 1995

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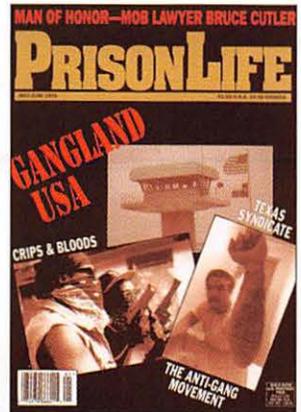
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Learn the shady history of Texas prison gangs and why veteran gang members are quitting.



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Photos by
Marc Levin (Crips)
and Chris Cozzone
(Texas & Delgado)
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Voice of the Convict

CONTRACT ON AMERICA

by **Richard Stratton**
Editor & Publisher

Once upon a time in America the puritanical busybody lobby made booze illegal. The rich, of course, never went without. They had their French wine, their Scotch and Irish whiskey. But the ordinary citizens who wanted a drink had to resort to moonshining and bootlegging. Illegal activity. Crime. Prohibition created the opportunity for outlaws and criminals to amass great fortunes and gave rise to the powerful organized crime syndicates that still rule many of the rackets today.

Crime is a result of circumstances, a response to circumstances. There are some crimes we all recognize as *mala in se*—literally “bad in themselves”—like rape, robbery and cold-blooded murder. But most crimes are *mala in proprio*—bad in circumstances where the powers that be have deemed them bad, like smoking or growing cannabis, like gambling and prostitution, and a constantly growing number of other offenses punishable by long terms of imprisonment or, in some cases, death.

The conditions that create most crime are poverty, racism, ignorance, idleness and oppression of the weak, the poor and the free-thinkers by powerful and intolerant control freaks. At any given time, the vast majority of people in prison are there for committing acts that are crimes only because they offend the ruling powers.

What government has given us most recently, as a result of drug prohibition, is a civil war. Police and government agents, using brutal and underhanded tactics, are battling on many fronts with large and growing segments of society who choose to use and traffic in illegal drugs. At

least 60 percent of the million and a half people in prison in the United States are prisoners of the drug war. It is important to remember that the government declared this war; the lawmakers are responsible for the crime, the violence and bloodshed, and the devastating impact the illegal drug trade and the war on crime have had on the economy.

The Republican cartel that recently wrested majority control of Congress did so by making a pact with influential National Rifle Association lobbyists whose *quid pro quo* was for Newt Gingrich and company to scuttle the ban on assault weapons once they took over the legislature. This makes perfect sense. When you declare war upon large numbers of the populace, the arms business is bound to remain strong.

Now Newt, Inc. trumpets the Republican Contract With America. Don't be fooled by the rhetoric. These guys are front men for the big corporations that make their money building weapons and prisons, and in dangerous technologies that are harmful to individuals and the environment. They sell illusions of defense and security to an intimidated citizenry who only want to work, earn a decent living and be left alone to love their families.

The new gang in power has put a contract on America. They put a hit on the ideals that made this country unique: life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. They set the stage for the bloodiest and most costly domestic war ever to rend and inevitably destroy a great nation. The contract on America can only result in a vicious, evil tailspin into further exacerbation of the conditions that have

resulted in the highest rate of incarceration in the world, and in gang warfare on the streets of our inner cities. Outlaw gangs must and will resort to violence to defend their turf and their freedom against the biggest gang of them all, the government. It is a repeat of alcohol prohibition only much worse because now there are more guns, more kids on the streets with nothing to lose, more angry and alienated prisoners with no hope, no incentives to change except to become angrier and more alienated.

Look around you. What do you see? Men and women doing 20, 30, 40 years or life with no parole for drugs. An end to Pell grants and the discontinuation of educational and counseling programs that at least held out some hope for positive change. Insane new initiatives to take away the weights, take away TVs, ban cigarette smoking, make conditions in American prisons even worse than they already are. And what is the result? More crime and more violence every day. A guard bludgeoned to death at the penitentiary in Atlanta. Cops killing kids in the streets. Kids killing each other. More hate. More desperation.

Does the Pillsbury Dough Boy stand a chance against a hard-assed street kid who doesn't give a damn if he lives or dies?

These guys are not conservatives. They don't want to conserve anything except their wealth and their power. They are wasteful, greedy parasites who cloak the hideous yellow stripe up their spines in moral superiority. Most of the Republicans and their allies from the Christian Right do not want to do away with big government. That's another of their lies.

They do not want to get the government off our backs any more than the Democrats do. They *are* the government. They will continue to vote themselves pay increases and pass stupid laws that harm society because they represent special interests that profit off our fear and misery.

The Republicans want a strong, vengeful government that has the power to kill and imprison anyone who does not live according to their phony puritanical precepts. They merely want to replace the wasteful welfare state with the even more expensive and wasteful imprisonment and execution state. They don't believe in live and let live. They are an organized gang of rich, tight-assed, elitist, paranoid, violence-and war-loving totalitarians who want everyone to live as they see fit.

Since when is it conservative to waste billions of dollars building prisons to warehouse people who could otherwise be working and contributing to society? And how can it be conservative to insist on telling others what they can and cannot do with their own bodies in the privacy of their own homes? These are not conservative positions. How can you be conservative and want to destroy life? You cannot be conservative and be for the death penalty. Giving the ultimate power of life and death to the government flies in the face of the truly conservative position of diminishing the powers of government over the individual.

To be conservative means that you want to preserve and protect the traditional values that our founding fathers recognized as essential to the American vision: life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. You cannot be conservative and be for war, death, mass imprisonment and the perpetuation of fear and misery.

Since taking out their contract on America, Newt and the boys have managed to usurp funds the 1994 crime bill earmarked for prevention programs and have them added to the billions already extorted from fearful taxpayers to build more prisons. The Gingrich gang claims to have "restore[d] credibility to the criminal justice system, we have revised the exclusionary rule, which would end legal technicalities that freed many criminals, and we have established an effective death penalty." What bullshit. How many criminals besides Ollie North do you know who were freed because of a legal technicality?

What Gingrich is really saying is that the Republicans have increased the powers of the State by making it possible for police and agents of the government to storm our homes and seize our belongings without a warrant so long as they are acting "in good faith." You don't give the police these kinds of absolute powers over the citizenry and expect that they will act in good faith. Power corrupts. Absolute power corrupts absolutely. A police state run by agents with the power to invade, search and seize our land, our homes and our automobiles, and to execute us for our offenses, is hardly a "renewed and rejuvenated American civilization" as the Republican cartel has promised. It is now an offense punishable by death to be caught with 60,000 pounds of marijuana or 60,000 marijuana plants. This is not a "true civil society" as Gingrich proposes. It is a vicious, destructive totalitarian police state and it will unleash a horrifying backlash.

The other day I was on a TV show debating whether ex-cons should be allowed to hold political office. In February there were five former convicts running for office in Chicago. We talked about Marion Barry. I defended the Mayor and his right to hold office. The government created the circumstances for Barry to commit a bogus "crime" like smoking some vials of crack. They used a former girlfriend to entice him into a hotel room and serve up the rocks. Let's see, you take a guy who's got a problem with cocaine and maybe a problem with womanizing, put him in a hotel room with some rock and a beautiful woman. Wonder what's gonna happen? If that isn't a perfect example of government-created crime, there are many others I can tell you about.

Not only should ex-cons be allowed to run for office, I argued, they should be allowed to vote, they should have all their civil disabilities restored. There are a lot of ex-cons out here working, running companies, holding their families together, contributing to society, living and letting live. And with an incarceration rate of one in every 156 adults in prison, there will be more and more ex-cons hitting the streets every year.

Maybe it takes a convict to recognize a murder contract on America when he sees it. I think ex-cons are eminently suited to run for and hold political office in this country. We've seen what the professional politicians can do; they gave us the cold war, Vietnam and now the Contract on America. Ex-cons have paid for their mistakes. Ex-cons who have turned their lives around are realists who appreciate life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. In prison you are forced to learn to live and let live.

Ex-cons need to organize. We need to get political and show the rest of America why the politicians don't want us voting and running for office—because we know a con job when we see one. We have been sucked into the belly of the beast and seen where this suicidal contract on America will lead: to the American gulag, a nation drenched in blood, surrounded in concertina wire and darkened with the shadows of gun towers.

Ex-cons who want to organize are invited to write to Prison Life editor and publisher, Richard Stratton. We want to network with other ex-prisoners and ex-prisoner groups who support positive change in the criminal justice system.



PRISON LIFE

READERS—WE WANT YOUR FEEDBACK

With five issues under our belt, we're ready to hear what you think about *Prison Life*. Your opinions matter. Your suggestions and ideas are important. Why? Because this is your magazine. *Prison Life* is the only magazine telling you the truth about crime and punishment in America. We are committed to putting out the best publication we can, and we need your feedback to make sure we stay on track.

Take a few minutes to write down your thoughts.

What do you like about the magazine? What don't you like? What were some of your favorite articles? Least favorite? What columns and departments do you read regularly? What should we lose? What should we be doing that we're not? What can we do better? Any important issues we haven't addressed that you think we should? How about the magazine's look and feel? The photos we use? The tone? The quality of the writing? Are the articles too long, too short or just right? Does the occasional use of profanity offend you? Have you learned anything from *Prison Life* that made a difference in your life? Have any of the articles helped you? Made you laugh, cry or get angry? Let us hear from you.

Be sure to tell us whether you're a prisoner, ex-con, family member of a prisoner or a freeworlder with an interest in criminal justice issues. How did you learn about *Prison Life*? Are you a subscriber? If not, why not?

Send your responses to: *Prison Life*, Dept. RF, 175 5th Avenue, Suite 2205, New York, NY 10010. We appreciate the time you took and the money you spent to send us your comments.

PRISON LIFE

May-June 1995

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MISSING A COVER?

If your mag's missing a cover, it's probably because it's been ripped off, i.e. censored, by your institution. The cover is, of course, gang-related and we all know what a touchy subject that can be with the Administration.

But yeah, we went ahead and put gangs on the cover anyway. Call us boneheads, call us risky. Whateva, we've been called worse. We felt it was a topic too important to ignore.

Hell, we figured putting gangs on the cover also increased the likelihood of officials reading the mag they love so much to censor. Then they might not be so harsh with our 'zine. I mean, in this issue, we're basically saying what most corrections officers would like to hear: Who needs gangs?

When we asked you for your insight into gangbanging, we had no idea we'd get the response we did. It took me a good two weeks to find my Mac buried beneath all the letters.

Last month, we featured Part One of our series on gangs. We heard from guys like Lamont Brown, a Gangster Disciple in Wisconsin, and Figalo, an ex-Latin King (who, by the way, has made parole and is planning to move to Puerto Rico to start a program for troubled youth). The overall sentiment received from the Midwest and East Coast—basically Folks & Peoples—was pro-gang. No doubt: Gangs are on the rise.

But when we started reading the responses from Texas, we were surprised. Nearly 90% were in some way negative toward gangs—and these were guys who were still in gangs or who had left them.

Might be a trend. Homeboys—most of 'em older, and, of course, in prison—are getting fed up with their affiliations, as you'll read in this issue (that is, if the D.O.C. or B.O.P. decides to let you have it). Veterans down in Texas are looking at gangs as a thing of the past, as something lacking heart and *carnalismo*.

You'll meet Robert Delgado, once a high-ranking member of the

Texas Syndicate. He's an *ese* who's up against his old organization and all the new ones, as well as the System. Instead of a well-sharpened shank, "Bad Bob" Delgado is armed with Truth—accrued from two decades of Syndicate work. "Gangs lack a purpose these days," Delgado says. "They'll only drag you down."

If you won't take Delgado's word for it, maybe you'll take Mark Fronckiewicz's. He's also a former gang member, once with the Texas Mafia. He'll give you the background of Texas' gang history—which actually started at the turn of the century with the Department of Corrections, no less, starting the first gang.

In this issue, we talk about another kind of gang—the mafia. We feature an interview with mob hero Bruce Cutler, John Gotti's lawyer. He'll talk about why the government (yet, a third kind of gang) is trying to railroad him, threatening him with his own prison sentence.

We've received letters from some of you complaining that *Prison Life* is too macho. (I know you've heard me say it before, but fuckit: *Prison Life* is a magazine for and by prisoners. If you can't take it . . .) When you read "Liberating Prisoners with Kindness," you'll see we have a soft side, too. You'll meet Bo Lozoff—that is, if you haven't already been to one of his workshops or read his book, *We're All Doing Time*.

If the Lozoff's aren't deep enough, maybe Nathaniel Hardy's "Making of a Criminal" will be. This slice of life excerpt tied for 2nd place nonfiction in our Art Behind Bars contest.

We also have several other winners from the contest. "Surrendering of Spirits," by C.W. Pyle, is our fiction selection (dis one's for you muscleheads); we got an excerpt from Precious Bedell's "Pieces," which took first place in drama; we got "Underground Clouds," 2nd place poetry by Pam Golinveaux; and we got two pieces by Jorge Antonio Renaud, who captured both 3rd place poetry and tied for 2nd place in the nonfiction



photo by Carol Kuram

category. There are also several works of art, all honorable mentions from the contest.

We encourage you to keep sending your work, concerns, letters and gripes our way. We're in the process of developing a prisoner network, the likes of which has never been accomplished before in our nation's history. (I always wanted to say something dramatic like that.)

Sure, there are gonna be problems: censorship, retaliation, bad press, you name it. We need you to work with us, as authors, artists, sales reps, advocates and reporters.

We have dozens of people already doing so, prisoners and freeworlders alike. People like Jed Miller (check out the guest editorial, "Striking Out in California," which he wrote and illustrated), Larry Harris (see Block Beat), Anthony Bustillos and Michael Davis (see art in Insider Outlook), Alan Masters (who contributed to January's UNICOR story), Bobby Delgado (the Texas gang story would've been *nada* without him) and Anthony Papa (who's fighting the war on drugs on all fronts). And also our regular correspondents, "Benny" Ventimiglia, Thomas Falater, Jon Marc Taylor, Reginald "CASH" Alexander, King Buck, Larry Fessler, Paul Mulryan, Michael Lee Wood, and anyone else we failed to mention but ran out of room.

In the end, we'll come out on top.

Chris Cozzone
Editorial Executioner

Mail Call



WOMEN AND WIMPS

It was good to see Karen White on the cover of your January issue and featured in the fine article by Kim Wozencraft. My hope is that Ms. Wozencraft will continue to seek out and write about women prisoners. With increased visibility of women in your magazine, perhaps more women prisoners will be encouraged to contribute.

The January issue's Prison Papers department included a review of *Green River Rising* by Tim Willocks. I feel obliged to take issue with the following observation made by the reviewer: "Tim Willocks may have taught him to show a manly bearing, but his publicist must have thought it would sell more books if he looked like a homosexual." Although I can appreciate the point the reviewer is making about image marketing, this comment unfortunately perpetuates a tired old stereotype. Tim Willocks could be as much a homosexual as the bodybuilding Sebastian Ventimiglia featured on page 71 of that issue. (I hope Mr. Ventimiglia is not offended.) There is no "homosexual look." The reviewer need only glance at any of the gay rags available in any major city to see that homosexuals are as heterogeneous as heterosexuals.

Athena Fuera
Salinas, CA

BANNED AGAIN

I am a prisoner at the United States Penitentiary at Lompoc, CA. I am writing to find out why *Prison Life* has stopped being sent to this penitentiary. The last issue we received here was the January '95 issue. I believe the institution has silently banned your magazine from us prisoners after the enlightening article that exposed UNICOR for all of its corrupt activities.

I sincerely hope that the voice of us prisoners has not been silenced. Not many people are willing to give prisoners an opportunity to speak out. *Prison Life* is inspiring. It isn't a magazine filled with stories of prisoners pouting about trivial matters. *Prison Life* proves that we prisoners do have many talents and we can use them in many positive ways.

David Harvey
Lompoc, CA

KUDOS

We've been on lockdown for three days behind a minor "Black Studies Month" riot against white inmates and staff over new draconian gain time rules. Someone shot me a copy of your rag which impressed me. Normally I'm not particularly moved by thug-heart or thug-art as it isn't tastefully presented, but you have shattered that shortfall. Bravo!

Michael Newell
Marion Correctional, Florida

I just received my very first issue of *Prison Life* (March) and I just had to write to say that I thoroughly enjoyed it! It makes me so happy that the cruelties and the real facts about prison life are finally being told. So many people are seriously duped into believing that prisons are nothing more than "country clubs" because the politicians feed that notion to the public to justify the obsessive expansion of punishment that is rampant in this country. I particularly enjoyed and agreed 200% with the article written by Mr. Chapman on "America's Obsession With Punishment".

The whole sentiment in this country right now is to punish and execute more, and I know in my heart that is not the answer to rising crime. It makes me sad to see people who want to inflict pain and hurt on others as the answer to their pain. As I see it, "He who seeks revenge better dig two graves."

Keep up the good work, your magazine is fantastic and I intend to spread the word!

Jan Simmons

YOU BONEHEADS

Stuck in this cesspool that is Pelican Bay is bad enough, but just to add to my aggravation I've stewed about why a magazine run by ex-cons would burn a guy for something so petty as a single issue. Then I received this memorandum from the mailroom saying it's been banned. Then it clicked. You're not thieves. You're just boneheads!

Now I understand about First Amendment rights, but a magazine for cons should at the very least be allowed into the joints. Don't get me wrong. I enjoy your rag. I just wish I could read it.

Jon C. Rubi
Crescent City, CA

BRAVO

I am happy to inform you that I appealed the rejection of *Prison Life*, and won. I have the book in my cell at this moment. Please don't stop my issues from coming.

Billy Blankenship
Airway Heights, Washington

GANGS: GET REAL

I commend you on your March 1995 issue concerning the gang-bangers. Personally, though, I think those cats need a reality check. Gangbanging is for punks. Any man who can't stand on his own and own up to his responsibilities is not a man. They need to stop looking for excuses and people to blame their own shortcomings on. The reality of it is it's time to grow up. It takes a real man to get off his ass and make a life for himself and his family.

In South Carolina prisons it seems like they want to take everything that's positive away from us except the few books that we have because they know that these clown inmates won't even think of picking up a book.

Stop whining and grow up! If you want to fight for something, fight for an education and a right to build a new life. Put down the guns and pick up the pens and pencils. Here at Perry Correctional Institution alone, approximately 50% of about 600 inmates are on a sixth grade reading level or below and can't even comprehend the meaning and purpose behind PLM. The other half is too busy being rats and trying to do the same things that got them here in the first place.

In 1994 alone there were approximately eight to 10 deaths related to Perry. The only reason the numbers stopped rising was because we ran out of months. Wake up and get an education. Education is more than learning Math, Science and Social Studies. It's about learning self discipline and how to improve and rebuild your life without depending on the next man. The government is making us obsolete by providing our wives, mothers and sisters with welfare. They put police sub-stations in the projects

and neighborhoods so that they can feel "protected." All the while the drugs and guns are killing our children.

While all this is going on, so-called "men" are running around in gangs and getting locked up, claiming to be men and trading in their families for a family of punks who still can't fight for themselves. Scoobie G said that he was trying to help his brothers to grow to their full potential. Well, history has proven that there are two kind of potential: the potential to be a success and the potential to destroy each other.

Love is when you want for your brother what you want for yourself. I'm sending out a challenge to PLM. I dare you to check out what's going on in the South Carolina Department of Corrections. Not only will you find that there are many other things for the readers to know, but there are also many people here who have learned to use their potential and unity to the best of their knowledge and abilities. I feel that this mag needs more positive news, even though it's good to know how the other half of this incarcerated world survives.

Don't forget that there are also some success stories behind these walls. You say that this is my magazine too? Then why can't my articles get published in my magazine?

Charles Wakefield
Perry Correctional
Institution

SNAKE, YOU WORM

In the past, I've read PLM cover to cover, but the March issue was getting read haphazardly because I wanted to get right to what Kunstler and Kuby had to say with prisoners' First Amendment rights. After I tackled that, I ran across a review of Body Count's *Born Dead*, by Jimmy "Snake" Tyler of Rikers' Island. By the time I finished, my blood was boiling.

I can see why Tyler got the nickname, "Snake." His claim that "*Born Dead* kicks some serious ass" is his own inability to admit that he needs his own ass kicked! "At first," he claims, "I was sorta pissed off because Body Count was talking about taking out the White Folks." But then he figures it out and starts yappin': "Yeah, Ice, I'm with ya!"

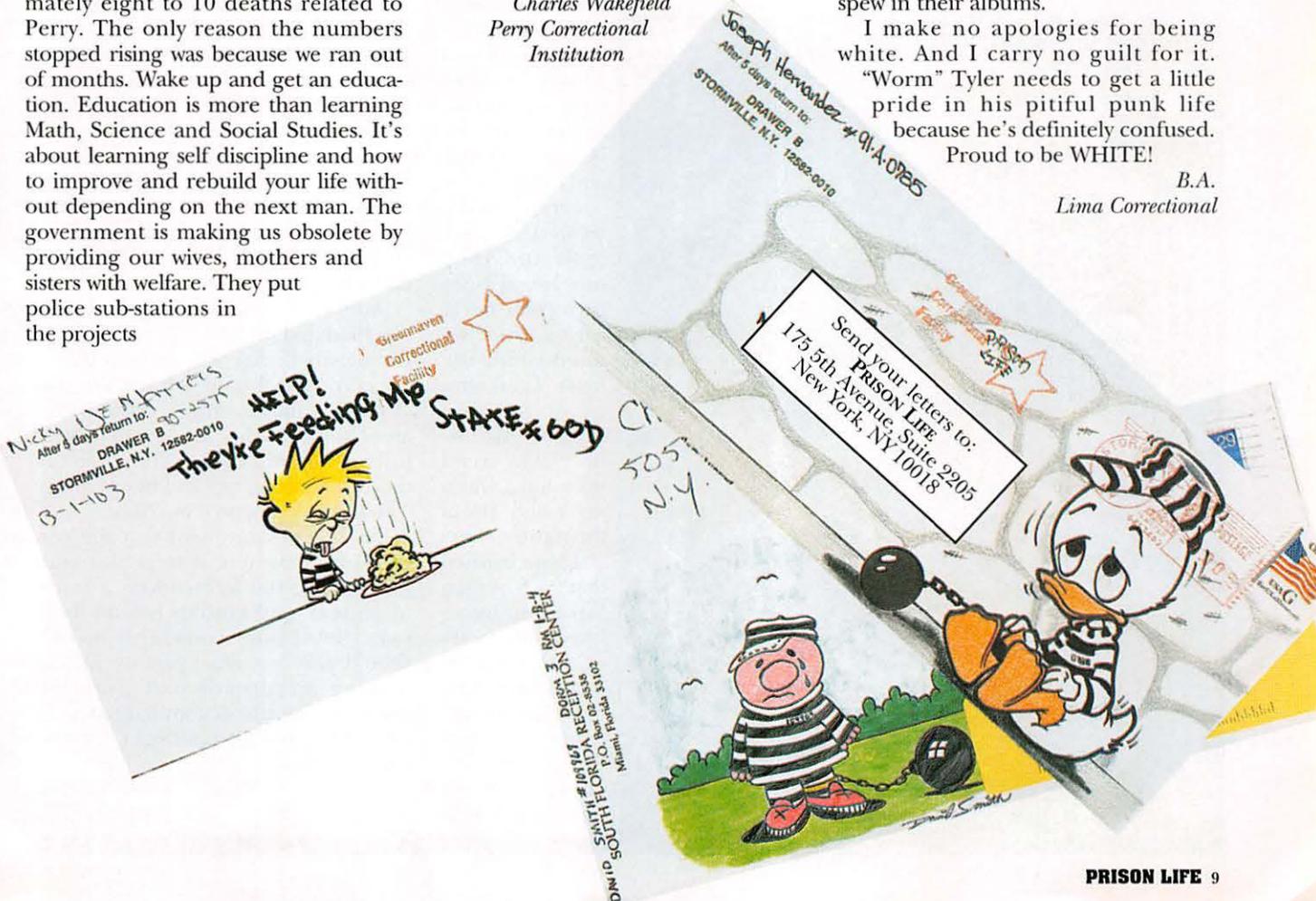
Anytime somebody puts lyrics in a song that advocates killing anybody, and that includes white people, it pisses me off. And the lyrics to "Necessary Evil," about killin' a little white kid because someone thought he called them a "nigga." Let me hip Jimmy "Worm" Tyler to something: Blacks disrespect themselves everyday by calling themselves "nigga," the very word they would want to kill a white kid for. Ice T and Body Count embodies the word "evil" with the racist lyrics they spew in their albums.

I make no apologies for being white. And I carry no guilt for it. "Worm" Tyler needs to get a little pride in his pitiful punk life because he's definitely confused.

Proud to be WHITE!

B.A.

Lima Correctional



INSIDER OUTLOOK

YOU ASK WHY?

I'm serving a 15-year sentence and this is my first time in trouble. At first, my wife told me, "Don't worry, I'll be right here for you." Now things have changed.

In just six months, she realized I wasn't the best husband and that I needed to do some things better. But why wait until I'm in prison to tell me this?

I remember the day when I surrendered myself to the police. She cried for hours. While I was in jail waiting to go to prison, we talked on the phone two or three times a day. She wrote me letters telling me how much she loved me and what kind of things we would do when I got out.

All the men in jail with me, who had been through this before, said she'd leave me before I got out. I told them "no way" for she loved me too much. When I repeated what they'd said, she told me, "No way." She and her mother had spent \$57,995 in just eight months on me just before I came to

jail. Her mother even called me "son." My wife wrote me a letter that said, "I promise to love you forever. I promise to try my best to spoil and make you happy. I promise to be here when you get out."

Well, I guess black and white don't mean a lot if you're in prison. The letters have stopped coming. When I got my case back in court, I tried to call her but the number was not working so I had my mom try getting her mom at work. After about two to three weeks, my mom was told that my wife "won't wait 'til I get out of prison to see if I've changed."

All this time, I wrote five or six letters and she never answered one of them. She won't even tell me the new phone number at home. My little sister went to Texas to see why she wasn't writing me back but she was nowhere to be found.

Finally, my wife called my mother and said that she still loved me but that she was going to wait until I got out to see if prison made me mean. This is

heard a lot by us convicts, by our loved ones. I wonder if they ever ask themselves *why* we become so bitter and mean.

First, we are treated like animals and then our loved ones turn their backs on us when we need them the most. Then after we do get out, they want us back. Why aren't they here when we need them the most?

I have learned that 95% of men locked up lose a loved one, mother, father, sweetheart, sister, brother, kids or the whole family. Why do we become so bitter here in hell with

no support from the outside? We are treated like lowlives.

And that is why we keep coming back over and over.

Steven Smith
Arkansas State Prison

ATTICA: WHO'S TO BLAME?

Attica has been abandoned as a waste land and warehouse for social misfits. The rights and privileges secured after the 1971 Attica riot are gradually slipping away and are being replaced by the former status quo of savage abuse and restriction.

Who's to blame for the restrictions and loss of rights?

We lost the educational release program here at Attica due to sexual harassment complaints against convicts by the student body on campus and the confiscation of drugs attempted to be smuggled into the institution by convicts attending school on campus. The package room privilege of receiving home-cooked goods were taken from us because drugs were frequently being discovered in chicken and turkey butts, baked into cakes or found in Lipton soup bags. Glass objects were transformed into weapons, the metal hot pots were used to heat up cooking oil to disfigure someone's face and metal silverware was stolen in large volumes from the messhall for shanks. Fish tanks were used to conceal shanks beneath the gravel, which resulted in their removal. There used to be a crossover policy here until groups of convicts manipulated this recreational process to extort, stab and snatch chains off the necks of other convicts and escape unnoticed back to their respective yards during the final crossover period.

And what about the preparation of our food and the general conditions of the messhall? Are we again to blame the correctional staff? Is it not the convict who victimizes other convicts in this area? Who is it who prepares the watery juice, Kool-aid and coffee? Or the mushy macaroni, rice and lumpy gravy? These are all prepared by convicts.

There's no argument that the correctional staff here is largely at fault for creating the tremendous amount of pressure and hostility behind these walls. But it is my contention that we should also face what part we play in making an already bad situation worse. It's in the acknowledgment of our errors that we can begin preventing repetition.

Eric V. Reid
Attica C.F.



Art by Anthony Bustillos, Pelican Bay

WISCONCENTRATION CAMPS

Thanks to Gov. Tommy "Lock-'em-up" Thompson, Wisconsin is experiencing the worst prison overcrowding ever. We have "three strikes, you're out," "life means life," "sexual predator laws," longer sentences and all the other hardcore tactics associated with the Republicans. Tension is at an all-time high. In order to outdo his cronies, Thompson has taken away all our free weights. Now he wants to take our TV's away and make us pay the D.O.C. room and board.

His most brilliant move, though, has been Badger State Industries (BSI). BSI is Wisconsin's equivalent of UNICOR. Like UNICOR, BSI forces us to make a wide array of products intended to slash the economic throats of small businesses: mattresses, pillows, towels, etc. Like UNICOR, BSI also sells to nonprofit organizations such as county agencies, hospitals and schools. BSI also employs illegal aliens.

Recently, my boss at BSI told me I should just "do my time, admit I am wrong, and don't appeal my case." All this for the heinous offense of using the law library on a near-daily basis.

But that's okay because the Wisconsin Administrative Code provides for year-end bonuses for all BSI employees—each employee is given two soda tokens at Christmas.

I used to be a long-time dope fiend and a thief. But thanks to BSI, I am now now rehabilitated. If I live until 2014, I should be able to get a high-paying job sewing at a sweat shop.

Thomas Reimann
Green Bay C.I.

CRIMINAL CONDITIONS CONTINUE IN CALI

In December of '94, I was diagnosed with cancer at Pelican Bay. I was put in a cell by myself in the infirmary for two weeks before my transfer to Vacaville.

It's not the treatment I received that disturbs me—it's what I witnessed done to others. Being a born-again Christian, all I could do was pray for the people being hurt.

One guy was brought in from SHU for refusing to come out of his cell. They maced him and dragged him by the hair into the shower while the poor guy just screamed at the top of his lungs. The nurses and doctors and officers, dressed in battle fatigues, just laughed at him while they stripped off all his clothes and strapped him to a bed for almost 20 hours. The guy screamed every hour for help, for

water, to pee. But they ignored or mocked him. I never found out what happened to him because I got transferred to Vacaville.

There, they kept some guys naked at all times and injected them with tranquilizers so they wouldn't know what was happening. They had no beds in their cells and one blanket. The food they ate was liquefied into some nasty goopy-looking stuff. The medical staff looked at them like they were guinea pigs. They showed no feelings, no remorse, no love whatsoever; they were wicked, evil and chaotic. The only way they know how to "calm" a person down is to inflict constant physical and mental pain. Unless you were passing through, you kept your mouth shut.

I witnessed this and other stuff that I would need more time to tell. But all of this is true. Their deeds will not go unpunished because the Almighty God sees all.

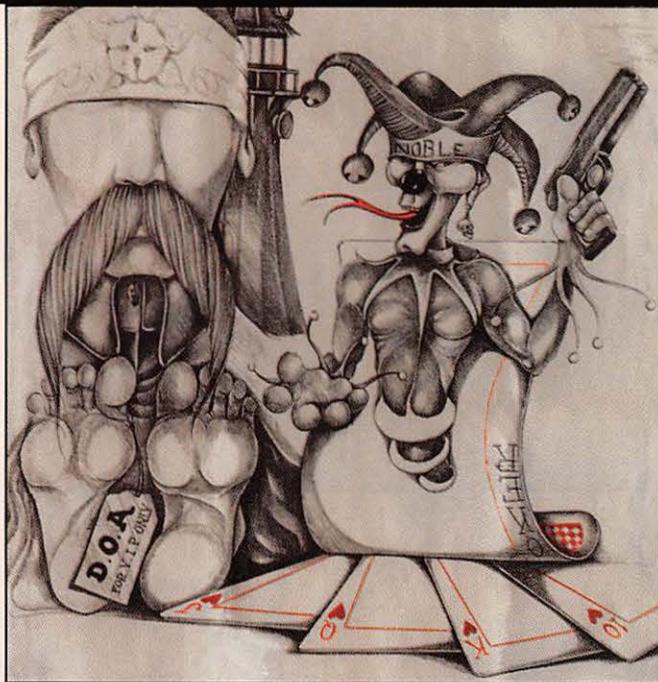
Kermit Cruz
California Medical Facility, Vacaville

SOLIDARITY, SORTA

Solidarity is developing here in Indiana State Prison, especially in the seg units, Death Row and in the D cell house. Dudes are studying and putting all that racial bullshit aside to focus on the real enemy. We—three different groups and some independents here on the Row—have been working on solidarity since 1990. Although we still got a few backward people maintaining the racial bullshit, we have managed to weather some serious changes here.

Overall, folks are waking up, and that's positive. The state just killed one of our comrades and we're on lockdown for a pig getting butchered when five of us (3 whites, 2 Blacks) tried to escape in October from the Row. A lot of changes have taken place in the last few years, but I'll refrain from elaborating. Not only is my mail censored but I'm still looking at criminal charges.

Kevin Conner
Death Row, Indiana State Prison



Art by Michael Davis, Corcoran State Prison, CA.

WAAAAHHHH!

I just want to say "WAAAAHHHH!" to all those crybabies who write in bitching about conditions—like the guy who wrote in bitching about the El Paso Detention Center (June, 1994). This guy was crying about homosexuals being segregated and who can't get jobs or trusty status. Poor babies! Here, only 10% (at most) of the population even gets to work, no matter what sexual preference or color. To be segregated, all you got to do is have the sleeves of your sweatshirt rolled up (alteration of clothing), or give another person a bar of soap or tube of toothpaste (bartering).

This guy also bitched about being required to buy underwear. Let me say that I'd give my left tit for the privilege because it's a damn sight better than being given ones with two-year-old crotch crud stains in them.

Overcrowding, he whines. This is a real boo-hoo! What prisons have you heard about that *aren't* operating over capacity levels?

Finally, he snivels about sick call being once a week. Shit howdy!! I'm afraid to let the "medical" staff get too close because I know I'll be worse when they're done. How often did this poor hypochondriac go to the doctor on the outside? Once a week? I think not since he'd have to pay for it and he's already crying about underwear costs.

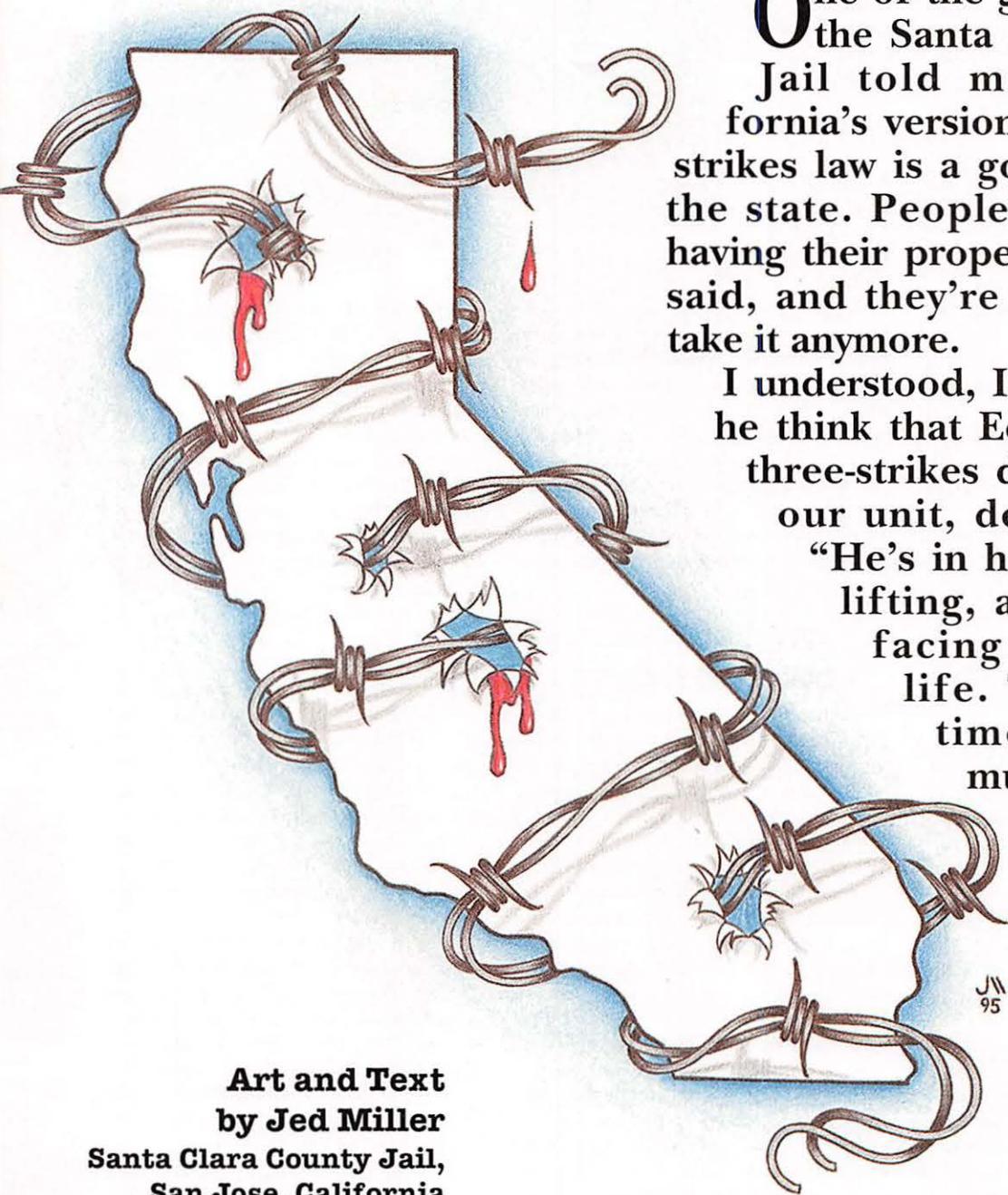
This guy needs to get a life. Any time you even consider feeling sorry for myself, think about the guys in Pelican Bay.

Just an Oregon Featherwood,
Marilyn L. Hamilton

STRIKING OUT IN CALIFORNIA

One of the guards here at the Santa Clara County Jail told me that California's version of the three strikes law is a good thing for the state. People are tired of having their property stolen, he said, and they're not going to take it anymore.

I understood, I said, but did he think that Ed, one of the three-strikes defendants in our unit, deserved life? "He's in here for shoplifting, and now he's facing 25-years-to-life. That's more time than most murderers get."



JM
95

**Art and Text
by Jed Miller**
Santa Clara County Jail,
San Jose, California

"But what about his past record?" the guard asked.

What about it? For his past crimes, Ed was sentenced to prison and he did his time. He paid his debt. He successfully completed his parole. Giving Ed a sentence of 25-to-life now for a petty crime is ridiculous.

For me, the stress of facing my third strike is so great I feel like it's leaking from my pores. Sometimes I can't even sit still. I try to think about something else for a while, but it's like trying to ignore your foot when it's caught in a bear trap.

Allegedly, I stole a car and drove it around for a few days. Back in 1981, I was convicted of assault with a deadly weapon after stabbing someone in a fight; in 1987 I was convicted of residential burglary in San Francisco. Now the district attorney is trying to give me 25-years-to-life. On a 25-to-life sentence, the average stay in prison is 40 years. I'd be 73 by the time I was released, and paroled in the year 2034.

The man in the cell next to me is also being charged under the new three strikes law. He had an eighth of a gram of speed in his pocket, barely a usable amount, and now he's facing 25-to-life. Often I hear him late at night beating the back wall of his cell in frustration. I never say anything to him about it, but I can see how swollen his hands are in the morning when he spoons up his oatmeal.

We aren't the only ones. My public defender says they are averaging ten new cases every week just for this county alone. Statewide, there are thousands. Evidently, only 2% are for violent crimes.

Take Antonio, for example, another man in our unit. Antonio faces 25-to-life for having two PCP cigarettes. His first strike was for burglary. He was caught stealing a lawn mower from a garage. His second strike was an assault. He threw a rock at a tow truck that was driving away with his car.

Combined, these crimes hardly seem like enough to take this man's life from him, but that is what's happening. We had been playing cards while talking, and I asked him if he had any kids. The effect was the same as if I had punched him in the stomach. He bowed his head, and

after a lengthy silence, he excused himself and went to his cell.

Governor Wilson publicly vowed to veto any bill that would amend this new law. My local broadcaster informs me that 67% of all Californians surveyed support it. I can't believe this is happening. How can society be so short-sighted?

The three strikes law does not deter criminals. Most of them have no idea that the petty crimes they are committing can be considered strikes. They think strike crimes must be violent or very serious. Not so. Fresh meat still arrives daily.

Anyone who considers this good law for California should tour the tunnels that lead from the jail to the court with me and see, first hand, what is going on. Look them in the face.

"We handle it in different ways. One three-strikes defendant cut his throat with a razor blade."

Today I saw a 19-year-old kid who was constantly biting his nails and shaking his leg. I started talking to him and all of a sudden it was like an emotional dam burst. He snapped and started crying right there in front of everyone, even though he didn't want to. He just couldn't control it any longer.

Evidently, this guy had walked into a parking garage and was messing with someone's car. He was charged with attempted auto theft, and the district attorney's office felt that this was sufficient to be his third strike. Now the kid is facing 25-to-life, and the shock sent his mother into a nervous breakdown. She's in the hospital, and from the looks of it, I don't think her son is far behind her.

I met another man, 25 years old, who was just sentenced to four years. His name is David. He had gone into a store with a friend, and while he was purchasing a soda and a candy bar, his friend stole a Walkman radio. Once they walked outside, security guards told them to stop, which David did because he had nothing to hide. But his friend tried to run and was tackled by the security guards. Both were arrested.

Since David had a prior record, the petty theft that he was now charged with became a felony, and the district attorney's office considered it to be his third strike. Under the immense pressure of facing a life sentence, David was coerced into taking a deal. In return for a guilty plea, the D.A. agreed to drop one strike and give David four years, of which he will have to do at least 80%.

Never mind that David had a receipt for his purchases and that he didn't steal anything. The fact remains that he was scared to death and was pressured into a choice he didn't want to make.

If that seems shocking, consider the fact that David receives monthly checks from the government for his mental disability, and that he's prescribed psychiatric medication. His public defender should be charged with criminal conduct for allowing this to happen.

By the way, the man who actually stole the radio was sentenced to 30 days and is already out of jail.

A lot of these three strike defendants have been to see the doctor for medication to deal with the stress. We all handle it in different ways.

One three-strikes defendant recently cut his throat with a razor blade. A trustee happened to be mopping outside his cell and saw the man's leg twitching on the floor. The trustee looked closer and saw the man lying in a pool of his own blood. He quickly called the guards, and somehow the man's life was saved.

I don't know how Pete Wilson feels about that. After all, it's going eat up a lot of taxpayers' money to sew that man's throat up, strap him down, and keep him medicated long enough to sentence him to life in prison.

PL

Welcome to Pete's World

By Andrew W. Martin
Folsom State Prison

Ever thought of visiting California? Maybe see the beautiful coastal region or the Redwood Forest? Maybe the snow-capped peaks of the Sierra Nevadas?

Think twice.

This state is goin' down the tubes, and those of us on the wrong side of the law are feeling it fastest.

Pete Wilson was reelected as governor. His campaign was based on getting tough on crime and reducing prisoners' rights. Case in point: California now has a law that allows the state to impound and sell your car if you get caught driving without your license. Not just driving with a suspended license, but driving without a license in your possession. Say your absent-minded grandmother forgot to take her license with her as she sped off to the drug store for some medication. She, too, could lose her car to California's used car market. I wonder when Governor Wilson will appear on TV in used car commercials.

Here's a good one: As of November, 1994, California prisoners must pay \$5.00 to see a doctor or dentist. Of course, if you're indigent, the fee is waived. Just make sure you don't have any money sent to you within 30 days after the doctor's appointment or it'll be deducted from your account. Twelve aspirin for a simple head cold will cost you \$5.00. Suffering from indigestion? That bottle of Maalox will cost you five smacks. All this for the kind of treatment where inmates routinely hobble around for days, some with broken limbs, before they're even seen by a doctor.

Here at Folsom State Prison, don't expect to recognize any of the food at chow. Pork is never served. "Where's the beef?" is a common refrain. Should they serve some beef-based product, the portions are scant. Almost every meal features a pre-made "meat" patty, which is really just ground-up chicken or turkey by-products—a real treat you can afford to miss.

Hot links, too, are a common item, especially on Sunday mornings: two eggs, overcooked, with three hot links. I still don't know what hot links are made of, or where or why.

Just recently, they tried a new culinary delight on us: "Harvest Burgers," a nonmeat hamburger made of soy beans. The memo issued after this culinary surprise stated that the officials were trying to cut down on the fat in our diets.

As far as programs go, we have quite an array: basic elementary education classes and a GED program. No college-level classes here. For vocational training, we can join such programs as Vocational Landscape, where we learn how to move rocks and dirt around. That's all the class consists of, and it's just what I want to do when I get out.

There are a few good vocational classes, such as auto-mechanics, electronics or Body and Fender.

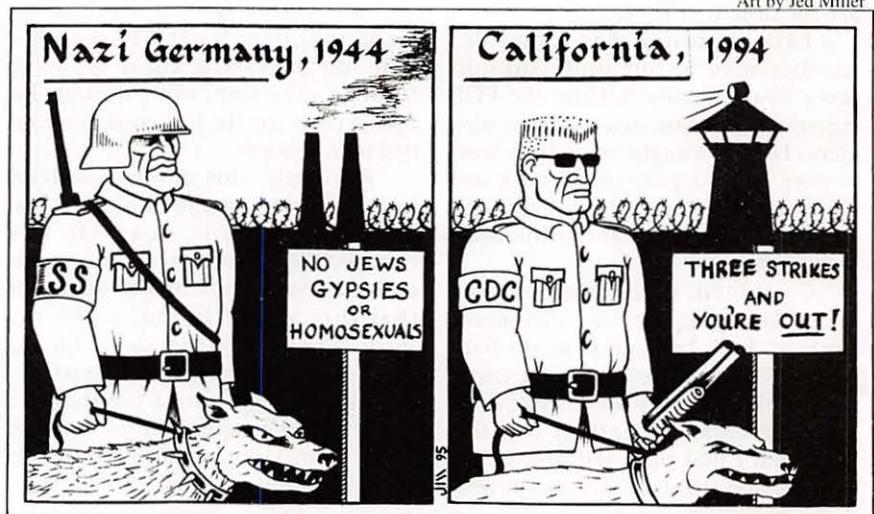
Problem is, there's never enough space to meet the demand. But we do have a shoe repair class. I wonder how many cobbler jobs there are in the freeworld? It's just a clever way for the California prison system to get their junk state shoes mended for free.

Want some recreation? My parents' back yard was bigger than the main yard here. We have a grass baseball/volleyball/soccer field/track depending on the season, but only one at a time. And remember, the grass is only to look at. No sitting allowed.

If all of this has still not persuaded you to stay away from California, maybe this will: Since 1989, 27 convicts have been shot and killed, more than three times as many as in all other U.S. prisons combined. California prison guards fired 185 shots in 1990. In 1991, they fired 205 shots. In this same time period, Texas officials didn't fire once. That's right—not once. The former chief of staff for the Texas prison system testified in court that California's use of firearms was "idiocy at best, and reckless disregard for human life at worst."

Under Pete Wilson, errant Californians are not just sent to prison as punishment, but to be punished. There's a difference. **PL**

Art by Jed Miller



CHICAGO GANG SHOWS POLITICAL MUSCLE

A group called 21st Century Vote, which has ties to Chicago's largest gang, the Black Gangster Disciples, tried to oust Alderwoman Dorothy Tillman, who represents the South Side neighborhoods of the Third Ward, and elect Wallace (Gator) Bradley, who has served prison time for armed robbery.

Mr. Bradley, 42, who contends that Ms. Tillman has "sold out" to Mayor Richard M. Daley, was not the only convicted felon in the contest, which took place in late February. Tyrone Kenner, a former Alderman who went to prison for taking bribes, was also on the ballot. In all, five former convicted felons ran for alderman posts in Chicago.

Campaign signs for "Gator" were plastered on walls, windows and shuttered storefronts throughout the ward, the poorest in the city. The election was seen as an indication of the political power of street gangs. Two years ago, the 21st Century group mounted a demonstration at City Hall with thousands of young men, many of them wearing the familiar colors of the Gangster Disciples.

In the City Council, Ms. Tillman has been a vocal critic of Mayor Daley, but her style has become slightly quieter in recent years. Mr. Bradley says that shows she has betrayed her constituents.

"Our community knows that when you go silent, it's because you've been bought out," he said.

Mr. Bradley says he fostered a "peace treaty" between members of Chicago street gangs two years ago. "Gangs are not the problem; criminal behavior is the problem," he said. "Violence is violence. The attacks on gangs are just a way to isolate the African-American community, to put fear into people. Look at fraternities. They have hazings. They're a gang. The Police Department is a gang."

In recent years, the Black Gangster Disciples group claims to have changed its focus, and its name, to Better Growth and Development.

The New York Times

JUDGE ORDERS END TO BRUTALITY AT PELICAN BAY

A federal judge, deploring the "senseless suffering and sometimes wretched misery" of prisoners in notorious Pelican Bay Prison, ordered the state to discontinue what he called a pattern of brutality and neglect at what was supposed to have been a national model for high-tech security.

The landmark ruling here by District Judge Thelton E. Henderson is expected to have wide impact because other states have looked to Pelican Bay as the prototype prison of last resort for incorrigible prison troublemakers.

The decision also is a warning shot to the Department of Corrections as it embarks on a prison expansion program to accommodate a prisoner population expected to explode as the state's new three strikes law is enforced.

In his harsh 345-page opinion, Henderson said the state has violated the U.S. Constitution by allowing guards to use "grossly excessive" force and by denying prisoners adequate medical and mental health care.

But the Carter Administration appointee refused to shut down the prison's infamous so-called supermax unit, a major target of a prisoners' class-action lawsuit that brought the ruling.

About 1,500 prisoners are confined in the unit's windowless cells, deprived of all but the barest of human contact for periods of up to several years. Henderson said conditions in the unit "hover on the edge of what is humanly tolerable" and probably inflict psychological harm on prisoners housed there for prolonged periods.

But rather than dismantle the facility, the judge ordered the state to remove prisoners who are emotionally or mentally fragile. Putting them in such a setting, Henderson said, is akin to "putting an asthmatic in a place with little air to breathe."

State officials have not yet decided whether to appeal portions of Henderson's ruling, which gives them four months to develop a plan of reform for the Northern California prison to eliminate brutality and provide adequate medical and mental health care staffing.

Deputy Atty. Gen. Susan Lee, who represented the Department of Corrections in the case, called the ruling a "mixed decision" and lauded Henderson for refusing to close the super-max unit, "the most important part of the case."

"I think people around the country were looking to see whether the use of this new type lockdown, high-security unit would be permitted to continue," she said. "The message is that it is permitted."

But Susan Creighton, one of the lawyers for the prisoners, said the state's claim of partial victory is "like saying that Germany didn't lose the war because it still existed."

She and other lawyers for the prisoners said the ruling would put other

(continued on next page)



HOPE FOR NEW YORK DRUG OFFENDERS

New York's Governor Pataki, a hard-liner on crime, is planning to challenge parts of the tough Rockefeller drug laws that he says put too many low-level drug dealers in prison for too long.

By diverting as many as 4,000 convicted drug dealers into rehab or job training programs, the governor believes he could afford to keep violent criminals in prison longer, he said.

Pataki has targeted a provision of the law that mandates a minimum four-year sentence for a second felony drug conviction. "Our estimate is one in four, or one in three of those who are convicted of this

second felony, would be appropriate for diversion into a type of system that doesn't put them into a cell with a violent felon," he said.

State correction spokesman Jim Flateau said there are 23,000 people in New York prisons for drug offenses, including 7,900 convicted of low-level drug charges.

"The governor is correct that the Rockefeller drug laws have hamstrung the state's ability to run an effective, cost-efficient criminal justice system," said Paul Samuels, president of the Legal Action Center.

New York Daily News

Pelican Bay

(continued from page 15)

states on notice that they must incarcerate prisoners humanely, even in a facility like Pelican Bay, which was designed to limit prisoner contact and corral the prison system's worst troublemakers.

"This is a landmark decision in that the court determined what can and cannot pass muster," said David Steurer, another lawyer for the prisoners.

Pelican Bay is supposed to house the worst of prisoners, those who have joined prison gangs or attacked other prisoners. But lawyers for the prisoners said they also include prisoners serving relatively short terms for drunken driving or drug offenses. Mentally ill prisoners also are confined to the high-security unit because they are difficult to handle. Guards armed with gas guns and other firearms monitor the prisoners from a control booth with video cameras, and generally talk to them through a speaker system.

Henderson noted that the prison, located near the Oregon border, used "fetal" restraints on prisoners numerous times in 1991 and 1992, securing inmates' wrists to their ankles with handcuffs, leg irons and a connecting chain.

One prisoner was restrained this way for nine hours. Sometimes inmates in this position also were chained to toilets.

Guards also punished prisoners by confining them naked or partially clothed in outdoor cages the size of a telephone booth during cold weather. Henderson chided prison authorities for allowing guards to use firearms unnecessarily and at times recklessly.

James H. Gomez, director of corrections for California, said the prison has made several improvements. He praised Henderson for ruling that guards may continue to carry firearms and for allowing prison officials to house minimum and maximum-security prisoners together. "It's been an ongoing process of improvement since the prison opened" in 1989, said Deputy Atty. Gen. Lee.

But Henderson was not impressed with state efforts.

"We glean no serious or genuine commitment to significantly improving the delivery of health care services, correcting the pattern of excessive force or otherwise remedying the constitutional violations . . ." Henderson concluded.

Los Angeles Times

Prisoners' Assaults on Guards Increase

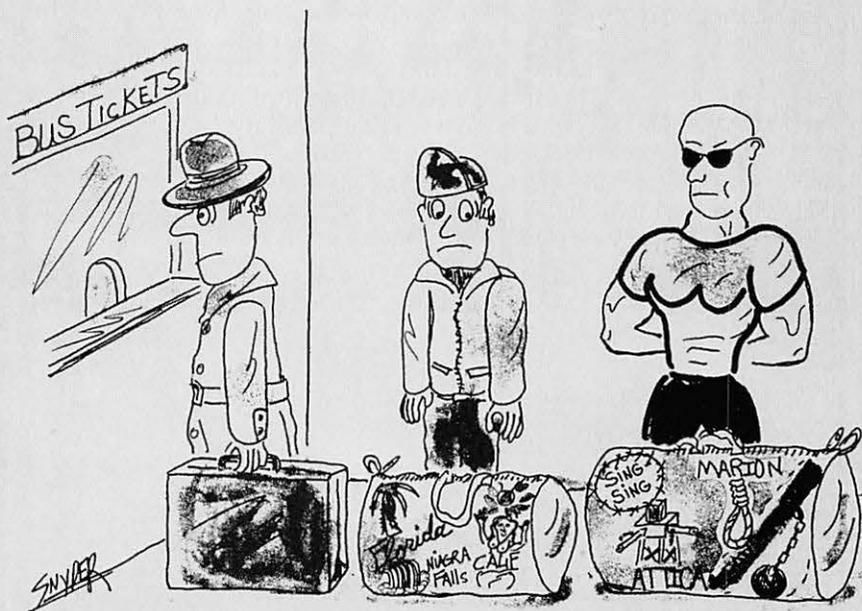
Officials say that assaults on prisoners and guards at high-security federal prisons rose nearly 20 percent last year, and they attribute that sharp increase largely to growing prison populations, longer sentences and prisoners who are more prone to violence.

Records from the Bureau of Prisons showed that there were 646 assaults on guards and fellow prisoners by inmates at five older high-security prisons in the 1994 fiscal year, an increase of 18.3 percent from the previous year. Inmate assaults on other prisoners were up 28.5 percent, while attacks on guards increased 11 percent, but included the first slaying of a guard in seven years.

Guards say that federal budget cuts have left prisons with dangerously low staffs.

"Nobody is listening to us," said Donald Tucker, president of the council of prison locals of the American Federation of Government Employees, which represents more than half the federal prison guards. "Nobody wants to hear the truth, and the truth is, we need more staff."

The New York Times



Brutal Guards in Lone Star State

The Texas prison system is reverting to the days when guards brutalized and murdered prisoners with impunity. Currently, 30 guards in four Texas prisons are being investigated by Internal Affairs for organized criminal conduct. At McConnell Unit in Beeville, Texas, a group of guards known as the "Blue Bandannas" severely beat 25-year-old Willie Jones on November 24 for "mouthing off" to a guard. Two of the guards involved in the Jones beating (Rodolfo Rodriguez and Damian Contreras) were indicted in December '94 by a Beeville County Grand Jury on charges of aggravated assault, retaliation and tampering with a witness. The latter charge stems from the guard's efforts to threaten other guards into giving false statements about what happened. Both guards are free on \$25,000 bond.

Both were members of the Blue Bandannas, a loosely organized group of guards who derive their name from the color of the bandannas they carry "to let the inmates know they have unity." Director of the Texas system's Internal Affairs Division, John F. McAuliffe, said in a memo to the Texas Board of Criminal Justice: "This latest case represents the fourth pending investigation involving allegations of organized criminal conduct on the part of correctional officers using excessive force in attacks on targeted inmates."

Meanwhile, at Robertson Unit near Abilene, four prisoners were beaten so badly that the brutality could

not be covered up. But perhaps the strangest case of all is at Michael Unit at Tennessee Colony, Texas, where at least six prisoners were beaten. Now the federal authorities have taken over the prosecution of ten Michael Unit guards in six separate cases of prison brutality.

The real death camp is Terrell Prison outside of Livingston, Texas. On October 7, 1994 prisoners were terrorized by guards who attacked them sporadically for seven hours. When the guard riot ended, 30-year-old Michael McCoy lay dead and prisoner Eric Robinson was suffering from a severe beating. Guards Alex L. Torres and Joel Lambright have been charged with murder. Both are free on \$50,000 bond. A total of nine guards were suspended.

Three days later, Anthony Thibodeaux was murdered in Terrell. The guards first said that the 24-year-old died when he had a seizure and hit his head on the floor. The autopsy determined that Thibodeaux had been murdered and the guards changed their story, saying he was kicked to death by a gang of prisoners in the Day Room. The official cause of death was a brain hemorrhage due to a ruptured esophagus. The guards now say that he was struck across the esophagus by one convict and fell to the floor. Then six inmates pounced on him and beat him unconscious. Whatever happened, no charges have been filed in Thibodeaux's murder.

Robert "Standing Deer" Wilson
Huntsville, Texas

DC Repeals Mandatory Minimums

The city council in the District of Columbia did what the federal government should have done a long time ago—repealed its mandatory minimum sentences for nonviolent offenders.

This bold move began because D.C. Councilman Bill Lightfoot learned about the failures of mandatory sentences from Families Against Mandatory Minimums president Julie Stewart, who he had as a guest on his radio and TV shows last year. Lightfoot was concerned enough by what he learned to introduce a bill to repeal the District's mandatory minimums for nonviolent drug offenders.

The bill was not passed retroactively, but it is still a smart and courageous move in the right direction.

FAMM-Gram

Raw Deal for Sex Offenders

For a fee, Californians can soon call a state-operated 900 number to learn whether a neighbor has a felony conviction for child molestation.

A Louisiana law requires offenders convicted of sex crimes against juveniles to send letters or postcards, alerting neighbors to their presence.

New Jersey and Washington rank offenders into three ascending risk levels, the highest level requiring law enforcement officials to distribute posters and news alerts in the community where the offender plans to settle.

The New York Times

The "Ville" on Lockdown

Warden Gardenez has been replaced by Warden Detella but the lockdown that occurred before the changeover has not been lifted.

Shortly before Gardenez left, he stopped all Kool-aid, honey and sugar from being sold at the commissary. After a few weeks of doing without any form of sweetener, and seeing that the new warden wasn't going to lift the ban, population broke into the general store and stole all the sugar and a few other things. They broke a hole through the wall with a sledge hammer and crowbar.

The cops have recovered some of the sugar but the crowbar is still missing.

Larry Harris, Stateville

CANING SOUGHT AS PUNISHMENT IN TENNESSEE

Vandals, burglars and people who burn the American flag in Tennessee could be publicly beaten with a cane under legislation filed by two state legislators.

"The public is interested in seeing crime punished," said one of the legislators, Representative Doug E. Gunnels, a Republican from Greenback. "I'm not an expert on crime, but people who are involved in more serious crime usually start out with crimes like this."

Under the bill, people convicted of certain misdemeanors could get 1 to 4 lashes, and people convicted of certain felonies would get 5 to 15, in addition to jail terms and fines. The offenses subject to caning would include vandalism, the defacing of government property, burglary and civil rights intimidation.

Mr. Gunnels said his legislation was inspired by the case of Michael Fay, an American youth who was caned by the authorities in Singapore in May after he was convicted of vandalism.

The New York Times

c a l l o u t s

Actor Cons Stage Play on Gangs

A group of cons turned actors at Mansfield Correctional (Ohio) produced a play for Mansfield teens on the consequences of gang membership. Written by Ohio prisoner Clifford Holt, "In the Eye of the Storm" was shown monthly throughout 1994 to hundreds of Mansfield-Cleveland area teens. The play tells the story of Q-Tip, a gang member gunned down for his affiliation. It opens at Q-Tip's funeral, then shows his gang plotting revenge. It closes with the gang members being sentenced to prison for the murder of a rival gang member. Many of the actors had been rival gangmembers on the street who overcame their differences to work together on the play.

Holt's idea to stage an educational play about gangs was originally nixed in 1989 when a Cleveland councilman insisted that the city had no gang problem. Today, Holt's efforts and those of the prison's Theatrical Workshop are supported by the Mansfield staff, parents and even government officials. "Even though we're locked up, we still care about what's happening to our young people everywhere," says Holt. For more information on the Mansfield Theatrical Workshop, contact Warden Dennis A. Baker, Mansfield Correctional Institution, P.O. Box 1368, Mansfield, OH 44901. (419) 526-2000.

Support for Canada's Longterm Offenders

Longterm Inmates Now in the Community (LINC) helps Canadians deal with doing time, and parolees with re-entering the community. Founded by lifer Glenn Flett, the program is run by convicts and is designed for convicts, their families and significant others. Meetings are held in various communities for parolees, and in several prisons for those still incarcerated. One member says the program altered the course of his life. "It's easy for me to be honest with people I can trust and I usually get the feedback I need, although it's not what I always want to hear. This time, I'll have some good support when I'm released, people who know the struggle I'll face. I'm glad I'm 'linked' up." For more information, write to: Harold Gaucher, Elbow Lake Institution, P.O. Box 50, Harrison Mills, B.C., Canada, VOM-ILO.

Freedom Light

FREEDOM LIGHT, the Prison Ministry affiliated with Agape Church of Religious Science in Santa Monica, CA, envisions ways to realize true freedom for the incarcerated. FREEDOM LIGHT rejects the "rescue mentality." Instead, it emphasizes "being that place in consciousness where God's Divine Plan can shine through...practicing unconditional love and nonjudgment...understanding that freedom is our birthright and has nothing to do with external circumstances." Sounds intriguing.

To receive letters, books, etc. send your name, address and i.d. number to: The Agape Church of Religious Science, 1849 Centinela Avenue, Santa Monica, CA 90404. (310) 829 2780.

Parents Behind Bars

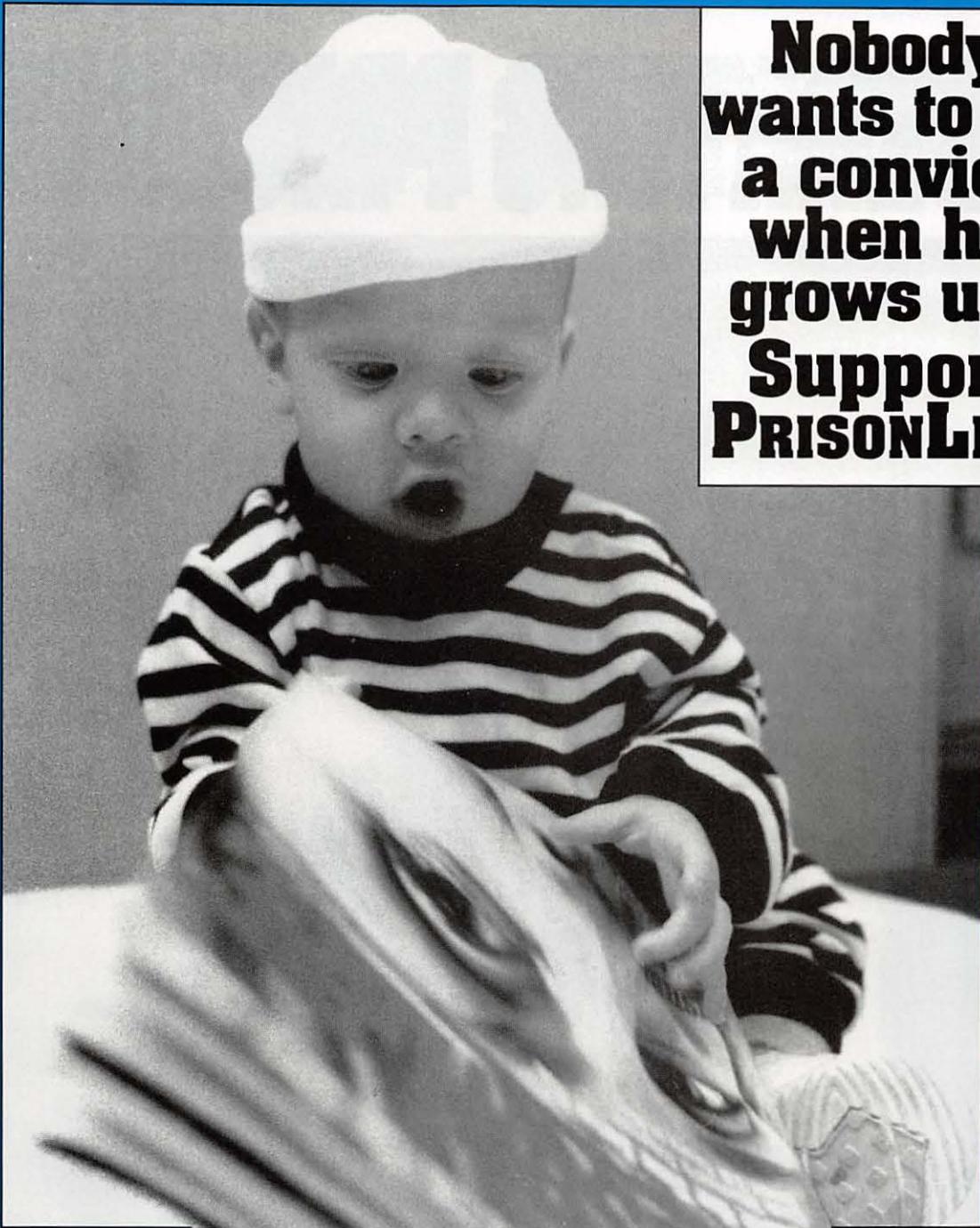
The Center for Children of Incarcerated Parents conducts research, produces publications and offers direct services to prisoners and their families through 12 different educational, family reunification and therapeutic projects. The Center was founded in 1990 and has served over 5,000 clients. All Center staff are former prisoners. For information and assistance, write to: The Center for Children of Incarcerated Parents, 714 West California Boulevard, Pasadena, CA 91105. (818) 397-1396.

Prison Video for Concerned Freeworlders

A 20-minute video filmed in five federal prisons (Danbury, CT; Leavenworth, KS; Lompoc, CA; Memphis, TN; and Terminal Island, CA) and one military prison (U.S. Disciplinary Barracks Fort Leavenworth) educates freeworlders about prison. Featuring interviews with prisoners and volunteer visitors, the film helps break down stereotypes of how prisoners are perceived by the public and shows what concerned people can do to bring some humanity to those behind bars. Send \$10 to Prisoner Visitation and Support, 1501 Cherry Street, Philadelphia, PA 19102, or call (215) 241-7117.

The Muriel Rukeyser Poetry Wall

The Cathedral of St. John the Divine, visited by 500,000 people each year, is redesigning its poetry wall—and your poetry can be part of it. All poems submitted with a return address will be accepted. Include your return address on the same sheet as the poem so readers can correspond with you. Send poems to: Muriel Rukeyser Poetry Wall, The Cathedral of St. John the Divine, 1047 Amsterdam Ave., New York, NY 10025.



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a convict
when he
grows up.
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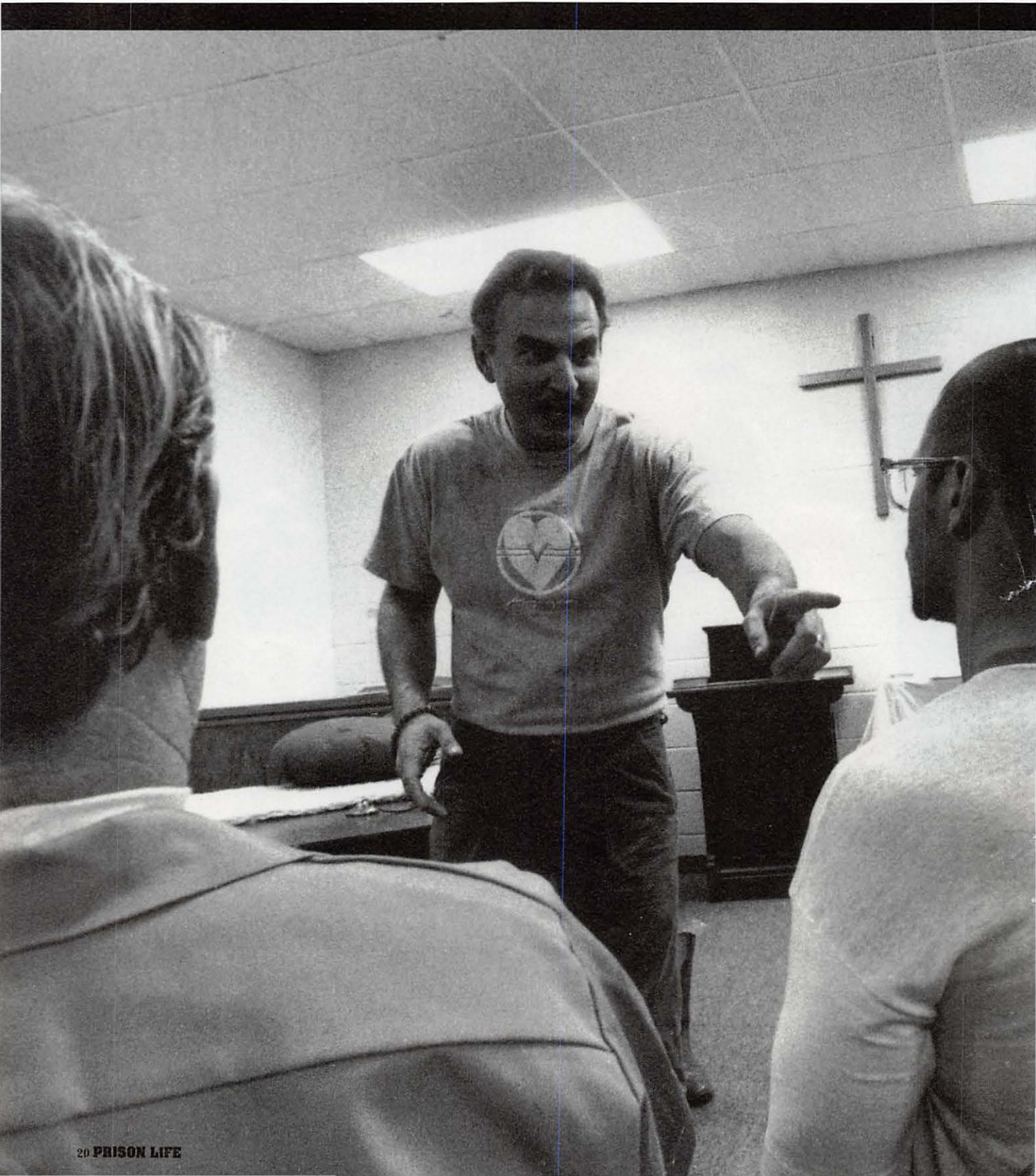
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LIBERATING PRISONERS



WITH KINDNESS

by Jennifer Wynn

It was amusing to watch the expressions on the faces of the 30 convicts at Eastern Correctional Center in North Carolina as they entered the chapel for Bo Lozoff's spiritual workshop. Most did a kind of *what's-dis-shit?* double-take when they saw Lozoff sitting silently on a table at the front of the room in the classic Lotus position: eyes closed, legs crossed, hands resting on his knees. Tibetan bells and other Eastern religious icons surrounded him as he meditated under a prisoner-painted picture of Jesus Christ.

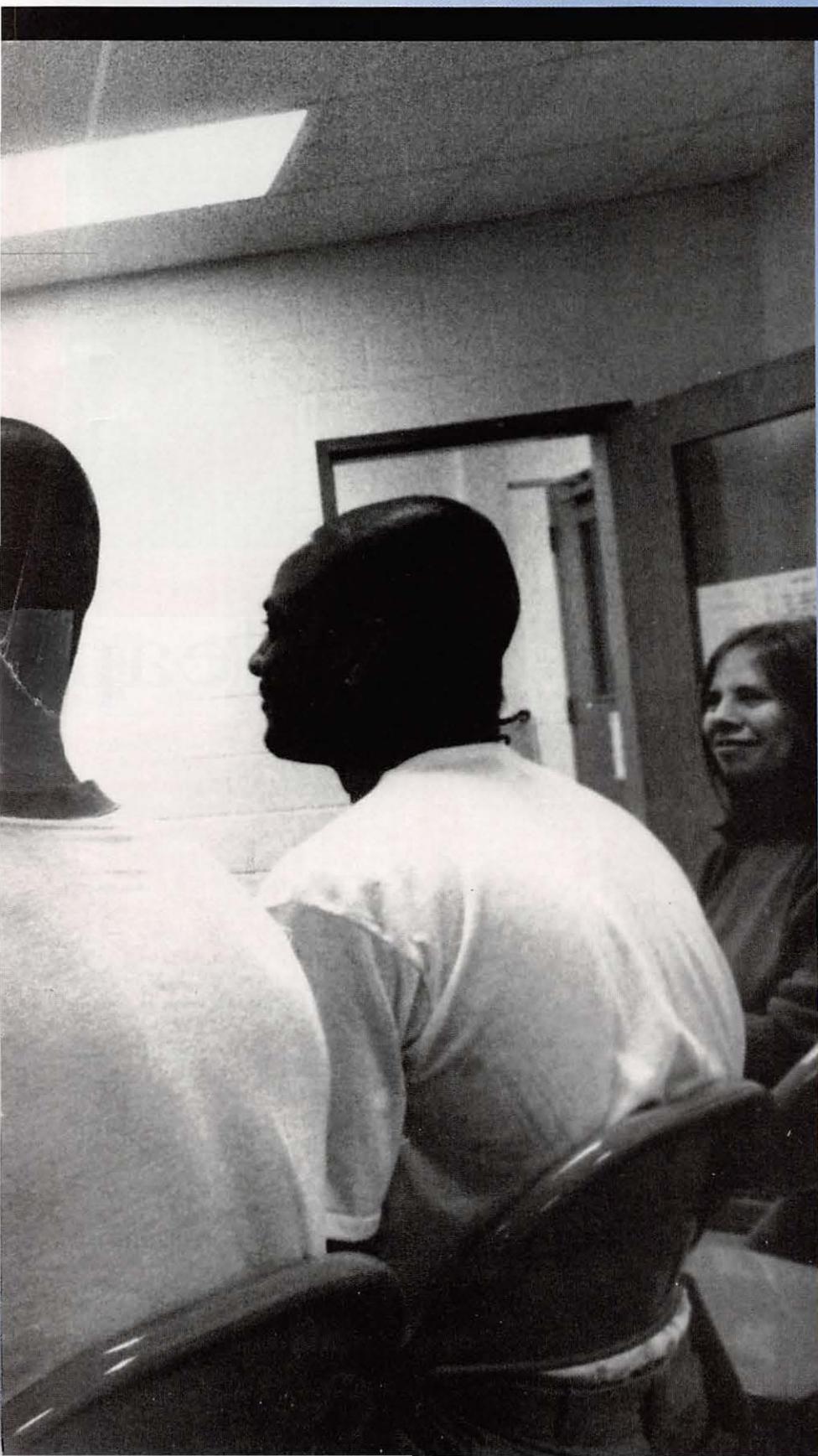
When the chaplain announced it would be another ten minutes before the rest of group could be escorted in from lunch, neither the prisoners, so accustomed to waiting, nor Lozoff, deep in meditation, seemed frustrated by the delay. The only signs of impatience came from the *Prison Life* writer, who was there to interview the man on the table.

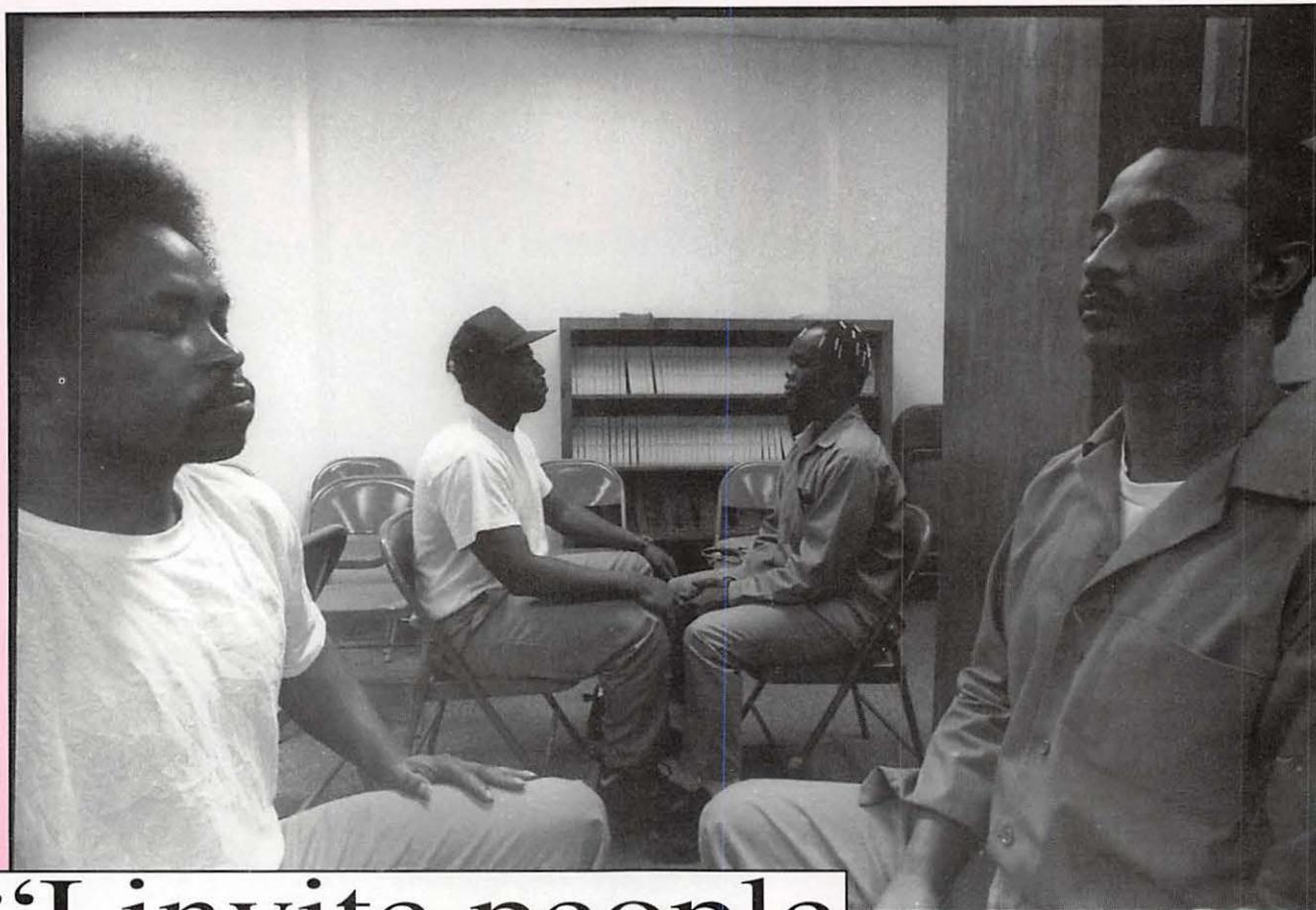
"Take this time to just *be* here," Lozoff began. "Notice where you are, what's around you. Gently clear your mind of anything that doesn't have to do with being here together. In the deepest spiritual sense—chill."

Some of the participants closed their eyes, and Lozoff introduced himself. We learned he's a "regular Joe like everyone else . . ." someone who "did a lot of bad shit," has a "sordid past," family members in the joint and no college degree. Modesty aside, Lozoff acknowledges that his organization, the Human Kindness Foundation, has helped transform the lives of thousands of prisoners.

Over the past 20 years, Bo Lozoff has conducted nearly 500 spiritual workshops throughout the world. He has written three

Photos by Chris Cozzone





“I invite people

Prisoners at Eastern Correctional in North Carolina, meditate in one of Lozoff's workshops.

to take a leap

books, which he sends free of charge to prisoners. His quarterly newsletter is also sent free to the nearly 20,000 prisoners and prison workers on his mailing list, representing over forty countries. Lozoff has met with the Dalai Lama, who wrote the foreword to his first book, *We're All Doing Time*. That landmark book inspired the warden of India's largest prison to put into practice Lozoff's concept of prison-as-ashram: doing one's time as a monk rather than a convict, using incarceration as a time for focused spiritual growth.

Lozoff came up with the idea in 1973, several years after he and his wife Sita decided it was time for a lifestyle change. Burnt out from their years as students, drop-outs, activists, outlaws and hippies, they decided to give up their political causes, sex and psychedelic drugs to live and work aboard a 41-foot sailboat in the Caribbean.

It was smooth sailing until the captain and Lozoff's brother-in-law concocted a plan to smuggle 1,400 pounds of pot into Miami from Jamaica, “just one time,” of course, and they'd sail away into paradise. Having had enough police paranoia

and stints in the joint during their hippie and activist years, Bo and Sita jumped ship and joined an ashram. Shortly after, they learned that Bo's brother-in-law, Pete, and the captain were caught. Pete got 12 to 40 years with no possibility of parole.

It was when the Lozoffs visited Pete at the federal prison in Terre Haute, Indiana that they came up with the concept of prison-as-ashram. “We realized that our lifestyle at the ashram wasn't a lot freer than his,” Bo recalls. “We, too, practiced celibacy, had our heads shaved, gave up our worldly possessions, ate in groups and wore plain clothing. There were no parties, drugs or restaurants. But for us, it was a choice. And the experience helped a great deal. Just by stopping in one place long enough to face ourselves without distraction, we were beginning to glimpse an inner power that had always been lacking.”

In 1973, Bo and Sita founded the Prison-Ashram Project. “Many things happen to us in life which we wish

could have happened differently,” he writes in the project brochure. “Yet, each of us has a chance—and a duty—to start right from where we are and begin sorting out the problems and mysteries of our lives so that we can become strong, wise and free—even in prison.”

Lozoff is not offering prison survival tips. “I advocate big, gigantic change, not the little daily mechanisms for coping we hear about in self-help programs. I invite people to take a leap with me into spiritual living, to embrace fellow human beings as brothers and sisters, to welcome each other on the planet, to show love and compassion for each other, to be thoughtful about how we're living our lives. I'm talking about radical change, not just learning how to be law-abiding, clean and sober consumers.”

Supported almost entirely by unsolicited donations (and earning salaries of \$11,000 a year), Bo and Sita offer friendship and guidance in

the form of books, tapes, correspondence, newsletters and workshops for prisoners and prison workers. They receive and answer over 50 letters a day, always in a straight-up, "I'm not buying into your victim mentality" way. The Son of Sam, Squeaky Fromm and Leonard Peltier are among the prisoners they correspond with, always reinforcing the idea that prisoners need to take responsibility not only for themselves but for their environment. This concept is a far cry from the traditional convict code of minding one's own.

"The convict code is bullshit," Bo tells the men in the workshop. "People think that just because they've been confined against their will they're not responsible for their environment. You don't like where you are? I bet most of you didn't like the 'hoods you left behind." Nods of affirmation.

"If a young kid gets gang raped, the convict code tells you to remain silent. A grandmother in the ghetto chasing off drug dealers has more courage than that. We are never relieved of our spiritual responsibility to each other," he says. The men shift uncomfortably in their chairs.

"Prisons won't be better places to live unless you make them that way. I know you are scared shitless. I know you would like to be respected, and you'd like to respect others. But it's up to you to overcome the sanctity of the convict code and to create a new one. It is possible to learn the art of nonviolence, to give up being self-righteous, to be both peaceful and powerful, strong and relaxed.

"Everyone out there hates us. They know us as animals and monsters. Don't show them they're right. Let's make the public ashamed they're keeping us here. Let's stop being another angry voice. Let's stop fighting each other."

"Yo! What religion are you?" a prisoner in the workshop asks.

"You could say I'm all religions," says Lozoff, who describes himself as a student and a messenger rather than a master. He has studied scores of religions, Eastern and Western, ancient and modern, and he believes that every religion boils down to two things. He strives to convey the simplicity of true spiritual living in his workshops.

"It's basically about communion and community," he says. "Comm-

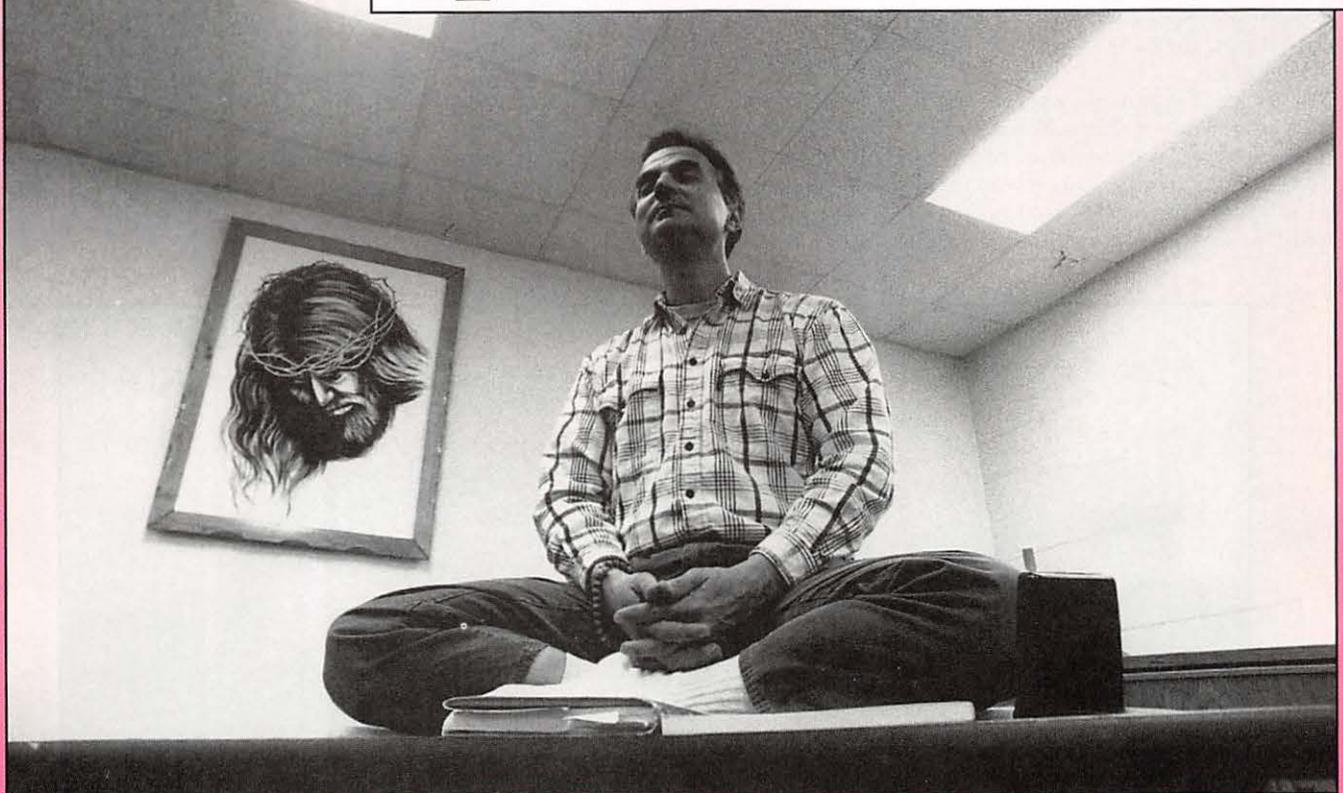
union is taking time each day to do your own internal spiritual work through prayer or meditation, getting in touch with your higher power. Community is doing the external work, practicing the religious values of compassion, forgiveness and love."

Not to mention kindness, which is the guiding principal behind Bo and Sita's Human Kindness Foundation. "There is no spiritual practice more profound than being kind to one's family, neighbors, the cashier at the grocery store, an unexpected visitor, the con in the next cell, the person who does the laundry or picks up the garbage, or any other of the usually invisible people whose paths we cross in the course of a normal day. Certainly there are spiritual mysteries beyond description to explore, but as we mature, it becomes clear that those special experiences are only meaningful when they arise from, and return to, a life of ordinary kindness."

It is Bo's simple, direct messages, his expert insight into the prison condition and the warmth and peace he exudes that enable the men in the workshop to perform the closing exercise.

After a short break, Lozoff instructs the group to pair off into partners and turn their chairs so

with me into
spiritual living."



they're facing each other. "Don't choose someone you know," he says. If he perceives racial tension, he encourages interracial partnering. He suggests that the nonprisoners in the room participate, in this case meaning the *Prison Life* writer.

I sit across from my partner, a young black man who tells me he's done 9 years and has another 11 to go. As Bo tells us to shut our eyes and clear our minds, I'm trying to stop thinking about the kind of crime my partner committed to get such a long sentence. *He doesn't look like an ax murderer*, I think. *Seems like a nice guy. Don't be so naive*, comes another thought, and I notice I'm having trouble quieting the committee of maniacs in my head.

The silence and intensity are uncomfortable. Small outbursts of laughter erupt now and then, and I realize this is difficult for everyone. But it's only the beginning.

After several minutes of silent meditation, Bo designates "A" and "B" partners. He tells the A's to close their eyes and the B's to look at the A's with compassion and love, to know that they want love and respect and forgiveness, that they, too, have fears and insecurities, that they feel scared, that they want to live good lives and are trying the best they can. He talks about trust and kindness, and tells B's to look at their partners and see the love and goodness in their hearts, to look at them with fondness, respect and compassion, to look upon them as God looks upon his children.

When I open my eyes, I see a face that wasn't there before. The man sitting a foot in front of me is looking at me with the most open, kind gaze. His warmth is almost palpable; his eye contact is steady and

peaceful, and I admire his strength in this difficult exercise. His face somehow seems wiser, and my eyes begin to fill with tears. I notice I'm not the only one getting weepy.

This is the kind of magic Bo Lozoff brings to prisons, places where miracles seem impossible and suffering endless. His and Sita's daily letters to prisoners rekindle the hope they generate in the workshops.

Last year, a prisoner asked Lozoff how he could continue his spiritual journey when he was released, if a community existed where he could experience firsthand what it is like to dedicate his life to serving others, as Bo and Sita Lozoff do. Not long after, an anonymous donor gave the Human Kindness Foundation the keys to a three-bedroom, three-bathroom house on 13 acres 50 miles outside of Raleigh, North Carolina. On the hill-top property grow walnut, apple, pecan and fig trees. When the house is opened some time in 1995, the view from the sun deck of the green farmland will be a welcome sight for eyes that have seen nothing but concrete and steel.

Named "Kindness House," the establishment is a bona fide parole plan (but not a halfway house) for newly released cons as well as for nonprisoners who are seeking a lifestyle of spiritual practice and who have a sincere dedication to human service. Lozoff, his wife, some ex-cons and an entire recovery house (about 30 ex-junkies) recently built a meditation room, a larger office for the Foundation and additional sleeping quarters. Plans are being made for the construction of up to 10 private cottages on the property, and last winter Bo, Sita and their son built a

meditation cabin in the nearby woods for residents to retire to for short-term retreats.

Kindness House will be run by the residents, who will learn how to grow and can their own produce, maintain the gardens and property, build furniture, do carpentry and make crafts to sell to the community. Residents will also assume much of the administrative work of the Foundation, which currently keeps Bo and Sita working around the clock.

"All we do is just encourage people to seek a way of living that is about something greater than themselves," says Lozoff. "We are the most affluent nation in history, yet our society is clearly not working. We have all these toys and leisure time, yet we're miserable and agitated. We can't sit still, we hate being alone, yet we fear each other, kill each other and cheat each other more and more. As a society, we're really going nuts.

"That's why once every month or so, one of us picks up a rifle and walks down the street or into McDonald's somewhere and starts blasting perfect strangers. We don't need more valium or prozac. We don't need more prisons and death sentences. We need a national attitude of loving and helping instead of getting and having. We have to stop teaching our kids to be greedy and selfish. We have to get back to the simplest spiritual principles of all ages: We belong to one another. We are one family. Cops and cons, victims and offenders, rich and poor, white and black, men and women, pro-life, pro-choice, conservatives, liberals—one big family. If we respect and care for each other, we will thrive. If we don't, we will destroy ourselves. It's as simple as that." **PL**

Kindness House.



A NATION BEHIND BARS

by Bo Lozoff

America is in the process of developing a 1990s Nazism and the object of our Nazism is criminals. As in racism and sexism, there is a tendency to objectify and sanction either condescension or hatred toward a diverse group of people as if they are all alike, blaming them for all of society's ills. It's become OK for decent people to publicly call people animals and scumbags, and say fry 'em and watch them as they die. We think our prisons are teeming with violent and dangerous people, with Hannibal Lecter types just waiting to get out to rape and pillage and kill, when actually 70% of people in prison are there for nonviolent crimes. They may be confused, pathetic or disorganized, but clever and scheming? No.

Most people think we're soft on crime, yet five times as many people are locked up today than 20 years ago, and people are spending an average of three times longer in prison. The statistics have increased so dramatically that we're not seeing how off-the-wall they are.

We are in the grips of Nazism and the Nazism this time is toward people who break the law. We're headlining the murderers, the child rapers and the molesters and saying these are all of the people who break the law. So you get a kid who is arrested for credit card theft and he's a pretty confused and scattered individual, and we are using imprisonment now as a first response. We're saying you committed credit card fraud, and in our minds we're linking him to the woman who drove her two kids into the lake.

Our animosity is crossing over the strictly racist, color-conscious hysteria to include women, men, children, whites, blacks, brown people, yellow people. All that matters is that they've broken the law. The white psyche is soothing itself, saying, "I'm not racist. I hate white kids who break the law just as much as I hate black kids who do." It is now socially acceptable to hate an entire group of people, and because of the socially sanctioned hatred we're moving ourselves into an era where before we know it everyone of us is going to have family or friends in prison. We are going to define enough things as punishable by imprisonment to justify keeping all of these new prisons going.

There is a feeding frenzy going on between the media, politicians and the frightened public, which not only excludes criminals and victims but all of the professionals who work

in these institutions, who know that they are horrible and that they don't work. I speak to wardens who sound twice as radical as I do.

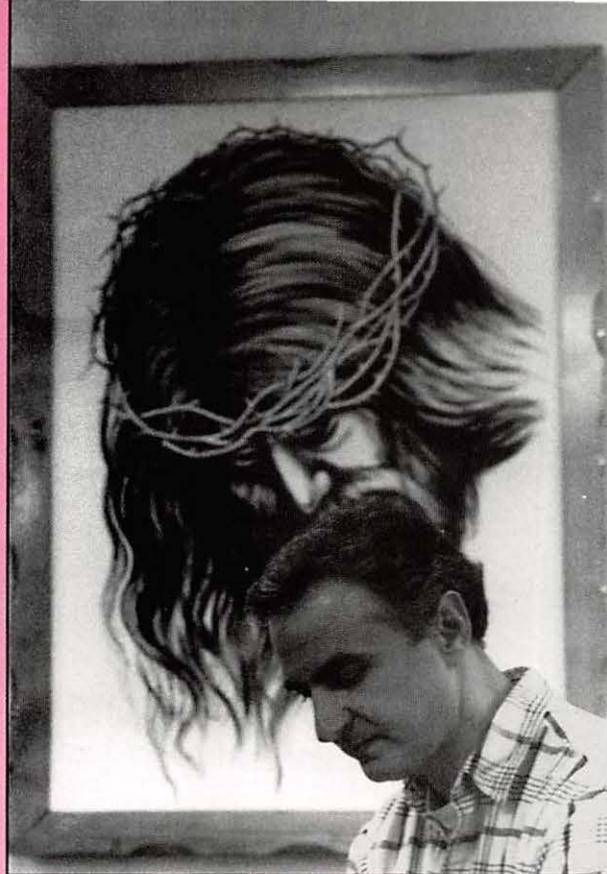
People call me a bleeding heart liberal, and my response is, "Oh, you sweet idealist. What an idealist to say that we can punish and hate and brutalize people and somehow have a safer world for our children. I almost have to admire that negative idealism. It's negative, but it's idealistic. They say, "But I live in the real world." And I say, "No you don't. You don't live in the real world because if you did, you wouldn't support a brutal system that does not work. Nearly 300,000 young men are raped in prison every year, a traumatic event which many of them will never be able to overcome no matter what else they do in their lives. So it's just idealism to think that somehow the country's approach to criminal justice is a solution to crime.

There's a movement called restorative justice as opposed to retributive justice. Retributive justice is about punishment and pain. Restorative justice sees it this way: a crime is an injury to the community, and so the solution to crime is something that addresses the injury as a whole. Our current system has absolutely no regard for the victim whatsoever.

If I steal your car and I trash it and get caught, I get taken to court. The prosecutor doesn't call it the case of Bo Lozoff versus you, or versus your car. It's the case of the state versus Bo Lozoff. The victim is out of the equation. A lot of times you don't even know when my trial is. You never get your car back. I never get forced to repay you for the damage I've caused in your life.

So part of what works in restorative justice is that the first response is to tighten the embrace of the community rather than to stiff arm the offender. Rather than say, "You committed a crime, you're out of here," restorative justice says, "You committed a crime, get back in here! We've got to tighten up our supervision of you. We've got to look to see why you're doing this. How can you feel such a disconnection to your sister here that you stole her car? How dare you do that and what would your mama think?"

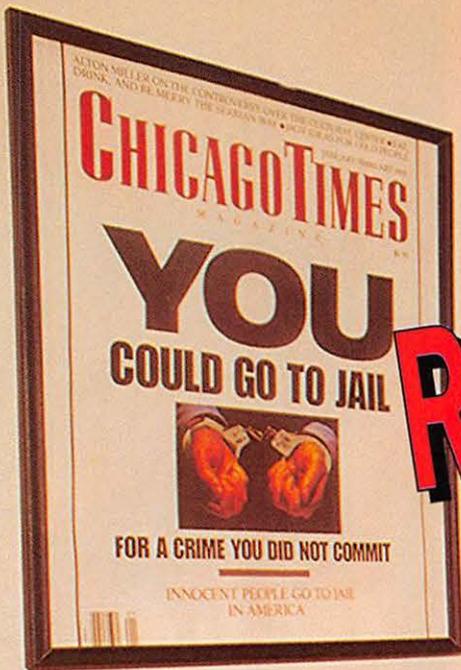
Now you have to be responsible for replacing the car you stole, and you have to look your victim in the eye and



hear what effect your crime had on her. There are groups all over the country called Victim/Offender Reconciliation Programs, which are part of the restorative justice movement. They get victims and offenders together to honestly express their views to one another. These groups humanize the encounter instead of separating the victim and the offender.

Retributive justice doesn't work. It just makes everything worse. We need to do something more intelligent about nonviolent criminal offenders and especially about drug offenders and the use of prison as a first response to all kinds of criminal behavior. A prison has to be the last resort for truly violent and dangerous people. And even then, a prison must be a secure but compassionate place that gives the offender every opportunity to tap into his own decency, instead of treating him like an animal. We need to protect society, but it is not our business ever to be cruel, nor to lose hope in a person's ability to change. Some of the greatest saints of all religions were notorious murderers, thieves, junkies and hookers before they discovered their true purpose.

Books and newsletters are free to prisoners and prison staff. Others should write for a catalog. Contact: Human Kindness Foundation, Route 1, Box 201-N, Durham, NC 27705. Telephone: 919-942-2138. Fax: 919-942-0830.



THE REAL WORLD OF BRUCE CUTLER

a *Prison Life* Interview
by Richard Stratton

Bruce Cutler's best known client is John Gotti, the man convicted of running the most powerful mob clan in America, the Gambino family, and of masterminding the assassination of his predecessor, Big Paul Castellano to gain his position of stature in the underworld. Cutler is what is commonly referred to as a mob lawyer. He represents a lot of men whose last names end in vowels and who are accused by the government of belonging to a criminal organization that for many decades has dominated lucrative illegal activities.

I wanted to interview Bruce Cutler because I'd heard he was a balls-to-the-wall showman with real talent. His brutal cross-examinations of rats and stool pigeons are called "Brucifications" for

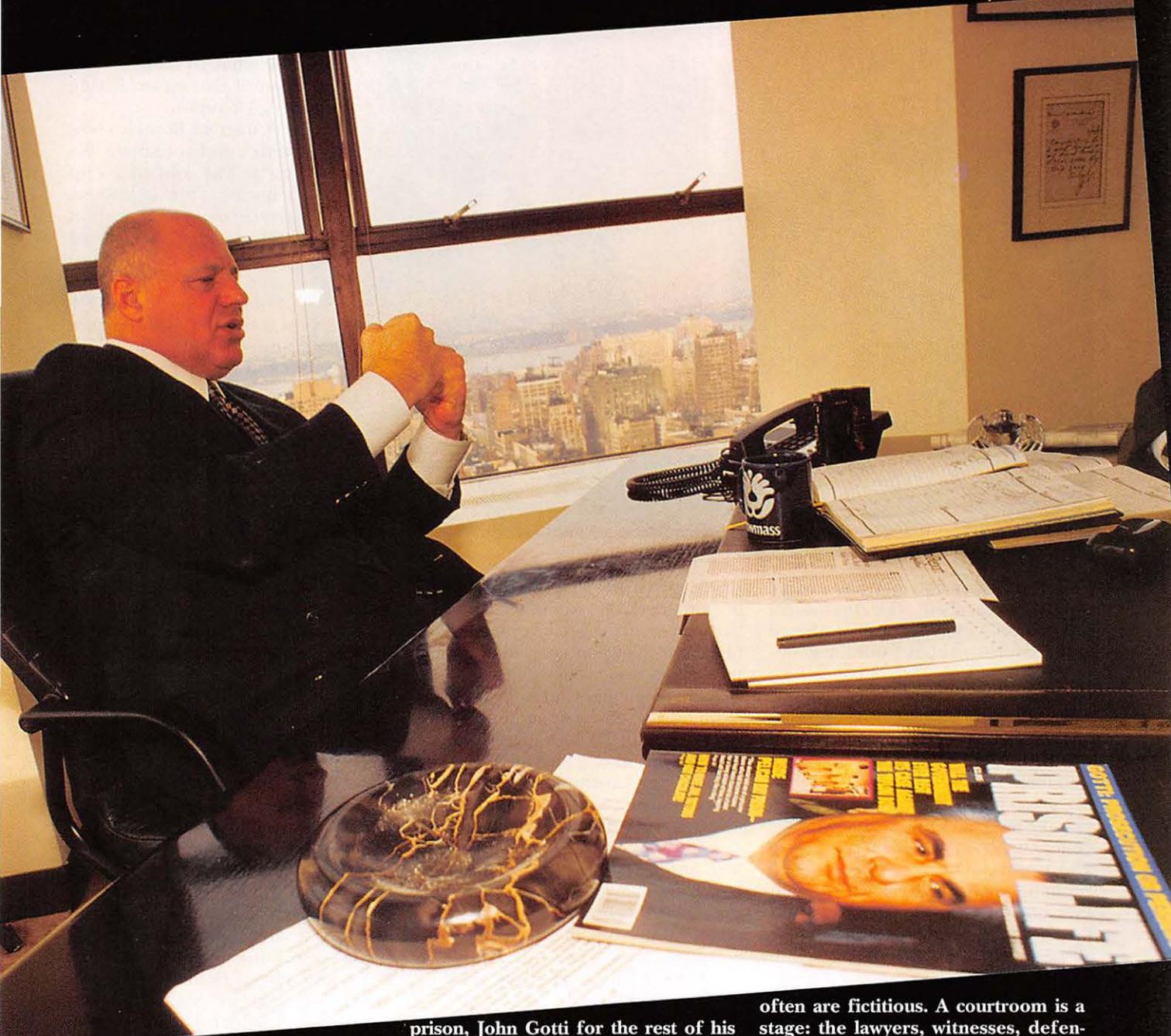
the sheer physical and emotional force he unleashes in the courtroom. Also, *Prison Life* June '94 cover man Herbie Sperling offered to help make the interview happen. Herbie Sperling has been a great friend to *Prison Life*, and I figured if Cutler was the kind of man Herbie would vouch for then this was a lawyer I definitely wanted to meet.

As our inside readers well know, lawyers are a big part of *Prison Life*. This piece begins a series of profiles and interviews with the nation's most effective and colorful criminal lawyers. Bruce Cutler, as counsel to the man accused of being one of the world's most powerful criminals, is a good place to start.

Is there a Mafia? I decided I wouldn't ask Cutler that question. I

once met John Gotti and I hadn't thought to ask him that question, either. Nor had I asked Carmine Persico, Tony Salerno or any other supposedly made *mafiosi* I met over many years in federal prisons. One advantage of writing for *Prison Life* is that you don't have to ask dumb questions.

Even if there weren't a mafia, we would have to create one, for the story is too good to let pass. Imagine it, as Mario Puzzo and Francis Ford Coppola have, as a secret brotherhood founded by oppressed peasants to protect themselves and their families from exploitation at the hands of rich landowners, the blood ritual and oath of *omerta* or silence, the myth of the



man of honor who will die before betraying his family. So the family thrives on illegal activity. The crimes are largely victimless: gambling, drugs, black marketeering, and the casualties are generally soldiers, turncoats, scum, never innocent civilians.

In the real world, it is simply a matter of which gang you're with. The mob is a gang just like the government boys are a confederation of gangs scratching the backs of the corporate crews selling legal drugs like nicotine and booze. It's all the same. Many of us know that. Nixon was as much of a gangster as any godfather I've ever met.

But the government says that they are criminals, and puts them in

prison, John Gotti for the rest of his life. Also in the real world, Gambino *consigliere* Sammy Gravano rolled over, pissed on his oath, admitted to killing 19 people, cut a deal with the U.S. Attorney and will one day go free for reciting the government's version of events at Gotti's trial and the trials of a number of other former friends and associates.

Bruce Cutler is a lawyer, and lawyers don't exist—at least professionally—in the real world. They exist in the world of evidence. What can you prove in a court of law? It doesn't matter what the totality of the evidence amounts to, what matters is what is admissible, what the jury will see and hear before they pass judgment upon conflicting versions of stories that very

often are fictitious. A courtroom is a stage: the lawyers, witnesses, defendants and judges are actors. It is reality-based drama. Again, we all know this, but we pretend it is real. And it is real, in a sense. Certainly the sentences they hand out are real.

John Gotti, as I said, is doing life with no parole. Now at the maximum security penitentiary in Marion, Illinois, he is rumored to be slated for transfer to the new super-max unit recently opened at the mega-prison complex in Florence, Colorado. Having won three trials back to back between 1986 and 1989, with Cutler as his trial attorney, Gotti was convicted at a fourth trial on RICO and murder conspiracy charges after U.S. District Court Judge I. Leo Glasser, doing the government's bidding, disqualified



Bruce Cutler and John Gotti attend court in the 1990 trial.

Cutler for ostensibly having become too close to his client. The government prosecutors kicked up a fuss, whined and complained that Cutler and two other lawyers were "house counsel for the Gambino organized crime family," and Glasser threw them off the case.

That is how it works in the real world. Cutler was Gotti's lawyer, he won three trials as his lawyer, and then the government had the judge kick him off the case so they would have a better chance of winning a conviction. This is what you can expect when you battle these guys. They don't play fair. Everyone knows it's a game, the cops, the agents, the lawyers and the judges all know it. A very serious game with life and death stakes, but still a game. And the government makes up new rules as they go along. They lie, they cheat, they don't obey their own rules, like state cops who drive 95 m.p.h. en route to a coffee break. When you're the government, you do what you want, because you are with the most powerful gang around.

Bruce Cutler has proven he knows the meaning of the words honor and loyalty. He stuck by his client. After the government threw him off the case, he continued to defend Gotti to all and sundry; he would not back down even when facing a possible prison term for contempt. And he is still Gotti's lawyer; he visits John at Marion regularly. Cutler and Gotti are far from beaten.

Now, as he sits in his corner office on Madison Avenue, he is facing house arrest, community service,

finer, possible suspension of his license to practice and other sanctions because of his aggressive defense of his client. Not content with winning their conviction using dirty tactics, the Glasser gang cited Cutler for criminal contempt when he spoke out to the press on Gotti's behalf. He made statements like, "The government throws the Constitution out the window when it comes to John Gotti," which is true, "John Gotti today—you (the public) tomorrow," which is, I fear, also true, and, "John Gotti is the best liked man in New York," true in some neighborhoods. Lawyers do that all the time. But in the real world, when you are Bruce Cutler and your client is John Gotti, they look to destroy you for doing your job.

Cutler had just won another major racketeering case when I stopped by to see him. The man wins a lot of cases. He won another big organized crime case, the Windows trial, right around the time they disqualified him from Gotti IV. We will never know if Gotti could have beaten the government yet again in the last trial had Bruce been allowed to defend him, and that is the pity of it. These jerks don't care about honor. Their motto is win at any cost.

No other lawyer has ever been charged and prosecuted for criminal contempt for making statements to the media about a client. Cutler is taking a lot of heat for his loyalty and honor. But he is, as he has said of John Gotti, a man's man, a man who places much

value upon his word, upon his fealty to his beliefs, and his willingness to stand up for what he believes in, even if that means having to go to prison.

Cutler's a Brooklyn boy, which helps explain his guts. The son of a cop who became a lawyer, Bruce went to Hamilton College where he played tackle on the football team, and then to Brooklyn Law School. He was working with defense attorney Barry Slotnik in 1986 when the government indicted Aniello Dellacroce and members of a reputed Gambino crew with headquarters at the Ravenite Club in Little Italy, and included an up and coming young turk named John Gotti. Gotti's lawyer at the time, Mike

Coiro, had problems of his own with the law, so Bruce wound up defending John, and they bonded. They have stuck by each other ever since.

I remember first hearing the name John Gotti when I was on the ninth floor at the MCC, the Metropolitan Correctional Center in lower Manhattan. It was during the mid-'80s. Rudy Giuliani was the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York in Manhattan. Federal prosecutors in Brooklyn and New Jersey, following Giuliani's lead, were bringing case after case against reputed mafia crews. In the penultimate prosecution, the federals charged the alleged bosses of all five New York crime families with running the entire mafia governing body known as the commission.

It seemed like every week we would hear about some new major round-up of mobsters on the evening news, and there they would all be the next morning in their ill-fitting blaze orange jumpsuits, their bedrolls tucked under their arms, looking bedraggled and bleary-eyed after a night in the bullpen. But that is where the similarity to the thousands of other defendants who schlepped onto the ninth floor ended. For these guys it was like walking into the locker room of their favorite clubhouse. All the other so-called wiseguys or button guys and the guys who were with so-and-so but not made men would flock out from the tier to greet their pals. Silver-haired

men in expensive warm-up suits and brand new sneakers, huge cigars in their mouths, would stride out from D tier, embrace the newcomers, sometimes kiss them on both cheeks, and it was like homecoming week, guys cheering, shouting to each other. They were all from the neighborhood.

I was the clerk on the floor so they would come to me to make arrangements for the new arrivals. "Richie," they would say, "this is my good friend, Funzi. I want you to take care of him. You know, put him in with one of us." There were two tiers that were almost entirely occupied by prisoners whose last names ended in vowels. They were the quietest tiers, the cleanest tiers, the most orderly. You practically had to get permission to go onto those tiers unless you knew someone.

It was a scene. Even the cops treated the wiseguys differently. When I first got to MCC, before the major corruption scandal that ended in the arrest of 13 correctional officers for lugging swag, it was incredible what you would see on those tiers. Portable color TV sets, bottles of Scotch and Cognac, fine cigars obviously not purchased from the commissary. The odors that wafted from D tier rivaled smells coming from Mulberry Street in Little Italy just blocks away. At the far end of the tier there would be a table where an endless game of pinochle was in progress. The boys would sit around between court dates playing cards and telling war stories. There was a lot of laughter. Food was paramount. "Come on, Richie," they would say to me. "Eat with us."

It was there, on Nine North, that I first heard about John Gotti from a mobbed-up Irish junk dealer named Jackie Donnelly, who died of colon cancer after practically willing himself into critical condition rather than having to go back to prison. Jackie was a sweet guy, knew all the wiseguys, was well liked by them. When Angelo Ruggiero, supposedly John's childhood buddy and goombah, was busted, he wound up on Nine North, and that is when the name Gotti could be heard whispered at the table at the end of the tier. Gotti, Gotti, said the men *sotto voce* when they discussed the imminent upheaval everyone knew was brewing in the Gambino clan due to Big Paul Castellano's wavering leadership. Castellano was facing charges on the Commission case when he was gunned down in front of Sparks restaurant in 1985.

And then one day Gotti himself was there. Actually, Gotti was on Nine South across the hall. Nine North was the A & O floor, and Gotti was brought over one morning supposedly for orientation. But it was like no orientation I'd ever seen. Someone brought me up to the little classroom they used for orientation to introduce me to John. He was there holding court. There were no hacks, counselors or unit managers. Just Gotti and a number of men talking as though he were lecturing the orientation class.

In a few short years, while the other families were crumbling and regrouping around him, Gotti was said to have risen from the rank of *soldati* in Neil Dellacrocce's crew to boss of the preeminent Gambino family. The scuttlebutt I heard was that many of the old timers did not like Gotti. They found him too high profile, too hot-headed, and they felt he would be bad for business. His was an image that was bound to

**"THE GOVERNMENT
THROWS THE
CONSTITUTION
OUT THE WINDOW
WHEN IT COMES
TO JOHN GOTTI."**

attract heat.

The dapper don, seen in the best restaurants in his fine suits and with his considerable entourage. The press loved him. Not since Al Capone has a mob boss received so much ink and air time. And his own crew was fiercely loyal, or so one heard, and rich, so therefore powerful.

Gotti exuded power. The way he carried himself, his voice, the look in his eye—there was nothing tentative about him, no sign of weakness. I got the sense that he had been grooming himself to take power from the time he first began to hear stories of the legendary bosses.

My personal favorite was Fat Tony Salerno. Tony, well in his seventies at the time of the Commission case, with his cane and Cuban cigar, would grab me every time he saw me and pull me aside. "Richie," he'd say, "you got the sheets?"

"Sure, Tony. They're all ready," I'd tell him.

"Good, kid. Make 'em into a rope.

Me and you, kid. Tonight. Wait for me in your cell. We're goin' out the fuckin' window!"

When he rode up on the elevator and there was a food cart being taken to one of the floors, Tony would hit the cart with his cane and say, "Any rats in there? C'mon outta there, you rats! I know you're in there." Nothing fazed the old man. He'd been living in the real world for over 70 years and he knew he'd get the better part of the government's 100-year sentence.

Doing time with these guys was a gas. I saw them call sit-downs over a ham sandwich. Whenever I showed up in a new joint, the Italians there would send me a care package with the necessities to hold me over until my property arrived. I met one old timer who had done over 25 years straight and was still just as wily as a street kid and as tough as brass knuckles. The cliques, the food rituals, the laughter and the decorum they bring to a joint—to say nothing of the rackets—help make life in the can interesting and tolerable. For them, it is like retirement on the installment plan. All their friends are there, or they will be. Just as some law enforcement people will admit they miss the old days when the mob had control of the streets because crime was handled differently then, so have I seen prison staff defer to wiseguy internal management.

Bruce Cutler, now 49, at a time when he should be luxuriating in the light at the peak of his career, gives more a sense of a man who was robbed of his crowning glory and has been trying to recover some sense of mission ever since. Where do you go after defending a client like John Gotti, only to have been cheated out of your best shot at making history? I've never seen Cutler in court, but from what I've been told, and what I've read, he plays his role with great intensity, nerve and a heightened sense of drama. He once dumped a massive government indictment against his client into the trash can and pronounced it "a rancid stew, bad meat and bad potatoes."

He's a bull of a man, bald as an egg, courtly and gentlemanly. He gives you his undivided attention—ah, yes, manners really are everything. But there is that sense not of a man who has reached the prime of his life and done an outstanding job in his profession,

as Cutler certainly has, but rather of a man who had a moment of dazzling glory, and is now laboring under some small doom, screwed out of the climax of his career.

I asked Bruce how he happened to become a lawyer.

"I got into law because of my father, who passed away last June. He was a policeman during World War II, did that for six or seven years, and later opened a law practice in downtown Brooklyn. When I graduated from Hamilton College in 1970, I couldn't get into law school anywhere. My law boards were not good, my grades were not tremendous and the extra curricular things like football and lacrosse didn't matter anymore. I got married when I was young, right out of college. I worked that first year, started reading a lot and trying to build up my ability to take these tests. I didn't take standardized tests very well. But I took the law boards again and I got into Brooklyn Law and John Marshall Law in Chicago. I went to Brooklyn. Then I went into the D.A.'s office for six years and nine months trying murder cases. From there I went out with Barry Slotnik for five years. I left him in 1986 and I've been on my own since then. I moved up here to this suite in May of '90. Beautiful, but expensive. You feel it when things slow down a bit, but so far, knock wood, things are going well. I'm going out to Chicago next week to meet a prospective new client. Maybe I can help him.

"I've spent a lot of time in Chicago. I had a seven-month trial there, back when John Gotti was on trial for the fourth time. I'd been disqualified. I had a trial in Chicago from October '91 to March '92 and then I got another case in Chicago and I opened up a little pilot office with a friend of mine. I fell in love with the city. I did. I really love the city and I love the people. It's a great place. My ex-girlfriend was from Gary, Indiana, so when I would go to Chicago she would meet me. I like the midwest a lot and then I was thinking that maybe I'd move there. Thought I'd get a lot of work out of it and also have a reason to go. But it was tough. Out of sight out of mind, and if you're not there, even if you're doing well and helping people, which I was doing in the federal court in Chicago, I didn't get a tremendous amount of work. I came back to New York to fight the contempt case that I had. Finally the probe that the IRS and the

U.S. Attorney had on me for two, three years was closed, without anything. But it was lengthy, it was going on for three years. And now I'm back to fighting the fight again.

"Joe Tacapina, a lawyer I met before he became a D.A., has left the D.A.'s office now and he's going to help me in the Morgue Boys case in federal court. We're representing a policeman from Brooklyn who is accused of civil rights violations and other criminal acts. Feds claim that these guys split up illegal proceeds at some building that had been used as a morgue at one time. That's where they got the nickname, where the press got the nickname. That case is scheduled to go to the end of January into February. Other than that, things are fine.

"I see John, he's doing great. He's in Marion, I saw him Thanksgiving. He looks fabulous. I never saw anything like it. He's rock hard. Turned 54 October 27th, and his physique makes him look like he's 35. I can't say enough about how great, how great he's doing, but I get crazy because you give somebody this kind of time, why can't they be in a normal jail setting? We have one of the top post-conviction lawyers, Linda

"THEY THINK MUZZLING ME AND KNOCKING ME DOWN IS A GOOD THING. I THINK ADVERSITY BUILDS CHARACTER."

Sheffield out of Atlanta helping us, and we have some other people helping and we're taking it step by step. John never complains. He won't say anything, but it's amazing the difference between a certain kind of jail and another kind of jail and the ultimate of being free. And I hear all this talk about Colorado but I haven't gotten anything definitive about it. He's going to be moved. We're also working on a motion for a new trial, which has to be filed this fall, so we're gathering a lot of information on that.

"Tell us about the disqualification," I said. "The background."

"Glasser disqualified me only for that particular proceeding, claiming that I was talking to John about some legal things on some of the tapes that

the government wanted to play from the social club. They wanted to play those tapes, they wanted to show that some of those tapes made John sound like an authority figure. Things of that sort. They also used the excuse that there was a conflict of interest because one of the witnesses they were going to call was a former client of mine. He was a former client of mine, but there was no conflict of interest. He also was John's former lawyer, Mike Coiro, who had been convicted on a case I tried. He wasn't a "government witness." He was subpoenaed by the government and he testified on John's behalf. But the government alleged conflict of interest and they also used this unsworn witness technicality, claiming that we—the other lawyers and I—would be unsworn witnesses because we were on the tapes. We were mentioned and we'd be advocates, we'd be wearing two hats, we'd be writing things said about us as well as defending the client.

"Then, of course, they used the other way out, which was that we should be available to be called either as government witnesses or defense witnesses. We waived all of these conflicts. All of these were waivable, we felt, but we lost in the 2nd Circuit Court of Appeals. The government tried to do the same thing in the Joe and John Gambino case that I tried with George St. Angelo in front of Judge Leisure in the Southern District. That was a six-month trial that ended with a hung jury, and after the hung jury they made the application under this Fulton case

which came out. They said there were certain conflicts that were *per se* conflicts, couldn't be waived and that sort of thing. Judge Leisure denied the application and he was great about it, just a great judge and I have a great deal of respect for him. Upshot of that story was that the clients decided they wanted to settle the case rather than go to battle. They got 15 years.

"The government's tactic is a win-at-all-costs proposition. They tried the same thing against Jimmy LaRosa. They made similar allegations in a case he had, and judge Nickerson denied it, which was great for the clients. The judge felt all of the conflicts could be waived. They were waived. We tried the case and got a great result."

"It seems to me," I said, "that these guys have no sense of fair play. They



take this high moral ground, 'We are the government, we never do anything wrong,' when in fact they are human beings and they will abuse their power. Some of them will do anything to win, even have an effective lawyer like you who they fear kicked off the case."

"I had a case with a lawyer in Dayton, Ohio named Johnny Ryan. I got friendly with him, in fact I gave a speech for him in Columbus, Ohio this past October. Johnny took me around and introduced me to the federal judges out there and the whole atmosphere was cordial, collegial, conciliatory, friendly, amicable—the opposite of what I see here in New York, especially in Brooklyn. I'll tell you, after John was acquitted on March 13, 1987, things just started happening. Manhattan has gotten more tempered since Giuliani left, they seem to be a bit friendlier now. But it's rough in Brooklyn, there's a siege mentality that I sense when I go in there. All lawyers sense it. Many of them won't say they sense it. I'll say the truth; I sense it and I'm hoping that it'll change. You don't feel any cordiality, it always feels like an armed camp. So few guys get bail. So few guys

get acquitted. Most of the juries are anonymous, partially sequestered. They went after John and finally lynched him in that fourth trial. It was unbelievable. To me, it just wasn't a real trial. So now the prosecutor in that trial is a judge."

"To your credit, and what really makes you stand out from most other lawyers, as far as I'm concerned," I said to Bruce, "is that you stuck by your client and were criticized even by other lawyers saying he has taken the role of advocate too far. What do you say about that?"

"Other lawyers, I don't know, have different attitudes about life. I felt that after three trials, after nine, ten years of knowing this man, I have a special relationship with this client. To me, it is a humanistic, personal relationship. I learned a lot in that case. I learned that you didn't mention other lawyers. You stand apart and you seem a little different with regard to fighting for your client or whatever it may be. You're dealing with the press. Lawyers who are my friends are my friends. The others I don't have anything to do with so it doesn't matter, but I'm not blind to the fact that many lawyers are not unhappy that I have all this adgita going on with the contempt and everything else. They think that muzzling me and knocking me down is a good thing. I think adversity builds character and you're a perfect example of that, and John certainly has been like that. So it's just aggravating and annoying but if you rise above it, you feel better about yourself and better about what you do. I can't take on these cases in a dispassionate, casual manner. I take them on professionally within the confines of what's right and wrong, within the context of the system but I do get wrapped up in the battle. I don't know what else to do."

"I think if you didn't get wrapped up in the battle that you wouldn't be as good a lawyer as you are. I think

that's what really makes you stand out. The same lawyers that I speak to from time to time, who criticized you at certain points in your career, they see the way you have handled the contempt case and they at least were big enough to say, 'Well, the man obviously believes in what he's saying. He stands up for his beliefs and he's risking going to prison.' Tell us some more about the contempt case."

"The contempt situation arose out of Rule Seven, which basically precludes defense lawyers from making statements to the press, with the exception of saying, 'My client denies the charges and feels he'll be vindicated.' More than that, under Rule Seven, if you read it technically, you are not allowed to say. There's one caveat, one big caveat—what's known as the safe harbor provision that if the lawyer comes under personal attack, then he can say what he feels is proper to say even if it goes beyond what's itemized in Rule Seven.

"John was arrested on his fourth case on December 11, 1990. In January of 1991 the prosecution moved to disqualify the lawyers. We had the hearing February 22. In the mean time, the attack of house counsel for the Gambino family and all of the pejorative terms the government was throwing around about me and the other lawyers was out there in the media. We responded to attacks made against us, and that was proper. From January through the time we were disqualified, which was in late July, early August of 1991, the court had some conferences. Judge Glasser told all the lawyers to follow the standards. I think it was in June, if I'm not mistaken, that the *Gentile* case came down, where a lawyer had been censured for having a press conference and it went all the way to the Supreme Court. They litigated the constitutional efficacy and legality of a Rule Seven type rule in another state and it was a five to four decision, a very difficult decision to understand. Legal scholars read it in all different ways. I think they sent the case back down because of the safe harbor provision, but they affirmed the constitutionality of certain rules like Rule Seven. The rule in *Gentile* was less vague than our Rule Seven. So we still have our strong 'constitutional vagueness' argument, but the *Gentile* case, in a nutshell, said that there are certain rules the state can promulgate to impact on the lawyer's ability to say what he wants.

(continued on page 81)

MORE

Art Behind Bars

Underground Clouds

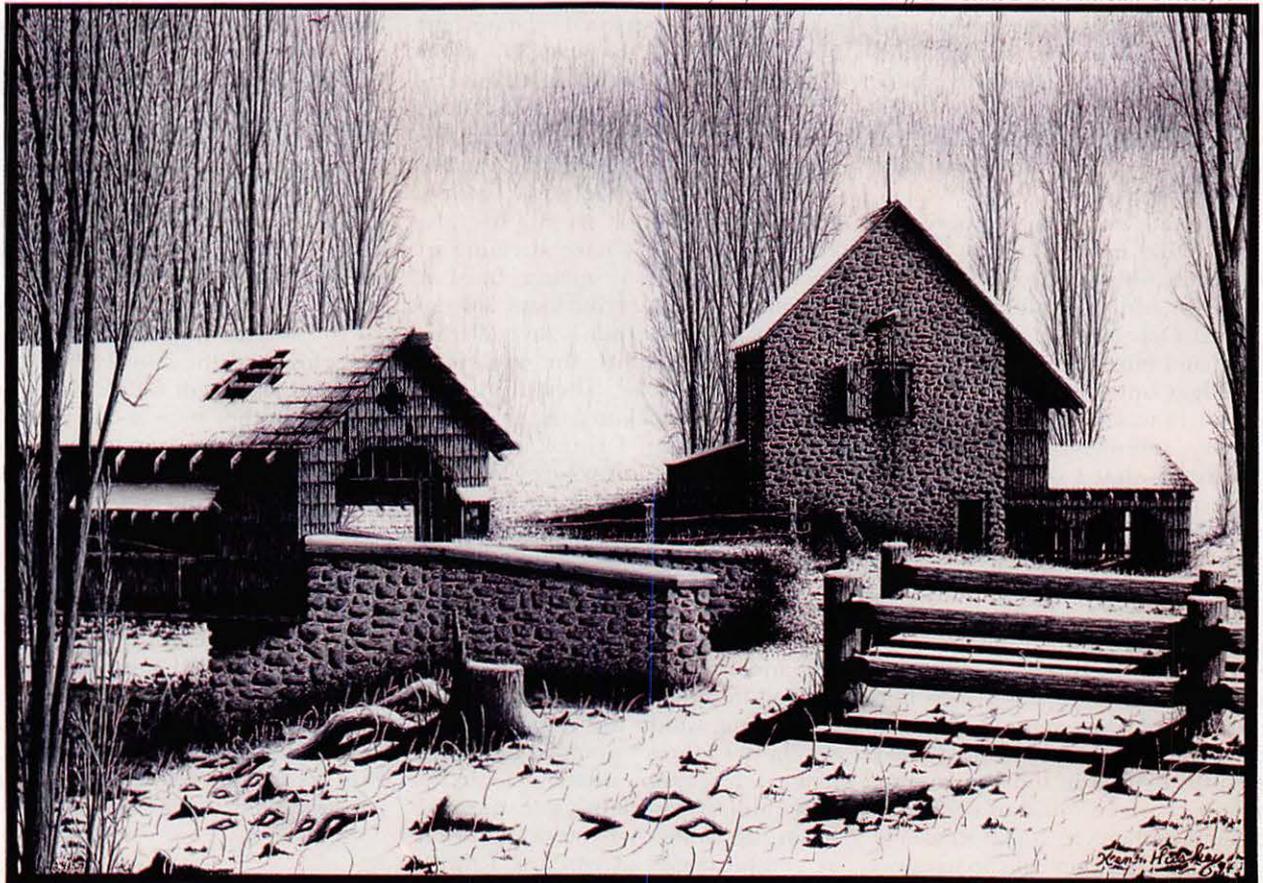
by Pam Golinveaux

Poetry, 2nd Place

Traveling North toward the cold that
numbs
and the snow that blinds
gray highway haze
hurries the destination
there's a foolish repetition about
following a path
here to there—still we hurry
because in between
there are no extremes
 in between you disappear
mouthing strange words
in some exotic smoke ring dance
so North or East
toward climate that will edge the flame
that carries us and
intrigues the dark part

Nice days have no place anymore
We used to know of gentle rain
and shaman
pure intention, something about love
Now a wounded earth pours out poison
when we tear out the sky
and suffocate virgin thought
with silent catechism
We used to believe in
something more than
material schemes and machines
. . . running out of sacrifices . . .
and underground clouds that form
from hidden tears watch,
as a dream waits.

Honorable Mention: "First Storm," by Kenneth Huskey, CA State Prison in San Obispo, CA.



This Time, This Time

by Jorge Antonio Renaud
Robertson Unit, Abilene, TX

This time I will not quarrel with chains.
I have no room for scars, and will
fit my bones to their bracelets.

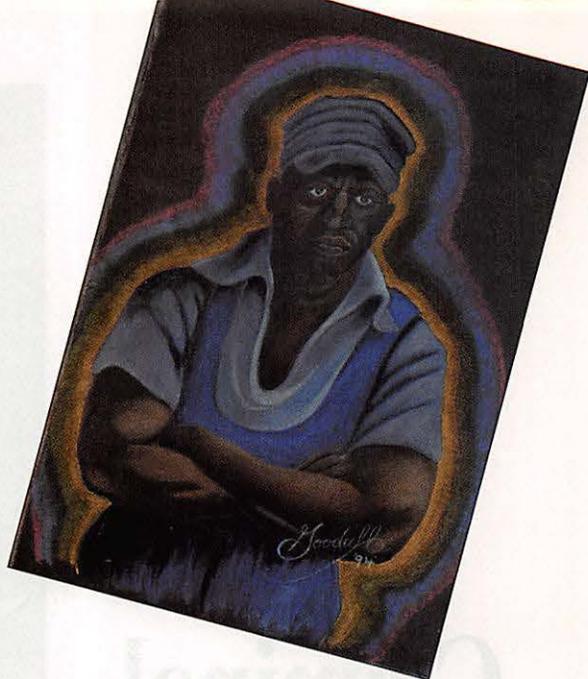
This time I will not spy on
memories. I will forget the
lessons of lips, the temperature of tongues.

This time I will not speak
with birds. Let music blanket others;
I will burrow with worms.

This time I will not scream. Sleep
folds its flames around me; ashes
line my cheeks.

This time I welcome the jailer's keys.
They soothe with a well-known exactness.
It is the sound of my surrender.

Poetry, 3rd Place



Honorable Mentions:

(Above) "John Henry," by James Goodall, Allen Correctional, Ohio; (Below) "Sunglasses," by Robert Madaus, Ozark Correctional, Missouri.

POETS IN PRISON

by Jorge Antonio Renaud

In my country 'tis of thee—sweet land of ten second soliloquies, slogans and soundbites—poetry has an image problem. It's about trees and daffodils, Grecian urns and albatrosses. Not enough Death and the Devil, you see, and thus unfit for prime time.

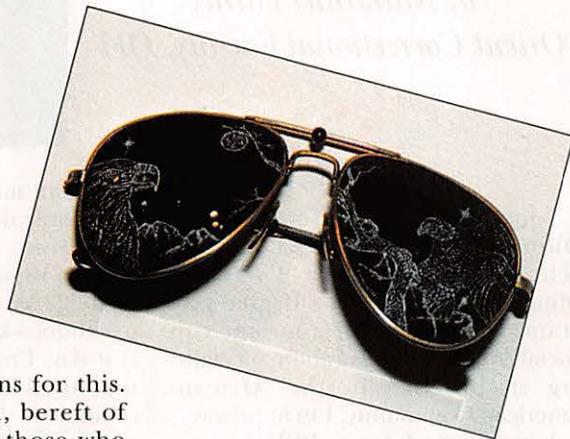
The American image of male poets is that they are bearded Russian émigrés, limp-wristed college namby-pambies or pipe-smoking, leather-elbowed professors. Female poets are all lesbian English majors fixated on menstruation with suicidal tendencies. We want our sons to be quarterbacks, our daughters to sell real estate. Poets are sissies, dreamy-eyed and frazzled. They lollygaggle, waiting for inspiration. Worst of all, they write nothing with market value and get paid accordingly.

But in the slice of reality where I reside—prison—where innocence is unknown, weakness deadly, tough guys a dime a dozen, poets are revered. It is not the cat burglar, the bank robber or the paperhanger who occupies the top rung in convict hierarchy. It is the poet. Only visual artists rival wordsmiths when it comes to who is granted respect.

There are two reasons for this. Deprived of stimulation, bereft of beauty, convicts admire those who create. We hunger for difference, for newness. A man able to capture an event, a memory or an emotion in a way that arouses convicts' dulled sensibilities is popular, indeed.

But poetry goes deeper. Many of us are inarticulate. We have always been this way, consumed by a rage we could not name and so gave voice to in a blinding brutality. Our silence has been taken for ignorance. Unable to express love, we are assumed to be incapable of nurturing it. We despair of ever finding a way of demonstrating humanity.

There are only so many ways to tell our wives of our bone-deep longing for them. There are only so many ways to tell our children that we are ashamed of our failures and fear for their future. Yet the days drag on, the pages remain empty, accusatory in



their purity, demanding an eloquence we find harder to tap.

It is here where the poet speaks. He cobbles together the words for us. He is a tailor, stitching the rip our rage has torn. He gives voice to our hopes and dreams. Poets, with their command of imagery and precision of language, bring our words to life in a way that most of us cannot.

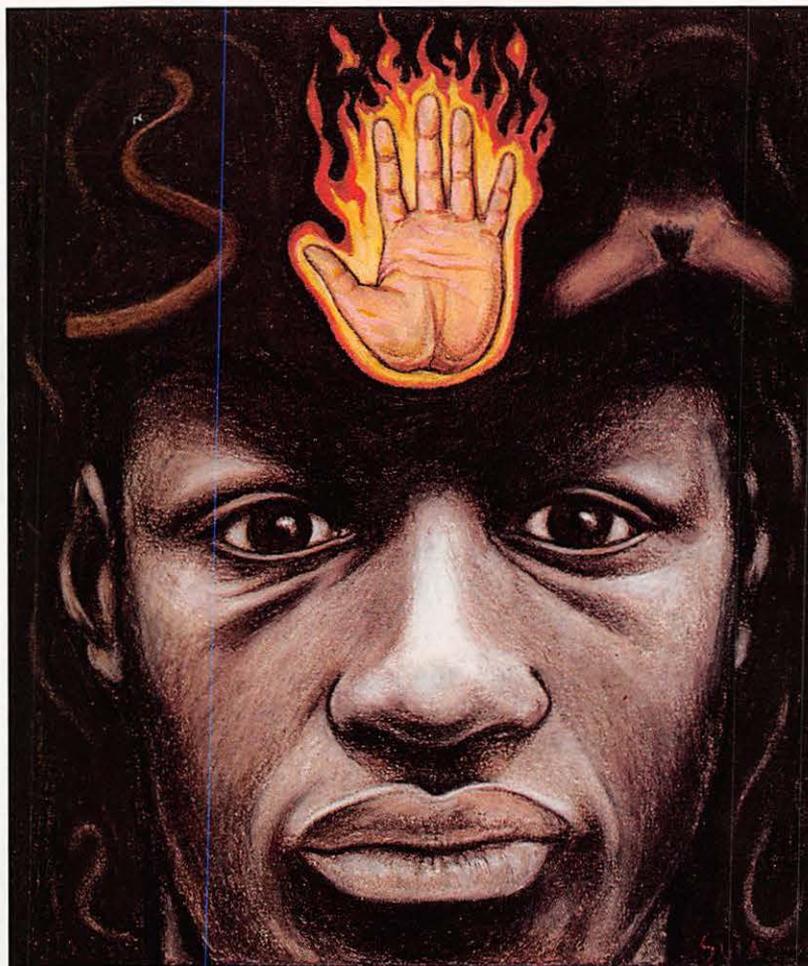
But more than that: Prison poets wield the sword that pierces the tumor of apathy, contempt and complacency in the minds of the still free. We are the voices—screaming, exulting, groaning, whispering—that you cannot still, here in the belly of the beast.

Nonfiction, 2nd Place (tie)

The Making of a Criminal

An excerpt from the unpublished autobiography: *Finding Myself in Prison* by Nathaniel Hardy

Orient Correctional Facility, OH



Art by Rob Sula

[April 28th, 1994]

I just received a letter from the Ohio State University's Graduate School of Social Work. I've been admitted to the Master's Degree program. I plan to earn a master's in Social Work Administration specializing in practice in the African-American Community. I'm in prison.

I graduated from Wilmington College in 1992 while incarcerated in Warren Correctional Institution. I graduated with honors. My degree is in psychology and sociology.

I'm a third-time convicted felon. At the age of 33, I found myself in prison in more ways than one.

It took four long years of confinement, reflection, observation, study, discussion and research for me to discover why Nathaniel Hardy—a self-proclaimed "nice guy"—had such a long criminal history.

I'm in prison now for burglary. I've also served prison time for theft and robbery. I've been in the county jail a number of times. I've been arrested for being drunk and disorderly, for domestic violence, drug abuse, embezzlement, assault, resisting arrest, driving while under the influence—and these are just the crimes I remember.

I spent much of my adolescent life in juvenile detention centers.

—Flash

[My earliest childhood memory]

1962, Akron, Ohio. I'm on my way to school—kindergarten. It's my very first day. I'm crying. I'm walking with my father. I don't like him. I'm afraid of him.

I don't like the shoes I'm wearing. They're black and white oxfords—cheerleader shoes. The shoes hurt my feet, they're too small. I was afraid to tell my father when he bought them. I was afraid he'd yell at me in the shoe store and beat me, so I didn't tell him the shoes were too small.

—Flash

[Sometime later]

I'm in kindergarten class. I'm sitting in the middle of the floor. The rest of the kids are dancing around the room waving their arms and singing, "Here comes Suzy Snowflake dressed in a snow-white gown, tap-tap-tapping on your window pane to tell you she's in town . . ." OUCH! Some fat white kid just stepped on my hand. It hurts. I'm crying. The teacher bends over me and says, "Aw, look at the little teardrops fall." Stupid bitch.

—Flash

I see my mother's face. I see my sister, she's older than me. I don't know where she came from. I don't like her.

—Flash

My sister is laying on the floor, she has her pants off. Her legs are open. She has hair between her legs. I don't. She's rubbing my face between her legs. I don't like her doing this—but I do. I think I'm nine years old.

—Flash

My pants are down. I'm bent over a chair in the kitchen. My father is beating me with a strap. I don't know why.

—Flash

I'm sitting in the living room. My face is swollen. I'm holding a bag of ice on my face. My father beat me again. Now he is sitting behind me, and I can't see him. I'm scared he's going to hit me again.

—Flash

My sister is making me "do it" again. My thing got hard.

—Flash

NOOOOOO—DADDY PLEASE DON'T I'M SORRY PLEASE . . . YAAAAA.

—Flash

I'm in the kitchen. I smell skin burning. It's mine. My father is hold-

ing both of my hands over the flames of the kitchen stove. He's burning the skin off my hands. PLEASE PLEASE PLEASE DADDY PLEASE. My mother made him stop. He slapped her. Now I'm laying on the kitchen floor. The skin is peeling off my hands.

—Flash

I'm scared. My father's coming home from work. Is he going to beat me again? He usually does. I'm ten years old.

—Flash

I just put rat poison in my father's coffee. I hope he dies. He probably won't die, because he didn't die last time I did it, he didn't even notice. Maybe I should use more.

—Flash

My sister has her clothes off again. She wants me to get on top of her but I don't want to—but I do.

—Flash

MOTHER PLEASE DON'T I'M SORRY—I DON'T KNOW WHERE IT'S AT...NOO—AWWW. My mother just took a kettle of hot water off the stove. OH MY GOD—she's scalding me with hot water. I'm hiding in the corner by the kitchen door. She poured hot scalding water all over me.

—Flash

It's dark out. It's getting cold. I'm scared, I'm dirty, I'm hungry, I'm tired. I ran away from home two days ago I think. I slept in some bushes last night.

—Flash-Flash-Flash

I'm in the detention home. It's nice here, it's clean. No pain, I'm not afraid. I want to stay here forever. There are other boys here. We have to take showers together. They have hair on their bodies in places I don't. One boy asked me if I had a sister. I said yes. He asked me if she "fucked." I don't know what that means. He told me. Now I know my sister fucks me. I didn't tell him. I didn't tell anybody (until now). I think I am ten years old.

—Flash

I'm in juvenile court. My father is there. My mother's there too. My father is gritting his teeth. That means he's mad.

OH MY GOD! The judge is sending me home. Why? I don't want to go. I told the counselor my parents beat me, burned me and scalded me with hot water. My father said I got burnt playing with fire. My mother said I knocked a pan of hot water off the stove and that's why half of my back is pink. As for the bruises and scars, "Well, kids will be kids."

—Flash

My father beat me all the way home.

—Flash-Flash-Flash

My sister just set the bathroom curtains on fire, because I wouldn't "do it" with her. Now she's running upstairs to tell my mother I set the curtains on fire. I'm leaving—my father will kill me.

—Flash

I'm in the juvenile diagnostic center on Broad Street in Columbus, Ohio—Group #55. This is my second time here. They keep trying to send me home. I won't go. I have to keep getting in trouble or they will send me home.

—Flash

I'm back in Akron, in the detention home. They want to send me home. I won't go. My father is waiting to beat me. My mother is waiting to scald me. My sister is waiting to fuck me. I won't go.

**Incorrigible,
runaway,
delinquent,
antisocial,
withdrawn,
introverted,
dysfunctional,
bad seed.**

—Flash

I'm in an isolation cell. My throat hurts, so does my head. I think I'm in trouble. I'm in the detention home and the police are coming to get me. They say I'm too hard to handle here. I'm getting big. I've got muscles. I'm mad. What the fuck are you looking at me for? I'll kick your ass. No one's going to hit me again.

—Flash

I'm in the county jail in a cell by myself. I think I'm fourteen.

—Flash

I'm at Fairfield School for Boys. I lift weights now. I'm a bad mother-fucker. What the fuck are you looking at me for? I hate you. I hate people.

—Flash-Flash-Flash

I'm 17 years old now. I'm in Columbus again at the YMCA. I live in a program for juvenile delinquents called Helping Hands. I don't talk to anybody.

—Flash-Flash

I'm 18 years old. I'm in the county jail for drunk and disorderly conduct. I like to drink. It makes me mean.

—Flash-Flash-Flash

[Places]

Detention Home, abandoned cars, bushes, county jail, juvenile centers.

[Labels]

Incorrigible, runaway, delinquent, antisocial, withdrawn, introverted, dysfunctional, bad seed.

—Flash

What about abused, did you forget about that?

1969—Parents don't abuse their children. "Boys will be boys."

—Flash

[years later]

I'm 33 years old now. I'm in prison for the third time. I'm in college studying psychology and theoretical perspectives of human behavior.

—Flash

I'm still in prison. I graduated from college two years ago. Now I work for the college as a clerk. I've been transferred to a medium security prison. My status is Minimum 2. I've been locked up four years now. I've learned a lot about people, about sexual abuse, about incest, about physical and emotional abuse, about sibling rivalry, about dysfunctional families.

I've learned a great deal about the underlying psychological ramifications of abuse of all types.

I've learned about recovery, working through personal issues, self-disclosure, self-exploration, self-understanding, and behavior change.

I've learned about psychosocial stages of development, basic trust vs. mistrust, identity formation vs. identity diffusion.

I've learned about diagnosis, labeling, negative effects.

I've learned a great deal about self-therapy, nurturing, support, compassion, love. I've learned about the importance of family ties, role models and social interaction.

I've learned about change, goals, purpose and direction.

—Flash

I've learned that I've been labeled again.

I'm a criminal—a violent offender—two strikes.

One more and I'm out.

—Flash

I'm 37 years old now and I've learned not to accept negative labels, I've learned not to allow the course of my life to be dictated by circumstances. I've learned to act—not to react. I've learned to take control over my life. I've learned that—I'M OK.

PL

SURRENDERING OF SPIRITS

by C.W. Pyle

California State Prison, Sacramento

I should have pretended I was asleep when Marty stormed into the cell with a fist full of large plastic bags. He would have woken me up anyway, but at least I wouldn't have had to experience the electric tension of his presence. He grunted as he tore off his weight-lifting gloves and jacket. His long hair fell about his face, a face I didn't want to look at just then.

"Why'd they recall yard so early?" I asked, casually flipping through Stephen King's *Gunslinger*. "You're an hour early."

His face twisted with hate and rage, his eyes became slits and his jaw was clenched so tight the skin looked drawn. "Fuckin' cops took the weights away," he said.

Everyone had heard the rumors, but no one believed it would happen.

"No more benches, no more dumbbells, no more bars or plates or racks or nothing! There's nothing left out there but rocks and dirt. A hundred years and no one ever fucked with the weights. What gives them sons-of-bitches the right?" Marty started pacing the cell with clenched, bloodless fists, repeating everything he'd just said, but in chants: "No more benches, no more dumbbells, no more bars . . ."

I'd never seen Marty this worked up before. He was always in a good mood, calm from his iron drives. His voice never trembled with rage in all the years I'd known him.

"What the hell do they expect us to do now?" he raved. "There's nothing out there anymore." He snatched up the plastic bags he'd tossed and tripled them.

I knew he was going to fill the bag with water and use it to finish his workout. Unfortunately, the water flowed so slowly he had to stand there for quite a while. One 16-ounce tumbler took a minute to fill, and Marty needed at least sixty of them given his size and the weight he needed to work those 20-inch guns.

He was still filling the bag when the floor cops surprised us with an early lockdown for count. Our being

in a corner cell allowed the cops to peek in before the general warning to "stand up and turn your lights on" was announced. They stared at Marty and the huge bag he'd filled in the sink.

"What?" Marty snapped, breaking the officers' suspicious gazes. "You wanna do my laundry for me or somethin'?"

The cops moved on, smiling, but not in a friendly way.

After we returned from chow, cops stormed our pad. "Both of you, step out of the cell."

My nerves were already shot from Marty's ranting and raving about the weights. I didn't need the cops tearing up our cell. Most of my illegal luxuries were stashed (extra razors, wire, a stinger, a sewing needle, a joint, etc.), but sometimes the cops would stay long enough to get lucky.

Instead, they only took the plastic bags. Then they popped the water-filled one and emptied it out on the floor.

"Why're you taking all our bags?" Marty shouted, becoming unglued. He stood outside the cell as the cops headed for the section door. "Afraid I'm going to melt 'em down and make shanks or somethin'?"

"Lock it up. You know plastic bags are contraband. Next time I find these in your cell, you've got a write-up coming."

"Oh wow, man. What's the big fuckin' deal?"

"Come on Marty, fuck 'em," I said. The two cops stopped at the section door. The Command Center cop caressed her gun.

"The big deal, Ford, is this is stolen state property. Keep running your mouth and we'll stick a thievery beef on you. Now lock it up!"

"I don't give a shit! You steal our weights, I'll steal your bags! How would you like it if I stormed your house and took your shit? Matter a fact, I got your address, pal."

Marty never should have said that. The cops were tired of the exchange; they had the section door closed. As

soon as they locked me in my cell, I knew they were coming for Marty. He ended up in the cage that night.

With the cell to myself for a few hours, I lay back on my bunk, staring into my celly's locker, discovering a side of Marty I'd never seen.

Most inmates' and convicts' locker cabinets were either empty or full of cosmetics, coffee and junk food. Not Marty's. His was bulging with bodybuilding, powerlifting and nutrition books he'd bought through mail-order catalogs with his own prison-earned cash. He'd even subscribed to *Muscle and Fitness*, an expensive publication, for years. Had a stack of them under his bunk. During the last few years I'd known him, he always shared his post-parole plans of helping teens "come up" in the world by bodybuilding. He was convinced that self-esteem was directly related to outside appearances. I'm sure he was right. He studied hard and drove the iron even harder to create an outstanding physique. Even in prison, he helped others train more safely, and with better results.

Once, while Marty was showing another con a certain back exercise, a branch-thin youngster snatched up a 25-pound dumbbell and slithered toward Conrad, a huge bald-headed guy known to have burned a few "lames" from time to time.

Marty intervened, but Conrad saw what was happening. He picked up an EZ-Curl bar and strutted toward Marty and the youngster. "You wanna bash my head in, fool? Come on with it. Get your shit!"

"Take it off the pile and leave the weights," was the general call for respect from other cons who jumped in. No one wanted the weights to be taken.

That incident was squashed without ever reaching the eyes or ears of the Man.

When Marty returned from the cage late that night he grabbed a sheet off his bed and tore some strips off.

"Come on, man," I said. "Don't hang yourself."

He tied his hair in a pony tail and stared at me. "Don't be stupid. I'm not going to hang myself. I need to work off this anger and energy or I'll never get to sleep. Uh, would you mind standing on my back while I do a few sets of push-ups?"

I couldn't refuse that. It wasn't every day you could step on someone without their stepping back on you. Wish I'd seen the troubles ahead though; I wouldn't have volunteered my bodyweight so freely.

Marty was right about my not being able to imagine what a prison yard would be like without weights. What I saw the next morning in the yard was unreal. The yard had literally changed face. Nothing remained where a huge iron pile once stood, not even traces of the rusted dumbbells sinking into the ground. The dirt crew had already raked the area smooth. Though I'd never used the weights more than a few weeks at a time, I felt an emptiness setting upon the yard. There was nothing left but a huge dirt track. Great. We could walk in circles all day.

Around the remaining sets of pull-up bars and parallel bars, prisoners of every race took turns as fast as they could. Confrontations and shouting matches broke out every few minutes between those attempting to cut into the long lines and those waiting impatiently. Massive boredom had infected the yard and a few stinking sets of bars were not going to offer cures.

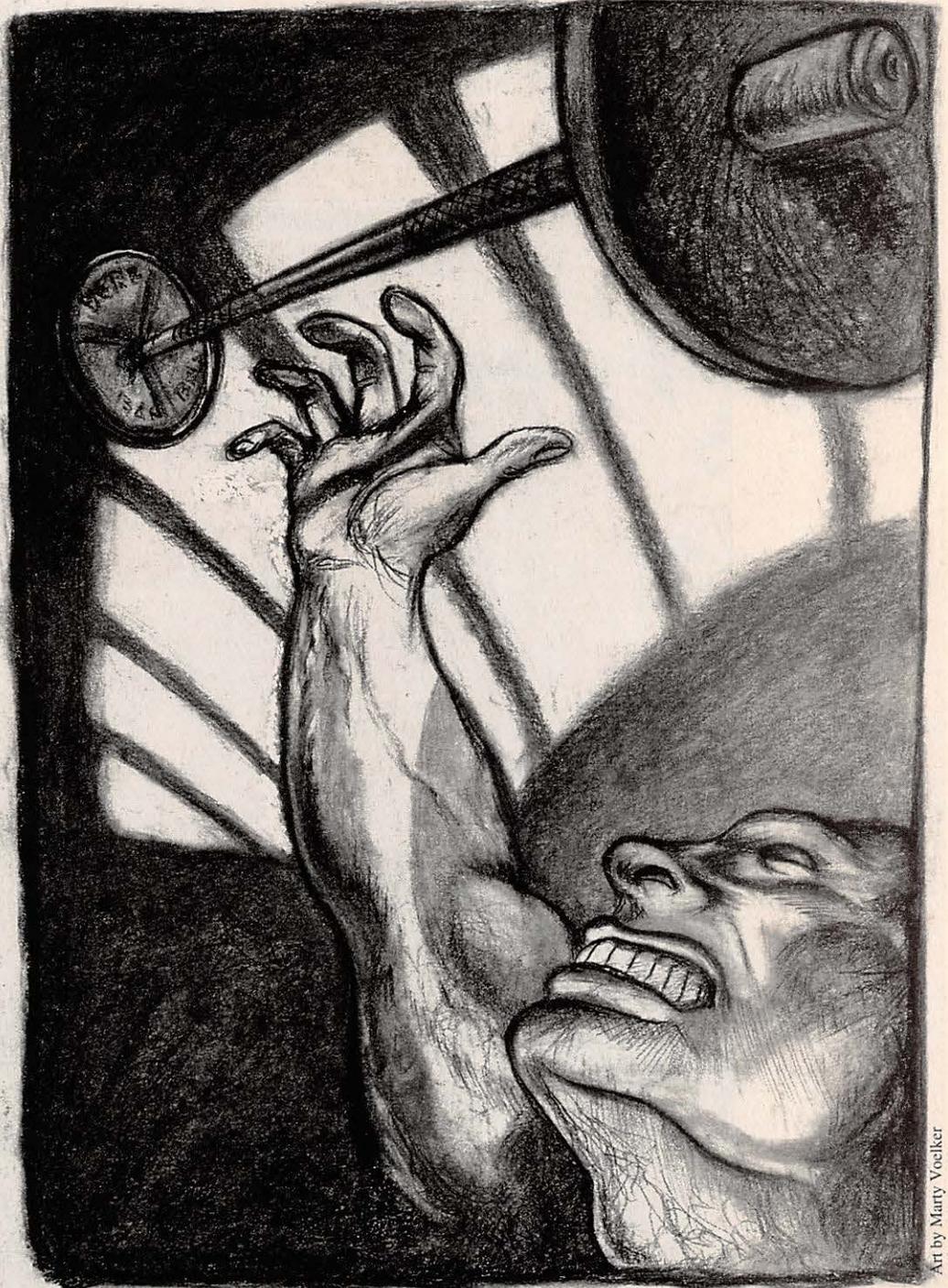
The cops were out in force, but strangely, they didn't venture much beyond the cellblock gun towers unless they had to. With four housing blocks surrounding the main yard of C-Facility, a total of eight mini-fourteens covered the two hundred or so cons and inmates. The tower cops were sitting closer than usual to the windows. Not surprising.

What was surprising was that all that beefed-up security did nothing to prevent the fights.

After the third fight that morning, our yard time was cancelled and the cops herded us back into our cells. It would be like that, and worse, for some time.

Marty broke many sheet strips while trying to work his arms before he finally acknowledged a loss in size and endurance. He stood in the front of our small cell mirror for hours flexing his guns, trying to find evidence of new muscle growth from the strict cell-isometric routines. The only thing that grew was his frustration.

"We heard the rumor but nobody believed it would happen—no more benches, no more dumbbells, no more bars . . ."



Art by Marty Voelker

"I'm getting the hell out of here!" Marty took his tumbler and started beating on the cell door.

Escape passed through my mind, but only for a moment. Marty might have had a hard time dealing with his anger, but he certainly wasn't stupid.

"Other states haven't taken the weights away. I'm going to get an interstate transfer. Fuck California!"

The Command Center cop racked him out to go see his counselor. I remembered Marty talking about relatives he had out in Georgia. Unfortunately, the counselor shot his request into the waste basket. The entire cellblock heard the shouts and threats Marty raved at the counselor. His voice rose until the counselor finally decided he'd had enough and pressed his panic button. The goon-cops stormed the office within sec-

onds, as if they'd been waiting just outside our block, and hauled Marty to the cages.

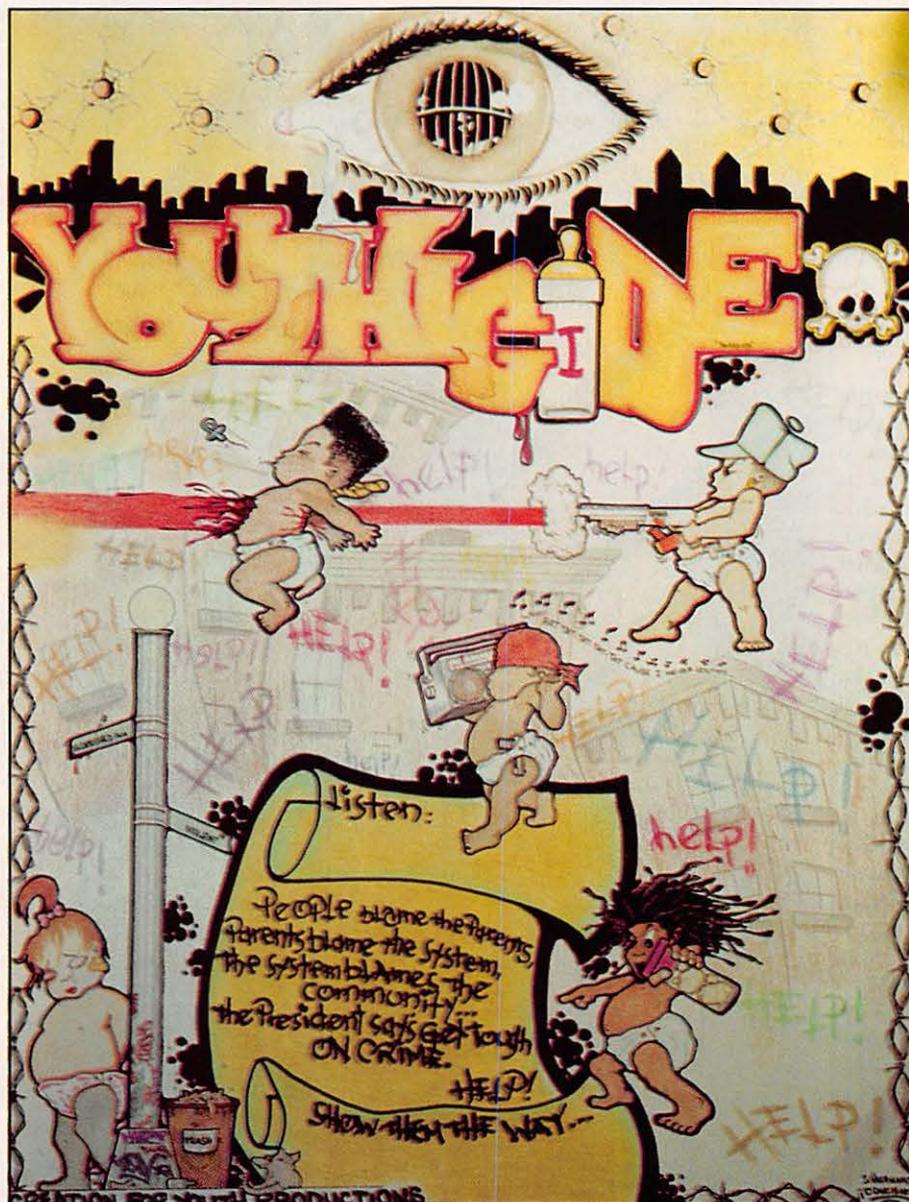
Doors started rumbling. People started shouting. The Control cops ran back and forth, confused over the uproar of support for Marty. Anti-cop slogans were thrown about without care of reprisal, an uncommon scene in the days of supermax prisons. It was great! It was unity!

When Marty returned late in the evening he was different. His high spirits and humor had died. Dullness glazed his eyes like cataracts. Weird shit. His shoulders slumped and his hair stayed uncombed. He quickly bored me with his constant fantasies of going out in a blaze of glory if, after parole, the police tried to screw him over and put him back into the blackness of prison. Marty even

developed an obsession for revenge movies.

This was not the same person I'd celled with two years earlier. When you've known a guy for that long and his personality suddenly twists 180 degrees, it gets a little scary. And sad. Most of my acquaintances didn't notice the changes going on with Marty because they, too, were changing for the worse.

Use of drugs and prison wine increased three-fold after the weights were taken. Now, I can't even walk the yard anymore without some strung-out homeboy hanging all over me. The drunks just run their mouths until they fall out. What else are they going to do? There are no educational programs left in the prisons, and limited sports equipment, nothing to take one's mind off doing time. The



library is a joke of bad books with missing pages and, well, there's just nothing better to do than try to wipe out reality.

One reality the cops are really frustrated over is the growing ineffectiveness of their warning shots. A group of Mexican-Americans squared off at the horse shoe pit the other day and started slinging body parts one-on-one. Warning shots were fired. The group tangled tighter. Two on one. Hit one, kick the other. Fists were flying. More Mexicans jumped in. The multiple shots the guards fired did nothing. Once the cops were able to billy-club most of the fighters into submission, another group squared off at the other side of the yard. It was one helluva show-down. The rest of the yard kept worrying about ricochets.

That incident got the institution locked down, but the administration's only response beside the usual token interviews was to take out the remaining exercise pull-up and dip bars so that nothing was left.

A cell change was inevitable. The man I'd known as Marty for so many years vanished through the use of heroin. His uncontrollable anger turned on me the first time I refused to stand on his back for a few thousands sets of push-ups and squats. He couldn't understand I had more going on in my life than volunteering my body weight. Before our falling out, he'd nearly killed a neighbor over some juice he'd bought that turned to vinegar. Crazy shit.

Fights break out nearly every day now because there's nothing better to do for long-termers. Short-termers

hardly go outside much anymore. Even the cops are wary of the yard and movement in general.

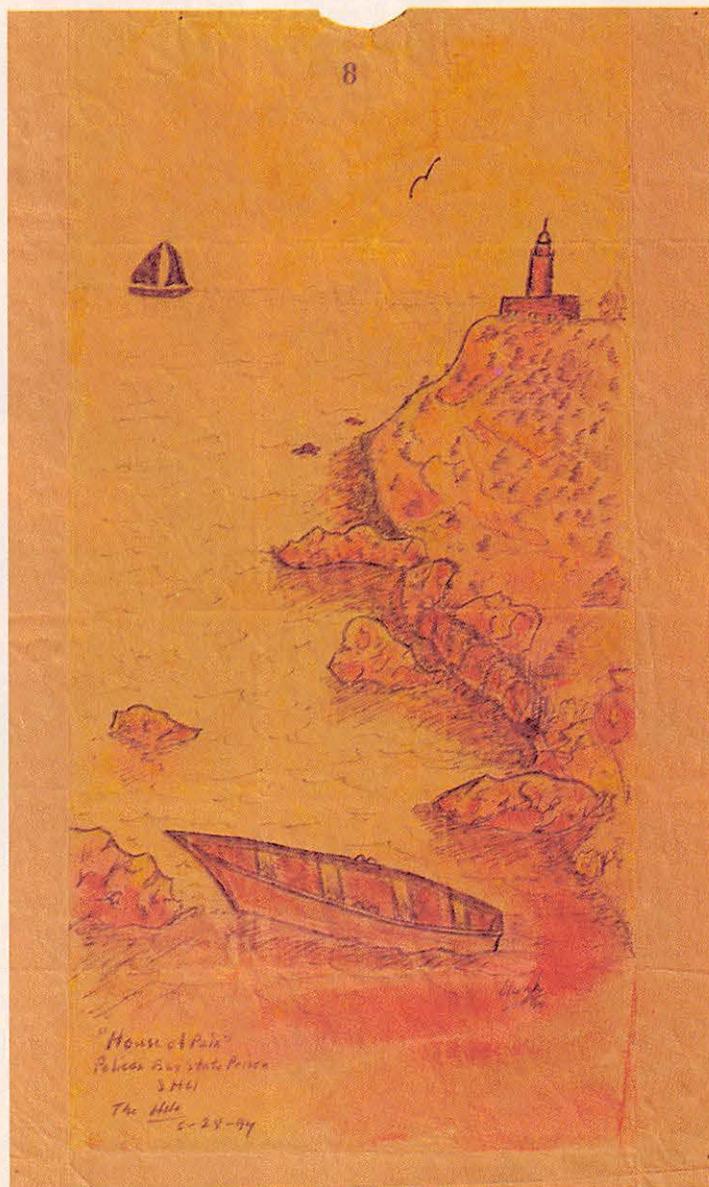
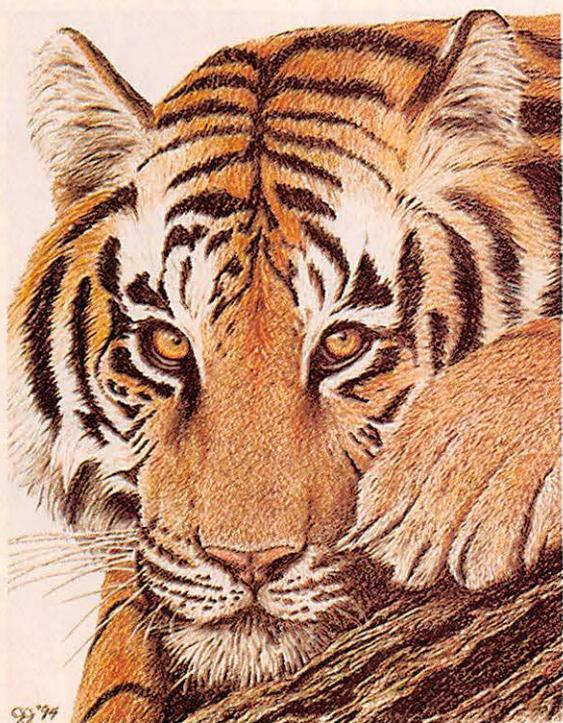
Now that the weights and programs are gone and the general population is desperate and violent, and "strike twos" and "strike threes" can send you back to all this emptiness for life, there's much more incentive to go down fighting. And they will. They'll be going out in blazes of glory, taking as many people with them as they can.

Just ask Marty. He paroles tomorrow, and he's one angry, strung-out dude.

PL

Honorable Mentions:

(Other page) "Youthicide," by Joseph Hernandez, Green Haven Correctional Facility, New York. (Below) "Tiger," by Janet Galloway, F.P.C. Carswell, Texas. (Right) "Lunch Sack Art," by H. Loible, Pelican Bay, California.



Honorable Mention: "Untitled," by Ty Rekshynski, Iowa State Prison.



Artwork by Ty Rekshynski

Mutt

1993

Pieces

by Precious Bedell

Bedford Hills Correctional Facility, New York

ACT ONE

SCENE 3

A prison yard, surrounded by a fence topped with barbed wire. Outside the fence four prisoners dressed in green chinos and white T-shirts, escorted by a correction officer, are leaving the reception building. The prisoners inside rush over to the fence and start to call to the others.

PRISONER #1: (from inside yard) Yo, baby, did my girl Liza come on the bus with you? Is that Shorty? That is you. How you been?

PRISONER #2: Yeah, it's me. Hey Sunshine, I love you baby. You know I do from the bottom of my heart. (The officer tells them to move away from the fence. The women keep walking but the prisoners follow along the fence talking to the other four as they walk on. One of the prisoners with the officer motions to Prisoner #1 pretending she's washing her underarm and mouths silently that she needs some soap.)

PRISONER #1: Don't come back here stressin' me for nothin' bitch. You ain't sent me no soap, no cigarettes, no nothin' when you were in New York. (The officer waves Prisoner #1 to move away from the fence and warns his charges with a stern look not to respond to any comments the prisoners inside the fence are making, and they are making many. Inside the yard there are benches and picnic tables scattered around. The dancers are still practicing and showing off throughout this scene. They are still rehearsing for the talent show. They practice the Vogue, the Butterfly, the Bogel, modern dances to the music of Michael Jackson's "Keep It In the Closet." Dee-Dee is on her knees in the middle of the yard praying reverently, raising her Bible to the sky from time to time. Sandy is comforting Prisoner #2 at one of the tables. At a table next to them four women are playing cards. There are other women in the yard sitting, walking or jogging with Walkmans. Money-Love is walking toward Sandy. The woman starts to leave but Sandy stops her.)

SANDY: You don't have to leave.

PRISONER #2: Later, girl. I don't wanna be round Money. My nerves are just too bad.

SANDY: I'll tell Money to go about her business and she'll go.

PRISONER #2: No, I'm too messed up to really talk and anyway I'm gonna meet a friend from another building. These kids, boy I'm tellin' you. The bigger they get, the bigger the problems get.

SANDY: You're certainly right about that.

PRISONER #2: Why can't he just stay his ass home till I get outta here? This is the second time this year he's run away. (She starts to weep silently and exits. Money walks toward Sandy.)

MONEY: How come she always cryin', Sandy? Shit, every time you look round she bohoooin' all over the place. Just makes me sick. If these no-money-gettin', turnip-face scaggs can't stand up to doin' time, why don't they just square up?

SANDY: How come you always talking street idiom and stressing it to the hilt when you come around me? Don't get on my nerves today!

MONEY: Wow! Now where did that come from? I just don't understand why women get so emotional over every damn thing here.

SANDY: Money, shut up! Not everyone has a Ph.D in doing time like you.

MONEY-LOVE: Oh, s'cuse me, "MISS SOCIAL WORKER" of the prison.

SANDY: You're excused, "MR CAREER CRIMINAL" of the penal system.

MONEY-LOVE: That's me, but don't change the gender, baby. "Ms." suits me.

SANDY: Oh, so today you want to be woman?

MONEY-LOVE: Come on now, baby. I have no illusions about who or what I am. I'm just aggressive and prefer men's attire. From the look on your face that scallywag must be feelin' guilty 'bout losin' her kids or the visit with them fell through.

SANDY: And if she did or didn't it's none of your damn business.

MONEY: That's why I don't set myself up for visits. Waitin' and waitin', with your best shirt on. And for what? To

look like her (points to the woman who has just walked away) and feel badder than I already do? Uh-uh, no thank you, sista. You know I almos' feel sorry for her. She looks stricken to death. (Money fakes empathy.)

SANDY (Pointing to an empty bench): Take your body over there if you continue on the route you're on. Sometimes you're so vile and disgusting I don't even know why I put up with your worthless ass.

MONEY: Ooh chile. Thangs must be real emotional for you right 'bout now cause you sure ain't soundin' like them white folks.

SANDY (Defensively): There's nothing wrong with speaking Standard English. I'm certainly not worried about losing my culture or becoming white-oriented.

MONEY-LOVE (Sounding proper): Of course not, never you, darling. (In her own voice) You not becomin' white-oriented. Ha! That's a laugh.

SANDY: So what? I can live in both worlds. I certainly won't get a job with "Yo, baby, like, um, can you slide me a job application?"

MONEY-LOVE (Laughs): Stop dissin' our race sista girl. Sandy, (on a serious note) you been a evil chile lately. Look, now, Sandy, I have some money saved . . .

SANDY (Angrily): Don't even try it, okay. Don't sell me dreams. You know me better than anyone and you know I don't play this kind of bullshit! Don't talk to me about your money on the outside unless you're going to tell me you are going to stop throwing bricks.

MONEY-LOVE: You know I always look out for you when I'm out there.

SANDY: Yeah, you do but it wouldn't hurt your ass to stay out of here. You're getting too old for this.

MONEY-LOVE: You, too. And why should you sit here any longer than you have. This goddamn shit makes me sick. I ain't never asked you why you here but I know and don't care. But it ain't no worse than what those white women done that the media and God knows who else 'bout to

Drama, First Place Winner

break the doors down tryin' to get out. You just the wrong color.

SANDY: Oh, shut up, Money. You always make something out a race issue when I tell you to stay your ass out of here.

MONEY-LOVE (*cringing in mock horror*): Then what am I gonna do? Apply for welfare? Or work my ass to death in one of those minimum wage jobs? Never get promoted 'cause I'm the wrong color and gay, too. Please!

SANDY: Oh, Jesus, what have I started? You can't tell your ass to go to work because you have more excuses than a politician.

MONEY-LOVE: You know I speak the truth.

SANDY: Oh Jesus, yes, you speak the truth!

MONEY-LOVE: Okay. Me and \$40 that the state will give me when I leave. No, no, now the state won't even give you \$40 unless you have money in your account while you're in prison so they can take it out and, get this, save the \$40 they're supposed to give you.

SANDY: Money . . .

MONEY-LOVE (*Interrupting*): Don't "Money" me! The system is a set-up to keep people comin' back. This is a business, warehousing

human flesh. Ain't no different from those slave ships except they throw a few whites in to make it legit.

SANDY: It's not the same and you know it.

MONEY-LOVE: I'm not going to get into that. Now you have to pay \$25 to take they G.E.D. test. And when you get out you have to pay the parole officer \$30 month for his services, which is to violate you and send you back here as soon as you breathe wrong. And let's not forget that you start out paying once the judge sentences you 'cause now they want you to pay a \$150 surcharge for court fees.

SANDY: And you'd think that once a person is put through all that, they'd never come back here!

MONEY-LOVE: No, people come

back here because this whole situation is staged from day one to the end. (*Shaking her head.*) How can they possibly expect for you to pay the parole officer when you don't have a job?

SANDY: There's jobs out there and more resources to help ex-offenders than there used to be. You paint a picture of an ex-con leaving here in the fifties. Please!

MONEY-LOVE: It is, believe me! Next I guess you'll tell me that racism is all in my mind and that we got e-quality because now we can use the same toilets and eat in the same restaurants as white people.

SANDY: You know, Money, if you were

SANDY: Well, ain't that the pot calling the kettle black! You're the one who's always calling women unfit mothers. And why does it have to be the gloomy picture you just painted?

MONEY-LOVE: It sure ain't like that fairy tale you got dancin' 'round in your head.

SANDY (*retorts hotly*): Do you really think I'm not aware that racism and the many other social ills exist in this world?

MONEY-LOVE: Do you?

SANDY (*Goes on like she doesn't hear Money*): But change never comes by people blaming each other and feeling sorry for themselves all the time and

becoming another statistic time and time again. Stop saying you're in prison because you're poor and black.

MONEY-LOVE: Hell, that's part of it! This place is full of Blacks and Ricans and not by accident, neither. This is another form of genocide. The oppression that we live in is perpetrated by the dominant society keeping us in prisons like this or in poverty-stricken ghettos.

SANDY: Then make a difference. You're just as smart as any college student or smarter. But you're still not brave

enough. You want everyone to think you're some illiterate career criminal.

MONEY-LOVE: You think I give a fuck 'bout changin' society? I'm lookin' out for NUMBER ONE and that's the bottom line. Baby, you been in prison too long if you think society is gonna change 'cause Blacks try to make a difference. That civil rights shit of the sixties is gone. All of our present so-called activists sure ain't Martin Luther King and his followers. These folks done gave us all we gonna get. You're really not that smart, Missey.

SANDY: Oh, really! I'm smart enough to realize that the biggest problem in my life was myself, not the system. (*Backing down and changing tone in voice*) Oh Jesus, why can't we just take pride in our achievements?

Art by Bobo Willkie



doing something to change all the wrongs that exist for minority people I could understand why you act the way you do. What about going to work and at least trying to make a go of it?

MONEY (*Grins*): What about it? If I didn't know how to hustle I'd have to go on welfare. In case you don't know, most women who leave here go that route because they don't have no money and noBODY!

SANDY: I'm not saying it won't be difficult, but have some pride. I'd rather work in McDonald's than have those nosey assholes in my business.

MONEY: Yeah, and then they try to take your kids when you don't dance to their music. But it's more than difficult to do the right thing. It's damn near impossible!

MONEY-LOVE: Here we go with the Jesus bit again. Don't waste your breath on him. He's been had too—even the Bible speaks of how wooly his hair was.

SANDY (*Resigned*): Whatever. Change starts from within, Money. I'm through with this shit.

MONEY-LOVE: I hate to hurt your feelings but life outside just ain't like you want it to be. I tried that route of yours. Your sweet American dream: "Work hard you will get ahead." I had a job as a recreation instructor.

SANDY: Really, Money?

MONEY-LOVE: Yes, really. I was real proud, full of dreams. Had me a baby and a fiancé, too.

SANDY: Well, I'll be.

MONEY-LOVE: We had us a nice apartment, he was workin'; I was workin'. He lost his job 'cause the boss gave it to one of his white relatives. Came home one day, found a note on the ice box. One of them Dear John jammies, but in this case, Dear Money. Things got so bad we had to go on welfare and move to a cheaper place. The neighborhood was so bad even I was scared to go outside without carryin'. (*Money stops and stares at the ground.*)

SANDY (*Shows emotional change here*): Money, I never knew you had a son. What's his name? He lives with your mother?

MONEY-LOVE: Ha! My mama stopped being mama when she married a white man and demanded that we call him daddy. Like somebody would believe he was.

SANDY (*Grabs Money's hand*): I'm so sorry, Money. You think you know someone well and you don't. How old is your son?

MONEY-LOVE (*Jerks her hand from Sandy*): Wait one damn minute! Don't try to make me another one of your victims. I gave my son up for adoption so he has a good home. Been there since he was nine months old. He's 14 today. Some of these 'hos in here need to make the adoption move. Always tryin' to hold onto kids they can't never take care of. The only one I have to take care of now is me. And I haven't had a man since. Only a woman can comfort me.

SANDY: You don't have to be gay 'cause a man did you wrong. Stop making excuses! You just love women! And most of them here didn't know how to be good mothers.

MONEY-LOVE: You not a good moth-

"Stop saying you're in prison because you're poor and black."

er, queen-mother-of-parenting-skills-program!

SANDY (*crossly*): Yes, me. Being a good parent is trial and error even for those who were fortunate enough to read Dr. Spock.

MONEY-LOVE: Who the hell is Dr. Spock?

SANDY: He wrote literature about babies, how to care for them.

MONEY-LOVE: Man, that shit don't mean nothin'. Anybody got to read about how to take care of a baby is stupid.

SANDY: I'm sure you took excellent care of him. Gaining further knowledge of parenting doesn't take away a person's instinctive ability to be nurturing.

MONEY-LOVE (*Pretends to play a violin*): I'm not stayin' here for one of your intellectual sermons. Not in this lifetime. I'm goin' in early. You can watch your magenta sunsets alone.

SANDY: No, I'm going in too. I'm making some popcorn. Would you like some?

MONEY-LOVE: Hell, no. I don't want no popcorn without butter like you eat it.

SANDY: I have to lose some weight.

MONEY-LOVE: Always tryin' to diet

and be thin like them white folks. Do you educated freaks know how to cook a real dinner? (*Laughing*) Just kiddin', baby, you can cook. I'm goin' down to Julio's place and eat some rice with fatback and pigeon peas. And if I know you, and I do, as soon as you smell it on my plate, you'll come beggin'.

SANDY (*Laughs*): Money, you're something else! You're going to eat Ms. Gomez out of house and home. (*The lights go up in another part of the yard. Milagros, Dee-Dee and a few others crowd around a nurse who is dispensing medication.*)

MONEY-LOVE: Yeah, but she loves ole Money-Love's company though, girl friend! Yo, Sandy, there goes Milagros on the medication line with Dee-Dee. She's been takin' Elavils since she's been back. See what I mean? Can't do no time. Still needs a crutch. (*Dee-Dee comes over to Sandy holding her head. She kneels by Sandy on the ground and lies her head on Sandy's lap. Sandy caresses her hair and talks to her softly.*)

SANDY: You feeling better than you did this evening? I bet you didn't take your medication this morning.

DEE-DEE: Oh, Sandy, something bad gone be goin' down. I feels it in my head. I keep seein' visions of somebody dying over and over. And I see a court room with a room full of white folks in it and you in the middle and they wants you to tell them somethin' and you just can't remember and you starts to cry.

SANDY: Don't worry about me, Dee-Dee. I'm going to be all right.

DEE-DEE: You sho' is, my pretty little girl. I's gone to see to it. And you goin' home too. Put it in God's hand. He owes me plenty and I ain't asking for much for me but I pray so hard for you. (*Spits some orange looking pills out of her mouth and stomps them into the ground savagely.*)

SANDY: Dee-Dee, your head hurts more when you don't take your medication.

DEE-DEE: But I don't needs this mess. They trying to keep me down, keep me quiet 'cause of my visions and 'cause I knows the police is raping these womens after dark. Sandy, I ain't never signin' no papers to give away my kids. You have to do somethin' to help and I's gonna get you outta here, okay.

SANDY: I know but don't worry about that now. Just rest, Okay. (*Lights fade.*)

PL

GANGLAND

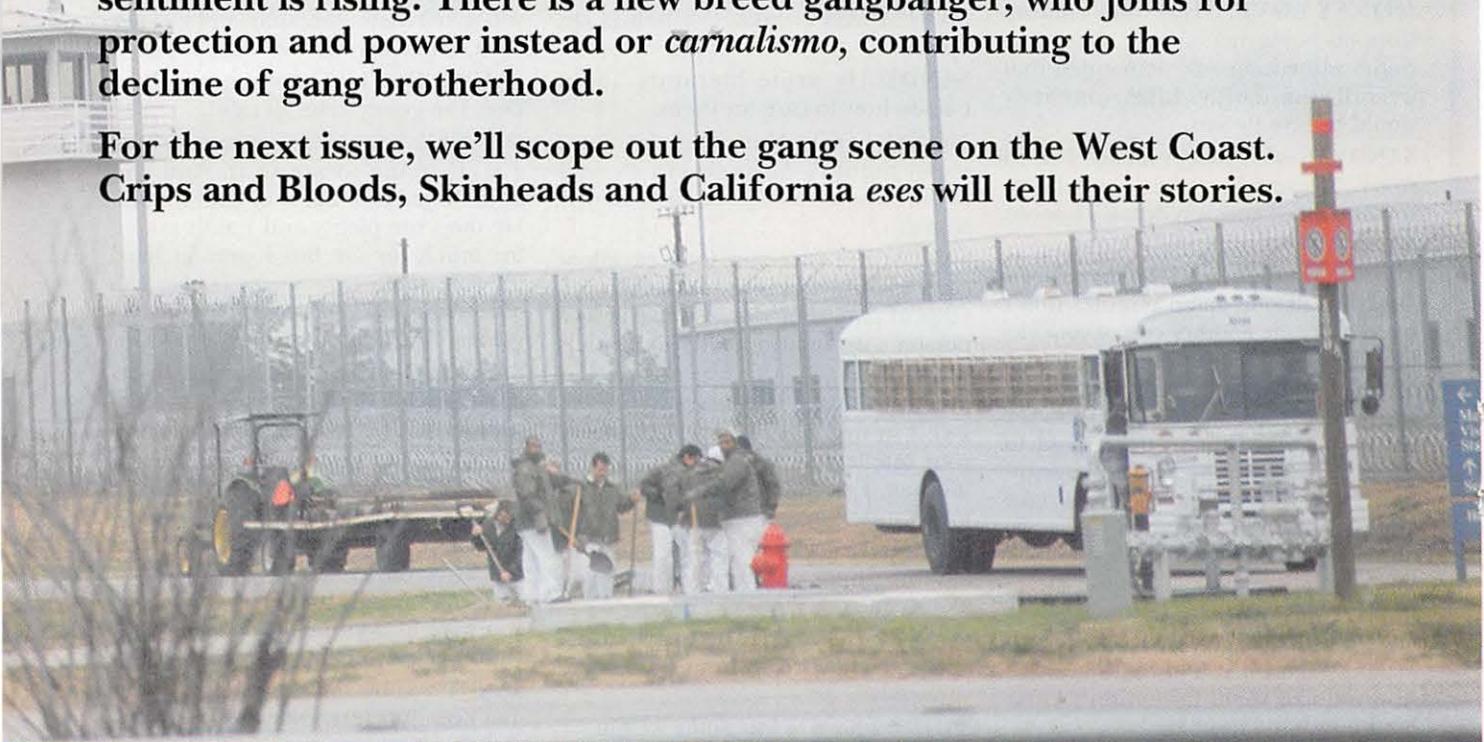
Last issue, in the first installment of our three-part series on gangs, we featured “From the Streets to the Pen.” Gangbangers from the Midwest and East Coast told the real deal about their organizations, good and bad.

For the second part of Gangland USA, we traveled south to Texas.

Texas prisons are overflowing. The state now has the second largest number of prisoners in the country, with an incarcerated population of 118,000. The numbers have tripled in just one decade. In fact, Texas officials say they’ll open a new corrections installation each week for the next year and a half.

It should come as no surprise that Texas has problems with gangs—problems the Texas department of corrections has initiated and let fester. Gang membership seems to be increasing at the same time that anti-gang sentiment is rising. There is a new breed gangbanger, who joins for protection and power instead of *carnalismo*, contributing to the decline of gang brotherhood.

For the next issue, we’ll scope out the gang scene on the West Coast. Crips and Bloods, Skinheads and California *eses* will tell their stories.



USA



text & photos by Chris Cozzone

I couldn't believe they were finally going to let me in. For weeks, I had tried to arrange an interview with Robert Delgado, a former gang member (FGM) with the Texas Syndicate. The Syndicate, which originated in 1977, was Texas' most notorious prison gang; they make Crips and Bloods look like Boy Scouts.

I had also tried to interview Texas Corrections officials, but David Nunnellee, spokesman for the Texas Department of Criminal Justice Institutional Division (TDCJ-ID), had denied each request.

"We feel an article on Texas gangs would be a threat to security," he told me over the phone. "You will not get cooperation from us in any way."

"The article has an anti-gang slant to it," I tried to tell Nunnellee. "Delgado is speaking out against gangs."

It was like talking to concrete. Nunnellee saw fit to prevent me from interviewing gang intelligence officers, Delgado and other prisoners, all FGMs against gangs.

What are they so afraid of? I thought.

Finally, with help from some friends of *Prison Life*, Warden West at Stiles Unit in Beaumont, Texas approved an interview with Delgado and I was in.

From the outside, Stiles Unit was like every other prison I'd been to in Texas: stark and quiet. In the preceding week, I'd "visited" 12 other prisons in the Houston-Huntsville area. At Goree Unit, I was followed out of the parking lot by a guard. At Ellis II, I was detained by guards while my driver's license was verified. ("You can't be tak-

ing pictures here without proper authorization!" the cop had shouted in my face.) At most of the prisons I checked out, I got only as far as a guard shack half a mile from the entrance.

The treatment I received at Stiles was no different, although the guard who escorted me to Delgado forgot to check my camera bag and run me through a metal detector. I was also left to find my own way out after the interview, without an escort.

"How many prisoners in Ad Seg?" I asked the guard who escorted me to the visiting room.

"Five-hundred and four."

"How many of them are gang members?"

"Oh . . . a whole bunch of 'em. Most." He led me to a booth facing a closet-sized room separated by a sheet of Plexiglas with phones for communication. This was where I was supposed to tape an interview and photograph Delgado.

"Can't we go into the same room?" I asked the guard.

"Can't allow you near Mr. Delgado." He shook his head and looked at me like I'd asked to have lunch with Jeffrey Dahmer come back from the dead. "What're you doing your story on, anyway?" he asked.

"Gangs."

"Well, he should be able to tell you something about that."

"Yeah, being a former member of the Texas Syndicate and all . . ."

"Former? We believe Mr. Delgado's the number two man for the Texas Syndicate."

"Do you know he's speaking out against gangs?" I asked.

"Gang members have that rule," he

said, nodding his head authoritatively. "Once you're in, you're in for life. So, he must be lying."

OPEN WAR ON GANGS

In 1985, TDCJ-ID spokesman Phil Guthrie estimated that 750 of the system's 38,000 prisoners in the 26-unit system belonged to one of half a dozen gangs: Texas Syndicate, Mexican Mafia, Texas Aryan Brotherhood, Texas Mafia, Mandoingo Warriors, *Nuestro Carnales*, *Raza Unida* and *Hermanos de Pistoleros Latinos*.

All but the Texas Syndicate were new to Texas. The Syndicate had originated in 1977 to fight the Building Tender System. Building Tenders (BTs) were selected inmates-turned guards, authorized by the state to carry weapons and order other prisoners around. Once the BT System was abolished in 1983, other gangs formed to fill the power vacuum. Much of the tension was between the Syndicate and Mexican Mafia, but other gangs joined the power struggle.

In September 1983, after a triple homicide at the Darrington Unit, the Department of Corrections declared open war on gangs. A lockdown was enforced at all maximum- and medium-security joints. For three days, while prisoners were confined to their cells, officials ran weapon searches, tattoo examinations and stopped mail call to all suspected gang members. After three days, every alleged gang member was confined to Administrative Segregation.

Ten years later, they remain there. And Ad Seg has since become the automatic housing area for those believed to be gang members.

"BAD BOB" DELGADO

Robert Delgado would have been thrown in Ad Seg back in 1983, but he was already there for a suspected gang-related stabbing. Back then, Delgado's Texas Syndicate tattoo was undeniable proof of his gang affiliation.

But people change.

Delgado, now 40, grew up in New Braunfels, Texas, a small town clean of gangs. His first run-in with the law came when he was busted for armed robbery at the age of 18. That was 1974, back in the days when the infamous Building Tender system was in full swing in Texas joints.

Chicanos, Mexicans and other minorities had it hard under the mostly-white BT rule. After three years of harsh punishment, Delgado became one of the original members of the BT's arch-enemy gang, the Texas Syndicate.

"Back then," says "Bad Bob" or "Malo" Delgado, as he is called, "we were the only ones who stood up to the Building Tenders. Joining the Syndicate was beautiful. It was real brotherhood back then, real *camalismo*. But without the violence and oppression under the BT system, we never would've had reason to form."

In 1978, Delgado finished serving his sentence. Within a year, he was

back in prison for selling less than \$100 worth of heroin. He was given a 35-year sentence; he has since downed 16 calendars.

When he returned to the pen, Delgado saw that the Syndicate's struggle against the Building Tenders had intensified. For every Syndicate member beaten, stabbed or killed, two Building Tenders were treated likewise.

"There were less than a hundred of us throughout all of Texas," says Delgado. "But we had the illusion of being more because nobody could figure out exactly who was making all the moves. We were organized to fight."

The Syndicate and the Building Tenders were the only real Texas prison gangs until 1983. Without a righteous cause, the Syndicate started to go downhill.

"We formed as an organization with a cause," says Delgado, "but it then turned into a bullshit gang."

Three years ago, after nearly two decades of gang affiliation, Delgado called it quits. Losing a *veterano* like Delgado, who had been chairman at one time, sent shockwaves throughout the Syndicate. Soon after, six other original members quit. Death sentences were handed down from the Syndicate's command.

Delgado is not worried. "The old

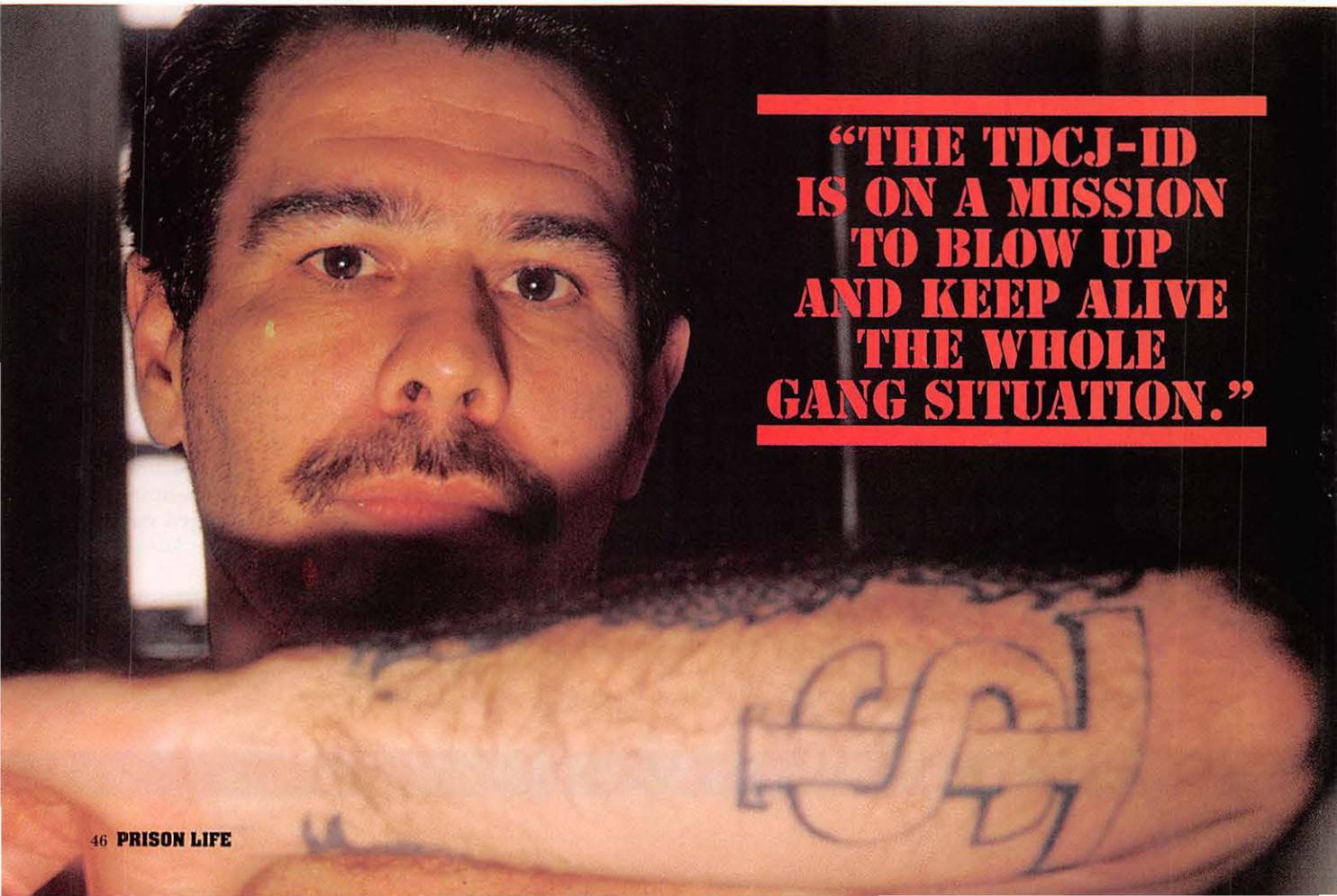
Syndicate is dead and gone," he says. "I'm dealing with the new Syndicate, which is nothing like the old. We don't call these guys gangsters, we call them punksters."

Green or not, the Syndicate made a move against Delgado last year. He was walking through his cellblock during his "free hour" when a Syndicate member attacked him.

"Right in front of a guard, too," says Delgado. "But here in Texas, guards have to wait for backup before intervening in a struggle. So this guy sounds the alarm and stands there watching. It took me about 30 seconds to knock this dude out. Then I just sat on him and waited for the guards to come to arrest us both. After about five minutes, he started to wake up so I knocked him out again. The guard says, 'Delgado, don't hit him no more.' But shit—he's the one who attacked me! If I didn't knock him out, I'd be dead. In the Texas system, you got to take care of yourself."

Ten minutes later, Delgado was arrested and thrown into a strip cell. He says the treatment and unfair punishment he received is typical of what the TDCJ-ID doles out to former gang members. "It's all part of the program," he says.

(continued on page 48)



"THE TDCJ-ID IS ON A MISSION TO BLOW UP AND KEEP ALIVE THE WHOLE GANG SITUATION."

BUILDING TENDERS: TEXAS' FIRST GANG

by Mark Fronckiewicz
(with Beverly Medlin)
FGM—Texas Mafia
Robertson Unit

Before the mid-'60s, the courts in Texas did not give any relief to prisoners who challenged conditions, policies or institutional rules. This changed in December 1980 when William Wayne Justice, a federal judge in the Eastern District of Texas, issued a sweeping decree against the Texas Department of Corrections. *Ruiz v. Estelle* ordered prison officials to address a number of unconstitutional conditions: overcrowding, unnecessary use of force by personnel and too few guards. Most significantly, the decree abolished the Building Tender System, disrupting the power structure that had controlled prisoners throughout the Texas penal system for most of the century.

Building Tenders were a select group of inmates who were given the job of managing hardcore criminals. By giving BTs special privileges, officials were able to use them and their assistants, the "turnkeys," to keep rank-and-file prisoners in line. Officially, the BT system was an information network that helped officials penetrate and divide prisoners. The BTs and turnkeys had their own snitches so that information about troublesome prisoners, guards and conditions could be passed on to administrators. The BTs and turnkeys were rewarded with power and status far exceeding that of ordinary prisoners and even lower-ranking guards. Unofficially, though, the BTs kept order in the cellblocks through intimidation and physical coercion.

Justice's ruling became effective in May 1982; Texas D.O.C. agreed to dismantle the Building Tender system by January 1983. BTs were reassigned to ordinary prison jobs, stripped of their power, status and duties, then moved to separate cellblocks for their protection. At the same time, guard forces nearly doubled.

Although the BTs knew which convicts to leave alone, weaker prisoners were commonly abused. You could buy protection from the BTs because they ran everything. They kept the Man off your back, and if anyone attempted to interfere, they'd be stopped short. Although never respected, the BTs



were definitely feared.

Burt Kiser, who did three-and-a-half years in Texas between '68 and '72, was a BT during the time he served on the Clemens Unit. His job assignment had been changed from hoeing cotton to working in the laundry when other inmates approached him about becoming a BT. Burt had gained respect due to the way he worked in the cotton field. He was liked by other prisoners, and he met the BT qualifications: a clean discipline record.

"The BT system facilitated harmony in the unit," says Kiser, now an ex-con. "It made life more tolerable for prisoners." He says it was the BT's job to check on inmates working in the cell block and to ask if anything was needed. If a BT was aware of something "going down," he could either turn his head or report it. Kiser says he did not use his position as a BT for snitching and that he usually allowed most altercations to work themselves out. He was there for the prisoners, he says, not the administration.

"Most infractions were worked out from within. Inmates could talk to one another. They could be reasoned with. Guards would not get the same kind of response." Kiser adds there was no need for someone to join a prison gang during the BT years.

While the purpose of the BT system was to close sociological gaps between the officials and prisoners, many BTs found less than desirable ways to communicate with the inmates, including violence. Like the guards,

they could often be bought, and because they had unchecked power, there was often serious abuse.

Abolishing the BTs also brought about major changes between guards and prisoners. With the new relationships between keeper and kept, prisoners became more vehement in challenging the authority of C.O.'s and became more confrontational and hostile. The guards began to cite inmates for infractions.

Gangs formed to fill the power void. In 1985, all gang members were being weeded out and shipped to Ad Seg. But this did little to stop gangs from flourishing in population.

A prison guard who asked to have his name and rank withheld expressed much frustration with respect to the Justice rulings. He says that now guards' hands are tied. They can no longer handle situations with swift and sure consequences as they once were able to do. "These people only understand one language—violence. We've got to be allowed to speak to them in their own language," he says. Gang members behind bars are only the manifestation of a greater power, a force so strong that it penetrates through the prison walls into the free world and endangers even the families of corrections officials. "These gangs are not confined to prison," he says. "You can be killed on the streets in cold blood for nothing more than wearing the colors they recognize as their own gang colors if you're not able to identify yourself to them as a gang member."

PL

THE PROGRAM

Delgado will soon go to the parole board for the seventh time. He's been denied six times in the last two years. In fact, last year, just days before Delgado was scheduled for release, the chief of gang intelligence, Salvador Buentello, made a special appeal to the board and they withdrew parole.

"It's because they still insist I'm the so-called number two man in the Syndicate. But there's no such thing in the Syndicate. The TDCJ-ID is on a mission to blow up and keep alive the whole gang situation. Everything seems to be centered around keeping gangs empowered and members active. If you're thinking about quitting, gang intelligence is gonna make sure you don't. They'll make sure you get assaulted, or they'll put you in an enemy cellblock.

"They want gangs to continue," he says. "Prison is big business and that includes gang intelligence. If gangs become extinct, gang intelligence becomes extinct—and they're not gonna let that happen."

Part of the TDCJ-ID's program, he says, includes increasing, then exaggerating, the numbers of gang members in Ad Seg, then letting gangs in population run rampant.

"There are 500 people in Ad Seg," I told Delgado. "How many would you say are gang members?"

"Very few," Delgado answered. "A lot of guys here—Cubanos, guys from Honduras, too, who speak very little or no English—are classified as gang members. Or guys with tattoos. And, of course, former gang members."

"The system is very racist in Texas. Take, for instance, Ad Seg. Hispanics make up only 16% of all prisoners in Texas. Yet, in Ad Seg we make up 69%. Whites only make up 14% of Ad Seg prisoners and throughout population, they total half. If that ain't ethnic cleansing, I don't know what is."

Delgado, a certified paralegal since 1990, doesn't sit idle in his cell 23 hours a day. He is working on a class action suit, *Robert Delgado, et. al. vs. The Texas Syndicate, et. al.*, which he is filing on behalf of all former gang members against the Syndicate for their "in

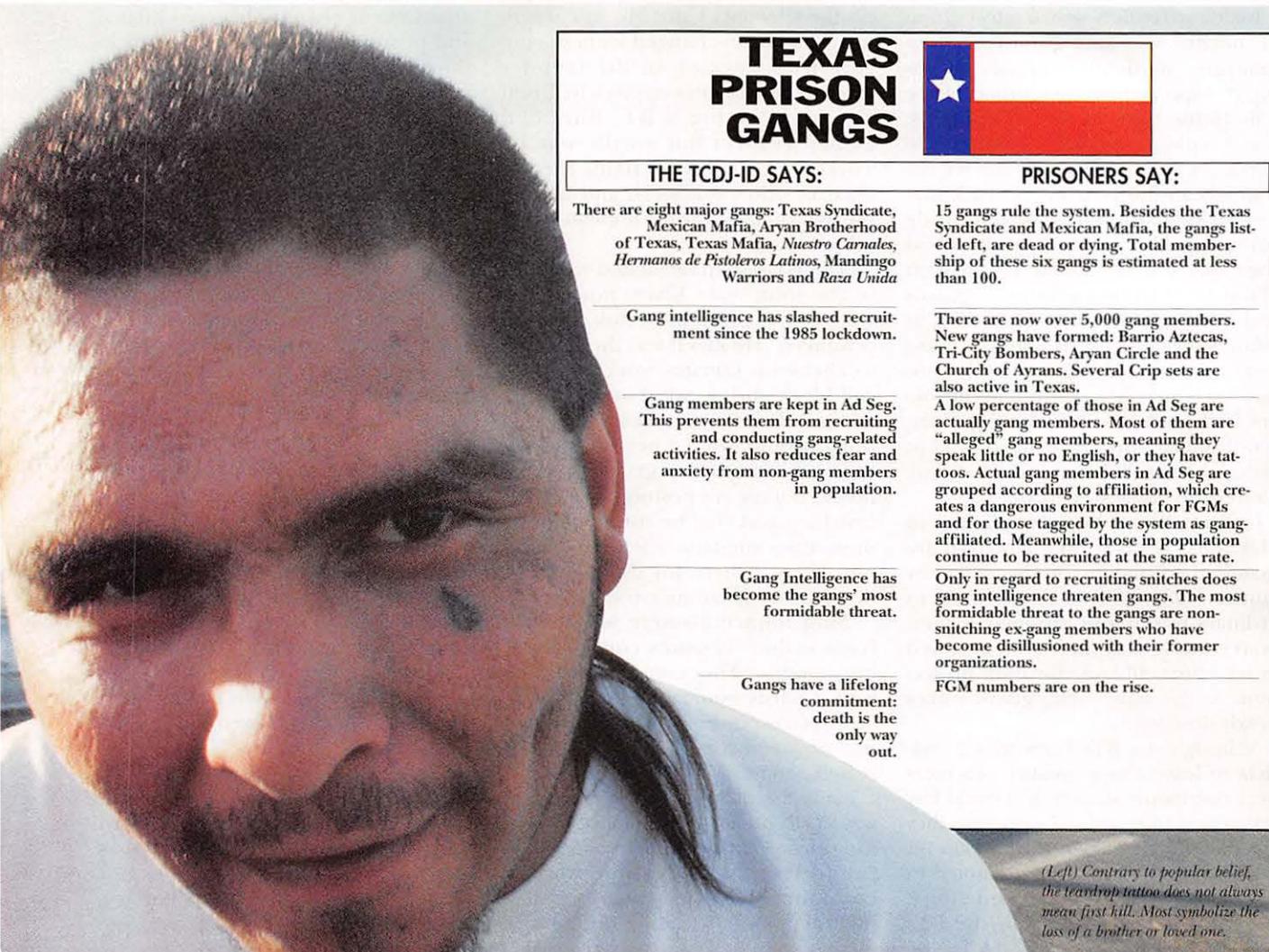
for life" clause, and against the Texas administration and gang intelligence for fostering a snitch system and for persecuting "non-cooperating" FGMs.

"There are a lot of us who have had it with the system," says Delgado, "and we've had it with the gangs. Most of us are veterans with experience."

In addition to Delgado, the FGM movement also includes old-timers like David "Quince" Garcia, who's serving life for the murder of a Syndicate member while on parole; Rogelio "Indio" Montez, who's serving a life sentence for killing a Mexican Mafia member back in 1985; and Robert Leos, an ex-Syndicate member, also doing life.

"The word is spreading, people are listening," says Delgado. "I'll give you an example. When I got to my current pod (a 14-cell block), there were six current gang members. After talking to them over the course of a few weeks, I got five to quit. I've become a dangerous man. And that's only because I'm wielding a dangerous weapon—Truth."

If only the System were on his side. According to prisoners, instead of



TEXAS PRISON GANGS



THE TCDJ-ID SAYS:

There are eight major gangs: Texas Syndicate, Mexican Mafia, Aryan Brotherhood of Texas, Texas Mafia, *Nuestro Carnales*, *Hermanos de Pistoleros Latinos*, *Mandingo Warriors* and *Raza Unida*

Gang intelligence has slashed recruitment since the 1985 lockdown.

Gang members are kept in Ad Seg. This prevents them from recruiting and conducting gang-related activities. It also reduces fear and anxiety from non-gang members in population.

Gang Intelligence has become the gangs' most formidable threat.

Gangs have a lifelong commitment: death is the only way out.

PRISONERS SAY:

15 gangs rule the system. Besides the Texas Syndicate and Mexican Mafia, the gangs listed left, are dead or dying. Total membership of these six gangs is estimated at less than 100.

There are now over 5,000 gang members. New gangs have formed: Barrio Aztecas, Tri-City Bombers, Aryan Circle and the Church of Ayrans. Several Crip sets are also active in Texas.

A low percentage of those in Ad Seg are actually gang members. Most of them are "alleged" gang members, meaning they speak little or no English, or they have tattoos. Actual gang members in Ad Seg are grouped according to affiliation, which creates a dangerous environment for FGMs and for those tagged by the system as gang-affiliated. Meanwhile, those in population continue to be recruited at the same rate.

Only in regard to recruiting snitches does gang intelligence threaten gangs. The most formidable threat to the gangs are non-snitching ex-gang members who have become disillusioned with their former organizations.

FGM numbers are on the rise.

(Left) Contrary to popular belief, the teardrop tattoo does not always mean first kill. Most symbolize the loss of a brother or loved one.

supporting those who want to get out of gangs, or those who already declare FGM-status, the administration throws them in with current gang members. The threat of the gangs' life-or-die membership and the system's lack of intervention keeps current gang membership at an all-time high.

THE STATE

Salvador Buentello is a state classification committee member with the TDCJ-ID and a consultant to the National Institute of Corrections. He's also the chief Gang Intelligence officer for Texas.

Although the TDCJ-ID denied *Prison Life* an interview with Buentello, we did find his thoughts on gangs in an article, "On Gangs," which he wrote for *Corrections Today* last year.

He blames three major court decisions for the increase in gang violence since 1985:

- *Lamar v. Coffield* (1977), which forced integration in housing areas, intensifying racial tension. "Because gangs form along racial lines," writes Buentello, "the decision made it easier for gang members to preach their ideology and gain more recruits."

- *Guajardo v. Estelle* (1978), which let prisoners correspond with each other in Texas. Buentello: *Guajardo* "allowed gang members to use the mail system to recruit, extort and even order deaths of inmates within the system."

- *Ruiz v. Estelle* (1980), which eliminated the Building Tender System. Buentello agrees with Delgado that this act left a power void.

Delgado believes the increase in gang violence is exaggerated. According to Buentello, there were 52 homicides in 1984-'85 alone—more than in the previous 15 years combined. But before 1985, Delgado says, there was very little record keeping in the Texas system.

"Under the BTs," he says, "most homicides were being covered up as suicides, heart attacks or accidents, and none of these suspicious 'accidents' were being investigated."

Delgado also refutes the notion that convict integration is to blame for the increase in gang activity. The *Lamar* case, he says, did not make recruiting easier for gangs. Recruiting was done more easily in the past, in segregated environments. As for *Guajardo*, the case applied more to legal mail than to prisoner-to-prisoner correspondence, which was possible before this case. ("Who would need the mail system anyway," asks Delgado, "when they move you around the system so much?")

FROM THE BARRIOS TO BEHIND BARS



Gang Fever—corrections officials are not the only ones who've got it. In the free-world, you can't watch the news without the phrase, "gang-related" being heard at least once. You can't drive through your less-fortunate urban areas without seeing cops all over the place. Take Houston, for example.

No bones about it, Houston is home to hundreds of local street gangs as well as those originally based in other cities: Crips (several sets from California and a few "home-grown" versions), Latin Kings and Gangster Disciples (both Chicago-based). But according to gangbangers, they are being blamed for everything: drug selling, graffiti, fires, muggings, car-jackings and killings.

"Sure, we do our share of retaliation," said a Latin Crip, "but not all that."

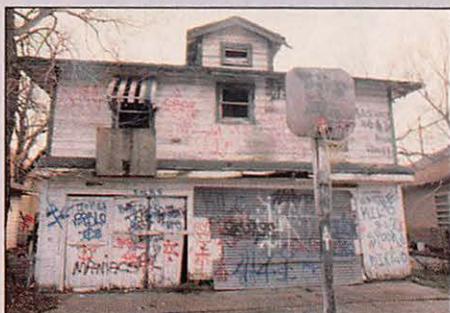
"We're being blamed for everything," said a member of the Southwest Aztecs, a local gang. "And the Five-0 ain't got nuthin' better to do than to harass us night and day. All we do is hang out and they be ridin' our jocks."

Contrary to what the police say, Houston street gangs are not organized or tied into the higher-profile prison gangs like the Syndicate or Mafia.

"Those guys are like the Mob," said Loc, a Ghost Town Crip. "We just small time who haven't made it to the pen yet."

According to those locked up, once a gang member fresh from the streets arrives in prison, he must usually start over and join an already established prison gang, or none at all. Although several street-based gangs are rising in power in Texas prisons, the gross majority are without "juice." The problem arises, however, when the street gang member decides not to join a gang. Because he's got gang-related tattoos from the streets, the Texas Corrections Gang Intelligence pegs him for a gang member anyway and throws him in Ad Seg.

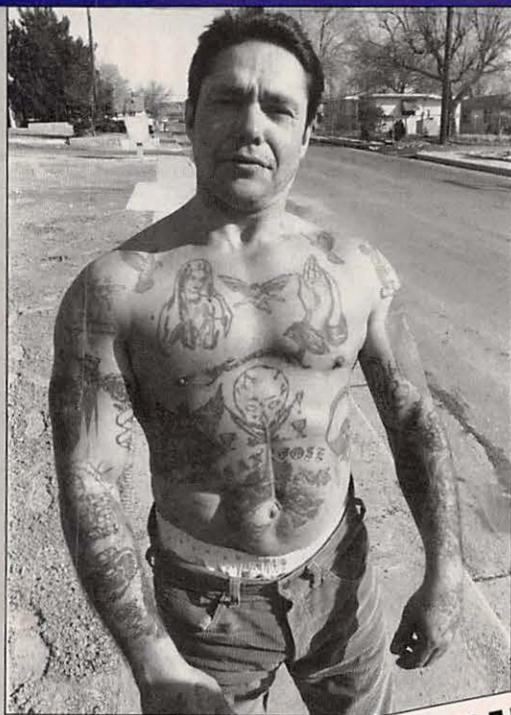
"We're given little choice," said "Sanchez," an ex-con who served three years at Huntsville. "I remember comin' in thinking, damn, I don't wanna get involved in this bullshit. But the Man said, 'Hey, we think you're down with so-and-so.' I had no choice from then on but to actually join that gang 'cause I'd gonna be hurtin' for certain from their enemies if I didn't wear my new jacket." **PL**



(Top) Houston police department check out a car full of suspected gang members.

(Middle) An abandoned house is a prime target for turf markings in the 2nd Ward.

(Above) A 13-year-old shows off his "BAP" (Brown and Prova) tattoo.



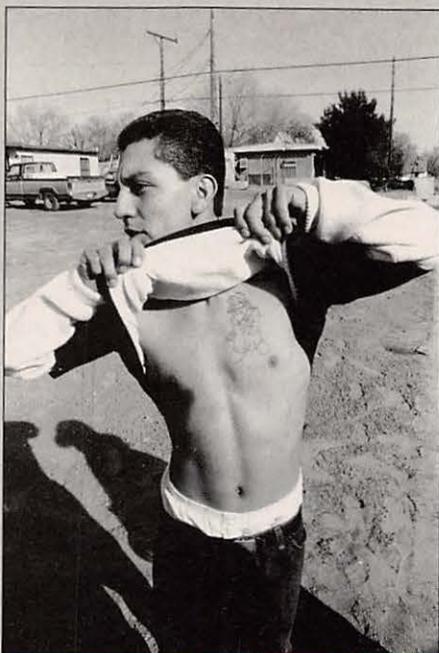
(Left) They called him Gangster. He was a living icon of the Pachuco experience in Albuquerque, New Mexico. He survived the Santa Fe riot and nearly two decades behind bars at the state pen. This picture was taken a day after his release in 1993. But within a year, Gangster was dead from an overdose of heroin. (Below) Andrew of the San Jose gang, one of dozens who looked up to veterano Gangster.

HOMEBOY HEAVEN

Lord, I know you're looking here below
 And that you see me, head hung low
 You saw when on my knees I fell,
 On concrete floor, in the prison cell
 Yes Dear Lord, I've come to you
 I just don't know what to do
 I come in prayer to ask, Lord, why
 So many homeboys have to die
 They die so young, Lord, and so cold,
 Most not yet 21 years old.
 Proud with dreams, whose hearts were good
 Now gone to the wars in the 'hood.
 Lord, the rivers run so high,
 Through the barrios,
 with tears that mothers cry,
 Lord, how much longer 'til they dry?
 How many more homeboys
 have to die?
 Heavenly Father, our gutters flood,
 Our streets run over,
 with homeboy blood.
 Our *raza*, Lord, is so torn apart,
 That's why I plead
 with open heart.
 That you touch my people,
 Lord, with your hand,
 And make them understand,
 That only through love,
 of sister and brother
 Will our *raza* survive, and stop
 killing each other.

Lord, one more thing,
 if you'll follow my heart,
 To a story I read before I depart.
 It's about a young homie,
 who was out about seven.
 Now dead to a drive-by,
 by the age of eleven.
 Please place him, Dear Lord,
 on the wings of a dove,
 And fly him to Homeboy
 Heaven above.

Robert "Indio" Martinez
 Beaumont, CA



To control the gangs, the department of corrections took some severe steps. For example, any prisoner identified as a gang member is placed in Ad Seg. Any inmate caught with a weapon is slapped with a felony charge. Any prisoner convicted of a crime while incarcerated within the Texas system will serve that sentence consecutively.

"As gang members begin receiving additional, consecutive sentences," writes Buentello, "more and more inmates want to defect. . . Defectors come forward and are used as witnesses for the state against gang violence. It is the designation of gang intelligence officers," he adds, "for each unit to gather information for the administrations."

Again, Delgado disagrees. "The gang intelligence must-snitch custom requires a former gang member to incriminate himself and others before he will be labeled an ex-gang member. This circumvents the U.S. Constitution's 5th Amendment right against self-incrimination.

"Furthermore, rewarding those who snitch and punishing those who don't is criminal. It sends a message to those in gangs: Stay in. And for those who are already out of gang life, it only makes it easier for retaliatory acts against them. Especially when the non-snitching former gang member is virtually surrounded by current members who have the order to take him out."

Delgado and other *firmes* convicts like him are not asking for protection from the state. They merely ask for fair treatment. "If these 14-cell pods could be assigned to seven former gang members and seven current gang members," he suggests, "there would be little to worry about by way of gangs in Texas prisons." According to the plan, gang members would have nobody to recruit and they themselves might end up quitting if they knew they had the option.

"In for life?" laughs Delgado. "I don't think so, *ese*. Not any more."

PL

FGMs and current gang members: Send your point of view and your tales of gang life to Prison Life: Chris Cozzone, PLM, 175 5th Avenue, Suite 2205, New York, NY 10010.

THE ANTI-GANG MOVEMENT

by Robert Delgado
FGM—Texas Syndicate
Stiles Unit

Legend has it that only through death can a member exit a gang. If such a legend had any substance, I wouldn't be here telling my story.

My name is Bad Bob, and I was a gang member for almost 20 years—up until three years ago. To Gang Intelligence, I'm the number two man in the Texas Syndicate. But to my friends and many other former gang members (FGMs), I'm the leading spokesman for a new nonpassive anti-gang movement.

We're the new guys on the block saying what others fear to say out loud: Fuck the gangs.

I make no bones about it. I'm out to destroy gangs before they extinguish us, and my most potent weapon against them is the plain truth. This isn't about revenge. We're not targeting any one gang member but the faceless whole of 'em. We're not about shooting down soldiers; we're taking out the whole damn army.

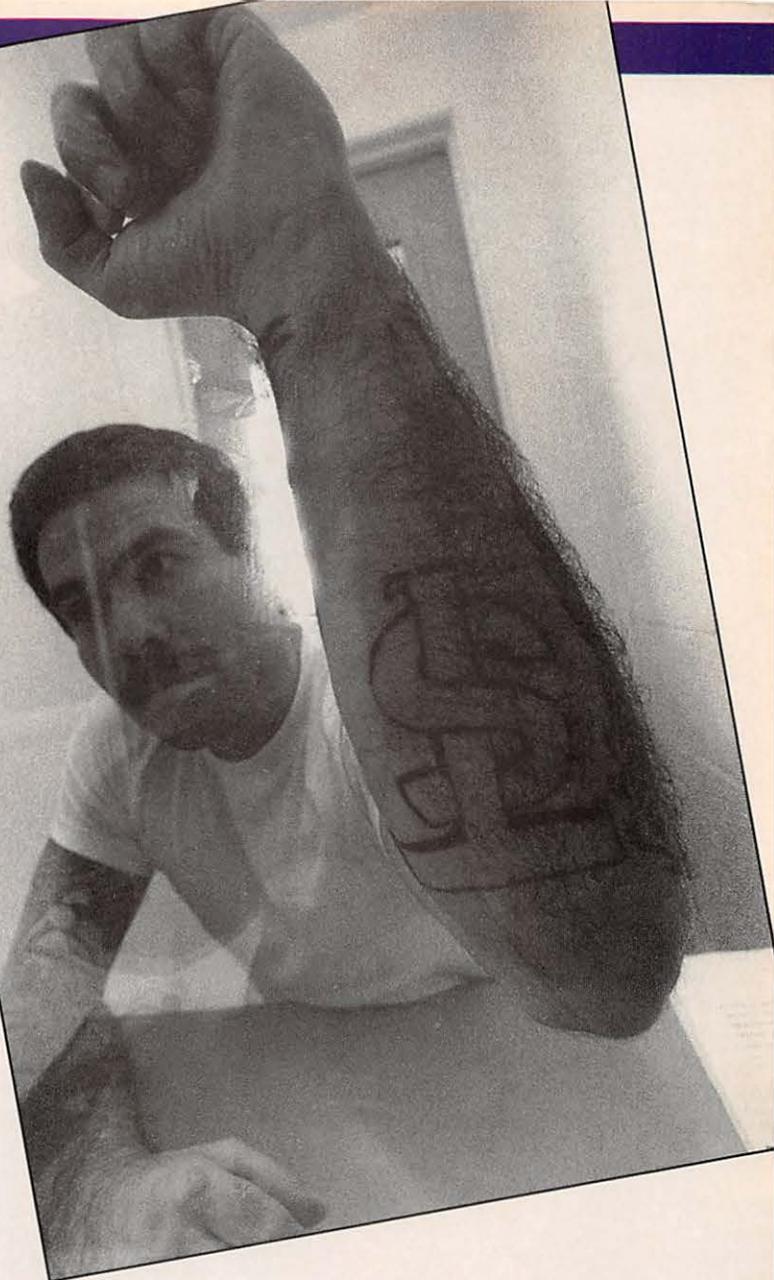
Our goal is to deprive gangs of fresh recruits. Gangs will die without new recruits. The way to do this is to raise consciousness among potential members and encourage active gang members to quit.

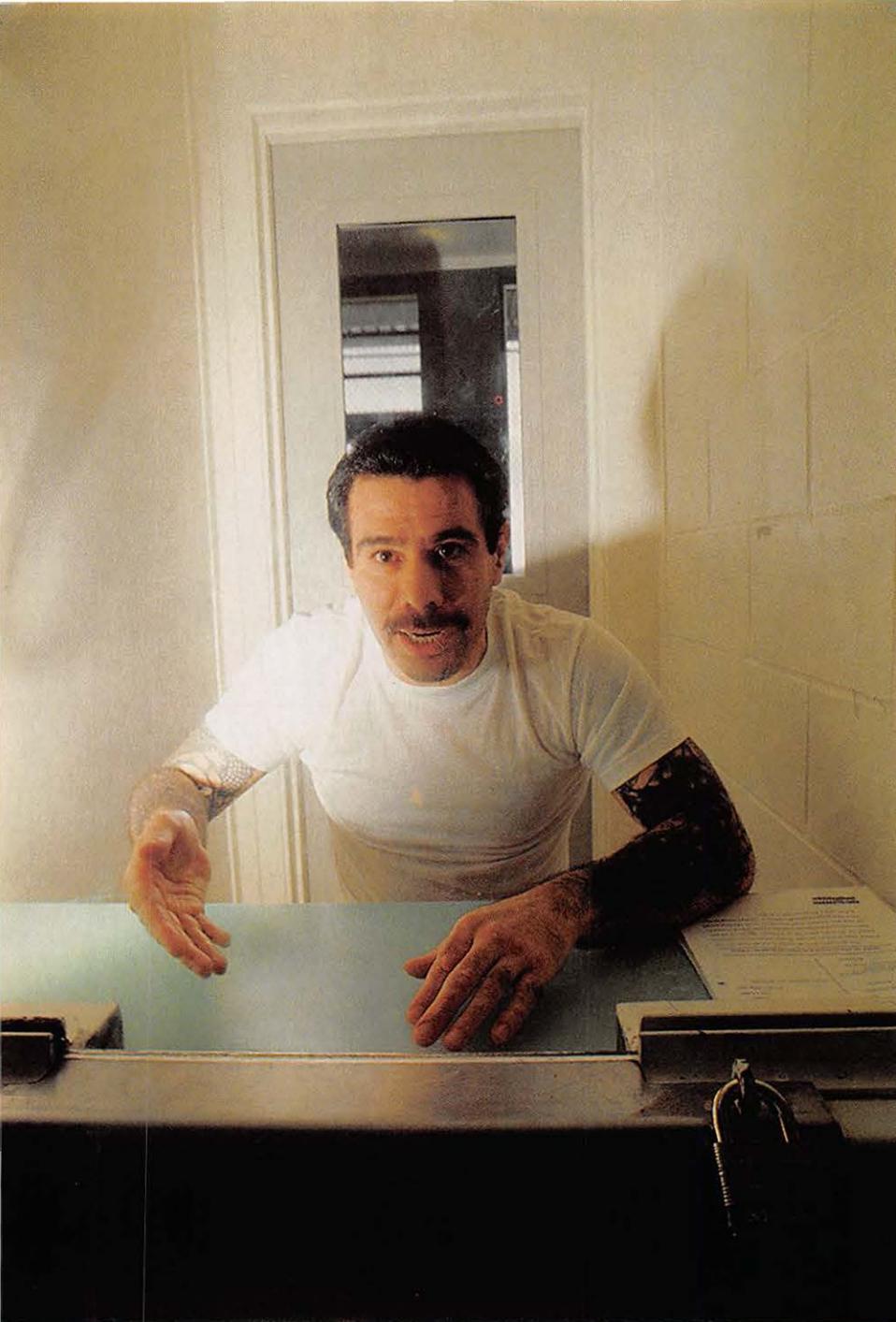
It became clear to me a couple years ago that modern gangs were not what their predecessors were. They were undeserving of respect. Gang members are their own worst enemies. When you join a gang, the door is wide open. But once you're in, the door slams shut. Death is threatened to those who change their minds. This is the only bond holding a disintegrating gang together. If not, gangs would remove their in-for-life rule and allow disenfranchised members to depart without death warrants hanging over their heads.

In Texas, this is slowly starting to

happen. Up until the late '80s, you could count all Texas FGMs on your fingers. Now, as many gangs have grown weaker, the FGM population has increased. Our ranks will continue to swell. While gangs traditionally form along racial lines and claim specific city or prison blocks, today's FGM is without racial prejudice and turf needs. They exist in every city and prison in the country. Racism, division and violence are scorned. The only prerequisite for being in the FGM structure is being a firme, or solid convict.

Ironically, it is the Texas prison system that invokes the "war on gangs" with every opportunity. In the early 1900s, they introduced the first prison gang. Racist white prison administrators organized and equipped a group of inmates who





later became known as Building Tenders (BTs). The BTs called the shots behind bars. They had their gang colors, too: black combat boots and green jackets with the word "Trusty" splashed across the back in bold white letters. They packed small, Louisville sluggers and freeworld knives known as sidearms.

Former prison director George J. Beto described the BTs as "institutional snitches." By 1979, the BTs numbered well over 3,000 in a system of 25,000. Besides being the Man's eyes and ears, their responsibilities were intimidation, ranging from burning cigars on prisoners' hides to testicle plummeting to outright murder. The

BTs had prostituted themselves to the all-white administration for such measly privileges as having choice homosexuals assigned to their cells. For several decades, the BT rule went unchallenged, except for a few minor uprisings that were poorly organized.

By 1977, BT provocation spawned the Texas Syndicate gang, which had its roots in California and, much later, in New Mexico, both heavily Chicano-populated border states. All of us who were asked to join were born Tejanos; we had all been born in the '40s and early '50s, and most of us were barrio *pachucos*, a proud breed who wouldn't hesitate to cross switchblades.

Joining the Texas Syndicate while living under the BT boot had meaning and purpose. It gave us a sense of belonging, the spirit of *carnalismo*—brotherhood. Our sense of a noble mission was real. What man in his right senses wouldn't join a mission against a brutal, murderous snitch system?

The great majority of us had not joined for protection, money or to impress peers. Our beef was with the system. That explains why our numbers never exceeded the 100-mark between 1975 and 1985. Believe me, the thought of standing up to the BTs petrified most other prisoners. But then again, we were picky and cautious about who we recruited.

Young green kids, child killers, snitches, rapists and other unsavory characters were automatically barred entry. These guys only wanted to join for protection. This gang didn't give protection; it dispatched retribution.

It was a time when prisoners were divided into two hostile camps, when violent BT—Syndicate clashes became an ideological quarrel among prisoners who had the choice to follow a pro- or anti-BT line. It was a struggle between characters: the *firme* convict vs. the *chafa* (worthless) inmate who had the massive backing of the State. *Firme* convicts fought back with any weapon within their grasp, including *huelgas* (work strikes), which crippled the prison system, and by participating in prison reform litigation.

In 1983, the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals upheld Judge William Wayne Justice's decision to dismantle the BT system. On paper, prison reform succeeded where violence failed. For the majority of prisoners, the final court victory over the BTs did not fulfill the dreams of peace because the bloodshed never ended. It only changed its mask.

Former BTs reorganized under a different name, one that was stolen from a California gang: the Mexican Mafia. The fall of the BTs left an opening for other wannabe gangs to organize. Up to this point, the wannabes had been petrified with fear. Now, even the punks, cowards and wimps studded up. That was one good thing about the old BT system: you knew who was whom. A *firme* convict stood out like a buffalo in a herd of sheep.

When the BT boot was lifted, you could no longer tell the difference between an imposter playing the part of a *firme* and a genuine convict. Chafas who played their part well by talking a good game became gang members.

The Texas Syndicate and the Texas Mexican Mafia were on a collision course. In September of 1985, they collided violently in what became a one-sided brawl. To this day, the Texas government still wants the public to believe the violence was a result of Judge Justice's ruling, which created a power void that gangs battled to fill. But the truth is that the prison administration let the Mafia take over the BT void. The administration's passivity had a few of us scratching our heads.

In '85, Gang Intelligence tallied the death toll. The Mexican Mafia was blamed with only one prison death (the victim was a 21-year-old *firm* convict who was serving an additional sentence for killing an inmate BT guard—I know, he was my relative) whereas the Texas Syndicate was blamed for 48 prison murders committed between 1977 and 1985.

The actual toll would have been higher if we didn't have to rely on prehistoric prison make-do weapons that often broke when still planted in a victim's hide. Those responsible for these rat killings were slapped in leg irons in a redneck courtroom and given sentences that ensured death in prison.

The gang violence gave the administration the excuse it needed to declare an emergency lockdown, which is still in effect today. It's ironic that during the reign of the BTs, hundreds had been murdered and there had never been a single lockdown. Those murdered didn't count—they were poor, without power, and they were expendable. State-sanctioned murders were often covered up on the coroner's death certificates as suicides, heart attacks or accidents.

Now Ad Seg, the TDCJ's prison within a prison, is bloated with gangs. Gang members in population have had to recruit every Tom and Jerry to fill the void, and this has changed today's gangs. This is what I saw going wrong with the Texas Syndicate. In the '90s, when we Syndicate veterans packed up our duffle bags and started exiting the gang, it wasn't long before the house became overrun with rapists, cowardly drive-by shooters, baby killers, informants, former BTs and others of like nature. Overnight, the gangs found their hog pens swelling with young kids who were joining to impress their peers, get undeserving respect or protection.

These new gang members are looking for a free ride. They ride on our

reputations without having to shed any blood of their own. The prospect of long prison sentences or getting killed to prove their worth isn't their idea of a free ride; talking mean behind bars then falling asleep at the door is. What they don't want others to know is how impotent they are. Humiliated and dispirited, these wannabes are trying to pass themselves off as veterans by lying to anyone dumb enough to listen.

The old Syndicate is gone, as is *car*-*nalismo*. Backstabbing has replaced backslapping; mad-dogging has replaced handshaking; withholding has replaced sharing. With rats surfacing and brothers killing brothers over a dime bag or a woman, trust has disappeared, as did all sense of having a real and noble cause.

The gangs have become co-conspirators with the government that now owns them. Just like the BTs. That's something Gang Intelligence hopes

ting and it sets the stage for gangs to get revenge against all those who've gotten on the wrong side of the administration.

The Man understands that time can mean the difference between life and death. So you better carry a 10-minute oxygen bottle because that's how long you'll have to fend off an attack. The Man has implemented a policy of nonintervention, which prevents guards from intervening in prisoner-to-prisoner assaults. If this isn't the gangs working hand-in-hand with the administration against solid convicts, then what is?

Many of today's policies are no different than the BT days. If you fight a guard, file a lawsuit or refuse to cooperate with the administration, you'll be sent to the treatment center where you'll be force-fed mind-numbing, psychotropic drugs, housed in a homosexual cellblock to switch your jacket from *firm* to punk, or thrown into one of the notorious cellblocks appropriately given such titles as "House of Pain."

Killing *chafa* criminals in the pre-BT days was one thing, but when gang violence started taking the lives of solid convicts and innocent children, it became another thing. When our children live in fear of a drive-by, and when kids start packing guns to school for protection from gangs, it's time to pull the plug.

These new gang members who need protection will fight to keep their gang together. They have to. What would happen if they were without the security of roaming around in packs? They wouldn't last. Ironically, they roam in packs only for protection from each other now.

I have to laugh when these gang members pass by the rec yard mad-dogging *firm* FGMs, punksters who in the old days didn't want shit with the Syndicate. Nowadays, they've tattooed the TS patch—not once, but twice—on their forearm. I see 20-year-old homosexuals, their feminine voices going manly with the TS patch still fresh on their arms. Now they tie a bandanna low around their plucked eyebrows and they wear shades to hide their fear.

You can't help but laugh when you hear these punksters addressing each other as carnal or brother. These guys are supposed to intimidate us? Some of us *veteranos* have merely to remove our shirts and show our battle scars to remind current gang members that we can't be intimidated.

WE'RE THE NEW GUYS ON THE BLOCK SAYING WHAT OTHERS FEAR TO SAY OUT LOUD: FUCK THE GANGS.

nobody will notice. The chief of Gang Intelligence is manipulating all the gang levers, which is easy to do since less than 1% of gangbangers are literate. They'd like nothing more than to see Texas become another Los Angeles, a city divided into hundreds of small, hostile gang camps. So they resort to inflating gang membership data with fictitious members, falsely labeling FGMs and non-gang members as confirmed gang members so they can continue to get massive funding to build more prisons and make more money.

The Man is also obsessed with turning every FGM into an informant. So when you refuse to cooperate, you're threatened with a move into enemy territory. Since gang members rely on being housed together as protection against their enemies, this ploy serves two key purposes: It discourages disillusioned gang members from quit-

Gangs are now a haven for rats. A month doesn't go by without a gang member turning snitch. What *firme* would remain married to his *rol* (ride) knowing it had taken to recruiting young, scared kids and undesirables?

Gangs have nothing else to offer. They have no idea what they want to achieve, no financial structure, no ideology, no nothing. Ask them what they're about and they can't reply because they don't know themselves.

This is the crap I walked away from.

I have no regrets for being a gang member during the BT years. But once that was dismantled, and although I stayed on too damn long, learning what I did later was better than never learning it at all. Crossing over to the FGM side of the road was like going back 15 years to a class reunion with old buddies.

We once targeted the BT snitch system because it was the right thing to do. Now we're going after their replacement for the same reason.

The gangs fear me because I know everything that needs to be known about destroying them. I'm a treasure trove of knowledge. I know gang history, the characters who make the gangs whole, I know who killed whom and why. And to the horror of my enemies, I have always succeeded at what I've strived to do.

So next time you run into a gang member, before giving him respect, think about what I said: "Fuck the gangs." *Comprende?* **PL**

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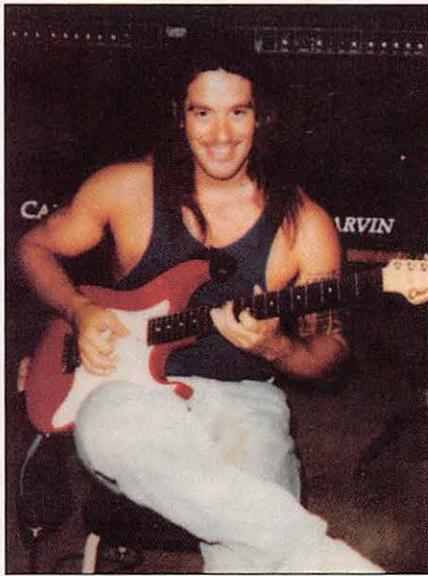
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Cellmate of the Month



It's an absolute joke that Michael Chavaux is in prison. In 1985 he received life probation for possession of 72 grams of cocaine. A year later, he purchased a car that turned out to be stolen. Even though the charges were dismissed, he was found in violation of probation and received a 10-year minimum sentence. Such rotten luck would paralyze most people. Not Michael Chavaux. In fact, his numerous accomplishments in the joint would make freeworld couch potatoes blush.

"My conviction motivated me to write a book, *Don't Get Taken For a Ride: A Complete Guide to Buying and Selling Used Cars Economically and Profitably*. I wanted to make sure others didn't make the same mistake I did, and I pointed out ways to tell if a car is stolen."

While confined in Michigan's Adrian Temporary Facility, where he's served 8 of his 10 years, Chavaux has become a Renaissance con, pursuing music, the arts and literature. He attended college, started a business and a rock band. "I told myself that if I had to be here, I'd make it worth it."

First he enrolled in college. "I received 51 credits toward an associate's degree in business in less than a year. Then the college program was cancelled. While I was in school, I maintained a 3.5 G.P.A., was on the president's honor roll for two semesters and dean's list for one."

Undaunted, Chavaux continued his education on his own. He read books on finance and business

Rap Sheet

Name: Michael James Chavaux
Age: 34
Birthplace: Detroit
Conviction: Violation of Parole
Sentence: 10 to 20 years
Time Served: 8 years
Ambitions: To start a business for musicians

administration, subscribed to business magazines and wrote to organizations such as the Small Business Administration for brochures, newsletters and resource guides.

"I ended up starting a van service called Family Ties Transit System, which provided transportation to the Adrian facility for prisoners' loved ones." His brother bought a van, and Chavaux promoted the business on the inside by producing and distributing flyers. Discounts were given to those who couldn't afford the \$30 round-trip fee.

Chavaux's latest venture, "Marketing Business Information to Opportunity Seekers," is a mail order service for fortune hunters.

Before he was incarcerated, Chavaux ran after-hour clubs, and his ties to the entertainment world influenced his most enjoyable pursuit in prison: lead guitarist for a band called Unwarranted Risk. "Unwarranted Risk is the term most often used by the correctional facility for keeping inmates in here. They say we're an unwarranted risk to society, so the name really fits us."

Chavaux was always interested in rock n' roll but was worried about trying to become a serious musician so late in the game. "I was 26 when I got my first electric guitar, and I've come a long, long way from those early beginnings. Being here has got to be the greatest place to learn music. You have lots of time to practice (I've got my own guitar in my cell), and you can really lose yourself in your music. You don't have the daily worries of going to work or trying to pay your bills on time. I can literally devote all my effort and concentration to what I'm doing, and I think it shows in the music." Chavaux and his band have recorded their songs and are the main attraction at Adrian's holiday shows.

"From writing music, I also learned

that I could write short stories, poems and that sort of thing." In fact, Chavaux has had several short stories, poems and articles published in free-world magazines and newspapers. A greeting card publisher purchased some material from him and produced greeting cards with it.

Prison Life's May Cellmate is also the editor of the *Adrian Bulletin*, a bi-monthly newspaper he writes and edits with four other prisoners. His provocative editorials debunking public perceptions of prisons as country clubs have been published in three community newspapers.

Before his schedule got so hectic, Chavaux worked as a tutor and was a literacy volunteer. He was an active participant in Hispanic Americans Striving Toward Advancement (HASTA); the Lifers' Organization; Alcoholics Anonymous and a member of CURE, Citizens United for the Rehabilitation of Errants.

Chavaux admits there was something else besides being active that has helped keep his spirits up. Until recently, he never thought he'd stay. "I really believed that once the courts looked at my case they'd see it was a travesty of justice. I kept thinking that the next time I'd go to court I'd be released. It never happened, but I guess having hope helped me get by."

With just two years to go, Chavaux has started planning for the future. "Running after-hour clubs was illegal, but it was one of the most fun and successful things I've done. Now I have a plan to stay in the entertainment field legally. I'm going to start a group called "Musicians United for Successful Instrumental Careers." We'll offer low-rate recording, get big bands to sponsor us, I'll use my writing skills to make a newsletter..."

Mike Chavaux is on a roll.

—Jennifer Wynn

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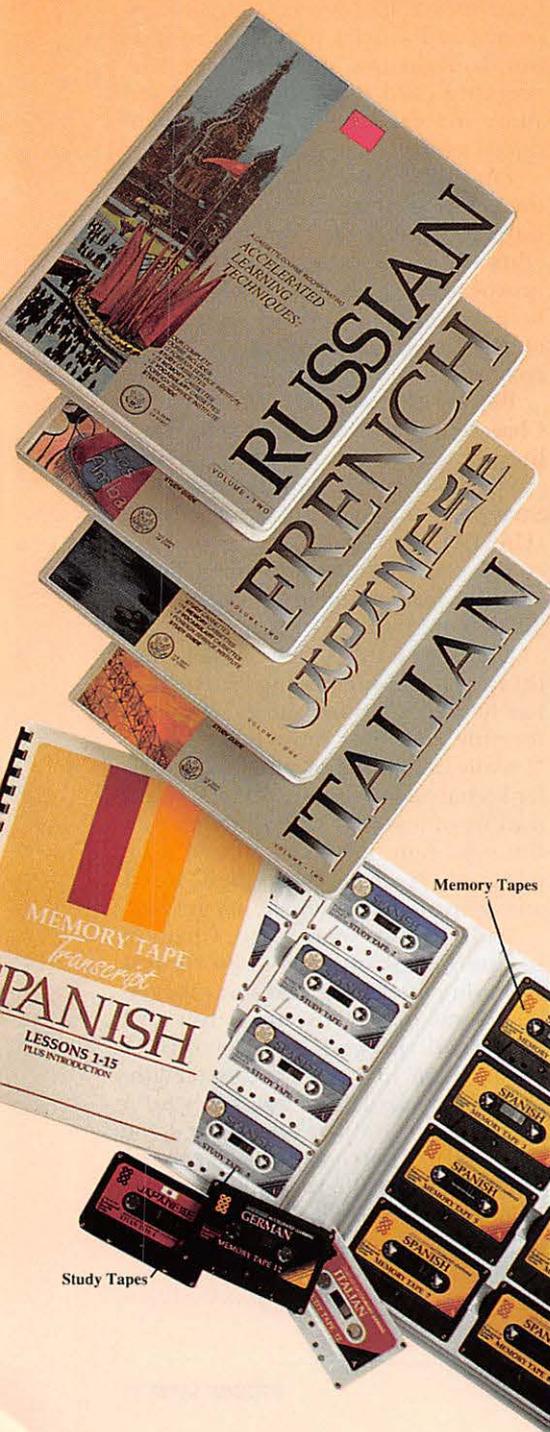
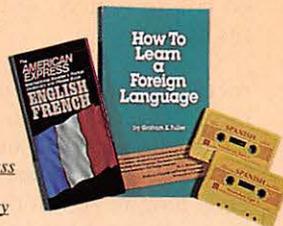
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Ask Bubba

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Dear Bubba,

I recently received a sample copy of your great publication. I admire you guys for not covering to the responses from governmental officials who received a sample of Prison Life. I have only one problem.

I like Prison Life so much that I feel I can't do without it by any means. I have no money at this time and due to problems on the home front, will be without money for some time. This is why I humbly request a free year or two of mags.

When I can get some of those dead Presidents on the commissary books, I'll send a contribution plus \$20 more to subscribe. I will always try to interest others in Prison Life. And on that magical day when the government releases me, I'll subscribe as a freeworlder. I look forward to your response. I salute you.

Billy G. Delony
Bill Clements Unit, TX

Bubba,

Let me make this short and simple because I don't want to confuse a big stupid ass like you. What I need is a one-year or two-year (free) subscription. You claim to be righteous so there should be no problem with the free subscription, plus you know how the prison struggle

is! Don't deny me, because if we were in the same prison a little guy like me would extort your big dumb self.

Tito Garcia,
a.k.a. "The Prince of Darkness"

P.S. Why do I get this funny feeling you're going to say something slick? Do yourself a favor and don't do something you'll regret. We all know you're a paper gangster.

Peace, love & all that other bullshit

Hey Bubba,

I just got a hold of Prison Life. I was doing extra duty for a bullshit write-up. The Lieutenant couldn't drop it because it would have put the reporting person's head on the chopping block. But anyway, while doing these extra hours I was cleaning the cop shop and came across Prison Life, and the cop ("high paid babysitter") told me I could have it because he didn't want that kind of trash in his shop.

I got back to my cage and my celly grabbed it while I went to wash my butt. He started reading it. So I ended up getting sloppy seconds. But what the fuck, the rag was worth the wait. I really enjoy something that the cops hate. I enjoyed all the stories and the Three Strikes-You're-Out bit. I am facing a three-strike bid myself right now. I would appreciate it if

you could fork over a one-year sub. I am in a pen where we're warehoused and they are fixing to move all of us to another yard where we could get jobs. Then I could pay for my second year. You really have a good rag. It's a lot better than Easy Rider. You all tell it like it really is, no bullshitin' around.

With respect,

Charles E. Garner
Corcoran State Prison

To all freeholds:

Who do I look like? Fuckin' Ivan Boesky or Michael Milken or one of those other rich Wall Street white collar criminals? Look again. I'm wearing a sweaty sleeveless undershirt. I ain't got no money, honey. I told those fools in New York that convicts are a hard sell. I must get 10 kites a week asking for free scripts, probably from dope addicts who spend all their money on drugs.

What're you jerk-offs doin' for ol' Bubba? Nobody's offering to make my bunk or wash my skivies. This ain't no free ride, bud.

The cheap pricks who run the business end of this rag keep sayin', "Uh, Mr. Bubba, please stop givin' away so many free subs." Think I want to hear them whinin' all the time? Fuck, no. I tried to get a few more bucks myself just last month, 'cause I got so many of your damn letters to respond to. But those bean counters down in Houston told me, "Uh, sorry, Mr. Bubba, it's not in the budget." Some new management crap about streamlining, being mean and lean or some dumb shit.

So here's the real deal: If you can't pay the freight, go out there and hustle. Sell some subs to your well-heeled, drug-dealin' homeys and make a few bucks. Or enter the Art Behind Bars contest and win your sorry ass a sub. This ain't no charity.

Respect is great, but send money.

Your mentor,

Bubba

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



CRIMEJACKER

#941233449

IN HIS FIVE-YEAR STINT AS A GOVERNMENT-FUNDED SUPERHERO, CRIMEJACKER HELPED LOCK UP NEARLY 3000 CRIMINALS-- FROM JUVIE CRACK DEALERS TO INTERNATIONAL DRUG SMUGGLERS. HE LED PARADES, KIDS CARRIED HIS IMAGE ON LUNCHBOXES. HE WAS AMERICA'S HERO. THEN HE FELL. TRUSTED FOR CONSPIRACY, CRIMEJACKER WAS SENTENCED TO 20 CALENDARS IN THE STATE JOINT. SOME SAY HE WAS SET UP, AND THAT THE FEDS, WHO WERE FEEDING CRIMEJACKER SUPER-STERIOD CHEMICALS, WERE BEGINNING TO DISTRAUST THE HERO. STRIPPED OF HIS POWERS, NEIL POWERS-- AKA CRIMEJACKER, ENTERED STONEKILL MAX PENITENTIARY AS ONE OF THE "COMMON CRIMINAL SCUM." HE ONCE TOOK PRIDE IN PUTTING BEHIND BARS...

WORK DETAIL.
THIS SUCKS!
IF I... HEY, WHAT'S HE STARING AT?

DAMN! IF I WAS ON THE STREETS, I'D HANDCUFF HIM, SHAKE HIM DOWN. BUT NOW...

HEY, SWEET THANG...

REAL TOUGH GUY!

YOU'RE SOOO STRONG!

WARDEN'S OFFICE. YOU SURE HE AIN'T SHOWIN' NO POWERS? CAUSE I CAN'T BE HAVIN' THAT IN MY PRISON!

DO YA THINK HE'LL BREAK SOON? I'M COUNTIN' ON IT, BOY.

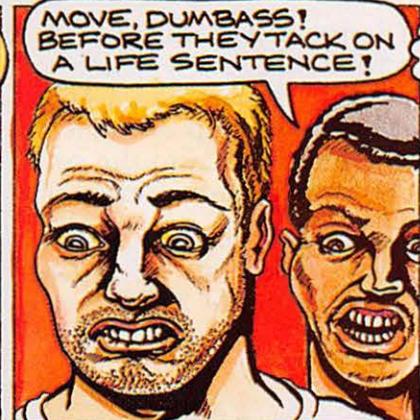
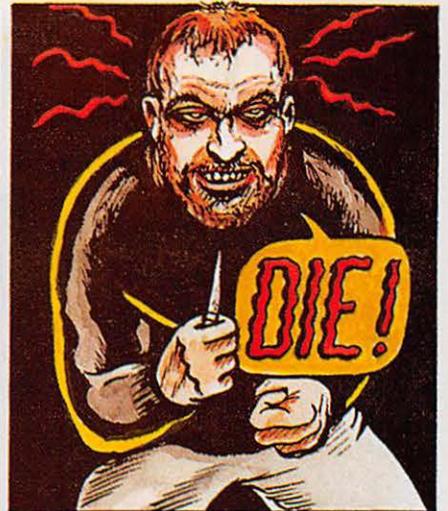
OH YEAH! HE'LL BE WORKIN' FOR US BY WEEK'S END. IF NOT, I GOT JUST THE GUY TO SCARE THE SHIT OUTTA HIM!

THE IRON PILE. O.K. MR. GUS, HOW MUCH WILL IT COST ME? YOU GOT CASH ON THE OUTSIDE. A BILL A MONTH, THREE BILLS DOWN.

BUT I CAN'T AFFORD THAT.

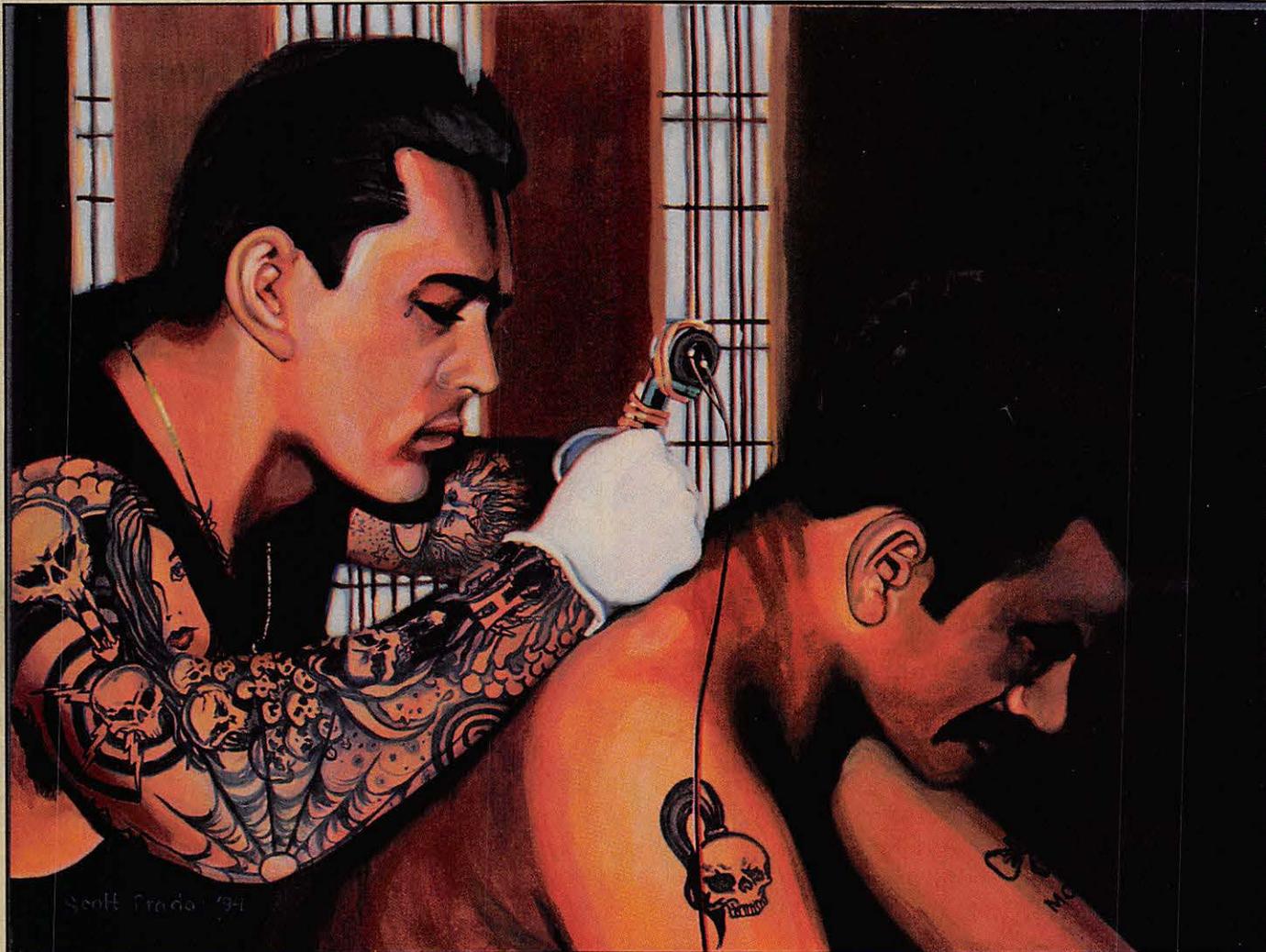
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TATTOO OF THE MONTH



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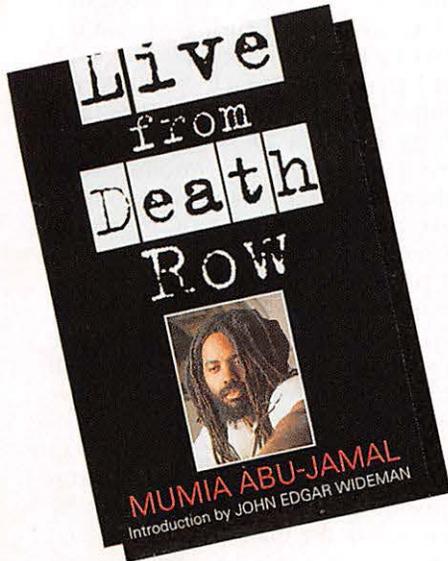
Rather than print one of the dozens of photographs we've received, we decided to run the painting (above) by Scott Prato, which was submitted to the Art Behind Bars contest. We're featuring it here in dedication to all the tattoo artists behind bars.

Keep on inkin'!

Send your tattoo photos to:
Prison Life
Tattoo of the Month
175 5th Avenue, Suite 2205
New York, NY 10010.

Prison Papers

Live from Death Row by Mumia Abu-Jamal
Sing Soft, Sing Loud by Patricia McConnel
The Dishwasher by Dannie Martin



Live from Death Row
Mumia Abu-Jamal
Addison Wesley Publishing
Hardcover: \$20.00

Review by Kim Wozencraft

Before you sit down to read this book, take a moment to prepare. Plan to read it in the comfort of your home, if you are fortunate enough to have one. Go to your favorite place in your home. Evening would be a good time.

Now, pick up the book. Examine it. Open the cover. But don't start reading yet. Close your eyes and imagine. Imagine this:

Just as you open the book, the front door of your home crashes open and a gang of armed men rush into the room, shoving guns in your face and screaming at you to get down on the floor. They are enraged; you do not know why. They shackle your wrists together behind your back. They leave you lying on the floor while they tear apart your home, smashing your belongings. They make crude comments about the photographs of your loved ones.

They handcuff you, put you in a car, drive you to a building, and lock you in a cage.

You get one phone call. Maybe.

If you're African-American and

political, they may not trouble to take you from your home and put you in the cage. They may just execute you right there on the spot.

This is the awful, overwhelming power of The State in America. The men may be city cops, they may be county cops, they may be state or federal cops. Regardless of the agency they work for, they have the power to do this to you. And often, the men who do this work have, for whatever reason, completely abdicated to The State any sense of personal morality or responsibility for their actions. "Just doin' my job, you know."

Mumia Abu-Jamal knows these people more intimately than they can ever hope to know themselves. Sentenced in 1982 to be murdered by the State of Pennsylvania, Mr. Abu-Jamal has, for the last 13 years, resided on Death Row. There are about 3,000 people living on the various death rows throughout America. Almost none of them are heard from, aside from the occasional last words, if they are of sound bite quality, printed in news coverage of an execution.

Before he was convicted for the murder of a Philadelphia police officer in 1982, Mr. Abu-Jamal was a radio reporter in the City of Brotherly Love. A former Black Panther and supporter of the radical group MOVE, he has written for *The Nation* and the *Yale Law Review*. *Live from Death Row* collects his prison writings and includes commentaries that were originally to be broadcast by NPR until that bastion of free speech caved in to pressure from the self-righteous and canceled his appearances.

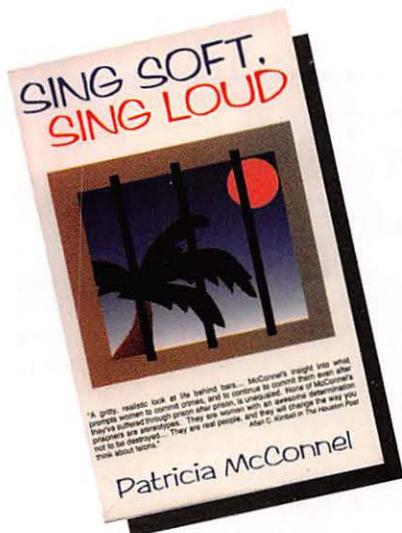
It is my hope that, at the time you read this, he is still alive. The newly-elected governor of Pennsylvania, Thomas Ridge, has already signed three death warrants since taking office and fully intends to "see to it that Pennsylvania's death penalty exists in more than name only." The State is moving ahead with preparations to kill a man who may or may not be guilty of the crime for which they hold him. I don't know whether he shot the cop, or if he did, whether it was justifiable force used in self-defense. Some years ago, I was a cop

myself for awhile, and I do know that his claims of innocence ring very, very true. I do know that criminal trials have nothing to do with what really happened. They have to do with the presentation of admissible evidence, and from what I've read, the prosecutor's tactics at Mr. Abu-Jamal's trial were abominable. It seems, too, that the appeals process has conspired against him at every turn. At the very least, he deserves a new trial.

Live from Death Row is an important book. At the risk of hyperbole, I will say it takes us into the bowels of hell. But perhaps that statement is not hyperbole at all, maybe it's simply inadequate. How does one write about waiting to die at the hands of those whose ancestors held yours in slavery, those who call you "nigger" and put you out for your hour of exercise, when they choose to do so at all, in what could be a dog kennel, those who isolate you from human touch, from sunshine and fresh air, who keep Plexiglas barriers in the visiting room to prevent you from touching your own children. I fear I would be reduced to banging my head against the concrete cell wall, trying to physically knock consciousness through the bones of my skull. I can remember few times being so moved by a book as I was reading Mr. Abu-Jamal's essays and commentaries. In my small, comfortable living room, in my favorite chair, I sat at five in the morning and looked up from his book and stared out the window in the direction of Pennsylvania, a few hundred miles away, and I could see him in his cell. I could hear the night noises of prison. I could smell the concrete and disinfectant, the stink of the guards' sweaty uniforms, the stench of fear that pervades such a place. I hope they have not killed him.

Part One of *Live from Death Row* is "Life on Death Row," a series of essays about the day to day drudgery, mind-numbing boredom and small-minded humiliations of being caged in prison. In "The Visit," Abu-Jamal recalls, "She, like my other children, was just a baby when I was cast into Hell, and because of her youth and sensitivity, hadn't

(continued on page 64)



Sing Soft, Sing Loud
Patricia McConnell

Logoria
 Paperback: \$12.00; 258 pgs.

Review by Jennifer Wynn

After a couple more drinks I feel my mind slipping away. The music is too loud, and there's this buzzing in my head that I always know means I'm really drunk, and I can't concentrate on anything around me, not even on Leon . . . Then there's a hand in my crotch and at first I think it's Leon but then I realize it's two hands, one from either side of me.

I look up and Leon isn't sitting by me anymore. On one side is a light-skinned black guy, tall and skinny, wearing a hat. On the other side is another black guy, this one dark, with a long scar on one cheek . . . The two of them are feeling me up under the table, and Leon is looking at me to see how I'm gonna take it. He must've got them over here while I was nodding.

Something snaps loose in me, like a little thread that's stretched too tight and breaks...I know that this is it, this is all there is for me, I don't have any more choices. I got nowhere to go but where I am, and Leon is it. And if I don't do what he wants me to do, then there isn't anything left for me at all. Period. The End.

Knowing this, I look at Leon and I open my legs a little. I feel fingers going under my bikinis, playing with me. I let my head drop again. I'll just sit here and they can do what they want . . .

I feel myself being half dragged out of the booth. The dark guy walks with his arm around my waist. The skinny guy and Leon are walking ahead, talking. I can hear Leon saying, "She loves cock, man, she just can't get enough."

Be honest, reader. Did the passage you just read turn you on?

You're sick. You need help.

Actually, you're just like the rest of

us, says author Patricia McConnell. "We all have these twisted elements in ourselves that get off on sexual degradation and power games. Maybe it's a small part, but it's there. If you can recognize that in yourself it's a step toward control and healthier sexual relationships."

One of the important themes McConnell touches on in her autobiographical novel, *Sing Soft, Sing Loud*, is the connection between violence and sex, how physical or psychological domination is an all too common component in sexual relations. Insecure women in general, and prostitutes in particular, are often the pawns in these sexual powerplays. By putting themselves in the hands of power-hungry, abusive men, they're positioning themselves as victims, reinforcing their feelings of worthlessness. Meanwhile, the men are getting off on it.

Sing Soft, Sing Loud is the story of two women, Iva and Toni, each of whom spend their time on the streets, on their backs and in the joint, and both of whom represent different aspects of the author's personality at various stages in her life. Part of what makes *Sing Soft, Sing Loud* so compelling is knowing that the stories are "95% autobiographical." These things really happened to someone who is not only alive to tell it, but sane enough to discuss it.

"It isn't easy to lay yourself out like this," admits McConnell. "The extremes to which I degraded myself and allowed myself to be victimized are pretty shameful." Like when she succumbed to her drug-dealer/lover's repeated requests to have sex with strange men while he watched and egged them on. The descriptions of such scenes are chilling, but what separates them from much of this familiar psycho-sexual drama is that they're credible. You might hope that Toni will run from that fleabag motel room while she's got a chance, but you don't blame her for staying. Through the author's painstaking effort, you understand the characters' motives, sick or crazy as they are.

"I wrote the book to heal myself," says McConnell, "but I also wanted people to understand how women like me stay stuck in that kind of life for so long and often don't get out at all. If your sense of worthlessness is deep enough, you actually don't believe you can do anything else. If you hate yourself enough, you also believe that the way men treat you is what you deserve. That's very hard for

people to comprehend." We learn from McConnell's characters that she, like most adults whose lives have run amok, had a loveless childhood and rotten parents. Her father, a psychologically violent man who treated those who defied him to paroxysms of anger and emotional torment, left home when she was five. Her mother was a nut job who, McConnell learned later in life, never really liked her. Thus, we are not surprised that her first incarceration came at age 15, and that by her early 20's she was doing federal time for smuggling drugs across the Mexican border. We are heartbroken but not surprised when Iva, after telling her pimp to take the job and shove it, returns to him defeated.

"I wrote that part with tears falling on my keyboard," says the author. "Iva is courageous in many ways, but it's what she believes about herself that defeats her. She doesn't have courage in any world but her own."

The book leaves off with Toni out of jail and, after the most brutal episode yet, finally freed from the clutches of the man who sexually and emotionally ruled her. She has left what little possessions she has in a hotel room and burned her i.d., wanting to erase who she was. It was a form of suicide that turned out to be the first step toward liberation.

I stop to look at myself in a store window. God, I look skinny. I must've dropped some weight in the last few days. I don't look like anybody I know. I don't even know my own goddamn self. That really makes me a nobody, doesn't it? Hey! If I'm nobody, I can be anybody. Ha-ha.

All this has been kind of a joke up 'til now, but now I think seriously: I'm really free for the first time in my life. I am really, truly free. I can't be any worse off, I can't have any less, I can't lose any friends, nobody can take anything away from me, not even my self-respect, because that's long gone, man. I'm not even Toni anymore. I burned everything that says I am. I am really truly free.

McConnell says she purposely left the ending ambiguous. "I wanted to suggest that Toni's life was up to her. I made her responsible. We don't know if she's going to make it, we hope she will, but we also know she might not. It's up to her. She has the power of choice, but she has to exercise it or she's not going to go anywhere. The message of my book lies in that."

For the author, getting out of prison wasn't the end of her troubles. "I got readdicted to amphetamines,

did more drug dealing, and got involved in some very destructive relationships. I kept going through these cycles where I'd get self-destructive, pull myself out, get destructive again, and I went through cycle after cycle until the last desperate thing I tried was marriage, the worst mistake of all." McConnell's husband, whom she likens to her mother, ultimately kicked her out. "I didn't have the guts to end it myself," she says. "He did me a favor."

Around that time, a major realization, actually an enlightenment, occurred: "One day I sat sobbing and feeling sorry for myself for all the terrible things that had happened to me and for my bad childhood, and this voice, from where I know not, said to me, 'It doesn't matter what has been done to you. You are still responsible for your own life.' At the time, that was the worst news I ever heard."

Unpopular as her theory may be, McConnell feels that many women, especially women prisoners, perceive themselves as victims, and part of that psychology is they don't have to be

responsible. "Being victimized is not an entirely lose-lose situation. You buy something with your victim's role, and one of the things you buy is not having to be responsible. You hand over control of your life to another person, and there's a certain amount of comfort in that role."

In the process of rebuilding her life, another important principal emerged: You have to be willing to pay the price. "Later, I understood that one of the things that kept me in the marriage when I knew I should have left was that I wasn't willing to pay the price. We have to be willing to pay the price to change things or to get what we want. Very often the price is living in a state of terror, and this is at the core of the psychology of so many female prisoners. Even though they often live the most dangerous lives imaginable, they're scared that they can't function in an ordinary middle-class life. For a long time I felt I couldn't leave my marriage, and then I eventually realized that the word 'can't' is very seldom valid. You can, you just don't want to pay the price."

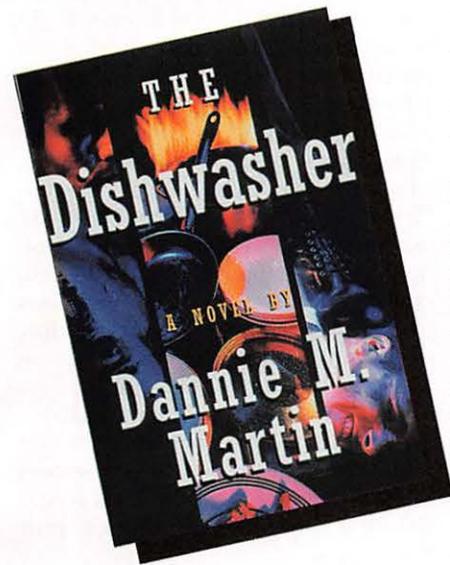
Important messages aside, *Sing Soft, Sing Loud* is an absolute joy to

read. The voices, characters and drama are handled with true craft. I read it in about 48 hours, unable to put it down, intermittently crying, laughing and thinking. Despite its portraits of shattered lives and the litany of prison horrors, the book, ultimately, is a story of human triumph, of how women struggle to survive prison, the streets and no-good men while managing to weave some joy into their bleak existence.

McConnell points out that the book, surprisingly, has been well received by men, and by freeworlders who've been victims of psychological power games. Her first fan letter was from a man in solitary confinement at Oregon State Penitentiary. "Thank you for writing this book," he wrote. "You got yourself out of the hole you were in. I'm going to get myself out of the hole I'm in."

The letter remains the most wonderful response she's received, McConnell says.

Sing Soft, Sing Loud may be ordered direct from the publisher. Send check or money order for \$12.00 plus \$2.50 for shipping to: Logoria, P.O. Box 22517, Flagstaff, AZ 86002-2517.



The Dishwasher
Dannie Martin
W.W. Norton & Company
Hardcover: \$20; 242 pages

By Kim Wozencraft

Many of you on the inside may already be familiar with Dannie "Red Hog" Martin's nonfiction work, some of which was collected in a book published last year, *Committing Journalism*. In 1986, while incarcerated in Lompoc Federal Penitentiary on a 32-year bid for bank robbery, Martin began writing reports on life behind the walls for the *San*

Francisco Chronicle. Red Hog didn't write about how to escape or how to build a bomb or how to smuggle in contraband. He wrote about prison life. One of his articles helped free a young man who was the victim of—let's use a euphemism here—overzealous prosecution. Another detailed the death of a young convict due to authoritative indifference. But it wasn't until Red Hog got critical of the warden that all hell broke loose. The authorities stooped to devious tactics—including solitary confinement and diesel therapy—in an attempt to silence Martin and prevent the public from reading what he had to say. Martin, *Chronicle* editor Peter Sussman and attorneys for the *San Francisco Chronicle* waged a four-and-a-half year legal battle against the B.O.P., attempting to reclaim prisoners' First Amendment rights from the prisoncrats. The courts, in a monumental wimp-out, said, "Oh-dear-it's-a-matter-of-prison-security-we'd-better-leave-that-to-the-wardens." Mr. Sussman continued to publish Martin's articles with a byline of "A Federal Prisoner." Then the B.O.P. lawyers pulled a fast one and got the case declared moot when Martin was paroled, another fine example of Federal Just-us.

Now free, Dannie Martin gives us *The Dishwasher*, a novel. When we meet Bill Malone, he's walking out the front gates of Lompoc after serving 14 years for bank robbery. "The world hit him in the face like a wind-blown newspaper. The second gate hummed as it slid and clanked shut with the finality of cold iron. The double fences with their rolls of razor wire on top and in between lay behind him now. He craned his head up at the main gun tower, where he could see a shadow beneath the military hat of a federal prison guard. The only easily discernible objects behind the tinted glass were a shotgun and an M-16 rifle standing at ready attention in their racks."

There's none of that clichéd nonsense about taking that first breath of free air. The description of the tower guard—as a shadow beneath a military hat—and the citing of the shotgun and M-16 as the only objects really discernible to Malone when he stands looking up at the tower tell an entire story in only a few sentences. Martin's careful rendering of details works to pull you into Malone's world, invites you to observe that world as he does, through eyes that

(continued on page 65)

Live From Death Row

(continued from page 61)

been brought along on family visits, until now . . . She burst into the tiny visiting room, her brown eyes aglitter with happiness, stopped, stunned, staring at the glassy barrier between us, and burst into tears at this arrogant attempt at state separation . . . Sadness and shock shifted into fury as her petite fingers curled into tight fists, which banged and pummeled the Plexiglas barrier, which shuddered and shimmied, but didn't shatter.

'Break It! Break It!' She screamed."

He calms his daughter's rage by talking "silly talk," the way a freeworld father might. Abu-Jamal's accounts of the personal in such an inhuman place are strong and straightforward. He gives us stories of other prisoners he's come to know. In "Actin' Like Life's a Ball Game," he addresses the three-strikes-you're-out political bellowing we've heard coming from Congress recently. He tells us about a 15-year-old boy who was imprisoned back in the '70s under what were then "tough new statutes" allowing teenagers to be sentenced as adults. The boy was convicted of an armed robbery in which he used a CO₂ pistol. "For almost fifteen years his brilliance has been caged in cubes of steel . . . For those critical years . . . that mark the transition from boy to man, [he] was entombed in a juridical, psychic, temporal box branded with the false promise 'Corrections' upon it. Like tens of thousands of his generation, his time in hell equipped him with no skills of value to either himself or his community . . . He has never held a woman as a mate or lover; he has never held a newborn in his palm, its heart atump with new life; he hasn't seen the sun rise, nor moon glow, in almost fifteen years; for a robbery, armed with a pellet gun, at 15 years old." Abu-Jamal tells us of prisoners drugged senseless by the authorities, of prisoners beaten raw by racist redneck guards, of malicious denial of medical care, of toxic drinking water, of guards ransacking cells and stealing wedding bands under the premise of a 'shakedown', of guards sticking lit cigarettes in a prisoner's ear, of prisoners hanging themselves. It is a shame the decisionmakers at NPR opted to deny him access to their audience. It is censorship against his voice; it is an ill-deserved deprivation to the NPR audience.

In Part Two, "Crime and Punishment," Abu-Jamal offers expert and well-reasoned commentary on the jus-

tice system: the totally racist nature of the death penalty as used in the U.S., the execution of the mentally retarded, the recent move to create prisons that violate United Nations' Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, the relationship between drugs and genocide against African Americans, the ambivalent mutterings of the Supreme Court, tainted or manufactured evidence, and The Crime Bill. Of the latter he observes:

"It will drive public bankruptcy; it will fuel greater violence; it will create prisoners who are dumber, more alienated, but more desperate in life's scuffle for survival. Consider this: The drugged out zombie about to rob you calculates the worth of stealing your property vs. 4 to 8 years in prison, if caught. Factor in your property vs. life without parole, and your life, not your property, is devalued."

**It is my
hope that,
at the
time you
read this,
Abu-Jamal
is still alive.**

Malcom X told us that a man with nothing to lose is a dangerous man. Mumia Abu-Jamal, in the eyes of some, is no doubt seen as a dangerous man. He is radical. He is subversive to the existing power structure. He knows some things should change. His writings are dangerous in the sense that to read them is to invite yourself to look at the population locked behind bars right here in America—a population that has now swelled to over one million. One in every 156 U.S. citizens is now in jail, and those numbers will continue to climb in years to come. Frightening.

In "Musings on Malcom," Abu-Jamal compares the lionification of King to the ignominification of Malcom X. "The system used the main nonviolent themes of Martin L. King's life to present a strategy designed to protect its own interests—imagine the

most violent nation on Earth, the heir of Indian and African genocide, the only nation ever to drop an atomic bomb on a civilian population, the world's biggest arms dealer, the country that napalmed over ten million people in Vietnam (to "save it" from Communism), the world's biggest jailer, waving the corpse of King, calling for 'nonviolence'!"

Abu-Jamal knows firsthand of police brutality and conveys the larger picture. ". . . American Justice released recently an astonishing report revealing that in a ten-year period, from 1981 to 1991, over 79,000 cases of police brutality . . . occurred. 79,000! . . . Those numbers, if accurate, mean over 7,900 assaults by police a year in America. Civilians are brutalized, on the average, over 658 times a month by police; over 164 times a week! . . . The police, tools of white state capitalist power, are a force creating chaos in the community, not peace."

His sensibility, though, is hardly that of a foaming-at-the-mouth radical. His analyses are reasoned, tempered. This man, who has every reason to lash out at the system, also says, "While no one could call the writer a cop-lover, it is my firm opinion that the federal retrial of the four L.A. cops involved in [Rodney] King's legalized brutality constituted a clear violation of the 5th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, which forbids double jeopardy." And, "It is ironic that many of those who did not oppose the federal civil prosecutions feel it inappropriate for the federal system to review state convictions under habeas corpus statutes." How does the honorable senator from wherever respond to that logic?

It is in the personal narratives, though, that Abu-Jamal brings home the reality of just how sleazy the system is. Part Three of *Live from Death Row* is titled "Musings, Memories and Prophecies."

"Philly Daze: An Impressionistic Memoir," is the last, longest, most immediate and most powerful of the essays in the book. Reading it, I felt for the first time the unabashed opening up of the author, the here-I-am-and-this-is-my-story that draws a reader in immediately and in this case deserves unquestionably to be expanded into a full autobiography. I hope he writes it. I hope he is not killed before he has the chance.

Abu-Jamal tells of going as a teenager with three young friends to protest at a rally for George Wallace. "We must have been insane. We strolled into the stadium, four lanky,

dark string beans in a pot full of white, steaming limas. The band played 'Dixie.' Later, "I was grabbed by two of them, one kicking my skull while the other kicked me in the balls. Then I looked up and saw the two-toned, gold-trimmed pant leg of a Philly cop. Without thinking, and reacting from years of brainwashing, I yelled, "Help, police!" The cop saw me on the ground being beat to a pulp, marched over briskly—and kicked me in the face! I was always thankful to that faceless cop, for he kicked me straight into the Black Panther Party."

Later in "Philly Daze," Abu-Jamal tells of his early days on the radio, gives a glimpse of a Jesse Jackson that few have ever seen, takes us into Black Panther headquarters, into the thick of things at MOVE, and onto the streets of Philadelphia.

"While walking to work one day, I passed in front of an idling cop car. I glanced at the driver. White, with brown hair, and wearing dark shades. He 'smiled,' put his hand out the car window, and pointed a finger at me, his thumb cocked back like the hammer of a gun: bang—bang—bang. The finger jerks, as if from recoil, and the cop gives it a cowboyish blast of breath before returning it to an imaginary holster. He and a pal laugh. Car rolls."

Later: "I'm sleeping, sort of. It has the languorous feel of sleep, with none of the rest. Time seems slower, easier, less oppressive. I feel strangely light. I look down and see a man slumped on the curb, his head resting on his chest, his face downcast—'Damn! That's me!' A jolt of recognition ripples through me.

A cop walks up to the man and kicks him in the face. I feel it, but don't feel it. Three cops join the dance, kicking, blackjacking the bloody, handcuffed fallen form. Two grab each arm, pull the man up, and ram him headfirst into a steel utility pole. He falls.

'Daddy?'

'Yes, Babygirl.'

'Why are those men beating you like that?'

'It's okay, Babygirl. I'm okay.'

'But why, Daddy? Why did they shoot you and why are they hitting and kicking you, Abu?'

'They've been wanting to do this for a long time, Babygirl, but don't worry, Daddy's fine — see? I don't even feel it.'

I'll leave it there.

Reprinted from the Village Voice.

The Dishwasher

(continued from page 63)

have seen a thing or two. This is good writing.

Malone travels to Fresno by bus. "Fourteen . . . years of violence and noise interspersed with mind-numbing boredom had convinced him he should try a new way of life. That was the main reason he was going to Fresno instead of back to Portland, Oregon, where he had grown up. All his friends in Portland were outlaws. His mother and father had been outlaws. His grandfather had been a bookie and a safecracker. The odds against his changing in that environment were slim. Grandpa Malone would probably have made that about ten to one."

In Fresno, Malone's parole officer, an ex-prison guard named Campbell who's closing in on that second government pension, asks him if he has a trade. Malone answers that he's a dishwasher. Campbell says, "Somehow I can't picture you slaving behind a hot steaming dish machine for twenty years or so for the bare minimum wage." Malone replies, "I just did it for fourteen years for nothing."

To Martin's credit, Campbell is not some stereotypical bad-guy parole officer, out to vent his rage at his general powerlessness in the world by abusing what power he does have at his parolees' expense. Though not particularly complicated and not a major player in the story, Campbell is compassionately portrayed. He's real. He's a human. Campbell takes Malone to the Star Motel and tells him to give it a try.

There, Malone meets Gail, the woman who owns and runs the motel, and her teenage daughter, June. It's been a long time since he was with a woman, and Malone is immediately attracted to Gail. She's no stranger to the outlaw world. Her husband is in prison. The day after his arrival, when Malone asks Gail about what bus to take downtown, she volunteers a lift. After such a long time in a world without women, Malone is stunned to be among them again. Gail voices concern over her daughter June. "Though she spoke in a light tone he could tell she was concerned about her girl's welfare. He didn't really know how to ease her mind. She was the first woman he'd talked with in a lot of years. Just the smell of her was divine and overpowering to his senses. 'She's safe around me. I don't bother little girls, but I can't guarantee the same with

you. You're pretty sexy yourself.' Gail replies that she hasn't had a compliment in years. "I think my husband has beat up everyone in California, and most men are afraid to even talk to me." She takes Malone to a clothing store and introduces him to the owner, who doesn't blink when Malone asks for a couple of pair of Levis to work in and a pair of *bon aroos* for the weekends. Again, the details tell a story. "He felt good as he dropped the khakis and stood barefoot looking at himself in the dressing-room mirror . . . The smell of new Levi's and the feel of soft carpet against his feet were wonderful. He left the khakis and government shoes in the dressing room." The clothing store owner outfits Malone for the freeworld at cost, but at the same time brings him into close contact with the world he is trying to escape. He tells Malone who Gail's husband is, and it turns out Malone knows him, has done time with him, and respects him. That doesn't quell his desire for Gail.

Gail's husband is scheduled for release in a few months, but Gail has known for some time that he has a new love interest and won't be coming home to her. Malone, however, is a convict of the old school, the school that taught, in the words of Bob Dylan, "To live outside the law, you must be honest." He doesn't push things.

Also through Gail, Malone gets a job as a dishwasher at a local restaurant. He's a hard worker, ready to put in his hours in return for a paycheck and peace of mind. He goes to work five days a week and does his job and keeps his business to himself. But when a waitress at the restaurant shows interest, he unleashes 14 years of pent-up sexuality upon her—right there in the dishroom, surrounded by the banging, clanging dishwashing machine, steam rising about them, the cool tile floor beneath them sweating with condensation. She likes it. And she gives as good as she gets.

But it's not love, it's straight sex, and Malone longs for a relationship. He longs for Gail. She longs for him, too, and when she finally marches in and tells him she's in love, he responds in kind. When they receive her soon-to-be-ex-husband's blessing, Malone moves from his room into the front office digs. He is protective of Gail and her daughter. He loves them. He can't believe his good fortune at having found someone to love so soon out of prison.

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Survival

EIGHT PITFALLS TO AVOID IN PRISON

by Ralf Dean Omar

Mansfield Correctional Facility, Ohio

GANGS

In prison, affiliations include individuals you're forced to keep company with (cellmates, workmates) and those you voluntarily hang with (partners, fellow members of prison clubs and programs). Other groups are formed by individuals who knew each other on the streets. Such loose-knit groups are generally referred to as cliques or crews.

More formally organized groups qualify as full-blown gangs, which are generally drawn along racial lines: *Los Hermanos* (Latinos); various incarnations of the Aryan Brotherhood and the Black Guerilla Family, and a bevy of bizarre religious groups.

As in the freeworld, in prison you are known by the company you keep. Guilt by association. The cardinal rule here is do not get involved with recognized gangs or with cliques known for trouble making or illegal activity.

Refuse favors from anyone you think might be gang-affiliated. To accept a favor may obligate you, in the collective mind of the gang, to some future recompense. If asked to join a gang, decline tactfully. Declining a gang's offer to join must be done with grace or you'll piss them off.



Laughing at or otherwise "dissing" their colors (gang emblems) by offhandedly rejecting an offer can mark you as a target.

Individuals attracted to gangs tend to have low self-esteem. As a result, these wannabe gang-bangers will do anything to first win acceptance into a gang and then everything, up to and including murder, to maintain ties to their newfound prison family.

Be aware of the various types of dress and emblems that identify gangs (colored bandannas, ball caps, tattoos) to avoid assumed membership. Stay out of any areas known to be frequented (i.e. controlled) by gangs so you don't inadvertently trespass on gang turf.

DRUGS

Drugs are for sick people. They help sick people get well; they make well people sick.

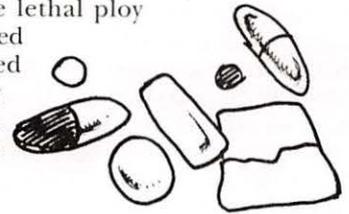
The lure of escaping, even temporarily, from the harsh reality of prison life through the use of drugs is attractive. Just remember the Icarus rule: The higher

you fly, the farther you can fall.

Whether inside prison or out, drugs impede your judgment and your ability to defend yourself.

Using or dealing drugs brings you into contact with some of the most dangerous prisoners, inmates who will kill you for your drugs. They will also kill you for someone else who will pay them off with drugs.

A common prison ploy is to get a young, naive prisoner high on "free" drugs before taking advantage of him sexually. A more lethal ploy involves getting an intended murder victim intoxicated in order to make killing him easier. This is known as "rocking an enemy to sleep."



SEX

Avoid sex while in prison, whether with other prisoners or with staff members. If you choose to dabble in homosexual activity while you're here, you'll be entering a ritualistic subculture that thrives on usury, violence and modern-day slavery.

If you're even suspected of being involved in passive-receptive homosexual activity, you will become a target for homophobic inmates and staff, as well as aggressive, sadistic straight prisoners who have few qualms about forcing unwilling prisoners into homosexual acts, while never questioning their own "straightness."

When it comes to sex in prison, the most difficult thing for outsiders to understand is the sharp distinction prisoners make between dominant and passive homosexual partners. In the skewed world of prison, the dominant-inserter man in a homosexual relationship is not considered a homosexual, whereas the passive-insertee boy or punk is.

This arbitrary delineation is necessary to help maintain some semblance of order in a chaotic environment. This man-boy role-playing is rigidly adhered to so that the man, the initiator, can still maintain his self-image as straight.



One of the best kept secrets in prison is just how often homosexual affairs develop between staff and prisoners. Traditionally, even when the staff member and the prisoner are caught *in flagrante delicto*, prison administrators have allowed the embarrassed staff member to resign quietly, and have transferred

the prisoner to another institution. However, with the increasing number of female correctional officers, the practice of sweeping sexual indiscretion under the rug is becoming less common. Prosecuting both male and female staff helps the state avoid charges of gender bias. As a prisoner, if you are found to be intimately involved with a staff member, heterosexual or homosexual, you are guaranteed to come out on the short end of the stick. Bottom line: In the age of AIDS, the less sex you have in prison, the safer you are. Period.

DEBTS & GAMBLING

Polonius' advice to Laertes still rings true: "Neither a borrower or a lender be."

Not borrowing or accepting gifts from persons unknown to you keeps you from being indebted to others, debts you may have to pay back in flesh—yours or another's.

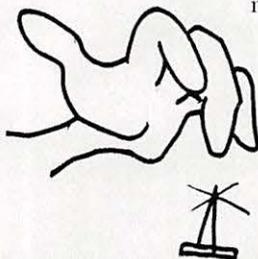
Not lending keeps you from having to deal with individuals whose promises to repay you mean nothing to them. If you loan something to a fellow prisoner and that person fails to repay you and you, in turn, fail to vigorously pursue that debt, other opportunistic prisoners will equate your failure to take care of business as weakness.



STEALING

Stealing from your fellow prisoners is like stealing food from fellow life-boat passengers. Do not buy or trade any property whose ownership you have not verified. Better yet, refrain from buying or trading anything with another prisoner.

In turn, it is your responsibility to guard your own property from theft. As a general rule, the less you have, the less you have for someone to steal.



SNITCHING

Informants will forever remain at the bottom of the prison pecking order.

Do not believe prison authorities who promise special treatment, protection, transfer to a better prison, or early release in exchange for turning snitch.

If you see illegal activity going on in your area, leave immediately. Here's why:

Inmates are notorious for blaming their own stupidity on others. Should a dope deal or other illegal activity go sour, criminals in general and inmates in particular tend to look around for anyone other than themselves to blame. Now, if you happen to be standing around gawking when drugs pass hands or violence occurs, you could all too easily be accused of snitching when the misadventure fails.



TRICKBAGS

Trickbag is prison slang for no-win situations that opportunistic inmates try to force on their naive and unwary fellow prisoners. The goal of a trickbag is to trap the victim in such a way that escape is impossible unless made through payment of fine or flesh.

Here's an example of a simple trickbag: A friendly inmate offers you the use of his radio, only to later claim you broke it and must now pay the owner for it.

A more serious trickbag involves a homosexual man sending his boy to entice a naive prisoner into participating in a "swap-out" (i.e. two-way, receptive sex). The boy's man arrives at the opportune time, catching the two in the act. From then on, the man can blackmail the inmate caught in the trickbag, either extorting him for money, sex or both.

To avoid becoming a trickbag victim, just remember what you know about street swindlers: If a deal looks too good to be true, it probably is.



THE RIOT

Given the overcrowding and abhorrent conditions in most prisons, sooner or later the joint you're in will explode. If you're lucky, any disturbance will come in the form of an organized work stoppage or a strike designed to peacefully protest conditions.

Avoid becoming a spokesperson, and don't cross prisoner strike-lines. Scabs are dealt with quite harshly.

If you find yourself trapped in a full-fledged slay-fest with both prisoners and staff trying to spill as much blood as possible before what passes for order is restored (see *Prison Life*, October, 1994), avoid becoming involved in any type of violent demonstration. Try to leave the riot area as soon as possible without inviting the hostility of rioting prisoners.

Stay clear of the area where hostages are being held. This will be the most dangerous area should the administration decide to reclaim the prison by force.

Avoid speaking with the media and decline negotiations with the administration. This will identify you as a ringleader and mark you for later prosecution.



Despite the fact that he has spent over half his life in one form of lock-up or another, 37-year-old Ralf Dean Omar has managed to write and sell several full-length books. He is currently working on Steel Nation: How to Survive and Prosper in Prison, scheduled for publication this year from Alpha Publications in Ohio.



Family Matters

VISITING DAY

by Kenneth Edward Hartman
California Correctional Institution, Tehachapi, CA

It seems as if time distends while you're waiting for something you want. On a Saturday morning while I am awaiting a visit from my wife, it's as if the very rotation of the planet has ground to a halt.

The wait actually begins on Friday at midnight. I work the graveyard shift so I am awake the entire night before the visit. I glance at the clock and figure I have between 9 and 10-and-a-half hours before I see her. So begins my weekly vigil.

With my wife there is a predictability to her demeanor at our visits. If she has had a bad week, which seems more often than not, she'll arrive late with a challenging attitude of Hey, you better not complain, mister. On the good weeks, she'll be early and friendly.

I am sure that being married to a man serving possibly the rest of his life behind bars must be a source of great stress for her. But I have been serving this sentence for as long as she has known me. Sometimes she acts like she just found this out yesterday. Believe me, I know that learning to accept a terrible reality is difficult, but I have not had the luxury of wondering about it. I have lived it.

I go to breakfast a bit groggy from the lack of sleep the night before, and hope the cop in the bubble that day will let me take a shower when he is finished feeding us. Luckily, this has been the case recently, but there were many times when I was forced to wash myself in the sink because they didn't want to run the showers in the morning. I suppose water is more expensive in the morning.

While I'm in the shower, I take a mental inventory of the past week's conversations and try to figure out if there have been any problems, any reasons for a delay or an angry visit. I wonder how she is, and if she is just then getting on the road from Los

Angeles and making her way up to the mountains.

During the week we speak at least once on the phone, and her responses are fairly good indicators of the tenor of the coming visit. "I'm having a good week" bodes well, but "I'm having a pretty good week" is tantamount to "I'm ready to jump off a bridge." Sometimes a "good" can change to a "pretty good" in three days, which leaves me wondering what happened, what the real source of the problem is, and of course the real problem is I am in prison. This is the one thing I cannot change.

"After all these years, I am still filled with a kind of giddy joy at seeing the woman I love."

I know I shouldn't, but I take all of this to heart. I have a tremendous fear of being abandoned, having been abandoned by my family and friends when I came to prison. My wife loves me, I know, but she hates my predicament. The hatred is growing while the love is merely holding its own.

Thoughts of this kind plague me most after I've showered and shaved and am ready for the visit. At this time, around 8:30 a.m., there is only an hour or two left to go. Most guys go to the yard when they are expecting a visit, more to be distracted than anything else. In the company of others, it is easier to feign indif-

ference.

Instead, I block my view of the clock to avoid checking the time with each new minute. I postpone dressing for as long as possible, saving this ritual as my final distraction. I have laid out my clothes earlier, and I put them on slowly.

At 9:30 I can feel the physical manifestations of stress growing more pronounced. My heart beats harder and more rapidly; I breathe quickly and shallowly and I begin to sweat.

By 10 o'clock, I have assumed the worst. My wife has been in an accident, she has got into a fight with the cops at the front gate, or (and this is the most painful to contemplate), she has finally succumbed to the hatred and anger and has once and for all abandoned me to this world. In these few hours I lose a measure of my humanity, and the toll is deeply felt. A man I knew who was serving a life sentence fell in love and he told me how he had never felt punished until then, until he embarked on this rollercoaster of heartache and joy that is the hallmark of prison love affairs.

Between 10:00 and 10:30 the cop in the bubble signals to me that I have a visit. The walk to the visiting room is always filled with a strange mixture of happiness and dread as I wonder what frame of mind she'll be in, what frame of mind I will find myself in. I am also, after all these years, filled with a kind of giddy joy at seeing the woman I love. I am glad I wait on Saturday mornings. I just wish I could be waiting in our bed for her to come back from the kitchen or the corner market.

Fantasies like this often emerge during visits. For a few brief hours, traces of the real world sneak in, accompanied by the smiles of women and the laughter of children.

PL



IRON PILE

by **Chris Cozzone, Fitness Editor**

Dude, gimme something new for my biceps and forearms. My triceps are already big but they make other parts of my arms look like shit. Besides, I'm damn near bored to death with my same ol' biceps and forearms routine (basically barbell work all around). I want something with intensity, something that'll make me puke. I want something that's gonna totally blow up my arms. Something that'll make my bi's like cantaloupes and my forearms like python-sized bowling pins. I want arms thicker than a chick's waist, bigger 'n my head—

Joe

Cook County for now

Nuff already! Chrissake, if you stopped writing so much description and picked up something heavier than a pen, maybe your arms wouldn't be the sorry-ass toothpicks you say they are. Now stop lying around your cell and get down to the pile. You're gonna work your arms so much you won't have a chance to squeeze one adjective outta your Bic.

Biceps.

Forget that damn barbell. If you're like most people I see, you're probably working back and legs more than your biceps when you do your

barbell "cheat" curls. You're probably the kind of guy who thinks the more weight is on the bar, the more your "targeted" muscle will grow—nevermind that your horrendous form starts recruiting other major muscle groups.

If you want to work any muscle, the first thing to do is figure out what that muscle is supposed to do. (That's right: Muscles have a function besides making you look good.) Then you try to isolate that movement.

Your biceps brachii serves two functions: to flex (y'know—bend) your arm and to supinate your wrist while your elbow is in a flexed position. If you don't know what supination is, move your hand from palm-down to palm-up. If your arm is bent, you'll notice your biceps contracting.

Knowing what you now know about biceps movement, you might figure out for yourself why curl bars should be stricken from your routine. Because they lock your wrists in a half-supinated position, there ain't no way to wreak maximum biceps havoc. It might pump up your brachialis (upper forearm muscle), but that little piece of beef is gonna tire out way before your meaty biceps. Your best bet, then, is to do an exercise that will

incorporate both—flexion and supination—without tempting you add in other joint movements.

If only we had cheat curls to worry about . . . Actually, your biceps' greatest enemy is the shoulder flexion movement. I'd bet my pathetic paycheck that 99% of all curlers do their curls wrong because they don't realize that their deltoids are muscling in on their curls.

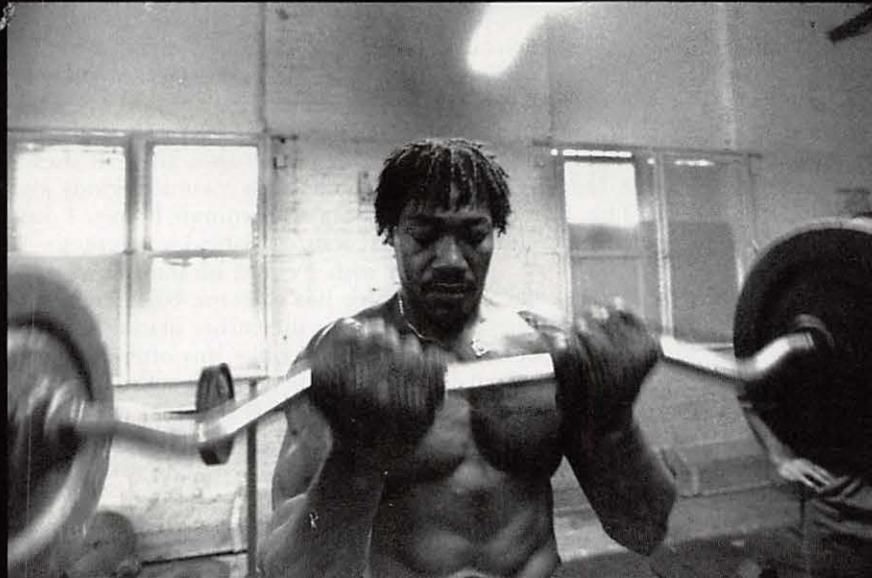
Flexing your shoulder is simply raising your arm from your side to a position parallel to the floor in front of you. This motion is almost strictly deltoid territory and so should be banned from all biceps beef sessions.

What does this mean in plain English? It means keep your damn elbows and shoulders back while you do your curls! It means don't simply lift the weight from point A (beginning straight arm position) to point B (weight at shoulder). Concentrate on the movement: a slight bend to a 145° to 155° angle.

If you want to make your pebble-sized bi's boulder-sized, the solution is the almighty dumbbell. You'll get that freedom of movement barbells, curl bars and machines prevent, although you might have to drop the weight (you're working muscle here, not your ego) to do this right.

I get my best pump seated on an incline, keeping my elbows back in a locked position. The arms are flexed and the finishing position is my chest area. Also, keep your wrists in a fully supinated position during the whole set. A few sets of these and you'll give up barbells for life. I don't care how much weight you can throw, or if you're 300 pounds, even a pair of 20s can get you cookin' here if you do 'em right. Work with a weight you can control for at least eight reps and hit at least three sets.

Ricky Williams of Rahway pumps his arms with EZ-bar curls. Note that the semi-pronated grip will most likely result in a brachialis muscle failure before his biceps are fully pumped.





Nicky "Hollywood" DeMatteis of Green Haven blasts his massive guns with wrist curls. Although Hollywood complains about the state-issued food, it's obvious that something's working!

The first time you try these, three sets are gonna do you in. But the next time, you might want to throw in a few sets of another exercise. Try 'em seated straight up, or do two-three sets bending over, "concentration" style.

Forearms.

It's time to hit that great big mass of muscle tissue lumped together as forearms. My old partner used to call 'em "fivearms," 'cause five is greater than four. But hell, that's why he works for the Post Office.

These guys (your forearm muscles, not postal workers) do a shitload

of movements: wrist movements (supination, pronation, flexion, extension, rotations) and even finger motions. Hell, my mighty forearms are doing reps now as I type away on my keyboard. To simplify, I'll lump these babies together under "top" and "bottom" forearms.

To work your bottom forearm, or your "belly," wrist curls are best. But again, leave that barbell where you left it. What you want is a simple wrist flexion and when your mitts are hooked onto a straight bar, you're limiting wrist motion. Use a dumb-

bell. Grab that baby and curl your wrist upwards. Your arm should be hanging down, slightly bent, but you can also do them in your standard off-the-knee-or-bench style.

The top of your lower arm can be slammed with the same form. This time extending your wrist upwards rather than flexing it. Now would be a good time to do your curls the way I told you not to do them earlier: hammer style. Your brachialis will be poppin' out like cooked steak.

Figure on a few sets of each for forearms and keep the reps over ten. Because we use that muscle (calves, too) so often during the day, they tend to be rep-resistant.

Gimme a shout in a couple weeks if this don't do it for you. If you do 'em right, you oughtta be runnin' for the toilet, ready to toss your cookies from all the intensity. Run, Joe, run!

Send your Q's, training tips, muscle photos and fitness-related articles to Iron Pile, c/o Prison Life, 175 5th Avenue, Suite 2205, New York, NY 10010.

Where to send your stuff . . .

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Writ Writing: Gathering the File

By Larry Fassler, Jailhouse Lawyer

One of the most important steps in preparing to seek a habeas corpus is to gather your complete case files and records before writing your writ. The importance of having everything cannot be overemphasized, as the prosecutors will have everything in your files—and then some—to use against you. Be sure that if you overlook any important facts or evidence in your case records, the government will present them to the court as part of its argument against granting you relief.

Case files consist of several different types of documents. The first are the police reports, investigative documents and other items of evidence, commonly known as Discovery. Grand jury documents and transcripts are also considered part of the Discovery materials.

Although it may seem logical that the first things a lawyer would give a client are copies of the police reports and other evidence against the client, few lawyers actually do. Some seem to feel that their clients are not capable of understanding Discovery. Others don't want their clients to see the Discovery because they don't want to be bothered with questions later. Some lawyers simply don't think about giving copies to their clients; and others give their clients only those portions of the Discovery materials that implicate the defendant in the crime. (Often, these are the lawyers who are intent on convincing their clients to plead guilty, regardless of the merit of the case against them.) There are even a few lawyers who don't bother to obtain the Discovery materials themselves, though this is relatively rare.

Chances are you do not have your Discovery files. Or, if you do

have them, the files are most likely incomplete. Therefore, you should write a letter to your trial and appeal (if you had one) attorney(s) asking for a complete set of all Discovery materials. Keep a copy of your letter, and if the lawyer does not respond within a reasonable time (usually 30 to 60 days), send a written reminder.

If you do not receive a satisfactory response after the second letter, you have several options. You can sometimes file a motion in the court where you were convicted, asking the judge to order the lawyer to send you the files, or you can write to the State Bar Association to which your lawyer belongs, requesting help. However, I find that a third letter, simply stating that you plan to take this course of action, is usually enough to gain his or her cooperation.

You also need to understand that by the time you first ask for these materials your lawyer has probably put them into his long-term storage facility, meaning that the materials are not immediately available. Be reasonable about giving your lawyer time to honor your request.

COURT FILES AND TRANSCRIPTS

The next category of materials you need consists of the court documents and transcripts from your case. These include two sets of papers. The first is the clerk's file, all motions, court orders and other documents on file with the Clerk of the Court in which you were tried. The second is the actual, verbatim record of the court proceedings, known as transcripts.

Your former lawyer(s) may have the clerk's files, so you should direct this request, too, to them at the same

time you request the Discovery materials. If you cannot obtain them from your lawyer, you may have to obtain them from the clerk of your trial court. A good first step is to write to the clerk and ask for a copy of the complete docket sheet in your case. The docket sheet will be several pieces of paper on which are listed all of the documents that have been filed in your case. Review the docket sheet carefully, checking each item to see if you have a copy of it, then write back requesting copies of those you don't already have.

If you are able to obtain these documents from your former lawyer(s), they will probably send them to you without charge. But if you have to order them from the clerk of the Court, be prepared to pay a copying fee ranging from ten to fifty cents per page. (Federal courts always charge fifty cents for photocopying.) You may also be able to send a friend or relative to the clerk's office to make the copies on coin-operated machines at a much lower cost.

Also be prepared to pay for these copies if you need to obtain them directly from the clerk. If you had a court-appointed attorney, you can file a motion with the court requesting that they be provided at no cost, but in general the courts are not required to provide them free of charge. As such, they rarely do. Although an indigent prisoner has a Constitutional right to proceed in forma pauperis at trial and on direct appeal, there is no Constitutional right to file a writ without paying the required fees, and judges will not normally waive those costs until they are satisfied that your action has real merit.

Transcripts are a more compli-

cated matter. There will always be a verbatim record of hearings in your case, even if you pled guilty. But they may not always be easily available. If you appealed your case, the transcripts were prepared by the court reporter and were provided to the lawyer who filed your appeal. Ask him or her for the transcripts, or for a copy of them.

If your lawyer no longer has the transcripts, he can tell you what became of them. In nearly every instance, if a lawyer who received the transcripts for appeal no longer has them, it is because he or she either (1) gave them to another lawyer to look into your case, or (2) was required to return the transcripts to the court that provided them at no charge in a forma pauperis case. Contact the court or the person to whom these documents were sent and make the necessary arrangements. You can usually arrange to have them sent to you, or to have someone on the streets borrow them long enough to make a set of copies. In the worst scenario, you may be required to pay the court clerk, or a copy service approved by the court, to make the copies.

If you did not appeal, it is likely that the transcripts were not prepared. In such a case, you will probably need to pay the court reporter to prepare the typed transcripts from his or her original notes. This usually costs in the neighborhood of \$3.00 a page, and it can be quite expensive if you went to trial. (A good rule of thumb is that there is one page of transcript per every two minutes of court hearing. Thus, each hour of hearings will generate 30 pages of transcript, which, at \$3.00 a page, will cost \$90.)

Fortunately, prisoners who were found guilty after a trial almost always file a direct appeal, meaning that their transcripts already exist and can be obtained at little or no cost. Prisoners who did not appeal are usually those who pled guilty, thus the transcripts in their cases tend to be relatively short. If you are one of the latter, the transcript costs will be considerably less.

There will always be at least two hearings for which prisoners who pled guilty need the transcripts: (1) the hearing at which they entered their plea, and (2) the hearing at which they were sentenced. In my experience, the cost for these two sets of transcripts generally runs between \$75 and \$200. Rarely is the cost more. However, if you also had a suppression hearing or other pretrial proceedings that are

important to your writ, the costs for these transcripts may be steep. (You can use the formula above to estimate the costs.)

Many prisoners file motions asking the court to provide transcripts free of charge for use in preparing their writ, but those motions are rarely granted. If you pled guilty, and did not appeal, you should expect to have to buy your own transcripts for use in preparing your writ.

Make no mistake: It is imperative that you obtain these transcripts before you begin working on your writ. Many inmates tell me that they cannot afford the one or two hundred dollars charged by the court reporter to prepare the transcripts of their guilty plea and sentencing hearings, and ask me to prepare a writ without them. I almost never agree to do so. Even if it means delaying your writ by six months or a year, having the transcripts first is indispensable to effective writ-writing.

If you do not have the transcripts, you are forced to argue your case based on your memory of what was said in court. I have never met the man who accurately recalls everything said during his court proceedings. In fact, defendants are often so distraught while in the courtroom that they mishear, or don't remember, much of what actually transpired. If you allege even one fact that the prosecutor can later show to be false (remember—he will have the transcripts), you can be sure the court will capitalize on that one seemingly insignificant discrepancy in your pleadings by denying the entire case, no matter how strong your issues and arguments are. You cannot afford to misrepresent a single thing that happened in court.

There is another equally important reason why you must have the transcripts before proceeding: Without transcripts, you will lose the opportunity to raise issues that you wouldn't even have known about. It is common for judges or prosecutors to make mistakes, or take shortcuts, in guilty plea cases. These mistakes are often reversible, but without the transcripts, you will never become aware of the potential grounds for reversal. If you file your writ without such issues, and at a later date get the transcripts and discover important arguments, you may be prevented by the procedural rules of the court from presenting the new, and possibly better, issues in the future.

The final group of documents you should gather are your appeal

records, if you have already filed an appeal or other post-conviction motions. You will need all of the briefs that were filed in your appeal, including the briefs filed on your behalf as well as those that were filed by the government against you. You also need to have copies of every court decision in your appeal. If you appealed to more than one appellate court, you need the brief and decisions from each of them. If there were any motions for reconsideration or rehearing, you also need copies of the motions and the decisions the courts made on them.

It may seem like overkill that I have devoted an entire column to the importance of gathering your complete record before proceeding, but in my experience, being completely prepared is the most important first step to filing a successful writ.

Gather your documents, read them and think about the issues you already have in mind for your writ. In the next installment I will discuss how to develop those issues and prepare them for the court.

Next Month:

Your Questions Answered!

Send your legal questions to In-House Counsel, c/o Prison Life, 175 5th Avenue, Suite 2205, NY, NY 10010.

LIBERTAD TEMPRANA PARA PRESOS MEXICANOS

Los prisioneros Mexicanos, especialmente en el sistema federal, pueden ser transferidos hacia Mexico para recibir libertad temprana, y vivir cerca de sus seres queridos a traves de los servicios del Bufete de Benninghoff & Ramirez. A traves de oficinas en los Estados Unidos y Mexico, Benninghoff & Ramirez provee a sus clientes un servicio sin igual.

Los prisioneros transferidos podran recibir libertad inmediata bajo fianza, libertad temprana para trabajar, y tiempo libre por buena conducta. Tambien, hemos tenido mucho exito con prisioneros a los cuales se les ha negado la transferencia anteriormente.

Favor de escribir a la siguiente direccion para que reciba un folleto descriptivo preparado especialmente para prisioneros Mexicanos. Escriba a:

Charles F. Benninghoff III
Benninghoff & Ramirez
Post Office Box 1355
San Juan Capistrano, Calif. 92675

"Justicia por los Mexicanos"

WARNING

To: All friends, relatives and loved ones of _____
Issued in solemn warning this _____ day of _____ 19 ____

Very soon the above-named man will once again be in your midst—dehumanized, demoralized and bitter. He will be ready once again to take his place as a human being with freedom, liberty and the somewhat delayed pursuit of happiness. In making your preparations to welcome him back in respectable society, you must make allowances for the crude environment in which he has suffered for the past ___ years and ___ months. In other words, he may be a bit paranoid and may be suffering from the advanced stages of prolix poisoning, solitary confinement or too many sweeping denials.

Therefore, show no alarm if he chooses to squat on the floor rather than sit in a chair, or continues to X out each day on the calendar, or slyly offers to loan the mailman a pack of cigarettes. Don't be surprised if he answers all your questions with, "How the fuck should I know?" or "Fuck you." Be tolerant if he shows undue interest in young boys with long hair, or refuses to enter any building without steel mesh over the windows and doors.

Avoid any of the following, since they might produce an advanced state of paranoia: walking closely behind him, bending over (either sex), or offering him a full pack of cigarettes.

Don't correct him if he chooses to cut his meat with a spoon rather than a knife, or asks where to empty his plate after dinner. Don't be surprised if he immediately goes to his room whenever a bell rings. (To reassure him, enter his room and pretend to count him.) Show no concern if he wanders around the backyard trying to find the iron pile.

For the first few months, don't be alarmed if swipes the toilet paper, hoards the sugar, or stashes a spoon under his bed. Be especially watchful when he is in the company of real women. His first reaction upon meeting an attractive lady will be to stare. Wives and sweethearts are advised to take advantage of this momentary shock to move out of his reach.

Keep in mind that beneath his pale, prison exterior beats a heart of gold. Treasure this, for it is the only thing of value he has left. Treat him with kindness, tolerance and an occasional fifth of good whiskey, and you will be able to rehabilitate this shell of the man you once knew.

Send no more letters to this man after the _____ day of _____, 19____ because he will no longer be here.

If for any reason you have betrayed, forgotten, snitched on or just plain "fucked over" the above named individual, you should immediately do one or all of the following:

1. Leave town
2. Join the army
3. Try desperately to repair the relationship by offering him money (lots of it!)
4. Start doing stretching exercises, because once you see him, you can kiss your ass goodbye.

Written by James Machado

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The Dishwasher

(continued from page 65)

Things are fine until a street-level heroin dealer enters the picture and Malone is forced to stand up for his beliefs and for those he loves. Contemplating his options, he realizes "he could have his clothes packed in a few minutes and be in another state before today was done. But he'd rather spend another 14 years in prison than live the rest of his life with the memory that would follow him from this place. A past that would reside in all his mirrors and patiently wait for him to gaze upon it each day. Sitting like a vulture in a gilt frame waiting to peck and pull at his diminished and dying spirit."

Malone doesn't take his beef to the cops. He handles it himself. "... Bill's right fist hit him in the mouth so hard it knocked his teeth through his upper lip. He went over sideways and yelled something in Spanish as his head slammed the inside of the passenger door. Bill felt the shock of the punch in his shoulder, and it felt wonderful. . . . Bill grabbed one of his kicking feet and jerked him until his shoulders cleared the seat, then let go and kicked him in the groin with the same force he'd once used to drop-kick a football. . . . Bill took careful aim and kicked him again in the small of the back. He began kicking him in the kidneys, the knee, anywhere

he could see, and alternately stomping him on the neck and head just as he would have stomped a rattlesnake. . . . The ground was soaked with blood beneath him. Bill's foot was hurting by now, and he reached down, grabbed a handful of hair, pulled the man's head up to the hood, and tried to pound him through the metal with his fist. Something had snapped inside him like a dam bursting, and he couldn't stop. He tried to make every punch harder than the last. He was in a slow-motion zone and could hear faraway screaming around him like bees buzzing in his ears. Suddenly a clawing banshee was on his back pulling at his hair and grabbing at his arm. He reached around, grabbed her, and pulled her around, slamming her onto the bloody hood of the Chevy, fully intending to bust her head, and when he saw it was Gail he heard her voice at the same time.

"Goddamnit, Bill! You're killing him!"

He stood breathing hard and looking at her for long seconds before he took his hand from her neck."

Powerful stuff, writ true. The way it really happens. Malone's extraction of justice throws him headlong into the world of wannabe mobsters who run the local rackets, and brings the police to sniff at his heels. Martin's depiction of small-town mobsters, their drug-

addicted, reluctant-mobster heirs, the local police, and how Malone handles all of them is not only intriguing, but astonishingly realistic.

If there is any shortcoming to this story, it is that the women characters are somewhat idealized. They are all attractive, and they have no faults. Being a woman myself, I feel eminently qualified to say that they should. Then again, 14 years without women could tend to cause a man to idealize the opposite sex. Given the circumstances, it's a most forgivable sin. I found too, incidences of writerly shorthand, concentrated mostly in the second half of the novel, where I stumbled over phrases like "raven-haired beauties." Perhaps my awareness of this was made keen because Martin does such a first-rate job of describing things in a unique and original way when he takes time to use his own words instead of those picked up from reading lesser writers than himself.

The Dishwasher is a wonderful story, well-paced and well-written, a journey into the world of the ex-convict told honestly by a man who's been there. Mr. Martin proves through his writing that The Pen is mightier than the pen.

Committing Journalism: The Prison Writings of Red Hog, by Dannie M. Martin and Peter Y. Sussman, will be published in paperback in June.

Sore 'Nads, Spinal Pain & Sutures

Shep's Left Nut

Dear Noice,

My left nut is killin' me. There's like this lump on the epididymis. I figure if it was something like epididymitis it would have disappeared by now. Twenty calendars back, I went to the U of W clinic, and some doc wannabe hustled me into a closet, a little disconcerting when he told me to drop the Levis. He wanted it dark when he took a pen light and held the bulb against the scrotum to spotlight the lump. Then he gave me some weak story and sent me on my way. Now, there are times when I cross one leg over the other, and I'm here to tell you, the sucker screams. Then there's two-fisted autoerotic moments that'll put a flaccid smile on a Southern Baptist. It's puttin' a real damper on my semi-celibate on-again-off-again affair with myself. Thoughts of cancer come hard in this Age of Carcinogens; one can muster much trepidation. Is my concern substantive? Or am I merely 'noid off me knackers?

T'anks fer yer time.

In sanity,

Shep

WA State Pen, Walla Walla

Hey Shep,

We understand why you're concerned given the area and intensity of your pain. Often pain, swelling or a lump in that area is caused by an inflammation of the testicles and epididymis (epididymitis or orchitis) or a combination of both. Usually, this inflammation is caused by bacteria often found in the gut, or by Mumps, Gonorrhea and Chlamydia. Treatment typically includes pain medication and antibiotics.

When doctors "transilluminate" (put the flashlight behind your testicles), they are checking for cystic masses like a hydrocele (fluid in the scrotum) as opposed to something solid like a tumor. Another possibility is a scrotal hernia—a loop of bowel dislodged in the scrotum.

Of course, when there is a lump, swelling, feeling of heaviness or pain in the testes (two egg-shaped glands behind the penis in the scrotum), testicular cancer should be considered. Tumors in the testicles are curable if

detected and treated early. But if left untreated, the cancer can spread to other parts of the body.

Testicular cancer is most common if you are between the ages of 15-35 or if your testicles did not descend or only partially descended into the scrotum following birth (cryptorchidism). Testicular cancer is more common in white men and men whose mothers used medication like DES or estrogen while pregnant. Injury to the testicles does NOT contribute to developing testicular cancer.

A weekly testicular self-exam (TSE) may detect testicular cancer.

Here are the steps to perform TSE:

1. Examine your testicles during or after a hot shower when they are fully descended.
2. Put the index and middle fingers on the bottom of the testes and the thumb at the top of the testes.
3. Gently but firmly roll the testicles between the thumb and fingers.
4. If you notice a lump, swelling or area of tenderness, report it to your health care provider right away. (Do not mistake the soft tube-like structures found at the back of the testicle for an abnormality; these are the epididymis, or the connecting tubes that store sperm.) For more information call the Cancer Information Service at 800-422-6237.

To help diagnose testicular abnormalities, you should consult a urologist who may order an ultrasound of the testicles.

Shep, whenever a health care provider gives you a "weak story" or tells you something you don't understand, you should ask some more questions. Doctors and nurses are responsible for the health care of hundreds of patients—but you are only responsible for one. And where the family jewels are concerned, we think you'd be especially vigilant.

Vertebrae Victim

Dear Nurses,

I had back surgery in July to remove a fat tumor (Lipoma) from my back. What was supposed to be minor surgery ended up being a 4 1/2 hour operation. The doctor removed a 2 1/2 pound tumor from my back leaving a hole the size of my fist. The wound formed into a massive hematoma within a week and I caught a gangrenous infection. I was rushed to the hospital where my life was saved.

After 90 days my wound healed. I now have a three-inch indentation in my back. But the surface is not my problem, I'm not exactly an underwear model anyway. My problem is the pain I still have in that area and others. I have serious pain running down the left side of my spine, around the side of my left buttock, circling around and running down my inner left thigh. The problem is the witch doctor who butchered me knows I have a case pending against him and refuses to treat me. I've done all I know to do and I'm at a loss for the next step. I've written grievances and written my attorney, but I'm in pain every minute of every day. Thanks for any advice you can give.

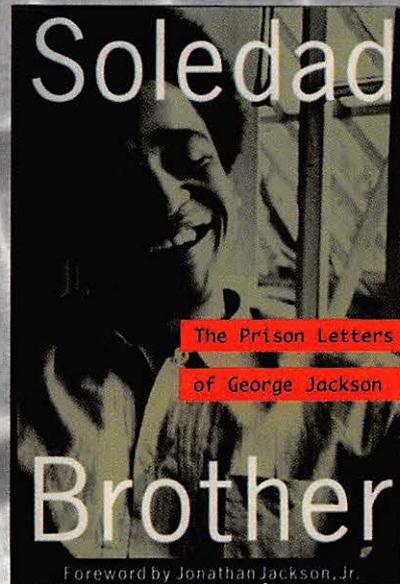
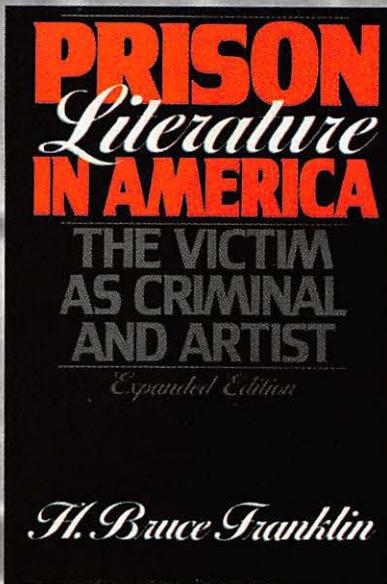
Painful in Tucson,

TwoRivers

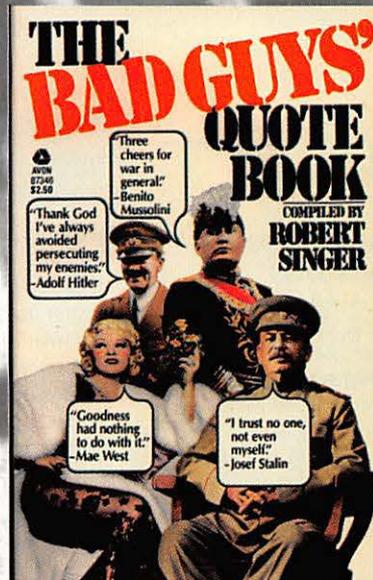
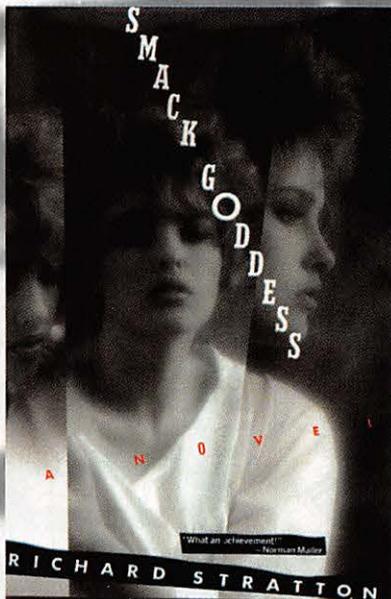
Dear TwoRivers,

Sorry to hear you're hurting. It's hard to say whether the pain radiating down your leg is related to the surgery, since you did not say exactly where on the back the lipoma was, and since it is impossible to evaluate without a full history, exam and diagnostic tests. But pain originating in the buttock and radiating down the leg could be, among other things, inflammation of the sciatic nerve. This is a large nerve running from the lower back area, through the pelvis, down the back of the thigh and into the legs. Spinal disc compression, infection or injury to this nerve can result in pain, numbness or loss of function in the leg. Uncomplicated sciatica often improves with several days of bed rest (on your back, in a position of comfort, with a

(continued on page 78)



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small pillow under flexed knees). Some medications (nonsteroidal anti-inflammatories) like advil/motrin (ibuprofen), or aspirin may help, but these can cause stomach bleeding and should be taken under the supervision of a competent health care provider. Again, your pain might have an entirely different cause altogether. You must find, in short, a good doctor or nurse practitioner who may refer you for a CAT scan and if necessary, to a neurologist, orthopedist or physiatrist.

TwoRivers, you have a right to health care. The Supreme Court stated that "deliberate indifference to the serious medical needs of prisoners constitutes the unnecessary and wanton infliction of pain....proscribed by the Eighth Amendment of the Constitution." In other words, you have a legal right to get medical attention. If you need help, you can contact the American Civil Liberties Union, National Prison Project, 1875 Connecticut Ave, N.W. Suite 410, Washington, D.C. 20009.

Hope you're feeling better soon.

Everything You Ever Wanted To Know About Sutures

Dear Nurses,

The picture is this: 48 sutures were applied to a deep, four-inch razor laceration across the right cheek. Now, the questions are: 1). What is the minimum time these sutures could/should be removed? 2) What is the maximum time these sutures can be left in this cut? 3) Could premature removal of these sutures cause the wound to begin disadhesing?

Respectfully,

Brian
Walkill, NY

Hey Brian,

Perhaps you know that the purpose of stitches (sutures) is to close a wound that may not heal as well by itself. So stitches help prevent or minimize scars and improve healing.

Of course, since rates of healing vary, we can only offer you an approximation of when stitches should be removed. Suture removal times may vary depending on blood supply to the injured area, anticipated healing rates, and movement of or near the sutured area. Here's the general rule for suture removal: For the face 4-5 days, scalp 10-14 days, neck 7-10 days, arms and legs

8-12 days, body 7-10 days, hands and feet 8-12 days, and the inside of the mouth 10-14 days. You can aid the healing process and help reduce scar formation by minimizing movement, keeping the area very clean, and making sure you have adequate nutrition, especially vitamin C and protein.

If stitches are left in too long, they may become difficult to remove or may cause an infection. If stitches are taken out too soon, the edges of the wound split apart, which may cause infection and scarring. Be aware that the signs of infection (with or without stitches) are pus, pain, swelling, redness and heat. If an infection is developing you will need further treatment, probably antibiotics. Hope yours are out by the time you read this, and try to avoid being a cut-up.

Da Nurses are both Registered Nurses and Certified Nurse Practitioners. We caution that information in this column is offered as general advice, and we recommend that anyone with health problems seek professional medical care. Although problems presented here may bear similarity to yours, each requires personal and individual attention. We welcome your letters, and thank you for asking Da Nurses.

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In-Cell Cooking



Illustration by Bobo Willkie

Chef's Special of the Month:

Barbeque Burritos

- 1 can Barbeque Beef
- 1 can whole kernel corn (Drained)
- 1 small can mushrooms (Drained)
- 1 block Velveeta cheese
- 4 flour tortillas

Steam tortillas. Cover with plastic & set aside. Combine Barbeque Beef, corn and mushrooms in hot pot. Heat for 10 to 15 minutes. Fill each tortilla with beef combination. Slice Velveeta over the top. Fold in burrito and enjoy!

*William J. Casey
Sheridan, IL*

Almost Menudo

- 2 small bags picante-flavored corn nuts
- 1 small can boned chicken
- 1 small can chile & beans
- Chili powder & red peppers (to taste)
- Garlic powder & onion flakes (to taste)

Empty corn nuts into three cups boiling water. Simmer for 30 minutes. Lower heat or remove all but one stinger from bowl. Add chili & beans. Shred chicken and add with juice to mixture. Season to taste with chili powder, red peppers, garlic, onion flakes. Stir constantly for 5 to 10 minutes. Remove from heat, cover, let stand for 5 to 10 minutes. (Optional: Add 1/2 cup instant rice for heartier soup.) Serves one or two.

*J. Stewart
Central California Women's Facility*

Spice Flour Tortillas

- 1 tsp baking powder
- 1 cup flour
- 2 cups water
- Dash of black pepper
- 3 tsp. minced chile peppers

Mix all ingredients with your hands. Make little balls the size of black hand balls. Roll out each ball of dough and flatten to make tortillas. Bake tortillas until done. Use for burritos or serve as Mexican bread.

*Ed Chaparro
Pittsburgh, PA*

For Dessert:

Pudding Cake

- 2 four-packs chocolate pudding
- 1 small jar peanut butter (creamy or crunchy)
- 1 box graham crackers
- 2 large bananas
- 1 1/2 can of peanuts
- 18"x15" piece of cardboard covered with plastic

Shell and crush peanuts. Set aside. Coat each cracker with peanut butter. Arrange on cardboard. Slice bananas and arrange over crackers. Spread pudding over bananas. Make two more layers of peanut butter and pudding. Top with crushed nuts. Let sit for 12 hours. Slice and serve. Share with celly.

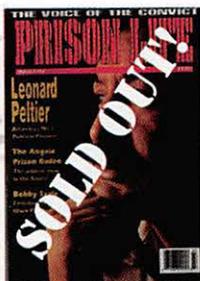
*William J. Casey
Sheridan, IL*

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

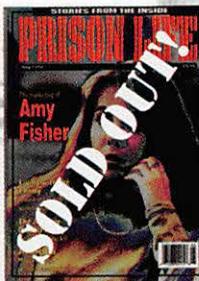
Lock 'Em Up and throw away the key!



#1—JAN. '93



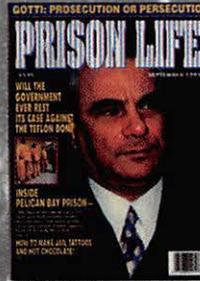
#2—MAR. '93



#3—MAY '93



#4—JULY '93



#5—SEPT. '93

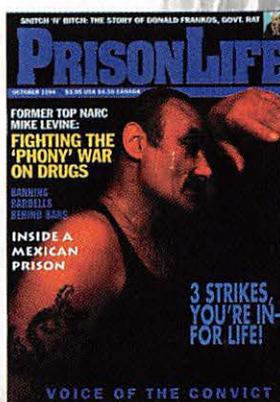


#6—DEC. '93

The first six issues of *Prison Life* are nearly sold out . . . you ain't ever gonna find 'em. But you can still score issues 1, 5, 7, 8 and 9. Packed with prison survival strategies and stories from the Inside, these issues will *never* go outta date. Only ten smacks a shot while they last, and that includes postage & handling.



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Bruce Cutler

(continued from page 31)

So the First Amendment ability, the ability of free speech can be limited by certain proper rules. They didn't litigate the validity of Rule Seven *per se*, they litigated one that was similar but was not as vague, so it's hard to answer whether *Gentile* was a win or a loss for us. It's a loss in the sense that it limited First Amendment ability for a lawyer to speak out, but it was a win for the lawyer in question because they reversed it and sent it back because of the safe harbor provision. Anyway, that case came down and the judge who heard my criminal contempt case told us to be aware of *Gentile*. So we were guided by that case, we were guided by Rule Seven, we were guided by the American Bar Association standards, we were guided by all of these things and tried a case in the courtroom.

"As a result of statements that the government said I made in violation of Rule Seven, the judge signed an order to show cause why I should be held in contempt. They appointed a special prosecutor, who investigated it and brought charges against me. We went to trial. Since I was only facing six months in jail it was not bound to a jury trial. So I didn't have a jury. We tried the case before Judge Platt, who said he thought that there were substantive legal issues here that he felt were important enough to stay the execution and sentence pending the appeal.

"So far, I feel optimistic. We're taking the safe harbor provision, we're using that upstairs in front of the disciplinary committee, and we'll probably argue that in the Second Circuit, in March or April or thereabouts.

"The sentence that Judge Platt gave me was ninety days house arrest, six months suspension from the Eastern District, three years probation, three years community service—one hundred hours per year—and a \$5,000 fine which was changed to the costs of probation. That's the sentence as it stands now. We're in the Second Circuit with the appeal, but there's been no date set for argument. We're optimistic we'll win in Second Circuit, but who knows. At the same time, George St. Angelo, who's my lawyer, is handling the matter in the disciplinary committee upstairs in this building.

Once you're convicted of criminal contempt, the licensing people take over and do their thing."

I asked Bruce what he foresaw as his future in the legal profession. Is their life after Gotti?

"As far as the future, sometimes I think of these crazy things. Everybody will be in prison, there'll just be a few people out. It's crazy to say and I don't mean to be a smart alec, but, to me, what the government is doing is crazy. And as you write about in your magazine, so correctly, it's a business for the government. They make money by warehousing people. They give them sentences that are just out of this world. I mean young guys get twenty or thirty years, get life without parole, and they just warehouse them. For what?

"I don't know, I'm hoping there will be a change. Some people thought that Janet Reno was going to be the Attorney General who would be pleasing to the defense bar. I don't really know her and I don't know much about her. People say good things, people say middle-of-the-road things, but I don't know what kind of changes there are going to be. The conservatives of this world, they just want things a certain way. They want lives to be conducted a certain way, which is not the American way but it's their way now. If the American people want it, I don't know what to do about it. I'm just hoping things will get better for everybody. That's how I feel.

"As a criminal lawyer, you just go from jail to jail and it's not pleasant. That's why I don't like to be cavalier about what I do and I don't like making fun of the misfortunes of others and I don't like getting off on the misfortunes of others and I don't like taking advantage of the misfortunes of others. I like to help a guy. If I get paid for the job I do, fine, and I do it to the best of my ability. I can't be like some people where they do great jobs but they don't have any feel, there's no visceral feel for the client or for the work. Of course you don't have the same attachment to every client, I know that. You don't have the same feeling for everyone, I understand that, too. But it's certainly more pleasant to represent somebody you have regard for, like John, than someone you don't."

PL

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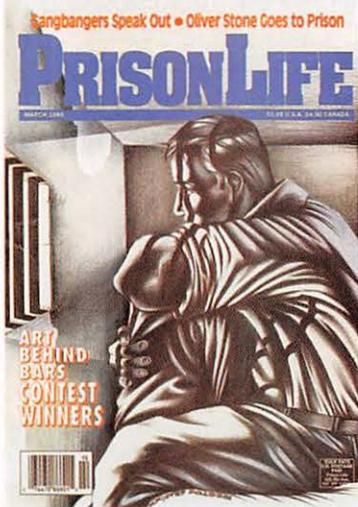
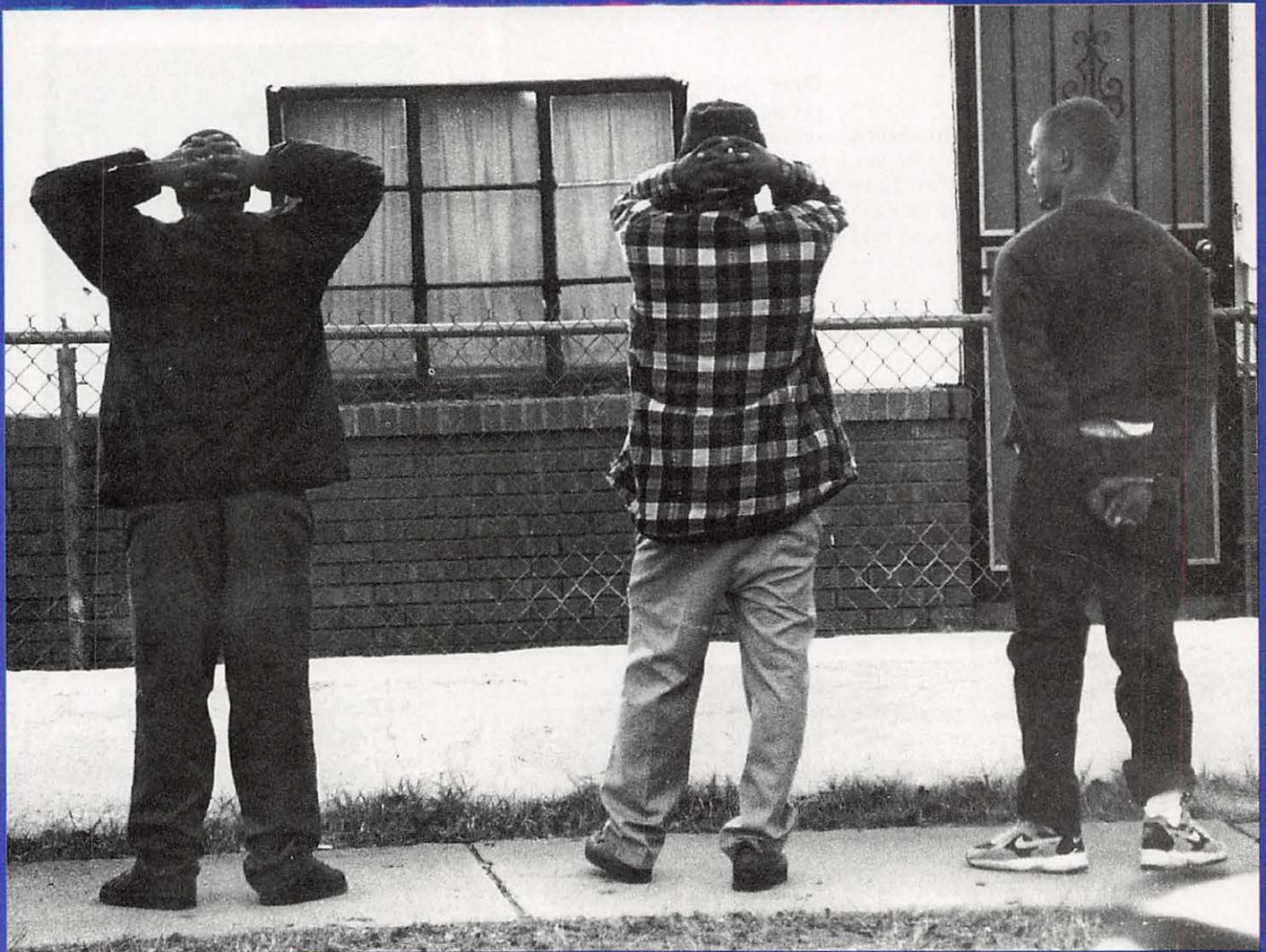
- **Direct Appeal from Trial**
- **Direct Appeal from Plea and Sentencing - 18 USC 3742 - Direct Appeal by Defendant on Issues of Sentencing Hearings**
- **Post-Conviction Motions - 28 USC 2255 and 2241 - Post-Conviction Motion Based on an Illegal Sentence and Habeas Corpus Relief**
- **Modification of Term of Imprisonment - 18 USC 3582(c) Modification of Imposed Term of Imprisonment**
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by Hadji Hamilton

Radio

A rapper who calls himself "Radio" has released his first CD on Interscope Records. The title CD, "Recognize Da Real," features the female and male vocalists Darq & Roc Chill. Who the hell is Radio? I figured this was a big joke. Someone named Radio trying to rap? Get real. Being the nice guy I am, I listened to the whole CD, which was pretty difficult. After one of the worst experiences I have had writing this column, I'm gonna ask Radio a favor: Please stop. Yo! This whole CD is wack. Pass this CD by and save your money. No disrespect, Radio.

Method Man

Method Man has released his first solo album, "Tical," on the Def Jam label, and of course it's all you'd expect from the most exciting member of the Wu-Tang Clan. His first single, "Bring the Pain," is so fat it's being played all day long on most of our local radio stations here in The Rotten Apple. "Bring the Pain" has one of those bass grooves that will put you in a trance. The lyrics will have you thinking *What's up wil' dat?*, only to rewind the tape to solve the riddle. In my opinion, his second single, "Relieve your Delf," is the best song on the album. Listen to this chorus:

*When I first stepped on the scene,
Brothers were petrified*

*Ran back to the lab like they were
being chased by homicide
My rap flow does you like Tical
And it will never stir you wrong
And all you bitch ass MC's
in the industry*

Your careers won't be lasting long.

The entire CD is nothing but flavor. If you're not up on this you're really missing out on something good. Mad Props for Method Man's "Tical."

2 PAC

Did you hear that new CD of 2 Pac's? Yeah, that's right, he has something new out, and man let me tell you it's hot. The name of the CD is "Me Against the World." It's kind of fucked-up that his CD will be released after he'll be getting used to his new home in the joint. It makes me think that it's becoming a trend for our black stars and heroes; struggle all your life to make it out of the ghetto, only to end up very popular and in prison. Damn. So far Mike Tyson, Slick Rick, O.J. (if he's convicted), and now my man 2 Pac.

That's some deep shit to think about, but that's all I could do while listening to 2 Pac's "Me Against the World" in my walk-dog. 2 Pac must have been talking to some psychic bitches from one of those horoscope hot lines because the tracks on this CD tell a story of things happening to him as they are in reality. Strange, considering he wrote the album before this huge wrath of bad luck hit his ass. Maybe that's why I like this CD so much, because it's real. If you get a

chance, peep this CD out and pay close attention to the track "It Aint Easy." Check it out:

*Ain't nobody down with me I'm thuggin'
Can't go home cuz muthafuckers
think I'm buggin'*

*And now I'm in this high-powered
cell at the county jail*

*Punk judge got a grudge, can't post no bail
What do I do in these county blues?*

*Getting battered and bruised
by the you know who's.*

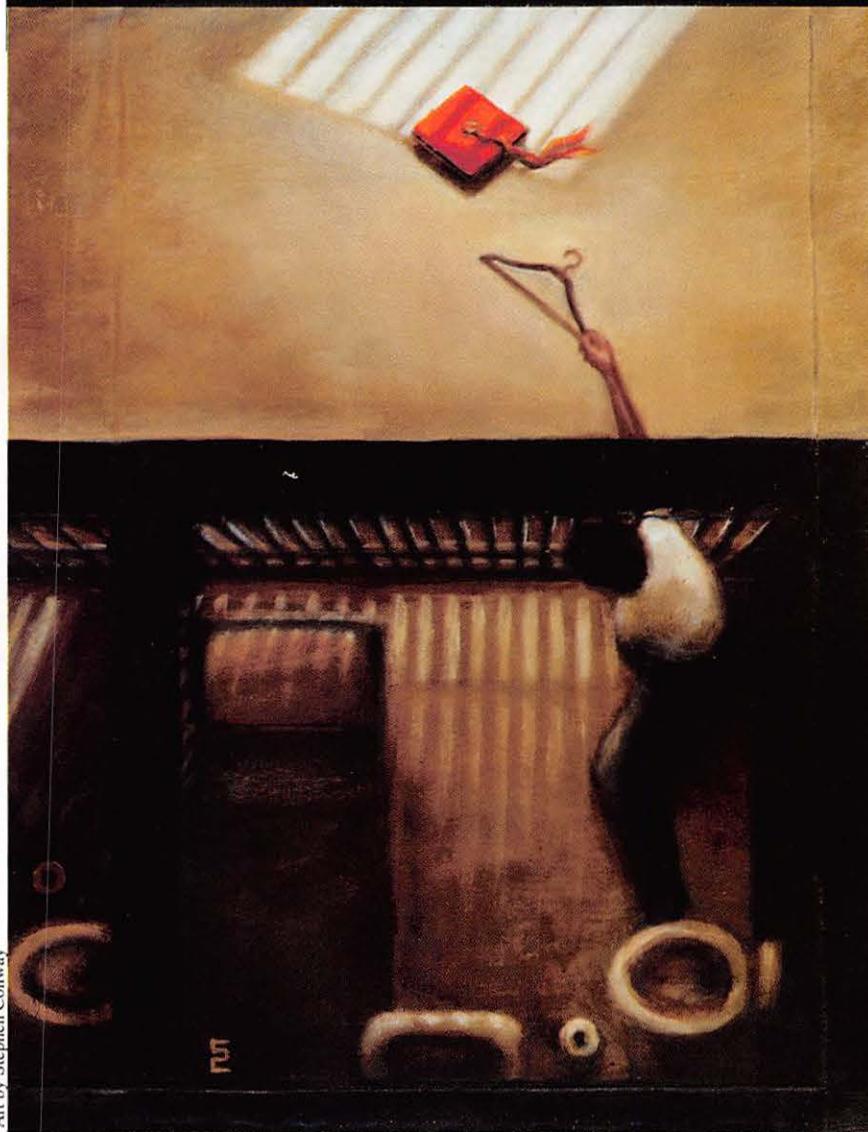
2 Pac's CD contains nothing but hardcore lyrics that will have you seeing the world from the perspective of a young black male trying to survive in America. This album doesn't only paint a dark picture of life, it offers some songs that are uplifting, even inspirational. There are also songs that will have you reminiscing about childhood fun, especially the song "Old School." Yeah, I enjoyed this one. It brought back good memories.

Whether you're Black or white, I think you should pay close attention to Tupac Shakur because he's saying something people don't acknowledge until the problems start hitting home. And what he's trying to tell us is that the socio-economic system in this country, and the "just-us" system are fucked-up.

I'm about to slide off, but before I do, I got a message for you guys who are still locked down, especially you 2 Pac. I've been there before, and I know being incarcerated is like living in hell. Stick your chest out and hold your head up. Use this time to think and seek knowledge and you will see that life goes on. Keep a cool head and don't make things hotter while you're there. Were countin' on you to make a strong comeback.

Peace.

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Art by Stephen Conway

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(See "Publications of Interest"—1995 Songwriter's Market—"Bible" for the industry.) Author, Joe Lilore, has written 25 books for Warner Bros., on groups like "The Rolling Stones" and "Genesis."

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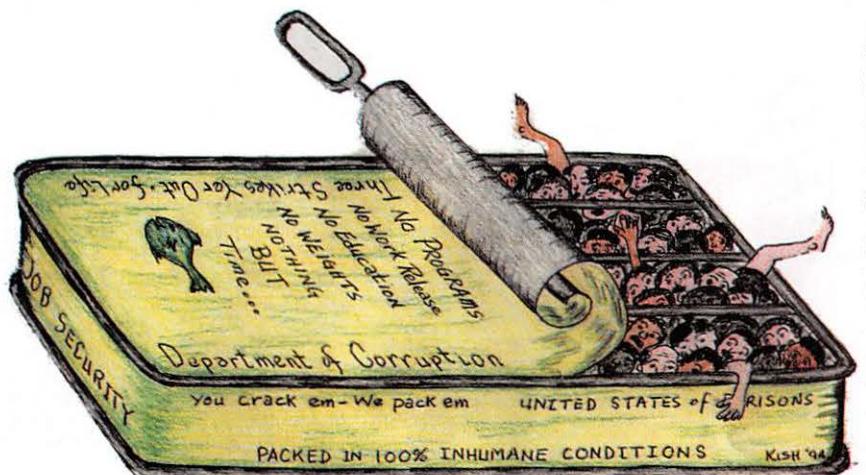


Illustration by Andrew Kish, Westville Correctional, Indiana

Pen Pals

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Maca-Roni needs tender-Roni for a sincere straight-up relationship. Send sexy photos (no nudes). I'll also send photo. I love good butt shots. Angelo Gomez Wright, # 20544, Y.A.C.F., Star 3, B-11-T, P.O. Box 250, Draper, UT 84020

SWM, 33 yrs old, 215 #, down for 11 1/2 so far. Likes rock & classical music, reading and lots more. Searching for lady to share letters and laughs, no games. Will answer all. Jay Cider, # 176-624, Lima Corr. Inst., Lima, OH 45802.

39, 6', 11", 185 #, long brn. hair, brn. eyes, been down since 1985 and got awhile to go. My home is on the East Coast. Searching for an opened-minded lady to keep me company and possibly have a future relationship. Caring, loving and emotionally sincere. Age not important, so please write: John W. Anderson, # 17627, P.O. box 250, Draper, UT 84020.

Death row prisoner, future uncertain, no family to care for me since mother died July 1993, seeks anyone who gives a fuck! James E. Bigby, # 997, Death Row, Ellis One Unit, Huntsville, TX 77343.

SWM, 48, looking for serious pen-pals who are going to be down for awhile and will keep the paper flowing. Photos exchanged one for one. Only women need apply. Scott Hokker, Ellis I Unit, Huntsville, TX 77343.

Hi. I'm 39, 6', 195 #, blue/green eyes, caucasian, into weight lifting and playing guitar. Down and out in Texas. Looking for real love like grandma and grandpa had. Write to: Michael David, # 648558, Ramsey 1, Rt. 4, Box 1100, Rosharon, TX 77583.

SBM, cultural, 37, 5'10", br hair, 182#, br eyes, lt br complexion, coll. ed. Drug-free, non-drinker, non-smoker. Enjoys boxing, martial arts, weightlifting, art, poetry, jazz. Seeks friend from the God-fearing. Steven Leonard Theus, #17970, Ely State Prison, POB 1989, Ely NV 89301-1989.

M/M. Real. Seeks female desiring serious minded, down-to-earth male. Mujahid, P.O. Box 1989 #26212, Ely, NV 89301.

SWM, lifer, seeking friendship, possible long-lasting relationship with open-minded, free-spirited, intelligent lady. I have a good attitude and hope for the future, along with a big heart. No games. Ed Bowman, # E-00064, 1-138L, POB 4000, Vacaville, CA 95696-4000.

Native American male seeks correspondence with females of Cherokee, Choctaw, Creek Seminole or Catawba nations or any serious native lady who walks strong on the red-road. Self-supporting, not looking for finances, just advice and friendship. Write to Christian TwoRivers, # 82976, 10,000 S. Wilmont, Tucson, AZ 85777. If incarcerated, send letters to: Daddy White Eagle, 153 Weed Dr., Columbia, SC 29212.

DWM, 26, slim, 6' 3", 160 #, seeking a friend and possibly more. Looking for serious, opened-minded lady, 20 to 30. Please send a photo, will respond to all. Freddie Spires, # 606233 Bill Clements Unit, 9601 N.E. 24th Ave. 12-E-62, Amarillo, TX 79107-9606.

In my 30's and down for a 60-yr term but still fighting. 5'8", 170#, love art and the bizarre. Anyone who breathes air can write me. Down but don't want to be forgotten. Perfumed letters worshipped! Brwn wavy hair, mustache. Open-minded, lonely. Daniel E. Nicklaus, N08351, P.O.Box 99, Pontiac, IL 61764

Handsome, well hung, long tongue, white male, 5' 11, 195 #, dark hair and green eyes. Needs gentle touch. Will answer all. Kenny Smith, #C-01561, P.O. Box 7500, C-6-124, Crescent City, CA 95531

SWM, 6', 175 #, long brown hair, free spirited artist with a great sense of humor. Wants to hear from a female 25-up. Tom Connolly, B-38619, Box 99, Pontiac, IL 61764

Down for the count, strong & solid white-man, 27, brown hair, very blue eyes, 6' tall and 170 #, also well built and tattoos. Very honest & loyal, no games, no bullshit. Seeks female companionship, someone special to grow close to and become lifetime friends. Jack Blackwell, # 212552, Baraga Max Corr. Fac., Rt 1, Box 555, 301 Wadaga Rd., Baraga, MI 49908.

WM, 32 yrs old, 6' 4", 215 #, blk hair, brn eyes. Seeking letters from all ladies (insiders or out). Lonely for to long. So come on, lift a Bro's spirits. Will answer all. Send letters to: Ray Gabbert, # 151364, 1301 E. 12th Street, Wilmington, Delaware 19809.

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.

SWM, 5'7, 160 #, 35 yrs old. Health conscious, loves artwork, smiles, nice people and music. Very open-minded. Convicted for marijuana. Seeking female correspondence: Robert Leftwich, 061242, P.O. Box 1500-667, Cross City, FL 32628.

Male "Arab", 5'9", 210 #, black curly hair, brown eyes, and very handsome. Would like to write to a female and a relationship. Send picture to Usama Farha, # H-61778, Fl-02-132, 480 Alta Rd., San Diego, CA 92179.

SWM, looking for friendship with only one special lady, I am loyal by nature, 31, 200 #, 6' 2", and lift weights. I am educated and traveled around the world. Fire one up to: Joe Florida, # 221477, 3855 Cooper St. Jackson, MI 49201-7517.

Strong African, surviving in the jungle of the oppressor, with things to say to you. Providing you are African sister of caliber. Let's do this, Sis. J. Champion, # C92938, P.O. Box 409099, Ione, CA 95640.

SWM, 36 yrs old, 5' 10", 200 #, searching for my soul mate for a sharing & caring friendship. Will answer all letters. Trade photos. Please write: Dino Garcia, # 732742, Dade C. I., 19000 S.W. 377, P.O. Box 567, Florida City, FL 33034-6499.

SWM, 34 yrs old, 5' 11", 210 #, no kids, college ed., goal-oriented. Seeking corr., friendship, maybe love from females of any race, 18-45, height, weight, proportionate and any location. Photo for photo, will answer all letters I receive. Interests: God, working out, history, computers, writing, and music. Please write soon, you won't be sorry. Earl Luna, # 198168, 17601 Mound Rd., Detroit, MI 48212.

Together SBM, 49 yrs old, 5' 11", college educated. Enjoy writing and receiving letters. Published poet. Looking for female 25-55. Never used drugs/been incar. 29 yrs. Photo for photo. Ron Dessus, AH-6384, 1100 Pike St., Huntingdon, PA 16654-1112.

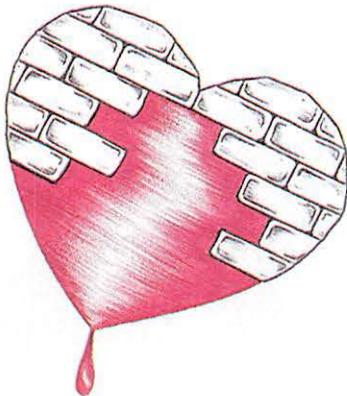
Folsom prisoner looking for a SWF to write to. 5' 9", 165 #, hzl/blue eyes, educated, and fun loving. Please send letters to: Richard Kesses, # H63639, Box 29, Represa, CA 95671.

SWM, 42 yrs old, 6' 2", 190 #. I was hooked up with a bitch that turned out to be a snitch. Wanted: women that know the meaning of love, honor & respect. Out on appeal bond in '96. No restrictions on who can write. Answer all. Scott Sours, # 42028, JCCC, Box 900, Jefferson City, MO 65102.

NO BULL.Sentenced to life at 17 and here in Colorado that means 40 years before I meet a parole board. Looking for somebody to take up some time, either through mail, on the phone or visiting room. Fell in '86, so it's been a minute since I last saw the bricks. Lady cons if you want to write. .then write. I'm white and I'm 26 and got what it takes. Eric Davis, # 56674, CCF, Box 600, Canon City, CO 81215-0600.

Lonely Mathematician, 1x1=1 (handsome x one of a kind = me, 1x1=0 (me - freedom = loneliness) 1+1 = 2 (you and me = friendship). Equation: It may seem elementary, however, it's mathematically impossible for true happiness and genuine friendship to avail unless you: A) write me, B) befriend me C) share your feelings D) all of the above. Answer: D Steve Tetro, # 079831, FSP, Box 747, V-3-S-3, Starke, FL 32091.

Spanish/Italian, lt brown skin, 6', 200 #, with short black hair. I am a christian male who has never been married, and never used drugs, no AIDS. Seeking white females only, ages 18-45 max. Must be clean, drug free and educated, no AIDS, or rags.



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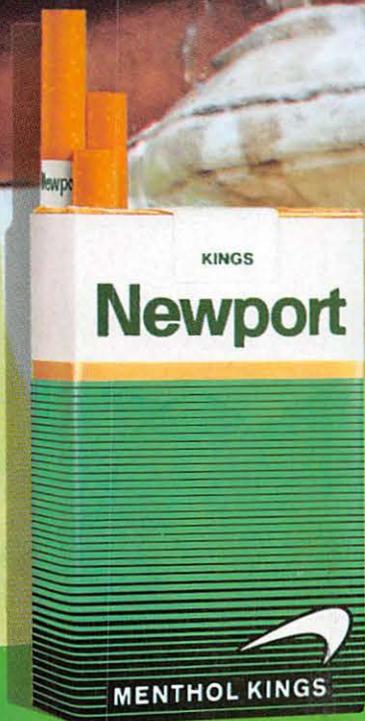
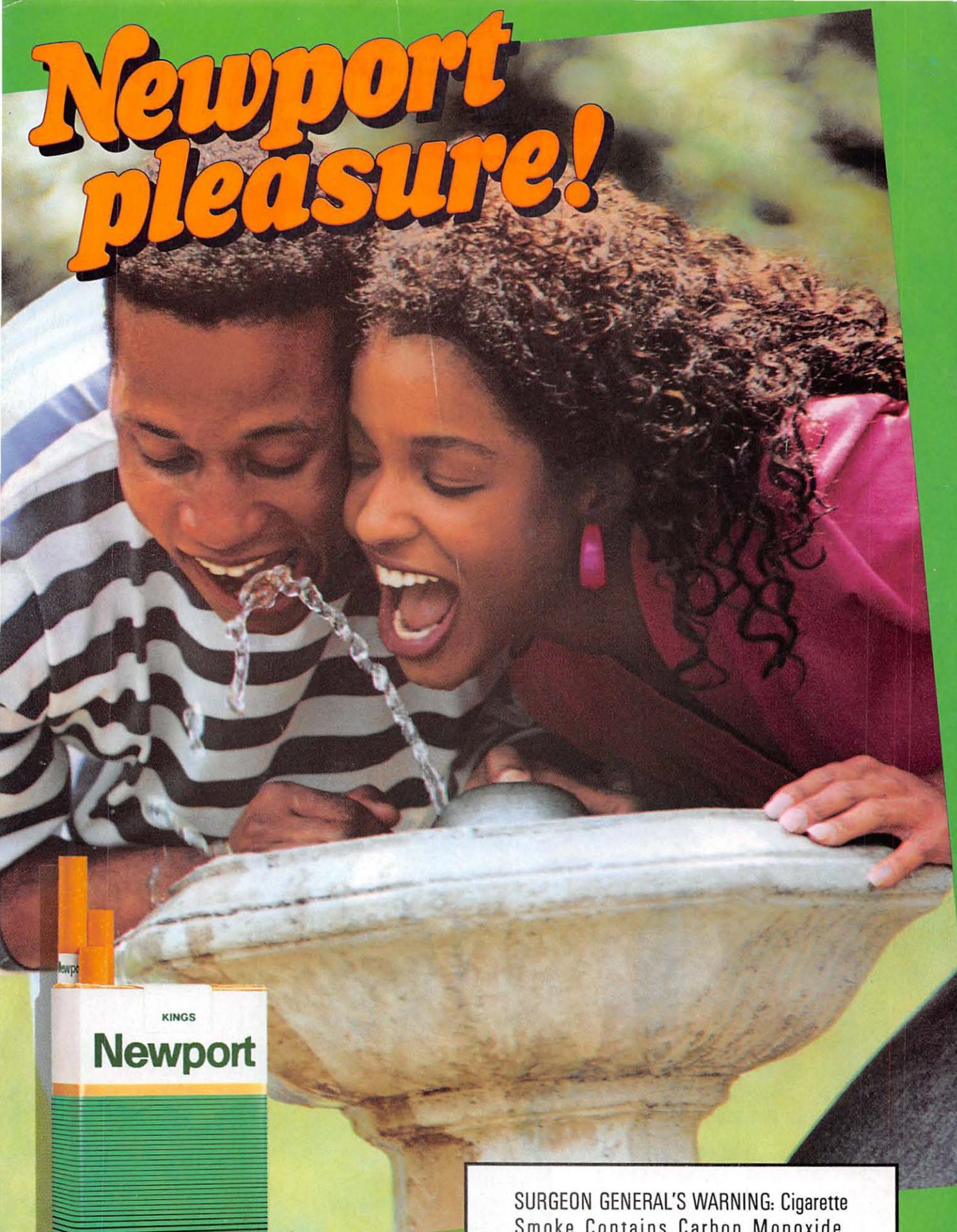
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