

Nicholas von Hoffman

Ruchell Magee's third time around

SAN QUENTIN, Calif.—This is the third time that Ruchell Magee is going through the law factory. The first time was when he was 16 in Louisiana and they put him in for having some kind of relations with a white woman—the facts are subject to dispute—and then they did it again in Los Angeles. He'd been free six months when he was arrested on a 10 dollar robbery charge and given a five-to-life sentence as a two-time loser.

Now they've got him on violating section 4500 of the California Penal Code, assault by a life prisoner on a guard, and that carries a mandatory death sentence. So maybe this'll be the last time for Ruchell.

They've got him on other charges, too, conspiracy, kidnaping and attempted murder, and murder of a judge last August 7th in the Marin County Courthouse. That makes him the only other defendant left alive to try with the black heroine, Angela Davis. For that, he's regarded as an inconvenience by some of Angela's supporters and a madman by those few who give him any thought at all.

Ruchell is the proverbial man shouting under water. The man Ruchell was convicted with for the 10 collar robbery is long since out on the streets. He went along with the program, did easy time and got his parole. Ruchell couldn't do that. He does hard time. Always he's fighting them, always he's fighting to establish himself as a person, to tell people he got railroaded in his Los Angeles trial, that the transcript of the trial has been altered to hide his having been beaten in the courtroom. He writes things explaining who he is and what was going through his mind on August 7th. They're printed with a pencil that is held with such force that the words are engraved on the paper:

"Who is Ruchell Magee? Who is this physically minute, mentally giant revolutionary black man? That

mysterious one who is painted and portrayed as being everything or anyone from the fawning Uncle Remus—ignorant nigger, to Sambo—hedious moron; to Nat Turner . . . to the blood thirsty criminal. How many are wondering whether Ruchell possess the astute mind of Malcolm X, or the unequalled eloquence of Frederick Douglass, or is Ruchell for those of us who dare partake of the mystical, the reincarnation of Joseph Cinque—the black slave-revolutionist who led the first successful recorded slave revolt to be acquitted by the American courts—who acknowledged Cinque's right to rebel slavery."

When Ruchell says he's a slave, it's not a trope. He believes he was fraudulently thrown in prison, and he's fought it every day, every way for years. It is this total, permeating conviction that he has been enslaved that leaves him indifferent to the kidnaping and killing of the judge. The nation may have been horrified, but Ruchell thinks a slave may legitimately do anything to gain his freedom.

In the years he's been in San Quentin he has always refused to work or cooperate in any way. "If he works or conforms to the institution policy, he's conceding to his illegal conviction," says Dan DeWitt. Dan knows Ruchell as well as anybody. Dan finally got out of San Quentin, but while he was there he got to know Ruchell. They were both what is called writ writers, convicts who've taught themselves the law and spend their time bombarding the courts with petitions on behalf of themselves and others.

It's strange, this going back again and again to the source of the original injustice and demanding that the

judiciary obey their own rules. Having done it himself, Dan can understand it: "Magee has no belief in the justice system but, yet and still, it's the only outlet he has to maintain his sanity. He's isolated. He has no one to come and see him. He has to believe that one day one judge will take the time to read his documents."

"I'd say I've filed 1,600 to 1,700 petitions in regards to my case and others. I got one guy a reversal in the 9th circuit," says Ruchell, who writes his writs as much to expose the system as to win freedom: "I look to bringing out and showing there is no justice in any court, that judges, law officers and attorneys use false testimony."

Dan says that Ruchell's efforts have won him a lot of his time in the hole. There are constant hassles between him and the prison authorities about confiscating his law papers and his incessant petitioning of the courts who turn him down because, he says, "First they make the loopholes and then they crawl through them."

There will be no more petitions from Ruchell. A federal judge has ruled that he can no longer be considered a pauper and must pay filing fees for his petitions. Magee has no money, so that ends that. But not Ruchell's trying.

He has written out some new petitions—his is an ingenious legal mind, but the judge has made a new rule: Ruchell may not file anything. The lawyers say it's unheard of, but Ruchell has heard it before. He says one of his petitions was turned down because it was written on the wrong size paper. So if someone throws him a gun again, he will use it again, for he has written in that strained and arduous hand of his that, "The limits of the oppressor are prescribed by the endurance of those whom they oppress. People you must resist!!"

Letters

In Memoriam

Just stick to fees,
And save the trees,
And call a moratorium;
But please do not,
In any case,
Try spelling "In Memoriam."

Dan Stern
Graduate in Music

Might as well

"I think we should keep ROTC because it provides courageous speakers to defend U.S. policy in Vietnam," said Alice.

"What kind of reasoning is that?" said the Hatter. "Why, you might just as well say that we should continue the Vietnam war because it provides courageous speakers to defend U.S. policy in Vietnam."

"You might just as well say," added the March Hare, "that we should have classified research because it provides courageous speakers to defend classified research."

"You might just as well say," added the Doormouse, who never really stopped talking, "we should talk and talk about free speech on ROTC and Indochina, so we'll never take any action."

"Well that is what you do," said the Hatter, and the party sat silent for a minute, while Alice thought over all she could remember about ravens and writing-desks which wasn't much.

Dennis Gilbert
Physics TA and grad

Thank the nurses

A couple of months ago, I had to spend almost a week in the Student infirmary. When I first went in I was thinking it would be a very dull and drab stay, with maybe a quick temperature check on each shift to liven up my day. One of the reasons I was thinking that, was what many people had told me of the Infirmary's lack of care for student patients and the nurses general disinterest in caring for patients.

Well, the purpose of this letter is to publicly thank the nurses on all the shifts

for making my stay there as enjoyable as it was. Of course I felt the usual boredom of just lying around but, the nurses were not just disinterested ladies doing their job. They were able, with their smiles and care of another human being, to make my recuperation a fairly enjoyable one.

Once again, a kind thank-you to all the nurses and people of the Infirmary for showing me there's still some feeling left in the world.

Kevin Delaney
Soph. Living

Kment's clarification

In response to the letter from Spence Alpert in Thursday's Emerald regarding the appropriateness of calling last week's election of ASUO officers a "mandate for the incidental fee budget passed by the ASUO Senate" or a "referendum on the Athletic Department" I feel a few statements of clarification are needed.

First the Athletic Department became, for better or worse, the issue of

the last election. Mr. Alpert based nearly his entire campaign on the simple, gut-level question of "Do you want to pay an additional \$17.50 for an athletic card next year—if not vote for me!" probably on the assumption that few students could be dissatisfied with the present operation of the AD under Mr. Ritchey and crew, and that most students would rather increase support for the Athletic Department than a silly old Child Care and Development Center, SEARCH and other ASUO Programs. Recent polls which show anywhere from 60 per cent to 85 per cent of the student body supporting a decrease in the subsidy of the AD might have shown Spence that maybe ticket question wasn't really an overriding issue in the minds of students.

Mr. Alpert states that the election was not a true referendum on the Athletic Department Issue. The Athletic Department felt otherwise. A letter printed by the Athletic Department printed three days prior to the election make this clear:

"Dear Fellow Lettermen:

As Lettermen of our University, we should all have a particular interest in the ASUO elections this spring. The choice between Iain More and Spence Alpert for president will be a clear vote for or against athletics. Iain More has made it clear that he is opposed to the athletic program as it exists at Oregon. The race for president has become a referendum on the athletic issue. If we as athletes believe in the importance of athletics, then we should take the action necessary to repudiate the philosophy of Iain More. We must not only vote for Spence Alpert but we must encourage others to vote for him also.

As an officer of the Letterman's Club, I would urge you to spread the word to vote for Spence Alpert on May 20-21. It's my belief that the majority of students want the athletic program to continue on its present course, and I would be disappointed if a determined few students could destroy a valuable program through the apathy of the majority. (Signed by lettermen club officers)"

Mike Kment
Jr. History
Past ASUO Vice-President



"The British will join the European Common Market over my dead body!"