

From behind the wall



by Larry Baker #35021
O.S.P. Correspondent

JUST CALL HER RUSTY

From a neighborhood in Portland, through the classrooms at a university in Eugene, to the jungles in Africa, through the corridors of flea-bitten jails and prisons in Oregon they call her "Rusty."

Frances Tomlinson, who graduated from Lincoln High School in Portland, Oregon in 1935, received a Bachelor of Science Degree at the University of Oregon in 1941. It was during her first year as a high school teacher that she became converted to a Christian faith and returned to college and received a Bachelor's Degree in Education of Religion from the Chicago Evangelistic Institute in Illinois in 1944 and a Masters Degree in Christian Education from Western Baptist Seminary in 1945.

Ms. Tomlinson then returned to Chicago in 1946 where she became acquainted with and then joined the Salvation Army. It was then that she received her "call" to become a Salvation Army officer.

In 1949 Ms. Tomlinson was sent to Africa as a teaching missionary for the Salvation Army where she remained until 1972, being forced to return home, in Portland, to care for her father. She was given the appointment of a Correctional Service Officer, working with those in prisons and jails in Oregon.

I, like many prisoners, first became acquainted with Major Frances Tomlinson while lying in a 9x5 dirty barred cell in Rocky Butte County Jail. Waiting for trial, mad at the world, abused by the guards, denied by the courts and slipping into a mental state between insanity and survival. All of a sudden appearing outside my cage was this woman in blue. "Oh, wow! All I need to come poking around me now was another 'Bible-packer,' who was out to save the soul of conformably dying man," I stated to myself.



MAJOR FRANCES TOMLINSON

"Hello there," uttered this woman. I had pre-conceived. "I'm Rusty." "Who cares?" I quietly shot back in a voice of rejection.

"I do," she replied in a tone of authority. "Why?" I found myself curiously asking. "Because you're in there, and I'm out here," she stated in a manner of sincerity.

"Look lady, do you know what it feels

like being a Black man accused of raping a white woman here in the State of Oregon? What it's like having to act as your own attorney because you can no longer trust the white attorneys appointed by the courts?" I quickly responded, testing her feminine and racial validities.

"No, I do not, being in South Africa, where I've been teaching schools for Black children for the past twenty years, but I would say you're going to need a friend," she answered.

All of a sudden it became very apparent that this woman, senior to my years, was very much aware of the Black's struggle for equal justice in a land which practices discrimination much more openly than where I was.

So that's how I came to know this woman called "Rusty." A woman who has become my friend. She never misses visiting O.S.P. every other week, always concerned about our welfare, our families, and our future.

Major Frances Tomlinson, last year was responsible for the many toys and dolls given to the many needy Black children throughout Albina (Oregon's Black community), and this Christmas will be responsible for toys and gifts being sent to any prisoner's child upon request.

On behalf of this O.S.P. Correspondent and the "Behind the Walls" staff, along with many, many other men at Oregon State Penitentiary the question is no longer to you Rusty, "who cares?" We know you do. And thank you for being there when someone was needed.

by Stevie Hoggans #38921

Our country, that is composed of various institutions, has a direct affect on the Black Americans. The institution with the most significant affect is the criminal justice system. This institution, composed of distinct sub-institutions (i.e. police departments, courts and correc-

tions division) and these having their sub-substitutions (i.e. county detention facilities, community relations, parole, probation and prisons), are forever striving and serving the needs to insure that the Black American receives the guaranteed rights as prescribed under the Constitution of the United States. As all institutions are far from perfect, we won't dwell on the inconsistencies or the personnel problems of the criminal justice system, but rather elaborate on the benefits of this institution that Black Americans receive.

First, let's examine and discuss the activities between the Black American and these "discretionary agents of society or social workers with guns." We know that their job is to prevent crime, preserve order, protect persons and properties, and to protect personal liberties, but in the formance of these duties Black Americans go all out of their way to give these gentlemen an extremely rough time.

Just a few months ago, some Black robbed a store. Consequently, another Black, helpless, defenseless, quadriplegic was shot four times in the chest and head while handcuffed to his wheelchair, attempting to escape from apprehension; the gun accidentally discharged! It's a shame that our policemen must be subject to such violent people.

Another incident that comes to mind was of a Black man, his spouse and two children, while going out to dinner. They were stopped by these discretionary agents, for looking suspicious. When asked to produce his driver's license and while reaching for it, he was shot dead for presumably pulling out a gun. Too bad his wallet had a shiny buckle on it; but how was this officer to know. The poor officer, I can imagine the pain he and his family suffered; "let's go dancing tonight with the Reinharts dear!"

We also have another sub-institution in the criminal justice system that significantly involves Black Americans: the courts. Here justice is administered in regards to Black's and society's best interest. Whether rich or poor, Blacks always receive equal protection and due process of the law. Look at Hurricane Carter; he showed such viciousness in his autobiography that it was enough evidence to convict him for murder. And what about the Scottsboro Boys, they were almost hung! Yes, the courts surely do the respectable Black Americans just deeds; thank God that Richard Nixon was white! I've often wondered why the courts called their punitive administration justice, because that's all there is "JUST US!" But as Black Americans, we must be gratified to the countless judges for that impeccable logic they're famous for; i.e. Patty Hearst.

In the Penal System, Black Americans are rescued from the poverty of the ghettos. Where else but in America, can a man receive three meals a day, clothing and shelter, not to mention the countless recreation and educational facilities for merely breaking the law. It's a wonder that all Blacks don't break the law, but they don't appreciate nothing. They even abuse this admirable form of help, by starting riots and the like. It isn't enough that they're taken care of, now they want more aid -- to be treated with kid gloves. Who do they think they are?! They even say that we beat and will kill them to cover our mistakes. Have you ever heard anything so absurd? Although the prison guard's education exceeds a high school

and/or military training, we know that they're well qualified in every aspect of the behavioral scenes to deal with Black Americans and give them the help they need towards rehabilitation. These guards often converse on intellectual levels far exceeding that of standard. "By God there Ned, I reckon the wife and I will go to the big city tonight." And the Warden after fifteen years has finally received his bachelor's degree. Yes, the intellectual genius behind the Penal Administration is one to behold.

These attributes of the criminal justice system aren't anything new to the Black American, for they are inscribed with the framework of their minds as the whip to the back. Their hostility and resentment is alive and growing and soon to explode. This institution of the criminal justice system, fails to understand that their attitudes, treatment and staff are only true manufacturers of crime, instead of elements of reform. Will they ever wake-up?

JUST ANOTHER BLACK MAN

by Ricky Brothers #39277

My name is Ricky L. Brothers, I am doing twenty years in O.S.P. Although I am innocent of this crime I was found guilty in Washington County Circuit Court.

I went before the Parole Board at O.S.P. on September 20, 1977 and they

gave me a twelve year parole date. I feel that it was very unjust, I could discharge it before then.

The Parole Board is not giving the minority groups the same treatment as the whites are getting. They are going over the Matrix range on minorities more than on whites, this is not fair at all.

I have a wife and three children but by the time I get out my kids will all be grown. The Parole Board wants me to do all twenty years without parole because they know it doesn't take nothing but thirteen years and four months to discharge it.

I have never had a violent record or arrest. I was incarcerated in 1971 for burglary II, that's the only criminal record I have. It just doesn't seem right for the Parole Board to give me a twelve year date set. All the long sets that the Parole Board is giving out are going to make the prison blow one of these days, because of the injustice being done.

Prisoners that have been in four or five times are getting smaller sets than first timers, and a Black man just doesn't have a chance. The whole prison administration is screwed up. We, the inmates, need to let the public know what is going on inside these walls. The federal authorities need to take a long look at this place because it is behind the times. There is no other prison like this one. I believe they are trying to make this another Attica. I feel there is prejudice in O.S.P. I wish the public would take into consideration the dilemma the inmates are having in O.S.P.

Racism: Ten years after commission report

by Mark Schwartz

OCTOBER 13 (PNS) - A Latino newly promoted to the rank of sergeant in the San Francisco Police Department returned to his car after work and found a dead skunk on the seat. At a precinct station across town, a photograph of a group of monkeys was posted with the caption: "Minority Sergeants Swear In, 1977."

Chicago police officer A.A. Majerczyk told the board of education there last August that he and many other white police "can be expected to get blue flu when called to protect school buses...We will not be used to destroy our schools." Majerczyk's comments prompted a Black police officers' association to demand he be fired for refusing to protect Black children bused into white school districts.

Less than one-fourth of the Black police officers in Washington, D.C. - whose police force is nearly 42 percent Black - feel they have a good or excellent relationship with white officers. Less than one-third trust their white supervisors, and over 80 percent believe they are discriminated against in job assignments and promotions, according to a Howard University survey completed last year.

Ten years after the U.S. Rio Commission's famous report on ghetto uprisings pinpointed racial antagonism among primarily white police and minority communities as a major and explosive source of disorder and urged police to recruit and promote more non-white members, racial strife continues to plague the police departments of many of the nation's big cities.

And the very solution proposed - more minority recruitment - has worsened the problem.

"I think we have made a lot of progress in trying to recruit minorities," says Dr. Richard Staufenberger of the privately funded Police Foundation in Washington, pointing to the fact that the percentage of non-white officers in U.S. cities has more than doubled in the past decade. "But racial tensions in police departments are probably higher now because white officers perceive this minority recruitment as reverse discrimination."

"The issue has changed," Dr. Staufenberger notes. "In 1968, minorities were

demanding jobs in police departments, but now they are aiming for political control of the police and city government."

Since 1970, court battles over the issue of police discrimination in hiring and promoting minorities and women have intensified racial splits in numerous departments.

In Chicago, where 20 percent of the police are minority in a population over 42 percent non-white, a judge last year upheld a five-year-old civil rights suit filed by the Afro-American Patrolmen's League (AAPL) and ordered the department to fill 42 percent of all new patrol officer vacancies with Black and Spanish-surnamed men and 16 percent with women. He also ruled that 40 percent of all officers promoted to sergeant be Black or Spanish-surnamed. Police administrators agreed to comply with the court ruling this year, after the city lost an appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court.

In March, AAPL Director Renault Robinson met with U.S. Attorney General Griffin Bell. As a result, Bell filed similar suits in Los Angeles and Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

A similar legal battle has been on-going in San Francisco since 1973, when the predominantly non-white Officers for Justice (OFJ) sued the police department. Although minorities comprise about half of that city's population, OFJ lawyers contend only 12 percent of the 1,700 SFPD officers are non-white. Of the 75 permanent lieutenants and captains, none are minority. The case - set for trial this November - has had a devastating effect on police morals.

While minority police continue to press the courts for relief against alleged discrimination, urban experts and minority community leaders alike are more alarmed by the larger problem of police-community relations in the ghetto it reflects.

"In many areas of the country, distrust, suspicion and fear of the police are still facts of life in minority neighborhoods," says Gilbert Poma, acting director of the U.S. Justice Department's community relations service. Earlier this year, the Police Foundation released a survey of six U.S. cities showing that Blacks com-

prised 78 percent of those killed by police. Homicide has now passed accidents and single diseases to become the leading cause of death for young non-white males in U.S. cities, according to a study reported in the September New England Journal of Medicine. Killings by police - mostly recorded as "justifiable" homicides - accounted for 13 percent of these deaths, the study showed.

A recent study by the Afro-American Patrolmen's League showed that Blacks in Chicago are more than six times as likely to be killed by police as are whites.

Some critics see the still mostly white police force as one cause of disproportionate violence toward Black suspects.

"There is a general disrespect on the part of white officers toward the Black community," charged Henry Dotson, president of the NAACP, Los Angeles branch. "They're not out to enforce the law - they're out to crack some heads."

The L.A. Police Department is less than six percent Black and less than nine percent Spanish-surnamed, the U.S. Department of Justice charged in a suit against the city filed last summer. And the Los Angeles Police Commission held hearings in September to investigate why 28 people - many unarmed, mostly Blacks or Chicanos - have been shot to death this year by policemen there.

"My gut reaction is that we probably have less actual brutality from policemen than in 1967," countered Dr. Staufenberger of the Police Foundation. "But that's partly to do with minorities' increased political power. The smacking of minority heads is no longer going to go unchallenged...Police officers are just as racist today, but they're probably more cautious."

Will more minority police alleviate violence in the inner city?

"It's ridiculous for a government to have a war on crime and not include the people in the midst of the crime," argues AAPL Director Robinson. "We endorse the use of more Blacks to fight crime in their own communities."

But Rand Corporation researcher Robert Yin warns against misinterpreting statistics. "You can have the right proportion (of minority officers) and still have a racist police department," he says.

"You may have a Black police officer, but he also lives in the suburbs, so there may be an income gap between him and the urban Black."

Although Yin supports the conclusion that a predominantly white police force was "a dangerous irritant" in the ghettos in the 1960s, he contends that "police today are doing less to be aggravating. Now residents don't feel so antagonistic toward the police."

[Mark Schwartz is a member of PNS' foundation-funded urban task force of scholars and journalists. For the past four years he has worked as a Bay Area radio and television reporter on criminal justice.]

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