



Behind the wall

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*In the beginning was the Word,
And the Word was good.
So be it, Behind The Walls.*

By establishment of the 'Behind the Wall' column, many men and women in prisons have spent endless hours with lead pencils, ball-points and reams of paper scratching out their own individual articles, subjects and poems.

It has always been the policy and procedure of this column to make it a known factor that the opinions expressed in any article or poem submitted be that of the writer and does not necessarily express the opinions of the O.S.P. administration, staff, inmate population, or the *Portland Observer*. Now with that out of the way.

It has suddenly been brought to attention that the Oregon Prisoners' Legal Services, a LEAA federal funded organization stationed in Salem, has not been particularly happy on being exposed of receiving local funding from the Department of Corrections.

The primary purpose for establishing the federal funds for the Prisoners' Legal Services was to protect any of the civil rights belonging to prisoners, and their families being abused by prison officials, including problems relating to complaints surrounding medical care, visitations, disciplinary, parole hearings and religious expressions.

The question that was openly expressed by 'Behind the Wall' was, how can the attorneys of the Prisoners' Legal Services effectively fight any of the above complaints in state or federal courts against the same agency that is paying their paycheck each month?

Many of the prisoners of this in-

stitution have expressed grave concern over the issue.

Over the past three weeks the PLS staff and attorneys have been swarming around this institution trying to convince prisoners that there is no conflict of interest being displayed by PLS receiving funds from Corrections.

Convincing convicted prisoners is one thing, but trying to convince the Oregon general public is another. Since it is their taxpaying dollars that are being used to pay for the prisoners' civil rights protection.

Another pertinent question that should be explored is PLS' statement, that they have received nearly 2,000 requests over the past two years since they have been in existence. Just how many of those requests have been thoroughly investigated, taken action on, or resolved? Or is that irrelevant too?

In recent years the public has placed a lot of pressure on our federal agencies to investigate the abuse of federal allocated funds to service the needs of unemployed minorities and the indigent individuals. Many have been victimized by agencies that could promote a gift for gab, stacks of paper and political backing. But the proof of the pudding has always been in the final results. Produce or stop exploiting the taxpayers money behind a cloak of smooth words and no action.

Gene B. Mechanic, director of Prisoners' Legal Services readily admits that the American Bar Association, who previously had provided local funding over the past two years of its four year funding grant, was not interested in funding his organization any longer, but he did not give the reason, WHY?

Mechanic, stated PLS approached the Oregon Legislative Emergency Board for local funding, and was turned away. But again he did not give the reason why. Is there something being closely hidden from the prisoners by PLS of why these two reputable associations and board denied their request? Are they 'hip' to something questionable about the Prisoners' Legal Services credibility and reputation and being the right agency to protect the indigent persons civil rights?

No, 'Behind the Wall' will not be silent by any of Mechanic's organization excuses that would provide the prisoners at O.S.P. with their civil rights. But how does one answer Willie Williams, a Black inmate, when he states, "The Prisoners' Legal Services cannot possibly give effective legal service to a Black prisoner who wishes to bring forth a discrimination complaint against the prison or the Division of Corrections. Heck, look who pays their salary, plus they have a lilly-white staff. I would never refer one of my Black prison brothers to them for any legal assistance."

Williams, a member of the Parliamentary committee of the prisons Black Culture Club continued, "They came to one of our meetings just recently and tried to give us a snow-job on what they wanted to do for us. They had two years to do many things to service the Black prisoners, why shoot that mess at us now that the money is tight and the death penalty is on the state ballot. My question is how much money has Mechanic and his bunch already 'pocketed' in the name of prisoners' civil rights."

There may be some fools behind the walls of this prison, but we're all not.

The Inmates' Community Liaison Project, Cry of Love, Inc., is coordinating efforts with the Friday night support group to present a Halloween Party for the children of inmates in the Willamette Valley area. October 29th, Pringle Park, 1:00-5:30 p.m. Sunday afternoon. There is no publicity about the party and there is no charge. Extra goodies and help with serving at the party will be welcomed. If you have family or friends in the Portland area please pass the word.

Treats, games and a visit with Pumpkin Man is scheduled. We think it will be an exciting day for the children. If you would like your children to attend please fill out the slip below and return it to our office as soon as possible. We want to reach as many children in the Willamette area as possible. Hope to see you at the party!

Yes, I would like my child(ren) to attend the Inmates' Community Liaison Project's "Halloween Party."

My name is: _____
My child's name is: _____
Age: _____
Name: _____
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Please return to:
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Appointment with the gas chamber

(Continued from Page 1 Column 3)
"When I get out — in 12½ years — I know I will never commit another crime."

Rod Addicks is another story. He claims he is innocent of the murder for which he has been incarcerated for life. "There is no doubt in my mind that if the death penalty had been in effect in Oregon, I would be dead."

Addicks, who is seeking a release on the basis that another man has admitted the crime, feels no doubt that his sentencing judge, Judge Dale, would have sentenced him to death.

"The attitude of the judge toward me and toward my attorney showed me that they had me pegged as a cold blooded murderer — a man who killed his business partner for money."

Not fitting the common image of the murderer, Addicks is a college graduate, middle class and white. "I was even a bit conservative before this happened to me. I believed the district attorney was supposed to bring about justice. Now I know there is no justice.

Addicks, 37, was convicted of the murder of his business partner, James Turel, in Portland. Addicks was convicted along with Dennis Cartright, who testified against Addicks.

Addicks who claims no part in the murder and no knowledge of it, maintains that he was framed by law enforcement officials. "I don't know the motive — maybe they thought I was guilty and arranged the evidence to prove it. But whatever the reason, I have been in prison for four years for a crime I did not commit — and if there were a death penalty, I would be dead."

"I didn't think they would arrest me. I laughed when they did, it was so ridiculous. I didn't think I would be tried or convicted. But here I am."

"I feel sorry for all those who are here because they don't have an education or money for a good attorney. They don't have a chance."

Although the Parole Board is required to set a release date within six months of a man's imprisonment, the Board has not set a date for Addicks. "You are supposed to discuss the crime with them. I didn't commit a crime and I wasn't going to say I did, so they didn't set a date. I'm in here forever."

A man who is a "cold blooded murderer" is Floyd Forsberg, 36. Forsberg is a "professional bank robber" who admits he killed for hire. He claims that he committed the crime for which Addicks was

convicted.

When Forsberg, who had been at Leavenworth federal prison after the murder, said when he arrived at O.S.P., he was surprised to meet Dennis Cartright, with whom he had committed the crime, and to be told that another man was in prison for his part in it.

Forsberg, who had been arrested for escape from a Nevada jail, had already confessed to the murder of a Bend woman. "When I met Rod Addicks, and saw him in the visiting room with his family, I decided to tell my part in the crime," he explained.

"I was told by (Chalmers) Jones of the Parole Board that this will add years to my sentence — I won't get out until I'm an old man."

"If they had the death penalty, I don't know if I would have come forward and confessed. That is one reason why I'm opposed to the death penalty. Mistakes can be made, and how many men would come forward to clear them up if they faced death?"

"If everyone knew that they would be convicted and the death penalty would come in ninety days — it might be a deterrent. But with the possibility of convicting the wrong man and the long delays, it would never work. By the time a man lives twelve years waiting to be executed he's not the same man who committed the crime."

"But there are some men who should be locked up and never let out. I'm probably one of them."

Forsberg says he is a "professional" bank robber — committing what was at the time the nation's largest bank robbery and another bank robbery that has been called nearly 'perfect'. "I spent weeks and sometimes several thousand dollars planning a robbery. There is no way I would have had to kill someone during a robbery. My two murders were for hire."

If the death penalty had been in effect for the past 14 years in Oregon two of these men — who yet may be released to raise families and lead productive lives — could be dead. The third — a man who admits he was a hired killer — could be free.

NAACP meets

The Vancouver Branch of NAACP will meet the Washington State Human Rights Commission at its monthly public education meeting on Sunday, October 22nd at 4:00 p.m. at Pacific First Federal Savings Community Room, 915 Broadway. The public is invited.

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