



Behind the Wall

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

BROWN SUGAR IN PRISON

She is young, educated, articulate, elegant, graceful, polished, refined, spirited, fashionable, beautiful and Black. Her name—LaVern Davis.

When asked what purpose it would serve to demonstrate the latest in womens fashions, especially in a visiting room jam-packed with Black prisoners at O.S.P., her answer was direct and precise, "since this prison holds the second largest population of Black people in Oregon, and they are all men, then we must come and place the Black woman back into our mens eyes."

"Ladies and gentlemen, may I present to you," said the soft, electrifying voice of LaVern Davis, "the LeTroupe Extraordinaire Oregon International."

Suddenly arousing applause stimulated the room with the sound of classical jazz in stereophonic sound playing in the background.

As this Correspondent settled back with the feeling that each of his fellow inmates were about to be entertained for two solid hours by some of the most expensive tastes in the latest clothing modeled by Oregon's top Black models.

"Brown Sugar," announced Ms Davis, as a tall sleek coconut-colored striking Black woman strolled down the aisle in a stride that demanded the attention of her mass audience, "better known as Liz," continued Ms Davis, "is wearing a sweet peach and nectar dress, with the popular sexy double side split, with gathers at the shoulders and sleeveless.

As she walked center stage, Ms Davis continued, "Liz is a Gemini, employed as a secretary, likes tennis,



chess and people. Loves to travel to new places and meet new faces. Hey guys! How would you like to wake up in the morning with Brown Sugar served with coffee, tea or milk?" Another loud roar, mixed with whistles and howls, came from the crowded room filled with Black prisoners.

AS THE EVENING PROGRESSED

There was *Kathleen Smith*, professional model, wearing a creamy beige 2-piece suit, beige blouse, with shoes and clutch bag to match.

Merrill Parker, sporting a blue halter evening dress made of silk with a slight flare in the skirt, is em-

played as assistant director of a child care center.

Debbie Hicks, who was the 1974 Miss Black Oregon—today a professional model and employed in the office of Portland City Commissioner Charles Jordan—received a standing ovation.

Sandra Coleman, 1977 Soul Train winner, is a student in cosmetology at University Beauty School.

Sanda Coleman (Sandra's twin) also a student at University Beauty School, loves to dance, sing and rap.

Magdaline Brister, nicknamed "Dimples," a student in art, delighted the inmates by wearing a Caribbean blue halter wrapdress with an uneven hemline.

Carrie Moore, a professional dress designer, drew praise modeling with *Loretta Johnson*, the latest in tennis wear.

Debbie King, stunned the room with a midnight blue metallic, long sleeve rippling knit brocade dress, that clung and swayed with her every step.

Bernice Farris, brought along the latest business look for women with a bone colored 2-piece suit, split and pleated, a gold blouse and a coordinated scarf in pink.

All Black ladies from Portland, a product of Oregon's finest.

THE NIGHT'S NOT OVER YET

LaVern Davis brought with her a special treat—a group of Black professional men modeling the best in mens wear. Immediately out came pencils and pads by many of the Black inmates who waited to check the price tags and feel the material.

Stan Johnson, assistant director at Portland Community College, walked into the room wearing a gold and grey jacket with white polyester pants, black shirt, and grey lizard-skin shoes.



Next came *Jerry 'St. Louis' Johnson*, a law student at PSU, decked out in a brown 2-piece double-breasted suit with wide lapels, french cut white shirt, brown tie, and brown and gold tip shoes.

Last came *Ralph 'The Man' Davis* (LaVern Davis' husband), Multnomah County Correctional officer and graduate of Oregon Police Academy, who on this night was celebrating a fifth wedding anniversary. Ralph blew the inmates' minds by modeling a grey 2-piece single-breasted pin-strip suit, with a slight flare in the pant legs. It had the taste of a businessman—in an expensive manner.

When the Black inmates honored each of the models with a 'certificate of appreciation,' there were tears in their eyes. This is not the normal entertainment found at O.S.P., but it happened. And it will be remembered by every man dressed in faded blue denim with faces of Blackness and sporting a number, for a long time to come. At least that's the way this Correspondent sees it.

Prison Poets

Julius Snowden, Editor

Childwoman Walking

Gracefully,
Alone on the beach,
Her curly black hair blown
in the breeze—

Her hands in her jacket pockets,
strolling the sand just as
not so long ago
did her own lost brother.

Well, the time did pass as they said:
Have I grown wiser and accepting
as they said I would?

Screams from within the voice
that cries,
'gainst the flame called frustration:
"Never!"

And she lingers on the path
he once took—
Only this time it's a different strand
and different waters lap the shore.

But sand is sand and prints it takes
and really no one else has made
these I leave behind.

The memory is evidence of one form
and I leave another.

They are both treasures.

Robert Benjamin Franklin

To Carol

If I had not known Carol's eyes
Perhaps the days would be easier to understand
and gentler to me
If I hadn't memorized the sounds
She made while close to me
I might have filled my memory
But as it is
My memory of Carol's eyes
And the sound of her voice
Make me smile
I remember Carol's eyes

by Edward H. Smith #41546

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AUGUST

On Aspiration/Responsibility
No bird soars too high if he soars with his own wings.
William Blake

On Conservatism
People are conservatives when they are least vigorous, or when they are most luxurious. They are conservative after dinner.
Ralph Waldo Emerson

On Conservatism
What is conservatism? Is it not adherence to the old and tried, against the new and untried?
Abraham Lincoln

On Ancestry
I don't know who my grandfather was; I am much more concerned to know what his grandson will be.
Abraham Lincoln

On Talk
Words once spoke can never be recalled.
Wentworth Dillon, Earl of Roscommon

On Truth
Be so true to thyself as you not be false to others.
Francis Bacon

On Time
Time ripens all things; no person is born wise.
Cervantes