



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

# Behind the Walls

David Wright # 39816  
Assistant Editor

By An Anonymous Prisoner

Many times honesty in prison end up being a bitter pill to swallow. But with so many of today's youth walking through these gates, someone got to tell them something. Because the rules in society differ a great deal from those developed in a prison...where they are called "Survival skills or Life savers."

Crime is a loser's game for most, and just the appellation of the word *criminal* to you may well cause your family and friends untold anguish. Starting with the lead-in of arrest and into jail, then eventual plea-bargaining or trial, it's downhill.

Errant individuals convicted of felonies and ticketed for prisons ought to know that the following of unpleasanties await them behind massive penitentiary walls.

1. First of all, expect to be stranded in prison for a while, and maybe for many long, trying, lonesome years.

2. If you must be in prison for over three years, expect to lose contact with some of all your family and former friends.

3. Don't expect anyone to agree with "your notion" of justice, nor will some miracle come along that will instantaneously affect your release.

4. Don't expect to soon, if ever to win a reversal from any higher court on appeal. The vast majority of imprisoned persons lose their appeals consistently.

5. There will be absolutely no privacy, and you can expect to do "hard time" in a hostile environment.

6. Don't expect the twisted circumstances of imprisonment in themselves to improve anyone's character of disposition. Since association is forced and limited by the very nature of the prison situation, some of your companions will oscillate between explosive bad temper and being boisterously annoying. Others will be unapproachably withdrawn to the point of being totally uncommunicative.

7. In prison you have been thrust into an abnormal twilight zone where neurosis, psychosis, and paranoia reign supreme. You are to be pited if you need or expect any meaningful psychiatric help. Prison personnel won't take all their time dealing with you or your special interest problems.

Interested in current books about African Liberation?

visit:  
JOHN REED BOOK STORE  
In the Dekum Building  
519 S.W. 3rd Avenue  
Sixth Floor

Or call: 227-2902

8. Expect no compassion, love, or sympathy from your fellow prisoners or from their keepers.

9. There will undoubtedly be overcrowding, continuous backbiting, and endless gossip out of which all kinds of wild rumors will come. What little facts and truth that is circulated around in prison is unfortunately mangled by most prisoners.

10. Expect the 6 X 8 cell that will be your home to be filthy. Your bed, graced with a dirty mattress, will be ancient, and one or more of your fixtures, electricity (lights), sink or toilet, may not work.

11. You will wear prison issued ill-fitting perma-wrinkle clothing that will always be in short supply. The scuffed shoes you will be given may have been worn by ten men before you.

12. Every door (and there are many) will be securely locked.

13. There is continual confusion in prison, loud discordant noises from morning to night, and often vermin -- mice, rats, flies, mosquitoes, roaches and an abundance of other sundry insects.

14. There will be an interminable wait for anything and everything, and your incoming mail will be read before you get it no matter if officials claim to the contrary.

15. Little respect, honor or integrity is to be found in prison, but discourtesy and dishonesty inclusive of petty theft are common place occurrences.

16. Every imprisoned individual will have his own unique sad tale to tell, and most prisoners will least make a claim of "technical innocence."

17. There are hundreds of written and unwritten rules that attempt to govern your in-prison behavior, but don't expect any practical everyday guidance. There is no set criteria, specific steps or programs for making parole, and no logical or reasonable explanations are going to be given for anything.

18. Monitory, regimentation -- sameness -- will characterize your existence, so you may expect to experience the depths of frustration.

19. You will be hustled, jostled, and manipulated from every conceivable angle, and you can expect some of the prisoners you meet to be armed with some kind of crude weapon.

20. Transfers from one prison to another are frequent; and there will be little or no association with the opposite sex.

21. Expect rampant homosexuality, guard and prisoner brutality (physical and psychological), vicious prison politics concerned with the preservation of their own special privileges for the most part, and there will also be a plethora of non-political tight-knit cliques, none of which will welcome you.

22. Without going out of your way in the least, you can count on violating one or more of the prison's many rules and regulations. A punishment of some sort will surely follow.

23. You will quickly feel as if you have committed your crime against prison officials of the prisoners, instead of the accuser who brought the original charges against you in court, and each day you will pay dearly psychologically to one of them for it.

24. Where you perceive some unfairness or wrong and individually or collectively seek redress through petition via mail to some officials in the state capital, expect disappointment, a flat rejection of your allegations or contentions.

25. You have no "rights" so don't delude yourself into thinking that you do.

26. You will hear guards and prisoners applying derogatory terms to all races and ethnic groups, there will be guard harassment, and in disputes between guards and prisoners, the prisoners lose.

27. Jobs in prison are very scarce because of the over-crowding, if you get one, treasure it, for it may become the only way you can keep your sanity.

28. There will be days when you won't be able to get certain essentials, toothpowder, toilet paper, razor blades, and no one will care, but you.

29. You will be constantly under supervision when you take your showers, not only by the guards, but some of the prisoners too.

30. Sheets for your iron bunk (bed) will often be torn or raggedy, and they will seldom match the size of your thin and dirty mattress.

31. Bacterial and viral epidemics periodically plague prison, so expect to catch whatever is going around.

32. Don't expect the best in dental and medical care.

33. Expect to be guarded in the prison's chapel, no matter what God you are praying to.

34. Don't be fooled into thinking that prison can be likened to a small harmonious community or society. There will be little or no unity of purpose, and your aims and goals probably won't coincide with those of any one else.

Always warped to a greater or lesser degree, things are, never quite as they appear to be in prison -- but all to be seen or felt in penal institutions are variegated facets of bad situations impervious to improvement. If therefore, you would avoid a seared soul and hellish degradation...find an answer for why you are still alive and in prison. Remember, you are nothing but a number and can easily be erased in a minute with a smile on someone's face.

# Cell Talk

Asmar Abdul Seifulla, Editor  
aka Joe West 40404

By Asmar Abdul Seifulla  
(aka Joe West)

These lines are written with the sole purpose of shedding light on the plight of Black prisoners now housed in the Oregon penal system. I have procrastinated and soft-shoed around the issue of racism for too long and it's time -- past time that the truths were known about the blatant racism that now exist in the whole correctional system and at O.S.P. specifically.

I've delayed writing this piece and similar pieces of this nature because I honestly felt that there were other avenues of recourse open to Black prisoners. But that line of thought has been completely and utterly destroyed. I don't wish to alienate any friends that "Cell Talk" may have made during this early and important stage of development but I can no longer with a clear conscious neglect my responsibilities to my readers or to my fellow prisoners. I realize that there will be people who will frown on the strongness of the approach that I have taken, but too many lies have already been told in support of this racist system, and I for one, will no longer tolerate the duality of hypocrisy. If for some unexplainable reason these articles suddenly stop appearing, you'll know that measures have been taken to silence me, but I shall not be lead to slaughter passively and neither will my brothers.

As Coordinator of Uhuru Sa Sa, it used to be Uhuru which means freedom in Swahili, but has now been changed to Uhuru Sa Sa, (Emancipation and Freedom Now) one of my functions is to negotiate on an informal level with the administration concerning Black inmate related problems. I'm backed up by a very dedicated group of brothers and up until this point, we've had high hopes of being able to effect some meaningful changes in the institutional attitude and administrative approach to Black inmate problems, programming and release. Needless to say -- we were functioning under the delusion that we were dealing with fair and just men. That assumption has been completely dispelled, it has been once again demonstrated that Black prisoners have no rights that white administrators are bound to respect. That the needs of Black prisoners are placed at the bottom of the list of priorities and that the best that we can possibly hope for is deceit and pacification.

Let it now be noted that the Black inmate population of O.S.P. will not be deceived or pacified into a false sense of security or accomplishment. We want and deserve our piece of the rock, the handwriting on the wall has been identified as that of a bigot, the master-plan no longer exist because we recognize the master's mentality. Our pain is supreme, our suffering is beyond imagination but none it is new -- it has been and will remain to be the same old song until we unite against the enemies of equality. Please understand that we are powerless without community support and that our grievances are legitimate and just. "Yes we are angry and frustrated but neither will lead us to foolish action." We will not become the victims of situations like Attica or New Mexico -- we will not be passive or silent casualties now or ever.

Oregon State Penitentiary is a white institution in design and concept and perpetuation. The implementation of meaningful programs designed to meet the needs of minority prisoners are null and void. We labor under the most difficult of situations because we are totally isolated from those parties that could help alleviate our pain. The prison administration is apathetic toward our needs but none the less they make a great show of lip service and concern.

(1) There isn't one Black teacher on the present payroll -- yet Black prisoners comprise 17% of the prison population.

(2) There isn't one Black counselor on staff behind the walls and there is only one Black counselor on staff period.

(3) There isn't one Black correctional officer of consequence above the rank of private nor has there been one in quite some time.

(4) There isn't one Black man or woman on the decision making level of state corrections.

(5) There isn't any Black oriented entertainment of any significance, the sole source of institutional entertainment is left in the hands of the State St. Jay-Cees which is a white control and operated organization.

(6) All programming for television programs are done by white inmates which causes for very bias selection of programs.

(7) We do more time for the same type of crimes as our white-counterparts which relates directly to the parole system and the extra burden it places on Black prisoners.

(8) We are constantly subjected to harassment and racism perpetuated by white staff members.

(9) We have no one who will champion our cause or who understands our cause when we relate it to them.

(10) We are solely dependent on the beneficence of a apathetic administration.

(11) We have been and still are the victims of racial slurs and bigotry.

Damn, the list goes on and on and we're sick and tired of receiving scraps while others receive the quality cuts. This administration has set up and supported a boot licking, Uncle Tom role for Black prisoners to play and we will no longer give up our dignity to receive what we should rightfully receive. The racism that exist in this place is of the worst type because it isn't overt. It's subtle and refined down to a filthy, bigoted smile. It manifest itself in terms of duality and favoritism -- it's foul and polluting because these people go to great lengths to hide it and they even want you to like them in the process. They are masters of deceit and trickery and their word isn't worth a damn.

"It has been decided that we will no longer subject ourselves to the hollow display of negotiation. If necessary we will do our time silently and peacefully, but we will never be willing to participate in our own destruction. We have contacted numerous so called, Black leaders concerning our plight and we have even had some of them down to our

meetings to honor their contributions to the community, but even they haven't answered our call for support and assistance. One of the necessary ingredients to unity and self-reliance is taking care of your own and we're still members of the community -- we will be back and we are still Black, Blacker than most, no matter what we've done in the past. If there is one iota of comradeship or brotherhood left in Portland or in Oregon among Blackfolks, please come to our aid -- please support us in our endeavor to gain the medicine that's needed to heal us and make us productive citizens. "These people are killing us mentally today, but tomorrow they may want our blood!"

## A PERSONAL MOMENT FOR THOSE WHO CARE

To provide ourselves with the basic food to sustain life, the minimum in shelter and clothing, takes only a few hours of time. The rest of the hours could be spent at our leisure. Why do we want more? Selfishness drives some and their work is hard labor. If the extra work is done to provide for the one you love this becomes a labor of love and is done with ease. Love then becomes the attitude of success.

©1979 Wm. A. Kummer

PRESENTED BY

AMERICAN  
STATE  
BANK

2737 N.E. Union  
282-2216

## \$\$ RAISE YOUR INCOME \$\$



### BECOME A FAMILY DAY CARE PROVIDER (IN YOUR HOME)

WHO: Persons receiving assistance from Adults & Family Services and are WIN eligible.

WHAT: Trainees will be required to attend 4 training sessions a week, 4 hrs. a day (9 am to 1 pm.) for 4 weeks. Children two years and older may participate.

WHERE:

AMA FAMILY DAY & NIGHT CARE  
1425 NE Dekum 285-0493

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION contact Kaye or Sue at 285-0493

## DO YOU REALLY WANT TO SAVE ON YOUR FOOD BILL?

We offer savings of up to 40% and more on fine quality wonder and Hostess products, plus large discounts on other baked goods. Besides our everyday low prices; we feature in-store specials daily. Just look for the "bargain" signs on the displays in our store. Discover for yourself what thousands of smart shoppers in the area have found.



You'll be amazed at the savings you make at our Wonder Thrift Shop!

Food stamps gladly accepted

SATISFACTION GUARANTEED

You must be completely satisfied with every purchase or we will cheerfully refund your purchase price.

WONDER-HOSTESS THRIFTSHOP

115 N. Cook St.

Corner of Vancouver & Cook St., Portland, Oregon  
Open Mon thru Sat -- 9am-6pm -- Closed Sundays

## The House Of EXODUS

Alcoholism Educational and Treatment Center

1518 N.E. KILLINGSWORTH

PORTLAND, OREGON 97211

284-7997

## FROM THE FRONT DOOR

By Tom Boothe

From the front door, I heard people in our community complaining, criticizing and condemning one another. All complaints, criticisms and condemnations were evident of negative attitudes toward each other.

The subject of their complaints, criticisms and condemnations should have been acted upon from a positive attitude position with respect of understanding the situation and circumstances surrounding the subject, after which the subject should have accepted or rejected with full respect projected from a positive attitude.

Remembering that complaints breeds complaints, criticisms breeds criticism, condemnation breeds condemnations; All of which have a direct negative effect on the spiritual, mental and physical aspects of human beings.

On the other hand respect breeds respect, encouragement breeds encouragement, honesty breeds honesty; All of which have a direct positive effect on the spiritual, mental and physical aspects of human beings.

From the front door, I also saw the difference between the results of positive attitudes verses negative attitudes. I saw those who possessed and practiced positive attitudes in more than 60% of their encounters with others had more valuables and were in control of those who possessed and practiced negative attitudes in more than 60% of their encounters with others. Those who were in control of our community services possessed more positive attitudes, than did those who felt they were being controlled.

I could see in the shadows that the first principle of collective community growth needed to be the development of more positive attitudes by the citizens of our community.