

Life In Castro's 'Devil's Island' Told In Prisoner's Smuggled Diary

Editors Note: Living in the isolated Cuban prison on the Isle of Pines literally is like living on a huge bomb. The prisoner is mined. A former inmate, who was there 29 months as a political prisoner, smuggled out a diary of his experiences, on which this series is based. The author, who was educated in the United States, is a member of one of Cuba's best known families.

By EDDY SUAREZ RIVAS
Written for UPI

MIAMI (UPI) — The Isle of Pines is Fidel Castro's "Devil's Island," where his foremost political foes are sent, if they are not earmarked for the firing squads. It is a place of living death.

I know it well. For 29 months I vegetated there with some 6,000 other anti-Castro prisoners including Americans held by the Cuban regime. I was prisoner No. 25671. My dismal, desperate confinement there ended suddenly and unexpectedly when I was released and returned to Miami last Christmas Eve with the ransomed Bay of Pigs invaders, among whom were my two brothers.

The Americans, too, soon may be freed. They are quartered in buildings that have been mined with at least 10 tons of dynamite, ready to be detonated upon command of the Communist warden.

But, in one sense, that is the least of their plight. They suffer physical and psychological tortures that only a warped mind could devise.

Jailed Law Student Authors Dispatch

By United Press International

Eddy Suarez Rivas, the author of the accompanying dispatch on life in the Cuban prison on the Isle of Pines, was a law student at Catholic Villanova University in Havana when he was jailed as a political prisoner.

Now 28, he was 25 when first imprisoned. He was held four months at La Cabana in Havana and then was transferred to the Isle of Pines where he was held 29 months.

Suarez Rivas speaks English fluently, having been educated in the Miami County (Fla.) Day School, Valley Forge Military Academy in Pennsylvania, and at the Boston University College of General Studies.

His father was a Cuban senator for 20 years and was agriculture minister during the Prio government.

Bennies Shatter Life For College Couple

By ANN LANDERS

"Dear Ann Landers: My husband is a junior in college. Last semester he was introduced to some 'stay a wake pills.' The kids call them Bennies. From Bennies he went to other stuff.

At first he took pills only when he had to stay up and cram for finals. Then he began to take them when he needed a lift. It wasn't long before he was taking pills just to keep going.

His disposition has changed from a sweet, likable guy to a belligerent bully. He argues with everybody. Hardly a civil word has passed between us in months. His grades have slipped badly and he has lost confidence in himself.

I'm worried about his health. He has lost a lot of weight and looks terrible. The man who started him on the pills provided them free at first. Now they cost \$14 a dozen.

I am a nervous wreck. Please tell me what to do. — MRS. HOOKED

Dear Mrs. Hooked: Your husband should be in the hands of a competent physician—and soon. And the man who is peddling the junk should be reported to the police. I hope you have the courage to turn in the scoundrel and spare other young people the agony you are now suffering.

Dear Ann Landers: I am a mother who does not agree with your position on going steady.

My daughter is 13 years old and in the seventh grade. She is going steady with a very nice boy of 14 and I am delighted. Last year when she didn't have a steady boy friend she was a terribly unhappy girl. She was always worried to death she wouldn't be invited to this party or to that ball game. It was a sad sight to see this child teary-eyed and fretting—waiting for the telephone to ring.

Going steady means nothing more to a seventh grader than having somebody to count on. It's

what the youngsters call "social security."

Please don't be so hard on these 13-year-olds, Ann. Things are different when you and I were teen-agers. Today it's a serious thing for a girl to be dateless.

—R.D.

Dear R.D.: And who made it a "serious thing" for a 13-year-old to be dateless? Mothers like you. The divorce rate is going through the roof and largely because of half-baked, premature marriages. When mothers prime their 12-year-old daughters to be man-traps, the kids become so jaded and bored at 17 there is nothing left to do but get married. At 19 there's no place to go but to the divorce court.

Please keep my address handy, mother. I have a sneaking suspicion you'll be writing again.

Dear Ann Landers: You have expressed your views about the single girl who becomes involved with the married man and you've discussed the eternal triangular affairs among married couples. Yet you've never explained why the female always pays for the involvement while the man goes free.

When a woman gets caught up in an illicit love affair she often loses her home, her job, her friends, her place in respectable society and yes, sometimes even her health. The man continues on his merry way with nary a scar — looking for his next pigeon.

What is the secret? How can a woman immunize herself against a tattered and torn heart the way men do?

Please don't dodge behind the obvious line that a woman can protect herself by not becoming involved in the first place. Women will continue to become involved regardless of the consequences. What's your solution?

—D. PRESSED

Dear D: Being a mere columnist and not a magician, I have no cure-all. As the poet has said — "to a woman love is all. To man 'tis a thing apart."

Foolish women will continue to become involved. And men will continue to take things apart. You can count on it, Babe.

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Once a Wonderland

Their situation is all the more hellish when contrasted with the fact that the beautiful Isle of Pines, 40 miles off the southern coast of Cuba, once was a tourist wonderland and a place of gaiety. Castro converted it into the locale for his most isolated prison.

There is no escape from this Cuban prison. The sharks make that impossible without a boat. They are Castro's silent sentinels, always on duty.

Despite the tremendous odds, many prisoners have tried to escape. I know of only one who got out and he traveled by plane in the company of the prison warden, who also fled.

Jorge Sotus, a former captain in Castro's army, flew out with the warden in 1960 and reached Miami by boat from Havana. Less than two years later he was killed in an accident in Miami.

The warden who helped Sotus escape, Ramon Padilla, died a violent death—a reported suicide—last month in the Brazilian Embassy in Havana where he had received political asylum.

Buildings Circular

The Isle of Pines prison consists of four circular buildings, each six stories high. In each of these buildings, known as "circulars," there are 93 cells on each floor with a minimum of two men in each cell.

The cells are hot in the summer and cold in the winter.

Solitary confinement in "punishment pavilions," with beatings, cold water dousings and a starvation diet, is what those who attempt to escape can expect—at the very least.

For example, Reynaldo Blanco, a political prisoner, actually got out of his prison in 1960 but the militia caught up with him in a short time. He spent the next 91 days in solitary confinement.

Demonstrations in political prisons anywhere behind the Communist Iron Curtain are rare and Cuba is no exception. But the men on that island succeeded—just once—in defying their guards last May. They staged a week-long strike, "the big strike," as I think of it—a prison revolt.

That was the most inspiring thing I saw during my imprisonment—from Aug. 31, 1960 to Dec. 24, 1962. We succeeded in forcing the authorities, briefly, to meet our terms. No mean trick for men sitting atop 20,000 pounds of dynamite.

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NEGRO SELECTED — Capt. Edward J. Dwight, the first Negro to be selected for possible participation in future U.S. manned space flights, is shown in his classroom at Edwards Air Force Base. Dwight is one of 14 candidates chosen for the Air Force's Aerospace Research Program. They will be trained primarily for the Dyna-Soar program. The Dyna-Soar or X-20 is to be a winged space vehicle.

Control Dams Prevent Willamette River Flood

PORTLAND (UPI)—Flood control dams in the Willamette Basin prevented flooding at Goshen, Harrisburg, Monroe, Albany and Jefferson, after last week's rains. Army Engineers said today.

The engineers released a list of figures showing actual stream depths after the rains and the probable depths if the dams had not regulated streamflow.

The most noticeable change was on the Coast Fork of the Willamette River at Goshen.

Flood stage there is 11.4 feet. The river reached 11.2 feet, but without the Cottage Grove Reservoir it would have crested at 14.5 feet, according to the engineers.

The Willamette River at Harrisburg reached 9 feet, a foot below flood stage, last weekend. Without regulation it would have been 10.7 feet. Regulation of the river kept the crest at Albany at 14.3 feet instead of 17 feet.

The Long Tom River would have crested at 10.5 feet at Monroe, well over its 8.3 flood stage. Flood control dams reduced it to 7.7 feet.

The Santiam River at Jefferson did reach 13.1 feet, slightly over the 13.0 flood stage, but without regulation upstream it would have been six inches higher.

Editor Leaves Spokane Desk

SPOKANE, Wash. (UPI) — Frank C. Ferguson, 65, a former New York newspaperman who came west 22 years ago, retired Monday as associate editor of the Spokesman-Review here.

Ferguson began as a reporter on the morning daily here in 1941 and later became city editor. He had been associate editor since 1950.

One son, Frank Jr., is professor of pharmacology and physiology at Albany, N.Y. Medical College. The other, Howard, is city editor of the Turlock, Calif., Journal.

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Hoffa Dubs Bob Kennedy 'Spoiled'

NEW YORK (UPI)—Atty. Gen. Robert F. Kennedy, according to Teamsters Union Chief James Hoffa, is a "spoiled young millionaire . . . using the taxpayers' money to carry on . . . a personal vendetta."

In an interview Monday night with newsmen David Brinkley ("David Brinkley's Journal," NBC), the trucking boss said that Kennedy has more than 3,000 government agents investigating his union.

The antagonism between the two goes back to the McClellan Committee Senate investigations, when Kennedy acted as chief counsel for the committee. Sen. John McClellan, D-Ark., chairman of the committee, charged Hoffa with diverting union funds to his own uses.

In the past two years, 77 officers and members of the union have been indicted on charges of stealing union funds, taking pay-offs, violence, tax evasion and perjury. Thirty eight of them have been convicted.

"There's only one thing I like about Kennedy," Hoffa told Brinkley. "His willingness to work and to fight to win. Now, outside of that, I don't have any use for him."

"And I wouldn't even give him credit for that because he's not right enough (sic) to use his own money. Now, if he would use some of his billions and carry on this fight, I would respect him a little more. But instead of that he's using the taxpayers' money to carry on the fight for his own personal vendetta."

He said he bore no hatred for the young attorney general. "Wouldn't waste my time," the stocky unionist said. "When you start hating you forget to think. I gotta think how to beat him, not how to hate him."

He castigated the Senate investigation hearings into his union as "a carnival, a publicity seeking operation, nothing sincere about it."

"They trade on fear," he said. "And they trade on the atmosphere that they create by having 150 newspapermen sitting there, having 10-12 cameras, tremendous lights trained at the witness."

Hoffa, commenting on the Teamsters expulsion from the AFL-CIO for corruption, told Brinkley:

"I have consistently said, despite some of my board members' opposition, that this international union should do almost anything humanly possible to get back into the AFL-CIO. Not that we can't live without 'em, but that they can't live without us."

"George Meany (AFL-CIO president) is the only man in my opinion that's keeping the Teamsters Union out of the AFL-CIO and he couldn't do a better job for the employers if they gave him all the money they have."

The television interview was taped in advance. Kennedy got further attention from Hoffa Monday night when the unionist appeared before 350 members of the Traffic Club of Newark, N.J., an organization of transportation businessmen.

There he criticized a bill proposed in Washington which would legalize wire-tapping for law enforcement purposes. Hoffa noted "brazen and bold statements by

Family Night Movie Slated

YMCA Family Night, April 5, will feature a movie on the Mardi Gras and a steamboat ride up the Mississippi River presented by John and Ruth Tribe. Members and their families will have potluck dinner at 6:30, the movies, and gym fun including volleyball for adults and trampoline for the youth.

For the potluck, families are asked to bring table service and one hot dish and salad or dessert. Coffee will be provided.

"EARTHQUAKE" LAKE

Reelfoot Lake, in Tennessee, was formed by an earthquake. Earthquake shocks caused a forested area to sink, making a huge hole which gradually filled with water to make the lake.

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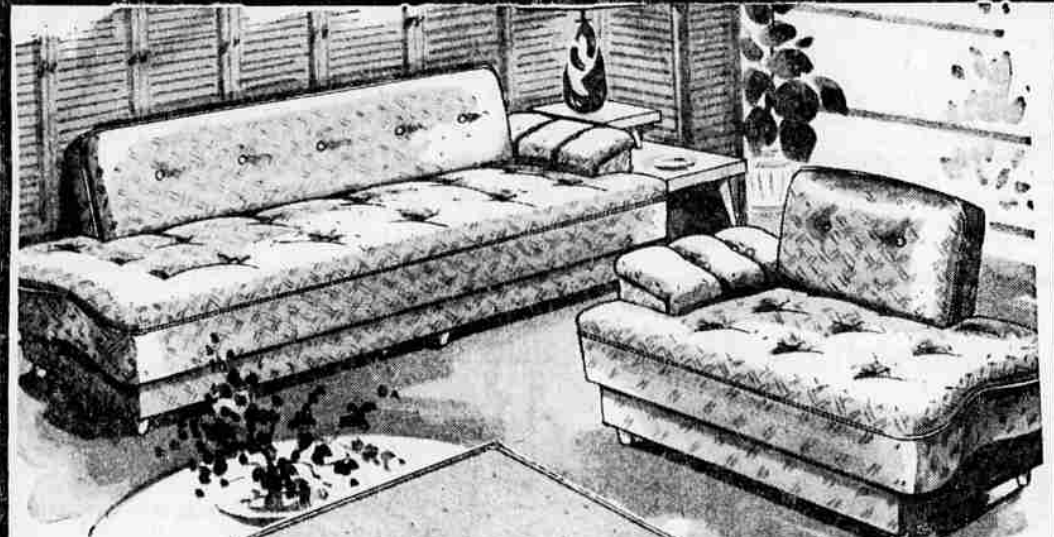
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This, the Teamster official said, would result in Americans losing their constitutional rights.

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