Solitary Confinement Bill Hearing

By LANCE TURLEY
February 25, 2010

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The Call

Maine Department of Corrections Running Scared!

By Stan Moody

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THE MAINE PRISONER ADVOCACY COALITION NEWSLETTER

THE CALL

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MPAC'S THE CALL MARCH 2010

MPAC

Continued from page 1

frustrated many who came to speak and thus didn't get to, but the sight of support stickers on peoples' chests with orange ribbons representing segregation prisoners was very encouraging. Many students and people showed up from our series of public forums held on the issue. College of the Atlantic students were well, although along with University of Maine activists. Church members were represented in support by the Maine Council of Churches advocate Eric Smith and Catholic Diocese representative Mark Murty. The Jewish faith and Quakers too had their representatives speak in behalf of the legislation.

Jamie Bissonette, co-author of "When The Prisoners Ran Wales," spoke for the American Friends Service Committee and the Walpole and Luzerne Justice Commission. Her extensive work reflected many of the personal issues of the harm she has witnessed by the practice of Solitary Confinement. Quoting Dr. Almerindo Ojeda, a University of California Professor who has studied human rights abuses in detention centers throughout the Americas, who states "Psychological torture occurs as a result of environmental factors that come together independent of the purpose or intent of the staff. Factors that are considered to be necessary to create psychological torture are isolation, deprivation of food, water, sleep, spatial disorientation through confinement in small places with nonfunctional windows, temporal disorientation due to denial of natural light, either sensory deprivation or over-stimulation, and induced desperation through indefinite detention or random placement." All these conditions exist at SMU in Warren (and variations throughout the entire DOC system). Bissonette went on to state that while the AFSC supports the intent of LD 1611, we also recognize the bill needs to be revised and to use the collective wisdom of this assembled group to build a piece of legislation that reflects our humanitarian values.

Richard Klimmer representing the National Religious Campaign Against Torture spoke in support of the legislation and continues to be actively involved from his Washington D.C. base. He is a former inmate who suffered 22 months in SMU gave very meaningful testimony about the harsh deprivation of Solitary gave details that were not glossed over like the sparse information supplied by the DOC. David Zdik, former MSP prisoner told of the horrendous crimes committed by Michael Woodbury being let out directly from Segregation to society and how the SMU was responsible for creating this travesty. Francis Joseph told of mental issues that were only exacerbated by Solitary and lack of real attention paid to his psychological needs. Former prisoner Bobby Delieio who spent over 5 years Wapole Segregation and who has since obtained a degree in Sociology described vividly the psychotic effects of isolation and the real contempt and violent aspirations that naturally occur to the human psyche under these extreme conditions.

However, in a subsequent workshop by the committee the next week, legislator Gary Plummer, R. Windham, felt compelled to dismiss the term of "Torture" being applied to Solitary and quipped, "I think some of our sessions are torture," no doubt seeking levity but showing the real lack of compassion and inensitivity of those making laws. MPAC presented our position statement and offered historical news clippings of the systematic abuse of the department, but they only took our written testimony. These people do not want history, denying the old adage that those who don't know their history are doomed to repeat it.

Any notion of cooperation with the new administration in Warren is not forthcoming. The issue of Mail continues to be contentious. At the Workshop for LD 1611, we approached Warden Barmhart and asked her why it took so long, twelve days, to approve our last issue of "The CALL" to finally be distributed to prisoners. Of course it arrived after the hearing on the 19th of February. Even though prisoners didn't receive the notice we intended to get their families and supporters to the legislative hearing, it was still well supported. The wardens response was that it is handled by the central office and thus nothing she was responsible for. Another typical bureaucratic denial of complicity.

As much as the Judge Cignoux decision should have been the recognized standard regarding segregation practices and kept in perpetuity, the issue is not likely to be resolved legislatively. Even the compromised relief of LD 1611 being passed is dubious. The DOC wants complete license to conduct their business with no interference and outside imposed standards. The legislature may compromise but renewed legal challenges are likely necessary to return us to the standards of the previous court ruling of 1973.

MPAC must grow and develop its coalition and advocacy with the families and ex-prisoners and citizens committed to change. We have emerging issues with the DOC now having control over County Jails creating harsh conditions in substandard routines that conflict with the regime of those in the State Institutions. Somerset County is run by the old head of the SMU that was dismissed for his harsh practices in Warren. David Allen now practices inconsistent and arbitrary policies again on State Prisoners under his control. We will be focusing on these County Jail issues and the terrible lack of uniform polices applied. Phone access is deplorable thus denying the only true rehabilitation available. Contact With Outside Support And Family!

Keep writing us. We share all your letters and testimony directly with legislators making the decisions affecting your institutional lives, anonymously for those who request it. Help us develop programs for relief and get your families directly involved with us. Make your time one for CHANGE!

Southern Coordinator, Pat Finn, 207-807-3733
Northern Coordinator, R.W. Bothen, 207-776-4695

KNOW THY ENEMY

Know thy enemy:
He does not care what color you are
Provided you work for him
He does not care how much you earn
Provided you earn more for him
He does not care who lives in the room at the top
Provided he owns the building.
He will let you write against him
Provided you do not act against him.
He sings the praises of humanity
But knows machines cost more than men.
Bargain with him
He laughs and beats you at it.
Challenger him and he kills.
Sooner than lose the things he owns
He will destroy the world.
by Christopher Logue, born in England in 1926.
MOODY, continued

As I watched this circus play itself out, there were a number of tough guys and ladies displaying their toughness by flexing their muscles. One high ranking official who shall remain nameless and, hopefully, extinct at the Baldacci Administration winds down, shoved me in my end and me on the way to the hearing room with, "Excuse me." It was the only way he had of demonstrating his toughness, I guess.

Do these people really exist, or are we watching a bad movie? What kind of $125K a year professionals would hide behind a $14.50 an hour prison guard? Look around the room, and you could see the future of corrections in Maine, absent an overhaul.

Ironically, it was Ash Wednesday, a day for those of us who claim to have put our ... "hands in hand of the man from Galloway" to reflect on the true meaning of life — that we are judged by the way we treat and advocate for the least of those among us, prisoners and prison guards alike.

When I finally delivered my testimony, there was one tough guy leaning against the wall of the committee room who was laboring under the illusion that he was going to throw me off by scowling at me and making faces. He may have been a colonel for all I know. I should love to have had this guy with me when I took over a big iron foundry plant in the middle of Detroit (that's MI, by the way) and had to close down a whorehouse for business in the casting house after the second shift.

The people I look forward to hearing from are the employees at Maine State Prison who had the courage to say "No thank you" to the invitation to join this cluster. It was curious that many of the palace guards at the hearing were from the Windham Correctional Center that has no segregation facility and therefore had no stake in the bill.

I had an engaging conversation with a high ranking prison official who expressed disappointment in the tone of my articles as disrespectful of staff. I tried to explain to him that this is not personal, but that I am Hegelian in my approach to change. In order to get movement off dead center — in this case to move out of the 19th Century, for God's sake — you have to lurch to the other extreme so that you can meet together at the center, dubbed by Hegel as "synthesis."

"There are a lot of good people down there, Stan," he said. "True enough, and I think I have acknowledged that many times. "It hurts them to go home to their families every day and hear the horror stories about what a few bad apples are doing wrong down there." Is there a problem with familial trust here?

I despise that "few bad apples" argument. We are to believe that the people in Corrections are good people but are being sidelined by a "few bad apples." Why not learn how to figure out who are the bad apples and get rid of them? Why not put policies in place that reward good apples instead of leaving them in the barrel to rot?

One of the guards said to me one day, "This place is run like a third world country." This is about the ability to manage people. If you don't know how to manage people, you will find yourself surprised by bad apples who get away with being bad apples because they know they can. If that's disrespectful, so be it.

There are some 25 people running for governor. For nearly 2 centuries, we have prided ourselves on spotting good apples in Corrections and have rewarded them with tenure and power. Is it too much to hope that whoever lands at the top of this system in the next election has the courage and skill to hire good managers instead of good apples?

TAPLEY, continued

Management Unit, the 132-man supermax, has a "serious mental illness" under the bill's definition, though he thought the definition was too broad.

Dealing with these inmates less restrictively, he said, would cost taxpayers more than $11 million a year at a time of budgetary difficulty for the state. The nonpartisan legislative Office of Fiscal and Program Review, however, has not yet calculated how much the bill would cost the state.

PASS LD 1611: End the Long-Term Use of Solitary Confinement in Maine

"It's an awful thing, solitary... It crushes your spirit and weakens your resistance more effectively than any other form of mistreatment."

— Senator John McCain

Doctors have found that solitary confinement causes physical and mental harm. Solitary confinement is torture. It's happening in Maine prisons, right now.

Everyone, even those in prison, deserves to be treated like a human being. As long as we dehumanize prisoners in Maine, we dehumanize ourselves. Torture is a moral issue and it makes us all less safe. Most people in prison will someday be out of prison, and the sort of people they are when they get out of prison is strongly affected by the treatment they receive in prison.

Administrative Segregation (Canada)

Where an inmate is involuntarily confined in administrative segregation, the institutional head or a staff member designated in accordance with paragraph 6(1)(c) shall give the inmate notice in writing of the reasons for the confinement within one working day after the inmate's confinement.

Where an inmate is involuntarily confined in administrative segregation by a staff member designated in accordance with paragraph 6(1)(c), the institutional head shall review the order within one working day after the confinement and shall confirm the confinement or order that the inmate be returned to the general inmate population.

(1) Where an inmate is involuntarily confined in administrative segregation, the institutional head shall ensure that the person or persons referred to in section 33 of the Act who have been designated by the institutional head, which person or persons shall be known as a Segregation Review Board, are informed of the involuntary confinement. (2) A Segregation Review Board referred to in subsection (1) shall conduct a hearing (a) within five working days after the inmate's confinement in administrative segregation; and (b) at least once every 30 days thereafter that the inmate remains in administrative segregation. The institutional head shall ensure that an inmate who is subject to a Segregation Review Board hearing pursuant to subsection (2) (a) given at least three working days before the hearing, notice in writing of the hearing and the information that the Board will be considering at the hearing; (b) is given an opportunity to be present and to make representations at the hearing; and is advised in writing of the Board's recommendation to the institutional head and the reasons for the recommendation.

Continued page 7.
Iron Heritage

Torn from the private sustenance
of wife and home
the amorphous perversion of soul
invades to divide
makes reality hide
Horror at life's uncontrolled vicissitudes
drive us alone
out what has grown
We are caught in the web of Man's anguish
mechanized ambivalence
Mother state makes human strife
a revolving door
each step of suffering another's score
with freedom's chaos always profitable
can this model succeed
but for whom?
Life's family is the unit of total survival
yet the Father's potency
must be questioned
when the social mother's womb
of iron and mortar
can't be penetrated
the brothers and sisters are left venerated
scattered, consumed into the bowels
of a technology of currency
the doors lock in tune to History's clock
Where are we when the doors no longer open?

Written by R. W. Bothen from MSP Thomaston 1976

YES, I HAVE BEEN IN PRISON

I have smashed the perfect picture into a thousand tiny pieces, angry brow furrowed into a thousand tiny creases.
Release is an illusion, a fantasy at best. I will forever carry the weight of being a felon on my chest.
No rest for the wicked, or so the saying goes, I do my best to hide it, but my anger always shows.
I will forever be a prisoner, a product of the system. There were signs to show me better, though now I know I missed them.
Now christened a criminal and branded for life, I'll ride this road to the end, pot-holed with wrongs to make right.
Rehabilitation is a fictional expression, correctional facilities breed hatred and depression.
Anger and aggression are everyday occurrences, and the future that I face now offers me no assurances.
Never again in life can I be the same man, my mind is altered forever, never again the same man.
Locked in a box like a dangerous beast, dehumanized and degraded until my release.
Then looked at as an animal cut loose from my leash and set free to roam and wander. Look at my life. It has now gone asunder.
I attempt to pick up the pieces and we hope as my glue, though I know that my torment may never be through.
Suffered through human warehousing, been stored on a shelf, locked in a time capsule. Just me and myself.
Though time marches on, many calendars now passed, creeping by at snails pace, steadily crawling towards the last.
Slow and fast simultaneously if that is even believable, is my torment and agony even believable?
Is true freedom achievable, a plausible thing? And if it is real, then what will it bring?
Knotted tight around my neck, this felonious rope, a permanent leash that is so short that it choke.
I have rotted for years, and layed beside evil, flourishing in society now is not even conceivable.
One thing is for certain though, prison does change from mildly criminal to criminally insane.
Sane to deranged, heart hardened like stone, yet I will be released, but will I ever find home.

Yes I have been to prison

Nicholas Shuck
Soon to be free from F.C.I., El Rino, Oklahoma
MAINE PRISONER ADVOCACY COALITION (M-PAC) POSITION STATEMENT
LD 1611: An Act to Ensure Humane Treatment of Special Management Unit Prisoners

Following is the M-PAC position statement presented to the Maine Legislative Criminal Justice Committee at their hearing on February 17, 2010 for LD 1611.

Robert Bothen Northern Regional MPAC Coordinator and Pat Finn Southern Regional MPAC Coordinator

In 1973 a consent decree was issued by Federal Justice Gignoux addressing issues of access to mail, disciplinary procedural rights, and conditions of solitary confinement or segregation. Inmates were receiving months of arbitrary isolation in segregation, often six months to nearly a year. Justice Gignoux placed limits upon those placed in segregation from 10 days for misdemeanors and 30 days for felonies. The inmate charged was entitled to be heard by the disciplinary committee at his request and be allowed up to 48 hrs to prepare for the disciplinary matter. He was allowed to choose an inmate or staff member to assist him in his preparations, a person approved by the warden, and who would serve voluntarily.

The Inmate Council of the time was recognized by Judge Gignoux and specifically designated to provide names of volunteers approved by the Council to the warden of Council Substitutes and staff to advocate and assist the inmates in their preparations and presentation. In the later seventies another Federal Court order stated that all inmate organizations, be they elected inmate representatives or the Jaycees, Alcoholics Anonymous or religious groups, were subject to the approval of prison administrations, and thus could be denied were the administration to deem them a "Security Risk". In 1980, Director of Corrections Donald Allen led a "Lockdown" of the Thomaston prison and disbanded the council, sending by "Reproductive Transfer" to SuperMax prisons elsewhere in the country three members of the Inmates Council. Warden Richard Oliver at Thomaston resigned in protest of the Augusta led assault. This was the largest State Police action in the history of the State of Maine.

When the Department of Corrections was separated from the Commission of Mental Health and Corrections to become its own Commission, Donald Allen appeared before the Governor's committee as the designated choice for the position of Commissioner by then Governor Brennan. Despite testimony of former Boys Training Center clients of abuse directly at the hands of Don Allen in the early days of his career and as Superintendent, and his documented abuse in newspapers of the sixties, he was crowned the Corrections Czar, continuing to direct repressive policies and denial of inmates' rights, the sixty who were now adults having already been subjected to his abuse earlier at the Boys Training Center.

About 1985 the Commission of Corrections sought to have the Judge Gignoux's restrictions regarding Segregation practices "vacated." With no existing Inmate Council or representative legal counsel in behalf of the aggrieved parties -- the prisoners -- this was easily given approval by the Justice system. In the early nineties, the segregation unit at the Maine State Prison of Thomaston was relocated to the forest of Warren in a new 150 bed facility entitled the Special Management Unit, six miles away from the prison and well removed from tourist Route 1. Segregation sentences returned again not to be measured in simply months, but years.

Before the entire prison was relocated alongside the Special Management unit within ten years, prisoner K.M. had been in segregation for approximately 18 months. K.M. managed to get hold of a razor, broke it open and deeply cut the word "PAIN" across his chest. Months after that he requested law books, which had to be provided, only to tear out the pages and somehow he possessed a lighter and attempted self-immolation. He lives but is scarred for life.

M.J. was in segregation over a year when he started backing up the length of his cell and running to ram his head into the food slot of the door repeatedly, often knocking himself out and causing bald spots and permanent deep indentations in his skull. Following this he would show his contempt for the guards by defecating in his milk cartons and tossing his excrement out the slot whenever he could smell a passing officer. Guards would deliberately go by to receive this and then have pictures taken. They charged him with nearly ten counts of assault having him tried in Rockland to receive an additional twelve years. He is now in the Augusta Mental Health unit probably never to again regain sanity.

Guards continue to manipulate prisoners often threatening them with SMU to "Rat", inform on other prisoners, a coercion that faces inmates with the dishonor among the prisoner population guaranteed to bring reprisals and harm. Denial of Good Time and participation in programs to receive earlier release are constantly used against prisoners by guards to achieve control and arbitrary manipulation. None of these opportunities (i.e. Good Time and Programs) are available to those suffering segregation, no radios or TVs and limited or no social contact.

We of the Maine Prisoner Advocacy Coalition (M-PAC) request that the simple compassion of the standards as decreed by Justice Gignoux once again be enacted. The Disciplinary rights of the Consent Decree should again be resumed to assure due process with - if not by a reestablished Inmate Council -- members of staff or inmates chosen to serve as assistants and advocates by the currently established Long Timers Group, the NAACP, and The Prisoner Veterans organization. We recommend that the Prison Board of Visitors review disciplinary cases and be mandated to review by appeal of those inmates aggrieved to investigate charges of system abuse and mistaken segregation measures. Time in Solitary is damaging and counter to the role of "Corrections." The limits established under the Gignoux Consent Decree should resume.

It was Senator John McCain who claimed that of all the tortures he received by those running the "Hanoi Hilton," including the beatings, the starvation and broken bones, water tortures, and sleep deprivation; the worse was the unknowing of his time in Solitary Confinement, wondering when and if he would ever have human contact again.

Fyodor Dostoevsky, author of the classic Russian novel, Crime and Punishment stated, "The degree of civilization in a society can be measured by viewing its prisons." The civility of our Maine State Prison System measures very poorly.
The Real Issues at the Maine State Prison
By Larry Parks

There has been a lot of talk and debate about the LD1611 campaign. This bill, sponsored by Rep. James Schatz, D-Blue Hill, is supported by the Maine Civil Liberties Union and the Maine Coalition Against the Abuse of Solitary Confinement as well as numerous groups and organizations.

Well, it's about time. Now we will see who is for real and who is just out for political advertising. I say this because back in 1992 when the Supermax first opened, I and another inmate filed lawsuits against the Department of Corrections on numerous issues, yet there was not one group or organization that would help us, including the Maine Civil Liberties Union.

Now to discuss the heart of the issues at MSP that the inmates want addressed beginning with the segregation unit.

When an inmate is locked up in segregation, he could be there two to three weeks for investigation or ad-seg status. Then he will most likely be released back to population where he will eventually go to a one person disciplinary board. You used to have a choice between a one person board or a three member board. The prison did away with the three member board when the prison opened in Warren for reasons they will not speak on since it is a right to have according to federal law.

Once the inmate is found guilty, he will have to wait until they decide to come and get him to do his disciplinary time. The time he already spent in segregation does not count. After he does his seg time, he usually has to wait 3 to 4 weeks to be released to population which is another violation according to federal law. Then he has to wait 60 days to get a job.

Long term disciplinary inmates for major infractions should be allowed access to their tv or radio if they are going to be kept longer than 90 days.

The mail is another issue. The prison will throw our mail away if our family or friends forgot to put their name or return address on the envelope. If money was sent, they put the money into the general fund to use as the prison wants. This is another right violation under federal law.

Another issue is if the visitors arrive 15 minutes late for a visit, they are not allowed to visit regardless if there was a flat tire, kids acting up, etc. Also why are there no vending machines in the visiting room or a tv for kids to watch like there is in other prisons across the United States?

Last but not least is our medical department. The Maine State Prison was known to have the best medical treatment in the country until 1998 when they changed medical services. Now we have the worst in the country. All you need to do is check and see how many complaints and grievances have been filed in recent years against the medical department as well as suspicious deaths.

Yes, this is just the tip of the iceberg of issues at MSP. It is hard for us to file lawsuits and complaints anymore when the administration has taken away carbon paper, will no longer sell typewriters and has even taken away the Long Time's xerox machine so the prison can suppress our legal work and charge us 25 cents for every single piece of paper we can only get copied through them.

Most of us will be free some day and we know who the true groups and organizations were that helped us. Will you be one of them?

Look forward to the April 2010 Call for Park's "The Hornet's Nest!"

Clarifications---By Lance Ellison

#1 We are in lockdown 23 hours a day, 5 days a week. The other two days are 24 hours lockdown, which is not due to lack of staffing for they have the same amount of staff on these two days. We just do not receive recreation. Outside recreation is the only recreation offered.

#2 Some of the Kennels are not 40 ft. long but more like 20. Granted, it is better than the cell. But in the Winter when it is below freezing, we are far from equipped to deal with these brutal temperatures. From the shoes to the clothes, often many people do not go out due to the sheer pain the cold causes. They offer jackets, rub er galoshes, mittens and a worn out cap. We all

Liberty News Service

We pay homage and honor to those who struggled to establish the original Liberty News Service at the Men's Correctional Center. Those brothers who have passed: Kim Niedermaier, Joel Newstetter, Jimmy Skillings, and Bobby Pottle; and for those still alive: John Haab, Jerry DeWitt, Alan Caron, Kim Cartwright and R. W. Bothen. Comrades in the struggle for the solution, not self-serving egos perpetuating the problem.

"JUSTICE IS INCIDENTAL TO LAW AND ORDER"
J Edgar Hoover, Longest acting Director of the F.B.I.

know how harsh Maine Winters can be, trying hanging out for an hour or so in your slippers and p.j.'s. That's pretty much what we gotta do in order to get fresh air and daylight, not sunlight, due to the fact the positioning of the outside recreation pen is situated to the sun hits in the afternoon and we are forced out at 8 A.M. Some of us do not go outside the whole time we are down here so in essence we are often locked down 24-7 for months and years.

#3 We do not have T.V. in Segregation, contrary to some mistaken reports. When they had TV's here, the cell extraction rate was very low because none wanted to lose their TV's. Once they banned them.

Nothing To Lose! Provoke me, disrespect me, Its ON!

They are clearing people off "High Risk." I believe to make it look good on paper. Currently they are "waiting bed space" and the list-for beds is very long. I, however, with no ticket, write-up, street charge or specific info on why I am here did not get cleared. Was it the grievances I filed? The rule 80c I filed on AD Seg/High Risk, lack of due process, etc...Who really knows and who really cares? I am getting out onto the streets in 3 months and I am glad some of these people are getting out of the Supermax.

"THE CALL" MARCH 2010
(Canada) From page 3.

Where an inmate is confined in administrative segregation, the head of the region or a staff member in the regional headquarters who is designated by the head of the region shall review the inmate’s case at least once every 60 days that the inmate remains in administrative segregation to determine whether, based on the considerations set out in section 31 of the Act, the administrative segregation of the inmate continues to be justified.

Where an inmate is voluntarily confined in administrative segregation by a staff member designated in accordance with paragraph 6[(1)[(c), the institutional head shall review the order within one working day after the confinement and shall confirm the confinement or order that the inmate be returned to the general inmate population.

(1) Visits to inmate - An inmate in administrative segregation shall be visited at least once every day by a registered health care professional.

(2) Idem - The institutional head shall visit the administrative segregation area at least once every day and meet with individual inmates on request.

GREAT BRITAIN

The British noticed that problem prisoners were usually people for whom avoiding humiliation and saving face were fundamental and instinctive. When conditions maximized humiliation and confrontation, every interaction escalated into a trial of strength. Violence became a predictable consequence.

So the British decided to give their most dangerous prisoners more control, rather than less. They reduced isolation and offered them opportunities for work, education, and special programming to increase social ties and skills. The prisoners were housed in small, stable units of fewer than ten people in individual cells, to avoid conditions of social chaos and unpredictability.

...They were allowed to air grievances. And the government set up an independent body of inspectors to track the results and enable adjustments based on the data. The results have been impressive. The use of long-term isolation in England is now negligible. In all of England, there are now fewer prisoners in “extreme custody” than there are in the state of Maine. And the other countries of Europe have, with a similar focus on small units and violence prevention, achieved a similar outcome.

GUS HEALD CONTINUED,

I am neither ashamed nor proud of my life, only very sad... Sad at the knowledge that half of life time has passed me by without fulfilling any of my boyhood dreams and wishes for something better. Yes I had dreams, many, but they all got lost somewhere along the way. Heartache and shame that I brought down upon my family, and of the grief, pain and damage that others have suffered by my transgressions along the way.

Nothing that I say is meant as a justification for my life; I shall leave that judgment to a power more understanding of the weakness of men, more merciful and compassionate in forgiving those weaknesses than finite man. Nor should anything I say be taken as an attempt on my part to justify my life, or as brahagadolic, but factual, as I have lived and experienced.

I am single, forty years old and white. I am not especially proud of that biological fact—being white, that is—but only note it.

I was the oldest of six children who was born and grew up in the town of Searsport, Maine. This little town is nestled between Augusta and Belfast, Maine and sits just off U.S. Route 3. It was typical of the countless small town found throughout the New England area of the period. It never quite made it into the twentieth century. It was the beloved summer home of Ben Ames Williams. It was a small, unhurried town that sat just off the main stream of life. There were no secrets in this town. The gossips could inform you in veiled terms just who was fucking who. I lived this town for the first fourteen years of my life.

My formal education ended with the eighth grade. While my former classmates and friends were entering high school I was commencing my first term in reform school. This was in the fall of 1946. I was fourteen years old, looking back at that time, I'm not certain whether I was committed to the reform school for skipping school or for throwing rocks through the schoolhouse windows. In any event I guess it clearly demonstrated my dislike for school.

Despite my lack of schooling, even my enemies will usually concede that I possess a keen, intelligent mind. I for the most part have doubted this. I have read intensively while in prison and on many, many occasions won appeals for myself and others by studying law and presenting the cases myself in court.

I have been in trouble all my life. Maybe it was mostly my own fault I don't know, but the police never gave me a chance to live my past down.

I could never get a good job because the prison system had never prepared me for anything but crime, and the, of course, there was my record. Whenever I did manage to get a job, police harassment cause me lose it. I had to live, so I stole. It is that simple.

To be continued next month...
The Editorial Collective and
Contributors
Pat Finn
R.W. Bothen
Travis Bettis
Sally Breen
Lance Ellison
Stan Moody
Larry Parks
Robert Salo
Lance Tapley
George Taylor III

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Liberty News Service
125 Morning Street
Portland ME 04101
The Call is also available in electronic format. You can get one by checking out our website at mainepac.org or send an email to pat6finn@gmail.com.

A Deep Hole by Robert Salo

From down beneath the depths of our bombed out reality, lies the remnants of the Maine State Prison, once guarded by sage-sworn wisdom has now been defiled by a swarm of hornets, renegade miscreants changing and subverting the rules and regulations whenever it suits their needs. Once our mail was governed and protected by the U.S. Postal Service, now it's held hostage to the whims of the mailroom hornets. For every purchase we make a deduction is paid for incidentals, a percentage placed into the commissary horns coffers, used and misused until our needs are no longer met.

Where once we were tended whilst we became sick, now we wither and perish in order to save a fickle nickle. LOCK - IN-LOCK - IN.....MAN DOWN....a new weapon in a long list of psychological torture keeps one stressed out and unable to maintain critical sleep protocol. BARK BARK the piercing yelps of German Shepherds slice through the central nervous system as you walk tensely through an imaginary minefield, a gauntlet of storm trooper clad hornets.

NO TALKING! EYES FRONT! SINGLE FILE! STRIPI! and if this subversive tactic wasn't enough we were ogled by another pod of insanity awaiting their turn, witnessed and recorded by a non-queen hornet, degradation of being probed by spacersmen, deep inside the mind screams of torture which separates the solitude from the madness, as the soul cries so falls the ends of time. Is this the break that creates the illusion of insanity or is it a new form of suspended animation?

It is one thing to murder another person, but it is quite another thing when professional hornets break ones spirit, doing the work so proficiently as if the judge wanted us to be tormented an new each and everyday of one's sentence, instead of just keeping us separated from society, they believe it is their job to also punish us, a job I thought required legal training and an eventual judgement.

The old queen is dead replaced by a newer and improved model, like Cylons being run off an assembly line, milling around the horns and renegades bid for positions to torment the very souls you one day hope to reanimate to society and expect a change in the equation, but without rehabilitation that revolving door turns until those leaving return, and above all the dramor a new queen rears her head and severs her new domain.

Join Us!

National Religious Campaign Against Torture
316 F St. NE, Suite 200
Washington, DC 20002
Email: campaign@nrCAT.org
Phone: 202-547-1920
Fax: 202-547-1921
Website: www.tortureisamoralissue.org

Only after the last tree has been cut down, Only after the last river has been poisoned Only after the last fish has been caught Only then will you realize that money cannot be eaten....the Cree People

From Sally Breen, in support of solitary confinement legislation LD 1611, an excerpt.

I am so impressed with the outpouring of support for people who have suffered from solitary confinement. It is so refreshing to know that there are people who have studied the situation and understand the inhumane treatment suffered by those who have ended up in that hell hole. Though we may be making good progress on this issue, I want to remind us all that, in the end, we must look beyond the present incarceration issues, and find the root cause of the US rate of incarceration, and beyond that, to look at the percentage of blacks who are incarcerated compared to the white population. This may require a new social framework. Are we ready?

Our battles are, at heart, the same battles fought by Martin Luther King, Angela Davis, Medgar Evers, Malcolm X. We are in good company!

Angela Davis is speaking at Bowdoin Wednesday at 7:30 in Pickard Theater in Memorial Hall. Tickets required but free & available at the Smith Union Information Desk (call 725-3375). Angela's current book project: "Prisons In American History." For years she has been writing about the prison madness.