

6 Days in Jail

# Drugs Purchased as Easily as Candy

By DICK HEBERT

"This is what you need," Al told me. "It'll put you out like a light."

"No kidding?"

"One spoonful and you'll be out for a long time."

We were sitting on his bunk, talking quietly. The long bunk hall of the city stockade was dense with the odors of smoke and spit and breathing grown stale.

Al is a fictitious name for the stockade's pusher. He sells dangerous drugs. As easily as buying candy, I paid him a total of \$2.50 for pills. I had come to buy a dollar's worth when he asked if I had slept well the night before and then brought out the small bottle of orange liquid. I read the label:

"Chloral Hydrate, for sleep. Grady Memorial Hospital."

"How much?" I asked.

"A dollar a spoon."

I said I didn't take chances

*To investigate reports of conditions at the city prison farm, reporter Dick Hebert feigned intoxication, was arrested, and was sentenced to the prison. Names of persons in this article, second of a series, are fictitious.*

on stuff I didn't recognize and then left with a dollar's worth of pills (subsequent testing revealed they contained phenobarbital.) Had I bought some of the liquid I would have had to take it then.

Chloral Hydrate is classified under federal law as a hypnotic, one of three major types of dangerous drugs. It cannot be bought legally without a doctor's prescription. It acts suddenly and is highly potent. It contains chlorine and ethyl alcohol.

A Grady Hospital official described it as "similar to a Mickey Finn" and said the hospital uses it to put heart patients to sleep at night — one spoonful a night. Pediatricians prescribe it for babies who cannot sleep.

In the underworld it has a reputation as an efficient knock-out punch for intended robbery victims. A druggist said he sells a four-ounce bottle or a dozen capsules for \$1.25, only 25 cents

more than a spoonful costs at the city stockade.

Twice Al tried to get me to buy some. One night he came to my bed and asked, "Ever take any of this stuff?" He pulled the bottle from his pants pocket. I said no and I didn't want to.

"Just look at it," he said. I did and returned it to him. On my last day behind bars I asked if I could buy an entire bottle. He said he was sold out but might have more later in the day.

Just before leaving the stockade for good I asked again. "I could use some of that on the outside," I told him. He said his supply had not come in but I could find him at one of two

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Photo—Jeff Nesmith

REPORTER AT WORK  
Hebert on Prison Detail

PILLS BOUGHT IN CITY PRISON FARM

# Obtaining Drugs Easy as Candy

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low-class downtown hotels after his release in a few days.

**A REGULAR INMATE**

Al is a regular inmate, never out more than a few days between prison terms, I was told. Many are like that.

I heard about Al in advance from an ex-convict who told me he paid Al \$55 for pills and favors during his 11½ day stay there earlier this year.

He said Al solicited him as he came in. He said he paid \$3 for a good bunk assignment and \$2 "to make sure I got on the right work crew."

Then came the pill sales.

**DRUNK SOLICITED**

"Look, you came in here drunk," he said Al told him. "You're going to need some of these." They were pills selling at 50 cents a set of two, the inmate said.

He bought and took them a few days, "but they only made me sick and nervous. I bought them because I felt like they'd make it hard for me if I didn't. I bought the pills and threw them away.

"He was trying awful hard to get me hooked on that stuff."

**WIFE SENDS MONEY**

He said Al offered to hold his wristwatch for him as credit against pills when he ran out of cash. Instead he built up a \$7.50 debt that he paid off when his wife sent him some money, he said.

With me it was different. Until the chloral hydrate incident, I was not solicited. My first day I went to Al and asked him, "What kind of pills you got in here?"

"Phenobarbitals," he told me.

"Is that all? No bennies?"

"That's all."

"How much are they?"

"Two for a quarter."

"Sell me four, will you?"

"Meet me in the shower room in a minute."

**WAITING IN SHOWER**

I was waiting in the shower room when he came in. He gave me two small white tablets and two white capsules with red-orange bands around them. I gave him 50 cents.

"Want to take some now? Here's some water," he said. He took up a cup from an ice water barrel that is kept in the shower room.

"I think I'll save them until later tonight," I told him. He seemed satisfied. I kept the pills in an aspirin tin I had carried into jail with me.

The next day, my second, I came to him at his bunk and bought a dollar's worth. I again asked him if he could smuggle in some "bennies," and that is when he first brought out the bottle of chloral hydrate.

**WAD OF NOTES**

I packaged all the pills in an envelope, camouflaging them with a wad of notes I had been scribbling late into the night when others were asleep.

The foreman on our work crew mailed the "letter" for me on the way back to the stockade after our day's work Friday. When the package reached the Constitution, three of the tablets were crushed and one capsule had sprung a leak.

I bought another dollar's worth from Al after that, but this time he had run out of capsules and gave me eight tablets. Sunday, during visiting hours, Constitution reporter Bill Westbrook visited me. I gave him a matchbox containing the eight tablets, and he carried them out for me.

**BOX CONTAINS DOZEN**

In return he gave me a matchbox with a dozen yellow pills in it, secreted under matches. They were common cough pills sold without prescription in drugstores.

As we left the mess hall where visitors are received, the

guard at the door searched me in the usual superficial way—patting my pockets and legs, lifting my pants legs enough to see the tops of my socks.

Then he looked in my shirt pocket. "Just comb and matches," I told him.

He took out the match box, opened it, saw matches and closed it again. When I reached my bunk I opened the match box. Two yellow pills peeked up at me through the match heads.

I carried that matchbox with me during the rest of my stay, and when I walked out a free man.

A local analytical laboratory examined the pills bought in prison and confirmed that the white tablets were phenobarbital, a barbiturate.

The capsules were found to be an anti-epileptic drug "very remotely related to a barbiturate," a biochemist told me. The drug is chemically known as "diphenylhydantoin sodium" and requires a doctor's prescription for legal purchase.

**ONLY ONE PUNISHED**

Only once did I hear of an inmate being punished for possessing pills. He was a middle-aged man, known in the stockade for his loud voice and his bravado—and for the good cup of coffee he mixed with instant coffee smuggled into the prison.

One day, as we were marched across to the mess hall to sit and wait for the ward to be cleaned, the inmate was stopped by a guard who spotted a jar of coffee under a magazine the inmate was carrying.

The inmate never made it to the mess hall to sell us his coffee. He was searched and pills were found on his person. He had been walking about the bunk room wall-eyed and dazed. It was said that with the nickles he made selling his coffee he kept himself drugged.

**LANDS IN HOLE**

He was sent to "the hole." A day later he was back out, selling coffee and looking wall-eyed and sleepy. "The hole," I am told, is a four-by-six windowless room in which you are fed a biscuit and water three times a day. You are not allowed cigarettes in there, and your commode is a bucket. You have no furniture.

Some are affected worse by the pills. Some of the old, usually the ones who have no home save the city stockade, are often seen weaving as they walk, leaning against posts and beds, sleeping on benches if it is an hour when inmates aren't allowed in bed.

**OLDSTER PUSHES BROOM**

I watched one old man with a fist full of pills push his broom between the rows of double bunks as though he might die at the end of each aisle.

Another old man was singled out of a lineup by one of the guards.

"You're drunk," the guard told him. "Go sit out in the hall and wait for me."

As he walked past me I saw the look I had come to recognize—the sleep-sagging eyes closed to slits, the dragging feet, the short, slow steps, the loosely hanging head that bobs with each step.

**SMUGGLE IN ALCOHOL**

The man might have been drunk on something other than pills, because the prisoners are adept at smuggling in alcohol—usually crude alcohol in the form of Bay Rum or a shellac thinner that has methyl alcohol in it.

Security against such smuggling is very loose. Searches of incoming prisoners are perfunctory. Inmates say the mails are never checked. I never received any mail at the stockade, but I had no trouble mailing my package of notes and pills to the Constitution.

And when I was arrested and jailed, the police saw the aspirin tin I carried. There were three aspirin inside but police did not open it. I carried the tin with me throughout my six days in prison.

I needed those aspirin that first night in city jail.

TUESDAY: A night in City Jail.

**Novelist Honored**

DARMSTADT, Germany (AP)—West German novelist Guenter Grass, 38, has received the \$2,500 Georg Buechner Prize, awarded by the German Academy for Language and Poetry, the State of Hesse and the town clude "The Tin Drum," "Dog of Darmstadt. His novels include "Years," and "Cat and Mouse."

# *The Night Is Long, Lonely and Loud Where the Men Have No Tomorrows*

By DICK HEBERT

I sit on the cold concrete floor, my back to a wall of bars.

Four tattered old men are curled in sleep on the floor. As pillows they use a torn and paint-splashed shoe, a roiled-up jacket, a forearm, or the naked concrete.

Two argue with long strings of curses

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*To investigate reports of conditions at the city prison farm, reporter Dick Hebert feigned intoxication, was arrested, and was sentenced to the prison. This is the third of a series of articles.*

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that reverberate through the vault-like room.

There is a chill in the air and I hug my knees to my chest. I light up a cigaret.

This is the city jail, where the forgotten men who seldom think of tomorrow spend tonight. They are the drunks, the winos, the streetcombers of the city. In the morning they will go before a judge and be sentenced to the city stockade.

"Save me a puff off-a that," an old voice says. I look up into a fallen face and almost crying eyes. His hair is thin and white, his face sad and quiet, his body stooped.

He stands over me, watching my cigaret shrink. I take a whole cigaret and give it to him and his eyes sparkle. His hands shake violently when he tries to light up so I light it for him. He shambles away.

It is a long and sleepless night, and as I jotted down notes on a small pad, I listened: snoring and coughing and spit-

ting; loud and crude songs; the rush of tap water into a basin with a broken faucet in the latrine; the man in a painter's white uniform, splattered with a rainbow of paint colors, walking about peddling cigarets at 25 cents apiece.

"Whose got a quarter? Want-a smoke some? Want-a smoke some? Who's got a quarter?"

There is a row of cages with bunks in them, bunks without mattresses, and when a prisoner gets too rowdy the turnkey comes and puts him in one of these cages. Several shout curses and sing disjointed songs.

Bugs crawl out occasionally to investigate but no one notices. Bugs and men, they both are regulars here.

We are shifted to another room after

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# Night Is Long ---No Tomorrow

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a few hours, a room filled with crude bunks — iron frames around a cross-hatching of narrow steel bands. About 50 are in the room. The bunks are uncomfortable but better than the floor.

A man sleeps on the floor because all the bunks are occupied. Others roam about begging cigaret ends or picking them off the dirty floor.

A small, shivering old man stands beside a tall and young one until the young one takes off his coat and gives it to the old man and spends the rest of the chilly night in short sleeves.

Another stands, yawning and shaking convulsively. . . . The hours pass slowly. . . . Breakfast is a tin of lukewarm black coffee and a slab of baloney and three slices of white bread. Afterwards, the trusties who served it sell the leftover bread and baloney to prisoners until it runs out. I was too late to get any.

## WAIT FOR DAWN

The turnkey announces that "Richard Herbert" is the only one who had enough money when he came in to make bond and go. The others can use the telephone. Some do. I stay put.

We wait in the bunk hall for dawn. We wait in a 12-foot-square room for court. We wait

in the courtroom for the judge. And everywhere we wait, the old, the ones destroyed by crude alcohol, sleep — on the floor, on benches, sitting up.

In court, an official calls out names and we make our pleas. Those pleading not guilty leave to wait for trial another day. I plead guilty.

It is almost 10 a.m. when Judge Robert E. Jones comes in and we gather before his bench. He says he will suspend the fines of all first offenders who have proper identification. They line up, but I don't join them.

## HEARS THE STORIES

He calls the names and listens to the stories:

"I have cancer of the stomach, Judge. I was going to the hospital. The whisky helps keep away the pain."

"I was just passing through town, Judge."

"I didn't drink a thing. When it rained, the medicine I take made me smell like whisky."

The judge chuckles sometimes at the oldtimers he recognizes. "I've heard every story you could tell," he tells one man, and fines him \$15 or 13 days in prison.

When he calls my name I answer and say no more. He looks at my face, says, "Fifteen or thirteen," and I walk out.

## GOES INTO CONVULSIONS

After court, in a waiting room, a crew-cut man of about 30 goes into convulsions. He pounds the wall, grunting and groaning, gagging, and then he goes rigid and two men hold him on the floor until some trusties take him away on a rolling stretcher.

They fingerprint us. Jail Supt. James F. Brown is there, chewing and smoking a cigar. I don't think he recognizes me, even when he calls my name and passes me through the door, out to the rickety old bus that carries us out to Key Road.

I was the last one fingerprinted. I almost was forgotten. I had to go to a policewoman and remind her that I wasn't fingerprinted and that they were holding some money of mine. She printed me hastily and had me sign for the money — \$21.

## CAN PAY OUT

"You have enough to pay your way out," she said.

"Yeh. But I don't want to."

At the Farm we are searched superficially. We are photographed. We are given our prison clothes, dirty and torn whites with the blue stripes. We are fingerprinted again. All of this is done by the old-time prisoners.

The one doing the fingerprinting smiles and tells me, "You've done this before, haven't you? I can tell."

Now I am inside. Already I know I am entering a community all its own, with a class structure as rigid as any on the outside.

**WEDNESDAY IN THE CONSTITUTION:** The tender, the tough, the merchants and the bosses.

# *It's Vicious Youth and the Aging Winos In the Caste Struggle at Prison Farm*

By DICK HEBERT

There is an unwritten and unspoken code at the city stockade. It charges the air as soon as you enter this world of barred windows and white uniforms.

It turns the "Farm" into a community all its own. It tells you in which class you belong — and if you belong.

It is something other than the written rules and signs on the walls, something that has nothing to do with prison guards. The convicts themselves have made this code, and it is as rigid as any city charter.

Once classed, you do not change classes. You are labeled. If you are not labeled,

you are an outsider who earns the suspicious glances from some, frozen and mean stares from others, and silence from many.

I was not labeled. I was unclassified.

The boss inmates are few.

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*To investigate reports of conditions at the city prison farm, reporter Dick Hebert feigned intoxication, was arrested, and was sentenced to the prison. This is the fourth of a series of articles.*

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They stay among their own. They are quiet. You go to one of them and pay 15 or 25 cents

for a good bunk assignment or light work.

They have a top boss who barks jail orders so the 300-bunk ward can hear, but otherwise he is quiet.

In the stockade you are allowed to keep your money. Where there is money there will be merchants vying for it. The stockade has its share.

Though only nickels and dimes and quarters are involved, business is big and bustling. One man has a "rolling store" hidden in a large white shoe box. Others walk about selling pocket combs or broken cigaret lighters or pens found on the streets or stolen from

other inmates.

As you first enter you meet a half-dozen hands holding out sacks of "bull," a cheap tobacco used in the roll-your-own cigaretts that almost all the inmates smoke.

"Pack-a-bull," the vendors cry. "Two for a nickel."

They get "bull" free for doing odd jobs around the ward or for going to chapel services on Sunday.

Jim sells bull from his "rolling store," too. When the guards aren't looking, he displays his "merchandise" on a table. He rents out a razor, blades and

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**6 Days in Jail****It's Brutal Youth vs. Old Winos in Caste Feud**

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bar of hand soap for a nickel a shave. He sells cigaret lighter fluid at a nickel a lighter-full.

His stock also includes packages of needles found on a sidewalk, a high school student's geometry compass, a pipe tool (no one seemed to know what it was), an orange and purple "Clemson Tigers" hat left over from the Georgia Tech game and bought from a man who needed a dime for coffee. . . .

Some merchants scrounge or steal goods wherever they can. Inmates often told me not to leave things under my bed because "they'll steal anything you got." I left things, but nothing was stolen.

Coffee merchants are a special sect. They are few, but

their coffee is better than that served in the mess hall, even though it is instant coffee smuggled in and made with hot tap water. Sometimes it is taken from the kitchen by inmates, I was told, but usually it is smuggled in in plastic bags hung inside trouser legs.

I was told that one merchant made \$25 profit on nickel coffee sales during one 30-day term.

The tough convicts are the younger set, the men with the faces cleanly shaven, the men in their 20s and 30s, the teenagers. They have hatred and suspicion boiling in their eyes. They hate the very old, the decrepit, the winos.

Two 17-year-olds were among them, one with a thick head of

long black hair. They were convicted of beating up a wino they said attacked them because they would not give him a dime. One admitted, "We would have got the chain gang if the cops had found the knife."

The tough ones talk of revenge when they get out. They talk of escape. Their talk is loud and boisterous. Their remarks to the old and helpless are cutting.

The mop-haired teen-ager was sent to the barber's chair by a guard and his hair was cropped close. The barber said he cried as his hair was cut, I was told.

Most of the prison population is made up of the regulars, those that won't admit defeat, and those that do.

Frank was typical of the former. He slept in the bunk below me. He was quiet and spoke without cursing. He is 51. "Frank" is not his real name.

He used to sell insurance for a large Atlanta firm, selling more than \$1 million in paid-up insurance each year, he said. Five times he got drunk and jailed and lost his job and was rehired because of his sales record, he told me.

The sixth time he wasn't rehired. He lost the job, wife and family in one sweep. He turned to selling photo enlargements door-to-door. His release was coming up and he was afraid to go because he had no money and no coat and the weather was turning cooler.

"There are ex-doctors, ex-lawyers, everything in here.

Some very important people," I was told. They are regular repeaters who admit to alcoholism and are sorry for it.

One told me: "I'm leaving this town and going straight." And another: "When I get out of this place I'm gonna go at least half straight."

Perhaps they will, but no one believes it.

Those who admit defeat are the saddest stories, the ones who spend only a day or so of freedom before they are locked up drunk again.

They are on welfare and get their welfare checks mailed to them at the stockade. They talk of their "weed patches" at street corners and behind factories where they hide to drink on the outside.

Their favorite drink is a de-

natured alcohol used as a shellac thinner and cleaning aid. Its label reads in part:

"Contains Methyl Alcohol, a poisonous material which, if taken internally, causes blindness or death. It cannot be made non-poisonous."

One old man, his breath heavy with the pungent odor of the solvent, offered me a drink from a pint he said he carried into prison in his pants pocket, plainly visible to the guard who is supposed to check inmates on their way in. The man said he bought the pint while on his work detail at the Grant Park Zoo.

The old and beaten move ever so slowly about their chores, assigned to the lightest work like cleaning out the barracks or picking papers off city park

# A Rugged Day with Prison Squad 62: Swinging a Blade at Man-High Kudzu

By DICK HEBERT

If you want to know what it takes to keep clean and green the sloped banks of Atlanta's long miles of expressways, go and swing a "blade" with Squad 62.

Chop at the thick tangles of kudzu vines that grow uncon-

## Hebert Praised for Prison Series

*The chairman of Atlanta's aldermanic prisons committee Wednesday commended reporter Dick Hebert for his investigation of the city prison. Story on Page 29. To investigate reports of conditions at the prison, Hebert feigned intoxication, was arrested and was sentenced to the prison. This is the fifth of a series of articles.*

trolled over those grassy hills. Chop down weeds that climb almost as tall as a man.

Feel the blisters rise on your hands under the blade handle. Feel them tear open and smart.

Squad 62 is one of more than 20 inmate crews sent out five days a week to work on the city streets and expressways, in the parks and on the prison-farm grounds.

The old and feeble are sent on the crews that pick paper off the city park grounds. The tough and burly are sent to tend the livestock on the prison acreage. The troublemakers, those who have escaped repeatedly, are sent on the tough crews where they are watched continuously.

When I first arrived, I asked one of the inmate bosses how much money he wanted to make sure I would get a light work assignment.

"Don't worry," he told me. "They won't give you a hard squad." That was because I was a first offender with the minimum sentence of 13 days, he said.

After my assignment to Squad 62, one of the regulars on the squad told me it was an easy one. The work wasn't bad, he said.

My first day out, I learned better. The foreman kept close watch over me. I felt he was riding me hard.

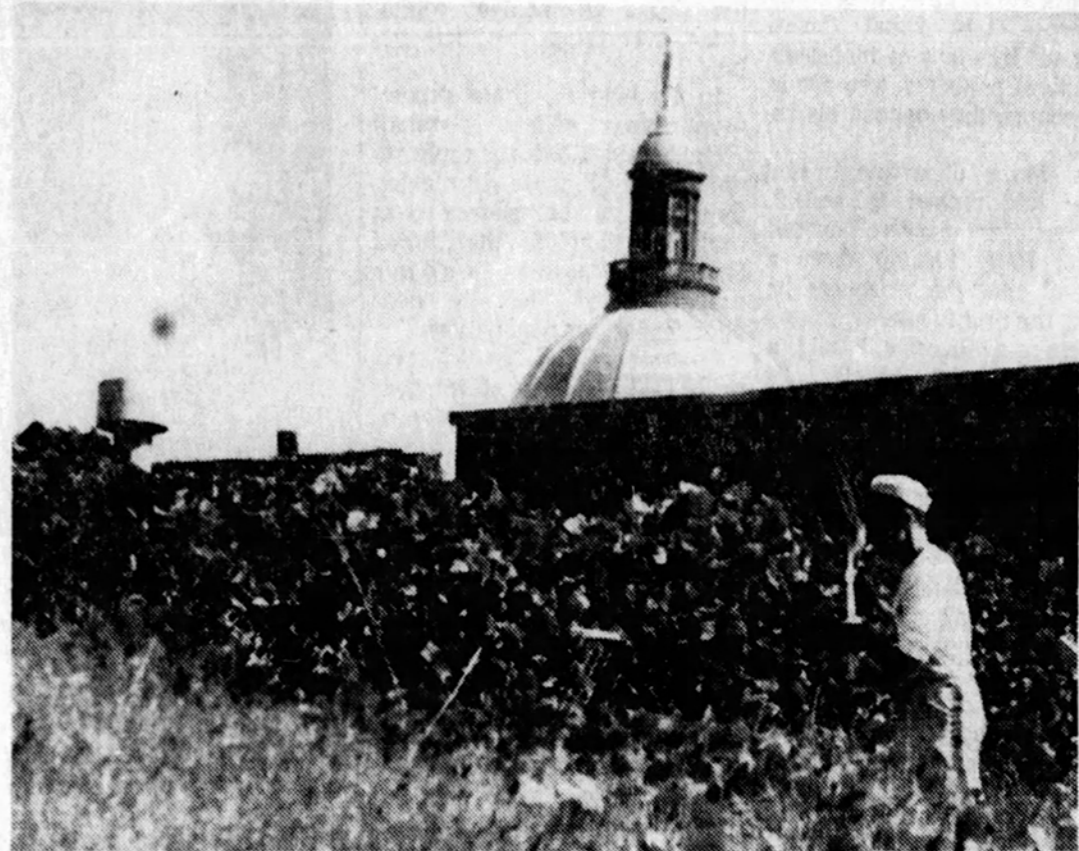
"Hey, kid," he'd call. "Let's get moving."

Or, "Young'un, get those vines over by the guardrail."

Or, "Move along, boy. You got enough swinging to do without swinging your blade in one place all day."

By day's end, I was tired enough to slump asleep in the

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Photo—Jeff Nesmith

Reporter Dick Hebert Cuts Kudzu on Prison Work Detail

## 6 Days in Jail

# A Day of Slashing At Tough Kudzu

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back of the jolting, clanking city truck they chauffeured us around in.

Not that I had to stay at my work. I could have walked off any time I liked. The guards don't help you escape, but they don't stand in your way, either.

Our foreman was a small, stocky man with leathery skin and silver crew-cut hair and eyes like steel in the sun. There also was a smooth, round-faced guard who drove the truck but he never stayed around much.

Hours crept by, much longer than 60 minutes each. It was worse yet when there was a billboard with a clock in sight.

The two days I spent under the sun with Squad 62, we worked on the west leg of I-20. Our tools were primitive. The "blade" is a sort of scythe that grows heavy in your hands. It is seldom sharp, tearing more than it cuts.

## SEPARATE LUNCHES

Each squad carries its own lunch to work—for each man a sausage patty, three corn muffins, a scoop of baby lima beans or black-eye peas, and ice water.

On Squad 62 we had extras. Maybe others did too. We had instant coffee with synthetic cream and sugar, a raw onion, and once, a dish of fried cabbage I was told our foreman's wife had cooked and let him bring to us.

The money for our extra groceries was realized as we worked. We saved empty soft drink bottles we found and at day's end, the truck stopped at a grocery store on the return trip and exchanged the bottles for cash. One day our take was 58 bottles—\$1.74.

The extra grub helped, but there was still not enough packed into a meal for a good day's work.

## NOT ARMED

If a prisoner wants to escape, the time to do it is at work. Few foremen mind a man walking off the job, I was told. They carry no guns, chase no prisoners. A photographer who took pictures of our work squad chatted with our foreman a while.

"I couldn't shoot the SOBs if I was armed," the foreman told him. "If they want to leave, they can leave. Most of them are winos... A few misdeemeanor cases. They'll get out and be right back in a day or two."

We knew that. I was told our squad had had quite a run of escapes—mostly from the young prisoners who walk off, find some civilian clothes and melt away. When arrested on another charge, they face serving out their earlier term and another for escaping.

Maybe that was why our foreman rode me my first day. Jim, the old timer on the squad, told me the second day that the foreman had said he "just wanted to try you. It'll be easier today. Just take your time."

It was and I did.

The work is easiest for guys like Jim (a fictitious name) and the small, wiry inmate who did our cooking. They wandered about much of the time, looking for empty bottles or other saleable items. On other squads, I was told, prisoners often find alcohol to drink—especially on the detail that is helping the city sanitation department clean trash off the streets now.

On one such detail, some inmates found on a roadside a gallon of home brew, some moonshine in the bottom of a bottle and a few unopened cans of beer. They came in loud and drunk that night and their story made the rounds.

## TO THE PHONE

On other details they are allowed to walk away to find a mailbox or telephone or restroom or go to a store to buy some of the crude alcohol they drink.

One old prisoner working at the Grant Park Zoo fell off a truck and was speeded to Grady Hospital. The next morning he was back with a report of how the jail was packed with the prisoners of the weekend waiting to come out to the stockade.

His scalp was crusted with dark, dried blood. A small bandage covered the stitched gash across his head. They said he was drinking shellac thinner when it happened.

As they work, inmates also watch for passers-by, with their hands out for pocket change or cigarets. They try to peddle their small store of pens and combs and cigaret lighters they have found or begged or stolen—often from each other, I was told.

It became easy to understand why Jim and the cook found 62 a good squad. For Jim, it was big business. He is the same one who had a "rolling store" stashed away in a shoe box, and I was told that when the cook was released, Jim would get that job, because it meant



## Death in a Living Room

TAYLOR, Pa.—Mrs. Rose Weisberger, 75, was sitting in her living room when this automobile plowed through the wall and ran her down. The woman died two hours later

in a hospital. Police reported the death car was driven by Mrs. Leonard Colucci, 32, when it collided with another auto. (Associated Press Wirephoto)

no "blade" to carry — and | FRIDAY IN THE CONSTI- | the day when some people  
more time to comb the streets. | TUTION: The longest day, and | cared.

**OUR 63rd**  
**Penneys**  
ALWAYS FIRST QUALITY

women's  
cloud-soft  
slippers  
at a low,  
low price!





6 Days in Jail

# It's Hard to Sit and Wait--For Nothing And Fighting Time Gets Real Rough

By DICK HEBERT

In prison, time is The Enemy. It is slow-footed. It wants filling, and many of its prisoners find sleep the only recourse.

There are hours on the inside when you cannot go to bed. The men curl up on benches or on the floor. Perhaps this is why Al is able to sell his pills. Phenobarbital helps you to sleep.

There are days when it rains and men roam the ward wishing it would clear so they can go out to work. Any work will do — so long as it fills time.

Some play checkers with bottle caps on a hand-painted board. Others play cards. At one of the large tables at the

front of the room, there is almost always a poker or blackjack game.

Sometimes money is on the table, sometimes not.

When the guards approach the ward, inmates call out, "Fire in

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the hole. . . . Fire in the hole," and the money disappears.

The television at the front of the room looks out over a group

of large tables and benches. It is only on at certain hours — 4 p.m. until "lights out" at 9 p.m., except on Fridays and Saturdays when it remains on until 11 p.m.

The men sit in tight packs to watch but few can hear over the constant chatter of the gaming and the peddling of instant coffee.

Mostly they watch the west-erns, rooting as vehemently as anywhere for the good guys.

Many of the men read. Magazines, newspapers and paperback novels are swapped back and forth, dog-eared and dirty before they are discarded.

Batches of old, popular maga-

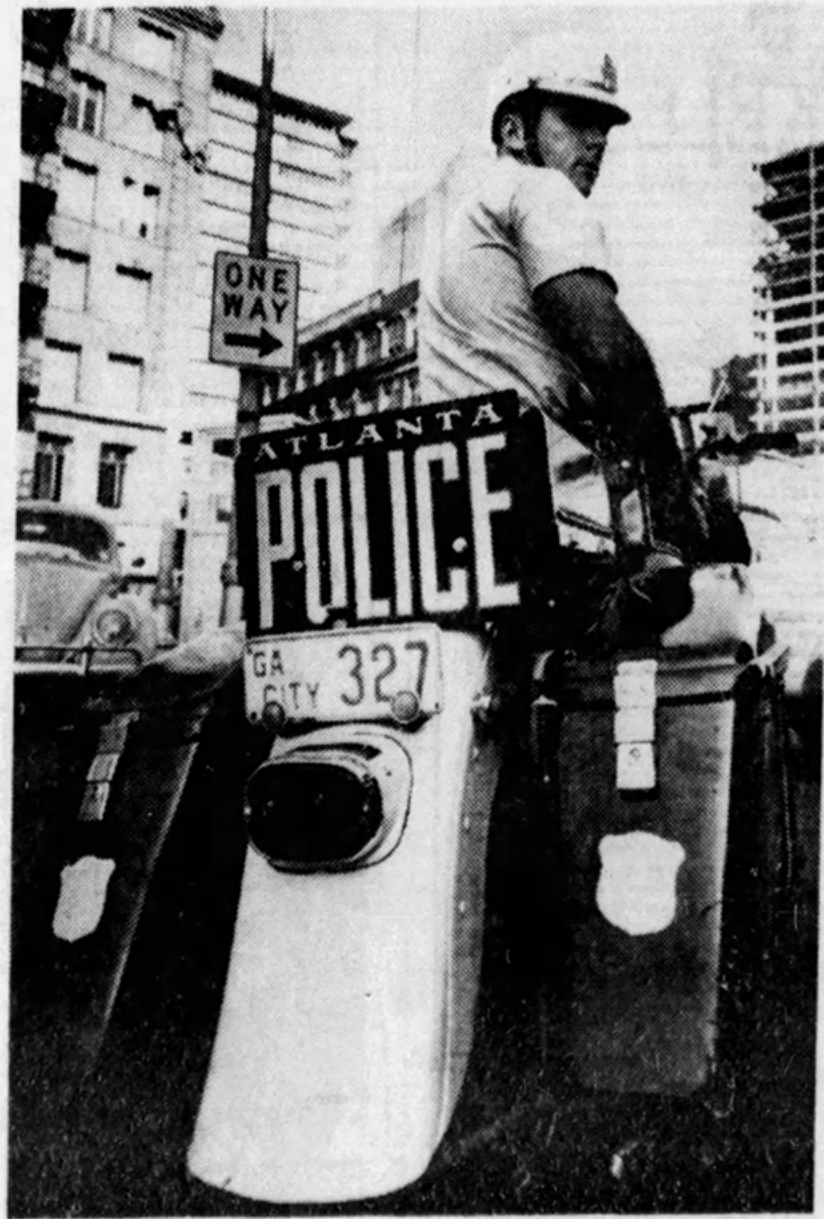
zines are brought in and they're gone within minutes. Even the fashion and women's magazines have wide readership here. Reading helps fill time.

Some of the younger ones, the teen-aged and the tough, are suspicious of the inmate who writes his time away. They want to see what he is writing. I could tell when they passed me.

The rainy days and the weekends are slow — except for Sundays.

Sunday is a good day. That is the day you see and meet the outside world and feel that

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## The New Look

Patrolman K. C. Bell shows off the new sign on the back of his motorcycle identifying him as a bona fide member of the Atlanta Police Department. All the city's 44 motorcycles have been so marked under a recent court directive. Story on Page 6. (Staff Photo—Dwight Ross)

# *Time's the Enemy; Sleep Defeats Him*

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some care that you are inside. I think most convicts feel that — even the toughest.

Sunday is the day of visiting — two hours from 12:45 p.m. to 2:45 p.m., when the very few meet their families and friends in the mess hall and talk in low voices while the guard waits and watches at the door. Reporter Bill Westbrook came to visit me. It was the first good moment since I had been arrested almost five days before.

## **MANY GO TO CHAPEL**

After visiting hours there is chapel. Many of the men go. Services are in the mess hall, too. There are services Saturday nights and Sunday mornings also, but these are poorly attended. So few attended Sunday morning service that it passed me before I knew it was being held.

But in the afternoon it was different. About a hundred of us sat at the dining hall tables and looked at the choir massed on the small stage in front, under a giant 8-foot portrait of Jesus.

Ten of the white women prisoners were there, too, in their green dresses and their hair tidied the best they could manage.

We could hear the bellowing tones of the Negro prisoners chanting their hymns at their services across the way, and then the young preacher turned to us and talked in a mild, soft voice, the kind you do not hear often in a place like this.

## **FROM BAPTIST CHURCH**

He talked a few minutes about Jesus and how we all were sinners, even he, and no one should lose hope. The men were attentive. He said he was from a Baptist church in East Point and that the choir of 19 voices behind him was a combination of three of the church's choirs.

It was a musical service with words between choir selections. It wasn't the best choir in the world, or the city, but it was beautiful to listen to and to watch.

Twelve in the choir were women. The men watched them closely. These were young women with make-up and well-tended hair-dos. Their dresses were

all colors, with patterns of plaid and checks and polka dot.

I do not think the Good Lord objected to the men's looking. A few times we were asked to sing with the choir, and most did, but not as lustily as we had heard the Negroes singing. We preferred to watch and to listen.

## **MUSIC SOOTHING**

There were solos by the preacher and a tenor and a pretty soprano, and a duet by two young men. The preacher closed with a short prayer. You don't hear much music in prison, and the music was calming.

I wanted to believe that these were all honestly good persons who came to sing for us. I needed to. But always there were the doubts and suspicions that a prison breeds.

I think the doubts started when I noticed the singers seldom looked at us but focused somewhere over our heads. Their glances at us were quick and secretive. Perhaps they, too, were self-conscious.

After chapel we filed back to the ward, passing a window at the warden's office and receiving our pay for going to chapel — a pack of the cheap "bull" tobacco.

Sunday was a good day.

*SATURDAY IN THE CONSTITUTION: Recommendations from an ex-convict.*

## **No Criminal: Prize for Police**

CASPER, Wyo. (P) — Casper Police Chief Paul Danigan, seeing a person furtively drop a package in a city park, took down the man's auto license number, then picked up the package.

After holding the package for most of the day, Danigan showed the package to a local radio station reporter.

It turned out the observant chief had found a promotional gimmick hidden each day by the radio station for listeners to find.

Danigan didn't get a criminal — but he won a radio.

# Here's How the 'Hopeless' Can Be Helped

By DICK HEBERT

When I walked from the city stockade a free man, I carried with me the things I had seen—broken and defeated men, the "outlaws," the filth and poor food and smuggled dope. . . .

The leaving was good. But there were things I wanted to see done for the men at 561 Key Road SE.

There is no sick bay. A doctor visited occasionally, I was told, but the one time I knew

*To investigate reports of conditions at the city prison farm, reporter Dick Hebert feigned intoxication, was arrested and was sentenced to the prison. This is the last of a series of seven articles.*

about, inmates only lined up at a window, told of ailments real or imagined and were dispensed pills. All other treatment has to be done downtown at Grady Hospital.

There are no recreation facilities for the long days when bad weather keeps the inmates crowded inside. (I was told a gym was being converted into a two-story barracks for men.)

The races are segregated, but another sort

of separation, necessary and humane, is needed.

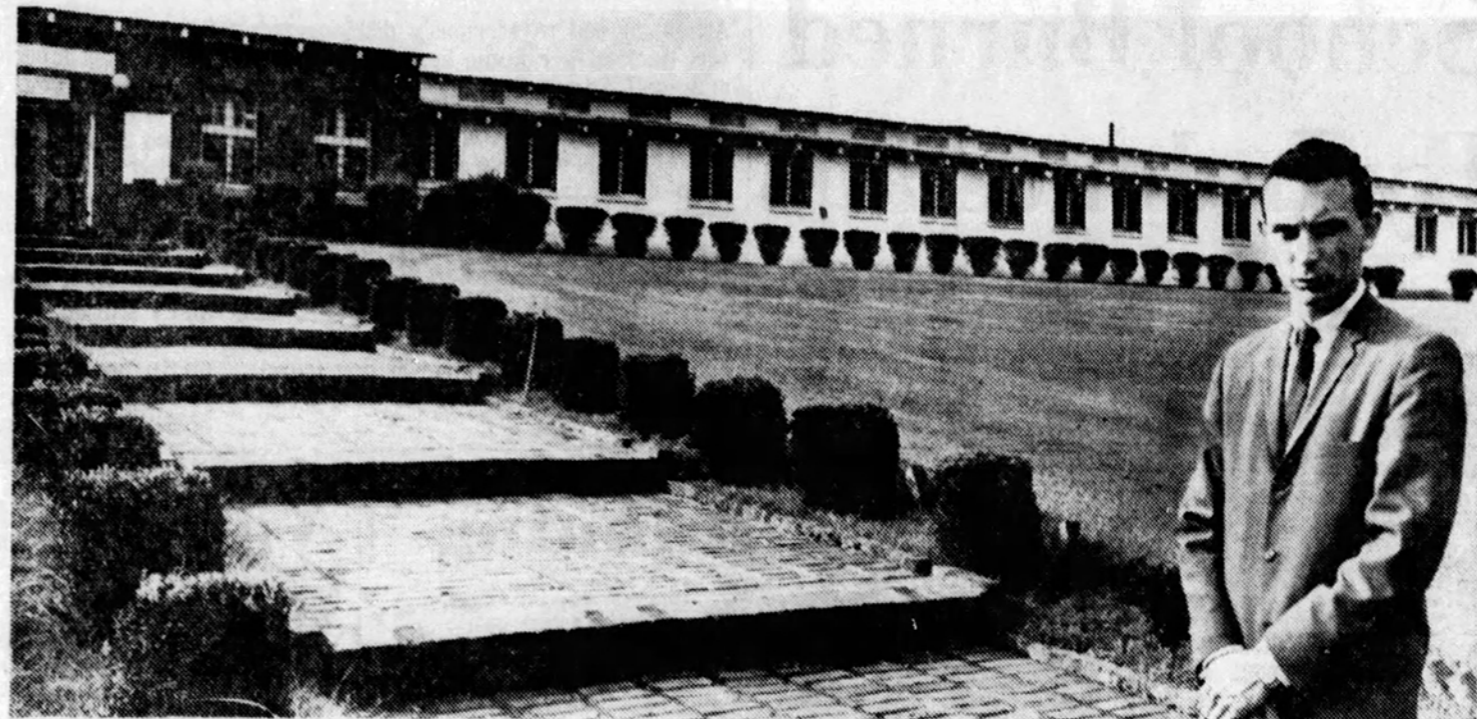
The very old and feeble and defeated should be housed apart from the tough and teens who treat them with scorn and jeers.

And the many so-called alcoholics who are not yet willing to admit defeat should have separate facilities that will help them on the road back. I was not willing to admit defeat for them either, because I met many intelligent and highly skilled men among them.

It was obvious that security needed tightening, not with severe penalties like "the hole" where men are starved and degraded, because I saw that doesn't work. Rather, better policing is needed.

Inmates on most work crews can "walk off" anytime they like. It does not matter to them that a guard patrols outside the stockade at night, checking window bars for cuts.

Prisoners smuggle into prison whatever they want—be it pills or knives or coffee—because they know how perfunctory is the frisking of incoming inmates. Inside the stockade they commit much the same crimes for which they have been sentenced: gambling, drunken-



Staff Photo—Billy Downs

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Reporter Dick Hebert Revisits Atlanta City Prison After Release

# Here's How the 'Hopeless' Can Be Helped

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ness, dope taking. . . .  
But I saw no harm in letting them have their coffee in the bunk room. It is better than the pills or the shellac thinner they drink. I was told felons in state prison are allowed coffee, but to the misdemeanor convicts at city prison it is contraband.

What I felt could and should be stopped is the merchandising of stolen or begged or found scraps that concentrates what small "wealth" there is into a few pockets.

### SIGNS INDICATE TRUTH

I was told that homosexuality was prevalent. Though I saw no overt acts, I heard enough of the loud and vulgar talk and saw enough signs to make me feel there was some truth in what I was told.

And there were definite health hazards:

1. Stiff precautions are needed against the spread of disease, especially tuberculosis. At night I listened to the hard spasms of coughing run along the long rows of bunks and wondered how many of the men had tuberculosis.
2. The ward is overcrowded. I was told that sometimes men

sleep on the floor or tables because there are still not enough beds. So closely packed are the 300 bunks that they are alternated, head-to-foot, in the old Army barracks way, so inmates will not breathe each other's coughing.

3. Puddles of spit at drainage grills on the floor could be eliminated with spittoons, and the rest room and shower room could be kept cleaner.

4. It was not uncommon to find dead bugs or hair in food. The rusty, dirty tins we drank out of should be replaced.

### A LIQUID DIET

The food on which we were asked to work is almost entirely a thin and liquid diet. Mainstays are corn muffins often grown stale; stews of beef or chicken-back with only a few shreds of meat and almost entirely liquid; raw onions; a slab of bologna or a small sausage patty, black-eye peas or baby lima beans. . . .

The drink is either black coffee or tomato juice thick with seeds and stems, or milk—the one purely good food at the prison, from the farm's own dairy herd.

Inmates complained often that the best of the farm's produce and meats are reserved for the guards and hired help.

I was ready to leave. As pre-arranged, reporter Bill Westbrook was bailing me out for \$10—a dollar a day off my original fine of \$15. I had been in city prison a little more than five days, plus a night in city jail on Decatur Street.

I bought nickel cups of smuggled coffee for four inmates I had come to know well, and I changed into the paint-splattered clothes in which I had been arrested. The 300 in the ward knew then that I was a "free rider." As I moved among them, their eyes followed and their hands reached out.

"Got any tobacco?"  
"Any change?"  
I gave some of what I had

and went to the warden's office. "Good luck," some called out. "Think of me. . . ."  
I said goodbye to those men I had lived with for six days,

and the barred gate at the front of the warden's office was opened to me. I passed through. I was breathing free air again, and that was good.

This Saturday, 9:00 PM on CHANNEL



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