

inside-out

prisoner support group
january 1972



RETURN THE MCNEIL 4

On September 23rd, 1971, four men were transferred from McNeil Island Federal Penitentiary. One of the inmates transferred said it best. "We were ripped off the island primarily and solely because of our ability to communicate to people." Because the McNeil Island prison administration transferred inmates who had been able to unite with the McNeil prison community--they exposed themselves to us; for a clear look at their true nature. They clearly have shown, by their past actions, that, they do not stand for, nor serve, the interests of the inmates; but rather stand against them.



Inside-Out, as a prisoner support group, sees that the only way prison will change.....is by the leadership in this struggle coming from the inmates themselves. We then, on the outside, by joining together can assist them.

In the months ahead, Inside-Out, is launching a massive education campaign in the community to get the McNeil Island four back. We will use a letter writing campaign as a main thrust to accomplish this goal. The efforts of the letter writing campaign will be used to key in on three people. We feel that this concentration of our energy on the following three people will be the best way to effect change (at this time) and to bring back the McNeil "4". The three people are: (1) RON MERIDETH - the aid to Senator Marlow Cook, from Kentucky, and the Minority Counsel for the U.S. Senate Subcommittee on the Investigation of

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RETURN THE MCNEIL FOUR...CON'T

Prisons (2) BROCK ADAMS - the U.S. congressman from the 7th District in the State of Washington and (3) LOR-EN DAGGET - the new warden at McNeil Island who will take over his new assignment January 1, 1972. Dagget is the former warden at Sandstone Federal Penitentiary, which is located approximately 80 miles N.E. of St. Paul, Minnesota.

In these letters, we would like the following three (3) points emphasized: FIRST POINT - We want the four inmates from McNeil Island (Lanier Ramer, Jerry Desmond, Tom Workman, and Ed Mead) who were transferred without hearing returned



to McNeil Island. Ed Mead is now in the King County Jail, Ramer is in the Thurston County Jail, and Desmond and Workman are in the Pierce County Jail. All four of these inmates represent the many inmates who have already been transferred. Approximately 50 inmates up to this date have been illegally transferred since last February's prison work strike. Many of the 50 inmates share the same desire as Ramer, Desmond, Workman, and Mead, and that is to get back to McNeil Island and get back to their work: which is to get the inside united, and to maintain communications with the outside!

Between the four of them, they are plaintiffs in the following actions (legal) against McNeil Island.

- 1) The Prisoners Intervention Suit in the Seattle-Tacoma News Guild Suit filed by Jessica Mitford.
- 2) A class action suit against disciplinary measures at McNeil filed by a legal services attorney, David Allen.
- 3) A racial discrimination suit by George Sing Louie (recently transferred to Leavenworth Federal Penitentiary.)
- 4) A suit against repression of first amendment rights.

5) The Genocide Complaint - a suit filed in Judge Boldts' court charging McNeil administrators with physical and mental genocide.*

*Websters Dictionary defines genocide as: "The use, or a user, of deliberate systematic measures toward the extermination of a racial, political, or cultural group."

6) and finally a suit filed in Judge McGovern's court to protest the il-



legal transfer of these four inmates. (This might give you some insight into the possible reasons for the transfer; and the fear that the warden felt.)

SECOND POINT - Any statement referring to the transfer of these four inmates that appears on their record jacket must be stricken from the record. This is vital! One slight comment can keep an inmate 'slammed' just that much longer. It makes parole next to impossible.

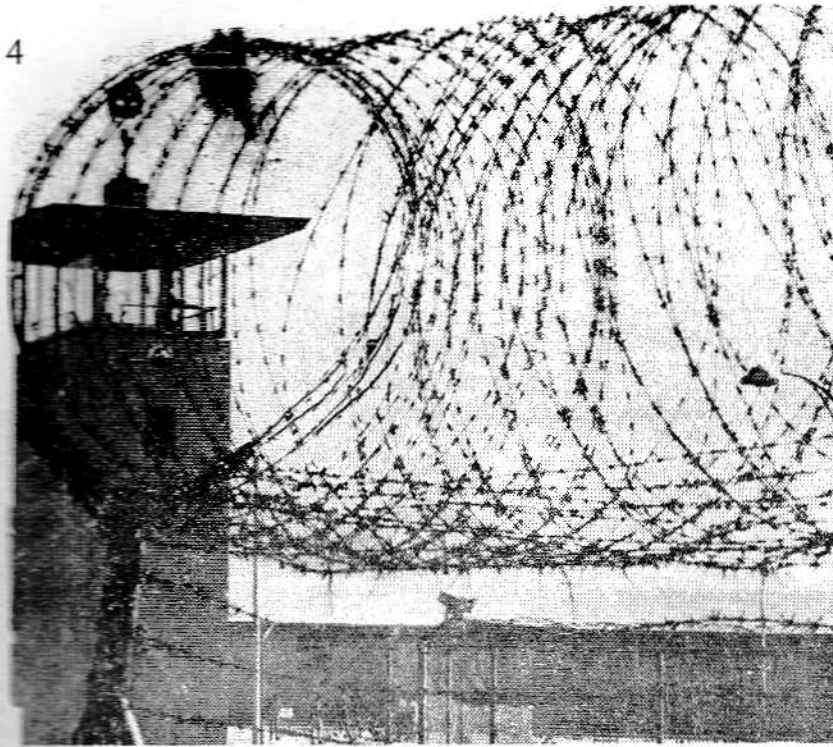
THIRD POINT - In the future, before an inmate is even considered for transfer, they must be given a hearing and represented by people of their choice. The final decision on transfer must rest with an inmates council--the peer group of the inmate--and not the warden, as is the case now. This will prevent in the future, someone being transferred

just because they were getting through to people. This is a minimum right that all prisoners must have! The right to have legal representation by a person of their choice, as well as decisions made by a group of their peers.

To highlight this letter writing campaign we have been lucky enough to latch on to a very valuable tape. It is a tape of 40 McNeil Island inmates rapping with a U.S. Senators aide. This is the first time in the 95 year history of McNeil Island that inmates have had the opportunity to speak for themselves. We are really excited that we will be able to share this tape with the community.

To round out this presentation we will have a panel discussion on prison. Rather than relying on the so-called experts the state always

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THE FOLLOWING IS A LETTER FROM A MAN RECENTLY RELEASED FROM MCNEIL. IT OUTLINES IN SOME DETAIL AN EVENT THAT HAPPENED AT THE PRISON IN EARLY SEPTEMBER. WE HEARD RECENTLY THAT COX HAS ALSO BEEN TRANSFERRED. AT THE PRESENT TIME THIS IS THE EXTENT OF OUR INFORMATION, AND WE HAVE DECIDED NO COURSE OF ACTION. IF YOU HAVE MORE INFORMATION, OR WOULD LIKE TO WORK WITH US ON IT, PLEASE CALL 584-6565. THANK YOU.

McNeil: The Fight Goes On

Cox and Vander Panwert attempted escape on the evening of September 2, 1971. They had gotten out of their building when the police opened fire on them from at least four gun towers. The guys in A-segregation saw the guard in the tower visible from that unit firing, although there is no way he could even see to where Cox and Vander Panwert had been (were).

On the afternoon before the attempt, the prison people were informed by Acosta that these two men would attempt an escape that evening. Apparently, the only response on the part of the prison people was to alert the gun towers to blast away.

Norman Carlson, the director of the Federal Bureau of Prisons, was at the

prison at the time of the attempt, and witnessed it. Possibly the prison people were trying to show off for the boss. Cox told me that he must not have liked the show, cos he was hollering at the gun towers to knock off the firing.

Oberfuhrer Hicker was quoted later that evening as saying that he would have to see that the gun tower police get more practice, so as to be able to spare the government the trouble of trying Cox and Vander Panwert, or words to that effect.

Acosta has signed and sworn to an affidavit that he told the prison people an attempt would be made by Cox and Vander Panwert to escape, several hours before the attempt

was actually made. Brachman, a case worker-type employee of the government, has signed and sworn to an affidavit that he was personally aware the prison people had prior knowledge of the escape attempt, yet made no attempt to stop it, other than to issue orders to fire at the sight of the escaping men. Apparently, two or three of the police didn't even require a sight, but just added to the general blaze for kicks. . . whatever. Brachman's affidavit also attests that he has been threatened several times by certain prison people (probably Hicker), in regard to his position in this case, and that he believes his life to be in danger on the island. Several of the prisoners in A segregation have signed and sworn to affidavits that they heard the remarks made by Hicker, previously mentioned.

All these affidavits I saw in Cox's possession before I left prison. There may be--probably are more, relating to other points.

Cox and Vander Panwert were working on the case themselves, and had accepted a court-appointed attorney only to assist their preparation of the case. Cox told me before I left that the attorney had done none of the research they had requested of him, and in fact had given them no assistance at all in what they were trying to do in the case. Cox stated that they intended to fire this attorney from their case, at the next court date. I believe he told me that their next court date was December 13, last Monday.

Most of what I have written is what Cox told me--not my personal knowledge--excepting those parts I personally read in the affidavits.

I also read the complete petition ⁵ for an indictment of Parker, Hicker, et al, which was in Cox's possession when I left prison.

On the afternoon of the day I left prison, I was in the office of the United States District Court of Judge Goodwin, in Tacoma where I chanced to see a copy of the petition for the indictment of...all them guys... the same petition I had seen in Cox's possession that morning, on the desk of Judge Goodwin's clerk. I mentioned the case to Judge Goodwin, and he remarked, "Oh yes, we know Cox and Vander Panwert here. They have been causing a lot of work for us lately."

This is curiously, almost identical to one of the statements made by Hicker, also sworn to in several of the affidavits I read, in which he seemed by his choice of language to imply that Cox and Vander Panwert, by virtue of not being dead (as planned) were causing the government a lot of work.

Probably, these people would be a whole lot more happy if everyone in prison were dead, so they wouldn't "have to" do any work at all -- provided they could still collect their paychecks.

Concerning people being transferred for arbitrary reasons: As far as I can tell, these are the only reasons anyone in prison is transferred. There are so many cases that I wouldn't know where to start. I myself was transferred to McNeil for an arbitrary reason. Official explanation: "A disciplinary problem." Where there are no standards of reason, all reasons are arbitrary.



VISITS DISCOURAGED

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One of the outward signs of the increasing repression at McNeil is the visiting room conditions. Within the last two months the prison administration has done what everyone considered impossible- they have made it more intolerable for those wanting to visit their loved ones.

Now, instead of just constant voyeuristic supervision, they have installed lockers in the visiting room where everything except change (for the vending machine) and cigarettes must be checked. This includes, even, children's toys; and of course, none are provided. Whenever any article is required a guard opens the locker and closely watches to see what it is. Children are no exception.

One brother asked that his relatives stop visiting because the severity of the searches before and after visiting made it not worth his only contact with the outside.

Regulations prescribe that visitors from out of state receive more than the customary 3 monthly visits--as "many" as 5 for those from southern California. The guards nearly never mention this to people; but moreover, go out of their way to shorten visits.

When questioned the captors may use the excuse of trying to eliminate drug traffic. This is simply not true: administrators, prisoners and

visitors all know that large quantities of dope are brought in by other means--usually by the 'custodial officers'.

Those people in power want to maintain that power. Part of the total control needed for this maintenance is isolation. Director of classification Tennison outlined the objective well in a remark he made at a recent prison conference: "This is a penitentiary, the very meaning of the word is punishment."



Walla Walla Prisoners Demand Decent Medical Care . . .

Inmates at Walla Walla State Penitentiary issued a series of demands through the prisons resident government council on Thursday, December 9. The demands were accompanied by a statement hinting strongly at possible violence if the demands are not met "In the next couple days". The demands emphasized the need for immediate upgrading of the medical staff and facilities and specifically includes the addition of four (4) more registered nurses in the hospital and an "immediate" pro-



of Social and Health Services, added, "even if the legislature approves those budget requests, we

RIGHT, NOT PRIVILEGE

gram of methadone treatment for drug addicts.

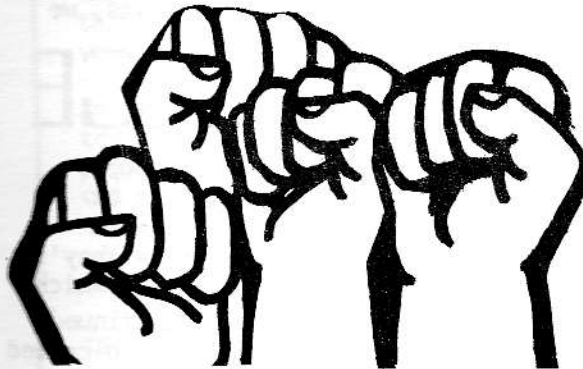
An Unidentified member of the Inmate Residential Council was quoted as saying: "It's about as serious as a prison difficulty can be. It could be rougher than a sit-down strike, but we can't predict or direct it after it's done. On the other hand, we're not trying to tell them to hold it down to a passive demonstration. What's passive to some of the people here is not passive to others". State Officials, including Gov. Dan Evans, took a "calm" view. Warden Robert Rhay was unavailable for comment. Thomas Pinnock, Div. of Institutions, said, typically enough, "the medical and psychiatric unit has high priority, but you can't just get them moving tomorrow morning". Sid Smith, Secretary of Department

still have to go hire the people and test them, and that puts us into next spring. They (the inmates) have got to recognize they're they're part of the system in which we all live." But, Smith continued, Some of what he termed "the so-called demands", made public Thursday by the Inmate Council are "ridiculous". The Governor, although self-admittedly no "expert" in the field, dealt specifically with the demand for a methadone program. "There is no question that there is a drug problem there," said Evans, "But there is in every high school in the state." Evans added that he would defer to those who are "experts in their field" as to whether Methadone should be administered. "It sure isn't the total answer," Pinnock commented on Gov. Evans

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RIGHT, NOT PRIVILEGE....CON'T

statement and noted that Doctors' disagree on Methadone. "It's addictive too, you know." Gov. Evans wrapped up his calm reflections on the matter by emphasizing, "I have every confidence in the warden and the prison management. I think that they will do a good job." For Gov. Evans and the rest of his ilk, following is the previous record of the present administration which they feel deserves his confidence.



.....AS PRESENT MEDICAL STAFF RESIGNS IN SUPPORT

"The state is going to have to decide whether it wants to have a double standard of medical care. You know, we are legally liable to give the same level of care there in the penitentiary as is given at University Hospital."

-----Dr. Quay Cutshall in his letter of resignation from the staff at Wala Wala, Dec. 12, 1971

Dr. Cutshall had more to say about the conditions that prompted the 1400 prisoners at Washington State Penitentiary to issue a series of demands not unlike those issued at Attica and elsewhere.

"The 40 bed hospital here is not even licensed by our own state health officials, much less accredited by the national joint commission of accreditation of hospitals..." Dr. Cutshall stated that all health services for the 1400 men were provided by himself, another physician working 1/2 time, one dentist, and only one registered nurse. There are no x-ray or laboratory technicians. He also noted that all of these people have resigned with him in protest of the state governments' and prison administrations' lack of interest and support for developing decent medical care for the inmates.

"When the governor visited here, everyone told us that the hospital was the number one priority in the state for additional funding..."

"The way they have done this in solid terms is to pare down the supplemental budget to almost zero before it went to the legislature."

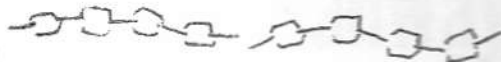
(An example of what he is talking about: The medical staff at Walla Walla requested 27 para-professionals and at best now are only going to get four.)

Dr. Cutshall summed up his feelings about the barbaric situation when he emphasized that "We don't solve many problems under the present system here; we probably cause more than we solve."

Warden Rhay was unavailable for comment.

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A brother from Monroe asked us to write a few lines about ourselves and what we are trying to do. The situation inside is rising more and more to the level of heavy confrontation. It really helps if you know people on the outside are organized for support, and are watching as well as they can, the happenings inside.

Below, I've sketched our history and what we're trying to accomplish. All this should be seen in the perspective of support - Supporting our needs as friends and families outside while supporting brothers and sisters inside who have grasped the Fascist implications of their imprisonment and are doing some-fighting back.



Inside Out was formed about 9 months ago, just before the McNeil Island work strike. Our original idea has remained the same . . . As prisoners begin to confront their problems directly, either through the courts, or by protest, it's important that people on the outside form support groups. Recent rebellions at San Quentin, Attica, Rahway, Alderson and other prisons emphasize this need. The people most likely to provide real long-term support for prisoners are those most directly affected on the outside - families, and friends of the people inside. Families

serve a sentence as long, and often as grueling as the prisoner. Inside Out was a way to bring these people together, and develop and carry out the work needed to assist those who are on the inside.

We also wanted to talk to people about some basic beliefs we formed as we learned about prisons. First we need to destroy the myth that prisoners are less than human beings or are "sick". Prisoners are people usually from working class backgrounds who deeply understand the nature of this society, and who are in need of friendship and aid. What they don't need is advice or "forgiveness". They teach us.

Secondly, prisons are corrupt, destructive places; but, they must be seen as part of a social system based on injustice. We've always felt that prisons must be seen as part of a social system, and not in isolation as so many reformers want to. Prisons are no accident!

The McNeil Island work strike gave us an opportunity to put our ideas to a test at once. With pressure, we generated a great deal of publicity about the strike. During those weeks we met many men inside McNeil who, though since transferred, are still providing us with ideas and direction. But we also realized that the job of building broad support for real change must begin at once.

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INSIDE OUT





314 Champion St.
584-6565
P.O. Box 918
Steilacoom, Wn.

THINGS ARE GOING WELL, BUT WE DO STILL NEED A CONSTANT INCOME IN ORDER FOR THE HOUSE TO BE SELF SUSTAINING. IF YOU ARE ABLE, A PLEDGE OF ANY AMOUNT MONTHLY WOULD HELP OUR EFFORT. THE ADDRESSES ARE ON THE BACK PAGE. THANK YOU.

I PLEDGE \$ _____ (\$5) PER MONTH TO INSIDE OUT FOR 12 MONTHS.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

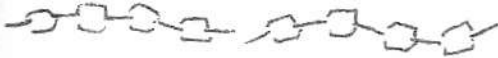
JUSTICE . . .
MC NEIL STYLE!

Eight months ago we found a roomy six bedroom house near the Mc Neil Island ferry dock in Steilacoom. Since then it has been used as an overnight hostel for families and friends, as a discussion center, and as a day care center. What was an idea a few months ago has become a chaotic, exciting reality. The house doesn't seem roomy anymore! Most weekends it is filled with people--people angry at what prison is doing to their loved ones and to themselves--and eager to meet other visitors. People who saw each other on the dock, but never dared to say hello, meet at the house, and become friends. Wives who are facing, for the first time, the problems created by having a husband in prison meet others who help and teach them through experience. A network of friendships is beginning to form around the house. As time passes we know these friendships will give us strength to face the prison more effectively and support the people inside whom we love and respect.

Continuing in the tradition of Mc Neil Island, several Black Muslims filed suit against the Warden and other prison administrators at Mc Neil. The Muslims charged them with cruel and unusual punishment, racist attitudes that affected the Black population and suppression of Constitutional rights. Instead of having their charges dealt with -- the plaintiffs were thrown in the hole. To protest this treatment, the Muslims went on a hunger strike. As of this writing. . . the case sits, gathering dust, on the Federal Judge's desk; and the Muslims are still in the hole.

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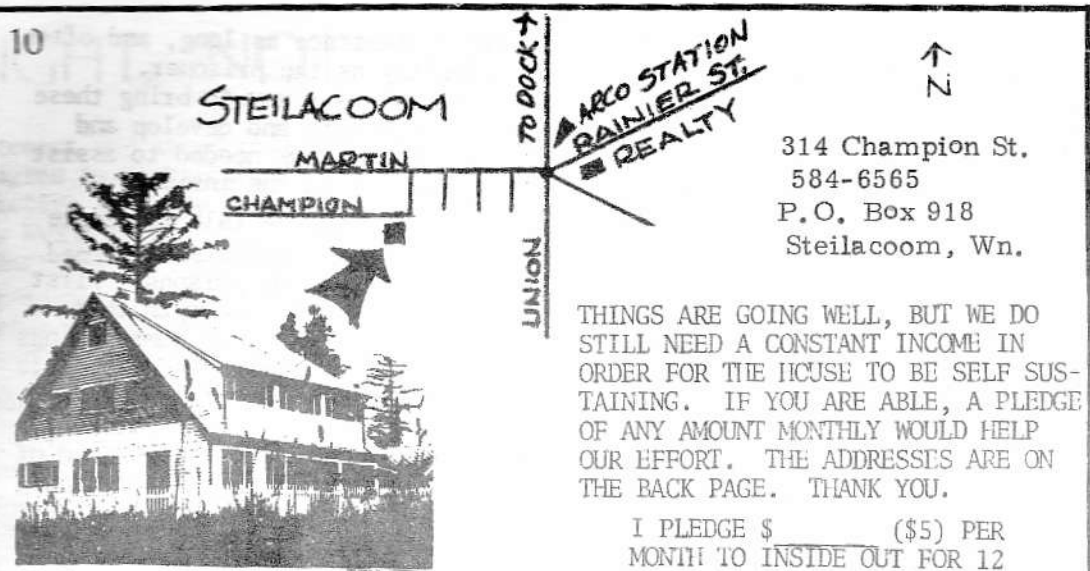
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Return the McNeil 4....con't ¹¹

trots out, we will have 2 ex-inmates, 2 members of prison families, and 2 people who are working with prison support groups to give an idea of what can be done.

THE INMATES WANT BACK...AND WE CAN HELP. LANIER SAID IT WELL- "THE ONE MAJOR THING PRISON OFFICIALS ARE THE MOST UPTIGHT ABOUT IS IN PREVENTING FEDERAL PRISONERS FROM REACHING THE PUBLIC. THEY BEGIN JUMPING AROUND LIKE FLEAS ON A HOT GRIDDLE WHEN THAT THREATENS TO HAPPEN." O.K. --LETS YOU AND I TURN UP THAT HEAT AND PUT THE PRESSURE ON. THE ADDRESSES OF THE THREE KEY PEOPLE TO WRITE TO ARE:

LOREN DAGGET, WARDEN
U.S. PENITENTIARY
P.O. BOX 1000
STEILACOOM, WN. 98388

BROCK ADAMS: U.S. CONGRESS
SAM RAYBURN OFFICE BLDG.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

RONALD MERIDITH
MINORITY COUNSEL: U.S. SENATE SUB-
COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PRISONS
U.S. SENATE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

at Rahway

Within 24 hours of the seizure of the auditorium and two of five cellblocks at New Jerseys Rahway State Prison Nov. 24, about 500 prisoners ended their insurrection and released five guards and the warden, who had been held as hostages. In return, the prisoners won an agreement from Gov. W.T.Cahill that there would be no physical reprisals and full negotiations would begin on all grievances.

The rebellion began during the showing of a movie when one black inmate took the floor and began a denunciation of oppressive conditions in the prison. Several guards and the warden, V.S.Vuckevich then rushed into the room, only to be taken hostage minutes after a skuffle. Some 150 armed state troopers were called in and prepared a plan for for an armed assault of the prison.



By the next afternoon, preliminary discussions between state officials and prisoners resulted in an agreement where one hostage would be released "as a sign of good faith" in exchange for the states allowing the prisoners to make public their demands.

A few hours after the demands were made public, and Cahill announced agreement on the questain of reprisals and negotiations, the remaining hostages were released. Several were taken to hospitals, but warden Vuckevich, himself injured, indicated that the wounds were a result of the initial scuffle. "They treated us like gentlemen," he said.

A GOOD NEW
YEAR...AND MANY
THANKS TO ALL
OUR FRIENDS IN
THIS PAST ONE



P.S.
we have a
new office!

716
Rainier
Ave. S.



We're still at 910 N.E.53rd too.
Come by soon! LA 4-2778