

# where others will spend their lives

## Side A...Solitary

Side "A" is the hole. Visitors do not normally get to see Side "A"—it is not exhibition territory. Most guards do not even get to see it. Side "A" is the secret of Dorchester.

To be admitted to this area, a prisoner would have to commit a gross misconduct (hitting a guard), or be an obvious danger (psychopathic) to the other prisoners. We were admitted to Side "A" somewhat by accident, as the higher authorities had issued definite instructions of "no go".

Side "A" is a long wing of cell blocks. There are five regular sized cells, and five full sensory deprivation cells. As one enters the cell, a color coded chart comes into sight. The keeper, who was obviously quite proud of his work area, explained the chart. A prisoner normally goes from Phase 1 (red) to phase 2 (black) to Phase 3 (yellow). Occasionally, a prisoner can skip Phase 1.

Taking advantage of the guard's hospitality, we were shown a phase 3 cell. It is precisely the same as an ordinary cell; and that phase had the same privileges. That is, there is a toilet (no tops), earphones (radio — two channels), full meals, and a bed with blankets. One can also smoke or read if he so wishes.

The Phase 2 cell is the same size as the regular (about 6' x 8'). There are no earphones and no flush toilet. Substitute for the latter is a plastic pail which must be cleaned out by the inmate in the morning.

The delight of sensationalist magazines is Phase 1. Murphy was behind the doors for ten minutes. The outside door completely shuts out all sound, and except for a little five inch square sound-proof, shatter-proof glass window, all light is shut out. The inside door is all steel bars.

The continuous shining 25 watt bulb (behind a mesh) cast a dim light over the tiny box. It was four feet wide and about seven feet long (just slightly larger than a single bed.) There was a chair or cot, no earphones or ashtrays, no blankets or pillows. A concrete slab (2½' x 6') raised about six inches from the floor was the sum total of the furnishings. You slept there, you sat there, you ate your meals there, you existed there on a concrete slab.

Besides the discomfort of this cold slab, further discomfort would ensure from the odour which would arise from the toilet bucket. Ventilation appeared to be a minimal consideration in the design of the cells.

The concrete walls were covered with calendars with days marked off. Days were probably divided by the meals served. (Two sparse and untasty meals—which, if hot, would probably be quite cold by the time the inmate received them. They are served at irregular times.)

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I could not help but question the rehabilitary function of this inhumane, medieval treatment. Two individuals were in solitary at the time, one was there because he showed psychotic tendencies. What solitary will do for an already sick mind, I don't know. Being in that hole for ten minutes was sheer hell for me. To be in there for three or four days would undoubtedly be a trauma of terror.

But even Side "A" cannot totally kill a person's humanity. Scribbled on the wall of the cell was the epithet of an obviously upset prisoner:

TO TAKE ADVICE FROM  
A TRETROUS (sic)  
FRIEND IS LIKE TAKING  
POISON FROM A GOLD-  
EN CUP.

—Ace Bob Richards

## At Dorchester a man is only a number with a daily routine

On entering Dorchester, you are given a number. The same number that is on your mug shot is the one that is on the greyish denim clothes you wear. And that is the all important Number. When we asked how many prisoners there were, the classification officer said, "Today, there are 344 prisoners." Exactly. It doesn't matter whether you the human being is there, so long as you, the human body is there. With your number.

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A typical day starts with rise and shine at 7:00 a.m. You wash and clean up in the little sink in your cell. After the guard unlocks your cell door, you go to the dome to pick up your breakfast, and proceed back to the cell to eat it. After that (around 8:30), and if you are not on kitchen duty, you may go to one of the shops, if you have been so assigned. The possibilities include sheet metal, paint, furniture, carpentry and maintenance. Of a production nature, there are canvas, tailor and shoe and leather shops. Of a vocational nature, there is upholstering, carpentry, plumbing, masonry and barbering. But if the facilities are anything like those for sheet metal, they are cramped and poorly equipped.

Shop sessions are just before noon, when you return to your cell for the noon meal. In the afternoon, you may go back to the shops, or possibly take part in activities of a more recreational nature. Perhaps a film of a Jaycee meeting, or work on the Beacon, the prison newspaper. Or you can be like some of the prisoners I saw and do nothing when you can get away with it. The corners, the space underneath the stairways are often the retreats for the loners, for the guys who just can't hack it.

As afternoon passes into evening, the daily count is taken. Around five o'clock, all doors are locked, and every individual (including staff and guests—who sign when they enter) are accounted for. Supper is served after that. Another fair, but not a good meal, according to the prisoners we talked to.

The evening is generally the inmate's own, which means he may read, listen to the radio on earphones, write a letter (provided he has permission. This is the only way to obtain the paper and pencil for doing so), or just relax. Lights are out at 9:00 p.m.

## "I am a social deviate"

This article is reprinted from the Beacon, a magazine "Published by and for the inmates of Dorchester penitentiary." The edition of the Beacon from which this article is reprinted was in memory of Robert Kennedy. —Ed.

This is an attack. It is directed at you. In the course of my efforts. I only pray I am not assailing a deaf-stone wall.

I am a social deviate. I have been called various niceties such as wayward, maladjusted, confused, etc., by some of the greatest, self-ordained judges in all the land. As they wish. A million uniforms can't be wrong.

I have broken their rules with the most noble intent, and I have designed to stay aloof while their sons and daughters and kinsmen were chipping each other to pieces at home and abroad. I have indulged in their taboos, and I'm a better man for it. I have partaken of their "acceptable" poisons, too. I am one hundred times dead.

Let me break into my own thoughts at this point to clarify something. I am not to be feared. I hate what you stand for, but I re-

fuse to express my hate wholesale as though I were one of your ranks.

To continue; there are many like me but they are all equally powerless. (At first my lack of "power" was an abscess which bothered me even in sleep, but one day I realized it was due to an overabundance of expressive feeling and compassion that I didn't need this power, which was nothing more than an improvised attempt at communication with and relation to one's fellow beings.)

Where have we come from? We are not born out of our own imaginations as you pretend to believe. The stark reality of us should be all too clear to you by this time. We are, rather, the products of your "power" in its early, unleased stages. We are deformities, radiation-babies, mushroom-flower-children.

It all started way back in the institution of your institution-oriented system: the home. As tots we were taught, same as you, to respect the authority, the father-image. In schools, likewise, we were told when our allegiance should be pledged where our loyalty was due.

But where, then did you fail? In your hurry to raise us, (What was the rush?) Did you think some

monster of your own making was preparing to devour you at any moment. Did you feel superficially "responsible to us?" You robbed us of that which you had promised—a father image. I will not bemoan the much-overdone issue of a patriarchy overthrowing a patriarchy the father stripped to his knees as the robust matron stands over him with a seductive whip demanding women's suffrage and sneering while all she really wants is to be overpowered....but I said I was not going to press the issue.

Thus, having nothing to identify with being (as you say) extremely tormented, misguided and confused, we had to rebel and rely upon own blind instincts to carry us along until we, gropingly, found occasional solace in chance meetings with one another, complete release to hedonistic pleasures, complete withdrawal, insanity, and/or death.

How did you respond to this, this generation of miscreants springing up in your midst? You reacted to this way any normal, conservative automation would when he discovers his offsprings have screws loose somewhere and are be-

having in a contrary and radical manner—you become unglued. You ran about frantically, trying to clean up your greivous error in the only way you knew.

You put in institutions, private schools, prisons, hospitals and asylums. But time took its toll, as it always will. Today, we have infiltrated the most scared of all your institutions: THE PUBLIC EYE. We are many now, but we are still not "powerful." We don't want to be. The need for power is the greatest weakness of them all. As our increases, we don't want you to feel as though you and your kind have lost. Rather we want you to feel you have gained, for we are part of you; we are of you. What's more, we are JUST LIKE YOU, only a little more susceptible to the sounds of agony welling up from the death-throes of a misguided, tortured humanity.

We want to love you, but don't hover over us.

Larry Prince  
The M.C. Eye.