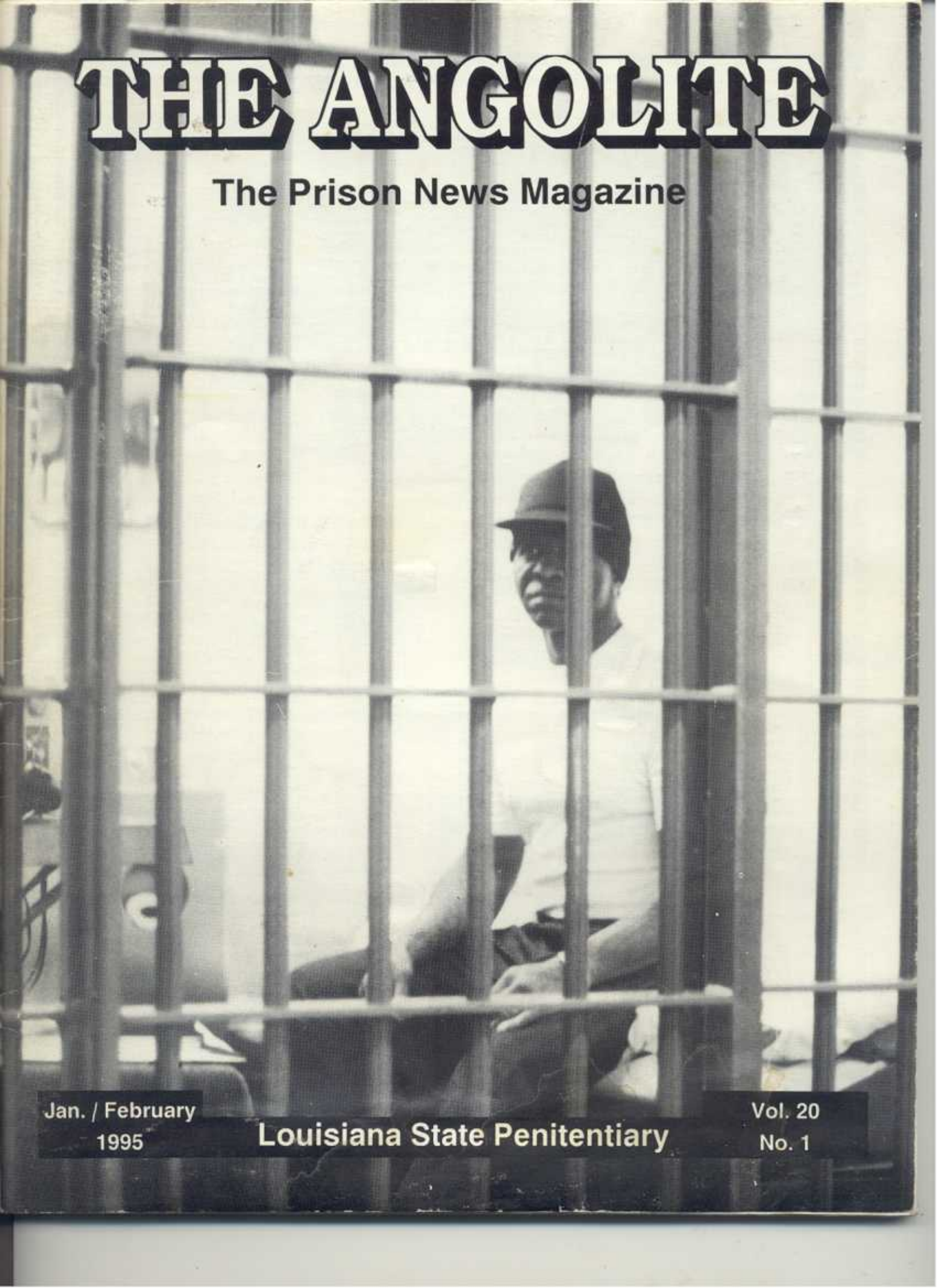


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THE PLANTED

By LANE NELSON

As he went through Cold-Bath Fields he saw
A solitary cell,
And the Devil was pleased, for it gave him
a Hint
For improving his prisons in Hell.

S.T. Coleridge, *The Devil's Thoughts*

Herman 'Hooks' Wallace lives on the Controlled Cell Restriction unit (CCR), at the end of "A" tier, in cell 15. His life is confined to an area nine feet long and six feet wide. Most of the cherished space is taken by a double metal bunk attached to the side of one wall. There is also a small metal desk top and seat welded into the other wall, and a stainless steel

toilet/sink combination secured to the back wall. Two military foot lockers hold his clothes and personal items. Wallace lives in extended lock down. He is enclosed in a one-man cell 23 hours a day, seven days a week, twelve months a year. He has lived this way for the past 22 of the 27 years he's been in prison. Wallace is among a minority of Angola prisoners planted in cells smaller than the average bathroom.

CCR is in a two-story concrete building sitting just inside Angola's front gate. The bottom three tiers of the backside of the building hold death row inmates. Above them, on four tiers is CCR—15 one-man cells per tier. Built in 1954, the building originally housed the prison hospital, as well as CCR and death row. Years later the hospital was moved and a receiving dormitory was added. In 1986-87 the entire building was evacuated, remodeled, and reoccupied. During that period of renovation, while CCR and death row were on disciplinary tiers at Camp J, a heavily guarded outside work-line was instituted for some CCR inmates. Once the building was complete, and the inmates moved back into their own cells, the work-line ceased to exist.

CCR is where you will find the majority of your longest cell confined inmates. Prisoners can be placed in this restrictive extended lockdown unit for several reasons: protection, disciplinary action, threat to the security of the institution, escape risk, or initial classification. CCR inmates hold no jobs, attend no education classes, have no religious services, do not mingle with other prisoners or even among themselves. They leave the tier only after being secured with enough shackles and chains to sink a ship. Some, once they've had a good



CCR CELL

dose of the cell, will eventually be released into the prison population. Others, like Wallace, are there to stay.

Besides Wallace, four other Angola prisoners have been confined to a cell for over two decades: Lee Lane, Samuel Tropez, Albert Woodfox, and Robert 'King' Wilkerson. Their hope to one day be released from CCR, and eventually from prison, carries them through each day. In reality, the chances that any of these five prisoners will ever again enter general population are slim. Each claims time has diminished the reasons for their original lock down, but prison officials disagree and rely on isolation as the safest, surest way of maintaining control.

National popularity for single cell confinement as means for control is a recent phenomena, evidenced by the growing number of state and federal super-max prisons. First there was Alcatraz, but now there is Marion in Illinois, Pelican Bay in California, and the newly christened state-of-the-art federal facility in Florence, Colorado.

Florence, which cost taxpayers \$60 million to construct, will hold 400 high risk prisoners, including Mafia boss John Gotti and ex-dictator Manuel Noriega. All prisoners will be under constant video monitoring. The worst of the 400 will be kept in soundproof cells 23 hours a day, unable to associate even with each other. Prisoners will no doubt attack these conditions with civil rights lawsuits, but they can only expect a ruling similar to that recently handed down in California.

In that ruling Chief U.S. District Judge Thelton Henderson blasted conditions inside the Pelican Bay State Prison in Northern California: "Dry words on paper cannot adequately capture the senseless suffering and sometimes wretched misery that [state official's] unconstitutional policies leave in their wake," pronounced the 345-page decision. Henderson pointed out that isolated confinement in the Security Housing Unit (SHU), where 1,500 of the 3,700 Pelican Bay prisoners are kept, "may

HISTORY OF ISOLATION

Isolating criminals is nothing new. It started when Cain murdered his brother, Abel, and God banished him, isolating him from all that he knew. He wandered the land aimlessly without the comfort of human interaction. Most theologians agree that Cain eventually found another human tribe and began a new life. If so, chances are that his lengthy departure from human companionship drastically altered his personality and perception of reality. On the other hand, if Cain never met up with another human being he probably went insane before he died.

Centuries passed before banishment took a backseat to physical confinement. In 64 B.C., Rome established what scholars suggest is the first formal prison—the Mamertime Prison—where cages confined felons in an underground sewer. This concept of imprisonment in sewers defined the prisoners' value as human waste.

Many ancient places of confinement, such as the Roman sewers, were originally built for reasons other than incarceration. Castles built in the Middle Ages had their basements turned into dungeons to hold chained, blindfolded and caged prisoners who wasted away in isolation. The thick walls of monasteries and abbeys, originally designed for solitude and prayer, were employed to seal away prisoners. Towers like the famous Tower of London, were used to lock away political and influential prisoners from the rest of the world. Even today military bases, barges and other constructions are being turned into prison facilities.

In the 13th century the Roman Catholic Church added a new dimension to the purpose of solitary confinement and imprisonment: Redemption. Besides the punishment of imprisonment to reduce moral contagion, redeeming the sinner's soul became important. Authorities theorized that solitary confinement carried redemptive power; that a prisoner subjected to the solitude of his cell, having nothing other than himself and the error of his ways to reflect upon, would cry out to God for delivery of his evil soul.

Pope Clement XI commissioned Italy's San Michele House of Corrections in 1703. It was the first known cellular prison and confined delinquent and juvenile youths. Inscribed in gold above the main hall for all to see, were Italian words meaning: "It is of little use to restrain the bad by punishment unless you render them good by discipline." Those very words became

press the outer bounds of what most humans can psychologically tolerate."

Recognizing all that, the Judge said the prison can keep operating, which allowed both the state and attorneys for the prisoners to claim victory. "It is a landmark decision supporting the use of SHU to segregate the most dangerous, predatory inmates who threaten the safety of staff and other inmates at 28 other prisons in the system," said Corrections Director James Gomez. David Steuer, one attorney representing the prisoners, countered Gomez's statement by claiming victory in a decision that found "the entire way they run the prison there is unconstitutional."

A sign of the times: instead of ordering the unconstitutional procedures halted, Henderson appointed a special negotiator to work with prisoners' attorneys and the state to agree on some changes. This reluctance to shut down the SHU is a reflection of society's perceived need to tolerate super-maximum prisons. Like cor-

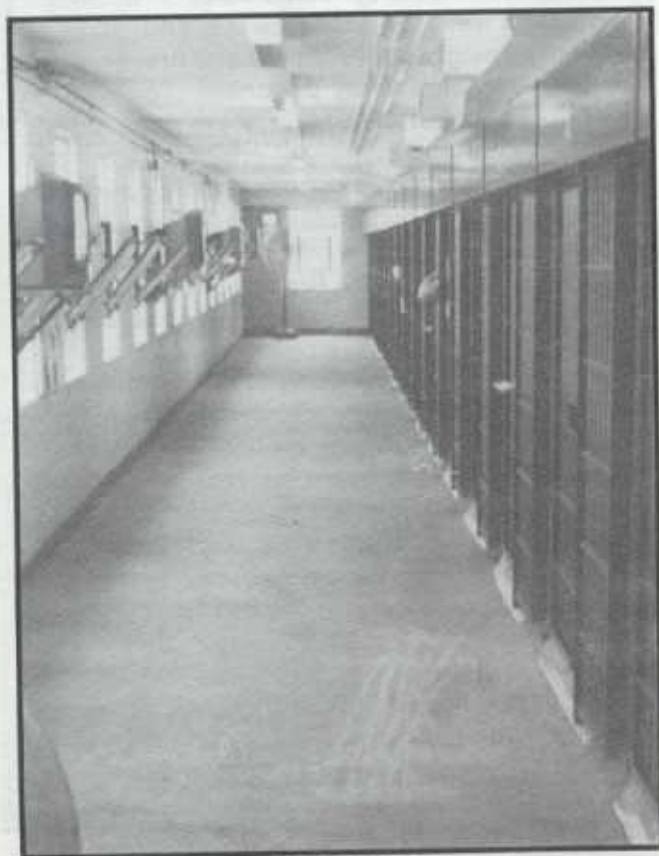
rectional officials, most courts envision isolation units as a necessary evil.

While short-term solitary confinement has, in some brutal form or another, been an integral part of Angola's long and bloody history, locking prisoners in cells for years on end is a fairly new phenomenon. From the beginning, Angola was never conducive to an individual cell system, such as the cellblock designs conceived in northern states. Angola was a plantation first, housing slaves who cut sugar cane and picked cotton for the master. At the turn of the 20th century it evolved into a prisoner lease system, with sentenced prisoners being rented to area companies. In 1901 Angola officially became a state-operated penitentiary, but in name only. It remained a plantation, with prisoners crowded into large wooden buildings and working from sunup to sundown in sugar cane and cotton fields—rain or shine, 12-14 hours a day, seven days a week.

During the plantation era, the prisoner-lease program and six decades of state-run operations, Angola's means of management never changed; ruthless forced labor. The procedure for obtaining work productivity remained the same—whipping, beatings, and death. If the spirit of an unruly prisoner could not be broken he often died. There was no outside law inside Angola. Prison officials made their own.

Obviously, to keep prisoners locked in cells for years on end was counterproductive to Angola's past system of management. Profit was the driving force, and working all able-bodied prisoners was the highest priority.

A most effective way of breaking a prisoner's spirit, and eventually getting some work out of him, was by short-term solitary confinement. In the 30s, 40s, and 50s there was the *pisser*—a box car type building which was divided into small windowless cells. No bunk, no mattress, no toilet, no ventilation. Rats, heat/cold, and lack of air generally tortured a man into submission. Before the *pisser* there was the sweat box or hot box—an iron casket buried into the ground. Disruptive prisoners were



CCR TIER

forced to lie in it for days, with the top clamped shut. It had small holes near the top to let in air. Insects and snakes could also get through those holes. The sweat box went past breaking a man's spirit.

In later years there was the "Red Hats." No account of solitary confinement in Angola is complete without mention of the seven years the notorious Charlie Frazier spent welded in a cell in the Red Hats unit.

Charlie Frazier, a convict who ran with the likes of Pretty Boy Floyd, Bonnie & Clyde and Ray Hamilton was a fearless and criminally-principled man. He came to Angola with a thirty-year sentence for bank robbery, and with an established notorious reputation. He robbed banks, ran illegal whiskey and killed people. In the summer of 1933, Frazier staged the bloodiest escape in Angola's history. It involved ten other prisoners and erupted in a barrage of gunfire in which one inmate guard was killed, two convicts were gunned down and four prison guards shot to death. Five of the escaped convicts were caught on the run through rural areas surrounding Angola, but Frazier and two other men got away. The three desperados robbed five banks in six days in Arkansas and Oklahoma.

Three weeks after the break Frazier was caught in Texas and sent to Huntsville Prison on a charge of bank robbery. He was eventually returned to Angola, where prison officials were waiting for him with Angola's first extended lockdown unit: The Red Hats—a small brutal cellblock set in the middle of the prison acreage.

Built in 1933 as a result of the bloody escape, the Red Hats was a one story cement structure consisting of thirty cells. Each cell was six feet long and three feet wide and contained a concrete bunk with no mattress and only a small metal bucket for a toilet. Outside, eight feet of barbed-wire fence surrounded the block of cells, with a guard tower set at each corner. The name Red Hats comes from the red hats prisoners assigned to this block were forced to

HISTORY, con't

the motto of Englishman John Howard, the father of prisons and prison reform in America.

In the 1770s, John Howard visited European prisons to learn their operations. He discovered vastly progressive operations in comparison to England's penal system. Prior to 1775, English courts handed down sentences that rarely warranted imprisonment. Felons were generally punished by banishment, the whip, and more often the case, hanging. In London's major criminal court between 1770 and 1776, imprisonment accounted for approximately 2.3 percent of the sentences imposed. And those prison sentences, usually for manslaughter, rioting, and perjury, were considered short by modern standards—generally a year or less.

Howard, a God-fearing man who was disheartened by the English system of punishment, was impressed with the European system of isolation. His knowledge of this system qualified him as the expert in the correctional field. His influence spread to England, Canada and America.

In 1776, the Pennsylvania Quakers played the key role in shifting from corporal and capital punishment—the whip, stocks, hangman's noose—to sincere attempts at rehabilitation. Awed over Howard's prison reform, these Quakers formed the *Philadelphia Society for Assisting Distressed Prisoners* in 1787. Soon afterwards, during a meeting in the home of Benjamin Franklin, the Society changed its name to the *Philadelphia Society of Alleviating the Miseries of Public Prisons* (PSAMPP). Today it is known as the Pennsylvania Prison Society.

Outraged at the sight of public humiliation from daily sentences of corporal punishment, the group advocated the use of solitary confinement for hardened felons. Dr. Benjamin Rush, a leading member of the PSAMPP and strong advocate of Howard's theories, took the forefront of prison reform in America. Rush, on behalf of PSAMPP, issued a 1788 memorial endorsing solitary confinement and hard labor as the most effective method of reforming criminals. The group justified the use of solitary confinement by their heartfelt belief that it was a necessity of penitence—confining a prisoner to a cell with only a Bible for company, providing the opportunity for him to reflect upon his misdeeds. It was also felt that solitary confinement protected against moral pollution of offenders

wear if they worked the fields. Frazier never worked. Legend has it that on Frazier's arrival he was thrown into a cell at the end of a tier, the cell door was welded closed, and he did not come out of that cell for the next seven years. No one did harder time in the Red Hats than Frazier.

In those times of prison violence and unaccountability, why wasn't Frazier killed when brought back to Angola? He had the Huntsville escape to thank. The incident carried national publicity—publicity that spared Frazier's life.

Until the early 70s, Angola officials had free reign to do as they pleased. What pleased them most was a broken-spirited, hard-working prisoner. But then winds of change blew through the nation. The civil rights movement gained momentum, Vietnam war protests were sending tremors of dissension through society, radi-

cal American Indians were on the war path trying to secure a rightful place in their own land, and penal reform swept over the country. Prison literature, prison riots, prisoner litigation and prison reformists prompted federal courts to glimpse into the secretive world of those locked away in our nation's prisons. What they found was not pleasing to their sight. Court rulings came hurling down, providing prisoners their long-denied Constitutional rights. Judges became particularly concerned for the prisoner's eighth amendment right to be free from cruel and unusual punishment. In many states, federal courts were scrutinizing prison operations and Louisiana was no exception. Inmate lawsuits were positioning Angola for a period of unprecedented change.

It was during this time that Elayn Hunt was appointed as Department of Corrections Secretary by then-newly elected Governor Edwin



THE RED HATS CELLBLOCK

Edwards. A sensible woman dedicated to prison reform, Hunt obediently followed court rulings allowing due process rights for prisoners. She also abolished the Red Hats cell block. In 1973 she eliminated the long-standing use of inmate guards in Angola, those specially selected inmates who toted shotguns, hollered orders to other prisoners and were used by prison officials to beat, whip and sometimes kill unmanageable prisoners. The end of the inmate guard system at Angola drastically changed the interior of the penitentiary. Confused prison officials scrambled to find other ways to secure ultimate control. It was during this time that Angola received national notoriety for being the bloodiest prison in the country.

During this change Angola security officer Brent Miller was killed while overseeing a dormitory on the Main Prison Big Yard. Miller, a white security officer, well liked by his peers, was killed in a segregated black dormitory. Four suspected prisoners were locked up. An informant told authorities inmates Herman Wallace and Albert Woodfox, known members of the Black Panther Party, committed the murder. To avoid the very real possibility that they would be lynched, all four suspects were transferred to the protection of CCR, where they awaited their trials. Eventually, Wallace and Woodfox were convicted for killing Miller by an all white judicial system in the country town of St. Francisville. Both received life sentences.

"I'm not surprised that I'm still in a cell as much as I'm surprised me and Hooks are still alive," commented Woodfox, who has been confined to a cell for 23 years. "I thought I'd be dead within a year. It was hell. . . . I use to get all kinds of hate mail, death threats. Ku Klux Klan messages. I could tell the KKK messages were from inside the prison. No postage marks on the envelopes." Nevertheless, Wallace and Woodfox, who have always claimed their innocence in the killing, never imagined they'd be locked down for over 20 years. "I never thought for one minute I'd be in a cell this long," admits Woodfox.

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who would otherwise group together, conspire and fuel their evil urges.

In 1790, the PSAMPP pushed its prison advocacy into the Pennsylvania legislature. What followed was the first officially recognized prison in the nation. Legislative enactment mandated an additional wing be added to the city jail on Walnut Street in Philadelphia, which would incarcerate the most hardened criminals in single cells. The legislative act ordered: "A suitable number of cells. . . each of which should be separated from the common yard by walls of such height as without unnecessary exclusion of air and light. [Cells that] will prevent all external communication, for the purpose of confining therein the more hardened and atrocious offenders who. . . have been sentenced to a term of years." The only contact the prisoner had with the outside world was the sporadic visits by prison officials and PSAMPP members. Their daily existence amounted to little more than Bible reading and mandatory prayer time.

Soon there were not enough cells available to individually house these *hardened and atrocious felons*. And despite the good intentions of Quaker reformers, the Walnut Street prison bred more insanity than salvation. Noted author Charles Dickens, after visiting the Walnut street prison, wrote:

He is led to the cell from which he never again comes forth, until his whole term of imprisonment has expired. He never hears of wife or children; home or friends; the life or death of any single creature. He sees the prison-officers, but with that exception he never looks upon a human countenance, or hears a human voice. He is a man buried alive; to be dug out in the slow round of years; and in the meantime dead to everything but torturing anxieties and horrible despair. . . . If his period of confinement has been very long, the prospect of release bewilders and confuses him. His broken heart may flutter for a moment, when he thinks of the world outside, and what it might have been to him in all those lonely years, but that is all. The cell-door has been closed too long on all his hopes and cares. Better to have hanged him in the beginning than bring him to this pass, and send him forth to mingle with his kind, who are his kind no more.

Still, the concept of isolation was locked into the minds of prison reformist, who were reluctant to release it. They adopted modifications to stop mental and physical deterioration. They tried housing the overflow of prisoners in large

Some say the practice of keeping prisoners locked in cells indefinitely began with the Miller killing and the locking down of Wallace and Woodfox. But extended cell confinement in Louisiana began with men on death row. The capital punishment moratorium of the 60s extended the cell time of many death row prisoners to over a decade. Wallace and Woodfox were placed in CCR in 1972, the year the Furman decision rescued condemned prisoners from their cells.

Prison officials did not confine them to cells after formulating an extended lockdown system to keep them there for decades. What happened just . . . happened. A year passed, five years passed, and somewhere along the line prison officials realized how convenient it was to simply never let some prisoners out of CCR. It played into what they were searching for, a way to secure better control over a potential powder-keg. Convict guards and brutality were out. Extended lockdown was in.

The other long-term prisoners in CCR were simply caught up with Wallace, Woodfox and



WILLIAMS

DIARY OF A PLANT

(composite diary entries of extended lockdown prisoners)

4/21/74: From my cell I look through the bars and out the iron-framed window across the narrow hallway. I watch a beautiful sunset. The sun is getting tired after a long day, slowly slipping down for it's rest. But its vibrant strength is still magnified through the deep orange bar that stretches across the bottom of the open land far in the distance. My mind wanders. An odor seeps through the window and is powering its way into my cell. The crisp smell of a skunk. It is a long-forgotten fragrance that I associate happier days with. Days of fresh woods, rugged mountains, clear streams, mowing the grass.

this newly discovered control device. Under the old rules they would not be treated so gently, but one way or another their treatment would be over by now. Under the new rules the treatment continues indefinitely.

The five CCR long-termers have one thing to be thankful for. They are still alive. The prison reform movement saved their lives, but at what cost? They are plants, shut up in a locked bathroom with no window.

Gloria Dean Williams is the longest cell-confined female prisoner in the state. She has been housed in a cell at the Louisiana Correctional Institute for Women (LCIW) for nearly ten years. Her solitude began on July 4, 1985, after she tried to escape. Williams, carrying a sock filled with pool balls, swung at a guard while attempting to walk through the front lobby of the prison. Guards subdued her before she made it out the front door. Charged with aggravated escape the court tacked 2½ years on the life sentence she already had.

The Independence Day escape attempt was not a first for Williams. On two prior occasions she succeeded in escaping from LCIW. The first time, in May of 1973, she simply walked away

from guards who escorted her to Charity Hospital in New Orleans. She made it to Los Angeles, California, only to be arrested a month and a half later when, according to Williams, her brother-in-law turned her into authorities for a small reward.

Her second escape was in August of 1973, when she used wire cutters to get through the prison fence. Again she made a clean getaway and returned to L.A. A few months later she traveled to her hometown of Houston where, along with her husband, she was arrested on a robbery charge. Williams served eight years in a Texas prison before returning to Louisiana in August of 1982.

After spending time in extended lockdown she was allowed back in the prison population. Not long afterwards she again tried for her freedom. When the Independence Day escape failed, prison officials determined Williams to be an unrelenting escape risk and tossed her in a cell, this time for good.

The 49-year-old Williams, mother of five children, tried to escape in the past because she didn't feel she ever deserved a life sentence. "I wasn't the trigger person that killed the man in the store," she claims. "When the store owner pulled the gun, all I wanted to do was get out of there." Court records confirm she tells the truth. Her codefendant, Carolyn Hollingsworth, 16 at the time of the crime, confessed at trial to shooting the grocery store owner. Although Hollingsworth is still in prison (the longest serving female prisoner in Louisiana), she lives in the general population and has never tried to escape. Of the six blacks indicted in St. Landry Parish for this 1971 armed robbery/murder, two, Manuel Hanchett and Nettie Lou Joubert, never went to trial. David Lawrence Killyon, the get-away driver, was offered and accepted a plea bargain; 18 years for manslaughter in exchange for his testimony against the other three. He was paroled six years later. Williams, Hollingsworth and Philip Anthony 'Pee Wee' Harris were found guilty of murder by an all-white male jury. Each received a life sentence. Williams and Hollingsworth remain in prison. Harris was

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congregate rooms and allowing those who remained in single cells to perform some type of labor—mostly shoe repair. Those modifications failed and in 1818 the Walnut Street prison was shut down due to a list of problems: overcrowding, politics, incompetent personnel, lack of financial support. Prisoners' sanity and physical deterioration was at the bottom of the list.

But for ten years Walnut Street Prison did survive. It became the nation's model on which other states would build their own prisons—states such as New York, Kentucky, New Jersey, Virginia, Massachusetts, Maryland, Vermont, New Hampshire, Ohio, and Georgia.

In 1816, New York opened its first prison, but based it on a congregate system in an attempt to eliminate the bouts of insanity caused by total isolation. It was not long before officials became uneasy and announced that immoral contamination was spreading among the prisoner population due to group association. State legislatures took notice and in 1819 passed an act directing prison officials to section off a place of confinement to house the oldest and most heinous prisoners, under what turned out to be even more brutal conditions of solitary than that of Walnut Street. In less than two years the prison, known as Auburn, marred by the prevalence of sickness and insanity, proved a hopeless failure. In 1824, New York Governor Yates pardoned most offenders who remained in solitary.

Local prison authorities at Auburn recognized that both the congregate and solitary system would not work. They created a compromise: the silent system, in which prisoners lived in single cells but were brought out daily to work in groups. They lived under absolute silence. Any prisoner caught even whispering to another prisoner was flogged on the spot.

Despite the failure of Walnut Street, the redemptive theory of isolation pressed on in Pennsylvania. In 1818, the state legislated the construction of a prison on a discarded cherry orchard. Opened in 1829, it was officially named the Eastern Penitentiary. Most called it "Cherry Hill." Here they operated what became known as the "separate system"—a system that required prisoners to be kept completely alone, never speaking or seeing another prisoner. The cells were eleven feet, nine inches long, seven feet, six inches wide, and sixteen feet high. Each cell had two doors, one leading to the main

freed through gubernatorial clemency in May of 1977.

Williams now concedes her escapes were stupid. "Back then I didn't know any other way. I just wanted to be free. Now I know the other way—through the courts. I'm trying to appeal my conviction and sentence. I never did have an appeal and I believe I'm entitled to one."

In some aspects, cell confinement is harder for the women in the extended lockdown unit known as Capricorn than it is for Wallace and the men on CCR. The only TV in Capricorn is in a dayroom at the end of the tier. It is turned on for one hour a week, and only for those who receive no disciplinary reports for a two week period. The only canteen items they can purchase are necessities—paper, pens, stamps, toiletries. They are allowed no food items or soft drinks. They get seven hours yard time per week if the weather is good, and they can socialize during this time because they go out by tiers. Most are allowed to work cleaning the tier, and some, not Williams, do yard work around the institution.

In contrast, CCR prisoners are allowed nearly unrestricted use of the four TVs on each tier and are able to purchase food items and cold drinks through the prison store. But they get only three hours yard time a week, one man at a time. They are not allowed to work.

Williams refers to her cell life as "a living hell! In the summer time the cells are like ovens, and ventilation is poor. In 1987, I tried to

THE FIRST AMERICAN PRISON

The Walnut Street Jail is known as the first officially recognized prison in America, but this may not be true. There was an abandoned copper mine in Simsbury, Connecticut, which was turned into a prison in 1773. Men, women and children were housed together and made to work under torturous conditions. Inside the overcrowded tunnels of the mine criminal chaos and perversion prevailed. Escapes were frequent. Just one year after it opened it erupted in the first prison riot in America, which hastened its closure. It never did become an important confinement facility, and, perhaps out of embarrassment, it is not recognized before Walnut Street as the first American prison.

DIARY OF A PLANT

(composite diary entries of extended lockdown prisoners)

4/25/74: *I'm scared! What happens if this delightful odor now becomes a nightly routine? Then it will evaporate my thoughts of those carefree times and become a part of the nasty smell of this dark pit I live in. "Hurr skunk, run far and come back only once in a great while. That way your smell will remain a fresh and sweet scent to me."*

kill myself because of the psychological stress," she admits. Williams is a self-educated and friendly woman who other Capricorn inmates turn to for advice and encouragement. She claims that her faith in Jesus, herself and the support of loved ones in Texas—who visit her twice a year—keeps her going. "The hardest part about my cell confinement is not knowing if I'll die in this cell." Asked if she knew she were going to live in that cell for another 30 years, only to die in it, would she rather be dead now, her reply was an adamant "Yes!"

According to observations and studies of the psychological factors within micro-societies, stress is one of the more serious detriments in an isolated environment. "All contained environments are stressful," explains a chapter in the text *From Antarctica to Outer Space; Life in Isolation and Confinement*. The text focuses primarily on men and women who work in polar ice stations for winter seasons. Like prison cell confinement, solitude in polar ice stations is not a total loss of sensory perceptions. The grouping of individuals along with some types of recreational activities in these stations erodes the completeness of isolation.

Even so, and although less isolated than CCR, stress factors of both microenvironments stem from similar sources: "Social stressors associated with an ICE [isolated controlled environment] include loneliness associated with being separated from one's normal social network, a reduction in privacy, the necessity of forced interaction with the other members of

the ICE, dependence on a limited community of individuals for one's social needs with no control over who may be included in that group, and limited ability to help loved ones with problems that may arise."

The text further explains that the "behavioral changes associated with stress include declines in alertness and mental functioning; low motivation; increases in somatic complaints such as sleep disturbances, digestive problems, and symptoms of colds and flu; social withdrawal; self-reports of depression and hostility; group splintering and polarization; feelings of helplessness; and psychotic episodes."

To combat stress in an isolated environment many turn, often unconsciously, to releasing negative energy in an effort for relaxation. Thus, when a heated argument breaks out on CCR, or a physical confrontation between two prisoners in cells side by side where spitting or the throwing of human waste might occur, chances are that the incidents are related to a release mechanism for a high stress level.

Located in the back of this sprawling plantation-like prison, approximately two miles from CCR, sits Camp D. Inside Camp D is Hawk unit, another extended lock down segment of the penitentiary. The primary difference between Hawk and CCR is that in Hawk a prisoner is more likely to be released into the general prison population at some point in time. There are exceptions. Most noted is Lee Lane, the longest cell confined prisoner at Angola and perhaps in the nation. Lane has lived in a cell 23 hours a day for the past 24 years. A longtime CCR resident, Lane was removed from CCR three years ago due to an altercation. He had coaxed another CCR inmate, who was on his way to the shower, up to his cell. With cat-like movement, Lane lunged a makeshift knife through the small opening in the bars, stabbing the unsuspecting prisoner in the chest. The inmate lived. Lane was issued a disciplinary report for aggravated fighting and sent to Hawk as means of separating the two. Even before this act of violence, Lane's chances of ever being released from a cell were slim to none.

HISTORY, con't

corridor, the other leading to an enclosed high-walled exercise yard. Prisoners were allowed one hour of solitary exercise each day. Prison officials were so serious about solitude they blindfolded every prisoner entering Cherry Hill while escorting him to his cell. For good behavior prisoners were given a Bible, worthless to most of the illiterate population. For extra good behavior they were allowed to do whatever solitary work they could perform. Like Walnut Street prison, some insanity plagued Cherry Hill.

Supporters of the separate system were excited over this new reform, while opponents thought it cruel. Author Charles Dickens wrote: "In it's intention I am well convinced that it is kind. . . but very few men are capable of estimating the immense amount of torture and agony which this dreadful punishment, prolonged for years, inflicts upon sufferers."

Battles erupted between reformists of the two systems. Silent system reformers denounced the separate, or Pennsylvania system, for being too cruel. "Its loneliness breeds insanity!" they screamed. Separate system supporters shouted back and proclaimed the silent system as crueler. "Placing prisoners in the same room and not allowing them to speak to one another is tempting them in an unfair way!"

Two French prison reformers visited America and evaluated both systems. De Beaumont and de Tocqueville concluded that at Auburn prisoners were more severely treated. Yet, at Cherry Hill prisoners were more unhappy and emotionally and mentally affected. They also discovered that at Auburn, where whipping was the norm, prisoners died less frequently than at Cherry Hill. The two concluded that the separate system proved less favorable to the health of prisoners than the Auburn system.

Despite all the differences between these two systems, and the strong accusations rallied against one another, supporters for both held similar beliefs on crucial issues. They believed imprisonment, not execution, was often the best way to deal with criminals; and that prisons should rehabilitate more than punish. Thus, these two differing yet similar prison operations were the basis of this country's penal system. One historian described it as the "trinity" of early organized prison operations: separation, obedience and labor. At Cherry Hill and Auburn, prisoners could not speak to one another, they

Lane came to Angola in 1956, at the age of 18, for a conviction of simple burglary. He discharged that sentence a few years later but not his life of crime. Another simple burglary landed him back in Angola with another five-year sentence in 1962. In those days of inmate guards, long-suffering work in the cane fields, and warring prison cliques, the name of the game was survival. And survival often depended on who had the biggest knife and the courage to use it. Lane had both. According to prison records, Lane killed two prisoners in 1963 and was convicted on two counts of murder in St. Francisville. He received two consecutive life sentences. It is unclear what happened to Lane between then and the turn of the decade, but in 1971 Lane was placed in CCR for another act of violence, and has been in a cell ever since. Some say he was a predator, others say he was a survivalist. His victims don't say anything.

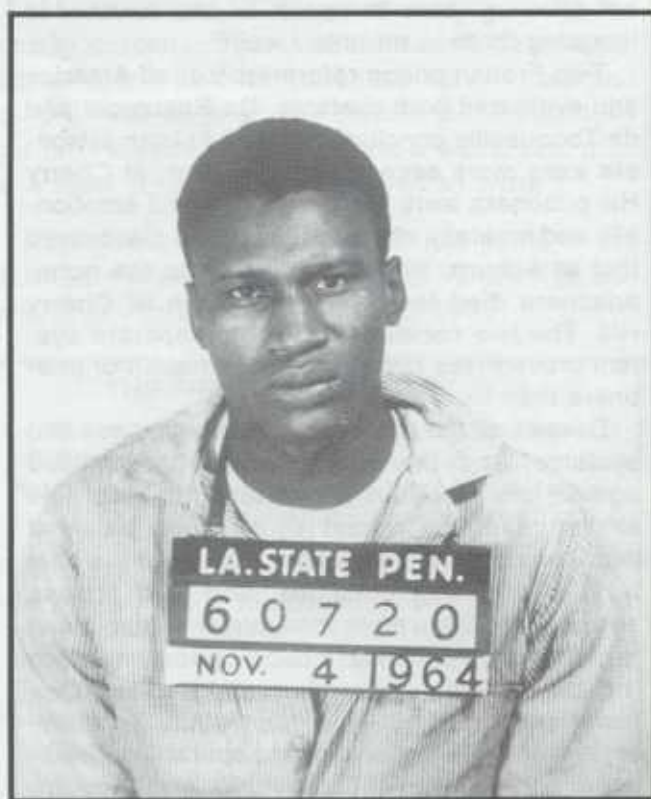
Lane declined an interview for this article, so only the public record is available to us. The sad irony in that record can't be missed. He came here over 32 years ago with a five-year

prison sentence. He now has two life sentences and will probably never be released to the general population, let alone into the free world.

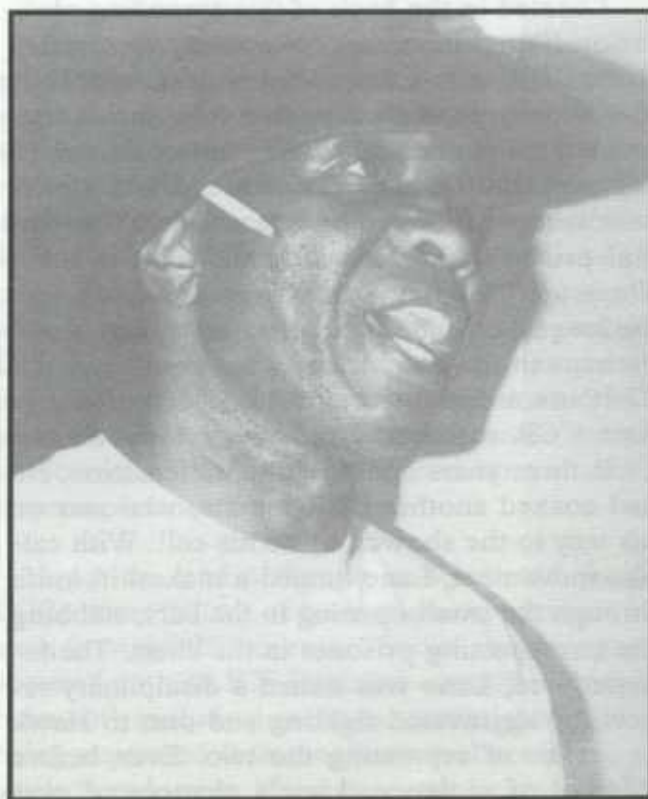
"I did some days in the Red Hats due to a buck in 1961," explained Robert 'King' Wilkerson. "At the time they put ten of us in a cell. The last time I was in the Red Hats was in 1970. I did ten days. That place was pure agony."

Wilkerson has been confined to a cell for nearly 23 years. He came to Angola with a 45-year sentence for armed robbery, aggravated escape and resisting arrest. He has discharged his original sentence. Wilkerson is now serving out a life sentence for the conviction of killing fellow CCR inmate Ernest Kelly in 1973. Two other CCR inmates housed on the same tier at the time of the incident testified they saw Wilkerson stab Kelly to death. Those two inmates were later released from Angola, only to return to prison for other crimes. One has again been released.

The 50-year-old Wilkerson appears in excellent physical shape. "I think if a person



LANE



WILKERSON