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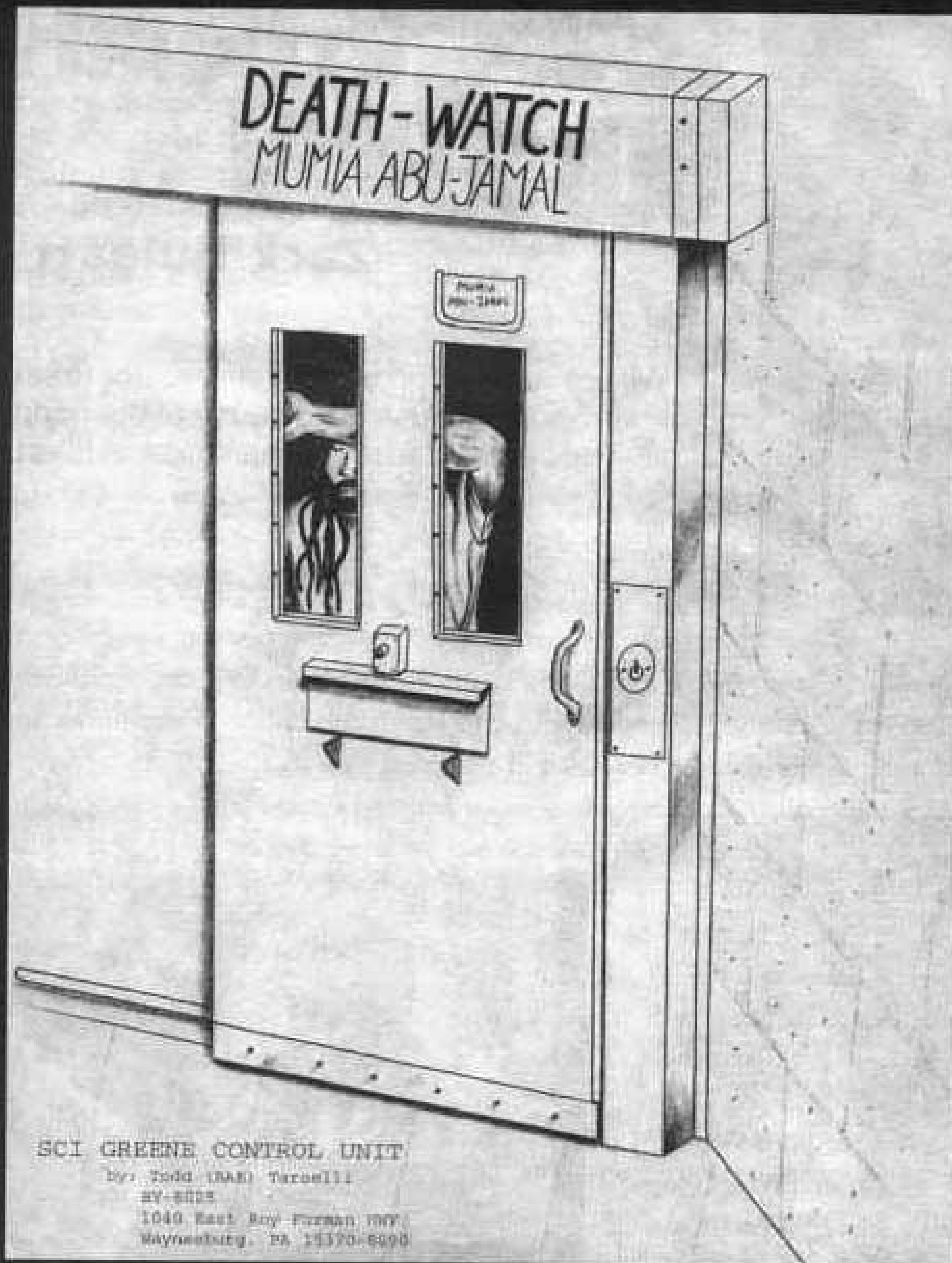
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FREE CD INSIDE



WORLD-RENOWNED WRITER FACES EXECUTION.
HE STILL HASN'T HAD A FAIR TRIAL.



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Dear Reader,

We will begin including a CD with every *Blu* starting with *Blu 2°*. If you subscribed before Jan 15, 1999, you will receive the new multi-media *Blu* (zine + CD) for the original deal: \$9 = 1 year = 6 issues + extras.

Why add a CD to the magazine? Over the last month we met a lot of young musicians, poets, and radio activists. Their work was so interesting to us that we wanted to share it with you, in audio format. We will be including their works in *Blu* with a CD for every issue. Unfortunately this will raise the price, but we believe it is worth it. The new multimedia *Blu* subscription is \$27 = 1 year = 6 issues + extras. You can also get *Blu* for \$5 on the newsstand.

Let's get in touch about how each of us is building the movement. Of course, you want to subscribe if you haven't yet.

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2°BLUZ°BLUZ°BLUZ°BLUZ°BLUZ

Assata Shakur

NO ONE CAN STOP THE RAIN

WATCH, THE GRASS IS GROWING.
WATCH, BUT DON'T MAKE IT OBVIOUS.
LET YOUR EYES ROAM CASUALLY, BUT WATCH!
IN ANY PRISON YARD, YOU CAN SEE IT - GROWING.

IN THE CRACKS, IN THE CREVICES,
BETWEEN THE STEEL AND THE CONCRETE,
OUT OF THE DEAD GRAY DUST, THE BRAVEST BLADES
OF GRASS SHOOT UP, BOLD AND FULL OF LIFE.

WATCH, THE GRASS IS GROWING.
IT IS GROWING THROUGH THE CRACKS.
THE GUARDS SAY GRASS IS AGAINST THE LAW.
GRASS IS CONTRABAND IN PRISON.
THE GUARDS SAY GRASS IS INSOLENT.

IT IS UPPITY GRASS, RADICAL GRASS,
MILITANT GRASS, TERRORIST GRASS,
THEY CALL IT WEEDS.

NASTY WEEDS, NIGGA WEEDS,
DIRTY, SPIC, SAVAGE INDIAN, WETBACK,
PINKO, SUBVERSIVE, COMMIE WEEDS.

AND SO THEY TRY TO WIPE OUT THE GRASS.
THEY YANK IT FROM ITS ROOTS.
THEY POISON IT WITH DRUGS.

THEY MAUL IT, RAKE IT,
THEY TRY TO MOW IT DOWN,
BUT IT KEEPS ON GROWING.

THE GRASS GROWS INTO A POEM.
THE GRASS GROWS INTO A SONG.
THE GRASS PAINTS ITSELF
ACROSS THE CANVAS OF LIFE.

AND THE PICTURE IS CLEAR,
AND THE LYRICS TRUE,
AND ITS HAUNTING VOICE
SO SWEET AND STRONG

THAT PEOPLE HEAR THE GRASS
FROM FAR AWAY AND START TO DANCE
AND SING, AND THE SONG IS FREEDOM.

DEATH BY REGULATION

CONTROL UNITS IN AMERICA

"Every inmate should have an opportunity to be constructively engaged and involved in a program of self-improvement." - Code of Ethics, Pennsylvania's Department of Corrections

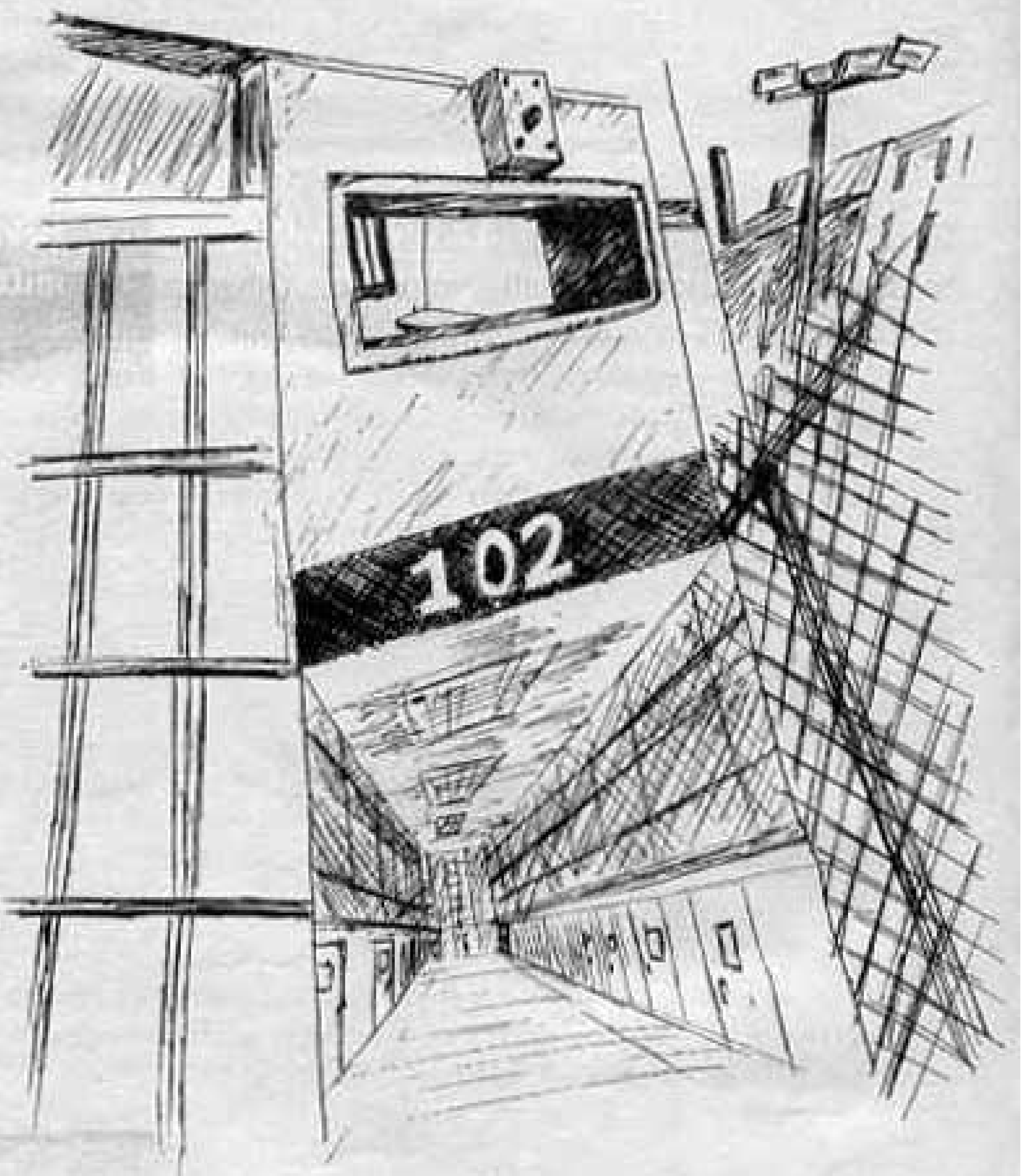
"Control units should be abolished! They serve only to terrorize the prisoners and render most of them unfit to cope with any normal setting. In their place, educational programs and substance-abuse and psychological counseling should be instituted." - Russell "Maroon" Shoatz

A **control unit** is a special section within a prison designed "safely and humanely" to handle prisoners whose behavior presents a threat to the security of the institution, staff, or prison inmates. There are 57 control units in the U.S., housing some 13,000 inmates. Government funding exists for building such units, and some institutions receive twice as much in subsidies for every inmate in a control unit. These units were built to rehabilitate violent and rebellious inmates. However, prison-watch organizations and mental-health experts tell us that control units are turning inmates into unbalanced, psychotic monsters full of anger and violence.

Unlike other restriction units within prison walls, such as solitary confinement, control units are not governed by conventional rules. A prisoner can be sent to a control unit for any reason or for no reason at all. In other words, those housed in these units may not have committed any infraction; they have simply been deemed a threat. And once 'locked down,' an inmate can be held there for as long as the administration feels he poses a threat.

The construction and operation of control units minimize human contact of any kind. Remote control doors, video cameras, and loudspeakers replace human contact. Solid doors cut off visual stimulation. Inmates spend 23 hours a day isolated in a 7 x 13-foot concrete box. Meals and exercise are also taken alone. The most restrictive units do not allow books, radio, or television. After examining a large number of control unit inmates, Harvard psychiatrist Stuart Grassian concluded that these units actually induce psychosis. Even those inmates who do not become psychotic report a number of psychotic-like symptoms including hyper-responsiveness to external stimuli, hallucinations, difficulty in concentration and memory, and unpredictable violent outburst.

Russell "Maroon" Shoatz, who has spent 21 years in solitary confinement, reported a strange experience after receiving a brutal beating from prison guards. "I was



wrong." He spent the next months reading up on psychology, and it was not long before he learned why he had felt great: his senses, starved for so long, had finally experienced some stimulation.

Russell learned that inadequate sensory input causes sensory deprivation, a syndrome characterized by emotional damage, a decline in mental function, and even hallucinations and delusions. Russell believes prison officials designed control units with this in mind. And he is not alone. A letter written in September 1998 by an inmate reads: "In this hole, the treatment applied is called sensory deprivation. It is the deprivation of your five basic senses - sight, smell, touch, sound, and taste - it actually damages you physically and psychologically. The side effects can only be described as terrifying! Studies say that prolonged exposure has two results: 1) mental illness or 2) suicide." A friend of mine, who served time in Attica and was present during the infamous uprising there in 1971, re-

Consider also that experts have known of the effects of sensory deprivation for decades. During the Korean War, sensory deprivation was used to torture American POWs. Since then, extensive research has been conducted, and the results of such studies are not hard to obtain. One would assume that research on the psychological effects of imprisonment were conducted before the construction of control units, and it seems fairly likely that that research would have revealed this basic concept.

And, says Amnesty International, control units are used to "shut up" troublesome inmates like the mentally ill and those with radical political leanings. Amnesty reports that the mentally ill continue to be assigned to control units, "despite evidence that the conditions are particularly damaging and inappropriate for them. Prison specialists say that mentally-ill prisoners are more likely than other inmates to end up in such units because of behavioral difficulties in prison... Other prisoners develop mental illness while in the unit."

The Philadelphia Anarchist Black Cross claims that, "since they were instituted, control units have been used to separate prisoners associated with liberation movements such as the Black Panthers and the American Indian Movement from other prisoners." Russell's case is a prime example of this. He has been in lock-down since June 1991. According to PA's Department of Corrections regulations, Russell's control unit status is re-evaluated every 30 days. Yet, after 8 years without a single disciplinary write-up, he remains in a control unit.

Terry Kupers, a prominent psychiatrist and expert on mental-health conditions of prisoners in American institutions, sums it up. "We know that idleness, isolation, brutal treatment, and especially deprivation of visits, lead to worsening behavior, more violence, and very poor results in terms of recidivism. So the question is, since we all know this, why does the DOC design a program where exactly these things are the norm? The conclusion seems obvious: the stated aims of the DOC are a sham, and the purpose of control units is not to 'correct' behavior or even enhance the security of the institutions."

So the bottom line is that prison officials know control units do not rehabilitate. Prison officials also know that they will get much more government funding for running control units. Yet they continue to build and populate control units. Simply put, those running the prisons are not interested in rehabilitating their charges. They are interested in money.

For more information:

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CELL: 7 x 13', concrete, sliding steel door with lockable slot for food tray, two permanently closed windows.

FURNITURE: Bed, desk & stool combo, toilet/sink unit. All steel, all permanently fixed to the wall.

LIGHTS: Not controlled by inmate. Some units have lights on 24/7.

HEAT AND VENTILATION: Inmates have no control of either. Prisoners report that they are constantly cold, yet complaints to guards yield no results.

FOOD: All meals taken in cell. Food must be consumed within about 20 minutes. Inmates may not save food for later consumption.

CLOTHING: 2 pairs socks, 2 tee shirts, 2 pairs underwear, 2 jump suits made of cotton mattress ticking, slip-on slippers. No other clothing permitted.

EXERCISE: 5 hours per week, weather permitting. Exercise is taken alone. No equipment provided.

HYGIENE: 3 ten-minute showers per week. Towel, washcloth, soap, shaving gear, toothpaste, toothbrush, and toilet paper are issued periodically.

COUNSELING: None

JOB TRAINING: None

RELIGIOUS SERVICES: None

EDUCATION: None

VISITORS: Non-contact visits, usually one hour-long visit per week.

MAIL: All incoming mail is opened and checked for contraband. Legal mail is opened in front of inmate. Authorities can withhold any mail they consider "endangering to the institution."

TELEPHONE: Some inmates permitted to phone collect once a week to a designated number, others are only allowed phone use in an emergency.

LEGAL COUNSEL: Non-contact visiting only. Attorney must apply ahead of time to meet with client. Attorneys report that the administration often deliberately hinders access to their clients.

MEDICAL SERVICES: Inmates must PAY for medical services. This is in violation to international standards, which state that prisoners must be given free medical care. Even so, inmates say any medical attention is difficult to obtain.

LAW LIBRARY: Inmates are often denied access. A visit is allowed every 10 days.

COMMISSARY: Inmates are allowed to purchase up to \$20 worth of commissary items per month.

* describes control units in Pennsylvania's prisons. Conditions in other states may vary slightly.