PREDICTING MAJOR PRISON INCIDENTS

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This report reviews the nature and causes of major prison incidents, and also investigates the extent to which their occurrence can be predicted by monitoring indicators of the prison environment, especially minor incidents and disciplinary reports.

Major prison incidents, such as fires, riots, mass escapes and hostage-taking, are important features of custodial systems. They can cause enormous material damage and extensive human suffering in a short space of time. Planning for their prevention and control is a significant pre-occupation amongst corrections administrators, and the management of a major incident may be the most rigorous test prison managers are likely to face.

Major prison incidents have a number of features that distinguish them from other forms of violent or disruptive behaviour that occur in prisons. They are:

- collective events, involving large groups of prisoners;
- of relatively short duration;
- involve a loss of control over part or all of the facility;
- often have significant political or administrative consequences.

Explaining the causes of major prison incidents

A variety of theoretical models have been proposed to explain major incidents. One way to characterise theoretical models is as "internal" or "external" models. **Internal models** emphasise the characteristics or conditions of prisons that give rise to violence. On the other hand, **external models** give precedence to the characteristics that prisoners bring into the system that make them prone to violence. Integrated theories that combine these two approaches have also been proposed.

Other theoretical approaches consider the breakdown of normal social structures that occurs in prisons, including disorganization in prison administration, that makes violent upheaval more likely. More explicitly political approaches see major prison incidents as arising from collective action of prisoners who are dissatisfied with the existing order and are striving to assert greater control.

Theoretical models also distinguish between "systemic" causes, such as poor prison conditions, and "immediate causes", that is triggering incidents which may escalate into a full scale riot, such as the alleged beating of a prisoner by staff members.

Finally, a sociological model holds that prison riots play a "normal", even positive role in prison life, in that they allow the tensions and frustrations of prison life to be resolved.

Predicting major prison incidents

Given the profound impact that major incidents can have on the management of a prison, it would seem reasonable that efforts would be made to predict their occurrence. Some attempts have been made to develop predictive systems.

Jayewardene attempted to identify the informal or subjective cues used by Canadian prison Superintendents. In general, respondents to the survey believed that disturbances arose out of a state of ambiguity and confusion within prison power relationships. They identified cues of prisoners' increasing dissatisfaction and frustration, of planning of the incident, and of diversionary activities most likely to be observed immediately before the incident.

A more formal "early warning system" was developed by Aziz for the New York Department of Corrections. He used the work of another researcher, Wilsnack, to identify indicators of prison conditions and climates that were likely to result in a major incident. The warning system that he established included 79 condition and climate indicators, and it was tested at two maximum security prisons in New York State, Attica and Green Haven. Ultimately, five indicators were selected for long-term monitoring: Inmate Grievance Committee activity, assaults on prison staff by inmates, assaults on inmates by other inmates, misbehaviour reports or incidents, and suicide attempts by inmates. While Aziz's indicators were able to discriminate between the past riot history of the two prisons, there is no evidence of its success at predicting future major incidents.

MacDougall and Montgomery conducted a survey aimed at identifying strategies to prevent prison riots. They surveyed all major incidents in U.S. prisons between 1971 and 1983, and proposed three procedures to assist in preventing riots: inmate grievance mechanisms to hear complaints, inmate councils to communicate with prison officials, and the use of an attitudinal survey instrument for inmates to communicate their concerns. One of the functions of the attitudinal survey is to provide prison administrators with early warning of specific areas of prisoner dissatisfaction, allowing corrective action to be taken.

There is little evidence that these predictive systems have been successful in giving advance warning of, or in reducing the frequency of major prison incidents. There are a number of possible reasons why they may have been ineffective, including:

> . they do not take into account the operational realities of prison administration, in particular the latitude that staff have in recording or not recording minor incidents;
> . prison managers may have informal warning systems which they believe to be quite adequate;
> . they are primarily warning systems that offer little help in defusing or controlling a disturbance;
> . they tend to give false positives; that is warnings of disturbances when there is no real likelihood of one.

Incident trends in Victorian prisons : 1988 & 1989

Much of the work on the prediction of major prison incidents is based on the use of certain types of less serious incidents, such as assaults and damage to prison property, as indicators of more generalised unrest. The analysis of incidents reported at Victorian prisons during 1988 and 1989 illustrates some of the features of prison incidents and the difficulties involved in monitoring incident rates.

At the end of 1987 a computer-based incident reporting system was introduced into Victorian prisons. The most obvious change between 1988 and 1989 was a very large increase in the total number of incidents reported: 1,711 during 1988 and 2,179 in the first 9 months of 1989: that is an increase of around 40%. Examination of trends in specific incident types indicates that this was probably an artefact due to Prison Officers' increasing familiarity with the system.

Other features of minor incidents included:

- female prisons have much higher overall incident rates than equivalent male prisons, mainly due to the extremely high rate of self-injury incidents;
- in general, higher security prisons have higher incident rates;
- no clear seasonal trends could be identified on the basis of one year's data.

Both Jayewardene and Aziz identified two types of prison incidents that can be used as indices of the state of prisoner unrest and hence as predictors of major incidents: assaults by prisoners on other prisoners or on staff, and damage to prison property. Examination of these specific incident types revealed the following features:

- as with incidents in general, female prisoners have a higher rate of incidents than males, and maximum security prisons have a higher incident rate than medium or minimum security prisons;
- even in comparatively large prisons such as Pentridge or the Metropolitan Reception Prison (approx. 500 prisoners), the average expected monthly number of selected incidents is only 10, and hence any change in the rate would be difficult to detect.

Statistical analyses showed that neither of the two "major incidents" which occurred in Victorian prisons during 1988/89 could have been predicted from a change in the rate of selected types of minor incidents.

Reporting Major Prison Incidents

Any systematic understanding of the events that make up a major incident, its causes, the effectiveness of staff responses and the actions that need to be taken in order to prevent the recurrence of the incident depends upon reports compiled after the event. A number of reports of major incidents in Australian prisons are reviewed in order to establish what conclusions have been drawn from them. The reports reviewed include:

- Bathurst 1974 - the Report of the Nagle Royal Commission
- Yatala 1983 - an internal departmental report
- Fremantle 1988 - a report to the Minister for Corrections
- K Division, Metropolitan Reception Prison 1987 - a Coronial report.

In addition, two reports of incidents occurring in U.S. prisons were reviewed. It was noted that while the reports of Australian incidents were extremely diverse in their approaches, methods and reporting styles, the U.S. reports were based on a formal, systematic investigative and reporting procedure.

Precis of the contents of the six reports reviewed are attached in an appendix to the report.

Conclusions and recommendations

A number of preventive measures can be identified, based on a consideration of the way that major incidents are generated. They include:

- maintaining a reasonable standard of prisoner accommodation and services;

- providing meaningful activities such as employment, education or recreation;

- dealing with prisoners in a fair and just fashion;

- advising prisoners prior to necessary program and procedural changes;

- training staff to recognize the warning signals of an impending incident, and training managers to accept and act on realistic staff warnings;

- developing graduated response procedures that allow minor incidents to be dealt with appropriately.

On the other hand, it is not possible to accurately predict the occurrence of major prison incidents, principally because the data required for a predictive model is too statistically unreliable. Moreover, the development of such a predictive system is almost certainly unwarranted. One further step that would be useful in the management of major incidents is to develop a system for reporting those that do occur that is objective, informed, comprehensive, and constructive.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Major incidents, such as fires, riots, mass escapes or hostage-taking, are a central feature of any custodial system. Although serious incidents are relatively infrequent events in most prison systems, they are nevertheless a major consideration in the design of prisons and the management of prisoners, and may be a predominating feature in the community's attitudes towards prisons and prisoners.

The profound influence exerted by major prison incidents on the minds of correctional administrators and custodial staff is in no sense artificial or contrived. In the wakes of recent major incidents in Australian jurisdictions there have followed extensive governmental or coronial inquiries, costly prison rebuilding programs, major administative upheavals and political recriminations. It is therefore hardly surprising that correctional agencies accord such importance to the prevention and control of major incidents. However, it is worth considering why the repercussions of major prison incidents should be so profound.

In part, the importance accorded to major incidents reflects their potential to cause enormous material damage and extensive human suffering in a short space of time. In the Bathurst riots of February 1974 about three-quarters of the prison complex was destroyed or severely damaged, twenty prisoners were injured by gunshot wounds, and large numbers of other prisoners received less serious injuries from the fires or from beatings after the incident. The 1974 Bathurst riots were also the key event in the establishment of the lengthy and comprehensive Nagle Royal commission. A major prison incident can therefore be seen in the context of other significant public tragedies; a serious bus crash, a mining disaster or a bushfire.

However, the way that society responds to major prison incidents cannot be accounted for purely in terms of the damage and injury involved. One factor that differentiates prison incidents from other public tragedies is their symbolic context. For the average member of the community, a prison riot provides a window into strange world of violent people and Dickensian surroundings. If prisons are a means for society to exclude or incapacitate those individuals whom it determines are too dangerous or too destructive to remain within the community, then a riot can be seen as a breakdown of that exclusion, a potential eruption of disorder.

A third feature of major prison incidents that is relevant to an understanding of their importance is their capacity to throw light on otherwise hidden aspects of prison management. Poor communications, inadequate staff training, substandard accommodation or programs and bad prison design can all be thrown into sharp relief by a major incident. In this respect, prison incidents can be a rigorous test for prison managers and the study of prison incidents can be a valuable exercise for corrections administrators.

1.1   Background to this study.

It is part of the accepted wisdom of corrections administration that one of the distinguishing characteristics of good prison managers is a feel for the "pulse" or "atmosphere" of their prison. By monitoring this "pulse", they can accurately assess whether the prisoners are placid or restive, and know in advance when serious trouble is brewing. This being the case, if one could accurately measure whatever it is that these "good managers" monitor, the prediction of serious incidents throughout a prison system would then be a straightforward administrative procedure.

We shall see in a later chapter that this notion of good prison managers predicting incidents by monitoring their prison's environment is not as straightforward as the simple description above. Nevertheless, the idea that major prison incidents should be predictable is one that has a great deal of apparent merit. Many forms of human behavior are the subject of "predictive" monitoring or measurement; for instance, personnel testing is widely used to predict applicants' suitability for employment, and psychological screening is used (especially in the U.S.A.) to determine prisoners' classifications or their participation in special programs. Therefore, it may seem reasonable to suppose that something similar is possible in the realm of serious disturbances of behavior within prisons.

An obvious basis for developing a predictive system for major incidents are reports of minor disturbances of behavior and order. A number of "early warning" systems have been proposed and implemented which include this type of information, together with other indicators or measures of various facets of the prison environment. This study, as it was originally formulated, was intended to apply this procedure to the Victorian prison system. The major objectives of the study were:

(1)   To analyse the inter-relationships between different aspects of the prison environment and to look for possible causal relationships between prison environment "indicators" and prison disturbances.

(2)   On the basis of this information, to develop a monitoring system that would allow the prediction of major prison disturbances.

It was envisaged that one of the chief sources of "indicator" information would be the Prison Incident Reports that are completed following all infringements of prison regulations and for most other non-routine events (eg. fires, injuries, property damage).

As will be seen, the proposed methodology did not take into account the complexities of the "real-world" environment that such a predictive system would have to operate within, and it soon became apparent that a broader, less quantitative methodology would be necessary if any real understanding of major prison incidents was to be reached.

1.2 Structure of this report.

The next chapter of this report reviews a variety of psycho-social models of conflict and the way that these models relate to prison environments. Following this theoretical review, a number of models developed to predict major prison incidents are reviewed in Chapter 3. In Chapter 4, the application of these models to Victorian prisons is tested via a quantitative analysis of minor incidents occuring within Victorian prisons in 1988 and 1989. From this analysis are drawn a number of conclusions regarding the usefulness and applicability of this data. In the fifth chapter, a number of case studies of major prison incidents are described. Finally, a number of recommendations are made regarding the reporting of incidents and the use of this information as a management tool.

CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL MODELS OF CONFLICT WITHIN PRISONS

Before one can attempt any theoretical analysis of major prison incidents, one needs to have a clear definition of the type of events with which one is concerned. Major prison incidents exhibit a number of features that distinguish them from other forms of violent or disruptive behavior occuring within prisons:

*   They are <u>collective</u> events. Although prisons are places where violent interactions resulting in serious injury to prisoners or staff or significant damage to prison property may be quite common, to the extent that these interactions involve individual prisoners and individual staff they are not generally understood to constitute a major incident. A criterion that is often used is that a major incident is one that involves 15 or more prisoners; this is a useful measure but cannot be considered to be a comprehensive criterion.

*   They are generally of <u>relatively short duration</u>, a matter of hours or days, and have an identifiable start and end point. These features differentiate major incidents from less intense forms of protest such as protracted hunger-strikes, other forms of passive resistance, or periods of intermittent violence directed at staff or prison property.

*   Major incidents typically involve significant <u>loss of control</u> by prison authorities over part or all of the facility. An indicator of this loss of control can often be found in the use of additional or external security resources (eg police, "tactical" or "response" teams), in order to regain control.

*   Major prison incidents often have <u>significant political or administrative consequences</u>. While these consequences may themselves stem from the loss of control or the personal or property damage arising out of the incident, the repercussions of an incident at the political or bureaucratic level may provide a good index of the severity of the incident.

It would be wrong to draw too definite a distinction between "major" incidents and more generalized prison violence. Indeed, it seems likely that individual and collective violence represent points on a continuum rather than distinct categories. Nevertheless, from an operational point of view, major incidents involving acts of collective violence pose a number of distinctive problems for prison administrators, and are therefore worthy of separate consideration.

2.1 Internal versus External Models

Theories that attempt to explain prison violence may be roughly classified into those that give precedence to internal causes - that is, the characteristics of prisons or correctional systems that give rise to violence - and those that give precedence to external causes - that is, the characteristics that prisoners bring into the system that make them prone to violence.

Ellis (1974) describes the two major theoretical approaches as:

(1)   The Institutional Product Paradigm, which emphasises the importance of conditions within prisons; and

(2)   The Diffusionist or Importation Model, which points to the importance of the non-prison identities and experiences of inmates.

Proponents of the Institutional Product paradigm locate the causes of prison riots within the social structure of the prison, including factors such as: the total number of recreational and educational activities, numbers of visitors, and the effectiveness of grievance committees or processes (Ellis, 1974; Aziz, 1980). According to this model, violence is a specific behavioral adaptation of prisoners towards the prison system; in effect, the violent behaviour of prisoners may be construed as the normal reaction of normal individuals to abnormal conditions.

A number of researchers support this perspective, however there is little consensus regarding the key features of prison systems or the processes involved (Aziz, 1980; Wilsnack, 1976). Ellis (1974) notes that past research has focused almost exclusively on observations of individuals and suggests that valuable insights into inmate behaviour may be gained by studying the interactions of groups of prisoners within the system.

In comparison, proponents of the Importation model assume that certain prisoner variables (personality, cultural and social background variables) make these persons more prone to violence and riotous behaviour. Thus, the non-prison identities and personal experiences of prisoners are assumed to be more important causative factors than the conditions within prisons. This approach primarily focuses upon the pathology of the individual prisoner to explain the occurrence of prison riots.

Ellis (1974) suggests that these two perspectives may be integrated into a Complex Model, such that one theory is an extension of the other. Along similar lines, Toch (1978) argues that violence precipitation results from the intersection between violence-prone dispositions and the situations which evoke these dispositions. According to Toch the social climate or context does not produce an incident but rather serves to increase or decrease the likelihood of an incident.

Theories of collective action in non-institutional settings (urban riots) have also been applied to the prison setting (Useem, 1985). According to Useem (1985) the

two major theoretical approaches to the explanation of collective action are:

(1)   The Breakdown or Disorganisation Model; and
(2)   The Resource-Mobilization Model.

Proponents of the Breakdown model argue that collective violence is a result of the breakdown of the structures of solidarity - church, family, work and voluntary organisations - that normally channel people into conventional behaviour. Social disorganization and increased levels of discontent are emphasised as important contributing factors to the development of unrest. Applied to the prison setting this model points to the important causative role of disorganization manifested within the prison administration as a breakdown in administrative coherence, control and operation. According to Useem and Kimball (1987) constituent elements of this breakdown include : scandals, inconsistent and incoherent rules for inmates and staff, fragmentation and instability in the correctional chain of command and conflict between administration and guards. The most important effects of such a generalised systemic breakdown is a disintegration of daily routines (meals, recreational and work routines), and an erosion of the security system. Political upheavals and economic considerations are non-institutional variables of disorganization which may also play a causal role in the development of prison riots.

Several authors have proposed explanatory themes which concur with this approach. Jayewardene, McKay and Krug-McKay (1976) suggest that riots in prisons are a reaction to perceived oppression on the part of the inmates, resulting from a state of ambiguity, instability and confusion as to expected standards within the prison. Dinitz (1981) notes that prison reforms resulting in rapid improvements in prison conditions are as likely to be followed by riots as are the imposition of additional deprivations. Any basic reform inevitably rearranges power and authority and, as such, represents a threat to inmate groups contending for control.

Resource-Mobilization theorists argue that collective action flows out of struggles among well defined, organised, skilled groups with access to material resources (Useem, 1985). Thus, according to this model, an increase in resources and solidarity among prisoners must precede prison riots. Resource-Mobilization theorists agree with the Breakdown theory proposition that individuals who engage in collective action are dissatisfied with the existing order. However, they assert that this proposition has no predictive power. Useem argues that the Breakdown model may account for spontaneous, short-lived actions such as riots, while the Resource-Mobilization model may be more applicable to more enduring forms of action such as social movements.

A different perspective on the causes of prison disturbances is provided in a report written by a senior prison Governor with extensive operational experience of riots and other disruptive events. Armstrong (1970) broadly classifies the possible causes of riots into three groups - general, specific prison generated and generated outside prison. According to Armstrong the general causes of prison riots are usually associated with the apparent punishment concept of imprisonment. The unnatural environment within prisons, with its limited personal

freedom, regimentation, monotony, separation from family and friends, and sexual deprivation, serves to create individual tension and emotional strain among inmates and staff. The attitudes of prisoners towards authority, resulting from their social, cultural and family backgrounds, are also a general contributing factor in disturbance causation.

There are a variety of prison-generated causes of riots identified by Armstrong, including ineffective prison management, inadequate facilities, lack of constructive prisoner activity, poor disciplinary procedures and lack of adequately trained staff. The cause of a riot may not be attributable to any one of these factors, but to the interaction of a number of factors. Finally, the potential causes of riots generated outside the prison may include political and radical influences in the form of external support providing a catalyst for disturbances. At the other extreme, public apathy which results in a lowered enthusiasm for treatment programmes among both staff and inmates, and inadequate financial support by the government may also constitute a form of external cause.

An alternative classificatory scheme is proposed by Davies (1982), involving a distinction between 'basic' and 'immediate' causes of riots. The former refers to the overall, 'systemic' causes, and includes a variety of areas such as policy issues, unwise sentencing and parole practice, prison management issues, substandard personnel, financial support issues and the state of, or conditions within, the prison. Immediate causes are triggering incidents which may escalate into a full scale riot, such as the alleged beating of a prisoner by staff members. At this level the actions and reactions of the prison staff are seen as contributory factors or antecedent events.

Davies classificatory scheme follows along the lines of the distinction between predisposing causes and precipitating causes outlined by Fox (1971). Fox (1971) argues that riots are unplanned events set off by a spontaneous event in situations where oppressive demands and pressures are generated in the presence of strong custodial confinement. According to Fox (1971), predisposing causes exist universally and serve to generate tension or pressure (eg. overcrowding or idleness), while precipitating causes are spontaneous, triggering events which may spark a disturbance. In comparison, planned disturbances generally end in strikes, slow-downs and self-inflicted injury. This distinction between planned and spontaneous disturbances raises the issue of how much the participation in riots is voluntary and deliberate, as opposed to inmate participation which is spontaneous, careless or coerced and manipulated by leaders.

Wilsnack (1976) outlines a number of interpretations of the causes of prison riots, including: the role of excessive and intolerable stress imposed by the prison environment; the effect of disorganization in the social structure of the prison; the inability of correctional personnel to respond effectively to strains on inmates before the strains result on a riot; riots as a form of communicating grievances to an audience outside the prison, or as a form of political protest. According to Wilsnack these various forms of explaining prison violence may not be contradictory, and different conditions identified by different researchers may occur not in isolation, but in combination.

Mattick (1973) argues that the conditions popularly referred to as causes of prison violence, for example outside agitation and inmate grievances, are simply correlates of violence. According to Mattick, the fundamental problem lies in the complex of utilitarian and religious ideas which serves as the basis of our penal policy. Mattick argues that penal policy is a policy of isolation and punishment, accompanied by a rhetoric of rehabilitation, which results in under-financing, inadequate staffing, deflected sexuality, and a general lack of resources and poverty of imagination that characterises our prisons. He argues that these are constants that cannot explain sporadic fluctuations in prison violence. Along with factors such as the effects of the changing racial composition of prison populations and the effects of regional differences and changes in sentencing practices, the effect of penal policy needs to be understood as a contributory element. According to Mattick, prisons are total institutions of social control and the sources of prison violence lie in the disruption of the implicit power-sharing bargain (or social contract) which is inevitably established between prisoners and staff. To disrupt these informal relations, by sudden or extensive social change, affects mutual expectations and obligations, and thus increases the probability of violence. The level of tension increases and a precipitating event becomes the occasion for a sudden flaring of violence.

Rinaldi (1977) argues that changes in the inmate social order, set off by the extension or withdrawal of privileges ,or power struggles between inmate groupings, increase the likelihood of prison violence. Although like Fox he distinguishes between predisposing and precipitating factors, he argues that neither is a cause in itself. This approach emphasises the importance of the total social situation and the degree of interaction between dominant people and subjugated people, in explaining the occurrence of prison riots.

2.2 Political Models

The theoretical models described above, whether externally or internally focussed, have in common a clear behaviorist bias; prisoners are seen as deterministic subjects whose behavior (in the form of violence and rioting) is "caused" either by a variety of environmental stimuli (external models) or by pre-existing tendencies towards such behavior (internal models). A particular aspect of this behaviorist bias is that major incidents are not seen as having any intrinsic rationale; that is, riots do not take place in order to "achieve" any apparent end.

This sort of behaviorist frame-work is at odds with the observation that some major incidents are intended to achieve definable goals; better food or living conditions, less restrictive controls, or even changes in legal status (for instance, the "Cuban" riots in the USA - see Chapter 5). One can therefore characterise at least some major incidents as being about power within the prison system, and in that sense the most appropriate theoretical model is a political one.

Fitzgerald (1977), writing about the series of demonstrations, riots and strikes that took place in British prisons during the early 1970's, makes a strong case for these incidents to be seen as primarily political - an attempt by prisoners to

improve their conditions by directly challenging the authority of the Home Office. This "revolt" was co-ordinated by Preservation of the Rights of Prisoners (PROP), an organization existing outside the prisons, and the political model on which these actions were based was that of a trade union. Interestingly, Fitzgerald claims that the initiative was wrested from PROP by the Prison Officers Association who began their own campaign of industrial action in opposition to "prisoners rights".

This notion of major prison incidents as a form of political action is one that is often implicitly subscribed to by correctional administrators in the course of making after-event reports. Prisoners' actions may be primarily attributed to a desire to overthrow the authority of the custodial staff and to dictate the terms of their own imprisonment (see Fremantle incident report in Chapter 5). A particularly extreme form of this political attribution arose in Queensland in late 1987 when prison staff claimed to have foiled a bid by "black activists" to smuggle guns into Boggo Road Prison and then take the prison by force.

The political models described above are too sketchy in their details and lacking in any theoretical grounding to be considered either useful or satisfactory. Fitzgerald's notions of a trade union of prisoners, while possibly true of some British prisoners, does not seem to have been an enduring one. While there are power structures within prisons they are, only poorly understood, and it seems unlikely that the political structures of the wider society can be superimposed upon them. Clearly it is an instance where the researcher's traditional cry applies: there is a need for more research on the matter.

2.3 An a-causal model

The final theoretical model to be examined is an "a-causal" model recently proposed by Larsen (1988). In essence, Larsen argues that prison riots do not result primarily from specific causes such as deprivation but rather play a normal, and even positive, role in prison life.

The notion that conflict is an integral feature of societies is an important element of many sociological theories; conflict is held to be the means whereby power relationships and societal norms are re-adjusted to be consistent with changed economic, political and social realities. This process is particularly relevant to prison societies because the abnormal features of prison life and the severe constraints on personal freedom of action lead to high levels of prisoner frustration, and hence to a pronounced need to resolve tensions. An important consequence of this theory is that prison authorities' attempts to prevent low-level conflict may result in a greater likelihood of major conflict.

A number of features common to major prison incidents lend support to this theoretical model:

- major incidents are most common in maximum security institutions where levels of control are greatest, and least common in minimum

security institutions where prison conditions facilitate the settling of conflict on an incremental, on-going basis;

- an important phase in the course of many major prison incidents is the emergence of prisoner leaders. These leaders are often neither the instigators of the incident nor the "pre-riot" leaders. Hence, prison incidents are often the means for a change in the prisoner power structure;

- major incidents are often associated with a change in the nature of the relationship between the prison administration and the prisoner subculture. Such a change may involve an erosion of prisoner power as the result of increased control by prison staff, or an increase in prisoner power resulting from concessions or disorganization by prison administrators.

There are several consequences of Larsen's theory that are worthy of further consideration. One is that the search for specific "causes" of riots is a futile exercise; one will almost always be able to find aspects of prison life that may be identified as "causes", but this process does not assist in the prediction or prevention of incidents. A second issue is that any process leading to a change in the power relationships between prison staff and prisoners (whether intentional or not) carries with it the risk of a major incident.

Hence, changes in prison organizational or procedural structures need to be approached carefully and with due consideration to their direct and indirect impact on the prisoner-staff relationships. Finally, prison administrators need to give greater consideration to the management of low-level prisoner conflict; a simple preventative approach is only likely to lead to increased frustration and a greater risk of a major incident.

The goals of prisoner management may include a wide variety of operational and philosophical objectives: security, deterrence, rehabilitation, punishment, training, re-integration and so forth. The particular balance between these goals in any given prison system will depend upon the organizational philosophy or climate of that system. For instance, in the past many prison systems gave formal support to a "rehabilitative" philosophy, whereas in more recent times this has tended to be supplanted by a "humane containment" approach.

Underlying the philosophical structures espoused by corrections administrations are the day-to-day operational realities that actually constitute the prison climate. These realities may be more-or-less consistent with the formal organizational position, or they may be significantly at variance with it. It is probably fair to say that in the majority of prison systems, whatever the system's formal philosophical goals, the operational management goals are predominantly those concerned with security and control. As a consequence, operational prison managers put a considerable proportion of their efforts into the detection and prevention of breaches of security and control.

Given this situation, one might expect that prison systems would have well-developed mechanisms for detecting and controlling major prison incidents. However, this is not the case. Indeed, even a superficial examination of the literature on major prison incidents reveals that vastly greater effort and resources (at least in the formal sense of collecting information, analysing it and reporting to administrators) are put into after-event analyses than pre-event prediction and management. In Australia, for instance, most significant prison incidents are followed up by a formal inquiry into the causes of the incident, the events that occurred and the actions that might be taken to prevent a recurrence. At the same time, the effort put into training staff in the early detection and prevention of major incidents is minimal. Indeed, in a number of notable instances, the responses of prison operational managers to the early stages of an incident have only served to exacerbate the situation (eg. see Nagle,1978).

Despite this focus on after-event dissection of major incidents, there have been a few substantial attempts to develop predictive models. Three such approaches are discussed in this chapter.

3.1   A Sixth Sense: Jayewardene et al (1976)

In the introductory chapter of this report the idea was raised that good prison managers are able, in an informal or subjective fashion, to monitor their prisons' climate and thereby predict the occurrence of major incidents. Jayewardene et al describe this ability as a:

"... barometer or sixth sense (which) may represent the sum total of inarticulated cues provided by inmates which staff come to recognize, with experience and the passage of time, as indicators of potential problems."

The researchers set out to investigate this proposition by surveying the Superintendents of all Federal and provincial institutions in Canada. The information they sought was not in the form of quantitative data about incident precursors nor about theoretical models of incident generation, but rather the Superintendents' beliefs, developed as a result of their practical experience, about the events that lead up to major disturbances.

The majority of the institutions contacted did not respond to the survey. The thirteen that did gave remarkably consistent responses which in most cases included the views of the staff as well as the Superintendent. In general, respondents believed that disturbances arose out of a state of ambiguity and confusion within prison power relationships. Three sets of cues were believed to give an indication of prisoners' increasing dissatisfaction and frustration: an increase in the number of prisoners making complaints and in the tenacity of prisoners in pursuing their complaints, increases in minor disputes between prisoners and minor damage to prison property (including graffiti), and changes in prisoners' personal dress and living habits.

These indicators of unrest were then followed by indicators of planning of an incident. Jayewardene at al categorized these cues into four groups; verbal communications, dispersion movements, diversionary activities and alterations in the level of noise.

Verbal communications may include direct statements by prisoners that an incident is brewing, requests for transfer to other institutions, to segregated accommodation (protection), increasing numbers of prisoners reporting sick or requesting changes in work assignments, and changes in participation in night activities. Respondents even suggested that changes in prisoners' speech patterns may be evident, such as altered inflections or halting speech. Normally communicative prisoners may suddenly become reticent. Conversely, uncommunicative prisoners may begin to engage staff in frequent, trivial conversation.

Dispersion movements by prisoners may be observed immediately prior to the disruptive event. These include:

"... inmates gathering together in groups larger than usual, in places other than usual, engaged in conversations of durations shorter than usual following each other in rapid succession, with a few key individuals flitting from group to group."

Other dispersion movement cues may be an unusually high number of prisoners remaining in their cells during peak activity periods, or prisoners apparently being "posted" to strategic points about the prison.

Diversion activities are also most likely to be observed immediately before the

event. They include attempts to engage officers in discussion or other activity, the stageing of mock arguments or fights, or other actions intended to divert officers away from the scene of the major incident. Finally, the respondents to Jayewardene's survey identified changes in noise level, especially music, as a further cue.

Cues to incidents may also be gained from observations of staff behavior. A reluctance to report minor breaches of discipline, feelings of increased isolation from prisoners, a decline in staff morale, demand for increased security precautions, and increased absenteeism, sick leave and resignations were all identified as staff responses to an impending major incident.

Jayewardene presents this predictive model in a very straightforward fashion, with little attempt to critically analyse the information provided by repondents. This is unfortunate because it is readily apparent that the "sixth sense" cues being described by the prison Superintendents have a number of general characteristics that limit their usefulness. Indeed, one of things that the study does shed light upon is the way that operational prison managers believe that major incidents arise. The process of incident generation that underlies them is a progressive one with a clear "planning" phase by prisoners. It takes place in a prison where the change from good management and staff-prisoner interactions to bad ones is clearly apparent. Finally, it is apparently a process with little variation; the authors note that some of the respondents believe that these cues are "definite, clear and invariable signs of trouble".

If one examines the range of major prison incidents, it becomes evident that only some incidents satisfy all these criteria. Some incidents arise very quickly without any significant planning on the part of prisoners, apparently in response to some critical trigger, and show few of the antecedent cues described by Jayewardene. Others occur in prisons where staff-prisoner relations have been very poor for an extended time, so that there is little scope for staff to detect changes in prisoner behavior. Many of the cues described may simply be indices of the level of tension in an institution, and may therefore generate a high level of "false positives" (ie. warnings of non-existent riots) which may themselves contribute to the level of tension.

3.2 Early Warning Indicator System: Aziz (1980)

One of the reforms arising out of the Attica prison riot of 1971 was the establishment of a Crisis Intervention Unit to provide the New York Department of Corrections with a co-ordinated and specialized response to conflict situations. The objectives of this Unit included:

- the establishment, training and co-ordination of Crisis Intervention Teams;
- the establishment of post-crisis debriefing, review and assessment procedures;
- the development of an early warning system for detecting crises.

The purpose of the research reported by David Aziz was to develop and test an early warning crisis identification (E.W.I.) system. The theoretical model underlying the E.W.I. system was based on the work of Richard Wilsnack (see Ch. 2) and can be summarised as follows:

- Prison crises are the result of inmate reactions to prison conditions. They do not result from the individual pathology of inmates.

- Both prison conditions and inmate reactions to them may be reliably measured by specific condition and climate indicators.

- Within any specific prison, a unique combination of prison conditions and inmate reactions may lead to a crisis. This is not a deterministic relationship.

- Crisis indicators are condition and climate indicators that are empirically or theoretically linked to the occurrence of prison crises. These crisis indicators will vary both between prisons as well as within a given prison over time.

Wilsnack wanted to know if there were simple, direct relationships between prison conditions and the occurrence of major incidents. He surveyed prison administrators in 48 states of the U.S.A. and reached two significant conclusions:

"... although some conditions and climates were identified as being necessary for collective violence[1], there were no conditions or climates that made such violence a certainty. Secondly..... there were important differences between the conditions and climates which characterized prisons that later experienced collective violence and those conditions and climates characterizing prisons that had experienced collective resistance[2]."

The relationships between collective violence or resistance and prison conditions, inmate climates and condition/climate indicators that were identified by Wilsnack are shown in Table 1 below.

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[1]. Collective violence is the seizure of prison territory by prisoners accompanied by the presentation of demand affecting prisoners.

[2]. Collective resistance is a refusal by prisoners to engage in some officially sanctioned activity in support of demand affecting prisoners.

TABLE 1

Collective Violence	Conditions/Climate	Indicators
	Administrative instability	Inmate disintegration Assaults by prisoners on other prisoners or staff Major administrative changes Low staff salaries Turnover rate higher than 20% per year
	External pressure	Efforts by legislators or citizen groups to influence prison operations Investigations of prison problems
Collective Resistance	Condition/climate	Indicators
	Inmate organizing	Politically aware inmate organization Growth of an inmate leadership group
	Staff weakness	No training programs for custodial staff Low recruitment standards Custodial staff less than one-quarter the size of inmate population
Both Violence & Resistance	Environmental deprivation	Maximum security prisons Inmate overcrowding Inmate idleness

The conditions and climates identified by Wilsnack were not unique to prisons which experienced collective violence or resistance; they were present to some extent in all the prisons surveyed, but were likely to be more pronounced in prisons that experienced major incidents. In addition, all of the 12 prisons that had experienced riots had also experienced some form of collective resistance.

Aziz's early warning indicator system also drew upon a survey conducted by the South Carolina Department of Corrections. This survey identified eight prison characteristics that were associated with riots:

- maximum security prisons had a higher incidence of riots;
- the larger a prison's planned capacity, the higher the incidence of riots;
- the older the prison, the higher the incidence of riots;
- less frequent contacts between custodial staff and prisoners led to a higher incidence of riots;
- the more highly educated the prisoners and staff, the higher the incidence of riots;
- in medium and minimum security institutions, lack of meaningful work was associated with a higher incidence of riots;

- prisons with inadequate recreational programs had a higher incidence of riots;
- prisons with administrative/punitive segregation facilities had a higher incidence of riots.

In developing the E.W.I. system, Aziz chose to only consider quantifiable variables. Even so, when the system was established it included seventy-nine condition and climate indicators. Initially it was tested in 1978 at two New York State maximum security prisons: Green Haven and Attica. These two prisons were selected because they were judged to be the most crisis prone prison in the state (Green Haven) and the least crisis prone (Attica). In most other respects the two institutions were similar. Five indicators were selected for monitoring:

- Inmate Grievance Resolution Committee activity
- assaults on prison staff by inmates
- assaults on inmates by other inmates
- misbehavior reports/incidents
- suicide attempts by inmates

Grievances

Aziz found that while approximately the same number of prisoner grievances were filed at the two prisons, the grievance resolution procedure at Green Haven prison was significantly less effective; the backlog of grievances was consistently longer at Green Haven, grievances were much more likely to be withdrawn or resolved informally, took twice as long to process and were much less likely to be resolved by the Inmate Committee. He concluded that prisoners at Green Haven were more likely to become frustrated with the grievance process as a way of resolving problems.

Assaults on staff & prisoners, and attempted suicides

While Green Haven prison had a much higher rate of assaults on staff by prisoners (13.4 assaults per 100 staff at Green Haven vs 3.9 at Attica), there were no significant differences between the two prisons in the rates of either prisoner assaults on other prisoners or attempted suicides. Aziz concluded that this large differential in staff assault rates could not be accounted for by a higher proportion of "assaultive" prisoners at Green Haven (there were few significant differences in the two prisons' populations), and that the source was therefore likely to be attributable to differences in prison conditions. He further concluded that the possibility of under-reporting of prisoner assaults on other prisoners made it an unreliable measure, and that definitional difficulties with "attempted suicide" incidents made it similiarly unreliable as a measure.

<u>Disciplinary reports</u>

Aziz examined monthly incident/violation reports to the Commissioner of Corrections. While both prisons had more minor infractions (dealt with by an Adjustment Committee) than major violations (dealt with by Superintendent's Proceedings), Green Haven had 90% more major incidents than Attica, whereas Attica had 20% more minor incidents. He concluded that this could be a result of Green Haven prisoners committing more serious incidents, or that the Green Haven Adjustment Committee was less effective or had less influence within the prison.

In reviewing the Green Haven/Attica study's results, Aziz notes that, in New York State all newly trained prison staff are generally posted directly to Green Haven, and that consequently Green Haven has staff who are, on average, less experienced and also a high staff turnover rate; both indicators of riot-prone prisons.

At the beginning of 1980 Aziz's E.W.I. system had been implemented at the Coxsackie Correctional Facility, however the report gives no evaluation of its success.

3.3 Strategies to prevent riots: MacDougall & Montgomery (1985)

This report details a survey conducted by the University of South Carolina of prison riots in the United States between 1971 and 1983. As well as containing a wealth of statistical information about riots and their consequences, the report examines the causes of riots, ways of monitoring the propensity for riots, and strategies for preventing riots.

The authors note that, while both prisoners and staff share many perceptions regarding the causes of riots (with some differences in emphasis), the prevention of riots depends upon more than improvements in communications or correctional management policies. They identify three procedures that can assist in preventing riots:

- inmate grievance mechanisms to hear complaints
- inmate councils to communicate with prison officials
- the use of an attitudinal survey instrument for inmates to communicate their concerns.

The attitudinal survey is the most novel of the report's proposals, inmate grievance procedures and councils being apparently well established in US prisons. Their "inmate inventory" includes 60 Likert-scale[3] items relating to prison food, legal help, medical services, personal privacy, education, censorship, work, visits, correctional officers and administration. The report states that the inventory has been tested

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[3]. A Likert-scale is a 5 or 7-point scale ranging from very positive to very negative with a neutral point in the middle. The respondent chooses the point on the scale that is closest to his or her feelings on the item.

and found successful, but gives no details of the test procedure.

One of the functions of the inventory is to provide prison administrators with early warning of specific areas of prisoner dissatisfaction, allowing corrective action to be taken. However the authors also make the more contentious claim that its use

> "... serves to diffuse potentially volatile situations by channelling energies and attention in more rational and productive directions. (p.36)"

MacDougall and Montgomery also propose that staff training is a strategy that can reduce the likelihood of prison riots. They cite a course run by the National Institute of Corrections entitled "Containment of Prison Violence" which trains corrections staff to recognize twelve general signes of tension amongst prisoners:

1. Restlessness among inmates
2. Quiet or subdued actions of inmate groups
3. Avoidance of visual or verbal contact with staff
4. Increase in commissary purchases
5. Increase in number of requests for changes in work or housing assignments
6. Unusual inmate gatherings
7. Increase in the number of incident reports
8. Appearance of inflammatory written material
9. Absence of inmates at popular functions
10. Increase in the number of complaints
11. Disturbances at other institutions
12. Assault upon an individual of another race or group.

Most of these indicators are consistent with those identified by other researchers. Unfortunately, the authors are unable to present any data to support their claim that this form of training is effective in preventing or ameliorating riots.

3.4 Discussion

The three studies reviewed here each include some valuable components or ideas about major prison incidents. Nevertheless, if these studies are judged in terms of their contribution to the early detection and control of incidents, it would appear they they have been relatively unsuccessful. There is little evidence that the lessons in them have been applied in U.S. prisons in such a way as to minimize the frequency or impact of major incidents[4]. There are a number of possible reasons why they may have been ineffective.

Theoretical vs Operational systems: In each of the three studies, considerable attention was paid to the theoretical structure of prison incidents, and very little to the operational realities of the systems within which major incidents take place. For

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[4]. See reports on Kirkland, Oakdale and Atlanta incidents in next chapter.

instance, each of the studies identified the level of prisoner disciplinary incidents as an indicator of unrest, but in none of the studies was there any attempt to examine the place of minor infractions of prison discipline within the operational structure of prisons. Although it is desirable that minor incidents are reported according to standardized procedures, in reality custodial staff have a significant degree of latitude in the way they deal with incidents and the frequency of incident reports is likely to vary in response to a variety of factors unconnected with actual prisoner behavior. Indeed, it is conceivable that in a prison where there is an increasing level of serious prisoner unrest and declining staff morale, the number of incidents reported will actually fall as staff try to minimize the level of day-to-day conflict between themselves and the prisoners (eg. see report of Yatala riot - Chapter 5).

Existence of informal warning systems: Another reason why formal systems for the detection of impending disturbances have not been implemented is that prison managers may have informal systems which they believe to be quite adequate. The after-event reports of many major disturbances note that a clear warning of the riot was conveyed to staff by prisoners, often hours or even days before the actual event.

Warning rather than prevention: The systems reviewed here are primarily warning systems that offer little help in defusing or controlling a disturbance. Even the system described by MacDougall and Montgomery as a prevention strategy is of debateable value; certainly their claim that conducting attitude surveys helps to defuse tension is optimistic in the extreme. A useful analogy is with the temperature warning gauge in a car: the gauge can tell the driver that the engine is over-heating but cannot influence the engine temperature - it is up to the driver to take corrective action by slowing down. To extend the analogy further, in at least some riot situations the prison administrators are genuinely unable to take short-term corrective action by reducing over-crowding, improving staff skills or providing better accommodation.

False positives: A further difficulty with early warning systems is their propensity to give false positives; that is warnings of disturbances when there is no genuine likelihood of one. Such a system places prison administrators and managers in a dilemma. If they respond to all the warnings that such a system is likely to generate, then they may appear to be unnecesarily jumpy, and this apparent nervousness may ultimately contribute to the level of tension in the prison. On the other hand, if the warnings are ignored and a major incident does take place, then the administrators or managers may be held to be at fault.

Generalizability of warning systems: A final issue that needs to be considered is how much these U.S. warning systems can be generalized to other prison jurisdictions. In part this concern is related to the particular indicators identified in the U.S. studies. For instance, formal prisoner greivance procedures and committees are apparently well established in U.S. prisons, and their activity can be acurately monitored. In other prison systems these formal grievance systems are

either absent or relatively undeveloped, and cannot therefore be incorporated into a warning system. At a structural level, there are also difficulties with the way that major prison disturbances are viewed. For instance, an inquiry into widespread disturbances in English prisons in 1986 (H.M.S.O., 1987) did not consider whether early warning of these events was either possible or desireable. Similarly, few Australian analyses of prison disturbances raise the issue of early warning. While it would be wrong to conclude that early warning systems are an exclusively American concern, it certainly appears that most non-U.S. prison systems do not regard early warning as a significant issue.

One of the themes that emerges from work on the prediction of major prison incidents is the possibility of using certain types of less serious incidents, such as assaults and damage to prison property, as indicators of more generalised unrest. Several of the researchers reviewed in the previous chapter cite evidence of linkages between changes in the frequency of occurrence of relatively common incidents and the antecedents of major incidents. However, before one uncritically accepts this apparent connection, it is worth considering some aspects of the reporting of prison incidents.

Reportable prison incidents may range from extremely serious matters such as deaths, escapes, or hostage-taking to relatively minor breaches of prison discipline. Incident definitions and reporting procedures vary considerably between jurisdictions, and it is difficult to generalise across the data available from Australian corrections systems. The following comments, based on analysis of incidents reported at Victorian prisons during 1988 and 1989, illustrate some of the features of prison incidents and the difficulties involved in monitoring incident rates.

4.1 Total Incident Report Trends

At the end of 1987 a computer-based incident reporting system was introduced into Victorian prisons on a trial basis, and after February 1988 all incident reports were entered on the system. Prior to this, incident reports were manually written-up but, with the exception of reports involving deaths or escapes, there was no means of compiling or analysing the reports on a statistical basis.

The computer-based reports include the time, place and type of incident, identify the prisoner(s) and officer(s) involved, and give a short text account of the event. There are 62 different incident types that may be specified (see Appendix 3), however, for ease of analysis these have been compressed into twelve categories. Table 2 shows the number of incidents in each category reported between February and December 1988 and between January and September 1989.

The most obvious change between 1988 and 1989 is the very large increase in the total number of incidents reported: 1,711 during 1988 and 2,179 in the first 9 months of 1989. Assuming that no seasonal trends are evident, one can calculate the total number of incidents expected for the whole years of 1988 and 1989: these are 2050 and 2,900 respectively, and represent an increase of around 40% between 1988 and 1989.

The most likely explanation for this increase is that it took some time for Prison Officers to become familiar with the new reporting system and that, during the first year of operation there was a significant degree of under-reporting of incidents.

TABLE 2

PRISON INCIDENTS
1988 & 1989

Incident Category	1988		1989 (Jan - Sept)	
	No.	%	No.	%
ASSAULTS	249	14.6	278	12.8
INJURY	259	15.1	245	11.2
SELF INJURY	213	12.4	176	8.1
DEATH/SUICIDE	10	.6	4	.2
ESCAPE	36	2.1	40	1.8
DRUGS/ALCOHOL	303	17.7	448	20.6
PRISON REGS.	472	27.6	753	34.6
RIOT/BREACH	54	3.2	56	2.6
PROPERTY	67	3.9	94	4.3
FIRE	23	1.3	37	1.7
VISITOR	18	1.1	25	1.1
OTHER	7	.4	23	1.1
TOTAL	1711	100.0	2179	100.0

This is supported by the fact that the greatest increases were in the least serious incident categories: breaches of prison regulations, incidents involving drugs or alcohol, and property offences. The more serious categories, such as assaults, injuries, deaths and escapes showed much smaller increases or, in the case of self-injury incidents, a decline. Clearly, Officers were able to exercise a significant degree of discretion in regard to the reporting of minor incidents.

Incident reports are not randomly distributed across Victorian prisons. Table 3 shows the number of incidents reported for each prison together with the incident rate (the number of incidents per 100 prisoners per year). The overall increase in incident rates between 1988 and 1989 from 102 to 136 incidents per 100 prisoners per year is consistent with the increase in the total number of incidents discussed above, although it is notable that at some prisons (Ararat, Dhurringile and Pentridge) the magnitude of the change in rates was significantly greater than the average.

Two other features of prison incident rates are notable. Firstly, female prisons (Fairlea and Tarrengower) have much higher overall incident rates than equivalent male prisons. In 1988 incidents involving female prisoners were reported approximately three times as often as those involving males (281 vs 91 per 100 prisoners per year), but in 1989 female prisoner incidents were reported only about twice as often as male prisoner incidents (222 vs 118 per 100 prisoners per year). One of the major factors contributing to this difference is the extremely high rate of self-injury incidents involving women prisoners; 40% of all incidents reported at Fairlea in 1988 were self-injury, although in 1989, following the introduction of a self-mutilation management program, the number of such incidents declined to about one-third of the previous level. Women prisoners also have higher rates of drug or alcohol-related incidents and breaches of prison regulations than do male prisoners.

The second characteristic of incident rates is that, in general, higher security prisons have higher incident rates. The maximum security Pentridge and Metropolitan Reception Prisons have the highest incident rates, and the minimum security prisons at Morwell River and Won Wron have much lower rates. There are a number of notable exceptions to this principle; for instance Dhurringile Prison, despite being a minimum security facility, had a high rate of reported incidents during 1989.

In assessing total incident trends, it would be useful to know whether the number of incidents is subject to seasonal trends, increasing during some months and decreasing during others. Figure 1 shows the number of incidents reported each month during 1988 and 1989. While it can be seen that the number of incidents reported each month during 1988 showed a fairly steady increase, it seems likely that this can be attributed to increasing familiarity with the reporting system. During 1989 this simple upward trend ceased to be evident and no clear seasonal trends can be identified on the basis of one year's data.

This brief examination of incident data over two years has shown at least two important factors that must be taken into account in any procedure that uses incident reports as predictive measures. Firstly, the number of incident reports is

TABLE 3

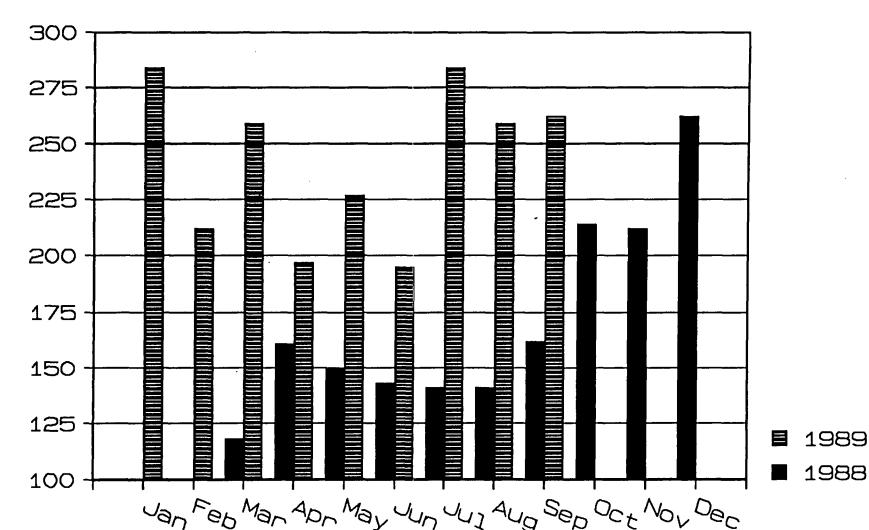## PRISON INCIDENTS BY PRISON LOCATION : March - Dec 1988

Incidents

PRISON	No.	%	Rate*
ARARAT	65	3.8	36.8
BEECHWORTH	46	2.7	48.4
BENDIGO	24	1.4	33.8
CASTLEMAINE	72	4.2	90.0
DHURRINGILE	52	3.0	67.8
FAIRLEA	240	14.0	368.4
GEELONG	49	2.9	49.4
METRO.RECEPTION	533	31.1	124.4
MORWELL RIVER	33	1.9	50.2
PENTRIDGE	484	28.3	131.4
SALE	38	2.2	81.5
TARRENGOWER	20	1.2	218.2
WON WRON	53	3.1	52.6
TOTAL	1711	100.0	101.8

PRISON INCIDENTS BY PRISON LOCATION : Jan - Sept 1989

Incidents

PRISON	No.	%	Rate*
ARARAT	186	8.5	117.5
BEECHWORTH	33	1.5	37.6
BENDIGO	33	1.5	52.3
CASTLEMAINE	56	2.6	77.0
DHURRINGILE	75	3.4	133.3
FAIRLEA	191	8.8	314.4
GEELONG	34	1.6	34.6
MELB.REMAND#	81	3.7	n/a
METRO.RECEPTION	577	26.4	141.2
MORWELL RIVER	21	1.0	32.6
PENTRIDGE	764	35.1	210.9
SALE	51	2.3	113.3
TARRANGOWER	26	1.2	157.6
WON WRON	49	2.2	54.4
TOTAL	2179	100.0	135.7

* Rates are incidents per 100 prisoners per year and have been corrected for expected full-year total incidents.

\# The Melbourne Remand Centre opened in June 1989 and a valid 12-month incident rate cannot be calculated.

FIGURE 1
PRISON INCIDENTS
1988 & 1989

Legend:
- 1989
- 1988

strongly influenced by changes in the method of reporting. Secondly, the changes in female prisoner incident rates shows that specific programs or operational changes can have a substantial impact on specific incident rates, and thereby on overall rates.

4.2 Assaults & Property Damage Incidents

Both Jayewardene and Aziz identified two types of prison incidents that can be used as indices of the state of prisoner unrest and hence as predictors of major incidents: assaults by prisoners on other prisoners or on staff, and damage to prison property. It is therefore appropriate to examine in more detail the characteristics of these specific incident types. It would also be useful to see whether there is any evidence to suggest whether this information could have been used to predict two major prison incidents occurring within the time-scale covered by the incident data-base, at 'B' Division at Pentridge in July 1988 and at Fairlea Prison in November 1988.

There are five specific incident types recorded on the computer-based system that can be considered as potentially useful predictors of major incidents:

- prisoner assaults on staff
- prisoner assaults on other prisoners
- damage to prison property (source unknown)
- damage to property (breach of Regulations)
- set alight article (breach of Regulations).

Tables 4 and 5 show the frequency of each of these incident types for Victorian prisons in 1988 and 1989. In 1988 there were 352 incidents which fell into the five types above, of which half were prisoner assaults on other prisoners. In 1989 there were 416 incidents of the five selected types, and prisoner assaults on other prisoners made up 45% of the total. The rate of assaults on staff went up marginally in 1989, but overall the distribution of incident types was similar over the two years. In general, the characteristics identified earlier in relation to all incidents hold true for the five selected incident types: female prisoners have a higher rate of incidents than males, and maximum security prisons have a higher incident rate than medium or minimum security prisons.

One aspect of these selected incident types that is critical for any predictive process is that the average incident rate is very low: around 25 incidents per 100 prisoners per year, or about 2 per month. Even in comparatively large prisons such as Pentridge or the Metropolitan Reception Prison (approx. 500 prisoners), this means that the average expected monthly number of selected incidents is only 10. For an "early warning" system to be useful, it should be able to give warnings on a time-scale of no more than a month; that is, it should be able to detect changes in the incident rate from one month to the next. Given the relatively low base-rate of incidents, any change in the monthly rate would need to be quite large before it was detectable. This principle can be illustrated by examining the incidents at the two locations where major incidents occurred in 1988.

TABLE 4

PRISON By TYPE OF INCIDENT : 1988

Incident Type

PRISON	ASSAULT ON STAFF	ASSAULT ON PRISONER	SET ARTICLE ALIGHT	DAMAGE PROPERTY (REG)	DAMAGE TO PRISON	Row Total
ARARAT	1	25		1		27
BEECHWORTH		5	1	4		10
BENDIGO	4	3		1		8
CASTLEMAINE	2	5		2		9
DHURRINGILE		1		2	3	6
FAIRLEA	12	4	4	17	4	41
GEELONG		4		2		6
METRO.RECEPTION	19	82	2	11	26	140
MORWELL RIVER					1	1
PENTRIDGE	14	39	2	20	10	85
SALE		3		1		4
TARRENGOWER					2	2
WON WRON		3		8		11
Column Total	54 15.3	174 49.4	9 2.6	69 19.6	46 13.1	352 100.0

TABLE 5

PRISON By TYPE OF INCIDENT : 1989

Incident Type

PRISON	ASSAULT ON STAFF	ASSAULT ON PRISONER	SET ARTICLE ALIGHT	DAMAGE PROPERTY (REG)	DAMAGE TO PRISON	Row Total
ARARAT	3	34		1		38
BEECHWORTH		1		1	2	4
BENDIGO	3	1		2		6
CASTLEMAINE	2	1		2	1	6
DHURRINGILE		3	1	1	6	11
FAIRLEA	12	10	1	5	9	37
GEELONG	4	4	1	1		10
MELB. REMAND	4	3	1	15		23
METRO. RECEPTION	15	44	5	13	28	105
MORWELL RIVER			1		1	2
PENTRIDGE	37	74	5	14	25	155
SALE		2	4		1	7
TARRENGOWER		2				2
WON WRON		7		1	1	9
Column Total	81 19.5	186 44.7	19 4.6	56 13.5	74 17.8	416 100.0

4.3 Predicting Major Incidents at B Division & Fairlea

In the period since March 1988, when an accurate incident data-base first became available, there have only been two events in Victorian prisons that satisfy the criteria for a 'major incident'. These two incidents took place at 'B' Division of Pentridge Prison in July 1988 and at Fairlea women's prison in November 1988.

The 'B' Division incident was initiated when Prison Officers attempted to remove a prisoner who was apparently under the influence of drugs to the prison hospital. The prisoner fought the Officers and a further ten or more prisoners joined in. Offices were able to move the prisoners from the Division to the exercise yard, at which point a larger group of prisoners barred the yard gates, set alight furniture and a shed and threw a variety of missiles at Officers. About 60 prisoners were involved in the incident which lasted for about two hours. It ended when Security Squad Officers in riot gear cut open the yard gates, extinguished the fires and moved the prisoners back to their cells. Two prisoners and nine Officers were treated for injuries.

The Fairlea incident was significantly less serious in terms of the level of violence involved and the amount of damage and injury that resulted. A prisoner who had been returned from hospital after treatment for self-inflicted wounds was placed in an observation cell. Other prisoners demanded that she be returned to her accommodation unit and about 40 or 50 refused to return to their cells at evening muster. A number of small fires were lit and some prisoners climbed onto a roof. The incident was resolved without violence after about 6 hours.

In order to show that these events could have been predicted on the basis of trends in the incident data in the periods immediately preceding them, one needs to be able to satisfy two statistical criteria:

(i)   one needs to show a significant increase in the frequency of "indicator" incidents in the period immediately prior to the major incident in comparison with the base rate of such incidents. Ideally, this discrimination should be made over a relatively short time scale - say one or two months;

(ii)   the analysis should discriminate between the location where the major incident occurred and those where major incidents did not occur. For instance, incident rates at 'B' Division before July 1988 should show a different pattern from those occurring in the rest of the Pentridge prison complex.

The simplest form of analysis that satisfies these criteria is a Chi-square test of independence. The first Chi-square table below shows the number of incidents at 'B' Division and the remainder of Pentridge Prison for the three month period leading up to the July incident (May to July - Pre) and for a three month period later in the year (October to December -Post)[5].

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[5]. Cell frequencies for a Chi-square test should be above 5 wherever possible. Hence, data for three months is required.

	PRE	POST	Row Total
B.DIVISION	1	2	3
REM. PENTRIDGE	5	14	19
Column	6	16	22

Chi-Square	D.F.	Significance	Min E.F.	Cells with E.F.< 5
.00000	1	1.0000	.818	2 of 4 (50.0%)
.06433	1	.7998	(Before Yates Correction)	

The Chi-Square test for the 'B' Division incident shows that there was no statistical relationship[8] between the number of incidents before and after the incident and the location of the incidents. In fact, the raw number of incidents at both locations was higher after the July incident than before. ˙

The Chi-Square test for the Fairlea incident uses data from earlier in 1988 (May to July - Control) as a comparison for the data in the three months before the incident (September to November - Pre). The location comparison is provided by the Pentridge incident rate: this is not an ideal basis for comparison, however no other significant female facility exists to provide more relevant comparative data.

	CONTROL	PRE	Row Total
FAIRLEA	2	11	13
REM PENTRIDGE	6	14	20
Column	8	25	33

Chi-Square	D.F.	Significance	Min E.F.	Cells with E.F.< 5
.29335	1	.5881	3.152	1 of 4 (25.0%)
.91638	1	.3384	(Before Yates Correction)	

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[8]. A statistical relationship would be demonstrated if the probability of the result (ie. "significance") was less than 5% or 0.05.

In this case the raw data shows a much higher number of "indicator" incidents at Fairlea in the period immediately prior to the November incident than in the three months earlier in the year. However, because this pattern was also evident at Pentridge (excluding 'B' Division), where no major incident took place, again there is no statistical basis for arguing that the Fairlea incident was predictable.

Note that each of these analyses is based upon three months combined data. If data from only one month had been used it is even less likely that any degree of statistical significance would have emerged.

Major prison incidents are typically complex, confused events. While they are occurring the efforts of prison managers and staff are focussed on specific goals such as containing fires, locating hostages and negotiating with prisoners. Any systematic understanding of the events that make up the incident, its causes, the effectiveness of staff responses and the actions that need to be taken in order to prevent the recurrence of the incident must depend upon reports compiled after the event.

Reports of major prison incidents can serve any of a number of purposes. They can be primarily political, in the sense of giving assurance to the general public that the causes of the incident have been analysed and corrective steps taken (Fox,1971). Some reports are directed at identifying the "ringleaders" of the disturbance in order that criminal charges may be laid. A report can examine the effectiveness of the administration's incident management procedures and co-ordination with fire-fighting, police and other emergency services. Finally, in some instances the analysis of a major disturbance may serve as a vehicle for examining the operations of the whole of a correctional department's activities.

This chapter critically reviews a number of reports of major incidents, and the purposes they were intended to achieve.

4.1 Major prison incident reports in Australia

The history of imprisonment in Australia has included many prison riots or other major disturbances. If one considers only those occurring after 1945, the list includes:

Yatala (S.A.)	-	21 May 1952
Pentridge (Vic)	-	9 September 1954
Brisbane (Qld)	-	6 November 1958
Hobart (Tas)	-	20 April 1959
Long Bay (N.S.W.)	-	22 August 1965
Fremantle (W.A.)	-	4 June 1968
Bathurst (N.S.W.)	-	19 October 1970
Brisbane (Qld)	-	February 1971
Pentridge (Vic)	-	1 October 1972
Hobart (Tas)	-	22 October 1972
Bathurst (N.S.W.)	-	3 February 1974
Yatala (S.A.)	-	22 March 1983
Yatala (S.A.)	-	August 1983
Brisbane (Qld)	-	December 1986
Metropolitan (Vic)	-	October 1987
Pentridge (Vic)	-	July 1988
Fremantle (W.A.)	-	4 January 1988

This is not a complete list, nor is it based on any single definition of a major incident.[7] One of the problems in reviewing reports of Australian prison incidents is that in many (if not most) cases the reports are internal departmental documents and therefore not readily available for review. Of the six post-1980 incidents listed above, only one report (Fremantle) can be considered as a public document, although the State Coroner's report on the 1987 K Division incident has the status of a public document. This state of affairs means that there is little sharing of information between state corrections agencies, and makes it almost impossible to systematically analyse the causes and processes of major incidents and the effectiveness of agencies' incident management strategies.

Bathurst 1974

The Nagle Royal Commission report into the Bathurst riot of 1974 (and also the New South Wales prison system generally) is one of the first comprehensive attempts to analyse and publicly report on the antecedents, events and aftermath of a major Australian prison incident. Rinaldi (1977) argues that prior to the 1972 Risdon (Hobart) riot, prison disturbances were not considered newsworthy by the Australian media and received little serious,attention by the general public.

In preparing its report, the Nagle Royal Commission interviewed large numbers of prisoners and prison staff and several senior departmental administrators. In addition to reviewing the causes and events of the 1970 and 1974 riots, the Royal Commission paid particular attention to the conditions at Bathurst prior to the 1970 riot and the bashings that occurred after it, and the failure of the administration to take any corrective action between 1970 and 1974.

The findings of the Nagle Royal Commission are summarized in Appendix 1. The Commission's final report made over 250 recommendations, many of which were directed at system-wide problems. The state of the New South Wales prison system was such that Nagle believed that wholesale changes across the system were required. No specific recommendations were made in relation to Bathurst Prison; this was hardly necessary as the prison had been almost totally destroyed during the riot.

Yatala 1983

The Yatala riot of March 1983 was one of a series of disturbances at the prison in 1982 and 1983. The Department's Annual Report of 1983/84 notes that for some time the prison had experienced frequent industrial disputes and high levels of stress-related sick-leave leading to staff shortages. In February 1983 prisoners held

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[7]. For instance, the 1985 K Division incident at Melbourne's Metropolitan Reception Prison directly involved only 11 prisoners (the usual criterion for a "major" incident is 15 prisoners), but in terms of the loss-of-life and material damage that occurred, it must be regarded as a major incident.

a non-violent "sit-in" which was followed some days later by a riot which resulted in the burning down of 'A' Division. A number of escapes (including one involving six prisoners) occurred and in August another riot resulted in the destruction by fire of 'C' Division. Prisoner unrest in the form of "sit-in's" continued until June 1984. In 1984 much of the older part of Yatala, including 'A' and 'C' Divisions, was demolished.

The report of the March 1983 riot at Yatala (see summary in Appendix 1) is an internal departmental document which describes the course of the incident in considerable detail; lengthy transcripts of evidence taken by police after the event are attached to the report. It also considers the likely causes of the incident, critically examines the prison staff's response to it, and makes a number of recommendations about how further incidents could be prevented or managed. The report raises a number of important issues about the management of incidents, but while it remains an internal document it seems unlikely that these issues will receive general attention.

Fremantle 1988

The report of the Fremantle riot of January 1988 was prepared for the state Minister of Corrections. It differs from the reports of the Bathurst and Yatala riots in the degree to which it focusses on the antecedents and specific causes of the event and the culpability of individual prisoners. The account that it gives of the course of the event more or less ceases at the point where prisoners took control of Two Division, and there is little analysis of or comment on the way in which the Western Australian Police and Corrections Department managed and ultimately ended the incident.

It is interesting to contrast the "model" of major prison incidents that is implicit in the Fremantle report with those of Bathurst, Yatala and K Division. Unlike the Bathurst and K Division reports, the Fremantle report ignores the curent state and past history of Western Australia's corrections system in general and considers only those factors specific to Fremantle prison in the period immediately preceding the incident. It identifies several aspects of the prison and its management that could be considered to be important generative factors for a major incident, including "substandard" physical conditions, repressive attitudes and punitive actions by officers, a prison administration that it describes as "inflexible, confrontationist and inaccessible" and poor handling of events immediately preceding the riot. Ultimately, the report concludes that "a group of prisoners had planned to cause damage and disruption to the prison and were merely awaiting the right opportunity." Moreover, "prisoners had become so resentful and frustrated over time that some other 'incident' would have provoked the event".

K Division 1987

The incident in Unit 5 of K Division at Victoria's Metropolitan Reception Prison is in many respects not typical of major prison incidents in Australia: only eleven prisoners were involved in barricading and then setting fire to the unit and the

amount of damage caused was relatively minor in the context of the prison system as a whole. On the other hand, the repercussions of the event were probably greater than those accompanying any major incident since Bathurst. The immediate consequences included the closure and complete reconstruction of K Division and revision of procedures for managing high-security and protection prisoners. However, the most profound consequences were directly connected with the conduct of the inquiry into the incident.

The report of the incident was prepared by the Victorian Coroner after an exhaustive inquiry during which an enormous amount of evidence was taken from dozens of participants (both staff and prisoners), management and administrative staff and expert witnesses. While the nominal focus of the Inquiry was the cause of death for the five prisoners, the scope of its findings covered issues of the management of the incident, emergency response procedures within the prison system, the appropriateness of the regime within K Division, the Office of Corrections' internal reporting procedures for the incident and the behavior of the Office during the course of the Inquiry. Ultimately, three further inquiries were established to investigate further issues raised by the Coroner.

The K Division Inquest report stands in contrast to more conventional investigations of major incidents in Australian prisons, especially in its focus on causes within the corrections system and its detailed analysis of the response to the event.

5.2   Reports of major incidents in the U.S. Federal prison system

One of the most salient features that emerges from the above review of reports of major Australian prison incidents is the extreme diversity of approaches, methods and reporting styles. An alternative, more systematic approach to investigating and reporting on major prison incidents is used by the United States Federal prison system.

The U.S. system of incident reporting is characterised by:

- expert, independant investigative teams;

  The investigation and reporting of incidents is conducted by expert teams headed by senior managers seconded from other Federal prison facilities who have appropriate knowledge of Federal correctional procedures but who are not directly connected with the prison at which the incident occurred.

- a formal, defined investigative and reporting procedure;

  The investigative process covers a comprehensive range of aspects of the incident, including the sequence of events, role of the prison's emergency response teams, involvement of external services (eg. fire-fighting), damage assessment, performance of equipment, and policy

and procedural implications.

- immediate debriefing of staff and prisoners;

    The core of Federal incident reports is a detailed chronological account of the sequence of events, based on comprehensive debriefing of staff and prisoners during and immediately after the incident.

The report of the major incidents at Atlanta Penitentiary and Oakdale Alien Detention Centre (see Appendix 1) is an example of the way that the Federal system is able to swiftly produce detailed, comprehensive incident reports. Some U.S. state correctional systems also use a truncated form of the Federal investigatory and reporting system (see Kirkland, South Carolina Incident Summary, Appendix 1), or have developed their own debriefing, review and assessment procedures (eg. New York State).

CHAPTER 6 : CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 The causes and control of major prison incidents

Anyone reading the literature on major prison incidents could be forgiven for coming to the conclusion that every aspect of imprisonment is a potential cause of major incidents, and that the only remaining research issue is to determine why all prisoners are not constantly in revolt. Fortunately, a somewhat more reasonable interpretation of the mass of research data and theoretical interpretation can be made that also generates useful insights into how major incidents can be controlled.

Firstly, the nature of imprisonment as a punishment is such that the probability of a major incident occurring is much higher than in other types of institutions or in the community generally. Prisoners lead a life that is characterised by extremely limited options as to what they do, who they associate with and how they deal with specific problems and conflicts. Hence, they have comparatively little to lose from participation in a major incident; in more formal language, the situational constraints that act upon them are weak. These factors do not directly "cause" incidents but rather fail to suppress or prevent an incident that is generated by other factors.

Secondly, prisoners are also subjected to a variety of "extraneous" punishments; that is, punishments that are not a necessary or integral component of the sentence of imprisonment but are nevertheless, to a greater or lesser extent, typical aspects of the deprivation of imprisonment. These include primitive living conditions, punitive or repressive management regimes, bad food, inadequate programs and services, and a general lack of meaningful activity. Clearly these factors have great potential to generate frustration and aggressive responses, and if they are sufficiently extreme they may generate a major incident in a fairly direct fashion. More often, they give rise to a climate of hostility, violent and destructive behavior and polarized staff-prisoner relations that predisposes prisoners to see any form of extreme change as likely to be better, or at least no worse, that the current situation.

Thirdly, there needs to be some precipitating event. The factors that have been identified as "immediate" incident causes can be grouped into three categories. One category consists of particularly extreme events or incidents; for instance, the perceived victimisation of an individual prisoner, a sudden deterioration in already poor environmental conditions, or a withdrawl of one of a limited range of privileges. A second group of "immediate" causes is events that lead to changes in the power relationships between prisoners and staff. More liberal or more represive management regimes, changes to disciplinary procedures or changes in the prisoner community's power hierarchy may all spark off an incident. The occurrence of major incidents at other prisons could also be included in this category, in the sense that such events can demontrate to prisoners the possibility of exercising power through revolt.

The third type of "immediate" cause is the mishandling of the early stages of an incident by prison staff in such a way that a major incident is generated. This may take the form of an excessive response to a minor incident or the rejection of clear warning signs of an impending major incident. Although this factor does not appear in any of the research literature reviewed for this study, analysis of actual incident reports shows that a significant number of major incidents could have been prevented or minimised if appropriate, prompt action had been taken.

Another causative issue that has received scant attention in the research literature is the role of individual prisoners in planning and initiating major incidents. While probably only a minority of incidents are extensively premeditated and planned, nevertheless individual prisoners play a significant role in at least some of them. Clearly the role of individual prisoners is intimately bound-up in the general issue of power relationships in the prisoner community.

If one accepts this model of how major incidents are caused, a number of preventive measures can be identified, including:

- maintaining a reasonable standard of prisoner accommodation and services;

- providing meaningful activities such as employment, education or recreation;

- dealing with prisoners in a fair and just fashion;

- advising prisoners prior to necessary program and procedural changes;

- training staff to recognize the warning signals of an impending incident, and training managers to accept and act on realistic staff warnings;

- developing graduated response procedures that allow minor incidents to be dealt with appropriately.

Obviously, no prison system will ever be able to prevent all major incidents all of the time. However, a well-run system that provides a high standard of management should be able to minimize the frequency and severity of major incidents.

6.2   Predicting major prison incidents

The starting hypothesis for this project was that major incidents could be predicted by the application of statistical monitoring techniques to data on minor incidents. This hypothesis was invalidated on two grounds; the inherent unreliability of the data-base of minor incidents, and the relatively low frequency of indicator incidents. Neither of these problems are insurmountable. The system for reporting incidents

could be amended so that officers had less discretion in what they reported and so that incidents were subject to a rigorous checking procedure. The low frequency of indicator events is more difficult to change. However, if one applied more sensitive criteria, for instance to take into account incidents of purely verbal conflict between prisoners and staff or between prisoners, then a higher degree of predictive discrimination could probably be achieved.

However, the development of such a predictive system is almost certainly unwarranted. On the one hand, any statistical predictive system will inevitably generate more false positives (ie. invalid warnings) than real positives, and would thus be of debatable value as a warning system. Secondly, a primary problem with controlling major incidents is that genuine, unequivocal warnings are often ignored anyway. Prison systems that have deteriorated to such an extent that a major incident is obviously in the offing are also typically unable to respond effectively even to clear warning signs.

This is not to say that a system for independantly monitoring the "climate" of prisons would not be a valuable management tool. Many prison systems produce a wealth of data about prisoner behavior and prisoner-staff interactions that is under-used as management information. A sudden, unexplained change in incident rates or management responses can indicate much more than simply that a riot is brewing. However, for this kind of data to be useful it needs to be processed into an easily comprehensible form that allows both long and short-term trends to be readily observed.

6.3   Investigating and reporting on major prison incidents

The brief review of reports of major incidents at Australian prisons showed that there was virtually no common ground in either the way that the incidents were investigated or reported. In most cases, the attribution of "cause" to an incident appeared to reflect the particular focus of those who commissioned or compiled the report rather than any comprehensive appreciation of the complex nature of major prison incidents. The one common feature of the reports was that their authors had little or no previous experience in investigating or reporting on major prison incidents.

For a corrections agency to learn from the experience of major incidents, it needs to have an investigatory and reporting system that is:
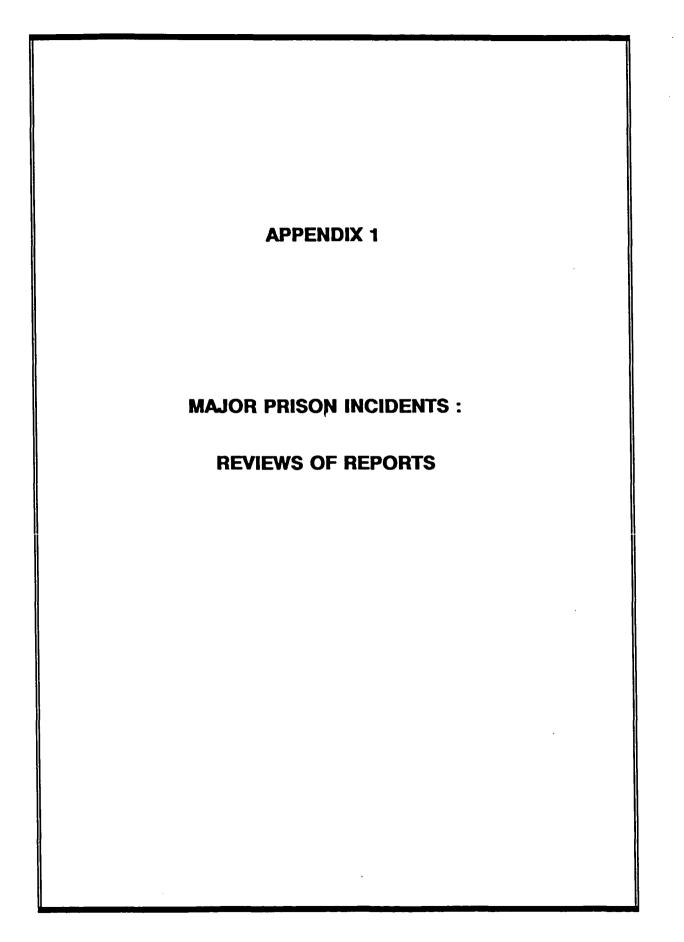
- **objective and informed**

    The post-incident review process should be undertaken by persons who are both knowledgeable about the environment in which the incident occurred but not directly involved in either the management of the facility or the response to the incident.

- **comprehensive and systematic**

  The review process should consider all aspects of the causes, events and outcomes of the incident rather than focussing on a few areas (eg. identification of instigators). In order to ensure that the review is comprehensive, it needs to follow a formal, systematic review process.

- **constructive**

  It is part of the nature of prison systems that there are always negative aspects of their operation that can become the focus of any review. A post-incident review should be a constructive process aimed at identifying feasible, appropriate changes to the prison system that will reduce the probability of future incidents or increase the system's capacity to manage them when they do occur.

APPENDIX 1

MAJOR PRISON INCIDENTS :

REVIEWS OF REPORTS

FREMANTLE PRISON
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Date of Incident:

4 & 5 January 1988

Type of Incident:

Riot, fire and hostage-taking

Report to:

Minister for Corrective Services

Size and Type of Institution:

370 prisoners; 70% maximum security
Fremantle Prison was originally built in 1855 and is one of the oldest prisons in Australia.

Initial Incident:

On 31.12.87 a "sit-in" was held by prisoners in Two Division in protest at the unfair treatment of a prisoner who had been refused leave to appeal against his transfer to another prison. The Enquiry found that this episode may have been an important precipitating factor.

7.00 am
4 Jan

A prisoner who was abusive to officers at morning unlock was restrained and transferred to an Observation Cell. Later in the morning he was returned to the yard. Other prisoners alleged that he had been assaulted and demanded that he be taken to hospital and photographed. Officers decided not to return prisoners to the workshops after lunch and a series of prisoner meetings were held during the afternoon.

Main Incident:

3.40 pm

Evening lock-up commenced and Main Division prisoners entered their division for their evening meal. On an apparently pre-determined signal, a group of prisoners rushed the grill gate and attack officers; 15 officers were injured, 2 seriously. A

number of fires were lit in cells, further assaults on officers occurred, and several sets of keys were taken. Five officers were held as hostages.

Two Division prisoners secured in their yard to prevent the spread of the disturbance.

Main Division prisoners moved from the division to their yard. "Riot leaders" assumed command of hostages and rioters, drew attention to grievances and demanded media attention and a meeting with the Executive Director.

The report gives no further details of the progress of the incident. Newpaper reports indicate that fires spread throughout Two and Three Divisions while approximately 120-130 prisoners remained at large within the prison overnight. Negotiations with the Police commenced at about 9 pm. and continued during the night. Hostages were released on the morning of 5 January and control was resumed by about mid-day.

The report notes that Fremantle Prison was still operating on a "crisis footing" six weeks after the incident.

Damage Estimate:

Three Division (100-150 cells) destroyed. No reconstruction intended.

Causes of Incident:

Physical conditions (incl overcrowding): acknowledged as "substandard" but prisoners stated that physical conditions were not a major concern.

Attitudes and punitive actions by Officers: The most common complaint; many prisoners expressed resentment and referred to a particular instance of assault. Report confirms this as a significant problem.

Inflexible and unfair administration: General frustration expressed by prisoners about prison administrators, with previous incident involving unfair treatment of a prisoner's appeal against transfer being widely cited. Report describes system as "inflexible, confrontationist and inaccessible" and proposes that prisoners believed that they needed to resort to desperate measures in order to be heard.

Prisoner conspiracy/escape: Widespread belief by staff, but report says there is no evidence to support this as a cause.

Poor handling of initial incident: Handling of initial incident of transfer of prisoner to observation cell and then later back to yards was inconsistent with the appropriate use of observation.

Report concludes that "a group of prisoners had planned to cause damage and disruption to the prison and were merely awaiting the right opportunity." Moreover, "prisoners had become so resentful and frustrated over time that some other "incident" would have provoked the event".

Recommendations/Follow-up Actions:

The report recommends:

Systematic intelligence gathering to give warning of developing situations;

Prison administrators, should observe existing procedures and policies;

Better staff selection, training, counselling and discipline;

Better management, dispersal and isolation of high-risk prisoners.

KIRKLAND CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTION
SOUTH CAROLINA, U.S.A.

Date of Incident:

1 April 1986

Type of Incident:

Riot, fire, hostage-taking.

Report to:

Board of Corrections & Commissioner of South Carolina Department of Corrections.

Size & Type of Institution:

A general custody prison with one maximum security division; 950 prisoners.

Initial Incident:

7.00 pm   A prisoner in the Substantiated Security Risk (SSR) section (apparently special maximum security) of maximum security Unit D threatens an officer with a knife and obtains a key-set to the Unit. Releases 30+ prisoners from Unit D.

Main Incident:

7.30 pm   SSR section prisoners obtain construction tools and use them to free 700 prisoners; 22 staff taken hostage or trapped.

7.40 pm   Prisoners take control of general accommodation areas, set fires and destroy buildings and property.

Response:

8.00 pm   Armed officers contain prisoners within general accommodation areas.

8.45 pm	Hostage negotiations commence - a prisoner presents as "in charge".
9.15 pm	Riot Squad frees officers trapped in Unit D, regains control of Unit, takes custody of 75 prisoners.
9.40 pm	Prisoners ordered to move to recreation yard. Riot squad sweeps accommodation units, takes custody of prisoners, frees hostages and trapped staff.
11.00 pm	Institution secured; 8 SSR prisoners transferred to another prison; remainder returned to accommodation units.

Damage Estimate:

$732,000

Causes of incident:

Incident investigated by SCDC's Division of Internal Affairs and Inspections. It was concluded that:

"... the disturbance was a spontaneous event triggered by the release of a relatively small number of extremely violent inmates." (p.15)

The report notes that SSR prisoners had a history of destroying security equipment and assaulting staff, mainly through throwing urine and faeces, but also one recent stabbing incident.

Faults in the electric door locks were had also been evident in the SSR unit for some time.

It was determined that the following were not causes:
Overcrowding was ruled out as a cause, however the large number of prisoners involved complicated the process of regaining control.
Negligence by staff prior to or during the incident was not a cause.
General security audit conducted over several weeks immediately prior to the incident found no indication of any imminent disturbance.

<u>Follow-up Action</u>:

30 prisoners transferred to other institutions

Sliding bolt locks with padlocks installed on SSR unit cell doors.

All entry/exit keys for Unit D to remain in control room unless in use.

One additional officer post in Unit D.

Construction tools to be removed from the institution.

Pay increases for officers recommended.

Increased use of non-custodial sentences recommended to reduce overcrowding.

FEDERAL ALIEN DETENTION CENTER, OAKDALE, LOUISIANA, & U.S. PENITENTIARY, ATLANTA, GEORGIA

Date of Incident:

21-29 November, 1987 (Oakdale)
23 November - 4 December, 1987 (Atlanta)

Type of Incident:

Riot, fire, hostage-taking by Cuban detainees.

Report To:

U.S. Federal Attorney-General

Size and Type of Institutions:

Oakdale FDC was built in 1985 to hold illegal aliens. It is a low-medium security facility with an open "campus-like" atmosphere. In November 1987 it held 987 Cuban detainees.

Atlanta USP is an older-style maximum security institution of traditional cellblock design. In November 1987 it held 1,394 Cubans with prior or current criminal records.

Initial Incident:

In 1980 approximately 125,000 Cubans were expelled from Cuba and deposited on the beaches of South Florida. A high proportion of these people had criminal histories or were mentally ill. Initially, virtually all of the expelled Cubans were held in detention centres; after processing by the Immigration Service, most were given entry permits. Those found to be mentally ill or to have committed serious crimes continued to be held in custody. By 1987, all remaining Cuban detainees were held at Oakdale FDC or Atlanta USP.

On November 20, 1987 the U.S. State Department announced that Cuba had agreed to reinstate a repatriation agreement whereby those detainees still in custody could be returned to Cuba.

<u>Main Incident</u>:

Nov. 20   Staff at both prisons informed the detainees of the repatriation agreement. Reaction was mixed, with some detainees expressing hostility. Additional staff were placed on security duties and a Response Team was placed on standby at Oakdale. At evening meal detainees at Oakdale rioted in the dining room, wrecking it. Order was restored by staff and the Response Team and the detainees returned to their accommodation units.

Nov. 21 Oakdale   During the morning and early afternoon a number of detainees reported to staff that a significant incident would take place that night and that large numbers of detainees were planning to escape. Staff reported that detainees had ceased to co-operate, that many were gathering food, packing personal property and wearing multiple layers of clothes. Phone queues were unusually long. At 6.50 pm a group of 200 detainees gathered in the central compound and assaulted the front entrance but were repelled by tear-gas fired by the Response Team. They then began to smash, loot and burn buildings within the compound and to assault staff. Staff were evacuated from the compound, further support units were called up and efforts were made to secure the perimeter. During the night it was established that 28 staff were being held hostage.

Atlanta   Detainees became aware of the disturbances at Oakdale at about 9.00 pm, but showed little interest or reaction.

Nov. 22 Oakdale   All services to the prison were cut. Hostage negotiations commenced and the detainees made an initial set of demands, mainly for freedom or transfer to another country.

Atlanta   Staff reviewed the option of a "lock-down" to prevent a repetition of the Oakdale riot. This option was rejected because it was felt to be unneccessary and because it could not practically be implemented for those detainees held in open dormitories.

Nov. 23 Oakdale   Negotiations continued. Regular helicopter flights around facility to keep detainees under pressure.

Atlanta   Some staff submitted reports based on information received from detainees which suggest serious problems could be expected. The prison Warden directed that staff "saturate the institution with talk". After unlock staff reported numbers of inmates wearing tennis shoes (cause for being refused entry to prison industry areas) and extra clothing. Increase in outgoing mail reported. Some detainees warned staff of trouble. Female staff were removed to secure areas of facility and additional staff were called on duty. Rioting began at about 10.30am in the industries buildings and dining hall. Detainees armed with

improvised weapons spread throughout prison compound taking hostages and setting fires. Several were shot by tower guards and one was killed. Emergency procedures were implemented and all available law enforcement agencies called in to assist. Control over some parts of the prison was maintained and by afternoon it was believed that 79 staff were held hostage and a further 42 trapped inside the prison. FBI SWAT squad and negotiators arrived and negotiations commenced. Firefighting teams were unable to effectively control burning buildings.

Nov. 24	Oakdale	Identified detainee leaders meet with negotiators and provide a written list of demands.
	Atlanta	Director of BoP gives assurance that safety of hostages is paramount. Large numbers of detainees surrender and seven hostages are released. Fragmented negotiations with detainee leaders.
Nov. 25	Oakdale	Negotiations proceed but without success.
	Atlanta	Negotiations proceed but without success. Further hostages released and more detainees surrender.
Nov. 26	Oakdale	Negotiations continue, preliminary arrangements made for end of incident and release of hostages.
	Atlanta	Negotiations continued but were broken off after failure to reach agreement over live press conference with detainee leaders.
Nov. 27	Oakdale	Negotiations stalemated.
	Atlanta	Detainees held several meetings and presented a list of demands to negotiators.
Nov. 28	Oakdale	Decision taken to by-pass detainee negotiators. A message from a Catholic Bishop was broadcast directly to detainees.
	Atlanta	Further fires broke out within the compound.
Nov. 29	Oakdale	Detainees surrenders, hostages are released and Oakdale incident comes to an end.
	Atlanta	Negotiators identified four detainee factions.
Nov. 30	Atlanta	Negotiations were suspended due to fragmented nature of detainee leadership.
Dec. 1	Atlanta	Negotiations were resumed with new detainee leaders.
Dec. 2	Atlanta	Negotiations broken off again. Catholic Bishop's message broadcast to detainees.
Dec. 3	Atlanta	Agreement reached with detainee leaders to end disturbance and release hostages.

Dec. 4 Atlanta   Agreement signed and Atlanta disturbance comes to an end.

Damage Estimate :

Oakdale: Extensive damage to buildings within perimeter, including seven major buildings destroyed. Direct reconstruction costs estimated at $15.7 Million plus costs of incident itself (staff, medical, legal etc).

Atlanta: Prison industries, recreation, education and segregation unit buildings totally destroyed. Other buildings extensively damaged. Reconstruction costs estimated at $33.7 Million.

Causes of Incident:

The post-incident investigation found that the proposed repatriation of detainees was the sole cause of the incident. The State Department's failure to give adequate notice of the repatriation agreement severely curtailed prison administrators' capacity to manage the situation.

Follow-up Action:

The report makes 107 separate recommendations. None are directed at the immediate cause of the incident (see above) but rather are concerned with the management of major incidents, including policy, hostage negotiation, equipment, the media, training, records, building design and construction, staff services and fire safety.

YATALA LABOUR PRISON; SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Date of Incident:

22 March 1983

Type of Incident:

Riot, fire, hostage-taking

Report to:

Internal report to Executive Director of Department of Corrective Services

Size and Type of Institution:

In 1983 Yatala Labour Prison was a high security prison accommodating 300 to 400 prisoners. The prison was divided into a number of separate divisions: 'A' Division had a capacity of 214 beds but held only 131 prisoners at the time of the riot.

Initial Incident:

In the early afternoon (1.00 pm) prisoners in the 'A' Division yards apparently consumed a quantity of home-brewed alcohol and a number of fights between prisoners ensued. Officers reported an unusual number of requests by prisoners to leave the yards and enter the Division; at around 1.30 this flow was reduced.

Main Incident:

At about 2.45 pm officers entered 'A' Division in response to the sound of breaking glass. Assaults on officers in and around the Division commenced at about 3.15 pm and prisoners commenced to erect barriers within the Division. Officers used C.S. gas, without effect, and shortly after 3.30 pm it became evident that two Correctional Officers were still within the Division, apparently as hostages. A fire was started in the Division chapel and rapidly spread to other parts of the building. Organized prisoner resistance ceased as the fire spread, and staff efforts were mainly directed at evacuating

prisoners from the Division and locating and releasing the hostages. At 4.00 pm. a group of Correctional Officers with riot control gear arrived but were ordered to stay out of the Division. All prisoners were removed to other locations and Fire Brigade units arrived to extingiush the fire.

Damage Estimate:

'A' Division was effectively destroyed, together with large amounts of prisoners' belongings within it. The Division was subsequently demolished in 1984.

Causes of Incident:

The report identified three causes:

Prisoner discontent with conditions
A fortnight previously 'A' Division prisoners had held a "sit-in"; their demand included the re-instatement of weight-lifting and the Prisoners' Needs Committee. Dissatisfaction with the Parole system was also expressed.

Alcohol Intoxication
Home brews had apparently been a significant problem during the summer and staff appeared unable or unwilling to deal with the problem.

Excessive opportunity for high-security prisoners to mix
A number of high-security prisoners were prominently involved in both the 8 March sit-in and the 22 March riot.

Recommendations/Follow-up Actions:

1. Dispersal of high-security prisoners whose behavior indicates a risk to security.
2. Establishment of crisis management procedures, including hostage negotiation.
3. Greater accountability of Correctional Officers - in reference to apparent tolerance of alcohol consumption by prisoners.
4. Improved co-operation with emergency services.

BATHURST PRISON, NEW SOUTH WALES

Date of Incident:

3 February 1974

Type of Incident:

Riot, fire.

Report to:

Royal Commission appointed by Parliament of New South Wales

Size and Type of Institution:

Bathurst was a maximum security prison holding approximately 200 prisoners. It was originally built in the 19th Century and had changed little since then. It consisted of four Divisions arranged about a central chapel and Circle area. After the 1974 riot it was closed and extensively rebuilt.

Initial Incident:

The Nagel Royal Comission identified a sit-in that occurred in October 1973 as the "logical starting point". For years prior to this sit-in, the prison had been marked by extremely poor management practices, substandard conditions and high levels of prisoner diorder, including a major riot in October 1970 which was followed by savage reprisals.

As early as 24 January a prisoner informed officers of an impending riot. On Sunday 3 February a petrol bomb was thrown in the chapel where prisoners were watching a film. Later that afternoon a prisoner was questioned about the bomb-throwing and apparently beaten. This prisoner's screams were the immediate cause of the riot.

Main Incident:

At about 2.00 pm a second petrol bomb was thrown and prisoners smashed the locks on their yard gates and entered

the Circle. Officers left the Circle while prisoners entered the buildings, smashing furniture, breaking doors and setting fires with the aid of petrol bombs. Most of the buildings within the prison were set alight and the fire brigade was unable to enter the prison. At about 3.15 the rioting prisoners withdrew to the southern part of the prison. Officers armed with rifles commenced to fire on the prisoners, wounding several of them. Prisoners began to surrender and by 4.00 pm all but 80 had surrended. The remainder retreated into the undamaged B Wing and at 6.00 pm began to negotiate a surrender. After surrendering they were placed in the Back Specials Yards. Additional officers and volunteers arrived early on Sunday evening. During the night and the next morning prisoners were systematically assaulted by staff. Thee assaults continued the next morning until the prisoners were tranferred to other locations.

Damage Estimate:

The major part of Bathurst Prison (including A and C wings, the Chapel, industry workshops, kitchens, laundry and boiler-room) was more or less totally destroyed. The rebuilding cost was of the order of $10 million.

Causes of Incident:

The Royal Commission identified discontent arising from the extremely poor physical conditions at the gaol, together with an oppressive management regime as the underlying cause of the incident. Specific issues which emerged during the Commission's hearings included:

- extremely primitive living conditions;
- limited access to education, recreation and sporting activities;
- frequent destructive security searches by officers;
- poor quality food;
- absence of prisoner employment.

Recommendations/Follow-up Actions:

The Royal Commission made 252 separate recommendations covering all aspects of the N.S.W. prison system. None of the recommendations was specifically addresed at Bathurst Prison.

K DIVISION, METROPOLITAN RECEPTION PRISON : VICTORIA

Date of Incident:

29 October 1987

Type of Incident:

Barricade, fire.

Report to:

Coronial Inquest into deaths of 5 prisoners in fire

Size and Type of Institution:

K Division was a maximum security unit holding around 50 prisoners in six separate units. Prisoners were classified to K Division on the basis of exceptional management, security or protection requirements. The Division was constructed in the early 1970's as a "model" high-security unit incorporating remote surveillance and locking equipment. For some time it had been the subject of criticism as an environment that contributed to bizarre prisoner behaviors and very poor staff-prisoner relations.

Initial Incident:

The Coroner identified the initiating incident as the refusal of the Classification Committee to re-classify prisoner Robert Wright to a mainstream Division. Wright had previously threatened to protest if his reclassification was refused.

Main Incident:

On the afternoon of 29 October prisoners on both sides of Unit 4 of K Division jammed the entry doors into the Unit, covered the windows with newspaper to prevent observation, erected substantial barricades and set fire to them.
Staff experienced extreme difficulty in forcing entry to the Unit due to the manner in which the doors had been jammed and the thick, toxic smoke emitted by the fires.

Four prisoners on one side of the Unit were safely evacuated, however the five prisoners on the other side could not be revived. Fourteen Prison Officers were treated in hospital for smoke inhalation.

Damage Estimate:

Although damage from the fires was confined to Unit 4, the entire Division was reconstructed over the next year. All electronic control and surveillance equipment was removed and new ablution, laundry and kitchen facilities were constructed. The total cost of these works was around $1.5M.

Causes of Incident:

The Coronial Inquest that followed the fire was concerned primarily with determining the cause of death of the five prisoners. Nevertheless, the Coroner made detailed comments on all aspects of the incident, including the events immediately preceding it, the manner in which staff attempted to extinguish the fires and evacuate the prisoners, and the subsequent internal investigation of the incident. Comments by the Coroner bearing on the causes of the incident included:

- the "electronic zoo" environment contributed to prisoners' aberrant behavior;

- the failure to reclassify prisoner Wright was the immediate cause of the incident;

- failure of staff to report on prisoners' behavior in preparation for the incident;

- equipment failure in the electronic and pneumatic door mechanisms made access to the unit more difficult;

- inadequate emergency procedures and equipment prevented rapid entry into the unit;

- the direct cause of death of the five prisoners was asphyxia by carbon monoxide poisoning following smoke inhalation.

Recommendations/Follow-up Actions:

The Coroner recommended an independant and general inquiry into the Office of Corrections and its administration of

the prison system in Victoria. In fact, three further inquiries weere established:

.   a judicial inquiry into the behavior of the Office of Corrections during the Coronial Inquiry;

.   a review of emergency response procedures;

.   an Inquiry by the Victorian Ombudsman into the public accountability of the Office of Corrections.

APPENDIX 2

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APPENDIX 3

INCIDENT TYPES

Code	Type		Code	Type
101	ASSAULT ON STAFF		501	RIOT
102	ASSAULT ON PRISONERS		502	INCITE OTHERS
103	OTHER ASSAULTS		503	SABOTAGE
111	ACCIDENTAL INJURY		504	HOSTAGE-TAKING
112	INDUSTRIAL ACCIDENT		505	CONSPIRACY
121	SUICIDE		506	BREACH PRISON
122	ATTEMPT. SUICIDE		507	BARRICADE
123	SELF MUTILATION		511	POSSESS/USE EXPLOSIVE
131	DEATH OF STAFF		512	POSSESS/USE FIREARMS
132	DEATH OF PRISONER		513	POSSESS/USE WEAPON
133	OTHER DEATH		601	PRISONER STRIKE
141	BODY FLUID CONTACT		602	STAFF STRIKE
201	ESCAPE		603	HUNGER STRIKE
202	ATTEMPT ESCAPE		701	PRISONER PROPERTY
203	FAIL RETURN TEMP.LEAVE		702	STAFF PROPERTY
204	POSESS ESCAPE IMPLEMENTS		703	FACILITY PROPERTY
301	POSSESS/USE DRUGS		801	FIRE
302	POSSESS/USE ALCOHOL		802	OTHER ACT OF GOD
303	POSSESS/USE OTH. SUBSTANCE		901	STAFF FORCE ON PRISONER
304	POSSESS ARTICLES		902	STAFF RESTRAINT ON PRIS.
311	TRAFFICK DRUGS		911	VISITOR ORDERED TO LEAVE
312	TRAFFICK ALCOHOL		912	USE FORCE ON VISITOR
313	TRAFFICK OTHER SUBS		921	STAFF USE OF WEAPON
401	THREAT ASSAULT			
402	REMOVE/MAKE BODY MARKS			
403	GAMBLING			
404	CORRESPOND W/O PERMISSN			
405	QUARRELLING			
406	LEAVE PLACE OF WORK			
407	REFUSE/CARELESS WORK			
408	MAKE UNDUE NOISE			
409	ENTER CELL W/O PERMISS			
410	GROUNDLESS COMPLAINTS			
411	FALSE ALLEGATIONS			
412	INDECENT ACT/GESTURE			
413	FAIL OBEY ORDER			
421	SET ARTICLE ALIGHT			
422	DAMAGE PROPERTY			
423	THREAT DAM. PROPERTY			

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