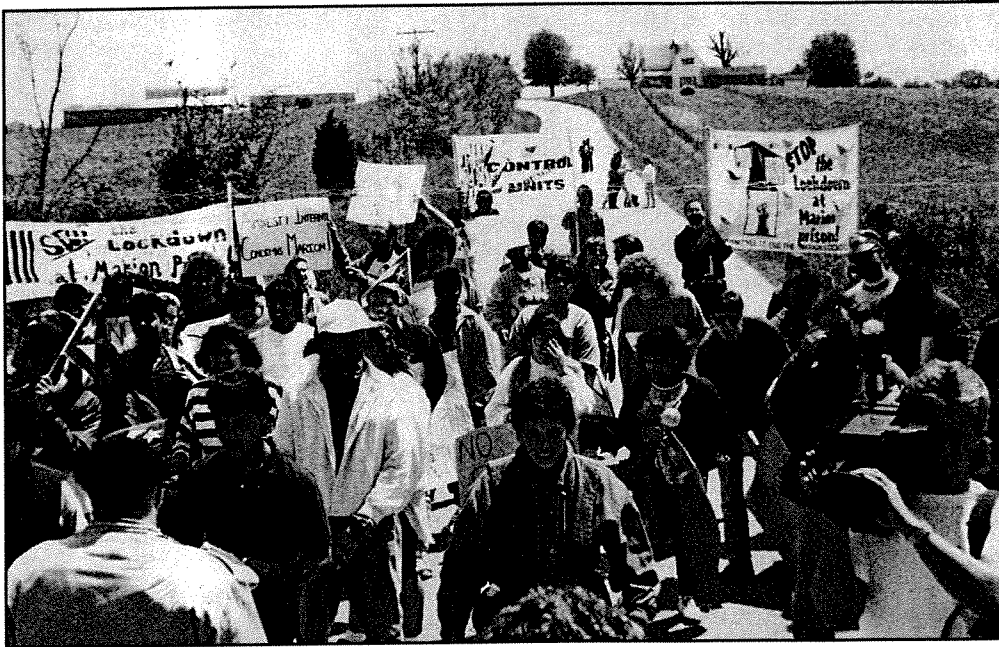


# A TOUR THROUGH THE Circles of Hell

BY PATRICK O'SHEA



COMMITTEE TO END MARION LOCKDOWN

*Demonstrators march toward the gates of Marion prison.*

CORRECTION OFFICER DAVID HALE was horrified by the barbaric and brutal actions of his fellow officers. "I can't describe it to you — I've never seen beatings like that," he recalled. "At least 50 guys got it, maybe more. I seen them carry one inmate down the hall with a guard on each leg and one on each arm. The assistant warden comes down the hall and grabs the inmate's testicles and starts yanking on them, saying, 'Who's doing it to who now, boy?'"

According to Hale and court testimony from more than 50 prisoners at the federal prison at Marion, Illinois, an assault force of guards entered the cells outfitted in helmets, plastic shields, bullet-proof vests, and armed with specially designed riot gear. Their name tags were removed from their uniforms so that it would be impossible to identify them when it was over. Moving from cell to cell in squads, they shackled the prisoners' hands and legs, and then proceeded to inflict severe beatings with steel tipped boots and three-foot riot bludgeons, each with a steel ball affixed to the end. "Rib-spreaders," as they are called, are designed to separate intercostal rib cartilage and

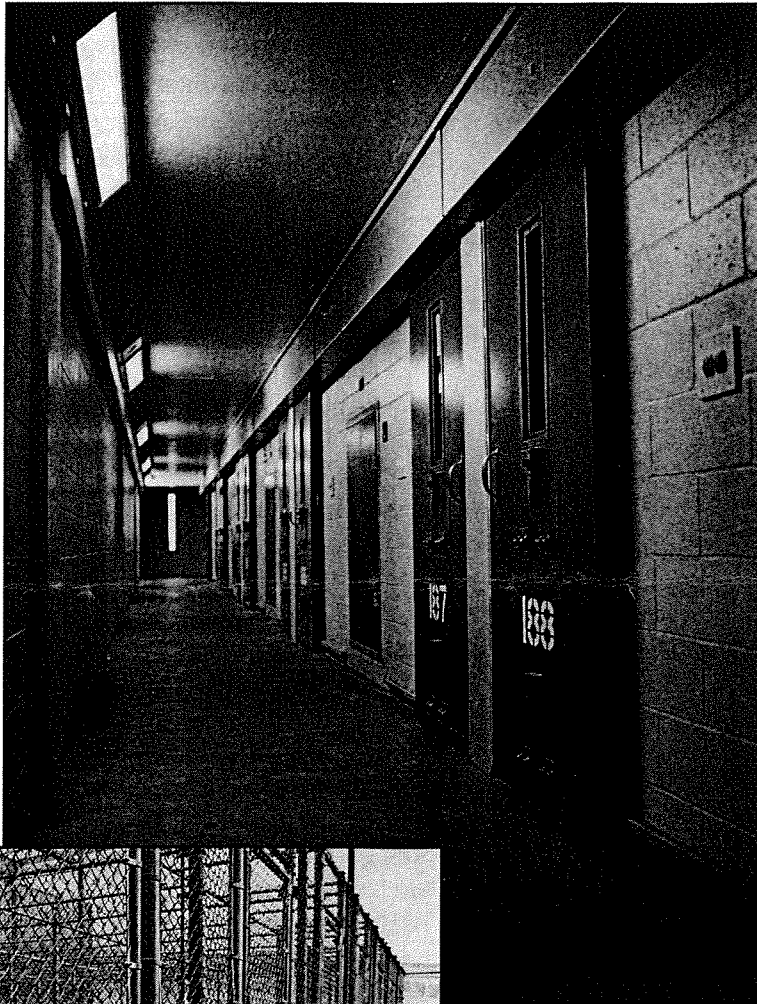
cause acute pain without fracturing bones or leaving any evidence of bruises. They are favorite weapons for this reason and have become part of the regular equipment at the prison.

After all the prisoners locked in the cell block were beaten, the assault team entered the hospital and proceeded to beat prisoners who were bedridden and under medical supervision. In many cases, they ripped off prisoners' underwear and conducted forced rectal searches that amounted to rape. Hale testified: "Certain guards were bragging about how far they shoved a riot baton up an inmate's rectum." One prisoner was injected with an unspecified drug and lost consciousness for two days.

This assault occurred on October 27, 1983. Since then, Marion has been in a state of a 23-hour lock down. The entire prison has become a Control Unit.

Control Units originated with the Federal Bureau of Prisons. The federal government has long been a leader in developing sophisticated techniques of behavior modification. As far back as 1963, under the direction of Dr. Edward Schein, experiments with repressive methods were underway. James Bennett,

Director of BOP at that time, approved Dr. Schein's ideas. By late 1968, the Bureau of Prisons had sent Dr. Martin Groder to the federal prison at Marion to begin monitoring the behavior of prisoners confined to the notorious "H Block," later renamed as "The Control Unit." The Marion facility, opened in 1963 as a replacement for Alcatraz, is the only Level Six prison operated by the federal government. Located 360 miles south of Chicago, Marion sits in the midst of Crab Orchard National Wildlife Preserve. It is surrounded by swamps,



MICHAEL JACOBSON-HARDY



*Recreation is confined to walks in the kennel, one hour per day, five days each week. The men are frequently handcuffed during their exercise period.*

*The DDU is equipped with all the technology that money can buy. The sensory deprivation cells are sound proof, and monitored by camera.*

an abundance of razor wire, and numerous fences and gun towers. The facility houses between 350 and 400 prisoners, most of whom are political prisoners. Since Groder's arrival, Marion has become a model for other federal prisons and for state prisons in which extreme behavior modification is practiced. Human Rights Watch, an international human rights agency that has condemned the prison, refers to this phenomenon as "Marionization" and notes that 36 states have established their own super maximum control units.

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**"His skin was peeling back and raw meat was visible. I will investigate the extensive use of gas and the presence of a paramilitary force at Cedar Junction (Walpole)."**  
**MASSACHUSETTS STATE SENATOR ROYAL BOLLING, 1988**

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### **"Marionization" in Massachusetts**

Despite the fact that Marion was singled out by Amnesty International as imposing conditions that "amount to cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment" and as being in violation of the United Nations standard minimal requirements for the treatment of prisoners, Marionization continues unabated. The most recent state interested in the Marion model is Massachusetts. Led by Ronald Duval, Superintendent at Walpole state prison, senior correction officials visited Marion. When he returned, he told reporters from the *Boston Globe*, "We absolutely liked what we saw." It figures. Duval's disregard for human rights is no surprise. Duval stood accused by his fellow officers of brutality against prisoners in a 1991 incident at MCI-Cedar Junction (Walpole). During the event in question, which took place in the hospital unit in the basement, Duval, then the Director of Security, ordered his guards to shut off the recording video while he repeatedly kicked a prisoner in the face who was being restrained by handcuffs and waist chain. Had it not been for a disgruntled guard, who himself participated in the beating of the prisoner, and who later signed an affidavit against Duval, the incident would have received little attention. Department of Correction spokesperson Robin Bavaro, when questioned about the incident at Walpole state prison and about the subsequent promotion of Duval to the office of superintendent, replied, "It is the department's policy not to comment on personnel issues with anyone, at any time."

When Duval says he liked what he saw, one must acknowledge that he is not alone. After all, the construction of this facility cost \$300,000 per prisoner, making it the most expensive prison ever built in Massachusetts. How does this expensive, new generation super-maximum facility differ from high level security prisons, and what justifies the enormous expense?

### **The Departmental Segregation Unit- Forerunner of the DDU**

In 1985, prisoner Jorge Bidot burned to death in Cell 27 in the notorious Departmental Segregation Unit, known as Ten Block, at MCI-Walpole. The details of the case alerted court officials that something was seriously wrong with the administration of the DSU. The hearing about the inquest took place in Wrentham District Court on March 20, 1985, and uncovered the following facts.

Inmate Jorge Bidot committed suicide by setting his cell on fire and stuffing toilet paper around the door to prevent fresh air from entering his cell. Expert testimony concluded that the door was jammed because the use of toilet paper created sufficient pressure against the bolt in the worn lock to prevent the guards from unlocking his door. According to the report, however, Bidot could have been rescued despite the failure of the lock and key. The report concludes that:

Although the key could not open the solid door of Bidot's cell, an emergency lever was located at the end of the lower left and right tiers. This lever was housed in a box just outside each tier. Expert testimony indicates that this lever would have unlocked Bidot's solid door on February 4, 1985. All guards questioned were familiar with the use of that handle [on the upper tiers, but not on the lower tier where Bidot died]. At some point in the first month of a Correction Officer's training, he is taught the general use of emergency levers...Had the handle been pulled that night, it would have released all the steel doors on the cells in the lower right tier.

The officers attending to the emergency on the night of February 4, 1985...testified that they were unaware of the purpose of the handle. One officer, however, who *did* know of its purpose believed it had been damaged in earlier riots and never repaired. Sergeant Marshall, at the time of Bidot's death, knew of the existence of the handle, since he used the closet in which it was prominently housed as a storage area. Common sense would suggest that one of many correction officers should have tried the handle on the night in question.

Marshall did not bother to test it. Bidot died. When the state police arrived to question the prisoners, most of them were reticent because they feared reprisals. The one inmate who did speak openly with the state police was placed in isolation. Privately, and through correspondence with their attorneys, many inmates questioned Marshall's willingness to open Bidot's door. He had been known to throw lighted cigarettes onto the beds of sleeping inmates.

### **Blocks to Attorney/Client Confidentiality**

When these and similar facts were reported during attorney visits, the administration became fearful and replaced the wire mesh screen dividing the DSU visiting room with a Plexiglass wall that interfered with the

free flow of information. Ann Greenblatt, an attorney with the Massachusetts Correctional Legal Services, reported in her affidavit that she objected to DSU staff that "the prisoner and I were not allowed to have a contact visit; rather, we were placed on opposite sides of a solid Plexiglass barrier. The barrier has a small voice box, but it was necessary to shout to make oneself heard by the person on the other side." Thus, it was impossible to exchange and review documents in a confidential manner. Legal paperwork would have to be carried by a guard to the attorney, or from an attorney to the prisoner, through a locked door where the guard was not visible to either party, thus allowing the guard an opportunity to peruse the paperwork. Furthermore, Greenblatt asserted that her in-person discussion with prisoners in the DSU had been continually monitored except for periods when the monitor-officer had left his assigned station. [Mail between attorneys and clients was interfered with, and clients' phone access was deliberately hindered.] Anyone who complained was subject to discrimination. After a number of complaints, the court finally intervened and ordered that inmates should have direct access to counsel. In her petition Attorney Greenblatt stated:

The petitioner, whatever its status may be in this proceeding, is presently seeking an order permitting MCLS staff to meet with DSU inmates (1) without the imposition of any mesh or Plexiglass barrier; (2) without the necessity of conversing via the telephone device; (3) without DSU inmates being required to wear jumpsuits; and (4) without being required to set up an appointment 24 hours in advance.

In addition, the Department of Correction attempted to bar paralegals who were employed by the Massachusetts Correctional Legal Services. Dianne McLaughlin, who had worked for 14 years with the National Prison Project of the American Civil Liberties Union, had her visiting privileges revoked and was accused of violating Walpole visiting rules and a state criminal statute as well. McLaughlin believes that the DOC was responding to



AP PHOTO

*During the 1970s, Ten Block stayed in this condition for months at a time. Amnesty International charged Human Rights Violations.*

her criticism that during her visits to the men in the DSU, a guard had been posted within eight feet of herself and her client, and that the guard could listen to her conversation without any difficulty. She requested that she be allowed to see clients in a place that allowed visual surveillance but not auditory surveillance, and her request had been denied.

The Supreme Judicial Court for Suffolk County agreed with Ms. McLaughlin and demanded that she be allowed access to prisoners without making application to do so, that legal visits be carried on without auditory surveillance, and that continuous visual surveillance by DOC personnel was uncalled for. The court further enjoined DOC employees from reading, censoring, withholding and confiscating legal papers. It allowed prisoners to have legal visits without being required to wear handcuffs, waist chains, leg irons, jumpsuits, or other impediments whose purpose clearly was to harass.

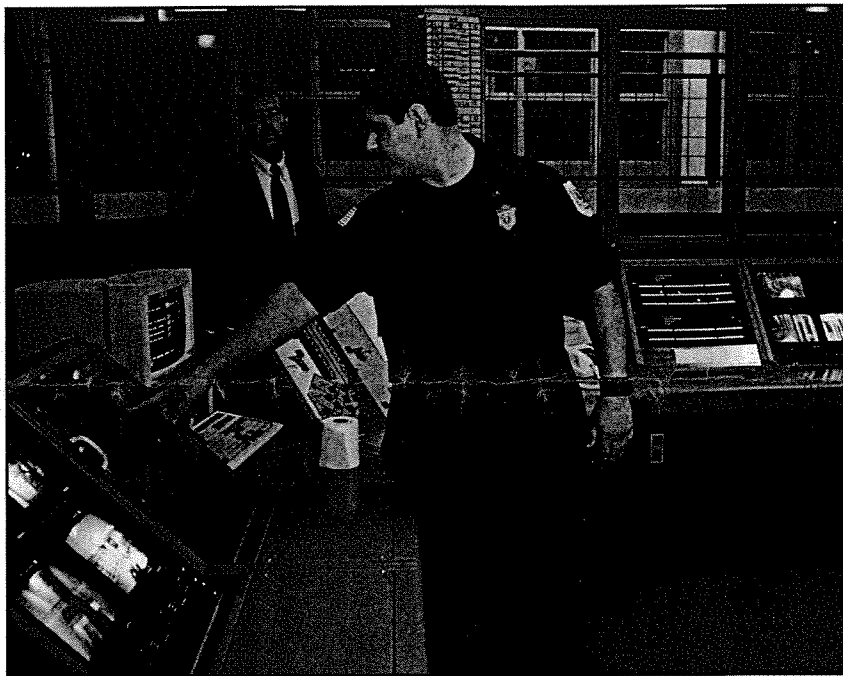
The suit that was occasioned by his death (*Carl Hoffer, et al. v. Michael Fair, Commissioner of Correction*) called public attention to the fact that correction officials systematically violated prisoners' human rights in that unit. In a blistering report delivered on March 3, 1988, State Supreme Court Chief Justice Paul Liacos took the Massachusetts Department of Correction to task for countless violations of law. Judge Liacos ruled that the Commissioner of Correction not only operated the DSU in flagrant violation of established due process

provisions of the Massachusetts Constitution, but that he was also in violation of numerous state statutes governing the treatment of prisoners confined to segregation. The Court ordered that the commissioner enact a series of sweeping reforms. Between March 3, 1988, and December 13, 1989, the Court rejected three separate proposals of new regulations submitted by the Commissioner of Correction on the grounds that they did not conform to constitutional requirements. Either the commissioner had a great deal of difficulty understanding and interpreting the Massachusetts Constitution or he had been operating the state's prison system outside its mandate for so long that he could not imagine working within its parameters. Finally, the Court accepted a set of regulations for the management of the DSU that went into effect on January 15, 1990.

The Court was most critical of classification procedures. According to the specific regulation governing classification (103 CMR 421.07), in order to be sent to the DSU the prisoner "must pose a substantial threat to the safety of others; or pose a substantial threat of damaging or destroying property; or pose a substantial threat of interrupting the operation of the state correctional facility if he is confined in the general population of any state correctional facility."

According to the attorneys who monitored the case and the judge who reviewed the procedures, the hearings were so meaningless and unfair that there was no way of determining whether any of the prisoners in DSU deserved to be there by the standards established in 103 CMR. Many attorneys argue that confinement to Ten Block frequently was retaliation for filing lawsuits against prison administrators, for seeking religious freedom, or for engaging in prison politics.

The Supreme Judicial Court for Suffolk County found that the DSU classification hearings were conducted in a fashion that violated the most basic rights of due process. The purpose of the hearing, in theory, was to serve as a safeguard to ensure that individuals who



MICHAEL JACOBSON-HARDY

*The Control Center of the DDU. John Marshall (center) was a sergeant assigned to Ten Block during the 80s. Prisoners questioned Marshall's "lapsed memory" and willingness to open Bidot's door during the "fire." Bidot died.*

were not "a substantial threat to the safety of others" would not be placed in segregation for extended periods of time without review. This is not what happened in reality. In some cases, prisoners spent as many as 10 years in DSU. The Court noted that, "The caseworker does little to assist the inmate before or during the meeting; tape recording of the meetings is rare; eyewitnesses are extremely rare; and the case worker meets with the board just before the meeting starts and this is not provided for in the Regulations...Most meetings regarding placement in segregation are perfunctory and there is a lack of fairness."

Numerous court cases document that prisoners in Ten Block have been beaten and tortured. Affidavits and court transcripts read like a page from Weld's "tour through the circles of hell."

Jack Shea testified that on April 25, 1988, he was placed in handcuffs and leg irons and transferred from the main section of the prison to Ten Block. As he was escorted to the DSU, Shea was beaten mercilessly by the guards. One guard smashed him in the head with a billy club while others repeatedly punched and kicked him. He was bleeding so badly from the assaults that the

guards had to take Shea to the hospital unit for medical attention to stitch him up before his placement in Ten Block.

After receiving treatment, Shea was taken to Ten Block and placed in a cell. He tried to get some sleep hoping to escape from the pain. Suddenly he heard a loud commotion. Shea testified: "While I was still lying in bed, half-asleep, an officer sprayed me with mace right in the face. I turned away to protect my eyes. The next thing I knew, the officers had rushed into the cell and pinned me under a large plastic shield. One of them rained punches on my face, head, and back. While the beating continued, the officers handcuffed and shackled me. They took me to the office."

Shea testified that while in the office, "Lieutenant Marsolais told me, 'I'll beat you every day...I don't like you...I never did like you.' A captain who was present just laughed. Marsolais also added, 'If you tell anyone what happened, I'll put you in four-point restraints and beat you again.'"

Raymond Brisson filed an affidavit on May 10, 1988 in which he asserted that at 4:30 A.M., he woke to find guards in riot gear and helmets standing in front of his cell. They asked him to stand to be handcuffed. He complied and was placed in leg irons and escorted to a cell without a mattress. He requested a mattress but was denied.

The next morning he was again placed in handcuffs and leg irons and dragged to the office of Lieutenant Eugene Marsolais. Along the way one of the officers tugged at the leg irons so that it would rip and cut the skin. One officer wrenched his neck while another twisted his arm. Marsolais put his face right next to Brisson's and screamed, "Any time you break a rule we are going to ride you and gas you. I don't care how many times we have to do it."

A few hours later they gassed his cell and rushed in equipped with full riot gear and beat him mercilessly. He was then dragged to the first floor visiting room. One of the guards stood on his back while Lieutenant Marsolais bellowed, "Do I make myself clear?"

That afternoon he was gassed for what seemed to him like hours. His face burned and he went blind and deaf. They took him to the hospital unit where they placed him in four point restraints for two days. During this time all his requests to see a doctor were denied. Brisson was subsequently transferred to the federal system.

## APPEALS FOR RELIEF

A suit filed by several prisoners from the Departmental Segregation Unit was reviewed by the Supreme Judicial Court for Suffolk County (No. 85-71), and the prisoners won their case. The following statements are taken directly from court records.

### Gregory Maxwell

Upon arrival at Cedar Junction, the van drove directly to Ten Block. Coming to Ten Block was like entering a war zone. The guards were dressed in what seemed to be full combat attire: heavy black boots, helmets, uniforms attired with machine-gun insignias on the shoulders.

Although I offered no resistance, the guards forcibly removed me from the van and pulled and dragged me into Ten Block. At this time, I was still in waist chains, leg irons, and handcuffs. I was escorted into the corridor and placed in front of a desk which had been set up for a medic to screen the prisoners who had been brought with me from Old Colony.

I told one of the officers who was manhandling me that I had no desire to cause trouble and asked, "Is all this force really necessary?" He told me to "shut up" and said, "This is the new Ten Block."

I then stated that I did not want to bother with my blood pressure being taken by the medic, and asked to go to my cell. At that point a Sergeant grabbed me from behind around the neck and, choking me, forced me down into the chair in front of the medic. Another officer punches me in the mouth and in the eye saying, "I don't care what you want."

The Captain then said, "He can refuse if he wishes." He informed me that the Tactical continues on page 40

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Team was now in charge of Ten Block and asked me if I had any questions. When I remained silent, a guard told me to "Answer the Captain, or we will mace you." I told the Captain I had no questions.

The Captain gave orders that I be stripped searched. The guards dragged me to the shower for the search and hurled me head first against the cement wall. After the strip search, I was given a sweat suit and taken to my cell. My head hurt. I had bruises on my face, and I felt very scared. I asked to see the medic and to see a mental health counselor. I was told I could see no one.

When I tried to use the toilet in my cell, I discovered that the water was turned off. I could not flush the toilet and was unable to get a cup of water to drink. I called repeatedly to the guards to have the water turned on, but received no response.

The next day I continued to call to the guards to have my water turned on and to request that I be allowed to see a mental health counselor. An officer came to my cell, closed the solid steel door, and told me that if I did not stop asking to have the water turned on he would gas me.

About 20 minutes later the guard came back to my cell, opened the solid steel door, and sprayed me with mace for several seconds, saying, "I told you to shut up." He then closed the solid door and left.

My eyes and skin were burning because of the mace. It was difficult to breathe. Since I had no water in the cell, I could not wash the mace from my skin and face. I called for a medic but received no response. My solid door remained closed until the next meal so the gas lingered in the unventilated cell.

I lay in my cell for the next few days more afraid than I have ever been in my life. All around me prisoners were being gassed and beaten for no apparent reason. The air was filled with the smell of mace and tear gas.

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The most outrageous case involved a man who has testified to losing his testicle as a result of being beaten by several guards. The following excerpts are reprinted directly from the court transcripts. "At approximately 1:00 P.M. on November 24, 1991, the prisoner was returned to his cell by several prison officials. Officer Goncalves ordered the prisoner's cell door opened and then entered the cell. While Officers Lydon, Midwood, Grossi, Doe, and Roe either held the prisoner or looked on, Officer Goncalves maliciously and sadistically, for the purpose of causing harm, struck the prisoner in the groin with his knee, and then strangled and beat the prisoner. Lieutenant Billings, who was in charge of the Departmental Segregation Unit in Block Ten on November 24, 1991, watched the assault and did nothing. The officers left the prisoner naked in the cell, crying in pain. The prisoner's repeated request for a physician were ignored for hours. As a result of the assault, the prisoner suffered pain, as well as psychological and physical injury, including a ruptured testicle which was surgically removed on November 27, 1991. The prisoner's name is being withheld at his request."

The Department of Correction has not taken disciplinary action against any of the officers involved in these incidents. On the contrary, Eugene Marsolais has been rewarded for his management of the DSU by being named Director of the DDU at MCI-Walpole.

The taxpayers have already spent millions of dollars in legal fees and settlements as a result of these violations of law. When *Odyssey* inquired as to the exact sum of taxpayers' money that has been awarded to prisoners as a result of civil litigation, we were informed that "Your request is denied, inasmuch as settlement agreements entered into by the Department contain specific non-disclosure clauses precluding any party from revealing the terms of the agreements or disseminating any settlement documentation." In other words, the DOC asserts that the taxpayers of the Commonwealth have no legal right to know how their money is spent. The department, in effect, has signed away the rights of all private citizens to review payments to prisoners for civil litigation claims.

*Odyssey's* review of the DSU budget also revealed that extravagant sums of money were allotted to procure weaponry that far exceeded any possible use. For example, John Marshall signed a one-year budget request that included 30 grenades, 30 chemical agent

projectiles, six 38-caliber guns, two 37-caliber guns, six mini-14 rifles, and six 12-gauge shotguns for a total cost to the taxpayers of \$7,193.24. Given the fact that all prisoners in the DSU are locked in their cells 23 hours each day and that only one prisoner draped in three sets of chains is allowed out of his cell at a time, what possible justification is there for purchasing this arsenal? A review of the DSU orientation book confirms that "all inmate movement within and outside the unit will be in full restraints as follows: cuffs behind the back, waist chains, and leg restraints escorted by two officers."

In response to these allegations of wrong doing, correction officials placed the blame for their violations on an outdated and overcrowded segregation unit. Their failure to comply with the statutory regulations governing the unit supposedly was going to be corrected when a \$30,000 state-of-the-art disciplinary facility was opened.

### **The Departmental Disciplinary Unit**

Designed to confine 124 prisoners in sound-proof sensory deprivation cells for up to 23 hours a day, and devoid of all standard vocational, educational, and recreational activities, the Departmental Disciplinary Unit (DDU) will serve, according to Duval, as a valuable deterrent. Long experience with Ten Block proves that the opposite is true. Duval himself admits that the recidivism rate for prisoners confined to Ten Block during a five year period was 40 to 50 percent. Prisoners are not, in fact, deterred by extended periods of harsh conditions of isolation. The psychological profiles of prisoners at Marion reveal that some prisoners become more passive, whereas others became more violent and desperate. Dr. Craig Haney, a social psychologist at the University of California at Santa Cruz and authority on prisons calls Marion "the most psychologically oppressive environment I've ever seen inside a correctional institution." He warns that because the number of assaults may drop, "that doesn't mean it is working. Just because prisoners have not gone off en masse doesn't mean they're not ticking away on an individual level."

Another psychiatrist and prison expert, Dr. Bernard Rubenstein, has testified in federal courts that he is alarmed at the health problems associated with long-term isolation. He believes that conditions in control units like the DDU cause irreversible physical and

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Since I never knew when the guards might choose to enter my cell and attack me, I was in constant fear. I was afraid the guards might even try to kill me.

I asked every officer who came to my cell if I could see a mental health worker. The answer was always, "You will see no one." I was unable to sleep because of my extreme nervousness. My head hurt and I felt very confused. I could not remember things. Several times I urinated on myself.

On April 9, I asked a nurse to please arrange for me to see Mental Health. Finally, on April 11, I was taken to the Hospital Services Unit at M.C.I. Cedar Junction. The mental health worker who met with me told me that they had to contact someone in the Superintendent's office in order to get permission to see me. I was given some medication to help me sleep and to relieve my anxiety. I stayed in the HSU for about five days. The mental health workers informed me that I was suffering from a severe stress reaction caused by the threatening environment in Ten Block.

On April 15, I appeared before a DSU board for a 90 day review hearing. The board members told me that they "are not operating under the Hoffer decision," and that I would remain in the DSU in accordance with my projected release date.

### **Timothy Smith**

On the morning of April 4, 1988, five guards clad in riot gear called me to my cell bars to be handcuffed. When I approached, the guards sprayed gas directly into my face. The gas blinded me. My eyes and face felt like they were on fire.

About two hours later, the guards came back to my cell and ordered me to step forward to be handcuffed. I told them that the last time I did so they had sprayed me in the face. One of the guards said, "We did that to show you who's boss. If you don't come forward right

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now, we will do it again.”

The guards then placed me in handcuffs and leg irons and escorted me to the visiting room. When they later brought me back to my cell, all of my property was missing. Much of my legal material has never been returned. On April 16, my legal mail, including a letter from Justice Liacos, was delivered opened.

On April 19, I met with attorney Deborah Shields to discuss the gassings and other abuse of prisoners in Ten Block. While we were talking, a guard sat within two feet of the bars and could hear everything we said. After the interview ended, I was handcuffed and placed in leg irons. One of the officers who was present ordered me to strip for a search. When I was naked, Lieutenant Ayala told me to bend over and spread my buttocks. I could not comply because I was in handcuffs. Lieutenant Ayala then forced a small flashlight up into my anus. The guards then slammed me into a chair, held my head back, and attempted to open my mouth and put the same flashlight down my throat. I kept my jaw clenched and several guards spent approximately 15 minutes grabbing my jaw bone so that I would open my mouth. I was then left naked in the cell for two hours with handcuffs and leg irons on.

After two hours, the guards told me to put my clothes on and took me to the hospital section. I was left there overnight with handcuffs and leg irons on.

On April 20, in the hospital section, I was given a morning meal but left in handcuffs so that I could not eat. I was then strip searched by two other officers and then transported to the Norfolk R.B. I was not allowed to make any legal calls until Friday, April 22, 1988.

On April 21, I was given a paper from John Maguire, Acting Deputy Superintendent, stating that my visiting privileges were suspended, and that I had received a disciplinary ticket for the events on April 19.

psychological damage. “I don’t think human beings were meant to be limited to that degree for long periods, no matter what they’ve done,” Rubenstein says. “It’s what happens to astronauts if they are in a state of weightlessness for too long. There are certain kinds of changes in bodily systems [that occur], and there is no way to stop them.”

Similarly, the conditions have an effect on prison guards. Don Houseworth, a psychologist and former deputy director of Michigan corrections, warns of the dangers to prison guards. They begin to lose all empathy for the prisoners. “If you prepare a guard consistently to be on the lookout for violence, and if you describe the prisoner in non-human terms, pretty soon he will perceive that person in non-human terms,” he says. The process of dehumanizing others is a common psychological defense that enables prison guards to commit brutal acts against prisoners without suffering guilt.

But dehumanizing others affects one’s own humanity. It is not surprising that stress and alcohol and drug abuse are so high among prison guards who work in these maximum security environments. Burn out is common and many of the guards have marital problems. One state Director of Corrections said about Control Units, “In this kind of atmosphere it becomes possible to think of abuse as normal, and if you are not careful you have a staff out of control.”

What is the ultimate purpose of Control Units? According to penal expert Hans Toch, super-maximum security prisons are used as symbols to assure citizens that prisons are under control and that disruptive prisoners are held in check. During a social period when public anxiety about issues of crime and violence are on the rise, Control Units convey the impression that the criminal justice system is responsible and efficient. In Massachusetts, Governor William Weld took advantage of a media event by personally opening the first cell door at the DDU. The event was orchestrated weeks in advance and was designed to bolster his image.

### Legal Challenge to DDU

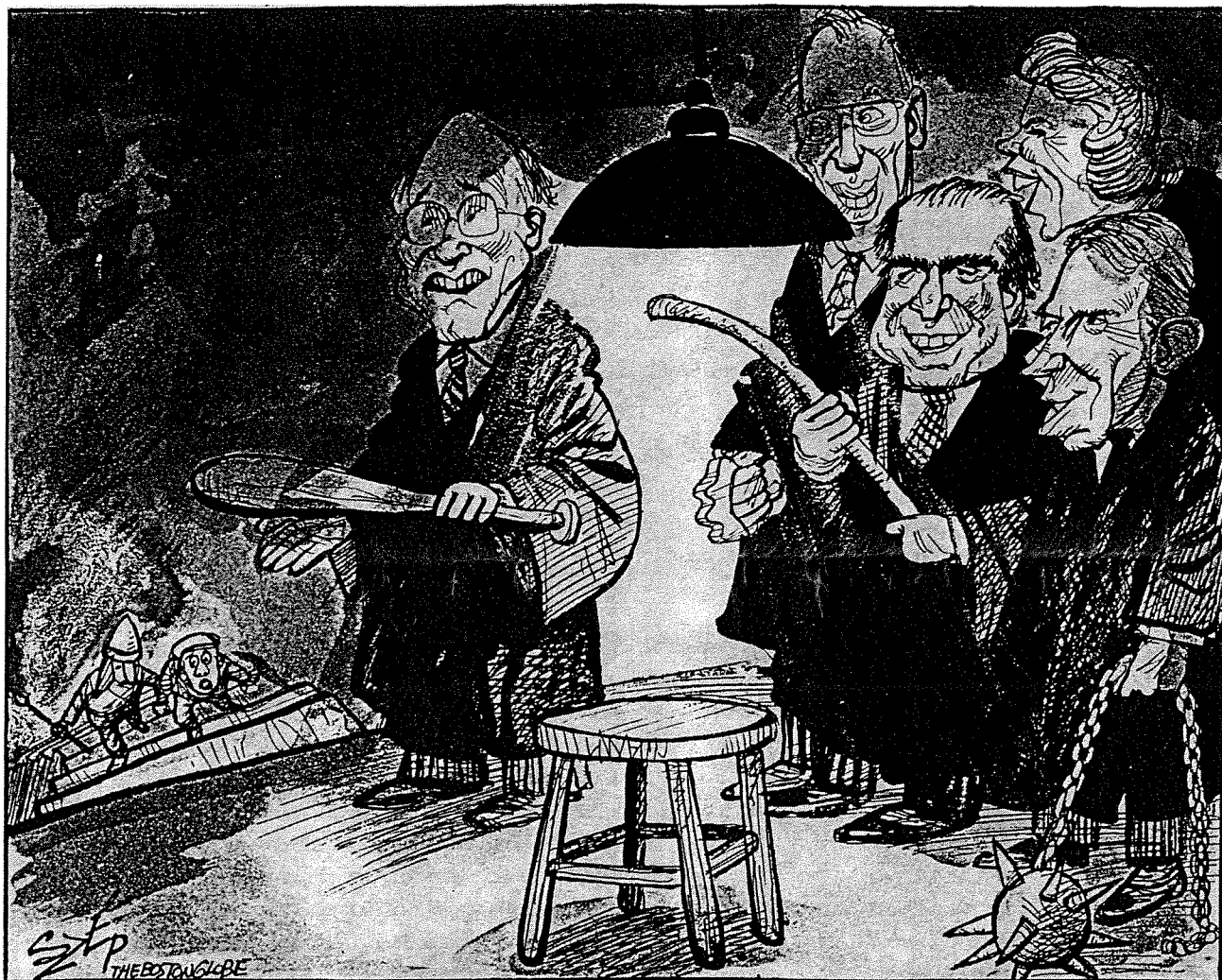
Attorney James Pingeon for the Massachusetts Correctional Legal Services claims that, “The DDU is operating in violation of law and is, in effect, an effort to circumvent the *Hoffer* decision. Commissioner DuBois’ concession that the DDU is more severe than the DSU only confirms that it is currently operating as an ‘isolation unit.’”

Commissioner Larry E. DuBois, as Regional Director of the North Central Office of the Bureau of Prisons, was the very same individual who gave the order to permanently place Marion in lock-down status. Extracted from DuBois' sworn April, 1992 affidavit, he concludes, "After due consideration, I decided to establish a unit comparable to the Control Unit at Marion. It had been intended by my predecessor, George Vose, as a new DSU. I determined that the project should be used instead to institute what would be known as a Departmental Disciplinary Unit."

In other words, DuBois is seeking to approximate in Massachusetts those conditions he established and employed at Marion, conditions which have been declared in violation of United Nations standards of human rights.

### Conclusion

Super Maximum Security prisons, or Control Units, as they have been euphemistically labeled, are the most expensive illusions of security that public money can buy. Confining a minute percentage of the state's prison population in cells that are more expensive than suites at the Hyatt Regency promotes neither prison security nor public safety. Perhaps even worse, Control Units dehumanize both the prisoner and society. While the United States self-righteously condemns the inhumane treatment of prisoners elsewhere, it simultaneously supports methods of punishment that are medieval and barbaric. Condemned world-wide by organizations such as Amnesty International, we can feel nothing about their proliferation but shame.



SUPREME COURT ALLOWS FORCED CONFESSIONS OF CRIMINAL DEFENDANTS BY 5-4 VOTE

PAUL SZEP