



ANTHONY J. RUSSO
... Ellsberg friend

door flew open and ... the captain was there. He had real authority ... and he said, "Are you Mr. Russo?" I said, "Yes." He said, "We didn't know who you were" ... and that made me mad as hell because what that meant was that this was par-

Blacks Feel Jailed by Color

Robert Johnson, 46, a former social worker, is warden of Graterford state prison in Pennsylvania, one of the first blacks named to head a major prison. His prison staff is 80 per cent white; 80 per cent of the inmates are black.

Question: What kind of a problem did you have coming in as a black warden in a largely white correctional staff?

Johnson: Everybody seems to think that's a big problem, but really I haven't seen any big problem ... I'm interested in what's happened to prisons because of the influx of black, young blacks. In many ways the American prison system has become a system which imprisons black people, at a time when race consciousness is very high in the country, and that's very special. Many black prisoners feel that

they're in prison because they're black ... There's a very convincing argument that there is a special penalty in the corrections system for being black.

Q. Does this make for internal problems in the corrections system?

A. No question about it ... You're asking the prisons to resolve a problem that the whole country is faced with. Prisons can't do it. Prisons are probably the worst places in the world to re-socialize people ...

Q. Well, why are you in corrections? It's a tough job.

A. Sometimes I ask myself the same question. Social consciousness, really. With so many black people being involved in the criminal justice system, really. This is one of my main reasons for staying ... So many people are there because of a

Q. Are you saying that you see the crux of your job as introducing a humane and loving relationship into the lives of men?

A. No question about it.

Q. ... How do you take people who are in an institution built of ceramic, concrete and steel, and introduce the idea of human love and trust?

A. By practicing it myself, by getting other people in the institution to practice it ...

Q. How do you say that to a man to whom you're also saying, "You get into that cell and I'm going to lock the door on you and I'm going to determine when you get out?"

A. There are ways to do that even.

Q. How?
A. For one thing, by not saying, "Get in there, you

Two New Breeds of American Prisoner

An Effort at Building Pride in Prison

Iasha Salim, 25, is a member of the black independent group, *Nero Republic of Africa*. She was arrested and imprisoned last August in connection with a shooting incident in Jackson, Miss., in which a local policeman was killed, and another patrol man and an FBI agent were wounded. While in the state penitentiary at Parchman with two other women members of RNA, she did her best to win over to her social views white and black male inmates in cells within hearing distance.

Miss Salim: At first we didn't talk to the men prisoners on the other side of the corridor. At first they could hear us and knew we were women and they'd

cursc and talk tough about sex.

There were two white men and the rest black. They'd boast about their sexual conquests. It was pretty sad ...

Then the men began asking us what was going on on the outside and up North. I would explain the need for respect for women. Sometimes this would degenerate into sex talk but most of the time they were serious and so were we. We would explain why it was important to have a strong family, how we as black women felt about the movement, how Daniel Moynihan could tell white Americans about the weakness of the black family.

We impressed on them

how every mind and all the dedication is needed to make this world in such a way that we black people are not going to be annihilated ...

"We would build pride of the men on the other side by telling how the black men had been kings in Africa, and how many great civilizations there were in Africa. We told them that even if they were incarcerated they did not have to be slaves in their minds ... Some of the men had been there in those cells—six months and some 10 years, but they all listened.

At first, the two white men were very insulting and skeptical. They'd laugh and snicker and say, "Why, you ain't nothing but a little old

nigger gal," but as we progressed, everyone got more articulate and intelligent.

By the time we left, all the black men were giving the New Africa Oath of Allegiance, at breakfast and at bedtime. We were doing our nation-building all the time we were in prison. And it changed them as persons.

At the end if we said, "Please quiet down," Sister Njeri is sick, they'd quiet down and the next day they'd ask how she was.

When we left every prisoner said goodbye. The white men said, "Best wishes." The black men sang, "Power to the People," and the matrons thanked me for helping them with their books. I felt that something good had come from it.

Russo Recalls Jail Mistreatment

Anthony Russo, 35, was a research analyst at Rand Corporation and was recently indicted in connection with Daniel Ellsberg and distribution of the Pentagon Papers. Before that he was imprisoned for 47 days for refusal to testify before a grand jury. His description below is of Los Angeles County Jail.

Russo: About 5 o'clock I was called to the booking room ... where clerks take the valuables you weren't supposed to have in jail ... The lady behind the window didn't want me to keep my reading glasses nor my fountain pen ... I said, "Please, I'd like to keep those because I need them to read." The glasses I have on air for long distance ... And she replied, "Well, you're not gonna need them because

much reading where you're going." Which kind of upset me. I always thought that one could read in jail ... I said, "You're not serious, are you?"

A guard walked up, and he said, "You got a problem here?" And I looked at him and I said, "No, I don't have any problem. Do you?"

Ag I was talking with the lady clerk, the guard walked up, grabbed me by the arm and started pushing me out of the room ... I walked down the hallway about a hundred feet, when all of a sudden, four guards turned on me and they bodily ... pushed me through this door, and there I was in a maximum security cell ... Concrete, solid no windows ... Six other guys ...

(Russo said he had not made a phone call after he

wanted to call his lawyer. He says he tried unsuccessfully to get a response from two guards sitting outside his door.)

So I began to yell out through there about how those guys were violating my constitutional rights ... I was getting madder and madder ... and I began to kick the door ... as hard as I could and these big metal doors make a lot of noise ...

I did that for about five minutes and all of sudden the door flew open and a flying wedge of guards came through, four or five and I was flattened ... they came through, hit me, pushed me up against the wall, said, "Turn around, put your hands against the wall." I did ... and one hand was jerked away and pushed up behind me really tight.

going to be pulled out of its socket. And then the second arm was pulled behind me ... And then someone kicked my legs out from under me. I felt knees all over me, knees on my head, on my neck. I wasn't struggling ... it would be ridiculous to struggle ...

They began to chain up my legs, and they put my wrists in handcuffs ... really tight ... so they tied my hands cuffed behind me and my legs shackled together. Then they tied my hands to my ankles, so I was done up in a little neat bow there, lying on my belly ...

After about half an hour we had the chains loose so I could stand up ... I was really so mad then that ... I spun around and chained the door back—and did that a couple of times