

Bad Checks Got IBM Salesman 'Terrifying Experience' of Jail



FAT-BARKER

... corrections official

J. Patrick Barker was an IBM salesman who at the age of 28 wrote a series of bad checks and served time in two different jails and two state penitentiaries before his release to become a professional worker in the field of corrections. He is now deputy director of the Oklahoma Crime Commission.

Question: Had you ever been in a jail before?

Barker: Never. It's a terrifying experience. I spent two years in the Marine Corps . . . so I had met all types of people and had to live with all types of people, so I think I was better prepared probably than most adult people. But it's frightening. You're

in a detention room with sleeping accommodations for 32 and 40 people. Some people have to sleep on the floor.

I've seen people raped, specially young kids. You can get a kid as young as 14 years old and several 16. These young boys would come in and if they were fresh-and-young, the guys who run the tank-and-lived in the first cell, they would take these young guys in if they wanted to. They would take the kid, forcibly hold him and someone would rape him right in the rear. I just flat saw it happen.

Q. Where are the guards while this is happening?

A. Well, the guards in jail make rounds periodically.

But they don't have enough manpower.

Q. What's the effect on the kid?

A. Some of them go to pieces just right there and then, kids who can't hack it and are torn apart. They cry all the time, just nervous, scared of their shadows. Others just get embittered and next time some young kid comes in they turn around and become the raper instead of the rappee. So it depends on the individual.

Q. What happens if the kid tells the guards?

A. Well, they better yank him out of there or his life isn't worth a nickel.

Q. Can anyone resist this?

A. How can you resist 8

or 10 people? The psychology of why they pick one to rape and the next one they don't, you really don't know. Most of the guys that take part in this kind of thing are kids who got it done to them.

Crime and Our Prisons—and Futility

A Judge Gets His Back Up

Judge Kenneth Lour, a magistrate in Columbia, S.C., had sentenced 200 men to prison when he decided to visit the Central Correctional Institution, the state's main prison, a Civil War period structure that the prison administration has tried to replace.

Question: Did your visit change your feelings about your actions as a judge of criminal cases?

Lour: I think the state should take a bulldozer and push that penitentiary into the sewer. It isn't helping the prisoners one bit. That place has over 1,000 men in it and it's nothing but a powder keg. I will not send one more prisoner to that place. I'll do anything, but I've sent my last man to that prison.

If one of our boys over in Vietnam fell into the hands of the Vietcong and the Vietcong did to them what happens to our own people who have to go to that penitentiary, our newspapers would be all over the Vietcong for cruel and inhuman treatment.

There are cells in there 3 1/2 feet wide and 8 feet long, and dark, as bad as the bamboo cells in Vietnam.

I think if the average citizen of my country went through that penitentiary, they'd have the same reaction I have. The people running that prison are doing a great job in getting men back into the community in work release and all that. But they need \$25-million to change the whole penal system.

Long Term Means Trouble

George Saleeby is deputy director of the California Youth Authority, the largest impulsive system in the country in juvenile crime. Here are excerpts from a tape-recorded interview:

Five years ago the public knew nothing about crime. They took the attitude "We pay you to take care of it." Now that crime is affecting everyone, people understand more. Maybe they will be more rational.

For example, the public feels more secure if it can lock up a criminal but sometimes the public is hurting itself. We do know that the longer a man stays in prison, the greater the chance that he'll commit a crime after he gets out.

Let's say we have a 20-year-old robber. He's going to live to be 70. We lock him up for 10 years, during which time the public is 100 percent safe. When he gets out, he's 23 and is going to live for 47 more years. The statistics show that 60 percent of these guys will repeat. So for the next 47 years the public is only 40 percent safe with that guy.

We have a program here that we think will have a repeat rate of only 30 percent, keeping the guy under supervision on the street. That's 50 years with the public 70 percent safe. And it hasn't cost \$12,000 to keep him behind bars.

The public is buying crime and doesn't know it.