

## But Officials Won't Let Him Go Home To Die

# Prison Inmate Dying Of Cancer

By Ed Brown

How does a two-timer at the Jean Correctional Institution, a cancer victim, mark double-time, knowing that he will die soon? That's a prevailing situation at the medium-security prison.

Does society turn its back on his record and say, "let him out?" What is the general feeling among the administration at the prison? More importantly, what is the attitude of the pardon board?

There are a couple of answers already established. The administration at the prison had recommended that the prisoner be pardoned. The pardon board saw it differently and that's the way the matter stands until the board meets during the latter part of the year. In the meantime, what is the plight of the doomed cancer victim?

The prisoner, whom we are unable to identify by either name or "number," has been a drug addict who fed his need through burglaries and other insidious crimes. He has amassed a record to put one away for some

considerable time.

There is a heartening side to this report. The inmate is not in a hospital or clinic. He is not lying flat on his back. He spends his day "in the yard," mingling among the other inmates and, where possible, will engage in a volleyball or softball game. As cancer eats away his weakened body, the inmate continues an uphill battle against time, with hope, a dream and a prayer.

He is one of the 400 inmates currently housed at the Jean facility - an overcrowded condition. The prison is designed to house only 350 inmates. This situation precipitated the recent, peaceful three-hour protest in the yard of the prison. About 100 men double up in their bunks.

About 250 inmates staged the demonstration which began early in the morning after they complained they were served only half the amount of milk they usually receive for breakfast. They quietly milled around and congregated in the prison yard to protest what they

said was inadequate food, improper medical care and a lack of vocational training program.

During the protest, a committee of eight inmates met with Warden Bill Lattin to discuss a list of about 15 grievances, the greatest one dealing with the quality and quantity of meals.

"The warden said he would try to increase our budget and to see that we get a better quality and quantity of food within a two-week period," said Roland Marshall, one of the eight inmates who negotiated with Lattin.

Marshall said the inmates were also upset because the prison has

been without a doctor since the former physician resigned March 30. There is only a clinic at the prison manned by nurses.

"Now there are nurses and guards here who act as medical physicians," he said. "If someone has an emergency, they can be taken to Southern Nevada Memorial Hospital. If not, then they have to be taken to the state prison up north in Carson City."

The SENTINEL visited the Jean facility and was told by Lattin that the lack of a physician was a problem but that every effort was being made to obtain one.

Lattin and other prison

officials said they were aware of the inmates' grievances but explained the prison is on a tight budget which necessitated cutbacks in services.

Business Manager Wally Earhart said the prison's food budget for the 1979-80 fiscal year has been determined by state lawmakers. It will cost \$302,400 to feed the prisoners three meals daily during the year, or about 79 cents per meal.

According to Steve Robinson, an employee of the State Department of Prisons, the total budget for the Jean facility was \$988,670 in 1979-80. The budget in the next fiscal

year will increase to \$1,072,800.

Referring to the inmates' complaints about the vocational training programs, Leon Hardison, in charge of the programs told the SENTINEL that there was a lack of equipment, space and personnel to meet the needs.

In the meantime, "Mr. X," the cancer-ridden victim's life, is ebbing away each day. Despite the inevitable, he has resignedly prepared himself to meet the Maker. Maybe, somehow, some day the doors will swing wide to free this man from the almost unbearable pain that eats away at his heart and mind.



### Clark County Fire Department

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June 11, 1980

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Betty Brown, Publisher and Editor  
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Dear Ms. Brown:

As an emergency service, the fire department is well aware of the potential havoc which could be created by a disaster such as that described in the article, "Killer Tornado Devastates West Las Vegas", written by Ed Brown and published in the June 6, 1980 issue of the "Las Vegas SENTINEL". Cooperative plans have indeed been formulated between the fire service and various other public service entities within Clark County. The article effectively makes the public aware of the agencies and programs available to them in the event of an emergency.

How many people have actually stopped to consider what they would do in an emergency situation? What organizations could they contact for help? Is there a structured plan to cope with a predictably panic stricken public? In approaching questions such as these, the article can be considered not only informative, but a challenge to the public to become aware of and actively involved in existing efforts to prepare the community for a possible crisis situation.

The article is thought provoking and well written. The Clark County Fire Department compliments Mr. Brown on his community interest, and encourages him in his efforts to inform the public and spread concern for community welfare.

Sincerely,

*John Pappageorge*  
John Pappageorge  
Acting Fire Chief

JP/sd.

## Woman Held In Death Of Hubby

Lawrence Johnson, 27, was shot to death last weekend as he reportedly tried to attack his estranged wife at an apartment complex located at 98 N. Highland.

Johnson died about two hours after he was shot in the head with a .32-caliber gun, Metro police said.

Officers reported Lessie Johnson, 34, who lived in a separate apartment at the same address, was being held in connection with the shooting. She is a secretary with the Clark County School District.

"Her husband apparently kicked open the door at her apartment,

and a struggle ensued," said Lt. Dan Mahoney.

Mrs. Johnson's 10 year old daughter, Frankie Rene Anderson, had locked herself in her room while the fight occurred. She called police after the shooting took place.

"She was hanging out the window screaming when we arrived," said one patrolman.

Her mother and another woman were trying to take Johnson to the hospital when the police arrived.

He was taken to the Southern Nevada Memorial Hospital by emergency equipment.

The Johnsons had separated recently.



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