



Only the fence and a man's conscience keep him inside — plus the fact that he may receive 10 extra years for escape.

Two inmates work on top of DW — Death Wing — which until recently housed the state's electric chair.

Occasionally the inmate will find himself sitting with three "lifers" at the supper table. Although his own crime and circumstances remind him that he also has done something wrong, he is scared, amazed and saddened to be in such company.

After the meal is over, he is not scared or amazed anymore. Instead he considers himself lucky for not becoming a lifer, for being able to stop before taking the ultimate plunge into madness.

Under the surface calm, under the loud laugh, under the exaggerated boast, there is a troubled man. The louder the laugh, the deeper the anxiety within. Some inmates are constantly fighting and in and out of solitary confinement.

At Rockview, "I am going to kill that motherfucker" is as common an expression as "hi." The new man will spend sleepless nights when he is threatened and may plan some preventative action of his own.

The next day, he realizes there was no need for fear, because by this time the man who threatened to kill him the night before will ask him for a cigarette—or threaten someone else. Still, if someone would argue with, or challenge the antagonist, someone might be killed. Some prisoners are so far gone that to kill or be killed passes through their minds very casually.

The day begins at 6:40 when the morning bell gives 20 minutes to get ready for breakfast. After breakfast the workbell rings, and all go to their make-believe jobs for a few cents a day. At 11:30 the men return to their cells and get ready for the noon meal.

After lunch one of many counts is held and all prisoners except some outside workers are locked in their cells. Occasionally the count is fouled up or someone escapes. Then the counts take longer, giving the men extra minutes to relax in their cells.

At 3:30 the workday ends for most of the inmates, the showers are opened and everyone prepares for supper at 5 p.m. Then another count is held. Now no one is hoping for a long count, since this period is free time. The inmates may go to the large exercise yard, watch TV in the blocks (living quarters), play games or, as some choose, stay in their cells—locked up for the night.

All of the inmates are reminded of the reality of their existence each night at 9 when the heavy steel-barred door slams shut on their cells. For a few minutes after lock-up there is some shouting back and forth as the men try to finish interrupted conversations. Soon it is a silent night, and each man is alone with his own thoughts.

Today some good things are happening

at Rockview. A lucky and reasonably bright inmate may become a college student through the New-View Program associated with Penn State.

The program's first phase is concentrated at Rockview itself, where Penn State professors and instructors give lectures in the new education building. After a while, the inmate-student may graduate from the inside part of the program, be transferred to Halfway-House a mile from the compound and attend classes on campus.

The convict-students have a certain advantage over the regular Penn State student, since all classes are small with plenty of opportunity to ask and discuss questions.

Rockview's forestry program also is associated with Penn State. The men in this group are working toward a certificate in forestry. They too are lucky—they live in a trailer camp at the base of Mt. Nittany.

Many inmates have obtained their barber's license in Rockview's modern barbershop, and many more are working for it now.

All are given a chance to improve themselves through elementary and high school classes. Twice a year tests are given through which the men may obtain their General Education Diploma (high school) offered by the state.

Some other vocational courses also are given. Inmates may learn upholstery, bricklaying, auto repair and other skills.

For most inmates, however, one day's drudgery follows another. They go to their non-jobs, such as serving food on the chowline, picking up cigarette butts around the yard or learning Rockview's specialized plumbing, for which they will have no outside use.

The average inmate earns 50 to 75 cents a day, which for a heavy smoker is not enough for cigarettes. Most men learn to roll their own. Inmates are unable to save even a small sum of money.

Some groups at Rockview have helped make life more livable for the inmates. The New-Breeds Jaycees of the Rock caused a minor revolution during their one year of existence. Their beginning was hard, but through the perseverance of a few dedicated men and the help of the State College and Bellefonte Jaycees, they have succeeded. Today, they help fellow inmates and others beyond the institution's fence.

The Jaycees have prevailed where other organizations—and often official policy—have failed. The organization involves a large number of men, who until now did not want to become involved and who did not "give a damn."

The Jaycees earned about \$11,000 during their first year from projects such as ice



cream sales, Sunday newspaper sales and Saturday evening movies.

How do the Rockview Jaycees spend their money? About \$250 went toward the establishment of a law library. They have presented several concerts at Rockview and held a "Watermelon Day," during which a truckload of melons was placed in the middle of the yard. Christmas gifts were given to the children at the Clinton County Children's Home, accompanied by a check toward their swimming pool.

They have improved the appearance of the visiting room by adding comfortable lounges, playpens and highchairs for children who come to visit their fathers.

Despite the activities available to the inmates which seem to link them to the outside world, Rockview is designed to keep them apart from society.

The building seen on the cover is the main housing unit, the so-called East and West Wings, a fortress of concrete and steel. There is a building within this one so no cell touches the outside walls. There are two other more humane housing units, "B" and "C" blocks, where the men have a window to the outside.

Rockview could house 1,000 inmates — two men to a cell. Lately, the population has been around 500 to 600. Nearly 400 employees are needed to hold and supervise this number of men.

Since Rockview operates around the clock, three guard shifts are needed. Lately supportive-type jobs — such as psychologist and counselors, have been on the increase, reflecting changing trends in corrections.

Rockview's nerve center is located in the "DW", Death Wing, where the now-dismantled electric chair was located.

Some old-time guards say today the inmates have everything. It is true that the prison today is more comfortable than it was 10 years ago but that is far from everything. The recently introduced reforms are a positive first step but more are needed.

The main objective must be to change the man and to prepare him adequately — mentally and financially — for a new start. But today most men leave the prison bitter and angry with \$10 in their pocket and a "free" suit on their back. In this condition they are forced to face a hostile society.