Prison visits an ethnographic study of interaction in the visiting room of a maximum security institution.

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NL 339 (198501)
PRISON VISITS: An Ethnographic Study of Interaction in the Visiting Room of a Maximum Security Institution

by

Marjo Ann Callaghan

A thesis submitted to The Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research Through the Department of Sociology and Anthropology in partial fulfillment of the Degree of Master of Arts at the University of Windsor

Windsor, Ontario, Canada 1985
ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research was to examine the interaction in the visiting room of a maximum security prison in the United States. The prison was unique in that it is the largest walled prison in North America, housing 5,000 inmates, 2,500 of whom are held in maximum security.

Using Symbolic Interactionism as the approach, the researcher examined the negotiations, boundaries and strategies used by inmates and their visitors to develop maintain and distance both their relationships and their visiting room interaction.

The methodology consisted of participant observation for approximately three and one half years from, 1981 to 1984 and again from February, 1985 to July, 1985. The observations were recorded as field notes and supplemented by both casual and structured interviews.

Of the limited literature available, only two studies had actually discussed visits. Since both were statistical analyses, the findings focused on the patterns of visiting by family and friends.

Generally, it was found that the world of the total institution inhibits the maintenance and growth of relationships through separating inmates and visitors in actual physical distance and by creating a 'need' for the inmate to develop certain norms and attitudes (inmate culture) to maintain a somewhat favourable self identity.
This 'inmate culture' is particularly self-oriented with emphasis on material wealth and power.

In order to maintain this 'inmate role identity' and an identity acceptable to visitors, inmates develop strategies to get what they want while maintaining a relationship with the visitor. The strategies incorporate a 'vocabulary of motives' which help legitimize their demands from the visitor.

The visiting room is the social setting where the encounters of the relationship take place. Here the inmates and visitors engage in illicit activities; such as, sexual encounters and the movement of contraband while attempting to maintain some sort of meaningful relationship.

Overall, it was found that relationships are not lasting. The world of the 'total institution' creates so many boundaries that most are unable or unwilling to attempt to maintain the relationships. And for those who do, even after the inmate is released, the 'total institution' must still be considered in the negotiation of a new home relationship.
Acknowledgements

There are many people without whom this thesis would not have been possible.

To my chairperson, friend and professional role-model, Mary Lou Dietz, I wish to express my deepest appreciation for her constant attention, interest and belief in my ability to undertake this research.

Thanks must also be given to the other members of my committee, Jack Ferguson and John LaGaipa, for their patience with me and interest in the research.

My friends Carl Bentoia and Marion Keith deserve thanks for their continued support, particularly during my "nasty" moods.

To Gram and Nonny I give my appreciation for allowing me to invade their home as well as for their editing expertise.

I also wish to thank my mother, Marjorie Callaghan, for finally trusting my judgement with relation to this research. Thanks for not asking questions Mom!

An finally, to the men of South End Prison, particularly, Montana Slim and Lou, my appreciation for their friendship, guidance and interest throughout this research.
This thesis is dedicated to C.W. Douglas, my Uncle Charlie, who taught me the value of education.

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1985
TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT ........................................................................................................... i

Acknowledgements .......................................................................................... iv

Dedication ........................................................................................................ u

Chapter page

I INTRODUCTION ............................................................................................. 1

II THEORETICAL APPROACH ........................................................................ 4

III REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE ................................................................ 8

Prison Visiting: An Historical Overview ................................................. 8
Prison Visiting Research ........................................................................... 11

IV METHODOLOGY ........................................................................................ 14

Getting into the Research Setting ............................................................. 14
Data Collection ............................................................................................ 16
Data Analysis ................................................................................................ 17

V SOME BACKGROUND ON MICHIGAN CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTIONS ......... 20

The County Jails ......................................................................................... 20
The State Prisons ....................................................................................... 23
Security ......................................................................................................... 27
Phone Calls and Letter Writing ............................................................... 29
Visiting Regulation and Visitor Accommodation .................................... 31

VI THE PEOPLE OF SOUTH END ................................................................ 35

The Visitors .................................................................................................. 35
Mothers and Blood ..................................................................................... 36
Wives and Girlfriends ................................................................................ 38
Clergy ........................................................................................................... 39
Lawyers ......................................................................................................... 40
Friends .......................................................................................................... 41
Inmates and Their Perspective .................................................................. 42
Inmate Culture ............................................................................................. 45
Status in Relation to Outside Contact ..................................................... 49
Institutional Staff ......................................................................................... 50

VII INMATE/VISITOR RELATIONSHIPS ................................................... 55

The Relationship ........................................................................................ 57
The Emerging Relationship .................................................................... 57
Maintaining the Relationship .................................................................. 66
Distancing ................................................................................................... 68
The Visits ...................................................................................................... 72
Visitor's Initiation into South End ......................................................... 72
Signing In ...................................................................................................... 73
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Quite often when one thinks of visiting in a prison, he/she envisions the visiting room setting of old Jimmy Cagney movies. These showed inmates and visitors separated by glass or chicken wire pressing hands against the surface trying to touch each other. The visits were always heavily guarded with illicit information being passed while the guards were distracted. Since that time, visiting rooms have changed a great deal but little information is available that describes this setting.

In March of 1981, the researcher made contact with two inmates doing time at a maximum security prison in Michigan from here on known as South End. Through this contact, the researcher was able to gain access to the visiting room at South End. As the relationship went on, the researcher came to realize what a unique social setting this was and observed a great variety of interaction taking place. Thus, the formal research was undertaken.

Stated simply, the purpose of this research was to examine the development of the visiting room relationship. Using symbolic interactionism as the approach, the researcher examined the negotiations and strategies used in order to develop and maintain the relationships. Much
of the approach focuses on Goffman's concepts which were developed in his work on total institutions but extends these concepts into the visiting room, an area that Goffman only mentioned peripherally.

Like Goffman's work, current correctional literature only generally mentions visits and the visiting room. All current correctional literature states the importance of visiting and outside contact in terms of rehabilitation. However, descriptive background information is limited. The researcher was able to find two comprehensive studies dealing with visiting patterns but nothing was found that dealt specifically with interaction between inmates and non-inmates.

In order to compensate for the lack of material dealing specifically with the visiting room and visits, the researcher will look at the historical development of prisons and events that brought forth the present day visiting set up.

The method of data collection consisted of three years of participant observation in the visiting room of South End. With the help of very cooperative informants, the method was extended to include interviews with other inmates and correctional staff.

In order to analyze the data, the researcher used generic interactionist concepts dealing with the development of relationships; such as, motive talk,
negotiations of boundary rules and strategies used to influence the negotiations.

Although there is some research that discusses visits, and the necessity of outside contact while in prison, to date, this is the first research to examine the relationships between inmates and visitors within the context of the visiting room. In this respect, this research is a worthwhile and important contribution to the field of sociology.
CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL APPROACH

As stated in the introduction, the theoretical approach used in this research is symbolic interactionism.

Instead of focusing on the individual and his or her personality characteristics, or on how the social structure or social situation causes the individual behavior, symbolic interactionism focuses on the dynamic social activities taking place between individuals (Charon, 1979: 23).

The development of relationships is an ongoing social process. Individuals form relationships with people on a daily basis. "If there is a substantial probability of interaction, it may be considered that a relationship exists between the people involved (McCall and Simmons, 1978: 167)." At a more interpersonal level, relationships may have a task orientation, a socio-emotional orientation or a combination of both. In any of these circumstances, boundaries of the relationship must be negotiated (Denzin, 1970).

Negotiation may be explained as the process of interaction necessary in order to reach an acceptable medium between the role identities of two or more people. This acceptable medium is guarded by boundary rules, which if violated, constitute dissolution of the relationship. If the relationship is to be maintained, these boundary
rules must constantly be negotiated to adapt to the needs of the individuals involved.

A role identity is "the character and role that an individual devises for himself (McCall and Simmons, 1978: 65)." This role identity is constantly changing as the individual moves from institution to institution throughout his/her life. As an individual comes in contact with these institutions, the role identity is adapted and thus, the inmate develops a new frame of reference for interpreting action and thought.

When one speaks of institutions, one is usually referring to those institutions with which we come in contact throughout our lives. We are born into the institution of the family, we participate in ceremonies in church, we attend academic institutions and finally we enter institutions known as the work place. Goffman (1961) discusses another type of institution that many people never come in contact with, the 'total institution.' The total institution controls and regulates a person's entire life. Where most individuals tend to "eat, sleep, play, and work in different places with different co-participants, under different authorities (Goffman, 1961: 6)," individuals like prisoners and patients live and work under one authority, with the same co-participants in the same place, sometimes, for many years.
In order to undermine many of the home world realities, the total institution forces people entering the institution to participate in self-mortifying processes which give those forced to participate a feeling of powerlessness. These processes include: the stripping of an inmate's possessions, denial of heterosexual opportunity, and contaminative exposures which violate the territories of the self; such as, the use of open toilets and group showers (Goffman, 1961: 14-35).

To rectify this situation, the powerless develop secondary adjustments to "express a separate identity from the one defined by the institution (Goffman, 1961: 60)." The visiting room may be discussed as a form of secondary adjustment where inmates attempt to express an identity that more closely resembles the identity he/she may have developed prior to incarceration. An identity that includes any or all of the aspects of life that are denied by the institution.

The world of the total institution creates a unique problem for those involved in relationships, a negotiable problem which individuals develop strategies to overcome. Lofland (1976) discusses scales of strategies used by people to construct their actions. He discusses encounter scale strategies as "requiring a few seconds, minutes, or, at most, a few hours for their execution (Lofland, 1976: 43)." These "acts" are situational directed and relatively simple lines of action.
On a broader scale are role-scale strategies require greater periods of time. "Role-scale strategies include informal, argot roles and social types, methods of acquiring and maintaining power in roles... (Lofland, 1976: 45)." The actual strategies developed are dependent on personal style and the situation. Goffman (1961) discusses strategies as secondary adjustments to unfavorable situations. Other strategies may take on more manipulative features where those employing the strategies may use a vocabulary of motives in verbalizing the strategies. A vocabulary of motives (Hewitt, 1979) attempts to deal with explanations that people demand in everyday life. These vocabularies are not shared by all members of a society. They are specific to certain situations. Thus, while a member of a specific group might find a particular vocabulary of motives acceptable, another may consider them to be rationalizations (Hewitt, 1979).

Using these concepts, the observations in South End's visiting room may be linked to broader aspects of social life. Although the interaction takes place in a compartmentalized social setting, the interaction reflects the commonalities in all human behavior.
CHAPTER III

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

As stated in the introduction, the correctional literature pertaining specifically to the visiting room is limited. Most of the literature acknowledges the importance of visiting but goes no farther. There were two initial studies done in the 1960's on which current visiting policies are based. However, since then, it appears that the visiting room has been a closed area of study. This discussion of the literature will be divided into two sections. The first section will discuss the historical development of prisons in relation to visiting and correspondence. The second section will discuss the current literature dealing with visiting, including the Brodskey (1975) study on inmate visits and the Glaser (1964) study which discusses the effect of visitors on the inmate's post release experience.

Prison Visiting: An Historical Overview

The penitentiary system was the invention of the American Quakers (MacGuigan Report, 1977). The intent was to replace the British tradition of corporal punishment; such as, punishment by death, whipping and mutilation of an offender.
Penitentiary houses were first established in England in the late eighteenth century as the direct result of John Howard's recommendations to the British Parliament. He suggested a strict regime of sanitation, inspection, separate confinement, sobriety, coarse diet, hard labour and a coarse and uniform apparel with certain obvious marks or badges affixed to the same to humiliate the wearers as well as to facilitate discovery in case of escapes (MacGuigan Report, 1977: 11).

The first penitentiary was established in Upper Canada in 1835, still known today as Kingston Penitentiary. The design of "...stone perimeter walls some thirty feet high, broken only by observation towers manned by armed guards. The buildings inside had a central dome with cruciform type wings and a range of iron barred cells (MacGuigan Report, 1977: 11)." This "Big House design (Irwin, 1980: 1)" was used in Canada until 1952. This design is still used in some areas of the United States.

This design enhanced the idea of excluding inmates from the rest of society. This 'rest of society' included family and friends. Visits and correspondence with family were limited to "one letter every three months as a reward for good conduct and one half hour visit per month (MacGuigan, 1977: 11)." Friends were allowed to visit only under special circumstances; such as, death in the family. Letter writing between friends was not permitted.

The period following the second World War marked the time for a new penology, "generally referred to as the rehabilitative idea (Irwin, 1980: 39)." One of the basic ideas was that programs should be designed to:
...effect changes in the behavior of the convicted person in the interest of his own happiness, health and satisfactions and in the interest of social defense (Irwin, 1980: 39).

These changes included the hiring of professional staff to work with inmates, organizing activities; such as, sports teams, publishing newspapers and easing restrictions on correspondence and extending visiting privileges to the extent that individual institutions could reasonably handle. Although, in many institutions, the extension of visiting and correspondence privileges were accommodated, still others paid no attention to the recommendations.

In 1950, Gresham Sykes found that:

It is true that visiting and mailing privileges partially relieve the isolation — if he can find someone to visit him or write to him and who will be approved as a visitor or correspondent by the prison officials (65).

However, it was not until the late 1960's and early 1970's that any real changes in the system took place.

The 1960's were the years of change both inside and outside prison. In the early 1960's television came into prisons. Inmates were now receiving uncensored information about what was happening in the outside world. Inmates became aware of the unrest in regular society and at the same time began to create unrest on the inside.

"Thus the social movements of the 1960's, such as the civil rights and peace movements, also gave rise to the prisoners' movements (Stastny and Tyrauer, 1982: 135)."

Television allowed inmates who had previously led
insulated lives to became aware of important national movements. It was also in the 1960's that lawyers began appearing at prisons in larger numbers (Fox, 1983). This was the result of inmates' increased awareness of civil rights, thus motivating them to file lawsuits against departments of corrections.

By the early 1970's, when it was found that few significant changes had come of age, many maximum security institutions were torn apart by riots. Two of the most memorable were, Attica, 1971 which ended in the deaths of thirty-nine persons, and Kingston Penitentiary, 1971, which ended in the mutilation deaths of eleven sex offenders.

Although, not a direct effect of the earlier riots, in 1973,

One of the rights of offenders issued by the National Advisory Commission on Criminal Justice Standards and Goals (Corrections Standards 1973), Standard 2.17 states that offenders should have the right to communicate in person with individuals of their own choosing (reprinted in Brodsky, 1975: 47).

This standard demanded the abolition of the visiting list. It also required all prisons to remove the glass and wire partitions separating visitors and inmates (Brodsky, 1975). This was the standard that set the stage for this visiting room research.

Prison Visiting Research

In 1959, Fenton commented that:
Penologists have also begun to recognize the importance of the family in connection with the adjustment of their clients in prison and on parole. The attitudes and behavior of a wife or parent while the man is incarcerated may have much to do with his deportment in prison and with whether or not he will take advantage of the treatment program (Fenton, 1959: 17).

However, nowhere in the literature is there any indication of how Fenton came to this conclusion. Comments such as this are common in corrections texts which usually devote two or three pages to visiting in conjunction with mail and phone privileges. Fox states "ordinary visits with the family are important in maintaining family ties (1977: 246)." Along the same line, Carter, McGee and Nelson (1975) discuss visiting as an important factor involved in a man's success on parole. Glaser (1964) did the first comprehensive study on the success of ex-prisoners on parole. His sample consisted of 250 inmates in federal prisons, broken into parole violators and men who had remained successful for over a year. His findings indicated that:

The success rate varied directly with the degree of family interest indicated before release, from a high of 71 per cent for those whom we classified as having active family interest, to a low of fifty per cent success for those whom the reports indicated received no communication from relatives (Glaser, 1964: 366).

Brodskey (1975) studied 140 newly admitted inmates (within their first six months of their incarceration) in late 1970 and early 1971. The focus of the study was the
interpersonal relationships of confined adult males. In doing this, Brodsky quantified the information and developed frequencies for visits. He also attempted to audio-tape visits between inmates and family members, however, faulty equipment hindered this part of the study.

The only description of visiting room interaction was available in Fox's (1983) introductory corrections text. His description of the visiting room interaction was as follows:

In most institutions, the resident and his wife may embrace each other under supervision of an officer at the beginning and at the end of the visit. The officer watches the embrace very carefully because narcotics and other contraband may have been exchanged from mouth to mouth during kissing and from hand to pocket or hand to hand during the embrace. Visiting in maximum security institutions is closely supervised by an officer or officers in the visiting room (Fox, 1983: 143).

As will be seen in the findings, this is not a particularly active account of visiting room behavior. However, unless the method of study permits, the true interaction in the visiting room is overlooked.
CHAPTER IV

METHODOLOGY

The methodology of any research consists of stages. First the researcher must decide whether he/she wishes to use a quantitative or qualitative approach to the subject. The researcher must then decide the actual method of data collection and finally choose the method best suited to analyze the data. The methodology of this research will thus be separated into three sections. The first section will be entitled "Getting into the Research Setting," the second will be, "Data Collection and the third will be "Data Analysis."

Getting into the Research Setting

"Participant observation refers to the circumstance of being in or around an ongoing social setting for the purpose of making a qualitative analysis of that setting (Lofland, 1971: 93)."

This type of research may easily be the most difficult type of research to do. One must first find subjects to study and then get into the actual research setting. Particularly when doing field research in deviance, the researcher may be faced with one major ethical concern, 'what do I do if I witness a crime?' Dietz and Callaghan (1985) discuss some of the negotiated rules the
Researchers established when they were doing their research with 'dangerous people'. Simply, these rules state:

1. I don't want to know about any crimes that have already been committed.
2. I don't want to know about any crime that is in the planning stages.
3. Any crimes witnessed will not be reported to the authorities unless someone gets killed and that will be negotiated at the time (Dietz and Callaghan, 1985: 6).

Although, some might question the ethics of rules such as these, under the circumstances, if the researcher is serious about completing the research, these bargains must be made. The alternatives to making such bargains may be abandonment of the research, physical pain or even death.

In reference to this, in the findings, the researcher discusses strategies for moving drugs into the prison. Some of these strategies were witnessed, while others were discussed during interviews with informants. In not reporting these incidents, the researcher had no problem with the ethical concerns, particularly when one or more of the subjects involved had already killed several people. Not only might reporting incidents like these be harmful to the research and the researcher, herself, but reporting them would almost certainly be harmful to the informants involved in the research.

The actual research began after a relationship had been established with two informants. Both informants were extremely cooperative with the research and even went
so far as to introduce the researcher to staff and other inmates who turned out to be an asset to the research.

However, to the majority of the people in the visiting room, the researcher was simply another visitor. Generally, the researcher was given the role of 'family friend' and, when meeting others, she was introduced as a 'college student', 'teacher' or as someone 'from Canada'.

It was originally believed that being an unknown observer to the administration at South End might hinder the research because of lack of access to administrative information. However, while visiting other institutions with an official role as the person in charge of Penology students while touring the institutions, it was discovered that although information about visitors is recorded, the records are destroyed on a monthly basis.

Data Collection

The method of data collection consisted of a combination of field notes and both casual and structured interviewing. As is the custom in deviance research; see Prus and Irini (1980), Dietz (1968), records were kept by jotting down notes directly after the visits, which were more formally written once the researcher arrived home.

The researcher collected data for approximately forty-two months. Visits were conducted once per month for approximately two hours spent for each visit. Broken down, the researcher made twenty-six weekday visits and
ten weekend visits during the initial research. Six
months later, the researcher returned to the prison and
conducted six subsequent visits, four took place during
the week and two on the weekend. In addition to this, the
researcher received letters from her informants. Over the
forty-two month span, the researcher received
approximately one hundred fifty-two letters from
informants. Any information pertinent to the research was
transferred to the researcher's field notes.

This method of data collection is particularly useful
in deviance research because it allows the researcher to
examine the entire realm of the deviants' social world.

This research strategy commits the observer to
learning to define the world from the
perspective of those studied and requires that
he or she gain as intimate an understanding as
possible about their way of perceiving life
(Shaffir et al., 1980: 7).

Data Analysis

The method of data analysis consisted of three levels.
The three levels include, the institution, relationships
and encounters. The analysis then applies major concepts
relevant to the development and maintenance of
relationships which are regulated by the institution and,
in turn, consist of encounter scale negotiations and
strategies. This form of analysis is known as
triangulation (Lindesmith et al., 1975: 53).
Triangulation is an inferential process through which
researchers attempt to understand unobservable or
inaccessible things (Lindesmith et al., 1975: 54). The process consists of examining information from various sources which seem to converge on each other. A person who is sufficiently experienced in a particular social setting or group may be able to make valid inferences about the action and interaction taking place.

It is the researcher's contention that South End prison is somewhat unique from other institutions in that it has greater population than other penal institutions thus allowing a greater amount of anonymity for inmates thus, increasing the amount of "prisonization" the inmate internalizes (Sykes and Messinger, 1977).

South End thus becomes the social world for the inmate and, for a time, the visitor. The institution is one major point of reference for the inmate's development of a role identity which in turn affects the relationship between the visitor and inmate.

During the course of relationship maintenance, certain key concepts become important. These concepts relevant to the visiting room relationship include, negotiations and boundaries, manipulation and motive talk.

At the level of the encounter, the researcher was able to develop patterns involving frequencies of visits, the people who are most likely to visit inmates and patterns of the typical two hour visit. The researcher also typified the common strategies used by inmates to involve visitors in illicit activities.
The preceding chapters have served to introduce the reader to the research. The chapters following discuss the findings from the investigation of the Michigan Prison system and the observations in the visiting room of South End Prison.
CHAPTER V

SOME BACKGROUND ON MICHIGAN CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTIONS

According to South End's inmate newspaper, South End prison is the largest walled prison in the free world. It has been suggested that it may actually be the largest in the world, however, not enough is known about many of the communist countries to be sure of this claim.

Through University courses and contacts made at South End the researcher has had the opportunity to tour and visit in a number of Michigan institutions in addition to South End. They include, the Wayne County Jails, Michigan Dunes Correctional Facility (The Dunes) and Michigan Training Unit (both medium security institutions), as well as the maximum security institutions known as; Huron Valley Men's and Women's Facilities and Michigan Reformatory.

Although all of the institutions, except the county jails are governed by the same legislation, there are some distinct differences.

The County Jails

County jails are designed to hold inmates for short periods of time (Fox, 1983). The majority of persons being held are awaiting trial. With bail available to persons charged with a crime, many spend only the time in
that jail it takes to be charged and processed. However, some inmates are doing "house time." House time is a short sentence, averaging three months but occasionally, up to a year. Offenses which warrant house time include; drunk driving, weapons offences, non-payment of child support, etc.

Since it is expected that only a short period of time will be spent by most people in a county jail, (although many awaiting trial actually spend well over a year in the county jail), visiting space is limited. Each inmate is allowed one half-hour visit per week. In order for anyone to visit at the Wayne County Jail, he/she must first be placed on an approved visiting list. The list may have a total of six people for each inmate. Changes of the list may only be made with the approval of the staff social worker. Visiting days are determined by the first initial of the inmate's last name, for example, A-D on Mondays, E-G on Tuesdays, etc (this particular designation may vary from jail to jail).

At the Wayne County Jail, phone calls and letter writing seem to be a preferred method of contact with family and friends. Letter writing is not as common in the county jails as in State Prisons. This is probably because people in the jails are often in their own neighborhoods and phone calls are not as expensive as they might be while in prison. Phone calls can however, become very expensive. In Wayne County, there is no limit placed
on the number of calls an inmate can make. The only regulation is that all calls must be made collect.

Particularly at the beginning of an inmate's time, he/she does not consider this and may cost a family member or friend very large amounts of money. The cost of calls however, is justified in this way:

Sure I'd love to see my family but by the time they get into the city and find a parking space and shit, they can only stay about half hour at the most. It ain't worth the time to come all that way when it don't cost as much to call. As long as they come maybe once a month and drop some money, it's okay. (Field notes, January, 1985.)

Phone calls and letters also allow the inmate to stay in touch with people who are not on his/her visiting list.

Even within the Wayne County Jails, there are distinct differences. Several years ago, a new building was constructed. The new building is used to house inmates over age thirty, offenders over age sixteen but under age eighteen and, until April of 1985, women. After that time, all women were moved back to the old jail. The new building is clean. Glass is used in place of the traditional bars, and individual visiting booths are provided on each floor.

Visitors are separated from inmates by plexiglass and converse through a speaker in the middle of the glass. The only problem with this is that while actually talking, the visitor and inmate cannot see each other because of the size of the speaker.
In contrast, the old building, also known as "the rock," has the look of a dungeon. As with all buildings used beyond their time, the old jail is dirty with failing plumbing and electrical systems. It is also infested with mice, roaches, spiders and rats that, at times, attack inmates.

Visits are held in a common room on each floor. Up to four visits may take place at one time. Visitors and inmates are separated by plexiglass as in the new jail but telephones are used to communicate, and these are frequently out of order.

Just as there are differences in visiting accommodations between the old and new Wayne County Jails, there are differences in other county jails. Some may allow contact visits, like Oakland County Jail, others may allow extended visits however, it is fair to say that Wayne County Jail exemplifies the "standard" jail in a large urban area.

Not only does there seem to be a difference in the attitudes of inmates housed in each of the Wayne County jails but a difference in attitudes of personnel is apparent in the two jails. Having been in contact with personnel from both jails, it is apparent that those at the new jail are much happier and definitely more polite to visitors and according to two informants, "better to the guys inside" as well.

The State Prisons
An inmate convicted of an offence in Michigan may be sent to a variety of institutions throughout the state. The security level and individual needs of the inmate are assessed at a regional reception centre. For the Detroit area, classification is done at South End. There are also specific institutions; such as, Michigan Reformatory and Michigan Training Unit which are designed primarily to house younger offenders however, with the current space crisis in the Michigan system, inmates are being sent to any institution that has room.

As with the county jails, the most distinctive difference in the appearance of the Michigan prisons is related to the year the prison was constructed. If one were to visit a new institution, like Huron Valley Men's Facility, one might get the impression that prison life in Michigan is not too bad. Huron Valley has a very pleasing appearance both inside and out. Guard towers are inconspicuous and the grounds are well kept.

Inmates are housed in individual rooms and no bars are visible anywhere. One would never know from looking at Huron Valley that next to the double maximum security unit at Marquette (which also may be termed Super Max), this institution exclusively houses inmates classified as the most dangerous in Michigan.

Although considered medium security, both Michigan Training Unit and The Dunes are very similar in appearance to Huron Valley. The difference being Huron
Valley is surrounded by a wall while the medium security institutions are surrounded by fences, topped with coils of razor ribbon and barbed wire.

On the opposite end of the scale are institutions like Michigan Reformatory and South End which were constructed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These are the older, larger institutions that upon sight might scare anyone away. The first visibly frightening aspect of the institutions are the gun towers manned by armed guards. Passers by are immediately aware that the structure they are passing is a prison. These large deteriorating buildings are particularly ominous at night. Michigan Reformatory looks strikingly similar to Kingston Penitentiary in Ontario, probably because they were constructed around the same time, late nineteenth century. The Reformatory houses twice as many inmates as Kingston, eleven hundred, but has the same basic architecture and pale grey coloured brick.

However, nothing this researcher has ever seen can compare to South End prison. It is quite simply, a monstrosity. South End, unlike other Michigan institutions the researcher has seen is surrounded by a thirty foot high, brick wall around which stands a sixteen foot fence that encloses the grounds outside the institution and the parking lot. Signs on the roadway forbid the taking of pictures or the stopping of
automobiles as is the rule at most penal institutions. All Michigan institutions have inmate stores run by the inmates where toiletries, snacks, running shoes and some clothing may be purchased. Profits go into the general inmate fund which allocates money for the purchase of televisions, radio equipment, etc. To purchase items from the inmate store, Michigan inmates use "tokens." Tokens are silver coloured, coin shaped money substitutes designed by the Department of Corrections in order that inmates not hold legal tender. Tokens may be bought by visitors at the desk before a visit or a visitor may deposit money into an inmate's account. A visitor may buy fifteen dollars worth of tokens per inmate per visit. Some institutions limit the amount of money a visitor may deposit in an inmate's account, South End does not although, if an inmate has more than one thousand five hundred dollars in his account, the institution charges him rent. Once per month, an inmate may draw sixty dollars in tokens. Despite attempts by the authorities to control legal tender, it is smuggled into the institution and referred to as "green." Also, like the two Wayne County jails, the researcher has noted a difference in staff morale between the older and newer prisons. For whatever the reason, nicer working conditions, happier prisoners or a greater feeling of safety, staff morale in the newer
institutions appears to be higher and is reflected in the manner in which the staff treats visitors to the institutions.

**Security**

As decreed by the Michigan Department of Corrections, the lower the security risk of the inmate, the lower the security level of the institution in which he/she will do his/her time. Initial classification or good behavior on the part of the inmate determines whether the inmate will spend his/her time at a maximum, medium or minimum security institution. Older maximum security institutions, like South End, are generally recognized by the thirty foot high brick wall surrounding them. There are those institutions that house only maximum security inmates like, Marquette and Huron Valley Men's Facility. These institutions are more well known as "super or double" maximum security institutions. Unlike these institutions, South End is divided into areas that house each classification of inmates. An inmate in maximum security may earn the trust of the administration and earn the designation of "trustee." These inmates are usually doing life sentences and because of their crimes, are not eligible for a lower security level institution. Trustees are given jobs which demand more responsibility than many of the other work assignments. Some work in the
administrative offices, others run the inmate store and still others do custodial work that puts them in contact with visitors.

Medium security at South End is to the east of the central maximum security complex, although it is known as "West Side." Medium security is enclosed by a sixteen foot fence surrounding the institution and houses, in dormitory housing and designated main complex cell blocks, what are considered to be less dangerous inmates than those in maximum security.

The minimum security section of South End consists of several work camps. These work camps have no fences or walls and are the final destination for an inmate prior to release to a halfway house. Inmates are generally on an honour system with very few restrictions. At this security level, if an inmate stays out of trouble for three months, he may be eligible for weekend passes.

However, where visits are concerned, the rule seems to be, the lower the security level of the institution, the tighter the security in the visiting room. When referring to visiting room security, the researcher specifically means the staff enforcement of institutional regulations.

Linda, a 'prison wife' with whom the researcher became acquainted, had visited her husband at a medium security institution for two years. When he was
reconvicted of a new offence, he was classified to maximum security at South End. After her first visit at South End, Linda and I had a conversation.

I can't believe how open people are about doing things here. At least in medium you have to use a little imagination to do anything (Field notes, May, 1985).

This was also confirmed by, my informant, Slim when he said:

"Yeah, the lower the security level, the tighter the security. It seems they want to make it harder for you when you get closer to gettin' back on the street (Field notes, June, 1985)."

Guards have two official avenues available to enforce the rules and regulations of the institution, "tickets" and court action. Tickets may be written up by guards if an inmate is in violation of any rule. They are divided into two categories, major and minor. Major tickets may be written for anything from, the prisoner being out of place, to disobeying a direct order to being in possession of contraband. Minor tickets may be written for such offences as, taking extra food at meal time. Tickets are incorporated into the inmate's record and affect his chances of moving to a lower security level and ultimately, his chances of parole.

Phone Calls and Letter Writing

Letter writing in Michigan institutions is not restricted to any great extent. There is no limit to the
number of letters that may be received or sent. However, all letters written by an inmate must be given to a guard unsealed for examination. There are two exceptions to this rule. Letters sent to lawyers and or to members of Congress may be sealed by the inmate. Incoming mail is subject to examination at all times. Letters are examined for money orders, to be placed in the inmate’s account, and for contraband; such as, drugs, legal tender and pornographic photographs. Most photographs that are received by the institution that are designated as pornographic are those that show the entire nude body of a female. Photographs showing nudity above the waist are acceptable. Magazine pictures, including those depicting the entire nude body of females, are available to inmates in the prison library or through individual subscription.

South End has a less rigid system for letter examination than some other Michigan institutions. According to one informant:

They can’t check all the mail here, there’s just too much. The only time you might have a letter read is if your mail’s been flagged, like if you been caught gettin’ somethin’ or maybe a guard heard a rumor, oh yeah, and if you’re in the hole (solitary confinement) (Letter, 1981).

The regulation of phone calls varies from institution to institution. Fox discusses phone calls, stating: “The differences in inmate phone access usually relates to custody status, with maximum custody
prisoners permitted fewer calls (Fox, 1983: 145). In the maximum security facility at South End, prior to 1983, inmates were limited to one ten minute phone call per week.

They let us make phone calls on shower night. Half the guys take showers while the other half make phone calls. But if the guard's in a shitty mood, he won't break the doors early enough so there ain't enough time for everything. (Field note, July, 1982)

In 1983, South End installed phone booths in the prison yard. This allowed inmates to make calls whenever they pleased during their free time. This also took the responsibility of inmate phone calls away from the guards, thus removing the question of punitiveness or favouritism associated with the earlier system.

Visiting Regulations and Visitor Accommodation

Other than size and appearance, the greatest inconsistencies in Michigan prisons are visiting accommodations and regulations. At one time there were standard visiting regulations for all Michigan Correctional facilities. However, now each institution has its own regulations and most publish them for visitors. Of the institutions visited, South End is the only one that does not have a "visitor's handbook."

There are Greyhound bus services available to most institutions in Michigan at relatively reasonable rates. Some institutions, like The Dunes, offer free rides from
the bus station to the institution because of the distance to be travelled. There are also food services available at many institutions to accommodate visitors who travel a long distance. Although the food is out of machines, it is still appreciated by the visitors.

Since inmates may be transferred all over the state, most institutions allow for all-day visits. To make these all-day visits more comfortable, food machines are placed inside the visiting room. In these institutions, visitors are allowed to bring in approximately three dollars, in change, per person. Smoking and gum chewing are also allowed in these institutions. For those institutions that cannot accommodate a food service inside the visiting room, visitors are allowed to leave the institution and return to continue the visit after they eat. Aside from food services, the newer prisons provide a variety of other accommodations for visitors. Some have changing rooms for babies or crying rooms so other visitors won’t be bothered by a cranky baby. Some provide cribs and toys to keep small children amused while adults visit. These newer institutions also provide for outdoor visiting during the warmer months. Outdoor visiting areas are fenced areas overlooking the prison yard. The areas are well landscaped and picnic tables are provided for visits.

South End, does not provide any of these accommodations. Because of the large inmate population
and the relatively close proximity to Detroit, which is home for a large percentage of South End's population, visits of over two hours in duration are only granted to visitors who travel from outside the state. Since visitors are there for only a short time, the administration feels that extra services are unnecessary.

The one regulation that seems to be enforced the least in all institutions, is the regulation which states, "each visitor is allowed to give the inmate being visited one kiss and hug at the beginning and end of each visit (Fox, 1983: 141)." Although this regulation is somewhat more strictly adhered to at lower security level institutions, visitors and inmates simply become more innovative and discreet.

This section has served to introduce Michigan Correctional Institutions. Although all prisons are regulated by the same legislation, there are significant differences in the actual administration of the regulations. In order to introduce the reader to correctional institutions, the researcher included information about county jails, medium and minimum security institutions. However, what is most important to this research is maximum security at South End. As one can see, South End has significant differences in comparison to what is standard in Michigan correctional institutions. Following the actual processual movement
into the prison visiting room, the following section will introduce the people one contacts when visiting at South End.
CHAPTER VI

THE PEOPLE OF SOUTH END

Any time a person decides to visit someone at South End, there are a number of other people with whom he/she may come in contact. Each of these groups of people will be discussed in a comprehensive fashion in this section of the report. However, stated simply, the positions of those with whom people may be in contact during a visit are:

The Visitors
1) Mothers and other Family Members
2) Wives and Girlfriends
3) Clergy
4) Lawyers
5) Friends

The Residents
1) Trustees
2) Inmates

The Staff
1) Correctional: guards, counsellors,
2) Civilian: secretaries, teachers,
   orderlies, social workers, psychologists,
   doctors, dentists, nurses.

The Visitors

Through observation and a review of the limited literature available, it has been found that certain visiting patterns develop in prisons. The first pattern that is apparent is that a great number of inmates receive no visits at all. The researcher varied visits by days
and times. Over and over again, the same people appeared in the visiting room. When asking informants about this subject, the reply was that "probably only half the guys in here ever get visits." Sykes (1940) reported that through an examination of visiting records, 41 per cent of the inmates received no visits (reprinted in Glaser, 1964: 362). Brodsky reported similar findings with 43 per cent of his subjects receiving no visits (Brodsky, 1975: 48).

Glaser, in his 1964 study of prison inmates found that family relationships are of major importance in post release success (364). Generally, it has been found that:

1. As time of release approaches, the relationship between inmates and their parents or other blood relatives tends to improve ("absence makes the heart grow fonder").

2. Imprisonment tends to weaken ties with spouses and with former friends ("out of sight, out of mind" (Glaser, 1964 as paraphrased in Brodsky, 1975: 17).

These conclusions made by Glaser (1964) and Brodsky (1975) are confirmed in the present South End study. Breaking the visitors into specific groups, Mothers and "Blood", Clergy, Lawyers, and Friends, specific visiting patterns will be discussed.

*On the street and in prison, particularly among blacks, "blood" may designate either family member or friend. For the purpose of this research, blood specifically means blood relative.

Mothers and "Blood"
The most easily observed pattern at South End is that the majority of visits are made by females. Brodsky (1975: 50) found that 28 per cent of visits made to his subjects were by mothers while only 5 per cent were made by fathers.

This pattern is easily explained in three ways. The responsibility of child rearing is still primarily the job of women. In this respect, it does not seem surprising that mothers take the responsibility of visiting children in prison. It also seems possible that more fathers work and are unable to visit during the week. Finally, given the background of prison inmates, as confirmed in many studies, many inmates come from single parent families and have little contact with fathers prior to incarceration, let alone, during their stay in prison.

The next largest group of visitors according to Brodsky (1975: 50) were siblings, making up 20 per cent of visits. Another 12 per cent of visits in Brodsky’s study were made up of other blood relatives; such as, aunts, uncles, cousins and children (1975: 50).

According to informants at South End, blood relatives are the people most counted on while in prison. It is generally accepted that if an inmate’s own family does not come to visit, it is because the inmate “was bad to his people on the street.” This inmate then becomes known as a “dog.”
I'll tell you, you know, Robby's got really good people but they never come visit him. That's how he got his name, "Shit Dog," he shit on his people so he's a dog (Field notes, July, 1985).

As is apparent from this anecdote, visits significantly affect the inmate's status on the inside. This status effect will be discussed more in depth in a later section.

**Wives and Girlfriends**

Some men go to prison married, others have girlfriends and fiancées when they enter. Still others marry or meet women who become their "ol' ladies" while inside. Whatever the case, according to Montana Slim, a pattern of "woman's loyalty" seems to emerge.

I done nine of my ten years in max and it never fails, a guy can come in here all in love and everything and six months later, practically to the day, you can bet that that guy is gonna get a letter sayin' "um you know I met another guy and sorry but...." I been around too long not to know this, any relationship lasts longer is real unusual, you know (Field notes, November, 1982).

Six months is also the time limit suggested as a general mourning period when people become widowed (Lopata, 1973). Although it takes much longer for most people to overcome such an ordeal, six months is usually when widow(er)s begin to recover their interest in others.
According to Brodsky (1975: 50), 14 per cent of the visits received by inmates were from wives while only one per cent were received from girlfriends and fiancées. The relatively high percentage of visits by wives in the Brodsky study corresponds with the South End study, (Brodsky's subjects were 140 male prisoners admitted to prison over a five month period (1975: 21)). It is also quite common for a wife to move to a city very close to the institution to which her husband has been assigned. This allows the wife to visit as often as the individual institution permits.

During the South End study, unless specifically told by an informant it was almost impossible to separate wives and girlfriends. It is common for inmates to refer to wives, girlfriends and common law wives as 'ol lady' so unless specifically known by informants, it was impossible to distinguish one group from another. However, informants did point out that many of the men who had wives visiting them were also receiving visits from girlfriends.

Like I told you before, ya just can’t count on havin' a woman around for a long time. So you get as much as you can while it lasts. If she'll bring you money and dope, great, if not, there ain’t much point to it...I mean, she ain’t gonna stick around anyway (Field notes, July, 1985).

Clergy
A number of men, while doing their time, "find the Lord." Although services are available for inmates on the inside, some prefer to have clergy members from "the street" come to visit or sometimes the clergy may visit as a favour to the family of the inmate. Clergy made up one per cent of the Brodsky study (1975: 50). This seems in proportion to what was observed during the South End study. Clergy members were seen on only five occasions. Though the number may be small, this may be the only visit an inmate receives.

Lawyers

Although this group is not included as part of the observational visiting room study, since they visit in an area separate from other visits, they still compose a part of the visitor population. The Brodsky (1975: 50) study showed one per cent of visits coming from lawyers. Whereas, at South End, at least one lawyer was seen on each weekday visit and on three occasions, on weekends. Again, because of the time at which the inmate's were observed in the Brodsky study, many inmates may not have started appeal proceedings. At South End, not only are there visits made by lawyers regarding appeals of the inmates' convictions and sentences, but also, lawyers visit regarding law suits against the Department of Corrections.
Some may believe that because of the professional nature of the visit, lawyers do not become involved with their clients. This however, is not always the case. There have been a minority of cases where lawyers have become involved with their clients. According to an informant, one lawyer became so involved with his client that he smuggled a gun into the prison for use by the inmate. As a result of this incident, lawyers are now subjected to the same type of security clearance as other visitors.

Friends

As with wives and girlfriends, inmates believe that relationships with friends cannot be counted on as far as visiting or maintaining contact is concerned. Brodsky (1975: 50) reports 11 per cent of his subjects' visits come from same sex friends. As with Brodskey's other statistics, this percentage only reflects the inmate's first five months of incarceration.

You know, they come for a while but then they get tired of it. And like Jimmy, he moved to Florida, I still hear from him maybe... well it was two years ago now. If you got friends who don't do crime you know, they got their own families and if they're into crime, you know, either they're in prison too or they're dead. Yeah, I got lots of friends who's died (Field notes, March, 1982).

As demonstrated in this section, a large number of inmates do not receive visits but there is an even
larger number who do. It has also been shown that the visits received form certain patterns which over time influence the inmate’s attitudes about family and friends. With this in mind, the discussion will next focus on the inmate world inside the institution, centering on 'institutionalization rituals' and the development of an inmate culture (Goffman, 1961).

Inmates and their Perspective

Unlike information specifically pertaining to visits and visitors, the information available about inmates and their life inside is limitless. This section will discuss the information about inmates that deals specifically with the inmate and his perspective on visits. This will include, the process of initiation into the institution and secondary adjustments and how visits fit into this system.

Initially, when an inmate enters prison he/she must participate in ritualistic processes which formally initiate him/her into the world of the "total institution (Goffman, 1961)." His/her first two weeks of prison life are spent in quarantine where, he/she must be deloused and examined for contagious diseases. He/she is then photographed and given an identification card and number and issued prison clothing. Then the prisoners undergo psychological, intelligence and psychiatric testing. The test results are then included
with the inmate's violence rating as part of the classification process.

The violence rating is determined through an examination of an inmate's prior record including both on the street and prior incarceration activities. Once-classified, the inmate is then sent either to a maximum, medium or minimum security institution. Other aspects of initiation into the total institution include: loss of heterosexual opportunity, loss of sense of personal safety and forcing inmates to abide by rules and regulations of the institution which are enforced by guards. These degradation ceremonies serve to strip the inmate both literally and symbolically of their street identities (Sykes, 1958; Garfinkel, 1956; Cloward et al., 1960; Stastney and Tynan, 1982). Goffman (1961) used the term "mortification of self" to describe this process. As a consequence of this mortification process, "the inmate's self becomes a great focus of his conversation and concern than it does on the outside, leading to much self-pity (Goffman, 1961: 67)." Thus, in order to reduce the feeling of loss of status, inmates develop secondary adjustments to both insulate themselves from the administration and guards and to make prison life easier. Goffman discusses secondary adjustments; such as, 1) collective teasing, where inmates band together to support anonymous mass defiance; 2) cliques and participation in homosexual
activity; 3) colonization, using experience from the home world to demonstrate the desirability of life on the inside, and 4) conversion, where the inmate appears to take on the official role of the perfect inmate (1961: 60-65).

According to the researcher's informants, since the time Goffman wrote Asylums (1961), inmates have come upon three other forms of secondary adjustments. The first is the visiting room which was discussed by Goffman as a "front region" of the institution, with decor more closely resembling the outside world than the actual living quarters of the inmate (Goffman, 1961: 102). Goffman also discussed the visiting room as a form of "contaminative exposure" where inmates are forced to visit with family and friends under the close supervision of guards (Goffman, 1961: 31). The visiting room will be discussed later as a secondary adjustment used by inmates for the smuggling of goods and making available forbidden heterosexual activity thus making institutional life more bearable.

The second type of adjustment is the writing of grievances. Grievances are filed against guards for unacceptable treatment and the filing of invalid tickets. According to one guard at Western Wayne County Correctional Facility, the newest of the Detroit area medium security institutions, "one guy has 35 grievances filed." The third of the secondary
adjustments is the law suits that inmates file against the Department of Corrections for a variety of reasons. Usually these law suits are complaints of violations of the "Eighth Amendment" of the Constitution of the United States and as such, are under the general area of cruel and unusual punishment. The law suits may charge a variety of acts as cruel and unusual punishment, even, according to one informant, inadequately protecting an inmate during his attempted escape.

Yeah, you know Denny, remember you met him here. Well him and nine other guys filed a suit for cruel and unusual after the riot. They could get rich off it but really none of 'em care, they're all doin' life so they figure before it comes down to money the State'll cut 'em loose. And you know, they probably will cause I think the suit's for a million dollars, yeah, a hundred thousand a piece. I woulda got in on it but I'm so short, they mighta flopped me (Field notes, July, 1983).

It should be noted that while working on their own appeals many inmates develop an expertise in law and become "jail house lawyers." By law, each inmate must be allowed twelve hours of access to the prison law library per week. Many inmates spend much more time there, thus, allowing these men who are usually long term incarcerates, to develop this expertise. Some "jail house lawyers" use this knowledge to help other inmates with law suits while others file for themselves.

Inmate Culture
One of the first things an inmate learns when he/she enters the institution is not to ask what a person's crime is (Clemmer, 1940; Sykes, 1958; Goffman, 1961). One may ask how much time the person is doing and that in itself is information enough to suggest what his/her crime might have been. Since all other aspects of the inmate's life become public, this may be considered the only privacy he/she is allowed. However, in time the inmate's crime(s) do become generally known.

When Clemmer (1940) and Sykes (1958) studied inmate culture, it was found that a status hierarchy of inmates existed based on crimes committed. Those inmates with high status had committed such crimes as, safe cracking and murder while at the other end of the stratum were crimes like rape and child molesting. This respect and disgust accorded certain types of crimes is "suggested by Irwin and Cressey (1962) to have originated as part of age old criminal norms and values (Irwin, 1970: 63)."

In the world of the thief, respect was given to that criminal who made his crime an art while crimes against women and children were considered cowardly. Irwin and Cressey (1962) discussed this phenomenon in terms of the "importation" theory of inmate culture where the codes of the inmate culture are brought in from the street culture of the thief.

Today, most criminals of the "old school" have disappeared and so have their norms and values.
Replacing the "old con", is the new inmate whose preprison life was spent in the insularity of the ghetto. According to Claude Brown (1984), the new inmate is more violent, unstable and likely to kill. This is demonstrated through the increased numbers of "killings for profit." Killing for profit refers to the cold blooded, impersonal and predatory murders that are done for some form of personal gain. This personal gain or profit can be credibility, money and goods, lives or sexual favors (Dietz, 1984: 187-191). Although not all inmates are killers, their crimes tend to be profit motivated but may simply not include the final act of killing. Their victims appear to be increasingly depersonalized or objectified.

One no longer "judges a man by his crime" but judges him on what he is able to accomplish while on the inside. The valued traits of today's inmates are power, love from family and the ability to make money. However, there are still certain inmates whose crimes makes gaining status more accessible. The most important of these status confirming crimes at South End is drug dealing. The drug dealer, while on the street, is able to accumulate large amounts of money. Even though under Michigan law any property or money suspected to be from illegal gain may be confiscated at the time of conviction, many dealers are able to hide some of their assets. For those dealers who are unable
to retain their wealth, connections are maintained on
the street and in prison which may help them get started
in an "inside" drug dealing business, an extremely
lucrative business "inside" as well as on the street.

The successful street drug dealers have also
demonstrated their power through the control of some
very large organizations on the street. For example,
one such organization is "Young Boys Incorporated," the
first of the emerging drug trafficking organizations
that use male children as distributors of heroin and
other drugs on the street. This organization in
particular; according to one informant, was run from
inside South End for two years before the majority of
the top people were either killed or incarcerated.

Other inmates whose outside connections help them
while inside are those with ties to organized crime.
Not only do other inmates respect the power attributed
to organized crime but also, the strong sense of family.

However, for the average inmate, fighting and non-
inmate contacts are the only means of gaining status in
prison.

The best way to get along in here is to make
'em think you don't give a fuck. That's what
I done when I got here. Just like if someone
come on to me I said like "okay mother fucker"
and made like I was ready to fight to the
death. And like, most times they'd say, you
know, "I was just kidding" but one time this
guy come at me and I just let loose. Later he
said I hit him with a pipe you know, to make
him look good cause I was so skinny, but I
didn't use no pipe. But once you have that
first fight, you're okay (Letter, April, 1981).

Status in Relation to Outside Contacts

In a discussion of what visits, letters and phone calls mean to an inmate, an informant emphasized the importance in this way:

Sure it's important, it lets you know you're not such a terrible person, you gotta have people that love you (Field notes, July, 1985).

In this respect, outside contacts allow the inmate to maintain a role identity that is not totally based on the perspective of the institution and criminal justice system. Instead of being considered only an inmate, convict, murderer, etc. The inmate maintains part of the role of father, son, brother, friend, etc. With further probing, the informant expanded the status aspect of outside contacts in this way:

You can't imagine what it's like when you come back to your house for count and there's letters there for you to read. And you know, when you're just sittin' there and some guy yells "hey Slim what do you think about this?" And you yell back, "hey I'm busy with my mail." Man, somma them guys get real jealous and you know, I feel good. Like I've had lotsa guys say "I wish I had someone like that woman writin' me" (Field notes, February, 1982).

And like with the phone, man I swear somma these niggers sit on the phone talkin' to no one. You can't hardly make your little five minute call cause they's on there for hours. And you know, these other guys go for it.
thinkin' these guys got people out there that care about 'em enough to talk that long (Field notes, July, 1985).

Money is very difficult to come by in prison. School and work details do not even pay enough to buy necessary toiletries. Therefore, an inmate is dependant on his family and friends to either buy necessities or get him started in drug dealing or loan sharking, two lucrative prison "hustles." Even if the inmate is not actually getting money or drugs, visits and letters give the impression of wealth. Although eventually the inmate must produce wealth in order to maintain his status, the impression itself may help the inmate become established in the beginning.

If you get visits they figure you're gettin' money or somethin' from your people. Like you know, if you need to borrow somethin' from a guy and he knows you got people comin' to see you then he knows the next time he's outta somethin' you might have it. You can only keep sayin' I'll pay you back, I'll pay you back so many times, that gets old awful fast in here, everything gets old awful fast in here (Field notes, July, 1985).

As the length of time the inmate spends in prison goes on, the greater the influence of the inmate culture. Not only does this influence his/her behavior and identity on the inside, it also effects the inmate's development of relationships with non-inmates.

Institutional Staff
As with literature dealing with inmates, there is an overwhelming amount of literature dealing with institutional staff. If one wishes to look at staff training or unions, the information is available. However, in the South End research the major question is "who rules the joint (Stastney and Tynauer, 1982)?"

In 1981, the researcher was informed by a member of the correctional staff that the overall inmate/staff ratio was 12 to 1. This does not mean 12 inmates for every one guard but, 11 staff members, including professional, civilians who work inside the walls; such as, teachers, orderlies and nurses, and correctional staff. In attempting to do a rough estimate of what these statistics actually mean, the researcher came to an estimate of approximately one staff member per 100 inmates and approximately one guard per every 150 inmates.

The relationship between guards and inmates is basically adversarial (1981: 87). While the guards are attempting to control the inmates according to administrative rules, the inmates are working against them to make their lives inside relatively more comfortable.

When looking at the staff/inmate ratio and including the fact that no institutional staff is allowed to carry a weapon while working inside, it would seem that the inmates have the upper hand in who actually 'rules the
joint.' This has been demonstrated through the increased violence against guards over the past few years.

I'm tellin' you, it's gettin' bad in here. You know, the other day I went to my house for count and you know this lady guard went up to fourth gallery and next thing you know, she's comin' down on a stretcher and you know they, the guys up there were drinkin' and smokin' a little and they, well, you know. I didn't hear nothin', she didn't even scream. She was pretty dumb to go up there herself (Field notes, February, 1985).

With further discussion, the informant also stated that although it may have been "dumb" for the guard to go up on her own, there were no other guards in the cell block at that time.

Though the conditions at South End do not excuse a staff member's participation in illegal or illicit activity, it must be taken into consideration. Although proportionally those staff members participating in these activities are a minority, the actual number is quite large. The activities may take the form of bribes, favouritism and/or actually importing contraband.

Unless a visitor to South End were actually working with a guard to import contraband, it is highly unlikely that a visitor would see this happen. Most arrangements for importing are made between the inmate and guard involved with the actual exchange taking place inside the walls.
I had a guard for a long time. He worked the kitchen and would bring in weed for me to sell. I’d hide it under the flour bags and no one would find it. I made a lotta money then (Field notes, June, 1982).

In the same manner that visitors to the institution are checked for importing contraband, so are guards. However, if a guard happens to be guilty of importing, his union and civil rights protect him/her from prosecution.

They caught a guy bringin’ heroin in today. What a fool. They wear them white shirts you know and the asshole didn’t wear a tee shirt so you could see the packets taped to him you know. When they asked him to take the position for a pat search, he turned around and went home. They’ll just transfer him someplace else (Field notes, January, 1985).

Unlike actual exchanges of goods between staff and inmates which are generally unobservable by visitors, there are other bargains between inmates and guards that become apparent in the visiting room. These may take the form of an actual exchange of money, or threatening the guard’s job or personal safety.

I was visiting Slim this one day and we were having a pretty good visit so neither one of us really wanted to leave when the two hours was up. About a half hour before the time was up Slim looked over at the guard and said “we’re in luck, watch this.” Slim walked over to the guard and talked to him for a few minutes then came back and sat down. He was smiling when he came back so I asked him what happened. He told me that the guard was a fag and a few weeks earlier he had caught the guy in the act with another inmate so now the guy was his friend. The visit lasted four and a half hours (Field notes, August, 1982).
Other forms of obvious bargains between inmates and guards in the visiting room include overlooking illicit activities thus making it easier for the inmate and visitor to take part in these activities. This might include, giving the inmate a preferred seat in the visiting room and allowing extended visits.

This section has given an overall view of the people at South End. Visitors were discussed in terms of their relationship to the inmate, as well as their specific visiting patterns. Inmates were discussed in terms of their perspective of visiting given their situation in the total institution.

Finally, this section briefly discussed the staff at South End. Although they are not a major consideration in the research, it was necessary to discuss their activities and relationships with the inmates as part of the overall prison world.
CHAPTER VII

INMATE/VISITOR RELATIONSHIPS

"As Max Weber pointed out, a relationship, in its most generic sense, is the existence of a substantial probability of interaction between two or more persons (McCall and Simmons, 1978: 167)." This distinguishes as relationships, any two or more persons who have had contact in any form: such as, two people who go to the same hair stylist or are alumni of a university. This definition is too broad for the purposes of this research. The relationships that have been observed in the visiting room are at an interpersonal level.

The interpersonal relationship must be defined as one that necessarily involves each participant as a personal entity... recognizing the other as a distinctive individual of whom he has some prior knowledge (McCall and Simmons, 1978: 167).

The observational portion of this research is the interactional encounter in the prison visiting room. However, one "sees" only the encounter (McCall, 1970: 35) while the more generic and structural aspects of the relationship governing that encounter must be explored. In order to do this in a comprehensive fashion, this chapter will be divided into two sections. The first will discuss the development, maintenance and possible dissolution of the inmate/visitor relationship. It will also include a discussion of the negotiations of
relationship boundaries and the strategies used by inmates and visitors to maintain a previously established relationship or begin a new relationship. These boundaries and strategies must be negotiated to fit into the overall boundaries of the 'total institution.'

Many of the strategies used by inmates are comparable to Sykes and Matza's techniques of neutralization (1957). Throughout the discussion of the strategies, the justifications they provide become obvious. These rationalizations are so common, they become a vocabulary of motives for inmates and visitors alike (Hewitt, 1979).

The concepts of vocabulary of motives and and motive talk address the fact that "talk about motives is a key organizing feature of everyday life, and in particular, a major way in which potentially or actually problematic occurrences are handled in social interaction (Hewitt, 1979: 142)." The concept 'vocabulary of motives' attempts to deal with the reasons behind a motive and allows these reasons to look legitimate under certain circumstances. Thus inmates develop a vocabulary of motives which make getting what they want much less troublesome. It is quite unacceptable for someone to ask another for money in the early stages of a relationship. However, by adding certain words to describe their request, a favourable reply is more likely.

The second section will discuss the encounters in the visiting room. While observing visiting room activity,
certain patterns of encounters emerged. The researcher will discuss these patterns and the strategies used in maintaining the negotiated relationship whether it be a "love," family, or friendship relationship. Or possibly a working relationship.

The Relationship

The Emerging Relationship

In developing relationships, people involved participate in negotiations and exchanges which create the boundaries (Denzin, 1970) that these relationships are to follow. As with all human experience, the boundaries of a relationship are not static, they are constantly being evaluated and renegotiated to conform with the changing situations and role identities of the participants.

For those participants in relationships who have been in an institutional situation before, adjustment to the new surroundings may not be too difficult. The adjustment may simply consist of becoming accustomed to the the rules and personnel of the specific institution.

There is a period of time between removal of the inmate from a county jail to the institution during which, the whereabouts of the inmate is unknown to friends and family. The inmate usually writes or makes the necessary phone calls to inform people of the institution to which the inmate has been assigned and the regulations on maintaining contact. It is also quite common for prisons
to restrict visiting hours during the classification period. This makes it necessary for many people involved in relationships to adjust to contact through letters and phone calls.

Some of these people have maintained relationships on a long distance basis prior to incarceration. So for these people, the adjustment may not be as difficult as it might be for those who have been used contact with the inmate on a day to day basis before his confinement. However, because of the cost of calling, the people involved in the relationship must negotiate how often the inmate may call and usually depend more on correspondence. A common agreement is to allow the inmate to telephone once per month unless there is an emergency, then an unexpected call may be accepted.

Once the inmate has been classified and placed in an institution, the inmate and outsiders will renegotiate the relationship to include visiting. Again, probably the greatest concern in the negotiation process is cost. One of the strategies used to keep the relationship intact is for the family to make an adjustment in location relative to the institution.

You know, there's lots of women who move into the city to be closer to their men. Some of them come visit once a week. It's easy if they don't work (Field notes, February, 1982).

A move like this is negotiated between the inmate and visitor. However, it must also take into account the
already established lifestyles of the other family members. If a move such as this cannot or will not be negotiated, the relationship will be negotiated at a less intense level. There are those inmates and visitors who negotiate monthly visits while others work out less rigid boundaries.

I really don't care how much they come up here as long as they don't wait too long to bring Sally. She's growing so fast (Field notes, March, 1985).

If the inmate and non-inmate have been able to negotiate the boundaries for actual contact, the negotiation process continues to determine the intensity of the relationship.

With a disruption of sexual contact due to the institution, spouses and mates are forced to create new boundaries for, maintaining some form of intimate contact and/or introducing an alternate method of sexual satisfaction. The inmate and visitor may make an agreement in which the visitor, if she wishes, may develop a sexual relationship on the outside while still maintaining her relationship with the inmate.

Yeah, guys who take another guy's place on the outside are called 'jodies.' They kinda move in on the guy's ol' lady while he's away. You know, it can work out but I wouldn't go for it. Its bad enough you're in here without knowin' there's some guy out there fuckin' your woman. But I guess its better than havin' her leave completely (Field notes, June, 1985).
The boundaries set in this type of agreement usually are that the woman will maintain the support already given to the inmate and most of all, not talk about the outside relationship. Not discussing outside relationships is a boundary observed by both partners. Negotiations for the inmate may focus around an homosexual affair or an heterosexual affair between the inmate and a guard. The acknowledgment of in prison sexual activities to outsiders, that is necessary for these negotiations, is very rare. It is more common for the inmate to deny sexual contact while inside and in turn use this lack of sexual activity as leverage in negotiating sexual activity in the visiting room.

I can’t get into a fag, you know. A few times I had some guy grab my dick but it just turned me off. I’d rather just jack off (Field notes, February, 1983).

I coulda had a guard or two over the years but I don’t know, I feel like they’re all whores you know (Field notes, September, 1981).

If the woman involved in the relationship does not have a "jody" on the outside, strategies such as these may instill feelings of mutual deprivation in the visitor, thus, making her more likely to participate in illicit visiting room activity. On the other hand, if the woman is expected to maintain a relationship with the inmate while involving herself with a "jody," these strategies serve to inform the woman of her obligation to "her man."
The visitor might also be introduced to some of the sexual contact that is observable in the visiting room as a suggestion to increase the involvement of the visitor.

Another important aspect in the development of the inmate/visitor relationship is the movement of contraband. While attempting to develop and establish rules for the relationship, the visitor may be introduced to the idea of supplying the inmate with money and/or drugs while he is inside. Of course, a limited amount of money may be brought into the prison legally through deposit in the inmate's account or by purchasing tokens however, smuggled money is preferred by inmates, since as a rule, "green is worth more than tokens." Whether the goods are smuggled or brought in legally, there are several strategies used by inmates to initiate visitors into doing this. They are:

1. The 'take good care of your baby' strategy.

   I love you, it's time you started taking care of your man. You know that if I was outside I'd be taking care of you (Field notes, October, 1982).

The love relationship in our society, particularly the more traditional form, suggests that women in love should "stand by their men." When the bad times hit, a woman is expected to help the inmate (her man) as much as possible.

2. The 'if you've got the money, I've got the time' strategy.
If I don't have any money I'll have to hustle and that's how I get into trouble. If I have some money I can just lay in my cell and do my time (January, 1983).

One of the only exchanges an inmate has to offer his visitor is a promise to do "good time." By doing "good time," he has a better chance of making his first parole date or working his way down to a lower security prison and eventually to a halfway house.

3. The 'only the strong survive' strategy.

The food in here ain't shit. Any that's worth eatin' has stole. I gotta keep my strength up to survive in here (July, 1982).

Quite often, the inmate will tell visitors horror stories about cockroaches and spiders in the food and how impossible it is to make food for five thousand people taste good. Along with this, the inmate will point out some of the more dangerous inmates in the prison to show the visitor the necessity of being alert and well fed in case the need to defend himself arises.

4. The 'I'm trying to be brave but they won't let me' strategy.

It's bad enough I'm doin' my time...and I deserve it. But man, they're doggin' me (July, 1982)

It is expected that an inmate "be a man" and accept his time without crying about it (Sutherland and Cressey, 1974). However, after being initiated into the prison
themselves, visitors get a taste of what it means to be "doggled." The inmate may talk about constantly having a guard bothering him or the extraordinarily poor living conditions in South End. Simply by coming into the visiting room, visitors get some feeling for what the inmate is talking about.

5. The 'What's a nice guy like me doing in a place like this' strategy.

Do you know what they do to guys who owe money in here (Field notes, March, 1982)?

Through visiting, a visitor gains an "insider knowledge" of prison life. Part of this knowledge includes knowing that inmates are loan sharking and lending money and goods until another inmate is so far in debt, his only means of paying the money back is selling himself. With loan sharks, if the debt is not paid, the debt is then sold to other "wolves" who then "turn out" the person owing the money (Clemmer, 1940; Sykes, 1958; Sutherland and Cressey, 1974).

6. The 'at least you're free' strategy.

I know it's tough for you to get by on the little money you get but you got your freedom and at least you know that there'll be money comin' in again (July, 1985).

7. The 'you're having fun and I'm suffering' strategy.

Shit, I can't even buy a pack of cigarettes and you come in here with new shoes and
talkin' 'bout goin' out last night, don't even
talk to me about that shit (Family letter, 1978, read, August, 1984).

Both of these last two strategies instill feelings of
guilt in the visitor. They are particularly effective
with visitors who might already feel guilt about the
inmate's situation, like a mother or a crime partner who
got away. It is also effective with visitors who take the
perspective of the inmate being unlucky, a victim or even,
not guilty.

The strategies used to convince someone to smuggle drugs
are slightly different, they are:

1. I know you don't have much money but if.
you bring in some dope then I can sell it and
we can both make some money (Field notes, July, 1985).

The in-prison drug trade is particularly lucrative at
South End. To someone who is already struggling to make
ends meet, this suggestion may be quite attractive,
particularly if the cost is less than what is already
being spent on the inmate.

2. See that guy over there, him and his
brother.... Them's the kinda guys I'm living
with. It gets me uptight and I need something
to help me sleep (Field notes, January, 1982).

3. Sleepin' keeps me out of trouble but I
need somethin' to help me out. You probably
got some valiums at home or maybe some of
your friends use 'em (Field notes, January, 1982).
The suggestion of bringing in a sleeping aid is the most common. Since Valium and other forms of tranquilizers are easily obtained, the visitor will not have to deal with "street" drug dealers.

4. The system's already corrupt. All you'll be doin' is helpin' me out the cheapest way I can think of (Field notes, July, 1985).

This strategy helps the visitor rationalize doing something illegal. Knowing others do the same thing, especially knowing that people in power do the same thing, makes it easier to say "what the hell, what does it matter."

Although a vocabulary of motives does enhance the inmate's ability to develop a relationship to his liking, another necessary element in the development of a relationship is trust. For those who come into the institution with pre-established relationships, an element of trust is assumed to be present. However, for those inmates who are developing new relationships after incarceration, the development of trust is more difficult.

It is quite common for an inmate to discuss "head games" with an outsider at the introductory stage of the relationship. He demands that the outsider always be truthful with him and not present him/herself or the relationship falsely. In order for the inmate to prove his trustworthiness, he will often discuss the crime for which he has been incarcerated and admit his guilt.
If you're straight up with me, I'll always be straight up with you. I know I done wrong but I'm payin' for it (Letter, April, 1981).

Obviously, an inmate has few avenues open to him with which to build trust. This is something a person with whom an inmate may develop a relationship knows. Thus, the inmate may not be expected to prove his trustworthiness anymore than he already has.

Once the boundaries of the relationship have been established, the inmate/non-inmate relationship moves into the maintenance stage. The movement from one stage to another is not cut and dried. A relationship may be in the process of being maintained while at the same time negotiations are taking place to either develop the relationship more fully or possibly increase the distance between the participants. However, there are certain aspects of inmate/non-inmate relationships that must be discussed.

Maintaining the Relationship

A major question that comes to mind when examining the inmate/non-inmate relationship is, how do people maintain them? One aspect of the maintenance of the inmate/non-inmate relationship that must be taken into account is the traditional gender roles that are taken for granted in most of these relationships. As discussed by Dietz and Callaghan (1985), the criminal subculture's expectations of women are limited mainly to supporting roles. As was
noted in Brodsky's (1975) study, and observed by the researcher, the majority of visitors to prison are female. The traditional and pre-established form of an existing relationship may be maintained for a long period of time if each of the participants is willing and/or able to negotiate the boundaries for its maintenance. This is specific to the male/female relationship but these are not the only relationships that are maintained. There are those same sex family members and friends who continue to maintain contact with the inmate. Keeping the people visiting is a major aspect in maintaining a relationship and is done through a variety of manipulative techniques.

*The most important thing you have to do is keep 'em comin' to see you. It gets too easy to forget if they don't (Field notes, May, 1982).*

It is also easier for the inmate to use powers of influence in person than it is in a letter or by phone. Once the distance to the institution is travelled, it is unlikely that the visitor will walk out. Whereas, in longer distance contact, one may hang up the phone and not accept phone charges from the inmate again, or simply not answer letters.

Lauer and Handel (1980) discuss the ability of the less powerful to attune themselves to non-verbal cues. While inside the institution, the inmate as a singular person is relatively powerless (the powerlessness of inmates as a group is questionable (Stastny and Tyrnauer,
Thus making his only means of getting what he wants, manipulation with the use of others' non verbal cues as indicators of the other's "weak spot." The inmate is able to watch reactions and in turn keep prodding until he reaches his goal.

The influence of inmate culture and the institution on relationships is strong. However, there are some people who continue in their relationships and accept the limitations surrounding them. For most however, the relationships begin to break down and eventually dissolve. The following section will discuss this issue.

**Distancing**

Once the boundaries for the relationship have been negotiated, the visitor and inmate attempt to maintain the relationship for as long as possible. However, as the relationship progresses, two different social worlds are working against one another. The greater the amount of time the inmate spends in prison, the more likely it is that he will become institutionalized (Clemmer, 1940; Goffman, 1961). Thus, the inmate culture becomes a greater source of role identity. As stated earlier, inmate culture recognizes visits as a means of achieving status. The inmate may attempt to place greater demands on family and friends, while at the same time having less to give in return. In time, many inmates lose their
ability and desire to relate to many of the activities going on in the outside world.

You know, I don’t know what’s happenin’ out there and it really don’t make no difference. Sure I like to know what’s goin’ on with my family but... I live my life day to day, I don’t know if I’m gonna be alive tomorrow so what’s the point (Field notes, February, 1983).

The inmate and visitor may then negotiate new boundaries for what topics are to be discussed; these usually include topics apart from the visitor’s life and the street and more toward the inmate and his world. Since the visitor is only selectively privy to information on the inside, the number of things that may be discussed lessen as time passes.

At the same time that the inmate is becoming more institutionalized, the visitor is continuing to live a life on the outside that includes the inmate less and less. The visitor may at this time attempt to move away from the relationship.

It might be considered that the inmate would dissolve the relationship however, because of his dependence on the visitor for support both financially and to maintain a role identity which includes more than that of an inmate, it is most common for the visitor to dissolve the relationship. There are three common strategies used by visitors when they decide to end the relationship. These are:

69
1. Stop visiting, writing and accepting phone calls.

2. Writing a "Dear John" letter.

3. Moving away.

These strategies may be employed gradually but more often than not, the actual end to the relationship is quite abrupt.

In order to deal with the break down of a relationship and still maintain and protect one's identity (LaGaipa, 1982), people engage in strategies which serve to do so. Stated simply, these strategies include:

1. Initiate engagement with a third person.

"The third person rite is an identity management technique designed to foster a positive self image, and a positive other-image of oneself in the eyes of the observer (LaGaipa, 1980: 197)."

Using this strategy, those who had been involved in the relationship are able to attribute the break down to a causal factor, the third person. Not only does this strategy allow the non-inmate to "save face" but it also allows the inmate to blame the institution as well as the "Jody." It is quite common for the inmate to say, "If I was on the street it wouldn't have happened."

2. The use of gossip to heighten one's self image (LaGaipa, 1980: 198-203).

This strategy in particular is used by the person who did not initiate the break-up. Thus, it's common to here an
inmate say, "she was just a whore" or "she wouldn't give me what I wanted so I told her to get lost." This allows the inmate to reinterpret, in the eyes of others, what actually occurred in the relationship.

3. The Intervention Team (LaGaipa, 1980: 203)

According to LaGaipa, the task of the intervention team is to "maintain and protect the structural integrity of the group (1980: 203)." Thus when an interpersonal relationship breaks up, an inmate's friends or "mellows" will band together to help him through the ordeal. While the friends of the non-inmate will support his/her decision.

The development, maintenance and dissolution of an inmate/non-inmate relationship is difficult and for many, unpleasant. No matter what the circumstances of a relationship prior to incarceration, the inside relationship has to be adjusted to to fit within the limited realm of the total institution. Many aspects of a "normal relationship" become unattainable or unacceptable while the inmate is incarcerated. Inmates and visitors attempt to adjust their relationships however, in the majority of cases, they eventually dissolve.
The Visits

The actual domain of the visitor is the street. However, by virtue of entering a total institution, although only for a short time, visitors themselves become institutionalized in the same fashion as an inmate. The following section follows the process of a visitor's initial initiation into the world of the total institution.

Visitor's Initiation into South End

Goffman (1960) discusses the processes in which a new arrival at an institution must participate. As discussed earlier, the process is termed mortification of self (Goffman, 1961). What was found during the initial stages of this research was that the visitor, whoever he or she may be, must go through the same type of self mortifying process as an incarcerate in order to be allowed entry into the visiting room.

Before one even enters the grounds, a stop must be made at the main gate. There the visitor tells a guard who he or she is visiting and the license plate of the car is taken. Much like procedure when entering a foreign country, the car and its contents are subject to cursory examination for illegal substances; such as, drugs alcohol, weapons and explosives. The driver of the car must also produce his/her driver's license for identification. If someone is entering on foot, hitch
hiking on or off the Greyhound bus that stops at the institution; the contents of a purse or bag may be inspected.

This in itself, is not a particularly traumatic experience, however once inside the building, the visitor becomes more a part of the institutional world.

Signing In

The first thing a visitor must do is check in at the main desk in the waiting room. The visitor must provide photo identification and tell the officer who he/she is visiting. The officer then pulls the records on the inmate and includes this visitor information on his card. The type of information needed by the institution is name, address and relationship of the visitor to the inmate. The institution also has access to a central computer to check the visitor for a criminal record or a parole hold (any visitor who is on parole must have prior clearance from his/her parole officer before access to the institution is allowed.)

It is also at the sign in desk that anything a visitor would like to give to an inmate must be left there. Any clothing or money orders are processed through the institution, not directly given to the inmate. Photographs may be given to an inmate on a visit but only after inspection at the desk. Photo tickets and fifteen
dollars worth of tokens may also be purchased at the desk to be brought in on the visit.

Although this practice is seen as necessary by the institution for security purposes, the visitor and inmate see the practice as an invasion of privacy, a presumption of criminality on the part of the visitor and often as stupidity.

I had been sitting in the waiting room for about a half hour when a very angry woman sat next to me and began cutting the backs off some Polaroid pictures. She turned to me and said, "I don't understand this, they won't let me take these pictures in until I cut them up." I explained to her that some people smuggle drugs into the prison by cutting off the backs and then gluing them back together. She became very agitated at the thought of "these people" thinking she would do something like that. She then proceeded to do as she was told (Field notes, April, 1983).

After checking in, the visitor is then told to take a seat and wait to be called.

The Wait

The waiting time to get into the visiting room varies from fifteen minutes to three hours. The average waiting time appeared to be one hour except on weekends when the institution was very busy, then the wait was closer to two hours. The three-hour wait seldom happens. In the researcher's three years of visiting it happened twice to her personally and on three separate occasions the researcher spoke to people who had been waiting longer than two hours. The reasons for extended waiting may
vary. The researcher's first experience was three weeks after the riot in 1981. At this time the guards were "working to rule," they were doing only the jobs they were assigned to do and made no effort to expedite procedures, let alone, be cordial to visitors with questions about the wait.

If at any time someone in the institution gets hurt or killed, all activity stops, including visits, until the incident is under control.

Upon my arrival at the institution one day, I turned into the compound to find the gates closed. The guard came out and informed me that "oh, some guy got stabbed and all they could find was a trail of blood so until they find the guy, things are locked down." I asked him if he could tell me what cell block this had happened in but he could not tell me. He suggested that I wait at a coffee shop down the road or head back home. I waited (Field notes, May, 1982).

However, the most common reason for a long wait is that the inmate was not notified or did not hear the call for his visit. In order for an inmate to be called for his visit the message must go through three or four stations. First the information desk calls "base," the electronic brain of the institution. Then "base must call the inmate's cell block where the guard there calls the visit over a loudspeaker. If the inmate is not there, the message then must be transferred to his work area or the yard. If for some reason the message does not get
through or is not heard, the call is not made again until the visitor requests it.

For the average visitor, this wait can be excruciating. Not only does it seem that the institutional staff has no respect of the visitors' time, but particularly when there are young children and babies, or when visitors only have so much time before the next bus comes to take them home, one long wait is enough to make a visitor never want to come back again. A long wait may also serve to strain or even ruin a visit. The waiting room however, can also serve as a warm up to prepare the visitor for what's to come in the visiting room. It was in the waiting room that the researcher was able to observe the variety of interactions taking place prior to a visit.

No matter who is in the waiting room or what's happening, there are jobs to be done. One of the major activities that may be observed from the waiting room is the transfer of inmates. Although the inmates are taken out a side door, from some areas of the waiting room it can still be observed. And even if you can't see it, the clanging of the shackles can be heard everywhere. There are also guards who make a point of letting everyone know exactly what's going on by walking through the waiting room carrying bundles of shackles. This proved to be very distressing to many of the visitors. Not only was the noise extremely disturbing but comments were also made by
visitors about "treating these men like animals." After having witnessed this several times I decided to question this practice.

After a guard had walked through the waiting room twice, seemingly with no place to go, with a big smile on his face carrying several sets of shackles I decided to talk to him about it. I approached him saying that I felt his strolls through the room were upsetting some of the visitors including myself. He replied that he couldn't understand why since people knew what was going on. After several attempts at explaining myself, I finally told him it was just a power trip and walked away.

The frustration felt while trying to talk to this guard was also felt when trying to deal with other seemingly unfair practices at the institution or with any government or bureaucratic office. Most of the time one receives a smile and possibly a pleasant manner but any questions to be answered must always go to "my supervisor" or the citing of a regulation.

Who Do You Talk To?

People visiting at South End are from various walks of life, some rich, some poor, some criminal, some non-criminal and the list goes on. But a pattern emerged while the visits went on. For the most part people did not attempt to make small talk while in the waiting room. Visitors seemed to stay to themselves except to say...
"excuse me" or, for the newcomers to ask a question about procedure. The waiting room is set up in a way that might provoke conversation among strangers but it does not. This however, does not hold true for two distinct groups, blacks and bikers. Each is quite friendly to members of their own groups. It must also be noted that these are also the two most powerful inmate groups at South End. One reason given for this is the apparent cohesion of these groups on the inside as well as on the streets. Although it is true that rival biker gangs may not be so friendly, if it comes down to war, they are all "brothers" (Thompson, 1967). These relationships seem to be reflected in the waiting room. It has been reported that the Hispanic groups in Michigan prisons are gaining reputations as the most powerful group of inmates and blacks are losing their power. Not so much because the Hispanic population is growing but because the Black population is so large that it is breaking up into subgroups taking away from the strength of the group as a whole. Studies have shown the strength and power of Hispanic groups in prisons with large Hispanic populations, like, New York and California (Irwin, 1980).

The Action Begins

It was also in the waiting room that the researcher witnessed her first movement of contraband. There are trustees who work in the visiting room. These are inmates
considered to be a low security risks. They are free to walk around the room and mingle with waiting visitors. The "move" made in the waiting room is of the least risk to the visitor. Making a move here prevents the visitor from having to take the goods inside the gates. A move like this generally has to be prearranged so as to have the right people at the right place.

The waiting room move is the least risky for both the visitor and inmate. The visitor is not required to carry the goods any farther into the institution, where visitors are subjected to more rigorous searches. This is left to the trustee who walks in and out of the institution all day and is not always subjected to a search.

The Visit is Called

Finally the visit is ready and the visitor can go in. But first, except for photo identification, tokens or photo tickets purchased or approved photographs, all belongings must be locked in a locker supplied by the institution. Once everything is locked up, the visitor goes back to the desk to pick up his/her visitor pass then must stand in line. Only one group of visitors is allowed through the gates at a time. Once inside the first gates, the visitor must turn everything carried over to the guard on duty in the area. He/she examines the goods as the visitor walks through a metal detector. The guard then performs a 'pat search' or 'frisk' on the visitor.
Only female guards may search female visitors but female guards may also search male visitors. Unlike medium security institutions, children are not searched as they enter.

It must also be noted that at any time, the visitor may be asked to subject to a full strip search. If the search is refused, the visit is cancelled. If however, the search is conducted and contraband is discovered, the visitor is refused the visit and either future visits are restricted or, in a very small minority of cases, criminal charges are laid.

While waiting in line to get into the visiting room I was standing in front of an elderly woman. She was watching the pat search of a woman who had been ahead of us. With a heavy Hispanic accent she said to me "Look what they do to people who come here to visit. How can they do this? I just cannot come back here anymore. My son, he just laughs at me (Field notes, May, 1985).

Again, practices like pat and strip searching although considered necessary by the institution, serve to humiliate and degrade visitors who, for the most part consider themselves undeserving of such treatment particularly when their only crime is wanting to see a family member or friend.

Finally, the visitors' hand is marked with a solution only visible under ultraviolet light. The gate to the visiting room is then opened and the visitor is allowed entry.

Before even entering the visiting room the visitor has had time to form impressions and "learn the ropes" (Prus,
of institutional life. Once inside, the process continues.

Inside the Visiting Room

The visiting room is the inmate's living room. For those relationships that are to be maintained, strategies are developed to maintain a balance in the relationship. As discussed in the section on inmate/non-inmate relationships, inmates and visitors negotiate the frequencies of visits and the degrees of involvement in the relationship. This section will specifically discuss the activities in the visiting room which are the result of the negotiations in the relationship, situationally induced or negotiated on the spot.

Overall, it was noted that single male/female visits took place during the week. With children in school, the visitor and inmate may spend time alone without having to hire a babysitter. This also coincides with the observation that much more sexual activity took place on weekday visits. It is not suggested that this pattern necessarily has anything to do with the morality or embarrassment involved with having children and other family members observing, but it is more convenient.

Weekends were very busy with family visits. As many as five people may visit at one time creating a party-like atmosphere in the room. There are also what are known as double visits. South End, in particular has a large
number of inmates who are related to each other; such as, brothers, cousins, fathers and sons. (The researcher's two original informants each had a brother doing time with him.) In cases such as these, the institution allows for double visits where up to ten people may come into the room to visit.

The Visiting Process

Once the visitor is allowed entry into the visiting room, he/she must then hand the visitor's pass to the guard on duty in the room. The guard will then escort the visitor to the seats at which the visit will take place. The visitor must then wait for the inmate to enter.

Every visitor is greeted by the inmate with a hug. If the visitor happens to be female, she will also receive a kiss which varies in intensity depending on the relationship. The visit then continues with a great deal of physical contact between inmate and visitor.

The inmate and visitor will then sit and talk for a time. If it is a male/female visit, the inmate and visitor will sit across from each other, lean forward and hold hands during the discussion. If it is a family visit including children, the inmate will pay particular attention to the children. The children will sit on the inmate's lap and if there is a baby, the visitor will usually bring in a bottle with which the baby is fed by
the inmate. If there are no children, the inmate and visitor just sit back and talk.

Approximately one half hour into the visit, the inmates and visitors move into a different stage of visit. If the inmate and visitor are having pictures taken, the cameraman will call them for pictures. It is customary during the majority of visits to have pictures taken. According to informants, pictures are very important for the inmate. "Pictures help you forget some of the madness that's goin' on inside (Field notes, October, 1981)."

If the visitor and inmate have negotiated illicit activities as part of the visiting room activities, it is generally at this time that these activities will take place. These illicit activities include the movement of contraband and sexual contact.

Strategies for Moving Contraband

1. In the vagina

The visitor is taught in the beginning not to take any chances. The contraband should therefore be placed where, even during a strip search, it will not be found. The visitor will then go into the washroom in the visiting room and remove the goods. They will then be placed in a pocket and exchanged during an intimate encounter with the inmate. If the goods are easy to grasp from the vagina, the inmate and visitor may play an erotic game where the inmate will "go fetch" the goods then swallow them.
2. Swallow the goods

Particularly with drugs, a common method of importing is to swallow them. The visitor then forces him/herself to "bring them up" in the washroom, exchange them with the inmate and the inmate in turn swallows them himself. He then may use the same method as the visitor to recover them or he may wait until they are discharged from his body naturally.

Well, when someone brings me dope I either shove it up my ass or swallow it then shit it out. Stickin' it up my ass is a little uncomfortable but it's worth it. Usually now I only swallow weed. One time my brother brought me some pills and I swallowed 'em and the balloon broke. I got busted and my brother got restricted visits but man I was high for a week (Letter, April, 1981).

3. In shoes/brassiere

These are common methods of bringing in money. According to one informant,

"Anyone who does it like that is takin' a big chance. You don't know when you might get searched. You get sloppy and you get caught, I should know (Field notes, February, 1982)."

4. In the mouth

Money and balloons of valium are easily concealed between the cheek and gum of the mouth. If the visitor is asked to participate in a strip search, the goods remain concealed even when the mouth is opened. Once in contact
with the inmate, the goods are easily passed through a kiss or transferred to a pocket and passed during a hug.

5. On or in clothing

Any clothing given to the inmate must go through the inmate property room, however, not all does. A visitor will soak clothing, a jacket, vest or hat in a drug like cocaine or heroin. The garment will then be transferred to the inmate during the visit. A visitor may also sew drugs or money into the lining of the garment, which can then be slipped into the institution unnoticed. This is a more preferred method of moving contraband between males.

6. Using letters

Some narcotics may be melted or turned into microdots. These are then transferred to paper that the visitor has written to the inmate with. The problem with this method is that the inmate must be informed of what is in the letter so codes must be used in case a letter is read by a guard (Field notes, April, 1981).

7. The cameraman

Although not used for importing contraband into the room, the camera and cameraman facilitate the movement of the contraband into the system. With picture taking as a distraction, the visitor may pass the goods without being
noticed. The cameraman may also be a direct link in the movement process.

This one afternoon I made a surprise visit. I wasn't doing anything that day so I thought I'd take a ride. The guard seated me and I waited for Lou to come in. I saw him come through the gates and then through the visiting room door. He dropped his pass and walked right by the guard, he didn't see me either. Lou walked right to the back of the visiting room and stopped at the cameraman. The guard just stood there sort of stunned for a minute then turned to me and said 'guess he doesn't want to see you.' I, not knowing what was going on, just laughed and shrugged my shoulders. By this time Lou saw me, started laughing and walked over. I started to laugh and said 'what the hell are you doing.' Lou said, 'I heard that Slim was out here earlier so I thought my stuff had been dropped off to the cameraman.' I asked him why he would drop it there instead of having Slim bring it in himself? Lou explained that the camera had a false bottom in it and you could bring in a lot of dope at one time. Plus if there was film left in the camera at the end of the day the guards wouldn't try to search it so as not to expose the film (Field notes, April, 1982).

8. Using "mules"

If the inmate has a drug business on the inside, he may use "mules" to import. Mules are visitors whose focus is making money. He/she receives money for the service of bringing in the goods. A different person may come in on each visit simply to bring in drugs.

See that guy there, that's Harry, he's the one who beheaded them three people over the drug deal. See that woman with him. She's a mule. She just comes to bring in dope. Man, that
9. On children

At South End it is prison policy not to search children going into the visiting room. Visitors take advantage of this and "plant" contraband on children coming in for visits. Quite often the goods will be placed in the diaper and removed by the inmate while he is holding the child. With older children, the goods are simply placed in a pocket and removed during an intimate moment.

These strategies for moving contraband are not unlike those used by people importing drugs into a country. In small amounts, goods may be imported without detection. Drugs like cocaine and heroin are very potent in small quantities and easily concealed. Thus an inmate may be involved in trafficking these drugs through the visiting room. However, as was noted earlier, for larger quantities of any drugs, prison staff plays a major role.

Strategies Used for Intimate Relations

As discussed earlier, negotiations take place between visitors and inmates which help maintain the relationship. If the relationship is a "love" relationship, bargains are struck pertaining to the starting or continuance of a sexual relationship. When one first enters the visiting
room, it brings back memories of high school parties after moth and dad leave. Innovation, staff compliance and the structure of the visiting room all help the inmate and visitor maintain sexual contact.

1. In the washroom

Inmates are not allowed to use the washroom, however, like most of the rules at South End, this rule is ignored. The female visitor will ask the guard for the key, she will enter. The inmate then waits a few minutes and casually enters. There is an unspoken cooperation in the visiting room where if the washroom is in use, other inmates keep watch for the movement of the guard.

I seen seven people get busted for usin' the bathroom in one day. They just kep' the camera on the door and watched who come in and out. They never stopped the visits but when the guys got back inside, they all got tickets (Field notes, January, 1982).

2. Behind the pole

In the center isle of the room, there are four poles. When there were non-contact visits at South End, the poles were the support for the chicken wire separating visitors and inmates. Today, the poles create a shield for intimate relations between visitors and inmates.

On my very first visit to South End, Slim and I got seated behind a pole. At the time I had no idea what that meant, I learned quickly. Anyway, while we were ssitting there Slim kept looking around the room in what I learned.
later to be a typical manner. At one point he told me to look next to us, so I did. There I saw a woman having oral sex with her ol’ man (I assume). I was extremely embarrassed and didn’t hide it well. Slim thought it was pretty funny.

I didn’t see this couple for quite a time but then when I started to show up on certain days (Fridays) before shift change (2:30 p.m.), this couple appeared over and over again in the same seat doing the same things. There was also a particular guard on duty at this time. This guard usually kept things pretty tight in the visiting room but when this couple was there, the back of the visiting room didn’t get his attention. I finally told Slim that it looked to me like there was a payoff there. He just responded "yeah probably." (October, 1981).

Although oral sex is the preferred form of contact, one will also see the female sitting on the inmate’s lap having sex.

3. In the Open

Every once in a while, the visiting room is very busy. On days like this some visitors will simply take a chance and have a sexual encounter in view of the guard. Although most of the time, the guards miss or ignore the action, once in a while they will spot it. Procedure is to stop the visit on the spot. However, the researcher never saw a visit stopped for this reason. During one incident, the guard walked over to the couple and told them they were stupid for not using the bathroom (Field notes, October, 1982).

The Process Continues
While the visitor and inmate are 'taking care of business,' they may remain seated in their designated seats or they may move about the room. Except for having pictures taken or using the washroom, inmates and visitors are to remain seated. For the most part, inmates and visitors do abide by this rule. This is not to say that they co-operate because there is a rule. Inmates and visitors seem to abide by this rule in order to maintain some kind of privacy. Except for the double visit, inmates and visitors keep their visits as separate as possible. Visitors may come to the institution together but while visiting, except for a possible casual greeting, they pay no attention to each other.

It was noted during visits that after the moves and intimate moments take place, the visits begin to wind down. Usually about forty-five minutes before the visit is to end, conversations dwindle and many sit in silence. Since the inmate, as he becomes more institutionalized, loses interest in activities on the street, conversations are limited.

Male/female visitors change seating positions so that the couple is sitting side by side, enveloped in each others' arms. Children present on family visits sometimes fall asleep or begin to get cranky while the adults, for the most part, sit in silence.

However, it is very rare for any visitors to leave the visiting room before their time is up. Noted exceptions
are those visitors who were delayed in the waiting room and have to catch a bus or get to work. Others who may leave early are those with a specific purpose in visiting, like the mule.

When the visiting time has ended, the guard on duty approaches the visitors and returns their visiting passes. The visitors then begin to say their good-byes as slowly as possible. Everyone again receives a hug and the women and children are kissed. The visitor(s) and inmate then slowly move back toward the door. If there is some delay in opening the door, the kisses and hugs continue until the door is opened. The visitors then walk out, show their identification and wait for the next gate to open.

The inmate, on the other hand, must wait inside the visiting room until a guard is available to strip search him before he re-enters the prison. The visit has ended.

The main focus of the visiting room encounter is to maintain the negotiated boundaries of the inmate/visitor relationship. As has been seen through the discussion of the visiting room activity, these encounters allow inmates and visitors to fulfill those responsibilities which demand face-to-face interaction. Although visits were developed to allow inmates and friends to maintain symbolic ties to each other, it has been demonstrated through this discussion that visits tend to be more task oriented rather than symbolic. Although these tasks
indicated do have some symbolic meaning to the participants, without the tasks, interaction is minimal.
CHAPTER VIII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary of Findings

The purpose of this research was to examine the development of the visiting room relationships between inmates and their visitors. Using a symbolic interactionist approach, the research follows an ethnographic method using participant observation and informal interviewing as the means of collecting data. It is common when doing research that one may fall back on previously reported data to aid in the development of the study. However, in the area of prison visiting, the literature is minimal.

The reporting of the findings have generally followed a processual design. The reader is first introduced to Michigan Prisons and prison visiting. Emphasis is placed on the uniqueness of South End which is generally larger and older than many of the Michigan prisons. Although there has been an increased emphasis on outside contact for the inmate, because of its size and age, South End does not provide many of the niceties now available to visitors in many of the other prisons.

The morale of staff was also discussed in that, the general trend appeared to be that staff at newer prisons
were happier in their places of employment. This was reflected in the treatment of both inmates and visitors.

The patterns of visits followed the same trends as those found in the literature, that is, with the exception of the number of visits reported to be made by girlfriends. This discrepancy was considered to result from the choice of study subjects in the Brodsky (1975) study. His subjects were newly admitted inmates who, within the allotted time span, may not have had the opportunity to develop new relationships with outsiders while inside.

Many correctional texts and conversations with inmates indicate that outside contacts are important for inmates. However, these claims are not substantiated by empirical research. Nor do these texts show any basis, other than intuition, for why visiting is important. Outside contacts are discussed by Glaser (1964) as being important for the inmate's readjustment to the outside world. However, findings in this research indicate that inmates discuss outside contact in more immediate terms as an aid to gaining status in the institution, rather than looking to the future.

In discussing inmate culture, the qualifications necessary for high status are, love from family, power and material gain. Contact with outsiders is used by the inmate to gain status, thus changing the motives for pre-established relationships and establishing more self-
centered motives for new relationships. Although these motives may be discussed openly away from the outsider, the inmate must present a role identity in the visiting room which will keep the relationship looking attractive to the visitor.

In order to do this, inmates develop strategies that both allow them to achieve their own goals and, at least for a time, to keep the relationship intact. These strategies focus on involving the visitor in illicit activities during visits; such as, influencing visitors to import contraband, and particularly, import drugs. These strategies employ a vocabulary of motives which allow both the inmate and visitor to justify what might otherwise be considered unacceptable boundaries for a relationship. At the encounter level of the relationship, inmates and visitors develop strategies used for the importation of the goods, as well as, strategies which allow inmates and visitors to maintain sexual contact in the visiting room. These encounter scale strategies make use of props in the visiting room to aid in concealing these forbidden activities. If not for the circumstance of the inmate being in prison, many visitors may not participate in these illicit activities. However, the visiting room brings together the contrasting worlds of prison and the outer society where both the visitor and inmate attempt to decrease the tension created through the bringing together of these two worlds.
Conclusions

Attempting to do research in the visiting room is difficult for a number of reasons. The researcher must first find contacts and be able to establish a working relationship with them, without becoming overly involved in the relationship. This can be extremely difficult because of the intensity of contact during a visit and subsequent letters.

There are also those ethical concerns where the researcher, although not becoming involved, witnesses illegal acts. However, if the research is to continue, bargains must be made between the researcher and the subjects about reporting these acts.

It is believed by the researcher that in order to know what actually happens in the visiting room, the research must be conducted as a participant observer. This is made obvious through looking at the literature that is available pertaining to prison visiting. Fox (1983) describes visits as being under the close scrutiny of guards with little contact between the inmate and visitor being allowed. As has been shown, this is untrue at South End and has been reported in other Michigan prisons. Brodsky (1975) discusses visiting patterns and frequencies however, because of his choice of subjects, the research does not show the wide range of relationships available to inmates. Also, his qualitative material is based on selected and limited tape transcriptions which in
no way show the breadth of visiting room activity or inmate/visitor relationships.

These earlier studies also do not show the reader why the relationships break down thus leaving nearly fifty percent of inmates without contact from family and friends. This research, on the other hand, typifies the development of the visiting room relationship. Looking at the perspective of the inmate culture and the limitations created by the institution itself, demands, commonly, unrealistic demands, have a profound effect on the focus of a relationship and serve to break it down until the majority of relationships end.

Aside from the influence of inmate culture and the institution, is the traditional background of most of the inmates and their families. Although actual blood relatives may continue to visit and support the inmate as part of their role as family member, wives are in placed in a different role. Although they are expected to continue their supportive role toward the inmate, they are also placed in a situation in their everyday lives where they are no longer the supportive member of a dyad, they are alone. This creates a situation where the wife may choose to become involved in a new relationship on the outside. The contact may still be maintained with the inmate however, the closeness may be diminished.

Finally, in conclusion, the researcher contends that the establishment of a relationship based on visiting room
encounters, phone calls and letters creates unrealistic demands and expectations for both the visitor and the inmate. This may not only hinder the maintenance of the relationship while the inmate is in prison, but also if and when it is to be continued after the release of the inmate. Many of the strategies used in the maintenance of the relationship while inside focus on the idea that "we're only doing this because I'm in prison." Whereas in fact, much of what goes on in prison is brought back into the street. For example, drug use is so much a part of the everyday coping strategy in prison that many inmates maintain or develop new drug habits while they are inside. These drug habits, in most cases, do not end because the inmate is released. They continue to be used as coping strategies while the former inmate is adjusting to everyday life.

It is also unrealistic to expect that a strong healthy relationship can be maintained with a maximum of ten hours per month of face to face contact between people. Of course there are long distance relationships that work; such as, military families, truck driver families and possibly the families of politicians. However, when members of these relationships interact together, they are at least in the privacy of their own homes. Whereas, the inmate/non-inmate relationship is maintained in a public arena ruled by prison staff and conflicting role identities. By the time parole becomes a reality, the
inmates and visitors are relative strangers having no idea of what to expect from each other on a day-to-day basis. The inmate has internalized a culture that is not forgotten overnight. While at the same time, the member of the relationship who has maintained a life outside of prison has adjusted to a life without the inmate. Just as adjustment to prison life requires negotiations of boundaries, so does readjustment to the outside world. If the adjustment cannot be made, the relationship breaks down.
GLOSSARY.

base: The electronic centre of the prison through which all communications pass.

blood: A term used to specify a family member. In black street language, blood may include friends.

break the doors: A term used when all cell doors are simultaneously opened by a guard.

cell block: Housing unit.

classification: The testing of inmates and examining of inmates' records upon entry to the institution. Results of classification determine whether an inmate will go to a maximum, medium or minimum security institution.

contact visit: A visiting situation where inmates and visitors have physical contact.

contraband: Any item or piece of literature considered to be illegal by prison authorities. This may include, money, drugs, pornographic photographs, etc.

count: Three times daily, all inmates are locked in their cells and counted to check for and deter escapes.

dick: A man's penis.

doggin': To be treated badly.

doin' time: Spending time in prison.

dope: Narcotics.

double visit: When two members of a family are in prison together, the institution allows for both members to visit with family together.

fag: A homosexual or one considered to be the effeminate member of an homosexual couple in prison. This person would not necessarily be considered homosexual outside of prison.

first parole date: Michigan law allows for indeterminate sentences which result in two dates from which parole dates may be calculated. Thus an inmate is given four possible parole dates, early and late parole on the first date and
early and late parole on the last date.

flagged: To be under observation.

frisk/pat search: An officer runs his/her hands across a person's clothed body to check for contraband.

get busted: To be arrested on the street. / To be caught with contraband in prison.

good time: Time taken off a sentence for good behavior.

green: Legal tender.

head games: To manipulate a person through the use of lies.

hole: Solitary confinement.

house: An inmate's cell.

house time: A short sentence done in the county jail.

hustles: Any means of making money.

jack off: To masturbate.

jail house lawyers: Inmates, usually long term inmates, who have an expertise in legal matters.

jody: A man who begins dating an inmate's wife/girlfriend while the inmate is in prison.

loan sharking: Lending money at high interest rates.

lock down: Inmates are locked in their cells for long periods of time. This usually takes place during a disturbance to control inmates or as punishment after a riot.

mellow: A close friend.

move: The movement of contraband.

mules: People whose specific purpose in visiting is to move drugs into the prison.

ol' lady: Wife or girlfriend.

on the street: Outside prison, the home world.
pills: Narcotics.

Regional Reception Center: An institution used to house inmates who are in the process of being classified.

shackles: Hand cuffs and leg irons attached together with heavy chains.

straight up: To tell the truth.

strip search: To have a person disrobe so that the clothing and body may be examined for contraband.

tickets: Written reprimands for improper or illegal activity.

tokens: Coin shaped pieces of plastic used in place of legal tender.

turn out: To prostitute an inmate, become his pimp.

wolves: The stronger, more “masculine” partner of an homosexual couple.

working to rule: Doing only assigned work at a slow pace.

yard: The exercise yard in a prison.

Young Boys Incorporated: A ring of drug dealing youths in Detroit.
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105
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