

## The Trip to L.A.

On Saturday, April 1, I flew to Los Angeles. The time had come to serve my 15 day sentence for my arrest on April 11, 1964 as part of the Auto Row demonstrations in San Francisco (Freeman, 2004, 103-5). I wanted to visit my mother first since I hadn't seen her in a year. The anti-war movement would be marching in NY and SF on April 15. Normally I would have gone to the NY march but this time it seemed expedient to go to the West Coast protest and do my time in one trip. I had spent \$31 to make a thousand buttons saying PEACE NOW to sell at the march to cover my trip expenses.

I planned to spend only three days in the Valley, but my mother took all my clothes to the cleaners and said that they wouldn't be ready before Friday. That left me with several days of time to kill, in a place where there was nothing to do and no way to travel other than by borrowing my mother's car, which she didn't want me to do.

On Wednesday, I found a phone number for my one friend from elementary school. I hadn't seen Teresa Chartok in many years but found her still living at her parents' home. She said she'd pick me up on Thursday, her day off, and we'd go some place and talk. We hadn't stayed in touch which meant we'd have a lot to talk about – or nothing at all.

What had brought us together in elementary school was our mutual status at the bottom of the social pecking order. In the eyes of the other children we were both cootie carriers; we could be taunted but never touched. I got the label because I was smart. Terrie got it because she was fat. By today's standards she was not obese, just overweight. By the standards of the 1950s Valley Girls, overweight was fat. In fact, she was a really sweet kid, but none of the other kids invested the time to get to know her. Academically we were worlds apart. I did well in school. Terrie didn't. I went to college. She didn't. Beyond that, I didn't know what had happened to her.

I soon found out that she had graduated from high school (not the same one as I and not the same year), gone to cosmetology school and become a hairdresser. She liked it and she was good at it. However, she didn't really see hair styling as a career. What she wanted most was to get married. She lamented that she was already 23 and had not found the right man or, more accurately, no man had asked her to marry him. My life so far was as strange to her as hers was to me. She could understand going to college; she could not understand why I had spent almost two years after graduating doing civil rights work. She called it social work, and was puzzled as to why I wasn't doing it for money. Being a movement worker, living off the land and on subsistence pay to make the world a better place just made no sense to her.

We struggled to find something to talk about. I wanted to talk about politics; she wanted to talk about men. Neither of us was interested in the other's favorite topic. After struggling to find a common topic of conversation, we ended up telling stories from our common experience in elementary school about all the cruel things our fellow students had done to us. However, we made fun of it in the same way that a comedian turns painful stories into funny ones.

We both remembered the penny game. Groups of kids would surround one of us and throw pennies, or throw pennies as we walked in the halls. The pennies weren't intended to cause physical pain so much as psychological pain. It was equivalent of spitting, but much less likely to

get any of the perpetrators into trouble with the teachers. Kids would spit on the pennies before tossing them or put several in their mouths and pull them out to throw. Terrie cried when that happened. I picked up the pennies (5 cents bought a candy bar) and washed them off in a drinking fountain. The kids thought my stooping to pick up the pennies was hilarious, but what they really liked was making Terrie cry. That's how they got their kicks. Refusing to cry and picking up the pennies to spend later was my way of telling them to go to hell.

I cried once. It started as a happy day. My mother had bought me a leather jacket with fringe on it. I loved all things Western and had begged her to buy it for me. It was expensive, but she finally did it. I wore it to school. It definitely attracted attention when I entered the playground where we all gathered before the classroom doors opened. One kid came over, grabbed some fringe and ripped a hunk of it off of my sleeve. I screeched. He laughed. Then another kid did the same and another. They had a lot of fun leaping at me, grabbing some fringe and ripping it off. They ruined my beautiful, brand-new leather jacket. I cried and cried and cried. When I got home, I told my mother what happened, but there was nothing she could do. I put the ruined leather jacket into the closet and never wore it again.

Terrie and I recalled the weekly chore of choosing teams for the daily 20 minutes of physical education. Every classroom had 30-36 children in which was enough for four teams for softball or volleyball. Each week the four children chosen as captains would choose their teammates, alternating until every child was on a team. While team captains wanted to win, which would predispose them to choose the better players, they also wanted to play with their friends. It was funny to watch them decide whether to risk a friend's ire by choosing a better player in each round. It was also funny to watch them compete for friends through the selection process.

Terrie and I were always chosen last so we were never on the same team. The Smart Girl and the Fat Girl were the ones that nobody wanted. Terrie wasn't at all athletic; I was middle-rank (I got Bs in Phys Ed.). We had an informal contest to see which of us would be chosen last. Ditto for team captain. Each week's captains chose the next week's captains until all children had a chance to hold that position. The week we were both captains, two other lower ranked children were also captain (or sometimes a high ranked child if the rounds were starting over). As we chose our teams, we would listen to the groans of those who didn't want to be on either of ours.

We had our individual stories. Every day in every class there was ten minutes of show-and-tell. Kids would bring to class something they wanted to show and tell the class about. Presumably getting up in front of a class to talk about your prize was good training in facing an audience; it helped get over stage fright. It was strictly voluntary so kids like Terrie, who didn't want to talk in front a class, didn't have to. As with team captains, the job of MC rotated among the students. Each day's MC chose who would get two minutes of class time from among the upraised hands. One Monday I brought a big, green rock to school and set it on top of my desk. About the size of a human head it weighed 10-12 pounds. With a little help, I had found out something about its age and geology for the "tell" to my "show." I raised my hand every time the MC was ready to call on someone new but was never recognized. The rock sat on a corner of my desk until the end of the day when I tucked it under my arm and carried it home. The next day my mother dropped me and the rock off again. History repeated itself on Tuesday and Wednesday and Thursday and Friday. That rock sat on my desk all week, in full view of

everyone, but I was never called on for show-and-tell. I didn't bring it back the following week, and never brought anything else for show-and-tell, at least not to that class. Perhaps I remember this story because to this day because I wonder why the teacher didn't intervene. When I was teaching I would have done something to make sure that *every* kid was called on. I would not allow any student to be singled out for opprobrium or isolation. That's what teachers do.

Being the target of child tormentors had different effects on us. Terrie wanted marriage and children. I didn't. After enduring the cruelty of children for many years, I just wanted to avoid them. I could teach college students but not the lower grades. On the other hand, enduring the cruelty of children compelled me to stand up to the cruelty of adults when I confronted it in the South. I saw the whites who taunted blacks (and civil rights workers) as just bigger versions of the children who had tormented me and the others designated as cootie carriers. It also helped me understand why so many blacks did not like whites, and why "black power" was a form of defiance after centuries of degradation.

Like my mother, Terrie was horrified at the idea that I was on my way to jail. They both believed that criminal records ruined your life and jail was a dangerous place. Unlike my mother, she wanted to do something to make it easier for me. The sweet kid had become a sweet adult. When I commented that I wasn't sure how I was going to keep my long hair clean in a jail environment, she offered to cut it for me so it would be easier to care for. I hadn't worn short hair since I let it grow in college, but she had a point. So we went to her salon where she gave me a short, stylish cut. She wouldn't take any money for it either, not even a tip. That was her gift to me.

My mother commented favorably on my new haircut, but when I told her the reason, she scowled. She didn't want to be reminded of what I was doing on the west coast. Friday she picked up my clothes from the cleaners and told me she'd take me to the bus station on Sunday. Her best friend had invited us to Saturday dinner. Mrs. Marble had been my piano teacher for six years, so it made sense that she'd want to see me.

I don't remember the dinner so presumably it was uneventful. The ride back was not. My mother got angrier and angrier. She criticized everything about me. I sat in the front passenger seat silently; I'd heard it all before. I often said that my mother and I got along just fine as long as she stayed on her side of the country and I stayed on mine. Put us in the same room and the sparks would fly. A week in her home was obviously more than she could tolerate, but it was her final words that got my attention. She concluded a long tirade with "You look and act just like a damn nigger, and it's no wonder, considering the people you've been associating with."

I froze. Literally. My blood turned to ice. Never before (or since) had I heard her make a racist statement. But this was a doozy. I felt like she had hit me with a frying pan. The words weren't as vile as those that had come out of Aunt Loy's mouth when I visited her in 1965, but the deep-seated Southern sentiment was the same. Where did that come from, I wondered?

I said nothing. When we got home, I exited the car and went into the house without bothering to raise the garage door for my mother to pull in. As soon as I got inside, I phoned the San Fernando bus station to get the Greyhound schedule going north. A bus would leave in four hours. I then phoned cousin Linda and told her that I had to leave; would she please come pick me up and take me to the bus station. Linda said she'd be right over. I was packing when my

mother entered. We said nothing to each other. I took my bag and went outside to wait for Linda. After I was in her car, I told her what happened. While Linda had never been a fan of the civil rights movement, we had both grown up on maternal anger so she understood why I had to leave. She said her mother said it would be OK if I waited at their house until time to go for the bus. On Saturday nights the San Fernando bus station closed early. Waiting at their house was better than three hours sitting outside in the dark.

We left my bag in the car. Aunt Jack was on the phone when we entered her house, obviously talking to my mother. She said nothing to me when she hung up. We watched TV for a couple hours before Linda took me to the bus station and waited until I was on the bus for Bakersfield. There I would change to a bus for Oakland.

It was a 400 mile trip, giving me plenty of time to think about my mother's words. We never talked about it. We didn't even speak to each other for a year. So my thoughts at that time and since are just guesswork. The anger belonged to my mother – I had grown up with that – but I don't think the words were hers. I think she was channeling her siblings' sentiments. They had no doubt given her a hard time about "letting" me go South (as if she had a choice). One may even have sent her the front page of the *Birmingham News* with the story of my arrest and trial the year before. Those words were probably provoked by the fact that I was going to jail – the one aspect of my civil rights work that she disapproved of. She had raised me to be a civil rights worker and I think she knew it, though she may not have been happy about it. Our beliefs were congruent, but our actions were not.

## San Francisco Jail

Arriving in the Oakland Greyhound terminal early Sunday morning, I phoned my Berkeley friends until I found a place to stay for the next week. I wasn't going to go to jail until after the march on Saturday. That gave me a week to see friends and sell buttons to raise money for my plane fare back to Chicago.

Seeing friends was lovely. Selling buttons not so much. I started at the Bancroft and Telegraph entrance to the University. This had been the place to sell in 1965. In 1967 there were just too many people selling things and not enough people buying. Passers-by would scour my button board with its offerings of civil rights pins and my new "PEACE NOW" pin and ask me for something I didn't have. There wasn't much interest in cause pins; everyone seemed to be looking for psychedelic stuff with fancy designs and bright colors. I tried other spots but it became clear that if I didn't make money at the march itself I would have to hitchhike back to Chicago.

April 15 was a beautiful day. Some 25,000 people marched down Market Street in San Francisco to protest the war in Viet Nam. Over 50,000 went to the rally in the stadium. There were a few black nationalist groups carrying signs that said "The Viet Cong never called us niggers." Beyond that there was only a scattering of black faces. As had been true of the DC demonstration a year ago, most of the marchers were young and white carrying signs with the usual anti-war statements. Mrs. King was one of the speakers at the rally; her husband was speaking in New York. (*NYT* 4-16-67, 3)

The police presence was light, but since I was technically a fugitive, I tried to stay out of sight. I don't know why I thought anyone would be looking for me a year after our appeal ended and we were told to return to serve our sentences. My misdemeanor trespassing conviction didn't put me on the "ten-most wanted" list or even the "ten-thousand most wanted." But somehow I got it into my head that I couldn't let the police haul me in before the march was over and I had sold as many buttons as I could. I took my photos and sold my buttons cautiously rather than aggressively. By the end of the day I had barely enough money to pay the \$60 cost of a half-fare, stand-by plane ticket back to Chicago.

On Sunday, I went to Martinez to visit my friends Jerry and Karen Fishkin. Jerry was going to law school as well as working full time. He was quite interested in what I was about to go through and wanted a full report when I got out. I shot a roll of film of Jerry playing with their new baby girl. Around 4:00 in the afternoon, I phoned the San Francisco jail and asked where to report. The person who answered the phone was a little surprised to hear from me. Fugitives don't normally call the jail to turn themselves in. Lawyers do that for them. Deputy Titman said that I would need papers from the court, which might have to wait until court opened on Monday. When I told her that there was a warrant out for my arrest, she said she'd check that out and get back to me. Twenty minutes later she called back to tell me that there was no record of a bench warrant with my name on it. There was a little voice in my head that said "fine, you don't want me, I'll go home." It was tempting to just head to the airport and catch a plane for Chicago. The rational side said "Don't be dumb. This will catch up with you someday. Serve your sentence and get it over."

Next I phoned Jackie Lesmeister, the probation officer who had interviewed me prior to my sentencing for the FSM arrest in 1965. We'd stayed loosely in touch since then so I had her home phone. She told me to call the warrant office in the S.F. Police Department. The woman who answered that phone was quite nasty. She took my name and left me on hold for a very long time while she searched the files. That was a long distance call from Martinez; in my mind I could hear the coins clinking as I waited. When she returned she said information about specific warrants could not be given out over the phone; I had to come to Room 460 in the Hall of Justice. I told her I didn't want to make the 40 mile trip unless I knew I was going to be admitted. If they didn't let me in, I'd be stuck in San Francisco with no place to go.

I phoned the lawyer who had handled the trial and appeal, whose home phone number was fortunately listed in the East Bay phone book. Art Brunwasser said he'd see what he could do. He finally got the jail to let me in. All told, it took several hours to break into that jail. Very late Sunday night Jerry drove me to San Francisco and I walked into the Hall of Justice, carrying a few of the items I had been told that I could bring. They let me sit in the waiting area for a long time before I was finally processed at 12:27 a.m. and put in a holding cell around 3:00 a.m.

During my calls to the jail, Deputy Titman had given me instructions on what I could and could not bring with me. Prisoners could bring only a few personal items: comb, brush, bobby pins, lipstick, toothbrush, tennis shoes, a change of underwear (any color but red or black), socks and a plain cardigan sweater without pockets (any color but white). Cigarettes and candy could not be brought into the jail, but could be purchased from the commissary once there. I could bring a pen, but not pencil or paper. I was told to put money into the commissary fund, which I could use to buy what I needed from a select list. Personal hygiene items had to be purchased. My shampoo was taken away and I refused to spend 75 cents for a 3 oz tube so I just didn't wash my hair while in jail, at least not with shampoo.

I was told to not bring books or any other reading matter; nor could anyone send books or magazines to me once I was inside. "We don't have time to read and approve them all," I was told. When my fellow civil rights convicts had started going to jail the year before, students had held a book drive for them. I never found out what happened to those books though they obviously had not reached the intended recipients. One could purchase a daily paper for ten cents each, but no other reading material. What did people do for intellectual stimulation? I was brazen enough to ask Deputy Titman the rationale behind these piddily-shit little rules. She said there was no need to explain; I just had to obey. I knew that I would clash with this institution. My natural tendency toward skepticism had been reinforced by my Berkeley education. Students are taught to question; prisoners are told to obey.

The holding cell was actually the city jail – the same one we were put in when we were arrested in 1964. My sentence was to be served in the county jail which was a few floors higher. Sometime on Monday I was taken upstairs where I turned in my street clothes for a jail dress. In between I had to shower and wash my hair with a foul smelling liquid. Only on asking was I told that it killed head lice. Of course no one had examined me for head lice; it was a routine preventive measure. Washing this stuff into my hair brought up a memory of a story my mother had told me of her college years. She said the upper-class girls, the ones raised by mummies whose personal needs had always been taken of by servants, often got head lice. Their servants didn't come to college with them and they didn't know how to take care of themselves. The students from homes without servants would make fun of them because they didn't know such

basic things as how to wash their own hair. I started to laugh at the thought that I could tell my mother that by going to jail I had joined the upper class. Of course going to jail had broken our communication so it remained a private joke.

“County maximum,” as this cellblock was known, was overcrowded. Each cell had four steel platforms, bunk bed style, with mattresses on them. Four was the normal complement per cell. In the middle was a free-standing bunk bed, added for the extra women who needed a place to sleep. There were just a few inches between it and the steel platforms, making it tough to squeeze in and out. Ten women slept in each cell. We were only brought into a cell to sleep; during the day we hung out in the day room – a space about 20 X 30 with steel tables and chairs where one could sit. There weren’t enough of these for all the women so most stood or sat on the floor. On one wall was a series of toilets with side walls but no front doors. The guards didn’t want anyone doing anything they couldn’t see, though the women sometimes thwarted this by getting a buddy to stand in front while they peed.

My first day I wandered around the day room trying to meet the other women and find someone to talk to. There wasn’t a lot else to do. I quickly discovered that the first thing anyone wanted to know about a new inmate was what were you were in for. The answer was given with a penal code number. By far, the most common response was “727 ” because that was the penal code section for prostitution. I remembered the penal code section of my conviction as 602J, but when I gave that as my answer to the inevitable question the response was incredulous surprise. “*What* is that?” I was asked. “Trespassing,” I said, meekly. “What were you doing – in the park with your boyfriend?” at least one woman responded. “Well, no,” I said. I asked if they remembered the civil rights demonstrations of 1964. A couple women sort of vaguely remembered them, but it *was* three years ago. Most had no idea what I was talking about and they didn’t care. Although 90 percent of the women I saw in the day room were black, the fact that I had been arrested for demanding more jobs for blacks in San Francisco was meaningless to them. We lived in different worlds.

I wandered over to a group of 4-5 women standing and talking at one side. One was white. *Very* white. Blond hair, which looked bleached but there were no dark roots. Blue eyes. Pale skin. She caught my attention because she talked black. In the movement, I had heard whites try to imitate black speech, but never successfully. They always sounded forced, artificial. This woman looked white but spoke black, urban street black, like a native. I must have been staring at her because she turned suddenly and looked at me almost accusingly. “And *what* do you charge,” she said. Taken aback, I stuttered, “well, uh, that’s not exactly how I earn my living.” “Huh?” she responded, incredulously. “You mean you *give* it away?” I stared at her for a few seconds, speechless, then drifted off.

I was soon shipped down to “county minimum,” ten miles south of San Francisco County near the town of San Bruno. This was the facility for longer term prisoners. Had “county maximum” not been so overcrowded, I might not have been moved. San Bruno was so much better than county maximum that I was glad for the overcrowding. We had individual cells. They were tiny, but they were private. The solid doors could only be opened from the outside. A window at eye level allowed a guard to look inside. Unless you were being punished with confinement, those cells were only for sleeping. Inmates spent most of their time in the day room, which had padded furniture rather than the steel tables and stools of county maximum. There was a bookcase with books and magazines and a TV set hanging from the wall. There was

also a yard with grass and a door that led to it. The walls were 12 feet high with razor wire on top, but on a sunny day one could go outside without even asking, lie in the grass, feel the sun and see the sky.

There's no orientation to jail. You learn by trial and error and I had my share of both. My first lesson was in territoriality. When I entered the day room, I took an empty seat on a couch, only to be told to leave by the woman next to me. That's not your seat, she said. Not knowing where my seat was, I declined to move. A few minutes later another woman came over and grabbed my hair on top of my head and began pulling and yelling at me to get out of that seat. Reminded me of kindergarten. I appealed to the matron to no avail. Surrounded by hostility, I went over to the bookcase and sat on the floor. The two women who had kicked me out of the erstwhile empty seat, sat giggling together, sometimes gesturing my way. At some point I did find a "place" in the day room, but I spent many hours on that floor.

Demographically, the inmates were overwhelmingly black and mostly young. There were a few old women – in for abuse of alcohol – but almost none who were middle-aged. The matrons were all white and middle-aged. There wasn't much integration. Instead I saw a lot of Crow Jim, which is what the civil rights movement called black-on-white racism. Blacks were the dominant group and they took advantage of what few privileges were available. There were only a few places that white women were allowed to sit. The couch that I had tried to sit on my first day was in black space. The fact that the ultimate authority, the matrons, were white had no effect on Crow Jim practices. The matrons' dominant concern was keeping order.

I had plenty of time to examine the books. There were roughly a hundred books, all fiction. Almost all of them were crime stories or romance novels. I did find a few science fiction books. I hadn't read sci/fi since childhood, but I devoured those. I had trouble sampling the other books because they were written on an 8<sup>th</sup> grade or lower level. I just couldn't get interested in the story line when it was couched in "Dick and Jane" language. How I wished some of the books raised in last year's book drive had made their way into this jail.

Finding something to do was the biggest challenge of doing time; boredom the biggest punishment. There were a few small jobs for inmates, who practically begged the matrons to do them even though they were unpaid. Anything to pass the time. One woman who had been in for several months directed a variety show for the other inmates once a month. She chose the entertainers and directed them in skits, songs and dances. By then, the fact that all the chosen ones were black didn't surprise me. The head matron had given her crepe paper and glitter to use in the show that I saw. She was due to get out soon, so that particular diversion was about to disappear.

Sunday services was one of the few breaks in the routine. At San Bruno there were three: Catholic, Christian Science and Salvation Army. However, the space available was small so inmates wanting to attend one of these had to sign up the night before. I didn't know this until Sunday so I missed my chance for the only full Sunday that I was there. Since I'm not religious, it was just a chance to do something different. As it turned out, the only service held that Sunday was Catholic. I'd been to mass before so figured I wasn't missing anything new. I saw a fold-up altar and a few crucifixes removed from a closet in the day room and taken to a small room for the service. I didn't see a priest so I don't know if the women's jail allowed a man to come in for that purpose.



In the days before indoor plumbing, people took their weekly bath on Saturday night so they would be clean for church on Sunday. Even though going to church wasn't obligatory, Saturday was the day we deloused at San Bruno. We were told to strip and were given cotton soaked with a stinging solution to rub all over our bodies, with particular attention to the hairy areas. Then we stood in the open air for about 15-30 minutes before taking a shower with plenty of soap. That soap worked on my body but not my hair. When I finished, it still smelled strongly of disinfectant. After delousing, we were all given clean dresses to wear for the next week.

I had kept my pen, toothbrush and other valuable items in the pocket of my jail dress. I removed them for the delousing and change of clothes. When I went to fetch them, the toothbrush was missing. This was an expensive loss; another toothbrush would cost thirty cents. I spoke to one of the inmates who seemed particularly well informed about the place. Two days later someone pushed my toothbrush under the door of my cell. Another woman loaned me a book. She had heard my complaints about the lack of substantive reading on the bookshelf. One day she told me that there was a secret book that the matrons did not know about. It was circulated among the inmates who only read it in their cells, not in the day room. If I wanted to read it, she'd get it for me. The secret book of San Bruno turned out to be *The Prophet* by Khalil Gibran, a series of prose essays in a semi-fictional context. On reading it I could see why that book would be particularly meaningful to women in prison, and also why they hid it from the matrons.

Everyone I've ever spoken to who has been in jail remembers the food if they remember nothing else. In an environment where they try to drive you berzerk with boredom, eating is the only interesting thing that you do all day. The food in this jail was atrocious. Twice a day we got onion salad – sliced raw onions with a few lettuce leaves thrown in for color. The rest of the food was mostly starch and usually cold. Black coffee was available but inmates had to provide (and pay for) sugar and the dry equivalent of cream. Only bread was plentiful – plain, unvarnished, white bread. It was tasteless but versatile. There were no napkins, so we wiped our hands on bread. We also used it as plates. If a meal consisted of soup, salad and a drink, we would only be given one bowl, one cup, and a plastic utensil. We could put the bread on the table and pile it with our onion salad, or turn it into an onion sandwich. Or we could eat our soup and then wipe the bowl clean with a bread slice before putting in the onion salad. The food was so unpalatable that I lost weight despite a lack of exercise. I didn't see any fat women in that jail, apart from the matrons. For three meals a day, three matrons would sit at the head table eating their own meal and watching us eat ours. For three meals a day, they ate steak – breakfast, lunch and dinner. I doubt they brought this from home. It wasn't hard to tell how the jail's food budget was spent.

We swept out our own cells every morning and the day room and other areas at least once a day. No one was allowed into another inmate's cell but, when the doors were open for cleaning, we could see inside. People decorated their walls with clippings from newspapers and magazines. When they were being punished for a rule infraction all those personal artifacts were removed. I saw this as an ongoing war between the inmates and the authorities over the right to have an identity. Prisons attempt to depersonalize people in order to make them easier to control. Uniforms and restrictions on what stuff you can have are tools of that strategy. Prisoners fought back by trying to be personally distinctive in any way they could. By allowing prisoners to have a few tokens of personality, like the clippings on cell walls, guards had another social control tool. Those few items became very precious; the threat of loss was an effective way to dampen disruptive behavior.

Prison infantilizes inmates. All but the most minor decisions are made for you: when to get up, what to wear, what to eat, whether and when you can leave your cell, etc. Little things become big deals because there's nothing else to occupy the mind and not much to do. You are very dependent on the mood and the whims of the guards, who are the only functional adults in the room. The guards even determined whether the TV is on or off in the evening, and what channel we watched. They controlled our communication with the outside world and what personal possessions we could keep. Inmates were also dependent on their connections to that outside world. Whether family and friends visited or wrote, put money into the commissary, or did other things you couldn't do for yourself, was up to them more than you. I could see that anyone in for a long time would find it difficult to "grow-up" quickly when the prison doors opened.

I observed two types of social groups: couples and cliques. The couples were lesbians – this was a woman's prison. A few were obvious butches, even though they wore jail dresses like everyone else. The others didn't look like butches but their evening behavior was revealing. When the lights were turned off so we could watch TV, the couples would pet. It was still light enough to see what they were doing. I guess they felt the semi-darkness was a kind of cover, or at least an OK for activity that would have evoked censure in full light. The cliques generally formed around a dominant personality who was a bit older and/or had a long criminal record. The few new inmates that arrived while I was there seemed to know women already there and joined their cliques. Indeed it appeared that the jail cliques were part of larger social groupings that also existed outside the jail whose members rotated in and out. For many of them, especially the prostitutes, going to jail was part of the cost of doing business.

Needless to say I didn't fit into any of these cliques. I soon discovered a few other misfits and we sat together. None were black. One was Hispanic. One was older; she was in for embezzlement. There were one or two others I don't remember well enough to describe. Another woman I remember quite well because of her tattoos. In the 1960s, women didn't get tattoos; nor did many men. She had a line down the back of her legs tattooed to look like the seam of a stocking. In those days, stockings were on their way out and pantyhose were on their way in. She had a permanent blue stocking seam. Tattooed on the backs of her fingers were the words LOVE and HATE. She told me those words represented her philosophy of life.

The rules permitted inmates to write two letters a day, one personal and one business. Each was limited to one sheet but one could write on both sides of the page. When I was told I could bring a pen but no paper, I assumed we would be given paper on which to write. Instead I had to buy two pads of paper at 7 cents each and a pencil for four cents. All letters were read by the matrons and censored; they would not approve any letters written in ink. I purchased ten pre-stamped envelopes, thinking that I would write one letter a day. However, the matrons censored anything I wrote about the jail itself (e.g. people and food) which didn't leave me much to say. I tried to evade this by resorting to sesquipedalianism. I'd always loved big words and I remembered a lot of the social science jargon I had learned at Cal, so I wrote Allan Solomonow a letter which was full of both. I got a hand written note from Lt. A. T. Barrett telling me that she would not mail this letter. She wrote that I should use my mind to meditate.

I did send several letters or so I thought, but I didn't get any back. I later learned that none of the friends I had sent them to received them. The fact that I wasn't allowed to bring in my address book and had to rely on memory may have resulted in failed deliveries. Or perhaps

all of my letters were deep-sixed but the Lt. only told me about one.

Visiting hours were 1:00 to 3:15 Tuesday through Saturday. I had asked my Berkeley friends to visit me, but since they had jobs or classes during those hours on the weekdays, it was hard for them to do that. Four of them came on Saturday, which was the highlight of my stay in the county jail. I babbled on incessantly, telling them all the things I wasn't allowed to write in my letters. One took notes. That's one way to get information out. Jackie Lesmeister visited me during the week as part of her job as a probation officer. Of course I wasn't on probation; this was just an excuse to see me on work time. For me it was like dessert. None of what I told her about my jail experience surprised her. She assured me that I was in one of the better county jails. She said the main difference between this jail and the one for men was that the men's jails had educational programs and more ways to occupy your time. We had nothing. That was a function of numbers. There just weren't enough women in jail to justify the expense of a program. Of course women weren't as threatening either. Crimes of violence were virtually all done by men. If a woman acted out at San Bruno, she was put into her cell and left to cool out.

My friends also took care of getting me out. When I went in on April 16 I was going to serve the extra five days rather than pay the \$29 fine. This was partially a financial decision (that fine was half my return plane fare) but it was also because I had absorbed the idea that one shouldn't *pay* the state for having committed an act of civil disobedience; one should *cost* the state by making it pay for your upkeep. Jerry Fishkin raised some money and paid the fine without asking me. I was really glad he didn't ask because the purist in me would have tried to discourage him. By day 14 of my incarceration, I was more than ready to leave. I didn't like jail. I *really* didn't like jail. I felt excited at the thought of getting out, like a kid the night before Christmas, full of anticipation and anxiety. I learned that the other inmates felt the same way the day before their release, even when they didn't have much of any place to go.

Inmates were released at 6:00 a.m. In effect, you got credit for your final day by only serving six hours and most of that was spent sleeping. But they didn't take you back to San Francisco. They just let you change your clothes, returned whatever stuff had been confiscated on admission, and opened the door. I don't know what one did without family or friends to greet you on exiting. When I walked out of that jail, Tony Scarr was waiting for me in his car. Now a law student, he and his wife Carolyn had been my classmates at Cal. He'd gotten up very, very early on a Sunday morning to drive from Berkeley to San Bruno to pick me up and take me to his home. Once safely inside his car I took off my shoes and socks and removed the folded up papers I had secreted between my feet and socks. Most of the pages were notes on the observations and experiences that didn't pass the censors. I also had Lt. Barrett's letter rejecting my missive to Allan and the commissary list. I wasn't sure what I would do with these but the very fact that it was forbidden to take any written material out of the jail motivated me to try to do so. Major books have been written in jail. From the San Francisco County Jail I could only take a few scribbled pages and I had to smuggle those out.

I bent Tony's ear on the way to his house, where Carolyn fed me breakfast while I talked some more. All the pent up thoughts I'd been thinking for two weeks came gushing out. One of the many lessons I had learned in that jail was that you can't go to jail alone. Without family or friends on the outside to visit you, put money into the commissary, and generally look after needs you can't take care of from the inside, going to jail is a much more dismal experience. I felt very grateful to my Bay Area friends for their support.

## Lunch with the Judge

Sunday was glorious. The weather was magnificent and I was euphoric. I spent the day at a “Be-in” in the park, hosted by the Berkeley police. They had invited all the hippies in the Bay Area to just come and hang-out and have a good time. The city even paid for a band. Of all things for the police to do, that was the last I expected. It was a reaction to an incident three weeks earlier when the Berkeley hippies had stopped traffic on four blocks of Telegraph Avenue to hold their own Be-in. The cops decided to divert all this energy to a safe place rather than crack down on it, and that seems to have worked. I saw professors flying kites, children chasing dogs and dogs chasing children, and a lot of people smoking pot. The cops, in uniform, just smiled.

Monday I took the bus into The City to find Judge Andrew J. Eyman – the judge who had presided over my trial and conviction and sentenced me to the 15 days and \$29 in 1964. Three of us (the defendants) had seen him in the clerk’s office when we went with our attorney to file the appeal at the courthouse. We went over to talk to him about civil rights and civil disobedience. Of course the judge didn’t want to talk, but instead of telling us to get lost he said that when we got out of jail to come see him. He’d take us to lunch and we’d talk about it then. I was going to do just that. He wasn’t expecting me and I didn’t know if he was still on the bench, let alone working that day. I found him trying a case in his courtroom. I sat down and listened to what sounded like a railroad issue. During a recess I told the bailiff that I was there to have lunch with the judge; that he wasn’t expecting me and probably wouldn’t remember me. Then I told him the story. An hour later Judge Eyman and I were eating lunch in a fancy restaurant.

While I had come to talk about the civil rights demonstrations in 1964, sitting in that restaurant in 1967 made all those events seem very distant. It just wasn’t the right time or place to argue or be impolite. Instead I told him about the women’s jail. I described our twice-daily feeding of onion salad while dining on a delicious salad of avocado and crab meat. It turned out that improving jail conditions was one of the items on his personal agenda. By the end of that lunch he had convinced me (as if I needed convincing) that I could help his campaign for jail betterment by agreeing to be interviewed by a reporter. He took me to the press room in City Hall and introduced me to Jerry Burns of the *San Francisco Chronicle*. The next day a little story appeared on page 4 headlined “‘Insider’ Criticizes The City Prison.” It quoted me as saying “City prison is the worst hole I’ve been in.” That wasn’t exactly true. I’d only been in the city jail overnight; my criticisms were about the two county jails. And only the food was “worse than Dixie,” as I was quoted saying in the story.

I never spoke with Judge Eyman again, but in August 1975 I met his son. I was in San Francisco for meetings of a professional association. My first book, which had begun as my Ph.D. dissertation, had just been published the Spring before. I decided to take him a copy. Eyman’s name was not on the courthouse directory; the court clerk’s office told me he had retired to Southern California. However, his son worked there and was willing to see me. I could see the skepticism on his face when I told him how I knew his father, and surprise when I handed him my book. I wrote on the front page: “To Judge Eyman, who gave me a very educational experience.” The son was amused. I never heard from the judge.

I enjoyed the next week in Berkeley, even though my primary reason for staying was to

sell more buttons and raise more money. When I left in 1965, hippies were present only in token numbers. In 1967 they were quite pervasive. Maybe I was still feeling high from getting out of jail, but there was an exuberance in the atmosphere that I didn't remember from my days of political confrontation. I spoke about my experience in jail to a Criminology seminar, before a Unitarian Church group and on a call-in radio show, went to a couple social events and visited with my friends. It was a lovely week.

All good things must come to an end. On Sunday, May 7, I went to the airport where I caught a stand-by flight to Chicago. I left a place where the sun was beaming warmly, the breeze was cool, the grass smelled fresh and people were nice, to return to the windy city, where it was cloudy, grimy and grey.