

BUFFALO CHIP

Omaha, Nebraska

Spring 2000

Ed and Mondo Need Your Help!!

In August 2000, Ed Poindexter and Mondo weLanga (formerly David Rice) will have served thirty years in prison for the bombing murder of Omaha policeman Larry Minard. Governor Frank Morrison, who defended Ed at his trial, remains convinced of their innocence, and has said that they were convicted for their rhetoric. Amnesty International has also called for their release.

Like Geronimo Pratt, who recently received \$4.5 million in his wrongful imprisonment suit in California, Ed and Mondo were Black Panthers targeted by J. Edgar Hoover's COINTEL Program. Government documents they have received through the Freedom of Information Act raise serious questions about police and FBI collusion to disrupt, entrap and frame political activists in the sixties, especially people of color.

Nebraskans for Justice is a non-profit, tax exempt organization that works on justice issues in law enforcement, the courts and U.S. prisons. NFJ has selected the case of Ed Poindexter and Mondo we Langa (formerly David Rice) for special support. and last year

recruited a Lincoln, NE team of attorneys and paralegals to review the case, with the aim of getting Ed and Mondo back into court, where they can prove their innocence. NFJ has hired two consultant/specialists in forensics and document analysis, to take advantage of improved technology developed since the 1970S.

And, thanks to nationwide bulletins broadcast by supporters Sis Marpessa and JoNina Abron, about half a dozen law students have volunteered to do research for the team, and Mondo is coordinating their efforts. The team has almost completed its analysis of the evidence and documents so far available to them, and expect to be in court within the next two months. When that happens, all the evidence must be released to them for testing and study. After reviewing the case, both the attorneys and the consultants on the team feel there is good reason to be optimistic. So, if we ever needed the support of our readers, we need it now! Please help us pay for this costly effort. **Send tax-exempt donations to: Nebraskans for Justice, 1314 S. 9th Street, Omaha, NE 68108.**



Cruelty Leads to Corruption

The brutality of the "justice" system is a nationwide problem. In the entire world about 8 million people are now incarcerated -- and a quarter of them are in U.S. prisons. Since 1995 the states have spent more on prison than on university construction. Operating our prisons in the year 2000 will cost about \$40 billion -- \$109 million per day.

All this suffering -- to what end? U.S. policy on crime and drugs is a human rights disaster. Drug use might decline if we dealt with it as a medical problem, and tried treatment, instead of punishment. That, not the "War on Drugs," would reduce the flow of narcotics worldwide. Yet the Clinton administration is asking for multimillions to fight a guerrilla war in Columbia (the guerrillas support their insurgency with drug money, it's true; but it is a rebellion against an abusive government, none-

theless).

It's not Columbian drug lords, but the poverty of our own culture that leads to our epidemic drug use. Yet as the violence trickles down to young people, our solution is -- more violence: incarcerate juveniles with adults, treat inmates inhumanely, cut back on education and build more prisons, impose longer sentences, deny parole and skimp on medical care for those we have rendered helpless. And don't ban handguns; pass laws so people can carry concealed weapons.

Corruption and human rights abuses of both suspects and inmates are inevitable in such a punishing system. In the past three years, the Justice Department has investigated police practices in at least ten cities, including Los Angeles, Pittsburgh, Buffalo and New York City.

(cont. on p. 4)

◆❖||Reflections on||❖◆ A Culture of Danger

Three or four summers ago, I was sitting at one of the yard tables, talking with another African prisoner, a young man of about twenty years of age. He had sold crack out on the streets. We were dealing with that. At some point, we arrived at the issue of why he hadn't finished high school. We talked about issues of boredom, Eurocentric curriculum, and so forth. And while these issues played roles in his failure to graduate, there was something else. He told me that he oftentimes didn't go to school because he sometimes had nothing to wear. I sensed, though, that he really didn't mean that; so I pursued the matter further. In fact, what he meant is that sometimes he had no clothes, or none that were clean, with designer labels -- Tommy Hilfiger, Gap, Karl Kani, whatever.

This brings me to Warren Buffett and media coverage of this man with the full pockets. It occurs to me that the press typically characterizes Buffett as being *worth* x-number of billions of dollars. So the question is raised in my mind, if Warren Buffett is *worth* billions of dollars, how much is a man or woman worth who works for a wage and has no financial assets? Is this person worth nothing? In the eyes of quite a number of people in U.S. society, the answer to this question is "yes." My brother on the prison yard saw his value in *what* he had. He associated who he was with what he had. He had what the television, his peers, and so forth considered nothing. So in his mind, he was nothing and no one. He decided he was going to get something. Slingshot crack enabled him to do so and, in the process, become someone.

My brother on the prison yard was not an evil person. He wasn't motivated by a desire to go out into the streets and sell mayhem and destruction to his people. And he wasn't born with the idea in his head that material symbols of status would give him value as a human being. Nor was he born with the idea that the making of the fast buck was okay, no matter the hurt that might be heaped on people in the process of that fast buck being made. But he learned that Warren Buffett, Donald Trump, et al are *worth something*. He learned about the "Life Styles of the Rich and Famous," saw the "Wheel of Fortune" spinning. Today the question is, "Do You Want to be a Millionaire?"

People from all over the world come to this country, seeking the "American Dream" in the "land of opportunity." And, yes, the opportunities are here, though the levels of opportunity are not the same for people of color as they are for Europeans (U.S.-born or otherwise). But the opportunities can be like coins at the bottom of a cesspool serving as a wishing well. The capitalist/materialist value system combine with individualism to make a brew of swill, producing all manner of contamination of

(cont. on p. 8)

☞Health Care in U.S. Prisons☞

The Nebraska Ombudsman's Office has issued a report on health care in the Nebraska Department of Corrections which found the DOC's medical department to be "understaffed, inadequately trained, poorly organized and badly led," and called for sweeping changes. There is evidence that the crux of the problem might be the DOC's emphasis on reducing costs.

The investigation was prompted by a letter from Dr. Faisal Ahmed, a DOC physician, who criticized the response of corrections medical staff to an ill inmate, and also raised concerns about a number of medical practices in the DOC. After Dr. Ahmed took his concerns to the Ombudsman, he was disciplined by his superiors. The state Personnel Review Board has found that this action violated the state whistleblower act.

The Ombudsman's report covered a range of bungled medical practices, including two in which inmates died during the past 18 months. In another case, an inmate had sustained serious injuries before his incarceration which required pins in his pelvis and one hand. He complained that the pins had caused an infection, and asked Dr. John Cherry, the medical director, to remove the pins. The inmate told investigators that he saw Cherry with a maintenance worker examining an old hammer drill, and Cherry approached the inmate, saying he would use the drill to remove the pins, and would not prescribe any pain medication, because the procedure "would not take too long." The inmate refused treatment. The Ombudsman noted that Cherry had signed a physician's order that stated, "please obtain drill and wrench from maintenance."

The DOC's medical budget is \$8 million, which represents an average annual increase of 4.25 percent since 1993, but the Ombudsman's report says the DOC's own figures show spending per inmate has actually declined.

Harold Clarke, director of DOC, has responded that the report misrepresents the state's inmate medical system, and he contends the department provides adequate health care. Governor Johanns has called for an independent review of what the report calls "woefully inadequate" medical services, and has named a task force.

The State Legislature also took a look at health care in Nebraska's prisons when it created a 21-member task force in 1999, to report on substance abuse in Nebraska prisons. The report indicates that from 65 to 85 percent of Nebraska's 3,600 prison inmates may have problems with drugs or alcohol, and that 65 to 80 percent of juvenile offenders in Geneva and Kearney need treatment for substance abuse. The report shows that the total amount allocated for all treatment programs -- including those not directed at inmates -- has (when adjusted for inflation) declined by 16.5 percent over that spent in 1992. Governor Johanns has responded that he's not ready to "throw money" at the system, but that

(cont. on p. 8)

Brother, What Are We Supposed To Do

brother, you wear the cross
and speak of leading your flock
and sermonize before congregations
enrapt by words that boom like thunder
from your chest
words that speak of Jesus and of justice
and of the meek inheriting the earth
inside a massive church that
your flock built with their trust and tithes
but outside
Herod's boys in basic blue
have a green light to maim and kill
and do
with a history on their side
of judgments of "accidental death"
"reasonable force"
"justifiable homicide"
and other all-too-familiar pronouncements
with a history on their side
of your words of protest and prayer
meetings with the mayor
and demands for blue-ribbon committees
police sensitivity training
etcetera, etcetera

and you, brother, you occupy a seat of politics
and have the claim to fame of rubbing shoulders
with movers and shakers
you speak of making inside moves
and delivering the goods for your people
while carrying civil rights credentials
like a badge
while those with real badges
exercise the politics of brutality and death
with a history on their side
of judgements of "accidental death"
"reasonable force"
"justifiable homicide"
and other all-too-familiar pronouncements
with a history on their side
of your resolutions of outrage and dismay
press conferences on capitol steps
calling for grand juries to deliver justice
etcetera, etcetera

all the time, brother
all the time
we bleed and die
and you talk
but those whose ears you seek to bend
pretend to hear
but the words don't sink in
and even when you act

they do not heed your deed
because your actions
like your words
no matter how sincere your heart might be
are of no consequence
carry too little weight
to make cops think twice
about going upside our heads
or gunning us down
because your actions
like your words
fall dead on the ears
of public officials who have no fear
of that which will hurt them none
in the least
and cause them to make their police
restrain their savagery in our regard
they know they can do what they do
and what they've been doing

and your chants of "no justice, no peace"
are no skin off their backs
since the chances of their having to pay
are slim to non-existent
so they go on and act no different
not having to sweat time
and court dockets
having to pay fines
out of their own pockets
or losing an eye for an eye
or a tooth for a tooth

you say "no justice, no peace"
but they're aware of the truth
of your trust in the system
and damned sure that even if your trust runs out
your fear will set in
and it's back to usual
all over again

and we must point our finger
at you AND at us
because we stand with you
and follow your lead
are stuck in your confusion
and share in your impotence
as the clubs swing and bullets fly
and we can't protect our living
or bring justice
for the families of the dead
because so many of us
like you
fear dying
but can cope with being misled.

mondo

Corruption *(cont. from p. 1):*

Amnesty International and the U.N. Commission on Human Rights now regularly issue reports on human rights abuses in the U.S..

The long-term cost in anger and bitterness and lost lives has yet to be assessed, but the monetary costs are starting to come due: in Los Angeles alone, lawsuits stemming from the police corruption scandal there may cost as much as \$125 million to settle. And if you think it can't happen in your home town, take a look at these snapshots of millennial America:

***CONNECTICUT** Hartford police officer Jesus "Manny" Rivera, who is one of six Hartford officers implicated in a corruption scandal, was sentenced to five years in prison for coercing a prostitute to have sex with him.

& While in the line of duty, Connecticut police officer Scott Smith, who is white, was found guilty of intentional manslaughter for shooting Pearlyn Reid, an unarmed black suspect.

***COLORADO:** Denver police are facing a series of problems with the police force. In 1997 a TV news camera caught officers beating a suspect. Ismael Mena was shot to death after officers broke into his bedroom in a "no-knock" raid on the wrong house. Ellis Johnson II was hired as a police officer last year, after admitting he had used LSD and cocaine.

& A civil suit against Denver police officer Timothy McAleer charges him with beating Mathew Combs unconscious and causing brain damage. McAleer claims the injuries came from a collision. The city has offered to pay any judgment against McAleer, in exchange for not having to turn over internal affairs records to the court. A federal judge fined the city \$10,000 for withholding the records, and the case is on appeal.

***PENNSYLVANIA:** A lawsuit filed in federal court alleges 127 cases of misconduct by Philadelphia police, against scores of individuals. The suit contends that a code of silence among Darby police officers was designed to shield them from complaints and the law. The suit seeks no monetary damages, except legal fees, but asks the court to order policies to prevent further police misconduct. Since 1983, more than 40 federal civil-rights lawsuits have been filed against the Darby borough and its police. One of the officers named is in prison.

"Every part of the system -- prosecutors, defense counsel, judges and juries -- has played a role in miscarriages of justice. The legal system has become an entrenched culture in which everyone is looking the other way."
Myrna Raeder, past chair of the American Bar Association's Criminal Justice Section

& As of mid-1997, five police officers from the Police Department's 39th District had been convicted on charges of making false arrests, filing false reports and robbing drug suspects. Their exposure has led to review of thousands of drug convictions, and between 160 and 300 cases have already been overturned.

& State Trooper Michael K. Evans is accused of sexually assaulting two teenage girls and harassing another. He is charged with 19 counts of aggravated indecent assault, solicitation of prostitution, indecent exposure, corruption of minors, open lewdness and other charges. Police believe Evans was also involved in Internet pornography.

***ALABAMA:** Sgt. John Stuckey, head of the Prichard Police Department's narcotics and vice unit, resigned while under investigation for possible misconduct, an official said. Police Chief Sammie Brown declined to provide details, but said the FBI is also investigating. This is the latest in a series of problems in Prichard: last month a Mobile County grand jury called for the impeachment of Mayor Jesse Norwood, the five-member City Council and four of five water board members. The charges include willful neglect, incompetence and corruption.

***Washington, D.C.:** Police officer Derrick A. Brown, one of seven D.C. officers facing criminal charges, pled not guilty in Superior Court to six counts of sexual assault. He faces a life sentence if convicted. A 16-year-old witness testified that Brown raped her two years ago when she was 14, after arresting her and a friend for buying marijuana in Southwest Washington.

***VERMONT:** Franklin County prosecutors charge that three guards at the Chittenden Regional Correctional Facility in South Burlington kned and punched an inmate last October in retaliation for an earlier attack by the inmate on a guard and a nurse. Richard Turner, director of correctional services, said the department would be reviewing policies on interaction between guards and prisoners. The inmate also faces separate assault charges from the earlier attack.

***MICHIGAN:** Detroit police officers Larry Nevers and Walter Budzyn were convicted of second degree murder in 1993 for the beating death of Malice Green, 35, a black Detroit man. Their convictions were overturned because the court found that the jury might have been influenced by seeing the Spike Lee film, "Malcolm X." Budzyn was retried, found guilty of a lesser charge, sentenced to time already served, and released. Nevers is being retried.

***OHIO:** Former prison guard Brian Lamp, 24, of Marietta, Ohio, was indicted on two counts of violating the civil rights of inmate Ricky Todd, then 21. Lamp allegedly helped arrange a 1998 attack on Todd. Lamp was hired in 1996, and fired in 1998 because of Todd's

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***KENTUCKY:** Two white Louisville police officers, Chris Horn and Paul Kinkade, fired 22 rounds into 18-year-old Desmond Rudolph's stolen vehicle on May 13. The incident was widely denounced by African-Americans as an abuse of police power, but a grand jury cleared them of criminal wrongdoing. A followup investigation by the city's public safety director outlined numerous errors by the officers; nevertheless, they received departmental awards for valor in the confrontation, after which Mayor David Armstrong fired the police chief. The police union responded by demanding the Mayor's resignation. Hundreds of officers and their supporters marched on City Hall, where shouting officers cut off downtown traffic and left the lights on their cruisers flashing ominously outside the seat of government as they called for the mayor's ouster.

***TEXAS:** Luis Enrique Hernandez, whose family said he was mentally ill, died New Year's Day 1999 after being hogtied by five Ft. Worth officers and left lying unconscious on his stomach in front of his house until paramedics arrived. Police officials said the officers used the hogtie restraint in violation of police procedure, and then conspired to cover it up. The five officers were fired, but are appealing.

***FLORIDA:** Documents released after a former deputy pled guilty to federal charges have revealed that members of the Delta Division, an elite Manatee County sheriff's unit, pulled over and robbed motorists, using police radios to discuss targets. Former Deputy Christopher Moore was the fourth member of the Delta Division to plead guilty in the 21-month federal inquiry. Others have admitted they beat and robbed suspects, planted evidence and fabricated arrest reports. In one such case, Sarah Louise Smith, 21, served 18 months for possession of crack cocaine. Smith lost custody of her daughter, lost her job, and was billed by the state for child support. Former members of the Delta Division have admitted to falsifying a search warrant and planting evidence on Smith, then lying when Smith went on trial. Smith's conviction has been dismissed, and she is seeking \$5 million in damages from the Manatee County Sheriff's Office. Several other convictions have been vacated. The sheriff's office was forced to drop more than 100 charges against 87 defendants in cases brought by the Delta unit.

& Four guards at Florida State Prison have been charged with second-degree murder in the fatal beating of an inmate sent to death row for killing a prison guard in 1987. They were among nine guards suspended after Frank Valdes died July 17, 1999 during a confrontation inside a disciplinary area at the prison near Starke. An independent autopsy report, which was verified by the official autopsy report, showed that Valdes suffered fractures on 22 ribs, his jaw, sternum, collarbone, shoulder, spine and nose. The guards said Valdes was injured when he repeatedly threw himself off his bunk onto the

"In every other endeavor of American life, whenever there is a total system failure – from airplane crashes to hospital explosions – the system has a built-in means of a total, post-mortem analysis to find what went wrong. The only system which doesn't have such a mechanism is the criminal-justice system."

Barry Scheck, *The Innocence Project*

floor.

& The Broward state attorney's office has charged two officers with misdemeanor battery for handcuffing Paul Wood, holding him face down on a road's median and beating him, then charging him with crimes. After witnesses filed a complaint, the state attorney's office dropped the charges against Wood and charged the officers, instead. One resigned and the other was fired. Both have pled innocent.

***LOUISIANA:** After John Baiamonte, Jr., former head of the Florida Parishes Juvenile Detention Center was placed on probation for exposing himself to an undercover policewoman, he was hired by the Jefferson Parish Sheriff's Office at an annual salary of \$35,220. With 30 years' experience in the field, his expertise wasn't disputed, but questions were raised about his "moral character." Baiamonte was hired less than two weeks after the Sheriff's office hired an ex-convict, Al Payne, to work as a night supervisor in the jail. An official in the Metropolitan Crime Commission noted that, at the very least, the Sheriff could have waited until Baiamonte's probation ended.

***ILLINOIS:** A civilian police board Friday unanimously voted to fire three officers on the Chicago force who were involved in the fatal shooting of LaTanya Haggerty, a 26-year-old computer programmer, as she sat in the passenger seat of a car after a lengthy police chase. The board cited the officers for ignoring an order to call off their pursuit of the car carrying Haggerty, and for firing their weapons without justification. Haggerty's death, and that of Robert Russ, a second unarmed motorist killed by police in an unrelated traffic stop a few hours later, prompted daily anti-police protests at City Hall and an ongoing federal investigation by the U.S. Department of Justice.

& At least four lawsuits, including a class-action lawsuit, have been filed against the Mount Prospect Police Department, outside of Chicago, alleging discrimination against Hispanic drivers. Police Officer Javier Martinez received a \$2 million settlement when he proved that Hispanics, who comprise only 6 percent of the local population, were involved in 45 percent of the traffic stops in Mount Prospect; and that his department had a standing policy of targeting Hispanic drivers. Other Chicago

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Corruption (cont. from p. 1):

suburbs have begun to impose harsher penalties for racial discrimination within their police departments.

& Former Chicago Police Gang Crimes officer Joseph Miedzianowski has been indicted for shaking down drug dealers. Federal prosecutors heard testimony from confessed killer Nelson Padilla that officers ripped off drug dealers, fixed criminal cases and on several occasions got him out of jail so he could visit his girlfriend. The Police Department confirmed there will be a major reorganization.

*NEW JERSEY: Wendell Huggin, a 10-year member of the Irvington police force, confessed in federal court in Newark that on at least four off-duty occasions, he carried his service revolver while accompanying drug dealers on drug deliveries in Jersey City and Essex County. Huggins' involvement came to light when he stumbled into an FBI "sting" aimed at police corruption. Huggins then wore a concealed microphone to gather evidence of any payoffs to cops, according to a source close to the case. The probe is continuing.

& Local and state officials have subpoenaed documents dating back to 1997 from the Camden Personnel Office, alleging that a multimillion dollar drug ring flourished in Camden for nearly a decade, in part, because of its close ties to law enforcement. Allegations of police corruption surfaced during the federal conspiracy trial of Camden drug lords Jose Luis "J.R." Rivera and Luis "Tun Tun" Figueroa, when at least twelve Camden officers were subpoenaed as defense witnesses.

The U.S. State Department has issued its annual "Human Rights Report." Using its harshest language in years, the U.S. sharply criticized China for what it called "a marked deterioration in human rights." The report noted that China's human rights record "deteriorated ... as the government intensified efforts to suppress dissent ... [A]buses stemmed from the authorities' extremely limited tolerance of public dissent aimed at the government, fear of unrest, and the limited scope or implementation of laws protecting basic freedoms."

*NEW YORK: After four male guards from the women's housing in the Westchester County Jail were arrested last month on charges of sexual abuse, including rape and sodomy, and forcing inmates to strip in exchange for medication, Westchester County executive Andrew J. Spano announced that male guards would be barred from working in the women's quarters of the jail. Spano pledged that the county would conduct more rigorous background checks and psychological tests before hiring correction officers.

& The FBI announced that four Buffalo police officers had been arrested and face multiple federal charges, including conspiracy, drug trafficking and civil rights violations. The officers, who all had 12 or more years' service with the police force, are accused of shaking down drug dealers, taking money, jewelry and drugs for their own profit and letting the dealers go free. They face sentences of up to 20 years in prison and as much

as \$1 million in fines.

& New York City agreed March 8 to pay \$1.87 million to three young men shot in Harlem by police officers investigating a shooting. This averted a trial in a federal lawsuit brought by the youths, which had alleged that the officers shouted at the youths after the shooting to "shut the fuck up or I'll shoot you again;" and that two of the youths were handcuffed to their hospital beds for three days. All charges against them were dropped. "We believe that the police officers acted appropriately under the circumstances," said Tom Crane, a lawyer for the city. "But there were some extenuating circumstances that prompted us to settle the case."

& A lawsuit filed by the Center for Constitutional Rights in U.S. District Court in Manhattan, against MCI WorldCom and New York State alleges a conspiracy to make huge profits on collect calls inmates make to their families and advisers. MCI has a monopoly in the state's 70 correctional facilities, and charges family members, who come from the poorest neighborhoods in New York City, a 60 percent surcharge on calls from their imprisoned loved ones. MCI declined to comment. A spokesman for the Department of Correctional Services, said, "Inmates do not have a constitutional right to make phone calls."

& Eight NYC cops have been implicated in a corruption scandal that alleges they promoting gambling and fixed parking tickets in Bensonhurst. Four were charged with official misconduct and other crimes. Police sources added that others may be arrested.

& The U.S. Department of Justice has issued a report stating that "a pattern or practice of excessive force has been found" in the NYC police department, which is not "disciplining appropriately." The DOJ recommends that the city institute its own independent oversight in order to prevent the federal government from coming in and forcing oversight on the city. A Justice Department source said that if there is no deal with Mayor Giuliani, the DOJ will file a lawsuit.

*CALIFORNIA: The *Sacramento Bee* published a series in February reporting that city police and county sheriffs' departments annually generate relatively high levels of resisting-arrest bookings compared to other large law enforcement agencies in California. The ACLU views the charge as a "cover" for officers' use of excessive force. In nearly three-quarters of the 100 cases surveyed suspects feel they were abused by the officers

(cont. on next page):

Corruption *(cont. from p. 6):*

veyed suspects feel they were abused by the officers taking them into custody. Nearly half of the suspects are black, even though they comprise only 10% of Sacramento's population.

& Sgt. Joe Deanda, former Bensenville chief of detectives, was indicted in March after he allegedly stole drug money and other money seized from gambling arrests.

& A Long Beach police patrol officer was indicted in February by a federal grand jury for stealing six kilograms of cocaine from from an undercover agent he believed to be a drug dealer, stealing 200 pounds of marijuana from a drug dealer in March 1999, and planning two other drug thefts.

& David Gene Lewis, a former guard at the Pelican Bay state prison, was convicted of violating inmate Harry Long's civil rights and shooting him in the chest. He had read erroneous prison records showing that Long was a child molester, but Long had been convicted of rape. Another former guard, Jose Garcia, was convicted in state court in 1998 of conspiring to assault inmates and was sentenced to 4 years, 8 months in prison.

& Michael Wilcox, a former California Highway Patrol officer who cooperated to help crack a major drug case, has been charged with attempting to hide money he made as a result of the drug deal. Former Agent Richard Wayne Parker was sentenced to life in prison and fined \$16 million in the drug case, in which nearly 650 pounds of cocaine was stolen in 1997 from an evidence locker in Riverside. Wilcox's partner, George Ruelas, was arrested in Fresno for possession with the intent to distribute 295 pounds of the cocaine.

& Prosecutors filed drug charges against former South Pasadena police officer James Avery Brisco, alleging that he ran a methamphetamine lab out of his San Clemente home. Brisco pled not guilty to the charge.

& In Los Angeles a federal judge has approved a \$4.5 million settlement of a false imprisonment suit brought against the City and the U.S. Justice Department by former Black Panther Geronimo Ji Jaga Pratt. He spent 25 years in prison for murder, before a judge overturned his conviction. The primary witness against him was an FBI informant who received leniency for charges brought against him.

***ARKANSAS:** After four of his highest ranking deputies resigned, Fayetteville Sheriff Jim Davis asked the FBI and the State bureau of Investigation to look into allegations of corruption among high ranking elected officials, county administrators and some current or former deputies in the county. One of the deputies has a new job with the Raeford Police Department. Another, who is currently employed by the Fayetteville Police Department, announced that he would run for Hoke County sheriff in 2002.

***NEBRASKA:** The Nebraska law requiring investigation by a grand jury of any death occurring in police custody has been declared unconstitutional by Nebraska District Judge Brian Silverman, on the grounds that it gives special status to people to die while in custody. Judge Silverman quashed a grand jury investigation of a robbery suspect who committed suicide in the Deuel County jail. Attorney General Don Stenberg, a Republican who is running to win Bob Kerrey's seat in the U.S. Senate, did not appeal the decision, on the grounds that the state lacked standing.

[Buffalo Chip is grateful for the good work done by all the people who run e-mail networks on human rights issues in the U.S. The African News Network covers issues relating to people of color. Stop Police Abuse disseminates a clipping service of news items about police and prison abuses nationwide. The Restorative Justice network focuses on seeking rehabilitative alternatives to imprisonment. Much of the material for this piece comes from them.]



If you want to help pay for forensics tests, document analysis and all the costs connected with proving Ed and Mondo's innocence, please send your tax-exempt donation to:

Nebraskans for Justice
1314 S. 9th St.
Omaha, NE 68108

Many, Many Thanks!!!

!!!MORE ON TEXACUTIONS!!!

Excerpt from a story in the LA Times

"It's a strange, taxing craft, performing executions, and Texas, many wardens say, performs it best. Drawn by the state's record pace of executions, wardens from a number of states are quietly paying visits here to watch the experts work..."

"Death penalty opponents ... see little to impress in either Texas' execution record or its performance. 'We've had people's veins explode during the execution ritual,' said ... death penalty opponent Ray Hill. 'Because of AMA rules it's not doctors who insert the needles; you have people with little or no medical training. When they screw up really badly the death chamber curtain gets slammed closed.'

"But to [some] wardens ... Texas' mastery of lethal injection is supreme." [One warden] admired the Texas system for preserving inmates' final words. 'When inmates make it, it is being transcribed. After the execution, the warden has a copy ... and he hands it out to the media.' Alabama, by contrast, Hamm said, would probably paraphrase what he remembered, if anybody asked...

"Don Cabana, [retired Mississippi warden] ... said, 'People don't understand the effect that executing a human being has on the people who do it.'"

Reflections (cont. from p. 2):

the human spirit. Have you noticed how, so often, TV commercials that encourage us to stuff ourselves like pigs are followed by ads for Tums, Roloids, and/or other products marketed as remedies for upset stomach? Isn't there a greed operating in this, a greed on the part of the sellers of food and of medicines that promotes ill-health for the sake of the sellers' bottom lines? How valuable can their guests be that Jerry Spinger, Ricki Lake, et al routinely set them up for ridicule and abasement in order to draw laughter, anger, etc., from audiences and high Neilsen ratings and advertising revenues? How pathetic must be the lives of people who would willingly appear on these talk shows to serve as amusement for others?

The culture lying at the foundation of the "American Dream" is killing people. It is killing their spirit, as in the case of my brother on the prison yard, and many others like him; as in the case of the "Jerry Springer people;" as in the case of the many men and women who can't or believe they can't function without the help of anti-depressant drugs; etc. It is killing them physically -- via lethal injections and electric chairs, alcohol and other drugs, and otherwise. The killings on the streets, in the schools, etc., are physical signs of the injury and death of spirit. They are signs of the swill we float in.

Yes, this is a land of opportunity. But it is also a land in which the same "pioneer spirit" that nearly annihilated the people indigenous to this place, the sense of "manifest destiny" that enslaved African people and turned Mexicanos/Mexicanas into "illegal aliens" in the lands of their ancestors, and other aspects of the foundation of the "American Dream" have come together and evolved to the point where, for an awful lot of people, living has become a risky business.

M.W.E. we Langa



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Prison Health Care (cont. from p. 2):

the state should first determine whether the \$19.7 million currently appropriated is properly allocated.

Nebraska's county jails also seem to be bad for your health: there were six Nebraska county jail deaths during the second half of 1999. Grand juries in Sheridan, Lincoln, Johnson, Platte, Box Butte and Otoe counties were unanimous in ruling the deaths suicides. Three people also died in law enforcement custody in Douglas County in the first weeks of this year. Diabetic Manuel Cantu, 41, was an inmate at the work-release unit of the Omaha Correctional Center. The State Ombudsman's Office, the Nebraska State Patrol, and the Department of Correctional Services are all investigating the quality of Cantu's medical care at the institution.

Elsewhere around the country the quality of health care for the poorest of the poor -- prisoners -- seems to be on a par with that in Nebraska.

*At New Folsom Prison, CA, inmates went on a hunger strike to demand better health care and clean drinking water, among other things. In Philadelphia, PA diabetic Stephen Rosen filed a federal suit against the city, contending he nearly died last year when police locked him in a cell for almost 24 hours and denied him insulin and blood-pressure medicine. The suit alleges it is the fourth such claim filed against the city since 1997. Last February the city settled another such lawsuit filed by a diabetic, reportedly for \$22,500.

*Mental health care presents problems for law enforcement officers as well as the mentally ill. Police and prison employees are not trained to treat the mentally ill, but are forced to deal with them. The problem has grown significantly since elected officials passed laws to deinstitutionalize the mentally ill in the 1980s,