

PRISON RIOTS

1990 Strangeways Prison riot



Prisoners protesting on the badly damaged roof of the prison. Paul Taylor is in the centre with his arms outstretched.

The **1990 Strangeways Prison riot** was a 25-day [prison riot](#) and rooftop protest at [Strangeways Prison](#) in [Manchester](#), England. The riot began on 1 April 1990 when prisoners took control of the prison [chapel](#), and the riot quickly spread throughout most of the prison. The riot and rooftop protest ended on 25 April when the final five prisoners were removed from the rooftop, making it the longest prison riot in British penal history. One prisoner was killed during the riot, and 147 prison officers and 47 prisoners were injured. Much of the prison was damaged or destroyed with the cost of repairs coming to £55 million.

The riot sparked a series of disturbances in prisons across England, Scotland and [Wales](#), resulting in the [British government](#) announcing a [public inquiry](#) into the riots headed by [Lord Woolf](#). The resulting *Woolf Report* concluded that conditions in the prison had been intolerable, and recommended major reform of the prison system. *The Guardian* newspaper described the report as a blueprint for the restoration of "decency and justice into jails where conditions had become intolerable".

[] Background

[Manchester's Strangeways Prison](#), which opened in 1868, was a "local prison" designed to hold prisoners from the surrounding area, mainly those on [remand](#) or serving [sentences](#) of less than

five years.^{[1][2]} At the time of the riot, the main prison consisted of six wings connected by a central **rotunda** known as the Centre.^[2] Convicted adult prisoners were held in wings A, B, C and D, and convicted **young offenders** were held in E wing, which was physically separated from the Centre by gates.^[2] Convicted prisoners on Rule 43(a) were held on landings C1 and C2 of C wing, and remand prisoners on Rule 43(a)^[3] were held on the fourth landing on E wing.^[2] F wing contained administrative offices on the lower floor and the chapel on the upper floor.^[2] Remand prisoners were held in wings G, H, I and K of a separate prison, linked to the main prison through workshops and a kitchen.^[2] The Certified Normal Accommodation Figure for Strangeways, the number of prisoners the prison was designed to hold, was 970.^[4] The population of the prison had increased in the months before the riot, from 1,417 in January 1990 to a peak of 1,658 on 27 March.^[5] On 1 April, the prison contained 1,647 prisoners – about 925 convicted adult prisoners, 500 remand prisoners and 210 convicted young offenders.^[4]

Prisoners felt their complaints about conditions were being ignored.^[6] Remand prisoners were only allowed out of their cells for 18 hours per week, and Category A prisoners^[7] were locked in their cells for 22 hours a day, and rarely left their cells except for "**slopping out**", a one-hour exercise period each day or a weekly shower.^[8] In March 1990, **Dominic Noonan** was transferred from Strangeways to **HM Prison Hull**.^[9] Noonan was the organiser of the Prisoners' League Association (PLA), an organisation formed in 1989 which campaigned for prisoners' rights.^[9] Its aims included initiating legal proceedings against prison staff for mistreatment of prisoners, and picketing outside prisons in which prisoners were mistreated.^[9] The PLA were active at Strangeways Prison, and Noonan's transfer demonstrates prison officers were aware of rising tensions inside the prison.^[9] On 26 March, Barry Morton was taken to the "**punishment block**" and **strip-searched** after being visited by his mother, as prison officers believed she had brought drugs into the prison for him.^[9] During a struggle he sustained a black eye and swollen nose, and the following day he was released back into the main prison along with another prisoner, Tony Bush.^[9] Later the same day, Bush and Morton climbed onto the roof of the prison and staged a twenty-hour rooftop protest.^{[9][10]} On 31 March there was a 30-minute **sit-down protest** in the chapel after a film was shown, which ended after a **prison officer** promised to listen to the prisoners' grievances.^[9] The same evening it is reported that a black prisoner was assaulted by prison officers in front of other prisoners, and injected with **Largactil** – a **sedative** used to control prisoners, known in prisons as the "liquid cosh".^[9] Prisoners then decided to stage a further protest in the chapel the following day, 1 April.^[9]

The riot

Disturbance in the chapel

Prison officers had advance warning that an incident would occur in the chapel on 1 April, and security was increased.^[11] Extra prison officers were used to escort prisoners to the service, and fourteen officers were inside the chapel supervising the service instead of the usual total of eight.^{[11][12]} An additional seven officers were also stationed in the **vestry** outside the chapel.^[12] The service was attended by 309 prisoners which was about the usual attendance, but all Rule 43(a) prisoners were prevented from attending as a precautionary measure.^{[11][12]} A senior prison officer believed the prisoners would attempt another sit-down protest with the possibility of **hostage-taking**, and instructed staff to evacuate the chapel if trouble began.^[13] At approximately 11:00 am, a visiting **Church of England** preacher had just delivered the **sermon**, and the prison chaplain, Reverend Noel Proctor, stood to thank the preacher when prisoner Paul Taylor took the microphone from him and addressed the congregation.^[14] Reverend Proctor was recording the service for distribution to a **prayer group**, and the subsequent events were recorded:^[15]

Noel Proctor: After that remarkable message that has...

Paul Taylor: I would like to say, right, that this man has just talked about blessing of the heart and a hardened heart can be delivered. No it cannot, not with resentment, anger and bitterness and hatred being instilled in people.

[General noise, over which]

A prisoner: Fuck your system, fuck your rules.

[Applause]

Noel Proctor: Right lads, sit down.

[More noise]

Noel Proctor: Right lads, down. Down. Come on, this is no way to carry on in God's house.

[More noise]

A prisoner: Fuck your system.

[More noise]

Noel Proctor: Right lads, sit down. This is completely out of order. Sit down.

A prisoner: Why is it? It's been waiting to happen for ever. It will never change.

Noel Proctor: Come on. This is terrible.

[More noise, banging, shouting, cheering]

Noel Proctor: All of you who want to go back to your cells go the back of the church please.

A prisoner: What? You're a fucking hypocrite, you.

Noel Proctor: I'm trying to help you, to keep you.

A prisoner: Leave it, mate.

[More noise until microphone goes dead]^[15]

As Reverend Proctor was appealing for calm, a prisoner brandishing two sticks shouted out "You've heard enough, let's do it, get the bastards".^[16] Other prisoners responded by donning masks and brandishing weapons, and three prison officers started to leave the chapel as earlier instructed.^[16] A set of keys was taken from a prison officer when a number of officers were attacked by prisoners wielding **fire extinguishers**, table legs and fire buckets.^[16] A number of prisoners attempted to leave the chapel via the vestry; at the same time, the seven prison officers there attempted to gain entry to the chapel.^[16] Once they managed to do so, the officers were

attacked by prisoners, and a second set of keys was taken from one of them.^[16] Some prisoners helped to get injured officers and Reverend Proctor to a place of safety via the vestry,^{[15][16]} while others barricaded entrances to the chapel or attempted to gain access to the roof.^[17]

[] The riot spreads



Damage caused to B wing of the prison

The prison officers guarding the gates outside the chapel abandoned them, and ran towards the Centre.^[17] The prison officer in charge of the Centre saw his colleagues running from the direction of the chapel, but due to the presence of **scaffolding** he was in a poor position to view the upper levels, and mistakenly assumed he saw prisoners running from the chapel.^[18] He informed other officers on C1 and D1 of this and, upon hearing that prisoners were in possession of keys, told them and officers on A1 that they should **evacuate** the prison.^[18] Governor Morrison, who was responsible for the main prison, was present and did not intervene with these instructions.^[18] Morrison then ordered officers to evacuate the Centre at 11:13 am as he mistakenly believed prisoners had entered the Centre.^[18] By this time prisoners had gained access to the roofs of E and F wings, and from there gained access to other wings by making holes in unprotected office ceilings.^[17]

The prisoners found A and B wings unsupervised as the prison officers had already evacuated, and began to free other prisoners who were still locked in their cells.^[17] The prison officer in charge of the first landing of C wing was ordered to evacuate, and with the help of three other officers evacuated the 73 Rule 43(a) prisoners being held there, being fearful for the safety of the prisoners who were regarded as **sex offenders**.^[19] Due to rioting prisoners entering the wing, the officers were unable to evacuate a further seven Rule 43(a) prisoners who were being held on the second landing.^[20] Rioting prisoners also gained access to E wing, where the Rule 43(a) prisoners had been left locked in their cells after the prison officers evacuated.^[20] A number of these Rule 43(a) prisoners were attacked by rioting prisoners.^{[21][22]} One such prisoner was Derek White, who was being held on remand on charges of **indecent assault** and **buggery**. White later died in **North Manchester General Hospital** on 3 April after being admitted suffering from head wounds, a **dislocated** shoulder and **chest pains**.^[22]

At 11:43 am rioting prisoners were seen approaching the remand prison, which was still secure.^[23] The prison governor, Brendan O'Friel, arrived at the prison at 11:55 am and gave orders to defend the remand prison.^[24] He later recalled that:

By 12 o'clock when I came in it looked as if we'd lost control of the whole thing. My first decision was to send a Governor 5 back up to the remand prison to see if we could hold it, but it was too late. That decision, had it been taken half an hour earlier, would have meant we could have held the remand prison, meaning we could have kept another 400 locked up. Assuming the doors would have held, that sort of thing. But we had about 200 staff on duty, and we must have lost nine or ten casualties of one sort or another and then you lose staff getting the casualties out. We didn't have a lot of the staff come pouring in until about 1 o'clock. I tell you what really bugged us was there an element of April Fool about it. We rang staff up about it, who said "You must be joking, is this an April Fool?" That's what happened when they rang up my home, my son thought it was an April Fool.^[24]

Rioting prisoners gained access to the remand prison at 12:20 pm through the kitchens in G wing, and began freeing prisoners who were still locked in their cells using stolen keys or improvised tools such as iron bars and fire extinguishers.^{[24][25]} At this point the rioting prisoners were in control of all accommodation wings of the prison.^[21] A large number of prisoners were on the prison roof, and roof tiles and other missiles were thrown at prison officers on the ground.^{[24][25]} Rioting inside the prison continued with cells being damaged and fires being started, and at 3:40 pm the Public Relations Department of the Home Office issued a statement:^[26]

At 11 am a disturbance started in the chapel at Strangeways Prison when some 300 prisoners attacked staff. Those prisoners then gained access to the chapel roof and then broke into the living accommodation in the main prison. Other prisoners, including those on remand, joined in the disturbance and staff had to be withdrawn. The perimeter is secure.^[26]

Between 2:00 pm and 5:00 pm approximately 800 prisoners had surrendered, and arrangements were made for them to be transferred to other prisons.^[27] At 8:00 pm Governor O'Friel agreed that prison officers should enter E wing, and at 8:05 pm approximately ten Control & Restraint (C&R) units each consisting of twelve prison officers entered the wing.^[28] By 8:10 pm all four landings of E wing had been secured, and one C&R unit progressed to the Centre where they fought with rioting prisoners.^[28] This was reported to Governor O'Friel, who instructed the officers not to move beyond E wing.^[28] Scaffolding poles and other missiles were thrown at the C&R teams from the roof area above the fourth landing in E wing, and when prisoners broke onto the wing the C&R teams withdrew at 0:22 am on 2 April, leaving prisoners in control of the wing.^[28] Up to 1,100 of the 1,647 prisoners were involved in the rioting, and by the end of the first day 700 had surrendered and been transferred to other prisons along with 400 prisoners who were not involved in the rioting.^[29] Between 200 and 350 prisoners occupied the rooftop of the main prison during the night.^[30]

[] Rooftop protest

At 7:00 am on 2 April, an estimated total of 142 prisoners were still in control of all the accommodation wings of the prison.^[28] Some prisoners on the roof gave clenched fist salutes to the crowd watching below.^[31] Some prisoners were wearing prison officers' hats and uniforms, while others were wearing masks improvised from towels and blankets.^[31] A banner was unveiled that read "No dead", in response to claims in the press that between eleven and twenty prisoners had been killed in the rioting.^[31] At 10:00 am, C&R units entered the remand prison and regained control, with six prisoners surrendering peacefully.^{[32][33]} A Home Office statement was released at 11:45 am stating that no bodies had been found in the remand prison, and 12 prison officers and 37 prisoners had received treatment in hospital to date.^[32] Further prisoners surrendered the same day, and by 6:00 pm 114 prisoners remained in the prison.^[34] On 3 April

newspapers published pictures of the prisoners' "No dead" banner, while still insisting that 20 prisoners had been killed.^[34] The prisoners responded with a banner that read "Media contact now".^[34] The *Manchester Evening News* newspaper was contacted from inside the prison by telephone, and prisoners outlined their demands:^[34]

- Improved visiting facilities, including the right to physical contact with visitors and a children's play area.
- Category A prisoners would be allowed to wear their own clothes and be able to receive food parcels.
- Longer exercise periods.
- An end to 23-hour-a-day lock-up.^[34]

At 11:10 am Michael Unger from the *Manchester Evening News* was allowed into the prison as an "independent observer".^[34] Unger met prisoners who described their grievances to him, which included [mental](#) and [physical brutality](#), poor food and conditions, and misuse of drugs in controlling prisoners.^[34] While Unger was inside the prison twelve C&R units attempted to regain control of E wing, in what became known as the "battle for E wing".^[34] Prisoners built [barricades](#) and threw scaffolding poles at the C&R units, and after approximately thirty minutes the C&R units withdrew without regaining control of the wing.^[35] By the end of the third day of the riot prisoners still controlled the upper levels of the prison, but prison officers had regained control of the lower level, and a Home Office statement was issued:^[36]

During the course of the evening prison staff have had access at ground level to all wings in the main prison. No bodies have been found. Earlier today prison staff gained access to the main prison building in order to remove barricades to allow the surrender of inmates who wished to do so. No inmates were injured during this process. Nine prison staff were taken to outside hospital for treatment. Two remain overnight for observation. Negotiations were carried out by prison staff ... 31 inmates surrendered. All of those who surrendered have been interviewed, medically examined and fed. They will be transferred to other accommodation as soon as practicable.^[36]

On 4 April, Governor O'Friel spoke to the press for the first time, describing the riot as "an explosion of evil which was quite terrible to see".^[37] Also that day the [Prison Officers Association](#) claimed that Rule 43(a) prisoners were being treated in North Manchester General Hospital for [castration](#) wounds, which was repeated by sections of the press despite being categorically denied by the hospital's public relations officer and consultant-in-charge.^[38] 29 prisoners surrendered during the day leaving 26 prisoners inside the prison, 11 of whom had been identified by the [Prison Service](#).^{[37][39]} Two more prisoners surrendered on 5 April, the same day as the Home Office announced a [public inquiry](#) into the riot headed by [Lord Woolf](#).^[38] Also that day a prison officer died in hospital; he had not been injured during the riot and suffered from a long-standing medical condition.^{[38][39]} By this time plans to retake the entire prison by force had been scrapped due to the likelihood of fatalities among prisoners or prison officers.^[40] That evening the police and prison officers introduced new tactics designed to weaken the resolve of the prisoners and to prevent them from sleeping.^{[41][42]} Loud music was played, lights were shone at the roof, and prison officers banged on their [riot shields](#) and shouted at the prisoners, including calling them "beasts".^{[41][42]}

The rooftop protest was watched by a crowd of onlookers and supporters outside the prison.^[43] Various political groups also attended in support of the prisoners, including anarchist group [Class War](#), the [Revolutionary Communist Group](#), and the Prisoners' League Association.^[44] On 6 April Paul Taylor attempted to shout out the prisoners' demands to the crowd gathered below,

but he was drowned out by police sirens.^[38] Taylor and other prisoners responded by unfurling a banner which read "We fight and stand firm on behalf of humanity".^[38] On 9 April, *The Sun* newspaper called for an end to the riot, saying "Jail riot scum must be crushed", and former prisoner **John McVicar** called for the retaking of the prison by force at the earliest possible opportunity.^[45] By 10 April more prisoners had surrendered, leaving thirteen inside the prison.^[45] Three more prisoners surrendered the following day, one of whom, Barry Morton, had taken part in the rooftop protest on 26 March.^[46] On 16 April, another three prisoners surrendered when they became ill with **food poisoning**.^[47]

Local businesses were calling for an end to the riot due to the disruption caused, including the closure of roads around the prison.^[48] A **leather-jacket retailer** based 400 yards from the prison claimed they had lost £20,000 in revenue since the riot had begun.^[48] **Greater Manchester Police** asked for £2 million to cover the costs of policing the riot, which it described as the "most savage incident of its kind ever experienced within the British prison service".^[48] On 17 April the remaining seven prisoners began negotiations to attempt to bring the rooftop protest to an end.^[47] **Negotiations** took place inside the prison between two Home Office officials and prisoner Alan Lord, who was negotiating on behalf of the remaining prisoners.^[49] On 23 April, Lord was captured by a C&R unit while on his way to meet the negotiators.^[49] Mark Williams—one of the remaining prisoners—later described his reactions to the negotiations and Lord's capture:^[50]



The last five prisoners descend from the roof in a "**cherry picker**"—Mark Williams, John Murray, Paul Taylor, Martin Brian and Glyn Williams.

David Bell, the Home Office negotiator, kept contradicting himself, as if in a bid to prolong the negotiations. He would agree to our terms, then he would try and tell us it was out of his hands, and go back on his word. If it was out of the Home Officer's hands—then whose hands was it in? I think the final stages were messed around by the Home Office so that our protest could help to divert the public's attention from the Poll Tax revolt that was going on throughout the country. As Alan Lord was snatched after being asked to negotiate on behalf of us all, this made us all more defiant about ending the protest.^[50]

Following the capture of Lord, the remaining prisoners agreed that 25 April would be the final day of the protest.^[50] Prison officers entered the prison early in the morning and gradually

began to occupy the upper landings.^[51] At 10:20 am one of the remaining prisoners, a seventeen-year-old on remand for [joyriding](#), was captured leaving five prisoners remaining on the roof.^[50] When prison officers reached the roof they put up a sign similar to the ones used by prisoners throughout the protest, which read "HMP in charge—no visits".^[51] At 6:20 pm the remaining five prisoners were removed from the roof in a "[cherry picker](#)" hydraulic platform, giving clenched fist salutes to the press and public as they descended.^[51] During the course of the 25-day riot, the longest in British penal history, 147 prison officers and 47 prisoners had been injured.^[52]

[] Disturbances at other prisons

The Strangeways riot caused a number of protests at prisons across England, Scotland and Wales, described as either [solidarity](#) actions or [copycat](#) riots.^[53] Approximately 100 remand prisoners at [HM Prison Hull](#) staged a sit-down protest in the exercise yard on 1 April, after hearing about the Strangeways riot on the radio.^[53] Disturbances occurred the same day at [HM Prison Gartree](#), [HM Prison Kirkham](#) and [HM Prison Rochester](#), although the Gartree protest had started three days earlier over conditions in the prison.^[53] There were minor disturbances at [HM Prison Lindholme](#), [HM Prison Low Newton](#) and [HM Prison Bedford](#) on 2 April, [HM Prison Durham](#), [HM Prison Winchester](#) and [HM Prison Wandsworth](#) on 4 April, and [HM Young Offenders Institute Glen Parva](#) on 6 April.^[54]

The weekend of 7 April and 8 April saw protests across the prison system.^[55] At [HM Prison Leeds](#) there was a sit-down protest after the arrival of over 100 prisoners who had been transferred from Strangeways.^[55] At [HM Prison Dartmoor](#), between 100 and 120 prisoners wrecked D wing of the prison, and 12 prisoners also protested on the roof of C wing unfurling a banner that read "Strangeways, we are with you".^[55] 32 prisoners from Dartmoor were transferred to [HM Prison Bristol](#), where there was another major protest following their arrival.^[56] Up to 400 prisoners took over three wings of the prison, and held control of them for two days.^[56] 130 prisoners at [HM Prison Cardiff](#) destroyed cells, a twenty-hour rooftop protest took place at [HM Prison Stoke Heath](#), and disturbances occurred at [HM Prison Brixton](#), [HM Prison Pentonville](#), [HM Prison Stafford](#) and [HM Prison Shepton Mallet](#).^[56] A second protest took place at HM Prison Hull, where 110 prisoners staged a sit-down protest in the exercise yard.^[56]

Prisoners smashed windows at [HM Prison Verne](#) on 9 April, and 40 prisoners held a prison officer hostage for twenty-four hours after taking over a hall at [HM Prison Shotts](#) on 10 April.^[56] On 12 April, two teenage remand prisoners at [HM Prison Swansea](#) barricaded themselves into their cell for seventeen hours, and on 22 April between 80 and 100 remand prisoners staged an eighteen-hour rooftop protest at [HM Prison Pucklechurch](#).^[57]

[] Media reaction

On 2 April newspapers reported a weekend of "anti-authority violence", as in addition to the Strangeways riot the [Poll Tax Riot](#) had occurred in London on 31 March.^[31] Reports of the violence at Strangeways included [kangaroo courts](#), hangings, castrations and that between eleven and twenty prisoners had been killed.^[31] On 3 April the front page of the [Daily Mirror](#) read "Prison Mob 'Hang Cop' ", and claimed a former policeman imprisoned at Strangeways for [rape](#) had been killed by prisoners.^[58] The newspaper was forced to publish a retraction admitting that "reliable police sources" had been mistaken, when it transpired that the man was actually alive and imprisoned in [HM Prison Leeds](#).^[58] Following the end of the rooftop protest the newspapers condemned the prisoners, with [The Daily Telegraph](#) describing the riot as "a degrading public spectacle", and [The Independent](#) describing the rioters as "dangerous and

unstable criminals enjoying an orgy of destruction".^[59] *The Guardian* urged the government to institute reforms, a view which was the prevalent one for a time, stating:^[59]

Initially, the riot appeared to increase public support for radical reform of the present degrading prison system. Some of that goodwill will have been eroded by the antics of the rioters in the last two weeks, and may be further eroded once details emerge during the forthcoming criminal prosecutions. But this must not deflect Home Office ministers from the road down which they had belatedly begun to travel. A change in prison conditions is crucial if good order is to be restored to the system.^[59]

In its last act before disbanding in 1991 and being replaced by the [Press Complaints Commission](#), the [Press Council](#) produced a comprehensive report into the press coverage during the Strangeways riot.^[58] The report stated that "many of the more gruesome events report in the press had not occurred – nobody had been systematically mutilated, there had been no castrations, no bodies had been chopped up and flushed in the sewers. Though there was inter-prisoner violence in the first hours of the riot, torture on the scale suggested by many of the early reports did not take place."^[58] It further found that press coverage "fell into the serious ethical error of presenting speculation and unconfirmed reports as fact".^[58]

[] The Woolf Report

A five-month public inquiry was held into the disturbances at Strangeways and other prisons, beginning in Manchester on 11 June 1990 and ending in London on 31 October.^[60] In addition to the public inquiry, [Lord Woolf](#) and [Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons, Stephen Tumim](#), also sent letters to every prisoner and prison officer in the country.^[61] 1,300 prisoners and 430 prison officers responded, with many excerpts from the letters being appended to the finished report.^[61] The *Woolf Report* was published on 25 February 1991, and blamed the loss of control of the prison on the prison officers abandoning the gates outside the chapel, which "effectively handed the prison to the prisoners".^[17] Woolf described the conditions inside Strangeways in the months leading up to the riot as "intolerable", and viewed a "combination of errors" by staff and management at the prison and Prison Service as a central contributing factor to the riot.^[62] He also blamed the failure of successive governments to "provide the resources to the Prison Service which were needed to enable the Service to provide for an increased prison population in a humane manner".^[62] Woolf recommended major reform of the Prison Service, and made 12 key recommendations with 204 accompanying proposals.^[63] The key recommendations were:

1. Closer cooperation between the different parts of the Criminal Justice System. For this purpose a national forum and local committees should be established.
2. More visible leadership of the Prison Service by a Director General who is and is seen to be the operational head and in day to day charge of the Service. To achieve this there should be a published "compact" or "contract" given by Ministers to the Director General of the Prison Service, who should be responsible for the performance of that "contract" and publicly answerable for the day to day operations of the Prison Service.
3. Increased delegation of responsibility to Governors of establishments.
4. An enhanced role for prison officers.
5. A "compact" or "contract" for each prisoner setting out the prisoner's expectations and responsibilities in the prison in which he or she is held
6. A national system of Accredited Standards, with which, in time, each prison establishment would be required to comply.

7. A new Prison Rule that no establishment should hold more prisoners than is provided for its certified normal level of accommodation, with provisions for Parliament to be informed if exceptionally there is to be a material departure from that rule.
8. A public commitment from Ministers setting a timetable to provide access to sanitation for all inmates at the earliest practical date, not later than February 1996.
9. Better prospects for prisoners to maintain their links with families and the community through more visits and home leaves and through being located in community prisons as near to their homes as possible.
10. A division of prison establishments into small and more manageable and secure units.
11. A separate statement of purpose, separate conditions and generally a lower security categorisation for remand prisoners.
12. Improved standards of justice within prisons involving the giving of reasons to a prisoner for any decision which materially and adversely affects him; a grievance procedure and disciplinary proceedings which ensure that the Governor deals with most matters under his present powers; relieving Boards of Visitors of their adjudicatory role; and providing for final access to an independent Complaints Adjudicator.^[63]

The Guardian newspaper described the report as a blueprint for the restoration of "decency and justice into jails where conditions had become intolerable".^[64] Home Secretary Kenneth Baker welcomed the Woolf Report and pledged to end "slopping out" by 1994, and also accepted Woolf's recommendations for more visits, home leave and telephone calls.^[64] In contrast to his proposed reforms, Baker also proposed the introduction of a new offence of "prison mutiny" carrying a maximum sentence of ten years imprisonment, stating "The events of last April marked a watershed in the history of prison service. We cannot, and will not, tolerate the savagery and vandalism in our prisons that we saw then".^{[65][66]}

[] Prosecutions

The first prosecutions in relation to the riot began at Manchester [Crown Court](#) on 14 January 1992.^[67] The trial was conducted amid tight security, including armed police patrolling the area around the court, body searches for spectators and a specially constructed dock with sides made from [bulletproof glass](#).^[68] Nine men went on trial charged with riot under Section 1 of the [Public Order Act 1986](#), with six of them, including Paul Taylor and Alan Lord, also being charged with the [murder](#) of Derek White.^[67]

On the first day one prisoner pleaded [guilty](#) to charges of riot and conspiracy to riot, and was also acquitted of the murder charge.^[68] The other defendants were also acquitted of murder due to the unreliability of [eyewitness testimony](#) and the possibility that White had died from a pre-existing [thrombotic](#) condition.^[69] On 16 April, four defendants including Paul Taylor were convicted of rioting, and the remaining four including Alan Lord were acquitted.^[68]

Taylor received a ten-year sentence, the maximum sentence the [judge](#) had the power to impose.^[70] The sentences received by the other defendants ranged from four years to nine-and-a-half years imprisonment.^[70] By the end of the trial the total cost of the Strangeways riot, including refurbishing the prison and the costs of the police inquiry and court case, had reached £112 million.^[70]

The second trial began at the same court on 5 October 1992, and dealt with charges relating to the "battle for E wing" on 3 April 1990.^[70] There were fourteen defendants, including Alan Lord and another man who was acquitted in the first trial, both of whom were added to the list of defendants after their [acquittals](#).^[70] Two defendants pleaded guilty to [violent disorder](#) and

received four- and five-year sentences, which due to the two years they had spent on remand awaiting trial resulted in them being freed.^[70]

The remaining twelve defendants pleaded not guilty to conspiracy to commit **grievous bodily harm** with intent and conspiracy to riot.^[70] On 7 December 1992 David Bowen and Mark Azzopardi escaped from the prison van transferring them from **HM Prison Hull** to the court.^[71] Azzopardi was recaptured, before escaping from the court on 17 February 1993 along with five of the other defendants.^[71]

At the conclusion of the trial two defendants were acquitted and the remainder found guilty of conspiracy to commit grievous bodily harm with intent, the lesser charge of conspiracy to riot automatically being dropped when guilty verdicts were announced on the first charge.^[70] When passing sentence, the judge remarked "You had your period of arrogance and violence in front of the world, but now the price must be paid and paid by you".^[72] The defendants received sentences ranging from four years to ten years imprisonment, although only five defendants were in court to hear the verdict as six defendants were still on the run after escaping and another was being treated at **Ashworth Secure Hospital**.^[71]

Following the second trial, a further 26 defendants were still due to be tried on charges relating to the riot.^[72] The **Crown Prosecution Service** accepted **plea bargains** where defendants pleaded guilty to violent disorder in exchange for the dropping of other charges, or in some cases all charges were dropped completely.^[72] On 20 September 1993 the last remaining defendant to maintain a plea of not guilty went on trial, and he was convicted of conspiracy to commit grievous bodily harm and sentenced to thirty months imprisonment.^[72]

On 18 March 1994, six prisoners appeared in court on charges of escaping from custody during the second riot trial.^[72] Five of them pleaded guilty to escaping from custody on one occasion, and Mark Azzopardi pleaded guilty to escaping on two occasions.^[72] Each was sentenced to eighteen months imprisonment for escaping from Manchester Crown Court, and Azzopardi received an additional two-year sentence for escaping from the van transporting him from HM Prison Hull to the court.^[72] In July 1994, David Bowen was convicted of attempting to **pervert the course of justice** by attempting to influence the jury in the first riot trial, and was sentenced to three years imprisonment.^[72] Paul Taylor, who had already pleaded guilty to the same charge, also received a three-year sentence.^[72]

[] Aftermath



[HM Prison Manchester](#) in 2007

Strangeways was rebuilt and refurbished at a cost of £55 million, and was officially re-opened as HM Prison Manchester on 27 May 1994.^{[73][74]} The press were invited to view the new prison and talk to the prisoners by new governor [Derek Lewis](#).^[74] A prisoner told the visiting journalists:

The better conditions in here are not down to the prison department. But for the riot, we would still be in the same old jail banged up all day and slopping out ... The rioters brought this about. These conditions ... should not have cost the lives of a prisoner, a prison officer and two huge court trials. They should have done it years ago but it took a riot to get them to do it.^[74]

"[Slopping out](#)" was abolished in England and Wales by 1996, and was scheduled to be abolished in Scotland by 1999.^[75] Due to budget restraints the abolishment was delayed, and by 2004 prisoners in five of Scotland's sixteen prisons still had to "slop out".^[75] "Slopping out" ended in [HM Young Offenders Institution Polmont](#) in 2007, leaving [HM Prison Peterhead](#) as the last prison where prisoners do not have access to proper sanitation, as 300 prisoners are forced to use [chemical toilets](#) due to the difficulty of installing modern plumbing in the prison's granite structure.^{[76][77]}

Notes and references

- ¹ ^ Jameson & Allison, p. 11.
- ² ^ [a b c d e f](#) Carrabine, p. 128.
- ³ ^ Rule 43(a) is for the segregation of prisoners who choose to be isolated for their own protection such as sex offenders, informers, or former police and prison officers, who are all at risk of being attacked by other prisoners.
- ⁴ ^ [a b](#) Jameson & Allison, p. 72.
- ⁵ ^ Carrabine, p. 151.
- ⁶ ^ Carrabine, p. 135.
- ⁷ ^ Category A prisoners are those whose escape would be highly dangerous to the public or national security.
- ⁸ ^ Jameson & Allison, p. 35.
- ⁹ ^ [a b c d e f g h i j](#) Jameson & Allison, p. 29–32.
- ¹⁰ ^ Carrabine, p. 138.
- ¹¹ ^ [a b c](#) Jameson & Allison, p. 21.
- ¹² ^ [a b c](#) Carrabine, p. 145.
- ¹³ ^ Carrabine, p. 144.
- ¹⁴ ^ Carrabine, p. 147.
- ¹⁵ ^ [a b c](#) Jameson & Allison, pp. 18–19.
- ¹⁶ ^ [a b c d e f](#) Carrabine, p. 148.
- ¹⁷ ^ [a b c d e](#) Carrabine, p. 152–153.
- ¹⁸ ^ [a b c d](#) Carrabine, pp. 149–150.
- ¹⁹ ^ Carrabine, p. 154.
- ²⁰ ^ [a b](#) Carrabine, p. 155.
- ²¹ ^ [a b](#) Carrabine, p. 158.
- ²² ^ [a b](#) Jameson & Allison, pp. 46–47.
- ²³ ^ Carrabine, p. 156.
- ²⁴ ^ [a b c d](#) Carrabine, p. 157.
- ²⁵ ^ [a b](#) Jameson & Allison, p. 22.
- ²⁶ ^ [a b](#) Jameson & Allison, p. 27.
- ²⁷ ^ Carrabine, p. 160.
- ²⁸ ^ [a b c d e](#) Carrabine, p. 161.
- ²⁹ ^ Jameson & Allison, p. 25.

30. ^ Jameson & Allison, p. 24.
31. ^ [a b c d e](#) Jameson & Allison, p. 38.
32. ^ [a b](#) Jameson & Allison, p. 39.
33. ^ Carrabine, p. 162.
34. ^ [a b c d e f g h](#) Jameson & Allison, pp. 40–41.
35. ^ Jameson & Allison, p. 43.
36. ^ [a b](#) Jameson & Allison, p. 45.
37. ^ [a b](#) Jameson & Allison, p. 48.
38. ^ [a b c d e](#) Jameson & Allison, p. 49–50.
39. ^ [a b](#) Carrabine, p. 169.
40. ^ Carrabine, p. 164.
41. ^ [a b](#) Jameson & Allison, p. 51.
42. ^ [a b](#) Carrabine, p. 170.
43. ^ Jameson & Allison, p. 111.
44. ^ Jameson & Allison, p. 116.
45. ^ [a b](#) Jameson & Allison, p. 53.
46. ^ Jameson & Allison, p. 54.
47. ^ [a b](#) Jameson & Allison, p. 57.
48. ^ [a b c](#) Jameson & Allison, p. 58.
49. ^ [a b](#) Jameson & Allison, pp. 62–63.
50. ^ [a b c d](#) Jameson & Allison, pp. 66–67.
51. ^ [a b c](#) Jameson & Allison, p. 68.
52. ^ Player & Jenkins, p. 2.
53. ^ [a b c](#) Jameson & Allison, pp. 92–93.
54. ^ Jameson & Allison, pp. 94–95.
55. ^ [a b c](#) Jameson & Allison, pp. 96–97.
56. ^ [a b c d e](#) Jameson & Allison, pp. 98–99.
57. ^ Jameson & Allison, p. 100.
58. ^ [a b c d e](#) Jameson & Allison, pp. 104–105.
59. ^ [a b c](#) Jameson & Allison, pp. 107–108.
60. ^ Jameson & Allison, p. 184.
61. ^ [a b c](#) Jameson & Allison, p. 138.
62. ^ [a b](#) Carrabine, p. 127.
63. ^ [a b](#) Player & Jenkins, pp. 8–9.
64. ^ Jameson & Allison, p. 142.
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66. ^ Jameson & Allison, p. 144.
67. ^ [a b](#) Jameson & Allison, p. 145.
68. ^ [a b c](#) Jameson & Allison, p. 146.
69. ^ Jameson & Allison, p. 147.
70. ^ [a b c d e f g h](#) Jameson & Allison, p. 149.
71. ^ [a b c](#) Jameson & Allison, p. 152.
72. ^ [a b c d e f g h i](#) Jameson & Allison, pp. 153–4.
73. ^ ["1990: Rioting inmates take over Strangeways"](#). BBC. 1 April 1990. Archived from the original on 8 April 2008. Retrieved 2008-04-03.
74. ^ [a b c](#) Jameson & Allison, pp. 14–15.
75. ^ [a b](#) Shirley English (27 April 2004). ["A daily ritual for one fifth of Scots inmates"](#). London: *The Times*. Retrieved 2008-04-03.
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Inside Strangeways: Brutal reality of life inside notorious jail

TERRIFYING weapons made of razor blades and boiling oil by inmates who spend their days high on drugs.



Strangeways Prison (pic: Andy Stenning)

TERRIFYING weapons made of razor blades and boiling oil by inmates who spend their days high on drugs.

This is the reality of life inside Strangeways, one of Britain's most notorious jails.

Governor Richard Vince, strolling through C-Wing, seems relaxed as hardened cons give him the eyeball. But the former soldier knows danger lurks around every corner.

“Attacks on staff are always a risk,” the 6ft 3in 41-year-old tells the Mirror.

“Prisoners make weapons called shivs. We find some very unpleasant things concealed in cells, so you have to be wary, things such as two razor blades melted into a toothbrush.

“It's designed to open up the skin so it can't be stitched back.”



Ryan Parry with Richard Vince governor of Strangeways prison (pic: Andy Stenning)

We're at the heart of HMP Manchester – Britain's largest maximum security prison.

The jail – more commonly known as Strangeways – is packed with murderers, rapists, bank robbers, gang leaders and terrorists.

Tonight a fly-on-the-wall ITV documentary will show the reality of life behind its bars.



Prison Fight - Strangeways Prison Documentary (pic: ITV)

Governor Vince gave permission to film inside the Grade II-listed Victorian jail for nine months and the three-part series features harrowing scenes of violence, self-harm and serious mental health issues.

Strangeways holds 1,200 inmates, 200 of whom are lifers, and killer Michael Sharp is one prisoner you don't want to cross.

The bodybuilder, 27, boasts of how he fought off 16 inmates during one attack.



Michael

Sharp (pic: ITV)

He says: “There’s no light at the end of the tunnel, so there’s a lot of stabbings, a lot of slashings, people boiling up tubs of butter, turning it into oil, throwing that over the faces, over the body, they don’t care what they do. They don’t care if they stab someone up, don’t care if they slash people up.”

Governor Vince, who worked at several jails before taking over at Strangeways in 2008, showed us round the 63-acre complex. On a wall in the staff room is a chilling display of some of the deadly weapons found in cell searches or hidden on inmates.

The shivs are made out of toothbrush handles studded with razors, sharpened pens, metal or glass.

One prisoner was even found with a home-made crossbow, crafted from razor handles, pens and an elastic band.

Drugs are a huge issue, too, and 60-70% of new arrivals have some kind of problem. The documentary shows one prisoner as he’s taken to hospital in an ambulance after a drugs overdose. It’s the second time he has tried to kill himself.

There is also footage of a blood-spattered wall and floor next to a remand prisoner who regularly self-harms.

Sharp, serving life for his part in the murder of a car dealer, claims that if he did not have access to drugs he'd commit suicide.

He says: "I'm not doing this sentence straight-headed, it's as simple as that. I take as many drugs as I can get my hands on. Heroin, cannabis, prison hooch. I'll take anything to give me a head change. God's honest truth, I don't think I'd last 10 years straight-headed. I'd probably top myself."

Governor Vince says drugs are still being smuggled in despite major security crackdowns. "We have 25,000 people coming through every year," he explains. "We have a machine to detect mobile phones or other devices concealed on a person. But drugs are harder to find, especially when a prisoner plugs them inside a body cavity."

Prisoners arrive daily at Strangeways under armed guard in bomb-proof vans. And some cons are so dangerous they have to be kept inside a prison within a prison.

Governor Vince says: "We have people in custody who have murdered in custody – they require the highest levels of security to make sure not only that they don't escape, but their influence outside the prison and within the prison is safely managed."

CCTV clips of violent incidents from this year show how dangerous the prison is.

In one, two inmates battle ferociously with pool cues. Then we hear the story of a prison officer attacked with a chair leg to the back of his head. Another officer is bitten on the hand as he tries to control an inmate.

French national Max Brice, who had earlier tried to poke his own eyes out, was moved to segregation. "If force is necessary we are very prepared," explains Governor Vince. "There have been 14 serious assaults at HMP Manchester in the past year and that covers prisoner-on-prisoner and prisoner-on-staff.

"But there are a lot more attacks, the majority of which are stopped before they start, and that's credit to the staff."

The documentary also has a lighter side as it shows armed robber Adrian Fielding marrying Kelly Hansen, dressed in a pink bridal gown, in the conference room.

Dad-of-four Fielding, 24, says: "Most people head to the pub after getting married but I'm going back to my cell."

Governor Vince says the documentary has made him look at his staff in a different light. He explains: "When I walk on the wing I see the Sunday best. Watching the film was almost voyeuristic, seeing the staff doing their day-to-day work. I knew they were good but this is quality. I'm very proud of the staff."

Governor Vince is clearly a popular figure. As we leave, a male officer shouts: "Carlsberg don't make governors but if they did..."

- Strangeways begins on ITV1 at 9pm tonight.

A day in Strangeways

7.30am: Prisoners unlocked (already having eaten breakfast pack handed out night before)

8.00am: To morning activities (workshops, education, visits, gym)

11.30am: Return to cells

12.00pm: Served lunch and locked in cells

1.45pm: To afternoon activities (workshops, education, visits, gym)

4.30pm: Return to cells

5.45pm: Evening meal served

6.45pm: Evening association

8pm: Prisoners locked down

Check out all the latest News, Sport & Celeb gossip at [Mirror.co.uk](http://www.mirror.co.uk)

<http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/inside-strangeways-brutal-reality-of-life-127419#ixzz2SRYDXDlN>

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Roof Protest (Strangeways Prisoners, 1990)

2011

Series of eleven re-photographs, dimensions variable, from The Guardian newspaper, SocietyGuardian, Wednesday 31.03.10, original photograph by Don McPhee.

In 1990 prisoners at Strangeways Prison in Manchester began a riot as a protest to the prison conditions. The riot began when prisoners took control of the prison chapel, and it quickly

spread throughout most of the prison. The riot and rooftop protest ended 25 days later when the final five prisoners were removed from the rooftop, making it the longest prison riot in British penal history.

“AF: I find this a compelling image because of the conflicting things that are happening in it – the prisoners have broken free from their cells, a riot has taken place and they have reclaimed their space but they are totally marooned on the roof and can go nowhere else, except down on the ground and so surrendering themselves.

*In that way the image, and perhaps the whole situation of the Strangeways prison riot, acts as a gesture of freedom, rather than a real try at escape. And I’m interested in this idea being reflected in the image, specifically shown by the individual hand gestures that the men on the roof are making [...] Those hand gestures that the prisoners make are totally unconscious, they are not acting, but it is the position of being in this ‘almost freedom’ that creates their ability to perform as free men.” ***

** Quote from a conversation between Amy Feneck and Caterina Riva in relation to the original photograph of the rioters on the roof. The full conversation will be printed as part of an artists project in January’s edition of art magazine Cura <http://www.curamagazine.com/en/>



Original photograph by Don McPhee

Image from The Guardian newspaper

Strangeways Prison Riot

underclassrising.net | 04.03.2010 15:23 | [Sheffield](#)

– 20 YEARS ON BUT ALAN LORD STILL IN GAOL

Coming the Day after the Poll Tax riot the Strangeways mutineers provided some of the most memorable images of revolt of the time. The fire brigade were asked to train their hoses on the

mutineers but repeated intervention from Ken Keating's Ordsall Class Warriors – cutting of hoses and a robust presence outside the prison walls – prevented this becoming a regular event. ALAN LORD was scapegoated as one of the leaders of the mutiny and is still in prison today – 20 years after the riot. Alan has dramatically escaped once but recaptured. Surely we must use the 20th anniversary to build a campaign for his release as he is now one of the longest serving prisoners in the country and sadly forgotten by us all. FREE ALAN LORD!

H.M.P Manchester formerly known as Strangeways was the scene of the worst ever prison riot in mainland Britain. The riot started on the 1st of April 1990 and lasted for 25 days. 147 prison officers and 47 prisoners were injured. Much of the prison was badly damaged or destroyed, the staggering cost of rebuilding coming to £55 million.

Strangeways prison was built in 1868 to replace the New Bailey Prison in Salford. The new prison had a capacity to hold 953 men. On the eve of the riot the total number of inmates was 1647. Tension was rising high amongst the inmates in Strangeways prison. Complaints about prison food, overcrowding and staff brutality were amongst the mens many grievances. Strangeways is a category b prison, and grade 2 listed building. The prison walls are said to be 16 feet thick. It's 234 feet high tower dominates the Manchester skyline and served as a grim reminder to potential law breakers. The prison was built on the grounds of Strangeways Park and Gardens, which gave the prison its original name.

Strangeways was also a place of execution, the last hanging to take place there was in 1964. Originally the prison contained an execution shed in B wing. During the second world war a special execution room and condemned cell were built. The quickest recorded hanging took place in Strangeways, Albert Pierrepoint executed James Inglis in only seven and a half seconds, from being led out of his cell until the trapdoor opened to send him on his fatal drop. In total exactly 100 people were hung at Strangeways.

The prison consists of two main buildings. Six wings (A, B, C, D, E, F) lead from a central rotunda in the biggest block. Wings (G, H, I, K) are in the second smaller block. Strangeways is a typical Victorian design with wings leading from a central hub. This layout was considered the easiest to supervise with all wings easily visible from one vantage point. The design of Strangeways is called "Panoptican" Panoptican means that the cells circulate around the central warders blocks. Inmates have clear site of their nemesis at all times.

It doesn't seem like it was nearly 20 years since the Strangeways riot erupted. I recall clearly seeing those images of prisoners wearing balaclava's, hurling slates from the roof, set fire to and systematically destroy the prison. Disturbing and sinister images of mock hangings on the rooftops, images of prisoners wearing nooses around there necks were beamed around the nation. The orgy of violence and destruction was on an unprecedented scale. The governor of the jail at the time Brendan O'friel called it an 'explosion of evil' Such scenes left a lasting impression not easily forgotten!

Prison officers had advance warning that an incident might occur in the chapel that morning, security was increased as a precautionary measure. 175 prison officers were on duty that day,

extra officers were used to escort prisoners to the church service, fourteen officers were inside the chapel instead of the usual eight. An additional seven officers were also stationed in the vestry outside the chapel. The service was attended by 309 prisoners which was about the usual attendance. Segregated rule 43(a) prisoners were prevented from attending as a precautionary measure.

A senior prison officer believed the prisoners might attempt a sit-down protest with the possibility of taking an officer hostage, he instructed staff to evacuate the chapel if trouble began. At approximately 11:00 am, a visiting preacher had just delivered the sermon when prisoner Paul Taylor ran down the aisle and grabbed the microphone.

Taylor began his speech which was to start Britain's worst ever prison riot. He started his speech, I would like to say, right, that this man has just talked about the blessing of the heart and a hardened heart can be delivered. No it cannot, not with resentment, anger and bitterness and hatred being instilled in people. The other prisoners started to whistle, stamp their feet and cheer Taylor on. Reverend Noel Proctor tried to restore calm by saying 'Right lads, calm down. Come on, this is no way to carry on in God's house. As the Reverend was appealing for calm, a prisoner brandishing two sticks shouted out "You've heard enough, let's do it, get the bastards" And then the riot started.

The prisoners donned masks and brandished improvised weapons, prison officers were attacked with fire extinguishers, table legs and fire buckets. Three prison officers started to retreat from the chapel when a set of keys was taken from them. A number of prisoners attempted to leave the chapel via the vestry, at the same time the seven prison officers there attempted to gain entry to the chapel. Once they managed to do so, the officers were attacked by prisoners, and a second set of keys was taken. Some prisoners helped to get the injured officers and Reverend Proctor to a place of safety via the vestry, other prisoners barricaded the entrances to the chapel.

The prison officers guarding the gates outside the chapel, abandoned them and ran towards the Central rotunda. The prison officer in charge of the Centre saw his colleagues running from the direction of the chapel, but due to the presence of scaffolding he was in a poor position to view the upper levels. He mistakenly assumed he saw prisoners running from the chapel. Upon hearing that prisoners were in possession of keys, he told the officers that they should evacuate the prison. Governor Morrison, who was responsible for the main prison at the time, did not intervene with these instructions.

By this time prisoners had gained access to the roofs of E and F wings, from there they gained access to other wings by making holes in unprotected office ceilings. The prisoners found A and B wings unsupervised as the prison officers had already evacuated, they began to free other prisoners who were still locked in their cells.

Rioting prisoners also gained access to E wing, where the Rule 43(a) prisoners had been left locked in their cells after the prison officers evacuated. A number of these Rule 43(a) prisoners were attacked by rioting prisoners. One such prisoner was Derek White, who was being held on remand. He later died in North Manchester general hospital after being admitted suffering from

chest and head wounds. Fires were started around the prison including H-block which includes the postal section. Only a small number of firemen went in at one time. They were protected by police in riot gear from the missiles been hurled down from the roofs. Inmates wore peaked hats and shirts taken from prison officers. A dummy prison officer was dangled on a rope from a gable of the chapel. Prisoners, many wearing scarves across their faces, almost completely stripped roofs of slates and chimney pots, which they threw into the compounds at officers below.

Part of the Strangeways mythology is that the prisoners fought a running battle with staff to gain control of the jail. The truth is, the prison officers were easily ejected from the chapel. The rioters then began to erect barricades to prevent staff from re-taking it. They expected a full assault by control and restraint teams that would be assembled from Strangeways and surrounding prisons.

One prisoner entered the roof space of the chapel to observe operations. To his astonishment, he saw that prison officers had evacuated the jail. The barricades were quickly taken down. The prisoners began to liberate the remaining hundreds of prisoners contained within Strangeways. The subsequent inquiry into the disturbance concluded that staff should not have abandoned the jail with such haste.

Inmates also fought amongst themselves. Old scores were settled, punishment beatings were meted out. Rioters broke into the prison hospital and helped themselves to drugs. One prisoner said he saw people running around in balaclava's high as kites smashing peoples heads in. Between 2:00 pm and 5:00 pm approximately 800 prisoners had surrendered, arrangements were made for them to be transferred to other prisons. At 8:00 pm approximately ten Control & Restraint units each consisting of twelve prison officers entered E wing. By 8:10 pm all four landings of E wing had been secured, one C&R unit progressed to the Centre where they fought with rioting prisoners. Scaffolding poles and other missiles were thrown down at the C&R teams from the roof area above the fourth landing in E wing. The prisoners broke onto the wing and the C&R teams withdrew at 0:22 am. This was latter to become known as 'The battle of E wing' rioters held up a banner on the roof proclaiming 'E wing held well' to taunt the locked out officers below. On the 2nd of April the prisoners were still in control of the wing. Up to 1,100 of the 1,647 prisoners were involved in the rioting, and by the end of the first day 700 had surrendered and been transferred to other prisons along with 400 prisoners who were not involved in the rioting. Between 200 and 350 prisoners occupied the rooftop of the main prison during the first night.

At 7:00 am on 2 April, an estimated total of 142 prisoners were still in control of all the accommodation wings of the prison. Prisoners on the roof gave victory salutes to the crowd watching below. Some prisoners were wearing prison officers hats and uniforms, others were wearing masks improvised from towels and blankets. A banner was unveiled that read "No dead", in response to claims in the media that between eleven and twenty prisoners had been killed in the rioting.

The segregated design of prisons meant to keep prisoners in, was now keeping the prison

officers out. There were few ways to the upper floors and roof areas. Heavy barricades had been erected on the stairwells to keep the C&R teams at bay. Scaffold poles from building work inside the jail rained down on any officers attempting to confront the men. There were lurid stories in the press at the time about Kangaroo courts, castration of sex offenders, bodies been cut up and pushed down drains. All of which were later found to be untrue.

On the second day of the riot there was a large number of control and restraint officers ready to try recapture the jail. A full scale assault was overuled at the last minute. The fear of officer casualties and even fatalaties was too high. One officer who entered the jail on the second day described what he saw. It was a very frightening and dangerous place to be. There were walls and doors knocked down, everything that was in the cells had been smashed and thrown from the landings, litter and debris scattered everywhere, it was like a bomb had hit it. You had the noise of the prisoners screaming above you. It was full on in your face frightening stuff. A Home Office statement was released at 11:45 am stating that no bodies had been found in the prison, 12 prison officers and 37 prisoners had received hospital treatment.

It was decided it was too dangerous to try retake the prison by force in the first few days. New tactics were designed to try weaken the resolve of the prisoners. Loud music was played to prevent them from sleeping, the Police helicopter hovered the prison, lights were shone at the roof, prison officers banged on riot shields and shouted at the prisoners to try intimidate them. The rooftop protest was watched daily by crowds of onlookers and supporters outside the prison. Various political action groups also attended in support of the prisoners, these including anarchist groups. Local businesses were calling for an end to the riot due to the disruption caused, including the closure of roads around the prison. Greater Manchester police asked for £2 million to cover the costs of policing the riot. G.M.P described it as the “most savage incident of its kind ever experienced within the British prison service. Conditions inside the jail were appalling, rats were to be seen in the prison yard, the remaining food was going off, the prisoners had been drenched with water cannons . They had been blasted with noise and light, buzzed with helicopters. They were tormented by truncheon beating prison officers during the night and they still refused to surrender.

Control and restraint teams were first seen on the roof of Strangeways on the 25th morning of the siege. Prison officers entered the prison early in the morning and gradually began to occupy the upper landings. At 10:20 am one of the remaining prisoners was captured leaving five prisoners remaining on the roof. When prison officers reached the roof they put up a sign saying “HMP in charge—no visits “Prison officers spent the day trying to talk the men into ending there protest. Water cannons were used on the prisoners to confine them to a small roof area of the prison.

Just after 6 p.m the remaining five men surrendered and were lowered from the roof in a Cherry picker.They gave clenched fist victory salutes to the press and public as they descended. During the course of the 25-day riot, 147 prison officers and 47 prisoners had been injured. The first prosecutions in relation to the riot began at Manchester crown court on the 14th January 1992. The trial was conducted amid tight security. Armed police patrolled the area and a specially constructed dock with bullet proof glass was made. Nine men went on trial charged with riot

under Section 1 of the public order act 1986, six of them being charged with the murder of Derek White. All the defendants were acquitted of murder due to the unreliability of eyewitness testimony and the possibility that White had died from a pre-existing condition.

The second trial began at the same court on 5 October 1992. This trial dealt with charges relating to the “battle for E wing” on 3 April 1990. Fourteen defendants stood trial. The defendants received sentences ranging from four years to ten years imprisonment on top of their original sentences. All but one prisoner serving a life sentence has now been freed. The Strangeways riot spread to 20 other prisons throughout the UK that year.

Strangeways was rebuilt and refurbished at a cost of £55 million. It was officially re-opened as HM Prison Manchester on 27 May 1994. A five-month public inquiry was held into the disturbances at Strangeways and other prisons. The Woolf report blamed the loss of control of the prison on the prison officers abandoning the gates outside the chapel, this effectively handed the prison to the prisoners he said.

The press were invited to view the new prison and talk to the prisoners by new governor of Strangeways. A prisoner told the visiting journalists. ‘The better conditions in here are not down to the prison department. But for the riot, we would still be in the same old jail banged up all day and slopping out . The rioters brought this about. These conditions, should not have cost the lives of a prisoner, a prison officer and two huge court trials. They should have done it years ago but it took a riot to get them to do it’

“Slopping out” was abolished in England and Wales by 1996, and was scheduled to be abolished in Scotland by 1999. During prison rebuilding work in 1991, the remains of 63 executed prisoners were exhumed from unmarked graves in the prison cemetery and cremated at Blackley Crematorium in Manchester.

underclassrising.net

1990 Strangeways Prison riot



Prisoners protesting on the badly damaged roof of the prison. Paul Taylor is in the centre with his arms outstretched.

The **1990 Strangeways Prison riot** was a 25-day [prison riot](#) and rooftop protest at [Strangeways Prison](#) in [Manchester](#), England. The riot began on 1 April 1990 when prisoners took control of the prison [chapel](#), and the riot quickly spread throughout most of the prison. The riot and rooftop protest ended on 25 April when the final five prisoners were removed from the rooftop, making it the longest prison riot in British penal history. One prisoner was killed during the riot, and 147 prison officers and 47 prisoners were injured. Much of the prison was damaged or destroyed with the cost of repairs coming to £55 million.

The riot sparked a series of disturbances in prisons across England, Scotland and [Wales](#), resulting in the [British government](#) announcing a [public inquiry](#) into the riots headed by [Lord Woolf](#). The resulting *Woolf Report* concluded that conditions in the prison had been intolerable, and recommended major reform of the prison system. *The Guardian* newspaper described the report as a blueprint for the restoration of "decency and justice into jails where conditions had become intolerable".

Background

[Manchester's Strangeways Prison](#), which opened in 1868, was a "local prison" designed to hold prisoners from the surrounding area, mainly those on [remand](#) or serving [sentences](#) of less than five years.^{[1][2]} At the time of the riot, the main prison consisted of six wings connected by a central [rotunda](#) known as the Centre.^[2] Convicted adult prisoners were held in wings A, B, C and D, and convicted [young offenders](#) were held in E wing, which was physically separated from the Centre by gates.^[2] Convicted prisoners on Rule 43(a) were held on landings C1 and C2 of C wing, and remand prisoners on Rule 43(a)^[3] were held on the fourth landing on E wing.^[2] F wing contained administrative offices on the lower floor and the chapel on the upper floor.^[2] Remand prisoners were held in wings G, H, I and K of a separate prison, linked to the main prison through workshops and a kitchen.^[2] The Certified Normal Accommodation Figure for Strangeways, the number of prisoners the prison was designed to hold, was 970.^[4] The population of the prison had increased in the months before the riot, from 1,417 in January 1990 to a peak of 1,658 on 27 March.^[5] On 1 April, the prison contained 1,647 prisoners – about 925 convicted adult prisoners, 500 remand prisoners and 210 convicted young offenders.^[4]

Prisoners felt their complaints about conditions were being ignored.^[6] Remand prisoners were only allowed out of their cells for 18 hours per week, and Category A prisoners^[7] were locked in their cells for 22 hours a day, and rarely left their cells except for "[slopping out](#)", a one-hour exercise period each day or a weekly shower.^[8] In March 1990, [Dominic Noonan](#) was transferred from Strangeways to [HM Prison Hull](#).^[9] Noonan was the organiser of the Prisoners' League Association (PLA), an organisation formed in 1989 which campaigned for prisoners' rights.^[9] Its aims included initiating legal proceedings against prison staff for mistreatment of prisoners, and picketing outside prisons in which prisoners were mistreated.^[9] The PLA were active at Strangeways Prison, and Noonan's transfer demonstrates prison officers were aware of rising tensions inside the prison.^[9] On 26 March, Barry Morton was taken to the "[punishment block](#)" and [strip-searched](#) after being visited by his mother, as prison officers believed she had brought drugs into the prison for him.^[9] During a struggle he sustained a black eye and swollen nose, and the following day he was released back into the main prison along with another prisoner, Tony Bush.^[9] Later the same day, Bush and Morton climbed onto the roof of the prison and staged a twenty-hour rooftop protest.^{[9][10]} On 31 March there was a 30-minute [sit-down protest](#) in the chapel after a film was shown, which ended after a [prison officer](#) promised to listen to the

prisoners' grievances.^[9] The same evening it is reported that a black prisoner was assaulted by prison officers in front of other prisoners, and injected with [Largactil](#) – a [sedative](#) used to control prisoners, known in prisons as the "liquid cosh".^[9] Prisoners then decided to stage a further protest in the chapel the following day, 1 April.^[9]

[] The riot

[] Disturbance in the chapel

Prison officers had advance warning that an incident would occur in the chapel on 1 April, and security was increased.^[11] Extra prison officers were used to escort prisoners to the service, and fourteen officers were inside the chapel supervising the service instead of the usual total of eight.^{[11][12]} An additional seven officers were also stationed in the [vestry](#) outside the chapel.^[12] The service was attended by 309 prisoners which was about the usual attendance, but all Rule 43(a) prisoners were prevented from attending as a precautionary measure.^{[11][12]} A senior prison officer believed the prisoners would attempt another sit-down protest with the possibility of [hostage](#)-taking, and instructed staff to evacuate the chapel if trouble began.^[13] At approximately 11:00 am, a visiting [Church of England](#) preacher had just delivered the [sermon](#), and the prison chaplain, Reverend Noel Proctor, stood to thank the preacher when prisoner Paul Taylor took the microphone from him and addressed the congregation.^[14] Reverend Proctor was recording the service for distribution to a [prayer group](#), and the subsequent events were recorded:^[15]

Noel Proctor: After that remarkable message that has...

Paul Taylor: I would like to say, right, that this man has just talked about blessing of the heart and a hardened heart can be delivered. No it cannot, not with resentment, anger and bitterness and hatred being instilled in people.

[General noise, over which]

A prisoner: Fuck your system, fuck your rules.

[Applause]

Noel Proctor: Right lads, sit down.

[More noise]

Noel Proctor: Right lads, down. Down. Come on, this is no way to carry on in God's house.

[More noise]

A prisoner: Fuck your system.

[More noise]

Noel Proctor: Right lads, sit down. This is completely out of order. Sit down.

A prisoner: Why is it? It's been waiting to happen for ever. It will never change.

Noel Proctor: Come on. This is terrible.

[More noise, banging, shouting, cheering]

Noel Proctor: All of you who want to go back to your cells go the back of the church please.

A prisoner: What? You're a fucking hypocrite, you.

Noel Proctor: I'm trying to help you, to keep you.

A prisoner: Leave it, mate.

[More noise until microphone goes dead]^[15]

As Reverend Proctor was appealing for calm, a prisoner brandishing two sticks shouted out "You've heard enough, let's do it, get the bastards".^[16] Other prisoners responded by donning masks and brandishing weapons, and three prison officers started to leave the chapel as earlier instructed.^[16] A set of keys was taken from a prison officer when a number of officers were attacked by prisoners wielding [fire extinguishers](#), table legs and fire buckets.^[16] A number of prisoners attempted to leave the chapel via the vestry; at the same time, the seven prison officers there attempted to gain entry to the chapel.^[16] Once they managed to do so, the officers were attacked by prisoners, and a second set of keys was taken from one of them.^[16] Some prisoners helped to get injured officers and Reverend Proctor to a place of safety via the vestry,^{[15][16]} while others barricaded entrances to the chapel or attempted to gain access to the roof.^[17]

[] The riot spreads



Damage caused to B wing of the prison

The prison officers guarding the gates outside the chapel abandoned them, and ran towards the Centre.^[17] The prison officer in charge of the Centre saw his colleagues running from the direction of the chapel, but due to the presence of [scaffolding](#) he was in a poor position to view the upper levels, and mistakenly assumed he saw prisoners running from the chapel.^[18] He informed other officers on C1 and D1 of this and, upon hearing that prisoners were in possession of keys, told them and officers on A1 that they should [evacuate](#) the prison.^[18] Governor Morrison, who was responsible for the main prison, was present and did not intervene with these instructions.^[18] Morrison then ordered officers to evacuate the Centre at 11:13 am as he mistakenly believed prisoners had entered the Centre.^[18] By this time prisoners had gained

access to the roofs of E and F wings, and from there gained access to other wings by making holes in unprotected office ceilings.^[17]

The prisoners found A and B wings unsupervised as the prison officers had already evacuated, and began to free other prisoners who were still locked in their cells.^[17] The prison officer in charge of the first landing of C wing was ordered to evacuate, and with the help of three other officers evacuated the 73 Rule 43(a) prisoners being held there, being fearful for the safety of the prisoners who were regarded as [sex offenders](#).^[19] Due to rioting prisoners entering the wing, the officers were unable to evacuate a further seven Rule 43(a) prisoners who were being held on the second landing.^[20] Rioting prisoners also gained access to E wing, where the Rule 43(a) prisoners had been left locked in their cells after the prison officers evacuated.^[20] A number of these Rule 43(a) prisoners were attacked by rioting prisoners.^{[21][22]} One such prisoner was Derek White, who was being held on remand on charges of [indecent assault](#) and [buggery](#). White later died in [North Manchester General Hospital](#) on 3 April after being admitted suffering from head wounds, a [dislocated](#) shoulder and [chest pains](#).^[22]

At 11:43 am rioting prisoners were seen approaching the remand prison, which was still secure.^[23] The prison governor, Brendan O'Friel, arrived at the prison at 11:55 am and gave orders to defend the remand prison.^[24] He later recalled that:

By 12 o'clock when I came in it looked as if we'd lost control of the whole thing. My first decision was to send a Governor 5 back up to the remand prison to see if we could hold it, but it was too late. That decision, had it been taken half an hour earlier, would have meant we could have held the remand prison, meaning we could have kept another 400 locked up. Assuming the doors would have held, that sort of thing. But we had about 200 staff on duty, and we must have lost nine or ten casualties of one sort or another and then you lose staff getting the casualties out. We didn't have a lot of the staff come pouring in until about 1 o'clock. I tell you what really bugged us was there an element of April Fool about it. We rang staff up about it, who said "You must be joking, is this an April Fool?" That's what happened when they rang up my home, my son thought it was an April Fool.^[24]

Rioting prisoners gained access to the remand prison at 12:20 pm through the kitchens in G wing, and began freeing prisoners who were still locked in their cells using stolen keys or improvised tools such as iron bars and fire extinguishers.^{[24][25]} At this point the rioting prisoners were in control of all accommodation wings of the prison.^[21] A large number of prisoners were on the prison roof, and [roof tiles](#) and other missiles were thrown at prison officers on the ground.^{[24][25]} Rioting inside the prison continued with cells being damaged and fires being started, and at 3:40 pm the Public Relations Department of the [Home Office](#) issued a statement:^[26]

At 11 am a disturbance started in the chapel at Strangeways Prison when some 300 prisoners attacked staff. Those prisoners then gained access to the chapel roof and then broke into the living accommodation in the main prison. Other prisoners, including those on remand, joined in the disturbance and staff had to be withdrawn. The perimeter is secure.^[26]

Between 2:00 pm and 5:00 pm approximately 800 prisoners had surrendered, and arrangements were made for them to be transferred to other prisons.^[27] At 8:00 pm Governor O'Friel agreed that prison officers should enter E wing, and at 8:05 pm approximately ten Control & Restraint (C&R) units each consisting of twelve prison officers entered the wing.^[28] By 8:10 pm all four landings of E wing had been secured, and one C&R unit progressed to the Centre where they fought with rioting prisoners.^[28] This was reported to Governor O'Friel, who

instructed the officers not to move beyond E wing.^[28] Scaffolding poles and other missiles were thrown at the C&R teams from the roof area above the fourth landing in E wing, and when prisoners broke onto the wing the C&R teams withdrew at 0:22 am on 2 April, leaving prisoners in control of the wing.^[28] Up to 1,100 of the 1,647 prisoners were involved in the rioting, and by the end of the first day 700 had surrendered and been transferred to other prisons along with 400 prisoners who were not involved in the rioting.^[29] Between 200 and 350 prisoners occupied the rooftop of the main prison during the night.^[30]

[] Rooftop protest

At 7:00 am on 2 April, an estimated total of 142 prisoners were still in control of all the accommodation wings of the prison.^[28] Some prisoners on the roof gave [clenched fist salutes](#) to the crowd watching below.^[31] Some prisoners were wearing prison officers' hats and uniforms, while others were wearing masks improvised from towels and blankets.^[31] A banner was unveiled that read "No dead", in response to claims in the press that between eleven and twenty prisoners had been killed in the rioting.^[31] At 10:00 am, C&R units entered the remand prison and regained control, with six prisoners surrendering peacefully.^{[32][33]} A Home Office statement was released at 11:45 am stating that no bodies had been found in the remand prison, and 12 prison officers and 37 prisoners had received treatment in hospital to date.^[32] Further prisoners surrendered the same day, and by 6:00 pm 114 prisoners remained in the prison.^[34] On 3 April newspapers published pictures of the prisoners' "No dead" banner, while still insisting that 20 prisoners had been killed.^[34] The prisoners responded with a banner that read "Media contact now".^[34] The [Manchester Evening News](#) newspaper was contacted from inside the prison by telephone, and prisoners outlined their demands:^[34]

- Improved visiting facilities, including the right to physical contact with visitors and a children's play area.
- Category A prisoners would be allowed to wear their own clothes and be able to receive food parcels.
- Longer exercise periods.
- An end to 23-hour-a-day lock-up.^[34]

At 11:10 am Michael Unger from the *Manchester Evening News* was allowed into the prison as an "independent observer".^[34] Unger met prisoners who described their grievances to him, which included [mental](#) and [physical brutality](#), poor food and conditions, and misuse of drugs in controlling prisoners.^[34] While Unger was inside the prison twelve C&R units attempted to regain control of E wing, in what became known as the "battle for E wing".^[34] Prisoners built [barricades](#) and threw scaffolding poles at the C&R units, and after approximately thirty minutes the C&R units withdrew without regaining control of the wing.^[35] By the end of the third day of the riot prisoners still controlled the upper levels of the prison, but prison officers had regained control of the lower level, and a Home Office statement was issued:^[36]

During the course of the evening prison staff have had access at ground level to all wings in the main prison. No bodies have been found. Earlier today prison staff gained access to the main prison building in order to remove barricades to allow the surrender of inmates who wished to do so. No inmates were injured during this process. Nine prison staff were taken to outside hospital for treatment. Two remain overnight for observation. Negotiations were carried out by prison staff ... 31 inmates surrendered. All of those who surrendered have been interviewed, medically examined and fed. They will be transferred to other accommodation as soon as practicable.^[36]

On 4 April, Governor O'Friel spoke to the press for the first time, describing the riot as "an explosion of evil which was quite terrible to see".^[37] Also that day the [Prison Officers Association](#) claimed that Rule 43(a) prisoners were being treated in North Manchester General Hospital for [castration](#) wounds, which was repeated by sections of the press despite being categorically denied by the hospital's public relations officer and consultant-in-charge.^[38] 29 prisoners surrendered during the day leaving 26 prisoners inside the prison, 11 of whom had been identified by the [Prison Service](#).^{[37][39]} Two more prisoners surrendered on 5 April, the same day as the Home Office announced a [public inquiry](#) into the riot headed by [Lord Woolf](#).^[38] Also that day a prison officer died in hospital; he had not been injured during the riot and suffered from a long-standing medical condition.^{[38][39]} By this time plans to retake the entire prison by force had been scrapped due to the likelihood of fatalities among prisoners or prison officers.^[40] That evening the police and prison officers introduced new tactics designed to weaken the resolve of the prisoners and to prevent them from sleeping.^{[41][42]} Loud music was played, lights were shone at the roof, and prison officers banged on their [riot shields](#) and shouted at the prisoners, including calling them "beasts".^{[41][42]}

The rooftop protest was watched by a crowd of onlookers and supporters outside the prison.^[43] Various political groups also attended in support of the prisoners, including anarchist group [Class War](#), the [Revolutionary Communist Group](#), and the Prisoners' League Association.^[44] On 6 April Paul Taylor attempted to shout out the prisoners' demands to the crowd gathered below, but he was drowned out by police sirens.^[38] Taylor and other prisoners responded by unfurling a banner which read "We fight and stand firm on behalf of humanity".^[38] On 9 April, [The Sun](#) newspaper called for an end to the riot, saying "Jail riot scum must be crushed", and former prisoner [John McVicar](#) called for the retaking of the prison by force at the earliest possible opportunity.^[45] By 10 April more prisoners had surrendered, leaving thirteen inside the prison.^[45] Three more prisoners surrendered the following day, one of whom, Barry Morton, had taken part in the rooftop protest on 26 March.^[46] On 16 April, another three prisoners surrendered when they became ill with [food poisoning](#).^[47]

Local businesses were calling for an end to the riot due to the disruption caused, including the closure of roads around the prison.^[48] A [leather-jacket retailer](#) based 400 yards from the prison claimed they had lost £20,000 in revenue since the riot had begun.^[48] [Greater Manchester Police](#) asked for £2 million to cover the costs of policing the riot, which it described as the "most savage incident of its kind ever experienced within the British prison service".^[48] On 17 April the remaining seven prisoners began negotiations to attempt to bring the rooftop protest to an end.^[47] [Negotiations](#) took place inside the prison between two Home Office officials and prisoner Alan Lord, who was negotiating on behalf of the remaining prisoners.^[49] On 23 April, Lord was captured by a C&R unit while on his way to meet the negotiators.^[49] Mark Williams—one of the remaining prisoners—later described his reactions to the negotiations and Lord's capture.^[50]



The last five prisoners descend from the roof in a "[cherry picker](#)"—Mark Williams, John Murray, Paul Taylor, Martin Brian and Glyn Williams.

David Bell, the Home Office negotiator, kept contradicting himself, as if in a bid to prolong the negotiations. He would agree to our terms, then he would try and tell us it was out of his hands, and go back on his word. If it was out of the Home Officer's hands—then whose hands was it in? I think the final stages were messed around by the Home Office so that our protest could help to divert the public's attention from the Poll Tax revolt that was going on throughout the country. As Alan Lord was snatched after being asked to negotiate on behalf of us all, this made us all more defiant about ending the protest.^[50]

Following the capture of Lord, the remaining prisoners agreed that 25 April would be the final day of the protest.^[50] Prison officers entered the prison early in the morning and gradually began to occupy the upper landings.^[51] At 10:20 am one of the remaining prisoners, a seventeen-year-old on remand for [joyriding](#), was captured leaving five prisoners remaining on the roof.^[50] When prison officers reached the roof they put up a sign similar to the ones used by prisoners throughout the protest, which read "HMP in charge—no visits".^[51] At 6:20 pm the remaining five prisoners were removed from the roof in a "[cherry picker](#)" hydraulic platform, giving clenched fist salutes to the press and public as they descended.^[51] During the course of the 25-day riot, the longest in British penal history, 147 prison officers and 47 prisoners had been injured.^[52]

[] Disturbances at other prisons

The Strangeways riot caused a number of protests at prisons across England, Scotland and Wales, described as either [solidarity](#) actions or [copycat](#) riots.^[53] Approximately 100 remand prisoners at [HM Prison Hull](#) staged a sit-down protest in the exercise yard on 1 April, after hearing about the Strangeways riot on the radio.^[53] Disturbances occurred the same day at [HM Prison Gartree](#), [HM Prison Kirkham](#) and [HM Prison Rochester](#), although the Gartree protest had started three days earlier over conditions in the prison.^[53] There were minor disturbances at [HM Prison Lindholme](#), [HM Prison Low Newton](#) and [HM Prison Bedford](#) on 2 April, [HM Prison Durham](#), [HM Prison Winchester](#) and [HM Prison Wandsworth](#) on 4 April, and [HM Young Offenders Institute Glen Parva](#) on 6 April.^[54]

The weekend of 7 April and 8 April saw protests across the prison system.^[55] At [HM Prison Leeds](#) there was a sit-down protest after the arrival of over 100 prisoners who had been

transferred from Strangeways.^[55] At [HM Prison Dartmoor](#), between 100 and 120 prisoners wrecked D wing of the prison, and 12 prisoners also protested on the roof of C wing unfurling a banner that read "Strangeways, we are with you".^[55] 32 prisoners from Dartmoor were transferred to [HM Prison Bristol](#), where there was another major protest following their arrival.^[56] Up to 400 prisoners took over three wings of the prison, and held control of them for two days.^[56] 130 prisoners at [HM Prison Cardiff](#) destroyed cells, a twenty-hour rooftop protest took place at [HM Prison Stoke Heath](#), and disturbances occurred at [HM Prison Brixton](#), [HM Prison Pentonville](#), [HM Prison Stafford](#) and [HM Prison Shepton Mallet](#).^[56] A second protest took place at HM Prison Hull, where 110 prisoners staged a sit-down protest in the exercise yard.^[56]

Prisoners smashed windows at [HM Prison Verne](#) on 9 April, and 40 prisoners held a prison officer hostage for twenty-four hours after taking over a hall at [HM Prison Shotts](#) on 10 April.^[56] On 12 April, two teenage remand prisoners at [HM Prison Swansea](#) barricaded themselves into their cell for seventeen hours, and on 22 April between 80 and 100 remand prisoners staged an eighteen-hour rooftop protest at [HM Prison Pucklechurch](#).^[57]

[] Media reaction

On 2 April newspapers reported a weekend of "anti-authority violence", as in addition to the Strangeways riot the [Poll Tax Riot](#) had occurred in London on 31 March.^[31] Reports of the violence at Strangeways included [kangaroo courts](#), hangings, castrations and that between eleven and twenty prisoners had been killed.^[31] On 3 April the front page of the [Daily Mirror](#) read "Prison Mob 'Hang Cop' ", and claimed a former policeman imprisoned at Strangeways for [rape](#) had been killed by prisoners.^[58] The newspaper was forced to publish a retraction admitting that "reliable police sources" had been mistaken, when it transpired that the man was actually alive and imprisoned in [HM Prison Leeds](#).^[58] Following the end of the rooftop protest the newspapers condemned the prisoners, with [The Daily Telegraph](#) describing the riot as "a degrading public spectacle", and [The Independent](#) describing the rioters as "dangerous and unstable criminals enjoying an orgy of destruction".^[59] [The Guardian](#) urged the government to institute reforms, a view which was the prevalent one for a time, stating:^[59]

Initially, the riot appeared to increase public support for radical reform of the present degrading prison system. Some of that goodwill will have been eroded by the antics of the rioters in the last two weeks, and may be further eroded once details emerge during the forthcoming criminal prosecutions. But this must not deflect Home Office ministers from the road down which they had belatedly begun to travel. A change in prison conditions is crucial if good order is to be restored to the system.^[59]

In its last act before disbanding in 1991 and being replaced by the [Press Complaints Commission](#), the [Press Council](#) produced a comprehensive report into the press coverage during the Strangeways riot.^[58] The report stated that "many of the more gruesome events report in the press had not occurred – nobody had been systematically mutilated, there had been no castrations, no bodies had been chopped up and flushed in the sewers. Though there was inter-prisoner violence in the first hours of the riot, torture on the scale suggested by many of the early reports did not take place."^[58] It further found that press coverage "fell into the serious ethical error of presenting speculation and unconfirmed reports as fact".^[58]

[] The Woolf Report

A five-month public inquiry was held into the disturbances at Strangeways and other prisons, beginning in Manchester on 11 June 1990 and ending in London on 31 October.^[60] In addition to the public inquiry, [Lord Woolf](#) and [Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons, Stephen Tumim](#), also sent letters to every prisoner and prison officer in the country.^[61] 1,300 prisoners and 430 prison officers responded, with many excerpts from the letters being appended to the finished report.^[61] The *Woolf Report* was published on 25 February 1991, and blamed the loss of control of the prison on the prison officers abandoning the gates outside the chapel, which "effectively handed the prison to the prisoners".^[17] Woolf described the conditions inside Strangeways in the months leading up to the riot as "intolerable", and viewed a "combination of errors" by staff and management at the prison and Prison Service as a central contributing factor to the riot.^[62] He also blamed the failure of successive governments to "provide the resources to the Prison Service which were needed to enable the Service to provide for an increased prison population in a humane manner".^[62] Woolf recommended major reform of the Prison Service, and made 12 key recommendations with 204 accompanying proposals.^[63] The key recommendations were:

1. Closer cooperation between the different parts of the Criminal Justice System. For this purpose a national forum and local committees should be established.
2. More visible leadership of the Prison Service by a Director General who is and is seen to be the operational head and in day to day charge of the Service. To achieve this there should be a published "compact" or "contract" given by Ministers to the Director General of the Prison Service, who should be responsible for the performance of that "contract" and publicly answerable for the day to day operations of the Prison Service.
3. Increased delegation of responsibility to Governors of establishments.
4. An enhanced role for prison officers.
5. A "compact" or "contract" for each prisoner setting out the prisoner's expectations and responsibilities in the prison in which he or she is held
6. A national system of Accredited Standards, with which, in time, each prison establishment would be required to comply.
7. A new Prison Rule that no establishment should hold more prisoners than is provided for its certified normal level of accommodation, with provisions for Parliament to be informed if exceptionally there is to be a material departure from that rule.
8. A public commitment from Ministers setting a timetable to provide access to sanitation for all inmates at the earliest practical date, not later than February 1996.
9. Better prospects for prisoners to maintain their links with families and the community through more visits and home leaves and through being located in community prisons as near to their homes as possible.
10. A division of prison establishments into small and more manageable and secure units.
11. A separate statement of purpose, separate conditions and generally a lower security categorisation for remand prisoners.
12. Improved standards of justice within prisons involving the giving of reasons to a prisoner for any decision which materially and adversely affects him; a grievance procedure and disciplinary proceedings which ensure that the Governor deals with most matters under his present powers; relieving Boards of Visitors of their adjudicatory role; and providing for final access to an independent Complaints Adjudicator.^[63]

[The Guardian](#) newspaper described the report as a blueprint for the restoration of "decency and justice into jails where conditions had become intolerable".^[61] [Home Secretary Kenneth Baker](#) welcomed the Woolf Report and pledged to end "slopping out" by 1994, and also accepted Woolf's recommendations for more visits, home leave and telephone calls.^[64] In contrast to his proposed reforms, Baker also proposed the introduction of a new offence of "prison mutiny" carrying a maximum sentence of ten years imprisonment, stating "The events of last April

marked a watershed in the history of prison service. We cannot, and will not, tolerate the savagery and vandalism in our prisons that we saw then".^{[65][66]}

[] Prosecutions

The first prosecutions in relation to the riot began at Manchester [Crown Court](#) on 14 January 1992.^[67] The trial was conducted amid tight security, including armed police patrolling the area around the court, body searches for spectators and a specially constructed dock with sides made from [bulletproof glass](#).^[68] Nine men went on trial charged with riot under Section 1 of the [Public Order Act 1986](#), with six of them, including Paul Taylor and Alan Lord, also being charged with the [murder](#) of Derek White.^[67]

On the first day one prisoner pleaded [guilty](#) to charges of riot and conspiracy to riot, and was also acquitted of the murder charge.^[68] The other defendants were also acquitted of murder due to the unreliability of [eyewitness testimony](#) and the possibility that White had died from a pre-existing [thrombotic](#) condition.^[69] On 16 April, four defendants including Paul Taylor were convicted of rioting, and the remaining four including Alan Lord were acquitted.^[68]

Taylor received a ten-year sentence, the maximum sentence the [judge](#) had the power to impose.^[70] The sentences received by the other defendants ranged from four years to nine-and-a-half years imprisonment.^[70] By the end of the trial the total cost of the Strangeways riot, including refurbishing the prison and the costs of the police inquiry and court case, had reached £112 million.^[70]

The second trial began at the same court on 5 October 1992, and dealt with charges relating to the "battle for E wing" on 3 April 1990.^[70] There were fourteen defendants, including Alan Lord and another man who was acquitted in the first trial, both of whom were added to the list of defendants after their [acquittals](#).^[70] Two defendants pleaded guilty to [violent disorder](#) and received four- and five-year sentences, which due to the two years they had spent on remand awaiting trial resulted in them being freed.^[70]

The remaining twelve defendants pleaded not guilty to conspiracy to commit [grievous bodily harm](#) with intent and conspiracy to riot.^[70] On 7 December 1992 David Bowen and Mark Azzopardi escaped from the prison van transferring them from [HM Prison Hull](#) to the court.^[71] Azzopardi was recaptured, before escaping from the court on 17 February 1993 along with five of the other defendants.^[71]

At the conclusion of the trial two defendants were acquitted and the remainder found guilty of conspiracy to commit grievous bodily harm with intent, the lesser charge of conspiracy to riot automatically being dropped when guilty verdicts were announced on the first charge.^[70] When passing sentence, the judge remarked "You had your period of arrogance and violence in front of the world, but now the price must be paid and paid by you".^[72] The defendants received sentences ranging from four years to ten years imprisonment, although only five defendants were in court to hear the verdict as six defendants were still on the run after escaping and another was being treated at [Ashworth Secure Hospital](#).^[71]

Following the second trial, a further 26 defendants were still due to be tried on charges relating to the riot.^[72] The [Crown Prosecution Service](#) accepted [plea bargains](#) where defendants pleaded guilty to violent disorder in exchange for the dropping of other charges, or in some cases all charges were dropped completely.^[72] On 20 September 1993 the last remaining defendant to

maintain a plea of not guilty went on trial, and he was convicted of conspiracy to commit grievous bodily harm and sentenced to thirty months imprisonment.^[72]

On 18 March 1994, six prisoners appeared in court on charges of escaping from custody during the second riot trial.^[72] Five of them pleaded guilty to escaping from custody on one occasion, and Mark Azzopardi pleaded guilty to escaping on two occasions.^[72] Each was sentenced to eighteen months imprisonment for escaping from Manchester Crown Court, and Azzopardi received an additional two-year sentence for escaping from the van transporting him from HM Prison Hull to the court.^[72] In July 1994, David Bowen was convicted of attempting to [pervert the course of justice](#) by attempting to influence the jury in the first riot trial, and was sentenced to three years imprisonment.^[72] Paul Taylor, who had already pleaded guilty to the same charge, also received a three-year sentence.^[72]

[] Aftermath



[HM Prison Manchester](#) in 2007

Strangeways was rebuilt and refurbished at a cost of £55 million, and was officially re-opened as HM Prison Manchester on 27 May 1994.^{[73][74]} The press were invited to view the new prison and talk to the prisoners by new governor [Derek Lewis](#).^[74] A prisoner told the visiting journalists:

The better conditions in here are not down to the prison department. But for the riot, we would still be in the same old jail banged up all day and slopping out ... The rioters brought this about. These conditions ... should not have cost the lives of a prisoner, a prison officer and two huge court trials. They should have done it years ago but it took a riot to get them to do it.^[74]

"[Slopping out](#)" was abolished in England and Wales by 1996, and was scheduled to be abolished in Scotland by 1999.^[75] Due to budget restraints the abolishment was delayed, and by 2004 prisoners in five of Scotland's sixteen prisons still had to "slop out".^[75] "Slopping out" ended in [HM Young Offenders Institution Polmont](#) in 2007, leaving [HM Prison Peterhead](#) as the last prison where prisoners do not have access to proper sanitation, as 300 prisoners are forced to use [chemical toilets](#) due to the difficulty of installing modern plumbing in the prison's granite structure.^{[76][77]}

2012 Welikada prison riot

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

The **Welikada prison riot** was a [prison riot](#) that occurred on 9 November 2012 at [Welikada Prison](#) in [Sri Lanka](#). The riot broke out during a search for illegal arms. The riot left 27 people dead and 40 injured.^[1] The government has appointed a committee to investigate the riot. Welikada Prison, which has around 4,000 prisoners, has witnessed a number of violent riots in its history.^[2] This prison riot was the worst in Sri Lanka's history since the [1983 riot](#), also at Welikada Prison, which left 53 prisoners dead.^[3]

Riot

At around 1.30 pm local time on 9 November 2012 around 300 commandos from the [Special Task Force](#) (STF), a paramilitary unit of the [Sri Lanka Police Service](#), arrived at Welikada prison to assist prison guards searching for illegal arms, drugs and mobile phones.^{[4][2][5]} The search was first carried out in the "L" section which was home to hardcore criminals.^[1] Despite protests from prisoners, the STF completed their search, recovering drugs and mobile phones from the cells.^[1] At around 4 pm the STF moved on to the "Chapel Ward" which was home to death sentence, life sentence and other long sentence prisoners.^{[1][5][6]} The STF commandos wanted to handcuff the prisoners but they objected and arguments and fighting broke out between the STF commandos and the prisoners.^{[6][5]} Some prisoners alleged that they had been stripped and beaten up.^[4] The prisoners started throwing stones and other objects at the STF.^[7] As the disturbance grew the STF tried to suppress the riot using [tear gas](#) but at around 4.30 pm prisoners working in the "Bingo" section broke into the main area and also started fighting with STF.^[1] The STF and the prison officials had to retreat from the prison.^{[4][5]}

The prisoners took control of the prison and a siege ensued during which some officials were held hostage by the prisoners.^{[2][5]} Numerous prisoners appeared on the prison's roof, some brandishing weapons.^{[5][8]} They started throwing stones at the STF who were now on the road outside the prison.^[7] They also threatened onlookers.^[7]

The prison was surrounded by the police and roads leading to the prison were closed at 5.45 pm.^{[4][2]} At around this time the prisoners broke into the prison's armouries and took arms including assault rifles.^{[6][9]} At around 6.15 pm five prisoners broke out of the prison and tried to escape on a [trishaw](#).^[7] They opened fire at the STF who returned fire killing four of the prisoners.^{[2][7]} Over the next half an hour there was heavy gunfights between the prisoners in the prison and the authorities outside.^{[2][7]} There was a power cut in the area at 6.25 pm which added more confusion to the situation.^[7] The authorities tried to storm the prison several times but had to withdraw after coming under fire from the prisoners.^[7] The [army](#) was called in, bringing with it an [armoured car](#).^[7] The authorities had then planned to storm the prison at 8 pm but this had to be postponed due heavy rains.^[7] Eventually, at 2 am, the STF stormed the prison and took full control of the prison.^[7]

27 people, all prisoners, had been killed and 40 injured (20 prisoners, 13 STF, four soldiers, one prison guard and two others).^[1] Eye witnesses, human rights groups and opposition politicians have alleged that some of the dead prisoners had been executed.^{[10][11]} A number of prisoners also escaped but most had been recaptured.^[2]

The prisoners may have had inside help – it's alleged that some prison guards had been selling [contraband](#) items to the prisoners and they weren't happy that the STF had been brought in to assist with the searches.^[5]

[] Reaction and investigation

The police have defended their actions, saying "By killing the prisoners who were armed, we prevented a much bigger disaster".^[12] Minister of Rehabilitation and Prison Reforms [Chandrasiri Gajadeera](#) announced on 10 November 2012 that he had appointed a three-member committee to investigate the riot.^{[9][13]} A second investigation is to be carried out by Prisons Commissioner General P. W. Kodippili.^[14]

The opposition has described the riot as a massacre and called for a parliamentary select committee to investigate the riot.^{[15][16]} Civil rights groups have also called for an independent investigation.^[17]

The [Asian Human Rights Commission](#) has condemned the authorities actions and has called on the government to carry out a "thorough and credible inquiry" into the riot.^{[18][19]} The [European Union](#) has urged the authorities to ensure that the investigations into the riot are carried out impartially and speedily.^{[20][21]}

Escape attempts

Perhaps in response to punishment like the hole, some prisoners strove to escape. In 1902, the inmate stable boss of a barn outside the walls named Thomas O'Brien drugged Conley's dogs, used for hunting and tracking down escaped convicts, again, hitting George Rock, who retreated from the office. Hayes got back to his feet, and Conley shot him again and threw him into the hall after Rock. Conley then went to help Robinson, who was on the ground under Rock. Rock had already slashed the Deputy's throat and was stabbing him when Conley threw a chair at the assailant, who turned on Conley. The warden fended the armed man off with the butt of his now empty pistol, and the escape attempt was ended at the end of a billy-club wielded by Guard E.H. Carver, who had had to break through the locked door to the hallway.^[30]

Deputy Robinson had been killed, and it took 103 stitches to stabilize Warden Conley. One of the slashes from Rock's blade had come a mere eighth of an inch from severing the warden's jugular,^[31] and he carried the scar from that wound to his deathbed. None of the rioters had died, and Conley made sure they were all fully healed before bringing them up on charges. Rock and Hayes were both given the death sentence for the assault, Stevens won his acquittal and served his original sentence, and Young's was extended to a life sentence. Conley oversaw both of the executions (Rock on 16 June 1908 and Hayes on 2 April 1909^[31]). The men were hanged using the [upright jerker](#) method, which used a 300 lb (140 kg). weight to jerk the sentenced man from his feet.^[32] This method was supposed to snap the neck, but it failed in both instances. Rock and Hayes were the only two men to be executed within the prison walls.

[] Conley's downfall

In addition to the problems Conley had with prisoners, the community began to complain of his use of prisoners and the office of warden for personal gain. When he arrived in Deer Lodge, he had been a lowly deputy, but within twenty years had risen to be one of the most powerful men in the region. Through the years, he had become personal friends with William A. Clark, and through him the [Anaconda Copper Mining Company](#), a subsidiary of [John D. Rockefeller's Standard Oil](#). Conley moved up the social stratus with his marriage to a [Missoula, Montana](#) socialite.^[33] While using prison labor to construct the prison itself, roads for the state, and buildings for state institutions, he had also found a way to have the inmates build him an expensive warden's residence across Main Street from the prison, a hunting lodge on the shores of his private lake and another for Thomas McTague, and a racetrack where he ran his own

thoroughbreds. He also used the produce of the prison ranch and farm to entertain guests like Theodore Roosevelt, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Secretary of the Treasury William Gibbs McAdoo, several Montana governors, and, of course, Copper King William Clark and a number of directors of the Anaconda Mining company.^[34] At these events, he commonly used prisoners as cooks, waiters, and servants.^[35]

Warden of the Montana State Prison was not the only office Frank Conley held; he was voted Mayor of Deer Lodge from 1892–1893, 1895–1903, and again from 1907–1929,^[36] a position he held for eight years after being removed from his duties as warden. The man responsible for Conley's downfall was Governor Joseph M. Dixon. Dixon took office under the promise to remove the powerful Anaconda Mining company from state politics, and, upon hearing that the warden of the state prison was heavily involved with the Company, he launched a series of investigations and audits which laid bare the extent of Warden Conley's corruption between 1908 and 1921. Some points Dixon's auditor found were:

1. Appropriating beef, assorted groceries and produce, cream, and butter for his private use in the amount of some \$8,330;
2. Using over a half million tons of state coal for his private residence;
3. Using and maintaining thirteen private autos at state expense, running up a gas, oil, and maintenance bill of over \$12,000 per year on the vehicles;
4. Using the prison's ranch to feed his private dairy herd and employing free inmate labor to care for and feed his livestock; and
5. Selling to the state (for use in the prison), dairy products and beef produced by the herd, at market rates^[37]

Dixon wasted no time in bringing Conley to trial on charges of corruption. The judge, however, could find no written statute which fully defined the relationship the state of Montana shared with Frank Conley, and so could find no laws Conley had broken. In the words of the judge, "every act of Conely...was in the interest of the state of Montana".^[38]

Although stripped of the influential office of warden, Conley continued as Mayor of Deer Lodge until 1929, and lived in the city until his death in Butte on 5 March 1939.^[39]

[] Degeneration of the facility

Immediately after the retirement of Warden Conley, the first in a long string of gubernatorial appointees, Warden M.W. Potter, strove to keep the prison functioning on a cost-effective basis. He pardoned a significant number of prisoners incarcerated during World War I and the early years of the Prohibition to keep overcrowding to a minimum and costs down. However, without Conley and his series of contacts to keep the prisoners busy, the number of extramural work programs dwindled, forcing more inmates to return to the facility.^[40] The prisoners were now faced with a heavily crowded living space that was not well suited to house them.

[] Buildings



1932 Administration building



Industrial complex

Only three construction projects happened at the prison between 1921 and 1959. The first, funded in 1927 by a \$40,000 grant from the state for use in constructing a license plate and garment factory inside the walls, instead went toward remodeling the old Territorial building, converting the central section into administrative offices, one wing into a license plant and the other wing into the garment factory.^[41] In 1932, this building would come down in the second construction opportunity for inmates—the construction of a new administration building.^[42] The simple, rectangular concrete building bridged the gap between the older, Gothic-style cellblocks and housed administration offices on the top floor and a dining hall, shoe shop, and laundry in the lower floor. 1935 saw the last new construction in the prison with an industrial shop complex that went up parallel to the north wall, perpendicular to the 1912 Cellblock. This building housed the prison's new hospital, including an infirmary, surgery, dentist's office, psych ward, and doctor's office. Also in this building was the new license plate factory, which moved to the prison ranch in 1960, and eight cells, which were sometimes used as [Death Row](#).^[43]

Meanwhile, the institution's existing buildings continued to degrade. The 1896 Cellblock still had no individual plumbing in the cells; a flush toilet had been installed on the ground level, but inmates had no access to it after lights out. The lighting in the cells was insufficient even for reading; the wiring installed at the start of the 20th century could barely power a 25 watt bulb. There was no ventilation, the wooden roof had not been replaced, and the cell doors still

unlocked individually. A state investigation in 1931 found this cellblock to be "a disgrace to civilization".^[44]

The 1912 Cellblock was in better shape, though it was still substandard. It was stifling in the summer, when inmates on the top tiers would throw items through the windows to create a breeze, and freezing in the winter, when inmates on the bottom tiers would drape the bottom half of their cell doors with blankets to keep out the chill. There was one shower facility for the 400 inmates with three shower heads; one for a rinse, one for a soap, and the third for a final rinse. The prisoners would step under these one at a time in a single-file line.

[] Administration

In addition to the outdated facilities, the guard staff was underpaid, undertrained, and insufficient to manage the ever-increasing number of inmates. Guards at the Montana State Prison during this period were some of the lowest paid correctional officers in the United States, ranked 115 out of 120 state and local institutions. Their median salary was \$1200 per year, where the national average was \$2000. There were no benefits and no pension plan. Few wardens of the time ran background checks on potential guards, and there was no formal training after hire. By the mid-1950s, 80% of the guard staff were retirees over the age of 55, and in 1957, there was a 75% turnover of guards.^[45] In order for this staff to keep order in the prison, a re-institution of the Auburn system came into play, keeping inmates quiet, obedient, and segregated.^[44]

The succession of wardens added to the low morale of both guards and prisoners. Appointed by the Governor of Montana for their pliability, ease of placement, and political stature, the wardens of the prison rarely had law enforcement experience, and none had penal institution experience.^[46] Unfortunately, due to Conley's aggressive control of the facility, most of the administration of the prison rested in the hands of the warden, including the hiring and firing of guards, requests for new building permits from the state, and most of the parole functions of the institution. In fact, a parole board was not instituted until 1955.^[42] Many of the wardens, like A.B. Middleton, tried to better the facility, but those who did often failed. Middleton, who held the position from 1925 to 1937,^[47] oversaw all the new construction, but he did little to ease the strain of overpopulation and low morale. Possibly the least effective warden to hold the office was Faye O. Burrell, who was warden from 1953 to 1958. Burrell had been a Ravalli County sheriff before his tenure, and was a man who prided himself on his frugality. The state actually increased funding to the prison during his time, but Burrell decreased his implementation of funds, allowing money slated for updating facilities to go back into general state funds.^[45] His wardenship of the prison weathered two riots, and he resigned under heavy controversy.

[] Prison life

Since Conley's theory of reform was based so heavily on manual labor, he had spent little time and money on things like education and vocational training. In the 1920s, the prison library was the only means of inmate education; the only classes being taught boiled down to English-speaking instruction for immigrant inmates. The library itself, donated mostly by William Clark before 1920, was outdated, contained mainly light fiction, and had been stringently censored by prison officials.^[48] As far as vocational training was concerned, Conley had dealt the prison another blow by removing all his personal equipment from the warehouse, garage, and machine shop; since his contract specified that the buildings, grounds, and land belonged to the state, he had populated these important industries with his own materials to further entrench himself

within the prison.^[37] This left the prisoners with only industries relating to the upkeep of the prison: laundry, garment construction, maintenance, a toy shop (which made toys for children in state institutions) and the prison band.^[49] In the '20s, the warden of the prison took on the role of Registrar of Motor Vehicles and obtained permission for inmates to manufacture license plates.^[41]



A cell in Cellblock 1

The jobs available to the prisoners were few; between 1930 and 1960, about 200 inmates out of a population averaging 550 had something to do. In the 1940s and '50s, most prisoners spent twenty-two hours a day in their cells.^[49] The industries that were available were managed not by civilians or guards, but, due to the shortage of staff at the prison, by a system of inmate overseers. Called "con-bosses," these privileged inmates had complete control over their areas, reserving the right to choose which inmates worked under them, how much work they received, and what they had to do to receive work at all. Since work meant not only something to do other than sit in a cell but also time earned off a sentence, this system led to rampant corruption, favoritism, and ill-feelings among the prisoners, since the con-bosses often sold positions or used them as leverage for any number of illicit favors.^[50]

The onset of the [Great Depression](#) flooded the prison with new inmates, and Montana state further curtailed the use of inmate labor to provide jobs for civilians.^[51] In another blow to the prisoners, in 1934, the state prohibited the sale of convict-made goods to civilians.^[52] Prisoners now had almost no legitimate, worthwhile industries to keep themselves busy, and to exacerbate the situation further, most of the prison yard within the walls had been converted into a vegetable garden, eliminating exercise as a pastime.

[\[\] Riots](#)

The mismanagement, insufficient guard staff, and intolerable living conditions led to three riots in the late 1950s. The first riot, called the "pea riot," took place on 30 July 1957 when the members of the prison band refused to pick peas in the garden which was the prison yard. The temperature was hot, and the band members were used to being left alone, if not coddled, by the prison staff. One member flatly refused the order, which won him time in the hole.^[53] The other members decided to work, but after one member flicked a pea at another, the job quickly turned into a foliage-destroying free-for-all. The destructive attitude in the garden quickly infected the rest of the prison, and inmates rushed from the cellblocks to take part in the destruction. The guards on duty were quickly overrun and locked into cells.^[54] A standoff between the prisoners and government officials, including Attorney General [Forrest Anderson](#) and about 200 National

Guardsmen, lasted about 24 hours. The warden, Faye O. Burrell, was out of town, taking delivery of an inmate from Indiana who had escaped years earlier. The prisoners clamored for better conditions, better food, better mail service, and the firing of Benjamin W. Wright, the man in charge of Montana's relatively new parole system. Anderson offered an eight-point program which sated the prisoners, and they retreated to their cells without bloodshed.^[55] Upon Burrell's return, however, he revoked the program drawn up by Anderson, claiming that he had not, and would not, negotiate with convicts.

The second riot, in response to Warden Burrell having ignored Anderson's eight-point program, happened on 27 January 1958.^[56] During a tour of the prison by the Montana Council on Corrections, the inmates instigated a twenty-four hour sit-down strike in which they refused to report to work, ignored orders from guards, and loitered about the cell house corridors. Warden Burrell ordered the lights and heat be turned off, which, in January, meant many hours of frigid darkness. The cold, hungry inmates returned to their cells and, for punishment, for a week were refused mail and access to the canteen where they could purchase cigarettes, candy, and other sundries.^[57]

[] 1959 Riot

1959 was a turbulent year in Montana State Prison history. Following Warden Burrell's resignation in February 1958, the Montana Council on Corrections decided that, in order to modernize the facility, the next warden of the prison would be selected from a nationwide search, putting an end to the tradition of gubernatorial appointees. Floyd Powell, of Wisconsin, was chosen from the candidates who applied, and he took control of the prison in August 1958. He managed to instill some reforms before, in 1959, a riot kept the prison and the town of Deer Lodge on edge for thirty-six hours. The riot started on 16 April 1959 and was the longest and bloodiest riot at the facility. Instigated by a pair of inmates, Jerry Myles and Lee Smart, the riot would claim the lives of three people, wound several others, and maintain the facility under inmate control for thirty-six hours. It ended in the early hours of 18 April 1959 when a brace of National Guard troops stormed the facility. Then, in August of the same year, an earthquake structurally damaged Cellblock 2, leading to its destruction.

[] Warden Floyd Powell

Born in LaValle, Wisconsin, just before World War I,^[58] Floyd Powell came to Montana in response to the nationwide search for a warden who would update the Montana State Prison into a modern facility. With more than eighteen years of penal experience at the Wisconsin State Prison in Waupun,^[59] Powell arrived in Deer Lodge knowing the only way to truly modernize the prison rested in building a whole new facility; what existed in downtown Deer Lodge was far too antiquated to be worth revitalizing. Within weeks of taking charge of the prison, Powell summoned his friend and subordinate, Ted Rothe, from Wisconsin to be his deputy warden.^[60]

Between the two of them, Powell and Rothe began a series of reforms which were targeted at updating the facility. They began to abolish the "con-boss" system,^[61] improved inmate food quality by instilling a "Take all you want, but eat all you take" policy^[62] and by supplying condiments on the tables.^[63] They also sought to crack down on the rampant drug use and black market inside the walls^[64] and began performing exhaustive background checks on the prisoners,^[65] a practice that was not standard operating procedure until Powell's tenure. A training regimen for the guards was also instilled, which bettered communication between shifts and cut back on guard contributions to the black market. Something they were unable to initiate

until too late was the removal of firearms from the cellblocks; Powell and Rothe wanted to completely sweep both cellblocks of the rifles the guards carried on the catwalks.^[61] They saw the '.30-30 Winchester rifles' presence as an instigator for inmate uprising, but the guards refused to surrender the guns.^[62]

Though the pair from Wisconsin were doing their best to better the conditions in the prison, they felt heavy resistance from both inmates and guards who had flourished under the previously lax security, as well as from the population of Montana who viewed any improvement in the quality of life of an inmate nothing more than coddling convicts. In his own words in a report to the Board of Prison commissioners, Powell stated:

To bring about the tremendous change needed to make the Montana correctional system a workable, valuable, efficient, adequate activity is an almost insurmountable job, particularly trying to do it in a grossly inadequate physical plant and with a lack of trained personnel.^[66]

Although Powell and Rothe meant well with their reforms, their alteration of the power structures within the facility led to a bloody riot which started on 16 April 1959.

[] Leaders of the riot

[] *Jerry Myles*

The primary leader of the riot, Jerry Myles was born in [Sioux City, Iowa](#), on 15 January 1915 under the name Donald Groat. His mother was an unmarried transient who quickly put her son up for adoption.^[67] By the time he was sixteen, he was in reform school, and for the rest of his life he would spend more time inside correctional facilities than outside them. Described as having an "emotionally unstable, psychopathic personality"^[68] by [psychiatrist](#) Romney Ritchey at Alcatraz, Jerry Myles nonetheless had a genius intellect, scoring 125 and 147 on intelligence tests in Atlanta^[69] and Montana,^[70] respectively. Using suicide attempts, petty disturbances, and sexual deviancy, he strove to become the center of attention. He was an institutionalized career prisoner, often committing small acts of burglary to get sentenced to more prison time whenever he found himself free, and, once incarcerated, struggled to be noticed.

On 4 December 1944, he organized a mutiny at the federal penitentiary in [Atlanta, Georgia](#) on the grounds of poor medical care, no church services, and having to wait in line in the mess hall with "the German intake and the Negro intake".^[71] After the mutiny, the administration at USP Atlanta declared Jerry Myles to be incorrigible and a danger to the security of their prison. They determined that their facilities were insufficient to fully monitor Myles' activities, so on 8 May 1945 they transferred him to the federal penitentiary at [Alcatraz](#).^[72]

Jerry Myles would spend about seven years at Alcatraz between 1945 and 1952, after which he was transferred to [Leavenworth](#).^[73] While Jerry was at The Rock, the legendary "[Battle of Alcatraz](#)" occurred on 2 May 1946, and Myles, while he did not take part in the escape attempt, learned much from the methods of [Bernard Coy](#), who initiated the riot. The disturbance Myles would later start in Montana shared many elements with the Battle of Alcatraz.^[74] Myles was released from Leavenworth on 3 March 1952,^[75] after which he finished his sentence at the Georgia State Penitentiary and was released in May 1958.^[76] During his long prison tenure, Myles had learned of a prison in Montana where the convicts ran the industries, and Myles was interested in what he viewed was a place where he could have power.^[77]

After his release, Myles bought a bus ticket to Butte, about 40 miles (64 km) from Deer Lodge, where he was arrested for burglary. He was sentenced to five years at the Montana State Prison and arrived in Deer Lodge in June 1958.^[78] Since the prison at that time was not in the habit of running background checks on incoming prisoners, his previous penal experience went unnoticed, and he was assigned to a cell in the general population. Myles quickly rose to the position of con-boss of the garment shop, due to his experience in similar places in other penitentiaries around the country and the notoriety of his experience in USP Atlanta, Leavenworth, and, of course, Alcatraz.^[79] He used the position to his advantage, decorating his apartment-like cell in the garment shop with niceties and manipulating young inmates into providing him with sexual favors for work in the factory. When Warden Powell abolished the con-boss system in October 1958, Myles was stripped of his favor in the prison community and started acting out, which earned him time in segregation. He had a short, heated interview with Deputy Warden Rothe in which Myles took an intense dislike to Rothe and threatened his life. Rothe sentenced Myles to isolation, or the hole, for an indefinite amount of time followed by a longer stint in segregation.^[80]



A cell in Siberia

Walter Jones, the prison's newly graduated [sociologist](#),^[81] recognized the danger Myles represented and suggested further segregation in Siberia in the base of the northern towers of Cellblock 1.^[82] The area known as Siberia was separated from the rest of the prison yard by a razor-wire topped chain-link fence and was used to keep known troublemakers apart from the rest of the population. The cells were cramped, cold, and isolated. Rothe rejected this treatment of Myles, claiming that he wanted to gain inmate trust by showing equal rights to all prisoners regardless of their past activities.^[83] On 27 February 1959, Rothe released Myles back into the general population and assigned him to the water crew—the group of inmates who emptied toilet buckets from Cellblock 2 and the guard towers.^[84] In April of that same year, Myles would incite the riot.

[] Lee Smart and George Alton

Lee Smart was born in 1940 in Washington State and lived 17 years before being sentenced to thirty years confinement to the Montana State Prison for the [second-degree murder](#) of traveling salesman Charles Ward outside of [Browning, Montana](#) on 28 April 1956. Smart had bludgeoned Ward to death with a pair of lineman's pliers and robbed him of \$100 cash. Smart was almost 6 ft (1.8 m). tall and weighed 147 pounds, wore a [ducktail](#) haircut, a black leather jacket, and had tattooed arms and chest. He and a friend had escaped from a reformatory camp in Cedar Creek, Washington, on 14 April 1956. The two then went on a two-week criminal binge which ended in

[Great Falls, Montana](#). Lee Smart left his friend in Great Falls and went north, where he ended up killing Ward.^[85]

Once inside the walls of the Montana State Prison, Smart eventually found his place playing drums for the prison band.^[86] Though one of the youngest convicts in Montana, he had fallen in with a relatively powerful group of convicts—the "band gang" was the largest trafficker of narcotics in the prison.^[87] Lee became a regular member of the cadre, and his crime of murder gave him standing among the inmates, most of whom were incarcerated for [larceny](#). One of the inmates who was highly impressed by Smart's haughty, impulsive nature was Jerry Myles, who befriended the boy. Smart got in trouble a few times, once for being in possession of a weapon, once over his haircut (which led him to receive a [buzz cut](#) by an inmate barber), and again over having an illicit weapon (which earned him time in isolation).^[88]

Since the prison had no system of segregating inmates based on age, crime, or sexual proclivities, Smart was housed in general population where his youthful frame became an instant target for older, predatory cons. His crime of murder and connection with the band gang lent him a modicum of notoriety, but he still felt obliged to hire George Alton, a known troublemaker, for protection at the cost of ten dollars a month. Alton, who had been in and out of prison since 1952, regularly sold protection services to newer inmates who could not fight for themselves.^[89] A diminutive, wiry Montanan, Alton was well respected by guards and inmates alike, known for his vicious left hook and his prowess in the prizefighting rink, held weekly in the WA Clark Theatre. Alton and Smart became friends and eventual cellmates,^[87] until Alton was moved outside the walls into minimum security housing.

Taking full advantage of his "trusty" status, Alton escaped with a fellow inmate in a prison vehicle marked "Registrar of Motor Vehicles" on 26 August 1958, the day after Floyd Powell started his job as warden. The two prisoners waved to the new warden on their way past the prison, and Powell waved back. By the time the warden realized what had happened, Alton and his confederate were too far away to do anything.^[90] Alton managed to stay hidden until November 1958, when he was apprehended in his hometown of [Culbertson](#). He was remanded to the prison and spent time in the hole, then more time in segregation.^[91] It was during this time that he met, and had extensive conversations with, Jerry Myles, who had been placed in the cell right next to Alton's in segregation.^[70]

[\[\] Preparations](#)



Interior of Cellblock 1, showing proximity of cell tier and catwalk

Jerry Myles knew that timing would play a major factor in the successful initiation of the riot. Between the time he was released back into general population in February 1958 until he decided to start the riot, he paid close attention to the movements of the guards and found a loophole in their routine; each day during the dinnertime turnover, the ratio of guards to inmates was decreased in Cellblock 1. His plan was to seize a rifle from one of the guards who walked the catwalk outside his cell when the guard was alone. The catwalk was close to the tier of cells. Guards routinely moved between the catwalk and the tiers by little more than hopping from one to the other; since neither walkway was caged, the maneuver was simple.^[92]

Myles also needed to recruit other inmates to his cause but limit the number of prisoners who knew specifics to ensure the administration would be caught unawares. He chose to let Lee Smart in on the plans, coaxing the boy along with promises of freedom and adventure.^[93] George Alton, a shrewd, intelligent man, was less easily convinced, though a workable escape plan attracted him.^[94] Myles needed Alton because of his rapport with the inmate population. Alton also worked in the prison garage and had access to gasoline, a crucial part of Myles' plans. Myles assured Alton that they would use Deputy Warden Rothe as a shield and hostage to gain exit from Tower 7, and from there to freedom. Myles also strong-armed Harold Laureys, a known lockpicker, or "gopher man" in prison lingo, into being ready for an escape attempt, but gave him few specifics other than that.^[95]

Myles, Smart, and Alton constructed a reservoir in one of the shelves in Smart's cell, and Alton regularly filled that space with gasoline he smuggled out of the garage. The trio waited until they had filled the container before enacting their plans.

[] Start of the riot

At about 3:30 p.m. on 16 April 1959, guard Gus Byars was alone on the catwalk of Cellblock 1 across from where Myles and Smart were loitering. Byars turned to open a window to the brisk spring wind when he heard someone call his name. He turned into a splash of gasoline which hit him in the face and chest, soaking his shirt.^[96]

Lee Smart had tossed the gasoline as Jerry Myles lit a match to a torch he had constructed from a mop. He thrust the mop at the guard, who froze in fear. Smart and Alton lit a broom and tossed it onto the catwalk behind Byars, who, with his vision blurred by the gasoline, saw he was surrounded by fire. He quickly surrendered his keys and rifle and allowed himself to be led to the hole.^[97]

While Myles, Smart, and Alton were securing the rifle and keys, other inmates ambushed the only other two guards in Cellblock 1, threatening them with knives. The guards surrendered their keys and were also led to the hole.^[98]

At this point, the inmates were in full possession of three guards, a rifle, and keys to the facility, though they still had no ammunition for the weapon. They quickly moved over to Cellblock 2, where they knew the ammunition was stored, and were in possession of that building within minutes, even after a tense standoff between a guard holding a loaded rifle and an inmate with a knife. The guard hesitated and received a slashed hand in return. Had he fired on the inmate, the riot may not have progressed. As it was, the inmates were now in control of two rifles, seventeen rounds of ammunition, and both cellblocks.^[99] Over the course of the next ten to fifteen minutes, several more guards would walk into Cellblock 1, be immediately and quietly overwhelmed, and led into the hole.

[] Death of Deputy Warden Rothe

By 4:00, Myles, Smart, and Alton had control over the whole facility except for the minimum security housing outside the southern wall and the upper floor of the administration building, called "Inside Administration." This portion of the facility housed offices for the warden, the deputy warden, the sociologist, and other prison infrastructure. The only woman working within the prison walls, Babe Lightfoot, held an office in Inside Administration, but by the time the rioters reached this area of the prison, she had already evacuated upon orders from an inmate.^[100]

Ted Rothe had been across the street attending a meeting with Warden Powell and some architects who were designing the new facility Powell wanted to build. Rothe returned to his desk inside the prison at a few minutes before 4:00, oblivious to the inmate takeover. To this point, there had been almost no noise, few scuffles, and no casualties. He chatted with a guard for a few minutes before sitting behind his desk, which was in view of the door where inmates came to receive their medication. Myles, Smart, and a third inmate named Toms came up to the door, where Myles asked to receive some pills for his migraines. The guard on duty, Officer Cox, turned to retrieve them as another guard opened the door to let a third guard out. As soon as the door opened, Myles rushed through, brandishing a meat cleaver he had acquired from the kitchens. Toms threatened the other guards with a knife, and they allowed themselves to be herded into a nearby lavatory. Myles burst into Deputy Warden Rothe's office and attacked Rothe with the cleaver. Rothe deflected the blow with a plywood letterbox.^[101]

The struggle continued for a few seconds. Cox grabbed a chair and raised it to hit Myles, but Lee Smart unveiled the rifle he had had wrapped in a cone of leather and fired once, hitting Rothe in the chest, killing him instantly. Myles turned on Cox and slashed with his cleaver, slicing Cox along his arm.^[102] The inmates quickly herded the guards into the lavatory, along with a civilian mail-sorter, and locked them in. Another guard, Officer Simonsen, was coming up the steps to Inside Administration, and Myles and Smart took him hostage and had him call the warden.^[103]

[] Warden Powell as hostage

At a little after 4:00, Officer Simonsen phoned Warden Powell, who was across the street at his residence. Simonsen told the warden there was a disturbance inside the prison and that someone had been knifed.^[104] Under duress from Myles and Smart, the officer told the warden little else, and Powell rushed through Tower 7 along with two guards to see what the "disturbance" was. As soon as he entered Inside Administration, he was yanked through the doorway. His escort realized something was wrong and retreated, escaping back through Tower 7. The guards on top of this tower knew something was wrong and had tried to warn the warden, but the blustery spring wind had obliterated their words.^[105]

Inside, Warden Powell came face-to-face with Myles and Smart, who immediately forced Powell to call Governor Aronson in [Helena](#). Aronson, however, was out of town and would not return until about 6:30 that evening. Powell left a message with the governor's secretary to have Aronson call Powell at Number 8 as soon as he returned. "Number 8" was a pre-arranged warning that told the governor that Warden Powell had been compromised and that Aronson should not return the call.^[106]

After the call, Powell managed to convince Myles that Cox and Rothe needed medical attention and should be allowed to leave the facility. Myles agreed, and an ambulance collected the

bleeding guard and the deceased deputy warden. Powell also attempted to talk the ringleaders into discontinuing the riot to no avail.^[107]

While Myles and Smart coerced guards and wardens to make telephone calls, Alton, armed with the second rifle, set about securing the remaining guards and administrators of the facility. By 4:30, he had locked 20 men into the hole, including sociologist Walter Jones.^[108] At a few minutes before 5:00, Myles and Smart led Warden Powell and the other four hostages down to the mess hall, and from there led the hostages into cells in Cellblock 1.^[109] Warden Powell sat under guard on one of the mess halls, where he was offered coffee and cake by an inmate. He accepted, and he ate while the rest of the hostages were led from the hole and placed in cells in "Cook's Row" where the kitchen workers were housed.^[110]

At about 6:20, the inmates led Powell back to Inside Administration to wait for Governor Aronson's call, which never came.^[111] Myles and Smart became anxious and left, leaving Powell in the care of Walter Trotchie, who had orders to kill the warden with a kitchen knife at 8:00 if the governor didn't call. 8:00 came and went, and, instead of killing Powell, Trotchie surrendered his weapon and freed the warden, who offered amnesty to any prisoner who wanted to retreat to minimum security. Six inmates agreed to go, including Trotchie, and Warden Powell escaped the prison, secured the inmates who had come with him, and began managing the handling of the riot from outside.^[112]

[] Negotiations and a new escape plan

Myles was angry when he discovered that Powell had escaped, but his rage was bated when he realized they had Walter Jones as a hostage. Myles viewed Jones as one of the reasons he had been ousted as a con-boss. Jones managed to talk Myles out of murdering him by offering himself as a negotiator for the demands of the inmates.^[113]

Meanwhile, Alton approached Myles with the argument that since Deputy Warden Rothe had been shot and killed, their escape plan was now null. Myles acknowledged that the original plan had failed, so he forwarded the idea of tunneling under the walls. He chose a place in the northwestern tower of Cellblock 1^[114] and put a team of inmates, eventually including the kitchen staff, to work with picks and shovels. The progress on this tunnel would continue for the remainder of the riot, but was doomed to fail. Warden Conley had built the cellblocks and the walls specifically to keep inmates from tunneling, and his designs proved effective.^[115]

Outside the walls, Warden Powell was busy trying to deal with budding public reaction to the riot. The word had leaked quickly, and wives of guards who were hostages started showing up at his house. Powell decided to again enter the prison through the tunnel system which gave access to the gun ports in the mess hall and the catwalks in the cellblocks. Luckily, the riot leaders had been unable to secure a key to the access points to this tunnel system, or else Powell may have been taken hostage again. Just after sundown, Powell made his way through the tunnels to the mess hall and shouted for Myles and Smart. Myles showed up, leading Jones with a knife at his throat.^[116] Powell asked what Myles wanted, and received a verbal tirade from Myles, who stalked away, leaving Jones with Alton. Powell was told that Myles wanted at least thirty members of the press to come inside the prison, take pictures of the conditions and speak with the inmates. Powell offered to get three reporters inside the walls under the understanding that they would not print a word of what they learned until the hostages were released. Alton agreed to the plan. Powell returned to his residence to await the coming day.^[117]

Meanwhile, National Guard forces were consolidating at Trask Hall, the gymnasium of Montana's first college campus, just four blocks from the prison.^[118] Members of the press were converging upon the warden's residence, and the city and county switchboards were becoming overrun with calls regarding the riot,^[119] some as far away as [London, England](#). By the next day, reporters from magazines like *Life* and *TIME* descended upon the town, and Deer Lodge's prison riot made international news.^[120]

After midnight, Myles summoned Jones to talk to the media. Through Jones, Myles warned that any offensive action against the prison would end in the killing of the hostages by fire, hanging, or stabbing. Myles then spoke up, telling the amassed media that he was fighting for better conditions and just wanted to be heard. He again threatened the hostages with death if any action was taken against the prison and paraded Jones in front of the windows with a knife at his throat to make his point. Afterward, Myles led Jones back to a cell.^[121]

At midmorning on Friday, Myles and Smart allowed Jones to exit the prison walls to escort the three reporters, one from the [Associated Press](#), another from [United Press International](#), and the third from radio station KREM of [Spokane, Washington](#).^[122] Myles allowed Jones eight minutes to return with the media before he threatened to begin killing hostages. Jones met with the warden and the reporters outside Tower 7 and managed to get the reporters into the mess hall inside his eight minute window.

Only seven inmates met with the reporters, one of which was George Alton, but neither Jerry Myles or Lee Smart took part in the interview. Jones remained to assist the prisoners with their statements.^[123] The reporters recorded a plethora of complaints ranging from the sanitation in Cellblock 2 to the use of the hole as a disciplinary tool, but the most common grievance was the parole system.^[63] The inmates demanded the resignation of Benjamin Wright, the same man the convicts had asked to have fired during the pea riot of 1957.

The reporters were allowed to leave the prison without incident, and Warden Powell announced that he expected to have the hostages released as per the agreement he had made with Alton. Myles, however, demanded more reporters come inside the facility to take pictures, and he stated that nobody would be allowed to leave until he saw the story in print.^[124] Powell, on the other hand, would not re-negotiate a deal. Since Myles refused to release guards, Powell refused to allow the story to run.

This started a twenty-four-plus hour standoff in which Myles railed openly to the media outside the walls;^[125] Alton retired to his cell after an argument with Myles, convinced that no escape was forthcoming;^[126] Jones was again allowed to leave the prison to negotiate with Powell and, under orders from the warden, did not return;^[127] and the hostages survived repeated threats of death by fire, rope, or knife. The hostages were eventually crowded into three cells, and the frightened men planned to press the thin prison mattresses against the bars to ward off any attack, but they knew the shield would not hold long against fire or at all against the rifles.^[128] [Governor Aronson](#), still in Helena, continued to refuse to negotiate with the prisoners, saying:

(I am)...standing firm on my original statement that I have no intention to go to Deer Lodge or to talk to any of the rebellious convicts until order has been restored, all hostages released unharmed and convicts back in their cells.^[129]

End of the riot



Bazooka damage to Cellblock 1

Thirty-six hours after Myles, Smart, and Alton pitched gasoline at a guard to start the riot, the Montana [National Guard](#) ended the riot. At about 4:45 a.m. on 18 April 1959, Bill Rose of the National Guard fired a World War II [bazooka](#) at the southwest tower of Cellblock 1^[130] while Highway Patrolman Bob Zaharko fired a [Thompson submachine gun](#) through a window which had been identified as where Myles and Smart were hiding on the northeast tower of Cellblock 1.^[131] The media had been placed under watch to ensure they did not leak news of the attack to the inmates, who were listening to the radio inside the prison.

While Rose and Zaharko rained ordnance on Cellblock 1, a contingent of seven teams of National Guard waited outside the door to the women's prison on the western wall of the prison.^[132] As soon as the first bazooka round hit Cellblock 1, they burst through the door and split up, some rushing the main entrance to Cellblock 1, others going to Cellblock 2, and more circling around to storm Inside Administration.



View into prison from northeast door

The team that invaded Cellblock 1 had to burst through two barricaded doors^[133] before gaining access to the tiers of cells. Most of the inmates were already in their cells and did not give the Guardsmen any problems. The soldiers filed up to where the hostages were kept and freed them, escorting them through the door into the minimum security facility in the northeast corner of the wall. All the hostages emerged unharmed.^[134]

Back in Cellblock 1, a team of Guardsmen entered the tower where Myles and Smart were hiding. The soldiers had to push past a pile of rubble which had been removed from the unsuccessful tunneling attempt as they made their way up the stairs. During their ascent, Jerry Myles managed to shoot Lieutenant Francis "Russ" Pulliam in the arm, who was removed and remanded to the hospital at Fort Harrison in Helena.^[135] Just after Pulliam was shot, a third bazooka round exploded against the tower, followed by **tear gas** canisters fired from the walls. Moments after the gas began to take effect, Myles and Smart fully ended the riot with a **murder-suicide**.^[136]

[] Aftermath

In an interview for *TIME* Magazine which ran just after the riot, Warden Floyd Powell said, "Things are going to get a lot tougher around here."^[137] As soon as official control returned to the prison, the prison guards and National Guard soldiers locked all 438 inmates inside their cells and began a systematic search of the facility. Tier by tier, the guards removed the prisoners from their cells, had them strip down and stand naked in the prison yard while National Guardsmen removed all personal effects from the cells. The prisoners were subjected to **cavity searches**,^[138] and many, including George Alton, had the dead bodies of Myles and Smart paraded in front of them before the cadavers were surrendered to the coroner.^[139] In their search of the cellhouses, the guards found 382 knives and had to haul away other contraband to the city dump in several 2½ ton truck loads.^[140]



Anti-suicide cell with angled bar



Cell door in maximum security with screen

Warden Powell decided that severe segregation for the remaining instigators of the riot was in order, so he moved the women prisoners out of their building and into housing across the street. They would eventually end up in the [Montana Women's Prison](#) in Billings, Montana. He converted the small building into a [maximum security](#) facility which had twenty-four high security and disciplinary cells.^[141] George Alton spent two years in one of these cells,^[142] which, at the time, did not have plumbing. Inmates were provided a "honey bucket", and it was common practice for recalcitrant inmates to slosh the contents of this waste bucket at passing guards, which led to the installation of screens or wooden doors outside the bars.^[141] Two cells were installed with an angled bar along one wall to which an inmate could be hand- and ankle-cuffed to prevent him from suicide attempts, and two more were converted into "black box" cells, much like the hole had been.^[143]

In the years that followed the riot, Floyd Powell strove to provide the state of Montana with a new facility. The riot had raised awareness of the need for reform, but a five million dollar bond issue put to the citizens of the state failed by a resounding 70%.^[120] A large earthquake damaged Cellblock 2 on 17 August 1959, and the antiquated building was condemned. Its destruction kept inmates busy for a few weeks, but led to severe overcrowding in Cellblock 1. In 1961, [Governor Nutter](#) curtailed the construction of new state buildings and the state government cut funding to the prison in the amount of \$500,000. Warden Floyd Powell resigned in February 1962, a "distraught and frustrated man".^[144]

May 18, 2005 **The Lucasville Prison Riot**

by Justice Paul E. Pfeifer

It was the worst prison riot in Ohio history. On the afternoon of April 11, 1993 – Easter Sunday – inmates at the Southern Ohio Correctional Facility at Lucasville took over L Section, one of the three main prison cellblocks. By the time darkness settled over Lucasville that day, the situation inside the prison was dire: the inmates controlled all of L Section, and they had taken eight corrections officers hostage.

It was a terrifying ordeal for the officers. Defenseless and badly outnumbered, they were at the mercy of the riotous inmates. After eleven grueling days the siege finally ended, but not before corrections officer Robert Vallandingham and nine inmates had been murdered.

Here at the Supreme Court of Ohio we recently reviewed the appeal of George Skatzes, an inmate who was sentenced to death for his role in the uprising.

The riot had its genesis sometime before April 11, 1993, when the Ohio Department of Health mandated that all prison inmates be tested for tuberculosis. The test required an injection, but the Muslim inmates – led by Carlos “Hasan” Sanders – objected to that form of testing on religious grounds.

Word filtered down to the Muslims that there was to be a lockdown – when all inmates would be confined to their cells – the day after Easter, to facilitate the tuberculosis testing. On the evening before the riot, leaders of the Muslims met with members of the Aryan Brotherhood, a white supremacist gang in the prison. The two groups disliked one another, but they found common cause in plotting a riot.

The next day, when the inmates took control of L Section, their planning became evident: the prison's dominant gangs – the Muslims, the Aryan Brotherhood and the Black Gangster Disciples – each took charge of different parts of the cellblock. The Aryans, led by Jason Robb and George Skatzes, controlled L2.

In the early stages of the riot, Robert Vallandingham locked himself in the corrections officers' restroom in L1. But inmates battered open the door and took him hostage. They held him in L6, which was controlled by the Muslims.

Another guard – Jeff Ratcliff – had taken refuge in the back stairwell of L2. The stairwell was supposed to be a safe-haven in such situations, with cement-block walls and a steel door. But using a metal bar from the weight-lifting set in the gym the inmates punched a hole in the wall. When Ratcliff came out they beat him.

An inmate named Earl Elder was in the stairwell with Ratcliff. Elder was considered a “snitch,” and when he emerged from the stairwell they began beating him with baseball bats and stabbing him with shanks. Jason Robb said to Elder, “You want to be police, we will show you what it is to be police.”

Later that night, after meeting in the gym with a Muslim inmate, George Skatzes took Roger Snodgrass, another Aryan Brotherhood member, to L6, where Elder, battered but not dead, was being held in a cell. Outside Elder's cell Skatzes told Snodgrass, “I want you to take this guy out. Go ahead and take care of your business, son.”

Snodgrass went into the cell and stabbed Elder numerous times. When Snodgrass came out, Skatzes put his arm around him and said, “You did a good job, brother, I am proud of you.” Elder was dead. The next morning his body was placed in the recreation yard.

Within two or three days of the takeover, FBI technicians had placed microphones in the tunnels underneath L block. The inmates didn't know it, but their conversations were being recorded.

During the first half of the riot, Skatzes was one of the lead inmate negotiators. After three days, when the inmates were unable to break the stalemate over their demands, the leaders of the three gangs met to discuss their next move. Skatzes and the others voted to kill a guard if their demands were not met.

Prison authorities had cut the power and water in L block. On the morning of April 15, Skatzes got on the phone and demanded that it be restored or “there would be a guaranteed murder.” When the deadline – set by Skatzes – passed without restoration of power or water, Muslim inmates in L6 killed Robert Vallandingham.

When a settlement was finally negotiated on April 21, the inmates began the process of surrendering. At that time, the gang leaders decided that inmate David Sommers, who controlled the phones and recorded the calls throughout the negotiations, “had to die, he knew too much.”

Apparently believing the confusion of the surrender would hide their actions, several inmates, including Skatzes, went after Sommers. When they found him in L7, one inmate tackled Sommers and began stabbing him; Skatzes ran up and kicked him in the head while another

inmate choked Sommers with an extension cord. Then Skatzes hit Sommers in the head with a baseball bat at least three times while the others repeatedly stabbed him.

Skatzes and the others cleaned themselves, burned the clothes they'd had on, and surrendered to authorities. But the confusion wasn't enough to mask their foul deeds. With diligent investigation, the FBI recordings, and eyewitness accounts, law enforcement officials were able to painstakingly piece together the events inside the prison and bring those responsible to justice.

For his part, Skatzes was found guilty as one of the inmates responsible for the murders of Vallandingham, Elder and Sommers. A jury recommended death for the murders of Elder and Sommers and a life sentence for the murder of Vallandingham.

After reviewing his appeal, we affirmed Skatzes' convictions and death sentence by a seven-to-zero vote.

The Lucasville riot was an all-together ugly affair; a public display of the worst humankind has to offer. It took months to clean up the shattered cellblock; so far it's taken considerably longer to clear up the ensuing criminal prosecutions. With our decision in this case, George Skatzes joins the others – including Robb and Sanders – who have been convicted for their part in Ohio's deadliest prison riot.

1986 riot

January 1, 1986 was not only the beginning of a new year, but also the date of one of the most infamous riots in recent history. The West Virginia Penitentiary was then undergoing many changes and problems. Security had become extremely loose in all areas. Since it was a "cons" prison, most of the locks on the cells had been picked and inmates roamed the halls freely. Bad plumbing and insects caused rapid spreading of various diseases. The prison was now holding more than 2,000 men and crowding became an issue once again. Another major contribution to the riot's cause was the fact that it was a holiday. Many of the guards had called off work, which fueled the prisoners to conduct their plan on this specific day.

At around 5:30 pm, twenty inmates, known as a group called the Avengers, stormed the mess hall as Captain Glasscock was on duty. "Within seconds, he (Captain Glasscock), five other guards, and a food service worker were tackled and slammed to the floor. Inmates put knives to their throats and handcuffed them with their own handcuffs."^[14] Even though several hostages were taken throughout the day, none of them were seriously injured. However, over the course of the two-day upheaval, three inmates were slaughtered for an assortment of reasons. "The inmates who initiated the riot were not prepared to take charge of it. Danny Lehman, the Avengers' president, was quickly agreed upon as best suited for the task of negotiating with authorities and presenting the demands to the media."^[14] Yet, Lehman was not a part of the twenty men who began the riot. Governor [Arch A. Moore, Jr.](#) was sent to the penitentiary to converse with the inmates. This meeting set up a new list of rules and standards on which the prison would build. National and local news covered the story, as well as the inmates meeting with Governor Moore.

Riots and lawsuits

By the early 1970s, advocacy groups warned the state government that the situation was becoming dire.^[6]

On July 27, 1973, trouble began in the prison's mess hall, reportedly by five inmates who, according to a prison spokesman, "were doped up on something." It quickly spread through the rest of the facility. At the end of the riot, three days later, three inmates were dead, 12 buildings were burned, and 21 inmates and guards had been injured. Damage was estimated at \$30 million.^[6]

A federal court in 1978 found conditions at OSP unconstitutional.^{[5][7]} The lawsuit, filed by one inmate before the riot, was changed to a class action suit after the riot. U.S. District Judge Luther Bohannon put the Department of Correction under federal control. The last issue of the lawsuit, medical care for offenders, was settled 27 years later, in 2001.^[6]

Consequent to the court's orders, four new housing units were built at OSP, and in 1984 the aging East and West Cellhouses were closed. In 1983, all female inmates were moved to [Mabel Bassett Correctional Center](#) in the [Oklahoma City](#) metropolitan area, near [McLoud](#).^[5]

On December 17, 1985, the inmates became disruptive, then gained control and took five employees as hostages on A and C units. Three of the hostages were seriously injured before their release the next day. The disturbance caused more than \$375,000 in damage and two of the hostages were permanently disabled. After this incident, security was overhauled at the prison to reduce inmate movements, limit recreation, and institute a level-ranking system for offenders to improve safety.^[8]

New Mexico State Penitentiary riot

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Penitentiary of New Mexico Riot of 1980	
Location	Santa Fe , New Mexico
Date	February 2–3, 1980 (MDT)
Attack type	Rioting
Deaths	33
Injured (non-fatal)	200+

The **Penitentiary of New Mexico Prison Riot**, which took place on February 2 and 3, 1980, in the state's [maximum security prison](#) south of [Santa Fe](#), was one of the most violent [prison riots](#) in the history of the American correctional system: 33 inmates died and more than 200 inmates were treated for injuries.^[1] None of the 12 officers taken hostage were killed, but seven were treated for injuries caused by beatings and rapes.^[2]^[page needed] This was the third major riot

at the NM State Penitentiary, the first occurring on 19 July 1922^[3] and the second on 15 June 1953.^[4]

Author Roger Morris suggests the death toll may have been higher, as a number of bodies were incinerated or dismembered during the course of the mayhem.^[5]


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☐ Causes



 One side of cellblock 4, where isolated prisoners were held.

The causes of the New Mexico Penitentiary riot are well documented. Author R. Morris wrote that "the riot was a predictable incident based on an assessment of prison conditions".^[1]

Prison overcrowding and inferior prison services, common problems in many correctional facilities, were major causes of the disturbance.^[1] On the night of the riot, there were 1,136 inmates in a prison designed for only 900.^[6] Prisoners were not adequately separated. Many were housed in communal dormitories that were unsanitary and served poor-quality food.

Another major cause of the riot was the cancellation of educational, recreational and other rehabilitative programs that had run from 1970 to 1975. In that five-year period, the prison had been described as relatively calm.^[7] When the educational and recreational programs were stopped in 1975, prisoners had to be locked down for long periods. These conditions created strong feelings of deprivation and discontent in the inmate population that would later lead to violence and disorder.^[8]

Inconsistent policies and poor communications meant relations between officers and inmates were always in decline. These patterns have been described as paralleling trends in other U.S. prisons from the 1960s and 1970s, and as a factor that moved inmates away from solidarity in the 1960s to violence and fragmentation in the 1970s.^[7]

[] Snitch Game

Due to a shortage of trained correctional staff, officers used a form of social manipulation called the "snitch game" to control uncooperative prisoners. Officers would simply label inmates who would not behave as [informers](#).

This tactic meant the "named" inmate would start being abused by fellow convicts. Often, prisoners would choose to become a "snitch" to get away from their tormentors. However, the practice hampered attempts to get accurate information from inmates. It also increased tensions within the prison, as inmates became even more suspicious of the officers and each other.

Nevertheless, conditions were tolerated by New Mexico's state Governor [Bruce King](#), Director of Prisons Felix Rodriguez and prison officials Robert Montoya and Manuel Koroneos. Warnings of an imminent riot were not heeded.

[] Hostages taken

In the early morning of Saturday, February 2, 1980, two prisoners in south-side Dormitory E-2 overpowered an officer who had caught them drinking homemade [liquor](#). Within minutes, four more of the 15 officers in the dormitory were also taken hostage. At this point the riot might have been contained; however, a fleeing officer left a set of keys behind.

Soon, E-2 dormitory was in the inmates' control. Prisoners using the captured keys now seized more officers as hostages, before releasing other inmates from their cells. Eventually, they were able to break into the prison's master-control center, giving them access to lock and door controls, weapons, and more key sets.

[] Violence ensues



Even though they were filled in, the axe marks are still visible from where an inmate was decapitated.



The burn marks on the floor outside cell block 4 where a prisoner was set on fire.

By mid-morning events had spiraled out of control within the cellblocks. Murder and violence had erupted. Gangs were fighting gangs, and a group of rioters led by some of the most dangerous inmates (who by now had been released from solitary confinement) decided to break into cell block 4, which housed the protective-custody unit. This held the [snitches](#) and those labelled as informers. But it also housed inmates who were vulnerable, mentally ill or convicted of sex crimes. Initially, the plan was to take revenge on the snitches, but the violence soon became indiscriminate.

When the group reached cellblock 4, they found that they did not have keys to enter these cells. Unfortunately for the prisoners in protective custody, the rioters found [blowtorches](#) that had been brought into the prison as part of an ongoing construction project. They used these to cut through the bars over the next five hours. Locked in their cells, the segregated prisoners called to the State Police pleading for them to save them, but to no avail. Waiting officers decided to do nothing despite there being a back door to cellblock 4, which would have offered a way to free them.^[1]

Meanwhile the rioters began taunting prison officials over the radio about what they were going to do to the men in cell block 4. But no action was taken. One official was heard to remark about the men in the segregation facility, "it's their ass".^[1] As dawn broke, an 'execution squad' finally cut through the grille and entered the block. The security panel controlling the cell doors was

burned off. Victims were pulled from their cells to be [tortured](#), dismembered, decapitated, or burned alive.

During an edition of [BBC's *Timewatch*](#) program, an eyewitness described the carnage in cell block 4. They saw an inmate held up in front of a window; he was being tortured by using a blow torch on his face. They then started using the torch on his eyes, and then the inmate's head exploded.^[9]

Men were killed with piping, work tools and knives. One man was partially decapitated after being thrown over the second tier balcony with a noose around his neck. The corpse was then dragged down and hacked up.^[1] Fires had also begun raging unchecked throughout several parts of the prison.

[] Negotiations begin

Talks to end the riot stalled throughout the first 24 hours. This was because neither the inmates nor the state had a single spokesperson. Eventually, inmates made 11 general demands concerned with basic prison conditions like overcrowding, inmate discipline, educational services and improving food. The prisoners also demanded to talk to independent federal officials and members of the news media.

The officers who were held hostage were released after inmates met reporters. Some of the officers had been protected by inmates, but others had been brutally beaten and raped. Seven officers suffered severe injuries.

One was tied to a chair. Another lay naked on a stretcher, blood pouring from a head wound. (Journal reporter)^[citation needed]

Negotiations broke off again in the early hours of Sunday morning with state officials insisting no concessions had been made.

[] Inmates flee

However, eighty prisoners, wanting no further part in the disturbances, fled to the baseball field seeking refuge at the fence where the [National Guard](#) had assembled.

On Sunday morning, more inmates began to trickle out of the prison seeking refuge. Black inmates led the exodus from the smoldering cellblocks.^[1] These groups, large enough to defend themselves from other inmates, huddled together as smoke from the burned-out prison continued to drift across the recreation yard.

[] Order restored

By mid-afternoon, 36 hours after the riot had begun, heavily armed State Police officers accompanied by National Guard servicemen entered the charred remains of the prison.

Official sources state that at least 33 inmates died. Some overdosed on drugs, but most were brutally murdered.^[6] (Some sources cite a higher death toll.)^[citation needed] Twenty-three of the victims had been housed in the protective-custody unit. More than 200 inmates were treated for injuries sustained during the riot.^[10] After the surrender it took days before order was

maintained enough to fully ensure inmates could occupy the prison. National Guardsman over the next two nights threw lumber scraps from Santa Fe Lumber yards over the two layered fence into the Prison Yard to ensure inmates who escaped into the yard would not freeze in the near zero temperatures. Nevertheless rape, gang fights, and racial conflict continued to break out among the inmates.^[4]

[] Legacy

A few inmates were prosecuted for crimes committed during the uprising, but according to author Roger Morris, most crimes went unpunished. The longest additional sentence given to any convict was nine years. Nationally known criminal defense lawyer [William L. Summers](#) led the defense team in defending dozens of inmates charged in the riot's aftermath. In 1982, Mr. Summers received the [National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers](#), Robert C. Heeney award, the highest award available to a criminal defense lawyer for his work in defending the inmates prosecuted with regard to the riot.

After the riots, Governor King's administration resisted attempts to reform the prison.^[4] Actions were not settled until the administration of Governor [Toney Anaya](#) seven years later.

Much of the evidence was lost or destroyed during and after the riot. One federal lawsuit that had been filed by an inmate was held up in the New Mexico prison system for almost two decades.

However, systemic reforms after the riot were undertaken following the [Duran v. King](#) consent decree, which included implementation of the [Bureau Classification System](#) under Cabinet Secretary Joe Williams. This reform work has developed the modern correctional system in New Mexico.

Situated within 20 ft of the main control center, the prison library and its law collection remained relatively untouched.^[11]

McALESTER PRISON RIOT

In July 1973 the Oklahoma State Prison at McAlester erupted into one of the worst prison riots in U.S. history. Crowded conditions that led to the riot had been in place almost since the facility's construction in 1911. Housing capacity for eleven hundred inmates was surpassed in 1920, and by 1973 the prison population exceeded twenty-two hundred. Gov. [David Hall's](#) refusal to sign parole recommendations for drug offenders and individuals convicted of violent crimes had contributed to prison overcrowding. Ill-qualified and too few correctional officers, violence perpetrated by the "convict bosses," and other factors also led to prisoners' discontent.



On Friday July 27, 1973, the prison exploded into violence. Around 2:30 p.m. inmates in the mess hall stabbed Capt. C. C. Smith and Lt. Thomas Payne, who were later treated at a hospital. Prison official Jack Hall and Deputy Warden Sam Johnston both attempted to help but were attacked by eleven or twelve inmates and taken as the first hostages. Approximately twenty-one prison officials were held hostage. At 4:30 p.m. the first of three inmate deaths occurred when Elwoodrow Lee Brooks was stabbed and beaten to death by fellow prisoners. By 5:35 p.m. the inmates had seized the hospital; twenty-five minutes later, the prison was ablaze. Among the demands the inmates made for the release of hostages were total amnesty for the ringleaders of the riot, media coverage, and access to U.S. Justice Department and American Civil Liberties Union attorneys. On July 28 at 12:30 p.m. inmates released the hostages but retained control of the prison until August 4.

The riot caused more than twenty million dollars in damage to twenty-four buildings, and the state considered closing the prison. A Special Task Force Committee on Penal Institutions convened from August 7 to September 21, 1973, to determine the fate of the McAlester prison and the penal system in Oklahoma. The committee determined that the Oklahoma State Prison should function only as a maximum security prison for three hundred to five hundred prisoners and that personnel quality should be improved by in-service training and higher salaries. Unfortunately, these provisions were never fully implemented and thus did little to solve the problems. In March 1974 inmate Bobby Battle, an [African American](#), won a law suit against Warden Park J. Anderson and the Oklahoma Department of Corrections for alleged cruelty and discrimination. U.S. District Court Judge [Luther Bohanon](#) ruled in favor of Battle and subsequently handed down a written opinion listing forty-three orders to corrections officials concerning minimum standards for the prisoners' medical care, housing, and safety. Despite changes in prison conditions, another riot occurred at the Oklahoma State Prison in December 1985.

Timeline of hostage situation at Lewis Complex

Note: In addition to the events detailed below -

The Corrections Command Center received hourly updates (or more frequently, as events warranted) from personnel with the FBI, DPS, Maricopa County Sheriff's Office, and various other local law enforcement authorities.

In addition to overseeing the situation at the Lewis Complex, the Corrections Command Center also received hourly updates from the other nine state correctional facilities to ensure that the hostage situation did not disrupt operations there.

In addition to meetings listed in the timeline with Gov. Napolitano and key staff, Corrections Director Dora Schriro gave phone updates to either Gov. Napolitano or Chief of Staff Dennis Burke every two to three hours (or more frequently, as events warranted).

Numerous phone calls between the inmates and negotiators occurred each day, many without significant progress to report.

This is the best information that we have, but it is an ongoing investigation. Additional information will be developed as the investigation progresses.

Sunday, January 18

2:30 a.m. Members of a kitchen work crew, including Ricky Wassenaar and Steven Coy, are released from their respective cells to report for duty.

3:00 a.m. Wassenaar and Coy enter the kitchen office, where a correctional officer and a civilian food service worker are present.

Wassenaar approaches the correctional officer with a shank (a hand-made knife). Coy blocks the door to prevent the food service worker from leaving.

Wassenaar forces the corrections officer to hand over his uniform and equipment, to include a pair of handcuffs.

Coy restrains the food service worker with an electrical cord.

Wassenaar directs the rest of the inmate work crew into the dry storage area and locks the door.

Wassenaar alters his appearance by shaving his beard in the kitchen area and putting on the correctional officer's uniform.

Wassenaar leaves the kitchen while Coy remains.

4:20 a.m. Wassenaar buzzes the gate near the tower. The officer looks at the monitor and sees what is believed to be another officer and lets Wassenaar in the gate and then the tower where Wassenaar overcomes the two correctional officers assigned to that location.

While Wassenaar is in the tower, main control radios the kitchen for a routine safety check known as a "code 20," Coy directs the corrections officer to respond, "Code 4" (okay).

An on-coming correctional officer enters the kitchen. Coy approaches the officer with a shank and orders him to go into the kitchen office where he observes the first correctional officer restrained to a fixture in the kitchen office and the food service worker restrained, lying on the

floor.

Coy removes the second correctional officer's handcuffs and also restrains him to the fixture.
Before

5:00 a.m. In response to a radio call, Coy releases the second correctional officer from the handcuffs to open the kitchen door. After opening the door, the second correctional officer runs out into the dining area. Two correctional officers are in the dining room and confront Coy, who draws the shank and injures one of the officers,

The officer who had been released from the handcuffs runs from the kitchen onto the yard.

Coy chases that officer onto the yard. The two officers who were in the dining room give chase as well, and radio for emergency response.

Coy is stopped in the yard by staff responding to the radio call. He is directed to drop the shank pepper spray is dispensed. Wassenaar fires several rounds into the yard from the base of the tower and Coy runs to the tower. Wassenaar and Coy enter the tower.

5:25 a.m. Southern Regional Operations Director Meg Savage is paged by Lewis Complex personnel and advised of a serious, unspecified inmate disturbance.

5:31 a.m. Lewis Complex duty officer is advised of hostage situations in the dining hall and observation tower of Lewis Morey Unit.

5:34 a.m. Division Director Jeff Hood is notified of the situation.

5:37 a.m. Department of Corrections Tactical Support Unit (TSU) at Perryville is activated and placed on standby.

5:52 a.m. Lewis Complex Warden William Gaspar is notified by Director Hood.

6:30 a.m. Corrections personnel identify the officers who have been taken hostage.

Corrections personnel requests hostage negotiators of the Arizona Department of Public Safety.

6:37 a.m. Dennis Burke, chief of staff to Governor Janet Napolitano, is notified of the incident. He notifies the Governor and key staff.

7:00 a.m. Wassenaar demands a helicopter and a pizza.

7:14 a.m. Corrections Director Dora Schriro is contacted out of state and returns to Arizona.

7:18 a.m. TSU snipers are positioned on buildings surrounding the tower.

7:26 a.m. Command center is established at Department of Corrections headquarters.

7:45 a.m. DPS SWAT team and negotiators are on site at Lewis Complex.

8:05 a.m. DPS negotiator makes first, 7-minute phone contact with Wassenaar.

8:20 a.m. Wassenaar demands handcuff keys, and repeats demand for a helicopter, and to talk

to Warden Gaspar and the Governor.

8:20-11:20 Negotiators have various conversations with Wassenaar, in which he backs off of his demand for a helicopter, demands a radio, describes injuries of the corrections officers held, and allows officers to speak briefly to one hostage.

11:19 a.m. Negotiators on the phone with Wassenaar play a tape-recorded message from his sister, pleading for him to end the situation peacefully.

11:30 a.m. Director Schriro, having flown back to Arizona, arrives at command center.

11:38 a.m. Negotiators share with Wassenaar the plan to deliver a handcuff key, in exchange for bullets.

12:36 p.m. Wassenaar demands to talk to a television news crew.

12:30-5:30 Various phone conversations occur between negotiators and Wassenaar.

5:25 p.m. DPS robot delivers AM/FM radio to inmates.

Evening - Negotiations continue on conditions for delivering a key to the inmates.

Monday, January 19

Negotiations via phone and/or radio continue on and off throughout the day.

2:40 a.m. DPS robot delivers one pack of Camel unfiltered cigarettes.

6:52 a.m. DPS robot delivers one radio battery for two-way radio already in the tower, one handcuff key, a radio charger, and cookies.

7:52 a.m. Inmates return handcuff key along with three shotgun shells and #23 rubber ball rounds (non-lethal).

1:08 p.m. DPS robot delivers 1 pack of Camel filtered cigarettes, a hygiene packet (toothbrush, toothpaste, soap, a comb and a dental pick), four bottles of water and four styro cups.

1:18 p.m. Inmates turn in one round of 37mm wooden non-lethal projectiles (designed to be fired at the ground and hit the object at knee-level).

3:00 p.m. Governor and key staff receive daily briefing at the command center from Director Schriro and key Corrections staff and interagency personnel.

Tuesday, January 20

Negotiations via phone and/or radio continue throughout the day.

12:30 p.m. Governor and key staff receive daily briefing at the command center from Director Schriro and key Corrections staff and interagency personnel.

1:22 p.m. DPS robot delivers one handcuff key, bottled water, two bars of soap, one pack of

coffee and seven individual cigarettes.

1:38 p.m. In return for delivery, inmates allow negotiators to get a visual confirmation of corrections officers being held.

9:51 a.m. DPS robot delivers four large cheeseburgers, two small cheeseburgers, four large orders of fries, four sodas, two packs of cigarettes and one package of coffee.

In return, inmates turn in numerous types of prescription drugs, two hand-made shanks, one canister of Mace and one cartridge for a 37 mm gun.

11:00 p.m. A health and welfare check is conducted with hostages via two-way radio.

Wednesday, January 21

Negotiations via phone and/or radio continue throughout the day.

8:00 a.m. Governor and key staff receive daily briefing at the command center from Director Schriro and key Corrections staff and interagency personnel.

12:20 a.m. DPS robot delivers a package of 8 Tylenol and three small cups in a plastic bag.

In return, inmates return two Mac 9 pepper spray gas canisters.

12:22 p.m. Inmates fire .37mm pepper spray gas into the yard after discovering that a nearby fence had been cut.

7:29 p.m. Negotiators receive voice confirmation of alertness of both hostages.

Thursday, January 22

Negotiations via phone and/or radio continue throughout the day.

9:30 a.m. Governor and key staff receive daily briefing at the command center from Director Schriro and key Corrections staff and interagency personnel.

10:29 a.m. Wassenaar asks to speak to a television reporter, answering questions the reporter would fax to him.

12:15 p.m. Negotiators give inmates interstate compact letters from other states to review.

3:20 p.m. Both corrections officers appears briefly on the roof, allowing for a visual welfare inspection.

9:30 p.m. Governor and key staff receive another briefing at the command center from Director Schriro and key Corrections staff and interagency personnel.

Friday, January 23

Negotiations via phone and/or radio continue throughout the day.

9:00 a.m. Governor and key staff receive daily briefing at the command center from Director Schriro and key Corrections staff and interagency personnel.

9:25 a.m. Inmates bring into the tower from outside water jugs that were there before the incident.

4:50 p.m. Wassenaar demands to speak to a reporter on live radio.

8:45 p.m. Negotiators discuss with Wassenaar terms of releasing one corrections officer.

Saturday, January 24

Negotiations via phone and/or radio continue throughout the day.

10:00 a.m. Governor and key staff receive daily briefing at the command center from Director Schriro and key Corrections staff and interagency personnel.

3:15 p.m. DPS robot delivers a package of five boxes of roast beef, five bags of dried beans, five summer sausages, five packages of tortillas, three tubes of Pringles potato chips, 18 Pepsis, 20 packs of jalapeño cheese, four packages of tuna, 10 packs of mayonnaise, and 10 candy bars. This represents half of the food the inmates requested. The other half would be delivered after the safe release of an officer.

3:20 p.m. Inmates release one corrections officer.

3:38 p.m. SWAT team members deliver second half of the food request: six cheeseburgers, six large orders of french fries, two large pizzas, 14 packs of cigarettes, and two packs of white cheese.

7:15 p.m. Negotiators hear remaining correctional officer voice during a conversation with Coy, confirming her alertness.

Sunday, January 25

Negotiations via phone and/or radio continue throughout the day.

Family members of one inmate arrive in Arizona to serve as third-party intermediaries..

10:00 a.m. Governor and key staff receive daily briefing at the command center from Director Schriro and key Corrections staff and interagency personnel.

Monday, January 26

Negotiations via phone and/or radio continue throughout the day.

10:00 a.m. Governor and key staff receive daily briefing at the command center from Director Schriro and key Corrections staff and interagency personnel.

Tuesday, January 27

Negotiations via phone and/or radio continue throughout the day.

10:00 a.m. Governor and key staff receive daily briefing at the command center from Director Schriro and key Corrections staff and interagency personnel.

5:05 p.m. SWAT team members deliver three towels, three blankets, and three wash cloths.

5:10 p.m. In return for the delivery of towels and blankets, inmates make the remaining hostage visible to negotiators for a welfare check by having her appear on the observation deck.

5:32 p.m. Wassenaar asks to be interviewed on radio as a term of his release, as confirmation that the state will make good on the terms.

Wednesday, January 28

Negotiations via phone and/or radio continue on and off throughout the day.

Family members of the other inmate arrive in Arizona to assist in negotiations.

9:00 a.m. Governor and key staff receive daily briefing at the command center from Director Schriro and key Corrections staff and interagency personnel.

12:28 p.m. SWAT team members deliver hygiene products for inmates and the corrections officer in return for a health and welfare check of the officer.

2:21 p.m. Negotiators hear corrections officer in the background of a phone call with Wassenaar, confirming her alertness.

Thursday, January 29

Negotiations via phone and/or radio continue throughout the day.

9:00 a.m. Governor and key staff receive daily briefing at the command center from Director Schriro and key Corrections staff and interagency personnel.

3:40 p.m. SWAT team members deliver three cinnamon rolls, one six-pack of tortillas and two packs of cigarettes, in return for a health and welfare check of the corrections officer conducted by a paramedic.

10:00 p.m. Governor and key staff meet with Director Schriro and key corrections staff address progress on negotiations, including a demand by Wassenaar to be interviewed on radio.

Friday, January 30

Negotiations via phone and/or radio continue throughout the day.

10:00 a.m. Governor and key staff receive daily briefing at the command center from Director Schriro and key Corrections staff and interagency personnel.

3:36 p.m. SWAT team members deliver three cinnamon rolls, one bottle of Pedialite, one bottle of Gatorade and one pack of cigarettes, in return for a health and welfare check of the

corrections officer.

7:16 p.m. The corrections officer is interviewed by a physician for a health and welfare check.

Saturday, January 31

Negotiations via phone and/or radio continue throughout the day.

10:00 a.m. Key staff to the Governor receive daily briefing at the command center from Director Schriro and key Corrections staff and interagency personnel.

3:56 p.m. SWAT team members deliver a half an onion, part of a loaf of bread, two bottles of Gatorade and one bottle of diluted Gatorade for the correctional officer.

5:22 p.m. Wassenaar appears on the observation deck holding a shotgun backwards in his right hand.

7:17 p.m. The corrections officer is interviewed via phone by a physician for a health and welfare update.

8:08 p.m. SWAT team members deliver four pouches of tuna, one jar of Pedialite, and one pack of cigarettes.

Sunday, February 1

9:20 a.m. Third Party Intermediary (TPI) on phone.

10:04 a.m. Wassenaar identifies negotiator he wants to deal with; begin identifying surrender demands. Cigarettes & property in van; additional demands once negotiator on site.

10:14 a.m. Audio of officer saying she "is fine".

11:04 a.m. Delivery of 4 packs of cigarettes.

11:29 a.m. Recap demands

Power on (to access lower floor for bathroom access)

Talk to sister (Wassenaar)

Play tape of inmate's ex-wife (Coy)

Property in van

Paperwork confirming no ADC or county custody for future court proceedings

Clothing

Steak, beer, pizza

11:52 a.m. Governor arrives at Central Office Command.

12:35 p.m. Tape of Coy's ex-wife played.

12:51 p.m. Correctional officer observed on roof with Wassenaar. She does not leave hatch area.

1:26 p.m. Call with Wassenaar's sister.

2:04 p.m. Wassenaar calls. If no power, no contact and additional demands in 24-hours. Then if

no power & additional demands not met, no contact for 48 hours & additional demands.

2:39 p.m. Power switched on.

2:46 p.m. Wassenaar fires 37 mm multiple baton rounds (non-lethal).

2:57 p.m. Wassenaar reports no power.

3:13 p.m. Clothing & copies of revised paperwork delivered. Wassenaar comments he may have disabled power in tower. Food includes 3 steaks, 3 baked potatoes, 2 12 oz. cans of beer, 3 sodas. Clothing includes 2 inmate uniforms consisting of shirts, pants, underwear, socks and shoes.

3:39 p.m. Director briefs Governor on status.

3:41 p.m. Key delivered to allow inmates to access first floor to use bathroom and to clear obstacles & traps to facilitate opening of door and exit of the inmates and hostage.

3:47 p.m. Key inoperable.

4:18 p.m. 2nd key delivered.

4:23 p.m. Bureau of Prisons & TPI staged on perimeter.

4:25 p.m. Coy at hatch with binoculars.

4:39 p.m. Governor calls for update.

5:16 p.m. Contact initiated to talk surrender process specifics; Coy advises to call back.

5:19 p.m. Governor returns to Central Office Command Center.

5:31 p.m. Contact initiated to talk surrender process specifics; Coy advises to call back.

5:45 p.m. Contact initiated to talk surrender process specifics; Coy advises to call back.

5:52 p.m. Wassenaar calls. Discussions about specific steps to exit tower.

6:17 p.m. Wassenaar on roof in orange uniform, signifying door clear for opening by tactical team.

6:20 p.m. Tactical team approaches tower, opens door, props door open with sandbag. Team retreats approximately 10 yards.

6:25 p.m. Wassenaar comes out with his hands up. He complies with the order to turn around and lay on the ground and is restrained. Correctional Officer exits the tower next and is recovered by a tactical team, and removed to the Administration Building and awaiting ambulance. Coy exits the tower and is taken into custody and restrained.

6:32 p.m. Correctional officer is examined and treated in ambulance.

6:48 p.m. Helicopter departs complex with Correctional Officer.

6:51 p.m. Governor & Director depart for hospital.

7:08 p.m. Helicopter arrives at hospital with Correctional Officer.

7:34 p.m. Inmates depart with Bureau of Prisons.

Vorkuta uprising

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The **Vorkuta Uprising** was a major uprising of the [concentration camp](#) inmates at the [Vorkuta Gulag](#) in [Vorkuta, Russia](#) in July–August 1953, shortly after the arrest of [Lavrentiy Beria](#). The uprising was violently stopped by the camp administration after two weeks of bloodless standoff. Vorkuta *Rechlag* (River Camp) or Special Camp No. 6 consisted of 17 separate "departments" engaged in construction of [coal mines](#), coal mining and forestry. In 1946 it housed 62,700 inmates, 56,000 in July 1953. A substantial portion of the camp guards were former convicts. According to [Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn](#), the uprising was provoked by two unconnected events of June 1953: arrest of Lavrentiy Beria in [Moscow](#) and an arrival of [Western Ukrainian](#) prisoners who, unlike long-term Russian inmates, were still missing their freedom.

The uprising—initially in the form of a passive [walkout](#)—began on or before July 19, 1953 at a single "department" and quickly spread to five others. Initial demands—to give inmates access to [state attorney](#) and due justice—quickly changed to political demands. According to inmate Leonid Markizov, [Voice of America](#) and [BBC](#) broadcast regular news about the events in *Rechlag*, with correct names, ranks and numbers. Even without foreign assistance, strike at nearby sites was clearly visible as the [flywheels](#) of mine elevators stopped rotating. The total number of inmates on strike reached 18,000. The inmates remained static within the barbed wire [perimeters](#).

For a week following the initial strike the camp administration did apparently nothing; they increased perimeter guards but took no forceful action against inmates. The mines were visited by State Attorney of USSR [Roman Rudenko](#), [Internal Troops](#) Commander [Ivan Maslennikov](#) and other top brass from Moscow. The generals spoke to the inmates who sat idle in camp courtyards, so far peacefully. However, July 26 the mob stormed the maximum security punitive compound, releasing 77 of its inmates. The commissars from Moscow remained in Vorkuta, planning their response.

On July 31 camp chief Derevyanko started mass arrests of "saboteurs"; inmates responded with [barricades](#). Next day, August 1, after further bloodless clashes between inmates and guards, Derevyanko ordered direct fire at the mob. According to Leonid Markizov, 42 were killed on site, 135 wounded (many of them, deprived of medical help, died later). According to Solzhenitsyn, there were 66 killed.

After submission of the mob, many "saboteurs" were arrested and placed into maximum security cells, but without further punitive executions. Conditions were marginally improved (especially for "political" inmates).

Kengir uprising

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Kengir uprising	
Date	16 May 1954 – 26 June 1954
Location	Kengir , Kazakh SSR
Result	Uprising suppressed
Belligerents	
 Red Army	 Kengir resistance ^[1]
 MVD	
 Gulag authorities	
Commanders and leaders	
 Sergei Yegorov	 Kapiton Kuznetsov
 Ivan Dolgikh	
Strength	
1,700	5,200
Casualties and losses	
40 wounded ¹	500–700

killed/wounded ² 37 killed ¹ 106 wounded ¹
¹ Official Soviet figure ² Prisoner-provided figure



Approximate location of Kengir camp in Kazakhstan

The **Kengir uprising** was a prisoner uprising that took place in the [Soviet prison labor camp Kengir](#) in May and June 1954. Its duration and intensity distinguished it from other [Gulag](#) uprisings in the same period (see [Vorkuta uprising](#)).

After the murder of some of their fellow prisoners by guards, Kengir inmates launched a rebellion and proceeded to seize the entire camp compound, holding it for weeks and creating a period of freedom for themselves unique in the history of the Gulag. Following a rare alliance between the [criminals](#) and [political prisoners](#), the prisoners succeeded in forcing the guards and camp administration to flee the camp and effectively quarantine it from the outside. The prisoners thereafter set up intricate defenses to prevent the incursion of the authorities into their newly won territory. This situation lasted for an unprecedented length of time and gave rise to a panoply of colorful and novel activity, including the democratic formation of a [provisional government](#) by the prisoners, prisoner marriages, the creation of indigenous religious ceremonies, a brief flowering of art and culture, and the waging of a large, relatively complex [propaganda](#) campaign against the erstwhile authorities.

After 40 days of freedom within the camp walls, intermittent negotiation, and mutual preparation for violent conflict, the uprising was suppressed by [Soviet armed forces](#) with [tanks](#) and guns on the morning of 26 June.^[2] According to former prisoners, five to seven hundred people were killed or wounded in the suppression, although official figures claim only a few dozen had been killed. The story of the uprising was first committed to history in *The Gulag Archipelago*, a [nonfiction](#) work by former-prisoner and [Nobel Prize-winning Russian](#) author [Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn](#).

[] Background

[] Gulag

A year before the uprising, the Soviet dictator [Joseph Stalin](#) died. His death raised great hopes among the prisoners of amnesty or, failing that, prison reform, and this hope was further emboldened by the subsequent downfall of Stalin's right hand man and state security chief, [Lavrenty Beria](#). Beria, who was the chief of the entire Soviet security and police apparatus and architect of some of the most hated policies relating to the camps, was declared an "[enemy of the people](#)" and executed by those who succeeded Stalin. Beria's newly besmirched name became a liability to others in both the upper and lower echelons of the Soviet hierarchy, and anybody who was associated with or spoke too much in favour of Beria was similarly at risk of being denounced as a traitor and persecuted. The camp administration were not excluded from this risk, and this fact in turn significantly weakened their position *vis à vis* the prisoners. Writing about the strikes which were taking place at the time, Solzhenitsyn described this issue:

“ They had no idea what was required of them and mistakes could be dangerous! If they showed excessive zeal and shot down a crowd they might end up as henchmen of Beria. But if they weren't zealous enough, and didn't energetically push the strikers out to work — exactly the same thing could happen.^[3] ”

Prisoners all over gulag, for this reason and others, were becoming increasingly bold and impudent in the months preceding the uprising, with [hunger strikes](#), work stoppages, large-scale insubordination, and punitive violence becoming more and more common. In Kengir in particular, camp authorities were rapidly losing all control over their charges, and the [communiqués](#) periodically sent by commanders up the camp hierarchy, in which they expressed their horror at the frequent incidents of unrest, powerful underground organizations, the growing "crisis" afflicting their network of informants, and their desperate attempts to reassert control, attest to this.^[4]

[] Kengir

[] Thieves

The uprising's roots can be traced back to a large in-shipment of "thieves" — the accepted slang term for the habitual criminals who were also imprisoned in Gulag along with the political prisoners. Traditionally thieves and politicals had been antagonists, with the thieves exercising virtually unchecked dominance over the politicals, robbing and abusing them at will, and with the politicals remaining too disunited to muster a credible defense. This situation was facilitated by a variably complacent and actively encouraging camp administration, which recognized the potential of thieves as an effective means of suppressing the politicals and preventing them from uniting in a common cause. Indeed, the infusion of roughly 650 thieves into the roughly 5,200-strong body of political prisoners^[5] at Kengir at the beginning of May was specifically for this purpose, as the Kengir prisoners had organized strikes before on a smaller scale and were becoming increasingly restless. The camp authorities hoped that these thieves would, as they had in the past, help reverse this trend.^[6]

[] Informers

It is important to note that, while the Gulag labour camps were founded in the early 1920s, only in the early 1950s were the politicals and 'thieves' finally separated into different camp systems. With the thieves out of the way, the politicals began to unite in ways unprecedented in Gulag. The building blocks of this process were national, religious, and ethnic groups ([Ukrainians](#), [Kazakhs](#), [Chechens](#), [Armenians](#), [Estonians](#), [Muslims](#), [Christians](#), etc.) who quickly consolidated into strong groups and led the way towards the building of a camp-wide coalition, primarily by launching huge campaigns of murder against camp [informer](#)s or prisoners who otherwise colluded in any way with the camp administration. Along with the thieves, the informers were the primary impediment to the politicals uniting together in the past. The informers kept their identities secret, denounced fellow prisoners often, and worked assiduously to root out and finger potentially troublesome prisoners. Because of this, a massive [chilling effect](#) was created among prisoners, who feared opening up to or trusting each other. These national and ethnic blocks, though, began the fight against the informers, systematically fishing out and killing them with a vigour and efficiency so great that the remaining, unidentified informers fled to the camp administration for protection.^[7]

[] Weaponry and organization

Of these above mentioned ethnic blocks, the Ukrainians, many of whom were exiled members of the [Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists](#) (by some estimates making up over a half of the camps' population) were undoubtedly the most important, and they quickly asserted a leadership role amongst the prisoners. Members of this "Ukrainian Centre", as it was often called, were the primary proponents killing informers and later would prove essential to dealing with the newly arrived thieves.^[8]

Along with this effective elimination of informers, the prisoners began fashioning relatively high quality [shivs](#), which were previously the exclusive territory of thieves. In addition, many incidents took place (usually including the wanton murder of some well-liked prisoners by guards) during the previous months that came to fuel resentment and justify extreme action on behalf of the prisoners.^[8] Protests and collective refusals to work were increasing in frequency and the prisoners were learning the ropes of how to plan and maintain large-scale disturbances, mainly by creating systems of communication between camp divisions and, more importantly, by establishing [command hierarchies](#).

Into this changed climate the thieves were injected and, to the surprise of the camp authorities, they instantly joined forces with the politicals, meeting secretly on the first night with the Ukrainian Centre and establishing a pact.^[9] This was due both to the fact that they recognized their odds against the almost 5,200 strong body of well-armed and united political prisoners, and because thieves across the whole Gulag caught wind of the politicals' campaign against the informers and began to admire and respect them.^[6]

[] The camp compound

The entire Kengir camp complex formed a large rectangle, divided up width-wise into four distinct areas: the women's camp, the "service yard", where all the workshops and storerooms were located, and two camps for men, each with its own jailhouse for punishing prisoners or hiding informers. The women's camp was blocked off both from access and sight to the men's camp.

[] Seizing of the camp

The formative stage of the uprising began on the evening of 16 May, a Sunday and thus a day off for all the prisoners. The thieves contrived to break into the service yard, where all the food was stored, and from there break into the women's camp, which was easier to do from that location. This they initially did, but they were shortly chased off by guards. At nightfall, though, the thieves regrouped, shot out all of the lights in range with their [slingshots](#), and broke through the barrier between the men's camp and service yard with an improvised [battering ram](#).^[10] It was at this point the Kengir uprising proper started when the guards opened fire on the thieves, killing 13 and wounding 43.^[8]

The remaining thieves retreated and an uneasy peace followed. During the night, though, thieves, now joined by the politicals, started breaking up their bunks and cells, trying to add to their cache of shivs and arm those without weapons, while the camp authorities posted machine gunners at the hole in the wall. After a tense standoff, the camp authorities, in a surprise gesture, ordered the withdrawal of all guards from the compound.

Despite appearances, this was a strictly tactical move on the part of the authorities. The following day they feigned acquiescence to the prisoners demands and, while the prisoners then agreeably went off to work outside the camp, the guards busied themselves patching up the broken-down wall. Nevertheless this was a strategic error on their part because it exposed the [bad faith](#) of the guards and eliminated all remaining trust the prisoners had in their word. More importantly, though, the prisoners had, for one whole day, tasted total freedom (within the confines of the camp compound), mingling freely with the female prisoners, eating their fill, and fraternizing as they pleased, and this put in them a desire for freedom that would not be so easily quenched.^[11]

This time also saw the first propaganda offensive by the camp authorities (they re-enacted, in full prisoner costume, the alleged rape of the women prisoners and photographed themselves, releasing the photographs and declaring that the revolt was in fact a cover for debauchery and hedonism), setting the tone for the many that would follow.^[11]

When the prisoners became aware of these tricks and lies, they quickly and forcefully reasserted themselves, running amok and sending the guards fleeing from the camp again. They then proceeded to re-destroy the wall that had just been repaired and release the prisoners from the camp's solitary confinement cells. The camp had been seized and would remain in the control of the prisoners for the next 40 days.

[] The new camp society

[] Culture

With the entire camp at their disposal, and with feelings of fellowship and good-will in abundance, prisoners began to enjoy the joys of normal, everyday life which had been denied to them for so long. As Solzhenitsyn and others retold, men and women from different camp divisions who had romantically conversed in secret for years, but had never seen each other, finally met.^[12] Imprisoned priests presided over a number of improvised weddings. Prisoners retrieved what remained of their civilian clothing from the storeroom (the guards regularly stole and sold prisoners' items), and soon prisoners were seen adorned with fur coats and assorted colourful clothing, in addition to the religious wear that had been banned. Business, as well,

resumed as best it could, with one Russian aristocrat opening up a "[café](#)" serving [ersatz](#) "coffee", which proved to be quite popular with the prisoners.^[13]

In short order, a number of organized recreational activities also sprang up. Because of the large number of political prisoners in Gulag, almost every camp boasted an enviable selection of highly skilled and trained engineers, scientists, intellectuals, and artists, and advanced lectures were delivered for the enjoyment of the educated classes and philistines alike.^[13] Art flourished as well, with poetry recitals and even hastily prepared [plays](#) being performed. [Hymns](#), penned by the Ukrainians, were performed en masse.^[13] One hymn in particular, with its simultaneously mournful and celebratory tone and its stirring demand for freedom, stands as representative of the prevailing themes in the works produced during the uprising:

“ We will not, we will not be slaves
We will not, we will not carry the [yoke](#) any longer.^[14] ”

In addition to the renewed presence of religious regalia, religious practices were also given new life. Notably, one of the religious sects massed at the original hole broken into the dividing wall on the first night of the uprising, claiming that their prophet had predicted its destruction and the freedom that followed.^[13] They, according to former prisoners, then sat on mattresses for several days by the hole, praying and waiting to be taken to heaven.^[13]

[] Government

Soon after the camp was taken over, the prisoners congregated into the [mess hall](#) and decided to elect a new leader, and a former [Red Army Lieutenant colonel](#), [Kapiton Kuznetsov](#), was chosen. A major reason for this choice was that the Ukrainian Center insisted on having Russian leadership of the rebellion and, indeed, on having the entire government be as [multiethnic](#) and multinational as possible. This was done mainly to avoid the appearance of the rebellion being anti-Russian in character, but also as an enlightened attempt to create a harmonious camp society and government.^[15]

Kuznetsov and his administration were originally delegated to conduct negotiations with the camp authorities on behalf of the prisoners, but as the prisoners' control of the camp lasted beyond expectation and as demand for law, order, and efficiency increased, the jurisdiction of this government increased in turn. Therefore, various government departments were quickly created:^[16]

- Agitation and Propaganda
- Services and Maintenance (laundry, shoe and clothing repair, haircuts and shaves, and other services typical to the camp were continued throughout on a volunteer basis)
- Food (their food stores, at the rate they were rationed, could have lasted many months)
- Internal Security (some [counterrevolutionary](#) prisoners, who were openly pleading with others to surrender to the (original) camp authorities, were put into the camp jail.)
- Defence (Military)
- Technical Department (staffed by the engineers, scientists, and other professionals imprisoned in the camp)

[] Propaganda

The first expansion of the government's authority came as a natural extension of its role as mouthpiece of the prisoners: propaganda. A theme was carefully set by Kuznetsov and taken over by his deputy, Yuriy Knopmus. The theme crucially undercut the main argument that would have been used by the camp authorities to crush the rebellion, which was that the rebellion was [anti-Soviet](#) in nature. Even with Stalin dead, this represented a red-line that was not to be crossed. Instead, Knopmus schemed to portray the guards as "Beria-ites" (a deadly charge at the time) and the rebellion as a patriotic, vanguard movement against them. Soon placards were raised declaring such sentiments as "Long live [the Soviet constitution!](#)" and "Down with murdering Beria-ites!"^[17]

As the new state of affairs continued, the Propaganda department's activities grew. At first they were all largely defensive in intent — literally just responding to allegations hurled at them across the fence. The guards broadcast propaganda over loudspeakers into the camp, urging surrender and decrying the loss of days of valuable prison labor and the alleged detrimental effect it was having on the [Soviet economy](#). In response, the prisoners, using a modified loudspeaker, broadcast back a whole set of mock radio programmes, complete with comedy programs and skits, written by the Agitation and Propaganda department and announced by a charismatic female prisoner.^[18] One of the guard's stenographers recorded some of the broadcasts, and these records made their way into the Soviet archives. An excerpt of one broadcast:

“ Comrade Soldiers! We are not afraid of you, and we ask you not to come into our zone. Don't shoot at us, don't buckle under the will of the Beria-ites! We are not afraid of them just as we are not afraid of death. We would rather die of hunger in this camp than give up to the Beria-ite band! Don't soil your hands with the same dirty blood which your officers have on their hands!”^[19]

Later, with the help of the Technical Department, their schemes became increasingly ambitious. The prisoners, realizing the precariousness of their situation, endeavored to publicize their rebellion and demands to the village adjacent to the camp, hoping to incite its citizens to supportive action. To do this, they first employed specially rigged, [hot air balloons](#) with slogans written on them (these were shot down by the guards) and, later, kites manufactured by the [Chechens](#), who turned out to be specialists in the field. The kites were successful for a time. In favorable winds, they dropped packets of leaflets to the settlements below, but the authorities soon sent up kites to tangle the prisoners' kite's lines.^[20] At last, seizing on a solid, successful strategy, the prisoners fixed leaflets to carrier pigeons, releasing dozens into the blue.^[21]

[] Defense

Along with propaganda, defense came to the fore of the new government's list of priorities. Before the exiled camp authorities cut off the camp's electricity, the [smiths](#) and [lathe-operators](#) in the camp fashioned all manner of weaponry in the service yard's workshops — long [pikes](#) from prison bars, sabers, [staves](#), and clubs amongst them.^[22] In addition to this, the prisoners ground glass into dust and placed buckets of this dust throughout the camp, hoping to [blind](#) oncoming troops with it.^[23] Barricades were established at key points, and responsibility for

manning them was divided up amongst the camp barracks (renamed "detachments" by the Defense department), with set shifts and procedures.

The Technical Department contributed to this effort as well, namely by creating [improvised explosive devices](#) and [incendiary bombs](#), both of which, according to Solzhenitsyn, saw use during the actual invasion in June, the latter bringing down a guard tower.^[24]

[] Technical Department

In addition to the above mentioned innovations, the Technical Department dealt with any number of problems that arose. When the exiled camp authorities cut off the camp's electrical supply, the electricians among the prisoners siphoned electricity from the wires passing overhead just outside the perimeter fence. This too was terminated by the authorities after a few days, and thereafter the prisoners used a modified motor as a generator and even improvised a running tap "[hydroelectric station](#)" to supply power to the government headquarters and medical barracks.^[25]

[] Negotiations

Negotiations between the authorities and rebels began almost immediately, as was becoming the custom with prisoner disturbances, but were from the beginning wrought with difficulty. The camp authorities again immediately acquiesced to virtually all of the prisoners demands, but this time, with the past deceit still fresh in their minds, the prisoners did not accept this solution as sufficient and demanded a written agreement. A draft was written up by the authorities, passed around the camp and widely panned. From here negotiations cooled until higher-ranking officers came in from other cities. Solzhenitsyn explained:

“ Golden-[epauleted](#) personages, in various combinations, continued coming in the camp to argue and persuade. They were all allowed in, but they had to pick up [white flags](#) [...] and undergo a body search. They showed the generals around, [...] let them talk to prisoners, and called big meetings in the Camp Divisions for their benefit. Their epaulets flashing, the bosses took their seats in the [presidium](#) as of old, as though nothing were amiss.^[26]”

To these generals and others were presented the same set of demands: punishment of the soldiers responsible for the murder of various prisoners and beating of women prisoners; that prisoners who had been transferred to other camps as punishment for participating in a strike be brought back; that prisoners no longer had to wear degrading number patches or be locked into their dormitories at night; that the walls separating camp divisions (namely between the men's and women's camps) not be rebuilt; that an [eight-hour work day](#) be instituted; that limits be taken off the number of letters they could send and receive; that certain hated camp guards and officials be removed from Kengir; and that, most importantly, their cases be reviewed.^{[14][27]}

None of these demands were unconstitutional. The original regulation specifically provided for all that the prisoners were asking, and that a simple reinstatement of those rights was all that was being requested.^[27]

The generals, now with [Sergei Yegorov](#), deputy chief of the [MVD](#), and [Ivan Dolgikh](#), division commander of Gulag, among them, once again agreed to the prisoners demands as whole, but, still failing to match a written contract to their words, they were once again rejected by the prisoners.^[14]

The discussions then further broke down into threats and counter-threats. The prisoners, out of a lack of trust in their current negotiating partners, demanded that a member of the [Central Committee](#) be sent and this was flatly refused.

[] Sowing discord

Prior to the raid, attempts were made by the camp authorities to sow [civil violence](#) within the camp, both so that the prisoners would slaughter each other and make the job easier for the invading troops, and to provide an ostensible justification for the massive armed intervention to begin with. Direct requests were made to high-ranking prisoners that they "provoke racial bloodbath" and, in exchange, get to keep their lives^[28] (any prisoner that publicly occupied a high post in the camp's provisional government was sure to be tried and executed when captured, as the prisoners themselves knew). Banking on the still-running current of paranoia and distrust of [Jews](#) in Russia, the authorities even attempted to spread rumours in the camp that a [pogrom](#) was imminent as a way of dividing prisoners against each other.^[28]

While these efforts largely failed, another objective of the authorities — to draw out orthodox Communists and Soviet loyalists — was successful and a number of them fled the camp in the days before the raid,^[29] including a high-ranking member of the prisoner's government who would later reappear as a voice urging surrender on the guards' propaganda loudspeakers.^[15] Nevertheless, this outflow was shortly halted by Internal Security, which captured those speaking favorably of the authorities or of surrender and locked them in the camp's jail.

[] Suppression

[] Prelude

In the days prior to the raid, small, token incursions were made. First, this was done to test the preparedness and defensive capabilities of the prisoners — alarms were sounded and prisoners quickly assumed battle positions — but later it was done for the sake of running film cameras. This footage later became important to the authorities in their effort to identify and punish all those who participated directly in the uprising, as well as secure their justification for the raid.^[30]

At this time, the morale of the prisoners was also dropping. Many came to have a dawning sense of the futility of their own struggle, and this attitude proved infectious. The leader of the prisoners, Kuznetsov, even betrayed his wariness in a speech, retold by Solzhenitsyn:

“ "Comrades", the majestic Kuznetsov said confidently, as though he knew many secrets, and all to the advantage of the prisoners, "we have *defensive firepower*, and the enemy will suffer fifty percent of our own losses!" [...] "Even our destruction will not be in vain."^[31]

”

Making matters worse for the prisoners, the day before the raid it was announced on the guards' loudspeakers that their demand to meet with a member of the Central Committee was to be granted. This had the effect of lowering the prisoners' guard and creating a less hostile and more favourable disposition towards the camp authorities, who were planning to violently crush the prisoners all the while. In addition, Solzhenitsyn recalls that the prisoners heard for days before the raid what they thought were the sounds of tractors running on the distance, out of sight. It turned out that the noise of the tractors was being used to conceal the sounds of [tanks](#) - which the prisoners did not anticipate would be used against them - as they were moved into position.

[] The raid



Russia's famed [T-34](#) tanks were used to help crush the uprising, bringing in barbed wire-laden trestles and firing blank shells to stoke confusion and fear.

In 3.30 am of 26 June, [flares](#) were shot up into the sky and the raid began. Snipers quickly picked off the [sentries](#) on the rooftops before they could sound the alarm, and the tanks rolled through the perimeter fence. Five tanks, 90 dogs, and 1,700 troops in full battle-gear stormed the camp complex.^[21]

What followed was panic and chaos. While some 'detachments' vigorously fought back, launching numerous counter-attacks despite heavy losses and throwing improvised sulfur bombs at the tanks, other prisoners hid or committed suicide.^[24] The tanks, [T-34s](#), alternately ran over prisoners or brought down barrack walls where prisoners were hiding, and used [blank](#) rounds of ammunition to strike terror and confusion into the prisoners. The hundreds of helmeted Red Army soldiers that flooded the camp were using live ammunition, though, and with these many prisoners were killed. Some tanks carried in [barbed wire-laden trestles](#), and these were immediately set down as a means of quickly dividing up the camp and hindering the prisoners' freedom of movement. The leaders of the uprising were specifically targeted by designated squads of soldiers and they were taken into custody alive, many of whom were later tried and executed. After ninety minutes of violence, the remaining live prisoners, most of whom were in hiding, were ordered to come out on the promise that they would not be shot.

[] Aftermath

According to a number of survivors of the camp, five to seven hundred prisoners were either killed or wounded in the uprising, with an additional six of the highest-ranking prisoners later being executed, Knopmus among them. Figures found in the Soviet archives, though, suggest that only 37 were killed, not including those who later died of their wounds or were executed, and with 106 prisoners and 40 soldiers wounded.^[32] Kuznetsov, however, had his [death sentence](#) commuted to 25 years and found himself released and fully rehabilitated after 5 years of imprisonment. Theories abound as to why, but most attribute this to the full, detailed 43-page confession he wrote in which he denounced scores of fellow prisoners. This confession also

proved to be an invaluable source for many of the studies conducted on the Kengir uprising, although some question its veracity.^[33]

In keeping with the prevailing theme of their story, the camp administration is said to have planted weapons on the corpses of those who didn't already have them for the sake of the photographers, who were brought in expressly for this purpose.^[34] On the day following the raid, almost a thousand prisoners were shipped off to different camps and the remaining prisoners were occupied with the task of, once again, rebuilding the destroyed wall, sealing themselves back into a life of imprisonment.

[] Significance

Main article: [History of the Gulag](#)

Among the [strikes](#) and rebellions that were taking place in Gulags across the Soviet Union in this period, the uprising at Kengir was perhaps the most significant. While Stalin's death, [Lavrentiy Beria's](#) fall, and [Nikita Khrushchev's](#) rise bore much promise for the prisoners, who had long expected [general amnesties](#) and [rehabilitation](#) to follow these events, the role of the Kengir uprising in hastening this process cannot be overlooked. The uprising further demonstrated to the authorities that [Stalinism](#) was not a sustainable policy option and that mass injustices such as those taking place in Gulag would not stand in perpetuity without significant cost. In a shift that boded poorly for the Soviet regime, many of the prisoners took part knowing full well that they were doing so at the cost of their lives, and prisoners in other camps, namely in the nearby [Rudnik](#) camp, had joined with the Kengir prisoners in solidarity, launching their own short-lived strikes.

The significance of the temporary freedom enjoyed by those prisoners was not lost on many. In a 1978 review of Solzhenitsyn's book, [Hilton Kramer](#) of *The New York Times* declared that the uprising "restored a measure of humane civilization to the prisoners before the state was able to assert its implacable power again."^[35] At a 2004 reunion of Kengir prisoners, a survivor of the camp mentioned that, despite the brutality and loss of life that came with the uprising's suppression, the 40 days engendered in the prisoners "a great feeling of freeing one's spirit", and another prisoner recalled that "I had not before then, and have not since, felt such a sense of freedom as I did then" — both sentiments echoed often by Solzhenitsyn.^{[33][36]} Indeed, Solzhenitsyn would later dedicate a screenplay he had written to the bravery of the Kengir rebels, entitled *Tanks Know the Truth* (*Знают истину танки*).^[37]

Most remarkably, as George Mason University historian Steven A. Barnes noted in a 2005 issue of *Slavic Review*, the prisoners' campaign was conducted with a certain pragmatism, and their propaganda with a level of skill, that was all but unprecedented.^[38] As noted, instead of making explicit their hostility to the Soviet regime and handing an excuse to the authorities to invade, they ostensibly expressed approval of the state while, meekly, asking for the restoration of the rights and privileges afforded to them in the Soviet constitution. This message was itself spread not only to the camp authorities and any of the [MVD](#)-brass that would visit the camp for negotiations, but, crucially, to the civilian population surrounding the camp. Before the authorities came up with the idea of using their own rival kites to tangle and bring down the prisoner's kites with, they kept a large retinue of guards and warders, on horseback and motorcycle, waiting for the leaflets to be dropped from the kites so that they could, literally, chase down and retrieve them before they could be read by members of the public.^[20] The tact,

cohesion, and ingenuity displayed in the uprising was a troubling sign to the authorities of what was perhaps to come.

Nevertheless, any potential effect the uprising could have had was strictly circumscribed by the nature of the Soviet regime, which was quick to use massive force to quell even the most humble of threats. In the same *Times* review, Kramer issued an important caveat to his previous claim:

“ ...Solzhenitsyn harbors no illusions about what was possible in the way of resistance... he knows very well how little they could achieve without the support of public opinion — something the Soviet state waged constant war on. "Without that behind us", he writes, "we can protest and fast as much as we like and they will laugh in our faces!" And yet the protests persisted — and still persist — because human dignity required them. ”

Riot of April 24, 2007

On Tuesday April 24, 2007 about noon, a disturbance in the prison dining hall occurred. A little after 2:00 p.m., the local New Castle police department responded *en masse*, as did forces from the [Henry County](#) Fire Department and Sheriff's Department. Sheriff's Deputies from adjacent [Delaware County](#), along with elements of the [Indiana State Police](#) also responded.

Reportedly, it started with a cluster of [Arizona](#) prisoners transported there against their will consequent to a [memorandum of understanding](#) with the State of [Arizona](#) and GEO Group. They refused to wear state-issued smocks over T-shirts as a display of non-compliance during the midday meal. This is when Captain Deaton stepped in and tried to handcuff several offenders and was severely beaten by three inmates.

These prisoners were reportedly picked for being non-violent and generally getting along with the rules; it is suggested the Arizona convicts felt they were, in effect, being punished for obeying the rules, and had they been less compliant back in Arizona, they would have remained there. An earlier deal with [California](#) fell through when that state was unable to come up with enough non-violent prisoners willing to volunteer for the transfer; the Arizona convicts were transferred on a non-voluntary basis.

This is not the first time Arizona transportees have been involved in prison disturbances in other states.

Two news helicopters from regional NBC and CBS affiliates provided live images carried on [MSNBC](#) and [Fox News](#). Piles of burning debris and smoke plumes were evident, reportedly mattresses, combustible furniture and garbage.

Within two hours, full order and authority was restored, though some inmates continued to be audibly angry for some time afterwards. Shortly after 3:30 p.m., J. David Donahue, the Commissioner of the Indiana Department of Corrections at that time reported that conditions were returning to normal.

Two correctional officers were reported to have received very slight injuries. Seven prisoners were treated for minor injuries at the prison.

While excesses were performed, this was probably not really a prison riot in the classic sense, in that no one was hurt. It may qualify as an act of true [civil disobedience](#). To date, GEO Group has not made any public comment.

The state suspended the transfer of additional Arizona inmates pending an investigation. Governor [Mitch Daniels](#) said the transportees directly involved in the disturbance would be returned to Arizona.^[2]

[\[\] Aftermath](#)

The DOC moved 69 Arizona transportees to the [Wabash Valley Correctional Facility](#), where they were placed in segregation the night of the riot.

A month after the riot, a "post event analysis" was released by the Indiana Department of Corrections. While placing blame on the Arizona transportees, the report admits failings on the Indiana corrections side as well, mainly understaffing and poorly trained personnel, but also very vague rules about what the Arizona prisoners were expected to do. This report states:

At the time of this writing the Indiana State Police indicated that criminal charges would be recommended against one Indiana offender and 25 offenders from Arizona. Aggregate recommended charges include Rioting, Battery, Unauthorized Possession of Weapons, Intimidation, Theft, Criminal Mischief, Criminal Confinement, and Battery by Bodily Waste.^[3]

2006 riot

On Saturday, February 4, 2006, a [prison riot](#) at the facility injured over 100 inmates. Nine were critically injured, and eight had minor injuries. One inmate was pronounced dead at the scene. Numerous ambulances were summoned to the remote facility after fighting began and custody personnel deployed [tear gas](#) to quell the disturbance. No law enforcement personnel were injured in the riot. The deputies indicated that the four-hour riot was sparked by [racial tensions](#) generated outside the prison between Mexican and African-American gang members. In retribution for a conflict between these gangs and in a show of the reach of their power, Mexican gang leaders had successfully ordered Mexican prisoners within the NCCF compound to drop furniture items from several stories above onto unsuspecting African-American prisoners below, with whom they had no personal differences.

On Wednesday, April 28, 2010, two inmates, Jose Aldana and Winder Barrios, were discovered missing during a 3:15 a.m. headcount. The two were captured several hours later.

1974 Huntsville Prison Siege

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🖼️ The [Huntsville Unit](#), the location of the siege

The **1974 Huntsville Prison Siege** was an eleven-day prison uprising that took place from July 24 to August 3, 1974 at the [Huntsville Unit](#) of the Texas State Penitentiary in [Huntsville, Texas](#). The standoff was one of the longest hostage-taking sieges in [United States](#) history.^[1]

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[] Siege

From July 24 to August 3, 1974, Federico "Fred" Gomez Carrasco and two other inmates laid siege to the education/library building of the [Walls Unit](#). “Fred” Carrasco, the most powerful [heroin](#) kingpin in South Texas, was serving a [life sentence](#) for the attempted murder of a police officer.^[2] He was also suspected in the murder of dozens of people in [Mexico](#) and Texas.^[1] Having smuggled pistols and ammunition into the prison, he and two other convicts took eleven prison workers and four inmates [hostage](#).^[1]

At the precise moment that a one o'clock work bell sounded, Carrasco walked up a ramp to the third-story library and forced several prisoners out at gunpoint. When two guards tried to go up the ramp, Carrasco fired at them. His two accomplices, who were also armed, immediately joined him in the library.^[1] The prison warden and the director of the Texas Department of Corrections immediately began negotiations with the convicts. [FBI](#) agents and [Texas Rangers](#) arrived to assist them, as the media descended on Huntsville.^[1] Over the next several days the convicts made a number of demands, such as tailored suits, dress shoes, toothpaste, cologne, [walkie-talkies](#) and bulletproof helmets, all of which were provided promptly.^[1] With the approval of [Texas Governor Dolph Briscoe](#), an armored getaway car was rolled into the prison courtyard. Carrasco claimed that they were planning to flee to [Cuba](#) and appeal to [Fidel Castro](#).^[1]

After a grueling eleven-day standoff, the convicts finally made their desperate escape attempt just before 10 PM on Saturday August 3, 1974. They moved out of the library toward the waiting

vehicle in a makeshift shield consisting of legal books taped to mobile blackboards that was later dubbed by the press the “Trojan Taco”. Inside the shield were the three convicts and four hostages, while eight other hostages ringed the exterior of the “taco”.^{[1][2]}

Acting on a prearranged plan, prison guards and Texas Rangers blasted the group with fire hoses. However, a rupture in the hose gave the convicts time to fatally shoot the two women hostages who had volunteered to join the convicts in the armored car.^[1] When prison officials returned fire, Carrasco committed suicide and one of his two accomplices was killed.^[1] Syndicated columnist [Cal Thomas](#), who was an onsite reporter for [Houston's KPRC-TV](#) at the time, later wrote, “It is a tragedy that two hostages died. It is a miracle all the rest lived.”^[3]

Two women, Yvonne Beseda and Judy Standley, died during the incident.^[4]

[] Aftermath



Cuevas was held at the [Ellis Unit](#) while on death row

Ignacio Cuevas, the surviving perpetrator, received the [Texas Department of Corrections](#) Death Row ID#526. Cuevas was received as a death row prisoner on May 30, 1975. Cuevas was held at the [Ellis Unit](#), and he was executed on May 23, 1991.^[4] Cuevas's [last meal](#) request consisted of chicken dumplings, steamed rice, sliced bread, black-eyed peas, and iced tea.^[5] Cuevas's last words were "I am innocent. O.K., Warden, roll 'em."^[6]

Fremantle prison riot

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The aftermath of the 1988 riots.



 Restored division 3

The **Fremantle prison riot** was a [prison riot](#) that occurred on 4 January 1988 at [Fremantle Prison](#), in [Western Australia](#). The riot was organised as a diversion for an escape that was to take place. Prisoners created a fire as part of the diversion, and temperatures inside the cells were recorded at 52.2 °C (126 °F). 3 division and 4 division were taken over by a total of seventy prisoners, and 15^[1] [officers](#) were taken hostage. The fire caused \$1.8 million in damage and unintentionally prevented the planned escape.

Fremantle Prison was built using convict labour during the 1850s, based on the design of [Pentonville Gaol](#), and was used as the maximum security prison for male offenders in Western Australia. During the 1890s the size of the cells were doubled by removing a join wall between two cells. The conditions in the cells remained unchanged except for lighting and basic toilet facilities. The prison population was divided into 4 divisions; 3 division housing violent prisoners and 4 division housing murderers and those serving long term sentences.

It was suggested that the riot and fire was staged as a diversion by twelve men including [Brenden Abbott](#), to assist a mass escape from the prison. During the two weeks prior to the riot they collected 3 [litres](#) of fuel from lawnmowers, which they managed to conceal in their drink bottles.

[] The riot

Just before 4:00 pm two prisoners were brought in from the exercise yards in 3 division to deliver [tea](#) and hot water to the cells as the other inmates were locked away. Two twenty-five litre drums of boiling water were stationed on the top floor above the gates, which was perfectly normal. Five officers were stationed in the division on this day, and as two officers opened the gates to let the prisoners in, fifty litres of boiling water was poured on their heads. At that moment, seventy violent prisoners from division three rushed in through the gates and quickly overpowered the officers, locking them in the yards. The prisoners now had the cell keys, and made their way to the top floor, opening every cell and throwing down anything removable and combustible, and piled it up at the doorway at the end of the division.

A fire was lit which soon became much bigger than anticipated, with flames reaching the roof. The roof was the original [jarrah](#) timber built 140 years prior, and before long half of the third division and all of the fourth division was a raging inferno that could be seen from [Perth](#). Images were broadcast live across national television. Camera crews in helicopters filmed the chaos as the prison roof collapsed. From the air it appeared as if no efforts were being made to extinguish the fire; efforts were being made but the main gates were made in 1850 by [convicts](#) were too narrow to get fire engines through. The fire continued for nineteen hours until it was brought under control.

After the fire was under control, the prisoners negotiated a trade of the prison officers for food and to return control of the prison back to the guards. Although 15 officers were injured (two of them seriously), nobody was killed.

[] Aftermath

In February 1988 a report into the causes of the riot was prepared. The report suggested that little evidence supported the escape plan theory common in the media, but that the riot was largely the result of an incident of that morning involving the mistreatment of a prisoner and his subsequent release into three division yard.^[2]

Total damage to the prison amounted to \$1.8 million, including the cost of restoring the roof to its original condition. The riot highlighted the poor conditions inside the jail and two years later the prison was closed with most prisoners being transferred to the new [Casuarina Prison](#). The prison was turned into a tourist attraction which is now nationally heritage listed.

A trial was held at a cost of \$3 million and 33 men were charged. The twelve ring leaders were given six years on top of their current sentences, two of those in near [solitary conditions](#); one, armed robber, Brenden Abbott successfully escaped from Fremantle prison in 1989 and spent five and a half years on the run before being caught in [Darwin](#).

[] References

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Battle of Alcatraz



Alcatraz cellhouse shelled by mortars, May 3, 1946

The **Battle of Alcatraz**, which lasted from 2 to 4 May 1946, was the result of an unsuccessful escape attempt at [Alcatraz Island](#) Federal Penitentiary. Two guards—William A. Miller and Harold Stites—were killed along with three of the inmates. Eleven guards and one convict were also injured. Two of the surviving convicts were later executed for their roles.^[1]

takeover

On May 2, 1946, while most convicts and guards were in outside workshops, [Bernard Coy](#), a bank robber serving a 25-year sentence at Alcatraz, was in the C Block cell-house sweeping the floor when kitchen orderly Marvin Hubbard called on guard William Miller to let him in as he had just finished cleaning the kitchen. As Miller was frisking Hubbard for any stolen articles, Coy assaulted him from behind and the two men overpowered the officer. They then released [Joseph Cretzer](#) and [Clarence Carnes](#) from their cells.^[2]

The cell block had an elevated gun gallery which was regularly patrolled by an armed guard. The guard, Bert Burch, had a set routine and the convicts had attacked Miller while he was away. Coy, as cell-house orderly, had over the years spotted a flaw in the bars protecting the gun gallery which allowed them to be widened using a bar-spreading device consisting of a nut and bolt with client metal sleeve which moved when the nut was turned by a small wrench. Coy thus managed to spread the bars and squeeze through the widened gap (Coy starved himself in order to fit through the space between the widened bars, which was still relatively narrow) into the temporarily vacant gallery and to overpower and bind Burch on his return. Coy kept the [Springfield rifle](#) in the gallery and lowered an [M1911 pistol](#), keys, a number of clubs and gas grenades to his accomplices below.^[2]





[Bernard Coy](#) (left), Marvin Hubbard (center), and [Joe Cretzer](#) (right)

Continuing along the gun gallery, Coy then entered D Block, which was separated from the main cell-house by a concrete wall and was used for prisoners kept in isolation. There he used the rifle to force guard Cecil Corwin to open the door to C Block and let the others in. They then released about a dozen convicts including [Sam Shockley](#) and [Miran Thompson](#). Shockley and Thompson joined Coy, Carnes, Hubbard and Cretzer in C Block. The other prisoners prudently returned to their cells. Miller and Corwin were placed in a cell in C Block.^[2]

The escapers now needed to secure the key to the yard door of the prison from which they expected to make their way to the island's dock to seize the prison's [launch](#). The boat docked daily between 14:00 and 14:30, and the plan was to use the hostage guards as cover to make their way to the dock, then [San Francisco](#) and freedom.

[] Failed escape attempt

Miller had held on to the yard door key, so that he could let out kitchen staff without having to disturb the gallery guard at lunch. Although they eventually found the key by searching the captive guards and the cell in which the prisoners had placed them, the door would not open because the lock had jammed as the prisoners had tried several other keys while searching for the correct one. The escape attempt was thus inadvertently foiled from the outset as the prisoners were trapped in the cell house.

Meanwhile other guards who entered the cell block as part of their routine were seized along with others sent to investigate when they failed to report in. The prisoners were soon holding nine guards in two separate cells, but with nowhere to go, despair set in among the would-be escapers. At 14:30, Coy took the rifle and fired at the guards in some neighboring watchtowers, wounding one of them. Associate warden Ed Miller went to the cell block to investigate, armed with a gas billy club. He came across Coy who shot at him. Miller retreated. By now the alarm had been raised.

Their plan having failed, Shockley and Thompson urged Cretzer, who had one of the guns, to kill the hostages in case they testified against them. Cretzer opened fire on the guards wounding five, three seriously including Bill Miller who later died of his wounds. Carnes, Shockley and Thompson then returned to their cells, but Coy, Hubbard and Cretzer decided they were not going to surrender.^[3] Meanwhile, one of the hostages discreetly wrote down the names of the convicts involved, circling the names of the ringleaders.

[] Battle of Alcatraz

At about 18:00, a squad of armed guards entered the gun cage but were fired upon by the convicts. One officer, Harold Stites, was killed and four other guards were wounded.^[3] Prison officials then cut the electricity and put all further attempts on hold until darkness.

Warden [James A. Johnston](#) now called upon the expertise of two platoons of [Marines](#) under the direction of [General "Vinegar" Joe Stilwell](#) to guard the general population of convicts and to take the cell house from the outside.

After night fell, two squads of guards entered the prison to locate and rescue the captive officers. There was a long-standing rule at Alcatraz that no guns were allowed in the cell-house and the prison officials did not want to have further guards injured or killed. In addition, the convicts' position on the top of a cell block provided a nearly impregnable firing position as it was out of range of the guards in the gun cages.

Thus it was that at 19:00 unarmed guards undertook the rescue attempt, but they were provided with cover by guards in the two gun galleries overhead. They found their colleagues and sealed off D Block by locking the open door but one guard was wounded by a gunshot from the roof of one of the cell blocks during the rescue. When the last officer had reached safety, a massive gun barrage opened on the prison with D Block subjected to heavy fire from machine-guns, mortars and grenades as the authorities erroneously believed one of the armed convicts was stationed there. Eventually it was established that the mutineers were confined to the main cellhouse and there was another lull in the battle as tactics were worked out.

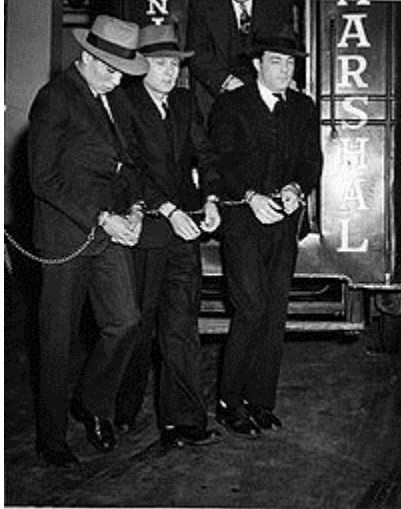


Bodies of Hubbard (*left*), [Coy](#) (*center*), and [Cretzer](#) (*right*) in San Francisco morgue

Security forces adopted a plan to drive the armed convicts into a corner with tactics perfected against entrenched Japanese resistance during the [Pacific War](#). They drilled holes in the prison roof and dropped in [grenades](#) into areas where they believed the convicts were in an attempt to force them into a utility corridor where they could be cornered.

On May 3, at about 12:00, the convicts phoned Johnston to try to discuss a deal. Johnston would only accept their surrender. Later that day a shot was fired at a guard as he checked out C Block's utility corridor.^[2] That night, a constant fusillade was fired at the cell block until about 21:00. The following morning, squads of armed guards periodically rushed into the cell house firing repeatedly into the narrow corridor. At 9:40 A.M. on May 4, they finally entered the corridor and found the bodies of Cretzer, Coy, and Hubbard.

[] **Aftermath**



[Clarence Carnes](#) (left), [Sam Shockley](#) (center), and [Miran Thompson](#) (right) on their way to court.

Prior to the escape attempt, Hubbard had petitioned for a writ of [habeas corpus](#) on the grounds that his confession had been beaten out of him and had produced hospital records to back up his claims. A federal hearing into the matter had been scheduled for the Monday that followed his death. The case was dismissed on a motion filed by prosecutor Joseph Karesh, who is quoted as saying that had it gone through Hubbard would have had "a fair chance" of being released.^[2]

[Miran Thompson](#) and [Sam Shockley](#) were executed in the [gas chamber](#) at [San Quentin](#) on December 3, 1948 for their role in the Battle of Alcatraz. Carnes was given an additional life sentence but was eventually released from [prison](#) in 1973. The increased security measures ensured that there were no more escape attempts until 1956.

Don't Mark His Face: Hull Prison Riot (1976) Introduction

For 4 days in September 1976 prisoners took over 3 of the 4 wings of Hull jail.

The Hull Riot did not just happen out of the blue. It was preceded by years of petitioning by prisoners, and public appeals that action be taken to investigate the rapidly deteriorating conditions and increasingly harsh regime there.

A full 9 months before the riot a press release drew attention to these conditions and the use of Hull prison as the staging post in the transfer of prisoners to the notorious Control Unit at Wakefield. It called for the immediate suspension of Hull's Governor Kearns, pending the

outcome of an independent inquiry into his running of the prison. Dr. Shirley Summerskil, Minister of State at the Home Office, replied:

“The Governor of Hull Prison has my full confidence and I have no intention of acceding to the demands made in the press release for his suspension and the holding of an independent inquiry into how he runs the prison.”

Nine months later the lid blew off.

In introducing this collection of prisoners personal accounts of the riot and its brutal aftermath we must make it clear that it would have been impossible for prisoners to have collaborated together in writing them. Immediately after the riot, those involved were dispersed to prisons all over England and segregated from other prisoners. To those who have suggested that these depositions were part of a well orchestrated conspiracy by prisoners to undermine the prison authorities, these accounts offer their own evidence. They reached us mostly on toilet paper, the only paper available to prisoners kept in solitary confinement. Smuggling out the evidence at great risk to themselves required a genuine belief in what they had written.

None of those involved in the riot stood to gain from it. More than 60 prisoners received up to 830 days loss of remission, loss of privileges and solitary confinement as a result of it. These sentences were handed out by a Board of Visitors at “hearings” lasting as little as 5 minutes.

The prisoners were allowed neither lawyers or witnesses. Many have appealed to the High Court and to the European Court of Human Rights against these vicious sentences, and the damage done to themselves and their property after the riot. They are still waiting for a hearing 3 years later ... long after most of the sentences have been served.

After a 5 month delay the police opened their own investigations into prisoners’ accusations of brutality by Prison Officers in the aftermath of the riot. The announcement of this investigation was clearly timed to counter growing demands for the full-scale public inquiry which the Hull prisoners had called for on their roof-top banners.

It was as a result of the governments refusal to accede to these demands that PROP undertook to mount its own Public Inquiry which took place during 4 days in May 1977 at which many relatives and visitors to Hull prisoners gave evidence.

The PROP inquiry only started to receive national press coverage at the end of its final day. The London publicity which might have drawn public attention to the proceedings while they were in progress was never forthcoming despite the enthusiasm of the reporters present.

For over 2 years public awareness of what happened at Hull has rested on these prisoners' accounts. During those 2 years the Home Office has done everything possible to impede the police investigations by keeping witnesses continually on the move, no doubt hoping the matter would be forgotten and the charges dropped. It is the prisoners that made sure they were not forgotten.

The Home Office has been forced to use these prosecutions as a means of diverting attention from their own responsibility for what happened at Hull. Having over many years given brutal prison officers the green light to go ahead, they are now faced with a militancy of their own making.

The only official inquiry into the riot was restricted to the Home Offices' own internal investigation subsequently published in the Fowler report. Typical of Fowler's approach was his description of the Prison Officer's actions which has now led to guilty verdicts on charges of assault as "an excess of zeal". The report was in every way a whitewash like that of every other prison riot.

But this time the prisoners speak for themselves. They write of the effects of the long stretches of deprivation and of brutality, everyday harassment by screws (many professed members of the National Front); slave labour - making furniture for other prisons in purportedly underdeveloped countries; of a community forced to turn in on itself and fight each other. Again and again they bring up the files found 30 minutes after the riot began, files kept by the prison authorities which described prisoners as animals in pages of crude "psychological" jargon. Witnesses write of the destruction of their identity until they could stand it no longer.

Hull, like every other riot, was a breaking point. It was an explosion necessary for survival, for their mental health. For a short time prisoners helped each other, made banners together, organised their own food and water, talked across the wall to the outside world (mostly to 400 children!). There are more than 42,000 people being destroyed in English prisons now: Hull wasn't the first riot and won't be the last until its lessons are learned. The power games played by the Home Office through prison officials are using prisoners lives and the lives of friends and families as fodder. The tensions that result must inevitably lead to more and bigger riots until we experience a tragedy on the scale of the Attica riot in America where 32 prisoners and 11 screws were killed by State troopers.

From: Don't Mark His Face: Hull Prison Riot (1976), National Prisoners' Movement PROP, London and Humberside 1976.

Hull Prison Riot (1976) Account by Jake Prescott 093763

Jake Prescott

There are two main workshops, textiles and woodmill. The woodmill is known, with hate and loathing, as 'The Mill'. A huge squat concrete building, no more than five years old, the latest in prison treadmills, three floors, each floor a workshop. On the ground the woodmill proper, then next up the assembly shop, then top floor, the spray shop.

Briefly what happens is that large timbers go in at the bottom, get cut up on machines, go to the assembly shop, get sanded and fixed together, go to the spray shop, get coated with paint, varnish, lacquer what have you. They are now pieces and sections of fitted prison cell furniture, for Arabian prisons (mainly the 600 in Iran). The shops are so noisy and choked with dust that a factory inspector visiting earlier this year entered each shop, stopped, wrote NOISE! DUST! on his clipboard, ordered the authorities to issue earplugs and filter masks to everyone and left. Needless to say, they only got these articles a couple of months later and they did not issue them, only reluctantly handed them out to those prisoners who persisted in asking for them.

Have you ever heard wood machines going all at the same time? Massive 'six cutters' chewing up wood all day, saws screaming, sanding machines groaning? The noise and dust are hard to believe or imagine, it's like World War II in there. Although the mill is huge, the amount of wood and work material is colossal, and it is slave labour being so crowded there is hardly room to turn, and 'work places' are wherever you can squeeze elbow room.

As for personnel, there were a hundred prisoners in there, and 19 'instructors' (glorified screws/overseers) and 20 screws, sometimes more. Also 2 senior screws who oversee the whole mill, watching 'security' and checking 'discipline'. On the instructors side there are, a works supervisor, a quality control manager, and an industrial supervisor. All these people are there to get as much work for as little as possible - of course. The instructors nag at the prisoners each day, always cutting down the time for each job. Everything is timed to a split second, all work is piece rate (the so called incentive scheme) and there was no way we could argue the time. One time and motion study man told us the rates we got were one fifth of outside industry. The instructors were penny pinching (literally) all the time, they had two things to do: keep the prisoners' wages down and production up. As each deadline for the contracts came up (and we are happy to say 'went') they got more frantic - the latest one, half a million pounds for Arabian prisons, was really driving them nuts.

For a basic target, you had to earn forty two pence a week, if you didn't earn this (for a 30 hour week) you did not get the 'cost of living allowance', which was 42p in the North of England; and if you earned substantially less than 42p you got nicked. The third time that happened they took remission off you, and every time after that. The average wage for people in 'The Mill' was 95p a week - that's including 42p cost of living allowance of course - and out of a hundred prisoners there were always about twenty getting 17p, 28p, 40p and so on each and every week, and always a steady stream going up and down the segregation unit.

There was always a queue of prisoners at the instructors' office on a Friday when we got our wages, all arguing about being cheated out of earnings - whereas it's pounds outside it's pence you're arguing about here. If you add the 40 men's wages in the Assembly you wouldn't have £40 - that is not one screw or instructor's wage. The wage bill for prisoners in the Mill was

altogether not more than £100 a week, whilst the wages of the screws and instructors, at say £40 a man (and that's way below the real) would be £2000. The cost of keeping a man or woman in prison is about £60 a week now, and if you look at the yearly prison expenditure, you'll find five sixths of that goes on screws' wages. And out of that 80 pence a week that prisoners get you have to buy tea, sugar, milk for breaks and you could not possibly work in that dust without it - so 12p a week has to be spent in this way. At one time there used to be a free issue of tea or a hot drink but when Kearns, the previous governor, came 3 years ago he stopped it, so the prisoners had to supply their own and many could never afford it. The rest of the wage went like this: 10p for the film club (prisoners run and pay for one film a week); 5p a week for the people in the segregation unit - there was always 20 to 25 men in there, and we all used to collect this and buy tobacco and get it smuggled down to them; 6p a week for T.V.(rented by prisoners), not everyone paid this or watched, but the majority did; 1p a week 'common fund' (this was compulsory and was supposed to be for the buying and upkeep of recreational facilities, and the extra food at Christmas - for 'that menu' that The Mirror never fails to print each year). That left about 60p a. week (if you were lucky) for a half ounce of tobacco and a 'canteen letter' (you're only issued with one and have to buy any extra) and maybe a pot of jam every other week... The canteen was run at 10% profit, and despite frequent requests, the authorities would not disclose where this money went - they robbed us in every way.

If you did not start work as soon as you went in to the shop at 8.10 and again at 1.10 you got nicked. The screws were situated thus: one in each of three strategically placed high box seats overlooking the whole shop, the others patrolling the shop the whole day, alternating with the ones in the seats, watching for people not working. If you read a paper during the ten minute break (one in the morning and one in the afternoon) they would come over and demand it -if you didn't give it up, or told them to 'fuck off' you were of course nicked. The screws are pigs, they sat about in their seats (like judges' benches) doing crosswords, dozing off, chewing the fat with their patrolling mates, discussing us, who's not working, who's next for getting nicked.

Also because of the fact that everyone was in for a long time, often 'life', and the work was so boring, repetitive and stupid, some prisoners would make a corner for themselves and their mates so they could take their breaks there, and make a shelf, a cupboard to hold their cups, tea

and sugar, or a stool to sit on. But often we would come to work mornings and find that the screws had been in and smashed them up.

All the time, there was a stream of guys getting taken out for spins by the 'burglars', they come in and take whoever they want back to their cells, strip search them, turn the stuff in their cells upside down. The screws all try to outdo each other in who can look like gestapo, hats carefully shaped, boots shining, the tassels of their truncheons individually ornamented etc.

As for facilities : one toilet to 50 men, two taps (hot and cold) to 50 men, three baths *or* showers to 50 men - the prison proper was 100 years old!

The only modern parts were the sensitised steel fences, the barbed wire on top, and on top of all the roofs closed circuit television (the only answer to our country wide PROP demos of 1972). And of course the Mill.

Recreational facilities, paid for by prisoners wages, were virtually non existent; one billiard table to each of the 4 wings; one table tennis ditto; one T.V. to 40 men (all paid for out of wages). You were allowed cell hobbies which you paid for yourself or your friends and relatives outside did, and the regime used it against you whenever your 'attitude' was 'wrong'. As we spent most of the evening in the cells (we were locked up at 8 pm) with nothing to do for many ... everyone tried to make something, but you'd find you'd be allowed some of the materials one week, then next you wouldn't - like, say, varnish or an adhesive or something - not allowed for 'security reasons'.

This was the operative Catch-22 here and in most prisons - SECURITY. There are about 30 or 40 screws (including the 'burglars' who work in pairs) and a chief screw, Deputy Governor (Mr Withers) who form security. They are a fast growth industry since the Mountbatton Report and they regard themselves as the elite of the screws, acting as police in jails. In Hull they had carved themselves out power over all kinds of areas and aspects of the prison which had little or nothing to do with stopping people escaping. They acted as thought police, governing what kinds of reading materials prisoners could get both from the library and from outside. They were systematically stopping all long term prisoners from having the kind of things that both the Mountbatton Report and the 'Guide to Long Term Prisons' had suggested and allowed - like for

instance altering prison clothing, wearing your own underwear, T-shirts, socks, handkerchiefs etc, getting towels sent in and other toilet requisites. Many had them from a few years back, but in Hull they kept stopping people from getting them in. You'd get handed stuff in by visitors and you wouldn't be allowed to have it - the reason was always 'it's against security requirements, it's nothing to do with us, see Security about it' - but of course you couldn't see Security, it was an amorphous malignant secret service.

They'd stop T-shirts, socks, underwear, towels, toilet gear (like tubes of toothpaste or after shave lotion), calendars, lampshades or whatever, and growing lists of banned cell hobby material like stuffing for toys (on the grounds that it was inflammable and could be used to start a fire - and this with a prison full of timber, lacquer, paint etc!). They stopped clothing on the 'grounds that it could be used as clothing on an escape, or to disguise a prisoner as a civilian' - this with everyone having curtains in their cells (necessary to stop the glare of the powerful floodlights all around the perimeter and inside which make night time seem like a dull day - the birds sometimes whistle all night around modern prisons, they don't know it's night time), these curtains could be made into clothing very easily, so you could escape in a three piece red velvet suit if you were of a mind to ... Of course a few people were allowed to have them, those who fraternise with Security, which also had a monopoly on the allocation of jobs, so that those who 'played the game' got working on the gardens or in the gym etc. (this on the grounds of Security of course). This might all seem trivial, but you have to realise that these small things are important to someone who is doing 20 years, or life with a minimum of 30 years, or whatever, and everyone was a long termer here.

Outgoing letters were often stopped, as people would tell their friends and relatives what was going on, but they have a 'rule' which says that a prisoner cannot complain, or make detrimental statements about prison conditions. You're supposed to either go to the Visiting Magistrate or petition, but you always get the same reply from them. (The Secretary of State has sympathetically considered ... etc.) Incoming letters, cards, etc. were invariably going missing, or 'never arrived'. All letters to solicitors, NCCL, or any other body were always opened and read/photocopied, either surreptitiously or blatantly, depending on how well the prisoner had

sealed them. These were 'privileged' and not supposed to be opened particularly if the matters relate to actions against the Prison Authority, but they opened and copied them anyway.

As far as visits went you were searched before the visit, strict surveillance was kept on them, there was often petty interference and a strip search afterwards, sometimes trying to get you to 'bend over and expose your ass' which they didn't get away with as most refused. But this is minutes after being with your wife and kids or whatever - you cannot imagine the violent changes.

There is nowhere and no time when you are free of them, even in your cell in the evenings the door would spring open and they'd be there, 3 or 4 handed to give you a strip search. They were always trying to mix it too - they'd say they were acting on information received, like frustrated old bill which is what they are. They would wait till you were halfway through a class (if you were on education in the evening or whenever) and come in and remove you for a search. Kearns and the Security, headed by Withers, Stevenson (Senior Officer) and co. got the Irish language class, given by a priest entirely voluntary and unpaid, stopped on completely fabricated 'conspiracy' type reports. There was at one time about 25 people used to come in on a Monday for a debating class, give lectures etc. (called Social Studies), they got the numbers whittled down in the last 18 months from 25 men to 6 men. They squeezed everything to breaking point.

The Segregation Unit was always full. Always a couple in the strong boxes in strait jackets etc. Strict solitary for everyone there. They'd sent quite a few to the control unit at Wakefield, and they had just 'glass bricked' 8 cells, reinforced the walls and door so that little sound could get in or out, you could only tell it was night or day. These had only been there 2 months.

The incident of Artie Clifford was the spark, the one that broke the camel's back.

What happened was that a prisoner called Artie Clifford who was in the seg. unit was goaded by a couple of screws as he was emptying his pisspot. He slagged them off. Later on the same two screws came back to his cell with another two screws, dragged A. Clifford out along to the 'strongbox' cells, beat him up. The screws were generally making a lot of noise having a 'good laugh' and unknown to them, another prisoner, a cleaner in the seg. unit, was watching then.

This guy went to the strong box and had a look at Clifford and saw he was marked up. He got a chance to talk to some prisoners who were working outside the unit and told them what had happened. We were in the wing next door and heard about it very soon, and got to discussing it and what to do. The news went all around the jail by 5 o'clock on Tuesday the 31st August and it was just spontaneously agreed that we would go and confront the governor and demand for Clifford to be brought out of the seg. unit. It was agreed that this would take place at 7 o'clock on the centre (where all the blocks except B wing meet).

About 100 of us joined up at 7 and got out onto the centre and got a Deputy Governor, asked him to get the Governor, told him what we wanted. He got on the phone after trying to bullshit for a while and spoke to the Governor, telling him we wanted him, and wanted Clifford brought out of the unit. He told us the Governor refused to come and refused to give an order to bring Clifford out, so we stood around there on the centre for a while, and as it was getting near 8 o'clock (when we normally get banged up for the night) we agreed we'd not get banged up but also not to stay in the centre because it was too exposed to attack.

We decided to all move into A wing as it was 1) less exposed and 2) joined onto the seg. unit. The screws and Deputy Governors and other lackeys followed us in and when it came to be about 5 minutes to 8 o'clock they began making noises about 'good and sensible' and in a nutshell go in the cells and go to bed. Well they didn't realise the mood I think. Someone got a bucket of water and chucked it over them all from the top landing and they galloped out of the gate onto the centre again leaving us in charge. As soon as they left (simultaneously) the place began to get demolished, with every place being attacked at once. There was an attack on the roofs and the prisoners got out onto the roof and began making entry to the Segregation Unit through that roof. Prisoners attacked all the cell doors, making strategic barricades within A wing and going along the roofs to the other two wings C and D, and building barricades at various places around the main prison block. (B wing is a separate entity and most of the 80 or so prisoners in B wing were locked up -when they saw it was 'off' many smashed their cells up - probably in frustration - and the windows and set fire to bedding etc. throwing it out of the cell windows. By 9 o'clock the whole main prison block was under prisoner control; everyone who was in the seg. unit, about 20 men including Artie Clifford were freed and were with us ; the offices were all opened

up and masses of documentation was obtained, collected together into a central place; the canteen, censor's office, chief's office, welfare/psychologist's office were all seized. All phones were cut except one which was unplugged and taken to the centre, our centre I mean, however all the outside lines were cut as we soon discovered. As you can imagine there was great rejoicing when all the guys were liberated from the unit and we embraced friends who had been down there for two months or more in solitary.

About this time however the mass of documentation was being scrutinised and very soon bundles of prisoners' files were being unearthed and distributed to their 'owners' (it would be more correct to say victims in view of their contents) and the mood of everyone changed very quickly to at first shocked disbelief and then, rapidly, to a quiet fury. They read like the ravings of a very frightened, extremely paranoid and evil (amateur) psychologist. Every other word was 'psychopath', 'misfit', 'anti-authority', 'manic-depressive' and so on, and virtually no-one was excluded, they were all in the same language, and one prisoners file was almost interchangeable with another. What was the more sick, was that each of us turned up by name in some other prisoners file, and it soon was obvious that according to the system every friendship existing in prison was hatched out of inherent criminal tendencies, that every association was suspect, conspiratorial and everyone was up to no good. That is when everyone decided to begin demolishing the prison with their bare hands, and many did so.

Here's some examples of what we found in the files:

"He associates with A, B and C (other prisoners named) and they spend a lot of their time in one another's cells no doubt scheming and plotting. This foursome must be kept under observation at all times. They are all good 43b (solitary) material."

And another:

"A is a professional criminal and a dangerous psychopath. He is bitter and has a biting wit which he employs against the staff at every opportunity. He has served 2 years of an 18 year sentence and will be 60 by the time he's due for release, by which time he should be a cabbage."

Everyone was going about in a state of seething anger at what they had read in their files - these files incidentally are not the full files, only the internal 'working' files and only consisted of a few photostat sheets - you may read that there was an area of the prison, the administration block, which was the most heavily contested area in the riot. This was where the main files for all the prisoners were kept. We did not succeed in getting them. It was the only place they did not surrender, leaving 50 screws in full riot gear in there, who made it pretty obvious that they would not leave, but equally they had no intention of advancing from that position either. This convinced us that the regime was more worried about us getting our complete prison dossiers back - they contain everything: police, security, surveillance, the lot - than anything else, and so we know now that the stuff we did get was just chickenfeed, that they would be seriously on the spot if we got our hands on these files. They must be dynamite. As it was though there were many guys feeling desperate from the stuff they read, especially the lifers, as the files stated they should be kept in for X no. of years more than they thought. Many of them were changed by the action and the files really made them realise what we had all along suspected; namely that screws, deputy governors, psychologists, welfare, the whole dirty bunch were forever writing reports about all your movements, your whole life was being reported.

Many of the files contained summaries of 'interviews' of prisoners by screws which were complete fabrications, the prisoners in the riot having to ask each other who a particular screw was, whose signature was on some very detailed report about the prisoner. They consisted of wholly manufactured 'admissions of guilt' supposedly made to a steely-eyed highly trained interviewer, i.e. yours truly Joe Turnkey who would make Alf Garnett jealous with the stupidity- I cannot stress too strongly the effect of these files on all the prisoners, even many of those who were previously adamant that the regime was 'fair, straight, and everyone was working in their best interests etc.' and that they would get such and such a prisoner out on parole etc. - this, coupled with the systematic beatings handed out to virtually all the prisoners at the end, will surely dispel any illusions that prisoners had and that the system was for ever fostering and boasting. I hope.

Most of the Tuesday night, and all Wednesday and night was spent then in smashing the place up, the files, trying to get the other files, gathering food together, gathering information,

building barricades, watching and guarding vital spots, stopping fires and other counter productive incidents (it would have looked nice all having to run out into the path of squads of screws because of our own fires) setting up a small field hospital (three guys were injured earlier, one fell off a low roof and broke his leg, one got caught early by a loose gang of screws, got his head beat up, had concussion, the other I don't know what was the matter with him, I think he was loopy temporarily). After a while, because of lack of sleep, having to stay on the alert Tuesday and Wednesday nights and all through the morning, and because of the murderous state some were in over the files, and others who had been on tranquillisers, sleepers etc. and now didn't have them, and because of the influx of the guys who had been let out of their cells (all these guys, didn't go on the original demonstration, so you can see they were not too enthusiastic - they helped to fan rumours about the screws charging en masse, the army coming in etc., etc.) things got a bit raggedy so we decided to stage a mass demo on the roof, get everyone out and showing solidarity and cheering - that happened Wednesday at 10 am and Thursday at 10 am and Friday at 8.30 am.

They were great times and were good for everyone. The prisoners couldn't believe the number and the joyous noise of the kids! Very early on some of us began making banners. And what we did was shout out to everybody around asking them what we ought to put on them, and after much ribaldry and some crazy suggestions like "What's happening?", "Send largactil urgent", "We demand transfers to Holloway" etc. etc., the ones which appeared were the agreed upon ones in the end. "Four screws beat up one prisoner", etc. Someone was pushed to the front of the roof to talk to the media, that was one of the best things- just to stand there, all of us with our arms around each other's shoulders and to shout out our anger and our contempt and our hopes and our strength and for everyone to endorse by whispered "Yeahs" and "Go ons" and raised fists and people saying "say this, say that" and to stop, ignore the T.V., radio etc., and have a quick round of everyone to see that everything was fair. We said we were here because of brutality, that they could read some of the details on the banners, that this was just the tip of the iceberg, that the brutality was in every aspect of the system, in the control units, both the ones which were well known and the ones which operate in every prison under the names of segregation units and rule 43. (Like the fact that 90% of the men in Wakefield control unit had been sent from Hull prison). That right below our feet there was the control unit of Hull where a

prisoner was beaten up by 4 screws, where they had just installed 8 cells which had the glass brick windows and the blank walls which are a feature of control units. We went on about the finding of the files, the language of them, the rampant lies, the hysterical paranoia, the completely inhuman marking down of every prisoner's past, present and future in terms of ABSOLUTE HOPELESS EXISTENCE FOR LIFE, that they clearly showed what we all knew - that the prison system was an industry trading in our lives, that we were here to tell people we would never be relegated to being passive 'products' on the conveyor belt in order to let screws, police, judges, politicians, bureaucrats get fat off us, that we would protest and demonstrate and take action again and again and until the last prison in Britain is shut forever. Also we mentioned about the work we were forced to do for a few pence a week, making furniture for prisons in Iran, and asked the media and people standing there, is this what we've come to?, supplying everything to kill, torture and imprison people all over the world. We all screamed for a while :

“FUCK THE SHAH OF IRAN, FUCK THE SHAH OF IRAN.”

How the end was reached was so kind of natural, most people felt there was little point in staying, many of the guys who had been let out of their cells had wanted to give themselves up, (they- outnumbered the original 80 or so people). We didn't want to let them go and many of the original lot too, leaving only a few to face what might come. There was a general feeling “we've done it anyway”, “for this time”, virtually put the jail out of action, so we got everyone together by general consent, a vote was taken, it was a vast majority for an end but not a surrender.

Someone was asked to go and talk to this Home Office bloke who was buzzing about outside, to get a procedure set up that would allow us to get examined by doctors so that nobody could get really seriously beaten, and to save some personal property. Many of us thought that this was naive, but others were genuinely indignant at the thought they might be beaten up. And none had been in a riot (amazing how few of us faced the fact that we had been!) Anyway someone went to this bloke out in front of all the prisoners and told him what we wanted, “A doctor, an M.P. to be there when we came through.” He hummed and hawed over the M.P. and after

fruitless back and forth we were told John Prescott would be around to see every prisoner after we were through, that a doctor would examine each of us, that a local magistrate would be there, that he, Lewis, would be there. He asked us to start coming in then, that was Thursday one o'clock, but we told him to wait. We went back and told everyone what had been said. They agreed to go if 1) I was allowed to go and examine the procedure, 2) only Hull screws would be there. We agreed that if we got a 'yes' on this and everything was OK we'd start going in at 9 am the following morning. Lewis asked why the request for Hull screws, smirking and thinking he'd caught us out in a glaring contradiction (because we accused them particularly of brutality). He was shaken when we told him we wanted to recognise the ones who would beat us up - "better the dogs you know than the dogs you don't." And he was profuse in his assurance that there would be no violence whatsoever, that he had given orders "no violence". But we just asked him, did he think we were fools, even after all this ? That was it.

I went that afternoon right through looking at the lay of the land, the doctor, the magistrate, the search area, the cells etc., all the time with Lewis at my elbow saying "trust me". I just looked at him in amazement and told him he'd be bang in trouble if he was lying, which he did not like at all. Most of us were sick as hell, but happy too because everyone was really beautiful with each other, all very emotional and nice for the first time with each other. Wishing each other luck, promising to meet on the roofs of some other jail, helping each other with personal gear, saying goodbye to all the kids, booing Prescott M.P. as he held a press conference within camera range of the prison. The end.

Or the end of the "public" part of the riot.

We came down in batches - 6,7,8 at a time. Down from the roof, through the wrecked wings and galleries, into the "reception" area. There, stood waiting, looking more scared than us, were the doctor, the magistrate, and the other worthies, including Lewis. Alongside them were groups of screws, looking far from scared -they stood impassively but behaving themselves, whilst in sight of the distinguished guests.

This operation took most of the day, it was about 3 pm when the last batch - you probably saw in the papers the singing of "Auld Lang Syne" - were 'processed'. We'd arranged a signal system, so

that the first batches could signal up to those still on the roof, as they were leaving for their buses to other prisons, if any violence had been done. But this was not a foolproof system. Willy Gould got his story into the papers, but most of us got the same treatment. First we were met by the 'reception' group, headed by Lewis, here we were given a quick "examination" by the doctor - "open your mouth and say 'ah'" kind of thing, then asked to get our property sorted out, and to say "yes, that's mine", or "I'm missing this or that" or whatever. Then, whisked off by a couple of screws, to be well roughed up, out of sight of the processing area - mostly this was digs in the ribs, kicks in the balls, hair pulled, shins kicked - mild stuff compared with what was to follow.

A lot of guys were transferred immediately after processing - they got their roughings up, were handcuffed, and subjected to abuse and more beatings as they made their way down the stairs - surrounded by screws, chanting, spitting, and kicking at them. And then onto the waiting buses.

Those who went to Strangeways, in buses of 12, all were met by some 20 screws, and while handcuffed, were beaten from the buses to D wing Seg. Unit. How many this was I don't know - I only know about one busload for sure, but I'm certain the others must have got it too.

Those of us that remained, were taken off to undamaged areas, in various parts of the prison. I was in with a group of some 25 guys. We were banged up, in single cells, all in a row - this was about 4 pm Friday. Very soon after we were all locked up, the first group of screws arrived, - about a dozen of them - this was the start of the systematic beatings that were to continue until Sunday afternoon.

The screws split into groups of about 4 or 5, and worked their way up and down the line of cells. It was systematic and co-ordinated - either they would charge into a cell, push the prisoner on to the floor, and kick him into a corner, and carry this on for 5, 10 minutes or longer. Or they would drag you out, with your arms and legs flailing and hurl you against a wall, landing blows on the head, back, legs and kidneys - anywhere that was exposed. When being beaten like this you instinctively roll yourself into a ball-like position - legs tucked in, arms trying to shield the head - some cons shouted abuse at their attackers, some just rolled into a ball and were silent except for screams and gasps of pain.

WITHOUT EXCEPTION EVERY PRISONER GOT AT LEAST ONE BEATING IN THIS SESSION, WHICH CONTINUED UP TO ABOUT 8 PM ON FRIDAY NIGHT.

Saturday morning brought the first food since we came down from the roof. We were shepherded along to 'breakfast' which consisted of plates of hot food being smashed into our faces. Then, back to the cells, for another session along the same lines as Friday night.

THE BEATINGS ON SATURDAY BEGAN AFTER "BREAKFAST" AND CONTINUED INTO LATE AFTERNOON.

A few doors down from me ('A') an Irish prisoner suffered a long beating at the feet of 6 screws, who left him lying, half in, half out of his cell.

He was in a shocking state - bruised, bleeding and gasping. A few minutes later, another group of screws picked him up and bundled him back into the cell for another severe kicking. Immediately they'd finished, a Medical Officer appeared - saw him - and he was immediately taken off to hospital.

Sunday, I was transferred - and suffered the same treatment given to these who left on Friday - handcuffed, I was pushed and kicked down the stairs by a jeering group of screws.

I was taken to another prison and immediately locked up in solitary.

Jake Prescott.

From: Don't Mark His Face: Hull Prison Riot (1976), National Prisoners' Movement PROP, London and Humberside 1976.

Riots AND Prison Riots

1. Brixton riot (1981)

The riots that erupted in Brixton, London were some of the worst the UK has ever seen. On the evening of April 12, police arrived at the scene of a stabbing to question the young, black victim. As they tried to get him into a car to take him to the hospital, civilians tried to intervene. The

police were attacked, but eventually managed to quell the situation. Because of the incident, police increased their numbers patrolling the streets. The very next day, angry citizens began to pelt police cars with bricks, and rioting broke up. When all was said and done, 279 police and 45 civilians were injured, over one hundred cars were burned, 150 buildings were damaged and thirty were torched.

2. LA Riots

On April 29th, 1992, a jury acquitted two white police officers for charges of the videotaped beating black motorist Rodney King. As a result of this verdict, thousands of citizens rioted for six days. Mass amounts of looting, murder, arson and assault took place, resulting in over a billion dollars in total damage, and the loss of 53 lives.

3. Detroit Riot of 1967

When police performed a raid on a Detroit after hours drinking club, they found 82 people holding a party for two returning Vietnam veterans. The police arrested all of these people, and this resulted in widespread rioting. The riots began in the northeast section and spread to the east over the course of five days. Widespread looting, fires and murders took place, and the situation got so bad that the National Guard and the 82nd airborne division were mobilized to quell the violence. When it was over, 43 people were dead, 1189 were injured and over 7000 people were arrested.

4. Watts Riots

In August of 1965, police pulled over a motorcyclist believed to be intoxicated. The driver, Marquette Frye failed to pass a sobriety test and was arrested. As the police ordered to impound the cycle, a crowd slowly began to form. Dozens grew to hundreds who began throwing rocks at the police. Racial tensions grew over the course of the next couple days until a violent riot broke out claiming the lives of 34 people and injuring 1,032.

5. 2007 Nairobi, Kenya Riots

Political unrest turned into deadly rioting in what has been called the biggest threat to East Africa's most stable democracy. Citizens of Nairobi, Kenya believed that the reelection of Mwai Kibaki was a sham, and some of the most violent rioting in history ensued. From Nairobi to the Coast, hundreds were killed and buildings were burned by machete wielding rioters. Club carrying police officers tried to restore order by firing tear gas and live bullets into the immense crowds. Crowds moved across villages, torching buildings, raping women and killing. Hundreds fled in fear from this violent demonstration of human beings at their worst.

6. Gujarat Riots



In September of 2008, a Muslim mob attacked and burned a train. The mob also threw rocks onto the train to prevent passengers from escaping. Riots resulted from the attack claiming the lives of thousands. Most tragically, over 600 children were orphaned when all was said and done. These figures don't take into account the 223 people reported missing and assumed dead.

7. 1981 Belfast Riots

Protests in Belfast, Ireland took a different form than what we have examined so far. Irish republican prisoners felt that the prison guards had been unreasonably violent toward them and

tried to carry out a "dirty protest", refusing to wash and covering their walls in excrement. Apparently this did not get the results they had hoped for, so they decided to try a hunger strike. Ten people starved themselves to death over the course of the 53-day strike until guards complied with their demands.

8. Serbia Riots

On Monday, October 13, 2008 riots broke out over Serbia's decision to recognize Kosovo's independence. The Serbs called the decision treasonous and proceeded to throw flares and other destructive objects at state buildings. Police responded by firing tear gas into the crowds of thousands of angry rioters.

9. Tulsa Race Riot



In 1921, America witnessed the worst example of racial violence in history. When a white female elevator operator claimed that a black man has sexually assaulted her in the elevator, violence broke out. The man fled the scene and a manhunt begun for his capture. This precipitated a riot that claimed the lives of hundreds of people. The rioting got so bad that the opposing sides of blacks and whites, many of whom were WWI veterans, began forming battle lines and digging trenches, waging a makeshift war against each other. Overall, 35 city blocks were destroyed by fire, leaving 10,000 homeless and causing estimates of 1.8 million (this would amount to 21 million in today's money).

10. 1844 Philadelphia Nativist Riots



In May of 1844, Nativist groups began spreading rumors that the Catholic Church was planning on removing the bible from schools. This rumor fueled the anti-catholic tensions that were the result of the growing population of Irish immigrants. The tension broke and riots erupted at a Nativist rally on May 6th. The violence caused the destruction of two Catholic churches, the burning of many homes and buildings the deaths of fourteen people and the injury of 50 more.

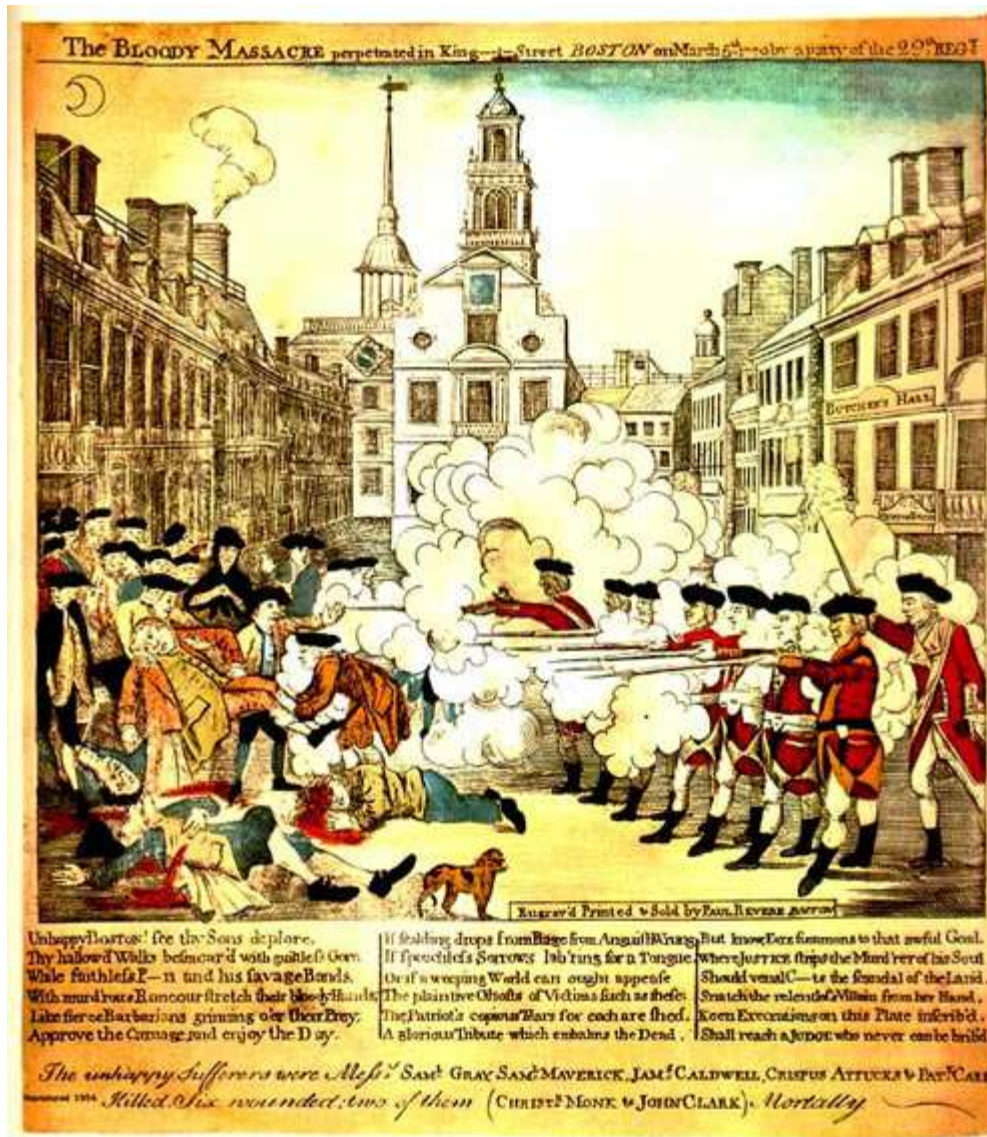
11. Hippodrome Revolt

Chariot Racing was a huge sport in the Roman Empire, and its spectators took team affiliation quite seriously. When it came to be that two chariot racers (one of them a member of the blue team and one a member of the green team) were taking refuge from the law in a church, an angry mob surrounded the church. Emperor Justinian was very nervous about the situation and had to postpone the race a couple of days. On the day of the race the massive crowd of spectators began throwing insults at Justinian and chanting "Win!" and "Conquer!" The crowd eventually turned violent and began tearing apart the palace. This inevitably ended with the imperial troops taking the Hippodrome by storm and killing over 30,000 rioters. This was the most violent riot that Constantinople had ever seen, and when it was over, half the city lay in burnt ruins.

12. 2005 Civil Unrest in France

From October to November of 2005, a series of riots and violent demonstrations raged throughout the streets of France. When police were called to a construction site to investigate a possible break in, three teenagers fled, apparently thinking they were being chased. The teens hid in a power station. At some point that night, the boys were electrocuted and two of them were killed. This broke pre-existing tensions over the supposed history of police brutality, and the riots began. Cars were burned, buildings were set ablaze, hundreds were injured and one lay dead before order was restored. Over-all property damage was estimated at just under 200 million dollars.

13. The Boston Massacre



The incident started when a wigmaker's apprentice, Edward Gerrish, complained to local army British soldiers that a man named John Goldfinch had not paid his bill. Goldfinch ignored these claims, but Gerrish returned later with a small crowd. The tension grew. The crowd grew, shouting insults at the soldiers, and as the evening grew later an estimated 300-400 people surrounded the troops and pressed them into a tight circle. The soldiers fired their muskets under duress and killed five colonists.

14. The Plague Riot in Moscow, 1771



When the Bubonic Plague struck Russia, the government took extreme measures to try and contain the outbreak. These measures included closing most public buildings including stores and schools, and a small food shortage. Outraged, the citizens of Moscow planned a massive uprising. On September 16th 1771, a riot broke out and captured the Donskoy Monastery where Archbishop Ambrosius was hiding. He was captured and killed.

15. Bristol Bridge Riots

In 1793, the government of Bristol England wanted to raise tolls for the Bristol Bridge and demolish several houses nearby to make room for more roads leading to it. The citizens responded by forming a huge riot. 11 people were killed and 45 were injured. The Bristol Bridge riot goes down as one of the worst riots of the 18th century.

16. Bloody Monday

On August 6th of 1855, riots broke out in Philadelphia spawned out of an intense rivalry between the Democrats and the Know-Nothing party. Rumors began spreading that the Catholics were interfering with the fair voting process and a street fight broke out. The riot grew in size and twenty-two people were killed. Many more people were injured in the riot than were killed and property was destroyed on a large scale.

17. New York Draft Riots



From July 11 to July 16, 1863, a time also known as draft week, riots broke loose in the streets of New York City. Outraged by new laws passed by Abraham Lincoln, thousands of citizens gathered to protest the draft for the civil war. Lincoln sent the army in to quell the rioters who, at the time, were burning public buildings and killing each other. When the riots were over an estimated 120 civilians were killed and property damage was estimated at about 1 million dollars.

18. Chinese massacre of 1871



The Chinese massacre of 1871 was a racially charged riot that claimed the lives of between 18-23 Chinese residents of Los Angeles. Over 500 Whites and Latinos stormed Chinatown and proceeded to carry out viscous attacks on the block. Reports have it that almost every residence and building on the block was ransacked and any Chinese person was brutally beaten.

19. Bombay Riots



In December of 1992 some of the worst riots of all time occurred in the city of Bombay, India. After the demolition of the Babri Mosque, two distinct phases of rioting took place. The first phase involved the Muslims striking the Hindus as a result of the demolition of the mosque, and the second was a Hindu backlash against the Muslims. Over all about 900 people were killed in these riots. As with most riots, arson and theft were also prevalent.

20. New Mexico Penitentiary Riot

The New Mexico Penitentiary riot was one of the most violent prison riots America has ever seen. The prison was drastically understaffed and heavily overcrowded. On February 2nd, 1980, the prisoners began taking guards as hostages and rioting broke loose. These guards were brutally beaten and raped by their captors. By the morning of February 3rd all hell had broken loose. Gangs were fighting rival gangs, dangerous criminals being held in solitary confinement had escaped and were exacting revenge on other criminals, and prisoners were being pulled from their cells to be beaten, raped, killed and burned. The National Guard soon set up refugee tents outside the prison, which, due to deliberately set fires, began to burn down. Many prisoners fled for safety to the camps and it wasn't long until the National Guard entered the prison to assess the damage and take a body count. Over all, there were 33 confirmed deaths and 200 injuries.

21. Louisville riots of 1968



In the wake of the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr, much of the country was in civil unrest. In May of 1968 in Louisville Kentucky, a group of around 400 African American civilians gathered at the intersection of 28 and Parkland to protest the possible reinstatement of a white police officer convicted of beating a black man only a few weeks prior. The situation only got worse as rumors that SNCC speaker Stokely Carmichael's plane scheduled to arrive in Louisville was being intentionally delayed by whites. Bottles began to be thrown and, before long, rioting broke loose. Stores were looted, fires were started, cars were overturned and two teenagers were killed. Police were powerless to stop the angry mob and it wasn't until the National Guard arrived on scene that the rioting ceased.

22. 1968 Chicago riots



In April of 1968, another riot caused by tensions following the assassination Martin Luther King struck a 28-block section of Chicago's west side. The riots were mainly focused on West Madison Street. Arson, looting and killing took place, and Mayor Daley banned the sale of guns and flammable materials. Over all over 10,000 police and 5000 troops were sent to disperse the riot. In the end, 11 people were killed and over 125 fires had been set.

23. 1967 Hong Kong Leftist Riots

When pro-communist demonstrations against the British rule took place in Hong Kong, the Hong Kong police attempted to intervene. The leftist communists called for strikes against the police, and riots broke loose. The leftists became even more violent by planting bombs around the city and killing news reporters who disagreed with their opinions. In the aftermath of the riots, 51 people lay dead, 5000 were arrested, and millions of dollars of damage had been caused.

24. 2006 Aligarh Riots

On April 5th 2006, in Aligarh India, rioting broke loose as a result of the Muslim community removing decorations from a Hindu temple. Six people were killed as a result of the riots and 68 people were arrested. Since the riots, curfews have been unsuccessfully established in Aligarh.

25. 2001 Riots in Argentina

In Argentina, President Fernando de la Rúa was viewed as the cause of a three-year recession in the country. The middle class eventually decided that they had enough of the economic conditions and began rioting on December 19 and didn't stop until December 20th. Twenty-six people were killed in the riots and widespread looting took place.