



# LostVault: Unlocked

*Thanks to everyone who submitted an entry in the logo contest.  
Winners will be featured in next month's edition.*

## Prison Brutality in the United States: The Investigations

by: Melissa Ray (BabyGurl36)

Welcome to the second installment of my three part series on prison brutality. In this part I will be covering some of the investigations that have been carried out by various investigators/agencies, looking into the many allegations of prison brutality. These various investigators are up against a strict "Code of Silence" from the prison guards/corrections officers. This code exists from the very bottom of the correction ladder, all the way up into the administration and the DOC department officials. The code includes not only silence, but blatant lies, cover-ups, falsified disciplinary reports, fictitious medical reports, evidence tampering, and wrongful decisions made by the department officials in handling the cases that are reported to them of the abuse and cruel and unusual punishment occurring in the prisons in which they govern.

A prime example of what the obstacles these investigators face includes the following documented story. A California DOC guard taking his trash out one morning was brutally stabbed in his lower back and also his chest area. He described his attackers as wearing black combat-like pants tucked into black combat boots, just like the members of an elite team of guards employed at a California prison, which is the same prison the stabbing victim was employed. Just a day before, a DOC internal affairs investigator had told him to, "Be very careful." That was five years ago. Why was he attacked? Who were his attackers? Were they the very men that this prison guard worked with on a daily basis, standing side-by-side, and "watching each other's back?" Incidents like these are what investigators have to work with when tackling the job of examining any type of prison brutality. Thus, many investigations are stymied to finally end their probe without answers. Recently a law was passed in California that states agents who investigate wrongdoing in state prisons are ordered not to disclose any information about any aspect of his or her work to legislators, the media or the governor's office, and are made to sign a pledge committing to following the confidentiality rules or face possible sanctions.

Another example is the reports of the staged gladiator fights that were going on inside the California prison system. Inmates from rival prison gangs fought after being forced into a common exercise area in this 1994 California prison surveillance videotape. Guards stopped the fight by shooting and killing one of the prisoners, a twenty four year old man. The father of the dead inmate was not afraid to speak out for others saying, "He was brutally assassinated. There was no doubt about it. They tried to cover it up, white wash it. But I knew from the beginning, I smelled a rat." Two state-sponsored investigations by the Attorney General's office came up empty handed - even while a four year long FBI investigation was under way, no resolution was obtained. The federal government filed charges stemming from the 1994 incident at the state prison where the inmate was shot and killed by a guard during the fight in the yard. Finally, in February of 1996, a Federal Grand Jury indicted eight prison guards for civil rights violations. According to the indictments the guards of the California facility deliberately paired up known rivals as a form of "blood sport" entertainment for prison staff. The federal indictment covered January to June, of 1994, the time when the young inmate was killed. Over a six-year period from 1989 to 1995 the guards at this same

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*"Happy Mother's Day" means more  
Than have a happy day.  
Within those words lie lots of things  
We never get to say.  
It means I love you first of all,  
Then thanks for all you do.  
It means you mean a lot to me,  
And that I honor you.  
But most of all, I guess it means  
That I am thinking of  
Your happiness on this, your day,  
With pleasure and with love.*

*LostVault would  
like to wish all  
Mothers a  
"Happy  
Mother's Day"*

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# LostVault

## Who We Are and What We Do

LostVault.com is the biggest and best completely FREE prison pen pal site on the web. Founded in September of 2003, we are dedicated to creating and maintaining a free place for inmates to find pen pals. Unlike many of the other prison pen pal sites, we do not charge the inmate OR you for this service. Our services are free for everyone, all the time, with no exceptions. We exist solely on donations from our members and by receiving donations in the form of postage stamps from inmates; however, we will never ask or expect anything from you in return for our services.

## Want A FREE pen pal ad on our website?

In order to streamline the process of applications for our pen pal services, effective June 1, 2004 inmates must have a loved one submit the application via an online-only form, available on our website, [www.lostvault.com](http://www.lostvault.com). All information and photos (if applicable) will be the responsibility of the person offering the ad to LostVault.com. LostVault does not assume responsibility for any ad submitted via the internet.

*LostVault: Unlocked* is a monthly publication of LostVault.com, a volunteer-based website offering free pen pal ads to inmates incarcerated worldwide.

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# From The Editor's Desk

## Letters to The Editor



Hello, and welcome again to another edition of *LostVault : Unlocked*. We are happy to have all of our readers and supporters through our growth and development and to know that the interest in our newsletter is on the rise thanks to all of you! I received a letter from a man serving time in Texas that I would like to share and follow it up with a few comments. I feel that if these feelings were brought to me from one institution, then others could be feeling the same way.

The letter says...

*"...the second most mentioned item from your newsletter is race. You and I both know that there are in deed one hell of a lot of blacks in prison and that number is growing. Regardless of what you write, there is always going to be folks, black or white, that complain of race issues. So, this is a suggestion- if you want folks to be drawn to and read your newsletter- you don't put one race in most of the stories of mistreatment. You find a few for different ones that involve different races..."*

*"Sinner" In Texas*

Sinner,

Hello and thank you for writing. I would also like to extend my apologies to you and anyone else that felt offended or left out due to the article I wrote concerning prison brutality. That was in no way my intent, but the truth is that most of the cases on file are due to abuse of black prisoners - that is fact! I'm not in any way saying that it doesn't happen to others, but those are the statistics I found while researching my prison brutality series. For example: 90% of the reported cases of prison abuse and mistreatment is committed against black prisoners. May I ask, why is that? I am well aware that the mistreatment of ALL races occur in prisons and so is the public. Matter of fact I recently ran across a documented story about an inmate that I plan to write about soon (keep an eye out for that soon). Also, if you or anyone else out there know of some specific cases that you would like me to look into, please feel free to send me the information and a lead as to where it can be found. I'll definitely look into it! I see no color, and in my heart there is only one race, and that is the human race. I think that the sooner society realizes that as a whole, this will be a much better world for all of us. I want to thank you for bringing this to my attention, and please be on the look-out for other stories of prison abuse in up-coming editions.

Till next time,

~BabyGurl

**Remember  
 Memorial Day  
 May 31st**



## Prison News

### News From Around the Globe

By Lene Gabrielsen (Cassi)

#### Texas Inmates Face Stricter Mail Rules

Prison inmates in Texas will no longer be able to receive sexually explicit material in the mail and their letters to the news media and government officials can now be read by officials.

The Texas Board of Criminal Justice adopted the new rules on Friday in the 1st overhaul of prison mail in 21 years.

Gary Johnson, executive director of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice, said the aim is to "strike an appropriate balance between an offender's privilege to correspond with the outside world" and the prison system's need to prevent inappropriate mail.

Publications such as National Geographic, artistic materials and medical or anatomy reference books might be allowed "on a case-by-case basis."

The other policy change with mail will now allow officials to read letters that prisoners send to reporters and government leaders.

Michelle Lyons, a spokeswoman for the prison system, said some inmates have recently sent threatening letters to state and county officials, as well as reporters.

#### Ban on Web material in Prison Mail Tossed by: Bob Egelko

A California prison ban on inmates receiving mail containing material downloaded from the Internet violates prisoners' constitutional right to receive information and does not promote security, a federal appeals court has ruled.

The ruling Tuesday by the Ninth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco upheld a September 2002 decision by U.S. District Judge Claudia Wilken of Oakland.

The policy, in effect in at least nine state prisons, prohibits inmates from receiving letters that contain excerpts of Web pages or printed e-mail.

The lawsuit, filed in 2002 by Pelican Bay inmate Frank Clement, contended the ban prevented inmates from getting information that was available only on the Internet.

Prison officials said Internet material in letters was harder to trace than other mail and might contain coded messages (San Francisco Chronicle).

#### Study: Thousands in Prison Innocent By: Adam Liptak, New York Times

A comprehensive study of 328 criminal cases over the past 15 years in which the convicted person was exonerated suggests that there are thousands of innocent people in prison today.

Almost all the exonerations were in murder and rape cases, and that implies, according to the study, that many innocent people have been convicted of less serious crimes. But the study says they benefited from neither the scrutiny that murder cases receive nor from the DNA evidence that can categorically establish the innocence of people convicted of rape.

Prosecutors have questioned the methodology used in the study, which

was prepared at the University of Michigan and supervised by law professor Samuel R. Gross. They say that the number of exonerations is quite small when compared with the number of convictions during the 15-year period.

The study will be presented Friday at a conference of defense lawyers in Austin.

The study identified 199 murder exonerations, 73 in capital cases. It also found 120 rape exonerations. Only nine cases involved other crimes. In more than half the cases, the defendants had been in prison more than 10 years.

The authors picked 1989 as a starting point because that was the year of the first DNA exoneration. Of the 328 exonerations identified in intervening years, 145 involved DNA evidence.

In 88 percent of the rape cases, DNA evidence helped free the inmate. Only 20 percent of the murder exonerations involved DNA evidence.

#### First Women's Faith-Based Prison Opens NewsMax Wires

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. — The nation's first faith-based prison for women opened in a Tampa-area detention center Wednesday, nearly five months after a similar program began for men.

About 300 female prisoners will be confined at the Hillsborough Correctional Institution, all volunteers who agreed to participate in a program combining vocational classes with worship.

Alia Faraj, a spokeswoman for Gov. Jeb Bush, said the new state prison creates "an environment that allows and encourages personal growth, self-reflection and character development."

To avoid legal challenges, no state money will be used for religious instruction. Volunteers will provide religious services and materials. Any religion may be represented at the prison, and no prisoner will be required to participate in religious activities, officials said.

"We need to bring humanity back into these people, to humanize them again, and faith is just one way of doing that," said Diane Conti, a volunteer who will offer inmates a course on Buddhism.

The women's prison is modeled after a men's program that opened in December last year at the Lawtey Correctional Institution in north Florida.

Critics are threatening legal action, insisting the state is giving preferential treatment to inmates who participate in religious services.

"It's incredibly irresponsible to open a second facility when so many constitutional and practical questions remain about the first facility," said Barry Lynn, executive director of Americans United for Separation of Church and State.

The group has sought records of how the state is funding the programs and may sue.

Unlike the men's prison, where most prisoners were already at the institution when it was converted to a faith-based facility, inmates at the women's program are transferring from another prison. Lynn said the state must have paid for those transfers.



## Death Row

### Capital Punishment Talk

By Lene Gabrielsen (Cassi)

#### Up Close and Personal Interview of a Death Row Inmate's Relative, Glenn Hines

**Lene:** What is your relation to the family member that is now residing on death row?

**Glenn:** He is my brother.

**L:** Glenn, how long has your brother been on death row?

**G:** He has been locked up on death row for 13 years.

**L:** How has it affected you and your immediate family, that your brother is on death row, and how does it affect you today?

**G:** I feel helpless and guilty. Helpless is a big word, but it doesn't even describe the feeling I walk around with. It's a deep pit of feelings. It takes all of my strength to walk away from a visit. If I cried, I don't think I could ever stop. There is nothing I can do. When he is sad it takes me to a level to where I can't even find the words to describe how helpless it makes me feel. Another thing, I feel CHEATED! My children have had to get to know their uncle thru letters and a glass wall. They have a close relationship with my brother and they all love each other and they are being cheated. My brother is such a loving person. He is being cheated, and so are my two children.

**L:** Have your views on the death penalty changed since your brother was sentenced to death? If so, how?

**G:** Yes, because I was ignorant before and I didn't think about how the death penalty affects other people. But now I have met hundreds of other people that are affected by this, both inmates and other families. I have experienced the pain close up. The state creates more victims by executing people. It just creates more hate. It's just like a disease, that keeps spreading and spreading. More and more people are being hurt. Even if my brother was released today I would still do everything in my power to help people on death row. I believe that everybody should receive a fair trail. If you're guilty you should be in prison, but they should not put you to death. It's wrong! God says "Thou shall not kill", it doesn't say "Thou shall not kill except for the state of Texas or the state of Ohio." I don't understand which part of that statement that's hard to understand.

**L:** How has the death penalty changed your life?

**G:** I see that Americans are in need of education, and I have this burning desire to educate people about the death penalty and how it affects other people, like the inmate's families. When I first start talking about the death penalty it's hard to shut me up, because I am so strongly against it. If I can educate just one person, it's a start. I have stronger opinions now. I am more grounded and focused. I don't judge people, and I don't believe everything that I hear. I have seen so much injustice done. Just because someone tells me that someone killed this or that person. How do I know that person really killed someone? He probably didn't get a fair trial, so how does anybody know he really killed someone? The death penalty makes me feel humble and not so in today's world safe, because all it takes is for you to be in the wrong place at the wrong time.

**L:** Do you think that anyone should receive the death penalty? If you do, which cases, and if your answer is no, why not?

**G:** Absolutely not, because it is wrong. God doesn't give anyone permission to commit murder!

**L:** Do you feel treated differently in society when they learn that you have a brother on death row?

**G:** Yes. I have experienced that people were scared of me when they heard that my brother was arrested. Now I don't let it affect me because I'm so strong in my beliefs. I know the death penalty is wrong. Some people will try to convince me that the death penalty is right, they will say that they know my brother is innocent but that the rest of them should fry. This really irritates me, because it isn't just about my brother anymore. I would give anything to save my brother, but I want the others off death row too. When

my brother got a stay of execution I was so happy, but I could not go out

and celebrate, because there was another family out in the cold mourning because they were about to lose their son, their brother. I could not enjoy the moment of my brother's stay because the state was about to murder someone else's loved one and I had to be there with them.

**L:** What kind of support do you need as a family member and where do you get it?

**G:** Family members need compassion, along with a little bit of respect. When family members have to go the long road to the execution chambers the last thing you need is demonstrators with signs saying "Fry the bastard". I am not a violent person, but if my brother were to be executed and I saw someone with signs saying he gets what he deserves I don't know what I would do. I really don't. There need to be some support groups, especially the last week prior to an execution. You need professional help to help you deal with this, but there is no one. The victim's families get counselling though. We are not considered victims. But, we are, victim's of the state. The wardens are pretending they are doing their job, but I'm sorry; they are not doing their jobs. They are killing people. Everybody involved in these executions are committing murder.

**L:** How often do you visit your brother, and what is the hardest part about visiting?

**G:** I try to see him when ever I can. I try to see him every weekend, but I can't always go. The hardest part is leaving him there. Sometimes when I enjoy life too much and I think of him, I feel guilty. He has nothing; he's never had anything, and may never have anything. The hardest part is saying goodbye, and leaving him there. I have not touched my brother in 13 years. I would give everything to just hug him ONE time. It's so hard not being able to touch him.

**L:** What is your experience with prison staff?

**G:** Some are good and some are bad. I have had some that I felt were just mean to me and my family because we were there to visit someone we love. Others are nice and they show they have a heart. They won't break the rules for you, but they show a little compassion. I have had some guards tell me that my brother doesn't belong there. That he doesn't fit in because he's so nice and polite. When he got a stay a guard in the visiting room cried because she was so happy. Even the Warden there has a heart and treats us with respect. He seems to be a fair man. I know many don't like him, but he's always treated me fair. He's a part of the system and I don't like that, but at least this Warden has shown me a little compassion and that is more than what most of them do.

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## News From Death Row

### KANSAS: Sebelius signs bill for life sentences without parole

Gov. Kathleen Sebelius signed a bill Friday creating a sentence of life in prison without parole as an alternative to the death penalty in capital murder cases.

Until the law takes effect July 1, the state's harshest alternative to a death sentence remains 50 years in prison without parole. The "Hard 50" sentence will remain available but only in noncapital cases.

Proponents of the sentencing alternative saw it as way to avoid costs associated with capital punishment by encouraging juries to recommend nondeath sentences. Those supporters have said due-process requirements affirmed by the U.S. Supreme Court create additional costs when a defendant faces execution. Also, a survey last year of jurors in 11 states suggested many worry about a capital murder defendant being able to leave prison eventually — however remote the possibility.

38 states have capital punishment, but only Kansas, New Mexico and Texas lacked the alternative of life without parole.

"It's an improvement in Kansas criminal law to have it as an option for juries," Matt All, Sebelius' chief counsel, said. (*Associated Press*)

### In Memorium - May They Rest in Peace

04/16/04 - Jerry McWee (SC)

04/23/04 - Jason Byram (SC)



## A View From The Inside

### An Inmate's Perspective

By Connie

My Awakening by Angel Rivera

To all who have love ones behind prison walls. My name is Angel Rivera, I am 46 years old and on death row for 18 years. The day my life ended and began was on Oct 1st, 1986. There are two kinds of awakenings, one is the spiritual kind, and the other is what I call the "I give up spirit". When I was brought to death row, it was as if I was looking at myself from above. Every step I took felt as if the earth wanted me to sink into it. I felt that my soul was lost and never coming back to me. I remember a lot of inmates from population looking at me as I was taken to the death row area. They all could tell when a death row inmate was coming in. But as they finally got me to the wing I was going to, I heard "New Guy", another Mexican inmate at once called out and wanted to know who I was. I was not yet myself. I guess that everyone knew that feeling, the first time ever to be locked up. I have never been in jail or prison, so being on death row was like being put in my grave. But our Lord was looking out for me. I gave my life to the Lord the first year I spent in the county jail, yet like Satan has his way of making me loose my way. So our Lord got to me two times in one day. First the porter that cleans the runs came with this big bag of stuff, he said "it from all the men on the death row. They didn't know me but yet they look out for me. And they gave me a stinger to heat up water, cup, coffee, soups, sodas, chips, tooth paste and tobacco (then we were able). Someone even sent me a radio and headphones, till I got my own. I got up from my bunk and told everyone my name and that I thank them all for everything. Then someone said remember to do this for the next man that comes along. Respect. And that's what I have been doing every since. That same day I was lost in my mind and I heard "Can I pray with you?" it was the death row minister, his name was Jack Wilcox. My heart and soul just let go. I got on my knees as he prayed for all the men on death row. The light is truly a blessing, embrace it and feel your soul again.

Respect to all my brothers and sisters on the Row.

#### Up Close and Personal Continued from page 4

**L:** How did you react and what went through your mind at that very moment, when your brother was given the death sentence?

**G:** I could not believe it! I was in shock! I went home and laid down on the bed and the room was spinning. I remember laying on my side and I was thinking that maybe this was just all a bad dream and that I would wake up and my brother would walk in the door and everything was just fine.

**L:** Glenn, I really appreciate that you took the time to talk to me about your brother being on death row. I know it must be hard to share your feelings and thoughts about what's happened and is still happening to your brother.

**G:** Well, as I said before, if my families story can help anyone, or change anyone's opinion about the death penalty, it is worth for something. It really is the only way to make a change, I think. We have to talk about it and share our stories even though it is personal.

**L:** I hope everything turns out well for your brother and that you will get to spend some time with him outside prison walls!

**G:** I pray that we will, and I believe we will. I wish it would happen sooner rather than later, but I am confident that my brother will be released one day. It will never give him back the years he lost, but he is still young enough to create a good life for himself, get married to his girlfriend, have children, get a job and enjoy life. I would trade places with him if I could. I have lived half a life, and it would only be fair that he could live half a life.

**L:** Thank you, Glenn for sharing your story with us!

## Spirituality

### Inspirational Words

By Dee From MA (Lucidity)  
& Dawn (Dawna)



#### American Muslims condemn mutilation of bodies in Iraq

(WASHINGTON, D.C., CAIR) - The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) today condemned the mutilation of those killed in Iraq on Wednesday.

Four American civilian contractors were ambushed in their SUV's, burned, mutilated, dragged through the streets and then hung from a bridge spanning the Euphrates River, according to news reports.

CAIR said the mutilations violated both Islamic and international norms of conduct during times of war and called on all parties to the conflict to respect the sanctity of the dead and the sensitivities of their families.

The Washington-based Islamic civil rights and advocacy group cited a tradition of the Prophet Muhammad that prohibits mutilating bodies (Hadith 654.3).

In another tradition, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "Do not kill women or children, or an aged, infirm person. Do not cut down fruit-bearing trees. Do not destroy an inhabited place." (Al-Muwatta, Vol. 21, Hadith 9) CAIR, America's largest Islamic civil liberties group, is headquartered in Washington, D.C., and has 25 regional offices and chapters nationwide and in Canada.

#### Religious Holidays for May 2004

**4/30 eve to 5/2 eve:** Beltane - Pagan and Wiccan holiday celebrating the coming of summer

**5/1: Mindfulness Day** - Zen Buddhist day for being mindful that everything you do, or fail to do.

**5/1: May Day** - observed in the United States to celebrate the coming of spring; observed in Russia in honor of labor.

**5/1 to 5/4: Zuni Green Corn Dance** - a celebration of the return of the Corn Maidens.

**5/1 eve to 5/2 eve:** Mawlid al-Nabi - Day commemorating the birth of Muslim Prophet Muhammad.

**5/5: Cinco de Mayo** - Day celebrating Mexico's struggle for independence.

**5/6: National Day of Prayer** - a day of prayer for all.

**5/9: Mother's Day** - a day honoring mothers.

**5/18: Feast of Old Greek God Pan.**

**5/19 to 5/22: Iroquois Strawberry Ceremony** - celebration of the strawberry harvest.

**5/20: Ascension Day** - Christian feast marking Jesus' ascension into Heaven.

**5/25 eve to 5/27 eve:** Shavuot/Feast of First Fruits - Jewish festival of Thanksgiving for the first fruits of the grain harvest.

**5/26: Beginning of Old Egyptian Shomu/Summer month of Khentkhet/ Paoni.**

**5/30: Pentecost** - Christian celebration of the descent of the Holy Spirit.

**5/31: Memorial Day** - commemorates the members of the United States armed forces who were killed in war.



## QQ & Motty Says Voices with Flavor

By *Chele Thomas (QQin4meboo)*  
& *Morrigan Johnson (Motty)*

### QQ/Motty On: Focus and Goals

#### QQ Sayzzzz...

How to keep YA focus on YOUR GOALS...

Yanno I ain't even gonna lie...first of all focus and goals are not born in ya - they are learned. The sad thing these days is that the ones that haven't learned that yet are already having their own babies. Nothing is being passed on to the next, it's **\*\*do for me, I'm doing me!\*\*** What they learned when they was coming up! Do u know how many folks have never had a bank account? Check cashin folks makin loot off the **\*\*low man on da totum pole\*\*** (no matter what the low man on da totum pole is, race wise). Liquor stores, pawn shops , lil' stores charge so much , washaterias (wash ya clothes at the mat not home). U can go in the bodega , they sell weed...do taxes, sell fake hair , fake gear!! That is what the kids see and we want them to have goals? How can u get what u haven't seen? I have that answer - reach out ! I believe when I have 20 kids on my block that play in my yard, that I am the bomb. They all know Miss Chele gonna get on us if we act up! But they not mine...I can only do so much to them. In a short time, even when I make them clean da yard, they have pride and they do it. Clean up today, another fun day here tomorrow is a lesson taught! Goals are a learned thing, u ain't born with em - u learn by example. What u desire and learn from what u see moves u on. See, the only difference in a goal or a dream is the movement, the action, the desire to make it come true, and the willingness to do better, be better, and try harder. No matter what, to get where u want to be. That makes a dream a reality! Yes its hard , but life was never promised to be easy. When u have one that tries to be someone, make sure ya tell him/her they can b what they want to b, cause of self esteem. Thats learned also! Always keep on point with the children bcuz they are the future. Know that what ya say and do, they see and learn. If u have no goals to show or tell, what do they have to learn from?? Change the cycle! Accept it! Learn from it...and fix it!

This post is dedicated to my babies, AMT, TDST , TLCT and the one that makes me see it all...JDW (and his mama CW). Thanks for callin. I still have questions, but, I know they gonna come through!

#### Motty Says...

There is an old wives' tale that says "You can't plow a field by turning it over in your mind." What does this mean? ACTION. You must take action in order to reach a goal. Everything in life is made up of actions. What is your ultimate goal for yourself? Better yet, what is the goal you have to reach for now?

A problem I have with reaching goals is my focus, and that often I set my goals for too far ahead of time. It's hard to stay with a goal if it is 10 years down the road, instead of 10 months. Not that it isn't doable, it's just easier to take little steps. We start out in life taking small steps, and we grow into strides. So, in theory our goals and focus go from getting across the room to getting across the yard.

What is focus? My own definition is "keeping to a set point/goal." Ever played a sport? What do you do? Focus on where the "goal" you

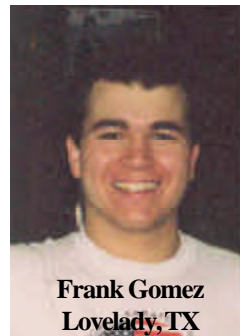
want to reach is. You also look at your fellow players. How are they hindering you or helping you reach the goal? In life we must step back and contemplate the things that are affecting us. WE are in control. WE must take that control. In essence WE must be the ones to stop sitting and thinking about what we want to achieve, and just do it.

Here's a plan to help keep your focus. Set your goal. Answer some questions about your goal (What do I need to do to meet this? Who can help or hurt with this goal? Why? How? Is the amount of time I have set reasonable?) You do these things to help you "double check" yourself to see that you are staying with it. Come up with a mantra, or something to help you remember what your goal is. Check yourself often. Make sure you are on your path, keeping focus. Most of all, remember that YOU have the power for good change or bad. YOU control where your goals take you. Good Luck!

*The "QQ/Motty says" column is about life. We would like for you to send in quotes or questions, either that you think will inspire us and others to "think" or just something you'd like to get an opinion on. QQ and Motty will gladly share their opinion in this column on any question or subject, as long as it is not crude. We want your input! Please, send any correspondence to: LostVault Newsletter, PO Box 294, Washburn, TN 37888. Please note on your correspondence that you are writing to QQ/Motty. At this time, no correspondence can be sent back or directly replied to. \*Please note, we will not publish your name, only first initial and state, not facility. If you wish to remain totally anonymous, please specify in your correspondence.*

## Pen Pals of The Month Inmates Desiring Mail

These 2 men are chosen from our Not Receiving Mail list. To be listed on this special section of our website, an inmate must not receive any mail or receive mail only from family.

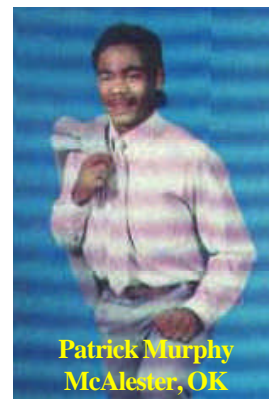


**Frank Gomez**  
Lovelady, TX

Frank is a down to earth kind of guy who loves people, adventure, and challenges. He is in search of a real friendship and "would like to find someone special to be with in my life, but I understand that it all starts with friends."

*If you would like to write either Frank or Patrick, please visit the pen pal section of our website at [www.lostvault.com/penpals](http://www.lostvault.com/penpals) or send an email to [penpals@lostvault.com](mailto:penpals@lostvault.com) for more information.*

Patrick is looking for a nice and honest person to be his friend and with whom he may correspond. He is the father of 3 children, Alivia age 10, Patrick Jr. age 9, and Mallorie age 7. He has many different interests. He reads his Bible daily, and listens to the radio. Patrick said, "I just need someone who will understand me."



**Patrick Murphy**  
McAlester, OK



## Dear Libbie

### Advice for the Lovelorn By Joanna L. Massing (Libbie)



Our society depicts the incarcerated men and women in our prison system as cold, hard, unemotional people needing and not deserving of much - least of all the warmth of human love and friendship. The majority of our prisoners were incarcerated at a young age so they were molded to be what they appear to be and have become a product of their cold, hard environment. I could not find that further from the truth especially with the group of sincere, warm and humorous inmates from "Michigan City, Indiana" that got together and submitted questions they had regarding their curiosity and angst about friendship and love. Many of them have the same questions we would have about our own relationships with people in society not just our relationships with our incarcerated loved ones. So you see we find the lovelorn amongst everyone even these supposedly "cold, hard" prisoners, these being the people that most need and want just a small bit of that warmth given from love and friendship. Below are their questions.

Dear Libbie,

Most men who place ads say they are just seeking friends but deep in our heart we are really seeking a serious relationship. We say "friends" because it feels safe and we fear we won't get any responses if we tell the truth. Do you think it is best to be honest, chance less responses or should we say seeking friends, get more responses, meet more people and hope that one of these will blossom into a beautiful relationship?

Curious, Michigan City, IN

Dear Curious,

*I have always felt that the best basis for starting any type of relationship is honesty and before you can start a relationship you would want to be friends with your potential partner. Building a relationship starts with friendship first and through trust, communication and mutual attraction if it is meant to be then it will blossom into what it should be a wonderful, loving, beautiful relationship and if it doesn't at least you have made a new friend out there. Just remember you can't push a square peg into a round hole, love cannot be forced on someone it just will come naturally if it is meant to be.*

Libbie

Dear Libbie,

There are many stereotypes about men in prison, they think we are all out to use people and play games. This is not true. I have personally found penpals out there who will write to us men in prison and say that we are the only men they are writing only to discover later that they are writing others - sometimes the others are even in the same facility! "OUCH", that hurts! What is a man suppose to do?

Painful, Michigan City, IN

Dear Painful,

*Ouch! That does hurt! I have to stress to any readers out there that if you are writing to an inmate and decide to write to another from the same facility please have the courtesy to let both parties know so unnecessary problems don't have to rear their ugly head. Sometimes people aren't upfront about who or how many people they write to because they might not want to hurt your feelings. They might tell you what they think "you want" to hear. Again I do*

*believe that the best policy is to be upfront and be honest about it. If you have any questions then ask your pal and stress to them you want to know the truth but remember this goes both ways as well.*

Libbie

Dear Libbie,

I am falling in love with my penpal but I don't think she feels the same way. Should I conceal my feelings to protect our friendship or should I let it all "hang out"?

Secret Lover, Michigan City, IN

Dear Secret Lover,

*Hmmm even though I do believe honesty is best, with things like this my opinion is to sit back and just let "nature take its course". Why the rush? Build on the friendship, build on the relationship and if it is meant to be it will naturally take its course. You can always tell your friend that you're beginning to really care for them without getting in too heavy and test the waters that way. But yes definitely don't try to rush into something that has not had a chance to flourish. Good luck!*

Libbie

### Prison Brutality Continued from page 1

facility shot fifty inmates, killing seven and wounding forty-three. Now prompted by the Federal Grand Jury indictments, this special legislative panel is conducting another examination of the facility and the department of corrections. A former correctional officer told the FBI, "We were using excessive force. We were shooting inmates, with a lethal weapon, to break up fist fights." Even as these reports are coming in to the investigators working on the cases, they run into problems of having witnesses, because the other corrections officers that try to tell the actual truth in these situations end up either seriously injured or carrying a fear with them of turning up dead.

Investigators who were exploring the beating of the busload of prisoners arriving at a California state prison in 1995 hit many dead ends in their investigations. The administration would not comment; the guards who were witness to these acts and the deliverers of the information turned over to the investigative team were closed mouthed when they were questioned. A civilian spoke up who wasn't employed by the prison, but was there working at the time of this incident. This was enough to continue the investigation, but it was stonewalled in every direction the investigators turned.

A death row inmate was pronounced dead in Florida by a hospital in Starke at 4:18 PM on July 17, 1999. The Florida Department of Law Enforcement was notified of the death the same day and began a criminal investigation in conjunction with the Attorney General's office. Over the months that followed, nine department employees were charged with crimes relating to the inmate death ranging from second-degree murder to official misconduct. All nine employees were dismissed by the Department because they had violated department rules including excessive and/or unnecessary use of force and falsified reports, according to a DOC spokesperson. Are these investigations what America calls self-examination? Have they finally taken the time to look into their justice system, legal issues, law enforcement, and their social issues? Are we headed in a new direction? Prisoners subjected to imprisonment in a prison brutality situation return to their communities untrained, untreated, poorer, and more disenfranchised than when they left. That is, if they return, at all. This system of dehumanizing, medieval torture promotes violence, exacerbates gang activity, and deepens the fissures of race and class that already divide the United States.

Next Month: *Prison Brutality in the United States: How situations are handled*



## Inmate Art & Poetry

### A Look Within

#### *Heaven Sent*

She begins in darkness,  
then adds a splash of color  
and it's worth living life  
to see one after another.

She bathes mountains in light,  
makes a forest a spectrum,  
they put your soul at peace  
if only you'll let them.

If it's angels you think,  
that this poem refers,  
you wouldn't be wrong  
but there's much more to her.

She is the breath of life,  
chases away the gloom  
and sometimes I pray,  
that she will come soon...

Though the waves of life crash,  
with her I feel calm,  
what these words describe  
is an enchantress called Dawn.

**John Troy VII**  
**March 2004**  
**Florida State Prison**



**DeAndre Williams - Malone, NY**



**Angel Rivera - Livingston, TX**

#### What Is Love

Love can be like a moment:

A midnight walk on the beach, a slow dance shared by the warmth of a fire, a view of the moonlight shimmering on the still quietness of a lake... Love comes easily at such times; the moment seemingly suspended in a place, apart from all other time; but then as with the moment, this love passes, never to return...

But, the moment did exist, and two hearts share a memory forever.

Love can be like a stream:

As does the stream, each heart travel's it's own individual course... Although two hearts may flow along together, creating a rich, deep current that endures: drifting along together until the end of time. But, then, as with the stream, they may experience storms, creating high winds that push them along uncontrollably; causing them to encounter obstacles that separate them... Never to cross each other's paths again. But, they are no less streams because they've parted.

Love can be like a song:

Two hearts can ride along on love as words full of hopes and dreams ride along on the melody of a beautiful song; never anticipating an end. But, then, as with every song; the music stops and the words have no means in which to continue. But, does it make a song any less beautiful because it has an end?

One should not demand that love last forever, but only be grateful that love has touched his heart at least once in a lifetime. For:

How can one answer for more than the moment?

Who knows what strange tides may come along and sweep is away?

How can a song last forever?

Perhaps when a man has held a woman in his arms, he has experienced love... Leaving a piece of her remaining in his heart forever.

Love is love simply because it was created and shared by two hearts, and whether two hearts remain together or not... Love, in a sense, does last forever...

Within the two hearts that once shared it.

**Jerry Mancil, Jr.**  
**Mt. Meigs, AL**





## Jessie's Jokes & Junk

### ...The Fun Side of Life

By Jessica C. Snyder (Jessica)

Hi! My name is Bunny. I was VERY busy hiding Easter eggs last month but here I am to help with the May issue of the Fun Page!

Have a HOPPY month!

### ~Joke of The Month~

The following ad in The Atlanta Journal is reported to have been one of their most popular (in # calls received):

*SINGLE BLACK FEMALE seeks male companionship, ethnicity unimportant. I'm a very good-looking girl who LOVES to play. I love long walks in the woods, riding in your pickup truck, hunting, camping and fishing trips, cozy winter nights lying by the fire. Candlelight dinners will have me eating out of your hand. Rub me the right way and watch me respond. I'll be at the front door when you get home from work, wearing only what nature gave me. Kiss me and I'm yours. Call (404) XXX-XXXX and ask for Daisy.*

Over 15,000 men found themselves talking to the Atlanta Humane Society about an 8-week old black Labrador retriever.

### RIDDLES:

By definition, a riddle is simply a mind-trick using words as bait. A riddle is not meant to be a question which you can run to the nearest dictionary to find the answer...what fun would that be? "HARE" are a few to test your brain. Hope they CRACK you up!

1. How many letters are in the alphabet?
2. What state is surrounded by the most water?
3. A woman has 7 children, half of them are boys. How can this be possible?
4. A farmer and his hired help were carrying grain to the barn. The farmer carried one sack of grain and the hired help carried two sacks. Who carried the heavier load and why?
5. In the NBA, how many men are on the basketball court for each team.
6. A boy was at a carnival and went to a booth where a man said to the boy, "If I write your exact weight on this piece of paper then you have to give me \$50, but if I cannot, I will pay you \$50." The boy looked around and saw no scale so he agrees, thinking no matter what the carny writes he'll just say he weighs more or less. In the end the boy ended up paying the man \$50. How did the man win the bet?
7. If you were running a race, and you passed the person in 2nd place, what place would you be in now?
8. What kind of cheese is made backwards?
9. And because I am a Bunny... How many chocolate bunnies can you put into an empty Easter basket?

Riddle answers next month

### ~Fun Facts!~

An AT&T survey estimated that 122.5 million phone calls to Mom are made on Mother's Day. Other Mother's Day findings revealed that 11 percent never call their mothers, and 3 percent of the 68 percent planning to ring Mom up called her collect. AT&T's query didn't include how many Mother's Day e-mails were sent to Mom.

Held in mid-May in Ottawa and Hull, the Canadian Tulip Festival is the world's largest tulip festival with over two million plants.

Mel Blanc – the voice of Bugs Bunny – was allergic to carrots. (Got to stick ONE bunny fun fact in here!)

Only 2 animals can see completely behind themselves without turning their heads: the rabbit and the parrot. (OK, TWO bunny facts!)

The sun's energy production each second is enough to supply the electrical need of the U.S. for 50 million years at the current rate of consumption.

Top of Form

It is illegal to hunt camels in the state of Arizona.

It is against the law to remove your shoes if your feet smell bad while you're in a theater in Winnetka, Illinois.

**FACT OF THE DAY:** "The bends" is a painful condition caused when nitrogen gas forms bubbles in a diver's blood. Scuba divers risk getting the bends if they come up too fast from a deep dive.

## Solution to Last Month's Puzzle

### LOGIC PROBLEM

(Clue numbers in parentheses)

Leguminosae isn't sky blue, yellow [Sir Leek (1)] (1), peach [Lady Lettuce [Solanaceae (1)] (2)], or lavender [Cucurbitaceae (2)]; it's sea green. Liliaceae [Sir Cauliflower (2)] isn't yellow [Sir Leek]; it's sky blue. Cruciferae is yellow. Solanaceae isn't Sir Alfalfa or Sir Watercress (3); it's Sir Broccoli. Sir Alfalfa isn't Leguminosae [sea green] (3); he's Cucurbitaceae. Sir Watercress is Leguminosae [sea green], so isn't Princess Celery (3); he's Princess Bean [only princess left] (1). Sir Cauliflower is Princess Celery [only princess unplaced], so Sir Alfalfa [lavender] isn't Lady Endive (2); he's Lady Spinach. Sir Leek is Lady Endive.

In summary (noblewoman, knight, province, scarf color):

Lady Endive, Sir Leek, Cruciferae, yellow  
Lady Lettuce, Sir Broccoli, Solanaceae,  
peach

Lady Spinach, Sir Alfalfa, Cucurbitaceae,  
lavender

Princess Bean, Sir Watercress,  
Leguminosae, sea green

Princess Celery, Sir Cauliflower, Liliaceae,  
sky blue



# LostVault Ads

To place an ad in our monthly newsletter, please see our website for pricing information. If you are an inmate and wish to place an ad, please send a SASE and your request for information to:


LostVault Newsletter

c/o Melissa Ray

P.O. Box 1688


Harriman, TN 37748

Ad prices range from \$5 to \$30 (we will accept postage stamps from inmates); all proceeds benefit LostVault.com and help keep us free. Your ad may not contain sexually explicit wording and ads soliciting products, services, or legal advice are not permitted from inmates.



**Dear Mom,**  
Although a daughter, I write this as a mother, We're both mothers now, of child-daughters:  
You, a grandmother forced to be a mother,  
And I, alone, with my fatherless daughter.  
Destiny has thus shaped both our lives in ways We would not have chosen. Yet life is still the bright,  
Painfully lovely thing it always was:  
Our children like dancers on a dark, splendid night,  
Needing our loves as I needed yours; your love  
The same song as ever, a lullaby I remember  
So well from my time in your arms. We move  
In slow spirals towards the stars. September  
Has weeks like June, yet is closer to the fall.  
Love has no answers, yet its beauty answers all.  
I Love You Mom~~ Your "BabyGurl"

**Happy 37th  
Birthday  
BabyGurl!  
(May 18th)**

**Listen to the Prison Show  
with Ray Hill**  
KPFT Houston - 90.1 FM  
Friday Nights 9PM-11PM CST  
Show information:  
[www.rayhill.info/PrisonShow.html](http://www.rayhill.info/PrisonShow.html)  
**Listen live on the web: [www.kpft.org](http://www.kpft.org)**


**Brad, Vaughn, Mandy, Lonnie, Troy, Robert, Chris & Angel** - Thank you so much for being there for me through everything! You all are the best! Your encouragement and prayers mean more to me then you will ever know. I have grown such an attachment to each of you and can not imagine going a day without you all in my life. You are forever friends that I will continue to pray for daily! ~Connie

**The staff of LostVault:  
Unlocked would like to wish  
fellow staff member Connie a  
warm congratulations on her  
pregnancy!**



**Congratulations on your new job  
George! This is better than the \$34  
prison check, huh?**

**Tarot Card Readings By Lucidity**  
\$10.00 donation  
100% of the proceeds benefit LostVault.com  
Any 3 Questions Answered




Hello everyone, I'm Lucidity and I have been reading Tarot Cards for close to 30 years. I work with many different decks, along with gemstones and crystals. I am a self taught Astrologer and Reiki practitioner.

For your reading I will need 3 handwritten questions, your birthday, a photo (not required) and a SASE. You will receive a typed reading shortly in the mail, or email if you prefer.

**Astrology Charts by Lucidity**  
\$10.00 donation  
I will need your date of birth, time of birth and city of birth. I will send you approximately a 10-15 page read-out. For either of the above services, please make your money order made payable to "D. Martin" or see our website for PayPal information.

**Mailing address:**  
**Dee Martin**  
P. O. Box 63095  
New Bedford, MA 02746

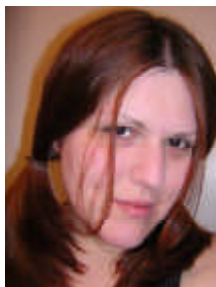


**Sinner...**  
You have my heart  
You have my soul  
You have my life  
For eternity to hold!  
**YES, I WILL!**  
With All My Love,  
~TNMOM

## Vaulter of the Month

### One of LostVault's Finest

The Vaulter of the month for May is one of the Administrators of LostVault, Michelle Bean (AKA Sewergrrl). Michelle is a marketing coordinator and technical writer for a large engineering firm; her office specializes in wastewater (sewers, manholes, pipelines, etc.), hence the nickname "Sewergrrl." Michelle will be 31 years old on May 10th and she lives in Baltimore, MD with her boyfriend and their cats.



Michelle's interest in the prison system lies primarily with death row issues. She has 3 regular pen pals (all on death row) and several others she writes to on occasion. When asked about her involvement with death row and what she hopes to accomplish by befriending death row inmates, she said, "Even if this lone voice can't make a difference in the big picture, if I can make a positive impact on one condemned person's life, I have indeed made a difference." Michelle has visited one of her close pen pals on death row and this is what she had to say about her experience, "It's amazing that stereotype people have for those confined to death row. The men I saw with their families are not the 'monsters' depicted by the public and the media. These are men that have wives, girlfriends, children and family members that love them despite their situation. Laughing and sharing lunch or playing a board game, they talk of days past and future plans...all the while ignoring their grim outlook, if only for that afternoon."

Michelle was instrumental in the development and implementation of the pen pal program and now oversees the operation of this program and actively participates in the management of LostVault: Unlocked. She is involved in the day-to-day operation of the website and offers this about LostVault, "There are many websites that offer pen pal services to inmates, but LostVault.com is one of the only free pen pal services in existence. By providing this service free of charge for all incarcerated individuals, we hope people will write to inmates and realize that these men and women confined behind bars are human beings that deserve friendship."

Michelle said ultimately she would like to affect one person's life as much as her pals have enriched hers. Michelle, you have affected many lives! Thank you for all your hard work.

**Due to overwhelming  
response, as of  
June 1, 2004,  
LostVault will no  
longer be accepting  
penpal applications  
via mail. Applica-  
tions will need to be  
posted by a friend  
or family member  
using our web  
form, at  
[www.lostvault.com](http://www.lostvault.com)  
Please see page 2  
for more info.**

**ANNOUNCEMENT**