

1 prepared the same types of profiles of inmate 48
2 population who were in D-yard as you did for Attica
3 population as a whole on September 9th; am I correct?

4 A That's correct.

5 Q And that will be shown later in the hearings.

6 I thank you.

7 (The witness was excused.)

8 MR. LIMAN: Mr. Jackson, will you please
9 rise.

10 W I L L I A M J A C K S O N, called as a
11 witness, being first duly sworn by Mr. McKay,
12 was examined and testified as follows:

13 EXAMINATION BY MR. LIMAN:

14 Q Would you state your name.

15 A William Jackson.

16 Q Mr. Jackson, you were an inmate at Attica?

17 A Yes, sir.

18 Q From when to when?

19 A From November 13, 1969 to March 20, 1972.

20 Q How old are you?

21 A I am 25 now, sir.

22 Q And how old were you when you were admitted
23 to Attica?

24 A Twenty-two.

25 Q What were you convicted of?

1 A Sale of a dangerous drug, first
2 degree.

3 Q What was the drug?

4 A Marijuana.

5 Q In what court were you convicted?

6 A Chattaqua County Court.

7 Q Was this your first felony conviction?

8 A Yes, sir.

9 Q What was your sentence?

10 A An indeterminate to seven-year sentence.

11 Q What does it mean, "indeterminate to seven-
12 year sentence"?

13 A This is a parole board sets for minimum on
14 the sentence and the maximum term would be seven years.

15 Q And you actually served two and a half years?

16 A Yes, sir, I did.

17 Q What is your educational level?

18 A I am a high school graduate.

19 Q Are you married?

20 A Yes, sir, I am.

21 Q Do you have children?

22 A Yes, sir, two.

23 Q What ages?

24 A My girl is five years old and my boy is six.

25 Q After your conviction were you held in county

1 jail prior to being transferred to Attica? 50

2 A Yes, sir. Upon conviction bail was revoked
3 and I was held in the county jail for 60 days prior
4 to sentencing.

5 Q This experience of being in jail prior to
6 actually being assigned to an institution such as
7 Attica is a common one, is it not, among the inmates
8 that you have met and talked to?

9 A Yes, sir. They usually take some time be-
10 tween the time you are first incarcerated in the
11 county jail and they finally sentence you.

12 Q You were brought to Attica on November 13,
13 1969?

14 A Yes, sir.

15 Q Who brought you? How is an inmate escorted
16 to the doors of Attica?

17 A The sheriff of the county you come from
18 brings you up to the prison. They handcuff you and
19 they bring you to the prison up there and then they
20 hand you over to the authorities at the prison.

21 Q Did you have any conception of what Attica
22 would be like before you arrived there?

23 A Well, you know, you talk with people who are
24 in the county jail and there was one man who was a
25 parole violator. He gave me some idea, but, you know,

1 you just listen to him. You don't know 51

2 what to expect in a place like this.

3 You know, like he told me that there is a
4 majority of black inmates there. It is a pretty
5 rough place, you know.

6 I had no conception at all of what prison
7 was like or anything, you know. You see it in the
8 movies, you really don't believe it until you are up
9 there.

10 Q Did you receive warnings about possibility
11 of homosexual attack on you?

12 A The guy that was in the county jail told
13 me, he says, you got to make a stand right off or,
14 you know--he told me like they will try to give you
15 cigarettes and all this type of thing, you know.

16 He just explained to me, you know, how the
17 thing went. So I was kind of prepared.

18 Q You were apprehensive when you were brought
19 to Attica?

20 A To say the least.

21 Q Would you tell the public what your reaction
22 was when you first saw Attica as you were being driven
23 up.

24 A We come down the exchange street in Attica
25 and I never believed they had a place that big. Those

1 walls around it. You know, it was just so-- 52

2 it was unbelievable. It was like a dream when you
3 see something like this.

4 Q Do you know how many acres Attica covers?

5 A A later time I found it was 55 acres in
6 there.

7 Q There is a map of Attica right by your
8 side and I think that it would be helpful in under-
9 standing your testimony and the further testimony if
10 you could point out the various parts of Attica.

11 Can that be put on screen, lowered. The
12 photograph.

13 A Right here is the front entrance.

14 Q You can see the pointer at the front entrance
15 there.

16 Would you move--on the left part of the
17 screen, would you move your pointer so that the people
18 can see it.

19 A Right here. This is the front entrance.
20 This leads right to the Administration Building.
21 These parts here are the Administration Building.

22 When you are first brought to the prison,
23 you are brought in here and there is like a little
24 bull pen. You are put in there while the deputies
25 check out your papers and make sure everything is all

1 right.

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2 Then you are handed over to the officers.
3 They walk you out here and you go around to this
4 wire gate and this is the reception building on the
5 bottom and the top floors are the HBA or the box.

6 You go in here and they take away your
7 clothing and they give you your number, a rule book.

8 Then they do a complete physical examina-
9 tion. They examine your hands, your--not a doctor
10 examination. This is for contraband. Like they
11 examine your rectum and everything. They go through
12 this.

13 Q You would be asked at that time whether
14 you were a drug user?

15 A No. Usually, but at this time the identifi-
16 cation office was busy. I was brought back the next
17 day and put through this questioning.

18 Q As a user of marijuana, you would have been
19 in one of those statistics that we showed of drug use.

20 A Yes, sir.

21 Q Because that is classified, I should say
22 that the classification of drug use which the Commission
23 adopted was in accordance with the classification by
24 the law of New York State, which classifies Marijuana
25 as a dangerous drug and that statistic therefore appears

1 in the statistics that we have shown.

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2 A New York State classifies marijuana as
3 a narcotic, too, not only a dangerous drug. It is
4 a narcotic.

5 Q Continue with your map.

6 How many cell blocks are there?

7 A There are four cell blocks. This is A,
8 the whole area across here is A-block.

9 This is C-block, all the way across here.

0 And this is B-block, all the way here.

1 And this is your D-block.

2 This is--

3 Q There is an additional block called E-block?

4 A E-block. This was newly built right up here.
5 This was E-block yard. Each block has its own yard.

6 This is B; this is C-block; this is D; this
7 is A-block.

8 Q You say each block has its own yard. Each
9 inmate is assigned to one of the blocks; am I correct?

0 A Yes, sir. Wherever he locks, there is
1 where he would have his exercise block.

2 Q And his privilege of using the yard would
3 be confined to the yard for that--

4 A Particular block.

5 Q (continuing) --particular block.

1 He couldn't walk from yard to yard? 55

2 A No. There isn't any way.

3 Q Except on the 4th of July; am I correct?

4 A On the 4th of July, there is yard doors and
5 they open these, right in here and on the 4th of
6 July and on a special occasion they allow inmates to
7 walk around and circulate a little bit.

8 Q There are shops at Attica where inmates
9 work; am I correct?

10 A Yes, sir.

11 Q Would you point out on the map the metal
12 shops.

13 A The metal shops? This is one of the metal
14 shops. I get the designations mixed up. One is metal
15 1, one is metal 2. These three buildings consist of
16 the metal shop area.

17 This one behind it is like the powerhouse
18 and the powerhouse annex.

19 Q This is the picture that you can see from
20 an aerial photograph, if you are in Attica, am I
21 correct, that what your perspective would be confined
22 to would be to the block that you are assigned to?

23 A Yes, sir.

24 Q Plus the areas that you would walk through
25 to go either to the hospital or to the shop or to--

1 A To the mess hall. 56

2 Q Where is the mess hall?

3 A This is what they call A-mess. Right across
4 from it is B-mess, then the bake shop is right here
5 in the back.

6 This is the whole mess hall complex in the
7 institution, these two buildings, like.

8 Q Where is what is called Times Square at
9 Attica?

10 A It's this area right where all the blocks
11 separate. It's like where they intersect right here
12 in the center. That's the Times Square area.

13 Q And what does Times Square have?

14 A Well, in the bottom there is gates that are
15 in each leg of this right back of Times Square. So
16 it can be completely isolated.

17 Then upstairs there is a wire riot cage and
18 this is where they stand and so when the men are in
19 the yard they look over, you know, into the yard.

20 Q You said that when you entered Attica, you
21 were given a number and you were photographed and,
22 I suppose, fingerprinted and processed?

23 A Yes, sir.

24 Q After the processing took place, you were
25 given clothing?

1 A Yes, sir.

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2 Well, when I first went in there, they gave
3 you--it's like a real coarse gray cloth with metal
4 buttons on it for your shirt and gray pants and a
5 button fly is on them. They give you like one set
6 of underwear. You are allowed to keep your underwear.

7 Q You can keep the underwear that you brought
8 in?

9 A Yes, sir.

10 Q How many pairs?

11 A I only brought in two pairs of undewear.
12 A later time I bought more. But I brought those in.
13 I was allowed to keep those.

14 Q What about shirts?

15 A The shirt I brought in was a colored shirt
16 so I wasn't allowed to have it. The only colors they
17 allow is gray and white.

18 Q How many uniforms are you given by the
19 institution?

20 A Later we went to the state shop and they
21 gave us, I believe it was three pairs of pants, three
22 pairs of pants and a couple shirts and then they give
23 you the state underwear. The old fashioned T-shirt,
24 you know, the knit ones. And they give you a box of
25 shorts and socks.

1 Q Most people have no conception

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2 of how you get your clothing laundered. Would you
3 explain that.

4 A Well, the state will wash your pants and
5 your shirt and the state underwear if you wear it
6 but a lot of people don't wear it. I had my own
7 underwear sent in. This here you have to launder
8 yourself.

9 You get a bucket of water in the evening
10 or in the afternoon and you wash out your own clothes.
11 Even if you have state socks, you have to wash them
12 out. They don't do any laundry service.

13 Any personal clothes, like a sweatshirt
14 or if you have your own white shirt sent from home,
15 you have to wash this out by hand.

16 Q You said the state launders it.

17 Actually inmates are assigned to the job
18 of working in the laundry?

19 A Yes, sir.

20 Q Am I correct that for a pack of cigarettes
21 or other currency in prison, you can get people--

22 A You can buy a laundry man. You usually get
23 a contract with one man and you pay him like maybe a
24 carton of cigarettes every month and he will take care
25 of your laundry for you.

1 Q I am going to discuss with you 59

2 at greater length later what you have to buy in
3 prison, what the currency is.

4 You are given some clothing. You now have
5 a number. You have been photographed.

6 What happened to you after that?

7 A I was--they put you in reception, what they
8 call a reception company.

9 At this time I went down to what they call
10 PK interview and this allowed me to go to my meals.
11 This was a couple days after I was there.

12 Q For the first few days you ate in your cell?

13 A I was fed in my cell, right. After this
14 interview, there were two, three men in there, they
15 asked me about what kind of work I had done on the
16 street. You know, just a general look, I guess.

17 And after this I went back up and I was
18 allowed to go to meals. And while I was in this
19 reception company we would go to the yard. They
20 would allow us to have yard and everything but at this
21 time you have to wait for the assignment board to
22 assign you a job in the institution.

23 Q So you were waiting for the assignment of
24 work to do?

25 A Right.

1 Q How long did you remain in the 60

2 reception company, approximately?

3 A It was approximately two and a half months.

4 I was waiting for a job assignment. I was on the

5 cell up in 10 company. All you could actually do

6 is go to the yard--

7 Q What did you do with your time in those two

8 and a half months?

9 A I--at the time you don't know anything

10 about the institution. I was borrowing books from

11 somebody. I would see somebody in the gallery with

12 a book, I would ask them, can I read the book tonight.

13 Once in a while you would listen to the earphones.

14 There really wasn't too much to do.

15 Q Did you know that they had a library at

16 Attica?

17 A At this time I didn't even know there was

18 a library at Attica. I didn't know anything about it.

19 You are kind of in a confined space. You

20 are locked in a cell and you go to meals. You don't

21 talk to anybody. They don't tell you about that.

22 Q Were you allowed to bring any books from

23 home or obtain books from home?

24 A I wrote to my wife. At the time I didn't

25 realize, I asked her to send me some books so she,

1 when she come up to visit she brought 61
2 them with her and they wouldn't allow me to have
3 them. They said, you can't get books from people
4 on the street. They all have to be sent in directly
5 from the publisher.

6 I didn't get those. Later I did get books.

7 Q That means you have to buy the books from
8 the publisher?

9 A Yes.

10 Q You can't have books given to you by family?

11 A No used books. It all has to be new materials.

12 Q Did you get any orientation while you were
13 in the reception company for that two-and-a-half-
14 month period?

15 A The only orientation I got was from talking
16 with other convicts. They didn't have any program,
17 you know, it was just trying to get along, you know.
18 That was the main thing.

19 Q Did you ultimately get some orientation
20 lectures?

21 A After I had gotten a job, it was five or
22 six months after I had been there, they gave a class
23 in orientation. It was presided over by a correction
24 officer and later we had a class in successful living,
25 which was done by the captain.

1 Q By that time you knew the rules
2 of living at Attica?

3 A After five or six months, you learn.

4 Q Were the rules that were explained at
5 these orientation classes the rules by which you
6 lived day to day?

7 A Not quite. You have to learn the whole
8 thing from, you know, just living there. There is
9 always differences. Little things.

10 You have to learn each individual personality
11 of a correction officer, whoever is running the show
12 at the time. You just learn to go along with them,
13 whatever they're doing.

14 Q I take it there are ways of doing things that
15 vary from officer to officer and gallery to gallery;
16 would that be a fair statement?

17 A Very much so. Their whole demeanor of
18 handling the thing is according to their personality,
19 you know. It's the way that they do it.

20 Q Did you get a rule book at any time?

21 A When I first come in, they gave me a rule
22 book. They wrote my number on it so I would remember
23 it and my cell location and this was printed at Great
24 Meadows and it was printed in the year 1969. It was
25 current, but it's just like a general rule book. It

1 was supposed to be for all the State

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2 institutions, though.

3 Q In addition to the rules that covered, as
4 you say, the general rules that covered all of the
5 institutions, there were special rules that applied
6 to Attica?

7 A Yes. Like the packages are different in
8 every institution. For instance, at Sing Sing you
9 can receive cigarettes, chewing gum, items like that.

10 Now, if you were at Sing Sing and trans-
11 ferred to Attica and these items are sent to you,
12 they are taking them and tell you you can't have them
13 here. You got to either send them back or destroy
14 them and it's all these little things that are chang-
15 ing.

16 A book you have at another institution,
17 you go to Attica, they will say you can't have this
18 book here. Things like this.

19 Q Does that create a good deal of frustration
20 and unrest among the inmates?

21 A Certainly. Hobby items they may have had
22 at Sing Sing. They did hobby work. They come back
23 and say we don't allow this here, so we're going to
24 put this in your personal file and you can get it when
25 you go home.

1 They want the items then.

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2 They have been working on maybe a hobby project or
3 something.

4 Q Ultimately you were assigned to a job at
5 Attica?

6 A Yes, sir.

7 Q Are you required to work at Attica?

8 A Actually, not required but if you don't you
9 just stay in your cell all day. You have to do some-
10 thing. You are glad to get out.

11 Q Do they have school at Attica?

12 A Yes, they have the school program for those
13 who--for a GED equivalency exams, for giving of
14 different diplomas.

15 Q Would you explain what you mean by that.

16 A What they had is like a lot of inmates would
17 need just a little brush-up on their reading skills,
18 probably they had tenth grade education so they give
19 classes on this for reading skills and math and things
20 like this and they get them prepared and then they
21 administer a diploma equivalency exam. This helps
22 the inmate get at least an equivalency.

23 Q Do many inmates go to school full-time at
24 Attica?

25 A I wouldn't say--it's hard to say.

1 Q You didn't go to school full-
2 time?

3 A No, I worked in the school. I wouldn't
4 say there was maybe at the most 200 that went to
5 school.

6 Q The rest of the inmates would be working?

7 A Working on regular jobs.

8 Q What was the first job you were assigned to
9 at Attica?

10 A I was assigned to the silk screen shop.

11 Q After you were assigned to your job, what
12 block did you live in?

13 A I moved from A-block to D-block.

14 Q Would you point out D-block.

15 A D-block is right here.

16 Q I take it that your life then settled into
17 a routine at Attica?

18 A Yes. You get used to how they live at that
19 particular block and you get used to the routine.

20 Q Would you describe the routine of inmates
21 at Attica.

22 A I will go on my last job that I had.

23 I worked in the hospital. It will be easier
24 for me to remember because I just left this about
25 a month ago.

1 We would--about 6:30 they

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2 would ring three bells and this is a signal for you
3 to start getting ready to get up. About ten to
4 7:00 they would ring two bells and then they would
5 holler for the count.

6 Everybody would have to be out of bed facing
7 the front so they can get a visual count of you.

8 Q I read an article at the beginning about
9 how at Attica there would be buttons in each cell
10 so that an inmate could signal that he was really
11 there.

12 Did they get around to putting those buttons
13 in?

14 A There is no buttons there.

15 Q So you would stand for the count and an
16 officer would see that you were there and mark you off?

17 A Right. He will come by and visually count
18 you. There is usually two, one right behind the
19 other. They tally their counts against each other.

20 Q When would that be done in the morning?

21 A This would be about between ten of 7:00
22 and 7:00 would be the count and at 7:00 o'clock
23 they would ring what they called one bell. This will
24 be the signal that the count is all right and they
25 would start running the different galleries to the

Q You said running the galleries. What do you mean by that?

A What they would do is like there is 42 cells on a gallery and they would open the entire gallery and the men would come on out, line up according to height and then they would march to the mess hall.

Q Is there single cell occupancy at Attica?

A Yes, sir.

Q And what's the size of the cell?

A Approximately five foot wide by nine foot deep, seven foot high; seven, seven and a half foot high.

Q Would you be given military-type orders to march, line up by height and march to the mess hall?

A It depended on who it was. One officer may holler out, back a stick on the wall, "Line up by height. Forward march."

Another one would say, "Okay, go ahead."

I never knew.

Q What was the rule on talking at that time?

A Whoever it was. One particular officer would say, "I don't want talking," or you knew this is the way he was. Or another one allow it.

1 Q How long would you be in the 68
2 mess hall for breakfast?

3 A Approximately--by the time you got there,
4 you got time to eat, it would be maybe 20, 25 minutes.

5 Q What would a typical breakfast be?

6 A It would be this--a scoop of milk. They
7 have a scoop and you go by and they give you a little
8 scoop of milk. Sometimes they would have oatmeal
9 or dry cereal and on the weekends you possibly could
10 have a piece of fruit and have this Ersatz coffee.

11 Q What do you mean by Ersatz coffee?

12 A If you drank it you would know what it tastes
13 like. It's pretty bad stuff.

14 Q After--what did you do about utensils for
15 eating?

16 A When you would go sit down, there would
17 be a spoon, you would always have a spoon and on
18 occasions they would give you a fork.

19 Then on even fewer occasions you would get
20 a knife. It was a specially tough piece of meat, they
21 would give you a knife to cut it with.

22 Q Would you be responsible for turning in
23 the fork or knife before you left the mess hall?

24 A Right. When you sit down, you always make
25 sure your utensils are on the table and make sure that

1 somebody hadn't accidentally shorted 69

2 you because if you sat down and the utensils weren't
3 there, you are hurting because you have to come up
4 with a spoon or fork or knife, whatever is missing.

5 Q Is it hard to come up with a spoon, fork
6 or knife at Attica?

7 A If it isn't there, it's hard to come up
8 with.

9 Q After breakfast, what would you do? You
10 finish your breakfast about what hour?

11 A Around 7:30, between ten to 8:00. It always
12 varied because they would be running the galleries
13 or maybe they was late tallying the count. We would
14 get back to our cells.

15 Q How would you get back?

16 A Line up, march back to the cells and lock
17 in again. And stay locked in various times until
18 8:00, a quarter after.

19 Then they would let you out for your par-
20 ticular job assignment.

21 Q How would you go to your job assignment?

22 A Usually all the men that work on the same
23 assignment, they will be put in adjoining cells so
24 this way, like the hospital where I worked last, they
25 will open 20 cells who work in the hospital and we