

Mrs. Hardy Tells Husband: 'Be Cool'

By Margaret Pala
and Jon Katz

Washington Post Staff Writers

"I've often wondered when it would happen," Anna Hardy said. "I've learned to live with the work as well as the man."

Mrs. Hardy, a former D.C. corrections department official herself, remembered that when her husband, Corrections Director Kenneth L. Hardy, walked out of their Southwest Washington home shortly before 3 a.m. yesterday, she told him to "be cool."

She said it wasn't an expression she often uses, but it seemed fitting then. To Mrs. Hardy and her husband, it was just another early morning phone call about some difficulty in the prison system.

Mrs. Hardy didn't find out that this one was quite different until Alan Avery, a D.C. government official, called her at 6 a.m. to ask what had happened to her husband. When she said she didn't know, Avery called back 15 minutes later to tell her Hardy and nine others were being held hostage by prisoners at the D.C. jail.

"I have faith," said Mrs. Hardy yesterday afternoon at home after more than 12 hours of waiting. "I have faith that there will be someone within that situation who will show him the kind of humanity he has shown in his work."

Mrs. Hardy, who is now a D.C. parole board examiner, said it was also a time "for us to show our humanity not only to this man (her husband) but also for the families of the hostages and the prisoners."

Mrs. Hardy tried to maintain a normal routine in the townhouse on 6th Street SW. She sent her son, Jake, to classes at Coolidge High School, where he is a senior, and she appeared outwardly calm.

The only signs that something unusual was happening were the neighbors who came to sympathize and help, and the incessant phone calls, from the press, from friends, from Mayor Walter E. Washington, and from corrections department officials who wanted to know if her husband was all right, since she was the

only person Hardy was allowed to contact.

It wasn't until 3:45 p.m. that a phone call eased the tension. It was from her husband, saying "things are looking up," that he was unharmed but still held hostage.

Within minutes, Deputy Mayor Graham Watt called to say the situation was improving, and that Hardy had agreed to help the prisoners speed up their lengthy court proceedings.

More than 90 per cent of prisoners held in the D.C. jail are awaiting sentencing or other court proceedings. The remaining prisoners are held for misdemeanors involving sentences less than 15 days, or are awaiting transfer to other jurisdictions. Prisoners have long complained of long delays between court appearances.

"I have accepted as a sad fact of life that in his role Kenneth becomes the goat for the entire system," said Mrs. Hardy. "They've needed money for expansion for a long time, and maybe now they'll listen," she said. Shortly after noon, Jake

returned home, and Mrs. Hardy's other son, Sgt. David Roach, called from a North Carolina Air Force base. Both are from Mrs. Hardy's sons by a previous marriage.

Mrs. Hardy has worked in the District government for 19 years. She came through the ranks of the department of corrections and became administrator of the women's detention center.

She resigned four years ago to avoid charges of nepotism following her marriage two years earlier to Hardy, who met her while both worked in the prison.

As a parole examiner, she monitors initial hearings of juveniles under the Youth Correction Act.

Yesterday, Mrs. Hardy called into her office shortly before 8 a.m. to ask them to distribute her caseload for her.

Across the city, another wife was listening to the radio and trying to learn through the excitement and confusion if her husband was all right.

Josephine Wren, wife of another hostage, corrections officer Lt. Charles Wren, said her husband had left as

usual for work on the midnight to 2 a.m. shift.

Mrs. Wren, who lives with her husband on Minnesota Avenue NE, said a cousin called at 8:30 a.m. and said he was listening to the radio and heard Charles had been taken hostage and injured.

"I turned on the television and they were saying my husband had been taken hostage and that he was hurt," she said.

Mrs. Wren said that throughout the day, no one from the jail, the police or the city government called to tell her that her husband was actually a prisoner.

"Then I started getting phone calls. I've been so nervous," she said shortly after 4 p.m. "I've got to do something. Nobody will tell

me what's happening."

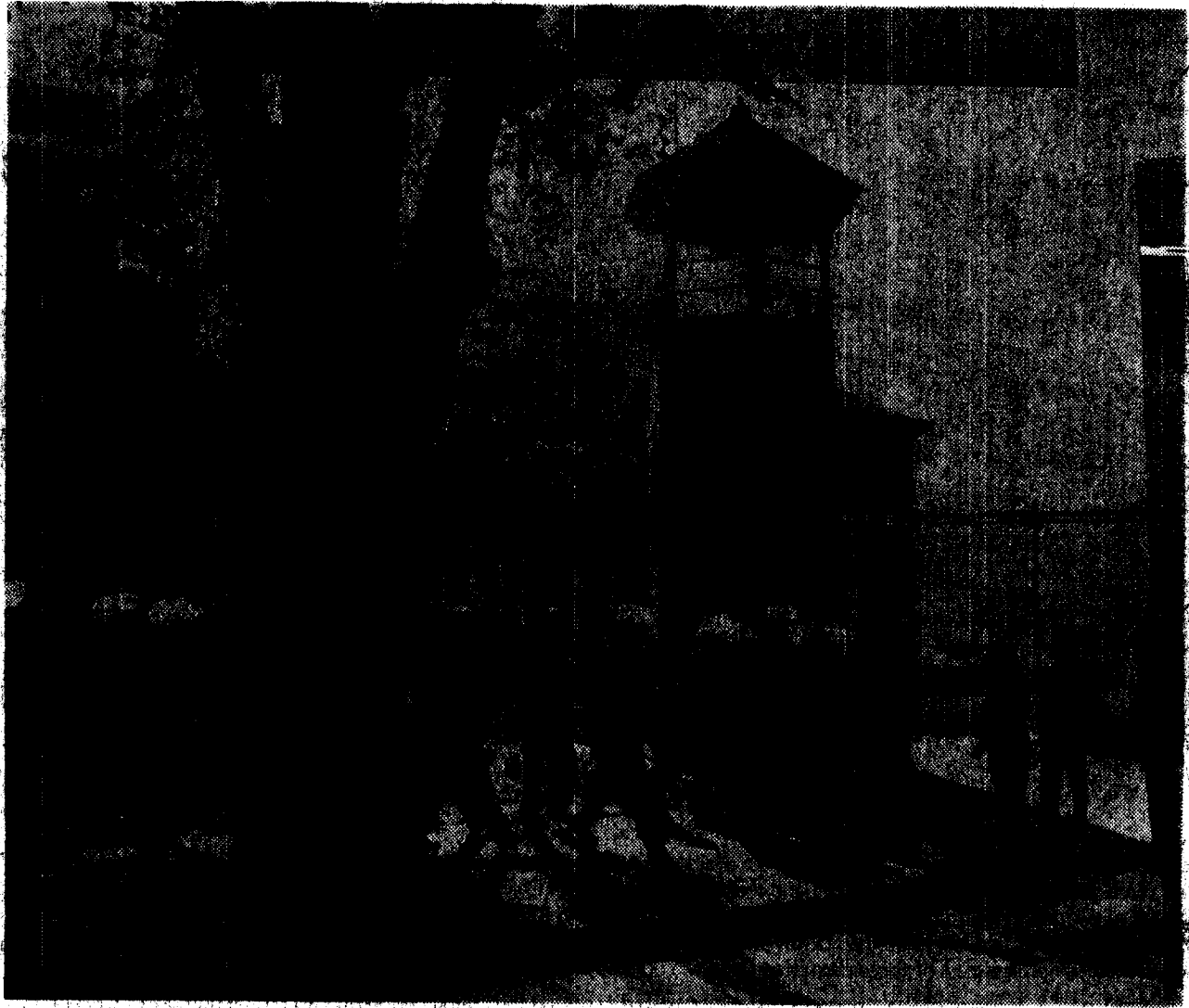
Mrs. Wren said her husband has been a corrections officer for 12 years "and has loved the work. He loves any job he has."

"I never minded his working there until this thing with the eight escapees two weeks ago. Then I started to get nervous," she said.

She said Wren was promoted to lieutenant two months ago, and is 55 years old.

"I just hope when this thing is over that he gives it up," she said. "I can't see getting all choked up by a group of hoodlums."

Families of other hostages rushed to the jail, but were held back by police cordons.



By Ellsworth Davis—The Washington Post

Metropolitan police in riot dress enter the D.C. jail yard after prisoners had seized 10 hostages.