

Jail Picture Disturbs Mother

By Peter Osnos

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On Wednesday, the prisoners at D.C. jail first demanded their say about the way things are. Thursday, it was the guards who made their protest. Yesterday, Gertrude Boyd made hers.

The way Mrs. Boyd sees it, she's as involved with prisons as the people in them. She is crime's victim, the penalties are on her behalf.

"If they didn't do what they did, they wouldn't be in there," she said softly but firmly yesterday afternoon, "They'd be walking around free like everybody else."

One warm evening in September, Gertrude Boyd's 7-

year-old daughter, her youngest, was found naked, raped and strangled in an alleyway near her Southeast Washington home.

It seemed an especially brutal, senseless crime, the kind that begs any rational excuse.

The next day, police picked up a 17-year-old youth, a neighbor of the Boyds, and charged him with the slaying. As they do in such cases, the authorities sent the accused to D.C. jail.

And there on Wednesday he was caught up in the trouble.

His own mother, hearing the news, rushed to the scene. Somehow in the con-

fusion she found her son in the jail courtyard and they tearfully embraced. Photographers were there and so were the TV crews.

When Gertrude Boyd picked up the paper Thursday morning and saw that emotional picture splashed across the front page, she felt the fury building inside her again.

"I was very angry," she said, "I really was. If I was him, I wouldn't want to be seen or heard from again."

Gertrude Boyd keeps pictures from her daughter's funeral on the mantelpiece of her cramped little house. The memory is always there, she said, a prison of its own.

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Mrs. Boyd has eight children surviving, the oldest is 20 and the youngest is 10.

"I tried to raise them right," she said, "many times I told them how easy it is to get in trouble and how hard it is to get out. And then I tell them, if you do get in trouble don't call momma, 'cause there's nothing I can do."

None of her offspring has been locked up, but her brother has. He's at Lorton and she went there a few times. But she won't go again.

"He knows he's got to stay there, had as it is. But I hate to visit him. It just hurts to see the look in his eye when I get up to leave."



GERTRUDE BOYD

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