

Hardy Sure He'd Be Slain In D.C. Jail

By William L. Claiborne
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At one point during his captivity in D.C. jail Wednesday, D.C. Corrections Director Kenneth L. Hardy said, he began to concern himself with not whether he would die inside the jail, but how he would die.

That was at about 1 p.m., when he was held at gunpoint at a window and he pleaded for the police not to attempt to take the besieged Cellblock 1 by force. That was when the inmates threatened to cut Hardy's head off if police moved in.

"I felt that was it, I braced for it," Hardy said in an interview in his home yesterday. "I felt, if it had to come to this, shoot me in the head first, so I wouldn't



KENNETH L. HARDY
... feared for life

know that I was being mutilated."

Hardy said yesterday that during his 15 hours as a hostage in the jail, he resolved that if he got out alive, he would fight bitterly for a "massive input" of funds and government attention to overhaul the penal system here.

See HARDY, A10, Col. 8

The other time that he felt death was imminent, Hardy said, was when he and 11 guards being held hostage were marched shortly before dawn to the steel door separating Cellblock 1 from the visitors' rotunda.

They stopped at the door, Hardy said, when some of the rebellious inmates saw armed guards and police through a peephole. One of the inmates had a snub-nosed revolver pressed to Hardy's head.

"If they fire at us . . . , you are going to be the first one," one inmate told Hardy, the corrections director recalled.

Hardy said that even though he was hit on the head once with length of chain, and struck across the wrists once with a pipe, he was not otherwise assaulted inside the cellblock.

"Sure, I was hit on the hand, and my hand hurts, and I was hit on the head, and my head hurts. But there wasn't a consensus to brutalize me. Each time I was hit, I'd hear a bunch of inmates yelling, 'What the . . . are you hitting him for,'" Hardy said.

He said some inmates

brought cigars and candy to the small cell where he was confined most of the time. Others asked frequently about his well being.

"I was regarded as an object of the system. I was to them a black man, but a lackey, a puppet. I'm the image of their hostility because I am director. They think I am in charge of the whole criminal justice system, but I'm not," Hardy said.

Hardy, who had been released a few hours earlier from George Washington University Hospital, where he had undergone treatment since Wednesday night for chest pains suffered during a court hearing for the prisoners, said that he felt well and that he planned to return to work Monday.

"Getting out of this alive has committed me more than ever to get done what I've been trying to get done . . . I'm a lucky man. I'm out here by the grace of God," said Hardy.

He sat in the dining room of his Southeast home, seated at a table stacked high with letters and telegrams from friends and public officials here and elsewhere. While he talked, his wife,

Anna, and his personal secretary from his corrections office worked in the living room on correspondence and other business work.

Hardy said that during the long hours of his confinement in the cellblock, he tried desperately to open a dialogue with the inmates, but was for the most part rebuffed.

"They were talking at me, telling me what they thought. They didn't want to listen," Hardy said.

"I couldn't talk about getting a new jail in a couple of years, when these men had been in that place for months and months," he said.

He said that he felt the turning point that ultimately led to his life being spared occurred during the forced march of the hostages to the rotunda door.

"When they saw they weren't going to be allowed out, they knew that I was no longer director of corrections. I was just another hostage. I no longer had the authority to accede to their one demand, which was freedom," Hardy said.

"Their only demand suddenly was no longer a reality, and that meant a lot," he said.

Hardy said he had anxious moments while pleading for police officials to go to the window to talk to him and the inmates. But no officials would respond.

"The only corrections man to come to the window was Jackson," said Hardy, referring to Delbert C. Jackson, superintendent of the Lorton Reformatory.

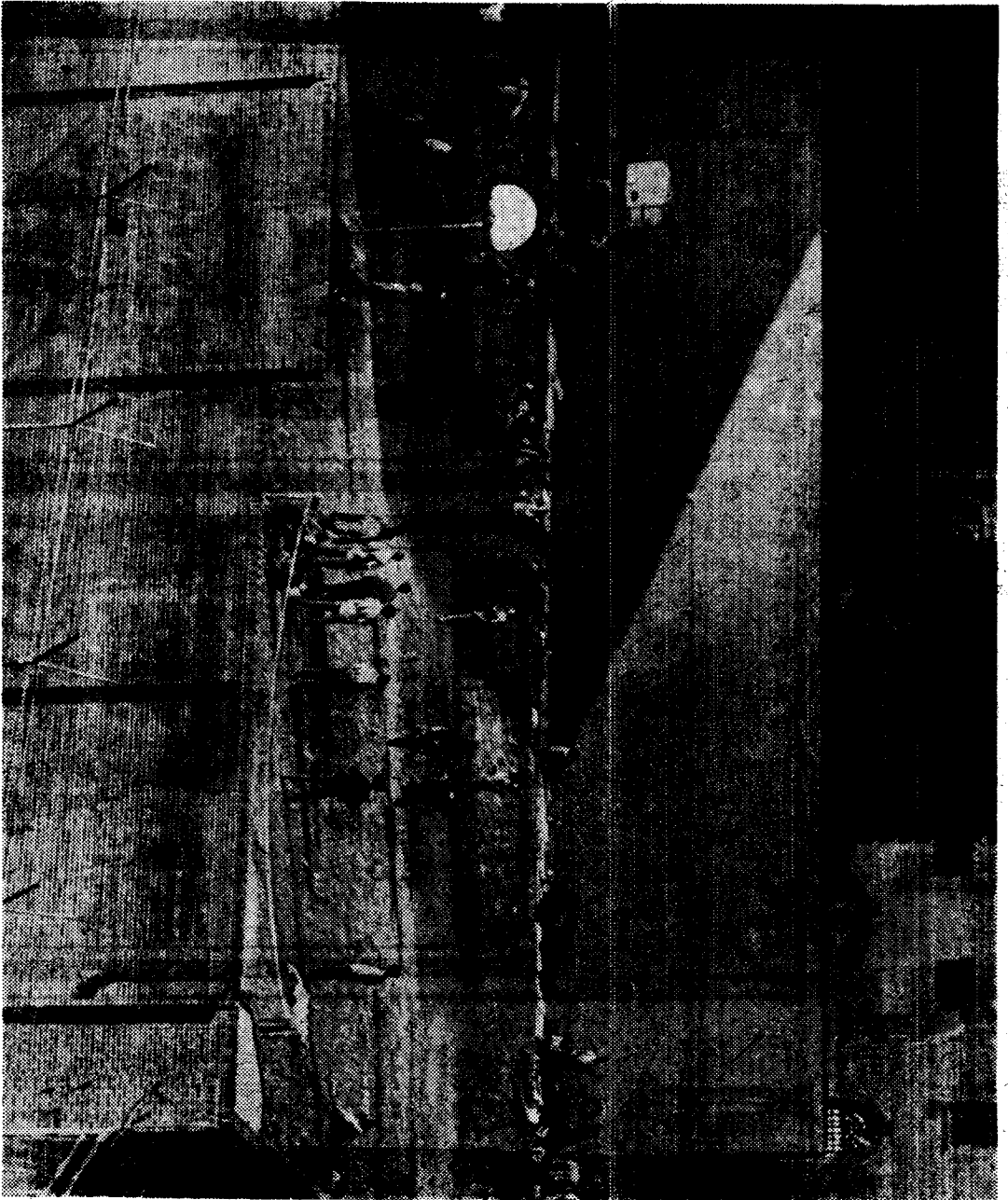
Hardy said he could not understand why Police Insp. Theodore Zanders and other law enforcement officials refused to come to the window. Zanders told a reporter at the time that he would not go because the inmates were pointing a gun out and that "they'd have the whole police force hostage."

At one point during the interview, Hardy joked with Mrs. Hardy about being squeezed through a small opening in the barricaded cellblock door about 4:15 a.m.

This reporter had gone through the opening moments earlier and observed that he had considerably less difficulty than Hardy.

"Maybe if I hadn't made you get down from 210 (pounds) you wouldn't have had to go in," Mrs. Hardy said.

"They'd have shot me," Hardy said with a wan smile.



By Larry Morris—The Washington Post
The relative peacefulness of a football game between D.C. jail inmates bears no testimony to the major disorder that occurred two days before or the minor disorder taking place simultaneously inside the facility.