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3 Attica Hostages Spared

'Don't Tell Them I Didn't Kill You'

ATTICA, N.Y. (AP) — Acts of mercy spared at least three hostages during the violence yesterday at Attica Prison.

"The man behind me was an inmate I had known for some time," said guard Richard Fargo, who was a hostage for 98 hours. He was recalling the moment yesterday morning when leaders of the rebelling prisoners ordered the slaying of hostages before state troopers, prison guards and sheriff's deputies closed in.

"He whispered in my ear that I would not be hurt. He was supposed to stick a knife between my ribs. He stuck the knife just to prick the skin and said, 'Now don't tell them I didn't kill you.' Then he threw me backwards and covered my body with his," said Fargo.

IT WAS the prisoner's last act.

"When it was over," said Fargo, "he was dead."

The executioner assigned the guard Elmer Huehn told him: "I don't have the heart to do it. I'm only going to prick you."

The executioner drew blood and fell on top of him to hide him from other convicts. "This wonderful Puerto Rican saved my life," said Huehn, but he mourned other hostages who were killed — "The others didn't have help and they're lying dead."

Philip Watkins, another guard who was a hostage, had a similar experience. "The guy had time to kill me, but he didn't."

Watkins said his captor threw him on the ground and fell on top of him as cover. Some prisoners were picked off by police sharpshooters as they tried to kill their hostages.