

A Tale of Terror, Rape In D.C. Jail

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A 27-year-old Quaker war protester arrested at the White House August 14 and held in the D.C. jail was released Thursday after what he said were two days of "terror" in which he was beaten and raped more than 50 times by jail inmates.

Robert Martin, who says he is a former reporter for the Norfolk, Va., Sun, Associated Press and Overseas Weekly, held a press conference at Quaker House here last night.

District of Columbia corrections department officials said the assaults are under investigation but said that jail guards do not usually venture into cellblocks during nightly recreation periods — when Martin was attacked — because the guards themselves might be attacked.

HOSPITAL

Martin was taken to D.C. general hospital late Wednesday night but had to wait for treatment, he said, while D.C. jail officials unsuccessfully sought to get the district police department's sex squad down to investigate. They were told, and police officials confirmed that police no longer investigate crimes committed at the jail or any district corrections facility, except for homicides.

Martin, currently unemployed, said he became a pacifist and Quaker after getting out of the navy in 1972. He was one of a number of protesters arrested after they sat down in the White House visitors line to pray for a halt in U.S. bombing of Cambodia.

He was held in a "quiet" cellblock until he was transferred to a different cellblock late Tuesday afternoon.

PERIOD

When the recreation period began, Martin said a gang of men came into his cell, began beating him, forced him to strip, and then raped him for almost five hours.

The next evening, when he was returned to the cellblock, a group of inmates came into his cell and told him to take off his clothes or be killed.

He refused, but his clothes were ripped off and inmates again raped him for about two hours until a guard wandered by and stopped it.

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