

With Jeb and Bud in Allenwood

By Robert R. Warner Jr.

MONTGOMERY, Pa.—I met Jeb the day he arrived at Allenwood Federal Prison Camp in Pennsylvania and we quickly became friends.

Jeb Stuart Magruder is, or was, a well-to-do member of the Establishment. I am a member of the counter-culture, a Presbyterian minister who has lived underground, at subsistence level, for the last four years.

Jeb conspired "to obstruct justice and defraud the United States." I burned down a Reserve Officers Training Corps building in Honolulu in 1971 as an act of war resistance.

We would seem to be worlds apart, maybe even enemies, yet our lives have come together as fellow inmates here. Moreover, we are both graduates of Williams College, we are both Presbyterians, and we are both interested in philosophy and theology. Each of us is egoistic, works hard, and has been "success-oriented." Both of us are over thirty, have bad backs and are extremely close to our families.

The evening of June 4 found me eating dinner with Jeb, together with Egil Krogh Jr. and Peter Matuszewich, a young draft resister from New York City. We made an incongruous foursome. Peter and I are quite close. We had just spent several late nights together working on a paper about the prison system and the "sentencing process" for the American Civil Liberties Union.

Peter was doubly tired from laboring on the farm all day with Bud Krogh—they are good friends—but Bud still looked fresh. His ten miles of running a day obviously made the difference. I often spent about four of those miles on the road with him myself before he was released Friday.

Jeb looked a bit bedraggled himself that first day. He appeared anxious and uncertain, the way most of us feel coming into the "joint" for the first time. It is a strange and alien environ-

ment for a Williams College graduate. Yet it was amazing to see Jeb's tension begin to melt away when he discovered that he and I shared that chunk of collegiate history and common acquaintances.

Our talk ran fast for a few minutes, and my own tension and ambivalence toward him began to dissolve in the surprising interplay between us. We have continued to build bridges since then and to open up to each other across great barriers of experience, life-style and political commitment.

One of the most difficult things about prison is the separation and hardship that prison life imposes upon families. Bud knows about these. Jeb soon will. We have talked about them often.

My most cherished moments are the times my family comes to visit, overcoming that separation for a few precious hours. I stand near my dormitory above the parking lot and wave to them as they drive in. Somehow my wife Nancy manages to lug our new baby Hopi, and several armfuls of diapers, clothes and food up the steps to the visiting patio.

When I arrive, Sunshine shouts "Daddy" and jumps into my arms to be hugged and kissed. Then off he runs to play with the other prisoners' children and their toys. Sometimes one of Bud Krogh's sons patiently kept Sunshine entertained for hours.

Nancy, Hopi and I spend the day on a big rug on the concrete floor of the patio. Hopi grins and makes giggling noises of happy greeting. We romp and play, nurse and nap, and wrestle and clown around together. Nancy and I find moments to talk and kiss. And we dream great dreams and plan great plans for the near future—a farm community and growing our own food, adopted children from many races and lands, and time to explore love again.

My heart goes out to this beautiful woman who is so young and has been through so much with me and for me.

When I decided to burn down an R.O.T.C. building, as a symbolic act of conscience and commitment to an ideal, I was also deciding to risk my family and to bring pain into their lives. I thought very egotistically that the end I envisioned justified my extreme means, and I could not contain my frustration and rage.

My friends on the outside keep asking me how I feel about these guys Krogh and Magruder who share my status here at Allenwood. Remember, I am told, these are the people who did everything they could to destroy the antiwar movement. And you are in prison largely because of them.

On reflection, I must admit I have felt at least vaguely satisfied whenever another of Richard Nixon's men finally "gets what he deserves." Each time somehow seems to even the score a bit. And I cannot lightly ignore the war crimes of the Nixon (and Johnson) era, in which my Allenwood friends participated, at least indirectly.

However, as I have come to know both Bud and Jeb I have found them, contrary to my earlier skepticism, to be men of great openness and sensitivity to other people. They also had their sincere political commitments. Their questioning stance and efforts at ethical reappraisal have been remarkable.

Their repudiation of much of the past and their plans for a new future seem to represent a genuine rebirth of consciousness, and perhaps a great contribution to the consciousness of the American people.

Indeed, I will count myself fortunate if the new birth and reordering of priorities that Nancy and I are experiencing are as real as those professed by my two new friends.

I get out in a few weeks. For now, Jeb's children will probably play with mine just as Bud's have before. And even as Bud encouraged me to go out running with him, so Jeb is running with me almost every day now.

Prison

And as we sit around and discuss what is really a hellish prison despite abundant recreation and the lack of physical bars, maybe Jeb and I will start the first Williams College alumni "field seminar" in prison reform.

No, my earnest friends on the outside, I have no feelings of hate or revenge to speak of concerning these men. As far as I am concerned, the present and the future count for more than the past. And they ache for their families just as the rest of us do here. We are different, yes, but you see in many ways we are both on the same side now. We are oppressed by prison and the attitude of vengeance it represents.

The Rev. Robert R. Warner Jr. is serving six months; three years of his term were suspended. He was teaching religion at the University of Hawaii when he burned down the R.O.T.C. building. He fled, hid and surrendered in New York last December.