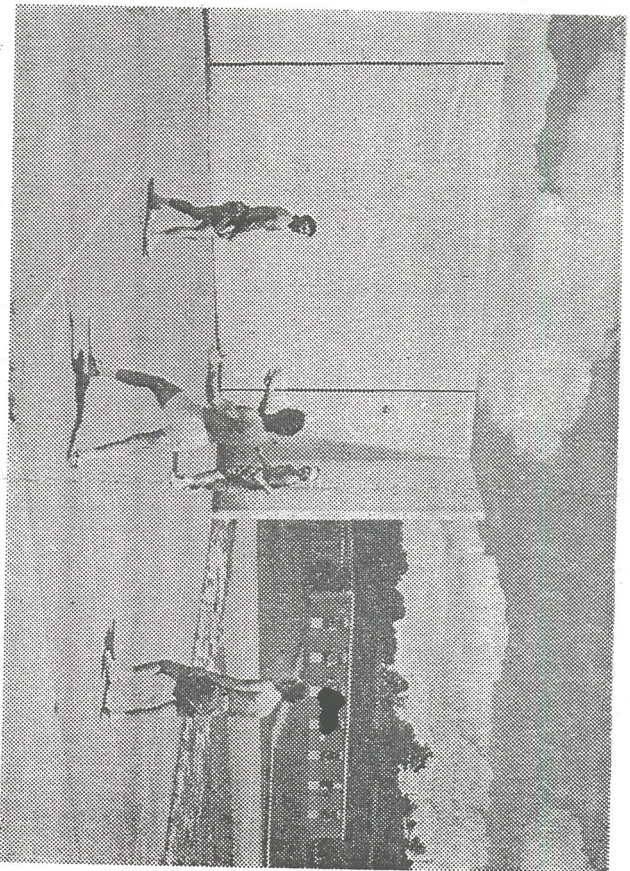




Prisoners can meet their visitors out on the patio at Allenwood federal prison in Pennsylvania



Things like handball make critics call it a country club but inmates complain of ennui

Sentenced to Boredom

By James T. Wooten
New York Times

NYTimes AUG 12 1974

To the Editor:

William Safire's new-found righteousness ("Special Prosecution Force," Aug. 1) is, to quote Representative Sandman, "amazing." Where was Mr. Safire when Father Berrigan and Sister McAllister were tried in the Middle District of Pennsylvania and the Wounded Knee leaders were indicted in the District of South Dakota? Where was Mr. Safire when the Government maneuvered the trials of Dr. Spock and the Chicago Eight before two of the most reactionary judges in the Federal judiciary? Certainly, the juries and judges in those cases were much more hostile to those defendants than are those in the District of Columbia, whose Federal bench is graced by some of the most distinguished jurists in the nation and whose juries are entirely representative of the community. Goodness, memories are certainly short.

ALFRED LAWRENCE TOOMBS
New York, Aug. 5, 1974



Jeb Stuart Magruder's cot is situated at the fourth window on the left in the background in a dormitory at the minimum security prison

brella tables, a well stocked commissary where each man can spend \$40 a month, grassy courtyards, telephones, liberal visiting privileges, and a furlough program.

Still, most of the prisoners, including Magruder, resist and seem to resent any suggestion that their lot is a fortunate one. Instead, they point to the constant ennui and frustrations they feel, the lack of challenging work and to the almost complete absence of privacy.

"I suppose it's a damn sight better than being in Leavenworth," conceded one inmate, "but it's no vacation and it's definitely not a country club. Hell, I ought to know. I once belonged to a country club."

★ ★ ★

IF THAT is true, he probably is not the only inmate who ever belonged to an exclusive club somewhere in the country. Allenwood's membership lists have included, for instance, Clifford Irving, the author of the Howard Hughes biography-hoax, who served some time here before being kicked out for possessing liquor. He was transferred to a prison at Danbury, Conn.

The prison's roster now includes 78748-158, or Cornelius Gallagher, the former congressman from Bayonne, N.J., who is serving a two-year term for income tax evasion.

No. 81019-158 is Joseph P. Pfingst, the former New York State Supreme Court justice who was convicted on bankruptcy fraud charges.

No. 77961-58 is D. Louis Tonti, who was once a candidate for the Democratic gubernatorial nomination in New Jersey and is now serving a three-year sentence for an extortion conspiracy during his tenure as executive director of the New Jersey Highway Authority.

Tonti's thin, narrow bed stands next to

the one used by No. 00582-134, the 39-year-old Magruder, who is serving a term of ten months to four years for his role in the Watergate coverup.

Like the other cots in his dormitory, Magruder's is equipped with yellow linens and a khaki army blanket. Beneath it, next to a box neatly filled with papers and documents, are five pairs of shoes, including tennis sneakers to accompany the metal racket and can of balls resting against the headboard.

To one side are his desk and his cabinet and on top are pictures of his wife and four children, a copy of the Bible, and two other books: John LeCarre's latest novel, "Tinker, Taylor, Soldier, Spy" and a non-fiction work called "Staying Alive."

Nearby, are the government-issued work uniforms that he and all of the other inmates must wear — although they need not wear them all the time. Today, for instance, several of the inmates were stripped to their shorts and sunbathing on blankets while portable radios blared nearby.

★ ★ ★

AS IS the case with all the other inmates, Magruder's presence here is premised on the judgment that he is not a threat to society and on his "lack of criminal sophistication," as Taylor phrased it.

Magruder, who declined a formal interview, works as a clerk in the mechanical services offices where the maintenance of the prison's equipment, building and grounds is supervised.

Other prisoners work as carpenters or help to tend the 1000 cattle or the 5000 acres of cultivated land. The carpentry shop turns out office furniture which is purchased by the government.

Gallagher, the former congressman, works evenings in the library. Magruder's book, "An American Life: One Man's Road to Watergate" is, however, not available.