UNSECURED

Incidents raise doubts about Angola security

By JAMES MINTON
and VICKI FERSTEL
May 6, 1997

ANGOLA — When four men sawed their way out of the ring of steel holding them for the executioner at Louisiana State Penitentiary last month, they exposed a degree of employee corruption and neglect of duty that spells danger in a maximum security prison.

Dale Dwayne Craig, Tracy Lee, Leslie Dale Martin and Lawson Strickland made history by becoming the first prisoners to escape from Death Row since its establishment at Angola in 1957. Their flight from what is supposed to be one of the prison's most secure areas followed two other security incidents that attracted the public's attention this year.

One was the Jan. 24 escape of four convicted murderers in which a prison employee is accused of smuggling two guns to the escapees. The other was the discovery in May of guns hidden in two areas of the prison.

Internal Angola documents obtained by The Advocate also provide details on some significant security incidents that did not attract public attention. They include:

• The Aug. 26 discovery by an assistant warden that all of the doors at two Camp D cellblock units were unlocked at one time, leaving inmates milling about in one lobby and in front of their cells at 6:30 a.m. The assistant warden wrote an “unusual occurrence report” detailing his findings, saying a lieutenant had to order the three officers on duty to lock all of the doors.

• An inmate’s Aug. 31 attempt to stab another prisoner in Angola’s Main Prison complex. Inmate Charles Carter, who was being held in a cellblock area, somehow managed to walk out of the facility, join a group of inmates being escorted to another part of the prison and go through several gates without being challenged or searched. As Carter reached his intended victim’s housing area, an officer asked him where he lived, and the inmate panicked. Pulling a 6-to 8-inch knife from his sock, Carter began running.

The bloodhound, ‘Josie,’ along with Maj. Johnny Bert Dixon and other chase team members, saved the day for Louisiana State Penitentiary by tracking down four murderers who escaped from Death Row on Nov. 4. In the foreground is some of the hand-made rope and other contraband the men used in the escape.
Changing of the guard

Burl Cain, warden of Louisiana State Penitentiary at Angola, frequently reassigns his deputy wardens and assistant wardens. Cain's top staff doubted since he became warden in 1995. The following is the lineup as of Dec. 13, 1999. In addition to their salaries, the deputy wardens and assistant wardens are furnished with vehicles and some are eligible for housing and food subsidies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title/Job Description</th>
<th>Base Annual Salary</th>
<th>Special Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Burt Cain</td>
<td>Warden</td>
<td>$96,216</td>
<td>On extended leave since Sept. 20, 1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richard Peabody</td>
<td>Deputy Warden/Security, treatment</td>
<td>$74,724</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darrel Vannoy</td>
<td>Deputy Warden/Security, treatment</td>
<td>$63,952</td>
<td>Temporary assignment due to Peabody's leave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheryl Ranatza</td>
<td>Deputy Warden/Administrative services</td>
<td>$49,632</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul Perkins</td>
<td>Assistant Warden 4/Security</td>
<td>$65,232</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pat Trett</td>
<td>Assistant Warden 3/Treatment Center</td>
<td>$60,996</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert McFatter</td>
<td>Assistant Warden 3/Mental health services, treatment</td>
<td>$55,296</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Clovis Tillery</td>
<td>Assistant Warden 2/Camp C, Camp D, Bachelor Officers Quarters, clothing room, road and levee, heavy equipment, front and ferry gates</td>
<td>$54,444</td>
<td>On extended leave since June 14, 1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Bonnette</td>
<td>Assistant Warden 2/Camp C, Camp D, Bachelor Officers Quarters, clothing room, road and levee, heavy equipment, front and ferry gates</td>
<td>$57,000</td>
<td>Temporary assignment due to Tillery's leave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leslie Dupont</td>
<td>Assistant Warden 2/Main prison, transitional unit, closed cell restriction, and R.E. Barrow Treatment Center</td>
<td>$54,048</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jimmy Johnson</td>
<td>Assistant Warden 2/Camp J, Reception Center and Death Row, Camp F, field operations, armory, control center, training academy, and cellphone tower</td>
<td>$54,048</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mike Mulkey</td>
<td>Assistant Warden 1/Camp J</td>
<td>$47,352</td>
<td>Temporarily assigned to Tallulah juvenile center on Nov. 29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Howard Prince</td>
<td>Assistant Warden 1/Camp J</td>
<td>$40,464</td>
<td>Temporary assignment to replace Mulkey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Felder</td>
<td>Assistant Warden 1/Field, Camp F</td>
<td>$44,064</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph Lee</td>
<td>Assistant Warden 1/Camp C</td>
<td>$48,912</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Douglas Durrett</td>
<td>Assistant Warden 1/Camp D</td>
<td>$41,784</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mike Roberts</td>
<td>Assistant Warden 1/Main Prison East Yard</td>
<td>$47,352</td>
<td>Temporarily assigned to LTI-Bridge City on Dec. 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dave Kelone</td>
<td>Assistant Warden 1/Main Prison East Yard</td>
<td>$47,232</td>
<td>Temporary assignment to replace Roberts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Robert Butler</td>
<td>Assistant Warden 1/Field Operations, Camp F</td>
<td>$48,924</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Donald Barr</td>
<td>Assistant Warden 1/Reception Center and Death Row</td>
<td>$47,232</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Louisiana State Penitentiary

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Although no one has been arrested for aiding the Nov. 4 escapees, Warden Burt Cain blames a corrections sergeant for bringing books into the prison for Craig — books that Cain believes held 10 hacksaw blades used in cutting through cell door hangers and a barred window.

Cain said in an interview that such criticism of him is coming from disgruntled Angola employees “who are mad because I make them work.” He strenuously denied the official’s assertions that security conditions have deteriorated this year or that he is away from the prison much of the time to the detriment of his administrative responsibilities.

“My wife thinks I’m here a lot,” said Cain, who lives on state property east of Jackson and has been away from Angola for 39 miles from Angola.

Cain, 57, is the employee representative on the State Civil Service Board. The board oversees state employees and their work. According to the official, Cain, unlike previous wardens, desires to live at Angola and spends much of his time away from Angola on other business. His frequent absences contribute to a “who cares” attitude among his subordinates that filters down to the lower ranks, the official said.

The official also criticized Cain for more than doubling the number of deputy and assistant wardens — from seven Landry — with no corresponding increase in the inmate population. He said the warden frequently promotes, demotes and shuffle the assistants around the prison and appoints assistant wardens to positions of responsibility. Cain said he is beyond their capabilities.

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Angola

COURTROOM REPORT

By LEE A. DAVIS

ARRESTED VIOLENT CRIMINAL, you'll find some that
work together," Cain said.

The murder, which was the third
at Angola in 1995, produced
testimony that he said showed the
number of attacks against offi-
cials had increased by more than
in any year of his prison-
director's tenure.

"My record's excellent," Cain said. "It's better than the warden's working now.

Former Warden John Whitley,
now the prison export for U.S.
District Court Judge Frank
Polidoro, declined to comment.

Cain later called to clarify that he was not taking a swipe at
Whitley, who said he did a good
job.

"You can't compare my record
with Whitley's," Cain said. "We
just had different resources.

Cain said he has a much larger
budget, an $831 million budget
for Angola this fiscal year. He said
he also has been able to
persuade Civil Service to
approve more assistant
and deputy wardens.

Cain, in the original interview,
also acknowledged that he
changed the definition of "escape"
for reporting purposes.

The flight from Death Row is
classified as an "escape attempt"
because the men did not get off
the 4,000 acres of prison prop-
erty, he said.

Cain said an audit by an Ameri-
can Correctional Institute team
in September shows "this is a
catatonic prison.

He gave reporters a copy of
portions of the official ACA
report, which stated the team had
reviewed Angola's condi-
tions of confinement and quality
of life "and found the overall
condition of the facility to be
excellent.

The team, which awarded An-
gola a high score in the audit,
said it was impressed with the
cleanliness and overall main-
tenance of the prison buildings
and grounds.

"It might also be noted that in
areas in and around known
respected Warden Cain,
which proves he gets out to
areas regularly," the report said.

Cain said he moves his assis-
tant wardens around so much
because the prison "is like a liv-
ing, thing.

"They like the challenge. I
want them to stay on their toes.
Whatever you want to say, it's
working," he said.

In response to criticism that
excessive numbers of visitors
are admitted to the Death Row
area, Cathy Jett, the prison's
inmate classification director
and media liaison, said she
calls Death Row tour groups
most of which are from universi-
ties.

"Don't let them say anything to
the inmates," she said.

Cain said he has no written pol-
icy on who may or who may not
visit. He said he allows the tour
"because I don't want people to
think they (the condemned men)
are animals.

But an impromptu visit by two
St. Tammany Parish sheriff's
deputies after they dropped off
a prisoner on Sept. 11, 1998, resul-
ted in a verbal confrontation
between one of the deputies and
a Death Row prisoner. The pris-
one claimed the deputy spot on
him.

According to reports of the
incident, the escorting officer,
then-Assistant Warden Ronnie
Jett, became incensed when the
prisoner was accused of killing the
depuhy.

Ronnie Jett is Cathy Jett's, fa-
ter-in-law. He now has the title
of assistant warden.

Cain said maintaining security
is harder "when you're fighting
with yourself" because of the in-
crease in the employee ranks.

In the January escape, a main-
tenance employee is accused of
delivering cash to a prisoner and
later two guns had
in cans of snack food. The escape
was in full swing after delivering the guns, but he was later released unharmed.

Angola and parish law enforce-
ment officers tracked down all of the
escapees committed suicide as a
chase team closed in on them.

The former employee is sched-
uled to be body-moved to Angola
next month as a principal to
approve scape and the
introduction of contraband into
prisons.

In the May discovery of two
guns in separate areas of the
prison, Cain was quick to
a relic from the 1970s. But Cain
called the escape a "conspiracy
of inducing a pistol in a
cellmates' hand", courtesy
Death Row and then reporting that he found

Cain said he believes the man
wanted to impress his superiors to	improve his chances of getting a
position with a team that can
cover the area the inmate was
before he could be given a polys-
graph test, the inmate was
in sick leave and hasn't returned, the

"This is the first time in my ca-
that they've turned us on,
the warden said of the
January and November escapes and the Mrs.

Looking at the prison's secur-
ituation from another
povv, former prison
Joseph Armand

Rideau said in the issue
of The Advocate mailed this
month that there are
leaders - at least 14 heads of
orations - who have
locked up for alleged
violations this year or in any
other time in the past 25 years.

"So many have been shan-
dunked that it has fueled rumors
of a hidden administrative agen-
ta to get the leaders, one at a
time," he wrote.

Rideau said, however, he
found no administration conspiracy,
and said the leaders who
disciplined have discovered they can manipulate
their way to their own gain.

Even if the leaders are innocent of the
charges that landed them in lock-
down, by the time they are re-
astered, the damage has been
done, he said.

"This administration's lock-
up is an immediate and
ner discipline policy
s leadership inspires ruthless rapport,
enemies and, yes, even resentful
employees," Rideau wrote.

They scheme and devise ways to
trigger that Pavlovian
response, knowing the adminis-
tration will smash leaders into
oblivion with no breaks, no con-
apa of (sometimes) do-
be unbecoming, no nothing.

Burl Cain, warden,
Louisiana State Penitentiary
at Angola

The Advocate
12-19-94

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par," said.

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The Advocate
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