

Wendy Clarke

Love Tapes

The 'love tapes', a series of 3mfn, video-tapes, were made by participants of various ages and ethnic backgrounds sitting alone in a room talking about love while sentimental music ran in the background. The three following participants are from L.A., Calif.

KATHERINE, 55.

I just came from the therapist and I think it was the last time. He asked me what's going on, as a matter of fact I had to go to him, I had a deep depression, but it's over, and I said to him every thing is fine, the only thing is I wish I would be in love again, really really deeply in love. And of course as the years pass and I get older, it's not as easy as it was when I was 16 and 18 and fell in love all the time and thought that was the real one, the big one. And funny enough when it's over then you think it can never happen again, and you are terribly sad and think it's over, never again. And there it is, around the corner there is someone else, and you think I was never as much in love as this time. No it wasn't that many times, of course, and it doesn't change as one gets older, I get older. I wish I would be 20 or 30 years younger, but I have the same feelings and the same longings, maybe even more so. And I think gee wiz maybe this time I won't make this or that mistake and, and ah, but where is he? Where is he? Oh I can't complain I have a lot of friends, good friends some who like me and love me but that passionate feeling that is so important, that I would like to have. It's not enough to love it's even more important to love, that is a fantastic feeling, that just makes you

community. It is also what former warden Ralph Aron meant when he testified at the 1975 *Bono vs. Saxe* trial (to close the Control Unit) that "the purpose of the Marion control unit is to control revolutionary attitudes in the prison system and in the society at large". What the "groders" fail to realize is that even as "therapists" they will remain under observation long after their release from prison—under what is euphemistically called "post-release follow-through."

CHEMOTHERAPY: THE MISUSE OF DRUGS

Chemotherapy is conducted four times daily at Marion. The loudspeaker announces: "Control medication in the hospital... pill line." Valium, librium, thorazine and other "chemical billy-clubs" are handed out like gumdrops. Sometimes the drugs mysteriously make their way into the food. For example, the strange month of December, 1974, recorded five unrelated, inexplicable stabbings. During the same time, eight prisoners suffered from hallucinations in the "hole" and had to be treated (with thorazine injections). Drugs are often prescribed for minor ailments and are commonly suggested to prisoners as a panacea for all the psychological ill-effects of incarceration. Some drugs such as prolixin make prisoners want to commit suicide. Some attempt it; some succeed.

THE END OF THE LINE: THE LONG-TERM CONTROL UNIT

Segregation is the punitive aspect of the Behavior Modification program. It is euphemistically referred to as "aversive conditioning." In short, prisoners are conditioned to avoid solitary confinement, and to do this requires some degree of conformity and cooperation. But the "hole" remains open for what prison authorities and Dr. Schein call "natural leaders". These prisoners can be pulled from population on "investigation" and held in solitary confinement until the so-called investigation is over. During the whole ordeal, he is not told what the inquiry is about—unless he is finally charged with an infraction of the rules. If the prison authorities think that the Behavior Modification techniques will eventually work on the prisoner, he is sent to short-term segregation. If not, they use the last legal weapon in the federal prison system: the

creative, that helps your art, that helps Your work, that makes your life. Yes if it's not there you bury yourself and maybe even overwork and do all kinds of things and look for things, but, so I'm still hoping. The year is not completely over. It's the 21st of December, the beginning of winter.

REGINA, 35.

Well here I am getting to talk about love and I'm getting a little nervous cause it's a hard topic. There are many ways that I feel love. I feel love for my children, I feel love for my women friends. I just experienced a nice new affair. That experience was "LOVEly". It made me be in touch with old, old romantic feelings of being in love, feeling happy and anxious and excited, a time when I wasn't thinking of anything in particular, but I just had this wonderful feeling. And it's like exhilarating. Exhilarating. It's a nice feeling. And all of a sudden you get a feeling from the other person that it's over. And I've experienced a collusion with me and my fantasies and my illusions. And the reality is that his feelings ended before my feelings ended and it was hard to deal with, it was very hard. But because I have other love relationships with women, other men, my children, older people, flowers, trees the sky, I guess just feelings, I was able to work through with some anxious feelings of depression and sadness. And love just does create all of those wonderful wonderful feelings that we dream about, that we read about, that we see in films. There's that old song I remember about a stranger across a crowded room, and I still have that illusion that someday I'm going to meet that stranger and he's going to appear. It's that old Cinderella story, it is. I really bought into the fantasy of what newspapers and magazines and films have told me that I should feel about love. And my real feelings when I express them, especially my last affair, that person I think was shocked that I could be so open and so vulnerable. And it was a wonderful time, 2 wonderful months with him, different feelings, different emotions. It was very nice and I hope to find someone else again soon.

ELIOT, 30.

You know I cry in movies sometimes over the weirdest things, but then when I want to, you know, when I really want to feel something I can't, and I know I should, and I want to, but I'm locked in, you know. It's like with your family, you know, you love them because somehow they're your family, but I don't really like them.

long-term control unit.

The long-term control unit is the "end of the line" in the federal prison system. Since there is no place lower throughout all of society, it is the end of the line for society also. Just as the threat of imprisonment controls society, so is Marion the control mechanism for the prison systems; ultimately the long-term control unit controls Marion.

Usually a prisoner doesn't know specifically why he has been sent to the Control Unit. And he usually doesn't know how long he will be there. A prisoner is told he is being placed on 30-day observation and that he has the right to appeal the decision if he wishes. Until recently, most prisoners simply waived the appeal because they were given the impression that they would be getting out soon.

In the control unit a prisoner does only two things—recreate and shower. Although everyone recognizes that the work is exploitative, it is generally considered a privilege. The rest of the control unit prisoners spend 23½ hours a day locked in their cells (which are smaller than the average dog kennel). He sees the Control Unit committee for about 30 seconds once a month to receive a decision on his "adjustment rating". He may see a caseworker, the counselor or the educational supervisor for books. Other than that, he deteriorates.

The cell itself contains a flat steel slab jutting from the wall. Overlaying the slab is a one-inch piece of foam wrapped in coarse plastic. This is supposed to be a bed. Yet it cuts so deeply into the body. After a few days, you are totally numb. Feelings become indistinct, emotions unpredictable.

Besides these methods of torture (which is what they are), there is also extreme cold conditioning in the winter and lack of ventilation in the summer. Hot and cold water manipulation is carried out in the showers. Shock waves are administered to the brain when guards bang a rubber mallet against the steel bars. Then there is outright brutality, mainly in the form of beatings. The suicide rate in the Control Unit is five times the rate in general population at Marion.

At the root of the Control Unit's Behavior Modification Program, though, is indefinite confinement. This is perhaps the most difficult aspect of the Control Unit to communicate to the public. Yet a testament to this policy was a man named Hiller "Red" Hayes. After 13 years in solitary confinement (nearly six in the control

You know, somehow would I really love 'em if I just ran into them on the street, nope. But there are people that I want to love, but somehow I just can not let it out. I'm still not at the stage where I can feel love. And I really want to. And so people come and they go and you want to love them, but you never could tell them that. And so they leave and they never know that you loved them. So people end up thinking that you're something you're not. Because you never could express yourself. You couldn't love them and you couldn't hate them. Because when you love them you can hate them. It's the same way, I couldn't love them—I have a problem hating them. So then you say, what the hell do I really feel? So you let it all out in a movie, over some made-up situation, when you get tears in your eyes. Because you wish you could at least be like the movie.

unit), he became the "boogie man" of the prison system—the living/dying example of what can happen to any prisoner. The more he deteriorated in his own skeleton, the more prisoners could expect to wane in his likeness. He died in the unit in August, 1977.

In essence, the Unit is a Death Row for the living. And the silent implications of Behavior Modification speak their sharpest and clearest ultimatum: CONFORM OR DIE.

1. Write letters urging that the Marion control unit be closed completely to: Judge James Foreman, U.S. District Court, 750 Missouri Avenue, E. St. Louis, Illinois 62202. Information: *National Committee to Support the Marion Brothers 4556a Oakland, St. Louis, Missouri 63110*

