



**Wacky, Raunchy,
Humorous Stories of
Sports and Other Events in
Michigan's Maximum Security Prison**

by

Leonard "Oakie" Brumm

Table of Contents

Foreword	vii
Acknowledgments	viii
Friends of the Program	xi
Introduction	xvi
Chapter One	
Warden Jacques (His Problem: How to Keep the Joint from “Blowing Up”) ----	1
The Warden Gets His Man	2
Chapter Two	
I Start My “Sentence”	12
Chapter Three	
My Education Begins	24
Shuffleboard Starts It All	26
The Shuffleboard “Psyche”	29
Paddleball: “The Pussy Game”	32
Chapter Four	
The Nation’s First Miniature Golf Course in a Maximum Security Prison ----	34
Chapter Five	
Football	42
No Smoking in the Huddle!	44
Other Football “Idiosyncrasies”	47
Bob Mathews: The Reluctant Defensive End	49
Bizarre Player Problems	50
More Unique Problems for a Prison Coach	52
Chapter Six	
From the Big Time (NFL to the PEN)	55
Chapter Seven	
Football Convicts Glad to Get Back to Prison	62
Ten Cons and a Cop	63
Chapter Eight	
Building the First and Only Prison Hockey Rink in the Country	68
Tough Tommy Keen	70
Ted Barr and His Broken Jaw	72
Chapter Nine	
World Champion Red Wings Play the Prison Pirates	73
Marquette Sentinels to the Rescue!	86
A Side to the Andy Kulczyski Story	87
“Punchy the Ref” Saves the Hockey Program	90
Chapter Ten	
Curling	93

Chapter Eleven	
The “Dear Fence” -----	95
Chapter Twelve	
“Take Me Out (Inside) to the Ball Game ...” -----	98
Wild Bill Conner and the Little Men That March -----	101
Chapter Thirteen	
Scouting For Help in the “Bullpen” -----	104
Chapter Fourteen	
Jim Swift: A Brilliant Pitcher, Sad Story -----	111
Ambidextrous Pitchers -----	116
Walt Hatcher -----	116
Rank Smitty -----	118
Chapter Fifteen	
Don’t Get On the Stretcher -----	121
Don’t Die In Prison -----	122
Chapter Sixteen	
Plastic Surgery to Save a Life -----	126
Chapter Seventeen	
The Only Complete Dissident Among the Inmate Body -----	128
Chapter Eighteen	
A Convict Offers A Strange Reward -----	130
Chapter Nineteen	
Short Sketches On Some More Bad Actors -----	134
Joe Henry -----	134
Dave Machowsky -----	135
James Wiley Hanson -----	136
Chapter Twenty	
Marquette Prison Inventions -----	139
Slow Pitch Softball -----	139
Hockey Shootouts -----	140
Replaceable Blades on Hockey Sticks and Laminated Shafts -----	143
Stun Guns -----	145
The Three Point Shot In Basketball -----	146
Chapter Twenty-One	
Armrad the Burglar -----	148
Chapter Twenty-Two	
A Quick Basketball Story: Murder Can Wait. Keep the Game Going! -----	151
Chapter Twenty-Three	
The 4th of July and Labor Day Events -----	153

Chapter Twenty-Four	
A Classic Showdown With A Twist -----	158
Chapter Twenty-Five	
A Dubious Winner at the Winter Carnival -----	161
Chapter Twenty-Six	
A Contrast in Recreation Programs -----	163
Foster Kenski, Former Recreation Director at Ionia Prison -----	164
Chapter Twenty-Seven	
The Painted Door -----	166
Chapter Twenty-Eight	
Johnny Roan and His Wheat Germ Dream -----	174
Popcorn Box Trick -----	175
Chapter Twenty-Nine	
Getting Out of Tight Spots -----	178
My Bodyguards -----	180
Lawn Mower -----	182
Chapter Thirty	
The Frankie Yankovich-Blue Barron Incidents -----	184
Other Entertainment at the “Joint”... -----	186
Chapter Thirty-One	
The Sexy Desk -----	187
Love Before Softball - The Dairy Farm Doe -----	189
Chapter Thirty-Two	
Big Jim’s New Wife -----	191
Chapter Thirty-Three	
A Very Sincere Left-Handed Compliment -----	193
A Fine Tribute to the Program -----	196
Chapter Thirty-Four	
Misconceptions -----	199
What Prison Will Do For You -----	201
The Constant Effort to Compromise Me -----	202
Chapter Thirty-Five	
The Barney Francher Story -----	204
Chapter Thirty-Six	
My Late Credentials -----	207
My Michigan Diploma -----	209
A Constant Occupational Hazard -----	211
Chapter Thirty-Seven	
All the Thieves Aren’t In Prison -----	213
Scared to Lose -----	214

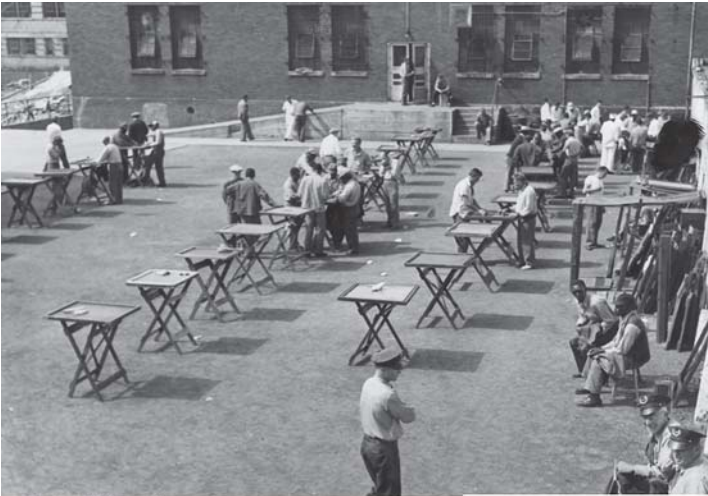
Chapter Thirty-Eight
 Prison Park ----- 217

Chapter Thirty-Nine
 Conclusion: Was It Worth It? ----- 220

Glossary of Marquette Prison Terms ----- 223

About the Author
 Leonard “Oakie” Brumm ----- 228

**DOMINOES -
 THE “ALL-SEASON” ACTIVITY!**



Photos show domino tables set up for inmates’ domino games. During this time, playing cards was not yet allowed because officials were concerned that it would promote gambling. In fact, the players would gamble their prison script (internal money) or cigarettes. The inmates played every game of chance with dominoes that could be played with cards, plus some that couldn’t!

The bottom photo shows the boxing ring that was used for “in-house” matches, and my office being built on top of the Recreation “Shack.”

Chapter One

WARDEN JACQUES

His Problem:

How To Keep the Joint from “Blowing Up”

“On April 20, 1952, Jackson Prison blew. Riot-ridden and on fire in several places, the largest prison in the world was in a state of siege. Four hundred prison guards and 200 Michigan State Police tried to regain control, but the penitentiary was completely in the hands of an army of mutinous convicts. All the ringleaders of the riot were eventually sent to Marquette Prison on disciplinary transfers.”

— Ike Wood in *100 Years at Hard Labor: A History of Marquette Prison*.

Warden Emery Jacques, the last politically appointed warden in the Michigan prison system, had a big problem on his hands. He had to keep the lid on the isolated maximum-security prison at Marquette after the unprecedented Jackson (Michigan) Prison riot the year before. All the ringleaders of the riot had been transferred to his custody. Although they were locked up in solitary confinement, he was wary about their hell-raising potential and the explosive capabilities of an inmate population that was for the most part idle, even when they were supposed to be working. Marquette was not an average inmate population. It was made up of the worst of the worst. Murder, rape, armed robbery, gross indecency, child molestation; you name it, there were many convicts in Marquette who had done it, not only once, but two or three times.

They were older; they were two, three, or four-time losers with terrible reputations, explosive tempers, and weird sexual drives, all jammed together in a tight little tinder box watched over by unsympathetic guards. Marquette Prison was a riot waiting to happen, a volcano waiting to explode, a huge human carbuncle getting more inflamed every minute.

It was imperative that Jacques keep the “lid” on the joint. He knew that his cushy political plum would be lost forever if the Jackson riot was repeated at Marquette. He was an astute politician as well as a respected penologist. He knew the public didn’t care how he kept the lid on as long as he kept it on. He also knew the best approach in dealing with the inmates and guards. The guards would be compliant so long as neither their workload nor their danger increased. The inmates could be controlled if he didn’t take away any of their privileges, provided he could find ways to keep them busy. He was more than aware of the adage “idle hands breed trouble.”

On top of these considerations, Jacques chafed about his limited budget in all areas of the prison administration. There were few prospects of finding additional work for the inmates. According to state law, convicts were allowed

to grow only their own food on prison farms. They could make overalls, cigarettes, brushes, wooden boxes, and snow fences for the prison and other state institutions. In addition, they were permitted to do occasional emergency work for charities and institutions. Federal law severely restricts convict labor, and woe to the warden who violates that directive, regardless of the merits of the situation. Jacques could not increase the internal jobs in the prison because each job was already staffed by two men (one black and one white); in some cases, three or four inmates were assigned one man's job.

He finally concluded that the only way to keep the men busy and relieve the pressure was through sports and recreation. It wouldn't cost much and it would consume a lot of idle time. He expected the guards to oppose the idea on philosophical grounds, and not because the program would increase their workloads. In spite of the potential for controversy, it could be passed off to the general public as "rehabilitative." *One thing it would do, if done right, was serve as a lance to keep the human carbuncle from bursting.* It might. This would be not a perfect, but certainly an effective move.

He set out to implement his plan. What was needed was someone who could do the job, someone who was immediately available. Summer was coming on, and the few hot days in a Marquette summer were just enough to cause this cauldron of human degradation to boil over.

Jacques had made up his mind not to promote a "screw" (guard). He wanted at least a high school-level coach, but preferably a college-level coach. He also wanted someone who could effectively utilize the vast supply of presently wasted human labor now loafing around the prison. He wanted a hard worker who got things done. He wanted *action*. He wanted the convicts kept *busy*. He also knew that the man he hired had to possess the guts as well as the ability to adjust to an alien situation where fear and danger were daily working conditions. Where was that man? He thought he knew. The joint could blow up any minute, so he had to get the pressure off, *now*.

He sent for his chauffeur.

THE WARDEN GETS HIS MAN

"We've got 600 of the worst bastards in Michigan locked up here . . .

We have treacherous convicts sitting around doing nothing all day, just waiting for some chance to raise hell. I can't have that.

I won't have that, and you're just the guy to make sure I don't."

— Warden Emery Jacques, to author in a pre-hire interview.

The big, long black car slowly came to a halt directly opposite from where I was supervising a crew pouring concrete on a road job.

"Who in the hell is this?" I thought. The only people I knew who drove cars like that were union business agents or priests. I wasn't Catholic and the

project was nearly over, so there was no need for either sort to be stopping at the job site.

My question was soon answered as the warden of one of the toughest prisons in the United States got out and started toward me. My recognition faculties flashed; now I remembered seeing that car almost daily as the Warden's chauffeur drove him through my project on his way to and from the Marquette Prison.

I was extremely curious as he crossed through heavy traffic and made his way to my side of the road. All I could think of was that he wanted to ask me to take on some guy or guys who were being let out of prison. Then I realized this was usually a parole officer's job, not a warden's.

I was partially right. He did want to put some guy to work; only the guy wasn't getting *out* of prison. The Warden wanted some guy *in*, and the guy was me!

Emery Jacques got straight to the point. "Hi, Oakie, how would you like to be coach at the prison?"

"What?" I stared at him in complete disbelief.

"Yeah, we just got the money to hire a coach, and I want you to apply for the job."

I had known Warden Jacques almost all my life. I was brought up in the same part of town where he and his family lived before he became warden. I had gone to grade and high school with his son and the oldest of his three daughters. His request left me completely speechless. I had just resigned as Athletic Director at the University of Alaska and had about made up my mind not to go back to full-time coaching. I thought I'd stay in the road construction business. Coaching at a prison, especially this one, never entered my mind. I couldn't bring myself to ask him the crucial question:

"Why in the hell do you need a coach for those bastards?"

The Warden saw the blank look on my face; then he realized his impeccable dark blue suit was getting dusty from the passing traffic, and he turned away.

"Think it over and come in to see me!" he said as he began making his way back across the road, dodging the ever-present traffic. He got into his chauffeured car and took off toward the prison.

I was still standing there astounded when a passing truck nearly ran over me, jolting me back to reality. Coach the prison. See the Warden. What was he talking about? Everybody in town knew that "the prison" as it was locally called, was considered the Siberia of the North, the Alcatraz of the Midwest, the last stop, the home of Michigan's worst convicts and certainly above all, no place for a coach.

Coach? Coach what? Coach who? Those guys were all doing long terms or life for dastardly crimes. Weren't they locked up all the time, or at least most

of the time? How in the hell can you coach anyone with a gun in your hands?

Every misconception about prisons and every movie scene about prisons flashed through my mind as I tried to figure out the puzzle of becoming “coach” at the Marquette Prison. Adding to my mental confusion was the Warden’s last comment, “Come in and see me.”

Come in and see him! Everyone in town knew who the Warden was. But very few people, other than the prison employees, knew what he did or where he had his office. His title was very well known, but his actual duties were mysterious and, in the minds of Marquette’s citizens, “scary.”

Previous wardens had been killed or kidnapped by angry cons. Marquette Prison was always in the news for escape attempts, killings and trouble inside, or the arrival or departure (usually by hearse) of many of Michigan’s most infamous hoods.

Go and see him! Is he nuts? I wouldn’t go into that place. I dismissed the thought and the Warden’s request.

A week later the Warden stopped at my job site again. He made the same request, adding only: “Don’t say no until you come in to talk about it. Again, I told him I would think about it. But I didn’t; I dismissed the thought even further.

Another few days went by, and he stopped again.

“Oakie, what’s the matter? What the hell are you waiting for? Come on in and see me so we can at least talk about the job.”

I told him I didn’t think I was interested and tempered my position by saying: “It’s nothing to do with you or the prison. I just don’t think I am going to coach anymore.” He seemed to accept that and left.

Jacques didn’t come back for another week. This time he looked half mad. It was raining and I was getting ready to shut the job down for the day when he walked up to me.

“Oakie, come on down and see me about that job or you’re going to be on my shit list. I have to hire someone soon, and I am offering you the job.”

I thought to myself, *I can’t work today and I don’t want to go home right now, so I might as well go down and see what he has to say.* In addition to this, the road job I was doing was almost finished, and I wasn’t really sure I wanted to be transferred to a job in southern Michigan.

I hopped in my pickup and followed his big black car down to the prison, thinking all the while of Marquette Prison’s horrible reputation: murderers, rapists, child molesters, killers, armed robbers, slick thieves, con men, brutal beatings, unwitnessed killings, guards slashed with prison-made knives, riots, escapes, the works. If a man’s life flashes before his eyes when he faces death, a prison’s reputation does the same thing when a free man enters its gates.

I was more than a little wary as I passed by the entrance guards on the way

into the Warden's office. I knew them personally, and as I approached, they both said, "Hi Oakie," but in my mind they were saying: *What are you doing here? Are you trying to get yourself killed? Get out and stay out! You're nuts! This is a prison, it ain't no school. The Warden will "get you!"*

Every negative, scary thing I could think of, or had ever heard, or read about Marquette Prison went through my head as I finally stepped inside the Warden's office.

Warden Jacques was the last politically appointed warden in the state of Michigan. He had prior "penal" or "corrections" experience as a parole officer, but he had never actually been on a prison staff before being named to the position. He liked the job. He served in it well. And, he did a good job for the people of the State of Michigan.

During his college days at Northern State Teachers' College in Marquette (now Northern Michigan University), he had played varsity football and still considered himself an authority of sorts on the game. He was a sports fan, and above all, he was an astute politician. He was well aware of the infamous Jackson Prison riot of a year before. He had inherited all the ringleaders of that riot when they were transferred out of Jackson to Marquette for "safe keeping." They were all in solitary confinement directly under his thumb, and woe to anyone who even thought kindly of them. The last thing he wanted or needed was for Marquette to blow up as Jackson had. He liked his job, he wanted his job, and he was determined to keep his job.

With those thoughts weighing heavily on his mind, he opened the interview by again coming straight to the point:

"Oakie, we've got 600 of the worst bastards in Michigan locked up here. Oh, there are a few good ones, but most of them are bad. They don't have enough to do. Yeah, some of them work a little, but the work isn't hard or tiring. I wish I could put most of them working out on the road like your guys do, but I can't. I've got to keep them busy. I've got to tire them out. I have to get their minds on something other than tearing this place apart or escaping. The only way I know how to do this legally is to get them playing more sports."

I kept silent and he continued, his voice firm but almost pleading.

"That's why I want you for this job. I need a guy who will go out in the exercise yard and get those guys going. We play a little softball, some football, quite a bit of handball and a lot of dominoes. That's it. It isn't enough. Besides the "screws" who are supervising sports don't know what the hell they're doing. We have treacherous convicts sitting around doing nothing all day, just waiting for some chance to raise hell. I can't have that. I won't have that, and you're just the guy to make sure I don't."

All the time he was talking, I was trying to figure out how a coach figured into his plan. The first time he stopped to draw a breath, I interrupted him.

“Warden, I don’t see how a coach is going to help.”

He jumped up from behind his desk and began walking back and forth.

“Hell, Oakie, you aren’t going to be just the coach. You’re going to be the recreation director, construction supervisor and everything else it takes to get these guys going. This isn’t a college; it’s a prison, an old one at that. We don’t have facilities or much equipment. You’re going to have to make things for them to do and places for them to do it.”

He was rapidly turning me even further off. But he went on.

“We have all kinds of guys sitting on their asses all day long with nothing to do. Get them busy. Make some horseshoe courts, fix up the ball field. Do what the hell you want to do, but *keep them busy.*”

“If I would have told you this out on the street you’d have never come in. I told you I wanted a coach, but what I meant was an all-around man. A coach, recreation director, builder, organizer, promoter, whatever it takes.”

He paused to check the look in my eyes, which at the time, registered total astonishment. He picked up on my attitude immediately.

“I know you’re confused, but let me help you out. Take a walk out in back and see what we have. Come back and we will talk again.”

I thought to myself: *He can go to hell. I’m not going inside that place alone. He’s crazy.*

At that moment, a guard with sergeant’s stripes on his sleeves came into the room. His presence and bearing reminded me of my army days when a sergeant was called in by the colonel.

“Sergeant Williams, this is Oakie Brumm. I want him to be our new Recreation Director. Take him on a tour of the back yard and show him what we have.”

With that command to the sergeant, the Warden escorted us to the door, all business. It was obvious he was not going to take *no* for an answer.

The sergeant said, “Come with me,” his tone of voice not much different than that used by police and prison guards in every movie that has ever been made.

At the first steel gate, I was asked to leave my wallet and car keys at the gate desk. The attending guard frisked me and found nothing. He gave the signal and, *clang-clang*, the gate opened. We stepped through, and it closed behind us. I kept quiet, but my mind was teeming. *What in the world am I getting into? I need my head examined.*

Steel gates clanged twice more before we got into the rear open area of the prison. I could feel eyes boring holes through me as several convicts and guards gave me the complete once-over about ten times. When we got to the open area leading to the yard, Sergeant Williams turned to me and grinned.

“Relax, nobody is going to hurt you. Take it easy, I’ll show you around. If you have any questions, just ask.”

Any questions? Hell yes, I had questions! This whole episode was nothing but a question, a very big question: *What the hell am I doing here?*

As we walked around and looked over the ball field, various inmates came up and asked the sergeant:

“Who’s your visitor, Sarge? Is he the new Recreation Director? Is he the contractor for the new cell block? Who is he, Sarge?”

The sergeant always replied: “You’ll find out when the time comes. Don’t bug us now.”

Of course, I was even more curious as to who they were. The sergeant could see the question on my face even though I didn’t ask.

“Don’t stare. Just look at them casually. I’ll tell you what they are in for.”

“Okay.”

“That last guy who came up is doing life for killing a cop in Detroit. He used to be a terror. He’s settled down now. Getting a little older, I guess.”

We continued walking toward the handball courts.

“See that big black guy sitting there? He raped two women and one of them died about a month later. Not a bad football player.”

We kept going. A rather pudgy white man approached.

“Whaddya say, Sarge? We gonna have a ball game tonight?”

“I guess so.”

The sergeant turned to me after we passed the man.

“That slimy son-of-a-bitch is the joint’s blow job artist. Good con, but he makes me sick.”

We kept walking. The sergeant was showing me where the football field and the concrete handball courts overlapped during football season.

“They don’t tackle on the concrete, do they?” I asked.

“Oh yeah. Every now and then someone gets hurt, but nobody really gives a shit.”

I shook my head in disbelief. What a place! If the players from the University of Michigan or University of Wyoming could see this!

I asked the sergeant where the athletic equipment was kept. He said, “What we have is kept in the yard shack, right there.”

He pointed it out and I asked if I could take a look at it.

“Okay, come on.”

We went to the yard shack, which was a one-story brick building about thirty feet square. When we walked inside we came upon several inmates,

both black and white, sitting around talking in one large room. In the second room (which was separated from the larger room by a steel fence-like grate) was one older white inmate. He was introduced, not by name, but as the equipment manager/custodian.

Inside his room were hooks, shelves and cubbyholes holding baseball gloves, bats, balls, some uniforms, and not much else. I was also informed that this equipment was mostly for the intramural league players. The players on the prison varsity kept their uniforms and equipment in their cells or at their workstations. All in all, the situation looked pretty sad, especially when I remembered the first-class facilities of the Universities of Michigan and Wyoming.

When we got back outside, Sergeant Williams turned to me.

“That white guy’s name is Jack Bielac. Doing life for murder. No other time. Just got mad one day and killed a guy. First time up was the big time. He’s been in for about sixteen years now. If you take this job, he’ll be your right-hand man.”

That’s all I needed. A right-hand man who was a killer!

We finished our tour. It didn’t take long because there wasn’t much to see. The main prison yard was about 400 feet long and 250 feet wide. It contained a softball/baseball diamond in one corner and four one-wall handball courts up against the wall out of the way of the softball field. There were two dilapidated horseshoe courts and several folding tables to be set up for playing dominoes. That, plus the yard shack was the full extent of the “inside” sports and recreational facilities.

To make matters worse, there was only one showerhead in the yard shack. These sorry facilities, combined with the two or three dozen inmates lurking around the yard made me extremely apprehensive. Now, more than ever, I knew I didn’t want to be the coach in this place.

We went through the same three gates with their loud clanging on the way back to the Warden’s office. But this time, I felt better as each gate slammed shut behind me.

The sergeant showed me back into the Warden’s office and then left. Once again Jacques started his pitch. “Well, what do you think? No, no, no, don’t tell me. I know we don’t have anything like what you are used to, but we could have. We have all kinds of labor just waiting to be told what to do. We’ve got a little money too, not much, but enough to get you started.”

I remained silent.

“Just think of all the different things you could get them doing. I know they’re a bunch of bastards, but I think they’ll work for a guy like you. They need some new blood, some young blood that hasn’t been screwed around by the system. They need a guy who can coach them if they need it, work with them if they need it, and lead them. A college man. Hell, the screws who have

been working with them had a hard time getting through high school. Besides they're screws, not college-trained coaches. What do you say? Will you give it a try?"

The Warden could read the disappointment on my face. Just before I opened my mouth to tell him I was not interested, he added slyly: "Oh yeah, this job pays damn good, too," and he mentioned a salary.

That immediately got my attention. He went on to outline the additional benefits that came with the job. Slowly I became even more interested. I was making a good salary on my construction job, but it had no fringe benefits, nor did either of my previous coaching jobs.

I was about to tell him I'd think it over when he said:

"I'm going out on a limb to hire you. I'm supposed to go through the Civil Service roster, and I have a choice of the top three applicants. I'm not going to do that. Hell, they don't know anything about our Marquette Prison and I don't know anything about them. I know you don't know much about Marquette Prison, but you know more than they do. Besides I know you, and I don't know them. You might have to take a test sometime down the road, but we can worry about that when the time comes. You can start next Monday."

That was Wednesday. There were still some things to finalize on the road job. In spite of the nice salary, I had to think this thing over and discuss it with my wife. Maybe I would also talk to one or two guards or technical people that I knew worked in the prison.

"Warden, you have my attention," I said slowly. "But I must think it over. I'll get back to you."

"You have two days," he snapped. "I'll have to know by Friday. I have to get someone going on this job. If you don't take it, I have to call Lansing. I'm not going to promote any of the screws. Let me know by Friday." With that, he pointed to the door indicating the interview was over and the ball was in my court.

On the way home, all the horror stories I had ever heard about the prison raced through my mind. Right after the horror stories, the visions of the poor facilities followed. *Jeez, this is what I went to college for? To get mixed up with a bunch of cons — killers, rapists, robbers, the scum of the earth? No equipment, no facilities, probably no athletes? What am I thinking of?*

I arrived home, told my wife what happened, and what the Warden had offered me. Because I hadn't even told her of his previous offers, she was completely surprised but there was also a very happy look on her face. Her main concern was not moving again. We had moved from Ann Arbor to Marquette, Marquette to Laramie (Wyoming), Laramie to Marquette, Marquette to Fairbanks (Alaska) and finally, back to Marquette all in a space of three years!

To further compound her anxiety, we had just purchased and moved into a

beautiful, log house, the first house we could call our own. She had no thought at all about the possible dangers of the job or the lack of facilities. Not being a native of Marquette, she also had no real knowledge concerning the terrifying history of the Prison.

Lack of facilities was my problem, not hers. After all, the University of Alaska was not exactly endowed with great facilities either! We discussed the situation thoroughly for about three hours and came to the conclusion I should take the job.

It meant, first of all, I would have a job. Secondly, I wouldn't have to go to Lower Michigan for the next road job. I wouldn't be laid off during the winter and the salary was excellent.

It was understood between us that if there were danger, no facilities and nothing to work with, I would have to do the best I could. I was 27 years old and had been all over the U.S. and Europe in the Army. I had been all over the U.S. playing sports for the University of Michigan. We had already lived in Laramie and had survived two years in Fairbanks. Alaska was a very difficult place to reside in since it was not a state at that time. We both felt I could take care of myself. She had no doubts, but I sure had!

I decided to call the Warden and take the job before I changed my mind. When I did, I told him I couldn't start until the second Monday because I didn't want to leave the road contractor before the job was finished.

"Fine," was the enthusiastic response. "I thought you'd accept. Report to my office first thing." The issue was settled, but my mind was still reeling.

I spent the next ten days bringing the road job to a conclusion during the day and talking to various prison employee friends every evening. Only one gave me any real encouragement. That was Ken Case.

Ken had been a civilian storekeeper inside the walls at the prison for many years and knew all there was to know about the joint.

"Take the job," he advised. "You'll like it. There are some bastards, but most of them know this is their last chance, so they behave themselves. They won't hurt you or bother you. They don't like screws, but guys with jobs like yours or mine never have any problems. I'll talk to some of the old timers and they'll help. Personally, I'd feel more scared working in traffic, as you've been doing all summer."

I felt better and made up my mind to give it my best shot!