

sexual attacks . . .

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Also, some inmates may not report a rape because it is comparable to the same emotions a raped woman goes through, Vitek said.

Many decent woman who are raped, the first thing they do is go home and bathe. They don't talk about it," the director said.

According to Youngblut, many inmates don't believe rape could happen to them.

"And sometimes they do not yell for help because they fear they could be seriously hurt before help arrived," he said.

Another problem that inmates view the prison as the system who incarcerated them. They suddenly don't believe that the prison is going to protect them, Youngblut said.

Most prison rape cases the county prosecutes are unsuccessful, Youngblut said, because corroboration is required in Nebraska to get a conviction. Corroboration requires physical evidence such as the presence of semen, stains on sheets or physical marks, if the person was beaten.

Generally the inmate is frightened and it's three to four days after the inmate reports it. The evidence is destroyed by the passing of time, Youngblut said.

"If anyone knows about a rape they are afraid to come forward and testify, because of the fear of being labeled a snitch.

Then the informant must be provided protection. Such as being housed at the reformatory, put on work release or transferred to another prison," Youngblut said.

Shada said he views a victim as "an emotionally weak person as opposed to a physically weak person. One who will not stand up for himself. One who does not have the mental make-up to stand up for himself.

"They will, like animals, prey upon this individual for a homosexual relationship," Shada said.

Sometimes a young inmate who has been attacked may be afraid to come to the administration, Shada said, because of the convict's pledge or the fear of being labeled a snitch.

But, according to Shada, it's different at the reformatory, where inmate sentences are short because they are usually first-time offenders.

"They know if inmates do something to a snitch, he's coming right to the man, the administration.

"It's different then being behind the walls (at the penitentiary). In there the guys are doing so much time that they don't care what happens to them."

When an individual comes to Shada with a rape problem, he said, "I get vehemently upset. It makes me sick to my stomach. I don't try to convey it to my men, but a

certain amount of it does. Sex should be between a consenting man and woman.

Dope is easy to get in prison, Michael said.

"One way to get dope in is by visitors. When I first got into population, my arm looked like a god dum shooting gallery," the inmate said.

A woman who used to visit him would get past the guard frisks by bringing dope in through her body orificies.

Prices for dope are higher than on the streets, he said. Three marijuana cigarettes and LSD goes for \$25 a hit. Inmates can get anything they want such as heroin, cocaine or sleeping pills, he added.

Drugs also are brought in by inmates on work release or guards, he said.

The guards even bring in liquor, he added.

"We make better booze than the outside does. It's called hooch and costs \$10 a gallon. We make it in the chapel. I did have some brewing in my cell, but not anymore. They busted me a while back for

having some drugs, a homemade knife and an intercom system that was connected to three cells."

As for money, the inmate said, cash is doubled in value and it is contraband. Prisoners have an account and can withdraw only \$2.50 in money stubs to buy goods at the commissary a day.

If you want something from the outside, you have to pay for it with cash, Michael said.

Concerning the inmates' statements on the accessibility of liquor and drugs, Vitek said, liquor is "fairly easy to make. It usually just a matter of tracking it down. Sometimes you find a crooked employee or visitor who brings it (drugs) in, but we can't do a body search without probably cause.

The commonly held idea that a maximum security prison is closed and confined is wrong, Vitek said.

(Editor's note: The above article was written by Ms. Engstrom in May for a depth reporting class at the UNL School of Journalism.)

williams . . .

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hovers above an electric fan parked beside a dusty refrigerator and a three-tired book cart in the corner of the conference room.

His short-cropped hair, small ears and smooth face bob and weave while trying to piece together his past and present, his life after four years in the Army.

I came out of the Army wanting the same things everybody else wants. But the ghetto is not just a location. The ghetto goes wherever the person goes.

"I don't want this to be a copout, but the main reason I wasn't able to deal with things out there is because my mind was blocked so much into hate that I figured society was whuppin' on me and I was angry with them.

"I didn't get out of that until a couple of years ago. And then when I got into this trouble and got into the Lord, I got all the way out of it."

He stops in mid-sentence, drops his head, looks up, starts a sentence, stops it. He shakes his head, smiling awkwardly.

"It's funny, but it took coming to prison to free me from all that. Here I've learned to look at people and love. I can look at George Wallace and that American Nazi Party man and just love 'em.

"Because I've been where they are. And until they run into some severe danger that breaks them, they're going to be miserable. That philosophy that they're in ain't no good. It just doesn't work."

Williams says his relationships with women never worked because he feared them the same way he feared society: women couldn't be trusted and in the end they would leave you, alone and empty.

Most women he met, Williams says, shared his love-and-leave philosophy, a philosophy spawned when his mother left him and further hardened when his father opened a three-inch gash in his head for messing around with a girl when he was 10.

"That, in itself, is a dangerous philosophy. I would be dangerous for me. There are some people that could live that way, but I couldn't anymore."

He said relationships only are meaningful if two people, stay together, overcome their differences and work hard to build a foundation of respect and love, not fear and hatred.

"I'm just sorry I locked all that out of me for most of my life."

Williams edges slowly forward on a grey folding chair when he talks about the lives of two women he ended and whether ending his life would balance society's scales.

"If my death would help the families of those people, man, I'd go right now. If it would help the families of those people to have peace, to fill that vacancy created by the loss of loved ones and help them to function, they could have it right now. That's really how I feel."

He says he won't fight the decision to kill or keep Robert Williams imprisoned for life; that if he knew five years ago what he knows now he would be a lay minister trying to get through "to all those people out there who are just as disgusted and just as full of hate as I was.

"That man (the earlier Robert Williams) is dead now. I'm gonna leave him dead. But I know we have to have laws to govern, too. It's possible that the dead man may have to be brought to life so he can be killed.

"If he dies, would that help. I don't know. That's a heavy question. I don't know the answer."

A guard opens the conference door, motioning Williams to come outside. He pauses in front of the double row of bars, smiles, says, "Thanks for stopping by," then disappears behind a corner.

The guard spins a wheel, clanking one row of bars open, then the other. Williams pads down the hiege hallway, turns on feet half-stuffed into the lowcut workboots and disappears through a door halfway down the row of cells.

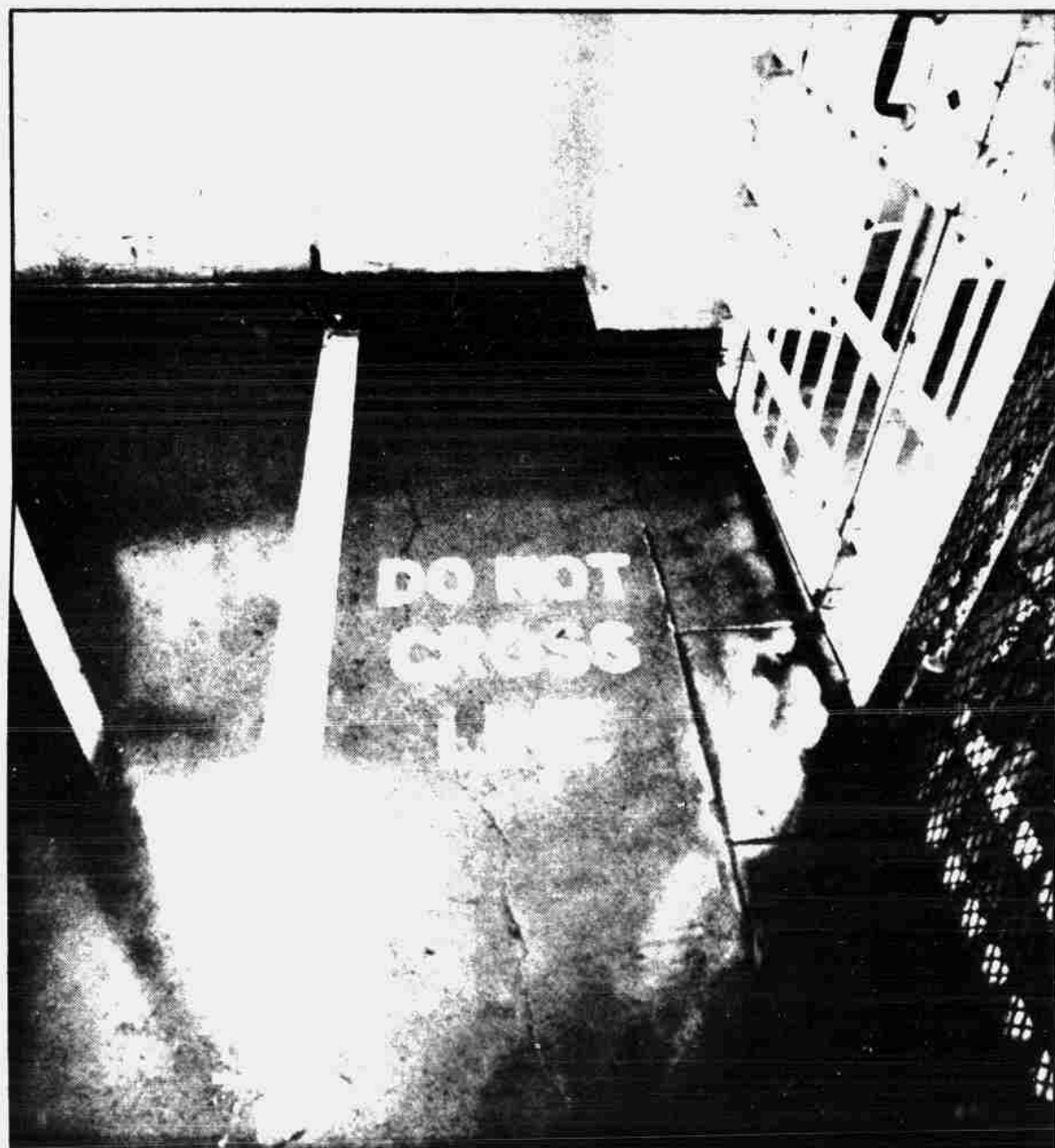


Photo by Ted Kirk

A guard at men's reformatory said the sign reminds inmates not to converse with other prisoners behind the bars.



Photo by Ted Kirk

Inmates at the men's reformatory are usually first-time offenders. The average age of inmates is 20 years.