

REPORT  
on the Disturbance at  
State Correctional Institution at Rockview  
by  
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Superintendent  
to the  
House Judiciary Committee

## DESCRIPTION OF INCIDENT

On Tuesday, February 7, 1989, a major disturbance took place in the institution Dining Hall and on the walkways near the Dining Hall involving inmates, correctional officers, maintenance officers and Correctional Industries officers. The disturbance resulted in injuries to nineteen staff members and six inmates. The costs created by the disturbance included \$698.41 for equipment, \$277.40 for food items and numerous hours in inmate and staff overtime.

The events leading up to this disturbance began at approximately 2:05 p.m. when a Corrections Officer had a confrontation with an inmate on the walkway near the Commissary.

The Officer observed a group of inmates who were loitering on the walk in the Commissary area. He ordered them to clear the walks twice, but they did not move. He started to walk towards them and they began to move along, except for one. That inmate was again ordered to clear the walk. The officer turned to walk back to the front of the Commissary when the inmate grabbed the officer's arm saying "if you're gonna write me up, I'll give you a reason to send me to the RHU right now. You chump ass guards, you're gonna have to lock down the whole jail today." The inmate then left the area and returned to C Block.

A short time later the inmate tried to enter the office area in C Block and came towards the same officer. At this point the Block Sergeant called the Control Center for assistance.

Two Lieutenants arrived shortly thereafter. At approximately this time sixty or more inmates gathered in C Block in a threatening way, apparently planning to interfere with the Officers' efforts to control the inmate. At this same time C Block began a line movement to eat supper and the inmate mingled in with the large group who were moving to the Culinary Building.

The inmate was spotted by Officers in the Culinary hallway; he voluntarily went with them to the Control Booth in the front of the hallway. Seeing this, a group of fifty to sixty inmates then refused to enter the Dining Room from the corridor at approximately 3:40 p.m.; they remained in the hallway despite numerous orders from Officers to continue through the meal line. A large group of inmates then began moving toward the Control Booth apparently in a show of force and stormed the area. The inmates also entered the Dining Room, assaulting staff members with metal pitchers, salt shakers, cups, bowls, food trays and fists. There were approximately 400 to 500 inmates in the Dining Room at that time. The specific number of inmates who took an active role in the disturbance is unknown, but did not include a majority of the inmates present in the Dining Room.

Within a few minutes the disturbance spilled out onto the walkway in front of the Culinary Building where inmates continued to punch, kick and further assault staff members who had come to provide assistance. At this same time the Deputy Superintendent for Operations, Deputy Superintendent for Treatment, Major of the Guard and the Director of Treatment were notified of the incident. The four of them proceeded to the area of the walkway between the Dining Room Building and Education Building. At this point, the inmates stopped their assaultive behavior and started to talk to the Administrative Staff on the scene. This staff, rather than enter into a dialogue with the inmates, ordered five inmates who were apparent spokesmen or leaders of the group into a room of the Education Building for a discussion of the inmate's concerns and ordered the remaining inmates to return to their cell blocks. The inmates then began dispersing, returning to their housing units. By 4:45 p.m. B Block, East Wing and West Wing reported that all inmates were locked in their cells. A group of

approximately 100 inmates in C Block continued to refuse to return to their cells; they eventually locked-in sometime after 5:00 p.m. after the inmates who were in the Education Building returned to the block.

The supper line was resumed at 6:30 p.m. when groups of approximately forty inmates at a time were released from their cells to go eat. This process was completed at 10:00 p.m. without further incident. The institution returned to a normal schedule on the next morning. When the noon meal was completed and the mid-day count was completed, the inmates were kept in their cells in C Block where a complete shakedown and general search of each cell in the block took place. No weapons were found.

A total of nineteen (19) staff members were injured in the disturbance. Thirteen (13) were treated at the Centre Community Hospital; twelve (12) were released after treatment and one (1) was hospitalized. Six (6) additional personnel were treated in the institution's Dispensary only. The specific reported injuries are as follows:

Corrections Officer 1: hit with metal pitcher, "pinched nerve" in neck.

Corrections Officer 1: punched in head, swelling of front area of forehead, some dizziness.

Corrections Officer 1: hit on leg with metal pitcher, punched in head, contusion of right calf, minor contusion of temporal area.

Utility Plant Supervisor: hit in upper back area, kicked in head and ribs.

Corrections Officer 3: punched and kicked, bruise behind left ear, contusion below right knee, slight contusion of left rib cage, edema left elbow.

Sewage Plant Supervisor: punched in left eye and shoulder, possible tear of left eyelid, corneal abrasion.

Corrections Officer 3: punched in face and head, laceration of right eye, swollen left ear, scrape left cheek area.

Corrections Officer 1: hit several times on head, laceration of right cheek, slight edema of forehead.

Corrections Officer 1: hit on left side of neck with metal pitcher, punched several times in mouth and jaw, several scratches on left side of neck, 3/4" laceration on chin, pains in neck.

Corrections Officer 1: numerous inmates had officer on floor beating him with metal pitcher, pain in cervical spine area and left scapula area.

Food Service Instructor: hit on back of head with metal pitcher, scalp laceration, contusions and abrasions of head.

Corrections Officer 1: hit in face, facial bruises.

Labor Foreman 2: struck on jaw with fist, hematoma inside lower lip.

Corrections Activities Specialist: punched in head, bruised temple, bruised chest, hematoma right side of scalp.

Corrections Plumbing Trade Instructor: punched in face, abrasion of forehead, bruise above left eye.

Corrections Officer 1: hit on head.

Corrections Food Service Manager 2: hit on top of left shoulder with metal pitcher.

Sawmill Foreman: punched behind left ear, bump on back of head.

There were five inmates who were treated for minor injuries in the institution's Dispensary.

Only one staff member is still off work as a result of the disturbance.

### Misconducts and Criminal Charges

Fourteen (14) inmates received a total of forty-one (41) misconducts. A total of sixty-four (64) criminal charges were lodged by the Pennsylvania State Police against fourteen (14) inmates with nine (9) defendants either pleading guilty or being found guilty of their crimes. Charges against five (5) of the inmates were dismissed. All criminal charges have been processed through the Centre County Court of Common Pleas.