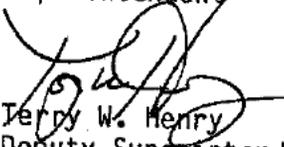


COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA

DATE: October 31, 1989

SUBJECT: Disturbance at SCI-Camp Hill
October 25, 26, and 27, 1989TO: Robert M. Freeman
SuperintendentFROM: 
Terry W. Henry
Deputy Superintendent for Treatment

At approximately 3:00 p.m. on Wednesday, October 25, 1989, I looked out my office window and observed a disturbance at E Gate House. I noted a crowd of inmates gathering and a number of officers in the vicinity. I then saw an officer being assaulted and falling to the ground. I immediately left my office and proceeded to the E Gate House. Upon arriving there, I observed four to five officers with facial and head injuries that were being escorted from the area. I also noticed nurse Romberger and another nurse applying on the spot medical attention. The officers were eventually taken by ambulance for further evaluation.

I spoke with [redacted] and [redacted] regarding the incident. I was advised that the incident occurred upon the return of the inmates from the stockade field several minutes earlier. Further, I was told that unknown inmates had assaulted [redacted] and [redacted]. I quickly realized that the incident was escalating. The E Gate House area was secured and the inmates had control of the Group II and III side. As I stood at the E Gate House, talking with [redacted] and [redacted] regarding the incident and any actions that needed to be taken, I observed an officer lying on the ground near K Block dayroom. He was there for just a few minutes when the inmates noticed him and, I would estimate at least 100 to 150 inmates surrounded him and began to physically assault him. At this point, the officer in the Highway Tower fired several shots and this caused the inmates to back away from him. I later found out that this officer was [redacted]. At this point, I returned to Deputy Smith's office where the Command Post had been established.

The Emergency Plan had been activated and Camp Hill staff, along with assistance from Local and State Police were securing the perimeter. I had received a phone call at the Command Post from a Local State Police Captain who asked about the seriousness of our situation. I advised him it was extremely serious and we needed all the help that he could send as quickly as possible. I advised them to send the police helicopter as quickly as possible. I advised him that we were losing control of our institution.

The events during this period happened very quickly. Staff were given responsibilities for note taking, calling in off duty staff, orientation of staff who arrived, answering of phones, monitoring the radios for incoming calls, and responding to staff who were calling the Command Post indicating they were trapped. [REDACTED] was asked to continue calling the Blocks to inform those officers who were in need of help that help was on its way. [REDACTED] was asked to ensure all staff who called in to "to hang in there." that help was on its way.

Although the Command Post was in Deputy Smith's office, I proceeded to the Control area on several occasions. I also advised someone (I'm not sure who) to contact all the Local Police Departments and advise them of our emergency and to send help. I further advised [REDACTED] to call 911 and get all available medical support ambulances on the scene.

While in the Control Center I heard a transmission from an inmate indicating that he wanted to talk with someone. At this point there were no formal negotiations or formal contact established with the insurgent inmates. I began talking with the inmate to establish formal negotiations. (It should be noted that [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were taping the radio transmissions between myself and the inmate). The inmate was quite demanding and would not identify himself. I identified myself as being Deputy Henry. He indicated that he would not want to talk with me, that he preferred to talk with the Superintendent, the Commissioner, and the Governor. The conversation between myself and the inmate went on for at least an hour (estimated). I tried to build the inmate's ego by telling him that he appeared to be reasonable, intelligent, and that I could tell that he did not want this situation to deteriorate any further. I asked him for his cooperation and that I needed him to show an act of good faith. I asked him to release the injured officers. I was told by the inmate that he would release the injured officers. I quickly notified the Command Post about this occurrence. The officers were then immediately released.

The next part is somewhat confusing as I tried to recall, but at some point it was decided to attempt face-to-face negotiations. I am not sure whether that was my suggestion or that of the inmates, but at the time it appeared to be our best choice. The inmates agreed to meet with me in an area located on the roadway immediately in front of the Education Building. The inmate spokesman [REDACTED] stated he would meet with me as long as he could be accompanied by five other inmates. I advised him this would be permissible and that I would meet him at the E House Gate to determine the method in which the negotiations would be conducted. I proceeded to the negotiating area with [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. I left those individuals at the negotiating area and I proceeded to E Gate House to meet the inmates. The inmates were permitted to exit the Group II and III side, only after they had been thoroughly searched by the officers. Once this had been completed, the inmates accompanied me to the negotiating area in front of the Education Building.

The inmates who were involved in the negotiations were [REDACTED]; [REDACTED]; and [REDACTED]. As negotiations were being carried out the State Police officers were in the area between the negotiating table in the Education Building. As negotiations proceeded additional staff and State Troopers were able to come into the area.

Negotiations began at approximately 6:45 P.M. on 10/25/89.

Spokesman was identified [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] stated he had spoken with Deputy Smith (unsure of location) on Tuesday, 10/24/89 regarding Family Days, new sickline policy, education, no access to law library, medical procedures in general, and the crowded conditions in the showers and need for renovation.

[REDACTED] stated they were here to negotiate in good faith and wanted to resolve the situation without further incident or injury. They felt they needed something confirmed with one issue to show inmates we were acting in good faith. At this time they demanded that the Press and Commissioner Owens be present. [REDACTED] stated they wanted an attorney present to draw up contracts. At this point it was again stated by the spokesman [REDACTED] that they were looking to bring things back under control.

In response to the issue of the Press being brought into the institution to listen to the negotiations, Deputy Henry responded that the inmates have the right to mail and phone calls and would have access in that manner.

Deputy Henry then requested that the six (6) inmate negotiators have the inmates loose in the institution move back into the blocks or into the K-Block yard. [REDACTED] responded to Deputy Henry that he does feel this would be in their best interest at this time.

At this point in the negotiations [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] restated their demands and included again Family Days, sickline and added the fact that the inmates are being suppressed by being placed in cells so much of the day.

At this point in the negotiations the negotiating team received a message from [REDACTED] that inmates were, during negotiations process, attempting to break into the kitchen area. [REDACTED] after a brief discussion with the inmate negotiators, returned to the Kitchen #2 area to attempt to get the inmates to stop any further break-ins, attempts to get at staff, etc.

[REDACTED] stated they wanted to bring this to a conclusion, that it has been coming since 1983, and is directly related to the doubling up and overcrowding.

Deputy Henry, explained to the inmate negotiators, that we did not want double-celling, but that we were in a difficult situation because of the Department wide population increase.

[REDACTED] stated again at this time, that they don't want more injured, and want to work towards change.

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At this point in the negotiations, [REDACTED] brought up the sickline policy change issue. At this point, it is unclear as to whether the question or the possibility of a ninety day probation period was brought up by either Deputy Henry or [REDACTED]

Deputy Henry at this time explained to the inmate negotiators that the staff was attempting to provide the best medical care. He informed them that if it was not an inmate's day to report on sickline that the block officers were to notify the Medical Department so that the inmate may be seen. He further stated they were trying to monitor the situation.

At this point in the negotiations it was noted by both the staff and inmate negotiators that police officers began moving in towards the E Gate area due to continued reports of inmates breaking into the kitchens.

[REDACTED] restated the hostage negotiators position that they want to have an attorney present because they were concerned about how things would be acted upon after the negotiations were completed and the inmates returned to the blocks. They felt that a lawyer was needed at this point.

At this point in the negotiations the hostage negotiators again restated their points which included Family Days, sickline, Medical Department, and education program concerns.

[REDACTED] asked for something to take back that could be used to subside this disturbance.

[REDACTED] stated that the sickline issue was the predominant issue. He further reported that the inmates feel they are looked at as lower than human beings and that going to sickline only two (2) days a week is inhumane.

Deputy Henry stated, at this time, the intent of the sickline policy. He then wrote the following statement: "The intention of the sickline policy was in fact, to provide additional medical care. With the high population and number of inmate's with critical conditions, we wanted to free-up nurses to assist with them. Any inmate who is ill is to receive immediate attention."

[REDACTED] stated at this time that the inmate negotiators and other older inmates in the population, had no problems with the way the new sickline policy was written. He further stated that the younger inmates did not understand the policy and felt that inmate grievance members should have been used in explaining the policy so there would be no misunderstanding of its intent.

[REDACTED] stated that the inmates wanted to hear that the staff may have to make a change in sickline policy and return it to the way it had been running Monday thru Friday.

Deputy Henry at this point in the negotiations wrote the following statement for the inmate negotiators: "In the future when a major policy change is to be implemented, we will confer with inmates regarding the need for the change, and to solicit the inmate's input."

[REDACTED] stated again that the inmates want the sickline policy simplified so that the younger inmates understand it. It needs to be more specific and wants block grievance representatives to be able to interpret the policy to the other inmates.

Towards the end of the negotiation process the following issues were stated by the inmate negotiators:

1. Law library access limited.
2. Locked in cells too much.
3. Poor attitude from officers.
4. Cut short on yard and shower time.

At the conclusion of the hostage negotiations the inmates expressed a need for further negotiations to be conducted on Thursday, October 26, 1989 between Superintendent Freeman, Deputy Henry, and Deputy Smith. In response to this Deputy Henry wrote the following statement for the inmate negotiators: "We (Supt. Freeman, Deputy Henry and Deputy Smith) will meet in negotiations tomorrow, Thursday, October 26, 1989 at 1:00 P.M. with [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED], and [REDACTED]."

At the conclusion of the negotiations the inmate negotiators named the following staff as those individuals who were involved in starting the incident on 10/25/89 at approximately 2:45 P.M. when [REDACTED] reported by the inmates, assaulted an unidentified inmate while stockade field was returning. The other names provided at this time were [REDACTED], [REDACTED], and [REDACTED]. The inmate negotiators were not specific as to what the three (3) sergeants had done to instigate the situation on 10/25/89.

Although the inmates presented a list of demands and concerns, it was my feeling that all of this was just a smoke screen and that their real intention was to cause a disruption in the institution. [REDACTED] referred to the incident that occurred at Huntingdon and further said that he "did not want to see another Attica." I advised [REDACTED] that further actions on the part of the inmate population would not benefit anyone. Specifically, he cited Family Days as a concern, and the medical procedure. After a lengthy discussion regarding the medical procedures, he stated that he had a better understanding of what the Administration was trying to do and felt that with a little more effort that could have been communicated to the inmate population. I advised him that the change in sickline procedures, was in effect a desire by the Administration to provide better medical services and that inmates would continue to be seen if there were serious problems. The concern about Family Days did not seem important at all. The consensus from the inmates was that ordinarily Family Days would have been terminated October 1, anyway and so that was not seen as important. The inmates wanted to talk with the Administration and wanted a news release given out indicating that on October 26th, the inmates would be meeting with the Administration at SCIC.

After my discussion with Superintendent Freeman I was advised that a meeting could be established for the next day with the six inmates who were at the negotiating table. I advised [REDACTED] that the Administration would be willing to talk with him the next day provided the inmates locked up, began to show some cooperation, and first of all, release any and all staff members that they held.

[REDACTED] stated that he would need "some time" to meet with the inmates to determine if that would be acceptable. He stated that he would need at least a half-hour to discuss these issues and concerns. The inmates were then permitted to return to the Group II and III side, without any intervention from our staff or that of the State Police. After approximately a half-hour to forty-five minutes, [REDACTED] returned to the E Gate House where he and I again talked. He indicated that the inmates would return to their cells. At this point I asked him to release the hostages immediately and they did so. [REDACTED] was present and I believe counted and took the names of those officers who were released. If I recall correctly, I believe there were seven officers immediately released. [REDACTED] advised me that there were other staff in the area, but they were locked in the switchboxes and couldn't be released. I told him we understood that and that our staff would get those officers out of the switchboxes and that they should return to their cells. [REDACTED] stated that he needed to have time to coordinate the return to the cells and needed an additional forty-five minutes. He was given a bull horn with which to talk to the inmates and it was quite apparent that he was able to direct the inmates in an influential manner. He came to the gate again to talk with me and indicated there was a problem because in some of the cell blocks the inmates could not get back into their cells because they were locked. I advised him to tell the inmates to just go into a cell, regardless of who originally belonged in the cell. At this point the inmates complied and returned to their cells.

On October 26, 1989, at 1:00 p.m., Superintendent Freeman, Deputy Henry, Deputy Smith, and [REDACTED] met with the same six inmates who were negotiating the previous night. These inmates were [REDACTED]

[REDACTED], and [REDACTED]. The demands presented by the inmates were as follows:

1. More educational programs.
2. Better medical treatment.
3. Better food.
4. Family Days to continue as before.
5. Better shower conditions.

6. Yard activities on Sunday morning.
7. All blocks to be opened the same as K Block.
8. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] have been unfair to inmates.
9. Half-way houses and furloughs need to be increased.
10. Proper dental care.
11. Lights being turned off after midnight.
12. There should be grievance meetings once a month.

The meeting lasted approximately one hour and it was the consensus of the group that communications may be more effectively increased. Superintendent Freeman indicated that he would take under advisement some of the concerns and issues, and that he would meet with his "Deputies" and the Deputies would get back to the inmates within a few days. It was my belief now, as I look back on this situation, that the inmates were really not interested in trying to work through any of their concerns. I believe that they had decided that they were going to retaliate in some fashion.

At approximately 5:00 p.m. I talked with Superintendent Freeman regarding the status of the institution. Reports from staff indicated that inmates were generally in a calm state and were locked and secured in their cells. I did not have any information that indicated the locking mechanisms were in such a state that inmates would be able to breach them. [REDACTED] and members of the SCIC TACT squad did a check of cells and reported that a few couldn't be locked. Inmates in those cells were moved to other cells that could be secured. The other cells were felt to be secure. At approximately 5:30 p.m., I asked for permission to leave the institution for a short period of time when it was felt the institution had order restored.

Upon returning to the institution, I proceeded directly to the Command Post where I was updated regarding the status of the institution. I was advised that the inmates had broken out of their cells simultaneously and had taken over Control of the entire of the institution. I was instructed by the Superintendent to accompany the State Police negotiators and to again make contact with the inmates in an attempt to resolve this situation. At this point I walked with the State Police negotiating team and [REDACTED] to an area beside the Highway Tower adjacent to K Block. The State Police had a portable telephone and we were trying to decide how best to get the phone into the inmates. The decision finally was made for the negotiating team to enter the Highway Tower and drop a line over the fence to the inmates. This was accomplished and negotiations were begun.

As soon as the inmate appeared in the yard to take the telephone, I immediately recognized that it was [REDACTED] and as soon as he spoke I was a 100% sure that it was [REDACTED], who was doing the negotiating for the inmates. I was asked initially to do the negotiations; however, I felt that it may not be in the best interest of the total negotiating procedure and, in fact, could jeopardize negotiations if I were to initiate contact with the inmates. My feeling for this was due to the fact that I negotiated with them on Wednesday, October 25, 1989. I therefore requested the State Police negotiating team to handle it and I acted as an advisor during this entire process. I do not have any actual notes on the negotiation itself because I was in constant contact with the Command Post and I had other responsibilities as well as being a resource person for the negotiating team. I would suggest that the notes be obtained from the State Police regarding the demands, issues, and general tone of the negotiations. It appeared to me that the inmates were not interested in resolving the situations through negotiations. Their major demand was to talk to the Governor and/or the Commissioner regarding their situation. Contact eventually was made with Commissioner Owens who stated he would meet with the inmates under the condition that:

- A. All hostages are released.
- B. That order is restored to the institution.

The inmates wanted to meet with Commissioner Owens prior to release of the hostages. This presented an impasse. Eventually, [REDACTED] stated that he wanted to personally talk to the Commissioner and if he were guaranteed that he could meet with Commissioner Owens then he would consider releasing the hostages. This point of the negotiations was debated by the inmates for about 1-1/2 hours before it was determined that we were again at an impasse. [REDACTED] kept changing his demands to the point where he wanted Commissioner Owens to announce to the Media that he would be meeting with the inmates. The Commissioner indicated that once the hostages were released, and order was restored, then he would announce to the Media that a meeting would be set up for Friday, October 27, 1989, at 7:00 a.m. Again, there was an impasse and the inmates wanted their own terms. They wanted to have their "plight" publicized via Channel 27, prior to making any agreements. At this point I notified the Command Post that an impasse had been reached and all attempts to move on these issues had failed. There was a feeling on the part of the negotiators and Correctional staff located in the Tower that the inmates were beginning to fortify themselves in K Block.

During the time of the negotiations I was in constant contact with the Command Post and reported inmate movements between E, F, G, H, J, and K Blocks. I reported fires that were flaring up within the institution. I reported inmates running through the compound with acetylene torches setting fires and prying open the kitchen doors, gymnasium doors, and doors to the Main Auditorium. The inmates had some type of fuel propellant that they made fire bombs with and threw those into the kitchen, the gymnasium, and the Main Auditorium. I also observed inmates crawling on the roof of E Block and throwing fire bombs off the end of the roof towards the State Police. As this was going on, I constantly gave this intelligence information to the Command Post. The inmates began to fortify the gate between the gymnasium and the commissary, the gate immediately adjacent to Modular Unit I. I observed them placing sheets of plywood, flake board, and what appeared to be two by fours and two by sixes against the fence. They also were observed putting some type of fuel propellant on the gate. At first I couldn't quite understand what they were doing, but then realized it was their intention to set the gate ablaze if an assault were attempted by the State Police. The inmates were also attempting to fortify the man Gate located adjacent to K Block dayroom. They utilized a ping-pong table, sheets of plywood, and what appeared to be two by sixes. It is my feeling that they were anticipating an assault through that area. Inmates then began to fortify E Block Gate, in a fashion that they had fortified during the previous insurrection. Various fires were built by the inmates throughout the compound and the inmates were burning furniture, desks, mattresses, etc. It appeared that they were burning anything and everything that they could, and there were at least six to eight groups of inmates huddling around the fires to keep warm. A fire was also built on the inside fence immediately in front of the Highway Tower and a tank was thrown into that fire. The tank eventually erupted with a loud explosion. While all of this was taking place, the State Police negotiator continued to talk with [REDACTED].

I eventually recommended to the negotiators and SCIC staff that were in the Tower, to consider the forward movement of the State Police towards the Group II and III area. After considerable discussion, the negotiators and I felt that the situation was worsening and we needed a show of "force." I then proposed to the Command Post that the perimeter be moved closer to the Group II and III side. The initial objective was to get the State Police to the area of E Gate House. It was agreed that we would keep in constant communication between the negotiators, myself, and the Command Post. If there were any threats received concerning the life or safety of the hostages, I was to notify the Command Post and the Command Post would immediately stop the movement of the State Police. Once everything was coordinated, I was told to make the decision when to begin the advancement.

When all was in ready, I notified the Command Post to begin closing the perimeter. At this time I also noticed the inmates hooking up the hose to a fire hydrant and it was my feeling they were going to use the high pressure water against the State police. I notified the Command Post to have the water in the institution shut off so as not to make the fire hose a weapon. The State Police, accompanied by selected SCIC staff, came through Kitchen II while at the same time advancing to the area of E Block Gate. Inmates soon became aware that the State Police were in Kitchen II and began trying to burn that area. They placed a ping-pong table against the door towards the Furniture Factory and lit the table. They also had rags that were set on fire and attempted to throw them inside the kitchen area. I constantly reported this information to the Command Post as it occurred.

Once the State Police force reached the E Block Gate and the inmates realized that a possible assault was occurring they ran into the Blocks. At this point the negotiations were continuing, and it is my belief that [REDACTED] did not realize that the State Police were closing in. He was in an area in the dayroom from which he could not have direct observation of what was occurring in the compound. Once the State Police made it to the E Block Gate I continued to allow them to advance until the force of the State Police officers was on the roadway from E Block Gate to the Furniture Factory Gate. It was at that point that word reached [REDACTED] about the advancement of the officers. At this point he told the negotiators that he had "killed one hostage" and that if the officers didn't retreat he would "kill the other." At that point the phone line went dead. I instructed the Command Post of the communication from [REDACTED] to the negotiator, and at this point we were in a "wait and see" attitude. After several minutes (at the time it appeared to me to be an eternity) I called the Command Post and suggested that we give inmates an opportunity to surrender. While I was talking to the Command Post I noticed white sheets and towels being hung out of the Block windows indicating a desire to surrender. I passed this information on to the Command Post and the decision was to allow a surrender. I was asked by the Command Post how we proposed to do this, and what we should do with the inmates. It was my suggestion that we announce over a loud speaker that the inmates may surrender and that they should proceed into the yard area of the compound and lay face down on the ground. It was agreed to try this strategy. I then asked the State Police negotiator who was with us if he could arrange to get the helicopter to make the announcement. The helicopter made the announcement over the PA system; however, due to the noise it was difficult to understand. The State Police negotiator then suggested that we use one of the State Police cars with a "hailer". The State Police car was then brought to the area under the Highway Tower and the announcement was made by the officer that "any inmate desiring to surrender should come out into the compound and lay face down in the grass area." Eventually, inmates began to file out of E Block. At first the officers were taking them out of the area in the direction of the Education Building. I then instructed the Command Post to have those

inmates taken back into the main yard area and placed face down. It was my feeling that if inmates would see these inmates in the yard, then other inmates would begin to leave the other Blocks. After about five minutes this had its desired effect and inmates from other Blocks also began to leave their areas. Once this process was begun, the inmates began to leave the housing areas in rapid progression. Simultaneous to this, the hostages were released. To my best recollection, [REDACTED] was removed from E Block, [REDACTED] from K Block, [REDACTED] from H Block and [REDACTED] from J Block. Previously, early in the negotiation process, [REDACTED] was carried from G Block by approximately five inmates and taken to the inner yard area (between G Block dayroom and the outer fence) by the fire hydrant where the State Police were able to get to him and evacuate him.

I remained in the Tower for about a half-hour after the last hostage had been released and, to my knowledge, the State Police and the Department of Corrections staff processed the inmates in a very professional and orderly fashion.

TWH/mg

cc: File