

Former prisoners describe inmates' fight for legal rights

by Chuck Babington
Staff Writer

"When you're fighting for your life, you learn about these things," said former Alcatraz inmate Frank Watson of knowledge of legal terms and procedures. Watson was one of five former prisoners, four of whom are still under sentence at Wake Advancement Center, who presented a panel discussion last Friday at the UNC Law School.

A standing-room-only crowd of approximately 150 law school students

attended the discussion led by Fred Tathwell, a second-year student who worked last summer as an intern for the N.C. Department of Corrections.

In the hour-long, informal program, the inmates, all of whom have spent time in N.C. Central Prison in Raleigh talked mostly about their experiences in court and especially mistreatment by lawyers.

Roger Watson told of his experience with plea bargaining, the practice in which a defendant agrees to plead guilty to certain charges and the court drops other charges. His lawyer told him the state had strong

evidence against him, Watson said, and that the judge had agreed to give him 10 years, dropping other charges.

"I took my lawyer on his word," Watson said, "and figured 10 years was better than 230." He said he signed the transcript of plea, then faced the judge for the first time and was sentenced to 20 years.

Watson said there was nothing he could do because when he signed the transcript he waived all rights.

Willie Smith, the only black on the panel, recounted his experiences of 20 years in prison, some of which were spent under the

death sentence. He said he has been in and out of court for the last nine years for post-conviction hearings, claiming that he was tried for life under circumstantial evidence.

Smith agreed that "You don't always get justice from your attorney or the judge," and he said that a lawyer will not try as hard for his client's acquittal if the state rather than the client is paying the fee.

Jackie Blaylock said that he spent \$32,000 in lawyers' fees over several years in which he was tried and re-tried for two capital crimes. Blaylock said a judge told him that his lawyer once had a strong argument which would have won acquittal, but the argument was abandoned. A new trial was called.

Blaylock said he feels the lawyer merely wanted more money. "If they find out you've got money, they're going to get it," he said.

"I got more done for myself sitting in the bathroom reading law books than was done for me in court," Blaylock concluded, "I feel legislature should pass laws where a man charged with a capital crime should pay a set fee."

The future lawyers broke into laughter when Frank Watson said, "All crooks are not in jail, fellows."

Herb Orr said he spent 21 years in prison and at one time he and Frank ran the numbers racket and bootlegging in Central Prison.

Orr said he accumulated a bad conduct record years ago. Although his record wiped clean, he is now denied work release because of the old record.

Orr has filed a petition claiming double jeopardy.

Frank Watson, the only panel member no longer under sentence, now works with youths for the corrections department. He said that parole boards should interview the inmates instead of simply reading their records.

Watson also said that former inmates should have more say in prison reform.

"Men with degrees hanging on their walls say, 'I know how it feels.' They can't know, you've got to be there to know, he concluded."

Israel relief funds asked

by Henry Forber
Staff Writer

An emotional appeal for funds for Israel was made by Jewish community leaders in Raleigh Sunday night at Beth Meyer Synagogue.

Rep. Ike Andrews, Democratic Congressman from N.C.'s Fourth District attended the event, but UNC students who had planned to attend cancelled out.

Arnold Zogry, one of the coordinators of the event, pleaded for money in behalf of the United Jewish Appeal (UJA) Emergency Fund.

"Every social service in Israel is closed because of the war," Zogry said. "The economy is at a standstill."

"The UJA has set a nationwide goal for

this week of \$900 million," Zogry said. "We're trying to collect in one week what was collected by the UJA in the past three years."

All contributions will be used to reinstate Israel's social services and humanitarian projects, nearly all of whose funds have been poured into the war. U.S. law prohibits the raising of funds to finance international wars.

"Raleigh has got to raise \$200,000 this week," said Zogry. It was reported that the Raleigh community has collected \$90,000 in cash for Israel since the beginning of the war more than a week ago.

Zogry also told of developments in the war as relayed by UJA headquarters in New York.

"In the Sinai, both the Israeli and Egyptian armies are organizing the largest armored mobilization of tanks and men in history—bigger than anything in World War II," Zogry emphasized. "If they collide, it will be devastating," he said.

After Andrews' remarks before the crowd of approximately 200, he was questioned about the possibility of increased U.S. involvement.

Andrews said the U.S. has to provide a balance of threat to the Soviet Union or any nation who upsets a stalemate in world conflict.

The event, originally scheduled as a rally to protest the treatment of Soviet Jews, had its emphasis changed because of the more immediate crisis in the Middle East, Zogry said. The Soviet Jewry rally was to have included a candlelight procession of families and students in eastern North Carolina.

The postponement of the march was rumored to have been related to the threat of possible intervention by Arab students in Raleigh. Zogry and other synagogue representatives denied the rumors.

Representatives of Hillel Foundation at UNC, who had been planning the event since September, had a different story, however.

"The Raleigh Jewish community was afraid that the march might promote some sort of violence on the part of Arab sympathizers," said Rabbi Robert Siegel of Hillel.

Susan Burgess, chairman of the UNC Soviet Jewry Committee and student coordinator for the rally, said the procession was cancelled without consulting the student planners.



Chapel Hill is not rampant with armed robbers, but the Brinks men take no chances when they deliver money to a bank. The happy-looking chap on the right has his gun out just in case.

(Staff photo by Tom Randolph)

Y classes scheduled

A variety of informal educational classes have been scheduled by the Chapel Hill-Carrboro YMCA.

The classes will offer instruction in bridge, croquet, guitar, painting, needlepoint, pottery, ladies physical fitness, gymnastics and yoga.

Scheduled times for the courses are: Bridge: Monday evenings, 7:30-9:30, beginning Oct. 29; Crochet: Monday evenings, 7:30-9:30, beginning Nov. 12 and Wednesday evenings, 7:30-9:30, beginning Nov. 14; Guitar: Tuesday evenings, 8-9, beginning Oct. 23; Needlepoint: Tuesday evenings, 7:30-9:30, beginning Nov. 6; Painting: Tuesday morning, 10-12, beginning Nov. 6.

Also included are Ladies Physical Fitness: Tuesday and Thursday mornings 9:30-11, beginning Oct. 23 and Tuesday and Thursday evenings, beginning Oct. 23; Pottery: Wednesday mornings, 9:30-11, beginning Oct. 24; Hatha Yoga: Monday mornings, 9:30-11, and 11-12:30 beginning Nov. 5 and Tuesday evenings, 7-9:30, beginning Nov. 6; Gymnastics: Monday afternoons, 2-3, 3-4, preschoolers, beginning Nov. 5; Wednesday afternoons, 3-4, 4-5, 6-8 year olds with no experience, beginning Nov. 7, Thursday afternoons, 3-4, 4-5, 9 yrs. and up, with no experience, beginning Nov. 8. Persons interested in enrolling in any of these courses may stop by the Y office or call 929-3788 or 929-8104.

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Professional club to rush

Alpha Epsilon Delta, a pre-med, pre-dental campus honor society will hold rush for undergraduate students at 7 tonight in 106 Berryhill, the basic sciences building.

Dr. Snydam Osterhout, director of admissions at the Duke University medical school, will speak at the meeting.

The purpose of the society is to create interest in medicine and dentistry for

undergraduates. A 3.0 average is required for membership and an active member must have attended UNC for three semesters.

Field trips to Duke medical school and Umstead Hospital are planned during the semester.

Rush will be held again on Oct. 30. All interested persons are invited to attend.

Questions may be directed to the group's president Will Walker at 922-4279.

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