

An Arresting Problem And How They Help

By CECILIA VIGGO

In 1966, the Rochester Center for Governmental and Community Research studied 309 inmates of the Monroe County Jail. Its report, published in 1967, and entitled "Justice Detained," came to two major conclusions: there was no rational or legal basis for detaining many, if not most of the defendants studied, and the length of imprisonment before trial was exorbitantly long.

The center's study documents that prisoners accused of misdemeanors, and not out on bail or released on their own recognizance, averaged stays of five days in jail before the disposition of their cases; those accused of felonies stayed in jail an average of 54 days.

Sixty percent of those charged with felonies were eventually freed, after months of waiting in jail. Either the indictment against them was dismissed, or they received a suspended sentence and were placed on probation.

Since the publication of "Justice Detained," several hopeful developments have occurred in Rochester.

Rochester now has a Pre-Trial Release Program. The program, which began in December 1970, has a staff of three interviewers and is headed by Mrs. Patricia Thompson. It is funded through the State Office of Crime Control, with the state and the county sharing expenses.

The Pre-Trial Release Pro-

gram helps persons awaiting trial to leave jail on their own recognizance.

Release on Recognizance (ROR) means that the judge, informed of a defendant's dependability and previous record of stability, allows him to leave jail and trusts that he will return for his trial. ROR demands no payment of bail or even promise to pay bail.

In its seven months of existence, the program has interviewed more than 500 defendants and won the release of 83 awaiting trial.

Mrs. Thompson contends that even a moderate amount of bail can be prohibitive for some people.

"Many families have to go to loan companies to meet bail," she said.

She added that this burden often compounds original financial problems leading to arrest.

"If a defendant can be released quickly on his own recognizance, it prevents a bad situation from growing worse," Mrs. Thompson said. It often saves his job, and keeps him from incurring more debts in posting bail.

Each day, her staff goes to the "lockup" and interviews all persons arrested within the past 24 hours. "Our questions try to determine the defendant's ties with the community, length of residence in Rochester, present employment and previous criminal record," Mrs. Thompson explained.

If a defendant has ties in the community, and if his history shows no criminal record or infidelity to appearances at court, he makes a good candidate for ROR. After verifying all information, the program staff makes its recommendations to the judge.

The program asks the released men to check in with the office once a week.

"In case a defendant has any problems, we'll be there to listen to him, and may be useful in getting him some help," Mrs. Thompson said. The program's staff has contacted psychiatrists and counselors in its efforts to assist defendants.

Mrs. Thompson terms the work of the program so far as a "good experience." She commented that of the 83 released only two were re-arrested. Only one defendant has failed to show up for trial.



CYO Officers

Arthur J. Bamann Jr., was installed as president of the CYO Board of Directors. Others are, standing, right, Roger T. Bunce, outgoing president. Front row, from left, Lawrence J. Oberlies, Josephine Lombardo, secretary, and Richard J. Stillman, vice president.

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Wednesday, June 9, 1971

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SARAH CHILD All In The Family



The New York Times ran a story recently about a gimmick that the wine industry used to drum up interest in its products.

The various wine making concerns held an auction. Featured were some of the industry's rarest vintages, its choicest bottles of ferment.

By almost anybody's standards the industry found it had a whopping success on its hands. Prices bid were sky high, double and triple what similar bottles had brought in previous years.

Neither the bidders nor the owners could believe what was happening until it was over. One lot, "the president's cellar", a group of wines reserved by one hotel exclusively for presidential tastes, went for a fantastic price. Another case of 12 sold for thousands.

But the most unbelievable (at least to me) figure was the \$5000 price bid and paid for one single, solitary bottle of wine. Had I been a connoisseur or even had a modicum of good taste, I would have noted the year and name of the wine.

But since my palate can note little difference between pink catawba (at about \$1 a bottle) and puligny montrachet (close to \$5). I retained few facts about the purchase other than the price.

I did note that the buyer was a young man of 23 serving as a kind of broker for his family's business and thus had not purchased the bottle for himself.

Someone else was going to

pay him the \$5000 and drink the wine.

And it was at this point that my imagination went zooming.

Now what kind of person could spend \$5,000 for something to drink? Perhaps a man dying of thirst.

But obviously a man who could afford to spend that kind of money was in need of nothing. Unless it be publicity, a great deal of attention.

Would he drink it by himself and then call in the press and reveal himself as the drinker of gold? Or would he call in a few good friends with whom to share his prize? Or still better would he bring together a hundred people and issue a thimbleful in order to better reap the harvest of publicity, ill or otherwise.

Actually, my own personal theory embraces none of the above. The gentleman, at least in mind, after gazing long and gratefully at the bottle sent it out to be made into a lamp. And in his declining years, when his wife has deserted him for bridge parties and charity fashion shows, his children have married and his friends have passed on, he will sit and gaze at his \$5000 lamp with supreme satisfaction knowing the pleasure that can be his at any moment he chooses.

THURSDAY DEADLINE

Remember that the news and photo deadline for the Courier-Journal is Thursday noon for the following week's newspaper.