

Attica Prison Retaken, 37 Slain: Convicts Kill Nine Hostages

By Stephen Isaacs; Washington Post Staff Writer  
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29 Safe; Rocky Hits Militants, Orders Inquiry

By Stephen Isaacs  
Washington Post Staff Writer  
ATTICA, N.Y., Sept. 13 — Police and National Guard troops stormed Attica state prison today, regaining control after a bloody clash. The bodies of nine hostages slain by inmates and those of 28 convicts were found after the uprising was quelled.

Twenty-nine other hostages were freed as the four-day rebellion ended under the combined force of about 1,700 state police, sheriff's deputies, and National Guardsmen.

Several of the hostages had their throats slashed, according to a state spokesman. A spokesman for Gov. Nelson A. Rockefeller claimed that some of the hostage guards had been killed hours before the all-out assault on a cell block. Rockefeller called them "cold-blooded killings" by revolutionary militants.

One surviving guard, Lynn Johnson, said each hostage was assigned an executioner. "My executioner was shot just before he could get to me," Johnson said.

Another hostage, Elmer Huehen, said his life was spared by a convict who, although assigned to kill him, whispered to him: "I don't have the heart to do it. I'm only going to prick you." Huehen said the prisoner nicked him enough to draw blood, then lay down on top of him so other convicts would not notice he was still alive.

Rockefeller and President Nixon twice talked on the telephone about the rebellion yesterday and the President expressed approval of Rockefeller's refusal to give in to the prisoners' demands for amnesty, the White House said.

The governor asserted in a statement:

"The tragedy was brought on by the highly organized revolutionary tactics of militants who rejected all efforts at a peaceful settlement . . . I have ordered a full investigation of all factors leading to this uprising, including the role that outside forces would appear to have played."

It was with Rockefeller's approval that State Corrections Commissioner Russell G. Oswald abandoned efforts to negotiate the hostages' release after nearly four days of trying and ordered the assault.

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