Birdman of Alcatraz

By Guy Trosper
You will see all the man-made and natural beauties of the most spectacular bay in the world. You'll pass beneath the famous Golden Gate Bridge, considered to be one of the most striking structures ever erected by man. From the bay, you will thrill to the magnificent San Francisco skyline. Your cruise ship, the Harbour King, will circle Alcatraz, a maximum-security prison containing the most dangerous criminals in America, and has been the home of such notorious figures as Al Capone, Baby Face Nelson and Machine Gun Kelly. That's the island of Alcatraz. There's a man leaving there today after 17 years' imprisonment. His name is Robert Stroud. He's spent most of his life behind bars, including 43 years in solitary confinement. He has never used a telephone or driven an automobile. The last time he broke bread with another human being was in 1916, the year Kaiser Wilhelm ordered the sinking of the Lusitania in World War I. My name is Tom Gaddis. I wrote a book about this man. Our story properly begins in the year 1912. A cargo of rebellious prisoners was being transferred from the federal penitentiary at McNeil Island, Washington, to The Big Top, the name given by convicts to the prison at Leavenworth, Kansas. Shut up! Make one more move and I'll take you off at the neck.
Robert F Stroud.
Breaking that window
was a serious offence.
It was hot. I was thinking of my lungs.
Did you think about the consequences?
You might have started a riot.
- Even a convict's got a right to breathe.
- Rights?
I don't think you know
the meaning of the word.
In 1909, in Alaska, you appointed yourself
judge, jury and executioner
and killed one... Charles Dahmer
because he allegedly beat up a friend
named Katie Malone... a prostitute.
You were transferred here to Leavenworth
because of an inferior record.
Now, I propose to give you a fresh start.
Such rights as you will enjoy are listed
here in my rules and regulations.
There are 86.
I suggest you memorise them.
I know 'em. They're the same in all pens.
They tell you when to eat,
when to sleep, when to go to the privy.
Precisely. And what you'll do
for every minute 24 hours a day.
You're going to be here
for nine long years, Stroud.
So with or without your cooperation,
I intend to make a man of you,
before you check out these gates.
You'll conform to our ideas
of how you should behave.
You'll learn the lesson now
or five years from now, but you'll learn.
For breaking that train window, all your
privileges are suspended for 30 days.
That's all, Mr Ransom.
Let's go.
You're one of the new fish
from McNeil, huh?
Yeah.
Yeah, well, I'm Tony Qualen.
Who are you?
Stroud.
You're lucky to be in this cellblock.
Boss here's a friend of mine.
Picture of your mother?
Put it back.
Put it back!
What did I do?
Just don't touch it again.
You know the guy
you're bunking with? Anthony?
Understand you and him
had a little misunderstanding.
Anthony is a friend of mine.
A very good friend.
He didn't mean nothin',
pickin' up the picture.
Beat it.
What kind of nut are you anyway? Just
because he picked up a picture of Mama?
Break it up!
Stroud! Stroud!
You ever mention
my mother again, I'll kill ya!
Stroud.
What's the matter, man?
What's eating you up inside, Bob?
You act as though you hate everyone.
You live in a pus-hole,
you act accordingly.
All right, Bob. Maybe 30 days in the hole'll
make you happy to see a face again.
Don't count on it... Harvey.
I don't think 30 days in the hole
is gonna cool that jaybird off, Warden.
Now, what do you suggest, Mr Kramer?
He's as mean as a boar hog.
If it was me, I'd keep him away from
the rest of the inmates permanently.
Isolation? No.
I don't give up on a man that easily.
Stroud comes from good stock.
He'll shape up.
He's a dingbat, Warden.
He's dangerous.
He's my responsibility, Mr Kramer.
Now, you let me worry
about his behaviour.
Yes, sir.
All right, Stroud.
Dearest Mother. I am feeling fine.
Hope you are the same.
Everything is OK at this end.
Time sure does fly.
Yesterday was
my fourth anniversary here,
but I got no cake. Ha-ha.
I guess everything would be all right
if I could just see you
and give you a great big hug.
I hope your cold is better.
Your loving son, Robbie.
Dearest Robbie.
I was here today to see you,
but they would not let me in,
it being Saturday,
with no visiting allowed.
But I saw Warden Shoemaker,
and he was kind enough
to arrange for a visit next Friday.
Until then, my darling,
this little gift of fruit comes
with all my love. Mother.
Guard, guard! Mr Kramer!
- What do you want?
- Did you know my mother was here?
- Yeah.
- Why didn't you call me?
You know the rules.
No visitors on Saturday.
That all you got in you? Rules?
Stop bellyaching. She said she'd be
here next week. You can see her then.
You ain't got much,
but you keep subtracting from it.
Don't you know I gotta put you
on report for touching a guard?
Mr Kramer...
If you shoot me on report,
I won't get no visit from my mother.
You should have thought of that before.
She came 2,000 miles.
All the way from Alaska.
Do me this one favour.
I just follow the rules.
Now get back to your seat.
- I tell you, I got to see her.
- And I told you to get back to your seat.
You ain't a man, Kramer. You're dog puke.
I just came from Kramer's widow.
I couldn't look her in the eye, Stroud.
I feel responsible for her husband's death.
He warned me about you.
He told me you were dangerous,
but I wouldn't listen.
And how he's cold in his grave.
You've taken the lives of two people
and haven't felt a twinge of conscience.
What do you want me to do?
Cry? Say I'm sorry?
I'm only sorry for Kramer's wife.
- And the dead man?
- He was fixing to brain me with his club.
I protected myself.
No remorse, huh?
No pity. Just an animal.
Ain't that what these cages are for?
Animals?
I have to make out a report
about this killing.
I hope it'll help to hang you.
Stroud had three trials.
The first one was declared a mistrial.
In the second, he was sentenced
to life imprisonment.
He appealed and was granted a third trial.
On June 28, 1918,
he heard the final verdict.
Therefore it is now by the court
considered, ordered and adjudged
that you be remanded to the custody of
the warden of Leavenworth penitentiary
and kept in solitary confinement there
until the 8th day of November, 1918,
and then and there be hanged
by the neck until you are dead.
No!
This sentence is unspeakable!
You call this justice?
You don't even know
the meaning of the word, sir.
Forget it. It's "Katy bar the door" for me.
I'm done.
Sit down, Robbie.
Sit down.
Look, Ma, you fought,
you spent all your money,
you got old followin' me from jail to jail.
It's time to douse the lights.
I told you before, Robbie,
I will not let them kill you.
I'm going to Washington DC very soon.
- I haven't begun to fight.
- Time's up.
You just don't know how to quit,
do you, Ma?
Did you think Mother was gonna
let them hurt my Robbie?
Carrying a petition for clemency,
Elizabeth Stroud doggedly haunted
the offices of Washington officials,
in an effort to gain an audience
with the president of the United States.
Finally, she managed to see
Senator Ham Lewis.
He reminded her
of the president's grave illness.
Grasping at straws,
she pleaded with the senator
to make an appointment for her
with the president's wife.
Reluctantly, he agreed.
Tell me, Mrs Stroud, why do you think
the president should intervene?
Mrs Wilson, the president is known
as the symbol of compassion
throughout the whole world.
I'm sure that deep in his heart
he doesn't believe in the brutality
of an eye for an eye.
I've never seen your husband,
but I've seen pictures of him.
He has the face of a man
who has known great suffering.
I think he'd understand what it means
to have the pack yapping at his heels.
Mrs Wilson, they've turned on
your husband in his fight for peace.
- They've broken his heart.
- Mrs Stroud, please.
There's only one man left in the world
who can lend a helping hand to my son,
and that's the president.
Take the petition to him.
I assure you, I give you my solemn oath,
my son is a person of worth.
Save him.
Stroud! Listen!
Hey, do you hear that, you cons?
President Wilson commuted Stroud to life!
Well, I'll be damned. She pulled it off.
Been expecting you, Harvey.
I have a telegram here from Washington.
You probably know about it.
I've heard.
I think you will live to regret
that this wire ever came.
How come?
Because you're going to spend
the rest of your life in deep-lock.
- Who says so?
- The attorney general.
Remember the judge's sentence?
"And kept in solitary confinement
until you are hanged by the neck."
But that ain't what the judge meant.
That's what the attorney general
says he meant.
Look around you, Stroud.
This is going to be your home
for as long as you live.
Ain't much more
you can do to me, is there?
A few things.
Consider this. You will not be permitted
to associate with the other prisoners,
not even to exercise with them.
You'll eat all your meals alone
for the rest of your life.
Visiting and corresponding privileges
will be limited to your immediate family.
And there'll be no work. Nothing to do
but count the hours and days and years.
They're tearin' down my gallows.
- To my great regret.
- Yeah.
It must have galled you
to give that order, Harv.
I think I got you figured out, Shoemaker.
First day here you as much as asked me
to get down on my knees and whimper.
I wouldn't do it then and I won't do it now.
I won't lick your hand
and that's what eats you, keeper.
You keep this in mind.
A man ain't whipped until he quits.
And I'll never give you that pleasure.
Now get outta here.
I'll never forget you as long as I live.
No matter what happens to me,
no matter where I am,
if I ever get a chance
to punish you further, I'll do it.
Drop in from time to time.
See how long I stick around.
I don't have to drop in on you.
I'll always know where you are.
Being in solitary
is like being on rails.
A man pushes your food
through the door.
You eat alone.
Once a week you get a shower.
You walk in the bullpen.
Once a month an inmate comes and cuts your hair. 
You read. 
You pace your cell. 
Once a week you get clean laundry. 
You pace your cell. 
The routine's always the same. 
The only way you can break it is to go on sick call. 
You sit and listen to your heartbeat, and you hear your life ticking away. 
The thing that swells in your head until you lose your mind is you know absolutely for sure what's coming next. 
Here's that Argosy magazine you wanted, Shorty. 
Thanks, Bull. 
Come on!
- What's the matter with you, anyway?
- He'll never get off the ground.
That bird's yellow to the core.
You gonna be a quitter? Hm?
Now you fly, you little punk, or I'll throw you out on your ear, you hear me?
Fly!
Fly!
Yellow, huh?
Cold?

About six months after Stroud picked up the sparrow,
the biggest piece of news a penitentiary can get went through Leavenworth like a forest fire.
A new warden had been appointed.
West.
Rather.
Sacourivitch.
Hollister.
Stroud.
Warden, can I have a minute of your time?
I mean you, Warden Younger.
I'd like you to watch something.
OK, Runty.
That's it.
Come on, come on. Open it, open it.
Open it.
Open up. Go ahead.
Open it.
Go ahead. That's it.
That's it.
I've never seen anything like that in my life.
Where did you get that bird?
Found him in the exercise yard, sir.
Just put your finger on his feet.
- What kind of a bird is that?
- A sparrow.
It must have taken great patience to train him. I admire that.
Then I can keep him, sir?
I don't see why not. Do you?
You're the warden now, Jess.
It's up to you.
I think it'll be permitted.
Don't take advantage, Stroud.
I wouldn't think of it, sir.
- There is one thing.
- Yes?
- I need some birdseed.
- Birdseed?
Yes.
I doubt if we've got any in the warehouse.
I took the liberty of ordering some.
It's at the post office.
I need your permission
to have it released.
I like your nerve. You'll get your order.
Thank you.
Trained sparrows in solitary!
Pretty cute act you put on there.
Just amusing myself.
Still ignoring prison regulations,
aren't you?
I hear you're going to Washington to plan
a new Federal Bureau of Prisons.
Yes, I am.
Every pen run by the book, huh?
If you mean uniformity, you're right.
- Drop me a postcard, Harv.
- I plan to keep in touch.
- You did middlin', Runty. Middlin'.
- Middling?
He just saved your carcass, that's all.
Got the heart of an eagle.
When Younger allowed Stroud to keep
the sparrow, he opened the barn door.
Other inmates had relatives
send them canaries,
and the solitary block rang with song.
Then one prisoner became bored with his
two canaries, and gave them to Stroud.
That was a day penal authorities
will never forget.
What are you gawking at?
Looking at that bottle.
- Are you thirsty?
- Yeah.
- I want the bottle.
- What for?
I got a use for it.
What use?
I ain't gonna cut my throat,
if that's what's worryin' you.
- What about the refund?
- So I'll owe you a penny!
How about it?
Well, you're welcome.
Son of a...
- Well, now what do you want?
- That box you're sittin' on.
- That's tough.
- It's just an apple box.
- You could get another.
- I could.
- Well?
- But I ain't.
- Why not?
- I ain't so inclined.
All right, I'll buy it off you.
What do you want?
One pack of cigarettes? Two? Name it.
If you showed me a hundred-dollar bill,
you couldn't have this box.
What the hell is eatin' you?
12 years I've known you, Stroud.
12 years, sun up and sun down, I've had
to look at that frozen mug of yours.
And in all that time, never so much
as a how-de-do out of you.
I try to treat you decent,
cos you got no bed of roses.
So I put my head on the block
and I dummy up about the birds.
Did you say thanks, my boy?
Did just once you say thanks?
Or maybe I just didn't hear you.
You're a soft speaker.
You want a pop bottle.
You want a pop bottle.
Do I hear maybe
the word "please" someplace?
Or could I be goin' deaf?
"Hand over the box" says you,
like you was the tsar of Russia
or somebody.
You get this. I may be just a uniform
to you, but you got no patent on feelings.
I'm a man, the same as you,
and I wanna be treated like one.
So you'd better come up
with a few manners with me,
or don't even expect the time of day
from yours truly!
Mr Ransom.
- You know what I think, Bull?
- I don't give a damn what you think.
I think you're absolutely right.
I admire ya for sounding off like that.
I had it comin'.
You always treated me square.
You been good to me.
So there's something I wanna do.
I wanna apologise to you.
I ain't apologised to anybody in 20 years.
- Hey, Stroud.
- Yeah?
My bird won't sing.
Is he sick?
I'll check him.
You sick, little baby canary Jack?
Say "tweety-dee", sweetheart.
Tweet tweet tweet tweet.
I don't know.
You been giving him special feedings
of grasshoppers and bugs like I told you?
I can't find any!
By the time I get to the bullpen,
you cleaned it out!
What do you want me to do?
You got a way with birds.
You take Jack for a while, huh?
What about birdseed?
All right, I'll split mine with you.
- What do you say?
- All right. Send him in.
Only for about a year or so and then I want him back.
OK.
You be careful, take it easy and don't mash him.
You don't care of him, I'll bust you apart.
- Don't worry, Feto.
- Come on, Gomez.
It's your exercise period.
Well, how about it, Stroud? Is he sick?
- I don't think so.
- Why don't he sing?
- It wouldn't be polite.
- Don't be smart!
Feto, don't you know a lady canary never sings?
Lady canary?
- You mean Jack's a broad canary?
- Yep. A hen.
Well, tough luck, Bob. You're stuck with a bird that don't sing.
Use up a lot of birdseed, huh?
Working with a razor blade and a jagged piece of glass, Stroud cut 128 slats, in addition to roof boards, tier bars, gate pieces and a handle. Every joint was charred for hardness and hand-fitted, since he had no glue. The birdcage took seven months to complete. Bob, that's a hell of a job you did there. It's all right. Not bad.
- Next one'll be better.
- The next one?
What do you want another one for?
Ain't you got eyes? Mr and Mrs. There's gonna be some procreation around here.
- Procre... what?
- In a prison?
- Yep.
Well, I guess they won't mind.
Canaries are always behind bars anyway.
It's springtime outside, slugger.
You best go find out who you are.
Come on.
Now what's wrong with you,
you old buzzard? Come on.
Don't be afraid.
Out there you can kick up the dust.
You can dance to fiddle music.
Watch the alfalfa bloom.
If you like, you can... see gold teeth.
Taste sweet whisky and red-eyed gravy.
The air breathes easy, nights move faster,
and you tell time by the clock.
Now you don't wanna be a jailbird
all your life, do ya?
You're a highballin' sparrow.
So you fly high, old cock.
Go out there and bite the stars - for me.
Find yourself a fat mama
and make a family.
You hear?
Beat it.
Hey, Stroud.
Yeah, Feto?
- My bird laid an egg, huh?
- My bird laid an egg.
Why, you stinkin' crook!
I only loaned you my canary!
For a year.
I want half them eggs.
What for? You gonna make an omelette?
Any con who'd steal canary eggs
from another con is a dirty fink!
And a rat!
How many, Stroud?
Two?
How many, Stroud?
Three? Dirty crook.
How many?
Four.
How many?
Hey, Stroud. Anything happen yet?
Now it's been 20 days and 18 hours.
What's goin' on in there?
- Hey, Bob, what's that noise in there?
- Quiet, Feto.
Feto, you're a godfather.
Sealed off from the world,
denied the fundamental drive of man
to beget his own kind,
Stroud developed a world
in microcosm with his birds.
And because it was safe, and he knew
they would never turn on him,
he developed a deep but private
love for his canaries,
as he watched the cycle of love
and mating and issuing forth.
Then, one spring day,
an old friend came back.
Runty! What the hell
are you doin' back here?
Too tough out there, huh?
Come back for a little prison security.
I guess you're a lifer, pal, just like me.
Hey, Stroud. How come
the birds ain't singin'?
Because they're sick, and so's mine.
Hey, Stroud.
My bird's gonna kick off?
"Dreaded among breeders is a highly
contagious disease called septic fever."
"Its actual existence can only be surmised
by a postmortem by
a veterinary surgeon trained in..."
- Bob!
- Pipe down, Gomez.
"Death may be rapid or delayed."
"Faeces are abnormal
and always pale yellow in colour."
"There's no practical remedy."
Stroud?
I found Bacillus pasteurella
in great quantity.
I'd make an educated guess
that there's a filterable virus.
That it is septic fever?
Possibly.
Are there any chemicals
or medicines or anything?
I couldn't find any literature on
the disease. Apparently there isn't any.
So, without any specific drug, I'm afraid
there isn't much I can do to help.
Thanks, Doc. I appreciate what you done.
Sorry.
Any change?
Runty.
Shame.
He wasn't much of a bird. I threw him out,
but I guess it was too tough for him.
He had to come back
where he could freeload.
He was a born panhandler.
Tried to get rid of him
as late as last Friday.
I warned him, but he wouldn't
listen to me. He was too smart.
He'd rather have the walls
than somebody to talk to.
He didn't amount to much.
Hey, Bob.
You know Ape?
The baby bird you slipped me.
Well, in case you're interested,
he just knocked off.
Punk.
He dropped like he got shot in the head.
Reminded me of an old girlfriend
of mine named Peggy... Beeman.
What a face. Like a pan full of worms.
But stacked. Like to make
your tongue hang out.
Good-hearted broad, you know.
She used to put out to me.
And every other guy
in the neighbourhood.
A bum, in other words.
Well, she had a bird too. A parrot.
And he too was ugly also.
And one time I came up to her room,
and the door was open,
and she was tryin' to teach
the parrot to say somethin'.
You'll get a boot outta this, Bob.
You know what she wanted him to say?
"I love you, Peggy."
Over and over, you know,
she kept at him. "I love you, Peggy."
Oh, them two uglies.
I figured she was some kinda nut, so
I never seen her no more after that time.
Good old Peg.
So what happens?
So I wind up in the can,
and I'm talking to the birds
just like she did.
You know... I gotta admit it,
for the first time since I been in stir,
them baby canaries,
they make me feel good.
You know, it ain't just right
to flush Apey down the toilet bowl.
Hey, Stroud, what am I
supposed to do with him, huh?
What am I gonna do?
Hey, Bob?
Stroud struck back
at the oldest enemy of all.
Wash the cages, sterilise
the cell from top to bottom,
read everything in
the prison library about birds.
He learned of oxidisers, which had been
used as a poultry germicide for years.
He wrote to his mother, asking
for these drugs, plus equipment.
While waiting, he tried
fantastic concoctions on his birds,
like a sulphur solution
made from the heads of matches.
The birds died with increasing swiftness. The package of drugs and equipment came from Mother. With little or no knowledge of the amount of chemicals a canary could tolerate, Stroud proceeded to administer the oxidisers to his sick birds. Clearly, this drug was no cure for septic fever, but Stroud persisted, trying different combinations. The birds still died. However, Stroud made one discovery: before death, their temperature dropped to normal. He concluded the chemicals were too harsh, too caustic. He decided to buffer them with effervescent sodas. The birds died.

Hey, Stroud! When you gonna find a medicine for my birds? They're droppin' like flies! - We'll just have to wait. - Wait? I'm gonna kill 'em all!

Finally, there was only one more buffering agent left in his tiny arsenal of drugs: Citrocarbonate. He combined this with potassium chlorate. He dosed his birds. After that, all he could do was hope.

- Three o'clock, Bob.
- Thanks, Johnson.

Hey, Bob? What happened? Why is that bird singin'? You find a medicine? Go to it, kid. Sing your heart out.

The years passed, and news of Stroud's medicine spread to the gentle world of bird owners. People began to wonder who
this strange new bird doctor was.
Finally, someone got curious.
Bob, did you enter some kind of a contest
in one of those canary magazines?
Yeah. I won second prize - a roller canary.
Well, you'd better go pick it up.
It's in the deputy's office.
Good.
- What's up?
- Not a thing.
You must be Mr Stroud.
Here you are. Your second prize.
A night roller of St Andreasburg stock.
I'm Mrs Stella Johnson. I offered the prize.
- Who let you in?
- The warden. It took three days.
Well, I suppose you wonder why I'm here.
Well, I kept reading your articles
and letters to the journal.
Then I tried your cure of oxidising agents
on one of my birds with septic fever,
and, by golly, it worked.
So I began to wonder
who this new bird doctor was.
And when you won the prize I put up,
my curiosity really got the best of me.
So I just had to find out who
Box 7, Leavenworth, Kansas was.
So I... I wrote to the postmaster
at Leavenworth and asked him,
and he told me it was
the federal penitentiary.
Why did you come to see me?
Well, you see,
I live in Shelbyville, Indiana.
And I was visiting a cousin in St Louis,
and Leavenworth isn't far...
You were visiting in St Louis
and you carried him all the way with you?
Well, the way it was...
I was going...
I thought...
Yes?
Mr Stroud, I'm terribly sorry
for taking so much of your time.
Good luck with the roller.
Mrs Johnson.
Thank you for bringing him.
Well, actually, you know, I...
I did have an idea when I came here.
Idea?
Have you ever thought of selling your bird remedies?
Go ahead.
Well...
I have a little money. Not much. But
I believe it would be a good investment.
You make 'em and I sell 'em.
I've even thought of a name.
Stroud's Specifics.
Well, I'll be darned.
You said your name was Mrs Stella Johnson.
- I'm a widow woman.
- I see.
My husband passed away eight years ago.
I'm sorry.
Truth is, about all I've got in life is my birds.
What do you know about me, Mrs Johnson?
That you killed two men.
- Any questions?
- No.
Stroud's Specifics. Well.
- You hear a roll of the drums just then?
- Drums?
- There was even a trombone there.
- Meaning what?
The formation of our new company.
You mean you made up your mind just like that?
One thing I've learned is not to abuse time.
I suggest we split everything right down the middle, if that's all right with you.
I never thought a business
could be set up this fast.
- You can change your mind if you want.
- Not me.
Yes, I guess so.
I beg your pardon?
I was just saying goodbye
to Shelbyville, Indiana.
I'll be moving to Leavenworth.
I've got to be near my factory.
This is a big day for me, Mrs Johnson.
I have a feeling you've brought me luck.
- I hope so.
- Time's up.
Before you go, would you do me a favour?
Of course. What is it?
Would it be too personal to...
to let me look through your purse?
Go ahead.
Lipstick?
- Cigarette case?
- Powder compact.
Oh, yes.
What were you looking for?
A hacksaw.
Write me when you get ready to move.
I'll have my mother find a place for you.
All right. Goodbye.
So long, partner.
Hey, Bob, get a load of this.
Hey, you hear that, Bob?
What's that word?
Congress.
The prison grapevine
hammered out the news
that a Federal Bureau of Prisons
had been created by an act of Congress.

**Director:**
The new warden who came to
Leavenworth was Albert Comstock.
One of the first prisoners
he asked to see was Robert Stroud.
- Sit down, please.
- Thank you.
You've heard about the formation of the new Bureau of Prisons, of course.
I have several directives from Washington that will affect you personally.
I wanted to read them to you myself.
Go ahead, Warden.
The first one states that no pets of any kind will be allowed in federal penitentiaries.
The second directive forbids any inmate to engage in any commercial enterprise.
Do you know what that means?
That means my birds.
I'm sorry, Stroud.
I know how important they are to you.
Nobody looks at my record, huh?
15 years without a mark against me.
- That don't mean billy-be-damned.
- You're exaggerating your importance.
These directives weren't made just for you. It applies to the entire system.
Prisoners now have dogs, cats, parrots, canary birds, even monkeys.
It's bad sanitation.
Feeding becomes a big problem.
It creates feuds among inmates.
Other prisoners complain of lice and fleas.
The situation simply has to be cleaned up.
You have 60 days to get rid of your aviary.
That's all, Stroud.
I never thought Uncle Sam would go back on his word.
Meaning what?
There's been an understanding between the government and me, for 11 years, that I could raise my birds.
That pledge has been broken.
- As far as I'm concerned, all bets are off.
- That sounds like a threat.
Warden, you just got through tellin' me that I ain't very important.
How could I threaten a big, powerful Washington bureau?
I've been doin' a lot of thinkin', Mother.
I have a plan, and it might work.
What kind of a plan?
Do you remember how
you saved my neck in 1920?
- Yes, but I don't see...
- Publicity. That's what did it.
I don't think I follow you.
How many bird owners
know I'm a convict?
- Just a few.
- Then we'll tell 'em.
We'll tell 'em how
they're gonna take my birds away.
We'll write to newspapers,
radio stations, commentators, columnists,
bird clubs, magazines.
We'll have people angry
from coast to coast.
Excellent, Robbie. Excellent.
We'll drive 'em right down the pike.
It'll be just like it was in the old days.
Just the two of us together,
fighting the world.
I've just been to see Bob,
and I smuggled out this.
It's instructions for the campaign.
Why should he give you this material?
The kind of thing he usually
entrusts to his mother.
Well, I don't know.
I guess that time was short.
It doesn't really matter, does it?
There's a great deal of copying
to be done. You'll follow my directions.
Yes, ma'am.
Start with letters to the bird clubs.
When you've finished I'll assign you more.
Yes, ma'am.
Here it is. Right here on the second page
of the Kansas City Star.
- Here.
- Oh, yes.
That's not enough.
I want the front page. We're ready now for the next step of our campaign.
- You got another idea?
- Yes, and it's dynamite.
I came across it in an old law book. Stell, you can save my neck.
How? Bob, you know I'd do anything.
Now, listen, how would you like to marry me?
Let me understand you, now. Are you trying to tell me that you married a man serving a life term in solitary at Leavenworth penitentiary?
Yes, sir. Yesterday.
And where did the ceremony take place?
At the penitentiary.
By the prison chaplain, no doubt?
No, sir. It was a civil ceremony.
Well, go ahead. I've listened this far.
Well, you see...
Yes?
You see, under the laws of the Treaty of Paris and the Louisiana Purchase, all a man and woman had to do to be legally married was to sign a declaration. You see, Leavenworth is still federal property and is therefore immune to the laws of the state of Kansas. It's all here, sir, if you want to read it. Stroud got his front page - and with a bang heard all the way to Washington.

**Result:**
conferences in prison history.
The warden's on his way right now.
- Hello, Bob.
- Hello, Harvey.
Well, you've succeeded in creating quite a little flurry with your birds. Just an inmate protecting his rights. Would you like to sit down?
Yes, thanks.
Bob... I've been sent here as a delegate
of the bureau to make you an offer.
That's what I've been waiting for.
Now the bureau is willing to let you
keep your birds. You can even sell 'em.
Now this is their official proposal.
You can continue
to raise and sell the birds,
but the profits will be turned over
to the prison welfare fund,
and you will receive a salary
in the form of a share of the profits.
10 dollars a month.
I consider that quite a generous offer
under the circumstances.
Frankly, it's more than I would
have offered, had I the authority.
Well, Stroud?
Let me see if I understand you.
You're proposing that the US government
go into the canary-bird business.
That's against private enterprise.
You sound like a Bolshevik, Harvey.
- You have no legal right to raise canaries.
- I know.
Rule 60 of the Federal Bureau of Prisons

**Manual:**
to operate a business, no matter
how legitimate, while in prison."
- That right?
- You quoted it correctly.
That's what I thought.
That's why I'm confused.
The rule says I can't have a business.
You say I can, provided
I give you the profits.
That's circumventing regulations.
It's not like you.
Mr Shoemaker came to try to work out
a plan so you can keep your blasted birds.
Don't con an old con, Warden.
He came because of public opinion,
and you know it.
50,000 signatures on a petition.
Congressmen jumping
all over MacLeod's back.
I think I got you over a barrel, Harvey.
Is that your last word?
I could use more room.
For my birds.
I'll report the minutes
of our conference to Mr MacLeod.
That's all, Comstock.
Have a nice trip back to Washington.
I'm not going back to Washington.
I'm heading a new penitentiary. Alcatraz.
That's a big job, Harvey.
I wish you luck.
Thank you.
Keep one thing in mind, Bob.
The public has a short memory.
Hello, Mother. Here, sit ye down.
You hear that? You know what that is?
It's a jackhammer.
And do you know what it's doin'?
- No, I haven't been informed as yet.
- They're tearing down the wall of my cell.
And cuttin' through
a doorway into the next one.
- I'm gonna have two cells for my birds.
- How nice.
I can keep 'em and I can sell 'em.
I get larger quarters and even some
laboratory equipment. How about that?
Two women and a con,
and we whipped the bureau to a standstill.
That's very good news indeed.
Of course, there was a time
when I would have been the first to know.
It's a real victory, Mother.
And I got you and Stell to thank.
Sit down, Robbie.
- I want to talk to you about her.
- About Stella?
Your association with her
will bring you nothing but trouble.
I don't know what you mean.
She's the wrong kind of a woman
for you to align yourself with.
She's worked her heart out for me.
She saved my bacon.
All right. She was of use temporarily,
but she's served her purpose.
And now if you'll follow my advice,
you'll get rid of her.
I don't understand
what you're talkin' about, Mom.
She's my wife.
Your trouble began with
that other woman in Alaska.
She's the same kind of a woman.
- She's a common adventuress.
- Don't say things like that, Mother.
She's a good woman. And she's kind.
And she'd do anything in the world for me.
It's disaster, Robbie.
She'll bring you nothing but heartache.
Besides, all she wanted was the publicity.
Mother... you can't be serious.
I can't believe this is happening.
Give her up, Robbie. Forget her.
You act as though
you wanted me here for all time.
With you as my only outside connection.
Then...
Then you choose her
instead of your own mother?
Don't say any more, Mother.
Please.
That's your decision? To desert me?
Mrs Stroud? My name is Peterson.
I'm a reporter from the Kansas City Star.
My paper wants a follow-up story
on your son's marriage.
No comment.
Well, does this so-called marriage
come as a surprise to you, Mrs Stroud?
I knew nothing of it.
Your son's parole hearing is coming up.
Who'll lead the fight this time?
You or Stella Johnson?
There will be no fight.
Wait a minute, Mrs Stroud.
What do you mean, there'll be no fight?
Just what does that mean?
My son is where he belongs.
I shall do nothing to obtain
his release from the penitentiary.
And this is for quotation?
I know he's safe where he is.
I wanna be sure. Are you saying
you'd rather have him in there than free?
You now oppose your own son's parole?
I'm doing it for his own good.
Well, Bob, you're the first con
in history that ever had two cells.
Gonna be great for the birds.
It's in all the papers. I can't understand
how she could turn on you that way.
Do you know what a mother tiger
does when she's upset?
She eats her young.
Maybe I could talk to your old lady,
try and fix it up.
I guarantee she'll change her mind.
Bob!
Far as I'm concerned, she's dead.
I gotta go make my bed check.
You know what this is, friends?
This is 180-proof alcohol.
I'm gonna make me
a Leavenworth cocktail.
You watch now.
You're gonna see me get drunk.
Fly, my avian friends.
I give you the illusion of freedom.
Enjoy it.
Go ahead, open it.
Go ahead.
Picked it up last night in a hockshop.
Thought you might get a kick out of it.
Why don't you look at somethin',
see if it works?
Mr Ransom, you sure are a darlin' man!
Keep both eyes open.
After a while, you'll see only
through the eye of the eyepiece.
That's the ticket.
For Stroud, that microscope
was the lantern he had been waiting for
to light his way into the marvellous
and exacting truth of scientific research.

**His object:**

**His tools:**
and the nerve of a riverboat gambler,
as he ripped into studies which read like
the curriculum of a medical university.
Cytology, morphology, biochemistry.
Stroud decided he was
equipped to launch a project
he had long dreamed about -
a definitive work on the diseases of birds.
He had found cures for diseases
he could hardly pronounce,
like haemorrhagic septicaemia, bird
diphtheria, aspergillosis, avian cholera.
He even found a specific
for fowl paralysis,
thereby saving poultry ranches
the lives of thousands of chickens.
The title of his book was "Stroud's
Digest of the Diseases of Birds".
Its contents established beyond doubt
that the ageing prisoner was
the world's foremost authority in his field.
The book took seven years to complete.
I want your scientific opinion
about this book of Stroud's.
Is it baloney or does it
amount to anything?
Well, Doctor?
It's hardly what you'd call baloney.
It's a highly scientific study
of the pathology - diseases - of birds.
You think Stroud's
quite a man, don't you?
I think he's a genius.
Why? Just because
he's written a book about birds?
No. No, not because of that.
Because, with only
a third-grade education,
he's become expert
in subjects like haematology -
that's blood.
Histology - tissue. Anatomy.
Studies tough enough with an instructor
in college, but self-taught in a cell,
an accomplishment
that staggers imagination.
He's smart. He has a high IQ.
He's more than that. He's dedicated.
He's spent over 3,000 hours
at that microscope of his,
made hundreds of drawings,
over 5,000 tissue sections.
He has one of the finest collections
of slides on birds in existence.
Knows more about avian anatomy
and pathology than any man alive.
OK. I'll recommend his book
go to the publisher's.
Make the bird-lovers happy.
If Stroud's paroled and gets a laboratory,
there's no telling what he might do.
He should be working on
human diseases, not birds'.
Paroled? Not much chance of that.
I thought his record was good.
Not in the eyes of the bureau.
His attitude is poor.
He thinks he's a world unto himself,
like we were his own
personal quartermaster corps.
Chemicals,
laboratory equipment, birdseed.
Now he's demanding 25lbs of ice
every day. It's got to stop someplace.
I'd give him 500lbs of ice
a day if he wanted it.
You would, huh?
I wonder if the bureau
isn't afraid of Stroud.
Afraid to let the public know what kind of
a brain they're keeping locked up here.
Doctor, we're keeping
a killer locked up here.
Don't forget it.
I heard from that professor,
the one at the university of Kansas.
He said if I were out, I might have
a good chance to get a research grant.
- What's that?
- Well, they pay you to do research.
Bob! But that's wonderful!
Only one drawback - gettin' out.
Well, how can the parole board
turn you down now?
Boy, they talk about rehabilitation.
This book and the cures you discovered...
What do they want?
I wish you were on that board, Stell.
I'd be strollin' down the avenue right now.
But let's not make any plans.
I've seen too many of 'em go up in smoke.
You still won't let yourself
think about getting out, will you?
Bob, what's wrong with
having a little faith?
You're always bringing me new words.
Like "love" and "faith".
You're a wonderful man.
You've done some great things.
I have faith that the parole board
will see how good you are.
Golly, you just can't go on thinking that
you're gonna be here the rest of your life.
All right, honey. I'll bring faith
into my cell tonight and entertain it.
Just for the soup course.
But don't you start buying me
any new neckties yet, OK?
You look pretty today.
Bob, come on, wake up.
Bob, wake up. Come on. Get up.
What's up, Bull?
Your transfer orders.
Alcatraz.
Here. Better get dressed.
- Dressed?
- Now. They're on their way down.
All right, let's go.
- Why this time of night?
- Orders. Step on it.
What about my equipment? My birds?
Our instructions are you walk outta here
with just the clothes you have on.
I got a sick bird in there. Can I fix it?
Of course you can.
Listen to me, Bull.
I want you to talk to Stella.
I want you to tell her not to follow me.
Under no conditions.
Understand?
You better grab that pension and beat it,
before these walls get to ya.
I'll try and write.
Don't waste your time grieving over me.
When it's cut, it's cut.
So long, friend.
Merry Christmas, boys.
I could use a rest.
Yes?
Prisoner Stroud
completed processing, sir.
Thank you.
Dog block. Solitary again, hm?
It's not called solitary here. Segregation.
Interesting name.
- Silence rule?
- Strictly enforced.
Hello, Bob.
- How are you, Harvey?
- Pretty good for an old man.
You're looking well.
How was your trip out?
Not too unpleasant, I hope.
Well, I've always enjoyed travelling.
It's quite an establishment
you've got here.
Yes, it has its good points.
It's modern, well-heated, clean.
First thing I noticed. Almost antiseptic.
Yeah, you'll find no cockroaches here.
We have linoleum on
all the floors of the cells.
Coming over on the launch,
I saw some children playing.
They belong to the guards
and all the other personnel.
We all live on the Rock, too.
Interesting, isn't it?
The game of tag never grows old.
Doesn't seem so long ago
I played it myself.
I got a good report on you
from Leavenworth, Bob.
And I'm satisfied you'll make
the adjustment here.
Now, your orders call for segregation.
But I think if you toe the mark,
eventually we can improve on that,
make things a little more pleasant for you.
My office is always open. If you're not
treated right, just let me know.
Do the children enjoy living here?
I don't suppose any of us
truly enjoy living on this island.
It wasn't designed for pleasure.
Stroud.
Hey, Stroud.
Feto.
Feto Gomez.
You old buzzard. I heard you was comin'.
- It's good to see ya. How do you feel?
- Still squeakin' by.
Remember the birds? Huh?
Ape and Jackie.
Them was good times, you know.
They sure were. Gee, you look good.
I still figure you stole
them baby canaries from me.
Well, you know me, Feto.
I'm just an old thief.
Have you seen the Shoemaker lately?
He met me at the barn door.
Well, he ain't such a bad old guy.
We been cutting it pretty good lately.
He made me trusty.
- Trusty?
- Sure.
No use beatin' your head up against the wall. I should've wised up a long time ago.
I been flyin' right lately,
because my parole comes up again in November,
and I'm gonna hit those bricks before I kick the bucket, you see?
Sure. Sure, I understand, Feto.
You still go for the mince pie?
I can do you a lot of good, because I'm the head man with the steam table here.
And old Feto Gomez can sneak you two, maybe even three pieces every so often.
- Feto.
- Yeah?
- How much time you done?
- Time?
Yeah. How much time? Altogether?
I don't know.
Let me recollect.
I knocked off four at Atlanta.
I did three at Juliet.
And then I did that ten-spot with you at Leavenworth.
And then I was on the street for four.
And then I been here for six.
- How much is that?
- 23.
Yeah.
- Why do you wanna know, Bob?
- Nothin'. I just wondered.
- What's all the gabbin', Gomez?
- Nothin', sir.
The prisoner just wanted some more meat.
No chance, Stroud. No extra portions.
Everybody gets treated the same here,
you understand?
- Bob.
- I'm gonna wallop you today.

Congratulations on
the publication of your book.
Yeah, it's a honey. It should sell big.
But that's all behind me now.

I've started writin' a new book.
The history of federal prisons from 1790
up to the formation of the bureau.
A story about caged men
rather than birds.

What prison does to 'em.
Got the idea from seein' an old friend.
- It's an ambitious undertaking, Bob.
- It'll knock the public cold.

Graft, corruption,
stupidity, sadism.
All the elements
of a best seller, eh, Father?
- It's a story that needs telling.
- And how!

You realise, of course,
it involves a certain element of risk.
I do indeed.

But you know somethin'?
When you've lived in these manure piles
for over 30 years, as I have,
you come to know everything's a risk.

Your serve.
- I wish you luck.
- It's worth the gamble.

I'm confiscating this manuscript, Bob.
Have you read it?
Enough to realise that it's a blast
at the entire penal system.
You're in serious trouble.
The bureau has known for months
what you were writing.
You haven't told me what you think of it.
I resent this personally.
I stand high in my profession,
and I believe I've earned that esteem.
I am proud of the advances
that I have helped to inaugurate.
Think back to the old times.
Leg irons, carrying the iron ball,
stripes, corporal punishment,
indefinite periods in the hole.
I have been instrumental
in abolishing that kind of treatment.
Yes, that's true, Harvey.
Furthermore, you completely ignore my
fight for a constructive work programme.
Like making belt buckles,
or running a drill press?
I see.
My entire career has been for nothing.
I'm all wrong and you're all right.
I'm not talking about one tree, Harvey.
I'm talking about the whole forest.
I haven't spent most of my life
behind bars for nothing.
I've reached conclusions about penology,
and a couple of them may be valid.
When you first came here,
I thought you were changed.
I was even planning to return you
to the general prison population.
And now this. Well,
you're not gonna get away with it.
The bureau has suggested privileges be
suspended. You know what that means.
You know better than try to frighten me,
Harvey, at this late date.
Damn your heart!
Do you think that
I wanna go on punishing you?
We've grown old together, and in all that
time I've only asked one thing from you.
Cooperation. The only thing
I've ever gotten back was defiance!
Not once have you ever shown
a sign of rehabilitation!
- Rehabilitation.
- Yes. Rehabilitation.
I wonder if you know
what the word means.
Do you?
Now don't be insulting.
The unabridged Webster's
International Dictionary
says it comes from the Latin root habilis.
The definition is:
to invest again with dignity.
Do you consider that part of your job, to
give a man back the dignity he once had?
Your only interest is in how he behaves.
You told me that once a long time ago,
and I'll never forget it.
"You'll conform to our ideas
of how you should behave."
And you haven't retreated from
that stand one inch in 35 years.
You want your prisoners to dance
out the gates like puppets on a string,
with rubber-stamp values
impressed by you,
with your sense of conformity,
your sense of behaviour,
even your sense of morality.
That's why you're a failure, Harvey.
You and the whole science of penology.
Because you rob prisoners of
the most important thing in their lives -
their individuality.
On the outside they're lost, automatons,
just going through the motions of living.
But underneath there's a deep,
deep hatred for what you did to them.
First chance they get
to attack society, they do it.
The result? More than half
come back to prison.
Now it's all here in my book.
And I suggest you read it
and you read it thoroughly.
All right, you've spoken your piece.
I have no course left but to speak mine.
This San Francisco climate sure doesn't
help an old man's aches and pains.
Where does it hurt you, Harvey?
In my left shoulder and down my arm. 
You should have a medical checkup. 
Yeah. 
You got a visitor. 
Hello, Bob. 
Hello, Stell. 
Well, here I am. 
I know what you told Bull to tell me. 
Then why did you come? 
What else have I got to do? 
Bob... 
Bob, I could get on your visiting list. 
I could get a job in Oakland maybe. 
I could get a room at the waterfront, 
and you could get some spyglasses 
and see my room from your cell. 
It's no use, Stell. 
Please, Bob. There's still hope. 
Bureau policy changes. 
There's always the chance 
the president will pardon you. 
Why did you come 
2,000 miles for nothin'? 
Just to see me once a month? 
I came because I'm your wife, that's why. 
Bob, the only life I got is you. 
Then you've got a damned 
poor future, old girl. 
I'm never gonna get outta here. 
I could get a job in a factory. 
I could write letters every day. 
- It would be like old times. 
- You'd wither away and die waiting. 
- Forget it, Stell. It's the end of the line. 
- Please, Bob. 
Now, listen to me. Listen carefully. 
You fought your heart out for me. 
You fought your heart out for me, 
but the sun's gone down. 
And don't look for it to rise again. 
I want you to pretend that I'm a dead man. 
I want you to pretend... 
that you're standin' on my grave. 
Remember the story
I told you about Runty, my sparrow, how I turned him loose?
Yes, but he came back.
Yes, he came back and he died.
Stell, you're not such an old girl.
You still got a dance or two left in ya.
Don't waste 'em waitin' for a lifer.
All right, Bob.
Whatever you say.
Now you... go on back
to Shelbyville, Indiana.
Open up a pet store.
All right, Bob.
Specialise in parakeets.
They're the coming thing, you know.
I could still sell Stroud's Specifics.
- There's still a market for 'em.
- And canaries.
- People always like canaries.
- That's the ticket.
And if a bird got sick,
I could look in your book.
Sure, Stell.
I can have a nice little business.
Stell, you'll be just fine.
I've got to go now.
Goodbye, Bob.
Goodbye, wife.
A prison is
a vast boiler of despair,
stoked by hatred and anger.
Alcatraz has the reputation of being
the harshest of all American prisons.
This means endless hours of idleness,
with little useful work and
limited prospects for rehabilitation.
Eventually, the pressure of life
without hope becomes unendurable.
On a lovely spring day in May 1946,
two convicts named Logue and Burns
started one of the most terrifying
riots in prison history.
With a contrivance made
in the machine shop and smuggled out,
Burns spread the bars in the gun gallery, secured arms and ammunition, and crossed over to "D" block, which contained Robert Stroud's cell.

You.

Hapling.

Come here.

Come here, you fink.

Open it.

We're takin' over!

Call the coastguard and tell him to start circling the island with patrol boats.

I wanna talk to the commanding officer on Treasure Island, the chief of police, and the FBI.

I'll have a statement for the press by midnight.

Yes.

The frenzied plan of escape was hopeless from the beginning.

It was predicated on getting the key to the exercise yard, which would at least allow the prisoners to get out in the open.

When this failed, they knew they were doomed.

After a brief outburst of destruction, the prisoners settled into a mood of quiet despair.

Shoemaker had no way of knowing that the weapons possessed by the mutineers totalled one rifle and one revolver, with 71 rounds of ammunition.

He's hurt bad. He's hurt bad.

Go back! Go back!

The kid needs help.

You know somethin' about medicine.

Help?

Try and snap out of it.

Snap out of it, you punchy old bum!

Now hold on.

- Where's he hit?

- In the gut.

Let's go.
Turn on the PA system.
All for nothin'.
- How do you feel, kid?
- How do you think I feel? I'm dyin'.
Good femoral pulse.
There's not much bleeding.
I don't believe it hit a big artery.
It may have pierced the gut.
Colour's not bad.
Now listen to this. Men in "D" block,
this is Warden Shoemaker.
You haven't got a chance, you hear me?
You had better surrender your arms.
This'll all be over soon.
They'll get you to a hospital.
You got a good chance.
I'm doin' 25. I'll get grey-headed.
- What do I have to live for?
- You just lie quiet.
I'm fed up with this life.
You don't know what I'm goin' through,
old man. I'm sick of it.
I hope to God I do die.
Never had a real good day all my life.
Life.
Who needs it?
You're just a kid.
You got your whole future ahead of you.
Knock it off, will ya?
How dare you lie there
and talk about dyin' at your age.
Bull.
The kid wasn't hurt that bad.
How the hell do you know?
I tell you, he might have lived
if he'd put up a fight.
What's wrong with knocking yourself off
in a maggot pile like this?
- What?
- I said what's wrong with dyin'?
What's wrong with dying?
Cos life's too precious a gift, that's why.
Because the first duty of life is to live.
Prisoners of "D" block,
this is your last chance.
Show a white sheet at the window,
or we'll commence firing again.
Warden Shoemaker.
Warden Shoemaker.
Are you there?
Give me the bullhorn.
Can you hear me, Warden?
Harvey, this is Bob Stroud.
I can hear you, Stroud.
Then watch this.
There are now no more guns in "D" block.
You can call off your marines, Harvey.
This is isn't Iwo Jima.
What about Logue and Burns?
They're dead.
Of course, if you wanna kill us all,
you can drop a small atom bomb.
How do I know there are
no more guns up there?
Because I give you my word.
I think it'll be safe to enter "D" block now.
There'll be no more firing.
Sir, you gonna take
the word of one convict?
That one convict's been
a thorn in my side for 35 years.
But I'll give him one thing.
He's never lied to me.
Warden Shoemaker died in 1953.
My book was published two years later.
It is not known if its publication
and the ensuing protests
influenced the decision of authorities,
buts 1959 the old man was finally
allowed to leave the Rock.
It was not a release, however,
but a transfer to another prison.
Mr Stroud, how does it feel
to get off the Rock?
Well, If you San Franciscans
had any true civic pride,
you'd blow that place outta the water
instead of advertising it. What an eyesore.
Is it true you've never seen a television set?
Yes, but from what I hear, I haven't missed very much.
If you're paroled, do you think you can adjust to the modern world?
Why? What's so special about your modern world, son?
Boeing 707. Weighs 247,000 lb.
Carries a payload of 22,000.
Each engine has a thrust of 13,000 lb.
Cruises at 595 miles an hour.
Just because a man's in prison doesn't mean he's a boob.
Will you work with birds where you're going?
I'm afraid not.
In the eyes of the prison bureau, avian research is, as you boys might put it, for the birds.
All right.
Just one more question. Do you have any particular project in mind?
Nothing specific.
I pass the time profitably.
I read a great deal, reflect.
I might even spend a pleasant hour measuring the size of a cloud.
- Thanks, Mr Stroud.
- Good luck to you.
Can I have a minute, Mike?
You must be Tom Gaddis.
That's right, Mr Stroud.
I heard you were getting a transfer.
I thought I might get a chance to see you.
You know me well enough to call me Bob.
- How did you know it was me?
- An old con's instinct.
Bob, I was hoping when we met it might be under different circumstances. What circumstances?
A release, not a transfer. I'm sorry.
Don't be a square, Tom. I'm going to Springfield, and do you know what?
I'm going to sleep in a room without a lock on the door. Think of it. To be able to walk in and out of a room any time you want. They got 400 acres up there. I can walk a half a mile, maybe, without once turning a corner. Imagine. Don't be sorry, Tom. It's gonna be a swell place to live till I get my release. I know. Live it one day at a time. You said it, kid. Soar like a bird. We gotta catch a train, Bob. All right, Mike. Goodbye, Tom. Thanks for helping me. Tom, you know what they used to call Alcatraz in the old days? - What? - Bird Island. Robert Stroud's petition for parole has been denied annually for 24 years. Age 72, he is now in his 53rd year of imprisonment.