

A JOURNAL OF EXPRESSION FROM BEHIND BARS

# PAPER CHAINED

LINE DO NOT CROSS

ALPHA


**CRC** community  
restorative  
centre

**ATFJ**

**ISSUE 19 / SEP 2025**

Posted free to incarcerated people

  
**UniSQ**

 **Curtin University**

*Dandy 2024*



# PAPER CHAINED



Editor: Damien Linnane  
Associate editor: Jedidiah Evans  
Copyeditor: Lucas Thompson

Website: [PaperChained.com](http://PaperChained.com)  
Email: [damien.linnane@crcnsw.org.au](mailto:damien.linnane@crcnsw.org.au)  
Instagram: @paper.chained

Postal address:

**PO Box 2073  
Dangar, NSW  
2309 Australia**

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*Paper Chained* is printed and produced on the  
stolen lands of the Awabakal people.  
We acknowledge the rightful owners of these  
lands; sovereignty was never ceded.



Police detain a protester during the first Sydney Mardi Gras in 1978. Protesters at the event were campaigning for an end to the criminalisation of homosexual acts.

# WHAT'S ON THE INSIDE

*Paper Chained* is a free, not-for-profit quarterly journal for incarcerated people, funded primarily by the Community Restorative Centre. This issue is also made possible with the help of Curtin University, the University of Southern Queensland and About Time For Justice.

If you would like to support *Paper Chained* through sponsorship, please contact us. Donations can also be made via our website.

If you are currently in prison, have experienced time in prison, or have a loved one in prison, we welcome your contributions to the next edition of this journal. Contributions from those supportive of prison reform will also be considered.

Submissions are accepted all year round. Contributions can be writings or artworks in any style. While exceptions can be made, we strongly prefer that submissions do not exceed 1,500 words. Please advise us if you would like submitted art returned.

Please specify if you would like your contributions to be anonymous. Due to our agreements with Corrections in Victoria and New Zealand, people incarcerated there may only be credited by their first name or a pseudonym.

If you are currently in prison and would like to receive a posted copy of the journal, please see the details to the right. Those outside prison may access the journal free online via our website, **PaperChained.com**.

## TERMS OF PUBLICATION

Handwritten contributions will be typed unless the author requests to have a scan of the original text in the journal. *Paper Chained* reserves the right to edit contributions for grammar, length, clarity, and to remove any stigmatising language. Please advise us if you are not open to your contribution being edited.

Copyright for art and writing is retained by the contributor. Please advise *Paper Chained* if submitted contributions have previously been published elsewhere.

Due to limited printing space and other logistical concerns, accepted contributions may not necessarily appear in the next issue of *Paper Chained*, and may be held on file for future issues.

We will not publish any contributions that are perceived to contain forms of oppressive language such as racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, nationalism, xenophobia, or ableism. We also do not publish evangelism, or any material that encourages violence or violates the privacy of others.

## WARNING: CONTAINS EXPLICIT LANGUAGE

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## SUBSCRIPTION AND SUBMISSION DETAILS

**South Australia:** Corrections in SA will not allow individual subscribers. Copies will instead be posted to the prison GM. Each GM will decide where copies are made available. Submissions from SA prisons must be approved by the Chief Executive prior to sending them to us.

**Northern Territory:** We cannot post copies to NT prisoners due to Correction's ban on anyone receiving mail exceeding five pages. Please request a copy from the library or a PSO.

**New South Wales:** *Paper Chained* is free digitally on the prison tablets in the 'L&D' section. Please do not subscribe for posted copies unless you do not have access to a tablet.

**New Zealand:** Contributions must be submitted for approval to education or the prison librarian, who will then send them to us. Please request the magazine from your library.

**United States:** *Paper Chained* is free digitally on the Edovo Learning Platform, available in most prisons. We are unable to post anyone hard copies due to budget limitations.

If you can access *Paper Chained* via your prison library, please continue to do so, or request it be made available in your library. Otherwise, incarcerated people in Australia outside SA and NT can subscribe by the address below. **Please let us know your release date (or if you don't have one) when subscribing.** Send submissions to:

**Paper Chained**  
**PO Box 2073, Dangar NSW 2309, Australia**





# Curtin University



## Study at Curtin from Prison

**At Curtin, we want everyone to be able to access the benefits of higher education.**

We provide a range of Curtin courses that our incarcerated students can study while in prison, helping them gain valuable skills, confidence and enhancing their career opportunities.

We know that as an incarcerated student, you have a unique study environment and may experience restrictions with internet access, accessing learning materials and undertaking assessments. So, we provide support and adjustments and flexibility to accommodate your student needs.

Courses currently available include:

- **Enabling pathways** - Unready and Indigenous Tertiary Enabling Course (WA prisons only)
- **Arts** (History, Geography)
- **Construction Management**
- **Commerce** (majors in Management, Marketing, Business Law, International Business, Taxation)
- **Fine Arts** (Justice and Equity Through Art program)
- **Health Science, Health Safety and Environment, Health Promotion**
- **Indigenous Mental Health**
- **Science** (selected foundation units only)

For more information, speak to your prison Education Officer.

Curtin University Prison Outreach  
GPO Box U1987 Perth 6845  
Phone: 08 9266 5671  
Email: [prisonoutreach@curtin.edu.au](mailto:prisonoutreach@curtin.edu.au)



# ABOUT TIME FOR JUSTICE



*Todd and Jacob Little. About Time For Justice founders, former prisoners and survivors of institutional abuse.*

**About Time For Justice** is an Australian family-owned and operated organisation specialising in assisting survivors of historical institutional child abuse and stolen generation members in seeking justice, healing and possible compensation.

Our passion is helping survivors who have been affected by abuse within private and public institutions across Australia. The team from About Time for Justice understands that taking the first steps towards seeking justice can be intimidating, especially for those who have had issues with trusting people, systems or organisations they have been exposed to in the past. Our experienced team, many of who have shared their own story and experience in this area, are trained to eliminate stress and navigate the complex process of approaching and dealing

with the most appropriate legal representatives. They are trauma-informed and culturally trained to deal with the most complex stories.

We provide full support to our clients so they know all the options available, taking away the anxiety of having to tell your story to many people, and assist in liaison with legal firms and lawyers to minimise the fears involved in taking legal action. We partner with legal representatives from some of Australia's largest firms, as well as smaller specialised law firms that provide targeted legal advice based on client needs. Our team have the skills to explain what is happening with your matter in simple terms, is available to answer any questions, and works flexibly with each survivor to achieve the best outcome for their individual circumstances.

Write to us for more information or call for an obligation-free chat.



**About Time For Justice**  
**PO Box 1182,**  
**Kingscliff NSW, 2487**  
NSW, ACT, VIC, TAS:  
02 5632 1291  
QLD: 07 4911 3237  
NT: 08 7918 0817  
SA: 08 7079 8356

**AboutTimeForJustice.com**  
**@AboutTimeForJustice**

*About Time For Justice is one of many organisations offering no-win-no-fee services for victims of institutional child abuse. Other similar organisations can be found on the National Redress Scheme website. A prison support officer may be able to print you a list of organisations operating in your state by visiting <https://www.nationalredress.gov.au/institutions/joined-scheme>*



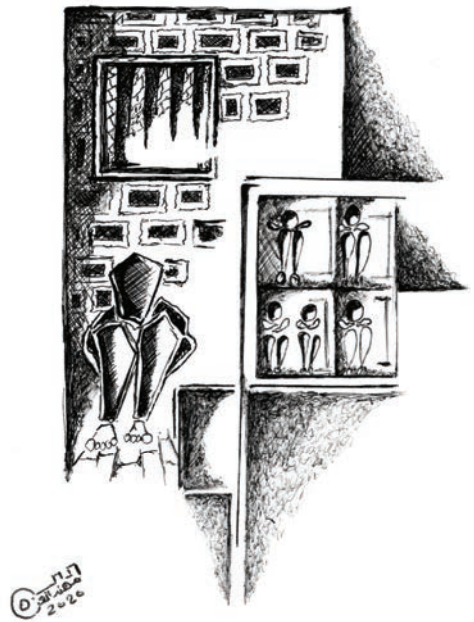
# LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

I'm always excited to release a new issue of the magazine, but I'm particularly proud of this issue. We're sharing our first ever collection of prison art from both Japan and the Philippines, as well as our first story about going into prisons overseas for the express purpose of looking at artworks and art programs. I hope you enjoy the story of my time visiting Filipino jails as much as I enjoyed meeting the incredible artists inside.

Speaking of art, *Paper Chained* is very proud to announce our third art exhibition. We featured the story of Mohammed Al Azzeh, a Palestinian artist formerly incarcerated in Israel, in Issue 16. In addition to obtaining original artworks Mohammed had to smuggle out of Ofer Prison in Israel, since Palestinians are not allowed to make art in Israeli prisons, *Paper Chained* has since managed to acquire many paintings made by Mohammed since his release, all of which focus on the theme of his imprisonment.

The exhibition will be held at The Creator Incubator, an art gallery in Newcastle, NSW, from November 20-30 this year, with a launch event on November 22. For readers on the outside in Australia, or who will be released by then, I hope to see you there.

*Damien Linnane, Paper Chained editor*



*One of Mohammed's original drawings smuggled out of Ofer prison, which will be on display this November.*



University of  
**Southern  
Queensland**

**Supporting  
Incarcerated  
Students**

At UniSQ, we believe everyone should have the opportunity to access higher education. To support our prospective and current incarcerated students, we've developed a selection of resources that will support individuals make well informed career decisions and a suite of programs that can be studied whilst incarcerated.

We understand that as an incarcerated student your needs are unique and internet restrictions will impact how you are able to study. UniSQ has developed learning materials in an 'offline' format which means you will be able to complete your program without the need for online resources or internet access.

During your studies, Correctional Centre staff such as an Education Officer may be able to provide you with support throughout your program including by communicating with UniSQ, applying for and enrolling you in courses, submitting assignments and coordination and facilitation of exams.

UniSQ has developed a series of workbooks called *Unlocking the Future*, which are designed to help you with the decision to study at university and provide support for students soon to be released from a correctional centre. If you would like a copy of these workbooks, please ask your Education Officer.

Unfortunately not all correctional centres can facilitate students studying at a tertiary level. For further information, or to talk about enrolling, please contact your Education Officer.



# ART AND WRITING

## WASTED

Parents' advice, children's smiles  
Trusted people become good friends for life  
Happiness on earth tasted  
Are all the things you wasted  
You were selfish, self-centred and cared for nothing  
You put yourself on the line without thinking  
You pay the time wasted and reap what you sow  
With God as your judge you know  
You blame yourself, regretful of your foul play  
You are now a person deprived of liberty  
You cannot do anything to accept your situation  
Or the dreadful consequence of your actions  
Time, comfort, freedom you wasted  
In exchange for temporary happiness you tasted  
The game of life you have taken for granted  
That voice of danger you followed instead  
It is not the end of everything, all the things you lost  
You can change this misery with good things at cost  
Reclaim what was lost or taken for granted  
Bring back the time you wasted

*By 'Awesome Angie'*

*Iloilo City District Jail, Philippines*

*Translated from Hiligaynun to English by Rosa Zerrudo*



*Art by A.H.T.*

*Chiconautla Prison, Mexico*



*'Burn in Hell' by Corey Devon*

*Otisville Correctional Facility, New York*



*Swan River Serpent by Delia H*

*Silverwater Women's Prison*





*'No Music No Life / No Life No Music', by Igarashikiri, Japan*



*Art by Ojore McKinnon  
Death Row, California*



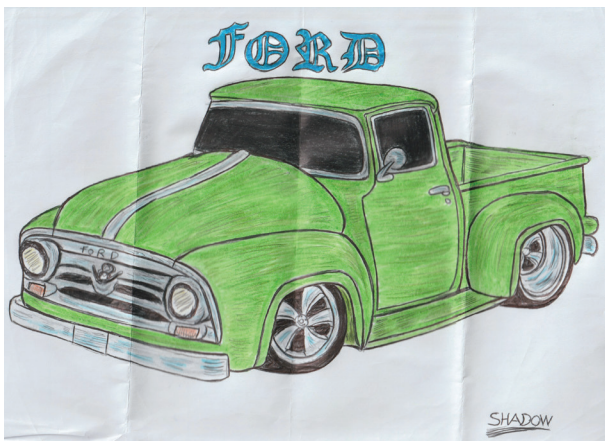
*Art by Mitch Barbieri*



## FORGOTTEN

Being in jail, lonely at night  
Waiting for letters that no one will write  
It's waiting for visits that never take place  
From so-called mates, who've forgotten your face  
It's depending on people you thought were your friends  
When they fail to come through  
Again, and again  
It's sitting around with nothing to do,  
Trying to figure out who is who  
It's realising hearts are made of stone,  
And realising you are all alone  
It's wondering why time seems to go slow  
And every dream you have,  
Has no place to go  
Therefore, I'll do my time with my head held high  
And keep my integrity  
And pride until the day I die  
The day will come when I'm free  
Then it's my turn to forget those who forgot me.

*By Brian*



*Art by ShadowArt*



*Matchstick motorbike by David, New Zealand*

My mum died when I was ten  
She looked amazing back then  
My dad was depressed and so was I  
Where were we in Satan's eyes  
Who is Satan? I don't know, ask God he will know  
When you were lying on the hospital bed I stood next to  
you and you looked at me with pain in your eyes  
Squeezed my hand and said, Son, this is the end,  
So I run outside, stole a car, went to my dealers  
And put a needle in my arm hoping I will forget  
Running around at a young age with a target on my head,  
And I tell you why because METH was my best friend.  
He said do this do that, now my family won't call back  
There's not enough drugs in this world to wipe my past  
away, but it feels like yesterday when I found out my mum  
passed away.  
I should have loved you but I was busy smoking pot,  
Starting fights, breaking rules hanging out with the  
wrong crew  
Because I thought it made me look cool.  
A few days ago, it was Mother's Day  
But you weren't here to celebrate.  
They say when you die  
You make it to a better place that is true  
But mum without you  
I don't know how to make it through  
I love and miss you mum.

*Untitled song by Braxton Hamming #683951  
Darwin Correctional Centre  
PO Box 1066, Howard Springs, NT 0835*



*Art by Motion, NSW*



## GUM LEAVES IN MY DREAMS

I've spent a lot of my life travelling  
Along roads that kept unravelling  
Counting miles that never seemed to end  
I've seen golden suns through clouds arisin'  
Over a distant blue outback horizon  
Where everyone I met became a friend  
I've seen the towns where drought took hold  
And walked the streets once paved with gold  
I did my best to help fight fire and flood  
And I can drink till my head rings  
When people ask why I did those things  
I answer you could say it's in my blood  
Sometimes I think of those friends long missed  
And all the barmaids that I've kissed  
In all the pubs where I enjoyed a beer  
I could drink all night with the best  
They're legendary drinkers way out west  
No one in the city could ever come quite near  
I can smell the gum leaves in my dreams  
And see the gold glint in running streams  
I can taste the very freshness of the air  
You can touch the edges of forever  
When you're out in the never-never  
You can be who you are without a care  
But now my wandering days are over  
I'm no longer the young intrepid rover  
A shadow once of what I used to be  
But I imagine one day I'll go back  
And walk down that dusty outback track  
And do it all before time catches up with me  
Then once again I'll see that sky  
And watch the wedge-tail eagle fly  
With a freedom that's denied to mortal man  
And I'll see the kangaroos leap and bound  
Across grassy plains all safe and sound  
And animals that live to their own plan  
So I'll get my map out of the drawer  
Then pack my swag and head out the door  
To make my way across the Great Divide  
Though in the end if I don't make it  
Who knows if this old man can take it  
I'll know deep in my heart at least I tried.

*By DeWitt*

Stand in line for meals  
Wolf it down at a table  
Craving K.F.C.

*Haiku by Clayton*

## ASK YOUR HEART

I asked my heart and it said you were the one, so much has changed but never my love. I love you today and for years to come, there's never a day I don't think of how to love you better in this life and in the next my soulmate. Forever you're worth more than money or any amount of gold, you'll always be beautiful in my eyes no matter how grey or old you become. From the time I laid eyes on you my love, my heart was sold. I need you in my life more than I could ever explain, without my lover, my ball 'n' chain. It really wouldn't be the same, my crazy matches your crazy, which makes us both insane. When two hearts become one our true love will always remain until forever ends. 4 now 4 eva always better together.

*By Josh Mcelhinney #451506  
Cooma Correctional Centre  
1 Vale St Cooma, NSW 2630*



*Art by Greg, Victoria*



*Art by James Mapp*



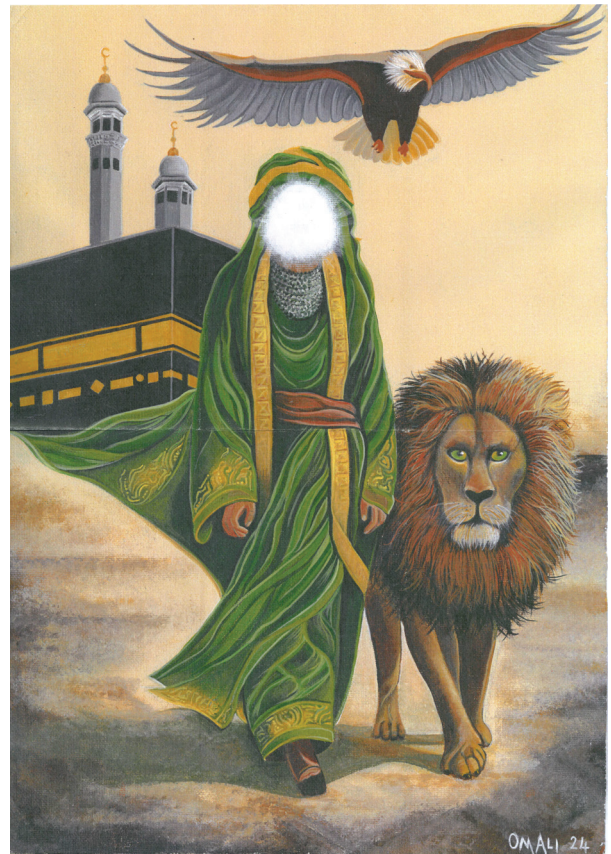
## MESSAGE 2 THA OUTCASTS

If I say I love you, just know that I'm being real  
 No hidden agendas, my intentions are not concealed  
 My loyalty and my word is what defines my name,  
 confined in chains  
 The way I seem to hide my pain.  
 These clouded thoughts I keep on having,  
 plus I'm losing my focus  
 Fantasize about my death, I can relate to the hopeless  
 Plus, I'm stressing with depression,  
 And I can't sleep at night  
 Sometimes I wonder why I even seem to put up a fight  
 Nobody knows the sorrow that I'm keeping inside  
 I guess it's my fault for not telling,  
 I should swallow my pride  
 I'm having visions of the trauma,  
 that I seemed to go through  
 I'm stuck in prison on my own,  
 I've got no one to go to  
 There's a war inside my head,  
 my brain, I can't shut it down  
 Every time I rest my head,  
 these evil thoughts huddle 'round  
 I'm so conflicted,  
 50/50 with the choices I make  
 It's good and evil on my shoulders,  
 and they're voicing their take  
 I've got no mail coming in, does anyone truly love me  
 I wish I had a friend to write, a pen pal would be lovely  
 I tried to put my family's numbers  
 on the phone from the start  
 But they never truly answered, now I'm lost in the dark  
 I guess I'm truly on my own, is anybody else out there  
 That relates to my struggles, and the pain I put out there  
 The black sheep, the outcasts,  
 the ones who never truly fit in  
 Just know I'm sending all my love,  
 I hope you like this written.

By Kieran Cowen #641239  
 Darwin Correctional Centre  
 PO Box 1066, Howard Springs NT 0835



Art by Simon, New Zealand



Art by Om Ali, QLD



Art by James Mutugi, Kenya



## I'M SORRY

I'm sorry  
For what I done, did, and might do  
For what I didn't do, never did, and will never do  
For what I thought of, and didn't think of  
I'm sorry

I'm sorry  
For the feelings that I felt, for the energy I gave  
And love that I gifted  
For the support, for the warmth  
For the comfort I choose to give you  
I'm sorry

I'm sorry  
For saying sorry so much  
But this time I guess not sorry enough  
But if I say sorry so much  
I guess the more I say it I wouldn't mean so much  
I'm sorry

*By Steven*

## MY DEMON

I pick up the cask it's chaos,  
I'm sure I'm gonna be another casualty.  
It goes down my throat, a stream of warmth just like the  
venom from a cobra making me crazy.  
It's my antidepressant, it turns me into a beast, I feel like I  
need to barricade myself in before I go berserk.  
These are the chronicles of my life, it is full of assaults,  
then they apprehended me, this is the aftermath of the  
cask, concrete boots I can't move, this is a crisis I need to  
avoid, I need to accept this cask is not for me.

*By Lil Mick*



*Art by Scott D*

## LOST

May I borrow your mind, just for a brief moment  
Mine stopped being kind and it acts like I don't own it  
I need a little peace, within the chaos I reside  
I've been lost for some weeks,  
I thought it best I run and hide  
Now I can't find my way back,  
I'm in a town without a name  
No streetlights,  
I'm in darkness and none of the wildlife are tame  
Noises all around me,  
There's all this screaming in my ears  
Self-hatred it surrounds me,  
I live with all my deepest fears  
A road paved with affliction,  
Not many people understand  
Just why I couldn't listen,  
Or let them guide me by the hand  
To a safer state, a place they know I wish to be  
But those who can relate, know about the bad dreams  
They know I've met some men,  
Who still linger on my skin  
No matter how bad I truly wish,  
I had never let them in  
They know about the grief,  
An ever-growing weight  
They know I'm losing sleep,  
Just so I don't meet my fate  
So can I lend your strength,  
your hope, to take away my sorrow  
So I don't spend my last cents,  
To get lost again tomorrow



*Writing and art by Storm Tientjes, Tasmania*



## 8 YEARS

8 years the Judge said  
8 years, blew my head  
8 years, for what I've done  
8 years, I'm sorry mum  
8 years, there's worse places I could be  
8 years, this place is hell enough for me  
8 years, how will I get by?  
8 years, do I even try?  
8 years, this is the start  
8 years, I'm dead in my heart  
8 years, to go  
8 years, ho ho fucking ho

*By Matthew*



*Art by RFGY*



*Art by Jean-Paul Issa*



*Art by Mr Lovin Life*



*Art by Lewis Comb  
Woodford Correctional Centre, QLD*

## TURNING POINT

I've been trying to fight these demons for so long,  
No matter what I've tried it's all been wrong,  
My freedom taken, myself and my family apart,  
How do you stay strong when you're missing your heart?  
Your mind seems to wonder once you're locked in your cell,  
this is the turning point I need to excel  
Everything will be different once I'm free,  
I will be the person you've all been waiting to see.

*By Monique, Victoria*



## ONCE UPON A TIME

Once upon a time,  
I was a baby.  
I knew nothing of the world,  
Then I grew up.

Once upon a time,  
I was a little boy.  
I played in the sunshine and mud,  
Then I grew up.

Once upon a time,  
I was a pre-teen.  
Excitement was colour TV,  
Then I grew up.

Once upon a time,  
I was a young adult.  
I had a job and responsibilities,  
Then I grew up.

Once upon a time,  
I had a beautiful girlfriend.  
She lied about wanting a family,  
She moved on, I grew up.

Once upon a time,  
I had a different beautiful girlfriend.  
She wanted a family too,  
We had one and we grew up.

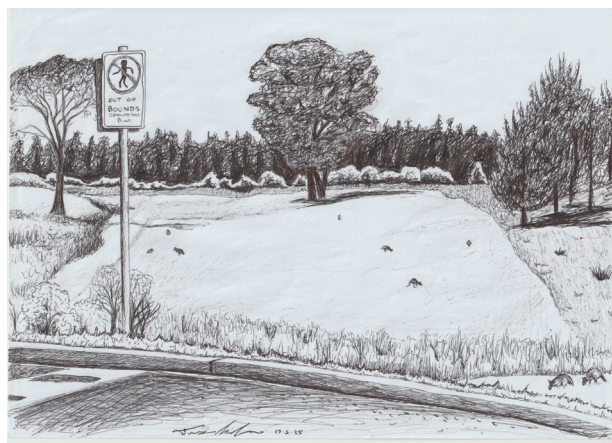
Once upon a time,  
I was an adult male.  
I let my family down with a massive fail,  
And I went to jail.

I hadn't grown up after all.

By KCDC



*'Destiny or Free Will' by Ashley McGoldrick, QLD*



*Art by Tony Minahan*



*Art by Clayton Tierney*



*'Sydney Harbour' by Colin Burke, UK*



## HEART OF ICARUS

As a child, I looked to the endless sky, and I dreamed of flying. The sky, impossibly blue, called to me. It was an escape from my life, from the expectations of the others. They surrounded me like embryonic medians, drones in the making, dreaming of their humdrum existence. Comport, security, anything that was expected of them. Sit not for me and life of societal slavery.

The sky beckoned, and I grew wings. I tested them at feeling the wind of hope and I began to rise. "Don't be a fool" the others said, "you will never be anything more." Emboldened, I beat harder and the world I had lived in started to pull away beneath me. I laughed with delight, and I burst through the veil of heaven. Everything was so clear to me, so pure and full of possibility.

I circled the world, seeing lights that others could never imagine. Dreams coursed through my veins; I lived a dozen lives in less than half of mine. I consumed experiences like so much candy, and soon I lost sight of the simple pleasure of living. I took the beauty of the sky for granted. I lost sight of my purpose, my dreams lost to memory.

A gelid, corrupt tentacle sucked up from below, coiling around my ankle and it dragged me back to Earth. In my hunger, I mistook it for a new pleasure to savour, my arrogance misreading its true nature. Too late, I realised, the air was spilling from my wings. I spiralled down, landing amidst squalor with a crash. My wings covered in filth, my bones broken, more tentacles enveloped me and pulled me down. I looked to the sky, the beautiful sky above me, once mine and now forever out of reach. Tears spilled down my face. I had been such a fool.

"Give me another chance," I cried, but the tentacles only gripped me tighter. "We have you now," came the grunting voices of the others. "You thought to defy your nature, but you will never fly again. You are nothing, your life was a lie." But these words sparked something inside me. A long-forgotten memory of being told never to dream of the sky. I carefully nurtured that spark, kindling it into a flame, into an inferno of determination! I proved you wrong once, I thought, and I shall do so again. I dream, therefore I will.

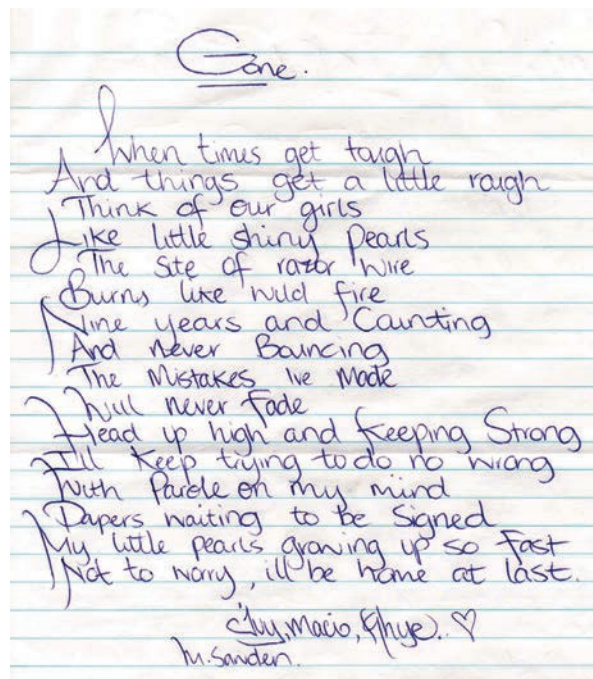
I felt my bones start to heal, the ichor falling from my wings. I looked to the sky above me and felt my strength returning, redoubling. I would fly once again; I knew it in my heart. The sky is always there for those who want it enough.

By Adam Britton #138770  
Darwin Correctional Facility

## RELEASE

I seek the truth they cannot see  
Will they ever return to me  
I rot in jail, this is hell  
And what makes it worse, it has a smell  
The food is dull, it has no flavour  
The outside world is what I savour  
Not working my farm or playing with my dog  
Leaves me feeling empty like a big fat blob  
One day the light will be much brighter  
As I'll be free and oh so wiser  
These rhymes they come and go like wildfire  
Will I find love and be able to retire  
They say the truth will set you free  
The wonderful ways that are sad to be  
But the question is will this release me

By Ross, Victoria



Art by Samantha, Queensland





Art by Sharon Yarntos



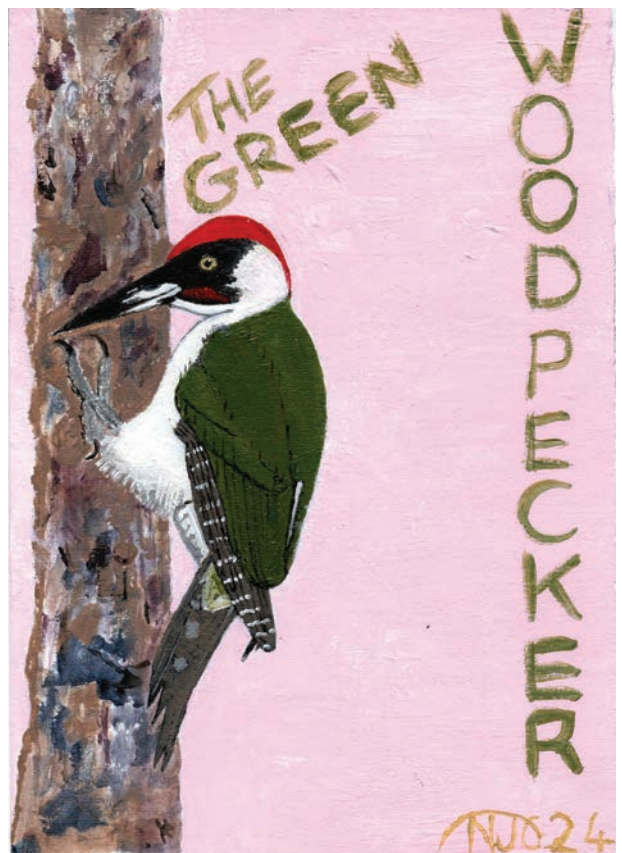
Art by Phillip, Victoria



'Failing System' by T. Park



Art by Henry, Victoria



Art by Nigel G



## YESTERDAY'S NO MORE

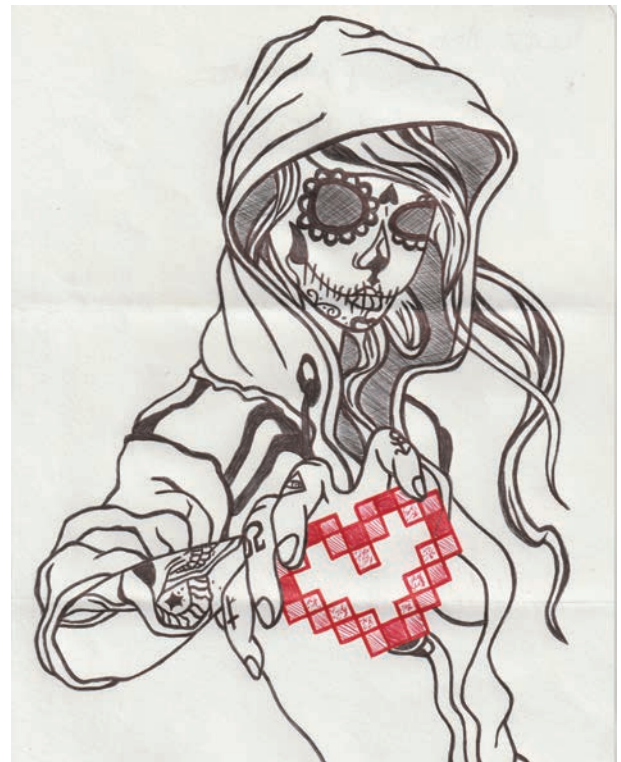
Say goodbye to yesterday,  
 Back when I was led astray,  
 All the time I've had to pay,  
 Has my future looking grey.  
 So many things, not said, not done,  
 Depression I've had to overcome,  
 I feel the beating of the drum,  
 While confined to my garrison.  
 Yesterday is gone it's true,  
 What am I now going to do?  
 No real reason to continue,  
 The reason that I seem so blue.  
 All the time I've spent alone,  
 My mind is the only thing to roam,  
 Prison has become my home,  
 Life's permanently on postpone.  
 Inside here more than half my life,  
 Had no chance for kids or wife,  
 Every day's a chance of strife,  
 Forced to live upon a knife.  
 Yesterday's now disappeared,  
 My future too is what is feared,  
 To this routine that I've adhered,  
 Out there I'd be considered weird.  
 So inside is where I remain,  
 Where every day is all the same,  
 Nobody ever sees my pain,  
 Just suck it up and don't complain.  
 And say goodbye to yesterday,  
 Goodbye to those who've gone away,  
 My life is stuck now on replay,  
 Upon my soul this all does weigh.  
 I've lost now all my hope to be,  
 I wake up to futility,  
 I'm not sure I'll even be me?  
 An old man who'll be lost when free.

*By Gareth, Victoria*

## PAY DAY BLUES

The garden flowers they smell so sweet  
 And how's the ice cream? Isn't it a treat  
 I miss the pizza and the pasta  
 Not to mention the garlic bread and focaccia  
 Minestrone soup, so tasty and hot  
 Don't forget mum's beef hotpot  
 The cold beers we drank at the pub  
 We sat and laughed and ate grub  
 I could sing and dance hour upon hour  
 But it upset the barmaid and made her sour  
 The long walk home took forever and a day  
 I wake up in the morning, shit I've spent all me pay!

*By Ross, Victoria*



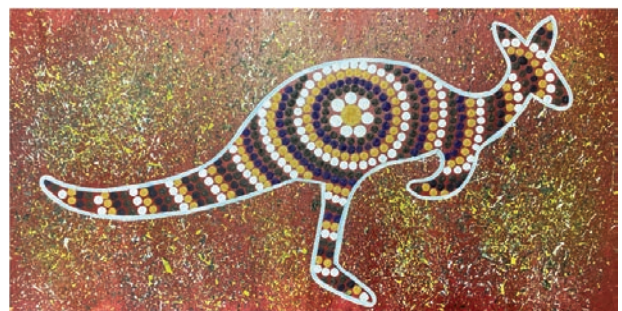
*Art by Brendan, NSW*



STATESMAN



*Art by LenPen, Victoria*



*Art by Preston, Brisbane Youth Detention Centre*



## THE GIFT OF FRIENDSHIP

Friendship is a priceless gift  
That cannot be brought or sold,  
But its value is far greater  
Than a mountain made of gold.  
For gold is cold and lifeless,  
It can neither see nor hear,  
And in the time of trouble  
It is powerless to cheer.  
It has no ears to listen  
No heart to understand.  
It cannot bring you comfort  
Or reach out a helping hand –  
So when I received the greatest gift  
I am so thankful heaven sends  
Not diamonds, pearls or riches,  
But the love of real true friends.

*By Malnight*

## I LOST YOU

I think of you more than once a day  
I dream of you when the light does fade  
When I hear your voice I drift away  
To a place I cannot stay  
There's nothing that I wouldn't do  
Just to only think of you  
To help me escape these boring days  
In a cell locked away  
I miss you each passing day  
More and more I hate this pain  
Do you remember when  
The first time I saw you?  
When our eyes first met?  
As if my mind took a picture  
I would never forget  
The first thing I said?  
Those words etched in your head  
Damn now time sits still  
And memories play till they fade  
I can't remember your face  
Sorry.

*By Steven*

When my thoughts they drift to you,  
A world of wonder spills forth a skew  
My life it seems quite small at times,  
As progressive forests do skyward climb  
I dream of you in the most loving of light,  
Dreams that lift me skyward all through the night  
Your face I see, beaming and strong,

My heart it races, for you I long  
I wish we were together as one,  
This desire within me so powerfully strong  
It warms my heart as if touched by the sun,  
Without your love, my life is numb  
Til we're united, again together,  
The storms of life, gone forever  
Know all you wish, but know this truth,  
My life, my soul, is dedicated to you  
For all I'll be, upon this earth,  
I owe to you my total worth  
I love you Sharon know this for fact,  
Without you my love, life would look black.

*Untitled poem by Kenneth Monley, written in 1994*

Sitting here in this cell  
Fuck my life feels like hell  
Day in and day out  
Makes me want to shout  
Look at these girls looking for fame  
Really looking for others to blame  
We really should feel ashamed  
Leaving our kids in this pain  
I have indeed learnt a lesson in here  
It's my family I love so dear  
I will always be so sorry  
For causing my family all this worry  
I've made some good friends in here  
Some more will be forever near  
But really, fuck jail  
Just get me out on bail

*Untitled poem by Julie Cameron*



*Art by Paul Wilson*



## THE CROSSROAD



This illustration is of a memory that has affected my life's course. My family was living in the Bronx, New York. I was three years old when this took place. My mother was surprised that I even remembered it. The inner experience I had was so powerful, that it made this moment in time a placeholder in my mind.

My mother was taking my sister and I shopping. I was holding my mother's hand in the crowded train car. When it stopped, and the doors opened, the crowd poured out onto the station platform. I lost grip of my mother's hand and was swept up in the movement of bodies. I thought my mother and sister were with me ... they weren't. I turned around in time to see the tear-filled, panicked expression on my mother's face as the doors closed, then the train left the station.

I was alone on the platform. No one noticed me. I just stood there, frozen, and mentally shut down. I dissociated from myself (hence the illustration's perspective). My mother got off at the next station and returned. I came back to myself when she called out from the opposite platform. It was only when she reached me that I actually cried.

By Mark A. Cádiz, E-88912  
San Quentin Rehabilitation Center  
San Quentin, CA 94974, USA

## VISITS

The visits are few and far between  
We should be excited, but we know what is to come.  
The way you have aged since your last visit.  
This makes us realise all the opportunities we missed  
To spend time with you. The ones we love  
The awkward silences, we have no good news to share.  
It's not easy to hear about how you have moved on  
With your life and all the good times you are having.  
All while our time stands still, Groundhog Day,

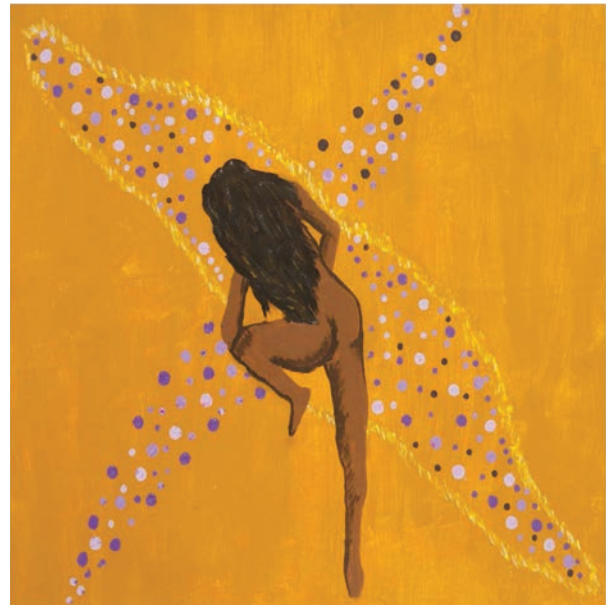
the same routine over and over again.  
Then we get to see you walk away beyond the big  
fences

And the razor wire. We know you want us to leave with you, which causes us great pain.

Then we are back to reality asked to bare all and be degraded for the privilege of a visit.

It makes you think who are the visits really for?

*By Paul*



*Art by Kelly Flanagan*



By Sheikh Jaxan Khalil Assad O'Reilly, E14512  
Brisbane C. C. Locked Bag 13101, Archerfield, QLD 4108



## I WONDER

I wonder if you think about me when I think about you.  
'Cause you were my everything,  
Would have given you anything.  
Just to keep your love.  
Do you think of me as the sun begins to fall?  
When he makes you laugh,  
Do you think of me at all?  
I sit in my cell, and I wonder,  
My thoughts run free, and I ponder.  
What life may have been if things weren't like this.  
The ache in my heart, yearning for you that I miss.  
The trouble is that I wonder ...  
I wonder and I realise I'm in love with a memory,  
And what once was, may again never be.  
I need to accept this, and my mind is trying,  
I need to accept this whilst my heart is crying.  
I wonder ...

*By Nathan*

## LOCK DOWN DAYS

The jingle of keys, hatches get unlocked  
Another day of lockdown, watchin' the clock  
A single cell used to be a treasure, today it's a curse  
I see how I'm gettin' out, it's in a fucking hearse  
Insanity grows, it gathers its voice  
We turn on each other, the insane choice  
Unity is a weapon, none can be found  
Each to his own, we stand our own ground  
What happened to days long past and stories shared  
Of power in numbers, and brothers that cared  
Ol' school is dyin', it's fadin' away  
All that's left is what ol' timers say  
Stories of old, brothers shoulder to shoulder  
In it together as one we grew older  
It's gettin' harder to hear the stories of old  
Soon there'll be none left to pass on stories told  
It's all ME ME ME, addictions feeding the beast  
In days of old we had each other's backs at least.  
Every man for himself, hidin' in a gang  
The hardest part of 'em is understanding their slang  
The morals, the codes are becoming a thing of the past  
Now all we got is complaints 'bout life kickin' our ass  
Opinions are like assholes, we all have one  
Mine's nothin' special I'm just a man's son  
A man I don't know, who never said he was proud  
It's no shock I'm in a cell being so fuckin' loud  
Insanity is growing as the years go by  
No one hears those at night in cells that cry  
The jingle of keys, the hatches get locked  
We're trained to be animals,  
you got no right to be shocked

*By Jason Ryan 595683, Darwin Correctional Centre*

## WHAT LIES BENEATH THE SURFACE

Do you know what lies behind this smile  
Have you walked the same mile  
Have you crossed the same mile  
Have you crossed your own river Nile  
And have you witnessed what the world will defile?  
Think about it for a while.  
Do you know what lies behind these eyes  
Have you witnessed what you despise  
Have you soared through open skies  
Into the sun where Icarus flies  
Don't you know everything dies?  
But not everyone truly lives  
Not everyone truly gives  
Do you give what you don't need  
Or do you live a life of only greed  
Would you starve for others to seed  
To cut yourself in order to bleed.  
Do you know what goes on in this head  
Or the words in this poem that you have read  
Do you listen to the words that someone has said  
For we all in the end, we all end up dead.

*By Lance*

## NO LIMITS

Let me tell you something that you mob already know, if you mob don't know well let me tell you. Life isn't about fun and games, sunshine and rainbows. It's a very bad, hard motherfucking dangerous place that will beat you down and keep you trapped in a dark place no one don't wanna be, and it will keep you down for the rest of your life. But only if you let it. So my brothers and sisters, stay strong. Like 2-Pac said "Keep your head up and stay true to yourself". My brothers and sisters, not you, not me, no one hits harder than life. Remember that, but life isn't about how hard you get hit, it's about how many times you can get hit and keep moving forward. There's nothing in this world you can't do; limits, there are no limits. There's a start line but there's no finish line. Just keep going till you can't go anymore even if you die, cause dying is not important. What's important is you try so if you fall just get back up and keep moving forward. That's how you win in life, that's how winning is done, just lock your beautiful mind into one or two or three simple, powerful ideas and be the best at everything you do no matter what it is. Never look back, look toward the future and fuck the rest, put yourself to the test and be the best cause there's nothing in the world you can't do. Limits? There are no limits. So, my brothers and sisters. God bless and don't stress.

*By Troy*



## I'M SURE I'VE SEEN THIS BEFORE

Wow, look, what's just come on  
But I swear it was only last month  
We got a round of James Bond.  
Do you like a bit of magic, potions and spells.  
Well Harry Potter, The Hobbit and the fucking Rings  
have already started this year.  
Wish I had one of those wands  
I'd throw it at the fucking TV.  
But it's okay I'm more of an action man  
'Cause The Fast and Furious, Bad Boys, the Jason Bourne  
Identity crises thing and the fucking Transformers will  
start again soon and its OK if I miss a part  
Because two months from then it will go back  
to the fucking start YAH.  
Sorry I forgot to mention those superhero movies  
Makes me want to try walking through a fucking wall.  
They were good at the start but 20 times in the past  
Few years is enough to bring a man to tears  
Man, that shit's gotta stop  
Makes me wish my time would go as quick as the Flash  
So, I can stop watching this repeated trash.  
Maybe you're a Predator or Aliens fan  
Remember when it was Us against Them  
Then Them against Them  
Then back to Us against Them again. Shit!  
Can someone beam me the fuck out of here, please  
Now don't get me started on those Christmas movies,  
comedies, and movies about falling in love  
'Cause that shit ain't funny  
Makes me wish I did have a hangover red-eyed and  
spewing up in someone else's dunny.  
But all jokes aside  
By the end of this year, you will know I never lied  
And the good thing is they all get repeated next year  
And the good thing is they all get repeated next year  
And the good thing is they all get repeat... Fuck off.

*By Miguel*

## WHAT THE FUCK

What the fuck was I doing  
I didn't know myself  
The man in the mirror changed  
He dragged us all through hell

What the fuck have I become  
Who the hell am I now  
Have I actually gotten better  
Who else have I dragged down

What the fuck did I say  
I don't think I meant a word  
I know that I can change  
I got a stretch to serve

What the fuck was I thinking  
Obviously not very much  
Drug-fuelled chaos  
That's affected all of us

What the fuck can I do  
Surely there's a chance  
That I could still be saved  
You might give another glance

I've fucked it all again  
Gotta stay away from that stuff  
All those who know and love me  
Look at me like what the fuck

*By Joel Reid-Roe #218534  
Darwin Correctional Centre*

## OD

I was waiting for my barbecue pack. I stuck my eye up to the peephole in my door. Crowd of blue in the hall. RIT cell across from me. He had cuffs on when they brought him in. Locked him in there. Now the door was open. Three nurses. The doctor. Orange med bags on the ground. The cell was packed full. Squad standing around. Arms folded. Tight security on the unconscious inmate. Four senior staff supervising. Crowns and stars on their epaulets. They watched the medical staff uncapping needles. Someone doing CPR. A half-hearted "sharps" warning was given by the medical staff as they tried to get through the blocked doorway into the cell. Oxygen tank by the toilet. Hose slithering up onto the mattress. Something about inserting a catheter. They stuck him with an IV. A nurse held a bag of saline over his head. They got the defibrillator ready and opened on the floor. "The doctor has requested lights, and sirens, I repeat, lights and sirens." I could see the inmate's cell card. He was twenty-three. They gave him Narcan. "4.8mg of Naloxone." They asked for the status of the ambulance. A female senior leaned close to another in front of my door. Whispered something. The other one laughed. The paramedics came in with a loaded down stretcher trolley. They asked for space and squad staff poured from the RIT cell like a clown car. They eventually lifted him onto the trolley. Bare feet. Wrapped in a space blanket. Wire fence tattoo on his calf. I glimpsed him through the supervising press. Woman holding a tube mask over his face. Plastic bag inflating, deflating a little with his shallow breaths. "Open your eyes," she was saying, "Can you hear me? Open your eyes." I didn't see him open his eyes. They rolled him out and the theatre troop followed. I closed the peephole back up with a bit of paper and sticky tape. I got my barbecue pack later. I cooked the steak in my sandwich press.

*By Kyle Zammit*



## PRISON

When I entered your door  
I thought you were hardcore  
But when I look at you  
It is not true  
I saw eyes more free than mine  
I hear a mind seasoned serving your time

I feel compassion for giving a moment to the victims of the crime  
I feel freedom in the words you spoke about justice, equality and divine

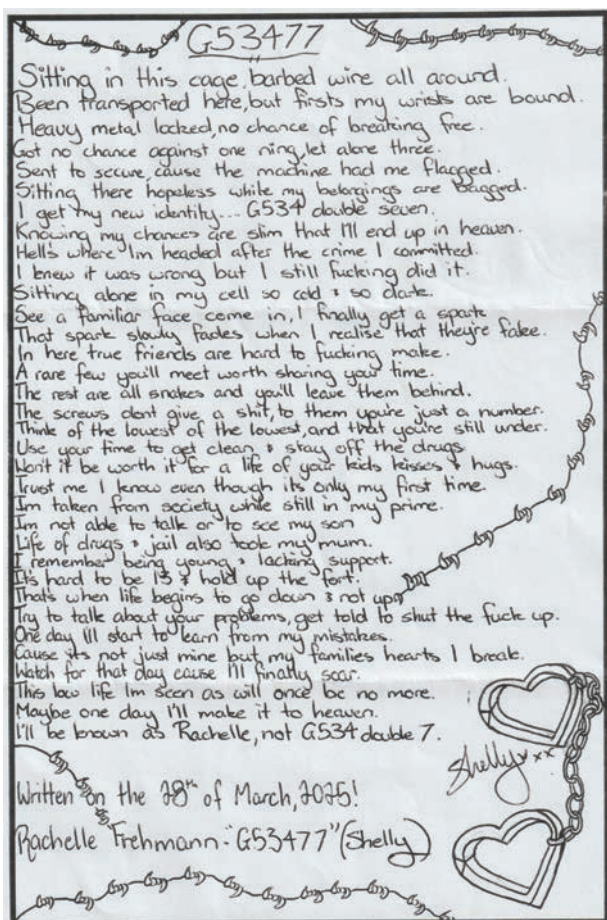
I see hope when the man is willing to change  
I see light at the end of the tunnel, not shame  
I see love when families and communities come and show care  
I see change, when you put ideas into action, my fear disappears

I learned you are not so different from me  
I know freedom is a luxury with a huge price to pay  
Outside your walls, life is not free, in everything I need to pay  
I hear you when you speak the words of the free

By Rosa Zerrudo, Volunteer Theater Facilitator  
Philippines



Art by Robert McCullough P78220  
Correctional Training Facility  
P.O. Box 705, Soledad, California, 93960, USA



Art by Steve Labelle BG3974  
Correctional Training Facility  
P.O. Box 705, Soledad, California, 93960, USA



## COLD HEARTED GIRL

Verse 1: See that smile, now look beyond the surface, darkest roads will take you to another universe. Relentless journeys, and the battles all in vain, broken-hearted, shattered, and paralysed by the pain. Let the memories fade, lost no longer a believer, empty promises made no more a real dreamer.

Chorus: scars of misery, souls empty in a loveless world  
Lust is poison, dark emotion, hey cold-hearted girl.

Verse 2. Emotional rollercoaster driven by the fears, violently crashing into a deluge of tears. Toxic veins, addiction a worse enemy behind bars, stripped bare, no pride no faith nor dignity. Let the memories fade, lost no longer a believer, empty promises made no more a real dreamer.

Chorus: scars of misery, souls empty in a loveless world  
Lust is poison, dark emotion, hey cold-hearted girl.

Verse 3. Life in suffocation, there is nowhere to run or hide

Chorus: scars of misery, souls empty in a loveless world  
Lust is poison, dark emotion, hey cold-hearted girl.

*Song by Monica, Silverwater Women's Prison*

## HOW GREEN IS MY VALLEY?

When I first entered the laughingly misnamed "correctional" system, I observed that the system, such as it is, was broken. In my tenure as an inmate, how much has been offered, been done, by this "correctional" system to prove it worthy of its name?

To date, sweet bugger all.

If it were to be drawn as a topographical map, it would show a land full of more valleys than peaks, and with precious few flat lands in between. Depending on where one lands after remand, an often and pathetically broken system in its own right, one may be offered remedial programs and perhaps, if really lucky, education.

There are the few and far between mountains on our map. The valleys are made from those in green that genuinely believe themselves to be the better of anyone else wearing the same; these that feel it is, somehow, their right to know why each and every one of their fellow inmates are inside; those in blue that feel that they now have the sovereign right to treat those in green as if they were less important than dogshit on your best shoes; and

those in government, including government agencies or those like them such as the Ombudsman's office that fail, miserably, to offer one skerrick of support or assistance.

It then logically suggests that one to reach the occasional peak, they must somehow summon the strength to climb from the valley floor. It's not always possible. But it's not an impossible mission. Those who haven't learnt that their actions in society continue to fail society, their family, and themselves have learned how to bend the system and get away with actions that, outside of the "justice" system, would rightfully have them in the environment they would appear to love anyway. There are the institutionalised. Made that way by, yes, the system. They make the climb for the wrong, or utterly selfish, reasons. Since the breakthrough in society that declared mental health issues are no longer shameful, it's become recognised that a lack of mental health support contributes greatly to recidivism. This, along with a lack of pre- and post-release support, has to be, must be, in breach of international standards?

It really does not matter what a person wearing green is in jail for. Why, though, is a different matter. Where are the proper and dedicated facilities for drug addicts? The sufferers of mental health conditions that led to the community of a crime? Those that stole or broke into a house because they needed money because they were homeless? Where is the assistance to help them summit their peaks? In conversations with many, it appears that parole, before and after release, is of major concern. There's the lack of contact prior to release, the oft-repeated "They set me up to fail" (heard too many times to be a rumour), the lack of post-release support in too many ways, such as employment assistance, education support, and genuinely decent housing options. Medical support, too, is beyond questionable far too many. "Sort it out yourself" is often the only support given.

Being in jail is the great societal equaliser, however. Each and every one of us is and will continue to be tagged by society, by family and friends, by the "justice" system as unfit members of society. No. Matter. What.

Those of us in green face an uphill battle in our climb from the valley floor to the mountain peak. My own journey hasn't been interrupted by the supposed regular visits from my assigned pre-release parole officer. Some have suggested it's a good thing, as it means little concern on their part. My mental health disorder, diagnosed as part of my pre-sentence progress, and unable to be treated until AFTER I leave has me thinking otherwise. I am then either stuck near the valley floor, or near the mountain's peak. It's a failure of the correctional system to not let me know which one. The system is broken.

*By 'Irma Gird'*



# 13 DEATHS

PM Lock-in. Another 15 hours cell time. Another Xmas "banged up" behind four pre-cast concrete prison walls. Another long night. Another lonely night. Another vivid nightmare. My last Xmas night.

Another Xmas gift from the good people salvation army. Each year the same Xmas gift is smaller. The same Xmas gift I have received 13 times. 13 court sessions. The local court, the District court, 13 guilt pleas. 13 convictions and sentenced to serve 13 terms of penal servitude with hard labour. The hard labour component today is missing.

Breaking and smashing rocks on the chain gang supervised by prison guards wielding batons and searching for the weakest link. The convict who falls behind and fails to fill the quota for broken souls will feel the wrath from the guard. The baton will crack his back on his head. Lash him with the whip fashioned from cured leather. Living tendrils connect and cut, every lash ensuing sting and closely followed by the screaming pain a fierce burning pain that can never be compared to the howl of the wildest animal, the fiercest ogre, or unnatural beast snared by a vicious steel man set trap. Where is my hard labour?

Hard labour today is assembling cheap headphone sets using cheaper components and sold to Qantas, or operating flatbed sewing machines made in Japan, cheaper from China. Stitching together the bottle green pieces of material, cheap felt imported from China, the prison wage cheaper and creating the bottle-green garb issued and worn by every convict. There is no room for additional colour to display individuality. There are no concessions rendered to display the myriad different characters and inherent characteristics that are unique to each and every individual and that make us all special. We prisoners are all the same to authority and are stereotyped into submission. A good family man who wears a tailored suit to work each week day is a convicted unlicensed driver serving small time, tossed inside the lion's den amidst desperate and hardened criminals, murderers, rapists, gangsters, all special offenders beyond redemption walking the prison line during the mind-numbing hours of yard time. Rain, hail, or shine. Spring time, summer time, winter time. Each minute, each hour. Every day, every week, and every month, counting the years rolling away. The tailored man walking the same line is influenced by his peers and instructed how to commit bigger crimes. Arrested, charged and indicted, convicted, sentenced and condemned to serve bigger time. Your colour choice is an extension to who you are and what you aspire to be. It compliments our physiognomy. Remove the rainbow and you shall discover the pot of shimmering gold when you reach the end. You shall only find a cheap iron pot replete with fifty shades of grey that will fade into black or bottle green.

I need to sweat my hard labour. I need to be lashed by my gaoler's whip. I need to discern the leather strips whistling through the air louder with my utter despair, and hear the sonic boom before the strips smack my bare back and tear lacerate, shred, and rip apart the living flesh. I need to smell my bleeding back. I need to suffer.

Maybe I won't come back if only I can remember the whip. The sting and tagging pain from the incessant lashing. The smell of my bleeding back. Maybe I will recall the taunting rock and heavy hammer. The chain and ball. Holding the ills of my life in the palms of my hands. I won't come back. Maybe.

Dearest father, they endeavoured to break my resolve, but you never care. Dearest mother, they have hijacked my sense of freedom, the ransom I can't pay. My life has become handcuffs, the courthouse. The big house, walking the prison line. Profound despair during the lonely nights thinking over the missing years of my time 'banged up' 16 years.

I was born an innocent baby. Born into a broken and cruel world. I was dealt and played a losing hand. I bluffed myself and stacked all my money. With malevolent grin, and he too called all in. To sweeten the pot I played my bleeding red heart and soul. Shattered by the black ace of spades. I should have called fold.

There are winners and there are losers  
What did I win and what did I lose?  
Winners can be losers and losers can be winners  
What did I lose and what did I win?

Nobody cares for the unwanted child. Dear father, did you care. Dear mother, were you there? The damaged legacy they left behind is my inheritance. The pleasure and the pain. The ecstasy and the agony. Will it be my final shot? I've never missed the spot. I do forget just why I taste the bitter with the sweet and I find it hard, it's hard to find a home. I won't cry. I won't scream. I won't beg mercy. I need to feel the sting, the potent pain to remind myself not to break mortal statutes and heed the divine. To not face the magistrate, nor the judge and do more gaol time. Again and again, and again. 13 agains. 13 pains. 1 life. 13 deaths.

Maybe only then I will not return when I recall the back-twisting and -breaking hard labour. The chains, the rock, the five-pound hammer weight stretching my finger and prematurely debilitating my hand, and breaking my soul. The cold hard stone inanimate speaks to me. To each and every convict chained to the line. Beggar, thief, murderer, and villain. Mocking me. Accusing me. Urging me to strike the stone harder and strike faster. I comply. Hating me and disrespecting me. Whipping me. Despising me and abusing me. Destroying me.

I am the hard cold stone chipping away and breaking the pieces of my life. I broke myself and I surrendered my life to Corrective Services.



Please whip me 13 times. 13 strokes for each lagging.  
Maybe I will remember the humiliation, the pain from my  
hard labour. The long days. The long years and the lonely  
nights with you. Maybe I will remember the whip, the rock  
and the heavy chains which burden my fragile mind.

I am the painful whip. I am the hammer burden of my  
crimes. I am the cold hard inanimate stone. I am the  
chains which I drag behind with my homeless soul. I have  
become cold feeling, and my heart has been hardened by  
circumstances beyond my control. My body is petrified.

I don't care. I've ceased caring for myself, and you. I don't  
care anymore. I once did care. 12 times. Now I couldn't  
care less. I can't care anymore. The final death. I've died 13  
times and never again will I care for me. Care for you. Care  
for them. Care for all.

Doing time has poisoned the notion that I can smash the  
proverbial and ball that bind me. I can't. I've tried. I refuse  
to try anymore and today I don't want to, and tomorrow, no  
more. I am inured and comfortable locked inside my cell. I  
relish pacing the prison line during yard time, rain, hail, or  
shine. I'm still serving time. Time stands still behind prison  
walls. My time will never end. I am institutionalised.

Prison is my home. 1 Death, 13 lives. 1 Life, 13 Deaths ...

#167312

MALCONTENT.

MISANTHROPE.

## EVERYTHING THEY DID AND EVERYTHING THEY'VE SEEN

I know a couple soldiers who have been to war  
But when they returned home they had nothing,  
they were poor  
Shrapnel in the back, PTSD galore  
They didn't fight in Long Tan nor in Desert Storm  
But Afghanistan, they were there for sure  
But they have not been noticed like they should have been  
Everything they did and everything they've seen

For they can tell you stories of the Taliban attacks  
And the bravery of their brothers who didn't make it back  
The details are so black and the bullets whistling past you,  
dead bodies everywhere  
The smell of burning powder is enough to make you scared  
No matter all the stories you can't begin to understand  
The un-noticed soldiers, unless you were there

The last I saw these heroes, they were homeless,  
such a pity  
They are living near Central station,  
in a park they call tent city  
The Veteran Affairs won't help them anymore

Because they won't go in sober everyday,  
they're on the sauce  
It helps them black out the nightmares of the war  
And every time they try to get help,  
they can't get in the door  
No one could even comprehend where in hell they've been

I know those soldiers are heroes from everything they did,  
and everything they've seen  
They fought for King and Country,  
to keep the land that we have free  
I've seen police harass them in their military greens  
The day ANZACS are remembered,  
that is putrid and obscene  
Because even they can't comprehend,  
where these soldiers have been  
Nor do they know everything they did,  
or everything they've seen.

Lest We Forget

By EVO1, NSW



Art by Mohanned Al Azzeh  
Made at Ofer Prison, Israel

# BOOK REVIEW

BY ZOE WEATHERILL, CRIMINOLOGY STUDENT

***Inside Outlaws: A Prison Diary*** (1989), by Tim Anderson, features a number of the prison writings and essays by Anderson of his experiences of the criminal justice system during his time spent in a number of NSW prisons.

In 1979, Anderson was sentenced, along with Ross Dunn and Paul Alistair, to sixteen years imprisonment for allegedly conspiring to murder a far-right Australian politician. Throughout the book, Anderson highlights how, like a large proportion of other prisoners he spoke with while inside, the evidence of the prosecution in his case was largely fabricated through the long-criticised practice of “police verbal”: the use of police-created and unsigned “confessions” tendered as evidence at trial.

Pointing out the obvious ease for police to fabricate evidence and the injustice of the practice, Anderson tells of his attempts to bring this often used issue to judicial review, including working with law reform and prisoner rights groups, and writing letters and petitioning to top criminal justice stakeholders, urging for the requirement for recorded police interviews. At the time of Anderson's writings, police verbals were still common practice in NSW, and it wasn't until the early 1990s that audio-visual recording of police interviews were introduced.

Anderson details his experiences of “shanghai's,” arbitrary beatings, humiliating strip searches, and various punishments for the breaking of frivolous rules—only some of the displays of unchecked power that Anderson and his fellow inmates experienced at the hands of prison officers. Together with the numerous strikes that the prison officers undertook which left prisoners locked up for days without sufficient food, they demonstrate just how little thought was given to the rights and lives of prisoners. Instead, Anderson explains, they were seen as second-class citizens, both through their treatment and through the laws that allow the treatment to continue.

Anderson explains how this mentality is further instilled through the representation of prisoners in politics and media. In particular, Anderson highlights how the ‘law and order,’ or tough-on-crime perspectives that are commonplace in mainstream media do not assist at all to help lower crime or keep communities safe – instead, they only allow for the continuing unjust treatment of prisoners, and instil in prisoners themselves an embracement of criminality, instead of rehabilitation.

Notwithstanding these experiences, Anderson remains resilient and steadfast in attempting and protesting to improve the lives of all prisoners. Through hunger strikes, lobbying with activist groups, participating in making Contact (the prison magazine of Parramatta Gaol), and

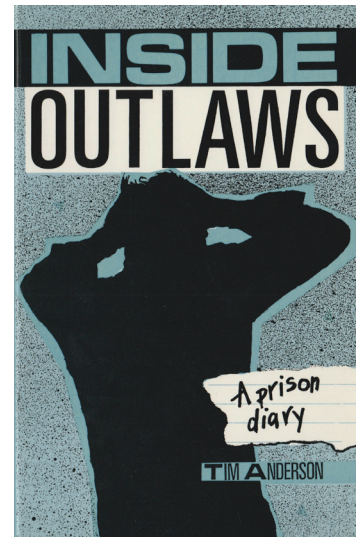
organising committees and meetings with his fellow inmates to discuss and push for solutions for common shared issues, Anderson helps to change the conditions that he and the other inmates faced. Although Anderson has not not always been successful in achieving his goals, on a number of occasions, he has made notable and important contributions to the

recognition of prisoner's rights – an achievement that shaped the future of prisoners rights in all NSW prisons.

After spending nearly seven years in prison fighting for justice and an inquiry into the circumstances of his conviction, Anderson and his co-accused were pardoned and awarded compensation. Following this victory, however, Anderson was convicted again under similar circumstances, but was then acquitted on appeal, in what Chief Justice Murray Gleeson described as “one attempt too many” by the prosecution to lock Anderson away. Anderson's story and fight for justice are now understood among some of the most classic, and all too common, miscarriages of justice in Australia.

Anderson explores a number of criminological theories and concepts in a way that is able to be understood by anyone, all the while also demonstrating these concepts in the context of his lived experiences, and the changes of the criminal justice system as a whole during this time. The tone and styles of Anderson's writing changes and flows through *Inside Outlaws* to compliment the context in which he was writing: from personal, to political, to passionate pushes for real change. Each chapter focuses solely on a different aspect of his experience of prison or the prison system in general, making the book easy to follow, understand, and digest.

Overall, *Inside Outlaws: A Prison Diary* presents a valuable insight into the NSW prison system in the 1980s, through the eyes of a political and resilient prisoner with a resolve to improve the experiences of all those imprisoned, and to putting the “justice” back into the justice system. In a society and system that often demonises prisoners, Anderson shows the importance of humanity and continuously fighting for what is right.





# A TRIBUTE TO JIM CROKE

BY MURRAY COOK

Our esteemed Songbirds art teacher, Jim Croke has reluctantly retired due to health concerns. A brilliant, likeable and witty polymath, he will be very much missed by his students and colleagues, as well as so many men in custody he has mentored along the way, many of whom are now professional post-release artists.

Jim studied at the National Art School (NAS), UNSW and Sydney University, became a revered artist and sculptor, and rose to be Head of Sculpture at the prestigious NAS. His work graces many public, corporate and private collections, here and in the United States.

Jim began teaching two days a week at SPC Long Bay in 2003, until in 2016 when he and most other prison arts educators were made redundant. CRC's Songbirds program reemployed him in 2018, where he continued his outstanding work, much of which has been featured and sold through the Boom Gate gallery, which enables the artists to support their families and themselves and get their art and stories seen and appreciated. Over to Jim ...

*"I can't even begin to describe how much I enjoyed teaching those students. To have participants who are genuinely serious about learning about art, all its complexities and difficulties and still rising to the challenge every time was so rewarding for me. To see their remarkable achievements on the walls of the Boom Gate Gallery and the sheer pleasure the students got from being able to give paintings and drawings to family members on visits was priceless.*

*To overcome a lack of student self-confidence I often began by demonstrating how I go about painting some simple objects. An apple was a favourite. I insisted the students stay with me while I completed the painting while talking all the time about what I was doing and describing why and what were the problems we had to overcome to make a successful work. They were then given a board, set of paints, brushes, colour wheel (to show how to mix colours) and the painting I had done. They were told to do a painting by my next visit. At that visit we would discuss what went right and wrong with their work.*

*To make the process more rewarding for the students we would eventually move to a subject they were more interested in. These ranged from landscapes, (often of an area they were familiar with), copying old masters, Australian bush scenes, portraits of loved ones, animals, and aeroplanes. In short anything they fancied. A good source of imagery was travel magazines and family photographs. On the way to these achievements, we would discover some of the secrets of perspective, colour, composition and (an essential) the value of learning to draw competently.*

*The arts demonstrate to them, presented and offered them a non-threatening environment. Those students will be more likely to accept a society that is on their side, not always against them. The interaction with people from outside they can rely upon is invaluable."*

*These words from a few of his myriad students say it all. Thank you, Jim Croke, from us all, we will really miss you.*

*I love the human being I am today, and I credit some of my better attributes to the work I have done with Jim Croke. He will forever be a great mentor, a great friend, and a great human being. – Rooster*

*Jim has immeasurably improved my chances of rehabilitation as well as improving my life. I am able to provide for myself and family while inside. I look forward to the times I spend with Jim developing my knowledge and ability. – Spectrum*

*Apart from Jim's kindness and understanding, his positive energy and humanity has a profound effect within these walls ... I will forever be grateful for Jim Croke. – Nexus*

*Art has given me freedom, a voice and a chance to start a new life. – Koko*

*Jim supplies us with art theory and other resources for our development, whilst offering expert critiques and suggestions. It is these acts that keep me stimulated and active in art, and that in turn has had a large influence on my sense of self and wellbeing. – Bexz*



**An artwork by 'Tiny', created in Jim's program.**

# VOTING WHILE INCARCERATED IN THE UNITED STATES

BY JEFFERY SHOCKLEY

Before my incarceration of serving a life sentence, I was not interested in politics. I cannot remember casting a vote for class secretary in high school, let alone a local public official, a congressman, or even the President of the United States, as responsible young adults do. In the household where I grew up in the suburbs outside of Philadelphia, PA, we did not speak much about civic responsibility. This is not to say my parents or grandparents did not vote. It was such a personal action in their lives, a private matter, they simply did not talk about it to avoid any argument surrounding politics.

African American women gained the right to vote in 1965, but their vote and voices remain challenged, with constant attempts to deter or silence them. My brother, on a recent phone call, intimated that black women often voted in secret. "If you should vote for someone another may not agree with, you could get beat by the abusive husband or even lose your job." The plight of the Black man did not seem any brighter to me. My own opinion was it didn't matter if I did not vote.

After I was incarcerated in 1999, at the age of 37, I did not imagine I would become interested in politics or voting. But after more than 20 years inside, that has started to change. Perhaps more than anything, it is my status as a "lifer" in the Pennsylvania prison system that most motivates me, creating the desire to vote.

I live my life in honor of the individual whose life I took, the hurt I caused her family, and the shame I brought to mine. In my 25 years inside, I have received one misconduct report (it was in 2008 for possessing an extra razor; I pled guilty). I remain program-compliant, and have demonstrated a significant change in attitude from the one I entered prison with. As a scrawny little kid, my childhood was not unique. I was raised by my maternal grandmother, who worked a lot. At times I was left alone overnight.

I was free to do whatever I wanted; there were no consequences. I did what I wanted, acquiring an attitude that conveyed "I don't care" through to imprisonment. "The adults did whatever they wanted, why can't I?" This being unanswered kept me empty inside. To fill a void, I became promiscuous, drank and smoked cigarettes, and stole unnecessarily. Eventually, I turned to drugs.

What has changed specifically is becoming cognizant that I do not have the right to do whatever pleases me at the expense of others. I had no right to take a life out of anger or for any reason. My mind clear, I understand that there are laws, rules and policies to follow: there are elected officials to help keep individuals, communities,

safe from errant delinquents, as I was. However, the only thing the system sees is the person I was that one fateful day, not the person I am today.

Letting go of the past can be challenging. Meanwhile, every facet of my external life is controlled by an entity that I have no means of influencing and raises the question "Are there some human beings incapable of redemption/rehabilitation?" I was sent to prison as punishment, however, my every day is to be punished for being in prison. There is a daunting bias that we are these lowly disgusting individuals.

A broken commodity to sit on shelves, warehoused. Cattle that gets put out to pasture on occasion for recreation purposes. The older you get, the less usable you are, subject to various abuses by other inmates, disregarded by corrections staff younger than the time you have served.

I cannot fail to mention that there are exceptions to every rule. There are some officers who treat you with respect, various programming available for those who invest in themselves to become a better individual today then so many years ago. Time allows one to see many things in life that were missed in the past. I can sit and hear a song, and go back to a time in grandma's kitchen, with the aroma of fresh baked bread. Flashes of happier times with my girlfriend and our two children driving to Seaside Heights beach in New Jersey for the weekend, like normal folks do.

Some nights I am laying awake crying for the life stolen, knowing the things that family cannot experience. Wishing I had died. However, I have opted to be that person who gives back, otherwise the death would have been for nothing and I cannot live with that.

The issue of voting while incarcerated is such an important issue to me because even though I failed society in the past, I can still help advocate for change. Having been through the legal judicial system, experiencing the changes that could be made for a more universal system not based on who can hire the better attorney.

I was asked to be a part of the dog-training program. As a person serving a life sentence, I did not think it was something I could do. Not for the dog, but because I was an absent father, self-centered, an addict. Now, a year in and several dog exchanges later from graduating service dog training, I care about life. I care about others.

My life is not about me or the looming-fact of dying in prison. I live today making sure this dog is fed and loved.



My hurts are nothing compared to what I have done to an innocent family, so I try not to complain too long. I am still human. This is why one of the most important political issues to me is ending what advocates commonly refer to as "death by incarceration", or life without the possibility of parole (LWOP).

Typically viewed as an alternative to the death penalty, LWOP is just another form of the same: one will die in prison either way. In Pennsylvania, life means life, regardless of an individual's self-motivation for rehabilitation. This state, with 5,100 people expected to die by incarceration, is home to the country's second-largest population of people serving LWOP sentences. Seventy percent are Black. In the United States, there are over 55,000 people serving LWOP sentences, a fact that shocks many of our democratic peer nations, where LWOP is rare. This figure also represents a 66% increase since 2003.

A general perception regarding persons in prison is that we have time to sit around and think. I think about how a significant part of my life, by the choices I have made, has been controlled by the government. The control is nearly total to where there is no thought about where and when I sleep, what to wear or how I should wear it. "Tuck your shirt in," the officer screams. No thought about where or what or when I shall eat, bathe, and, most disturbing, where I might die. In other words, my life has become one directed by an entity I have no significant means of influencing. A vote could change that and would be beneficial for both inside and outside influences.

Voting while incarcerated would mean a great deal to me and similarly situated individuals. Imprisoned citizens eat substandard food. They get treated inhumanely for the slightest infractions. Men and women are currently warehoused like old toys. Meanwhile, their long-term geriatric care balloons the corrections budget and costs taxpayers more and more. Second-chance opportunities are rare; after waiting five years for a decision on my commutation application, I was denied "merit review" with no reason or explanation given, which is standard procedure. I have been a "model inmate" for 25 years. These are things that make me wish I could vote.

There are at least two prominent pieces of legislation for lifers and long-termers currently tabled in Pennsylvania in part on account of the lack of support necessary to passed: parole for lifers and a geriatric and medical bill. Our vote, our voices, could support the right people getting into office to get these or similar bills passed.

Incarcerated individuals are considered the dregs of society, the castaways and down trodden, so that few if any of the people in power desire to see or otherwise communicate with because in their mind we contribute nothing to or for their cause. Try to imagine the improvement in our communities if lifers and long-termers

were home to vote. That same impact can be realized in allowing us inside to vote, therefore contributing to the various causes that need to be represented. The ability to vote is not about making prison life easier, not by any means. The vote would apply to those who are for more stringent laws for the offender and true compensation for injuries suffered by the victim/survivor.

The vote would allow for the reinstitution of rehabilitative programming that would address traumas that compelled that criminal activity or mindset so the individual has a better chance to not re-offend. Learning, as I did, why it was done in the first place, and we are no more merely warehoused until we die. For most of my life, I did not vote because I did not care. I did not care because I did not vote. I saw no need to vote because those in office were going to do whatever they wanted to whomever they wanted to do it to, just like I was doing, and didn't care about anybody.

Today, I have a little puppy who needs me and I care enough to make sure I am there for her at whatever hour so she does not pee in the cell, go hungry, or get abused. I care enough about others here who have been wrongfully convicted, abandoned by the system, and I wish for the opportunity to vote to make a difference. More than that, allowing lifers to vote would be a good start to becoming an active member of society. It would work to create vested interest in community leadership and government issues. Sadly, the opportunity to vote while incarcerated may not automatically translate into higher civic engagement. Laws have been made to lock up more people from the poorer communities.

I would argue that at first there may not be immediate buy-in from either side of the proverbial coin, since change takes time and wheels of justice do grind slow. But think where we would be if everyone thought and believed nothing would change during civil rights demonstrations and the like? It only takes a push to get the pebble rolling, and I want to be that push as one is better than none. I could be the vote for the one who can't. Thank you.

*By Jeffery A. Shockley ES4796  
SMART COMMUNICATIONS  
/ PADOX SCI-FAYETTE  
Po Box 33028, St Petersburg  
Florida 33733, USA*



# PLEASE PRESS FIVE

BY RONIN GREY, CALIFORNIA

*"Voice is important, a way to know a soul" – Shawna Forde*

One of the most stressful things about prison used to be using the phone. With sixteen phones for a yard of almost 1,500 guys, you could spend hours in the phone line – especially on a holiday – and at any time your chance of wishing your mom "Happy mother's day" might vanish in a cloud of the dust kicked up by shuffling sneakers as a dispute over who cut whom in line got physical.

Even if there were no brawls or alarms, you might not even make it out to yard where the phones are at all. You might have an antagonist in the tower who doesn't feel like turning the phones on. You might stand in line half the day, only to miss your people in the narrow window you have to place a call before the next guy's breathing down your neck to get on with his own spin of the phone roulette revolver.

In April 2023 at my facility, the prison rolled out tablets to the inmate population. Everything else about tablets aside, one feature of ours is the ability to make telephone calls from them. All of a sudden, instead of 16 phones for 1,500 guys there were 1,500 phones – and zero fights, at least over "I was here first, motherfucker" – and using the phone went from being the most stressful part of the day to the most relaxing.

I hear out on the street now it is considered rude to call people, that you are supposed to text first, or do whatever it is people do now – sometimes it seems to me that people outside are as bad at communication as we are in here. But while it may be considered poor manners to call without warning, thank you for remembering that I am a caveman and I'm reaching out to you from the Stone Age where nobody teaches folks like me the rules of polite society.

And thank you for enduring the torturous automated messages informing you that you have a phone call from a prison, that yes, really, a prison, and that yes, seriously, the person calling you really is a prisoner so if you are absolutely sure you want to accept the call then go ahead and press 5 – and your phone call will be monitored, your phone number recorded, and no doubt you will be placed on a list of "People Who Talk to Them." And I am sincerely thankful for every time someone presses 5.

What a phone call means to someone in prison may not be readily apparent: yes, we want news from home, yes, we want to know if mom's feeling better, and yes, we want to confirm that the mail got sent, that the pictures got sent, that the money did – all that.

But more than what's on the surface, we want to reattach to the larger body of humanity. We are like a severed limb in the discard pile, but when we connect it is like we were never shown away for a blissful fifteen minutes. We want to step outside of the miserable, stifling, boring, oppressive world of incarceration and remember what it feels like to be with real human people. To remember what it feels like to just talk. To have someone want us around.

We want to take a breath of free air. We want to catch a glimpse of domestic life. We want to spend just a few moments feeling included again. We want to spend time with someone we love, to feel present in their life despite the distance and our isolation.

I am 40 years old. Last week I began my 17th year inside a state penitentiary. I don't have a lot of happy memories to look back on. The people I knew before prison are long gone from my life. But when you press 5, I'm not in prison. When I am with you, I am not in this place that daily chisels away at my soul. I know they said I don't have one, but here's a secret: I do.

It doesn't matter to me where we are or what we're doing. Are we at the grocery store? I don't mind. I haven't been to a grocery store in 17 years. Are we doing laundry? Cool, I wish I had a machine like that to do mine. Are we by the lake? I haven't seen a body of water bigger than a stainless steel sink since I got locked up. Is there a tree? Can we touch it? What kind is it? I haven't been near a tree in almost half my life.

Even at home, the phone takes me to a whole new world with you. Are we cooking? What's for dinner? Are we on the couch? Are we on your bed? Are we whispering to each other so everyone else feels like they're far away? Seventeen years ago, I did things like this but my heart then entered stasis – until you accepted my call and woke it up.

It's been all these years since I talked to a woman who didn't have a baton on her hip. All these years since I heard a woman say, "I love you." All these years since I said, "I love you."

I love you.

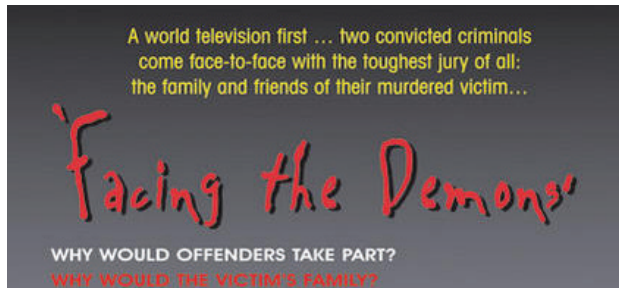
Your call will be monitored and recorded. Thank you for using Global Tel Link.

– Ronin.



# FILM REVIEW:

## FACING THE DEMONS



Was it an armed robbery gone wrong, or did they enter with the intent to murder?

*Facing the Demons*, released in 1999, explores the vulnerability of the family and friends of Michael Marslew as they come face-to-face with his killers. In 1994, eighteen-year-old Michael was working at a Pizza Hut in Sydney when he was shot in the back of his head during a robbery. Senior Sergeant Terry O'Connell brings two of the young men involved in the attempted robbery to experience the wrath of the family and friends that Michael left behind.

The emotions displayed by both the family and friends of Michael and the young men who were responsible for his death allows for a sense of empathy causing internal conflict amongst viewers. It allows for a grasp of understanding behind the original plan of the robbery, and reveals how the two men talking had not been involved in the decision to pull the trigger that would result in Michael's murder. Moments in this documentary are confronting as the details of Michael's murder are examined.

Michael's mother Joan and his father Ken display very different forms of grief. Joan is still very angry about Michael's murder and consumed by resentment, as are many of Michael's friends and co-workers. Interestingly, Ken created an anti-violence movement called "Enough is Enough," and uses his family's tragedy to attempt to lower the level and impact of violence in society a component.

*Facing the Demons* is a raw and confronting documentary that draws compassion and anger from the audience. I thoroughly enjoyed the informative tone of the documentary and its ability to be emotive. *Facing the Demons* is a great documentary for those interested in the process of the criminal justice system and the impacts that crime has on family and friends. The responsibility of the criminal justice system in helping families to feel a sense of justice and closure is movingly explored in the documentary.

By Paige Fullerton, Criminology student

# FILM REVIEW:

## RUMOURS



*Rumours* centres on a meeting of the G7 leaders, the leaders of seven wealthy democracies. Heads of government from Germany, the US, the UK, Japan, France, Italy and Canada attend a conference in Germany to address a global crisis. The actual nature of the crisis is never mentioned, and evasive discourse leads the audience to assume it is a large-scale economic, political or climate issue. The story takes an odd turn when the leaders become stranded in the woods while attempting to formulate a joint statement.

The movie manages to both confound and bore. *Rumours* offers no insightful political analysis, nor an incisive depiction of geopolitics. It has nothing of interest to add to the ideology that may give rise to actual international disasters. As the film progresses, it feels like it is the viewer that is trapped. *Rumours* is marketed as a comedy, drama and horror film, but is humourless, dull, predictable and idiotic. The most horrific aspect is the 95-minute length. Rating: 1 out of 5 'jailbirds,' for being boredom in film form.

By Vincent, Long Bay Correctional Centre, NSW

# PAINTING BEAUTY IN PRISON: AN INTERVIEW WITH JACK KARLSON

BY DAMIEN LINNANE

Jack Karlson was quite the character, but of course I'd already known that before driving out to visit him at his home in Mt. Hallen, Queensland last year. Among other things, I'm here to talk to Jack about art in prison, as part of an upcoming documentary film I've been working on. The director sets up our microphones and does a standard sound check, asking a random question. "What did you guys have for breakfast?" she asks. "I had muesli and a banana," I reply. "I had vodka," says Jack. I don't think he's joking. When I asked whether we could come out and film, and whether I could bring him anything for morning tea, he only asked me to bring him "a bottle of the red grape." I brought two. It's 10am, and I was expecting him to save them for later, but he opens one and pours himself a glass. I decline his offer of a glass myself, and decide that I best start asking my questions sooner rather than later.

Most people know Jack for the viral video of his 1991 arrest outside a Chinese restaurant in Brisbane. Surrounded by police, Jack exclaims, "Gentleman, this is democracy manifest." Protesting his arrest, he then spoke his now-famous words, "What is the charge? Eating a meal? A succulent Chinese meal?" The arrest was only filmed as Jack had been mistakenly identified as a 'most-wanted' criminal. What most people don't know about Jack is that his journey towards becoming an artist in prison began in the 1960s, when he was in Long Bay for safe-cracking.

"I first picked up my paintbrush in Long Bay Gaol," Jack tells me. His friend Billy Finch was a painter. "And [Billy] said to me, 'Mate, they got you down to be transferred to Grafton' when the visiting justice, Murray Farquhar, arrives. Murray loved painting. Billy said, 'What you got to do, I do paintings and I'll bring a couple up to you when he comes in here to you, take this painting in.' Billy did [the painting]; I never painted in my life before. And I when I fronted ... visiting magistrate Murray Farquhar, Chief Magistrate of Sydney, he said, 'This is magnificent. You're a painter?' I said, 'I am indeed, Your Honour.' He said, 'I want him out of those punishment cages. I want him out of them.'"

Pretending to be a painter stopped Jack from being transferred to Grafton, but then he actually did start painting. I ask him if he kept painting even after he realised he was safe from being tipped to Grafton.

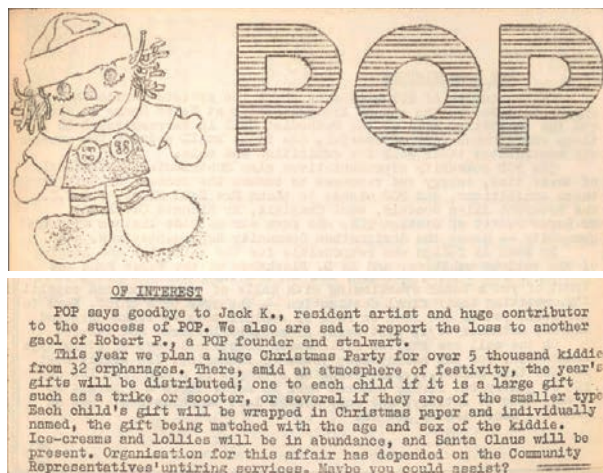
"Oh shit yeah," Jack exclaims. "I even formed an art group. The POP art group, Prisoner's Orphanage Project.



*Damien Linnane talks to Jack Karlson in his art studio.*

That was later at Parramatta Gaol. We made all these toys for the Salvation Army. We'd organise with some of the factories where they might have a bit of a fault in their toys to send them out here to the jail. And we had blokes there that could fix them. And every orphan in New South Wales on their birthday, on Christmas Day, and on other days, they got a present."

Jack doesn't know this, but I'm already aware of his involvement with POP. I've been researching the history of Australian prison magazines for quite some time now, and have an almost complete collection of *Contact*, the official magazine of Parramatta Gaol from 1970–1981. In the September 1973 issue, there's a farewell message to Jack from POP, after he left Parramatta Gaol. I've brought a copy of the magazine to show Jack, hoping it will be a trip down memory lane.



*Portions of the September 1973 issue of Contact magazine.*



I'm surprised to learn that Jack never saw this message when it was first written. His eyes light up, suddenly making him look ten years younger. "They said this to me? Jack Karlson? Oh, they remembered me," he beams.

Jack also did oil paintings in prison for POP. They would be sent out for sale, with all the money going to the orphanage project.

Jack's life in custody is far too complex to cover in just one article. He was put in an orphanage at four, sent to Westbrook Reformatory at age sixteen, then did five years at Boggo Road Jail in Brisbane, eight years in total in NSW, and four in total in Victoria.

Jack escaped from McLeod, a prison farm in Victoria that closed in 1975, on his first day there. Due to the historical escape, the next time he was arrested in Victoria, over fifteen years later, he was sent to the notorious "H Division," the punishment section of Pentridge Prison. By this stage, however, his reputation as an artist in prison in NSW had preceded him.

Jack tells me something I already know from researching prison history in Australia, that life in H Division consisted of hard, pointless labour during the day, smashing blue-stone rocks with hammers. After a couple weeks of this, Jack was called up to the office of a high-ranking officer who by that stage had gone through Jack's records and asked whether he'd been part an art group at Parramatta Gaol. Jack explains what happened next.

"I said, 'Oh, I love painting, Commander!'

He said, 'Don't call me Commander! I'm Sir.'

A couple of days later, I'm still cracking these rocks. He called me up to see him. He said, 'what do you think about this, [and showed] me a picture of a little country town. Can you paint that?'

'I certainly can, but I'll need some gear.'

He said, 'You make a list and give it to me. In the meantime, you can paint the doors of the cells. You're a painter anyway.' I wrote out a list, paints and turps. Metho of course, which I drank."

Just like art had previously stopped him from being tipped to Goulburn, art was eventually able to get Jack out of H Division and into a regular section of the jail. For Jack, art offered a form of escape, and not just from H division.

"I wanted to escape from the clutches of the enemy, the evil scum that lock people up," he says about making art in custody.

I want to know how Jack feels knowing that most people don't know anything about his art, and typically only know him for the internet meme.



*One of Jack's paintings, which is now in the permanent Paper Chained International art collection.*

"It's driving me fucking mad," he says. "You know why? I go into a pub and they say, 'Hey, Jack, you're that bloke!' I want to go into a pub without people coming up saying, 'You're that bloke on that democracy manifest.' I don't want that."

I ask if he'd prefer to be known as an artist. He looks pensive, though also a little annoyed. "Yeah. Not that I ever thought about it, but yeah. If you want to make me an artist, make me an artist. Not a criminal or ex-criminal."

I also want to know where he thinks he'd be today without art. "Dead," he says flatly. There's a silence in which I don't know what to say. Eventually, I ask him if his art style has changed since his release.

"Oh, I don't know what to say, I've just progressed. Some of my best paintings were done in prison, but I haven't got them. I've given them away to family and friends. Painting is all I do now. I don't break the law anymore. Oh, I do I drive without a licence. But I'm an artist now. I used to be a criminal ... but no more. All I want now is to wield my brush and paint pictures. I'm a poor struggling artist. Art is beautiful. Art is wonderful. I used to wake up [and it was] the first thing I wanted to do. Leap out with a paintbrush and finish that painting that I was working on last night. Oh, it's so good for the soul and the heart to paint. That's what we used to do. I suppose that was what kept me at least half sane. Painting in prison."

"What were you trying to say with your art?" I ask.

"Oh, no, I didn't want to say anything. I just wanted to paint beauty."

*Sadly, Jack died from cancer in August 2024. You'll be able to see more of this interview with Jack in the upcoming documentary Burning Down the House.*

# ARTS AND CRAFTS IN FILIPINO PRISONS

BY DAMIEN LINNANE

It's my first time in the Philippines, and on my second day in the country, I'm visiting Davao City Jail. Davao is the largest city in the Philippines in terms of land, and the third largest in terms of population, after Quezon, and the capital of Manila. The taxi ride takes me a little out of the city centre, and I really don't know what to expect. The outside prison gates aren't exactly welcoming. My visit is approved of course. The BJMP, the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology, were very supportive of my request to write an article about their arts program, though the application took a lot of time. I knock on a door to the side and show my letter of approval to an officer. I'm led into a room filled with trainee prison officers to wait.



*The gates of Davao City Jail*

They are incredible young, and are almost all women. The girl sitting next to me looks about 16, though tells me she is 22. They all have their hair cut incredibly short, which I am told is a requirement for their training. They are two weeks into their five-month training course, and are immaculately dressed in maroon trainee shirts and black pants. Their shoes shine brightly. A couple of the women are wearing flats, but most have kitten heels. I'm told the high-ranking officer who will be leading my tour is busy in a meeting, and what happens next really catches me by surprise. The trainee guards take it upon themselves to start singing to me, to keep me entertained while I wait. Eventually, I come to learn that this is a bit of a Filipino thing. Prison guards later break into song at random while I am inside, as do people in the general community, and even one of my taxi drivers at one point. Filipinos are a people who love to express themselves through song. At first, the songs are all in English – one male trainee does an impressive rendition of Adele – though some of the trainees aren't confident in their English, and eventually they start switching to Tagalog, also known as Filipino. The girl next to me takes it upon herself to translate.

## MORE ABOUT THE PHILIPPINES

The Philippines is a country consisting of 7,641 individual islands covering around 300,000 square kilometers. It is the world's twelfth most populous country, with over 110 million people.



The country's official languages are Filipino and English. Locals will typically speak Filipino among themselves, though most speak English conversationally, if not fluently.

The Philippines has capacity to hold around 45,000 people in prison, though it currently holds over 170,000, resulting in extreme overcrowding.

'Your odour is good. It makes my heart ouch,' she says. I'm sure a better translation would be 'You smell so good it hurts my heart,' but I get the gist. There's a lot of giggling among the young women while they're singing and translating, but eventually I get to see why they are in the room. In the Philippines, like most south-east Asian countries, your family is allowed to bring you food in prison. The prison is currently on lock-down, meaning visits are cancelled, but food is still allowed in. One by one, visitors start bringing bags of food into the room I am in, and the trainees form an assembly line. Most of them have kitchen scissors. They start opening the containers of food for people in custody, and cutting up pieces of meat to see if there is any contraband hidden inside. Containers of rice are prodded thoroughly with plastic utensils. Something I notice immediately is that there is absolutely no tension between any of the guards and the mostly older women, who are presumably delivering food for their sons in custody. The women delivering food and the supervising officer talk cordially in Tagalog and share laughs. I ask the supervising officer whether any kind of food is prohibited. "No fruit," he tells me, because it can be used to make alcohol, and also no processed food, no shellfish, and no internal organs like intestines, which are otherwise common in Filipino food. He explains that they've found contraband in intestines brought into the prison before. One of the trainees continues to sing during the entire food-searching process, though this no longer appears to be solely for my benefit.



Eventually, I'm met by Alma Arguelles, the prison's chief welfare officer, who takes me through to their lounge area, named the Nelson Mandela Lounge. There are many photos of Mandela in the room, along with quotes I would never expect to see inside an Australian prison. "A nation should not be judged by how it treats its highest citizen, but its lowest ones," one reads. Alma, a friendly woman, explains that she was a teacher first, before applying to become the chief welfare officer at Davao City Jail, which puts her in charge of 2,700 PDLs. The BJMP uses the term 'Person Deprived of Liberty' or PDL for short, rather than "prisoners" or the horrendous, demoralising term we use in Australia: Offenders. This was explained to me during the Zoom meeting when I first applied for approval to enter the prisons. "When you go into the prisons, do not call the people inside prisoners," the senior officer told me. "It's dehumanising, and they still deserve respect even though they are in prison. You must call them PDLs."

Alma's previous history as a teacher shines through her persona. She says she is the only senior female officer in the Philippines who has her office inside the actual jail, where PDLs can visit her directly. Later she shows me this office, and the PDLs indeed treat her with enormous respect, typically referring to her as 'Mum,' in a way that sounds genuinely affectionate rather than forced. "The PDLs are all my children. I love them," she tells me with a warm smile. "I am not here to judge them. I believe there are two sides to every story, and jail is a time for thinking about the future, not the past. We can't change the past but we can change the future." One of the ways they do this is through arts and crafts, or what the BJMP call livelihood programs. The BJMP promotes the artworks made in prisons in galleries and even shopping malls. This includes weaved bags and paintings. For some reason, making money boxes is particularly prevalent at this prison. They are made on an assembly line. One person does the epoxy, another paints the boxes. Newest recruits are given the task of cutting the tubes to size, which is the easiest part. The livelihood program also makes trophies, as well as game boards such as darts and chess. Most of the products made are ordered from outside the prison. Alma tells me the programs are designed so that people in custody can still support their families from inside.

She brings two PDLs to meet with me. Jong is a political science graduate. He teaches all subjects to other PDLs in the prison now. "Except math," he tells me. "I hate math!" He works weekdays, and also participates in the art programs to make money, using the funds to give to his family and to buy hygiene products for himself. Jong learned to draw when he was young. Making the coin banks with epoxy, however, is something he learnt in prison from staff. "We are not just doing this for ourselves," he tells me, "but for the whole prison." The profits are also spent on materials, and are divided among all the people who make art, he tells me. "Making art helps keep me busy, and also stops me from missing my family so much.

I love art because I can express my own ideas, whatever I want. I base my art on my imagination. I do not copy things. I like to encourage all my fellow PDLs to make art. It's a big thing for me, you can do it by yourself, and you can influence others too. This is my second time in prison. The last time I did not do art. I saw the difference the livelihood program was making to other people, so I volunteered to be trained in it. I love it, I think it will help me not to come back a third time. You cannot just depend on one skill, it is much better to have plenty of skills. Having many will help you not come back to jail."

The second PDL I meet is Dave. He is 38 and completed a fine arts degree about ten years ago. He was a full-time artist before coming to custody, painting about nine hours a day, mostly on commission. In 2017, he was actually hired to paint the outside walls of this very prison. At the time, he never thought he'd end up inside those walls. He now does some small murals in cells, mostly using pencil and crayon, even though he's not sure if this is technically allowed. Dave makes all forms of artworks, using acrylics, pastels and whatever he can get his hands, but resources are limited. "Paper and pens are expensive to get here," he says. I ask if Dave has any art he can sell me. He asks Alma if he can go back to his cell. Minutes later, he returns with five drawings. He also has two paintings, the only two he has been able to do in his four months here due to a lack of materials. "I wish I could do more are in here," he tells me. "It's good for me. Art is a self-expression, and an escape. It's a reflection of God. It heals, and it saves a lot of lives. I feel alive when I make art." I buy all of Dave's drawings and one of his paintings, hoping he can use the money to buy more materials to continue his passion.



*One of the drawings I purchased from Dave. You can see more of his art on Instagram @ibaodabo*

My time at Davao City Jail ends, but four days later I arrive at the larger Manila City Jail for my second and final prison tour in the Philippines. Manila City Jail is larger than Davao, occupying 2.1 hectares, and is more prominently located in the city. Several officers accompany me on a thorough tour of the prison. I'm shown a video on the prison's history – construction began in 1847 and was completed in 1865 – and am even given a tour of the museum, located within the prison. The whole time I'm in the museum, PDLs outside are curiously watching me through the windows. Among other things, there's a display case of confiscated makeshift weapons. They're mostly shivs similar to what I saw in custody myself, but a couple things really catch my eye. A fully functional revolver and semi-automatic pistol, but there's also a set of playing cards, hand-made from cardboard. Confused, I ask why this is in here. The officer leading my tour, Elmar, explains that anything that can be used to gamble is contraband in Filipino prisons. There are also homemade tattoo guns in the cabinet. Elmar explains the livelihood programs are intended to transform the creativity of people who make contraband items into something more constructive.



*Contraband confiscated from inside the prison. Note handguns on left, and playing cards bottom right.*

Some things not allowed in Australian prisons are allowed here, though. The museum contains artworks showing the logos of the prison's four gangs. Almost everyone in prison in the Philippines is a member of one of them. There's the Bahala Gang, whose logo is surprisingly a Viking, as well as the Commandos, Sputnik, and the Batang City Gang. "We're not trying to promote the gangs by showing their art," Elmar tells me, "but we need to acknowledge them and their history here." Some prisons do not allow this, but Manila seems to have taken a sensible approach. "How could we ban the gangs anyway? We can't," continues Elmar, 'we can only try and manage their behaviour.'



Those not in a gang are referred to as Querna, which translates as "unaffiliated." They make up about 5% of the prison's population. People are housed in the prisons according to their gangs, or lack thereof, and the section for

quernas is deliberately larger so as to encourage people to leave gangs and move there. Despite the fact that almost everyone is a gang member, PDLs tell me that violence in the prison is low. Elmar confirms he's only witnessed one gang riot in his eight years at this prison. The top floor of the museum, which doubles as a functioning watchtower, also contains a fully operational garrote, a device that was previously used for executions in the Philippines. A stray cat walks through the watchtower while I'm being shown how the garrote works.



*Officer Elmar shows Damien the garrote. The collar, which Elmar is touching with his hand, is placed around a sitting person's neck. As the screw at the back is tightened, it crushes the brain stem. People were still being executed by garrote in the Philippines in the early 20th century.*

From the top floor, I can see all five sections of the prison for the gangs and quernas. There's also a much smaller section in the distance. "That is for the LGBT persons," Elmar tells me. "There are 97 there. We separate them if they want as some receive abuse and harassment, but also to stop them doing sex work." The small section for LGBT PDLs is painted pink. From the guard tower, I can also see something I was previously told about. The prison is in the centre of the city, and the slums around it have built houses that are now higher than the prison walls. "This makes it too easy for people to throw contraband into the prison," Elmar explains. The prisons have complained about this issue many times, but there is a lack of interest from the government to do anything about it.



*Officer Elmar and Damien on the outside of the watchtower. One of the cell blocks is visible in the bottom right, and Manila city in the background.*





*Damien Linnane meets Manila City Jail warden Soriano*

Coming down from the museum, I meet with the prison warden, Lino Montano Soriano. Among other things, I tell him that people held in Australian prisons, including those on remand who have not been convicted of any crime, are referred to by our prisons and prison staff as “offenders.” He frowns. “That sounds very judgemental,” he says. “We call them PDLs because they are only deprived of liberty for the meantime.” While conditions here are much more overcrowded than Australia – this prison is designed for 1,182 people but currently houses 3,800 – I’m continuously amazed at some of the common-sense things the prisons do better here than in Australia.

Before going to see the arts program, I walk past the mobile tuberculosis-screening clinic, which is currently seeing people. Once a year, each PDL is checked for tuberculosis. I’m shown the prison bakery, the tailor shop, before being taken to the barbershop and massage room. Massage by PDLs is charged at 100 pesos an hour for visitors to the prison (about AUD 2.80), and 50 pesos for other PDLs. All PDLs are allowed to have actual cash, in order to purchase services like haircuts. The barbershop also offers hair dyeing, but only in black. “You cannot get bright red like your hair,” Elmar jokes with me. I’m also shown an educational class where about 30 PDLs are being trained in how to do massage. Later, I see the conjugal visits area, containing two small rooms with single beds where PDLs are allowed to have sex with people they were already in relationships before being imprisoned. There are only two rooms and 3,800 prisoners though, so each PDL is only allocated 20 minutes in there with their partner at a time.

Eventually, I’m taken to what I most wanted to see: the prison art program. In this room, many PDLs are hard at work making jewellery and key-chains out of beads. Also on display are screen-printed bags, lamp stands made from paper, and purses made from recycled coffee bags.

The art centre has many impressive paintings on the wall, and one painter hard at work on a commissioned portrait.

His name is Dandy and he paints here every day, usually finishing one painting a week, typically commissioned from photos. Dandy is 44 and has painted since childhood. He worked as a tattoo artist prior to his arrest, and hopes to return to this job once he is released. He tells me that art helps give him a living, with money for food and hygiene products. It also helps keep him productive.



*Inspecting crafts and paintings made at Manila City Jail.*

“I develop more talent in here. Outside there is a lot of influence for doing drugs, but in here I can just focus on painting,” he tells me. His works, and others, line the walls. All of Dandy’s art supplies are provided by the jail. Custom orders are sent into the prison, and then finished artworks are posted out. The price of paintings is left up to the officers, but Dandy receives 60% of the sale. The rest is used to buy new materials. Most of Dandy’s paintings are typical portraits, but there’s three abstracts that look different from the rest. I came here hoping to find an artwork I could use as the cover of the next issue of *Paper Chained*, and upon seeing them I immediately know one is the painting I’m going to be using for that. I leave the prison with a bag of prison handicrafts in one hand, Dandy’s painting rolled up in the other, and a fascination for what I’ve learned in my short time inside Filipino jails.



*Dandy wearing the standard yellow uniform of PDLs. Photos of PDLs are not allowed to show their faces.*

# WHAT WE DO TO SURVIVE

BY ANNA FISCHER, FOUNDER OF TRAUMA SENSITIVE LAW

In the last issue of *Paper Chained*, we covered how unresolved trauma in our past can make us more vulnerable to something called emotional dysregulation.

Emotional dysregulation is what happens when a certain part of the brain gets over-activated, causing us to feel either very strong emotions or to feel very little to no emotion. We also discussed how emotional dysregulation restricts our ability to think clearly, to plan things out, to understand other people when they speak to us, and more. In this issue, we're outlining a couple of scientifically proven self-regulation exercises that can bring you back into control over dysregulated emotions very quickly.



First, we'll outline a "down-regulation" exercise: Progressive Relaxation. Down-regulation exercises bring us back into control when we're going too "high" in our emotions, such as when we feel overwhelming anger, panic, or grief. To practice Progressive Relaxation, mentally scan each area of your body, typically starting at your head and moving downward to your toes. As you go, try to intentionally relax the muscles in each area of your body. For example, I might start with my head and realise I've been furrowing my eyebrows, so I relax them. As I move down to my neck, I intentionally release the tension in my neck muscles before going to my shoulders, and so on until my whole body is relaxed. When done carefully, this simple practice will help rebalance the levels of stress hormones in your brain, helping you regain access to restricted brain functions.

The other exercise is an up-regulation technique, designed to shift your brain and body out of a potential shut-down state when you feel strong fatigue or numbness coming on. The exercise is called Breath of Fire, a rapid breathing technique that will produce a lot of physiological energy in the body in a short time. First, you contract your abdominal muscles very hard and very quickly so that all of your air gets pushed out through your nose. An automatic inhale will occur after each abdominal contraction. If you're doing it right, it will look and feel like a bunch of fast-paced, miniature sneezes. The goal is to have two or three "fire breaths" each second. Three to five rounds of about 20 breaths are recommended for effective up-regulation. However, it's not recommended for pregnant women and those with abdominal sensitivities, so use with caution.

There are many different self-regulation techniques that can help you get back into the driver's seat of your brain. Mastering even one or two can help you keep your mind and body calm and controlled.



## FINANCIAL HELP FOR YOUR FRIENDS AND FAMILY TO VISIT FROM THE COMMUNITY RESTORATIVE CENTRE

Do you have family or friends who travel a long way to visit you, and struggle to cover the cost of travelling? CRC manages a program that is funded by Corrective Services NSW to assist people who are travelling 100 kms or more for visits to prisons in NSW. It is not intended for the purpose of transporting you home when you are released, but helps you to maintain family ties and connection during the time you are imprisoned.

So how does the travel assistance program work?

Unfortunately, we are not able to pay any expenses upfront before the visit day. Your relative needs to keep tax receipts for everything they would like to claim for, which can be:

- Petrol or diesel
- Train and bus tickets
- Taxi fares from the closest public transport to prisons where no local public transport is available, such as Wellington, Clarence, Mannus and others.

If it takes more than three hours to travel by whichever method of transport they are using, your relative can also claim up to \$110 towards the cost of a night in a local motel or similar, so they don't have to make the whole long journey in one day.

If you have a family member or friend who needs additional help with travelling, we are happy to speak to them about how we can provide a little extra help. Examples of this may include families travelling with babies or young children, or people with a disability who would be unable to travel long distances without several breaks.

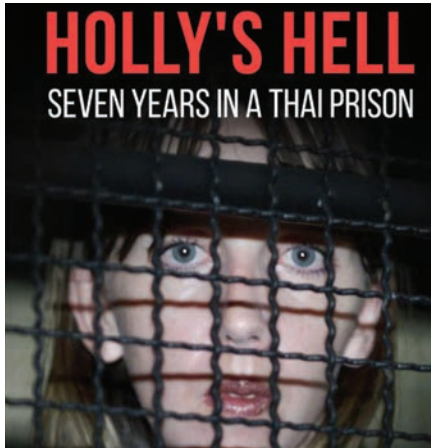
Your loved one should send their application in to CRC as soon as possible after their visit, including all the tax receipts. We then send some money to their bank account. Tax receipts for petrol are simply the till receipt the cashier gives you when you buy fuel. For public transport, the ticket is a tax receipt, and motels can provide a tax receipt when booking, or on request when your relative stays there.

Your relatives can make a travel assistance claim once every 12 weeks. Please tell your visitors about the travel assistance program if they are in financial hardship and would like some help with covering the cost of visits. They can call us to ask any questions on (02) 9288 8700, between 9am and 5pm Monday to Friday.



# IN THE NEXT ISSUE

ISSUE 20 DUE FOR RELEASE IN DECEMBER 2025



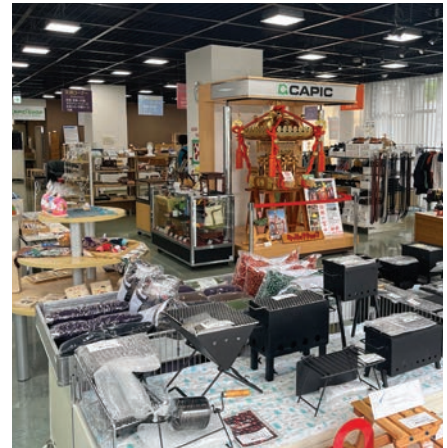
## HOLLY DEANE-JOHNS

You read a review of her book, *Holly's Hell*, in issue 18. In issue 20, we'll speak to Holly directly about her seven years in a Thai prison.



## SEODAEMUN PRISON

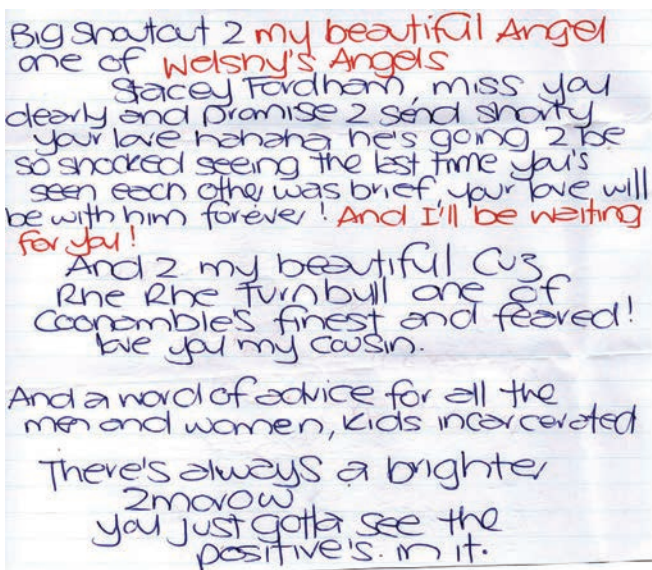
*Paper Chained* visits Seodaemun Prison History Hall in Korea, a former prison that now operates as a memorial museum.



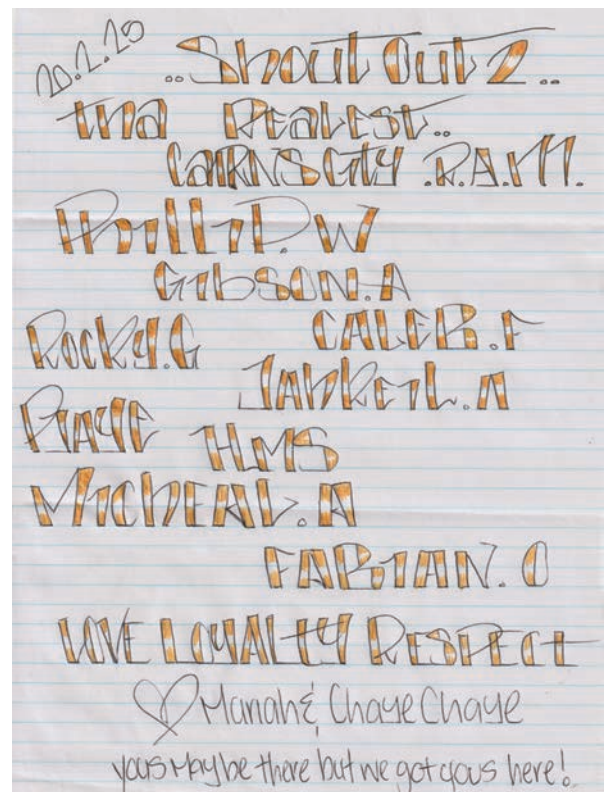
## PRISON CRAFTS FROM JAPAN

*Paper Chained* visits CAPIC, a store in Tokyo dedicated entirely to selling crafts and goods made by people incarcerated in Japanese prisons.

# SHOUT-OUTS



By Dwayne Welsh



By Mariah Pitt



