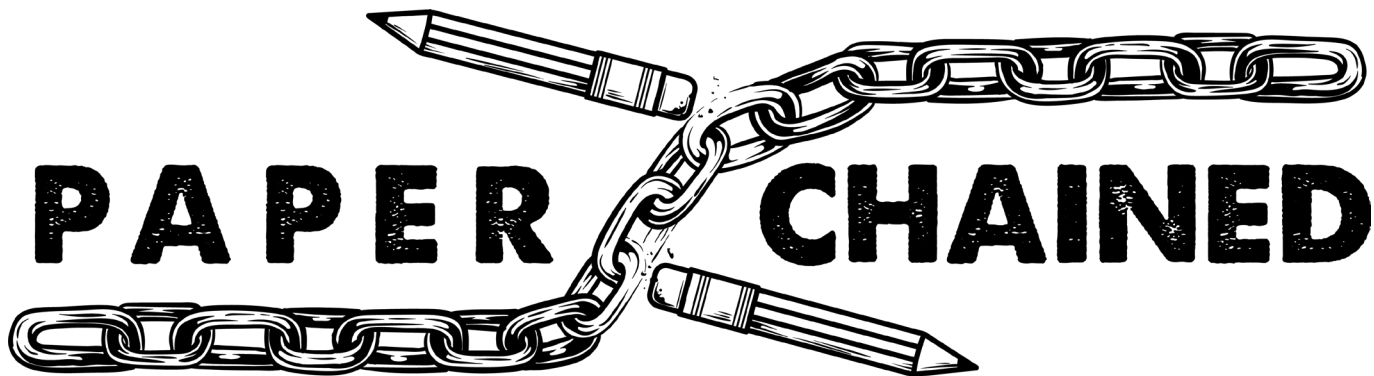


A JOURNAL OF EXPRESSION FROM BEHIND BARS

PAPER CHAINED





PAPER CHAINED



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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.



WHAT'S ON THE INSIDE

Paper Chained is a not-for-profit journal posted free to incarcerated people, funded primarily by the Community Restorative Centre. This issue is also made possible through the generous sponsorship of 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 also specify if you would like your contributions to be anonymous. If you choose to publish under your own name, please specify if you do not want the postal details of your prison published alongside your contribution.

If you are currently in prison and would like to receive a posted copy of the journal, please provide us with your name, MIN/ID number, and postal address. 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 presented in the journal. *Paper Chained* reserves the right to edit contributions for grammar, length, clarity and to excise any stigmatising language. Please advise us if you are not open to your contribution being edited in any way.

Copyright for art and writing is retained by the contributor. Contributors are free to have any of their work that is published in *Paper Chained* republished elsewhere at a later date. However, please advise us if submitted contributions have previously been published elsewhere.

Please be aware that due to limited printing space and other logistical concerns, contributions received may not necessarily appear in the next issue of *Paper Chained*, and may be held on file for subsequent issues.

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

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WE WELCOME CONTRIBUTIONS FROM:

PRISONERS

EX-PRISONERS

FAMILY OF PRISONERS

Post submissions to:
Paper Chained
PO Box 2073
Dangar NSW 2309
Australia

PAPER CHAINED

STAFF



DAMIEN LINNANE. EDITOR.

Damien was sentenced to two years' imprisonment in NSW in 2015 for burning down the home of a man accused of raping someone close to him. While in prison, he wrote a crime novel, *Scarred* (Tenth Street Press, 2019), and also taught himself to draw. Since his release, he has completed a masters degree in Information Studies, and has illustrated the book *This Is Ear Hustle* (Crown Publishing, 2021). In addition to working on *Paper Chained*, he is completing a PhD in law by publication, currently focusing on making Medicare available to people in prison.



DR JEDIDIAH EVANS. ASSOCIATE EDITOR.

Jedidiah Evans is a Lecturer in the Department of Writing Studies at the University of Sydney. He has published articles on U.S. literature and higher education, and is the author of *Look Abroad, Angel* (University of Georgia Press, 2020). Jedidiah runs a weekly writing workshop in a maximum-security prison in NSW, and his current research focuses on the impact of creative arts in prison. With colleagues at the University of Sydney, Jedidiah is working to develop collaborative learning opportunities between incarcerated students and university students.



KATIE FOX. GRAPHIC DESIGN.

Katie Fox is a graphic designer, writer, and accredited editor. Her lived experience has given her valuable insight into the impact of disadvantage on the person and its relation to crime, and into issues in the Australian criminal justice system that lead to injustice. She is currently working through a Bachelor of Laws (Hons), and has developed interest in human rights, intellectual property, and legal structures for social enterprise and not-for-profits. She is currently employed at Green Fox Studio, a creative agency operating a not-for-profit graphic design training studio through a maximum-security prison.

IRL PENPAL PROGRAM

LETTER WRITING TO PEOPLE IN PRISON

IRL Infoshop Letter Writing to People in Prison is a monthly social get-together, where we write to friends inside. If you would like to be written to by this group please send us a letter to

IRL Infoshop
PO BOX 549
Sunshine
VIC, 3020

with your name, ID number, prison address and a little bit about yourself. Please include interests and anything about you that would be useful for us to know (eg are you LGBTIQ+ and would like to write to someone who is LGBTIQ+).

We are interested in supporting people inside through writing, literature & art and hope to provide solidarity and connection.

On stolen lands of the Wurundjeri & Boon Wurrung Peoples of the Kulin Nation



University of
**Southern
Queensland**

Supporting Incarcerated Students

At UniSQ, we believe everyone should have the opportunity to access higher education. To support our incarcerated students, we've developed a selection 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 is available in the Offline Enterprise Platform or the Offline Personal Device. This 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:

- communicating with UniSQ
- applying and enrolling
- assignment submission
- coordination and facilitation of exams
- referral to a career development practitioner
- accessing resources that will help inform your career decision making

Are you unsure if studying a university program is right for you? We've developed a series of workbooks called *Unlocking a Future Career*, which is 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.

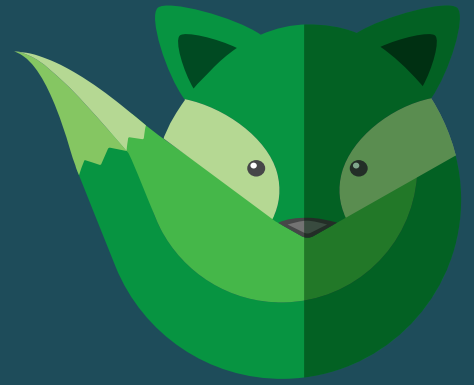
The programs you can choose from include:

- Tertiary Preparation Program (TPP)
- Associate Degree Business and Commerce
- Certificate of University Studies
- Diploma of University Studies
- Bachelor of General Studies (Management, Journalism and Social Sciences disciplines).

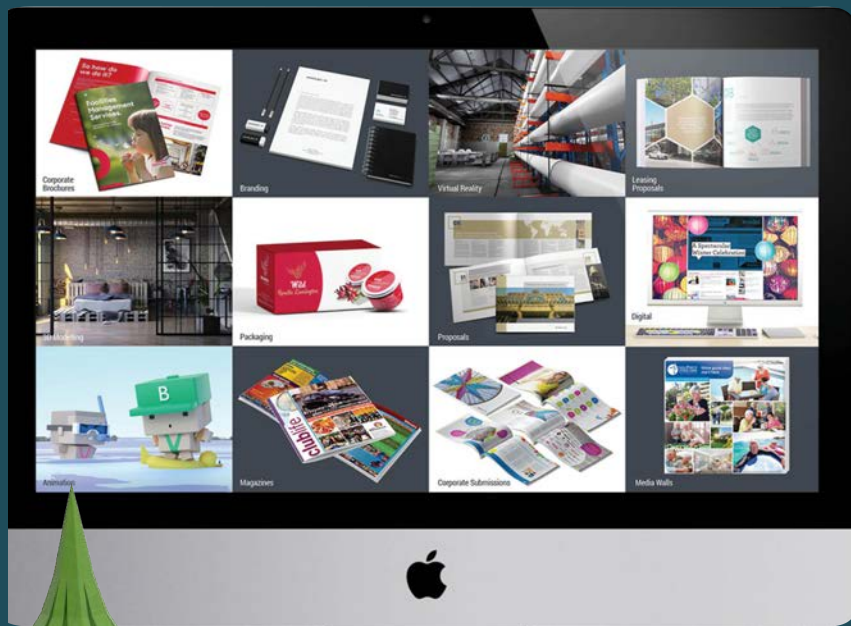
Not all courses within these programs are available in a correctional centre, and unfortunately not all correctional centres can facilitate students studying at a tertiary level.

For further information, and to talk about enrolling, please talk to your Education Officer.

GREEN FOX TRAINING STUDIO



- 🌿 Are you **creative or artistic**?
- 🌿 Do you **want to learn computer skills**?
- 🌿 Would you **like a new career**?



We're looking for new students!

You could learn graphic design, digital skills, 3D modelling and animation, professional skills, and writing and editing.

If you're a woman leaving prison

in Brisbane or Melbourne, you may be able to participate in our free community-based program after your release.

greenfoxstudio.com.au

Contact our friendly foxes for more info at: manager@greenfoxstudio.com.au

NONE OF US ARE FREE UNTIL ALL OF US ARE FREE POEMS FROM THE INSIDE #3

Opportunity to get your poetry or short story published

Incendium Library and Press is a collectively run community library and reading room with a focus on critical literature.

We are calling for submissions of poetry or short stories by people who are or have been in prison. We will publish the works in a booklet. All proceeds will be donated to solidarity projects for people inside prison and post-release.

The first and second edition of *None Of Us Are Free Until All Of Us Are Free - poems from the inside #1 and #2* sold out in a few hours! \$500 was donated to Inside Out newsletter for #2.

Submission Guidelines:

- Writing does not need to be explicitly political, it can be about whatever you want
 - Please include a suggested title
- Contributions may be anonymous, or you are welcome to include your name or pseudonym so we can credit you
- Remember to include a prison address if you would like a free copy of the book (or an address on the outside)
- Please include a return address if you would like us to let you know we have received your contribution and for correspondence about the program
 - You may submit as many pieces as you like (though not all are guaranteed inclusion)
 - No length restrictions

Terms of Publication:

Works will be selected by Incendium Library and Press collective, we will let you know if and which of your works have been selected for publishing
We will format all work for the booklet

Contributions will be typed exactly as the original is written unless you indicate "please edit" in your entry. We will then be happy to correct any spelling or grammar errors, however we do not feel that perfect spelling and grammar are in any way necessary

We will not publish any contributions that directly or indirectly contain: racism, sexism, transphobia, nationalism, xenophobia, ableism or any other form of oppressive language

Submission deadline: May 2023, likely to be released early 2024

Submissions accepted to incendiumradicallibrary@gmail.com

or

Anne-lise at Incendium Library
PO Box 549
Sunshine, 3020
Victoria



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 assisting in liaison with legal firms and lawyers to minimise fears of the processes 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 and is available to answer any questions and work flexibly with each survivor based on meeting the best outcome for their individual circumstances.

Call or write to us on the details provided for an obligation-free chat.

About Time For Justice want to pay their respects to the elders of First Nations people, past and present, wherever this magazine is read.



**PO Box 1182
Kingscliff, NSW 2487**
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QLD: 07 4911 3237
NT: 08 7918 0817
AboutTimeForJustice.com
@abouttimeforjustice

JAILBREAK RADIO

In this issue of *Paper Chained*, Editor Damien Linnane interviews Kate Pinnock, producer of *Jailbreak Radio*.



Thanks for talking to us today Kate. To start, can you tell me how long *Jailbreak* has been around for?

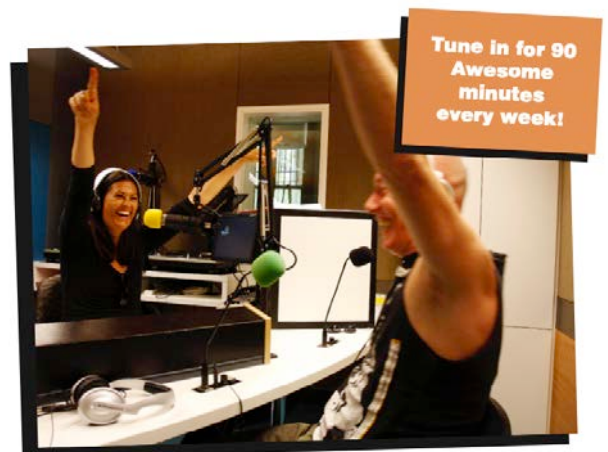
I think we started in 1997. I do know *Jailbreak* is the longest, continuous running prison radio program in Australia, and I think in the world too. There were programs that started earlier that have since closed down, but I'm certain we're the longest running worldwide, because I've recently attended a prison radio conference in Norway in which many countries participated, and where we celebrated how radio is such a unique and special medium for supporting people in custody all over the world. We had attendees from Israel, Argentina, a huge contingent from the US, including the King and Queen of prison podcasting, Nigel Poor and Earlonne Woods from *Ear Hustle*. They actually presented at the conference. What came out of the conference mostly was how there are different types of radio programs, but they're all achieving the one aim, which is supporting people in jail. Letting people in jail know there's someone on the outside thinking of them, and of course, some of the radio programs are actually run inside prison, which is what we'd ideally like to do with *Jailbreak* one day.

What made you want to get involved with prison radio?

I started with *Jailbreak* back in 2009. I love radio. I'd listen to it all day long if I could. I think my passion for it started when my dad used to read stories to me as a kid. Being read to is one of the simplest and most joyful pleasures in the world. So radio stories have always been part of my life. I started

working in health - I'm a registered nurse - but then I had a mid-life change to journalism and studied radio. I volunteered with 2SER radio in Sydney, and *Jailbreak* of course is one of their programs. The role of producing *Jailbreak* became vacant, and I just knew it was something that I'd love to do.

As a nurse I thought I knew a lot about lives and people's situations, but I have to say, when I learnt about being in custody in the prison system, and heard people's stories, I've learnt so much, and I'm so grateful for the people who have shared stories with me for so long. It's given me such an understanding of how people end up in jail, and of the whole jail experience, the trauma of jail, and the struggles that people have. I feel very privileged to be able to do this job.



I've seen that photo of you and Ice Cube. Can you tell me about how you got him to appear on *Jailbreak*?

I think that was one of my proudest moments of prison radio. I happened to be in Canberra, and he was doing a concert there. And if there's someone who I think our *Jailbreak* listeners would like to hear from, I will always try to reach out to them. So I approached Ice Cube's agent, told him that there were 40,000 people in the prison system who were Ice Cube's biggest fans and would I be able to have some of his time backstage just to share his story. I didn't think he would say yes, but before I knew it, I was in his dressing room, a white, middle-class woman from the Northern Beaches, and I had to just wing it. It went well. I got him talking about his experiences being in jail himself, I asked him to share what it was like. He was just amazing, he was a really switched-on person, and completely identified with people in jail, especially Aboriginal people. He knew straight away why I was asking him to talk to our listeners, and I always think

that fact in itself was really amazing. Everyone who's been in prison has this inherent understanding of what other people are going through in there. It's like you've almost been in a war, in terms of the shared trauma of jail. He shared his thoughts and emotions and gave some really positive messages. It wasn't a long interview, only about 15 minutes, but I still often play that interview when I go into prisons as an example of how someone's story can really resonate with and inspire people, and give them hope, which is so important for people in jail. Some people say to me, 'when I was in jail, I never heard hope', so I think it's so important to hear other people's stories and to hear that you can turn your life around.



What do you want people to share when they come on the program?

I really admire people who come on the program, because essentially by asking people to share their story, we are effectively asking them to get up publicly on radio and tell people about how they stuffed up in life, to talk about some of the most awful parts of their lives, all the trauma they've experienced. I really respect the courage of anyone who is willing to do that. People who come on the program are some of the most courageous people I've ever met.

How can people get in touch to appear on the *Jailbreak*, and what advice would you give them?

So the way to get in touch with *Jailbreak* is to ask welfare or your SAPO to contact us, tell them to give us a call or email me at kate.pinnock@crcnsw.org.au. You can tell your family to get in touch with me on your behalf too. Families are welcome to appear on the program as well. If you're on the inside, you can also write us a letter (*address below*). I read and answer all letters, but sometimes it takes me a while to reply. If you want me to come to your prison, I can visit any centre in NSW, and possibly other states too. I welcome any readers to make contact. And those of you in NSW, look out for the link on your tablet system. Hopefully you'll be able to listen to many episodes of *Jailbreak* directly on your tablet soon. In the meantime, if you can't tune in to *Jailbreak* wherever you are, I'd encourage you to write to your local community radio station and ask for them to start airing *Jailbreak*.

JAILBREAK BROADCASTING TIMES AND STATIONS

Broadcast Area	Radio Station	Broadcast Schedule
Sydney	Koori Radio 93.7 FM	Mondays 10 PM, Sundays 11 PM
Melbourne	3CR 885 AM	Fridays 10.30 AM
Canberra	2XX 98.3 FM	Wednesdays 10 AM
Broken Hill	2 DRY FM	Mondays 9 PM
Bathurst, Orange and the Central West	92.3 FM & 94.7 FM	Thursdays 10 PM
Nowra Bay & Basin	92.7FM	Saturdays 9.30 PM
Kempsey	TANK FM	Fridays 11.30 PM
Castlemaine	94.9 MAIN FM	Sundays 11 PM
On Demand	2SER	Podcasts

GETTING IN TOUCH

Inmates can write to:
Jailbreak, 2SER PO Box 123 Broadway NSW 2007

Welfare and Family can also email:
jailbreak@2ser.com

ART AND WRITING CONTRIBUTIONS

Custom lighter holders by:

Shannon Norton 1418240
Acacia Prison, Locked Bag 1
Wooroloo, WA 6558

Editor's note:

Cigarette lighters and smoking-related items are not contraband in Western Australian prisons, where these artworks were created.



PTSD FROM JAIL

I read in a book, *The Body Keeps the Score* by Bessel Van Der Kolk, about a study done in 1984 on learned helplessness in animals. In this study, researchers repeatedly administered painful electric shocks to dogs who were trapped in locked cages. Here's an excerpt from the book:

"After administering several courses of electric shock, the researchers opened the doors of the cages and then shocked the dogs again. A group of control dogs who had never been shocked before immediately ran away, but the dogs who had earlier been subjected to inescapable shock made no attempt to flee, even when the door was wide open – they just lay there, whimpering and defecating. The mere opportunity to escape does not necessarily make traumatized animals or people, take the road to freedom. Like the dogs, many traumatized people simply give up. Rather than risk experimenting with new options they stay stuck in the fear they know."

Reading this description instantly made me think of all of us in jail. The trauma, the head miles. Breakups, dead friends, and dead relative's funerals you can't even attend. Trying to deal with this while locked in a tiny cage all alone. For some, they are bashed and even raped in that tiny cage too. No escape from it all. Trapped. And then one day the gates are opened and we just don't care anymore.

In my own case, since I have been in jail, I have been put on escitalopram, an anti-depressant. And prazosin, which has recently started being used as an alpha blocker to prevent nightmares associated with PTSD. I was never on these medications before prison. Normally I'd seek out some counseling for my problems. So when I had a psych nurse appointment, I asked whether I could get therapy. I was told no. Corrections does not provide intensive counseling for trauma/PTSD, even if that trauma occurred in prison. But they said I do need counseling and should seek it out when I am released from prison. So ten years of no therapy for my traumatic journey. Then I will be released, a traumatized ex-con who is now the community's problem to fix. I again thought of something I read in that book, this time on veterans of war.

Here's the excerpt:

"They insisted that I had to be part of their newfound unit and gave me a marine captain's uniform for my birthday. In retrospect that gesture revealed part of the problem: you were either in or out - you either belonged to the unit or you were nobody. After trauma the world becomes sharply divided between those who know and those who don't. People who have not shared the traumatic experience cannot be trusted, because they can't understand it. Sadly, this includes spouses children and co-workers."

This is what we are carrying out the door with us. The new, post-prison us. And they expect us to reintegrate. Pick up where we left off. Rehabilitated and all fixed now.

PLASTIC GANGSTERS

The Plastic Gangster is a native animal of Victoria and as such is a protected species. Meaning they are kept in protected environments away from any real danger. Despite being highly aggressive, they are also extremely cowardly, and will flee at the first hint of danger. A Plastic Gangster can be easily identified by their posture. They stand and walk as if they are carrying very heavy objects in both hands and puff out their chests. Every Plastic Gangster wears extremely tight human clothing they have found somewhere. But researchers aren't sure why. Perhaps the easiest way to identify a Plastic Gangster though is by the distinctive facial markings in the shape of a tear under one eye.

Plastic Gangsters are carnivores and will hunt in packs, using ambush tactics to surprise and easily overpower their prey. They will then consume every part of the prey, leaving no trace. The main prey of Plastic gangsters are Rock Spiders. There have been very rare cases when a crazed and starving Plastic Gangster has attacked a Staunch Tott, but each time it has ended unsuccessfully.

Plastic Gangsters are thought to be a lesser off shoot of the Staunch Tott family of animals. They are to the Tott what a house cat is to a lion, so to speak, having neither the size nor the courage. It is not known how Plastic Gangsters reproduce, but researches surmise it is by cloning as the vast majority of Plastics look and sound the same.

Some Plastic Gangsters have been known to fashion crude tools for digging and poking. Their movements are similar to a monkey's, but the Plastic will go one step further and use the tools to poke at anything that upsets them. This behaviour is almost human-like, but the level of aggression is worrying. While in the protected environments, animal keepers try and domesticate the Plastics and remove this unfortunate trait. It is the hope of the animal keepers that the Plastic can be domesticated and kept as a family pet or used for menial labour. Though not at the intelligence level of a German Shepard, it has also been suggested that the Plastic could be used by dog handlers in the army, harnessing their aggression. But so far they have been found to be to easily startled and too cowardly for anything actually useful and prone to run off. It was also shown that they sniffed people's butts more than the dogs did. Due to this strange development, the Plastics were then used as a sort of sniffer dog, but they ate all the drugs they found, resulting in many overdoses. Research continues into a constructive use for these semi-intelligent creatures.

Writings by Stacey Stokes #208153

Langi Kal Kal Prison

Private Bag 4

Beaufort, Victoria 3373

Plastic Gangsters is an excerpt from a unpublished novella.

HEROIN, THE GREAT DESTROYER

A little weary, you started out young
You thought it was in til the nightmare begun
You loved the white powder, it didn't take long
And where were those friends, who'd been there all along?
Yeah, they're all dead
And everyone told you to unscrew your head
The people they warned you, they told you I know...
But you could not hear them, you wouldn't let go
The cramps and the horrors, one too much to bear
A parlour is safer, but you don't really care
The cars roll on by, a few jobs a night
You'll get your high
A hospital visit, they judged you still sane
So you went out and did it again and again
And sometimes you tried to give it away
If you were lucky, perhaps maybe a day
Then suddenly a screech, jax on the street
Your own sugar daddy, he'll make you a queen
He just wants a few photographs, not too much to request
So you have a big walk before you undress
Then comes the movies, he can't expect much more
You finally give in, just so you can score
They're all in it, the knobs, they're making top brass
For dope they'll bend over and kiss your ass!

Submitted by Teresa Michelle Hawkins

INSPIRED BY TEARS

The clock keeps ticking as time rolls over
Broken pieces falling, petals of a four leaf clover
20 milligrams of white to off white
Escitalopram, once daily noon or night
It does chip away at it, but it don't make it right
The system is like scurvy
Those in the system have gaping wounds
Shouldn't the system be like Vitamin C
Are we not the young and free?
No one is looking so I shed a tear ...
Oh snap ... all eyes on me ...
Um Winnie reds, Vic Bitter Beer and how's the footy last night?

Poetry by 'Belly', NSW

THE ROAD NEVER ENDS

Long distance bitumen under sun-fuelled heat
The shimmering vapors rising wraith-like
Along the phantom lake water mirages
Skeletal fragments bleached snow-white
Prone with bent legs and clawed fingers
As though desperately crawling toward a mock vision
That is the road which we travel,
And the road never forgets
Red dust earth blood seeps across time's landscape
Billowing, erupting into voluminous storm-driven sails
The parched, denuded ground gasping for sustenance
Denied as the rain-laden clouds retreat to infinity's lair
Lone stone chimney's record man's unwanted intrusion
Charred and scattered foundations stark in isolated relief
Then night's shadows snake eerily across the gravel ribbon
Cloaked in desert darkness, asphalt now long forgotten
All await the approaching dawn as sunlight probes the horizon
Gazing through the mists of night's vanishing silhouettes
There, shrouded in mystery, calling like sirens of the Odyssey
That is the road which we travel,
And the road never forgets

Written by DeWitt

As I witness my tears rolling down the bars of this cell window
So angry inside cause I am hurting so bad
I realise that I can only hug my pillow
Stuck in here alone I am coming out of my mind
On the borderline unpredictable blows like Kimbo
My life has direction now no longer in limbo

All of my eperiences in this life
Will now be used to benefit the lives of others
I once took a life that I cannot replace
But I can try to help influence people
To make better decisions in the first place
And not share in a regret that does not go away

Turning it all around
Energies no longer put to crime
Positivity into society I will compound
With the power of my life in experiential mind
Seeking for what I could not ask ever
Needing love like an animal in the RSPCA pound

Love is the greatest driving force infinity
Being human and in need
To hold, to feel that touch
In my ear, those words every morning and night
That touch my soul such delight
Happiness and love I hope in sight

Untitled poem by Luke Wentholt, Victoria



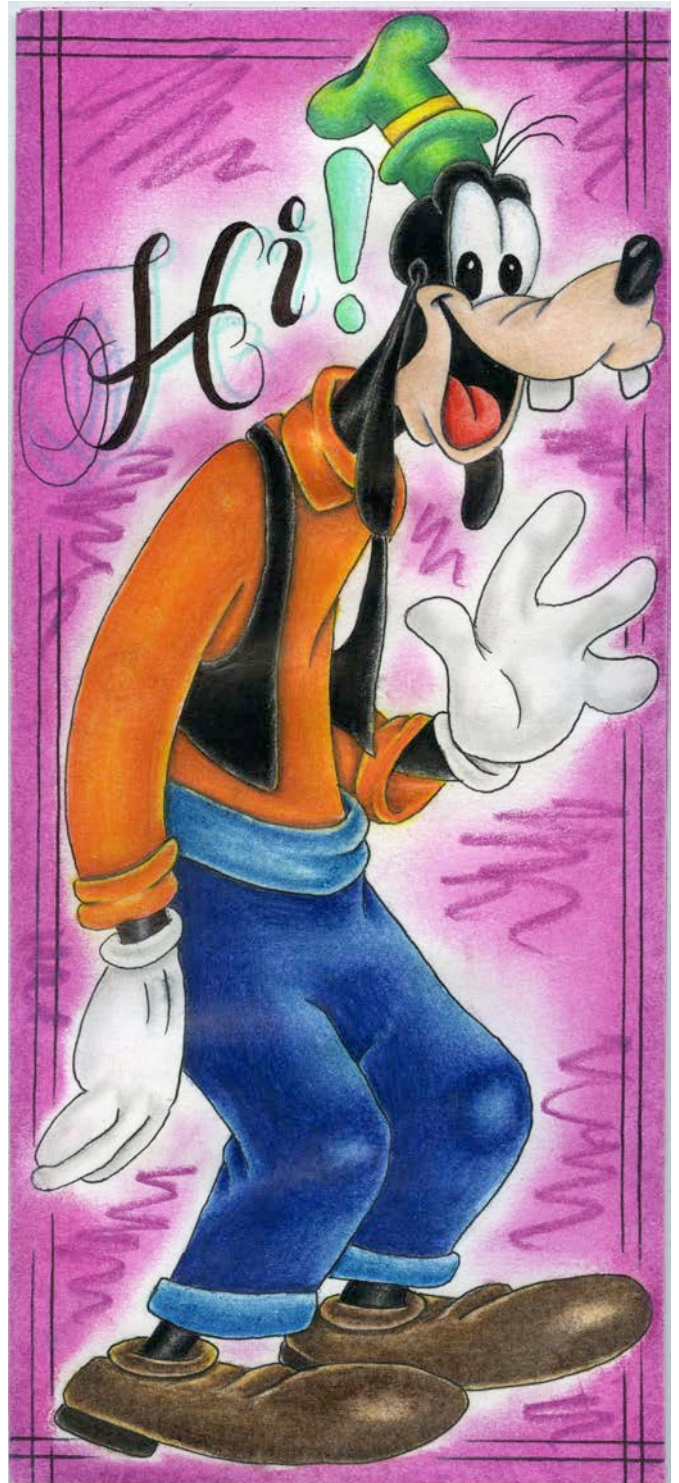
Artwork by David Frahn #170230
 Mount Gambier Prison
 PO Box 1498
 Mt Gambier, SA 5290



Artwork by Simon Evans #1833561
 Auckland Prison, Private Bag 50-124
 Albany, Auckland, 0752
 New Zealand

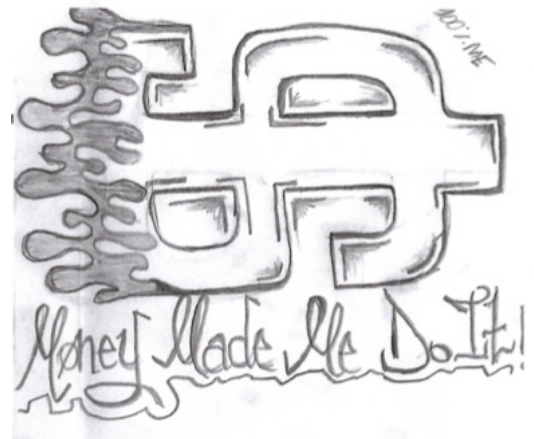
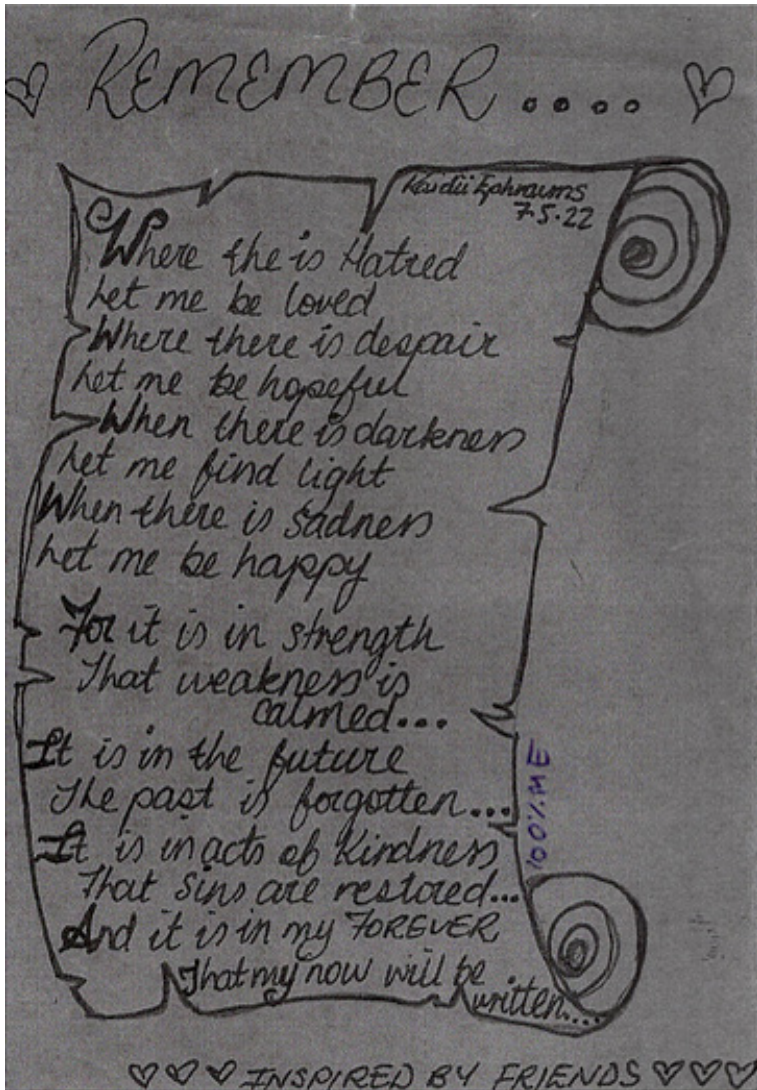


Artwork by Garry Davis, NSW

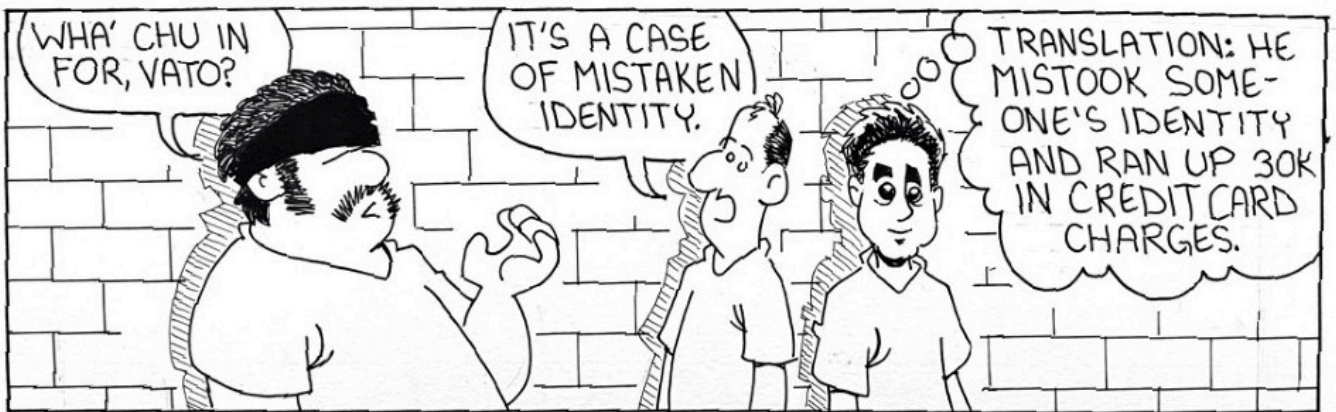


Artwork by Joe Salazar #1057110
Wynne Unit, 810 FM 2821
Huntsville, Texas, 77349, USA

*If you wish to write to Joe, be advised
that prisoners in Texas can only receive
white paper written on in black pen.
Do not include any other colours.*



Poetry and artwork by Kaidii Ephraums, D82947
TWCC, PO Box 5574
Townsville, QLD 4343



Comic by John E. Sacks, creator, writer, and illustrator of 'Diary of an Incarcerated Cartoonist'. © @john_e_sacks



Artwork by Sylvia Roberts



Artwork by Gena McBurney



Artwork by Nigel Gilliland
Woodford Correctional Centre
PMB 1, Woodford, QLD 4514

JUST SIT'N HERE

Just sit'n here in this prisoner's chair
Trying to decide
Where to go from here
With nothing but time
To remind....
Of the mistakes made
The heartaches gave
And the friendships they'd fade
Past the times we've made....

The shame of my life
Sending a lady to the grave
A life's time cut short
Because if it ain't life
It ain't long
And again I'm wrong
For not being strong
Long before becoming weak
Now I sit in this seat....
Doing ... L I F & E

Listening as those around
Speak like their yesterday
Never happened ...
Grappling in a past
For an identity trashed
At the cost of
Family separation
Crack-head generation
Street-life penetration....
Crying... "Who's messed up now?"

What will it take
To make it through
To get me to
Out there with you
Short of a breakthrough?

A kind that'll make others see
Through all the junk I used to be
To fill an emptiness inside of me

Meanwhile,
I'm still just sit'n here
In this prisoner's chair
Trying to decide
When will I get up from here
Trying constantly to not
Live in despair

Nothing to fear
Ideas out there
That can steer
In the right direction

I dare not fear
That I could be here
When the 'morrow is not promised....
So today I live
For the ones that can't

By Jeffery A. Shockley, USA

PUSHING LANGUAGE TO ITS LIMIT

The writer attempts to take language as far as it can go
There seems to be no limit to how they make the words flow
Creative beyond belief even when writing about the imaginary
They leave sentences suspended in the air like gravity

For the writer, the page is empty like outer space
Allowing them to go wherever they please on the universe's
face
Writing is like matter in that life revolves around it
Communication is music to our ears with harmony at a perfect
pitch

A language teacher was asked, can language be taken to its
limit and beyond
She said that it can be taken as far as the mind can expound
You have to exercise muscles that you've never used before
Lifting words from the depths of your psyche until you can't
find anymore

Choreograph the words so they can do a lyrical dance
Let them stand still long enough to make their stance
See how the sentences make their mind wonder
Mathematically written but yet not hard to solve like a
geometry number

Simple truths can be so well written
The pristine language will leave your mind smitten
The first thing that we learn is writing and arithmetics
We must take it to a higher level and push language to its
limits

HOW CAN I BE A TEACHER ALTHOUGH I'M STILL LEARNING?

Every teacher has to get their knowledge from another source
As students we just follow in their course
What we've learned from them can then be taught to others
Handed down to younger siblings from their sisters and
brothers

Knowledge is meant to be passed on
Of our legacy this will be the greatest milestone
It isn't something that we should squander
In our archives should be lessons that makes the mind ponder

I still have a lot to learn
In the process, millions of my brain cells will burn
While this is going on, I also have a lot to teach
There are thousands of people that I want my knowledge to
reach

Some people look for me to teach them a thing or two
I give them more lessons than a few
Teaching them also allows me to learn a lesson
Sharing our life experiences is a blessing

Every teacher has to be taught
In the web of learning we are caught
Knowledge is something for which I'll always be yearning
I will teach others although I am still learning

Writings by Bobby Bostic, USA

PIGEON PIE

The waiter rounded to our table
He said, 'What would you like?'
I said that I might try the fish
A little piece of Pike

He said, 'I'm very sorry
for the fish is off the menu
I have a nice hot pigeon pie
Be trying that then will you?'

'I've not had pigeon pie before
Not sure I'd like the taste'
He said, 'Please have the pigeon pie,
we must cook the thing in haste'

'Are the pigeons from the wild,' I ask
He sheepishly said 'Nay'
'Then where on earth did they come from?'
He didn't want to say

You've heard of all the blackbirds
Four and twenty in a pie
But this dumb chef had cooked the birds
Before they'd even died

He pushed the plate of pigeon pie
To ease my appetite
'I'll not be eating this,' I cried
'This birds still half in flight!'

He said, 'The taste will melt your mouth'
As he passed it by my nose
But the pigeon on the bottom
Was still wriggling its toes

I didn't want to argue
So I gave him fifty cents
I said, 'Tell me where they came from'
He said, 'Over my back fence'

'It's my neighbours flock he races
and they fly off very far
But when they find their way back home
They crap upon my car'

So if you're hankering for some country grub
and you're going out for dinner
Be wary of the pigeon pie
For you just might eat the winner

Written by D. Scott, Victoria

My door slowly opened, I saw it look in
I yelled out loud, there's no-one home
But it just kept coming, faster and faster
My cell was small, there was nowhere to hide
It hit me hard, it laid me flat
Covid, you bastard

Untitled poem by Steven P. Thompson, WA

IT'S JUST MY LIFE

My life seems to get harder and harder yeah, it's always full of drama. Maybe it's the karma from all the dogs that I've robbed I pumped it nonstop. Now I sit in a cell feeling like I'm in hell. Ahh, missin important moments in my son's life. Dealing with the fact my women could be fuckin' another guy. Ha, why do I have these toxic thoughts that run through my head? I just wanna lay down and go to bed instead.

My mind races, fuck always find myself pacing. Reminds me of the days I was chasing drugs, now I feel like a cunt cause its been 15 months since I gave my girl a hug. Ahh, she sticks fat but fuck how possibly long can I expect her to do that.

I'm waiting on a trial date that never seems to come. All because my mum threw me under the bus for something she knows I couldn't of done. Ha, maybe that's her way on getting me back from when I was a kid and I stopped her having a wack. I still remember her telling me to stick fat and go out the back with the bat and tell the drug dealers fuck off ya not getting ya cash.

As a kid my mother taught me to carry a shiv this i'll always remember cause she said I was a rule bender. But the coppers Ahh, they said I was a young offender, she was always out on drug benders, felt like I had to defend her rocking up at school with a busted nose and a black eye teachers asking me why and I'd straight out lie, tellin' em I fell off my bike. Ha, I didn't even own one. DOCS asking me how ya live at home son, I'd say I do alright, really I was dying inside terrified at night, nowhere to sleep only thing that kept me going was the sound of the beat and the music I now speak.

I'll be rapping Lo Life Public Enemies until the day I'm deceased, motherfuckers know I be a beast on these streets pumping out earns and committing crimes just to past the time, bring all these so called drug dealers to their knees. I'm tellin' ya give me five years i'll have kids worshiping me I'm like EasyE in his prime, just I'm young red-headed and white.

Rap written by Travis Wills, Victoria

Discouraged, forgotten and full of despair
Broken, lost, feel like nobody cares
You're not alone with all those desires
It's time to come together like a choir

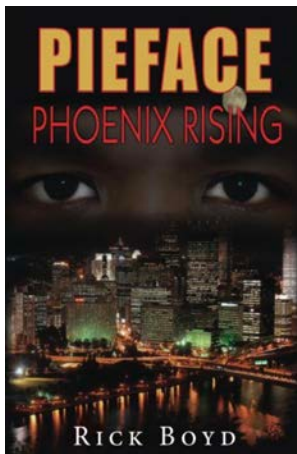
It's time to come together, time to unite
In a world where not everything is right
It's a world of both darkness and light
This is a world where I will fight

I will fight for injustice, I will fight what's wrong
For this is the world where I belong

Untitled poem by W. Mason, NSW

BOOKS WRITTEN IN PRISON

Want to check out what other people have written while in prison? Ask your education or library department to consider ordering a copy of the following books for your prison library.



Pieface: Phoenix Rising is the debut novel by the US prisoner Rick Boyd.

Richard Brooks, aka Pieface, was on a mission to end the cycle of poverty that had plagued his family from generation to generation, even if it meant sling-ing drugs and letting bullets fly. But as fast as he managed to wrap his hands around the city of Pittsburg's drug market, the unexpected happened. He was killed. Not physically, but judicially, through a sentence of life in prison. Years later, his nephew Royal Brooks assumes his name, and finds himself deeply embedded in a mental game of chess with the FBI. Will he break the cycle of poverty, or will history repeat itself?

Available from Amazon in both paperback and eBook format. Boyd is also the author of the novels *Back'Door Capitol* and *Butch*, and the childrens books *Big Brother* and *Ooowee*.



Dear Mama is one of several books written by the Missouri prisoner Bobby Bostic. After serving 27 years for an armed robbery committed when he was 16 years old, Bobby was released on parole in November 2022.

Enter the life of Diane "Dee-Dee" Brown, a woman who tried to overcome all the struggles, heartache, and pain of being a single mother. Read through the pages of the life of a girl who turned into a woman even before she saw the 'real world.' Here for the first time, Diane's personal story is told by her dear son vividly detailing her life and day-to-day existence. Dear Mama chronicles Diane, her family, and all others whom she loved and cared for. It is a must read book for every mother and child.

Available from Amazon in both paperback and as an eBook, alongside all Bostic's other non-fiction and poetry books.



Scarred, the debut book by *Paper Chained* editor Damien Linnane, was written by hand while he was incarcerated in NSW.

Jason Ennis doesn't understand why the world is such a confusing place. Why it's so difficult to read between the lines, so hard to understand what people want, such a struggle to fit in. Not that he isn't trying as he works a dead-end job and chips away at a degree that's going nowhere. But good things come to those who wait. Sometimes, when he least expects it, he gets a chance to make a real difference. To make the world a better place. By removing someone else from it. Someone who doesn't fit in with his standards of behaviour, someone who reminds him of how they scarred him as a child.

Published by Tenth Street Press. ISBN: 9780648480242. Available for order in paperback from Amazon, Australian bookstores, and library suppliers, as well as on most eBook platforms.

MY WORLD IS YOUR WORLD

BY DAVID UTTING

A lifetime of drug addiction, crime, imprisonment, mental illness, institutionalisation, and Christianity, what do they all have in common? This is the world I have lived my whole life in, and it is also the world I have left behind now. My name is David, I am 50 years old, and since I was first incarcerated at the age of 13, I have spent 27 years behind bars. I have used and abused every substance known to man, and I've been a teenage alcoholic, a dope smoker, a solvent sniffer, a heroin addict, a speed freak, a pill junkie, and a meth head. I spent about two years in and out of Longmore Boys Jail from between 13 and 18. Then I spent the first three years of a 12-year sentence in the notorious and brutal Fremantle Prison. While there, I was labeled with nearly every mental illness they could throw at me—psychotic, psychopathic, and extreme sociopathic tendencies, after being brutalised (beyond what I can write in here) and forced into those labels and convincing myself, my family, my friends and those around me that that is who I was, I was convinced I would live and die in jail, especially in those early years. After spending all my formative years behind bars, they prepared me for my release by handcuffing me and walking me through a crowded shopping centre into a waiting prison van. That was all the re-socialisation I received after serving a decade in jail.

I lasted two years before I was back in jail with another 6-year sentence. Back out again, I did well, I was out for nearly six years this time, but back in for another 10, with no parole this time, which meant no support. After three months out I knew I was in trouble, I couldn't survive out here, no way - no how, I wanted to stay out so I took myself off to see a psychologist. She was real good, but I couldn't understand the people in my own country, my own state, my own town, my own family, and I just couldn't understand their ways, I couldn't relate, I was more lost, more lonely, and more broken being outside than when I was in. I moved to a country town because I just couldn't handle the scope and the multitude of people and also to live with my one and only love of my life, but it took me away from my psychologist. My relationship took a nose dive because I didn't know how to converse or interact with women and I had also carried the baggage of all the men in jail and their relationships, and believe me, jail is one big misogynistic place. To learn how to treat a woman the way she deserves, don't learn it from bitter locked away men, but it is all I knew at the time and I applied it to this relationship. The one good thing I had going for me and I ruined it.

I went to the doctor's four times to get help, four different

psychs and counselors turned me away, telling me I was too intense and that my life was too intensely violent for them to deal with. There were no services or help for people that were like me. I gave it my best try, I gave it my all and this time I even recognised I was failing, I looked for help but there was none to be had for a 50-year-old retired criminal who spent his life in crime, drugs, and the violence that life brings, so I lasted four years this last time and now here I am again, back in a cell for three years, nine months in and nine months to go before parole, if they even give it to me that is. I am categorised as being a high risk of re-offending. Naturally, they don't know the man I am now, and instead of putting services on the outside into long-term incarcerated prisoners, it's made nearly impossible for us to get out—why waste the resources!

In those last four years I was out, 35 of my long-term brothers who I had known since I was 13 committed suicide, 35. Thirty-five, no matter how I say it or write it, the thought of that number chokes me up every time, and every time I talk to someone I haven't seen in a while, that number goes up by at least two. These facts and figures actually scared me when I came back in this time. I've never been suicidal before, but neither had my 35 brothers. We used to deride and mock those who had fallen by their own hand as a way to bolster ourselves against such a heinous and selfish act. Upon coming back, I began to think, "Is that my fate, is that how my life is meant to play out? To die pitifully like my brothers did, did I fight all my life to survive and just to be able to live and breathe to die a coward's death?" No, but I had to get to the bottom of these thoughts. I want to do more than just survive, I want to work out why I had become institutionalised and what it meant to me. Here are some of my thoughts.

When we come to jail at such an early age, all we have and all we know is our brothers inside. You build strong bonds living in adversity with people 24/7 for decades or more. To get through our time we have to put what goes on outside out of our hearts and minds. If we don't, we don't make it till our end date. As time goes by we grow from being boys with all the outside support from girlfriends, parents, family and community, to men with only support from family to middle-aged men who no-one supports because we are heart-sick and weary of our wayward lives, sick and tired of worrying if they will get that gut-wrenching phone call that their son is dead, so they have no choice but to withdraw from us. All my brothers who had fallen couldn't comprehend that we are the reason we have no support. In their minds they thought, "What's wrong with these people, it can't be me, I haven't changed, I'm still the same person

I have always been," and that there is the problem – I've had these thoughts and convictions all my life. In jail, time stands still. It's not the place you grow to maturity in, you don't learn how to be a real man, a provider for your family, you don't learn how to be a productive member of society. You stay the same, the same mindset, the same lifestyle, the same everything, while everybody outside grows and matures and builds a sense of community mindedness.

Another big thing I realised that was keeping me institutionalised was that I never had a goal in my life, nothing to achieve except to reach my end date—just survive until then. When that eventually comes about and you are standing outside those gates, again, you realise fast that you are in another world altogether and you know you don't belong out there and it won't be long before everybody else knows it as well. With no goals in mind, that first step you take outside is the first step you take to coming back inside. So this time, with no family support, my one and only true love leaving me and taking my beautiful little daughter with her because I was too chaotic and didn't treat her right or the way she deserved, being depressed, lonely, not sure if I was meant to suicide and wondering how the hell I was back after I thought I had tried my best, I thought it was smart to remove myself from society. I stayed home and only left to go to appointments, or to walk in solitude along a secluded beach or to go through a drive-thru to get Maccas. It just wasn't my world. My first week back inside I talked to our chaplain Owen, and he saw the distress I was in over all my fallen brothers, and in that distress, I found God, at the absolute lowest point of my life—there He was, instantly my life's outlook and trajectory changed in more ways than I can write here in under 2000 words.

Currently I am doing a diploma and several certificates to help me with something I have never had before, a goal. You see, I have a goal in my life now, good wholesome goals to give me a life and to help others with their lives. I am fully aware that life won't be easy for me in this new world, but it won't be impossible now, I am surrounding myself with good people in the community, I have help now and with that help comes hope and with that hope comes a life I can make for myself. I know now all the troubles and all the pitfalls that lay ahead in this new world that are waiting for a man like me, but I am drug free now, and I vow to always will be – of that I have no doubt, so armed with clarity of mind, good foresight, good people, strong resolve, opportunities, and healthy goals, I can meet all these troubles and problems head on and know that, for the first time in my life, I will be alright and can finally walk proudly into this new world and make something of myself – it is never too late to begin again if it is the right choice.

David Utting
Acacia Prison
Locked Bag 1
Wooroloo WA, 6558



Artworks by 'Tiny', NSW

WELCOME TO EAR HUSTLE

Ear Hustle, an award winning podcast, was created by inmates Earlonne Woods and Antwan Williams, and volunteer Nigel Poor, at San Quentin State Prison in California. It was the first podcast created entirely inside a prison. By 2021, it had been downloaded more than 54 million times, and its 10th season started in 2022. *Paper Chained* Editor Damien Linnane interviewed Nigel and Earlonne, about their podcast, and how he got the contract to illustrate their book.



Nigel Poor and Earlonne Woods, recording Ear Hustle in San Quentin State Prison, California.

Nigel, when did you start volunteering in prison and what made you want to begin?

Nigel: I started volunteering in 2011 through a program called the Prison University Project. I'm a visual artist, and my work has always been about how people find meaning. How do you sort out a life? What's worthy of being documented and remembered, and how do we pass on our experience to others? And I started thinking about how that happens inside of prisons and I wanted to figure out how to get inside a prison to start thinking about that. And then I heard about the Prison University Project and how they were looking for a professor to come in and teach a history of photography class. I answered that ad and that's how I originally got in there.

Earlonne, you were serving a 31-year-to-life sentence, and you started your sentence elsewhere. What brought you to San Quentin?

Earlonne: So, it all started when I was on a 10-month lockdown in another prison, and on the TV they had a show on the Discovery Channel called *San Quentin Film School*, and I was always fond of film and stuff like that so my mission was to try my best to get to San Quentin. Every year you're able to put in a transfer to go to another prison... I tried for six years to get to San Quentin but couldn't get there till 2011.

Nigel: I forgot we got there the same year!

Earlonne: *(Laughs)* Yeah, I got there in 2011, and got down to the media centre later that year.

At the time, what were you hoping to achieve by transferring to San Quentin Earlonne?

Earlonne: I know me – if I have my mind on something I'll pretty much get it done. I knew there were only two prisons they could send me to at the time because of my [classification] level. I knew they were either going to send me to Soledad or San Quentin, and they actually sent me to Soledad. I was there a total of 67 days, but in the time I was there, they had a volunteer list to go to San Quentin, and I was like, 'Man that's where I was trying to get from the gate, let me sign up!'

Nigel, what gave you the idea to make a prison podcast?

Nigel: Well, I'd been teaching a history of photography class and a lot of the class was about storytelling, it was about looking at photographs, asking the students to insert their own narrative into them and tell a story based on looking at the photographs. I did that for three semesters and I got more and more interested in expanding ways of telling stories inside of prison, and I found my way down to San Quentin's media lab where Earlonne was. I didn't know him yet, but I knew there were volunteer opportunities down there. I started volunteering and meeting other people there. We talked about doing audio stories about life in prison, and so the idea was to do stories we would air inside the closed-circuit station inside the prison. I was doing a lot of interviews – they were about daily life inside, not unlike Ear Hustle, but not that sophisticated yet. And while we were working on that a local radio station found out about it and offered to help us and train us. And Earlonne was part of that. I think that was 2012. And over the ensuing couple years, Earlonne and I got to know each other better. He was interested in storytelling. And so we both thought, let's just take those skills and move it towards doing radio. So we worked on that for a couple years but it wasn't really moving forward in the way that was very satisfying for me or I don't think for Earlonne. And so one day I just proposed to Earlonne, you want to try to do a podcast? And then he asked me what a podcast was, and I explained to it was a storytelling project. And he's like, *absolutely*.

And so we sat down on October 5th, 2015, and we hashed out our idea. We still have that piece of paper about what we wanted to do. And the idea was to tell everyday stories of life in prison, and that he and I would be the hosts. I would be the outside person and Earlonne would be the inside person, escorting people through the stories. We wanted to use first-person narrative. We didn't want to be journalists. We wanted to be doing this from the perspective of artists. And so we kind of just fell into it and it snowballed from there. We had a plan, but we didn't really know what was going to happen

with it. And then we found out about the Radiotopia Podquest competition. Radiotopia was looking for a new podcast and we got permission to apply and out of... Earlonne always remembers the numbers.

Earlonne: Out of 1,536 other contestants across 53 different countries, we end up winning.

I remember in one episode Nigel talked about explaining what a podcast was to Earlonne, and you played him one and he said, 'Oh this is going to be easy.' Now that you're into Season 10, what's been the most challenging part?

Earlonne: Well, I mean I wouldn't say the most challenging part, but what we definitely had to get better with was interviewing people in less time. So we wouldn't have four hours of tape to go through for a 23-minute episode, you know what I'm saying? And in the beginning I thought it was just we sit down and talk and then whatever. But you know it was way more scripted than that. So it was way more writing for the writers, you know what I'm saying? Way more. Trying to make sure everything add up so it wasn't what I thought in the beginning at all. Totally the opposite of that. Wasn't that easy. It ain't been that easy since.

Nigel: It's never easy.

Earlonne: Never. It's never gotten easier. It's still as hard as it was in the beginning. And yeah, it's a trip.

Nigel: I think the goal is to always make it sound easy. So when you hear the final episode, it sounds effortless. Like we don't want it to sound like, you know, this is blood, sweat and tears. It should be engaging and entertaining and emotionally intense, all that stuff.

Earlonne: It should be just like I thought the other one was, they was just having a conversation. That was it. That's what I thought. They was just having a conversation. I didn't think it was all edited and cuts and cuts and retracts.

Nigel: Oh my God, I think one thing neither Earlonne and I understood was that in some ways we'd have to become actors because we have to do the narration.

Earlonne: Pick that laugh up! Pick that laugh up again. Ha Ha Ha! (*exaggerated false laugh*)

Nigel: But it sounds better than that. So that was a funny thing too. I mean, I don't think either of us are natural. I don't know if we are or not, but you know, that was funny. I didn't think about that at all.

So Nigel, there's obviously a public fascination with the prison system, but why do you think Ear Hustle has become so overwhelmingly popular? I assume it's a lot bigger than you ever thought it would be?

Nigel: Way bigger than I ever thought would be. I think there's a couple of reasons. One, you're right, I think people are fascinated with the prison system. And we give them a look at something that a lot of people don't have access to. But we also do it in a different way. We don't focus on crime. We don't focus on scaring people. We focus on, from our perspective, what life in prison is really like and trying to show the connections between life inside and life outside and dispel some of the myths that people have. And so

I think people come because they're curious and then they're surprised. And I think that hooks them. And I think we tell really good stories with compelling and surprising characters and that holds people's attention. And I think my friendship with Earlonne is also something that people are surprised by and they can hear our affection for each other and I think that's a draw for people as well. And we tell stories people do not expect to hear about prison, and we don't tell people what to think. So we've got listeners from across the political spectrum because although both of us have very strong political views, that's not what we do on the podcast. We give people the information and let them make up their own minds. And so I don't think people ever feel like we're preaching at them.

Earlonne, you received a life-sentence under the three-strikes policy in California, but your sentence was commuted in 2018 and you were released. You're campaigning against three-strikes laws now. Can you give us a brief outline of how the policy works and what you're doing to campaign against it?

Earlonne: Yeah. So the three strikes law. Just one of those laws that said if you have two prior convictions, then your third conviction would be a life sentence if it fell under a certain category. But when it first came out, you know it didn't matter what your third strike was, as long as you had this one called a qualifying strike to make you a three-strike candidate. And me, I went to jail when I was like 17 and I had two felonies in one case. And when I got out of prison and became an adult and went and got back into crime and went to jail for the first time, I ended up getting a life sentence.

Nigel: He didn't even know he was a three-striker, since his first two convictions were as a juvenile.

Earlonne: So to answer your question, what am I doing currently? We tried our best maybe a couple of months ago to get a bill on the ballot called *The Repeal California Three Strike Act of 2022*, and we failed to reach the prerequisite amount of signatures that we needed. So we weren't able to get it to qualify for the ballot. We're looking into it right now to see if this is something that we're going to do for 2024. And I think this time if I play a role, it's going to be more of a backseat role. But I still definitely assist in every way I can. But it takes signatures just to get it on the ballot, that's not even to get people to get it off the books. It's just to get people to vote on it again. And it's really hard. We needed 1,000,000 signatures, we got 623,212, but we needed a million to make sure that it was like 100 percent accurate. So it's just a lot of work if you don't have the money to do it, the volunteers is one thing, but trying to keep all the volunteers organized, keep all the signatures on the right page for the right county, for the right city, that was hard, you know, so I think when you try to run a campaign like that, you gotta make sure that you have the funding necessary to hire the professional signature gatherers to collect those signatures.

Hopefully, if nothing else, you've got a better understanding of how to how to organize it next time.

Earlonne: Oh I've got a totally different understanding of

that. Sometimes you just gotta go through it to be able to understand it, you know? Because if not, you'll just keep thinking about it a certain way.

So you're on season 10 of Ear Hustle now. Did you think this you'd come this far? And is it possible you'll have a season 20 one day?

Earlonne: Yeah, so I mean right now, I'm looking at it like we'll be on episode 79, maybe episode 80, so we got 20 more to reach that 100, you know what I'm saying?

Nigel: We just have to finding things that keep us interested so that we can keep telling different sorts of stories. So a goal both of us had for a really long time was to move into a women's prison, which we're starting to do this season, to start telling stories from inside a women's prison. This summer, we did international travel, so we have a couple stories from other countries. So I think, you know, we want to move into those areas. Earlonne is super interested in juvenile incarceration. That's an area we haven't gotten into yet. So I feel like until we start repeating ourselves, we'll keep doing it. I plan to do this with Earlonne until I can't do anything else anymore.

Earlonne: But we could also run those same 78 stories in the women's prison, from the women's perspective, you know what I'm saying? Same subject, but just from a whole different circumstance.

Nigel: And totally on topic, we haven't spent that much time in a women's prison, but the little time that we have, it's such a different world.

This is something that I think you might find interesting. I'm listening to the podcast from Australia. I'm always interested in the similarities between the prison slang. You might be interested to know, we call a prison-made sex toy a Fi-Fi here in Australia too.

Nigel: (Laughs) Where did that term come from?

Earlonne: It's probably from a song somewhere.

But some slang is completely different. I was really interested to hear that 'bone-yard' is a slang term for the conjugal visits room in the US, because in Australia 'bone-yard' is slang for protective custody. One term I hadn't before at all before though was 'Ear Hustle' So can you just explain what that means and why you chose that name?

Earlonne: "Ear Hustle" is just one of them slang things that mean you know, you using your ear to listen to things. Some that might be for you, but most of it is not for you. It's not intended for you, but being that it's interesting, you listening in like fly on the wall, it's eavesdropping. Just hustling. And I think, you know, prison is one of them spots where everybody do some listening in, whether they want to or they don't want to. It might just be juicy, you know? I was standing in line one time hearing about a dude tell another dude about an escape he did, how he got away, and that was interesting. I was ear hustling that conversation. It became the 10th story of season one. You know what I'm saying? It's just being places and listening and shit.

Nigel: It sounds cool too. *Ear Hustling*.

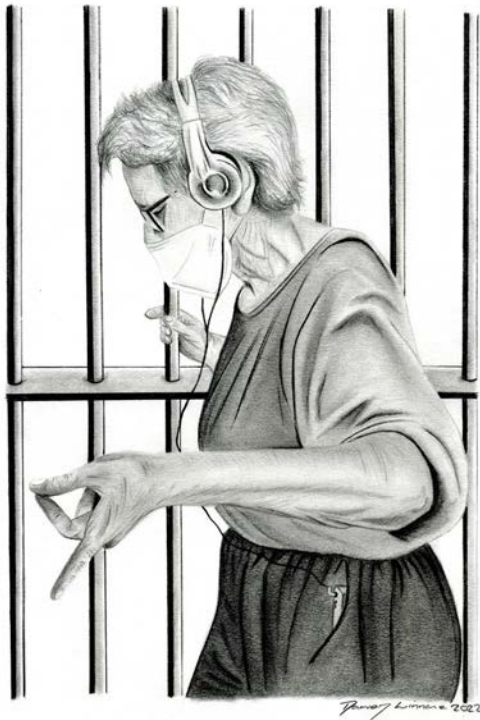


This Is Ear Hustle is available from Crown Publishing.

So I got the contract to illustrate your book, *This Is Ear Hustle*, after I had an art exhibition where my theme was people who made the most of their time in prison. I drew Nelson Mandela and Malcolm X, and, of course you, Earlonne. When I tagged you in the picture on Instagram, I was hoping you'd just like and comment on it. You hadn't announced you were writing a book yet. How long had you been looking for an illustrator at that time?

Earlonne: The first person that we had in mind was our boy Antwan Williams, who started the podcast with us in the beginning because he do good illustrations. He did all the illustrations pretty much up to season 10, you know? But his relationship with the book company didn't work out, and that's when you came about, you know what I'm saying? You drew a picture of me that I shared with the team. I said, look at this shit! I'm on the wall with the greats.

Nigel: I think as soon as I saw it, I was like, 'Oh this guy's perfect!' It was the right style. You obviously were really good at doing realistic imagery. You work super-fast and with precision, so it just seemed like a really good fit. The thing that really stood out to me about the illustration of Earlonne was that it wasn't just that it looked like him. You captured the feeling of Earlonne, like the little way his eyes kind of sparkle and the way he smiles. And so it seemed it was more than doing a likeness. It was like capturing the essence of somebody. I mean, certainly a lot of people could do something like this, but it's getting that inner spirit that not everybody gets. And it's like that picture you did of Alice for Episode 80. You've never met her, but like somehow you capture just the way her body moves. You haven't even seen her face.



Damien's illustration of Alice for Ear Hustle Episode 80

But somehow you complete something really three dimensional about a person. So that's what really spoke to me with your illustrations.

Something I've never told our readers of *Paper Chained* is that *Ear Hustle* is the reason our magazine is widely available now. There was no prison magazine when I was in custody; I got involved with *Paper Chained*, which was just starting up, after I got released. I helped out the previous editor for five years, then she told me she couldn't work on it anymore and asked me if I wanted to keep it alive. And I took the project on even though I didn't have the time or the money to produce it, because I knew how important it was to people inside.

After I got the contract to illustrate your book, I had the exhibition for those illustrations at Boom Gate Gallery. The assistant commissioner for Corrective Services NSW, Luke Grant, attended. I explained that some prisons were rejecting our magazine without giving an explanation and I asked him if he could do anything about that. He generously offered to make the magazine available on the tablets they have in prisons now. Which was great, except that meant my readership went from about 100 to several thousand overnight, and I already didn't have the time to volunteer on the project. So I applied for funding and the short version is the Community Restorative Centre kindly offered to hire me. So now not only do I have a job because of *Ear Hustle*, I get letters every day from prisoners telling me how much *Paper Chained* makes a difference during their sentence. How does it feel to know that something like *Ear Hustle* has indirectly given a resource and a creative outlet to inmates in Australia?

Nigel: I love that. I mean, the name of your publication, *Paper Chained*, what it implies about creating links when you do good work about an important issue. It does create this often-invisible chain. But sometimes that chain becomes visible and it connects people in a really profound and beautiful way. It ties into so many people's stories. So I mean, it feels amazing and I love that we've been inspired to people. Then we inspire other people and it keeps moving forward and it makes life feel less random and lonely. So I think that it's really beautiful. And I love the idea that you can affect people that you may never meet. You don't always know the effects of your endeavours, of course. But it just makes you feel like you can make a difference, that in a really crazy world that sometimes seems overwhelming and depressing, people can actually make real connections and give your life meaning. It's great.

Earlonne: Definitely. You know what, this a trip, because I was in prison because I assaulted an Australian citizen. So it seemed kind of, I don't want to say full circle, but something that happened in 1997 in Manhattan Beach, California is now affecting people in Australian prisons in a way, you know what I'm saying? That's deep.

As a former prisoner, do you have any message for people in Australian prisons, Earlonne?

Earlonne: My thoughts to the people inside is just to continue to think outside the box. You know, don't do what everybody else does, do something different.



Damien's original illustration of Earlonne, which led to the contract to illustrate This Is Ear Hustle.

EAR HUSTLE: CELLIES

Ear Hustle make the transcripts of their podcast available on their website, earhustlesq.com. This transcript of their first episode, *Cellies*, is printed with the kind permission of *Ear Hustle* producer Shabnam Sigman.

Episode 1: Cellies. Originally aired June 14, 2017.

Male: You are now tuned in to San Quentin's 'Ear Hustle' from Radiotopia.

Earlonne: The following podcast contains language that may not be appropriate for all listeners.

Ron Self: Having spent all my adult life in the Marine Corps, Special Forces, been in combat, raised in military schools, I thought, you know, "OK." You know. "Prison, how bad can that be?"

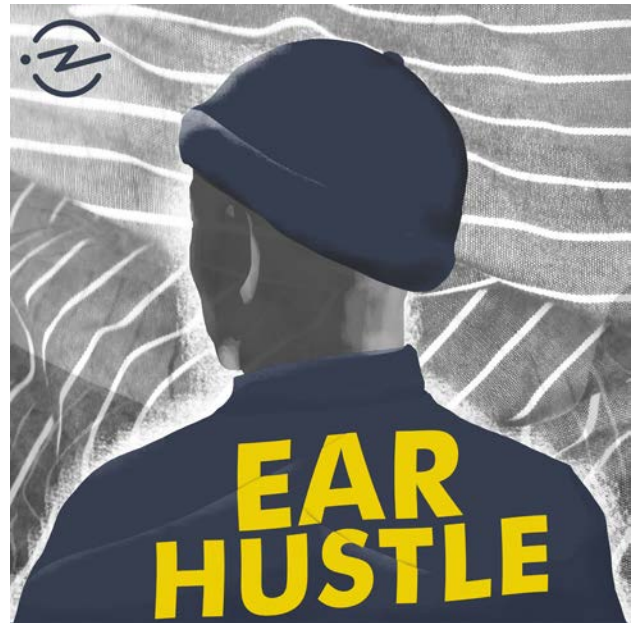
Nigel: That's Ron Self, an inmate at San Quentin. He's serving 25 years to life for attempted murder and conspiracy to commit murder.

Earlonne: He's been locked up for 20 years. His first stop was Corcoran, a level four maximum security state prison in California.

Ron Self: We arrive on the bus and we get off. We go through processing. A part of processing is it's the reception area where they issue you your state blues and whatnot. And, I meet this guy. He's a native American like myself and his name's Duck [chilling music] and I stick my hand out. He may as well spit on me. This guy is just evil. I mean, he just, he scared the shit out of me. I mean it is not often that things or people scare me, but this man actually scared me.

Earlonne: Ron was in receiving and release, or R and R, which is basically the intake into the prison system. It's where you get your ID card and your prison number, which will follow you through your whole incarceration, and it's where you go through a litany of questions to find out where you will be housed.

Ron Self: It just felt like the whole time I was in R and R this guy wanted to kill me. It was like I couldn't get processed fast enough to get out of R and R. So, they finished processing me out. I go to the building, which is like a mile-long walk in chains. You know, guns out on the rails and an electronic door opens. I walk into the building. The door closes behind me and then another door I hear pop open and that's the cell I'm going to, and the door opens all the way and it's Duck, the guy that's looking at me like he wants to kill me. And I just, my heart dropped. They said go into that cell and close the door behind you. "OK. I can deal with this." But no matter what I did in the cell, it was wrong. I mean, he would yell. He would scream. He threatened to kill me. I would sleep with my back to the wall and one eye open, if you would call what



I did sleeping, and sometimes he would just get down out of the bed in the middle of the night screaming, acting like he's going to kill me. That one six-month period felt more like 60 years.

Earlonne: The moral of Ron Self's story: In prison, it matters who your cellmate is. [heavy, choppy beat] I'm Earlonne Woods.

Nigel: Earlonne is serving a 31-year to life sentence for attempted second-degree robbery, and he's the co-host and co-producer of 'Ear Hustle.'

Earlonne: And that's Nigel Poor. She's a visual artist and works with incarcerated men here at San Quentin, and she's the co-producer and my co-host, and together, we're going to take you inside.

Nigel: [snapping beat] Earlonne, this is our first episode, so it's probably a good time to tell everybody what ear hustling means.

Earlonne: Ear hustling is prison slang for eavesdropping, listen into something that may not be your business, and today we're going to hear about cellies.

Nigel: It's a big deal in prison who your cellmate is, isn't it?

Earlonne: Huge. Ask anyone around here and they'll have a lot to say about their cellies.

Yard Talk: We always wash our hands, like, "Wash your hands, man. Like, no, you can't get none of my chips until you wash your hands."

Earlonne: That's what we're calling Yard Talk, when we

take a microphone and ask bunch of guys questions about whatever topic we cover. We'll hear some more of that later.

Nigel: San Quentin is not a maximum security prison.

Earlonne: Nope.

Nigel: So that means we can spend the day working down here in the media lab.

Earlonne: Pretty much.

Nigel: And obviously you're not in your cell all day, but you do have to spend time there. I've seen the cells here, but most people haven't. Can you explain how big they are?

Earlonne: How big is the cell? It is like 4 by 9, 4 feet by 9 feet. So, if I got my back on one wall, I could touch the other one. And, within that space, you have two bunks. You have a toilet and a sink that's side by side. You have two lockers, one locker above the top bunk, one locker in the back of the cell. And then, each cellie has their appliances and property. I'll put it like this, you can't walk by each other. One person either got to sit on his bunk and the other person can walk by. It's like a little public storage.

Nigel: You know, I hate to say it. I know I have seen closets that are bigger than that.

Earlonne: Of course.

Nigel: Earlonne you've been thinking a lot about cellies recently and not just because we're doing a show about them.

Earlonne: Right, because my cellie just got out of prison after serving 22 years, and we were cellies for like 3 years. And, about a half hour to a hour after he left, they gave me a new cellie.

Nigel: But it's possible your new cellie could be temporary if you find someone else you'd prefer.

Earlonne: Right. Right.

Nigel: I'm going to ask you about that later, but first we should say that sometimes guys at San Quentin can choose their cellies. Right?

Earlonne: Usually, they'll just throw someone in a cell with you, but they do have this thing called moves of convenience where you and another guy can go to the officer and say, "Hey, look, man, we are compatible. Can you move us together?" And they'll do it, like they did for the next guys we're about to hear from, Eddie and Emile. And here's Eddie.

Eddie: I've been incarcerated for 20 years on a 26 to life sentence. I've had some bad experiences with cellies [booming music]. I've had a situation where got into a fight, stayed up. I had to stay up all night because I didn't know if he was going to keep going, sleeping in the bed with my boots on.

Emile: I've been locked up for 20 years, since I was 18.

Nigel: That's Emile. He's actually Eddie's younger brother.

Emile: 2001, I'm in High Desert state prison. I've been I've been doing time for like three years at this point, and I'm in there with my brother, and I'm thinking to myself, "We're brothers. We should we should live together. We should cell up." Right?

Eddie: For sure. I love my brother, and I wanted to be cellies with him because there was nobody else in the prison that I loved that much. You know? Family sticks together. You know.

Emile: In an environment where nothing is safe, right, and it's like, "Hey, what could be better and safer than that? You know, living with your brother. Right? So, he moves into my cell.

Eddie: I was happy. I was, I kind of felt relieved, you know?

Emile: We did it!

Eddie: To be able to just exhale, you know, just relax for, for a moment in prison.

Emile: That's like one of the biggest things in prison, is you miss your family, so to be able to have your family with you is bittersweet, but it's still sweet. [upbeat music]

Earlonne: So, Eddie and Emile got what they wanted. They got to cell up together, but just like roommates on the outside, they still have to figure out how to live together and it's smart to start thinking about this before you move into a tiny cell together.

Nigel: Get a new cellie.

Yard Talk: So, when I get a new cellie, the first thing that I look at first is what age they are then what is their disposition, because you know we, we have to have, I mean you always look at it from that fact that I don't live in here by myself.

Emile: The first few nights were great and then it wasn't.

Eddie: I didn't really know my brother like I thought I did.

Emile: He's still Seventh Day Adventist. Right? And he's like devout. So, the Sabbath, you're not supposed to watch television, but I watch television. But he didn't want to have to hear it, because he didn't want to have to hear it on the Sabbath. [piano music] So, he asked me to use my headphones, right? Which was, in theory, wasn't like a horrible request, but my headphones are like 3 feet long, right, in that space between my bunk and my television is like 3 feet long, right, 3 1/2 feet right on the corner of my bed with my head hanging off it. "Man, I'm not going to do that."

Eddie: He was watching soap operas and soap operas was like a trigger for me because I remember hearing 'The Young and Restless' tune. Dum-dum-dum-dum-dum-dum and there'd be straight violence in the household, right. My father used to get on my mother and he would say, "You're watching them soaps and being a lazy," you know, woman, and beat her up.

Emile: I didn't really understand what he was going through. Right? I thought like he was just trying to convert me and make me observe the Sabbath and shit. So it just pissed me off, like, "Dude!"

Eddie: I was like, "Man, you need to change that channel."

Emile: I'm a grown ass man and this is my television. I don't give a fuck how you feel about it.

Eddie: And I was like, "I can't believe you watching that soap! Right. Really, bruh?"

Emile: And so he turns my television off, right. And I'm like,

"Dude, back up." I turn the television back on, right. I'm like, "Have you lost your mind?"

Yard Talk: The rule is don't touch my stuff. Don't look through my mail. Don't look at my pictures. Do not put your hands on my shelf, because if you do, that's like the ultimate form of disrespect because it's, it's...

Emile: So, he's pissed, because you know, in his mind, I'm not respecting his space and respecting his Sabbath. So, you know, he declares like a passive aggressive war on me, and he stopped showering. [heavy beat] And when I call him on not showering, right, he keeps bringing up this watching television on the Sabbath shit, right. And I'm like, "Bro." In my mind, I'm getting hella frustrated 'cause in my mind, I'm like, "Man, what the hell does one have to do with the other? Man, you have to shower. Man, it's not the same thing." So, not only did he stop showering, but he stopped like using deodorant. He wasn't using deodorant because, you know, in my mind, I guess it just made the warfare more potent, right.

Eddie: That is so not true.

Emile: But on the other hand, right, he does have this thing about like deodorant and like conspiracies of like chemicals and...

Eddie: They say the aluminum in the antiperspirant deodorants and stuff will cause like memory loss or Alzheimer's when you get older, and I was like, "Why would I poison myself like that?"

Emile: He wants to "be natural" and "it's just a natural smell" and "what's the big deal!" It's a big deal. Let me tell you.

Earlonne: In such a tight space, Nigel, smells are a big deal.

Nigel: Ugh. Yeah. So, I've heard.

Yard Talk: That, that was one of the reasons why I'd never cell with a like dude over like 250 'cause you know them bowel movements, boy, are going to light up everything. I remember we were sitting on the yard, right. We seen this one big old dude, right, walking by and I'm like, "Man, can you imagine being in a cell with him when he's dropping a bomb?"

Emile: Oh, another thing we argued about was smoking. I smoked.

Eddie: I didn't smoke. And so, he was smoking cigarettes. They were legal. They were selling us tobacco in a canteen. If you smoked, you would smoke and blow the smoke out the door or blow the smoke in a vent or blow the smoke in a toilet or something like that, right, to get rid of smoke for your non-smoking cellie. And one day, I guess we had got into an argument. The next thing he said was, "You know what? If I want to smoke, I'm gonna smoke on my bunk. I ain't going to no door or nothin." He just lit up right there on the bunk. [smooth beat]

Emile: It wasn't really about, "Fuck him." It was like [imitates smoking a cigarette]. "Yeah, this is my moment. I need my space to have something in this place."

Eddie: And I was like trying to hold it in, trying to hold it in, and it was just eating at me, and then we just clashed in the cell.

Emile: And he was like, "Man, you're trying to kill me! You're killing me with this. You're going to kill me with cancer!" And I would just kind of, I was very dismissive, like, "Man, shut the fuck up with that shit, man. God, man, we are in prison for life, like you know, I have 67 years to life. You have 27 years to life. Man, I am smoking this cigarette."

Eddie: Neighbors in the prison, they was thinking that we was killing each other up in there, but it was just a bunch of yelling and screaming and shouting. But, the dude next door, he kind of like was shouted incendiary things through the vent. It was like not homicide, it wasn't homicide, it wasn't genocide, but it was like-

Emile: Fratricide! [laughs] And that used to make Eddie so mad, right. I just, I thought it was kind of funny, right.

Eddie: Wow, he's like going there, like killing your own brother. That's something I would never do. And now he's shouting this through the vent.

Emile: Fratricide! Fratricide! [laughs] Because Eddie felt like Bobo next door in actuality wanted us to kill each other, like literally, like Eddie can be a very literal man, right. That dude didn't expect us to murder each but, you know.

Eddie: When Bobo and my brother were talking in the vent, I assumed that Bobo was trying to drive a wedge between me and my brother.

Emile: But Bobo wasn't the problem. The problem was Eddie and the problem with me. Right. It's like the problem was your ass ain't showering. The problem ain't like Bobo's on the vent talking about fratricide, which is an intellectual joke, right, between philosophers. [warbling beat] He's not a bad guy. He's a good man. But, you know, living with someone in an apartment is difficult enough, but living with someone in a box, like you need to live. You have to be compatible in a lot of different ways and me and Eddie aren't compatible, and despite, um, you know, not being a great brother when I was young, he does his best today to be a good brother, and I appreciate that, but we'll never live together ever in life. Period.

Nigel: Eventually, Emile moved out of the cell with his brother and moved in with his neighbor Bobo, and they got along fine. It worked out well. So, Earlonne, now that your own cell situation is up in the air, what did you take from that story?

Earlonne: What? The story we just heard?

Nigel: Yeah.

Earlonne: See, there's the type of shit I'm trying to avoid.

Nigel: What shit?

Earlonne: That, where it's confusion, chaos, and just craziness.

Nigel: Hmm. So, what's your biggest fear about finding a cellie?

Earlonne: I have several fears, but one of them is someone that talks too much, that's always talking. Every time you look around he's talking, talking, talking through the TV shows, talking when you walk in, talking when you get up in the morning. I hate that shit.

Nigel: Your cellie who just left, Cleo Cloeman, who was also known as Black, and from everything you told me, it seemed like he was a really great cellie for you.

Earlonne: Yeah, and I think he feels the same way, because I brought him down here and got him on tape right before he left. [sound of tape rewinding]

Earlonne: The first question is, having me as a cellie—

Cleo: Right.

Earlonne: In the time that we spent in that cage, what is your thoughts on me?

Cleo: Oh, man. I can honestly say first that you as my cellie has been one of the best times in my incarceration. First and foremost, the respect level is 100, is genuine. This is a place where we lay our head, where we 'posed to be comfortable, where were 'posed to feel comfortable when we take a nap and a place to sleep, and when we wake up, we just do it all over again, and we enjoy each other and, most importantly, we leave the penitentiary out of the cell.

Earlonne: If I was to describe Mr. Cloeman over here, I would say he's a well-disciplined person and a great thinker. I know many times, I always come to him and be like, "Hey, man. I need your help on this." [Cleo grunts] And he got his little white board in the cell. [Cleo laughs] He'll bust out the little Sharpie marker, little, little dry marker, and he'll just get to going, you know. He'll get to whatever issues I'm having a problem with. And then, the brother's well versed too, especially when it comes to self-help groups and smart brother men, and that's what I get any, any cool, hella cool, I mean, shit. I don't know what I gonna do when he leaves. To find a brother of your caliber, man, it's going to be hard. I already know that. [sound of tape fast forwarding]

Nigel: OK, so Black's gone. You have a new cellie that the prison put in with you, but you're still going to be looking around. Right?

Earlonne: Actually, it's a trip, because the cellie that I have now is temporary. He's about to leave. I don't want a cellie, but I got to go find one, because if I leave it to custody, they'll just throw anybody in the cell with me, somebody that I'm not compatible with. So, I have to find someone that I'm compatible with. And then, on the other hand, you don't want to tell somebody something, that you want to move them in the cell, and then you change your mind like, "Oh man, I ain't gonna be able do that." You know what I'm saying?

Nigel: Yeah.

Earlonne: Like, you tell a person, "Hey, man, what you doing? You know? You want to move up?" Then, you'd be like, "Oh. I'm gonna go get this dude over here."

Nigel: It's really like dating. I mean, some of the things that you talk, I know.

Earlonne: It's not like dating, Nigel.

Nigel: There are a lot of similarities.

Earlonne: There's — I can't even look at it that way, Nigel.

Nigel: I knew you wouldn't be able to. That's why I hesitated.

Earlonne: No, but it is, it's a relationship. It is a relationship.

Nigel: Yeah. Yeah, and so that's why the idea of dating comes up, because there isn't any other time where two adults are expected to live in such close proximity.

Earlonne: So, you have to be peaceful. You don't have to talk.

Yard Talk (Sha and Dante): What he got? This is what he got over Denzel Washington? This the movies he played in: *Booty Call*. [laughs] Jamie Foxx is a better actor—

Bait. [laughs]

So what? Look, man, he's got to—

See what I'm saying? *Booty Call*. Fortune with Ricky in it. What was the one?

Ricky from *Boyz in the Hood*? [laughs] I don't even know the name of that movie.

What was it? *Booty Call part 2*.

It had Gabrielle Union in it.

Earlonne: Nig, I know I said I don't like talkers, but Dante and Sha, they are cellies and they are chopping it up in a way that is totally compatible, totally acceptable. That kind of talking wouldn't bother me.

Nigel: Yeah. They came down here yesterday and started talking and we had to pull out the recorder. I mean, I just imagine that's what they're like all the time in their cell.

Earlonne: Yeah. Every night, they have their top five. Who's the best black actors? Who's the best basketball players? Who's the best rappers?

Yard Talk (Sha and Dante): Top five, right. Jay Z and Ja Rule in the same category.

Come on, brother. Stop it.

Blue for 2. Ain't blood in my eyes part 2? [laughs]

Bruh. You're vile, bruh.

Blue for 2. Blue for 2. Ain't black back—

Nigel: Those guys clearly get along. They obviously are compatible cellies.

Earlonne: Yup.

Nigel: And, E, I know, ideally, you really want to live alone.

Earlonne: That I do.

Nigel: Well, you won't believe this, but on the way in today, when I was walking in, I ran into Ron Self, who was the guy at the top of the podcast who had that cellie from hell.

Earlonne: Right.

Nigel: And I asked him about his current cell situation, and I wanted to play some tape for you.

Earlonne: OK.

Ron Self: Well, I, I don't have a cellie right now. I don't live with anyone. I'm single cell.

Earlonne: That's, that's the best way to live in prison.

Nigel: How's that make you feel, though?

Earlonne: I mean, it's, it's—I'm jealous.

Ron Self: And the reason I'm single cell is because of my ethnicity, which is American Indian, and I have medical issues because surgeries that I've just had, neck surgeries, arm surgeries, that prevent me from pulling myself to the top bunk.

Earlone: I got a shoulder injury, and I can't get a bottom bunk.

Nigel: Man, you cannot catch a break.

Earlone: [laughs] No, I cannot. I have to be Native American probably.

Nigel: Yeah. Well, ok, so at San Quentin, guys are celled by race. That's a story for another podcast. But, Ron apparently has had a single cell for quite some time.

Nigel: Tell me what it's like to have that 9 by 4 space to yourself.

Ron Self: Still feels crowded. [laughs] So, I use the top bunk as like a desk, and I have a yoga mat up there, and I, I, yeah I just kind of-

Nigel: But, isn't it- I mean it must actually be a pleasure, if we can use that word for a cell, that you can go back there and you can shut the cell door, whatever, and you can actually be alone in there.

Ron Self: Yeah. It's helped me get in touch with myself in a way that I can go back in there and shut the door and just cry. A lot of guys can't and won't do that because they just, there's no time to be alone here, because you're never alone really. You're surrounded by, you know, 900 people all the time but you're never alone. Having a single cell for any period of time, it's just, it's like a brief vacation.

Earlone: Yeah, I can dig that. That's the life.

Nigel: So, like, tell me what you're doing now. Like, are you like looking around at guys? Are you checking people out? I know this all sounds like dating.

Earlone: Yeah, especially the checking people out. Yeah.

Nigel: I know. So, what are you like, what are you doing now when you're walking around the yard?

Earlone: Well, there's one cat. He's, uh, he's laid back. He's older than me. He's probably like 49. Cool dude. You know he's out the way. He's been locked up like 20 years. So, a person that's been locked up for a long time gets it. You know, it's, it's, it's a professional prisoner.

Nigel: So, what would the conversation be like with this guy?

Earlone: What do you mean?

Nigel: When you pop the question.

Earlone: So you're saying, will I court the guy?

Nigel: Yes. Yes. How are you going to court this guy? And then, when do you move to asking that really important question: Will you move in with me?

Earlone: I be like, "Look here, man." Put my Barry White voice on.

Nigel: Yeah. [laughs]

Earlone: No. Um, I think it is more-She said "pop the question". It's like, look at him get on one knee. "Hey, you wanna move in with me?"

Nigel: Exactly.

Earlone: [laughs] Nah. It's more like, "Hey, man. Look here, man. My cellie's fixin' to bounce, man. You good where you at or you want to move up?" You know, that's it. [outro music] And that's it for this episode of 'Ear Hustle'. Our sound designer's Antwan Williams. We also got a few tracks from fellow prisoners David Jassy and Joshua Burton.

Nigel: Pat Mesiti-Miller is our outside production adviser. Our editor is Curtis Fox.

Earlone: And our executive producer for Radiotopia is the illustrious Julie Shapiro. We also want to thank Warden Ron Davis, and every episode has to be approved by this guy here.

Sam Robinson: This is Lieutenant Sam Robinson. I'm the public information officer at San Quentin State Prison, and I approve this story.

Earlone: 'Ear Hustle' is a proud member of Radiotopia from PRX, a collection of the best podcasts around. Radiotopia is made possible with support from the Knight Foundation. Hear more at Radiotopia.fm. Next time on 'Ear Hustle', the high price one man paid for loyalty to his gang.

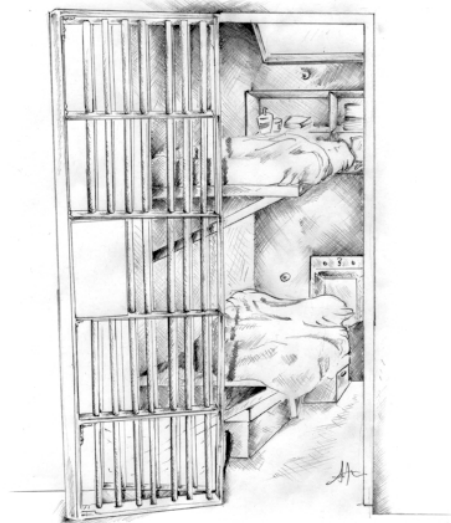
Shakur: In 1985, I'm in a liquor store, and I see this brother come in and I say, "What's up, homeboy?" And he like, "What that West Side Rollin 60s like?" Now, that was the worst thing he could have said to me at that point because I was at the height of my career as a gangbanger.

Nigel: Our website is earhustlesq.com. You can find video, photos, and audio extras there.

Earlone: And you can subscribe to our podcast, sign up for a newsletter, and find out how to send us a question by postcard that we might answer on a future episode.

Nigel: That's earhustlesq.com.

Radiotopia outro: Radiotopia from PRX.



The original cover art for Cellies, by Antwan Williams.

FROM THE VAULT

HISTORICAL PRISON WRITING

Trevor Pugh spent seven years working as a prison officer in South Australia. He spoke with David Denborough in 1996 about his experiences. This untitled piece originally appeared in *Beyond the Prison: Gathering Dreams of Freedom* (1996). It is reprinted with permission from both Trevor and David.



I grew up working-class in Victoria.

My father was a labourer. Well he was a printer first off – a qualified printer – but he didn't enjoy the indoors. And for years he was a milkman with a horse and cart, which I ended up doing as well. We met many people through the dairies and through dealing with horses, so that was quite interesting. And of course I started to meet a lot of people that were on the other side of the law. I used to go down the pub with Dad from a young age, just to be with him. We spent a lot of time together that way and I saw how different jobs affected different people.

At one of the pubs we drank at, there were bricklayers, builders, architects – all the range of building trades. They all stuck in their own little groups. Quite often, if a fight started in one area, the others sort of just moved back and let that group fight their own fight and that was it- they weren't going to get involved with people. I thought it was a terrible way to be – not concerned about another person – but I grew up with the attitude that you minded your own business because everyone's got their own problems. I wasn't in a position to help.

Education was just technical school and then it was out into the real world working. I learnt all my experience in the streets and working. I never had trouble getting a job because there was plenty of jobs around in those days. Quite a few of my mates had been inside. I used to be laughed at because I'd never done any time. I thought, 'Well, I'm not stupid enough to get caught. ' I got plenty of clips over the ears by the cops, or a boot up the arse. You know, drink-driving, just being 'a lad' as they called them in those days. That was just part and parcel of growing up. But when I got to around twenty-two, I'd been drinking since I was fifteen, I was injured when I was doing the milk-round I decided that I could have been killed at any time so I decided to live up life. I think in a matter of a year I got thrown in jail for drunk and disorderly and

fighting probably six or seven times because I wanted to be accepted by the others. I could come out and say, 'Yeah, I copped a kicking by the cops in there because I was giving them cheek', things like that, and I was just lucky that there were no convictions. They were a lot more lenient in those days.

But I realised where it was going to head. I was getting older and a lot of guys were getting into light-scale larceny and were heading up the scale. When I was about twenty-three I decided the best way was to leave the area. I came over to South Australia with my partner at the time. I broke out of that circle of people that would have taken me down. Most of them are now dead, whether it has been through drugs, motor-bike or car accidents. That was their lifestyle – live hard and fast. We moved to South Australia. It wasn't until I came over here that my interest in life came back. After we separated I came back down to live in the city and that's where the opportunity came to become a Correctional Officer.

I'd always been interested in helping people, but I never had the chance to do higher education, as in social work or anything like that. I felt Corrections was the way to go – working with people in a prison. I was thirty years old. I believed that I'd had the experience by that time to possibly make a difference, because theory is great, but practical experience counts. I was in for a hell of a shock when I got in there. It was totally different to what I had expected. I found out, much to my disbelief, that there wasn't the rehabilitation, there wasn't the care I expected. You didn't get involved. Actually if you took too much time with a prisoner that was having problems you were called a social worker by the fellow officers and told to just do your job and leave that to the 'do-gooders', so to speak. You were caught in a sort of a situation where sometimes you desperately wanted to help someone and other times where you had to bow to peer pressure. The prisoners were in the same way. But it was a steady job. It was a challenge, and I did manage to help some people. I thought for every person I can help, that made it worthwhile, but there wasn't enough opportunity – they were sort of exceptions rather than the rule.

Officers are living on the edge all the time and the only way they can cope is the same way as the prisoners: put on that vicious face and be aggressive. They are virtually trying to scare each other. That is a cycle in the prison system. They've got nothing else to hold onto, because if they show any weakness it's like a pack of wolves – every one just

turns on them. That happens to officers against officers and prisoners against prisoners. It's all a big bluff – the whole lot is a big bluff. There are a lot of officers who start out as caring. They're not all violent but they become immune to the violence because of what's around them and it just rubs off on them. They take it home. And then when they have trouble at home they release it at work in different ways, through petty little things which annoy the prisoners. This then makes them angry and it's a vicious circle.

Officers are dealing with it through alcohol, or their marriages are breaking up. After years in the job, you become like the people you are guarding. You become like the prisoners in respect of - you've got to be tough, you can't show fear. You will find that with any long-term serving officer (which is normally over, say, five years) they become hard, cynical – very cynical. They will laugh after they deal with someone that has slashed up or overdosed, because that's the way to deal with it. If you let it get to you, it gets to you very badly and you can't function.

A lot of officers will get involved in fights out in the street. They don't give anyone a second chance out there – because they've got to give too many second chances in prison, and so they become quite violent. I know that feeling. I swore when I first got out of the prison service that if anyone threatened me in any way, I would just flatten them, no questions asked. I totally believed that I would do that and I had the opportunity with a good friend who had insulted my wife. But fortunately at the time I found common sense. I had been out long enough.

Working in a prison if you show any sort of weakness the other officers then stay clear of you, and you have to prove yourself again. That happened to me. I had been in the job for about two and a half or three years and I got on okay with officers and prisoners. But then at the Remand Centre I thought I had been infected with AIDS from a prisoner. I'd done the right thing. He'd been taken down to the infirmary and he had none of his gear, so a couple of the other prisoners – knowing myself – they asked if I could take his gear down to him. Otherwise by the time they had got someone else to do it, it could be two or three days. So I packed up his gear and in the process I thought I had become infected. I had to undergo blood tests for quite a while.

It affected my home life, because of the fear of contracting AIDS or HIV. I didn't have any contact with my daughters for a long time because I was concerned I could transfer it to them. I can understand what a prisoner feels like when they could be infected or they believe they are, it can be soul destroying. Dying never worried me. I think most officers are, if they're going to get bashed up then they're going to get bashed up, if you're gonna get killed, you're gonna get killed. That's part and parcel of being in the job. If you are scared of that you shouldn't be in the job. But the virus was different. HIV – if you get full-blown – is a wasting disease, and I didn't want to go that way because I'd seen a lot of other prisoners go that way.

I didn't have help, even though I was on the outside, because the Department wasn't interested. I got compensation payments, as in stress leave. Finally, after about six blood

tests, I found that I was clear. I had to convince myself to get back into living, instead of wasting away, because that's what was happening. It was affecting me mentally and physically. When I went back to the Remand Centre I found out that I had become claustrophobic, possibly because of the lack of air and the fear of getting another infection. I ended up transferring up to another prison which had a campus-style living area, and started back on track again. But I felt that up there the officers were, if anything, more detached than I had ever been – even when I was crook. They were in there getting paid and that's all they wanted. They didn't really care about the people. They were just interested in the money and that's it. And to me, if you're in a job which you don't enjoy you're in the wrong job. I had to prove myself to the officers there that the reason I had been out on stress was not because I was scared of prisoners, which meant I had to be honest. It's amazing how much doubt they have of you if you can't survive in a prison system, even with the officers. They will virtually force you out of a job.

I caused waves. I came to logger-heads with a lot of them because of the way I treated people. I would stop in the evening when we were locking them up; if a prisoner was upset (which you found quite often) I would stop and talk to them, if they wanted to talk. When you know a prisoner is going through bad times and you care, you'll write reports or tell someone about it. Now quite often people on the next shift didn't care – they'd be too interested in staying in their office reading a book, having a laugh or whatever with someone else – another officer, and you'd go back to that unit the next day and find that the prisoner had been transferred to the labour prison, or was in hospital because he slashed up – because no-one followed up. That was a heart-breaking part of it, because these people were screaming out for help but the people in there didn't care enough. That used to affect me deeply, plus after the AIDS scare, seeing all the blood if someone had slashed up, that affected me to a certain degree. And visits. It's terrible to be an officer during visits. Visitors actually pull their children away from you.

When an innocent child will come up to say 'Hello', they will pull their children away from you, 'Don't speak to him – he's a screw'.

I became involved in 'the squad' [a unit of officers called in to quell disturbances and 'secure' prisoners]. Not for the express purpose of what a lot of officers joined it for – to bash prisoners when they got the chance – but to be there to help officers that were in trouble and to secure prisoners if they were playing up. The quicker you could subdue them, by using proper restraint holds which I was used to in martial arts, the easier it was on them – people didn't have to resort to violence. And I can say that while I was with prisoners in the squad, no-one got any undue physical force that wasn't necessary. I grew up with that belief that you can't take advantage of someone that is at a disadvantage.

But because of my 'outspoken' ways I got my elbow busted in squad training by an officer. I never got over that – I was in chronic pain for a long time and I ended up getting out of the Department because of it. I still have the chronic pain

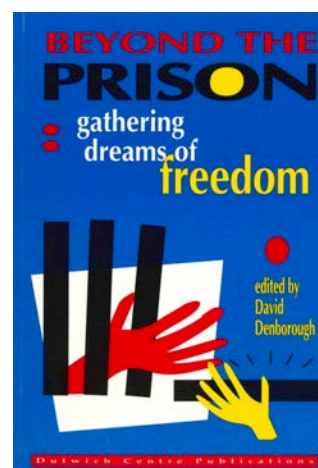
today. I was on all manner of pain killers which made no difference and I lost the ability to meditate and take control, which martial arts had helped me learn for many years. It wasn't until I got out of the prison system and possibly a year and a half down the track that I got back the ability to subdue the anger about what had happened to me and actually take control of my life.

You just take a long time to recover from the prison system – even as an officer. I know many officers that have left the job and it takes probably a year – a year and a half – to actually get back to a form of living normally and deal with problems without an initial violent attitude coming out.

I think everyone is responsible to do something. You can cry, you can laugh but I think action and actually speaking out about your feelings will allow others to understand that it is possible. I'd like to believe that officers could speak out without being made a laughing stock but it's a body armour they get up. I'm not lagging or being a dog on anyone. There are a lot of things I could speak about but it would be betraying what some prisoners have told me, how they survive in there. Even though it would be nice to be able to tell others how to survive in there it would give away the game and they wouldn't be able to use that. So there's a fine line about what you can say. And officers are in the same boat. They've all got their little survival tricks whether it be giving prisoners smokes, turning a blind eye to certain things. That's their little tricks that they've developed which makes them believe that they're doing that little thing that makes a difference.

Over all those years I met a lot of fantastic officers. I'd like to say to them – don't just sit there and take it. Say your piece, just let it be known that you don't agree. Don't just sit there and accept what's happening. It might be a job and it might be money but why did you get into the job in the first place? Was it for the reason of helping people? Or was it for a reason of controlling people? Think of why you got in there and think of why you should be in the job and that's about it. Don't be scared of having feelings because if you're not careful you become like the people you're looking after. Look at your own family life and how it affects you. Talk about it.

I've dealt with most things in life through humour and jokes. I always got a quick word in – you know, make light of the situation because if you don't laugh, you cry and sooner or later you're all cried out and you still go nuts. After I left the Department the dream inside of me still was to help people and I realised that once you are in the prison system, there's no real way you can help 'em. The only way is to stop them from getting into the prison system. And so now I'm working on that, with kids, young offenders. We've got to keep them out.



Beyond the Prison: Gathering dreams of freedom, can be purchased from the Dulwich Centre website, dulwichcentre.com.au

Paper Chained contacted Trevor to ask how he has been since 1996. This was his response:

Not long after the interview in 1996, chronic pain took its toll. I was on the Disability Support Pension due to the injury I suffered to my left arm. Despite operations, I was informed by doctors to learn to use my right arm (I am left-handed).

My life spiraled out of control and in my effort to cope, I was using both legal and illegal medications in my attempt to escape the pain, all my coping methods stopped working and my marriage was on very shaky ground.

I was at the point of committing suicide to find peace. One night, I held a rifle under my chin, thumb on the trigger ready, then a moment of clarity got me to go outside and call out to the night sky. There was no flash of light, but God was revealed to me and not long after I became a Christian.

Six months later, I received healing to my left arm. I cancelled my disability pension and resumed working again. My partner and I became Foster Carers, which continued up to 2018. It was over this time that we made a difference in many children's lives over our 20 years of foster caring.

I worked in numerous jobs during this time but after a back injury, I had another job change and started studies in Community Services and ended up working in the Homelessness and Domestic Violence areas and ran a 60-bed program for ex-offenders in Murray Bridge. At one stage, I even returned to speak to prisoners at Mobilong Prison, where I had worked. Officers who knew me wondered why I cared about prisoners.

The experience of finding God had a major impact in my life. I became a Pastor in 2003 and became involved in many Youth Groups dealing with troubled kids and helped turn many lives around. As of 2022, I continue volunteer support work with people in local communities in many areas as we settle into our retirement.

A HISTORY OF AUSTRALIAN PRISON NEWSLETTERS

BY DAMIEN LINNANE

In Issue 6 of *Paper Chained*, we began covering the history of prison newsletters in Australia, which included a story on *InPrint*, a NSW newspaper printed at Long Bay that ran from 1977 to 1981. In Issue 7, we continued our coverage with a feature on *Jail News*, *Framed*, and *Just Us*. In this issue, we'll wrap up this three part-series by talking about *Contact*.

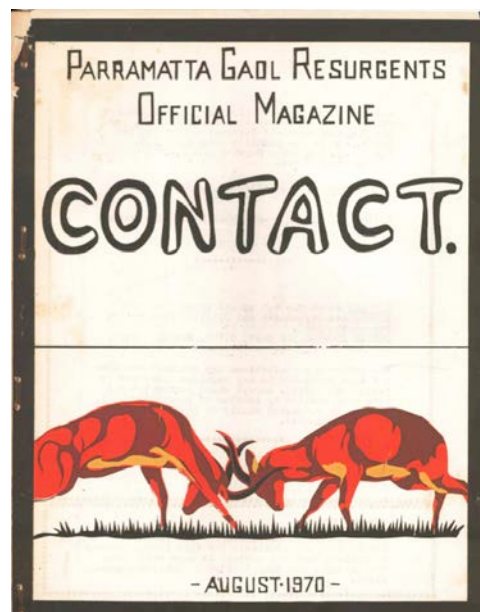
Created in 1970, *Contact* was the official magazine of 'The Resurgents', a group of mostly long-time prisoners at Parramatta Gaol who made up the discussion and debating team. It was produced on a Gestetner 120 stencil copying machine, with all stencils needing to be typed, and content-vetted prior to publication. The Resurgents deliberately refrained from being outspoken in their magazine, for fear of the publication being banned.

Things took a significant change, however, after notorious bank-robber Bernie Matthews took over as editor. In his memoir, *Intractable*, Matthews said that he wanted to use the magazine to "change the stereotype that all prisoners were knuckle-dragging six-foot sinners with broken noses and crew cuts, covered in boob tattoos." Under his leadership, the magazine began including in-depth interviews showing the views of other prisoners and advocating for changes in the prison system. The external mailing list was extended to include members of parliament, unionists, journalists, and various radical organisations. As of Issue 20, the circulation of *Contact* was 500 copies.

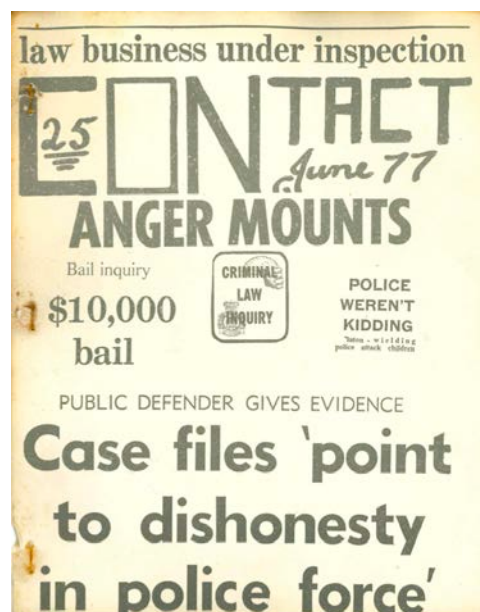
Matthews continued to use *Contact* as a platform for change in the prisons system. Through the networking of the magazine, on the 22 of July, 1977, the first ever meeting was held between prisoners and unionists, to discuss the issue of employing the formerly incarcerated. *Contact* also organised seminars and even started a theatre group that staged plays for visitors.

The 1978 Christmas edition of the magazine, published while the prison's superintendent was on leave and accordingly not vetted, contained a controversial interview between Bernie Matthews and fellow inmate James Edwards 'Jockey' Smith, who spoke at length about police verbal and corruption. On January 13, 1979, the *Sydney Morning Herald* ran a story, speculating that the magazine would be banned due the embarrassment the interview had caused to both the police and Corrective Services. The magazine, however, survived. Bernie Matthews eventually transferred control of *Contact* to fellow inmate Terry Haley upon leaving Parramatta Gaol, who in turn handed the reigns to New Zealander Gary Nilson.

Contact continued to be known for its outspoken manner and criticism, and was regarded as the best known of the internally run prison publications at the time. Production, however, finally ceased in 1981, when funding was cut by Corrective Services NSW, the same year they also shut down *InPrint*. Following the demise of both publications, NSW went without a long-term prison publication until the creation of the magazine *InLimbo* at Long Bay Gaol, which ran from 1984 till 1989.



The August 1970 issue (top), and Issue 25 from June 1977, reflecting the changing nature of the magazine and its criticism of government.



BOOM GATE GALLERY

ART FOR SALE

Boom Gate Gallery is the only gallery in NSW solely dedicated to the promotion, exhibition and sale of inmate art. The gallery is located outside the security boom gates at Long Bay Correctional Complex, allowing members of the general public to enter the gallery without entering the gaol. Visitors can view paintings, sculptures, hand-painted clap sticks, and didgeridoos, as well as videos showing inmate artists discussing the making and meaning behind their practice.

The gallery displays the work of current Long Bay inmates, and former prisoners from all over Australia. Inmates currently at other Correctional Centres can have their work displayed on the gallery web-page. Prices are arrived at through collaboration between the artist and gallery staff. 75% of the sale price goes back to the inmate, which they use to buy more art materials or send home to their family.

Members of the general public can purchase in-person in the gallery, or via their website and Instagram page.

© @boomgategallery

www.boomgategallery.dcj.nsw.gov.au/



David Gulpilil (young)

By Peter

\$300

60 cm x 150 cm, Acrylic on canvas



Death B4 Dishonour

By Craig

\$650

60 cm x 75 cm, Acrylic on canvas



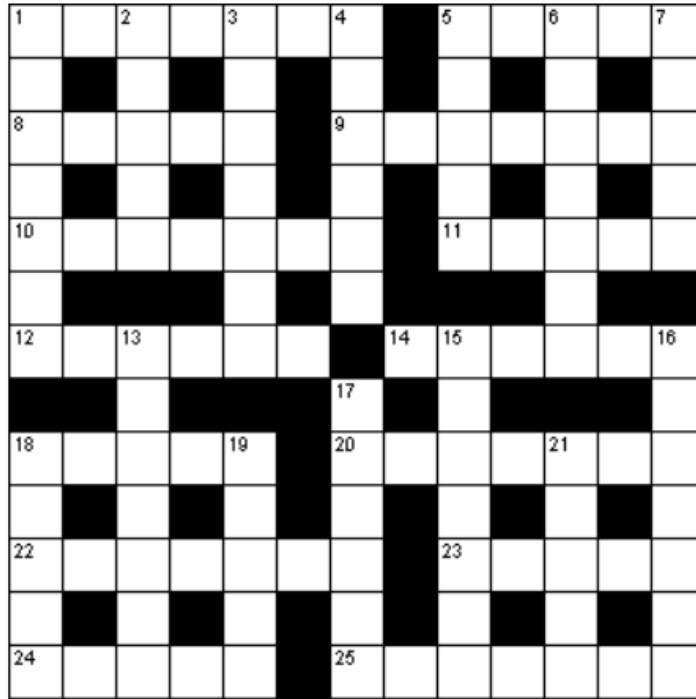
Galah 3

By Jonothan

\$300

50 cm x 40 cm, Acrylic on canvas

CROSSWORD



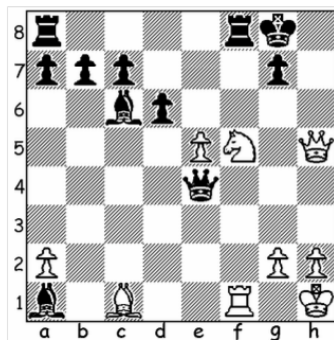
Across

1. Large house (7)
5. Pieces of information (5)
8. Profits (5)
9. Gruesome (7)
10. Retaliated (7)
11. Form of transport (5)
12. Hostility (6)
14. Stick (6)
18. Permit (5)
20. Sincere (7)
22. Creatures (7)
23. Doctrine (5)
24. Ledge (5)
25. Sweet (7)

Down

1. Tycoon (7)
2. Dissonance (5)
3. Perceptiveness (7)
4. Wanderers (6)
5. Aspect (5)
6. Vegetable (7)
7. Austere (5)
13. Discomfort (7)
15. Mocks (7)
16. Pull out (7)
17. Stopped (6)
18. Accumulate (5)
19. Dock (5)
21. Bird of prey (5)

CHESS

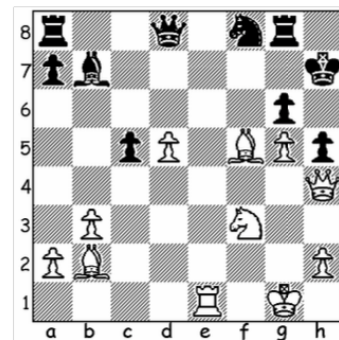


Mate in One Move- White to Move:

1. _____

Get the nominated colour to a position of checkmate in only one move.

Answers on page 40.



Mate in One Move- White to Move:

1. _____

Car Parts - Word Search

How much do you know about cars? Can you find the car parts in this word search? The words in this word search are hidden across, down, and diagonally, with backwards.

O H R S T K Y T T D R L W E O G O W Y N
 L S S R S H M T L A I T N E R E F F I D
 I S S E A T G I T P D A H F H N X T E S
 E H R I M S G I D A O T U E O O O R S I
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ACCELERATOR
 AIRFILTER
 BATTERY
 BLINKER
 BRAKE
 BUMPER

CLUTCH
 DIFFERENTIAL
 DOORS
 ENGINE
 EXHAUSTMANIFOLD

FUELTANK
 FUSES
 GEAR
 GRILL
 HEADLIGHT
 HORN

LIGHTS
 MUFFLER
 REARVIEWMIRROR
 RIMS
 ROOFRACK
 SEAT

SENSORS
 SHOCKABSORBER
 SUNVISOR
 TRANSMISSION
 WHEELS
 WINDSHIELD

Number Find Puzzle

5 Digit Numbers: Puzzle B

36367
 86033
 88403
 38992
 14652
 95613
 21093
 78255
 86661

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SOCIAL-PSYCHOLOGY OF PRISON GRIEF

BY KENJUAN CONGO, JR

One can look at prison grief from a social-psychological perspective. Social-psychology is the relationship between the mind and the environment in which it operates. According to Webster's Dictionary, grief is "intense emotional suffering caused by loss, disaster [or] misfortune." The social-psychology of prison grief can be defined as the relationship between the mind and penitentiary as it relates to intense emotional suffering.

The unequivocal intent of the American "justice system" is to serve as an impetus for grief. By-products of the system include long prison sentences, three-strike laws and mandatory minimums, in addition to an overall 'tough on crime' social philosophy. By levying a time-based sentence, the justice system attempts to dole out a punishment in terms of days and years, which equivocates offense with duration. Of said sentence, American prisons operate under the retributive approach of pain, suffering, anguish, and grief for the offender through the deprivation of liberty. The defunding of programs and services, distance from families, overcrowding, unsanitary conditions, and poor medical care are but a few indicators of the foundational and ideological purposes of U.S. penal institutions. The American criminal justice system is intentionally constructed to evoke grief from the offender. It's unfortunate that these prison conditions are more likely to invoke rather than deter future criminal behaviors. Research has been conducted on prison's socially constructed criminogenic impact, looking at incarceration as a driver of crime and violence. Offenders become more criminally oriented as a result of their prison experience, particularly as it relates to the intense and untreated emotional suffering. A prisoner's grief is the by-product of inflicted shame that ranges from humiliating strip searches, being forced to use the bathroom and undress in front of each other, and other dehumanizing actions. This shameful grief also comes directly from correctional officers diminishing humanity by threats of violence, name calling, threats of parole denial, insulting visitors, tossing books, stepping on clothes, and turning the deprivation of dignity into a game in order to pass time while still on duty. The feeling of shame is a reality of prison life, causing grief among us.

In the field of psychology, shame is widely recognized as a producer of violence. In such cases, violence is used as a means to resist rising feelings of shame, replacing shame with a sense of pride through the use of physical force. This may mean a student disrespected in class asserts respectability by fighting, or a man who is made fun of may seek reprisal. Each individual's grief comes from a deep sorrow from the loss of respect or dignity, thus the desire to displace the emotion through the use of physical force. Violence is used to exchange shame and grief, for pride and dignity. The prisoner's grief is still present when re-entering society. The individual is now carrying a socially produced mental state of inadequacy and worthlessness, making them more susceptible to replicate criminal behaviors. Prisons produce a psychological condition in which violence becomes more attractive than rational thought.

Another form of prison grief is deep sorrow from the loss of safety. The aforementioned emotional response is due to the violent conditions of American prisons. There is physical, emotional, and mental abuse inflicted on the incarcerated from other incarcerated people or correctional staff themselves. This abuse ranges from rape, assault, threats, verbal alienation, and provocation. Unfortunately, reporting this type of behavior puts the prisoner at even greater risk; thus, the vast majority of these situations go unreported. The normalizing of violence with no protection puts the prisoner in a state of grief through the loss of physical, emotional, and psychological safety. Upon release, the ex-prisoner has spent years – if not decades – in a place where violence is normalized. This socially produced hyper-vigilance and fear puts the person in a more vulnerable condition as it relates to the use of physical violence.

When a former prisoner says, "Don't walk up behind me," it is not a statement of toughness or strength, but the result of a psychologically fragile state. Putting offenders through years of trauma is a risk to society as a whole. The psychological 'solutions' of the Department of Corrections (DOC) are minuscule at best. One is told to keep a journal, or do breathing exercises, only to be thrown back into the same environment that produced the problem. Sadly, going back to the psychologist with the same mental problem puts one at risk to isolation for 'safety' reasons, which only exacerbates the underlying condition.

Separating the human mind from its environment is what makes the DOC's psychological approach limited. It is true that there is a need for short-term relief from the socially induced grief and psychological trauma of incarceration. The immediate remedies should be recognized as temporary treatment, as it relates to the necessity of a healthy psychological environment for sustainable mental health. Once short-term treatment is given, the prisoner can be educated on the root causes of their socio-psychological problems. When one is aware of the overall problem, one is in a better position to recognize and manage emotional impulses in a constructive manner. After the prisoner is given immediate short-term relief, is able to recognize root causes, and develop the skills to cope effectively, they are able to link their mental health with social reality. The prisoner will be able to work constructively with groups and organizations, to address the social plights inflicted on them that results in their psychological distress. By being an active participant in their own life and destiny, they restore a sense of pride, respect, and dignity in a socially positive way.

One possible solution is a coalition between prisoners and social groups to address the socio-psychological needs of the incarcerated and those re-entering society. This coalition must be free of DOC input, which would tend to bias the treatment options in favor of punitive measures.

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IN THE NEXT ISSUE

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SISTERS FOR CHANGE

In the next issue of *Paper Chained*, we'll talk to leaders from Sister for Change, a Red Cross program that began at Townsville Correctional Centre.



DRAWING LESSONS

Our editor, Damien Linnane provides instructions on how to illustrate with pencils.



JAILBREAK TRANSCRIPTS

Starting from our the next issue, we'll also begin sharing transcripts from episodes of *Jailbreak Prison Radio*.

CROSSWORD ANSWERS

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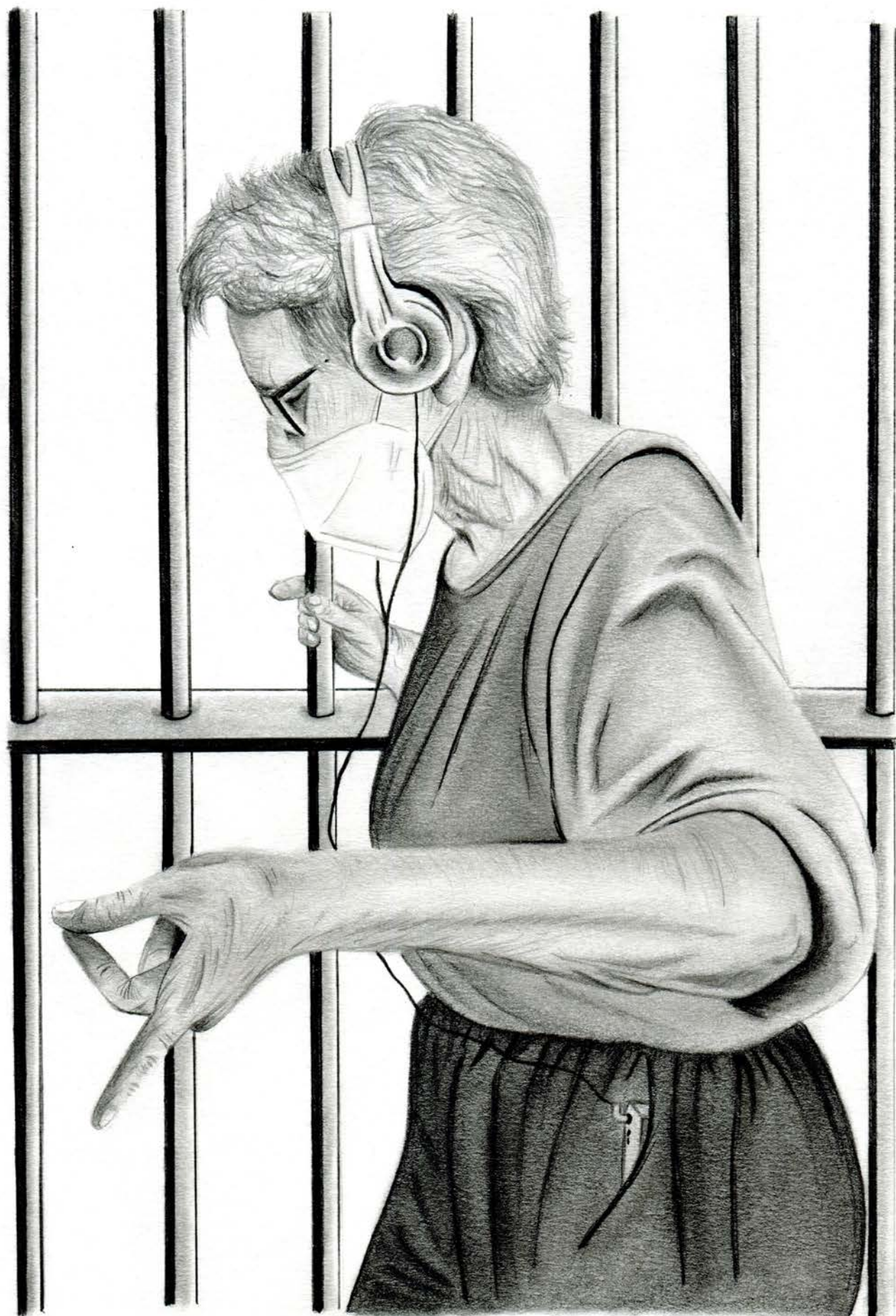
CHESS ANSWERS

White Knight to E7
White Queen to H5

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE IN THE NEXT ISSUE?

IF YOU HAVE SUGGESTIONS ON WHAT YOU'D LIKE TO SEE IN PAPER CHAINED, PLEASE REACH OUT AND LET US KNOW!

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