

# PAPER CHAINED

A JOURNAL OF EXPRESSION FROM BEHIND BARS



**CRC** community  
restorative  
centre

**ATFJ**

**ISSUE 17 / MAR 2025**

*Posted free to incarcerated people*



**UniSQ**



**Curtin University**

# 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.



To prevent logging of an old-growth forest in Tasmania, Miranda Gibson climbed a 60-metre tree in the Styx Valley in an illegal protest. After reaching a 3-metre platform built at the top, she stayed there for the next 449 days, breaking the Australian record for the most time spent up a tree without coming down at any point. A support crew on the ground sent her supplies. The area her tree was in was eventually officially added to Tasmania's World Heritage Area, protecting it from logging.

Miranda is now part of the editorial team of *Inside Out*, a quarterly newsletter aimed at LGBT prisoners though open to everyone. You can subscribe by writing to their address: *Inside Out*. PO Box 2446, Footscray, Victoria 3011

# WHAT'S ON THE INSIDE

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

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

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

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

Please 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, ID number, and postal address, as well as your earliest possible release date (if you have one). Those outside prison may access the journal free online via our website, **PaperChained.com**.

## TERMS OF PUBLICATION

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

Copyright for art and writing is retained by the contributor. Contributors are free to have any 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, accepted contributions 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



Curtin University

# Study at Curtin from Prison

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

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

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

Courses currently available include:

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

For more information, speak to your prison Education Officer.

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



**About Time for Justice** supports and advocates for survivors of institutional child abuse through peer-support, advocacy and mental health resources. Should our clients wish to initiate a litigation process to receive possible compensation for what they have been through, ATFJ provides support throughout what can be a confusing and difficult process to make it easier and to minimise the negative impacts this process can have. We want you to find justice and start healing so you can put it all behind you.

## Testimonials

Thanks Jacob! Much appreciate what you've accomplished for the ppl! In saying this nobody else would talk out until you spoke out about your story! You're a true blue survivor who thought about others and not only yourself! This has been locked away since my younger days and I can honestly say that you've made me believe that I'm a better person today than yesterday :) thank you from the bottom of my heart and God bless not only my soul but others who have been affected by this. Because of you I'm nearly a full and complete woman :) Moving forward is the best medicine! Happy days Jacob!

Hi! To all the team at About time for Justice I thank you so much for taking me on, believing in me, and bringing me justice. You have changed my life, and I'm sure you will go on to change the lives of many more as I know there are many more victims just like me, please do. I love the work you do, you're heaven sent god bless you all and THANK YOU.

I don't know how to say this but seeing your post about things you talk about you genuinely inspired me, you're little bit of support has given me the strength to finally speak out. Finally after 13 years I'm getting justice. I appreciate you more than you'll ever know. I know we've never met but please know I appreciate you from the bottom of my heart.



*The founders of About Time for Justice, father and son Todd and Jacob Little, are former prisoners and survivors of institutional abuse.*

Hey I have just seen your Facebook page and I think it's amazing what you are doing. Although my experience was never in an institution but within the family, it's bloody good to see someone is out there making a difference :) and giving hope for others. We are who we are through the experiences we endure. I'm a single mum, ex drug addict and child sexual abuse survivor, but I'm also a student in my first year at uni thanks to people like yourself who motivate me xx have a good one mate.

Thanks very much for your kind words of encouragement you should be proud of yourself and how strong you are. You have made my day.

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

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

# LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

BY DAMIEN LINNANE

Welcome back to another year of *Paper Chained*. I'm pleased to let you know our magazine has continued to grow since last year. In addition to going out on all tablets in NSW prisons, we're now also on the educational computers in prisons in the ACT and Tasmania, and on the Intranet trial now taking place in Victorian prisons. And watch this space for news on us potentially expanding more into prisons overseas.

I'm also excited to announce the wonderful people over at Vision Australia aired the first issue of *Inside Voice*, a new radio program and podcast in December 2024. The program is dedicated to providing access to news and creative content for and by incarcerated people, and consists of reading content from both *Paper Chained* and the prison newspaper *About Time*. *Inside Voice* airs across the Vision Australia Radio Network Thursday's at 4:30pm, and is repeated on Mondays at 4:30pm. Radios can be tuned to Vision Australia in Adelaide, Albury, Darwin, Perth, and many locations in Victoria.

Until next time, keep those contributions coming, and if you have any feedback, requests, or letters for publication, we'd love to hear from you. I hope you enjoy Issue 17, and here's to another year of *Paper Chained* magazine.



*Paper Chained's mascot animal Izzy sits with the 353 letters which were received from people in prison in Australia, New Zealand, and the United States in 2024. Help us break last year's record by sending us your art and writing!*



University of  
Southern  
Queensland

Supporting  
Incarcerated  
Students

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

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

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

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

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

# ART AND WRITING

## LOVE POEM

Remember, my love that distance is no barrier,  
My love for you is side and face to face  
No miles can separate to true heart even as  
light years cannot halve the warmth of the sun

You are in me and with me and of me  
I breathe and feel the gentle rise of your breath,  
I dream and in those sweet dreams I see the glow of  
your smile and feel the truth of who you are

The sun and the moon and stars look down on our love  
The space between us, from up there, is indistinguishable  
I will love you until the stars fade and fall from the sky  
Til all is gone except for the memory of you and I

## WAITING FOR THE TRAIN

I have heard a hundred fights waiting for the train  
Lovers kiss then drift apart waiting for the train  
Many strangers shifting eyes waiting for the train  
I have passed ten thousand hours waiting for the train

## MY WINDOW

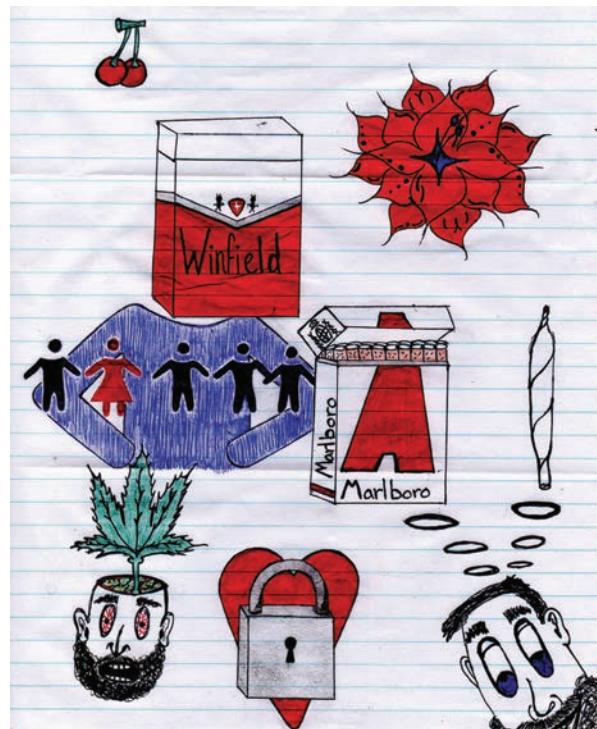
Only one foot square is my window  
So I bend my neck to view the world  
I look to see what the day has to show  
Past the shining metal curled  
I try to look past it to find a cloud  
I even hope of the chance to see a bird  
I would go outside myself if only I was allowed  
I use my eyes instead of chosen word  
Not a bird not a cloud but the sun is on fire  
There is wind but I cannot see it blow  
My eyes struggle past the razor wire  
Forever it travels and seems to go  
Sparkling in the sun laden with morning dew  
Sharp as the pain I feel deep within  
Memories of a life I once knew  
And the bar on my window a legacy of sin

*Poems by Aaron Matthews, 186464*

*Mount Gambier Prison  
PO Box 1498  
Mt Gambier, SA 5211*

## BROKEN SYSTEM

They say we all need the justice system to get along, I don't understand what does justice have to do with me smoking my bong? They say I'm a crim because I like to smoke, but I only started because first my back then my leg broke. When the pain started I went to the doctor, after many scans I was told this pain will last till you're old, you'll have to be tough, you'll have to be bold, surgery is no option, no doctor will risk all of his gold. The pain goes on day after day, you try to be tough push on anyway. The pain is too much so you go see the doctor, he says here are some pills take every four to eight hours and nothing can stop ya but be careful too many will drop ya. The pills started yellow then to light green on to grey nurse or fentanyl and amphetamine. All you want is for the pain to stop so again and again the pills you pop. But all you want now is to stop all these pills, you hear in America thousands and thousands it kills. The government gives me opioids daily, but a big bag of weed and for years they will jail me, all I want is to be pain free daily, can someone please tell me have I bothered you lately? Then why is the justice system tryin' to nail me?



*Art and writing by Lewis Comb  
Woodford Correctional Centre  
PMB 1, Woodford, Queensland 4514*

## BONE ON BONE

Bone-on-bone I stumble  
through cut glass memories  
shards of hail  
slice through my mind  
bone-on-bone

Bone-on-bone  
torn from the tomb that bore me  
the fumes that formed me  
the safe house that scorned me  
bone-on-bone

Bone-on-bone  
ancient blood flows through my veins and  
out my mouth and down the drain  
I'm the link that broke the chain  
bone-on-bone

Bone-on-bone on skull on ribs  
the friend the brother, mum and kids  
the door the wall, the breath the soul  
bone-on-bone

Bone-on-bone the funeral pyre  
rope and buckle, blade and wire  
thin and young and higher and higher  
bone-on-bone



Art by Clifford Singh

Poem by Wayne Hosking

Former literacy teacher at Greenough Regional Prison, WA

## THE HEART

You can control the actions of people by  
limiting their liberties but you cannot  
with all the outward restrictions, chain  
the heart. Kingdoms rise and fall as time  
ebbs and flows but the heart is forever.  
Men need women. The men are the  
strength and the women the heart. Might  
without heart or compassion can be cruel,  
just as a heart without authority is weak  
and vulnerable. Never allow a written  
human code to separate you from what  
was written on your heart.

By Brittaney McCulloch  
Bandyup Woman's Prison  
PO Box 100  
Guildford, WA 6935



Art by David McGettigan

## SPIRITS OF THE BILLABONG

The wind-stirred Casuarinas sigh  
The cool waters carry their song  
Through the breezes the echoes are heard  
Spirits of the billabong  
In an image mirrored from above  
The placid waters reflect the light  
Of the sun that passes through the sky  
And the glitter of stars at night  
The rippling water forming features  
Of the ghosts of long ago  
Whose souls inhabit the shaded depths  
And whisper softly in their flow  
Spirits of the billabong  
The dreamtime legends tell  
Of ancient battles long ago fought  
And of the warriors brave that fell  
Down through the ages word of mouth  
Carried forth their heroic deeds  
While now they drift undisturbed  
Amongst the rushes and the reeds  
When at night the sun has settled  
And darkness has stolen the day  
The restless souls stir the silence  
From the depths as they break away  
Spirits of the billabong  
They rise to embrace the sky  
To fight once again legend's battles  
In which they were destined to die.

Poem by DeWitt B



## AS I WAS!

As I was, before this time,  
Is something I can't be.  
For as time flowed, and changes came,  
there's much I didn't see.  
Left alone, til my time's done,  
just waiting to restart.  
I've lost a lot, but not it all,  
because I still have heart.  
So as I was, now gone for good,  
is nothing but the past.  
It took some time, to get me here.  
But now I'm built to last.

*By Dale Blackborough*

## WARRIOR MAN

Here and there stands a warrior man with a spear, not hunting for deer because there was no deer, only emu and kangaroo meat.  
Here stands a warrior man with a spear and boomerang on the side of his hip before white man came over on ship.  
These days we see these men only in books recollected and collected in museums and libraries.  
This time man with no spear or boomerang, only with chains wrapped around their necks and feet.  
These men seen before on land without house or car, only their own two feet.

*By Robert Trapman, Lithgow Correctional Centre*

## IF YOU KNOW YOU KNOW

Out of time out of luck now I'm a prisoner of the judge  
locked in the system and taken away, in a place full of  
the same shit that they want me to change, trapped in  
a cycle impossible to quit now as a number that must  
forget an evil place that can leave you broken or scared  
where one escort truck can change the power of the yard  
the water is cold the food always shit your loved one's  
faces you slowly forget, seconds to minutes, minutes to  
hours months to years armed guards in towers six minute  
calls six-minute showers photos 'n' letters some are lucky  
to get express post six weeks after it's sent no matter how  
staunch no matter how strong this place will fuck with  
your head but no effect no effect fuck the system I said  
they can't stop the clocks and we'll be free once again.

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



*Brownlow 2018*

Art by Samantha Brownlow, D56930  
SQCC, LMB 1008, Gatton, QLD, 4343



Art by Kelly Flanagan, 219454  
Dame Phyllis Frost Centre  
PO Box 497, St Albans, Victoria, 3021



Art by Katrina W  
Silverwater Women's Prison

## TO BE HUMAN

The world's greatest athletes were human  
The world's greatest artists were human  
The world's greatest scientists were human  
The world's greatest innovators were human  
The world's greatest philosophers were human  
The world's greatest humanitarians were human  
The world's greatest naturalists were human  
The world's greatest teachers were human  
The world's greatest explorers were human  
The world's greatest dreamers were human  
The world's greatest lovers were human  
They were all just humans  
To reach for the stars is human  
And if you reach for the stars you just might reach them,  
because to be human means that near nothing is  
beyond you  
Nothing is beyond you

*Poem by Alex Freeburn, 211722*

*Karreenga C.C.*

*1200 Bacchus Marsh Rd, Lara VIC 3212*

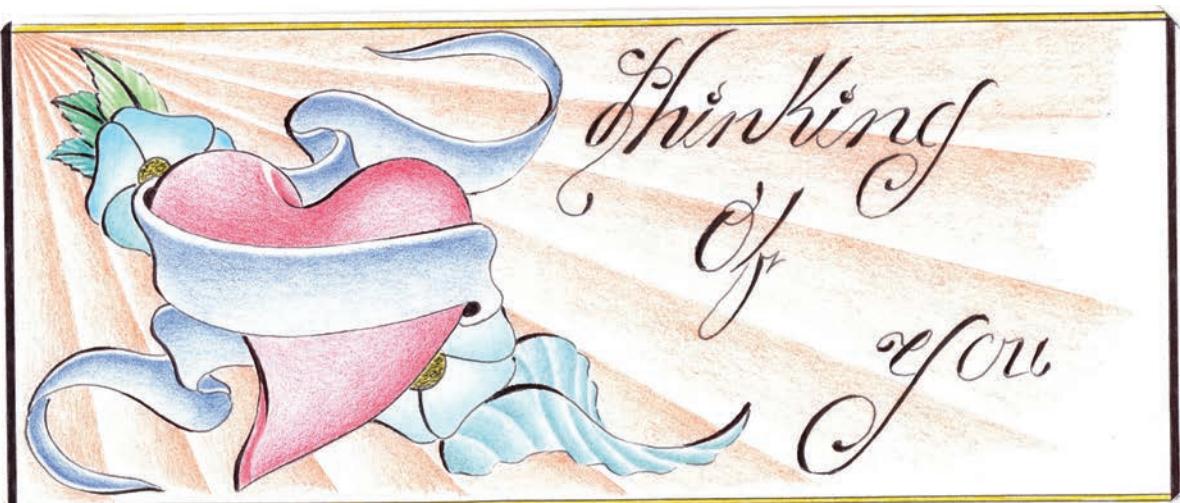
## ALONE

I lie to myself at least 12 times a day, sometimes more  
It all depends how many people ask how I am  
Hugs and cuddles get you through hard times,  
but I wouldn't know. Its been some time,  
I don't know how long you can go on without it.  
Even though its been over a decade. I feel so empty all  
the time. But I eat so much. I'm surrounded by heaps  
of people, I still feel alone, Soon it will end and I will go  
home. I know I'll never come back OH GOD NO PLEASE

*Poem by Natalie Lewis*



*Art by Preston, Brisbane Youth Detention Centre*



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

## A LIFE BETWEEN LIFE

What happened to the time,  
who knows? But it has been a while  
5-and-a-half years, sharp and bitter as lime  
that's my jail time,  
where I lived a life between life  
a day and then another day  
in the reality of jail:  
a constant now  
but now it's happening  
when life is just in the hands  
of LORD PAROLE POWER TIME  
in the transition from the imperfect present  
to a perfect future.  
It has been a good week,  
Sin Parole, let's make it a double meet!  
I will breathe fresh air, real and pure  
I will go out dancing, loving and  
embrace new culture  
and keep my mind at rest.  
I will very soon fly free, leaving all this behind  
and I will make it happen  
because there is nothing here to keep  
I will fully engage with life,  
no gates, no bells, no walls anymore  
I will not waste precious time  
I am the change that I seek  
I am the one I have been waiting for.

*Poem and art by Silvia Roberts, Numinbah QLD*



Thanks to all of you that have been sharing laughs and tears, to all the readers of PAPER CHAINED, the friends that I met within, and all of you that share and spread the LOVE. WE ARE ONE! Namaste



**Torana**



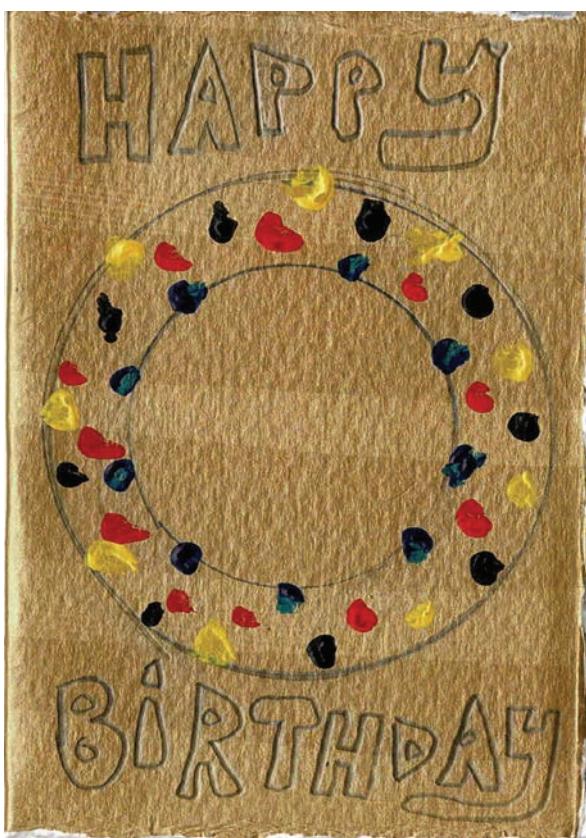
*Art by LenPen, Victoria*



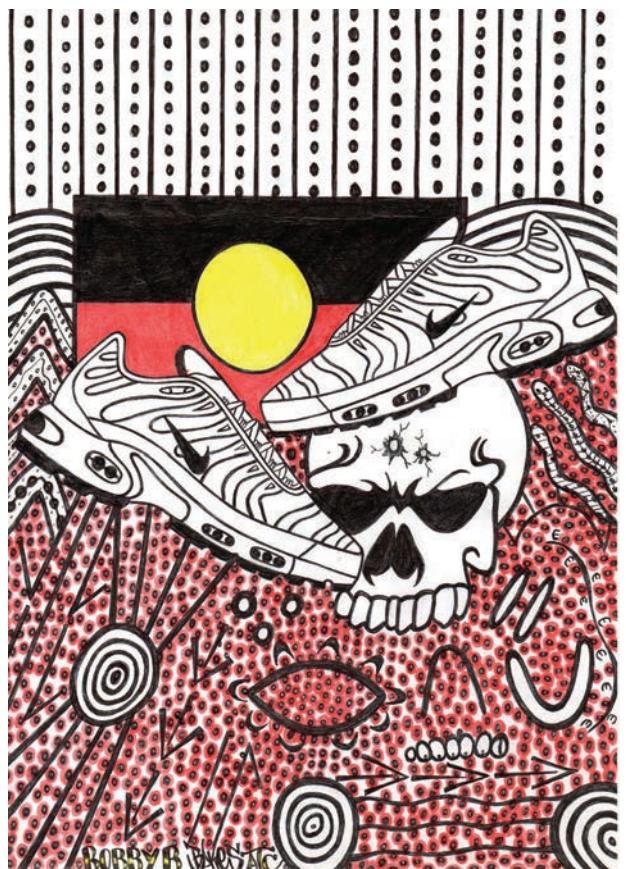
Art by Simon Evans  
Tongariro Prison, New Zealand



Art by Phillip Powell, Yatala Labour Prison  
1 Peter Brown Drive, Northfield, SA 5085



Art by Nilesh Goundar, Long Bay Correctional Centre



Art by Robert Baker, Yatala Labour Prison

## HER DARK UNIVERSE

Behind her smile, beyond the surface  
Entails a dark road, into her universe.  
Relentless journeys, battles in rain  
Distorting her mind, paralysed her with pain.  
The road meanders, around harrowing bends  
This world of torment, all routes are dead ends  
Emotional rollercoaster, provoked by her fears  
Crashing violently into a deluge of tears  
Lost in the darkness, her soul drowns deeper  
Loving memories fade, no longer a lil' dreamer  
A cold-hearted girl, with countless scars of misery  
She's forgetting how to love, empowered by enmity  
Cruel deceitful lies, compelled by lust and poison  
Her soul is now destroyed, all but dark emotions.  
Living in suffocation, there's nowhere to hide  
From her inner demons, and the devil by her side.  
She fails miserably, and struggles to survive  
Her self exposed, stripped bare and skinned alive  
She wants to give up, dictating she must die  
Lord have mercy for, those who will suffer and cry  
Toxic through her veins, reaching high capacity  
Her pride is dead, fuck faith, fuck life, fuck dignity!  
This world of turmoil, thorns bleed endlessly  
There's no turning back, to the girl she used to be ...

## THE BRAZEN B'S (AT A WOMEN'S PRISON)

I've compiled a bizarre list of our top five leisure activities whilst incarcerated – for humour purposes only.  
Apologies in advance if details in my writing are offensive or traumatic to any readers.

1. BUY UP: Let's face it, we can't go on without buy-ups, this is what we live for in here.
2. BUSCOPAN: Incredulously gets you so befuddled after a smoke, like who knew to even smoke a buscie? The effects are hilariously entertaining!
3. BREW: It's the holy grail if you've mastered brewery. Beginners do not attempt unless your aim is to get sick.
4. BUPE: This stuff is as sacred as it could get in here. It will make your time fly and send you broke instantaneously.
5. BOXES: Well, it depends whose box, otherwise could be a turn for the worst ... LOL.

*Poem and writing by Monica Huoth, 650856  
Clarence Correctional Centre  
Locked Bag 3902,  
South Grafton NSW 2460*

## NO ONE'S A CRUMB IN HERE

They've got gold chains, money, drugs, cars, everything we could ever dream of.  
They're moving more drugs than a pharmacist and are super well off.  
They're MMA Fighters, their Mrs is a model, their blokes hectic and so are they.  
They know everyone, they're someone they'll show you on the outside one day.

No one's a crumb in here.

They've got no one filling their account, they're barely getting through each week.  
They're the biggest dealer in the area but they can't afford canteen.  
They can't pay for their lawyer, they're using Legal Aid.  
But they'll tell you they're no shit kicker and the jacks don't find shit when they raid.

No one's a crumb in here.

They've got nothing, and no one, they're smoking patches and glue.  
They're wearing prison issue everything and someone else's old shoes.  
They live in Government housing, the Penthouse of Commission Flats.  
They're wearing Gucci and Prada, but they're covered in jail tats.

No one's a crumb in here.

Everything they have, they stole from someone else's home.  
They reckon they're a baller but they're on methadone.  
They're the ones that'll tell you they're here for the long haul then get out at the end of the week.  
They're an IVO breacher, they're a complete deadbeat.

But no one's a crumb in here.

*By Maddie*

Plovers warn early  
Officers unlock later  
Another prison day

-  
Sparrows hopping freely  
Prisoners feed them daily  
Safety in numbers

*Haikus by Clayton*



By Sheikh Jaxan Khalil 'Po' Assad O'Reilly, E14572  
Woodford Correctional Centre  
PMB 1, Woodford, QLD 7074



Art by Scott Dalrymple, 595982  
Darwin Correctional Centre  
PO Box 1066, Howard Springs NT, 0835

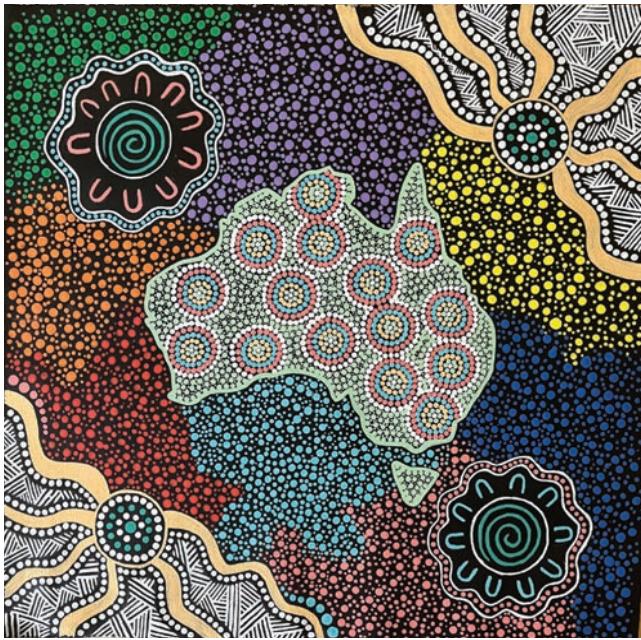
## BEHIND THESE WALLS

Behind these walls is a place full of danger  
a place you will hate, a place full of anger  
Behind these walls is a lot of regret  
Bodily fluids, some blood and some sweat  
Behind these walls you have no privacy  
no time to yourself, no time to be free  
Behind these walls it can be a bit rough  
where anyone sad is forced to act tough  
Behind these walls is a lot of reflection  
a place full of stress that's lacking affection  
Behind these walls is a place of the needy  
the food's not enough so we're forced to be greedy  
Behind these walls all you got is yourself  
our only possession is keeping our health  
Behind these walls is a test of your mind  
a test of your character, punished with time  
Behind these walls cons are judged by respect  
but the government only sees us as a cheque  
Behind these walls is a place we all hate  
our sleep and our dreams are our only escape  
Behind these walls you lose track of the time  
every day is the same, it plays tricks on your mind  
Behind these walls is a place full of dread  
the living come here, but they'd rather be dead.

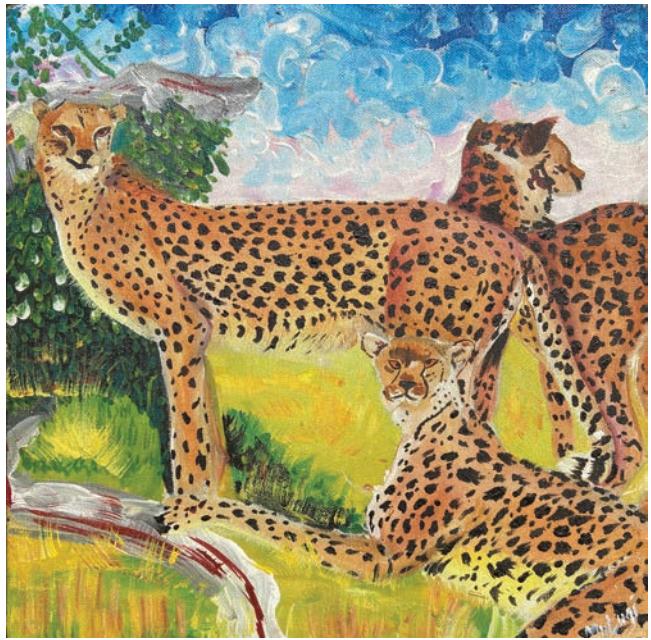
## MID DAY THOUGHTS

At night I find it hard to sleep, I tend to stare at walls  
I ponder on my troubled past but still I'm standing tall  
I always keep my head up with my heart upon my sleeve  
But what's the point in staying strong when people  
always leave  
These suicidal thoughts I'm having never seem to go  
When one comes along, the others seem to overflow  
As the days pass by I realise I'm losing hope  
I'm finding more comfort making friends with the rope  
I wish I had a second chance or even just a clean slate  
My family misses all my calls, a pen pal would be great  
I wish I had somebody close that could relate to my pain  
A person that I love, I'll keep you sheltered from the rain  
A type of love that is so rare I swear it's only in the movies  
But I guess I'm just dreaming I find myself snoozing  
I wish I had someone to write, to laugh at my jokes  
I'm getting sick and tired of being stuck with only blokes  
I know I can't complain, I'm here because I'm in the wrong  
I started writing poetry, no longer writing songs  
I hate the smell of piss and male B.O. that is foul  
I really wish I had a girl to call or even a pen pal

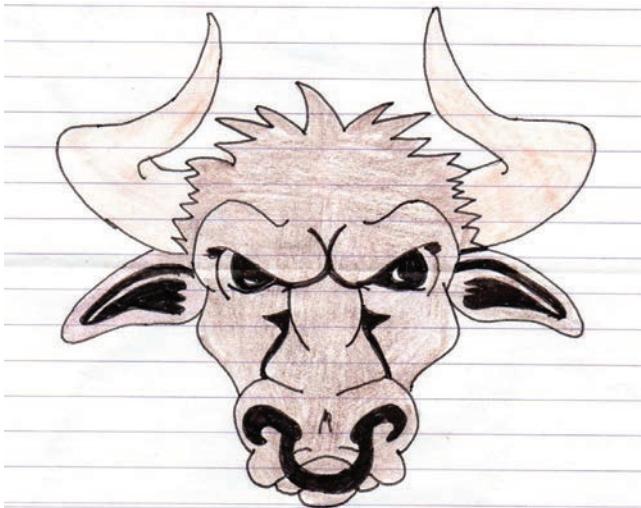
By Kieran Cowen, 641239, Darwin Correctional Centre



Art by Jean-Paul Issa



Art by James Mutugi, Kenya



Art by Aaron Matthews, 186464  
Mount Gambier Prison  
PO Box 1498, Mount Gambier, SA, 5291



Art by Nigel G



Art by Phillip Galea  
Ravenhall C.C. PO Box 490, Victoria 3021



Art by Malnight

## THE REAL PRISON ISN'T A BUILDING

I need my mind to settle ... so many thoughts and questions and worries. Each night I lay awake unable to sleep, it's driving me crazy and making my time in prison much longer than it's needed, than it's wanted.

The biggest punishment is not the lack of freedom, not missing the ones we love, it's not the fact I can't eat the foods I desire, it's not the stopping of having drugs or sex, it's not the people I'm made to coincide with ... it's the thoughts that are endlessly doing circles in my head. It's all the unanswered questions my mind keeps asking. It's the worries I keep wondering about that I cannot solve. It's the unknowing I cannot find out about and it's the "what if's", "if only's" and "I wish's" that are always to be just that.

Prison is not just a building. Prison is what's in my mind. I yearn for the inner peace. For the ability to silence the constant thoughts. To put the whole puzzle together without the jumbled and missing pieces.

By Stacey Cifuentes, G35098  
TWCC, PO Box 5574  
Townsville QLD 4810

## THE ACT OF CRIME

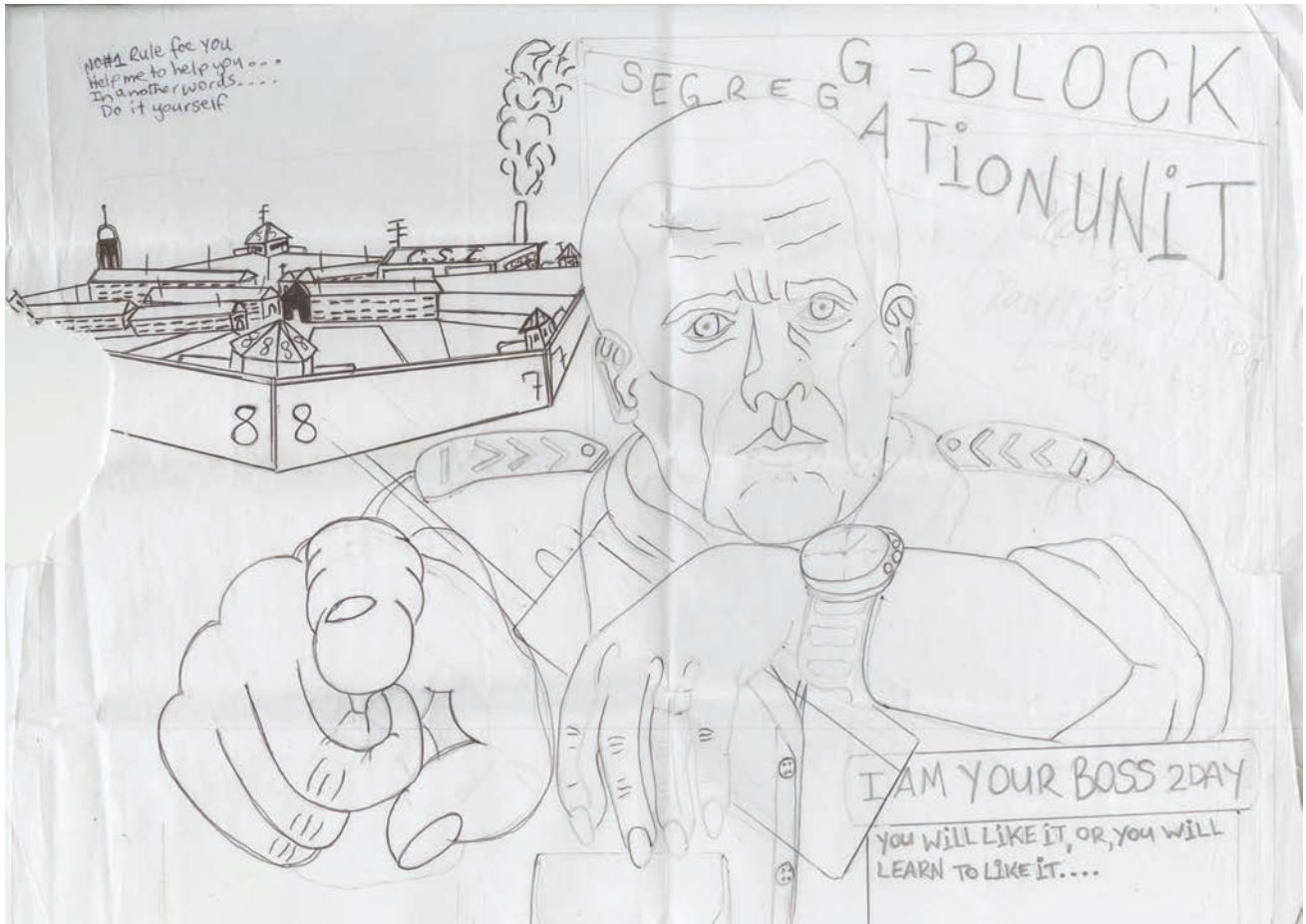
I knew it from the very first,  
The eyes had said it all  
They were totally absorbed with lust,  
You had no control at all  
You grabbed me by my slender neck.  
It truly took my breath  
Then you tore away my flimsy wrap,  
I felt the rush of death  
When your lips had covered mine,  
I knew it was the end  
You had to have your way with me,  
No matter what was said  
You drained my life of every drop,  
I never stood a chance  
Then you simply cast me aside,  
Without a second glance  
My life was gone without a care,  
A total loss to all  
A victim of a brutal act,  
That can't be touched by law  
Now here I lay an empty shell,  
No one to shed a tear  
Nobody cares about a big brown bottle,  
When it's no longer filled with beer!

By Kenneth Monley, aka Kenoath  
Written 26th September, 1994

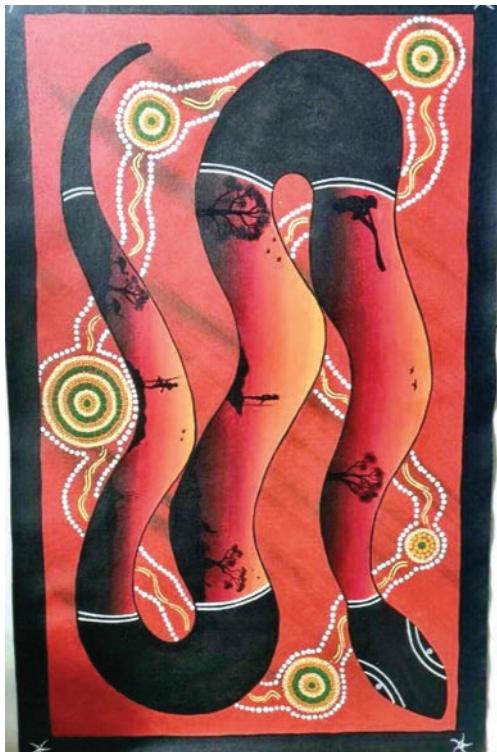
## WHEN WILL IT STOP?

It seems to be on the news everyday that another woman has died,  
Killed by the hands of one once loved  
Whose anger has seen his brain fried.  
He was out on bail, the media tells us,  
The murderous signs were there,  
But never arrested for doing anything wrong  
So the police and justice system don't care.  
The adverts on TV tells us everyday,  
"Fellas, check your mental health."  
So where are the services to help these men in a country supposedly of such great wealth?  
It still seems to be a source of pride for blokes young and old to say "I'm not ill".  
What hope is there for these men when the first thought in rage is to kill?  
There's the misplaced sense of manly honour,  
a sneer as he says "I don't know why she cried,  
had nothing to do with calling her fat and ugly,  
it's really not my fault she died".  
Police and media gather in their numbers,  
Faces writhe large in sorrow and despair.  
"We're sad to report yet another death"  
Fellas, when will you start to care?  
Yet we're told mental health support is a priority for men, one and all.  
So where are the head doctors to help us sort out our pride before the fall?  
Why are the women in our society afraid to walk the streets at night and celebrate being alive and joyous, not be dead without a fight?  
The media shrieks the song yet again that the killer was out on bail.  
Society shrieks to the media and police.  
"Put the rotten bastard in jail!"  
Then the media finds out quietly the man sought mental health support.  
He told them about the voices in his head  
He needed help but came up short.  
Psychologists and psychiatrists he saw,  
"Please look after me" he would weep.  
"I don't know why I get so angry,  
is it the childhood pain I keep?"  
The doctors of the head look sad.  
"Mate, for you there is no place to send you to sort you out and put a smile back on your face."  
Out to the world he goes again,  
Anger builds once more inside his head and the lack of mental health support sees another woman on the news.  
Dead.

By KCDC



Art by Grant Colb



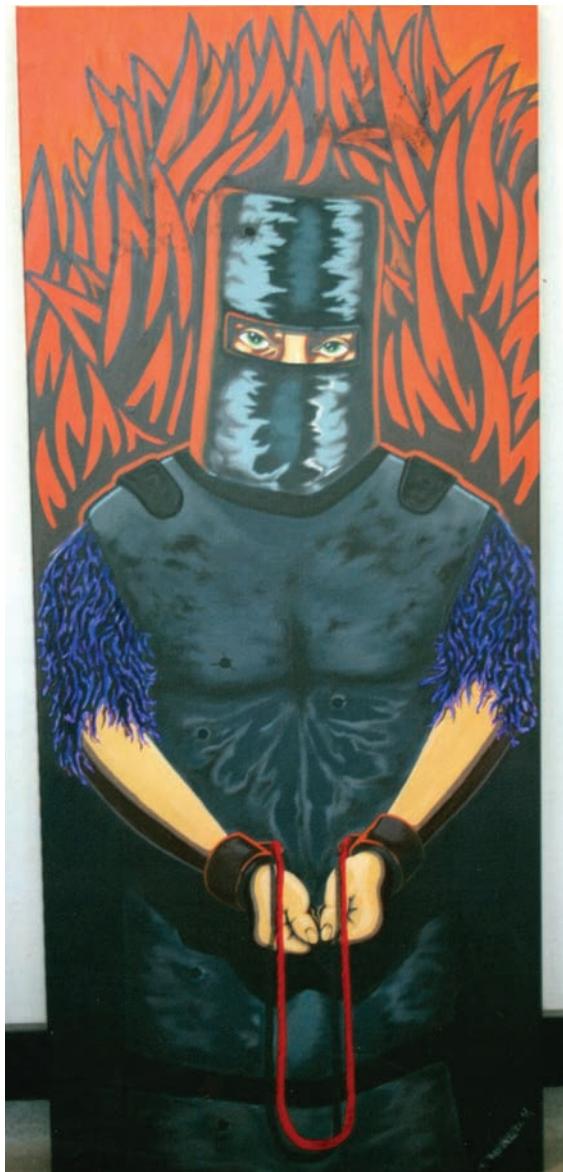
Art by Tristan Webb, D35777  
Maryborough Correctional Centre, LMB 1950  
Maryborough, QLD, 4650



Art by Kris, QLD



Art by Clayton Tierney, Parklea Correctional Centre



Art by Jayde Farrell, NSW



Art and writing by Malnight

BIRTHDAY BLUES

WHEN YOUR AXLE IS DRAGGIN'  
AND YOUR TIRES ARE WEARIN' THIN,  
THEN YOUR BIRTHDAYS AREN'T SOMETHING  
THAT YOU WELCOME WITH A GRIN.  
AND I'M SPEAKING FROM EXPERIENCE  
ALTHOUGH IT'S SAD BUT TRUE,  
FATHER TIME AND MOTHER NATURE  
SURE CAN MAKE IT TOUGH FOR YOU.  
I'LL ADMIT I'M GETTING MILDWEED  
AND MY CARBURETORS BUSTED,  
MY CHASSIS'S CRACKED AND DENTED  
AND MY SPARK PLUGS ALL ARE RUSTED.  
BUT WHAT'S THE USE OF GRIPING  
BECAUSE WE'VE STRIPPED OUR GEARS?  
YOU CAN'T EXPECT TO FEEL LIKE TWENTY  
WHEN YOU'VE LIVED SO MANY YEARS.  
HAPPY BIRTHDAY, DEAR FRIEND!

MALNIGHT

## PRISON CHAINS

I reach out to catch my fall  
And my hands find air  
Gasp loud as I hit the floor  
Land flat on the concrete bare  
Look around in the dark  
Recognise nothing but pain  
Is this the end or a start  
Calculate how to break the chain  
The weak links right here  
But somehow it eludes me  
Sit alone and I fight the gear  
Wait and see what the news brings  
Same story but a new hero  
Same story with an old villain  
Go back to when I know zero  
Can't take more soul killing  
The chains tighter in the mind  
So that's a good place to start  
Got wiser with some more time  
Quit living life in a prison yard  
The weak link just breaks  
As the sober mind snaps free  
Use ya mind to escape

## SLEEPWALK

I woke up one night too restless, could not return to sleep  
Wandered out in the darkness as something called to me  
Fell asleep into a cavern wherein I found a puddle  
Saw a face in the reflection, seen a man begin to struggle  
Done into the muddy waters, hoped to save his life  
Grasped at limbs and cloth, got punctured by a knife  
The brackish muck turned red as I tried to find some purchase  
The face became a demon and dragged me below the surface  
Eyes wide open without sight, started to feel desperate  
Losing light and breath as the dots they all connected  
For in these fleeting moments, fractions of time and life  
Clarity of mind helped me regain my sight  
Turning to the demon the beast began to change  
Dragged me out the pool and said "I have your face and your name"  
"If you cannot defeat me then all hope shall be lost,  
all because you lived so reckless, all because you couldn't stop"  
I then woke up in my bed in a puddle of tears and sweat  
A warning within a dream, not a nightmare to forget  
I took it as a sign that I still have time to mend  
I'll get it done, no delay, I won't get this chance again.

*Poems by Joel-Reid Roe, 218534  
Darwin Correctional Centre  
PO Box 1066, Howard Springs NT 0835*

## FUTILITY

I lived a life I filled with mistakes  
Now doin' 20 with thugs and fakes  
Sent to prison as punishment for crime  
The delusion is in here I will change with time  
Change to someone better is the delusion of the free  
There's no examples here of how I'm meant to be  
Those that rule and govern my days  
Are beyond fucked up in so many ways  
Corruption, betrayals, the constant deceit  
An honest example you won't meet  
Power trippers, tyrants, roid freaks and abusers  
It's not just the cons that are the drug users  
Those in power get played like a fiddle  
Their version, your version, truth lost in the middle  
Frustration builds, the rage consumes all  
In the end it'll beat you and then you fall  
The idea is to be corrected from ways deemed wrong  
This place is made to break you, it don't care you're strong  
Helping us change isn't part of the plan  
You're here to be broken, to obey the "Man"  
The animal we were gets turned into a beast  
What we are made into always gets released  
Then those that are free wonder why we fall  
No one here is paid to teach us to stand tall  
To learn new ways, heal pains from the past  
So the choices we make don't kick our ass  
Monkey see monkey do, the prison needs better screws  
People admired, an inspiration of what to become  
Instead of the beast that was once a loved son

*Poem by Jason Ryan, 595683  
Darwin Correctional Centre*

## SUCK IT UP

When I was five I watched my mother taking petrol from another car by using a hose. Shortly after that we visited my uncle and I was told to go and play outside. When I was mucking around I came across my uncle's lawnmower and found a bit of hose. I tried to copy what I'd seen Mum do with that car but instead of spitting the gas out I drank it! I remember the gas felt like hot fire in my throat. I walked around in a circle until I fell down. If it hadn't been for my uncle I wouldn't be here now. He found me and kept me alive by doing mouth to mouth resuscitation until the ambulance arrived. I don't remember waking up in the hospital but I do remember clearly how nice the nurses were. They let me do the rounds with them when they handed out drinks and biscuits to the other patients. I'm not sure how long I was in for but I had a good time with the nurses.

*By David Gay, New Zealand*

## IF I KNEW THEN...

How many of us have heard the statement... "If I knew then what I know now"? However, I often failed to see such things; the simplicity of my life back then, when repeating the same acts desiring different results.

Each time caught in the web of lies I've often told to myself, as well as to others who've said they loved me unconditionally while I repeatedly defied their trust and my responsibility to be the best that I could beyond selfishly ignoring what I knew then. Now I think about behind chain-link razor wire topped fences and cold closed steel prison doors.

How about, "What I know now I knew then" which makes it possible to see beyond yesterday. Moulding a unique path forward. Holding onto the things learned along the way that gives the ability to better recognize the twists and turns, hoops and hurdles of an outraged life I tried to hide behind from fear. Masking over those inner pains suffered through my own unique and real traumas unfortunately unaddressed because I didn't know then what I know now about self and the ability to rise above the past that existed.

In My Today...

Can I see now how I have  
grown to know what I know  
no matter the time of then or now?  
Rather,  
how adjusting heart and mind  
to make it through  
the drudgery of holding onto inflicted pains that remain a  
little less intense...  
By understanding that past mistakes nor the opinions of  
others does not define who I am.  
In this I am free  
to be the best one can be  
by simply accepting who I am to myself.  
Coming to terms as best I can for all  
that has been done within my control of what has been  
known.

Here's the thing about the time I have in trying to grab a piece of yesterday applying it today. "If I knew then what I know now. Circumstances change in time and may not fully apply to who, what, when, where, or why I am now. For I'm being better than yesterday's history inflicted with hurtful memories that no longer keep me bound down by prison chains and shackles of time.

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

## THE MAN LOOKING BACK AT ME

Damn here I go again.  
Thinking too hard trying to let the past go  
Knowing deep down my fears only grow.  
So did you think because you can love  
You could change lives, like you was someone from  
above.  
Yeah you changed lives.  
But you went at them with knives.  
Why don't you take a step back and look at yourself.  
Didn't you feel the darkness emanating from within.  
Did you feel it consume your soul?  
Trapping inside what could have been.  
Maybe it's the reason you can't sleep most nights  
Or why you feel like you need to scream.  
Thinking back to when you were a boy.  
Did I really take one for the team.  
He said he was my friend, had always focused on me.  
Then pulled me into shadows where nobody could see.  
Being bullied, taking from my mob and carrying that hate  
and shame.  
Was how it came to be.  
So I bottled all that shit up.  
And blamed it all on the man looking back at me.  
Alcohol and drugs I know now was that darkness fed.  
And there were many days I would wake up thinking.  
Fuck I wish I was dead.  
But man it felt good every time I cracked open that beer.  
Made me feel like I could do whatever I wanted.  
Being the man who had no fear.  
Then there was the drugs.  
An escape from my past.  
Had to steal from innocent people every time I ran out or  
because it didn't last.  
How can I love when I know I can't be trusted.  
Always sneaking around on her.  
Trying hard not to get busted.  
Do I love her or do I love him.  
Struggled my whole life with it.  
Just wanted to fucking fit in.  
Something else I bottled up.  
Because I told myself it was a sin.  
Three times now incarcerated  
And yes I'm doing this time medicated  
Because I want to get the help I need wherever I can.  
To step away from that darkness  
And become a better man.  
I remember that darkness that emanated from within.  
And how it consumed my soul.  
Trapping the best of me and what I could have been.  
Damn here I go again.  
Thinking too hard trying to let the past go  
But now I'm doing something different.  
Something that will help me grow.

By Miguel Love, Alice Springs Correctional Centre

## MINUTES

Every minute I ache, the hours are pain,  
The days take forever, it's all just the same.  
Years upon years, of nothing at all,  
Nothing to expect, become so critical.  
I know tomorrow is the same as today,  
Nothing will happen, life's on replay  
Nothing to gain, I've already lost,  
Seconds cause pain, I'm becoming frost.  
Yearning increases, no prospect to ease,  
Head it is throbbing, no longer believe.  
A bitter existence, questioning fate,  
Fantasising death, will it come too late?  
Seconds are hours, hours are days.  
Days they devour, I'm stuck in a daze.  
Days feel like years, years never end.  
No one sees the tears, going round the bend.  
The tick of a second, is a throb to the head.  
To a clock I am beckoned, am I better off dead?  
These minutes are sorrow, bring nothing but hurt.  
Feel like every breath I borrow, I'm stuck in the dirt.  
How can I go on? When this time makes me ache.  
My future is gone, it's more than I can take.  
I'm breaking apart, I'm being tortured by time.  
The minutes wound my heart, I cannot sense a lifeline?  
A year is a decade, a decade's departed.  
Existence does fade, yet I am back where I started.  
Minutes bring forth night, in night cannot dream.  
No ending in sight, every second's extreme.  
I'm stuck in a phase, not sure I even exist?  
To the time I'm a slave, wishing it would all just desist.  
How can time I accept? When the endings unclear.  
Every minute I'm swept, want time to just disappear.  
All the time I've forgot, will there be anything left?  
All the minutes I've fought, but time it cannot be theft.  
Will an end-date arise? Am I stuck in it forever?  
Will I become institutionalised? Or will time get better?

## IF I AM NOT HERE TOMORROW?

If I am not here tomorrow, if my body is found dead,  
Please don't shed a tear or let the sadness in your head.  
I am freed from pain and suffering, no longer struck with  
loneliness.  
Yet I will always be here with you, wishing you the best.  
You may see me in the sunlight, feel my heat on your skin,  
I still have my place inside you, you'll feel me deep within.  
Do not cry, don't shed a tear, for I am now finally free,  
I will leave a little piece of me in every sight you see.  
When it's raining I will cool you with droplets on your face  
As you start getting damper then let this be my embrace.  
The moisture of each drop on your cheek will be a kiss  
from me,  
So please don't shed a tear, this is my last and final plea.

By....



## MY MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES

Hi guys, I'd like to share with you 'My Mental Health' issues; I'd like to share with you some of my life's experiences, some coping strategies I have set in place for me to remind myself that when things start looking bleak, to stop the negative thinking I'm putting into my thoughts and to get on with the new way of life that I am leading now through NA and AA.

Guys we can't expect our cars to go as hard as we want them to go if we put in bad fuel and the wrong types of oils. And that's how we treat ourselves with our substance abuse, and the way we mistreat our family and friends just because we're not thinking straight.

I don't mind sharing with you that before I came to NA and AA my mental health was all over the place. I was thinking that no-one understood me or that everyone was cheating me, robbing me, or just plainly screwing me over. Then I started treating everyone in the same way that I thought I was being treated. But I was the one screwing myself over, although it didn't look that way to me with my drug-affected way of thinking.

I'm here to say that during that part of my drug-affected way of life I had two suicide attempts, I failed with the care of my loved ones, I failed at all of my financial responsibilities, my credit rating dropped like a rock, but most of all I failed myself, which really hurt and affected my loved ones — the people who put their trust in me, who just wanted to share their life with me, the ones who just wanted to love me. I made it so hard for them, and I blamed them for the state of my mental health.

Today guys, the strategies I have set in place are through the fellowship and brotherhood of NA and AA. This program has become my way of living today. My thoughts are on track and best of all I can resolve life's issues as a person who has many friends and family to help me.

When I first came to NA and AA, I was at a total loss of my complete self, but the people there showed me respect. They were ready to help me, providing I was ready to help myself. Today after following the steps, attending many meetings, but most of all being totally honest with myself, I have changed into the person that other people who are at a loss of themselves now ask me for help. Unbelievable. Look at how much I have changed — mate, this kind of help is available and all you have to do is ask. But be truly honest with yourself when you ask yourself if you are really sick of what you have become in a life of living for drugs! Something has to change and it won't happen while you are living just to take drugs.

D.L. —Clean since 23 October, 2008.  
Doing it 'one day at a time'

# YOUR NEIGHBOUR'S PUBLIC EXECUTION

BY CAMERON TERHUNE

People go to prison every day. Whether we call them convicts, prisoners, offenders, or the Orwellian 'inmate-patients' that's what they are: people. They do not lose their humanity because of where they are. People in prison are like people who are not in prison. They have hopes and fears. They dream, they laugh, they cry, they think about the future, or the past. They live.

One oft-cited truth about prisons is that most of the people in them will eventually get out. In other words, they will be somebody's neighbours. Whose interests does it serve, then, to subject our neighbours to needless cruelty before they move in?

Under the guise of 'the people's right to know,' the news media has made a habit of celebrating the destruction of lives and families. Little the news relays to its audience is more wanton than the details of crimes and the people who commit them. The 'information' splashed across these tabloid screens is as gratuitous as gore in a slasher flick. Besides grabbing attention – and advertising dollars – these orgies of misery serve no positive purpose.

In fact, treating crimes as drama and trials as entertainment does our communities a grave disservice. Portraying people who break the law as animals, monsters, fiends, and villains grants audiences free rein to indulge in victimhood, to be outraged and demand vengeance, to cease thinking and simply hate. Destroying a person's humanity is a time-honoured tradition that makes it palatable to society to consign the targets of their ire to inhuman treatment.

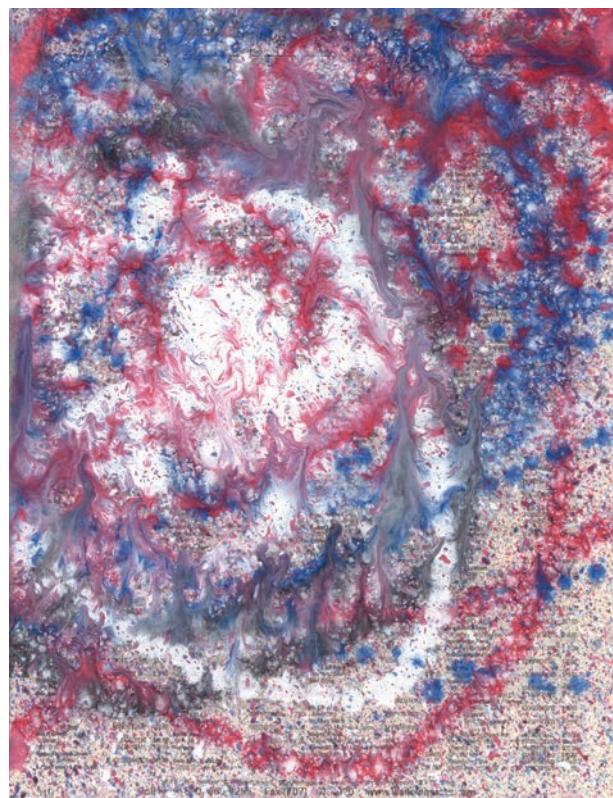
The challenges of returning to that society as a less broken and dysfunctional person are already daunting. The court system is well endowed with the ability to inflict punishment and needs no help from the news reporter. Yet rather than remain objective, it is the media that launches salvo after salvo, attacking people when they are at their most vulnerable before burying the carcasses beneath yesterday's headlines. For a moment of bloody glee, the target is forever scarred.

There exists no equivalent attention for positive achievements. No newspaper celebrates the person's success against all odds when they come to terms with the traumas that led them to prison and earn release by working hard to put those antisocial behaviours behind

them. Instead, if the media acknowledges the release at all, it is only to dredge up the past and exclaim that mercy is unwarranted.

That is a profoundly cynical stance to take for those who claim to be the voices of our collective conscience. Media fear-mongering accomplishes nothing, save for alienating the person going to prison even further from society, which in turn makes returning whole much more unlikely. This undermines the entire reasons prisons supposedly exist: to convert dangerous people into those able to be productive parts of harmonious society. To be our neighbours.

While I would never argue that the news media does not have the right to be as appealing to the basest human instincts as it pleases, piling harm atop harm heals no one. Only once we reject such appeals for the blatant attempts to erode our empathy that they are can we live with, rather than in fear of, our neighbours.



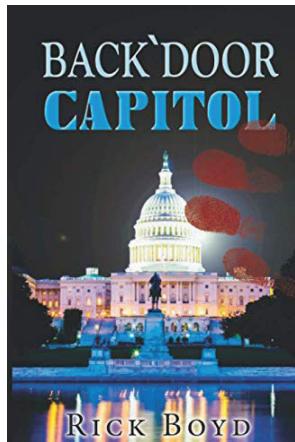
*Writing and art by Cameron Terhune, AD0786  
CTFN, PO Box 705, Soledad, California, 93960, USA*

# BOOK REVIEWS

BY MADISON KELLY  
& GISELLE COATES

## Back'Door Capitol By Rick Boyd

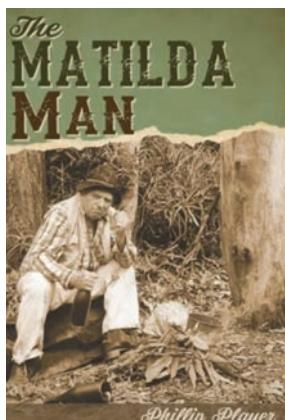
*Back'Door Capitol* by the US prisoner Rick Boyd opens up dialogue on racism and how prison systems support the economy by instituting mandatory sentences and increasing penalties that adversely affect the Black American community. The novel has themes of crime, racism, inequality and injustice. Although the book does a great job at addressing societal issues that affect minorities, it was hard to follow at times since each chapter was from a different character's perspective.



Despite this, the novel was so outrageous that it had me intrigued to read on and find out the characters' endings. The amount of characters introduced is overwhelming at first but towards the end they all connect at certain points. This novel is entertaining and eye opening with a fast-paced plot. Overall, Boyd's use of informal language and different types of characters set the scene for an immersive story about racially biased court systems, corrupt figures of authority and the reality of Black people living in America.

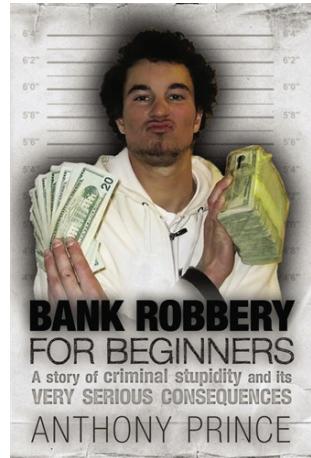
## The Matilda Man By Phillip Player

*The Matilda Man* is a thought-provoking novel written by Phillip Player, based on his mother's unfinished film screenplay project. The true-blue Australian story is based in Western Australia and truly immerses the reader into the early days of living in the Australian Outback. It centres around an old swagman named Dobson, focusing on his habit of stealing, his brushes with the law, and his way of escaping and evading the police by jumping from town to town. Throughout the course of the story, Dobson is accused or suspected of murdering three people and robbing them of their life savings, stealing alcohol from a prominent cattle station owner, stopping a government train, and of arson and the death of a poet. Overall, the book is engaging with unexpected twists and betrayals. *By Madison Kelly*



## Bank Robbery For Beginners By Anthony Prince

*Bank Robbery for Beginners* is a gripping memoir by Anthony Prince that chronicles the true story of a notorious "dumb and dumber" bank-robbing duo. The narrative delves into Prince's crime and time in prison, providing fascinating insight into the events leading up to the crime, the dynamics within the prison walls, and the transformative journey that made him a better man.



Prince's memoir excels in providing a raw and unfiltered look at his experiences, both inside and outside of prison. Prince's storytelling prowess captures the reader's attention, making the narrative engaging and thought-provoking. The portrayal of the "dumb and dumber" bank-robbing duo is both humorous and tragic, creating a unique blend of emotions that resonate throughout the book.

The detailed exploration of prison life stands out as one of the book's strengths. Prince skilfully navigates the complexities of prison hierarchies, offering readers a glimpse into the day-to-day challenges, reputations, and unexpected alliances formed behind bars. Prince's introspection about his own transformation adds depth to the narrative, revealing a profound exploration of redemption and personal growth. Additionally, it answers what every person reading the news of the robbery was wondering: "What were these two boys thinking?!"

While the memoir is compelling, there are moments when the pacing feels uneven. Some sections may linger longer than necessary, while others could have been explored in more detail. Additionally, certain aspects of the crime itself are glossed over, leaving readers with questions about the motivations and mindset of the characters.

Nevertheless, I highly recommend *Bank Robbery for Beginners* to readers who appreciate gripping true stories, especially those with an interest in the criminal justice system. The memoir offers a unique blend of humour, tragedy, and introspection, making it a compelling read. However, be prepared for an exploration of complex themes that may challenge preconceived notions about crime and punishment. *By Giselle Coates*

# MY ART JOURNEY

BY HENRY OGUCHUKWU AKANO

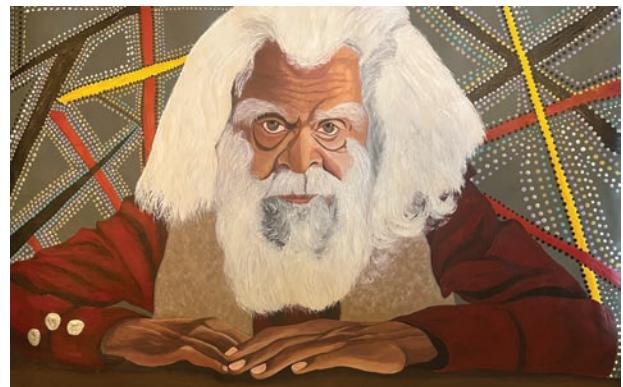
*This article was originally published in Middleton Magazine, the magazine of Loddon Prison, Victoria.*

My name is Henry Ogochukwu Akano. I grew up in a small city of Enugu in the eastern part of Nigeria, West Africa. I arrived in Australia in 2012 after I was admitted to study a Diploma of Business management at Sunshine College of Management in Victoria. I was arrested in 2016 which resulted in my conviction. Whilst I have been domiciled in the custody of Victorian Corrections, I was immensely affected mentally by the strange environment in which I found myself in, which also contributed in me becoming very volatile and to some extent anti-establishment.

In such a dense environment in maximum security, there are too many traumatic and emotional people like I was back in the day. I became a nightmare to both myself and the people around me. It was not until in 2020 when I was restricted at Port Phillip Prison that I had a vision, a trance-like dream of my late father who had encouraged me in the dream to get some will-power and resist the temptation of jail politics and focus on my hidden talent.

I remember vividly painting on a piece of toilet paper the next day after one of the PPP officers refused to lend me A4 paper to practice some sketching in my lone time. I had a need to evolve and find solace with my abject condition and a strong desire to embrace my long time passion as a child, which was to embrace any form of art. However, I chose painting. My first brush stroke on a canvas was in 2020, which was so magical and meaningful to me and which also made me decide that I would never stop painting, no matter what the situation or circumstances. Then again, I am gratefully indebted to some of my Indigenous Aboriginal mates who in their kind-heartedness, supported me with both their great skills in art and also by providing me with some art materials when I was struggling to purchase them. As I write this and think of all their huge benevolence towards me, it fills me with great cheerfulness and utmost respect for them.

Throughout that time until this moment, I have produced more than 250 paintings, some of which I had painted for my fellow prisoners who have also benefited from the skills that I have developed during those hard times. My art embodies the tradition of art-making and each one is crafted with a strong passion to recognise those men and women who have contributed immensely in shaping our world in a more positive way.



*Jack Charles by Henry Akano*

My style of painting is called symbolic realism. I sometimes play around with some other styles of painting such as abstraction, surrealism and expressionism.

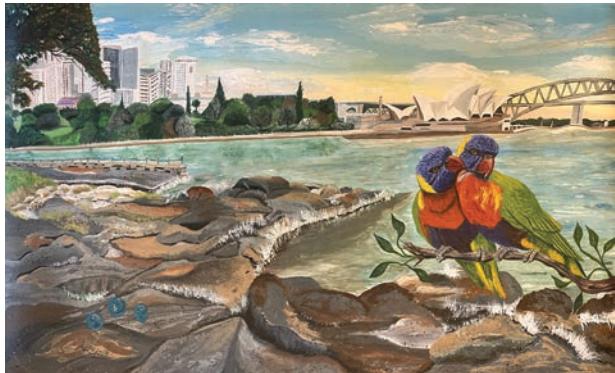
Art in essence has given me a mental focus, hope, a sense of purpose and tangible rewards. It has given me confidence. It has also helped me to appreciate every individual day which I use to empower my fellow prisoners in believing in themselves as I am very much aware that reaching smaller goals such as painting, writing songs or even reciting poetry would inspire people in prison to have a sense of self-worth and also a sense of tangible rewards, self-development and progress.

I am also titillated and inspired by researching art books at any prison library. Africa has been an artistic centre of great importance. It was through the migration of the Black Africans that some of the belief and social structures reflected were spread throughout the continent.

As usual, a huge percentage of prisoners are very quick to talk themselves down, judge their actions and also disbelieve that they can reach a much higher goal in life. The truth is that humans are not perfect beings. I will say this to the reader, especially to those people who think that they cannot regain whatever that they have lost due to them being incarcerated, downtrodden or subjugated by the system. I would encourage you to start believing in yourself again because the first brush stroke is hard but the end is rewarding. However, no institution can make you a great man or give you an aim in life, without the integration of your own belief and behaviour.

A huge percentage of celebrities and well known people who have made their marks on the world stage, never made it to the highest level of education, some of them

have gone through a lot of traumas in life too. But they only became successful because they have learnt through tough times how to "get their shit together". What truly matters in life is to "start doing", and if you can appreciate life and truth, if you can leave bullshit, and leave the world a better place, loving wife, parents or grandchild, to know that one life breathed easier because you lived, then that means you have succeeded as a human being.



*Sydney Harbour* by Henry Akano

Unconditional acceptance of your dreadful situation of being locked up is the first step in opening the door to the miracle of your salvation. To succeed in setting goals for yourself in any prison location, here is my advice:

- You have to be conscious of who you have around you.
- You must be able to identify the job you would like to do as soon as you re-integrate back into the community.
- You need to set a goal, ask yourself, what it is that I want?
- Listen more closely to your thoughts through mindfulness. (Borrow a book in the library on mindfulness)
- Know your value and what you want to achieve after your stay in prison.
- Absorb new information from as many books as possible.
- Shape your perception by having a vision board on your cell walls.
- Avoid the entitlement trap of thinking that the government will always provide you everything you want such as Centrelink, housing and etcetera. (You can acquire those things by setting yourself a small goal in this place)
- The quicker you understand that, you will get things done by yourself, and the better you will start thinking straight.
- Improve your penmanship and talent, such as singing, training, and improving your vocabulary.
- Do not depend on any sort of drug or any other person in prison. You will be in control in setting your goals.
- You can always access the gym or hit the punching bag when feeling frustrated about outside, your girlfriend, dramas or prison politics.
- Always invest your energy into a craft and anything that will benefit your mental wellbeing.
- You can always ask the educational staff to print out some online games such as Ludo or Snakes, and borrow some paints and cardboard box and create the games by yourself.

- Be a friend of all prisoners in the community and ask questions about their cultural heritage, which will give you an inkling about their way of life.
- Never commit yourself to one sport. Give yourself the opportunity to identify with something different such as playing soccer with boys, hitting long or short tennis, chess competition and so on.
- Whenever you find yourself in the slot, which is always a depressing time, train your brain to be stronger than any pessimism that might have infiltrated your spirit.
- Lastly, by becoming positive to yourself and creating something while you are in prison, you have shown that you can make something. You have also shown that you are not just a loser or a dreamer with an idea hoping that someone would someday take a chance on. You have proven that you are an asset who can kick back waiting for the best deal.

There are too many stories I have left untold in this article. I could write a book on each situation I got myself into but I will leave them for another day. My long-term goal is to continue creating artworks and also use it to empower other prisoners who are on the path of establishing themselves through art. If you are in anyway inspired or impressed by my story, please feel free to reach out to me so that I can help you in any possible way that I can. On Ya Mates!

*Henry Akano, 208546  
Middleton Prison  
Locked Bag 3, Castlemaine  
Victoria, 3450*

*Editor's note: If you would like to purchase any of Henry's artworks seen in this article, or his works seen on the front and back covers, please get in touch with Paper Chained.*



*Julian Assange* by Henry Akano

# THE REAL COST OF PRISON PHONE CALLS

BY KELLY FLANAGAN

I wanted to write a paper that outlines the truth and facts about being in prison, and the struggles we face daily with simple things like trying to stay connected to friends and family via telephone, mail and video calls.

I am a prisoner at Dame Phyllis Frost Centre and have been since February 2022. I have no family in Melbourne, Victoria who visit me in person. Nor do they drop off property or top up my account with money. I rely solely on my wages from working a full time job inside the prison. My job title is a Sewing Machinist. This job requires me to sew prison issue, women's blue tracksuit pants and jumpers together from pieces to a completed product in the prison industries portable building inside DPFC prison. My position consists of working six hours per day Monday to Friday, 30 hours per week at \$1.56 per hour. Here are the calculations below;

## PRISON WAGES CALCULATION

\$1.56 per hour worked x 6 hours work per day = \$9.40

\$9.40 per day wages x 5 days worked in a week - \$47.00

\$47 per week wages, minus 20% which goes into a compulsory savings account for release date = \$37.60

\$37.60 per week available to spend on toiletries/ phone credit /stationary/ stamps/ printing/ special spend items such as shoes, radio, card games, paint by numbers etc.

I guess by now you have some idea of the kind of money I make weekly from my full-time job that I hold here at DPFC. I rely on phone calls and Zooms to my family. However keep in mind that I come from a low socio-economical background and my mother cannot read or write. My father is very limited in both areas as well. I cannot Zoom my mum when my dad is away working as she cannot navigate a mobile phone. My daughter is nineteen now. She was seventeen when I was arrested and sent to prison. So lets start with Zooms. In DPFC we only get two Zooms per week. They are not unlimited as some articles have reported in the past. There is a one-hour time limit on all personal Zooms. Personal video calls must be booked 72 hours in advance by the prisoner. However if you have two Zoom calls in the same week, you are not permitted to have a visit in person in that same week. If you have one Zoom, then you are permitted to have one visit in person in that same week for up to two hours. Legal visits are unlimited in person or via videolink, but must be booked 72 hours in advance via the prison's Telecourt team.

Now lets move onto the mail system. DPFC has now put a policy in place that sends back pen-pal mail, as mail from strangers is not accepted. Mail from other jails across Australia is being refused and is being sent back, if DPFC believes the sender appears to not know the addressee personally. This has caused confusion to all. There has been frustration from many women and a decline in mental health. As some women have had their families and partners mail returned to them stating "mail from strangers will not be accepted".

The prisoner telephone system (PTS) and phone call costs inside prisons in Australia have been a topic of conversation for many years. Today it is still an ongoing issue. I have been doing some research around the call costs in each State or Territory in Australia and have come across some interesting facts. All States and Territories charge prisoners different rates to call home numbers and mobile phones even if the service provider is the same. The interesting thing is that all the telephone calls are recorded onto a server. That server can be accessed via a computer inside the prison at any time. Even during the call, as the call is taking place. All this is being done via a VOIP service. Which means that there is no actual phone line required. The internet hosts the call and records the file for later use, if and when the recording is needed. There is a table of the different prices our prison's systems are currently charging prisoners to make calls on the next page.

I encourage others to post their state's calling rates and who the PTS is contracted out by. Comsec TR (Telio) is a European Prison Media and communications provider. The fact is that Comsec TR are charging these kinds of rates to provide a secure phone system, and we all understand the importance of security in a prison setting. Comsec TR say they charge these rates due to the highest levels of security measures it takes to monitor and record these calls. Then why does each State differ in charges? If it is providing the same service to each State, why such differences in the prices? We often talk about reducing recidivism, but to do that people need to heal and that includes healing broken relationships in prison. Most women I talk with make those hard reconnection calls to people they have hurt while in prison. Prisons and government should encourage nurture and maintain those connections. Phone calls are vital to stay together and continue building and repairing relationships to reduce recidivism. Humans want to be accepted, loved and feel needed and appreciated. It has been proven time and time again that it is possible to stop women re-offending. This can be done by prisoners repairing those connections with family and children. It gives us a fighting chance and a purpose to change.

STATE / TERRITORY	MOBILE RATE PER MINUTE	MOBILE RATE (PER 10 MINS)	LOCAL CALL PER 10 MINS (IF CHEAPER)	PHONE CONTRACT HELD BY:
WA	\$0.10	\$1.00	\$0.95	
ACT	\$0.19	\$1.87		
NSW	\$0.28	\$2.80		
SA	\$0.36	\$3.60		
TAS	\$0.36	\$3.60	\$2.50	Commsec TR - Telio
NT	\$0.40	\$4.00		NT Government
VIC	\$0.56	\$5.60	\$0.30	Commsec TR - Telio
QLD	\$0.70	\$7.00	\$0.48	Commsec TR - Telio

*Note: Unsentenced prisoners in NSW get three free personal calls a week, while sentenced prisoners get one free call. The above rate applies after free calls have been used. Prisoners in NSW facing charges also get free legal calls.*

You want to really help us? Then start listening to us. I am a female prisoner, I want to call my beautiful daughter everyday and tell her I miss her face and I love her to the moon and back. I want to laugh with her, cry with her and just listen to her thoughts, complaints and boyfriend problems. I can only make one call per week. It costs me close to \$7.00 for a 12 minute call. I also have to call my elderly mother once a week and check up on her and tell her that I miss her and can't wait to cuddle her. My daughter and my mum both only have mobile numbers. I only make \$9.20 a day. I make 2 calls a week and I don't have enough money left over to buy toiletries and stamps. I have lost everything coming to prison. I don't want to lose my daughter and my mum too. I deserve love, acceptance, family support and the right to communicate with my family who are fighting to help me succeed in moving forward away from drugs and crime. I shouldn't be stopped from seeking their love and help because I don't have money to pay the exorbitant call costs.

I'm hoping that the people who read this will feel the pain and my desperate call for help. I am pleading with the Local, State and Federal Governments. Stop penalising and punishing us for being poor. Stop allowing companies to make millions from the most disadvantaged population in our society. Help us heal and rebuild our broken connections to family. They are already in pain for losing us. Don't let them suffer more.

Let's make a change. You be the person to help change it. It just takes a compassionate, understanding and brave person to help fight with us and for us. We are not monsters. Some of us are here for finally standing up to our abuser. Some of us are here for traffic accidents gone wrong. Some women are here because they couldn't afford groceries for their kids and stole. Some women are here as they have been taken advantage of. Sexually abused, drugged and made to work as sex workers under horrible people that use women as a commodity to be sold and traded. Nothing

more. Some women are here for simply being in love with the wrong man and now are considered their co-offender. There are lots of reasons why we are here.

We are still women, mothers, daughters, aunties and sisters. We all deserve to be loved, respected and have unlimited contact with our family and children. Phone calls should not be used as a means to make money from us. Our families are suffering. Our children are missing us and need us more than ever. Especially if we cannot be there in person to help guide them.

Here are some options to think about. These rates are currently being charged in other states and territories by the same prisoner telephone system provider that we currently use. So adjusting the rates for our women should not be a problem. Ideally it could be done immediately with ComSec TR remaining the PTS provider.

Why not make calls free for women? How about a flat rate \$1 per call to a mobile phone number? What about 95-cent calls to landline numbers? WA has these rates already.

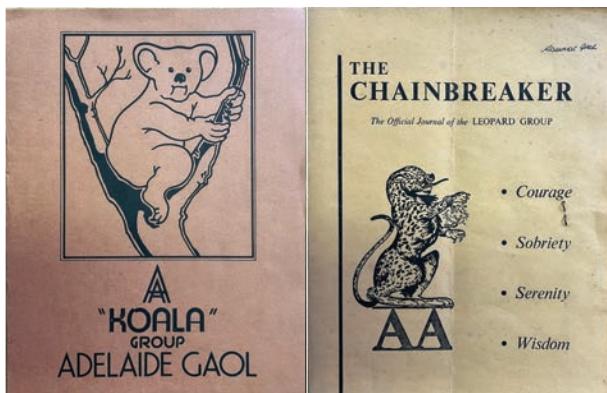
*By Kelly Flanagan, 219454  
Dame Phyllis Frost Centre  
PO Box 497, St Albans, Victoria, 3021*

*Editor's note: Costs in Queensland and South Australia as provided in the table were given to the author by prisoners in those states, as Corrections refused to disclose the official costs. Corrections in Victoria have recently temporarily reduced the cost of calls to mobiles to 25 cents a minute, though it remains to be seen if any reduction will be permanent. In late 2024, Corrections in the ACT changed the cost of phone calls to \$1.87 for 10 minutes to both mobiles and landlines. Previously it was \$4.40 for 10 minutes to mobiles, though only \$0.40 for 10 minutes to landlines.*

# OLD ADELAIDE GAOL

BY DAMIEN LINNANE

I'm not sure if it's weird for a former prisoner to be fascinated by visiting former jails, but I have to admit, I do enjoy seeing them. Indeed, I came all the way to Adelaide from Newcastle specifically to come to the Old Adelaide Gaol, but not as a tourist. I'm constantly researching the history of prison magazines in Australia. One of the many ways I've tried to find magazines is by contacting all the former prisons that now operate as tourist attractions, and asking if they have any magazines in their collection. Old Adelaide Gaol had two. They had a handful of copies of *Chainbreaker*, a publication that was actually made at Yatala Labour Prison, SA between 1963 and 1978. I'd previously found some copies of this publication elsewhere. They also had copies of their own newsletter, *Koala Group*, from 1976, which I'd never seen before. Both magazines were aimed at members of Alcoholics Anonymous.



*Publications found in the archives of Adelaide Gaol, not available to the general public. Access was granted to me as part of my ongoing research into prison publications.*

However, once I'm finished photographing the magazine collection in the former prison's storeroom, since I'm already here, I decide to take a look around the parts now on show for tourists. What I'm quickly taken aback by, is the amount of art and murals painted in cells. Also apparent is the amount of graffiti, certainly considerably more than any prison I spent time in. However, I quickly learn on the self-guided tour that most of the graffiti visible was done during the 1980s, when the prison's rules were relaxed in anticipation of its imminent closure. Prior to this, prisoners caught adding graffiti would have been brought before a Visiting Justice and charged with damaging property. Ironically, while prisoners could have previously been charged with creating the graffiti, the graffiti is now heritage listed and documented with State Records. I hope you enjoy some photos of both art, and graffiti, on the following page.

## OLD ADELAIDE GAOL



Adelaide Gaol, opened in 1841, was the first permanent prison in South Australia, as the State had until then only housed prisoners in a make-shift lock-up. From 1867 to 1869, Sister Mary MacKillop, Australia's first Catholic Saint, visited the gaol regularly along with member of her Order to provide assistance to prisoners, and also to provided transitional supports for released women. The prison housed both men and women until 1969, when women were transferred elsewhere.

In 1980, it was announced the prison would be closed once new facilities had been completed elsewhere. All remand prisoners were transferred to the newly built Adelaide Remand Centre in 1984, and the remaining prisoners were transferred in 1987 to the new Mobilong prison. A total of 66 people were executed in South Australia, and 45 were hanged at Adelaide Gaol. The first hanging took place in 1840 while the prison was still under construction. Hangings were originally held out the front of the prison as public events, and would attract crowds of up to 2,000 people, almost a third of the population of Adelaide. In 1858, an Act of Parliament was passed declaring that all executions were private affairs which were only to occur within the prison itself. The final execution was carried out in 1964; the death penalty was outlawed in South Australia in 1976.



*A painted window inside a cell.*



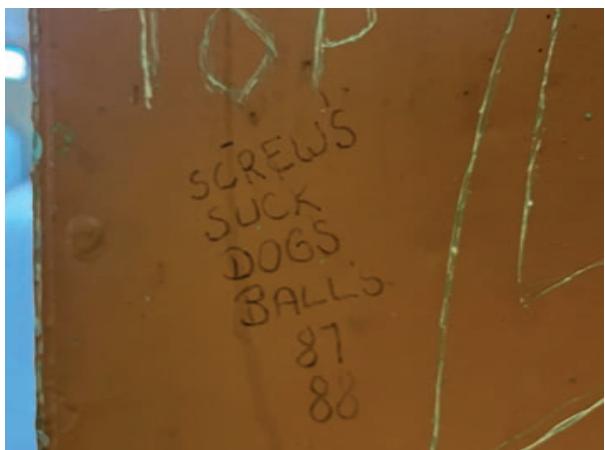
*A room with a mural painted on the wall*



*Above and below: murals found in cells and within common areas of the prison*



*A cell door with various graffiti*



*Ironically graffiti like this, which once could have caused disciplinary action, is now protected under heritage laws*



# FILM REVIEW: THE FEMINIST ON CELLBLOCK Y

BY ZOE WEATHERILL, CRIMINOLOGY/LAW STUDENT

*The Feminist in Cellblock Y*, a documentary produced by Contessa Gayles, follows incarcerated men Richie, Hugo, James "88", Mannie, Benjamin, and Roy as they serve time at Correctional Training Facility (CTF), an all-male prison in Soledad, California, where they participate in and facilitate the group program, 'Success Stories'. This program, which is based on feminist literature, centres around addressing and challenging the traditional patriarchal views and stereotypes that have prevailed in the imprisoned men's lives, both before and during their sentence.

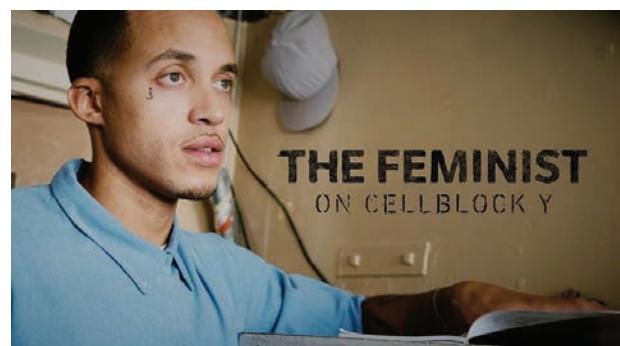
As the documentary follows the personal and collective growth of the incarcerated and the strengthening of relationships within the group, it provides an inspiring account of the power and importance of conversation, vulnerability, and combating toxic perceptions of masculinity, both personally and jointly, as well as inside and outside of the prison walls.

In a flawed system and wider patriarchal society where men are expected to both be the providers, while also maintaining dominance, showing aggression or retaliating to those that disrespect them or their companions, the documentary follows as the group unpacks how these attitudes and perspectives perpetuate the mindsets and actions that led to their sentences, and that often continue to reverberate within the prison walls. As the group recounts their childhoods, their familial and personal experiences, and their evolving perspectives, the film provides valuable insight into the importance of challenging and combating damaging views and normative rules, held by men and imposed against men, that are often accepted for granted within society.

As the group session begins to come to a close, Roy recites a passage written by bell hooks which explains that, because men are raised to believe that the compartmentalisation of their thoughts and feelings is a positive practice, it is often then difficult, painful even, to practice integrity; a completeness of one's emotions, feelings and perspectives that translates to all situations faced in their lives. However, as Roy recites: "Without [integrity], there can be no wholeness. To be whole, men must practice integrity".

As the group's conversations allow space for the men to self-reflect on their perceptions, the documentary allows for the audience to self-reflect on and challenge their own

internalised perspectives. It is not often that a piece of media challenges what you thought you may have known about your own outlook on yourself and others, however, this is certainly the exception. I thoroughly enjoyed *The Feminist in Cellblock Y*, and would strongly recommend it to anyone looking for an inspiring and feel-good watch, or who wants to challenge their own perspectives.



*The Feminist on Cellblock Y* was released in 2018. This film cover art shows Richie, the first president of the program.

## SUCCESS STORIES

### AN INTERVIEW WITH HUGO GONZALES

To learn more about *The Feminist on Cellblock Y*, and the program Success Stories, Paper Chained editor Damien Linnane talks to Hugo Gonzales, a co-creator and former president of the program.

#### How would you describe Success Stories?

I would describe Success Stories as a program that has opened up the space for people to be their authentic selves, for people to talk about things that they've sometimes never, ever talked about.

Where I grew up, I was taught that I needed to suppress my emotions because a man doesn't cry, a man doesn't express the need for help. You figure it out on your own.

So I went from living a life like that, to being in a community within prison walls where everybody believes in that, but no one was really open to express what their root causes were. When I speak of root causes, I'm talking about your 'why' — why you committed the acts that you committed, what gave you the right to harm other people and then turn around and use the reasoning that you've been harmed as a justification?

We learn the distortedness of how and 'why' when we were brought up, being taught that, the more violent I am, the more of a man I am. The more emotionless I am, the more of a man I am, the more money I have and the more women I'm with, the more of a man I am. These are the traits that I was strongly convinced made me a man, and that people gave me accolades for. I was held in high esteem when I was more violent, more emotionless, when I was that guy who just happened to be able to be daring enough to go ask a woman out. And these are also the things that led me into a life of feeling like I had no choice, like I had no option, that this is the route I had to take. And I never questioned it. I never asked why.

Mainly it was because I just wouldn't be considered man enough if I do not do that. If I don't fight, or if I choose to stand up for this or for that, I would be considered a whiner, a complainer, someone who can't deal with the consequences versus actually standing up for my rights.

*So in the program was there a lot of talk about growing up in a culture of toxic masculinity?*

Yeah. And obviously, we're talking about the distorted version of masculinity, because it becomes a debate of, "Oh, everyone all of a sudden wants to jump on this toxic masculine way of being, and completely want to get rid of masculinity." No, there's a healthy version of masculinity. What I'm talking about is the distorted, unhealthy version of it. The version that causes or convinces individuals that they do not have a choice when harming another human being. When they truly convince themselves, "Oh, you hurt my feelings? Now I have to physically hurt you."

And Success Stories is about that understanding, and the understanding of equality, the understanding that we're all human beings. That really led me into this work. That's what actually helped us be very effective within prison walls, where violence was running the prison, whether it be through the guards or whether it be through individuals that are in prison serving time.

That's what made our program effective. Because we weren't coming out of these conversations where individuals say, "Oh, you're one of them. Oh, you're a new generation kind of guy." It was more like, I want you to think of a time where you did something that you didn't want to do, and you did anyway, and you did it because you didn't want anybody to think less of you if you didn't do it. And I want you to think of the consequence that you faced because of it."



*Hugo Gonzales, second from left, and Richie, far right, both pictured while active in the program at CTF, California.*

And nine out of ten individuals responded by talking about their case. They were talking about the charges that they had and why they committed the acts and whether it was a robbery, whether it was a murder, whether it was attempted murder, it revolved on not what they fully wanted to do, but what others expected them to do.

Whether it was to look good by having clean, brand new clothes, or whether it was to have money in your pockets, or you're constantly just selling drugs because you're convinced that as long as you make money, regardless of how you make that money, that equates to you being a man, that equates to me being independent, that equates to me having a say versus just being a person who's dependent on others.

*What else would you talk about in the program, and how would that work?*

Obviously, it took a little introspection of ourselves, and it took a little more of ourselves to be vulnerable and to be the first one up to bat, to talk about the things that have hurt us the most. I talked about not knowing my father, never meeting him and wondering what about me was not worthy enough for this individual to want to be a part of my life? And then growing up in a society where you could feel the unfairness, the inequality, where you could think, "Why is it that I go to a school, and kids could have a laptop and nice things and clothes, and I'm wearing the same clothes damn near every other day?" It just didn't make any sense. And it also felt like I had no space to talk about that. That I should just suck it up. Just suck it up, just work hard. Just work hard and you'll somehow make it.

But then I'd look at the people that I'm looking up to that are working extremely hard, and they're all working manual labour jobs. They're all thanking God for overtime, and they're rarely at home because they're either working or they're drinking their stress away on the weekend. There's this cycle of so many parents not being at home because they're either working and caught up in some type of addiction. There was no place to actually express the truth.

So when Success Stories was created, we were able to open up a space where individuals could be themselves. For many, this was the first chance they'd ever had to speak about neglect, about abuse, about child molestation, to speak about feeling alone, about just wanting to belong, about being willing to do whatever it takes for acceptance.

So while we're being labelled animals for doing heinous crimes, no-one's really actually asking the real questions, which is, "Why would you do that? Like, why are all of you in your community doing that? Why are you guys fighting for a place that you don't even own? Because if they could have asked that question, then they would find out that I feel alone, and I found camaraderie in the group of people I was hanging around with. I find camaraderie in this community. And I feel like, in a place of having nothing, I feel like this is all I have. I knew I didn't own these apartments, I don't own these houses, I don't own these streets. Very clearly I knew that. But at the same time, I felt the ownership of having to protect a place when there's a lot of violence going around, and willing to do whatever it takes.

I'm talking about kids who are 13, maybe 16. These are kids that are underdeveloped, in terms of their way of thinking. The consequential thinking is not present — I was about to say it's at the backseat of it, but it's not even the back seat. It's not even in the equation. It's just gung-ho, let's go. I have your back, you have mine. They harmed me. So what are we going to do? We're going to double down.

And it's crazy because in California they have these twelve jurors in a box. They decide. Jurors of your peers. But the majority of the people who are in these seats are not our peers. They don't understand what it's like to grow up in a society like that. In fact, they shrug their shoulders and nod their heads in disagreement, because they're so disconnected to the 'why'. They're so disconnected to the 'why' that they really don't even focus on the 'why'. They just focus on the, 'Are you guilty of what they just said?' And now they're gonna sentence you to multiple life sentences, run them consecutive, and not even worry about it.

Altogether, when being asked, what is Success Stories, what does Success Stories do, what are we about? Bro, we're about opening up the space that many individuals feel that they were never allowed to have. We're about allowing individuals to be their authentic selves, sometimes for the first time since they were kids. We allow individuals to open up in a way that they're able to envision a future worth having. And I'm grateful and thankful to be able to say that we now have a big alumni of individuals who were once sentenced to never being free, and now they're out here being extremely successful, owning companies and in logistics, tattoo artists, rappers, writers, individuals that are thriving as directors, as CEOs, as creators, as innovators, as pillars of their community, or, heaven forbid, just a law abiding citizen working a nine-to-five, and a good father, and able to actually enjoy the sun and the breeze, and feel a lot safer, versus feeling like you have to go do something negative.

*I assume it was hard getting some people in prison to open up about their feelings.*

Oh yeah! There are many individuals in prison who don't open up. The last thing they want to do is talk about emotions. So we had to deliver that in such a way where we were opening up with storytelling. And this is where I came in.

I told my story of being an individual who was born with cerebral palsy, who felt completely abnormal throughout my whole life. In trying to reach a version of normal, I joined a gang, did extremely harmful things, attempted to take life. I was able to use these stories and then talk about how I have a son, and I never spent one full day with this son because I was fighting my case while my son was in his mom's belly. Because I wasn't there. I never knew my father, and now my son was facing the same fate, which is, 'I also don't have a father now'. And it's stories like that which truly opened up the space.

And I was doing this because I really wanted to be a part of the solution versus the problem. I wanted to create a community that was safe and more importantly, that was empowered by choice, by being able to make the right choice, versus feeling like this is what I have to do. Because before that, I was in a mindset where if some man just stepped on my shoe, I got to show him I'm more of a man than he is, because otherwise he'll think I'm a punk. He'll feel I'm less than him. So instead of going through that filter, it's just honestly going through the filters of "What's most important to you?" And what are you willing to do for what's most important to you? And if you're willing to suffer for the nonsense that has brought you into prison, what are you willing to do for the things that do make sense, that may lead you out of prison?"

I got involved in this program because I ran out of excuses, and I ran out of people to blame, and I really started asking myself, what is it about myself that gave myself the right to harm others? The writer bell hooks said it best. It's this toxic, masculine way of believing that I had to be this way that led me into a frame of thought, that made me feel like I had no choice. And at times, I even used the version of being a victim versus actually being the victimiser.

***What does being a feminist mean to you?***

Being a feminist to me means being able to recognise that we're all human beings, that gender doesn't make us better than the next person, that the color of your skin doesn't make us better – even though that's not the way it feels in America.

It's a reminder of my purpose to keep on moving forward and keep standing for equality, and to keep checking myself in moments where I am finding myself with that residue of assuming that women are here for me, versus that we're here for each other, to help one another out and to make each other greater. For me, that's what being a feminist is.

***Were male prisoners skeptical towards a feminist program in prison?***

We didn't use the word 'feminist'. We just modeled the program on feminism. We modeled the way we would treat women and then how we would feel if someone treated your sister, your mother, in that same way.

So, the word 'feminist' just happens to be a word that turns so many people down. So instead, what we would do is we deliver the same message through storytelling. We must have tact. We must have some type of way of delivering the message so that people don't shut it down before the message is actually given. In fact, so that people are not only open, but it effectively changes individuals. Next thing you know, they're openly saying, like, "Yes, I believe in equality." And by saying that, they're a feminist now too.

***Did you think the film would become this popular?***

No. You got to keep in mind, we were living in a prison, we didn't think the film would go worldwide. We never thought that universities would be using the film as part of their curriculum. I've traveled all throughout the United States in panels speaking about this documentary. I didn't think that it would be accepted the way it was, because I felt like my voice was muffled within the prisons walls. I didn't think anyone would look at us as credible messengers.

***You became the second president of the program. How long were you running it for?***

I was president for about two years, until my release. I was sentenced to three multiple life sentence for attempted murder, for a crime that I committed when I was 16 years old but tried as an adult for. My sentence was commuted after 18-and-a-half years by Governor Jerry Brown. The commutation was mainly because of the documentary. To this day sometimes we get comments like, "Oh, they only did and said that to get out of prison." But when I helped create the program in 2014, the laws that allowed me to get credit for working on the program didn't exist yet. We were doing the work because it was the right thing to do, because we just didn't want to live in a place that was saturated with violence in this hyper-toxic, masculine way of individuals solving issues through violence and through dominating others and through manipulating and through carrying this fake persona of 'The more emotionless I am, the more of a man I am', when in reality, it's the more emotionless you are, the less human you're acting. The less genuine you are about the truths of the emotions that are going on within yourself, whether it be depression, whether it be hurt, regardless of what it may be.

***Is Success Stories still running at CTF?***

Yes, and we're now at seventeen other maximum security prisons in California. We've been in other states, like New York and Chicago. We've facilitated curriculum in other states, as well as in juvenile halls, in high schools, in middle schools. But the idea is to spread out any and everywhere. This conversation should be taking place in all correctional facilities, but also in all schools as well.

I still work on the program, but now it's even better because I'm not in prison blues anymore. Now I go back in, in regular clothing, and I talk to them about all the things that we've been able to do. They used to laugh at us. With Success Stories, they'd say, "What kind of success story are you guys? You guys are all in prison!" It got to a point where I looked at Richie and I was like, "We should really change this title. It's just evoking questioning. What success are we?" But the success, it's internal. The success is knowing that it is internal. It comes from within, and then everything else follows. Everything else is a byproduct of it.

***You're now the Director of Public Outreach for Success Stories. What does that involve?***

I travel around the California and the United States, and I educate people on what we do, why we do it, and how effective we are at doing it. The idea is to educate people and let them know that there is an alternative to incarceration. Many individuals are quick to assume, "Alternatives to incarceration" – so you mean close all the prisons down?" And they equate that with throwing accountability out the window, whereas what we're really saying is putting accountability at the forefront. Accountability cannot be forced. Accountability is a choice. And if an individual doesn't know what they're being accountable for, how can they even be accountable? If it's a choice, how can they even willingly be accountable for something that they don't even know that they should be accountable for?

Many individuals stay stuck in the vibe of, like, "Let me out!" Why? "Because I should be out!" Versus "I now know what I did. I now know why I harm people. I know where it derived from. I know the root causes of it, and now I understand it so deeply that it hurts. And I never want to hurt anyone again like that, ever. In fact, I would like to do the opposite and help others and to really be able to see human beings as human beings, versus looking at them as just objects, as people just passing by that I do not know and don't care about. I want the opportunity to get to know each other, versus to walk away from each other." And when I say 'walk away from each other', I'm not just talking about physically walking away from each other. I'm talking about ignoring the issues, ignoring the injustice, ignoring the way we treat each other less than human beings and how at times, we'll openly talk about how people deserve to be treated less than.



*Hugo speaking about Success Stories in California in 2022.*

# THE ATTEMPTED HANGING OF JOSEPH SAMUELS



BY SARAH LONG, CRIMINOLOGY STUDENT

Let me tell you the story of Joseph Samuels, a convict in the settlements of early colonial Australia known for the unique circumstances of his attempted execution. For a little background on our protagonist, Joseph Samuels was originally arrested in England for robbery at the age of fourteen. After a few years in prison, Joseph was transported to Australia to serve the remainder of his sentence in the penal colonies of NSW. This brings us to 1803, where our story takes place.

Mary Breeze is a wealthy woman living in Sydney. One night in late August of 1803, her house is broken into and various valuables are stolen including money, and specifically a desk (this is relevant). Joseph Luker, a convict-turned-police officer and neighbour to Ms Breeze, is called to the house to investigate. At some point during the night, he is brutally beaten and stabbed to death. Early the next morning his body and the stolen desk are found at the crime scene, as well as a broken wheel from a wheelbarrow. Investigations begin immediately and quickly reveal a group of suspects.

The suspects for the robbery – and by extension, the murder – are a small gang of convicts, including our main character, Joseph. This group is supposedly led by a man called Isaac Simmonds, who, like Luker, also happens to be a convict turned police constable. However, he is known to be corrupt and violent. I already don't like Simmonds and you can't change my mind. Anyway, the group of thieves, including Joseph Samuels and Isaac Simmonds, are arrested but most are released due to 'insignificant evidence', despite multiple eyewitnesses placing them in the area. Joseph, however, is not acquitted. Why? Because Mary Breeze identifies him—and only him—as one of the robbers. If you ask me, the accuracy or integrity of this whole investigation and police-work already seems a little suspicious. Joseph admits that he was indeed present and part of the robbery at Ms Breeze's, but categorically denies having any part in the murder of Luker.

Now, before we get into the gory details of Samuels' attempted execution, I want to talk a little about the murder. There are so many little details and tangents I could go on, but for time's sake, I'll just tell you one version of events.

Joseph and Simmonds had adjacent cells while imprisoned and both were Jewish, so Joseph claims they had covert conversations in Hebrew. It was during one of these conversations that Simmonds allegedly confessed to killing

Luker. The story goes that Luker discovered Simmonds and possibly some of the other thieves with the desk. They then viciously murdered Luker using a wheel from the broken wheelbarrow and his own cutlass. Simmonds even had blood on his clothes and handkerchiefs, but he explained it away by claiming that he sometimes got terrible nosebleeds, which feels like a pathetic excuse. Considering his violent track record, I'm not sure how it'd hold up today. If you couldn't tell, I think that Simmonds is responsible for Luker's murder, I also think that Joseph had nothing to do with it.

Okay, you've been very patient, so I'll tell you about how they tried to execute Joseph. It's the day of the execution. The other guy sentenced to hang is pardoned at the last minute, so now it's just Joseph and the executioner on the cart. They do the whole end-of-life prayers and formalities. Then the executioner ties a noose. If you're curious, the rope used was a 5-strand hemp rope. If you're a rope fanatic, that might mean something to you, but to me? Rope is rope. The point is, it's a good, strong rope.

So, Joseph has the rope around his neck, and he is said to be praying feverishly as they pull the cart away. Execution done and dusted right? Wrong! Instead of hanging to death, the rope snaps and our main character falls to the ground, face first. Joseph is still alive, though unconscious. This unexpected outcome makes everyone uneasy. Quite frankly, it's an awkward situation.

So, the scene is reset, somewhat clumsily, I imagine, because Joseph is basically dead weight (well not dead weight, but you know). The cart is pulled out again. I bet Death was feeling cheated right about now because despite the fact that the executioner only had ONE job Joseph again doesn't die. Instead, the rope unravels, and Joseph slips until he is half-hanging, half-laying on the ground. Instead of being awkward, now it's just sad.

By this point, the crowd is getting a bit rowdy. Nevertheless, a third rope is tied, and Joseph is again fitted with his supposedly deadly necklace. Third time's the charm.

Just kidding. The noose snaps AGAIN! The crowd loses it. It's unheard of! One official runs off to get a pardon because hanging someone upwards of three times is grotesque (this guy is possibly my favourite character merely for not being an idiot). The consensus is if Joseph hasn't died by now, it's surely a case of divine intervention

and Joseph is generously (heavy sarcasm) allowed to live. You'd be mistaken if you thought Joseph would get off easy, although I'd hardly call being hung and publicly humiliated three times 'getting off easy'. Instead, poor Joseph is sent to another settlement as punishment for the robbery.

If you're anything like me, you may be thinking that Joseph surely went on to do something amazing after surviving execution three times! And again you'd be wrong. Our story has a very unsatisfying ending. In 1806, our hero, Joseph Samuels, decides to escape his new colony. Along with several other convicts, he steals a boat, and they successfully make their getaway. Well, semi-successfully. They had two days of freedom before a storm hit the area. Officials searched thoroughly but found no evidence of the group and announced they were presumed drowned. Imagine surviving literally three execution attempts only to drown by accident. I want to believe that there was incompetence at play (as there often is with law enforcement) and Joseph somehow made it out alive. But I guess the good thing about this story is: it doesn't matter whether Joseph drowned, or was executed, or died at an old age, because that was over two-hundred years ago so either way, he's dead now... Probably.

# THE 100 DAY PERSPECTIVE

BY ANNA CHITTICK

15th May 2024: Day 100, 509 to go. That number still sounds like a lot, but it's less than the 609 I started with. 1 year and 144 days or 12,126 hours. Time means a lot in here. A day can feel like two and a week can feel like days. My first 100 went slow, but they also went so fast.

Here, you have nothing to prove who you are or to back your claims of being a mother, a grandmother, a widow. You no longer hold a fixed address, a telephone number or anything tangible on the outside world to call your own. A week out from my 50th birthday with nothing to celebrate except my existence. A criminal in the eyes of the law, imprisoned amongst beauty. An ironic existence that can seem surreal, but 'oh so real' at the same time. A personal experience. A unique journey. A different viewpoint.

With the rest of the world casting their judgemental eyes over us with their limited beliefs and jumping to conclusions without ever knowing anyone's full story. So, I write this piece for every person I have met so far through my first 100 days and for the ones who I am yet to meet.

I too was one of those people who cast judgement on others, labelling them as a certain type of person that I

disapprove of, but you cannot truly know anything until you experience it first-hand, and even then it's only one version, a single viewpoint and only from where you are.

I didn't know it at the time, but the last five years where I have been 'working' on myself was preparation for where I am. Finding a way to lose that side of myself where I welcomed foundational judgements. Instead of being able to see a person for who they are, how they act and where any connection lies between me and everybody else.

Every single experience or person you meet is always met with a level of commonality. A thread between you and that other person. A common topic, story, feeling, an interest in their lives and who they truly are.

We all have a story, things that we have experienced. I could list off the many reasons of how my life brought me here. I could point the finger at all the events and all the people and blame them for the choices that I have made. Regardless of all that, I'm still here. And there's only two ways I can deal with it. Fight it. Or flow with it. Sounds like an easy choice, but it's not. It's a constant battle between the life you had before and everything you knew, to making new choices so that you can search for the silver lining.

How do you do that when your food has rocks in it, when someone calls you a dog or you have to share a small space with a stranger? Remember, these people aren't your friends – you've just met them. You're cautious, you don't know if you can trust these people at all.

That belief that you are still holding onto, just like everyone else, rears its ugly head. These are criminals. Untrustworthy, thieves, bullies, murderers, drug addicts, dealers. The labels hold strong within the collective consciousness.

Even as someone who is trying to make a different choice, to see another perspective, there is a surprisingly different trait that shines through.

Authenticity. People being themselves. But even more so, strangers who support you in ways that you never knew were possible. Giving. Listening. Caring.

It's a lot different to the forced friendship we are constantly accepting in the outside world. The false love and support from family members who don't even like you. The friends around you who only support you to your face and talk behind your back and then drop you when you do something that is not on their approval list.

In here, it's not your crime that you are labelled with or judged upon, instead it's who you be. (Yes, be.) How you act. The strength and truth in your word. That does not mean that everyone has to be your friend, nor do you need to get along with every single person you meet. You only need to be you. From there, you'll attract the people you need to. Some will become long lasting and trustworthy friends. Others will become fleeting moments that you may enjoy a conversation or meal with.

There's more laughter inside prison than I have ever seen on the outside. Even though the laughter that is shared with others during the day may turn to tears when we are alone at night. We can still bring out the best version of who we are. It's these varying degrees of camaraderie that literally drive us into each other.

Without the familiarity of the life that we once had, we are no longer surrounded by the comforts of the past. The way we acted, who we hung out with, what we did during the day. It's a whole new reality that we neither have for a short time or a long time. But either way, we can still choose, what's the view look like from here?

I'm painting a picture that everyday is another fun day at Girl's Camp and sometimes it actually is, it is also the place where you can have the worst experience ever and be at the lowest you have ever been, stripped beyond recognition. Fearing for your own safety, with no clue what your future looks like. Everything is constantly changing.

Where I used to jump on the net is replaced by reading a book. When I want to spend time with kids, I make a phone call instead. If I want to do a TikTok live, I write it as a blog. And if I'm feeling like a shopping spree, I have a buy up form to fill in. It's a paradox from a different perspective.

That's all it is. And today, I view the opportunity to even be able to write this. Here, I have a plethora of time and space to write, extract and analyse my own private thoughts. I can draw, paint, read and exercise which leads me more to the being of myself. Stripped of everything I thought I was, but knowing that wherever I am, regardless of what is around me, I still always have who I be. And I get to choose exactly what that looks like. And so do you.

Your perspective changes everything and not everyone can see that. Remember, it's only a point of view.

By Anna Chittick  
Numinbah Correctional Centre  
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# WYVERN

BY KYLE ZAMMIT

The spaceship shuddered as it dropped out of warp. Universe all around. One of the pilot's earbuds dangled. It leaked a drum beat. Ping, went a monitor. The pilot rubbed his eyes and double clicked the contact. The surrounding cockpit screen zoomed in on a star. It blew up into an asteroid, its texture stark under floodlights. A ship clung to its surface, a firefly on the side of a mountain.

Cowboy platinum miners.

The pilot moved aside a cold bowl of noodles and slid his keyboard up. Clacka clickityclack, clack.

'Approach hydrogen refuel?' he asked the miners. He sat back and watched the asteroid as it steadily revolved. Light ... Dark ... Light ... Dark ... Light ...

There was no response.

The pilot turned to the monitor's display. He moved the cursor onto the miner's ship and scrolled up the mouse wheel. The screen zoomed, zoomed, zoomed. The resolution dropped.

The pixels showed someone floating, secured to the rock by a tether.

Their corpse had bloated in the vacuum. A furry serpent streamed from the body. It was picking and peeling away the spacesuit to get at the flesh beneath. Stripping the meat off the bone.

The wyvern looked up at the pilot. Stared at him through the monitor. Blood stained gaze. It tracked him as the asteroid revolved.

The serpent was lost to sight.

The pilot watched the screen unblinking. He held his breath until the light side came back around.

The corpse was spinning 'round and around within a cloud of viscera.

The wyvern was gone.

# SMALL ONE-HEARTED RIVER

BY KYLE ZAMMIT

A man dressed in green was catching his breath by a stream. The water sparkled in the sun on its run. Crystal clear. So clear that the man could name the brands of beer that littered the bottom.

Gum trees leaned out across the creek. A kookaburra lazed on a branch.

The man listened as cicadas rang amongst the reeds. A dragonfly buzzed past. Frogs in the grass.

And then the air began to clap with choppachoppachoppa.

The man dressed in green jumped into the stream. Splash! He let himself sink to the muddy riverbed. The helicopter passed overhead. Its thermal camera couldn't see him through the water.

The man surfaced. Hounds were baying in the distance. The kookaburra laughed at the escaped prisoner as he clambered up the bank and kept running.

# EMPOWERING VOICES: BUILDING LIVED EXPERIENCE COMMUNITIES WITHIN THE CRIMINAL LEGAL SYSTEM

BY DWAYNE ANTOJADO

In the labyrinthine corridors of the criminal legal system, where voices are often silenced and narratives overshadowed, there exists a need for communities rooted in reciprocity, mutual aid, and solidarity. Those of us engaged in lived experience work within these oppressive contexts understand the challenges of having our voices, knowledge, and expertise marginalised by the pervasive academic-industrial complex. To counteract this, the development of lived experience criminology emerges as a vital avenue for enacting epistemic justice—ensuring that our perspectives and knowledge systems occupy a rightful place in discourses that shape our lives. Within criminal legal frameworks, those directly affected by the system—formerly incarcerated individuals, their families, and communities—possess invaluable insights that often go unacknowledged. By fostering lived experience criminology, we not only validate these insights but also enrich the broader criminological discourse with authentic, ground-level perspectives that challenge prevailing narratives crafted by those distant from the realities of systemic oppression.

The imperative to build such communities is underscored by the relentless struggle to be heard and seen. Operating within spaces of entrenched oppression, our voices are frequently contested, our expertise dismissed, and our narratives appropriated without acknowledgment. This marginalisation is not merely a matter of exclusion from dialogue; it is a systemic effort to maintain control over the narratives that define us. To navigate and dismantle these barriers, it is essential to cultivate environments where our voices are respected and valued, and to have spaces imbued with the principles of abolitionism, and other activist traditions that prioritise love, respect, and collective well-being. In this spirit, building communities of reciprocity involves more than collaboration; it requires a foundational commitment to uplift and empower our peers entangled within the oppressive webs of the criminal legal system, especially from Indigenous communities. Such communities must be anchored in mutual aid, where support is not conditional but a shared responsibility, and in solidarity where collective action supersedes individual agendas.

However, the path to building these communities is fraught with challenges. The system itself is designed to foster division, encouraging internal conflict and competition rather than collective solidarity. This adversarial structure not only hinders our efforts to end mass incarceration but also perpetuates the very cycles of oppression we seek to dismantle. To counteract this, it is imperative that we eschew fighting and arguing, embracing honesty, restoration and transparency instead. We must prioritise the cultivation of trust, respect, and genuine collaboration, ensuring that our internal dynamics do not mirror the divisive tactics of the oppressive structures we confront.

By fostering an environment where every member feels valued and empowered, we can create a network capable of withstanding external pressures.

One beacon of hope in this endeavour is the work of the Global Freedom Scholars Network Australia. Through initiatives such as the Empower Mentoring Initiative, this network exemplifies the transformative potential of lived experience knowledge and expertise. These programs aim to build a community of formerly incarcerated scholars, providing them with the tools and support necessary to navigate and challenge the academic-industrial complex from within. By bridging the gap between lived experience and academic terrain, these initiatives empower individuals to reclaim their narratives and assert their expertise.

The Empower Mentoring Initiative fosters relationships between academic mentors from diverse scholarly fields and emerging scholars, facilitating the transfer of knowledge, skills, and support essential for academic and personal growth. This mentorship not only aids in academic pursuits but also reinforces the importance of community and solidarity, reminding participants that they are part of a larger movement striving for systemic change. Central to these initiatives is the recognition that formerly incarcerated individuals are more than their criminal records. They possess diverse experiences and insights that can significantly contribute to ending mass incarceration. By elevating these voices, we're not only liberating some of our community's most vulnerable, but we're also showing them how to thrive beyond the walls of prison.

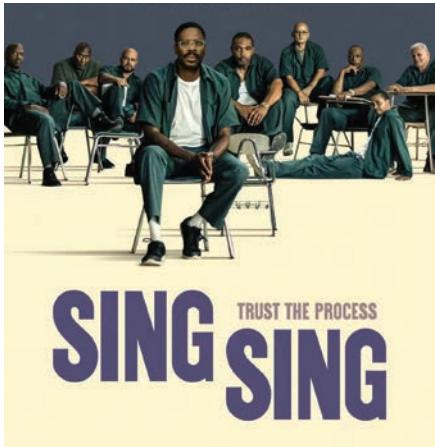
Tangentially, the responsibility lies with those of us who have been afforded the privilege of platform and voice to ensure that the doors remain open for those who follow. It is a duty to carve out spaces that honour the work of our predecessors and facilitate the emergence of new leaders within the movement. This continuity is essential for sustaining momentum and achieving long-term change, as it ensures that the collective effort remains robust and inclusive. The journey towards dismantling the oppressive structures of the criminal legal system is undeniably arduous, but it is not insurmountable.

I invite you to join me and my colleagues in building this transformative network. Please write to *Paper Chained* or to [operations@innaustralia.org](mailto:operations@innaustralia.org) to become part of our collective. Similarly, if you are an academic dedicated to fostering change and wish to mentor a system-impacted student, we warmly welcome your participation. Together, we can create pathways to education, empowerment, and lasting societal transformation.

*Dwayne Antojado is a lived-experience criminologist and PhD candidate at Australian Catholic University.*

# IN THE NEXT ISSUE

ISSUE 18 DUE FOR RELEASE IN JUNE 2025



## INTERVIEW WITH BRENT BUELL

*Paper Chained* interviews Brent Buell, the former director of a prison theatre group in New York, about the film *Sing Sing*, which tells the true story of the theatre group and the men behind it.



## BAYWATCH

*Paper Chained* interviews former prison teacher and magazine editor Kit Sheppard, about the Long Bay prison magazine *Baywatch* (2000-2012).



## A LOOK AT INSURANCE

Worried about getting insurance after your release? *Paper Chained* tells you what you need to know about applying for insurance with a criminal record.

# SHOUT-OUTS

Shoutout to my dayones ✌  
Jordan James Nemec @ Tmcc  
Pellista Kanak & Kaitlyn Bennett.  
Sending all my love to yours, thinking of yours always.  
Wannito Thong-Urai @ Twcc.

Hello im Kevina. L AKA Kevie can i send  
Some love to my girls Anji, Rinni, Bobbie & Judy,  
Paris, Niesha Bear, Bubbles, Althea, Uncle Toby (Easie)  
Ratin, Justo, fori, Simona, Jordy, Tammy, DK,  
Courtney R, Demi and every-one else to my  
brothers TAUPO, Harely & the rest.

Shout Out to My Lovers Kymberley Curtis &  
Ruby Smith at S.Q.C.C. I lovey and miss yours  
so so much xx Behave yourselves, hope to  
see your beautiful faces soon ☺ Take Care xx  
Love, Loyalty & Respect  
Always Diamond xx

