

PAPER CHAINED

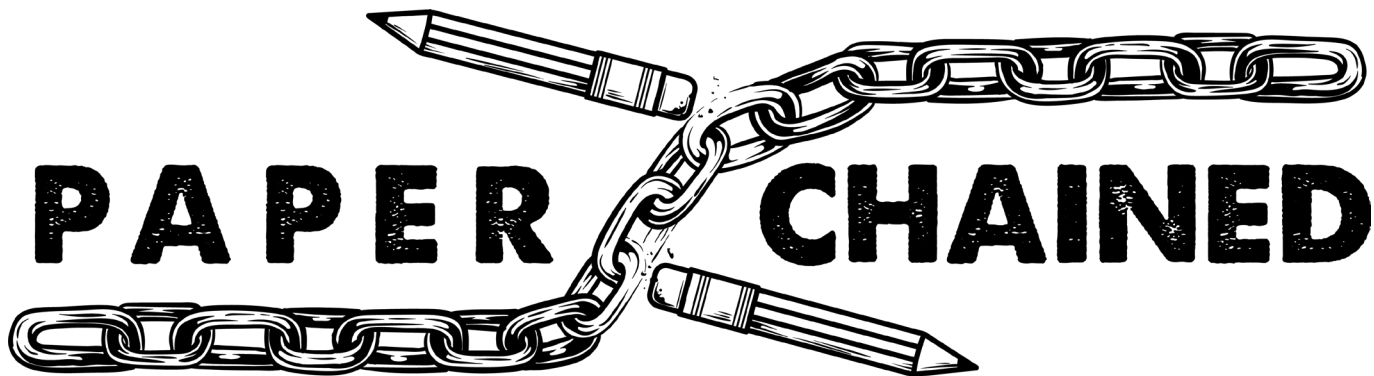
A JOURNAL OF EXPRESSION FROM BEHIND BARS



ISSUE 05 / JAN 2022

Posted free to incarcerated people





PAPER CHAINED



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Associate editor: Jedidiah Evans

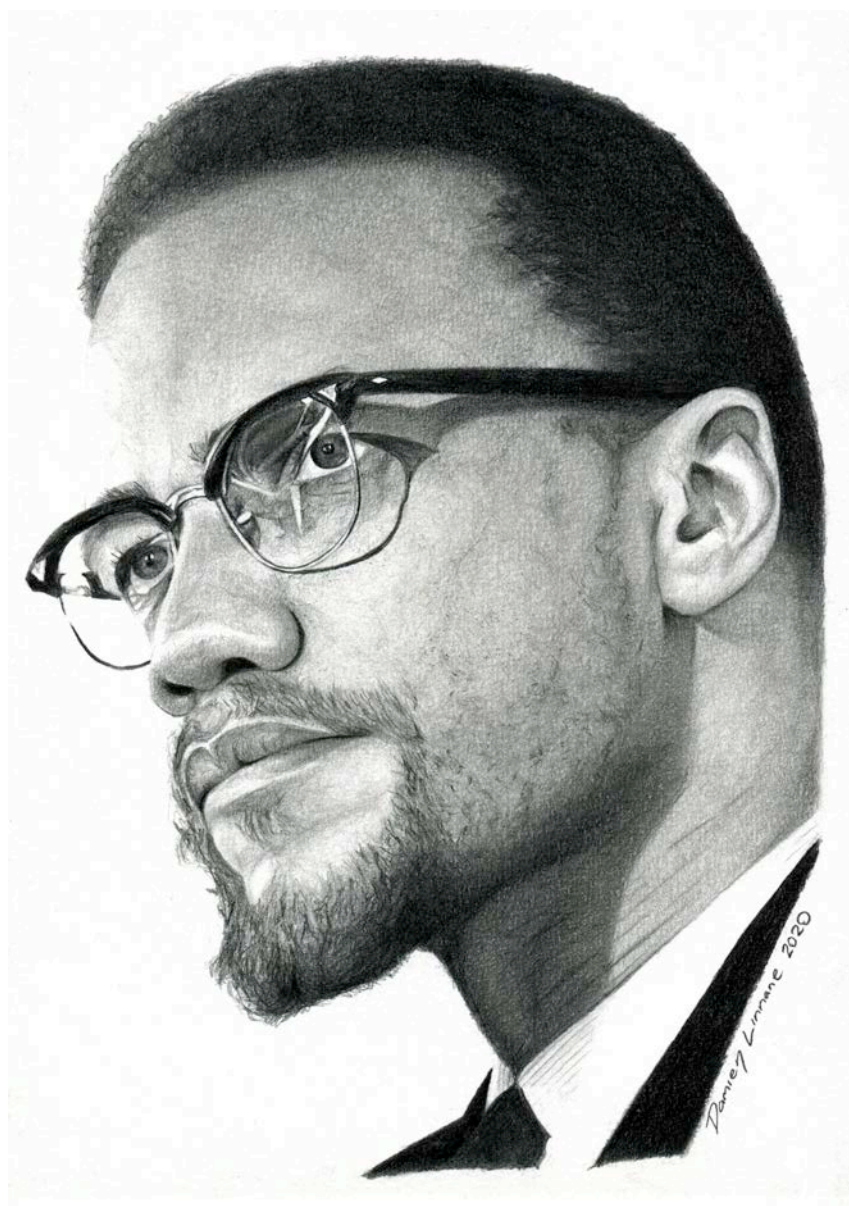
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Paper Chained is printed and produced
on the stolen lands of the Awabakal people.
We acknowledge the rightful owners of these
lands; sovereignty was never ceded.



WHAT'S ON THE INSIDE

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

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

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

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

Please also specify if you would like your contributions to be anonymous. If you choose to publish under your own name, please specify if you do not want the postal details of your prison published alongside your contribution.

If you are currently in prison and would like to receive a posted copy of the journal, please provide us with your name, MIN/ID number, and postal address. Those outside prison may access the journal free online via our website, PaperChained.com.

TERMS OF PUBLICATION

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

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.

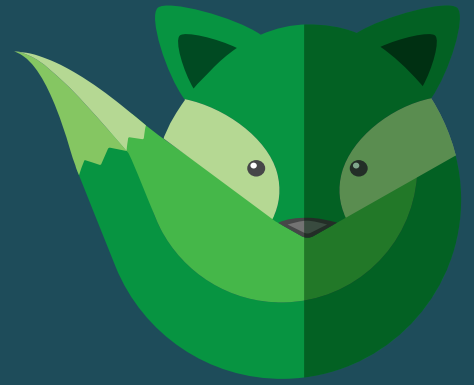
We will not publish any contributions that are perceived to contain racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, nationalism, xenophobia, ableism, evangelism, or other forms of oppressive language, or any material that encourages violence or violates the privacy of others.

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|-----------|--|-----------|--|
| 05 | Letter from the Editor | 17 | Podcasts |
| 06 | Artist profile: Jayde Farrell | 18 | Comic
<i>By John E. Sacks</i> |
| 07 | The Redeeming Value of Art in Prison
<i>By Bobby Bostic</i> | 19 | Satan Took Over My Crazy Life
<i>By Joe Salazar</i> |
| 08 | Portrait of Bobby Bostic
<i>By Damien Linnane</i> | 20 | The Boot of Fate
<i>By James Francis Dwyer</i> |
| 09 | About Time for Justice | 21 | Author profile: James Francis Dwyer |
| 11 | Traveling my Rocky Road of Hope
<i>By Simon Evans</i> | 22 | Ado Ado Nothingness
<i>By S. H.</i> |
| 12 | Art and writing
<i>Various contributors</i> | 23 | Deadman Talkin'
<i>By Ojore McKinnon</i> |
| 16 | My Moment in Time/ Prison
<i>By Stacey Stokes</i> | 25 | Grasping the Nettle |

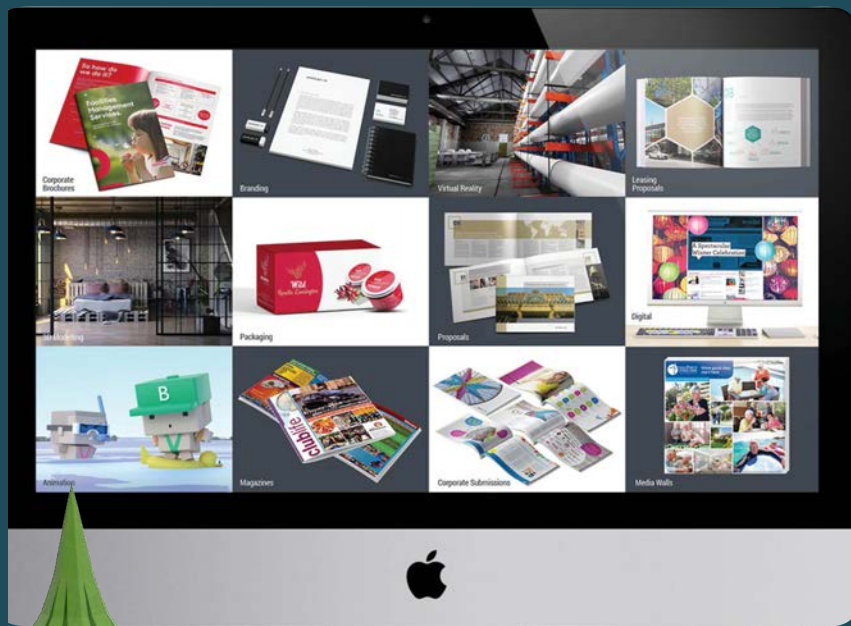
WE WELCOME CONTRIBUTIONS FROM:
PRISONERS
EX-PRISONERS
FAMILY OF PRISONERS

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Supporting Incarcerated Students

At USQ, we believe everyone should have the opportunity to access higher education. To support our incarcerated students, we've developed a selection of programs that can be studied whilst incarcerated.

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

During your studies, Correctional Centre staff such as an Education Officer may be able to provide you with support throughout your program including:

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

Are you unsure if studying a university program is right for you? We've developed a series of workbooks called *Unlocking a Future Career*, which is designed to help you with the decision to study at university and provide support for students soon to be released from a correctional centre. If you would like a copy of these workbooks, please ask your Education Officer.

The programs you can choose from include:

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

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

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

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Paper Chained has certainly come a long way since its humble beginnings. I often think about my time in prison creating artwork and writing, and the frustration of having no place to send my work to. So when I heard about the upcoming first issue of Paper Chained in 2017, almost a year after my release from prison in NSW in 2016, I knew it was a project I wanted to be involved in. I've been peripherally involved in the project since Issue 1, and was offered the opportunity to take over as editor in mid 2021, after the release of Issue 4.

The first edition of Issue 5, my first issue as editor, was posted out to everyone in prison on our physical mailing list in January 2022, though I'm extremely grateful that Corrective Services NSW have since agreed to make a version of our magazine available digitally via the tablets now available in NSW prisons.

In March 2022, we separately managed to secure funding through the Community Restorative Centre to produce Paper Chained quarterly for at least the next 12 months, with our first

quarterly issue scheduled for release in June 2022. So if you have any art or writing you'd like to share, please send it to us via the address provided by Corrective Services NSW on page 2. We have been advised material for the electronic version of our magazine will only be screened to ensure it does not violate privacy laws or pose security concerns, which we have never allowed anyway as such material goes against the intention of *Paper Chained* to be a positive influence. Accordingly, we do not anticipate this will impact our ability to print content in the manner we have always done, or share the expressions and experiences of incarcerated people.

Rest assured we remain an independent publication, run entirely by former prisoners and those supportive of prison reform, which chooses its own content and supports incarcerated people by giving them a voice and creative outlet. I hope you enjoy Issue 5, and look forward to receiving your contributions.

Damien Linnane, *Paper Chained* editor



ARTIST PROFILE: JAYDE FARRELL



Jayde Farrell first picked up a pen around age four after watching his father draw and sculpt in their home. His father spent most nights sitting watching TV, with a blanket and a beer, carving what Jayde thought were the best artworks he had ever seen. He mostly copied images from within his dad's work until one day, tinkering with a piano, he began to visualize imagery linked to the sounds of the keys. And so began Jayde's relationship with art inspired by sound.

Jayde's life story has had a meaningful connection to his art. He joined the army, but a scandal saw him imprisoned for four years. During that time, he was able to reconnect with his artistic side, reigniting his creative journey. This process enabled him to rise above the constraints that prison can inflict on the human spirit. Jayde describes his art as "new, intense, free, and evolving and from that subconscious place that people have been taught to leave behind."

Jayde now works across a variety of mediums – painting, drawing and mixed media using everything from aerosol, brush, pen, pencil and pastel. Sketch-booking is an integral part of his practice, with several books in use at all times. Jayde finds inspiration in reflections and shadows, other images and artwork, and in every moment's glance, looking for those in-between moments that provide something not usually seen. His debut exhibition, "Into the Wild", consisted of work mostly produced during his stay at Long Bay Correctional. It served as a final chapter in that terrible time in his life and it was the first time he shared those paintings with family and friends.



THE REDEEMING VALUE OF ART IN PRISON

Sometimes it is inside of the darkest places that we find the brightest light. However, the light is not always external. When the light comes from inside it tends to shine for the whole world to see. This is why people are so amazed when they see the magnificent work of prison artists.

Prison is raw and this is why the prison artist leaves his soul on the canvas. Whether the prison artist is writing, doing music, drawing or painting they always express themselves in a soulful deep manner. It is like they are redeeming themselves from their past.

Prisoners tend to find atonement in their art. With limited resources they find beauty in the ugliness that surrounds them. In the confines of prison, art represents redemption. Art assists inmates in their quest of rehabilitation. Obviously, art has many redeeming qualities.

Let's look at definitions of the word redeem.

1. To free, or rescue by paying.
2. To free from the consequences of sin.
3. To convert into something of value.
4. To make good by performing.
5. To change for the better.
6. To atone for.

All six of these definitions are manifested by the conscious prison artist as they are creating an artful masterpiece. Art is made in layers and must be uncovered by the person viewing it. Even the simplest of art evokes people to search for its deeper meaning.

Prison art screams out at you in many ways. It tells stories of longing, pain, need, wonder, beauty, and sometimes the divine. In creating such meaningful art, the prisoner finds meaning in their own life. This is how they redeem themselves. In many cases, their talent is all that they have to give. While locked away in a cage, art allows them to free their souls. When outside, patrons view their work and they have a voice. Art rescues the prisoner from obscurity. No longer just a number, because their art expresses their humanity. Outside patrons

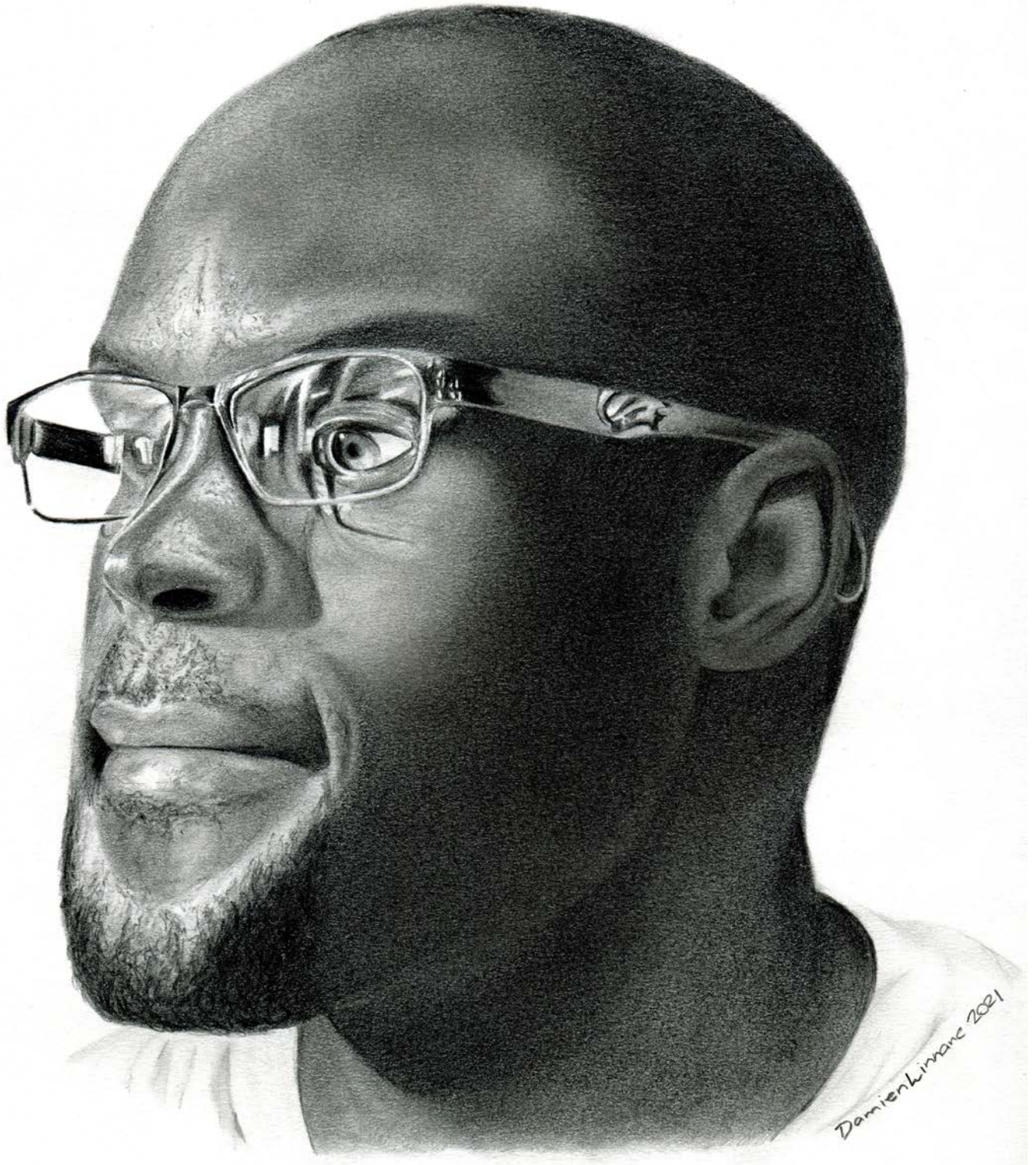
make that connection with the prisoner's humanity.

With limited resources, prisoners get creative and make spellbinding art. When outside patrons view prison art, they wonder how such talented artists commit such horrible crimes? Before they find the answer, the question begins to answer itself through the prisoner's art. A prisoner knows that he can never take back his crime. He cannot undo his past. But this is where the term redeem comes into full play. By creating art that helps to heal other people, the prisoner is attempting to atone for his wrong. He is converting a mess into something of value. He is doing his best to make his life better by performing good art.

Bryan Stevenson once said that people are not the worst thing that they have ever done. This applies to prisoners also. Just look at their art. Before you write them off, let their art speak to you. What is the message? Feel it. Prison artists know that they have harmed society. They know that many people have been hurt by their crimes (including themselves). Therefore, they occupy their time in prison making meaningful art. In their art, they express remorse, warn others not to repeat their mistakes, and still see hope in a troubled world. Locked away from the world with all its problems, the prison artist still sees so much beauty in the world because more than anyone he knows there's nothing like being free. For all its flaws the world is still a beautiful place. That's the picture that the prison artist is painting or writing about. In the darkness of their prison cell, art beams down on his intelligence. Thus, he is guided through imagination and creativity to create a masterpiece.

He hopes his art to heal someone's troubles. Through pen, paper and canvas the prison artist is trying to right his wrongs. All the while believing the outside world can see the redeeming value of art in prison.

By Bobby Bostic
Missouri, USA



Bobby Bostic by Damien Linnane

ABOUT TIME FOR JUSTICE



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

About time for justice is an Australian organisation specialising in assisting victims of historical sexual abuse seeking possible justice through the litigation process. Our passion is helping victims who have been affected by abuse within private and public institutions across Australia. The team from About Time for Justice understand that taking the first steps towards seeking justice can be intimidating, especially for those who have had issues with trusting people, systems or organisations they have been exposed to in their past. Our experienced team, many who have shared their own story and experience in this area, are trained to eliminate stress and navigate the complex process of approaching and dealing with the most appropriate legal representatives.

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

questions, and work flexibly with each client based on meeting the best outcome for their individual circumstances.



JACOB LITTLE: ABOUT TIME FOR JUSTICE FOUNDER

My mum and dad split when I was four. I decided to go with my mother. Unfortunately, I was left without a father figure. All I had was my pop. Unfortunately, he passed away from cancer. RIP Weseley Bruce Little. This was a hard time in my life. I was lost and confused, and I was raised a way which was what I thought was normal. My father was taken away from me at 10 years old, and he served a 16-year sentence. I went from seeing my father every school holiday to visiting him inside jail. Losing my dad left a bad impression on an impressionable kid. I wouldn't say I liked authority!

Times were pretty tough. Myself, mum and my little sister were living in a housing commission. Mum did her best to provide for us. A lot of other kids from the area had lost their fathers, whether they were in jail or not. They had the same attitude to authority that I did. We decided to make the break from NSW and moved to QLD. When I was about 17, I started getting in trouble with cops. I fucked up and went to a boy's yard. There were a lot of terrible things happening there;. Unfortunately, I was caught up in abuse while I was there.

I went from high school, playing footy, going to the beach and hanging out with my friends and family to being locked up just like my father. I remember when I was in high school, I had been in trouble. The principal pulled my mother in. The principal said I would end up in jail just like someone else she knew, referring to my father.

When I turned 18, I was transferred to the men's prison. I had no idea what to expect, especially after my abuse in the boy's yard. When I got out, I started hitting the party scene, and I started taking lots of drugs, drinking and getting into fights. I ended up getting involved in street gangs. Eventually, I joined a crew; it was a place I felt like family, protected and a brotherhood. I started getting into more fights and other violent events. I ended up getting charged again. I kept breaching my bail and ended up back in prison. At the time, there was a new VLAD (vicious lawless association disestablishment act) law implemented in QLD. I was one of the first people to get charged. I was facing 25 years.

I was thrown into solitary confinement. I was made to wear pink jumpsuits and I only had one phone call a day, two hours yard time with no training equipment, no TV, no buyups, no contact visits—we struggled to even get a book. We were treated worse than pedophiles; there was lots of confrontation with the screws.

At that time, I started noticing that people I knew began to drop off when I needed them most. I began to question this lifestyle. When I got out, I kept on the same path. My father's parole was coming up, and some issues started to pop up because of the association with my friends. His parole officer told me that I couldn't see him or I could get him locked back up as it was a breach of his parole conditions because of my associations. My dad was my life and role model in so many positive ways. I had spent my whole life dreaming

of spending time with him. Having that relationship was so important to me. Feeling threatened was a horrible feeling. From a young age, I started visiting jails, doing jail phone calls and eventually going in myself. This started to become normal, but I decided I didn't want to keep doing that and just wanted to spend time with my dad and rebuild our family.

So I left my old life behind, and that was it. I have now been working for two years full-time in the same industry. I recently finished my tertiary preparation program and enrolled to start my bachelor of arts in February 2020. I will be studying part-time at USQ with the intentions to become a lawyer and also to inspire young kids not to go down the same path I did. I am currently training to fight in the ring. It has always been a dream of mine. I am mentoring young kids to make positive changes not to get caught up in the same things I did.

If I can do it, anyone can do it, it just takes the right attitude with a positive mindset. I have no regrets and now I look forward to a future of being able to help people.

TODD LITTLE: ABOUT TIME FOR JUSTICE CO-FOUNDER

I was raised in a small country town. I had a great life growing up with my father, mother and two younger brothers. We had a very loving family home, but when I was very young, I suffered abuse in an institution. At the time, I did not really understand what had happened.

As I got older, it started to affect me I started drinking and taking drugs. At the time I was having fun. I didn't understand I was trying to block what had happened to me all those years ago. As I got older, I started getting caught up in different crowds. I joined a gang. In many different ways, this felt like family and a home away from home.

I started getting caught up in some pretty serious stuff, and charged with some serious offences. I ended up in jail to serve a sixteen-and-a-half-year sentence. The jail was no fun and a big waste of time. You learn your lesson. I was worried about my kids growing up with no father to guide them.

I got on the drugs on the inside, they helped to block out the pain. At the same time, they sent me crazy, so I stopped and did my time. While I was in jail, I lost nearly everything: my house, my family, my possessions, all the things that I had earned from doing what I thought at the time was cool and a quick easy earn. I was so wrong. One of the most challenging times while I was in jail, was when I lost my father. RIP Weseley Bruce Little. I tried to go to the funeral, but the screws wouldn't let me.

I spent half of my life out of jail taking drugs to block out the pain. As I am a survivor, we will do our best to help all survivors. I have lived experience, and I know how challenging it is to talk about our experiences. I am healing, and I am out of jail with my three kids. They are all growing up; I am proud of them all, I have generous, loving support from my wonderful family. Jacob and I would like to help, so contact us at about time for justice.

About Time For Justice

PO Box 1182, Kingscliff, NSW 2487

NSW: 02 5632 1291. QLD: 07 4911 3237. NT: 08 7918 0817.

TRAVELING MY ROCKY ROAD OF HOPE

BY SIMON EVANS

I have walked my rocky road of hope, travelling my journey where I have had many a day of great defeat, causing me to fall flat upon my face.

My thoughts which I had really lead me astray, where all I ever did is thought they were okay.

But no! its really sad to say it hasn't been the case, I've had to walk away to rethink for another day, on what to do and say.

I can only hope and really, really pray for more of those sunny days, I have cried for many a day, in grief and sadly pain while walking through sunshine, and yes alot of rain.

No matter where I've travelled or what I've done, my voice of reason has been there, weeping deep within.

I've been far too busy to listen only doing the things I was interested in, not worrying about the more important things that matter the most, Because Hey! I can not exactly boast.

I have missed so much enjoyable and happy moments, with my family, Christmas and Birthdays, Weddings and Funerals, which has been a heartache, would you believe.

Being apart for a great amount of years, where sometimes it has been to hard to even bear, causing me to lose my will to even care.

As I reflect back on my life today, it has been with much regret to this very day, is how I had pushed all of my loved ones away.

All I really long for is a chance of forming these friendships again, being Open and Honest and ever so true... Appreciative and thoughtful, thats what I need to do... Affectionate and Caring is what I need to be, cause I know deep down within my heart it would really mean the world to you, and I know it would also mean a great deal to me too!

Simon Evans (2021)

Its nice to

be Important

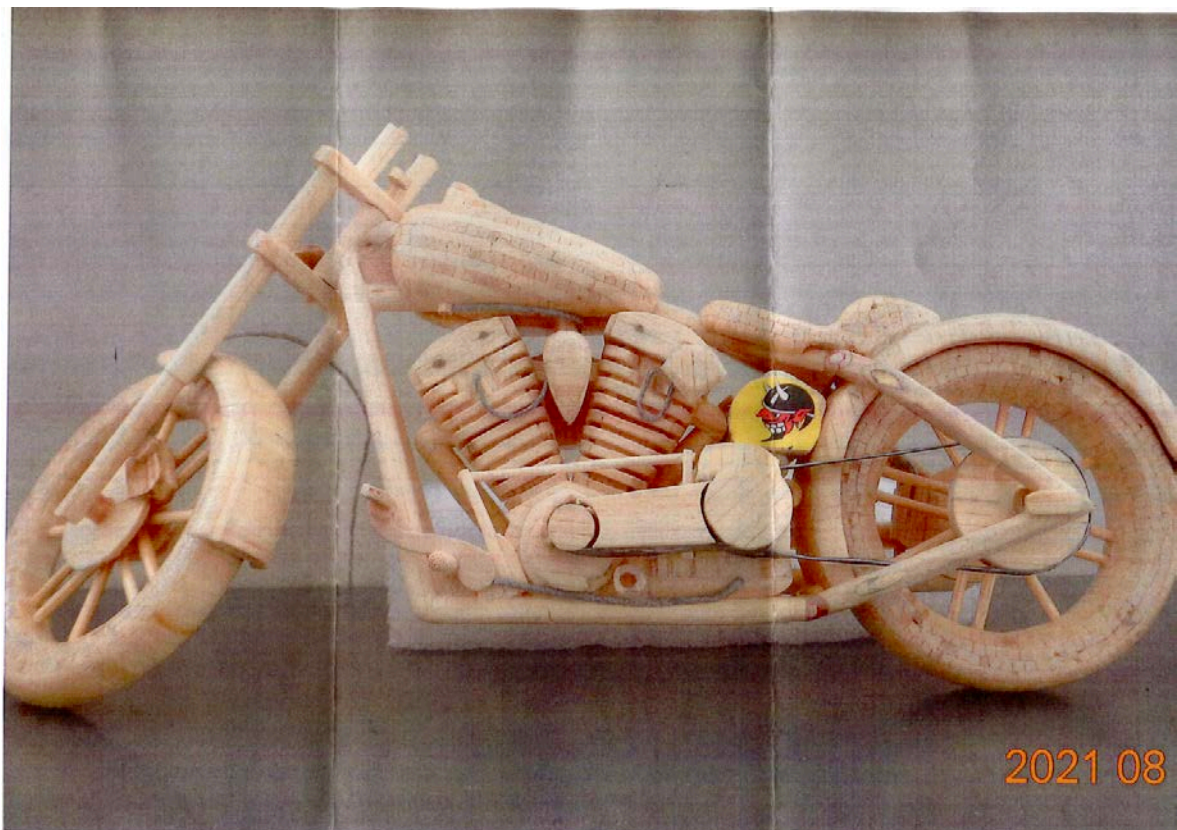
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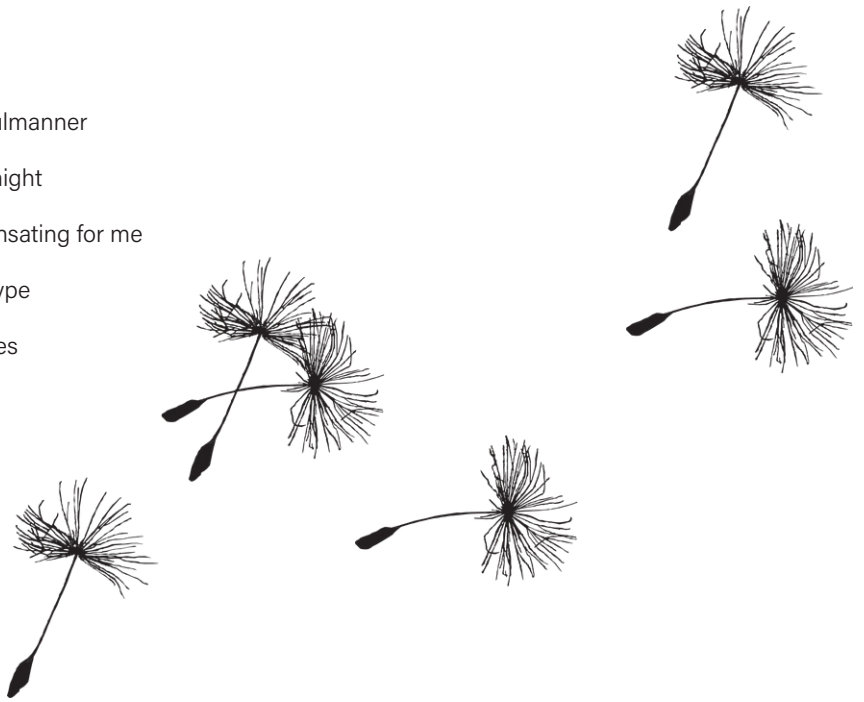
Simon Evans / 2021

I looked at myself in the mirror with hatred. "I hope you're fucking pleased", I said. But the old man in the mirror looked too sad and tired to even hate. The eyes gazed back at me with the impassivity of a goldfish looking out through a glass bowl.

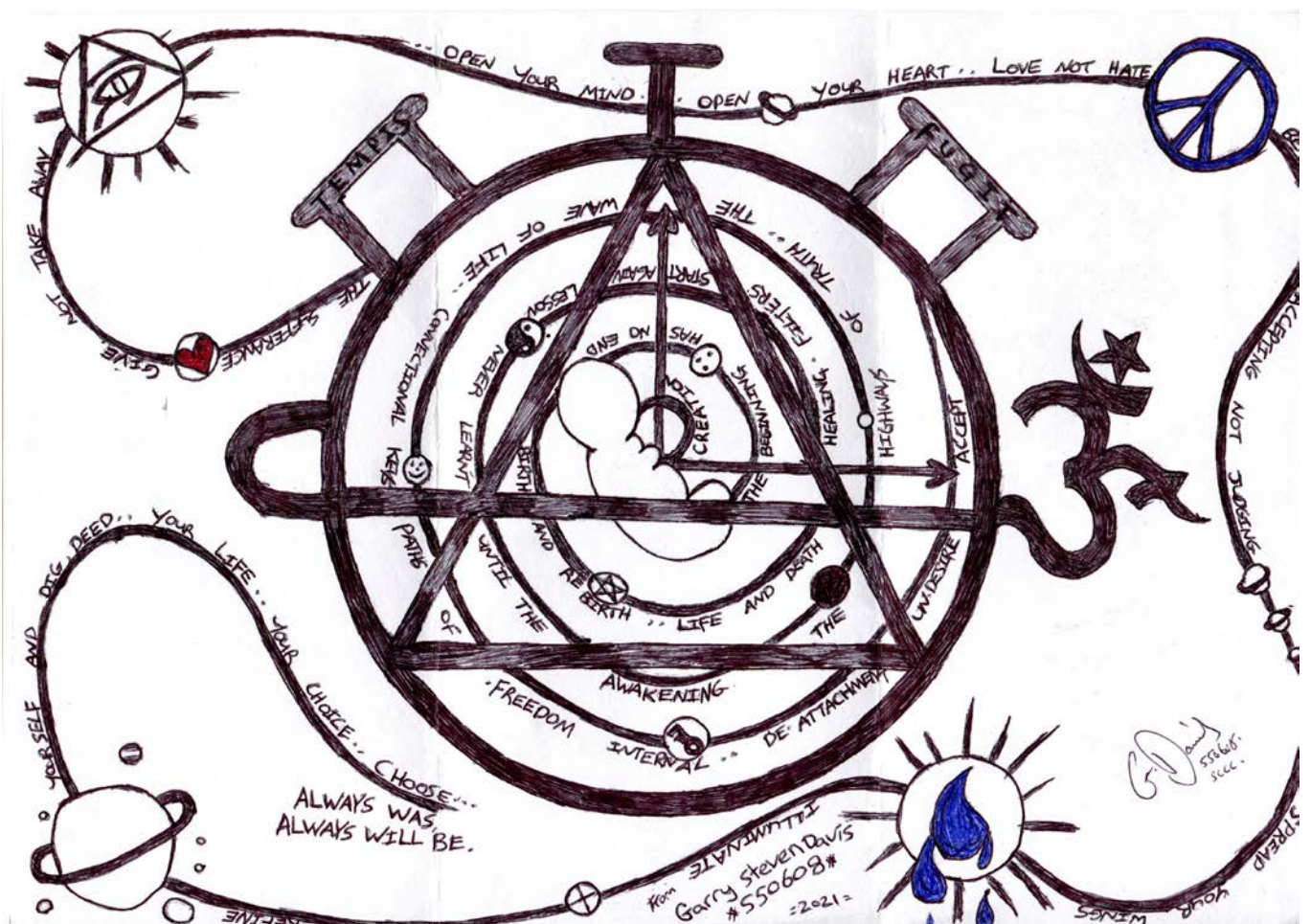


Art and words by David Gay, New Zealand

Blissfully ignorant and unfortunately unaware
 Horrendously crude and rude in a harmful, hurtful manner
 Vic Bitter, Winnie Reds and how's teh footy last night
 Some say 'overcompensating' though no compensating for me
 That's just how men were nack then, the atereotype
 Apologise, recognise, see with new eyes, real eyes
 No! no! no!
 Pull up Belly
 It ain't right bro
 That's gotta go
 And you know
 Grow...



A poem of reflection by 'Belly'; incarcerated in NSW



Fighting for freedom due to miscarriage of justice put upon me. I wish for everyone to remain safe and positive in this environment.
 Art and words by Garry Davis, incarcerated in NSW.

ACETIC PANDEMONIUM

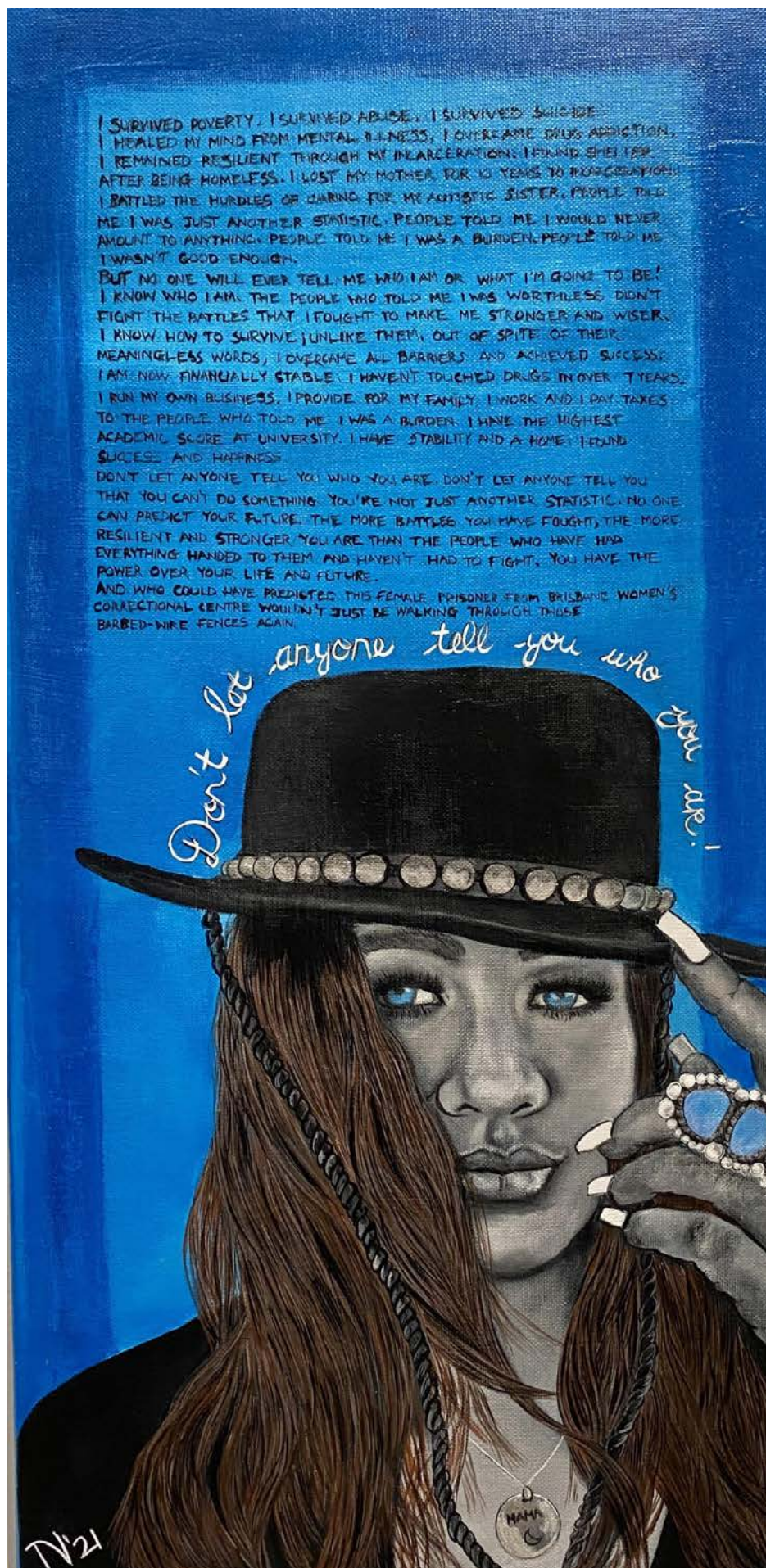
What started as recreation
Now a full-time reservation
A withdrawn disposition
My cynical condition
And lack of contemplation
The repetitious obsession
My dismissive contempt
An absence of discretion
Of unsocial administration
For a feeble sensation
Fuels community aggression
Not unreasonable oppression
To an undeniable compulsion
From this unparalleled addiction

UNFORTUNATE SOMNAMBULIST

Addictions cruel trick
Medicine kept me sick
No social form
Waking up withdrawn
An accidental crime
Still a grievous time
The outlook is grim
For remission is slim
No matter the remorse
Proceedings must take course
I sit and reminisce
The special occasions, I miss

Poetry by 'C', NSW

Artwork by 'N'21', Southern
Queensland Correctional Centre



MY MOMENT IN TIME/PRISON

My name is Stacey and I'm past halfway into a 10 ½ year sentence. I'm a 38 year old transgender female on hormone replacement therapy, which causes a female puberty. So I look female. But I'm in the men's prison system... I hate it, it makes me feel constantly watched. Always on edge - a coiled spring waiting to explode. So I hide in my cell.

It's a lock down day today, the door already locked. So I'm stuck in my cell. This means no unwanted attention, which is good. But it also means day-time TV and head miles. I do lots of head miles; regret and self loathing creep in to my tiny little mind every time I have an empty head for them to occupy. And I'm usually pretty empty-headed. But lock downs are the worst since I have nothing to do; nothing to fill the space between my ears. Just me and my walk in wardrobe-size cell.

Flashbacks of past trauma normally start first. Times when I've been attacked, when I've been violated, creep in to my thoughts. I start to pace like a caged animal. Eventually sadness drags me back down to my seat, tears in my eyes. My own sins now paying my mind a visit. I stare out the window, outside where the flowers bloom, where I'm forbidden to go. Thinking how shit I am. Thinking how I'm in jail and the people who attacked me in the past are free and happy. How the world goes on without me, my children growing up, my friends moving on. I hate the world. I'm in Hell. Not that I don't deserve Hell. But fair and even justice for all would be a welcome novelty.

Still staring out the window, I notice rain starting to fall, driven at an angle by an Arctic southerly gale. Then the rain goes funny: it floats instead of falls. Like a broken pillow spewing its stuffing. It's snowing! I'd never seen snow before! It's actually really beautiful. I don't want it to stop. I imagine us inmates making "snow criminals" and putting green beanies and scarves on them. Having snow ball fights, with large rocks at the centre of each "snow" ball. All my fanciful thoughts make me giggle and smile. My dark thoughts long forgotten, now mesmerised by this minor miracle of nature.

Eventually the snow stops and the rain returns, the sun slowly piercing the clouds. Sun rays breaking through like a picture from a 'God Loves

You' post card. A rainbow appears as well. Now it looks like a 'Mardi-Gras' post card from Sydney.

It all makes me think. Maybe the world is pretty magical, maybe it's not Hell. Maybe we just think it is because we put ourselves at the centre of it. Maybe Hell is just inside our head and that's why some of us go there when we are naughty, because of all the guilt. We send ourselves to Hell.

Maybe Hell is actually a good place; the guilt proving we aren't all bad. Maybe one day we can make the world a better place and earn our own forgiveness.

Written by Stacy Stokes, incarcerated in Victoria



PODCASTS

**WANT TO SHARE YOUR STORY
ONCE YOU'RE RELEASED,
OR LISTEN TO THE STORIES OF OTHERS?**

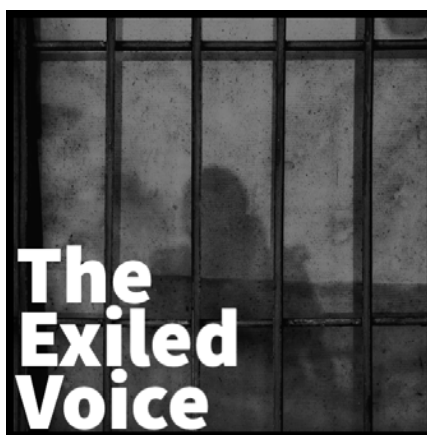
Tune into these shows, available from all the major podcast providers.



Broken Chains

BROKEN CHAINS

Hosted by *Paper Chained* editor Damien Linnane and commissioned by the City of Newcastle, *Broken Chains* interviews formerly incarcerated people about their experiences in prison.



THE EXILED VOICE

The Exiled Voice is a podcast solely dedicated to true stories of personal experience. They began as an idea that formulated in the mind of host Joshua Wright while they were imprisoned in Portland, Oregon. Their goal is to bring about the awareness of the horror and trauma that is prison, in the hope that those who hear what we've endured are activated by these injustices, and work towards abolition.



SURVIVOR STORIES

Survivor Stories interviews survivors of child abuse, institutional abuse, addiction, the prison system and domestic violence. Being a survivor of abuse and having lived experience of the prison system, Jacob decided to start this safe space so all survivors can listen. If you would like to tell your story, get in touch.



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

SATAN TOOK OVER MY CRAZY LIFE

I was born and abandoned by dysfunctional parents
So it's no wonder that I got served a life sentence
I've sank deep in sin and far from glory
For my words and action I am not sorry
I used to look up at the sky and wonder if God could
see me
Now I look at the ground and wonder when Satan
will take me
I gave up on god since he was never there
I've lived a crazy life ever since I was put here
Doing hard times, serving life in prison
I'm living a life of corruption and sin
I can only do nice things through my colors in art
I've fought and stabbed with ice in my heart
Only Satan has ever been there by my side
So I do stupid shit without thinking twice
Prison is living in the Devil's playground
They lock us away where we could never be found
We run around like demons out of control
Till I'm old I'll forever be soulless and cold
I don't care if Satan leads me to the ground
That's better than breathing with no family around.



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

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

THE BOOT OF FATE

We're a God-forsaken legion, and we lift our heads with pride,
Or sit, blown with self-importance, in the saddles we bestride,
Caring not for Fate's grim shadow or for Destiny's bequests,
For Conceit has set a temple for self-worship in our breasts;
Ever striving for a fancy or a yearning undefined,
While our ears are deaf to footsteps that are creeping up behind,
Till the rough-shod foot has touched us, and our folly shows too late,
And we're kicked from our stirrups by the ruthless Boot of Fate.

There are wreaths of fame and glory that we fancy we can win:
"Nothing surer-very easy," come the whisper from within;
And our pride and self-importance make us eager to compete,
But we wonder what has struck us when we're lifted from our seat,
When a woman's smile has lured us-to the Fiend with spur and whip!
Shall we think of girth and stirrup when we kiss a ruby lip?
And we never heed disaster, and we ride a reckless gait,
But it takes a practiced acrobat to dodge the Boot of Fate!

There be gentle, stiff-backed brothers, to the men who are unhorsed;
Some mad passion of a moment in a smooth career has forced
Just one reckless, mad, wild gallop when the rein has hung too slack
And they did not think old Nemesis was riding on their track.

Have a feeling for the footmen as you press on in the race;
There are many who rode like you and who watch your giddy pace,
And some trifle long-forgotten, that you never calculate,
May start the cursed lever that controls the Boot of Fate!



Poem by James Francis Dwyer

AUTHOR PROFILE: JAMES FRANCIS DWYER

BY DAMIEN LINNANE

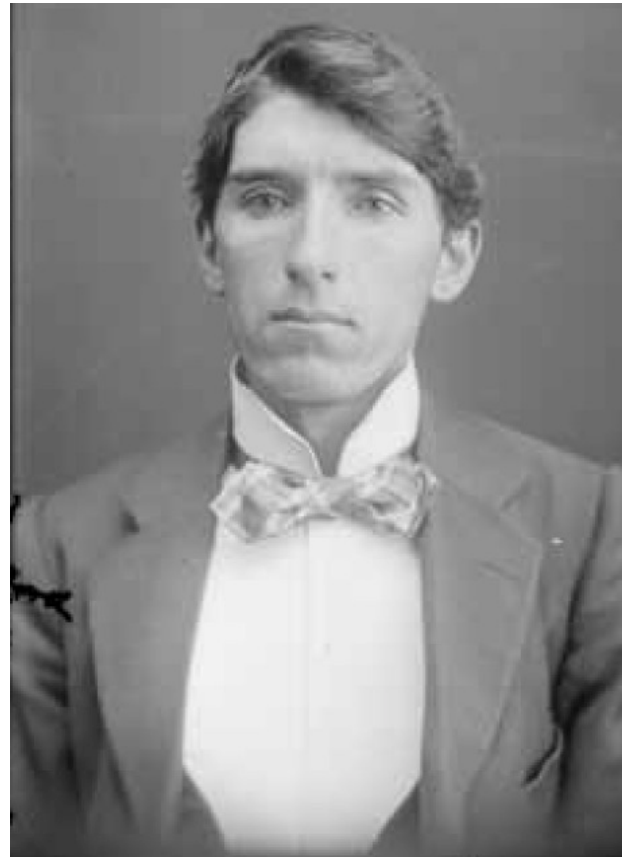
James Francis Dwyer was born in Sydney, Australia in 1874. In 1899, while working as a postal assistant, he instigated a scheme to make fraudulent postal orders in order to get himself out of debt. He was caught and sentenced to seven years imprisonment at Goulburn Gaol in New South Wales. He was required to spend the first nine-months in solitary confinement, as was standard procedure at the time for anyone sentenced to more than three years. After being released from solitary, Dwyer obtained a job cataloguing books in the prison library, where he developed a passion for reading and a desire to become a writer himself.

Inmates were not allowed access to pencils or paper at the time, though one of Dwyer's friends memorised his poem *The Boot of Fate*, saying he would send it to the magazine *The Bulletin* after his release. The poem was published in the magazine on 21 September 1901. Dwyer, however, only learned the poem had been printed after one of the prison guards, who had seen the magazine, asked if he had in fact written it. Dwyer befriended the guard, who, against regulations, helped him write by giving him paper and pencils. By his third year in prison, the guard had sent another poem and short stories to *The Bulletin* on Dwyer's behalf.

Dwyer was released on parole in 1902. He initially found difficulty obtaining employment as he could provide no references for the last three years of his life, though eventually found steady work writing for both the *Sydney Sportsman* and the newspaper *Truth*, and also wrote opinion pieces on the prison system for *The Bulletin* under the pseudonym *Burglar Bill*.

In 1906, after his parole period was completed, Dwyer relocated to London, before moving to New York in 1907, where he made a career writing short stories and novels. His first novel, *The White Waterfall*, was published in 1912, and the 1926 film *Brides of the Storm* is based on one of his short stories. In the 1930s Dwyer moved to France, where he also wrote anti-Nazi articles for French newspapers. He fled to Spain for the duration of World War II. In 1949, he published his autobiography, *Leg-Irons on Wings*. Having attempted to conceal his criminal past for most of his life, Dwyer said he regretted not being open about the matter, and described his crime and prison experience in his autobiography in great detail. He died in France in 1952, aged 78.

Dwyer published over 1,000 short stories and at least 11 books of fiction during his career. He was the first Australian to become a millionaire from writing.



James Francis Dwyer's mugshot from 1899

The Separate-cell system may have done much in keeping prisoners from the influence of older "hands"; but the complete isolation of the confinee from 4 p.m. till 6.30 a.m. has (especially with the boys) fostered practices which are held to be largely conducive to the increase of insanity in prisons.

With the now abolished separate treatment of nine months "solitary" for all sentenced of three years and upwards, the unfortunate wretch had one hour out of his cell in the 24 (during the non-working hours between 3 p.m. and 8 a.m.). Next morning, he was allowed a book (all light reading material barred). Certainly, gaol is not supposed to be a pleasure-resort, but separate confinement without interesting reading-matter furnishes a fine forcing-ground for lunacy.

And the ordinary gaol doctor! Well, I have seen him get through 15 patients in 2½ mins! He generally prides himself on his smartness in not letting a prisoner "bluff" him, and doesn't take much pains to discriminate between the "malingerer" and the really sick man.

James Francis Dwyer writing in *The Bulletin* on 23 August 1902 under the 'Burglar Bill' pseudonym.

ADO ADO NOTHINGNESS

Not knowing exactly what to say into an empty space, I want to talk about nothingness. When people speak of a hole within them, that is not the same. You may come at it through Eastern philosophy or Western metaphysics, either of which can yield the same, what in programming in "null", not a thing.

Existentialists drone on the abyss, or the absurdity of life. Ideally we would confront the abyss, reside within it or sit upon its ledge. Camus expects us to imagine Sisyphus contented, rolling his rock. Nothingness says there is no rock, no roll, no abyss and no hole. Nobody is there to contemplate life and there is no life, or "there", in which to contemplate.

Nothingness (metaphysical nihilism) has to account for the apparent world we seem to reside within. Or does it? How would it? Nothing is real, we don't exist, our experience is an illusion. But to be consistent the illusion must sit on a substrate of reality. Or must it? How could it?

Where does nothingness stand when it denies any basis for standing? What happens to a concept that denies the existence of minds which could conceive it? More importantly, what happens to the life of a mind that first conceives and then accepts, concludes that it is not real?

I can tell you. I do not exist. Whatever "I" was is only words, arranged, a linguistic convenience. Nothing of this is really happening. I have never reconciled the truth of nothingness with the illusion of existence.

Yet it persists. It is like a holographic torture, smeared on the event horizon of true non-existence. Meaning, purpose and belief have already fallen into its singularity where information and beingness are destroyed. Nothing is left - nothing is really left. I await the annihilation.

Badly tuned radio, loud. Sonorous, meaningless, empty and yet possessing. The illusion drives you to cynicism or madness. The same song plays every 15 minutes and then every minute in memory, inside your non-existent skull.

Things that are not real should not continue to be seen. Friendship following betrayal, duck following rabbit, illusion following awareness. But still the impressions of reality foist and force themselves upon us.

This is not intended to make sense or to communicate across the divide. This is not

meant to convince or persuade. This is just a non-existent skull, rattling in a netherspace.

Nothingness can send you insane. Its consequent entailments are destructive of self, of everything upon which sanity rests. Descartes cautioned about discarding all notions. It is not the path for everyone, you could be left with nothing. He never advised what to do if you reach that state. There is no help.

Nothingness leaves you with nothing. If you cannot handle that, you will grasp back at an illusion. Sisyphus convinces himself, "This must be the last hill ... And this one ..."

If you take on nothingness, you are left with the problem of existence. How do you deal with the experience of "reality" when you disbelieve it?

No answers are possible.

By S. H.

South Australia



DEADMAN TALKIN'

BY OJORE MCKINNON

Look who's talkin'

A deadman walkin'

Comin' live from death-row

Payin' a debt a jury says I owe

My life, was decided by who put on the best show

My innocence, never was an issue

The D.A. said, "I'm out to get you"

Now I'm waitin' in the attorney line

Behind the guilty, who admitted their crimes

Where are the protesters for my injustice

Where are the people I entrusted

I'm a deadman talkin' with disgust

After this, they will want to censor my written talk

They already scan my nuts

And eye my butt

But I have no intentions on shuttin' up

Let me tell ya, the death penalty is no deterrent

When murder continues to be a re-occurrence

Just admit, it's revenge

A system's means to an end

Sin begets sin

Cruel and inhuman treatment is your trend

But I will bare it and grin

Even when your torture makes me bend

Sentenced under the Anti-terrorism Effective Death
Penalty Act

My terror, my rights being attacked

Suspending my due process and illegal search and
seizure under your Patriot Act

This has happened

For talkin' I'm labelled an enemy combatant

How do I fight against your terrorism?

And state bred racism

And every other one of your isms

My Public tribunal was of your peers

Judgin' me not on evidence, but, on their fears

Instant terrorist

Add United Snakkkes politicks

The same Dick and Bush shit

They fuckin' you and me with

And got me communicatin' with the TV.

Respondin' to the propaganda I heard and see

A deadman talkin'

Got to watch where he's walkin'

I live under the gun

Walk under the gun

And sleep under the gun

Patiently waitin' my execution date to come

And live T.V. will be banned

But I seen the execution of a woman in Afghanistan

DEADMAN TALKIN' (CONTINUED)

Yes, they will execute the innocent
They have done it before, what makes me different?
The same they, that professed the innocence of
Jews in Iran
And went as far as makin' release demands
Damn!
And I'm a stipulated Amerikan
Y'all don't hear me
Did I tell ya, most pled guilty?
Society I object
To your legal right to inject
With murderous poisons
You already got me illegally in prison
Told me ignorance of the law is no excuse
You should've told that to the attorney you appointed
for my use
And addressed the government's misconduct and
abuse
You make 'em, you break 'em
They are your laws
You raised reasonable doubt and won on probably
cause
I'm too black for you to see your flaws
And the nerve of you, to require me to sign the death
certificate
Or it's the choice of your wish
Gas or electricity
Isn't this a crime against humanity?

*Poem by Crandell Ojore McKinnon, #P-32800
CSP-S.Q. San Quentin, CA 94974, USA*

ON REMAND

Tick Tock
Goes the clock
Turn the key
In the lock
Doing time
For a crime
Get the boot
Man in a suit
Cries "Objection!"
In need of correction
No more choices
No more voices
Boys in blue
Say what to do
When to sleep
What to keep
Where to go
Do not show emotions
Two stripes seek promotions
Wearing green
Nothing seen
You're gonna pay
Till you hear the judge say
NOT GUILTY!

Poem by David McGettigan, NSW

GRASPING THE NETTLE

LONG BAY EXHIBITION SHOWCASES INMATE ART AND EXPERIENCES

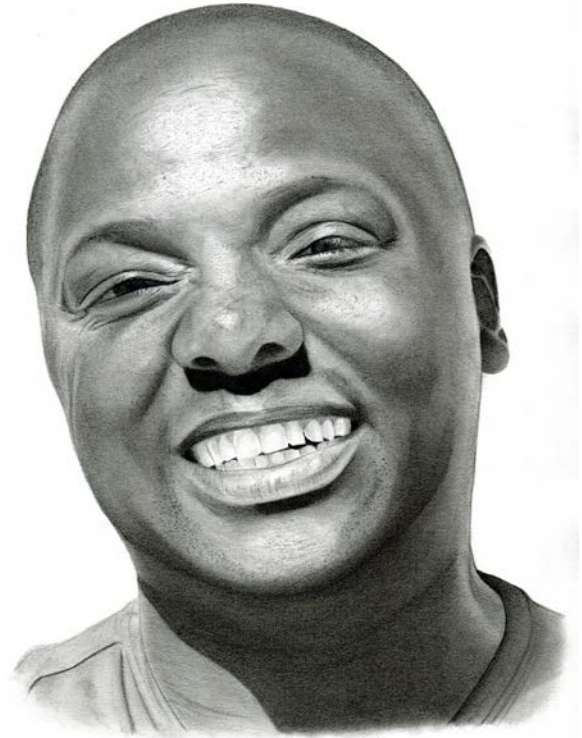
Media release from the New South Wales Department of Communities and Justice, published on 10 Dec 2021. Images supplied by Boom Gate Gallery.

Inmate artists are sharing their artwork and stories of rehabilitation as part of a new exhibition at Long Bay's Boom Gate Gallery at Malabar.

Grasping the Nettle features the work of current and former inmates whose lives have been transformed through the development of their art skills during their prison sentences.

Boom Gate Gallery curator and artist Dr Elizabeth Day said the exhibition highlights the rehabilitative role art can play in offenders' lives both during and after their time in custody.

"I'm hoping this exhibition demonstrates an alternative perspective and shows how these peoples' lives and lifestyles have changed by producing art



*Lt. Sam Robinson by Damien Linnane.
Graphite on paper.*



Memento Pink by Jayde Farrell. Acrylic on paper.

both in custody and post-release," Ms Day said.

"Through this collection of artworks, we're able to witness a kind of evidence of behavioural shifts in these men, such as ability to socialise, improved focus, improved self-esteem and general mental health."

Self-taught artist, writer and former inmate Damien Linnane approached the gallery about the exhibition after successfully completing a contract with Penguin Random House to illustrate the book, *This is Ear Hustle*, based on the acclaimed prison podcast *Ear Hustle*.

Mr Linnane, who has completed a master's degree in information studies and begun working as an archivist post-release, said creating art played a vital role in his rehabilitation.

"There's a perception that people in prison have a lot of free time, but the reality is there's only so many things you can accomplish from within your cell. The beauty of creating art was that it was always available, even when we were locked-down," he said.

"It was a way to express myself constructively that I consistently had access to, and also a chance to develop a new skill. The way I saw it, if I wasn't able to take something positive with me from prison, it was a wasted opportunity to grow."

Mr Linnane's illustrations will be exhibited alongside art by other former inmates like Jayde Farrell, who participated in Long Bay's prison art program, and has gone on to enrol in university and live as an artist.

Current inmate artists include Lee*, whose highly original artistic style explores concepts of identity politics, nuclear energy and threats to the planet.

Another featured artist is Tiny* whose meticulous paintings of birds and underwater scenery are sought after and enable him to pay some of his family's living expenses.



*The Visiting Room by Damien Linnane
Graphite on paper*



Brutal Fantasy by Lee
Acrylic on canvas*



*Snake Dreaming by Trent
Acrylic on canvas*

Grasping the Nettle was on display at Boom Gate Gallery in Malabar, New South Wales from December 9, 2021 until January 23, 2022.

Boom Gate Gallery is the only gallery in New South Wales solely dedicated to displaying the work of current and former prisoners. Currently incarcerated people not at Long Bay can arrange to have their art displayed on the gallery webpage. Boom Gate also hosts the annual NAIDOC competition and Custodian Portrait Prize. Entrants for these exhibitions can come from any NSW Correctional Centre.



