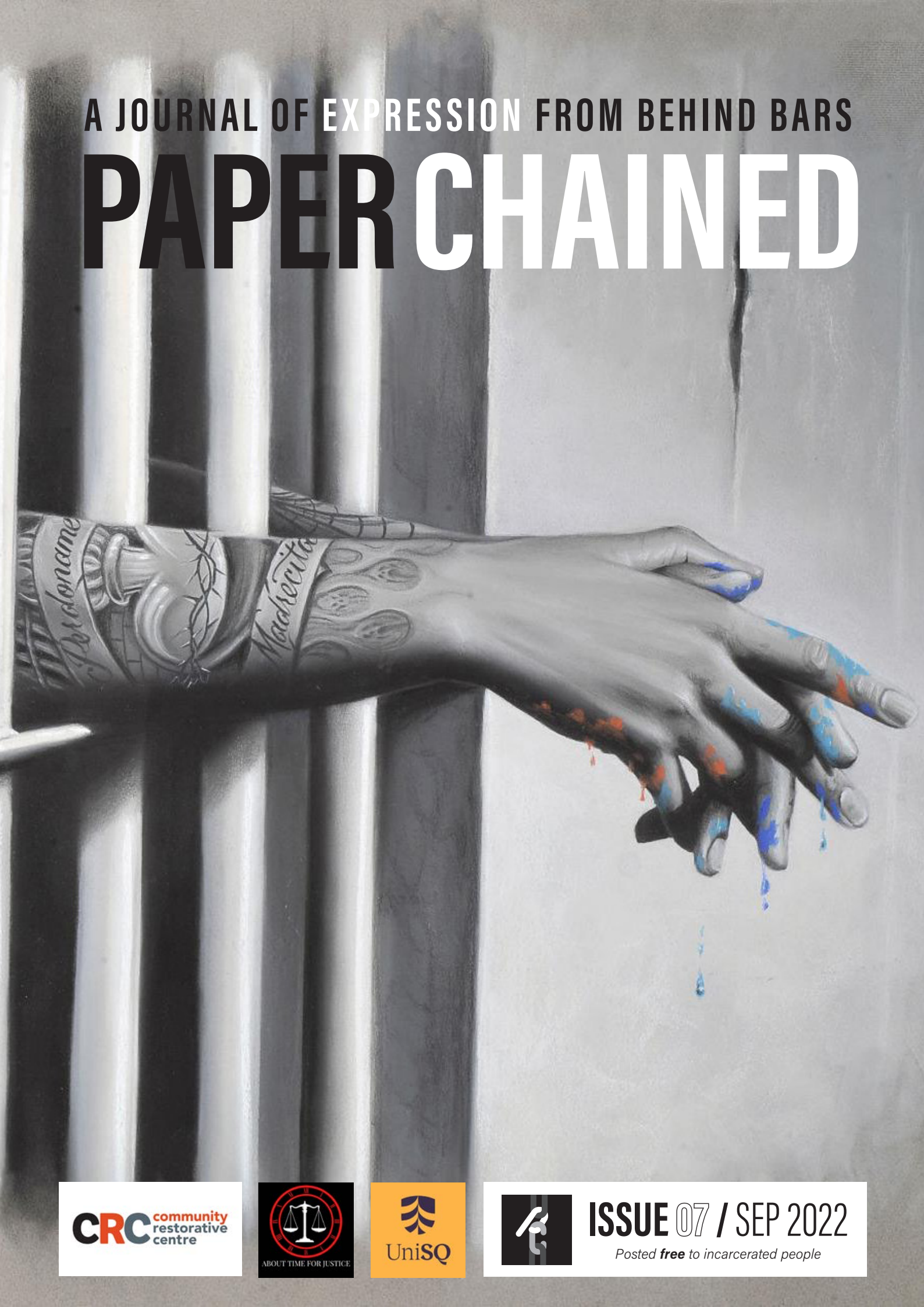


A JOURNAL OF EXPRESSION FROM BEHIND BARS

# PAPER CHAINED



**CRC** community  
restorative  
centre

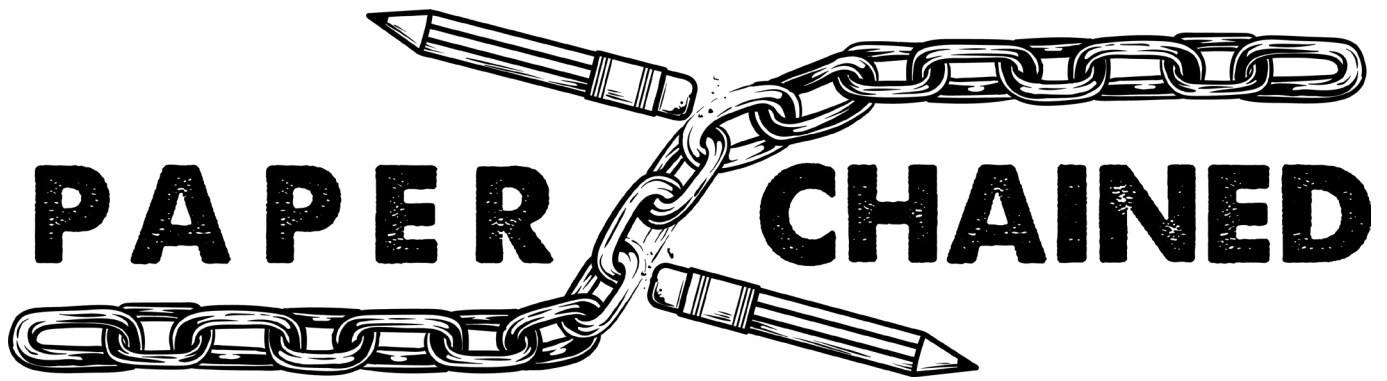


  
UniSQ



**ISSUE 07 / SEP 2022**

Posted **free** to incarcerated people



# PAPER CHAINED



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Associate editor: Jedidiah Evans  
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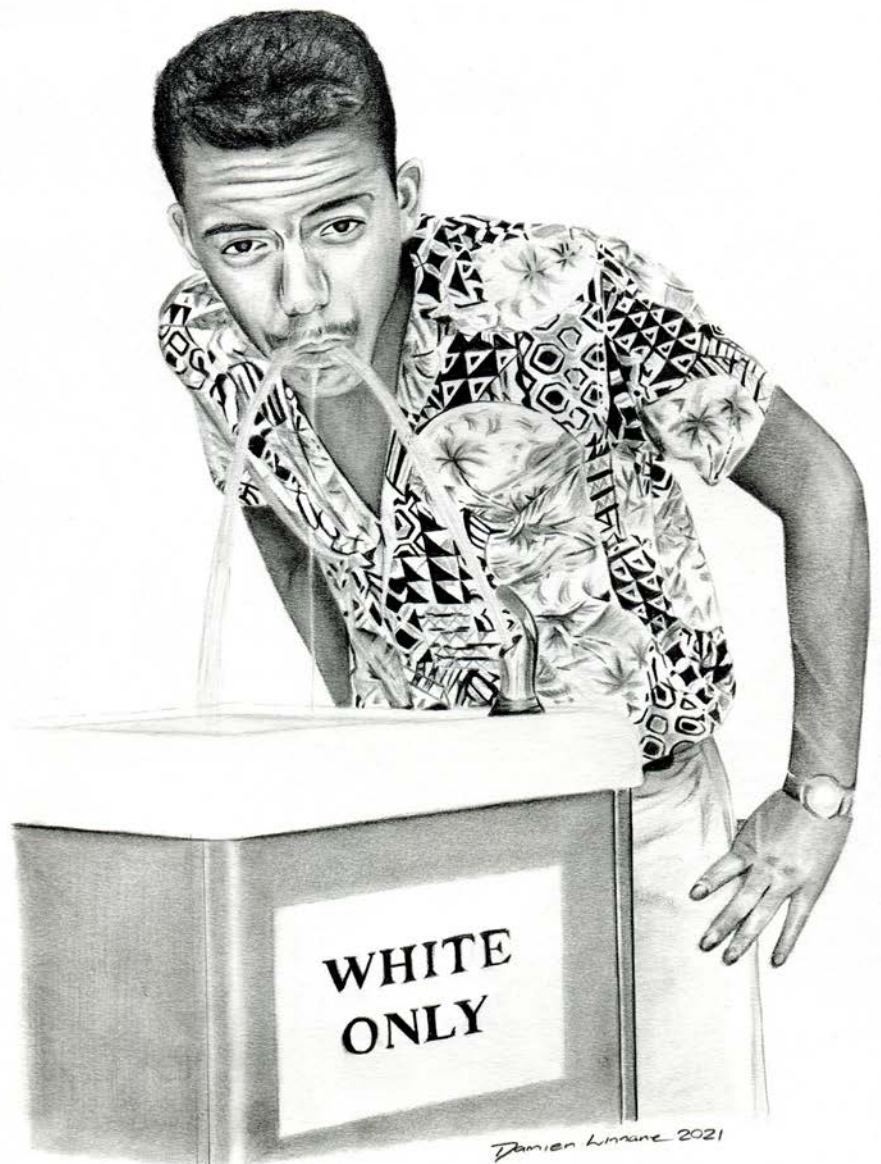
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# WHAT'S ON THE INSIDE

*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 text does not exceed 1,500 words per contribution. 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. Readers outside prison can access the journal free online via our website, [PaperChained.com](http://PaperChained.com).

## TERMS OF PUBLICATION

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

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

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

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

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>03</b> Green Fox Studios   | <b>24</b> Strange Dreams<br><i>By Sylvia Roberts</i>   |
| <b>04</b> Staff profiles  | <b>25</b> Letter to the editor of<br>the Daily Chronicle<br><i>By Oscar Wilde</i>  |
| <b>05</b> USQ: Supporting<br>Incarcerated Students                                  | <b>27</b> Boom Gate Gallery art  |
| <b>06</b> About Time for Justice  | <b>29</b> Interview with Murray<br>Cook from Songbirds   |
| <b>07</b> Life After Lock-Up<br><i>An interview with Lizzie<br/>Kommes</i>          | <b>31</b> Puzzles  |
| <b>09</b> Art and Writing<br><i>Various contributors</i>                            | <b>35</b> The Creativity of<br>Inmates: An Interview<br>with Paper Chained<br>editor Damien Linnane<br><i>By Paul Gregorie</i> |
| <b>18</b> Shout-Outs  | <b>37</b> Socioeconomics in<br>Prison<br><i>By Kenjuan Congo Jr</i>  |
| <b>19</b> From the Vault<br><i>Historical prison writing</i>                        | <b>38</b> Next issue preview   |
| <b>20</b> What is Wrong With<br>This Picture?<br><i>By Jeffery Shockley</i>         |  |
| <b>21</b> A History of Australian<br>Prison Newsletters<br><i>By Damien Linnane</i> |  |

WE WELCOME CONTRIBUTIONS FROM:

**PRISONERS**

**EX-PRISONERS**

**FAMILY OF PRISONERS**

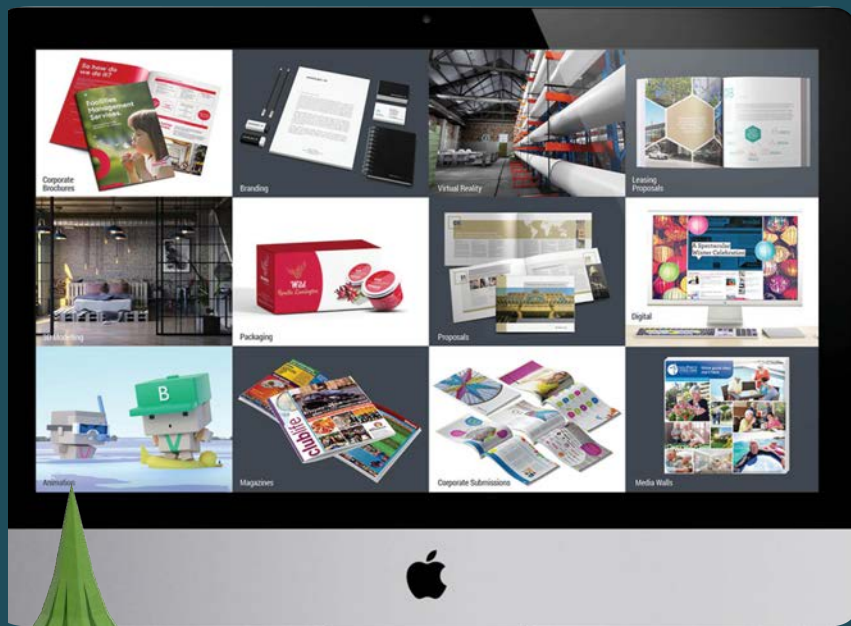
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**PO Box 2073**  
**Dangar NSW 2309**  
**Australia**



# GREEN FOX TRAINING STUDIO



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



## We're looking for new students!

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

## If you're a woman leaving prison

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

[greenfoxstudio.com.au](http://greenfoxstudio.com.au)

Contact our friendly foxes for more info at: [manager@greenfoxstudio.com.au](mailto:manager@greenfoxstudio.com.au)

# PAPER CHAINED

## STAFF



### **DAMIEN LINNANE. EDITOR.**

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



### **DR JEDIDIAH EVANS. ASSOCIATE EDITOR.**

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



### **KATIE FOX. GRAPHIC DESIGN.**

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





University of  
**Southern  
Queensland**

# Supporting Incarcerated Students

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

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

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

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

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

The programs you can choose from include:

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

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

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

# 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 understands that taking the first steps towards seeking justice can be intimidating, especially for those who have had issues with trusting people, systems or organisations they have been exposed to in 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 on client needs. Our team have the skills to explain what is happening with your matter in simple terms and is available to answer any questions and work flexibly with each client based on meeting the best outcome for their individual circumstances.

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



**PO Box 1182  
Kingscliff  
NSW 2487  
Australia**  
02 5632 1291 • 07 4911 3237  
**AboutTimeForJustice.com**  
**@abouttimeforjustice**



# LIFE AFTER LOCK-UP

## AN INTERVIEW WITH LIZZIE KOMMES

**No stranger to the spotlight, former prisoner and reality TV star Lizzie Kommes talks to *Paper Chained* editor Damien Linnane in this issue for an exclusive interview.**

***Why don't we start at the beginning? Where are you from?***

I'm originally from the upper peninsula of Michigan. I was raised on a farm. I was the only minority in my school, and there were no other blacks in our town. There was a lot of racism there, so when I finished high school I immediately left for California. I wanted to be an actress and a model and all that stuff, but I ended up becoming a stripper at 17.

***Was that job what first got you into drugs?***

I started experimenting with alcohol and marijuana around 15, then at 17 I got into cocaine and everything else. GHB, shrooms, acid ... I didn't discriminate. Just recently I celebrated one year sober. When people hear that they ask me what drugs I used to do, and I'm like 'everything.' Whatever was available, whatever I could get high off.

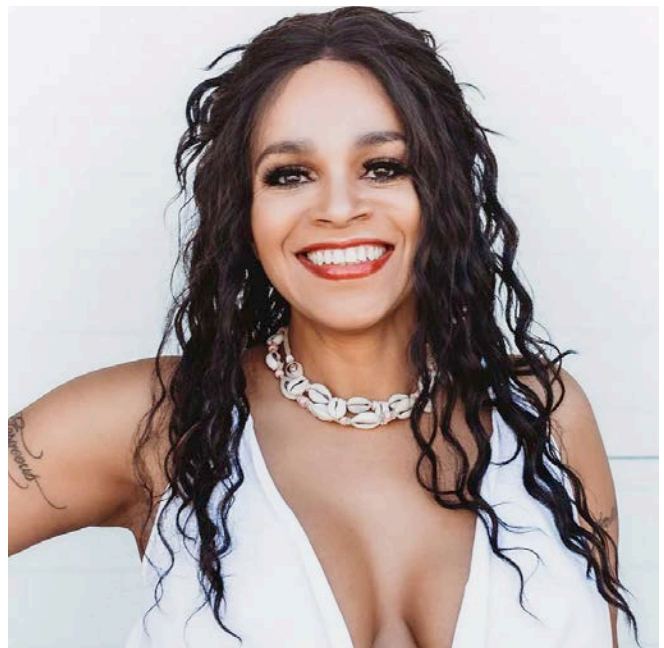
One of the other strippers first introduced me to harder drugs. We were at a party and there was a pile of cocaine and a line next to it and I was given a straw. I just stuck the straw into the pile because I didn't know that only the line was for me. I was like, why would I do just the line when there's a whole pile there? *(laughs)*

***When did you start getting in trouble with the law?***

I kept taking drugs and kept getting DUI's. About one a year for several years. I did about five months in custody between my first six convictions, a month here and a day there, that sort of thing. For my seventh DUI, I got about eight months in Wisconsin, but while I was on bond, I got my eighth one in California. That landed me in prison for eight years, though I ended up serving nine-and-a-half due to new charges during my sentence.

***Eight years for DUI seems harsh ...***

It had a lot to do with the fact that I breached my bond and was also interstate. I tried heroin and ended up nodding off at the wheel. I hit a bus stop and ran over a guy's foot. Thank God I didn't kill anybody, I was in no condition to drive. I didn't have experience with heroin and didn't know it would make me fall asleep like that. Anyway, I guess they wanted to slam the book at me, especially as I wasn't from there. I didn't really know the law well in California so I just took the



first deal they offered me. I'm glad now that I took that deal, because I wasn't ready to change yet. I was still doing drugs, including heroin in prison. I went into prison in 2009, I didn't stop doing drugs until 2017. I needed that time. If I had of gotten another slap on the wrist, I wouldn't be here to have this conversation with you, you know what I mean?

***What was your first reaction when you got that longer sentence?***

I was scared. I was sent to Chowchilla, which is a maximum facility. The Manson girls were there, other famous murderers as well. I'm going into these rooms where eight people sleep, some of them were murderers and I'm just a DUI girl. I'd never intentionally hurt anybody. It was terrifying.

***What did you do with your time in prison?***

I had a sugar daddy from the streets. He was helping me out and stuff with money, but all the girls in there were like 'you're so pretty you can make all this money' and I'm like 'how?' And they told me about these websites where people can form connections with inmates. *[Editor's note: The website's Lizzie refers to are only available for US prisoners]* I had a lifer teach me how to do it. I started getting all these





Drawing of Lizzie Kommes by Damien Linnane.

pen pals that started putting money on my books. So I spent my time hustling. Prison taught me how to hustle! (laughs)

All up over my sentence I got \$800,000, and I put it all in my veins or smoked it. I only had a few thousand left when I came out. I could have done so much more with that money. Instead, I just got high. It was crazy. All I wanted to do was to keep getting high. I didn't want help. Nothing else mattered to me. I just conformed to the life of prison. I have an awesome life now, and I can't imagine why anyone would ever want that prison lifestyle, but at the time I did.

**How did Love After Lockup offer you a role on the show?**

I did a sexy pose for a mugshot back in 2008 which went viral. It made nation-wide news and I ended up being listed on a website where I was ranked as one of the hottest inmates in the world. That's how they found me and reached out.

**How would you describe Love after Lockup?**

Crazy! (laughs) It's a reality TV show about finding love while you're still in prison. It's a challenging show because you meet these people while you're in prison and you've literally got to start a life with them when you get out. You never get to date the person properly first or anything like that. It was pretty crazy. They're still making the show, but I don't watch it. I only watched my episodes! (laughs) The show covers me going to live with Scott who was my sugar daddy at first, but then I gained feelings for him.

**You were often portrayed as the villain in the relationship with Scott. How do you feel about that?**

There's so much controversy over this. I was portrayed as the villain on the show, but Scott was controlling my money. During the first season they couldn't give the payments

for filming to the person in prison, so they gave my share to Scott, and he controlled me by refusing to give me my money unless I did what he wanted. I'm not upset about how I was portrayed though, because the show definitely made me very memorable. It was good TV, and I'm still popular because of it, people still want to talk to me even though its been four years. I did get so much hate mail on social media at the time though, people telling me I should die or go stick a needle in my arm and OD. If you go through the history of my Instagram you can still see all those comments. People ask me why I don't get rid of that. I deliberately leave it there because I feel like it makes me stronger.

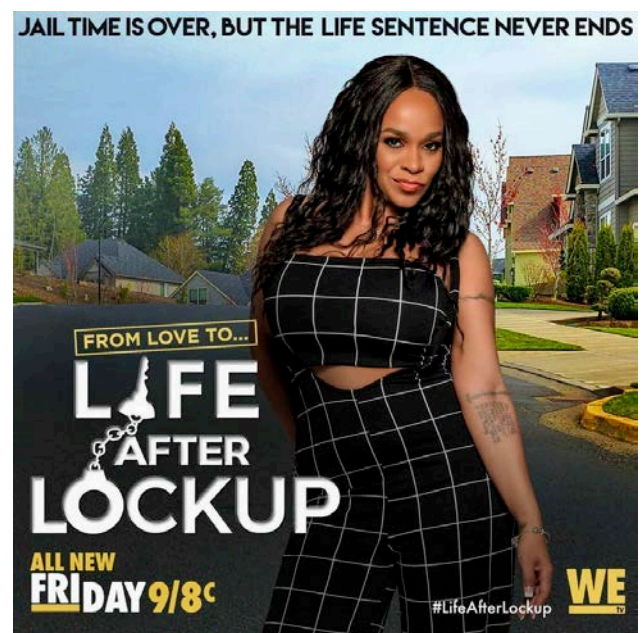
**What else did you do after you got out of prison?**

I wanted to get a degree, it didn't matter what it was. It was more the fact that I always wanted to go to college. I ended up doing Applied Arts. I can't say I've done anything specific with it, it was just something I wanted to accomplish for myself.

I'm doing really great, still free from addiction. When I was first in prison, I thought when I got out I was going to open up a strip club, because I was a stripper. But my life is in a very different direction now. My plans for the future are to start a not-for-profit which helps rescue children from sexual violence, exploitation, and trafficking. I'm working towards starting that up now, just taking it one day at a time at the moment, because if I put in 10% of the energy I used to put into looking for dope I'm sure it will be a success.

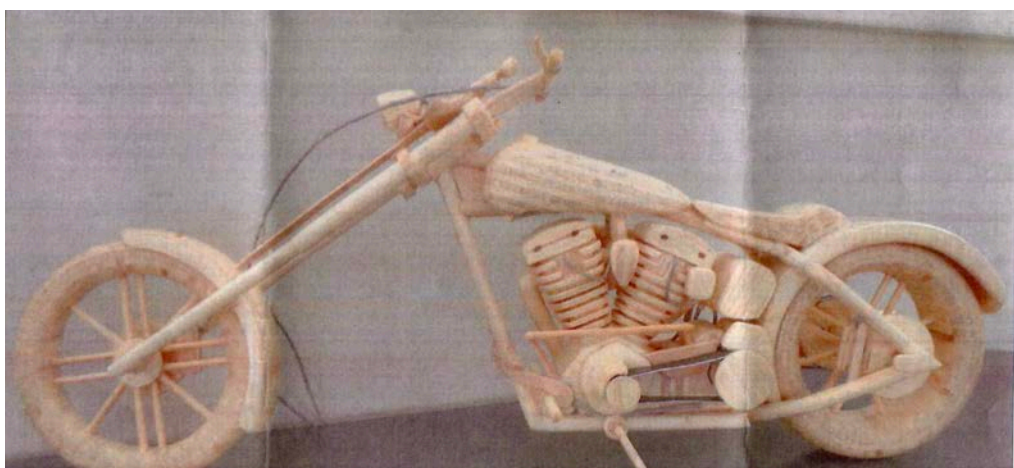
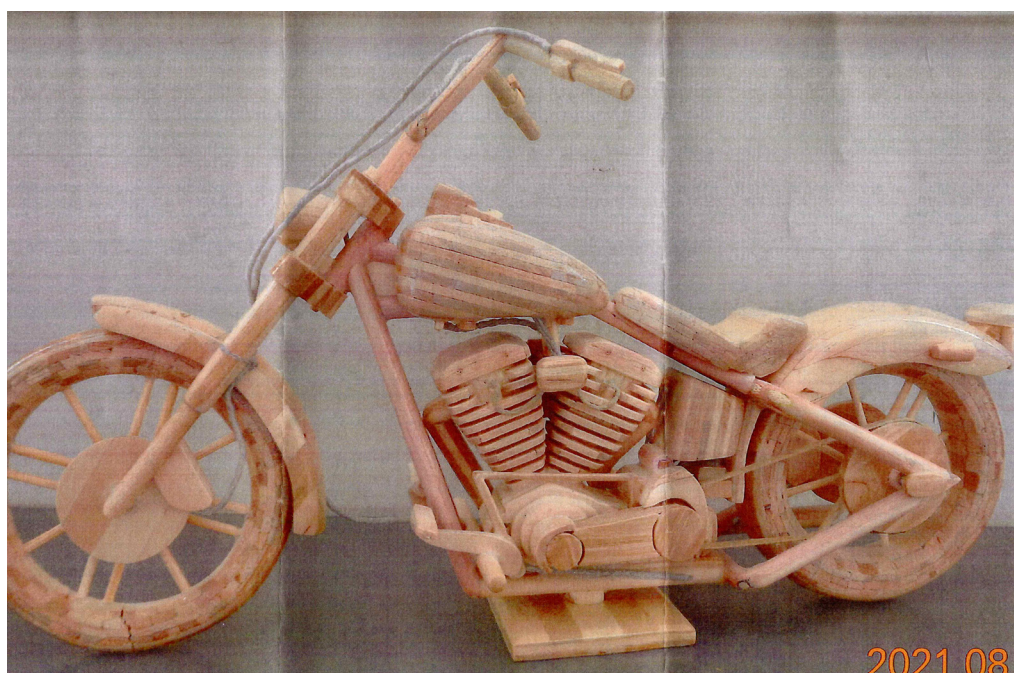
**What would your advice be for people currently in prison?**

Try not to get too involved in the mix, because prison isn't cool. Try to better yourself while you're in there, but otherwise just do your time and get out.



Love After Lockup originally aired on We TV in the US. Watch it in Australia on 9Now. Photos taken from Lizzie's Instagram account, @lizzieloveafterlockup, with permission. Follow Lizzie on Twitter @LizzieKommes.

# ART AND WRITING CONTRIBUTIONS



*Artwork by David Gay  
New Zealand*



## POLITICAL THOUGHT

Thoughts racing, heart pacing, walls closing in, dream chasing  
Dreaming freedom, dreaming peace, dreaming equality, dreaming better me  
Thoughts still racing, heart still pacing, when is it gonna change, time still ticking  
1000 days passed time still ticking, 1000 more to go I'm still on my mission  
Victim to the streets, still dreaming a better me. The fight against oppression  
is still a fight to beat, freedom, peace, equality, just a better me  
A long road ahead, take it piece by piece, Judge not playin' fair  
A second fight to beat. Death by incarceration. Just got erased from the street  
One bang of the gavel destroys a family's peace  
Family trees destroyed because the system playing for keeps  
Just another struggle, another victim to the street  
100 more days just crept past me in my sleep  
Through the pain, through the tears, the bloodshed, and all the years  
Still I stand tall, ready to fight at all cost, for freedom, peace, equality,  
and always a better me !!!

Kendall Hudson, USA



Artwork by Simon Evans, NZ



Artwork from Mary Wade Correctional Centre



## A CHILD'S VOICE

I was looking out of the tiny window, in my prison cell just the other day.  
A tear rolled down my cheek, as in truth the things to me my child might say.  
I saw a little boy there sitting on the ground. I went to say "hello" but he said, "My daddy's not around."  
I got a little closer, a frown grew on his face. "My mom has found another to take my daddy's place."  
I knelt right down beside him, to help him with his strife.  
He said, "I'm just a little kid, but he's been missing all my life."  
I tried to say, "I'm sorry", but he didn't understand my plea.  
I told him who I was, he said his daddy wasn't me.  
I got up to walk away but he pulled me to his side.  
He said, "If you ever see my dad mister, please tell him I said Hi."

There was a little girl, a young woman probably by now.  
To get back into her life as "Dad", I'm not exactly sure on how.  
She struggles everyday, growing up without me.  
Growing up in this type of world without her precious daddy.  
She has my facial structure, her eyes are soft and brown.  
I could see the pain inside her because her father wasn't around.  
This is what I heard:  
"There's been no father in my life, to teach me right and wrong."  
"A father there beside me to tell when I am strong."  
"There's been no father in my life, to teach what I should know."  
"That when I go out on a date, how far that I should go."  
"There's been no father in my life, to celebrate my growth, and when he's proud of me it's I'm daddy's girl, my oath."  
"There's been no father in my life, it seems the whole world can see."  
"I try to smile and stay real strong, but I really miss my own daddy."

As I sit here in my solitude, my eyes forever moist, listening to the whispers, the whispers of my child's voice.

*Jeffery A. Shockley #ES4796  
Smart Communications/PA DOC  
PO Box 33028, St Petersburg  
Florida 33733, USA*



*Artwork by Joe Salazar #1057110  
Ellis unit, 1697 FM 980  
Huntsville, Texas, 77320, USA*

*Editor's note: Unfortunately, prisoners in Texas are not allowed to receive letters from other incarcerated people.*

## POETS OF CHANGE

I am in the class of the poets of change  
Writing for a serious purpose and not just to entertain  
We have a deep passion for the words of change that our  
writings express  
The readers can feel the urgency in our address

Throughout history it was words that inspired people to make  
the changes that needed to be made  
If it is said or written correctly it can cut through obstacles and  
doubts with the force of a blade  
Words contain power but we just have to use them the right way  
That's why poets of change need to be careful in what we say

Every human being uses words to get their point across  
We just write it down so the substance of the words don't get  
lost  
Poets trying to change the world because we believe in the  
power of what we write  
Our main agenda is to better this world's plight

A change is coming but we must be ready for it  
In our lives change must always have a place to fit  
When it does come we have to be able to adjust  
Never hatching all of our eggs in one nest

Evolution is in a constant state of progress  
As the world evolves its inhabitants are under so much stress  
Even while you are reading this, millions of people are starving  
from a hunger pang  
We hope that the readers of our writings will aid them because  
we are poets of change

*Bobby Bostic #526795  
c/o Digital Mail Center - Missouri DOC  
PO Box 25678  
Tampa, FL 33622-5678, USA*

## ODE TO COMMUNISM

We will all be landless peasants  
Paying homage to our lords  
Medieval serfdom  
Surely no one can applaud

A thin disguise for slavery  
Techno-shackles, viral-whips  
Their solution to the problem  
Of human rights, and all that shit

Now their 'Monolithic conspiracy'  
For a reich of a thousand years  
Bares its fangs to suck the lifeblood  
From the necks of a compliant herd

For decades we've had the warnings  
Though the prophets were all dismissed  
Taken out by proxies  
Before they could lead us to resist

There are many faceless men  
And behind the scenes they work  
Unelected power elites  
Our leaders' strings they jerk

Now they've stepped up to the podium  
With a pseudo plan to save us all  
We must give up all our property  
Our right to own at all

Neoliberal to neofeudal  
We will all stay where we're put  
They will provide a basic income  
But our freedoms will have gone to fuck

*By Gary, South Australia*



Comic by John E. Sacks, creator, writer, and illustrator of 'Diary of an Incarcerated Cartoonist.' © @john\_e\_sacks





Artwork by Jayde Farrell, NSW

I know what you see:  
 The lost  
 The brokenhearted  
 The poor in spirit  
 Looking out from inside the cage

You don't know what I see:  
 You think you are sustaining me  
 But I don't eat from your hand  
 My food is the fruit of the spirit  
 And I'm never hungry

This world hates me  
 But I found love  
 In the embrace of the lost  
 The brokenhearted  
 The poor in spirit

In the mornings  
 The sunlight hits the razorwire  
 And it turns it into giant bales of

harvested gold  
 The wagtails perch inside it  
 And belong to me

In the evenings  
 My sleep is sweet  
 Dreams look magnificent  
 From down here where I lie  
 With no pretty things to block the view

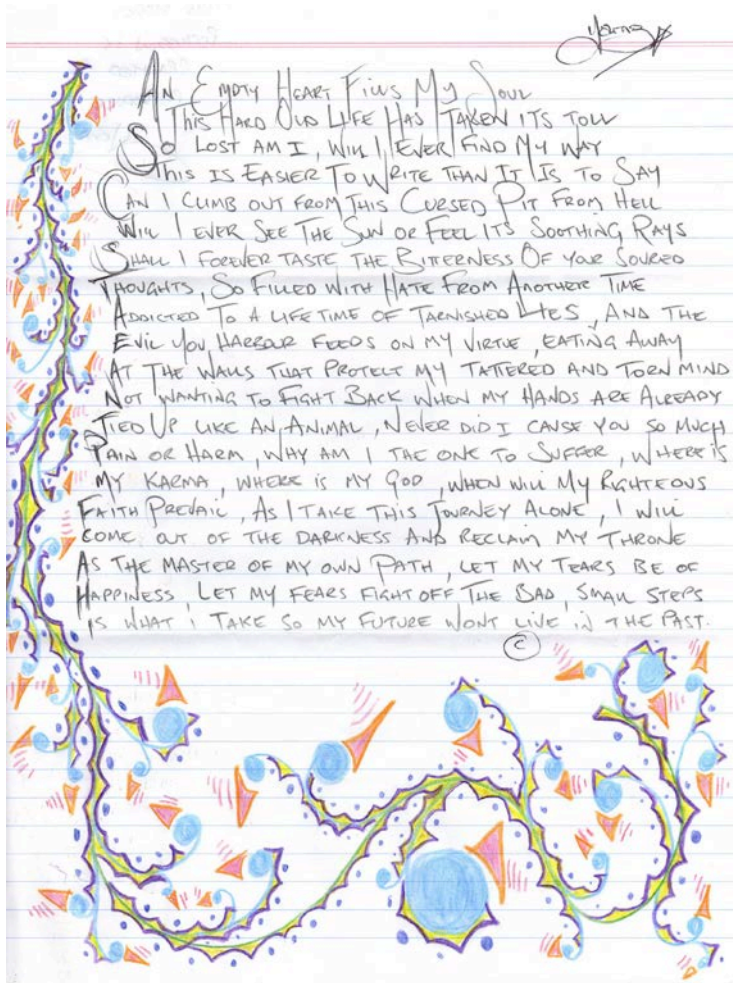
I don't care if you line me up and  
 count me  
 Or if you turn the key and lock me in  
 The bars I see are gilded  
 And you still don't know  
 Why the caged bird sings

*Anonymous*

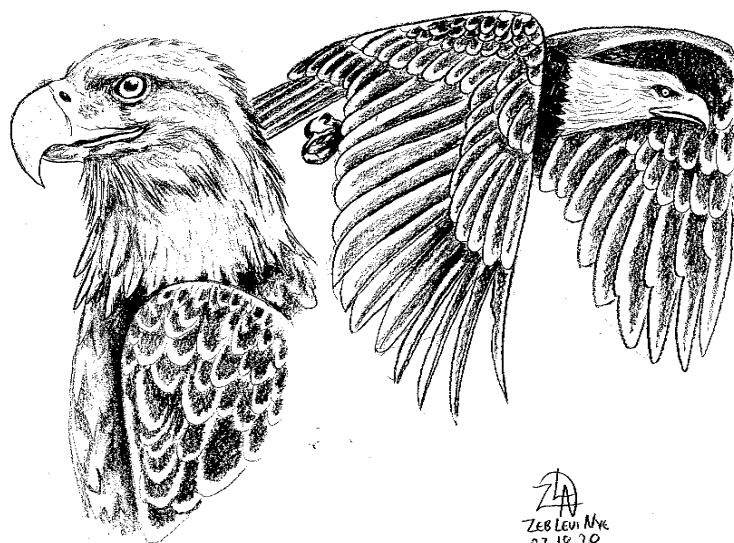
Her eyes are cold and glassy  
 They show no pain or fear  
 On her bad days  
 She wants nothing more than to disappear  
 No-one would notice  
 No-one would care  
 She feels truly broken  
 Beyond complete repair  
 There is nothing she can do with the  
 building despair  
 Someone has to tell her that she's worthy,  
 she's rare  
 Please can someone hold her, remind her  
 to stay  
 Tell her and show her it will all be OK  
 I just can't do it for the girl, that she, that  
 her  
 It's me.

*Natasha Robinson, NSW*





Yarnis Mehana  
 Queensland

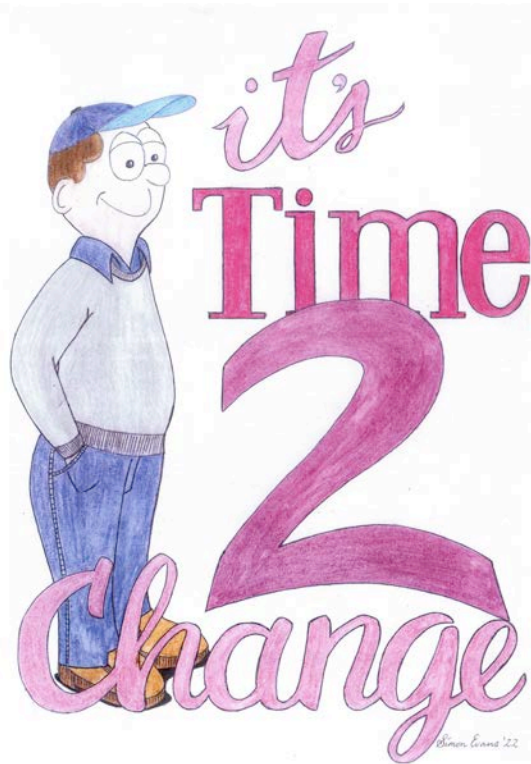


Artwork by Zeb Levi Nye

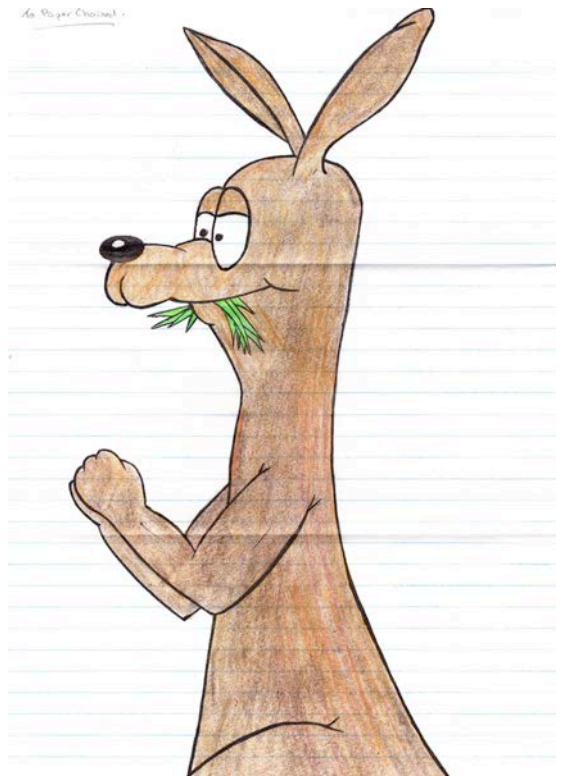
## INCARCERATION

Old bluestone walls and buildings,  
 New razor wire and iron bars.  
 Imposing concrete prison structures,  
 Thick steel mesh grill and wire cages.  
 Confined cells with stained steel ablutions,  
 Filthy steel toilets with no seats.  
 Solid steel doors and iron locks,  
 Wrought iron gates with heavy padlocks  
 Invasive observation slits and peepholes,  
 Noisy trapdoors and congealed air ducts.  
 Glaring artificial light from fluorescent tubes,  
 Stale re-circulated air from electric pumps.  
 Bland second-rate food from battered trays  
 Watery soup and damaged fruit.  
 Ill-fitting cotton prison clothes and cheap  
 footwear,  
 Steel-framed beds with putrid mattresses and  
 ragged bedding.  
 Blaring portable radios and non-stop television,  
 Close-circuit TV cameras and infra-red movement  
 detectors.  
 Large brass bells and piercing fire alarms,  
 Crackling intercoms and thundering loudspeakers.  
 Autocratic rules and totalitarian regulations,  
 Arbitrary arrests and despotic Governor's Courts  
 Humiliating body searches and petty seizures,  
 Destructive cell searches by over-zealous guards.  
 No real rights or civil liberties,  
 Only strict obedience and mindless duties.  
 Monitored telephone calls and intercepted mail,  
 Supervised and restricted visits with loved ones.  
 Violence amongst inmates and from warders,  
 Attack dogs, tear gas, shotguns and rifles.  
 Angry orders barked by irate prison officers,  
 Defiant cries from oppressed prisoners.  
 Warden strikes and prisoner riots,  
 Suicides, self-mutilation and hunger strikes.  
 Restrictions on every aspect of daily life,  
 Life reduced to mere existence.  
 Human beings reduced to base instincts,  
 Transformed from bad to worse.  
 Every waking hour a nightmarish endurance,  
 Every sleeping hour an escape.

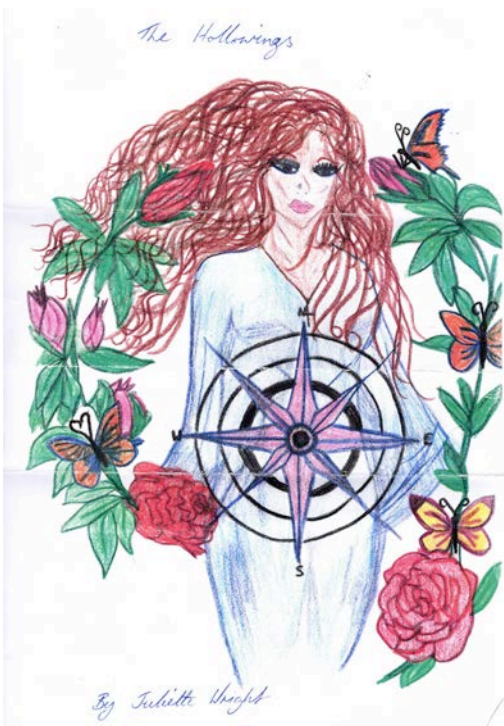
Julian Knight  
 Port Phillip Prison, PO Box 376  
 Laverton Victoria, 3028



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



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



Artwork by Juliette Wright F93585  
 LMB 1008  
 Gatton, QLD 4343



Artwork by Jennifer



## THE INNOCENT PLEAD GUILTY

There is little known about the workings of the Court system to many in the community and generally speaking it remains a secret world only visible to legal brethren, this secret world made up of deals by lawyers, prosecutors, and judges is only now surfacing to the public eye.

This is mainly due to the increase in crime, which has had a flow-on effect by way of crime touching more of the community both directly and indirectly.

Previously, only a minority of the public were aware of the deals in court, with the majority enjoying TV idealisation's of court practices.

One of today's accepted common practices in deals is that the accused be advised by their legal counsel to plead guilty to charges they are not guilty of.

This is often done with the promise of a speedy trial or a more lenient sentence by way of a sentencing discount. This quite often has an added bonus of cleaning up unsolved police cases and thus improving their success ratings.

These discounts usually average 30% and are often taken up by defendants to avoid long remand periods and to receive their offered reduced sentence.

There is never anything in writing and the prosecution and judge are not bound by any law that says that they must give a sentence discount for the early plea. These arrangements are purely discretionary.

There are many who believe that this process robs both defendants and victims of justice mainly due to the inaccurate nature of the plea.

I recently spoke to a sentenced prisoner on this subject and he confirmed that it was indeed commonplace for inmates to make these deals. The number of inmates sentenced this way raises a lot of ethical questions about the process of justice in the Victorian court system.

Is this practice taking advantage of a vulnerable minority at a vulnerable time?

Is this conflicting with a true truth in sentencing practice?

What is the real motivation behind these Court practices?

Can your lawyer really be trusted?

*By Jonas Black #76543  
Ravenhall Correctional Centre  
PO Box 490  
St Albans, Victoria 3021*

## IMAGINE

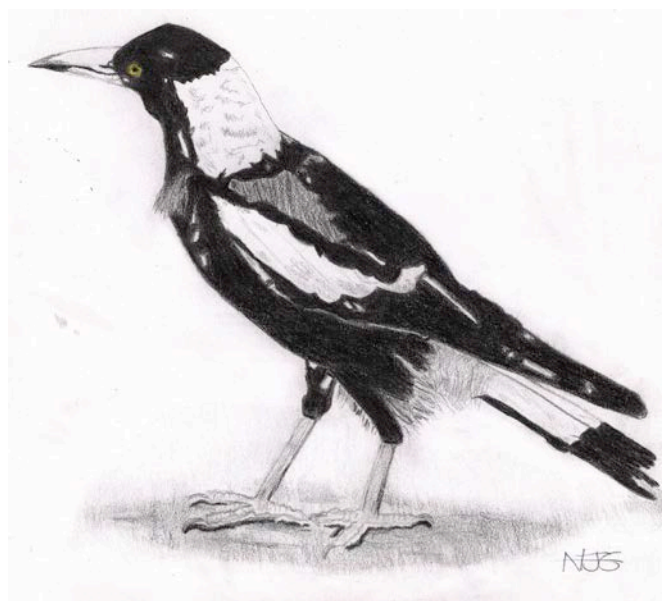
Imagine a world where time stands still  
Where nothing you do is your own free will  
Stripped of your freedom, your hopes, your pride  
Surrounded by strangers with no place to hide

Imagine a place where you're told what to wear  
A place where no-one is allowed to grow hair  
You are told each day you're not to talk and where and when  
you can and cannot walk  
A world where you sleep surrounded by hate  
Where all you can do is sit around and wait

Imagine a world were you have no choice  
You can't even think because of the noise  
A world where you work and get no pay and are made to feel  
worthless each and every day  
A world where days crawl like a snail  
Where all you have hope for is a piece of mail  
A world where you have to eat real quick  
Does this sound like a world that would make you sick

Imagine a world surrounded by wire  
To walk from this place is my greatest desire  
A world like this is hard to conceive  
Yet here I am and I cannot leave

*By Mark R*



*Artwork by Nigel Gilliland  
Woodford Correctional Centre  
PMB 1, Woodford, Queensland 4514*



# ~~I'm Outta Here!!~~

OMG AT LAST

I CAN BREATHE

THIS CELL IS NO LONGER A CAGE

THERE IS HOPE, WHERE ONCE IT WAS RAGE

ANXIETY IS NOW JUST A WORD

BEST LEFT WHERE IT WAS, UNHEARD

SO MANY PLANS TO REBUILD THIS LIFE

WHICH WAS TATTERED AND TORN, FILLED WITH STRIFE

DOESNT MATTER IM OUTTA HERE!

I WORRY ABOUT THE UNKNOWN

CAUSE I DONT NO WHERE IT IS IM GOING

FROM MY LIFE BEHIND BARS

TO SLEEPING UNDER THE STARS

WHAT A CONTRAST IM OUTTA HERE!

I GOTTA BE STRONGER THAN EVER

AND MUST KEEP MYSELF TOGETHER

MAKE NO MISTAKE

OR MY FREEDOM THEYLL TAKE

THE OPPOTURNITIES ARE THERE

I MUST TAKE THEM WITH CARE

IM GONNA BE OK

CAUSE IM OUTTA HERE, TODAY

FIRST OFF I GOTTA GET A SMOKE

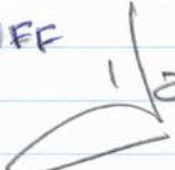
I SAID I WAS QUITTING WHAT A JOKE

ONLY NICOTINE OFF CAUSE

MY OLD ENERGY SOURCE

IM OUTTA HERE CANT WAIT FOR A PUFF

ALL I CAN DO IS HOPE ITS ENOUGH.

 2022

# SHOUT-OUTS

If you'd like to give a shout-out to a friend or family, send it to us!



~~SHOUT-OUT~~

TO MY GIRLS AT MNC  
LOVE 3 MARYBOO

3 SHOUT OUT TO AIDO.ELLO

LOVE YOU MY KING

NO MATTER WHAT TIL

THE END

♡ CATLIN.G. ♡

"to Karli Sargeant + Shandell Pryor  
I love both you girls so much  
and you will get through this  
sentence. I know you will stay  
strong soldier on always. xox  
you never know how strong you  
are until being strong is the  
only choice you got. Love Erin"



# FROM THE VAULT

## HISTORICAL PRISON WRITING

### JUSTICE

A new man to this country ends  
a six year term in jail  
With all of that behind him now  
he's hesitant and pale  
But when cops load him with a gun  
they steal away his hope  
And in that cell he never loved  
he ends it with a rope

But how many more are driven on  
to take their lives like this  
When nothing offers them more joy  
than death's consuming kiss  
Too many of them bear the marks  
of a gun behind the head  
That takes them to a precipice  
and paints their names in red

An old man dies in Central cells  
he's kicked to death it's plain  
There's half a dozen witnesses  
but trials are all in vain  
Some people just won't testify  
magistrates just won't commit  
And judges see the cops don't face  
the bench on which they sit

But how many more have lost their lives  
been bashed and brutalised  
While helpless in a police cell  
they never realised  
That cops would never get their dues  
through the courts they patronise  
They'd see their friends and money  
bought the necessary lies

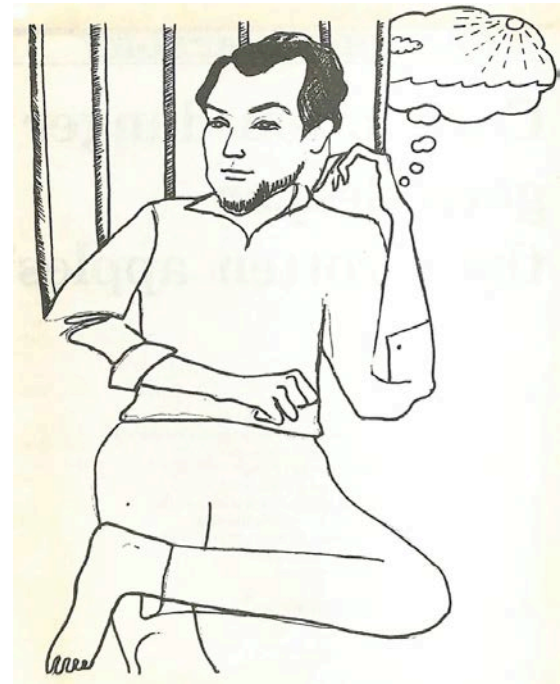
Justice is dead in New South Wales  
and it's been dead quite a long time  
I don't know if it was ever alive  
or if it even solved one crime  
But you've got a chance if you're not  
unemployed

and it helps if you're not poor  
If you're not an Aboriginal who's  
been to gaol before  
And if you're not a factory worker  
immigrant, social activist  
Then you might just be able to buy  
a piece of this "justice"

The detective took ten thousand  
and four charges fell away  
And the magistrate took much the same  
for a bail release that day  
But the district judge asked sixteen grand  
from a man who wouldn't pay  
Then handed him ten years in gaol  
for darkening his day

And countless more are on the take  
at all the steps and stages  
The law extracts its due rewards  
and adds them to its wages  
The most respected, honoured men  
put bank robbers to shame  
There's millions rotting in their vaults  
and no blemish on their names

Justice is dead in New South Wales  
and it's been dead quite a long time  
I don't know if it was ever alive  
or if it even solved one crime  
But you've got a chance if you're not unemployed  
and it helps if you're not poor  
If you're not an Aboriginal who's  
been to gaol before  
And if you're not a factory worker  
immigrant, social activist  
Then you might just be able to buy  
a piece of this "justice"



*Uncredited poem and drawing  
Originally printed in Contact No. 35  
Parramatta Gaol Resurgents Official Magazine, 1981.  
Reprinted with permission as given in the original publication.*

# WHAT IS WRONG WITH THIS PICTURE?

BY JEFFERY SHOCKLEY

Where does the mind go as we try to strive inside this monotonous space? This place we are set to die in while in this machine of rehabilitation. Set apart from the start as that man, a black man, in this society I've strayed away from more than a time or two trying to do what other suggested I would not do and now I see the errors of the old ways in those old days when being young was the only excuse we had.

A time defined more so by an emptiness inside; but what does that make me in this sea of mass confusion which gives merely an illusion I am worth more dead than alive yet still I strive to hide the insecurities, personal disparities of what one can become even behind this time of L. I. F. and E.

Please try to see or have we remained so blind to be that we create our own misery in this place with some miserable individuals who compete for no more than less than the next man who grandstands about the hell he's done when from birth he's begun to hate his own existence with little resistance as society says you create your own destiny in this land of plenty who now care nothing more about you yet tell you to keep trying while dying beside the next man whom you can't stand next to because he's everything just like you.

Enough of the self-annihilation, I am, we are a creation born not just to die. Stop reliving that lie told by us, looking high and low for us yet not caring enough about us, ourselves. Is it pure illusion or self-taught confusion? How many times must my crimes only enhance this inability to be free? How much longer must I surrender my choice to voice my opinions on where I shall be so my children, grandchildren, can see me right?

Though I fight with the evils of untrue myths of my forefathers of long ago, the system deteriorating my mind as it is

no more than a modern-day slavery, a thievery of so many souls. Turning around only to see another prison wall scaling so high I cry as my tears reach nowhere for it is my silent death as I watch your screaming, refusing the meaning of "change." Too many of us holding on to the fake dreams blowing up in the smoke exhaled. Stale stench rising, surprising we've been here this long, now tell me what is wrong? The mis-education of the black man as we see our children compete not in after school games, but dying to survive to stay alive if for only one day at a time.

The crime is us as fathers looking out for what "I" want, alone, never home, that junior now grown packing heat on the same street daddy died. On goes the pursuit of everything we've never had. Bad time not gone, that funeral procession now moves on and that junior now dead while in my head the rage increases, our people decreases and again we are locked-up, messed up, trying to say we don't give ... upchuck from being dope sick, the trick? Don't start in the first place for we are a people, black people, strong in mind, divine creatures if we rise above the mis-education of the black man.

How much longer shall we wander about without a sense of direction making our own correction from reflections of this distorted reality society has deemed those like us are so unfit to be a part of? How can we reach out, teach about without a doubt of being heard to those already hurt by what was before? While those in power continually subliminally devour the sensibilities and fleeting tranquilities of being happy while a brother man just like you, hoping for change just like you, struggles just like you to remain alive as too many men stand around, bound down yet proud of their own claim to fame.

The same who only speak of times of

getting paid while starving in every way on every day for the ability to change some reality if only at a second at a time. Too blind to define what is wrong with this picture when the ground consumes too many youth who have never found self amidst the wealth of truth in their own identities they've never seen or those who will never be anything anymore.

What is wrong with this picture when the older guys try to be as the younger guys who strive to control the lost soul that was never taught true the things to do as a man who lives life right from day one while some say they know what to do when they've never lived life tight.

What is wrong with this picture when all the men are so bound down but the sound heard is disturbed noise and not one lifting each other up above what was because the whole idea or theme is another mask that lasts from cradle to grave but nobody seems to see the man in the mirror who cries behind the cold closed steel prison door. Just a deep sigh when a new day has ended before another has begun when the same games of shame that tear our souls down, our communities abound with the sound of our African sisters, mothers and daughters too afraid to come around. As their brothers, fathers and sons, far too many men forever and a day now locked down. Still, some want to play to stay in with those who could care less about you, get rich quick without you and when they've gone home never think twice about you, still, you call 'em family.

What is wrong with this picture as I turn around to look at me, trying to figure out just who I should be? What I once was I am no more, who I could be. I want to be but not real sure on how to get there so I stand to the side, alone, Just looking at...

What is wrong with this picture?



# A HISTORY OF AUSTRALIAN PRISON NEWSLETTERS

BY DAMIEN LINNANE

In the last issue of *Paper Chained*, we started coverage on the history of prison newsletters in Australia, focusing on two former newsletters, *The Compendium* and *InPrint*. In this issue, we'll focus on *Jail News* and *Framed*, and their direct and current successor, *Just Us*.

*Jail News* was founded by Tony Green and Bob Jewson, former prisoners who had been involved in the 1970 and 1974 Bathurst prison riots respectively. Intended as an alternative source of information for prisoners not controlled by the prison system, the publication was immediately banned by Corrective Services NSW. "We had no satisfaction getting it into the jails, the prison system opposed us from the word go," Tony Green said during an interview with me. "We had to get it to prisoners by clandestine methods, smuggled in on visits and given to them at court appearances."

*Jail News* was published by the Prisoners Action Group, the predecessor of the current prison activist group Justice Action. The first issue came out on 10 June 1978, with the newsletter being produced at Glebe House, a halfway house for parolees that still operates today. "We typed up the pages and stuck them on boards at Glebe House, and they were printed by Tomato Press, a radical left wing press just down the road from us," said Tony. "It was usually only an A4 foldout, though we sometimes went to eight pages. We had a big mailing list of people outside prison, mostly academics, lawyers, and civil libertarians, and it was the paid subscriptions from these people that gave us our funding to produce the newsletter. We were quite proud of the fact we never got any funding from Corrective Services or the government, as this would have compromised what we could publish."

When Brett Collins, the current coordinator of Justice Action, was released from prison in 1980, he became peripherally involved in the newsletter. However, regular production of the newsletter came to an end around late 1981, when Tony Green temporarily went to England. The newsletter wasn't able to be put together in his absence, and when he returned months later it was considered too big of a job for the small team to continue. "We never achieved our objective of mass circulation in NSW prisons," said Tony, "so we decided to focus our energy on other prison-related activism." Occasional issues, however, continued to be released until 1985.

*Jail News* was eventually relaunched and re-branded as *Framed* by Justice Action, with the first issue released on June 23, 1989. The name was chosen as it was officially the 'Newsletter of the Campaign Exposing the Frame-Up of Tim Anderson.' Following Anderson's acquittal on appeal in 1991, it continued to campaign against issues such as police verbal and corruption. Issue 25 saw it officially labeled as the magazine of Justice Action. Not banned under the new title, the newsletter was sent nationwide to every prison's education department, as well as to a list of subscribers both in and outside prison.

Things took a dramatic turn in 2002, after Ron Woodham became Commissioner of



The front cover of the 16 September 1978 issue of *Jail News*, with stories on the "intractable" section at Grafton prison and assaults on prisoners by officers, and Brett Collins being transferred to Long Bay from Grafton. Below is a flyer for a *Jail News* fundraiser, obtained from the State Library of New South Wales.



Corrective Services NSW, and subsequently appointed John Klok as acting Senior Assistant Commissioner. Woodham, a long-serving prison officer, was responsible for transporting "intractable" prisoners to Grafton during the 1970s. At the 1976 Royal Commission into New South Wales Prisons, details of horrific abuse towards inmates by officers at Grafton were uncovered. While Justice Nagle's report said that "every prison officer who served at Grafton during the time it was used as a gaol for intractables must have known of its brutal regime. The majority of them, if not all, would have taken part in the illegal assaults on prisoners"; the report did not specifically name Woodham.

Justice Nagle's report, however, did name John Klok as an officer who assaulted prisoners on numerous occasions. Justice Nagle stated in one incident that Klok "hit a prisoner named Bloomfield with his fist three times. Klok was six feet five and a half inches tall and weighed nineteen and a half stone (123 kg). Bloomfield was five feet eight inches tall and weighed less than ten stone. Klok's denial of the incident is not accepted. This was a disgraceful assault."

Issue 42, the February 2002 edition of *Framed*, ran a feature criticising both Woodham and his decision to promote Klok. "When it came time to distribute the issue, Woodham told us if we published the article about him, *Framed* would never be allowed into New South Wales prisons again", said Brett Collins during an interview with me. Justice Action refused to back down, and Woodham followed through with his promise to ban the publication.

While the newsletter was still sent to outside subscribers and prisons in other states, due to being banned from NSW prisons, Justice Action instead focused their attention on campaigning, and also transitioned into a new newsletter that would focus primarily on elections and prisoner's right to vote, believing this would be more likely to be allowed into NSW prisons. Originally called *The Australian Prisoners' Election Paper*, the first issue was released in 2004 and accepted into prisons in all Australian States and Territories.

Except New South Wales.

Ron Woodham banned the newsletter, without giving any reason. Justice Action took the case to the NSW Supreme Court. Legal observers predicted Justice Action would win, but Corrective Services NSW brought polling in prison forward and made prisoners vote before the newsletter could be distributed, effectively making the case redundant.

The first issue also took suggestions for a new name for the newsletter. Proposals at the time included *Klink Link* and *Shitizen*. Eventually, the name *Just Us* was chosen, and the publication continued to be sent out before elections. Ron Woodham tried to ban Volume 3 from being sent into NSW prisons before the 2007 federal election, and Justice Action again took the case to court. Justice Elizabeth Fullerton declared there was nothing in *Just Us* that should prohibit it being sent into prison, though she could not establish whether Woodham had acted unreasonably, as Justice Action had asserted based on his refusal to give a reason for the ban. Justice Fullerton stated "While I have real doubts as to whether [Woodham] has in fact considered the 'Federal Election Special' on its merits in accordance with his stated policy ... I am unable to form the certain view that he did not. The fact that I am not prepared to draw an inference adverse to the [Commissioner] is not intended to encourage him to refrain from giving reasons in the future were Justice Action to seek permission for another edition of *Just Us* to be distributed. To the contrary."

This marked the beginning of many victories for Justice Action regarding *Just Us*. In 2011, they were successful in the NSW Supreme Court in obtaining the right to distribute the magazine to locked hospital and prisons. Justice Health had attempted to block the magazine, though not only did their efforts fail, they were also ordered to pay Justice Action's court costs. In 2014, Corrective Services in Victoria initially refused to allow Volume 5 of the newsletter into prisons, though backed down after the Human Rights Centre prepared a challenge in the Victorian Supreme Court. Likewise, in May this year, the South Australian Department for Correctional Services was the only state to attempt to ban Volume 9. After Justice Action prepared to challenge the ban in the South Australian Supreme Court, an agreement was instead reached to print a slightly modified version of the newsletter. Brett Collins assures me that Justice Action will continue to fight any bans on prisoner's legal rights to information, and that we can expect *Just Us* to continue to be brought to prisoners before elections for the foreseeable future.



### ROTTEN RON ON THE ROPES

In January, despite NSW Acting Commissioner Ron Woodham's repeated assurances that the NSW Upper House members in his cabinet at Justice Action were not involved in the assault and other associated matters, the Justice Action newsletter, especially known as Justice Action, and the NSW Upper House members in his cabinet at Justice Action were not involved in the assault and other associated matters. The NSW Upper House members in his cabinet at Justice Action were not involved in the assault and other associated matters. The NSW Upper House members in his cabinet at Justice Action were not involved in the assault and other associated matters.

### JOHN KLOK: WHAT NAGLE SAID

One of the first things Woodham did was to appoint John Klok, a long-serving prison officer, to the position of Senior Assistant Commissioner. Klok was six feet five and a half inches tall and weighed nineteen and a half stone (123 kg). Klok's denial of the incident is not accepted. This was a disgraceful assault.

Issue 12 of *Framed*, released on 7 March 1991, and one of the pages about then Commissioner Ron Woodham from the February 2002 issue, that led to the publication being banned in NSW prisons. Below is Volume 6 of *Just Us*, released in 2016.

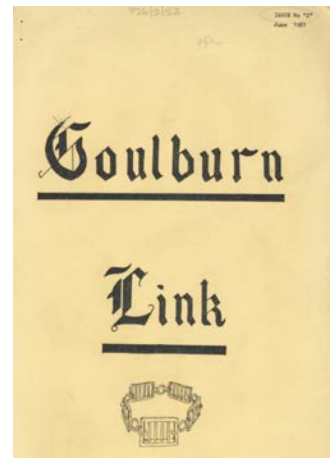
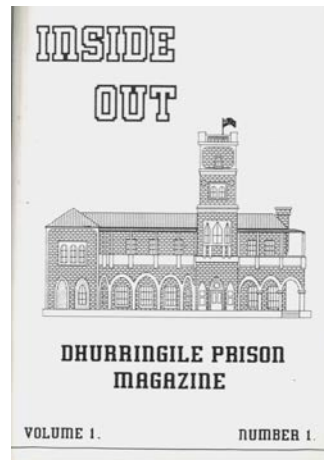




# DO YOU KNOW ABOUT ANY PRISON NEWSLETTERS?

It's often challenging to find information on other prison newsletters. Even today, those made internally and only distributed to one prison are generally not available to those on the outside. So if you know of any other prison newsletters, historical or current, have any inside information, or any copies you can send us, please get in touch. The following are the prison newsletters in Australia we have obtained copies of so far.

- *The Compendium (NSW) 1912-1945*
- *Trial Bay : Welt am Montag (Trial Bay, NSW) 1917-1918*
- *Stockade (Pentridge, VIC) 1955-1966*
- *Flat Rock Bulletin (Beechworth, VIC) 1957-1966*
- *Chainbreaker (Yatala, SA) 1963-1965*
- *Neptune / Hersperus (McLeod, VIC) 1964-1968*
- *Inside Out (Silverwater, NSW) c. 1974*
- *Alternative Criminology Journal (NSW) 1975-1981*
- *Time & Life (NSW) c. 1977*
- *Jail News (NSW) 1978-1985*
- *Contact (Parramatta, NSW) 1970-1981*
- *Vision (Yatala, SA) 1975-1982*
- *Prisoner's Voice (VIC) 1976-1979*
- *InPrint (Long Bay, NSW) 1977-1981*
- *Behind Bars (VIC) c. 1980*
- *Broken Bars (ACT) c. 1980s*
- *The Epistle (VIC) 1981-1985*
- *Goulburn Link (Goulburn, NSW) c. 1981*
- *InLimbo (Long Bay, NSW) 1984-1989*
- *Jail Notes (VIC) 1985*
- *Behind Closed Doors (Fairlea, VIC) 1985-1989*
- *Loose Ends (Long Bay, NSW) est. 1986*
- *Inside Out (Dhurrigile, VIC) est. 1986*
- *The Magazine (Parramatta, NSW) est. 1987*
- *Just Us (Beechworth, VIC) 1988-1992*
- *Framed (NSW) 1989-2004*
- *Rogues (Bathurst, NSW) 1989-1990*
- *Barwon Times (Barwon, VIC) est. 1990*
- *The Prison Record (VIC) c. 1992*
- *The Rattler (Long Bay, NSW) 1993-1996*
- *Time Out (Long Bay, NSW) 1994-1997*
- *The Plainswoman (Emu Plains, NSW) est. 1996*
- *Away (Cessnock, NSW) est. 1996*
- *Baywatch (Long Bay, NSW) 2000-2012*
- *Just Us (NSW) 2004-Present*
- *Inside Out (VIC) 2016-Present*
- *Insider's News (NSW) 2017-Present*
- *Glenhope Newsletter (Ravenhall, VIC) 2021-Present*
- *The Razor Watch (Mt Gambier, SA) c. 2022*



# STRANGE DREAMS

BY SYLVIA ROBERTS

Another day, another night  
Surrounded by the colour grey  
The path, the road, the building, the walls  
All around me are grey and cold

This grey that never goes away  
Another day, and it's the same day  
Wake up, count, medo line  
Another meal down my throat

And it's the end of another day, but wait...  
Check for mail  
Maybe a friend's email?

I broke the law once and for all  
I am paying so hard  
They call this grey 'your home now'  
They call it a correctional centre  
And my mind wonders  
What is here to correct?

I had a family, a great job, a happy life  
And an education that never goes away  
But now I am here, surrounded by just grey

I had a house made with love,  
A garden full of flowers,  
A veggie patch  
And a mountain view that gave me power  
Another day, another night  
Still too long to be over

I could be running along that field of flowers  
I could be walking up the hill, that gave me power!

Three years, its been so long  
Not seeing the beach, the sea, the sand under my  
thongs  
Three years I don't walk  
Up to the mountains, almost touching the sky  
With my hands, and a big smile.

God, please, help me to survive  
Down in this grey and away from the sky  
I maybe now lie down and close my eyes  
And think about the sun kissing my skin  
And thinking about the time that now flies

So, I just close my eyes  
And dream, sweet dreams and time goes by  
Now, close your eyes and think to fly  
Out of your mind  
Close, close your eyes...  
Another day passing by



Dream, sweet dreams, do not open your eyes...  
And then, another day, another night  
I wake up and open my eyes and  
Wait, *ehi* look, wait a moment...  
I am in the sky!  
Yes, I am up in the sky, what's going on in my mind?  
The path, the road, the building, the walls  
They are just small dots of grey, of a kind  
And now I am full awake  
Did I dream that place and it was just fake?

I try to run, and I swing away  
I got wings, no more legs and I can fly away I feel the wind  
caressing my way  
I pinch my skin that is covered in feathers

I am a bird, free to fly and landing away  
From those dots that are now just a speck of grey

I am high, high up in the sky  
It was all a bad dream and got away

I am a bird that can fly  
Free, happy and alive!!!



# LETTER TO THE EDITOR OF THE DAILY CHRONICLE

BY OSCAR WILDE

Sir, I learn with great regret, through the columns of your paper, that the warder Martin, of Reading Prison, has been dismissed by the Prison Commissioners for having given some sweet biscuits to a little hungry child. I saw the three children myself on Monday preceding my release. They had just been convicted and were standing in a row in the central hall in their prison dress, carrying their sheets under the arms, previous to their being sent to the cells allotted to them.

They were quite small children, the youngest — the one to whom the warder gave the biscuits — being a tiny little chap, for whom they had evidently been unable to find clothes small enough to fit. I had, of course, seen many children in prison during the two years during which I was myself confined. Wandsworth Prison, especially, contained always a large number of children. But the little child I saw on the afternoon of Monday the 17th at Reading, was tinier than any one of them.

I need not say how utterly distressed I was to see these children at Reading, for I knew the treatment in store for them. The cruelty that is practised by day and night on children in English prisons is incredible, except to those who have witnessed it and are aware of the brutality of the system.

The present treatment of children is terrible, primarily from people not understanding the peculiar psychology of a child's nature. A child cannot understand a punishment inflicted by society. It cannot realise what society is. With grown up people it is, of course, the reverse. Those of us who are either in prison, or have been sent there, can understand, and do understand, what that collective force called society means, and whatever we may think of its methods or claims, we can force ourselves to accept it.

The child consequently, being taken away from its parents by people whom it has never seen, and of whom it knows nothing, and finding itself in a lonely and unfamiliar cell, waited on by strange faces, and ordered about and punished by representatives of a system that it cannot understand, becomes an immediate prey to the first and most prominent emotion produced by modern prison - the emotion of terror.

The terror of a child in prison is quite limitless. I remember once, in Reading, as I was going out to exercise, seeing in the dimly-lit cell right opposite my own, a small boy. Two warders — not unkindly men — were talking to him with some sternness apparently, or perhaps giving him some useful advice about his conduct. One was in the cell with him, the other was standing outside. The child's face was like a white wedge of sheer terror. There was in his eyes the terror of a hunted animal.

The next morning I heard him at breakfast time crying and calling to be let out. His cry was for his parents. From time to time I could hear the deep voice of the warder on duty telling him to keep quiet.

Yet he was not even convicted of whatever little offence he had been charged with. He was simply on remand. That I knew by his wearing his own clothes, which seemed neat enough. He was, however, wearing prison socks and shoes. This showed that he was a very poor boy, whose own shoes, if he had any, were in a bad state. Justices and magistrates, an entirely ignorant class as a rule, often remand children for a week, and then perhaps remit whatever sentence they are entitled to pass. They call this "not sending a child to prison." It is, of course, a stupid view on their part. To a little child whether he is in prison on remand, or after conviction is not a subtlety of social position he can comprehend. To him the horrible thing is to be there at all. In the eyes of humanity it should be a horrible thing for him to be there at all.

Every child is confined to its cell for twenty-three hours out of the twenty-four. This is the appalling thing. To shut up a child in a dimly lit cell for twenty-three hours out of the twenty-four, is an example of the cruelty of stupidity. If an individual, parent or guardian did this to a child he would be severely punished. The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children would take the matter up at once. There would be on all hands the utmost detestation of whomsoever had been guilty of such cruelty. A heavy sentence would, undoubtedly, follow conviction. But our own actual society does worse itself.

Inhuman treatment by Society is to the child the more terrible because there is no appeal. A parent or guardian can be moved, and let out a child from the dark lonely room in which it is confined. But a warder cannot. Most warders are very fond of children. But the system prohibits them from rendering the child any assistance. Should they do so, as Warder Martin did, they are dismissed.

The second thing from which a child suffers in prison is hunger. The food that is given to it consists of a piece of usually badly-baked prison bread and a tin of water for breakfast at half-past seven. At twelve o' clock it gets dinner composed of a tin of coarse Indian meal stirabout, and at half-past five it gets a piece of dry bread and a tin of water for its supper. This diet in the case of a strong grown man is always productive of illness of some kind, chiefly of course, diarrhoea, with its attendant weakness. In the case of a child, the child is, as a rule, incapable of eating the food at all. Anyone who knows anything about children knows how easily a child's digestion system is upset by a fit of crying, or trouble and mental distress of any kind. A child who has been crying all day long, and perhaps half the night, in a lonely dimly-lit cell, and is preyed upon by terror, simply cannot eat food of this coarse, horrible kind.

In the case of the little child to whom Warder Martin gave the biscuits, the child was crying with hunger on Tuesday morning, and utterly unable to eat the bread and water served to it for its breakfast. Martin went out after the breakfasts had been served and bought the few sweet biscuits for the child rather than see it starving. It was a

beautiful action on his part, and was so recognised by the child, who, utterly unconscious of the regulation of the Prison Board, told one of the senior warders how kind this junior warder had been to him. The result was, of course, a report and dismissal. regulation of the Prison Board, told one of the senior warders how kind this junior warder had been to him. The result was, of course, a report and dismissal.

As regards the children, a great deal has been talked and written lately about the contaminating influence of prison on young children. What is said is quite true. A child is utterly contaminated by prison life. But the contaminating influence is not that of the prisoners. It is that of the whole prison system — of the governor, the chaplain, the warders, the lonely cell, the isolation, the revolting food, the rules of the Prison Commissioners, the mode of discipline as it is termed, of the life. Every care is taken to isolate a child from the sight even of all prisoners over sixteen years of age. Children sit behind a curtain in chapel, and are sent to take exercise in small sunless yards, sometimes a stone-yard, sometimes a yard at back of the mills — rather than that they should see the elder prisoners at exercise. But the only really humanising influence in prison is the influence of the prisoners. Their cheerfulness under terrible circumstances, their sympathy for each other, their humility, their gentleness, their pleasant smiles of greeting when they meet each other, their complete acquiescence in their punishments are all quite wonderful, and I myself learnt many sound lessons from them.

I am not proposing that the children should not sit behind the curtain in chapel, or that they should take exercise in a corner of the common yard. I am merely pointing out the bad influence on children is not, and could never be, that of the prisoners, but is, and will always remain, that of the prison system itself.

There is not a single man in Reading Gaol that would not gladly have done the three children's punishment for them. When I saw them last, it was on the Tuesday following their conviction. I was taking exercise at half-past eleven with about twelve other men, as the three children passed near us in the charge of a warder, from the damp, dreary stone-yard in which they had been at exercise. I saw the greatest pity and sympathy in the eyes of my companions as they looked at them. Prisoners are, as a class, extremely kind and sympathetic to each other.

It is not the prisoners who need reformation. It is the prisons.

Of course no child under fourteen years of age should be sent to prison at all. It is an absurdity, and, like many absurdities, of absolutely tragic results. If, however, they are to be sent to prison, during the daytime they should be in a workshop or schoolroom with a warder. At night they should sleep in a dormitory, with a night-warder to look after them. They should be allowed exercise for at least three hours a day. The dark, badly ventilated, ill-smelling prison cells are dreadful for a child, dreadful indeed for anyone. One is always breathing bad air in prison. The food given to children should consist of tea and bread-and-butter and soup. Prison soup is very good and wholesome.

A resolution of the House of Commons could settle the treatment of children in half-an-hour. I hope you will use your influence to have this done. The way that children are treated at present is really an outrage on humanity and common sense. It comes from stupidity.

Sir, your obedient servant,

Oscar Wilde

May 27th 1897



Oscar Wilde in 1898, after his release, and his former cell at Reading Gaol, as seen in 2016.



**Oscar Wilde (1854-1900) was an Irish poet and playwright. One of the most popular playwrights in London in the 1890s, he is also remembered for his 1891 novel, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, and his imprisonment in 1895 for 'gross indecency' (consensual homosexuality), which was illegal in England at the time.**

Wilde was sentenced to two years imprisonment with hard labour, the maximum penalty. He was released from prison on May 19, 1897 and subsequently wrote two letters to the editor of the *Daily Chronicle* newspaper, describing the brutal conditions of prison and advocating for prison reform. The first has been reproduced here in its entirety.

Wilde's 1897 letter called for the end of imprisonment for children under 14. Despite this also currently being the recommendation of the United Nations, children as young as 10 are still incarcerated in both Australia and the UK to this day. – DL



# BOOM GATE GALLERY

## ART FOR SALE

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

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

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

© @boomgategallery

[www.boomgategallery.dcj.nsw.gov.au/](http://www.boomgategallery.dcj.nsw.gov.au/)



**Emu and Kangaroo**

By Graheme

\$750

90 cm x 120 cm, Acrylic on canvas

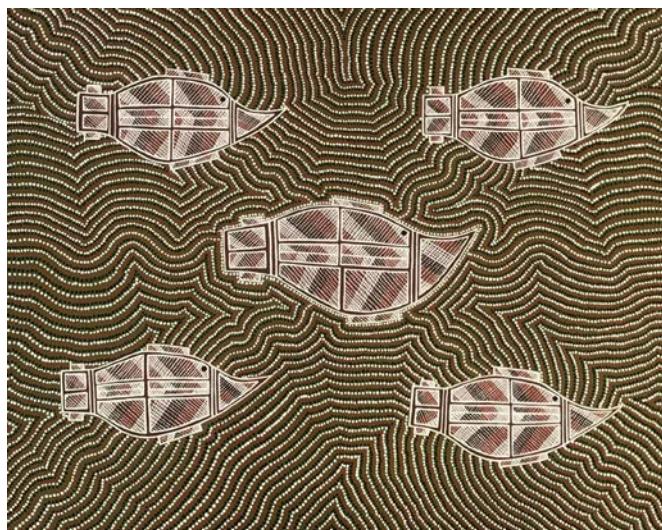


**Echidna's Nesting Place**

By Mervyn

\$500

60 cm x 75 cm, Acrylic on canvas



**Trapping Fish**

By Len

\$500

60 cm x 75 cm, Acrylic on canvas



**BOOM GATE GALLERY**



**Red Centre Storm**  
 By Michael  
 \$800  
 90 cm x 120 cm, Acrylic on canvas, 2021



**Geko Dreaming**  
 By Trent  
 \$200  
 54 cm x 50 cm, Acrylic on canvas, 2021



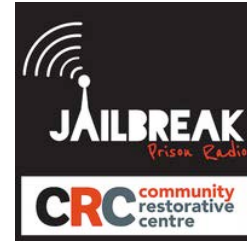
**Two Yongas**  
 By Richard  
 \$400  
 60 cm x 90 cm, Acrylic on canvas, 2021



**Rainbow Serpent Geckos**  
 By Troy  
 \$400  
 50 cm x 75 cm, Acrylic on canvas, 2021



# COMMUNITIES



Tune in for 90  
Awesome  
minutes  
every week!

## HOW DO I LISTEN TO A JAILBREAK PROGRAM IF I'M INSIDE?

**At some centres via your In Cell DVD Channel**

**Not at your centre? Ask for it! Get Welfare to call us.**

**Podcasts on the Green Machine coming soon**

**If you have a radio in your cell, tune in via community radio**

*Sydney* - 107.3FM 2SER - Sun 9:30pm & Thurs 5:00am  
93.7FM Koori Radio - Mon 10:00pm & Sun 10:00pm  
88.9FM Skid Row - Thurs 2:00pm  
*Melbourne* - 3CR 855AM - Tues 9:30am  
*Broken Hill* - 107.7FM 2Dry - Mon 8:00pm

## HOW CAN MY FAMILY LISTEN TO JAILBREAK?

By tuning into their local community radio at the stations listed in the green box

By using the net anywhere to listen to live streams at [www.2ser.com](http://www.2ser.com); [www.radioskidrow.org](http://www.radioskidrow.org); [www.kooriradio.com](http://www.kooriradio.com) or [www.3cr.org.au](http://www.3cr.org.au) or a Podcast any time at [www.2ser.com/jailbreak](http://www.2ser.com/jailbreak)

Families can send dedications and song requests by writing, calling or emailing us.

## HOW CAN I TAKE PART IN A JAILBREAK PROJECT?

Write to us if you want to get involved in making Jailbreak and

Ask welfare to invite Jailbreak to visit your centre!

## GETTING IN TOUCH

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

Welfare and Family can also email:  
[jailbreak@2ser.com](mailto:jailbreak@2ser.com)

Or Call:  
0420 946 709

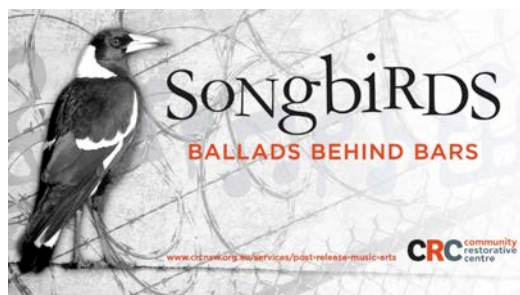
### Inside Out

Sistergirls, brotherboys & LGBTIQ+ prisoner solidarity network.

We send out a free newsletter every 3 months with writing and artwork by and for LGBTIQ+ folks who are (or have been) in prison, anywhere in Australia. All genders and sexualities are welcome to join the mailing list. If you want to read or contribute to the newsletter, we'd love to hear from you!

**PO Box 2446, Footscray Vic, 3011**

# INTERVIEW WITH SONGBIRDS



**In this issue of *Paper Chained*, we interviewed Murray Cook from Songbirds, a program run by the Community Restorative Centre.**

## ***How would you describe the Songbirds program?***

Songbirds is basically a program which assists people to write original songs, even with no prior experience. It involves teamwork, tolerance and cooperation. One does not have to be a musician to participate, you might be good with lyrics, ideas, or constructive suggestions. It is a 4–5-week course of 2–3-hour workshops designed mainly for the prison environment, but has also proved effective in the outside community. We have expanded the scope to include art, and have plans for theatre workshops. We have released three CDs of original songs written and recorded in Correctional Centres, and many of our art students sell their work at Boom Gate Gallery. The program is unique in that it operates both pre- and post-release; we have built partnerships with Eora TAFE, Redfern Community Centre and Ozanam Learning Centre to help ensure parolees keep busy!

## ***How long has the program been running for?***

It is currently in its fifth year. I was a music teacher at Long Bay for 21 years. Most of the brilliant, experienced teachers got sacked by the Baird government, and I was fortunate to be offered a chance to write my own Songwriting Program by Dr. Mindy Sotiri, who had just come back from America and UK and was fired up by the great programs over there like Bread and Roses and Jail Guitar Doors. I looked at their setups and wrote the Songbirds syllabus from my own experience, adapted to NSW correctional conditions.

## ***What Correctional Centres do you currently operate in?***

We have run Songbirds mainly in Sydney Metro centres, but also quite a lot in Broken Hill, and have set up a recording studio in Macquarie. I am also running a weekly course at Ozanam Learning Centre which has proved successful; we are releasing a 6-track EP soon of original music. We have had requests from South Coast, Cessnock, and other regional gaols and would like to work there, we just need the funding and extra staff.

## ***What are some of the challenges in operating a program like this in prison?***

The usual: lockdowns, legal visits, musters, meds, showers, group members being tipped, lack of appropriate spaces, etc. Inmates are so bored with no bungers and minimal education happening. One of our problems is too many people in groups!

## ***Has anyone who started with the Songbirds program continued with music after their release?***

Yes, indeed. Two of the singer/songwriters on the Songbirds 1 and 2 CDs were asked to go on *The Voice*, and quite a few are in working bands/solo acts/busking at the moment. We offer them contact with our partnership programs for further free music and art education and participation, and of course a few become CRC clients with our wonderful workers helping them with things like housing and welfare.

## ***Songbirds 3 came out on May 24. What can you tell us about the latest album?***

It rocks! Thanks to a grant from Randwick Council, we were able to spend more time mixing this one, in a state-of-the-art studio with ARIA award winning producer Paul McKercher, who has worked with artists including Iggy Pop and Cold Chisel. We got Scotty from Rose Tattoo on drums and my co-presenter Bow Campbell (Front End Loader) and myself got to put on some loud guitars, Hammond organ, and vocals to back up the songs recorded in prisons. The order of the tracks tells a story, including that of Anzac Sullivan, a brilliant young Barkindjii singer/songwriter who I'd known for many years earlier at Long Bay, who tragically died in custody last year. The album is dedicated to him, with kind permission from his family. It also includes cameos from Abby Dobson (Leonardo's Bride) and Midnight Oil's Jim Moginie on pedal steel guitar. The songs range from country through to hardcore rap and punk and I reckon they're all crackers.

## ***Where can people on the outside buy the albums?***

We have a Bandcamp account where you can listen to and buy music online. All money goes back into the program. You can also purchase the CDs at Boom Gate Gallery and the Community Restorative Centre's Canterbury office.



Assistant Commissioner Luke Grant, who has been a big supporter, has purchased copies of Songbirds 2 for every library in NSW Correctional Centres, and I managed to get the video version of the course onto the options available on the tablets that many inmates in NSW have access to. Apparently it has proved to be very popular.



# SUDOKU

## NORMAL DIFFICULTY

The goal of Sudoku is to fill the numbers 1-9 exactly once in every row, column and each of the puzzle's nine 3x3 grids.

Sudoku is not a math game, rather it is about identifying logical patterns. All puzzles have a unique solution that can be arrived at purely by logic. Guessing answers is likely to make things more difficult. Instead, use the process of elimination to find the answers.

	2		5					
		7				5	1	6
		9	3	6		4		
7		4	8				3	
2		5	7		3	8		1
	1				4	2		9
		3		4	5	7		
5	4	2				1		
					8		5	

			8		3	6	1	7
			5	6		9		
	3	6		7			5	
	9	4		8	6	5	2	
	6	5	9	1		7	4	
	5			2		4	7	
		3		5	9			
6	2	8	4		7			

	9	7	5	4	3			1
			9		6			
8		6				3		
	2	1		6	7	9	5	
	7						1	
	3	8	1	5		7	4	
		9				1		7
			7		9			
7			8	3	5	4	6	

				3				6
4	6		9				1	
		1	8	6	7	2	3	4
	2			1				
9		4	7		2	3		1
				9			8	
8	4	2	5	7	1	6		
	5				9		2	7
7				8				

		8		1	4	6		
4	6						3	
		9	8	2				4
	2		6			3		1
9		5		4		7		6
8		6			1		4	
1				9	2	8		
	8						9	3
		7	4	3		1		

## HARD DIFFICULTY

7	1			5	9		3
			8				
		3		2			4
		6	5				2
	5	7			8	4	
8				6	3		
3			5		1		
				7			
1		2	3			6	5

		7	3	6			
		2		5			3
			9			5	6
4				9			6
		9		4		8	
5			7				4
	8	1			5		
	4			7		2	
				8	1	4	

			3	8	2		
9	3		4	1			6
					5	4	
6		2				9	
	7			5			3
		4				8	1
		1	5				
	9			3	1		2
			9	2	8		

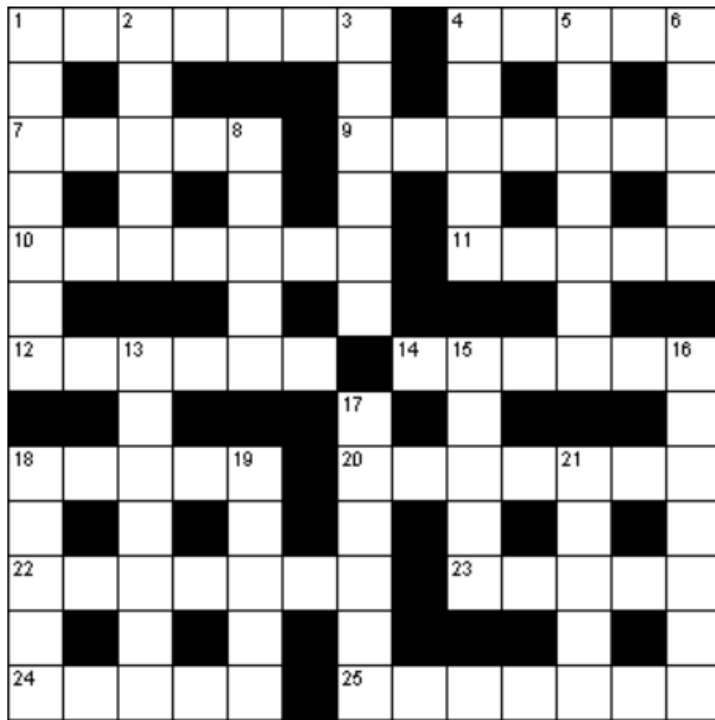
		3				5	4
4				1			3
				7		1	
2					3		
8	9			5			4
			8				2
		2		6			
	7			8			9
6		1				7	

		4		6		9	
	6						1
7	8	2			1		4
2				7		3	9
			6		2		
6		8		5			4
	4		9			6	1
1							9
		7		1		8	

3	1		8				
				5			
8				7	6		5
1		7		3			
	8						4
				6		2	1
2	9		4	8			3
				9			
					5		6



# CROSSWORD



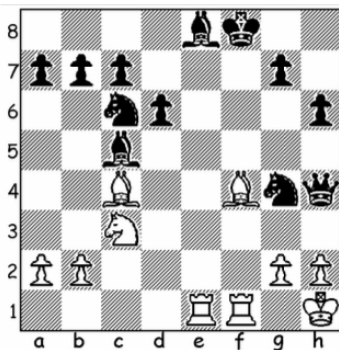
## Across

1. Floorshow (7)
4. Spooky (5)
7. Detection device (5)
9. Vertical (7)
10. Inactivity (7)
11. Measuring implement (5)
12. Dictator (6)
14. Ecclesiastic (6)
18. Copious (5)
20. Drawn (7)
22. Pouch worn with a kilt (7)
23. Diadem (5)
24. Admittance (5)
25. Spiny anteater (7)

## Down

1. Transported (7)
2. Emblem (5)
3. Tropical bird (6)
4. Mistake (5)
5. Dependable follower (7)
6. Go in (5)
8. Magnitude relation (5)
13. Reinforcement (7)
15. Reasoned judgment (5)
16. Musical passage (7)
17. Opportunity (6)
18. Part of a church (5)
19. Ahead of time (5)
21. Obviate (5)

# CHESS

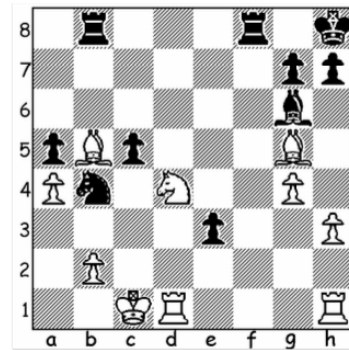


Mate in One Move- White to Move:

1.

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

Answers on page 38.



Mate in One Move- Black to Move:

1.

### Find-A-Word

Find all the words hidden in the across, down, and diagonally, with backwards.

O E T T N B Y N H R A A H H A N D I C A P R  
W O O T O E N E T E R S O P I L Y W E E A T  
M N N Y I R O W E X E O R C W H O O F T M E  
N S R M T U A T G E T T R L P S C H G H O O  
O V T E A T A I D S E O O A T E D E T Y T O  
E G A I L P S L U O H A R S M Y A P D U V L  
U I L R E L T A B E E G E S I N I T I A L T  
H O K S R U C P M R O T B R E A K D O W N I  
R P A R C C L I E I T R M O H E F R Y L M I  
N S T O N S A T B T N C H O A I E G M M N H  
O L I T F O R B I D A I H M F R I N U N D E  
I N V A L H I U I I D T M T H D E N M T A D  
V M E T G T F M O E S C C I H T E E T N B H  
F C E I E A Y R P N Y A R I Z M R S E N W D  
E O R O E T A E R H T T U N D E R T A K E O  
U T E N V U R A L O T U P T U O H E T O H L

BIOGRAPHY  
BREAKDOWN  
BUDGET  
CLARIFY

CLASSROOM  
DICTATE  
FORBID  
HANDICAP

HORROR  
IMMUNE  
INITIAL  
MINIMIZE

OUTPUT  
RELATION  
ROTATION  
SCULPTURE

TACTIC  
TALKATIVE  
THREAT  
UNDERTAKE

### Number Find Puzzle

5 Digit Numbers

5	2	3	4	5	6	3	3	7	5	3	3	6	2	1
2	6	4	7	6	3	6	2	3	1	8	7	9	7	8
1	2	9	5	7	3	1	9	1	3	8	6	1	4	9
7	3	0	4	5	6	7	8	0	1	3	5	8	2	5
1	4	0	4	3	9	2	6	4	5	7	2	7	1	3
3	1	8	1	8	5	6	2	5	2	1	2	1	3	7
9	2	7	3	2	7	9	1	4	3	8	0	2	9	4
7	5	6	9	7	3	2	9	9	9	4	3	3	8	3
8	7	0	3	1	4	4	2	5	3	5	8	2	9	7
5	6	0	6	1	2	0	5	8	6	0	1	4	1	5
0	1	9	3	8	6	8	3	1	0	7	2	7	6	2
1	8	7	2	5	2	9	2	9	3	9	3	8	4	1

23456

90510

82173

34900

37184

58601

30456

99433

12345

77622

49581

31758

52811

22809

76009



# THE CREATIVITY OF INMATES

## AN INTERVIEW WITH PAPER CHAINED MAGAZINE EDITOR, DAMIEN LINNANE

BY PAUL GREGOIRE

Originally published by the Sydney Criminal Lawyers website on June 2, 2022. Reprinted with permission.

US Professor Angela Davis remarked in an interview with Democracy Now last December, that she was “absolutely surprised” that the concept of prison abolition has “entered into public discourse during this period”.

Davis, a key abolitionist, and her colleagues hadn’t expected the campaign, which calls for societies to dismantle systems of incarceration, to enter popular consciousness for “perhaps 50 years”, as, until a little while ago, it had been a fringe issue.

However, the footage of George Floyd being killed by Minneapolis police officers, and the resulting upsurge in the Black Lives Matter movement, changed this dramatically, with the questioning of the role that corrections and law enforcement play in our systems becoming mainstream.

And with this, so too has the understanding that abolishing prisons doesn’t just mean tearing down the walls and letting everybody run riot. Rather, it entails establishing broad social reforms that lead to a more equitable society, with the perceived need for gaols and imprisonment receding.

Creative pursuit has long been understood as a means of transforming negative emotions, and in that way, not only is quarterly magazine *Paper Chained*, a publication by prisoners-for-prisoners, helping inmates reform individually, but, more broadly, it’s abolitionist in nature.

First launched in 2017, *Paper Chained* is a magazine that appears online and in print and features the writing of inmates, ex-prisoners, their family members or work connected with the corrections system. The hardcopy magazines are posted for free to prisoners inside.

The sixth edition of *Paper Chained* has just gone live. Indeed, the first article in the new addition is titled, A Future Without Prisons, and it posits that “if we maintain our current course, the future of prisons is an ever-expanding series of storage facilities for broken people”.

The author, Stacey Stokes, goes onto explain that moving towards an incarceration-free society would require delving into the reasons for behaviour that leads to imprisonment, and providing healing and education to help move beyond it.

“A future without prisons is a world where we all have a place and no one is left behind,” Stokes concludes.

The majority of funding for *Paper Chained* comes from the

Community Restorative Centre, which is a Sydney-based organisation that provides a range of services to people involved in the criminal justice system and their families.

Damien Linnane is the editor of *Paper Chained*. Having spent time in prison himself and written the novel, *Scarred*, whilst in there, Linnane understands the importance that a creative outlet can have for those inside. So, when asked to take over the reins of the publication, he had to agree.

Sydney Criminal Lawyers spoke to *Paper Chained* editor Damien Linnane about the impact the magazine has upon those who are involved with it, the new prison computer tablet program that will allow inmates to access the publication online, and what he’s looking for in terms of content.

***Damien, since May last year, you’ve been the editor of Paper Chained. Why would you say a magazine by prisoners-for-prisoners is important?***

The thing that makes my job the most worthwhile is the feedback I get in the letters from prisoners. People frequently tell me how much difference simply getting some mail can make to their day, something I know all too well from personal experience. But what I hear the most is how much difference it makes to know there is a publication that specifically gives them a voice, understands what they’re going through and is catered to them directly.

*Paper Chained* is what I needed when I was in prison. I had so much I wanted to express, but there was no way for me to share anything I had created with the world. My artwork and writing just gathered in a box under my bed.

***How would you describe the types of articles and other pieces of artistic expression you’ve been receiving for the issues? How would you say the subjects that are touched upon reflect the prisoner experience?***

The majority of the submissions we get are poetry: that definitely seems to be the preferred way people like to express themselves. Not surprisingly, most of it is heavily themed on prison. I’ve definitely read a lot of work with themes of feeling trapped, hopelessness and regret. So, it’s healthy for people to have a creative outlet to express these feelings in, rather than just bottling them up.

But we get all types of writing. In our last issue, we got a piece from an inmate who just wanted to share his passion for reading. He wrote about how reading makes him feel like he is free, which is something I can attest to personally. The only time I didn’t feel like I

was in prison was when I was either reading or writing.

Unfortunately, we're a bit limited in terms of what art we can receive from prison, as it's pretty much whatever people can fit in an envelope. It's very difficult to arrange for larger artworks to be sent out, and even harder to try and get photographs taken of artwork. Luckily, we have a relationship with Boom Gate Gallery, the art gallery attached to Long Bay, and they're able to give us access to photographs of larger art pieces made by incarcerated people.

**Corrective Services NSW has agreed to make Paper Chained available to prisoners via the new computer tablets that are being provided to inmates. This was an initiative put to the government agency by the Community Justice Coalition.**

**As someone who has spent time on the inside, how important do you consider this computer tablet initiative is?**

I spent the first half of my sentence writing a crime novel by hand, and the second half teaching myself to draw. I originally wanted to go back to university, but we had no computer access, and the days of the offline correspondence course ended a long time ago, so there was no way for me to study anything.

I was told that because I was assessed as low risk for reoffending and because resources were limited, I wasn't eligible for in-person rehabilitation, and was also told there was no therapy available at all. The most frustrating thing about prison is you have all the time in the world, but the prison doesn't give you the resources to do anything constructive during that time.

I was lucky enough to be literate enough to write a novel, but a lot of people in prison aren't that fortunate. One of the reasons we campaigned for computers in cells for so long was so that inmates could access rehabilitation courses, even after lock-in and during lockdown.

Even being able to access basic education programs from your cell will make such a huge difference for people who want to change in prison.

Only 22.7 percent of inmates in NSW were able to study during 2019-20 – the second lowest state rate after Tasmania – and only 0.1 percent were able to pursue higher education. These results have been consistent over the last several years, but hopefully we'll start seeing a difference now that tablets have finally been introduced.

**Justice Action had long been pushing for the tablets. The campaign was stepped up after the onset of COVID-19 due to the impact it had upon the conditions prisoners were kept in.**

**Inmates in this country were served a rough time during the pandemic due to neglect and restrictions. What are your thoughts on the situation for prisoners during the COVID crisis?**

I can only really imagine how much harder prison got for people during the pandemic. Considering how isolating and depressing it was beforehand, I know it would have been much worse.

It's a bit ironic, I get about 25 letters from people in prison a week, but one thing I've noticed is that people very rarely actually want to communicate about the prison itself or how things are affecting them personally, other than through art and poetry.

Writing, art, reading and education in prison is a form of escaping

what's actually going on around you, so anything that helps facilitate this is going to be welcome.

When you're in lockdown, you normally can't even get access to library books. I definitely think tablets in prison is a fantastic idea, one that was long overdue.

**Paper Chained is primarily funded by the Community Restorative Centre. Why has this organisation prioritised such a project?**

I'd been peripherally helping with *Paper Chained* since they first started in 2017. And in 2021, the previous editor asked me if I wanted to take over as she no longer had the time or the money to self-fund the project. Knowing how much something like *Paper Chained* would have improved my mental health when I was in prison, I couldn't say no. But as our list of subscribers grew dramatically it became clear I'd bitten off more than I could chew.

I was getting enough contributions to publish it much more frequently than annually, which is how the magazine ran for its first five years, though replying to letters and transcribing contributions was taking up most of my free time as it was.

Then, early this year, I finished a long-term work contract as an archivist. And as I needed a new job anyway, I applied for funding to turn what I was passionate about into my dream job, and thankfully, I managed to get a 12-month contract with CRC to produce the magazine quarterly.

It really fit in with their other great projects, like Jailbreak Radio, a radio program for incarcerated people, and Songbirds, which records music made in prison.

**And lastly, Damien, for those who might like to contribute or become involved with Paper Chained what should they do?**

I'd really encourage people to give it a go. A lot of people seem self-conscious about whether their work is good enough, and then I'm amazed by their creativity. Speaking from experience, a lot of writers and artists have too much self-doubt, especially when they first get started.

If you're worried about using your real name, we can publish your work anonymously. And keep in mind, if you're looking to make a career out of writing or art, already being published by us could give you a hand up.

People often write in asking if we'll accept certain types of contributions, like song lyrics. And as I always tell them, if you can create it, we'll consider printing it. It's only really limited by your imagination.

One thing I wish we got more of is fiction, especially since that's what I created when I was incarcerated. I'd love to see more short stories in future issues.

**Paul Gregoire is a Sydney-based journalist and writer. He has a focus on social justice issues and encroachments upon civil liberties. Prior to writing for Sydney Criminal Lawyers, he wrote for VICE and was the news editor at Sydney's City Hub. Paul is the winner of the 2021 NSW Council of Civil Liberties Award For Excellence In Civil Liberties Journalism.**



# SOCIOECONOMICS OF PRISON

BY KENJUAN CONGO JR

If over one thousand prisoners gathered together are classified as a group, there must be socioeconomic classes in prison. In a group of two, if one leaves it is no longer considered a group. In a group of three, if one leaves, it is still regarded as a group. As the group grows in size, dynamics occur such as gender, race, income, sexual preference, religion, etc. The dynamics created through the growth of the group produce a hierarchy in which each unit can be ranked, thus the creation of Socioeconomic Status (SES). SES is a composite ranking based on various dimensions of social inequality.

At SCI Chester in Pennsylvania, the lowest paying jobs offer 19¢ per hour which is the starting rate for all non-skilled workers. With outside clearance, workers have the highest earning potential at 51¢ per hour. Other jobs include block workers, barbers, janitors, and laundry workers. Being paid only cents per hour prisoners are forced to labor under the constant threat of disciplinary action for any stoppage or refusal to work. A potential benefit of working is, depending on jobs such as maintenance repair, you can acquire a trade skill and experience. A downside to working is that the prisoner's labor is pivotal to the functioning of the prison, thus making the prisoner a facilitator of their own oppression. We are forced to weigh the pros and cons of workforce exploitation, under the unmerciful heavy-handed might of DOC policy and constitutional law.

Making 19¢ opposed to 51¢ is a difference of over 250%. This is of great significance for individuals who do not have financial support from the outside. Basic necessities such as toothpaste, deodorant, hair grease, and lotion have to be purchased. Those the state recognizes as indigent are given toothpaste that does not fight plaque or tartar, as well as a lotion that leaves skin flaky and itchy; with the false proclamation that their needs are actually being met. With this economic wage system being their sole source of income, some are forced to struggle for even the most basic of necessities; while others are not. Ultimately, the best jobs are the ones that pay the most often giving trade experience as well. The worst jobs are the least paying giving no trade experience most of the time. Even with the highest pay, prisoners are only to meet the most basic of life's needs. Occupation is one of the many socioeconomic categories for the prison populace.

Beyond jobs prisoners are systematically influenced to make money illegally and/or in ways that are against DOC policy. Such economic pursuits include selling drugs, extortion, making wine, and loan sharking. Prisoners are put on trajectories toward this behavior, because of the abysmal pay given to them by the institution. Sociologists and criminologists widely agree that economics is a key driver of crime and violence, and the prison environment is by

no means an exception.

When the incarcerated person's income is removed from the household, financial strain is placed on the family unit. Making mere cents per hour, the incarcerated are not in a position to legally address the additional hardships put on their loved ones. Not to mention that in most cases the prisoner's offense is directly related to financial inequalities. Once imprisoned, the individual must choose between conforming to prison policy, or taking matters into their own hands. Sadly, prison policy does not allow those who are incarcerated to give legal financial support to their families, thus enticing criminal behavior.

Money is also spent on extraordinarily high legal fees as well as court costs and fines. Only making cents per hour, how many hours would a prisoner have to work to pay a lawyer thousands of dollars? Again, the individual is forced to choose between abiding by DOC policy or mounting an effective legal defense. The socioeconomics of prison categorizes class not only in job pay but in terms of the underground economy as well. The more net income a prisoner has the higher they are in the class hierarchy, regardless of their source of revenue.

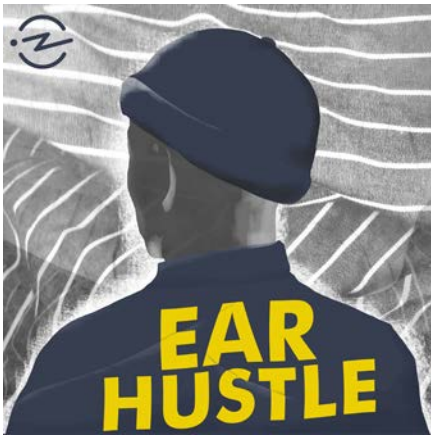
The sociologist Max Weber gave credence to status as a socio-economic categorization. Those who are known as snitches, molesters, and rapists are at the bottom of this social ranking, as well as homosexuals housed in male facilities. Those with the most status are usually the individuals with the most money, known for rebelling against DOC, or those with publicity around their case, and in extremely rare cases are celebrities as well. Based on the status, they may be given preferential treatment by other prisoners extra food, commissary, cleaning supply, wine, drugs, food smuggled in by staff, along with a host of other advantages. The harsh reality of prison life, a perk that may seem minuscule is actually of monumental importance to a prisoner. These privileges gained through status allow the person to save money, which will raise their socioeconomic positioning even higher.

Prison jobs and socioeconomic status can determine the likelihood of a prisoner being released early, meeting their needs, and giving support to their family. Due to the socio-economic structuring of the prison system, the incarcerated are put in a position where crime is their best option for both acquiring freedom and giving support to loved ones. The jobs and socioeconomics of prison are major social justice issues.

*Kenjuan Congo Jr #ND7568  
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# IN THE NEXT ISSUE

ISSUE 8 DUE FOR RELEASE IN DECEMBER 2022



## EAR HUSTLE TRANSCRIPTS

Starting from our the next issue, we'll begin sharing transcripts of the award-winning prison podcast *Ear Hustle*, created at San Quentin State Prison in California.



## MORE ON HISTORICAL PRISON NEWSLETTERS

Our coverage of historical prison newsletters in Australia will continue with an article on *Contact*.



## JAILBREAK PRISON RADIO FEATURE

We'll also feature an interview with Kate Pinnock, the producer of *JailBreak Prison Radio*, including information about how you can appear on the program.

## CROSSWORD ANSWERS

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## CHESS ANSWERS

White Bishop to D6  
Black Knight to A2

## WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE IN THE NEXT ISSUE?

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

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



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ROMANTIC  
PROFESSIONAL  
HAPPY  
WEALTHY  
PATIENT SMART  
CONSTRUCTIVE  
ZEAL



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Thoughtful Adventurous  
Sociable happy assertive  
Confident BLISSFUL  
INTERESTING UNIQUE  
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Cooperative  
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HAPPY  
POPULAR  
FUN