

A JOURNAL OF EXPRESSION FROM BEHIND BARS

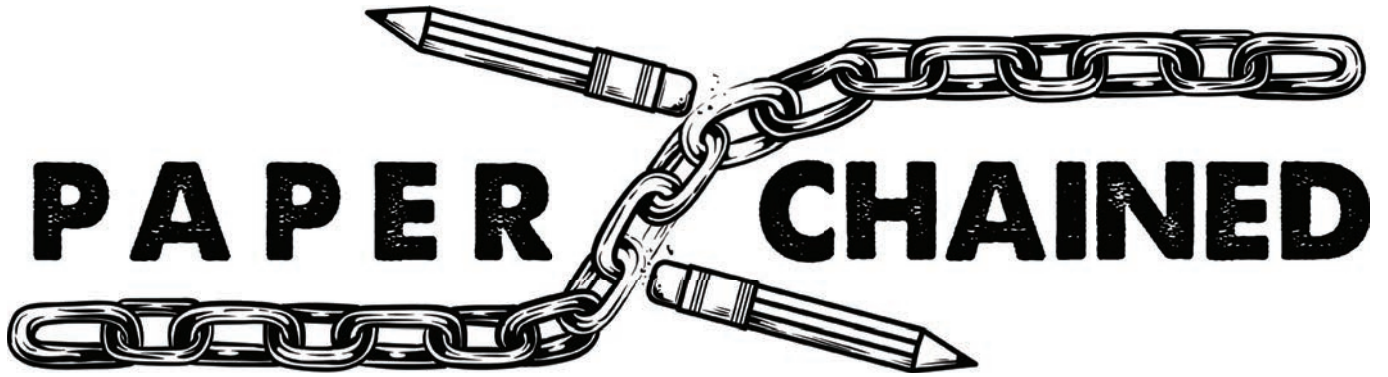
PAPER CHAINED



CRC community
restorative
centre

ISSUE 22 / JUN 2026
Posted free to incarcerated people

 Curtin University



PAPER CHAINED



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Published by Vigilante Studios
Issue 22, June 2026
ISSN 2653-0775 (Print)
ISSN 2653-0783 (Digital)

Cover art by Mitch Barbieri
Inside cover art by Damien Linnane

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



Over the past two decades, Australia has enacted 49 new laws eroding the rights of people to protest, largely in response to the climate crisis, arguably putting considerably more effort into preventing protests rather than addressing the crisis itself. NSW has enacted the most of these new laws, some of which were later found to be unconstitutional by the Supreme Court.

An extremely heavy police presence did not deter turnout at the Rising Tide protest in Newcastle in November 2025, which attempts to block access to the world's largest coal port each year. 173 people were arrested for entering the Port of Newcastle on kayaks and rafts. The protest succeeded in temporarily closing the port.

WHAT'S ON THE INSIDE

WARNING: CONTAINS EXPLICIT LANGUAGE

***Paper Chained* is a free, not-for-profit quarterly journal for incarcerated people. It is funded by the Community Restorative Centre with assistance from our partnership with Curtin University.**

If you would like to support *Paper Chained*, tax-deductible donations can be made via the Community Restorative Centre.

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

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

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

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

TERMS OF PUBLICATION

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

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

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

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

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SUBSCRIPTION AND SUBMISSION DETAILS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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PO Box 2073, Dangar NSW 2309, Australia



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Phone: 08 9266 5671
Email: prisonoutreach@curtin.edu.au

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

BY DAMIEN LINNANE

Yet another issue, and yet another report on one of our art exhibitions to go with it. In this issue, I'm thrilled to bring you photos of the third annual Paper Chained International art exhibition. Long-term readers will be well aware that once a year, *Paper Chained* organises an annual exhibition showcasing all the amazing art we've received from people in custody. We aim to tour the exhibition in a different city each year. Our first exhibition was at Long Bay Correctional Centre's Boom Gate Gallery in 2024, and our artworks were displayed in Brisbane in 2025. This year, we were able to hold the exhibition in Newcastle, a lot closer to where *Paper Chained* is made. The exhibition was held at The Creator Incubator art gallery, from February 12-22, and was opened by Acting Lord Mayor of Newcastle Charlotte McCabe.



Acting Lord Mayor Charlotte McCabe introducing Paper Chained editor Damien Linnane at the launch.

Paper Chained International is an evolving exhibition. More works are received all the time, and works sell at each show, making each show distinct from the last. This year's show was our biggest yet, showcasing 200 artworks from over 40 different prisons in 12 different countries.



Funding permitting, we intend to tour the exhibition again next year, so keep your eye out in future editions for news on which city we'll go to next. In the meantime, enjoy some of the incredible artworks.



Paintings on prison bedsheets, sent to us by Park in NSW. Note: Park obtained permission to paint on the bedsheets before attempting these artworks. Doing so without prior approval will likely get you internal charges.



Above: Various artworks from women at Chiconautla Prison and Chalco Penitentiary in Mexico. Below: Sculptures welded at Alice Springs Correctional Centre.





Top left: People attending on the launch night.
 Middle left: Toilet paper sculptures by Ashley McGoldrick, alongside his instructions on how to make the sculptures which were printed in Paper Chained issue 12.
 Bottom left: Paintings by Ashley McGoldrick
 Above: Paintings by Henry Akano in Victoria.
 Below: Wooden sculptures from Japan, New Zealand, Bolivia and Tasmania



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear other inmates in Australia

I know life in gaol is tough but it can be better. We can't do much in prison but I have found that helping someone in need has helped me mentally and spiritually. So, have a go and help someone.

P.S. Some helpful quotes:

"Keep your softness, stay gentle, and remain kind. Don't let the negativity around you make you bitter."

"God gives his hardest battles to his strongest warriors."

"The grass isn't always green on the other side, it's greener where you water it."

Anonymous, Junee Correctional Centre

Dear Paper Chained

A big hello to everyone. My name is Lee. Also known as BB, 'blind bitch' as I'm totally blind. I'm at Dame Phyllis Frost Centre in Victoria and I've been here coming up 13 years. This is my second piece I've written which was due to the encouragement and support from Sister Cathy and Shaun. If you have spent time in St Vincent's hospital you may have met them. They are the nicest human beings you will ever meet.

My first piece was Second Chance, which I have provided along with my new piece Second Choice. Second Chance I wrote when I had my sight back in 2014, and Second Choice I wrote in late October 2025 with no sight at all.

I hope you enjoy them.

Lee xx

SECOND CHANCE

All I've ever wanted was to be given a chance.

A chance to be loved,

A chance to love,

To be given a chance to have belief,

You have to be believed in,

To have a chance you have to forgive
and be forgiven

One day, I hope I can forgive myself,

believe in myself and love myself,

So that I accept others to love me,

believe in me and forgive me,

So that I can be given a second chance.

SECOND CHOICE

Nobody wants to be somebody's second choice
Whether it be in a relationship or a position at work.
Everybody deserves to feel that they are number one.
It only takes a few short words to let someone know.
Like ... I knew that you were the one for the job, or as
soon as I saw you I knew you were the one for me.
I think it's important to always remember the beginning.

Dear Paper Chained

Just thought I'd share a bit of my journey and offer some advice to those new to the system or people wanting to not just sit there wasting the time away. I've been there before. It affects your mental well-being. First and foremost, you want to get into a comfortable routine. If you're in a jail that lets you work, that's a good way of productively spending your time. Depending on what you do you may even learn new skills. Make yourself a training regime where you dedicate at least one hour a day to working out. Even if your prison doesn't have a gym, you can still do push-ups, sit-ups, dips, lunges and squats, which is plenty to keep fit. But that still leaves you a good 10 hours a day.

What I found works for me is studying and reading. In NSW, you can search your inmate tablet for educational programs and courses. I am blessed to have found content on there I am actually passionate about. I've completed courses like 'Positive Psychology,' which focuses on obtaining your full potential through working on your strengths. I've also found studies on parental discipline and children, which teach techniques called 'Connect and Redirect' and 'Emotional Coaching,' which teaches children to deal with their emotions, and focuses on loving discipline instead of punishment. Having just had a baby 20 years after my last child, the subject sparked interest and I'm glad I took the time to look into it further. I would highly recommend it to any new parents, or any parents at all. I also highly recommend the author Dan Siegal, a child psychologist and brain development expert.

All the study I've done has inspired me to write my own book that I'm halfway through. Even though I'm spending the bulk of my time studying, reading and writing, you can choose how much time you want to dedicate to this. But I'm never bored anymore since I started studying. When I need a well-earned break I've taken up painting which I absolutely love. I'm also planning on entering a piece in editor Damien Linnane's future exhibitions. He has been one of the main inspirations for my life change, with my focus on a brighter, more successful future upon release, with my aim to live my best life and be the best father I can be. So find yourself courses, programs and books, and learn as much as you can while you have all this time, and turn a negative experience into a positive and come out a better, newer and smarter version of yourself. - Aaron

ART AND WRITING

LIFE WITH HIM BEHIND BARS

I live my day to day life just thinking of you
Are you eating enough?
Are you sleeping alright?
What are you doing now?

I have to carry on and keep living my life but you're not here. So instead of you right by my side I'm holding you in my heart, every day and every second.

I'm grieving but you're still breathing
I miss you, that deep feeling of emptiness and nothingness inside of me just longing to hold you near.

Oh how I wish you were here
I get anxiety every time there's a lock-in
Did something happen to you? Are you OK?
Then you finally call and tell me everything's OK but I wouldn't understand.
Yeah, I guess not. We are just two worlds apart.
10 minutes ain't long enough for our stories to be heard
We used to be each other's personal diary, now all we've got is a limited phone call to share our 'dear diary this happened today'

You are behind bars, life on pause but so is mine, waiting for you. I didn't get a sentence but it sure feels like I did, we are all just doing time.

The highlight of my day is receiving your call. I just can't wait to hear your voice when you call. Every day I wait by the phone.

I can't wait till the day I mark off the calendar and go to pick you up
To hold you
Kiss you
And talk for hours
To cry
To laugh
And then to finally go home



Art and writing by S.M.

TONIGHT

Tonight I will write the saddest lines,
the night is shattered, the stars I can't see
inside this cell.
The cold wind howls like a wounded beast,
or was that me?
I loved her and maybe she did love me?
Through nights like these I held her close,
I kissed her all over, and she kissed me.
She loved me, so I thought, I loved her too,
how could I not looking into her eyes.
Tonight I don't want to write the saddest lines
To think I never truly had her, to feel so much loss.
To bear the immense night,
still more immense without her.
How this pain cuts to the soul, what does
it matter that my love could not keep her?
My nights, shattered, she is no longer with me.
This is all, my soul so tormented with this love.
My eyes still see her, my heart has died for her,
but she has left me.
Though this will not be the last of the pain
I am suffering,
these will be the last of the verses I shall write for her.



Writing and art by Melony Attwood
Bandyup Women's Prison
PO Box 100,
Guildford WA, 6935

THE SUNSHINE SUICIDE STATE

There was a man in my block here for nine months and every week without fail the mother of his children would book visits with the prison. Every week his two face-to-face and his two video calls blocked by her bookings, but she wouldn't show up. When he asked her to stop, she would scream so loud everyone around the phone could hear.

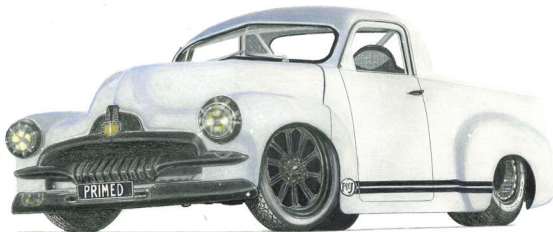
"Why do you want me to stop booking visits, so one of your whores can visit? Keep lying to me and I'll fuck your friends!"

Who deserves that? Nobody. The poor bloke looked so embarrassed. I feel like the government doesn't care about domestic violence against men. They can take away our children then our freedom, and leave us with no options, no path of recourse. Stuck.

Welcome to Queensland, the Suicide State.

By Lewis Comb E16779
Woodford C.C.
PMB 1, Woodford, QLD 4514

VIC
LOPROJ



Art by LenPen, Victoria



Art by Samantha Brownlow, Queensland

TIME IS FIRE

Time is fire in which we burn,
We should never take time for granted.
As time knows no yesterday nor when,
For time can and will change at every twist and turn.
In fact we should always treat time well,
As the present time should be our main concern.
For yesterday's time should only be history,
Tomorrow's time will only ever be a mystery.
Either way it's more time with our loved ones we always yearn
Therefore time is fire.



By Ashley Burke D39301
Maryborough Correctional Centre
PO Box 627, Maryborough, QLD 4650

AMAZED

I walked into a maze
and when I reached the middle
I stayed.
Once inside it's really easy
to not only lose
your sense of direction
but also your desire
to find it again.

By 'Boris Kerr' (pseudonym), New Zealand

I HATE YOU, CRYSTAL METH

Hate's a strong word,
But for you it's reserved.
I hate what you've taken from me,
My parents, my childhood and my glee,
Now all but simply a distant memory.
The destruction you've caused,
Without even touching my lips,
It's so great, it's not fair.
You've taken everything and left me in despair.
I live in constant fear, that you'll take him too,
I just don't know what else I can do.
He's the love of my life, but your grip is strong.
Will it be you or I who becomes his wife?
I hate you, I do.
More than words can express,
For all the damage you've caused,
To those I know best.
I absolutely fucking hate you Crystal Meth.

*By Mackenzie 'Eve' Farnworth
Bandyup Women's Prison
PO Box 100
Guildford, WA 6935*

WONDER

I wonder if you ever knew
Of what these kids are going through
I wonder if you ever cared
Or how your life to theirs compared
I also wonder what would you do
If this kid asked for help in turn would you
Would you turn your back on this little kid
And not even care of the things they did
Or would you help them out of this situation
And try bring healing to our world and nation

By Jamie Hicks



Art by Tony, NSW

MUM

Growing up it must have been luck
To get a mum who cares so much
When you opened your door you gave me all
Showed me love and kindness I'd never felt before
Mum, just so you know you'll always be my number 1.
I love you mum.



Art and writing by Greg McLellan

Single raven crows
Drowned worms crawl on concrete path
Wet weather deflates

Half moon in blue sky
Announcements break the silence
Jails never quiet

Haikus by Clayton



Art by KJ Tolhurst

It's five forty-six in the morning
 I'm tossing and turning, chest burning
 Surra's in my head, keep re-occurring
 Having visions in my head, of a kid
 Crying at the feet of our father, for all the wrong things
 that he did
 Now I'm sweating in my sheets, can't sleep
 My mind keeps telling me I'm six feet deep (Don't remind
 me)
 Even though I'm still alive, I can't tell
 The way I'm living my life, I feel I'm going to hell
 God, they keep telling me, I should accept you
 That you had to leave the world, coz the world left you
 Reason I can't change, it's like a mystery to me
 So I make believe there really is a heaven for a ghee
 God, you say, you love the world so much.
 You shed your blood, and God, I feel I'm too messed up
 for love
 They tell me come as I am, but I smell like smoke
 My whole life's full of sin, but that's all I know
 Allah I know you're there, and I pray for the end
 I put my love and trust in you, will you take me as I am?
 Look I know the way I'm living is wrong
 But I can't make it on my own, try to make it alone
 I wonder
 How could you love me, with my life so ugly
 But, you seem to keep it real for me
 Will you take me as I am?

INEVITABLE: TWO TURTLES PART II

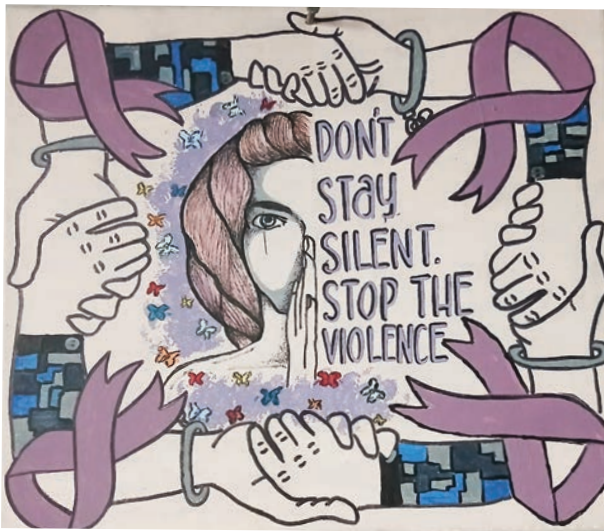
Be one with me forever, eternity
 Even though, a world with yours is only a wish.
 You are mine and I am yours.
 All dat charm, passion and romance
 I'll wanna overdose only on you.
 Your wish is my command.



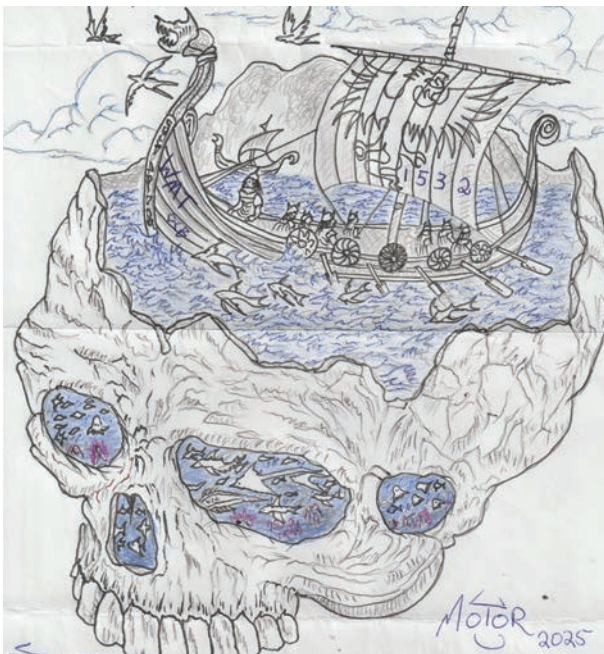
Writing and art by 'Yours Truly'



Art and untitled writing by Jaizy Savage
 Brisbane Correctional Centre



Art by 'Versatile Valerie'
Iloilo City District Jail, Philippines



Art by 'Motor'

Every day is a struggle,
Behind these bars, no one to cuddle
In here you see people for what they are
I just sit back and watch from afar
Fighting every day, doesn't have to be this way
Petty and childish mark my word
People are just so absurd
Grow up, indeed they must
But instead they create a fuss
Centre of attention, they need to be
They wonder why they're not free
Selfish and greedy is what they are though
Won't remember them when I go
I am so frustrated you see, it's so hard trying to be me

Untitled writing by Julie Cameron
TWCC, PO Box 5574, Townsville, QLD 4811



Art by Chris, New Zealand

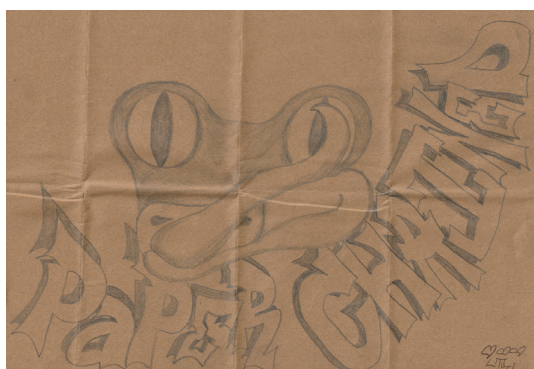
FADED PHOTOGRAPHY

It was only a faded photograph
Of a young man in an army uniform
It had pride of place on the mantelpiece
Long since before I was born
A face touched by just nineteen summers
Looked out from its sepia tones
And a wedding ring on his finger
Spoke of a new bride left all alone
One of the first to touch Gallipoli's shore
One of the last to make it out
Then sent to fight on the Western Front
Where any outcome was always in doubt
The list of battle honours grew
As the numbers of the dead increased
How long all victory be realised
And for the war gods to be appeased
That young man never made it back home
From a world for a time gone mad
I often wonder what he was like
My father's father, he was my granddad
It was only a faded photograph

By DeWitt B

25 TO LIFE

I'd write you a poem
A sonnet, a play
I'd write you a musical
But afraid it's too gay
Light-hearted and fun
Reminiscent of one
The sweetness and light
You bring to my life
I'd wait till the eve
Chill wind on the breeze
And give you my solemn
Soul for an age
An era of love
An eon of smiles
And the warmth and reverie
You embody to me



Art and writing by LTZ



Art by Henry, Victoria

HOPE AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL

When is this misery going to end?
Nothing but tears wash my face in shame
When I think of my misfortunes
Wrong choices brought such conditions

Vices bring humiliation
Life is dark to carry
Full of hardship, pain and misery
When I think of my situation
My heart explodes in pain caused by my actions
I anticipate as I sit
Hoping for someone to visit
My happiness is overflowing
For even just one to come along
In that day after waiting for so long
In my nostalgia
I am free hallelujah
Then I am with my loved ones, such a sight
I am holding on so tight
For God will never forsake me with His might
I am hoping
That at the other side of darkness or something
There is hope in everything
Because the love of God is everlasting

By Grace
Bacolod District Jail, Philippines
Translated by Rosa Zerrudo

PRISON

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

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

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

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

By Rosa Zerrudo
Volunteer Theatre Facilitator, Philippines

To my nearest and dearest father
 Rodney Bruce Sullivan
 Dad, even though you have passed on
 You are not gone
 You're still here
 In my heart
 In my mind
 You pass by all the time
 Even though I did right
 Even though I did wrong
 Even though we didn't,
 Didn't always get along
 You stayed strong
 By my side
 And showed me love
 So while I'm here and still alive
 You live on
 In the stories
 Stories that are told
 So, until I see you again
 You were and still are
 My best friend
 But most of all
 You are and always will be
 My dad
 That I love and miss

By Aaron Sullivan



Art by Tay, New Zealand



Art by 'Motion'

STANDING STRONG ON MY THRONE

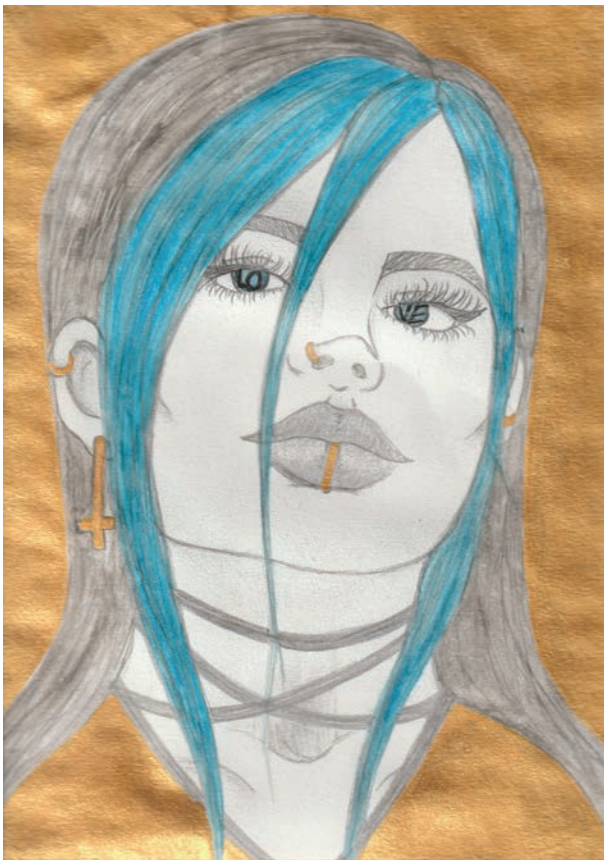
I've captured a lot of pain
 without surrendering to it.
 My voice is for the voiceless.
 Those who don't have many choices.
 The weight of my face
 cannot find any expression
 for social abuse.
 I stand like a volcano
 wrestling in the winter
 passing through an intrinsic
 element of sorrow.
 Time glares between a shadow -
 because today is always tomorrow.
 Some people have everything in the world
 and are still miserable.
 I have a good ear
 for the external forces that kill
 the joy of dreams.
 A mindset to see the future,
 so take that in with the air you breathe.

*By 'Knowledge S', North Carolina
 Author of 'Wild Roses: Poetry & Prose,' available from
 Word Out Books*

MAMA I'M A CRIMINAL

Mama, I'm a criminal, but you know that I'm sorry
Don't learn my lessons,
and I know that you endlessly worry
Out of my mind again, I got no real ambitions
Running around, making more and more bad decisions
Have you got any sense, which I can borrow
At this rate, I'm not sure if I'll see tomorrow
Don't wanna cause you, even more sorrow

Sorry mama
I know I'm only a criminal
I've gotta change my ways
I know that it's critical



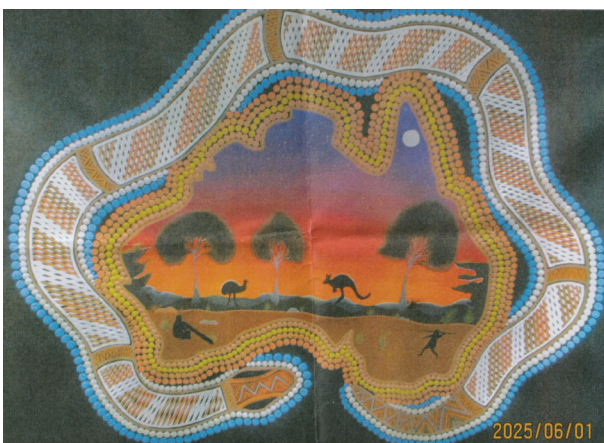
Art and writing by Storm Tientjes



Art by Sky



Art by Joel Minor E31433
Borallon Training Centre
LMB 8003, Ipswich QLD, 4305



Art by Zac Wilson

FTS (FALLACIOUS, THE SYSTEM)

How many birthdays spent behind bars?
How many times has Christmas passed
surrounded by walls and wires with barbs?
Thinking 'bout a life that we had in the past.
"Yes sir, no sir, three bags full sir,
push or pull sir, cotton or wool sir."
Life's dictated by a government permit,
Being strip-searched by public servants
Are they perverts?
Always wanna see me naked.
"Open up your mouth, lift your nuts and shake it."
What a way to live, honestly, I can't take it.
Always keep my head up,
tell myself "you're gonna make it."
Memories flash of the outside, I miss it.
Seem to get along with the outcasts and misfits.
Rehabilitation is non-existent,
Now I'm just another number added to statistics.
FTS, we say while stressed
FTP, free the brother and me.
Together doing time, though I only got five.
I got brothers that'll never leave this place till they die.

Free us.

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



Art by Mark, NSW

WORD!

When your purpose in life, is thrown clean off track.
With the false sense of direction,
from this shit they call crack.
For once in your life, you're feeling on top.
And you pray to yourself that this feeling don't stop.
So a few extra points, you'll grab and flick round.
As you share the love,
with the new friends that you found.
Overlooking the true, who stood through thick and thin.
As you push them aside and you let the grubs in.
Impressed with the new you, you've pictured inside.
As your new so called friends say,
"Fuck this cunt is fried!"
With your head in the clouds, well now it's their turn.
As they're robbing you blind, they just call it an earn.
Then you point the finger, "It was you I heard!"
But they reassure you, and then they say "Word!"
Leaving you puzzled, and slightly confused.
While scratching your head, thinking, "Fuck! I was used!"
Now feeling so stupid, and a dumb cunt to boot!
The only way out, is to find some cunt with loot!
Then spin them a yarn, you can get them cheap crack!
Just hand over the bugsy! And "Word!" I'll come back!

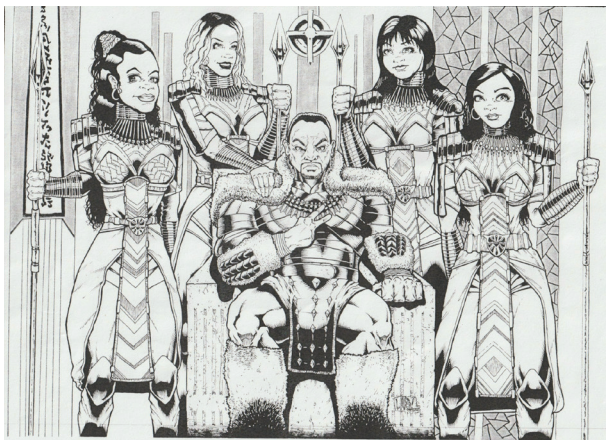
By Jason Derksen A98627
Lotus Glen C.C.
PMB 1, Mareeba, QLD, 4880



Art by Jasmine Punton
Bandyup Women's Prison
PO Box 101, Guildford WA 6935



'The Great Southern Land' by EVO1



Art by Steven Labelle, BG3974,
CTF. PO Box 705, Soledad, California, 93960, USA



Envelope art by Mitch Bennet C62203
Lotus Glen C.C. PMB 1, Mareeba, QLD, 4880

PAY DAY BLUES

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

By Ross Streeer

FUCK THIS PLACE

Some days go by and all is well
 The next day comes and it's gone to hell
 Consistency gone, and fairness a dream
 The rage builds fast, frustrations scream
 They do what they want, they have no rules
 Those that speak up get treated like fools
 We have no voice, we have no rights
 We only have rage that fills our nights
 They steal our stuff and abuse whoever
 They act like we'll be here forever
 The days go by, we bide our time
 They kill what's good so our light can't shine
 The battle within between good and bad
 Is enough for most to go completely mad
 The system is fucked and run by crooks
 It's sold by its appearance, it's judged on looks
 Areas seen by the public eye
 Are always flawless, that's no lie
 The reality isn't what it seems
 They want to break us, crush our dreams
 The punishment was prison, they add all the rest
 Rehab here is a myth, here it don't pass the test
 We came here as animals, we're made to be beasts
 Then the day comes and we hit the streets
 The anger, the rage, the hatred released
 We needed help to change, not be fuckin' beasts
 We become what prison makes us,
 of that you can be sure
 Till the system fuckin' changes, this shit hole is no cure.
 FUCK THIS PLACE!!!

By Jason Ryan 595683
 Darwin Correctional Centre
 PO Box 1066, Howard Springs, NT 0835



Art by Robyn Kennedy, Queensland

LOCKED DOWN AGAIN

Another day in prison done, locked down again,
Nothin' else to fuckin' do so I pick up the pen,
Words and thoughts go through my head, a never-ending stream,
I write the words, the thoughts are gone, my way to let off steam.
They've got no idea what this system does to our mental health,
Feel like an object, dusty and broken, forgotten on a shelf.
Missed appointments and cancelled visits are the lockdown consequences,
Destroying us all bit by bit while we stare at these fences.
I call home once a week now, if I'm lucky, it's so fuckin' strange
If only someone cared enough to implement real change.
They say contact with the outside world reduces recidivism,
I guess we know why every cunt comes back to Risdon prison.
I do not think it's much to ask, just one phone call a day,
Screws turn the phones off, just for fun, it's a game they play.
Round here they lack humanity, they play games with our sanity,
they call it rationality, lockin' us down on a technicality.

*By Jordan Brennan
Risdon Prison, Tasmania*

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE FENCE

It's time for release, mid twenty twenty-five
Somehow I've made it, I'm still alive
And can go back to the other side of the fence.
But there is little good that awaits me there
No love from a family, just a cold stare
From those once on the other side of the fence.
Parole are in my ear to follow this and that rule
So I don't come back inside, looking like a tool
Unloved once again on the other side of the fence.
It's deep into winter, full of cold winds and rain
Matching the confusion and anguish that fills my brain
After dealing with the muppets now on the other side of the fence.
Too many drugs in young blokes with attitudes that suck
No rehabilitation for them as they jump onto the truck
That puts them yet again on the other side of the fence.
Our jails are overflowing thanks to a system that's broken
Because of the shiny bums in government that haven't yet woken
Up to issues they don't see on the other side of the fence.
There's little to no support for those on the inside
Way too many will quickly find themselves on the same ride
That landed them yet again on the other side of the fence.
For me, though, no more sirens or the ringing of a bell
My former family and I have both lived through hell
Because I was once and no longer am on the other side of the fence.

By KCDC

ABORIGINAL MAN

I'm sick of doing crime
I'm sick of doing jail
it's time to put pen to paper
and send this in the mail
as I currently sit in jail
Bathurst Jail I am
I'm an Aboriginal man from Wellington

and Wiradjuri is my clan
I grew up on Nanima mission
what a perfect place to go fishin'
kickin' back on country
on my home land
I'm proud to say
I'm an Aboriginal man

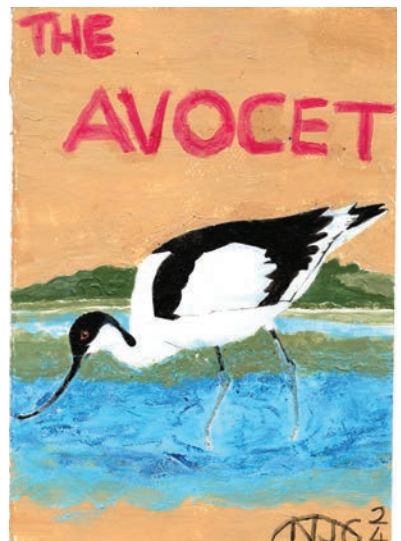
By Mr Wellington



Art by Simon, New Zealand



Art by Clayton Tierney



Art by Nigel G



Art by the Mysterious Artist 'D', Yokohama prison, Japan



Art by Mark Flewell-Smith
Drawn at Boggo Road Gaol, Queensland, in 1988



'Zebicorn' by Park, NSW

THE CIR-RECADE

The reverence of old sayings
Are passed on to me now
Without realising how
The knowledge blocks the way
When cultured plums of wisdom
Drain my simple tongue
Remaining forever undone
The surly use of random
For the sake of evermore
I lie upon creation
And create sensation
To be wanted nevermore
The old sayings are not mine
Those sources revealed
Wounds never healed
In the whirl of conjecture, I shine
To entertain and always fall
Pretending hidden meaning
Awaken new scheming
With no relevant point at all
For I had no wise elder
Spouting wisdom jewels
Disdaining all the fools
No hat with bells like jesters
just pretend the influence
Lying in fold
Walking the cold
The gems of wit are common sense
When I spout old sayings
Claiming story load
Resting elder mode
I only whisper donkey brays
on a shadow of defeat
and invent wise elders
to back up the rhymes
the confluence of influence
is always hard to find

By Jon, Victoria



Art by Phillip, Victoria

NOW WE CONFORM

I remember the slave ships
They sailed the Trans-Atlantic
Now they sell penal institutions, to be filled with
descendants of those who survived the trip
I remember on the slave ship
We were packed in the hull, in our own filth and stench
Now we're packed and warehoused in cells, in inhumane
conditions, smellin' another human's stench
I remember on the slave ship
Bodies were thrown overboard to drown
Today we're thrown in penitentiaries fo' life
and given the D.P. for being 'G Down'
I remember on the slave ship
In the dark under-belly we plotted revolts against our
captors
Today, we plot on other captives
never contemplating the system as a factor
I remember on the slave ship
We shuffled in shackles on decks
Now we bail prison yards,
pump-iron, post-up and stay-on-deck
I remember on the slave ship
The crew forced us to the ground,
assaulting us with barbs
Now we lay spread-eagle on prison yards,
the crew standing over us are prison guards
I remember on the slave ship
humans insulted our sense of humanity
Within the Department of Corrections they debilitate,
not rehabilitate nor strengthen our mentality

By Ojore McKinnon, death row, California



Art by Sharon Yarttos



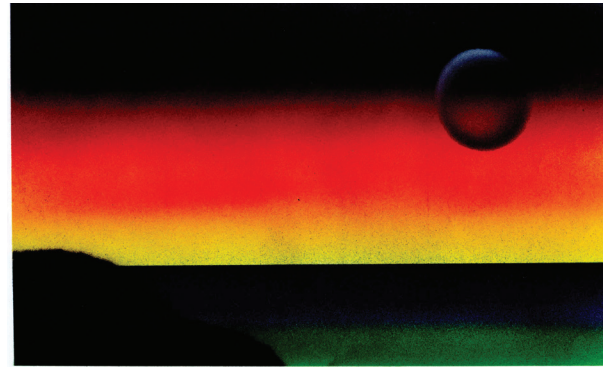
Art by Jaxan Khalil Assad O'Reilly, E14512
 Brisbane Mens C. C.
 Locked Bag 13101, Archerfield, QLD 4108



Art by Preston, Brisbane Youth Detention Centre



Art by Robert McCullough P78220
 CTF, PO Box 705, Soledad
 California, 93960, USA



Airbrush art by Scott D



Art by Robbie, NSW

HUMAN OR ANIMAL

I wander among the dark depths
of these shallow opening pillars
that engrip me in its four-sided
stone wall of savagery.
Violence surrounds my innocence.
I become suffocated from smoke bombs
thrown from inmate altercations.
Darkness and pain linger in this
sweltering heat of chaos.
My visual senses are disrupted.
I become a paralysis of many structures,
movement without moving forward.
So, what is my motive in life?
Is it meaningful as the purpose for which
my inner-humanity was received,
extracted from the dark-womb of my mother?
I hear her screaming shouts of
anguish as she delivered me into
this world. Am I a star child or
star burst faded in the midst
of overcast dusty clouds?
My roots are thorns slanted against the
concrete pavement from where I stand
that consists of no flowers.
My heart blooms only black roses in spring,
endless winters blistering my soul
in traumatic coldness. And again and again,
a fearful reality takes over my visions
where I exist inside a stone-realm around
thousands of captivated imagery.

AM I HUMAN OR ANIMAL?

*By Raymond White BJ5924
California Healthcare Facility
P.O. Box 213040, Stockton
CA 95213, USA*

ICE, PART 2

My name is ICE, and I takes lives
I was addicted I couldn't put the pipe down
my mind start to shut down
I start to lose control of the lifestyle that I'm living,
and I'm willing to commit any crimes just to get high
Now you are high you'll lie to your mother
You'll steal from your father
When you see their tears
You should feel sad.
But you forget how you were raised
Cos you still suck in an ice maze
Let me show you my world.
I'll teach you my ways.
I take kids from parents, and parents from kids.
I tear people from God, and separate from friends.
I'll take everything from you.
Your looks and your pride.
I'll be with you always, right by your side.
You'll give up everything
Your family, your friends, your money

Then you'll be alone
In the zone of the Devil
When I'm finished with you you'll be lucky to live
If you try me, be warned, this is no game.
If given the chance, I'll drive you insane.
I'll ravish your body, I'll control your mind
I'll own you completely; your soul will be mine
The nightmares I'll give you while lying in bed.
The voices you'll hear from inside your head.
The sweats, the shakes, and the visions you'll see
I want you mob to know these are all gifts from me
Mr ICE who takes lives is never nice
So please, take my advice

By Troy Benning 532019, Alice Springs C.C.

PTSD

PTSD, inside my soul,
Within my heart, a great big hole.
With an anger that is building,
It's so hard for self-control.
When I'm always changed so tight,
I wake with nightmares, in the night,
There is nowhere that I can go,
so it's always fight, not flight.
No love for me, that has been gave,
and to the system, I'm a slave,
Closer, closer, closer, I'm edging towards the grave.
Too many years, inside a cell,
I've lived my own, fair share of hell,
I see visions of a darker time, that I cannot repel.
I've seen the violence, seen the dead,
Seen Dad shoot himself, in the head,
He gently pulled the trigger,
and it sprayed the wall in red.
My soul's empty, am I a ghost?
Of chances, I've not made the most,
It's hard to see a finish line,
when they just move the post?
I know I live, when I am bleeding,
No love, but love, is what I'm needing,
Please don't let me remain alone, is all that I am pleading.
For years I have, remained alone,
For my mistakes, I can't atone,
Inside of a prison cell, the place where I have grown.
It seems existence, is my life,
I have seen both sides, of the knife,
Half my life I've been alone, the other half in strife.
All I know is, struggle's real,
I have seen, the blood congeal,
When young I used to cut myself, so I can know I feel?
I've no-one to hear, my confession;
I suffer PTSD, depression,
I'm from the school of hard knocks,
it seems class is back in session.
This is a glimpse, inside of me,
A look at my, PTSD,
All I know is I'm alone, who'll be there when I'm free?

By Bukks, Victoria

YOUR HONOUR, MY CLIENT PLEADS NOT GUILTY

BY WAY OF CHILDHOOD

BY ABE STEPHANSON

Author's note: *This piece is offered not as provocation, but as calibration. It invites us—as practitioners, stewards, and witnesses—to reckon with the ethical and developmental stakes of our work. In a climate where political expediency threatens to override evidence and humanity, we must remember: our proximity to harm is not neutral. It is a site of responsibility. May this serve as a mirror, a refusal, and a reminder of what stewardship demands. All feedback – positive or otherwise – is welcome.*

In case you missed it, Victorian Premier Jacinta Allan declared: "Courts will treat these children like adults." With that, Victoria joins Queensland's 'adult time for adult crime' philosophy—an archaic nod to retribution as a response to juvenile crime.

There is a startling admission embedded in both statements: Yes, they are children. And yes, we will judge and punish them as if they are not.

This is not a semantic slip, or error of language—it is a deliberate suspension of developmental truth. An ethical and biological breach.

Children—need the point be laboured—are not adults. Their brains, hearts, and muscles are still forming. Their instincts, understanding, coping, and reasoning capacities are incomplete.

We legislate around this.
We build entire systems of protection upon it.
We do not let children drive, vote, purchase alcohol or cigarettes, or go to war.
We deny them autonomy for the sake of self-protection.
We appropriately criminalise their mistreatment.
And yet, when fear surges and headlines beckon, we pretend otherwise—not by accident, but by design.

To pretend a child is an adult is not a neutral legal fiction—it is an abject moral failure.
A breach of epistemic integrity—a denial of reality.
A refusal to reckon with what childhood actually means:

Not innocence, but incompleteness. Not purity, but potential.

To punish that incompleteness as if it were volition is to enact harm under the guise of justice. This is not new.

Beyond the ethical and developmental betrayal, there is the small matter of outcomes: The evidence—abundant, longstanding, and clear—shows youth incarceration is counterproductive.

It does not rehabilitate. It does not deter.

It entrenches trauma, compounds disadvantage, and scripts futures of recurrence. It produces more crime, more human misery, more wasted potential. (And yes, it violates the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child—but let's not get too pedantic.)

It is not a solution. It is a punitive sentence—one that begins before the courtroom and echoes long after release, and far beyond the individual.

And yet, the Victorian government joins Queensland in this choreography of retribution. Not because it lacks data, but because it lacks courage. Not because it misunderstands children, but because it chooses to mis-recognize them. Because it prioritises oversimplification, ignorance, finger-pointing and political expediency over complexity, nuance, shared responsibility and arguably, humanity.

This is not leadership or policy. It is performance. A ritual offering to the shock jocks, the ignorant, the hypocritical, and the vigilante chorus. A headline masquerading as a solution.

But juvenile crime is not a referendum on morality. It is a mirror—reflecting collective trauma, social neglect, and institutional failure. To respond with punishment is to smash the mirror and call it repair.

We must refuse this seduction.
We must treat truth as a public good, not a political inconvenience.

And we must plead not-guilty by way of childhood, but responsible by way of stewardship.

By Abe Stephanson



HOLLYWOOD GEORGE WAUGH

BY RAY MOONEY

Hollywood George stood one-seventy-five centimetres, scrawny, with an emerging pot belly, and looked more like a fat matchstick than a matinee idol. We called him Hollywood because of our penchant for attributing sarcastic nicknames. But he had charisma, and was one of the all-time great philanderers.

When I met Hollywood in 1969, he was thirty, six years older than me. He'd been a music archivist for a radio station and knew more about the music industry than the editors of *Rolling Stone*. He carried a contact list that included Johnny O'Keefe, Billy Thorpe, Bob Dylan and even Crash Craddock and had the goss on them all. 'They taught Crash Craddock to sing in the plane on the way over to Australia.' 'Dylan's got a wife in every country.' 'I taught Billy Thorpe to stomp at Surf City in The Cross.' 'Johnny O'Keefe used to pinch my yippee pills when we worked on Six O'clock Rock.' We never believed a word. Hollywood had as much credibility as Crown Casino telling patrons to gamble responsibly.

Hollywood's go was bouncing cheques, so he was a yo-yo, in and out of prison. I was a sports fanatic who participated in every prison sporting competition, cricket and athletics in summer and football in winter. Hollywood's one sporting talent was an ability to swing a cork cricket ball off three steps. He was unplayable and when I captained the A Division cricket team, I always gave him the new ball. We won the inter-divisional cricket in 1969 against C Division, who were favourites due to their captain Graeme Totum Pauley, who could have opened the bowling for Australia.

Hollywood was also a poet with a unique gift for imagination. 'Why don't your knees throw a party and invite your stockings down?' Outside prison, Hollywood trawled newspaper social columns searching for lonely hearts. He always carried a chocolate box of replies and in prison his main concern was organising his letters and visits to prevent doubling up. Hollywood worked in the General Store as an office writer and was able to smuggle letters out to his ever-growing harem. If you believed every conquest Hollywood bragged about, then as the saying went, 'if you can be geed, you can be fucked!'

But we loved his stories, especially the one he always told to impress newcomers. Hollywood claimed a relationship with the ex-wife of a South Australian Detective. According to Hollywood, the wife was well off, wanted to marry him and lived in a mansion with all the trappings. We lapped it up because coppers were always sending crims messages of how they were fucking our wives. Hollywood moved in with her but it only lasted six months. 'I gave her the flick.' 'Why?' 'Too many chicks wanted a piece of me. And she owed me dough.' But we knew he would've owed her dough and she would've kicked him out. Apparently, she later reunited with her husband. 'So, what'd you do, Hollywood?' 'I waited until they were out of the house and sneaked in, cut all her dresses in half, slit their mattress, had a shit, sewed it back up, then drove her car into the swimming pool.' We believed him because we wanted to. I became close to Hollywood.

Prior to his release he asked if I knew anyone on the outside who might help him get a job. A golden rule for smart crims was to never ask outsiders for favours, especially if it involved helping another crim. When I'd been on remand in 1968, bail refused, I promised a crim, Trevor Pettit, whom I'd bonded with, that if I was given bail, I'd bail him out. He was on burglary charges but couldn't get access to his \$600 bail, which he claimed he had buried. I got bail and true to my word, bailed him. But to do so I needed a friend to act as bondsman, as a bailee was unable to bail another. I told Pettit that if he intended shooting through to give me a few days' notice so I could 'withdraw' his bail and cover myself. The unwritten 'rule' in those days was if someone bailed you, you had an onus to put the amount of the bail in their hand immediately, but if you didn't have the money and intended shooting through, you had an onus to warn the bailer. 'Course, mate, I wouldn't do the wrong thing by you. What'd you take me for, a fucken dog?' But Pettit was one of those people who was as mean as a Cash Converter's assessor. True to form he absconded leaving me \$600 in the red. I wasn't worried about the money. That \$600 was the best money I ever spent. When I returned to prison I did so with the reputation of someone who kept his word, and inside that counted. But the police gave my friend a terrible time believing he had purposefully orchestrated the bail rort. From that moment, I decided never to involve outside friends with anything to do with prison matters.

I wanted to help Hollywood, so I reluctantly asked another outside friend to help Hollywood find a job, which he did, even allowing Hollywood to stay in his home. Two months later my friend visited. He was teary. I exploded before my friend said anything. 'Don't tell me the bastard robbed you!' 'I wish he had,' he whimpered. I could tell my friend was trying his hardest not to throw guilt my way. I didn't say any more, allowing him to explain in his own time. 'He slept with Jan. They ran off together.' At first I didn't believe it as I knew how close my friend and his wife were. They seemed the most devoted couple on the planet. I realised there was nothing I could say to ease his pain and simply shook my head apologetically. 'I'm not here to give you a hard time, Ray. I just want you to know.' And with that he left, forever. That was 1970. I still feel guilty and always will.

Hollywood was back within a year. My dilemma, do I play sheriff and give him a belting or adopt the crim's code of minding one's own business when it came to relationships? I knew there were two sides to every story, but this was a straight-out betrayal of my trust so I couldn't let it pass. I collared him the first chance I had. He would've known I was going to confront him.

'Why, Hollywood?'

'Mate, don't blame me. You've no idea how hard I tried to resist, but she wouldn't leave me alone!'

'Crap!'

'Dead set, mate, she was a case. Everyone in the street had been there. I was the last bloke in line.'

I knew he was talking shit but there's something about jail that makes everything outside seem like a parallel universe

and holding grudges based on civilian values was as stupid as 'accepting the word of coppers.' Hollywood was the best bull-shitter in the game. Today he would've made a fortune as a social influencer. So, scrabble it was.

He was in and out twice more for shit-pot blues plus breaching parole, and each time, he was allowed to serve his sentence in A Division. We had good times, always laughing and getting up to minor mischief. Like the time he worked out how to smuggle contraband into the prison. The Director of Prisons was Eric Shade, an ex-Footscray footballer but a die-hard ball-n-chainer. If Shade had his way we would've all been working in chain gangs. The first Monday of each month Shade drove his car into the prison garage for a service and cut-n-polish. Hollywood worked in the general store next to the garage. He discovered Shade's address and on the Sunday night at the end of each month he had one of his admirers sneak round to Shade's home and attach contraband under the chassis of his car. It was simply a matter of Hollywood organising a mechanic to snooker the contraband. But the trick was to get it into A Division and that's where I came in. One of my jobs was occasionally moving sporting equipment and hobby material around the prison in a trolley. Although the trolley had to pass the Security-Box area I basically had immunity and was rarely searched. For a year we had money, vitamin pills and the latest porn magazines. But Hollywood couldn't keep it to himself. That's always been the downfall of most crims. They want the world to know how clever they are. The rort finally came unstuck when Hollywood was pressured by a heavy crim to smuggle in a gun. Terrified, he used the old 'drop-box' trick and convinced an admirer to send an anonymous letter to the *Truth* newspaper giving Shade up for rorting the system by getting freebies. Nothing was printed but Shade stopped bringing his car in for a service.

Hollywood was released in 1974 and managed to stay out until my release in July 1975. He had returned to Queensland, and although carrying on several simultaneous relationships, kept out of trouble. In 1976 I enrolled in the 3-year drama course and in my second year of the course formed an ex-prisoners theatre company, Governor's Pleasure. Our first production was *Everynight Everynight*, based on the horrific experiences my close prison friend Christopher Dale Flannery had experienced in H Division. Hollywood returned to Melbourne and became our honorary PR. None of us were being paid. We divvied up what was left over after each production, equally among the 12 members of the company. Hollywood worked tirelessly organising interviews, designing flyers and getting our first play genuine publicity. Initially he cashed in our curiosity value with the media, but our company had excellent performers and it ultimately took the theatre scene by storm with current affairs television and full-page articles in mainstream newspapers. But it didn't happen overnight. When we started, all we had was a belief in ourselves and a desire to reveal to the world the atrocities committed by sadistic screws on inmates in H Division. I applied for a bank loan to fund our first production. I sensed a revengeful glee in the manager's eyes when he rejected my application. I wanted to inquire if he had ever been a bank robbery victim. 'I can give you a \$1,000 loan if you deposit \$1,000 security.' 'If I could deposit \$1,000, why would I need a loan?' 'To run a business legitimately. We can then set you up with a cheque account and you can incorporate.'

The more he explained it the more sense it made. I borrowed the money from my mother, set up the account, where I was accorded a cheque book requiring my signature on each cheque and we were on our way.

Next, we needed a theatre and a rehearsal space. Our first meetings were in the back rooms of pubs, which turned out not to be the best corporate move as most of us were pissed half-way into the meeting. When I queried how Hollywood was surviving financially, he claimed he was getting by on the dole and writing sex letters and answers for *Penthouse* and *Truth*. I never knew whether to believe Hollywood, but one thing was certain. His box of female admirers had grown to shoe box size and constantly remained under one arm. After a few beers he'd proudly read a couple. 'Hollywood, darling, I want your body. I need your body.' 'Gives a look at the handwriting!' 'Ha, ha, jealous.'

But I was happy for him and each night he'd turn up with a different admirer hanging off his arm. And many were glammers. But they rarely lasted a week. Only Hollywood knew whose fault that was but there were a few occasions when disappointed admirers turned up to theatre events complaining Hollywood had ripped them off before cruelly discarding them. I was often saddened because I wanted him to have a meaningful relationship and hopefully settle down. But that was never on the cards. Hollywood had become the number one active member of the lonely-hearts club. Had he found a way to charge participants membership Hollywood might've become rich. I had a brief relationship with an exceptional artist and her two young kids. We threw a party for our friends one Sunday arvo. It was crammed with artists, sportspeople and family, including Hollywood, Chris (who had recently been released and yet to be labelled Rentokill), and his wife Kathy. Hollywood had displayed his cricketing skills that arvo by clean-bowling the young kids on the front lawn and was the life of the party.

As evening approached a dozen of us were left smoking joints in the front room when the phone rang. 'Is Waugh still there?' asked an angry Chris. 'Yeah, mate.' 'Don't let him leave.' I had no idea what Chris was on about and called Hollywood outside. He was stoned and grinning like a certified idiot. 'Is there something I should know about?' 'Relax, Moonman.' 'What've you fucking done?' 'Put yourself on vitamins, man.' And he staggered back inside. Chris's car screeched to a halt. He jumped out, hurriedly followed by a flustered Kathy. 'Where is he?' I looked at Kathy. She shrugged. Chris walked straight past me. I followed him inside. 'Can I see you for a second, George?' Chris politely asked. Hollywood was sitting on the floor in the middle of the group and pretended not to hear. 'Now!' 'Carn, George,' I added. The group were mystified, and my partner's body language implied she wasn't happy. Chris picked up her vibes. 'Sorry to interrupt, Luv,' said Chris. 'There's no problem. I promise. I just need to talk to George.' I indicated for Chris to wait outside, and I'd bring Hollywood

out. Chris grudgingly left.
'Mate, Carn, let's sort this out!' But Hollywood had no intention of moving.
'Now!' I demanded.
Hollywood hesitantly stood. We walked outside. Whack. The handmade cricket bat smashed into the side of Hollywood's face. As Chris brought it up to clobber him directly on the scone, I stood in front of Hollywood.
'Mate, I pleaded to Chris.
'He bloody stole my purse!' yelled Kathy.
'You fucken cunt of a thing!' screamed Chris as he whacked Hollywood again. I grabbed for the bat and prevented a lethal blow.
'Mate, witnesses. Carn, use your fucken head!'
Hollywood mumbled that he didn't do anything.
'I couldn't give a fuck about witnesses. You're off, you cunt!'
'How much did he take?'
'Everything.'
'I didn't! I fucken didn't!' pleaded Hollywood.

My partner appeared at the door, horrified at the sight of one man trying to kill another in a foetal position protecting himself with flailing arms. I dragged Hollywood away.
'Give me a moment.'
Chris reluctantly nodded. I held my hand out for the bat. He shook his head.
'Witnesses, fingerprints.'
Chris held it out. I took it by the bottom. It's been hand-turned from redwood, bloody heavy. I took Hollywood round the corner of the suburban house, which was in one of those suburbs you see on the nightly news when residents state they how were shocked that something so violent could've happened in their street.
'Where is it?' I demanded.
'What?'
'Do you wanta live or not?'
Hollywood didn't answer. He didn't need to.
'Give it to me!'
He removed Kathy's purse from a trouser pocket.
'Is it all there?'
He nodded.
'Stay here.'
I gave Kathy her purse. She checked the contents then nodded to Chris.
'He owes you his fucken life, mate!' said Chris leaving. I removed my hanky, wiping the bat clean of prints.
'You owe me one,' I joked, but no one laughed.

I was living in a flat in St Kilda's infamous Gray St. Hollywood asked if he could crash for a couple of weeks. I cautiously agreed, stipulating it was only for two weeks. Down the road was The Ritz, a wicked strip joint. It wasn't long before our flat was second home to every deviant in St Kilda courtesy of Hollywood's generosity.
'Mate, they're barred!' I told him.
'C'mon, Moonman, everyone needs a break.'
'Well, that bloke, for starters, is an undercover.'
'Yeah, and I'm working for ASIO!'
'Out, and you too!'
'Mate.'
'I said two weeks. It's been two months.'
Hollywood and his entourage reluctantly left. Two nights later I was raided by police, apparently looking for an escapee. But I knew it was a warning, though I didn't know

who dobbed me in, Hollywood or the undercover.

Our theatre company was putting a second play on at The Pram Factory. They had given us a terrific deal for hiring the Back Theatre of only \$200 a week. I wrote a cheque for the first week. When it bounced I raced to the bank manager.
'Why would this cheque bounce? There should be more than \$1,000 in the account!' The Manager showed me the account was empty because I had withdrawn a cheque for \$1,150 the previous week. I queried it and he produced the cheque with my signature. I meekly apologized and left.

Hollywood was drinking with a group in Masie's Lounge in Toorak Road. When he saw me pushing through the crowd, he stood to greet me, or maybe to set himself for a hasty retreat. I feigned by acknowledging his female friend then smashed him flush on the nose. He managed to destroy all the drinks on the accompanying tables as he hit the deck. I glared at him, but he simulated unconsciousness. 'Stay there, mate. It's my shout,' I quipped and walked out.

Three years later, I answered a slight knock at the door.
'I hope you're satisfied, I can only breathe out of one nostril!' I looked him up and down. The paunch was Halloween-pumpkin size, the eyes baggy loose and his complexion beef suet tallow. I almost expected him to give me something as a down payment but all I got was a slow rambling of how fortunate he was to be alive after his car accident had left him hospitalized for six months.
'They stitched me up with all this webbing. There's a mile of it holding my guts in.'
'Must be bloody strong,' I whispered loudly.
'Do I get a fucken beer, or what?'
Neither the missing money, nor the thump were mentioned, and we took up as if nothing had happened. The accident left him a total wreck. I couldn't help but love him despite knowing our friendship was always destined for heartbreak.

A year later I had a blue with my lady and visited him for the night in his bungalow in South Yarra. It was a total dive. I got blind that night and woke up the next morning on the floor, with Hollywood snoring through his one good nostril in his single bed. When I got home, I was curtly informed not to bring my arsehole friend around.
'Why?'
'Because he rang me last night, didn't he?'
'When?'
'He reckoned you were in the jacuzzi screwing some fat chick. Did I want to meet up and get back at you.'
'Ha, ha.'
'I don't find that funny.'
'Neither do I.'
I rang and told him never to get in touch. He slammed the phone in my ear.

Three years later I was in bed with the same lady and the phone rang at 3.00 am. 'Hallo.'
'It's me.' The voice was raspy and slow-motion-surreal, but I knew it was Hollywood.
'I love you, mate.' Click. I returned to sleep without giving it a second thought.
His mother rang the next day to tell me Hollywood passed away peacefully during the night.

THE COLONEL

BY RUSSELL FULLER HILL

Mark was following the set of keys, jangling from the belt of the guard striding in front of him. In seven months, he had only seen the one key used, the magical one-key-that-ruled-them-all. The one-key opened the next gate with the standardised pattern of wavy flattened steel bars that reminded him of soap scum trails on glass shower screens. He was counting down the gates, three more to go, he thought. You counted down everything in this prison; days to visits, days to spends, days to medical, days to court appearance, steps to the end of the wing corridor, minutes to lockdown, and now, sleeps to transfer ... one. Transfer to the 'Farm' was the decision. No more enclosed corridors of soap scummed steel bars, no more lockdowns, no more weight loss. But, unhappily, no more time with 'The Colonel'.

They arrived at his unit and finally his wing, the wing for the difficult prisoners. Nineteen paces down the central corridor, the magic key jangled for one last time. Mark was feeling conflicted, buoyant at the transfer but also sad at abandoning the nearest thing to a father he ever had. He called him The Colonel because that was his character. Thirty years in the army with a voice built for the parade ground and an attitude that brook no argument. The Colonels' voice defined him.

When the guard opened the door, all Mark could see was a diminished, forlorn figure sitting silhouetted against the cell window on his bed. Mark felt for the light switch as the door thudded shut. The Colonel had the build of a shopping centre Santa, big gut, wide shoulders, luxuriant white moustache, beard and eyebrows, with huge hands and strong legs. His posture now was of surrender, soft and passive, his cherubic face had the shadow of grief with dried tears welding his eyes shut. He was limply holding his walking stick as if that could give him strength.

Mark was frozen 'What's wrong?'

The Colonel opened his bloodshot eyes. 'Dad's dead. Died this morning ... ' His voice was now like a butterfly floating in a gentle breeze. Mark took time to process the changed voice coming from that body. Mark sat on the toilet and looked at shell of the man who had rescued him from his own depression. He searched for the right words, he wasn't going to use the trite 'RUOK?'

'Have they let you call your niece yet?' was all he could think of.

'No, but they said I could call when I get back from medication ... she might have something organised by then.' He stopped and started to sob. 'She has always been better at organising.'

Mark reached over to the tissue box and put it next to The Colonel as the tears continued, feeling powerless. Eventually all the pain and sorrow were emptied and the reddened eyes looked up at him.

'Where are you going?'

'The Farm, maybe, if a floor bed becomes available.'

'Jesus, floor buddies even there!?' The Colonel boomed. He was back.

'Guess so...!' Mark grinned, 'but at least there will be sunshine and edible food!'

The Colonel' smiled weakly, 'You'll fit in much better there'

Mark felt a wave of guilt flow over him. Should he have tried harder to convince a stubborn, proud cellmate to listen to his legal advice and get the show over? After 12 months of anger, delays, and intransigence, it was too late now, The Colonel' would no longer have a frail father to care for.

Life in remand was like this, constant change, black/white, happy/sad, bored/activated. The Colonel was a real activator, always up for a conversation, an anecdote or discussion. They spent most of that night reminiscing over the parade of memorable events they had witnessed while sharing the wing and a cell. The ice-cold monster with a fetish for naked walks along the corridors, the ear splitting, cell-trashing crazy, the baby-faced pain addict, the psychopaths, the hoarders, the fantasists, the schemers and the survivors, who clung on every day, like they did. Then they had another very raw conversation about pride, honour, stupidity, fear and love. By the end, Mark's voice was a faint croak, so much laughter, pain, entertainment and experience contained in a 3x2 cell. Mark spent the rest of the night listening to the gentle snore below, the occasional missed breath and catch-up gasp, just as Mark was tensing. Tomorrow was important but tonight was critical, he would monitor The Colonel as a family would.

The next morning Mark was up early going through his final belongings check and donating excess items to his partner in rules-dodging. Mark gulped down his morning cereal when the one-key magicked the door open at 7.00am, racing to ensure he got first in line for medication and then slipped through his two-minute shower before the inevitable muster and lockup. He was not going to risk leaving smelly. A note was pushed under the door awhile later. He began the long wait. The distant magic key was jangling at the wing gate. Mark reacted immediately and leapt down the ladder. The Colonel was gently unfolding from his bed. He had shrunken overnight. Whatever part of The Colonels' frame his father had occupied was now gone. He stood for a few moments, taking in the last few seconds. Smiling at the same time, they didn't need to say anything, 23 hours a day together for four months meant the intimate knowledge they shared didn't need words.

'Ready?' came the guard's gruff voice.

Grabbing his black bin bag of belongings Mark replied 'Yes', not breaking his gaze to The Colonel shifting uncomfortably on his bed, hesitantly reaching for his walking stick.

Mark held up his palm. 'Don't get up mate. Please. I umm ... really hope you can get out for the funeral and-' his voice caught, he couldn't say the thing he wanted to say.

A smile formed, gentle in the tangled forest of his face. The familiar booming voice erupted, I just want to say thank you, for everything. For all the talk, for all the help, for being there... I won't forget'

'Come on' came the grunt.

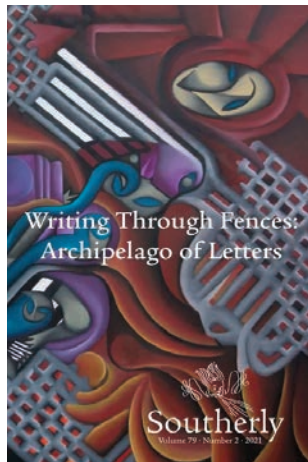
Mark nodded one last time and followed the magic key one last time.

A few months later Mark found out The Colonel had changed his plea and been released. Mark felt the tension release and the guilt disappear.

BOOK REVIEWS

Writing Through Fences: Archipelago of Letters

(2021) is a powerful collection of memoir, poetry, fiction, non-fiction, and images by people impacted by refugee incarceration. These works challenge Australia's offshore detention policies and advocate for refugee rights. Over 130 contributors share their experiences, asserting both personal identity and their right to exist. The editors have curated a powerful story in thematic chapters, exploring friendship, resistance, love, loss, memory, dignity, confinement, remembrance, testimony, women's voices, and hope.



As someone far removed from this reality who has never faced displacement, I know I cannot capture the pain and despair written within these pages. And I doubt my brief review can truly reflect the depth of trauma and insight these works contain. The most meaningful way to honour the authors is by sharing their own words. Here are just a few words that stayed with me.

*"Patrol officers kicked our hearts,
Smashed our pride beneath their feet.
Every home turned into cold incarceration
As we ran into them for refuge"*

"I didn't run from my country to destroy yours. I came here to join you because we both want the same thing – peace."

This is the reality of offshore detention: imprisonment, isolation, loss of identity – psychological and physical torture. The Australian government claims these people aren't imprisoned and are treated humanely. But these authors reveal the truth about the forgotten prison populations on Christmas Island, Manus, and other remote detention centres. Instead of refuge, they're met with brutal conditions; stripped of hope, freedom, and a future.

"They were only human, seeking better life from their war ravaged and torn homes."

This book contains truths every Australian should know so we don't remain complicit in the suffering of human beings caught in political crossfire. This is more than art—it's a call to action, a spotlight on the mistreatment and unjust detention of migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers.

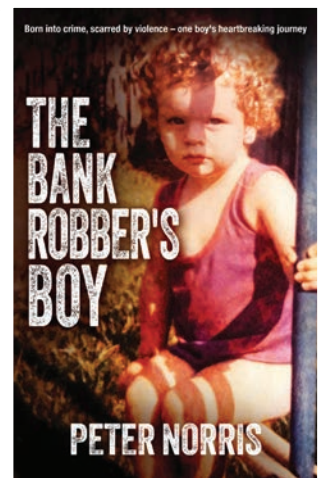
"It brings light to what has been shoved into darkness, it humanises those who have been dehumanised"

Come on Australia, we must do better.

By Josephine Bull, Criminology student

The Bank Robber's Boy

(2025) is a memoir by Peter Norris, the youngest son of notorious bank robber Clarence "Clarry" Norris. Peter begins by exploring his childhood, sharing the traumas and identity crisis that come with having a father who is "famous" for his crimes. Throughout the book, much of the retelling of his youth is through the eyes of his older brother Dave.



Peter conveys the large impact an individual's environment has; he explores the ways in which the choices of his father led him down a similar path. Peter details several interactions he has with figures in the criminal world and the trauma he experienced in his early childhood. His father was not a constant in his youth as he was taken away to prison or would be on a "crime spree". Peter explores the loyalty and love he had to his father in a compelling way as the reader is able to understand this alongside the conflict due to the crimes his father was committing.

Throughout *The Bank Robber's Boy*, the reader is able to follow the inner battle that Peter is exposed to when a world of crime is within reach, contrasted with a life of normalcy. For many individuals this lifestyle of crime is one that they are not exposed to, and I thoroughly enjoyed the way Peter is able to detail his personal experiences without glorifying a life of crime.

Peter Norris has an engaging and empathetic narrative voice that evokes sympathy and an understanding of the inner conflict he faced. Norris was able to raise the question of redemption and rehabilitation. Norris offered a nuanced perspective of the complexities of having a father involved in horrific criminal behaviours whilst also being seen as respectable father to Peter and his siblings.

Overall, it was a powerful story that explored the intricacy Peter had in order to escape the "shadow" of his father and finding his own individuality. *The Bank Robber's Boy* beautifully and skilfully explored the difficulties and brought humanity to a life of crime and the challenges Peter was confronted with in his youth. I highly recommend this as a novel that will challenge your misconceptions of those involved in crime from a young age.

"I'm more than the Bank Robber's Boy"

By Paige Fullerton, Criminology student

FILM REVIEWS

A Different Man (2024) is a new take on an age-old question: would my life be better if? We often fill in the blanks by envisioning an improvement to the fears and securities that we believe plague our own lives. In this film, physical disfigurement offers the lens by which the audience views the trials of Edward. Living with a severe facial deformity, Edward attempts to improve his lot in life by



undergoing a radical medical procedure. This experimental treatment promises to eradicate facial tumors and leave the patient with a new, unblemished face. Edward arrives at his decision to pursue this treatment after experiencing a constant sense of loneliness, despondency, and emotional resignation. His daily existence is portrayed as one of sadness and misery. It becomes clear that a desire for a new face is really a yearning for a new life.

This movie comprises elements of drama, comedy, and science fiction. *A Different Man* makes the viewer laugh out loud, ponder the misfortunes of Edward, and examine their own beliefs regarding self-love and contentment. Edward's saga from "ugly frog" to "handsome prince" is told through his relationships with Ingrid, his love interest, and Oswald, an eccentric extrovert with facial tumors. The movie utilises subtlety and graphic violence to show how Edward grapples with feelings of self-loathing and how repressed anger, when unleashed, ultimately undermines Edward's efforts to reconstruct his life.

This film is an intriguing exploration of what may occur if we have the possibility to dramatically modify a key aspect of our lives. If we truly want to change, we should start by addressing issues within ourselves. Just ask Edward.

Rating: 4 Jailbirds out of 5 – "A new face on an old question"

By Vincent, NSW

Bloodsport (1988) was a favourite from my childhood. But it turns out some things are best remembered the way we thought of them as children. When viewed without my pre-teenage bravado, the film offers little of interest. The dialogue is wooden at best and painful at worst, and while the fighters are skilled, when viewed in high-resolution,

rather than on VHS, the combat looks about as real as pro-wrestling.

The premise of the film is ridiculous of course, but even more so is the fact that a man claims this is based on his true story. Frank Dux, who is portrayed by Jean-Claude Van Damme, still insists he won the secret 'Kumite' tournament depicted in the film, though even the film's



screenwriter, Sheldon Lettich, describes the story as fabricated, saying he simply used Dux's "tall tales" as a film plot. Debunking Dux isn't exactly difficult on many levels, but the math alone is the most absurd part. Dux first talked about the alleged Kumite in 1980 to *Black Belt* magazine, describing a single-elimination tournament. Held over a period of 3 days, competitors allegedly progressed through 20 rounds of fights each day, and losers had to leave. There is, of course, no proof for this other than Dux's word. The end of *Bloodsport* claims Dux received a world record for the most consecutive knockouts in a tournament, with 56. This number impressed me as a child, though now it only serves to set off my bullshit alarm. Let me explain. If there are five rounds of fighting in a single-elimination tournament, this will require 32 participants. Six rounds will require 64, and seven rounds needs 128. I'm sure you see the pattern. Each time you add an extra round, you have to double the number of fighters. This adds up fast. In order for Dux to go through 56 rounds, there would have needed to be significantly more competitors in the Kumite than there are people on the planet.

Others have pointed this out, at which point Dux does what he always does—changes his story. *Bloodsport* depicts Dux being trained by his supposed ninja master, Senzo 'Tiger' Tanaka, though Dux provided no evidence this man exists. In 2017, Dux found a death certificate of someone named Senzo Tanaka who died in Los Angeles, offering this as long-overdue proof. However, Dux claimed for years on his own website, in a now deleted page, that Tanaka had died in Japan. In response to the impossible math of the Kumite, Dux's website now hosts an article describing a tournament format that contradicts the original version he told *Black Belt*, where losers kept fighting other participants. Sure, you'll enjoy a few 'it's so bad it's good' laughs upon watching *Bloodsport* now, but the film's real legacy was establishing Dux as a martial arts fraud.

By Alex Martin

GREENBUSH ART EXHIBITION

BY DAMIEN LINNANE

At this stage, I've curated four prison art exhibitions on behalf of *Paper Chained*, and while the few other prison art exhibitions I'd been to were fantastic, they mostly consisted of paintings. This is not at all surprising, since I know from lived experience that prisoners have access to very few other art materials. So when I found out there is an annual prison art exhibition in Australia that only shows sculptures welded out of recycled metal, I was taken aback.

Greenbush has been held annually since 2017 at the Araluen Arts Centre in Alice Springs. Each year has a different theme chosen by the prisoners, and for the exhibition that launched in November 2025, the theme was 'Outback'. Eight prisoners from Alice Springs Correctional Centre welded over 100 sculptures made out of used materials discarded from the prison itself, and scrap brought in by the engineering officer and the arts teacher and exhibition founder Susan McDonnell. The men are all enrolled in a Certificate II or Certificate IV in Visual Arts at Charles Darwin University, and from the looks of things, they could have bright futures in the arts. In February, I travelled to the exhibition to have a look. The collection was an incredibly impressive sight. Kelly McCarthy, Manager of Projects and Education at the prison, met me at the exhibition to tell me more about it.

"Most of the prisoners do welding for a living, if you can call it that, in the industries of the prison, but that's mostly building things like beds and manufacturing things for the prison facility. For the exhibition, they get to be a lot more creative."

I asked Kelly if the men formally study welding at the prison, as well as visual art.



'Mrs Mare', a sculpture by 'GM'

"We've had people come into the prison to teach short courses in welding before. What we found is that the things they teach in those courses, the men are already well beyond them. What they learn on the job is really good, and they're great mentors for the next people coming in to work in that area. We do have people who go and work for engineering companies when they get out. Welding is a great skill, especially for a lot of people who go live in communities after release. There might not be many engineering opportunities in Alice Springs, but they can be the guy who fixes busted trailers, broken cattle grates, and things like that."



The exhibition opening back in November 2025 was a massive event, and over half the works sold on that night alone. Kelly tells me he bought one of the bull heads, and the Alice Springs Correctional Centre Superintendent bought a sculpture of a donkey. Over 80% of the works had sold by the time I arrived, and I purchased three of the few that were left. The Greenbush exhibition ended on February 8 this year, and I flew back to Newcastle the next day. The day after that, I started installing the third annual Paper Chained International exhibition. You can see the three pieces I bought from Greenbush in the bottom right hand corner of page 4.

It's great to see the exhibition so well-supported. Kelly explains that as this has become an annual exhibition, it is now well-known in the community, which is why so many artworks sell quickly. Some of it goes to surprising places. Last year, a large eagle was sold; it is now displayed in the Federal courthouse. And as I found out myself when I went to visit one of our regular contributors at Alice Springs Correctional Centre, many large sculptures from the Greenbush artists line the walkway to the visitor's area, once you enter the prison and are well past the point you are allowed to take your mobile phone. These include a large welded cactus with an eagle perched on top, as well as a giant insect. Unfortunately, prisoners don't get to see this area, but it makes my walk to visits more interesting.



Susan McDonnell, who is also an art lecturer at Charles Darwin University, explains the importance of why Greenbush exists.

"This opportunity gives the artists a connectivity to the 'outside world' that they otherwise do not have. Whilst there are benefits to the artists seeing their art being admired and purchased, the creativity is a powerful way to build self-esteem and other positive outcomes whilst being in a sometimes oppressive setting, both physically and emotionally. As we all know, creative expression can contribute to healing, and these exhibitions represent a therapeutic journey. The artists have the chance to see that their works have a 'worth' and they develop as artists."



SENSE LESS

BY CAMERON TERHUNE

Welcome to state prison, population you. Certainly, you will never enter a more densely packed throng of humanity, but make no mistake: you are completely alone here. Stranger in a strange land? Forget it. You are an alien crash landed on a hostile world that barely supports life. But before you have a chance to grasp that, let's get you processed, convict.

Buzzing fluorescents glare overhead, scouring away all shadows except the ones obscuring your future. A hand like an iron vise grips your arm. Snick! A telescoping baton extends to beat discipline into you should you get any ideas. The shackles bite into your bare ankles as your flip-flopped feet shuffle down the claustrophobic corridor.

Halt! The vise bites deeper, spins you around. The cement wall is oily with a sheen of someones greasy face that came before you as your forehead is pressed against it. Look away! No eye contact allowed. Another captive soul is ushered past you on a journey to and from nowhere.

Into another room reeking of mildew and disinfectant. You stand under bare naked bulbs and the empty eyes of your keepers. Strip, convict! The brisk air makes you shiver as you rush to comply with barked orders.

Run your fingers through your hair. Behind your ears. Open your mouth. Lift your tongue. Sweep your gums. Hands out, front, back. Armpits. Lift your sack. Face the wall. Bottoms of the feet, right, left. Spread 'em. Squat. Cough.

Get moving, inmate. If you can't get dressed in ten seconds you'll be hustling down the hallway with your clothes in your arms, your walk of shame, your 'this-is-my-first-time tango! Move!

That rough hand seizes your bicep again. Face forward. Don't look at me. Shut up.

A buzz like a thousand angry hornets. The electric gate - a portcullis from a bygone era - unlocks. Clank! The heavy metal racks open like a toothy maw ready to swallow you whole. Step through. Clank! The jaws slam shut. Now you're truly in the belly of the beast.

The raucous cries of the cellblock echo off the grimy walls of the concrete Saltine box you're marched into, drowning out your racing thoughts. Tiers of barred holes in the walls rise like blind eyes, stretching out longer than life sentences.

The harsh light glints off the foil interiors of potato chip bags, polished mirror perfect and stretched over pomade jars. A dozen such homemade looking glasses protrude from those bars to scope out the fresh fish. Hard faces in the common area look you over without seeing you at all. They're deciding if you'll survive the internal hierarchy of this no-place, get in where you fit in, sink or swim, or whether you will be weeded out, and when, and how.

Then they ignore you. All their machinations regarding the outcome of their evaluations are none of your business. Whatever the verdict, you'll be the last to know. Your judges resume slamming dominoes, sloshing mops, catcalling from the showers, hollering over card games, football games, mind games, any game to keep themselves from looking inward. Silence is abhorred within these bleak walls and will be your companion like an old flame, only in a dream. You walk through the jungle. The acrid smell of toxic chemicals long banned in the outside world stings your nostrils. This is not the outside world. Here there are no rules, no protections, no guarantees, no rights.

Here you will drink dirty water from lead pipes. Here you will learn to pour the oily film off and let the sediment sink to the bottom. Here your eyes will adjust to perpetual extremes, a dark place forever blindingly bright, a place far, far away from any horizon, where nothing is more distant than the end of your housing unit. Here you will wolf down without tasting whatever is slopped onto your tray in the five minutes allotted for your mealtime. Here your body will snatch fitful rest sleeping on a stone slab not unlike a funeral bier - fitting, since the last slap of your flip-flops brings you to your tomb.

A gruff voice calls out a number. Another hornet buzz. The barred door to your cell clanks open. The rough hand releases your arm. You step inside. The bars slam shut behind you, sealing you inside your smothering hole. Here you will remain until you hear the klaxons which you will learn mean breakfast, showers, yard, dinner, and so on.

But those are lessons for tomorrow. For tonight, just sleep tight, inmate.

You aren't going anywhere.

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WHY BLACK HISTORY MONTH IS IMPORTANT IN THE UNITED STATES

BY JEFFERY SHOCKLEY

Throughout the study of the Black man's history, we may find ourselves constantly misled or puzzled if we forget that practically all of the names and terms in use are not African names and terms, but Greek, Roman, Arabic, Anglo-Saxon. However, some have been rediscovered.

It is important to have an entire month dedicated to remembering Black History because there is so much of the Black man's history and the history of the Black man that is undiscovered, misconstrued and just plain left out. Each year celebrating Black History Month, several prominent names are recalled, however, there are so many other instrumental figures in the history of Black men and women that perhaps are not as widely known but have as much, if not more of an impact in many of the rights and privileges we have today.

In Black History we give thanks to scholar Carter G. Woodson, the 'Father of Modern Black History' who founded the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, and in 1926 launched Negro History Week, which is now known as Black History Month. However, the Black man and his experience goes back even further than that. Looking at the period 1619 and 1861, most writers and researchers have failed to make a distinction between indentured servitude and chattel slavery. A small number of free Blacks in the South were permitted limited education, though they had no basic civil rights. To discourage education of the lowest class was natural to aristocrats, who established governments based on the representation of interest, restrictions of suffrage, and the ineligibility of the poor to office.

Some slave owners saw fit to train their slaves in the repair of farm equipment and certain aspects of the blacksmith trade. What the slave masters permitted was training and not education. Africans in the United States were trained to serve. It did not require a difficult argument to convince some slave holders to permit their respective slaves to be trained in some basic skills. In this way, they became more valuable; but still slaves, still property.

Negroes learned from their white friends to educate themselves. Unfortunately, African people in the United States still have some prevailing misconceptions about their education in general. We were not brought to the United States or to the so-called New World to be educated. We were brought as part of a massive labor supply. In general, throughout the South, education for a slave was against the law. This conflict between the Northern states and Southern states, was never resolved and to this day it is difficult to get an in-depth discussion or analysis concerning this contradiction in American History.

Slavery is over by definition, yet many of the ideologies remain in place by developing and instituting laws that disproportionately target non-whites, such as restricting people with criminal records from voting. A month dedicated to Black History is necessary because out of the mixture of former slaves and escaped slaves, came a Black American thinking class that today, are called middle class. They in no way resembled in their action, attitude and commitment the present class of Black Americans called Middle Class. They were committed to the liberation of the rest of their people who were still not free. This could be the most responsible class of people that Africans have produced in America.

Because of race-mixing throughout the whole of the slavery period, an increasing number of children were born from Black mothers and White fathers. Some of these White fathers were benevolent enough to send their offspring to schools in the North that would accept them. Occasionally some would be sent abroad to Scotland where a select number pursued degrees in law or in medicine. The neglected aspect of the education of the Black American prior to 1861 is the proliferation of education and publication among free Blacks in New England. Encouraging as had been the movement to enlighten the Negroes, there had always been at work certain reactionary forces which impeded the intellectual progress of the colored people.

As we look upon the History of the Black man, we reveal many untold truths about the condition they had to overcome. In this same narrative there are a great many episodes of tenacity, resilience, and strategy that must be learned and studied today by the Black man himself. With all of the accomplishments of the elders and ancestors, we are doing way more harm to ourselves than has been documented in this history than by others.

We venture forth together when a perceived injustice is done by the police and yet turn away when, by our own hand, a Black life is lost. As our voices rise in song about prison reform and holding others accountable, silence is deafening when the talk is about our own responsibility to the next generation and the dozens of children we have left behind or abandoned. It is that we must learn more of our own history and gather the soul of that past so that we can become who we as Black people were meant to become in harmony with each other and the world. That is why it is important to have an entire month dedicated to remembering Black History.

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THE CONVICT ARTIST: JOSEPH LYCETT

BY JOSIE BULL

Joseph Lycett is a renowned artist of colonial times, most famously for his paintings of Australian landscapes. He was born around 1774 in Staffordshire, England. Professionally trained as a portrait and miniature painter, he was also known to be a skilled botanical artist, sketcher, and engraver.



The Sugar Loaf Mountain by Joseph Lycett

Around 1810, Joseph Lycett and his de facto wife, Mary Stokes, were arrested in London, charged with possessing forgery tools and incomplete banknotes, and were held in jail for several months awaiting trial. In early 19th-century England, forgery was a very common crime and harshly punished. Banknotes were easy to copy, and for skilled engravers like Lycett, it offered a tempting way to make money. Counterfeiting was not an impulsive crime; it took planning, technical expertise, and access to specialised tools. Today, criminologists would likely place Lycett in the 'white-collar' category: a skilled person driven by profit, not violence.

At the August 1811 trial, Mary was found innocent and released, while Joseph, then aged 37, received a 14-year transportation sentence to New South Wales. Transportation was a key part of Britain's approach to punishment at this time. It served a double purpose: exile as punishment, and cheap labour to grow the empire. Lycett remained incarcerated in England for two years before arriving in Sydney around 1814. He was originally employed by the colony officials as a painter and clerk. But less than a year into his sentence, he was caught producing forged five-shilling bills using a hidden copper-plate press. This second offence led to a 3-year transfer to Newcastle, a secondary penal settlement for convicts who had re-offended, meaning harsher regulations and conditions.

In Newcastle, Lycett's convict experience was far from typical. Under the command of Captain James Wallis,



Lycett's illustration of Wallis' Christ Church Cathedral

Lycett was given opportunities to paint, design, and contribute to civic projects. It is clear Wallis could recognise his artistic gifts. Lycett helped draw the plans for Newcastle Cathedral, which was built around 1818, and he is credited with painting the church's altar piece. It is also believed Lycett designed the stained three-light window, which can still be seen in the bishop's vestry of Newcastle Cathedral today.

Lycett's work on the cathedral aligns with modern theories of rehabilitation through purposeful engagement and identification of individual talents. His artistic output during imprisonment challenges the notion of total penal control. His art gave him agency, a way to express his perspective and contribute meaningfully. Lycett not only worked on civil projects; he also documented landscapes, Aboriginal ceremonies, and colonial life. "Corroboree at Newcastle" is thought to be the earliest oil painting of an Aboriginal night ceremony, giving a rare glimpse into Indigenous culture at the time. Lycett's work still holds relevance for those exploring Indigenous connection to land during colonial times, through a European lens, offering a rare perspective into the lives of the Awabakal people in early 19th-century Newcastle. His watercolour paintings have become distinctive images of the colonial Newcastle, depicting landscapes, homesteads, botanicals, and Indigenous peoples. These pieces were curated into a now-famous album, *Original Drawings of the Natives and Scenery of Van Diemen's Land*.

Wallis's support and advocacy led to a conditional pardon for Lycett in 1818. When he returned to Sydney in 1819, his artistic career took off. He was commissioned to do many private works across NSW and Tasmania.

Governor Macquarie even sent his art to Lord Bathurst, who served in Lord Liverpool's ministry as Secretary of State for the Colonies from 1812 to 1827. Macquarie's backing is believed to have helped Lycett secure an absolute pardon in 1821, which is interpreted as an acknowledgment of his artistic promise.

Lycett's rare pardons highlight the value of recognising artistic talent in supporting criminal reintegration into society. Lycett returned to England in 1822 and published *Views in Australia* (released between 1824 and 1825), a twelve-part series featuring forty-nine aquatint engravings and etchings. Aquatint is a printmaking technique where acid helps create soft, watercolour-like tones (had to look that up too, very cool). Some prints were hand-coloured, others left plain, and each came with maps and handwritten notes. They remain as some of the most important visual records of colonial Australia. Lycett used the series to show off the beautiful landscapes of New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land, highlighting the expanding colonies' potential and appeal, in a shift toward free-settler societies. His work could be interpreted as an attempt to spark British interest in emigration and attract investment to the developing settlements.

Lycett's final years are unclear; there are no solid records leading up to his death. But it is believed he came into substantial money after publishing his work in England. Although unconfirmed, some believe Lycett may have struggled with alcoholism. He was later suspected by

authorities of forging banknotes once again, and when officials attempted to arrest him, he reportedly tried to take his own life. Despite being taken to hospital, he did not recover from his self-inflicted injuries. Lycett's story is a reminder that even with talent and second chances, rehabilitation is rarely straightforward, especially without proper support.

Joseph Lycett's work has left a lasting mark on history. His pieces are currently held in major institutions like the National Library of Australia, the State Library of New South Wales, and the British Museum. His landscapes are often referenced in studies and exhibitions of colonial art, Aboriginal representation, and environmental history. His art assisted in reshaping European views of Australia, presenting it as lush and inviting, rather than infertile and empty. His work offers some of the only portrayals of Awabakal peoples' everyday life in colonial times.

Lycett's story shows that when natural talent is recognised and supported, it can lead to meaningful contribution and potential reintegration into society. It raises big questions about how artistic expression can soften punishment and assist in rehabilitation within the penal system. His life offers deeper lessons and questions on crime, punishment, and redemption. With the right support and direction after his release from custody, Lycett might have fully reintegrated into society. Even with his struggles, Lycett has left behind a legacy that continues to shape Australia's visual history.



Joseph Lycett's painting of a corroboree in Newcastle. According to Miromaa Aboriginal Language and Technology Centre, a Indigenous not-for-profit organisation in Newcastle, Lycett's depictions of individuals in this painting is historically accurate, though the various events seen in the painting would not have occurred at the same time. From an artistic perspective, it is understandable Lycett would have chosen to combine events from an entire corroboree in a single painting.

HOW BILLY MITCHELL LOST OVER \$500,000 BY WINNING A LAWSUIT

A CAUTIONARY TALE ABOUT DEFAMATION AND BANKRUPTCY LAW

BY DAMIEN LINNANE

The defamation case between Queenslander Karl Jobst and Billy Mitchell from Florida was one of the most epic and infamous legal challenges related to video games the world has ever seen. Chances are you probably haven't heard of either of these people, who aren't widely known outside of the video-gaming community.

Mitchell is one of the community's most controversial figures. He once held an undisputed world record high-score on the 1981 video game Donkey Kong, before evidence emerged in 2018 that his score had not been achieved on an unmodified original Donkey Kong arcade cabinet. There is overwhelming evidence that Mitchell achieved his score on MAME, an emulator that allows games to be played from save states, which allows easy manipulation of scores. Accordingly, a player on MAME must be filmed completing the entire high score to ensure cheating was not used. As Mitchell was not filmed in this way, and as he submitted his record as an arcade score, they were removed from Twin Galaxies, the main source of video-game world records. He remains banned from submitting records to Twin Galaxies.

Jobst's video-game world-records, by comparison, are uncontested. At one point, he held 199 records for the Nintendo 64 games GoldenEye 007 and Perfect Dark, 16 of which remain to this day. After the peak of his gaming achievements, he went on to become a professional YouTuber and investigative journalist. His channel, which has over a million subscribers, is known for both covering video-game achievements and also exposing video-game cheaters. Jobst extensively covered the evidence that Mitchell not only cheated his high score, but also repeatedly told many falsehoods when speaking about the issue. Jobst was far from alone in doing so.

Video-gaming YouTuber Apollo Legend also released videos stating Mitchell had cheated, after which Mitchell did something he is also famous for; suing people who don't portray him positively. In 2015, Mitchell lost a lawsuit against Cartoon Network, ironically for their portrayal of a character based on Mitchell in the *Regular Show* TV series who, among other things, throws tantrums when he doesn't get his way. Cartoon Network had more than enough money to fight Mitchell in court and destroy his legal challenge. Apollo Legend did not. Even if he had won, which the evidence strongly suggested he would have, challenging Mitchell in court would have cost Apollo hundreds of thousands of dollars. Apollo, a young man with limited money, backed down to Mitchell's demands. He settled out of court, and removed his videos on Mitchell from YouTube. Up until that point, Apollo had

been earning revenue from the videos. Apollo had existing health issues and died by suicide the following year.

There is no evidence that Apollo's suicide was related to Mitchell's lawsuit. However, in his own ongoing coverage of Mitchell, Jobst stated that after the lawsuit was settled, Apollo was left "deeply in debt, which required him to find extra work, but with his ongoing health issues this was all too much of a burden and he ultimately took his own life." This statement was based on Jobst's personal interpretation of the matter, rather than any evidence.

Mitchell filed a lawsuit against Jobst for defamation for drawing a connection between his actions and Apollo's decision to end his own life. Mitchell's lawyers later sent Jobst's lawyers concerns notices, informing them that more lawsuits were going to be filed regarding Jobst's claims that Mitchell cheated his high scores. Jobst subsequently released a video regarding a GoFundMe campaign he started to help raise costs for his legal defence, where he stated the truth; that a lawsuit had been filed against him, and that Mitchell's lawyers stated that Mitchell intended to file another lawsuit.



Jobst (left) and Mitchell (right) in the thumbnail of a video Jobst uploaded to YouTube

In response, Mitchell publicly made a false statement that only one legal complaint had ever been made against Jobst, and made incorrect accusations that Jobst was claiming a second lawsuit had already been filed. Mitchell explicitly stated that any person who had donated to the GoFundMe had done so "based upon a lie". Mitchell ultimately decided not to file the second case, though Jobst and his lawyers only learned the lawsuit would not be going ahead once the statute of limitations for filing it had expired, by which stage the GoFundMe had closed.

However, the original defamation case proceeded, and while the court case was complex, Mitchell ultimately proved, in April 2025, that he had been defamed.

In his ruling, the judge stated Jobst had defamed Mitchell by implying he "caused such stress to Apollo Legend that he decided to end that stress by killing himself. While not directly accusing Mr Mitchell of having murdered Apollo Legend, nor of knowingly encouraging Apollo Legend to kill himself, in one sense it might be seen as almost as serious as such imputations would have been."

I asked Associate Professor Neil Foster, an expert in defamation law at the University of Newcastle, to explain how rulings like this are reached. "When courts determine if defamation occurred, they will take into account not just what is explicitly said, but what an ordinary reasonable person could conclude from what is said", says Foster. "The court was satisfied the public would, based on Jobst's comments, draw an implication between Mitchell and Apollo Legend's suicide, and Jobst was not able to prove there actually had been a connection."

After winning the lawsuit, Mitchell contradicted his earlier assertions that Jobst was never sent information on a second lawsuit related to cheating in video games. In a video he uploaded to YouTube himself, Mitchell confirmed that details of a second lawsuit were indeed sent to Jobst's lawyers, though he continued to maintain that the GoFundMe had been a scam on the grounds that Jobst should have somehow been aware the lawsuit was not going to be filed. By this stage, Jobst' reputation was already damaged, due in part to the allegations about his GoFundMe campaign as well as other factors related to the case, and he lost over 100,000 followers on YouTube as well as revenue due to decreased views of his videos.

Jobst was ordered to pay Mitchell \$350,000 in damages. Both litigating and defending defamation is incredibly expensive, and in Australian law, people who lose lawsuits are almost always ordered to pay a substantial portion of their opponent's legal fees. Jobst was ordered to pay a significant amount of Mitchell's legal fees, making his total debt to Mitchell \$990,000.

Jobst was unable to pay the damages and instead filed for bankruptcy. Fortunately for Jobst, bankruptcy protections in Australia are robust. When you become bankrupt, all of your debts are absolved, not just the one that caused you to file for bankruptcy. Jobst had about \$86,000 in other debts, like credit card bills, which were also wiped. The Australian Financial Security Authority (AFSA) handles bankruptcy applications. A bankrupt person is allowed to keep normal household items, a vehicle worth up to \$9,600, work tools or equipment worth up to \$4,500, their superannuation, and around two thousand dollars for personal expenses. Any other money is confiscated and other assets are sold. Proceeds from sales of assets are then distributed proportionally to creditors – people the bankrupt person owes money to.

If a person filing for bankruptcy co-owns anything with

another person, the AFSA give that person the option to buy out the share of the jointly owned assets before they attempt to publicly sell them. Jobst co-owned property with his wife, and she made an offer to buy his share of the property, which the AFSA accepted. This is completely legal, though Mitchell publicly claimed that Jobst was engaging in "serious illegal activity before and during this bankruptcy process."

Jobst raised \$224,000 from the liquidation of his assets before he filed for bankruptcy. However, not all of this money went to Mitchell. The AFSA charges fees for their services, beginning at tens of thousands of dollars for even simple bankruptcy cases. This money is deducted before any recovered funds are given to creditors. The AFSA were also obligated to investigate Mitchell's false claims that Jobst had engaged in illegal activity. While the AFSA concluded Jobst had done nothing wrong, Mitchell likely shot himself in the foot as the investigation probably incurred further costs which were deducted from any money he would receive.

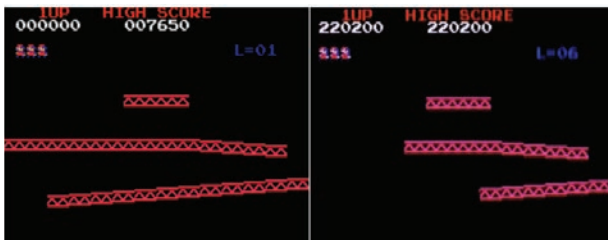
After the AFSA deducted their fees, and money was also given to Jobst's other creditors, it is estimated that Mitchell received around \$150,000. Mitchell's legal fees were \$686,671. Even though he won the lawsuit, he likely walked away from it with over \$500,000 in debt.

There are three key points to learn from this spectacular failure from both parties. Firstly, you are asking for trouble if you make libellous claims against someone else without clear evidence, no matter how sure you are right, and no matter how logical the connection seems. It doesn't matter if there is overwhelming evidence that Mitchell is a cheater and has a long and ongoing history of making false statements. Mitchell's own credibility is irrelevant to the fact that Jobst had no proof Apollo's death was related to his behaviour. To Jobst's credit, he has accepted his failure, and also accepted that he did indeed defame Mitchell, and rightfully calls himself an idiot for doing so.

Secondly, when you sue someone, it's important to make sure the person you are suing is actually capable of paying any damages you are awarded. Often, the only people who win in defamation lawsuits are the lawyers. As Associate Professor Foster notes, "The nature of civil litigation is that you always run the risk that even if you win, the other person can't pay. To some extent, Mitchell got the satisfaction of having a verdict in his favour. He may have felt that was significant enough to run the risk, but he's still going to be out of pocket."

Bankruptcy law essentially allows a bankrupt person to get on with their lives once the dust settles. Jobst is now essentially debt free and back to earning money by making popular YouTube videos, and has recovered his lost subscribers. Mitchell, however, will never recover the \$500,000 he lost by electing to go to court.

In addition to being known for having his high-scores removed for cheating, Mitchell will now also be forever remembered by the video-gaming community as the person who managed to lose half a million dollars by winning a lawsuit. But things are getting worse for Mitchell.



The video Mitchell submitted for his Donkey Kong high score shows levels loading exactly the way they do on the MAME emulator (left). The arcade version (right) draws the first girders in Donkey Kong differently.

The third point is that if someone defames you, that does not give you the right to start defaming that person in response. While researching to write this article, I formed the opinion that Jobst appeared to have case to sue Mitchell, over his false claims that there had not been a second legal complaint and that Jobst's GoFundMe was based on a lie, and his false claim that Jobst was engaged in illegal activity regarding the sale of the property to his wife. Prior to contacting Jobst, I asked Associate Professor Foster to elaborate on this as well.

"If Mr Mitchell did lie about that, Mr Jobst might be able to sue for the allegation that he's engaged in a scam for the GoFundMe campaign, when the second legal complaint was real. But there are barriers to suing a person in the United States when you are in a non-US jurisdiction, and unlike Australia, the default is that each party bears their own legal costs even if they win the case," said Foster.

After I reached out to Jobst requesting an interview in late March 2026, he responded later by pointing out that in early April, he did file a lawsuit against Mitchell in Florida. The best possible outcome for Mitchell is his lawyers successfully applying to have the case dismissed, which would still incur significant legal fees to Mitchell. Jobst has filed the case himself, meaning he has no legal costs yet, though he has indicated he will obtain lawyers if the case proceeds to court. A possible outcome is that Mitchell makes him an offer to settle out of court in the meantime. But no matter how this case ends, Mitchell has further increased his debts over the ordeal by making false statements and giving Jobst legitimate grounds to sue him.

Jobst politely declined an interview request as the case is currently open. Mitchell did not respond to a request for comment prior to the new lawsuit being filed.



CLOTHING AND FOOD AFTER RELEASE

When you leave prison, you may need to find your own clothes and food. Wherever you are in NSW, please call CRC on (02) 9288 8700 and our telephone information service will help you to find what you need in your area. There are charities and community centres in many areas providing free meals, free or low-cost grocery basics or food vouchers. You can look up what is available in your area on www.askizzy.org.au. If you don't have access to the internet, CRC staff can look them up for you as well.

Anglicare offers food parcels at its Food and Financial Assistance offices. You can leave a message on their Family Assistance Line at 1800 606 724 to request assistance.

Oz Harvest provides food relief through various community organisations and has information on receiving food on its website, www.ozharvest.org.

The Rev. Bill Crews Foundation offers free meals at multiple locations throughout Sydney, and the Salvation Army has various centres in Elizabeth Street in the Sydney CBD, Waterloo and Surry Hills that provide free meals a few days a week.

For clothes, shops like Kmart, Target, Big W and dollar shops have basics that can sometimes be cheaper than op shops. St Vincent de Paul Society (Vinnies) provides assistance with food, clothing, and other essentials through their Support Centres and welfare services. Call 13 18 12 for food vouchers or to find your local support centre.

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Write to us if you'd like to share your story or tell us what you think
Jailbreak, 2SER 107.3 FM, PO BOX 123, Broadway NSW 2007

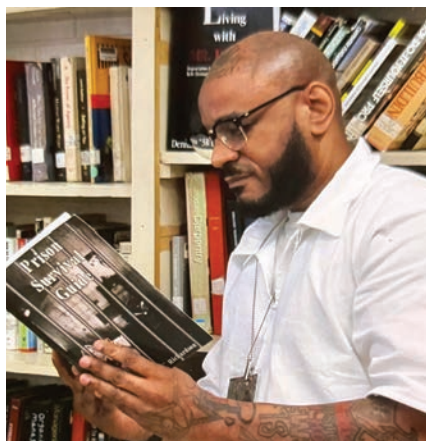
IN THE NEXT ISSUE

ISSUE 23 DUE FOR RELEASE IN SEPTEMBER 2026



TAGIMOUCIA ART GALLERY

Paper Chained visits Tagimoucia Art Gallery, a gallery in Fiji showcasing artworks created inside Fijian prisons.



DENNIS 3R'DEE INTERVIEW

We interview Dennis '3r'dee' Richardson, incarcerated US author of the *Prison Survival Guide*




THE CASTLE HILL REBELLION

Read about the 1804 Castle Hill Rebellion, the first major convict uprising in Australian history.

SHOUT-OUTS

p.s. can I shoutout too bro's
in tsv, Butch, Wnks, Manny,
Jordy, Jarrel, JD, Swifty, All
MI mob + Palm brotha's Hopefully
be back soon. MLLR
OXB 1532 WMT

Nikkie J. (IRL)
Scotty Mayhem
Jo J. (SIEGE) (locked in COW 3 IRL)
Jayne Wiltaker Jayden Samir
Ahmed Shannon of Assad
Karyne Minkley
Yusuf Zakab 2 Six 12
Jai "Amir" Savage Two 3 Four

SHOUT OUTS BY PO 

Shout Out

I MAY NOT BE INSIDE ANYMORE BUT WILL SEND MY LOVE TO A FEW FULLAS OLD RAY RAY RAY M, MIKE HARDEN, JED RED, AOT, HACHIE I, JAMES S, SCHLO HENRY, JOELY MINOR, TRAVIS MACK, FEW OTHER FELLAS

JONHILL, BURKY, CHRIS BLESS
PAUL STACKS, BIRDBRAIN
& COUPE BIRDS KENSHIKA I, CAMILLE N
KEEP YAH HEADS UP TALSAH N, SAVANNAH
STAY STRONG
BE GOOD OR GOOD @ IT!
NOTHING A RED WOULDNT FIX!
LOVE & RESPECT
MITCHIE
xO xO

