

A JOURNAL OF EXPRESSION FROM BEHIND BARS

PAPER CHAINED



ISSUE 13 / MAR 2024

Posted **free** to incarcerated people

CRC community
restorative
centre

ATFJ



**CENTRE FOR
LAW AND
SOCIAL JUSTICE**



 **Curtin University**

PAPER CHAINED



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



Cyntoia Brown, who was forced into prostitution as a child, murdered a 43-year-old man who solicited her for sex. Cyntoia was sentenced to life in prison at 16, though her sentence was commuted in 2019. She has since become an activist and advocate for prison reform.

WHAT'S ON THE INSIDE

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

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

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

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

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

If you are currently in prison and would like to receive a posted copy of the journal, please provide us with your name, ID number, and postal address, as well as your earliest possible release date (if you have one). Those outside prison may access the journal free online via our website, **PaperChained.com**.

TERMS OF PUBLICATION

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

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

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

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

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WE WELCOME CONTRIBUTIONS FROM:

PRISONERS

EX-PRISONERS

FAMILY OF PRISONERS

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



Curtin University

Study at Curtin from Prison

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

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

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

Courses currently available include:

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

For more information, speak to your prison Education Officer.

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



University of
**Southern
Queensland**

Supporting Incarcerated Students

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

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

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

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

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

The programs you can choose from include:

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

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

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



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

ABOUT TIME FOR JUSTICE



About Time For Justice is an Australian family-owned and operated organisation specialising in assisting survivors of historical institutional child abuse and stolen generation members in seeking justice, healing and possible compensation.

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

appropriate legal representatives. They are trauma-informed and culturally trained to deal with the most complex stories.

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

About Time For Justice is a safe place. We want to stop perpetrator's violence by breaking survivor's silence. Return the emotions, embarrassment, shame, guilt and anger to its rightful owner — the perpetrator. Call or write to us via the details provided for an obligation-free chat. There are no silly questions.

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

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**AboutTimeForJustice.com
@abouttimeforjustice**

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

BY DAMIEN LINNANE

It's great to be back with our first issue of *Paper Chained* for 2024. Last year was our biggest to date, both in terms of circulation and letters received. 2023 was also a year of firsts for us. We published our first transcripts from Jailbreak Radio, our first prison recipes, song contributions and also drawing and sculpture tips.

In Issue 9 in March 2023, we also started printing our first 'Serial', the term for an ongoing story shared over several issues. That story, *Australian Gunslinger*, is still ongoing, with Chapter 5 appearing in this issue, and the finale due in our next issue in June. We also did interviews with the Red Cross organisation Sisters for Change, cartoonist John E. Sacks, international prison artists James Mutugi and Orlando Smith, author and actor Marcus Proctor, as well as authors and former prison magazine editors Ray Mooney and John Killick. For me though, the highlight of the year was travelling to Kenya to be able to attend and report back on the Ninth International Cure Conference on prison reform.

Thankfully, this year looks like it's going to be just as big. We've got two incredible interviews in this issue, and more already lined up for the rest of the year. This issue also sees our first film review, and stay tuned for news about a major art exhibition *Paper Chained* is organising at Long Bay Correctional Centre's Boom Gate Gallery. Until then, keep those contributions coming, and if you have any feedback or requests, send those through.

Thanks for reading, and enjoy Issue 13.



About 200 letters were received by *Paper Chained* in 2023 from prisons in Australia, New Zealand and the United States. *Paper Chained*'s official mascot animal Izzy can be seen sneaking into the photo in the top right corner.

CAN YOU HELP US FIND THESE PRISON MAGAZINES?

Paper Chained is always searching for more information on historical prison magazines. If you know anything about the following publications, or any others, or know someone who might, please let us know.

WRITE HERE

Write Here was a publication at Brisbane Women's Correctional Centre from around 2010 until 2015. We are aware of its existence but have never seen a copy.

SELF-HELP / THE BULLET

Self-Help and *The Bullet* were historical publications in Queensland prisons, around the 1960s/70s.

THE SINKING SHIP

An informal publication that circulated around Long Bay Correctional Centre, around the mid-2000s. If you know you know.

ART AND WRITING

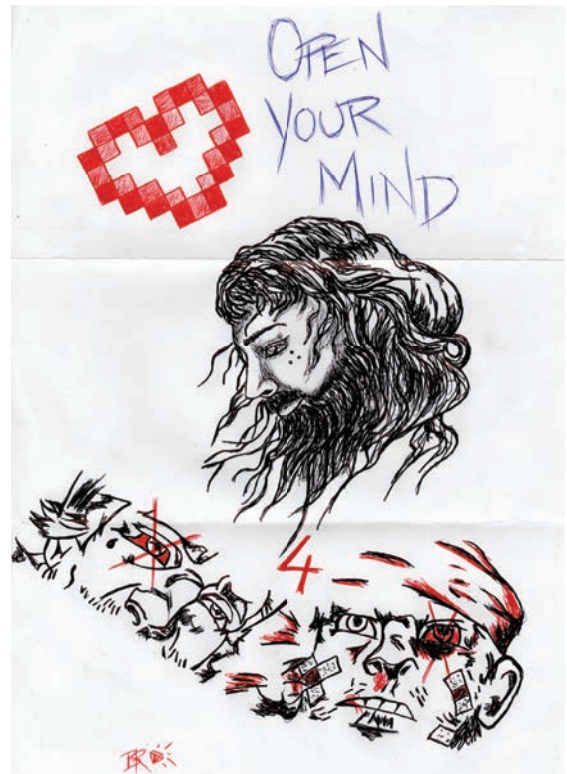
UNBROKEN

Time permitted
for a crime committed
No more guilty pleasures
only punitive measures
Full of thugs
and long mugs
Constantly locked down
until I vs. the crown
Alone with my fears
awaiting for years
There is no benefit
now it's for the hell of it
What others discern
is not my concern
I'm an enigma
with my new stigma
Just wait till I plea
someday they'll see
I'll change my ways
and create better days
A new kind of servitude
full of kind gratitude

*By Adrian Slee
Darwin Correctional Centre, NT*



*Art by Cameron Dixon,
Ravenhall Correctional Centre, Victoria*



*Art by Brendan
Lithgow Correctional Centre, NSW*

REALISM

I'm done with the game for what it's worth
The same old game got me sentenced to more time than
I've been on earth
On my face I wear smiles to cover the pain, but inside I'm
really hurt
My bed is made up, so now I have to lay in it
God-willing I don't have to forever stay in it
Thus far, I've endured 4,000 odd days in it
I realized that this place meant to make you better can
make you worse
So I learned to be one with myself and just make it work
I think outside the box, outside these prison blocks
I do my best not to indulge in any nonsense
I've set goals and I've planned them well
If I fail to plan, it is only logical that I plan to fail
I promised myself to break the cycle of statistics,
and never land back in jail
In intake they ask us, "Where you want your body mailed?"
We loved to chase that lifestyle lived by the rich and
famous, while very few are remembered and the majority
die nameless

*Poem by Evan Wiles
SCI Coal Township, Pennsylvania, USA*

AN ENDING IN WORDS

The letter came today,
The one to tear me apart
It exploded in my head
And completely broke my heart
It was written as an obligation
From the person once my wife
It wasn't written because of want
to bring happiness to my life
A letter from where I lived is
a touch of the wider world outside.
But to read she felt she "had" to write
Is why I hurt and cried
She put the words to paper
As the daytime changed to night
The words upon that paper
Had bitterness and spite
Its made no difference telling her
Of my love and growth inside
She wants me to disappear
To run away and hide
I know what I did was wrong
I took it on the chin
She tells me all she sees
Is a memory of ever-living sin
Every time I think I'm better
As I move forward in jail life
I go backwards because of a letter
From a person once my wife
Now there is nothing to look forward to
When my time inside is done,
For what was the two of us
Is now and forever just one

Poem by KCDC



Art by Emma Ezergailis
Dame Phyllis Frost Centre, Victoria

JUST OF DIRT

I design my own Hell, with each choice that I make
At the Devil I'll yell, and my voice shall not break

I dig myself deep, I plant both my feet in the ground
But will my voice keep, if I cannot hear a sound

I dwell in the shadows, for I can't stand the light
But insanity grows, when you live for the night

For out of the darkness, a madness is spawned
And each piece of that madness is a mask I'll adore

I dig myself deeper, I break at the knees
I claim a God as a keeper, so I can do as I please

I see my enemies face, as I inspect my reflection
A new madness replaced, to deflect all detection

I don't belong in no place, I can feel the rejection
And I've not the mindspace to direct a resurrection

I dig even deeper, I'm now over my head
But you cannot hurt what is dirt, cannot kill what is dead

Back to the darkness I leap, for this Hell is my own
Living under no Gods keep, and the devil leaves me alone

I have dug to the end, my voice is finally broken
I can no longer pretend, there's a chance to be woken

I forget how to breathe, so I'm starting to rest
Because I full believe, I tried my absolute best

*Poem by Daryl Dunbar
Casuarina Prison, WA*



Art by Ashley McGoldrick
Woodford Correctional Centre, QLD

INFERNO

Some people call it jail
 Some people call it life behind bars
 Some people call it home
 Some others call it rehab
 Some call it safe
 Some call it brave
 Some call it shelter
 Some call it trapped
 Some call it learning
 Some call it isolation
 Some call it 'catch up with friends'
 Some call it vacation
 I call it HELL



Poetry and art by Silvia Roberts
 Numinbah Correctional Centre, QLD

MAXIMUM SECURITY

The bricks
 The bars
 The lights
 The thoughts
 Maximum security ...

The air conditioning
 The cold
 The reheated food
 The thoughts
 Maximum security ...

The footsteps
 The keep keys
 The hatch
 The thoughts
 Maximum security ...

The isolation,
 The waiting,
 The pacing,
 Super maximum security.

I AM FREE

These chains are broken,
 These bricks have crumbled,
 These bars are bent,
 These fences fallen,
 I am free

My head is clear,
 My hands stopped trembling,
 My butterflies have died,
 My feet stopped pacing,
 I am free

I have snapped these links,
 I have broken these cuffs,
 I have left this cell,
 I have cut these hinges,
 I am free

My prayers have been answered,
 My worst fears destroyed,
 My past is dark,
 My future bright,
 I am free

These chains are broken,
 These bricks have crumbled,
 These bars are bent,
 These fences fallen,
 I am free

Freedom is in the mind, it is simply choosing to be
 I am free



Poetry and art by Khalil O'Reilly
 Arthur Gowrie Correctional Centre, QLD

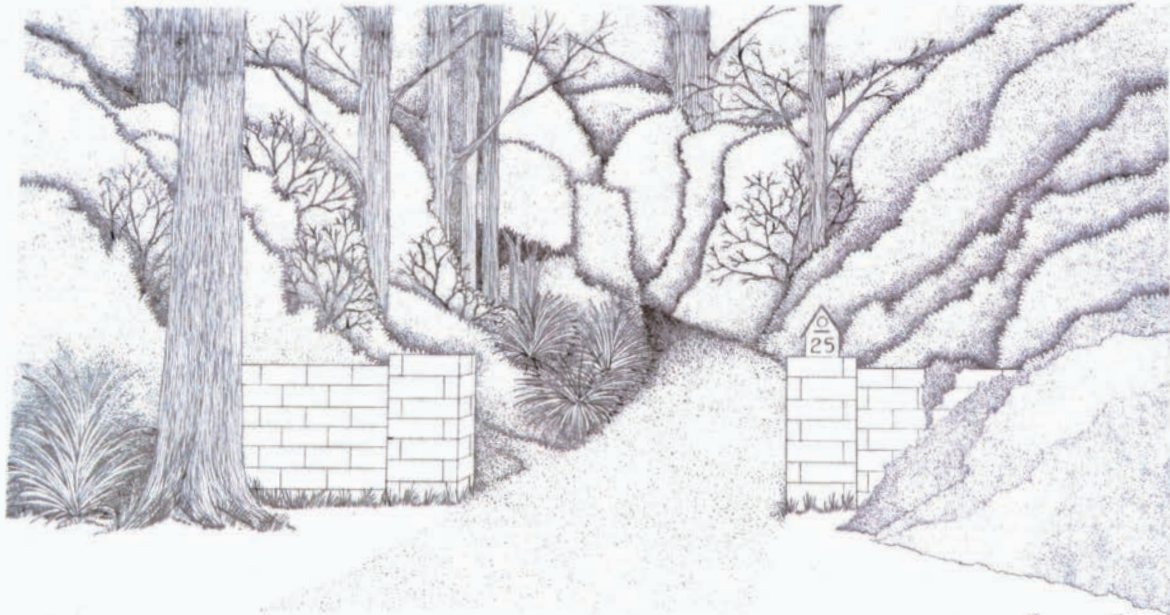


EK Holden



Art by LenPen, Victoria

A line and pointillist drawing of the driveway, of the property I lived at for most of my child and teenage years



Art by Simon Evans
Tongariro Prison, New Zealand

ODE TO THE MEDIA

Sitting and staring
Through vertical bars
Struggling often
With deep emotional scars
The media have a lot to say
While I sit and decay
Lies flow from the media tap
Spewing forth a whole heap of crap
Most people wrongly believe
Everything they watch and read
Even though
Most of it is untrue
But you won't know
Unless it happens to you
You may never know
The deceitful seeds
That the media sow

Poem by Gary



Art by Samantha Brownlow
Southern Queensland Correctional Centre

BULLION

The gleam of seams and lustre of stone,
Fuel my need to plunder.

Auriferous dreams
Crown my life with cream
Rapine and pillage asunder.

Take it, break it,
Hoard its intrinsic wealth

Will it make me? Or forsake me?
I'll sell my soul and health

Do the jail, time like a snail
Riches promised in Hollywood glamour

Did you get the mail? Been refused bail,
Sentence imposed at the drop of a hammer.

Poem by SKS 762, NSW



Art by Kaidii Ephraums
Townsville Womens Correctional Centre, QLD



Art by Cameron Dixon
Ravenhall Correctional Centre, Victoria



Art by Chiara Hubber
Southern Queensland Correctional Centre, QLD



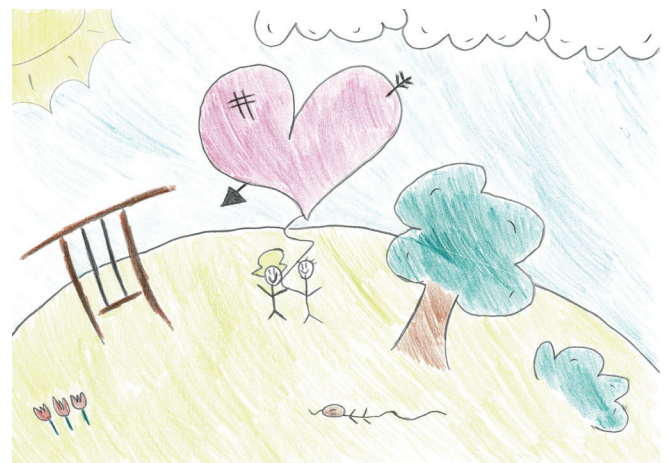
Art by Kelly Flanagan
Dame Phyllis Frost Centre, Victoria



Envelope art by Tess Hawkins
Southern Queensland Correctional Centre, QLD



Envelope art sent in by Matty Bain
Yatala Labour Prison, SA



Art by Ryan Welsh
Long Bay Correctional Centre, NSW

ONE LAST DANCE

Written for my beautiful wife, Jess

Minds a blur but my feet are running
Flashlights and voices are raised
Times up and I knew it was coming
No sleep, on the gear for days
In the paddy out to the wife
She collapses down onto her knees
"I love you baby, everything is alright"
That ain't even close to what she sees

Handcuffs tight they're twisted and hurtin'
The coppers don't seem to like me much
In the hospital interviews behind curtains
Doctors and nurses, bruises and cuts
Back to the cells where a ghost walks
Of another bloke who couldn't take it
Listen to the gangsters as they boast more
Got a bad feeling and I just can't shake it

Have I done too much and run too far
Is everything that I love lost
Plead guilty to every single charge
Wait and see how much it'll cost
Not cash but time and family
Maybe even a lot more
No one's got time to be around me
Not when I'm trying to score

Please forgive me for my mistakes
Please allow me one more chance
I'll give it all everything that it takes
To share with my wife one last dance

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

SECURE AGAINST FAILURE

Dying and yet we live on beaten and yet not killed,
sorrowful yet always rejoicing. Hold fast whenever we
are tossed about by failure. Be reconciled to the fact that
failure is one of life's most certain experiences. The first
time we tried to walk we failed. The first time we tried to
form a word on our lips we failed. The first time we tried
to drink a glass of milk on our own we failed. And failure
doesn't stop when we pass from being children to adults.

Did you pass from your very first driving test the first time
you took it? If you did congrats, many people failed, I know
I did. If you were one of the failures, I imagine no one

pointed a finger at you and said "You must be a worthless
person if you failed your driving test the first time."

Someone once taunted Thomas Edison, the inventor of
the incandescent light bulb who tried endless experiments
before finding success, with the remark, "All these
thousands of attempts and you haven't learnt a thing."
"Wrong" said Edison. "I have learnt thousands of ways of
how not to do it."

From failure comes experience, from experience comes
wisdom, from wisdom mutual trust, from mutual trust
comes co-operation, and from co-operation united effort,
and from united effort...

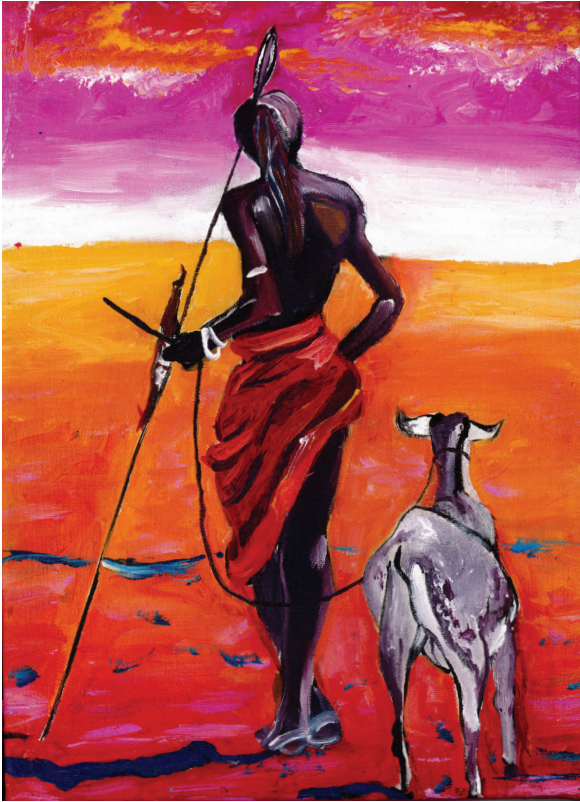
Success.

*By Brittany McCulloch
Bandyup Women's Prison,
PO Box 100, Guildford, WA 6055*

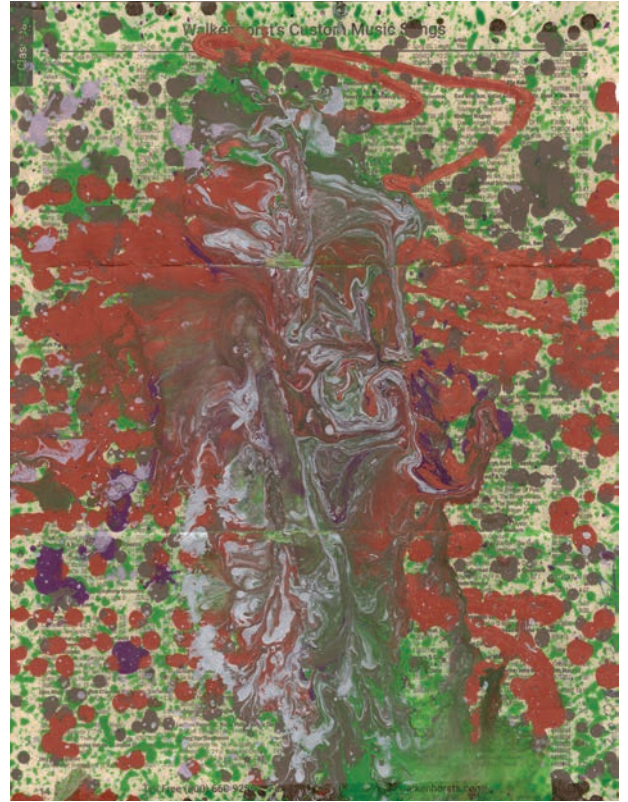
ALL

Of love, you might ask me, in a moment of question,
To describe my love of loves, and of her person
She's not of stunning or legendary beauty of form,
Only in my eyes, she's of breathless dimension to gaze
Her walk not liken to light clouds of gossamer or grace,
Her laughter not of the sweet melon song,
to melt a frozen heart
She can be witty, and even vague,
consumed of the mirror with vanity,
But never impassionate, or of misguided intention
Her devotion, beyond the thoughts of mortals,
Her love, limitless, with understanding and truth
Her colours are of the earth, sea and sky,
She wears them well, with the ribbon of rainbows
Within her eyes, lay the wisdom of the ancient and wise,
Overwhelming forgiveness, in forever deepening pools
Her voice is soft, amongst the harshness of life's cruelties,
Healing my soul, with each and every life-giving breath
She comes to my night sleeping, in dreams, almost reality,
With her love, a smile to ease my troubled mind
I am calmed now, the storms of confusion beyond me,
With the injustice and aggression upon despair, gone
She can take these dreams, turn them from me,
Draw me to her, with endless love and warmth of giving
My heart beating within her hands, slowed to steady
Would see it no harm, with the tenderness of her touch
My love you may ask, if you've never known her,
Is in all women, the secret they hold, as if a key
Would unlock the souls, from torment and disillusion,
Of all men, to know the love that she would give freely.

*By Ken Monley, aka Kenoath
Written 6 August 1994, NSW*



Art by James Mutugi
Kenya



Art by Cameron Terhune
California



Art by Colin Burke
United Kingdom

HEARTS UP HER SLEEVES

BY KYLE ZAMMIT

"Hey, we need a fourth person to play Forty-One!"

Heads about the prison pod instinctively swivelled toward the exclamation. This attention didn't embarrass Samantha, in fact it visibly charged her with energy. With the eyes of a bird of prey, the would-be card player scanned the room for a likely candidate.

At that moment, a diminutive lady who believed she had mastered the art of being inconspicuous was crossing the room with her head hung low. Samantha's eyes opened to their limit, her head tilted back, and her right arm shot forward, index finger trained on the lady who just wanted to be left alone.

"You," Samantha's voice thundered despite its high octave, "you're playing Forty-One."

It might require a quartet to play that card game, but if anyone's eyes happened to casually wander over the metal table the players were sitting at, they would only see two players and two spectators.

Sitting opposite Samantha was the other blatant competitor. She was a girl with bleached hair and a supreme confidence, as if she already knew her entire hand would consist of hearts, even though the cards were still being dealt out by the deadpan lady sitting to her right. This dealer had made a fortune in soda cans and chocolate blocks on account of her poker face, although the bleached-haired girl had previously argued that she was cheating by using performance-enhancing drugs – in the form of the cataclysmic dosage of mood stabilizers she was on.

Samantha began the game by smacking down a two of clubs onto the table, which made the diminutive woman to her right flinch. The expressionless lady's arm moved like a robotic limb in an automobile manufacturing plant as she deposited a six of clubs on top of Samantha's two. The girl with the bleached hair launched a Jack of Hearts onto the pile as if she were making it rain on a pole dancer.

The game lost its tempo when it got around to the quiet girl. Her eyes had transformed into deep blue pools of terror and her gaze was locked onto something a thousand miles beneath the tabletop.

The other three women stared at her in expectant silence. The six eyeballs ramped up the tension, causing the blue-eyed girl to cover her face with the fan of cards in her hand.

The girl with the bleached hair fiddled with the sleeve of her jumper as Samantha drolled out a sarcastic "Heeeellllloooo."

The frozen girl didn't respond. There was a moment of awkward silence at the table before the woman using performance-enhancing drugs mumbled, "Do you have a King, Queen, or Ace of Hearts?"

The monotone question slowly sank in as the quiet girl looked over her shaking hand of cards. She moved her head in the negative.

"Finally!" blurted Samantha, arms held high in thanks to the Lord.

The bleached-haired girl took that trick with her Jack of Hearts. She also took the next one with a King of Hearts, and the one after that with a Queen of Hearts. Each time she slid the loose pile of cards over to her side of the table, her smile got wider while Samantha's face got redder.

As the fourth trick began, Samantha's eyes were locked onto the white-haired girl sitting across from her as if she were a cruise missile focusing in on an infrared laser.

The girl with the bleached hair and positively giddy smile launched an Ace of Hearts onto the table. That was when the cruise missile named Samantha detonated. If the steel table hadn't been bolted to the ground, Samantha would have flipped it over with the speed and intensity with which she stood up.

With the thundering voice of a megachurch preacher recanting a passage of brimstone, Samantha boomed, "You cheating whore!"

As if to justify her language, Samantha slapped one of her cards down onto the table. It was another Ace of Hearts.

The bleached hair girl's mouth was agape with shock. The words, "I thought I'd stacked the deck," glowed in neon writing across her forehead. The quiet girl had fallen off her stool in fright and had already fled halfway back to her cell.

The expressionless girl remained expressionless.

"I saw you messing with your sleeves!" Samantha was coming around the table, intent on exposing the cheat in front of the whole pod.

An officer ducked her head out of the office. Her face was incredulous. "Could we calm down, ladies?"

Samantha wasn't calming down as she tried to pull back the accused cheater's sleeves. An awkward battle of dexterity ensued as Samantha stood over the white-haired girl, struggling to get a grip on her squirming form.

"This is stupid," droned the poker-faced woman. As if she'd spoken some magic words, cards suddenly came flying out of the now confirmed cheater's right sleeve.

The stupid grapple instantly ended as the spray of cards began landing all over the table, every one of them a heart. A couple of ladies who had apparently been watching the struggle from the second-floor balcony above them, cackled and called out, "Cheater, cheater," in childish glee. The officer, as well as a fair percentage of the pod, had gathered about, laughing as cards also began falling from the cheater's left sleeve.

As the bleached-haired girl pointed both her arms skyward to keep the cards in her sleeves, Samantha was busy soaking in the glory, doing victory laps about the table. The boisterous revelry continued until the girl with the hearts up her sleeves let out a scream of genuine fear. Girly screams of any sort were by no means uncommon in a women's jail, but this one cut through the whole pod and immediately silenced it. The cheater's face had grown as pale as her hair. Despite the fact her forearms were held upwards, cards kept fountaining up from her sleeves against gravity. Through the silence, the flapping, sliding and brushing sound of what must have been hundreds of cards gliding through the air and landing about the place, seemed far too loud.

Someone toward the back of the pod blurted out. "What the fuck?"

This flipped a switch within everyone's minds and suddenly every lady in the room was shrieking, pointing, and babbling with excitement. The pale girl stumbled back off the stool she was sitting on.

She turned this way and that, as if unsure where to go. Her mouth was opening and closing like a goldfish. The whispers of silent screams drowned out by the cacophony about her.

With each passing second, the ferocity at which the cards spewed from her arms increased. Already the air within the pod shimmered as it rained a suit of hearts. It was pandemonium as women ran about catching cards out of the air as they fluttered and fell. Pretty soon they would be able to make card angels as the floor of the pod was rapidly disappearing under a layer of cards. Perhaps for the first time in her life, Samantha was rendered speechless. She was frozen on the spot, periodically flinching as cards flew into her face. The officer was in much the same state. The girl without emotions, however, was incapable of feeling awed, or confused, or scared. She calmly waded through the now shin-deep foam of cards toward the girl doing an impression of a goldfish. Kings were stuck in her hair, Queens had fallen down the front of her shirt, and Aces bounced off her shoulders as she fearlessly reached out toward the terrified lady in front of her.

With as firm a grip as she could muster, the stone-faced woman wrapped her hands around the forearms of the girl now lost in a fluttering haze of cards. Immediately the double fire hydrant flow of hearts ceased. As the cards that were already in the air spun and fell back to earth, the adrenaline

fuelled mania that gripped everyone in the pod abated.

The girl with the bleached hair shook like a leaf in the wind, but the colour was slowly returning to her face.

Samantha finally rediscovered her voice and stated what everyone was thinking, "What in the goddamn was that?"

The million cards scattered about the pod offered no answer. The girl who had cheated at 41 let out a long sigh of relief as she looked into the eyes of the emotionless woman in front of her, but her face was no longer expressionless.

She had a faint smile.

It was at that exact moment that the cheater exploded into cards.

The quiet girl was in her cell, looking out the plexiglass window in her door and crying into a pillow she held to her chest. The tsunami of cards boomed and thundered with the sound of an avalanche. Within seconds the window was entirely covered, the quiet girl's face had gone dark.

Silence followed. It was broken only by the muffled screams of those buried alive, slowly asphyxiating.

Don't put cards up your sleeves.

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SOFT IN A HARD PLACE

BY CAMERON TERHUNE

Prisons are not soft and cuddly.

All across the world prisons are built from cement and steel. They are stocked with hard people doing hard time and ruled with iron fists. In a place where toughness is mandatory and brutality is a virtue, those who do not affect a spiritual exoskeleton and fashion their minds and bodies into weapons, held ever ready to fend off the assaults of a hostile world that values strength alone, are seen as lesser, as contemptible, as objects of scorn, as prey.

Perhaps prison could have persisted indefinitely. Perhaps these hard places filled with granite hearts and iron wills would never crumble. Perhaps these mean lives born out in the closest proximity to our fellow humans, these callous existences devoid of compassion where we could not so much as acknowledge the struggle, the despair, the suffering of those beside us as they were subjected to the exact same indignities and cruelties that we were, could have kept on without diverging, and the prison mentality could have maintained its crushing grasp upon us, enforced its illogical directive that humans — a species by all accounts predisposed to seek softness, warmth and comfort, not stone and steel and solitude — be hard, be cold, be heartless.

Perhaps. But then there were cats.

At first there was just one, a wary orange tabby that prowled the yard between human hours and haunted the forbidden spaces beyond the fences like the phantom of a world long forgotten. We watched from behind glass and steel and wire and cement, watched her romp about, watched her chase birds and share a meal with us. She grew, fed both by pigeons and state food offered by many hands, though in time we realized it was not the meagre scraps of unidentifiable meat which made her fat.

The blessing she bestowed upon us for our gifts was delivered, appropriately enough, in an unused locker on the yard's religious grounds. From the moment the litter of kittens arrived, there existed a covenant among all her feeders and fawners and fans: we shall belong to these cats.

Thus, the ensuing weeks were heavy with the sounds of crinkling plastic as not just state food but canteen and package morsels were brought to the site of the pilgrimage, set like sacrifices upon the altar of this mysterious beast who walked among us. We watched in quiet awe from behind our stoic masks as the kittens opened their eyes and emerged to take their first steps, as they explored the world they now shared with us and grew into rambunctious, playful beings of wonder.



Then, of course, we pet them.

I had not, until a small orange cat wandered over to sit with me in the grass, had the divine pleasure of petting a cat in fifteen years. I am a writer by trade but to describe the experience leaves me scrabbling for words. Simply, it reminded me that I am alive. It instilled in me a raw, unbridled happiness that I had never felt, not even as a child. I spent many hours with those cats and still I am amazed at how perfectly they reject everything it means to be in prison: they are playful and unselfconscious, curious and silly, soft and cuddly and so damned schmoofy that if I had a thousand of them I would delight in being buried alive. But even one is bliss.

Sometimes it is even more interesting to watch the interactions of my fellow prisoners with our cats. All those hard cases doing hard time melt like butter on a summer sidewalk when they visit the cats, when they feed them and watch them chasing bees and birds, when they make toys to entice the cats to play with them (as I myself have done—it is too fun for words). Engaging with a fluffy ball of innocence that offers no judgement whatsoever, stony visages finally bear smiles.

And I understand. I don't think about the past when a cat hops in my lap. I don't think of what I should or could have done. I don't think about courts or life sentences or parole boards. What comes to mind is peace, and a sense that everything is going to be OK. What comes to mind is that what's in the past needs to stay there, if I want to have a future, if I want to be grateful for today, and for the fact that I am no longer the person I once was.

The cats, of course, already know this, but they are gracious enough to spend their time with us so that we might learn, and so that we can enjoy a few quiet moments of warmth, of softness, of non-judgement. Of freedom.

Every prison should have cats.

*Writing by Cameron Terhune, AD0786
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PROGRAMMING IN PENNSYLVANIA PRISONS GAVE THIS LIFER PURPOSE

BY JEFFERY SHOCKLEY, PRISON JOURNALISM PROJECT

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What is the point of jails and prisons?

Many in society may say: "to punish people who have committed a crime or offense against society." A smaller portion may say: "rehabilitation."

My name is Jeffery Shockley. I reside in a Pennsylvania prison, serving a life sentence without the possibility of parole. You can also refer to my sentence as "death by incarceration."

I am one of thousands of similarly sentenced individuals who have changed their lives for the better in prison. Yet despite our growth, we are constantly scrutinized, criticized and marginalized. Politicians use us, and our crimes, as ammunition against reformers who want to change the antiquated ideologies and laws that keep people unnecessarily locked away for decades.

As I sit here in the 23rd year of my sentence, I've demonstrated a positive mentality, changed my behaviors and built an institutional resume of educational classes and rehabilitative programs. I'm not the same person today that I was 23 years ago. I'm no longer a problem child who behaves in destructive ways.

When you break prison rules, whether it's for a minor offense such as lending and borrowing or a more major offense such as fighting, you're written up for misconduct. During my two decades in prison, I've received only one misconduct report and spent 30 days in the hole for it. I pleaded guilty to possessing an extra razor — which I still maintain I didn't have — in hopes of keeping a job that I wound up losing anyway.

It's commendable that the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections provides basic education and GED classes, as well as various vocational classes, to people who want to better themselves. I have been able to participate in many programs and classes that expand the mind and provide some hope. I want to have tangible tools to help others and be able to support myself should I ever get out.

The prisons also offer welding, computer-aided design, plumbing and electrical courses through the maintenance department. Correctional industries teach metal fabrication and machining, where incarcerated people learn to make license plates.

One of the programs I participated in was the University of Pittsburgh's Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program. The program has since spread to other Pennsylvania prisons. In the exchange program, professors teach college-level courses in English literature, composition and creative writing. The unique aspect of the program is that campus-based students join incarcerated students in prison for classes.

Those lessons melted the prison walls away for me. When we stepped in the classroom, we were all just students, together as peers. We turned in weekly homework and discussed such topics as prison reform and what social justice means to someone who may never be free.

This experience touched me in so many positive ways. It helped me to grow as a writer. I explored topics I would never have considered in prison, including the plight of immigrant children. In one course, we read Daniel Beaty's play, "Emergency." The cherry on top was when the actor came into the prison and performed his play live.

It is easy to think that your life is over when serving a life sentence, but that hasn't been the case for me. Being able to participate and grow through these opportunities has given me hope.

There's a thought experiment that I think explains my point well. Envision a person getting a job flipping burgers. They continually demonstrate quality and efficiency, but their supervisor still does not believe they are capable. They may leave to get a better job.

A person serving a life sentence does not have the luxury of leaving if there isn't room for growth. We continue to sit here for decades, regardless. But because of classes and programs, and our desire to change, many of us have excelled beyond real or imagined expectations. The problem is that so many of us are stuck here, growing older and eating up taxpayer money despite our excellence.

As things are now, investments in us often don't make it back to our home communities — communities we have damaged and that we want to repair. Would youth not benefit from those of us who are no longer young, but whose experiences could help to deter today's violence? Many of us would love the chance to strengthen and encourage the communities we lived in. We want to share our knowledge and experience with the younger generations we've left behind to make sure they don't travel the same path we did.

What's the point of rehabilitation if the only part of us that society sees is the part we've finally left behind?

ART THERAPY

A CONVERSATION WITH SARAH TUCKER

Sarah Tucker served three years at Adelaide Women's Prison from 1996 until 1999. She now teaches art therapy classes to incarcerated people in Queensland, while also completing a Master's degree thesis on the subject. Paper Chained Editor Damien Linnane talks with her about her story.

You did a degree while you were in prison in South Australia. Were you well supported? Or was it really difficult studying in prison?

I studied art in prison, a Bachelor of Visual Arts through the University of New England. I was probably one of the very few prisoners who had completed Year 12. So the education team and the chaplain worked really hard to help get me into university. There were no computers, so each week I had a scheduled phone call with my lecturer. He would send me notes and assignments in a large hardcover book, which I've still got. He would send them to me, I would do the work in them, and then OARS, the Offender Aid Rehabilitation Services, would finance it and send it back for me and help me with art supplies required.

I had so many art supplies, and the population of the prison was much lower then, that I was able to have a second cell for my art supplies. I actually had an art studio next to my other cell in the prison because I always had so much art going on. I painted the murals there and I had an exhibition while I was inside. But despite the support and officers actually understanding that I had to study, there were constant hurdles and setbacks.

Did you continue with art after your release?

Because of parole and affiliations with my crime I left the state after I got out and moved to Queensland. I grew up in tattoo studios as a kid so the easiest job for me to get back into with a criminal record was tattooing. I'd been managing tattoo studios for the Rebels and Hells Angels and Finks for a couple of decades. But then the VLAD laws came along, and anyone with a criminal record couldn't own a tattoo studio anymore, so it completely changed my ability to provide for myself, as well as losing my pivotal social networks.

I can really empathise with that Sarah. After teaching myself art in prison I eventually got a job as a tattoo apprentice. I put in an application for a tattoo licence



but the police denied it. They said I was an unfit person. So now I'm running a prison art magazine and doing a PhD instead, which I'm really happy about.

Well I'm happy for you too Damien, because tattooing is a dead end to be honest. I watch all of my old friends still stuck in tattooing now. They don't have an education. They don't have any other options. And once they're in it, that's it. Most of them are just so bored and over it.

So after I couldn't tattoo anymore, I had to rethink my entire existence. And the one thing that I really enjoyed about tattooing back then was the connection with people. It was different back then. It wasn't just shopping for an image to put on your skin like these days. It was a connection with the artist. The connection you had with people was therapeutic for them.

And they would often come back and talk through a lot of their stuff. When you go to prison and you're very young, it becomes so normalised that it becomes strange when you meet people who haven't been in prison. So to me, being in jail became normal, going through extreme traumas and having a really full-on life was normal to me. Being around people with trauma was normal. So even though I couldn't support myself tattooing anymore, I still wanted to be with those people.

After I realised tattooing wasn't an option I decided to start educating myself and doing community work. I volunteered. I was handing out food parcels to a lot of ex-prisoners, and the church groups didn't know how to handle them, so then I became a prison chaplain for a while. I ended up spending a lot of time sitting in the units with the men in prison just teaching and talking about their problems while drawing. The other chaplains couldn't understand why I was able to literally draw so much information out of them through art and illustrating at the same time as talking with them, and the relaxation method that goes along with making art.

Then I got really interested in how the art programs were accessible to inmates. I found out that the only person who'd been facilitating art in Woodford, one of the super maximum-security prisons here, she'd basically been there 15 years and the art class was really just a hobby shop. People were able to go in there and just do what they wanted, but there was a lot of opposition coming up from officers because the inmates were able to take advantage of this. So there was a big conflict going on from the Queensland prison system, who saw art as too soft and fluffy. There was this attitude that people are in prison to be punished all the time, so the officers slowly started grinding away at making that more difficult in many ways.

Then the psychology team wanted to reintroduce more holistic stuff. And the problem is that the benefits of art therapy in Australia are so ignored. American art therapy associations in prisons have been established for over 15 years now and they are overseen by well-trained therapists, not just artists letting inmates do what they want. It's not just art, it's art therapy, and trying to communicate that to the psychology team was incredibly difficult, because they think it's just drawing and painting.

Later I was employed by Queensland Corrective Services to teach art, which was really difficult at first because I'm an ex-prisoner. I ran the high security room and the medium security room at Woodford with a couple of other art teachers in rotation. And some of the ways that they were teaching were beneficial, but there were deficits in it. It was frustrating and it caused some divisions. And then the triple C happened, the Crime and Corruption Commission. There were a heap of officers who were caught supplying drugs and Subutex into the prison. So, because of the funding and security around some of those things, they closed the art rooms down.

I started seeing all these holes in the system that was so different to South Australia and anything I'd experienced myself. I wanted to be able to bring art back to the inmates in a truly humanistic way of being able to engage with them, in the place that they were, without telling them what they should be doing.

I had a really good boss at the time. He was supportive and he let me do a program. They funded the art supplies for me to work out at Borallon Correctional Centre and at Brisbane Women's and a couple of the others on and off, and I developed this program that distilled a process of self-exploration, accountability, and objectivity, through

being able to illustrate things and allow prisoners to use their minds rather than just replicating that prison style

It was about building them up to be individuals who owned their own style and artwork so it could be unique and they could find themselves in that place. The whole point was to be able to bring artwork to be approved by parole so the people that who had low literacy could use artwork to communicate what their needs would be in the community when they got out.

Because most of the time when you're up against the parole board, you're so exhausted and institutionalised that it's difficult to verbalise what you need and what will keep you from returning to prison. You can't explain it well because you just want to get out. So the real needs are ignored. But if you could visually explain that, then they could actually understand the basic needs that would be able to keep former prisoners off the street. Then hopefully parole officers could actually see more of the humanity in this person through their artwork, rather than just a number. I actually turned what I was trying to get across to parole into a graphic storyboard of inmates, explaining what their life is going to be like once they get out, focusing on the perceived problems and how to have the best outcomes. That artwork is called Rodney Respect 100% and it's part of a workbook I created. It's actually quite well known in many prisons now, and people have kept copies of it.

Can you tell us more about your research?

My thesis, "Art Therapy in Queensland Prisons," is about the data research, the analysis, because that's never been done in Australia before. There's never been quantitative and qualitative data analysis on prison art therapy here. I don't think at the time I was doing my research that the prisoners really understood that this will have an impact, a published paper about the benefits of art therapy in prison in Australia. Because it's so hard for them to see that there's anything positive coming out, I'm still working on it. And once the thesis is written up and completed, it'll be the first time there is actual data for corrections to be able to go back and say, "Hey, this style of therapy actually does work for inmates. Can we implement this?" And this is what it's all about: all of us working together to chip away at a system that is failing. Being able to try and introduce new ways for prisoners to be able to express themselves creatively and also remain an individual.

My research is through Christian Heritage College, but I've also been studying a Bachelor of Art in Psychotherapy. The goal is to get recognition of the therapeutic benefit, rather than just having art perceived as being for enjoyment only. We'll have numbers to be able to say, "No, there is actually an improved benefit in overall prisoner self-reflection, health, mental health, and the ability to be non-reactive."

Getting the methodology across the line was very difficult and I had to go through that during COVID. So I had shutdown upon shutdown and it took me about four years to get it across the line. In all my ethics approvals, they understood there was a concept of psychology raised, and

accountability for the inmates. Well, as soon as we got to that point with the women, they shut the program down, because they're so intimidated by the women potentially being made more vulnerable, even though they already are vulnerable, and they really need to work on themselves. They don't allow them the space to actually really do some deep-diving work on themselves, whereas the men will just get completely thrown in it. And the differences are so polar in the way that the psychology teams treat the women compared to the men. It's really confronting to witness.

At every corner, Corrections in Queensland will come up with some reason to stop you. So, it's just been wall against wall, but now I'm on the final stretch of writing the data up. Hopefully I'll be able to publish my research later this year.

Can you tell me more about difference between the attitude with Corrections in South Australia when you were in prison and Queensland today?

This is an interesting phenomenon. As you'd be aware, the incarceration rates of women have dramatically increased in the last decade and a half. I'm not sure if it was a difference in the relationship between the officers and their concept of actually providing rehabilitation, because the population was so much smaller then, and people were closer.

Whereas now Australia has followed the American punitive justice system so closely without even looking at its own differences of culture or society, so the population rate has just exploded and what's missing now is that relationship

between the officer and the inmate as a role model and a mentor for rehabilitation.

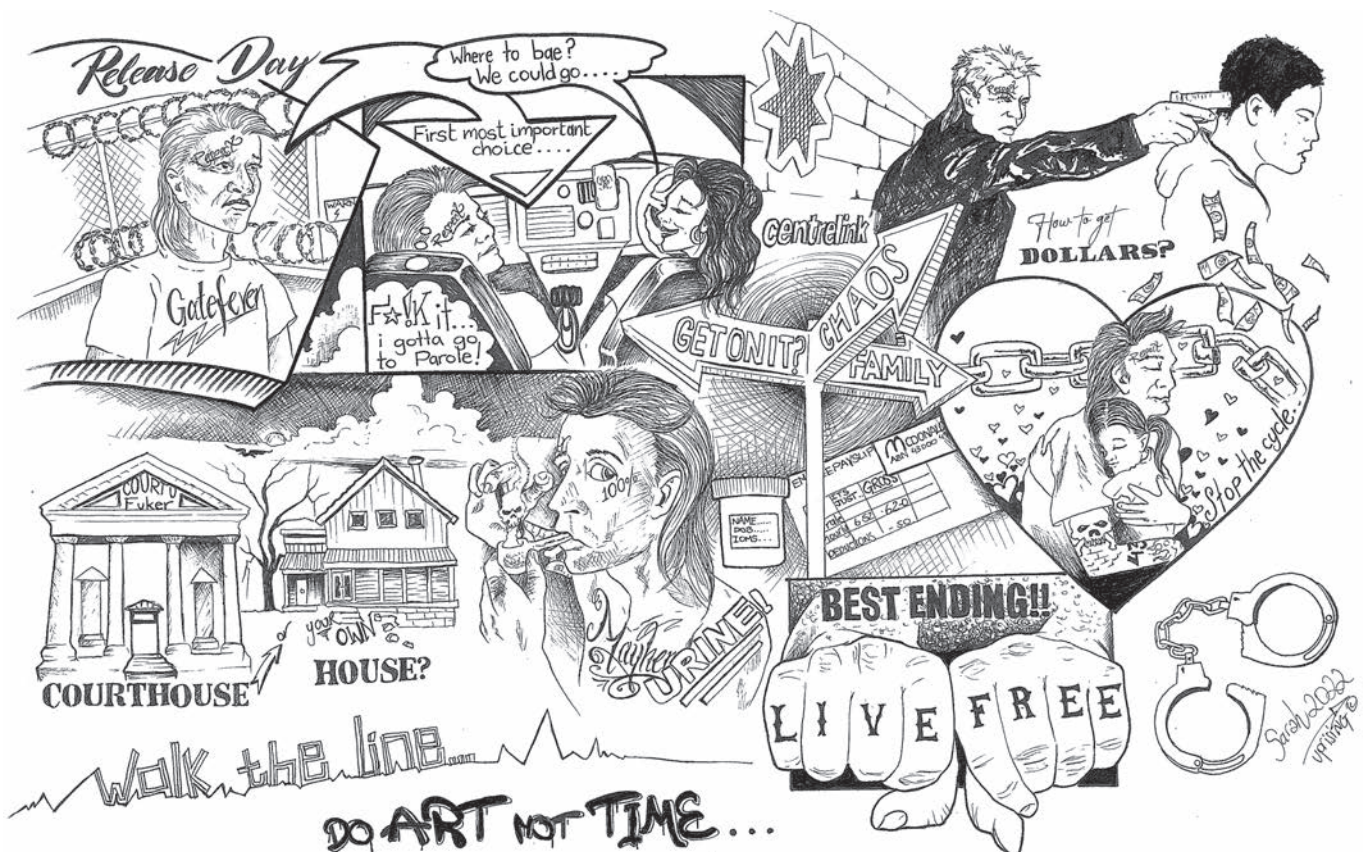
Jail in the pre-2000s was different in so many ways. The unwritten laws were different. The code was different. The officers were different. The population was smaller and there was nothing to hide either. You didn't have a fake identity on the outside via social media. You couldn't hide anything. It was real, it was all real. Someone could get your paperwork somehow.

I'm not too sure if it was a difference between that time constraint and the gentrification of prison now with a whole different class of criminal, but also the 'us and them' divide that has increased between the officer and the inmate because of the population, and the desire for money and overtime and triple pay if there's an incident. Or whether it was funding at that time, whether they were more supportive about rehabilitation education. Or even if the officers are just suffering from their own ethical burnout and it's too hard to really care or go that extra mile anymore.

What's your advice for people inside for getting through their sentence?

Use your mind, value every bit. Don't ever look away from a good book or the opportunity to spend time in your own mind because that's the thing that will save you from this, and in the long run benefit the experience to being a learning one.

RODNEY RESPECT 100%



NAVIGATING RELATIONSHIPS AFTER INCARCERATION

BY DWAYNE ANTOJADO

The prison experience is a porous one. For those who have been previously incarcerated, the remnants of the past continue to linger beyond the walls. Be it a police check to gain employment, the stigma from people you come into contact with, or “coming out” to those you date. It’s an inescapable reality that formerly incarcerated people endure, and we know that it’s a big challenge to social reintegration. The emotions, self-doubt, anxiety, and insecurity can sometimes be so debilitating that you struggle to function and see things clearly, making you think it’s okay to settle for what you think you deserve even though deep down you’re unhappy and dissatisfied. This challenge is nowhere more apparent than in relationships.

For most people, the process of getting to know someone else involves talking about what the other person does for work, their hobbies and interests, aspirations, and so on. For the formerly incarcerated, there’s the added complexity of knowing that at some point you’ll have to tell that you’ve been to prison, knowing it might jeopardise your relationship. It’s an ominous and hanging cloud that looms over your head every time you see them, you ask yourself, “When am I ready to tell them?” I can’t offer advice, since I’ve not figured that out yet. I too, just like you, have felt ill-equipped to deal with these questions and situations. But what I do know is what it feels like, how it manifests in real life, and the internal crises that I’ve had to overcome to make relationships work for me. The combination of these realities might make you feel hopeless, but things do get better.

I’ve dealt with this conundrum in two ways: building walls to convince myself I am not interested in relationships, or else desperately clinging on to ones that I know are fallible. The prior, for me, was about self-preservation. A coping mechanism that I have built to justify in my own head that I don’t need anyone, that I’m immune to the feelings of happiness associated with being in a healthy relationship. When I see friends around me show affection to their partners, and when I see my own parents express love and endearment, an internal dialogue ensues convincing myself that “I don’t need that, I don’t have time for a relationship, my career is really taking off and I need to focus on that,” and “I just need to deal with one more thing before I’m ready to find someone.” I kill every hint of emotion so as to feel nothing, numb and indifferent.

And on the odd occasion that I let my guard down and allow myself to be seen by someone else, I disregard my own intuition and convince myself that they’re “The One,” even though I know they probably aren’t. I excuse every bad behaviour, I let go of the things that cause me pain and hurt, I accept the love that they give me, just to feel loved, even though it’s probably premature and insufficient. I try so hard to change myself, to fit into the mold that I think they’d want.

I forget about myself and everything happening around me, and I become so concerned with the relationship at hand, allowing insecurity to fester. It becomes an addiction, a drug. I find every excuse to justify to myself that I need this, and that it’s good for me.

But why do I do this? And, importantly, to what extent has the prison experience shaped my interaction with relationships? Understanding the root cause of these patterns is essential for breaking free from the chains of self-imposed isolation or clinging to unsustainable relationships. The prison experience undoubtedly leaves a lasting impact on your perception of self-worth and interpersonal connections. The stigma associated with a criminal past can create a persistent fear of rejection, making it challenging to open up to others about your history – and when you do, even though that relationship may be unhealthy, you throw everything at it to make sure it doesn’t leave you.

The internal struggle to determine the right time to disclose your incarceration adds an extra layer of complexity to forming relationships. The fear of judgment and fallout can lead you to build an emotional fortress, convincing yourself that solitude is preferable to facing potential rejection. For those who opt to engage in relationships, the desperation to hold onto them, even when there are red flags, stems from a yearning for acceptance and a belief that you may not find love elsewhere. This desperate clinging can be a maladaptive response to the fear of being alone or being deemed unlovable due to a criminal past.

Recognising these patterns is the first step towards healing and building healthier connections. Therapeutic interventions and support groups can provide a safe space for formerly incarcerated people to explore and confront their fears, insecurities, and self-doubts. Learning to embrace your worth beyond past mistakes is crucial for fostering genuine self-love and, consequently, healthier relationships. Breaking down the walls constructed for self-preservation requires vulnerability and self-reflection. It involves acknowledging that everyone, regardless of their past, deserves love and understanding. Releasing the belief that happiness is an unattainable or undeserved state is a powerful step toward cultivating meaningful connections.

As we continue to navigate the complexities of post-incarceration relationships, let us collectively strive to dismantle the societal stigmas that perpetuate the cycle of self-doubt and insecurity. By fostering empathy, understanding, and providing avenues for support, we can create a society that truly believes in the transformative power of redemption and second chances. The prison experience should not be a lifelong sentence to emotional isolation. Instead, it should be an opportunity for growth, resilience, and the forging of connections that defy societal expectations.

THE JUSTICE SYSTEM

BY STACEY STOKES

I ponder these things.

Classified as a low risk of re-offending and not needing any rehabilitation, I was sentenced to ten-and-a-half years in prison as my punishment. The base cost of my punishment, being in jail, was \$150,000 a year, which totals \$1,650,000 for the duration of my incarceration. This does not include the court costs of a trial and two appeals.

I am transgender, male to female, breasts and all. So they sent me to a male protection prison with the rest of the at-risk prisoners. Mostly sex offenders. The result for me was being the victim of more crimes than I have ever committed.

I now have PTSD, a serious anxiety disorder due to the crimes I have suffered. I am also extremely institutionalised due to the length of my punishment. I have real doubts I will ever work again, so I will be on welfare after my release and will obviously not pay any tax.

My punishment has cost society a lot of money that could have been spent on pro-social things like education or health care. But it was very important that I be made to suffer for my crimes.

Why? Why is it so important to the Australian people that criminals be made to suffer, to the detriment of all other things? It seems very vindictive and self-defeating.

I will never be forgiven for my crimes either. I will spend the rest of my life being reminded I am a terrible person. Barriers to travel and getting a job put in place via police checks. I will be monitored by the police and made a suspect in every similar crime in the area I live in. For all intents and purposes, I will be a pariah. But I am told I must re-join society. That seems very paradoxical. Why not send me to a convict colony in some far-off land? At least then I could have a fresh start.

In my opinion, going to jail is the punishment. You lose your job, your friends, your kids, your hobbies, your house. You have everything taken away. That's the punishment. Being in jail is not the punishment.

Being in jail two years or ten years made no real difference to me. I don't remember freedom anymore. I stopped remembering it around the two-year mark. Life was just jail, that's all I knew. They are spending loads to punish me and my mind just accepted it as life years ago. So pointless. Money well spent ...

We are in jail because we are broken but none of the people I see are getting any sort of help. We are just warehoused,

then released. People who were assessed as needing to complete offending behaviour programs are being released without ever doing them as well, due to the "COVID backlog". I feel like COVID was long enough ago for that to be a massive cop out.

To get parole, you need to supply the housing. But imagine if you have been in jail for 10–20 years, and no longer have anyone on the outside. Please supply a house for parole. How? What's the actual point? I really don't understand what they expect. You have zero agency and no one on the outside. Then you are released and told, "Good luck with that." Here's a two week stay at a caravan park. Then you're homeless, and cold in winter, so you'll want to go back in jail where at least it's warm.

You want to do drugs? Then you are sent to jail to be punished. You get on methadone, a government-supplied drug. You use it for years in jail and never got weaned off. They say it's to help you get off other drugs, but when you go back into the community, you're just addicted to a different drug.

This is the justice system I have experienced. I wonder how society feels about all this pointless spending of money. How a parent feels about waiting at the hospital for hours in Emergency with a sick child because the Government thinks it's more important to punish me than to help their child.

I truly don't understand why. Is it governments trying to win votes? Is it because Australia has an inherently vindictive culture? Is it ignorance, that no one outside of the justice system knows? Is it that no one gives a stuff?

It is my reality though, and I just accept it.

I only ponder these things when I have time to waste, like now when I'm waiting two hours for the prison doctor...

Stacey Stokes has recently been released from custody. You can read more of her writing at <https://substack.com/profile/187957598-stacey-stokes>



ROGUES: AN INTERVIEW WITH PHILLIP PLAYER

Phillip Player served over seven years in prison in NSW before being released in 1991. During that time he worked on InLimbo, the magazine for the remand section of Long Bay, before creating Rogues at the Central Industrial Prison, the main area for sentenced prisoners. Paper Chained Editor Damien Linnane talks to him about the magazines, and how they came to be banned.

So how did you end up at Long Bay?

I was a professional criminal. I don't deny this fact. If you Google me you'll find some articles describing me as a former underworld boss, which is partly true. I've lived by crime most of my life, but my legitimate profession was show business. I was a ring announcer for boxing and a sports and entertainment promoter. I have always lived either by crime or entertainment. That's all I've ever enjoyed.

I did seven-and-a-half years in NSW, mostly at Long Bay, but I'd just done seven years in Perth before that sentence started, so I pretty much did fourteen years straight.

Tell me about InLimbo and Rogues.

InLimbo was created and printed at the Metropolitan Remand Centre at Long Bay. It had only run for a couple issues before I took over as editor. Eventually I got transferred to the CIP [Central Industrial Prison at Long Bay]. Ken Horton was the Superintendent there, and probably the only decent Superintendent in the history of the New South Wales prison system at the time. I told him I wanted to start a magazine, and he said "*InLimbo's* the only magazine that's ever achieved anything at the MRC, so you can give it a try." And so then I created *Rogues*.

Ken Horton wrote the introduction for the first issue of Rogues. Was content censored initially?

No. I made content in the magazines political whenever I got the opportunity. But if it was censored, I would not have printed it. I would have just fucking torn it up. I told Horton I wasn't going to be censored. Free speech is legal. I'm lucky because I've had a lot of connections in the media over the years so we got lots of media coverage over both magazines, but I always said that if you try to censor me, when the media hear about it they will blow it completely up. The media supported me a lot.

How many copies were made?

Over 1000. They went to all cells in Long Bay, and to different



The final issue of InLimbo from 1989, before the magazine was banned.

jails in NSW. We also sent issues to politicians. The Prime Minister and the leader of the Opposition and different government bodies were sent them as well, because I wanted people outside to understand what was going on. It was the only voice from inside prison. And prisoners need a voice, because otherwise people don't know what's going on inside.

The leader of the Greens was a big supporter of the magazine, and so were some judges. Kep Enderby QC was a big supporter, so I sent him the magazine. I also deliberately sent it to judges who didn't like me or the magazine, just to stir them up.

When did the trouble first start?

I put a dog in the witness box on the second cover. I did it in support of my friend Tom Domican, regarding a case he was involved in. The cover caused a whole lot of stir.

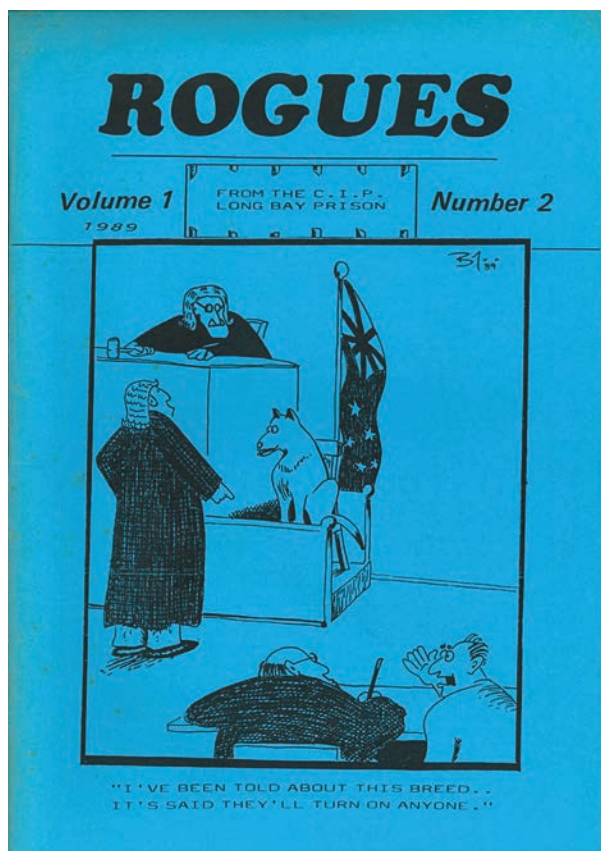
There was also an article in the magazine titled 'In The Wild', which was a satirical article about a type of animal called 'mongrelous humananus caninious', which was clearly aimed at informants, or 'dogs'. What happened after the cover and article came out?

Michael Yabsley, the Minister for Corrections at the time, had us banned. Ken Horton actually stuck up for us and ended up getting a lot of shit from Yabsley. We took the case to the NSW Ombudsman.

I got the original report from the Ombudsman. They found that the decision to confiscate the second issue was justified, but the decision to ban future issues of the magazine, and also to ban *InLimbo* at the same time, was unreasonable. They also said the decision to transfer you to Goulburn after *Rogues* was banned was unreasonable. What happened after the Ombudsman came out in support of you?

Nothing. Yabsley ignored the Ombudsman and continued to ban the magazine. After it was shut down, I started producing the magazine without approval. I still wrote it on the sly. I'd give the articles to a bloke in another slot, because my slot was always getting raided, and I'd send it out in legal mail to my lawyer, Daniel Brezniak, who was very supportive of us. Then my wife at the time, Renate, and a friend, Cass Chidiac, put it together as best they could.

The first two issues of *Rogues* were printed at the CIP. After the ban it was printed outside with funding from my lawyer. Brett Collins from Justice Action printed copies as well.



The controversial cover of the second issue of Rogues, which led to the magazine being officially banned.

I just wanted prisoners to have a voice. I've always liked the battle for the little guy. If we can fight to get things better for us, we need to. When I was in prison in Western Australia, we had to fight to get rid of the shit buckets in cells and replace them with toilets, and to get hot water in the jails. I was put in solitary for six months in WA for making things difficult by fighting for better rights. If you were fighting for better rights in NSW though, they just shanghaied us from jail to jail, which made life really difficult.

Do you think you were sent to other prisons deliberately to make it difficult for you to keep producing *Rogues* underground?

Yeah, I was sent to Parklea, then Goulburn, Bathurst, Silverwater and Parramatta. It made it hard to keep editing a magazine, especially if you're trying to write things then smuggle them out. I then had to get other people to send it to my lawyer as legal mail couldn't be opened, but my mail was getting shredded half the time. I was released from prison in 1991 though, and that was the end of the magazine.

There wasn't anyone willing to take it over?

No. After what Yabsley did, everybody sort of went to water on it, they were too afraid to take it on. The screws and welfare didn't want to know anything about it because they always thought they were going to lose their jobs.

In *Rogues* underground, you wrote an open letter to Yabsley criticising him for cutting funding to a bus service run by the Community Restorative Centre that provided transport for families to visit prisons. I've also read that he banned educational materials in prisons.

Yabsley even banned Vegemite, because he thought we were going to turn it into homebrew. He banned fresh fruit for a period of time as well. He just went completely ridiculous. One of the ideas he had was to transfer prisoners in containers. So when you got sentenced, you'd be put in a movable container cell, and that was going to be his answer to overcrowding. So if you got transferred, for example out of Long Bay, they'd just pick you up while you were in your container and fucking off you went. That never eventuated, but it was one of his ideas, and it was just fucking stupid. I think he was just a rich boy who got given a portfolio and it went to his head. He got power, and he realised all of a sudden that he could be in the papers every day if he kept being outrageous. I think his ego just got completely out of control. Even the staff hated him.

When I was in custody, I kept asking if there had ever been a prison magazine. Nobody could remember one, because there hadn't been one in so long.

The population of prison has changed. Every ten years or so there's a new wave of crims coming through and people forget the past. My glory days in the prisons were in the 70s, 80s and 90s. But now pretty much no one cares, no one gives a fuck. But that's life with everything.

People over the years, like myself, like you and others, we have tried to get magazines out, and then as soon as it becomes too powerful or too embarrassing for the system,

they crush it because they're afraid of it. Because it gets a voice. *Rogues* and *InLimbo* had so much publicity, and that's what the government and departments are afraid of.

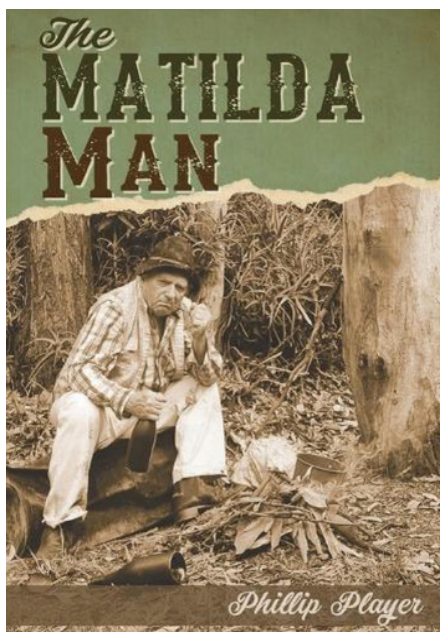
We've both done something to help improve the system, we've done something for our fellow inmates and we've been creative, which is always good because my motto in jail and all the time I've done since I was a kid is "Don't you work for time. Let time work for you."

People often ask me what prison was like and I tell them that there were two really depressing things. Firstly, we were hardly given anything constructive to do. But the other thing I found depressing was that even if there were good, meaningful programs, half the people in there wouldn't do them anyway.

Yeah, because it's just easier not to do anything. I don't regard a lot of people in prisons as crims. I was a professional criminal, we lived by crime, but a lot of them are just in jail because of drugs and they don't give a fuck. But you've got to make time work for you. If you don't do something positive, you'll just come out of jail like, "Woe is me, what am I going to do? How am I going to survive?" You've got to get off your ass and fucking do something. Be positive. You know, even though it's hard, sometimes you get knocked down, the screws can fucking beat you, you can get locked up, but you've got to come out and say, "I'm not going to let them beat me, I'm going to do something." You've just got to keep going and find a way, which for me is writing.

What are you writing now?

I've released two books this year. *The Matilda Man*, which my mother started writing as a screenplay many years ago. I've turned it into a novel. The other is a children's book called *The Adventures of Milo and Clyde*. I've written a play, *The Last Hours of Morant and Handcock*, and I've done a couple other stories that haven't been published yet. But I'm leaving the autobiographies to guys like John Killick and Graham 'Abo' Henry.



The Matilda Man can be ordered in stores and online.

SHAME FILE

Name: MICHAEL YABSLEY

Occupation: MEDIA MEGLOMANIAC / BOY POLITICIAN

File No.: Y-U-R-A- 0



A 'Shame File' featured in every issue of Rogues, commenting on perceived shameful actions from public figures. This picture is from the file in Rogues Vol 1 No 3.

MORE ABOUT MICHAEL YABSLEY

Michael Yabsley was elected unopposed in a by-election for the district of Vaucluse in Sydney in 1988 and was given the role of Minister for Corrective Services. He led a campaign to make prisons harsher, explicitly telling the media he wanted to be remembered as "someone who has put the value back in punishment."

Yabsley decreased the number of visits prisoners could have from one per week to one per month, as well as cutting funding to educational and rehabilitation programs. He banned prisoners from having various personal items, ranging from pet birds to wedding rings and even hats. He also attempted to ban prisoners from having photos of their own children. Prisoners responded to his bans by rioting.

Under Yabsley's leadership, prisons in NSW experienced unprecedented levels of violence, deaths, and operating costs, as well as lowered morale and increased resignations among staff. The Probation and Parole Officers Association openly accused Yabsley and his restrictions of endangering the safety of Correctional Officers. According to the historian Mark Dapin, Yabsley's harsh prison reforms had no positive effects whatsoever.

In 1991, Yabsley was removed as Minister of Corrective Services and appointed as Minister for Tourism and also Minister for State Development. According to the academic David B. Moore, the government transferred Yabsley to portfolios where "he could do less harm." Yabsley resigned from these ministries the following year, and from politics entirely in 1994. Following his departure, many of his policies were rescinded, though some remain in place to this day. Yabsley was instrumental in creating the "Truth in Sentencing" legislation in 1989, which ended the early release of prisoners in NSW for good behaviour.

CONTACT FRONT

BY DAMIEN LINNANE

I've published two books now, and several pieces of academic writing and journalism. But the first time my writing was published was in Issue One of *Paper Chained*, back in 2017, long before I became the editor. I wrote the story while I was in prison. I've mentioned it a couple of times in passing, and to several people who have written in to the magazine. People often ask me to send it to them so they can read it. Since people are still interested, and since it's been seven years since it was first published in *Paper Chained*, I thought it would be fair to share it again. I hope you enjoy it, and if you send your writing in to us, maybe one day you'll be telling people the first time something you wrote was published, it was in this magazines as well.

Kain's parents were very disappointed. It was remarkable their son had achieved an almost perfect score on his university admission test. He could have studied anything he wanted to with those grades, even medicine. Not that his parents particularly wanted him to study that. His mother was a naturopath and his father, a primary school-teacher, was also a big believer in alternative medicines. They thought the pharmaceutical companies were as greedy and heinous as the mining ones. Just as reckless as the conservative government. Or the military for that matter. Military college. They just couldn't believe it. A literal world of options and that was where their son had chosen to redeem his free pass to study anywhere. Even if he hadn't scored so well on his admission test, it was just the principle of the matter.

Kain's mother blamed herself. She was the one who had pushed him into joining the Boy Scouts as a child. She had hoped it would give him an appreciation of nature and the outdoors. What he had really taken a shining to was the uniform and discipline. She'd had serious reservations about letting him move up in the world to the army cadets, but she told herself it was just harmless fun. Boys will be boys. Like the trading cards he had been so obsessed with as a child, she had hoped he would just grow out of it.

Only he hadn't. He had just signed an eight-year contract. Eight years. Eight years ago he had only been ten. How could he possibly know what he wanted to do until his mid twenties? She took some comfort in the knowledge that the first of those four years would be purely at the academy. It was the second half she was worried about. Once her son had graduated and was eligible for overseas deployment.

Kain was in the top five students in his class of eighty officer cadets when the first semester exams had come back, which came as no surprise to anyone who knew him. He had been at the upper echelons of practically everything he had ever put his mind to. The top place of the chess club in high-school, as well as vice-captain of the rugby league

team, a combination that amused the other members of both groups. He had represented his school on the debate team, and nobody had ever doubted that he would end up being the dux. There were things he was terrible at, of course. He'd gotten his only 'C' in high-school for art, and he'd only gotten a grade that high for his effort and positive attitude. Kain couldn't draw to save his life, and as a child he had learned after only a few months of piano lessons that his interest in music lay solely in appreciating its beauty from a distance. But that was fine. You couldn't excel at everything.

But he did excel at everything the academy threw at him. The top marksmen in his class, and nearly breaking the record time on the obstacle course. High-distinctions in all his subjects from military history to martial law. With his grades he could have easily gotten a position in military intelligence, or any other number of safe desk jobs the army offered. But none of that interested Kain. He wanted to be a platoon commander.

Kain graduated from the college with full honours, and was promptly placed in charge of a platoon at the school of infantry. He was popular with the soldiers. He led with confidence, listened to their feedback, never patronized or pulled rank when he didn't need to, and once he'd clocked off for the day, he drank with them and made it clear they weren't to treat him as their commander when he wasn't in uniform. Once the boots were off he wasn't Lieutenant Meriwether anymore. He was just Kain. Someone you could get drunk and chase after girls with. And there was no shortage of girls to be chased. Kain had many, but loved none. He wanted to focus on his career. He planned to take a wife and raise children once he'd had a few years service and a promotion under his belt.

It took the standard six months for his first platoon to finish their training. Kain had expected to be given a new squad. Most of the junior officers stayed at the school of infantry for at least a couple years. Instead he was offered a tour of duty. Fast-tracked due to outstanding service, the Colonel had said. Kain had beamed as he saluted. He'd dreamed of leading a platoon into combat since as long as he could remember.

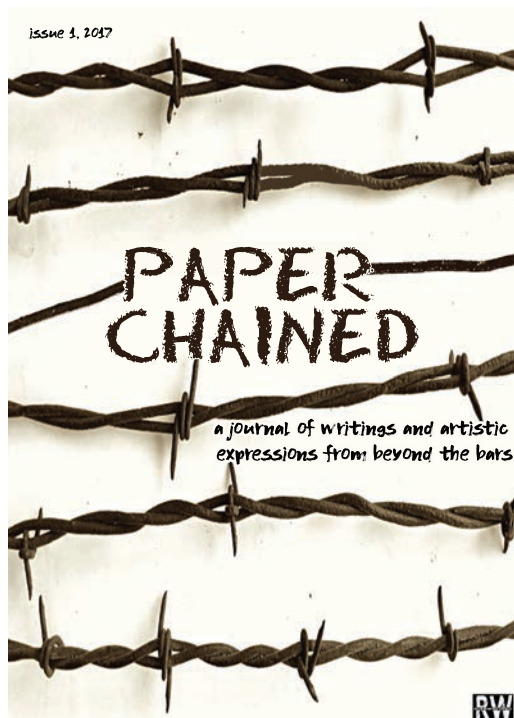
He was even more elated to learn some of his now fully trained soldiers would be joining him on the rotation. He whelmed with pride as he got onto the transport plane. Kain did think it was ironic that the first time he was travelling overseas was to invade another country, but he had the rest of his life to travel for leisure. Here he was going to make a difference. Liberate the oppressed. Bring freedom to those who needed it most. Kain's mind could have been scanned and turned into a military recruitment video and a PR campaign at the same time. He was a believer.

Two weeks of acclimatisation at the forward operating base and a dozen briefings on local security later, Kain put on his body armour, loaded his rifle and stepped onto the armoured transport. Going outside the wire for the first time. Most of his men were nervous, but Kain wasn't. A lifetime of training had prepared him for this. He knew his rifle like the back of his hand, and he knew most of his soldiers even better. He knew what they could endure, physically and emotionally. He knew the capabilities of their weapons, and how much ammunition they carried. He knew how long it would take for resupply or additional troops to arrive if they were needed. He knew he could request air-strikes or artillery support if it came to that. He knew every conceivable military strategy. He had memorised today's game plan. He had all his bases covered.

'We're in position sir.' The driver's radio crackled into the rear transport bay where Kain was surrounded by his men. He smiled thinly at them. Nodded. There was no need for a last minute pre-battle speech to install confidence in them. They knew him. Trusted him. His presence and demeanour itself radiated confidence through each and every one of them. He went to the rear of the vehicle. The best commanders always led from the front, and Kain had always been one of the best.

The rear hatch began to open. Through the growing gap Kain saw the glaring desert sun. He saw the dry, blue sky. He caught a glimpse of the tops of sand-blasted buildings in the distance. He never saw the sniper's round.

The first shot of the battle took him in the neck, about three inches above his ballistic vest. He dropped to his knees and clutching at his wound, his body crumpled onto the deck of the carrier before the rear hatch had swung completely open. By the time it had, he was already the latest statistic in the war. It took field command almost a week to find a replacement officer to lead the platoon.



Issue One of Paper Chained, released in 2017.

STRUGGLING TO REINTEGRATE IN KENYA

BY DAMIEN LINNANE

I met Ali Mwero in Kenya, while attending the Ninth International Cure Conference on prison reform last May. Like me, he was one of many ex-prisoners attending the conference. Here is his story.



In 1999, Ali was 27 years old and married with three children. His life, however, was upended when he was sentenced to life in prison in Kenya for robbery with violence. Such a harsh sentence is normal in Kenya, which can still technically impose the death penalty for armed robbery. Ali had always maintained his innocence, though he couldn't afford a lawyer, and didn't understand the legal system well enough to properly defend himself in a country that has little to no free legal services.

Ali used his time as best as he could, given the conditions of Kenyan prisons. He completed his schooling and then trained as a paralegal, working in this role for ten years in the prison. It was through his paralegal training that he learned how to petition the court, and in 2019, he was acquitted of the crime for which he was sentenced. After 20 years at Shimo la Tewa Maximum Prison in Mombasa, he gained his freedom. Unfortunately, like many former prisoners around the world, Ali faced significant hardships upon his release.

Ali had owned a small block of land, but when he returned to his home town, he discovered that his uncle had sold it. His uncle was now deceased, as were his parents. His wife had also remarried and abandoned their two sons. With no land or prospects, Ali resorted to casual employment in order to rent a single room, though he has constantly faced the threat of eviction for the last few years, since his income is not stable.

Nonetheless, Ali still finds time to lobby for better rights and transitional services for prisoners in Kenya. Those in custody do not get paid to work in Kenya, and Ali has appealed to the government to pay small amounts of money for carpentry and welding jobs in prison, which could then be accessed upon release. Until such time as this happens, many people released from prison in Kenya will be completely unable to support themselves.

Ali does not have regular access to a phone, but messages and offers of support or financial assistance can be sent to him via his son's Instagram account, @saidimlako.

AUSTRALIAN GUNSLINGER

BY SOKON

Part five of the story of Angus Watson, following the debut of this ongoing series in Issue 9.

"He's planning something, get ready for it." Said Mideast. "You think so." I replied sarcastically. Minutes passed as we sat, listening, waiting for something to happen. "This isn't good." I whispered. Mideast pointed to a dunny about 50 metres away. "Not a good time for a crap." I said quietly. He shook his head no and then gestured to the dunny. "What?" I whispered. "Run!" He yelled. We both jumped up and ran for the dunny, bullets whizzing past us. I glanced back as I dived behind the dunny and saw four men standing at the timber. "Watch the other side!" Yelled Mideast. "How did you know they were there?" I asked. "I heard one of them wheezing."

We waited for a short time but it had gone quiet, until we heard horses galloping. "See ya next time Angus!" Yelled Clarke. "No!" I yelled. The horse yard was on the other side of the cabins, I made a run for it. "No you don't Clarke, not again!" I yelled as bullets were whizzing past me.

Mideast started shooting at the men near the timber as a distraction. By the time I got to the horse yard Clarke and the men with him were too far away to shoot. I kicked up some dust and shook my head, I couldn't believe Clarke had got away again. The sound of gunshots reminded me about Mideast, jolting me into a sprint for the timber stack.

I came around from the cabin and when the four men came into view I started shooting. Mideast saw me and ran for the timber as well, guns blazing. Not long after we were both standing at the stack of timber, guns smoking, looking at four dead men.

"Did you get him?" Asked Mideast. "No, he got away. How's your shoulder?" "I'll live." He answered. "We better check the cabins."

The door to the second cabin was open. I reloaded my gun before stepping in. To my left was a man tied to a chair and a few steps in front of me was a table with an open bottle of whisky on it. I watched the man trying to free himself while I swigged from the bottle.

"The other cabin's empty." Said Mideast when he came in. He noticed the man in the chair. "Who's your new friend?" "I don't know, he hasn't said anything." Mideast snatched the bottle and threw it out the door. "We haven't got time to celebrate, and did you think to take the gag from his mouth?" "I was getting to it." I said.

Mideast walked over and removed the gag. "Are you two out of your minds!" Blurted the man. "Untie me!" "Not until you tell us who you are." Said Mideast. "I'm Bret, now untie me!" Mideast looked over and I shrugged my shoulders. "I own a farm not far from here, now please untie me." Said Bret. "Do you know this man Angus?" Asked Mideast. "Nope, never heard of him." I replied. "Take me to my farm, my sister will tell you who I am." Said Bret. "Hang on." I said. "Is she a pretty brunette?" "She's not that pretty." He answered. I nodded to Mideast to untie him.

Mideast and I walked out to get our horses. Gunshots didn't scare them so they didn't go far. "We will have to send the grave digger back to clean up this mess." I said. "We will have to send the photographer so we have proof of capture." Added Mideast. After draping Mitch's lifeless body over his horse we started our ride back to town. "Wait for me!" Yelled Bret.

"How did you end up tied to a chair?" I asked Bret. "I was on my way to town to get some supplies and a few of those slingers saw me. They said I was snooping for Mitch. I told them I wasn't but they didn't believe me and they didn't want me going back and reporting to Mitch."

It didn't add up. He didn't show any remorse about Mitch being dead, and his story didn't match Andrea's. "Is it a big farm?" I asked. "It's big enough." Answered Bret. "Stock or crop?" I asked. "A bit of both." "Good fencing?" I continued with my questioning. "Yeah. It's gotta be to keep the sheep in." "I thought it was all cattle country around here." I said, looking at Mideast. "Is that so." Said Mideast. Bret nervously shifted in his saddle.

"Ahh, yeah it is, but my sister and me wanted to try the sheep to change things a bit."

Bret slowed his horse and dropped behind. I continued the conversation. "I think I've met your sister, what's her name, oh Kelly. I thought she said you had cattle, but I must be mistaken." "You must be mistaken, I don't think Kelly would have said that." said Bret.

I stopped my horse and after a few steps both Mideast and Bret stopped theirs. My hand slowly dropped to my side and my little finger started twitching. "What I'm not mistaken about is that Bret's sister's name is Andrea."

Both Mideast and I reached for our guns. "Don't do it!" said the man. I looked back and saw him with a gun in both hands aimed at Mideast and me.

"Where's Bret?" I asked. "Don't worry about him. Both of you throw down your guns." "Is this some personal grudge?" asked Mideast. "Nah, Clarke is paying me big money to take care of your mate. You're free to go if you want to ride on." "I think I'll stay." said Mideast. "Suit yourself, now throw down the guns." "Just shoot us and get it done." I said. "Nah, I'm having too much fun, now throw em down, slowly!"

With his guns already aimed on us from behind, even Mideast's lightning speed wasn't going to be quick enough, so we dropped our guns. "Now ride up a bit." He said. We rode up a few metres and then stopped. He got off his horse and collected our guns, then told us to get off our horses.

He started dancing around. "Woo-hoo. Two of the best slingers in the country at my mercy!" He shouted. "Just hurry up and shoot us." said Mideast. The man snapped back. "When I'm ready, now get on your knees!" "That's not going to happen, just shoot us!" I yelled, taking a few steps toward the man. "Get on your knees and beg for your life!" He shouted. Mideast came up beside me.

"I'm not begging, are you Angus?" I pointed to the man and took a couple of steps closer. "This man is going to shoot us Mideast! If we beg, and offer him more money, he might change his mind." Mideast came up beside me again. "And Clarke would never know, but you would have to stop chasing him."

"Shut up and stop moving closer!" Shouted the man. "I knew that wasn't going to work." Said Mideast. "I'm sick of your crap plans Angus, give me my gun bloke, I'll shoot him myself." Mideast boldly walked up to the man with his hand reaching out for his gun. The man didn't know what to do. He hesitated long enough for Mideast to punch him, stunning him so we could rush him. In seconds we were on the ground fighting for the guns until, Bang! The man slumped and it was over. "I thought it was a bit strange for a farmer to have a couple of guns on his hips." Said Mideast. "Really! Now you mention that." I replied.

We got our guns and headed for town. "It was a good thing you put that bullet in him before he got us." I said. "I didn't shoot him." Replied Mideast. We shrugged it off and pushed the horses to a gallop.

When we got to town Mideast went to speak to the grave digger, with Mitch, and I went to speak with the photographer, then we met up at the sheriff's office.

"There's a bit of money in the safe but not enough to cover all the bounties." Said Mideast. "We can get the rest at the next town." I replied. "And how did you get into the safe?"

Just then Andrea burst in the door. "You've got to help me Angus!" "Calm down. What's going on?" "I was out in the paddock and I saw seven men ride onto the farm. They've taken over my house!"

"It couldn't be, could it?" Said Mideast. "I reckon it is." I replied. "Let's ride."

**AUSTRALIAN GUNSLINGER WILL CONCLUDE WITH CHAPTER SIX IN
THE NEXT ISSUE OF PAPER CHAINED.**

STIR: A RETROSPECTIVE REVIEW

In 1980, Stir, which was based on the true story of the Bathurst prison riots in the 1970s, was billed as the most controversial Australian film ever made. Today it has largely been forgotten, just like the Royal Commission into New South Wales Prisons, created in the wake of the riot. In this issue of Paper Chained, Jennifer Myers, a criminology student, looks back on the film and the events upon which it was based.

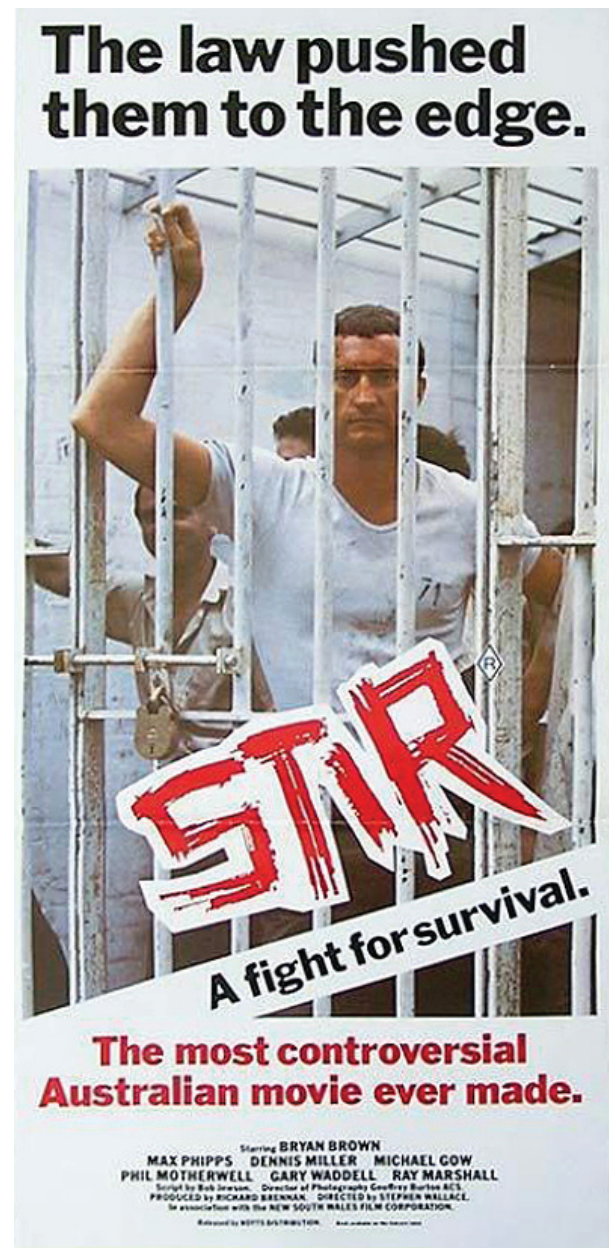
Stir, directed by Steven Wallace in 1980 and starring Bryan Brown, was a film ahead of its time. The script was written by Bob Jewson, a prisoner at Bathurst during the 1974 riot, and is based on his experiences in NSW prisons during the 70s. The film also uses the findings from the subsequent Royal Commission into NSW Prisons to create a full and accurate depiction of these events.

These riots are a somewhat neglected part of NSW history, particularly considering the 'true-crime' genre's choke-hold on pop culture today. I couldn't even find a podcast episode on them! The irony of a lack of media discussion today is that the rioters, the Royal Commission, and the film itself were all trying to make the same point: ignoring a problem doesn't make it go away, it only makes it worse.

The accuracy of this film is truly impressive. This film wasn't just designed to entertain: it was a man jumping up and down, waving his arms, and yelling at the helicopter, "I'M OVER HERE!" It was made to say, "This is the problem, right here, clear as day. Now fix it." And honestly, they didn't need a whole lot of melodrama to make that point.

The film opens with violent screams and beating thuds in a cell block, while our protagonist, China Jackson, and his cellmate wait in terror. As the ominous sound draws closer, the anxiety in the cell grows. Finally, the cell door opens, and the two prisoners are subjected to what they knew was coming, a ruthless beating by the prison guards, primarily 'Norton', who takes the lead on beating Jackson. Throughout the scene, an overlaid icy blue filter emphasises the prisoners' fear and the guards' cold detachment. Jackson's voice narrates the event, though as the scene cuts, we learn that this narration is actually a TV interview of Jackson recalling the beating, which is now being watched by Norton. The blue filter exaggerates the hollows of Norton's face and his haunted eyes, setting the tone for the film, not only as the catalyst for the events that follow, but also for how the trauma of physical violence can infest a man.

This opening scene is inspired by the true events that took



place on the 21st of October 1970. Four days earlier, the prisoners at Bathurst had participated in a peaceful 'sit-in' to protest the undeniably inhumane conditions of the prison. Over that weekend, it became apparent to prisoners that staff had no intention of keeping the promises they made about improving conditions. Fueled by the frustration of remaining unheard, and fearing riot guards, the prisoners barricaded themselves into a wing of the prison. After a stand-off lasting several hours, the prisoners agreed to go back to their cells after being promised there would be no reprisals. The following morning, this promise, much like the one to improve prison conditions, was broken. And so, our opening scene begins.

This scene plays out in a similar way to the actual events. If anything, the film softens these events, as it shows the prisoners being only subjected to a single beating. In reality, the reprisals went on for roughly two weeks before things began to simmer. These included the prisoners being locked in their cells for an entire week, specific prisoners being subjected to several beatings, personal belongings being destroyed, and prisoners being 'Shanghaied'; gaol slang for sent to another prison, usually with a harsher reputation, and with no warning. I say simmer, because things had certainly not gone back to normal. The pot was very much still on the heat.

The focal point of this film is the dynamic between Jackson and Norton. From the opening to the closing scene, these men demonstrate the power of fear and the influence it can have on a community. During the lead-up to the riot, Norton spends time seeking Jackson's forgiveness. This pursuit leads Norton to alienate himself from his peers and the corrupt system itself. However, these attempts are met with little success, as Jackson does not believe any meaningful change can be made within the prison walls. We understand this resignation when Jackson says, "Any idiot that thinks he can tell the trouble what the trouble is, is right off the fucking planet," while talking with other prisoners who are trying to find a peaceful solution to the tension rising in the gaol. The futility of Norton's gestures becomes evident as they ultimately fail to prevent a catastrophic prison riot, underscoring the deeply rooted issues within the prison system that no individual, no matter how well-intentioned, can resolve on their own.

Does a building stop burning if you look the other way? Do the flames disappear if you just pretend they aren't there? Of course not. The building will collapse, a tower of smoke will reach the sky, and the flames will tear a warpath, engulfing anything that dares to cross it. You know this. I know this. The prisoners at Bathurst knew this.

Once it became apparent that peaceful protests and reasonable discussion were not accomplishing anything, the prisoners found that their only option left was to destroy the place. This sentiment is established in the film when Jackson says, "Burn the fucking joint to the ground," when talking with his cellmate about what options were left to save the gaol.

The scene of the inevitable riot is one of carnage. The prisoners destroy the gaol and infamously burn it down. The simmering pot had finally boiled over. This analogy of a burning building encapsulates the point that both the riots and the film set out to make: Ignorance is dangerous. After the riots, authorities were forced to confront the issues they'd long neglected. As it turns out, burning buildings don't consult the media with much discretion.

With no way to disguise the severity of this event, the subsequent Royal Commission became a reality two years later. The 1976 Royal Commission into New South Wales Prisons was a pivotal moment in the history of the Australian penal system, investigating the conditions, treatment, and

practices within the NSW prison system. Unsurprisingly, the Commission's findings were damning and led to a demand for reform. As a result of the Commission's recommendations, several significant changes and reforms were implemented.

These included:

- Better living conditions for prisoners
- Greater access to education programs
- Increased measures to monitor staff behaviour
- A shift to a rehabilitative approach—aiming to better prepare prisoners for life after release
- A decrease in unprovoked beatings towards prisoners

Now, while I have spoiled most of the film, I've left you the ending. If you ever decide to watch this film, provided you have a high tolerance for violence, I'm sure you'll have the same response to the ending as I did: it's horrific, but perfect.

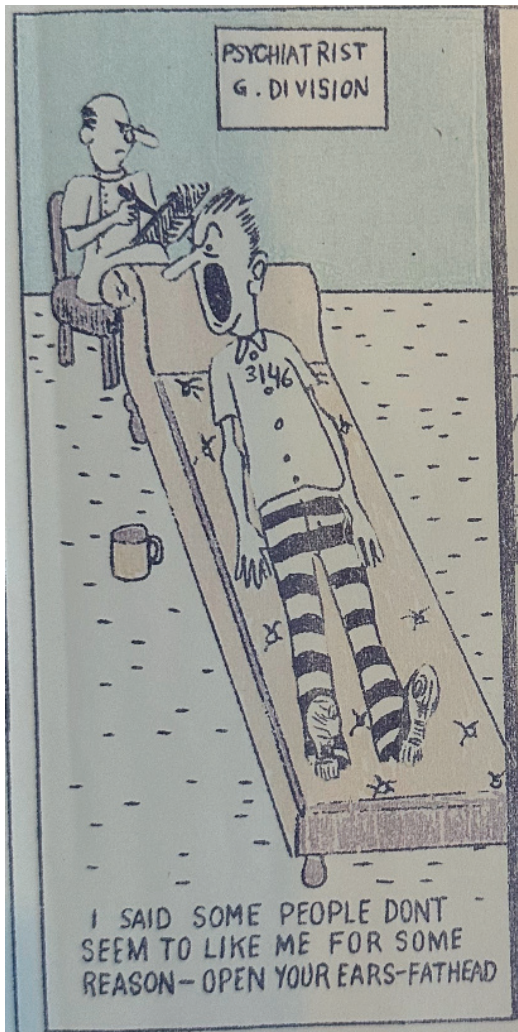
The accuracy and integrity of this film is truly remarkable. It serves as an Ode to the prisoners' experiences while highlighting the Royal Commission's significance. It is a fascinating watch that reveals what man is capable of when motivated by fear and desperation.



Despite being based on the Bathurst riots, Stir was set in a fictional NSW prison called Gutunga. It was filmed at Gladstone Gaol in South Australia, which opened in 1881 and closed in 1975. Gladstone Gaol later re-opened as a tourist attraction, though closed in June 2022. Many props created specifically for the film were left in place while the prison operated as a tourist attraction, such as the 'Maximum Security' sign seen in this photo.

Photo by Fairv8, shared under CC BY-SA 3.0 licence.

HISTORICAL PRISON COMICS



Published in Stockade in July 1957. Stockade was the magazine of HM Prison Pentridge, Victoria.



Published in Flat Rock Bulletin in October 1957. Flat Rock Bulletin was the magazine of HM Prison Beechworth, Victoria.



Published in Contact, No 14, March 1973. Contact was the magazine of Parramatta Gaol, NSW, from 1970 until 1981.

HISTORICAL PRISON WRITING

OF DOGS AND MEN

The other day I heard a man referred to as a "dog". The remark was intended as an insult—and indeed it was—to the dog.

From the beginning of time the dog has been man's best friend—a workmate and a companion, and it is to the dog's credit that he has not allowed this association to change his nature for the worse.

There are, of course, some dogs which display some of the more disgusting qualities of mankind, and there are some men who show some of the better qualities of the dog. To those dogs that act like men we apply the little "cur", and to those men who behave like the majority of dogs, displaying loyalty and courage or obedience in the face of extreme danger and difficulty, we give medals and call heroes.

While men continue to plan the extermination of millions of their fellow men in push button warfare it would be far better to cease comparing the human race favourably with these so called "dumb" creatures who have managed to restrain their destructive instincts at least to the gratification of their own immediate needs.

By Peter W. First published in Tharunka, Vol. 7 No. 1, 1964. Geelong Training Prison.

THE PUNTER

I love a punt—but I hate "Monday Morning Punters". The snoozer that comes up to you on Monday morning, especially the Monday morning after THAT Saturday afternoon; that fateful day when you had your all, I mean the whole works—rent, hocked your Grand-mothers pension, emptied right out on the favourite in the last, only to see it beaten by a donkey who ran last in a field of thirty at Hanging Rock on the previous Wednesday. The event at Hanging Rock (incidentally) was a Flag and Barrel race.

To have this "Monday Morning Punter" come and ask you if you backed the donkey!

While you're fighting to gain control of your shattered emotions, whilst you're striving for coherent speech, this very same snoozer, in his smug little manner comes out with "you should've, I told so and so to tell you".

And so your Honour, to cut a long story short, that's when I hit him.

By Bob Jewson. First printed in Kalori, Vol 1 No. 1, 1967. HM Prison Brisbane.

THE HAVEN

Once upon a midnight dreary
While I pondered, weak and weary
Over many a quaint and curious
Aid to the support of my floor
Suddenly there came a tapping
As of someone madly clapping
'Twas the Warder, he was rapping
With his nightstick on my door...
"Is it tea you're in there making?"
And at once I was forsaking
All the odds and ends of baking
They lay guilty by the law!
Frantically, I set to drowning
All the evidence, while frowning
For the brew I'd not be downing
As I'd done the night before ...
Then a jingling and a jangling
As of keys someone untangling
Some muttering and wrangling – then
They flung wide 'ope my door!
"Oh sirs!" Cried I upstarting
"Has the time come for our parting?"
(The while their eyes were darting
To find my wicked store)
Though my innocence was patent
(My halo almost blatant) and
Their anger seemed not latent
As my domicile they saw:
A snap of Betty Grable
The Good Book on my table
My words—that they called a fable
Merely this and nothing more.

First printed in Contact No. 1, 1970. Parramatta Gaol.

I remember half the prisoners in Goulburn Gaol were poets: the other half would have become poets had they stayed long enough. The cells were devoid of ornamentation. I remember one simple horse-stealers verse—

*With eyes blood-flecked with the glare of Hell,
Face hardened with wind and hail
Is the bull-faced hound who runs us round
The ring at Goulburn Gaol*

By James Francis Dwyer. First printed in The Bulletin on 20 October 1903.

SHOUT-OUTS

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



Can I please do a shout out to
sharon Graham at BWCC
were all thinking of
you.

From Joanne McAuley, Southern Queensland Correctional Centre

SHOUT OUT

BIG SHOUT OUT FIRSTLY TO MY BEAUTIFUL
WIFE THANK YOU FOR ALL YOUR LOVE &
SUPPORT.

SHOUT OUTS TO MY SON, DAUGHTER IN-LAW
AND 1ST GRANDCHILD.

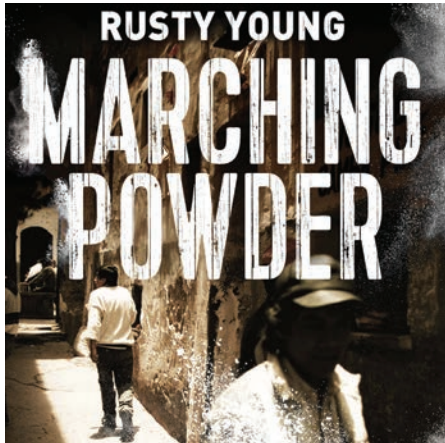
SHOUT OUTS TO MY ROEY, REIDY & ULRICH
FAMILIES.

LAST BUT NOT LEAST, SHOUT OUTS TO ALL
THE MOB DOING IT FROM CASUARINA TO
YATALA AND FROM LOTUS GLENN TO
DARWIN CORRECTIONAL. TRAIN HARD AND
DO THE REST EASY.

FROM JOEL REID-ROE
"THE INFAMOUS
HORA ENCEE"

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

ISSUE 14 DUE FOR RELEASE IN JUNE 2024



SAN PEDRO PRISON

Paper Chained Editor Damien Linnane reports on travelling to Bolivia to visit San Pedro Prison, made famous by the best-selling book *Marching Powder* by Rusty Young.



INTERVIEW WITH BOBBY BOSTIC

When Bobby Bostic was 16 years old, he was sentenced to 241 years in prison in Missouri. Thanks to a change in the law, he is now free, promoting his books, and sharing his story.



SEX WORK AND FEMINISM

Paper Chained talks to Cara, a sex-worker from South Africa who is currently based in Newcastle, about trauma, sex-positivity, and working in the sex industry as a feminist.

"We grabbed some supplies and hurried out the door. 'I'm a
felled Andrea. You have to, I don't know where your house is.
We saddled the horses and rode out of town. "Who do you think
are?" Asked Andrea. "I think it's what's left of the Bandler."
We rode for a while and then stopped at a rocky fence.
"That's the house. Andrea pointed across some flat paddocks:
house that matched the fence. "They'll see us coming." David c
"That's fine. If it's them, there's only one way." I replied. "I
going down, I think we should wait."
Andrea drew a plan of her house in the dirt, then we used
the fence, watching. "I don't want him to get away again."
to hideout. "We're not going to if we both go in the front door."
"Who's he?" Asked Andrea. "A man I've been chasing for a
time." She looked across to her house. "I want to come in
you." "You're a former, not a gunslinger." "I can shoot like
I grew up shooting burries." She argued. "Burries don't shoot."
I teased. "You can stay outside and shoot any
wants to make a run for it."
Not long after it was dark enough to move in. Leaving the
we cautiously crossed the paddocks, trying not to splash the co
A dog barked as we got close to the house. "You didn't think

AUSTRALIAN GUNSLINGER PART 6

We'll also be featuring the final installment of our ongoing series *Australian Gunslinger*.

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE IN THE NEXT ISSUE?

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

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TRANSFORMATION

CHANGE

TRANSFORMATION

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