

A JOURNAL OF EXPRESSION FROM BEHIND BARS

PAPER CHAINED



ISSUE 14 / JUN 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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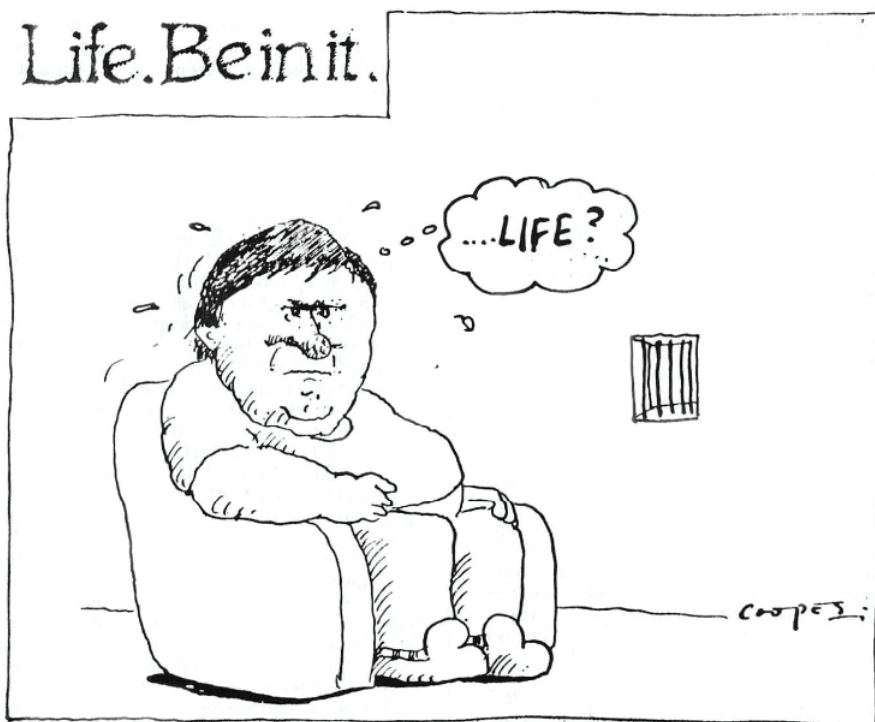
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Comic by Jenny Coopes, originally drawn around 1984. Republished with permission.

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.



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

Testimonials

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

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

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



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

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

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

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ART AND WRITING

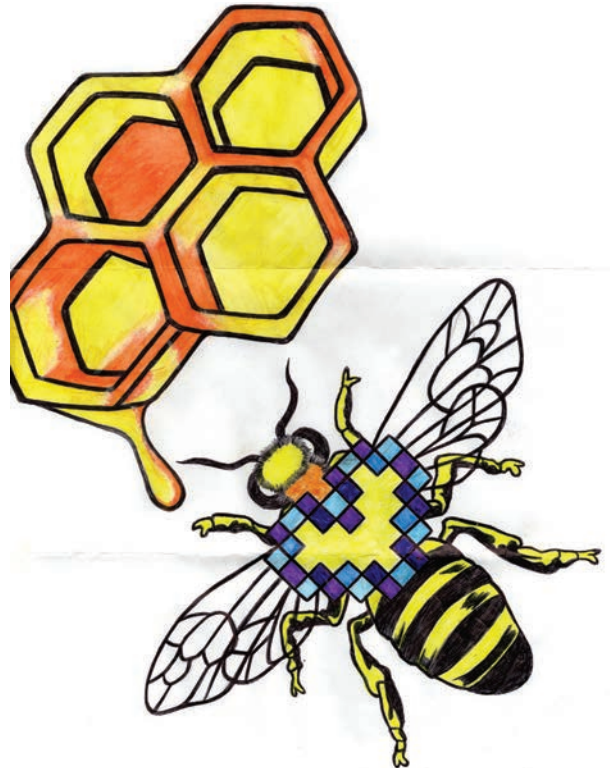
NOT GIVING UP

Another day passes locked down in my cell
 The power went out and every cunt yells
 The power came back on, now the TV is dead
 Gunna be a long fucking night trapped in my head
 No one to write to, no letters need a reply
 I'm stuck in my head, I need to get high
 The feelings felt and thoughts in my head
 Push one solution, that I should be dead
 No one deserves this endless abuse
 No one should feel they are of no use
 I look back to yesterdays long lost in the past
 Thinking of a decision to change so life won't kick my ass
 Too many to choose from, so many were wrong
 I just need to get through this, I need to be strong
 Each day gets a bit harder than the one just gone through
 Each night comes the "solution," you know what to do
 My ol' friend the demon whispering in my ear
 Relentless and endless year after year
 Much as I hate him and wish it would go
 Only thing more loyal has been my shadow
 The day draws closer and a decision will be made
 Will it finally be over or will I be saved
 Each prospect is scary, but one will I choose
 The flip of a coin, one side wins, one will lose
 So much is riding on the choice that I make
 The torments been endless, how much more can I take
 I kept people distant to prevent being hurt
 I'm not coping alone, so clearly that didn't work
 I need to find a way to fix the wrongs of my life
 Maybe then comes the reward, a family, a wife

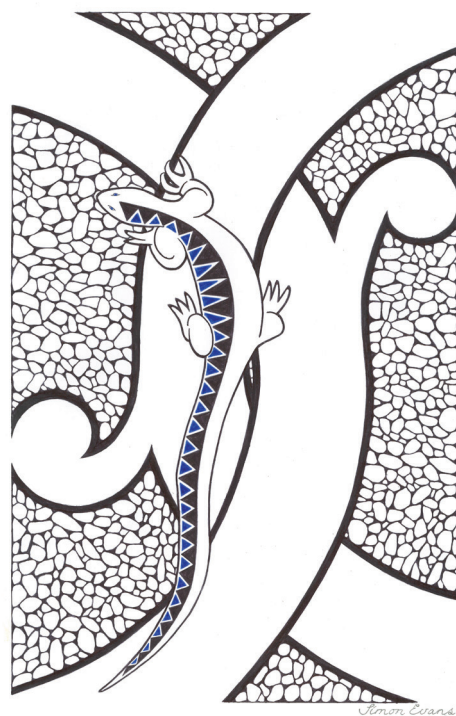
By Jason Ryan, 595683
 Darwin Correctional Centre
 PO Box 1066
 Howard Springs, NT 0835



Envelope art sent by James Lane, SA



Art by Brendan, NSW



Art by Simon Evans, NZ

THE ONGOING SAGA OF THE BOOJUM AND THE SNARK

"You may remember" said the Boojum to the Snark,
"that once we spoke of being alone."
"Ah that is true," smiled the Snark, "and I ponder if those
that felt that hurt have grown?
Have they found that they can be with others, like cows
that gather in the sun or the rain,
or have they continued to walk a solitary path
to hide themselves with souls full of pain?"
"It matters greatly to those that suffer," the Boojum sighed.
"Yet for some they lack support and love,
they are locked away from those called family,
and struggle to get help from those above."
A tear rolled down the Snark's craggy face,
"So there is no support from those that hold the keys,
the ones that make decisions and the rules
would prefer those in pain to be on their knees?"
"It would seem that is true," grimaced the Boojum,
"There is little glue to mend the broken head,
and sadly for the humans that remain alone
they wish for the end of life, to be dead."
The Snark's pendulous body suddenly went quite still,
All that moved was the tear from its single eye.
"Do you mean to say," the Snark softly breathed,
"that being so lonesome, they could die?"
The Boojum nodded slowly, its face wreathed in sad.
"There are those in high places caring little about the pain
that humans feeling alone and lost from family
must endure like a day standing in cold rain."
Sobbed the Snark, "What can be done to help these poor
humans from key holders with hearts so dark?"
"Of that we will talk more and later,"
Said the Boojum to the Snark.

By Dave, NSW



Art by Jo McAuley, QLD

THE SHIELD

A poem about finding a better way to be a protector

The time has come or perhaps it's passed
But either way I'll place down my sword

There are no beasts no enemies at the gate
So the moment is here to place down my sword

Still they may run for they believe I'm armed
Little do they know I've put down my sword

To protect those around I keep the blade sharp
But there's another way, so I put down my sword

My hands are now free, I place them to my face
I can feel myself smile as I put down my sword

My queen can approach, she can enjoy my embrace
She's waited so long for me to put down my sword

My hands hold hers as we fashion a shield
A shield will protect us, no need for a sword

I've grown so old, the warrior no more
Our love is the shield, no need for a sword

The queen and the king, two hearts into one
We built this shield we have no need for a sword

*By Joel Reid-Roe, 281534
Darwin Correctional Centre
PO Box 1066
Howard Springs, NT 0835*

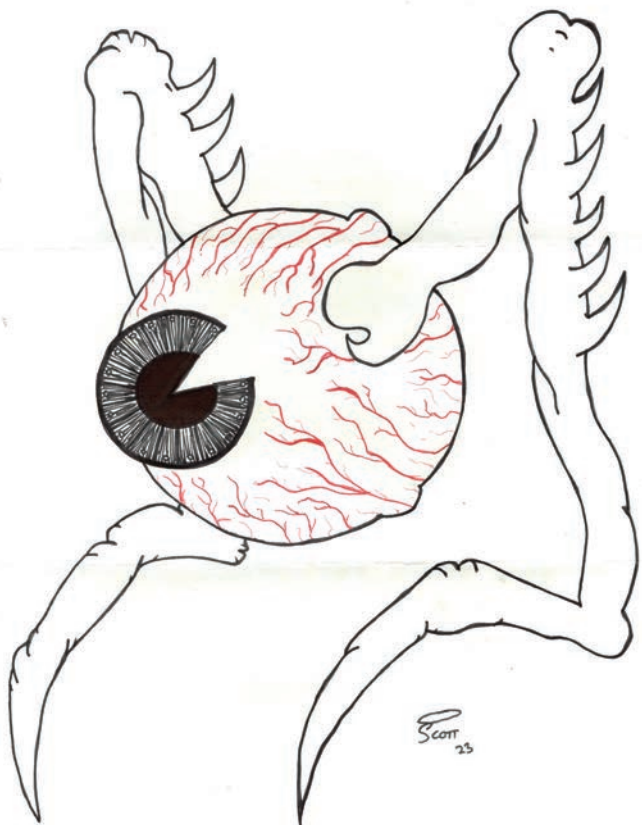


Art by Kelly Flanagan, 219454
Dame Phyllis Frost Centre
PO Box 497, St Albans, Victoria, 3021

THE ADDICT'S GAMES

Once again I sit here in my cell
 A night of sweet dreams
 But I wake to this living hell
 My life disappearing
 Like morning dew
 There's gotta be more than
 What I've put myself through
 The anger
 The pain
 All the shame
 That's what you win
 When you play the addict's game
 So grab the dice
 And start the game
 Then watch as your life
 All goes up in flames
 It starts by removing
 Your material things
 Once they're all gone
 Level two begins
 So grab the wheel with both hands
 Give it a good spin
 You hope for the best
 But your family's still gone
 When the spinner comes to rest
 That's when you discover
 You're one of Satan's guests
 It all gets darker
 You stop seeing the light
 But you're still in denial
 Saying everything's alright
 Yet deep down inside
 You want your life to end
 For it can't get much worse
 Then you realise it's only the first verse
 That the addict's game will go on
 So you reload the fit
 Arm out and hang on
 Thinking the hit's great
 But inside you'll be hurting
 When you wake up inside Woodford's gates
 I've asked for forgiveness at least 10,000 times
 In my heart, my prayers and my rhymes
 I need to do it in person
 So keep telling yourself everything's all right
 You can quit the addict's game
 To walk away from all the shit
 Carry's no shame
 Please try to get your life back
 Walking tall, but cautiously
 Avoid all the crack
 It leads to a life of misery
 And if it doesn't happen soon
 You will go to your grave
 Sad and lonely
 As the addict's game
 Never ends happily

By Robert Perceval, QLD



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



HX HOLDEN

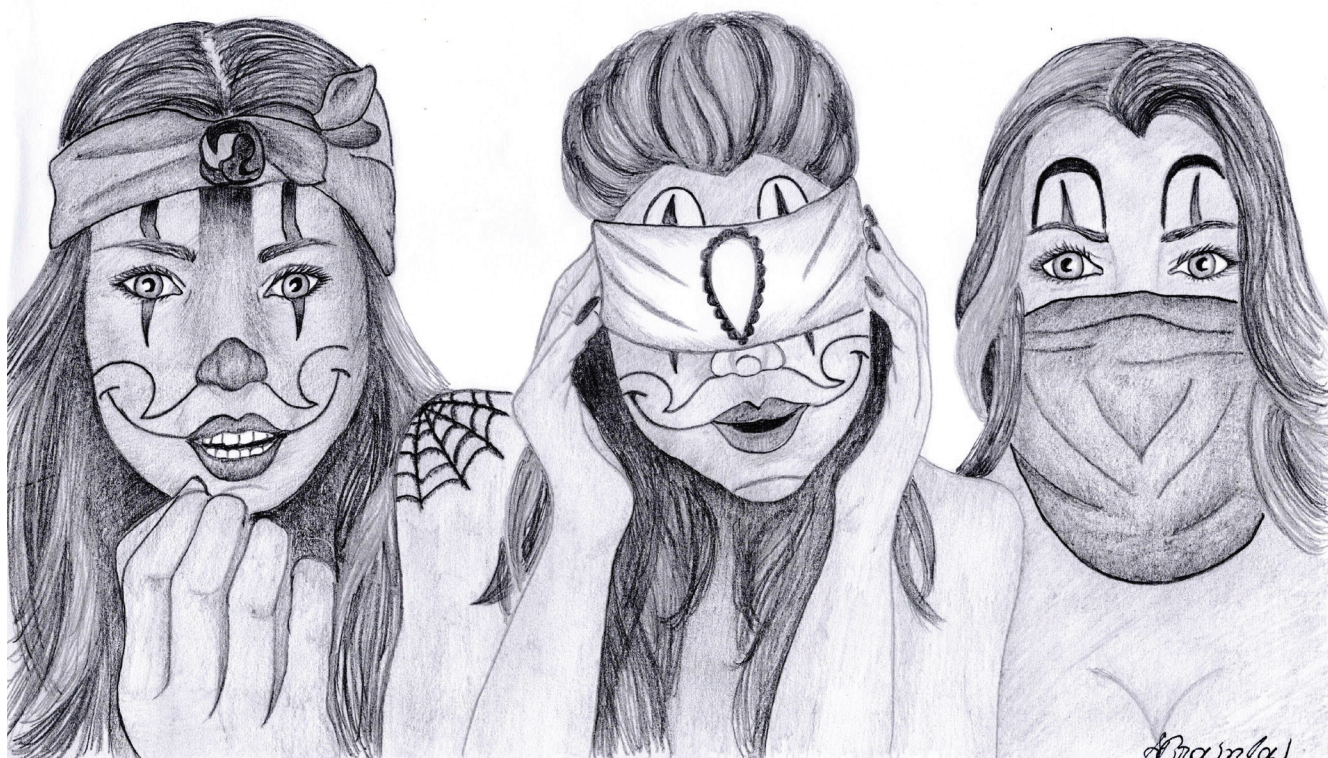


Monaro

Seppie

MCC 2011

Art by LenPen, Victoria



Art by Samantha Brownlow, Queensland

I FELL FOR LOVE

I opened my heart, I layed it out bare
You tore it right up, and then you weren't there

I took that as time, to crawl back in my shell
To contemplate love, as I relive in its Hell

Downward I slip, deeper I fall
Further you run, as louder I call

I can't be alone, and yet there is no-one around
And then it hits me, and so does the ground

You let me down, you watched me drown

Now don't say that you, that you couldn't have tried
To catch me, because we'll collide

Don't say those nice words, words get into my head
They leave me misled, until I wished I was dead

That's when I fell
I fell for love

So I opened my arms, for anyone's embrace
I opened my arms, when I thought of your face

My heart is too torn, to do any good
I'm so far down, I can't be understood

So I opened my eyes, I fake a beautiful smile
Take every chance at romance, any excuse to be vile

But then I close my eyes, for they start to hurt
That's when it hits me, and so does the dirt

You pushed me down, you let me drown

So don't say that you, that you wouldn't have tried
To catch me, in case we collide

Don't say no nice words, words get outta my head
They leave me misled, until I wished you were dead,

That's when I'll fall
I'll fall for love

I'll always fall

Always fall

In love

I fell for love

Poem by Darryl Dunbar, D2749791

Casuarina Prison, Locked Bag 1, Kwinana, WA, 6966



Art by Matthew Sawden, QLD



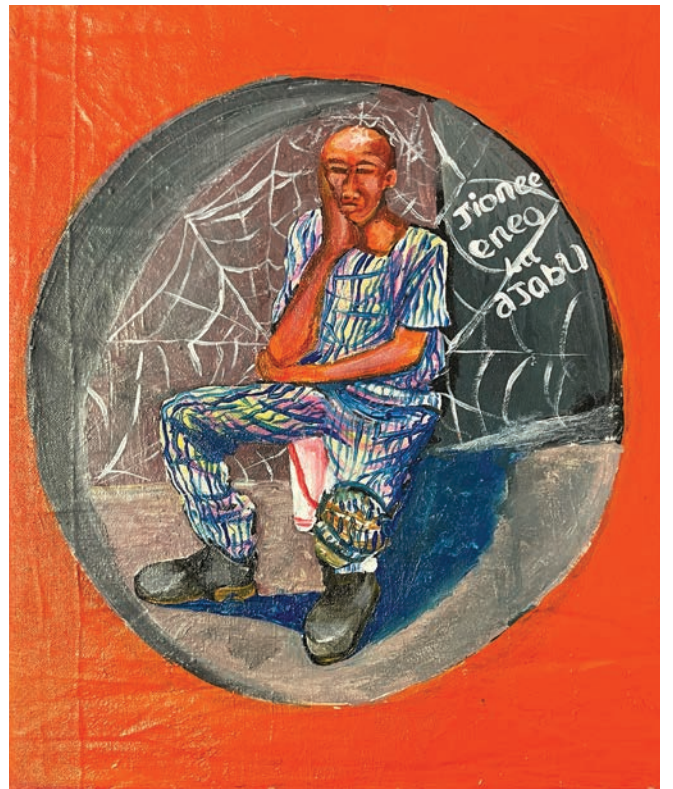
Art by Cameron Terhune, California



Art by Colin Burke, UK



Art by Robin P, Pennsylvania



Art by James Mutugi, Kenya

FIRE OF A BROKEN HEART

It took the fire of a broken heart to fuel the journey from one side of the universe to the other. Admiring of the inner light became a reset of the soul; a potentially lifesaving deep breath held for over two years before the exhalation of a first date.

There is no memory of the dinner or the conversation, only the words spoken as she sat upon a ramshackle lounge in a cold sterile room, lit by the flickering glow of the TV, words that will stay, or haunt, until dementia stills the mind or the last breath is down. It's OK, you can kiss me you know...

Days blurred into weeks, hours of work blurred into the anticipation of the drive to see her again, kisses blurred into energetic passion, and thus love was reborn. A work bonus, a weekend away at the movie and theme park, a revelling in the joy of being ... the mist-shrouded ride, the sphincter-clenching pause as the tracks at height seemed to disappear, the release of something deeply hidden.

After the rise, the fall. An hour's journey inside the great metal bird, trembling, petrified, and the birth of the distance between us. The call days later that relight the fire of a broken heart.

Grim determination to climb out of that lonely bed, feed the hungry feline support mechanisms, letting the burning showering water wash away the salty tears, calling upon the Hollywood personality for the fake smiles and faux *joie de vivre* to get through the day before falling, alone once more, into that solitary, single, cold bed.

The weeks blurred again, hollow and unfulfilling, then the tentative reaching out from the darkness in the mountains, ignored at first before succumbing to the insistence. Dinner, uncomfortable, no intimacy with one once so intimate, before the fuse was lit and the bomb exploded. "I'm pregnant."

A decade and a half goes by at warp speed, more peaks than the valleys in our journey from two to three to four. The fires of pain burn a new path to fires of long-awaited love.

Implosion.

Jail. Pain. Guilt. Regret. Loss. Rejection. Grief. A visit here, a letter there, chasms of emotional distance in between. The tiniest glimmer of trust rebuilt.

Christmas Day 2023 and the possibility of the greatest gift for the first born, a fatherly phone call after a quarter of a decade. Unexpected, unbelievable pain. She says no.

Once bent, I am now broken, and the fire of a broken heart has been reignited, never to be extinguished.

By KCDC



Art by Ojore McKinnon, California

ANOTHER PLACE

In another time, in another place,
We'd not be sent, to rot in waste
We'd be warriors, who conquered vast great lands,
With worlds of riches, placed within our hands
We'd live out our lives, as passionate dreams,
No one but ourselves for us to please
We would be worshiped, on high, as Gods
Not locked away in filth, like dogs
No warder's keys to clang the lock,
No living life by the tormentor's dock
But now's the time for the weak to rule,
To train our young within their schools
The schools that teach, the weak are strong,
And to stray from the flock would all be wrong
We sit with knowledge, of ancient times,
When we were called warriors, not men of crime
We've conquered worlds, for these the weakest of men,
Only to be cast out, and chained by them
It's in our nature, to weather outside,
While they warm their bones, inside with fire
To carry on their lives in peace and grace,
They build their monuments of social distaste
For us the men, who dream of lives long past,
Whose dreams are as long as the sky is vast
Where there are no boundaries, we cannot stretch,
Nor can we hear their weak, hollow threats
With nerves as steel, and proud, loud laugh,
We'll battle to the end, with great beating heart
For in our dreams, we're the lords of fate,
In another time, in another place!

*By Ken Monley, aka Kenoath
Written in 1994*

LOST

Who am I?
I don't seem to recognise
Who I truly am inside,
Lost in the twirl of a half-filled pipe.

What was I destined for in life?
What would the paradox be like?
Is this reflection my real sight?
Am I a figment of someone else's mind?
Will I be repaid what I gave of mine?
This sanity sold up for the "main line"?
Whose fault is it all this time?
For the blood and the teary eyes?

Who am I?
I can't seem to recognise
Who I truly am inside,
Lost in the twirl of a half-filled pipe,
Lost



*Poetry and art by Sheik Jaxan Khalil Assad O'Reilly E14512
Brisbane Correctional Centre - MSU
Locked Bag 2600, Mt Ommaney, QLD 4074*



Art by Phillip, Victoria

ME AND MY SAFE KEEPING

Hello

This is me, yes, I know you can hardly see me because of it, my guardianship, this long big snake, an Anaconda, I believe, that part of my family these past four years, in custody.

The snake wraps around me, suffocating and inescapable, around my waist, my chest and even covering my eyes.

Does it sound familiar?

Are you struggling for breath too?

Do you feel almost strangled?

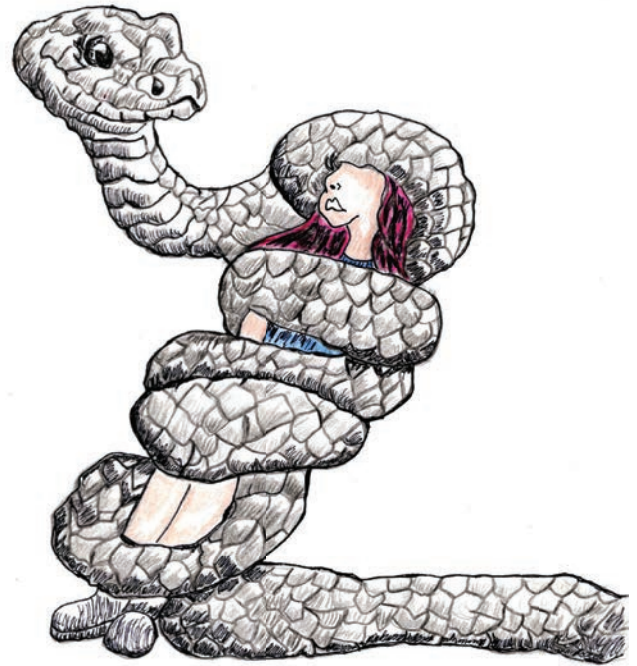
Is your snake as big as mine?

Is your snake squeezing something out of you?

Your past, your future, your truth, your hope, your heart, your soul?

This drawing is dedicated to all of you who came 'inside' to serve some time with hope and a drive to learn and grow, and found yourselves challenged by pain, sadness, disappointment and trauma.

Writing and art by Silvia, QLD



Art by Nato, Victoria



Art by Navin, NSW

Used to peddle rocks now I peddle words to *Paper Chained*
 Am with the A4, flying with a paper plane
 Am still locked up the bars, will never be the same
 It's such a shame my ambitions were about to change
 Not the dollar type, the time to get your collar white
 To get a dollar sight, we had to get a shock a light
 My people on a pipe, no vision but to burn it!

What you want to know, my life is full of criminals
 Bunch of loose cannons, lost individuals.
 We still stuck up in a chain wish for a miracle
 Lotta pain, in prison, out of prison back in prison again
 Tryna add up all my sentence like division again
 My mother pray to God, my sister wishing again
 It's all life, gimme 12 like a dozen off eggs
 Parole in ten, hope they hatching a hen
 In a classroom, Yeah then it's back to the den
 I'll be looking in the mirror like you shackled a gem
 16 cop a charge am a run with stem
 Smoking hallelujah, now see the crystal a friend

Diji bored picking like a draft out of high school
 Am billboard and I went to school high too
 Home baking powder dancing all in the lounge room
 No shame still see police as some cartoons
 Cocaine drifting in my nasal and heart too
 Number one rule hope they don't catch you
 Kitchen knife runs through his guts like a harpoon
 He dropped backwards his eyes rolling back his mind too
 That's my first charge now am on the stat
 So I spit in the escort like carpools

They be like what's the relation
 The victim impact and the statement,
 Allegation the payment,
 Am back and forth through the stages
 They don't love you till you make it
 Am makin', made of the payment
 I watch' em move it and shake it
 And get a sentence to break 'em
 Am still low-key situation, am still O.G ain't no blaming
 Am still O.C in the papers, am still O.D doing favours
 Like you get what you get, so they still instigating
 Am tryin' to better myself task force ready for debating
 They got the dot to dot am under investigation
 What's the word, what's the flex
 Am busy stuck in bars, you busy stuck on a desk
 Aggravation the latest
 The cat ready to be brazen
 Drain you out for you contoured
 Pay you out through the nasal
 The rock it syrup a maple
 Ain't no TV with the cable
 Got CD for the blazen
 Will turn you soft with some phrases
 My girlfriend stuck being Satan
 I can't see her through the cages
 She say I ruin her life, so I write her in my pages
 Like seven years we been dating

She drop the tears it's raining
 She says you're bad for my health
 You grab my heart just break it
 Am swallowing all my demon am spitting fire engaging
 I can't see through my fears all of this action is crazy
 I'm tryna focus my future, my lens still on delaying
 12 years 22 I need me a clap, applicated
 I need me a clap of appreciation
 Like mama we done made it
 Push an eight ball learnt to count to ten
 I keep my faith strong serve what I can't pretend
 Now days we shoot each other just to make a trend
 We making enemies, no time to make a friend
 It gets heavy seeing life thorough a naked lens
 Am rock steady David Beckham when I make a bend
 Am war ready, all this problem ain't making no sense
 Bags packed, rags sacked, backlash like it's Baghdad
 Lapse lapse lapse lapse till we cracked out
 Lapse lapse lapse lapse like I'm Phar Lap
 Car gash marked out like a car crash
 All this supplements making me woozy
 Am losing suffocating in my sleep
 Yeah am having dream illusion
 Seen 'em break in a cell
 Fallen pieces are moving
 This ain't no movie this reality can cause confusion
 Stuck in the system my numbers written forever different
 One, two, five, seven, one, nine, six, five to cool it
 Like shooting for the hoop when we ball in stupid
 To reach and fall, and we in the stall
 We in the gears double clutching fast
 Tracking to a million years
 Bars heavy, my mind gone
 I'll die ready.

Untitled rap by Wayne, WA



Art by Yelanda Shaw F88262
 Townsville Women's Correctional Centre
 PO Box 5574
 Townsville, QLD 4810

I'M HERE TO DIE

BY OJORE MCKINNON
FROM DEATH ROW, CALIFORNIA

"The unexamined life is not worth living." – Socrates

We are all born to die; however, have you come to the conclusion you're on Earth to die? Over my two decades on death row I have overheard it declared, or spoken to me as a matter-of-fact: "I'm here to die!"

One afternoon out on the yard, a brother proudly and confidently stated to me: "I'm here to die. I'm not going to be here beyond ten years." I had said that one should use their time wisely while awaiting the appointment of Counsel. But he was professing he would go out on his own terms, he would force the gunman to kill him if his case was unresolved after ten years. This was the first time someone professed such a notion to me. I pulled out my bullshit repellent, responding, "You don't want to die, believe me, these goons will be happy to oblige you. If you really want to die, start climbing the fence. Surely the goon in the tower will execute you." He peered at me as though I was crazy. Then asked, "Why would I do that?" I replied, "You have come to the conclusion that your sole purpose on death row is to die; and that is why you have done nothing to cultivate your being. Therefore, why wait ten years?" Of course, my rationale was too real for him to continue the conversation.

On another occasion a former neighbour, who was agitated by the dialogue and antics around us, stated, "Do you hear all these complaints? What do they expect, we're on death row, we're here to die." His expressed frustration was in response to a Legionnaires outbreak within San Quentin, that rendered the water undrinkable. "No, not we... you," I responded from my cell. I engaged him in a debate that challenged his rationale, 'We're here to die,' as though simply being on the row justified the treatment we were enduring. He doubled-down, pointing out the purpose of death row is to await death. My unwillingness to go along with this notion caused him to state out of frustration, "I'm here to die!"

While in separate showers, a week or two later, he began complaining about the lack of water pressure coming from the shower-head that had been broken for months. This created an opening for me to lampoon his complaints and reiterate my point from weeks earlier. "What are you complaining about, Mister 'I'm here to die...'" I stated from the other shower. "So what if you die funky... matter-of-fact, why are you wasting water? From today on I'll grab your trays, you don't need to eat, just lay over there and die. Of course, he did not find my satire funny. However, after a few days of pondering that encounter, he did see my point.

In a third case, a man was professing his "I don't give a fuck" rendition about life and others. He claimed he

did not care to better himself; nor did he care about his homies, because he was on the row for killing them. His only concern in life was for his daughter. Yet, he proudly proclaimed he was here to die. Literally hours later, I heard him call to one of his homies for something to eat. Which I found funny. All that talk about "fuck life, his homies," and being "here to die" was lost in the silence of the unit, once his belly desired nourishment.

In many of these cases the declaration: "I'm here to die," comes from the uneducated mind and undisciplined mouth of individuals who have failed to examine their life. They have conformed to prison, embraced ignorance, and are trapped behind the mask of ego, villainy and bravado. That is a profile in unnerved callousness, and a theatrical show of being unmoved by the threat of death imposed on their life.

By no means do I encourage this behaviour or wish to see these individuals do something to bring about their premature death. Instead, I propose they think different. There is too much to live for and I know like they know, 'Dying is easy, living is hard.'

Of the three young men I spoke of, only my former neighbour has come to the realisation there is much to live for. He has put in the hard work to think and act different. He has embraced the hard work of living and self-reflection so many prisoners find hard to entertain. I now count him amongst those who are life-affirming. The other two have remained stunted and have rejected self-reflection. They are the proverbial leaf in the wind, while dwelling in the darkness and chaos of death row.

I, like everyone else on the row, and prison for that matter, have been confronted with the decision to sink or swim.

After my wrongful conviction and being found guilty of special circumstances, I did not lose my resolve to live. Rather, I became more life-affirming. At no point after arriving on death row did I ever come to accept the fact this was my final destination. Even during those times I found myself fuelled by anger and frustration, or burdened by the maladies and monotony of prison, I never contemplate dying. My will to live and be free of this injustice remains resilient as I stumble through the darkness. During my days of solitary isolation, I fought through the burden of feeling abandoned. And, eventually I exhausted my anger, disappointment and negative thoughts that once consumed me, to see the light that illuminated my unexamined life.

Personally, due to my examination, my life is continuing to blossom and flourish.

My message to you all: Love life.

ARTIST INTERVIEW WITH ASHLEY MCGOLDRICK

Paper Chained Editor Damien Linnane interviews Queensland prisoner Ashley McGoldrick, a regular contributor and also our cover artist for the previous issue, about his experiences making art in custody. This interview was done via mail after approval was granted from Queensland Corrective Services.

How long have you been an artist for? Is it something you've discovered in prison? Or have you done it for a lot longer?

I'm 48 years old now and I've been interested in art for most of my life. I studied art through the TAFE system for about three years, but it wasn't until I was imprisoned that I became serious about my practice.

You've sent us some awesome paintings and the great sculpture we featured in issue 12. Have you tried any other mediums?

On the outside I tried everything I could get my hands on: oils, pastels, water colours, mixed media, clay and even wood. I thoroughly believe that an artist shouldn't limit themselves to only one or two mediums. These days, even though my choice of materials is restricted to pens, pencils and acrylic paints, I still try to push the mediums and myself as much as possible.

Why is art important to you? How do you feel when you're creating something in your cell?

I don't want to sound overly dramatic, but I'm convinced art practice saved my life. When I was first locked-up I was diagnosed with chronic depression. Don't be concerned: I committed a terrible crime, so I deserved everything I got. But it soon became apparent that my choices were either suicide or life. Eventually I chose to live and I did so with the help of my art practice. At first, I started drawing for five minutes here and there, then one hour here and there. That was about 13 years ago. I'm now at the stage where I average about eight hours a day. Every six months or so I force myself to have a day off.

What are the challenges of being an artist in prison? What's the one art supply you wish you had the most that you can't get in prison?

The positives of being an artist in prison far outweigh the challenges. For example, I don't have to worry about rent or studio space, and all my clothes and meals are provided for free. Of course, I sometimes daydream about supplies I don't have. For some unknown reason I'm not allowed



to have a kiln or my own personal wood-fired forge, but mostly I'm grateful for what I do have.

We're featuring your art in the *Paper Chained* international exhibition. Have you been part of an exhibition before, and how does it feel to be able to share your art with the world while you're in custody?

I was involved in about five or six exhibitions when I was at Southern Queensland Correctional Centre. The prison's educational department put them on in a local hall for a couple of weeks every year. They'd showcase paintings,

drawings, leatherwork, and pottery. Nothing like that happens at Woodford Correctional Centre, where I've been for the last six years, except for an art competition the Prison Fellowship put on once a year. So, the *Paper Chained* exhibition is definitely something I looked forward to.

I'm sure most artists want their work to be displayed and hopefully appreciated. Nobody wants their artwork sitting in a dark shed gathering dust. I have about 200 paintings in my mother's shed.

Where do you see your art heading from here? Do you have any different plans for what's next? Or are you keen to focus on just developing your paintings and sculptures?

Ultimately, I want to keep learning and pushing myself in new directions. One of the biggest dangers, with regard to creating art in such an isolated environment as prison, is repeating yourself. It's more beneficial to fail at a new endeavour than to produce the same masterpiece over and over again.

I create all kinds of artworks: socially minded pieces, portraits, landscapes, abstracts, anything and everything really. But if there is one overarching theme, it's a sense of positivity that I try to bring into most of my creations. So, it's this concept I wish to explore and push into new directions, both for myself and others.

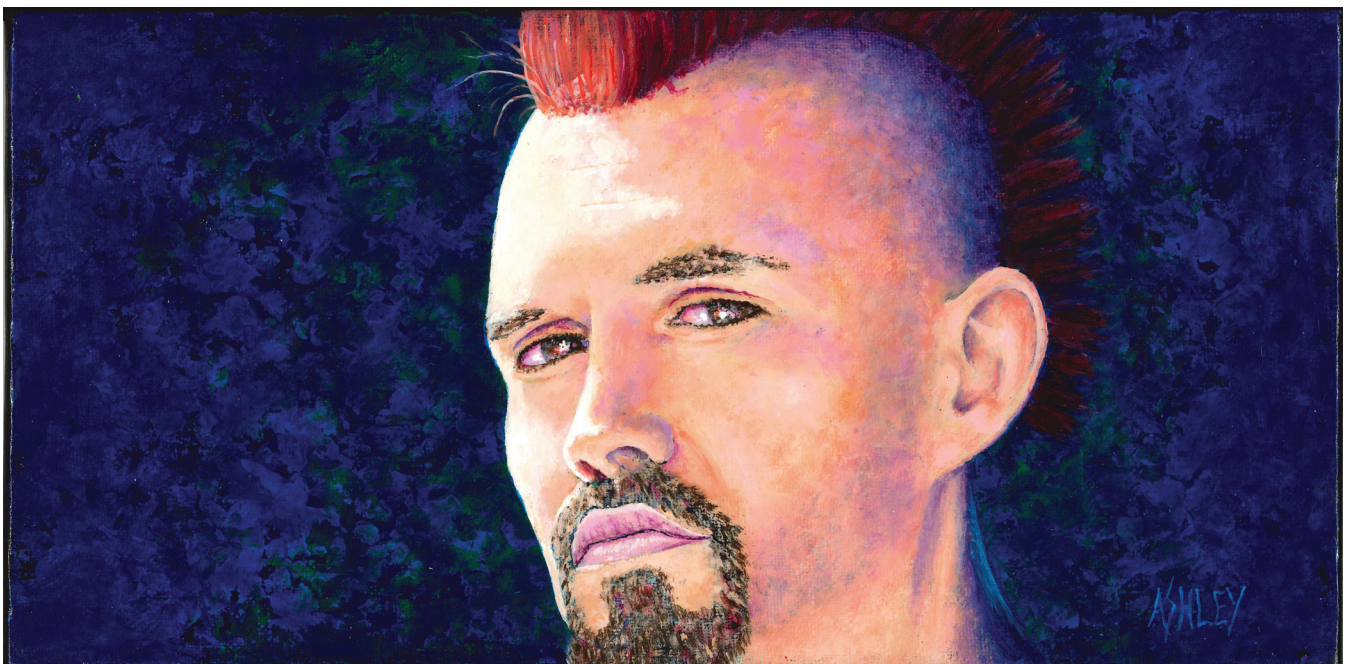
Depression is still a constant in my life, yet, my art practice is by far the most effective anti-depressant I've ever experienced.

Most prisons don't have art teachers or classes. What's your advice for other people who want to create art in prison but don't know where to start?

For me this is the most important questions you've asked. I'll be honest, teaching yourself art is not easy, very few persevere, but it is definitely possible. You will need patience, will-power, and a strong work ethic. Here's my advice.

- Start drawing – try for about 30 minutes a day, every day. Use graphite pencils, coloured pencils or pens. Drawing is a skill that can be learned by anyone.
- Draw anything. Your hand, your shoe, anything. The best things to draw are often things you're interested in.
- Don't throw away any of your drawings. Keep them to look back on when you become professional.
- When you're first starting out, feel free to copy other artist's work; it's a great way to learn. Comic books and graphic novels are a great resource.
- When you first start painting, try to think of the paint as drawing with a wet medium.
- Get your Education Department or family and friends to send you printed art demonstrations from the Internet.
- Read about art history and contemporary art. Contemporary art can be difficult to understand at times, but try to find out what the artist is trying to communicate and I'm sure you'll come to appreciate most of it.
- Your greatest asset will be self-confidence. A strong mindset is more important than natural talent.

I hope you'll all forgive my arrogance, but I know that I've reached a competent professional level. However, what you don't see is the 1000 artworks I've done to reach this level. There's no doubt in my mind that you could reach the same level if you so chose.



LIFE AFTER 241 YEARS

In 1995 when Bobby Bostic was 16-years-old, he was sentenced to 241 years in prison in Missouri for an armed robbery and carjacking in which nobody was seriously injured.

In 2021, a law inspired by the severity of Bobby's sentence was passed, which gave any child sentenced for crimes other than murder the possibility of parole after 15 years. As Bobby had already served 27 years, he was able to apply for parole and was released the following year.

Paper Chained Editor Damien Linnane talks to him about his writing both in prison and after his release.

Like me, you turned to writing in prison. I only wrote one book inside. You were in for a bit longer than me though so you were about to write eight. Tell me about your writing process.

My process of writing poetry books in prison was just write all the titles of poems down and when I get like over 100 titles then I'll start the process of writing them. With my non-fiction books I would just write the headings of the chapters. Then I will go back and write each chapter.

But I write each book long-hand. I write it by hand first, then I'll turn around and type it up right. So the eight books I wrote in prison I wrote by hand. We could get typewriters in my prison, so that's how I typed it up. These days I'm using a computer. Since my release I've also published an autobiography, and now I'm in the process of publishing a book of essays and prose.

How did you manage to get books published while you were inside?

I would send them to my family who helped me. It was challenging at times. In fact it took two decades because when I was writing my first books in the 1990s self-publishing was non-existent, and not available to the average person. The self-publishing scene really took off in probably 2009 or so. I didn't get the first ones published until 2020 though as my family and friends were busy and it was a slow process. My first book came out in January that year, then I published six more that year. So it was a whirlwind of publishing.

I find it hard enough to promote my two books on the outside. How did you go about trying to promote yours from in prison?

Mostly writing letters. I would write to various magazines, newspapers, anybody I could try and promote my books, because marketing never stops, even when you're in prison. I was constantly working on that inside. Because of



that, I was able to sell enough to have a nice little cushion of finance for when I was released.

Was writing what kept you busy for most of your sentence?

The majority of my time actually went to reading, because it was when I was reading that ideas and creativity sparked in my mind. Reading gives you ideas. It makes all the organic thoughts you have come to life, then you can write it down. Reading gives you a source of inspiration you can't get from anywhere else. For me, reading was the key in prison. It was the catalyst that pushed me to want to accomplish more things. Reading showed me what was possible, and that my goal would be wider than the horizon that I had limited it to. If you ain't reading, you don't get to see beyond your own world. It helped me visualise opportunities even though I had been sentenced to 241 years.

What was your favourite book you read in prison?

My favourite was *Think and Grow Rich* by Napoleon Hill. I still keep it with me now. It's a powerful, potent and inspirational book about a man letting people know you can think goals into existence no matter what circumstances or adversities are against you. He uses his mind to visualise goals and then does everything in his power to make them happen. I used it to grow and think my way to freedom. Once I broke out of prison mentally, then the physical freedom was right behind it. Me talking to you now is living proof that those types of dreams do come true.

I know you did a lot of education in prison. Can you tell me about that?

Nelson Mandela said education is the letter of freedom. Education was everything to me. A lot of my life in prison was based around education. I did every course I could. My high-school equivalency, an associate degree, dozens of short courses. Remember, prison is temporary, this is a phase you're going through. Find a meaning of purpose in prison to prepare you for when you get out.

Have you been writing much since you got out?

Every book I've written was written in prison. My autobiography, which was published after I got out, was written in prison. People are reading my poetry in particular now, and they'll be like 'Oh I see what he's saying, because now he's out of prison.' But I wrote everything before I even had a chance to get out, I was just free in my mind. But when I was in prison, I exhausted all the subject matter I could write about. I write non-fiction, so everything I wrote had to be based on something I knew, experienced, or researched.

Now that I'm out and have new experiences, I feel like I've got new subject matter. I've started a writing residency this year which has given me a stipend and an office space to write in, so I'll be writing my first book out of prison there.

How long did it take you to write a book in prison?

All of them took me about two or three months. The one I'm about to start may be the same.

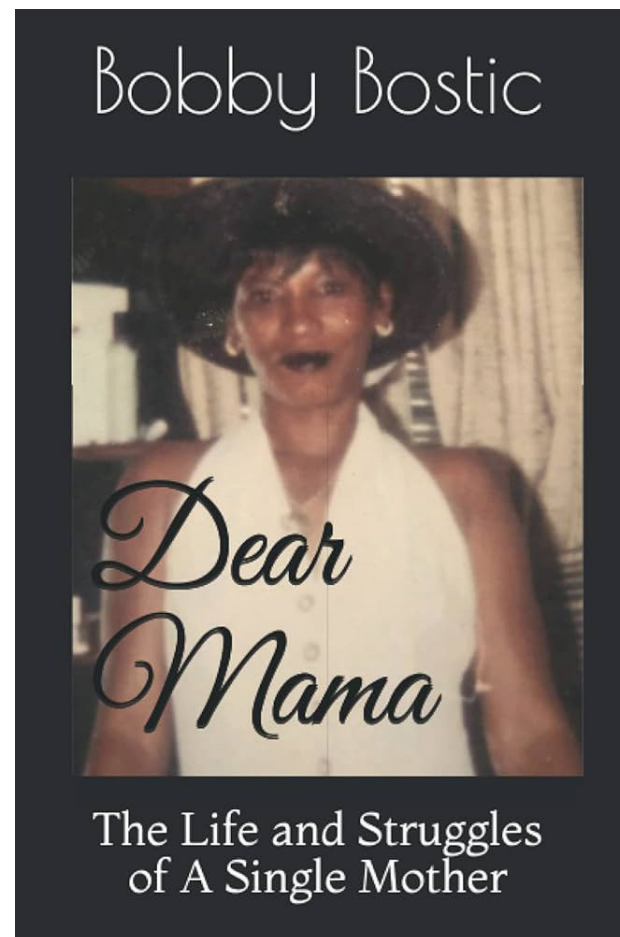
What have you been doing with most of your time since you got out?

I'm self-employed. I do a lot of public speaking and also promoting and selling my books. My mission has been working on my books, reaching out to try and get public speaking arrangements. It's a constant quest. It takes a lot of work to put yourself out there.

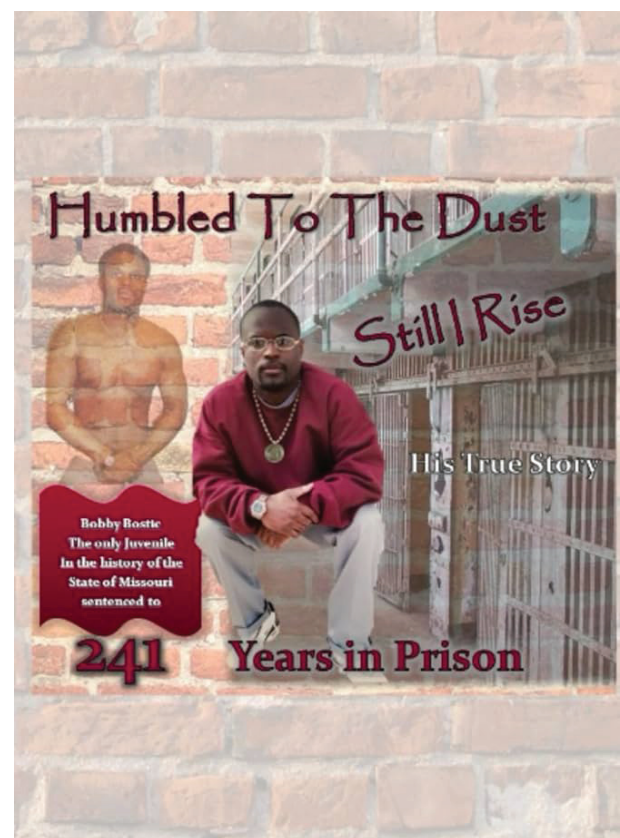
What's the advice you'd give to people still in prison about using their time well?

My advice to y'all in prison is that despite the negativity around you, you need to stay positive. We all have a gift, something we can offer and give to the world. We may have used our power for the wrong purposes before prison, but now we've got to use it for something positive.

You may not have any appeals left in prison, you may be dealing with health issues. It's hard to see sometimes, especially when it seems that there's no end in sight. But if you stay faithful and patient, you will see a reward from that. Even if you're stuck there, teach others, give something back no matter what, because your life is not defined by the prison you are in today, tomorrow or next week. Prisons come and go, but the things that you can create won't leave. Create something that's meaningful and contribute something to the world. Be a contributor instead of a taker. Respect and see all your fellow humans, see the other prisoners as human beings, see the guards as human beings. Just be patient, and come home. They can lock up your body, but they can't lock up your mind.



Bobby's first book, Dear Mama, was released in January 2020. His autobiography, Humbled to the Dust: Still I Rise, was released in August 2023.



CHEECH

BY RICK

Readers are advised that the following story gives a graphic description of suicide, as described by a person in custody who witnessed the event.

Momentarily perched upon the guardrail, he took off his beret and let it drop. He stood like a proud soldier, erect with his arms frozen by his side. Someone shouted out, "No! No! Don't!" as he slowly inclined forward, keeping his arms fixed by his side. Gravity took over, and his momentum increased as he fell at a right-angle to the concrete floor, headfirst. A head-splitting crack echoed around the unfriendly walls of the pod.

Cheech was Ukrainian. He was in his mid-fifties and was a short, slight man. He was dressed just like the rest of us in our prison greens. He always wore his grey beret and tortoise-shell glasses. His attempt at maintaining individuality. He was a quiet man; it was easy to forget he was there. He was never offensive, always polite. Yet you could find him sitting at the same table, in the same place on the bench every day, playing a card game called '41' with the same players.

The night before he died, Cheech was playing his usual card game when he announced to the boys, "I am going to die in prison!" He explained that he would not receive treatment to address his long-term illness: cancer. He would not even receive the basic care needed to keep it at bay. The boys offered the usual sympathy required under the circumstances and chastised the prison system for being so unkind and unjust, but it was a common enough scenario. They then went back to the card game.

The next morning, I passed Cheech when he was on the phone. His usual placid tone had changed. He started shouting into the phone. He wasn't speaking English, so I couldn't tell who he was speaking to, but he was extremely agitated; not normally something we would expect from him. He abruptly slammed the phone receiver into its cradle and stormed off in the direction of his cell. This seemed to be the tipping point. I imagined some prison bureaucrat had just told him, again, that cancer treatment was not an option.

Stunned by this change in him, I watched as he moved past his cell and onward to the stairs. He made it up to the second level and turned left toward the end of the walkway. He stopped, then crawled up on top of the balcony and stood erect on the handrail.

It took only a second for Cheech to leap and crash headfirst into the unforgiving concrete floor 30 feet below.

There was silence as onlookers stood in shock and disbelief. A massive pool of blood expanded around his head and thickened over the floor. "Code Black!" shattered the moment as pandemonium broke loose as guards rushed from everywhere. This was reserved for the most serious incidents. The entire facility's 1,000 prisoners were locked down in their cells. Through the slot in the door of my cell, I watched in shock as medics charged in. They quickly bandaged his head and started CPR, followed by an adrenalin shot. They frantically worked on Cheech for about 30 minutes. Somehow, he was still alive!

I'm no medical expert, but I saw the impact on the concrete floor, and I believe he was already brain dead. All the injection did was keep his heart beating. He was taken by helicopter to the Royal Melbourne Hospital. I later learned he was pronounced dead hours after arrival.

The rumour mill went into overdrive once we were released from our cells: all manner of theories as to what occurred, how it happened, and why. One should never let the truth get in the way of a good conspiracy story, especially when the 'truth' is told by a 'pity of prisoners.' According to the pundits in the prison, the consensus was that the prison would be heavily fined if this was a suicide, but Cheech died in the hospital, meaning that the prison would avoid any penalties.

Alby, one of my buddies, was upset that his freshly washed towels were taken from the dryer and used to mop up the blood. He would have to requisition more. Pete was due to have a visit with his daughter, who had travelled five hours to get there, only to be turned away with no explanation to face the five-hour trip home. Davo, in the library, was really upset; his cell was next to where Cheech lay, so he couldn't return to his cell. This meant he was confined to the library for over six hours, the most time he had ever spent there. I was not sure if he was more pissed off about the library or missing the action in the pod. Others were looking to gain advantage and took the counselling offered by the prison to anyone traumatised by the event. This meant they could get out of work, and it might assist in getting an early release.

The next day, Marty took the vacant spot at the card table, and the '41' playing continued.

The preceding story is true. In 2022, more than four years after the suicide, the Victorian coroner ruled that 'Cheech' (not his real name) killed himself after he was denied cancer treatment on three occasions due to staff shortages for his transport.

LET'S TALK ABOUT SEX WORK **AND FEMINISM**

Paper Chained Editor Damien Linnane meets with Cara, a sex worker, at a Newcastle cafe to talk about trauma, sex-positivity, and working in the sex industry as a feminist.

So tell me about your job?

I'm a sex worker. There's a lot of different kinds of sex work, but I work in a regular brothel and I do escorting as well, which means I go out to people's houses to see them for whatever they might want to explore sexually.

What got you into this work?

So I actually got into it a little bit traumatically. I was raised in South Africa as a Jehovah's Witness, an organisation that exerts high levels of control over you. I got married at 19. I left my husband because he was very emotionally abusive, and I wanted to be out of that environment as well. But divorce is a big no no when you're a Jehovah's Witness. So in leaving him, I was outcast. I was cast out from the community, which cut me off from my parents, my siblings, all my friends that I'd grown up with. Anybody who knew me and would be able to help me was just gone. They were actively shunning me. That put me in a very vulnerable position. I ended up on the street. I started picking up guys and going home with them just because I wanted a shower, a bed, and breakfast.

I was on these pick-up websites to do that, and someone who said they were a woman contacted me online and said: "I like your look, have you done any photo shoots?" And then they asked if I'd tried escorting. I hadn't, but I felt like that's basically what I was already doing, just for accommodation rather than money. Anyway this person, they said: "I live in Australia, I have all these businesses and would you like to come and work?" I said yes. When I got to Australia, I found out it wasn't a woman that I was talking to. It was a really crusty little dude in a shitty Volvo. He picked me up from Sydney Airport and that's when I realised I was fucked.

So I had spoken to this man who had pretended to be a woman while he was talking to me. He told me I'd be working in Sydney out of apartments and I'd just do escorting, but then he drove me to Canberra and it was just a shitty brothel and we weren't allowed to leave. So that was my start to the industry, and I had to learn very quickly how everything worked. I spent about 3 months in that environment until I started figuring out that this isn't normal for the industry. It's not normal for your employer to expect you to give him free services. It's not normal for these prices and restrictions they put on us. So my start was as a survival worker, but even in that space, I enjoyed the camaraderie of it.



I enjoyed the puzzle of human contact, meeting someone very quickly and having to figure out what they're into, what makes them tick, and then leave them feeling happy and having what experience they wanted.

I feel like there's a stereotype that a lot of people come to sex work from trauma. Do you think that's true?

My story isn't a normal story. I think that stereotype is a media thing. In media, because of the moralising around the actual act of sex, sex workers are always portrayed as a victim or as someone who doesn't care about themselves. There's no legitimate in-between.

My story definitely stems from my personal circumstances, but there's a lot of workers that just do it because they got bored of their day job or they wanted a side hustle, or they saw a friend doing it and it looked like fun. I don't think that all sex workers have trauma. It's not a prerequisite. It definitely happens, but that happens for every human in every industry.

Are most people happy where you work now?

Yeah. I can definitely say that if there are people coming out of trauma, the staff at work have done a lot to assist them instead of just being like, "Work and sort it out yourself." There's a big mix of ages and backgrounds where I work. There are people touring from overseas.

Recently there was a case of a very young worker who came from an abusive, traumatic background and was there for survival like I had been. They gave her accommodation in the space, helped her find temporary foster homes for her animals, and told her to just jump on a shift when she could. With the nature of the industry, you're always going to see people from traumatised backgrounds coming in.

How long have you considered yourself a feminist?

So having this very religious conservative background, I didn't get words for feminism. Even in the publications that the Jehovah's Witnesses published, I remember very strongly an article that was read in the church where it was saying that "Women's liberty is destroying the family unit. You should be a wife." And I remember just feeling at odds with that from like eleven years old.

The reason I got married at nineteen was because I wanted to run my own home. And in that particular environment, I'm either my father's daughter or my husband's wife. I'm never my own person. I can definitely say from my teens I felt that I've had a strong sense of not wanting to be boxed into "This is woman," and that feeds into my gender identity today as well. But that's what sparked my interest in feminism and feminist icons, being at odds with what was expected of me as a girl child.

It was frustrating, because I'm a good speaker and I won awards at school for public speaking. But I wasn't allowed to speak in the church because I have a vagina. I would sit there and get so frustrated listening to the men and the boys in my community stuttering and struggling to deliver their talks and speeches.

I feel like there's still a stereotype that all feminists are against the sex industry.

There's an interesting divide there. There's a type of feminist called SWERFS, Sex Worker Exclusionary Radical Feminists, who believe that you cannot participate in the industry without being exploited, and there is indeed definitely an element of exploitation to the industry. There's definitely a power imbalance. NSW has some of the most progressive sex work laws in the world, but there's still a power imbalance between establishment owners and workers. There's still a power imbalance between private workers and their clients because there's a power imbalance between men and women.

But I don't think feminism and sex work are mutually exclusive. There are definitely workers, even in my immediate space, who are not feminists. There are definitely workers who are racist and transphobic and those who look down on other workers for their choices. There's a hierarchy within sex work, where street workers, brothel workers and private escorts all see each other differently, strippers and topless waitresses see each other differently, so do workers doing OnlyFans and content. There's not always a mutual respect.

So with all of those divides existing, there's always going to be an element of bullying and anti-feminist ideas. I think at the core of it, my personal belief, in the way I sit with it,

is that sex work is work. I see it like any other job. I'm not going to say flipping hamburgers is feminist. I'm not going to say working in a hair salon is feminist. I don't think the act of being a sex worker is feminist in of itself. But at the same time, being in charge of your own sexuality, being comfortable and having ownership of your body in the way you're using it, makes it not an anti-feminist thing to do. I don't feel like we're working against what feminism is trying to do for women.

My history with sex work has trauma in it. And one of the groups that said they wanted to help me are advocates of the Nordic model. The Nordic model criminalises the purchasing of sexual services, but not the selling of it. And in that way they're hoping to eliminate the industry. The problem with that is that the industry has always existed and it's going to continue to exist and the Nordic model just makes it more dangerous. It's difficult to report people if an element of it is criminalised. So the Nordic model kind of looks at all sex workers as victims, no matter how you got into it. Advocates for models like this are often attached to religious organisations. I reached out to one faith-based organisation, Pink Cross, who said they would help me. But then private phone records and emails between me and them were given to the defence lawyer of the man who trafficked me, without my consent. I told Pink Cross I was worried about getting deported if I reported the man, and then that information I gave them was used against me in court. So talking to them just left me worse off.

So the ways these organisations try to "help" sex workers is by rehabilitation. So even if you're really happy doing it, they're basically advocating for conversion therapy, to convince you that you're not happy and you need help. So at their heart, they're really not trying to help the individual worker. They're pushing their moral view on the world, which is not feminist. The whole point of feminism is equality. So if someone really wants to do sex work, you should support them. At the end of the day, it's important to advocate for safety, and shaming people for working isn't going to help with that.

In my personal circle of co-workers, there are definitely people who are outwardly very not feminist and declare that they don't understand feminism. But if you're doing sex work, it's more likely that you're sex-positive. It's more likely that you have a pretty strong sense of self. So I would say that in my experience, and specifically in Australia, sex workers trend towards having strong feminist ideas. The people who are definitely not feminist or actively speak against feminism are by far a small minority.

What's your definition of sex-positive?

My definition of sex-positive is education. So if you want to practice abstinence and or want monogamy and to be with one person, or even if you're asexual or demisexual, that's sex positive because you're educated. You know that about yourself, and you know that people with other needs and expressions exist. I don't think sex positivity means engaging in a lot of sex, because the human experience is so varied. That's just not what everyone wants.

Being sex positive is about educating yourself about the very broad experience that we call sex, and about the nuances and power balances that exist within those structures.

So not that you're having a lot of sex, but that you think sexuality is not something to be ashamed of?

Yes. It's about understanding your own body and your own sexual needs and responses. That, for me, is sex positivity and that's absolutely lacking across both genders. One of the questions I ask in a booking is "How do you like to be touched?" And the number of men that cannot answer that question is astounding. And that's coming from the gender that's supposed to have more sexual freedom. So sex positivity is definitely not having a lot of sex. But knowing what you like, and knowing how to ask that from someone else, and understanding the difference between your personal experience and your needs and someone else's that might be the polar opposite of you.

Outside work, have you ever come across other feminists who have a problem with your job?

Yeah, definitely. I'm pretty vocal about what I do. I'm pretty forward about my sexuality and I think my contribution to feminism and the women around me is to speak very candidly about my own sexual experiences, my body and my job, because some people just need that permission to talk about their experiences and women don't often get that. I've definitely had situations with people who say that I am putting the feminist movement back or that I shouldn't "allow" men to control me that way.

And again, I think a lot of the conflict between sex work and feminism comes from the moralising of the sex act itself. It comes from having a black and white, right or wrong concept of having sex with a stranger. It will often be the case with these women who are criticising me that they're on Tinder going out having one-night stands. But they view that as different to what I do. It's not that different. If I'm going out and expecting someone to buy me a bunch of drinks or dinner or take me on several dates, versus just accepting them giving me \$200, what's the difference between me and you? I'm just cutting out a few steps and getting paid for it. *[Laughs]*

At the end of the day, all sexual interactions are transactional. And it's kind of a cold way to say it, but at the heart of it, if you are engaging in that level of intimacy with someone, it's an exchange. And that might be an exchange for comfort, for reassurance that they care about you in a certain way. It might be an exchange for money. It might be an exchange for dopamine. But sex is always a transaction, even if you're not actively aware of it, you're always trading something to get to that point. It might just be emotional support. There are plenty of couples where there's either a libido imbalance, or one partner isn't that excited by the prospect of having sex with them. But there's an emotional tie. So they have sex to keep the emotional tie.

I can't help but notice your legs aren't shaved. Do customers ever give you shit for that?

Oh yeah, it's very interesting. So I'm pan-sexual and gender fluid. My gender identity swings pretty wildly between masculine and feminine, but when I'm working, I work as a woman. When I first started, I groomed myself to be as womanly as I could be. I don't in my real life present as very feminine. But when I started, I put a lot of work into getting rid of all my hair and doing my make-up. And I wore wigs to cover the shaved sides of my head. And I thought, well, everybody has different tastes, and honestly, the more I worked, the more I saw the variety in bodies and presentations. Eventually I switched over to something more comfortable for me. Now I go out to meet my clients in crop T-shirts. And I don't shave as much and I kind of do what I want. Every now and again I'll get someone who will make a comment and I usually just make a joke out of it. They'll be like, "Oh, you've got hairy legs." And I'm like, "Yeah I grew it myself."

I had someone tell me that they liked that I was always myself when they booked me. And after our working relationship ended, he turned around and sent a bunch of messages about my body hair and my presentation, saying that I'm too masculine and I should shave my armpits. All his own insecurities came out. There's a very strange relationship between humans and body hair, I guess. I have to navigate in that space. But I've actually turned it into a specialty. So on my adverts I state that I don't shave. I do specifically get people who will book me for my leg hair, and for actually having pubes.

Do you have a particular funny story about a job?

Oh God, so many. *[Laughs]* I think most of my funny stories just come around from requests. Someone once wanted me to do a Christmas role play with them. They wanted me to be an elf and they were Santa. They even had Christmas music playing in the background. It was difficult because they were very young, and I think trying to keep it together while bouncing on top of them, singing Jingle Bells and making it sexy was definitely an experience I won't forget.

I assume this costs extra?

[Laughs] Yeah, if you want me to sing Jingle Bells while I'm riding you, I'll do it. But we have to talk about it first.

Are there any bad experiences you'd like to share?

My coming into the industry with all the trauma is the worst experience I've had. Since then, as I've gotten more confident in myself and done more research into the industry and found my place in it, I'm a lot better at advocating for myself. So I'm having fewer bad experiences because I'm shutting them down long before they can happen. I recognise toxic clients. There's definitely this mindset among some sex workers that, "Oh well, he's paid me for a service. I need to pander to this person." Whereas I definitely have the view that you're paying for access, but I can shut down that access at any time. But even for myself, as outspoken as I am, I still have situations where it's very hard for me to stop the booking and be like, "Hey, what you're doing is hurting me. You need to get off me."

Some clients have a sense of entitlement, thinking they can do whatever they want to you because you're a worker, but it often goes two ways with male clients. They will either be like, "You clearly have no regard for your own body," or they will be like, "Are you OK? I want you to come live with me; I can look after you." I call them the "Captain Save-A-Ho's." They just want their ego stroked at the end of the day. But those two extremes, again, it comes back down to media representation of sex workers. We're either completely helpless or we don't give any fucks about ourselves and have no standards.

Since I re-entered the industry on purpose, with my own feet, I am definitely much better at spotting problem people. Sometimes I won't even take the job. I'll introduce myself to them in the booking room at work, and then I'll tell reception straight away that I won't take that booking. The more solid idea you have about why you're doing the job and for what goals you have for the job, the easier it is to deal with those problems. It's kind of obvious when bad clients come in. They look at you like a product instead of as a person.

I've given this advice to a lot of friends who are just starting out in the industry: never tell a client that you're new, say you're touring or you've come back after a while. Because there are men who will specifically book a new worker because they think you will have no boundaries and no idea what's acceptable and what's not, and they can get away with more for free or stuff that just wouldn't be right. I definitely have had men who will speak very degradingly to me during sex, and I'll say 'You didn't pay for that. Like we can do degradation. But that's an extra, right?'

It's strange that they have that sense of entitlement in the first place, but men who behave that way towards workers behave that way towards all women. Men who hate women, they still have relationships, they have mothers and sisters and girlfriends and wives, but they don't actually like women. I think the way that a man behaves towards a sex worker is very indicative of their attitude towards women in general. You're not going to say and do those things out of the blue. That's already in your mind and you think you have permission to do it now. It's a bit icky sometimes, but I can honestly say by and large those encounters are in the minority.

With the younger generation being a bit more sex positive and a bit more educated, I'm noticing a different approach and attitude though. Men in their 30s and younger are more aware of what the industry is, and approach me as a service provider, not as just a hole. There are definitely less problems than there used to be.

When somebody pays extra to degrade you, do you actually feel degraded?

No, because there's been an exchange. It's only an element of role play.

Where I feel there's boundary pushing is when people are trying to touch me before we even get to the room. They'll be like slapping my butt or saying things to me as we're walking up the corridor in front of everyone.

I will pull people up, but that's a problem in society in general. There's definitely a lack of willingness in a regular sexual encounter to pull a man up on their behaviour in the bedroom. If you're in a sexual encounter with a man and you say, "I want to stop" or "I don't like how you're doing that," a lot of men can take that very personally and that can go one way or the other. Or they just don't listen.

My generation didn't get taught much about consent in school. All I was taught was that "No means no", and so up until my early twenties, I would make assertive moves on women, and if the woman said "No", I would stop. And I thought I was really great with consent because I was doing everything I'd been taught. I'm embarrassed about this now, but it never occurred to me at the time that maybe the only reason a woman doesn't say "No" is because she's not confident enough to say "No".

Yeah, it's a journey. But that's so pervasive and not specific to sex. What's happening during sex is symptomatic of the larger gender imbalance, even in situations with like medical professionals it's hard to communicate consent. It's a two-sided thing because men and boys aren't taught how to communicate consent in a sexual experience, and women and girls are taught to be passive and taught to not be assertive in that sense because then you're a slut and domineering or whatever. So you don't learn what your body likes, so it's hard to be say "I don't really like that" because you don't know for yourself a lot of the time.

I wish I'd been taught active consent in school. Can you explain to our readers what that term means to you?

Active consent for me is verbal consent. Making sure someone says "Yes" first, rather than waiting for them to say no. I need words from people and it also has to be enthusiastic. There cannot be a question mark in the "Yes" at all. A lot of it you have to take on yourself. You have to be a good body language reader. That is sometimes a bit tough for me, as I find it difficult to read body language sometimes. But active consent is verbal and sometimes people can think that's a bit unsexy. But there's definitely a way to do it that is super-hot. Like if you start doing something it doesn't have to be a question. I personally find it very overwhelming with people who are learning active consent and they keep asking me, "Are you OK?" or "Can I do this?" or "Is it OK if I do that?" That immediately puts me in a state of unease.

A good approach is instead saying, "I would really love to kiss you right now", and then if you get that move towards you and that act of consent in that, you keep going. Or like saying, "Your body's so beautiful, I'd love to touch you." Those kinds of things, they can be really sensual and intimate and gorgeous. If you keep checking in that way, and making it more about what you're seeing and feeling, it takes that pressure off a partner of instead of just asking "Give me a Yes or No."

If it's not an enthusiastic "Yes", it's a "No".

Yeah, absolutely. As humans, our survival relies on social cues and being able to interact with other humans. I think people know when it's a bit nervous or a bit of a "No", and you kind of have to be okay with pulling back.

Tell me about other types of clients you get.

I get couples bookings as well. If I'm seeing a straight couple, I put in a lot of effort to make sure that I have enthusiastic consent from the female partner. I have turned couples away because I can see how uncomfortable the woman is. Sometimes they've been pressured into the booking by their partner. You can see like the pleading in their eyes that they don't want to be there.

Probably a big portion of my clientele have come out of prison. I will get people who are "repeat offenders" coming to me. *[Laughs]* They'll come to me with their friendship bracelets still around their ankles and will tell me I'm their first stop after getting out, and then they'll ask me if there is an Orthodox Church somewhere. Because they need to go there next. It's part of the circle. It's okay to need touch and it's okay to come in and do that. But be aware that that's what it is. It's the same with the Air Force guys here. They'll come in to lose their virginity, and they're green around the ears and they're 19 or 20 and they're joining the military because they want to leave home. And there's all this pressure. And I'll say, it's OK to need touch and it's OK to not know what you're doing. It doesn't have to be an exploit. It's OK to let me look after you.

With guys who have just come out of prison, is the experience different because they haven't been with someone in a long time?

Honestly my clients that have just gotten out of prison are some of my loveliest clients, like the nicest, and best bookings that I have. I love them. Because they just want to have a nice time. They want cuddles. They miss human touch. And often it'll be very quick. But I always look forward to it. And sometimes there's a bit of embarrassment. Like, they won't always tell me they just got out. But sometimes you just know.

My experience of Australian men has been very interesting because I didn't grow up here, so I didn't grow up with being exposed to the way that Australian men interact with each other and interact with women. And it's very different from what I know. A lot of my clientele are absolutely touch deprived. Truckies and miners and older men who've lost their spouses. They're absolutely not lonely because they have friendships, but they don't get touched. Like their mates aren't sitting and having D and M's with them, or not when they're sober anyway. They're not giving each other hugs. They're not sitting close on the sofa. They're not getting what they need from their male friends. They're not getting it from their parents because you don't treat your male children that way.

So the only context that a lot of Australian men are receiving emotional intimacy and cuddles is during and after sex. Men will often have an emotional breakdown with me in a sexual context because they're holding on to all of this need for human touch, and that's when their body is conditioned to be emotional. It's very interesting to me. I would honestly argue that 90% of my job is an emotional support thing and not about the sex.

Do you ever get female clients on their own?

Yeah. A lot less often, but it happens.

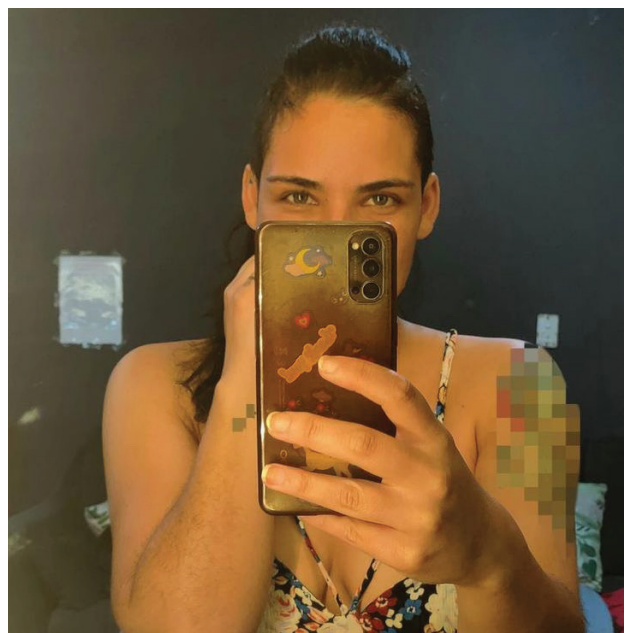
I'm probably pandering to stereotypes, but I thought women would find it easier to pick up women.

Yes and no. It's a lot easier for women to get transactional sex. It's hard to get good sex. You're gambling every time. And honestly, with men more often than not you're only going to be semi-satisfied, and then have to get yourself off the rest of the way. That's just how it is.

I see sex workers myself occasionally, and the reasons I go and see a sex worker is either because I want an experience that I would need a partner that I trust very deeply to do, or because they offer an experience that my partners aren't into. I'm not going to pressure my partners to do something sexually that doesn't bring them joy. I'm going to go get that somewhere else. Or because I want to be with a woman and picking up women is hard. Not just for men, it's hard for everybody. I honestly believe this is not down to women being fussier or anything like that. It's a societal expectation of how you're allowed to put yourself out, how forward you can be with your sexuality and the kind of the permissions we give ourselves.

Is there anything else you wish men would understand before they came to a brothel?

The biggest thing is we're service providers, just like a hairdresser. We're not products, you're not purchasing a thing that you get to use and then discard. Paying someone for sex is no different from paying someone to give you a haircut or repair your car, that's the category we're in. Come in with that attitude, and come in with the knowledge that we're professionals. We have our client's safety at heart as well. There's definitely another stereotype that sex workers are just trying to extract every penny and do as little as possible for as much money. Unfortunately some workers have that attitude, but by and large that's not normal. Just come in understanding that we are a service industry.



ANARCHY: LIFE IN SAN PEDRO PRISON, BOLIVIA

BY DAMIEN LINNANE

It was February 2016. I had just been moved back to Tamworth Correctional Centre for my appeal. I'd started my sentence in the remand section in Tamworth, but now that I was classified, I found myself in minimum security, which had slightly more resources. Being me, one of the first things I did was see what new books I could find in the library. *Marching Powder*, a book by Rusty Young, caught my eye, and before I knew it, I was hooked, reading through the entire book in one night. Alongside *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, *Marching Powder* would become one of the two most memorable of the 63 books I read during my prison sentence.

If you haven't heard of *Marching Powder*, I recommend you put down this magazine and go and see if your prison library has a copy. The book, written in 2003, tells the true story of Thomas McFadden, a British-Tanzanian man who was arrested in Bolivia in 1996 for trying to smuggle five kilos of cocaine out of the country. He served his sentence at San Pedro, a prison unlike any in the Western World.

The guards at San Pedro Prison only control access inside and out. Once inside, prisoners must completely fend for themselves. No food or accommodation is provided. If you have money, you can rent or even buy property inside the prison, or food from one of the many restaurants run by other prisoners. A small cell shared with eight to ten prisoners will cost about 500 Bolivianos a month, the equivalent of about \$110. The most expensive rooms, which will have king-sized beds, plasma televisions, and in at least one case, a jacuzzi, will cost about \$3000 US a month.

If you don't have money, you will find yourself sleeping in the streets of the prison, and possible dying of hunger and exposure if you don't work. The prison is like a city within a city, and many jobs can be found offered by other prisoners, such as in coffee shops or barbershops, or if you're looking for less than legal work, in cocaine manufacturing. Cocaine manufacturing is a major industry within the prison. Ingredients for making cocaine are smuggled in, and the finished product is in turn smuggled out. These days most prisoners are in for relatively minor offences, the majority being drug-related, and are at San Pedro on remand.

Corruption is very high in Bolivia. As Thomas McFadden proved, if you had enough money to bribe the guards, they would even escort you outside the prison for a day of leave.



The main entrance of San Pedro prison.

Your partner and family, however, are free to come and go from the prison.

It is quite common for prisoners to have their families live with them in the prison. Children are free to leave in the morning to go to school. Wives and partners are free to leave, and indeed must do so to buy food and provisions to continue surviving in custody. Prisoners who do not have family living with them can also have food brought in on visits.

Despite its unorthodox nature, San Pedro became most notorious for its tourism. Tourists would frequently bribe their way into the prison for a low fee to the guards, perhaps even renting a hotel inside for a weekend, and more often than not, purchasing some of the cheapest cocaine on the planet.



San Pedro is located in the middle of La Paz, the capital city of Bolivia. In this photo, shops not affiliated with the prison, including liquor stores, have set up directly outside its walls.

Local people would also go into the prison every day just to eat a cheap meal at one of the many restaurants. As one of the few English speakers in San Pedro, Thomas McFadden became renowned for giving tours of the prison to Westerners. Rusty Young, an Australian backpacker in South America, heard about Thomas, bribed his way into the prison, and joined one of his tours. The two quickly became friends, and Rusty subsequently bribed the guards to let him stay at the prison for an extra three months, sharing a room with Thomas as he began writing a book about his story.

Reading Thomas' stories in *Marching Powder* while I was at Tamworth, I was so fascinated I began making plans to visit San Pedro myself. The irony wasn't wasted on me that I couldn't wait to get out of the prison I was currently in, so that I could go visit another one overseas as a tourist.

Sadly for me and many other tourists, the Bolivian government eventually cracked down on the booming illegal tourism industry at San Pedro. The government had turned a blind eye to it for years, but in February 2009, tourists uploaded a video of a tour to YouTube. A local TV station picked up on the story, and began interviewing tourists coming out of the prison. The resulting embarrassment was too much for the government, who quickly stamped down on the practice.

As tourists are no longer allowed inside, stalls selling handicrafts made inside the prison have been forced to set up outside the main entrance. So when I eventually visited I was at least still able to see the creativity of the people inside. Aside from this, all I'm confronted with are the very high walls, which are bland, save for three small murals.



A craft stall outside the prison selling works created by people incarcerated inside. Before the ban on tours these stalls operated inside San Pedro.

Of course, I'd done my research before coming to Bolivia, and knew very well that the tours of the prison had long stopped. Still, being so close to what was previously considered the highlight of tourism in the country, I can't help but feel disappointed. A guide of La Paz is walking myself and a small group around the outside, and without prompting, warns us about people still offering 'tours' inside. I'd already heard about this myself.



One of the murals on the outside front wall at San Pedro.

"There is a guy here in the city centre, offering prison tours. He will approach you and tell you he can get you inside for 200 Bolivianos (\$44). He will get you inside. The problem is not getting inside. The problem is that your guide will disappear. When you try to get out, the police will stop you. They will say 'Where are you going? No, no, there are no prison tours here, you are trying to escape. Go back to your cell!' Of course they know you are a tourist, but they want more money. The last tourists I know of who managed to get in four years ago also had to pay about \$400 US each to get out again. They were Australian, and their embassy would not help them as they had committed a crime by going into the prison in the first place. I do not recommend trying to get into the prison anymore."

As much as I'd like to see the inside of San Pedro myself, possibly not being able to get out at all depending on what the bribes have increased to, if you can even bribe your way out at all anymore, is not my ideal experience for the rest of my stay in Bolivia. Before leaving the area I purchase some art from the stall outside the prison, then choose to spend the rest of my trip in Bolivia on the more cowardly and much safer option of visiting Copacabana.



A photograph of the inside of San Pedro taken in January 2009, shortly before the government cracked down on tours of the prison. Photograph by Danielle Pereira. Shared under CC BY-SA 2.0 DEED licence.

AUSTRALIAN GUNSLINGER

BY SOKON

The final chapter of the story of Angus Watson, following the debut of this ongoing series in Issue 9.

We grabbed some supplies and hurried out the door. "I'm coming!" yelled 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 they are?" Asked Andrea. "I think it's what's left of the Chandler gang."

We rode for a while and then stopped at a rickety fence. "That's the house." Andrea pointed across some flat paddocks to a house that matched the fence. "They'll see us coming." Said Mideast. "That's fine. If it's them, there's only seven." I replied. "The sun's going down, I think we should wait."

Andrea drew a plan of her house in the dirt, then we sat by the fence, watching. "I don't want him to get away again." I said to Mideast. "He's not going to if we both go in the front door, hard." "Who's he?" Asked Andrea. "A man I've been chasing for a long time." She looked across to her house. "I want to come in with you." "You're a farmer, not a gunslinger." "I can shoot straight, I grew up shooting bunnies." She argued. "Bunnies don't shoot back." Mideast interrupted. "You can stay outside and shoot anyone that wants to make a run for it."

Not long after it was dark enough to move in. Leaving the horses, we cautiously crossed the paddocks, trying not to spook the cattle. A dog barked as we got close to the house. "You didn't think to mention the dog?" I whispered. "I don't have a dog, Bret does and he took it with him." We crouched and waited. The dog barked again and the front door opened. We dived to the ground. A gunslinger stood in the doorway looking across the paddocks. It was a dark night with just a hint of a moon so there was no way he could see us. He lit a smoke and then went back inside.

Mideast gave the signal to move in quietly. "Go and keep the dog quiet." He told Andrea. Andrea veered off in a different direction and we slowly headed for the porch. The dog barked again so once again Mideast and I had ducked. "What is she doing?" Asked Mideast, frustrated. "How would I

know?" I replied. "I'm here with you."

We waited for a moment and then quietly moved toward the porch. We were almost there when we heard Andrea yell. "Nooo!" The dog started barking and the noise was heading our way. Bang! The shot echoed through the quiet evening and the dog let out a yelp, then went quiet. "Let's go!" Yelled Mideast running for the porch.

As we made it to the porch we heard gunshots and windows breaking. We both crouched until we could put our backs to the wall. Andrea ran up onto the porch, dived onto her belly and rolled to the wall. "What are you doing?" I asked. "I told you, I'm coming in with you."

Then, "Is that you Angus?" "Yes Clark!" "I didn't take ya long to find me." "When are you going to stop running and fight this out?" I asked. "I stand up and we'll fight it out." He replied. "You're a funny man Clark."

With both guns drawn, Mideast quickly turned, took a few steps back and fired a wall of lead through the window. "You still alive Clark?!" He yelled, backing into the wall. Clark laughed. "Yeah mista, but ya got a coupla others."

I quickly turned and fired five shots through another window, and then slammed my back against the wall. "What about now Clark?!" Clark laughed. A figure appeared at the window and fired a few shots at nothing. "Who shot my dog?!" The man yelled. "Bret, what are you doing?" Asked Andrea. "Andrea? Where have you been?" "Getting help." He replied. "You don't need help, now get in here before you get hurt." "Why are you with a gang?" He asked. "I'm doing some jobs so we can get out of debt." "There's better ways Bret." "Yeah, but this is quicker, now get in here." "No Bret, I'm not going to come in."

Mideast had reloaded his guns and edged close to the

window. He looked at Andrea and she shook her head no. He nodded yes, turned and fired through the window. "No!" yelled Andrea, jumping up and grabbing Mideast's arm. Bang! A bullet burst out of her back with a spray of blood and she dropped to the ground. "You bastards!" yelled Burt. The door flew open and both Mideast and I turned for the fight. Bang! I felt a burning sensation in my gut and staggered back a couple of steps. Bang, bang! The man in the doorway dropped to the ground. Bang! A shot came from one of the windows and Mideast dropped to one knee. We both slammed our backs against the wall, and slowly sliding, we sat down. "Hey Angus!" "What Clark!" Clark laughed. "Just see'n if ya still alive!"

I looked over to Mideast and asked if he was o.k. He nodded yes and brushed the bloodied upper part of his leg as if the wound was nothing. Mideast pointed at me and I gave him thumbs up. I was holding my stomach but my hand wasn't stopping the blood.

We didn't know how many of the gang was left. I looked over at Andrea's lifeless body and then hung my head. "She wasn't meant to be this close to the action." Said Mideast. "I know."

Mideast held up his guns and gestured to the front door. I nodded yes, and then while we reloaded I called out. "Hey Clark!" "What!" "You not running today!"

Mideast and I got to our feet, drew a deep breath and rushed the front door. Bang, bang! Bang! Bang, bang! Mideast was first through the door and I saw two puffs of pink mist explode from his back, and he dropped to the ground.

I saw a man standing at the staircase and we exchanged gunshots. Bang! One shot hit me in the shoulder spinning me around and I dropped to my knees. Another man was standing

in a doorway, I quickly got off a shot. Bang! He fell backwards. Quickly spinning around, I fired a shot at the man near the staircase. Bang! His head was shocked backwards throwing him to the floor.

I was now sitting on the floor staring at the stairs, listening. I could sense that someone was behind me. "Um not gunna shoot ya in the back Angus."

I slowly got to my feet. I was weakening from the loss of blood and my body was aching. I swung around and pulled the trigger. Bang! Bang! A bullet hit me in the hip dropping me to the ground.

My gun was empty and I was out of energy. I lay on the ground looking at the ceiling until Clark's smiling face appeared above me. "Um not run'n Angus, um walk'n out."

I grit my teeth and prepared myself for the fatal shot.

Clark turned and walked out the door.

After a painful walk to my horse, and a long ride, I made it back to town, where I saw you, waiting.

That's how my uncle Angus described the events to me just before he died.

So here I was, in the Territory, facing my first ever gunfight.

"Um gunna kill ya like I killed ya uncle." Said Clark.

The End maybe.

ARE YOU INTERESTED IN WRITING A SHORT STORY OR A SERIAL (ONGOING SERIES) FOR PAPER CHAINED? IF SO, SEND US YOUR WORK. WE'D LOVE TO FEATURE YOUR STORY IN THE MAGAZINE AS WELL.

CONVICT AND LIVED EXPERIENCE CRIMINOLOGY SYMPOSIUM

BY DWAYNE ANTOJADO

In March, the Southern Queensland's Ipswich campus was the backdrop to a pioneering event that may very well redefine the contours of criminology in Australia. The inaugural Convict and Lived Experience Criminology Symposium was not merely an academic conference but a beacon of progressive thought, bringing together esteemed scholars and lived experience criminologists from around the globe. Figures such as Professor Jeffrey Ian Ross from the University of Baltimore, Dr. Sacha Darke and Dr. Andreas Aresti from the University of Westminster, alongside Associate Professors Grant Tietjen from the University of Wisconsin – Tacoma, and Jennifer Ortiz from The College of New Jersey, convened to delve into the heart of convict and lived experience criminology.

The gathering was symbolic of a broader shift within the field of criminology, especially pertinent to the convict criminology movement in the US and the emergent lived experience criminology movement in Australia. These movements are groundbreaking in that they prioritise the narratives and insights of individuals who have firsthand experience with the criminal justice system, challenging the conventional, often detached, academic study of crime and punishment. The importance of such a paradigm shift cannot be overstated, as it seeks to imbue the field of criminology with a depth of understanding and empathy that has historically been overlooked.

The symposium's discussions revolved around the integration of these vital perspectives into the Australian criminological landscape, highlighting a global trend towards acknowledging and valuing the expertise of those who have lived through the system. This inclusion is transformative, not only for the individuals directly involved but for the field of criminology itself. It opens up new avenues for research, policy formulation, and the overall understanding of crime, its causes, and its effects on human lives.

Why, then, is this moment so pivotal? For decades, criminology has largely been the domain of scholars and policymakers removed from the direct impacts of the criminal justice system. While valuable, their research and theories have often lacked the nuanced understanding that comes from lived experience. The voices of those who have navigated the complexities of incarceration, rehabilitation, and reintegration have been conspicuously absent in the shaping of criminological theories and policies. The symposium marks a turning point in this regard, at least in Australia, signifying a collective recognition of the importance of these missing voices.

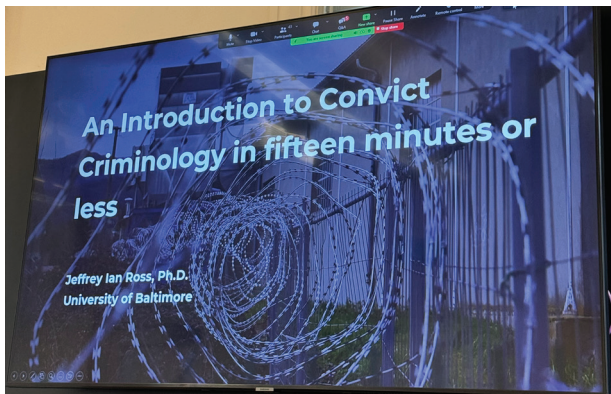


Dr Suzanne Reich and Dwayne Antojado, two of the four convenors of the symposium.

The implications of this shift are profound. Policies and interventions developed with the input of lived experience criminologists have the potential to be more nuanced, effective, and just. These contributions can lead to a more empathetic approach to criminal justice, one that recognises the humanity and potential for change within each individual. The symposium serves as a powerful reminder of the value of inclusivity in academic and policy-making circles, underscoring the notion that those who have experienced the system firsthand bring indispensable insights to the table.

Moreover, the event was a source of empowerment and validation for individuals with lived experience of the justice system. Participating in such a high-level academic forum provided an opportunity for these voices to not only be heard but to be acknowledged as crucial to the advancement of criminological research and practice. This recognition challenges the stigma often associated with incarceration, presenting an alternative narrative where former incarcerated people and those affected by the justice system are seen as experts and advocates for change. The discussions at the symposium also highlighted the potential for a more collaborative approach to criminology, where scholars, policymakers, and lived experience criminologists work together to develop theories and practices that reflect the complexities of crime and justice. Such collaboration can lead to more holistic solutions that address the root causes of criminal behaviour, improve rehabilitation efforts, and support the reintegration of individuals into society.

As we reflect on the outcomes of the symposium, it's clear that the inclusion of convict and lived experience criminology represents a seminal moment in the field in Australia. This approach offers a way forward that is more inclusive, empathetic, and effective. It challenges us to rethink our assumptions about crime and punishment and to embrace the complexities of human behaviour and societal responses to it. The Convict and Lived Experience Criminology Symposium is not just a milestone for those directly involved but a beacon of hope and progress for the whole field of criminology. It represents a shift towards a more inclusive and empathetic understanding of criminal justice, one that acknowledges the invaluable contributions of those who have lived through the system. As we move forward, the insights and discussions from this symposium should inspire us to continue pushing the boundaries of criminology, to seek out and value diverse perspectives, and to work towards a justice system that is fair, just, and effective for all. This event is a testament to the power of collaboration and the importance of including all voices in the conversation about crime, justice, and societal well-being.



Professor Jeffrey Ian Ross, the co-founder of the Convict Criminology approach, presented this lecture in person at the conference, which was also streamed online.

FROM BEHIND BARS TO BEYOND: A JOURNEY THROUGH LAUGHTER AND TEARS

BY DWAYNE ANTOJADO

In my quieter moments, when the laughter has faded and the room grows still, I find myself wrestling with a profound truth. It's a truth that has been a constant companion, shadowing me through years marked by a constant cacophony of noise, and the echo of heavy doors slamming shut. I've been told I'm a fortress, my emotions guarded behind a moat of humour. It's an armour I've donned, perhaps unknowingly at first, a shield against the world's harshness and my own internal turmoil. This journey of introspection, especially as I pen down my thoughts for this column, demands that I strip away the veneer of jest. It's an excavation of the soul, unearthing layers of sadness, dread, and anxiety that my

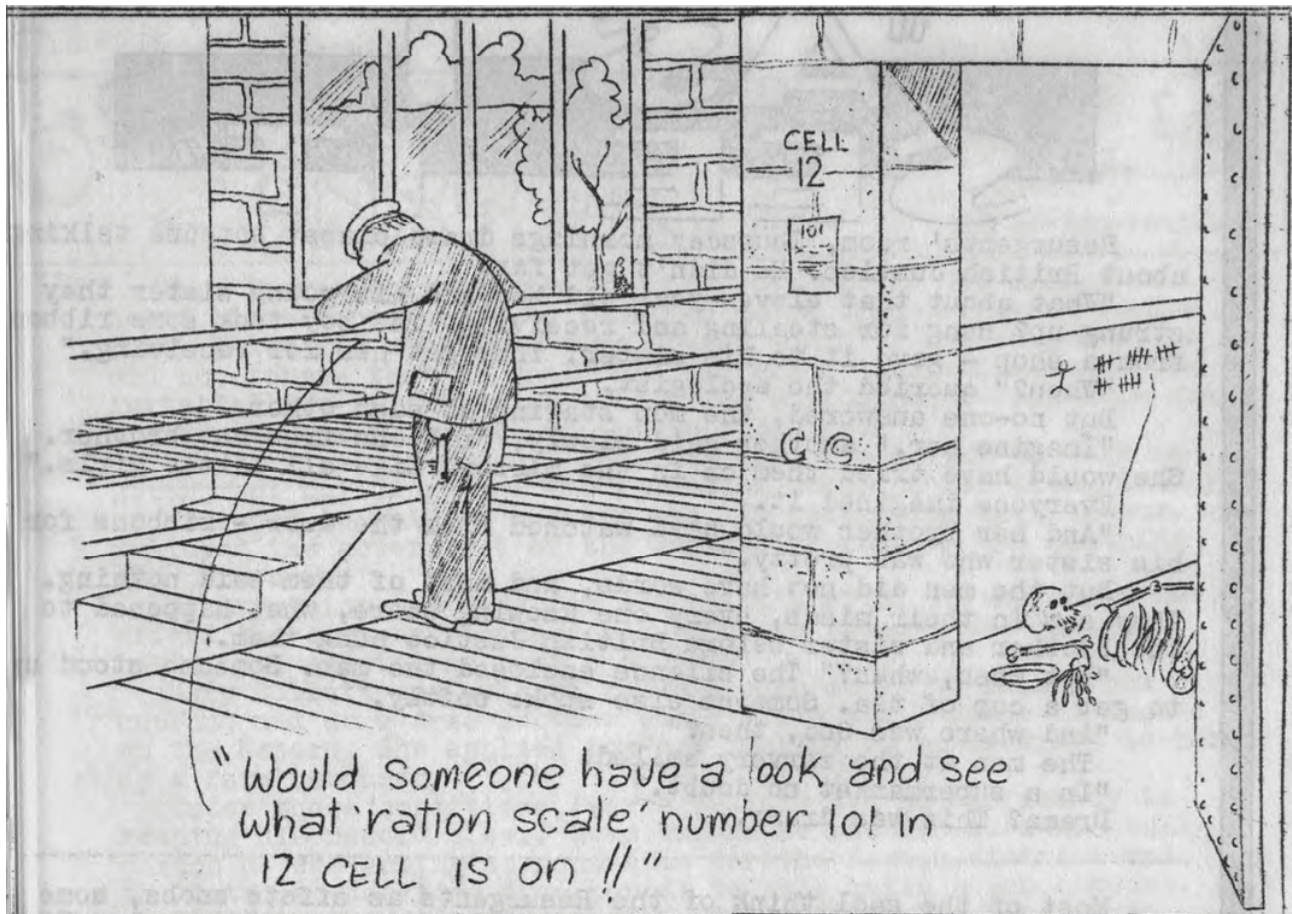
time behind bars has sedimented within me. Venturing into the recesses of my psyche isn't a pilgrimage I eagerly embark upon. This mental space, marred by memories of confinement, isn't a destination I visit willingly. It requires a resilience, a raw honesty that is as uncomfortable to settle into as it is challenging to retreat from once the quarter's column is complete. The emotional residue of these explorations doesn't vanish with the final period. It lingers, an unbidden guest that refuses to leave, clamouring for recognition, demanding to be felt and acknowledged. It's a reminder of a past that, while physically distant, is ever-present in the corners of my mind, shaping my now and my tomorrow.

So, why persist? Why continue to peel back layers of self, to delve into the depths of personal despair for the sake of a column? The answer, as complex as the emotions it stirs, is surprisingly simple: connection. Through these words, through the shared experience of loss, longing, and the relentless search for meaning, I hope to bridge the chasm that prison, both physical and metaphorical, creates. I write because I believe in the power of shared stories to heal, to offer solace, and to forge bonds that transcend the confines of prison walls. My narrative, fraught with its own trials and triumphs, is not unique in its essence. Many of you, my readers, have traversed similar paths, felt similar pains, and fought similar battles. It's in this shared journey that we find strength, a sense of community, and the realisation that, though our stories may be individual, our experiences are collectively understood.

Prison is a physical structure, yes, but it's also a state of mind. To leave its physical confines is one step in a journey; to free oneself from its psychological grip is another journey entirely. This journey is fraught with setbacks and victories, moments of clarity interspersed with periods of overwhelming doubt. Yet it's a journey worth undertaking – perhaps not willingly. I've come to understand that humour is not just a defence mechanism; it's a beacon of hope, a testament to the resilience of the human spirit. It's a way of finding light in the darkest of places, of asserting one's humanity in an environment that often seeks to strip it away. And while my humour serves as a bridge, connecting me to others and offering a reprieve from the weight of past experiences, it's in the honest, unvarnished sharing of those experiences that true healing begins.

To those of you reading this from behind those unforgiving walls, know that you are not alone. Your story, with its pain, its hope, and its unique perspective, matters. And to those who have stepped beyond the threshold, remember: the journey doesn't end at the prison gates. It continues, a testament to our ability to grow, to change, and to find peace within ourselves. As I end this issue's column, know that the emotions stirred by this column remain, a reminder of the journey I've undertaken and the path still ahead. But there's comfort in the knowledge that through these words, we are connected, bound by a shared understanding and a collective hope for a future defined not by our past, but by the possibilities that lie ahead.

HISTORICAL PRISON COMICS



Originally published in Issue 12 of *Contact*, Parramatta Gaol, September 1972.



Originally published in Issue 30 of *Vision*, Yatala Labour Prison, February 1981.

HISTORICAL PRISON WRITING

NIGHTMARE

I had an awful dream last night,
That they bundled me out of gaol:
With thirty-bob and a threadbare suit,
I was back on the jungle trail.
I hurried to the preacher:
He told me kindly, "Son ...
come back when it's time to bury yer -
That's my idea of fun."
I wandered the unfriendly streets,
And I ran past Pharisee Lane -
Where the passing faces told of defeat,
And I thought of that fellow named Cain.
I saw the moon, whispered a name,
With nary a bar between ... and
I played a little 'Pretendin' game,
That the years had never been.
Lottery tickets, protests, care.
Methedrine, pot and decay.
Young voices calling, futile despair,
Hypocrites still at their play.
To a cab driver: "The gap, my good man!"
And soon we pulled up at the queue.
I offered the last of my thirty-bob -
But he said, "Nah; I'm goin' with you."
So that's why I'm glad to see you,
Old mate, yer ugly face, number 'n all.
For I've come back from a dreadful fate,
In that madhouse over the wall.

*Uncredited piece originally published in Issue 1 of
Contact, Parramatta Gaol, August 1970*

WILL YOU

Of all us guys imprisoned here
It truly can be said:
There's really something wrong with us
We're a bit weak in the head
Some of you may take offence
And say that it's not true
But when you come to think of it
You're here in gaol aren't you?
Just a lot of smarties
We all have brains galore
We seem to beat a lot of things
But cannot beat the law
It makes you thick when you are here
Here or down at "Pen" [Pentridge Prison]
Makes you wonder if you'll do
Some silly thing again
And when your term has ended
And you've been through the mill
Will you do the same again?
My fucking oath you will.

*By Hoot
Originally published in Flat Rock Bulletin,
HM Prison Beechworth, Easter 1961*

RUMOURS

Around this establishment and others of the same type, there are many rumours in circulation. Some are true, some are false. How does one tell the truth from the lies—the facts from the malicious lies and suppositions? As we all know, a simple story will start at point A, and after travelling to all points the finished story will have grown into a many-headed monster – often with no relation to the original story or incident. Why is this so?

- (a) Is it because people don't think or listen?
- (b) Is it because people rush in like fools, believing everything they hear?
- (c) Is it because they take a malicious delight in spreading lies and rumours?

Some groups will start rumours to stir trouble amongst their enemies – be these real or imaginary. Others do it for a bit of a lark, still others to further their own petty ends – i.e. causing fights and dissension and keeping everyone on edge.

There are three major types:

1. How often do you hear talk in the yard, showers, hall, etc. "So and so is no good, a dog, copper, cat, etc." He has done this or that or the other. But very seldom is this said to his face, and when it is they always have their backstops or an officer close by. This is commendable if you are not sure of your facts, or if you know you are libel.
2. This type is harmless in so much as they do not try to back-stab, or undermine the peace and harmony. Often, they are not aware that they are spreading rumours.
3. This is a very strange group – purporting to be your friends on one hand, and on the other trying to use you to do their stirring for them. We all know that some people aren't happy unless things are bubbling – why this is so, only a psycho would know. How are we to stop these lies?

Next time you hear a rumour or story, apply the following rules:

1. Get the facts – who said what and where.
2. Weigh and decide: Is Fred Bloggs really likely to have given someone up? Form your own opinion. If it is a 2nd-hand story, cut it in half, divide by 47, and then forget it.
3. Don't go around repeating stories unless you know them to be true.
4. Decide what action to take.
 - (a) Why is he telling me? Why not tell it to the person involved?
 - (b) Is he a friend or trying to use me?
 - (c) Should I repeat this story to anyone?

But above all, remember the old saying: "A still tongue keeps a wise head."

*Originally published in Issue 6 of The Jarrah Post,
Fremantle Gaol, June 1973*

IN THE HALL OF THE BUY-UP KING

BY KYLE ZAMMIT

The chirp of a radio reverberated down the clinic's hallway, and from a man's belt a crackly voice stated, 'Inmate's knocked up that they've hurt themselves, Pod E two, cell fourteen.'

The shutter covering the window of the cell door was pulled back, and the inmate said, 'Hello,' to the two masked officers peering in at him through the plexiglass.

There was a metal jangling, and the food flap was opened. 'Stick your hands out,' one of the men ordered. The inmate took a moment to understand the command, before he stuck his arms through the door.

'Fuck,' exclaimed an officer, as he looked over the dried blood all caked and cracked. There was a cranking sound, and the offender felt cold handcuffs tighten about his wrists.

The autumn night's air bit the inmate all over as he was pulled by the chain of his manacles out of the pod. 'It's not that bad,' the offender mumbled.

'Nah, it's pretty bad,' one of the masked men replied, before the other one asked, 'How old are you?'

'Nineteen,' the inmate replied.

'Fuck, you're only a baby. What're you slashing up for?'

'Oh,' the teenager began to shiver as he was marched barefoot through door after door in a blur. 'It's not that bad.'

The nurse in the clinic made him scratch off all the dried blood in the shower so that she could see the wounds.

A few officers wanted to see the wounds too. 'At least he went up the street instead of crossing the road,' one of them said to another.

After the offender was strip searched the transparent RIT cell door was slammed shut with a bang. The air was suffocating. The camera in the corner of the roof had clogs of wet toilet paper thrown at it. The toilet trickled and leaked.

The teenager lied down on the foam mattress and looked over all the doodles scratched into the wall. The fluorescent light on the ceiling never turned off. The inmate felt his mind grow foggy from oxygen deprivation.

Every day at lunch a mental health nurse would ask him through the food flap if he was having any thoughts of hurting himself, and he would say no. Then they would ask him if he was having any thoughts of hurting others, and he would say no.

The offender got a total of fifteen minutes in the yard. After a hundred hours of this, dreams get mixed up with memories

and imagination becomes reality. It was in this state that the teenager heard a whispery shushing sound, like wind through a keyhole, coming from behind the sink.

His feet splashed through the puddle of toilet water pooled in the corner, and when he leaned to look in the nook back there, he saw a shaft of sunlight coming out of a toilet roll. The inmate pulled it from its cubby under the sink and held it to his face.

From through the cardboard tube a cool breeze blew, and the offender opened his mouth and drank the fresh air like an elixir, like a wine. Immediately his mind cleared, and the warm light kissed his cheek as he stuck his eye up to the hole of the toilet roll. Through which, he beheld a vast and glittering hall, stacked high with warehouse shelves, stocked full with plastic packets, with colourful cans.

In the middle of a great aisle paved with marble, there sat a man upon a throne of tuna cans, upon a cushion of marshmallows. The Buy-up King was dressed all in green, and with a finger, he beckoned.

The teenager felt his skull squeeze down around his brain as he was sucked through the toilet paper tube. When he emerged from the canal and fell limp upon the cool marble floor, he had been born again.

The inmate's gaze was pulled up to look upon the man on the chilli tuna throne. The king's face constantly shifted, his features morphing between every kind prisoner that had ever been and ever would be.

The king's many mouths opened, and a million voices sang out in harmony, 'You're up shit creek without a paddle, mate.' The great man gestured with sweeps of his arms at the towering shelves of buy-up on either side, 'So take as many paddles as you want.'

An officer placed a milk and a ration pack into the food flap of the RIT cell door, but did a double take as he saw all the floor of the cell covered with packets of cookies, cans of soda, blocks of chocolate.

The teenager grinned at him, spooning up Nutella with a plastic spork.

*By Kyle Zammit
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The preceding story, aside from the supernatural ending, is based on the author's actual experience.

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

ISSUE 15 DUE FOR RELEASE IN SEPTEMBER 2024



VALPARAISO PRISON

We share photos from visiting a former prison in Valparaíso, Chile, which has now been turned into a community space and garden, and also photos of historical prison artworks from Chile.



PAPER CHAINED INTERNATIONAL

We report on *Paper Chained's* first ever art exhibition, held at Boom Gate Gallery, which featured artworks from people in prison all over Australia, and also from all over the world.



AUSTRALIA'S STUPIDEST LAWS

Did you know it's illegal in Victoria to fly a kite 'to the annoyance of another person'? There are many stupid laws in Australia, and *Paper Chained* takes a look at some of them in the next issue.



Anonymous

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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