

WHEN REFORM BECOMES REVENGE

How the title came to me ?! All I have to do is look around to see our existence, treatment, lack of resources, lack of care, & knowing that society sleeps on that misuse of their tax dollars. That the only reform that comes about are from those who fight & claw for it.

We have elders who have been incarcerated for eons that are about as aggressive as a sunflower. We have children given abhorrent amount of time who came from broken backgrounds. We have women who have lived threew years of abuse, but in here instead of helping it's a system of perpetuating harm!

Our government tells the public the correctional system reforms us, but how does continually harming us inside peak reform – it doesn't, it's all about revenge, instead of getting to the root – to help those who obviously need it!

-
Rhonda Thompson



**Prison+Neighborhood
Arts/Education Project**

Love And Concern For Us

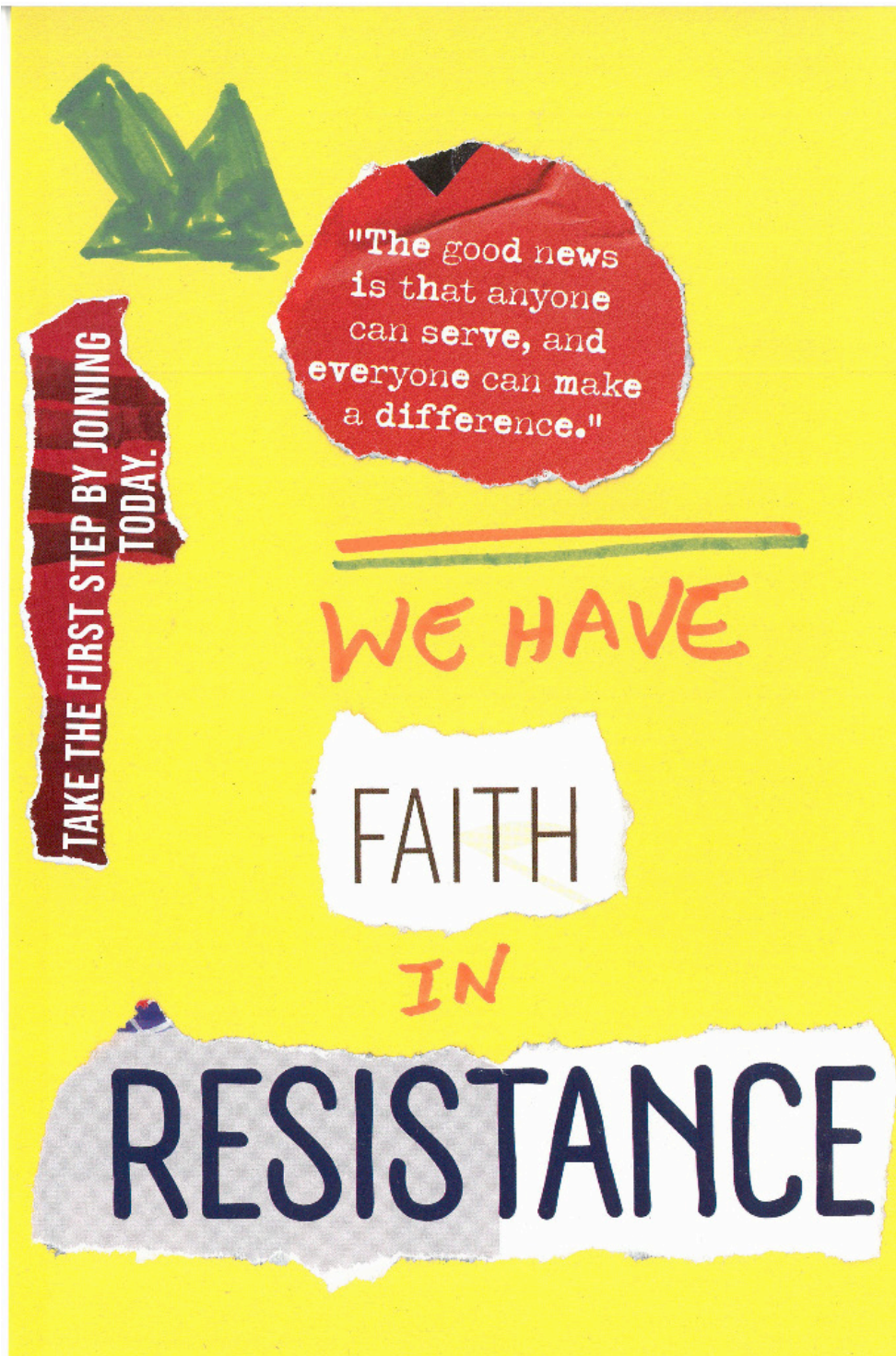


**WHEN
REFORM
BECOMES
REVENGE!**



reflections from logan correctional

Transitional Housing:



It will be growth... Explosive emotions

It will be filled with NO MORE DARK CLOUDS! Only filled with sunny days ahead you see. I am NO longer the person I used to be... But I am growing from a caterpillar into a beautiful butterfly you see! YES it takes time, but I am all about growth. I am going to leave a legacy growth like a seed for my seeds... planted, watered and beginning to grow you see

- LaTonyia Dextra

It will be free with me. My Past will no longer hold me down or back. I will move forward smiling and at peace for the choices that have seen a result of my actions. I will be a stronger, smarter, forgiving, growing, wiser, humble woman. I will admit my wrongs and shock the people that expect otherwise. It will be change with me. I will be released from every and anything oppressive. I will be a new person that people will want to know.

It will be a life of second chances and the world at my fingertips. It will be a chance to finally be a mother to my teenage children. It will be better for me. Anything different will be a Blessing with me.

-Jennifer Vojinovic

It will be with me...

As soon as I find my way out the GATE READY, willing and destined to make change. Grow my Community, family and ADVOCACY

To its full potential regardless Of my past and street Credentials. I am fighting for equality, equity and Generational wealth to rebuild my community from within so my my children can have better health, better care be more aware of the injustices they face before they even have a face. The SYSTEM needs to change STOP INCARCERATING AND INSTEAD EDUCATE REBUILD RESTORE REHABILITATE END MASS INCARCERATIONS - Amber "CoCo" Cannella

How is it with you?



How will it be with you?

With me, it's all strength and courage. From the age of 8, I realized how conflicted the "world" was. I literally ran from the Klu Klux Klan and ran so fast I didn't even know why until later speaking with my mom who in turn scold me for my presence in that area. She explained to me the harm of why I must not ever return. She matter-of-factly, played immediately for us (her children), the movie Mississippi Burning as we quietly and quickly understood. This would be the very first shaping of my mindset of the world, though followed by many more direct experiences both good and bad I seem to never forget this very one.

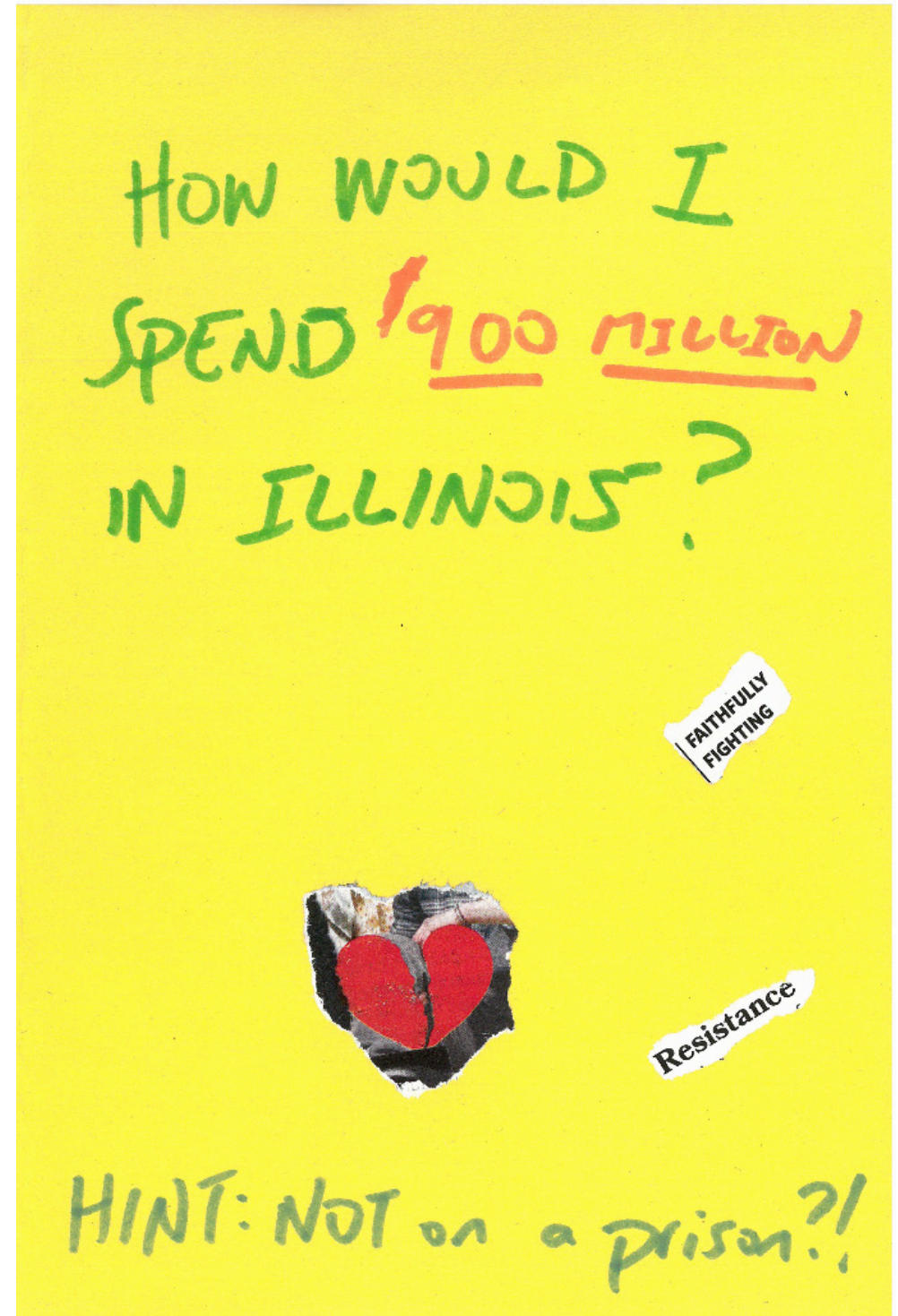
- Sharonda "Shay" Miller

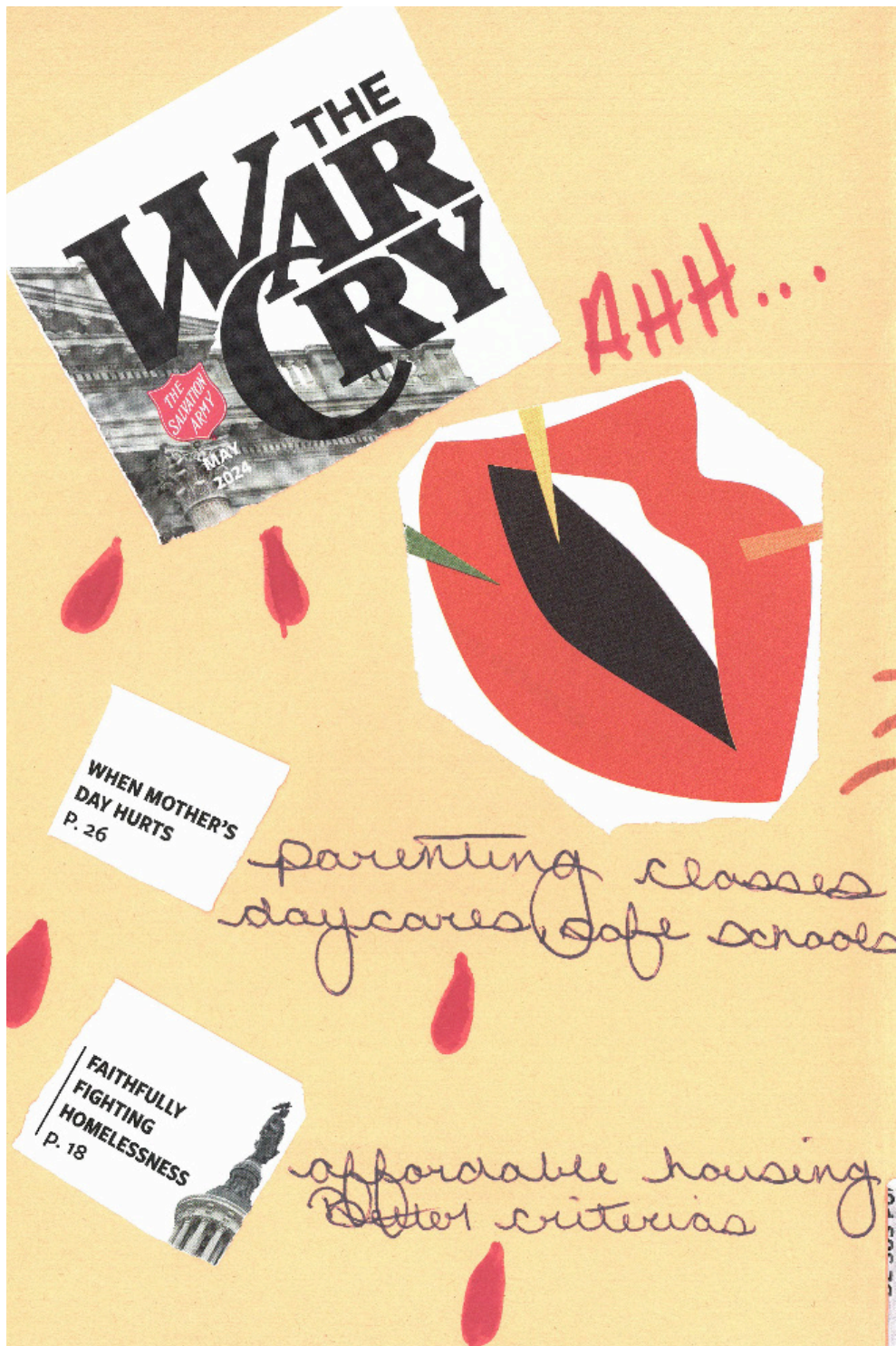
It is rough with me. I haven't seen my dad or kids for four years now. The administration has denied my dad visitation because he is an ex-con for a crime he was convicted for in 1977 when he was 24 years old. They say he lied on his pre-visitation application but we're all submitted to the officers who lie for each other to cover their own asses. So now, there are generations of my family that have been impacted by incarceration. My kids don't have their mother at home because of the "accountability" and Truth-in-Sentencing. They cannot visit their mother because their guardian did nine months in prison almost 50 years ago. Where is the "justice" in that.

- Jennifer Voginovic

I wont be anyones bitch or hoe
bitches , hoes, and heartbreak
somehow womanhood is buried
in a damp basement. Its skin
melting
and sometimes its beauty is fleeting
like me and silence sounds sane,
the first song taught to
abuse girls and women. They believe
imprisoning us is a natural
convergence of foreseeable
consequences
if we protect ourselves from more
heartbreak. But I remember
examples
if America saying "just say no"
calling us to wage war against
entities that course with love
-causing
death. Bitches, hoes, and emptiness
hidden within family units, then
friendships and communion, the
love's
quick movements away from the
ultimate goal of breaking free
from being bitches and hoes - or
was it
just me

- Erika Ray





My experiences throughout my life that shaped or defined me, good question. I had my share of good and bad on my journey in life I was already dependent, but we live in a cold world that changes all the time, it made me more dependent + strong. At the Same time the world we live in has so much to offer, you just have to go after your dreams and reach for the Stars. You just have to be strong and not let the bad of the world take you down the wrong path. Be true to yourself

- Patton

What do I want my words to do? I want my words to manifest and go in the souls of all people, to bring light and to change our society by using my voice to break the cycle of corruption. Although we were born into this broken society, it doesn't have to stay that way.

Where do you want your words to go?

I want my words to reach all people. Every race, gender, age, class, or free and the incarcerated. For change to happen we must start somewhere. Fear and consequences will no longer cause us to be silenced. Silence is a lie given by others when they don't want your words to rock their boots of security.

- Tony Dextra

How it is w/ us:

Some times I am treated poorly by the male staff: some use their position to belittle us.

Ex: an officer on our unit will open our door and shut it real fast and make us stand out in the rain and cold. This will go on for at least 3 min. If you voice your disdain regarding his actions he then retaliates.

I have been subjected to racism by some officers. They think just Because I'm white it's OK to say racial remarks. We are called names, belittled & put down a lot. I predominantly have experienced it with male staff.

I feel like oppression Toward women within the prison system has been the same forever. Nothing has changed. We experience the same abuse that our foremothers have. When does it stop; is it ever going to End? Reading the Zine showed me that

Arrested Justice

Is another way to keep women oppressed using power to make us submit. Threatening to take Days on Our Date.

- Amy Hoffman

I feel like I am "Tanya." No one looked into my childhood or why certain situations happened. The justice system only looked at a 72-year old woman who was killed and blamed me for everything. I grew to think the police department served and protected you. Why wasn't I protected early so I wouldn't be a victim to the prison system? I never understood how to properly place myself in a world after abuse, molestation, rape, and teen pregnancy. It was always me trying to "catch up" and come out of the brackets of, "failure" and teen pregnancy from being promiscuous. When it's really called a young girl searching for love in any way the "world" (man) throws it. Now it's become a trap of manipulation and an upgrade form of abuse where you look to a man for emotional stability. You are left with a prison term (more time than the person who committed the offense), cycle after cycle, children being raised without parents or thrown in the system, and the question remains who is really the victim?

- Katrina Battiste

I feel as though Logan and Riker have a lot in common when it comes down to the stereotype, labels, medication, sick-call. But on the contrary to their Motherly officers. That want and will help. We have none whatsoever and the few that would help us aren't in position to.

- D. Pickett

How Do I Feel About The Zine

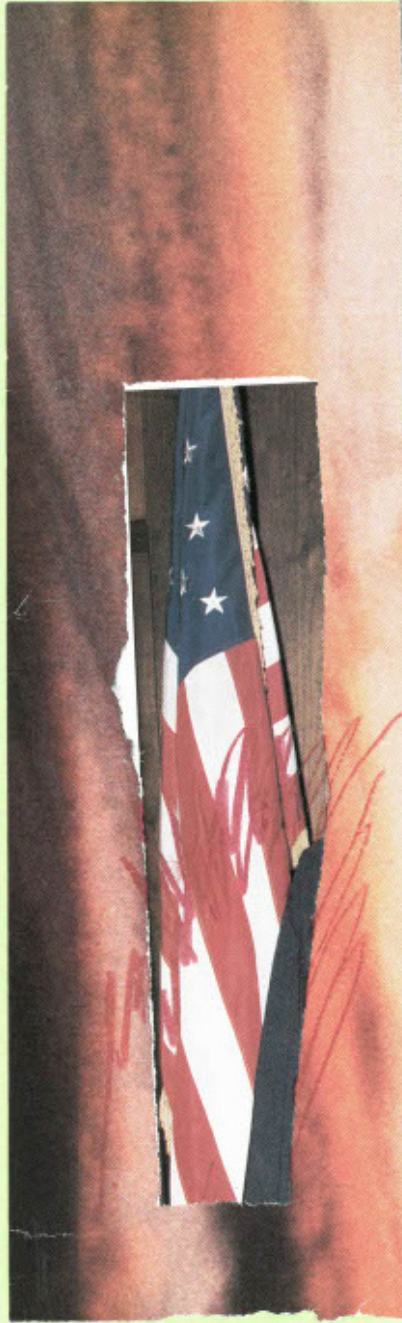
I feel it's accurate especially the gender roles and how the "fems" and "studs" are treated while being incarcerated. I also feel the statement "women don't stick together" hit home vs the men because men seem to get things done far as their rights in the institution and all us women do is moan, groan, and complain and accomplish nothing. And I do believe women have know (?) true recollection to what identity they are and most do plead guilty and not even truly be guilty :(

- Hayes

Being in prison has shaped and defined me and my perspectives of the world. This experience has been the most influential in my becoming the woman that I am today. My fight and desire for social justice can be attributed to encounters with the oppressed. Being up close and personal with the results of social injustice, has awakened in me a desire to fight for what is right and just. The world needs change, and I would like to part of that change.

- Maria Jimenez





"We The People" for who?
 Amer:KKKa's a joke.
 Amer:KKKa MUST FALL

13

FREEDOM CHOSEN

• It Needs & Change

• Instead of using 900 Billion dollars to build a building & house broken women keeps them incarcerated and uneducated
 • Get rid of TRUTH IN SENTENCING

• Bring Back fair parole system!

• It cost 1.4 billion on prisons that money can be allocated to under funded communities and prevent crime. Give

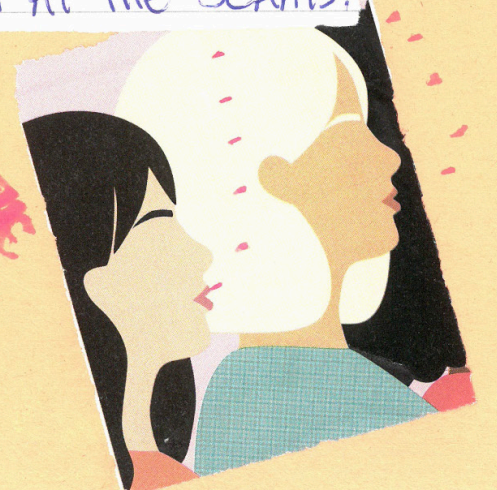
• Women Jobs and Job Training when released create a support system so they dont re-offend.

MASS INCARCERATION

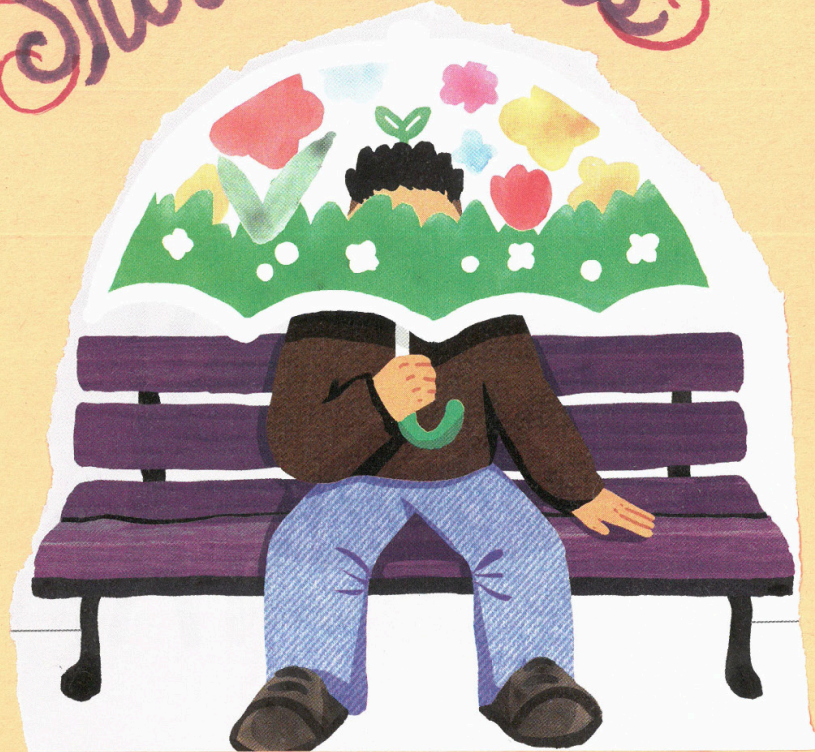
IS BUSTING OPEN AT THE SEAMS.

• Coco

HEAL THE
 BROKEN
 WORDS LEFT
 UNSPOKEN
 FREEDOM
 CHOSEN



Shower Us



With More Opportunities:

To Better Our selves, with more
Education and Higher Education, **More** programming
Rentrey, career skills, easy access to Resources.
Better legal li. baray/help. Staffing People that
geniuly want to teach onel help Educate, **us!**
Let us **Not BE limited to NO LONGER**
~~to~~ due to Budgets onel time.

To me Arrested Justice means there is no real justice once arrested. Once you're arrested, especially as a woman, conviction and incarceration is the only justice anyone seems to be looking for. The longer the term of incarceration, the more justice others feel has been served.

- Sarrah E. Brannon

I believe that what arrested justice means is that the concept of "justice" is stunted by corruption and distorted public perception. "Justice" is an illusion that is accepted by the masses and satiated by the poor and disadvantaged, in other words "scapegoats." The "why" of why crimes are committed by some is not so important as long as there is a "who."

- Jennifer B

Is there really a straight definition for this? Either way people are still treated poorly and discriminated. To me, the correct definition should stand and mean something. But from race to color and gender it would feel nice to see the day where there will be some form of equality.

- Katrina Battiste



To me, Arrested Justice means that there is no justice. Justice is restrained for individuals who do not fit in or belong to a certain norm, race or class. Justice is arrested to women of any race or creed because our power is limited and unwanted.

- Jennifer Vojinovic

Arrested Justice- "to be placed in a state of smallness" "to be made invisible" "to know that the smallness and invisibility is caused by one's Blackness or Brownness, gender identity of woman, or lack of conformity." to be subjected to criminalization because of one's smallness, invisibility, and nonconformity to trauma.

- E-Ray

Arrested justice to Me Means... Being captured By law legally while Being held in confinement illegally ONLY Because the one of authority in authority said and had the right to Because of how one May View you.

- D. Pickett

Arrest of Justice To Me Is Getting Justice Out of Any Arrest That IS not Justified. I feel what was Taught In Training as Being a Officer Should Be applied and not abused By Taking The Rights Of Any Civilian Unlawfully.

-Janay Hayes

I grew up seeing the world through my parents eyes; their opinions, their ideals. To figure out, as I got older, my views, my thoughts; see the world from my eyes, was to experience truth in its rawest form— that not all people are living with the same opportunities, expectations, or advantages as others. That people were held down by oppression and disregarded as less than was saddening and definitely motivated me to do what I could to be a part of the solution and don't the problem. That is how it is with me.

- Jennifer B

Arrested justice means to me: It brings out the truth behind the black community, the violence & injustice Black women get. Or just women period. The truth behind how white men act that have power.

- Samantha G

Arrested Justice Means to myself is no matter who you are Or where you come from. The treatment, and unfairness that we encounter is harsh, i feel that things Aren't changing, over the years. You would think that After all the talk and Action that others take, change would've came. The Arrested Justice is getting worse, Say less And do more.

- Tee Bennett

Justice, is there really Justice? To me in my experience and the stories in the book, NO! Justice goes to those in power + control. An average person does not stand a chance. It blows me away what power can do to people and how they can use it to victimize others. We have to stop giving them power.

- Patton Journal Prompt

Arrested Justice is the voices of the traumatized survivors and telling of the way the systems are designed to criminalize black women brown women and to keep us locked in our own communities and remain locked up in prisons. Arrested then trial then punishment. Well what if punishment came first before any trial or arrest. As Survivors of all forms of abuse WOMEN are taught to be quiet dont talk back respect your man, so what he hits you he good with the kids right? Women have been dehumanized when it comes to the Justice System Since the beginning of time. Justice only serves a purpose if the justice was Just well who gets to write that Law if it don't even pertain to me. The laws were made for Law 4 who?

- Amber "CoCo" Cannella

REVIVED COMMUNITIES
JOBS • EDUCATION
REHABILITATION • MENTAL FACILITIES
COMMUNITY SUPPORT GROUPS • SAFE SPACES FOR THE YOUTH
TRAINING FOR AGRICULTURE
SELF SUSTAINING COMMUNITIES FOOD DESERTS
COUNSELING • LIVING FACILITIES FOR FORMERLY INCARCERATED INDIVIDUALS
DISMANTLE JUDICIAL SYSTEM
FREE EM ALL

not only those they are housed with
or staff, but to themselves as well.

Staff or Individuals are not
trained to deal with manic Episodes
of SEVERE depression or violence im-
posed by individuals suffering from
Mental Health issues.



HELP! ↓



In arrested justice by Beth E. Richie, her writings ring true for many who are dealing with populations of men who have come from and been within the prison system. Our existence in our neighborhoods of the poorest populations are affected from State reps to social workers in our communities by a specific mindset--belief--that as lower income classes, we are less worthy. I say because of the men,

because the truth is. Is that the harm towards these communities are towards the men who then unleash upon the women of the brown skinned populations, and poorer white communities. Unfortunately there are more populations of African Americans without resources to come out from under such widespread oppressions.

- Rhonda Thompson



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NATIONAL REPORT

Should The Government Apologize For

What do you want your words 2 do?
Where do you want your words to go 2?

by Amber "CoCo" Cannella

I want my words to shake your core. I need my words to jump over barbwire fences go through back walls up to the steps of Capitol Hill. I want my words to lobby, to ring in the ears of Senate and House, to Sting when judges try to impose unjust sentences to all. I want my words to go to the hearts and souls of every change maker law maker Supreme Court defense attorney prosecutor jury member and even the stenographer. I need all of them to hear our cries from the inside even though we are alive we are stunk criminalized inside dying to strive while no rehabilitation exists. Just deterioration of hope our bodies and any gifts. Poor conditions they keep us bundled inside and out ask yourself: What is justice really about? So where can my words go when they're labeled as contraband? Who's gonna listen? Who cares when this is an afterthought? Where do my words go when politicians are politicking bout summer homes and Who's gone golfswing the best while standing w/ a knife in my chest they saying truth in sentencing does it the best. So where are my words now? Did they penetrate your chest? Did you have on your bullet proof vest?

FOR

No

He!

Arrested

With Mental Illness;

Prisons...

are overflowing with individuals who have SEVERE mental illness.

Investing in Mental Health facilities Equipt to help them ARE greatly needed. It is the states

RESPONSIBILITY

to Ensure the safety of both Individuals and staff from unsuspected attacks from those suffering from mental illness yet, they are being placed within general population where they impose safety hazards for

As we
continue to fight
for our FREEDOM,
we hold true to
ourselves and our
destinies to be
successful women,
mother, daughters
and caregivers
to society!



FREEDOM
HOPE
Victory
Faith.
GRACE
STRENGTH

[Concentration Camp not Correctional Center]

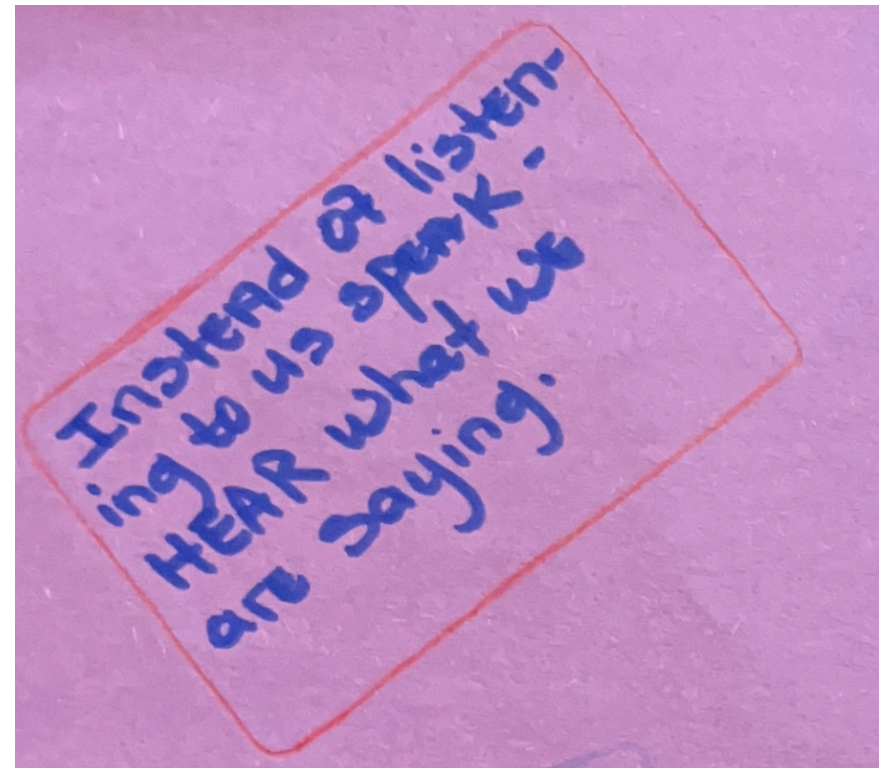
I AM a woman behind bars
Incarcerated, forgotten, Broken, Lost Double-crossed by a system designed
2 do Exactly what its doin.
Daughter, sister lover not yet a mother Forgive me 4 I never hold my tongue
Not a victim I aint never claim 2B1 Survivor all I C
Every name call n punch 2 tha face never fazed me only made me crazy. It
made me hate me. Remain angry
No ion think you heard me
Every name call n punch 2 tha face Never fazed me only made me crazy It
made me hate me remain angry.
I stayed like most do
Didnt know how 2 love I thought I Was loving you.
I had 2 grow as a woman 2 find my strength
Whether it b in the penn or thru my pen I am who I am b/c of where
I been. Poverty, broken home Growing up alone.
My pops Rest in Peace was Addicted 2 crack but that's
A whole nother rap next time 4 That. Moms did what she could but didn't
know How 2 leave either.
So all I did was emulate all the abuse n toxicity I saw like a mirror.
One bad decision after the next Pops was around but always hitting
On my big brother So big bro left
Back alone, streets where I left
Home, stomping, steppin but inside just
a little girl neglected.
Started selling drugs, toting gunz cheating Death popping x-pills smoking
weed drinking What the hell was I thinking...If
I could rewind time, get a 2nd
Chance you losing time you can
Never get back. You goin down the
Wrong road pump ya brakes.
When a man hits a woman, that's not
Love that's HATE. Run baby girl cause That's your fate. no ion think
you heard me. When a man
hits a woman, that's not love

It is evident our backgrounds have shaped who we are today. The environment of abuse, the lack of acknowledgement of the abuse, the lack of response to abuse as if it didn't happen. Is just the conditioning from generations past from the elder women to the younger. Diminishing our suffering continues through to adulthood. Getting into the relationships that continue the status-quo, that cause them to end up incarcerated, still dealing with being treated with emotional abuse, intimidation, stalking, coercion, threats, economic abuse, uses privileges, on..., denying, & blaming, isolation, uses children.

Learning from each other once incarcerated through mass reflection in these moments, you are not isolated. So then you can see that you are not supposed to be treated that way, you have worth and must begin the process of unlearning all the thinking patterns you have learned early on to learn to live authentically as a healthy minded woman.

Whereas those who've never suffered this kind of oppression had every reason to succeed and we had no choice to rise above the damage of your trauma ridden lives.

- Rhonda Thompson



There isn't just one experience that i can think of,
I feel that every experience I've encountered, been
Through as a child - Teen -To an Adult. Before prison - during And Now.
HAS made an impact. lessons that I've learn, Witness, the good, uneasy, bad
that I've Faced. even Knowing others experiences, perspectives, actions have
had an influence. I have taken from each one..

They all Made me a Resilient fighter, gave me
Ambition, strength, knowledge, an understanding, level headed, values,
growth, Caring, passion, and More.

My Perspective of the World Now is unsure. It's inconsistent, corrupt,
unjustice, lack of compassion and understanding
of one another, Quick to judge then accept and help.

It is chaotic and can be unstable, dangerous

I do know the World isn't all Bad there is good

And good people. who Try and act on good intentions. Despite who we are,
where we are at we all

go through Something in one way or another. We

All fall short but it's when and how you get up

that Makes a difference. You got to Plant Seeds if

you want to See Something Grow And Blossom.You

Have to be in tune to learn how to Navigate the

World Nothing's Black AND White.

Examples: of what

Feelings of support, love, lack of Support,

hidden Abuse. Internal fight with Self. family Relationships -

Friendships, Mishaps, Get Togethers. altercations, Misunderstandings,
accomplishments.. Rejection, hardship, Uncomfortable Situations, goals,
vacations, helpful peers/strangers,

Volunteer, Awares, Being very detailed due to My Circumstance, Prison/
county time. Patience, School Others actions And lesson learned, Dealing
with Unfairness, inconsistent, ignorance lack of

Dental care Achieving My Education, Self educating, Dog Training,
Communication, and More,

They all put me through some kind of

journey whether smooth, curvy, Bumpy - dips.

They all left an imprint that helped shaped/ define/gave me a different
perspective.

- Breanna Maldonado

That's hate. Run baby girl

Cause that's your fate.

You're better than what they

Labeled you 2B. Dropout fat

Ugly. Use your eyes 2 C

You are beautiful and can

Be whatever you want 2B. No matter Where you are or how you feel,
Remember Love yourself and always keep it real.

Speak your mind don't hold shit back Love your parents because when they
Gone you cant bring em back. Be

You Be loud Be funny #1

Rule always stack yo money

You gone struggle its gone B OK Have faith love you + things will Change.

The pain will go away

One day. Just pray.

Cause 21 years of this nope not

Me gotta fight for freedom gotta

Fight 4 womens rights gotta

Fight 2 free em all locked

Inside. Tha roadblock from

Day 2 day Truth in sentencing needs 2 change. Cause there is no sentence
That defines the truth. While old Timers pose no threat n still remain

In chains they dangle days n

idle minds play spades 4 trays. Stay medicated 2 hide the pain

Shit needs 2 change. Free em

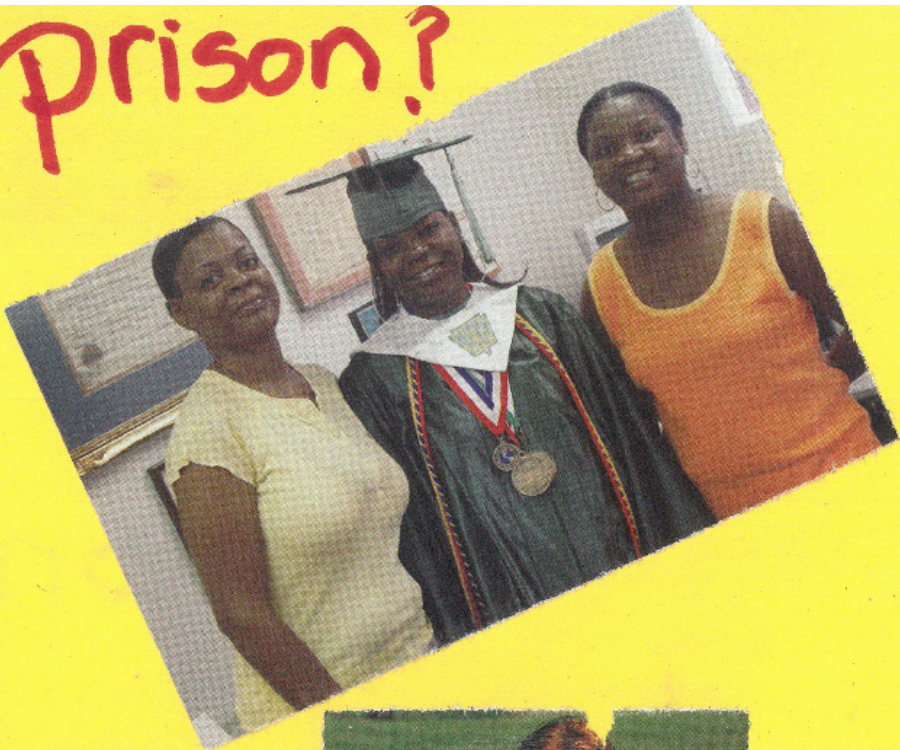
All from the modern day

Slaveships better known as

MASS INCARCERATIONS!



Prison?



Why
Not
on
Children



HOUSING

invite any person to
for safe belonging.



Cultivating the art

ART

Is Beauty My Curse? No More by Ameer Shakur

I was a young, stupid and misguided girl who was trying to find myself... Instead I got lost in a world that saw me as an object; hated me for what they saw; and believed I could be its punching bag to take all their anger and self-hatred the world inflicted on them to turn around and inflict on me.

I was vulnerable... and when I had nowhere to go there was a price to pay for a roof over my head and food in my stomach. Saying "no" wasn't allowed. Either act like you like it or be forced to take it. I've been held hostage at the age of 15 for 3 days by a man old enough to be my dad. I ate, I had a roof over my head, I was warm. At what cost? I acted like I liked him and enjoyed his pain. My PAIN WAS HIS PLEASURE! At night he'd hold me and I'd cry silently. My acts of affection allowed his guards to go down so I took advantage of it. I RAN!

Ran where? To safety? NO, to another man who offered freedom with a little cash and luxury. He came around for a few months and took care of all my needs & wants. I took care of his needs & affection. He said his name was Ken, but I was never the Barbie type.

I introduced him to my homegirls. Four beautiful, black girls with long flowing hair and flawless skin. Four beautiful, black girls who wouldn't be missed if they went missing...

Police pick me up for a violation of probation just to ask questions about Ken. The man that did everything for me. The man who felt good against me. The man that was test driving me to be sex trafficked. That's what the agents say. They got the facts. Two days from being captured to sex traffickers. The same day he was suppose to take us shopping.

My world changed that day...

I realized my beauty was a curse. By age 16 my body, my Beauty has been violated, raped & stripped from trusting anyone. My Beauty was vulnerable. So I stopped being beautiful. I cut my hair, put tats on my face, I grew a "beard," I put baggy clothes on. Do you see my beauty now?! Who will protect me? No one! So I'll protect myself.

For the men that told me I wasn't good enough, I wasn't shit, I'll never be shit...

For the man that put my face on the pile of rocks and stripped me of my innocence & dignity and left me with shame and a hole...

For any man that degraded me, violated me, hurt me, put me down, hit me, misused me, abused me...

I hate you! Why? Because I started to become you.

But I forgive you. Now I can move on and grow into the Rose from my concrete. To get to my petals you'll have to pass my thorns. My beauty will never be a curse again.

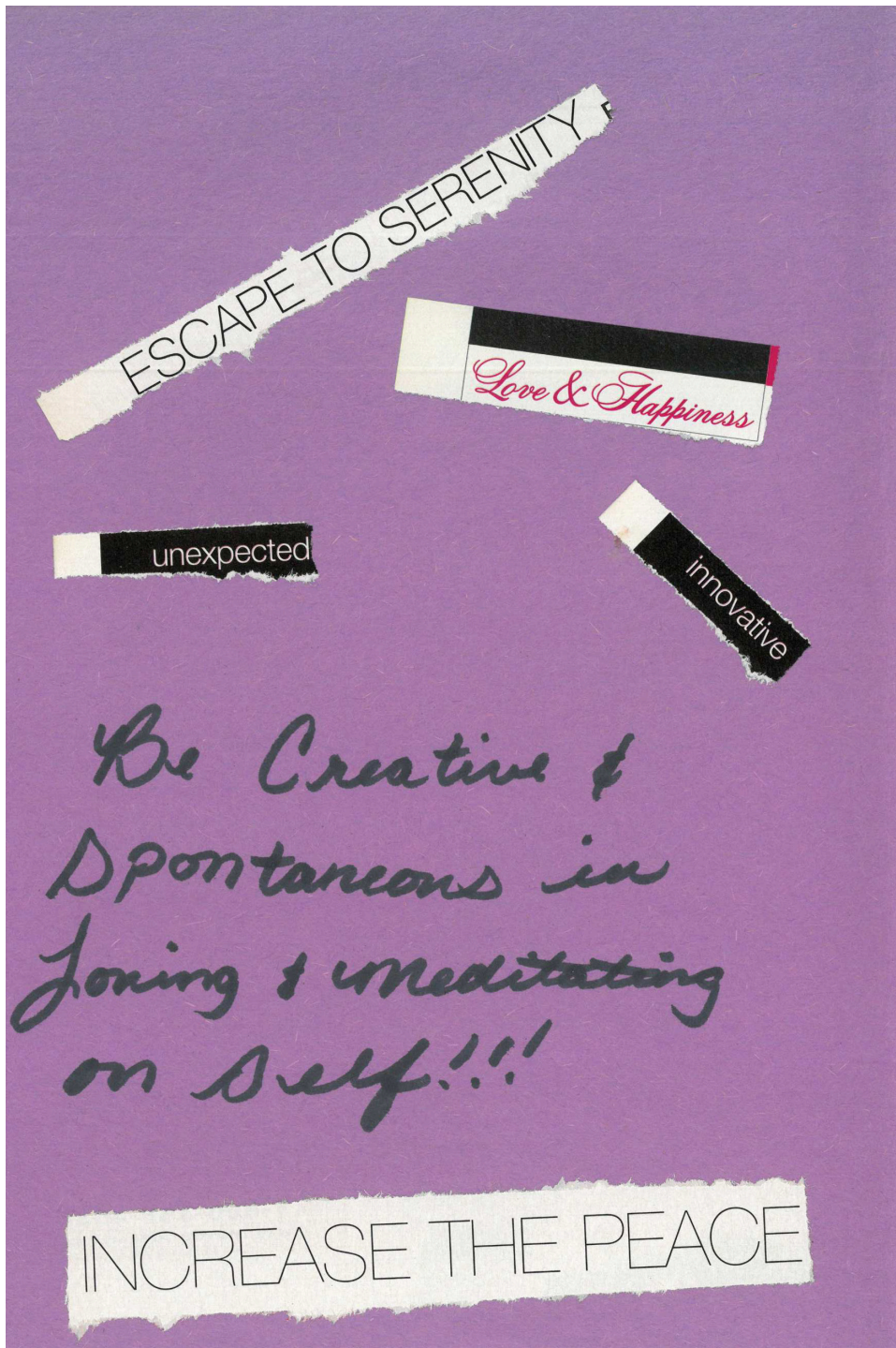
Signed *Ameer Shakur*
3/24



More Education
Less
↓

How To File For Unemployment Benefits





have become but only of what I did. I am afforded no good conduct credit to count against my Prison sentence because existing statutory laws prevent such an act from doing so.

I am bound to this system and it seems as if help will never come because reform laws

that are created target nonviolent offenders or worse; no one at all.

I have an urgency to go home because of constantly feeling left behind. I have to watch

people I am similarly situated to calculate days to go home because they were convicted and sentenced before 1998. At times I want to scream, "I want to go home too!" Until my throat is soar and I'm weak from exhaustion, yet I muster an ounce of happiness for the liberated and hope my time is near.

I have an urgency to go home not knowing if I have a home to return to. My mother does not know me and is so far detached from the woman I am today. The last time I felt her embrace I was 18 years old and struggling to find my way in the world. A lot of my family has died off and those who remain do not know me. A new generation who has never seen my face have hopes of finally meeting me, but without a further look into a system that has a reputation of being effective in the erasure of lineages, that day will not come anytime soon.

There is an urgency embedded within to reach out to those who are in positions to make a change within our sentencing structure. The necessity to do so scream... from the human souls our criminal justice system has failed and there is an outcry to rewrite history and not fall into the pattern of discarding human lives for monetary gain--new prisons, and political security comes at the cost of humans.



Racing Against TIS

by *Elbonie Burnside*

I have a sense of urgency embedded in my soul. This urgency comes from a fight against time. In my situation "time" is a metaphor for the statutory laws that are stacked against people who are affected by the carceral system. Mandatory minimums, truth in sentencing guidelines, and felony classification statutes all prevent a person like me from having a successful second chance at life. The stacked statutes prevent a person from being a productive member in their community as well as becoming a useful citizen.

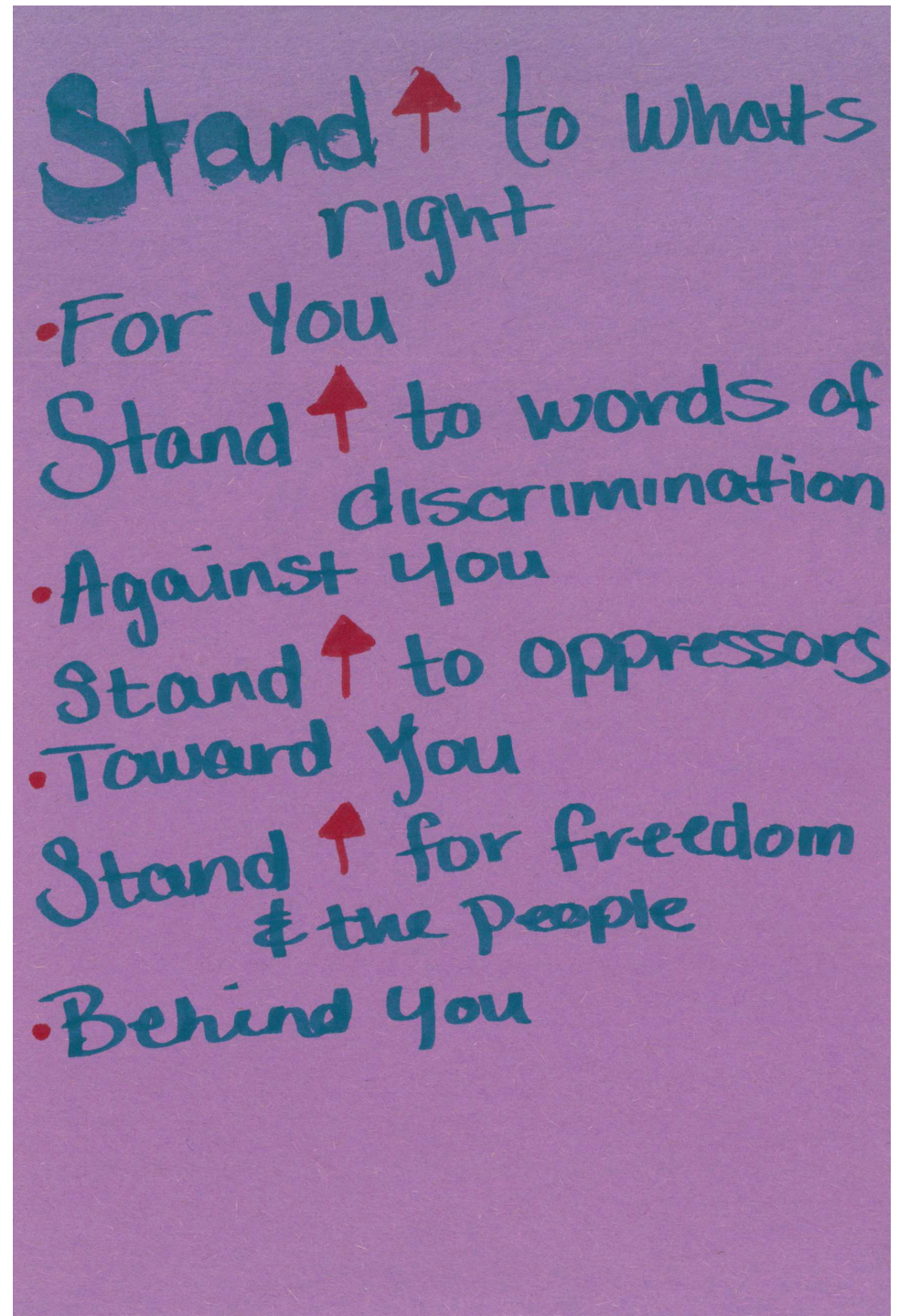
Upon my release I will be 53 years old. For the past 23 years, the carceral system has been my unofficial residence. People who do not know my name and refer to me as only a number have assumed the position as my stakeholders--an indirect caretaker. I have been sentenced to serve 100% of a 35 year sentence due to truth in sentencing laws the state of Illinois has adopted and the state not having an active Parole Board. I have filed for Executive Clemency four times in hopes I'm granted commutation. For my clemency to be granted, the Prisoner Review Board would have to look beyond what the media and courts depicted as a juvenile delinquent and look into the person I am today.

The PRB should consider the public safety but they should also take into consideration there were complexities compiled within the young girl that convicted a crime, which made decision-making unre... for a young girl to reach. The clemency process should look into rehabilitation as well.

Each of my clemencies have been denied because the ability to look beyond the picture that was painted through the media and prosecutors could not be met. They did not want to see me for who I am and chose to see me for what I did. They're unaware of the progressive trauma caused by the loss of a parent, feelings of abandonment caused by continuous uprooting from homes, molestation, unable to identify who my protector was or should've been as a 10 year old girl led her down a path of destruction.

Allowing my story to be told my way would have given a cause and effect to who I am. There is substance to the person I am. There is no way for the Prisoner Review Board to see me or any individual in custody completely if they're focused on the crime and not what caused the crime. What questions are asked that paint the picture the Prisoner Review Board sees?

No matter how far I excel in my academic studies and evolve as a person, there is no reprieve for me. There is no avenue for me to present my evidences of rehabilitation because there is no inquiry of who I am or



“No friend, family member, or advocate,
No official representative of the state,
And no reporter— asks about these
Young women’s lives outside of the tragic events.”

(Richie 6)

What are the experiences that have shaped and/or defined you and your perspectives of the world?

Trust was broken from molestation and sexual assault by people who were supposed to be my friends. The Church turned its back on me as I battled spiritual warfare alone. Teachers and counselors lied on me, and tried to take me from the only constant in my life (my mom.)

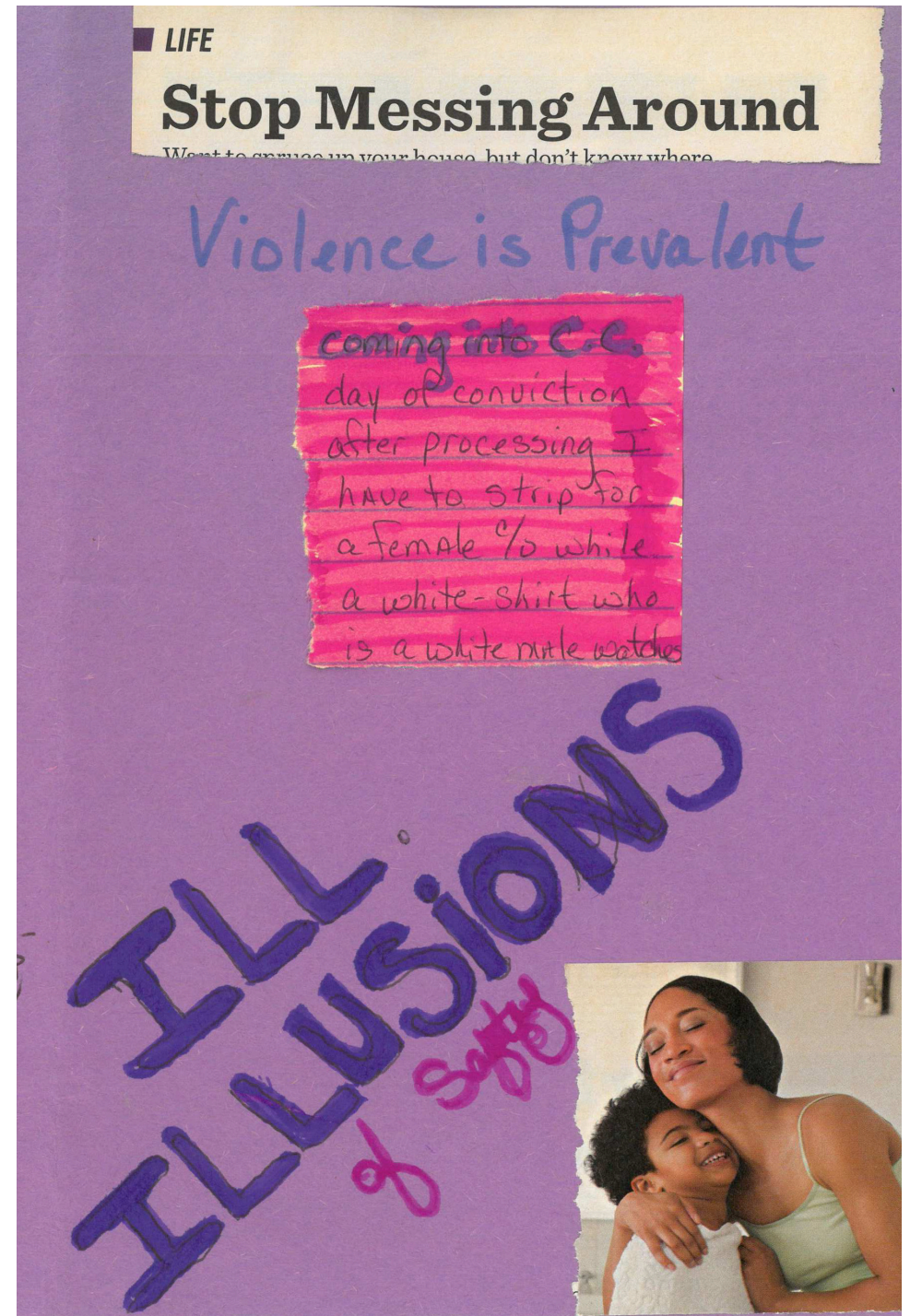
I learned to distrust authority because they only hurt, lied, and ignored cries for help.

My mom taught me to use my beauty and sexuality to get what I wanted from men. However, my faith taught me of my unworthiness and not to use people.

My marriage was often one-sided; there was no self-care...only care for the spouse and children. I swung completely the other way, sacrificing my own mental, emotional, and, sometimes, physical well-being for “my man” and kids. I married young, and didn’t want to be a statistic; so I stuck it (my marriage) out much longer than I should have.

I grew up on the wrong side of the tracks— the “other,” as you will. I was poorer than my peers, but taught to love “everyone.” However, “everyone” included only minorities or whites who were poor, like me. The rich were greedy devils, responsible for all the evils of the world.

My mom taught me to be strong, polite— like the grandmothers and great-grandmothers in Assata Shakur’s zine. The problem, though, was with the changing culture. The institution— school, the media— told all of us we could be the CEO’s of a major company. They sold us a dream, albeit a false one, where we could all be rich and powerful. Everyone could and should go to college, but these institutions defied what my mother and grandmothers taught: the power of hard work and selflessness. My mother wanted a “better” life for me— one that didn’t include backbreaking work. She wanted me to use my mind to make money and command respect. What she did not realize— what none of them realized— is that life is more fulfilling when you work hard and live in community with your family and neighbors. They wanted me to live like royalty, but a real queen serves her people.



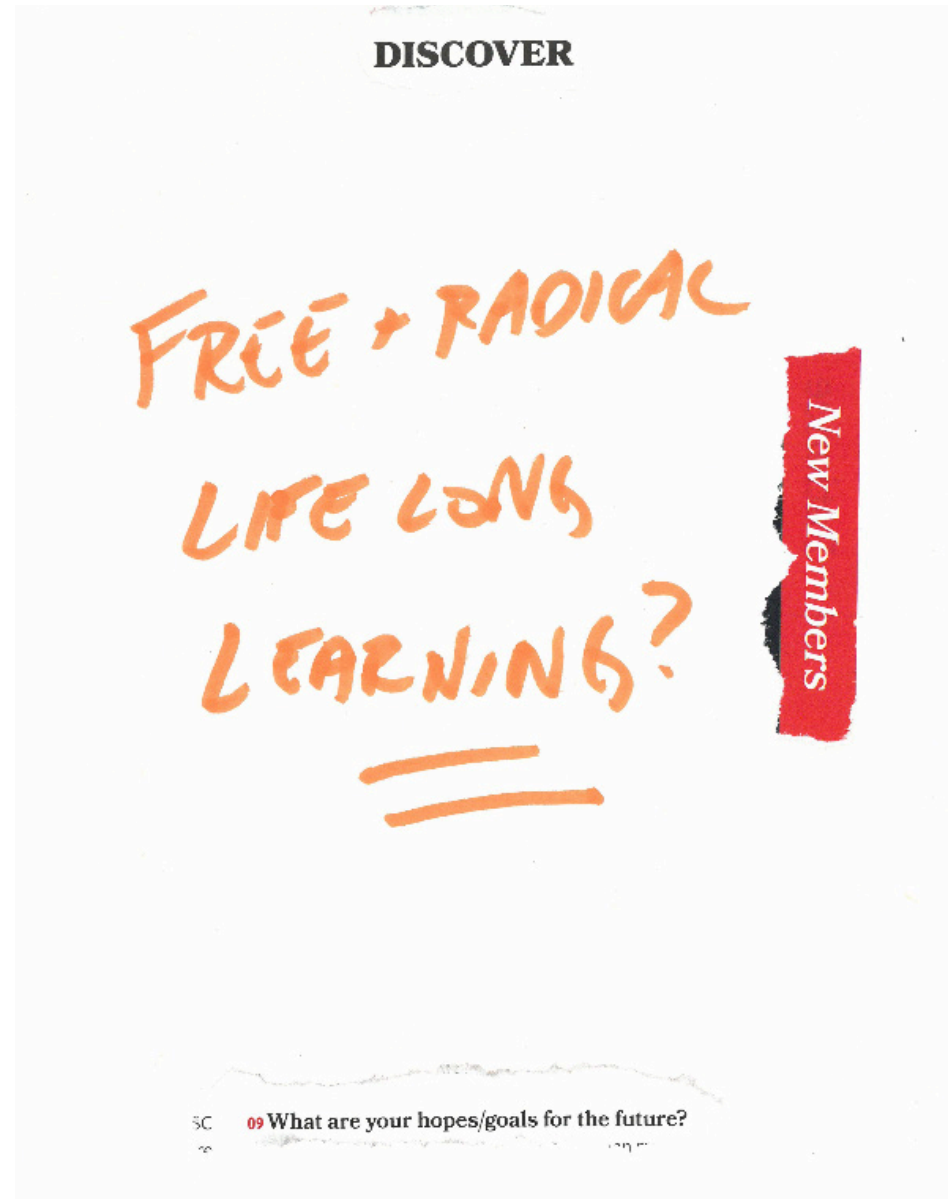
and everyone's afraid of cops. Maybe my brain didn't want to believe in so much indifference and not having even one person feel sorry for me enough to help. Soul crushing.

Second time, four/five-ish years later I was in county jail again and (same one) since I was in there longer I seen all the things that needed to be done. New paint jobs on doors and chuck holes, etc. I was still a clean freak and constantly asked for stuff to clean with, this time I think I was able to obtain more than last time. Also, since I was in longer I had more experiences. We had a small dayroom, conversations could always be overheard. We had to close the call door to cover ourselves and not be seen when we should have had a curtain or separate divider for our shower. The door to the call next to the shower just barely blocked the wide open shower. Wide open for the male inmate trustee to walk by and look through the doors windows or the male deputies and indeed they did. I caught one guard doing it and guess who it was?! The very same one I flipped off as he drove down the street. Getting himself a peepshow. All men are perverts, given the chance. He claimed to be a Christian, was in the rock band with his last name, a Christian rock band. He was married (twice). We had a guard that also was not just mean spirited, but a nazi and the girls and I prayed one night to God that he would expose them all for the corrupt and evil people they were and within a week that guard got caught with a stash of illegal guns and stolen guns. I honestly can't remember what happened after that but he was gone. The prosecutor never got re-elected either and the sheriff's daughter got caught stealing inmates' medication. I was out of control sometimes and acted like a wild child, but not receiving any mental therapy of course I acted out. I had been through hell, was in on a first degree murder charge, and the mentally imbalanced and slow girl they brought in from another county was wild and influenced me. The reporter wrote up an article titled "Girls Gone Wild" for the newspaper, I was everybody's lawyer and getting in addresses like the Judicial Inquiry board and reporting the judge, telling others what they should do. The deputies came in and one final day and confiscated all my anti-government papers and such. Probably illegal also, but my worthless public defender (a social security attorney by trade) did nothing. There were good days too though. We got McDonalds, Pizza Hut often and people could buy us food as long as whole jail got some like veggie trays, we got cigarettes from the guards. And one female guard even brought in her telescope so we could see the planet at the time. Small town, doesn't always mean small minds, sometimes in can be better than a county jail in a big town or city like Chicago.

Arrested justice is the cessation or stopping (arrest_ of what is right (just) as a result of violence, both in the prison state at the macro level, and in the prevalence of gender-based violence at the micro level.

Arrested justice is the cessation (arrest) of what is right (just) as a result of the violence in the prison state, and in the prevalence of gender-based violence. Its effect is felt by all women, but especially by black and brown women.

- Angie Varriale



Sight Through My Eyes Written *by Elbonie Burnside*

There are many experiences that have shaped me as a person and my view of the world. I'm not ashamed to express these experiences began at a very young age--too young for me to have wrapped my limited mental capacity around--but it's true.

I've dealt with the loss of a parent; drug addiction; molestation--not knowing whether the invasion of privacy was frowned upon or not-- eventually led me down a path of mixed emotions towards my molester; gang affiliations; abusing drugs on my own; robbery; witnessing murder-- having eventually murdered someone has all shaped me--molded me like clay into the person I am today.

This has all been a path of destruction to say the least and simultaneously it all has led to me incarceration. IDOC subconsciously was the destination and had I known my destructive path would have landed me in Dwight's penitentiary because there was no alternative to the prison system, maybe I would have taken track and field more seriously. I wouldn't have those life experiences to fall back on and just maybe my perspective of the world would have been a little different--I don't know--maybe. I would be navigating the world clueless to the disparities and disdain--stages I faced growing up as a young black girl.

Unaware of my exposure to poverty stricken communities was just another act of violence inflicted on me at a young age. Was just another layer of harm that causes a downward spiral. I want to say my experiences have created an extra layer of skin; a tough layer of skin that is rigid with scales and tough to pierce.

Prison has hardened my heart. It is difficult to display an ounce of humanity. Especially towards those who oppress me. It is difficult to see the good in a bad situation; a bad situation such as prison is blinding. I guess you could say I would have never gotten the opportunity to become an undergraduate at Northwestern University but I counter that and ask: how could I know that for certain?

If prison was the only option as a juvenile who knows what opportunities would have come my way if there was a different recourse. Where are the recourses? In a society where punitive punishment is the only option to produce accountability, our future/children are doomed.

I was in the only women's cell there is and there are plenty of times when it's empty and the trustee could have went in and cleaned it. I hate laziness. I guess I've always been a rebel and that was my first taste of a rebel's punishment. My friend bailed me out for \$500.00 about a week later, and I dropped off my stuff at my house on the backporch and went with my male friend to talk about what happened. All he wanted was sex and started in on me and at least I was able to say no and he actually accepted it, I wasn't raped. I didn't know him exceptionally well, although I liked him and he hung out with my then friends. He had really tried though to get me. I made it home a few hours later it was turning daylight, all I had wanted to do was get home. About 6 months later his mommy called me trying to demand that \$500.00 back, saying I owed him. I said no, I don't. Bye. and hung up on her. No strings attached and he never said I had to. After wrestling his ass and getting out of having to sex him, no way I was gonna turn around and pay him. I had never even asked him to bail me out, and he had just showed up out of the blue around midnight or after, probably horny as a billy goat as the saying goes and that's why it was a late last minute thing. I remember going around trying to find a lawyer and somehow one lawyer, the next town over knew I had flipped off a cop that had drove down my stress.

Yes, indeed I had. The officer was the second little small town officer and he was crooked too but not as bad as the one we reported. There was only 2 cops and the chief, that's how small the all white town is. How word travels that fast, I don't know because I met with that attorney within a week or two after that. I don't remember if I called and made an appointment or if I looked him up and went down there. If I made an appointment he might have called our town cops to inquire about me or something, but as a professional why would he feel the need to do that and is it even legal? Why would he not give me the benefit of the doubt first and meet with me first? Because I was a female, he was a white male and of course he was white, I don't deserve service and protection. He could not have known I was mixed race over the phone. I know a couple years back I had the thought run through my mind about the possibility of the cops having my phone tapped. Knowing who I was making appointments with, they could have called ahead of time to "warn" all attorneys about me. I never could find one that didn't want money up front and that's why I got stuck with that public defender. I hadn't realized that I was going through exactly what chapter 1 describes. No protections, no help from members of the community that could've have, government officials that should have shown me

Benefit of the doubt and help. I was too ignorant of the facts to have what I thought was bad luck and racial indifference or hatred outright. I knew but yet I didn't know, suspicion. Disbelief. No where to go, no help to be obtained. My white friends talked as if it was all because I'm poor

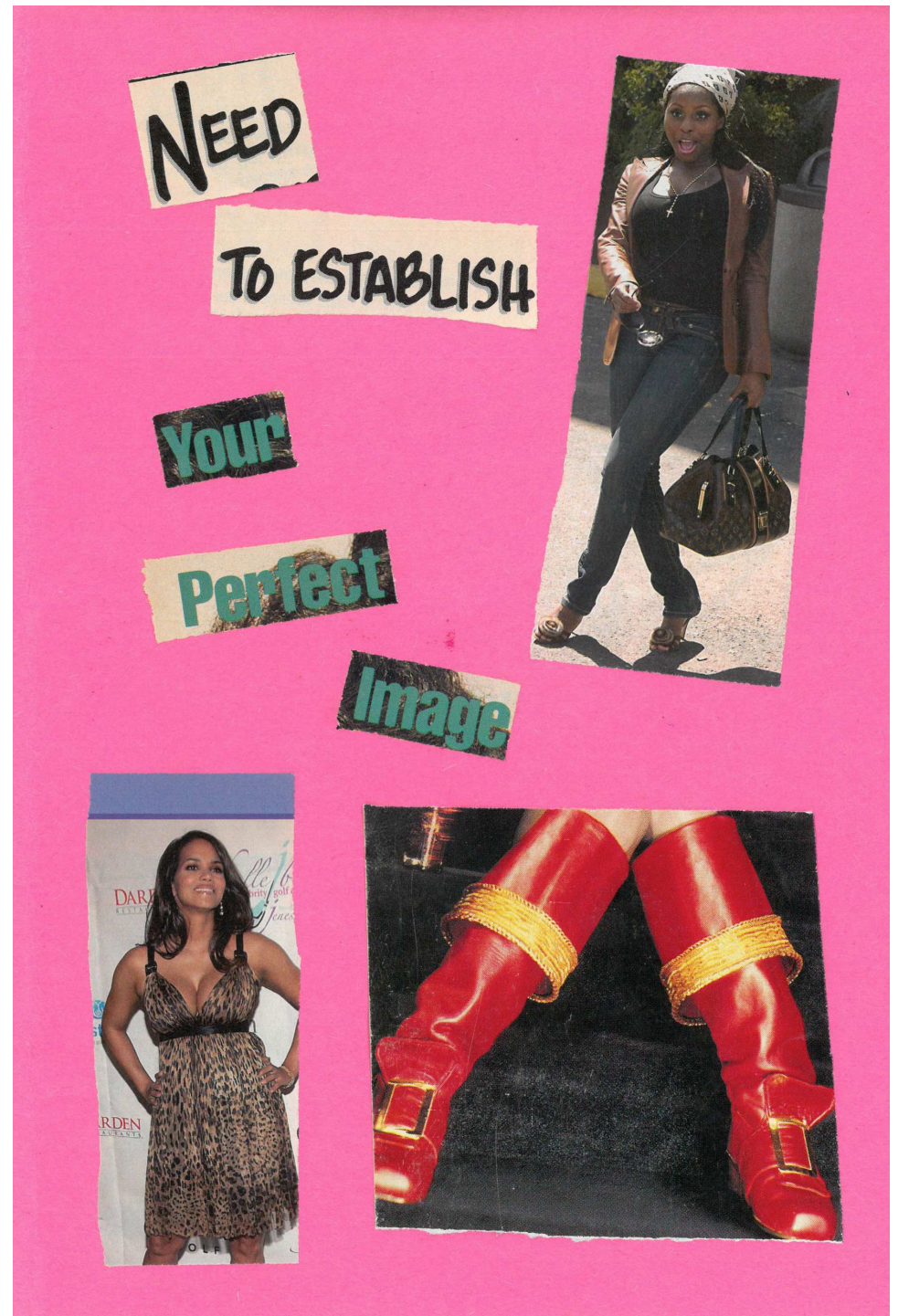
Journal Prompt

by Connie Marie

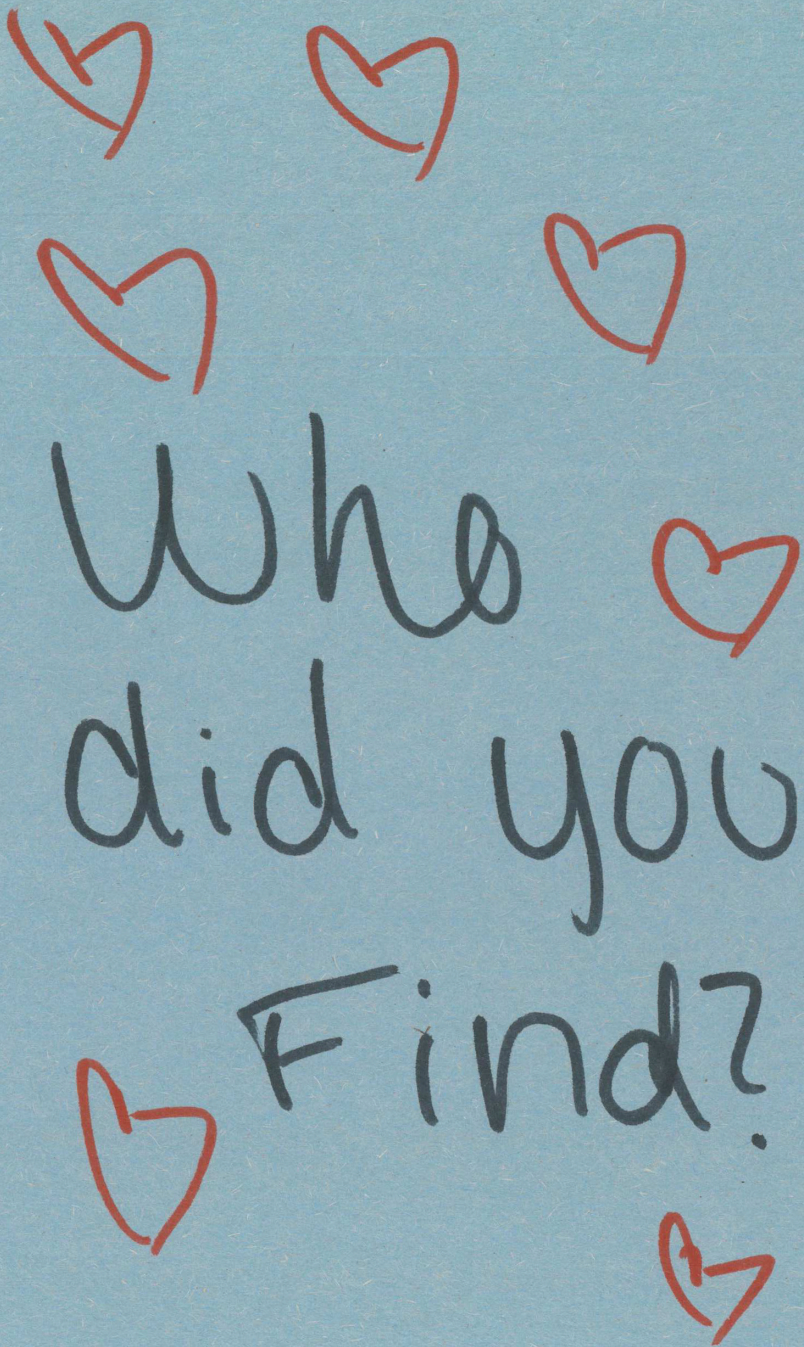
Women in Prison Zine- Did not get to read yet, but how is it with you (me) I can write about

I will start with county jail the very first time I ever went, around 2003, after my friends and I reported a bad cop in our small rural town by hanging up 3-4 signs with tape, informing the town about his nefarious activities out in the woods with underage girls. This was with the bar being open at 8:00 pm still, even though it was dark, so we were seen. I found out years later the local cops tried to say they had my fingerprints already on file somehow and they compared it to the tape on the flyers that had my fingerprints on it. (I was the ring leader. I was the oldest. And I did most of the "work". Tearing off the tape and hanging up 2 of the signs. That's why my saliva and fingerprints were on the tape live + learn my friends, so called yellow belly asshole who turned on me later on, hid behind their white privilege, I was the only one arrested and put in county jail. I had a white female public pretender, who was hostile to me from the start, and never had any intentions of representing me. To make this part of the story a little shorter, after the court authorities realized I wasn't going to give in my attorney got her notebook out and started to ask who my witnesses were and the states attorney Mr. Rietz said let me talk to Ms. Vantlin alone, in the back hallway he tried to intimidate me at first and I stood right up to him and after reading what I could plea to, then I told him "You remove that right now, where I was the one to stop harassing/stalking the cop, and he was the one that was stalking/harassing me with over 20 witnesses!), or I'm not signing anything. That's an insult to me, I'm not stalking or harassing him, he's doing it to me! That state's attorney marked it out immediately! I plead guilty, then to buy myself more time, and turned around and appealed it! Never heard a word back at all from the court, I didn't even know it had been marked as being under appeal until 20 years later as I re-read and went through my court papers for my last attorney just two years ago!! Somehow that's illegal. I'm sure that the court never got a hold of me. By the way, quick not, this cop's wife divorced him within four years over his affairs with young girls, after all the whole damn town knew about it!

Now, onto the county jail part. It was dark dark, with shit smeared everywhere on the walls and bed. I immediately asked for cleaning mop and stuff. I can't even recall what I got. But I remember cleaning it up as much as I could. I was shocked that a government county jail where the good guys were supposed to be was allowed to be kept that filthy. I was immediately even more disappointed, jaded and losing all respect for authority.



Who did you
Find?



What do you want your words to do?
Open minds to think of the other side
Effect people's energies + emotions
To want to put efforts into actions.

Hi.....

Where do I want my words to go?
Broadcasting, TV, social media
In person schools, colleges + senior establishments.
Arrested justice means to me
People who take advantage of their authority and change/
make their own rules. And may revictimize. Also, organizations
established to help or bring attention to domestic violence or
other causes relatable to injustice don't get on the band wagon
(asleep at the wheel), because they don't stay current on events
or do a "watchdog."
To me, Arrested Justice means that there is no justice. Justice is
restrained for individuals who do not fit in or belong to a certain
norm, race or class. Justice is arrested to women of any race or
creed because our power is limited and unwanted.

- Jennifer Vojinovic