

FREE : SURVIVORS

SURVIVED & PUNISHED NY



VOLUME 1
ISSUE 4 | 2020



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FREE : SURVIVORS

A PRINT NEWSLETTER PROJECT OF SURVIVED & PUNISHED NYC

VISION & PURPOSE

The **Free : Survivors** newsletter is a project of Survived & Punished NY, which exists to end the criminalization of survivors of domestic and sexual violence, and to free those locked up in prisons, jails, immigration detention centers, psychiatric facilities, and in their own homes. We focus on criminalized survivors in New York City and State, but know that our struggles here are intimately connected to those around the country, and beyond.

We offer this selection of the *Analysis and Vision Statement* of Survived & Punished as a framework to understand why a print publication, comprised of inside and outside voices, stories, words, art and resistance is so necessary.

We believe that policing, immigration enforcement, and the prison industrial complex (including psychiatric lock-ups) are violent institutions that primarily target poor communities of color. They are fundamentally racist, anti-family, anti-trans/queer, anti-woman, anti-Black, anti-Native, anti-poor, and anti-immigrant. It is in this context that self-defense and other survival actions are criminalized.

When survivors are only supported when seen as “victims of crime,” survivors who are already criminalized are not recognized as people worthy of support. Survivors are criminalized for being Black, undocumented, poor, transgender, queer, disabled, women or girls of color, in the sex industry, or for having a past “criminal record.” The institutionalization of this “good victim/criminal” dichotomy leaves a huge portion of survivors, overwhelmingly Black women, unsupported and unaccounted for by the anti-violence movement.

We focus on survivors because we want to highlight the specific pipeline between surviving sexual or domestic violence and being arrested, locked up, and/or deported. We focus on women, trans folks, and gender non-conforming folks because they - we - are the main targets of gender violence, and of criminalization of survival actions.

Our editorial collective seeks to work in the tradition of past newsletters that have spoken across the walls, especially feminist publications, like *No More Cages* and *The Fire Inside*, and other journals, like *The*

Abolitionist, that call for a total end to incarceration—a prison-free world. Our aims for this newsletter are seven-fold, to enhance: **expression, struggle, community, communication, strategy, intervention and history.**

When we say **expression**:

This newsletter will create an outlet for survivors to express themselves while surviving the systems of violence and incarceration! Our comrades who are inside putting writing and art into circulation (inside and out) exists as a powerful form of resistance in and of itself! This publication will be art and information driven.

When we say **struggle**:

Our newsletter will help folks combat the effects of the interlocking oppressions experienced due to incarceration and criminalization, even while on the inside. Being able to feel connected to the broader fight for freedom, release and the decriminalization of communities is one of our essential aims.

When we say **community**:

A newsletter will help to build community among survivors as a whole, serving as a place to correspond, connect and grow with other contributors and readers. It will create a platform in which all involved will feel connected and supported by the creative expression used to combat our shared struggle, no matter where folks are physically located—inside/outside, NY or elsewhere—or what their communicatory limitations are.

When we say **communication**:

First and foremost we want to amplify stories and methods of connection. We seek to bridge the contact gaps between survivors inside, survivors outside, and their advocates and allies. We aim to connect incarcerated survivors with each other, as the prison mail protocols do their worst to keep folks from corresponding. And furthermore, we will endeavor to connect incarcerated survivors with supporters outside to build an inside/outside dialogue. We will endeavor to think creatively, to imagine new ways to convey our thoughts and whenever possible, employ visuals, construct interconnected webs, and provide translation services.

When we say **strategy**:

We want to gain perspective on each other's work and experiences as we work both inside and outside for survivors' freedom. This newsletter will be a platform to support incarcerated survivors being part of the organizing work across the walls. We know there are strategic insights to be gathered from survivors inside and outside. This newsletter will be putting together experiences of violence, of criminalization, or incarceration that can be very different—which we will need to effectively free survivors, both through individual support campaigns and mass-release campaigns.

When we say **intervention**:

This newsletter can function as a piece of propaganda that can intervene in existing prison reform or abolitionist spaces, combat the absence of the voices and stories of the survivors we are working alongside.

Often trans folx, cis women, femmes, and gender non-conforming people are left out of political analysis, resistance narratives and framework building—this erasure and exclusion is unacceptable and our collective intervention will be deliberate.

When we say **history**:

This newsletter will serve as an archive of organizing inside and out, of support across the walls for incarcerated survivors, of the creative expression of survivors. We see ourselves within a legacy of the freedom work and as such, we want to honor those who've been doing the organizing, theorizing and direct action that we've learned so much from.

The editorial collective of **Free : Survivors** wish to reiterate this urgent demand and call from Survived and Punished's *Analysis and Vision Statement*:

We demand the immediate release of survivors of domestic and sexual violence and other forms of gender violence who are imprisoned for survival actions, including self-defense, "failure to protect", migration, removing children from abusive people, being coerced into acting as an "accomplice," and securing resources needed to live. Furthermore, we demand that these same survivors are swiftly reunited with their families.

Join us, write with us, make art with us, circulate and support this print project toward the necessary work of survivors getting free.

In Community,

The **Free : Survivors** Newsletter Editorial Collective of **Survived & Punished NY**

Free:Survivors Issue #4 Editorial Collective Contributors

Red S., zoë, mendé, William, lae sway

COMRADE READERS!

We have been so humbled to hear from so many of you since we launched our *Free : Survivors* newsletter. Our first three issues reached nearly 250 criminalized survivors incarcerated across the country. Hundreds more copies have been purchased by comrades on the outside. We aim to continue printing poems, articles, artwork and news by and about criminalized survivors and their supporters.

This fourth issue intends to build upon the past issues, offering news and current events, updates from actions that Survived & Punished NY and our affiliates have been undertaking, art from people like yourselves who envision a better, freer, world, articles, a call for book reviews, and more! You'll notice that this issue is largely a tribute issue, created in remembrance of our recently passed comrade, Darlene Benson-Seay, may she rest in power.

Inside you will find moving poems by criminalized survivors Annette Farrell, Ashleigh Wade, Crystal Whaley, Ivié De Molina, Kelly Marshall, Tammara McCoy, Ms. Smalls, Lovette Rosshill, and Coco, book reviews by Jessica Paradisio, and Annie, original movement art from Kah Yangni, JB Brager, Jett George + more!

Within these pages you're also going to find ways to stay in touch with us. If you're a criminalized survivor of gender based violence, we want to hear from you! We want your thoughts, words, and art to be in our coming issues. Take a look at our Vision & Purpose Statement and tell us how we can work with you to support expression, struggle, community, communication, strategy, intervention and history. Or just write to us and let us know how we can have your back when you need us!

We are very thankful to Aari Barnes for designing the cover and to Gwen Cullen for covering the layout and comp of this issue.

In Love & Struggle,
The *Free : Survivors* Editorial Collective
Survived & Punished NY

S&P NATIONAL UPDATES

KY PETERSON IS FREE!!!

In 2011, Ky Peterson was sentenced to 15 years in prison for defending himself against a sexual assault. In 2015, Pinky Shear, Ky's friend, and advocate brought Ky's case to the attention of Survived and Punished. We are happy to announce that after 9 years, 20,000+ petition signatures, & 5,000+ letters to the governor, Ky Peterson is home!

In 2017, Ky and Pinky founded Freedom Overground, a non-profit that supports incarcerated TLGBQ+ people during and after incarceration. Shortly after being released, Ky officially stepped into his position as Co-Founder and Executive Director of Freedom Overground (a position he could not legally hold while incarcerated). Freedom Overground has secured hormone replacement therapy & gender-affirming medical care & safe housing for dozens of incarcerated TGNC people.



Ky is happy to be home with his family and is looking forward to BBQs and going fishing every chance he gets. He's enthusiastically diving into new technology and plans to continue his work supporting the TLGBQ+ incarcerated community.

The first picture of Ky and Pinky together after 6 years of friendship, hard work, and advocacy.

CHRYSTUL KIZER IS FREE!

From our comrades, the Chicago Community Bond Fund:

Chrystul Kizer is a Black 19-year-old survivor of sexual violence currently facing criminal prosecution for actions taken in self-defense. For

almost two years, Chrystul has been incarcerated in the Kenosha County Jail while awaiting trial and presumed innocent. In February 2020, Chrystul's \$1 million dollar bond was reduced to \$400,000—still an unimaginable sum. Today, the Free Chrystul Kizer Defense Committee, Chicago Community Bond Fund, Milwaukee Freedom Fund, and Survived and Punished paid Chrystul's \$400,000 bond so that she can continue fighting her case from outside of a cage and with the support of her community. When Chrystul's case ends, the bond money will be used to establish a national bail fund for criminalized survivors of domestic and sexual violence under the direction of Survived & Punished and housed at the National Bail Fund Network.

In June 2018, Chrystul was charged in the death of Randall P. Volar, III, a white man from Kenosha, WI.



THIS GRAPHIC WAS DESIGNED BY LANIA SPROLES.

Prior to his death, Volar was known to authorities in Kenosha. In February 2018, he was arrested on charges including child sexual assault. Police discovered evidence that he was abusing multiple Black girls, including Chrystul, then age 17. While Chrystul has maintained that her actions that led to Volar's death were in self-defense and evidence demonstrates that Volar had trafficked her since she was 16-years-old, Kenosha County District Attorney Michael Graveley is pursuing charges that would incarcerate Chrystul for the rest of her life.

Far too often, survivors of violence—especially Black women and girls—are punished for defending themselves. Chrystul's case highlights the urgent need for the criminal legal system to stop prosecuting survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault. The police and government systems set up to protect Chrystul failed her. Instead of being given care and support from the beginning, she has been wrongfully incarcerated for nearly two years now for choosing to survive.

Since our founding, supporting criminalized survivors has been a priority for Chicago Community Bond. Since 2015, CCBF has paid \$346,500 in bond to free eight criminalized survivors of domestic and sexual violence in Chicago. Like many community bail funds around the country, CCBF has received an unprecedented outpouring of support following Black Lives Matter protests in response to the police murders of Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, and Tony McDade. Using those donations, CCBF has paid bond in six Illinois counties for everyone arrested on charges related to the uprisings (that we are aware of), and we will continue to do so as needed. For more information on the bonds already paid, see our updates from June 4th and June 16th. This support for Black people's liberation struggle has now also enabled CCBF to pay Chrystul's bond with plenty of money leftover for ongoing use in Cook County and Illinois.

We are elated to know Chrystul will no longer be locked in a cage simply for wanting to live. We are proud to stand with Chrystul and will continue fighting by her side to ensure she can put this tragic incident behind

her and begin to heal from trauma she has suffered at the hands of her abuser and the state that failed her. Chrystul should have been given support from the beginning instead of being caged and held for ransom by Kenosha County. No one should be incarcerated for surviving violence against them.

Our comrades, the California Coalition for Women Prisoners took action on July 31st (and continue to do so)!

The COVID-19 pandemic is growing at an alarming rate inside California women's prisons, and yet CDCR's protocols remain inconsistent and unsafe, failing to stop the spread. This, alongside overcrowding and staff's refusal to wear masks, could be a death sentence for at-risk incarcerated people, including those who are elderly, and medically-vulnerable. CDCR says they have the pandemic under control, yet they are willfully neglecting to prevent outbreaks and save lives. Join us in demanding Governor Newsom and prison officials take immediate action because #CDCRLies and more people will die.

Guards, wardens, and the entire prison industrial complex continues to profit; staff are not adequately tested or quarantined and resources, including cleaning products, are not distributed to limit the spread and mitigate the effects of COVID-19. Against this new layer of institutional violence, there are organized collective efforts from inside to make sure folks stay safe. This includes efforts to self-quarantine and circulate and share resources amongst themselves inside despite guard negligence and interference. Even when guards attempt to use the threat of COVID to inflict more pain and separation, or for control, folks inside find ways to care for one another.

CCWP Full Demands:

- 1** End transfers from other facilities, including private facilities like McFarland.
- 2** Stop housing people that have been potentially exposed in group "quarantine" with people that have tested positive, especially people on CPAP breathing machines. Release people back to General Population after they test negative for COVID-19.
- 3** Stop housing people with disciplinary write-ups with confirmed positive cases.
- 4** Treat quarantined people with dignity: Sanitize group "quarantine" units daily, allow weekly laundry, issue new and sufficient clothes and undergarments upon arrival in quarantine, and provide more time to access showers and phones.
- 5** Enforce staff mask use, issue replacement masks, and N95 masks to positive cases.
- 6** Communicate and uphold policies, procedures, and program schedules in writing so incarcerated people know what to expect.
- 7** Distribute medication on time and provide physical and mental health care to anyone in quarantine, on request.
- 8** Stop penalizing incarcerated people who refuse to risk exposure by working.
- 9** Shut down all non-essential jobs and RESPECT and reduce the number of incarcerated essential workers.
- 10** Allow prompt access to quarterly packages and purchased food to prevent spoilage.



Photo by Brooke Anderson | @movementphotographer



Photo by Brooke Anderson | @movementphotographer



Photo by Brooke Anderson | @movementphotographer

On July 27, 2020, a group of 14 undocumented organizers and immigration attorneys were arrested at California Governor Gavin Newsom's mansion while demanding that Governor Newsom use his power to grant mass clemency and to stop ICE transfers to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Currently and formerly incarcerated Survived and Punished CA members including Liyah Birru, Kanoa Harris, Tomiekia Johnson, and Brandy Scott spoke via recording and written testimony on conditions inside and the urgency for Governor Newsom to take action to save lives.

Outraged by the mounting death toll at San Quentin prison and rising infection numbers in state prisons and immigration detention centers, the California Liberation Collective demands that Governor Newsom immediately:

1. Use his power, including mass clemency and emergency release, to free people in state prisons.
2. Stop transfers from state and local custody to ICE and between California prisons.
3. Stop the expansion of immigration detention in California.
4. Hold the detention industry accountable.

For more info, visit bit.ly/YourActionSavesLives

PHOTOS BY BROOKE ANDERSON

LIYAH BIRRU IS FREE!!!

On May 18th LIYAH WAS GRANTED BOND!

Y'all, we can't believe it. Liyah, a Black immigrant survivor incarcerated for defending herself against violence, has a chance at freedom!

The judge referred to an "extensive marketing campaign" in his decision. Organizing works!!! We believe we will win!

Since her release, Liyah has been speaking out against conditions inside and advocating for Governor Newsom to stop prison to ICE transfers.

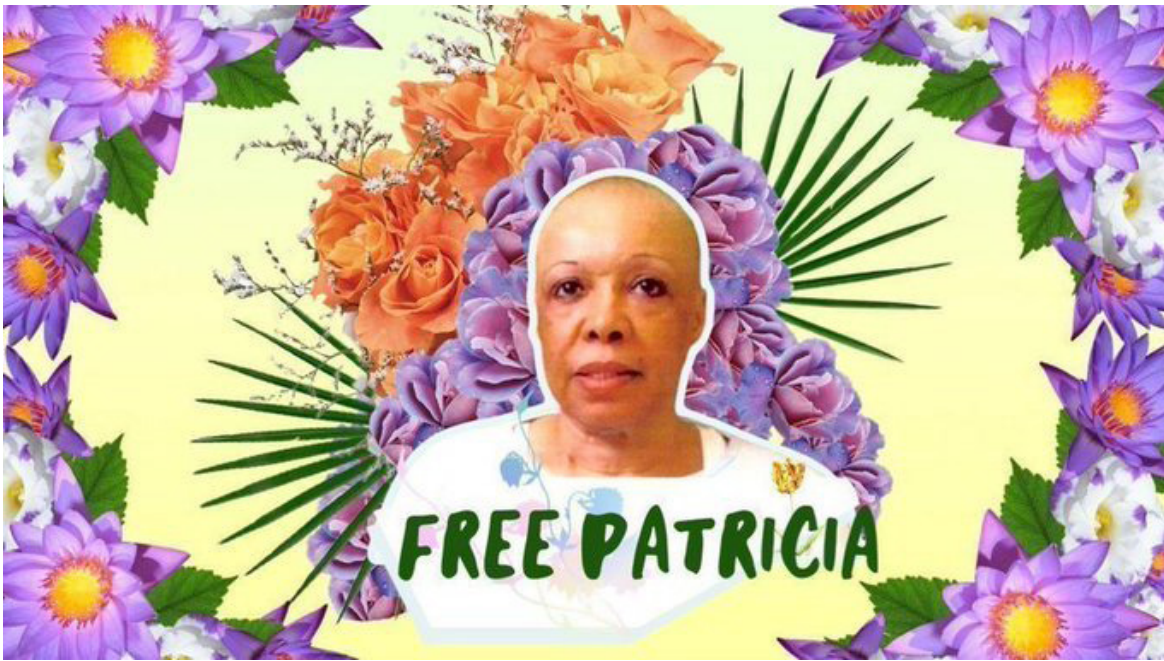


#FreeLiyah organizers, wearing masks and wearing *#FreeLiyah* t-shirts, host a protest outside of the ICE building, where Liyah's immigration bond hearing was taking place. One organizer holds a sign that reads, "End incarceration, deportation, and gender violence. *#FreeThemAll #SurvivedAndPunished*." Two other organizers hold their fists up with megaphones, one of whom is holding a pink "*#FreeLiyah*" sign.

PHOTO BY BROOKE ANDERSON.



Liyah, her aunt, and #FreeLiyah campaign organizers smile at the camera with balloons and flowers to celebrate her freedom.



ART CREDIT: @C_C_W_P

PATRICIA WRIGHT IS FREE!

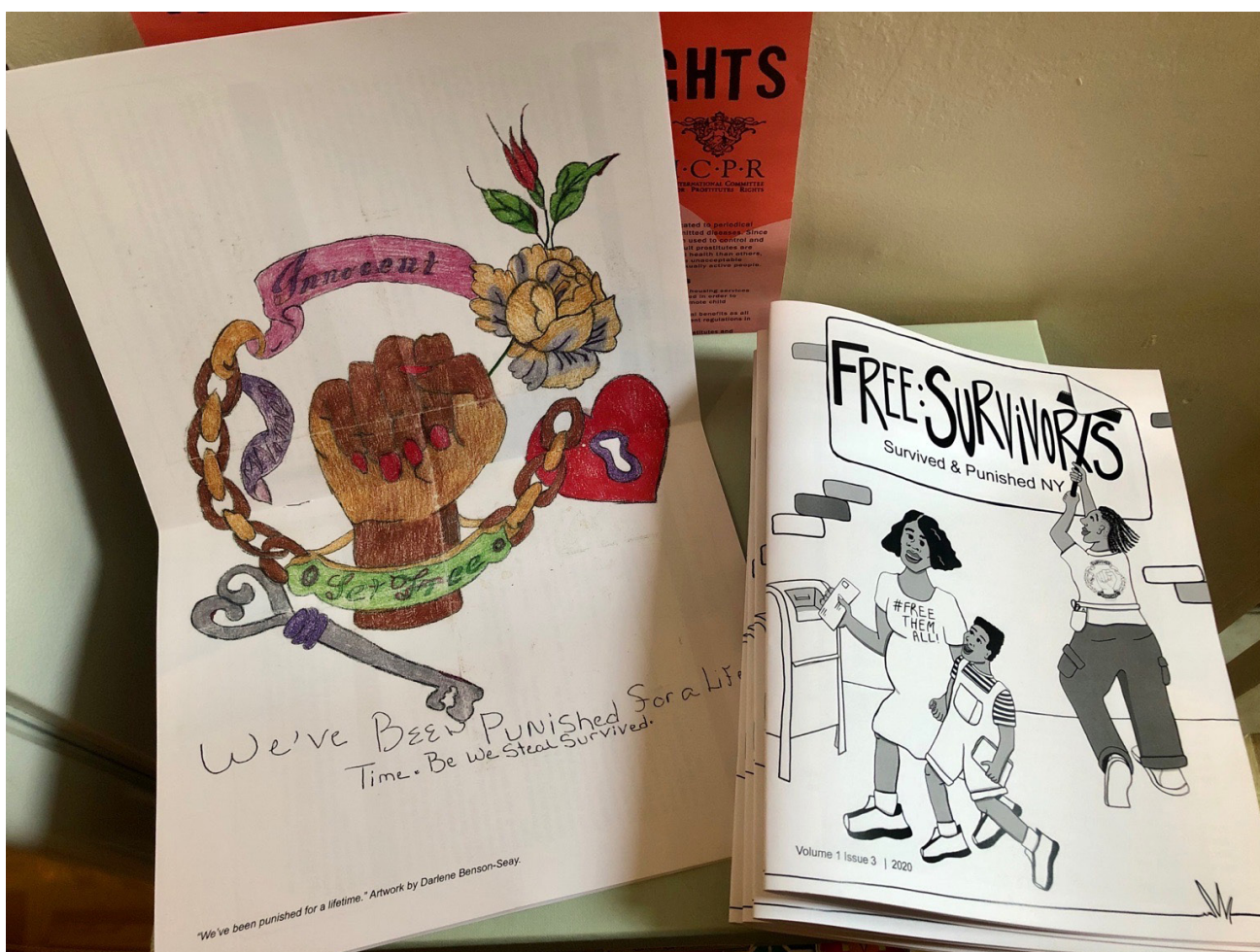
Patricia Wright is free! A million thanks to CCWP and everyone who joined to call for her freedom. Welcome home, Patricia. Onto the next! #FreeOurElders #FreeThemAll

S&P NY UPDATES

Inside/Outside Soap Brigade + S&P NY launched the Abolitionist Mutual Aid Fund providing thousands of dollars worth of hygiene products, like soap, to comrades inside in the form of care packages or monetary contributions to commissary books.

APRIL

On April 6th we held an online art-making even called, “Making Art for Abolition.” In this virtual event, we shared about the status of criminalized survivors in NYS prisons—in general and in this moment—and how people can support their/your freedom. We spoke at length about the Governor’s broad clemency powers and how he can free survivors through mass commutations in this moment of heightened risk and always. Then we transformed our demands into beautiful works of art that we used to put the pressure on Cuomo to act now via online actions.



Issue 3 of *Free:Survivors*, centerfold art by Ms.LuLu (L) and cover design by Jett Geroge (R). PHOTO BY RED.

On April 10th, we held a virtual candlelight vigil with phone banking actions throughout the day as part of a national Survived & Punished #FreeThemAll week of action!

We asked people to light a candle for a loved one or community member inside, share a photo, and make a call to demand their freedom.

We aimed to have at least 9,100 people participate, with one candle for every 10 people incarcerated across New York State.

On April 14th we launched and virtually debuted Issue 3 of Free:Survivors with Bluestockings Bookstore and Activist Center via online webinar to talk about the issue's content, art and share calls to action from comrades inside.

Throughout April, we heard from comrades inside NY city jails and prisons about the horrific conditions they/y'all were facing. We've learned that people incarcerated at Bedford Hills Correctional Facility were being denied food. In already extraordinarily inhumane conditions in the prison, where COVID-19 is known to be spreading faster than reported, NYS DOCCS was starving people, and by some accounts continues to do so. In response, we launched a call-in campaign directed at Gov. Cuomo, DOCCS Commissioners and Superintendents.

To support these efforts, our friends and comrades created numerous infographics featuring demands and actions! Here are a few created by our friend Deb Kim that highlight our #COVID19 Release demands!

SURVIVED & PUNISHED NY MASS RELEASE DEMANDS

Prisons, jails, and detention centers are sites of coercion, violence and death that create an ongoing public health crisis. A global pandemic only exacerbates this fact. This is not new, though this type of pandemic is being experienced for the first time by the broad public.

This crisis of incarceration has always been particularly acute for Black, brown, Indigenous, queer, trans, and disabled communities that the state has historically targeted and terrorized. We agree with the demands offered by several groups to grant immediate clemency and release to all people, beginning with those most vulnerable to Covid-19. Survived and Punished NY would like to also underscore the urgency of freeing criminalized survivors of violence (a status that could be extended to all those inside). It's important to note that trauma, which affects all incarcerated people, but especially those who were criminalized for survival, has detrimental physical health effects and causes immunocompromisation, which often leads to serious illness and the potential of death.

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WE ADD OUR VOICES AND EXPRESS OUR SUPPORT FOR THE FOLLOWING SPECIFIC DEMANDS:

#1

Release all people locked up in carceral facilities, including federal and state prisons, local jails, immigration detention centers, juvenile detention, those committed to psychiatric facilities against their will, starting with elderly people, people who are immunocompromised or have chronic health conditions, trans people, pregnant people. When we say "Free Them All" we mean precisely that.

#2

Expand funding for housing and non-coercive healing resources (e.g. physical health services, trauma-informed counseling, substance use support), so all people have immediate and stable housing options and access to holistic, restorative care upon release. We're thinking here, specifically of those survivors who cannot return home because of fear of violence and are interested in additional support to heal from the abuse they endured. This should also include the immediate erasure of the public housing ban that prevents formerly incarcerated people from accessing affordable public housing options, and the immediate improvement of all public housing to rectify its current deplorable conditions. Furthermore, any vacant apartments and hotel accommodations must be made available to house people released along with our houseless neighbors.

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CONDITIONS DEMANDS BASED ON OUR CONVERSATIONS WITH FOLKS INSIDE ABOUT WHAT THEY NEED

- 1 All incarcerated people should be allowed to protect themselves against possible covid-19 infection without punishment. This includes, but is not limited to: a) being able to cover their faces with masks, fabric, or their hands; b) consistent, self-determined opportunities to shower and wash hands with soap, reducing the risk of contracting the virus.
- 2 No one should be forced to work with civilians/people from the outside as long as the covid-19 epidemic is happening, i.e. DMV, etc. This must not be used as an excuse to shut down the commissary, package room, or any other facility that serves incarcerated people.
- 3 For the state to provide (at no cost) non-coercive testing, soap, CDC-recommended hand sanitizers, tissues, and hygiene items to all incarcerated people.
- 4 Incarcerated people must have accessible communication with loved ones. Keep all mail and communication lines open. a) All facility phones should be functional. b) All phone calls should be free. c) People should be provided with unlimited emails through JPAY and have expanded access to video conferencing. d) Paper mail must be delivered in a timely manner.

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CONDITIONS DEMANDS BASED ON OUR CONVERSATIONS WITH FOLKS INSIDE ABOUT WHAT THEY NEED

- 5 Keep commissary and package rooms open so people can get what they need. Items sold at commissary, and packages sent into prisons, are solely for those people incarcerated--our comrades inside have always pushed back against the confiscation, hoarding and outright theft of items at the hands of COs. Now, during this crisis it is imperative what is sent in for them, go immediately to them. Furthermore, the price gouging of commissary items must stop. To this end, any fines or fees associated with accessing commissary funds must be cancelled so all funds are accessible in their entirety. Any money earned or put on the books of an incarcerated person should be immediately accessible to spend at commissary. No garnishing of funds.
- 6 We demand transparency and open information sharing from the prison about what their current policies are regarding covid-19 and what they are doing for "treatment."
- 7 No punishment for folks who test positive- this includes the use of inhumane isolation tactics like solitary confinement.
- 8 Incarcerated people should be provided accurate medical info about COVID-19, including what symptoms are.

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Release demands
DEB KIM

MAY

In May we held a workshop and presentation on our recently published report, "Preserving Punishment Power".

"Preserving Punishment Power" is S&P NY's analysis of criminal punishment system reforms passed in New York in 2019. These abolitionist assessments are meant to serve as a durable resource for organizers considering progressive-seeming but carceral state-expanding legislation and policies that come about in their locales, both during the COVID19 pandemic and beyond.

We know that criminal justice reformers and elected officials will use this moment to add new draconian powers into their arsenal, as we already see in Governor Cuomo's expansion of pretrial detention. Those with internet access can visit bit.ly/AbolitionistFramework for the full report! For those without internet access, write to us and request a printed PDF!

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On May 8th we held an event with the Barnard Center for Research on Women called, **“Past as Prologue: Storytelling about Resistance to the Brutality of Incarceration”**

Our comrade, Mariame Kaba, was joined by formerly incarcerated organizers and leading thinkers about criminalization, Monica Cosby and Kathy Boudin, along with historians Toussaint Losier and Laura McTighe for a discussion of the current horrific conditions that incarcerated people are enduring under the COVID-19 pandemic and how they are resisting this violence. In addition, the conversation will focus on historical examples of prisoner resistance to the violent conditions of confinement.

From the event’s description: “For centuries incarcerated people and others have painted a grim and gruesome picture of conditions inside prisons and jails. There have been countless reports, testimonies, exposes, and essays addressing the brutality and violence that incarcerated people are subjected to daily. Often these terrible conditions have led to uprisings and rebellions by prisoners. Attica is among the most well-known, however it is far from the only example. The reality is that incarcerated people have always and continue to resist daily and everywhere.

Too often accounts of this brutality are met by the general public with indifference or tacit support. This is to all of our shame. We need to be in solidarity with incarcerated people who deserve freedom and at least to be treated with care while locked up.”

JUNE

We published + launched a Mutual Aid Toolkit on June 5th!

We offer this toolkit as a resource for people interested in contributing to Survived & Punished NY’s mutual aid commissary giving project. This toolkit begins with an introduction to who we are as Survived & Punished and the values that guide our work. It then discusses mutual aid and fundraising, including specific recommendations, tips, and steps for doing grassroots fundraising. We initially created this toolkit as a guide for people and communities who had reached out to us with an interest in fundraising for Survived & Punished NY’s commissary giving project specifically, but we also hope this guide can provide an abolitionist analysis to support the creation of transformative mutual aid projects across many types of communities and movements.

To reach out with questions, feedback or joy-sharing, email us at SPNYmutualaid@gmail.com

Issue 3 of Free:Survivors has been mailed out!

Let us know if you didn’t receive it and want a copy! Copies being mailed to our comrades inside are always available, without cost. Outside supporters and readers paying for issues, along with our fundraising efforts ensure this!

Survived and Punished NY
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Free Tracy McCarter!

Tracy McCarter is a Black woman, mother, grandmother, and criminalized survivor who has been held pre-trial on Rikers Island since early March and denied bail multiple times. Tracy's family, members of Survived and Punished NY, and Tracy herself have formed a team to fight for her freedom and support her as she goes through the callous and dehumanizing process of the criminal punishment system. While uplifting Tracy's case, the support team also seeks to raise awareness around the freedom struggles of all criminalized survivors. So far this has included a Twitter power hour, a virtual letter writing event, and a grassroots fundraising campaign (read more on that below).



Tracy with her children

On March 3rd, just as the coronavirus pandemic was beginning to spread across New York City and the United States, Tracy was assaulted by her estranged husband and fought back in self defense. She survived and is now charged with second degree murder for defending herself against violence. Tracy expresses that she should be home and able to fight her case from there. Also, as a registered nurse, she wants to be able to help save lives during the ongoing pandemic, as well as earn income that is essential to her and her family's economic stability in already tough times.

Due to COVID-19, Rikers Island, like facilities across the country, is offering even less to people than in pre-pandemic times, necessary things like access to the law library, access to social services, and visits with family and attorneys. For these reasons, it is imperative that Tracy is granted bail swiftly.

August 5th was Tracy's birthday, and her family just welcomed Tracy's first grandchild into the world on August 15th. To honor and celebrate this momentous month in her life and to continue fighting for her freedom, the support team has launched a grassroots fundraising campaign to raise \$75,000 for costs associated with her legal defense by the end of Tracy's birthday month.

Tracy McCarter's fight is important in this moment of a national uprising for Black liberation because it exposes the irrational and punitive nature of the U.S. criminal legal system, particularly for Black cis women, trans, and gender non-conforming people. It also shows the emptiness of elected officials' sentiments of gratitude for frontline workers during the ongoing health crisis, because the system they enact and uphold continues to criminalize these same Black workers. The support team rejects the idea of a 'per-

fect survivor' or exceptionalizing certain people's cases. This is why Tracy McCarter, and all incarcerated survivors, must be free. The fight to free Tracy McCarter is the fight to #FreeThemAll.

Support the fundraiser by sharing or donating at <http://bit.ly/tracyfund>
Follow the Tracy McCarter Support Team at #StandWithTracy

#JUSTICEJULY

We co-sponsored a book launch with Bluestockings Bookstore + Activist Center, Maya Schewar, Vikki Law and Ruth Wilson Gilmore on July 18th! The event was titled, "What Does Abolition Look Like? Ruth Wilson Gilmore Joins Authors of Prison by Any Other Name Maya Schenwar and Victoria Law"

In PRISON BY ANY OTHER NAME: The Harmful Consequences of Popular Reforms, journalists Maya Schenwar and Victoria Law expose the insidious reach of mainstream "alternatives" to incarceration that transform entire homes and communities into prisons. For their book launch, they'll be joined in conversation with Ruth Wilson Gilmore, co-founder of Critical Resistance and the California Moratorium Project, to talk about the harsh reality of relentless carceral expansion and grassroots organizing for non-reformist reforms and abolition.

If you're interested in reading and reviewing this book, write to us and let us know!

<div>Survived and Punished NY PO Box 182 New York, NY 10013</div> <div></div>

We also filmed and debuted a series of letter readings called "Voices from the Inside," which featured our outside comrades sharing words from our incarcerated comrades on conditions inside NY prisons during the #COVID19 pandemic. We also held an online event to share more in-depth stories and calls to action on July 21st. We need people to know that since the pandemic began, Gov. Cuomo has released only 3 people, despite his clemency powers to Free Them All!

Below are excerpts from several of our comrade's letters:

"Now there are two positive cases inside Bedford...It couldn't have been from inmates because it's been a while since the last positive case...So it's obviously one of y'all and now you want to be in our cells doing these cell searches, touching our stuff."

"We can't even shower when we come in from the yard...Some people have canes or problems with their needs, everybody can't stand on their feet and it's summertime, it's hot. We're forced to sit on the ground because there's no benches for us to sit on."

"Units which housed my peers who were ill with COVID have not been sterilized...They have a

trained inmate hazmat team whom haven't been utilized, yet they placed women on that unit for observation in quarantine."

"We were not allowed to have phone calls...For those of us whose family did call, they lied and told them that we were OK and that maybe we just didn't call home. We were not allowed commissary packages for essential things such as hygiene products."

We also held a virtual letter writing gathering on July 22nd!

#8ToAbolition hit the scene and we are here for it!

From 8toabolition.com: At its root, policing and prisons are systems designed to uphold oppression. One thousand people are killed by police every year, and Black people are murdered at three times the rate of white people. Up to fifty percent of people murdered by the police have disabilities. Up to 40% of police officers have perpetrated intimate partner violence, and sexual violence is the second most common form of police brutality, primarily targeting Black women and especially those who are sex workers and drug users. Many of these incidents of police violence are undocumented by studies and only uplifted through grassroots movements. Prisons, police, and prosecutors work closely together to sustain white supremacist, capitalist, ableist, and cisheteropatriarchal systems of extraction and death.

Black people who are women, trans, gender non-conforming, sex working, and queer are often criminalized for actions they take to survive gendered violence, as we have seen in the cases of Tracy McCarter, Alisha Walker, GiGi Thomas, Marissa Alexander, Bresha Meadows, Cyntoia Brown, and many others. We reject the notion of a "perfect survivor"; we do not believe anyone deserves to be caged, nor do we prescribe to the state's notions of "innocence" and culpability. We recognize that the system of policing is intertwined with the prison and military industrial complex, both here and abroad. In abolishing policing, we seek to abolish imperialist forms of police, such as militaries responsible for generations of violence against Black and brown people worldwide.

We believe in a world where there are zero police murders because there are zero police.

Abolition Can't Wait.

Many thanks to contributors: Mon Mohapatra (@cemicool), Leila Raven (@theleilaraven), Nnennaya Amuchie (@TheAfroLegalise), Reina Sultan(@SultanReina), K Agbebiyi (@sheabutterfemme), Sarah T. Hamid (@hamidtasnuva), Micah Herskind (@micahherskind), Derecka Purnell (@dereckapurnell), Eli Dru (@BlackTransFutures), Rachel Kuo (@rachelkuo)

We are a geographically dispersed, loose formation of abolitionists across the U.S. The group of authors includes people who are Black, Latinx, Asian, Arab, Muslim, white, trans, queer, migrant, disabled, sex working, caregiving, and working-class.

DARLENE TRIBUTE STATEMENT

Darlene, Ms. LuLu, as many affectionately called her, was and remains a revolutionary artist and poet who graced us with her words, drawings, and story. Many of us corresponded with Darlene and forged comradeships based on an appreciation of movement art, building trust, and responding to the needs of fellow friends + comrades inside Bedford Hills prison. The last centerfold of *Free:Survivors*, the center of Issue #3, was a drawing Darlene sent us. Vibrant pinks, reds, greens, and golds leap out from the line drawing of a Black power fist with red fingernails. The solidarity fist is set within an opened heart-lock chain, with banners reading, "Innocent," "Women," "Let Free." Underneath the drawing, the words, "We've been punished for a life time. But we steal survived." A silver key and golden peony-rose also frame the fist.

Darlene looked after many people, inside and out, with an intensity. She cared about what happened to people, she fought for herself and others daily.

I am still haunted by one of my last correspondences with Darlene. In it, she requests I share a public plea: "The corona virus has hit Bedford Hills Corrections. One of the unit of about 75 women are locked down being supposedly quarantined with no sanitizer/anit-bacterial/ just watered down bleach that is not real. We have already been exposed to it because everyone goes to the yard together/meds/chow and other places. Please contact people in higher places and let them know. The president, The governor, Albany and any one else you can think of. I have underlying serious illness so I can not afford to get this virus, it may kill me. Please tell people we need help..." S&P NY shared this alert and others from our comrades inside, organized call-in and email campaigns, fax jams, social media blasts and continued our mutual aid and support work. We will continue to do so.

The *Free:Survivors* Editorial Collective wants to hold space for all that our S&P NY family is feeling about her being taken from us by state violence and by COVID-19. I am angry, still, months on. We are sad, collectively distraught at another death behind the walls. We are also honored to have been in community and struggle with Ms. LuLu, her memory blessing us with courage and art. I personally feel all of these things, and have moved through various stages of grief to greater or lesser extents. I wish I could have mourned Darlene in person with my comrades. We created virtual spaces to grieve, I felt held by those spaces, and yet being unable to touch and share physical space for this specific loss...there aren't adequate words for that lack. I have brought Darlene's memory with me every time I've been able to take the streets. I will continue to speak her name, and reflect on her beautiful works of art.

-Red

To: My Loving Friend Darlene

This is about one of your favorite hobbies. "The Hand that God Dealt"

Darlene, I heard that that you, were playing cards with God, And he dealt you the best Hand that anyone could have ever dealt you.

God, Dealt you the big Joker, and the Little Joker; the deuce of Diamond and the deuce of Spades.

Those are the highest winning Cards to set you free from all the pain and suffering that you endured.

Now you can say Thank you God, for dealing me the winning Hand That Took Me Home, Because, Now My Spirit Is Free, Free, Free

Love, Ms Smalls

Lulu, Whew, this is unreal. Never thought that you'll be gone soon. I miss you so much. It's like yesterday I was cooking for you and playing cards with you. Now I am writing a 'goodbye' letter. SMH(shaking my head) You always knew how to make me laugh. I swear you one of the funniest person I have known. I am very grateful to have met you. Allah needed an angel and he chased you. Tears are flowing as I write and you know that I am not the crying type. Save a spot for me at the spades table. Until we meet again. I Love You Always And Forever.....

Coco

REST IN PO
DARLENE AKA





ART BY
REVEREND JOY POWELL

Free Nikki Addimando Update!

In February 2020, our friend and sister Nikki Addimando was denied protection under the Domestic Violence Survivors Justice Act and sentenced to life in prison for surviving her abuser. At sentencing, the trial judge Hon. Edward McLoughlin in Dutchess County NY stated he understood Nikki “reluctantly consented” to “intimate acts” (evidence showed she was raped with homemade objects, burned on her genitalia while pregnant, and had her abuse uploaded to Pornhub without her consent). The judge concluded that she is a “broken person.” Nikki is currently in Bedford Hills Correctional Facility in New York.

On July 31, 2020, Nikki’s pro-bono appellate team with Sullivan

& Cromwell LLP filed an appeal with the New York Supreme Court Appellate Division (Second Department). The appeal highlights five different points when Addimando’s rights were violated, and requests a new trial or, at the least, resentencing under the Domestic Violence Survivors Justice Act.

Learn more details at [WeStandWithNikki.com](https://westandwithnikki.com).



OPEN CALL: BOOK REVIEWS FROM THE INSIDE

Are you interested in reviewing books for Free : Survivors? Book reviews are a great way to discuss popular writing in the abolitionist movement, and also think about new organizing strategies.

Book reviews from people on the inside are especially important, because who can better critically analyze writing and media about the prison industrial complex than those who are resisting and surviving it every-day? We are looking for reviews that cover major themes from the books, takeaways, and anything else you find important and relevant!

We have access to a variety of books related to prisons, abolition, and the “justice” system including *All Our Trials* by Emily Thuma, *Invisible No More* by Andrea Ritchie, *Resistance Behind Bars: The Struggles of Incarcerated Women* by Victoria Law, and *Soledad Brother* by George Jackson.

If you are interested in writing a book review for Free : Survivors please fill out the attached survey in the newsletter. Feel free to request a book or write a review on a book that you have already read. We look forward to hearing from you!

BOOK REVIEWS

Review of *All Our Trials* by Emily Thuma

Jessica Paradiso

There is always “2” sides to the story & then there is the “TRUTH”!

So here is my side to this story.....

As I stand at my locker that stands I'd say about 3ft 5 inches, that sits right next to my bed with barely any room in between all in a cube thats 14ftlong & 8ft width (thats by my own feet walking so my determination may be a little off, sorry :)) thinking, “DAMN Shit hasn't changed much in almost “50” years within this place”, and by place I mean Prison. Yup, you read that right, your reading a story, ANOTHER piece from a Prisoner.

Well I am not just a Prisoner, I am a WOMAN, A daughter and a Mother, to 3 beautiful children. I am not just a DIN#, I do have a first, middle, & last name, I am someone in High Hopes that my family, my friends and the community where my crime was committed will be able to forgive me for my Actions and allow me to show what I now know I am WORTH.

I have gone from being an Immature abused mentally and physically woman to a woman who is able to THINK, SPEAK and ACT all on my OWN. They say in time one will learn from there actions and almost 4 years later I am so much more REMORSEFUL for my actions and part in my crime, but I can now VOW that I am Ready to live a more Honest, Productive life.

So I am not trying to loose focus on my Review of the book All Our Trials, but this book has ignited my mind, my feeling and my words to just flow. I am a Woman whom wants to SPEAK and Be Heard.

I'm SO TIRED of advocating for myself and being RESTRICTED from the benefits I advocated for the law that was Recently passed in 2019 I dont qualify for because my sentence does not meet the mark for 8years or more, except here's the CRAZY part my sentence is 7-15years, 3 consecutive sentences of 2-4 years combined to the 7-15 years and my conditional release date is 2025 10 years later because one's Parole Eligibility date is Not Ever Guarenteed, so I meet ALL other Qualifications, but I'm RESTRICTED because of my Sentence, CRAZY* (I'm Reffering to the Domestic Violence Law)

Someone PLEASE HELP ME, so after all I went Through for years, all the "STEPS" Corporation has done, along with Survived & Punished and ALL the time spent pressing the Governor to let me OUT of Here, and he passes this law and i am told no I dont qualify... :(Will there ever be any Real Justice For Women in the United States of America? With What I read & with what I believe I do not think so..... Sickening if you ask me, but who am I, just another statistic?

Being that Bedford Hills Correctional Facility was mentioned in this book, and since I am currently an Inmate serving a 7-15yr year Sentence here, I am going to refer to what I read and express and elaborate life within these gates, days, nights, weeks, months, & years most will not ever have to encounter. Except I am going to speak "MY TRUTH", let all whom read My Review get a more in depth insite on the life behind Bedfords Barb Wire in the year 2019 almost '2020.

Going on almost 5 years of Incarceration and 4 years here in Bedford Hills I can Honestly say I have had to learn and grow all on my own. I have had to learn and grow all on my own. I do not understand how New York State can claim Bedford Hills as a Correctional Facility, when even the Staff and Sexurity commit fraudulent acts each and everyday.

It goes as far back as '1974, possibly longer but in ALL OUR TRAILS, this was the year it began its story with. It began with including a topic I am very familiar with, it mentioned the word "Grievances". A Grievence is intended for an Inmate to write out a problem they are having within the facility, even can be against Security (OFFICERS, Sgt's, Luietenants, etc.). As far back as 1974 the women grieved the same things us Women Inmates still Griever today in 2019. As you can guess or imagine things have not really changed they have either been removed from the facility's or have gotten worse.

"The Incarcerated Women's grievances included involuntary and unpaid labor, overcrowding, an abysmal health care system, scant educational & vocational training opportunities, and a library nearly empty of books". pg 16. For myself, the Grieveneces I have written have consisted of new rules they tried to implement, against standing at 5:30AM so the officer can count us (its called Live Body Breathing Count, Corny Right?) but who really wants to get woken out of There sleep to someone (in the case an Officer) yelling, COUNT, FIVE MINUTES TILL COUNT, WAKE UP YOUR BUNY, YOUR NEIGHBORS, FIVE MINUTES UNTIL COUNT. Its is Horrible, I truly dispipe it. So I grieved it but got no where because not enough women grieved it and my one grievance cant STAND UP against The superintendents end decision and she ONLY got a few so it is still the LIVEBODYBREATHING Count, Yuck :(I have definitely been Grieving the Health Care System & the Provide I was placed with almost 4 years ago, but as with all or most of my Grievences I loose, no one really cares what I have to say, they tell me on my response that, "I am to receive minimal

health or response care as a NYS Inmate" what is that suppose to mean? Imagine being someone with "Puesdo Tumor" like myself and for almost 3 months I was untreated was treated for something else and the pressure in my body was 37 when I got to Westchester Medical Center & received my 1st Spinal Tap. I had to have 4 spinal Taps in 8 days, Crazy. I am still suffering from the ending of that nightmare. So if you have anything to do with the Medical Field or provide care to patient then you will know I received Horrible Care. The last Grievence I am still dealing with Presently is against a Male Officer whom is the 4 age of 25-30, who was completely unprofessional and inappropriate to me, So to fill you in on a little of the situation, since I got to Bedord this officer had always been a little fresh to me but I would pay it no mind. Until one day as I was walking back from the Messhall, this particular officer was the officer outside watching, and I approached him, he said for me to come over to him, i told him NO & kept walking, He then over used his authority power and said "it's a direct order come here", so I had no choice but to go & when I got to him & was face to face he said to me, "Let me ask you a Question", I said "What?", He says "Where are your ankles?" (like what the (bleep) does that mean? I felt immediately like he was calling me FAT, I did not like it nor think it was ok, AT ALL) I was even Crying. So before I walked away, I said, " Well where is your Neck? I was upset but Proud of myself for coming up with that in Return so Quickly, because I am usually not that fast. So still i fight this Grievance because she said he was not Harrassing was just doing his Job. Is she For real? Its always a CONSTANT fight to stand Up for yourself in this place. DOCCS does not go by the saying "What's Right is Right and whats wrong is wrong" At all. As The years go on here I feel These Officers begin to learn more of The Person I a, and to be honest if I wasn't Raised by parents whom had the Respect and Moral they had and still have I probably would not care but Since I was, I will fight and continue to fight for what is right.

As I continued to read this book I came across a section on page 29 where women many years ago would do what they referred to as "sit-ins". Women would stick together to protest rules or regulations Authority implemented. Which in return caused them to be moved to maximum security Men's Facilitys. That would NEVER happen today 2019/ Also "sit-ins" do not happen anymore either. Women do NOT stick together at all, maybe out of 900 inmates I've seen 100-200 stick together and Grieve something relating to the same topic. Others just like to fight or talk junk or Grieve dumb non-important things, like Make-Up, because they were denied it out of there package. I have noticed over these last 31/2 years here Alot of These Women like TORTURE and it is really sad. They don't want change or better for themselves. They settle for crap and continue to live in Misery because that is there normal, so that's all they know. Myself on the other hand, WRITES UP everything. I advocate for myself constantly. So I fall into the population that sticks together.

Further into the reading as I got to page 99, the part that stuck out to me was the newsletter women ordered, "No More Cages", it reminded it me of the Newsletter Survived & Punished sent out that 1 time, which had some really great positive information. Gave altot of us that hope we all look for and appreciate. As it was back then it is still remaining the same, Prison is made to "BREAK DOWN" one's feelings and thoughts so when many women are ready to give up, they dont because they have reassurance out there letting them know someone even if they dont know them or never met, someone out there cares. Not only do these "News Letters" give hope, the knowledge the women involved and whom read these Newsletters who are willing to pass on the information do and are able to bring hope to the next women.

Example: I, myself, had the Survived & Punished Newsletter, gave it to this woman I knew would be intersted from our conversations we had been having. After sometime and she had given the Newsletter back

to me asked me for it back because there was a new woman whom just got to Bedford and moved in next to her and after there conversation, she believed she may find Hope & Help from it. So it was like a Pay it Forward situation. Was kind of cool, made me feel good.

When I got to page 112, and found out that in "1978 male correction officers could not work Night Shifts in Housing Units, Staff Shower areas and limit there presence in Areas where they could gaze at Naked Women". Well this is Funny, because that didnt last too long, There is a Naked C.O working right now and its the 11pm-7am shift. They have a tiny little camera (which is suppose to be recording while on Rounds on Interactions/conversations with inmate but most times isnt) that allows them access to open curtains to women's curves if an Inmate does not answer (who may have Music in her ears) could see her naked. Crazy if you think about it. We inmates are constantly VIOLATED and NOONE, NOONE thinks anything of it. They are able to come in to the Bathroom & showers too At any point or at anytime ANYONE could make it to PRISON or someone they know or LOVE, so the ones who think any of the things Male Correction Officers are able to do or are Allowed to do, they think is okay because its Not Them. Its sick. They recently put CAMERA in the DORM areas, EVERYWHERE, and (as of now they are not Working) as ALL KNOW Cameras are NO longer made to just see one direction, they zoom in/out and can make it go around. Well WOMEN get dressed (are Naked) in these cubes, NOONE (not even Women C.O's) should be able to watch that at anytime. Women Inmates should be allowed that Privacy, that should never be taken. These CAMERAS need to Go. Its a VIOLATION of our RIGHTS and DOCC knows this, but as ALWAYS, Bedford Hills, is always ALLOWED to do WHATEVER they want. They make their OWN rules, don't follow any DOCCS Rules or Directics They implement FOM's and only go by them. But that will never change. Even if i get out and go speak on it, NOONE will care.

To end my Review, I came across on page 114 about the unnecessary medical procedures women were being forced to have. Well, here at Bedford Hills they still in 2019 diagnose Women Inmates Wrong constantly. I was one I could have a great MAL-PRATICE lawsuit if I had the right help. They diagnosed me with something in the urinary canal and put me under for surgery to be woken up & told it wasn't that. After I had been treated for this specific thing for months. Crazy. Then I later had surgery that caused another problem they left untreated/treated incorrectly for 3 months until they took my mother serious once she was able to get this placee my Medical Records from outside. This place gives women unnecessary hysteri-times and cures everything with Ibuprofens, even an upset stomach. It really is inhuman. But there allowed, I received a letter once from the Head of Medical in Albany, NY saying I was to only receive Minimal Health Care, what makes me any different han someone not in Prison. Its sick if you ask me. Makes me very mad.

This book showed me that alot has not changed. That most has only got worse. As always I am willing to answer any questions or speak on any topics if I am able to. I want to help as many who really care understand what it really is like here. I understand not all Prisons are the same & many are Worse but all should be the same & men & women deserve Help, while being punished & serving their time, get them to realize there remorsefulness and want to change on their OWN, not forced. I Hope one day that I can assist in making that happen. Thanks for allowing me this opportunity to assist.

Book review of *All Our Trials* by Emily Thuma

Annie Farrell

My Review On The Book "ALL OUR TRIALS" thuma is a outstanding writer to think of something so positive and truthful as well as something us women and sexism face today that is violence and punishment of defence in which we are the ones who face massive criticsism. This book has opened my eyes to a bigger a world in which the violence is still going on in women defence to save self yet alone punished for making the right choice being put down and locked away in prisons with no second chance of life. Thuma also taught me that the ones who face a sentence isn't alone their are people to speak on the good as we prisoners lose hope , then once we realize we aren't alone we push to fight back from the inside..... They to survive and be set me reading this book place me on top with hope , faith and love.....US Women should stick together and become free from hate crimes and violence against sexism

ART AND POETRY

Don't want to lose

Annette Farrell

Trees lose leaves
But when summer come
They'll win
I've lost hope
And it seems to never end
No matter the season
But I don't want to lose my children
That forces humanity to be lost
I Don't want to lose
But we live to Die
Cops are killing youth
Pull over, they shoot {POW}
No time served
I won't lose
But live to fight another day
When death reaches me
I will have a legacy that lives on
But I feel as if I'm already gone
So much pain inside
As my heart scream loud cries
I won't and can't lose
Fighting for my youth and new generation
Repeated in my head
Til the day God decide it's time
to take me away
I won't lose



A Honor for the Moment by Annie (me) "Symphony Lust"
Annie Mae Farrell

Free Them All
 JB BRAGER

For some February is Just an ordinary month
 For others they relive the lives that were lost
 This month we take time to honor those who fought
 For a great cause
 Martin Luther King had a dream that one day we be equal
 to a color some say divided you and me
 Harriet Tubman used her feet to free people from becoming
 a disgrace to the slave owners needs
 Malcolm X a man who used his words to bring people together
 His life taken by a man of the same color
 Obama came in and hit us with Obamacare which was a
 great thing but once out of office Obamacare went away
 and the name was changed
 So many people made the choice to spread change and make
 meaning we honor them with these words from a wise writer (me)

“For you took the chance to make a change with your mouth,
bodies and soul this February with many more to come we
honor you and many more who took the stand and paid a toll”
“Thank you” we shall continue to make more positive
changes in self and others to better our world we too shall
place our feet to the ground take the stand and make a change

Transcribed by Makoroba Sow

2020 Massacre

Annie Mae Farrell

Gazing out my window of a 4 wall cell
people face consume by mask for protection
A pandemic has reached (2020 Massacre)
Killing off more and more people each day
Yet Im lost in a world full of creature like people feeding off our lonely
They speak of social distance as if it seems easy
We've been subjected to stay locked in 22 hrs a day
Our freedom isn't a choice within this pandemic
Forced to complete a sentence given within this Judicial system
Where we are consider animals and criminals
But we are Human Beings who reached our faults
Suffocated in lonely and sadness
Darkness has placed us at the top of they list of humor
Creepy how not one spec of light can break through
Away from these shadow like creatures and devil advocates (police)
I cry for sins given, loneliness, sadness, and hurt
To these people they see comedy in our pain (PANDEMIC!!!)
Why can't I win him over & get away from something the government planned
To seek war on a country that benefits from all our assets
Who would of thought we'd face a 2020 Massacre

From the Ash Tree

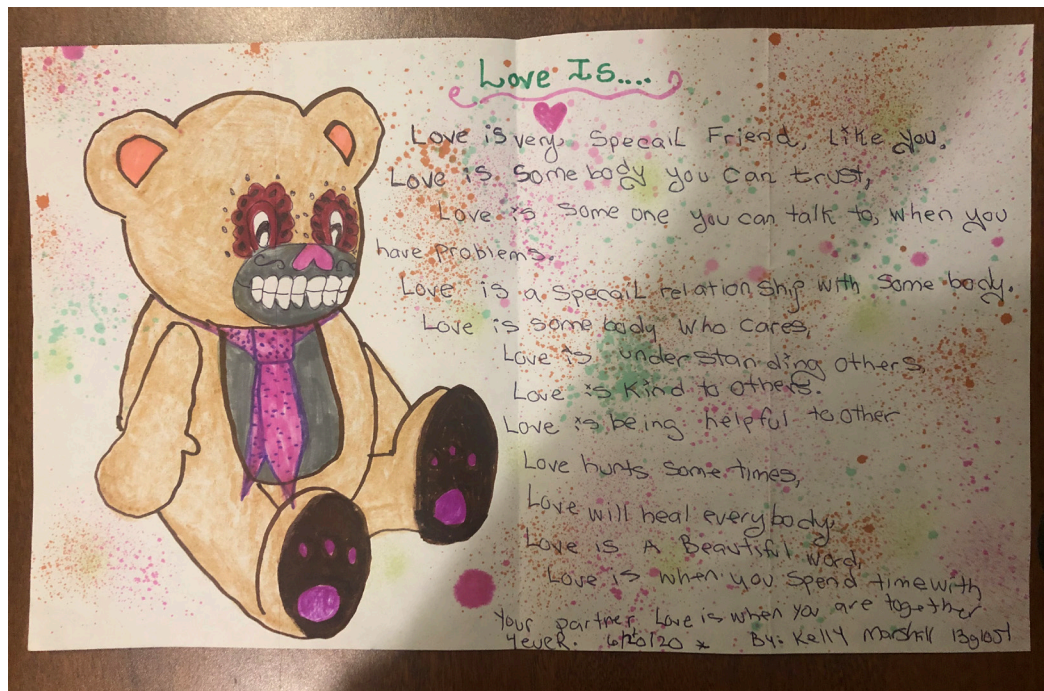
Ashleigh Wade (DIN: 17G1019)

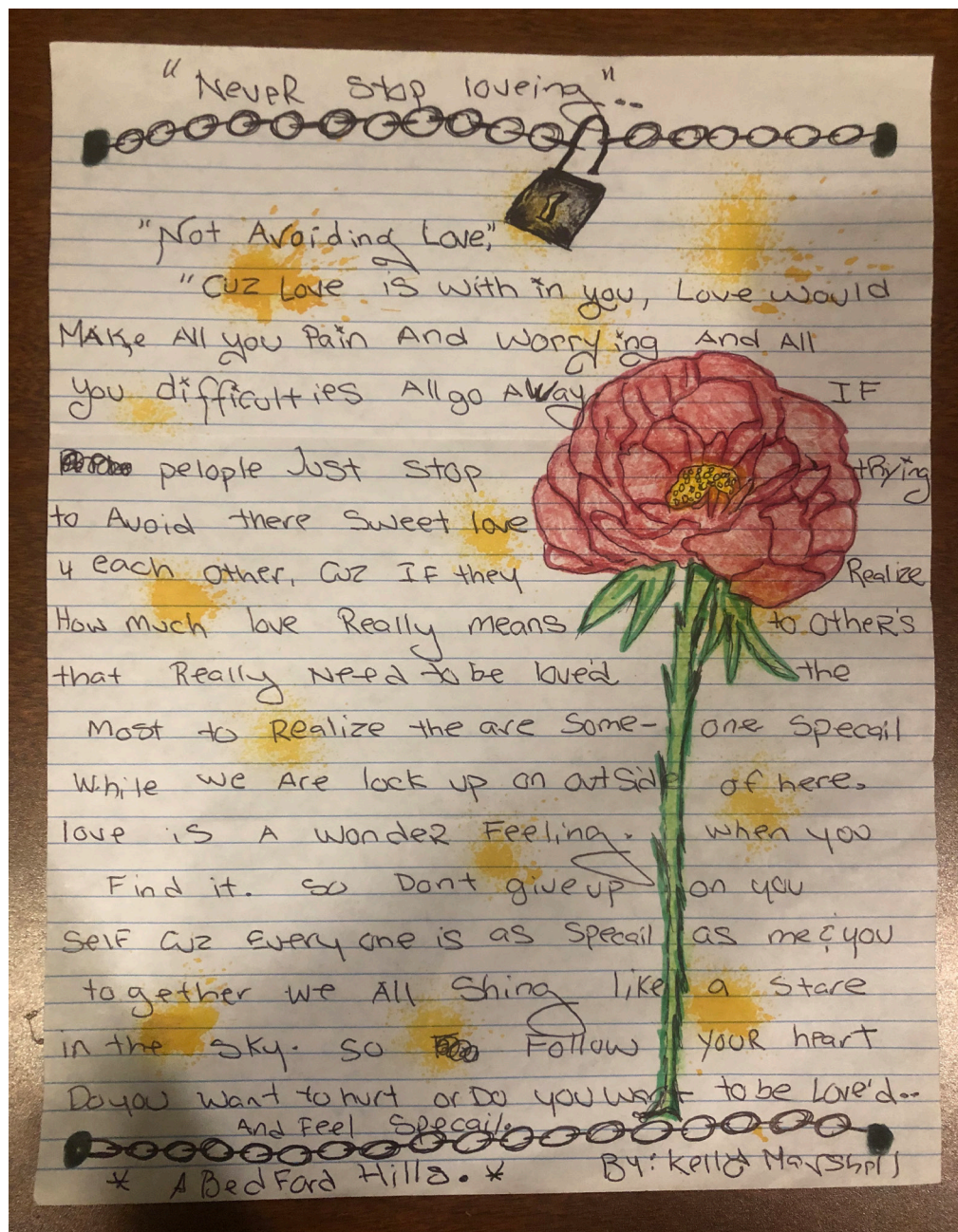
You are my father but you don't act like it
All that matters is your happy family, of which I am a misfit
You did not even value me enough to give me your last name
And when I would try to hug you, you would push me away as if I'm a shame
No one would ever know I am your 1st born and they came after me

Even though I am your spitting image I have no place on the family tree
There's a price to be paid and here is my token
Always bending but not easily broken
Ashleigh
You use to love me but then I matured
The love turned cold and I became abhorred
I wasn't the little girl you could touch so I was no longer your grandchild
Innocence ripped away, body torn and defiled
But now you don't even look in my direction
Papa do you remember at all or have you lost all recollection
There's a price to be paid and here is my token
Always bending but not easily broken
Ashleigh
You told me all about the birds and the bees
Which transitioned into you showing me what it means
But I am only 9 and you're a teenage girl
Is there any peace in this cold cruel world
Does the things you do to me make me gay
So confused, a fragile mind led astray
There's a price to be paid and here it my token
Always bending but not easily broken
Ashleigh
You are my mom, the giver of my life
My pride and joy, turned pain and strife
As a child you let me down
So many things I endured when you was not around
And why would you repeatedly stab me with a stiletto heel
Tortured by your hands now I no longer feel
I don't care anymore I am a cushion to be used
What do you have for me next world, I'm not amused
There's a price to be paid and here is my token
Always bending but not easily broken
Ashleigh
You ease the pain as you burn my chest
Bourbon, vodka, tequila, gin. What's best?
Screw it pour them all I bet I can take them
In the bottom of each bottle I find my safe haven
Emotionally numb but I still can remember
With each drink I find a memory erasing pleasure
There's a price to be paid and here is my token
Always bending but not easily broken
Ashleigh
You throw me on the ground and I taste your flavor
Bourbon, vodka, tequila, gin... All the tastes I use to savor

I try to fight you off but I feel the knife
 So at 16 I take it as I stare into the sky of the unusually dark night
 Good thing innocence was already ripped away
 To others this may hurt but for me it is just another day
 There's a price to paid and here is my token
 Always bending but not easily broken
 Ashleigh
 Of course you would be yet another to misuse me
 I believed you was different and loved me truly
 3 years of joy then you turned into a monster
 Who would have known all the damage you would foster
 Physically, verbally, financially downtrodden
 Using true love as a disguise but I'm numb so why bother
 There's a price to be paid and here is my token
 Always bending not easily broken
 Ashleigh
 My name is Ashleigh, can you guess what it means?
 Well I'll just tell you, it is "from the ash tree."
 Ash trees are one of the toughest wood sources known to man
 It can withstand unthinkable things yet still manage to stand
 Have you ever heard a name so perfectly fitting
 To take all of life's punches and still keep it hitting
 This is barely a glimpse of the things I have been through
 Homelessness, suicide attempts and incarceration by the age of 22
 There's a price to be paid and here is my token
 Always bending but not easily broken
 Ashleigh

ART BY
 KELLY MARSHALL





Poem by Tammara McCoy

Bedford Hills
 Bedford sits still
 Bedford done deals
 Bedford feels
 Bedford unreal
 Bedford appeals
 Bedford conceals
 Bedford steals
 Bedford kills

Poem by Crystal Whaley

Power and Money are Fruits of Life!
But Family and Friends are Roots of Life!
We can manage without Fruits!
But we can never stand without Roots!

Author Bio

My name is Crystal Whaley. I am from Brooklyn NY. I'm a middle age strong black woman under construction. I enjoy learning new things and helping people out. My favorite quote is: no weapon formed against me shall prosper.

"Bubble Ballyhoo"

Ivié De Molina

NBA Bubble Ballyhoo
Of A Strong Twenty - Two.
List To What Nobleness
Has To Sat To You - And Follow Suit:

Use Your Voice
Kneel Down
Get Up.

"If It's Not fair, Not Right, Not Just, Speak Up" (John Lewis; 1940-2020).

We Stand Stronger Together.
Become Leaders Of Change
To Make This World Better.
NBA Bubble Ballyhoo
Of A Strong Twenty - Two,
Forever.

Bubble Ballyhoo, hoop, hoop, hoop :-)

“What I Need”

Reverend Joy Powell

I don't need Police to kneel with me. I need you to get off of our necks. the Black, and Latino lives are devalued, and they refuse to protect, or correct. It's not a figment of my imagination, why do they want me to forget? I picture George Floyd that day with the officer's knee on his neck. It has me disgusted and totally vexed. We're pushed to bring and forced to protest. "It's really happening, It's called, "CIVIL UNREST"!!

I don't need to convince or justify your lies, of why you choose not to socialize. If it doesn't apply then let it fly. I need you to know that I will rise, rise, rise. Can't you hear the mother's, father's, and children's cries. Innocent people of color on death row waiting to fry. Why?

What you need to know if, I've paid the ultimate price with my life, as an antiviolenace activist against violence and police brutality, and government corruption. The Voices are sounding all over the world like a volcano eruption. Now, do you hear us, are you taking the black life serious. Some have lost it and became delirious.

I visualize George Floyd handcuffed to the back on that cold ground. He pleads, "please get your knee off my neck, I can't breath"? Repeated history in the 21st Century; "PTSD", It's hard to erase our memories.

I totally relate, and understand the pain. we're afraid of the terrors, tired and feel drained. Senator Cory Booker's voice rang. "We need transparency, and change. My people Came over here in shackles and chains." Yet, nothing has changed it remains the same.

I need to feel safe knowing that finally a database has been implemented to weed the bad police out. Instead of tainting the investigations and giving the thug's in Blue the utmost clout. Forgetting what the real cause is all about.

African Americans are subjected to the harshest laws with mandatory minimums by design. the color of my skin seems to be the only crime, racial profiling comes to "WHITE SUPREMACIST MINDS." Systemic racism need not go unchecked. The U.S. has created a HUGE MESS! We're no strangers to pain my mind can't escape. My mentally ill son was killed by Police in the most grotesque way. On October 10, 2018 it was a sad day!

We're incarcerated and killed at alarming rate. I pray the anguish in my mind will one day escape. If violence is not the answer then why do they anticipate, on murking people of color on a daily base? But it's too late. The people are work and no longer sleep, our pillows are soaked, for years we weeped.

What i need to know if, what happened to the Emergency Response Persons Team. Is Killing the Black Mentally ill, "the American Dream"? On the prowl to snuff us out. Will it work, I

highly doubt. Terrell had mental health issues from a child, It was serious not mild. Emotionally unbalanced but also serene, dashed his hopes, destroyed his dreams.

On the contrary, In South Carolina, when Dylan ran full throttle in an African American Church to commit a horrific hate crime. Based upon what he was taught. Cold bloodedly killed preachers Teachers and others he sought. Bragged and gave it no second thought. A well put together crime was wrought. The young white boy didn't run, he wanted to get caught . . .

Shooting or killing him wasn't an option. When Police saw him at the scene they halt, Amd talked. Put him on a bullet proof vest, took him a bought, Him a meal we are unjustly criminalized. Basically, this depraved indifference young man was pat on the back and given a prize.

Unity, shame, and fear has moved in a few weeks what Centuries couldn't, Acknowledgement is power, at first they wouldn't. More importantly, Is I need President Trump to cease from his incoherent, racist, psychotic tweets. He needs to eat some humble pie and become mee. He'll no longer be blind, but will finally see.

Trump's incompetent leadership is clearly a joke. He had the audacity to call !!COVID-19 A HOAX!! Unfortunately we lost about a hundred thousand folks. Just the thought of Trump makes me wanna scream. Desecrating Holy Grounds to make a low-rated movie scene! His main objective is to cause chaos, and never speak facts. The U.S. president is mad whack to be exact.

He called the national Guards to shoot rubber bullets at peaceful protesters, and tear Gas. This guy is simply out to lunch and has no class. I need Trump to never advise American's to drink bleach, What he think, he's Hitler, or Jim Jones? He really creeps me.

Forget the unconstitutional policies and practices. We need solidarity, love and peace, and for the police abuse to cease. So please stop the violence, don't stab and beat the police. Although, some have no decency, morals, and integrity.

They maced a nine year old girl, and busted a 75 year old man head to the white meat, It's not even safe to protest in the 21st century. Without being unwittingly put at harm. Two NYC Cops snatched a protestor's mask off of his face so they could spray him with mace, a female protestor was punched in the face by police outside of the Barclay. Was hospitalized with a concussion. They really don't care about heading for self destruction.

Why can't I exercise my First Amendment Free Speech Right without fear of Reprise. In disbelief, shock, and surprise; I mourn for those as well as myself who have been victimized. By an all white jury, I was tried. Not one piece of evidence, "my rights were grossly denied." The key witness admitted on the stand, "that he lied," Yet, still they convicted me and gave me 25 to Life..

I need to know when you apologize, that it's real so I can heal, and not feel afraid that history will repeat itself. Meanwhile, I refuse to go back on your whipping post, or get raped with my mouth closed. You got invited to the show, and I'm the host. The topic is can't you see. This is the turn of history. "THE GIG IS UP IN 2020," and like thunder we sing, "NO JUSTICE NO PEACE: STOP RACIST POLICE!!" No more broken promises, we demand accountability. Stop the racially profiling me . . .

Give us Equal Education, without Voter Suppression. Abolish Mass Incarceration, and dis-information on these Modern Day Plantations. Get rid of the low Police Brutality Investigations, We need Reparations. For the overdue pain and suffering.

I need Equality and Justice For All.

Rest in Power; To My Son Terrell Blake, George Floyd, Brianna Taylor, Trayvon Martin, Sandra Bland, Freddie Gray, Eric Garner, 7 year old Aiyana Stanley-Jones, Mike Brown. Stephon Clark, The Africa's, that were brutally murdered by Police, and list goes on . . .

R.I.P. in 2020

feelings

Tanisha Davis

when did hate become your fate?

I am lost and confused and so clueless...

did I miss the signs or refuse to acknowledge this hate exists?

are you really just a angry person that every little thing gets you pissed?

you decided to turn it on me when its you who's wrong.

I'm giving speeches to myself "you can get pass this girl your strong"

making me question myself when all along your angry

and need help ,and I'm steady crying feeling so sorry for myself..

your smile never match your eyes, playing nice is a disguise

to the anger boiling inside ..

who turned you so bitter and selfish that you hate everyone around you including the people who truly loves you?

why do you choose anger over being happy

you chose to be quick tempered and salty?

when did you become this asshole ,

this stranger, I don't wish to know

you became rude obnoxious inconsiderate and selfish

making me feel down sad confused and helpless

playing a mental mind game on me stealing my joy, positive energy.

to me having to be cautious, careful with what I do and say,



Black Girls Deserve Protection
KAH YANGNI

because you became this bomb thats steady ticking away
what become of you, who are you really mad at
what have you been through????
look in the mirror, self reflect, the person bringing you down is YOU!!!

the world we live in....

Tanisha Davis

this world is chaotic, negative energy cyphering around
police brutality, gunshot sounds
a fucked up president, who is only out for self
you can't go to him on bended knees because if you fucked up he still won't help!
Republican, Democratic... do it really make a difference, when you. broke and homeless do they supply the
pot to piss in??
we all show love when we think their for us, its all a hoax and we fell for the political okey doke!
then they build prisons and hire and anyone to be a CO...
like how do we take them serious when they fuck the 'greens' and blow weed smoke?
piss test us strip search us find any way to degrade u
get degrees to become janitors and all your hard work vanishes,
when its time for holidays, why are the less fortunate forced to eat sandwiches?
the govenor , senator and mayor know what we go through in here,
hear about how we're treated, you think the really care?
we need a world leader who can make can make a change do something to help ,but we learned from 'Mr.
President' to only look out for self!!!
children are dying parents are jobless people going to prison people getting killed, is this gods plan when
this world was built?

...thoughts...

Tanisha Davis

I guess pain is a regular for me...
put a smile on my face but the hurt is skin deep...
not sure when its over but I pray soon...
I miss my glow, bright like the sky at noon...
no one will really know how I feel unless I tell them...
but are they listening??
I can tell them with passion ,eyes glistening...
don't mean I'm taken serious..they look at me like Im crazy..
delirious...
we can protect our children but when we hurt,who protects us?

pretend to wear a shield like hurt can't penetrate...
we wish pain can be fixed, surgery,
operate..
unfortunately, we hold on to it and pray for a resolution...
read the Koran, bible...whatever offers a solution..
feel better for the moment, then we feel the hurt again..
what do happiness feel like?
can a smile be simple ,genuine and sincere?
or is it really a smirk that's a cover up for tears?...

who said it was OK?

Tanisha Davis

who said it was OK to put me here and ignore my pleas and sorrowful tears?
who said it was OK for the judge to give me 14yrs?
who told GOD to sit me down and let me "grow mentally and eventually she'll be thanking me?"
who said it was OK to hurt me?
who said it was OK to beat on me and do what my dad never did?
who said I was OK with it and and can endure that shit?
if i said I loved you, who said to take advantage of me and I'll let it be?
who decided that its OK to be cold hearted and swear my soul is empty?
who decides when. you've been through a lot ?
why nobody cared enough to stop me from getting hurt again?
who told my mom to become depressed which led a 16yr old to stress?
who knew where the next meal was coming from or when the lights coming bk on???
who knew he would persuade me into believing he was perfect when he only wanna to hurt chicks? and turn them into convicts!
who told GOD to write my life and decide my destiny?
when do I decide my own fate and get fed up with feeling hate?
who said it was OK to be so stressed and never stop to look at my life and decide I'm actually blessed?
why am I a woman broken? just a man's token?
just a notch under his belt cuz he never shared the feelings I felt!
who said it was OK to run and get married on me when I'm wearing the engagement ring?
who decided that it was OK to love a married man?
who said its OK to love someone who don't love you back?
who decided that this was the life I wanted and this would be my fate?
who said all of this is life and I will be OK????

REFLECTIONS OF ARCHIVING ABOLITION

The *Free : Survivors* newsletter comes from the abolitionist feminist legacy of supporting criminalized survivors and building a movement across prison walls. We in the editorial collective use the rich history of feminist print culture found in the pages of past and present abolitionist newsletters like *No More Cages* to inform our work. As Emily Thuma theorizes in her book, *All Our Trials*, these newsletters are “world-building” projects fostering an abolitionist feminist movement within its pages.

Our collective has been reading issues of *No More Cages* both from comrades who collected and saved them over the decades (thank you MK!) and at the Barnard Center for Research on Women archives. Reading the words of criminalized survivors from decades ago is haunting. So many of the poems, essays and pictures could have been mailed to us by our comrades inside today. Each issue is filled with stories of surviving sexual violence, anti-Black racism, transphobia, and unsanitary living conditions.

Also in each issue are stories of movement building across the walls and international solidarity - subjects we are looking to expand our coverage on. The importance of highlighting efforts of solidarity was emphasized by our friend Shatzi, who was a collective member of the *No More Cages* newsletter. As a member, Shatzi penned articles on the Palestinian Liberation struggle and helped bridge the communication barriers that cut off occupied peoples in Palestine from incarcerated survivors in the US.

In this newsletter, we strive to create a space where comrades inside the walls and supporters outside can speak to our conditions and movements in our own words, living together into the promise of the future. Life inside prison is purposely kept out of public view, so *Free: Survivors*, along with those published by groups like Black & Pink and the California Coalition for Women Prisoners (*The Fire Inside*), are among many parts of the collage of life created to bring it to light. We are creating a record of our movement for freedom that is made by organizers inside the walls and out, not by people pretending that distance makes them more “objective” or reliable.

In reading histories, like those in Emily Thuma’s book, reviewed in this issue by Jessica Paradiso and Annie Farrell, Survived & Punished NY members on the inside are speaking back to the past in a way that alters the course of the future and demands a renewed presence from comrades on the outside. For us, on the outside, their words force us to interrogate how our own understandings of prison, punishment, and justice have been constructed by white supremacist revisionist history in the media, schools, universities and museums.

In the future, if we survive ecological collapse, this newsletter will stand among other time capsules of what it was like to live into resistance while imprisoned during a pandemic. The newsletter lives alongside the long and recent Black freedom struggles, most recently re-catalyzed by the police murders of Breonna Taylor, Tony McDade, George Floyd, David McAtee, and Ahmaud Arbery. It is alongside and connected to calls to defund and abolish the police, stateside and abroad; projects like #FreeThemAll4PublicHealth and #8ToAbolition; campaigns like #CloseTheWorkhouse in St. Louis, MO and the ending of contracts with police departments in school districts in Oakland, CA and Minneapolis, MN; and the largest gathering in commemoration and celebration of Black trans women’s lives ever recorded, in Brooklyn, NY. Abolitionists who are coming up will have these repositories of art and collective thought to expand their consciousness beyond the realities we believe(d) ourselves to be born into.

As we work on *Free : Survivors*, we try to keep in mind the ways that this newsletter, as well as the web of relationships that our work builds across the walls, can be a gift to future organizers and comrades, those we may be lucky enough to meet, and those we'll never even know about. That doesn't mean trying to polish ourselves to look good to folks who come later - it's about letting their presence push us to be thoughtful and honest in our work. In this newsletter we get to try our best to be good ancestors in a very concrete way.

We try to make our decisions with that in mind, on small things as well as large ones. For example, we began by not including the names of the newsletter's outside-the-walls editorial collective, but re-thought that choice after hearing how much harder that kind of practice had made it for Emily Thuma to fully understand the work of earlier abolitionist groups (thank you Emily!).

We want *Free : Survivors* to connect us through space. We want it to cross the walls of the cages that separate us, and now to break the isolation that the COVID-19 pandemic has caused, going where phone calls have been restricted, traveling between friends who can't share a hug. We want it to be a space where those held in different cages can speak with each other in ways that are often prevented, as well as with folks outside the walls. We also want it to connect us through time: backward to the abolitionist feminists whose work we build on, and forward, through the looking-glass, to people living in a time when there are no more cages. Knowing that we are part of the braid connecting those times, holding those relationships in our hearts, gives us hope and courage.



ART BY KAH YANGNI