

ILLIN OIS D EPAR

TMEN T OF FREE

DOM & LIBERATION

Fiscal Year 2014 Annual Alternative Report

Illinois Department of Freedom and Liberation

Mission Statement:

The mission of the Illinois Department of Freedom and Liberation is to acknowledge and honor our collective work to end our nation's over reliance on policing, imprisonment and punishment. The Annual Report of IDFL acknowledges our shared desire to support people/ourselves inside/ after release, to fight for self-determination and community control over the terms of "public safety," and to forge a future free from the logics of incarceration.

Fiscal Year 2014 Annual Alternative Report

Dear Colleagues, Comrades, and Collaborators,

This introduction was written the day after the Grand Jury in Missouri failed to indict police officer Darren Wilson for the murder of Ferguson resident Michael Brown. Cities across the U.S. are erupting with expressions of raw and powerful emotions. We come together, yet again, in cultural and community centers, park houses and student unions, and other public spaces to talk, teach and feel with each other about the loss of yet another young Black life. Once again, we confront the national insanity of white supremacy and its institutionalization in a system of governance that depends on the uneven distribution of life chances.

Our daily political landscape is often rife with contradiction. The dizzying speed with which these contradictory moments unfold, where gains are often measured against profound loss, can be overwhelming: How do we remain alert to each new set of specifics, while also gaining a better understanding of the structures that penetrate and shape these events, the links between these events and the conditions of ordinary life, and the tactical opportunities each presents to forge new solidarities on the basis of our shared desire to re-make the world from the ground up? How do we respond to emerging events, often framed for us as “crises,” and remain committed to a process of careful and complete analysis of our collective situation? It's the radical potential of collective praxis, its becomings and openings, that keeps us going. Committing to imagination and engagement seems like the only path away from despair.

This First Annual Alternative IDOC/IDFL report, chronicles work people in Illinois have done in 2014. Our collective labors stopped jail expansion in Urbana, supported people while inside and after release, fought for meaningful legislation to curb increased punishment, organized internationally against police violence, and worked hard to stop people from getting locked up.

By no means is this report exhaustive. Across Illinois many other groups - formal and informal - continue to push back.

To create this report, we asked Illinois based organizations and collectives to submit materials produced for an action, a project, an event, or a campaign in 2014. Every year the IDOC pumps out a report about how successful they are with our tax dollars. This year we want to celebrate our collective work to end our nation's over reliance on policing, imprisonment and punishment and to acknowledge our shared desire to support people/ourselves inside/after release, to fight for self-determination and community control over the terms of “public safety,” and to forge a future free from the logics of incarceration.

with revolutionary love,

Erica Meiners & Amy Partridge
for P+NAP

Chicago Freedom School Freedom Fellows Call to Action

In light of the murder of Mike Brown and the growing resistance in Ferguson, MO

We are the youth. We are black and brown. We are freedom fighters. We stand on the shoulders of many who came before us, fighting for the freedoms we have today. Not utilizing those freedoms to create a better environment for ourselves is neglecting our own power.

We are taking ownership of our communities and saying no more. We are here to wake people up. This is a movement for freedom, not only in Ferguson, but all over the country, including the communities we live in. While we were drafting this statement, another young person was shot and killed by the police on the West Side of Chicago.

WAKE UP!!! The national media is biased. They are neglecting to provide full coverage of several recent incidents like the murder of Michael Brown. We must look to alternate outlets to educate ourselves and others in order to protect ourselves.

WAKE UP !!! The police are attacking our people and disrespecting our communities. We are tired of our peers being killed in the streets as though we are sub-human beings. We must speak out, organize, and stand in solidarity in order to protect ourselves.

We believe law enforcement and justice systems should be held accountable. We have experienced complete and total violations. We should not fear those who have an obligation to protect us. Here in Chicago youth daily endure violence and harassment at the hands of the police.

WAKE UP!!! We must make connections to the oppressive, racist relationship between underemployment, unjust school environments, legal, justice, and other systems that contribute to the violence done to our bodies daily. People in numerous communities all over this country live this reality.

Today we say to all youth **WAKE UP!!!** We can no longer underestimate the power we have to make change in our communities. We must stand up and get active in support of the struggle against police brutality, racism, and all forms of oppression Mike Brown's murder and the growing protests in Ferguson are bringing to the surface.

Get Active in the struggle against police brutality and support the fight for freedom and demand Darren Wilson be charged for the murder of Mike Brown.

Visit OBS and Hands Up Don't Shoot Coalition to find more information on local and national demands for justice.

August 27, 2014

Black & Pink, CFS, CTSJC, Free
Marissa Alexander, CBWP, CTJM,
Circles & Ciphers, FLY, Decarcerate
IL, Prison Phone Justice, Moratorium
on Deportations, Undocumented IL,
P+NAP, Support Rasmea Odeh,
Stateville Speaks, St. Leonards,
TJLP, We Charge Genocide

!PRESENTE!

This publication was prepared by the
Illinois Department of Freedom and
Liberation.

Erica Meiners
Amy Partridge
Preparators, for IDFL

In conjunction with the 2014 annual P+NAP
exhibition, held at the South Side Commu-
nity Art Center

P-NAP
p-nap.org
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Printed by & for the people of the
State of Illinois

December 2014

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Audy Home Campaign Action – Photo Sarah Jane Rhee 2014

Audy Home Project Fearless Leading by the Youth (FLY) & Generation Y

<http://www.stopchicago.org/p/fly.html>

The FLY Program began in 2007 when tenants involved in STOP's housing work began thinking about how they could engage their sons and daughters around issues that directly affect youth. With that goal in mind, STOP launched a community organizing summer internship program. Over the course of the program the youth developed their own organization: Fearless Leading by the Youth (FLY), supported by the Youth Justice Program.

During the first summer internship program, participants were outraged by stories from friends and family about escalating violence, abuse, and neglect inside the Cook County Juvenile Detention Center (commonly known by its original name, the Audy Home). In response to these conditions, FLY joined forces with another youth organization, Generation Y (Gen Y) of the Southwest Youth Collaborative and launched the Audy Home Project. The goals of the project are to pressure the center's administration to establish humane conditions in the detention center, and reform the juvenile justice system by developing community-based alternatives to child incarceration.

The Audy Home Project organized a press conference outside of a Cook County Board meeting where they delivered 100 pairs of underwear for Audy Home residents (who were being denied clean underwear) and demanded immediate humane conditions.

Though FLY and Gen Y's gift was never delivered, **the staff immediately responded by providing the youth with clean underwear.**

FLY also conducted a research project documenting abuses in the Audy Home through interviews with former detainees, which they compiled with outside research. They shared their findings at a teach-in attended by the Audy Home director. At the teach-in FLY and Gen Y were granted regular monitoring tours of the Audy Home.

For the past two years, FLY has been conducting tours and meeting with detention center administration to learn about the juvenile justice system and push for reforms. They have also built relationships with people key to implementing these reforms.

Black and Pink

<http://www.blackandpink.org/chapters/chicago/>

Black & Pink is an open family of LGBTQ prisoners and “free world” allies who support each other. Our work toward the abolition of the prison industrial complex is rooted in the experience of currently and formerly incarcerated people. We are outraged by the specific violence of the prison industrial complex against LGBTQ people, and respond through advocacy, education, direct service, and organizing.



Excerpts of testimonies from Black and Pink members incarcerated in Illinois, responding to surveys about conditions inside IDOC. Names are withheld for reasons of safety.

If you could change one thing about prison, what would it be, why?

“If I could change one thing about being locked up it would be the way we are treated. That covers everything - especially consensual sex. That should be our choice and not a rule violation that carries 6 month seg. Treat us like we are human.”

“Safety without loss of rights - a single cell but not solitary or segregation. Accountability re: sexual assault or harassment.”

What have your experiences in solitary confinement been like?

“It has affected me mentally and emotionally because I am forced to live in my own thoughts or be victimized for no reason. Emotionally I’m traumatized because I’m forced to repress who I am sexually so that I don’t face the harshness of the gay bashing. I haven’t resisted because it only gets worse. But those who have resisted get maced, assaulted by staff, denied trays, showers, and they get stripped of their property for 72 hrs only to never get it all back. Pen pals can provide support by writing consistently, send books or magazine subscriptions, pictures.”

“My experience in segregation/solitary has been a major learning experience. I’ve faced hatred, verbal & physical abuse, denial of medical treatment, and discrimination. I had to fight for over 15 months to receive medical treatment for my Gender Identity Disorder.”

Is there anything else you would like to share with ‘free-world’ members of Black and Pink?

“Further I would love to live in a society of people who help each other out. One not ruled by invisible powers. One where love runs rampant and jails, prisons and the like are unheard of. One where we don’t need money but rather trade services. Sort of off-the-grid but only in the way of need . . . to exist and live. My idea of freedom seems hard to achieve. But I will still work for it.”

2014 Ban the Box Legislation!

While the law does not apply to all formerly incarcerated people or to all employers, in 2014 Illinois passed limited “Ban the Box” Legislation.

The “Job Opportunities for Qualified Applicants Act” (House Bill 5701), signed by Governor Pat Quinn on July 19, 2014, prohibits employers, or any agent of an employer, from considering or inquiring into a job applicant’s criminal record or history until the individual has been determined qualified for the position and notified of an impending interview. Or, if the applicant will not be interviewed, until after a conditional offer of employment is made. The Act explicitly excludes three categories of job applicants from this restriction. Applicants for all other positions will be entitled to the protections of the Act. Alleged violations of the Act will be investigated by the Illinois Department of Labor and violations will result in progressively substantial civil penalties. The Act becomes effective on January 1, 2015.

Kudos to many, including the Workers Center for Racial Justice: <http://www.center4racialjustice.org/>

Check out: <http://www.progressillinois.com/news/content/2014/05/30/ban-box-fair-hiring-bill-sent-quinn-desk>

NO MORE JAILS



ANOTHER LOOK...

AT the discussion about how to spend the “public safety” tax in Champaign County

Don’t Spend Money On Jails

The Champaign County Board collects **\$4.5 million** annually in **public safety sales tax**. To date only 5% of that money has gone for youth education. 95% has gone for jail construction and policing costs.

Increase That 5% to at least 30%

The county has many better ways to spend that safety sales tax. The Community Justice Task Force, a body appointed by the County Board, came up with a number of alternatives to incarceration. They included:

- Setting up a re-entry

program to support those returning from state prison

- Establishing a **Racial Justice Task Force** to investigate why more than half of the jail population is African American when only 13% of our county is African American

The Task Force also recommended supporting programs to assist people with mental health and substance abuse programs.

**More Money for Programs,
Less Money for Jails**



What is Public Safety?

More Jails and more police don't make us safer...

Who's in Our Jails?

Members of UIUC's Planner's Network documented a one-day "snapshot" on January 26, 2013 of the Champaign jail population.

They concluded:

1. We are locking up far too many African Americans and poor people.

Of the 246 people in the jail:

- 69% were African-American,
- more than 1/4 of them had registered addresses in north Champaign-Urbana, an area that is predominately low-income and African American.

2. We are locking up too many people for minor offenses

- 131 people were in jail for non-violent offenses
- More than one out of five we incarcerated for traffic offenses

3. We are locking up too many people who have mental health

and substance abuse problems, not legal problems.

By Sheriff Walsh's own admission, roughly half of those in the jail have substance abuse or mental health problems. These people need treatment and support, not incarceration.

Support Alternatives:

1. Increase the public safety sales tax that goes to prevention from 5% to **at least 30%**.
2. Fund a **re-entry program** for people returning from state prison. Rehabilitate, don't incarcerate.
3. Establish a **Racial Justice Task Force** to end the New Jim Crow in our county.
4. Make maximum use of existing facilities instead of building new jail cells.



Visit us at: cucpj.org OR
<http://nationinside.org/campaign/stop-jail/>



The Campaign to Stop Jail Construction

<http://nationinside.org/campaign/stop-jail/>

Reflections on the Campaign to Stop Jail Construction in Champaign County (IL)

By James Kilgore

We did our homework and became the experts on the issue. We spent hours building a profile of who was incarcerated in our county -demonstrating that our jails cells were teeming with people who didn't belong there- those with traffic tickets, mental illness, substance abuse problems, women with non-violent charges. Most importantly, we identified the seriousness of the racial disparity in our jail population. We found that consistently more than half those in the jail were African-American in a county with a 13% Black population. This was a key point in exposing the pitfalls of building new jail cells-that ultimately they would end up caging more Black youth. We also uncovered the ways in which incarceration specifically impacted women in the jail, contributing to the separation of families and facilitating the unnecessary loss of child custody among parents in the jail population. All of this served to expose the irrationality of mass incarceration at the ground level.

We added a financial dimension to our research as well, uncovering how the County was spending taxpayers' money, emphasizing the need to reallocate more of the \$4.6 million collected every year in Public Safety Sales Tax. At the time, the county was spending 95% of that money on bond repayment for criminal justice construction and support for law enforcement. In pressing for a change in the allocation of these revenues, we encouraged a new framing of the idea of public safety. For us and for much of the community, public safety was about ensuring people's access to healthcare, housing, employment, education and treatment not simply growing the number of police and jail cells.

Besides analyzing the local situation, we researched trends and successful changes in other communities across the country and brought them into our criminal justice debate. We spoke about prison closures in New York, the blocking of a jail construction plan in Bloomington, Indiana, a re-entry program in Richmond, California. All this helped Board members to realize they would not be alone if they opted for changes.



Chicago Alliance to Free Marissa Alexander

<https://chicagofreemarissa.wordpress.com/>

Chicago Alliance to Free Marissa Alexander (CAFMA) is a group of individuals from across the city who came together after a September 2013 teach-in about Marissa's case.

The Alliance is a volunteer-led and volunteer-run grassroots effort. Members are individuals who have affiliations with various projects and organizations across Chicago. There are no requirements for membership. Anyone can join CAFMA simply by organizing your own relevant events or activities or by attending and supporting those organized by other members.

Throughout 2014 members of CAFMA have organized several other gatherings and events intended to raise awareness and funds to support Marissa's legal defense. CAFMA works in solidarity with the National Free Marissa Now Mobilization Campaign.

For questions and information, contact CAFMA at freemarissachicago@gmail.com.

About Marissa Alexander:

Marissa Alexander is a proud African American mother of three, a loving daughter and sister, she has earned an MBA, she's a woman of faith, and she's a survivor of domestic violence. In 2012, Ms. Alexander was sentenced to twenty years in the Florida criminal correctional system for defending herself from her abusive estranged husband. Nine days after giving birth to a premature child, she fired a single warning shot upwards into a wall to halt her abusive partner during a life-threatening beating.

Marissa Alexander's incarceration:

Despite the fact that Marissa Alexander caused no injuries and has no previous criminal record, and despite the fact that Florida's self-defense law includes the right to "Stand Your Ground," she was arrested by Jacksonville police and charged with aggravated assault. She rejected a 3-year plea bargain because she maintained her innocence and the right to defend her life. After 12 minutes of deliberation, a jury of 6 people convicted Ms. Alexander of three counts of aggravated assault with a deadly weapon with no intent to harm. Her sentence was set at 20 years in part due to the state's mandatory minimum sentencing laws. Marissa Alexander successfully appealed the trial, overturning the guilty verdict on 9/26/13. She was released on bond on 11/27/13 and is now under home detention. While under home detention, she must pay \$105 every week for the use of an ankle monitor, and \$500 every other week for the bond cost. If she is found guilty in a new trial, she could face a tripled mandatory sentence of 60 years for self-defense.

Latest status of Marissa's case, as of July 21, 2014:

Marissa Alexander was denied a new Stand Your Ground hearing and will move forward to a new trial, scheduled to begin Dec 8, 2014. **State Attorney Angela Corey wants to sentence Marissa to a mandatory 60 years in prison.**

Source: Free Marissa Now: <http://www.freemarissanow.org/about-marissa-alexander.html>



Image by Jawaan Burge, 2014

Chicago Books to Women in Prison

<http://chicagobwp.org>

We're a volunteer cooperative that strives to improve the quality of life for women in prison by providing them with books at no cost on the topics that interest and inspire them. We distribute books to women and trans people in state prisons in Arizona, California, Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Mississippi, Ohio and West Virginia, as well as to all federal prisons.

We meet 2–5 p.m. every Sunday at Ravenswood Fellowship United Methodist Church, 4511 N. Hermitage, Chicago, IL 60640. (We also receive mail at this address.) We welcome monetary donations to cover postage, as well as donations of new and gently used paper-back books.

Check out the books we need most at chicagobwp.org/how-to-help/donations and our Amazon Wish List at [amzn.com/w/3JB7QLOISAPLO](https://www.amazon.com/w/3JB7QLOISAPLO).

New volunteers:

Join us for orientation on the last Sunday of each month, 1–2 pm.

Details at chicagobwp.org/how-to-help/volunteer.

Write us at chicagobwp@gmail.com

Find us on Facebook

Follow us on Twitter @ChicagoBWP



Every week we select just the right books for each order, process special requests and prepare the paperwork for packing. The result? More than 50 packages of books ready for mailing to the women we serve.





Chicago Books to Women in Prison

We're pleased to share a few of the notes we've received this year from the women we serve:

I was given this address and was told that this organization is a good one. I would appreciate whatever you send me. It is worth more to me than words can say.

Angela G., California

I just want to say thank you so very much for the books you sent to me. I really appreciate them. We only get a library call once every two or three months and I read a book in two nights. I read to take my mind off the awful surroundings. So I can't thank you enough for the books you send me.

Rebecca H., Mississippi

Thank you so much for offering such a wonderful and colossally generous program. When I am released, I fully plan to contact this program to see how I can help. If anything, I have tons of books I can donate. We (prisoners) need all the books we can get. Improving our lives is vital – not just to ourselves but to society as a whole.

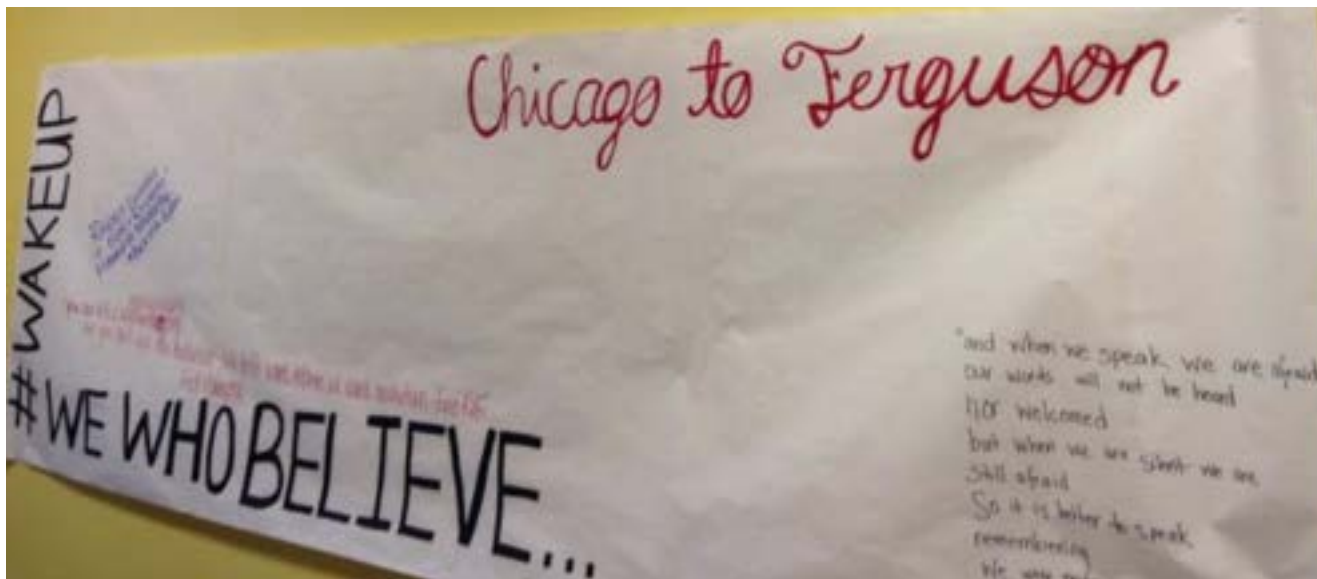
Olivia D., Florida

Thank you all so much for everything that you do for those of us who are incarcerated. I can't imagine how much work you put in. Getting the books in the mail means more to me than I can ever express.

Kim C., Mississippi

You all help me so much with the service you provide. I really enjoy getting your little notes of cheer in each order. I'm so very thankful to you all for everything that you do. You really have helped me get through my time easier. Thank you again for improving my time here. I can't begin to tell you how much you all mean to me. YOU ROCK!!

Patricia M., Florida



Chicago Freedom School

<http://chicagofreeschool.org/>

The mission of the Chicago Freedom School (CFS) is to create new generations of critical and independent thinking young people who use their unique experiences and power to create a just world. CFS provides training and education opportunities for youth and adult allies to develop leadership skills through civic action and through the study of the history of social movements and their leaders. In the spirit of the original freedom schools in Mississippi in the 1960s, CFS serves as a catalyst for young people across Chicago to discover their own power to make change – not only for themselves, but also for their communities and for the world.

In response to the murder of Mike Brown, an unarmed black youth in Ferguson, Missouri on August 9th, Chicago Freedom School youth and staff came together to plan an action in support of young people fighting for justice for Mike Brown's family. It was all too easy for the Freedom Fellows to make connections between the issues surrounding the murder, the history of police brutality in Ferguson, and their own experiences living in heavily policed Chicago neighborhoods. A painful reminder came when in the midst of one of the planning meetings, we received news of the death of Roshad McIntosh, another unarmed black youth, by Chicago police.

Freedom Fellows organized a Sound Off on August 27, 2014 with the theme of **#WAKE UP** to encourage young people to get active in the struggle for social justice. The Freedom Fellows prepared a statement of solidarity and call to action (**see full text on p 3**). Over 40 youth and adult allies gathered at CFS to participate in the Sound Off.

They also collected donations to support protesters in Ferguson who have been targeted by police during their 24-hour vigils to demand that charges be filed against the officer who killed Mike Brown. CFS members and adult allies donated various items including water, food, first aid supplies, and materials to protect protesters from tear gas. CFS staff and adult allies drove the donations to Ferguson and delivered them to Greater St. Marks Church, which had been raided by police two weeks prior.



Freedom Fellows reading their statement of solidarity

REPARATIONS

NOW!

REPARATIONS

NOW!

Chicago Torture Justice Memorials

<http://chicagotorture.org/>

Chicago Torture Justice Memorials (CTJM) aims to honor and to seek justice for the survivors of Chicago Police torture, their family members and the African American communities affected by the torture. In 2010 CTJM, a group of attorneys, artists, educators, and social justice activists, put out a call for speculative memorials to recall and honor the two-decades long struggle for justice waged by torture survivors and their families, attorneys, community organizers, and people from every neighborhood and walk of life in Chicago. This effort culminated in a major exhibition of 75 proposals and a year-long series of associated teach-ins, roundtables, and other public events in 2011-2013. CTJM now turns its attention to a campaign for reparations for those affected by Chicago Police torture, and to working in solidarity with other groups and individuals for racial justice and to end police violence and mass incarceration.



Anthony Holmes and Darrell Cannon testify to their torture by Chicago Police

CTJM's 1st Annual Participatory Memorial Action, 2014



ORDINANCE

REPARATIONS FOR THE CHICAGO POLICE TORTURE SURVIVORS

WHEREAS, the City of Chicago acknowledges that former Chicago Police Commander Jon Burge and detectives under his command systematically engaged in acts of torture, physical abuse and coercion of African American men and women at Area 2 and 3 Police Headquarters from 1972 through 1991; and

WHEREAS, the acts of torture committed by Burge and detectives under his command included electrically shocking individuals on their genitals, lips and ears with an electric shock box or cattle prod; suffocating individuals with plastic bags; subjecting individuals to mock execution with guns; physical beatings with telephone books and rubber hoses; and other forms of physical and psychological abuse; and

WHEREAS, Burge and his men committed these acts of torture and abuse to extract confessions from the victims which were subsequently admitted against them in their criminal prosecutions resulting in their wrongful convictions; and

WHEREAS, these acts of torture, physical abuse and coercion violate state, federal and international law and such acts are universally condemned worldwide; and

WHEREAS, the trauma and damage caused by these heinous acts continue to deleteriously effect the torture survivors, their family members, African American communities and the City of Chicago; and

WHEREAS, the trauma and damage caused by these heinous acts will continue to cause egregious harm to those affected unless the City of Chicago and other municipal bodies enact reparations to mitigate the harm; and

WHEREAS, the City of Chicago has been complicit in the torture practices and tacitly supported those acts by expending more than \$20 million of taxpayers' funds to defend Burge and other detectives implicated in civil litigation brought by the torture survivors, and

WHEREAS, Mayor Emanuel has recently acknowledged that the torture scandal was a dark chapter in the history of the City of Chicago that stained its reputation and that he was sorry for it;

WHEREAS, the City of Chicago must officially acknowledge the torture that occurred in the City and resolve to never allow such acts to go undeterred and unpunished ever again, now therefore,

**BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF CHICAGO AND
THE MAYOR OF CHICAGO:**

- ' Hereby issues a formal apology to the torture survivors, their family members, and other affected individuals and communities on behalf of the City of Chicago for the violations and harm incurred by these torture practices.
- ' Hereby creates a Chicago Police Torture Reparations Commission that is responsible for administering financial reparations to the torture survivors to compensate them for the torture they endured.
- ' Hereby creates a center on the south side of Chicago that will provide psychological counseling, health care services and vocational training to the torture survivors, their family members and others affected by law enforcement torture and abuse.
- ' Hereby provides that all torture survivors and their family members be allowed to enroll in City Colleges and receive their education and degree for free.
- ' Hereby calls on the Chicago Public School system to incorporate into its curriculum a history lesson about the Chicago Police torture cases and the struggles to hold those accountable and to seek reparations for the survivors and affected family members.
- ' Hereby calls on local law enforcement officials to provide evidentiary hearings to the torture survivors who remain behind bars who had their coerced confessions used against in their criminal proceedings resulting in their wrongful convictions, and moreover, supports the torture survivors' rights to have a full and fair opportunity to present evidence that demonstrates they were physically coerced into giving a confession.
- ' Hereby commits to supporting the creation of public memorials that memorialize the Chicago Police Torture survivors and the struggle for justice on their behalf.
- ' Hereby provides a minimum of \$20 million to finance the Chicago Police Torture Reparations Commission, the center on the Southside Center, the creation of a curriculum and to fund the creation of public memorials set forth herein.
- ' Hereby directs the Corporation Counsel to take whatever legal steps are available to support the stripping of Jon Burge's pension.



Circles and Ciphers

<http://www.project-nia.org/circles-and-ciphers.php>

Thousands of Chicago's black and brown young men are entangled in the juvenile justice system each year. Warehoused, confined, or otherwise incapacitated these young men often internalize the discourse of a system that defines them in negative terms, as unfit to participate in society. Circles and Ciphers is a leadership development program for young men who are prison, court, and gang involved. Through the use of improvisational hip-hop freestyle ciphers, as well as talking and peacemaking circles, participants will respond to this tragic pattern as community organizers: they will design a new, autonomous, nonviolent gang tailored to their unique needs.

“Walk Past” – El

Tom Schneider, is a sixty-something year old Jewish man I meet with once, sometimes twice a week. Tom is a retired probation officer who knows a whole lot about gang culture in the streets. Tom is a white man who doesn't at all fear me.

He's dealt with the worst of the worst. Most of our conversations are about gangsters, emotions and anger. I tell him everything about America and Chicago is gangsta, from Al Capone to CPD, Blagojevich, Larry Hoover and politics.

But back to Tom, he has love for me, probably because he knows me. I can't say the same for white strangers who in my everyday life have nervous encounters with me, fear. The people who are comfortable walking past any white skinned person in front of me. I mean no harm but when getting close to walking past ME they'd prefer to walk all in the grass at the edge of a wide enough sidewalk.

Can't even wait at bus stops next to a white woman without her feeling the need for more distance in between. That kind of fear is what got Emmett Till killed, so rest in peace. Reminding me, of how the Scottsboro brothers were framed. Shit like even when I was gangbangin I meant no harm to white folk, unless me and the guys where hungry. But rarely, we're a danger to ourselves and hardly anyone else. I get harassed and checked on certain blocks while descendants of slave masters walk past worry-free. The more I read about my history the more I realize I should fear white people the same way some of them fear me.

Now as I walk through downtown Chicago I fear being sprayed with water hoses and walking past police dogs off the Jackson red line stop, don't look at the police with fear of being shot or lynched. Don't wanna become Chicago's Trayvon Martin. And those black cops really ain't shit.

But forget all that, I'm scared of white folks because I'm scared of being stereotyped, discriminated against, and criminalized. For now I'm too scared to walk into restaurants filled with whites. I'll make an attempt to run home if the person interviewing me for a job is white.

The other day I crossed the street when I saw a group of more than three whites standing on the sidewalk, thought they were the Klan.

Me and two white friends walked into a Subway restaurant the other day, I was the first to get my footlong sandwich made. The white women in front of me clutched her purse, as I

stepped to the register the Indian woman behind the counter gave me my price, I pointed at Brandy & Evan and said we were all together, to pay it all together would be nice.

She looked in disbelief and said “YOU’RE with THEM??” I laughed irritably and said it again. The next day was Saturday, St. Patrick’s weekend. A hundred drunk white girls and boys packed the red line. I was so nervous I walked toward the back cars till I could find one with not so many loud, drunk, and high white people. Found one.

But when we arrived at the next stop more got on, I shit and pissed my pants and thought: **If this were a hundred black and Hispanic people the Chicago Police would shut this shit down.** Because some old white lady called in and lied, they’d send in the national guard and pepper spray all our eyes. Probably bomb the train like they did the MOVE organization in Philly for being too black. But since it was just a whole lot of white people with open beers on the train it was perfectly legal.

Ain’t that some shit.



Circles & Ciphers Community Circle, 2014

Decarcerate Illinois

<http://nationinside.org/campaign/decarcerate-illinois/>

We call on lawmakers to end our addiction to incarceration, reduce the need for such a crippling corrections budget and improve public safety. We support the Illinois prison closures and ask Governor Quinn to implement good time credits and swiftly reduce Illinois' record-high prison population. Illinois must invest in prison alternatives, community-based services and support for people after incarceration.

Two upcoming pieces of legislation that we need to OPPOSE:

SB3383 imposes even more stringent requirements on those convicted/adjudicated for sex offenses (including misdemeanor offenses). SB3383 also adds offenses (including misdemeanor sex offenses) and lengthens the amount of time juvenile and adult sex offenders have to register. SB 3383 will expand current juvenile registration requirements to treat juveniles like adults, contravening a growing body of research that shows registry of youth does not enhance public safety and may actually harm victims of sexual abuse and increase risks for future offending. We need to stand strong against such unnecessarily punitive measures. Ask your representatives to OPPOSE SB3383.

HB4775: allows schools to expel students convicted of a violent felony. HB4775 would allow schools to expel students upon conviction of a violent felony. There are many reasons why a juvenile could end up with a conviction for a violent felony, but none of them justify preventing that child from getting an education. We need children to be in the classroom in order to have hope for the future. HB4775 is a big step in the wrong direction. Ask your representative to OPPOSE HB4775. It takes just 30 seconds to make your voice heard!

In 2014 a number of Illinois prisons, including Murphysburo and Dwight, were depopulated. Many of us fought against labor unions and local residents who wanted these prisons to remain in full and active operation. While these prisons are currently closed, and we celebrate this achievement to shrink the system, the state has threatened to reopen these prisons to house people in the federal system. The work continues.



The Illinois Prison Phone Justice Campaign

We believe people in prison should be able to communicate with their loved ones on the outside. At the moment, excessive prison phone charges create a huge obstacle to this communication. Private companies and the Illinois Department of Corrections are making millions off these phone calls. This has to stop. Read the basic information about Prison Phone Justice below. Share it with a friend. Join us.

Prison Phones in Illinois-The Basic Facts

- A prisoner's family or loved one pays **\$4.00 for a phone call** with an incarcerated family member or loved one.
- 76% of that money goes to the Illinois Department of Corrections as a kickback.
- In 2012 kickbacks from state prison phone calls came to over \$12 million dollars-the second highest of any state in the country. This is largely money taken from poor people who are already stressed by having a family member or loved one locked up.
- Prison phone kickbacks bring in more than \$140 million to prison authorities across the country.
- **Securus Technologies**, the company that has the phone contract for Illinois runs phone systems in at least 10 other states. They also have the contract for the Cook County Jail. In 2012 they paid \$76 million in dividends to their shareholder. In 2013, Abry Partners bought Securus for over \$700 million. Companies are making millions - at the expense of prisoners and their families.

Why Is this Important?

Phone calls are the main method people in prison have of maintaining contact with loved ones on the outside. Research has shown that people who maintain contact with family members, especially their children, have a much better chance of succeeding when they are released. Excessive charges for phone calls contribute to the breakup of families and make all the more likely that people who are released will end up back in prison.

What can we do?

The Illinois Prison Phone Justice Campaign is pushing for the elimination of all kickbacks to the Illinois Department of Corrections. This has been done in eight other states. In New York people pay less than five cents a minute for a phone call. In New Mexico, prisoners pay 66 cents for a 15 minute call. Why should it be different in Illinois?

We can win:

Champaign County is already a leader in Prisons Phone Justice

In 2005, Champaign-Urbana Citizens for Peace and Justice (CUCPJ) led a successful campaign to eliminate kickbacks on phone calls from the local jail. The county had made over \$350,000 in just two years from these kickbacks. Now they get no kickbacks and prisoners and their families enjoy cheaper phone calls. Evercom, the company that had our county contract in 2005, has since been bought out by Securus.

National campaigns on Prison Phone Justice have succeeded:

Activists from around the country pressured the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to put a cap on the charge for interstate calls from prisons and jails. Since the FCC ruling in 2013, interstate calls cannot be charged at more than 15 cents a minute. However, most calls from prisons in Illinois are to people inside our state so they are not covered by this ruling. That's why we need to target the contract with the Illinois Department of Corrections.

Join Us:

We need people to share their experience.

- **Stories** – Tell us your story of using the prison phone system-the problems, the financial hardships, the importance of those phone calls? We'd love to talk to you!
- **Volunteers** – Give us your contact info and we will be in touch with ways you can choose to get involved.
- **Interns** – You can work for phone justice and get school credit at the same time – get in touch!
Contact: Illinois Campaign for Prison Phone Justice c/o Danielle Chynoweth (Coordinator) at illinoisprisonphonejustice@gmail.com or at 217-344-8820 (Independent Media Center phone)

Like us on Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/pages/Illinois-Campaign-for-Prison-Phone-Justice/1551164941774001?ref=br_tf

Help us pressure the state of Illinois to end kickbacks.

Why should companies like Securus make millions off of incarcerated people and their loved one?

Prison Phone Justice Now!

Who are We:

The **Urbana-Champaign Independent Media Center (UCIMC)** is leading the Illinois Prison Phone Justice Campaign. UCIMC is a grassroots organization committed to using media production and distribution as tools for promoting social and economic justice in the Champaign County area. We foster the creation and distribution of media, art, and narratives emphasizing underrepresented voices and perspectives and promote empowerment and expression through media and arts education.

Moratorium on Deportations

www.moratoriumondeportations.org

Moratorium on Deportations was founded in Chicago in the spring of 2010 to create a space for individuals and organizations to discuss, share information and coordinate efforts in their fight to get an Executive Order for a Moratorium on Deportation from President Obama. However, in early 2011 the undocumented youth who founded the MDC reached out to form a broader organizing community. Through an experimental series of speak-outs called “The ABCs of Struggle: A is for Amnesty and Abolition” and mobilizations for March 10th **Liberation Square** and the **People’s Trial of Boeing** action, the MDC transformed into a meeting-place for autonomous migrant justice, anti-war and community organizations. MDC became logistical host and intersectional platform for the planning process of Chicago Mayday 2011. We organized a grassroots struggle in Chicago to resist the construction of a new immigrant detention center in Crete, IL and developed political education campaigns in response to DACA and the so-called “Immigration Reform” politics of 2013.

Contact us at: moratoriumondeportations@gmail.com



Stopping Police Crimes Against Immigrants

The National Forum on Police Crimes convened a workgroup session facilitated by the Moratorium on Deportations Campaign. The goal of the workgroup is “to encourage alliances to resist police crimes committed against people on the basis of their (actual or perceived) immigration status and to discuss how denial of legal and human rights of immigrants affects the community as a whole.” The following resolutions were proposed by the workgroup and adopted by the National Forum.

Resolutions

1. Work to get detainees and deportees to file lawsuits in federal court to get redress for abuse suffered in detention centers, especially short-term detention centers.
2. Resist the building of any new detention centers.
3. Challenge the rhetoric of good immigrant versus bad immigrant.
4. Raise awareness about the vulnerabilities of undocumented persons organizing to stand up for their rights.
5. Create transnational and international networks of resistance to confront free trade agreements, the war on drugs, and militarization.
6. Challenge historical revisionism that accepts the State’s draconian processes as having always existed and as being normal.
7. Push for a moratorium on deportations for all people, including felons and those with a criminal background.
8. Create a space for dialog among different criminalized communities, Latino, Black, Arab, LGBTQ, poor people, etc.
9. Prioritize and understand the struggles of indigenous communities affected by border militarization. Work to tear down any and all walls on both ends of the United States for free movement from the Yucatan to the Yukon.

<http://naarpr.org> To follow up with the coordinating committee, please contact Frank

Chapman - fchapman@naarpr.org

May 16-17, 2014

MoratoriumOnDeportationsCampaign.org
WhoseImmigrationReform.com

¿Qué onda con La Reforma Migratoria?

¡No se vayan con la finta, hagan preguntas!

Cinco preguntas sobre la dicha "Reforma Migratoria:"

1. ¿La reforma pondrá un alto a las deportaciones?

No. La reforma resultara en *más* deportaciones ya que incrementa el presupuesto de la Poli-Migra y la persecución de más inmigrantes.

2. ¿Esta reforma realmente beneficiara a 11 millones de indocumentados?

No. La reforma migratoria excluye a personas pobres, a los que no tienen un empleo estable, a los deshabilitados, o a quienes sean señalados como criminales por la ley.

3. ¿Esta reforma ayuda a reunificar a las familias?

No, la reforma elimina la posibilidad de petitionar a un hermano o hermana e impone una definición limitada de lo que es una "familia". La reforma también excluye a parejas del mismo sexo.

4. ¿Ofrecerá un camino hacia la ciudadanía?

Un número limitado de personas calificarán para un estatus migratorio provisional y restringido. Este nuevo estatus migratorio no garantiza derechos y puede ser revocado en cualquier momento. Después de 10 años en este estatus de "limbo" la gente podrá aplicar para su "Green Card" pero esto solamente ocurrirá cuando el Departamento de Seguridad Nacional (DHS por sus siglas en inglés) declare que la frontera esta "lo suficientemente segura". La reforma migratoria garantiza la ejecución de leyes represivas y militarización pero no garantiza la legalización.

5. ¿Esta reforma crea un sistema migratorio más justo?

La reforma crea una jerarquía entre los "buenos" inmigrantes (educados, con mayores recursos económicos, patrocinados por corporaciones) y los inmigrantes "malos" (personas de color con menos recursos económicos) y refuerza la idea de que la vida de ciertas personas es más valiosa que la de otras. Este proyecto de ley no se trata de justicia, se trata de utilizar la política del miedo para explotar a ciertos inmigrantes en el interés de los grandes negocios y corporaciones.

Muchas organizaciones de base popular se oponen a esta reforma, incluyendo a Derechos Humanos de Arizona, Bayan (la Alianza Filipina Nacional), la Coalición Para La Justicia Migratoria, y la Campaña para la Moratoria a las Deportaciones en Chicago.

Para más información por favor visite

www.WhoseImmigrationReform.com

www.MoratoriumOnDeportations.org

E-mail: MoratoriumOnDeportations@gmail.com

* Nosotros **NO** proveemos ningún tipo de asesoría legal*

Whose Immigration Reform?

Don't believe the hype!

Five questions about so-called "Immigration Reform:"

1. **WILL IT STOP DEPORTATIONS?**
No, the bill will lead to *more* deportations by increasing funds for Poli-Migra programs and for prosecutions of more immigrants.
2. **WILL THIS BILL REALLY BENEFIT 11 MILLION PEOPLE?**
No. The bill will exclude people simply for being poor, for lacking stable employment, for being disabled, or for being targeted by the police.
3. **WILL THE BILL HELP FAMILY UNIFICATION?**
No, the bill eliminates the possibility for petitioning for siblings, and imposes a limited definition of "family". It also excludes same-sex families.

4. **WILL THE BILL REALLY OFFER A PATH TO CITIZENSHIP?**

A limited number of people will qualify for a provisional and restricted form of status. But this does not guarantee rights, and can be revoked at any time. After 10 years in this "limbo" status, people will be able to apply for a green card, but this will depend on Homeland Security declaring that the border is "secure enough". The bill would guarantee enforcement and militarization, but will not guarantee legalization.

5. **DOES IT REALLY MAKE THE IMMIGRATION SYSTEM MORE JUST?**

The bill creates a hierarchy between good immigrants (educated, wealthy, corporate-sponsored) and bad immigrants (poor people of color) and reinforces the idea that some lives are more valuable than others. This bill is not about justice, it is about using the politics of fear to keep some immigrants exploitable in the interest of big business.

Many grassroots organizations are strongly opposing this bill, including Derechos Humanos in Arizona, Bayan (the national Filipino alliance), the Coalition for Migrant Justice and the Moratorium on Deportations Campaign in Chicago.

For more information visit:
www.WhoseImmigrationReform.com
www.MoratoriumOnDeportations.org

E-mail: MoratoriumOnDeportations@gmail.com

We do NOT offer legal advice

Organized Communities Against Deportations, Undocumented Illinois

<http://www.iyjl.org/lourdes>

On May 30th 2013, Lourdes Moreno was supposed to leave behind four children and her husband after having been placed in deportation proceedings for driving without a license. It was with a tremendous amount of community support that Lourdes was able to delay her deportation. At the **National Coming Out of the Shadows** rally in Chicago, Lourdes shared her story.



Lourdes: “My Story Does Not End Here; I Am Still in Deportation Proceedings But I Am No Longer Afraid.”

Hola mi nombre es Lourdes Moreno y tengo orden de deportación. En el 2010, tuve un accidente de carro y mi único delito fue no contar en ese momento con una licencia de manejar. Estuve detenida todo un fin de semana en Wheaton, ahí mientras estaba yo en esa celda fría, yo sentí como todo mi mundo y mis ilusiones con las que yo vine a este país: un mejor futuro para mis hijos, una Buena educación, conocer todos los 50 estados de este país, de aprender el idioma y tener una casa grande donde mis hijos pudieran correr libremente, de darles a ellos todo lo que mi esposo y yo no tuvimos en nuestro país de origen. Pero el día que me detuvo ICE, mi realidad fue estar encarcelada, pasar frio, hambre, me sentí sola, triste y abandonada en esa celda fría. Sentí como mi dignidad de ser humano caía por los suelos cuando me pidieron que me desnudara y me checaron por todas partes como si escondiera algo, cuando mi único crimen fue buscar el pan para mis hijos. Ese día marco mi vida, cuando comenzó mi pesadilla, yo iba a trabajar y ya no regrese. Y hoy, gracias a Dios, y la movilización de la gente salí de ese infierno. Pero mi historia no acaba aquí, aún tengo orden de deportación pero ya no tengo miedo Es la razón que hoy estoy aquí saliendo de las sombras porque se me pone la piel chinita y mi corazón se me parte al pensar que mis hijos se puedan quedar sin su madre y todos mis sueños y los de ellos que su se vean truncado. No dejare de luchar. No permitiré que me separen de mis hijos. No más deportaciones. ¡No más familias separadas! ¡Dos millones es mucho!

Translation

Hello my name is Lourdes Moreno and I am in deportation proceedings. In 2010, I had a car accident and my only crime was not being able to provide a driver's license. I was detained for an entire weekend in Wheaton. I, in that cold cell, felt how all of my world and illusions vanished. I came to this country for: a better future for my children, a quality education, to visit all of the fifty states in this country, to learn the language and have a big house where my children could run freely, of giving them everything that my husband and I didn't have in our country of origin. But the day that I was detained by ICE, my reality was being incarcerated, being cold, hungry, feeling alone, sad and abandoned in that cold cell. I felt how my human dignity fell through the floor when they asked me to undress and they inspected me through all parts of my body as if I were hiding something, when my only crime was to look for a way to provide for my children. That day marked my life, when my nightmare began; I was on my way to work and never returned. And today, thanks to God, and the mobilization of the people I got out of that hell. My story does not end here; I am still in deportation proceedings but I am no longer afraid. That is the reason I am here coming out of the shadows. Because I feel my skin curling [goose bumps] and my heart breaks when thinking that my children could be left without their mother. And all of their dreams and mine will be truncated. I will not stop fighting. I will not let them separate me from my children. No more deportations. No more separation of families! Two million is too many!

Prison + Neighborhood Art Project

www.p-nap.org



From “PNAP: End of Year Report”:

During the 2013-2014 academic year, faculty and volunteers with PNAP participated in a range of activities at Stateville and in the Chicago region:

- 8 courses offered at Stateville

- 11 guest lecturers visited classes at Stateville

- 1 ceremony for men who completed classes at the prison

- 1 annual exhibition of work developed in PNAP classes

- 3 exhibitions in which PNAP work was featured

- 3 film screenings organized by PNAP volunteers

- 1 roundtable discussion

PNAP has served 75 students and more than 250 people have attended PNAP events this year.

Written in “Poetry” course, 2013-14

Metaphors

Are we too blind to read the signs
Disregarding the warning or cautions
Life now at an auction, full of
Have or Have Nots,
Big Spenders or Broke Niggas
Fast talker and slow learner
Every time I give Birth to a line, let it
Marinate in my pot, under a slow burner
So alert the coroner, there's going
To be casualties—
Keep insisting to move forward
In stupidity, then it's my destiny
To bring ya back to reality
Cause I was born with exquisite taste
Real big on Loyalty—
Instead of closing my eyes
I stare right down the barrel of adversity
It's a drought on real poetry
So my ears stay thirsty
Knew you heard of me
My aim is to change this
Commercial game
With pen point acuity
Don't be silly, rather get your tooth
Pulled than try and battle me
Know the shit I spit, venom
Should be prohibited
Because it changes lives, opinions
And personalities.
Don't matter how you want it
Anaphora, enjambment, quatrain,
Ghazal, metaphors or simile
Just call it a grown man flow
With a touch of growth and maturity, yesterday
Poets really bore me. Because I
Can I relate more to Nikky Finney, and I
Don't mean disrespect to
Those come before me
But if spoken word's yo language
Then I must speak poetry fluidly
You think Shahid Nice
Well, I'm something like an armed
Robbery, real messed up debauchery

So leave them hands up
For this Fed-Ex delivery
You can be diagnosed with
Alzheimer's, but remember me
Real classic proficiency
Got lyrics to fit my formality
Color, Creed, religion or nationality
Juvenile had 'bout 400 degrees
But never hot as me, need answers,
Well keep them, he's out yo bars
Then no one can question yo credibility
An' remember to prosper, you must
First conquer them 4 biggest fears of life
That Death, Poverty, Change,
And Uncertainty

By: C. Young

Written in “Personal Narrative As Political Form” course, Spring 2014

“The gun muzzle flash . . .”

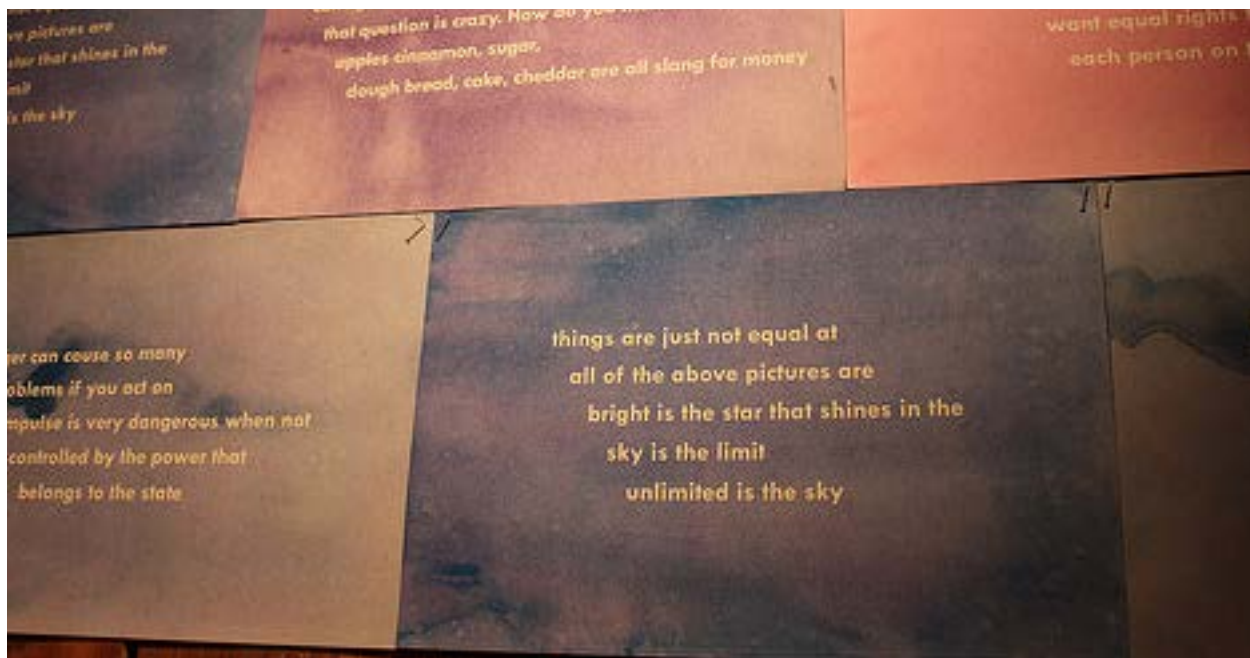
by M. Dixon

The gun muzzle flash unleashed a wrecking ball that destroyed all hopes for tomorrow. My youthful ambition lay in a mass of broken wood and brick and twisted aluminum. Blinded by “street shine,” I couldn’t see the murder of my mother’s hope for caps n’ gown glory. It lay crushed in the rubble alongside my father’s pride for his first-born. No diploma; I stand here nervously fingering the jagged pages of my trial transcripts preparing to frame them for posterity. “Road trip!” yells the judge, bent on exploring the extent of this disaster. From Joilet, to Menard, to Pontiac, to Stateville, each destination becomes a mission to find the source of this devastation. A promising future reduced to a heap of “what if?”

“Measure twice, cut once” grandfather advised. “Don’t grow up too fast,” says mom with fortune cookie wisdom. “You shouldn’t go out!” my sisters turned prophets foresee. “You know I love you right?” my girlfriend asks and the concern on her face signals her worry. Each carrying a briefcase of knowledge, they’d analyzed my investment portfolio and found it filled with failing stocks. “Sell! Get out” I thought I heard a still, small voice speak from the penthouse office. Sometime later I realize the voice said, “Cell, watch out!”



Photos: P+NAP 2014 Annual Exhibition at the South Side Community Art Center



Written in “Social Change Histories” course, Spring 2014

Reflections on David Walker’s Appeal

By A. Patterson

Walker appeals to his “afflicted and slumbering” brethren to free themselves from the chains that bind their minds as well as their bodies. This resonates with me and immediately I draw a parallel to Robin Kelly’s *Freedom Dreams* (2002) where he speaks about a main component of social change as self-transformation, or transforming how we think. After generations of slavery, do psychological chains bind tighter than physical ones?

I believe that is the case now. Throughout the world, people’s minds are bound by shackles of ignorance, complacency, hopelessness and just plain apathy. I forgot to mention disunity through the illusion of race and all other types of prejudices “had Carthage been well united and had given him good support...” But they were disunited, as people of color are now, in the United State of America, “the reason our natural enemies are enabled to keep their feet on our throats” (Walker’s Appeal, 23).

But particularly here, in this dismal crypt, psychological slavery is on full display. A lot of us are content just to make it. Survive. Exist as comfortably as possible. But we make a lot of compromises in the name of comfort and survival. We are so deprived we become greedy for everything that will alleviate this deprivation. The state of the “corrections” system shows, as Walker notes, “what a bearing avarice has upon a people” (46).

Essentially (inmates, friends and families of inmates) enable this system to keep their foot on our necks, and stop any reform. We support the tyrant of the corrections system through buying into the phone system, commissary, and vending machines. Everything that enables the prison industrial complex is fed by the money of friends and family and by the labor of inmates. I am guilty of the latter and some days I wrestle with the idea that I am one of these slaves that had the opportunity to run but did not.

**I SUPPORT PALESTINE
I SUPPORT WOMEN
I SUPPORT RASMEA**



**SIGN PETITION NOW:
[TINYURL.COM/RASME](https://tinyurl.com/rasme)**

Chicago work to support Rasmea Odeh

<http://inciteblog.wordpress.com/2014/09/16/justice-for-rasmea-odeh/>

Rasmea Odeh is a Chicago-based Palestinian American feminist, educator, and community leader. Her groundbreaking lifelong efforts to empower Arab and immigrant women have inspired generations of Arab feminist activists.

Rasmea Odeh faced criminal charges for alleged failure to disclose, during immigration proceedings, that she had been tortured and imprisoned in an Israeli jail. Though she has lived in the US for 19 years and has been a US citizen since 2004, she faces a 10-year prison sentence and revocation of citizenship because she was convicted of immigration fraud in federal court in Detroit on November 10, 2014, for having concealed her arrest, conviction, and imprisonment for a fatal terrorist bombing.

She had her bail revoked and was taken into custody upon the conclusion of her trial, as the judge found her to be a flight risk. She will be sentenced on March 10, 2015. Protest and resistance is ongoing.

We encourage you to continue to **send letters of support to Rasmea**. (Please remember that prison authorities will read all of your letters.)

Rasmieh Odeh #144979

St. Clair County Jail

1170 Michigan

Port Huron, MI. 48060

Fundraise and contribute to Rasmea's commissary fund and to her ongoing defense. Donate at www.stopfbi.net/donate. Commissary funds allow Rasmea to purchase food, blankets, writing materials, and other items to make her more comfortable in jail. Expenses continue to mount for Rasmea's legal defense and the ongoing community organizing around her case. **We will file an appeal of this unjust verdict, and that will take resources.**

Spread the word! When publicizing on social media, use the hashtags #Justice4Rasmea and #FreeRasmeaNow.

Protest to #FreeRasmeaNow in Chicago TODAY, Nov. 12

– NOVEMBER 12, 2014



Emergency protest to #FreeRasmeaNow

Join USPCN and the Rasmea Defense Committee for the first protest in Rasmea's home city since she was unjustly convicted and arrested two days ago.

Facebook event: <https://www.facebook.com/events/>

Wednesday, November 12th, 2014, at 4:30 PM

Federal Plaza (50 W. Adams St.) in downtown Chicago

People's Thanksgiving in Chicago, fundraiser for Rasmea!

Saturday 2014-11-22 16:00 -20:00

Location:

Trinity Episcopal Church
125 East 26th Street
Chicago, IL

23rd Annual People's Thanksgiving Dinner in Chicago
Hosted by Fight Back! /¡Lucha y Resiste! Newspaper
A fundraiser for the defense of Rasmea Odeh

Stateville Speaks

<http://www.neiu.edu/academics/college-of-arts-and-sciences/departments/justice-studies-department/stateville-speaks>

Stateville Speaks is a newsletter written by and for incarcerated individuals, their families, those working in the correctional system, and other interested citizens. *Stateville Speaks* emerged from a prison essay contest. Response to the contest was enormous, and the writing was so good, that Mr. Bill Ryan, a longtime Chicago justice worker, took the entries and published a book entitled *Lockdown Prison Hearts*. But writings kept pouring in and the *Stateville Speaks* newsletter was launched. What began as a few mimeographed pages with 200 readers, is today a publication that reaches more than 3,000 inmates, the general public, politicians and the media. Published three times a year, it is now about 20 pages in length, and includes information important to incarcerated individuals. It also publishes original poetry, essays, cartoons, and artwork by the men incarcerated at Stateville.

In 2014 *Stateville Speaks* focused a special issue on **HB 3668**, also known as the “Elder Bill,” which would permit elders to petition for parole. Read about this Bill in the pages of this special issue of *Stateville Speaks* reprinted below.

HOUSE BILL 3668 TALKING POINTS

By Aviva Futorian

- Illinois no longer has parole (i.e., eligibility to be released early for good behavior) for adult prisoners.
- Illinois prisons are overcrowded, operating at a crushing 144% of capacity. The number of prisoners over 50 years of age in the IDOC has grown from 1,030 in 1990 to 7,162; the number of prisoners who have served over 25 years in prison has grown from 32 in 1990 to 1,009.
- House Bill 3668 would enable an elderly prisoner who is 50 years old or older and has served 25 or more consecutive years to petition the Prisoner Review Board (PRB) for a modification of his/her sentence.
- Families of crime victims will be notified in a timely manner of each petition and board Hearing. Families will be afforded opportunity for input into the sentence modification process.
- The Elderly Bill is not “a get out of jail free” pass. The PRB could order the release of a person only if it finds that the petitioner has transformed his/her life in prison and poses no threat to public safety.
- This bill puts a mechanism in place to distinguish those elderly and long-term offenders who over decades have turned their lives around and become fully rehabilitated, from those who have not changed and are not rehabilitated.



Representative Arthur Turner (D-IL)

ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, AND MORAL BENEFITS OF HB 3668

- This legislation will save money. Many elderly prisoners are sick, bed ridden; need dialysis and other expensive treatment, and require time and attention from an already overburdened staff. The cost of housing a prisoner over 50 years old is approx. \$70,000 per year (as compared to \$23,000 for inmates under 50). Medical costs for prisoners constitute one-third of IDOC's \$1.2 billion budget. This figure will continue to escalate as the prison population continues to age.
- The number of prisoners currently eligible to apply for sentence reduction under the Elderly Bill is hardly 900. If only 100 such prisoners or about 1 in ten was released, the State would save \$7.5 million; if 200 or 2 in 10 were released, the State would save \$15 million.
- It will make prisons safer for staff and inmates by providing an incentive for good behavior by prisoners. Prisoners will stop focusing on gang loyalty or anger at staff and start making sound choices. Under Illinois' former parole system (abolished in 1978), prisoners were known to warn staff of impending danger.
- It will reduce overcrowding, increasing opportunities for greater security and more vocational and educational programs.
- National studies demonstrate that prisoners over 50 years of age who have served long sentences have virtually no recidivism rate for violent crimes – and a negligible recidivism rate for violation of parole agency rules.
- Inmates recently paroled under the old system (those sentenced before 1978) have a recidivism rate of 2% -- compared with the average IDOC rate of over 50%.
- There is no social good in keeping such people in prison at a cost to taxpayers of \$70,000/year.
- The requirements for modification are stringent and will only be met by the truly rehabilitated petitioners.
- The Illinois Constitution mandates the purpose of incarceration is to return prisoners to “useful citizenship.” (Article I, Section 11) ■

HB 3668 SHORT SUMMARY

SYNOPSIS OF BILL

- Provides that a prisoner who is at least 50 years of age and who has served at least 25 consecutive years of imprisonment may become eligible to petition the Prisoner Review Board for parole.
- Victims receive notification of petition.
- PRB must find that the prisoner poses no threat to public safety.
- PRB may set conditions on release, including participation in programs and wearing electronic monitoring device.

HB 3668 LONG SUMMARY

SYNOPSIS OF BILL

(from state website)

- Amends the Unified Code of Corrections.
- Provides that a committed person who is at least 50 years of age and who has served at least 25 consecutive years of imprisonment in a Department of Corrections institution or facility may petition the Prisoner Review Board for participation in the Elderly Rehabilitated Prisoner Sentence Modification Program.
- Provides that if the committed person files the petition, the victims and the families of the victims of the committed person's offenses shall be notified in a timely manner after the filing of the petition.
- Provides that the Board shall consider the petition in its entirety and shall not order the release of the committed person if it finds that the committed person poses a threat to public safety.
- Provides that if the Board determines that a committed person is eligible for participation in the Program and that the committed person should participate in the Program, the Board shall set the conditions for the committed person's release from prison before the expiration of his or her sentence.
- Provides that when granting participation in the Program, the Board may require the committed person, for a period of time upon release, to participate in community service or to wear an electronic monitoring device, or both. ■



A CHANCE TO SPEAK

By Janet Jackson

I will be 60 in 2014 and working on my 28th year of incarceration. In 1986 I was given a life without possibility of parole under the accountability theory. I did not kill my abusive husband. My two co-defendants accepted pleas (one was a former foster child who lived in our home) and were given lesser sentences than mine.

I would not accept a plea as I did not see how I could be found guilty of something I did not do. This is my first and only criminal offense.

My husband was abusive toward me. He was physically and verbally abusive for years. During my trial the judge ruled evidence of abuse could not be introduced as evidence. Thank God this is no longer possible. Congress passed and President Bush signed legislation mandating evidence of spousal abuse be considered by the court. This law was effective in 1992. Unfortunately the statute was not retroactive. Illinois has not taken action to make statute applicable in cases heard prior to 1992. I am one of several women with cases similar to mine who have never had abusive treatment considered

by court.

The years passed. Then decades. I learned and learned, grew and grew. My own mental illness brought on my abuse had a name...battered woman syndrome. I received treatment in prison. I may flinch at loud voices but I no longer cower in a corner shutting down

I have forgiven my abuser, forgiven those who murdered my husband, and asked for forgiveness for myself.

I have given my life to God. Starting with a high school diploma I earned an Associate Degree from Lincoln College. In 1995 I was awarded a Bachelor Degree from Lewis University. In 2011 I was awarded a Masters in Divinity degree from Shalom Bible College. In 2013 I earned a Doctorate in Christian counseling. I am an ordained and licensed minister.

I also earned a paralegal certificate. I am an approved graduate from the Americans with Disabilities Attendant program. I am part of very new and effective Disability program in Logan prison.

My prison record is excel-

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CHANGE HAPPENS

By Tom Odle

My name is Tom Odle and I am writing as a member of the population of men doing life without the possibility of parole. When I entered this system I was 18 years old and now this year I will turn 47 years old. At the young age of 18, anger and blame, coupled with the inability to accept responsibility, ruled my existence. This was my life for a good many years. Unfortunately and as shameful as it is to say, it took a good many years for me to come to an understanding about myself.

For some reason, still unknown to me, I am a stubborn breed of individual who initially shuns those understandings and does not assume responsibility for my actions. Eventually I came around though because it got tiring and I realized that change must first come within myself before change can come from other places. I realize the value of human life just from the way my own life has been directed. There is loss, shame, guilt, alienation from family, and many other forms of emotional trauma I experienced; but this by no means outweighs anything felt by my victims. I also came to an

understanding within myself that helped me to empathize with my victims.

Unfortunately, 90% of us doing these long term sentences were very young at the time of our offense and left to serve the rest of our natural lives without any value whatsoever, and all hope for redemption erased. Most of these offenses were done in the heat of the moment. We all know when we are young we act more on emotion than intelligence. Through growing up, we learn more how to act after thinking than acting before thinking, and for the most part we hope to be forgiven because of our youth. Change happens, which is what this bill gives everyone a chance to see.

It does not allow for immediate release at 25 years or at 50 years old, but it gives a chance for review of that change. Did we change? Change for better or for worse? Would we be an asset to society? Questions like that would be asked and answered by the courts, D.O.C., and even the person on review. Restorative justice programs thrive in many other states that helps both of-

SEE CHANGE, PAGE 11

LETTERS

My name is Jeff Bartik. I'm 52 years old and I'm 29 years into a Natural Life sentence for murder. I beat a woman to death in her home while high on PCP although I couldn't prove the last part. I was about as messed up as a person could be, but I wasn't far enough gone not to realize that I had done something horribly wrong and it haunted me. The police didn't even consider me a suspect in the crime. I could have gotten away with it, but I was so torn up inside over what I had done to that poor woman that I turned myself into the police and even gave up a non-negotiated plea of guilty to murder in court. I am also a first-time offender and that along with my non-negotiated guilty plea did me no good come sentencing time. If you know anything about the Circuit Court in Du Page County, then you know why.

I'm not bitter though. I did this to myself. A good person who had every right to feel safe and secure in her own home is dead because of me. The depth of sorrow my heart feels for that leaves no room for any bitterness over my circumstances. In fact, I consider that the Lord has blessed me far beyond what I could ever have dreamed possible for me. My blessing has a name; it is Denise. We've known each other since we were 12 years old and have been married since 1996. It is her unflinching love and dedication demonstrated over the last 30 years that has inspired me to be a better person and aspire to be the person she believes I can be. There is no greater motivation than love, not the physical kind but the self-sacrificial kind. Consider that for the last 29 years I've had no practical hope of ever seeing the streets again, yet there is a burning passion inside of me that drives me to be all that I can be because my love for my wife and her love for me will accept nothing less.

I've tried to take advantage of the opportunities that have been provided to improve and rehabilitate myself. I've gone to Barber College and gotten my barber's license. Even though arthritis in my hands is a problem, I enjoy providing a valuable service that can make people feel better about themselves. I have a strong work ethic and have had a job during almost all of my incarceration. I took some college courses when they were available and accumulated 30 credit hours with a 3.6 GPA. I'm currently enrolled in the American Bible Academy's correspondence course. I'm active in my church. I tutor fellow inmates who are studying for their GEDs. And I haven't had a disciplinary report against me for the last ten years.

My sentence, which requires that I spend the rest of my life in prison, serves no useful purpose to anyone other than to perpetuate the human warehousing industry. I am not a criminally minded person. I abhor the criminal mindset that I have been subjected to for the last three decades. I hate it when people brag about their criminal exploits. All I want is the chance to be a proper husband to my wife, to make a contribution to the community, and to prove that I can be of value to society. I believe that I can factually demonstrate my ability to comply with the requirements of the elderly sentencing bill. That's not an easy thing to do. A person would have to have been working for years towards the ends it demands and that with no carrot on a stick to motivate him or her. Those of us with a healthy and realistic view of the world do not expect that the prison gates will be thrown open for us, but we welcome the opportunity to prove that we can stand above the stereotype.

Jeff Bartik

My husband was sexually abusing my daughter Kimberly. She was his step-daughter. Yes, I realize I was not supposed to take the law into my own hands. I feel terrible because both of our families suffered from my actions. I wish so much I could turn back the hands of time because of all the pain and suffering I caused but that is impossible. My charge is murder with solicitation/conspiracy. I came from DuPage County with a sentence of 75 years. I am a first time offender and was a solid, stable member of my community. My co-defendant (the trigger man) got a 20-year sentence. I am here because of accountability. I have been locked down since June, 1984 with an outdate of 2021. As the years go by, my medical needs are numerous. I am 60 years old.

Sincerely,
Diane Maletta

I am a 67-year-old female who has been imprisoned since 1979 for the crime of murder. Not a day has passed that I don't think about the man I shot or the terror I created. I shot a man while on a shoplifting spree because he attempted to stop me. I pray each day for the victim's loved ones and friends whom I know still miss him. My life has been consumed with guilt, and I have thought of that one day over and over, replaying its events and wishing that miraculously its outcome could be changed. In my heart I harbor the deepest regret and remorse.

I could not see the remaining years of my own life as salvageable and for that reason it's excruciatingly hard to write about my own accomplishments, but I did pick up what was left of my life perhaps for my mother or my children, or my grandchildren. Perhaps I felt that eventually my story would change the outcome of another woman's life. For whatever dignity has been stripped from me, I still have the ability to touch another person's life. I think because I was allowed to lose and give back in some way that I mustered the strength to carry on and to even excel.

I have achieved my AA and AAS Degree, then a BES Degree, a Tutoring Certificate, Safety and Sanitation License, Restaurant Management and computer classes, and 6 years of on the job training in Prison Industries, where I was taught to operate and use many high powered machines used in the manufacturing of prison clothing and guard uniforms which are used statewide. Now at 64 years of age I am medically unassigned because of bronchial asthma and COPD, plus a bulging spinal disc that has restricted movement.

I reside in a Maximum Security Prison, Logan Correctional Center. The population is roughly around 2,000. It would be a great kindness to elderly prisoners who are no longer able to work or obtain a release from overcrowded and sometimes volatile conditions which exist in prison.

My children are adults who reside in other states too far away to afford the expense of traveling to visit. My only means of contact is through letters, and I write many letters to keep in close touch. I do have friends who would provide me with a home to go to in the event I was released. I am grateful to everyone who reads this, and I pray you will support the change we ask for.

Pearl Tuma

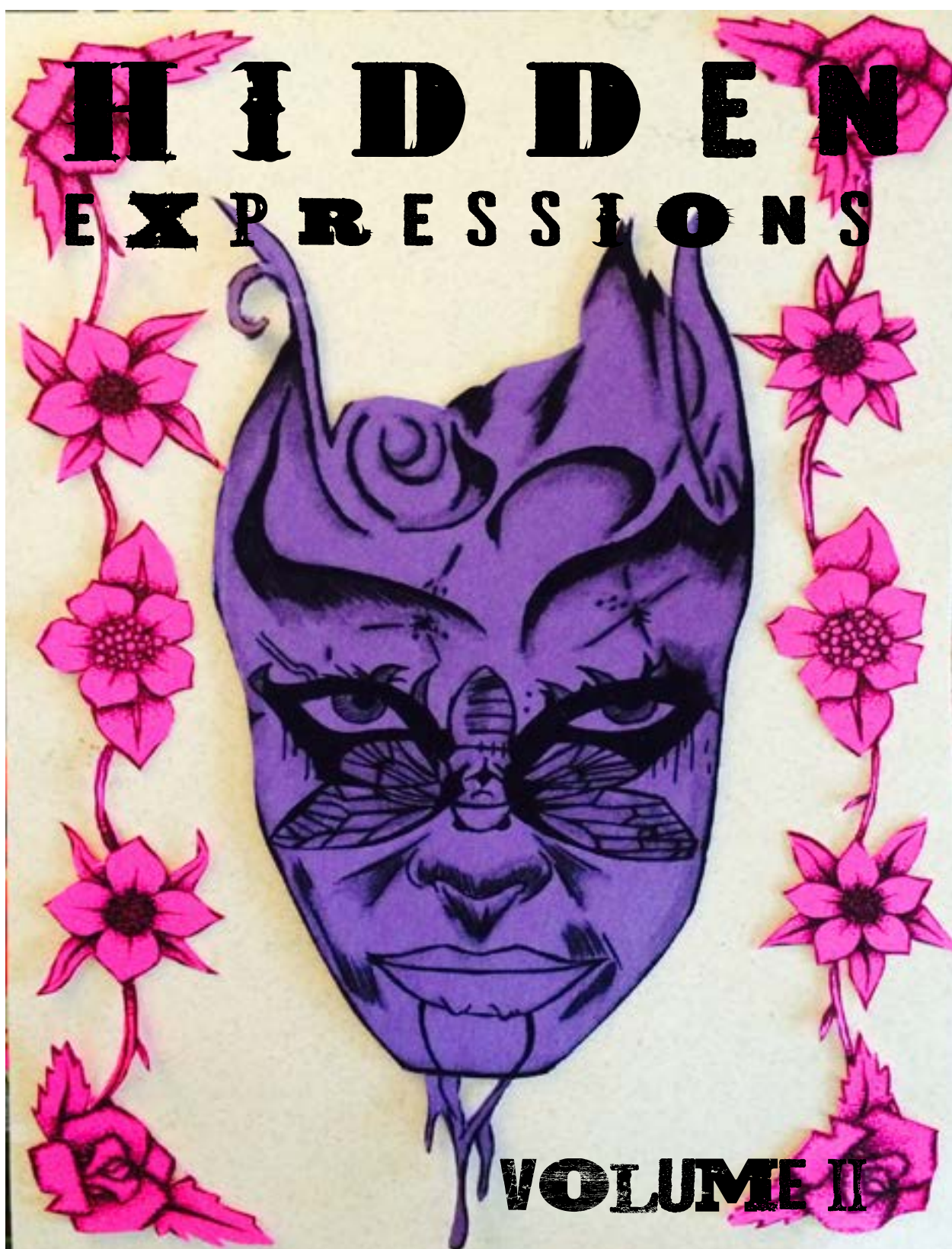


Billie Williams, May 2014 Graduate

St. Leonard's Ministries

<http://slministries.org/mbc-education/>

St. Leonard's Adult High School provides an opportunity for formerly incarcerated adult students (over the age of 21) to earn a high school diploma. The program has been in operation for over ten years and has graduated more than 400 students. Classes meet four nights a week for 3.5 hours and are taught by some of the finest educators in Chicago. For those who are not residents of St. Leonard' Ministries and are interested in enrolling, registration for the fall semester opens the first week of August, and registration for the spring semester opens the second week of January.



Transformative Justice Law Project of Illinois

<http://tjlp.org/>

The Transformative Justice Law Project of Illinois (TJLP) is a collective of radical lawyers, social workers, activists, and community organizers who are deeply committed to three core values: 1) the right to gender self-determination, 2) commitment to a long-term goal of prison abolition, and 3) dedication to resisting state-sponsored systems of control through transformative justice and community empowerment models. These core values guide every aspect of our work, from which cases we take, to choosing which legislative efforts to support, to which community groups to be closely allied with.



Hidden Expressions zine release event, 2014

Transformative Justice Law Project of Illinois
4707 N. Broadway, Suite 307
Chicago, IL 60640
773.272.1822 (p)
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Excerpt from “Notes From the Editors,” *Hidden Expressions* v.2.

As a collective of incarcerated and formerly incarcerated trans women, we have shared with each other our feelings of anger and disappointment about organizations and individuals who claim they want to help us, but instead speak for us, tokenize us, and exploit us. We are particularly cautious of mainstream LGBT organizations, many of whom have distanced themselves from our communities for racist and transphobic reasons. While we seek to build political coalitions with trans and queer people who are not criminalized, as well as non-trans people who share our experiences of racism and incarceration, we also believe that criminalized transgender people need our own publications, political leaders, voices, community-building projects, and movements, or else we risk being further marginalized by activists who don't share or care about our experiences. We don't want to work with people who just want to tokenize us while furthering their own agendas of assimilation and leaving us behind. **We are sick of scholars, doctors, educators, non-profits, and lawyers getting paid to study us and tell our stories. While some of them may have an important place in the revolution, our primary goal with *Hidden Expressions* is to share our wisdom, stories, and strategies *with each other*, to support the organizing and strikes and demonstrations happening already on the inside, and to set ourselves on our own path to liberation. We align ourselves only with those revolutionary movements and activists who share that vision.**

However, many trans women on the inside with whom we have tried to organize have deep trust issues, as though everyone who associates or befriends them is only doing so with ulterior motives. While this is an important survival strategy for many people, **we believe that loyalty is nonexistent without the ability to trust each other, and loyalty is necessary if we want to work together while under intense surveillance to build a movement that meets our needs.** Similarly, some of the sisters inside have developed such low self-esteem that they are taken advantage of by anyone who shows them positive attention, which often leads to heartbreak, violence, and more loss of trust. If we don't feel secure in ourselves, we lack the power and motivation to say that we deserve to build a better world. It's not our fault that many of us lack trust and self-love – it's the direct result of living in these institutions, surrounded by racism, transphobia, fear, and violence. We believe that prison staff keep us from trusting each other or loving ourselves because it makes us easier for them to control. Instead, they pit us against each other, and they force us to compete with each other for resources and respect until all sense of community is lost. Some of us have tried to start politically conscious trans or LGBTQ organizations on the inside, and they have either been squashed by the administration, or torn apart from the inside by disagreements, competition, and distrust. It hurts to see our potential for empowerment destroyed over such foolishness, instead of disassembling our oppressors' power over us and combating it with intellect and dignity. We have to listen to each other on the inside of the wall. We encourage our trans comrades on the inside to remember that if day-to-day survival behind these walls is itself an act of revolutionary resistance, then *helping* each other to survive is fundamentally threatening to our oppressors. **The prison-industrial complex has become frighteningly efficient at destroying our communities and political movements from the inside out by exploiting our disagreements and our differences, and using them against us. By building trust, solidarity, and support with each other, we can stay ahead of our oppressors and continue to dream and build the world we want to live in. While a life for anyone behind bars is brutal and challenging, we must fight to not become this place.**

Photos: We Charge Genocide's UN delegation



We Charge Genocide

<http://wechargegenocide.org/>

We Charge Genocide is a grassroots, inter-generational effort to center the voices and experiences of the young people most targeted by police violence in Chicago. Instances of police violence reveal the underlying relationship between marginalized communities and the state. This is a relationship of unequal access to power and resources. This is also a relationship where violence is too often used by the police to silence, isolate, control and repress low-income people and young people of color in particular.

Right now, young people in communities across Chicago are being targeted, harassed and violated by law enforcement. Some will unfortunately also be physically hurt and perhaps killed. Recent stories, such as the incident where a young man named Damo was tased by the police, hit his head, and later died, make us feel overwhelmed and at times powerless about how to respond.

We Charge Genocide was started to offer a vehicle for needed organizing and social transformation. The initiative is entirely volunteer-run. We are Chicago residents concerned that the epidemic of police violence continues uninterrupted in our city. We are not a 501c3 and we do this work intentionally outside of the nonprofit industrial complex (which has sometimes silenced community advocates from being able to propose radical ideas and solutions). The name We Charge Genocide comes from a petition filed to the United Nations in 1951, which documented 153 racial killings and other human rights abuses, mostly by the police.

There is a long tradition of collecting testimonies of human rights violations and taking those to the UN but there's never been a specifically youth-driven effort. We want to connect the dots through lifting up youth testimony and youth voices on police violence in our city.

In addition, We Charge Genocide hopes to equip individuals across Chicago with information, resources, and tools to more proactively “police” the police. We Charge Genocide respects and seeks to lift up the existing efforts to hold the Chicago Police Department (CPD) accountable, to reform the CPD, and in some cases to seek viable alternatives to policing. Our goal is not to reinvent the wheel but rather to explicitly include young people’s voices in these efforts and to encourage youth-driven solutions.

Our work to end police violence relies on two primary strategies: education and documentation. Both are central to our organizing efforts. We invite community involvement (and especially youth involvement) in “We Charge Genocide.”

Want to join We Charge Genocide?

New members are welcome to attend our monthly meetings.

Please email info@wechargegenocide.org for more information.



We Charge Genocide Demands for National Day of Protest Against Police Brutality

(inspired by #BlackLivesMatter demands)

1. We call for a decrease in CPD spending and a reinvestment of that budgeted money into the black communities most devastated by poverty in order to create jobs, housing and schools. This money should be redirected to those city departments charged with providing employment, housing and educational services.
2. We demand reparations for the survivors and victims of Chicago Police Torture.
3. We demand that the federal government discontinue its supply of military weaponry and equipment to local law enforcement, including the Chicago Police Department.
4. We demand that the CPD answer the questions that we have posed in the interest of transparency and accountability. See cpdquestions.tumblr.com.
5. We call on the CPD to release the names of all officers involved in killing Roshad McIntosh.



UN Committee Against Torture Calls Out Chicago Police Brutality, 'Excessive Use of Force'

By: Kevin Gosztola

Friday November 28, 2014

Earlier this month, a US delegation appeared before the committee as all countries that are signatories to the treaty banning torture are supposed to do every four years. Committee members were able to ask officials in the delegation any questions. Delegations from civil society organizations were also able to submit "shadow reports" on the US that committee would use to help them review the country's record.

The US government's insistence that a federal law specifically prohibiting torture is unnecessary, holds a "restrictive interpretation" of how the treaty applies to "any territory" under US control, captives remain in indefinite detention without charge or trial at Guantanamo Bay prison and hunger strikers are subject to cruel and inhuman forced-feeding and the failure to appropriately hold officials accountable for torture were each some of the concerns.

Yet, even more remarkable was the fact that an entire section on police brutality and "excessive use of force" in the US solely focused on the Chicago Police Department.

The committee expressed "deep concern at the frequent and recurrent police shootings or fatal pursuits of unarmed black individuals. In this regard, the committee notes the alleged difficulties to hold police officers and their employers accountable for abuses."

"While noting the information provided by the delegation that over the past five years 20 investigations were opened into allegations of systematic police department violations, and over 330 police officers were criminally prosecuted, the Committee regrets the lack of statistical data available on allegations of police brutality and the lack of information on the result of the investigations undertaken in respect of those allegations," the report added.

The committee proceeded to address the issue of torture committed by Chicago Police Department Commander Jon Burge and other police officers between 1972 and 1991 and share its dismay that no officer has been "convicted for these acts of torture for reasons including the statute of limitations expiring."

It acknowledged that a federal investigation had asserted there were no "prosecutable constitutional violations" uncovered, however, the committee criticized the fact that the "vast majority of those tortured—most of them African Americans—have received no compensation for the extensive injuries suffered."

What stands out is how what has been happening in St. Louis County, Missouri, particularly Ferguson, went unmentioned in the report. There is nothing about the shooting of Michael Brown. The increased militarization of police activities is noted, but the primary concern of

the committee is Chicago police.

This is largely a result of a Chicago-based grassroots organization, We Charge Genocide, which produced a thorough “shadow report” and traveled to Geneva to present their findings to the UN committee. And the organization was pleased with their success, that the group’s experiences formed the “bedrock” of the committee’s concerns and recommendations.

“We went to Geneva as a delegation of We Charge Genocide with the intention of getting Chicago visibly named as a site for systematic, horrific & punitive police violence against Black and Brown youth on a daily basis, and it is safe to say that we achieved our goal,” the organization declared in a statement provided to Firedoglake.

The organization was “overwhelmed with gratitude” that police violence was “specifically named as a deep concern.”

“While going to Geneva to present our report on police violence against Black & Brown youth in Chicago was not our end goal as We Charge Genocide, we feel a slight sense of relief in the fact that the violence that Black and Brown youth systematically experience every day in Chicago is now getting the attention, internationally, that it deserves, which will only serve as an uplifting foundation in our continued work in challenging police violence in Chicago.”

Additionally, the committee highlighted Dominique Franklin Jr. of Sauk Village, Illinois, who died after Chicago police used a taser on him. The committee recommended that the US establish a “high threshold” for taser use and expressly prohibit “their use on children and pregnant women.”

Without the efforts of We Charge Genocide, the committee would not have mentioned Franklin in its section on restricting the use of tasers.

Additionally, there was a recommendation that the Chicago City Council pass the “Reparations for Chicago Police Torture Survivors” ordinance. This is probably the result of efforts by the Chicago Torture Justice Memorial.

The committee’s criticisms and recommendations were released at a time when protests against police violence are happening all over the country after a grand jury decided not to indict Ferguson police officer Darren Wilson for killing Michael Brown.

“This report—along with the voices of Americans protesting around the country this week—is a wake-up call for police who think they can act with impunity,” American Civil Liberties Union Human Rights Program Director Jamil Dakwar said. “It’s time for systemic policing reforms and effective oversight that make sure law enforcement agencies treat all citizens with equal respect and hold officers accountable when they cross the line.”

Source: <http://dissenter.firedoglake.com/2014/11/28/un-committee-against-torture-calls-out-chicago-police-for-brutality-excessive-use-of-force/>



Ad hoc memorial for Michael Brown, located at the site where Brown was shot by police in Ferguson, Mo. on August 9th, 2014.
(AP Photo/Charlie Riedel)



Protests in Ferguson, Mo. after the murder of Michael Brown.

