



PAN

VOLUME 9.1

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Prison Action News
PO Box 832
Watertown, MA 02472

Prison Action News is a newsletter for prisoners worldwide to report on their struggles and acts of resistance from behind bars. All submissions must be **RECEIVED by January 1st or July 1st** and be in compliance with the guidelines below. Please note that we retain the right as editors to alter submissions for grammatical and content-related issues. Prison Action News is one part of the multi-faceted Prison Abolition movement. We believe that the writing in Prison Action News is as important as poetry or political essays, but is often less represented.

History:

The idea for Prison Action News came out of the 2007 Anarchist Black Cross (ABC) Network gathering. We wanted to create a venue for prisoners to share updates of their activities, similar to the updates we wrote in the network newsletter. As people on the outside, we can facilitate this dialog of prison resistance, and help our comrades stay informed about the inspiring actions others are taking. We accept submissions from prisoners and prison groups worldwide, and bilingual writing. With your help this newsletter will be a success- if you know of resistance taking place that is not represented here, please send us a submission, and spread the word!

Please send ALL SUBMISSIONS, SUBSCRIPTION REQUESTS and ADDRESS CHANGES to:

Prison Action News PO Box 832 Watertown, MA 02472
prisonactionnews@riseup.net

Guidelines

1. A submission must not exceed 500 words.
2. We will not accept submissions with racist, sexist, homophobic, or otherwise oppressive language.
3. An update may be a report on resistance activities of individual prisoners or prison groups (this can include, but is not limited to, radical book groups, hunger strike, general strike, letter writing campaigns, etc.).
4. A report should not be a political essay or a report on prison conditions, rather, the response and resistance to these conditions.
5. PAN accepts entries of artwork and illustrations.
6. One submission per group, per prison, per newsletter.
7. We will not report on gang activity.
8. We accept bilingual entries (when one language is English), as well as Spanish entries! *Aceptamos la escritura en español.*
9. Entries may be submitted for publication by prison groups and organizations, or individuals, and may be submitted for publication with the name and contact information of the writer, or anonymously, to protect their identity.

PLEASE MAIL US YOUR ART FOR FUTURE ISSUES!!!

"All is for all! If the man and the woman bear their fair share of work, they have a right to their fair share of all that is produced by all, and that share is enough to secure them well-being. No more of such vague formulas as "The Right to work," or "To each the whole result of his labour." What we proclaim is "The Right to Well-Being: Well-Being for All!" Peter Kropotkin - The Conquest of Bread (1907)

ing on the solution. So everyone around me can be who they are while I strive to be better each day. You have to be able to forgive yourself as well as make the effort to have peace in your daily life. When you admit to your faults and make amends in your life you will appreciate yourself and your life so much more. I always allow myself to see the beauty in my freedom. From struggle to survival.

Lisa Strawn

T. Strawn
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Vacaville, CA 95696

Prison Rebels Across US Call for Nationally Coordinated Work Stoppage.

Voices from behind the bars across the country have issued a call for a nationally coordinated protest movement in America's prisons. There are already committed Freedom Movements in Alabama, California, Ohio, Georgia, Mississippi, Virginia. In September of 2016, prisoners in these and other states will refuse to participate in the system of prison slavery which reproduces their conditions of confinement.

The prisoners, who choose to remain anonymous to avoid reprisals from authorities, have called for a peaceful and non-violent work stoppage to occur at that time wherever incarcerated people feel capable of mounting one. The success of this action depends upon outside support and international solidarity. People on the outside who wish to support folks in their region can find more information on line at SupportPrisonerResistance.net including many educational resources and strategy guides.

More information about this nationally coordinated action will be forthcoming, so please keep an ear to the ground and start getting organized where you are at.

Prison wages are not keeping up with the economy. The last wage increase was over a decade ago. Yet, commissary prices continue to increase. Keefe Commissary Network is making bank on us. Coffee and cigarettes are like gold in prison. They even sell pipe tobacco. You aren't supposed to inhale, right? Helping to make more health issues! The inferior appliances Keefe sells have to be replaced too often. A \$5.00 fan costs us \$18.50. Again, Keefe is making bank on inmates that get paid \$0.25 an hour.

This is our world, my home, if we stand up against these atrocities together we could make some changes.

I aim to encourage change. Another step I've taken to learn more is to become a new member of IWOC, Incarcerated Workers Organizing Committee. I am standing, are you?

Thank you,
Antoinette J. Newcomb
ADC #217583
ASP Perryville
Unit Lumley C-42-02L
PO Box 3300
Goodyear, AZ 85395

Struggle to Survival - October 2015

When I was 17 my mother committed suicide. This is when my entire life changed. Not only dealing with her death and trying to understand why, I was also trying to figure out my sexuality and gender. A struggle to survival has been my life for over 40 years and in prison it hasn't been any easier. My drug addiction brought me to prison along with the offenses I was committing. When I caught this case in 1994 I was given 50 to life for burglary under the three strikes law. And most definitely I am not the same person. When you are transgender you have a huge target on your back. That comes from the ignorance and stupidity of people who don't understand that I am still a person. When you have people telling you that you're not a woman everyday, but knowing you are a woman, it does a lot to you. How do you live in an environment with men that are evil? And not just the inmates, you also get it from the staff. Being pointed at, called names, laughed at. It's enough to make you hide. Being the victim of mental and physical abuse by other inmates makes you numb. But somehow I have survived and try each day to change my life and the thinking of others about transgenders. I figure if you put it out there to people then you get them to listen and talk about it. So I've joined a lot of groups in prison to let others see how it is to be real. There are some that understand. And then you have those that are insecure or jealous. A lot of men will disrespect a transgender because they can't deal with their own sexuality. I tell myself you are not going to be what everybody loves. But love yourself. My focus is on how to constantly make the changes in my life that I can. I'm not here to make friends. It isn't how I've survived. My survival comes from not focusing on the problem, but work-

Prison Action News Volume 9 Issue 1 is a special issue, featuring only writings by women, trans* people and gender-nonconforming folks. These are voices that we wish we saw more in EVERY issue of PAN, and in order to raise them up, we are dedicating this issue entirely to their powerful stories of resistance. We hope that every issue of PAN going forward features just as many, if not more, voices of women, trans* people and gender-nonconforming folks as this special issue. Your stories are important, and we look forward to hearing more from you!

*In solidarity and resistance,
PAN Editors*

Please note, Prison Action News CAN accept donations of stamps or envelopes, but can NOT accept checks or money orders, as we do not have a bank account.

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Disclaimer:

Disclaimer: The content of the PAN newsletter is intended solely for information and education. Descriptions and claims appearing in PAN have not been independently verified and should be considered unsubstantiated. Moreover, PAN topics do not necessarily reflect the perspective of any individual involved in its content or production. Likewise, PAN topics do not necessarily reflect the views and opinions of any recipient or of any individual or group mentioned in PAN. This newsletter in no way encourages or supports any illegal behavior. PAN only intends to provide a printed forum for conversation and news. We regret if any PAN entry or passage is misconstrued as a violation of state and/or federal regulations.

THE ALMIGHTY PEN AND PAPER: GRIEVANCES AND LEGAL WORK

Chowchilla, CA - December 2015

Here in Central California Women's Facility we have more than a few transmen. We had an incident here recently where transmen were 'ordered' to shave our mustaches and beards in order to go behind work change to our job sites.

A number of issues arose from this incident – my fellow brothers had been working on the jobsite for approx. one year and here comes a C/O out of retirement – easy money – mainly supervising, given the job is in construction. You would think the C/O would come and make his easy 8 (hours). Instead he has a testosterone moment and complains about the 'guys' at the site and how it is a security risk, etc.

They were given a direct order to shave by a certain date or they would be terminated from their positions. The incident was reported to advocates who wrote the warden immediately to cease all discriminatory actions towards transmen. Just when we thought we had won the battle a war broke out.

A transman went to Committee where a new captain was presiding over and had recently transferred from a male facility. The Captain ordered our brother to shave his beard and mustache and pulled his I.D. so he could not get through work change to work (the same construction site mentioned above).

A call of action came forth and it ended up that the Legal Coordinator of our institution ducated random transmen to a meeting that was held in a foyer of the visiting area with many C/O's within earshot. Basically we were told we would not have any further issues with custody concerning our beards or mustaches.

In the meantime a new set of issues arose – 1. the release of a list of transmen to Administration 2. Administration ducating us to one location – a) now the entire institution (C/O's and Inmates) know who are transmen (HIPPA Violation) b) we did not know one another either—so identities were divulged. Some transmen do not want to be identified. Administration should have never received our information to begin with, let alone display our names and housing for all to see.

What we have decided to do is continue to file against ANY discriminations against us until the treatment of transmen ceases. We are not a threat, nor are we any different than anyone else incarcerated here. I feel ignorance by administrative peoples has put fear into our community where there never was.

We get threatened with comments like “there are places for people like you!”, “those people,” “they think they are men,” etc. This is fear spewed out in the worst of ways – the tongue. We resist discriminatory treatment of transmen.

We encourage all trans people in California Prisons to band together and challenge the ignorance bestowed upon us through the grievance process or contacting outside advocates. Remember if we don't stand for something we will fall for anything. Changes are happening in CCWF. Our voice matters.

In Solidarity, Anonymous - CCWF

invite a wide array of topics. Such topics might include: organizing against police terror; personal triumphs in overcoming past or ongoing trauma; community-based responses to gendered violence and abuse; self-care in high stress environments; the consequences of deprivation in the U.S. prison system; environmental liberation; forms of resistance in women's prisons; do-it-yourself ethics; astrology and planetary transits; et cetera!

Please email *unstoppablepublication@gmail.com if you wish to be involved with this project in any way or if you have a contribution to share.

Or you can write us at *unstoppable, PO Box 11032, Pueblo, CO 81001* to contribute or to get a free subscription if you are currently incarcerated! Please spread the word to folks on the inside and out; we want this distributed broadly!

dearest,
unstoppable.

COMMENTARY AND CALLS TO ACTION

Goodyear, AZ - December 2015

Hello fellow PAN'ers! My name is Antoinette Newcomb. For the past eight years I have been incarcerated at Arizona State Prison Perryville, the only women's prison in Arizona. Thankfully, PAN was my first step on a path to help myself and others. Being raised by a union/political activist mother, I learned to observe before you act. I have observed many issues, but only write about three.

We are overpopulated and understaffed. D.O. Corrections or Corruption? Most assuredly, confusion! The colossal problem here is medical and mental health. We have Physicians' Assistants (glorified nurses writing prescriptions), not doctors. Misdiagnosing and medicating at will, or not diagnosing at all- “drink more water.”

Mental health: 60% of inmates are on meds, way too many are over-medicated. Inmates learn quickly what to say to get the good drugs in a 15-20 minute interview. Basically, we are all addicts of some kind. Switching from illegal drugs to legal drugs. Many inmates need to be housed in a mental health facility for their own protection as well as others. The guards make other inmates take care of the over-medicated zombies. We should not be held responsible for what they do or don't do. During my time here the Arizona Prison System has changed medical companies four times. Before we got our present medical company, “Corizon,” the state was well aware of Corizon's numerous lawsuits. But the lowest bid wins. The bottom line is always money, not our health. Inmate London P. was diagnosed too late with Leukemia/cancer and she passed away less than six months later. 11-13-15 RIP. She will be greatly missed.

SOLIDARITY: WORKING ACROSS THE BARS

Trans & cis women shut down traffic in Seattle over quota to fill detention center - August 2015

<http://www.notonemoredeportation.com/2015/08/03/seattle-2/>

Seattle, WA- “Trans and/or Women’s Action Camp (TWAC)” in solidarity with NWDC Resistance and the Not1More movement to end detentions and deportations, at this moment is doing a civil disobedience action to bring attention to ICE presence in downtown Seattle. TWAC will be calling attention to ICE, located on 1000 Second Ave where they have a large presence and headquarters, and their local quota that guarantees a minimum of 800 beds to be filled at the immigration jail in Tacoma (aka Northwest Detention Center) operated by GEO group corporation. This quota is built into the contract between ICE Seattle and GEO and motivates the agency to round up immigrants in the area. The contract fuels the recent anti-immigrant politics in Congress that exposes the real intentions of Republicans and Democrats who both introduce and pass bills to scapegoat immigrants and exploit family tragedies. Both parties are guilty of criminalizing immigrants further while sustaining the detention and deportation system; one of the most corrupt institutions in the country.

TWAC is bringing attention to the inhumane treatment of transgender detainees at all detention facilities, including the one located in Tacoma.

Unstoppable - November 2015

a new prisoner publication is beginning. it is unstoppable.

Unstoppable is specifically by and for incarcerated folks who identify as women, gendervariant, and/or trans. This anti-authoritarian publication seeks to blend radical political analyses with personal experiences and observations. We want to elevate the voices on the inside that are often excluded from political dialogues, while also asking people on the outside to convey their social and political realities to people on the inside. Unstoppable aims to build bridges across prison walls and beyond them by facilitating dialogue and engagement between those who are incarcerated and those who are not.

Unstoppable is asking for contributions in the form of artwork, poetry, writings, social commentaries, fieldnotes from the prison yard or the streets, critical views of power structures and more. Unstoppable is particularly interested in focusing on gendered issues and systems of social control in the U.S. context, but we



Artwork: Mass Incarceration War by Anastazia - 2015

Dickinson, TX - December 2015

Brothers and sisters,
All prisoners matter in Texas! The time is now...we must STOP ACCEPTING the way the TBPP manipulates the Legislation to keep us inside. We must learn and KNOW our rights. We must petition our state government to get the full scope of our rights, and legislation. IT AFFECTS YOU!!! Below is a sample format letter that you or your family can send to Gov. Abbott, or your Senator/Representative. (Please amend letter accordingly). Also, we must start writing the TBPP and requesting reviews on good and work time. Take a stand and start writing.

Gov. Greg Abbott/Sen._____/Rep._____
1400 Capital Ave./Address
POB 14248/Address
Capital Station/Address
Austin, TX 78711/City, State. Zip

“Re:/ Awarding Good and work time to Offenders in TDCJ

Dear Gov. Abbott/Sen./Rep.:

As a Voting Constituent, I’d like to know why tax dollars are being wasted by the over-incarceration in TDCJ. The 74th Legislature gave TBPP the authority to award Offenders their good and work time based on a “Case-by-case review basis.”

However, there are never any reviews outside the Parole Interview. This is deceptive, fraudulent, and discriminatory, as well as a violation of U.S.C.A.Const. Amend. 8.14, Due Process. This is causing over-incarceration and is counter-productive to the rehabilitation the offender has received. Even at interview, good and work time is usually not awarded.

Please enact an Amendment for the 2017 session that will automatically award all offenders good and work time. This credit will promote release onto supervision to exercise the rehabilitation efforts that the State has offered. Thank you.

Respectfully,

Name
Address
City, State, Zip
Phone/ Email”

Take a stand, everyone, and start writing...” Nothing beats a failure but a try.” Pray before and over your letters to bless the correspondence. God bless you all!!!

Sincerely,
C. Amanda Bolton #1164764
CYMF Unit
5500 Attwater Ave.
Dickinson, TX 77539

How many have been moved into solitary confinement?

Two women have faced solitary confinement that we know of. Insis [Maribel Zelaya Bernardez] was placed in solitary at Hutto the first weekend of the hunger strike. This was confirmed by her attorney and friend who went and demanded to see her and a letter she wrote about the experience. Francisca, who was moved to Pearsall, has been in solitary since she arrived. We and her family are extremely concerned about her well-being and want her released to pursue to case outside of detention as soon as possible. It is worth explaining here that ICE will say they do not have any solitary confinement cells in immigrant detention. But what they leave out is that they do have single cells in the medical units and this is where they will lock women up, under the pretext of medical care. But it is obvious to the women that it is a punishment, especially since they have reported that don’t see anyone while they’re in there, including any doctors or nurses. This was what we saw in the reports of solitary used against mothers and children during the Karnes hunger strikes.

ICE officials told Colorlines that there is no strike. What is your response to that?

ICE has a policy of always denying there is a hunger strike, whether they have investigated it or not. We see this again and again, every time a strike erupts. But we have phone calls, letters and testimony from dozens of people who have visited the women inside, the reports from their lawyers all saying there is a hunger strike and the women are facing retaliation for it. ICE’s denials are just a PR policy.

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In addition to the women who have been transferred, other women have reported that they have faced other forms of retaliation, including threat of deportation, disciplinary reports for refusing to leave the dorm at meal time, heightened surveillance for the women who are perceived as leading the strike, restricted mobility inside the facility, denial of outside recreation and attempts at force feeding.

Colorlines contacted ICE for comment, and public affairs officer Adelina Pruneda said: “ICE takes the health, safety and welfare of those in our care very seriously and we continue to monitor the situation. Currently, no one at the T. Don Hutto Detention Center was identified as being on a hunger strike or refusing to eat.” However she added that, “ICE has explained the negative health effects of not eating to our detainees.”

When asked about detainees who were transferred or placed into solitary confinement, Pruneda said that “the T. Don Hutto facility does not have solitary confinement areas,” and that “ICE routinely transfers detainees to other facilities for various reasons, including bed-space availability or to provide greater access to specialized services needed by particular detainees.” She also denied that detainees are being barred from going outside.

100+ Women now refusing to eat in Texas Immigration Detention Center - November 2015

By Kenrya Rankin

<https://www.colorlines.com/articles/update-100-women-now-refusing-eat-texas-immigration-detention-center>

On October 28, 27 women being held at the T. Don Hutto Residential Center began a hunger strike with a single demand: immediate release from an immigration detention center that they say neglects them and their rights. Fourteen days later, local advocacy group Grassroots Leadership reports that the growing group of women is still refusing to eat and is now facing retaliatory measures.

We spoke to Christina Parker, Grassroots Leadership's immigration program director, for an update:

How many women do you estimate are currently on hunger strike at Hutto?

Parker: The hunger strike has moved into a new phase of rolling strikes. The original strike started almost two weeks ago and women have a biological need to begin eating again. So now, women will fast one section (each section is about 40 to 50 women) for a few days, and then stop and another section will begin. Twenty-seven women started the strike, and over the course of the last week, we confirmed that three sections were on strike at the height of the protest. So that's at least 125 women, with 40 to 50 striking at any given time.

How are they sustaining themselves?

During the initial strike, women only took in water or sugar water. During the rolling strikes, they'll use time to rest while another section strikes to sustain themselves. In addition being a way to sustain themselves, they told us they are employing this system this to try to hide from ICE who is and isn't eating. ICE has been taking inventory of who is eating and who isn't and intimidating women they believe are not eating. The rolling hunger strike is a way for them to continue to resist, but be less easy to target for retaliation, which is brilliant and shows how committed they are.

How many of the striking women have reportedly been moved to other facilities?

We know of two women [Francisca Morales Macias and Amalia Arteaga Leal] who have been moved to the detention center in Pearsall, a historically all-men's facility that is notorious for its conditions. Apparently, there is a small women's wing. We know of at least four others moved to the Laredo detention center on the border, which is also known for bad conditions. According to a rushed phone call from inside the night they were moved (late Thursday, early Friday), as many as 12 may have been taken to Laredo and perhaps half of them had been participating in the strike.

Beaumont, TX - December 2015

Hello, my name is Nicole Lynne, I'm a trans woman who is incarcerated in the Texas prison system. I'm incarcerated on a men's facility, and have, along with other trans women, struggled for a better life for us all. Here in Texas, we have finally made a breakthrough. For many of us who have been in the struggle to obtain hormone therapy, we have been given a solution. Texas now has a gender clinic for trans and gender-nonconforming people who are interested in hormone therapy.

They [TDCJ] are still not providing surgery, nor is it a system compatible with your gender identity, but if we keep at it then it's a possibility. I never thought when I started trying in 2001 to get on female hormones that I'd ever see it happen. In 2001 the TDCJ shortstopped any effort to receive feminizing treatment. In October 2015, after years of struggle, fighting for a chance to receive the treatment I so felt I needed, I've finally been placed on a regimen of Spironolactone and Estriadol. Still, I've not yet finished. I've 8 more years in TDCJ before I'm released. I want to be physically a woman. Lets hope that the "great state of Texas" decides to avoid the litigation insofar as providing gender reassignment surgery. After I've been on hormones for the required year I plan to request this much-needed relief.

Next is, as the PREA stated, that staff should be trained in proper, respectful communication with people of the LGBT community. We are constantly exposed to comments that are counterproductive to our well-being. Where the Medical has gotten to the point where we are referred to with the proper pronouns, monikers, etc. the staff still likes to rub it in with comments like "If you're a woman, show me your [tits, V, etc.]," "If you're a woman, why are you on a men's prison?" "If you'd pray maybe that demon would leave you," "You've got a penis, so you're a man, period."

I try to answer this hateful group of people with a simple, yet firm assertion, while trying to be gentle that I am who I am. If they call me Mr., Sir, I gently correct them by saying Ms., Ma'am, etc. A lot of this depends on your own attitude. If you let them see it can pull you out of your character they'll continue to harass you, but if you turn the tables on them while being polite and respectful it shows that they can't shake you. If they can't pull you out of your character it will mean that you win and that's more important than getting mad and acting stupid, cause they want you to do that so that they have ammunition to use against you. Why give the enemy forces bullets for their gun to shoot you with?

I wish you all the best. Always stay strong and never give up.

Nicole Lynne

Ms. A. Childress #897643

Stiles Unit

3060 FM 3514

Beaumont, TX 77705

Ocala, FL - December 2015

I am a Florida State Prisoner in Ocala Florida, wrongfully convicted for several years now. The abuse in prison here in Florida has been very high profile, with a record number of inmate deaths in 2014. At the facility where I am now in this very dorm a 36 year old woman was beaten to death last October 2014 and died of blunt force trauma. I had reported the abuse at this facility 2012-2013 before I was transferred. I spent 17/18 months here at LCI locked in a room for false PRs issued as punishment for using the grievance process to report abuse. While here before I filed 100+ grievances per month sometimes. There was physical abuse, property theft, mail tampering, lack of basic necessities, water turned off for hours while we were locked in a room, no medical care, no law library access, and deprivation of food, showers, and recreation. In the last years since 2010, my efforts at resistance include grievance submissions, petitions to the courts, packages sent to government agencies/organizations, letters sent to politicians, DOC secretary, wardens, regional office, Governor and President. I filed an official complaint with the Commission on Ethics recently. I submitted a civil complaint in the local federal court, detailing the revenge carried out against me nonstop for years at the two prisons in this town. I have filed petitions in the local state court and appellate court, in the Leon County Court (Tallahassee). I have sent copies of my petition to local police, state attorney, FBT, Florida State Police, FDLE, Department of Justice, US Commission on Civil Rights, ACLU Criminal Justice Committee, the Project for Accountable Justice, the Marshall Project, Human Rights Defense Center, Southern Poverty Law Center, Florida Justice Institute, Southern Center for Human Rights, Human Rights Watch Prison Project, Amnesty International, Just Detention International, senators, the legislature, Department of Health Chief Inspector general, and CURE has posted this petition on the www.FLCURE.org website. I also sent my petition to Prison Foundation to be posted on the web as a book with a plea for help. I have a friend who has scanned the petitions to email to many places/people/organizations.

I am relieved at the bipartisan efforts to commute sentences and release thousands of prisoners in the federal system, as well as visiting prisons. I share my prison resource guides with other prisoners and encourage them to report abuse through the grievance process. I have sent my petitions about the prison abuse as exhibits in all the courts. I have filed post correction relief documents to support my claim of cruel and unusual punishment. I have called the prison tip line, met with several inspector generals, and talked with administrators at all facilities. I have sent my petition to several newspapers that are investigating the prison abuse that is prevalent in Florida. I have asked friends/family to sign their names to the petition at change.org, an initiative to reduce the prison population by 50% in the next ten years (#cut50). I study newspaper articles to find out what is going on and subscribe to newsletters of groups that advocate for prisoners.

In the last 5+ years I have been hauled off to confinement sixteen times, several with 58 false/retaliatory disciplinary reports, spent over half my time locked in a room and lost over a year of good time. While the crooked prison officials have no consequences for their misconduct and criminal acts, I have received threats of

DIRECT ACTION/NON-COMPLIANCE

Cumberland, MD - November 2015

I humbly write to Prison Action News to report on my resistance and struggle to gain a better environment for all transgenders in Maryland and at the same time open the door for transgenders in all states and keep pushing the struggle forward.

I filed a 1983 Federal Lawsuit in regards to receiving hormone and estrogen treatment, sex-reassignment and a transfer to a women's prison. I have also filed a 1983 federal lawsuit against staff members for sexual assault, sexual harassment, and assault. I was raped for 18 months and assaulted by inmates and when I spoke up and made my voice heard by contacting the outside world through a letter-writing campaign and a hunger strike, the staff members called me a liar and started abusing me and sexually assaulting me. I filed another 1983 lawsuit in regards to being denied medical care.

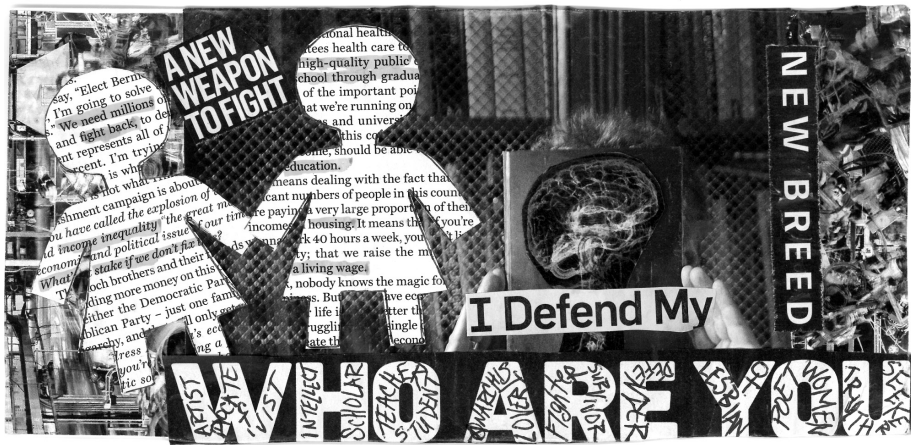
I am currently planning another hunger strike because the prison staff have not kept their word, so November 29th I am declaring an indefinite hunger strike as a resistance to the conditions transgender inmates face here in Maryland and in every state. Transgenders have rights too.

I am going to continue my letter-writing campaigns.

Michael A. Jones, a.k.a. Latrina Marie Lopez
NBCI
14100 McMullen Highway SW
Cumberland, MD 21502

scribes the data while anchoring it in their cases. Schmid wants to write more about the relationship between present-day abuses of prisoners and the kinds of stories she sees in the history of IWP.

The researchers' ambitions are still circumscribed by their imprisonment, however, and by the labor involved with procuring materials for incarcerated researchers. In her own article for *Perspectives*, Kauffman issued a call to arms to retired historians and others who might be interested: "I need help tracking down myriad leads on such topics as Sarah Smith's roots in England; the history of the Magdalene laundry in Buffalo, New York; 19th-century sewage systems; and the incidence of female circumcision in the 1870s. We would be delighted and grateful to have your help."



Artwork: "Knowledge is Power" by Anastazia - 2015

more disciplinary reports and sanction from the judge and assistant attorney general over my cases in Leon County. My mother has called, emailed, sent letters and tried to find help on the outside. While doing all I can to help on my own I pray to God for divine intervention and relief to fight my wrongful correction.

I have filed many documents with the trial court, appellate court, supreme court and federal district courts and most recently, the federal court of appeals in Atlanta GA. I have written many organizations for legal help to document what has been done to me in the judicial system of Florida. I have sent the details of my case to the Center for Prosecutor Integrity, Florida Association of Prosecution Attorneys, Department of Legal Affairs, and all the other government offices that I could get addresses for. Rarely do I get a reply. I have also filed complaints with the Commission on Ethics to report the prosecutors, public defenders, and private defense attorneys who were involved in my case, as well as the dishonest clerk and probation officer who took fees I did not owe, falsified her notes for years and committed perjury in court. A friend is to scan the summary of the corruption involved in my case and email it to many people to try to expose what has been done to me in the criminal justice system of Florida.

I have spent 10 of the last 13 years locked up in prison, jails, and mental hospitals because of the false police reports of an acquaintance who pretended I was stalking him to have me jailed repeatedly, only to continue to visit me at the jail after my last arrest, take my collect phone calls, and write me letters. The state attorney over my case who presented all the lies in court to justify asking for me to spend 20 years in prison for a simple VOP on charges that I did not originally see even 3 years for was removed in 2011 and from my case and left the state attorney's office after my [illegible] to mitigate exposed all the false allegations he introduced. I was charged with crimes I was not guilty of, held in jail with no trial, [illegible] by jail staff who falsified reports to charge me with more felonies, sent to the state hospital after a psychiatrist lied on her report, overmedicated into a stupor, then provided with a public defender who lied to me, and slandered by a malicious prosecutor who had no regard for the truth. I have reported all the attorneys involved to the Florida Bar and the judges to the Judicial Qualification Committee.

My life has been obliterated by the justice system in Florida where the prosecutors, judges have absolute power, absolute immunity, and are absolutely corrupt because of this. So many people profit from my incarceration and no one wants to be liable for the misconduct or admit the system is seriously flawed. All these dishonest officials would rather leave me rotting here in prison for decades than admit any wrongdoing, while sitting in judgment of others. My release date is currently in 2019. This year is the justice year, starting December 8, 2015. The year God's mercy is particularly manifest and the year prisoners are to be set free. I follow the laws God gives the captives to return and obey, so to will turn away my captivity, punish my enemies, return me home and make me prosperous as He promises in the Old Testament, Deuteronomy, Chapter 30. I try to repent of my sins, help my fellow man, keep the Sabbath day holy, give thanks in all things, sing hymns of prayer daily, pray, fast regularly and take hold of my expected end. My future of hope and promise Jeremiah 29:11 so this [illegible] of captivity will end. God's promise is that if we

turn to the Lord, stop worshipping our false idols (money, drugs, sex, TV, facebook, etc.) He will fetch us from where he has scattered us. I know when we obey God's laws He will keep the covenant he made with his chosen people, the house of Israel.

Sincerely,

Shannon Copeland W25201
Lowell Correctional Institution
11120 NW Gainesville, Rd.
Ocala, FL 34482

Gatesville, TX - November 2015

Dear PAN,

I'm writing to report the action that I'm taking against TDCJ-ID for its harsh policies that deny transgender inmates medical care! For years I have striven to force TDCJ-ID to change its policies and provide us with medical care that meets the World Professional Association for Transgender Health Care. As a result, TDCJ-ID has started providing us with Estrogen and other medication!

I'm sure I'm not the only transwoman that has filed, etc. But I told myself if I don't make this personal and truly do whatever it takes, they will continue to deny me the care I need!

Also, I'm currently in Federal Court challenging TDCJ-ID policy that bans changes. I think I have a good chance because it's a blanket policy! Federal courts have ruled that this is unconstitutional.

Here's the case information: Scott L. Gibson/Vanessa v. Brad Livingston, et al- 6;15-c-v-190 in the Western District of Texas-Waco Division.

I encourage all people in prison to take a stand for our rights and help each other to file complaints, etc. instead of discouraging the ones that have made it their mission to fight the system! Together we can change the prison system worldwide! Remember, instant communication with society has taken the veil off of what occurs in prison! When you see abuse, call your loved ones and have them report it! The more you take your complaints to people in society, the better the results you will have! Believe it or not, a lot of people care and are willing to help us! So take action today!!!

Truly,

Vanessa Lynn, TX

[Smith and Coffin] a free pass for this behavior?" the three asked. Pointing out the disparity between the small "property crimes" committed by many of the prison's working-class inmates at the time and the large amounts of money that Coffin's husband caused his depositors to lose, and finding themselves unable to excuse Smith for the behavior reported in the 1881 inquiry, the authors argued that the history of the prison's founders is incomplete without this information: "There seems to be a fulgent disparity in the consequences for the crimes of the powerful, like torture and bank fraud, and the punishment dispensed by the courts and by Ms. Smith for the slightest infractions of the poorer classes."

In another conference paper, Anastazia Schmid presented her research on the history of health care in the prison. Schmid wrote about the doctor Theophilus Parvin, who was the prison's physician between 1873 and 1883. Comparing Parvin's reports of his treatment of prisoners with his published articles in medical journals, Schmid became suspicious. She likened Parvin to Dr. J. Marion Sims, another respected 19th-century gynecologist who had perfected a technique for repairing vesicovaginal fistula (a tear between the urinary tract and the vagina, often caused by difficult childbirth) by experimenting on enslaved women. (Kauffman said, "It was Ana who made the link to Marion Sims. I had never heard of Marion Sims—I had no idea.") Schmid raised the possibility that Parvin might have carried out his own experiments on the women at the prison.

Presenting on the topic via videoconference at the 2014 meeting of the Indiana Academy of the Social Sciences, Schmid pointed out that although Parvin never officially reported carrying out research using female inmates as test subjects, a prisoner who testified at the 1881 investigation mentioned a mysterious "operation" that was performed after she had misbehaved. Schmid suggested that this operation might have been an ovariectomy or a cliterodectomy—two operations Parvin had advocated for treatment of "hysteria" in other contexts. The researchers also identified three prisoners whose case studies Parvin included in an article for a medical journal, lending further credence to the idea that his decade at the prison had yielded experimental results procured from patients who may or may not have consented.

When discussing Parvin, Coffin, and Smith, Kauffman and the researchers sometimes came into friendly conflict, with Kauffman pushing for more evidence and the group insisting that their personal experience better equipped them to judge the historical record. "Dr. Kauffmann and I kind of went around and around a few times on some of my theories, and at one point in time I had to kind of get brutally honest with her," Schmid says. "When she was saying, 'Ana, how do you know? Where are you getting this?' I had to divulge some of my personal story and say, 'Dr. Kauffman, I know because I am the modern version of the women I'm talking about.'"

[...]

In the wake of their initial success, the IWP researchers are now turning from shorter articles to a book-length work. Jones told me that she is going to return to her data, research some higher-profile women who ended up at the prison by committing crimes that garnered newspaper coverage, and write a narrative that de-

century mental hospitals, the history of medicine). The others began looking at primary sources from the prison's history, concentrating on a topic: health care, the economy of the prison, food. Jones began to wrangle data from the prison registries, which Kauffman had scanned at the state archives, printed, and brought in for the researchers to use.

Research in the prison is difficult. I asked Jones about the library's stock of books. "Our recreational library is very good," she said, "but it's limited predominantly to fiction, so when it comes to doing research, particularly if you're interested in the 19th century ... it's just not going to be there." Interlibrary loan is slow. The IWP researchers followed the time-honored approach of tracking down new references using the footnotes and bibliographies of the books they were currently reading, but the new requests sometimes took months to arrive. Kauffman and other volunteers tried to fill the gap by providing books themselves, but with a long list of research requests, they couldn't always access titles quickly enough. The digital databases and online archives and collections that historians now take for granted were not available to the women. The researchers were not just researching the 19th century; they were working at a 19th-century pace.

As the group's research inched forward, the two women who founded the prison—Rhoda Coffin and Sarah Smith—began to come in for their share of skeptical analysis. The founders' story—female reformers who "rescued" women from sexual abuse in an institution full of predatory guards and prisoners—had traditionally been one of exemplary Christian female heroism. In historical sources, the women were described using the Victorian rhetoric of womanly virtue, with Smith in particular held up as an example to sinning prisoners under her care. "We referred to Sarah Smith as 'Saint Sarah' in our class," Kauffmann told me, since so much contemporary literature lauded the prison's first superintendent for her forbearance and purity.

Less complimentary descriptions of the two women fade into the background in most histories, which discuss their work as part of a largely benevolent movement toward prison reform for women in the late 19th century. Kauffman's researchers were therefore surprised to read a published report of an 1881 inquiry into mistreatment of prisoners, in which Smith had been accused of humiliation, assault, and "dunking" of prisoners who didn't follow the institution's rules. Several former prison employees testified to witnessing Smith hit the prisoners, with two saying that they had seen Smith "pull their hair and pound their heads against the wall." According to testimony, prisoners were also put into solitary confinement and denied food and medications. Smith and the prison were exonerated of these charges, but most of the researchers believed the inmates, nurses, and other staff whose testimony appeared in the report, and the class debated what might really have happened, arguing over how harshly to judge Smith for the punishments used at the prison she ran in the name of mercy.

[...]With Kauffman's help, the group began to test out their ideas on audiences of historians. The prison agreed to allow incarcerated researchers Leslie Hauk, Kim Baldwin, and Lori Fussner present a paper on Coffin and Smith by videoconference at the Indiana Association of Historians conference in March 2014. The authors were not sympathetic to their subjects. "Why have historians seemingly given

Gatesville, TX - November 2015

I just want to say that over the years prison is still going to be prison, trust me. No matter how much we complain, nothing will ever get done. Because in a female prison we write and write grievances and still no justice. The reason why?! Because the person that signs off on our grievances is the warden and she finds no fault in her officers at all. Sad, but true. So, I'm not going to sit here and bring up everything, just know those who turn a blind eye, God sees everything and they will be accountable for what they did and did not to.

Also my number one thing is why TDCJ is trying to bill us for every single thing: medical, college, phone calls, visitation, pictures that we don't take maybe five times a year, but still they want us prisoners to pay for everything. Now people are talking about how TDCJ is going to start charging us to eat chow hall food. That's insane. I don't know how true it is but my thing is, we don't even get paid to work in Texas TDCJ prisons. We work for free. Most ladies here don't get money and TDCJ can't even come up with extra soap, green soap at that. No deodorant, shampoo, but they want us to pay for everything. And when some do get 10 or 20 dollars TDCJ snatches it so fast by taking half. TDCJ prisons in Texas are money-hungry. They don't want to give, they are too busy taking from us. I feel like if TDCJ prisons can't afford us living here, they need to let us go and stop keeping us when we come up for parole. Stop setting us off and send us home. Instead of keeping us and trying to get rich or just plain messing over our lives by doing whatever they want to us.

That it and that all!!!!

The Real McCoy, if you must know.

Lovelock, NV - November 2015

My name is Daisy Meadows. I am an (M to F) inmate transgender locked up within the NDOC. I would like to take this time and opportunity to tell you some about my situation in the hopes that you will put my info in your paper to get me some help and support to fight against the corrupt NDOC prison system and their unconstitutional blanket policies, specifically MD121 which allows the NDOC to refuse to give me any medical treatment at all to treat my gender dysphoria, but contradicting themselves by showing favoritism to other inmates by allowing them to initiate hormone and estrogen treatment but denying me the same, singling me out and discriminating.

I have filed hundreds of grievances against the NDOC over several issues regarding gender dysphoria and the medical treatment that I definitely need and is required in treating me. But so far the NDOC has done absolutely nothing to help me. I have a life sentence and have been requesting treatments for three years now. I have filed a lawsuit case #3:14-CU-00611 and have reached out to several lawyers and advocacy groups but have received no help or assistance. I have begged and pleaded to so many people for help but so far nothing. Of course if you are willing to help me you have my permission to edit and submit, tell my story however you see fit.

NDOC has refused to help treat or address any of my issues as a transgender woman due to the hatred and the disrespect of me. NDOC doctors and mental health professionals have both recommended and prescribed me hormones and estrogen treatment for my gender dysphoria but NDOC Administration won't issue or provide these treatments, hiding behind a blanket policy MD121 which is unconstitutional.

I have compiled well over 2500 documents of supporting evidence: litigation, grievances, kites, medical rules, affidavits, etc. to support my case over the past three years of the ongoing issues to well document my case.

Constant examples of retaliation, harassment, abuse, mistreatment: excessive cell searches, inappropriate strip searches, sexual abuse by both inmates and staff including rapes. Over 100 incidents as well as numerous times of placing me in the hole out of retaliation for grievances or filing PREA reports or to punish me in being transgender. Dozens of placements in the hole as well as a half a dozen prison transfers within less than a year.

NDOC Administration has been now using intimidation tactics, threatening me and "chilling" me from filing grievances, telling me that if I file anymore grievances or PREA reports to address my issues they'll lock me up in the hole or ship me off the yard to Ely which is the NDOC SuperMax as a way to instill fear into me. With the NDOC also having knowledge of and being aware to how traumatizing of a situation it is for me to be in the hole and my past 12 suicide attempts in the hole.

The NDOC is aware of how serious the risks are of untreated gender dysphoria and that it is a life threatening medical condition has a high risk of self castration, causes severe mental health issues, depression, anxiety, stress, panic attacks, night terrors, as well as several others. In addition to risk of suicide, I myself have 12 prior suicide attempt just in the past two and a half years all due to the NDOC's deliberate indifference and refusal to help treat me treat my gender dysphoria. Life has become unmanageable, a living hell, not wanting to live, being forced to be something I'm not, torture and cruel and unusual punishment.

NDOC denying me access to gender conforming undergarments, panties and bras, and forcing me to either crossdress or expose myself to male inmates and staff, nothing to cover my female breasts. Forced cross gender viewing, no privacy or security concerns, safety concerns addressed but again issuing and allowing other transgender inmates these clothing items, discriminating, and singling me out, showing favoritism.

The NDOC has made absolutely no attempt at all to help or address any of my issues and only punishes me for being transgender and asking for help.

I would really welcome any feedback. Anybody that is willing to help I

Recently, a group of women currently incarcerated at the 142-year-old institution (now called the Indiana Women's Prison) began to pore over documents from the prison's first 10 years. They had set out on an ambitious project: to write a history of the institution's founding decade, one that tells quite a different story from the official narrative. What happens when inmates write a history of their own prison? In this case, the perspective that the group brought to the project took what inmate Michelle Jones, writing in the American Historical Association's magazine *Perspectives on History*, calls "a feel-good story" about Quaker reformers rescuing women from abuse in men's prisons and turned it into a darker, more complicated tale.

The researchers focused their attention on allegations of wrongdoing at the prison, looking at previously discredited testimonies of prisoners who claimed to have been physically abused and at the activities of a prison doctor who had some very Victorian ideas about women and sex. They began to unravel a long-standing mystery: Why didn't the prison incarcerate any prostitutes in its early years? They presented their findings at academic conferences and published papers in journals. And they did all of it without access to the Internet.

Kelsey Kauffman, who spearheaded the project, holds an Ed.D. in human development, worked as a correctional officer, wrote a book about correctional officers, and taught college classes in writing at two men's prisons. Kauffman was dismayed when the Indiana state legislature canceled funding for nonvocational college programs in prisons in 2012. At the suggestion of the Indiana Women's Prison's superintendent, and working with two other educators, she started a new, grassroots program of college courses at IWP.

Kauffman's book contained a chapter on prison history in Massachusetts, and she had long been interested in the idea of leading a class in writing a history of the IWP. She told me that she tried the project with her college students at DePauw University, to no avail. "They never asked an interesting question," she told me. "To some extent, you can't blame them for that, because they know nothing about prisons. It doesn't relate to their lives." Kauffman resolved to try the subject out on students who knew the subject firsthand.

* * *

IWP is a maximum-security facility, and many of Kauffman's 20 students were serving sentences for violent crimes, ranging from robbery to murder. Some had just started taking college classes, while others had been at the facility long enough to have graduated with a degree through the prison's old college program. Michelle Jones and Anastazia Schmid, the two researchers I interviewed for this story, each earned a bachelor's from Ball State University that way. Jones, 43, has been at the prison since 1996; Schmid, 42, has been incarcerated since 2001.

The group met once a week for three-hour sessions. Kauffman set out to convince them that they could make real interventions in the history of 19th-century women's prisons, publish and present their research, and eventually write a book. At the beginning of the project, some of the student researchers were dubious of those ambitions. "A lot of people did not believe it," Jones told me. "I was skeptical."

Kauffman began by splitting the group of researchers in half. Some began with secondary research, reading histories that covered related subject areas (19th-

refuse to stop being human or to stop having normal emotions and desire simply because I'm locked up by razorwire. I freely love and am loved, I cry freely and laugh loudly. I refuse to take their zombie dope or remain pacified by television and lies. I share every book, radical publication, and piece of literature I come across – teach other women the origins of their destruction brought about by white supremacist patriarchal elitism and religious condemnation.

No matter where I am or what I am doing I speak on those issues considered taboo- there is no need to keep anything in the dark – none of us are as “sick” as they try to convince us (or want others to believe) we are. I resist by staying alive, and living well.

Sincerely,

Anastazia Schmid 122585
2596 Girls School Rd. B6-IWP
Indianapolis, IN 46214

[More information about the history project, of which Anastazia Schmid is a part, follows]

“The Pen” - March 22, 2015

By Rebecca Onion

http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/history/2015/03/indiana_women_s_prison_a_revisionist_history.html

Inmates at America's oldest women's prison are writing a history of it—and exploding the myth of its benevolent founders.

In 1873, two Quaker reformers living in Indiana, shocked by allegations of sexual abuse of female prisoners at the state's unisex institution, pushed the state to fund the Indiana Reformatory Institute for Women and Girls: the first totally separate women's prison established in the United States. For years, Rhoda Coffin, who lobbied for the prison and then joined its first board of visitors, and Sarah Smith, the founding superintendent, enjoyed a historical reputation of benevolence. Coffin and Smith, the story went, started an institution that prioritized reform of inmates over punishment. If their approach was invasive and personally constrictive—the institution focused on reintegrating prisoners into Victorian gender roles, training them (as the prison's 1876 annual report put it) to “occupy the position assigned to them by God, viz., wives, mothers, and educators of children”—at least this new kind of prison provided safe surroundings and was bent on giving troubled inmates a second chance at life.

would greatly appreciate it and feel free to write. Prisoners can't write me. Again my case is US Dist Court #3:14-CU-00611. If you have any questions please don't hesitate to ask. I will stay strong and keep fighting. Changes need to be made. There is strength in numbers so people we need to unite and fight together, brothers and sisters.

Again, thank you very much for anything that you can do to help me greatly appreciate it.

Sincerely with solidarity,

Daisy Meadows
a.k.a. Roy Jones Trost #1027585
Lovelock Correctional Center
1200 Prison Rd.
Lovelock, NV 89419

Canon City, CO - October 2015

My name is Jayde Moonshadow (Billy Radan). I'm a 33 year old “trans-woman” (M to F). I'm currently on Female Hormone Therapy, though for this to be accomplished was not by any measure an easy endeavor! I fought for over 12 years for the approval of female hormones and as of May 6th 2015 I was finally approved and started on Aldactone (100mg/2xdaily) and Estrace (6mg/day).

The Colorado DOC had a blanket policy of not allowing transwomen to be on hormones, without previously being prescribed (by a doctor) them on the streets. However, through the grievance process and many letters to the Director of Medical and Mental Health Services, my fight (and many other transwomen) is now finally over (at least as far as hormones are concerned). Though we transwomen in Colorado DOC have won this battle, we're still fighting the war for other trans-related needs/rights, such as female bras/panties, makeup, laser hair removal, and, ultimately, reassignment surgery and placement into female facilities.

I've recently read about awesome landmark cases that've ruled in our favor, for surgery and other necessities! This is great, but we still need to unify and fight every moment for the right to what we (as transgender individuals) are entitled to, regardless of the fact that we're in prison. The mere fact that we're in prison means we're not able to acquire all we need (to express/embrace our femininity and trans-selves); therefore DOC is responsible for the FULL range of necessary medical/mental-health care that's needed by transwoman inmates!

So- always fight!!! We'll only achieve our desires and needs if we're willing to strive for them. This means you all need to resort to grievances (and keep

copies, even if you have to “hand-copy” everything) to force DOC to accommodate transgender inmates’ needs/necessities! Also, don’t be shy about reaching out to organizations that cater specifically to transgender people and ask for help and advice on getting what we need!

We are people, too, even if we’re in prison!!! So, I send my love to all my fellow transwomen and remind you that we’re all bound by our common threads of femininity and I love you all, regardless of race, religion, looks, etc.!!!

Keep your heads up and know that there is someone fighting for your/our rights and needs.

All my love and kisses,

Jayde MoonShadow
[Billy John Radan]
DOC #120535
PO Box 777
Canon City, CO 81215-0777

P.S. I’m open to correspondence from other transwomen. However, inmates must use a 3-way (person on the streets) method of writing to me!

Mountain City, TN - November 2015

Dear Prison Action News,
I am a well-known Trans Activist known in the Federal System and Tennessee Department of Corrections as “Mother Cat.”

In both the Feds and TN I have fought (with help) and won changes in policy! Before I left the Feds in 2010, I had part in the change on HRT Meds. Now everyone has the opportunity to get HRT Meds even if they were not on it before. I have pushed family against both Fed and TN policy! I have family in both who when I first started hugging openly on the compounds encountered hate and resistance from the prison officials. However, after refusing to quit and increasing these actions, the resistance on their part has ceased!

When I got to TN, they were resistant to giving me my HRT meds. They took my bras and locked me up in solitary for my so-called protection. I fought against them every day using PREA guidelines and constantly put in for my rights for bras, etc.

We now have policy #113-37 dealing solely with transgender issues. We have HRT, we have bras, we have won gender-neutral terms. I am still fighting for makeup and for S.R.S. (surgery). The policy still states we are not allowed makeup or earrings etc., however we violate that daily now and they turn their heads instead of writing us up.

The jury is still out on my S.R.S. Request. The problem is TN still feels like that Kentucky Court Clerk “Davis.” They are just giving a little hoping no one will notice their homophobia and hatred for anyone who is LGBTQA. Resistance is my nature. I am 52 and have spent 42 years locked up. I will continue to resist no matter where I end up, but we need more outside support groups and people, letter writing campaigns, etc. We resist, but the people who supply taxes to the PIC need to help us change the prisons for the better.

In solidarity and love

Ms. Catherine Lynn Quick-Champion
(committed name: Patrick Champion)
#328286 NECX
PO Box 5000
Mountain City, TN 37683

Indianapolis, IN - December 2015

I resist by being raw, real, human – an artist, poet, activist, survivor, warriorress. Quotidian resistance comes through education and bringing awareness. I give voice to voiceless people- both past and present, dead and those who are still very much alive. I share the wisdom of my lived experience fearlessly sharing the secrets I was once forced to hide, as well as the ones imperative to the foundation of oppressive regimes and institutions of subjugation and social control.

I teach other women about their primordial worth and value, about their bodies – how to celebrate who and what they innately are. Reclaim their bodies, become empowered, strengthened, to embrace the self and release the Goddess within. I teach women how to heal- their minds, bodies, and spirits. I teach them to speak and use their voice in creative expressionism with a tapestry of words that erupts within the safe space of my creative writing circle. Sacred room – listening, compassionate, non-judgmental ears, accepting of their screams, shouts, cursing, laughter, tears, pain, joy, ecstasy, song. Words giving life to desires, hopes, and dreams. Time, space, and tools to create – to tell their stories in art, poetry, theater.

I write, speak, and create my own truth-sharing with all who are willing to listen- the good, bad, and ugly of who I am, where I am, where I’ve been, what I know and think and feel, the horrors and tragedies I have lived through, the triumphs and transformation. I speak and write publicly to change the face, indeed give a face, break the stereotypes and dispel the myths of the “criminal convict.”

I fearlessly love myself and other womyn – claiming lesbianism loud and proud while reminding people that sex is not the sole or determining fact of sexuality. I do not have to stop wearing lipstick, lingerie, and high heels or hate men to be gay, and just maybe it’s what’s on the inside that matters to me at the end of the day. I