



Welcome to issue 18 of the Word is Out:
Ten-Year Anniversary Edition

Ten years. How did that happen? It seems like not all that long ago we were sitting around in a circle, a stack of letters in the middle, debating what our name should be. Or if we even really needed a name (SPOILER: We did get one). We blinked and now find ourselves here.

Of course a lot happened in the span of that blink. For one, we met all of you, a feat that can't be overstated. We started this newsletter. We learned to build websites and databases, and to fundraise a budget. We learned what to write to get our letters into Florida prisons, and how to talk to get the newsletter into Texas. We learned to disagree and fight and still get the newsletter out (mostly) on time. We learned to make mistakes and we learned to learn from them.

Anniversaries like this can sometimes be bittersweet. On one hand, we never imagined that the project would last anywhere near this long. We were just a bunch of kids fumbling our way through it (in many ways we still are), and the fact that we haven't yet collapsed or eaten each other alive is nothing short of a miracle. On the other hand, when we picture the world that we want vs. what we've accomplished in those ten years, we see how very far we have yet to go.

In February, we retreated to a chateau for our annual visioning weekend, where we had the chance to discuss some of these future directions. We strategized around some long-time goals of the project and how to bring them to fruition—not at some point in the next ten years, but in the next few months. These goals were: better contact with our Canadian members, formally take direction from people in prison, and use our networks to push for change on a larger level. We have seen some dramatic results.

- In March, we launched a newsletter for our Canadian members. For some administrative reasons, Canadian prisoners can be more a lot more difficult to find and stay in contact with. We hope this newsletter—published in *The Word Is Out* off-season—will help us maintain relationships with people in Canadian prisons.

- After a few failed attempts in past years, we have resurrected an advisory committee of inside members, currently called the Inside Collective. Made up of some inside members who have long-term involvement with the project, the collective receives our meeting minutes and regularly offer invaluable insight.

- Due to a couple of recent developments, we launched a campaign to change the policies around how trans people are treated in the Canadian federal system. While the penpal program and resource library remain the core of the Prisoner Correspondence Project, all too often we run up against the limits of what support and information can accomplish. With this campaign (discussed in detail pages 8-10), we bring the fight to them.

Hopefully these tentative steps bring us further towards that dream we've had our sights on for the past ten years. You know what they say about dreams that you dare to dream.

In this issue of *The Word is Out*, we have full-colour covers made just for the occasion. Resident advice queen Widow returns with *Crush + Blush* on page 7. Remember to send us your questions for her—we'll be sure to forward them. We got some great submissions for our "Queer & Trans Organizing" theme from pages . Be sure to submit to our next newsletter. You can read the call for submissions, "The Butterfly Effect," on page 8.

Shout out to the #18 contributors! Sara, Jiordi, Jeff, Celeste, Lisa, Tiffany, Jazzie, Breonna, Sasha, Anayah, David, Michael, Divine, Cherrie Bomb, Nick. Thanks for creating this special newsletter with us. Unfortunately we couldn't figure out the name of the artist who made the beautiful unicorn header for this issue. So sorry about that. Please please end us a note and we'll give you a shoutout in the next newsletter!

Thank you all, dear inside members, for building The Prisoner Correspondence Project with us in the past decade. We've learned so much from you. Let's keep fighting.

Onwards!

Adrien, Amber, Beatrice, Bruiser, Carlos, Catherine, Cherrie, Dema, Dustin, Gavin, Josh, Kristin, Maggie, Olivia, Parker, Patrick, Rene, Sara, Tiffany

Q U E E R & T R A N S Q U E R G A N I Z I N G S



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Lawsuit against Longterm Isolation

A woman in Quebec who spent nine months in solitary has been approved to bring a class action lawsuit against Correctional Service Canada, claiming that people who are subjected to long periods of isolation have had their human rights violated.

Bolstered by the condemnation of the United Nations and Canada’s prison watchdog, the lawsuit seeks more than \$10,000 in damages from the Correctional Service Canada for each prisoner held in solitary confinement for longer than a 72-hour period since February 24, 2013. It also seeks compensation for prisoners with mental-health problems, regardless of how long they were held in isolation.

The representative claimant is Arlene Gallone, a 25-year-old woman who served a year-and-a-half sentence at Joliette Institution for Women starting in February 2013.

Gallone’s lawyer estimates that there could be thousands of other federal inmates, past and present, who may be eligible for compensation if the lawsuit is successful.

Gallone said in an interview that she was sent on four occasions to solitary for two three-month periods, as well as two additional stretches of two months and one month each.

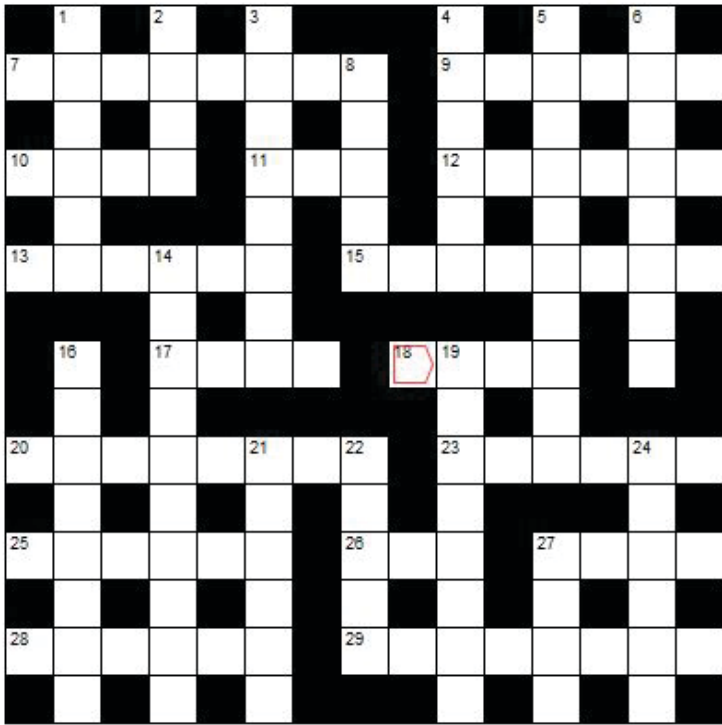
“My depression became worse. My anxiety became worse. Also, I lose trust in people easily. If I hear a door slam I’ll jump because they always slammed the doors there.”

The suit is just the latest attack on a practice that has been criticized at home and internationally, including by the special rapporteur of the UN Human Rights Council and the UN Committee against Torture. Last month, an Ontario judge authorized a lawsuit on behalf of mentally ill inmates who were placed in administrative segregation in federal prisons.

In October, Ontario’s human rights commissioner accused the province of violating prisoners’ rights through the “alarming and systemic overuse of segregation.” In Quebec, there are regulations that limit a prisoner’s stay in administrative segregation at provincial facilities to 72 hours, with a possible one-time extension of 24 hours if an individual is suspected of having ingested contraband. But recommendations in 2012 urging that the federal government adopt the same rules were rejected.

Ariene Gallone is optimistic that the class action suit against Correction Service of Canada could result in a positive change in the prison system.

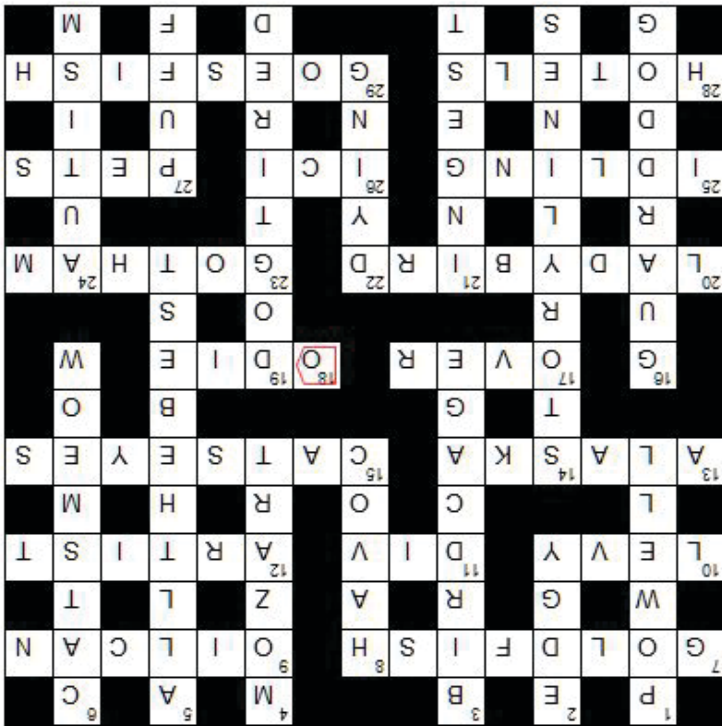
The Word is Out Crossword



Hot Tip for Crossword noobs: If a clue mentions a city, the solution is generally in the language spoken in that city. So the answer to the clue “Tijuana hello” would be “Hola.”

ACROSS

7. Cheesy snack cracker (8)
9. It helped the Tin Man loosen up (6)
10. Impose a tax (4)
11. Opposite of multiply (abbr.) (3)
12. Picasso’s occupation (6)
13. Northernmost state (6)
15. Swirly marbles (8)
17. _____-easy (way to cook eggs) (4)
18. Garfield’s canine pal (4)
20. President LBJ’s wife (8)
23. Batman’s turf (6)
25. Like a car in neutral (6)
26. Here, in Paris (3)
27. Furry friends (and the theme of this puzzle) (4)
28. Doubletree and Hilton (6)
29. Picks up a card (8)



DOWN

1. Former Secretary of State Colin (6)
2. Risque (4)
3. Tweety’s digs (8)
4. He composed his first symphony at the age of 5 (6)
5. Way to end a letter (3,3,4)
6. Bee’s knees (8)
8. Chaos (5)
14. Plots (10)
16. Junkyard protector (8)
19. Tuckered out (8)
21. Consume (6)
22. Expiring (5)
24. Asperger syndrome is on its spectrum (6)
27. The Magic Dragon’s name (4)

Gay Celebrity Gossip: the Personal Edition

Good evening my loyal and lovely queens. This isn't exactly the easiest article for me to write but, as a committed and lifelong student to the sciences of ethics and morality, I am aware that there is indeed no other path available to me to take at this particular junction. For 37 years now, I have traveled the world as a gay celebrity gossip journalist of the utmost integrity, risking my own life and that of my peers in order to uncover the most salacious and spurious of homosexual rumors about people who just so happened to be famous and have lots of money and also be actors or actresses in television dramas or film comedies.

There are many, many people who erroneously believe that I just happened to fall into this line of work because of the family I was born into (my mother of course being Janet Genet, the womyn who singlehandedly broke the story of Madonna and Christina Aguilera and Britney Spears making out publicly at the VMAs in 2003 live on TV in front of millions of viewers) but the reality is that my family had nothing to do with my intentional and thoughtful choice to pursue this trade. Others of a less intelligent sort are often heard to quip "Oh you just became a gay Hollywood journalist because of the lavish glamour and sparkle lifestyle you crave and also because you believe you are above the common people." What drivell! I don't even live in Hollywood, you delirious ducks. I live in Beverly Hills, so that doesn't even compute not even on the most expensive of iPad or iPad derivative device.

You see, I chose the homosexual star rumour field of work because I believed that the normal everyday people, hard-working teashop transsexuals and library lesbians, not to mention garbage gays and Quaker queers, deserved to know what kind of illicit undercover fisting or back alley scissor sessions the stars were enjoying in between takes of the most wonderful heterosexual movies they were producing in which men and women live, love, and laugh together. Make no mistake, I have donated my entire life to the people and some thanks I get with these horrible accusations!!!

However, recently something quite astonishing has happened to me. While I did not see this particular turn of events coming, I must admit that I am not entirely unhappy with the outcome. There's no use beating around the bush and attempting to assuage and evade my embarrassment so I will just come out and say it. Up until very recently, my identity, which I believed was entirely fixed and stable, has become much more fluid and what you could call "flexible" than I ever imagined possible. Allow me a few moments to explain myself. You see, most of my life, for as long as I can remember, I have identified as a gay homosexual attracted primarily to gay and homosexual proclivities. I even went so far as to wear different kinds of buttons with words like "LGBTQ+" and "cum-dumpster" written on them. These buttons, much like my identity, were very important to me and also other people who related to me because they were



also homo too. Well my apologies, dear readers, for I am sorry (not sorry) to admit that these buttons no longer speak to me—for I have changed into something else.

It all began approximately yesterday when I made a video of myself talking about a discovery I made. The content of the video is irrelevant for the article, but basically what I realized is that, even though froot loops come in different colours, all of the flavors are exactly the same. This information needed to be spread, I believed, because fruits of different kinds, as we all know, do taste differently and turning them into loops shouldn't change that.

Anyways, one hour after the video was posted it already had 380 views and 8 comments. By the end of the day, these numbers had almost tripled and a Twitter repost caught the interest of a local film maker, a recent High School Honor Roll graduate named Debbie who contacted me to make a short film about my life and my discovery! While I am definitely hesitant about the limitations of the medium clashing with the complexity of my story, I nevertheless agreed because I know Debbie is an otherworldly talent (I watched another movie she made about a bake sale).

As I laid my head down on the pillow after all the craziness, a strange thought entered into my head. “My life is never going to be the same; I will no longer be able to enjoy the anonymity I once cherished.” This is the inevitable consequence of fame. I woke up that morning as a gay celebrity gossip columnist, but I went to sleep as a celebrity who just so happened to be gay and write gossip about my compatriots, the stars of Hollywood, my equals.

I tossed and I turned all night and sweat buckets of sweat on my own self because a profound change was gripping my body. I finally understood why almost no one in Hollywood is out as gay: it’s because they chose, like I would as well, to come out instead as celebrities of movies, music, and the theater. A much more sincere and not to mention dangerous identity. You see it’s not that I’m not homosexual, it’s just that “famous talented star” is an infinitely more accurate descriptor of my persyn than gay ever could be. Not to mention that, but I have deep ties of solidarity with the celebrity community who are constantly under attack by two-bit tabloid gossip journalists who spew the most rancid and hateful rumours about stars, who are just trying to make the common people happy by acting in cinema and television.

Considering this dramatic turn of events in my life, I figured it would be fitting this week not to write a column about gay celebrity gossip, but instead to give you the truth about a celebrity who I love very dearly: myself. You see the truth about me is I was only pretending to be gay because I didn’t yet know I was a star. I am indeed not a homosexual but a celebrity who is straight, just like Carey Grant and John Travolta and Marlene Dietrich and others like them. And no, this is not just a phase and I’m not experimenting, I have always known that I was a celebrity. I just needed a little bit of extra time to truly figure it out.

Now that I am out and proud as who I really am, I just wanna say that I don’t think it’s shameful to not be a celebrity, in fact, most people are not celebrities in Hollywood like me. I was just born this way and I wouldn’t change it for anything, not even a million dollars (which I obviously don’t need because I will be rich in a couple weeks when the movie is done).

Tata, kisses,

CORRECTION

An error was made in identifying the author of “Dear Family” on page 11 of Issue 17: Winter 2016. Jiordi Russel was printed as the author. The actual author is “Gavin, Nevada, U.S.A.” Oops! Mistakes will be made. Sorry.

Chelsea Manning

After serving 7 years of a 35-year sentence for leaking more than 700,000 military files to WikiLeaks, whistleblower Chelsea Manning was released on May 17, 2017. Her sentence was commuted thanks to the tireless lobbying of activists, lawyers, and transgender and incarcerated peers.

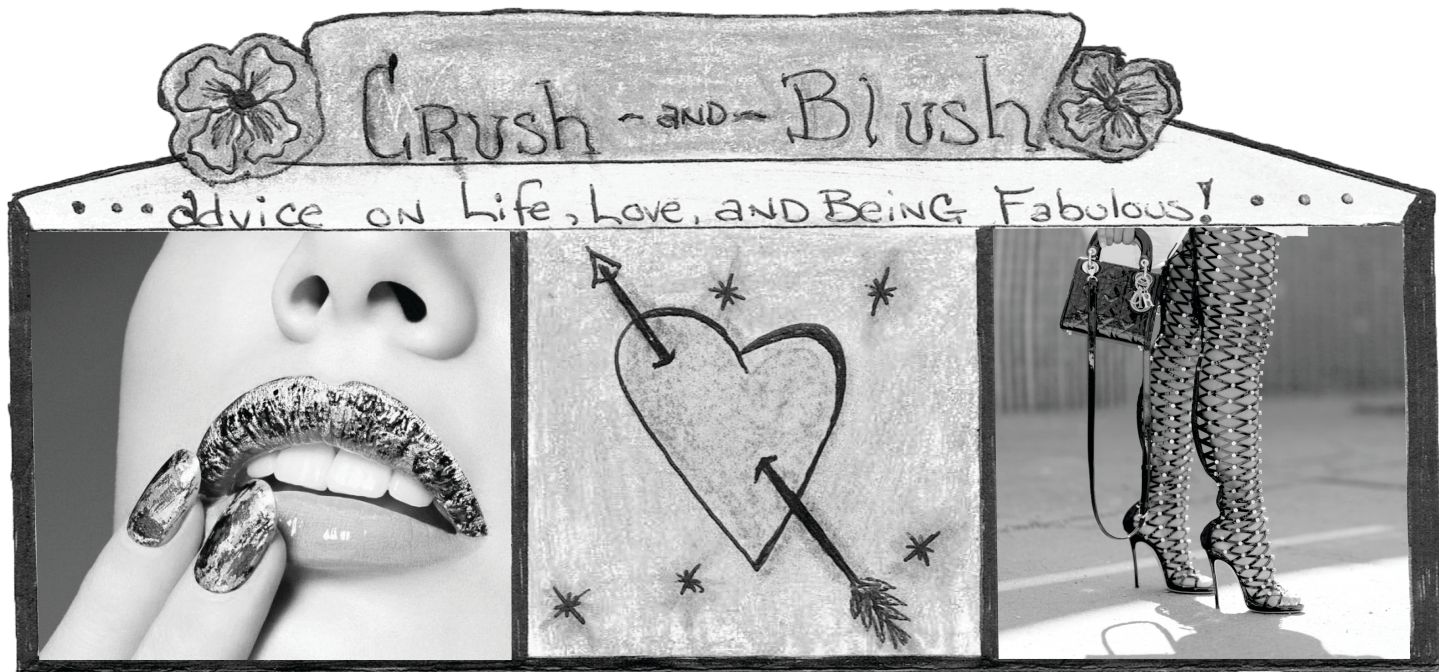
“We can all finally truly celebrate the strength and heroism she has shown in surviving and sharing her truth and life with all of us,” Chase Strangio, Manning’s attorney with the American Civil Liberties Union, said in a statement that included Manning’s post-release comments.

“Through extended periods of solitary confinement and up against the government’s insistence on denying her medical care and existence as a woman, Chelsea has emerged with grace, resilience, and an inspiring amount of love for others,” Strangio added. “I am humbled to fight alongside such a fierce advocate for justice.”

Manning, who was arrested in 2010, filed a transgender rights lawsuit in prison and attempted suicide twice last year, according to her lawyers. In a statement last week—her first public comments since former President Obama wiped away her remaining sentence—Pvt. Manning thanked him and said letters of support from veterans and fellow transgender people inspired her “to work toward making life better for others.”

“For the first time, I can see a future for myself as Chelsea,” she said. “I can imagine surviving and living as the person who I am and can finally be in the outside world. Freedom used to be something that I dreamed of but never allowed myself to fully imagine.”





(note: I received a moving letter from a bisexual guy locked up in California, and I really felt a pull to use his letter in this edition of C&B. He talks a lot about personal experience, and things in his life, so I can't go to deep into it without violating his privacy. But here is how he closed the letter.)

Dear Widow,

...Going against all authority, low self-esteem, depression, and anger. I eventually joined gangs, and using drugs. It was my only escape from reality. And this yet is only 1/4 of my past and present issues that keep me in depression. I have my good days and my bad days. Today is one of my good days. I guess it's because I'm opening up with you right now. Sometimes telling someone, some of my issues, really helps a lot. Thanks.

In Solidarity,
"Shy"

Dearest "Shy",

First, thank you for your sweet words, it means so much to me that I can make a positive impact in your life from my cell desk in NY. It's letters like yours that bring tears to my eyes, and remind me why I agreed to commit to writing this column for all of you!

Now to your specific comments. It is a very brave and therapeutic thing when you find the courage to talk about your pain with someone. I will always be hear to listen! You talked about your childhood traumas, and how they effected you emotionally and behaviorally. I know exactly what you mean, I endured several of the same things, minus the group home. It broke me, and I've never been the same carefree and precocious individual I was before it all started at age six. I will never be free of those demons, and you may not either.

The important thing to remember is you are not alone, and you are loved! I simply chose to be a better, different person than fight to be who I used to be. It was never your fault, and you deserve to enjoy life.

Stay beautiful, Shy, you have my heart always!

Love yourself,
Widow

Dear Widow,

If I may ask, why do you have the name "Widow"? Is it due to losing a partner or something different? The reason I ask is because my partner passed away a couple years back at the age of 65, and was a retired drag queen from [censored].

Truly,
"Widowed Too"

Dear "Widowed Too",

Yes, you may ask, but I guess you could ascertain that little cherry of a fact (fyi, I love using the word "cherry" off hand, just kind of naughty, hehe), from the fact your reading this column answer.

Well, first, I'm sorry to hear about your partner's passing. Losing a loved one is never easy, and often is extremely painful. Know my heart and thoughts are with you, and at least I believe he is always with you in your heart and watching over you. Since I don't know your beliefs on death, and the afterlife, I err on not pushing my beliefs on you.

As for my name "Widow", as anyone who read the introduction in the last edition knows, my real name is Sara. I picked up the nickname "Widow" when I came into prison in NY. It was given to me by an officer that I was good with due to my criminal case. I came to prison because I was accused of intentionally killing my partner, in reality it was an issue of him or me due to him domestically abusing me. Out of respect for him and his family, I won't say much more, but I loved him dearly and it rips my heart out every day and every night to know what happened.

So I never really "loved" the name cause of its connotation, but I choose to own it now. It can't be used to hurt you if you already own it, kind of like how Rebel Wilson's character in Pitch Perfect calls herself "Fat Amy" so the thin anorexic bi***s can't call her it behind her back.

It's me now, and it's who so many of you look forward to hearing from every edition!

Love yourself, own it always,
Widow

Goodbye From Jordi

Dear PCP Family,

Hi everybody (sniff). It's Jordi (sniffle). With the saddest heart, I must inform you all of what I dreaded years ago when I began writing for the PCP. The time has come where I have to step back. I am unable to continue my love column. It's not for lack of will, initiative, prose or ideas. I simply haven't the resources any longer. (this sucks!!)

I guess looking at the bright side, this will give some other sharp, queer lawyer an opportunity to posit solutions on the worldwide prison industrial complex. In fact, in the "Welcome..." on page 1 of Issue 17: Winter 2016, our advocates at the PCP headquarters in Montreal have put a callout for submissions. Pretty straight forward: anything you read about that will benefit someone in our community is fair game for an article or an essay, even an op-ed (opinion editorial) piece, no creative writing experience? No problem. Copy one word-for-word from a newspaper or magazine. Just make sure to credit the author with production of the piece, identify the publication by name, the publication date, give the page number. And name of the column heading of the piece.

I hope at some future date I'll be able to come back and write for all of you. Maybe give some of you the extra added boost to keep going. Now, I know that there're a lot of you in there who are gifted writers. Pick up a pen and make a difference in someone's life. When you do this, you make a difference in yours. Thank you for giving me a place among you to just be.

All my love to you, and all my love to all of you. This is Jordi, and I hope to stand again for you soon.

Jordi Russell

PCP Launches Action for Trans Prisoners Campaign

In December 2016, Corrections Services Canada (CSC), the body that regulates Canada's federal prisons, revealed their newly updated policies concerning the treatment of transgender prisoners. The policy changed only slightly, now allowing for trans prisoners to live the 12 months in a so-called "identity-congruent role" required for a diagnosis of gender dysphoria to occur within prison (before these 12 months could only occur before someone's time inside).

Flash forward to January 2017, when during a town hall in Kingston, Ontario, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau is asked what he is going to do about the archaic and cruel treatment of transgender prisoners in Canadian prisons. The next day, CSC announces a policy overhaul and an intermediary practice of placing trans prisoners on a case-by-case basis.

In this context, we at the Prisoner Correspondence Project see this as an opportunity to take what we hear the inside membership experiencing and push for changes that will reduce some of the harms that many transgender prisoners face in Canadian federal prisons. In an effort to drum up public pressure, we launched a petition to demand that CSC change some of the policies that affect transgender people in prison. In just under 4 hours, the petition had garnered over 100 signatures and as of writing this we have surpassed 250.

In May, 4 hours before it was set to begin, we found out about a very poorly advertised "public hearing" on human rights issues of Canadian prisoners being held by the Canadian Senate Human Rights Committee. 4 PCP collective members went to the hearing and brought to the table some of the key issues facing transgender prisoners in Canadian federal prisons including timely access to medical professionals, access to gender-affirming clothing and items, housing placement, and more. The Senators were rather responsive and while they maintained their commitment to improving the treatment of people in prison in Canada, it is paramount we maintain pressure to effect the changes necessary to reduce the harms caused by prison.

In the coming weeks and months, we aim to maintain public pressure, organize actions, seek out media coverage, and work with our partners in the city and beyond to pressure CSC and the Canadian Government to accept these recommendations. Below you can find the demands drafted in consultation with some of the Canadian membership of the PCP. Send us your thoughts or ideas for how we can all work to reduce the harms caused by the prison system, in Canada and beyond. We will update our membership as soon as the new policies are released, which should be in the coming months.

The Butterfly Effect

"The Butterfly Effect" refers to how our actions, however small, can have meaningful and lasting impacts on others, even when we don't mean them to. Just like how the flap of a butterfly's wings can make it rain on the other side of the world, being yourself and spreading your own wings can encourage love and pride in the people around you! For our upcoming issue of *The Word is Out*, we want to hear about times that being *unapologetic about who you are* has made change for others, big or small! You might have helped to change a law or policy in your institution, or maybe you helped others to be true to themselves. Tell us about how you've made a difference by *just being you!*

ALWAYS PRIORITIZE ALTERNATIVES TO INCARCERATION

Prisons cause lasting harm to all people, and they create particularly dangerous living conditions for trans people. Responses to criminalized and harmful behaviour should always recognize this fact. As a society, we must look to ways to redress harm and repair damage that reduce our reliance on cages and punishment as catch-all solutions to a range of social problems. Restorative and transformative justice approaches, as well as investment in housing, guaranteed incomes, and public services are some places to start.

GIVE ALL TRANS PRISONERS THE RIGHT TO CHOOSE THEIR GENDERED HOUSING IN PRISON

With few exceptions, CSC policy places trans prisoners in men's or women's prisons based on their genitals. This policy has exposed many trans people to an elevated risk of harassment, physical abuse, and sexual violence. Those who wish to be transferred to another prison must undergo "Sexual Reassignment Surgery" ([hyperlink to the policy here](#)), causing serious difficulties for those who do not want, or who cannot undergo, surgery, and are thus refused a transfer.

While CSC has recently announced an interim, case-by-case placement policy, any final resolution must at a minimum take account of several key considerations. The final policy must ensure that no self-identified trans, two-spirit, genderqueer, or non-binary person be refused a transfer to a prison that would pose them a less immediate a threat. The final policy must follow informed consent procedures, whereby the prisoner is provided with details on detention conditions and programming available at the facilities that would be available to them. The final policy must ensure that relocation is not mandatory since ties to community in and out of prison are crucial to prisoners' well-being. As long as they are incarcerated, trans prisoners must be allowed to identify the least dangerous option for themselves.

END INVOLUNTARY SEGREGATION

Solitary confinement, administrative segregation, or any other form of involuntary isolation is a particularly harmful practice that is often interchangeably used as a punishment and as an unwanted protective measure. Trans prisoners, and other sexual and gender minorities, are often held in isolation against their will, supposedly for their own protection and/or to "preserve institutional order" within the prison.

As the College of Family Physicians of Canada has argued, segregation exacerbates the damaging effects of prison isolation on people's mental, physical, and emotional health. Further, it often limits prisoners' access to programs, in-prison services, and prison work programs. For trans prisoners, as well as all others, segregation must only be used as a protective measure at the express request of the prisoner. Prisoners must, at minimum, be able to maintain basic levels of normal social interaction and access to programming as part of the general population if they so choose.

PROVIDE ACCESS TO CLOTHING AND PERSONAL ITEMS REGARDLESS OF GENDER

CSC currently maintains separate clothing and personal item allowances for men and women. Even though trans prisoners are technically permitted gender-affirming clothing and personal items, in practice, access to the catalogues to order them is not guaranteed. Additionally, many gender-affirming items are not available at all.

To ensure the logistical framework required to support this basic right, clothing allowances, canteen items, and permitted personal items sent from the outside should not be limited on the basis of gender. There is no reason CSC cannot ensure that all prisoners have access to the full range of gendered clothing it offers and allows. Furthermore, gender-affirming items, like wigs and prosthetics, should be made available.

ENSURE IMMEDIATE AND CONTINUOUS ACCESS TO QUALIFIED HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

Current CSC policy promises prisoners a referral "at the earliest opportunity" to a health care professional qualified to diagnose gender dysphoria. In practice, however, this can take upwards of several months. Because access to this essential medical care, and to trans-inclusive psychological support services is so crucial to trans people's mental and physical well-being, any delay is an unacceptable wait that can cause significant mental and physical harm in the interim. Therefore, it is CSC's responsibility to provide the people it incarcerates with immediate and continuous access to this essential medical and mental health care. This will further require increasing immediate access to qualified outside health professionals.

ALLOW PRISONERS TO CHOOSE WHICH GUARDS PERFORM SEARCHES

The sample protocol offered in the CSC Commissioner's Directive 566-7 for strip searches and pat-downs proposes that trans prisoners who have not had genital surgery are subjected to a "split search," meaning that areas of their bodies identified to belong to a certain gender are searched by officers of that specific gender. This would mean that a trans woman who has not undergone genital surgery would have the top part of her body searched by a female officer and the lower part of her body searched by a male officer. This regressive sample protocol, and its repeated references to a trans woman as "he" betray CSC's confused and archaic approach to trans people. So long as strip searches and pat-downs are performed on trans, two-spirit, genderqueer, and non-binary prisoners, the people subjected to them must be able to choose the staff member performing the search. Trans prisoners must be able to choose which of their body parts are searched by which staff member, and to select the officers administering urinalysis testing.

ARRANGE TO OFFER PRIVATE SHOWER AND BATHROOM ACCESS

Given the particular forms of vulnerability that can be involved in using bathroom and shower facilities, CSC must

make arrangements for private use of shower and bathroom facilities, should the trans, two-spirit, genderqueer, and non-binary people it incarcerates request it.

EASE ACCESS FOR OUTSIDE GROUPS AND VISITORS

The approval process to for outside visitors to CSC prisons who are not immediate family members is lengthy and difficult. This is a key problem for LGBT people, who may often be alienated from family, and dependent upon friends, lovers, and chosen family for support. Maintaining links between all incarcerated people and their communities of support is in everyone's interests. CSC must allow for visits to occur on request, as is done in many other jurisdictions (e.g. New York State, Ontario provincial prisons).

RAISE WAGES AND LIVING ALLOWANCES

Having a little money in prison is vital. It is used to purchase personal hygiene items such as soap, razors, and

shampoo; to purchase food when unable to attend meals; and to buy stamps and stationery to communicate with the outside world.

Due to discrimination in the job and housing markets and strained family networks, many trans people (like most people vulnerable to incarceration) do not have large outside financial resources to draw from, and so rely heavily on prison jobs provided by CSC. Maximum pay for these jobs is \$6.90/day before deductions, and those who do not participate receive a basic living allowance of \$1 to \$2.50 a day. These rates have stayed the same for the past 30 years, while costs of everyday items have skyrocketed 700% according to the Office of the Correctional Investigator. Many trans prisoners have to purchase their gender-affirming items, and save for years to do so. CSC must substantially raise pay rates and the daily allowances for all prisoners, end deductions, and provide all necessary items free of charge immediately.

Queer & Trans Organizing

Dear PCP and Family,

I wanted to share my thoughts on the creation of LGBT peer support groups.

I have spent the last 2 1/2 years fighting for an LGBT peer support group here in prison and I have to admit that I was shocked at what it took to finally make it happen. It is for this reason that I feel compelled to sort of pass on what knowledge I have, because if more of us can get support then we have a much higher chance of safety, which allows for rehabilitation. It is important to note that I am in a long-term minimum/medium security facility in a highly progressive state (Washington). Despite this, I ran into fierce bigotry where my life was threatened on multiple planes. Those brave people who did dare to openly help me were ostracized by their peers.

I was not expecting this kind of reaction and it seems that the very mention of LGBT people having fair and equal representation in DOC matters of any kind is laughable to most, and threatening to some. When you ask for peer support in prison you have to remember that you are not dealing with normal circumstances. Prison has long used segregation and prison politics as a means to keep us controlled. After all, when there are gangs doing the dirty work of policing and enforcing compliance why would they ever want to change? An LGBT person asking DOC to help against this very thing is a wrench in the program. However, I will admit that not every prison is like that, as some of you well know. Then again, some of you have experienced extremes of the opposite sort. Submitting to the defiling of your temples (your body) so that you can be protected from a very real and very dangerous mainline. My hope is that with activism such as this, we can end this type of oppression.

Here is a really simplistic way of putting how I got an LGBT Support Group and an LGBTI Pride Celebration Month in the same year.

First, I submitted a proposal detailing what I wanted. I solicited as many LGBT family and friends as possible to find out who had the best writing skills. Then I had them write the proposal, several times. We painstakingly went over every word and its implications and did our best to pick apart the things that administration would use to deny us with. We must have revised a four-page proposal over a dozen times before we came up with a suitable copy to submit.

Second, I did elevator pitches. For those of you who don't know, an elevator pitch is a 30-90 second sales pitch. Which is ample time for the breezeway when you see your Superintendent or other administrative people. Every time I saw them I pitched it repeatedly. Every time expressing our desperate need for help. I brought up our unique challenges and every time I have the pitch, I would revise, edit and repeat. I paid close attention to each person's reactions and adjusted my pitch for our next chance encounter.

Third, I put it out there in the yard. I wasn't only pitching it to staff, but to inmates too. Staff's biggest concern was that the mainline was not going to take it well, so I had to change the atmosphere on mainline. Which took surprisingly little effort. Most people have no problem taking advantage of someone weaker than them. But when you tell that same person about a whole group of people being treated unfairly, suddenly you have a fierce protector. Most of us know that when men feel like they are protecting something and doing it well, they are at their best and whatever is being protected by them rarely gets more attention. So I began to detail the real struggles to anyone who would listen and my

proposed solutions. What I found was that many guys had great ideas on how to help. In nearly every area of our lives. Everything from protecting us, equal rights, recidivism, staff interactions, safer sex, healthier relationships, and the list goes on. As soon as I realized that I could include everyone in our success, it grew like wildfire. I went from being one little activist fag to witnessing an entire mainline demanding that we all be treated fairly. Nothing was done through violence, nothing was done through politics (prison politics that is), and everything was done legally. You would be surprised at how many people want to be a part of something that is just.

Fourth, I conducted myself righteously. Not to be confused with religiously. I didn't do drugs, I abstained from sex, I listened to every person's point of view (even when it infuriated me) with patience and love, I made myself available, I educated myself on group therapy, I attended mental health (yup, need to document that you are suffering distress as a result of being separated from your peers. Why do they allow gang members to fill an entire unit but won't allow gay guys to cell in together?), but most of all I pressed hard. I never let up, every time I saw administration I brought it up. They knew what to expect from me whenever I saw them and began to avoid interactions with me as a result.

Fifth, I started a blog. Which wasn't effective for gaining the support I had hoped (though I still write on it daily) but it was effective for letting administration know that I was getting the message out to the public. I was not doing it secretly either, I let them know, "I'm blogging this entire process and I am going to let the world know about the bigotry here" then I would. Even to the point of being investigated formally and my messages being censored and ultimately rejected.

This is the simple version, I had a lucky break with a whole new administration come in and demand equality. I was one of the first proposals that were formally enacted. We had our first meeting on December 1st, 2016 and we had our first cultural event just 6 months prior on June 30th, 2016. I cried both times because this road wasn't easy. I wrote hundreds of letters both to administration and organizations. I was ridiculed by staff and inmates, I was accused of organizing a prison gang, I was called a shot caller and even had to diffuse other gang leaders from seeing me as a threat to them, having triple and, in some cases, ten times more people than them. I had to assure them all that the gays were of no threat.

I had weeks and months of silence from everyone. I was completely isolated from everyone and everything, I watched helplessly as friends attempted suicide, were brutally raped, extorted and pimped. They were drugged and taken advantage of in the name of "hustlin'" and all I could do was pray and every time it happened I would viciously place blame where blame was due, squarely on the shoulders of the staff. They were failing to keep us safe.

I learned more about myself in this process than I ever expected. After about 18 months of constant, relentless pressure, people began to root for me and slowly people started looking forward to it happening. Then, I had them start sending messages to administration asking for the approval of the group. We made it hard to ignore. But the most intense moments were when I doubted myself. Which if you have to fight as I did then you will have times of doubt, long nights

where all you can think about is why aren't things working and why is everyone ignoring you. Fighting for equality is not easy nor will it ever be. You are fighting against people who do not believe that you are equal to them. How would you react to your toilet if it said that it wanted to be treated equally? How can you listen to something you piss in?

The ones who are most threatened by our equality are our biggest predators. The ones who gain off of our fear or addictions. By uniting and getting each other help through peer support, formally we threaten their hustle, their means of getting sex or power or money. Keep heart my dearest family and know that we are all fighting and we are all hurting and we are working for solutions. The best solution of all is to do the unthinkable, fix ourselves and leave this place and perpetuate that knowledge on the outside. Preventing those who are walking in our footsteps from doing what we have done. We know what brought us here and we can identify those who are about to make the same mistakes. End the need for this devilish place and its inhabitants.

I have so much more to say, but I know that space is limited. My website is lgbtqprisonsupport.com. We are working on a Facebook Community site and revamping our current site to be less bloggy and more formal.

Stay focused friends. Love,
Jeff Utnage

INMATES TAKING ON THEIR OWN EDUCATION IN PRISON

Having college-level courses available to prisoners who truly want to better their lives and improve themselves is not new. However, the hard truth is that funding and financial aid are often denied to prison inmates, which means they have higher barriers to postsecondary education. The availability of college level classes in prison has been viewed as a necessity for progressive inmate reform for years, but when the same classes are being taught by prisoners, to the imprisoned population, as a way of creating a liberating learning community that is committed to reform, it becomes more than progressive; it becomes a revolution. Why is this even necessary? I had to ask myself this after reading an article about it (2015, Carter).

Let me go on; ever since congress passed the Violent Crime Act aka the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act, this was done in the 1990s which restricts access to Pell Grants for Prisoners, state legislators have been following suit to cut funding for prisoners, state and federal for college education. Now I remember signing away my Pell Grant in 1994 for a college computer class I never finished due to the states moving of myself and others. I bet they got the funding and I got the shaft.

Only one year after Washington, the Act, Washington State passed a law prohibiting the use of public money to support any education beyond A.B.E. (Adult Basic Education), G.E.D. (General Education Diploma), and E.S.L. (English as a Second Language). That was Washington State; here in Texas, college level courses and degree plans were cut by at least 50%. You used to have to go to G.E.D. class without wanting to, now it's only if you want to. Most classes that the

Texas Prison System is pushing are trades and those trades are only trades that will help with the maintaining and operation of this vast prison complex. They couldn't care less about my college degree because it doesn't help cook food, fix air conditioning units, plumbing, electrical or other basic service needs that will save the Texas Prison System years of budget battles because they have free labor for very high end jobs. Texas doesn't even pay their inmates for any of our labor but charge us \$100 a year for medical care. Those trades would be alright if they were really worth a damn, but they only show or teach you to maintain their prisons. That's why I choose college from a free world source: Texas A&M, Central Campus with professors who came in to teach. I also know I can use my field to help my community. Due to the uproar over illegal immigrants having access to US resources I really feel Texas will be hit even harder shortly due to the change of office here in the US.

While most of society may think of prisoners as being unworthy of education, the education we so crave is being taken to pad the pockets of the politicians to keep us "stupid criminals" as they say. An educated man will not come back to prison! The hard evidence shows that prisoners who receive post-secondary education, cut their likelihood of returning to prison by 65%, that's over 1/2.

So why do government and society do things that contradict their stated desire to reform prisoners and make them productive, taxpaying members of society? Is it possibly a desire to save money, by not spending it on those considered "worthless"? It now costs over \$100,000 per year to keep one person in prison, and most prisons are now privatized or semi-privatized, where a large private "agency" works under a perpetual contract with the state. The prison industrial sector is now a multi-billion-dollar industry--that's with a "B", folks, and it has become a huge lobbying bloc, with shares of stock available to the public paying dividends to stockholders while receiving state and federal funding to house each prisoner. Look on the Dow Jones Stock Market USA under T.C.I. and you too can buy into this Texas sham. They make money from industrial operations utilizing free inmate labor, in that prisoners can legally be forced or coerced into what is legalized slavery. These are the only people with a truly vested interest in keeping prison populations high while simultaneously sucking taxpayers dry. Again, look at the # of just Texas inmates along with paroles or probation combined and we lead the whole world put together. YEA. Now I will give Texas credit that might not be true if China and Russia released honest numbers. Therefore, the possibilities that this bloc is behind these laws, how be it still unsubstantiated, must remain.

Even so, when inmates got fed up with the status quo, they took matters into their own hands. T.E.A.C.H. (Taking Education and Creating History) was created by B.P.C. (Black Prisoners Caucus) in 2013 to teach world literature, biology, and college math. This began because the sentiment among prisoners was that the Washington Correction Center for Women and Men was not doing enough to help prisoners return to society. At the Washington State Reformatory, U.B.B. (University Beyond Bars) was started. In addition, F.E.P.P.S. (Freedom Education Project - Puget Sound) is active at both the Washington Correction Center for Women and

at the State Penitentiary Walla Walla. Not all have inmates designing curricula, facilitating or teaching classes, and organizing board meetings, but those that do have some of the best courses that could be taught at any upper-tier university. Inmates may always be looked upon as "worthless" convicted felons, but when it comes to want to turn their lives around, actions are clear, the sound these taskmasters hear. These inmates do not want to return to prison. They long to feel normal again, or the first time in their lives, like me, and they want to leave as better people that when they came to prison: college educated students.

I remember something I read in school and it rang so true for me I cried when I read it:

"Education is about healing and wholeness. It is about empowerment, liberation, transcendence; about renewing the vitality of life. It is about finding and claiming ourselves and our place in the world." (bell hooks, Teaching Community)

Well my family, every time I remember that quote it rings so true throughout my life in every corner, not wanting to come back here to transitioning. Well this girl is tired and I will say good night. I wish this finds y'all very happy.

Peace,
Celeste

My name is Lisa and I am one of 17 transwomen at this facility. I'm the first transwoman to be the Chairperson for the girls on the Inmate Advisory Council. I check on the girls to support them and help them get into programs here or advise them on how to navigate the all-boys club. I've advocated recently to allow the girls to have mammograms done. Of which they can now have.

We have several support groups here. We have a transgender-only group that meets and discusses any concerns the girls have. The girls receive updated material from myself about current medical standards, as well as any information they need for re-entry to the community.

As well as the transgender group, there are 3 LGBT groups that meet each week. I recently started the 3rd group as the co-facilitator with a staff member. This group is a creative group. We support each other but we also support outside LGBT centers and many publications that we are allowed to have. We now will include *The Word Is Out*.

I had a vision for a different group. So anyone wanting to start any group should be very passionate and have a purpose first. I simply asked staff to help me push it to administration. In 2 months the PACE group got approved. PACE stands for Positive Actions Create Everything. I put in the effort for the group because I wanted the LGBT population to have a place to go where they can express themselves on paper.

Everyone loves the group. The staff here are very excited as well. I had a vision as I said and because I'm a girl I wanted to make sure that I sent a loud message to the males here, that I can do the same things that they can, but for a different reason. To allow anyone to be who they are and have a place to go where they won't be judged.

I also help facilitate the largest of the 32 groups here. Usually 60-80 men. I am the secretary. I speak each

week about how to be better and to also have tolerance for others. This is an Alcoholics Anonymous group and one of my favourite groups. Make no mistake, I do all I can to give anyone something positive. We can all be better if we try a little harder each day.

Outside of prison I have aligned myself with several organizations. Just this month the Transgender Justice Project came on a visit to see me with 3 of their members. I had stayed in touch with them and arranged the legal visit with them. Spending almost 2 hours with Kelly, Coral, and Waze, we talked about many issues; name + gender change, S.R.S. Sex Surgery, and many other issues that pertain to the transwomen. We had a great visit. I was left very inspired.

My time is spent advocating for us in here and keeping connected with the outside also. It is very important. We never know how we can impact someone else's life. I am blessed to have the ability to support others equally and to stay focused on the positive. I am not the person to bring another girl down.

My best advice to anyone is be involved in not just your life but the lives of others. Just as *The Word is Out* has asked for submissions about support. It is our call to answer. This is how we stay united. Have a passion for what you do, and do not let anyone tell you that you can't do something or you can't be who you are. We are all destined to be great. Just know how to push yourself where others aren't as supportive. Never give up on you. When you attempt anything and it doesn't work out - it isn't failure. At least you tried. Be proud and always be who you say you are. Always.

Be inspired. Be you for you.

Lisa Strawn

VOLUNTEER 4 ADVOCACY

My name is Tiffany Joy, a transfemale since birth. I'm temporarily incarcerated within the walls of the "Florida Department of Corrections". I enjoy advocating, it's way cool. I do so through newsletter publications, sitting on committees and conducting surveys/Q&As within D.O.C. This produces valuable feedback and information that helps support the movement of the LGBTQs mission in all situations.

I'm sharing reality with y'all for important reasons. I am, and will be, the voice for those who are in fear of being heard because of the retaliation within. Our incarcerated family members are not only at a higher risk, but experience inadequate health care, equability, rape, mental and physical abuse daily because of who and what we stand for. I tell you this from my own personal experience. We, the incarcerated, are just a small percentage that are suffering from all this.

In the free world, my advocacy participation was, at best, minimal. It wasn't until I landed in prison that I came to realize, "My god, there's a lot of work that needs to be done here." How out of touch I was with advocacy work! I let valuable years slip by, letting others fight the battles. Ignoring their active participation in the movement towards abolition and unselfishly focusing their efforts on the entire LGBTQ family. Why? Selfishness? Laziness? Too busy? My excuse was "I didn't know how." Well, look around you: I can assure that the person next to you, the PC organization and or even myself would be more than happy to share on how. All you have to do is ask. Just a few hours of your time each day, week, or month can change lives for a lifetime and maybe even save a life.



Remember me, "Tiffany Joy," and this simple message I have laid out. By doing so you'll also be remembering all the Tiffany Joys who are suffering and the importance of advocacy.

I am profoundly grateful for all LGBTQ advocacy groups and individuals, especially the PCP family to whom, if not for their involvement and interaction with me, I would still be a lost unheard soul.

The more support we recruit the more powerful and united we become... to overcome. So with diligence, engulf yourself with advocating for and with the LGBTQ family. It's the right thing to do and there may come a day you'll need someone from the family to advocate for you!

Much love and solidarity to all,
Tiffany Joy

TO: THE L.G.B.T.Q COMMUNITY

Once again this is MS. Jazzie Ferrari wanting to drop a few lines of empowerment. So what I learned about being a Transgender in our situation in prison, we really have to do for ourselves.

While people like the A.C.L.U have done a tremendous and really unrewarded amount of work on our behalf in the courts and the streets through the decades that have eased our undue burden, they can only do so much. We must learn how to do for ourselves.

Go to the Law Library and get up on the Law. See what legal self help resources they have. Do outreach (and not a little). Find legal and other prisoner's rights groups. Expand your knowledge and ability. Put the junk novels and smut away and learn the rules of the law. Become a jailhouse lawyer. No one can fight for our human dignity better than us. Make prison a campfire for the brain power.

We need as much intellectual power as we can accumulate. It's a big fight. It's never too late. Take advantage of it. Start now. If prisoners are found guilty of a rule or Law violation in the course of protecting their health and life because prison guards "would not help," then on the surface it seems they may have a legal claim under the 9th Amendment (Cruel and Unusual Punishment) for failure to protect that resulted in personal injuries (Rape, Mental Health Issues, Criminal Charges, Additional Prison Sentence). Especially if they had foreknowledge of the threat, which can be evidenced by their taunts ("stop complaining or we'll put you with sex fiends where you'll get raped").

Get busy. Crack open the books. Go for it. The housing for the Fags in the hole is for their protection where there is no formal safe-housing. Program is addressed differently by the courts, research the ruling and work with the favorable ones. The prisons aren't going to give us anything on a platter, we must take it. Go to the Law Lab. Do the math or don't complain. Sounds tough, I know, but most of us came up that way and recognize. There are no free rides in this fight. Of course, there should be safe-housing in all prison, though it's best to do away with prisons. Until that time, it's all on us to survive. Do your part. It's a collective, community fight, and every effort matters. I stand with you in this fight for life.

In solidarity,
*MS. Jazzie Ferrari &
MS. Breonna Miller*

Transgender

Who can understand my struggle?
To be a woman held prisoner in a man's body
Filled with complex emotions and irrational thought
patterns
At least that's what society says
I have never felt comfortable in my own skin
You see... my father is a Christian
My mother is a Christian... my brothers are
Christians
Then there's me
Yo I've spoken with Christ
I mean... I've spoken with one of Christ's
representatives
And he says there is no place in heaven for people
like me
I was only seven when a man told me this
All I could do was smile
Don't blame me for what I am... Blame God
I did not wish to be born into such a loveless world
For what you see in me is the result of HIS flawed
craftsmanship
My soul declares my perfection
Monotheistic religions...
Nothing more than cultural and ideological
constructs created
by superstitious men
I do not fit into their box
My very existence transcends their knowledge
Knowledge I call ignorance
Knowledge I call bigotry
Knowledge I call delusion
Don't be mad at me... I call it how I see it
They say women should know their place
Forgive me... I don't think I ever will
For there is no place for me in your holy looks
But I will not be denied by you or your God
For your faith is but propaganda to my truth
A truth I've lived everyday of my life
And so I ask... can you understand my struggle?
No!
You cannot...
For you have no idea what it's like to be a woman
held prisoner
In a man's body
So spare me the rhetoric
My identity is not a disorder...
But your way of thinking... is.

Sasha

Homoscopes

Aries



Okay, so you're being honest and that's great. But also, ouch! You are a little too real and a little too blunt, but also you are so cool and charming and perfect, so we still want to hear it but not really. If you could coat your truth with a little sugar/Venus/retrograde instead of being so candid/Uranus/direct that might help us feel a little less scorned and a little more whole, but you know, do you.

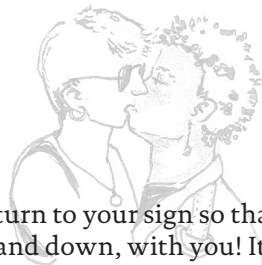
Taurus

You are getting wiser and really turning into a silver fox, if a fox was a candy hot resolute force with a profound taste for the best shower singing, muscle queens, and art. Everyone will seek out your opinion toward the end of the month, and the moon squaring your sign will cast some inner, emotional clarity on the answers everyone is searching through. If you have any agency over this, you might want to bottom a bit and make room for some shared loss of control.



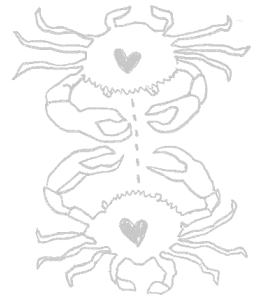
Gemini

It's time for the sun to return to your sign so that everyone can get flirty and dirty and down, with you! It's possible that you already aware that you have many cute subs lining up, or more likely you are just so busy chatting with friends, you haven't bothered to notice everyone taking notice of you and your butt. Again. Your problem, of course, isn't gathering interest, it's letting yourself reciprocate and flirt hard back instead of being so BORED WITH EVERYTHING. If you can just keep your attention focussed on one (or two or even three) deserving babe(s), you may actually have a really fun summer.



Cancer

Oh no! Sweetie! Your heart is at it again. Opening up. Rusting. Tarnished. Repeat. What you need as Pluto squares Mars, is a strategy. If you can find a way (or a trusted pal) to screen out all of the garbage lying cheater dirtbag copycats and let it some earth signs, or maybe even a Pisces, you might actually be able to stay vulnerable while staying yourself? Sound possible? Good baby, go for gold and keep it sparkling like it's wet.



Leo

Yes, please! You are all the phases of the moon. You are oozing with gumdrops of possibility. Here are all the things: you are self-assured, sunny, cheery, candid, wise, fun, inspiring, true. What I like best about you is how you make me feel when I dote on you. You know this. You've got this. I want to kiss you and taste what you've been snacking on. I want to invite you over for dinner.

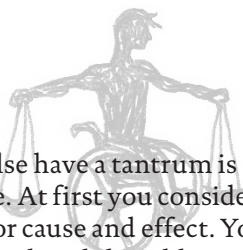


Virgo

Oh dear. The task at hand is prickly and daunting. So why aren't you even breaking a sweat? Don't you get frustrated and burnt out and just kind of over it like the rest of us? Or, do you secretly enjoy the futility of a hopeless, frustrated, soggy, spent project that is going nowhere ever with anyone never? Ruled by Mercury, your dedication and fascination with pushing limits is enthralling, but don't forget no one will ever be too tired to hold you when you are finally ready to rest.

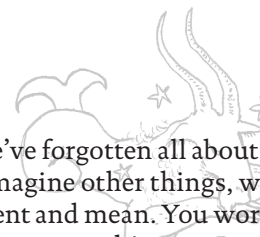


Libra



Watching everyone else have a tantrum is becoming something of a bore. At first you considered all perspectives. You looked for cause and effect. You mediated. You meditated. You played the odds. But now you just want calm. Walks on the beach. Gold lame Speedos. Frank Ocean. What is it about Mars this month that is making everyone so freaking freaky annoying? Don't be afraid to retreat into the things that make you feel cared for and the places in your head where your calm is. You need a break, you didn't cause this mess.

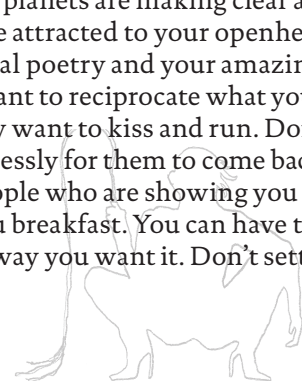
Capricorn



You think we've forgotten all about you while you work away and imagine other things, wondering why we are so cold and silent and mean. You worry Uranus retrograding is mucking everything up. But baby, look again: you are right here in our dreams. We think about your soft arms and your big hands as we are falling asleep at night. We wonder if you are eating waffles when we are drinking tea. We imagine you walking your favourite route, carefully applying eyeliner, reading your favourite gay book with the pages folded where you fell asleep, wondering if we still care. We do. You are forever loved.

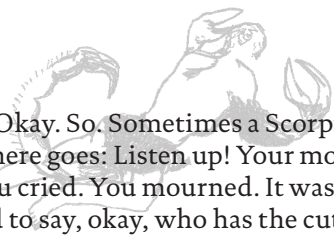
Aquarius

I don't know how to say this. Especially to you, Aquarius, but Venus warns you currently to project your feelings. I know that you think all people are good and hot and switchy and fair but the planets are making clear at the moment that most lovers are attracted to your openhearted goodness and your whimsical poetry and your amazing dimples not because they want to reciprocate what you are putting out but because they want to kiss and run. Don't chase them! Don't wait endlessly for them to come back around. Show up for the people who are showing you they are solid. Let them make you breakfast. You can have those runny eggs just exactly the way you want it. Don't settle.



Scorpio

Okay. So. Sometimes a Scorpio just needs a pep talk. So here goes: Listen up! Your moon has come and gone. You cried. You mourned. It was satisfying. But now you need to say, okay, who has the cutest underpants? Who has the best smile? Who can I look at or at least get sweet on who will make me brood less, work more, and get fancy? If you can surround yourself with some sparkly people/ideas/stories/lies, then you will be less stuck in the muck and more flying through it face first, but in a good way. P.S. - I think you're really beautiful when your face cries, but also when it cheers up.



Sagittarius

Well, you've actually shown us all an interesting life lesson, which is that people can actually change. As a mutable fire sign, you demonstrate how passion, drive, desire, and commitment can be truly all over the place. One minute you are never having it and you've convinced the rest of us to hate it too, and the next minute your entire fist is all the way in it and it's really all you can talk about. This erratic sense of adventure and fun is infectious, we want to be near you just to imagine what it would feel like to become all wild and soft and unstuck.



Pisces

Okay Pisces, here's the thing: If the people you count on are only showing up halfway, and if the people you are keeping at an arm's length and sending back to their basements are waiting by your door with flowers and symphonies and butt plugs, then don't you think that it might be time for the good old Switcheroo? If you can just swap out some duds for some winners, you might get a match that is exactly like you: fun but not reckless; open but not leaky; cute but not mushy; a total ace.



The Second Spirit

Watching Catherine David's daughter win the women's CrossFit championship. To remain labeled the world's fittest woman was truly awesome and inspirational.

The muscle mass gained from CrossFit training can make women look bulky, which goes against our traditional views of what a woman should try to look like. This is just another example of how man's creations stick out like a sore thumb but still, no one seems to catch on.

Women naturally grow hair on their legs. They are naturally born without makeup, and naturally grow muscle when it's worked. They are not born in skirts and heels. All the things that we view as "feminine" are artificial categorizations.

I'm not suggesting that we should ban such creations; to throw away skirts and heels... trash our makeup etc. Such creations are fine, if of course they are not used to discriminate. There is nothing wrong with a person with a make gender-marker being partial to everything that is "called" feminine... or even craving the same things that those female gender marker craves. Now, realistically when one craves what a significant other craves, this is when we acknowledge our second spirit. Some will favor this second spirit so much that they'll completely reject their natural

gender marker in favor of a whole new identity. Others will take other courses.

I've been into fitness off and on all of my life. So at age 45 I'm built like a 20 year old athlete. I did stop CrossFit training in favor of other methods because while I have muscles everywhere I am partial to the artificial role of women and don't want to be "overly" bulky. However, I'm 186 pounds of solid muscle; at 5'9". That's far above most women but I'm comfortable. I'm also comfortable with my penis. I do not feel that my "penis" makes me a man. In fact, my love of penis makes me quite the opposite :)

If you think any of this is strange, then check this out. I also love other transwomen who have kept their penis but love embracing their second spirit. These are people I foremost choose to date and have relations with.

Anyway, I wanted to give some of you these things to consider. Most of you have already acknowledged such things but it never hurts to reevaluate yourself or share with others.

Sincerely,

Anayah Lea Tziyon

Concerning the Prison Industrial Complex

First off, let us examine the complete descriptive which should be assigned to our current misery: "Military Insurgent Police State Prison Industrial Complex" (MIPSPIC"). 68 million Americans are "enemies of state" (that is, they have a criminal record and are disenfranchised). There is a reason why fascist regimes need large prison camps. It goes with the territory of silencing dissent.

Second, on our agenda of facing the truth of our mutual "reality" is that the conspiracy theorists are dead wrong.

There is no conspiracy. A conspiracy, by definition, is a secret agreement, group, or organization. These people, and I use the term loosely, are right out in the open and conducting "business as usual" (to use an old term of the resistance) which includes the publishing misdirection media about "hidden groups" with "secret agendas" -- and please, let us not forget the mothership and our tin foil hats because (paranoid delusion, now serving No. 1,963,672,981!) they are out to get you!

The thing is, you already done been got.

Third, the Constitution of the United States has, in fact, been overthrown and rendered nugatory (meaning without force and effect). If it did, I wouldn't be 14 on 72 to life convicted on "evidence" that is inadmissible, as a matter of law, because hypnotically-induced "memory

recovery" is considered by the courts of California to be "quack science"--that is, for everyone except me. This means that I am not afforded the privilege of the protection of the laws and therefore I am a political prisoner suffering from what is called "attainder" (meaning that all of my rights are stripped away and I suffer from civil death). I am an illegally convicted, factually innocent, enemy of the state ("EOS"). The worst part--worse than life in a concrete tomb, worse than the corruption, worse than the criminal conduct by the guardians of the public moral trust, and yes, even worse than the food--is that the state, my government, destroyed two of my beautiful children in order to "paper me up", meaning that there is no actual evidence that I, at any time, committed any crime.

I am an old gay alpha male top and I love femmes, trans, bottoms, androgyne, and everyone who is working to improve themselves, and our beautiful garden. I am a practicing Jew and a "jailhouse" lawyer of 35 years. And this is what I think about this and that--meaning my educated opinion.

I have always been an activist and a political action organizer. In 2000, I came out (to myself), and left my second spouse of 11 years--some time later (I got with my Asian Androgyne, and) the ex decided I needed to go to prison for life.

So, I have been suing the state, over and over, and eventually, they put a big, strong, cutie in my cell, who proceeded to beat me and rape me for 26 days while I was held hostage in the cell.

PREA is a joke. When I finally told the doctor why I need medical attention, the reason for the testicular hematoma, a PREA “investigation” was set into play. First I was told that if I didn’t give up the name (four months had gone by), I was going to be prosecuted for engaging in illegal sexual activities. My mail has been withheld, my legal work and property was seized, my cell torn up, all a part of this “investigation” which resulted in me being told that “nothing had happened”.

I didn’t ask for an investigation. I never made any allegations against anyone. I asked for medical care for my injuries.

Now I am suing to strike the laws in the State of California that make it a crime for me to be who I am. For me to love another man.

Obergefell v. Hodges (2015) renders all laws criminalizing homosexual intimacy between consenting adults unconstitutional, and so, those laws must be stricken. The court, like many institutions, has (in the past) made assumptions defined by the world and time of which it is a part. Many states have had laws on the books, since the 1800s (when intimate love between same-sex couples was thought to be a disease) that make it a crime for prisoners to engage in sexual acts.

In California, Title 15 (Prison Regulations) reads: §3007 Sexual Behavior.

Inmates may not participate in illegal sexual acts. Inmates are specifically excluded in laws, which remove legal restraints from acts between consenting adults. Inmates must avoid deliberately placing themselves in situations and behaving in a manner, which is designed to encourage illegal sexual acts.

This prison regulation is compounded by Cal. Pen. Code §§288(d); and 286(e) (Oral Copulation and Sodomy against Children) where these subsections explicitly make it a felony for prisoners to engage in these acts with one another. (I am presuming this because of the fact that there are no children in prison... yet.)

When I was raped (I was held hostage in a cell for 26 days and raped 2-3 times a day between beatings because my custody staff thought it would be a good idea to lock me in a room with a known gang enforcers), I, after two months, disclosed to the Chief Surgeon, who was hearing my 602 for Cialis, that I needed to get some medical care as I was still experiencing testicular hemostasis after three months since the rapes.

PREA investigators threatened to prosecute me under the Penal Code for engaging in homosexual activities in prison, if I would not disclose the identity of my attacker. Since this man, who is getting out of prison, knows the names and locations of my children, I was terrified. I wouldn’t give up the name. They never did prosecute me. But I was subjected to the most painful interrogations and searches. Some of my property was stolen, and I was placed on phantom

single cell status (meaning that they will not place anybody with me even though I am classified as able to have a cellie).

They blocked my administrative appeal to strike these laws. I am about to file a petition in the courts to force the issue. It has been a year and I still do not have my Cialis (I 602’d that on the basis of forced feminization of older alpha male tops who suffered from organ failure. I began that immediately after they started serving up condoms to all inmates).

I am alone here. Although I have always been a political activist, all my life (in fact this is how my incarceration began and remains as a political prisoner as I am convicted on inadmissible hypnotically-induced memory recovery therapy mind fuck of two of my own children) and I am not going to stop trying to improve things just because I am forced to live in a little box without a computer.

They, of course, hate me. My mail is destroyed, I am given rotten food, in 2009 they tried to murder me. Somehow I just keep on going like a fucking energizer bunny!

I love you all, always.
David M. David



New Prisoner Correspondence Project Resources

Here are the new resources that we've added since the Winter 2015 issue of the *Word is Out*. You can still request the free LGBTQ publications from our last resource list. Send us a letter if you want to receive an updated list of our entire resource library!

Women's Prison Network - Prison Free Press

From the creators of Cell Count, this new Toronto-based magazine is produced 4 times a year and features news articles about Canadian prisons, letters and poetry submissions from readers, and important information about HIV and Hep C for women in prison.

One for the Books: An Account of the 2016 Saskatchewan Penitentiary Riot

This detailed and thoughtful account and interview with a member of a prison wives support group traces the conditions and events that led to and followed a riot that occurred in a Canadian prison.

No Pride in Prisons

Articles challenging the motives and effectivity of Corrections Services Canada's prohibition of relationships in prison, written by current and former prisoners. Personal and striking, these writings offer a look into the treatment of LGBTQ prisoners in Canada.

Solitary

This is my poem... Just pages of my life
This past year brought me many experiences,
I love and I love, but found no lover
I try my best not to stress...

I sit here in solitary, and try to lean back
This cell is making me crazy without a love
In my life, I take this time to ride the ride
And come out on top because still I try...

I face my dilemmas just like anyone else
A beautiful person you are with a lot of pride,
So forgive me the pain I will not run and hide,
And keep you near my pride...

I sit here in solitary and keep my dream alive,
I wait for you to be the love of my life...

Michael Zwick

Mo[ve]-Ment

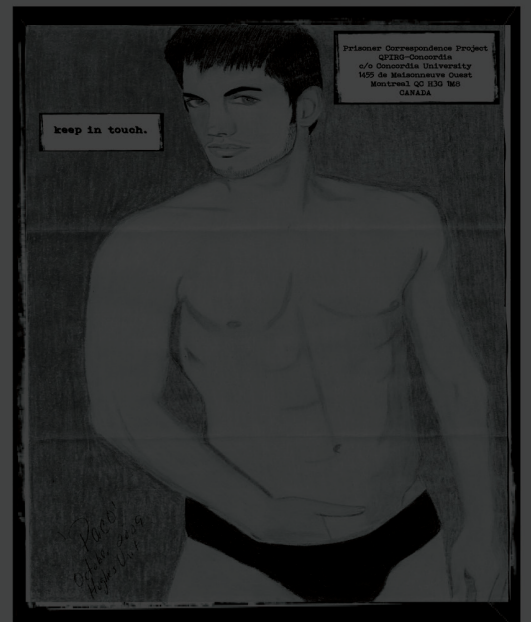
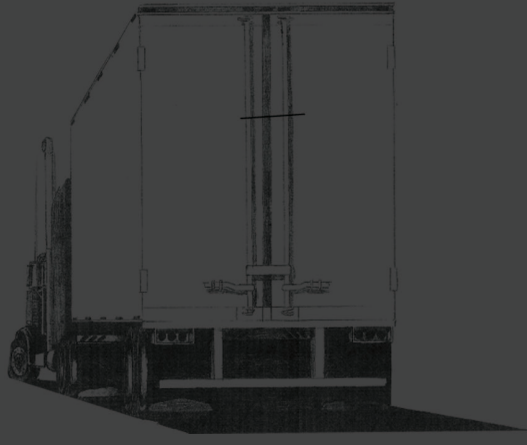
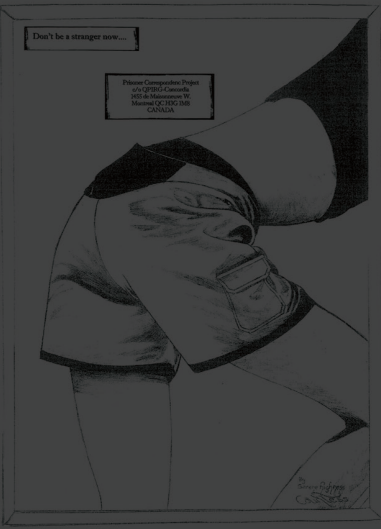
From the moment of the pop of the first Stonewall riot gun
We been balling like 361... "Autobahn"
Movement steadily gaining weight and pace
While you stay planted in place... "Audubon"
Still can't cipher "why?" Society; labels our leanings
impropriety
Maybe we grew too fast - so I ask as I blow past...
Why are you so afraid of what's inside of me?
Are you intimidated by a sultry switch, make-up,
and tits? (or)
Perhaps cause I wake up on my shit ASAP... "Rocky"
Couldn't envision - me grinding and celebrating,
Each GLBTQI decision that supports the Vision
As soon as they touch down... "Shockey"
As we dispense with the hits on our "Queer Bucket
List"
At a pace break-neck... cross-check... "hockey"
Perhaps you realize you can't stop me?
And can't drown the dream—My triple-crown team
Throwdown like secretariat
You just a jockey, who can't ride me—ain't no hariat
That's why you can't understand how Ms. Major can
lead the ram
Above-ground to the Promised land; like a modern-
day Harriet
Continuing the Stonewall/Tenderloin Missions—in
the tradition
Of Sylvia and Marsha—Like a mantle she carries it.
Carefully selecting allies whose actions and eyes
Convey "they" are not some NewAge Judas Iscariots

Don't get all A-"twitter,"
Cause we ain't fully "Linked-in"... yet
These just a few matches in the game
It ain't the whole set!
—and—

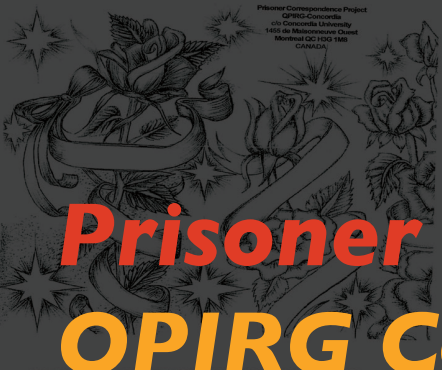
While I'm proud that Laverne can star in *Orange is
the New Black*
we still got a lot of fighting to do
To beat this "Trumped-up" White House misogyny
back

Just because a few songs—say our names
Don't mean they want us at the dance
Keep in mind—this Move-ment
Is about more than the Mo-ment
We can make our facebook status
Fluid, Intersex, Non-conforming, (or) Trans!

Divine



"L.G.B.T.Q. Love" by Dwight Hines
LGBTQ love is an endless love. Special love that knows no limit. A pure Love that continues to flourish and to transform, yet also remains the exact, LGBTQ love is a true love that comforts and nurtures the heart. A tender love that reminisces in the gratifications and fulfillments and in the heartbreaks and losses. LGBTQ love is sculptured by every face that lives from the fulfillment to the extraordinary LGBTQ love was pre-ordained. LGBTQ love is a love that is beautiful for destiny.



IN MEMORIAM JORDY MACKAY
(August 18, 1983 - August 16, 2015)



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