The Magazine 1664

SUMMER | 2024

GRAY PRISONS

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Features

Randy Fritz reflects on the 63 years he will spend in prison before seeing the parole board, his brief time on the run, and more than a decade spent as a hospice volunteer.

Larry Williams shares his multi-faceted life, covering topics of Southern family values, growing up in Oakland, and race in America and the prison setting.

Artist, author and formerly incarcerated Kirk Charlton agrees to an interview five years after his release.

Welcome to 1664

By way of introduction,

1664 – just another number in a prison system where everyone is reduced to a collection of integers in a specific order. State Identification number; employee number; court case number; DPSST number. By its nature the justice system removes the humanity from each of us in the name of accuracy, fair treatment, and consistency.

Welcome to a new number: 1664. This is the inaugural edition of a new publication with the Oregon Department of Corrections. While the magazine-style print will come from the same office as Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution's newsletter (The Echo) and share many of the same contributors, you will note differences in both format and content. While The Echo is focused on reporting news and events around EOCI, 1664 will focus on the arts and human-interest stories of the people who live and work here.

1664 will be a more visual medium, and the content will be geared toward the goals of:

1. Showcasing writing and artwork from incarcerated members of the community
2. Exploring issues that affect the lives of people who live and work in the prison setting
3. Capturing the humanity of people throughout the justice system and offering inspiration to others
4. Highlighting efforts at rehabilitative practices within the Oregon Department of Corrections

Every edition will have a theme; in the summer 2024 edition we are covering aging in the prison system.

1664 is a quarterly publication and will be available in limited printed copies. Long term goals include creating a digital-friendly format that will allow for expanded readership.

Ultimately the goal is to highlight and celebrate humanity in the prison environment, and recognize that each of us is an individual with our own stories.

An Unexpect

On May 7, in the small eastern Oregon town of Pendleton, two administrative officials from a state prison met with the local city council to discuss the possibility of incarcerated people taking tours of their town. In other cities throughout Oregon, field trips from prison were more common and served to aid long-term incarcerated people by allowing them to better adjust to reentry in the weeks prior to their release. The city of Pendleton had a long standing agreement against this practice.

Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution's Superintendent Dave Pedro and Assistant Superintendent Andrea Neistadt proposed the concept and convinced the city council of its merit. A new memorandum of understanding between the Department of Corrections and city of Pendleton was drafted.

Prior to the change in Pendleton, a field trip for incarcerated person Seth Mulkey was approved. Mulkey, who was one week shy of release and becoming a member of the Pendleton community, met the state's criteria for an acclimation field trip. However, due to Pendleton's policy at the time, Mulkey was taken to the nearby town of Hermiston.

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ed Field Trip

Seth Mulkey Takes a Tour of Town

Pictured left to right: Release Counselor Mike Markle, incarcerated person Seth Mulkey, Sergeant Geoff Holden, and Transitional Services Coordinator Sue Robson have breakfast at Denny's.

Written by Phillip Luna

Photographs provided by ODOC
Article originally published in The Echo and the ODOC Blog

A week prior to his release after 20-years incarceration, Seth Mulkey visits a local Walmart.

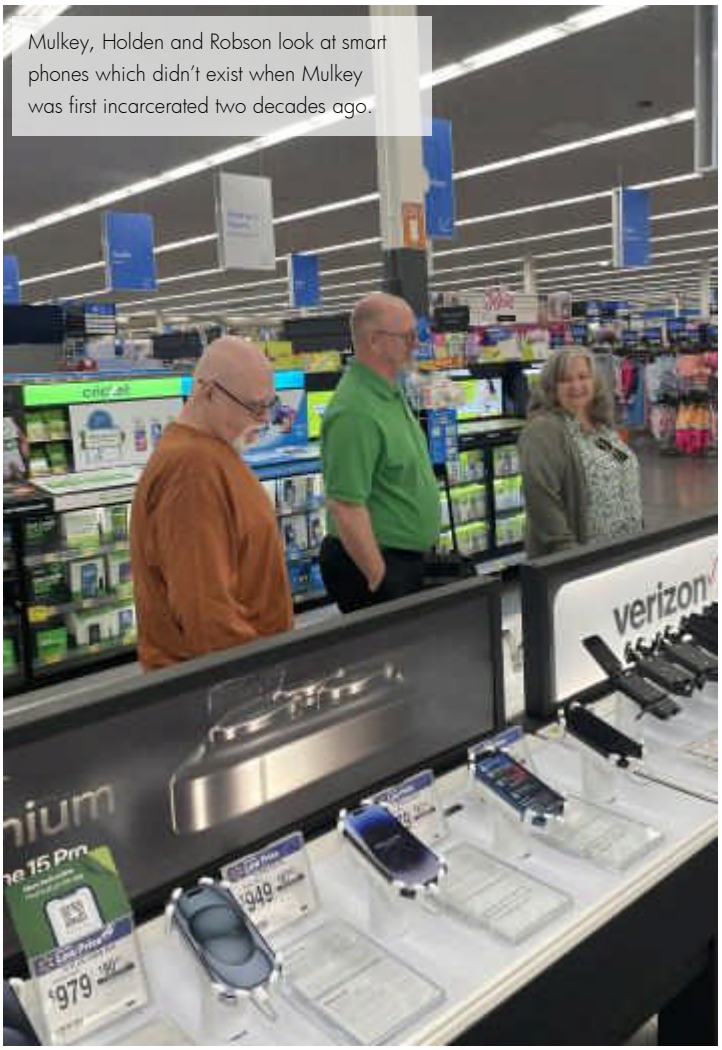
ON FRIDAY, APRIL 26 when Seth Mulkey was awoken at 7 a.m. and told to get ready for a field trip, he was unsure of what to expect. He was brought to a transport holding cell and provided civilian clothing to wear. Mulkey was just a week shy of release after serving a 20-year sentence in an Oregon State prison.

"I didn't really know they were going to do this," said Mulkey. "They woke me up in the morning and said to get ready for a field trip."

"They woke me up in the morning and said to get ready for a field trip"

Leaving the prison unshackled and dressed in regular clothing for the first time in two decades, Mulkey was given a tour of a nearby town close to where he would be released in seven days.

The event was set up by the Oregon Department of Corrections (ODOC) to help Mulkey acclimate back into society. The prison's Release Counselor Mike Markle and Transition Services Coordinator Sue Robson prepared the excursion. Markle and Robson also served as chaperones for the outing along with ODOC Sergeant Geoff Holden.



Mulkey, Holden and Robson look at smart phones which didn't exist when Mulkey was first incarcerated two decades ago.

"The idea for field trips has been in place for a long time. At least over 10 years," said Markle. While this type of trip is more common in minimum security release facilities, it is unheard of at the medium security facility where Mulkey resided.

Most incarcerated people will transfer to a minimum facility prior to release; however, this is not always the case. Available bed space and the county of the incarcerated person's release are considered as well.

The Oregon Department of Corrections requires a person to have served 15 years or more to be considered for a field trip.

"They showed me around town, where things were that I needed," said Mulkey.

He was shown the DMV, the parole office and the Veteran's Assistance (VA) building. Mulkey, who served on a Destroyer Escort in the Navy from 72' to 76', will be working with the VA to obtain housing.

The coterie visited a local Walmart - Mulkey referred to the store as "really strange" and "weird."

"I felt that I stuck out like a sore thumb," he said. "I had on khakis and a pumpkin orange sweatshirt."

"I'm in this big store … you see people walking around, you see things that you check out yourself," he said. Mulkey had never seen a self-checkout stand before.

The crew went to Denny's for a late breakfast and gave Mulkey twenty-five dollars to spend. He purchased a Philly cheese steak omelet.

"I was wanting hamburgers, but you can't have burgers until after 11 a.m. I had breakfast and that was enough." His meal cost $17.48, but he didn't get to keep the change. "Still, it was kind of nice being able to dish out the money," said Mulkey.

After he paid for his own meal, Counselor Markle showed him how he generally pays – by using the Apple pay card on his smartphone.

"Mr. Markle, I guess he has all his credit cards and everything on his phone, I thought that was kind of interesting," said Mulkey. "I don't know if I am going to get that far." Tap-to-pay and smartphone wallets didn't exist before he was incarcerated.

Following 20-years in prison, handling money and interacting with a waitress was an unfamiliar experience for Mulkey – one of many unfamiliar experiences he expects to occur in the next few weeks as he adjusts to life as a free man. However, the trip certainly eased his anxiety.

"The staff treated me like an equal"

"I feel more prepared now. Less stressed," he said "The staff treated me like an equal, they talked with me and they joked with me. That made the experience a lot better."

Seth Mulkey was released on May 3, 2024. ■

GRAYING IN PRISON

Getting to Know Randy Fritz:

A Reflection on Life and Death

Written by Phillip Luna
Photography by Phillip Luna

It sounded like

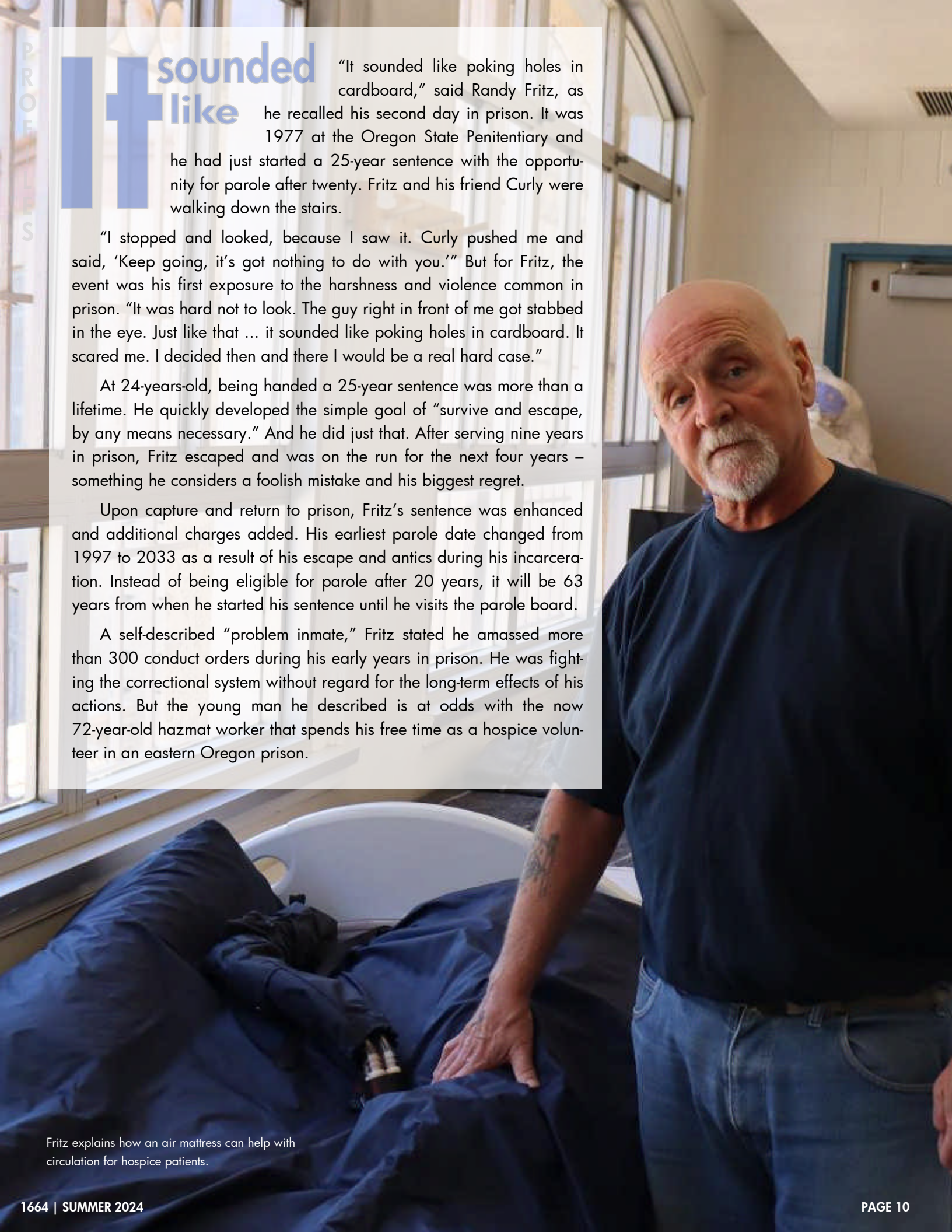
"It sounded like poking holes in cardboard," said Randy Fritz, as he recalled his second day in prison. It was 1977 at the Oregon State Penitentiary and he had just started a 25-year sentence with the opportunity for parole after twenty. Fritz and his friend Curly were walking down the stairs.

"I stopped and looked, because I saw it. Curly pushed me and said, 'Keep going, it's got nothing to do with you.'" But for Fritz, the event was his first exposure to the harshness and violence common in prison. "It was hard not to look. The guy right in front of me got stabbed in the eye. Just like that ... it sounded like poking holes in cardboard. It scared me. I decided then and there I would be a real hard case."

At 24-years-old, being handed a 25-year sentence was more than a lifetime. He quickly developed the simple goal of "survive and escape, by any means necessary." And he did just that. After serving nine years in prison, Fritz escaped and was on the run for the next four years – something he considers a foolish mistake and his biggest regret.

Upon capture and return to prison, Fritz's sentence was enhanced and additional charges added. His earliest parole date changed from 1997 to 2033 as a result of his escape and antics during his incarceration. Instead of being eligible for parole after 20 years, it will be 63 years from when he started his sentence until he visits the parole board.

A self-described "problem inmate," Fritz stated he amassed more than 300 conduct orders during his early years in prison. He was fighting the correctional system without regard for the long-term effects of his actions. But the young man he described is at odds with the now 72-year-old hazmat worker that spends his free time as a hospice volunteer in an eastern Oregon prison.



Fritz explains how an air mattress can help with circulation for hospice patients.

Randy Fritz at about 5 years of age.

THE WANDERING SPIRIT

Randy Fritz was born in 1952 in Denver, Colorado and is the oldest of five children in a blue collar family. He recalled that his "dad was a disciplinarian." Fritz believed his father's parenting style was informed by his military background. His father was a retired Lieutenant Colonel with the Air Force and his mother was a licensed Certificated Public Accountant. Fritz was a competitive diver and enjoyed camping and hiking on his free time. He described himself as a "wandering spirit."

In middle school, Randy met his wife Kim. They would marry in 1967, the year before he graduated from high school. He planned to join the military after graduation and that meant Vietnam. Young marriages were not uncommon in the 60's and 70's.

He joined the Marine Corps, snubbing the Air Force which he considered a slight to his father at the time. Like many veterans, he is hesitant to discuss the details of his service. "I don't like people coming up to me, and thanking me for my service and all that. That's not why I did it," Fritz said.

After Vietnam, Randy and Kim started their life together. They had two children, both boys. He found work in high steel construction, which had him travelling to different states.

Eventually, he became incarcerated at the age of 24, leaving behind his wife and two small children. Fritz attributed his incarceration to "anger, poor judgment, alcohol, and drugs – heroin mostly." Substance abuse was a coping mechanism, which led to a lifestyle not conducive to raising a family.

Kim and Randy stayed married, but the barriers between the imprisoned and the free world are physical, geographical and psychological. Prisons have a way of turning loved ones into strangers given enough time, and incarcerated people often form prison families, or what sociologists dub 'fictive kin' or families of choice. Fritz quickly found it difficult to maintain the relationships he knew outside of prison. "You can't live in here and out there," he said. "No matter how you try."

RED SHELL, BLACK DOTS

In 1986, Fritz escaped from the Oregon State Penitentiary by wearing a ladybug-print dress and walking out through the visiting room as visitors left. "Back then, you could purchase anything in prison for a carton of cigarettes," he said. He obtained the dress through the laundry service. Once escaped, he crisscrossed the country, never staying in one place for long.

Life on the run wasn't exactly ideal for reconnecting with family. His goal had been to survive and escape, but escaping wasn't what he thought it would be. Fritz was constantly looking over his shoulder, never feeling settled, robbing empty homes for money and working

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Fritz shares pictures of his family.

"By my account I will have served 63 calendar years by the time I am done."

under-the-table jobs to keep moving. He was beginning to learn there was a difference between "surviving" and "living."

After a few years when he felt no one was looking for him anymore, he contacted his wife. They met up in Tennessee and attempted to restart their life together. By this time his two children were almost grown and lived with relatives. Randy and Kim had a daughter then and he found stable work in an autoshop.

He was in hiding for four years before a background check brought law enforcement to his door. Fritz was recaptured in August 1990. The façade of life he had rebuilt crumbled, stymied by one inevitable fact: you can't undo what's been done.

"The judge stacked everything consecutive under the original charge and enhanced [the sentence] by 23 years," he said. "By my account I will have served 63 calendar years by the time I am done." He will see the board for the first time in December of 2033. Four years on the run would cost him an extra 43 years in prison.

The escape represented a culmination of poor judgment and bad life choices. "I regret it. I have been kicking myself since 1997. I would have been eligible for parole then, but because of the escape part and the high risk category, because of my antics and my history, I wasn't. Would I do it now? Not a chance. It's not worth it."

With a bleak outlook, he resigned himself to a life of incarceration which put him out of touch with most of his family and children. "I love my kids, don't misunderstand that. I would give my life for my kids. But as adults, I don't know them. My kids have kids that have had kids. I don't know these people. I know their names, I know what they look like, I talk to them on the phone, but I don't know these people."

What Fritz described is something many incarcerated people experience: a form of ambiguous loss - a grief without the healing process of mourning. Mourning is the acute period immediately following the loss – it's the cathartic time that serves as an outlet and a coping mechanism. Fritz has lost connections with much of his family, but they were not gone. Not lost, just less. The ambiguity of the relationship denies the opportunity to mourn, stunting any chance to heal.

The one constant in his life was his wife. Though their relationship was strained they have stayed married for 50 years, throughout his incarceration. However, in the past two years she has developed Alzheimer's disease. According to Fritz, the likelihood of her being alive

when he sees the parole board is slim – a loss for him that would not be quite so ambiguous. Over the past 30 years, much of his family including his parents have passed on. He even lost a son in Iraq.

PAID IN FULL

In 2012, Fritz was selected to be a part of a team of 27 incarcerated people trained to assist as hospice volunteers in his prison. For more than 12 years Fritz has been on-call and volunteering odd and sometimes overnight hours to provide hospice support. He also works as the hazmat orderly, which is an on-call job as well. "To me, I've been such an ugly individual in my past life that I've got to do something. How does a person doing forever in prison give back?" Assisting with hospice care is Fritz's way to give back. He said hospice care is, "Everything from A to Z. Whatever they want - you do."

Most incarcerated people with a terminal illness are transferred to facilities with better medical support. While not as common in Fritz's facility, hospice care is required at times. Additionally, some terminally ill people may spend time at his facility, until there is bed space at a location with higher level of medical support.

Like most incarcerated people, Fritz believes all correctional facilities should have adequate hospice care. "Nine out of ten times they move [to another facility]. They don't give them the option, they don't ask … It's a disservice to the person." People serving life sentences often spend decades at the same facility, only to be transferred when they reach the end of their life.

Transferring to another facility may seem like the opportunity to die with dignity, with proponents of the process citing that better medical support provides the appropriate care. Another perspective may be that when a terminally ill person is transferred to an unfamiliar place filled with unfamiliar faces, leaving behind their fictive kin, they are sentenced to a lonely death. The real indignity, it would seem, is dying in a place where death has been sanitized to the extent that being uprooted and moved across the state to the care and company of strangers is viewed as appropriate care.

Since 2012 Fritz has helped 11 incarcerated people with their end-of-life care, including some of his close friends. He is the last remaining volunteer from the original 27 selected and currently the only hospice volunteer at his facility.

He recalled an experience with his friend Bob, who had terminal stomach cancer. Fritz and Bob had known each other for several years and Bob's family was visiting. The plan was to get him cleaned up for what could potentially be his last visit with family.

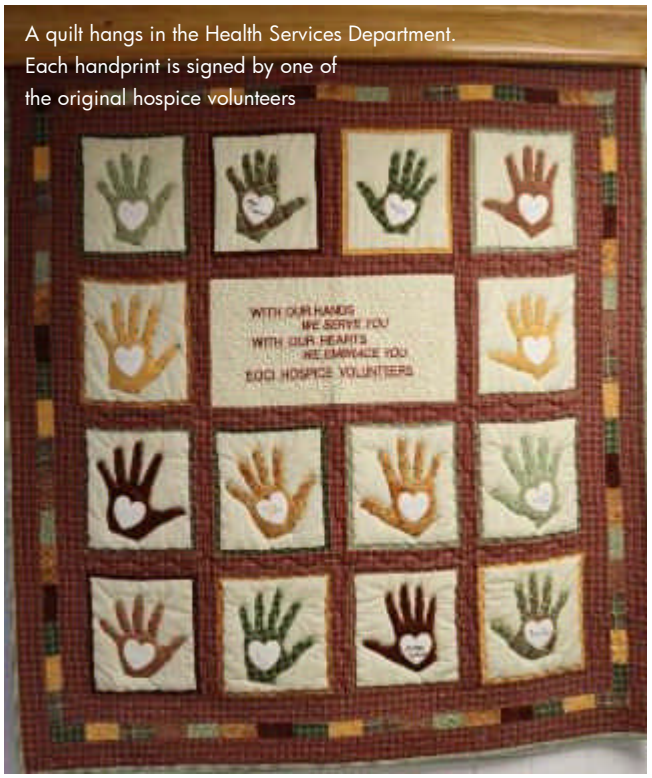
"So I told him, look – you smell terrible. We need to clean you up. Now, we can get you in the bath and clean your bed, or we can give you a sponge bath." Bob asked what a sponge bath was.

"I told him, we're going to hold you up and wash you like a dog with a sponge. And Bob said, 'I'm gonna take a sponge bath!' And he was serious! Bob said that if we were man enough to hold him up and wash his nasty [backside] then he was man enough to get washed. And so we did." Fritz explained this "is hospice in a nutshell." Bob was in pain and struggling to move around. Finding levity in the situation was just as important as any physical act – both served as palliative medicine.

After over a decade spent in hospice care support, Fritz has seen or heard nearly everything. Some of the volunteers he started out with eventually became patients, while the lucky ones finished their sentences and were released. "To know people for a long period of time and then help them in the end. It's sad. That hurts," he explained.

People at the end of life often feel the need to confess their burdens. Fritz said he is sometimes shocked by what people say, but it is not his role to judge. "If you are going to judge someone, you do not want to be in hospice because it will break you. No matter what a person has done, their debt to society is paid in full once they receive a terminal diagnosis." He forgives anyone who asks so they can "cross-over forgiven." Not all people ask for forgiveness, but as far as he is concerned they have his if they want it and for what it is worth.

Fritz explains the process of hospice care in "Room 4."



A quilt hangs in the Health Services Department. Each handprint is signed by one of the original hospice volunteers

He described the passing of someone as overwhelming. "To help with hospice, you've got to have tenacity. Most people with a terminal illness go through the five stages of grief," Fritz feels his role is to be there for each stage. The five stages of grief he refers to - denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance - was first coined in *On Death and Dying* by Elisabeth Kübler-Ross.

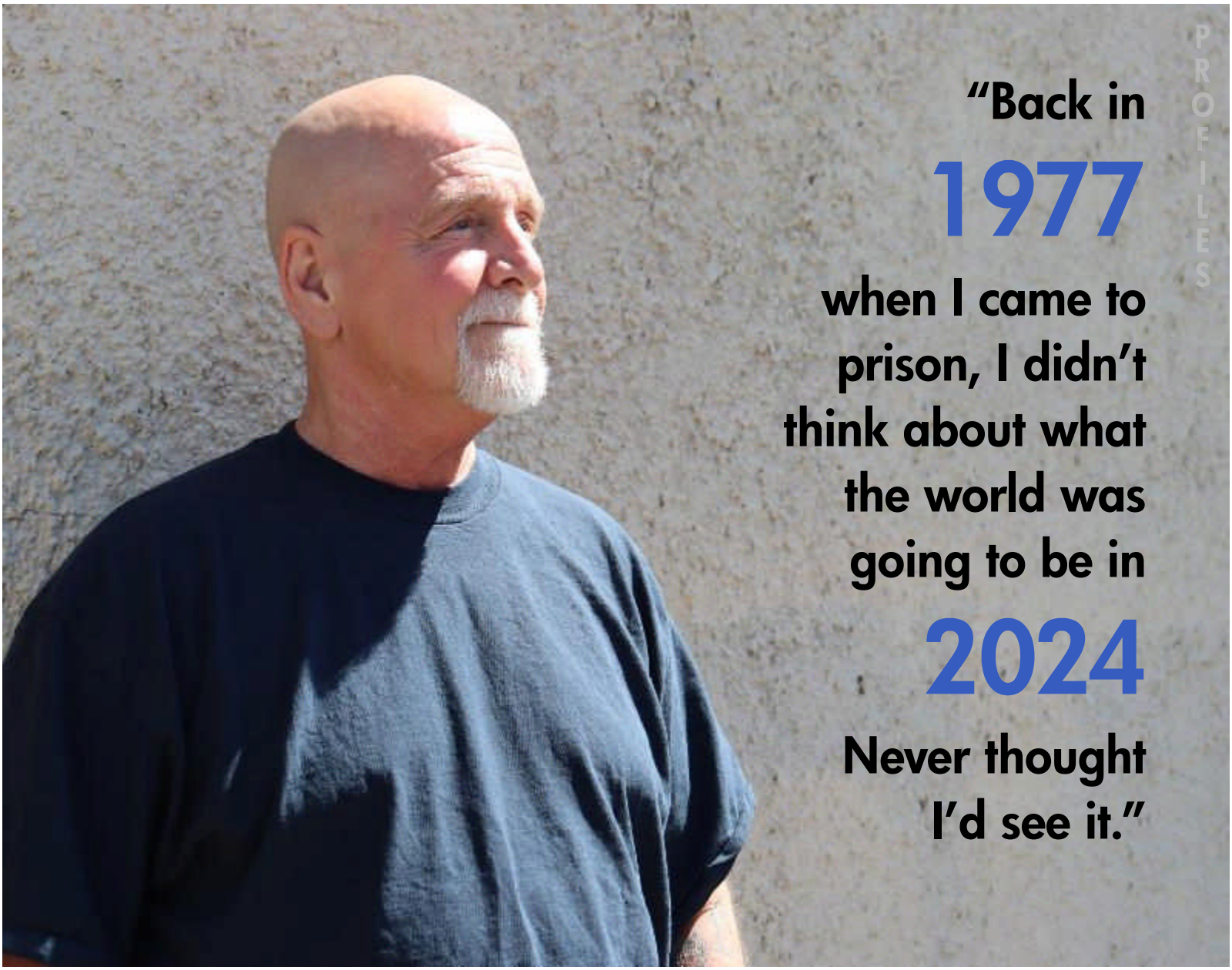
A difficult part of hospice for any volunteer is a person's final moments. "In the last moment," Fritz explained, "when it's quiet up in the infirmary, you can hear it. When there is no television, radio or slamming doors, you can hear their last breath. You don't listen for it, but you just know when they are gone." Hospice volunteers provide round-the-clock support and are often locked in the cell with the terminally ill patient overnight. "Yes it hurts. Yes it is personal. It can be extremely emotional."

"I've learned compassion," he stated. "You did the best you could do for someone who couldn't do it themselves." Hospice is the one place that removes all labels and levels the playing field. It's bathing dying people, hearing their deathbed confessions and providing the comfort they need – because it's what they deserve. "It doesn't matter race, creed, color or faith. It doesn't matter. When whatever you believe knocks on the door and death is the sentence, we are all the same."

An uncomfortable reality of U.S. prisons is that they increasingly contain elderly people, who are often at the end of serving decades-long sentences. Mandatory minimums have increased the prison population exponentially over the last 30 years, with the 55 and over age group having the steepest increase over time, according to the Prison Policy Initiative. From 2001-2018, the Prison Policy Initiative also cites the percentage of age-related deaths as increasing by 46 percent.

Incarcerated people over 55 years of age cost twice as much in health care compared to those under 55 years of age. The aging prison population has spurred a need for hospice volunteers around the state and as a result many prisons now have units or areas that are essentially nursing homes behind bars. Elderly care in prison is often considered a hidden cost of mandatory minimum sentencing.

Fritz hopes to avoid being part of the statistics. When asked about his thoughts on parole, should it be granted in 2033, Fritz said, "I'll be 81. I know nothing about the world beyond what's for chow? Or what's for canteen? Or can I get an ice cream today? When it comes to technology, it's scary to realize a fifth grader is smarter than me." But Fritz is optimistic about his future. "I will not die in prison," he declared. "I might only have a rock for a pillow when I get out … but I'll die away

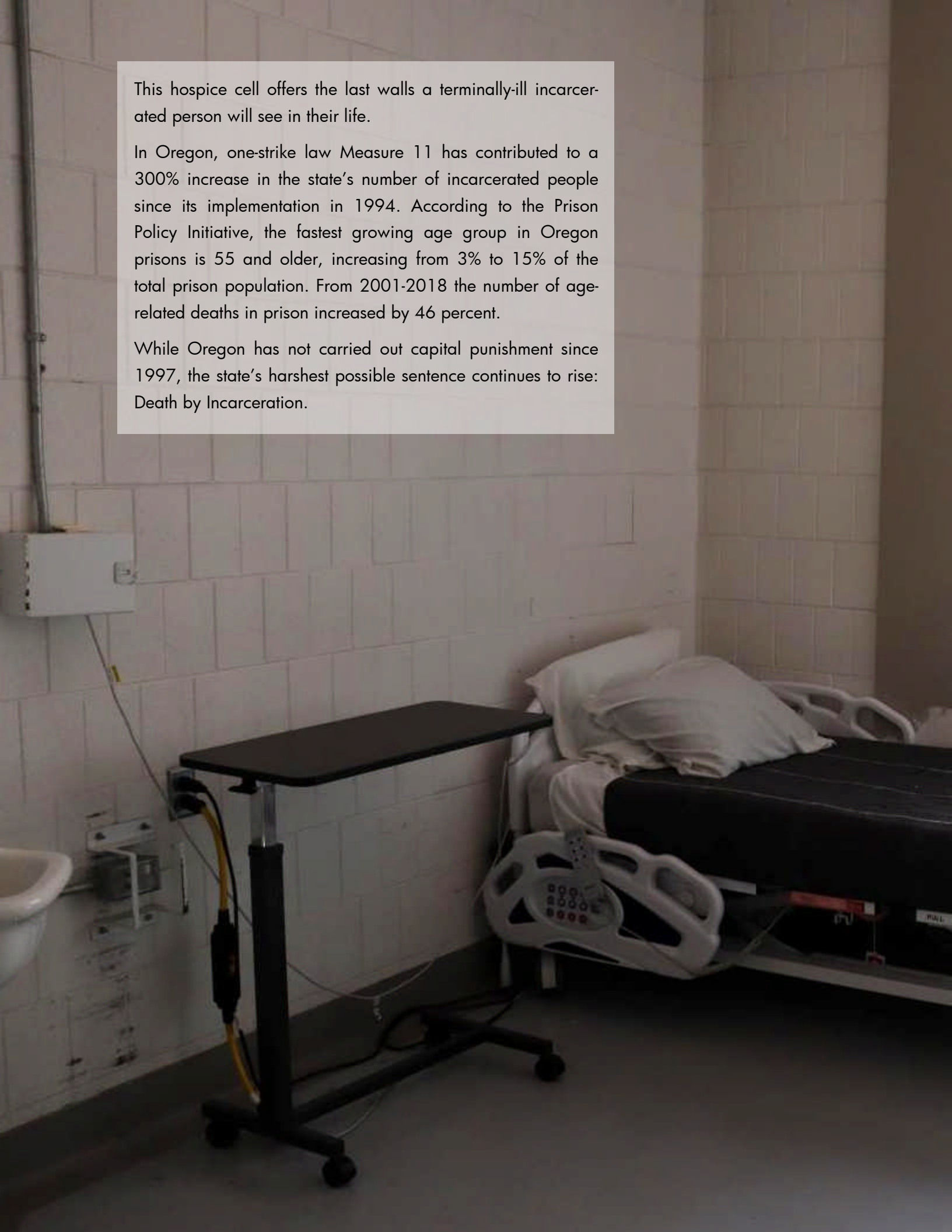


from the prison." He plans to carry the tenacity it takes to be a hospice volunteer with him.

"Back in 1977 when I came to prison, I didn't think about what the world was going to be in 2024," he stated. "Never thought I'd see it." Now, Fritz does concern himself with the future. He takes care of his health and exercises regularly, riding a stationary bike for 15 miles each day (20 miles on the weekend).

Fritz's sentence began with witnessing violence and the cruelty of mankind in the prison setting, an experience that never entirely left him. This exposure shaped his mindset and what ensued could only be described as dangerous and chaotic. Today, through his work as a hospice volunteer, he experiences the compassion and understanding of humankind in the same prison setting. He explained, "When you sit at the bedside of a dying person, it doesn't matter who they are or what they've done. It really puts things in perspective."

At one point or another, infirmity eventually reaches everyone - it is part of the human condition. Bodies break down and there is an unavoidable sunset to life. Outside of prison, caregivers come from the boundaries of relatives and marriage, but in the incarcerated setting it is fictive kin that provide the emotional care and support for elderly people - a supportive role that Fritz has become engulfed in over the last decade. For all his time spent in hospice rooms, he hopes for forbearance with his own life's setting sun so that he might find peace away from the place he will have reluctantly called home for 63 years. ■



This hospice cell offers the last walls a terminally-ill incarcerated person will see in their life.

In Oregon, one-strike law Measure 11 has contributed to a 300% increase in the state's number of incarcerated people since its implementation in 1994. According to the Prison Policy Initiative, the fastest growing age group in Oregon prisons is 55 and older, increasing from 3% to 15% of the total prison population. From 2001-2018 the number of age-related deaths in prison increased by 46 percent.

While Oregon has not carried out capital punishment since 1997, the state's harshest possible sentence continues to rise: Death by Incarceration.

One of three hospice care rooms at the Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution.

Ap

Larry Williams has a laugh. It's a two syllable chuckle to be more accurate, and has a distinct southern twang. Every time he laughs I expect him to start using words like "Y'all" and "Reckon." I got the most laughs out of him when we talk about technology from when he was a kid. "I came from a crank phone and now you can talk on video," he said. He elaborated about a difficult-to-imagine era of black and white televisions, no internet, smartphones, apps or social media. He explained, "I can understand the technical part but not the actual process. Honestly, what the heck is email? Growing up in the mechanical era I find it extremely hard to understand the tech era."

Williams is a 73-year-old African American, Muslim man incarcerated at an eastern Oregon prison. He has been locked up for more than two decades and like most incarcerated people serving a long sentence, he is out of touch with modern technology. On his housing unit, he might be the guy jabbing his finger into the screen of a prison-issued tablet out of frustration. But dive under the surface and he is a man with a wealth of life experience: a youth that spanned farm life in a Southern Black family; marching the streets of Oakland in the Civil Rights era; becoming a skilled practitioner of Judo and winning numerous accolades; to an adulthood that was compiled of running a multi-million dollar equestrian business and becoming a man devoted to the Muslim faith. He has many facets and is much more than an older gentleman frustrated by a touch-screen tablet.

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ples & Oranges

Finding Common Ground with Larry Williams

Written by Phillip Luna

With interview and research support by Walter Thomas

Photography by Phillip Luna

During interviews with Williams I found out very quickly that he has a way of saying a lot with few words, sometimes answering a question with a question. One of the last topics we talked about was race in America and particularly in the prison setting. I asked Williams what he thinks about being in a place that hasn't changed with the world, with prisons often being racially segregated. Then I asked what he thinks when he hears the names Rodney King or George Floyd or Breonna Taylor?

He responded with the question. "Who is Emmett Till?" saying so much with few words. But that was the last thing we spoke about, and to understand his response you have to know a few things about him first.

A LITTLE TASTE OF HEAVEN

In early April 2024, I met Williams in the greenhouse for a photo shoot. He was cleaning aphids off of pepper plants when I arrived. "They like to get down into the flowers and the buds," Williams said, as he sprayed the plant with a natural mint oil mixture meant to deter the pests.

He gave me a tour of the greenhouse and his areas of work. Although he is a man twice my age, I had difficulty keeping up with him while snapping photos. He moves between plant starts, a homemade drip irrigation system he installed, special projects and his plans for the future – each time stopping to give a brief, but detailed explanation of the area. "In the greenhouse," Williams stated, "I do what they ask me to do, and then whatever the rest of the time I tool around. I love gardening."

His life has had many chapters, but in his third act he finds solace as one of the prison's greenhouse workers. Gardening and agriculture remind him of his childhood and provide a comfortable nostalgia.

Williams was born in Oakland, California in 1951; however, his family is from Arkansas and Louisiana. According to him, they are traditionally southern. "When you come from a Southern Black family, if you don't work you don't eat," he said. "In my household there was no such thing as woman's work. You would do dishes, sew, anything." He had seven brothers and sisters, which included half-siblings on both his mother's and father's side. "In my family the rules were: don't lie, don't cheat and don't steal. Your word is your bond."

In Oakland his family raised chickens and had a garden. But it was the time he spent with his extended family in the South that cultivated a love for horses and the communal nature of farm life. They didn't visit often because of the social climate in southern states during the 1950's and 60's. Regardless, Williams recalled the importance of community was a value instilled upon him from an early age. "Everybody was sharing," he said. "This person has tomatoes, or plums or figs. Maybe somebody had a good recipe for a sweet potato pie, so you gave them your sweet potatoes. It was a beautiful community; a little taste of heaven."

Williams explains his role as one of the prison's greenhouse workers.

As a youth, he spent plenty of time working in manual labor, where he excelled. His father owned a construction company and his step-father had an auto repair shop. At times, he helped his mother clean houses in all-white neighborhoods.

Williams went to Castlemount High School and was a part of the Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) program. He struggled with academics, learning later in life that he was dyslexic. "That's why I am mechanically inclined. You show me something and I can do it," he explained. He found ways to cope with his academic challenges and focused instead on working with his hands. He "took a lot of shop classes" and many of his teachers even allowed him to take verbal exams.

Despite his educational challenges, he graduated from high school. "I had a chance to go to West Point, the military academy. [I was] Accepted to go to Cal Berkeley." However, he decided not go to college and never addressed his struggle with dyslexia.

During that time period, the United States was rife with racial conflict and Williams found himself wrapped up in the political activism. It was the Civil Rights era, and he lived in the heart of Oakland - an epicenter of the Black Power movement.

THEY CALLED US MULATOES

In the 1960's, racial tensions were at a high point in the country and he dealt with his share of tribulations during that time. However, he recalled racism occurred within the Black community as well, on account of his lighter skin. "They called us mulatoes, white boys, anything but Black," Williams said. "And one time when they hit me, I hit them back. Then they said, 'Well, you are Black!'" He was often ostracized by people within his community.

In the antebellum era the word mulato was used to refer to a lighter-skinned African slave, who was often of mixed African and European ancestry. Eleven million African slaves were brought to the United States throughout the country's history. Many female slaves bore children of mixed race, often not by choice.

"They called us mulatoes, white boys, anything but Black."

At that time, the country labeled enslaved people based on their various skin tones. The terms were used as descriptions to help identify and capture runaways. Mulato was a racial category for census in United States until 1930, and for many years now the term has been considered outdated and offensive.

Williams recalled that when he was a youth, schools and public areas were still segregated. "There were areas Blacks couldn't go into," he said. "We couldn't even walk through the parks."

As a teenager, regardless of how light his skin was, being out alone at night was dangerous. "After five o'clock the boogie man would come out. White people and the police would come by with bats and hoe handles and they called it [n-word] knocking," he stated. "If you were out in the streets you were getting knocked."

He described being attacked by a group of white kids in 1967 "I got jumped in the park behind my house. I came home all bloody and my mother said, 'this will never happen again.'" His mother enrolled him in martial arts; Williams joined the Judo club at his high school.

Within three short years, by 1970, Williams was *Ikkyu*, a first degree brown belt and just one step below black belt. According to the *Oakland Tribune* circa April 1970, Williams was Judo High School Champion 150-pound division and a Junior Olympic Brown Belt Champion that year. Additionally, he is cited as being the highest ranking ROTC officer at his school and holding the best rifle marksman in ROTC in all Oakland high schools. While academics were a struggle for Williams, hands-on physical activities, such as farming, judo, and marksmanship were his forte – which served him well throughout his life.

Judo champions from eastbay

TEEN Age!

Oakland Tribune
Wed., April 8, 1970 E 25

Brad Burge tackles 'best judoka' Steve Sirey

Larry Williams throws Tony Grillo in match

loing . . . where . . .

Larry Williams, pictured left in the Oakland Tribune 1970, throws opponent during match. Williams was a high school Judo champion.

Williams, as a high school senior 18 years of age. He graduated from Castlemount High School in Oakland, California.

Williams with one of his children and with full head of hair.

Williams' mother was a political activist within their community. While she encouraged her son to defend himself from bullies, she took up the mantle to combat the injustices against African Americans. He said, "My family, even though we were lighter-skin and we weren't really accepted, we really believed in our Blackness."

As a young man, he became involved in political activism as well. "I was a member of the Afro-American Association. Don Warden was our leader and we were marching down in Oakland," he recalled. "Everything was divided back then."

The Afro-American Association was founded in 1962 in Williams' hometown. The group started in order to teach African and African American history to people of color. It has been described as the most foundational institution in the Black Power movement. Founding members Don Warden, Donald Hopkins, Otho Green and Henry Ramsey were graduates and law students at UC Berkley. They founded the organization with just 150 reported members.

"We were activists in the community," Williams explained. "We passed out Kennedy buttons and brought political awareness." By 1963, one year after its foundation, the Afro-American Association had exploded to more than 5,000 members across the United States. Co-founder Warden was a mentor for now well-known activists Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale, who later formed the Black Panther Party.

Despite having such a broad impact and immediate success, not every Black person was on board with the political movement. Williams recalls there were many people that felt peaceful protest and civil disobedience were not enough. There were also those who emphasized passive behavior. "Even though you know your

Williams' family and extended family, 2014. He has eight children, ten grandchildren and two great-grand children, some of which can be seen here.

Williams poses for a photo with his oldest daughter as they cook a meal. His daughter is currently a Fire Department Chief.

Williams in 2024 as he prepares to pray. Outside the window the iconic smokestack at the Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution is faintly visible.

neighbor, Black people would not come together. They wanted to say nothing and turn the other cheek," he said. "It was crazy chaos trying to get the Black people to come together."

GOD'S GREEN COUNTRY

By 1976 he had enough of city life and he moved to Oregon. "I saw the direction California was going, and I didn't want to raise kids down there." Oregon was the wide open spaces and nature he'd been raised to value. "I called it God's Green Country." He eventually had eight children and what he enjoyed most about the Pacific Northwest was being able to take his kids horseback riding and fishing.

In 1984, he converted to Islam. "Back in 84' I took my vow to become a Muslim," he said. "But, I didn't really start practicing until I came to prison." He had tried many religious denominations over the years and found that Islam is what worked for him. "It doesn't have to be anything, it doesn't make a difference what path you follow. What I choose, that works for me, is Islam."

Also in 1984, he found a job that put his martial arts skills to use. He was hired briefly as a bodyguard for Jesse Jackson during Jackson's first presidential campaign. Reverend Jackson was the second African American to campaign for President of the United States. He was the first African American to win any major-party state primary or caucus.

Later in life, Williams started a horse business – but not just any run-of-the-mill business. He found a way to return to his passion for equestrianism and was co-owner of the Horse Academy for Advanced Horsemanship, which grew to a multi-million dollar academy that travelled across the United States training and selling horses. "My first love is horses … My grandfather had horses

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and mules and the love is in my blood. When I was a kid I had my little broom stick and I rode him to death."

In 2003, despite the success of his business, Williams became incarcerated. He described the circumstances as a disagreement with a business partner where he felt he was betrayed. Williams committed a crime of emotion – the result of which was the loss of a person's life.

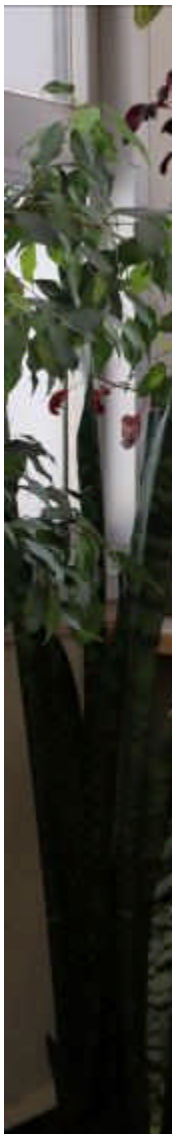
Prison was a shock compared to what he had experienced throughout his life. Like many incarcerated people he found it difficult to stay linked with his family from the inside. "The first ten years … I didn't have a connection with them," he expressed. Often people who are incarcerated for long sentences feel guilty for trying to remain connected with the outside world, as if they are a burden their families must carry. Williams admits to having a sense of intentional detachment, but over time something finally changed and he reached out to his family. "Now, my daughter and I talk every weekend and I do video visits with my son. My daughter comes up when she can." From his eight children he has ten grandchildren and two great-grand children.

APPLES AND ORANGES ARE FRUIT

When I started interviewing Larry Williams I was most interested in his experience, or lack of, with technology. Incarceration has a way of freezing people in time and this seemed like a good storyline to me. But Williams' lack of exposure to technology was only part of the story.

When the tape recorder is shut off and I've read my notes a hundred times, the part of Williams' life that resonates most are on the subject of race. Not because the topic is inflammatory or polarizing, which it can be for some people, but because his perspective is not exactly what I expected.

Here is a Black man born during a time when schools were still segregated - a person who had family in Arkansas when the Little Rock Nine first integrated the school systems. He marched the streets of Oakland, the birthplace of the Afro-American Association and the Black Panther Party, and was hit with tear gas. He organized sit-ins and other forms of civil disobedience to fight injustice and the social inequities in Black families that was the inevitable result of our nation's blemished history.



He fought for civil rights, despite being ostracized because of the lightness of his own skin. And after everything he finds himself incarcerated, stepping back 50-years in time to a factionalized place where tables, chairs and social circles are separated by the color of skin. Yet, he wants to listen and understand people with opposite views.

I asked Williams for his thoughts on racial separation in prison. "I talk to everybody, I talk to them all – I respect what people believe even if they are racist. I respect that, that's your belief. I don't agree with it, but I respect your right to believe," he explained.

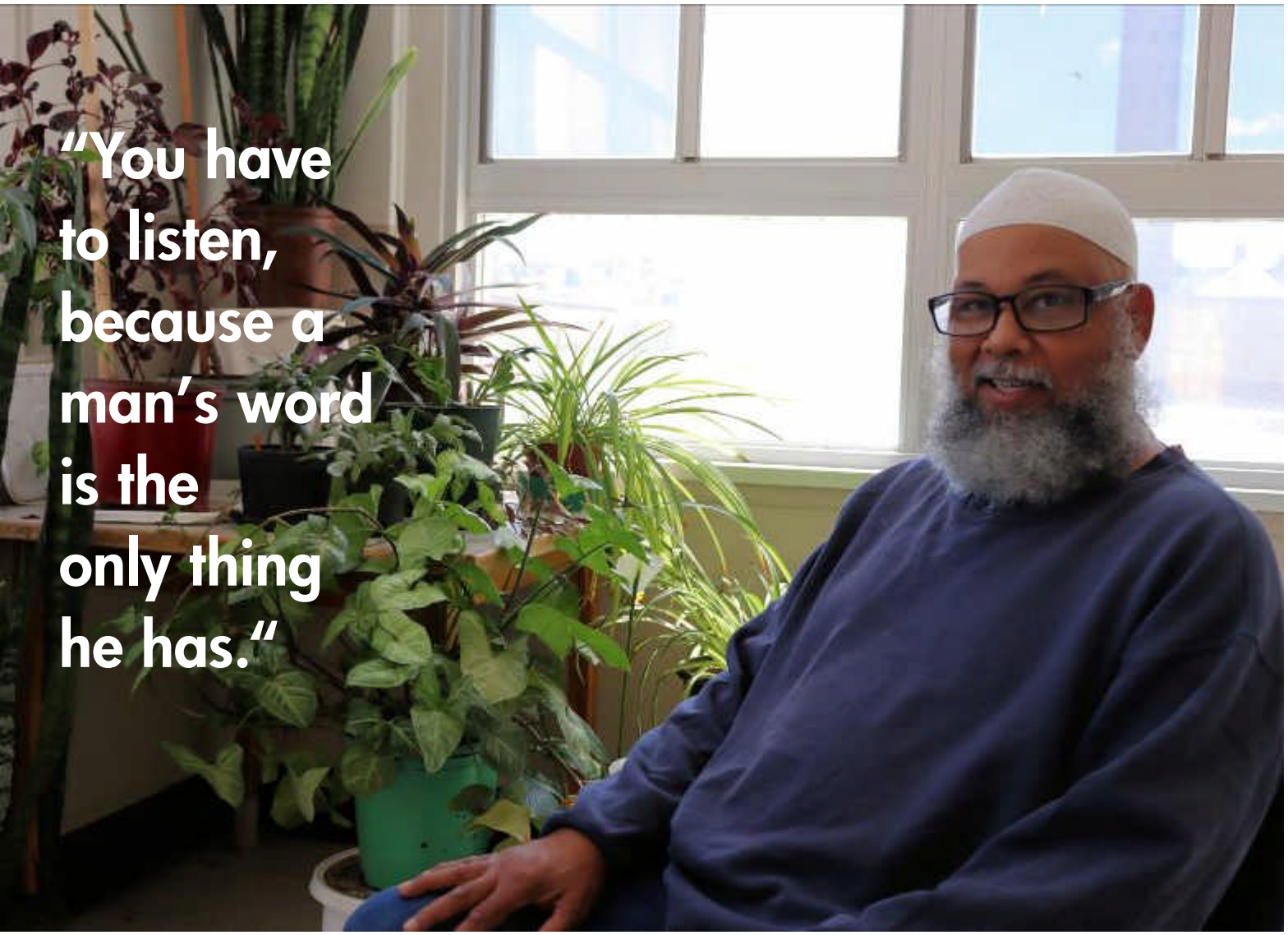
Then I asked what he thinks when he hears the names Rodney King or George Floyd or Breonna Taylor? And this is when he asked me, "Who is Emmett Till?"

Emmett Till was a barely 14-year-old African American boy who was murdered in Mississippi in 1955 after interacting with a white woman at a grocery store. Williams would have been a young boy at the time, not that far in age from Till.

Till, who was born and raised in Chicago, was visiting family in Mississippi. He had unknowingly violated the unwritten code of behavior for a Black male in the barbarism of the Jim Crow-era South. Because he addressed a white woman, he was abducted, beaten, mutilated, lynched, shot in the head and his body dumped in the Tallahatchie River.

In 1955, the two men who took Till's life were found not guilty of murder by a Mississippi jury. A year later they admitted to torturing and murdering Till. Protected against double jeopardy, they sold their story to *Look* magazine for $4,000 (equivalent to $45,000 in 2024).

The point Williams was subtlety making was this death and the jury's acquittal sparked outrage among Americans of every race. Tens of thousands of people attended Till's funeral. There were marches. There were protests.



There were rallies. The incident became emblematic of injustices suffered by African Americans and Mississippi became the embodiment of racism. Till's death was the spark that gave rise to the Afro-American Association and eventually the Black Panther Party. Emmett Till was to the Black Panther Party what George Floyd is to Black Lives Matter.

To put it simply, the point I was trying to make to Williams (perhaps in my naïvete) was that he lived through the Civil Rights movement, and after fighting for all these great changes it must be difficult to come to prison, a place that forgot to change with the rest of the world. The point Williams was making to me was, *Has it really changed that much?*

Of course the brutality and cruelty of Till's death outweigh Floyd's, but from Williams' view the problem is and has always been the same. People don't really listen to each other. They see differences, not commonalities.

"Let me ask you this," Williams said. "You've got an apple and an orange. Maybe you call the apple an orange and I call the orange an apple. But, what do they have in common?"

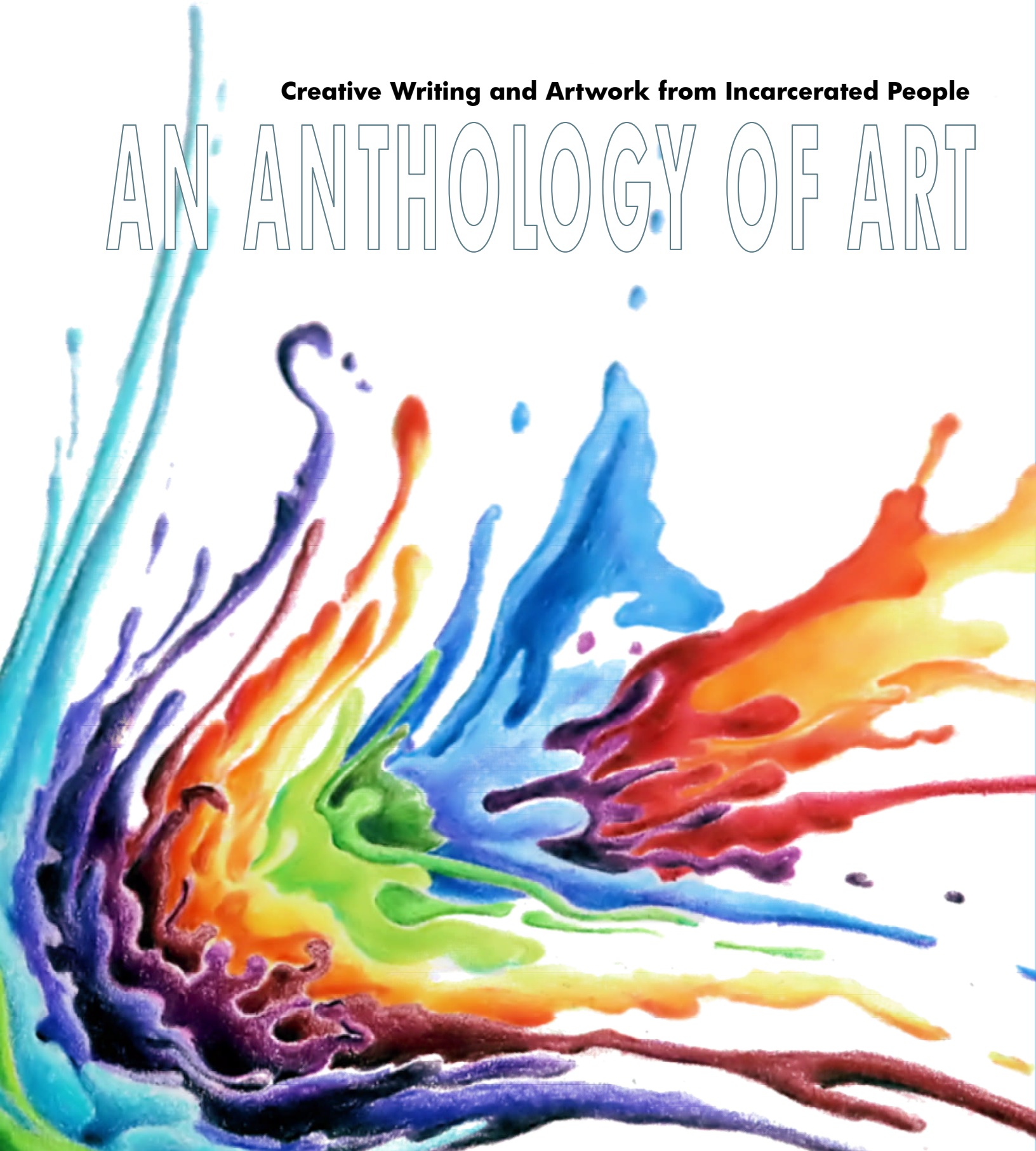
I answered, "They're both fruit."

"Exactly. Republicans and Democrats can't even agree on that. Black and white barely agree on that. People don't listen, they hear, but they don't listen. Until we start listening to one another and finding common ground, nothing is going to change. Nothing. You have to listen, because a man's word is the only thing he has. That's what I take my pride in."

Editor's note: The Emmett Till Antilynching Act, which makes lynching a federal hate crime, was signed into law on March 29, 2022 by President Joe Biden - 67 years after Till's death.

Creative Writing and Artwork from Incarcerated People

AN ANTHOLOGY OF ART

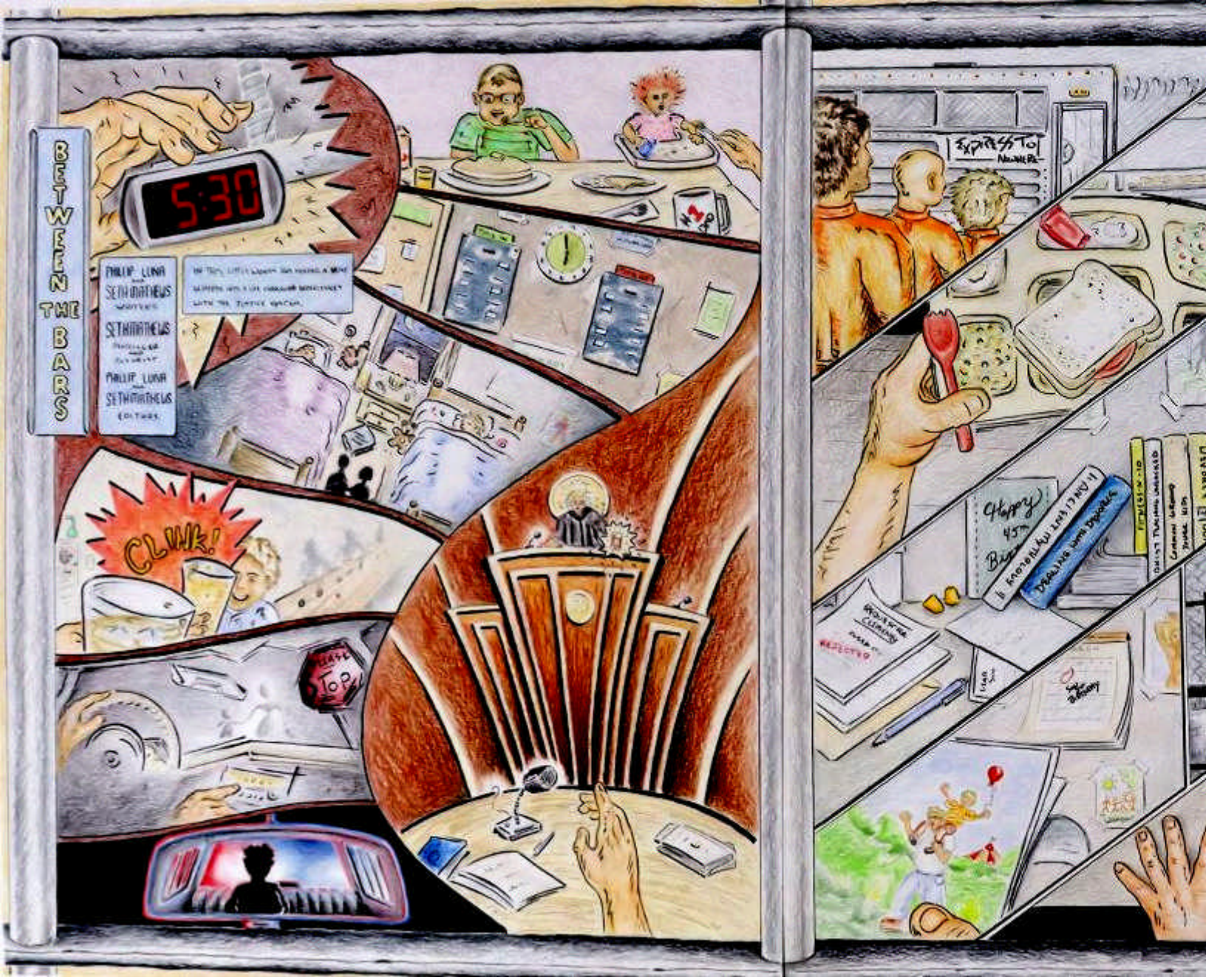


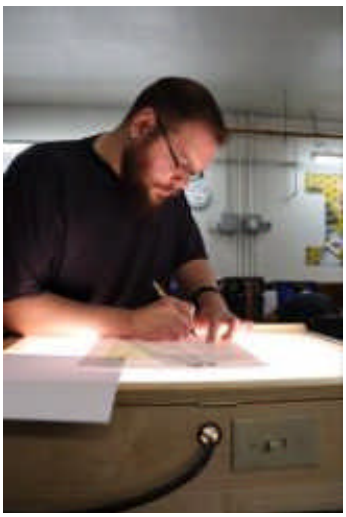
Art has many mediums - from sketches to paintings, poetry to essays, spoken word to music. Creating art is a form of self-expression and a powerful tool for healing and well-being. Studies show art can relieve anxiety, reduce stress and increase cognitive thinking.

For incarcerated people, creating art can be survival. It's the outlet that extends beyond the austerity of prison. Under the heavy cloud of razor-wire fences and lethal gun towers, art is a cold clean breath of fresh air. In this section of 1664 we offer a brief anthology of art. Our hope is to provide a platform to showcase some of the many talented people affected by incarceration - an atmosphere for the air.

Contained within in these pages, creative artist Seth Mathews provides comic-style art that depicts the beginning, middle and end of time in prison; 30-year-old Conor Dayton contributes an essay about aging in prison while facing a 25-to-life sentence; Walter Thomas shares a poem titled *Diligence,* about the freedom he found in self-control; Patrick Gazeley-Romney contributes a creative writing piece reflecting on nearly a decade of incarceration while he prepares for his release; and Robert Otto Berno shares poetry crafted during his time in segregation, lamenting the loss of youth, "My joints are stiff, my sleep is poor/And the hopefulness of youth is gone."

Information and submission guidelines can be found on page 35 of this publication.

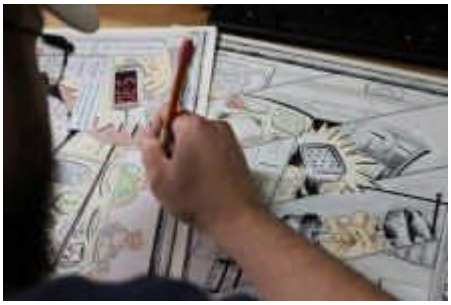




Artist Seth Mathews

These pages feature comic style artwork by long-time artist Seth Mathews.

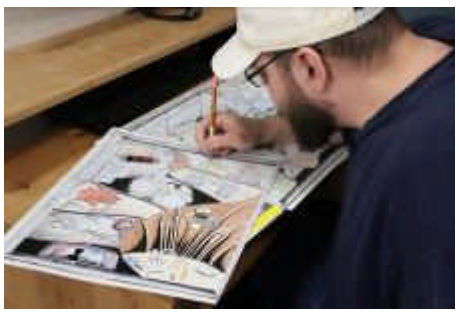
The comic strip was completed on three, large 11" by 14" pieces of 100 lb paper.



The project required multiple meetings with the 1664 team to develop the concept. The project was created in colored pencil and took Mathews 75 hours to complete.

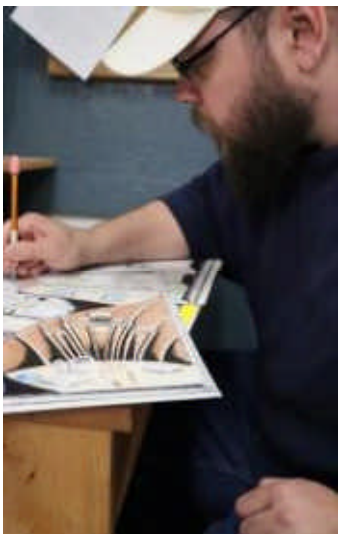
Mathews said the goal was to understand "how can we visualize emotion." In the first panel, he employed controlled perspective with an illustrative curve diving into the problem.

According to Mathews, the second panel was designed to be “far more rigid, but still kiltered, which is why I did it on the axis.” The panel represents the often inflexible and uncomfortable structure of prison.



Mathews called the last panel “the cradle of family.” Each section depicts a challenge a person faces upon release.
The images of family in the bottom corners serve as the cradle.

Mathews, 37, has been incarcerated since 2015. Prior to his incarceration he worked in the culinary field, but finds art has him using a similar skill set.



Growing Old, Growing Up

An essay by Conor Dayton

Wouldn't it be a shame if you decided to leave exactly the way you came?

- Conor Dayton

Growing old isn't the same as growing up. Nope, far from it… One references the flow of time and the biological process that occurs when your cells fail to replicate themselves completely (i.e. the aging process). The other is in reference to what occurs with the organ between your ears (the mental aspect). One is inevitable, and the other, to put it simply… is a choice.

"Aging in prison" is an intriguing topic and as I pondered the matter further I realized there was quite a bit to unpack. Are you familiar with the phrase, "prison preserves you?" I'm sure many of us have heard these words before. I remember the first time I heard this phrase, it really stuck with me. It was a sort of silver lining within a tragic mess, and the sentiment of those words sparked a certain level of hope for my future self. That despite my unfortunate situation there are in fact positives to be had from this experience. And trust me, after being sentenced to 25-to-life, I needed all the positives I could get!

At this point of my life I didn't possess a strong sense of the flow of time, and I didn't invest much into the deeper concepts: aging, growing and evolving. After all, time can be quite elusive to gauge - occasionally zooming by at ridiculous speeds, and in other instances crawling slower than a tar covered tortoise.

But time doesn't actually flow differently. I mean, there's always going to be 24 hours in a day, the only variable that shifts the perception at all is you! How engaged you are with the world around you and what experiences you glean from it in return. So, when it comes to aging in prison, I try to simplify it in this sense - you can do your time, or you can let your time do you… controlling what you can control as you strive to grow and evolve; taking advantage of the opportunities that life provides when your energy is focused in this spectrum; tapping into your drive and ambition to achieve your goals and desires; utilizing these raw elements to lead a fulfilling life despite where you are physically. Or … you can be an unwilling participant in the process, and just let the days pass you by. The choice is yours.

But wouldn't it be a shame if you decided to leave exactly the same as when you came?

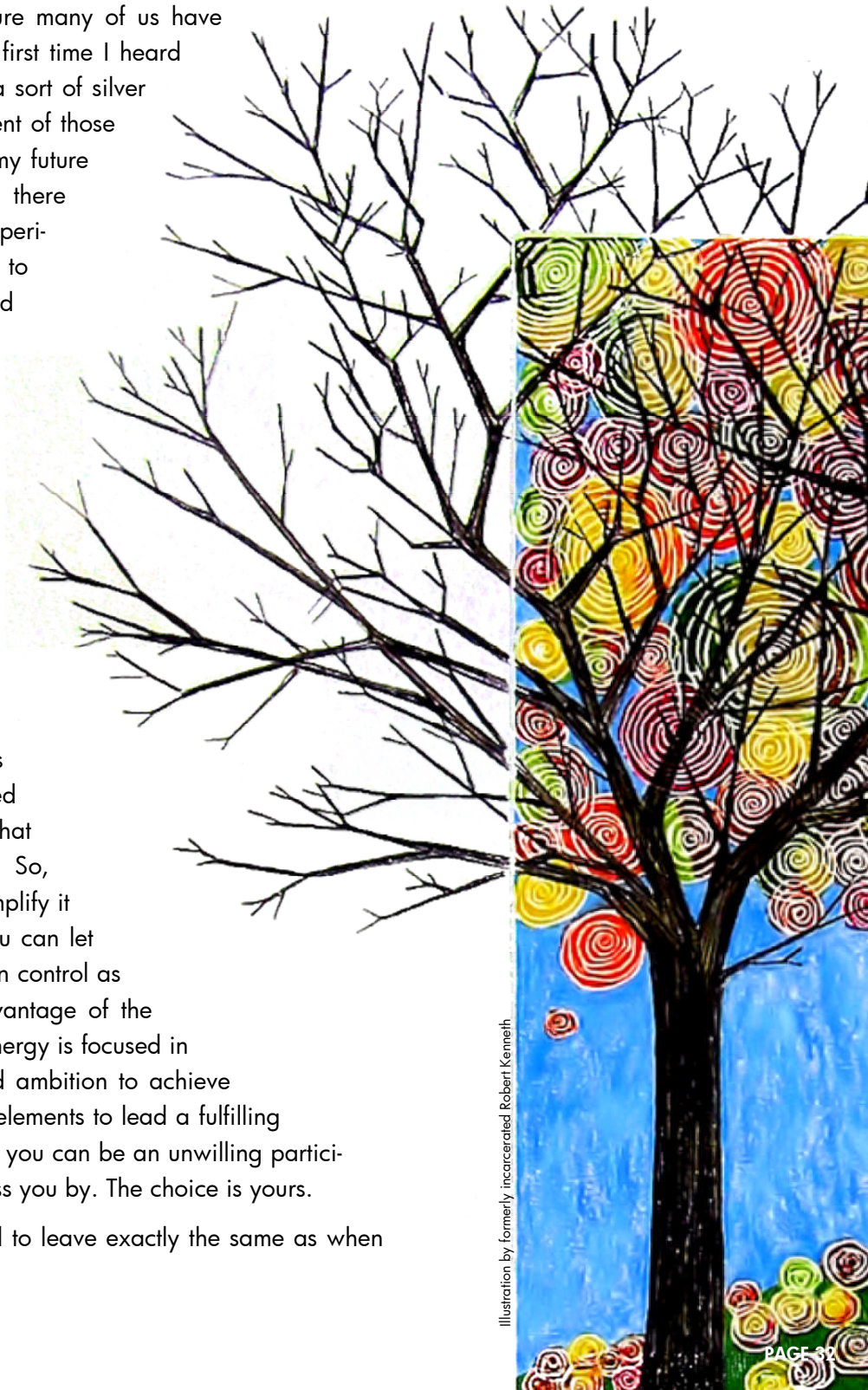
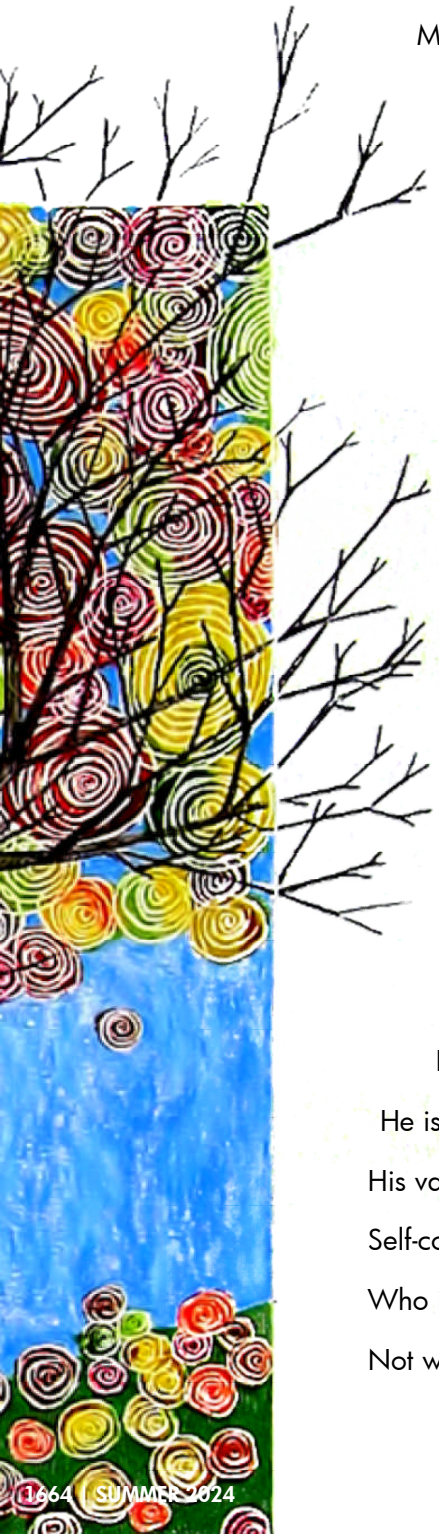


Illustration by formerly incarcerated Robert Kenneth

Between the Walls That Have So Long Contained Me

A poem by Robert Otto Berno

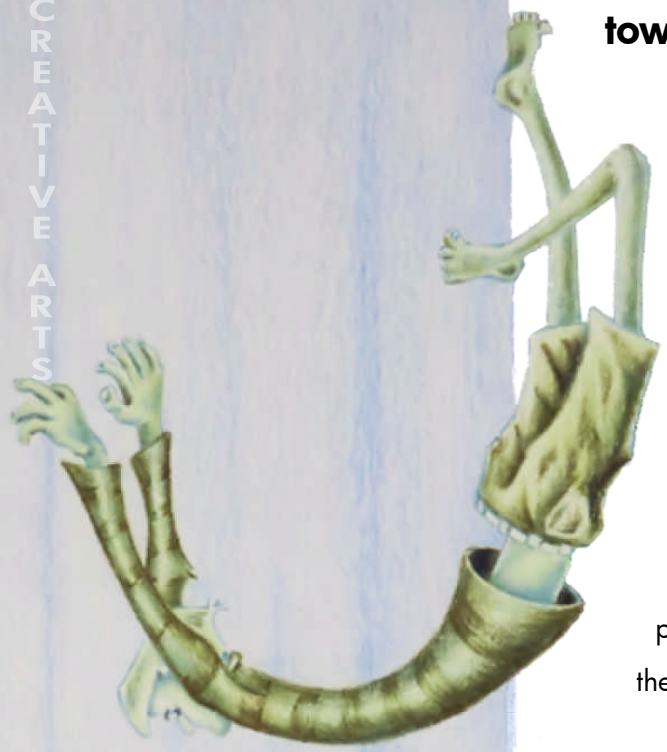
Between the walls that have so long contained me
I have suffered, exulted, gained, and lost
Where once I behaved as one unworthy of manhood, trusting eagerly to hope
Now I feel aged, pained by memories
The weight of mistakes made and miles travelled
Of evil done to, by, and before me
My joints are stiff, my sleep is poor
And the hopefulness of youth is gone
Now I think grimly of difficulty adjusting to a changed and changing world
Of how long I've existed and how little I've lived
I have matured and gained wisdom
But I think the cost has been far too great
And I think often of how much I still owe



Diligence

A poem by Walter Thomas

All that a man achieves is the direct result of his own thoughts
A man's weakness and strength is all he has brought
Only he can alter his condition, suffering and happiness
As he thinks, so he is, as he continues to think.
He who conquered weakness,
and has put away all selfish thoughts.
He is free.
He is now fit to act independently and stand alone.
His vanity and ambition devoured his selfish and greedy, dishonest ways.
Self-control, righteousness gave his world a different sway
Who is he? he is I,
Not who I once was but what made me who I am today.



toward the light

A poem by Patrick Gazeley-Romney

cuffs click sharply, tightening
subjugating my withered wrist.
cold metal digs into my warm, adrenaline-filled flesh.
in an instant I molt,
shedding whatever innocence and optimism in me remains.

the day of my capture I trade rose-colored glasses
for spectacles of a darker shade. The dominant rays mostly blue thereafter.
paranoia, fear, anxiety, depression;
these are my lessons.

I see The Greed all around me. Infecting… me.
defeated men trading brotherhood
for fleeting, minor comforts.
to tear another down is common place here.

but while treading filth, head just above surface
beautiful things can happen.
silver-linings begin to separate from the flotsam of a stagnant cesspool.
patience, surrender, appreciation, acceptance just to name a few.

I took so much for granted before;
fleeting moments of joyous connectivity, Trust.
hope.
silence…

I yearn to shed my cocoon of pessimism,
to cast aside my welder's shade,
holding fast to the gifts found in purgatory.
I welcome liberation, the solvent needed
to wash away the unwelcome stains on my soul.

Illustration by Seth Mathews

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

1664 is a sister publication to The Echo.

If you are interested in shaping the content of 1664 there are three of ways to get involved: 1) creative writing in the form of a personal non-fiction essay, poetry, or music lyrics; 2) artwork in any medium; and 3) being featured in one of our person-first profiles. We accept submissions from all justice-impacted people - inside and outside of prison.

1664 publishes quarterly (four times per year). The summer edition covered the topic of aging in prison. Our fall edition theme is "Patriotism." Can an incarcerated person still be a patriot? What's it like to be a veteran in prison? What do concepts like freedom and America mean to you?

HELP SHAPE THE CONTENT

If you are interested in contributing or if you think your story is compelling, contact EOCI's Institution Work Programs (IWP) by communication form. For those outside of EOCI, you may mail your submission to:

Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution
C/O IWP
2500 Westgate
Pendleton, OR
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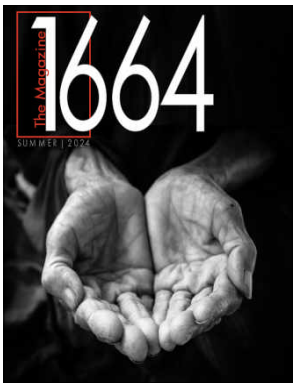
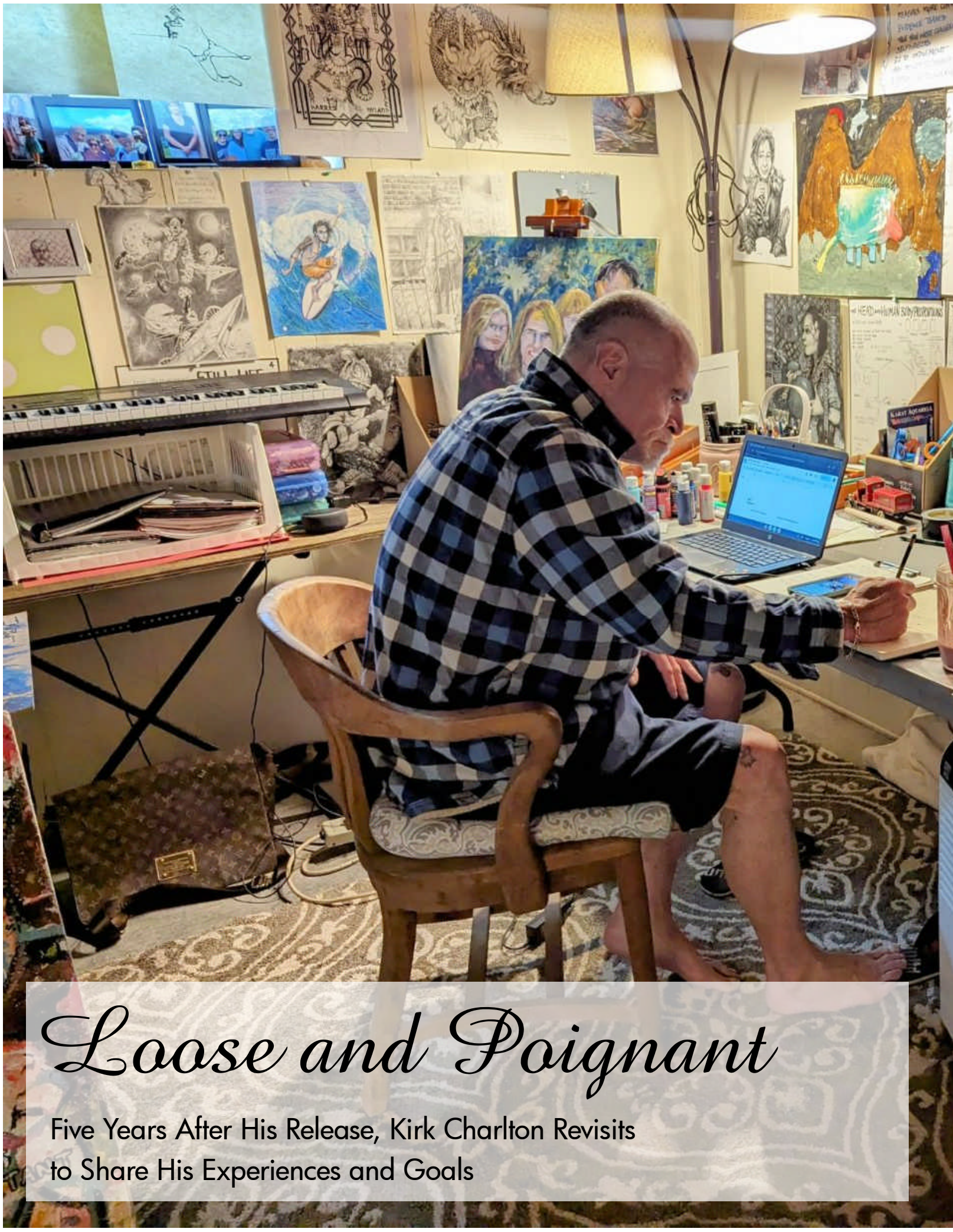
Creative writing and artwork submissions are due by August 31, 2024. Please keep in mind we may not be able to return submissions. We ask that you do not send original copies. Not all submissions will be selected.





Loose and Poignant

Five Years After His Release, Kirk Charlton Revisits to Share His Experiences and Goals

Kirk Charlton in his art studio, five years after his release from incarceration

Kirk Charlton is a life-long artist, muralist and a published author. Released from incarceration in 2019, Charlton's artwork includes various murals in the EOCI visiting room, the 23-foot slab of cinder-block wall in the D2 hallway covered in Americana images, and several canvases in the chapel. He is the creator and owner of the Art Inside Out program, combining therapy and creativity seamlessly into one. He has authored and illustrated several children's books which were published both during and after his incarceration.

In 2019, prior to Charlton's release, he was interviewed by The Echo, EOCI's newsletter. The subject of the interview: What's your five year plan after release? June 2024 marks five years since his release.

He agreed to interview with 1664, providing an update on his experience - from the low times, like his relapse, to the high times where he has obtained incredible success as an artist and entrepreneur.

Charlton illustrates that the path to redemption and rehabilitation often has detours, speed bumps, and even u-turns and road blocks. But despite the challenges and the difficult terrain, the road remains open to those who seek it.

Interview by Ray Peters and Phillip Luna
Photos provided by Kirk Charlton

Charlton, left, with some of his many sketches and My Personal Experience (MPE) art displayed.

The next day I called my counselor and told him that I got high, ratting on myself. Some convict I was!

- Kirk Charlton

The next day I called my counselor and told him that I got high, ratting on myself. Some convict I was! Telling on someone was against the convict code, right? But telling on yourself is insanity according to my convict mentality, which I think is stupid now.

It started this accountability thing for me and without that relapse I would not have this need to be accountable like I do now. It is a remarkable story to show how mistakes will show you the right path and to not let your wrongdoings define who you are. I wish I could give you nothing but happy, happy, joy, joy but it would not be the truth.

Getting out of prison is great, but facing challenges like employment and making amends to people you have hurt is hard.

Q: What's the first thing you did after being released from prison in 2019?

A: My dad picked me up and we ate at a pancake house. We visited with family and then dad took me to my residence in Portland, the Shoreline Hotel. This was a bad place to live for anyone released from prison.

Located on 2nd and Burnside downtown, it provided lots of opportunities to relapse and associate with people who were active in the world of crime. I relapsed in my third week of freedom, and I did something that I have never done before.

Q: What were the things you did while incarcerated that truly helped you after release? Were there programs that helped? Programs that didn't help?

A: Everything I did while I was incarcerated affected my life as a free man. Good and bad things happen but I always felt like I could do something to make up for my time away from my family.

Getting a job at a freight liner or Amazon and working for 30 years to get a pension was not an option. Many of my friends and family, with good intentions, would say

Charlton teaching an art class.

'Kirk get a job working anywhere and work on your Art Inside Out at night.'

It is hard to explain how that approach would not work, especially with bills and restitution needing to get paid. All I can say is it is "all in" with Art Inside Out (AIO) and a job that fetters my creativity is impossible.

I have dreamt of being a person who makes a living doing something that he enjoys. In art there is a way out of the starving artist existence. Art bifurcates in two directions: aesthetics where you draw and paint visual things to sell and make a living, however, it also involves marketing and being good at business.

Most artists are great at producing art but suck big time with promoting and business. Then they starve. The useful and utilitarian area is where you can make money teaching art or creating programs like I did when developing AIO. I am looking at making much more money from my program than selling my art.

Q: What were some of the immediate challenges you faced?

A: Some of the issues are more of an inconvenience than a problem. I mean, I believe in putting things on a scale of one to ten. I learned this in Anger Management in prison. I used to go straight to ten on everything but now I put not only problems but crucial decision-making issues on a scale, weigh it out and force myself to be ok with my decision. If it was not the right decision I do not freak out. Many things are minus 100 instead of plus ten.

Q: Art has played a big role in your life - both inside and out. Can you tell about some of your success and your exhibits?

A: Art is my life! If you love art, it loves you back. My drawings of My Personal Experiences that I have named MPE is extremely popular with groups that look to better the prison system. The pendulum is indeed swinging to-

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Charlton's Art Inside Out program combines therapy and creativity into one.

The pendulum is indeed swinging towards the Norway version of incarceration

- Kirk Charlton

wards a Norway version of incarceration, also considered to be a utilitarian/useful way to make better neighbors once a prisoner is released. My exhibit has been on display at the Portland Community College at the Paragon studio, Portland NW College of Arts, Art Design Exchange, and hopefully soon the Leach Gallery in the Pearl District. This exhibit, like my program, is dragging me along because it connects with all people without my guidance … and I am glad.

Q: You published a few children's books – the "Iwannabe" brand. In 2019 you had three books. Have there been any more?

A: My children's books are at this moment being purchased by an archdiocese school and other places because of the educational component in the books. I planned that well I think. Also showing diversity and having a great and fun story that has a problem and then a solution at the end is liked by kids. The key was to make books that offer other occupations than the well covered ones. I want to be a Doctor, Police officer, nurse, firefighter etc. I have five finished and available online: I want to be a Marine Biologist; Artist; Archeologist; Jazz Musician; and Soccer Player. Coming out soon I have an Engineer, Olympic Ice Skater, and a Geologist.

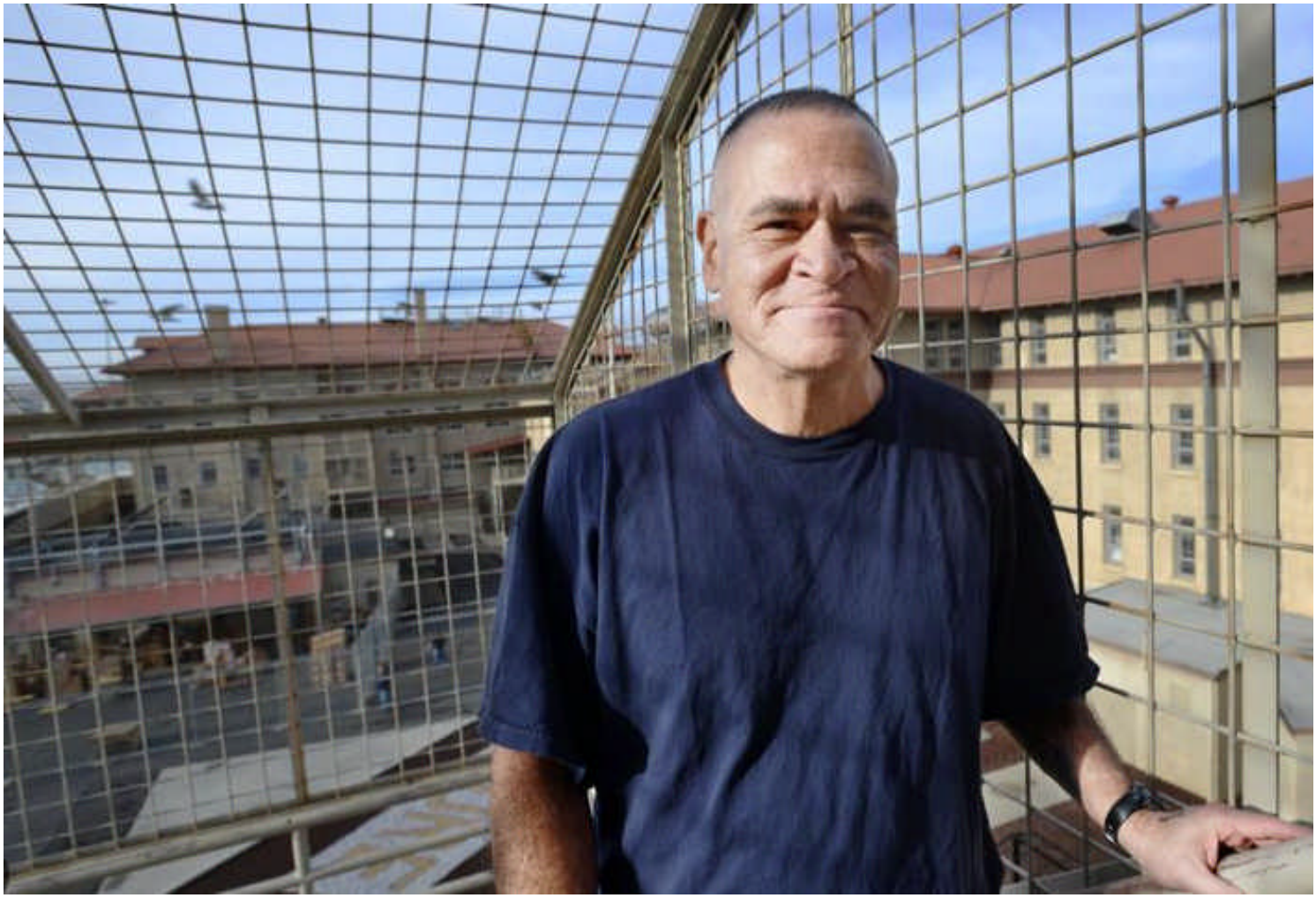
Q: Can you tell me about Art Inside Out?

A: AIO is operating in the Drug Treatment programs at Cascadia Health, Another Chance Drug Treatment, BHS department in the ODOC, Retirement and Memory care facilities, and soon at corporate places for team building, Nike is a possibility soon.

Q: In 2019, we interviewed you. The last question was, "Where do you see yourself in five years?" Here is your response:

> ***In 5 years I hope that my children's books are a brand, the "Iwannabe" brand. And they can be on t-shirts, toys, movies, why not? I want to work 16 hours a day … My children's books will provide me with an income so I can do my Art Inside Out program for troubled youth, retired and elderly folks, war veterans, prisoners, drug and alcohol retreats, and even for executives and employees at IBM or Nike.***

How do you feel about that now? Did you accomplish what you set out to do?



Prior to his release from prison in 2019, Kirk Charlton stands at the top of the stairwell off the F building appendage at the Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution.

A: Wow this question is making me cry, I am seriously crying. Hard not to cry nowadays because of the "not supposed to cry" bull in prison and everywhere. Men are not allowed to be emotional. Growing up watching Steve McQueen and Charles Bronson in movies supported masculinity and made an impression. It is all bull, and it does not mean you're gay or even over sensitive when you cry. I am making up for not crying all those years and it feels good.

Yes, I think that I have accomplished much in close to five years. Very unconventionally though.

Q: I think one of your best quotes from that interview was, "*The best* compliment *an artist can get is not, hey that looks real or perfect, the best compliment would be, did you do that one painting? I recognize your style.*"

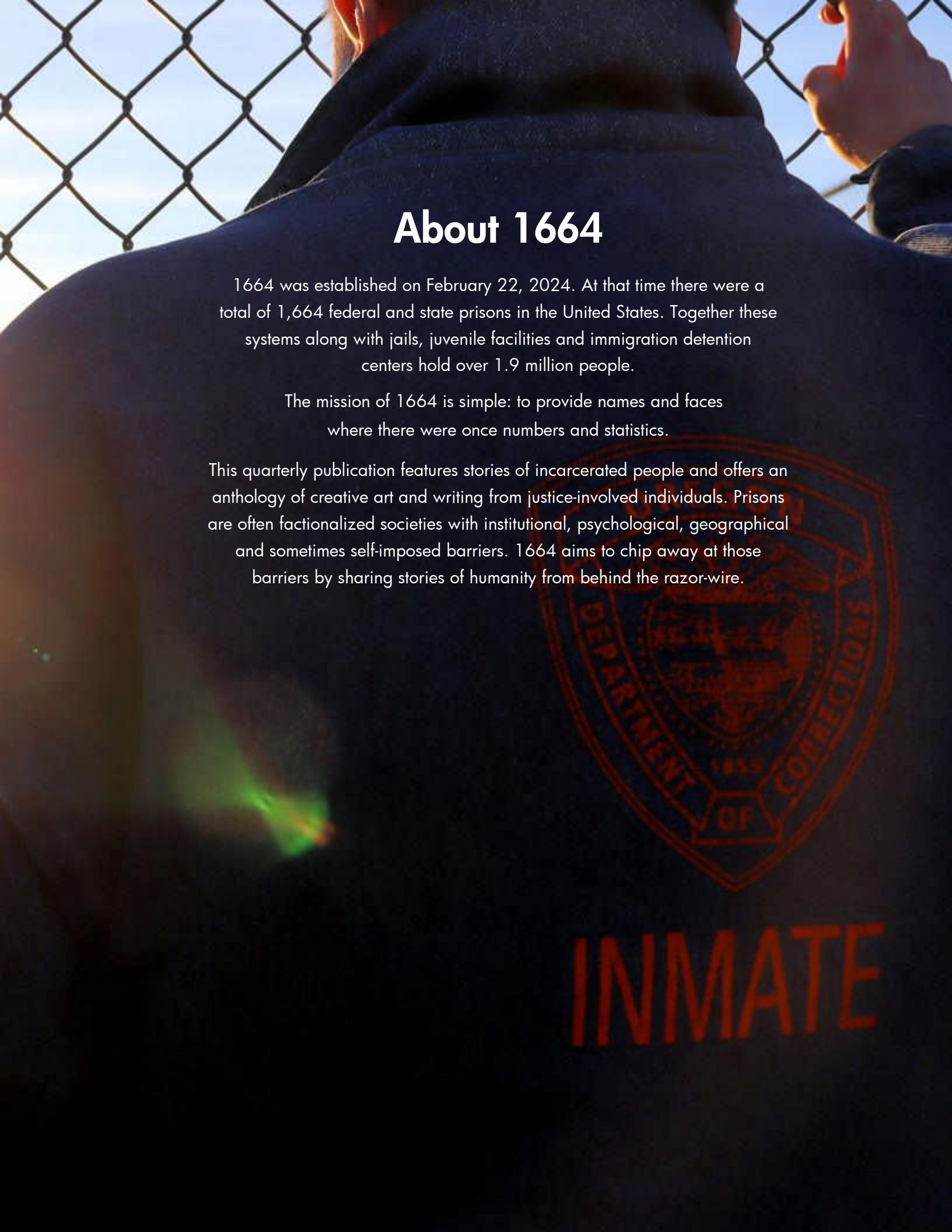
How would you define your style as an artist?

A: Loose and Poignant. I do not know because I can use all mediums and do caricatures as well as realism, murals, airbrushing etc. My ability to draw is what I am grateful for.

Drawing is the key … You don't need to learn how to paint to learn to illustrate and draw well … but you should learn how to draw before learning to paint etc. Like learning the piano first in music. I can draw anything.

Q: There are many people here that still remember Kirk Charlton. And if they forget, there are countless murals to remind them. As a true success story, what would like to share with our readers?

A: If you have an idea and it is doable and different, realize that effort and fortitude will make it happen. Also be your genuine self, you will find life easier that way. Oh, and a life of propriety is cool and not boring. ■



About 1664

1664 was established on February 22, 2024. At that time there were a total of 1,664 federal and state prisons in the United States. Together these systems along with jails, juvenile facilities and immigration detention centers hold over 1.9 million people.

The mission of 1664 is simple: to provide names and faces where there were once numbers and statistics.

This quarterly publication features stories of incarcerated people and offers an anthology of creative art and writing from justice-involved individuals. Prisons are often factionalized societies with institutional, psychological, geographical and sometimes self-imposed barriers. 1664 aims to chip away at those barriers by sharing stories of humanity from behind the razor-wire.

Summer, 2024
Issue 1: Gray Prisons

The 1664 Contributors

Patrick Gazeley-Romney **photographer, contributor**

Patrick is a writer-at-large for The Echo and a contributor to 1664. He has a Bachelor's degree from Portland State University and facilitates numerous educational, agriculture and beekeeping programs. He has been incarcerated for nine years.

Phillip Luna **editor, photographer, design**

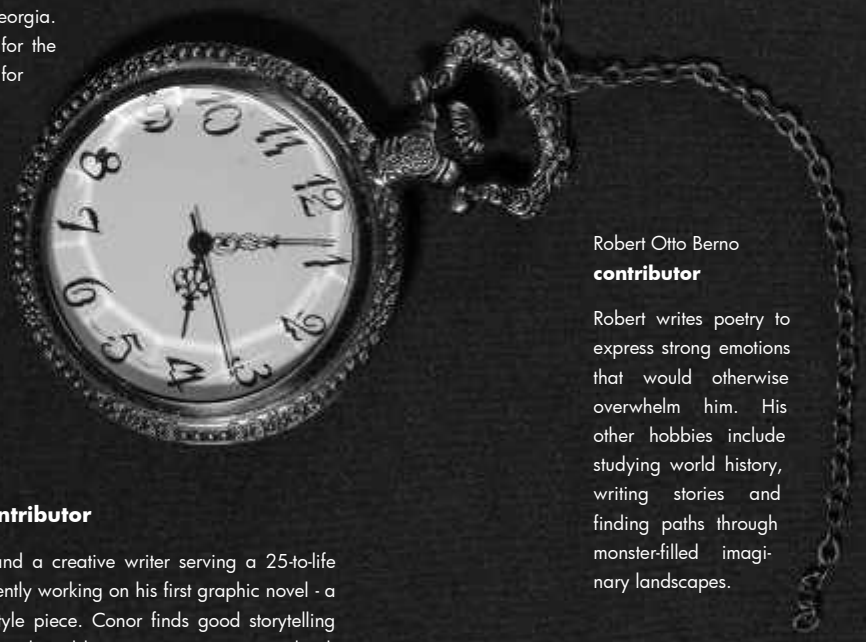
Phillip is the editor of 1664 and The Echo, Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution's newsletter. He is a member of the Society of Professional Journalists and a student with the journalism program by the non-profit Prison Journalism Project. Separately, Phillip is currently pursing a Bachelor's degree. He has been incarcerated for nine years.

Seth Mathews **artist**

Seth is a life-long artist. He studies different genres and mediums of artwork and considers the practice of each to be homework. Prior to becoming incarcerated Seth worked in the culinary field. He has been incarcerated since 2015.

Walter Thomas **contributor**

Walter is from Atlanta, Georgia. He recently started writing for the Echo and is a contributor for 1664. Thomas has been writing music and poetry since age 12. He has been incarcerated for six years.



Robert Otto Berno **contributor**

Robert writes poetry to express strong emotions that would otherwise overwhelm him. His other hobbies include studying world history, writing stories and finding paths through monster-filled imaginary landscapes.

Conor Dayton **contributor**

Conor is a artist and a creative writer serving a 25-to-life sentence. He is currently working on his first graphic novel - a 300 page manga-style piece. Conor finds good storytelling lends well to his artwork and keeps a composition notebook with him to jot down ideas.

Ray Peters **staff support, supervising editor**

Ray has been working with the Oregon Department of Corrections for 27 years. He is the supervising editor and staff liaison for The Echo and 1664.

Cover photo: Elderly hands - Shutterstock/CHAINFOT4
Back photo: time piece in black and white—Shutterstock/Tonythepic