

DOCUMENTARY FILMS ABOUT INCARCERATION AND REENTRY

Internet Resources

Last Updated: April 2019

This document is part of a series of internet listings about
When Survivors Reenter their Communities after Jail or Prison
developed by the National Clearinghouse for the Defense of Battered Women.

This page is intentionally blank

Sections

Table of Contents	iii
Introduction	1
Documentary Films about:	
The Prison System and Mass Incarceration	3
Charged and Incarcerated Battered Women	5
Incarcerated Women	8
Transgender Prisoners	11
Mothers, Their Children, and Incarceration	12
Reentering People	14
Restorative and Reentry Projects	17

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	1
DOCUMENTARY FILMS ABOUT THE PRISON SYSTEM AND MASS INCARCERATION	3
13TH (2016)	3
The House I Live In (2013)	3
Broken on All Sides (2012).....	3
DOCUMENTARY FILMS ABOUT CHARGED AND INCARCERATED BATTERED WOMEN	5
The Perfect Victim (2012).....	5
Crime After Crime: the Battle to Free Debbie Peagler (2011).....	5
Every F---ing Day of my Life (2009).....	6
Sin by Silence (2009).....	6
Charisse Shumate: Fighting for Our Lives (2005)	6
Defending Our Lives (1992).....	7
DOCUMENTARY FILMS ABOUT INCARCERATED WOMEN	8
The Grey Area (2012).....	8
Women Behind Bars: The Voices of Oklahoma’s Incarcerated Women and Their Children (2011)	8
Healing Neen (2010).....	8
Freedom Road (2004).....	9
900 Women (2000)	10
DOCUMENTARY FILMS ABOUT TRANSGENDER PRISONERS	11
Ashley Diamond, A Transgender Prisoner In Georgia, Speaks Out (2014).....	11
Cruel and Unusual (2006)	11
DOCUMENTARY FILMS ABOUT MOTHERS, THEIR CHILDREN, AND INCARCERATION	12
Mothers of Bedford (2011).....	12
Troop 1500 (2005).....	12
DOCUMENTARY FILMS ABOUT REENTERING PEOPLE	14
Pull of Gravity (2013).....	14
Reentry Film Series (2010)	14
Strength of a Woman (2009)	15
Our Voices Within: Out of the Shadows (2007).....	16
DOCUMENTARY FILMS ABOUT RESTORATIVE AND REENTRY PROJECTS	17
Coming Home: The C.A.R.E. Program (2014)	17
Concrete, Steel, and Paint (2009)	17

Introduction

Documentaries can be a great way to share powerful and personal stories of struggle and resiliency. In this listing, we have included information about documentary films that focus on those who are incarcerated, as well those who have reentered their communities after incarceration, many of whom have experienced battering, drug addiction, poverty, and racism.

You will find information about films that feature a variety of people, including charged and incarcerated victims of battering, many of whom came into the criminal justice system due in some way to their own history of being abused. Some of the women featured in those films are still incarcerated, while others have been released and their reentry journeys chronicled in the films. In this listing we have included films about:

- Charged and incarcerated battered women;
- Charged and incarcerated women, including transgender women;
- Incarcerated mothers and their children; and
- People reentering their communities after incarceration.

Although the majority of the films included in this listing focus on women, some focus on both men and women. We include these films because we believe they are helpful to all advocates and other practitioners working with reentering people, including survivors of abuse.

Additionally, we included documentaries about mass incarceration to give advocates and other practitioners an overview of some of the overarching systemic issues at play in the criminal legal system.

AUDIENCE

Incarcerated and reentering people, especially women, practitioners and advocates working with incarcerated and reentering people, and educators.

A NOTE ABOUT LANGUAGE

Labels can often stigmatize people and create barriers between those using the labels and those being labeled. Some of the resources included in this listing use the term “women offender” for women returning home from jails and prisons. It is not a term we use at the National Clearinghouse. Many incarcerated and formerly incarcerated women have objected to that term. We believe it is critical that individuals not be defined by their crime/alleged crime. Instead, we use terms such as “returning person,” “reentering woman” “woman returning from jail/prison,” or “formerly incarcerated individual.”

In this resource listing we changed words like “offender” or “inmate” when they did not appear in the title and when it did not affect the integrity of the document being described.

NOTE: The following list of films is provided for your information. Inclusion on this list does not constitute an endorsement of the film by the National Clearinghouse for the Defense of Battered Women.

If you know of additional films that should be added to this list, please contact the National Clearinghouse. We would also like to know if you find errors or changes in any of the web addresses. Thanks.

Documentary Films about the Prison System and Mass Incarceration

NOTE: The films in each section are listed in chronological order, from most recent distribution date.



13TH (2016)

directed by Ava DuVernay

100 minutes

Host Description: “The title of Ava DuVernay’s extraordinary and galvanizing documentary 13TH refers to the 13th Amendment to the Constitution, which reads, “Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States.” The progression from that second qualifying clause to the horrors of mass criminalization and the sprawling American prison industry is laid out by DuVernay with bracing lucidity. With a potent mixture of archival footage and testimony from a dazzling array of activists, politicians, historians, and formerly incarcerated women and men, DuVernay creates a work of grand historical synthesis. Now Streaming on Netflix.”

Full version available on Netflix

<https://www.netflix.com/title/80091741>

THE HOUSE I LIVE IN (2013)

directed by Eugene Jarecki

108 minutes

From the film’s website: “As America remains embroiled in conflict overseas, a less visible war is taking place at home, costing countless lives, destroying families, and inflicting untold damage on future generations of Americans. Over forty years, the War on Drugs has accounted for more than 45 million arrests, made America the world’s largest jailer, and damaged poor communities at home and abroad. Yet for all that, drugs are cheaper, purer, and more available today than ever before. Filmed in more than twenty states, *The House I Live In* captures heart-wrenching stories from individuals at all levels of America’s War on Drugs. From the dealer to the grieving mother, the narcotics officer to the senator, the inmate to the federal judge, the film offers a penetrating look inside America’s longest war, offering a definitive portrait and revealing its profound human rights implications. While recognizing the seriousness of drug abuse as a matter of public health, the film investigates the tragic errors and shortcomings that have meant it is more often treated as a matter for law enforcement, creating a vast machine that feeds largely on America’s poor, and especially on minority communities. Beyond simple misguided policy, *The House I Live In* examines how political and economic corruption has fueled the war for forty years, despite persistent evidence of its moral, economic, and practical failures.”

<http://www.thehouseilivein.org/>

For distribution information visit:

<http://www.thehouseilivein.org/see-the-film/watch-the-film/>

BROKEN ON ALL SIDES (2012)

directed by Matthew Pillischer

68 minutes

From the film’s website: “The project began as a way to explore, educate about, and advocate change around the over-crowding of the Philadelphia county jail system. The documentary has

come to focus on mass incarceration across the nation and the intersection of race and poverty within criminal justice. The feature-length documentary is available for activists and educators to use in order to raise consciousness and organize for change. Since its completion in February 2012 the director, Matthew Pillischer, has been doing a grassroots tour of the movie: setting up meetings in cities across the country, where a screening of the movie can kick off discussions by people who were formerly incarcerated and their families and allies on how we can dismantle the system of mass incarceration. If your school, workplace, organization, or religious institution can host a screening, please contact the director. The documentary centers around the theory put forward by many, and most recently by Michelle Alexander (who appears in the movie), that mass incarceration has become 'The New Jim Crow.' That is, since the rise of the drug war and the explosion of the prison population, and because discretion within the system allows for arrest and prosecution of people of color at alarmingly higher rates than whites, prisons and criminal penalties have become a new version of Jim Crow. Much of the discrimination that was legal in the Jim Crow era is today illegal when applied to black people but perfectly legal when applied to 'criminals.' The problem is that through subjective choices, people of color have been targeted at significantly higher rates for stops, searches, arrests, prosecution and harsher sentences. So, where does this leave criminal justice? Through interviews with people on many sides of the criminal justice system, this documentary aims to answer questions and provoke questions on an issue walled-off from the public's scrutiny."

<http://brokenonsides.com/>

For purchase information visit:

<http://brokenonsides.com/getdvd.php>

Documentary Films about Charged and Incarcerated Battered Women

NOTE: The films in each section are listed in chronological order, from most recent distribution date.



THE PERFECT VICTIM (2012)

directed by Elizabeth Rohrbaugh

82 minutes

From the film's website: "Together, Shirley, Carlene and Ruby have collectively spent over eighty-five years in Missouri State prison having each been convicted of killing their abusive husbands. Beaten, raped, sold, abused and nearly killed, these women suffered for years prior to the crimes. Denied the opportunity to enter their abuse into evidence during trial, each of the women now represents a system broken by media-sensationalized stereotypes and an outdated understanding of domestic abuse. A beacon of hope arrives when a group of impassioned lawyers and law students form the Missouri Battered Women's Coalition. Once the group plucks these women from a number of worthy cases, they begin a decade and a half long quest to secure their freedom. Having already been abused once by their husbands, and again by the notoriously secretive Missouri parole board who determine their fate, the three women have advocates on their side for the first time. Now, Shirley, Carlene and Ruby become active partners in directing their own destiny as they learn to finally fight back for their freedom."

<http://www.theperfectvictimfilm.com/>

For purchase information visit:

<http://theperfectvictim.bigcartel.com/product/the-perfect-victim-dvd>

CRIME AFTER CRIME: THE BATTLE TO FREE DEBBIE PEAGLER (2011)

directed by Yoav Potash

95 minutes

From the film's website: "*Crime After Crime* is the exclusive documentary film on the dramatic legal battle to free Debbie Peagler, a woman imprisoned for over a quarter century due to her connection to the murder of the man who abused her. Over 26 years in prison could not crush the spirit of this determined African-American woman. Despite suffering many injustices and abuses, she remains an inspiring and upbeat individual, leading the gospel choir and teaching other inmates to read and write while behind bars. She finds her only hope for freedom when two rookie attorneys with no background in criminal law step forward to take her case. Through their perseverance, they bring to light long-lost witnesses, new testimonies from the men who committed the murder, and proof of perjured evidence. Their investigation ultimately attracts global attention to victims of wrongful incarceration and abuse, and takes on profound urgency when the case becomes a matter of life and death."

<http://crimeaftercrime.com/>

For purchase information visit:

<http://crimeaftercrime.com/connect/dvd-for-educational-and-institutional-use/>

EVERY F---ING DAY OF MY LIFE (2009)

directed by Tommy Davis

70 minutes

From the film's website: "On May 1, 2005, Wendy Maldonado, an Oregon mother of four, called 911 in hysterics. 'I just killed my husband,' she confessed. When the operator asked how long her husband had abused her, Maldonado replied, 'Every f---ing day of my life.' Wendy, along with her eldest son Randy, pleaded guilty to manslaughter. This film follows Wendy and her family in the few days before she begins a 10-year prison sentence for the crime. Alternately shocking and heartbreaking, the film tells the story of one woman's fateful decision to make a new life for herself and her children at all costs, even her own freedom."

www.hbo.com/documentaries/every-f-ing-day-of-my-life/index.html

SIN BY SILENCE (2009)

produced and directed by Olivia Klaus

49 minutes

From the film's website: "Inside the California Institution for Women, the first inmate initiated and led group in U.S. prison history, shatters the misconceptions of domestic violence. Convicted Women Against Abuse (CWAA) was created in 1989 to help women inside prison break the silence about abuse and learn more about what they needed to do to help others stop the cycle of violence. Instead of fighting a system that does not fully comprehend the complexities of abuse, the women of CWAA led an initiative to help educate the system. Through careful orchestration of letter writing campaigns, media coverage, and senate hearings a movement was born and laws for battered women were changed. And for the founder of CWAA, the flicker of hope begins to grow as her possible freedom, after 26 years in prison, lies moments away."

www.sinbysilence.com

For purchase information visit:

www.wmm.com/filmcatalog/pages/c759.shtml

CHARISSE SHUMATE: FIGHTING FOR OUR LIVES (2005)

written and edited by Eve Goldberg, and produced by the California Coalition for Women Prisoners and the Freedom Archives

37 minutes

From the film's website: "This 37-minute video was created in collaboration with the California Coalition for Women Prisoners and focuses on the life of Charisse Shumate and women in California state prisons. It includes amazing prison interviews as well as materials from State Senate hearings on conditions for women in the California State Prison System and historical video footage of Charisse and her family. Charisse was a life term prisoner incarcerated for 16 years at the Central California Women's Facility. She died of complications from sickle cell anemia, cancer, and hepatitis C. Charisse championed the cause of battered women when no one else was rallying to their support. She was imprisoned for defending herself against an abusive partner. Charisse stepped forward to be the lead plaintiff and prisoner spokesperson in the class action lawsuit challenging the medical neglect and abuse of women prisoners (aptly named *Shumate v. Wilson*). It was thanks to Charisse that many activists and advocates initially became involved in defending the right of women prisoners to medical care and adequate treatment. Now, through this video, she will inspire others to fight for social justice."

<http://freedomarchives.org/Charisse.html>

For purchase information visit:

<https://co.clickandpledge.com/advanced/default.aspx?wid=33028>

View the film online for free at:

<https://vimeo.com/19050308>

DEFENDING OUR LIVES (1992)

produced by Battered Women Fighting Back!

Two versions of the film are available: 30 minutes & 44 minutes

From the film's website: "'Defending Our Lives' is an Oscar® winning documentary about the magnitude and severity of domestic violence in this country. This educational video features four women imprisoned for killing their batterers and their terrifying personal testimonies. . . . Every person in this documentary is an expert; each has experienced first-hand the terror of domestic violence. The women in the documentary are members of 'Battered Women Fighting Back!' a grass-roots organization dedicated to exposing domestic violence as a critical human rights violation threatening the majority of the population: women and children. 'Battered Women Fighting Back!' began as a prison support group for battered women who had killed their abusers, and with the support of human rights activist, Stacey Kabat, developed into a community-based task force of over 100 volunteers. Each of these women tells her own horrific tale of beatings, rape and torture at the hands of her husband or boyfriend. They talk of being stalked, harassed and threatened with death, particularly after attempting to leave their abusive partners. . . . And each woman's frightening account of the cycle of violence resonates with the stories of battered women everywhere. These women were forced to defend their lives, and this documentary captures the cruel irony of putting them behind bars once they have finally escaped their abusers. They have chosen to share their stories, hoping to inspire creative strategies for ending this violence. 'Defending Our Lives' aims to educate people about domestic violence and to spur legislative and judicial reform. It is appropriate for people working on any aspect of this issue, including general education, legal reform, police training, battered women advocacy, counseling, prosecution and defense, human rights activism and community education."

<http://www.cambridgedocumentaryfilms.org/filmsPages/defending.html>

For purchase information visit:

<http://www.cambridgedocumentaryfilms.org/order.html>

A 59-page discussion guide (created in the 1990s) is available to download at:

<http://www.cambridgedocumentaryfilms.org/media/guides/defendingstudyguide.PDF>

Documentary Films about Incarcerated Women

NOTE: The films in each section are listed in chronological order, from most recent distribution date.



THE GREY AREA (2012)

written, directed, and produced by Noga Ashkenazi

66 minutes

From the film's website: "*The Grey Area* is an intimate look at women's issues in the criminal justice system and the unique experience of studying feminism behind bars. Through a series of captivating class discussions, headed by students from Grinnell College, a small group of female inmates at a maximum security women's prison in Mitchellville, Iowa, share their diverse experiences with motherhood, drug addiction, sexual abuse, murder, and life in prison. The women, along with their teachers, explore the ambiguous 'grey area' that is often invisible within the prison walls, and delve into issues of gender, sexuality, class and race."

<http://thegreyareamovie.com>

For purchase information visit:

<http://thegreyareamovie.com/about/purchase-dvd/>

WOMEN BEHIND BARS: THE VOICES OF OKLAHOMA'S INCARCERATED WOMEN AND THEIR CHILDREN (2011)

directed, produced, shot, and edited by Amina Benalioulhaj

43 minutes

Host Description: "Women Behind Bars was directed, produced, shot and edited by Amina Benalioulhaj, a Women's and Gender Studies graduate of the University of Oklahoma. Using the research of Presidential Professor of Sociology, Dr. Susan Sharp, Amina sought to make a documentary film that would expose Oklahoma's #1 rate for female incarceration in the world. Over 28,000 children are currently displaced by the incarceration of a parent in Oklahoma. 80% of Oklahoma's female offenders are in prison for non-violent, drug relatable crimes. 80% are also mothers. Rarely do any of them have access to treatment. Many of them will leave prison facing harsher conditions than they did before the entered, with responsibility of caring for their children. Women Behind Bars seeks to answer the cause of the rising epidemic of female incarceration in the United States by taking viewers inside of Oklahoma's female prison facilities and face to face with the women and children most affected by this issue."

<https://vimeo.com/46176235>

HEALING NEEN (2010)

directed and produced by Laura Cain and Diana Gross

55 minutes

From the film's website: "*Healing Neen* takes viewers on a journey to places and subjects that most find too difficult or uncomfortable to fathom. But it is Tonier 'Neen' Cain's joyous spirit and astonishing inner-strength that leaps through the screen directly into viewers hearts, inspiring renewed hope and compassion for those still living on the fringes. For two decades, Neen hustled on the streets of Annapolis, Maryland, desperately feeding an insatiable crack addiction and racking up 83 arrests along the way. Rapes and beatings were a routine part of life; home was underneath a bridge or inside the locked cage of a prison. In 2004, pregnant and incarcerated for violation of parole, she was provided the opportunity to go to a community trauma, mental health and

addictions program. Feeling safe for the first time in her life, Neen confronted the haunting childhood memories that she tried to numb with drugs: filth and chronic hunger, sexual assaults by neighborhood men, routine physical and mental abuse dished out by her drunken mother. Realizing for the first time that she had been a victim, she began to heal and reclaim power over her life, embarking on a remarkable 'upward spiral' that has no limit. Today, she works for the National Center for Trauma-Informed Care, dedicating her life to being a voice for those still lost and still silent. Traveling the country to give speeches and work one on one with women in prisons and hospitals, Neen continues to transform her own life while helping others to embrace her motto 'where there's breath, there's hope.'"

<http://healingneen.com/>

For purchase information visit:

<http://healingneen.com/buy-dvd/>

FREEDOM ROAD (2004)

directed by Lorna Ann Johnson

35 minutes

From the film's website: "*Freedom Road* is a barren stretch that leads in and out of the Edna Mahan Correctional Facility for Women. Yet for some of the women incarcerated there, freedom has been redefined through the power of the pen. A testament to the profound influence of arts and education, Lorna Johnson's compelling film features six female prisoners who are part of a unique memoir-writing workshop called 'Woman is the Word.' Reading classic autobiographies such as [Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl](#) by Harriet Ann Jacobs and [The Cancer Journals](#) by Audre Lorde, the women are empowered to claim the events of their own lives and retell their own stories – ultimately liberating them from long-held secrets and silence. Moving interviews with the women inmates, their instructors and family members combined with verité footage of their fascinating classroom discussions reveal how poverty, under-education, domestic abuse have had a role in the destiny of many women in the program. Ultimately, the film examines the devastating cycle of imprisonment for the poor and underprivileged, and points to an inspired embodiment of prison reform."

For purchase information visit:

<http://www.wmm.com/filmcatalog/pages/c670.shtml>

What I Want My Words to Do to You (2003)

directed by Madelein Gavin, Judith Katz, and Gary Sunshine, Produced by Eve Ensler

80 minutes

From the film's website: "*What I Want My Words To Do To You* offers an unprecedented look into the minds and hearts of the women inmates of New York's Bedford Hills Correctional Facility. The film goes inside a writing workshop led by playwright and activist Eve Ensler, consisting of 15 women, most of whom were convicted of murder. Through a series of exercises and discussions, the women delve into their pasts and explore the nature of their crimes and the extent of their own culpability. The film culminates in an emotionally charged prison performance of the women's writing by acclaimed actors Mary Alice, Glenn Close, Hazelle Goodman, Rosie Perez and Marisa Tomei. *What I Want My Words To Do To You* documents both the wrenching personal journeys undertaken by the inmates to find the words that tell their own stories, and the power of those words to move the outside world."

www.pbs.org/pov/whatiwant/

For purchase information visit:

<http://www.shoppbs.org/product/index.jsp?productId=1443138&cp=&sr=1&kw=what+i+want&origkw=what+i+want&parentPage=search&searchId=3351651>

900 WOMEN (2000)

directed by Lalah Khadivi and produced by Jonathan Stack

72 minutes

From the film's website: "The Louisiana Correctional Institute is located in the swamps of southern Louisiana in the small town of St. Gabriel. Built in 1970 to house an increasing population of female convicts, today it houses the state's most dangerous female prisoners and often exceeds its population capacity of 900. 75% of these are mothers and one fourth of them are serving sentences of fifteen years or more. The prison compound has a surreal quality; there are no searchlight-capped towers or barbed wire fences. Filmmaker Khadivi delivers a striking, sensitive portrait of life in this deceptively peaceful atmosphere, which is filled with stories of life on the streets, abuse, freedom, childbirth and motherhood. Six women – a grandmother, a young high school student, a pregnant woman, a recovering heroin addict, a prison guard, and the only woman on death row – were brave enough to share their frustrations and hopes."

For purchase information visit:

<http://www.wmm.com/filmcatalog/pages/c521.shtml>

Documentary Films about Transgender Prisoners

NOTE: The films in each section are listed in chronological order, from most recent distribution date.



ASHLEY DIAMOND, A TRANSGENDER PRISONER IN GEORGIA, SPEAKS OUT (2014)

by Ashley Diamond, compiled by Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC)

This short piece was created by Ashley Diamond, a transgender woman incarcerated in a Georgia prison designated for men, calling for justice for herself and other prisoners after repeated abuses by and within the Georgia Department of Corrections. Originally titled “Memoirs of a Chain Gang Sissy” and posted by Diamond in eleven short clips on YouTube, compiled into one video by SPLC. Posted Description: “SPLC has filed a federal lawsuit against the Georgia Department of Corrections on behalf of a transgender woman who has been denied medically necessary treatment and sexually assaulted by other inmates while held at a men’s prison. This is Ashley’s story.”

View the film online for free at:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?t=20&v=ho_RRiuLjpY

CRUEL AND UNUSUAL (2006)

directed and produced by Janet Baus and Dan Hunt

64 minutes

From the film’s webpage: “Most states separate prisoners by genitalia alone, so pre-op, transgender women are placed in men’s correctional facilities, where they find themselves vulnerable and preyed upon. *Cruel and Unusual* is a frank, often unsettling documentary, that portrays the challenges faced by these women. Ophelia, beautiful and bold, cuts herself when left alone in solitary confinement for an entire year. Yolanda, 21, has taken hormones since age 12; after surviving a childhood of poverty and drugs, she is raped by fellow inmates. Rough and tough Linda, imprisoned for stealing pantyhose, performs her own correctional surgery when the Idaho Correctional Facilities deny her request for drug therapy. Anna loses not only four years of hormone treatment but also custody of her only son when she is sent to prison for being in the wrong place at the wrong time. The women’s stories are interwoven with commentary by lawyers and prison custodians who discuss the problems transgender inmates face; chief among them is the authorities’ complete refusal to recognize Gender Identity Disorder as a legitimate medical condition. Disturbing evidence suggests that thirty percent of all transgender people have been imprisoned – three times the national average. Eye-opening and caustic in its depiction of the blatant discrimination transgender people endure, this documentary will leave you with much to think about.”

View the film online for free at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Yzy8oh5Fw0>

Documentary Films about Mothers, Their Children, and Incarceration

NOTE: The films in each section are listed in chronological order, from most recent distribution date.



MOTHERS OF BEDFORD (2011)

directed by Jenifer McShane

93 minutes

From the film's website: "Many parents find it hard to imagine being away from a child for a week. Imagine being separated for ten or twenty years? *Mothers of Bedford* explores the effects of a long-term prison sentence on the mother-child relationship. The film examines the struggles and joys these five women face as prisoners and mothers. It shows the normal frustrations of parenting as well as the surreal experiences of a child's first birthday party inside prison, the cell that child lives in with her mother, and the biggest celebration of the year, Mother's Day in prison! Eighty percent of women in US prisons today are mothers of school-age children. Filmmaker Jenifer McShane spent four years visiting Bedford Hills and following the women and their families. A mother herself, Jenifer was drawn to the universal themes of motherhood and the staggering power of the mother-child relationship. In all walks of life, mother and child care for each other. As we watch the mothers inside Bedford trying to become their better selves, we see parts of our own selves – and that gives us all hope."

<http://www.mothersofbedford.com/>

For purchase information visit:

<http://www.mothersofbedford.com/host-a-screening.php>

TROOP 1500 (2005)

directed by Ellen Spiro and produced by Karen Bernstein

68 minutes

From the film's website: "At Hilltop Prison in Gatesville, Texas, a unique Girl Scout troop, Troop 1500, unites daughters with mothers who are serving time for serious crimes, giving them a chance to rebuild their broken bonds. Facing long sentences from the courts, the mothers struggle to mend their fractured relationships with their daughters. *Troop 1500* follows five young Girl Scouts – sisters Caitlin and Mikaela, Jasmine, Jessica and Naomi – whose mothers are serving time. Once inside the prison bars, the girls of Troop 1500 fall into the arms of the mothers they seldom see – Kenya, Melissa, Ida and Susan – crying and laughing while pulling out report cards and pictures and passing along hellos from grandparents and absent brothers. At the conclusion of each monthly meeting in the prison library, the girls and moms form a circle and recite the Girl Scout Promise in unison: "On my honor, I will try to serve God and my country, to help people at all times, and to live by the Girl Scout law." Filmmakers Ellen Spiro and Karen Bernstein, who volunteered with the girls for two years before making *Troop 1500*, gained unprecedented access to Girl Scouts of the USA, Gatesville Prison and the families themselves. The filmmakers trained the girls in videography, so they could conduct their own interviews and tell their own stories – asking some difficult questions and getting some tough answers. *Troop 1500* goes beyond the girls' prison experience to show what their daily lives are like: balancing family, schoolwork and extracurricular activities under the care of dads, friends and grandparents. And though the girls longingly await the day when their moms are free, their problems don't always end upon their mothers' release. The result is a

sobering but hopeful look at the struggles faced by the more than 1.5 million American children who have a parent behind bars.”

<http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/troop1500/film.html>

For purchase information visit:

<http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/troop1500/video.html>

Documentary Films about Reentering People

NOTE: The films in each section are listed in chronological order, from most recent distribution date.



PULL OF GRAVITY (2013)

co-directed by El Sawyer and Jon Kaufman

81 minutes

From the film's website: "Every year in the United States, 700,000 people are released from prison or jail. Within three years, 67 percent will re-offend. *Pull of Gravity* is a film that tells the stories of three men, each attempting to make his way along the challenging continuum of reentry.

Filmmaker and co-director El Sawyer brings both a keen ear and eye to this story, having traveled this path himself. He realized that the journey is misunderstood, even by those whose hearts and minds lean sympathetically. With colleague and co-director Jon Kaufman, Sawyer turned to the art of storytelling, captured on film, to debunk perceptions and replace ignorance with fact. Together, Sawyer and Kaufman have created an intimate portrait of three lives, offering compelling insights that can help shape responses from family members, parole officers, law enforcement officials, and the social networks upon which reentry is dependent; when viewed by [ex-prisoners], the film can offer hope tempered by a dose of unvarnished experience."

<http://www.pullofgravityfilm.com/>

For purchase information visit:

<http://www.pullofgravityfilm.com/#!/contact/c16fM>

REENTRY FILM SERIES (2010)

presented by Voices of Hope Productions

From the Film Series' website: "The American Friends Service Committee and Voices of Hope Productions joined forces to support, through the medium of film, community groups and policy organizations devoted to men and women returning home after incarceration. These three films are the result. *A Failed System* was a labor of love by Voices of Hope. *No Where to Go* and *Healing Justice: Transformed Lives* were made with the support of the New Jersey Institute For Social Justice, Integrity House, and Women Who Never Give Up, Inc., with funding from the New Jersey State Office of Faith-Based initiatives. American Friends Service Committee and Voices of Hope Productions encourage you and your organization to use each of these films with the accompanying online user facilitation guide and advocacy toolkit to further your organization's goal of developing thriving communities and productive lives of dignity."

<http://voicesofhope.tv/re-entry-film-series/>

- ***Nowhere To Go***

directed by Lori H. Ersolmaz and produced by Elizabeth Enloe

10 minutes

From the film's website: "*Nowhere to Go* highlights the need for, and barriers to, safe, stable housing. Through testimonies of impassioned advocates and previously incarcerated individuals, this video presents the options of housing including streets, shelters, transitional living facilities, family homes, and permanent supportive housing. As formally incarcerated people are often challenged by issues of addiction, mental health, and violence, the type of housing available to a person drastically impacts their ability to successfully re-enter society and realize their full potential. *Nowhere to Go* provides urgent and critical

insight into how we can provide the best supportive structure possible to ensure their success.”

View the film online for free at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-myMnr0aRCA>

- **Healing Justice: Transformed Lives**

directed by Lori H. Ersolmaz and produced by Elizabeth Enloe

11 minutes

From the film’s website: “*Healing Justice: Transformed Lives* gives voice to a remarkable group of formerly incarcerated men and women who have overcome extreme adversity and successfully turned their lives around upon release from prison. Many of the individuals interviewed wrestled with drug addiction, homelessness, and recidivism. Now they are advocates and role models, helping others make the difficult transition from prison to the outside world. Their stories provide a road map to others struggling to reintegrate, and as a guide to their friends, families, and allies wishing to provide critical assistance. As dire as life after prison can be, the women and men in *Healing Justice: Transformed Lives* offer hope and a glimpse of a better future for all those making this journey.”

View the film online for free at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oubVRlyrLLE>

- **A Failed System**

directed by Lori H. Ersolmaz

7 minutes

From the film’s website: “*A Failed System* provides a straight-forward introduction to the multiple obstacles many formerly incarcerated individuals encounter after paying their debt to society, and addresses unjust practices that make it impossible for them to become productive citizens, which causes a revolving door of incarceration. The film also documents two grassroots advocacy events illustrating how courageous individuals and policy makers can come together to make logical and compelling arguments for changing policy. Together, smart economic solutions and enhanced public safety will help diminish high recidivism rates in the state.”

View the film online for free at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3HpF286vhkg>

STRENGTH OF A WOMAN (2009)

produced by Allison Caviness for the Women in Prison Project of the Correctional Association of New York
22 minutes

Posted Description: “*Strength of a Woman* is a 20-minute documentary created by the Violence Against Women Committee of the Coalition For Women Prisoners and filmmaker Allison Caviness about the experiences, resilience, and strength of formerly incarcerated domestic violence survivors and the devastating impact that the criminal justice system can have on women's lives. *Strength of a Woman* is a unique and powerful advocacy tool, which can be used to educate policymakers and the public about these critical issues.”

View the film online for free at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zZAv7JsNH0Y>

OUR VOICES WITHIN: OUT OF THE SHADOWS (2007)

produced by Free Battered Women, California Coalition for Women Prisoners

34 minutes

From film screening announcement: *“Our Voices Within: Out of the Shadows* tells the stories of six domestic violence survivors released from state prison after serving years – some decades – for crimes related to their experiences of being battered by an intimate partner. This 34-minute DVD includes footage from our community celebration honoring formerly incarcerated domestic violence survivors & linking their fight for freedom with the larger movement to end domestic violence.”

For purchase information contact:

California Coalition for Women Prisoners

Tel: 415-255-7036 ext. 4

Email: info@womenprisoners.org

Documentary Films about Restorative and Reentry Projects

NOTE: The films in each section are listed in chronological order, from most recent distribution date.



COMING HOME: THE C.A.R.E. PROGRAM (2014)

presented by the Probation Office of the Middle District of Pennsylvania in Association with the Harrisburg Rotary Club produced by Bucknell University

16 minutes

From the film's Bucknell University website: "Brianna Derr, Library and IT's Video Production Specialist, participated in the course and was one of the creators of the film, along with Bucknell undergraduates Caitlin Falco, Erich Gilbride, Tim Kim, and Zander Massey. The State of Pennsylvania episode profiled the Court-Assisted Re-Entry (C.A.R.E) program created by Chief U.S. District Judge Yvette Kane and Deputy Chief U.S. Probation Officer Eric Noll of the Middle District of Pennsylvania. . . . For the *Coming Home: The CARE Program* documentary, students interviewed former federal prisoners (currently on probation) who enrolled in the program, along with Chief Judge Kane, Chief U.S. Probation Officer Anthony Harvilla, Deputy Chief U.S. Probation Officer Noll, and other judges, probation officers, and community mentors who participate in the program. According to Eric Faden, the students recorded approximately 50 hours of footage for the 16 1/2 minutes of the final video. After planning the video and discussing the requirements with Officer Noll and with other federal probation officers, the students spent three to four weeks filming the subjects of the video, then three to four weeks in post-production, combining the footage, editing the video, adding sound and other effects, and ultimately producing the final work. According to Brianna, the students saw the video as a 'great opportunity to be part of something that would have a profound and lasting effect on individuals' lives.' The central question the student filmmakers asked, Professor Faden explained, was, "How can we make people that are generally hidden from society . . . human, because they are human. . . . We really wanted to provide an opportunity for them [the ex-offenders] to tell their story."

<http://lit.blogs.bucknell.edu/2014/10/24/bucknell-produced-video-featured-on-wvia/>

View the film online for free at:

https://mediaspace.bucknell.edu/media/Coming+HomeA+The+C.A.R.E.+Program/1_tthq5swa

CONCRETE, STEEL, AND PAINT (2009)

co-directed and co-produced by Cindy Burstein and Tony Heriza

55 minutes

From the film's website: "When men in a Pennsylvania state prison join with victims of crime to create a mural about healing, their views on punishment, remorse, and forgiveness collide. Finding consensus is not easy, but as the participants move through the creative process, mistrust gives way to surprising moments of human contact and common purpose. This complex story raises important questions about crime, justice and reconciliation – and dramatically illustrates how art can facilitate dialogue about difficult issues."

<http://www.concretetfilm.org/>

For purchase information visit:

<http://www.concretetfilm.org/index.php/purchase-6>