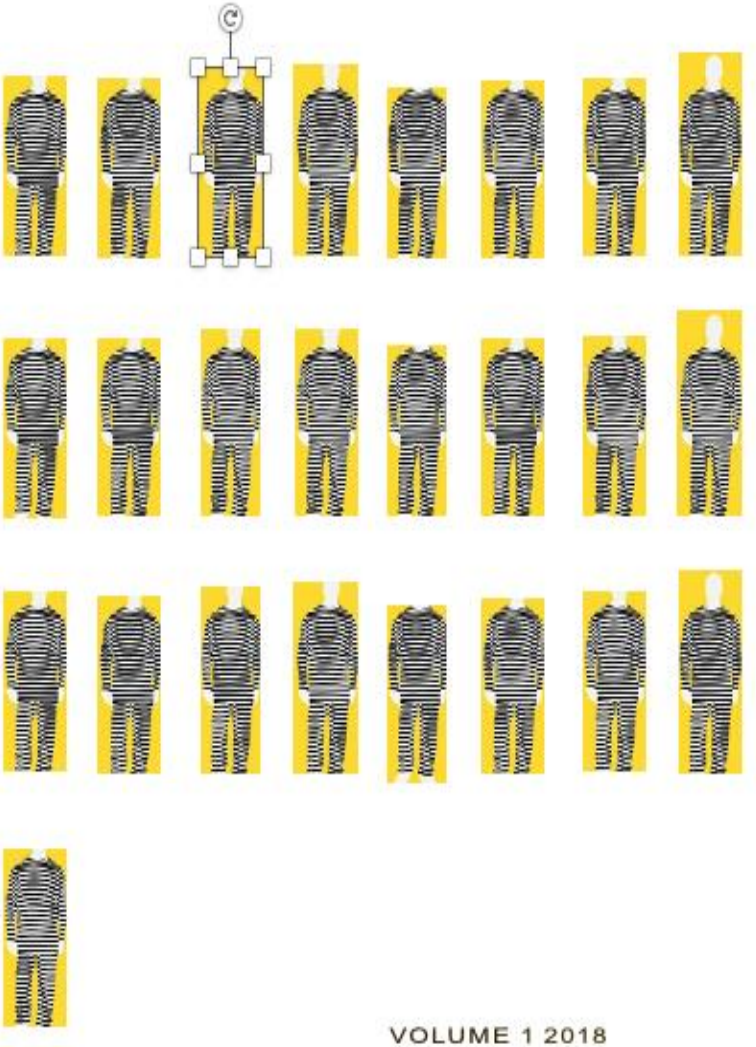
CAL STATE LA COMMUNICATION STUDIES

PRISON B.A. JOURNAL



VOLUME 1 2018

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Introductory Issue

Welcome! In this issue we let the second cohort at Lancaster Prison introduce each other. We also reproduce the script of a performance based on their reactions to a video about the impact of providing education programs in prisons.

Aims & Scope

Prison BA Journal aims to represent the unique scholarship by the current cohort of students at Lancaster Prison whose life experiences offer a distinct perspective through their academic work. Essays exploring themes related to Communication are welcomed along with personal narratives from those whose voices have been unheard and silenced. Research by communication students and scholars on mass incarceration will also be featured.

The editorial board is comprised of Cal State LA students in the Department of Communication Studies, including students in Lancaster Prison, and a supervising member of the Communication Studies Faculty. The editorial board reviews the writings for consistency, clarity, proper formatting, and references. Editors are recommended by the department faculty based on their demonstrated academic success, ethical

responsibility, and critical thinking skills.

Each published essay will be accompanied by a brief biography of its author, as we are proud of those pursuing higher educational opportunities while incarcerated. This journal is created in hopes of putting stereotypes and misconceptions about prisoners to rest.

Prison BA Journal would like to thank Cal State LA's Associated Students Incorporated (ASI) for funding this publication along with the editorial board. A special thanks to the Lancaster students who are aspiring communication scholars. We look forward to reading their valuable insights.

Prison BA Journal

A journal by the Department of
Communication Studies
California State University, Los
Angeles

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Spring 2018

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The Second Cohort Introduce Each Other

Derric Burbie

My name is Mr. Terry Bell, and I would like to introduce the educational background of Mr. Derric Burbie. Prior to arrest, Mr. Burbie attended Grambling State University in 1991 for three semesters. After incarceration, Derric remained focused on his education and attended Coastline Community College. He achieved three A.A degrees in Social and Behavioral Science, Sociology, Science and Math. Derric furthered his education by enrolling in Cal State University Los Angeles, majoring in Communications to aid in starting his own business as a Life Coach.

* * *

Cody Kahn

Cody Kahn graduated high school from Rancho Alamitos in 2006 in the city of Garden Grove. He went to college immediately after to Golden West in Huntington Beach majoring in Business. College was not Cody's first choice, he much rather have traveled the world but he went to college to make his family happy. Now that he has earned his Associate's in prison and is now pursuing a Bachelor's with Cal State Los Angeles, he feels that this was a way for him to redeem himself. He is also a tutor, helping inmates earn their G.E.D. He was also a water polo player in high school. It was a pleasure to interview Cody and I hope to continue to get to know him.

* * *

Jason Keaton

I am Jason Keaton, born and raised in Compton, California. Education was never a priority in my life with all the negative influences I had. I joined a gang early on which ultimately lead me down a path of destruction. While incarcerated my life began to change. I experienced the pain of losing my little brother to gang violence. At this point I knew how my actions affected everyone I encountered in my life. I made a conscious decision that I begin to live my life making amends. Enrolling in college was one of the biggest challenges in my life, but I was committed. I graduated in 2017 with an Associate's Degree in social and behavioral classes. I have found a passion for learning. Enrolling into the BA program has been one of the most memorable moments in my life. I am forever grateful. This has changed my perception on life through furthering to educate myself. I am able to not only be a positive role model but also set an example that change is possible. I no longer let my past define me, I look forward to writing my future. My grandmother is proud of me and it makes me happy. My life now has a purpose and continuing on this journey is my focus. Thank you for everything.

* * *

Macio Lindsey

My name is Risala Rose-Aminifu and I have the privilege of introducing Macio Lindsey. Mr. Lindsey has always been a business minded individual. When he was younger he started a carpet cleaning business with his brother trying to show his younger brother that there's better ways to make money, other than fast money. In 1999, Mr. Lindsey started a pen-pal service based out of Hawaii while he was incarcerated. This business flourished among the prison population and earned him the distinction of, "the go to guy for a pen-pal relationship." Mr.

Lindsey knows the importance of a higher education and has been enrolled in Coastline Community College for the past four years. In the fall of this year, He will be receiving four A.A's and is currently enrolled in Cal State LA's Bachelor's program. His hopes are to show that an incarcerated person can rise above his circumstance's and return to society to become a productive citizen. It's been an honor to interview Mr. Lindsey.

* * *

Samuel Nathaniel Brown

I'm Kamran Afary and I'm honored to introduce Samuel Brown. Samuel is excited about being a member of the second Communication Studies cohort. He has made it clear it that his mission in life is to help bring about a liberation of the mind. Prison walls do not cramp his capacity to work towards freedom and justice. He has founded a non-profit organization to help youth develop skills in emotional intelligence. He is particularly interested in ideas and believes that correct ideas, ideas that can liberate the mind, have practical consequences; and he enjoys following the logic of each revolutionary idea to its conclusion and is always looking for new ideas. He is an avid reader and advocate for social justice with youth outside the prison walls.

* * *

Jeff Ayers

My name is Ninh Nguyen and I have the pleasure of introducing my classmate Jeff Ayers. There is something you may not know about Jeff; prior to tenth grade, Jeff was a "wall flower" until one day in an English class where they were discussing Greek literature and the English teacher pronounced the title of the play wrong and Jeff challenged her pronunciation on the word because he grew up with Greek

literature and language and his home as a young child. After that incident, Jeff came out of himself, and got involved on his class discussion. This is my new friend, Jeff. Thank you

* * *

Bertho Gauthier

Hello everyone, Dr. Afary. I'm here to tell you about Bertho Gauthier that you may not know. At the age of 15 years old he worked at Worskman Circle Jewell Center. He was the youngest worker there and one out of three African Americans. His father got him the job. This kept him out of gangs and troubles for the most part and instilled responsibility and hustle within him. He also has received his A.A. degree in prison. Though he is remarkable at math, he is a horrible basketball player. Thank you.

* * *

Thaisan Nguon

My name is Thaisan Nguon and some things that people do not know about me are that I was born in Cambodia. I moved to the United States with my parents when I was still a baby. My parents speak both English and Cambodian, but speak Cambodian most of the time. I speak both as well, but I am better with English. My mom speaks to me in Cambodian and I have to ask her to translate into English for me. I was never good at school until I got older. I received my high school diploma in youth authority, and my Associates degree from Feather River Community College while in prison. I look forward to earning a bachelor degree with California State University, Los Angeles.

* * *

Andrew "Kicking Horse" McCarter

I had the privilege and honor of interviewing Andrew “Kicking Horse” McCarter. Kicking Horse is an asset to this program and prison. He is always making himself available for people who need help. Enriching his knowledge of the law by previously working in the law library has helped him be an informed inmate. He is looking for ways to improve our circumstances and a fighter in a sense. In addition, a fighter in other ways he has shown resilience in combat but it started in the Midwest.

Kicking Horse was born in Oklahoma and raised on a reservation until the age of eight. He later moved to Texas. He is a tribal member of the Choctaw Nation. He later enlisted in United States Army from 1973-1979. He is part of a family of military service. His father is a Master Sergeant in the Air force, his grandfather Chief Pete Maytubby, who is a WW1 Code Talker. Kicking Horse is currently attending CSULA to earn his Communications degree. His 32 years of Prison experience is helping other individuals who have any questions regarding legal discrepancies in prison institutions.

Kicking Horse understanding makes him versed fighter for prisoner reform. He is a progressive prisoner and essentially one of the first MMA fighters. He is a 3rd degree Black Belt in Hap-Ki- Do (The Art of concentrated Power). Also, a 2nd degree Black Belt in Isshin-Ryu.

PKA (Professional Kickboxing Association) is where Kicking Horse debuted his bouts in the 1970s. Joe Corley founded this Mixed Martial Arts federation. Prisoners such as Andrew “Kicking Horse” McCarter help people see that there is more than meets the eye. This progressive inmate is and continues to help his fellow CSULA colleagues. It was a pleasure to interview him.

* * *

David Ruiz

I had the privilege and pleasure to interview my fellow peer

David Ruiz. He was born in the U.S, yet interestingly he did not attend kindergarten as a child. At six years old, he and his family moved to Mexico where he was schooled from the first to the third grade. He and his family moved back to the states where he continued the third grade all the way to the ninth grade. He amazed me when he told me how he learned how to speak English in the third grade in a span of three months- a man of persistence. He moved to Mexico after the ninth grade but he didn't go to school from the tenth to the twelfth. He came back to the U.S. at the age of 18, got his
G.E.D and went to San Diego City College for three years. His dream school was University of San Diego, but I believe he will prosper in this Cal State LA Program through his resilience.

* * *

Gustavo Tamayo

Greetings classmates my name is David Ruiz. My recipient today is a good fellow named Gustavo Tamayo. Gustavo is a U.S. born however he is a first generation. His family originates from Mexico. Gustavo's education, while still in society, began in kindergarten and extended to college. He attended college preparation high school and moved into the college life when he graduated that school, which required a 3.0 GPA. Thereafter, he attended California State University of Dominguez Hills. I am fully sure that he is very dedicated and confident of what he intends to accomplish in the educational part of his life. He is intensely enthusiastic about this school and class, and clearly looking forward to this semester.

* * *

Larry Torres

Today I am here to speak to you all about Larry Torres. Larry

has no dreams of attending college. He would rather learn a trade. After his incarceration, he signed up for Math with Feather River. He graduated with A.A. degree in Arts and Humanities. He learned through education to become productive and continued to self-educate. His goals are to work towards a Master's Degree to continue his learning experience.

* * *

Risala Rose-Aminifu

My name is Macio Lindsey and I would like to introduce my fellow classmate, Aminifu. At the age of 18, Mr. Aminifu was incarcerated and has been incarcerated for 27 years. Throughout Aminifus' life he has had the privilege and honor to meet the acquaintance of many celebrities. Some of which include Oprah Winfrey and Smokey Robinson. Aminifu had occasion to be involved in a program for at risk youth. During the course of these programs celebrities would come and mentor the youth. Aminifu recalled both Oprah Winfrey and Smokey Robinson telling him that the appeal of the street life was temporary and costly. Unfortunately, Aminifu found himself imprisoned with a life sentence. Despite Aminifu incarceration, he has diligently sought an education as a means to rehabilitation. In the summer semester 2018, Aminifu will be completing two Associates degrees from Coastline Community College. He has also begun his journey to completing a Bachelor's Degree generously offered to him by Cal State LA. Aminifu is grateful for the opportunities offered to him. He intends to further his education by one day earning his Master's Degree and becoming a mentor for at risk youth. It was a pleasure to meet and introduced our classmates, Aminifu. Thank you.

* * *

Aaron Benson

My friend Aaron Benson was born and raised in this great city of Lancaster, California. He had a pretty great childhood. He

was part of the Boy Scouts for six years and worked his way up to earn the high honor of being an Eagle Scout. In high school, he was involved with the Navy Junior ROTC. He would describe himself as a "total nerd", but let nothing in that description carry even a sliver of negative connotation. This guy is sharp, smart, and plays guitar, bass, and drums. He's even done studio work with various bands. How cool is that! During his leisure time, he enjoys attending live sporting events especially hockey. And that is my friend, Aaron Benson.

* * *

David Lee Jr.

Hello, my name is Robert Pratt and today I'd like to introduce David Lee Jr. He is 33 years old, and has done eleven years of his life without the possibility of parole sentence. Before coming to prison, he achieved an A.S. degree and was working as a respiratory therapist. That involves people with breathing problems, infants in critical care, and post-surgery patients. He was unable to further his education in the first three prisons he was at. When the opportunity to be part of the Cal State Bachelor's program presented itself he eagerly got involved.

* * *

Robert Kelly Pratt

I had the proud opportunity to interview this gentleman, who I introduce to you as Robert Kelly Pratt. One thing most people may not know about Robert is that before he was born his family owned a dog that they loved so much, they decided to name Robert after the dog; hence the middle name Kelly. As Robert grew so did his love for Kelly. By the age of five, Robert would go on walks with Kelly without his parents' permission, and often times would get so lost that it would require the local search and rescue team to find them. Robert Kelly Pratt is 49 years old, he has been incarcerated for 30 years, and before

prison he was a terrible student who didn't have much desire to further his education. It wasn't until after Robert was arrested that a close friend convinced him to continue his education. Robert has since obtained his Associates Degree, and is enthusiastic about being a part of CSULA.

* * *

Terry Bell

Dr. Afary, my fellow Cal State – L.A. classmates. I'd like to introduce to you Mr. Terry Bell. Terry was incarcerated at the age of 17. He got his high school diploma in juvenile hall in 2002, but in 2013 began furthering his education through college courses, and has attained three A.A. degrees in American Studies, Sociology, and Social & Behavioral Science. He is currently pursuing his fourth A.A. degree in Arts & Humanities, as well as is currently in his second semester at Cal State – L.A. where he is pursuing a B.A. degree in Communications. Mr. Terry Bell.

* * *

Nihn Nguyen

Mr. Nihn Nguyen was born in Vietnam. He lived there until the age of 11 years old, until he and his family fled on the last day of the Vietnam War in 1975. Mr. Nguyen witnessed firsthand everything that many of us only see in documentaries about that conflict. He and his family came to the United States in 1975 and first settled in Knoxville, Tennessee. The winters were too cold for their liking, so they emigrated to Southern California in 1976. Mr. Nguyen considers himself more American than Vietnamese because his family embraced their new country, and all the opportunities it had to offer. This is why he chose to be a part of the Cal State LA Bachelor's program. His parents impressed upon him that higher education was one of the keys to making the most of all their

new home had to offer.

* * *

Christopher Calkins

This gentleman here to my left is my good buddy Christopher Calkins. He is 30 years old and was born in San Bernandino, California. What some of you might not know is that this is not Chris' first time in college. He actually attended college prior to his incarceration. Christopher started off at the San Bernandino Valley Community College, transferred to the University of Laverne but it was too expensive, his ultimate goal, however, was to attend the University of San Bernandino. While attending college Chris really enjoyed taking math and science classes, and although he hadn't decided on a career path, he knew that his major would be related to math and science. His overall interest are math and science, and he just enjoys education. Now with this opportunity and new major Chris ultimately would like to have a career in teaching or some type of instruction, and that is what my buddy Chris is all about.

* * *

Arthur Andrew Andrade

On February 2, 2018, I had the honor and privilege to interview "Arthur Andrew Andrade", a fellow Golden Eagle in the second cohort, during our Speech Communications class. Art or "Triple A" as some refer to him as, is a 34 year-old first generation Bolivian man whose parents migrated to the United States in the 1970's. He is the middle child and only male in his family, but he has two sisters. One thing most people do not know about Art is that he is a 'foodie', and used to Google places to go eat. These inquiries were all based on critiques and/or reviews. His favorite food choice is sushi, and his least favorite thing to eat is… nothing, he

loves all food! Art has been incarcerated for five years and is a first termer. One point of interest was that he stated he has the same birth date as Dolph Lungren, the movie star.

* * *

Dara Yin

On February 6, 2018, I conducted an interview with a fellow Golden Eagle named Dara Yin from my speech class. During the course of this interview, I discovered Dara has a passion to broaden his horizons through education. He lived a narrow life, constantly in trouble with negative thoughts and actions prior to seeking higher education, which has caused him to be a better human being now. Once he completed his degree in communications, Dare wants to be able to help children in inner cities, ghettos, and neighborhoods that do not receive the same opportunity as other children of more affluent backgrounds. This does not just include academia, but also emotional intelligence, spiritual, and to help them gain confidence in themselves. I had the blessing of introducing Mr. Dara Yin during my previous English 1050 class. I already knew of Yin on the previously. However, we had never been introduced until most recently. I learned an interesting fact about Yin. Mr. Yin use to mow lawns for senior citizens for free as a church project as well as for charity. He first began mowing lawns of his churches congregation for extra income. The pastor of this church was the one who gave Yin this awesome idea. This newfound occupation of his became so successful that he insisted his pastor allow him to somehow display his gratitude. Yin stated the only payment his pastor wanted was for him to "pay it forward". And so, mowing lawns "just for the love" began.

* * *

Deon Whitmore

Deon Withmore grew up in Los Angeles, California. He is one of six siblings. He's also a twin. Deon grew up in a broken and

dysfunctional household where he was exposed to negative elements that children normally wouldn't be exposed to. At the age of 13 he found comfort in the gang members outside his front door. Deon soon began to hang with these negative influences and eventually joined the gang as a member of the bloods. Deon dropped out of middle school and began to find himself waist deep in a destructive lifestyle. Deon was shot at the age of 15 and almost lost his life. Seven days later he was arrested for murder and attempted murder. While in prison he decided to get his life together a couple years into prison. He decided that he was going to take responsibility for all his actions and be a positive man. He's six units away from completing his A.A. degree and he's already a student at Cal State LA in the pursuit to gain his bachelor degree and a career upon leaving prison. He strives every day to be a great father, brother, and influence the younger inmates in prison by showing them that change is possible.



A class photo of Cal State LA communication studies BA students (second cohort) in California State Prison in Lancaster.

(photo by Ronald Underwood)

Imagine This

A PERFORMATIVE RESPONSE TO "ALLEN & ZION"

Editors Note: During the spring 2018 semester in COMM 1100 (Oral Communication) each student wrote a one-page response to "Allen and Zion," a short video documentary about the way a prison education program impacts the lives of prisoners and their family and friends. The title "Allen and Zion" refers to Allen Burnett who is a member of the first cohort at Lancaster Prison and Zion, his daughter, who is a new college student at Cal State LA. In the documentary they talk about how each inspires the other to be a dedicated student. Student responses to this video were developed into a script by Elizabeth Malone, rehearsed for two weeks and performed on May 11, 2018 in front of several visitors, including CSU Faculty Trustee Romey Sabalius, and Vice Provost Octavio Villapando. Here is what Dr. Sabalius wrote after his visit: "I feel that I not only learned a lot, but that my brief visit helped to reflect on my own humanity and helped me grow as an individual." You can watch the video of Allen and Zion at:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yqhmAMtIfe4

(half enter from stage left, half from stage right, greeting one another and sitting in chairs in a semi-circle facing the audience.)

ALL
Imagine this.

BERTHO GAUTHIER
(stands up) Just to sit in a room at a high security prison and not

feel threatened is a sort of phenomenon. *(all give "uh-huh's" and small vocal reactions.)*

JEFF AYERS

I was deeply affected in a way I have not been in years. tears flowing unrestrained…

(all slump down in chairs, showing sadness, wiping tears, etc.)

ALL

(sit up straight, loud and direct) WHAT SOME PEOPLE THINK OF PRISONERS:

TERRY BELL

(stand and shout) A bad influence

CHAY YIN

(stand and shout) We have to judge them!

NINH NGUYEN

(stand and shout) Just throw away garbage.

DEON

(walks forward toward the audience) I was sentenced to life in prison at 16. What little I knew about life was over.

DAVID LEE, JR.

(walks forward toward the audience) For most men and women sentenced to life in prison, there isn't very much to look forward to. For those with life without the possibility of parole, life is even more bleak.

NINH NGUYEN + OTHERS

(stands and walks forward) I'm serving life without parole

KICKING HORSE

(stands and walks forward) I'm serving life without parole.

AMINIFU

(stands and walks forward) I'm serving life without parole.

TERRY BELL

An L.W.O.P sentence means that a person has no value and will die in prison.

JUSTIN

Only way to leave? In a pine box. *(everyone puts hands to their chest as in a coffin. Those on the stage rush to sit back in their chairs.)*

CHAY YIN

(steps forward) Convicting someone of a crime is only about punishment…

JUSTIN

No second chances.

(Chay puts hands behind back and Justin escorts him back to his seat as if he's law enforcement)

CHRISTOPHER CALKINS

At the end of my sentence I will know what it feels like to serve more time in prison than I have lived outside of prison.

(Christopher stands to speak and anyone who has also served more time than outside at the end of their sentence raises their hand)

E. RUIZ

When you feel that you do not have an opportunity to better yourself, you feel as if you have fallen into hopelessness…

(Christopher makes his way to his seat, slumping hopelessly in it)

ALL
I am still a HUMAN BEING.

(All stand)

TERRY BELL
Regardless of our prison sentence….

ALL
We are now focused on EDUCATION.

(All switch seats with someone else, pretending to read a book as you sit, without running into anyone)

DERRIC BURBIE
I'll rewind the years…

(all sit backwards in their chair, backs to audience except Burbie and Bertho. We see the following acted out.)

Back when we were both teenagers. I was a trustee inside the city jail when Allen was first placed inside a cell. I had no idea that one year later, I was going to be in that exact cell, facing similar charges, and a similar sentence. We used to go to court handcuffed together since they paired people up alphabetically by their last name. In fact, we were sentenced on the same day; he went to the courtroom on the left, I went to the one on the right. I can still remember coming out of the courtroom and

being placed in the holding cell.
"What they give you?" "Life without plus four"
"They just gave me life without
plus five"
I had just turned twenty-one, he was twenty. Fast forward twenty-four years later.

(Burbie and Bertho then go sit in their chairs faced back)

ROBERT PRATT
A story of a father and a daughter.

JUSTIN HONG
I see a loving father who can barely restrain his emotions at the slight mention of his daughter.

E. RUIZ
I am a lifer…My daughter is 4 years old, Elaine Mary-Jane Ruiz, and I am on my third year in prison. It is one of my dreams to see my daughter attend college.

JUSTIN HONG
A father's grief.

ROSE-AMINIFU, RISALA
Tragically, I lost both of my children within the last seven years.
I envisioned my own daughter. Maccaia was killed by a hit and run driver here in Lancaster in 2011. She was only 18 years old, and attended Antelope Valley Jr. College. Miles was gunned down in Tarzana, in 2016 in a robbery. He was 26 years old. At times, I found myself lost in emotions, due to the physical loss of both of my kids. It is imperative that higher

education be stressed to our youth, especially our inner-city youth.

ROBERT PRATT
A sister and a brother.

CHRISTOPHER CALKINS
My younger sister Justin started high school as I started college courses. I earned A's in all six classes, and shared my grades with her. I sensed her hesitation in sharing with me, "Don't worry about this quarter, next quarter you'll do better right?" "Ok." The next quarter Justine was happy to share her much better grades.

ALL
I am an incarcerated student, I
am changing someone's life.

ANDREW KICKING HORSE MCCARTER
I feel such a pride not only as a
father and grandfather.

JASON KEATON
My grandmother is proud of me.

JUSTIN
My mother is proud of me.

(some students pop up and say "(insert person) is proud of me.")

ALL
I am not a man who gives into
his emotions.

JEFF AYERS

Doing so would be like blood in the water, sure to attract sharks. No matter what I was going through, what I was feeling, I could make no outward showing. Displaying emotions equated weakness, and weakness would make me a victim.

I internalized everything. My sorrows, my joys, my hopes, my despairs. I became just another face on the yard, with my emotions sealed behind a mask of indifference. Twenty years later ever so often I allow it to slip and my long-repressed emotions to rise to the surface.

LINDSEY

An incarcerated person

ALL

CAN RISE ABOVE…

JEFF

Allen and Zion

CHRISTOPHER

Bertho and Marco

BERTHO

Christopher and Justine

JEFF

Kicking Horse and cohort two

KICKING HORSE

Jeff and Heather

THAISON

Ruiz and Elaine Mary Jane

RUIZ
Thaison and Thailee

AARON
Larry and Mabel

LARRY
Aaron and Theresa

DAVID LEE
Derric and cohort 2

DERRIC
David and Symphony

JASON
Ninh and Ann

NINH
Jason and Maxine

TERRY
Gustavo and _____

GUSTAVO
Terry and _____

JUSTIN
Chay and _____

CHAY
Justin and Elaine

RISALA
Lindsey and Macio

LINDSEY
Risala and Miles & Maccaia

ROBERT PRATT
Arthur and Christina

ARTHUR
Robert and Brianna

DARA YIN
Deon and Donna

DEON
Dara and _____

CODY
Samuel and Betty

SAMUEL
Cody and Gramps

JEFF AYERS
Are opposite sides of these prison walls, the walls have not been able to impede the growth in the relationship to a father separated from his daughter.

LINDSEY
Separated from his son.

NINH
A grandfather separated from
his grandchild.

JASON
A son separated from his
mother.

LARRY
His father

RUIZ
A brother separated from his
sister.

RISALA
His brother.

CODY
A connection being rebuilt.

ALL
Despite being in prison

LINDSEY
Many incarcerated fathers are striving to be good examples to their families and others in the community.

ALL
EDUCATION

GUSTAVO
Education can break barriers
and bridge gaps.

SAMUEL BROWN
A liberation of the mind.

JASON KEATON

I have found a passion for learning.

THAISAN NGUON

I thought of my little brother, Thailee, who I dragged to prison with me at the tender age of sixteen. These days the glorification of gang and criminal lifestyle is no longer a part of our conversational topics. My brother enriches my life.

JASON

My family is also a part of my journey as a college student. My family convinced me to keep going so I did. Who knows, maybe I'll be free.

ANDREW KICKING HORSE MCCARTER

A college student

BERTHO GAUTHIER

Successful

AARON BENSON

A father

SAMUEL BROWN

An inspiration

DAVID LEE JR.

Found

DARA YIN

CODY

Better

LARRY TORRES
Happy

DEON WHITMORE
Peaceful

ARTHUR ANDRADE
Influential

ALL
Forgiven

DERRIC BURBIE

What stood out to me was the change within him. Not the change from a teen to a forty-year- old adult, but the entire transformation he's undergone as a person, and his ability to allowthat to come across through his words and actions. Knowing him, I have a contrast of emotions.
Happy to see the joy and pride he displays when speaking about, and to ZION. Saddened to reflect upon the thought that without a change in his sentence, he may never be free again.

JUSTIN
We create our own destiny. We
create our own chances.

LINDSEY
The other side of prisoners as
fathers, motivators,
supporters…

ALL

We are among many good fathers, grandfathers, sons, brothers, friends who are incarcerated who invest their all.

AARON BENSON
I am extremely proud to be on the same yard as

(each says the name of the person next to them in intervals).

ALL
From adversity, comes triumph.

ALLEN
Everything we do can strengthen or harm the people that are connected to us.

ROBERT PRATT
All of this puts a real face on a prisoner who is otherwise seen as a faceless number.

SAMUEL
Education is a powerful transformative tool. Not only has it transformed my thinking, it has also allowed us all to rehabilitate the image of prisoners, better yet to rehabilitate the image of people, bringing new definition to RIP. We are not incorrigible.

ARTHUR ANDRADE
There is more than meets the eye.

ALL
Imagine that.

ABOUT THE EDITORS

Dr. Kamran Afary

Dr. Afary is an assistant professor of communication studies in the College of Arts and Letters at Cal State LA. Dr. Afary is a dedicated teacher who brings a breadth of interdisciplinary knowledge and years of experience in journalism, community activism and drama therapy to his students. He has taught more than 20 different courses in rhetoric, cultural studies and performance theory during the past decade. He has also helped to organize University-wide town hall meetings and student performance showcases. He is the author of the book, *Performance and Activism: Grassroots Discourse after the Los Angeles Rebellion of 1992*

Mariely Pozuelos

Mariely is a Mass Communications major with a newfound love for advertising and public relations. She joined the Prison BA Journal team with the hope of helping those that no longer have a voice because of their circumstances.

Shealene Sakacs

A Communications major student with a public relations and advertising as background. She wasn't particularly interested in the mass incarceration system, but now she wants to learn more. After reading the work produced by the students in Lancaster Prison she have gained a new perspective of what it's like on the inside.

Candy Mendoza

Candy is a Mass Communication major who's greatly interested in the entertainment industry along with feminist theory. She will be graduating in Spring 2019 and is a Dean's List recipient who is grateful to have worked as an editorial board member on Prison BA Journal.

Selene Castillo
Selene is part of an organization that is dedicated to advocating for student issues and representing the Cal State LA community. She decided to get involved in the Prison BA Journal because she wanted to contribute to the dialogue of change for the mass incarceration system. “I am happy and grateful to be part of the beginning of the Prison BA Journal”, she says.

Alfonso Peña
Styling and visuals has always been the strong suit of Alfonso. Being the creative director for this project is an extension of his love for all things design. When he heard there was an opportunity to create a journal from scratch, he couldn’t resist to be part of this amazing cause. This will be his second publication as the creative director. He hopes to make a career out of it in the near future.

Reflections

Terry Bell

The Cal State Los Angeles Annual Celebration on August 27, 2018 was an event that I will never forget. The atmosphere was loving and caring. We performed two skits, Imagine, and A Fresh Start. Performing these skits made me feel like I was a part of society. These skits were very emotional to me. I held back tears at the end of A Fresh Start. This skit showed the progression from events in childhood to teenage years that contributed to the mindsets we developed which led us to prison. Imagine was a small part of the effects from those events. From being separated from family as a son, grandson, father, brother, and uncle. Being sentences to Life Without the possibility Of Parole, which is a sentence that signifies a person has no value, and will die in prison. Yet, staying focused on education, and pro-social activities to be the best image of ourselves.

Cal State Los Angeles is the best thing that has ever happened to me, not just within my sixteen years of incarceration, but within my 34 years of living. C.S.L.A has given me value and purpose. Thanks to Taffany, Mrs. Malone, Dr. Afary, Ahmad Jackson, and other C.S.L.A staff, skits have been implemented in plenty that we do here. From self-help courses, class assignments, and a youth diversion group. We utilize skits as a visual form to give insight into the message that we are conveying.

The message that I hope to be received from those that witness this event, is to stay focused on your goals, never give up and you can achieve anything positive that you put your mind to. “I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me” (Philippians 4:13). If we are able to do it under the circumstances we face, then it is possible for others to accomplish their goals with ease. Inspiration comes in many forms.

Baleegh Brown

Reflecting back on August 27, 2018, all I can do is smile because that experience was so remarkable. I felt human and that’s something I hoped to have shown to the viewers. As people we oftentimes make bad decisions; of course some, a lot more severe than others, but that

doesn't make us incapable of growth. I believe education is our key to success.

A lot of us came from underprivileged backgrounds where we adopted a low self-image due to the environment, which reflected in our past behavior. With an opportunity such as California State Los Angeles, we are now able to create a positive self-image. This program has broadened our thinking, boosted our confidence, and has provided us with skills that will enable us to live productive lives out in society.

It was amazing how engaged the audience were that day, they seemed to be deeply impacted from our stories. If the world had the opportunity to see us in such a light, I believe it would redefine the perception of prisoners and strengthen the belief in rehabilitation.

Derrick Burbie

After taking a few days to think about the impact of the event on August 27, 2018 where we, as Cal State L.A. students presented two performances (Imagine, and A Fresh Start) for a multitude of people at California State Prison-L.A.C. (Lancaster), including President Covino, and Warden Asuncion, I have found myself in awe of the responses I have been receiving from those in attendance. Having performed Imagine a few times previously for various people, I was already aware of the impact our words had on people, but to see the impact firsthand through the eyes and words of multiple people solidified the value our combined efforts.

Through this experience, and from participating in narrative drama, I learned how to view my life in a different aspect. Instead of solely looking at things from my perspective and through my own eyes, I learned how to view my life, and the stories my life contains as part of a whole. When going through this process, the unifying message of all of our voices combining to become one was stressed to us instead of focusing on the solo voice of one person. Hearing other people's stories allowed me to see how connected we all are, and how similar our lives are to each other. This experience reaffirmed our oneness, and shed a positive light on our shared humanity.

Allen Burnett

I wonder what God is doing.

I wonder what God is doing? It has been hard for me to really grasp what has been going on in my life these last two years. I have been blessed with an opportunity to attend Cal State LA, a major university—me, a prisoner sentenced to Life without Parole? I have been blessed to have my daughter attend the same university—me, an incarcerated father? I have been blessed to have my words, my thoughts preserved and shared in books—me, the worst of the worst? And I have been blessed to be a part of two impactful plays Imagine and A fresh Start because of Cal State LA.

I feel like God is moving in the direction of telling the incredible story of how education has changed the lives of so many people. It is mind-boggling how all these events have led to this point. This is something we only see in movies. I am so thankful to be a part of this story.—I wonder what God is doing.

I remember sitting in the front row during the event feeling privileged to witness the Warden pass out the written confirmation that these men, my friends, will have a second chance at life. I got to experience their joy. I have been blessed to know them. I am equally appreciative that my daughter Zion was able to experience it too. As an incarcerated parent, we want our children to be proud of us we want our children to see us not as who we were—the crimes we committed but the change we have become. I have been blessed; my life has taken on a new meaning because of Cal State LA. I wonder what God is doing.

I feel that everyone should see our awesome celebration and inspirational performances; from our Cal State family, to policy makers, other prisoners, and advocate for social change as well as people involved in theater. Education is powerful—it really does change lives.

James J. Cain F-

Participation in Cal State LA's Narradrama portrayal of prisoners' lived phenomena in epoch format allowed me to immerse into a world of humanity and the essence of heterogeneous comradery. As a man who'd once suffered from a form of social anxiety due to repetitive

moves and social bullying in my formative years, participation in the narradrama with my collegiate peers helped to further negate this former phobia by placing it in the rearview mirror as I became acquainted with my peers from Cohort II.

Had you not been my motivating factor for getting involved in this worthy project, I may at this moment be remorseful for foregoing such an opportunity. Yet, gratefully I was able to experience the joy and happiness of raw human emotion on your face as well all those I had engaged in the audience while playing the part of teacher and principal in the performance.

As I reflect on all of the stories, rehearsals, and preparation for the narradrama, I realize the magnitude of lived traumatic phenomena my fellow prisoners had experienced in real life. The choreographed competency of Elizabeth Malone, with added advice of Dr. Kamran Afary was extraordinary. I have come to realize how sensitive and respectful Mrs. Malone and Dr. Afary are to the men's feelings that have been attached to these relived experiences. Some being quite traumatic, full of remorse, and some proud anecdotes defining their youth.

What I found interesting about this experience was learning about the diversity of these men's childhoods, their willingness to share these personal moments, as well as their dedication to the accurate nuanced portrayal of their experiences. I also found it impressive to be a part of a group of men who were willing to selflessly dedicate three to four evenings a week to rehearsals so that the final product would reflect a well-prepared, chronological mixture traversing time, space, school years, incarceration, and our educational enlightenment through Communication Studies.

So, from the bottom of my heart, I Thank You Taffany, President Covino, Dr. Roy, Elizabeth Malone, Dr. Afary, and everyone involved in transforming this bunch of former misfits into educated, thoughtful,

humanitarian minded men, no longer interested in serving our selves but instead the interests of humanity. With Warm and Grateful Regards,

Larry Torres

A Reflection from the performances: Imagine, and A Fresh Start at the Reaching Higher event

The best way for me to describe how it felt to perform at the event, is that I now understand what it means to say that it takes strength to be vulnerable. I never imagined how liberating it is to externalize my personal issues. I was able to go back and re-listen to some of the positive voices from my past that had been drowned by all the negative ones I remembered. Performing also gave me a feeling of camaraderie and selflessness from getting lost into something greater than myself.

The message that I hope people will received once they view our performances is that human beings have an incredible capacity for transformation. I want them to understand our story as human beings, as a story of human nature. To see how it was that we developed from children to the teenagers and men that committed our crimes. To understand that as people we have also changed into something truer to our capacity as human beings to be full of love, kindness, and compassion.

The most memorable moment for me was our first moment as performers of Imagine. We had not seen the script prior to that first reading. We sat in a circle as a group and read through our parts for the first time. I followed along and read a little ahead as it was Risala's turn. I was so caught off-guard by his story that I can recall few moments where I was so instantaneously moved by something. Words cannot describe how I felt, and before I could process his story, or consolidate it with the man I know from class, who is always smiling and in high spirits, I heard his voice tell his story. I listened to the sorrow and grief in his voice, as he too was caught off-guard as he read his part. At that moment, I understood what it means to feel universal empathy.

What stands our to me the most is how committed and dedicated everyone is towards putting together our performances. The amount of

support we are given from Cal State LA, from Taffany Lim, Dr. Afary, and Ms. Malone is an amazing privilege to have. There is also an incredible amount of support from both cohorts in putting on these student performances. It is great to share in this experience with others, to work alongside people that have such a sense of purpose, and are willing to put in the time and effort to make all this possible.

I would really like for my son, Chris, to view the student performances. A few days after the Reaching Higher even, my sister, Mabel, established contact with Chris. He is sixteen years old and lives and Yuma, Arizona, and although I am a complete stranger to him, he expressed interest in meeting me. I don't know what he thinks about me, or what he has been told. I think that these performances will communicate something essential to him about who I am.

Of those not present, I would like for policymakers to view our student performances. I want not just those involved in CDCR policy, but people in the state government and even the Governor, because I think the performances tell a universal story. They are not just stories of who we were, who we are, and how all this came about. The story is everyone's story. This includes stories in the making, stories from the past, and future stories. If policymakers view our performances, they may understand how the stories came about and why. It is my hope that they will capture how our story is changing, so that they may realize how they also author these stories and many more like them through the policies they enact.

Duncan Martinez

The idea that people will come just to hear what we have to say is still a little hard to understand. So much of prison is about putting you down, making you less, that when the opportunity comes it is amazing.

Normal prison has rules and ways of being, there is a flow (much like that of a crowd) and once you understand it, it is easier to navigate. But, our classes are not like that. In those times, we are not in prison, not following some set (or sets) or prescribed actions: we are, simply, human beings trying to be better. It is an amazing difference. To celebrate that is something special, but to have others come and be just as moved…like I said before, it is amazing.

Those gatherings are a different type of crowd, moving in a different way than the ones akin to prison. Instead of everyone going a separate way, where there is conflict and confusion, we are all moving together. Very Taoist, in a sense, and almost the definition of community.

Duncan

Andrew Kicking Horse McCarter

Imagine this… a fresh start! Today, our cohorts performed two plays composed and directed by the brilliant Elizabeth Malone and co-directed by the incredible Dr. Kamron Afary to an audience ranging of invited guests from California State University-Los Angeles faculty, prison bureaucrats, press agents, business professionals, and family members. The plays depicted heart wrenching life stories comprised in a spine tingling series by those living behind this grey mountain… many of us for decades.

I must admit with each rehearsal and each story from the love of a father (Allen) for his daughter (Zion) to the gut wrenching by their parents as such a young and tender age simply overwhelmed my heart bringing tears to these old Indian eyes, each of us to the best of our limited abilities and bravely mustering internal fortitude to perform while reliving these painful events for those in attendance and for those who believe in our redemption like the incredible Taffany lim, Dr. Bidham Roy, and amazing professors of Cal State-LA whom give so much teaching us classes each semester.

For me, it is my hope and wish to the solid citizen or pillar of society that they will be able to view this performance with both an open mind and heart and it not b enlighten by a sudden flare of publicity then shrouded again in mystery in this resort of last resort. I would pray those from Governor Brown down to the young adults in high school view these stories and feel the performance to see that even though mistakes or poor decisions were made in these men's lives, one should not be judged their entire life for a mistake made so very long ago and condemned to exist in a catacomb of dead hours and buried days. Yes, you have to be held responsible for your actions and although a bell cannot be unrung, if earned, people should be deserving of a second chance in life.

So… imagine that… a fresh start to be human again, contributing to society through one's life experiences and a degree in communications, being of service so just maybe… you can be an example to others so they won't have to walk down that same path you traveled for so many lonely years.

Robert Mosley

August 27, 2018 performances for California State University, Los Angeles at CSP-LAC Campus.

I challenge a sentient life form to identify an existence, longer than realization of existence, not influenced by a memory. On August 27, 2018, the student of CSULA's CSP-LAC campus performed two plays to bring attention to the plights of persons held accountable for convictions of crimes. The dramatic exposes, Imagine and A Fresh Start, cooperative creations of the CSUAL Cohorts One and Two, represent marginalized factors contributing to personalities and behaviors of humans. Physical incarceration of the writers and performers, of the performances, does not effectively inhibit our creative energies. These productions encourage exposure of our positive thoughts and abilities, here at CSP-LAC.

In the dramatic productions, we illuminate some of the issues, previously kept veiled, which contribute to our present psychology. Hearing, and observing, the audience empathize with us, and expressing astonishment at our revelations, announces to us our success.

It brought great pleasure to perform in these dramas. Hearing the impact of the performances, from the audience members, rewards us, the performers, richly. Indeed, as Dr. K. Afary and Ms. E. Malone-Ateet, instruct through the intent of dramatic therapy, all have benefited from participation in these performances.

The presence of the faculty from CSULA did indeed influence the effect of the performance upon me. Let me take this opportunity to thank Dr. Covino, Ms. Taffany Lim, Dr. Roy, Dr. E. Bulard, Dr. D. Olsen, Mr. G. Langner, Ms. Tatev Savkissyan accompanied by Vicky and Erica, Ms. Mosqueda, Ms. E. Martinez, Mr. Richard Benton, Mr. Underwood, "Ms. Vicki I.", Ms. Susan Malvini-Kane, Prof. S. Black, Mr. Michael Johnson, Dr. David Madrid ,Mr. Craig Pope, dr. N. O'Brien, Mr. J. D. Hughes, other

members of CDC&R, cast family members and those persons unnamed, from the un-incarcerated public, for attending and contributing their attention to the production. Without their presence, the production's overall pertinence varies. They, too, now participate in the construction of memories, which will exist throughout infinity.

I, eagerly, look forward to future productions of similar nature, either within or without the walls of CDC&R. Each production contributes new memories serving as positive significant events in my life.

Robert Pratt

I want to thank you for the opportunity to participate in the Reaching Higher celebration. I cannot remember ever participating in a function like that before. I have started a collection of good, positive memories. The first was getting accepted into Cal State when I thought it might not happen, then my first "A", the first academic paper I thought was really good, and being a part of both plays at the celebration. These memories are the paving stones on the positive path that I am walking and which are the foundation that you and Cal State have so generously laid down for me. You, the professors that have taught me, and the rest of the Cal State members that I don't see who work to make this program successful not only inspire me to do well academically, but provide me with role models to shape who I want to become as I journey down this new path that I am on. Thank you! Stay in good health and spirit.

Daniel Whitlow

As the process of preparing for our Cal State LA event on August 27th began, I had a feeling it would change lives. Changing lives is a primary mission of this program. Each student involved in the Bachelor's Degree program has an opportunity, unlike any other, to receive a top-level education while expanding the collective minds and hearts of this incredible community of peers, as a team. During "A Fresh Start" rehearsals, as excitement rose and spirits coalesced, I could feel the vibrant energy coursing through us all, instructors and students alike. My own songwriting process (for "A Fresh Start") was unlike any time before. The music came to me, fueled by the moving performances and intuitive scriptwriting, as if it were composing itself.

To see the joy in the eyes of the faculty as they watched our performances, as they witnessed our appreciation, as tears stood in their eyes—no words are capable of expressing the elation I felt. Even though I want to succeed for myself, the desire to share my success with the professors and supporters who made this journey possible remains as a way for me to pay tribute to their efforts. My favorite moment came during "A Fresh Start," when Dara, Jason, and Thaison approached and incorporated Taffany into the scene, making her an important part of the performance because, truly, she is an essential and incredible part of all our lives. That moment was symbolic of how all of us feel—we all appreciate Cal State LA and we all want to show that gratitude.

I watched, from my chair behind the action, with guitar in hand, as President Covino, Professor Roy, Taffany, and the rest of the faculty sat at the edge of their seats, caught up in the emotion and passion of our performances. The intimacy of our disclosures, the acknowledgements of our appreciation, and emotions echoed by the audience's faces, reassures me that all those who attended went home that night with a deeper understanding of the significance of this program, and their own renewed appreciation for their roles in realizing our mutual goals. I wish my loved ones could have seen this; even though they know my friends and peers at Cal State LA care for me, and all my classmates, and want what is best for us, I would have liked them to experience the joy I feel—as a part of this collegiate family—firsthand.

From the very beginning, I knew the event would be a success. My confidence in the efficacy of the Cal State LA mission comes from personally experiencing the devoted, determined, dedicated, and consistently exceptional efforts of our professors and administrators. No one, beyond my loved ones, has the level of unconditional support and confidence in my abilities like the faculty of Cal State LA. They aspire to inspire us, to change our lives for the better in every way possible, to shed perpetual light on ceaseless darkness, not because it is their job but because it is their passion. I am truly grateful; thank you.

Deon Whitmore

Deone Whitmore

When the idea of compiling material so we could perform a play after viewing Allen and Zion's video made me hesitant at first. Seeing both their meshed made me think about how the choices we made in our life affected everyone around us. Hearing Allen speak inflicted an emotional side of me I tried so hard to suppress but I could not ignore the emotions he displayed when talking about Zion. As we began performing this play my heart filled with joy, sorrow, and grief because I knew everything I was experiencing at this moment made me human. This became a platform to express myself and learn from Allen how he went against a prison norm, removing the stigma as just another prisoner, and developing compassion not only for his daughter Zion but also others.

I was proud to be a part of this performance and I hoped everyone who had an assumption about what a prisoner was could view we made horrible choices and the result of htose choices destroyed innocent lives. When thinking about education in prison it's not just a good grade, it has become life changing and empowering to remove our defects of character. Developing not only knowledge but also emotional intelligence something we lacked as individuals. The story of Allen and Zion is evident that change is possible.

Dortell Williams

What I enjoyed most, as a spectator, were seeing my peers act out the narrative of our lives in both plays: A Fresh Start, and then Imagine. Of course, all of our cohort past experiences overlap in some fashion, but I think our stories were so universal in some aspects that every human being in the room could relate on some level.

The speeches were powerful and poignant, expressing a micro-lens of another universal set of life experiences, the challenges and triumphs. One would have had to be a stone not to be moved by the evoking narratives. I was definitely touched.

And this one day, this one indelible day, Monday, August 27, 2018, is really a representation of the larger and more healthier, culminating experience of Cal State LA for us. It was Mother Golden Eagle who saw us wallowing in the mud, dirty, grimy and reprehensible; she had

compassion. Mother Golden Eagle, recognized that every human being has some inherent potential that can be tapped into. Monday, August 27, 2018, was the manifestation of what Communication Studies can do for a population that was raised in dysfunction: dysfunctional homes, dysfunctional neighborhoods, dysfunctional schools and then a dysfunctional prison system that is also getting its shot in the arm of reform and transformation.

I have often said that if prisoners had the array of support that every celebrity has when those celebrities climb up on those stages and give their acceptance speeches, we, too, could excel and thrive. The presence and warmth of the thirty Cal State attendees, Mr. Choate, the institutional staff and our families proved my hunch correct. No matter who one is, it takes a society to interdependently make its social members prosper. I think from birth, human beings are usually believed upon externally first, before they believe in themselves, and then there's the converse.

…Thank you for an indelible day. As deprived citizens, we aren't allowed to go to parties anymore, but you and the "team" brought the party to us, as we are forever grateful.

Dara Yin

Dr. Afary and Elizabeth Malone first came to the students with an idea of creating a performance about how education has affected our lives or the lack of thereof. At first many of the men were unsure, as to have never out on a play before and very mask of masculinity strapped onto many of our faces. Thoughts floated many minds such as "We don't do plays!" or "What will people think?" Fortunately, we had Ahmad Jackson the semester before who had asked us to act plays out such as Macbeth, Joe Turner's Come and Gone and 12 Angry Men. This energized the men and broke down many barriers. Barriers such as being embarrassed, doing something out of our comfort zone, sharing our stories that have shaped many of our lives, and organization to complete a task.

Mrs. Malone put together a script using many of our narratives and through her invaluable wisdom as an actor, she guided us to put on the best show we could. August 27, 2018, will be a day that I will never

forget. This day I confronted my fear of acting in public and got the opportunity to share out stories with the world. We got to show what a program such as Cal State Los Angeles is doing for our lives and our community. Before the show I felt scared and nervous, “What will people think?” and “I’m not good enough,” entered my mind. Through tools I have gained in self-help and Cal State I was able to forge on and help put on a show for our audience to enjoy. After this we were able to mingle with the audience and the input that I got made me feel so proud and I felt joy and happiness with this sense of accomplishment.

I am changing, my negative mindset is far from where I am today. Education, specifically being able to seek higher education with people that back us like Cal State and CDCR I feel that I can’t fail, that I expect better of myself now. I want better for myself now. I want better for the community that I helped destroy. I owe that to them, to everyone I have hurt. I hope to be a part of many more plays and performances to come, shedding more and more of my old mindset and replacing it with academics and emotional intelligence. I can talk about education all day and tell you what it does for me, but one thing it does that takes the cake is that I feel like a human being again. I feel like I am a part of society, and not something that has been the disease that has plagued it. Thank you Taffany Lim and Dr. Roy for believing in us, as well as President Covino and all of the Cal State Professors. Also, CDCR and our warden and captain here at the Progressive Programming Facility in Lancaster for combing their efforts for all of this to happen.

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

Are you interested in contributing your work for the journal?

We welcome work relating to the mass incarceration system and communication studies. Work submitted to Prison BA Journal should be inclusive and not include defamatory language. The following are standards for publication that all submissions must meet:

1. All work must be original and properly credited to the authors.
2. All research regarding participants is ethical, professional, institutional, and legal. Informed consent has been obtained with limited risk presented.
3. Scholarship reported is authentic.

Papers submitted to Prison BA Journal will be peer-reviewed without bias by our panel of editors. All submissions should be accompanied by a cover letter including a 75-word biography with full contact information, including an email address.

Please send all submissions to: Dr. Kamran Afary
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