TIME/CUT

Indiana Prison Newsletter

Issue 17 · Summer 2025

Immigrant detention at Miami CF

Black August

Grieving & fatherhood behind bars

Revolt against ICE inside & out

& more

TIME/CUT is a quarterly publication for Indiana prisoners and their families and friends. It includes news, analysis, and resources from inside and outside the walls and around the world. The articles in the publication do not necessarily reflect on its contributors, creators, readers, distributors, or readers. Its contents are for informational purposed only. TIME/cut does not provide financial or legal assistance or romantic arrangements.

The following are welcome as submissions, contributions, and responses to TIME/cut: reports of conditions inside, book reviews, poetry and artwork, tips for surviving and navigating prison, advice for mental and physical health, educational history, and offerings toward collective organizing and getting free. Please state explicitly if you would like your writings to be considered for publication and if you'd like your name published with it. This publication depends on participation of those incarcerated in Indiana and their loved ones. TIME/cut may choose not to publish some contributions due to limitations of space or the nature of the content. Send submissions to:

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Write to us! **We are working on making RMN more intentional, more thorough, and more curated. One of our main goals here is to be more conversational with and among prisoners: more original content and more ongoing discussions and analysis. Each issue will have some prompts, some invitations for engagement. To this end, the questions we have for you all this time are:**

- *What are yall hearing about the creation of a 1000-bed immigrant detention facility at Miami Correctional?*

- *For people who are or have been at Miami, what does your experience tell you about how this proposal would would work in real life? Have you seen any changes happening yet?*

- *How separate do you think the detainees will be from those of you in IDOC custody?*

FIGURE 110.—Rubus allegheniensis Porter. Allegheny blackberry. *A*, Primocane habit—× 0.5; *B*, floriferous habit —× 0.5; *C*, fruit showing drupelets—× 0.5; *D*, seeds—× 3.

solution to RMN #16's crossword, "Confinement"

1 S	2 T	3 E	4 E	5 P	■	6 T	7 I	8 G	■	9 L	10 A	11 S	12 I	13 K
14 K	A	N	Y	E	■	15 A	D	E	■	16 E	L	I	S	E
17 I	N	T	E	L	■	18 C	O	L	19 D	S	P	E	L	L
■	■	■	20 F	O	21 M	O	■	22 A	R	S	E	N	I	C
23 A	24 C	25 C	U	S	E	■	26 S	T	A	■	■	27 A	P	E
28 C	O	O	L	I	N	29 G	T	O	W	30 E	31 R	■	■	■
32 A	M	B	■	■	33 S	I	R	■	■	34 A	V	35 I	36 A	■
■	37 P	R	38 I	39 V	A	T	E	40 P	41 E	R	S	O	N	■
■	42 S	A	D	E	■	■	43 A	E	R	■	■	44 W	O	45 W
■	■	■	46 S	T	47 O	48 C	K	I	N	49 T	50 R	A	D	E
51 S	52 G	53 T	■	■	54 D	H	S	■	55 S	H	I	N	E	S
56 T	O	E	57 S	58 H	O	E	■	59 U	T	E	S	■	■	■
60 J	U	N	K	E	M	A	61 I	L	■	62 L	E	63 A	64 P	65 S
66 O	D	D	E	R	■	67 T	N	T	■	68 M	U	R	A	L
69 E	A	S	E	D	■	70 S	K	A	■	71 A	P	P	L	Y

Back From Hell: Black Power And Treason To Whiteness Inside Prison Walls
Lorenzo Kom'boa Ervin

The federal penitentiary at Terre Haute, Indiana had the reputation of being the most racist and brutal prison in the federal prison system. The city of Terre haute itself had been known in the 1920s as one of the strongest base areas for the Ku Klux Klan in the Midwest. As I was to discover later, many prison guards were Klan members or sympathizers. There were no black guards at the time I entered it, in the summer of 1970. The most famous inmate to do time at the prison was the 1950s rock and roll singer, Chuck Berry, during the early 1960s, and reportedly he spoke disparagingly about the state of Indiana for years afterward and said he would never have a concert in the city of Terre Haute. I do not know if this is true.

Usually racism is the best tool of the prison officials to control volatile prison populations. The warden and his guards intentionally keep up racial hostilities through rumors and provocation, and give a free hand within the prison to groups like the KKK and the Aryan Brotherhood to maim or kill Black prisoners. They use the racist white prisoners to confine both themselves and others, in return for special priveleges and the fleeting feeling that they are "helping" the "white race" maintain control. This is how the system imprisons whites and uses them in their own oppression. The officials can usually count on recruiting a steady supply of racist murderers and henchmen from the white prison population. But an important part of the plan is to beat down or silence anti-racist whites, in order to make sure all whites toe the fascist line. In fact, without this conformity the whole plan would not work.

For years many black inmates had been beaten or killed at Terre Haute by both white prison inmates and guards. I knew from the stories I had been told by black prisoners in Atlanta that this was true. In fact, the black prisoners at Terre Haute had lived in total fear of the whites. I said "had" because by the time I got there things had started to change.

A group of young militant black prisoners had formed an organization called the Afro-American Cultural Studies Program (AACSP), which met every week and discussed black history and culture, as well as world current events. The prison officials hated the group but had to grant their charter because of a lawsuit filed against the Warden and the Federal Bureau of Prisons. But the Warden, John Tucker, said that if the started "acting militant," he would grant a Klan charter for the racist white inmates — as if they secretly already didn't have one! Warden Tucker had a well-earned reputation for brutality against black inmates. The older blacks told us "young bloods" all kinds of horror stories about Tucker, and about the Blacks killed or mutilated over the years by white guards and inmates. Black men were hanged, stabbed, thrown into a threshing machine, beaten with pipes, burned alive in their cells and murdered in every other way imaginable. tucker even had a group of white inmates who acted as his "hit men" against whites who refused to conform to the racist line. But the "young bloods," and especially the black inmates from AACSP, would not be intimidated and vowed that they would fight back to the death. Shortly after I arrived in the prison, I threw in my lot with them.

At one of their meetings held each Thursday, I asked what I had to do to join. The gentleman who had been acting as the moderator, a short, dark, bald-headed brother from Detroit, whose name was Nondu, told me all that was necessary was to actively take part. I was introduced to all the brothers there — fifty in all — but especially to Karenga, a huge but affable brother from Cincinnati, along with his prison rap partener, a relatively smallish brother named Desumba, and then Hassan and Nondu from Detroit, all of whom were the principal AACSP officers.

They along with the general members, all welcomed me into the group and treated me like family. Karenga, the President of the group, actually became my best friend, and saved my life on more than one occasion.

These brothers all wore shaved heads, and were influenced by the 1960s cultural nationalist figure, Ron Karenga, along with the Cleveland, Ohio black nationalist Ahmed Evans (who, with his second in command, Nondu Latham, was serving life in Ohio state prison for killing several policemen in 1968), but their greatest influence was Malcolm X. I was not greatly enamored of Ron Karenga, who headed a Los Angeles-based group called "US" (United Slaves), which was implicated in the murder of two Black Panther Party members in 1969 and purportedly engaged in other internecine violence against the BPP. The Panthers believed that Karenga was a police agent, or knowingly allowed the crimes to take place because of some political sectarian reason. But my initial doubts did not stop me from taking part in the AACSP. It became my all-consuming passion while at the prison, and I would fight and die to defend it. In fact, I almost did make the supreme sacrifice.

We had to fight both the racist authorities and the white inmates on behalf of the black prison population, many of whom were intimidated into silence. We were bold and audacious, and carried on a virtual guerrilla war to strike back at the killers of black men, whether they were guards or inmates. The whites hated and feared us because we were ruthless in defending ourselves and punishing racists. There was no mercy. Our retaliation was always swift and bloody.

Our kind of revolutionary blacks had never been seen before at Terre Haute, and it changed the status quo when we fought back. Many of the prisoners were white radicals who were in prison for anti-war cases, and they in turn began to educate other whites. The anti-racist organizing by white radicals was important because it ensured that white prisoners would no longer be indoctrinated or intimidated by the Klan as they

had been for the previous thirty-five years at that prison. This re-education was something black revolutionaries could not effectively do alone, and prisoners began to check out books from the Black Culture library, to attend joint political study groups, and to try to understand in theoretical terms how racism was a way of enslaving us all — blacks and other non-whites as inferiors, whites as oppressors. They understood now how the Klan had been doing the bidding of the prison officials for years, just like the white workers in society do the bidding of the capitalists. Fascist politics became not only unpopular but unsafe.

Guards used to the old regime decided to suddenly "retire," and racist inmates begged to be transferred. The Warden and his staff were greatly alarmed, but powerless to take any action lest they precipitate a full-fledged riot, which would also get guards and staff killed in large numbers. The prison officials realized they were losing control, and began to panic. All prison officials know that if racism is surmounted, revolt is inevitable.

Then in September of 1971 the Attica prison revolt erupted in upstate New York, and riveted the attention of the entire world on the U.S. prison system. Revolutionary prisoners — black, Latino, and white — had taken guards hostage at Attica and were running the prison. This terrified prison officials all over the United States. It also pushed forward the prison struggle and made it a red-hot issue.

Even after the repression of Attica, sympathy rebellions broke out all over the country, including at Terre Haute, where for the first time black, white, and Hispanic prisoners rose up to fight the prison officials. Buildings were torched or bombed, people tried to escape, strikes and industrial sabotage went on, and desperate hand-to-hand combat between guards and prisoners in the high-security L-unit was taking place, along with other acts of resistance which seemed to break out daily.

Warden Tucker and his staff panicked, and rushed to start building a new wing of high-security cells in L-unit to hold the "malcontents" in his prison. He then tried to provoke a confrontation, a "race riot" among inmates, but this didn't work because we had chased away most of the racists, and had made alliances with progressive white and Latino prisoners. These prisoners, many of whom were schooled in revolutionary politics, wouldn't fall for the old tricks.

The Warden could not convince the white prisoners, who had now struggled and suffered next to us, to accept the old racist "hate bait." They knew they were prisoners, and would not accept white skin privileges or resurrect the Klan to help the Warden run the prison. These white prisoners were standing up against their masters, and they were a different people entirely. They no longer saw anything in common with the Warden, not even "whiteness." The black prison population had overcome its fear and insecurity to become the vanguard and the backbone of a serious threat to the organized racial violence and repression which had ruled unchallenged for years.

Frustrated, Tucker then just told his officers to begin rounding up the AACSP leaders and throw them into the new security unit. But we had prepared for this eventuality, and had decided not to go down without a fight. So the first time they came for our leaders, it precipitated a twelve-hour standoff when we took over one of the prison units where most of them were, booby-trapped the doors with explosives and other traps, and held the unit guards hostage. The prisoners armed themselves with spears, knives, home-made dynamite, and other weapons. Realizing how serious the situation had become, a truce was negotiated by Tucker for protection of our so-called constitutional rights to have disciplinary hearings for the leadership instead of just summarily throwing them into solitary, and for no reprisals over the protest. But this agreement for amnesty and standard disciplinary hearings with outside legal representation was swiftly broken as soon as the authorities re-took control of the institution. All of the known leaders of the AACSP, and their white and Latin Allies, were snatched up and rammed into high-security cells.

The officials were thus satisfied that they had removed the threat, and that the absence of the first level of leadership would cause the group to collapse. But on the contrary, the organization never missed a beat. We had set up AACSP as an organization which had several levels of leadership; there was no primary leader. So as soon as the original founding leaders were removed, the secondary leadership took over. I took over as President, and the other slots were quickly filled by a new wave of leaders. We kept up the struggle, continued our weekly meetings, and began sending out a monthly newsletter to tell our outside supporters and the press what was going on.

We had always had a number of programs to help prisoners: a library of radical and black books, political education classes, literacy classes and job training, and we kept these going. We even demanded that officials allow us to take books and materials to those leaders in the solitary confinement units. The officials had to agree, since they saw they had failed to destroy us in the previous incident.

Finally, after several months of this standoff, officials created another provocation by attacking one of the leaders in solitary, Brother Hassan. He was badly beaten when he objected to a guard spitting and blowing his nose into the prisoners' food. We knew this was a set-up, so we did not violently respond. We demanded that the harassment cease, circulated a petition, and filed a lawsuit in the local court system. Even though we did not attack the guards like they wanted, they began to round us up anyway, claiming that we were "planning" to create a disturbance. The truth was the officials concocted this "conspiracy" to try to destroy the organization and justify these harsh security measures.

We were all thrown into the special security cells in L-unit and

were only let out for showers and the law library. For twenty-three hours a day we were locked down in these cells, which were about the size of your bathroom. The guards taunted us by calling us racist and offensive names, and spitting and blowing their noses in our food. They would do this right in front of you hoping you would object so they would have an excuse to call you a "smartass nigger" and beat up on you. They would gang up and beat prisoners bloody, especially those they did not like. After a discussion among the comrades in the unit, we decided to rebel against these conditions before things got worse and somebody got killed. As it was, Hassan was so badly beaten he required stitches and a back brace.

One day when they opened the doors to take me to the law library, I knocked the handcuffs away, leaped out of the cell, hit one of the guards in the face with my fist and stabbed the other one in the hip with a knife. I tried to force them to open the secuirty door to let all the prisoners out, but the guard who had the keys ran and threw them out the window into a hallway. So I was trapped along with them, and decide, in frustration to kill our keepers who had been tormenting us for weeks.

I jumped on the guard I had punched, and stabbed him several times until the knife broke in his side. He screamed, "Don't kill me! Don't kill me! I've got a wife and three kids." I hit him again and agian until he fell to the ground. Then I picked up a mop wringer to crush his skull, but the other guard attacked me from behind. I turned to hit him in the chest, and then we started to wrestle. Meanwhile the pig on the floor jumped up and sprayed my face with chemical MACE. I also had cut my forehead on the mop wringer, and blood flowed into my eyes, blinding me. I fought on in a blind rage!

By this time the other guards in the hallway had been alerted and ran into the unit with riot equipment. they started to beat me, but the other prisoners in the unit broke their cell windows out and started throwing coffee mugs, glass jars, and other things at the riot squad as they dragged me out of the unit, feet first, like I was some lifeless animal. But they were more afraid than I was, to see this stuff flying in the air at them, so they refrained from hitting me any more in front of the inmates.

I was dragged down the hallway by about six guards to the hospital where I was thrown into a "mental observation" cell on the second floor. They were treating me as if I had gone "crazy." They ripped all of my clothes off of me, and then threw me naked into the cell.

There was no bed, linen, toilet, or even a sink to wash my face — just a door, a window, a hole in the wall to "do your business," and padding all over the floor and walls to either cushion these "crazy" inmates from injuring themselves when they run their heads into the walls, or to cushion the sound of blows by guards when they beat prisoners.

For the week I remained there, they would neither feed nor clothe me, and except for when they would open the doors to spray me with a high-pressured water hose, and then open the windows to freeze my ass off with a blast of wintry air, I was left alone night and day. I caught pneumonia as a result and almost died. When they saw I was real sick and that my death would cause the other prisoners to revolt, they decided to see that I got some kind of medical attention. They made arrangements to send me to the prison hospital in Springfield, Missouri.

But even though I was being transferred by prison officials, who hoped to end the uprising, this did not happen. Although the prison officials ultimately took back administrative control from the "rioters," the prison was never the same place. Because of the united prisoner population at Terre Haute, the prison had strikes and violent protests for years afterward. The unity of the prisoners made many things possible: the creation of the Indiana prisoners' labor union, which fought for better working and living conditions, an end to the racially motivated killing and organizing by groups like the Klan, and of course better overall treatment. Some of the most brutal guards were fired or prosecuted after they had beaten or tortured prisoners, something which had never happened before.

Although I was to go through many years of torture at Springfield, Marion (Illinois), and other prisons, I lived through it all. I remember many things about those fifteen years in prison, but the struggle at Terre Haute, and how even whites who had been following the Klan line for many years rose up with the blacks against the prison officials was one thing I will never forget.

Report from the Second National Black Radical Organizing Conference, 30 May-1 June 2025, Indianapolis, Indiana
by Sanaa Young
from Pambazuka.org
June 2025

On the weekend of 30 May 2025, 500 people from all over the U.S. convened in Indianapolis, Indiana, for the second National Black Radical Organizing Conference (NBROC). The conference was organized by Community Movement Builders, Black Alliance for Peace, Cooperation Jackson, Malcolm X Grassroots Movement, National Black Liberation Movement, and Black Men Build. Attendees gathered at Butler University for three days of plenaries and workshops to develop the knowledge, skills, and relationships necessary for Black/New Afrikan liberation. The convening of the conference came 53 years after the first ever National Black Political Convention held in Gary, Indiana.

The second NBROC was an attempt to cultivate a space for organizers and organizations to assess the current state of organizing efforts for Black/New Afrikan liberation and discuss a collective way forward to achieve liberation. Workshops were offered to teach attendees skill-building and organizing

"Lock Up"

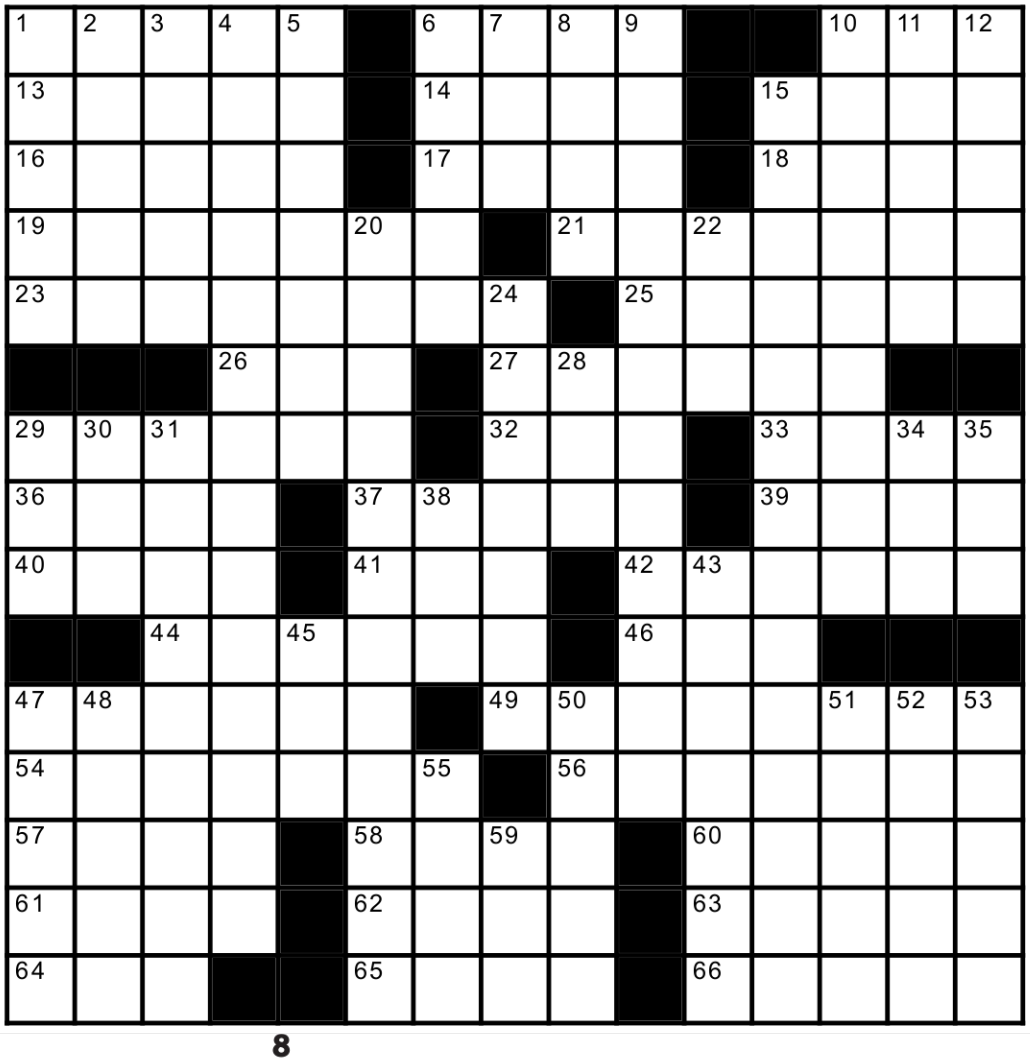
by Leonard Williams

Across

1. Condescending sorts
6. Minor spat
10. Pano necessity
13. Capital of Vietnam
14. Word after "push" or "pull"
15. Like our social and political elites: male and ___
16. French for "airplane"
17. The company formerly known as Facebook
18. "I think ___, I think ___, ..."
19. What UPS might deliver
21. Net, in a way
23. EV part
25. Hit for The Beach Boys in 1988 (having nothing to do with Indiana)
26. Miner's find
27. Boil down to extract the essence
29. Neighbors of tonsils
32. ___ Speedwagon (a car and a band)
33. Words of estimation
36. One outcome of a gender reveal event
37. Jazz singer Diana
39. "___ not, and say we did"
40. Actor Kaplan of "Welcome Back, Kotter"
41. Director's call to stop filming
42. Except if
44. First part of "Hamlet"
46. Goat's bleat
47. Shelf for an elf
49. Land of cul-de-sacs
54. Secure, as a bike
56. Blockages
57. Type of syrup
58. Lose one's feathers
60. ___ as Hades
61. Cassini of fashion design fame
62. Film genre for "The Big Sleep"
63. Steak option
64. Affirmative vote in Congress
65. Where the Mets used to play
66. Some antidepressants: Abbr.

Down

1. Mold, as clay
2. Like an academy in Annapolis
3. Chilling, as champagne
4. Bibliophile's preoccupation
5. Oscar-winning actor in "From Here to Eternity" (1953)
6. Marisa who plays May Parker in the MCU
7. "___ Been Everywhere"
8. Elaborate party
9. Peter Falk's TV detective character
10. Chocolate source
11. Word after "car" or "fire"
12. ___ Park, N.J. (site of Edison's lab)
15. Women's work?
20. Architectural features appearing in Ionic, Doric, and Corinthian orders
22. Michigan's ___ Canals
24. Long-term saver's concerns
28. Sushi fish
29. Once-trendy boot brand
30. Itinerary word
31. Locale for a cityscape
34. Rds. found on city maps
35. CIA forerunner (W.W. II spy org.)
38. Become a candidate for office
43. ___ and Crosses (what Americans call Tic-Tac-Toe)
45. First double-digit number
47. Kirk called him "Bones"
48. You can dig it!
50. Extremist, ideologically
51. Ulan ___, Mongolia
52. Name meaning "faith" or "belief" in Swahili
53. Stupid or irritating people
55. Christopher Robin's companion
59. Trumped-up story



theories. Campaign breakout sessions afforded attendees the opportunity to learn about some of the work that sponsoring organizations are involved in, along with avenues to support the organizational work.

The conference opened with a timely plenary, "What time is it?", which addressed the current conditions facing Black/New Afrikan people in the U.S. and abroad. Panelists Dr. Charisse Burden Stelly, Malaika Jabali, Derecka Purnell, and Dr. Akinyele Umoja addressed current conditions and how the movement has responded to them. Necessary, indisputable criticisms of the current movement raised by these panelists cannot be overstated. As we consider what appears to be a lack of revolutionary, Black radical perspectives amongst "the people", we need to recognize that people lack these perspectives because organizations and organizers are not actually with and amongst "the people".

Panelists addressed the need to be present on the ground and in the lives of people. But that means we cannot be all ideology and dialogue. We need tactics that reflect political clarity about the situation we are living under. What tactics make sense as we experience in real time the expansion of the surveillance state and the deputization of citizens that accompanies it? Would one canvass in a neighborhood door-to-door, ripe with Ring doorbells and their faces uncovered, talking about sensitive issues?

In this current moment, panelists reiterated that we find ourselves extremely disorganized. Who amongst us has been able to stop just a single shipment of weapons to Israel as they continue their aerial genocide of the Gaza Strip? As one panelist asked, how many Black organizations supported labour strikers at Amazon? At this point in time, where the settler colonial state has not slowed down its violent enforcement of imperialism, settler-colonialism and capitalism, self-defense, political exile, and armed struggle must be considered seriously as we seek to organize against and confront the settler colonial state. We can theorize about what is to come for our communities, but how are we addressing what is happening to our communities right now? A direct assessment of our current moment tells us we need new tactics, we need unity and a collectivization of our efforts, and we need to be with the people to effectively organize.

The plenary that followed, entitled "What is to be done?", continued to build on conversations about what organizers and organizations must do to combat the colonial capitalist system we live under. Panelists Ajamu Baraka, Erica Caines, Ashaki Binta, and Ashanti Alston touched on an array of perspectives regarding the role and structure of organizations. Rather than defining ourselves by word choice or latching onto abstract self-descriptors, organizers must be evaluated solely on the material actions they take towards liberation. In other words, what we are calling ourselves does not seem nearly as important when we consider how we are moving. The importance of ideological struggle became apparent during this plenary as panelists presented different attitudes towards organizations and leadership structure. Regardless of our differences, emphasis should be placed on partaking in democratic, ideological struggle to advance liberation efforts by sharpening our analyses. Strikingly, organizers and organizations must propose a superior ethical framework and the future they are offering in opposition to the current colonial capitalist one. As Baraka said, we need a total and fundamental transformation of the reality we presently live under.

The richness and the value of the second NBROC shone through in its multitude of smaller, breakout discussions. Workshops included – Organizing 101: defining our mission, objectives, strategies and tactics (MOST); building Black radical grassroots media; building a solidarity economy: land trust and cooperatives; building Black working class power: in this period under capitalism, imperialism, and fascism; dismantling the settler colonial logics of patriarchy in the New Afrikan liberation struggle; building a people's self defense network: community safety and defense.

The struggle for Black/New Afrikan liberation is a material, cultural, and ideological one. If we understand that the settler colonial state knows no bounds in its tactics of violence and repression, then our skill sets should be expansive beyond what we are comfortable with in order to strengthen our movement. Strategic planning of an organizational campaign is a skill. Creating propaganda and utilizing media channels available to us for dissemination is a skill. One cannot Free The Land with no ownership or knowledge of working and maintaining the land. Dismantling gender and sexual oppression cannot occur without a proper analysis of colonial socialization and understanding the harms of bioessentialism. And perhaps most importantly, to achieve self-determination, all organizers must take seriously the tasks of security and community defense. All aforementioned topics and more were fleshed out in these small group workshops. Sessions enabled attendees to engage with topics through Q&As, robust discussions, and lectures. For attendees who wanted to stay in touch with presenting organizations, some sessions provided contact forms for future resource sharing.

One of the most critical outcomes of the conference was the rally that followed for two political prisoners known as the Pendleton 2. On June 1st, after the closing plenary, dozens of conference attendees travelled an hour north to Anderson, Indiana, in support of John "Balagoon" Cole and Christopher "Naeem" Trotter. In 1985, Cole and Trotter saved a fellow inmate's life at the Pendleton State Correctional Facility, who was almost beaten to death by a group of white supremacist guards in a KKK splinter group known as the "Sons of Light". Both Cole and Trotter received 84 and 142 years added to their respective sentences for their life saving intervention. They were subject to torture in solitary confinement for their heroism. Trotter's clemency hearing is scheduled for 10 June

2025. The rally, covered by Truthout, was a means to show the settler colonial state that not only are people following the case of the Pendleton 2 closely, but are also fiercely committed to organizing towards seeing these political prisoners free.

As with any type of convening, the conference comes with limitations and areas for improvement. A gathering of only three days is not sufficient to address every single, unique circumstance facing all organizers and organizations. The time allotted for plenaries, workshops, and campaigns was dictated by logistical and practical constraints. The desire to continue these conversations and skill sharing sessions beyond the allotted time was apparent. For attendees to get the most out of a convening like this, their role is to make connections, follow-up, and stay in touch with the organizers and organizations they desire to build with and learn from. The NBROC was not able to cover every single issue or topic, but it was able to create a space for attendees to seek out and make connections that may benefit their own organizational work. In-person convenings offer benefits that simply cannot be replicated by online meetings or webinars; connecting face to face is imperative.

Congratulations and thank you to the organizers of the second NBROC for providing this space and laying the groundwork for creating connections. For all organizers and organizations, the lessons are clear: we must do more to meet the needs of this moment.

Supporters Rally Behind Political Prisoners Who Stopped White Supremacist Attack
by Frances Madeson
from Truthout.org
June 2025

An upcoming clemency hearing will determine the near-term fate of Christopher "Naeem" Trotter, a political prisoner who has been held captive for over 40 years as punishment for a spontaneous act of community self-defense inside prison walls.

On February 1, 1985, Trotter and another incarcerated man — John "Balagoon" Cole — led a rebellion within the prison now known as Pendleton Correctional Facility to protect a fellow prisoner, Lincoln "Lokmar" Love, who was being attacked with nightsticks by Indiana Department of Corrections prison guards. As Hammer and Hope recounts:

> According to Trotter and Cole, they fought several prison guards in self-defense and to protect Love from further beatings. To avoid being attacked themselves, they took two guards and a prison counselor hostage and negotiated with the prison. The hostages were released unharmed. No one died. Trotter was sentenced to an additional 142 years and Cole to an additional 84 years.

Trotter and Cole are now known as the "Pendleton 2," and people nationwide have rallied in their defense.

Another prison guard later testified that the guards who attacked Love were members of the Sons of Light, an offshoot organization of the Ku Klux Klan. The fact that they continued to bring their truncheons down on Love's head after having already subdued him is an undisputed fact of the case.

For people incarcerated alongside Love, the memories of the attack cut deep. The blood spilled that day has never really been stanched according to Rodney "Big R" Jones, who witnessed the prison guards' attack from the cell across from Love's.

Just days before our interview, Jones had a pacemaker implanted. Nonetheless, he exerted himself to share his memory of the 1985 attack and uprising, even though actively recalling those events takes its toll. He is no longer in prison, but the effects of witnessing the guards' brutality against his neighbor, which are traumatic, are knitted with memory.

"Every time I talk about my life on that day, it's like I'm looking at it," Jones told Truthout. He said he saw the guards, whom he calls "soldiers," rush Love with their "sticks," and he recounted seeing the blood gushing out of Love's head where they'd split his skull.

"I had tears in my eyes," he said. "I was yelling at them to 'give me some of that' just to get them off of him. They had his hands behind his back. 'Why you keep beating that man like that with your sticks, even if he moves a little bit?' He was like Rodney King moving a little bit, trying to get out of the way of all those hits."

In the ensuing years he's spoken on the phone with Trotter and Cole a couple of times, the men he credits with saving Love's life. "We took their kin back down there to visit them. But, no, no way, I never went back inside," he said.

On June 1, 2025, dozens of people came to Anderson, Indiana, in defense of Trotter and Cole. Those who answered the rallying call to uplift the sacrifices of the Pendleton 2 came from Georgia, Maryland, Missouri, California, Illinois, and beyond. The out-of-towners joined with Jones and dozens of Indianans at the government center in Anderson, the county seat of Madison County, to demonstrate that eyes beyond the state line are trained on local prosecutors, judges, and the clemency process as a whole, in advance of the parole board's meeting on June 10 to consider Trotter's clemency application.

National awareness has been roused in part by the 2023 release of They Stood Up, a documentary film that tells the mortifying story of what befell the Pendleton 2 after rescuing Love. There were months of routine assaults, months of being fully fettered (shackled by both hands and feet) and decades somehow surviving in solitary confinement. Too Black, one of

the documentary's co-directors and a member of the Pendleton 2 Defense Committee that formed in 2022, told the crowd, "We're here because we want to save two human lives that the state is hell-bent on ending and exterminating in a quiet hole all by themselves because of what they inspire in us. Because what they inspire in us is heroism."

When the guards attacked Trotter and Cole, they fought back, which led to the hostage situation, Too Black recounted. "But no one died," he said. "Yet still they got 200 years for it."

The defense committee is pulling out all the stops ahead of the June 10 hearing, including most urgently asking for signatories to a letter of support.

Another defense committee member told Truthout they're looking to American Indian Movement (AIM) political prisoner Leonard Peltier's recent release as a paradigm for their campaign, which like Peltier's has to overcome entrenched institutional vindictiveness.

Just weeks ago, the five-year anniversary of the murder of George Floyd thrust renewed questions about bystanders intervening to stop acts of state violence while they're in process into the zeitgeist. In the film, Cole speaks about the anguish of the eyewitnesses who were not prepared to disrupt Derek Chauvin's slow suffocation of Floyd, a heartache he didn't have to suffer. Trotter declared himself in They Stood Up: "If I can be convicted for standing up and saving a person's life, then convict me. But I know it was morally the right thing to do. And I will continue to fight, and I ask that you fight with me."

Given these confluences so alive in the moment and the imminence of the clemency hearing, the defense committee decided it was finally time to bring the fight to ground zero.

"This is the county where this happened, and I think that's the part we really need to stress," Too Black told the rally. "We've done actions in the capital, we've shown the documentary across the world, but we've never really brought it here. But we've got to bring it here, because this is the place where they'll be released."

Tamie Dixon-Tatum, an Anderson city employee, told Truthout she would have gone to the rally even if she weren't the director of the municipality's Civil and Human Rights Department.

"These gentlemen have been in prison for over 40 something years, and you know, they were trying to stand up to protect another gentleman, and that gentleman was being harmed in such a way. And so they literally put themselves, their lives on the line, to help someone else," she said.

"Everybody in this picture is human," Dixon-Tatum said. Yet she's concerned that there are bad actors working as guards and wardens who remain part of the picture. "Some of them were punished and removed from the prison system. Some of them are probably still there," she said. "So, yeah, it's scary."

Michelle Smith, executive director of Missouri Justice Coalition, told Truthout she travelled from St. Louis to stand with the Pendleton 2 because the reality for Black men behind bars in Missouri is also very scary. Since 2023, her organization has been supporting the family of Othel Moore in the aftermath of his death. Moore was a Black man in a Missouri Department of Corrections prison who was assaulted by guards in a secure location where no fellow incarcerated people could possibly come to his aid.

"Othel was beaten severely with billy clubs, and then they restrained him, and they maced him in the face," Smith said. "So he was subdued, he was shackled, and then they put a spit hood over his head, and he suffocated to death. And that is very similar to what happened with the Pendleton 2 case, or would have happened, if Cole and Trotter hadn't stopped the guards. Because of that they saved Love's life."

Indiana is very similar to Missouri, Smith said, in terms of how anti-Black racism operates inside and outside of its prisons.

"Indiana's a Klan state. In Missouri, it's Proud Boys and Oath Keepers," she said. "Plenty of times I've been on the phone with men on the inside and heard the guards calling them the N-word. Are we tired of these injustices? Of course we are. So even from two states away, we're going to keep on fighting and advocating for these two men to come home," she said.

Representatives from the Atlanta-based National Black Food & Justice Alliance told Truthout that they came to the rally for the Pendleton 2 because both the food system and the legal system are designed to uphold white supremacy. Their organization's analysis is that police brutality, police violence, and the criminal legal system are all inherently violent in the same ways that the food system is, arguing that they are designed to kill Black people.

Underscoring that reality, Love never received any grace from the system that had dehumanized and brutalized him. He died from COVID in 2020, still captive, 1 of 143 people to succumb to the virus in Indiana prisons that year. Incarcerated Indianans died at a rate even higher than the coronavirus-skewed national average, researchers found.

Erica Caines, from the Baltimore chapter of Black Alliance for Peace, told Truthout she'd traveled to Anderson, Indiana, as part of her organization's commitment to freeing political prisoners because "of our understanding that resistance breeds repression." She likened the Pendleton 2 to journalist Mumia Abu Jamal, Black Panther Party member Jamil Al-Amin (formerly known as H. Rap Brown), and AIM member Leonard Peltier — all longtime captives of the state whose liberation

Black Alliance for Peace has struggled for.

"In any war, you go and get your people back," Caines said. "You negotiate for your people."

There's a discipline involved in being part of a Black anti-imperialist, internationalist organization whose focus is to bring back the Black radical peace perspective, she explained.

"What's embodied by Balagoon and Naeem is the self-determination, the self- defense aspects we call for," Caines told Truthout. "What does it mean to forge your own way with your back against the wall, when you know you can almost touch freedom, but you will risk it all for your person?"

At the time of the rebellion, Trotter only had three months remaining of his already onerous four-year sentence.

"That's the emphasis for our being out here," Caines said. "We thought it important to show Anderson that these men have our support." And, she added, "We can bring more people back if need be."

Anderson city employee Dixon-Tatum sees a chance for the Indiana Department of Corrections to repair past wrongs.

"I want to say that Madison County is a place where hope still lives," she said. "There were some bad officers, and people like to say 'allegedly,' but it's actually been proven at this point. This is about doing right."

Grieving Inside a Total Institution
by E.J.
from Scalawagmagazine.com
June 2025

I was not yet 27 years old, and I had already been in prison for nearly a decade, estranged from my family and friends on the outside. As a teenager, I was thrown into this world and had no choice but to learn to assimilate. Every breath I took was with the intent to survive—even with no money, no family support, and no one I could call a friend. After almost 10 years inside, I had been in prison long enough for people out there to forget my existence. I had been buried under time.

One day, I received a card from my mother and thought it was so strange. I stared at her distinctive handwriting: tiny little letters, slightly bubbly, and fully upright; all of her r's capitalized, regardless of where they appeared in the word.

Seeing my mother's handwriting made me immediately burst into tears. I had been writing to her every week for so long, searching for a response.

The card was to let me know that several months prior, my grandmother, who I'm named after, had passed away. When I was a child, I spent holidays with her in North Carolina. She had taken me to see my father's grave. She was my link to him. She was the artifact I had to remember him by.

I re-read the card, my hands shaking uncontrollably. Hot tears flowed from my face as I handed the card to the officer. In my mind, I was handing the card to the officer so he could call chaplaincy. In reality, he called the on-duty mental health professional.

I was called to the front door of the dorm, where the officer handed me back the card my mother had sent. I put the card in my shirt pocket. I had tissues in my other hand. I was crying without ceasing. My hands were shaking so hard I missed my nose when I went to wipe it. The officer asked me to step outside the dorm, so I did. I was then cuffed up, my wad of soggy tissue still clamped in my hands.

They videotaped me as they escorted me to the mental health side of the medical unit. Snot and tears poured from my face. My glasses were fogged from the heat of my tears and sobs. I clenched the useless wad of tissues. They were all I had to hold on to.

My entourage and I reached the medical/mental health building. I was led to a counselor's office and instructed to sit. I sat as well as I could with my handcuffed hands behind my back. The man behind the desk asked if I was OK. I was trying so hard, so very very hard to pull myself together. To be OK. To suck it up. Finally, I shook my head no.

The interview lasted less than 10 minutes, most of which I cannot recall. My body wracked with sobs.

Next, I was escorted from the counselor's office to the infirmary and placed inside a plexiglass-fronted cell. They uncuffed me, then instructed me to remove every article of clothing. They wavered back and forth about whether or not I would be allowed to keep my glasses. The temperature control setting in the infirmary was 52 degrees, and I was now completely naked, shaking with cold, grief, and shame.

They handed me a paper gown and told me to stop crying. I was told that when I stopped crying, I would be released from Mental Health to go back to my clothing, back to my dorm.

I had to pee, and I asked for tissue. I was handed five squares.

I managed to stop crying in two days, but they kept me there for four. They wanted to make sure I was really done.

There is no one alive today who has not grieved and tried to heal. No age, gender, religion, or economic bracket is safe from the impacts of grief. Grief is universal.

Cooking in Lock-Up

Multi-Purpose Pie Crust
(makes 1 large or 2 small)

Ingedients
1 cup packed brown sugar
½ pack oatmeal cookies (12) crushed
10 packs Kosher graham crackers or 15 commissary graham crackers, crushed
1 tsp cinnamon
20-25 butters
2 tbs cooking oil, if available (2 orange spoons)

Instructions
Combine all dry ingredients in a large bowl. Mix well. Add remaining ingredients. Mix until forming clumpy mixture. Pack base of dish being used or roll out flat on foil bag and cook for 30 minutes. Let cool for 5 minutes. Add filling.

Banana Pudding

Ingedients
2 multi-purpose pie crusts
12 bananas, peeled and sliced
3 four packs of vanilla pudding (12 total)
2 bags vanilla wafers
cinnamon (to taste)
1 pack iced oatmeal cookies, crushed into chunks

Instructions
Place open a small garbage bag in a white wash tub. Place one large foil chip bag at bottom. Place crust in bucket atop foil chip bag. Cover evenly with layers of 1/3 of vanilla wafers, 4 puddings (spread evenly) and 4 bananas. Sprinkle cinnamon. Repeat twice more. Top with crushed iced oatmeal cookies. Tie garbage bag closed removing as much air as possible. Set out in cold for 2-4 hours before serving.

Love Lessons in a Time of Settler Colonialism

By Tanaya Winder

I am not murdered, and I am not missing, but parts of me have been disappeared.
—Leanne Simpson

They too know all too well that some cracks were built just for us to fall through. We live in a world that tries to steal spirits each day; they steal ours by taking us away.

From Industrial Schools to forced assimilation, genocide means removal of those who birth nations—our living threatens. Colonization has been choking

us for generations. I tell my girls they are vessels of spirit, air to lungs expanding; this world cannot breathe without us. There are days I wish

I didn't have to teach these lessons, but as an Indigenous womxn silence is deadening. There is danger in being seen, our bodies are targets

marked for violence. We carry the Earth's me too inside us, a howling wind, our mothers & their mothers swallowed these bullets long ago.

The voices ricochet I wish I were invisible I wish I were invisible I wish echoes in my eardrums—we know what it's like to live in fear. Colonialism's bullet sits cocked,

waiting behind a finger on trigger. We breathe and speak and sing for survival. We carve out in lines; we write—I know joy I know pain I know love

I know love I know—lessons we've carried throughout time. Should I go missing: don't stop searching; drag every river until it turns red and the waters of our names

stretch a flood so wide it catches everything. And we find each other whole and sacred, alive and breathing and breathing and breathing.

So what about those who lose someone while incarcerated? The millions of incarcerated people lose something every day: our agency, our identity, our ability to have children and procreate, our autonomy. We grieve daily losses of things that the free population takes for granted. These losses are felt differently and mourned differently. Do we experience grief? The answer is most assuredly yes. Can we grieve? The answer is most assuredly no.

A total institution, as described by sociologist Dalton Conley, "is an institution in which one is totally immersed, that controls all the basics of day-to-day life. An institution in which no barriers exist between the usual sphere of daily life… all activity occurs in the same place and under the same single authority." He says that the absence of barriers and having a "single authority" are the two factors that are of the greatest challenge when starting discourse about grief and those living in total institutions. For those living in places such as these, social control is of the utmost importance. Uniformity is the supreme law to enforce structure and control. To deviate from the uniform, the common, and compliantly downtrodden is to invite negative attention to oneself.

Walking single file is enforced so that those out of line are easier to spot and adjust. We wear uniforms in identical ways so the untucked do not remain unchecked. We walk and stand with our hands behind our back to reaffirm helplessness and subjectiveness. Faces forward, hair secured in a tight bun, silent, and conformed. Little remote-controlled robots of productivity, working 40 hours a week. Controllability is key. Imagine what grief does to this culture of social control!

Prison officials meet the threats that grief poses to security in a variety of fashions. Correctional officers are trained in militaristic control tactics. These tactics include but are not limited to pressure points, take-downs, shock shields, cell extractions, rubber bullet guns, both 7 percent and 10 percent pepper spray, physical intimidation using body pressure and a hodge-podge of other "training exercises." Though these tactics are used on people who are not trained, they are justified as a means of control.

In a total institution, natural grief behaviors are seen as threats to security. Crying uncontrollably is a threat. Wailing is a threat. The inability to "pull yourself together" is a threat.

Tears, swollen eyes, shaking hands, unkempt hair, and wrinkled clothing are often considered violations of the Georgia Department of Corrections Inmate Handbook (GDOC). That's because the handbook categories any "willful failure of an offender to keep his or her body, hair or clothes in as clean, sanitary, neat and odor-free condition as possible under the circumstances of his or her particular custody," as a violation of disciplinary code number G-1.

Mourning is not recognized by the GDOC, and the inability to control our emotional responses to grief is therefore characterized as "willful failures." These "willful failures" are criminalized.

More than that, normal avenues of extending compassion and support to those who are mourning are also interpreted as criminal acts. Hugging or any other prolonged physical contact may be treated as a HIGH-level infraction, for "participating in any sexual behavior or activity with any offender, male or female" or a GREAT-level infraction, for "offender-on-offender assault: any assault (injury or non-injury) that is not defined as serious." Staff blatantly—and enthusiastically—misread physical acts of compassion as sexual or violent in order to maintain "order" at all costs.

Nonphysical acts of compassion are also criminalized. Taking a mourner cooked food or other necessary supplies during their time of suffering is a common expression of community support. Unfortunately, when incarcerated, this show of support is termed "pasing". It is an illegal MODERATE level infraction: "receiving from or giving to another person, possession on one's person, in one's cell, immediate sleeping area, locker, or immediate place of work or assignment any goods, property or item of value to another offender without prior knowledge and approval of a staff member."

By penalizing both the givers and recipients of hugs and foodstuffs, the GDOC has criminalized shared community. The GDOC has made being a comforter as illegal as being the one in need of comfort.

An intended consequence of this is separation from community. According to the American Heritage Dictionary, to be incarcerated is to "[be] shut in; confined." As our bodies are shut in and confined, so too must our emotions.

A little over a decade after my grandmother passed, I began reforming a relationship with my mother. We talked every Saturday.

On one particular Saturday, the dorm is having a Valentine's Day dance-off. When she accepts the call, she tells me to sit down because she has horrible news. She has terrible news.

My sister, my Irish twin, has died by suicide. She put a gun to her 38-year-old head. She did not survive.

I clutch the phone so hard my knuckles are yellow-white. I stare out the window and command myself to pull it together. I command myself to keep my face, my hands, my heart under control. I command my heart to stop breaking. I command my mind to understand the necessity of looking OK. I direct my pulse to slow because if I do not control me, they will.

I stayed at the phone for a long time. Longer than the 20 minutes allowed. I could not breathe. I could not feel. My only thought

was “control it.” If I can’t, they will take me away again. Strip me again. Watch me again. Pull it together. Keep it together, under lock and key.

I went upstairs to my two-occupant cell and collapsed on the floor for about three minutes, forcing as much pain and rage into that three minutes as any mortal can. Then, I wiped my face, got up, and left my room to watch the Valentine’s Day dance-off.

For weeks only four people knew of my loss.

For some in mourning, time spent alone and undisturbed is the most vital asset in healing. Mourning is immensely personal and intimate. When my sister died, I knew my grief could not be registered as a public or social spectacle—otherwise, I would be placed in medical again. But, I also knew that quiet solitude is also against the rules and regulations of the GDOC.

No offender is permitted to lie down, dress down, or take their hair down from 0800 hrs until 1630 hrs. During those times, my person and my areas of living, sleeping, and working must be inspection ready. No exceptions. With no break, space, or moment of reprieve in order to tend to my throbbing heart, my grief had to be compressed into the smallest form possible. I had three minutes of space for my sister and no more.

To say I suffer from a broken heart is a misnomer. A break is such a clean thing. Shattered pieces that can be replaced, glued, adhered together to resemble the original. Hearts, however, are organs composed of striated muscle tissue. They are visceral. Hearts don’t break in prison; they’re shredded, torn tissue by tissue.

Being thrown into the unpredictable stages of grief does not make us combatants, it makes us human. And still, we are punished for it. Now these people are grieving twice: Once over for the initial cause and again under the punishment received for feeling grief in the first place. Trauma compounded by trauma, over and under. In this way, grief becomes a total institution.

To begin healing first requires the release of pure emotion, but pure emotion is volatile, uncontrollable, and therefore, must be subdued at all times and at all costs. So while healing is difficult for all of us, for those of us on the inside, it’s literally against regulations.

I have been incarcerated since 2002. I have lost people I knew from home. I have lost the created family I developed during my life on the inside. What sort of person could I possibly be when I am released?

At some point, policymakers within the DGOC must begin to fully understand that 95 percent of incarcerated individuals eventually return to society. What kind of society will be shared by all if these Americans are forcibly conditioned to be automatons who are emotionally numb for fear of state violence? Georgia has long abandoned its “rehabilitative” mission in place of a corrections model. I ask, what exactly are they correcting? My natural mourning responses have been conditioned out of me by both actions and threats of the state.

There seems to exist a belief that people who live in carceral settings deserve the treatments they receive because they, at one time, broke the law. Yes, it is wrong to break the law. However, is it not also wrong to victimize someone or ignore their victimization, using their past as justification? Incarceration reinforces victimization over and over again in an endless cycle of harm, suffering, and criminalization.

The inhumane policies enforced to control and punish incarcerated individuals do not leave room for hugs, comfort food, or even a moment of relative peace without demanding productivity on the job. These are small things that can, in theory, be changed—but these are great things to someone in the throes of mourning. These great small things can be foundational in restoring humane treatment of millions of incarcerated Americans.

Two weeks ago, my friend of several years was murdered here.

Ruby Evans was the Estelle Getty of Arrendale. With wild, curly, salt-and-pepper hair, Ruby had been down a little over a decade with a long way to go. When I wasn’t willing her to sit her ass down, I was admiring her strength to stand up for what is right.

When I was told that Ruby was beaten, had a stroke, and died, I looked up from the book I was reading. I nodded my head. I went back to my book.

Shrinking staff, rising violence: Problems have plagued proposed ‘Speedway Slammer’ for years
by Kristine Phillips
from IndyStar.com
Aug. 2025

Indiana is in line to play an increasingly pivotal role in President Donald Trump’s push for mass deportations, with multiple locations across the state, including the Miami Correctional Facility, poised to house thousands of undocumented immigrants.

So far, state and federal officials have shared very little about the partnership that would make Miami Correctional, a maximum-security prison 70 miles north of Indianapolis, one of the largest immigration detention centers in the Midwest.

The new partnership between the Indiana Department of Correction and the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement — along with separate agreements with four county jails and

the previously announced plan to use Camp Atterbury to house detainees — will turn Indiana into a regional detention hub for thousands of detainees from across the U.S. as they face deportation.

"We are proud to work with President Trump and Secretary Noem as they remove the worst of the worst with this innovative partnership," Gov. Mike Braun said in an Aug. 5 statement from the Department of Homeland Security on the agreement. "Indiana is taking a comprehensive and collaborative approach to combating illegal immigration and will continue to lead the way among states."

But immigrant rights advocates have raised significant concerns about detaining people with little or no criminal history in a prison meant for the most violent criminals. Although some detainees have been found guilty of crimes, the majority of people ICE has arrested nationwide either have not been convicted of crimes or are facing civil immigration violations, according to ICE's own data.

"This is a new frontier," said Jesse Franzblau, associate director of policy for the National Immigrant Justice Center. Franzblau called the use of the prison a "chilling" way to "maximize cruelty against immigrant communities."

"They're just setting the stage," he said, "for really dramatic rights abuses against people by placing them in a prison system."

Miami Correctional, which federal officials unabashedly dubbed the "Speedway Slammer," will house up to 1,000 undocumented immigrants as the Trump administration continues to ramp up arrests and expand detention spaces nationwide.

But a week after state officials announced the partnership, there are many questions about the undertaking, which could roughly double the population of a prison long plagued with understaffing issues, problems with violence and drug overdoses among inmates. Key among those unanswered questions: How will the facility handle the influx of new detainees with potentially significant language barriers? And where will the state find staff needed to deal with such a surge at the already understaffed prison?

Annie Goeller, chief communications officer for the IDOC, said details about the partnership are still being determined. Goeller said ICE detainees will be placed in an area separate from other prisoners at Miami Correctional, which can house up to about 3,100 men but has only been partially filled because of staffing issues.

No timeline has been set on when the arrangement will be finalized, or when ICE detainees will begin arriving.

What do we know about plans to house detainees at Miami prison?

State and federal officials have not said who will provide additional staffing or if there are plans to hire bilingual or multilingual employees.

While IDOC contractors, such as Centurion and Aramark, provide healthcare and meals to state prisoners, it's unclear if those companies will provide the same services to ICE detainees.

Immigration detainees are often transferred to other ICE facilities and court proceedings, but it's unclear who will provide those transportation needs.

Unlike jails, which are designed for short-term incarceration of people who have not been convicted of crimes, prisons like Miami have programs that allow inmates to obtain college degrees, receive vocational training and gain work experience. Prisons also have caseworkers and counselors who work with individual inmates. It's unclear if any of these will be available for ICE detainees who maybe held for an extended period of time.

How much it will all cost is also still unknown.

County jails that have contracts to house ICE detainees receive a per diem rate from the federal government. Marion County receives $75 for each immigration detainee per day, as well as for transportation and meal costs. Clay County, which has been housing ICE detainees for more than a decade, receives $85 for each detainee per day.

The cost of housing one prisoner at Miami Correctional is about $80 a day.

Goeller said a memorandum of agreement between IDOC and ICE is being developed, and "details about the partnership, including staffing, transportation, legal services and costs, are being determined." Goeller also said IDOC will follow legal requirements for housing and providing services to ICE detainees.

Braun said in a press release announcing several law enforcement agreements with the Trump administration that Indiana "will fully partner" with federal officials in enforcing immigration laws. Braun also told reporters in early August that his goal is for the state to be compensated by the federal government.

U.S. Rep. Andre Carson, a Democrat who represents much of Indianapolis in Congress, acknowledged the importance of cooperating with immigration officials, but said the crackdown has "unfairly targeted" people even for minor infractions.

"What is happening now is part of a larger message that stokes fears, anxiety and xenophobic sentiment," Carson said.

Franzblau, of the National Immigrant Justice Center, said the more concerning issue is what these partnerships mean "in this next era of immigration enforcement and abuses," in which immigrants — regardless of criminal history — are detained for longer periods of time.

What else do we know about Miami prison?
Miami Correctional, which sits on 200 acres of the former Grissom Air Force Base just north of Kokomo, has for years faced problems with violence.

Data from IDOC showed that violent incidents — including battery against an inmate, fighting between inmates and battery against officers — escalated before and during the pandemic. More than 400 incidents annually were logged in 2019, 2020 and 2021. There were nearly 300 in 2022. IndyStar does not yet have IDOC incident data from more recent years.

But 911 county call logs made from the facility suggest instances of violence and overdoses escalated over the last decade.

In 2015, there were only 18 calls from the prison, nearly all of which involved health-related issues. Last year, the calls were up to 278. During the first five months of this year, there were already 100 calls. In each of those years, about a third of the calls were labeled "stabbing," "overdose," "trauma" and "assault" in call logs.

As problems with violence grew, prison staffing has shrunk.

In 2015, the prison had 367 custody staff or correctional officers, according to state personnel data. This year, as more and more positions were left unfilled, that number has gone down to 288.

The facility has also faced allegations of mistreating prisoners.

The ACLU of Indiana has filed more than two dozen lawsuits on behalf of inmates who were placed in restrictive housing units at the prison. The lawsuits, which are pending, alleged that inmates were kept alone in dark cells for long periods of time and were taken out only to shower or for one-hour recreation periods a few times a week.

"Any maximum-security facility, designed to severely restrict the liberty (and) rights of prisoners, is an inappropriate place to hold people awaiting an immigration hearing or in response to an order for deportation," Chris Daley, the ACLU of Indiana's executive director, said in a statement. "And given the history of the treatment of prisoners at Miami Correctional, we are highly skeptical that the rights of any immigration detainees held there will be honored."

'ICE will fill those beds'
ICE has long relied on a large network of facilities to house immigration detainees. The majority are ICE processing centers, privately run detention facilities and county jails. But relying on large state prisons is a new feature of the second Trump administration, according to legal experts and immigrant rights advocates.

This is part of a move toward using facilities and military sites with large capacities, said Hannah Cartwright, an attorney and co-executive director of Mariposa Legal, a Indianapolis nonprofit that represents immigrants.

The Trump administration, for example, has signed contracts with the GEO Group to use the 1,800-bed North Lake Correctional Facility in Michigan and the 1,000-bed Delaney Hall Facility in New Jersey to house ICE detainees. A new temporary detention center in the Florida Everglades has been dubbed the "Alligator Alcatraz." The Trump administration also reportedly is in talks with Louisiana state officials to house ICE detainees at the Louisiana State Penitentiary, another maximum-security facility.

In Indiana, the Trump administration is also planning to use Camp Atterbury, a military training facility south of Indianapolis, to temporarily house up to 1,000 ICE detainees.

"When ICE obtains more bed capacity, whether a jail is built or expanded or a new agreement is made like Miami, ICE will fill those beds," said Cartwright of Mariposa Legal.

"The amount of ICE enforcement in Indiana is likely to continue to increase. Just imagine how much it's going to go up once they have 2,000 extra beds."

'Alligator Alcatraz' detainees on hunger strike for 10th day, protesting conditions
by Jamie Guirola
from NBCNews.com
Aug. 2025

A hunger strike at a South Florida immigration detention center state officials have named "Alligator Alcatraz" has entered its tenth day, as detainees protest what they call inhumane and dangerous living conditions.

One of the detainees, Pedro Hernández, was hospitalized during the strike but continues to refuse food. His wife, Daimarys Hernández, said she's terrified for his health and fears he could die in custody, or be deported back to Cuba, alone.

"My husband was in prison. We make mistakes, but we learn from them and fix things," she told NBC6.

Pedro Hernández, who came to the U.S. from Cuba in 2006, was detained in July during a routine check-in with ICE in Miramar. He hasn't been home since.

In a recorded phone call from inside the facility, he pleaded for

Plant Profile: Blackberry

The isolation of prison extends beyond separating humans; it also separates the imprisoned from most of the rest of the world, from nature, from animals, from plants, all things that are vital to our physical, emotional, and spiritual health. But for those who are allowed time out in the yard, there remain small opportunities for exploration and encounter. Here is a brief profile of a plant you may be able to find growing near you.

Common name: Blackberry
Myaamia name: makiinkweemina
Scientific name: *Rubus allegheniensis*
How to identify:
Blackberries grow from tall, arching, angular (not round), thorny stems called canes. Then can tend to grow together forming brambles or thickets in breaks in the tree canopy and disturbed areas. On the stems are palmately compound leaves. This means there are multiple (usually 5) leaflets coming from one central point, like fingers from a palm. There can be a reddish or purplish tint the stem. Blackberry flowers have 5 dainty white petals, a fluffy ring of stamens, and a green center. They bloom in late spring/early summer and the fruit ripens in July and early August. The fruit is not a true "berry" in the scientific sense. They are aggregate fruits; each little sphere is called a drupelet. The immature fruits are yellow or red and turn deep purplish blue to black when ripe.

There are many similar species of Rubus and they can even hybridize with each other. Raspberry can be distinguished because the leaflets are pinnate (feather-like) instead of palmate. This means that pairs of leaflets grow out of the stem in succession instead of all coming from one spot. Dewberry, another similar plant, is distinguished by smaller stems that trail along the ground instead of arching upwards. Also, a raspberry is hollow when pulled of the plant, whereas blackberries and dewberries are not. All the Rubus berries in Indiana are edible, though some are less palatable.

Encountering Blackberry:
The edible berries, when ripe, are both sweet and tart. Like most berries, they are cooling and high in antioxidants, something almost everyone needs more of in their diet! Wild types tend to have a less sweet taste but more of the beneficial constituents than domestic varieties.

A tea can also be made from the leaves. They also contain antioxidants. It is cooling and drying with astringent and anti-inflammatory actions. It also has anti-microbial properties. While its sibling the raspberry leaf is more commonly known in herbalism, the blackberry leaf has similar qualities and can be used in similar ways such as toning the uterus and bladder. Due to its astringency, we can think of it for all manner of leaking, lax tissue, weeping wounds, etc: toning the bladder, ulcers in the mouth, bleeding or inflamed gums, excessive menstruation such as spotting between periods, and loose stool. Blackberry is generally a very safe plant unless there is an allergy and may be eaten or taken frequently.

help:

“We’ve all been hungry since Tuesday. I’m not going to eat another plate of food until they show us respect,” Hernández said.

The hunger strike has prompted outrage from his wife and community members. On Thursday night, Democratic leaders held an emergency town hall in Coconut Grove demanding reform and accountability.

“Florida has struck an unholy bargain with the Trump administration,” one speaker said. “People are not getting food, hygiene, or medical care. These conditions are substandard and cause irreparable harm.”

Meanwhile in Washington, Florida Republican Sen. Rick Scott responded to questions about the facility by expressing appreciation for the president’s immigration policies, adding only that things should be handled in a humane way.

Civil rights groups as well as environmental groups have filed lawsuits over the state-run facility in the Florida Everglades. Civil rights groups allege detainees haven’t been allowed access to legal counsel, which the state denies.

ICE detainees tear down a wall in uprising at N.J. detention facility, lawyer says
by Steve Strunsky
from NJ.com
June 2025

About 50 immigrants being held at Delaney Hall, the ICE detention facility in Newark, banded together and pushed down the wall of a dormitory room when meals were hours late, a lawyer told NJ Advance Media.

Mustafa Cetin, an immigration lawyer who represents a detainee inside the private, contracted jail on Doremus Avenue, said his client told him that simmering dissatisfaction over the quality and timeliness of meals in the facility boiled over late Thursday afternoon.

“It’s about the food, and some of the detainees were getting aggressive and it turned violent,” Cetin said. “Based on what he told me it was an outer wall, not very strong, and they were able to push it down.”

Cetin said his client described the detainees being in a third-floor dormitory and also had bed sheets hung in an apparent escape attempt.He said his client told him he also smelled gas.

Cetin said his client told him he was not among those who pushed in the wall, and that he retreated to a different room in Delaney Hall to avoid any violence he feared might ensue after seeing the wall pushed in.

Christine Cuttita, a regional spokesperson for the Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency, known as ICE, declined to comment on the incident.

Essex County Sheriff Amir D. Jones said deputies responded to Delaney Hall following reports of a disturbance.

“When our officers arrived, the situation had already been resolved. At no point did our personnel enter the facility—we remained on the perimeter throughout,“ Jones said.

The sheriff pointed out While Delaney Hall is located in Essex County, it is a private facility that operates independently of the sheriff’s office.

“We are concerned about reports of what has transpired at Delaney Hall this evening, ranging from withholding food and poor treatment, to uprising and escaped detainees,” Newark Mayor Ras Baraka said in a statement. “This entire situation lacks sufficient oversight of every basic detail — including local zoning laws and fundamental constitutional rights.

Baraka was arrested at Delaney Hall last month after a confrontation while trying to join congress members on a tour of the facility, but the charges were later dropped.

“We demand immediate answers and clear communication with the GEO Group and the Department of Homeland Security,” Baraka said. “We must put an end to this chaos and not allow this operation to continue unchecked.”

Federal officials later filed felony assault charges against U.S. Rep. LaMonica McIver, a Democrat representing New Jersey’s 10th Congressional District, who was with Baraka in May when he was arrested. A federal grand jury indicted her on Wednesday.

Newark Department of Public Safety spokesperson Catherine Adams referred questions about the incident to ICE.

Outside Delaney Hall on Thursday evening, about three dozen people from groups that hold regular protests there, witnessed dozens of heavily armed authorities arrive at Delaney Hall at about 6 p.m.

The New Jersey Alliance for Immigrant Justice posted several photos and videos on their X account of the police activity, including officers gearing up in tactical combat gear.

Whitney Strub, a Rutgers University-Newark history professor and member of the Democratic Socialists of America, showed pictures of several vehicles from the Essex County Sheriff’s Office and Newark Police positioned in front of Delaney Hall’s

main gate.

Sometime around 6 p.m., Strub said he and other protesters inhaled what they thought was “some kind of gas” that had wafted over them. “We were all coughing at the same time,” Strub said.

Just after 9 p.m., a crowd of about 40 protesters blocked an SUV from exiting an ancillary gate at Delaney Hall, forcing it to back up back through the gate, which then closed, an NJ Advance Media reporter witnessed.

Protesters block an SUV from exiting an ancillary gate at Delaney Hall

Black August Part 1: Origins, Struggles, and Revolutionary Discipline
from The Dugout Podcast
Aug. 2025

Black August is much more than a month on the calendar. It is a revolutionary tradition born inside the walls of California prisons during the 1970s, a disciplined time to honor Black freedom fighters who resisted centuries of oppression and state violence. It is a call to study, fast, train, and fight — a framework for collective struggle and individual commitment.

The Roots of Black August
Black August commemorates key moments in Black resistance starting with the first enslaved Africans brought to English North America in August 1619, and later, pivotal rebellions like Nat Turner’s in 1831. The month gained new radical meaning with the prison struggles of the 1960s and ’70s. At the center was George Jackson, a Black Panther and prison organizer whose life and death embodied the fight against the racist prison-industrial complex.

George Jackson was sentenced at 19 to “1-to-life,” spending over a decade in brutal prison conditions, much of it in solitary confinement. He transformed from a politically unaware young man into a leading revolutionary thinker, influenced by Marx, Fanon, Mao, and others. Alongside comrades like W.L. Nolen, he organized prisoners around education and self-defense, founding the San Quentin chapter of the Black Panther Party.

The violent repression of these organizers culminated in the 1970 murder of Nolen by guards, and the framing of Jackson and others in retaliatory killings — events that sparked Jonathan Jackson’s armed courthouse uprising. George Jackson’s assassination on August 21, 1971, under suspicious circumstances, became a rallying point for prisoners and activists.

Black August began in 1979 to honor these struggles and to continue the fight for political prisoners’ freedom and prison abolition.

Key Figures to Know
George Jackson
George Lester Jackson (1941–1971) was a Black revolutionary prison organizer and author. Sentenced at 19 to a life term for armed robbery, Jackson spent much of his incarceration in solitary confinement. During this time, he became a leading figure in the Black Panther Party’s prison chapter and an influential Marxist and anti-imperialist thinker. His letters and essays were collected in Soledad Brother: The Prison Letters of George Jackson (1970) and Blood in My Eye (published posthumously in 1972). Jackson’s political work highlighted the systemic violence of the prison-industrial complex and inspired widespread prison activism. He was killed in a controversial 1971 incident at San Quentin Prison, widely regarded as a political assassination.
Sources: *Soledad Brother* by George Jackson (1970)

Jonathan Jackson
Jonathan P. Jackson (1953–1970) was George Jackson’s younger brother. At just 17 years old, he led an armed attack on the Marin County Courthouse in California in August 1970. Jonathan attempted to free his brother and other Soledad Brothers (George Jackson, Fleeta Drumgo, and John Clutchette) by taking hostages, including the judge, jury, and prosecutor. The event ended in a shootout, leaving Jonathan Jackson, two inmates, and a judge dead. Jonathan’s action was one of the most dramatic episodes of radical prisoner solidarity and youth revolutionary militancy in U.S. history.
Sources: The Trial of the Soledad Brothers by James V. Bennett (1971) & *Blood in My Eye* by George Jackson

W.L. Nolen
W.L. Nolen (William Lee Nolen) was a Black prisoner and mentor to George Jackson, instrumental in politicizing Jackson and others within California’s prison system. Nolen co-founded the Black Guerrilla Family (BGF), a prison-based Marxist and Black liberation organization. He was a vocal critic of prison brutality and racism. In 1970, Nolen was killed by a prison guard at Soledad Prison under suspicious circumstances, an

Yoga for a Good Night's Sleep

1

Shoulder release
Lie with a tightly rolled towel placed under your head and upper spine. Stay 5 mins.

2

Supported back bend
Lie with folder towel placed under your upper back. Stay 5 mins.

3

Flowing twist (a)
Lie on side with knees tucked and arms straight out in front.

4

Flowing twist (b)
Slide top hand over chest to open out arms and upper body. Return hands together. Repeat x5.

5

Supported arm circles (a)
Lying on side, sweep top arm in large circles above head and around body. Repeat x5 in one direction.

6

Supported arm circles (b)
Repeat arm circles in the other direction x5.

7

Side rock
Lying on side, gently rock by pressing a hand against the ground.

8

Seated forward bend (a)
Sit on ground with bent knees supported by pillow(s), then rock forwards.

9

Seated forward bend (b)
Place more pillows or folded towel or clothes on lap to support your upper body. Rest for 5 mins.

10

Table top
Press into hands and feet to lift body away from the ground. Stay 5 breaths.

11

Floating egg
Sitting, hug knees into chest, lift feet off floor, closing eyes if comfortable. Stay 5 breaths.

12

Legs up rest
Lie on your back with lower legs supported by chair or bed. Rest for 5 mins.

Tips:

- For shoulder release, rolled towel goes no lower than the bottom of your shoulder blades
- For supported back bend, head and tops of shoulders are on ground above the folded towel
- When lying on side, place pillow under head for comfort
- When circling arm, let its weight rest into the ground
- For table top, head can stay lifted or rest back
- At the end, roll gently onto your side before sitting up again

adapted from the Prison Phoenix Trust

event that helped galvanize prisoner protests and political organizing. His death directly influenced the radicalization of George Jackson and the wider Soledad Brothers case.
Sources: *Soledad Brother* by George Jackson, The Black Guerrilla Family's historical records, Liberation School resources

Ruchell Magee
Ruchell Cinque Magee (born 1939) is one of the longest-held political prisoners in the United States. A survivor of the 1970 Marin County Courthouse incident led by Jonathan Jackson, Magee was shot, arrested, and sentenced to life imprisonment. Magee's case highlights systemic abuses of Black political prisoners, including unfair trials and harsh sentencing. He spent over 50 years incarcerated before being released on parole in 2023. Throughout his imprisonment, Magee was an outspoken advocate for prisoner rights and abolition.
Sources: The New York Times (2023) on Magee's release, The Guardian coverage of political prisoners, & Liberation School documentation

Assata Shakur
Joanne Deborah Byron, known as Assata Shakur (born 1947), is a former member of the Black Panther Party and Black Liberation Army. She was convicted of several charges in connection with a 1973 shootout but maintains her innocence, asserting she was targeted for her political activism. Shakur escaped from prison in 1979 and was granted asylum in Cuba, where she lives today. She is a global symbol of Black resistance, revolutionary struggle, and the fight against state repression. The FBI has classified her as a domestic terrorist, making her one of the most wanted fugitives in U.S. history.
Sources: *Assata: An Autobiography* by Assata Shakur (1987), FBI wanted poster archives, & *The Black Panther Party: Service to the People* by Alondra Nelson

Angela Davis
Angela Yvonne Davis (born 1944) is a scholar, activist, and author who has been central to prison abolition and Black liberation movements since the 1960s. Davis was a member of the Communist Party USA and associated with the Black Panther Party. Arrested in 1970 and charged with aiding an armed takeover, she became an international symbol of resistance during her trial and was acquitted in 1972. Davis's work popularized the concept of political prisoners in the U.S. and has been foundational in theorizing the prison-industrial complex and abolitionist praxis.
Sources: *Angela Davis: An Autobiography* (1974)

What Black August Means Today
Black August remains a time to remember that Black liberation is a fight, not a celebration. It reminds us that freedom requires discipline—physical, mental, and political—and that the struggle against the prison-industrial complex and white supremacy is ongoing. Observers commit to fasting, study, training, and direct action as a way to honor those who came before and build power for those still inside and outside prison walls.

"If you don't stand for something, you'll fall for anything": a warning to other prisoners
by Chawknee Prince Fairchaild Caruthers

It is incumbent upon me to bring awareness to a situation that is currently happening to convicts all across our nation,

At the lowest point of our lives, we are being taken advantage of by people that are allegedly there to help us (convicts) out of our current place in life. The United Appellate Group (U.A.G.), based out of Texas and California and advertised through the Prison Legal News and Criminal Legal News has stolen money from several convicts that I personally know, as well as myself. One brother sent $10,000, another brother sent $9,000. I sent $7,000 from my account with the promise of helping me to prepare my post-conviction relief appeal. To no avail. These people stopped answering the phone in Texas and California.

The scam that these people are perpetuating is happening all across this country wit the help of the P.L.N. and C.L.N. This missive is to let individuals who are incarcerated become aware and more vigilant in their vetting process for legal representation. "Just because they say they're for you, doesn't make it true."

Prison Is Designed to Make Fatherhood Impossible
by Robert Willis
from Truthout.org

In the movies, people bolt upright, panting after dramatic awakenings from bad dreams. I thought that was an exaggeration until I experienced it behind bars. In my nightmare, my 2-year-old son entered the prison where I was incarcerated. He was trying to reach me, but the prison guards grabbed him and wouldn't let go. I jolted awake in my prison cell, just like I'd seen on screen hundreds of times, breathing hard and filled with terror.

I've never felt more fear, helplessness, or despair than when I was separated from my son, unable to protect him from harm because I was locked up in prison.

This Father's Day, I'm thinking of the millions of fathers across the country who are living the same nightmare that I did. Nearly half of all men in prison are fathers of minors, and not a day went by when we didn't talk to each other about our kids.

We know that family connections are essential for children's health and development, but they're also essential to the well-being of incarcerated parents. However, federal and state

prisons put many barriers in the way of maintaining family relationships. From constructing prisons in hard-to-reach areas that make it difficult for families to visit, to charging exorbitant fees for phone calls, to inhumanely long prison sentences even for nonviolent offenses, the U.S. carceral system seems designed to break up families.

If we look at our criminal legal system through the lens of outcomes, the results are damning. Prison pushes families into deeper poverty, steals away parents from Black and Brown communities, and traumatizes children. It tortures the people it incarcerates by locking them in cages, isolating them through solitary confinement and lockdowns, and subjecting them to often unchecked physical violence by prison guards.

When I had that nightmare in prison, my son was only a toddler. He didn't understand why daddy was away. During our phone calls, I would tell him I was in a special school, studying to become Superman. But the second time I was incarcerated my son was at a particularly vulnerable age, just entering middle school. And it had a big impact on him — and on me.

My son was just one of the staggering 2.7 million children in the U.S. with at least one parent in prison. According to a study by the Pew Research Center, Black children are over six times more likely and Hispanic children nearly twice as likely to have an incarcerated parent than their white peers.

Without me there, my son started acting out. His grades dropped. He became a more rambunctious kid — and I knew better than anyone that neither the South Bronx, Harlem, nor anywhere else in the U.S. is a safe place to be rambunctious if you're a Black child.

Numerous studies have found correlations between parental incarceration and criminalized behavior, poor academic performance, and social and emotional problems in children. Prison punishes and traumatizes children just as much as their parents behind bars.

My second arrest was in California, more than 3,000 miles from my son, which made it impossible for him to visit. I didn't see him for three and a half years. When I started my sentence, my son was still a child. When I came home, he had become a teenager and was almost 15 years old.

When he was 11, my son loved spending time with me. At 15, he wanted to hang out with his friends. None of the things I did to try to connect with him seemed to work. It was demoralizing and I felt like a failure as a father.

When he got into trouble or got a bad grade, I blamed myself. What got me sent to prison was being too concerned about maintaining a comfortable lifestyle for my family, so I gambled with my freedom. It didn't occur to me then that my son would have been happier living under the Brooklyn Bridge with me by his side than financially stable with me separated from him.

After prison, it took us almost eight years, until my son was around 24 years old, to get our rhythm back.

I've dedicated my life to transforming this unfair system that mostly serves the interest of wealthy people, where the rich can pay for extravagant, high-powered legal defenses and even buy presidential pardons, and where Black and Brown men are more likely to end up in prison and get handed longer prison sentences for the same crimes.

Improving and maintaining family connections is a key step towards rehabilitation and justice.

One study found that people incarcerated more than 50 miles from home were more likely to experience depression, but 70 percent of the over 1,000 new prisons built from 1970 to 2000 are in rural areas. As long as the state is putting people in cages and separating them from their families, prisons should offer free transportation to family-friendly visitation centers and enact policies that make it easier for families to visit their incarcerated loved ones.

One thing people rarely talk about is the cost of having a family member in prison. I have two incarcerated nephews and I send each of them $50 a month. That's just for commissary so these young men get enough food to eat, and a bare minimum of comfort. Phone calls cost even more. We need to expand free calls to all prisons and jails nationally.

As a father, I am proud to be a part of LatinoJustice PRLDEF, where we work to advance the principles of prison abolition by confronting the systems that criminalize, incarcerate, and surveil Black and Brown communities. While we view abolition as a long-term goal, we fight for immediate reforms that shrink the reach and power of the carceral system. Our advocacy for decarceration and sentencing reform includes strong support for transformative legislation like the Second Look Act, Earned Time Act, Ending Mandatory Minimums, and parole reform — efforts aimed at reuniting families sooner rather than later. We also challenge systems of surveillance and criminalization, including leading efforts to eliminate the NYPD gang database, a tool that drives incarceration and breaks apart families. Ultimately, we are working toward a future built on care for incarcerated parents — not punishment that devastates entire communities.

The United States has more people locked up in prison than any other country in the world. Keeping nearly 2 million people behind bars hasn't made our streets safer or our world more just. It has only broken up families. We need to fight for a society that provides the means of life to everyone, not one that punishes people struggling with precarity and deprivation.

I wrote my son a letter from prison at least every other day

throughout my entire sentence. My son was the first person I thought of when I woke up in the morning and the last person I thought of before falling asleep at night.

I never stopped being a father. But it shouldn't have been so hard — for me or anyone else who is incarcerated. On Father's Day, let's work toward a world that brings families together rather than tears them apart.

Supreme Court Sides with Incarcerated Plaintiffs in Prison Abuse Case
by Juan Lasso
from DavisVanguard.org
June 2025

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled Wednesday that incarcerated people have a right to a jury trial when they are accused of failing to file a prison grievance but claim they were prevented from doing so.

In a narrow 5–4 decision in Perttu v. Richards, the Court held that when access to the grievance process is entangled with allegations of abuse or retaliation, it is a jury—not a judge—that must determine the facts.

The case was brought by Kyle Richards and two other men incarcerated at Michigan's Baraga Correctional Facility. They allege that corrections officer Thomas Perttu sexually abused them and then destroyed their grievance forms in an attempt to silence them—effectively cutting off their only official avenue for reporting the abuse.

After being denied access to the prison grievance system and without legal representation, the men filed a federal lawsuit. In a handwritten complaint submitted in 2020, they described the filing as a "last resort" to stop "a vicious sexual predator from continuing his preying on vulnerable, helpless inmates." They also claimed they faced threats and retaliation for speaking out.

A district court initially dismissed the case, citing the Prison Litigation Reform Act (PLRA) of 1996, which requires incarcerated plaintiffs to exhaust all internal grievance procedures before pursuing lawsuits in federal court. The PLRA was designed to reduce frivolous litigation by encouraging the use of administrative remedies.

But on Wednesday, the Supreme Court reversed the dismissal.

Chief Justice John Roberts, writing for the majority, emphasized that exhaustion under the PLRA is an affirmative defense governed by standard civil procedure rules. If the dispute over exhaustion is intertwined with the facts of the abuse claim, Roberts wrote, it must go to a jury.

"Parties are entitled to a jury trial on PLRA exhaustion when that issue is intertwined with the merits of a claim protected by the Seventh Amendment," Roberts wrote. He was joined by Justices Neil Gorsuch, Elena Kagan, Ketanji Brown Jackson, and Sonia Sotomayor.

Civil rights advocates hailed the decision as a major step toward restoring access to justice for incarcerated people, who they argue are often denied a fair hearing due to procedural hurdles.

"Too often, courts accept the word of prison officials over incarcerated plaintiffs before the facts are fully heard," said Jennifer Wedekind, senior staff attorney with the ACLU's National Prison Project. "This ruling will ensure that more incarcerated plaintiffs finally get their day in front of a jury."

The ACLU, along with the ACLU of Michigan, Public Justice, and the Legal Aid Society of New York, filed an amicus brief in support of Richards and his co-plaintiffs. The brief argued that access to the courts is a constitutional right—not a technicality—and that denying jury trials in such cases undermines due process protections.

In their brief, the ACLU also rebutted arguments from the state of Michigan that jury trials in these cases would lead to a flood of litigation. They pointed out that only a small fraction of PLRA cases involve genuine factual disputes over exhaustion and noted that courts already have the authority to dismiss meritless claims.

The brief also asserted that the state's concerns were unsupported by empirical evidence and emphasized that constitutional rights should not be sacrificed for the sake of judicial efficiency.

The ruling resolves a split among lower courts. Several circuits, including the Tenth, have allowed judges to decide exhaustion issues even when the facts are disputed. The Supreme Court sided with the Second, Fifth, Sixth, and Seventh Circuits, which allow juries to weigh in when allegations of abuse or retaliation are closely tied to claims of grievance exhaustion.

In dissent, Justice Amy Coney Barrett—joined by Justices Clarence Thomas, Samuel Alito, and Brett Kavanaugh—argued that the majority had interpreted the PLRA too broadly. Barrett wrote that Congress did not explicitly grant incarcerated plaintiffs a right to a jury trial on exhaustion questions. The majority rejected that argument.

Cecillia Wang, national legal director of the ACLU, said the decision sends a clear message about the importance of accountability in prisons.

"Today's decision is important for the rights of incarcerated people, who too often are blocked from having their day in court after prison officers first violate their rights—and then take steps to silence them," Wang said in a statement. "The Perttu decision is a broader victory for due process and our

fundamental constitutional principle that no one is above the law."

Dreaming until we wake
from Southern California Francisco Torres Party

To bandida,

It has been more than a month since Los Angeles - the city of inmates - showed us a way out of this prison society that doesn't relent.

More than a month since Los Angeles showed us how to confront ICE, the police, and the creeping border regime.

A border that is neither Wall nor 100-mile zone, but delocalised terror, colonial kidnappings, and ever-expanding empire.

Don't get shit fucked up: June 8th was not only a how-to on fighting border imperialism, it was much more. It was inspired militancy in the face of terror. Life struggling against death.

On June 8th, the people of LA pulled the curtain on reality and revealed possibility. It was imagination ignited. There is no denying this.

The underground surfaced and poured into the streets, the freeways, the plazaz.

Everywhere, you saw the raza – the people- rising. Everywhere, you saw the metropole seized. Every wall, fence, and facade was graffitied over. Scrawled over. A thousand times over.

Everywhere you heard laughter. Everywhere you felt insurgent joy. The people were in control and the authorities struggled to tame us.

This is why the national guard was mobilized.

The political demagogues described Los Angeles on June 8th as civil unrest when it was, in fact, revolt against all things civil.

June 8th was not your average protest. The youth did not dominate. Instead, it was a generational convergence, from chamacos to mayores. It was a cultural watershed, from bike crews, graffiti vandals, cholos, paisas, veteranos, radicals, the homeless, to couples holding each other close.

It was every cross section of the raza: brown, black, white – everyone.

While anti-ICE sentiment was the spark, June 8th was not guided by one ideological torch. There were no political brands, no affiliations, no bullshit. It was simply us, the people, running on our own power. A revolutionary fire that spread indiscriminately with no regard for the established. In few words, hartazgo social.

When we arrived, hundreds crowded above the 101 Freeway. They hugged the railing near the Courthouse and looked down below. Many waved their colors proudly, the flags of Latin America.

Peering down into the 101 was like peering into a cenote. A formation beautifully surreal. But instead of water, we saw police cruisers pelted by everything under the sun. Their red and blue lights glimmered under the debris.

All things were weaponized against the cruisers. Rebels tossed broken pavement, lime scooters, flaming cardboard, and cuete after cuete. The crowd's laughter was punctuated by firework blasts. The raza heckled the pigs with each successful strike on the vehicles. One older vato cloaked with a Mexican flag screamed "Que viva Mexico, cabrones!" Meanwhile, a formation of cops cowered under the N Main St overpass. One held a fire extinguisher in hand. At times the cruiser most targeted caught fire. Each time it did, the people would roar in celebration. Then the pigs would put it out. And the rebels would start the cycle of conspiracy all over again. It was an incendiary tug-of-war.

Meanwhile, the streets overflowed with autonomous energy. Youngsters on SE bicycles popped wheelies. Taggers hit up every square inch of nearby buildings with FUCK ICE graffiti.

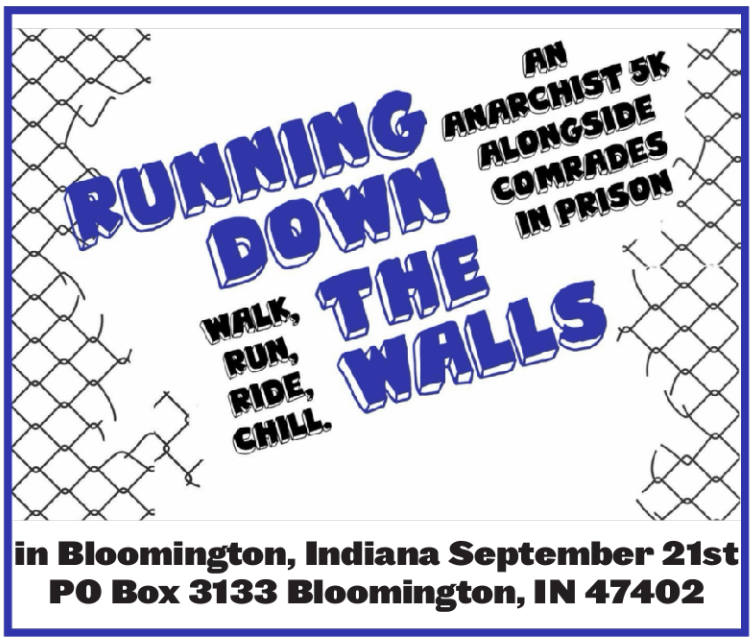
It was graffiti of pure negation. They tagged everything with no cultural reservations: LA Plaza de Cultura y Arte, Pico House, and surrounding Mexican businesses. The graffiti transcended national considerations. Far more important was the rejection of ICE. Some foos handed out free masks. Motorcycles burned rubber on the sidewalks. Paisanos bumped corridos. More fireworks exploded.

Prism Break

solidarity with queer and trans prisoners in Indiana

Get in touch:

P.O. Box 3133
Bloomington, IN
47402

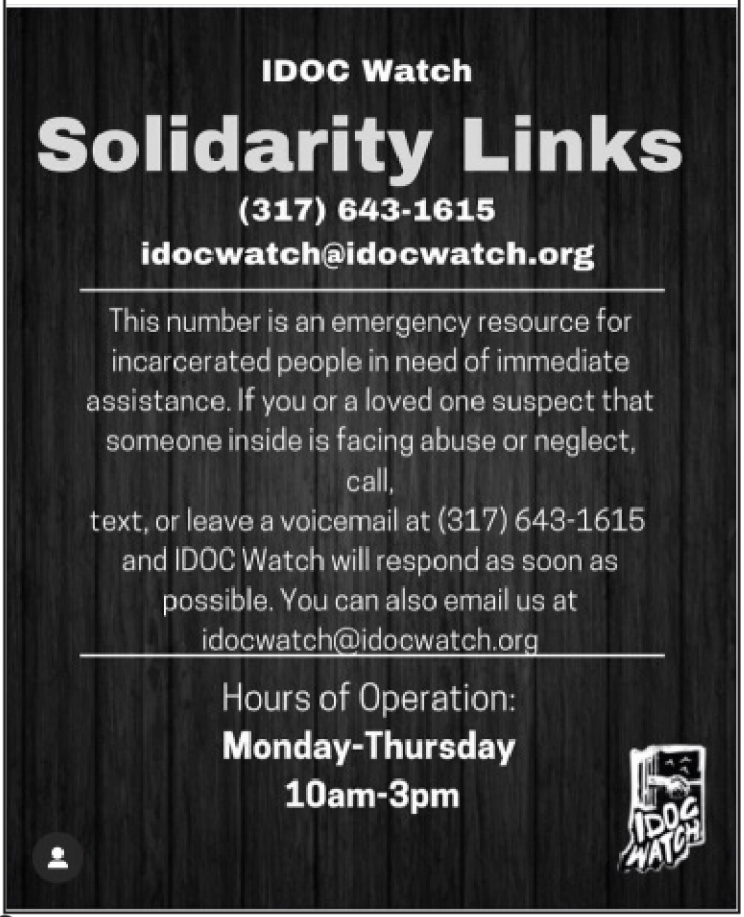


Are you or someone you know currently or formerly a part of the **prison labor program at one of the Indiana State Tree Nurseries?**

We want to hear from you!

We want to hear your experience with the program and potentially connect you with projects that are using the trees you grew. Reach out to us at the mailing address on the back of this paper.

Solidarity Links is a new alert system for abuses in the Indiana Department of Correction and Indiana county jails. Call during the hours listed, or send a voicemail, text, DM, or email with reports of abuse or neglect! We will get back to you ASAP and devise a plan to address the issue!



Physical Health

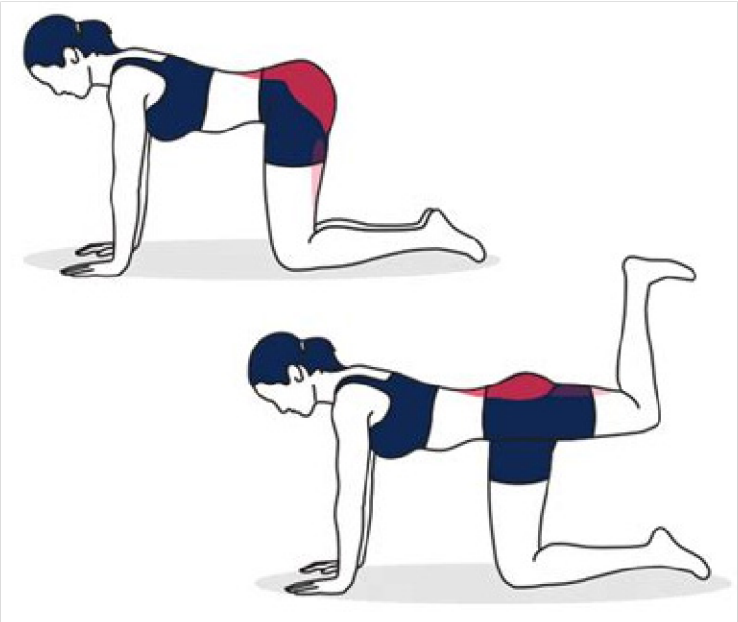
Welcome to the exercise portion of the issue! It's likely many of you have developed routines for increasing or maintaining fitness inside, but for those who are looking to build up your practice or learn new work-outs, we aim to provide some options here. We would love to hear requests for content, should you be curious about increasing strength and flexibility, or making sure you're doing a move correctly-let us know what you'd like to see.

Donkey Kicks!

Donkey Kicks work to strengthen both the gluteus maximus and gluteus medius.

Assume the starting position on all fours: knees hip-width apart, hands under your shoulders, neck and spine neutral.

1. Bracing your core, begin to lift your right leg, knee staying bent, foot staying flat, and hinging at the hip.
2. Activate your glute to drive your foot directly toward the ceiling and squeeze at the top. Ensure your pelvis and working hip stay pointed toward the ground.
3. Return to the starting position.
4. Complete 20 reps on each leg for 4-5 sets. Increase reps or sets as these become too easy.



Writing to Prisoners

Since prisoners are often transferred between facilities, we won't print addresses that can quickly become outdated. Instead, we'll direct you to the Indiana DOC "Offender Database" on their website. You can look up their current location with their DOC# (listed on Table of Contents). We use the number because the names they use are often not the state name that the DOC lists them under. And then look up the mailing address for that facility. Correspondence and engagement with what they've written here is welcome.

Some tips for writing to prisoners: Be clear about your intentions. Share something of yourself and also be curious to learn more about them. If you're not sure where to start, reference ideas they have written about. Don't say anything sketchy or incriminating for yourself or others. Assume that everything you write is being copied and read by prison administrators. Use only blue or black ink on white, lined paper in plain, white envelopes. Keep in mind that prison is, in many ways, the epitome of toxic masculinity and saturated with problematic and harmful ideas and social norms. Prisoners often will not have the latest language or frameworks for social justice. Be generous and seek to understand their different experiences, but also don't be afraid to engage and share your own experiences. Be mindful of power disparities between people who are incarcerated and those who aren't.

If you prefer to correspond online, you can set up an account at web.connectnetwork.com

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