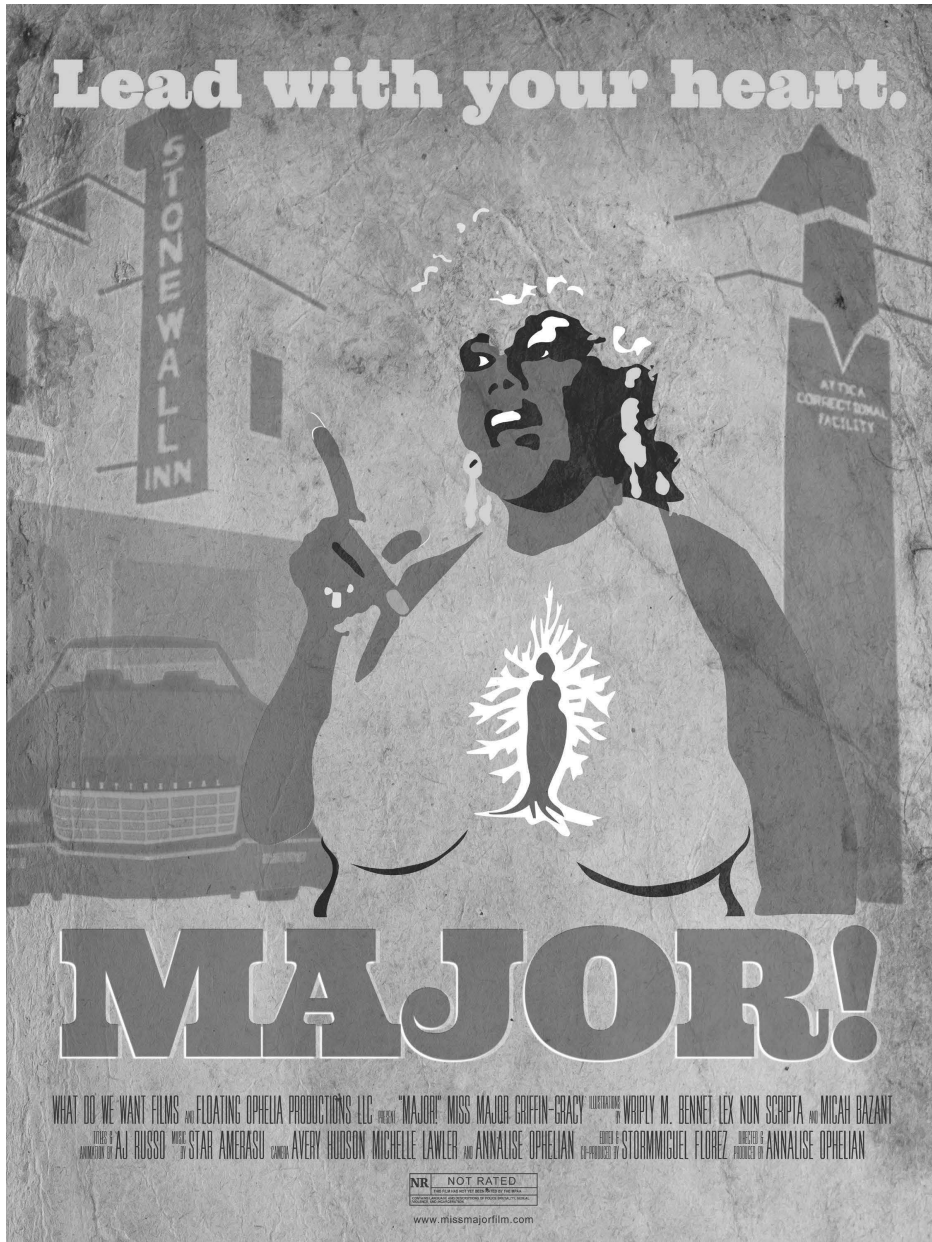


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MAJOR!

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EDITED BY AJ RUSSO MUSIC BY STAR AMERASU COSTUME DESIGNER AVERY HUDSON MICHELLE LAWLER AND ANNALISE OPHELIAN EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS STORMMIGUEL FLOREZ PRODUCED BY ANNALISE OPHELIAN

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TRANSGENDER
GENDER-VARIANT
& INTERSEX
JUSTICE PROJECT

Stiletto

DECEMBER 2015 | VOLUME 8 | ISSUE 2



Passing the Torch



TRANSGENDER GENDER-VARIANT & INTERSEX JUSTICE PROJECT

TGI Justice Project is a group of transgender, gender variant and intersex people—inside and outside of prison—creating a united family in the struggle for survival and freedom. We work in collaboration with others to forge a culture of resistance and resilience to strengthen us for the fight against imprisonment, police violence, racism, poverty, and societal pressures. We seek to create a world rooted in self-determination, freedom of expression, and gender justice.

Janetta Johnson, Executive Director
Woods Ervin, Administrative Director
danni marilyn west, Development Director
KellyLou Densmore, Esq, Staff Attorney
Tainay Pulphus, Re-Entry Coordinator
Eva Alexander, Re-Entry Specialist
Alejandra Cruz, Mail Night Coordinator
Peaches Banks, Leadership Team
StormMiguel Florez, Leadership Team
Malachi Garza, Leadership Team
Billy Chen, Leadership Team
Paper Buck, Leadership Team
Kris Hayashi, Leadership Team

New Postal Address:

370 Turk St PMB #370
San Francisco, CA 94102

info@tgijp.org



I want to thank you all for working with me and being part of the transitions and changes we've gone through at TGJIP over the years. And I want to assure you that while I'm stepping down as Executive Director, my mouth is not stepping down and I will continue to bitch and let people know what my community is going through. It's difficult living in our truth, but what better way to survive? It's important that we survive; we've got to come out on top. Please continue to support and back up Janetta for taking on the responsibility of taking TGJIP into the next phase. Wish her well and help her prosper. Be safe and stay strong.
- Miss Major Griffin-Gracy

I remember it as if it was yesterday: I was having a few conversations with Miss Major and describing to her my struggles and disenfranchisement and disparities that I felt that I was facing living in Florida. I asked her if she would be willing to help if I moved to San Francisco to create a better quality of living and she said "Sure baby, no problem. I'll see you when you get here." I think she was really surprised when I showed up 2 weeks later at her work.

She's been my mother and friend; she's been my sister as well as my mentor; and she taught me how to advocate for myself and to live my truths. I'm just so eternally grateful because today I know how to fight because Miss Major taught me how to fight for me and my community and other underserved populations. She has always expressed to me that when she retires from TGI Justice Project that she wanted me to be the Executive Director. I feel very honored to accept the position and I will treat her baby TGJIP with the same love that I watched her handle it with. It's like walking in her shoes, which I will never fit, but then again, I literally have worn her shoes before. I'm looking forward to accepting the position as Executive Director.

- Janetta Johnson



ALLY UPDATES (CONTINUED)

Hearts on a Wire

Check it out! New commissary policies in PA prisons!

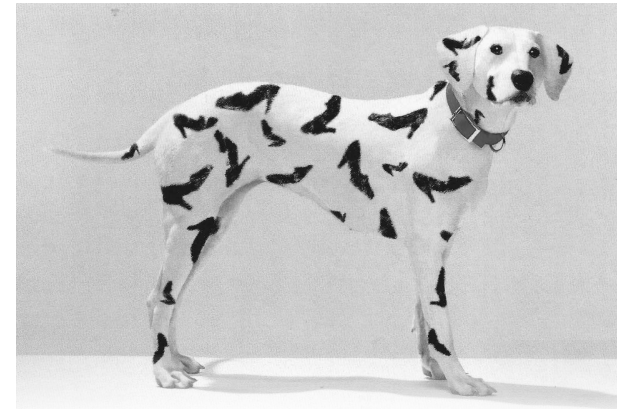
Hearts on a Wire welcomes the announcement of the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections that it has revised its policies with regard to the housing and resources available to people in Pennsylvania state prisons who identify as transgender. As of June 30, 2015, new commissary lists are available to transgender people that offer gender-specific items that were previously viewed as contraband, including undergarments and cosmetics. The prohibition on gender-specific items has been an issue of serious concern to Hearts on a Wire members. The outside collective gathered hundreds of signatures in support of a revised policy over the past several years, while our members on the inside have fought back against this policy through their own advocacy. In the words of our member Najee Gibson, "If they were worried about our safety, they would help us stay healthy, not worry about how we express ourselves." We are glad to know that these voices have been heard!

The new policies also make several changes that should improve the treatment of intersex, trans and gender variant people in prison. On a case-by-case basis, the new rules allow people

to be placed in housing that is more appropriate for their gender identity and instructs prison staff to give "serious consideration" to people's views as to their housing preferences. The rules also state that housing should be re-assessed every 6 months, that all transgender and intersex people should be allowed to shower privately and that staff must treat LGBTGNCL people respectfully. These policies go into effect on September 21, 2015.

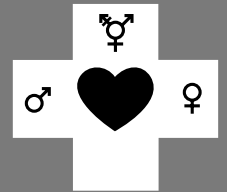
While we congratulate our members on this victory, Hearts on a Wire reaffirms our commitment to end the policing and imprisonment of trans and gender variant communities. We know that the liberation of our communities will not arrive through policy, but through our collective empowerment. As our member Adrian Lowe explains, "We need to find new ways to address harm in our communities. In the mean time, we need to support people facing these impossible decisions inside, between privacy and safety, identity and survival. If we can improve the quality of people's lives at all, I think we're doing important work." We welcome changes that lessen the struggle of our members' day-to-day lives while we continue to fight for an end to the conditions that make these rules necessary.

In solidarity,
Hearts on a Wire



TGJIP is working on building our grassroots re-entry program, especially in the SF Bay Area, so if you or another TGI person you know is being released soon, be in touch and connect with us before and after you come home. Be safe and stay strong!

St. James Infirmary



The St. James Infirmary is a peer-based health & safety clinic for current and former sex workers and their current primary partners. Since 1999 we've been offering services like primary medical care, mental health care, massage and acupuncture, support groups, harm reduction services, and hormone replacement therapy by and for the trans community. All of our services are confidential, non-judgmental and free to the sex worker community. We have shared office space with TGJIP since the spring of 2014. It has been amazing to share community with an organization so dedicated and driven towards justice and liberation. Since TGJIP moved in with us, we've had some great opportunities to collaborate on political projects, to support each other's work, and to coordinate our services to the maximum benefit of our community. Between the legal and social support offered by TGJIP and the physical and mental health services of the SJI, there's a lot happening by and for the trans community in our shared space. If there's any information about our services we can send you, let us know! And if you're coming home to the Bay Area, stop by and check us out. We'd love to meet you!

ALLY UPDATES

BreakOUT!

BreakOUT! was founded in 2011 by a small group of LGBTQ youth of color in response to discriminatory policing in New Orleans. BreakOUT! has since grown to a powerful youth-led, membership-based organization of queer and trans youth directly impacted by the criminal justice system, as we believe that those most directly impacted by discriminatory systems must lead the efforts to transform them. BreakOUT! works to end the criminalization of LGBTQ youth by confronting unfairness in the legal system, youth homelessness, school push-out, and many other issues and is building the power of LGBTQ youth to build a safer city for all New Orleanians.

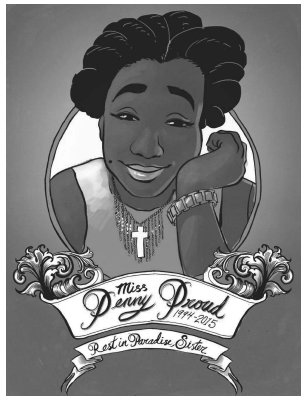


Illustration by Erin Wilson for BreakOUT

Trans women of color suffer violence at one of the highest rates in the nation, yet their stories often go unreported in the media. Already this year, 21 trans women of color have been murdered in this country for expressing their true selves. When Penny Proud, a trans New Orleanian, was murdered this year, BreakOUT! was dismayed by scant and inaccurate local media coverage. Taking matters into our own hands, BreakOUT! launched a media campaign online and erected a highly visible billboard near the Orleans Parish Prison. Using the hashtags #MakePennyProud and #BlackTransLivesMatter, BreakOUT! is raising the visibility of victims of state and interpersonal violence in our community and across the nation.

This year, BreakOUT! will be hosting TMOR- the Trans March of Resilience.

Every year on November 20th, all across the country, the transgender community acknowledges and participates in Transgender Day of Remembrance (TDOR), an annual day of observance to honor those who have lost their lives to anti-trans violence, bigotry and suicide. Traditionally on this day, community members and organizations host vigils while reading the names of transgender individuals who have lost their lives that year.

This year, members of the trans community and allies are also taking to the streets to march in honor of these lives lost and to let the nation know that the lives of trans people of color matter in the first National Trans March of Resilience.

Led by trans people of color, the Trans March of Resilience is set to take place on November 20th, 2015 in numerous cities across the nation and will be the first nationally-coordinated demonstration for justice for the transgender community.

"We want to continue to ignite social change, a movement for transgender people of color nationwide, highlight the injustices faced by the transgender community, and attach those stories to real faces and real voices," expresses TMOR organizer in New Orleans, Christian Lovehall.

Many are aware of the demonstrations held around the world, over the killings of numerous young Black men by police and the outrage expressed by the #BlackLivesMatter movement.

Protests across the country made countless headlines, made the cover of Time Magazine, and even gained the attention of our President.

But many in the transgender community are wondering why we don't witness the same level of public outrage when trans women of color are brutally murdered and assaulted daily, by both police and civilians.

"Trans people of color are disproportionately impacted by structural oppressions that are inextricably linked to physical violence, whether state-based or interpersonal. And at the same time, historically, transgender people of color have been the catalyst of change for social justice movements," states Milan Nicole Sherry. "On November 20th, we invite others around the country to celebrate our resilience as transgender people of color and demand justice - Black Trans Lives Matter, too."

Project WHAT

Project WHAT! is an organization that raises awareness about the effects of parental incarceration on children, with the long-term goal of improving services and policies that affect these youth. WHAT! stands for We're Here And Talking referring to the youth who make up the Project WHAT! team, as well as the 2.7 million children nationwide who have a parent incarcerated. Project WHAT! is a youth-led leadership development program that employs young people from the Bay Area who have had a parent incarcerated as youth advocates. Youth ages 13-19 from San Francisco County, Alameda County, and Contra Costa County, CA can apply for the paid job each spring, beginning in March. People can contact us at www.communityworkswest.org or 510-486-2340 for more information about how to apply, or write to us at:

Project What!
4681 Telegraph Avenue
Oakland, CA 94609

ALL OF US OR NONE

All Of Us Or None is a grassroots organization led by formerly-imprisoned people committed to fighting for the human dignity of people who have been or are being held captive in America. We are fighting for the full restoration of our civil and human rights and against the systemic discrimination facing us while in captivity and upon our release. We demand to be called people and not the dehumanizing labels we are usually referred to, such as ex-offenders. These characterizations prevent us from being seen and treated as human beings. Although we may have been to jail or prison, our lives are much more than the sum total of our past indiscretions or accusations. We are presently working towards building the leadership of formerly-incarcerated people. Our nationally-recognized Ban the Box campaign challenges the stereotypes of people with conviction histories by asking employers to choose their best candidates based on job skills and qualifications, not past convictions. The question on applications for employment, housing, public benefits, insurance, loans and other services, means lifelong discrimination and exclusion because of a past arrest or conviction record. We have chapters throughout California, with our most active chapters are in the SF Bay Area, Riverside, and Los Angeles. All of Us or None is **not** a pen-pal organization. For more information please contact All of Us or None via Legal Services for Prisoners with Children at:

1540 Market St., Suite 490
San Francisco, CA 94102

Good News

SPECIAL THANK YOU TO BEJA FOR COMPILING THE GOOD NEWS SECTION

MARCH 2015

The Montana House on a tie vote Friday rejected a proposed ballot measure that would have allowed people to cite their religious beliefs to justify disobeying certain laws or actions by the government. "This bill is about discrimination of people like me," said Rep. Bryce Bennett, D-Missoula, who is gay. "This is a bill about inspiring fear. ... This bill is discriminatory and dangerous."



Dozens of protesters shut down a busy intersection outside the Beverly Center in Los Angeles during the evening rush hour Friday to call for an end to violence against transgender people. As horns blared and police helicopters circled, protesters marched into the center of the intersection at 3rd Street and La Cienega Boulevard, shouting for trans liberation.

APRIL 2015



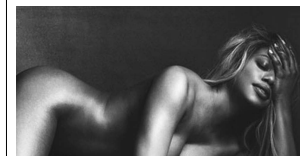
Maka Brown, 18, was crowned prom queen at Salt Lake High School and could be the first transgender prom queen in the entire state of Utah.

The Supreme Court of Virginia has ruled that Alicia Jade Brown, a transgender woman who is incarcerated at a federal prison can legally change her name.

Mexico's highest court has called bans on same-sex marriage "totally unjustified". It is part of a battle to gain equal marriage across Mexico. Currently only some states allow it, and if more petitions and legal challenges are

made to the court, it is expected to become legal throughout the country.

The Bathroom Surveillance Bill, otherwise known as HB 2801, has been withdrawn by the Texas House State Affairs Committee. It was authored by Republican representative Gilbert Peña with the intention of restricting bathroom use in public schools based on biological sex. The Human Rights Campaign (HRC) had branded the bill "harmful and unnecessary", adding that it "encouraged the harassment and bullying of transgender students just for using appropriate bathrooms." Although the bill was withdrawn, the legislature in Texas continues to consider other anti-equality legislation. A list of 'bathroom surveillance bills' are still pending, all entailing the potential criminalization of transgender individuals if passed. HRC warns that these bills "hurt businesses and individuals by leaving them open to unnecessary litigation".



Laverne Cox poses nude to break down the myth that trans women are not beautiful. The Orange Is The New Black star posed for Allure magazine's annual nude feature, alongside Jordana Brewster (Furious 7), Kathryn Winnick (Vikings), Nicole Beharie (Sleepy Hollow) and Sandrine Holt (The Returned). Laverne said, "Seeing a black transgender woman embracing and loving everything about her body might be inspiring for some folks. There's a beauty in the things we think are imperfect. It sounds very cliché, but it's true."

MAY 2015

Oregon is now the third state in the country to ban so-called "gay conversion therapy" after Gov. Kate Brown signed legislation outlawing the practice. The measure makes it illegal for social workers or licensed mental health professional to practice therapy treatments purporting to change the sexual orientation of children younger than 18.



On the May 18 episode of *The Bold & the Beautiful*, the character Maya Avant disclosed to her boyfriend Rick Forrester that she is a transgender woman. The show revealed to the audience in March that Maya, an established character on the show since 2013, is a transgender woman who transitioned many years ago. While Rick was originally hurt that Maya had not told him about her past sooner, he ultimately affirmed that he loves her. He said, "I'm glad you told me. That's what the woman I know would do. So what does it change? [...] I just know that I love you and I want to spend my life with you. So please don't walk away from me."



The *Oxford English Dictionary* is considering adding the term "Mx" to its next edition. For years, trans and gender-nonconforming people have been using the gender-neutral title "Mx" (pronounced "mux" or "mix") to identify themselves in lieu of gender-specific honorifics like "Mr.," "Ms.," "Miss," and "Mrs." In the United Kingdom, many agencies and government institutions have begun including this term within their forms, driving licenses, bank details and government departments. Gender-neutral pronouns are becoming more common as a growing number of LGBT people and allies strive to use language that accurately and respectfully reflects the broad range of gender identities people embrace. And the trend toward inclusive language isn't limited to English-speaking locales. Sweden will formally add the gender-neutral pronoun "hen" to the Swedish Academy's dictionary.

The Japanese ministry of education issued a notice to local education boards urging schools to do more for transgender students. This includes letting children choose which uniform, bathroom and locker room they want to use.

JUNE 2015



At an LGBT pride month reception held at the White House, Jennicet Gutiérrez interrupted the President, shouting "President Obama, release all LGBTQ immigrants from detention and stop all deportations." As a transgender woman who is undocumented, Gutiérrez said she could not celebrate while some 75 transgender detainees were still being exposed to assault and abuse in ICE custody at this very moment. The work of the organizations she represents, Familia Trans Queer Liberation Movement and GetEQUAL, was echoed yesterday when 35 Congresspeople signed a letter sent to ICE demanding the agency release LGBTQ immigrants out of concern for their safety.



The Supreme Court ruled today that "same-sex couples may exercise the right to marry" and that "there is no lawful basis for a State to refuse to recognize a lawful same-sex marriage performed in another State on the ground of its same-sex character." Writing for the Court, Justice Anthony M. Kennedy, Jr., grounded these marital rights in the 14th Amendment's guarantee that no State may deprive any person of "liberty" without due process of law or deny to any person the "equal protection of the laws."

The original Stonewall Inn, which launched the Rebellion sparking the modern LGBT rights movement, was voted to be an official city landmark. This is the first time a site had been landmarked specifically for its role in LGBT history and came just in time for the 46th anniversary of the Rebellion that will be commemorated by the Pride March on Sunday, June 28, the actual anniversary.

The federal government ordered federal employee health insurers to include transition-related health coverage for transgender employees in their plans. California became the first state in the country to allow transgender individuals to have their chosen gender identity listed on their death certificate.



Soprano Breanna Sinclair became the first transgender person to sing the national anthem at a Major League Baseball game at the Oakland Coliseum at the Oakland Athletic's first LGBT Pride night.

JULY 2015



Meagan Taylor, a Black transgender woman whose story made headlines when she was arrested after checking into an Iowa hotel and then held in isolation at the Polk County Jail, has been released after over a week in custody. This news follows advocacy by local groups, national organizations, and a pastor who raised the money for her bail. When Meagan checked in at the Drury Inn, she presented her Illinois ID, which has her legal name and a male gender marker. The hotel later called the police to her room. Many transgender women lack access to accurate IDs that reflect their gender identity. The police charged her for having hormones without a prescription, among other charges, though her prescription was at her home in Illinois. Transgender Law Center is working with Meagan to explore next steps, including possible litigation.



Apple Model Management L.A. plans to open its doors to exclusively represent transgender models. Asuncion, whose award winning documentary film *What's the T?* explores the lives of transgender women, points out that there have been trans models throughout history such as Candy Darling, Caroline Cossey (aka Tula), Octavia Saint Laurent, and now Andreja Pejic. "But their full potential was never reached because of the stigma the community-at-large had towards the trans community," he says. "This has to change."



After months of collaboration between the National Center for Transgender Equality (NCTE), Fairness West Virginia, and elected officials in the state legislature, West Virginia's Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) unrolled new policies this week making it easier for West Virginians to obtain a driver's license that matches their gender identity. While the previous policy required a court order to update the gender marker on a West Virginia driver's license, all that is required under the new policy is a signed form from the applicant's physician attesting to the applicant's gender identity. The new policy also instructs DMV employees to refrain from asking invasive questions about an applicant's gender identity or medical history.

The US Senate Tuesday rejected a provision that would prohibit discrimination and bullying in K-12 public schools based on sexual orientation and gender identity. But Sen. Lamar Alexander (R-Tenn.), the chairman

The Intersex Basics

Hello Friends & Comrades of TGJIP,

My name is Kalash and I am a proud volunteer of the Transgender Gender-Variant Intersex Justice Project **Dynamic** Community.

I am, also, a person of Intersex gender. In this section of *Stiletto*, I will be exploring information on Intersex biology and socialization.

What is Intersex Gender?

Intersex is a biological reality, but it gets confused with gender, sexual orientation, and behavior because there is no socio-cultural relationship between one's body and all of these identities. Intersex individuals share in the same sexual orientations and gender identities as non-intersex people. However, the difference is that intersex people are born with a mix of anatomical sex traits chromosomes.

For example, a person might be born appearing to be female on the outside, but having mostly male-typical anatomy on the inside. Or a person may be born with genitals that seem to be in-between the usual male and female types—for example, a girl may be born with a noticeably large clitoris, or lacking a vaginal opening, or a boy may be born with a notably small penis, or with a scrotum that is divided so that it has formed more like labia. Or a person may be born with mosaic genetics, so that

some of her cells have XX chromosomes and some of them have XY.

Though we speak of intersex as an inborn condition, intersex anatomy doesn't always show up at birth. Sometimes a person isn't found to have intersex anatomy until she or he reaches the age of puberty, or finds themselves an infertile adult, or dies of old age and is autopsied. Some people live and die with intersex anatomy without anyone (including themselves) ever knowing. http://www.isna.org/faq/what_is_intersex

Discrimination

Within the broader context of discrimination, discrimination on the grounds of gender identity and gender expression, as well as discrimination on grounds of sex vis-à-vis intersex people, are particularly complex issues. This is due to the fact that the legal recognition and rights afforded to this community are often intertwined with specific medical and psychological obligatory requirements. Whilst most of the report deals with discrimination on the grounds of gender identity and gender expression, a brief part focuses on the specific discrimination that intersex people face. <http://bookshop.europa.eu/en/trans-and-intersex-people-pbDS3212033/>

Intersex Lived Experience

Intersex is a lived experience of the body. Intersex bodies do not meet societal expectations. We suffer stigma and pathologisation as a result. Intersex people have non-heteronormative bodies, bodies that affect perceptions of our realness as men or women. Cultural, familial and medical attitudes govern to which sex we are assigned. Surgical and other medical interventions are made to ensure we conform to the norm, to erase intersex differences.

The key issue for most intersex people is not the existence of two binary sexes, but what is done to us to make us conform to those two narrow classifications.

<http://www.wheelercentre.com/notes/aad59565809c>

I know these three articles excerpts can leave room for open curiosity for interested folks wanting to know more, we can send the full articles upon request.

Please feel free to write in to Kalash at TGJIP. Let me know your question(s)/queries, thus we will try and answer them as constructively as possible.

In Solidarity and Love, Be Well, In Peace and Fearlessness!!!

Thank you, TGJIP Volunteer Kalash

Legal Updates

The Cases of Michelle Norsworthy and Shilo Quine

Many of you have heard about the California cases, Norsworthy v. Beard et al and Quine v. Beard et al, where the Northern District Federal Court required CDCR (California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation) to provide Michelle Norsworthy and Shilo Quine with gender affirming surgery/ Sex Reassignment Surgery (SRS) - Ms. Norsworthy won a preliminary injunction and Ms. Quine received a groundbreaking settlement. Instead of giving Ms. Norsworthy her surgery, CDCR paroled and released her and therefore did not adequately address the issues and needs of imprisoned trans people's necessary gender affirming medical care. However, the settlement terms and conditions in Ms. Quine's case are slowly being enforced. Ms. Quine will be provided with gender affirming surgery and will be moved to a women's prison. Additionally, due to the settlement agreement, CDCR is required to review and change its policies to allow Ms. Quine access to some

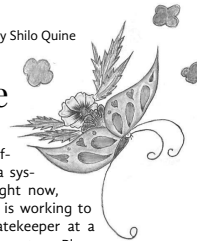
expanded Department Operations Manual (DOM) commissary items.

These two cases have created a strategic window of opportunity and now is the time to really push for equal access to programming as well as access to all the clothing and commissary items you need and want (and are available within the broader prison system) that affirm your gender. There is no better time to push for the remedies you deserve for the harms the state and CDCR have caused you for being transgender. Due to these big wins, many TGJIP members in prisons have been requesting medical and psych gatekeepers (medical and psych staff) to evaluate and approve them for SRS. In response, we have heard that TGJIP members are experiencing a lot of typical CDCR chaos, such as CDCR bouncing back requests and appeals for lack of "updated CDCR forms," even though CDCR has released a new Care Guide for Gender Dysphoria, "Guidelines For Review of Request

for SRS."

Your continued self-advocacy is making a systematic difference right now, and your persistence is working to chip away at one gatekeeper at a time within the larger system. Please follow the new SRS guidelines that CDCR has released, **AND continue to document the results and exchanges with CDCR staff and at every level of the appeals process**, as we anticipate some frustrating pushbacks. We are already seeing small victories in the ways of access to some undergarments (bras, boxers, binders), transgender representatives on IACs, and the development of support groups. However, there is also ongoing retaliation from guards and gender police because of the strength of your powerful advocacy, all of which you know too much about already. If you want a copy of the new guidelines please write us. Otherwise, be safe and stay strong!

Butterfly by Shilo Quine



Oakland Power Projects

Eroding the Power of the Police

BY CRITICAL RESISTANCE OAKLAND

In June of 2014, officers in Dallas, TX shot and killed Jason Harrison, a Black man who suffered from bipolar disorder and schizophrenia, moments after arriving at his doorstep. His mother had called 911 because she needed help getting him to the hospital, yet instead of receiving medical help she lost her son. This is just one heartbreaking example of people being subject to the violence of policing when they need or are seeking medical care. The glaring question is why are fully armed officers acting as health service providers?

The answer lies in the fact that police have been deemed as the primary state-sponsored agents responsible for addressing not just violence or crime in communities, but multiple forms of harm including medical emergencies. This is not accidental, but a by-product of austerity; the shaving away of life-affirming resources and programs. Government entities repeatedly prioritize funding for surveillance, policing and imprisoning people while social services and education funding continue to get slashed. These spending trade-offs demonstrate a socio-economic climate where the state systematically and repeatedly fails to meet the educational, social and economic needs of communities of color, while demonstrating few difficulties in imposing punitive policing practices under the guise of "services."

This does not have to be the reality.

What if a trained mental healthcare professional had been sent to the Harrison home instead of an armed cop? Here we see the irreconcilable and tragic intersection of policing and healthcare. These highly publicized cases of violence, however, make clear the necessity of building self-determination through investing in real community resources that we need. Among those things is access to quality health services, not police response; we must fight to build the former while making the latter

obsolete. Because we know that policing will never meet any of our needs.

The Oakland Power Projects, a project of the Oakland chapter of Critical Resistance, was conceived to build capacity for Oakland to reject police and policing as the default response to harm and to highlight or create alternatives that actually meet community needs and address harm. OPP helps Oakland residents invest in practices, relationships, and resources that build community power and wellbeing. By identifying current harms, amplifying existing resources, and developing new practices that do not rely on policing solutions, the projects remind us that we can make our families and neighborhoods safe and healthy without relying on the cops. Through a steady and intentional process, Critical Resistance members talked to close allies, friends, neighbors, and community members to find out what makes people feel safe; what existing resources people rely on, what happens when people call the cops; and what resources people felt would build stronger communities. Health emerged as a broad theme in terms of resources that people needed but didn't feel they had access to in Oakland without police involvement.

Following that theme, Critical Resistance decided to draw on the expertise of people and organizations involved with health and

healthcare practices that are conscious and critical of the relationship with health and policing, to see what resources already exist or what resources they could imagine building that would address some of the things that had come up in people's stories. CR members spoke with people from Mission Neighborhood Resource Center, Berkeley Free Clinic, Street Level Health Center, Highland Hospital Emergency Medicine, Curanderas Sin Fronteras and an ally who is trained as a street medic and Wilderness First Responder. We asked them some questions about what they think people need to know as basic information to keep healthy and what resources they would like to see.

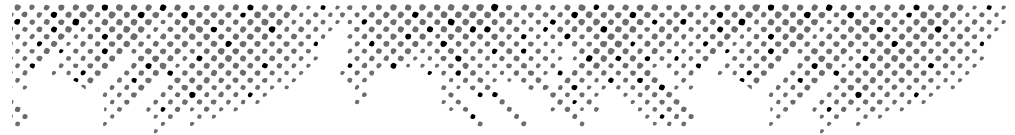
Out of these conversations, we have launched the first Power Project; an Anti-Policing Health Workers cohort that will provide community-based "Know Your Options" training so that people can access the healthcare that they need while minimizing potential police contact. Our long-term goal is to create a new common sense – that people can and will be safe and have better access to resources without police. We believe that this goal is both visionary and practical. The idea of self-determination remains at the heart of how we understand and articulate Oakland Power Projects and Critical Resistance's fight to end our reliance on prisons, policing and surveillance as solutions to social problems. It helps us to remember that this fight, is as much about building what we want as it is about tearing down what we do not want. Self-determination by definition is a long-haul proposition, but it is surely attainable, and definitely worth the struggle.

EDITORS NOTE TO STILETTO READERS

We appreciate all of the bold and brilliant leadership of Critical Resistance and especially commend the transgender leadership within Critical Resistance and Oakland Power Projects.

#TransIsResistance
#TransLeadershipForLiberation
#BlackTransLivesMatter

CRITICAL RESISTANCE

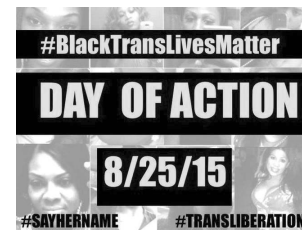


of the education panel and a former education secretary under President George H.W. Bush, urged his colleagues to vote against the amendment, calling it a federal intrusion into matters best handled at the local level. Sen. Al Franken (D-Minn.), the sponsor of the amendment, said "This isn't about lawsuits, this about schools doing the right things when parents ask. We have the same protections granted to kids by virtue of their race. That wasn't a local issue, that was a federal law we had to pass."



The Pentagon announced that it will allow transgender members of the military to serve openly starting next year, marking an end to a long-standing policy that barred them from the armed forces, yet continues to deny treatment to or release Chelsea Manning, transgender political prisoner held in military prison.

AUGUST 2015



Over 200 people attended a rally in San Francisco August 25, which TGJIP, Get Equal, Black Lives Matter, and other groups designated Black Trans Liberation Tuesday. In nearly 20 cities across the country, organizers used the hashtag #SayHerName to acknowledge the threats of violence facing black transgender women, and to call attention to the at least 20 transgender women and gender non-conforming individuals who have been murdered since the beginning of the year, including 13 black transgender women. The day of action

was called after three Black trans women – Elisha Walker, Ashton O'Hara, and Kandis Capri – were reported murdered in a 24-hour period on August 17, and trans leaders in the Black Lives Matter movement decided to respond.



The White House for the first time has hired an openly transgender person as a member of its staff. Raffi Freedman-Gurspan, who formerly served in trans advocacy as policy adviser for the National Center for Transgender Equality's Racial & Economic Justice Initiative, has been appointed to a senior position in the White House Office of Presidential Personnel. She's set to begin her new role as an outreach and recruitment director in the Presidential Personnel Office.



The second all-transgender chorus in the nation formed in Boston. They are planning their first public concert in April of 2016.

SEPTEMBER 2015



In the US, the Transportation Security Administration is defending its treatment of a transgender woman who says she was detained for 40 minutes at Orlando International

Airport, harassed, repeatedly patted down and instructed not to record the ordeal, all because a full-body scanner flagged her penis as an "anomaly." Shadi Petosky, who live-tweeted the incident Monday, ended up missing her flight. Advocates say transgender people are often subjected to invasive airport screening. When passengers go through a full-body scanner, TSA agents calibrate the scanners "male" or "female" based on their perception of the passenger. Genitalia that doesn't conform to the scanner's standards for that sex may be flagged. At one point, Petosky said an agent "told me to get back in the machine as a man or it was going to be a problem." The TSA says its agents followed agency guidelines.



Lawmakers in Buenos Aires, Argentina rule that 1% of civil service jobs must go to trans workers. This follows Argentina passing its Gender Identity Law in 2012; legislation that the World Health Organization described as the most progressive gender-identity law on the planet. That law allows trans individuals to officially change their names without having to go through legal or psychological examinations, and makes it the Government's responsibility to pay for surgical procedures and hormone therapy to aid transition. Further marking it as one of the most progressive countries in the world in relation to LGBTI rights, last week it lifted its ban on gay men donating blood.

Transgender women in San Francisco's city-county jails will allegedly be able to access programs for other female inmates and eventually will be housed with them if they wish to be. Trans women are currently housed in a separate unit for their own protection, but they will be fully integrated with other women by the end of the year. Next month inmates and Sheriff's Department staff will begin "education and training designed to smooth the

GOOD NEWS (CONTINUED)

way for female transgender inmates to participate with other women in programs such as drug and alcohol abuse education and women's empowerment groups," the SF Chronicle reports.

A federal appeals court has found that conditions for transgender women are so dire in Mexico that they may qualify for protection in the US under the international Convention Against Torture (CAT) based on the likelihood they would face torture if deported. The three women in the court ruling will not be deported, and virtually any Mexican transgender woman whose gender expression and appearance were likely to make her a target of the police and military should be entitled to find refuge in the US.



The Catholic Church has been condemned for its "harmful" decision to deny trans people the right to be godparents. According to the Catholic News Agency, 21-year-old Catholic trans man Alex Salinas was rejected as his nephew's godfather, and told he was not eligible because he is transgender. His case launched an appeals process in the Church which eventually reached one of its highest authorities. The body upheld the original ban.

OCTOBER 2015



TGJIP is proud to have collaborated in the powerful gathering in Boston, MA called Decade of Black & Pink where formerly incarcerated TGI and LGBQ leaders from across the country gathered to build relationships, share strategy and build power towards abolishing prisons, jails and detention centers. The historic

gathering also marked the release of [Coming Out of Concrete Closets: A Report on Black & Pink's National LGBTQ Prisoner Survey](#).

During the latter months of 2014, Black & Pink, conducted a survey of our prisoner membership. Nearly 1,200 prisoners responded to their 133-question survey, producing the largest ever dataset available on the experiences of LGBTQ prisoners in the country. The intent of this survey was to get some truth out from behind prison walls about the experiences of LGBTQ prisoners in the United States. Their report aims to share that truth by elevating prisoner voices, stories, and leadership to inspire immediate collective action.

Black & Pink
614 Columbia Rd
Dorchester, MA 02125



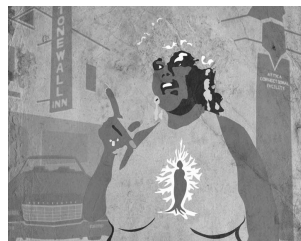
In San Francisco, on October 25, the day of her birthday, hundreds gathered together from across the country for a historic celebration for and retirement of one of the trans community's fiercest fighting and longest standing leaders, Miss Major. The affair was spectacular and grand with live music and a DJ, flowing drinks and tasty food, and lots of sweet and loving faces from over the many many years of her work. The party marked the official passing of the torch from her to TGJIP's new Executive Director, Janetta Johnson.

[Defiant Archives](#) exhibit, which highlighted trans Philadelphia history and activism through a collection of materials, artwork, documents,

and video, will be on display outside the mayor's office at Philadelphia City Hall. The exhibit will run for a solid two months, and will feature works curated by Sharron Cooks, Wesley Flash, Helyx Chase Searce Horwitz, Ezra Berkley Nepon, and Mai Schwartz. Cooks, one of the curators, says that the exhibit "affirms the struggle trans-identified people have had with society and how we still managed to break through certain barriers, and demand the rights and respect we are due and deserve."



NOVEMBER 2015



MAJOR!, the documentary film about Miss Major's life and campaigns, had its world premiere on Friday November 13th at the Castro Theater as part of the San Francisco Transgender Film Festival. In 2016, the film will go on tour, screening at film festivals and community events and bringing Miss Major's powerful message of survival to audiences around the United States and the world. MAJOR! is a revolutionary film project that centers trans women of color in telling stories of our history and truths about the impact of the prison industrial complex on our lives and loved ones. We're excited to share photographs from the premiere in the next issue of Stiletto, and will keep you posted on the film's travels and upcoming screenings.

back hard, and shut the meeting down because our concerns weren't being taken seriously. The city decided to try and move forward without conducting a full environmental review with input from the community.

City Refuses Community Input, We Build Community Power

We figured that if the city was not going to conduct a legit report, we'd do it ourselves. In March, the coalition released a report on the fight against expanding the jail and then held a panel featuring Janetta Johnson discussing the impact of prisons and jail on the trans community in San Francisco and what something like pre trial diversion could do for trans people.

During the panel, the coalition used the excitement to gain signatures to contest the jail on environmental grounds. We sent an appeal to the state, but didn't wait for them before our next move. We continued to hold meetings and mobilize to SF city hall. We were granted a special hearing on alternatives to the jail - where the D.A., the city attorney and the city Pre trial department presented alternatives to incarceration. We presented community based solutions - more housing, more jobs, bail reform - demonstrating that if the city put the \$280 million it had to alternatives instead of jail expansion, the need for a new jail would disappear.

Unfortunately, our environmental appeal was rejected by the state and the Board of Supervisors voted to move forward with the next phase of the jail - requesting funds from the Board State and Community Corrections for an \$80 million loan as part of the construction process.

On November 1st, 2015 we found out the state granted the \$80 million loan to San Francisco. So now we have the hard job of convincing the city not to take a loan from the state to build this jail. While it will be difficult to accomplish, we know the fight is worth it. We hope to soon report that the city has decided there should be NO NEW JAIL in San Francisco. Until then, FIGHT TO WIN!

Ashley Diamond Released from Georgia Prison

BY THE SOUTHERN POVERTY LAW CENTER, AUGUST 31, 2015

Ashley Diamond, the transgender prisoner who sued the Georgia Department of Corrections (GDC) after being denied a safe environment and medically necessary gender dysphoria treatment, was released today after more than three years in prison, where she was housed with male prisoners and sexually assaulted eight times.

Diamond, 37, was released from Augusta State Medical Prison just five days after the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) filed additional documents supporting her motion for preliminary injunction in a lawsuit filed in February. The papers, which include sworn statements from multiple transgender prisoners, demonstrate that the GDC continues to systematically deny appropriate care to transgender prisoners, despite having earlier announced a policy change.

"I'm overjoyed to be with my family again and out of harm's way," Diamond said. "Although the systematic abuse and assaults I faced for more than three years have left me emotionally and physically scarred, I'll continue to fight for justice and to shine a light on the gross mistreatment of transgender inmates in Georgia and nationwide."

Diamond began serving an 11-year sentence for a nonviolent offense in November 2012. She was eligible for parole this November but was released to family members at 8:45 a.m. (Eastern) today.

The SPLC filed suit - *Diamond v. Owens*, et al. - in the U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Georgia after Diamond was sexually

assaulted repeatedly and denied proper treatment for her gender dysphoria, a medically recognized condition in which individuals identify emotionally and psychologically as a gender different than they were assigned at birth. She had been receiving hormone treatments for 17 years prior to her incarceration.

The suit alleges that the GDC's failure to protect, train and provide medically necessary care to Diamond and other transgender prisoners violated the Eighth Amendment's ban on cruel and unusual punishment and placed prisoners at a grave risk of harm. The denial of safety and care has caused Diamond to compulsively bind her genitals, attempt suicide and self-castration, and experience post-traumatic distress, anxiety and depression.

Diamond's case has drawn international attention to the abuse and mistreatment of transgender prisoners.

On April 3, the Department of Justice filed a statement of interest supporting the lawsuit. The DOJ claimed that Georgia's "freeze frame" policy - which prohibited treatment for prisoners beyond the care they received before incarceration - was unconstitutional.

Under the widespread scrutiny, GDC revised its gender dysphoria policy and adopted new guidelines to provide constitutionally appropriate treatment. The GDC also agreed to start Diamond on hormone treatment. The dosage, however, remained inadequate for months, according to the SPLC's most recent filing.

Diamond has also endured ongoing punishment for her female gender identity and been



Ashley Diamond, photo by Brenna Beech / WABE

denied access to female undergarments and grooming items pursuant to GDC policy, even though her medical providers have recognized that gender expression and role change are medically necessary treatments for gender dysphoria.

Though she has been released, the SPLC will continue to litigate the case.

"While we're thrilled that Ashley Diamond is out of prison, our lawsuit is far from over," said Chinyere Ezie, SPLC staff attorney. "Ashley has endured more than three years of systematic abuse based on the Georgia Department of Corrections' unconstitutional policies toward transgender inmates and woeful lack of care. Her release does not erase her barbaric treatment by GDC officials, which was tantamount to torture. Nor is her plight isolated. We will continue to advocate for an end to prison practices that unfairly punish and inflict pain on transgender inmates."

TGI JUSTICE PROJECT says NO NEW JAIL IN SF

BY WOODS ERVIN

Since we know that no cage is a good cage and if they build a cage, they will fill a cage, TGJIP is showing up to say stop criminalizing and capturing our community. TGJIP doesn't want anyone incarcerated, so we do not want folks in jails or prisons longer off hate crimes extensions and we do not want new beds or special cells for trans people because it increases the risk of even higher rates of incarceration for our communities. We do want safety for our community and equal access to programs and other survival mechanisms, both inside the beast and out. Below you will find a report from our Administrative Director on our work.

Some Background- A New Jail is Unnecessary

In 2012, the Controllers Office of San Francisco completed a forecast of San Francisco's jail population to inform planning for a replacement jail. The forecast was based on the work of two external consultants who utilized jail population data through 2011. In 2014, the Controller's office updated its analysis with more recent data and recommended that the forecast be updated again in 2015.

Between 1994 and 2009 the average daily jail population declined gradually, falling by an average of less than one percent per year. Over the last five years, that decline accelerated to eight percent per year. However, since 2012 the decline in the jail population has largely been driven by two policy changes: state realignment and proposition 47. Absent these policy changes, the jail population remained relatively flat over that period. This suggests the jail population may plateau near current levels unless other policy changes are enacted.

San Francisco initially proposed a jail rebuild priced at \$280 Million and that the local jail at 850 Bryant would be torn down and replaced, due to both issues of overcrowding as well as the fact that the building had gotten so decrepit. However, the city has a facility in San Bruno that is currently not being used at all - but is considered too "low security" to house people as it is open dormitory style.

There are approximately 1000 empty jail beds in county jails every single day in SF and the jail. The county has discussed leasing empty beds to other counties, states or to the federal government to fill excess cages.

The Sheriff's department has stated that the building at 850 Bryant is decrepit and

seismically unsound. Instead of continuing to invest in ineffective solutions that harm our communities, this is an opportunity for the city to CLOSE the jail at 850 Bryant.

TGJIP Gets in the Ring

In February of this year, TGI Justice Project decided to take up the fight against expanding the jail. The SF county jail system is only at 65% capacity, 85% of people inside are pre-trial and while San Francisco is 6% Black, Black people make up 56% of the jail population. Given these clear inequities and the repeated stories of prisoner abuse at the hands of sheriff's deputies, we thought it necessary to push the city around alternatives to incarceration of trans people - especially trans women - in SF county jails.

The reason that TGI decided to take up the fight is that trans women from San Francisco are housed in the special populations tank is

850. They currently have very little access to programming, are at general risk to the conditions that decrepit jail poses. There is general violence that those incarcerated face, for example, in March it was discovered that deputies we deputies were forcing people in 850 to fight in cage matches and betting on them. There is also the violence that is specific to trans people in prisons, jails and detention centers, such as, the harassment, the denial of gender affirming clothing and health care, the threat of solitary confinement or administrative segregation. TGJIP knew it would be important to support our people inside, and to work against even more of our folks going inside, by doing all we could to stop the likelihood that the jail would be built.

So in February 2015, the city announced that they would be doing an environmental impact report at the Community Assessment and Services Center (CASC). An environmental impact review is mandatory for all construction projects in the state of California, including prisons and jails. The report process is one of the few ways that community members can actually weigh in on whether a jail gets built or not. As the construction of a new facility has intense environmental and human impacts, this is a crucial intervention to make.

When we mobilized to the CASC to engage in the environmental impact report process, we found that the city administrators were attempting to rush through the process without any community input. The coalition pushed



Black Lives Matter & the Movement For Black Lives Current Events

Over the last 6 months, the war on Black people has continued to wage genocide on our communities in varying forms. The murders of our families through the violence of racism, police brutality, transmisogyny, gentrification and displacement, etc. has increasingly amplified and shown no signs of slowing up. As a result, we have continued to resist, stand up and fight back for our livelihood and refuse to back down so long as the state continues to perpetuate such violence against us. Below is a timeline tracking our resistance movements over the last 6 months, grounded in our perspective from local San Francisco/Oakland Bay Area work and national strategy, coalition and field organizing. With every Stiletto issue we will also bring you our most current events in the movement for Black lives to keep you informed and aware of this crucial moment.

FEBRUARY 2015

February 21, 2015: #Justice4Yvette



Yvette Henderson was a 38-year-old Black woman and mother of four from Oakland, California who was murdered by Emeryville Police officers after being accused of shoplifting at the local Home Depot in the early afternoon of February 3, 2015. Reports note that the officers involved in the murder had their body cameras turn off during the incident and that they used three different kinds of guns during their response—an AR-15, a handgun and a military assault rifle. On February 21, 2015, Black Lives Matter activists, many of whom are queer and/or trans, shut down the Emeryville Home Depot for five hours to demand answers for Yvette's murder.

MARCH 2015

March 28, 2015: State of Black Oakland (SOBO)

Hundreds of Black activists, educators, entrepreneurs, healers and artists convened on March 28, 2015 for "a People's Assembly." The purpose of this assembly was to unite community members, discuss and strategize solutions to improve life for Black people in Oakland. The daylong gathering was held at Geoffrey's Inner Circle in downtown Oakland and was structured as a "listening space" where a coalition of Black-led organizations called on attendees to discuss what must be done to improve the lives of Black people in the city.

APRIL 2015

April 19, 2015: #BaltimoreUprising

On April 12, 2015, 25-year-old Baltimore resident Freddie Gray was arrested by the Baltimore Police Department for possessing an alleged illegal switchblade. Gray died on April 19 from spinal cord injuries which he sustained during his arrest and while he was being transported in a police van. In addition to this unlawful murder, the brutality of the city's police culture — coupled with the routine (historical) denial of black personhood and economic opportunity, exemplified in predatory policing practices, hyper-surveillance, mass incarceration, extreme unemployment (currently estimated at 24 percent) and

standard housing — are the core causes for the conflagration that has become known as the "Baltimore Uprising." Spontaneous protests across the city were held in direct response to Gray's murder and the injustices of the Baltimore Police Department. These demonstrations will forever be known as the Baltimore Uprising.

MAY 2015

May 21, 2015: #SayHerName National Day of Action

The Black Youth Project 100 called for a national day of action on May 21, 2015 to demand justice for 22-year-old Rekia Boyd, who was shot unlawfully by off-duty Chicago police officer, Dante Servin—Servin was released of all charges. Black women and girls, whether trans* or cisgender, are routinely harassed by police and abused by the state. This day of action was not only meant to commemorate Rekia Boyd, but ALL Black women and girls who fall victim to state-sanctioned violence. There were hundreds of events cross country and three events held in the Bay area on this day to honor #SayHerName.

- BlackOUT Collective direct action using traditional topless protest
- Anti-Police Terror Project (AFTP) rally for Yvette Henderson
- Local Black Youth Project chapter (BYP) #SayHerName Night March



BlackOut Collective members block Market and Beale streets in San Francisco, California. Photo via crowdalbum.com.

JUNE 2015

June 6, 2015

Oakland native and father, Demouria Hogg, was killed by the Oakland Police Department while lying unconscious in his car at 7:30AM on June 6. Black organizers in Oakland held a vigil and demonstration for Demouria where they amplified the message that he was killed because he was #SleepingWhileBlack.

June 16-19, 2015: Black Lives Matter National convening at Allied Media Conference

Black Lives Matter organizers from national chapters convened together at the Allied Media Conference in Detroit. Black trans leadership was intentionally included in the chapter convening.

June 28, 2015



Source: Screenshot from The Tribe video

BLM Charlotte, NC activist Bree Newsome takes down Confederate flag from South Carolina's Statehouse

JULY 2015

July 24-26, 2015: Movement For Black Lives Convening in Cleveland, OH



Hundreds of Black freedom fighters from around the country came together for the inaugural Movement for Black Lives Convening in Cleveland, OH, from Friday July 24 to Sunday July 26th, 2015. This historic event came at a pivotal time for the growing movement for Black lives in the United States. Black people are facing unabated police violence, increasing criminalization, a failed economic system, a broken education system and the loss of our communities to gentrification and development. Our trans and queer communities face the increased risk of physical and economic violence. The list of indignities regularly faced by the Black community is long and untenable. Thus, Black freedom fighters organized this event to bring together Black people from all around the world to strategize against these

injustices. There was a day long gathering of Black trans leaders from across the country the day before the convening, hosted by TGIIP, GetEqual, BreakOut and the Audre Lorde Project.

AUGUST 2015

August 25, 2015: Black Trans Liberation Tuesday

In response to the 20+ murders of trans women of color since the start of 2015, Black trans organizers made a direct call to BLM and the larger movement to lift up Black trans women through a national day of action and to recognize the daily violence they encounter while living their authentic selves. Specifically the call to action asked non-trans people to provide leadership towards stopping anti-trans violence. Non-trans Black leadership across the country continued to take risks and build on the powerful work to #SayHerName and put the #TbackinBlack. Rallies and actions held lifted up those loving Black people, wanting Black liberation necessarily means loving and celebrating and claiming Black trans people in our families, communities, and movement leadership. In the Bay area, teams of activists spraypainted the names of Black trans women lost to violence with the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter at various BART metro stations around the area. We also held a rally coordinated by the TGI Justice Project and local BLM chapter that turned out with overwhelming support.

Happy Trans Liberation Tuesday

Brief history to mark the importance of TUESDAY

Transgender Tuesdays

Many years ago, Mark Freeman of the Tom Waddell Clinic in San Francisco, CA designated "Transgender Tuesday" to hold transgender clinic.

TGI Justice Project TUESDAY'S Mail Night

TGI Justice Project's Mail Night meets on Tuesday from the hours of 4:30pm to 8:30pm to correspond with incarcerated trans women of color and remind them that they are not forgotten. Tuesday is the day we send extra love

to our folks that are in prisons. With that said, many more people have been joining us as the holidays are approaching, because we'd like to collectively let our folks that are imprisoned know that we're still fighting for their freedom and waiting for their safe return home—and we will always be fighting the systems of oppression that separate us from our family/loved ones.

Trans Liberation Tuesday

February 10th 2015: TRANS LIBERATION TUESDAY in response to the murder of Latina

trans woman Taja Gabrielle Dejesus.

Black Trans Liberation Tuesday

National call from Black trans women of color and Black Lives Matter organizing to turn up on the state sanctioned violence and police brutality and not turn on each other. Cis folks supported us in putting the T Back in the Black family dynamics and focus on Black love, Black solidarity, Black liberation and brilliance, and together we will win. When they say BLACK LIVES MATTER that means ALL Black Lives.

Trans Sex in the City

Dear Sisters,

I was asked to write a contribution to Stiletto this month with the theme of "passing the baton", and I struggled with the topic- the idea, and wondered what words could I truly offer to you ladies for perspective. I write (sporadically) a collection of essays on musings of the transsexual woman's experience- a collection entitled "Trans Sex In The City" which I'm excited to begin sharing with you all in the coming months. But with such a niche of writings on sex and love and things in between, I found myself afraid to write anything that would sound inauthentic to my experiences in which to share thoughts.

More recently I've begun learning of the experiences and ideology of activism and political movement building and of advocacy, and I sometimes struggle with my place in the movement. I'm honestly not on the front lines of a protest, or in circuits where I can chat about ways the movement can advance. I wish I was

emboldened in that journey—that passionate purpose that guides folks like Isa Noyola, Janetta Johnson and of course, Miss Major- women I admire for their visibility and courage to lead.

And then it hit me like a lightbulb on the BART train at 7:45am- TELL YOUR STORY. So simple right? I'm almost ashamed of sending this thought because of its simplicity. But I offer that it's underrated and underestimated the impact that sharing your story has. Every legend on this earth started with their story- and that is how legends came to be! That's how trans women I know have survived and advanced over the last 40 years. That's how we grew to trust one another and to learn from one another. It's how we as a people from the dawn of time have communicated ideals and truths, how religions grew to the masses, how news became a core part of our dialogue- telling our stories. So with the theme of "passing the baton" I think of "trans mothas" who

guided me in my early years with rebelling of their stories. How women like Janet Mock and CeCe McDonald shared their stories with us- their plight, their strength, their journeys- and how that very act, inspires movement and lives. It's how we all learn that in this life we are all unique but connected, and it's how movements and ideas are refreshed.

It's such a simple element to our lives that I think we take for granted its impact. Think of any legend and you automatically think of their story. From war heroes to survivors, activists to celebrities we think of their story. And many more stories need to be told- to each other, to the movements of the world, to friends and loved ones; to me. That's how we pass the baton to each other. Because at the end of it all, fire needs fuel to remain hot, to remain burning and fervent.

With love,
a

Profile of trans entrepreneur Martine Rothblatt

WIKIPEDIA

Martine Aliana Rothblatt (born 1954) is an American lawyer, author, and entrepreneur. She is the founder and Chief executive officer of United Therapeutics and the highest-paid female executive in the United States. She is also the creator of GeoStar and Sirius Radio.

Rothblatt left college after two years and traveled throughout Europe, Turkey, Iran, Kenya and the Seychelles. It was at the NASA tracking station in the Seychelles that she had her epiphany to unite the world via satellite communications. She then returned to University of California, Los Angeles, graduating with a thesis on international direct-broadcast satellites.

Rothblatt subsequently became an active member of the L5 Society and its Southern California affiliate, Organization for the Advancement of Space Industrialization and Settlement (OASIS).

Rothblatt is responsible for launching several

communications satellite companies, including the first private international spacecom project, the first global satellite radio network, and the first non-geostationary satellite-to-car broadcasting system.

As an attorney-entrepreneur, Rothblatt was also responsible for leading the efforts to obtain worldwide approval, via new international treaties, of satellite orbit/spectrum allocations for space-based navigation services and for direct-to-person satellite radio transmissions. She led the International Bar Association's biopolitical project to develop a draft Universal Declaration on the Human Genome and Human Rights for the United Nations.

In 1982, Rothblatt married Bina Aspen. They have four children together. Rothblatt and Aspen legally adopted one another's children.

In 1994, at age 40, she came out as transgender. She has since become a vocal advocate for transgender rights.

In 2004, Rothblatt launched the Terasem Movement, a transhumanist school of thought focused on promoting joy, diversity, and the prospect of technological immortality via mind uploading and geoeethical nanotechnology.



Martine Rothblatt, September 2010

Pelican Bay Hunger Strike

EXCERPT FROM SAN FRANCISCO BAY VIEW ARTICLE BY CLAUDE MARKS AND ISAAC ONTIVEROS

Four years ago prisoners in California – led by those in the control units of Pelican Bay – organized a hunger strike to demand an end to the torturous conditions of solitary confinement. Two more strikes would follow, with over 30,000 prisoners taking united action in the summer of 2013 – both in isolation and in general population in nearly every California prison.

The strikes reflected significant shifts in

political consciousness among prisoners and their loved ones. The violence of imprisonment was further exposed by demands and heightened organization from within the cages.

When prisoners went on hunger strike, they issued five core demands that called for an end to the California prison system's use of long-term solitary confinement, gang validation and collective punishment, and they demanded better food and access to

educational programming.

The hunger strikers made it clear that they also wanted to help shine a light on the conditions of isolation in women's prisons, which too often are even more invisible and ignored than those in men's prisons.

Prisoners understand that their fight, like most freedom struggles, is long term. They have built alliances with different movements, peoples and communities.

IN HONOR OF THE HISTORIC COURT DECISION TGJJP WANTS TO LIFT UP AND REPRINT THIS IMPORTANT WORK!

Agreement to End Hostilities

AUGUST 12, 2012

To whom it may concern and all California Prisoners:

Greetings from the entire PBSP-SHU Short Corridor Hunger Strike Representatives. We are hereby presenting this mutual agreement on behalf of all racial groups here in the PBSP-SHU Corridor. Wherein, we have arrived at a mutual agreement concerning the following points:

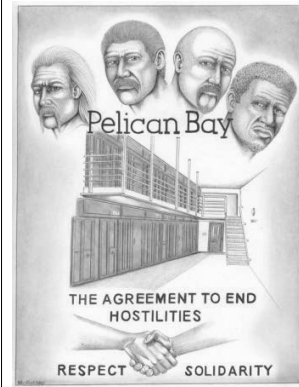
1. If we really want to bring about substantive meaningful changes to the CDCR system in a manner beneficial to all solid individuals, who have never been broken by CDCR's torture tactics intended to coerce one to become a state informant via debriefing, that now is the time to for us to collectively seize this moment in time, and put an end to more than 20-30 years of hostilities between our racial groups.

2. Therefore, beginning on October 10, 2012, all hostilities between our racial groups... in SHU, Ad-Seg, General Population, and County Jails, will officially cease. This means that from this date on, all racial group hostilities need to be at an end... and if personal issues arise between individuals, people need to do all they can to exhaust all diplomatic means to settle such disputes; do not allow personal, individual issues to escalate into racial group issues!!

3. We also want to warn those in the General Population that IGI will continue to plant undercover Sensitive Needs Yard (SNY) debriefer

"inmates" amongst the solid GP prisoners with orders from IGI to be informers, snitches, rats, and obstructionists, in order to attempt to disrupt and undermine our collective groups' mutual understanding on issues intended for our mutual causes [i.e., forcing CDCR to open up all GP main lines, and return to a rehabilitative-type system of meaningful programs/privileges, including lifer conjugal visits, etc. via peaceful protest activity/noncooperation e.g., hunger strike, no labor, etc. etc.]. People need to be aware and vigilant to such tactics, and refuse to allow such IGI inmate snitches to create chaos and reignite hostilities amongst our racial groups. We can no longer play into IGI, ISU, OCS, and SSU's old manipulative divide and conquer tactics!!!

In conclusion, we must all hold strong to our mutual agreement from this point on and focus our time, attention, and energy on mutual causes beneficial to all of us [i.e., prisoners], and our best interests. We can no longer allow CDCR to use us against each other for their benefit!! Because the reality is that collectively, we are an empowered, mighty force, that can positively change this entire corrupt system into a system that actually benefits prisoners, and thereby, the public as a whole... and we simply cannot allow CDCR/CCPOA – Prison Guard's Union, IGI, ISU, OCS, and SSU, to continue to get away with their constant form of



Art: Michael D. Russell

progressive oppression and warehousing of tens of thousands of prisoners, including the 14,000 (+) plus prisoners held in solitary confinement torture chambers [i.e. SHU/Ad-Seg Units], for decades!!!

We send our love and respects to all those of like mind and heart... onward in struggle and solidarity...

Presented by the PBSP-SHU Short Corridor Collective.

Justice for Jennifer Laude

BY GABRIELA USA

August 24, 2015. U.S. Marine Corporal Joseph S. Pemberton admitted to choking Jennifer Laude until she stopped moving, but claims she was still alive when he left the hotel room. Autopsy reports show she died from asphyxiation by drowning. Pemberton claimed he acted in self defense as he was surprised to find that Jennifer was a "man" and feared being "raped" by "him". This does not excuse the soldier's malicious intent to harm and ultimately take the life of Jennifer Laude. His admission to choking her only exposes Pemberton's intent to kill Jennifer upon realizing Jennifer's transgender identity.

The killing of Jennifer Laude continues to shed light on the systemic violence and brutal attacks against transgender persons under an imperialist, patriarchal culture that dismisses the dignity and rights of trans people. Mass organizations under GABRIELA USA remain vigilant in demanding Justice for Jennifer Laude and an end to all hate crimes and state violence against transgender people.

According to Irma Bajar, Solidarity Officer of GABRIELA USA, "There have been 22 reported killings of trans women of color in the U.S." She goes on to say, "We continue to witness violence against trans people escalate under various forms of state repression including militarism, police brutality, increased detentions, and in the prisons. We must acknowledge that Jennifer Laude's murder is a product of U.S. militarization in the Philippines and anti-trans violence. It is our duty to educate and organize our communities to love and protect trans women here and abroad who regularly suffer

systemic violence and hate crimes due to imperialism which further perpetuates patriarchal systems of oppression."

Ongoing US military occupation of the Philippines has persistently violated the rights of women, who are exploited for sexual and labor purposes, especially in areas where U.S. military bases are still occupying Philippine lands. Jennifer's murder further exposes the human rights violations amplified by U.S. militarization in our home country. Under the Justice for Jennifer Laude campaign, GABRIELA USA and BAYAN USA alliance organizations demand that U.S. troops get out of the Philippines. With the so called bilateral policies, such as the EDCA (Enhanced Defense Cooperative Agreement) and VFA (Visiting Forces Agreement), between the US and the Philippine government, there are no limitations to the number of troops to be deployed to the country nor is the duration of deployment specified. Therefore, unlimited number of troops can be deployed at any time

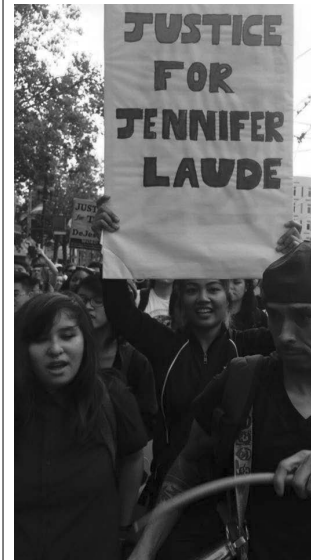


Photo via Irma Bajar

without a particular reason or activity.

"Pemberton joins a long line of US military invaders and occupiers, and his guilt in the death of Jennifer Laude is loud and clear. His excuses are disgraceful, an insult to the life of Jennifer and the many trans women who have to live in fear from men like Pemberton" states Valerie Francisco, Chairperson GABRIELA USA.

U.S. intervention continues to generate a climate of heinous crimes, injustice, and impunity within Philippine society. As militarization perpetuates continued violence against trans persons and so long as the state continues to protect perpetrators of hate crimes instead of upholding laws to protect the most marginalized and vulnerable in our communities, it is critical that we stand together in fighting for justice for victims and to demand truth and accountability.

#JusticeforJenniferLaude
#JunkVFA
#ScrapEDCA
#USOutNow



Stiletto

Letters from the Inside



Black

BY SHAYLANNA B. LUVME,
AKA THE PHILOSOPHER

Black is an establishment created to protect one's civil rights
Black is courage
Black is self-motivation to win
Black is vision
Black is respect
Black is love
Black is loyalty
Black is honesty
Black is trust
Black is caring
Black is nation-wide
Black is freedom
Black is unity
Black is pride
Black is equal
Black is LGBTQ
Black is you
Furthermore and more importantly,
Black is me

Loyalty We Must Be/Show Period.

BY MS. JASMINE LASHAYSHAY JONES

Hi to all my brothers and sisters. This is Ms. Jasmine over here in Kern Valley, and I just want to share the latest struggles of myself and my sister, BabyGirl. Currently we are trying to establish a transgender position on the IAC (Inmate Advisory Counsel), which by the way we are entitled. [Editors Note: They exist in many other CDCR facilities.] Secondly, I am trying to establish a transgender self help group. I am receiving resistance but I shall not quit. The funny part is, there are self help groups for just about every group of people with issues, and yet not a transgender group. Now mind you, after researching, I've come to learn that there is not even one transgender in any other groups currently going. Why is that? Here's what I believe: I believe Kern Valley is not a prison for Transgenders, I don't know if you've heard, but a couple years back, we had a sister who was murdered here by her cellmate. After he told the pigs what he would do to Ms. Carmen, the pig told him, "Well, I don't see nobody." Pretty much giving this idiot the

green light to murder Ms. Carmen. What is so sad is, the pig who put Ms. Carmen or rather forced Ms. Carmen in that cell, did not lose his job and his is still working here, just seen him a few days ago. These instances are examples of the fact that we need safety, if that's where we must be. We need to work for justice otherwise we will continue to be murdered. Lastly, I beg my sisters and brothers to stop all of the in-house fighting. The hating gots to stop. Because at the end of the night we are all we can count on. And when you lost that you lose your self. Be loyal to one another, Loyal Queens/Kings Rule All. Remember that.
I send you my love and respect.
Loyal Queens Rule
Ms. Jasmine laShayShay Jones.

Survivor:

BY GERI Q

First: embrace the survivor title while it may seem corny or overblown now it is the truth. In time you will understand and even feel pride in not only surviving sexual assault/abuse (SA/A) but also recovering.

I won't say I know how you are feeling right now – every SA/A survivor is unique, and experiences varied reactions to an SA/A incident. I do know you are hurting and going through a range of emotions, perhaps some you have never felt before: ex: fear, despair, helplessness, humiliation. Support and time are key elements in SA/A recovery. With this brief letter, I will try to offer my support, guidance and solidarity. *Note: prison rape is gender neutral – predators don't discriminate.

...
While your situation may leave you with the choice to report the SA/A incident or not, I was unable to conceal injuries in the course of a medical exam, the fact of the rape was noted, and I lost control of the situation. The nurse insisted on taking swabs of semen, confiscated my underwear, and conducting an intrusive and humiliating exam. I didn't know I had the right to refuse parts or all of this procedure. I was given minimal medical treatment and tossed into Involuntary Protective Custody (IPC) and eventually transferred to another facility. Despite insistence on the SA/A exam and report/investigation by security staff, I was forced to fight with DOC every step of the

way for: Post SA/A; follow-up medical care, STD testing and mental health counseling.

I wasted time and resources – simply due to ignorance of my rights and where to contact support/recovery resources. As of August 2013 state(s) DOCs are mandated by PREA (Prison Rape Elimination Act) to provide specific and comprehensive standards of post SA/A care.

Fight for your rights!

There are some great SA/A/Recovery organizations. Start with Just Detention International (JDI) they literally saved my life while struggling with the aftermath of being raped.

EDITORS NOTE: FEEL FREE TO COMMUNICATE WITH JDI USING LEGAL MAIL, ADDRESSING YOUR CORRESPONDENCE TO:

Cynthia Totten, Esq.
3325 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 340
Los Angeles, CA 90010

I will close by urging you to have faith that you will recover, you will come to embody the survivor spirit.

My Best Wishes For You,
In Solidarity,
Geri Q

Unconquered

BY SHYLA THOMPSON

Veins run with women's blood which burns within of hatred of discrimination Born into the world of oppression They seek to suppress our ways To deteriorate my spirit-n-mind The native woman is worthy of the ancestors ways Their legacy been handed down through many generations My blood flows freely through which society tries to diminish my own very being Constructing concrete with twisted metal, shard-n-shin Enforcing made up laws trying to contain and break me My image does not conformed but makes my desire – everlasting Goals of mine ever expanding the skin I'm into wovon Derive from this beautiful land yet I'm outcast into a misfit

My crimson red color bleeds for bravery and honor consumes my being
Our people ways outright rejected defined by the war battle scars
Knocked down repeatedly though, still standing strongly
Torn though – fully compromised
Despite all my afflictions these chains can't bind my worthy red woman's spirit
Their lies don't hold me down nor does these walls
That restrict my sight because why...
I am an unconquered woman!

Presentation

BY FATIMA MALIKA SHABAZZ

Some years ago, an episode of the Cosby Show dealt with the way Denise presented her new Husband to the family. That was a teachable moment in acceptance verses presentation.

My name is Fatima Malika Shabazz. I am an African American trans woman currently incarcerated in the gulags of California. I have had to on more than one occasion wage war on the facility I am housed in to finally be put on feminizing hormone treatments. But even with all that I am still not being treated in the manner that you would expect a woman to be treated.

It is great that we can get hormone treatments in the system now. I know I for one am grateful for that. But there is still the problem of presentation. That is, being able to present every day as a woman beyond the breast growth that comes along with being on hormones.

We are constantly being harassed for many reasons on this facility. The question is why. Two years ago, this facility at Corcoran (C-SATF) was designated a transgender hub, for medical reasons, mostly because we get hormone shots. Because of this I am at a level 2 facility when I am a level one inmate. But beyond all that, I am not allowed to present as a woman in regard to makeup or style of dress. I am however required to wear a bra, no problem, BUT, if in wearing my bra, I cannot wear a tank top t-shirt unless I alter it so that you cannot see the bra's side side underarm panels, or the straps peaking out.

If I alter the shirt, which I have to do, I am subject to having it confiscated, and being written up for wearing altered clothing. If I

wear makeup, (home made) I am subject to being written up for altering my appearance. All of the canteen items are made for men. We are of course in a "mens prison". So I've been told on more than one occasion. This is all tantamount of psychological torture.

We are, for all intents and purposes woman, that is how we all identify, we all have been diagnosed with Gender Dysphoria, but we are never allowed to truly act as the woman we are as the woman we are; we are always disrespected.

We are being denied the right to live as woman, but really we are being denied the right to properly prepare ourselves for life on the outside as women, because of this forced masculinity. Being called sir, is disrespectful. Being told you aint no woman, is disrespectful. Being patted down coming out of the dining hall is degrading.

Being considered mentally ill because I identify as a woman is also degrading and denigrating. We get hormones and bras, because of a law suit, not because they really want us to have those things, we are not issued panties, because this "is a mens prison", we are not provided with female items in the canteen because we are not considered women.

The medical department is not concerned with transgender specific care. And even the mental health department does not fully comprehend what we go through psychologically in our daily lives around here. We are often told to put our complaints on paper. So the question remains, when do we get to the point where the mental trauma we suffer through every day will be properly attended to.

I go to bed every night wishing I were more physically presentable as a woman, I wake up feeling that way. I go through my day feeling that way, every day all day.

Being denied the opportunity to make that a reality is mentally destroying me. And not recognizing that it is mentally destroying me means that the Department of Corrections is not properly taking care of me in the mental health department, which I perceive as a violation of my 8th amendment rights.

Denying me the proper mental health structure to properly prepare for living as a woman in a free society is a violation, and also allowing the staff to treat me and any transgender person, or any person, in their care as degenerates

unworthy of respect is also cruel and unusual punishment. Until the proper mental health treatments are given, until the proper physical needs are met, we as transgender men, woman, and people, confined in prisons across the nation will continue to be uniquely targeted and hurt.

We all know proper presentation, not just physically, but mentally and emotionally, and without all of those things in place, any no provisions being made by prisons to put them in place, cruel and unusual will always be the norm.

Sincerely,
Fatima Malika Shabazz

Your Dreams Can Become Reality

BY STEPH HOWE

Dreams can come true if you take your time to really think what it is you truly desire for your life. First get to know yourself & find out who you really are. Find your deep interests, & then pursue them. Learn what it is you are really good at. Don't worry if you stumble or make some mistakes. When things seem to not be going right or your way, don't ever give up, just keep at it & try harder. Always find the courage to remain solid & stay strong. Give yourself the freedom to try out new things & don't be so set in your ways that your not able to grow. Do the right thing always, do the ethical way always. Allow yourself to get loose sometimes & laugh feel good. Form new relationships with people that you respect. Treat everyone exactly how you wish to be treated. Most importantly, always be honest with people. People all over the world can handle & work with truth. But those same group of people all hate to be lied to. Don't be afraid to open up & be able to love. Always remain loyal & close to your whole family. Don't ever complain & be appreciative of all that you have. Help & give to those who are less fortunate than you are. Go out of your way to make others life happier. Find a cause and work towards peace in the world. Live your life to the fullest, smile be grateful. Always remember you can not control anything or anyone else but yourself, and only your actions. Dreams can become reality. Pure love & respect, by Steph.