

# [Hearts on a Wire]

Issue # 20— Spring 2017



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♥ support incarcerated and detained trans and gender variant people ♥  
 ♥ build community through bars ♥  
 ♥ organize for justice ♥

We are trans and gender variant people, and our allies, building a movement for gender self-determination, racial and economic justice, and an end to the policing and imprisoning of our communities.

We meet in Philly at  
William Way Center  
1315 Spruce Street

Mondays at 5:30pm  
tokens provided

#### THIS ISSUE'S CONTRIBUTORS

Aamina Morrison ♥ Adrian  
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Anonymous @ Forest  
Bam Bam ♥ Caitlin  
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L.I. ♥ Leah ♥ Mariya  
Max ♥ Maxine  
Miley Selena  
Miss Ceci ♥ Miss Jossy  
Miss Juicy Queen Bee  
Mrs. GeGe  
Ms. Prissy  
Myah ♥ Na'Tia  
Najee Gibson  
Niara AKA Peaches  
Nikita ♥ Queen Jamie  
Ra-Ra ♥ Ronald  
S.J. ♥ Sketch  
Tonesha ♥ Toph ♥ Tyra

Layout: Toph & Adrian  
Cover Art: J.E. Forbes

## LETTER FROM THE OUTSIDE COLLECTIVE

Dear friends,

The outside collective of Hearts on a Wire spent the last months holding space in the face of difficult times. Members participated in an intergenerational dialogue about trans issues for black history month, vigils against violence directed at trans women of color, the women's march in Philadelphia in the face of Trump's inauguration, resistance against the Trump administration's Muslim travel ban, and marches in support of trans youth to access public facilities, such as restrooms.

We have welcomed many members home this year, and we continue to hold up the leadership of people who are formerly incarcerated in our work, both public and private.

We have included pictures and stories from some of those events in this issue to let you see our faces and that we are trying to ensure that queer and trans people in prison have a voice in our local movements. We believe that building stronger alliances with other organizations that are also committed to ending violence, including institutional violence, is crucial to our future.

We maintain strength and dignity through our support for each other, and Hearts on a Wire members remain dedicated to our communities, friends, sisters, and brothers.

♥ Hearts on a Wire

We heard from some of you on the inside that you want to see more photographs from the outside collective. TADA!!



February 16, 2017 letter writing event

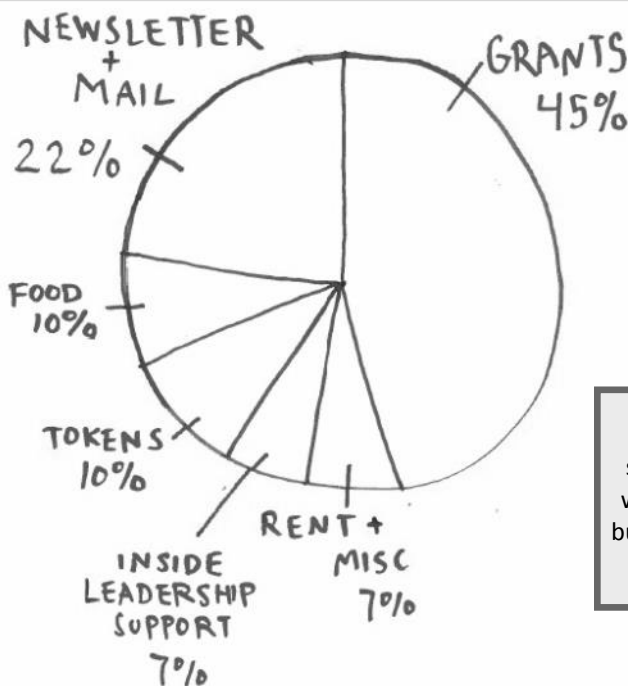


First Hearts on a Wire meeting of 2017 : Adrian, Jossy, Tyra, Myah, Mariya, Najee

# HEARTS ON A WIRE 2016 BUDGET

## HEARTS ON A WIRE OUTSIDE COLLECTIVE

Here is a breakdown of how we spent our funds last year! Just a reminder that we are an all-volunteer collective. There are no salaries for staff, and our operating expenses are very low. We spend most of our money on grants for our members returning home, mailing our newsletter and providing food and tokens to make our outside meetings accessible.



If you have suggestions for how we should spend our budget in 2017, please let us know!

Hearts on a Wire's Homecoming Project is a small grant for transgender and gender variant people coming back from prisons and jails in Pennsylvania who have been away for longer than 6 months. You can receive this grant only one time.

**If you are coming home soon, write us and request an application!**

Hearts on a Wire  
Homecoming Project  
1315 Spruce Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19107

# CREATING CHANGE 2017

KAT DELANCEY

This year the National LGBTQ Task Force held the Creating Change Conference in Philadelphia on January 18-22, 2017. The Philadelphia Marriott

**National LGBT Task Force**

1325 Massachusetts Ave. NW, Ste 600  
Washington, DC 20005

Downtown was the host hotel. Creating Change is the National LGBTQ Task Force's premiere annual event. It's truly a one-of-a-kind organizing and skill building event where LGBTQ community members

and allies gather. Creating Change has grown to over 3,500 attendees from all over the country, from all walks of life., and it's getting bigger every year. The four-day program included over 350 workshops and training sessions, plus tons of networking opportunities.

On Saturday January 21, Outside Collective Member Kat Delancey presented information about the work Hearts on A Wire does on a local level during an interactive panel discussion. She was joined by folks from Lambda Legal who presented information about the work they do on a national level. Kat shared her personal experiences during county

**LAMDA LEGAL**

120 Wall Street , 19th Fl.  
NY, NY 10005-3904

confinement. While Kat does not have experience with penitentiary confinement, she noted a lot of information that has been shared by Hearts' Inside Collective. The interactive portion went amazing. The turnout was about 25 people in the audience which allowed for great discussion and questions.



Outside Collective Members Tyra Johnson, Kat Delancey, Mariya Oneby after the interactive panel discussion, Creating Change 2017.

# EMBRACING WHO I AM

ERIN

Hi my name is Erin, and I'm a transgender girl. I haven't always embraced who I am. For most my life, I hid and denied who I truly was.

I didn't come out publicly or embrace myself 'til I ended up in prison. I lived under a mask named Chad. I forced myself to act and play like one of the guys. I spent many nights crying myself to sleep. Wishing for a miracle, or an end to the life I hated so much. I felt like I was alone, and no one understood.

Puberty was a hard time, because things started changing in me that I found repulsive. Dating was a nightmare for me. I went for the prettiest and skinniest girls I could find. I later realized this was due to wanting to be them. At puberty I started using drugs. It was an escape from the body I hated so much.

When I went to prison I told my parents I was gay, but I still wasn't happy. After I was moved to state prison and being around transgender girls for a while. I finally admitted to myself: I'm a girl, and there's nothing wrong with me.

It was a relief to finally not be hiding. For the first time in my life I was

happy. I cried all night but they were tears of joy.

If you're out there, and read this, you're not alone. I understand. I also care. You're beautiful, don't hide yourself from the world. It will kill you in the end. You deserve to be happy.

Your girl Erin

Shout out to my man I love you baby.



Artwork: "Pretty Zone" Miley Selena

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# DEDICATED TO YOU

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## MS. JUICY QUEEN BEE

In life we all go through struggles and we complain about everything, blaming everyone except ourselves here it is black history month and we owe it to the people that fought for us to stop oppressing each other and put our differences to the side and fight back saying we won't give up. We need to educate our children who need us the most. They killing each other, oppressing each other, why? Cause they see us doing it. I'm not just talking about LGBTQ or the non-homosexual. When our people fought to end slavery they didn't do it for us to turn on our own people. If Martin Luther King was still here he would be putting us in our place now I understand the outrage about police killing our youth and black people but what about the killing among ourselves and transsexuals who no one cries about? I say we need to take a stand and stop hating each other and be strong and stand united as a team. So in closing brothers and sisters know that you are loved and don't let no one get in your way stand tall and declare that 2017 is our year.

Hearts on a Wire received several letters from inside members asking for information about an incarcerated couple who were able to get married.

Right after same-gender marriage became legal we were in touch with a few people who were trying to get permission from the DOC to marry their sweethearts in the same prisons, but have no confirmation thus far that anyone has been successful.

### **IF THIS IS YOU WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!**

First, we want to hear the procedure you went through to get permission. More importantly, we want to hear all about your wedding! What was everyone wearing? Were there flowers? What kind? Who officiated? Did you write your own vows? Was there a party? Etc.

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## JUST TO BE WITH YOU

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### SKETCH

Written with a pen  
Sealed with a Kiss  
Will you love me Dear  
Please answer me this  
Out of all the Boys I've ever met  
You're the one I've never forget  
Because your heart  
Is like a bar of Gold  
Hard to Hold, Hard to Get  
And If I go to heaven one day  
And You're not there  
by Judgment day  
I'll know You're gone  
the Other Way so in return  
I'll give these Angels  
Back these wings  
Golden Harps and Godly things  
Just to come back down  
Just to be With You

# EXCERPTS AND SHOUT-OUTS...

## LETTERS AND LOVE XXXO

Hello Hearts on a wire,

Let me introduce myself, my name is Jamie. When I read the encouragement and words of wisdom it makes me smile. I embrace my sexuality very firmly and believe in being who I am with no regrets. I love you Hearts on a Wire, and the rest of my queer family also.

Sincerely,  
Queen Jamie

I met GeGe a while back and am glad she got this LIGHT up and running, good looking out girl! To my Kings and Queens I love you all.

Sketch

to my extended lgbtq fam I send greetings to all; to our beloved mr. lowe I love you; to my brother the finest at huntingdon much love boo boo; to mr. two stars I miss you hope all is well; rosie, love hey sis, I know you're a good person despite our differences; alicia hey boo it's been years sexy lady; Jeff you're in my thoughts; penny hey baby write me miss you a lot; angel hey sis miss you; leema what's happening I miss you sis; tara no shade girl you worked me; maxine hey boo my old celly miss you babe; love to all, until the war is won fight the power in unity

XO niara AKA peaches

Dear Hearts On A Wire,

Shouts out to Mariah at Forest, Yum Yum, ASIA, La La, at Benner and at some point I'll get to see you all gain.. I'm here at Mahanoy, So I see all of the Sisters & Brothers that are here..

There has been a set back for me, I was coming up for parole and was denied! I miss Philadelphia so much.. I've been away since 2010, and it's now 2017...

I send my hellos to all at Hearts on a Wire for all the info that's being sent out and around, as well as the avenue for us to keep in touch and contribute to the cause. Together we will receive the fairness we deserve as a people and a culture with no more discrimination for our way of Life, and Love..

Hawk

I'm giving shoutouts 101: For André, For Snook, V, Storms, Skittle kid too, Lil Rob, Tommy, Stretch and all the men who love their girls. All of you are cute and strong. Shout out to Juicy, Erica, Bre'air, Pearl, Penny, Heather, Tara, Joanne, Maxine, Kelli, Samone, Ms. CeCe, Asia, Lexi, Twanna, Chuckie, Ms. Chickie, Ms. J, J-Lo, Ms. Simmons, and all the girls out there. You're beautiful, sexy and a diamond, keep sweet. Shout out to all the trans men. You are handsome and true blue, love all of you too. Stay strong.

Miley Selena



# ...FROM THE MAIL

## OXXOX LETTERS AND LOVE

To my HOAW family,

Hello again to all of you kings and queens. All across this great rainbow spectrum. I pray all of you are doing ok and in good health. As for me I am doing ok myself yet. Even though a lot of us are locked up...

The only thing I want is for all of the kings and queens out there in the rainbow spectrum to take a couple minutes to remember all the kings and queens we have lost. From health issues or being killed by others...

I feel this is so important to pay our respects to them. For things they may have done to make our way of life better... And also for them being themselves each and every day. Please keep them in our minds and in our hearts.

Well an update on me and my life. I was writing a guy out on the streets. Writing him about every day. And even sent him some nice cards also...

I was buying phone cards from the commissary every month. So I could call him every week. Well I thought he was the right one. He promised me the world and love. But to find out it was all lies on his part...

So now I watch every day slip by once again. Without a partner or lover in my life today. But it's cool though for real!

All kings and queens should be proud to be who they are every day! Don't let those "haters" of this world keep us down or try to. Walk around and hold our heads up high. Smile and be happy every day and night.

That's what I plan on doing now every day and night.

I will close for now all you kings and queens. Bye Bye for now with much much love for all of you my family...

With love,

Jessa from SCI Mahanoy



Artwork: Miley Selena

# EXCERPTS AND SHOUT-OUTS...

## LETTERS AND LOVE XXXXO

Dear Hearts On A Wire Family,

Greetings! I wanna give a shout out to Ms. Shailynn from HOAW for her giving me a happy but belated Happy Birthday.

I also wanna give a special shout out to the boogie high maintenance Queen of Houtzdale: Ms. Prissy for finding true love. Respect to you and your king, I hope he recognizes that he definitely have a rider and priceless jewel.

Lastly I don't know you personally but Juicy you're a strong young woman. I read your articles in HOAW and what Black & Pink. Keep your head up Mami! You are in my thoughts!

Pounds 4 the Kings & Kisses for the Queens!

Chaos

Victor Mosley IN3683  
P.O. Box 99991  
SCI Pittsburgh  
Pittsburgh, PA 15233

Dear HOAW Community:

My name is Miss Danielle Guthrie and I would like to send all my love to my sisters & brothers in the PA DOC. Being transgender in here is hard but we are strong together.

It seems a lot of our community here at Somerset are caught up in the drama. Please just love yourself and each other, save those angry faces and harsh words for the haters of our kind!

If you not going to the Trans support group meetings please go. The info we got so far has helped a lot. Oh yeah, thanks to Miss Miley for providing info and stuff for girls like me who don't know where to start.

Lots of Love <3,

Danielle

D. Guthrie MQ7942  
SCI Somerset  
1600 Walters Mill Road  
Somerset, PA 15510

Seeing the big family on TV is really something, seeing Penny and the rest of the old school queens. To all the old school queens, if you can, I say show the ones that's going about doing this and that, show them we care, and slow down.

Shout out to Mrs. Reilly, Mariah, SJ, Chip, GeGe, Miley, Diamond. I miss seeing you all at Forest be good, and Miley, I like your art work, in issue 19. To all the LGBTQs all over, peace. Mariah take off that hat big head hahaha miss you, SJ, what's up!

Peace out,

Bam Bam

# ...FROM THE MAIL

## OXXOX LETTERS AND LOVE

Mrs. Elmo. From the start, I knew I loved you. Through it all. I want to spend the rest of my life with you. It's been a crazy 9 months, but I'd relive it all with you. From Day 1, 5/16/16, to the present day.

We may have our Differences.

But in the end.

I just want Happiness and Peace with you. And if ever it becomes a crime to love you.,

Then I'd proudly take LIFE, Because nothing could take my Love for you.

Whenever you are in need, I am always here for you.

Stay Strong Beautiful. For I am strong for you.

I love you and I miss you.

Love your loving,

Mr. Elmo Lopergolo Samana



Shoutouts to Jaina, Chi-Chi, Juicy and Keyona Love. I love all ya and keep ya heads up.

Anonymous at SCI Forest

Dear HOAW Family:

Today I received some good news, my book publisher said my book could be released as early as January 2018. I'm so excited. The birthing of it didn't come easy. I had it sent back 4 times for more edits, some of the criticism hurt my feelings. I worked 3 years to hear the company say "this is what the world needs to hear." I recently picked the cover and I am titling it "I'm turning a mess into a message." Remember the title.

Love yous so much.

Ms. Prissy @ SCI Houtzdale

shout out to Ms. Bre, Precious (White Chocolate), "E", Ms. Dutch, and his new lover.

I would like to give a shout out to Ms. Pearl, Ms. Redds, Ms. Twanda, Ms. Nascar and Ms. Precious up there at Fayette. Shout out to my wife Samantha that's out there on the streets since 2014. Shout out to Ms. Candy that went home from Houtzdale and Ms. Joanne that went home from Benner. With Love,

Mr. Collin Henderson AKA CU or OJ

## EVEN MORE MAIL...

### LETTERS AND LOVE. AND QUESTIONS.

Dear Family,

It's Bookie, as always I'm going great, I've been out the hole since January. To all the new family and queens, I was in the hole for 2 years, it was a bad 2 years for me but now I'm out the door. I'm maxing out my time June 19, 2017, not long and I will always keep in touch with the LGBTQ community and family I love all of y'all. Shout to Ms. GeGe. Don't forget about me sis. There is talk from LT's and Majors that they will be making J Block up here a transgender block so that the queens can be safe. A couple weeks ago a queen got beat up real bad on the west side for being transgender, it was by inmates. It makes me angry how people judge others because of their sexuality. Everyone knows I am bi and that I love my queens, and they respect that but there are a few that talk. But everyone knows my saying, be you be cool. Never act something you're not. I just want all the queens to know Bookie's here. I'm a king and I take care of mine.

**Note from the outside collective:** Has anyone else heard about this? What are incarcerated trans folks' thoughts on this? Would you prefer to be in a separate unit? Is that segregation? Is that preferable? What are the pros and cons?

Bookie (Nathaniel Griffin)  
Coal Township  
LGBTQ Always

Dear Hearts on a Wire,

To all my brothers and sisters currently in the RHU, SMU, or program that got you isolated from general population I got a question do your correction officers try to single you out going to the shower. I'm just asking because I want to know if it's really a policy or not that you got to wear your towel around your neck well or if it's just a rule they made here. Today on 6 to 2 shift ran showers on D Pod and told me, only me, that I couldn't wear my towel around my waist. Everybody said that ain't true, they said file a complaint, I won't win. Please let me know what I ask that way I can have more evidence of discrimination against Huntingdon and the DOC.

**Note from the outside collective:** Can anyone else confirm DOC policies, or lack thereof, about where you must wear your towel?

~ Juicy Queen Bee

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# RELATIVES AND FAMILY

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ANDRÉ LORENZANO

Blood: Even though we're not blood related, we all share the same common goal: Peace, love, happiness, togetherness and high expectations for oneself

Relatives: We're all related by these standards which should make us stronger forever...

Loyalty: At some point of time, we havta have this. It's like a chain that's well tightened, once we get one loose or broken link, we all fall apart. We have to stand strong with one another, regardless of our flaws...

Family: And it starts with being a family, loving one another, being there for one another, caring for one another and understanding each other's problems...

Remember: Blood makes us relatives, loyalty makes us family! Which one will you choose?

---

## UNTITLED

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L.I.

I love you, that's true,

Thru storms and all, Even when you say we're thru.

I love you, it's a fact,

I'm here for you, and will always have your back.

I love you, It's right,

God brought us together, in this cold life.

I love you, and it's real,

Let me tell the whole world, I love you still.

See J., you brought meaning to my life,

I'm dedicated to you only, for you're my wife.

When it's dark, you're my light.

Thank you for your smile and love,

But most importantly I thank God above for you, my love...

On the other hand I want to thank you for your patience and understanding. For trying and not giving up. We've both done wrong, but forget that bae, I love you too much to go on.

Tell the hataz it's L.I. and J. B. for life.

Now open your eyes...

I'm telling the world I love J.B.

And remember baby: It's us against the world...

Til death do us part!

## NO FEAR

BOOKIE

AKA NATHANIEL GRIFFIN

Pain is the essence of the mind  
Fear is of the Heart  
Past things are of our memories  
so start new at being you  
You can change al the sad memories  
Be al you can be  
Having No Fear you will succeed.  
I've traveled a long way  
And one thing I can say,  
I've come to a better place  
many obstacles were in my way  
But my strength I pulled through  
Having No fear to press on.  
And I've made it this far  
I was drowned with my sorrows  
Flooded with tears  
No matter what I tried  
It seemed I wouldn't win  
Became stuck to my cell  
far from population  
I pondered why I put myself in  
This situation.  
But I began to face my fears  
overcoming all my pain  
And deep in my heart  
I was finally me  
finally Free.  
I fought and succeeded  
And I found Peace  
Now no matter where I am  
I'm finally me.  
Now let my new life begin.



Doodle: Miss Ceci

## BONNIE & CLYDE

MAXINE

We fuss and fought  
Through it all, only together closer we  
were brought  
Like Bonnie & Clyde  
Faithfully we remained that ride or die  
Through ups and downs  
Whether sadness or frowns  
We stick around  
To give that other the lift off the  
ground  
Was never money hungry  
And I stick by you showing you love  
that's not phony

## DECISION

ANONYMOUS @ FOREST

The universal solvent encases me  
like a tomb  
Yet not fear of death crosses the mind.  
Much like a fetus in the womb  
waiting its time.  
Neither eager nor stagnate,  
just in state of contemplation.  
Should I hesitate or accelerate  
this situation.  
Though my aquatic surroundings  
essential for my existence.  
But I still feel the need to be resistant.  
Instinct compels me to seek freedom.  
Release myself and realize  
divine wisdom.  
So I shall with will, courage  
and persistence.

## THE COMMUNITY

JUICY

One day,  
One challenge,  
One celebration at a time...  
We have become a community  
With a crazy, funny  
Love heart,  
We have built a community  
Filled with warmth and love,  
Made it a place  
Where love and  
Dreams can grow...  
And help the youth  
To grow and love,  
No matter the hate and or the abuse  
And to live every day  
Like no other  
We are so thankful to have a  
community  
That love all no matter the  
difference,  
So we send love and peace to all.

\* Dedicated to Precious Love @ Smithfield.  
The ones who love you as you are.

## HEAR MY CRY

S.J.

Will you hear me if i cry,  
Above the thunder of anger,  
Over blasts of fear and hate,  
When help comes not at all.  
Or when it comes too late?  
When street explode with fire,  
And hearts grow dead with grief,  
When all the sounds are sad,  
And there's no more relief?  
Will you hear me if i cry?  
Will you come before i die?

## THE SEARCH

MAXINE

We search but rarely find  
The kind of love that's in our hearts or  
in our minds  
The kind of love that's unconditional  
The kind of feelings that's not just  
traditional  
The kind of love that's truly your own  
But rarely has this love been  
introduced to us or known  
Little did we know we had it all along  
As God continued to bless us daily  
whether right or wrong  
But most of us continue to look  
As something from each of the  
unworthy  
ones has been stolen by the crooks  
The very ones we layed in bed with  
In the end, often at times leave you for  
dead  
The ones who will be with you behind  
closed doors  
But soon as they get their satisfaction  
Shut you out of their life for sure

This is dedicated to everyone searching for love and acceptance, those who have lost their lives to senseless killings and tragic suicides. Know I feel your pain. I live this life every day until it's time to meet my brothers and sisters who are no longer here. So let's not shrug our shoulders or be shady fanning it off as if it wasn't you, 'cause like it or not, you are affected by everything as the LGBTQ community. This year stand for something or fall for anything. Whether you're in the closet or not, get those chainsaws and bust out! Or you will never truly be happy. You'd be surprised how many are hidden but us Queens surely know...

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## RIP BAMBI

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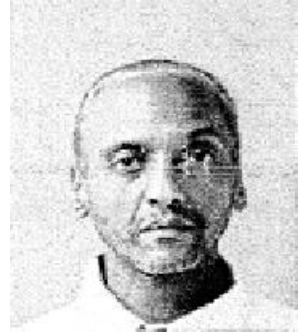
### HEARTS ON A WIRE OUTSIDE COLLECTIVE

We heard from several of you about the passing of long time Heart on a Wire member Bambi Paige.

We are deeply saddened to report that Bambi died in custody at SCI Graterford in early February. There was a memorial service February 8.

Our hearts break for Bambi's family, husband, closest friends, and her community. You are in our thoughts and prayers.

Rest in Peace Bambi, you were loved and will be sorely missed.



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## OUTSIDE PERSON LOOKIN' IN

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### ANDRÉ LORENZANO

My name is André, I'm from South Philly. I am a good friend to the person we all knew as Bambi, we're from the same projects. Bambi fought for us in the project as kids. In County, Bambi always had my back or somethin' for me. I ran across some disrespectful, ignorant, nasty and obnoxious people. I would have had that same type of attitude of a person outside looking in.

At SCI Graterford I met a transgender woman, I was amazed at how she transformed her body into something beautiful, like a potter do to a vase. I

had her first bra made. I had to ask her how you want it, is it too tight, do you want it lifted up. She answered all my questions but for a person outside looking in they would have been disgusted and ignorant to the gorgeous thing presented to them.

Remember, in order to change the minds of others we have to change within. Until then, games, frustration and curiosity will always play a part of their way of thinking for a outside person looking in.





↑↑ Heart's Meeting Space ↑↑

Carilyn from  
Hearts

Mrs. GeGe  
L.I.G.H.T.

Ms. Lynn

# HOW TO WRITE A SUCCESSFUL GRIEVANCE

MRS. GE GE

Most of what I will be talking about is based on Pennsylvania Department of Corrections (DOC) policy. But this information might be useful in other states. Whenever you need to write a [grievance](#), you should first review the policy in your facility regarding grievances. In Pennsylvania (PA), that policy is DC-ADM 804. Remember that not all grievances are winners, so it is important to find any [case law](#) that is similar to your situation to use in the grievance.

If your prison requires you to try to resolve the issue with staff before a grievance, then do so. Even if you know they will not help. You want to exhaust all remedies first. [Remedies](#) are things that can be done to resolve or fix an issue. It is also a good idea to get in the habit of documenting all interactions between you and staff, and other important events. This can be done by simply keeping a journal to log the dates, times, and locations, and what staff are involved. That way, if later you need to recall certain information, you have a detailed log to rely on. In PA if you ask for a grievance, you will be asked what it is for. Answer cautiously. You don't have to say names unless you are asked. You don't want to give a heads up to staff that the grievance is about them. Just give the basics.

The *Jailhouse Lawyer's Handbook* and the *Prisoners' Rights Handbook* are a good start for finding case law to match up with your grievance. Even if you can't find similar cases or yours doesn't seem to be a winner, you can still file the

grievance. The *Prisoners' Rights Handbook* was written for people in PA prisons, but it covers U.S. Supreme Court decisions that apply to people in any state or the federal system.

Also, you should review any and all policies that the issue pertains to. In PA, Policy 7.2.1 states that any staff receiving a DC-135A Request to Staff must respond within 5 working days,

excluding holidays and weekends. If you have sent the request and it is not

To get a copy of the *Jailhouse Lawyer's Handbook* and the *Prisoners' Rights Handbook*, you can write to this address. They will send it to you for free. They also have a *PA Directory of Services*.

**PA Institutional Law Project**  
718 Arch Street  
Suite 304 South  
Philadelphia, PA 19106

answered within that timeframe, then staff are in violation of your due process rights.

Now you are ready to file your grievance. Get all your thoughts together. Get all the relevant information. If you have witnesses, remember, you cannot file a joint grievance. You just want them to be mentioned in the grievance. If the issue affects them, they can file a separate grievance and use you as the witness and vice versa.

You want to be as detailed as possible. But do not tell them your life story. You want to be as direct as possible. State the facts and the evidence. Attach any supporting documents, but make sure to make copies for yourself first. They don't have to give you copies of any submitted material.

Most prisons have time limits for filing a grievance, and staff have time limits to respond to your grievance. In PA, you have 15 work days to file your grievance, and staff have 15 work days to respond. However, they also have the option of an extension of time to respond. In PA, they can get an additional 10 work days to respond. The same limits apply to an appeal to the facility manager. On the final level of appeals, you have 15 work days from the date they responded to file your appeal, and the DOC has 30 work days to respond and an extension of 10 work days. Remember, the time limits apply on the date the grievance is received, not the date you write it. The date should be logged on the receipt of grievance.

In your appeal, you can only raise issues that are in your initial grievance or decisions the facility or DOC makes that your grievance was frivolous, which basically means that the grievance has no real cause. They are pretty much calling you a cry baby. Do not let that stop you, though. Appeal through all levels, and if you are not satisfied with the results, you can raise a lawsuit.

I hope this information is useful to you all, and I encourage you all to get to the library and review any and all policies in the prison you are in. This is how we learn to use these policies to our advantage and stop the gulags from taking advantage of us. We must learn to unite and teach and help each other to win this struggle. I send you all my love and solidarity...

Sincerely, Mrs. Ge Ge

This article was reprinted with permission of the author from *Prison Health News*, Issue 31.

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# QUESTIONS FOR SO-CALLED EXPERTS ON TRANS PEOPLE AND TRANS ISSUES

MISS CECI

If someone considers themselves an expert on a particular subject, then that subject wouldn't disagree with his or her analysis, because they'd know or feel that they're correct.

Can someone be an expert on cars & not know how to drive?



Can a heart surgeon be an expert on cardiology and never been in a operating room, or is it considered a (PRACTICE) once he or she began?

For the sake of clarity, do (expert) and (practice) have the same meaning?

Can a boxer be a pro (expert) in the field and art of Boxing and never have been in the ring?

Can a psychologist in the field of Neuroscience understand all Trans issues and needs, and if so, could that be categorizing all of us in one category?

Are we all alike? Do all Trans people think alike and want the same things?

Do we have the right to exist?

Do we have the right to live?

Does the mysterious death of Marsha Johnson deserve an investigation, or is it OK to mark it off as a suicide, case closed, NO FURTHER INVESTIGATION NEEDED? How can something be ruled a suicide without investigating? Does every average homicide/murder get the same attention, or lack thereof?

If I feel a certain way about myself should I not be myself because it doesn't conform to your approval?

Should I live to satisfy your acceptance?

Or would it emotionally hurt me?

# DISCIPLINARY CONFINEMENT

## MISS JUICY

To all my brothers in Disciplinary Confinement listen up this is for you and this is important information. This is for non-informal hearings by the Hearing Examiner. Here are the steps to take in your appeal process:

### **Disciplinary Hearing Due Process**

1. You're entitled to witnesses and counsel as long as it does not threaten security.
2. You have the right to have evidence reviewed by signing a waiver.
3. You may submit a written version and keep copies of everything for yourself AND the appeal to final review

**Tip:** send a copy of everything to someone you trust. The DOC will destroy property and evidence

Under DC-ADM 801 You cannot file a grievance against the Hearing Procedure or misconduct itself. But...

Put EVERY issue you have dealing with **due process bias** on your appeal! Don't plead guilty then challenge the DOC policy being unconstitutional and unequal.

The PRC only has 15 working days\* to answer your appeal from the day they receive it. If it is denied, appeal to the facility manager who have 7 working days to answer your appeal. Next, raise every issue you want to raise in court in your appeals all the way to the central office.

After you exhaust your remedies you can get relief in court.

You can also file a grievance. It's going to be rejected. Appeal it to the facilities manager then the chief grievance officer. After your appeal you got from 1 year to 2 years to file your lawsuit.

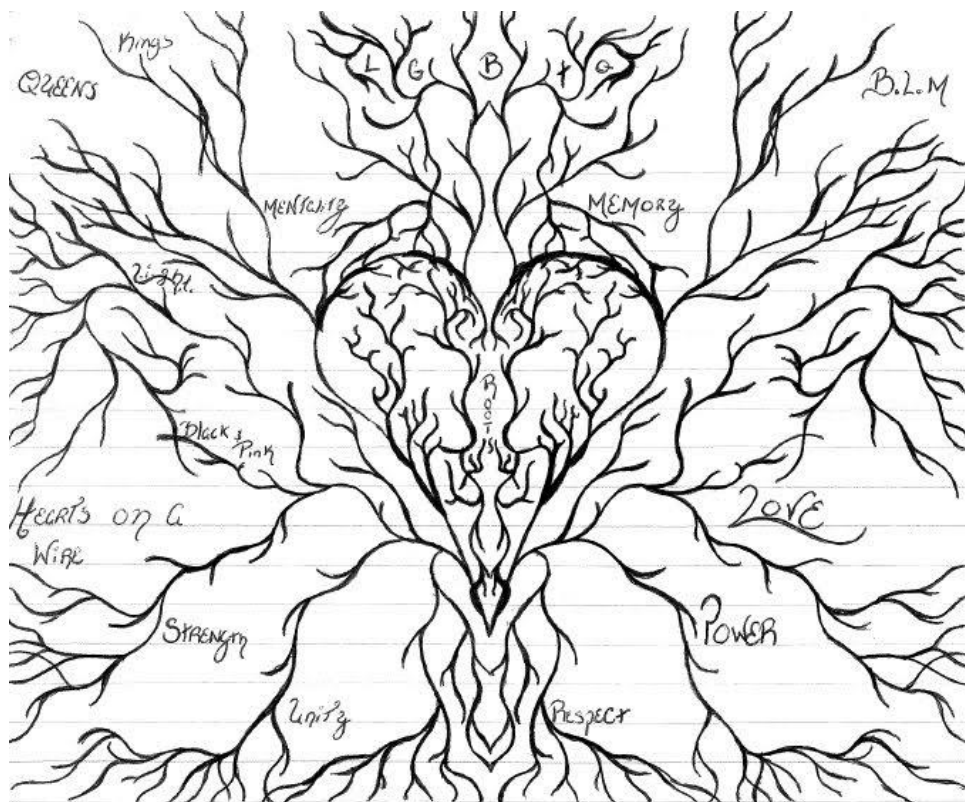
If you bring a due process claim the following case will help you. The Supreme Court ruled in *Sandin v. Conner* than an inmate can only bring a claim once he or she prove that their confinement deprives them of life and liberty to everyday prison life. Meaning you must show that an "atypical and significant hardship on the inmate in relation to the ordinary incidents of prison life." 515 US 472 (1995).

In closing, brothers and sisters if you get a sexual misconduct and the DOC slaps you with a PREA. This is what you must do to challenge PREA both at the State and Federal level. The DOC is violating our rights. File a complaint with your senator or state representative for your region, if you want to push federal issues.

\*working days = excluding weekends and holidays

# BRANCHES OF OUR STRENGTH

KING BOOKIE



Artwork: King Bookie

No matter what we go through and what others say us together will branch out and become stronger each day. We will never fade we have too much love for one another and can and will help each other. No matter what others say, always be you. Don't let no one dictate what you will and won't be no matter your gender no matter your sexual preference you can be whatever you want to be. So what I always say Be you and Be cool. Yours always, King Bookie. All love.

# A GIRL LIKE ME

AAMINA MORRISON

Let me be quite honest--

Y'all gon' forget a girl like me--

I'm not a fav, I'm not the "It" girl...so I was never comfortable with talking about what happens to me as a trans woman, fearing that I'll be called a liar (which has happened) or given some cheap, cliché response about my hardships. These murders make me think about a lot of things, including what my future, and other girls like me will have to look forward to...

If we do not die by the hands of those who fetishize us, we will die alone- Because all we have been told is "Our 'one' will come" but never pointed in the direction of where that 'one' is...Picked apart about who/how/why we love/are loved, almost as if it makes y'all more comfortable if we act as entertainment, activists, and caregivers... blamed for "loving the trade" but never stepping up as the alternative, the better choice, and never offering other options. So we turn to one another... and you shame us for that...

Our bodies are constantly critiqued... as well as how we use them...

Our passability is constantly judged, often used to shame those we've lost, or used as a valid reason why we've lost them...

We don't look right, we don't talk right, we don't act right...we gotta be nice all the time if we want people to respect us...

What we do to y'all, huh? Why can't we live here, like how Y'ALL live here? Why are we destined to give up love, respect, and our aspirations for our lives to only be these things to the world?

Our identities are never good enough to be affirmed...

We even have to create our own equality...create our own ways out while we stand on the front lines to create better ways for everyone else...

Why is living in my truth synonymous with why someone wants to kill me?

We are born into this world just like everyone else... Why can't we live here?

What we do to y'all, huh?

Aamina Morrison is the Program Coordinator for the Trans-health Information Project (TIP)

# SUBMISSIONS

## RULES & GUIDELINES

### You can send us...

- Letters
- Artwork (black and white)
- Interviews
- Articles responding to current events, prison policies, and this newsletter
- How-to articles
- Poetry
- Ideas
- Contribuciones en español son muy bienvenidos!

### If you contribute make sure you tell us...

1. Exactly how you want to be credited [anonymous? ID number? Chosen name?]  
**\*\*\*we will only use your government name if you explicitly tell us to do so**
2. Whether it's OK to say the facility you are/were in
3. Please respect other people's privacy; only make disclosures about yourself.
4. No shade

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