

THE INSIDERS SCOOP

Produced by the participants of the John Howard Society literacy program:
The best of prison literacy and art, created by inmates for inmates

December 2011

UNEARTHED

Mother Nature gave us a gift of life: Earth
The plants and animals.
You could never put a value
On what they're worth
The only thing that deviates this plan
is the beasts of green
Some call them man
Take, take, take, is all we've done
She now has had enough, and her patience?
Down to none.
The elements: Fire, water, earth and air
She's laying the law down
and we will tumble in despair
Fire in the form of scorching sun
Flares that burn us up
Water shows its strength with water spouts
Monsoons, tsunamis
Earth as it quakes
And pulls the ground
from beneath us down under
And air? Hurricanes, tornadoes,
lightning and thunder
Warned many times, man refused to see
She is now ridding the world of you and me
Can you blame her?

TERENCE DESJARLAIS
AKA "NOT BIG PUN"



IN THIS ISSUE: JHS students sound off on Bill C-10 and police brutality, and our *Scoop* contributors roll out the usual awesome poetry and pics.



THE JOHN HOWARD SOCIETY
OF MANITOBA, INC.

FROM THE EDITOR

Seasons' Greetings, *Scoop* readers! As always our winter edition of the newsletter is jam-packed with great writing from inmates and former inmates all over Manitoba. The holidays can be a dreary time of year for people in jails and prisons, but hopefully getting to check out some fantastic poems, prose, and pictures will make a difference to those spending the season on the inside.

I'd also like to use this space to remind WRC folks on 400A and 400B about JHS's literacy program, which offers group and one-to-one instruction for people looking to improve their reading and writing skills. It's a tiny program — open to only one floor in the Remand Centre — and we've usually got a wait list, but get a hold of us and we'll try to see you as soon as we can. Contact Jacquie in the literacy department at 775-1514, ext. 303.

Literacy also offers the "Get the Story Out" program, where fathers (or grandfathers, cousins, or older brothers) can record themselves reading to

their child and have the book and recording sent as a gift. This program is open to male inmates on all floors of the Remand Centre, and Elizabeth Fry runs a similar program for women at WRC.

Finally, we hope you enjoy the December calendar below, courtesy of one of our loyal *Scoop* contributors. Whether you're counting down the days till Christmas, till your release, or just till the next Jets game airs on TV, it's handy to have a way to keep track of time.

Until next time, take care and happy reading!

Jacquie Nicholson
Literacy Coordinator



	s	m	t	w	t	f	s
December					1	2	3
	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
	25	26	27	28	29	30	31

2011



*Season's Greetings from the staff at JHS!
If you are able, come and see us
at 583 Ellice in the New Year!*

John Howard Society is your one-stop shop for reintegration services such as clothing and hygiene items, anger management programs, and resources for housing, pardons, addictions treatment, counseling and more. Folks in the community can also participate in our literacy program, which will be running both group courses and one-to-one tutoring out of our office starting in the New Year. We also have a new bail program that includes both residential and community components (but you need to be referred by a lawyer if you'd like to be considered for the program). For more information on the bail program, contact 775-6991. For more info on reintegration or literacy services, contact 775-1514.

POETRY

DEATH OF A FATHER

How long has it been
Since I've held you in my arms,
I never knew this love existed
Till you won me with your charms.
Took you by the hands,
Taught you how to walk,
Heard "I love you Dad"
When you learned to talk.
But that was long ago,
When we were a family,
Now I'm left alone,
With just a memory.
Wish I could take back,
All those times that I yelled,
I wasn't angry with you,
Just fed up with myself.
My life was a mess,
Always fighting with your mom,
And asking myself,
"Where did I go wrong?"
If I could turn back time
I would make things right,
Instead I'm only with you
In my dreams at night.
Now living without you,
Isn't living at all.
No more flowers in the springtime,
Or changing leaves in the fall.
Though my heart keeps beating,
And tears still flow from my eyes,
Since you've been gone,
I feel dead inside.

Guilty Until Proven Innocent



MONDAY TILL SUNDAY

I don't know where to start,
Now that things have really fallen apart.
Certain things I don't understand,
No choice but to let things get out of hand.
As time moves along, I will fix it in the best way I can.
How to start or how to go, too much pain in my mind to know.
As I sit here watching the rain, the pain slowly goes away.
Reading books, turning page after page, so that my
Rage stays put and in place.
Always trying to forget my rage and smile as I go by.
But day after day as I sit in this cage, it begins by
Making rock hard fists.
I look at pictures trying to stay calm or read my
Letters before I become an explosive bomb.
To prevent such days, I stay hidden and out of the way.
Angry most of the time, so if I'm not loving and
Respecting by Monday, we will wait until Sunday
So that way we can't say,
I didn't try.

Traper P. Cook



UNTITLED

Sitting silently vibing thoughts colliding
like two asteroids in space universal rhyming
words are the creation the vortex that I'm in
This is mind spellz leave our the hyphen
I'm the new found star that hasn't been hiding
I shine bright more when I siphon
This is whut you get when my thoughts are arriving
A sound of hip hop lyrical enlightened
Sitting silently swaying thoughts raging
My volcanic mind tired of being caged in
So I release with fire the words I'm displaying
this is mind spells and yes we are blazing
aim for destruction a disaster I've been craving
call me atomic boom my sound is amazing
This is what you get when my thoughts go playing
A sound of hip hop the music I'm creating

Monte AKA Bad Conscience

POETRY

WITH TEARS IN OUR EYES

To see the love of life upon your face
And dreams dancing in your eyes
That make the anger disappear
And flutter off in time
Your smiling face and loving embrace
With tears in your eyes
The hate you show, you'll never know
May only be a disguise
Your loving eyes will look upon me
With that special certain glance
You know our love will always be
To that never-ending romance
The choice is yours you may be right
You'll never know my dear
You showed me love then pushed away
And left me with a tear
To you with all my heart and soul,

Rob

SORRY

I'm sorry I hurt, I hurt your heart
That heart I loved please forgive me by a fresh start
Forget the past, I'm here now
to fix the crack in your heart
You are the angel in my dreams all I do is think
I had a dream that made me think
Why did I hurt that heart that made me complete
Those eyes I love that make you see
My hands that rub your back 2 sleep
Your lips so soft your kiss to me
This hustler slash daddy I had to be
Back to this dream
I'm in a place and locked up these charges I face
Three meals a day just waiting for that day
To walk out those doors call you on the phone
And tell you I'm free
I want no more tears and a smile on your face
I want it back to normal remember those days
All lovey dovey and both on the same page
So please forgive me 4 the saying I say
I'm sorry my love for these games I played.

Geebee AKA Chambers

HOPE

different emotions going through my mind
I don't know what it is I am trying to find
hiding all my fear soon all of my pain shall
appear but for now I shall shed no tear. I'm
tired of the person I become. For myself I
should be ashamed what can I do I feel
like a fool they will find out
what I'm really about
that will be the day I shall pay for
all the selfishness I disobeyed the things I
could've conquered now I'm in this place
where I don't want to be can't do a thing but
wait and see I have a lot to think about
before the big day comes I do hope and pray
that I could be let out so many days I was
starting to doubt that I will never get a chance
to live my life the way it should be.

Andy Starr

DEDICATED TO RAY-RAY #15

Yesterday I read your poem, and today another
Reading words spoken only from the heart,
Constantly reminded of the day we first met in the
bowl.

Hey, how's it going would probably be in order.
But wherever the chains bound you by...
I hope you know today Justice is thinking of you!

A day has come, and another passes,
But I wanted you to know, not a day passes
Where I'm not reminded of you...

I read your poems today, and tomorrow
I'll probably read another, but know this
It's your turn to read one dedicated to you.

Wherever life takes, whatever path God takes us on
I hope someday that we get to meet.
Until the day finally comes, Rayvonne Tylvia Miles
Today Justice is thinking of you...

Justice Beardy

NOT JUST ME

As if I were stuck inside a crowded room with a broken soul,
In the name of everyone who suffers from pain in all of us,
For anyone who fucks up, seriously in public,
For hate and loss and the messes they leave behind
And every teenager who is caught stealing.

I'm here to announce that the show has officially started.
It's been five years I actually said my real pray,
Yeah I made mistakes in life, so has everyone else...
God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change,
The courage to change the things I can
and the wisdom to know the difference.
Amen to you.

12 years ago I had a mama but when she had to go
My life came tumbling down as my dreams from yesterday
Came crushing down in front of these locked doors.
I found my hatred sneaking in behind me,
But your love still got me going.

Mama I don't blame you for leaving me
It ain't your fault for having a broken heart
I'm just your native beauty girl looking for some answers
In this cool world.
I realize you already know how it was, how it went,
But I keep thinking that if we just thought it through again,
We would see something new.

Drugs and alcohol got my people face flat on the ground,
My natives look at yourselves, where this got you,
Lost in the middle from the good and bad.
Where do we go from here, we've been on the run,
We could only run for so long, yeah it's time to change a few things.

Down to one, still flying free...
Wiped out almost all of them in a single day.
It's only later when we've gone home
And you've picked up your life and seen it break apart in your hands
That we remember how we return again and again.

I want my love for you to rise up without failure and guilt.
First nation never breaks down we keep trying,
We don't let these bruises take over our pride, we fight for freedom.
I feel ashamed for not letting you know that I love you all.
Lord, forgive our nation and forgive me as well.
It's time to pick up our feet and walk tall and strong.

Revonne Tyvilla Miles AKA Ray-Ray #15



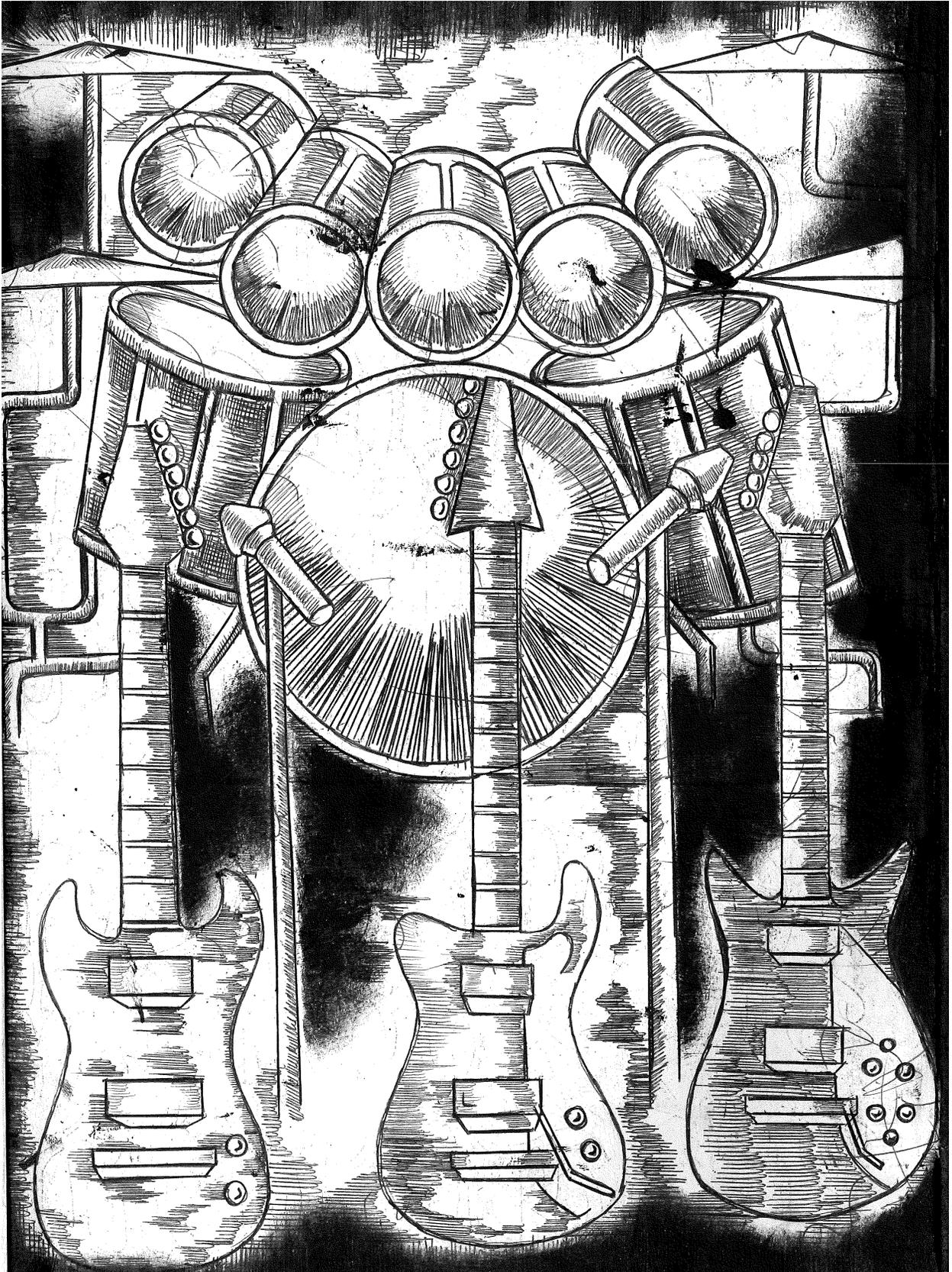
FOR MY BABY DADDY

Someway, somehow
All I know is I need you now
Trapped inside your heart
are lies I can't take back
Failed to comply
my commitment to you
Loving you is where I got lost
Losing you is what it cost
Being away from you this long
Made me realize everything
I've done so wrong
Raging inside
Tears I hold back and hide
You removed and replaced
yourself
to a whole different side
I know we had our drama
The things we've done 2 one
another
Has both left us hurt
Bruised with memories
of trauma
But regardless of all this shit
I'm always gonna be
your baby mama
So take a moment
and be a man
I'm only human
I need you 2 understand
and give your helping hand
I love you, I truly do
I'm sorry
for everything
I put you through

Destiny B.



STUDENT ART



Excessive Force

How Police Abuse Their Badge and What We Can Do About It

This piece was written by a student of the John Howard Society Literacy Program. It also appears on our literacy blog at www.prisonstories.org.

The police are often guilty of abusive behaviour. Police use force on people that need no force, sometimes on people who are not resisting or who are complying with what they are saying. I see it in the news and I learn of it from people I know.

A drunk driving officer killed a woman while he was off duty. The officer was suspended with pay and spent no time in jail. Two police officers do illegal search and seizure on somebody's place that shows they can go anywhere and do anything they want, when they want. Police also use serious intimidation with people, because some



people don't know their full rights or knowledge about how police are supposed to treat others. So they abuse their badge that way too. I've experienced this myself, and I know people who have had this happen to them.

More people need to bring their complaints to the police investigations. Society needs to have a middle man to help them fight for their rights against an abusive officer or officers. There needs to be more awareness in what happens behind the

district walls, cause that's where most of the abuse happens and there is nobody in that building to help people that are getting abused or threatened. There needs to be more training in local police. Police need to be able to relate with people better, or maybe they should have to become counsellors before applying. As far as hiring goes, society needs to get into the hiring or recommendation of any officer that gets hired. We need a local organization that can vote on whether new recruits get recommended to be a Winnipeg Police Services officer.

All this awareness should help everybody feel safer inside the walls or out of these walls. Police need to communicate with the problem areas more and get out there and meet with people in the neighbourhood. They need more knowledge, more street etiquette.

Society wants to prevent crime, but violent crime is still a big problem. We need to practice what we preach and make a difference instead of looking the other way. Police that abuse the badge should be taken seriously when an accusation is brought against them and be treated like everyone else. The badge does not make them better or superior to society, since we (society) are no lesser.

Writers and artists, the *Scoop* wants to hear from you!

Send your poems, stories, letters, and artwork to:

The Inside Scoop
583 Ellice Avenue
Winnipeg, MB, R3B 1Z7

LOCKED AND BRANDED

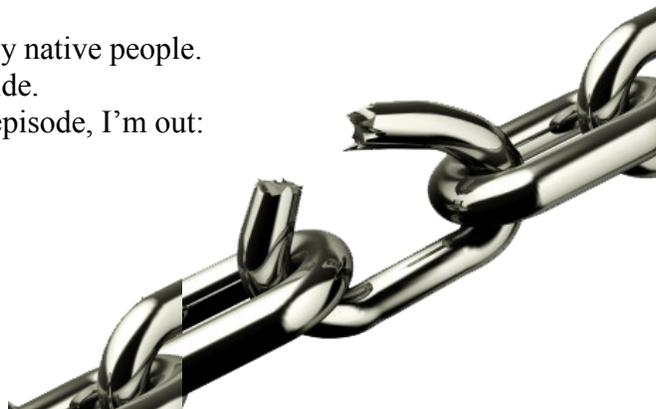
Natives, neechis, Indians stuck in a system, jails, prisons, probation
And most of all, on remand without a fair hearing,
Whatever happened to “innocent until proven guilty”.
Sounds like another way to control
And conquer the red race, under lock and key. What has become of
This so-called justice system?
As it is said “Money talks and bullshit walks,”
While some lawyer gets his pockets filled,
Food served to them like royalty
Instead of placed on the table, while the Indian is fed scraps,
And your lawyer reaps all the benefits from one’s misery,
And they call that the laws of justice.

Even on the streets life ain’t easy for Indians, treated so unfairly
from the so-called peacekeepers,
Police brutality, and most of all, themselves.
Indian on Indian, crimes against each other, gangs, colours, turf,
drugs, alcohol
And the rep that comes with it.
Deep down inside we all bleed the same colour red,
Ain’t nothing ever gonna change that. Every morning you wake up,
Look at yourself in the mirror and ask,
Is this the life I want for my children?
Cycles start from home, is what we see and learn
through our so-called role models
“Parents”. Most act out what they lived and learned,
from their experiences in their daily choices in life.

And this, for all the honkey tonks who like to think they are in
command,
Controlled and conquered this race, treat us in these kind of places,
like fucken cattle
Branded with a number.
Tell us all where to live, eat, shit, and sleep
Even our religion is a ‘privilege,’
and talk about comfort.

Peace out to all my native people.
Stand tall with pride.
And till the next episode, I’m out:

J. Abraham.



UNTITLED

Lost here “somewhere”.
My soul be out there floating
doing solid time,
wasting time, left in the dark.
NO feelings, got the loved ones
out there.
They be having hard times,
bringing my baby boy for visits.
When you gotta see the fam
through em dirty glass windows,
datz when you notice em tearz
wanting 2 come down your
cheek.
But u don’t want 2 show ‘em u
still got feelingz.
Thatz the only time you realize
you got ‘em feelingz.
Boom thingz change when they
walk the other way,
and you’re pushed back in the
dark corner,
left with nothing but your
thoughts.
Tryna put together the pieces of
your puzzled life, turned out to
be a wreck.
But at the age of 21 I finally
come forward
about the sexual abuse at the age
of 7 years old.
He said he would kill me if I
ever told anyone.
Hog tied and gagged, thought it
was a game.
Mama should of known right
then and there,
he pretty good
at playing his game.
Now I’m left to pick up the
pieces and puzzle together.
Now I know why I was what I
became.
Didn’t feel comfortable in my
own skin.
But now I am in straight healing
mode.

SASSY #23

We're Humans Too

JHS Literacy Students Speak Out About Bill C-10

On Tuesday, November 8th, the John Howard Society and its community partners held a rally at the Manitoba Legislative Building against Bill C-10. Bill C-10 is a package of proposed laws that would require judges to sentence people to jail time for certain drug offences, take away the use of conditional sentences (house arrest) for a variety of offences, make it easier to sentence youth as adults and make it more difficult and more expensive to get a pardon.

The John Howard Society has spoken publicly against this bill, because we know it will pack already overcrowded prisons, keep our clients apart from their families and communities, and divert public funds away from providing Canadians with good health care, education, housing, and basic needs.



JHS Literacy Coordinator Jacquie Nicholson reads students' statements aloud at the November 8th rally

So the 300 people who attended our rally got to hear our thoughts on Bill C-10. But more importantly, they got to hear our clients' thoughts about Bill C-10. Our literacy students wrote essays on this topic and we read pieces of them out to the crowd and put them together into a pamphlet. Here is some of what our students had to say:

“What our government is proposing is to put an absurdly expensive band-aid on a gaping wound. Stiffer sentencing does not alleviate the suffering for victims of crime because it deals exclusively with detention, not prevention. It is by no means a ‘conservative’ approach to crime, as it makes the taxpayer accountable every time another Canadian is incarcerated.

Jail is an ‘out of sight, out of mind’ approach to crime. It is a storage facility for a demographic comprised largely of citizens who have slipped through the cracks of an often indifferent society.”

“Life in jail these days is three 200-lb males to a cell that is 10 feet by 10 feet. At first that might sound average, but throw in a mattress, a cold vent in one corner and a toilet in the other. Now it's just inhumane. And I think they want a problem to happen.

Sorry if you don't like this, but sometimes one of these three guys has to take a number two. And while that sounds disgusting, let me tell you, it smells disgusting! So right now it's 90k a year per person in custody, three people in a cell. If this bill passes, what's the cost to the taxpayers then? How many people per cell in two years?”

“The majority of inmates come from broken homes and lived in poverty as children. Putting them in jail only continues that cycle, taking them away from their families and leaving another generation of kids to violence, drugs and gangs. I know this because I am currently incarcerated at the Remand Centre. I see the problems with the jails and the inmates who populate them.”

“Gangs thrive on your misconception that locking them up will stop them. Jails become a type of headquarters. Splitting up gangs and transporting them to different jails across the country in an effort to divide and conquer only creates and



multiplies the problem on a national level, creating a syndicate, a network, an organization: the very thing you are trying to combat. I guarantee that gangs not only recruit in the community. Once they're in institutions they will find more ways to lure other inmates to team up. With this bill being passed the prison populations will explode, creating more resources for gangs and organizations to feed upon. You will be brought to your knees through the billions of dollars you spend following your own recipe for disaster.”

“Bill C-10 lists a lot of consequences but does not offer any real solutions. The United States has been down this road for more than a few decades and has proven through numerous studies that it does not work.”

“Harper's approach to “tough on crime” is not a fix-it solution, it's simply a cowardly way of locking more people up and keeping them off the streets for a period of time, with no interest in rehabilitation. My opinion is Harper and his friends in Ottawa have their heads up each other's rear ends and are not taking the time to evaluate the evidence that is already proving C-10 is a failure.

We are being warehoused in tiny cells with no access to much in terms of programs to identify our problems which have brought us here in the first place. I believe for the majority of inmates currently incarcerated, a lot of us could make the changes necessary if guided in the right direction to become productive members of society. I believe at least 90% of us are caught in a cycle of the revolving door of justice, because of learned behaviours. If given proper programs and life skills, I think we could free ourselves of jail.”

“What does it cost to keep an inmate locked up for a year, a hundred grand? And what good does being in prison do them? These guys leave Stony with nothing – nothing but an appointment with a parole officer and an appointment with welfare. No wonder they come back. You're setting them up to fail! You know what would almost be a better use of money? Take that hundred grand, hand it to the guy and say, “Don't come back.” I guarantee you'd have fewer of them coming back than with what we're doing right now.”

“Prisons cost money and if we want to keep building them, we will need to take money from other things. So let's not build more prisons, let's put less people in jail.”

“Instead of double-bunking, rehabilitative programs for inmates should be doubled. Programs can be drug or alcohol awareness, life skills or job skills. More programs and job skills would make job opportunities for an inmate with a criminal record.

More jobs for inmates will help society and maybe possibly we could even get pardons easier. So the saying “looking over your shoulder at all times” will be extinct and we can move on and have a life without crime.”

“What we need is funding for programs and more support from outside agencies. Longer and stiffer sentences are not needed.

Inmates need a better reintegration plan. We're humans too. No to Bill C-10.”



JHS volunteers attend the rally, holding signs made by their students in the literacy program

KARMA

I was standing tall never thought I'd fall
When I was brought down to my knees

A scared little boy in dirty corduroys
Said, "Will someone help me, please?"

As people walked by a tear fell from his eye
As he cried, "I don't know what to do."

"We're all alone and my mommy's not
home
And my sister, she's only two."

I shook my head and to my friend said
"Have you ever seen such a pitiful sight?"

She laughed and said "No, he's not our
problem, let's go,
We've got to get ready to go out tonight."

We were tall and we drank some alcohol
And we laughed as she gave me the keys.

Well that fancy sports car well it sure did
roll far
When we ran it right into the trees.

As people drove by some blood fell in my
eyes as I screamed
"Won't someone help me, please?"

"I can't find my friend, I think that she's
dead
And I can't get up off of my knees."

Andrea Baird



MENTALITY OF A SIMPLE MAN

I'm reminiscing 'bout them good ol' dayz, my past life,
past crimes,

Nothing but pain and scarz, little to remain,

Still wondering how I became that Guy

Never mind? But I feel exactly the same as the next guy

Painted such a picture where I'm doing alright

Lotta ups and downs, mama still be proud whether I'm
locked down or out

Unconditional love but still the same no matter

Why or How?

I must admit I feel complete with the tooly in my hand

Truthfully, that ain't me; I'm just a simple man

Gripping reasons to understand, things to believe in, No
chance!

Lost my girl Chasity, and it's fucked up,

I ain't even Mad

My brother once told me, "It's you that would make the
differences."

Still I fight with my conscience, like I ain't gifted

Think for a minute that there is a God

and a life worth living

I'm hearing voices, I think I'm gone mad

Believing in choices, things I can't comprehend

It's a delusion, reloaded clips, ready to run again

Plus my mind starts stumbling; my life now starts
crumbling,

Cuz all I see is Ghost, wonder why they still

Wandering?

Far as I know, life after death, still an argument!

But literally speaking, my loyalty is where my heart
lives

And she knows, "Daddy's still around, no matter how
far he is."

So I say Fuck friends, I gotta whole family where my
trust is,

But the money is a must kid,

So here I am, waiting for my judgement.

Justin M.R. Henderson



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