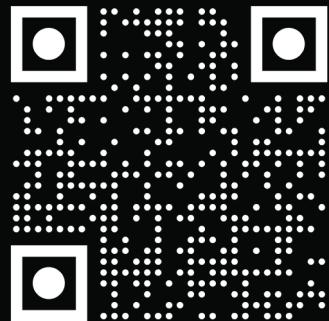


S I L E N C E D



silenced.in/

Produced in collaboration with people  
inside solitary confinement in Michigan,  
Open MI Door Campaign, Prison Creative  
Arts Project, American Friends Service  
Committee: MCJP and Prison Watch,  
We Are the Work and Zealous

# 01

OVERVIEW:  
THE SOLITARY SITUATION

# 02

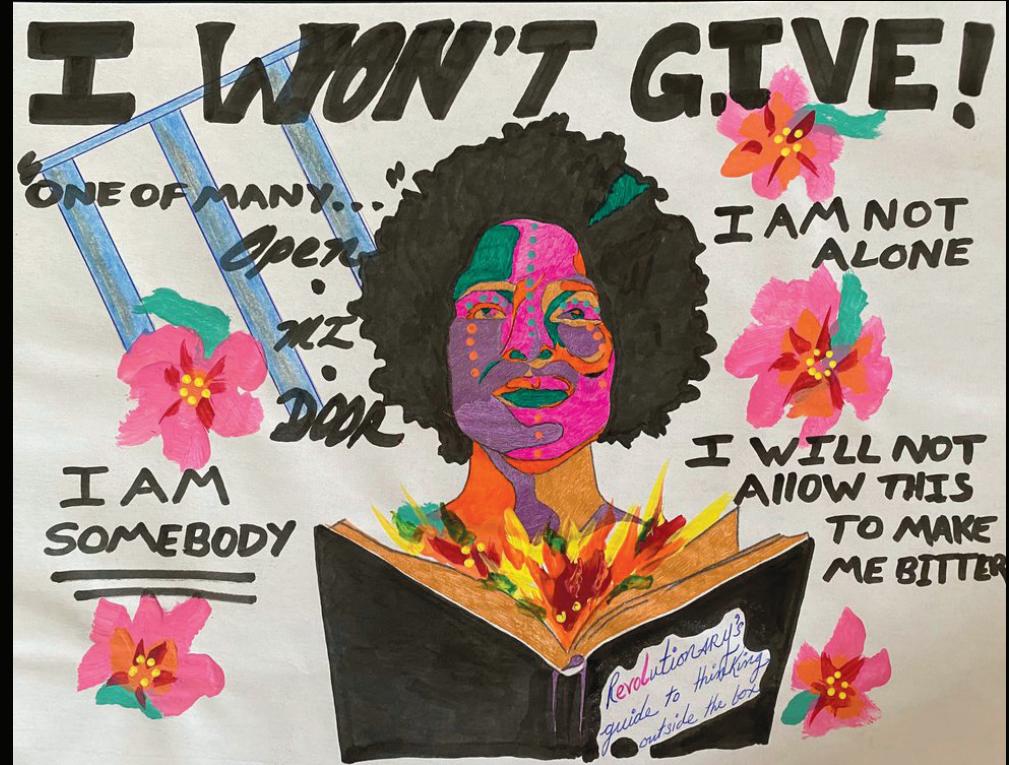
SYSTEMIC OPPRESSION

# 03

HUMAN COSTS  
OF CONDITIONS

# 04

RESISTANCE  
AND ACTIVATION



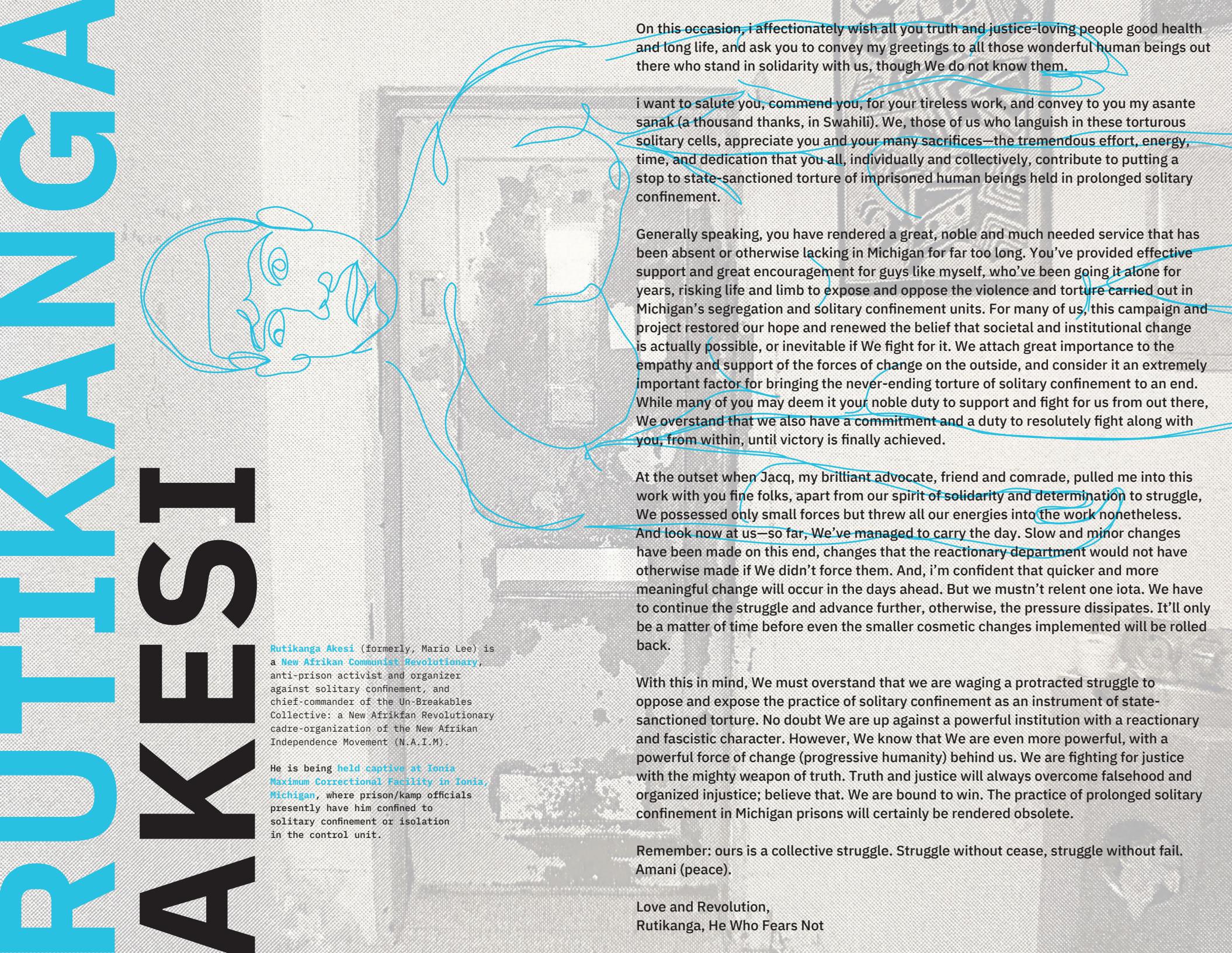
Artwork by  
Jodi Hill

THIS ZINE  
HAS A

CONTENT  
WARNING

The words of real people, their letters, their handwriting and names are woven throughout this book. They are annotated and amplified with truths about the realities they endure. This is heavy, and like anything heavy we carry, we must know ourselves and our limits. When we as organizers, comrades, family members, and formerly incarcerated people read letters from inside, we take breaks, reflect in margins and empty pages, feel our feet on the ground, and remember we, too, are alive and worthy of space to breathe.

Follow your own wisdom and the gentle guidance of this book as you engage deeply with our people who are Silenced.



Rutikanga Akesi (formerly, Mario Lee) is a [New Afrikan Communist Revolutionary](#), anti-prison activist and organizer against solitary confinement, and chief-commander of the Un-Breakables Collective: a New Afrikan Revolutionary cadre-organization of the New Afrikan Independence Movement (N.A.I.M.).

He is being [held captive at Ionia Maximum Correctional Facility in Ionia, Michigan](#), where prison/kamp officials presently have him confined to solitary confinement or isolation in the control unit.

On this occasion, I affectionately wish all you truth and justice-loving people good health and long life, and ask you to convey my greetings to all those wonderful human beings out there who stand in solidarity with us, though We do not know them.

I want to salute you, commend you, for your tireless work, and convey to you my asante sanak (a thousand thanks, in Swahili). We, those of us who languish in these torturous solitary cells, appreciate you and your many sacrifices—the tremendous effort, energy, time, and dedication that you all, individually and collectively, contribute to putting a stop to state-sanctioned torture of imprisoned human beings held in prolonged solitary confinement.

Generally speaking, you have rendered a great, noble and much needed service that has been absent or otherwise lacking in Michigan for far too long. You've provided effective support and great encouragement for guys like myself, who've been going it alone for years, risking life and limb to expose and oppose the violence and torture carried out in Michigan's segregation and solitary confinement units. For many of us, this campaign and project restored our hope and renewed the belief that societal and institutional change is actually possible, or inevitable if We fight for it. We attach great importance to the empathy and support of the forces of change on the outside, and consider it an extremely important factor for bringing the never-ending torture of solitary confinement to an end. While many of you may deem it your noble duty to support and fight for us from out there, We overstand that we also have a commitment and a duty to resolutely fight along with you, from within, until victory is finally achieved.

At the outset when Jacq, my brilliant advocate, friend and comrade, pulled me into this work with you fine folks, apart from our spirit of solidarity and determination to struggle, We possessed only small forces but threw all our energies into the work nonetheless. And took now at us—so far, We've managed to carry the day. Slow and minor changes have been made on this end, changes that the reactionary department would not have otherwise made if We didn't force them. And, I'm confident that quicker and more meaningful change will occur in the days ahead. But we mustn't relent one iota. We have to continue the struggle and advance further, otherwise, the pressure dissipates. It'll only be a matter of time before even the smaller cosmetic changes implemented will be rolled back.

With this in mind, We must overstand that we are waging a protracted struggle to oppose and expose the practice of solitary confinement as an instrument of state-sanctioned torture. No doubt We are up against a powerful institution with a reactionary and fascistic character. However, We know that We are even more powerful, with a powerful force of change (progressive humanity) behind us. We are fighting for justice with the mighty weapon of truth. Truth and justice will always overcome falsehood and organized injustice; believe that. We are bound to win. The practice of prolonged solitary confinement in Michigan prisons will certainly be rendered obsolete.

Remember: ours is a collective struggle. Struggle without cease, struggle without fail. Amani (peace).

Love and Revolution,  
Rutikanga, He Who Fears Not

## STATEMENT

BY  
ZEALOUS

Solitary confinement. The deprivation is unimaginable in this prison inside of a prison. Concrete, stainless steel, the sound vacillating between silence and screaming. The smell of blood and sweat and lost hope, the gray walls closing in. In the United States, 80,000 people are living in some form of solitary confinement each day.

In Michigan—tucked deep in national forests, along stretches of farmland and the banks of Lake Superior—some of the most remote and brutal prisons in the country stand tall and foreboding, yet largely unseen. Filling them are thousands of Black and brown men and trans women from far away in lower Michigan. Detroit, Flint, Saginaw. Most of these prisons bear multiple units dedicated to long-term isolation. Solitary confinement. Torture.

The Zine you are holding is the result of years of relationship building, mutual struggle and study, and advocacy work in solidarity with people inside solitary confinement in Michigan. This work was not built around presentation, but people. It was crafted with mutual respect, informed consent, and deep collaboration with the people living these experiences. This work sparked foreseeable retaliation from guards, many mail rejections, and difficult conversations, but ignited the spirits of those who worked on it, both inside and outside of the walls.

The Zine is part of Silenced, a growing archival website and exhibition project, built around letters and artwork from solitary over the years. The intention is to shed light on the inhumanity of long-term solitary confinement, both in Michigan and around the country. This work is not meant to be consumed and forgotten, but to illuminate hard truths and activate response; to amplify the voices calling out from solitary through letters, cards, artwork and shoddy satellite phones. The goal is to abolish solitary confinement forever.

Please visit <https://silenced.in> to get involved, to view the growing digital archive, and to follow Silenced as it moves across states. In the words of Assata Shakur: "It is our duty to fight for our freedom. It is our duty to win."

## STATEMENT BY

MAHOGANY L. BROWNE  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, JUST MEDIA AND  
POET-IN-RESIDENCE, LINCOLN CENTER

In a time where it is ever clear that the criminal legal system reflects the bones of modern day slavery, I find myself feeling more than hopeless. I feel like I can't see clearly or think clearly or feel deep enough for any word or sentence structure to be adequate. The harm caused by mass incarceration is unspeakable. It is designed to decimate the human spirit. It is designed to fracture the family structure. It is designed to further level the economics of impoverished communities. And still we must speak. My grievance is that of a child who has lost her father and uncles and brother and cousins to the prison system. I am from California. Several generations migrated from Louisiana for greener pastures and opportunities, just to be lost to the recidivism of this country's prison industrial system in a northern state. I lost years with my father due to the prison industrial complex. Every man in my family has been impacted by the criminal justice system. The shame is blinding. Three strikes will try to make a fool of us. Make us believe we deserve this kind of punishment. Life is for living. Life is for living. And prison is the antithesis to living. It is reducing lives to a single moment. With no promise of light or redemption. Prison is a hill that wants everyone to die on. The correctional officers. The people caged inside. The counselors. And the attorneys. The families and visitors. The business of it all is rooted in shame. But the people will always be the light. Behind bars is a place that must be demolished. The people most affected by the prison industrial complex are bordered by cruelty, rather than rehabilitation. The people behind bars are still people. There are over 7000 prisons, jails, detention centers, and correctional facilities in the United States. Redemption and healing and transformation is possible. But this is not the way. Prison is not the way forward. Through language we can see it clearly. The inadequate reach of this sentence is only a hand held out, reaching for whomever on the other side of this page. Reaching for an idea or policy or act that will finally see an "inmate" as someone capable of transformation. Reaching, reaching, reaching even still until all of our families are free from the trap that is.

This zine was published in coordination with Mahogany L. Browne, Lincoln Center Poet-in-Residence, to engage students in her Racial Justice Writing Workshop and others to consider the impact of incarceration and cruelty on us all.

# 01

## OVERVIEW: THE SOLITARY SITUATION



Artwork by  
Trisa Shepard, "Freedom"

The human body is not meant to live in a cell the size of a parking space.

The human body is meant to move, to feel sun and wind and rain, to see color and hear birds. The trauma stored in a body isolated is trauma that gets repeated.

Imagine your dearest  
loved one locked in a small  
concrete room with a solid  
steel door...

Diagram by  
Rutikanga Akesi

My Name is Malachi Cifenshaw #787654

Since I've been incarcerated, I have been to  
segregation many times. Because of the many months  
that I spent in there on different occasions, It has caused  
me to become paranoid, constantly stressed out, depressed all the  
time

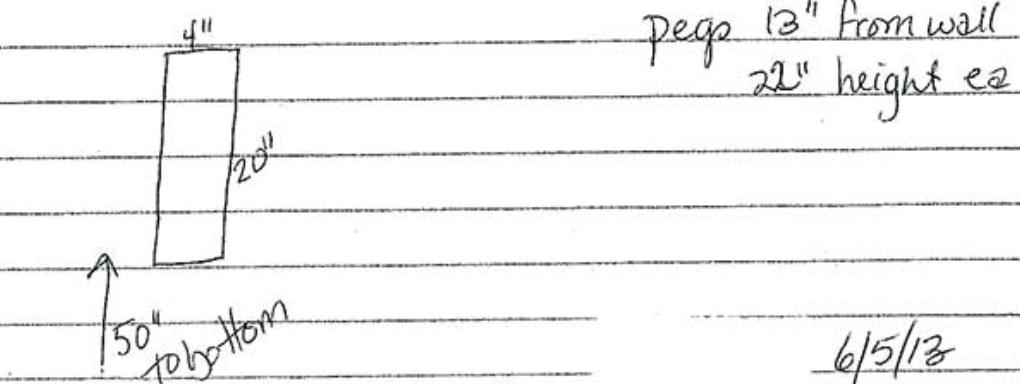
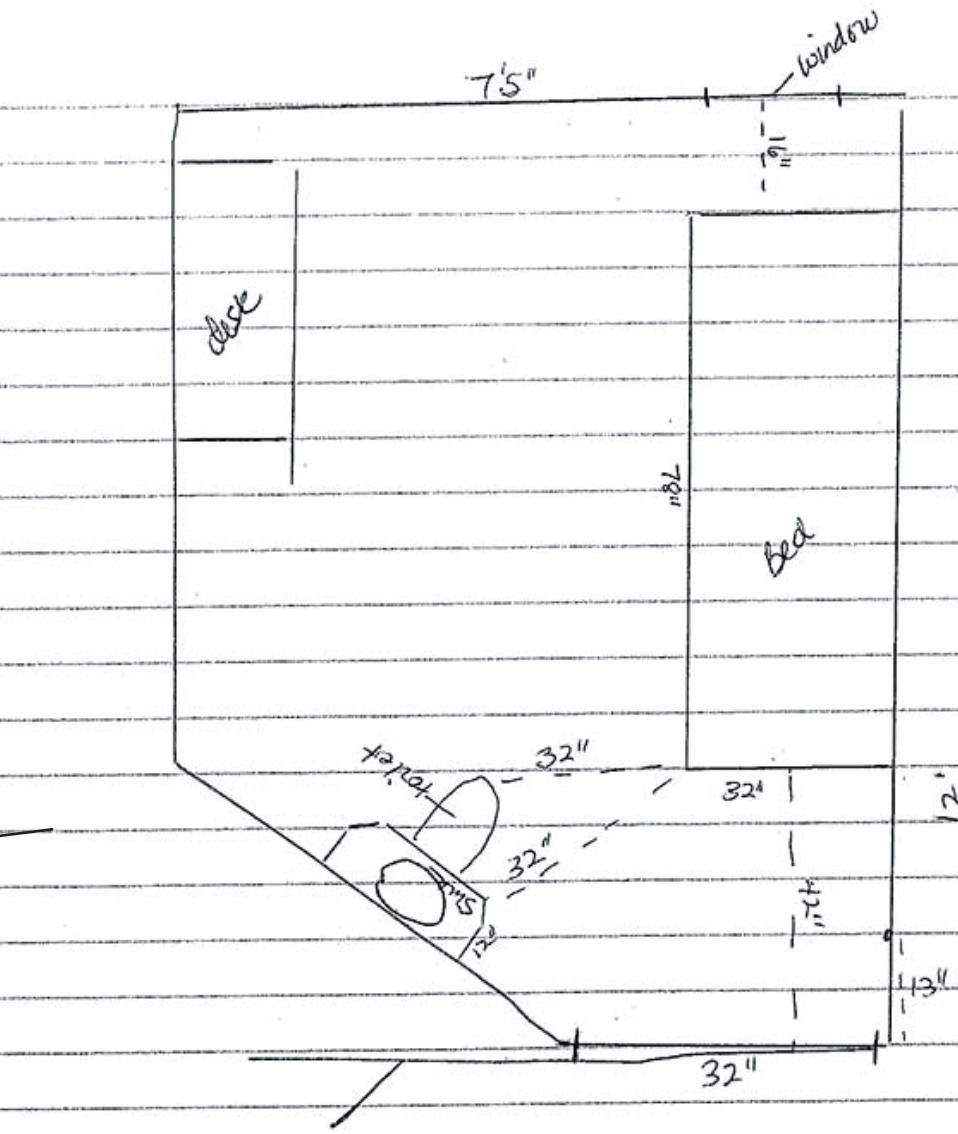
In 2011 while in Seg at OAKS Correctional Facility I tried  
to Commit Suicide twice, because I was afraid the C  
were gonna kill me. I had written the SOS Kill Me  
twice while I was in the York

This has put me in fear for my life, because the  
C/O's will either Starve you, or Spit in your food. I would  
Starve myself, just so I wouldn't have to be put through that

I've had several C/O's not feed me at times, due to them  
Being prejudice, At the same time being deprived of my dignity  
while being called racial slurs, Being deprived as a Human being.

I always fear for my life, my safety, and my Mental when I'm  
in Seg. Because at any moment anything can happen and that can be  
my last day on this earth. alot of things about seg is not right.  
It's dehumanizing and torture at the same time.

No contact with another human being  
besides the rough voice through a food  
slot, the shouting of other caged people, or  
a guard who comes three days a week to  
walk them on a leash to an outside cage.



There are over 3,000 people  
in Michigan in solitary  
confinement on any  
given day.

In the United States, there  
are over 80,000 people in  
solitary confinement.



**Anthony**

Anthony P. Richardson

~~Derrick~~

Andrew G. MacLachlan

Anarais A. McCleod

Clifton Moffet

OAKWOOD RAY TURNER

Erick Johnson

Drayne Taylor

Dayley McMillan

Deshawn A. Foster

DENZELL FRESH

Denzel Berry

Dennis M. Geth

DeLawrence Billingsley

Darrell Jarvis

DANIEL A. HENRY

dale

Darrell A. Winters

d. Brooks jr

Cortez D. Shuler

Mr. Maurice McNeely

Matthew Sironen

Martez Norwood

Mark Rowe

Mr. Kerwin M. Cook

Kerwin Cook

LaiVors Coates

Malachi Crenshaw

MR. MANSA CARJIN

Joshua Greg Williams

Tosh Salyers

Johnny Hatfield

mentally

Larry Adams

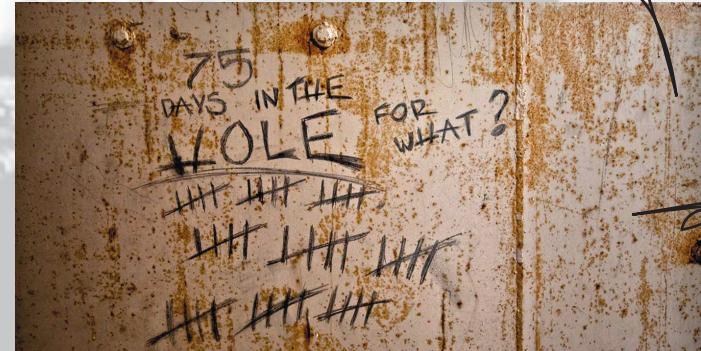


Photograph by  
Matthew Christopher

The state of Michigan has no restrictions on the length of time a person can live in solitary confinement.



Photograph by  
Matthew Christopher



One man has been there for 46 years. His friends write to us about his gentle nature, about his dreams. His name is Richard; he is seventy years old.

## PUNISHMENTS IN SOLITARY

Advocates, families and organizers know about these tortures from our comrades inside.

Gassing	Food Loaf	Starvation	Paper Restrictions
Tear Gas and Pepper Spray	Cell Extraction	Fed Spoiled Food	Loss of Privileges
Hog-tying	Observation	Taunting and Embarrassment	New Charges
Top of Bed Restraints	Sleep Deprivation	Water Restrictions	



I know it's too late now, of course, but I want those people to know that we're humans too, and we deserve to be treated as such. As social (i.e., human) beings, one of the most severe punishments humanly possible that society can mete out to a human is to banish and condemn us to the tombs for the living — or otherwise subject us to extreme social isolation and sensory deprivation. It's endless torture, psychological and physical.

These are the words of [Rutikanga Akesi](#), Co-Producer of the Silenced campaign.

### **Reflections on the Solitary Situation**

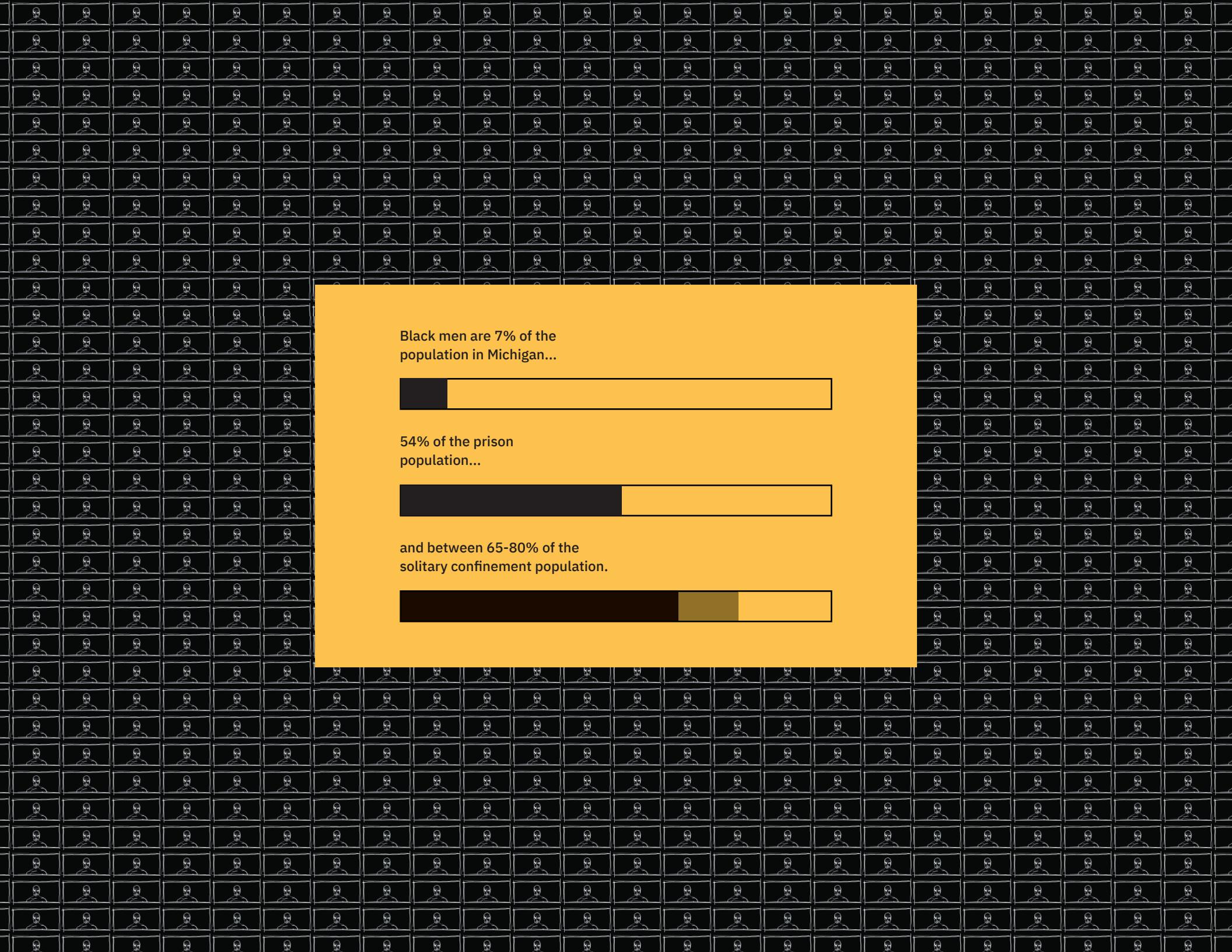
All of life's difficult work requires a conversation. As you think about circumstances of racism, state abuse and mass criminalization in your life or vicariously, what conversations come into your mind? Who would you like to talk to? What would you say?

# 02

## SYSTEMIC OPPRESSION

Every oppressive societal inequity on Earth is amplified behind razor wire. The racism, ableism, sexism, homophobia, misogyny... they go from a constant murmur to a hellish unending scream.





Black men are 7% of the population in Michigan...



54% of the prison population...



and between 65-80% of the solitary confinement population.



Prisons with isolation units are often remote, settled deep in racist and dangerous backwood territory.

AMERICAN PRISONERS OUT  
AND IT'S THAT THE FURTHER  
IS OF THE SOUTH IN THE  
BURNING." THIS STATEMENT  
E OUTSIDE LOOKING IN, BUT

what you need to know  
about. And I'll write to you  
+ effects are like long  
way's killing them selfs. Guy's  
Marquette Branch Prison, in the  
Northern Upper Peninsula, 11  
hours from Detroit.

Victor Lindsey fights for  
recognition of the people  
who've died by suicide  
in Marquette's solitary  
confinement units.

Personally witnessed over 50 (now) Attempt  
Suicide While here in Marquette Branch Prison  
in this Segregation Solitary Confinement, and  
One Personally witnessed "3" Suicides Within  
the past 3 1/2 months and they all were kids  
Which the newest one was on Aug. 21, 2020 the  
day that I received your "ad" in the Mi-Cure.

I COULD TELL YOU  
ABOUT DIAGNOSES,  
BUT

I WILL TELL YOU ABOUT  
HANDWRITING,  
THE WAY I CAN SEE  
PEOPLE SLIPPING AWAY.

MAYBE IT WILL BE  
CURVED MORE THAN BEFORE,  
SLANTED ALONGSIDE  
THE PAPER LIKE IT IS  
LOSING ITS BALANCE.

MAYBE THE WORDS USED TO  
FLOW AND SCROLL

BUT NOW  
THE PEN IS PRESSED SO HARD  
IT TEARS THROUGH THE PAPER.  
ARE LOST  
ARE CREATED,  
SOMETIMES WORDS  
AND NEW ONES

SOMETIMES  
UNCOLONIZED  
TO DECIPHER AND LEARN.  
NEW LANGUAGES  
INVENTED ALL TOGETHER,  
S/MBOLS

I COULD TELL YOU OF  
PARANOIA,  
HALLUCINATIONS,  
DEPRESSION,  
PARALYZING ANXIETY,  
SCHIZOPHRENIA,

SELF-HARM,  
STUTTERS,  
SUICIDE, EXPOSURE.

Letters by  
**tikanga Akesi**

Artist and Poet Asia Johnson, an organizer and solitary survivor, in conversation with Jonathan Lancaster, a person with mental illness who was starved and dehydrated in solitary confinement in 2019.

Poem by  
Asia Johnson

8/30/2020

FIRST AND FOREMOST I PRAY THAT YOU AND YOUR FAMILY  
REMAIN HEALTHY DURING THIS PANDEMIC

MY NAME IS ANDREW MCLEOD AND I RECENTLY CAME  
ACROSS YOUR ARTICLE IN THE AUGUST 2020 MI-CURE  
PUBLICATION. I IMMEDIATELY STOPPED EVERYTHING I WAS  
DOING IN ORDER TO SUPPORT YOUR MI-CURE CAMPAIGN TO ADDRESS  
SOLITARY CONFINEMENT

IN CLOSING YOU ASKED ANDREW TO TELL THEIR STORY SO  
THAT YOU CAN SHARE OUR STORIES IN OUR COMMUNITIES. RECENTLY  
I WAS PUBLISHED (IN ARTICLE) IN A NEWSLETTER PUT TOGETHER  
BY THE MADE IN TIME. IM NOT SURE IF YOU KNOW ABOUT  
THIS ORGANIZATION BUT THEY MIGHT HAVE THE LOWEST OR ONE  
OF THE QUARTER RECIDIVISM RATES IN MICHIGAN... - 8% IM.  
GOOD FRIENDS WITH THE CO-FOUNDER, LEON EL ALAMIN. YOU  
MAY FIND MY ARTICLE ON [QUINTONINSTITUTE.ORG](http://QUINTONINSTITUTE.ORG)

MY STORY MAY BE A LITTLE DIFFERENT BUT I ADDRESS  
THE ISSUE AT LEADS FIRST. THERE IS NO SECRET THAT 80%  
OF COLOR AND MAJORITIES ARE DISPROPORTIONATELY SUBJECT  
TO INCARCERATION. AFRICAN AMERICANS ACCOUNT FOR LESS THAN  
14% OF THE GENERAL POPULATION.. YET WE MAKE UP THE  
MAJORITY OF THE PRISON POPULATION. SO ITS NO SURPRISE THAT  
OUR SKIN PEOPLE IS DISPROPORTIONATELY SUBJECT TO SOLITARY  
CONFINEMENT.

IM CURRENTLY AT MICHIGAN CORRECTIONAL FACILITY IN THE  
UPPER PENINSULA WHERE ALL I CAN SAY HAS TO SAY IS  
THAT SOMEONE VERSATILY THREATENED AN OFFICER AND

## More Than This

- ASIA JOHNSON

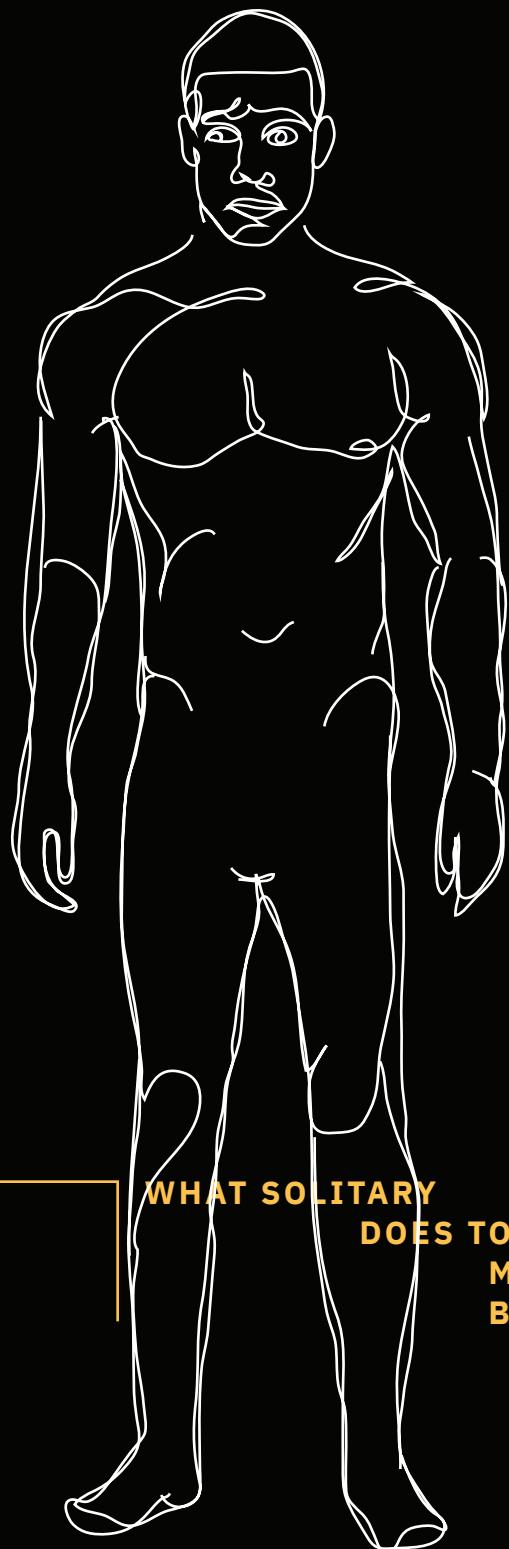
The fragility of his body should alarm them  
Maybe someone could offer sustenance  
The distortion in his voice should baffle them  
Perhaps someone should give him company  
Because his heart is still buoyant

He's dangling between the arms of an imaginary clock  
Clamoring to go back in time, forward in time, any time but this time  
They ignore the human need like wall weeds, doing nothing  
He is no longer doing time, time annihilates + devours  
Hours are prolonged  
How much life can they pack into 6x8 ft

The air is stale, his eyes watching memories in the dark  
Dreamscapes where he can visit a different time  
A time when he was more than this.  
Time with balance, time with light, time with Breonna

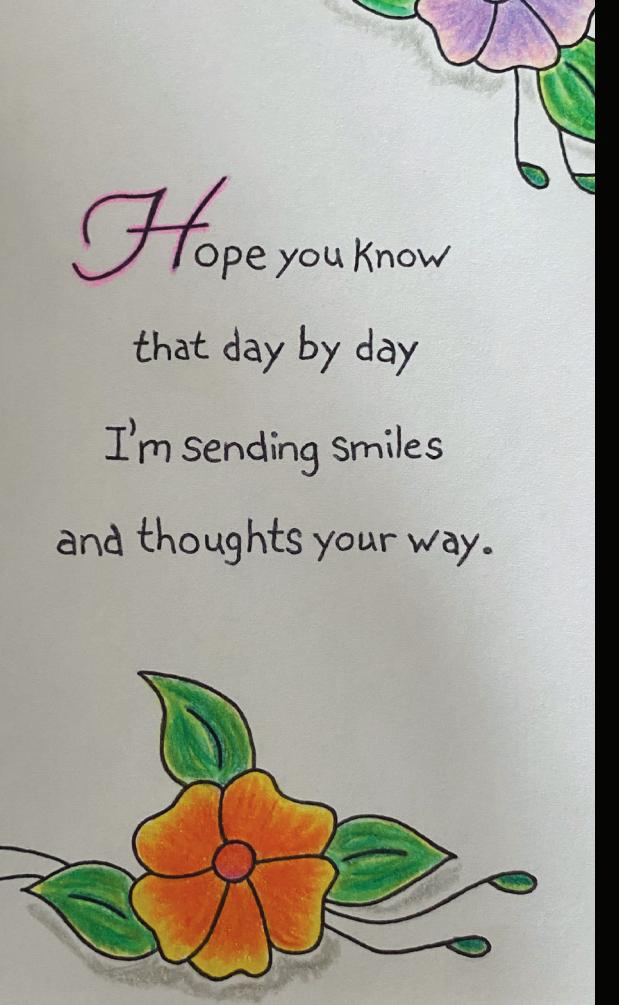
Strength is out there beyond the locks.  
Love is out there beyond the barbed wire  
His thoughts on laughter, childhood, on stability -  
On freedom...

Just beyond his grasp



Creating and maintaining free world connections is often therapeutic for people in solitary.

Chronic Headaches	Excessive Sweating	Loss of Appetite	Sleep Problems
Eyesight Deterioration	Fatigue and Lethargy	Muscle and Joint Pain	Trembling Hands
Digestive Problems	Heart Palpitations	Hypersensitivity to Light and Noise	Weight Loss
Dizziness	Genitourinary Problems		



A greeting card from **Daniel Henry**, **Silenced Contributor** and **Open MI Door Inside Steering team** lead member who's lived in solitary for 13 years.

Morris Weatherspoon # 471817  
Ionia Correctional Facility  
1576 W. Riverwater Hwy  
Ionia, Michigan 48846

Mon, Aug 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020

Dear AFSC [REDACTED]

In response to Aug. 2020 MI-CURE news I want to share my story of repeat solitary confinement continuing since 9/16/12, see Weatherspoon v. Thibault, case # 214cv108 trial 000186 - 000254, ecf# 176, ecf# 168 and ecf# 154, at these times it is charted, noted, and expressly noted/document that I am chronic problem nos psychosis, nos personality, and cognitive disorder during these periods of solitary confinement. See Weatherspoon v. George, case# 214cv12789, doc # 142 Pg 1d 979. In addition, see Weatherspoon v. Choi, case # 114-cv-707 ecf# 165 pg 1d 111)-1144 (file # 01301901MTU); Report and Recommendation of Hon. ESC on 7/12/17 is to support the MDOC knew and ignored the risk of harm and known pain, suffering, PTSD, fraud, and mental distress and neurological disorder. I am over 2 years past the (end) of 5/23/18, and with covid-19 threat and disability both mental and physical (unspecified schizophrenia, psychosis and Rheumatoid arthritis). My name is Morris Weatherspoon I request be provided the Statement of Principles and learn more about the Open MI Doorman campaign. I can prove and show that I have been repeatedly confined to solitary confinement/ad seg more than I have in the MDOC general population, and exposed to sexual harassment and denied dental treatments etc during these ad. seg periods. Thibault, case# 214cv108, ecf# 176

You have permission to share this continuing and ongoing injury to educate the public and community.

I am most passionate about justice, I enjoy golfing, basketball, football, baseball, swimming, hunting, and fishing and weight lifting when I was younger and in the community. I enjoy reading newspapers, criminal defense newsletter, Lawyer Weekly, Time, playboy, and current court ruling in civil and criminal cases. Other activities are cooking, barbecue, sled, and spending time with my children and girlfriends at the park, etc.

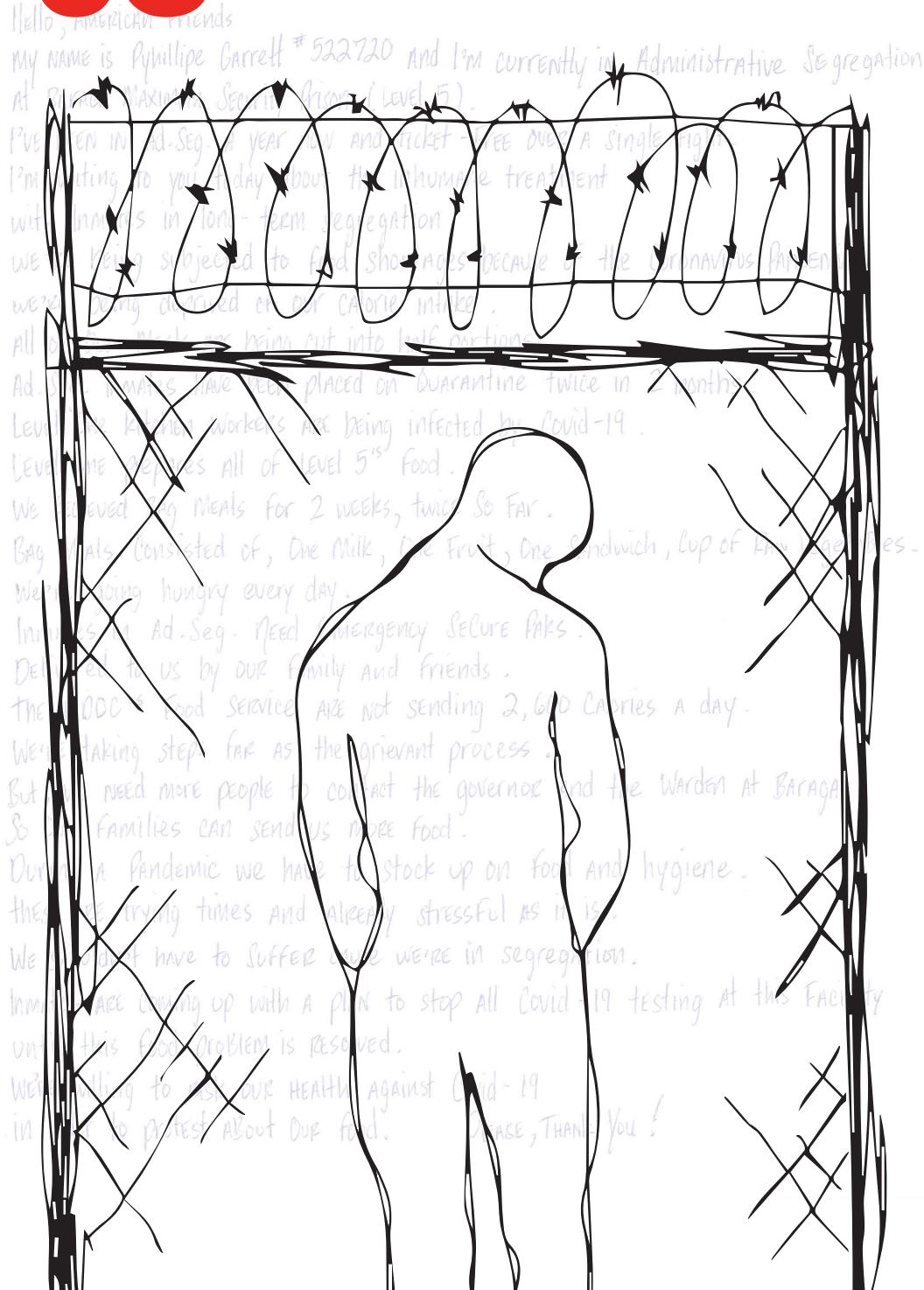
I dream of ~~meeting~~ justice and the prison official, public officials and court officials be prosecuted for the discrimination, misuse and abuse of public funding and the pain, suffering and trauma and side effects of Zyprexa (Risperdal, Aripiprazole, Benztropine, Diphenhydramine) I dream of commutation and pardon and or release from the MDOC and complete parole just like the "Juvenile Lifers" prisoners that are released back into the community and to be with their family and friends. In addition, I dream of now that I should be released and as an alternative to the MDOC programs I be allowed and permitted to complete a program in the community because the parole Board keep changing program requirements such as VPP and change to Batters Intervention and Prior Bridges program, is false imprisonment to the MDOC because treating psychiatrist etc diagnose and involuntary panel order diagnosis currently as unspecified schizophrenia & psychosis thus I don't meet the criteria's if developmentally and intellectually disabled with weak immune Rheumatoid arthritis? Any question and concern let me know! 2. Black Lives Matter, cc Morris Weatherspoon

### **Reflections on the Systemic Oppression**

As you read through this zine, notice the feelings in your body. When you think about solitary confinement, the inability to move beyond a few feet, does your breath get short, do your limbs tense up? Your body has a story to tell, what is it saying now?

# 03

## HUMAN COSTS OF CONDITIONS



"In solitary, one can hear the madness coming from the throats of men who cannot take it any more, frustrated souls from behind the bars of each cell, rasping rackets from the walls, the hollow vibrations from sink and toilet combined into one. Our iron beds are bolted to the floor. Lights are never turned off. These things take on frightening significance. They result in loss of appetite, insomnia, irritability, emotional withdrawal, depression, paranoid ideation and easily provoked anger, which may escalate into 'acting out.'"

8/30/2020

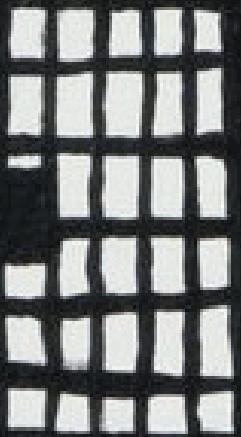
MY NAME IS ANDRAUS MCLOUD AND I RECENTLY CAME ACROSS YOUR ARTICLE IN THE AUGUST 2020 MI-CURE PUBLICATION. I IMMEDIATELY STOPPED EVERYTHING I WAS DOING IN ORDER TO SUPPORT YOUR NEW CAMPAIGN TO ADDRESS SOLITARY CONFINEMENT.

IN CLOSING YOU ASKED ANYONE TO SHARE THEIR STORY SO THAT YOU CAN SHARE OUR STORIES WITH OUR COMMUNITIES. RECENTLY I WAS PUBLISHED (AN ARTICLE) IN A NEWSLETTER PUT TOGETHER BY THE MADE INSTITUTE. I'M NOT SURE IF YOU KNOW ABOUT THIS ORGANIZATION BUT THEY MIGHT HAVE THE LOWEST... OR ONE OF THE LOWEST RECIDIVISM RATES IN MICHIGAN... AT 3%. I'M GOOD FRIENDS WITH THE CO-FOUNDER, LEON EL ALAMIN. YOU MAY FIND MY ARTICLE @ [WWW.MADEINSTITUTE.ORG](http://WWW.MADEINSTITUTE.ORG)

MY STORY MAY BE A LITTLE DIFFERENT BUT I'LL ADDRESS THE ISSUE AT HAND FIRST. THERE IS NO SECRET THAT PEOPLE OF COLOR AND MINORITIES ARE DISPROPORTIONATELY SUBJECT TO INCARCERATION. AFRICAN AMERICANS ACCOUNT FOR LESS THAN 14% OF THE GENERAL POPULATION... YET WE MAKE UP THE MAJORITY OF THE PRISON POPULATION. SO IT'S NO SURPRISE THAT OUR SAME PEOPLE IS DISPROPORTIONATELY SUBJECT TO SOLITARY CONFINEMENT.

I'M CURRENTLY AT ALGER CORRECTIONAL FACILITY IN THE UPPPER PENINSULA WHERE ALL A EFFORT IS MADE TO MAKE THAT SOMEONE VERSATILY THREATENED AND

Credits: I Am Buried Alive in a Michigan Prison by Lacino Hamilton who spent 9 years straight in solitary. He was exonerated after 26 years in prison. The op-ed was published on TruthOut in 2018.



## HOW TO GET TO **SOLITARY CONFINEMENT**

Artwork by  
James Fuson, "Suffocating"

Yelling	Fighting	Filing grievances	Requesting protection
Disobeying a direct order	Peaceful protest	Standing up for vulnerable people in prison	Filing prison rape elimination act complaints
	Refusing Meals		
Cursing		Too much medication or food	Too many alcohol swabs, toilet paper, toiletries
	Asking to speak to a superior officer		
Arguing			

There are dozens of ways to hide the brutal practice of locking people away in concrete cages for years. One of them is changing the name of their cage.

OBSERVATION

THE HOLE

THE TOMBS

THE BOX

THE SWEATBOX

SOLITARY  
CONFINEMENT

SEGREGATION

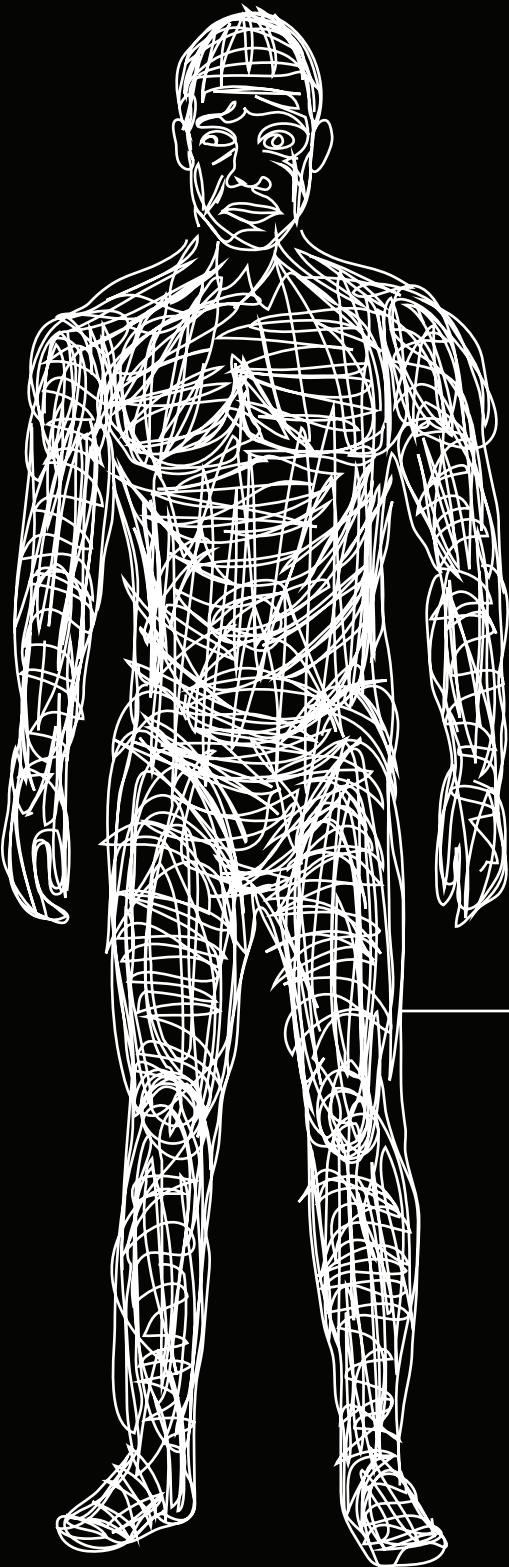
ISOLATION

SPECIAL  
HOUSING UNIT

CONTROL UNIT

LEVEL V

Getting into solitary is one thing, being released is another. Then, of course, you must survive it.



Greater than 6 Months & Less than or Equal to 1 Year	9
Greater than 1 Year & Less than or Equal to 2 Years	1
Greater than 2 Years & Less than or Equal to 5 Years	0
Greater than 5 Years & Less than or Equal to 10 Years	0
Greater than 10 Years & Less than or Equal to 20 Years	0

Misleading data the Michigan  
**Department of Corrections** provided  
to reporters investigating  
solitary confinement

## ADMINISTRATIVE SEGREGATION

Departments of Corrections use semantics to hide people isolated for decades. When questioned by an investigative reporter this year about extreme solitary stays, the Official Michigan DOC spokesperson Chris Gautz provided this “chart from a report” and the following quote:

As of February of this year, there was one prisoner who has been in [administrative segregation] for more than one year, but less than two, out of 32,000 prisoners,” Gautz said.

When the reporter came back with far more names, he stopped speaker to her and referred her to the Freedom of Information Act if she had more questions.



Artwork by  
Martin Vargas, "Solitary"

9/24/20

My name is Andrew MacLachlan. I am 27 years old, and as of right now, ~~am~~ classified to Administrative Segregation or otherwise referred to as "Solitary Confinement." I have been incarcerated since I was 18 years old. I am from a family whose background isn't familiar with "prison or jail" at all; which kind of makes me the black sheep or the odd one out. However over the years I have used these experiences and life lessons as motivation to be a better and more successful citizen of the community once I return, which now is about only 2 years away. I am a high school graduate from Heritage High School in Saginaw, MI. I once looked down on ex convicts and inmates, but after being through the system and humbling experiences, I am not ashamed to admit that I am an ex con myself. I wanted to write this letter to show others that there are so many good, intelligent, creative and hardworking individuals in the system that are capable of so many positive things in their communities. However the system and the Department of Corrections makes it so difficult on these brothers and ~~sisters~~ sisters to do need. I currently am in Oaks Correctional Facility in Manistee, MI after receiving a class 1 misconduct for "incite to riot". My story, or part in this incident was not to be malicious or destructive or insubordinate by anymeans. I was participating in a peaceful protest by asking the staff and shift command to get the answers from the Warden or administration as to why they are moving individuals from a positive covid 19 unit to our unit who's inmates had no cases yet. At least ~~mentioning~~ as to why they are moving them with out being properly tested first. I myself have been a chronic care asthma patient for several years now, and recently went to the hospital in May for upper respiratory problems. This made me high risk and I couldn't afford to catch the covid 19 virus. After peacefully refusing to leave the hallways till we could get proper answers to our questions, the administration and staff gassed and pepper sprayed inmates and used excessive force on some as well. In result they rode some of us out from Muskegon that night on an emergency ride out to Oaks Correctional Facility. As of today Muskegon has the highest covid 19 case rate in the state of Michigan (DOC). This has been the most difficult time for me in my whole prison term. I am in a room with nothing but a desk and a toilet for 24 hours a day. No interaction with inmates other than through a door or talking through an AC plug in the wall. It is also so stressful and difficult to maintain healthy relationships with your family and loved ones. They as well as yourself are the ones who suffer with not know what's going on with their family members either. Several times my mother had called the facility to ask if she could get information as to what's going on, and they continued to state that "they didn't know". The staff only lets you use the phone or other privileges when they feel like it. The treatment is totally ridiculous and it just gets more stressful and more difficult to handle everyday. ~~As~~ I'm finally approaching my chronic care doctors check up, or else all my medical issues would also be ignored or neglected. Its like you are treated less than ~~a~~ human. There is no respect or empathy given towards an individual in Administrative Segregation. I feel even worse for the inmates with psych issues because even the psych related doctors don't make their routine rounds in

"Ad Seg" sometimes. I also can observe the long term effects that "solitary confinement" has on individuals just by listening to them. I believe helping someone consists of programming and learning. Not ~~continous~~ continuous or consistent punishment and neglect. I believe positivity should be implemented more in the administrative segregation practices. Not just telling ~~as~~ a person "do 6 ~~months~~" or "do 12 months" in a room by yourself and then they ~~consider~~ will consider letting ~~you~~ you back out to the same thing... Its still prison! This dis communication causes only further relationship and communication related problems amongst inmates again. To me it is not only unjust, but it is more importantly unhealthy to inmates.

As my ERL (earliest release date) approaches in less than 2 years, I want to remain ticket free and continue doing all the positive things I was doing before I was placed in "Ad Seg". I want to participate in more programming like I have in the past and remain focused. I want to become fully involved in prison reform, and I want to be a voice and bring ~~more~~ awareness to the outside world of what brothers and sisters, moms and dads, and friends and loved ones have to deal with or go through in our struggles to make it to freedom. I always like to remind myself with the quote "without struggles, there would be no progress". I will continue to participate in educating the ones who are not educated with this corrupt side of the system, in hopes that one day things will change for the better and most importantly, benefit our fellow brothers and sisters who will one day return to the community. My heart goes out to all who are behind bars, the wall, or in the hallways, and the ones who gives us a chance and listen.

Best regards,

Andrew G. MacLachlan #844 474

A Careless whisper in a dark room.  
An undertone of voices carried throughout  
a lightless cell.  
The mumbling drones on.  
But the whisper, "Come back" it says.  
Hearing the voices, the screams.  
I still feel so alone.  
How is that possible?  
Shoulder to shoulder, not seeing any faces.  
Just their distorted voices as they  
utter their displeasure and pain.  
Reverberating their discouragement in this  
abyss.  
But the whisper, its steady, tangible.  
"Come back" it repeats.  
lost in this dismal depressing place.  
All but a foot placed upon my head to  
assist in my descent.  
But the whisper, "Stay calm, focus.  
relax, don't give up.  
The whisper is needed.  
The constant monotony of the screaming  
scratching at my eardrums is overwhelming.  
But the whisper is right, is reason.

Justin J Gibson

Justin Gibson served the first 18 months  
of his life sentence in a solitary cell in a  
juvenile facility. He was 15 years old, and  
was not allowed any clothing for a year  
except two pairs of underwear.

date 8/18/2020

DEAR Jacq Williams  
I read what you posted, gave Me Hope  
because As I write this letter To You  
I'm In Solitary Confinement. I have This  
Mental Health Condition (PTSD) and Some  
other Stuff Not too long ago I got gased  
with Chemical agents over My Mental health  
Condition because i hear Voices and see demons  
and they gased Me and they Never let me out  
Porters clean MY Cell When and after I got  
gased, I got gased on 8/6/2020 They were taking  
My Showers I finly got Cleaned ON 8/17/2020 It  
was Clear Violation of the Civil Service Commission Rules  
and The Facility P.D. and p. 03.03.130 / Inhumane Treatment.  
I was wondering If You Could Help Me get The Specific Footage  
of Freedom of Info Act I put All MY grievances In  
So we I get The Footage Then I can Start My 1983 Date.  
Wood do a Wonder If You Could Help. It was between 4:00PM to like  
8:00PM

To MMY Julian  
#6018469

And Yes You Can Share  
with other

3000  
PEOPLE

100  
DEGREES IN SUMMER

30  
DEGREES IN WINTER

23  
HOURS IN CELL

15  
MINUTES ON THE PHONE  
PER MONTH

5  
HOURS OUTSIDE PER WEEK

3  
SHOWERS PER WEEK

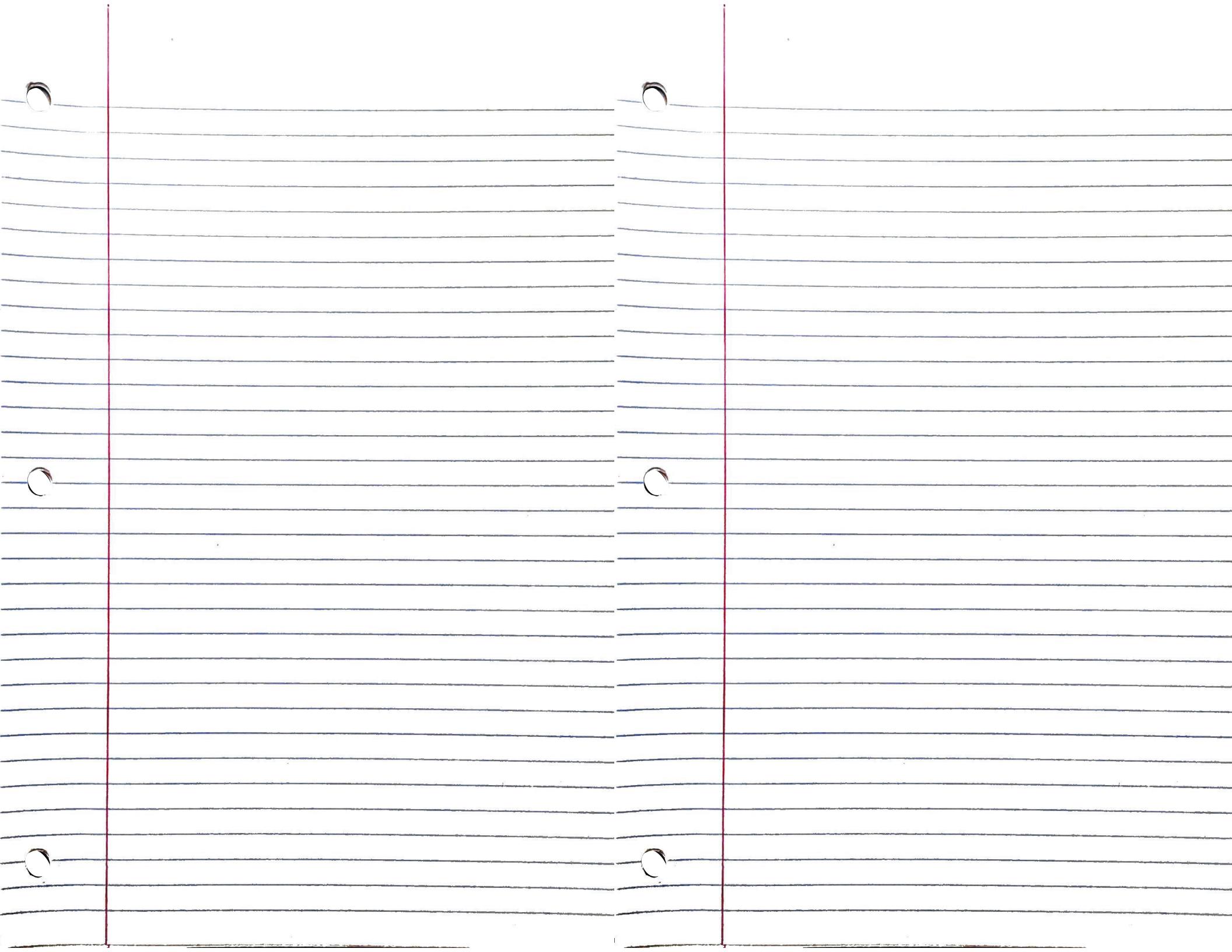
3  
SCANT FOOD TRAYS PER DAY



Artwork by  
DaJuan Ainsworth, "Playing for Freedom"

### **Reflections on the Human Costs of Conditions**

Whether or not you identify as part of a group that's been affected by state oppression, enslavement, incarceration, or exploitation--we're all affected by it in some way. How do you think this shows up in your everyday life? What words could you put to it?



# 04

## RESISTANCE AND ACTIVATION



"We Demand an end to the segregation of prisoners from the mainline population because of their political beliefs. Some of the men in segregation units are confined there solely for political reasons and their segregation from other inmates is indefinite."

### Credits:

[Manifesto of Demands from The Attica Prison Uprising.](#)

50 years ago on September 9, 1971, people incarcerated in abhorrent conditions in Attica Correctional Facility in Attica, New York took control of the prison to demand humane treatment. 43 people were killed, nearly all at the hands of guards and the police.

Hello,

My NAME IS MARIA AND I HAVE BEEN IN SOLITARY CONFINEMENT FOR SEVEN YEARS. THE REASONS ALLOWED ONLY ONE HOUR PER DAY FOR RECREATION LAST SEVEN YEARS. THE SECURITY GROUPS POLICY THREAT GROUP POLICY IS USED TO PUNISH IN A ARBITRARY FASHION. YOU GET NO HEARING SO YOU CAN'T DEFEND YOURSELF OR SEE THE EVIDENCE TO GIVE YOU THE STG DESIGNATION. ONCE YOU THE STG DESIGNATION THERE IS NO CRITERIA FOR THE PRISONER TO FOLLOW DESIGNATIONS REMOVED.

THERE ARE TWO TYPES OF STG DESIGNATIONS. STG-I AND STG-II. STG-I ALLOWS 2 HOURS OF OUTSIDE ACTIVITIES AND AN ALL DAY YARD DAYROOM ACTIVITIES AND ARE TO LEVEL II OR I. STG-II ONLY ALLOW FOR RECREATION ONE HOUR PER DAY CLOTHES, VISITS WHICH ARE ONLY TWO A MONTH FOR ONE HOUR. THE STG COORDINATOR LIMITS YOUR PHONE CALLS TO 30 MINUTES UNLESS YOU ARE IN SOLITARY. Money Mont has been in solitary confinement for 35 years. He is a prolific writer and a shepherd to young men inside. Mont is 67 years old, but known for his incredible strength of will and body. In the yard cage, he walks on his hands.

SINCE A PRECISE DIFFICULT TO CUT DUE TO THE AUTOMATIC TO RECOMMEND STG-II TO GET THE STG DESIGNATION REDUCE THE STG COORDINATOR USES WHATEVER IT FOR DENIAL. NO EVIDENCE NEEDED, TO FOR SOME UNKNOWN REASON BELIEVE. CHECK THE STATISTICS.

8/24/20

We stand in solidarity with political prisoners, and prisoners whose punishments have endured so long they are inherently political	Assata Shakur Russell Maroon Shoatz Nelson Mandela Mumia Abu Jamal Sundiata Acoli Rutikanga Akesi Money Mont	I have been in Solitary Confinement for 35 years. The Reptile per day for the yard and recreation. The security group policy. The threat group policy is used to punish in an arbitrary fashion. You get no hearing so you can't defend yourself or see the evidence to give you the STG designation. Once you the STG designation there is no criteria for the prisoner to follow designations removed.	A fence that only the scariest of men who want freedom and compassion are met with cold threats and harsh jones meant to dehumanize someone already deemed not fit. Some read, some write, make art, paint, sing, others become violent and tell them I am not a threat. My name is Walidah Coates. I have been in solitary confinement or temporary segregation for 30 days. In that time span I have witnessed men mutate from men into something savage men mutilate themselves, feed their rooms, take food offerings hostage, also break down doors and say I am not a threat because of any investigation for an offense that either A.) A misconduct will be found by the prisoner will be transferred in 30 calendar days. I protect inmate and staff. C.) Investigation can persist up to two years.	Bill Dunne Leonard Peltier Romaine "Chip" Fitzgerald Mutulu Shakur Rev. Joy Powell Red Fawn Fallis Kamau Sadiki
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As long as you do not give in to them, you will always find ways to beat them, in one way or another, sooner or later. And even if they do find ways to weaken or kill your mind and body, your soul should be impenetrable and immortal. But your mission should be: not to die but to multiply.

# BEHIND ENEMY LINES

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This collage by Lutalo and other art related to solitary confinement is on display at the **Broad Museum at Michigan State University** from September 4<sup>th</sup>, 2021 to Jan 30<sup>th</sup>, 2022.

[https://broadmuseum.msu.edu/  
exhibitions/silenced-voices-from-solitary](https://broadmuseum.msu.edu/exhibitions/silenced-voices-from-solitary)

## BEHIND ENEMY LINES

New Jersey Department of Corrections  
LUTALO, OJORE



INMATE

0000901548

SBNR 0000901548

DOB - 08/06/1945

Height - 5'11" Weight - 182

INM# 59840



Pg ②

8-22-20

Can feel the damage being done to me just about every day, This December will be 2 Years in Confinement Coming out My cell with handcuffs on, the Start program was ~~not~~ Stop Confinement for psychiatric prisoners and get us back in General population and at Icf Start program on A Wing and B Wing lower we are still confined to hour cells More than 20 Hours a day, please Respond back to this letter and if you can I would like to file a Law Suite on the M.D.O.C for Keeping me in lock down for so long with Major Mental Health Problems, I'm also on Years worth of Sanctions which is loss of privileges and stops me from going to yard, per M.D.O.C Rule I can get a 7 day Yard break every 30 days and that is it, On the Law Suite if you can file it for me that would be the best thing that happened to me.

Thank You for Your  
time

Pg ①  
8-22-20  
AFSC Jacq Williams I was reading Mi-Cure News August 20. This is a prisoner [REDACTED] at the Ionia Maximum Corr facility / Icf, I used a friends Stamped Envelope a prisoner [REDACTED]  
We are both in the Start program at Icf and we are both Confined More then 20 Hours per day and are in cells, we both have psychiatric Mental Health problems Very bad I have a Bipolar Disorder and it is a stage one, I have been Confined to a cell Since December 2018, I have talked to the Chief psychologist Maranka and A.D.W Traylor to let me on the B Wing upper in the Icf 3 unit Start program and they just keep me on the Side that is just like Segregation, we only get 5 Yards a week and on Saturday or Sunday we can use the JPay Machine once a week, we only get 5 Showers a week and have to go to Group once a week to talk to a Psychologist, I have also done a lot of time in the Past in Long term Segregation in the Past, I



Artwork by  
Theodora Moss, "Warrior on Black"

## INSIDE RESISTANCE

## INCLUDES

Hunger strikes	Petitions
Coordinated grievances	Refusal to lock
Inside/outside organizing	Political study
Individual training	Holding food slots
Flooding cells	Workgroups
Group advocacy	Lawsuits
Demonstrations	Creating book lists
Sharing resources	Intentional silence
Full rebellion	

"I am fighting a system that  
refuses to acknowledge  
my existence."

*The Beauty is ...  
They can't put my mind  
in a box.*



Jodi "Ladi Da" Hill is an artist, educator, and organizer for trans rights. She is serving a life sentence on a wrongful conviction, and has been incarcerated in a man's prison for 18 years, five of those in solitary confinement.

# 9 SOLIDARITY COMMITMENTS

TO/WITH

## INCARCERATED PEOPLE FOR 2021

1. LEARN SOME BASICS ABOUT INCARCERATION AND CRIMINALIZATION.
2. WRITE AT LEAST 6 LETTERS TO AN INCARCERATED PERSON IN 2021.
3. MAKE AT LEAST 4 DONATIONS (OF ANY AMOUNT) TO INCARCERATED PEOPLES' COMMISSARY ACCOUNTS IN 2021.
4. JOIN AT LEAST 4 PHONE ZAPS FOR IMPROVED CONDITIONS INSIDE OR FOR INDIVIDUAL PRISONERS IN 2021.
5. SEND 4 BOOKS TO INCARCERATED PEOPLE IN 2021.
6. DONATE TO AT LEAST 1 BAIL FUND IN 2021.
7. VISIT AN INCARCERATED PERSON AT LEAST ONCE IN 2021.
8. READ 2 BOOKS ABOUT CRIMINALIZATION IN 2021.
9. MAKE A MONTHLY CALL OR SEND A MONTHLY EMAIL TO YOUR GOVERNOR DEMANDING MASS RELEASE OF INCARCERATED PEOPLE THROUGH CLEMENCY.



Arkansas	decarceratear.org
Connecticut	stopsolitaryct.org
District of Columbia	dcjusticelab.org
Georgia	schr.org
Louisiana	lastopsolitary.org
Massachusetts	umassaction.org/end-solitary
Michigan	openmidoor.org
Nebraska	aclunebraska.org
Nevada	aclunv.org
New Jersey	njpjw.org
New Mexico	aclu-nm.org
New York	nycaic.org
North Carolina	disabilityrightsnc.org/current-campaigns/help-stop-torture
Pennsylvania	pacaic.org
Rhode Island	closehighside.com
Virginia	interfaithactionhr.org/virginia_isolation
Washington	aclu-wa.org

I'm sick in  
The head, I know it, and I'm  
holding on the best I can.  
All I know is I will not do  
A crime, But I AM like a ship, in the  
dark, with no where to go, But I  
feel like that all my life, when I  
got out of the County Jail I  
can not concentrate, I have a  
sensory deprivation - I do not  
know how to have meaningful human  
contact - I know I am permanent  
damaged, But don't know how to  
fix it, or if it can be fixed

go outside leave one cage to be locked in another

while in solitary confinement, I was not allowed to call my family at all and the only people that I had contact prior to prison were C.O.s, my psych, and my ARUSA over time, I began facing my cell) and talking to my self. I have now been 5 years since that point and I still struggle with talking to myself. I think this may impair me a little for my reintigration into society. I will it affect my relationships, but and work contacts.

For quite a few years now, it has been my dream to get certified for welding while incarcerated, but all is the major concern is that I will be (able), it is very possible that I may not be able to get this to better my End, I have been looking into other possible career ideas. Hopefully,

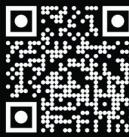
it may concern MY name is sebastian KNIDER 8517B1  
Recent issue about possibly publication of my  
dreams by prison. And after ~~the~~ prison, I give  
them to publish it all in the next issue. I was  
a difference Amherst M.D.O.C. inmates. I just ask  
you. keep my last name and MDOC # anonymous.

reads issue. My name is sebastian just like many  
men and women that reads issue in incarcerated.

writing all cupcakes and Amherst. But I still am a  
**"People from prison return to us.  
We must love and support each other."**  
Gene W., writes while on parole after  
serving a long time in isolation. He  
describes to us unending loneliness, and  
later, his search for a winter coat.

An invaluable part of our  
communities before their  
incarceration, during, and  
after they return.

silenced.in/  
michigan/voices/



Michael Mollins

\$100

Momay Morot

Morris Weatherspoon

Nicholas James Spencer

Paul Gross

Rutikanga Akesi

Paul D. Richardson

Quincy Howard

Roummel Ingram

Rufus Chamarelwin Spearman

Phillipe Garrett

R. Collins

Riyah Khanhmeir

Sebastian P. Zadler

Mr. Butts

Shane Stree

Shemekia Franklin

Mr. Stand L. Gibbs

Steven Wilcox

Thomas A.

Tommy Julian

Torrel Gaudette

TRINIDAD PAREDES JR.

TUNC URAZ

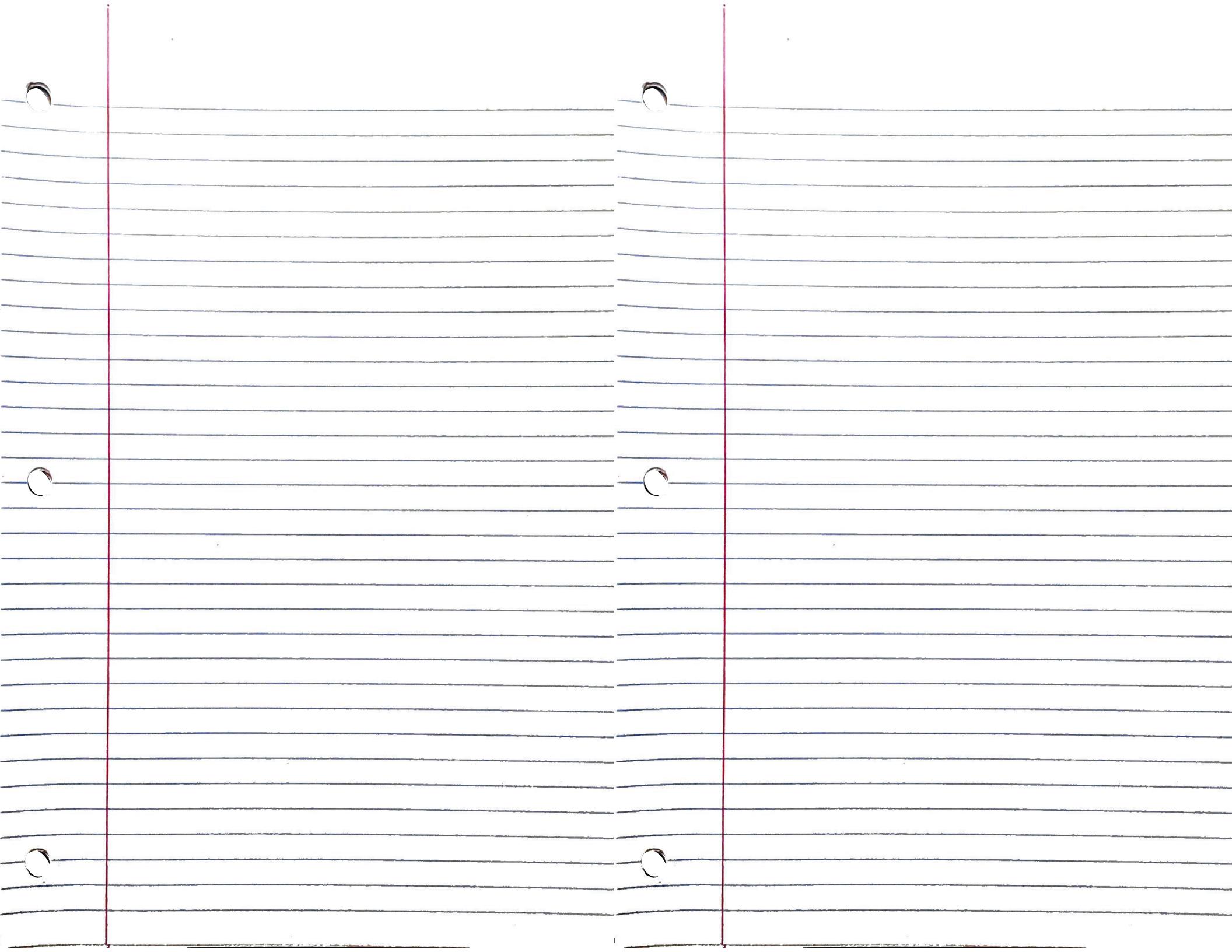
Victor Lindsey

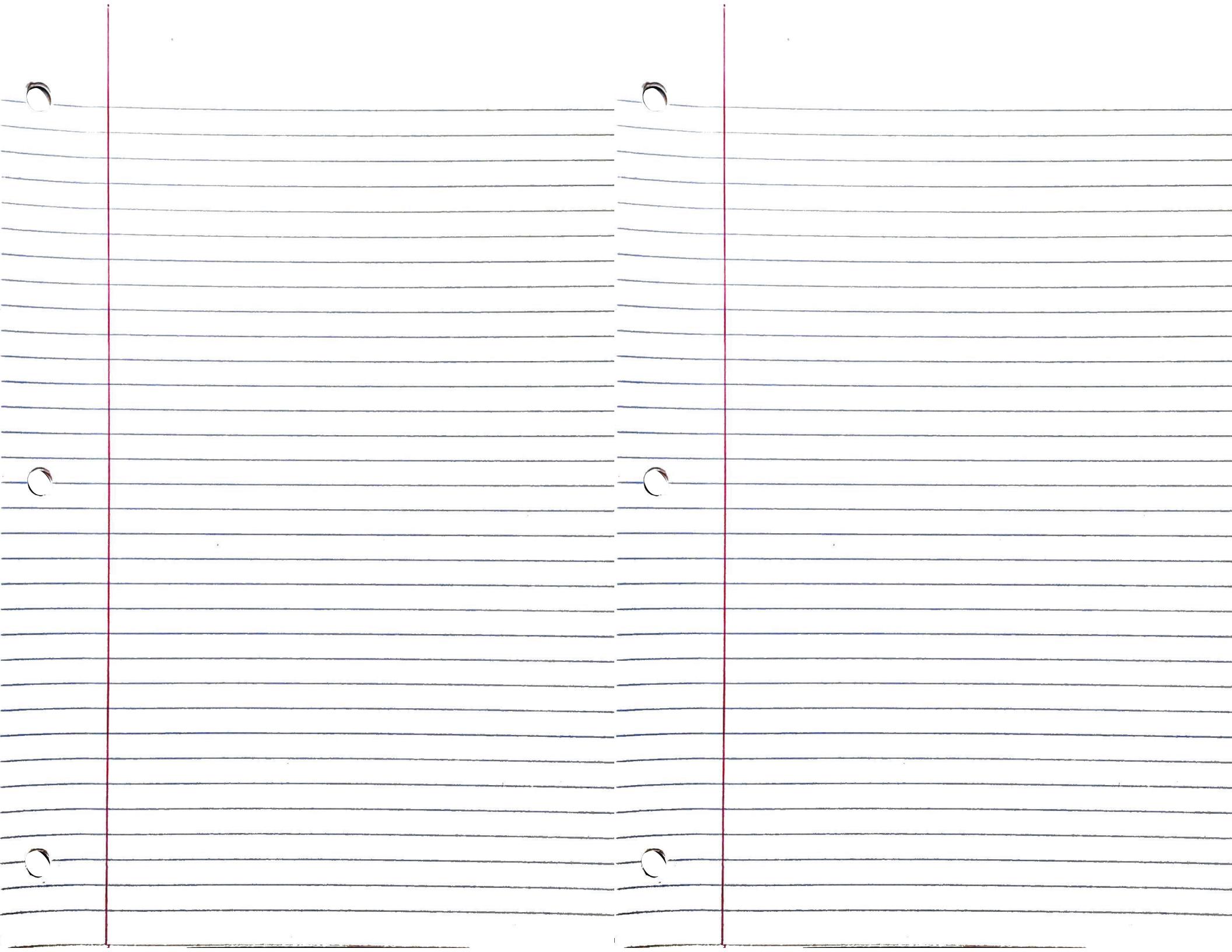
W. Sanders

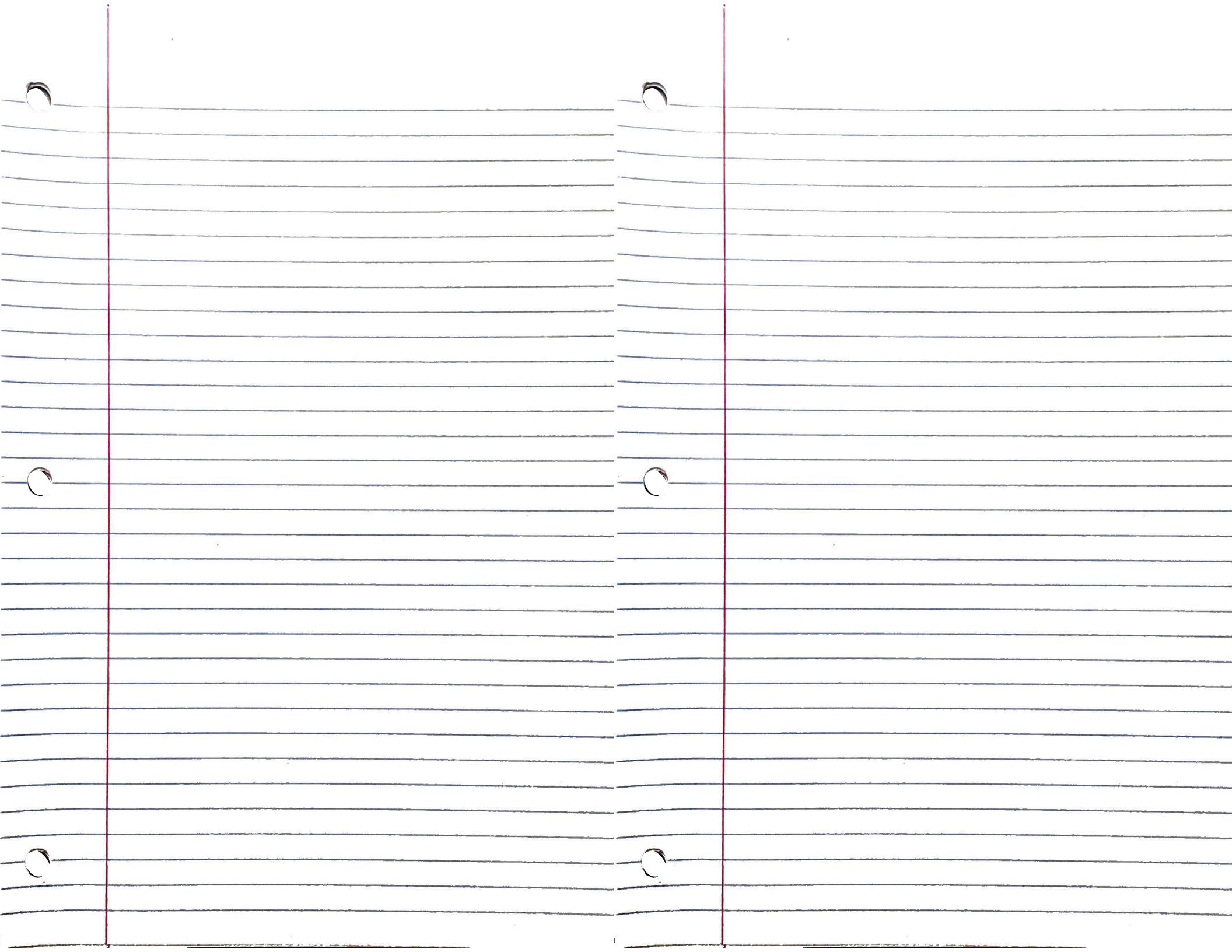
Zach

### **Reflections on the Resistance and Activation**

Where do you find hope as you navigate the world? Mariame Kaba tells us “hope is a discipline.” How do you find your strength in your darkest hours, and where do you find light?







**CONSOLIDATED  
ARTIST  
CREDITS**

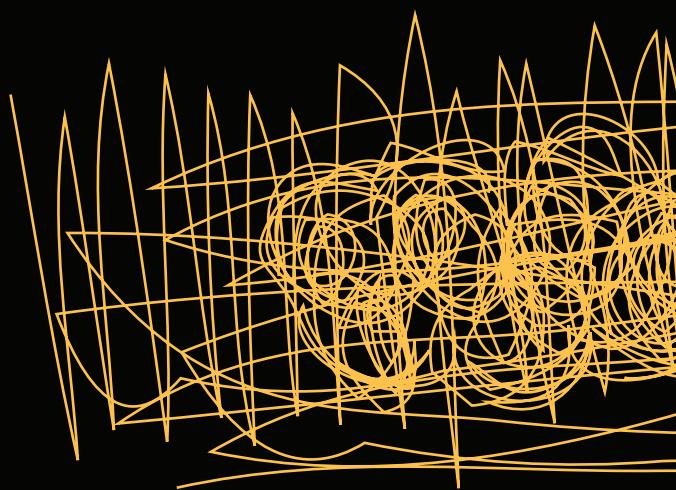
Jodi Hill	Colored pens on paper
Tricia Shepherd, "Freedom"	Oil on canvas
Matthew Christopher, "Abandoned America"	Photograph
Oliger Merco, "Evening Yard Crew"	Oil on canvas
Daniel Henry, Greeting Card	Colored pens on paper
James Fuson, "Suffocating"	Unknown medium
DaJuan Ainsworth, "Playing for Freedom"	Unknown medium
Ojore Lutalo, "Belly of the Beast"	Collage
Theodora Moss, "Warrior on Black"	Unknown medium
Jodi Hill	Colored pens on paper

Many of these pieces for sale at  
<https://lsa.umich.edu/pcap>



Zine designed by  
Pallavi Daga, Design Lead at Zealous

**Thank you for engaging with the voices of  
the people the state has tried to disappear.  
To find out more about ending solitary in  
Michigan, visit the local campaign's page at  
[openmidoor.org](http://openmidoor.org)**



**VOICES FROM SOLITARY IN MICHIGAN**