In 2016, almost 8% of voting age Alabamians were disenfranchised: their right to vote taken away because of a criminal record. Here, *mass incarceration* doesn't just punish individuals, it eats away at a community's power, person-by-person, vote-by-vote, with roots that run deep down into history.

After the Civil War, the period of Radical Reconstruction saw the first massive growth in Black communities' political power. Through *enfranchisement* (gaining the right to vote) and community organizing, Black leaders were elected, carrying the *abolition* of slavery forward with the changes that an abolitionist society would require: new land rights, economic rights, public schools, social services, while undoing the political and economic monopolies of the historic plantation class.

W.E.B. DuBois called this "Abolition Democracy," *a form of democracy that serves equality by making living conditions more equitable for all, rather than profitable for a few.*

This power was then undermined by the plantation class' resurrection through violence, intimidation, fixing the vote, and undoing these *abolitionist reforms*. They passed laws that criminalized Black communities —to disenfranchise and pull them back under control, but this time through "crime control," including racially targeted laws and policing, while turning old plantations into new prisons.[1]

New laws, called "Black Codes," targeted rights to move freely, to organize, to own land, to buy, sell and borrow freely, while Alabama's prison system went from 99% white before the Civil War to 90% Black after.[2] "The whites of Alabama, through the use of terror, trickery, and the legal system, succeeded in disenfranchising their Black fellow citizens."[3]

In 1901, a new Alabama Constitution was written "to establish white supremacy in this State,"[4] seeking the disenfranchisement of both Black and poor white communities, and their shared interest against plantation monopoly.

In one year, the number of registered Black voters in the Black Belt counties of Alabama would fall from 78,000 to only 1,081. And six decades later, while **Sumter County's** voting age population would be 69% Black, 95% of its registered voters were white.

In addition to poll taxes and literacy tests, Black people were kept from voting through "felony disenfranchisement laws," where a felony conviction also comes with "civil death" — the death of one's political rights and their right to vote.

As racist schooling, housing, banking, employment, policing, courts, parole and probation systems all framed Black communities as criminal, *felony disenfranchisement* became a dominant methods of restricting Black voting, by saying "crime" instead of "race."

While the Voting Rights and Civil Rights Acts of the Civil Rights Era dismantled Jim Crow's overt restrictions on voting, disenfranchisement through the "tough on crime" and "law and order" political movements, both born in the wake of the Civil Rights movement, have maintained voter suppression throughout the U.S. through today.

See KNOW YOUR RIGHTS on page 12

Memphis
Tupelo
Huntsville
Chattanooga
Atlanta
Birmingham
Jackson
1 York
Montgomery
Columbus
Hattiesburg
2 Mobile
Pensacola
Tallahassee
MUSKOGEE AND CREEK LAND
CHOCTAW LAND

= Prisons, jails & detention centers

= Cities in the region

= Black Belt region of the U.S.

= Exhibition sites for "Degrees of Visibility" in Alabama

Alabama imprisons 946 people per each 100,000. As a nation. The U.S. imprisons 698 per 100,000, the highest rate in the world: France = 102 per 100,000, Canada = 114, England = 139, China = 121, South Africa = 259...

Broken down by race, Alabama's 946 per 100,000 includes:
- White residents imprisoned at 535 per 100,000
- Latinx residents imprisoned at 767 per 100,000
- Black residents imprisoned 1,788 per 100,000

Because of Alabama's felony disenfranchisement laws, 8% of Alabama's voters are denied the right to vote.

*Footnotes: 1. Alabama's Red Eagle Honor Farm was a family plantation purchased by the Department of Corrections in 1873, while Parchman Farm in Mississippi and Angola Penitentiary in Louisiana are plantations enclosed, turned into prisons, and worked by the same people who had been emancipated years earlier; 2. "History of the ADOC," Alabama Department of Corrections website; 3. Quoted in Brian K Landsberg, "Sumter County, Alabama and the Origins of the Voting Rights Act"; 4. Quoted from Day 2 of 54, 1901 Proceedings, Constitutional Convention. **Pictured:** 1. Found postcard with Confederate monument in front of Courthouse; 2. Lookout tower of the French then Spanish then U.S. colonial Fort Conde, overlooked by the corporate RSA Battle House Tower, Mobile, Alabama.*

The interviews *included here were produced by Community Compilers, youth interns at the Coleman Center for the Arts, as well as the Center's leadership, in "Making Histories Of This Place: Interviewing and Storytelling," a workshop over Zoom, led by Ashley Hunt, alongside a monument-making workshop with Zarouhie Abdalian. They were held in connection with the exhibition, "Degrees of Visibility," a project that documents landscapes of mass incarceration throughout the U.S., studying how the realities of imprisonment are made invisible, while maintaining the historical disappearances of people, places, languages, ideas, humanity, rights and stories, and growing carceral systems of control.*

A WHOLE LOT OF TALENT AND A WHOLE LOT OF RESOURCES

Jackie Clay interviews Tim Clay

Jackie Clay: We're now starting to record. I'm interviewing Tim Clay as inspired by students in one of the Learning Internship Workshops at the Coleman Center for the Arts. I'm Jackie Clay. And, can you introduce yourself?

Timothy Byron Clay: My name is Timothy Byron Clay.

Jackie: Come a little closer. Lean in.

Tim: My name is Timothy Byron Clay.

Jackie: So I wanted to talk to you about two things. First your visiting prisons and your reflections on prisons, because that's one of the subjects we talked about within the class. And then also Breonna Taylor, because you're from Louisville, and your reflections on that. Do you have a preference where we start?

Tim: Let's start with the first one. I would probably know less about Breonna Taylor and Louisville.

Jackie: Okay. So when did you start going to prisons?

Tim: The first prison I went into was in '76, when I was a student missionary in Bangkok, Thailand. I formed a relationship with a Black G.I. that had been captured with like 33 kilos of heroin. And they had put him in jail for 33 years in Thailand.

Jackie: Have you ever followed up with him? Can you remember his name?

Tim: His name was J. I followed up with him maybe as recently as 10 years ago. He's been out, he got remarried, he had a kid. He was living in Orlando when I talked to him.

Jackie: Were you guys the same age?

Tim: He was a little older than me, because I was maybe 21. He might've been 24, 25, 26, something like that.

Jackie: What made you visit prisons that first time?

Tim: I can't really remember. Maybe I'd heard about this guy, maybe somebody I knew was going, and it just seemed like something to do, you know, to just talk to some people that were in prison. I think people in prison get real lonely, and especially if you're overseas in a prison and you're away from your family. And a Thai prison is just awful.

Jackie: So even now, after you've been multiple places, like in Ohio and Alabama, you thought the Thai prisons were awful?

Tim: Well, in the sense of... I think J. caught dysentery at least a couple of times while he was there. I mean, they literally fed them slop. It's just pretty rough conditions. So, compared to a prison here where you'll get two to three meals a day, they might get one or two, and it's a lot rougher living conditions. Then for an American, you know, you got the language barrier and all of that. So...

Jackie: So when you came back to the U.S., was it your experience in Thailand that made you think, "Oh, I want to continue to visit men and, essentially, my peers in prison?" When was the next time you went, and when did you start going consistently?

Tim: When I first came to Birmingham, I started going with a guy at church. It was more of a Gospel thing then, like "saving souls." We went

Cont'd page 4

STILL HUMAN

Brunell Smith

Even though I've walked a path in crime, I am Human.

Though I show I am strong, I am broken.

Though I show so much hatred, I care.

Looking upon the outside world, they show me fear.

Even if I had a second chance I'd probably be better off in here.

Sitting here day after day all you know starts to disappear.

Caged like a lion that they fear and if was to be set free I'll be shot down like a deer.

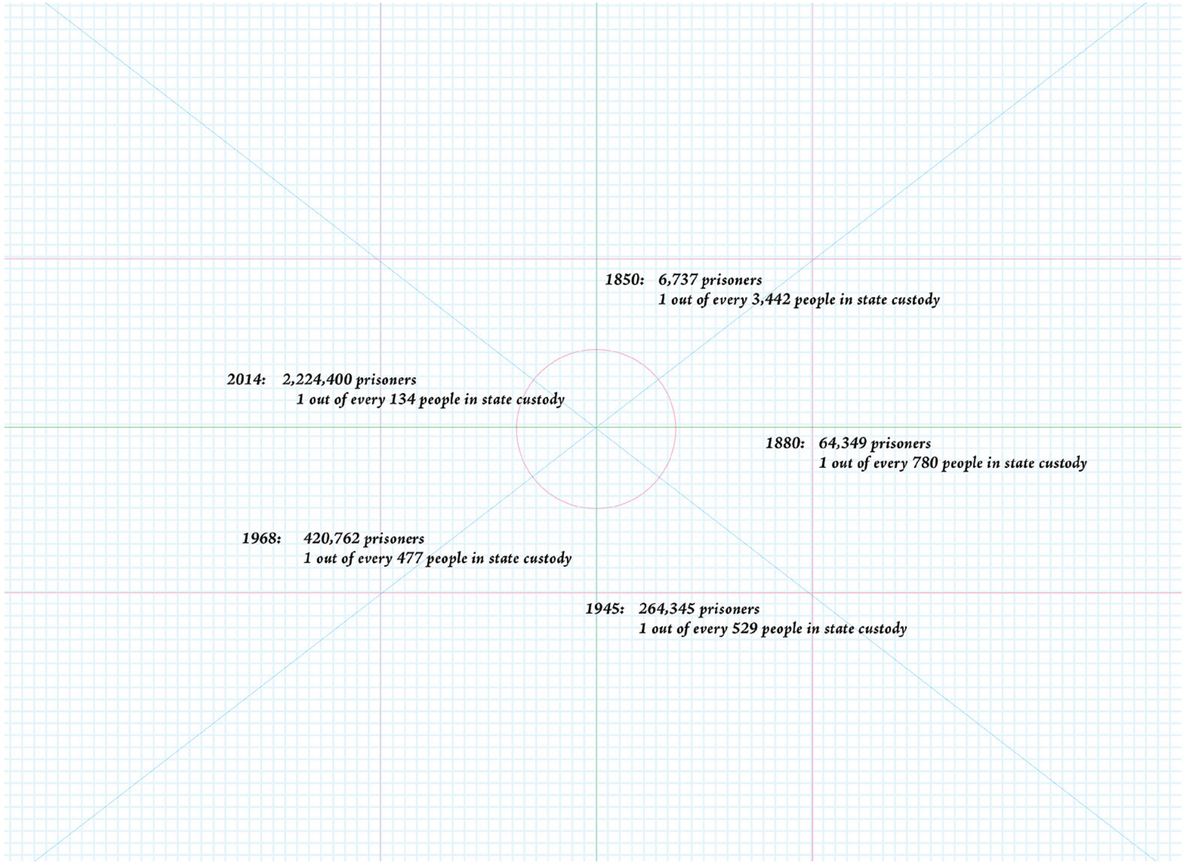
So even though we've walked a path of crime, we are HUMAN.

Though we've been treated lesser than, we are equal.

Binge watched like your favorite tv show, except we're the sequel.

244 women and 1,101 men

Montgomery Women's Facility and Kilby Correctional Facility, Mt. Meigs, Alabama



Degrees of Visibility: Circular Timeline

WHAT IS WHITE PRIVILEGE? #1

Daniel Rogers interviews Denise Rogers

Danny: Hey, how you doing? I'm going to let you introduce yourself.

Denise: Hi, my name is Denise Rogers. I am the mother of Daniel Rogers, and I am 48 years old and in great health. Thank you.

Danny: Alright. I guess I'm going to start the interview with the question, "what is white privilege?"

Denise: White privilege to me is like when one race just has an advantage over everything, and take advantage of other people; like taking advantage, having power over a bunch of races, like Black, white, Mexican. Just have a privilege of being empowered over one different colored people.

Danny: All right. And with that be instead, have you ever experienced any type of white privilege?

Denise: Yes. On my job, very many times I've experienced white privilege down through the years. We could have two people with the same type of job, but the Black person get treated the worst on the job and the white person gets the most advantage of the job and they might even get higher pay than the Black person. They might even get a better job from that than what I have. That's my experience with that.

Danny: Okay. Well my next question was going to be, have you ever witnessed it? And it's clear that you have witnessed it from your countless job opportunities and experiences like that. So that brings me to my next question, honestly, how did that make you feel?

Denise: Oh, it made me feel very terrified and made me feel weak. Like I was just incapable of doing my job when I know I could do my job better than the next man that came. And it just made me feel some type of way, like, oh, I would just being downloaded, and you know, when you downloaded, it just don't make you feel right.

Danny: Do you ever regret all the experiences you have? Do you wish that they could have been better?

Denise: Yes. I regret the experience that I had, but with the attitude I have, I never download on my own self. I always hold my head up and know that I was a better person and I didn't let nobody just made me feel little. I always had the mindset of whatever one person do to me doesn't matter. Just to hold my head up and keep my job going. And I always know that God made all of us equal and none of us is not perfect.

Danny: All right. Do you think that white privilege is a bad thing for all people? Like, do you think it's bad for white people?

Denise: Well, it should be bad for everybody when just one race has just got this entire power over everything. It should be bad for them, but in they mindset it may not be bad for them. But I think it's bad for white people, Black people, anybody who wants to just be empowered and not have to just listen to anybody else, who just want to be in control of ourselves.

Danny: Okay. And do you think white privilege could be fixed at all?

Denise: Yes, I think it could be fixed and we could all just try to get to come together and get on one accord.

Danny: Alright, we're finna get ready to wrap up the interview, we have like a few more questions left. How might we combat white privilege?

Denise: What do you mean by combat?

Danny: How do you think we could get rid of it?

Denise: Just start having a lot of seminars on it; have different people go around and have seminars on white power and...

Danny: So start some type of education of some sort on it?

Denise: Yeah. Some kind of educational thing, educate people on white power and how white power manifest.

Danny: Alright. Who do you think we should approach about fixing this problem?

Denise: The people, the overhead in the White House, you can go there and send letters to them. You're representatives, or Congress, however you want to put it. The big leaders around here, first start with the top people and...

Danny: And work your way down, in the hierarchy of the government — the legislative branch and all that type of stuff? Do you think we could start possibly in the local, the local government, the state, Alabama? Kay Ivey?

Denise: Yes, the governor... I work our way up from ... First, you probably going to have to start with the local people first and then work your way up to the higher authorities. That's how you probably would get there, because you go through your government, your representatives, and all your local little people first, and try to see what they can do. And then, from them, you can just branch out and work your way all the way up to the higher level.

Danny: All right. Okay. Final question. Do you think, do you think society would have been better without white privilege ever being present at all?

Denise: Yes, it would have been a whole lot better without white privilege, because everybody probably would be more on the same level. Everybody probably would be doing the same things and getting paid the same amount of money, and not judged by their color, but by their character. And everybody probably would be doing good in everything they do, getting in "good trouble" instead of bad trouble.

Danny: All right. Well, I enjoy talking to you.

Denise: And I enjoy talking to you too, Daniel, glad that I could be a help.

Danny: Alright, well, I'm gonna sign off. Thank you for your time.

Denise: Thank you. And you have a blessed day.

WHAT USED TO BE HERE AND WHAT DO WE NEED NOW?

C interviews her mother

C: Hi how are you today?

Mom: Hey, I'm good. How are you doing?

C: I'm doing good. I wanted to ask you a few questions. The first question is, what kind of stores did we have, but no longer have? It can be stores or restaurants or...

Mom: That's a good question. Well, I know we used to have a Walmart. Yeah. We used to have Walmart.

C: What was Walmart like?

Mom: It was the bomb back during my days. It was a good store for us around here. It wasn't like the Walmart that we have nowadays, not like the Super Walmart; it was just the regular Walmart, and it was, it was just very convenient for the city. You didn't have to go very far out to just go to a Walmart, whatever you needed, you had it right there in the city. You could just go there and get it. It's not like that anymore because Walmart shut down. They were supposed to have put in another Walmart, it was actually going to be a Super Walmart, but they decided to put it in another city, which is probably like 30 miles away, in Demopolis, Alabama.

C: Yeah. What else do we have no longer?

Mom: Well, we had a Waffle House. Yeah. We had a Waffle House.

C: Really???

Mom: Yeah, we had a Waffle House. Can you believe that?

C: I can't, now it's miles to the city.

Mom: Waffle House was real nice back then. Well, you were a child, but anytime you wanted some breakfast anytime of the day, you know, you could just go up to the Waffle House, get you a bite to eat with some friends or family. It was real nice. I wish I wish it was still here.

C: Yeah me too, you wouldn't have to drive so far to get to those kind of places.

Mom: Yeah. I love Waffle House. I like they waffles. I'm a fan of they waffles. And hash browns — let's not leave that out!

A Whole Lot of Talent... (Cont'd)

to the city jail, and it was pretty much like putting on a church service.

Jackie: Were they other Seventh Day Adventists, or were they just other Protestants?

Tim: The attendees?

Jackie: No. The person you went in with?

Tim: Yeah, they were all Adventists — who I went with, they were guys from the church. So it was Brother Watkins, another guy named Pat, and myself. It was usually us three, and maybe we might get people that would come.

Jackie: Do you distinguish these kinds of visits from when you would visit D.? Do you think that's a different thing or...?

Tim: Yeah. You're talking about D.B. Jackie: Yeah.

Tim: Yeah, yeah, yeah. He was like in a halfway house, he was getting out, it was kind of like a friendship as well as a helping type of thing. I would buy stuff for him, take it to him, he would ask for stuff, you know. He wasn't really like in a "prison prison." But there is another, a friend of mine, M., her nephew got convicted of killing his girlfriend's daughter — she was like a six year old and died while under his care. And I wrote him, and I actually got to go to the Texas prison and meet him once.

Jackie: When I was younger and you'd go to prisons, I thought of them as both religious, in the sense that you're going with your church, but also relational, very much about you visiting other Black men who were many times your age-peers too.

Tim: Yeah, I mean, I think that's definitely a part of it. So like T., who was M.'s nephew, she told me about his case when it first happened, and then it went to trial, and then he actually went in. So, when he actually went in was when I started communicating with him, you know, just as I guess a relationship began, even though I haven't talked to him in probably 10 years. And he's out now.

Jackie: I wanted to talk to you because, for my many years of my life, I've thought of you visiting prisons and visiting men in prisons who were your age-peer. You don't talk about your visits a ton, until recently, and you don't always talk about how it makes you feel. So what did it feel like early on, versus in the middle, and versus now?

Tim: I think that early on, and even in the middle, it was more of a religious compulsion. It was like, "Well, this is what I'm supposed to do because this is what the gospel says," you know what I mean? And I think the relationship was a part of it too. But I think that religion was more of the motivation at the beginning, as well as even the middle. Now I would say it's more about just connecting to them, like in a real way, on what I would call like a spiritual plane, you know? Just kindness and listening. Not trying to get them to join some group.

Jackie: When I've visited prisons —I've only been twice and one was almost like a legal visit, because I was going with the California Coalition of Women Prisoners, where we were visiting prisoners, women who had "life without parole." We were helping them with litigation on their case, to encourage them, and also to take information, like detailed information of their story to strengthen their case. Because life without parole is particularly hard, and a lot of times the charges and convictions are about proximity to an abusive partner. Although honestly, as I get older, I don't really need to know why somebody is in prison.

Anyway, that first visit, it was really weird because it felt like high school. The space felt like I was going into my high school lunchroom, and it made me realize how spaces are institutionalized, you know? There are all these things that you don't totally understand until you go inside. Like how many layers you have to move in and how you really are deep inside of this building once

Cont'd page 6

THREE POEMS A DAY

Brunell Smith interviews Todessa Smith

Brunell: Hey, can you state your name and your relationship to me?

Todessa: Hi, my name is Todessa Smith. And I'm Brunell Smith's mother.

Brunell: For poetry, what do you think used to be in the community?

Todessa: I googled one time that the Arts and Humanities in Tuscaloosa County had a poetry slam at Bama Theater.

Brunell: Do you think there are still things like that in the community?

Todessa: Yes, because they have one coming up, October 13th at 7:30 PM.

Brunell: So what made you start writing poetry?

Todessa: I liked it and I got to express my feelings and emotions by writing poetry.

Brunell: Okay. Why did you stop?

Todessa: My last poem was to my brother when he passed away and I really think it hurt me so bad that I just haven't wrote since then.

Brunell: Was it something you love doing?

Todessa: Yes.

Todessa: Do you know how often that you would write?

Todessa: I would usually write like three poems a day.

Brunell: What was your poetry mostly centered around, and how did you express your emotions?

Todessa: It was centered around, things that I was going through in my life, or things that was happening in the world.

Brunell: Okay. So I have a poem that I would like to read to you. You tell me what you think of it. This poem is called "Animated heartbreak":

The sadness isn't worth it no more.

I feel like Cinderella when she was sitting on the basement floor.

All this happened when I let my heart explore, I should've worn boots coming into this storm.

So now my heart is bad for it because you took the armor. You forgot, tangled, got kidnapped, so she had no knight in shining armor.

Just being near you made my heart beat miles from tomorrowland.

I let you pull my strings. Like I was the puppet. I would have closed my mouth and let you control it like I was a muppet.

Finally I cut the strings because there was constant mistakes, but now you're hired for the animated series, "Monster by Mistake."

Todessa: Okay. I feel like that you was in a serious relationship, and someone hurt you bad. But you managed weather the storm, and you got through it.

Brunell: Okay, I suppose [giggles]. So I have another one that I will read a part of, and this is called "Counterfeit":

It's 4:55 AM, and you're on my mind.

Every time I hear your name, I fast forward to a point in time where I wish we were.

A place I know that will never exist, but I still expand my imagination beyond my wildest dreams, where I see fit.

I could have loved you, but your feelings was counterfeit. And I should've known because some of your actions kind of fit.

And I still envisioned something counterfeit, but I had the wrong puzzle pieces, but it kind of fit.

I wish the time could split so I could erase all the time we spent. And that includes every dime I spent.

Time is money, and I just spent two more dollars writing this.

The feelings I share for you are now more than well-spent. And now all my head do is spin.

I don't know why I put my tears, time, sweat and blood in this, knowing to you, this situation probably doesn't even exist.

Todessa: It sounds like another poem that, you was hurt and you're expressing your feelings on what you went through, and the things that happened. But again, you got through it.

Brunell: So, thank you for your time, and it was nice talking to you.

Todessa: Alright, you're welcome.

Ruins of the Alabama Capitol building, Tuscaloosa, burned down in 1923, preserved as an idealized wreckage of the Antebellum South's connection of itsself to Classical Greece through architecture

SURVEY ON RACE AND JUSTICE #1

By Daniel Rogers

Danny: Hello.

Bobbie: Hello.

Danny: How are you doing?

Bobbie: I'm great. How are you?

Danny: I'm great. Well, I'm going to let you introduce yourself.

Bobbie: Okay. I am Bobbie. I am originally from Mississippi, but I now live here, and I also attend school here at University of West Alabama.

Danny: All right. Well, we're going to talk about a lot of things that have to do with the mass incarceration rates right now. Let's first start with this: Do you feel that Black people are targeted more in the South versus the North? And when I say the South, I mean, places like Alabama, versus places like Chicago or anywhere else?

Bobbie: No, I actually do not. And I say this because I'm from Mississippi, one of the most racist states in the country, you know, we're known for our racial history along with Alabama. But I have noticed, especially with having family in the Chicago area and Milwaukee, Black people there are targeted more. And I say this because they're targeted publicly, you know. In Southern states, everyone has kind of found a way to get along and unite more. And it's not so segregated now versus in urban areas, where you have predominantly Black neighborhoods, predominantly white neighborhoods, and that also involves socio-economic status. So that's another reason for that. But I do still feel like people are targeted.

Danny: Okay. Well, with that being said, Bobbie, do you feel like you are targeted? Have you ever been targeted?

Bobbie: Of course I have. You know, being a woman is rough enough, but being a Black woman or just a Black person in general, and also adding a gender onto it, that makes you even more targeted. Me personally, I've been targeted academically, ever since high school, even in elementary school. I was always too advanced, you know, and it wasn't just me as a person, they were looking at my skin tone and deciding, "Okay, there's no way *you* did this." So yeah, I have been targeted.

Danny: Alright. Well, do you feel that the police in your city protect you?

Bobbie: No, honestly I do not, simply because they're not out that much. But I will say if anybody in the Black community calls them, they're going to take forever to come out there. They're going to take forever to respond, whereas if a white person calls them and says, oh, we're having this issue, they're literally just going to fly over there quick.

Danny: Alright, love. Now we're going to get to the next part of the interview. We're going to talk about legal things and situations. Do you feel that if you were to be arrested that you would get a fair trial?

Bobbie: No, I would not get a free trial, and that's something I'm sure of. This system, there is so much systemic racism these days, and it's been going on for years but now it's even more evident, you know?

Danny: And for this next question, do you feel that the legal system protects your rights as a US citizen?

Bobbie: No. I actually feel like the legal system is against me, simply because of my race, my skin tone, and also where I'm from and how I grew up, you know? I wasn't rich, so of course I don't think they would protect me. I honestly do not.

Danny: Alright, well now we're at the final part of the interview, and my final question is, do you feel that arrests are more likely to happen to Black people? And if so, why do you feel that way?

Bobbie: Yes, I do feel like it's more prone to happen to Black people, simply because we're already targeted. I mean, personally, I can't go out shopping without being looked at as if I'm going to steal or I'm going to do something wrong, as if I'm going to harm someone, you know? And that's the sad part about being targeted. So yes, I honestly do feel like we're not protected and we're always targeted and this system is not for us. And that's just sad to say, but honestly, it's not for us.

Danny: Right. Well, it was good having you.

Bobbie: Thank you for having me.

Danny: Alright love, we're going to end it here. I hope you have a nice day.

Bobbie: Have a nice day!

you get inside. How the folks inside can't touch money, or they don't have permission to do certain things, even though they're being very closely watched and stuff. And I guess on that very first visit I got a real understanding of how the way that space is socialized is not really built for reform, you know?

Tim: Well, and not only that, but I mean, my experience in prison now, especially now in the Alabama Department of Corrections, is that what you said is kind of true on one level as a means of control, but there is a deep and dark underground where you can get almost anything in prison. I mean, they get drugs, they get alcohol, they get cell phones, you know, and there's no question to me that the guards are complicit.

Jackie: Right now there's been these conversations about "defunding the police," and it's interesting because people take up that part of the conversation. But the idea that it will affect prisons and the abolishment of prisons is this other leap that people aren't really able to make yet. Like, if we have stewards of the law — police — who are corrupt or overly forceful, or they overly litigate and criminalize certain behaviors — particularly drug abuse or more accurately drug addiction — then there'll be less people in prisons and there'll be less people to feed to that system. I guess the whole point of this question is, can you imagine a world without prisons? And can you imagine a less active prison system?

Tim: Yeah. There's no question. There's a big connection between a lot of mental institutions closing down and the growth in prisons. I wouldn't guess the percentage, but if it was 10%–25% of your prisoners or your inmates actually having some kind of mental or emotional health issue, I wouldn't be surprised at all.

When I talk to white people, what they think about the police and what a lot of Black people think about the police is completely different. You know, there's very few Black men my age that couldn't give you at least three stories of a run-in with the police where they were just stopped and harassed because they were Black, you know? And so where most white people look at the police as protection, I think Black people look at police as like guardians of property, you know, guardians of the state. And so that's just a big difference.

The police and the way they operate helped build up the prison industrial complex because of the way that they deal with Black people. And I think that Black people, because of a lack of opportunity, they can do things that are more risky — they can use drugs, which shouldn't be criminalized, or they can do robberies. You know? I mean, if someone is born in the projects, the probability of them getting a college degree versus going to prison, what's more likely? You know what I'm saying?

Jackie: For generations though, there was this other option, all these different forms of labor. And now that has been removed — there were poor working class people who maybe didn't "move up" to the middle class, but they did have jobs that paid a living wage. Whereas now, you know... I mean I've been either under underemployed or underpaid for many, many years, and I have a lot of privilege and a lot of degrees. So if you have less of that, it's even more difficult, you know? And the other thing that is interesting, Daddy, kind of related to this, is a lot of study and documentation about how federal, state and municipal governments putting limits on where Black people could live has affected our generational wealth. Because we didn't have access to homes that would appreciate the way that our white peers had, who were just as working class or had the same degree or lack of degree. All of those things funneled us into the moment we're in right now, you know.

I've heard you talk about what it's like interacting with much younger men versus when you first came in, when you were more peer-to-peer. Are there fewer and fewer men your age there as you get older?

"Denny Chimes" bell tower on the campus of the University of Alabama at Tuscaloosa

Tim: Yeah, there are. And, and most of them are going to be 40 and under. At Donaldson, I've run into teenagers, early twenties. And when you talk about life without parole, I mean, life without parole is probably worse than a death sentence, you know? It's basically saying, well, we're going to keep you living, we're gonna have you doing something, maybe, but you're a part of this prison industrial complex, where we got food vendors and clothing vendors and long distance phone providers and all of these businesses feeding off the prison system, you know? And to me, it does, you know, and I hear about somebody, "Yeah, we went on a mission trip to wherever..." It's like, the prisons have a whole lot of talent, a whole lot of resources, just like the projects have a whole lot of talent and resources. The Black Belt has a whole lot of talent and resources, but because of where we are now, because of how we got to where we are now, most of these people, especially the Liberal ones, they don't want to get their hands dirty. They don't want to get in and like, let's do what needs to be done. It's just a lot of talk.

Jackie: Do you think I'm getting my hands dirty?

Tim: Oh yeah.

Jackie: See, I feel lots of conflict about being at a nonprofit and how those are tools in the system too. It allows the government to do less and us to accept privatized care, as opposed to a system that serves us.

Tim: Yeah. But I mean, I think that we could get the government to do more, because we control the government. You know, you talk about defund the police, or you have all these federal grants... I mean, if the federal government could all of a sudden put out $3 trillion in like three weeks [for COVID-19 relief], then money is not really an object in this country. There's an abundance of money in this country. It's not that there's a lack of it and it's tight, so we gotta watch this and watch that... It's just a matter of attitude. And if we want to do it, we can do it.

Jackie: How do you feel like your visits to prisons now are different from maybe your very beginning?

Tim: Now I'm not trying to win the guys over or convert them or change them, you know, I try to share my story with them and what I've been through. Just try to give them some hope and talk to them about real life. Because I mean, you can still be an addict or an alcoholic in prison and that's like trapped within a trap, you know? So basically just trying to get them to free their minds, even though they're locked up.

Jackie: Are there, is there anything else you want to say or anything you feel like I missed that you would want reflected in the recording?

Tim: I just think that like for young African Americans, and specifically males, they have to realize that this system in this country is not set up to help them progress. It is set up to get them in prison or to kill them.

Jackie: To extract their value, as measured by the system.

Tim: Exactly. And so it's important for young African-Americans to begin to know what their own value is as early as possible, not base it on what the culture or what the media say, or what's popular, you have to figure it out for yourself.

Jackie: Okay. So now I want to pivot to the Breonna Taylor killing.

Tim: Okay.

Jackie: So do you know the rough sketch of what happened?

Tim: I mean, in Louisville the police can just enter somebody's place without knocking. That's what they did. And when that happened, I think her boyfriend shot at them, they shot back, and she was killed.

Jackie: When you heard about that at first, did you feel additional concern because it happened in your hometown?

Tim: No. I mean, Louisville is like any other inner city, especially in the Black community. Police are there not to protect Black people, but to keep them in check, to make sure they do not act out of order. And the assumption is that they're going to be out of order. And to be honest, the assumption is if you're Black, especially if I'm Black, even if I'm in a hundred thousand dollar car riding in a white neighborhood, well, I probably stole that car. So let's stop him. (Laughs)

Jackie: When I first heard about Breonna Taylor's murder it didn't upset me more than the many, many other murders that have hit the news since 2014. But when I would hear her mom speak, she sounded like our family. And it surprised me when we did have these large family calls, and people didn't talk about what is happening in Louisville. I do think there may be a practice within our family of numbing, dissociation and denial, maybe that's what's happening. But also, maybe it's like, "What is the space where we talk about this?" You know?

Tim: Well, I also think that part of it could be, "Yeah, it's so big, what can I do? What difference can I make?" You got this systemic stuff that's been going on for centuries, decades, and how do you stop it?

Jackie: When you see folks marching and demonstrating, does that excite you? Because I didn't even see where anybody in our family ever went to a march.

Tim: Yeah, I mean, marching and demonstrating, to me, I'm not a big fan of it.

Jackie: Why?

Tim: I mean, I'd much rather see somebody going and doing some Big Brother, Big Sister, some mentoring with kids that need it, or providing resources to this inner city school where kids may not even have internet at home or...

Jackie: So let me just clarify. I'm not saying what you would do. Right now I don't go to demonstrations because they're hours away. But it's more like, in what you're saying, those things aren't either/or, you know?

Tim: You can do both.

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RARITY
Brunell Smith

In my world flowers don't too often bloom but when they do there aren't any as rare as you.

A heart so pure it's worth more than diamonds, rubies and gold.

A heart so pure if you wanted darkness to come in, it wouldn't dare to even come close.

A heart so pure when it love and beats towards you, you see unicorns and rainbows.

A heart so pure it loves within the soul and that brings me back to a rare flower I rarely see grow.

A flower that grew in a very cold place and have yet to stop shining all through the place.

In my world flowers don't to often bloom but when they do there aren't any as rare as you.

I haven't seen many unicorns and rainbows but when your heart beat there are things from unicorns to dragons and from dragons to a Phoenix.

You love so deep and hard it can have anyone feening.

So in my world flowers don't to often bloom but when they do there aren't any as rare as you.

625 women and men

Tuscaloosa County Jail, Tuscaloosa, Alabama

WHAT USED TO BE HERE AND WHAT DO WE NEED NOW?

Steffon interviews his mother

Steffon: What are some things, stories or histories that existed in my community that I was never aware of.

Mom: Well, there's a couple of things that I can remember from when I was young. Downtown they used to have a store called TWL. They used to have this bar, this kind of club that was like right beside TWL, they used to have it open on the weekends. And if I'm not mistaken, I think it was called AJ's that was right across the street. They used to have some church down there, I don't know if they were Pentecostal. Bonus is one of them too, it used to be called the Bill Dollar Store. Mr. Larkin used to have his grocery store down beside Young Fashion, which used to be right beside that church.

Now I did hear history on how there was a Reverend Nixon, they said that he marched through York. They do have a "Nixon" road sign, right where your grandmother lives, up in the projects. I'm not sure if it's related to that actual Reverend Nixon, but his house is literally up the street from this road sign.

Another thing that I can't say 100% for sure, but I do know that it existed: Where Sumter Central is at now, there's a road not far and there's this school that was built back there in the woods. I was told that it was only for white people to attend, that Blacks weren't allowed to attend this school. When I was going to school, I didn't see many white kids in the school with me, it was majority Black with white teachers, and I never could understand why, you know, we didn't really have any white kids going to our school. But I was told that the reason why we didn't see them is because the parents had their kids enrolled in this here private white school that was back there in the woods, away from everybody. They recently just closed that school down, I would say about three years ago.

Steffon: Okay. What kind of things does my community need?

Mom: Sumter County needs a lot of things. First off, the most important thing, they need better schools. These schools are so old. Thank God they finally built a new high school, Sumter Central High School, because Sumter High was very old, it wasn't fit for those kids to be going down there, not even safe to be honest with you.

We definitely need more jobs, because it seems like every little business around here, they are either closing down, or they are being very picky about who they hire. It's like you've got to have some type of college degree — a high school diploma ain't going to get you nowhere nowadays, not even enough to get a job at a food restaurant.

And this may sound crazy what I'm about to say, but I'm gonna keep it one hundred — I don't see what mayor Robbins is doing around here. Sumter County has been so dried up, especially York, I don't know what they're doing with the money. I don't see nothing they are trying to do to help build this here town.

We definitely need something here for the young people, like the park? That's not even a park, I wouldn't even call it that; I don't know what that is down there, but it's not fit for kids to play at.

There's nothing around here for the young generation to do, and that's why so many of them are out there on the streets or getting locked up, because there is nothing around here for them to do.

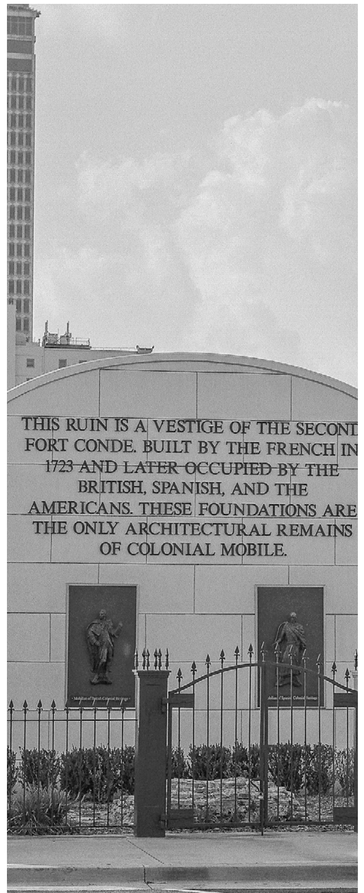
These roads need fixing. They're so focused on the main road instead of working on all the roads. Because I'm telling you these back roads are not even fit for driving your car up on. The roads are messed up, these buildings need remodeling, and like, it's just really... It's just poor. It's poor around here.

And I wish I could say, five years from now, things is going to look different, but to be honest with you, I feel like five years from now it's going to be even more dead, because I just found out that the Church's Chicken has been closed down. And that was the only restaurant that York had where they can even say, "we can go get us a nice little meal."

And one last thing before I finish: We definitely need a better college. University of West Alabama (UWA) is not the college that I would recommend to Black people. I'm gonna just say that, I'm gonna keep it one hundred. UWA is just as racist as I don't know what. They try to pretend like they're not, like they're a "mixed college." Yeah they got Blacks and other races going there, but the reality behind all of that is still a very racist school. They always have been. And I'm going to just leave it at that.

Steffon: Thank you, and I hope you have a good day.

Mom: And I appreciate it son. You have a good day too.



WHAT IS WHITE PRIVILEGE? #2

By Daniel Rogers interviews Brianna

Danny: Hello sweetness. How you doing?

Brianna: I'm wonderful, baby.

Danny: I'm going to let you introduce yourself.

Brianna: Okay, my name is Denise.

Danny: Alright. Well, let's not waste any time and get into this interview, my love. So, what is "white privilege"?

Brianna: White privilege is when white people can just walk down the street and not feel scared about their life or anything else around them.

Danny: Have you ever experienced it?

Brianna: Yes, I have. I've been walking down the side of the street before and been with my other friends, and I've been either stopped or pulled over by cops because they feel like I should be scared for my life, being in a car with a Black person.

Danny: Have you ever witnessed it, like an account as to when you just sat back and witnessed it?

Brianna: Just that time when I got pulled over, where me and a friend of mine were in Meridian and just driving down the road and got pulled over. He was driving, and they asked if I was okay, asked for his license and registration and attempted to give him a ticket. But I didn't see the point in it, so I asked the officer "why?" And so they never gave him the ticket, they just let us go about our day.

Danny: So having dealt with and experienced that, how did it make you feel as an individual?

Brianna: As an individual? I was hurt. I went home and cried that night because I did not find it fair at all, and I don't find it fair how people are being treated with everything that's going on in this world today. Like, I just don't think it's right. I think if, you know, people can be friends, why can't everybody be open minded to the whole situation? Why can't everybody be educated on the whole situation to try to work together as one?

Danny: Do you think white privilege has this intended purpose or, well, let me restate that. Do you think that white privilege has its intended perks for its intended people?

Brianna: Yeah, I do.

Danny: Do you think that it's a bad thing to have those perks?

Brianna: It can be, because it can be overused sometimes. It can be underused sometimes. I just, I just don't feel like we need to have it — wrong is wrong and right is right.

Danny: That's understandable. How might we combat white privilege as a whole entire society?

Brianna: Okay. If everybody was open minded and everybody was willing to be educated on situations, I feel like we could get rid of it. I feel like, if everybody cared enough to try to get rid of it, if people weren't living in the eighties or — not even the eighties but like in the 1800s and early 1900s, or when slavery was still there — I feel like if people weren't still trying to live in those days, we could get rid of it.

Danny: That's understandable. So with that being said, who do you think we should approach to fix the problem?

Brianna: It should start in our own community first. If we can't get our own community to come together as one, then how can we get a whole nation to come together? Because you cannot just tackle it from the nation down. You have to start inside your own community and go from your community to the next community and then get the next community involved, and just try to go about it as a group effort. Say we got a group here in Livingston and we all came together as one, then we could go to York and then Demopolis, and then Meridian...

Danny: To expand...

Brianna: Yes, and then try to tackle the whole nation that way.

Danny: Right, right. Alright, love, well we're about to wrap up. This is the last question. Do you think society would have been better without it having been present at all?

Brianna: Hmm.....

Danny: That's a head scratcher, isn't it?

Brianna: It is! Um, yes and no, actually, because sometimes those people, the ones that have the white privilege, who know that they have it, sometimes it is a good thing when those are the open-minded people that you need on your side in order to change other people's minds. Like, if they're the ones that you can talk to easier and are willing to listen.

Danny: Right. Well, it's been fun having you for the interview, love.

Brianna: Thank you.

Danny: And you have a blessed day.

Ruin #2: Last remaining pieces of the original Fort Conde, Mobile, Alabama

Ruin #3: Tourist walking path, Tannehill Ironworks Historical State Park, McCalla, Alabama

Ruin #4: Site of former slave market, Montgomery, Alabama, now the site of the Equal Justice Initiative's legal offices and its "Legacy Museum: from Enslavement to Mass Incarceration"

SURVEY ON RACE AND JUSTICE #3

By Daniel Rogers

Danny: Hello, how are you doing?

Robert: I'm good. How are you?

Danny: I'm wonderful. I'm going to let you introduce yourself.

Robert: Okay. My name is Robert.

Danny: Hello, Robert. Alright, so I'm going to ask you a few questions today. Answer to the best of your ability, but most of all have fun.

Robert: Alright.

Danny: Robert, do you feel that Black people are targeted more in the South versus the North? Like, say for instance, somewhere like Alabama versus like maybe Chicago, or somewhere like that.

Robert: Honestly, I would say probably more towards the South. You do see a lot more problems here, but with everything going on currently, it's kinda just spread out throughout the United States. Right now it seems more towards the North, but I know Alabama itself is a big area where you still have Black people that are targeted.

Danny: That's understandable, that's understandable. What with that being said, Robert, do you feel that you've ever been targeted?

Robert: Honestly, I can say a few times, cause I just recently joined law enforcement in March, and I've been targeted as an officer for things that I didn't even work on. But since I work for that department, it didn't change what people think.

Danny: Right, right, right. Right. Well, since you said you work in law enforcement, do you feel that the police in your area protect your rights as a citizen?

Robert: Completely. At this police department, one of our biggest things is just being equal and fair. That's how we've always been. Me personally, when I go out and work, I never view anybody different. I just want to know the truth, and it's just how we work as a department.

Danny: Okay, alright. Well, moving on to the next part of the interview, we're going to talk about legal situations and stuff of that nature. Do you feel that if you were to get into trouble with the law, you would get a fair trial?

Robert: In this area we're in now?

Danny: Yes.

Robert: I honestly do. As much as people don't feel the court is fair, it honestly is, especially here in a small town, such as Livingston. A lot of people get leeway, and they honestly always work with you no matter what.

Danny: You say you feel that the court system around here works for everyone, and it's a pretty cool, pretty fair little system. Do you feel that the legal system around here protects your rights as a citizen?

Robert: Yeah, completely. I've, I've seen a few things during court, just through the city. And honestly, people are very well protected. You get your turn to speak, explain yourself on the situation, what happened, it's not just a biased opinion. You basically get to comment, share your information, and both parties get to talk. It's not like one person just has the floor and then it's over with, they try to even assist you if you need help. And they have representation there if you need it.

Danny: Right. This is the last question. Do you feel that arrests are more likely to happen to Black people? And if so, why do you feel that way?

Robert: When you asked that...or are you just talking about here in Livingston?

Danny: I mean, I'm saying Black people more in a general statement, like worldwide. Like, do you feel that racism is more likely to happen to Black people?

Robert: I honestly can't answer because I don't honestly know. From what I've learned in the Police Academy, it's honestly not who, but what they did. And that's what it boils down to. Because at the end of the day, I don't think it matters about your skin color for any situation. It is honestly what you're doing. And if it is wrong, it's wrong, and there's nothing we can change. And so, even throughout the Academy, everything I've seen, it's always been a good ratio of people. It's never just one race, it's everyone. And that's one thing that we're constantly showing. This is what all could happen in those situations.

Danny: Well, thank you, Robert.

Robert: It's no problem at all.

Danny: The interview was wonderful.

Robert: Well I'm glad.

Ruin #5: Site of former slave market, Mobile, Alabama, now an ICE facility (Immigration and Customs Enforcement)

A Whole Lot of Talent... (Cont'd)

Jackie: Yeah. And I will say that what you're talking about is what could positively affect, in the short term, those folks that you have touch-points with, but it doesn't necessarily connect with the systemic things that you pointed to either. I do think there's been moments where, and maybe this is just age, but you and Mommy both don't believe in change as much as I do, or believe it to be possible?

Tim: Well, I just think that we have become jaded. I actually was alive during the demonstrations in the 1960s and the Civil Rights marches. It opened up things, but...

You know, I'm reading *These Truths: A History of the United States*, by Jill Lepore. And when I go back to the beginning, and I see how calculating and diabolical the treatment of Indians was and bringing over slaves and that type of mentality that's so deeply ingrained in our society now, so that it's kind of like, "Well, how can you not like the military?" "How can you kneel against our flag?" You know what I'm saying?

Jackie: I do. I do.

Tim: And there's such a disconnect, because the systemic racism is so great. It's like, "Come on y'all, I mean, y'all were experimenting on Black men in Tuskegee back in the 1940s." You know what I'm saying? I mean, Black people have been lynched. So when you hear all of this stuff today, I'm like, "My country 'tis of thee"?? "Sweet Land of Liberty"??

So from your Mom and my perspective, I'm kind of jaded and cynical now, because I believe more in the change of the individual, and maybe the individual's coming together to bring about change, more than this system changing, because this system has been built block-by-block over centuries, and the only way is it's got to get blown up... I'm saying it's got to get blown up.

Jackie: Well, there's lots of people who are calling for that, you know, but sometimes you don't seem that open to that idea.

Tim: Well, I guess what I'm saying is, there's many ways to do that.

Jackie: Yeah.

Tim: There's many ways to do that. You know, I don't know if it is only one way. And I think that it's actually happening now, because, all of my life we've had this American exceptionalism, and "We're the greatest country in the world, this shining city on a tower, and look at our democracy..." and all of that. But with COVID now, we're not in control. And now it's a "China disease," or "we got to stay in and shelter in place," and "God forbid, our economy is failing" — which is really the "god" in this nation, you know? So this is a time that's very interesting. Because of all of that, the demonstrations and the unrest, it's like churning and growing because there's a lot of people, not just Black people — not just the Black people who have been dogged out forever, not the Native Americans have been dogged out forever, but now you got young white kids who realize, "Hey, this system ain't working for me neither!"

Jackie: Yeah. Well. We've run long, so I was gonna cut it off, unless you have, do you have anything you want to ask me or any closing reflections?

Tim: No.

Jackie: Really? (Laughs)

Tim: (Laughs) I mean, you want me to?

Jackie: No, I... I mean it's more if you want to...

Tim: I think I've pontificated enough.

WHAT USED TO BE HERE AND WHAT DO WE NEED NOW?

Steffon interviews his uncle

Steffon: What are some things, stories or histories in my community that I was never aware of?

Uncle: A lot of things, like the stores, TWL, AJ's, and York Value. There's just a lot of things I wish they could have did better, Church's Chicken, you know they just closed that down. Junior Food Mart is still open for right now. It's a whole lot of stuff I wish they could have did better. They could have a Piggly Wiggly, that's a store we had in my childhood, I wish they could open that back up. As far as what they need to do now? They need to put a Walmart and some more grocery stores around. And they need a skating rink and gaming for the kids and the young generations. A new park, a better community, you know, more things for the youth to do around, to keep them out of trouble. Young Fashion, there's another store. We definitely need better restaurants. Yeah, that's the main thing I would say that we definitely need around here, and everything else is good.

Steffon: Thanks for the interview.

Uncle: Well, you're welcome.

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

If you have a felony conviction in your background,

YOU MAY STILL BE ELIGIBLE TO VOTE IN ALABAMA

or be able to apply to have your voting rights restored.

Based on a recent reform to its state Constitution, Alabama limited the number of convictions for which one loses their right to vote in 2017, while creating an application process for Voting Rights Restoration.

3 LEVELS IN WHICH A CONVICTION INTERACTS WITH VOTING RIGHTS:

1. Convictions for which one loses their voting right for life, unless they are later pardoned for the conviction.
2. Convictions for which one can apply to have their voting rights restored, once any sentence has been served and fines have been paid (Alabama calls these called "crimes of moral turpitude).
3. Convictions that are not a part of #1 or #2 above, in which case one does not lose their right to vote and remains eligible, including while imprisoned.

Due to the 2017 reform to voting rights in Alabama:

- Alabamians convicted of a crime only lose their right to vote if that crime is considered "an Act of Moral Turpitude."
- Alabamians convicted of "an act of moral turpitude can now apply to have their voting rights restored once any sentence has been served and any fines have been paid.
- Alabamians convicted of a crime that is NOT on the list of "Acts of Moral Turpitude no longer lose their right to vote, and are eligible to register to vote.

From the Alabama Secretary of State:
"Voters that have never been convicted of a crime involving moral turpitude are eligible to register and vote during their incarceration. Alabamians that believe they are eligible to have their voting rights restored, should contact the local Pardons and Paroles office in the county that they live in.

Alabamians that wish to register to vote, update their information or check their current registration status can visit alabamavotes.gov or call 1 (800) 274-8683."

HOW TO APPLY FOR VOTING RIGHTS RESTORATION

If you have been convicted of a crime of moral turpitude but not an ineligible conviction, you may qualify for voting rights restoration. You must meet the following requirements:

1. Have no pending felony charges
2. Have paid all fines, court costs, fees, and restitution ordered at the time of sentencing on disqualifying cases in full (post-conviction fees are not included)
3. Have completed either the full sentence, probation/parole, OR been pardoned

To apply, you can contact your local state Probation and Parole office in the county where the applicant lives, or you can contact the Board of Pardons and Paroles main office by phone, mail, email, or in person.

The Alabama Board of Pardons and Paroles
PO Box 302405
Montgomery, AL 36130
Phone: (334) 353-7771 or (334) 353-8067, or Fax: (334) 353-9400
Email: pardons@paroles.alabama.gov

Once your voting rights are restored, you must still register to vote with your local registrar office or online at alabamavotes.gov.

For more information:
https://www.aclualabama.org/en/how-to-apply-voting-rights-restoration

VOTING
RIGHTS
RESTORATION

SURVEY ON RACE AND JUSTICE #4

By Daniel Rogers

Danny: Hello, how are you doing?

Trell: I'm well. How about you?

Danny: I'm great. I'm going to let you introduce yourself.

Trell: My name is Trell, and I'm from Shubuta, Mississippi. I was a graduate student here at the University of West Alabama.

Danny: I talked to you about what our interview was going to be about already, so let's get it cracking. Do you feel that Black people are targeted more in a place like Alabama versus somewhere in the North?

Trell: Being from the South myself, I can say I can say that Black people are targeted more, be it by police officers or any kind of correctional officers. Being an African American male, I do feel targeted, at times with certain actions and certain things and how things go. Certain aspects of my life have led me to be on that side or spectrum of the "wrong view" of the law, and I've received apprehensive treatment.

Danny: Well you just answered my next question, "did you ever feel targeted," saying that you do, so do you feel targeted in a way that you don't feel safe?

Trell: I know where to go, and I know where not to go. I know how to act and how not to act in certain situations. I try my best to stay out of harm's way, from being put in that bad spectrum of the law. But yes, I do feel apprehensive. Me as an African American male, I am a target myself, not just in today's time, but throughout the generations of American history, which has shown to us as African American males that we are very much targeted through law.

Danny: So with people being targeted through law, do you feel that the police in your city protect you, as a US citizen?

Trell: It depends. It depends on the situation, what's going on, what's happening. I've had good encounters with the law, but I've also had bad encounters with the law. Things go above and beyond what it needs to be. Things escalate just because of a perception of me as an African American male and me being seen as a threat by my law enforcement officers.

Danny: Alright, Trell, now we're going to talk about the legal system. Do you feel that you would get a fair trial if you got arrested for any type of crime?

Trell: I really don't feel like I would get a fair trial. If anything, I feel like I'd get more of a plea deal. That's one of the more popular things in law is the pressure to take a plea deal — pleading guilty for whatever the crime may be, whether or not you did it. That's the main reason why there is a mass incarceration, the act of accepting plea deals; just with the belief that you'll get less time than if taken to trial, even when innocent, believing it would result in more time. That's one of the reasons I try to walk on the lighter side of the law. But if put in a situation to where I was arrested, do I feel that there would be fair treatment, versus some of my other counterparts? I do not believe that I would get fair treatment.

Danny: With that being said, do you feel that the legal system protects your life, as a U.S. citizen?

Trell: Oh, definitely not. I definitely don't believe that. It's skewed. I know of an instance where one guy literally committed murder and to this day he is not in jail. He has not faced any kind of charges for that. And honestly, he is walking free to this day.

Danny: I can understand that, I can see it.

Danny: Alright, Trell, we're at the final part of our interview, fixin' to talk about arrests. Do you feel that arrests are more likely to happen to Black people? And if so, why do you feel that way?

Trell: I do feel like arrests happen to more Black people, and that's all due to a perception of the person. If you fit a certain mold, or you fit a certain perception that the officer has, you are going to be labeled as, in some instances, a "thug" — I put quotations around "thug" —and you will be arrested. My brother, who I love to death, has been put on the bad side of law countless number of times. And I'm pretty sure that he can attest and tell you that, just because of the way he is, his mannerisms, how he looks, how he presents himself, that he fits the description of someone who committed a crime or is going to commit a crime and will be on that negative perspective, of "this person probably should be arrested for something," or this person may have a warrant or something like that. So I do believe that it is not fair.

Danny: Well, Trell, listen, it's been really good talking to you.

Trell: It's been good talking to you, too.

Danny: And thank you.

After incorrectly logging where I'd photographed the jail through the overgrowth behind Shannon Bryant's Auto Body and Towing in 2016, I tried to locate it by finding the auto shop on Google Maps in 2020. It was listed in Andalusia, Alabama, which I know I hadn't driven through, and I worried I'd made a mistake — having seen a jail where there wasn't one. A second search turned up a Bryant's Auto Body in Evergreen, but without an address, so I searched up and down Evergreen's digital streets: An old library, empty store fronts, big-box dollar and auto part stores, six churches, county administration buildings, and a Church's Chicken. Then at the edge of town I found a similarly beige, boxy building, but without the business sign, no cars or tow trucks around it. Zooming in, I could see the phantom outlines of its sign and half-moon logo, above the same *1946* building dedication and, below that, a new *For Sale* sign. The business had been well-dead by the time this Street View camera-car drove by, while the Conecuh County Detention Center — now more clearly a jail behind it — stood tall with its concertina wire catching the sun, and a night staff woman who answered the phone confirmed that it jails "a steady 100–120 men and women a night." Without an exact date for the photo, one can't know who its flag, flown at half-staff, was meant to mourn, and that might make it anyone: A former warden, a guard, an Evergreen teenage soldier killed in Afghanistan, the business of Shannon Bryant's Auto Body and Towing, or others whose jobs have fled the county; or perhaps it was for the coronavirus strain that, since March, had sent communities into irregular lockdowns the world over, ravaging prison and jail populations like sitting ducks.

A steady 100–120 men and women a night

Conecuh County Detention Center, Evergreen, Alabama

SHE WAS MY BEST FRIEND

Brunell Smith interviews Mary T. Smith

Brunell: Hey, can you state your name and relationship to me?

Mary T. Smith: Hi, my name is Mary T. Smith. I'm from New Orleans, Louisiana. I was born and raised there, and I am your grandmother.

Brunell: Okay. So what is your work centered around?

Mary T. Smith: Cooking. I started with my grandmother at the age of nine. She was in a wheelchair. She had both her legs cut off, and I used to stand on a step stool and help her do things around the kitchen and get her the seasoning and whatever she needed to put into the pot, stirred it up and stuff like that.

Brunell: So is that who inspired you to start cooking?

Mary T. Smith: Yes, she was my best friend, and I just love cooking. We baked, we did so many different things in the kitchen together. That's my greatest and best friend in the world.

Brunell: What is some of your favorite dishes to make?

Mary T. Smith: Gumbo, red beans and rice, stuffed peppers, fried chicken. Oh, there's just so many of them.

Brunell: So do you know which one is your favorite to cook or anything more specific?

Mary T. Smith: My favorite thing I love to cook and a lot of people buy from me is gumbo. They like it with the seafood, and some like it without the seafood in it.

Brunell: Okay. So can you explain how to make one of these dishes?

Mary T. Smith: For the gumbo, you have to make your roux, and that's what consists of flour. You can use butter, either cooking oil. And you sauté that down till your flour gets a brown color, get it the way you want it to look. And then you add your seasoning and whatever choice of meat you choose to put in the pot.

Brunell: Do you know how long it takes to cook?

Mary T. Smith: Basically, it depends on what meats you use. If you make just a chicken and sausage gumbo, it takes like an hour to two hours to prepare. And if you're adding seafood to it, I'll give it at least three hours.

Brunell: Do you use separate pots to cook certain things before you put it all into one big pot?

Mary T. Smith: Yes. I sauté my roux and my seasoning, I do that in a different pot. And my meat, I usually cut it up, everything cut separate into containers, and I take my meat and my sausages and stuff like that, and I put it in the oven to let it bake a little to get most of the grease out of it. And then I combine everything, step-by-step.

Brunell: Do you think you've inspired others to cook?

Mary T. Smith: Yes. I work at Dream Lake Lounge, and I have three other cooks underneath me. I have two for lunch and two for dinner, and we do a lot of different stuff, and they look up to me as a cook.

Brunell: Okay. So, anyone else that you've inspired to cook, and who may these people be?

Mary T. Smith: Well, my daughter is one, and she works in several restaurants, and she's been doing it for quite a while now. And my granddaughter, she started out to do a few things, but she ain't at her best yet, but she tries very hard.

Brunell: (Laughs) So do you think all your recipes and things that you know and your daughter knows, would you pass it down to her to continue y'all's tradition?

Mary T. Smith: Yes, of course. That's my main goal is to do this, and hopefully to open my own business one day.

Brunell: Do you expect your granddaughter to pass on these traditions to her children as well?

Mary T. Smith: Hopefully, by God's grace, that's what the intention is, to continue it on down, generation-to-generation.

Brunell: Do you think that they enjoy cooking as much as you do or they just do it because they have to?

Mary T. Smith: They enjoy it somewhat, but if they don't have to, they won't. They depend on me to do all the cooking.

Brunell: What is some of the things that they ask you to cook or want you to cook?

Mary T. Smith: Anythying and everything really, but the main thing they like is hot wings. And now we did some Chinese food together. We made combination rice, egg rolls and several other things, and we did good, working as a team.

Brunell: Does it make you happy to know that you inspired people to cook and to do other things that you love?

Mary T. Smith: Yes, it really does.

Brunell: And if you had the opportunity to own your own business, what would it be centered around? Cooking? Baking?

Mary T. Smith: Hopefully all of the above. Cooking, baking, appetizers, sandwiches, you know, whatever.

Brunell: Okay. So which do you enjoy the most baking or cooking, or what do you do the most?

Mary T. Smith: Cooking.

Brunell: For baking, what are some of the main dishes that you enjoy baking?

Mary T. Smith: Cakes, sweet potato pies, pecan pie, cobblers. It's several things. I just love to bake.

Brunell: When do you bake the most instead of cooking?

Mary T. Smith: The holidays, Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Brunell: Have you considered a name if you was to own a business?

Mary T. Smith: Not off the top of my head, but basically they probably would be either Midget or Mary.

Brunell: What inspired those names?

Mary T. Smith: Because my name is Mary, and I'm short. (Both laugh)

Brunell: How will you attract customers?

Mary T. Smith: In the beginning, it would be word of mouth, through family and friends and stuff like that. And then I would go on to advertising on a radio station, and as things became more accomplished, I would try to do a TV commercial to continue and get more customers.

Brunell: Would you accept recipes or suggestions from your workers?

Mary T. Smith: Yes, of course.

Brunell: And will you be the main cook, or hire others to do most of the cooking?

Mary T. Smith: I would be the main source for cooking everything, and they would follow my recipes and instruction to making sure everything has the same tastes and flavor at all times.

Brunell: How do you plan to make sure that everyone knows the amounts to use in your dishes?

Mary T. Smith: I will create a cookbook and have all the recipes and directions and stuff inside of the book.

Brunell: Would you think about selling these books to customers or other people that want to learn how to cook at home?

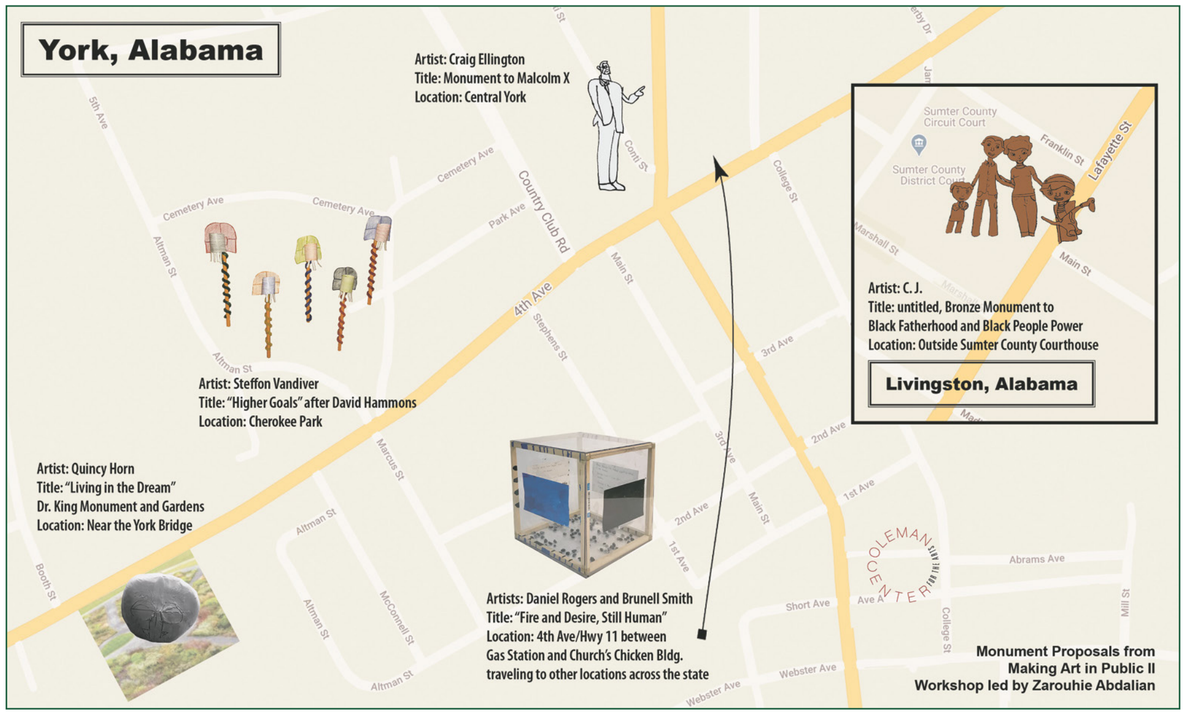
Mary T. Smith: Yes, of course. That would be a great thing to do, to share everything so other people can enjoy their own cooking at home if they don't want to come out to eat.

Brunell: So have you thought of your decorative style, to show your culture and your way of cooking?

Mary T. Smith: Not at this particular moment, but I'm more than sure my grandson, Brunell Smith, he loves to create things, and my sister, she does a lot of creative and decorating and stuff. So it wouldn't be a problem at all coming up with something.

Brunell: Okay. Well, it was nice talking to you, and enjoy the rest of your day.

Mary T. Smith: Thank you. You have a blessed one as well.



Proposals for new monuments, made by Community Compiler interns during Zarouhie Abdalian's Making Art in Public workshop, Summer 2020

2,799 men, including 158 on Death Row The first prisoner of Alabama's first penitentiary was sentenced to 20 years for "harboring a runaway slave." After the Civil War, Alabama's prison population shifted from 99% white-immigrant to 90% free Black people sentenced into cotton, turpentine, timber production and mining. 10 miles from the river that was then the primary artery of Alabama's slave-trade now sit the Holman Correctional Facility, Fountain Correctional Facility, Atmore Community Work Center, and J.O. Davis Correctional Center, in Atmore, Alabama. Following decades of strikes and uprisings against conditions and continued forced labor, the Free Alabama Movement began at Holman and, on the 45th anniversary of the Attica uprising, sparked the 2016 National Prison Strike.