TransLiberation3-4PM

**SPEAKERS**

Necho, Stacey, Priya, Katie, Jadee

**Priya** 00:00

Welcome to the Trans Prisoner Solidarity segment of 3CR's 2024 Trans Day of Audibility broadcast. My name is Priya and I'll be with you for the next hour. Now, before I begin, I want to acknowledge the Kulin nations, the true owners, caretakers and custodians of the land from which we broadcast. 3CR pays respect to Elders past and present of the Kulin nations and we recognize their unceded sovereignty. And this acknowledgement and recognition has to be a material commitment to Indigenous sovereignty rather than a tokenistic gesture and on Trans Day of Visibility, this leads me in particular to the lessons I've learned from Wiradjuri non-binary Professor Sandy O'Sullivan, whose contributions towards dismantling the colonial project of gender have really been a guiding light for me. Professor O'Sullivan emphasizes that settler colonial attempts to assert control over Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples land and lives have always relied on gender nor-normativity, and on the erasure of trans and gender diverse people. And the work of Professor O'Sullivan and other trans and gender diverse Indigenous peoples reminds us that struggles for trans liberation and freedom from colonialism are always already interconnected, as well as being intertwined with the fight for a future without the oppressive systems of prison and policing. So, for the next hour, we're going to be having some really honest conversations about how these systems work together to impact the lives of trans and gender diverse people, both non-Indigenous and Indigenous, who have been in prison in so-called Australia. I need to make sure as well that you know, this segment was not a solo effort. And that I'm not speaking from a position of lived expertise here. Much of the direction and thematic planning that went into this hour of radio has to be credited to a dear friend, who is a trans woman currently inside the Victorian prison system. She's been very clear about the importance of uplifting the voices of trans people with lived experience of incarceration. And she really wanted to make sure that this segment highlighted the truths of these experiences. However, the reason you're only hearing my voice hosting today is because despite our best efforts, the bureaucratic war of attrition trans people inside are forced to wage to try and exercise any form of voice or self-representation has unfortunately won out this time. So as you can probably hear, I'm pretty bitterly disappointed that my friend is not in a station with me right now. And because she's not been able to come in, she has shared a piece of writing that I'm going to read out to you all later, which reflects some of her experiences.

**Priya** 02:31

So before we jump into our interviews for today, this is a reminder to listeners out if you're not already familiar with the way that the prison system treats trans people and particularly trans women and femmes, this might be a tough listen for some of our audience. But honestly, it should be. All of our guests today were adamant about being direct and speaking truth to power in their interviews, and we're not about censorship at 3CR. So please take this as a content warning for discussion of things like transphobia, physical and sexual violence, racism and discrimination. If you do need to speak to someone at any point, you can always call QLife, that's 1800-818-4527 from 3pm to midnight, and Victorian listeners can call the Rainbow Door, that's the Switchboard initiative on 1800-729-367 from 10am to 5pm. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander listeners can also call 13YARN, that's 139276, or Yarnin' Safe'n'Strong, that's 1800-959-563. And also for crisis mental health support, you can call Lifeline on 131114, or the Suicide Callback Service on 1300-659-467. Finally, and I know you're probably getting tired of hearing me talking, but I also want us to hold in our minds trans women who are currently being held in solitary confinement in men's and women's prisons around so called Australia. This is a form of torture, and yet it is so often forced on trans women inside, because it makes it easier for prison authorities to wash their hands of concerns about interpersonal violence trans women are subjected to, especially in men's prisons. So to our trans sisters inside and especially in solitary, we see you, we love you, we miss you and your lives matter. And we want to make sure that we are keeping you front and centre in our thoughts throughout this conversation.

**Priya** 04:27

So without further ado, first up, I am joined by Katie and Stacy, and Katie and Stacy are in the studio today for conversations about their lived experiences as trans women who've been incarcerated in the Victorian prison system. They're going to be reflecting on some of the raw reality of prison life for trans women, as well as sharing their experiences of finding support and relationships of care that have kept them going and continue to sustain them in their lives on the outside. Good morning, Katie and Stacey.

**Katie** 04:59

Good morning.

**Stacey** 05:00

Thank you for having us, it's a privilege.

**Katie** 05:02

Thank you.

**Priya** 05:03

Did I say good morning? I said good morning.

**Katie** 05:06

Did we just say good morning back?

**Priya** 05:08

You said good morning back, so I- clearly we're all, we're all firing on all cylinders here. I'm used to being here for Thursday morning breakfast [laugh]. Which I have previously introduced this Wednesday breakfast even though I've only been doing Thursday breakfast for years. So good afternoon. Scratch all of that.

**Stacey** 05:26

How about Hello?

**Priya** 05:27

Yeah, that's that's better. That's not, that's not time sensitive. Hello, thank you so much. Maybe we'll jump in with some self introduction. So Stacey, do you want to go first and let our listeners know a bit about who you are and why you're here today.

**Stacey** 05:42

My name is Stacey Stokes. I am a writer and a public speaker. I was in prison for eight years. I identified as trans during my trial/sentencing, so, but I was send to a men's prison for eight years. I'm now currently on parole, and I'm here to tell my truth.

**Priya** 06:04

Yeah, we're so lucky to have you, and Katie.

**Katie** 06:08

Hi, I'm Katie. I am- how old am I? 32 [laugh].

**Stacey** 06:15

You don't look it, you look, 21.

**Katie** 06:17

Thanks, babe, it's the Botox. And I spent also eight years in a men's prison as a trans woman. And I have a strong passion for advocacy for the trans community and for prison abolition.

**Priya** 06:32

Yeah, amazing. Thank you so much, Katie. And, I mean, I know this, this conversation, like what we're going to be talking about today is definitely not easy. And I want you to know, I want listeners to know that there's no pressure to disclose anything that you don't want to. But also that this is a space where you can speak truthfully, if you do want to. So I thought maybe we could begin by talking a little bit about gender affirmation and the question of visibility, it's Trans Day of Visibility, and Stacey, you mentioned that even though you had, you know, identified as trans at the time of sentencing, you were still placed in a men's prison. So I'm wondering if you could maybe talk a little bit about, about that process. And, you know, coming to terms with that deliberate mischaracterization?

**Stacey** 07:21

Yeah, it was, it was very hard for me. They, basically, my first half of my prison sentence was an exercise in conversion therapy, I was seen as the problem and they, the system essentially put its head in the sand and just pretended "no, you are not trans, you're not a girl, we will just treat you as a boy," I was directly told by the health services and corrections officers, to just, just forget that silly idea of being a girl, it will never happen, and that's maybe a goal that I can set for myself when I get out of prison, and I should just act like a boy. The judge specifically made some helpful suggestions to me, I should maybe cut all my hair off and grow a beard so that I presented as more of a masculine person. And that way, I wouldn't be bullied in prison, and I'd be fine. So they all made it very clear that they were not on board. So I was facilitated in men's prison, I was locked in shared cells with, with men. So some of the cells were three person cells or three men cells. And so I was in there with two people. Generally, when you're a transgender girl, you're sent to protection so that you are protected from the bad things that will happen to you. But the other people who were sent to a place of protection, everyone who has been charged with a sex offence, so all the transgender girls get locked in with all of the rapists at nighttime. And yeah, there's no cameras or anything. And despite the fact that the prison system does not want to see you as being a girl, all of the convicted sex offenders have no problem seeing you as a girl because you look like a girl. So it then becomes truly a punishment. There is no, there was no rehabilitation in there for me, or I think any of the other girls, it was a horrendous horrific punishment.

**Katie** 09:29

And I think in terms of what today is about Trans Visibility Day, I think it's also mindful to reflect that maybe for some trans people in the world, like trans women in prison, that every day is Trans Visibility Day. You are visible all the time. Everyone knows that you're trans. Everyone knows who you are. You don't know who they are, but everybody knows who you are.

**Priya** 09:53

Yeah. Did you want to add something, Stacey?

**Stacey** 09:58

Oh, no, it's, I agree with Katie on that topic. People would come up to me and say, "hi, Stacey, how you going?" I think, I don't know who you are. Every single person knew who I was. I remember complaining about people sexually harassing me, sexually assaulting me. And I had been raped as well. And I complained about all these things. And then a supervisor actually said to me, if you complain one more time, we're going to lock you up in, like, solitary.

**Priya** 10:28

I mean, what else can really be said about that, this is it- the violence of the system is so fundamentally clear in what you've both been speaking about, in terms of, you know, this idea that sending, you know, sending anyone to prison, the punishment is supposed to be that isolation from the outside world. But then, by virtue of being a trans woman in a men's prison, there are just a million additional punishments that aren't, you know, they're not a part of the sentence, but they become a part of your everyday life in there. Where, you know, the prison can say, functionally, you're not being treated differently from any other prisoner, but what you've spoken about is like, actually, no, it's it's a vastly different experience.

**Stacey** 11:18

Yeah, it's, it's a nightmare, basically, yeah.

**Priya** 11:23

Now, I did want to come back to the point you made about the botox, and your age, no, less about your age more about the botox, but I'm thinking about, I'm thinking about gender affirmation as well. And, you know, now that you're, you're both out, you're able to, you know, access different kinds of gender affirming care, but what was it like when you were inside, in terms of accessing things, you know, like hormones, or gender affirming clothing, that kind of thing?

**Katie** 11:48

Oh dear. So when I first went, I went into jail in 2015. And there was like, there was a policy that existed, it was so archaic, and hadn't been updated in 16 years, called the management of people with transsexualism, or something. And it was just a, you know, a weightless policy, like, it was just a policy about nothing. And then, so getting policy changed. And from the time that I first asked, access gender affirming care, to accessing it, took five years. And it was the same for Stacey as well. It's, um, it took five years of getting policy cha- or, like, convincing someone to change the policy, actually getting a change, getting it implemented. And then 2017 [unclear] 3 years, it took from the policy when it was actually active, for people to be able to start utilizing its contents, if that makes sense.

**Stacey** 12:53

Yeah, and for me, I had already been- a psychiatrist had already said I was transgender, so. But I didn't receive any care. They told me this would not happen. So I eventually got given, they told me that I could get care. This was years into my sentence. And so I engaged with Monash and I had to be reassessed all over again. Even though, so even though I was diagnosed as being transgender, I had to- the prison wanted me to be re-diagnosed. So it was just assessment after assessment after assessment, it was almost as if they were delaying and trying to kick the can down the street and putting up barriers. And then eventually, I was granted medication and it was one milligram of estrogen.

**Priya** 13:44

Can you please explain to listeners, first of all, who don't understand how hormones work - I mean, it's Trans Day of Audibility, so hopefully we have a lot of trans listeners, but there will be listeners who don't understand - can you explain what one milligram of estrogen, the, the practical effect that it has?

**Katie** 13:59

Veeeery small dose, like the smallest it come- like the smallest possible dose you can actually get.

**Stacey** 14:06

Yeah, like I reckon I probably already had one milligram of estrogen in my system as a, as a male anyway [laugh]. Yeah, it's, so it was, it was tokenistic, very tokenistic. It was a way for them to say "oh, but Stacey's on medication" without me actually being on medication. And then later on in, in my sentence, as it progressed, I was told that part of my care was I needed to get an orchidectomy which is free on Medicare. So in the normal public system, it would have been free and I could have just got it done. But the prison system said no, and then eventually they said, "Okay, you can get it but you have to fund it." So I would have had to have paid for all of the surgery, and then had to pay- would have had to have paid for the officers, the transport everything. And this is something that my specialist had said I needed to get done, or my- or the blockers would cause me to get blood clots, possible brain tumors, different things like that. So the whole care was not very caring.

**Priya** 15:19

Yeah, I mean, it really does speak to that, yeah, that bureaucratic violence as well, where they have you like, you get diagnosed, and you get re-diagnosed and not even to mention the sort of problems with the medicalization and like the disease framing of being trans in the first place. Like who amongst us, I definitely am included, has not had to go see a psychiatrist to prove that they're trans? Like, it's, it's just, yeah, but then having to-

**Stacey** 15:46

How trans do you feel today?

**Priya** 15:48

Exactly. Surely this, surely this cis man will be able to rate me on a scale of 1 to 10 to tell people, like, how trans I am.

**Katie** 15:58

Definitely take his opinion.

**Priya** 16:00

Yeah. Are you trans enough?

**Priya** 16:02

Um, but, yeah...

**Stacey** 16:02

Yeah.

**Stacey** 16:03

But after I started presenting as being transgender, and the sexual assaults got worse, the supervi- one of the supervisors had said, "Ah, yeah, look, I think you're probably a more of a risk now. I'm definitely noticing your breasts," which I thought "that's a weird thing to say,"

**Priya** 16:19

Yeah, hmm.

**Stacey** 16:20

And then, um-

**Katie** 16:20

It's amazing how many people start commenting on your breasts.

**Stacey** 16:23

Yeah. And then the doctor, I had to see the doctor because I had been raped. And the doctor had said to me, "Well, you just have to expect these sorts of things to happen. We can't really give you any psychiatric care. We don't have the resources for that. And we can't give you any psych meds or anything to cope with it, you're just going to have to realize that you're in a men's prison. So you clearly going to get sexually assaulted. And you just need to deal with that yourself."

**Katie** 16:50

That's happened to me, as I'm sure it has other people on so many different occasions, is that someone will just look at you and just go, "you know, you have to expect that, right? Like, you are you in this place."" I said, Yeah." I said, "So are you, do you expect it?" She said "no. But I'm not like you." [laugh] No, bitch, you're not.

**Priya** 17:16

Yeah, exactly. I mean, I guess I also, from here want to talk a bit about the, the work that you've both done in terms of like self-advocacy, but advocating, advocating for, for other trans girls in prison. Because like everything that any trans person wins against the system, you know, sets another precedent for another, another trans person to keep chipping away. So, do either of you want to reflect on that? Like you mentioned the policy change that you, you know, getting implemented into practice was already a fight enough?

**Katie** 17:51

Yeah. Like, no health policy, the policy I referred to earlier was the management of someone. But the management and the medical, they're two separate entities. And there was no policy until 2017 for the treatment of people with, um, was it trans and, trans and gender diverse, what was the policy called?

**Stacey** 17:51

I'm, I'm not entirely sure. I can't remember [laugh].

**Katie** 17:52

The Justice Health policy. The Justice Health policy. And yeah, and it came out in 2017. And yeah, nobody. And it said in there finally, that someone could start accessing gender affirming care, HRT, services, this, this, this, this and this, and nobody got hormones until 2020.

**Stacey** 18:36

Yeah, it was. I think we all ended up having to be advocating and fighting for our, basically just to be treated decently, really. It was either sink or swim, really. And all of us started advocating on an individual basis, which, I think that really was part of why it was so effective a little bit, because they were fighting on many, many fronts. They were fighting me and they were fighting Katie, and then they were fighting all the other girls. I'm not sure if I'm allowed to mention any one else's name? I will not get anyone else in trouble [laugh].

**Katie** 19:17

We got you!

**Stacey** 19:18

Yeah, but because they were fighting so many different people. They, I think just got pushed back and pushed back. But it does, every transgender person I have met in custody is advocating. And I would be surprised if I met any, anyone who was just sitting there happily being trampled on.

**Priya** 19:43

Yeah, I mean, it is. When I was speaking to- I spoke to Necho in an interview that that we recorded that I'm going to play later today, but

**Stacey** 19:54

We love you Necho.

**Katie** 19:55

Yes, we love you Necho, shout out bitch!

**Priya** 19:58

She basically, like- you know, towards the end of the conversation we were talking about, like, I've never spoken to a trans person inside who hasn't been like, I want to live and I want to live well, like, you know, as bad as, you know, as bad as things are. And as, as real as like contemplating suicide is, you know, when you are being subjected to this violence, it's also like, well, I am not going to accept this, I'm not going to put up with this. I guess maybe we can turn to like the last sort of area that I wanted to talk about, which is, what's kept you going and the things that, you know, the things that kept you going inside, but also, you know, your experiences of connecting with community both inside and out.

**Stacey** 20:41

Yeah, for me, what kept me going was, I've said to a few people, that I was completely, utterly defeated and destroyed, I couldn't go another day. I definitely, I'd tried to commit suicide while I'd been in prison, I just couldn't do it anymore. And then people came into my life from our community, and more and more of them did, and everyone was so supportive and loving, and they helped me have the strength to keep going and to get back up and to keep fighting. And if it wasn't for our community, I couldn't have done that, I would have just been completely destroyed. And one of the things I've realized, and I've noticed, since I've gotten out of prison is I have quite a lot of survivor's guilt, because I've lived through that nightmare. And I've gotten out, but I've left part of our community behind. And that's really hard for me to cope with. Because it was the only thing that kept me going.

**Priya** 21:44

Yeah, I mean, I think that I really appreciate you sharing that because it is, you know, as much as we're all like, so happy to have you out here, I understand how that can still, you know, weigh on you. Yeah.

**Katie** 22:00

Because being on parole is fucking hard! Like, you know,

**Stacey** 22:03

Parole is terrible.

**Katie** 22:04

Like, it's crazy, and the conditions, and this, and that, and it's just like, "here's your life back, but we can pull it away from you any moment." You know, it's just like that, you know, impending sense of doom, feeling.

**Stacey** 22:19

Yeah, looking over your shoulder, the anxiety of it constantly.

**Katie** 22:23

Yes.

**Stacey** 22:23

It's, it's never ending, it's, and for me, too, I've mentioned it to a lot of people since I've gotten out too, that I, that I separate community and society into two different groups. There's our community, the queer community, and then there's society, and our- the queer community, we all, like support and love each other. And then society is just vengeful, and venomous, in my opinion, they're looking for their pound of flesh, they want their revenge. And that's all they can deal with.

**Katie** 22:53

Ugh, straight people. [laugh]

**Priya** 22:57

And, I mean, like, you know, from talking to, like my friend to, you know, pro- programmed this with me, it's really, you know, you need those reminders to be like, not everybody sees you, as somebody who has a life sentence, you know, like, you're, you're in the community, and you deserve to be a part of the community. And even when you were inside, like you were still a part of a community that loved you and cared about you, even if they couldn't access you.

**Stacey** 23:30

Yeah, and as much as the system tried ever so hard to destroy our community as well by not letting us meet, because they need- we needed to have an officer peresent if we wanted to have a meeting of the queer community, because their excuse was that it would turn into a, essentially an orgy, is how they saw it. They pinned us or as you're gay, or your're bi or you're trans, so you are sexual deviants, and if you all meet without proper supervision, you will all have a big orgy. So we can't-

**Katie** 24:03

What else can we do with our time?

**Priya** 24:05

I can confirm to you that the meetings that I've- the, the meetups that I've been at with the highest density of queer and trans people have been the most boring, administrative- like, it's organizing meetings. It's like yeah, no, no orgies, unfortunately. [laugh]

**Stacey** 24:23

No spontaneous human centipedes.

**Priya** 24:25

I know, but- and yet, the system is like, "Oh, my goodness," pearl clutching.

**Katie** 24:31

Mhm.

**Stacey** 24:32

Yeah, so they tried to smother that community as much as they could, they, they rarely allow it to flourish and facilitate. One of the lovely examples of that was that they tried to stop, many times tried to stop the IRL letter writing group from writing to us, but they would give us a Christian letter writing letter. So we could write to the Christian letter writing group but we were not allowed to write IRL, because they can't be trusted.

**Priya** 25:02

Yeah, they'll give you dangerous ideas.

**Katie** 25:04

Oh, watch out for those free thinkers. Whoo!

**Priya** 25:06

I know. That's right. But have you heard the good word? [laugh] Is there anything else that you wanted to add for our listeners before we wrap up?

**Stacey** 25:21

Any words of wisdom? I have a substack, which I write about my views on the prison system, I write about how I think they have no interest in rehabilitation or second chances. And I do not agree with this. I think we are all entitled to redemption otherwise, just put a bullet in us, honestly, don't prolong the torture and suffering. It's, it's tormenting me. [laugh]

**Priya** 25:49

Yeah. And we'll have a link to that in our show notes, which I will hopefully posted in a timely manner after this broadcast. Katie, is there anything you wanted to leave us with?

**Katie** 25:59

I just like to say that because of organizations like Beyond Bricks and Bars, everybody, please look them up and donate. You know, it's because of community funded grassroots organizations like this that keep people alive. And it- you know, it saved my life. And Witt, if you're listening, you know. But to anyone else that's listening, just know that you are not alone. And-

**Stacey** 26:27

We see you, and we love you.

**Katie** 26:28

Things do get better.

**Stacey** 26:30

And we're here for you. We have not forgotten you.

**Katie** 26:32

And if things are good, fuck yeah! [laugh]

**Priya** 26:37

Well, thank you both so much for, for coming in for making the time. That was beautiful last words. Fuck yeah. And yeah, I really appreciate you sharing with us, and again, for being vulnerable here with me, and with our listeners, and hopefully people take those words away and do some deep thinking about how they think about punishment in this society, and especially the effects that it has on members of the trans community. So thank you very much.

**Katie** 27:09

Thank you.

**Stacey** 27:10

Thank you.

**[Community Service Announcement and Program Promo Sting]**

**Priya** 30:17

And we are back for today's special Trans Prisoner Solidarity hour of 3CR's 2024 Trans Day of Audibility broadcast, make sure to stay tuned, we're on till 4pm. And now we are joined by Jadee to speak about her experiences of the prison system in Magan-djin or so called Brisbane, and to reflect on the question of visibility, and on Trans Day of Visibility as an Aboriginal trans woman. Hello, Jadee.

**Jadee** 30:46

Hello, how are you?

**Priya** 30:47

I'm good. How are you?

**Jadee** 30:49

I'm good.

**Priya** 30:50

Thanks so much for coming on the show today. I really appreciate you making the time and, and you know, making the time to be called on a Sunday. Maybe we could start off by hearing a little bit about yourself. So can you tell our listeners a bit about who you are?

**Jadee** 31:06

I dunno, I think the best way to explain me is, like, I'm a stay-at-home princess? I've done a bit of jail, obviously, unfortunately, in a male jail. But I love my sisters and I love my nieces and nephews like, you know, and my daughter Ashley, [unclear].

**Priya** 31:29

Yeah, I mean, I love that.

**Jadee** 31:31

That sums it up.

**Priya** 31:31

I love starting off by talking about being a stay at home princess. So I was wondering, you know, we've we've had a bit of a chat beforehand about the kinds of things that we might talk about. And I thought maybe we could start off with some of the harder stuff and then maybe move towards some of the community and, you know, supportive kind of stuff that you've experienced as well. So can you tell us a little bit about your experiences inside as much as you'd like to share?

**Jadee** 32:02

Like, with, with prison officers?

**Priya** 32:07

Yeah.

**Jadee** 32:09

Um, with prison officers, I go through a lot of discrimination. Like they are qui- they really bully me in jail. And it's embarrassing, because they're supposed to be there to protect and serve. [cough] Like, they withheld me from getting my sex on my birth certificate changed, because it was too much drama for them. Like, and I just, I dunno, I just, they're just nasty to me, especially the female staff, because they always, like, they always get jealous. I don't know why. Like, and they're nasty. I've been called a slut by all of the female staff in Arthur Gorrie. And, that doesn't, I'm not even that person.

**Priya** 32:56

Yeah, it's like they make this assumption. Based on like, discriminating against you because you're trans.

**Jadee** 33:05

Yeah. And because- but I don't discriminate against them being females working in a male's jail.

**Jadee** 33:10

Definitely.

**Priya** 33:10

Yeah. And I think like, it's, it's this sort of, in the interview that I just did with Katie and Stacey, who are two trans women who've been in prison down here in Victoria, they talked about the fact that, you know, as a trans woman in prison, you're visible to everyone.

**Priya** 33:11

And everyone can make a judgement about you or behave in whatever way they want to seemingly without consequences.

**Jadee** 33:39

That's right. Like and I, like, I'm put- in the Queensland Correctional centre I'm put on an IMP, which is an impulse management plan? It's supposed to be for bad people. But I have to have one, and I get case-noted everyday, like I got sent my case notes from humans right- the rights commi- thing? And there's like 1000s and 1000s of pointless case notes that they made, like, made up saying that I'm doing all this stuff that I'm sure if you watch your cameras I didn't do.

**Priya** 34:10

Yeah.

**Jadee** 34:13

Like, yeah, I- I've. The camera follows me-

**Priya** 34:16

Yeah. And-

**Jadee** 34:17

in jail, it's, like you said, everyone sees everything. Because you stick out so much.

**Priya** 34:31

Totally. And I mean, I guess, you know, this is something that I'm also interested in, in hearing about is like, you know, how did you, you know, you're, you're, you're visible in all these ways and being watched in all these ways that you don't want to be, but then how about things like gender affirmation and you know, self presentation and stuff? Do you get to be visible in the ways that you do want to be?

**Jadee** 34:56

Um, no, I had to wear green uniform, like every other men, when females get to wear blue. I get told by the GM that I'm not allowed to dy my hair because I don't have gray hair. But that's not the only point to dye hair, the point to dye hair is you're a female.

**Priya** 35:18

Yeah, it's like, these million different bits of control, hey.

**Jadee** 35:23

And like, they take everything from me, like, they'll put, they'll put a female razor and a female roll-on on the male's bath and say, "That's a transgender bath."

**Priya** 35:32

It's yeah, it's just like that. That level of discrimination that's already sort of in broader society becomes so much more vile when, you know, people are given this power over trans folks inside.

**Jadee** 35:50

Yeah, that's what- we have nothing in there at all. And you don't get- I honestly, feel more heard in a courtroom than I do in fuckin', um, jail. So I didn't mean to swear that was- I'm so sorry.

**Jadee** 36:07

Um, well, it's- not really, there's no female support at all, in jail. In Arthur Gorrie Correctional Centre they, they wouldn't let me have any facility calls with my sister. So, like, and they- they always say that they want to give you as much female support as you can- as they can, but you're not allowed to speak to anyone but female officers that tell you, like- don't te- like they, they're no- it's not a shoulder you can lean on.

**Priya** 36:07

No, no, you're alright. I already let listeners know at the start of the show that we were going to be having truthful conversations. And it might include some content that is, you know, difficult to hear, including swearing, which I think is totally valid in these contexts. But I was also wondering, you know, during your time, inside, were you able to be connected to your community, whether it's like the queer and trans community or to you know, to mob outside, to your family?

**Priya** 37:05

Yeah, it's not like, it's not like they're providing you with, you know, that kind of relational support.

**Jadee** 37:14

Yeah, nothing. There's, there's nothing like. I get- I think I danced on NAIDOC Day, that was as much as I got to see any cultural support. My family, Borallon Correctional Centre allowed me to have phone calls with my, um, sister. So we had inter-facility calls once a month.

**Priya** 37:36

But that's so so limited, right?

**Jadee** 37:38

Yeah.

**Priya** 37:39

And now, now that you're, you're out, you're able to spend time with family and as you mentioned, you know, spend time like with your nieces and nephews. As well

**Jadee** 37:48

Yeah, I'm, I'm with my sister right now. Like she's the one that swore at the beginning of it, it wasn't me. [laugh] She said the f-word at the beginning.

**Priya** 37:55

[laugh] Oh my gosh, um. Beautiful. I was also wondering what it's been like for you, you know, being outside and being able to connect with other like trans girls outside now that you're yeah, like out of the prison?

**Jadee** 38:15

I don't know. Like, I haven't actually connected with anyone but my sister, because. I, I- jail is making me become someone that is like, I don't know, shy and quiet on the outside.

**Jadee** 38:32

And, I haven't. Yeah. Like they took away everything from me. I didn't, I got one phone call once a month with my sister, when she was in jail, like. And then they just chuck you straight back out and think everything's gonna be alright.

**Priya** 38:32

Yeah, and-

**Priya** 38:46

Yeah. I mean, I appreciate you sharing that. Because I guess there is, like, you've highlighted something that I think doesn't get talked about enough, which is just that, you know, the way that their isolation works on your own mind and makes you feel like you're not confident to be able to connect with other people. And then when you're left outside with no support, um. Yeah

**Jadee** 39:11

Yeah, that's right. It is right.

**Priya** 39:14

I'm wondering what- oh, no, go ahead.

**Jadee** 39:17

No, you go.

**Priya** 39:18

I was just gonna say I'm wondering, you know, what keeps you going and what are you looking forward to in the future?

**Jadee** 39:25

What keeps me going is my daughter and my sister Jess, honestly. Honestly, without Jess I wouldn't be able to have made it. I wouldn't have been able to do anything, or be the person that I am at- so my motivation is literally my sister. She's just, she's, I dunno, she's everything to me. She's everything I never could- I was never, and I'm proud of her, so that's the motivation.

**Priya** 39:55

I love that. Do you have any messages as well that you'd like to share? With any trans mob who've had similar experiences to you?

**Jadee** 40:05

I do. I ju- I just, someone else's opinion doesn't matter. Just, I just honestly ignore people. Because you know what? We're all beautiful. I don't know if that made sense, but that's how I like- I just, I don't worry about other people's opinion's. We're girls.

**Priya** 40:26

Yeah.

**Jadee** 40:27

And I love yous all.

**Priya** 40:30

That is, I think that's also really beautiful as well, like, you know, just a reminder that, you know, the system might try and take all of these things away, but you know who you are?

**Jadee** 40:43

Yeah, that's right.

**Priya** 40:44

Yeah. Is there anything else that you want to add before we wrap up Jadee?

**Jadee** 40:50

Thank you for having me on the- like, and yeah, thank you!

**Priya** 40:56

Yeah, no, of course. I mean, I'm grateful that you've, you've made the time to talk about this stuff. You know, it's not easy. And, and yet, it's also just so vital to be able to hear from you and from other trans women who've been inside. Because, you know, the message I'm getting again and again, is that the system is constantly trying to shut people's voices down.

**Jadee** 41:19

Yeah, that's right. It is.

**Priya** 41:22

So thank you. Yeah.

**Jadee** 41:24

That's okay! Well, thank you for having me. I hope yous have a really lovely day, everyone.

**Priya** 41:29

You too. Take care.

**Jadee** 41:30

Alright, thank you. Bye.

**Priya** 41:32

Bye! And that was Jadee, who is a trans woman who was incarcerated up in Magan-djin, or Brisbane, so-called Brisbane, reflecting on her experiences of the prison system, and also on the question of visibility as an Aboriginal trans woman. And I'm really, really grateful to her for making the time. And thank you so much to Necho, for putting us in touch. And you're going to hear a little interview that I did with Necho a couple of days ago, in a moment, but for now, I actually wanted to, you know, remind you all during this special broadcast that this was not programmed alone, I, um- I'm only, well, I'm not even half of this. I am just a very small, I'm just the voice here, really. But all of the incredible programming content ideas, the testimony that informed the kinds of questions that I'm asking, has come from my wonderful friend who is currently incarcerated and who is not able to join us, because the bureaucratic violence of the prison system is keeping her from us, despite our best efforts to get her to be a part of this show. She also wanted to mention, by the way that on Trans Day of Visibility, you know, there's a lot of gestures towards solidarity with trans people, including, you know, unfortunately even Victoria Police have a trans flag up. Which is interesting considering the extreme violence they inflicted on autonomous queer and trans protesters at this year's Pride March. But anyway. It seems like Judy Lazarus and Melbourne Assessment Prison don't even have a trans flag up so, so much for even that tokenism.

**Priya** 43:23

Now, she's passed me on a piece of writing to read out to you all, and I'm going to do that now. This is a diary of a transgender inmate. "Another day, yep. And other day in this shithole. Alone, restricted, having to live life with people I don't want to live with my only solace is confining myself to my room to get away from all the noise of the world. My room is not even my safe space anymore. Not that it really was to begin with. But now it feels so claustrophobic. But it's the only place I've got. Seven months of this, a means to an end. What do I do? I'm at war with myself. Just end it. No, not much longer, have hope. Every day the same battle over and over only to have a reprieve when I find something to distract me for a while. But same routine, same monotonous shit. Then I go to sleep and do it all again. I'm stuck in a loop. I do have a way out. I could just die. But what does it achieve? Really? Will anyone really give a shit? Well, maybe it might give them something to fuel their own- own agendas for a while and then they'll move on, forget, due to life. I wouldn't really be missed. However, I would find peace. That's all I desire is peace. That desire for peace, both sides want in this war. That's why I'm in equal despair and hope, a stalemate. My freedom is the deciding factor that will give an edge over the other in this seemingly endless combat. Hmm 35 minutes, a distraction. I get to go to the library. Great, being overstimulated by bright light, noise, people everywhere. Anxiety and hyper vigilance for two hours. then I come back prison. Yep. And every Tom, Dick and Harry are still here. Nowhere to be alone and potter about. Well, I guess it's back to my room. Door locked light off. I'll sit on my bed and stare blankly at the floor and bask in the dark light of despair. Time for a nap, emotionally drained, I'd say. Hopefully, I'll feel a little better when I wake. Maybe I won't. Who am I kidding? Of course I will. But sometimes I wish I didn't. Well, one last thought before I go. It's better than where I was. That's some truth-telling for another time." And that was Diary of a transgender inmate, from my very dear friend who I co programmed this segment of 3CR's 2024 Trans Day of Audibility with.

**Priya** 45:48

And now you're going to hear that interview that I did earlier this week with Necho, so I caught up with trans prison abolitionist and community worker, Necho Brocchi to talk about the work she's done at Sisters Inside and is continuing at the Open Doors youth service, which continues- which includes working with trans and gender diverse people who've been criminalized, including those in the prison system and out on parole.

**Necho** 46:12

I'm Nico, use she her pronouns. I'm a settler here in Magan-djin. So the last sort of six months I've been working at Open Doors, a youth service here, starting the state's first transtemme, femme-questioning program for young people of our community 12 to 24. We've been working with people inside and out in the community, trying to access, yeah, health, housing, employment, safety in schools, workplaces, unis. Um, yeah.

**Priya** 46:44

Yeah, I think that talking about this kind of work is so important in relation to Trans Day of Visibility and thinking, always thinking about what Bhenji Ra said, about visibility without protection being a trap, and thinking about the immense amount of community work that goes into building the infrastructure to keep trans people alive and thriving in the world? So I was wondering, particularly in relation to people that are inside, can you talk a bit about being guided by trans people with lived experience of incarceration in addressing the sort of structural violences that create conditions under which trans folks are struggling to survive?

**Necho** 47:32

Yeah, I think that's a huge question. And a really good question. I- what I think about that, when I think of the amazing words of Bhenji, the first thing I think of is that visibility is like a surface, right? So it's one day a year, it's like, you know, it's a sticker on the front of a place saying that we're a safe space, and we're trans welcoming, but like, in reality, we know that queer and trans services across this continent are predominantly white facing, they're not including people inside, you know, they're middle class, upper middle class services targeted for a very small and particular portion of our community. And I think, as abolitionists, the first thing that we can do, is truly wa- walking alongside the members of our community inside, is saying that every time we come into a space, and every time we come into a queer and trans space, we're going to say, "Well, why is there not people with lived experience of being inside? Why, you know, why are these services? Why are these strategies, why are these policies, not truly led by the people that they're trying to support?" Right? Yeah, when I hear those really powerful words, and I think about what it means to walk alongside someone, it's, you know, being led in all of our work by people inside, you know, by people that are criminalized, that are in and out in the community, but also by saying, like, "Well, why is this just visibility without true leadership, by people that, you know, are affected by it?"

**Priya** 48:54

Yeah. And it goes to troubling, I guess, the sort of diversity and inclusion model of tokenistic engagement with folks who are inside or with folks that do have lived experience of being criminalized and being incarcerated.

**Necho** 49:09

Yeah. And I think like, you know, when you are tokenizing people, right, you're, you're not dealing with the fact that our communities are all different. You know, like, we're complex people, we don't have singular lived experiences of one thing. It's like the reality is hurt people hurt people, like violence happens in our communities, and we need- abolition, like provides us a framework to actually start saying, we need community responses and like, all be involved in safety. We need to all be involved in health care and housing, we need to all be, you know, involved in like addressing the harm that happens in our community. When you replace, like, tokenism with actually like, how can we all have collective responses to these things, I think like, that's one of the huge things that abolition provides us, is a collective way of thinking and like adressing everything from justice to you know, trans people accessing healthcare. We know that, you know, trans people being able to access healthcare is a huge way of like stopping people going inside. But I think also about the projects that are connecting, you know, who's in and who's out in our community is like, obviously, the amazing like Incarcerated Trans and Gender Diverse fund that's, you know, getting funds directly to people in each, each month, $100 each month, and then $1,500 when people are out. And that's something that like, anyone who has the ability to, like, please donate or like, share information about because we need that out there. Thinking of like, the amazing work that Inside Out are doing, like the countless letters that people are exchanging inside and out. You know, the work Beyond Bricks and Bars, Sisters Inside are doing like, yeah, these pieces of bridging that gap, because people truly are isolated inside. We all know, like, in the community, how isolated you can feel. I think that's times 100, when you're inside, you know?

**Priya** 50:59

Yeah, and there's also within, within the prison walls themselves, this isolation, confinement in solitary of trans women, which is so frequent and such a violent mode of punishment that is not even captured within the, within mainstream understandings of the punishment that goes with a sentence, right? It's this extra, extra isolation, and, you know, isolation from members of our community, as diverse as it is, but from other queer and trans people to be able to process your feelings and experiences about gender when you're in an extremely gendered system.

**Necho** 51:45

The most gendered, right? You know? It's like, every time I've been in and supported someone, they've had really similar ways of speaking about the violence they've experienced inside. And it's like, the hyper sexualized sort of nature of how trans people are seen inside, it's just like, you're asking for it, or what you would expect, you know, you're a woman in a man's prison, you're a man in a woman's prison, or, you know, you're a non binary person in one of these highly gendered systems. And, you know, the conversation around DFV, in trans and queer communities needs to extend to people inside because people inside when they experience violence, it's just, you know, disregarded, it's not con- it's seen as their fault. You know, time and time again, the cam footage is just turned off for, you know, when someone tries to report it, they've been made fun of, they've been called busted-arse, they've been called the problem, like, it's never seen as seriousness. It's never, you know, taken as like deserving or worthy of that safety when you're a trans person inside.

**Priya** 52:46

Yeah, and this is, again, I just can't emphasize enough how much this compounds already, that structural assumption that people who are inside are not worthy of safety anyway, let alone if they are, you know, trans women who are made to be extremely vulnerable in these, in these prisons, whether they're incarcerated in a men's prison or a women's prison. There are the same kind of systemic violences that are enacted upon trans people that is just like a million additional punishments.

**Necho** 53:20

Yeah, and, you know, I was reading this really, like, sort of scary, and just eye opening statistic, and we know how bullshit statistics are. But in Queensland, there's, it's supposedly reported that more people in our community go to the police then go to a domestic or family violence support service, because we know how transphobic those community funded, meant to be community-controlled spaces to address, outside the police, violence, like how transphobic historically and currently they are, is that more people are going to the police. And it's like, you know, if that, what 6% or 3% of people that are going to the police, even less are going to domestic and family violence support services. Like if you're on parole, or you've been, you know, criminalized before, or you've got a history of criminalization in your family, like you're not going to those services, right? You're not going to the police. There's no- as a trans person experiencing violence, there's no support for you. Yeah, it's just hard to kind of think about, I guess how, historically transphobic and still are, those services are. And it's- but it's got to change and hopefully it is changing.

**Priya** 54:36

Yeah. And I guess on the issue of change, how has doing this work changed you?

**Necho** 54:42

I think that probably first and foremost, like, people inside and out have just shown me like how brilliant and funny and ridiculous and strong and just yeah, authentic we are. You know, when you truly like, you go- you kind of embrace the challenge and the beauty of like questioning your gender and identity and sexuality and way of living in the world. You know, you end up probably questioning a lot about who you are, what you want, like how things can be better how things can be more beautiful, and like you really find the joy in everything. And that's something that like, each and every person shows me and I really have been thinking more so than ever about that.Ruthie Gilmore quote, like, "Where life is precious, life is precious," because I think it summarizes all the community work we're trying to do, right? We're all worthy of it. And we're all pretty fucking amazing. And at the end of the day, like, you know, we're doing this because abolition and going beyond, you know, criminalization, and just the absolute brutality and like, degrading, you know, systems of policing and prison is- we're the ones that truly believe in justice and accountability, like that's what we're fighting for, because we're all deserving of safety of, you know, justice, of accountability, of our communities, and like connection to that. I think, that joy and that love and you know, that community is something we're all worthy of. And when you're, when you're in those systems, it's the furthest thing away from that, but we're all worthy of that connection. And yeah, that love I guess?

**Priya** 56:11

And that was trans prison abolitionist and community worker, Niecho Brocchi, who I caught up with late last week to talk about the work that she's done to add Sisters Inside, and continues at the Open Doors youth service in Magan-djin, which includes working with trans and gender diverse people who've been criminalized, including those in the prison system and out on parole. Now, that was the last interview that we had for today's Trans Prisoner Solidarity hour of 3CR's Trans Day of Audibility broadcast, and we are coming to the end of the broadcast with the end of this segment.

**Priya** 56:44

So I want to again, really thank Katie, Stacey, Jadee and also Necho and Witt from Beyond Bricks and Bars for all of their help pulling this together. And last, but certainly not least, to really, really thank my wonderful friend who is inside who programmed this with me, who is more than half of, you know, more than half of the genius and the labor that's gone into creating a special that is, you know, that is for trans people who have experiences of incarceration. And again, as she mentioned, the importance of shouting out and sending a message in any way to trans folks who are being held in solitary in, in men's prisons in particular, to say, We love you, you matter. And we see you and we're thinking about you. So thank you everyone for sticking with us for this special piece on trans prisoner solidarity for 3CR's Trans Day of Audibility 2024. Again, I know we covered some difficult conte- content. So if you do need to speak to someone at any point, you can always call QLife on 1800-184-527 from 3pm to midnight, Victorian listeners can call the Rainbow Door, that's an initiative Switchboard, on 1800-729-367, from 10am to 5pm. And Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander listeners can also call one 13YARN that's 13-92-76, or Yarnin' Safe'n'Strong on 1800-959-563. And if you have the means please consider donating to Beyond Bricks and Bars, the Incarcerated Trans and Gender Diverse Community Fund on GoFundMe. And finally, if you can please chip into support Reem, Amal and Noor, three trans women who are raising money to evacuate Gaza. Donate to paypal.me/transsolidaritygaza, and you can find further details at @trans\_solidarity4gaza on Instagram.