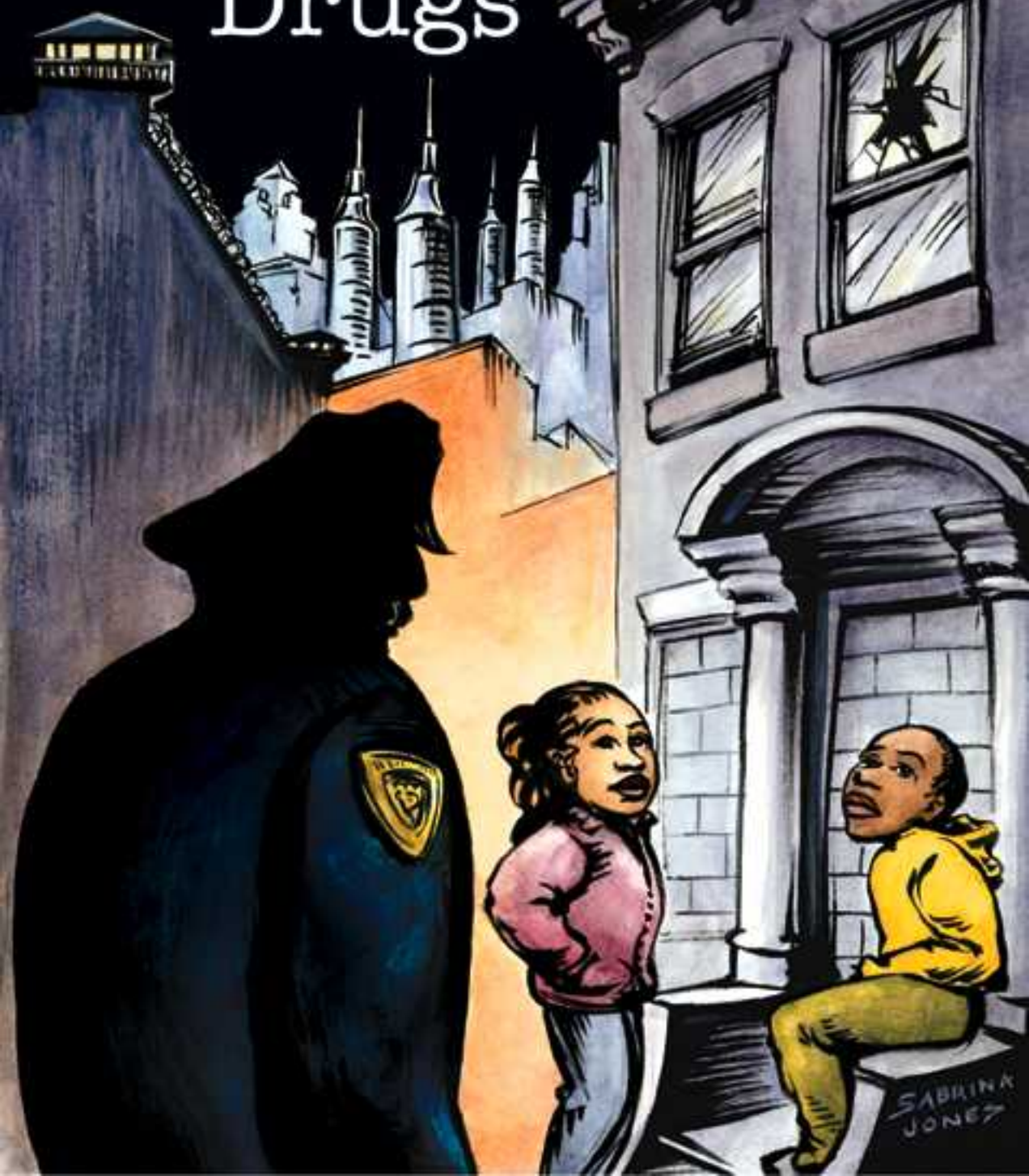


the real cost of prisons project™

Prisoners

of the

War on Drugs



Prisoners of the War on Drugs

Artist: Sabrina Jones

Writers: Sabrina Jones, Ellen Miller-Mack & Lois Ahrens

Real Cost of the War on Drugs workshop writer/presenter: Mark Brenner

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Real Cost of Prisons Project Director: Lois Ahrens

The Real Cost of Prisons Project brings together prison/justice policy activists with political economists to create workshops and materials which explore both the immediate and long-term costs of mass incarceration on the individual, her/his family, community and the nation.

Two additional comic books are part of this series: *Prison Town: Paying the Price* and *Prisoners of Hard Times: Women and Children*. If you would like copies of these comic books to assist your group in its organizing work, contact Lois Ahrens. Or you can go to www.realcostofprisons.org and download the entire series.

This comic book can be downloaded free of charge from the Real Cost of Prisons website. Please credit the Real Cost of Prisons Project. Any reproduction requires written permission of the Real Cost of Prisons Project, except for small excerpts for review or publicity purposes.

The Real Cost of Prisons Project is an activity of The Sentencing Project, a Washington, DC based non-profit dedicated to reducing over-reliance on incarceration. The Real Cost of Prisons Project is supported by a grant from the Community Advocacy Project of the Open Society Institute.

The characters in these stories are fictional, but their experiences are taken from actual case histories.

THANK YOU

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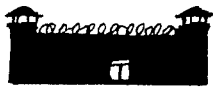
Write to us at 5 Warfield Place, Northampton, MA 01060. Printed in Canada.

For more work by Sabrina Jones, please visit www.sabrinaland.com

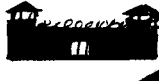
FROM THE 1920'S TO THE 1960'S, AMERICA INCARCERATED ABOUT 1 IN EVERY 1,000 PEOPLE.

IN THE '70'S, THE RATE SUDDENLY ROSE, WITH THE PASSAGE OF TOUGH NEW DRUG LAWS - THE 1ST STRIKE IN THE

BY 2000, NEARLY 5 IN EVERY 1,000 PEOPLE WERE INCARCERATED.



PRISON BUILDING BECAME A BIG BUSINESS, AND



SPREAD ACROSS THE COUNTRY.



NOW U.S. PRISONS HOLD OVER 2 MILLION PEOPLE.



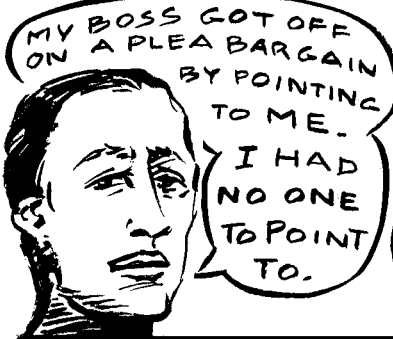
WHO'S NEW ON THE INSIDE?

MOSTLY PEOPLE CONVICTED OF LOW LEVEL DRUG CRIMES:

PRISONERS OF THE WAR ON DRUGS

MOSTLY AFRICAN-AMERICANS & LATINOS

MORE & MORE WOMEN



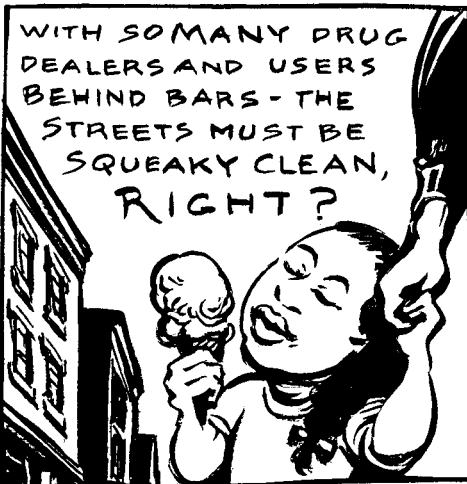
MY BOSS GOT OFF ON A PLEA BARGAIN BY POINTING TO ME. I HAD NO ONE TO POINT TO.



IN MY NEIGHBORHOOD THE COPS WILL STOP YOU FOR NO REASON



NOW WHO'LL TAKE CARE OF MY KIDS?



WITH SOMANY DRUG DEALERS AND USERS BEHIND BARS - THE STREETS MUST BE SQUEAKY CLEAN, RIGHT?

WRONG!

DRUGS ARE CHEAPER AND MORE AVAILABLE THAN BEFORE THIS "WAR" BEGAN.



"BOBBY" ⁹⁹ *

WAS 16 WHEN HE STARTED WORKING IN THE DRUG TRADE.

* BASED ON VARIOUS TRUE STORIES

HE LIVED IN A SMALL APARTMENT IN CHICAGO

WITH HIS MOM, HIS TWO LITTLE BROTHERS, AND HIS SISTER.

EVERY DAY HIS MOTHER RODE THE BUS

3 HOURS ROUND TRIP TO WORK IN A MALL IN THE SUBURBS

LET'S GO, GUYS! GET READY FOR SCHOOL

THEY ALREADY GREW OUT OF THEIR CLOTHES AGAIN!

HI KIDS, I'M HOME

HI MOM

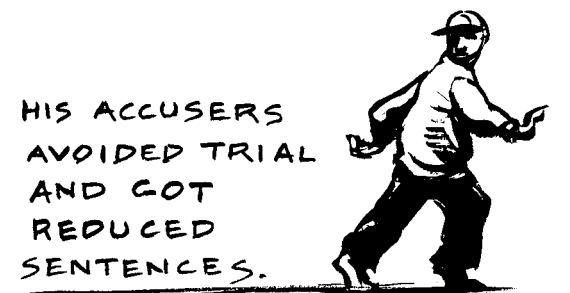
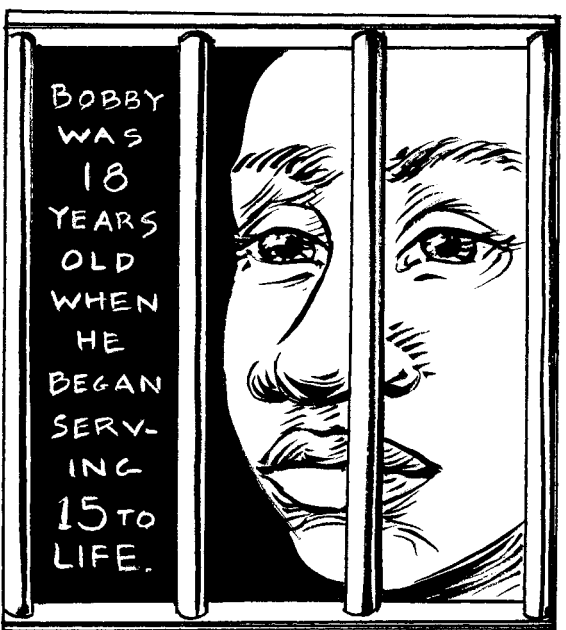
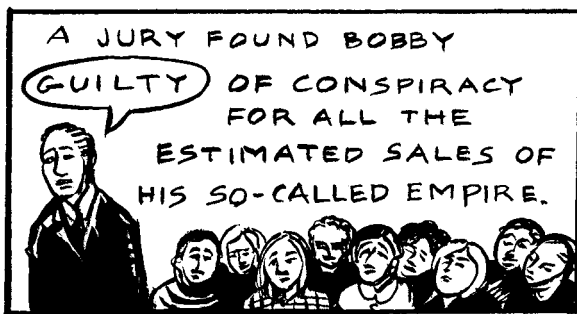
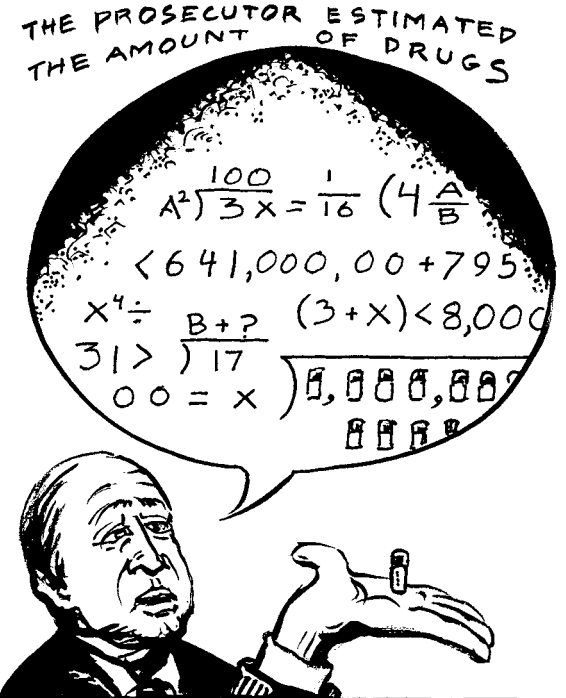
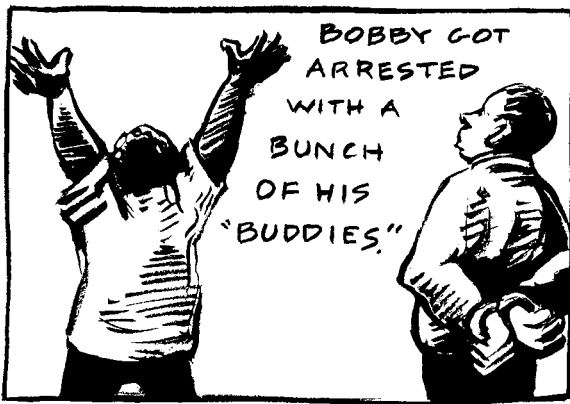
I CAN'T ASK HER FOR ANY MORE MONEY

HIS FIRST JOB WAS SIMPLE:

YOU JUST WHISTLE WHEN YOU SEE THE COPS.

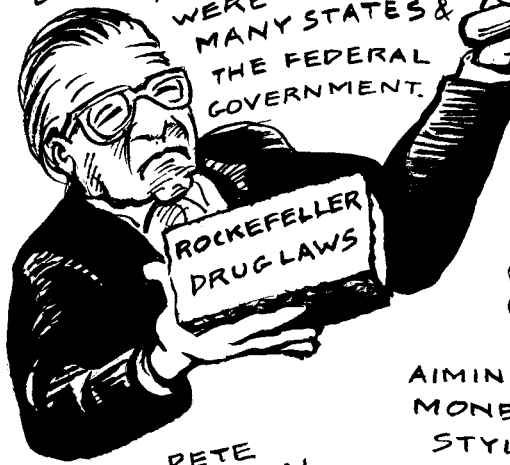
BOBBY MADE \$300 A WEEK CASH

& STAYED IN SCHOOL.

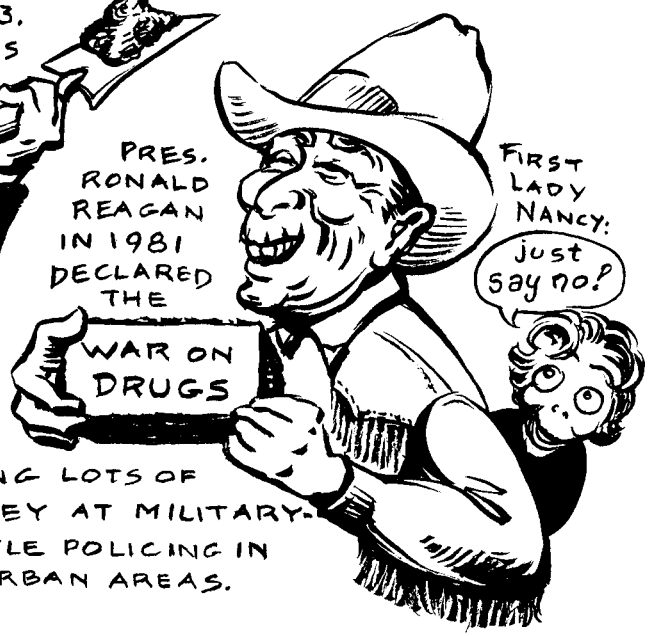


MEET THE BUILDERS OF THE DRUG PRISON BOOM

NY GOV. NELSON ROCKEFELLER LAID THE 1ST BRICK IN 1973. HIS HARSH SENTENCES WERE COPIED IN MANY STATES & THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT.



PRES. RONALD REAGAN IN 1981 DECLARED THE



AIMING LOTS OF MONEY AT MILITARY-STYLE POLICING IN URBAN AREAS.

CA GOV. PETE WILSON HIT A POLITICAL HOME RUN: 3 STRIKES LAWS RUN: 1994



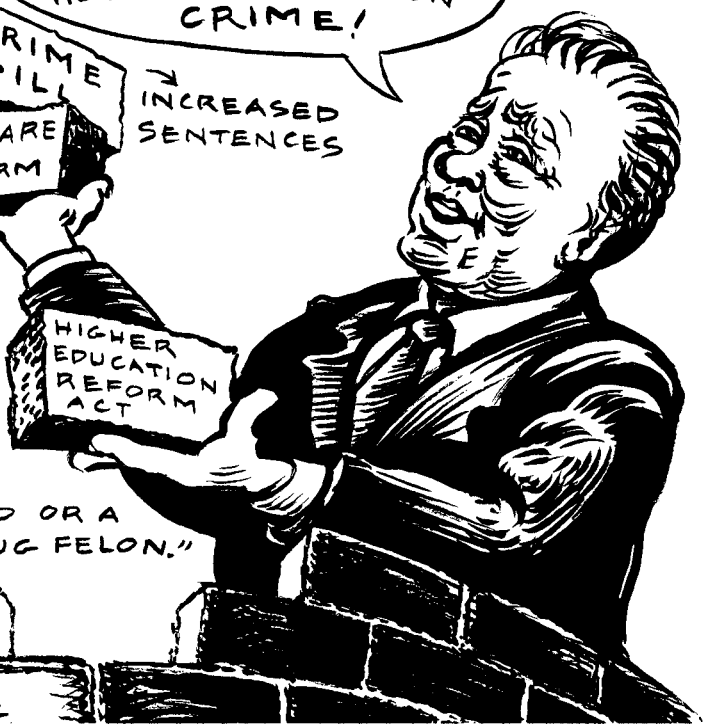
25 YEARS TO LIFE FOR A 3rd FELONY (EVEN NON-VIOLENT.) THE LAW WAS COPIED BY 22 STATES & THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT.

PRES. BILL CLINTON: SOME FOLKS CALL ME A LIBERAL, BUT WATCH HOW TOUGH I AM ON CRIME!



INCREASED SENTENCES

BANNED PEOPLE WITH DRUG CONVICTIONS FROM WELFARE AND FOOD STAMPS



NO STUDENT LOANS IF YOU ARE INCARCERATED OR A FORMER "DRUG FELON."



Yvonne

IS 22 YEARS OLD AND PREGNANT FOR THE FIRST TIME.

HER NEIGHBORHOOD IN SPRINGFIELD, MA. HAS BEEN DELAYING AROUND



SILENT FACTORIES SINCE THE JOBS WENT SOUTH.

ON HER WAY TO THE STORE ONE SUNDAY NIGHT...

HEY-DO YOU KNOW WHERE TO BUY SOME CRACK? I'LL PAY YOU \$20.

STUPID CRACKHEAD

\$20!

WAIT RIGHT HERE.



YVONNE DOESN'T DO DRUGS, BUT

SHE KNOWS HER NEIGHBORHOOD.



IT LOOKED LIKE

THE EASIEST \$20

SHE EVER EARNED.

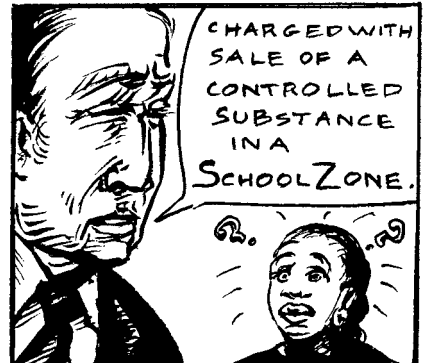


SHE DIDN'T KNOW HER "CLIENT"

WAS A POLICE INFORMANT



SHE WAS SET UP.



CHARGED WITH SALE OF A CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE IN A SCHOOLZONE.

LIKE MOST OF DOWNTOWN
SPRINGFIELD, YVONNE'S
CORNER WAS 1,000
FEET FROM
A SCHOOL,
SO IT



TRIGGERED AN
'ENHANCED
SENTENCE'
EVEN THOUGH
SCHOOL WAS OUT
AT THE TIME.

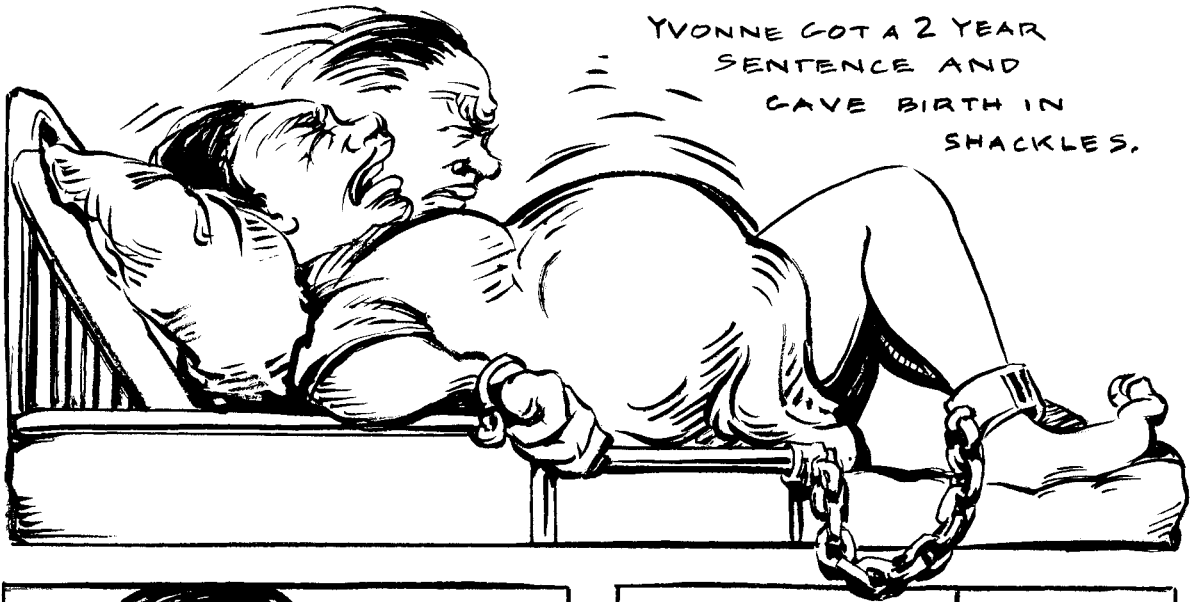
Sale



IN 20 STATES, SCHOOL
ZONE LAWS RAISE
SENTENCES IN CITIES,



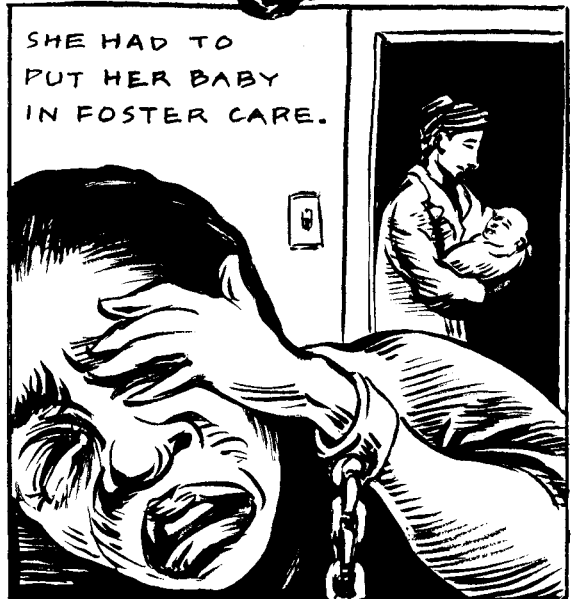
AND HAVE NO EFFECT
ON THE KIDS THEY'RE
SUPPOSED TO PROTECT.



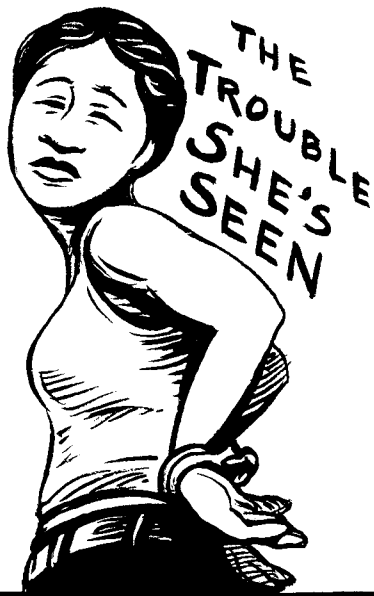
YVONNE GOT A 2 YEAR
SENTENCE AND
GAVE BIRTH IN
SHACKLES.



SINCE NONE
OF HER
RELATIVES
COULD
HELP...



SHE HAD TO
PUT HER BABY
IN FOSTER CARE.



THE TROUBLE SHE'S SEEN

MEN ARE STILL THE VAST MAJORITY OF PRISONERS



BUT THE NUMBER OF WOMEN IS GROWING MUCH FASTER.

WOMEN ARE MORE LIKELY TO BE LOCKED UP FOR



NON-VIOLENT DRUG AND PROPERTY OFFENSES.

THEIR BOYFRIENDS OFTEN RECRUITED THEM AS PARTNERS IN CRIME.



OVER HALF OF THEM HAVE BEEN ABUSED



PHYSICALLY, SEXUALLY, OR BOTH

MANY MORE WOMEN ARE ADDICTED AND HIV POSITIVE.



FOR EVERY MOTHER IN PRISON, A FAMILY IS PUNISHED.



IF HER KIDS ARE IN FOSTER CARE TOO LONG SHE CAN LOSE PARENTAL RIGHTS FOREVER.

ALLOW MOTHERS AND KIDS TO STAY CLOSE.



MAKE VISITS EASIER AND PRISONS CLOSE ENOUGH FOR REGULAR VISITS.

AFTER RELEASE, MOMS NEED FOOD & HOUSING



BUT WELFARE LAWS IN MANY STATES EXCLUDE PEOPLE WHO HAVE HAD DRUG CHARGES.

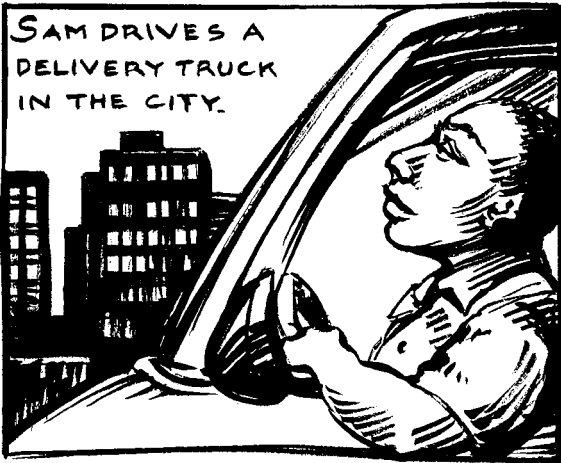
Sam & Alec



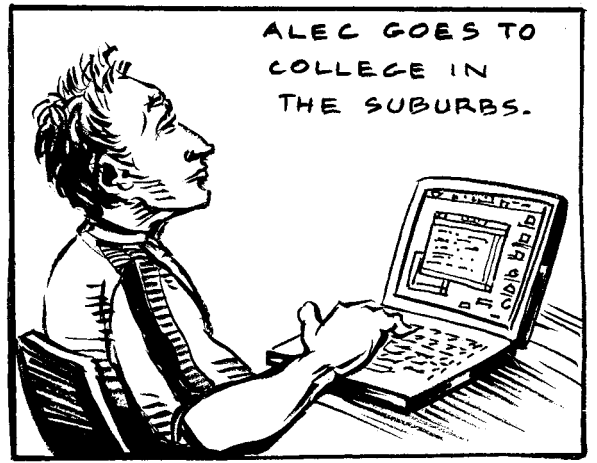
ARE BOTH



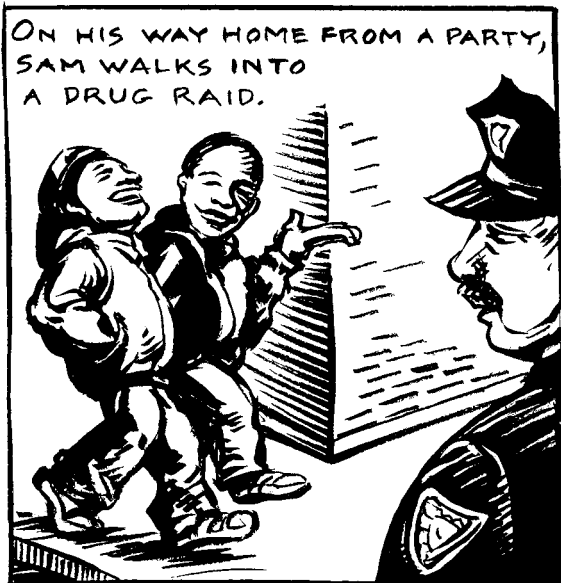
19 YEARS OLD.



SAM DRIVES A
DELIVERY TRUCK
IN THE CITY.



ALEC GOES TO
COLLEGE IN
THE SUBURBS.



ON HIS WAY HOME FROM A PARTY,
SAM WALKS INTO
A DRUG RAID.



ON HIS WAY HOME FROM A PARTY,
ALEC RUNS A STOP SIGN AND
GETS PULLED OVER.

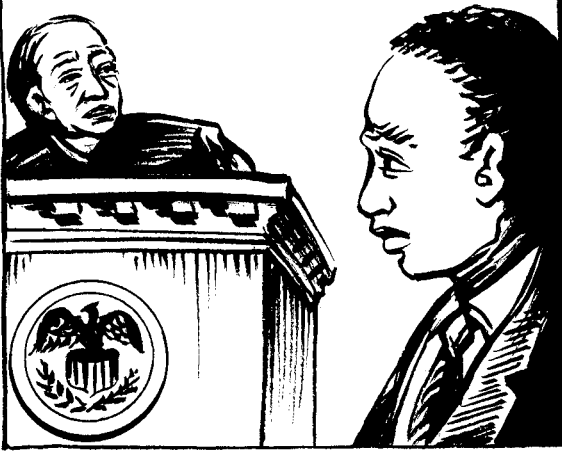
THE POLICE FIND A SMALL ROCK OF CRACK IN THE POCKET OF SAM'S FRIEND.



THE POLICE FIND \$100 WORTH OF COCAINE IN ALEC'S CAR.



SAM IS ASSIGNED A PUBLIC DEFENDER AND CHARGED AS AN ACCESSORY.



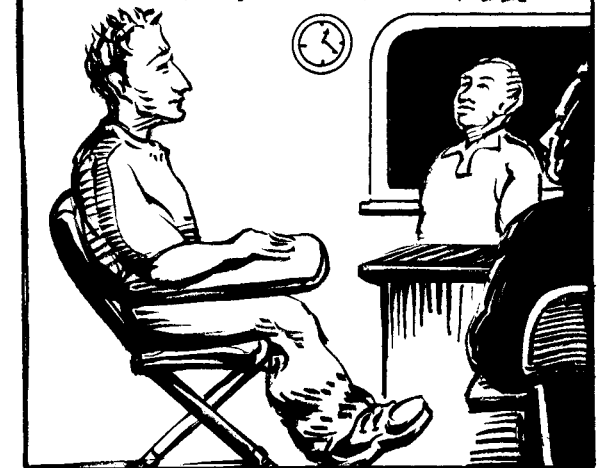
ALEC'S PARENTS HIRE A LAWYER WHO WINS HIS RIGHT TO STAY IN SCHOOL.



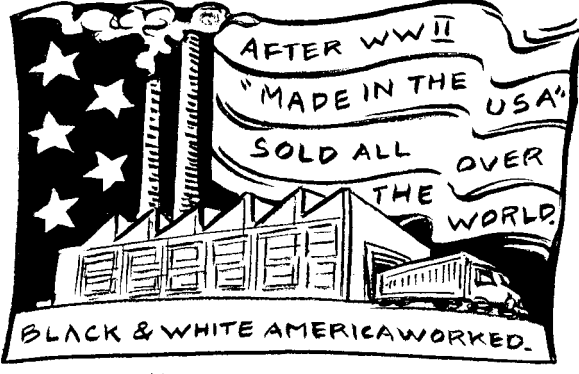
SAM GETS A FELONY CONVICTION AND SIX MONTHS IN JAIL.



ALEC IS SENT TO DRUG CLASSES & COUNSELING. AFTER 6 MONTHS, HIS CHARGES ARE DROPPED.



WHAT'S RACE GOT TO DO WITH IT ?

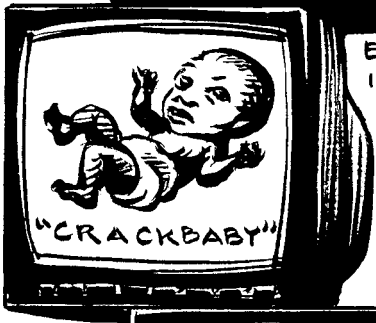


1980's: POLITICIANS RAGED AGAINST CRIME & DRUGS

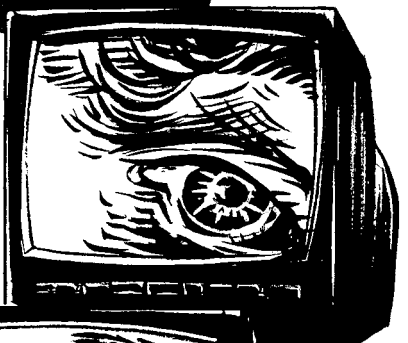


THE MEDIA FLASHED IMAGES OF BLACK MEN.

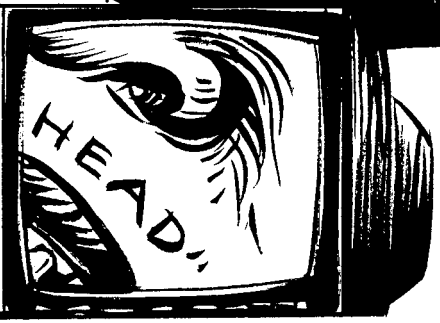
THE MYTH OF THE



EXPLOITED IMAGES OF LOW-WEIGHT BABIES OF POOR MOMS WITH NO PRE-NATAL CARE.



AMERICA'S OLD DEMON RACISM WAS USED TO SELL THE WAR ON DRUGS.



AFRICAN AMERICANS
MAKE UP 13% OF
THE U.S. POPULATION



AND 13% OF
DRUG USERS



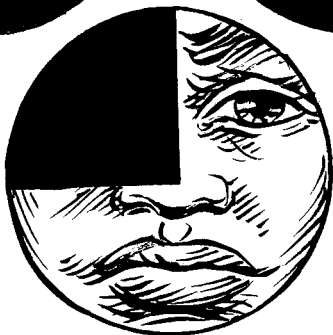
35%
OF DRUG ARRESTS



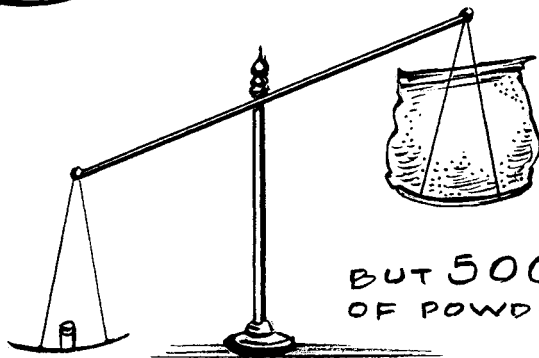
55%
OF DRUG
CONVICTIONS



74%
OF THOSE
SENTENCED
TO PRISON
FOR DRUGS.



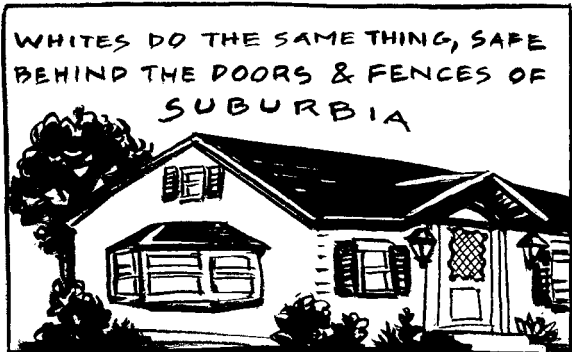
LAWS TARGET
DRUGS USED BY
PEOPLE OF COLOR.
TO GET A FEDERAL
MANDATORY MINIMUM
SENTENCE OF 5
YEARS, IT TAKES
ONLY 5 GRAMS OF
CRACK COCAINE,



BUT 500 GRAMS
OF POWDER COCAINE.



POLICING TARGETS
INNER CITIES,
WHERE POOR
PEOPLE OF
COLOR DO
BUSINESS &
SOCIALIZE
OUT ON
THE STREET.



WHITES DO THE SAME THING, SAFE
BEHIND THE DOORS & FENCES OF
SUBURBIA



ONCE
THEY'RE CAUGHT, AFRICAN-
AMERICANS ARE MORE
LIKELY TO GET
PRISON TIME.



WHITES ARE MORE LIKELY TO
GET ACCESS TO TREATMENT.

FREE AT LAST!

NO MORE BARS & RAZORWIRE!
NO NUMBER, I'LL RECLAIM MY NAME.
NO I.D. THEY TOOK IT AWAY



MY KIDS DON'T KNOW ME 'CAUSE IT WAS TOO FAR TO VISIT

SO I'M OFF THE BOOKS FOR WEEKS, NOT DAYS.



THEIR MOM'S STRESSED OUT FROM PROVIDING ALL THEIR LIVING.



I HEAD FOR MY MOM'S, BUT

SON, YOU CAN'T STAY OVER



GOTTA GET WELFARE & FOOD STAMPS 'TIL I CAN GET HIRED

WITH MY DRUG RECORD, HER PUBLIC HOUSING'S OFF LIMITS FOREVER.

SORRY...

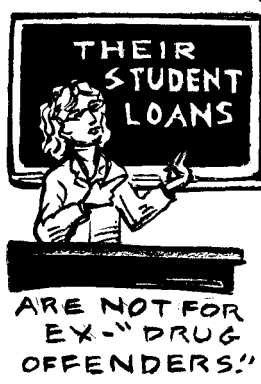


NO EX-DRUG FELONS SERVED HERE.



I'M READY, WILLING & ABLE TO WORK

WE'LL CHECK YOUR CRIMINAL BACKGROUND FIRST.



AREN'T THE FEDS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY LENDER?



I NEED SOME EDUCATION IN THIS TOUGH JOB MARKET

I GO TO A SHELTER

BUT IT REMINDS ME OF PRISON



I HANG ON THE STREET, AND WHO DO I MEET?

COME ON BACK & DEAL WITH ME!



NO WAY!

I KNOW WHERE THAT ROAD LEADS!



THE RULES AREN'T FAIR- THEY'VE GOT TO BE REVISED



BUT I CAN'T EVEN VOTE- I'VE BEEN DISENFRANCHISED!

IN SOME COMMUNITIES, 15% OF ALL ADULTS ARE INCARCERATED IN EVERY YEAR.

CYCLES OF EXILE

...SO WHY AREN'T THESE AREAS SAFE?

CHILDREN HAVE FEWER CARE GIVERS.

THEIR REMAINING PARENT STRUGGLES TO SUPPORT THEM.

IT'S EASIER TO FAIL IN SCHOOL

& GET IN TROUBLE.

PEOPLE LEAVE FOR DISTANT PRISONS

FAMILIES LEAVE. CAN'T PAY THE RENT.

KIDS ARE SENT AWAY TO RELATIVES & FOSTER CARE.

OTHERS FLEE THE "BAD NEIGHBORHOOD."

THEY RETURN

LOW-PAYING JOB CALLS FOR A 2ND NO TIME FOR FAMILY.

THE SHAME OF INCARCERATION LEADS TO

TOO MUCH HANGING OUT ON THE STREET IS BAD FOR BUSINESS.

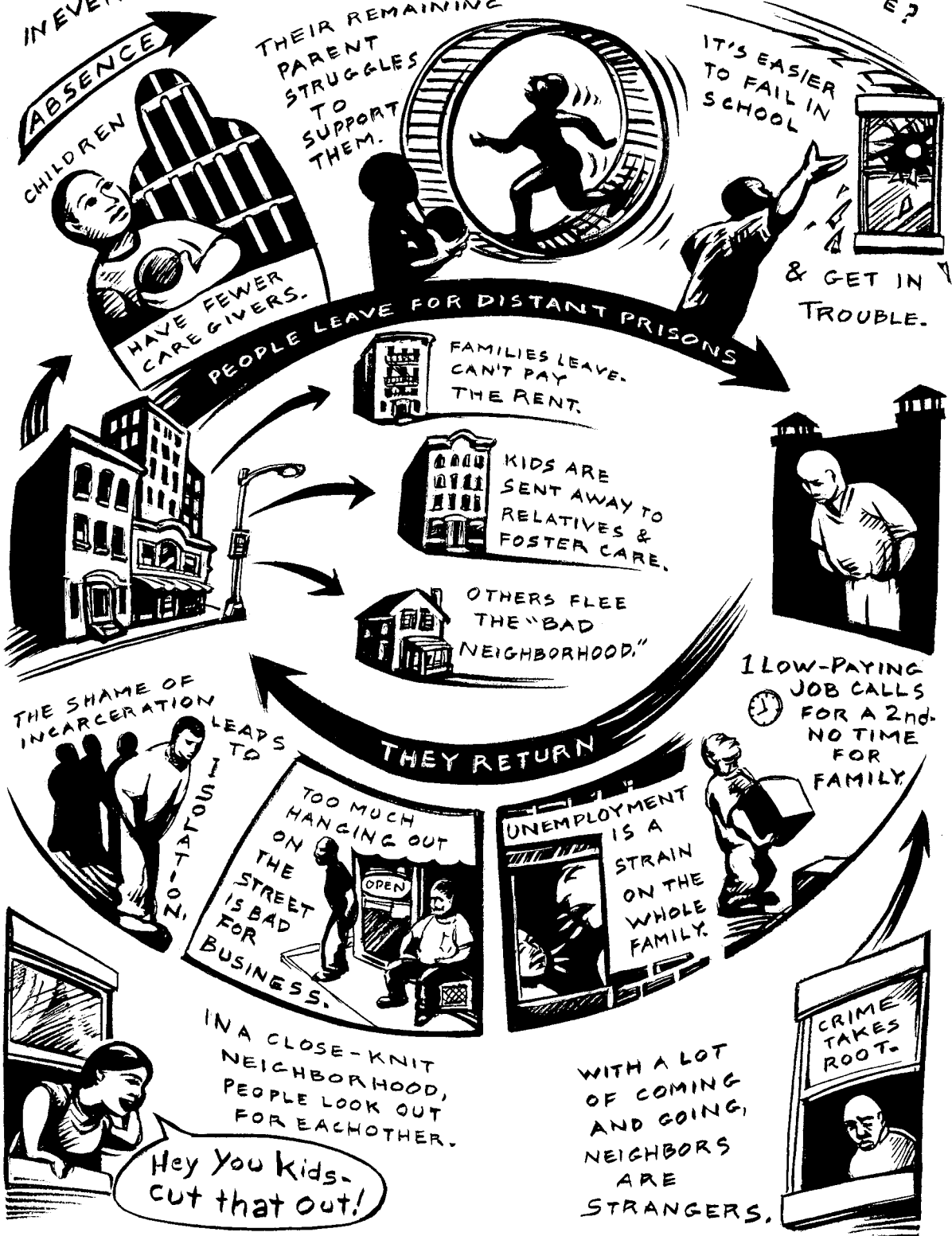
UNEMPLOYMENT IS A STRAIN ON THE WHOLE FAMILY.

IN A CLOSE-KNIT NEIGHBORHOOD, PEOPLE LOOK OUT FOR EACH OTHER.

Hey you kids - cut that out!

WITH A LOT OF COMING AND GOING, NEIGHBORS ARE STRANGERS.

CRIME TAKES ROOT.



These ideas are based on the work of Dina R. Rose and Todd R. Clear: "Incarceration, Reentry and Social Capital: Social Networks in the Balance," 12/01

STRIKES YOU'RE OUT

CALIFORNIA'S 1994 LAW APPLIES TO ALL FELONIES - SO IT STRIKES FREQUENTLY AT DRUG USERS.

WHEN CHINO WAS 17, HIS MOTHER TURNED HIM IN FOR BURGLARIZING THEIR HOME.

IT'S THE ONLY WAY TO GET YOU INTO A DRUG PROGRAM!



BUT ALL HE GOT WAS PRISON TIME AND HIS 1ST FELONY CONVICTION.

BACK OUT ON THE STREET,

OUT OF WORK,

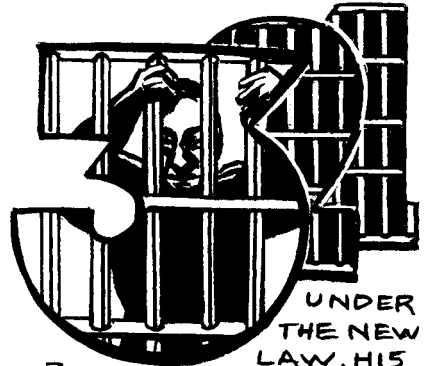
AND STILL STRUNG OUT-



HIS SECOND FELONY.

CHINO STAYED OUT OF TROUBLE FOR YEARS. THEN HE WAS CAUGHT STANDING 30 FEET FROM A FRIEND WHO SOLD \$20 WORTH OF COCAINE.

CHINO'S CHARGES: AIDING & ABETTING.



UNDER THE NEW LAW, HIS 3RD FELONY GOT HIM 25-TO-LIFE.

CALIFORNIANS PASSED THIS LAW IN OUTRAGE OVER THE KIDNAPPING, RAPE & MURDER OF A 12-YEAR-OLD BY A RECENT PAROLEE WITH A HISTORY OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN.

MISSING:

PLEASE CALL: 310-441-1111

HER CASE WAS RARE.



"3 STRIKES" TYPICALLY CATCHES PETTY THEIVES DRIVEN BY ADDICTION. NOW CALIFORNIANS ARE ASKING:

SHOULD WE LOCK UP SO MANY FOR SO LONG - AT OVER \$30,000 A YEAR?

THE WAR ON DRUGS HAS COST TAXPAYERS BILLIONS,
DEVASTATED LIVES, FAMILIES & COMMUNITIES AND
COMPLETELY FAILED TO REDUCE DRUG USE.

CONSIDER THESE ALTERNATIVES



END MANDATORY MINIMUM SENTENCES.
REVISE FEDERAL SENTENCING GUIDELINES,
LET JUDGES JUDGE FAIRLY,
CONSIDERING THE WHOLE CASE,
NOT JUST DRUG WEIGHT.
IN 2002, MICHIGAN REPEALED
ITS 1978 MINIMUMS, WHICH
THE EX-GOVERNOR CALLED:

"THE WORST MISTAKE
OF MY CAREER"

OFFER DRUG TREATMENT

THE WAR ON DRUGS LOCKS
UP MORE USERS THAN DEALERS.
MOST WANT TO QUIT, BUT CAN'T.
A YEAR OF TREATMENT COSTS
MUCH LESS THAN A YEAR OF
INCARCERATION, PLUS: THE PERSON
CAN WORK, PAY TAXES & TAKE
PART IN FAMILY LIFE.
A FEW STATES CONSIDER
TREATMENT BEFORE
INCARCERATION.
WHY NOT OFFER
TREATMENT ON DEMAND?



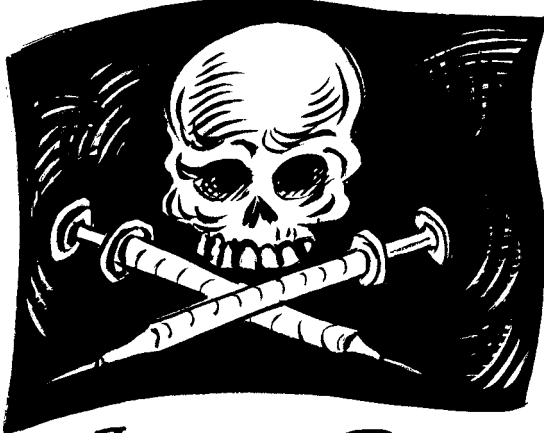
CHANGE PROBATION

TWO THIRDS OF PEOPLE ON PROBATION
ARE RE-ARRESTED, MOSTLY ON
TECHNICAL VIOLATIONS, LIKE
MISSED APPOINTMENTS AND
FAILED DRUG TESTS,
NOT NEW CRIMES.

PROBATION OFFICERS SHOULD
HAVE RESOURCES TO HELP
PEOPLE STAY OUT OF PRISON.

END LEGAL DISCRIMINATION

AGAINST PEOPLE WHO HAVE DONE THEIR TIME. LET THEM LEAVE PRISON BEHIND. RESTORE FULL ACCESS TO PUBLIC HOUSING, WELFARE, FOOD STAMPS, STUDENT FINANCIAL AID, DRIVERS' LICENCES, STATE LICENSED PROFESSIONS & VOTING RIGHTS.



HARM REDUCTION

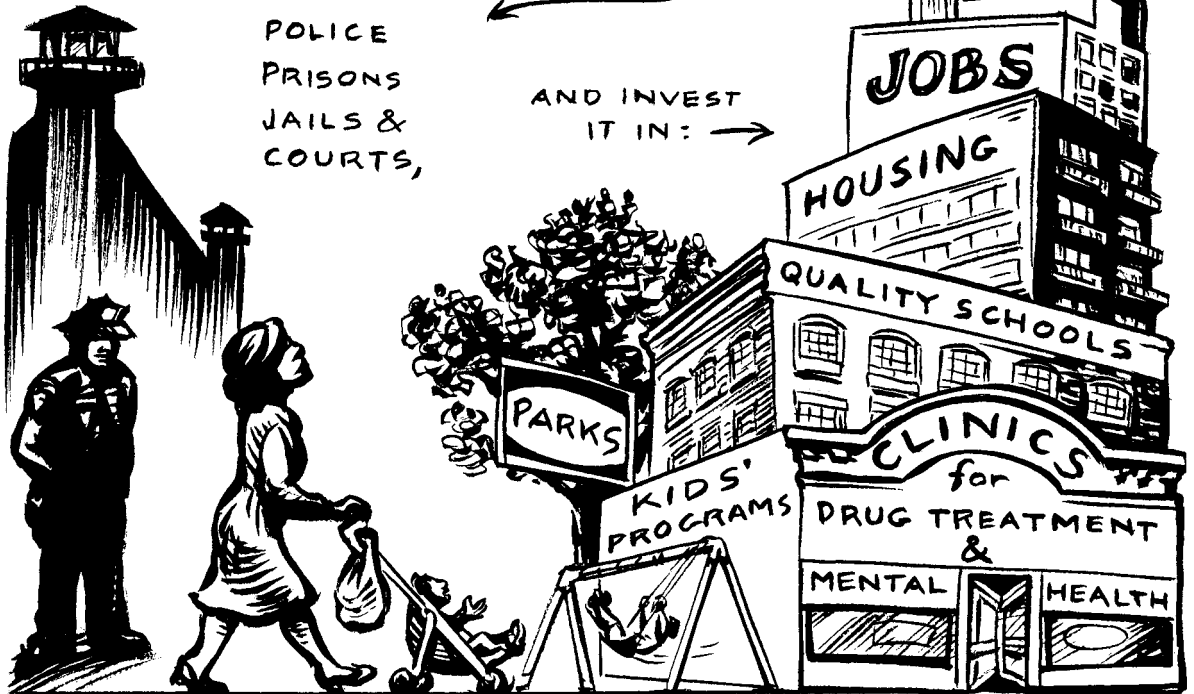
REDUCE THE HARMFUL EFFECTS OF DRUG USE ON FAMILIES, COMMUNITIES & THE DRUG USER. NEEDLE EXCHANGE PROGRAMS REDUCE TRANSMISSION OF HIV & HEPATITIS C.

JUSTICE REINVESTMENT

CREATE SAFER, VIABLE COMMUNITIES BY LETTING THE PEOPLE WHO LIVE THERE TAKE CONTROL OF THE MONEY SPENT ON

POLICE
PRISONS
JAILS &
COURTS,

AND INVEST IT IN: →



"Justice Reinvestment" concept comes from a paper by Susan B. Tucker and Eric Cadora, *Ideas for an Open Society*, Vol. 3, No.3, 11/03

