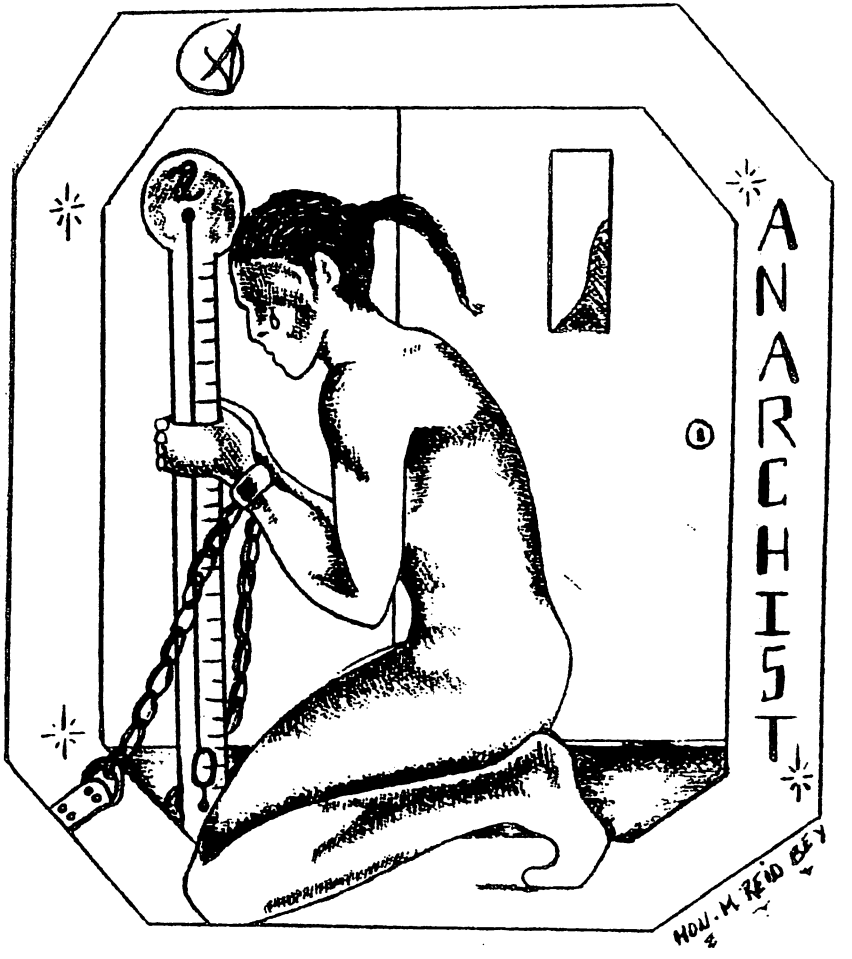
ZERO To *ANARCHIST*



In 1.2 Seconds

Interview with Lee Savage



Lisa Renee Savage #959277
T Dorm – Quad 2 Cell #2111
Annex CM Level 1
Lowell Correctional Institution
11120 Northwest Gainsville Road
Ocala, Florida 34482-1479

By, Anthony Rayson

INTRODUCTION

As a long-time prisoner supporter who goes the extra step by making it my business to collaborate with the bravest most lucid prisoners, one of the goals I seek is to get the voice of womyn prisoners out there. This has proven to be a difficult endeavor for many reasons.

Womyn prisoners are usually mothers of small children when the state threatens with kidnapping custody forms, if they get "disruptive" i.e. get too close to the truth and cry out their rage at the injustice they are forced to suffer. Most womyn prisoners were victims of abuse - physical, sexual and psychological - before their incarceration, only to be further and completely victimized by the state' s abuse, known as incarceration.

So, they often have nowhere to turn for support. Their family has been a source of abuse, the state (D.O.C.) is their present abuser, and other predators, either prisoners themselves, or opportunists on the "outs" look to form abusive relationships with these highly vulnerable females.

Womyn prisoners are conditioned into docility as a prerequisite of their release. Even though their "crimes" aren' t anywhere near the viciousness of men, if the womyn challenge their fate through words or action, they too can face the awful weight of the sadistic repression of the prison system. There are solitary confinements, SHU' s, "control units," restraints, gassings, shacklings, beatings and all manner of deprivations and humiliations forced upon these people.

So, it takes a superhuman love of liberty, courage and fundamental anarchist rage - and love of humanity - to be willing and able, to blurt out the hot, molten truth.

So, I am most thrilled and excited to have this opportunity to let the voice of the incarcerated womyn be heard in this interview by a no holds barred, fascinating and deft-minded rebel-to-the-core anarcho-lesbian dynamo.

So, heighten your senses and prepare for a bonsai run of explosive truth and insight from the guttural cry from the buried depths of the sinister psyche of locked-down Amerika. I' m really pleased to be a part of this revelatory project with "Lee" , Lisa Savage.

~ Anthony Rayson ~

My Response to the Introduction

Thank you, Brother, for taking precious time out of your absolutely "insane" mind-boggling schedule of projects with countless radicals and politically conscious prisoners throughout locked-down Amerika and away from your allotted time to press the flesh, and plug in with like-minded free world people to further the goals of ABC' s and Anarchism. Lest I forget to mention the time you spend reaching out to re-educate those whose lives have been shaped around and set upon a foundation of government based lies and oppression, fed to them daily by the government controlled money-driven media.

I feel most fortunate and grateful to have met you at a time in my life when I was seriously searching for enlightenment and skooling on real issues. You have helped me find a way to give voice to the silent and equally unseen population of incarcerated womyn living their tormented and oppressed lives caged within the concrete walls of a fortress of forced isolation. This slice of hell for me is known as "T-Dorm" - close management special control housing unit here at Lowell Corruptional Institution - Florida State prisons' only CM-solitary confinement control unit for womyn.

Brother Anthony, you have been a blessing in my life for sure, I also want to take a moment to thank you for placing me in the path of Abigail, who is the cornerstone of the Burning River chapter of ABC. She has been an awesome comrade that I can only aspire to emulate. It is

through both of you and your acts of selflessness, generosity and genuine love that I have been able to discover my own depths of these traits. You and Abigail have helped me grow stronger through your words of encouragement, thus emboldening me to speak louder and to call into account those who are seriously affecting the well-being of my sisters in chains.

It is also through you Brother that I had the distinct honor to have played a part in the "STOPMAX" campaign conference held in Philadelphia May 30 - June 1st, 2008. My testimony and spirit was heard and felt by those fighting to end solitary confinement and torture in U.S. prisons. I was "blowed" when I received a thank you letter from Naima Black for "my story" - yet more moved by the packet she compiled of the schedule of events & workshops, post campaign goals of those on the outside, testimony of the 17 men highlighted with me and the pictures from the opening speech and moments throughout the three-day event - and, her request for me to please keep in touch to help further this movement.

Also, I must send my Anarchist love & thank you to Abigail of Burning River for also carrying my words and feelings to the public via the punk magazine, Profane Existence in their prisoner section, entitled "Dehumanized Nation."

I have had the great honor to be placed on page in between two of the prisoner's resistance movement's most articulate and dedicated warriors, Coyote Sheff and Sean Swain. I never thought I'd be in a publication with either of them, for their work and insight surpasses my own, but because of you Brother, I've humbly shared space with Khalfani Khaldun in Prisoners' Speak! #4 - your publication for STOPMAX. It was Khalfani, whose zine entitled Surviving Solitary Confinement for the Targeted Prisoner, helped me to establish a firm foundation of resistance.

Abigail has given me voice with Coyote & Sean in PE #57. I am honored and humbled by all you and Abigail have

made possible for allowing me the chance to be heard and to be one of the voices in the struggle and prisoner's resistance movement. 6

Once again, thanks Brother for showing me Anarchist love and for the powerful introduction to this interview. I can only put my best foot forward and hope this literature will prove to be a lasting source of strength, hope, enlightenment, and used as another conduit for challenge and change for all - especially my severely marginalized "sisters" - womyn who <u>live</u> the struggle on a daily basis. With that being said - much love to you Brother Anthony, and allow me to take a few deep breaths and let's begin.



Here's a shot of my brother Jim & me.
We're looking for wood to make walking canes.

Published on December 12th, 2008 / *free* to prisoners
Edited by Anthony Rayson @nticopright

Anthony: 1. You write like the ink in your pen is boiling! You've ripped up every last rule of conformity. You're stuck in the bowels of the Women's Control Unit, within the maximum security prison there in Florida. Plus, you're indigent - with no loving family or anyone to rely on. Yet, you maintain a soaring level of joyous defiance!

Can you explain how you developed such a high-octane spirit amidst this society of dullards?

Lee: Thank you Brother for the compliments and I'll answer your question in three parts.

First, Anthony, I always write what I think and feel. I don't try to sugarcoat the thoughts and feelings I want to convey simply for the sake of "societies' standards" on how a womyn "should" present herself, how she "should be." You know, quite meek, timid, and always "lady-like" (i.e. controlled by some type of oppressor or another). Screw societies' bullshit gender roles!! That's not me, that's not who I am - passive, so why would I write under such a false guise? Today my life is about speaking and writing the truth. As we all know, sometimes the truth isn't nice & pretty or easy to swallow - especially if *I'm* posed with the questions of womyn in prison.

Government wants, society wants, the upper echelon wants to make us (womyn) invisible, and if not entirely invisible then, minimize the truth about the horrid conditions in which we are forced to live. The 2% that rule Amerika would like everybody to believe that we (womyn) are away at a spa - resort, camp, or an extended vacation···

There is little, if any focus placed on the grim realities of an incarcerated womyn, and even less still on the 1/3 of 1% of womyn that are in the prisons' torture chambers - known as solitary confinement, SHU, control units, TCU, CSU or CMSHU's. It is within these units

buried deep within the prison (a prison inside a prison) that the most damage is being done to the womyn we call mother, sister, daughter, aunt, niece, grandmother, wife, friend or lover…

8

So, my blood boils at the injustice and different types of abuse I see and live with on a daily basis - you see, I am one of the *1/3 of 1%* that are caged 24/7, my bad 24/4 & 23hours, 45 minutes/the other 3 days - within the "CMSHU." So, I take this shit personally! It's not an attack on people, I don't know about, it's specifically targeted & directed at me & my sisters for being womyn!!

I'm not writing from a perspective of an outsider. I am writing this as the previous pieces - "up close and personal from the front lines of this war being waged against womyn." It's crazy - nobody else in here will speak up - so I feel this needs to expose womyn's incarceration for what it is… Phew…

Honestly, I need to rant and vent since I continuously live in stressful conditions. I don't want to hold it all in, but rather dispel as much as possible so it won't eat away at me. Then and only then will I be able to remain strong and intact to fight this "good fight" and to Up the struggle & take it to the next level, once I'm back in society.

Secondly, as far as developing a high-octane spirit - well this spirit has been with me since I could remember. I think when I was created the "standard human spirit" was upgraded to a *nitrous oxide model* and the pistons in my heart enlarged for increased "spirit power" … Since I've got this "N.O.S. pack" inside of me - all it takes is a "flick of a switch" (an emotional switch) and I go from Zero to Anarchist/Abolitionist Bitch in 1.2 Seconds!!! Um - for all the women reading this last statement - if you got lost during the car lingo, let me translate: instead of having a compact size Ford Escort "spirit" I have a "drag strip car spirit," you know, those suped-up track cars "funny cars" that only race

for a ¼ mile at maximum speed and need to use a drag parachute to slow them down! If you're still lost, go to your prison library and locate some reference books, I'm sure you'll find more info in there··· and many other non-fiction books to raise your awareness as far as maintaining my soaring level of joyous defiance amidst 9 this society of dullards···

It's not hard, really and it doesn't take much conscious effort on my part - it's natural··· Also, it's like this, I heard a song that says "when you got nothing to lose, then baby, you got it all!!!" As you stated prior, I'm stuck in "hell," broke, no family or people to rely on, what else do I have left? Only my attitude and joyous defiance! That's how I look at my unjust (yet justified to society) prison sentence and my kidnapping, um I mean "relocation" (cough) and being held hostage in the bowels of CMSHU.

Anthony, this unjust judicial (scam) system forcibly took my freedom and stole all material possessions and every last scrap of "proof" that I ever existed as "Lisa R. Savage" or that I ever had a life before the Department of Corruption renamed me #959277. I feel it is imperative to my own sense of self and my emotional well-being to keep myself···("Lee") mentally agile and emotionally alive and intact and I do this by "working the guards" pushing against the walls - "going against the grain" - being that voice screaming of injustice here in CMSHU. This is all a part of my joyous defiance & I take the opportunity to do so every chance I get!

"They" say an object in *motion* will remain in *motion*···(and is much harder to suppress!)

I feel since the heinous womyn-hating system stole me from my natural environment (thus rendering my chosen role in society null and void) so "they" could force this new role as a sub-human slave and candidate for recidivism upon me···

It is my *right* and my duty to honor the memories of my prior life, before incarceration. It is showing myself

love and respect to deny "them" control of me, so I *fight* this *oppression*, instead of falling prostrate and willingly submit to the systematic "reprogramming" and eradication of my individuality & personality.

Every time I stand up and *resist* this killing of my mind and do not adhere or conform in submission to their torture - I am *confirming* and *validating* my life, my existence and the fundamental rights we all have to diversity, liberty, and thus, remaining true to myself and retaining my dignity. Also, when I resist and defy the "laws" in prison, I am showing the administration that I am not willing to give - which is *who I am*. Even more so, when I stand up for another womyn who is scared to speak up, I am giving love and strength to all my incarcerated sisters. Honestly, most women will not risk their gain time, visitation, phone or canteen privilege being suspended for 30 - 120 days (or more) for their *own* rule infraction - let alone give up "theirs" for the "next bitch" (prison slang - not my feelings)…

But, as in my case as I stated earlier - "When you got nothing to lose then Baby you got it all!!..." D.O.C. henchmen cannot take what I don' t have (or what I choose to freely give up…) I don' t get visits. I don' t have money to buy basic necessities - or anything for that matter, and I can' t earn gain time because my write-ups exceed my EOS date… So those punishments, or *threats* of such punishments, hold no weight - have no bearing on my non-conformity, resistance or speaking the truth! All I hear when the "lackeys" repeat their threats to me, is the sound of Charlie Brown' s teacher speaking or "Blah, blah, blah, blah, blah - blah, blah!"

So, honestly the *last resort* D.O.C. had to punish me was to place me on extended disciplinary confinement *within* the CMSHU where I already have no freedom or privileges, really. The 17 months solitary confinement on PC status *within* the *CMSHU* has virtually pushed me out of their "reach." There is nothing left except kill me,

which I doubt would happen, for around here they are more into psychological torture than flat out killing. 11

So, in the end, Anthony, the result is something close to this - - they over-extended themselves, spent too much ammo at one time on me - resulting in my now unabashed and unabated, continuous defiance!! Pure bliss! Why be dull & ineffectual? There is much joy & *hope* when another womyn steps outside the "dotted line" to protect herself! Army of one, slave to none!! May my high-octane spirit catch on here···

Anthony: 2. Take us back to your childhood. What are your strongest memories? How did the turning point moments affect your outlook?

Lee: Before I expose that personal roller-coaster ride through hell, I want to speak with candor··· When I received the interview questions you stated you were leaning on me for direction, and it was ultimately my choice to edit, delete or modify the questions posed. I felt relieved to have such liberty. That is true collaboration - and such a state of beautiful equality! Thank you!

So, as I read the introduction and first question, I was feeling very comfortable and confident in my ability to help create an insightful piece of work for all who are in the struggle and searching for the truth. Then I read question number two··· At that moment an *internal* struggle began - for I never revealed my childhood in its true context to anyone, with the exception of my present therapist, who has been a continuous source of compassionate understanding··· I *almost* decided I would delete this painful question and replace it with one not so personal or revealing. As you will soon discover, I "stood my ground" and chose not to take the easy way out. After all, this interview is *about the struggle* I and many other womyn live & share.

Since I am dedicated to this cause I *must* raise my voice where other womyn can' t or won' t. Again, it is my duty to all womyn and myself to speak the truth and finally bring to light those experiences so many womyn try to cover up or deny ever happened. Without facing these abusive experiences, "demons," if you will, and exposing them for what they are, they will continue to slowly eat away at the fibers of the psyche, of one' s "being" thus further weakening our strength, self-esteem and our perceptions of self-worth. Facing these terrible and cruel *acts done to us*, returns the power to ourselves and ultimately takes it away from our past and present abusers. But, as long as we *hide* these crimes against us, the abuser and the experience will still have control over us.

Once we establish the cognizance & recognition, the basic understanding that we (womyn) *did not cause* our abusers to *react*, but rather, they *acted* upon us from their own sick and distorted rationales - we move forward and shift from *playing* the *role* of *victims* into a much healthier view of ourselves as *strong survivors of abuse.* Then and only then can we possibly reach out and effectively aid our sisters in their own recovery or discovery of self…

I also want to make clear that the answer to your question posed will be "raw and uncut" - all first thought and raw feelings because this part of my past - my childhood - is a wound that at times is still very raw and painful. But, I' m working on replacing those feelings for my biological mother and my other abusers with unconditional love and acceptance of them and my past. So, if anyone reading this has a problem with bold and blunt truth or how I convey it - that' s on them… Today, I am an army of one and slave to none! Today, I' m breaking these chains…

My strongest memories of childhood…

Allow me to set the overall mood… In 1969 I was

born heroin addicted and three (3) months premature to a 15 year old. So, from the first moments after emerging from my "pusher' s" opiate-soaked womb, I had to fight to survive. Here I am, a new born baby girl weighing less than (3) three pounds, with underdeveloped vital organs and I' m suffering in the throes of full-blown heroin withdrawal!

It' s pure fucking *hell* on an adult' s body - the profuse sweating, the twisting and cramping of the stomach and intestines, the upset stomach and projective vomiting, the shaking and wishing for death to come (or another "fix") to alleviate the all-out assault on the body and mind. But I' m just a "*newborn*" and I can' t communicate all the pain. I' ve just emerged from a quiet, liquid blackness and warmth where I was supposedly protected. That' s a fucking joke! My own mother was forcing me to use, against my will, get high and to become addicted before I entered the world. Now here I am forced out of her toxic and abusive womb into a bright, yet cold world & I' m "kicking" heroin.

The addiction surely brought on my premature birth, but it was possibly the only way to save my life··· Welcome to my reality··· It must be that "high-octane *spirit*" no pun intended, that pushed me on to fight and live···

The first (4) four months of my life, I was in an incubator struggling just to take my next breath. I was told later in my childhood by my Great Grandmother - "Nan" who said that when she and my "Pop" (her husband) would visit or stayed over night at the hospital with me, they would constantly stare at me - for hours on end - because it looked as if each breath I took might be my last.

Being in such a tortuous state of addiction, pain, withdrawal and alienation from day 1 (one) caused a lack of *bonding* for me to my mother. Infants recognize mother by smell and sound and are *comforted*. I didn' t have that

"luxury" or curse - however I chose to look at it. I had different nurses tediously handling me, adjusting the breathing tubes, IV' s and monitors hooked into my tiny body - but I had no real human touch or loving contact. I was too fragile for such.

After 4 (four) months, I was released from the hospital to return to a habitat and lack of care of a junkie - the bitch who abused me from conception - my dope fiend mother, Sherrie. My biological dad "Daniel" had tried to cause her to miscarry in her 3-4 month of pregnancy by repeatedly hitting her in the stomach with the butt of his shotgun. He didn' t want a *second* child (I had a brother 9 months, 5 days older - he wasn' t born a junkie) especially one who *might* be defective or deformed. So after I came "home" he split for good. It' s a hard pill to swallow knowing both my parents wanted me to die before I had a chance to live…

Good old Mums. Sherrie then moves in with Rick, her Puerto Rican heroin dealer and becomes his personal live-in whore, punching bag, slave and forced partner in numerous "armed crimes." My very first memory was of Rick beating my mother, shooting her up with dope and violently raping her. She was raped because she didn' t consent to being fucked… I can still recall only her pleas of "no, please no." I was 2 (two) years old. I' m 39, and I still can vividly see that scene. I also remember sitting in a tiny rocking chair watching "Petticoat Junction" - my brother nowhere around. I' d be left alone for hours on end "swimming" in my own piss and shit, the only thing that soothed me was rocking in that little chair. It should have been my mom "Sherrie" rocking me in her arms, but I guess that' s kinda difficult to do if you have a needle in your arm, or some dope fiending machismo maniac forcing you to swallow his dick on cue or he' s beating you while he' s fucking you against your will or while he' s kicking you in the ribs or face while you' re on your knees trying to clean up the mirror or plates he just broke in his psychotic rage…

Rick was a malevolent force straight from the depths of hell - I was so terrified of him that I would try to hide when I heard him getting loud. I' d crawl into my toy chest, slide the panel shut and look out through the finger hole used to close the panel. Sometimes I' d bury myself amongst the toys and stuffed animals so he wouldn' t beat me or abuse me in other fashions. All it took was him to *see* me and that would be reason enough to treat daughter like mother··· I don' t recall Rick ever abusing "Daniel the III" (my brother), just us two: Sherrie and me··· 15

There are other memories of this period but they are all quite the same - physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional / mental abuse, alienation and neglect. In the first 1 ½ years of my little life, I lived through and witnessed more horror and experienced more than most "normal" humans in a 20 - 30 years maybe their entire lifetimes···

Around the age of 3, Sherrie abandoned Danny, myself and my 9 month-old half-sister Nikki, yes, Sherrie and Rick' s baby. It blows my mind to this day to think she' d bring another child into her sick abusive world··· Apparently, Sherrie and Rick "dipped" & were gone for days, possibly out to a "heist gone bad" and the neighbors heard me, Danny and Nikki crying. When they came to our apartment, the door was unlocked, the neighbors came in, found my Nanna & Pop' s phone number and called to inform them that Sherrie and Rick left us there alone for days.

The next vivid memory I have is of my Nan and Pop and Nan' s sisters - Aunt Marge and Aunt Mabel - searching to find my other shoe that was lost in the ransacked apartment. They took us from the apartment and Danny went to my Dad' s mother, I remained with Nan and Pop, and Nikki was put up for adoption. There were family members who wanted to raise Nikki, but the fear of Rick' s retaliation forced them to give Nikki to the state. That

would be the last time I ever saw Nikki. It would be 4 years before I would meet Danny again. 16

Nan and Pop had an enormous amount of land - which had been in his family for a couple of generations. There was a 2-story main house, also a 1 story building for his father, my Pop' s Pop - I called "Pappy" - he was moved into that little house before I got there. Pappy died shortly after his 94th birthday. I loved Pappy too and when he' d ask where his horse was, I' d go look for her. I never found her though… not knowing of senility back then.

Pop had a huge piece of farmland where he & Nan grew every type of vegetable. I remember sitting down in a row of pea pods & eating them fresh & picking strawberries… There were 4 hothouses (greenhouses) where they grew all types of flowers, small seedling plants, vegetable plants and other plants for sale to the country folk. Plus, there was an old barn. I instantly fell in love with the outdoors and nature - probably experienced and fell in love with real life for the first time.

Nan and Pop had taken on the arduous task of trying to "fix" the emotional and physical abuse I had suffered. I would wake up screaming, thinking Rick was coming to hurt me or I dreamt he was sexually abusing me. Pop put his whole heart and soul into healing me - I love him to this very day for it. Pop soon discovered I was "smart" intelligent considering the past traumas, and he ran with it… It seemed like every other day he was bringing home educational "toys" and books. On Sunday, after church, he' d surprise me with a bigger present than he' d given me during the week. Soon little me was whizzing through the workbooks and mastering every skill he presented me with. *I' d* read to *him* advanced books and could spell adult words. Soon, Pop would give me a workbook with grade levels and I' d read all the instructions and follow them. I went through the 1st to 4th grade books before I even entered kindergarten…

I was a sponge and soaked up all the love and

nurturing and continued to excel in learning. I remember being removed from kindergarten class because I was trying to teach the other children. I was bored & needed challenging work - so the principal sent 2 5th grade students to sit with me and teach me, but I already knew more than they did…

So began the idea that no rules applied to me - for I was different in *every way* from other children. Pop fostered this notion by allowing me total freedom, to think, do and say as I pleased. I have free reign of the household - nothing was denied me…

Shortly after entering kindergarten, Nan and Pop drove me to the old courthouse and I had to speak to the county judge about my life… The judge asked me all types of questions and I replied. Finally, he asked: "Where do you want to live - with your mommy or with your great-grandparents?" I reached up to my Pop and he picked me up. Then I said, "I love my Pop-Pop and Nan. I want to live with them forever…" That day I became the only child Luther William Savage, my Pop, ever had. Now, he had his "little girl" and she was going to become whole, have everything she ever wanted or needed. On that day in March, I became Lisa Renee Savage. Finally, I had a home and two loving parents…

Within a year the bottom was to fall out of my world again. Pop would die of terminal cancer and leave his 65-year old wife, my Nan, to raise me alone…This was the 3rd trauma in my young life. After Pop died, my "ex" mother, Sherrie, came to "visit." She stole my adoption papers and tried to get me to leave with her. Nan had to call Pop' s nephews to stop her and her man. They made a circle around me and dared that doper to try these good ol' country boys. He' d have buckshot in his ass, if he was lucky…

Months after Pops death, Nan & I moved back to Baltimore and such began a new set of abusers… This time the abuse was from my uncles, two sons, Steven and Todd. I was 6 years old when Steve started sexually abusing me.

He was 15 (maybe) at the time. Over the course of time, Nan & I lived at her sons. The abuse was quite frequent… But I think what was even worse than the physical abuse was the psychological abuse from my so-called family; 18 Aunts, Uncles and Nan's daughter (my grandmother) Rae. Everybody hated Sherrie and now they have to deal with "Sherrie's daughter." They all said I'd grow up to be just like her - a junkie whore. I was ostracized for being Pop's adopted daughter. They were all jealous that I inherited (in a trust fund) 75% of his estate for later use. I also received his pension.

So, now Nan's grown sons & daughter (my uncles and grandmother) were jealous of me for having "it all" when they grew up close to poverty…

I can honestly say I never felt loved by any of my relatives - (only Pops & he died) and after our hearing such statements as "Myrtle, why do you want to keep her now that Luther is gone? Why don't you just give her back to Sherrie?" - just reinforced the wall of alienation and distrust encircling me.

Nan bought a house 4 blocks from her son - my "Great" Uncle Bob and his family (Steve & Todd.) So Bob would visit frequently - but he was drunk most of the time and would slur such threats as, "if you ever do anything to hurt my momma, I'll kill you, you tramp." Mind you, I was only a little girl of 6 or 7 - how or why would I 'hurt" my only parent?... What's a "tramp?" …

When Nan would make me go with her to visit at my uncle's house, I would get sent off to "play" with his sons. The underlying message to me was, "Lisa, go "service" my sons - get fucked and fondled as punishment for being born Sherrie's daughter (or being born at all) and for straining and "ruining my momma's life…"

Throughout my entire childhood I was abused in some form or fashion, be it psychological, sexual, emotional / mental or physical. I know I am not alone in this. Many, countless women and men have suffered as I. The underlying themes are reoccurring and consistent -

abandonment, alienation, betrayal, neglect, belittlement, berating - all these and others unnamed, spawned the lack of trust I still have today - which is now fuelled by a monstrous, sick and out of control, flagrantly abusive system of incarceration··· Kinda feels like home (feel the sarcasm?)

These abuses in their many forms affected me deeply for I had not developed any coping skills for such tirades. Then Todd introduced me to drugs, which in the beginning was his way of rendering me "helpless" - getting me so high I couldn' t stave off any sexual advances & conquerings. By the time I was 8, I was drinking alcohol. At 9, I' m smoking pot. Age 10 - 12 doing "speed" along with the prior mentioned drugs. At 13, I' m dropping acid like candy, drinking "' shroom tea," doing Quaaludes, valiums and on a daily basis drinking a 750 ml (fifth) bottle of Calvert Extra (which I called "calling the Calvary") a Southern Comfort, which was very comforting indeed··· Even if I wasn' t being sexually abused, the drugs were now an integral part of my daily survival - used as a way to forget the "using of my body by people I didn' t love." I had cut myself off from interaction with people as much as I could. In this way, I lived in my own little world - "The Wonderful World of Savage" - where it was peaceful - only me, my drugs & my music. I couldn' t be betrayed or rejected if I didn' t let you in. Imagine, remaining high 24/7 just to deal with reality··· but I' m only a *child* still, not an adult with adult pressures and responsibilities right?!

I should have been playing with baby dolls & going to slumber parties, but instead I *was* an adult in my little girl body, having forced sex, doing drugs and thinking I' ll never live to see 18. And I had pressures because my life was about the chase and maintaining my drug habit & to keep reinforcing the walls of isolation··· Just like my mother I' d be···

Yet, there were *some* differences between Sherrie and myself and I clung tightly to these differences simply

because I couldn' t bear to think I could be exactly like the woman I hated more than all my other relatives & 20 abusers combined. Those simple yet meaningful differences were - I had a 6 digit bank account (trust fund) I had access to, so I wasn' t selling my ass as a dope whore. At 15, I was "only" shooting cocaine. Heroin didn' t enter my life until I was 25. At 16, I shot painkillers occasionally, not street "H" and I didn' t have 2 kids. I still lived at home and my son wouldn' t be born until 2 years after I was married. I was 21 when I gave birth to Adrian Alexander. I was sober when he was born - *clean 3 years*. Also, I considered myself far more intelligent by all means.

Yes, I was the "*too* intelligent" rebel - who was always the exception to "The Rules." I made sure I crossed every boundary and stood apart from others - after all, early in life I was kept away from normal children, so it became my life - to destroy, smash all existing rules and show everyone that I was strong-willed and no one will control me.

I looked upon society as The Fucked Up Liars Committee." Everybody in my family lied to me (except my Nan). I saw politicians lying on T.V. - Televangelists lying & getting busted for stealing money from the "sheeple" (passive, trusting people), promising a spot in HEAVEN if only these lonely helpless women would send in their widow' s pensions. Teachers lied daily, hourly about history, stating we live in a "free nation" - (but it was built on lies and bloodshed) and I saw women & people of color suffering heinous acts of repression in public, and I had suffered "greatly" (or I thought so at the time) at the hands of people who were family, supposed to protect me···

Let me not forget the T.V. news which always lied, sensationalized and exploited the tragedy it reported. Nobody in "above ground media" - government driven media ever told the truth. How could they? These people were

paid to lie··· The only way government keeps control is to lie, deceive *us* as a nation. The only truth I knew to be fact is that I was utterly alone in this world filled with abusers and liars. Also, "The Wonderful World of Savage" - with my drug-induced days and acts of flat-out aggression and rebellion was the only world worth living in, the only world I could trust. 21

As I stated prior, I was never "censored" & felt I had no boundaries. In my teens, my every interaction with humanity became a war of words (in my eyes - "A war of the worlds"). I developed a razor-sharp tongue - quicker than a switchblade if I felt attacked - but I would speak the truth - it didn't matter if the truth hurt, at least it was truth. I was called a liar - when I finally told the truth of my sexual abuse, my family twisted it to fall back on me - that I *caused "them" - made them* (those boys, young men, who were my cousins) have sex with me when I was 5, 6 and older. "You're just like your mother Sherrie - the junkie whore."

When I was 17, I confronted my worst abuser, my biological mother, Sherrie. You see, I had "known" of her all my life. She tried to absolve herself of her crimes against me by visiting me once or twice a year for a week or two. Sherrie would try to step into a role she wasn't qualified to play in my world - part-time mother.

It physically sickened me to think after she abandoned or discarded her first 3 children (like her used syringes) that 9 years later (when I was 12) she would bring 2 more children into her sick depravity. Over the years, the drugs changed for her from "H" to snorting coke & drinking heavily. Yes, the junkie grew wings and became a "lit up" (coked up) barfly - *now that's evolution at its finest*···

Wow. She had changed just enough to be a "pseudo mom." Imagine how I felt with this ex-junkie, barfly trying to "*morph*" (don't confuse w/morphine) into my "Mother" for a week or two - toting 2 children and doting on them - singing praises of how wonderful they

are··· (Note: my ½ sister has physical traits of F.A.S. - fetal alcohol syndrome - & is more or less mentally retarded - not completely, but it seems today like she got the shorter end of the stick than I)··· 22

Then I snapped!... "So you got 5 kids Sherrie. One, you have no idea if she' s dead or alive, your first born Danny is with our Dad. I' m with Nan & now your life is perfect with those 2 children which were products of your lack of intelligence to use birth control and of a society that doesn' t believe in forced sterilization. That' s how you trapped this new man by having his kids···" She yelled and raised her fist, but I screamed "Fuck you! You are not my mother - take your brats & get the fuck out of my house."

(I had so much rage, hurt, disappointment bottled up inside me for all those years, I couldn' t respect her because she never loved or respected me. I see things in a different light today - but I' ll get to that later.) I left and went to the basement - my room, and proceeded to crank up, *"Am I Evil?"* by Metallica and as the lyrics played, I filled my syringe with a mixture of very "clean" powder cocaine and water. As I heard James Hetfield sing "Such a thankless little bitch for all the tears I cried - Take her away now, don' t want to see her face··· I can' t hide my disgrace - Am I evil? That I am. Am I evil? I am Ma' am. Yes I am! - As I watched my mother die···" I injected over ½ a gram of cocaine and O.D.ed. It was my Mother' s Day present to her for her presence now & lack of presence prior. At 17, May 1986, I had coke-induced heart failure.

As I disclose my life to all, I have to wonder what you (the reader) perceive me to be··· You may think I am unfeeling or I never loved Sherrie, but that' s not true.

I have fought up until *recently* to establish honest, open communication but she shunned me as she' s done all my life, each hurt & disappointment fed my addiction. The other side of the coin is that when I was young, I would

get drunk and listen to John Lennon' s song, *"Mother"* repeatedly··· "Mother, you had me, but I never had you···" My efforts throughout the years to connect with her and heal have been thwarted by her addiction & denial, shifting the blame back to me saying I rejected her··· Again, sick rationales··· 23

So, I guess my anger and hurt feelings fueled my rebellion - somewhere I want the scales of justice to weigh and deliver, but it is through all the experiences of abuse I have survived that have made me who I am today. If I wouldn' t have had so many adversities to overcome, I would be weak in heart, mind and spirit.

All these struggles of my childhood have molded me into the womyn you know today - an anarchist who *loves* freedom, who wants peace and has love for all people - a prisoner resistance movement warrioress - for without the addiction, I may not have ever experienced prison. I am willing to fight to better conditions for *all* womyn incarcerated - a *survivor* instead of a self-absorbed victim.

There are many other facets to my personality, but these are the ones I project most - I' m not a hard ass in matters of love, relationships and matters of the heart. I do have my soft, warm and fuzzy side. It' s taken me 39 years to start learning what "balance and stability" is, but I' m getting a better grasp on the concept and appreciation. Each day I stay clean and sober and reach out to others who need help. I have stepped outside the "Wonderful World of Savage" and found instead of being helpless and unable to "fix" situations, I now have the power to affect and promote change - change for the better.

I have recently learned that it takes "2 sticks to light a fire" and today I' m willing to lean on another for guidance and be "a part of" instead of "apart from."

It' s beautiful to know that there are other anarchists or radicals out there who actually aren' t

afraid to speak up & out, to reach inside this menticide chamber to combat the slow killing of those incarcerated. Today, I am "blessed" to have the connections made by those outside the walls. You have taken me and gently guided me on the path of comraderie. Today, I can truly say I have found real family in you Brother & in Abigail. May this family continue to grow and flourish into blissful anarchy throughout the world. 24

FYI - in hindsight, I knew I was an anarchist in *1980* - how? In social studies class we (children) were forced to watch the Carter / Reagan debate and I disliked Reagan so much I spit on the television screen - mind you, I' m in 6th grade··· My teacher wigged out and later said I would have kicked ass at this year' s "RNC" as a member of the "Welcoming Committee" but I couldn' t attend due to being held hostage in CMSHU··· There' s always 2012 to look forward to!!

Also, 1980 was the year of John Lennon' s death and I stayed home holed-up in my room for a week crying over his "assassination." Yes, odd for an 11-year old, but I was never normal. I had 3 of his albums and 9 Beatle albums & 8-tracks. I loved what Lennon stood for - the messages in his lyrics. Here was a man targeted by the CIA as subversive for his political views & his type of protesting against the war & establishment. The songs, *"Mind Games." "Give Peace a Chance / War is Over," "Whatever Gets You Through the Night," "Imagine," "Revolution," "Eleanor Rigby," "Let it Be," "Watching the Wheels"* - they all had a major influence on my outlook, my perspective of life & freedom. I felt deeply connected to him because of his own mother' s abandonment, his artistic side (dropping out of art school) & poetic prophesy. I' d say Lennon was a driving force in my own self-discovery and rebellion.

In the following years I would delve into my artistic / poetic muse and reconfirm my chosen role in society - as different & non-conforming. One of my favorite memories



INNOCENCE LOST

©Hyung Rae 2013
Todd(Hyung Rae) Tarsell
BX 8025
175 Progress Drive
Waynesburg, Pa 15370-2009

Comments & Correspondence
Welcomed

of this time was carrying my mini-drafting board, pencils, charcoals, paper and my 8-track player with Lennon's 26 *"Imagine"* playing - into the woods and sitting on a log, drawing the plants & trees··· I'd spend hours there in communion with nature, feeling at times Lennon's idea as expressed in *"Imagine"* could be possible & how beautiful that would be.

Later that same year, I was labeled "gifted & talented" in the arts & received a special invitation to study art in a "G & T" setting - at the community college. The class was on Saturday morning & it was "killer" - to be this 12-year old rebel walking among college students on the campus. I'd show my college I.D. and gain access to their library, college bookstore & the student lounge. While in the lounge, I'd pull out my charcoal renderings of the (live) nude female (sometimes male) subject. College kids would check out "my work" and we'd talk while I smoked their cigarettes * drank coffee or Pepsi's. But as with everything good in my life - it came to an end abruptly due to the jealousy of my "family" - *Uncles*. So, they stopped driving me to the college & I didn't get to finish my studies.

This denying of the privilege to excel & earn college credits (which I thought was *so* important to me then) fueled my belief that I'd be better off without any contact with my relatives & helped me develop the idea that the world & my so-called family was filled with oppressors! Screw them all & I'll do what I want when I want and do what I feel is right for me.

In high school I was known as the "brilliant burn-out." With cash & drugs and the student parking lot, I'd climb atop Freddy's van - stand on the roof with a joint & yell, "Fly the Friendly Skies - Savage Baby Airlines! Free rides for those who 'skip & dip!' So, what are you waiting for? Cut class & let's get high!" Sometimes when we were really tore up and totally ripped, Freddy would put me on his shoulders (he was a big senior)

& he' d carry me down the hallway all the while we' re laughing & disrupting the whole student body!! 27

Mind you, I hated school, but I loved art class, the sciences (biology) and math··· I loved to learn what I *wanted* to learn - not what I was *told* or *forced to learn*. So, the classes I disliked, I turned into a "circus" and spotlighted the teachers as the clowns, the kids became my audience & me the "Ringmaster" (or sometimes I' d be called a "Ringleader.") Administration wasn' t happy with me, or my behavior to say the least··· Hey, Anthony, that sounds mighty familiar in a recent sort of way!! Doesn' t it déjà vu? I think you get the picture so I' m going to fast forward & *finally* condense the next 20 years···

I dropped out of high school 11th grade. The following year I was accepted into college without a G.E.D. because my entrance exam score was remarkably high. I studied architectural drafting & *loved it* but still I *loathed* conformity.

I dropped out & married the guy I' d been with for years - he was an abuser of drugs & was violent. I married him because I thought if I created a family of my own, it wouldn' t be like the one I was born into··· Hey, a girl can dream, can' t she? I was also repressing lesbian thoughts and tendencies···

I married Robert in 1988. In ' 89 we moved to Ft. Lauderdale & on July 7th 1990, Adrian Alexander (Alex for short) was born. My beautiful son, but six weeks after his birth, Robert skipped out because he didn' t want to raise a child or be a father. Alex & I made the front page of the Sun Sentinel - Dec. 8th, 1990 - "Woman Finds Bomb in Her Home." Yes, "Bob" left Alex & I a going away present. Haven' t seen him since.

With Robert gone a whole new world opened up···

As you have just read in length my life was full of disappointments, abuse, oppression & me struggling at times to make sense of the hand dealt to me and at others

trying to wish it all away. One thing is certain having lived this way has brought me today to the point where I will not stand by and allow anyone to abuse me or those whom I feel for··· Did I mention I feel for all of humanity - especially womyn & children?... 28

Again it has taken me my entire lifetime to learn what books & government-based education *didn' t* teach - the fundamentals of human compassion and how to survive suffering and to use these skills & traits to help others & re-educate them on the basic truths of life··· I am now dedicated to the struggle & my Sisters & Brothers in all prisons.

I would have elaborated on the abuse more but I' m sure that those reading this interview are already intimately connected to the what & hows. I need to reiterate that the "why' s" of abuse do *not* stem from our actions - it is *not* our fault, so guilt & shame need to be dispelled - disposed of. We as women no longer need to carry that excess weight. The blame & the fault for the acts of abuse are solely owned by the ones who *violated* our innocence, the ones who abused us without provocation···

It is time for all of us as survivors of abuse to learn, heal & grow & reach out to those still suffering. Change will only occur *if we* make it happen.

Anthony: 3. In this demented, sexist pig, misogynic, lie-based, cowardice-worshipping settler outpost, you sing the song of lesbianism! Tell us how it was coming to this fundamental harmony with yourself amidst such a brute-stupid, missionary positioned social miasma?

Lee: Anthony, Brother, the more I read your work or letters, I am convinced that your perceptions of people, life & struggles are the most revelatory I' ve encountered! From a *man* thus far! Ok, you "stole" most of the adjectives I was going to use in my opening rant!!! So allow me to drop back and *punt*!

"La-la-la-la-la-la!!" The sweet song of lesbianism - yes, one of my favorite melodies to sing or have sung to me!! (Play Melissa Etheridge' s *"Yes* I Am" now··· for full effect!!) Yes, I chose to break through the barriers and sing about the phallocentric "gaga." 29

Coming to this fundamental harmony with myself has been a long journey - one in which I didn' t even know I was embarking on, but now I' m 100% thankful I started!!... Mind you, these words are coming from a womyn whose first memories are of Rick fucking & abusing my mother - also my childhood experiences of being sexually abused and being told while it was happening that I was no longer a little girl but a grown womyn who knew how to please a man. I was so good at it growing up there never was talk of "homos" or "fags" or "lezzies" that I recall. I didn' t know lesbians truly existed until I was about 14 or 15, when I was "hit on" by a 19-year old "Dyke" while I was at a party with the older crowd. My reaction was to quickly put space between her & I. *Then I went to Missy (the teen throwing the party)* and told her what happened. At that, she spit out a mouthful of Budweiser & laughed herself into a silly stupor. When she recovered from this hilarious joke I told, she said: "Leed (Leed was my nickname because I was looked at as a leader) it' s cool, chill. She' s a "lezzie" & she thinks you' re cute and wants to "try you."

After that, I said the age-old phrase, "I' m strictly dickly. I love men, I love dick & if she tries me again, I' ll be the shit outta her··· fuckin' freak!" At the time, I didn' t even realize I was homophobic or prejudiced against *those alternative lifestyles.*

You see by that time, I had been involved with my boyfriend "Bobby" for a *few* years (I would go on to marry him at age 19) and the only part of my life where I conformed was in playing the role of a heterosexual, due to my overexposure of this since being a toddler. At all other things, I was on the opposite side of the fence than

the majority or "norm." Later on that year, I got into a fight with "Bobby" because I found a *Hustler* & a *Playboy* magazine hidden under the bed we "shared." I screamed at him like a banshee asking why he' d want a picture when he had the real thing by sleeping with me.. There was something that I didn' t tell him, though…. While I was leafing through the pages of *Hustler*, I got a warm, "funny feeling" in my stomach when I saw some of the women exposed, laid bare in all their beautiful erotic glory….

What caused the bottom to fall out of my world was a 4 - 5 page spread like a story board line of 2 women - 1 playing a cop (only wearing her police hat, gun/utility belt, night stick & boots) & the other, a young woman who had "stolen" a fur coat… (that' s all she was wearing) and how they "*looked*" at each other - with passion & the physical contact they finally engaged in. it was hot.

It disturbed me that my body was responding so deeply to it - more than it responded to Bobby' s touch. But after that, I kept thinking there was something in those pictures that made me feel happy, turned-on & scared… Are these the mysterious "Monstrous Lezzies?" Is that what the Dyke at the party wanted to do to / with me? BH, Shit! "Houston, I think we' ve got a problem."

So began the 7 long years of repression and I compartmentalized the actions of "love" that Bobby & I shared and the fear of the genuine feelings and arousal I had at those pictures. Let me clarify that I thought Bobby & I should love, but in reality he was just another abusive figure in my life who spent my "Pops" trust fund money, used my drugs & my body & when he wasn' t satisfied or felt slighted or thought he was "losing control" of me, then he' d punch me, kick me, throw objects. Throughout our 12 years (on & off) together, I suffered a broken nose, fracture to the orbit around my left eye, skull fractures, broken arm, broken or bruised ribs, black eyes.

…Wow! Just like my mother I' d be…

Around the same year, 1984(?) a "family" member stated something about me growing up to be a "truck driver" I didn' t understand why he said this until 7 years later. It seemed that others recognized the part of me I was refusing to acknowledge to myself, but I hung on tightly - with a death grip - to this sick & twisted abusing relationship with Bobby. As a matter of fact, I miscarried 3 times before our marriage. I was going to hold onto this identity as Bobby' s girlfriend come hell or high water··· and hell certainly followed···

I didn' t bitch at Bobby for the *Hustler* mags anymore cuz I' d enjoyed them when he would go visit his parents or he was hanging out somewhere. But my guilt & shame would get the best of me & I' d get high to try to forget the "wetness" I' d experience with those pages and couldn' t experience with him.

On November 19, 1988, I married Robert Morlan, Jr. and was determined to have a normal, happy marriage & build a family with him. I had been clean for over a year now and I, by every outside appearance, had achieved my goal to be a wife, have a house & a job. It was a house of cards & folded quickly after the birth of our son "Alex" in July, 1990. Six weeks after Alex was born, Bobby walked out - took all the money in the bank before he left for good & I had handed him the last $50 I had cash, so he could go buy diapers & formula for my precious baby boy. Bobby never returned···

It wasn' t until 8 - 10 months later that I would come face to face with my greatest fear··· Since Bobby' s quick exit with my dreams of marriage, I had only been at a bar twice and I didn' t feel all the way comfortable in my skin as I sat there having a couple drinks. The more I drank, the more I noticed the singles in the bar, male & female, but I left when I started feeling "suffocated."

One afternoon I left my apartment and took a walk to the Circle K to buy a pack of Marlboro Red & a 12-pack of Heineken. I remember thinking it was exceptionally hot for 5 pm. I stopped to put my hair up in a bun (laugh now

please) and I saw this tall dark-haired girl walking behind me & I remembered seeing her somewhere before, but I couldn' t place it. I kept walking to the store. I entered the Circle K & talked to the young guy behind the counter for a minute & then proceeded to the cooler case to get my 12-pack. I turn & there is the same girl who was behind me earlier. She grabbed the cooler door & held it open & asked me "Where' s the party at?" I said, "It' s no party just me & the cable T.V. & my AC." She grabbed herself a 12-pack too & the same brand cigarettes.

We left the convenience store together & she said her name and asked if he always serves me (being under-aged.) I said, "I' m a legit 22." As we approached the street where I lived, she asked if she could come over & hang out with me. I replied, "Ok, but just don' t leave empty beer bottles on the table & use a coaster & don' t get too loud - I live next door to the landlord…"

Here I am in my new apartment with this friendly dark-haired blue-eyed female and I' m thinking, *Wow* - I' m making new friends… Can you say "naivete" at its finest?

As I stated earlier, it was very hot that afternoon, so I told the good womyn to make herself comfortable while I hop in the shower… I just get the water to the right temperature & she opens the bathroom door & hands me an open Heineken & leaves. About ten minutes later, she opens the door again, shuts it behind her & is holding my bath towel out so she can wrap it around me or dry me off… I' m thinking she must be bored by herself. I proceed to my bedroom to get dressed… Did I mention the shock, then cozy feeling I had when I saw that the only light in my apartment was the candles placed throughout the living room… Still I didn' t catch on… Dumb as a box of rocks - Wow! - I really did grow up out of touch with reality…

So, I' m in my bedroom & its dark in here too except the little hurricane lamp (candle) lit on my dresser. I turn around & there she is so close I could smell her

cologne & the mixture of Marlboro & Heineken on her breath··· She asks so innocently,··· "Can I ask you something? "Sure, what?" I reply. "Can I kiss you just once···" She whispers in her husky, dreamy voice··· I slam the whole beer first··· then I lean into her & allow the towel to fall away from between us··· She kisses me lightly, quickly & takes me my the hand & leads me into my living room & we stand in front of the overstuffed 7 foot couch - yes, I' m *still naked*··· She kisses me fully & completely & I went right along - no resistance - & as I write this now, I can *feel* the excitement, the wonder and the feeling that this is what I' ve been missing, but didn' t realize it was what I needed.

Within the course of that evening and into the next morning, Jackie showed me a world I never knew existed, a passion that can never be quenched. I used to hear an odd phrase about "seeing fireworks" when being in love was right and I saw fireworks behind closed eyelids and like an Indian mystic experience, I saw my own *Phoenix Rising* out of the ashes of my former life. Could I have seconds on the epiphany, please?

I knew then I would never go back to the unfulfilling life I had before. I allowed Jackie to move in with me and yes, it was sudden but I wasn' t scared. My evenings were filled with walks together, holding hands - she was so thrilled with me & I her. I still remember the look, the crooked smile (sly smile) when she' d introduce me to her friends & family···

It was as if I didn' t care what anyone would say if they saw me being affectionate to "my girl" - we didn' t live closeted, if anything Jackie opened the locked door I was trapped behind.

I grew accustomed to the lesbians, butches & femmes I met. For the first time in my life I was enjoying *every* moment & my experiences with new ideas and of living outside the box.

I thrived in a pink triangle, as did all my lesbian

sisters. I was only 22, still young, and very femme, so I didn't experience the "bashing" as did my butch (masculine looking) womyn friends. 34

The "problem" of my sexuality didn't come until I called my "Nanna" (adopted mother) all excited and happy with being "gay," a lesbian. She cried and told me I broke her heart & if my Pop was still alive *this* would have surely killed him, but since he's dead he's "rolling over in his grave…" I was crushed, hurt beyond words by her reaction. I thought Norma would be glad that I'm happy & healthy & living my life without being abused… She was devastated. That would be the last conversation we would have before she died. She didn't even say, "Lisa, I still love you." She just hung up… A month later, she died.

I didn't experience the social stigma & toxicity until 2 years later - about 14 months into my relationship with the womyn I would call "my first wife" - Dee. Yes, Dee & Lee - that relationship was beautiful yet stormy and many times I was tossed about on the waves of society's non-acceptance of my "new growth." I was also faced with her death from cancer 1 year later.

Mind you, I'm still coming into myself - evolving as a womyn and as a womyn who is a lover of womyn. I had changed my thinking. I didn't believe in all the make-up & the facades womyn put on and wear for society's acceptance. I felt that if I wore unflawed make-up and just showed "sex" - playing on the looks of being a womyn, I was somehow *shortchanging myself* and those around me. Men would always speak to me *before* because I *looked* good, but the vast majority didn't *hear* what I was saying - my intelligence and free-thinking were lost behind the costume & mask of acceptable femininity. I was just an *object* to every man - not a real person whose thoughts and ideas were respected or held any worth in a sexist world. So I changed all that..

I stripped away the mask & costume and donned a

fresh, healthy make-up free face and wore shoes and clothes that were comfortable, not *sexy* (in a man' s eye). I wanted to be recognized for being a person - not a womyn who wasn' t a male' s equal. By dressing differently, I quickly weeded out the men & womyn who were superficial - only looking at the "outside" and judging me by what I wore or looked like.

I found that those in society who would converse with me were actually listening, that they weren' t hung up on my looks & that was a beautiful revelation. But there were & *still* are, those who place a label on me because I no longer have curly brown hair to the middle of my back & I now sport a fade and wear what I want to…

This crippled society can' t even take the first step & stand its ground for tolerance & acceptance of gays and lesbians. It' s OK if you look & act straight - heterosexual - but don' t be the womyn today who shows her strength, intelligence & doesn' t conform to societies' & government' s "rules" and ideas for her. This kind of thinking is militant.

The different states that passed same sex marriage or civil unions did so & gave us a chance at equality but as we see from the sham, pitiful election - the majority of these states have now repealed those laws - making those of us, womyn who love womyn "criminals." Our equality has once again lost amidst government and society' s toxic smoke screen of deceit. In Florida, all bills or amendments for us to marry, have death benefits, security for us to legally adopt, have been denied & set in stone.

Just because a womyn is a lesbian doesn' t mean she doesn' t want to or know how to be a mother. That is instinct and the majority of womyn I' ve had friendships with or social interactions, still love & desire children. It' s a tough battle for those of us who *want* & deserve these rights, who can afford to adopt the children others didn' t want or "couldn' t keep."

Today, I am comfortable in my own skin and with being a womyn who loves womyn. I know when I settle down that

me & my partner can have a rewarding and fulfilling life, regardless of the deepening oppression & intrusion by government into our own bedrooms and personal lives. 36 It' s just going to take conscious effort to work towards these simple personal rights that we as lesbians are not afforded or rewarded by government. The fruits of this labor will be sweet…

I at least have the "herstory" of all the womyn before me to lean on and to help soothe some of the heartaches I' ve experienced living in this oppressive, statist nation. Womyn before me found a way to overcome and to *positively react* to the cruel adversity of a patriarchal hierarchy.

My wife, (lover, friend & life partner) and I will follow our hearts not the status quo mindset. Each day we live our lives unto ourselves we validate all lesbians and their lives & loves. Each day we find peace, joy, harmony & love in a world so lacking of tolerance, we make that world a little better.

It' s been a long road, but also such an enriching experience. I would take the journey 1000 more times if given the chance.

For those who are still searching, questioning their identities, I say if you are questioning your sexuality, then you probably aren' t straight. The only way to truly live and be at peace with yourself is to accept the beautiful difference between you and the world.

"…Tell your children that they must be strong, for life is full of wonder and love is never wrong…"

Anthony: 4. You' re an anarchist and I' m an anarchist! We love and respect each other because we really feel that the other genuinely cares limitlessly about liberty, freedom, the truth and about giving a damn, acting accordingly and enjoying the hell out of life! So, take a deep breath and give us a nice explanation of your dreams of anarchy!

Google DePaul Library for Anthony Rayson Zine Collection

Lee: (Inhale···exhale···) There is such beauty and possibility in those few yet precious words you spoke, Anthony. First, I love the fact that I am an anarchist and that there is a population of persons who deem themselves with the title - and actually dedicate themselves to a deep understanding of what that means. But what is truly amazing, is that you, Brother, have touched many "free world" people & prisoners' lives and brought about a change in their social conscience and gave many of us the truth that we did not know before. Again, I must thank you for coming at the right time & being in the right place to help my evolution and growth as an anarchist & activist.

My first dreams of anarchy were not quite anarchy per se. They were on a much smaller scale & I admit, not all-inclusive. I had strongly identified with lesbian separatism - just a "womyn' s world" run by womyn of all ages, races. There was no classism or capitalist / phallocentric media that spewed forth ridiculous advertisements making womyn feel they must look like runway models. There was no alienation of larger-sized or handicapped womyn. But, I won' t continue explaining the prior line of thought only what has gloriously grown and finally blossomed into my dreams of anarchy···

To clarify the term anarchy - it is *not* the definition that our capitalist government would like our citizens to believe it is - government will feed "us" this *lie* to ensure that this government remains intact. Anarchy is not chaos and disorder and confusion. That is only one definition and not the one a true anarchist will tell you we live by. For, we now, currently, live in chaos, confusion and disorder *due* to our oppressive ruling class & government! We are pitted against each other for the attainment of monetary, materialistic gain and social class ratings. It is only through anarchy or an anarchist mindset that these conditions have a chance to change.

Anarchy is absence of political authority. To dive deeper, it is the absence of *all* authority. This anti-


DO NOT
QUESTION
AUTHORITY



Lisa Renee Savage #959277
T Dorm – Quad 2 Cell #2111
Annex CM Level 1
Lowell Correctional Institution
11120 Northwest Gainsville Road
Ocala, Florida 34482-1479

© Hyung-Rae 2001
Todd (Hyung-Rae) Tarselli
BY-8025
175 Progress Drive
Waynesburg, Pa. 15370-8879

Comments Welcomed

authoritarian philosophy holds firm to that belief and wishes to enact a new social order based on living our lives unencumbered, unrestricted and not oppressed by "laws" which are man-made.

Mind you, anarchism is a philosophy of higher moral standards, where an individual lives life without imposing threats and coercion. It is a deep love of humanity and as a result of this love, the anarchist treats every person as an equal and strives to ensure there is equal distribution of goods and that everyone' s needs are met. Anarchists worth "their salt" live on the premise of mutual aid and voluntary cooperation. We strive for peace and respect for all living creatures and with a reverence for Mother Earth. We strive to be connected with individuals in healthy, loving modes, thus any acts of violence or threats or psychological abuse are unnecessary. When these situations occur, anarchists will confront such bullies. We can only build this type of social order, based on integrity & trust.

I' ve heard of different ways to achieve "non-government" living. I don' t condone violence or war but I feel that revolution & our state of liberty may only be achieved by the demolition of government.

The dream would be for every human to get in touch and communicate with their higher conscience and through his self-actualization, understand that a world built on anarchism *is* possible! Each person would act responsibly by enlightening one another on this premise. I feel we have the power of choice to transform our lives and the world. My dream is for our citizens to connect. The more we anarchists) connect, the more we dis-empower the apitalist system. Once "we" are connected to ourselves others in honest, open communication, then we can make ositive choices & meet the needs of many - of all - and ove completely.

I dream of a world without looming fear. Fear is the oot cause of control, domination, insecurity, ompetitiveness and every other unhealthy action or

reaction. Our government controls us by fear. In my dreams of anarchy, there is no fear, only love. The most revolutionary action we could take is to care & love without limit! 41

We can only cause change to materialize by focusing on it, then simply moving on it - instead of being weighed down by inertia. I dream of us disengaging from the capitalist state and building & networking with more "co-ops," more communal living spaces, taking our children out of public schools & teaching them what life lessons they truly need to learn, like how to be autonomous and teach them the "back to basics" as I call them, such as planting our own food, how to sew & make our own clothes, how to share with others instead of hoarding items.

We teach our children of love & respect based on "Life" - not on race, or color of one' s skin··· Our world would be different because we would be aware of our integrity & how important it is on a much larger scale - "The Big Picture." We would live without oppressive religion, sects, imposing their beliefs & judgments upon us labeling us fornicators, sinners, etc. We would live in a beautiful world in which we restore what greed, capitalism and apathy have destroyed. I dream of us making amends with Mother Earth & helping her heal from the repeated & frequent rapings of her precious essence. I see reforestation, the banning of toxins that flow into her rivers - her veins - that end up in her oceans. I see a rebuilding of the natural habitats lost to commercialism, expansion of factories & "high end" living spaces.

Can you picture a life where our minds are not filled with capitalist propaganda, where our thoughts are of sunrises, sunsets & of loving one' s Brothers & Sisters? Where we do not have to guard our every thought or emotion for fear of being exploited? Where there are no punishments only natural consequences as the repercussions of what we do?

I dream of a world without racism, classism, sexism

and all other "isms." I dream of unity & mutual care & concern. I want a world without homelessness, poverty, abandoned & abused children, without rape, violence, 42 harassment, misogyny. I dream of a world where prisons, institutions - CM units, solitary, torture, chemical lobotomies, "crazy-houses" - where people are caged and kept doped up & electro-shocked - no longer exist! I dream of a world without military weapons, nuclear war, uranium mining, without slavery, mutilation, repression and dehumanization…

I had to laugh just now as I was sitting here thinking of what else to add to my dream & I heard John Lennon singing "*Imagine.*" Maybe that was my cue to end the dream & start trying to *create* it!

> *"Imagine all the people living life in peace*
> *You may say I' m a dreamer,*
> *But I' m not the only one*
> *I hope someday you will join us and*
> *The world will live as one…"*

Anthony: 5. So many prisoners are in prison because of a bunch of nothing!... If you steal hundreds of billions - trillions of dollars, also you can murder millions of people and destroy whole continents, nothing happens… But! If you so much as heist a package of Twinkies from your local 7-Eleven, you could be "three-striked" for life!

What was your big "crime" ? Please include the farce of court proceedings.

Lee: You' re probably going to laugh when I tell you of my "big crime" … On August 3rd, 2006 I was arrested for constructive possession of paraphernalia and later charged with possession (residue from the paraphernalia) of cocaine & attempting to tamper with physical evidence, which are both 3rd degree felonies. I was in a car with a guy. He was taking me back to my room at a boarding

house. I lived in the 'hood. I had just finished work a few hours prior & was hanging out with a girl I knew. I had decided I wanted to go home. There were no buses 43 running at that time, so the girl "SF" flagged down this car. Mind you, I' m still in my work boots, dickeys & have my back brace w / suspenders on. He says he' ll give us a ride home. "SF" lived six houses down from me.

So I get in the passenger' s seat, she jumps in the back. Peter states he needs cigarettes, so he stops at a local "Circle K" (modest version of a 7-Eleven.) He gets his smokes & pulls out, but there was a stop sign at the corner & Peter didn' t come to a complete stop. We drive about ¼ mile & B.S.O. (Broward Sheriff) pulls us over. Now, I' m thinking no biggie - just a little delay in getting home. Well, Peter gets all nervous & rolls down my window by his control on his door & reaches over me & throws something out. I' m like "what the fuck, dude?" Then I hear over the P.A. system "put your hands where I can see them." Peter says quietly, "It' s cool. It' s gone." I said, "What is gone?" He says, "my pipe." I' m like, "Oh fucking Christ. I hope he didn' t see you or I' m going to prison. Dude, I *just* got out of prison & you threw *your shit* out of *my* window." Peter tells me to "chill out & relax." SF is like, "I don' t know nothing & I' m clean - I' m not carrying anything." Well, I wasn' t carrying anything either & me & SF didn' t know who this dude was.

The officer asks Peter for his driver' s license & registration. Peter fumbles around and produces his i.d. card not his license - because his license is suspended. Another squad car pulls up & the cop comes over to my door & tells me to step out of the vehicle. I complied. The cop also has SF out & now we' re sitting on the curb while the first officer is questioning Peter & running his tape & i.d. The 2nd cop takes my info & asks for i.d. I give him my prison identification because I haven' t gone to get my regular i.d. & I show him my E.O.S. slip (paper

stating that I was just released from prison on such & such date.) He also takes SF' s info. 44

Now both the cops are talking to Peter & the first cop comes over to me & says "show me your i.d. - spell your last name." So I did & said "Sierra, Alpha, Victor, Alpha, Gulf, Echo." I was trying to help by giving it to him in "cop code." He didn' t think that was helpful.

So the cop says, "Savage, what did you throw out the window?" I said, "Nothing dude, I mean officer - I swear." He says, "I saw you. Tell me the truth & there' s no problems." Again I said, "I didn' t throw nothing out." He said, "If I go over there and find something, you' re going to jail & possibly back to prison…"

Peter was now sitting down about 5 feet or so from me. I said, "Listen motherfucker. I' m not going to prison for your *shit*. I just got out & all I needed was a fucking ride home & this is *your* fucking fault. Why didn' t you shove it (pipe) in you' re a/c vent or up your ass?" He says, "Fuck you, he can' t charge nobody with it…"

Well the cop comes back & says, "Savage, look what I found, just outside of your car door… So, how' d it get there?" I said, "I swear I didn' t put it there." I turned to Peter & I said, "Dude don' t do this to me. I just did time." Peter says to the cop, "You can' t charge her for that. It wasn' t on her." The cop says, "I saw her throw it out." Peter gets quiet, the spineless ass worm.

I said, "Look dude, I mean what I said. I didn' t put it out the window." I turn to Peter & said "tell him the truth dude - it' s not mine." Peter says nothing. I said in a rage, cuz the cop is charging *me* with possession, "This slug threw it out across me. Goddamit Peter you slug, tell them!!" Peter finally says, "OK, it' s mine. I threw it out. It wasn' t hers. She didn' t know I had it. Let her go."

The cop says to me & Peter "you are under arrest for possession of cocaine." I said, "Who?" The cop says, "I' m charging you both with constructive possession because I believe you (Savage) threw it out but it was Keegan' s." And I' m charging you (Savage) with 45 attempting to tamper with physical evidence. Keegan, you are also charged with driving on a suspended license & failure to come to a complete stop. Ms. F - you are free to go." And SF walked away & didn' t look back.

Yeah, a less than 2" long pipe with residue that was the drivers & here I am doing 3 years in prison.

If you think that situation sucked you haven' t read nothing yet…

On Oct. 13, 2006, I plead no contest & received a downward departure from the mandatory guidelines. Did I mention I had another possession charged to me? The pipe broke in 2 pieces. So, I have 2 possessions & attempt to tamper with evidence & 2 paraphernalia charges, which carries a max of 15 years plus 2 - 364 day sentences for paraphernalia. I was sentenced to 3 years drug offender probation but I had to go to 6 months residential drug treatment, 6 months aftercare & 6 months in DRRD - Day Reporting & Re-entry Division, do over 1500 community service hours & pay for probation. DRRD is Community Control where you *must* show up every day & drop a urine sample & wear a monitor. DRRD interviewed me & was willing to pay for my *auto-CAD* training (since I had a background in architectural design) & to locate an employer to hire me w / CAD.

So, I' m kinda happy with the idea of auto-CAD & getting a good job & I' m not going back to prison.

I was sitting in the county jail awaiting "Spectrum Residential" Treatment to get an open bed, so they can come & pick me up…

But while I was in the county jail, already sentenced to treatment & probation, B.S.O. (Sheriff' s Office) charges me with *2 misdemeanors* & states I' m in violation

of my probation. I was charged with disorderly conduct & criminal mischief for the officer' s hurting me during transport to the other county jail. 46

So, April 20, 2007 I am found guilty of violation of probation and sentenced to 3 years in prison considering I never *left* the county jail to officially start my probation. I never saw *treatment*, never got my CAD training. Do not pass GO, do not collect $200. Go directly to prison.

I appealed the case out of county so I would get a *fair* (laugh now please) & impartial hearing of my appeal. In June 2008, my appeal was denied with no reason for the denial - which means I couldn' t take it to the Supreme Court due to the 3 judges of appeal stating it as "Per Curiam."

Also note that since Aug 2007, I have been in solitary confinement, officially a "CM" inmate since Sept 4, 2007 - on top of everything, I am isolated & cut-off from normal prison life…

Does anyone remember the cartoon of Pebbles & Bam-Bam as Teenagers? Well, they had this friend called "Shleprock" - "Bad Luck Shleprock." Everywhere he went, and anything he touched fell apart & a rain cloud followed over his head & *always* rained on him. After dealing with the courts, I felt like Ol' Shleprock…

I could go into great detail about how corrupt, how the sham of the whole judicial system is for the capitalist elite, but I' m pretty sure anyone reading this & that has anarchist views already in place and have felt the injustice of the unjust judicial system.

So, I' m a big-time criminal - wow! The $40,000 for each year of my CM bed could have bought me a Master' s Degree (not that that means much anymore) or could have fed hungry children…

I must back up for a second. The day of my final sentencing, April 20, 2007, which was my violation of probation hearing, I didn' t go on the big "Bluebird"

bus to court with everyone else. When I was told I wouldn' t be going on the bus, but rather be sent later in the afternoon, my stomach fell into my feet. For, I knew then I wasn' t going to be getting a continuance to appoint new counsel···

I was brought to the holding area & shackled, black-boxed, waist-chained & drop-chained like I had been in maximum security & was going to court for murdering a cop or something *big*. I was escorted by 2 armed BSO w / Kevlar vests, dressed in black w / mirrored sunglasses. I was taken to the courthouse in a black tinted window, unmarked police car with plush leather seats.

I came to find out my judge had found me *guilty* before I left the county jail. He ordered the shackling, waist-chain & fully armed cops & undercover car because he knew what he was going to do to me was wrong & he didn' t want me to raise hell when he denied me a continuance or new counsel. He didn' t want his people to get hurt.

Worst of all was the entering the courtroom escorted by these 2 armed police w / bullet proof vests. (Why?) Imagine the look of shock and horror on my lover' s face when she saw me shackled & chained more heavily than the maximum security men. My lawyer spoke to me briefly & said we' d get the continuance & I looked over at "my girl" & said "I love you - it' s OK. I' ll get re-instated." She looked so sad & puzzled as to why I was brought into court like that - for it isn' t normal procedure.

My lawyer talked to her & told her I' d possibly be getting out. Then I heard the state prosecutor say, "We want maximum penalty." I was like "What the fuck? I never left the jail to even start probation. How am I in violation?" Then the state "negotiated" with my lawyer & I could do 22 months in prison. I said, "No. I' m not taking it because I' m not in violation." The judge says he wants to hear the facts & I' ll probably be reinstated···

So my wife looked hopeful & so did I··· Two minutes

later, he finds me guilty & sentences me to 14 months more than the state recommended. I ended up with 36 months and my "baby" she just broke down in tears. I screamed, 48 "NO! Fuck NO! I' m going home to my wife! NO!" and I was dragged out of the courtroom. That would be the last time I saw her face··· That was the hardest part, watching her suffer, watching her heart break at my sentencing & being dragged away as I screamed "I love you, Bae···"

And the hardest part of my sentence is to know she didn' t have the strength of will or spirit to stand by me. I can still hope, but it' s really late "in the game" for her to step up to the plate and hit a grand slam···

Anthony: 6. OK, now you' re in prison. What are women' s prisons like? It' s such an insane, hard to grasp concept··· Cages for women - abused and poor who were trying to provide for their children, or maybe covering for a dope-fiend, abusive husband, in a world where rape and assault are pandemic.

Lee: First, Anthony, I wish I could compare a women' s prison to the men' s, but I' ve never been to the men' s to see their poor conditions firsthand and even so that still wouldn' t deliver justice for what the women endure. I can only relate to you my personal viewpoint, where "some people" have recently claimed to be "distorted" or "tainted" by my anarchist beliefs. I think you and I both know who those "some people" are - guards and an administration who want to see my "quest to reveal the Truth" come to an abrupt end; there is also those certain women who have a chance at minimalistic gain, (to them it' s still "gain" regardless) by doing their best to vrite certain contacts I have on the outside and lie to .hem to discredit me. One individual sent letters to at least 2 of my important contacts, but before she sent hem, she showed them to the guards and the CM lieutenant

to say she' s on their side and is trying to put an end to my writing. She has been rewarded by receiving more free movement and time out of her cell. 49

I tell you this now because now I' m in one of the highest possible custody units in FLA (except death row.) Recently, my internal custody has been increased once again. I knew this was happening but I refused to stop speaking the truth. So, here' s Lee' s Reality of Women' s Prison (at least in Florida) vs. what others may say.

First, we (women) are not - repeat are not at a far off college campus studying computer science or accounting, considering the compound I was held hostage at before my movement to the CMSHU at Lowell, had the "look" of a quiet college campus. The warden wanted the prison to look like a finely manicured country club or an elite learning facility with many different types of flowers, gardens, fern designs and trees native to Florida. The warden felt if she "whitewashed" the buildings and gave the prison the appearance of a tropical retreat, those who visited the prison and the family of prisoners would believe the façade and think that the women are not in any way suffering or oppressed.

Enter the matrix. The truth is that being involuntarily caged or fenced in, miles away from family and friends is psychologically brutal on the minds of these incarcerated women and those on the outside who love them - regardless of what administration or government would like the nation' s citizens to believe.

There are different types of housing at the 3 prisons I' ve had the distinct displeasure to be held captive at & be a slave of. The least restrictive (laugh now please) and most "bearable" to the unschooled, would be housing in a 2-wing dormitory, in which there are separate cells that house 2 women together. There is a double bunk bed, 2 foot lockers and a sink in these cells - and a communal type bathroom (picture a restroom at a public transportation depot - eeww!) with 2 toilets & 1 shower.

There are 2 restrooms on each tier, so a total of 4 So
bathrooms, 8 toilets (if they are all working which they never are) 4 showers for each wing of the dorm which holds 50+ women. So, 100 women can and do occupy a dorm of this set-up··· The women cells have doors or hinges - like regular doors. The only difference is the prisoners can not lock their cell door for privacy. This is the 5 star accommodation at FLDOC for women···

Also, you must take into account that DOC just assigns beds randomly so picture if you have a "Christian" inmate in the room with a practicing Muslim, or a butch lesbian in with a homophobic, closed-minded inmate, or even the racial tension that is present in all prisons (because guards fuel this problem so to keep the women from uniting) - think! It' s divide and conquer. So, even " 5 star" (feel the sarcasm?) accommodations are quite miserable & unaccommodating.

Speaking of misery & non-accomodation brings me to the "1" star (really) Open Bay Dormitory. Imagine military barracks (army or marine) with row upon row of bunk beds and stacked double bunk beds where all 100 women (approx. estimate 80 - 120) are caged in one huge room / building - 1 story, with an open restroom area with concrete walls 3 ½' high between the toilet stalls and 4 - 6 shower heads in a large shower area, with some having individual shower stalls. In this huge cage, the women spend their time sleeping, reading, eating, shitting, showering & watching T.V. or playing cards or using 1 of 2 phones available. So, reality should tell you that there s NO privacy whatsoever, because even while on the oilet, the guards can see your face. Generally in this setting the most fights occur because there is no way 100 omen are going to get along without problems. Can you ay PMS? They can' t just shut their door & go to sleep. lso, the lights stay on in the open bay until 11 pm & fter lights out, there are those who talk loudly or nore, so it' s quite uncomfortable.

The next caged area (dorm) I want to cover is a "no star" ··· I' ll give it my two middle fingers up rating··· This dormitory is called by many different names (just as evil itself has many names.) You might recognize a couple of them··· confinement, DC housing, solitary, solitary confinement, the Hole, the sweatbox, behavior modification unit, special housing unit (SHU), restrictive housing, lock-up, lock-down, the "23/7 club" , close management (CM), close management special housing unit (CMSHU) jail within prison or as I sometimes refer to this mind and life-stealing caging - "Le Palace De Sade" or one of Dante' s "7 Levels of Hell." 51

I must clarify to those who have not been on the inside of the concrete and razor wire, that no area, no "housing" or "barely living quarters" are an acceptable means to *create a better person* after their supposed judicial scam hearing, in which at least ½ of the women if not more, are found guilty of petty crimes or didn' t have the money to pay $5,000+ for a lawyer. So, by not being one of the well-to-do, the status quo, these struggling women are removed from society, taken away from their role as mothers, wives and now become a *product* which creates profit for the prison industrial complex (aka the greed machine). Society has, through law enforcement, taken the less prosperous women and turned them into a guaranteed money-maker for local, state and federal governments.

Imagine these hard-working women living only at or below the poverty line, trying to feed their children. Government and society looks down upon these pillars of family & community because they (women) could not contribute enough money through taxes or consumer purchases to help sustain or increase the goals of capitalism. So they (women) are caught within the ever-growing web spun by law enforcement, at the prompting of the 2% that rule Amerika!

It' s sad to hear some of the stories these women tell of how they ended up here. Of course not all are

innocent, but there are those who were forced to commit crimes by their male relationships. I' ve heard of the beatings, raping and abuse of these women, their children, if they didn' t comply to their sick boyfriend / husband' s *orders*. There are those too who wanted to escape the tortured relationships and saw no other means but retaliate / fight against these abusive men. For some, their only escape came in the form of incarceration. If you haven' t yet discovered *incarceration is just another sick form of abuse & oppression*. So for some women, regardless of the lengths they' ve gone to escape, start over or protect their children, ultimately, they have "lost their lives" to a dehumanizing, misogynic and psychologically scarring system designed to further impair and alienate them from any semblance of a real life, and most have lost their children or *valuable time that should have been spent* raising them.

The numbers about that at least 60% of women incarcerated suffer from some form of addiction - food, money, drugs, sex, shopping, gambling, etc. But what isn' t generally discussed is the root cause of these self-destructive behaviors - which is abuse - physical, sexual, psychological as children, teens or as adults. This modern-day pogrom comes in the form of unnecessary & brutal incarceration··· As I' ve stated before that women who are housed / caged & *locked down* suffer the most of all. The women caught in the bowels of the gulag have a much higher rate of suicidal ideations or behaviors, self-devaluing, self-destructive tendencies and suffer from a higher rate of *induced mental illness*.

I know you' re probably saying to yourself "*induced mental illness*? Come on, Lee, that' s not likely or even true." But rest uncomfortably in the fact that many of the women caged in the special housing units - CM, solitary, the hole, etc. after prolonged exposure to severe conditions do develop "*SHU PTSD*" or Special Housing Unit Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. This is the same type of psychological scarring that Vietnam Vets and

Gulf War Vets have suffered, but SHU PTSD is not brought on by "the enemy" in a foreign war. It' s induced by your local neighborhood corrections officer and may affect your wife, mother, grandmother, daughter, sister, aunt, niece, girlfriend or lover··· Um, so *Now* how do you feel about the prison guards who control every facet and outcome in *your womyn' s* life?? 53

It isn' t until more people inside and outside of these depraved institutions are educated on the *truth* of the real costs of prisons that change will occur. FYI: www.realcostofprisons.org is a good place to start. There are a few ABC' s and organizations that have *tons* of information, statistics & facts to validate what I' ve said and so much more.

If the womyn in your life is incarcerated and you ask her how she is, 9 times out of ten, she' ll say she' s OK - mind you *all* phone calls and outgoing mail & other interactions are under scrutiny - *nothing* is private here. She loves you enough not to worry you or to cause more problems or bring "consequences" upon herself - but me - I' m as far down this end of this road as I can get - & for me, that' s *liberating*, for I can & will say what most womyn will not say or even dare admit to themselves - this is the most degrading and dehumanizing assault upon my femininity, my heart, mind & soul that I' ve ever encountered - and if you have read this interview in its entirety, you will know that is a difficult feat to accomplish - but FLDOC has done it - head & shoulders above the rest. And each day this system is not challenged it gets stronger & destroys more valuable women' s lives - the lives of the women you know and love.

I sincerely hope that you will reread this question & answer and feel the truth & sincerity in my words and be *moved* to *act*···

Anthony: 7. Let' s get a look through the prism of your insight. What are the dynamics of life among a group of womyn prisoners in a dorm setting? How are the guards

factored into this, and what are their sick rationales for performing their thuggery for the state?

Lee: Ok, are you sure you want to look through my prism? It breaks down the illusion so one may see the true colors disguised by all the white lies. It' s tainted with Reality! Anthony, Brother, you & I both know from first hand experience, that once individual comes into anarchist awareness and boldly sees what belies - what is hidden behind and inside the Matrix - that our lives are forever changed. We are no longer part of the illusion, per se. We, in most respects, are "set apart from" because our beliefs and truths do not coincide with the lies of government and capitalist henchmen, use to control society. This in turn, makes Reality and the Truth Suspect to the "normal, average" unaware citizen who is blindly led by government and its relay source - MEDIA. This is why I find it to be a daunting task to break through the barriers and change the mind-sets of most womyn trapped in prison. They (womyn) are conditioned throughout life to accept abuse and oppression. So, for most, this is a natural, normal part of their existence. Any principle or idea different from this programmed state of mind is alien & unnatural, thus resisted and rejected.

The administrators and the fat prisoncrats want Amerikan citizens (and the rest of the world) to believe womyn' s prisons are one big tea party or comparable to an extended "girls day out··· where all womyn get along socially and everyone is cared about and "looked out" for··· (Yeah, *then* you woke up!) This is not so. Allow me to pose a question or two, if I may···

Is it this way in our "Free Society?" (Laugh out loud, please?) Do womyn of all ages, all races, shapes, sizes, economic standing, education or lack of education, take care of womyn totally *different* from themselves or of different cultures or conflicting religious beliefs? NO. So why would one believe that being trapped in prison with

these "incompatibles" would change the firmly ingrained and finely honed characteristics of being overly critical and judgmental? Why would anyone believe that classism, racism, homophobia (lesbophobia), ageism, elitism, humiliation, cruelty, harassment, competition, exploitation, rhetoric, alienation, scarcity, greed, apathy, indifference & poverty does not exist here in this microcosm? I mean, after all, why would they not exist in this microcosm, this slice of society derived from our nation's toxic thinking and abject childrearing in these destructive and life-devaluing critiques? Why? 55

People on a whole want to believe the lies, this frees them the painful truth and removes them from having the responsibility to change the situation. THIS AS WE KNOW IS THE VAST MAJORITY'S STAND-POINT…

So living in a dorm isn't like one huge slumber party where everyone is enjoying themselves. It is as I stated prior - a microcosm of society as a whole. In the dorm there are a few womyn that may look out & help someone, but that someone is usually another womyn who in free society would be her equal of the same class, race, religion, mind-set, etc. Women do bond, but the majority bond to their own kind & do not deconstruct those "social barriers" that were erected before imprisonment. I'm not stating it's a hostile environment, but it can be most uncomfortable and emotionally taxing on the womyn who "don't fit in," who are poor or disliked for 1000 different prejudices…

There are those womyn who "adopt" children (i.e. older womyn having care & concern for someone younger) and call them "daughter." This is the maternal instinct needing to be fulfilled, usually by an older womyn who has grown children and / or a close knit family prior to their incarceration. Also, there are those womyn who look for a mother or grandmother figure for advice & some "security" - a sense of being connected, so some "boundaries" do get crossed and relationships are formed & fostered.

But sadly, there is a "code" most womyn follow··· If their prison family or one of them dislikes another womyn, she (the other womyn) is then shunned by that entire family & if this is a family with monetary security (prison bank account) they, as in the free world, that "family" has influence over the other families. It is the womyn with money who have "control" and who are looked up to, who get the most "slack" on rules violations. 56

Just as in society, you can identify the poor or those without favor or family. These sad womyn spend their sentences sitting alone outside, walking by themselves, not being able to engage in prison society. These are the womyn forced to eat every meal DOC provides, be it disgusting or not, for they have no canteen. These are the womyn without a raincoat (poncho) for lack of funds - who get soaked in the rain without adequate changes of clothing. These are the womyn who pick through the cigarette butts can for "stubs," "shorts" to smoke. These are the womyn who get no mail, no visits and most of the time, they get no mercy.

So while in the dorm at night, there is a "ranking system" to the very scarce showers - (4 for 50 womyn). The ones who have seniority (more prison time) or who are a part of "the elite" get early showers with hot water, but those sad womyn I discussed prior will shower very late and quite possibly in cold water.

If I said there isn' t a hierarchy, I' d be lying. It' s these same chosen elitists who get the choice of TV programming, phone calls at their convenience and who have the easiest prison time. These are the womyn who control the flow of goods & contraband. They' re also the ones who occupy the scarce seating in the day room and who get new (not used) prison clothes from laundry, etc. The womyn stay with their cliques & family and money makes all things possible.

Yes, I mustn' t forget to include the opportunist / snitch, cuz there' s at least one in every bunch! This is

the womyn without money who is looking to gain some type of privilege or canteen by informing "the police" - the guards - of activities of *other women.* Just as in the streets, a snitch' s value dissipates rather quickly, 57 unless she knows how to "work" the guard & keep from exposing her "double agent" lifestyle.

I find it very strange, even after the years I' ve spent in prison to see a womyn "sucking up" & being extra friendly to the guards. These rent-a-cops are the people helping the administration & prison industrial complex to carry out their sadistic oppression! I' ve sat back on more than one occasion and watched the interaction of the male guards with the female prisoners··· What boggles my mind is why would someone who is "free" want to come and work in a prison, then use some of the most vulnerable womyn for acts of sexual misconduct··· I mean there are *free womyn* out there who haven' t been as abused in every form as the ones held captive in DOC. I mean, haven' t these men heard of singles bars (no pun intended)··· or cyber sex? The only answer I can rationally conclude is these men were predators before going through training and donning the uniform. The clothing now gives them all the power needed to carry out *their own* sick, sadistic hidden agendas!

Honestly, I don' t feel the majority are carrying out thuggery for the state. It is more so they (guards) are using the state as a safe, viable route to achieve fulfillment of their twisted, debasing fantasies. Think about it··· if you hated women and sought to control and demean them and get "free pussy" without legal repercussions, where would be the best place for an opportunity to do so and also get PAID with benefits and a pension for these acts??! And the men who work as night dorm officers, can pick and choose what skin type, age, size, hair color their victim will be. Kinda like Midnight Shopping at Albertson' s, less crowds (no crowds) no waiting. Just wake up the female or tell her in the evening she will have a "work detail" to do "later" ···

If she refuses - lockdown, loss of visitation & gain time··· "So, um, see you at 2 am?"

There are those men who also are of violent nature, who are rough on a female when handcuffing or escorting her, or in a use of force. But this fraction of the abuse is easily recognizable so it is less likely to occur here in Florida DOC - unless you are in a confinement setting where there are no cameras to monitor activities. I feel these men take their abusive childhoods, tension & turmoil from their marriages or outside relationships out upon the incarcerated womyn because it is safer & easily justifiable. So womyn living in the dorms don' t just have their own internal stresses - their sentences, to deal with. There is a much broader spectrum of problems and safety concerns, than one, (who is uneducated in the truth) would think there is. Just as womyn must strive to protect themselves in society, it is so while in prison and now it' s even harder due to these simple facts: there' s nowhere to hide, nowhere to run, no one to turn to (for administration will take up for - cover-up misdeeds by officers) and we cannot lock our doors. The predator resides for 8 hours in the dorm - like a crouching lion waiting to attack its prey··· Woe to the sad womyn without a pack, a tribe or a family, for they are the most vulnerable. And, with no contacts on the outside, who will she tell after she' s been repeatedly dehumanized - then taken to confinement? Who will care about her emotional & mental health that she is left to deal with? Who will right the wrongs of an intensively abusive and psychologically scarring incarceration? Who?...?

How else are the guards factored in? There are those who are into "supply and demand," who sell quantities of drugs for profit (from outside families who pay for the dope to be brought to the loved one here) - or bring in other types of contraband - yeah supplemental income for them - ongoing addiction & submission for the womyn. Some use illegal drugs or contraband as a tool to get sex. For

example, officer X brings a baggie of marijuana to cell #4 & says "I want oral sex." If inmate in #4 says no, officer X will bring other officers to search the cell for contraband & lo & behold, there' s a baggie. Now, #4 can give them all oral sex or go to lockdown & still possibly face lockdown afterwards because of her initial refusal. 59

(I would be wrong if I didn' t say there are a few womyn who willingly engage in sexual relationships with officers but those are far & few between from what I' ve heard & seen.)

The dorm setting with male guards is a bad idea period, because many do get the urge. But all-in-all it' s a pyramid type scheme. It' s all about Power and Control & the womyn with money & means rank just below the officers. So, there are many different levels of oppression at this slumber party…

For those who don' t know, Power is given to a person or group 9 times out of ten, that Power will be misused. The ego feeds on power, so to satisfy the ego more & more acts of control, oppression & dehumanization are required to fill the ever growing power hungry ego. It' s a vicious circle and a very real fact of life for womyn held in FL DOC' s "care, custody & control." (I will state since I' ve been "CM" I haven' t heard of sexual misconduct but at the prior facilities - yes.)

Anthony: 8. How do you cope with solitary confinement? How do you recover from assaults, thefts of your property and other attempts at intimidation?

Lee: OK - (deep breath). Before I explain how I cope with forced isolation in solitary, I want to explain what my first trip to the CMSHU (or IMU, DSU) was like…

In 2003, I was relocated from Homestead C.I. to (here) Lowell C.I. Annex - but to be labeled and housed in J-Dorm as a "CM inmate." There were only 40 "CMs in FL DOC, so the CM 1' s were housed with the less restricted CM 2' s & 3' s - and it was total chaos!

Since the consolidated CM unit was just opened 1 ½ - 2 years prior, the guards and staff were very "gung ho" and didn' t have the proper training needed to handle the "worst of the worst" in the Florida State Prison for Women. And, I feel some officers and higher ranking 60 officials were looking to "make a name for themselves" and climb the administrative ladder. So, unnecessary uses of force happened *daily* - cell extractions by full riot gear fitted officers (think of storm troopers of death in black). Also, there was mass administration of chemical sprays - gassings. If a single CM 1 acted up, the entire group of CM 1' s would be sprayed individually & we aren' t speaking of little pocket-sized maze cans - no, 4 - 5 officers would bring in "fire extinguishers" full of C.S. and attached to the canister was a 6 foot rubber hose with a 2 foot metal tube which would be inserted into the food slot and "fed" into the room so the inmate could not escape the spraying. The walls would run red with C.S. - I NEVER WITNESSED ANYTHING LIKE IT BEFORE - it was crazy. Even if 1 womyn was to be "sprayed" the entire quad suffered the effects, for the C.S. would come in through the A.C. vents. So picture 10 - 15 CM' s being sprayed simultaneously!! Every womyn suffered needlessly. Everybody is yelling & banging stating it' s wrong to do "us" like this, which caused more unnecessary measures to be taken.

If it wasn' t the CS or cell extractions, it was beratement & belittlement from the officers. If it wasn' t the officers, the womyn would degrade each other and verbally threaten each other and their "families."

Five, almost 6 years ago I didn' t know how to cope with such a hostile, insane, torturous environment & I had never been locked down over 30 days & for me even that was very difficult.

Approximately 4 - 5 months into my "solitary confinement sentence" I gave in. I was mentally and emotionally worn down, scared the storm troopers would

roll my door & "do me up good." For a womyn already 61 suffering from major depression / anxiety and PTSD (post traumatic stress disorder) this forced isolation, neglect and abuse was more than I could bear. I had endured so much as a small child, just a "baby girl" & throughout my teens, you would think I would have had the strength to overcome this adversity··· Not so. Even a willow tree has a breaking point after so much. This was mine.

I tore up my sheets, wrapped them together & tied them width wise around the top bunk. Then I proceeded to climb up, kneel & tie my ankles together, then secured "the rope" around my waist & back to my ankles. Then I placed the slipknot around my neck & rolled - leaned forward & pushed myself off the bunk - and voila! There I was hanging in a height space DOC claimed was "suicide proof."

I was told I was "seizing" - then I died. I was cut down by the people I feared - checked for pulse, none, then wrapped in a sheet and rushed to annex medical where I was revived··· Considering my circumstances *today*, I am *thankful* I had another chance at life - but back then I saw no end, no other options.

That was my first stint in prison. My 2nd stay was 10 months & I wasn' t a CM. I am currently serving the last stretch of my 3rd imprisonment. I have been in iso 16 months so far & haven' t offed myself. No more "easy way outs." So what is different from 2003 & now? First, I' m 5 years older. Second, when I arrived as a CM 3 in 2007, I was placed in a cell with an older Cuban-American dyke whom I now call "My Dad." She said if I was to stay in the cell with her, I had better get myself together, cuz if I die in there, DOC would be too lazy to remove the body & she couldn' t live with a "stiff." So, "M" "showed me" how she manages CM. I was put on a schedule of brain & physical activities & rest (siestas)··· CM had changed. There was a new CM unit dorm "T" (where I am now) and the level 1 CM' s are not housed with the level 2 & 3' s. The cell extractions and

CS use was minimal. So, gradually my fears of what I 62
experienced in 2003 faded. I stayed with "M" for the first 2 months. Then I was moved into a cell by myself.

Only after I was housed with "M" & moved out, I started realizing what she had been saying did make sense. First, I am CM, not a free inmate, in regards to physical movement and interaction - but in the truest sense, I am no longer a slave for DOC, my days are unto myself. There is no more extra work detail or any work detail, no more standing in pill line for an hour or longer. There' s no more standing in any line - all services are brought to my cell door, food, laundry, mail, law library, medical (pill line). The only time I am DOC' s is at noon count - I' m to sit up on my bunk - that' s it, that' s all. When this incredulous thought of being free from their scheduling & petty tyranny sunk in - I laughed until I cried. Now DOC must work for *me!* I have my own private suite, no stranger eyeing my property. I have my own toilet & sink. But the real beauty of this forced isolation is I have all this time to do what I need to do for me & not have to place myself 2nd to DOC. I can feed my mind all day. I can learn new ideas & try new principles. Instead of being caught up in the external - I can now focus on my internal needs & set goals for self-betterment & stability.

In November, 2007, I picked up a resource guide and wrote to a couple places to see what they had to offer. Also I wrote to this "foreign" unknown listing: *South Chicago ABC Zine Distro* & asked for a catalog. When I received it, I remember thinking it "looked odd" - not like what I' m used to seeing - I had *no* idea what a zine was! (I know, don' t laugh - Anthony, I hear you laughing.) When I opened the catalog you sent me Brother, I was, well, I was blown away - just by the sheer *uniqueness* of what this "zine catalog" *looked like.* It was a made at home, do-it-yourself type media, information source.

Then, oh bro, *then* I read the titles of the zines offered and the categories. Some fell under what I like - "OH SHIT - What did I just stumble upon? *Thought Bombs*? Anarchists? *ABC' s in Every City*? What' s an ABC? (Stop laughing Anthony, I can hear you smiling.) *Agitation* oohhh - Agitation - I like that. Then I saw *"How to Survive Solitary Confinement for the Targeted Prisoner"* by Khalfani. So I ordered it & *Copwatch* & Moose & Inca' s *Build Those Collectives*.

You see, I was determined to survive solitary & "arrive alive to the outside." So I had already put into practice some of Khalfani' s principles & also when I read "*Targeted*" - I knew that' s why I' m in CM - because I am strong-willed & can be influential - so I realized what people had told me when I was younger, that "I could get an angel to play poker" - Wow. I did have ability to educate and possibly evoke change. So I was & *still* am ***MORE SO*** today, considered a threat to the orderly running of the facility. For I have the head knowledge to go along with the heart knowledge. I could tell the world what I think & feel about mass incarceration, solitary confinement for womyn, oppression, also the beautiful principles of anarchism···

But I' m getting a little off track here···

How do I cope with solitary - a heck of a lot better than the first time - I educate myself and as a result of putting a face to anarchism & prison abolition. I am an actual member of this movement··· Honestly it wasn' t my goal at first - that was to regain & hone my skills in architectural drafting & design & earn the certifications while I' m here in CM, but sad to say, there are "haters" - people (womyn in blue) - just like me, but *not* like me who want to hold their own sister in blue down because they have issues with *my* abilities. Today I am *thankful* for those adversaries!!.. I may have lost a "privilege" but I gained the insight to feel & know that activism, resistance, education, freedom, equality, justice, mutual aid & free association is the path I

belong on & unknowingly had walked upon since I was young.

I must state that even though I know & feel these principles and practice self preservation & combat the menticide, there are days when being confined in this 7' x 14' (14 because the bunks are head to head *not stacked* anymore to be "suicide proof") cell are difficult, heartbreaking and lonesome··· It is human nature to love to be free and there are many days that I pine & ache for the *ability to walk outside in the sunshine* (I haven't been out in 8 months) - to walk without chains, shackles, handcuffs, blackbox & 2 guards holding onto my restrained arms. I yearn to feel the breeze, even smell the wafting aroma of the farms next door. I miss interacting socially or one-on-one with peers. I miss the simple everyday nuances of life. But most of all I miss spending quality time with my partner in the free world. Since I am so far buried in the bowels of this hell, I have no access to phone, visits, education wellness (physical ed) etc. I miss hearing, "I love you, Lee." ··· (Swallow hard - breathe deep). As I wrote those 4 words a tear escaped its confines and is freely flowing down my cheek. With being here so isolated - I have been "demonized" and even my own lover can't seem to grasp my reasons for this separation & I am looked upon as a fuck-up, not as an activist, looked upon as uncaring, not as a loving womyn holding my anarchist heart in my hand for the world to see & feel its love & continuum to beat despite the odds.

The hardest thing is to know deep down inside that she is moving on, couldn't wait this out, & stood by my side.. and another holiday passes, another day slips away as I anxiously await the mail man & still no letter. As I write this, again I am reminded that these pages could have been filled with a love letter to her, but instead fate has destined you Anthony, and the other readers to intimately know "Lee" & understand what she (my girl) cannot···

The label DOC has placed upon me & the sanctions imposed are not *who Lee is* - the label *CM 1 - DC*, threat

to security is just *that - a label* to deter networking & force more isolation upon me··· And she, my once lover fell for DOC' s lies. They may have succeeded with her but I know the readers take in what I say, understand & *know* the label DOC placed on me is not the spirit, heart & soul of "Lee Savage." That spirit, heart & soul are upon these pages. Some days are harder to deal with than others, but the couple comrades on the outside whom I' m in contact with - they help emotionally. They write, send letters, "listen" to my words (read my letters) and I know through "my family of anarchists" that I am cared about and I am not alone in the struggle. 65

As far as recovering from assaults & thefts of my property & the attempts at intimidation - I don' t think one who is in solitary ever fully recovers from those attacks. The prior mentioned acts are acts of physical & psychological abuse, and as I may have discussed earlier, these acts leave scars upon our psyche even after the physical has healed, and new items (property) have been acquired. So by all outward appearance one may "seem to be" - whole, intact, unaffected, but we must always *look beyond the surface of situations to find the truth.* The harm done is covered by a veil - this can be one of different types, such as "*making light* of the harmful act" , *minimalizing*, denial that it ever happened, rationalizing, justifying the assaults & threats by stating it was our fault··· Anarchists will look beyond the facades, for we know *the Matrix* I its insidious abuse & retaliation can be veiled in a less harmful package for the "consumer" to accept and digest.

I used to wonder 14 - 15 years ago about these 2 people in my life who I met after their release from prison. Why did they *always* bring up prison, their prison experiences··· "Yeah, when I was in prison···" etc. I was *really* blind - uneducated. I would say, "Why do you always talk about prison? - You' re free now - that' s the past." Or I' d say, "Look, I don' t want to hear about prison. Tell me something else." Yeah, ouch···

Isn' t it amazing what "time" can do?... Yes I understand these 2 people & my heart now goes out to them!! For I know firsthand after being released from prison, the experience never leaves us, it becomes ingrained & that is due to the abusive effects of shameful incarceration. I don' t think one ever fully recovers but given proper opportunity to heal & repair the lost sense of humanity, we do grow and if we challenge ourselves in positive, productive, loving modes, the residual pain, memories & feelings can be controlled & used for a GREATER PURPOSE --- to help someone else in the struggle···

66

Lastly, as far as threats of intimidation - I now being a Level CM 1 or even when I was a CM 2 - those acts of "intimidation" I laughed at because I know I' m in the hole - at the bottom & being at the bottom can be *comforting - even liberating*!!! I know DOC has no other real tactics to threaten me with. SO like I said, all I hear is - are you ready for his - OK. I was told last night if I didn' t stop talking my DC time would be extended! This officer wasn' t aware that my DC days pass my EOS. So I asked her to repeat slowly what she said. When she did, I imagined she was making turkey sounds - I laughed hysterically & said, "I didn' t know you were Turkish!"

She looked at me as if I' d lost my mind. I don' t hear threats anymore. They hold no weight, no validity to my CM 1 status. They can' t put me on death row, so this is it & down here in the hole there is much freedom of expression!!! And now, my words echo throughout the hole!! - and into free air - via this interview - thanks, Anthony.

I cope with solitary by writing about it, what I experience, what I see, what' s lacking, how it could be better --- *Abolition* is the true answer, but until then - ways to make ISO less mentally & emotionally destructive.

I write so people in the outside of the razor wire will know the truth & hopefully be moved in such a way that they will be touched in the deepest part of their

humanity and take the initiative to join us in the struggle. And honestly, sometimes I rant, I yell, I reflect & I cry. I cope by allowing myself to be *HUMAN* & *feel* everything so I do not become one of the desensitized, sub-human creatures DOC is trying to make. I cope by holding tightly to my beliefs & know this is temporary & soon I can share with those "outside" & give my strength and insight to the cause. Lastly, but most importantly, I *Love*…

Anthony: 9. Where and when is the light at the end of the tunnel for you, as far as getting out of the control unit and prison altogether? Also, what can we do to help you (and help each other)? Finally, what are your hopes, dreams and plans once you get back into the so-called "free world?"

Lee: Anthony, even in these times that by all rights could be deemed as "my darkest moments" of living in this concrete cage - under heinous control, by my unaware and apathetic captors, I can turn my thoughts *inward* and see the light of my beliefs, see the light of the anarchist truths & also see a fire burning which is my spirit & will to promote change. I can see what those who lack vision & morals can' t - which is my emergence - and from 24 months of training to be a "soulja" for the struggle. Yes, I' ll be escaping the belly of the beast *intact*!!

That light burns brightly in my soul and is a beacon for my heart to follow until that glorious day of my release from the solitary confinement - control unit. Mind you, these paid torturers try to make me believe their lies about my permanence here! They want me to believe and act like I' ll never leave this chamber of waking horrors - to reduce myself to a primal level - to act like a caged animal. I hear them say *if* I leave CM SHU and / or prison, that I will inevitably return here to this, the lowest,

deepest place in FL DOC for Women in which I am housed with Death Row. They say, "Savage will be back!" And that, I' m "destined" for re-incarceration. I don' t believe their lies. If I were to do so, I' d be *placing myself in mental & emotional shackles.* 68

But yes, I see the light at the end of the tunnel & focus on getting there & achieving my goals, once I' m back in the warm sunshine··· once I am no longer #959277, but again "Lee" (Lisa R.) Savage & "free."

I will spend the last night before my release from prison and the few hours left before I walk out the gate - *August 1st, 2009* - still trapped in CMSHU - solitary - control unit - isolation··· Just 2 weeks ago, the Department of Corruption increased my custody to CM 1 - DC status. So there is no chance of me leaving CM to return to general population. It' s OK. Though really··· now I have an entirely new set of minds to speak reality - speak the truth to since I was just recently relocated from my prior Quad (T-3) to here: CM 1 / Death Row (T-2). So unknowingly, DOC did me a favor & helped me out! Imagine that, them ("The Boyz") introduced me to "New Womyn" so I can speak anti-administration, pro-anarchist propaganda, under their roof & rules - irony at its finest! I' ve done my best to take those lemons (which the DOC handed me) and make lemonade - "Mind grenades" - blasts of *pure in-your-face-non (pulp) fiction*··· I try to make sure each of my CM sisters gets her daily dose of alternative thinking··· hold the pulp.

OK. What can you do to help me, well hmm··· I think the most important action would be to offer support & encouragement, regardless of your geographical location. ' m in the process of networking - forming a wider upport system with people who are politically & socially onscious and am hoping to receive information of ifferent cities in the U.S. - re-entry programs or down-o-earth "Good Sams" - who would be willing to give me a lace to stay while I get on my feet. I want to get as uch resource information as I can & also I' m looking for

someone who would be willing to take a chance and hire me.

If you really want to help - don' t wait for someone else to do it - just write me & let' s connect! 69

To prisoners reading this, you can help by continuing the "work" I started··· It' s all about empowering each other - through mutual aid and respect. You cannot rely on DOC to "rehabilitate" you. You must take the steps to improve yourself, on your own or with a small group of womyn who want the same. You must learn voluntary cooperation & set *all* our differences aside so you may achieve a sense of awareness & keep it.

I say get involved with the *ABC' s* & educate yourself on *real* issues - freedom for all, justice, global healing, abolition work, activism, etc. In general, *unlearn* everything public schools, colleges, media & government have taught, actually drilled & instilled into you from childhood. Reach for (write for) a zine and *expand* your *knowledge* for it is "*underground skooling*" that will tell you the truth. Read some & then judge for yourself whether or not you' ve been living *everyone else' s lies* & been unknowingly blind··· It' s OK to be that way until you realize you' re that way - then it becomes *your responsibility* to *yourself* and those around you to change it & become an active member for a better future; better conditions for all humans. I' m *not* saying you MUST save the WORLD on your own··· Just help someone else without having to be asked - do a good deed and ask nothing in return - basic human principles - kindness and love go a lot further than bitterness & hate.

Hey, maybe it will be you - the reader who' s next to step up to the plate - to bring to light injustice & you whose voice and words will carry the message of growth, harmony, liberty, love, freedom without coercion. You can help make a difference - wait the last line sounded like a T.V. commercial - but it' s true & it' s all up to you.

Wow - hopes, dreams & plans··· that' s actually the correct evolution of actualized goals! I can always count on you, Brother Anthony to "say it right!"

My hopes are for a relatively smooth transition back into society. Also, I hope to remain an active member of the resistance movement - the struggle··· 70

You know, Anthony, if you would have asked me that question a year ago or even 6 months, I would have said, "When I get out I want to be an architect" - which isn' t unrealistic, due to my prior college education - all I need is CAD training and someone to hire me - to take a chance. I have a love for designing homes & outdoor living spaces, and this is a dream or goal I' ve tried to pursue on a couple occasions but something always got in the way. Like now, certain officers & 1 higher ranking official decide I' m not allowed to draft / design in my cell. I' m not allowed the opportunity to "rehabilitate myself" & finely hone my skills in drafting.

Also, I had worse news - the "FEDS" say I' m default & must pay my college loan off before I can get anymore "government assistance" in acquiring education for career purposes. Um, I owe almost a year' s salary to them··· So the only way I could accomplish this goal of attaining my CAD certification, is if I win the lottery··· or I' m at the right place at the right time···

But you know a profound change took place deep inside me when I read my very first zine from you, Anthony. I' m not in the least saddened by this change, or the new path my life is on. I' ve always been outspoken, cried out for justice - for the scales to weigh even & tip in the downtrodden or oppressed favor. I longed in my heart to deeply connect with others and to be a part of that leveling of the scales. I' ve wanted to heal & show others they can heal.

And since I' ve had the displeasure of being a hostage by DOC, I' ve wanted to overhaul (at the very least) or destroy this enormous Greed Machine. I' ve wanted to stop the abuses I' ve witnessed from DOC & now today that is truly where my heart is. I' m trying now to make sure change materializes or at least there is an

increase in the incarcerated womyn' s awareness of their stealthy abusers.

I want to work in the field, be an activist / abolitionist @narchist. I know this doesn' t put food on the table or a roof over one' s head, but I' m hoping & dreaming of the opportunity to be part of the struggle & earn some pay. I thought about advocating for womyn who are getting ready for release or those recently free. I want to be where I can be of most service to the cause. I don' t care about keeping up with "the Joneses." I want to live simply & simply live.

I know this is where I belong - "FIGHTING THE GOOD FIGHT' and furthering the dreams of a *non*-statist / *non*-capitalist world. I believe in anarchism. I believe it' s taken every simple hurt & struggle in my life to finally reach this awareness & find a true *purpose* for my life - not some self-serving plan that will further oppress those who are already slowly dying under this heavy burden of Pseudo-Freedom.

My plans are not definite as of yet - where I' ll settle down or where I' ll work, but I know I don' t want to live the life I lived before incarceration - I have no ties to anyone - *I owe no one my presence in their life* - except for my son, Adrian Alexander. I have nothing to look back on but *a lot* to look forward to. I am willing to go where the struggle takes me.

I' m determined to re-establish communication & a strong bond with my son, Adrian Alexander (Alex) & getting on my feet so as to be stable enough to have him live with me. Not one day passes without him being in my thoughts & heart. I' ve got a lot of lost time to catch up on & I sure do miss him & love him. I' ve never wanted him to be the one to suffer for the problems Sherrie & I have had. I want my son - I want us to be a family.

So, again, if you have information relating to my hopes, dreams & goals, please contact me. I do have some feelers out, so I' m working on it with the help of two people right now. The more information I can collect, the

more able I' ll be to make an intelligent & informed decision about relocating from where I lived for 19 years - Broward County. I don' t plan to go back - only forward and I' m willing to try a new area, new state, if I can obtain the needed information. Oh yes, Anthony, I plan to UP THE STRUGGLE!

Anthony: 10. I' m sure I missed a lot of things you wanted to talk about. Please give us a full dose prescription of "Lee Savage" pain-killin' verbosity!... Please keep in mind most of your readers will be yearning to learn prisoners. So lay it on thick and give us some strength from that vast reservoir of yours.

Lee: (Ah-hem). First allow me to state the obvious··· Being locked up is nothing more than legalized abuse!! We are *all* living with this great oppression. Does it make sense to hurt and abuse those who are caged *with us?* Or would it make sense to treat the next person how you want to be treated, to gain alliances, build support systems with those whom you do your time?

Human nature is caring, compassionate, sharing, loving. The only way to fight this *hatred* of prisoners by guards is to counterpart it with *love & support* of those who the guards want to play against one another. Stand up for your sister (or brother) regardless!! DOC has filled prisoners' minds full of fear. They use fear to control you, to bend you & shape you to their standards. I' m here to tell you - the fear is *worse* than the *true action.* If you can grasp this idea, you will find your own inner strength & the strength of those around you.

DOC' s goal is to psychologically scar you & warp your perception of self & others. In this way, you are controlled and when you leave, you will *feed yourself* back into the prison system via *recidivism.*

Resistance is the answer. How do you resist the effects of DOC? You make friends with people you

wouldn' t normally, you lay aside prejudices & find the commonalities you share, you build little support groups on your own, talk about real issues. You educate yourself and others on the truth of this cruel & heinous system. How? Write a zine distro - anarchist black cross & tell them you want to know the truth! You read, read, read! Have group discussions on material you read. Write to books to prisoners groups, write to newspapers and 73 publications and tell them about what is really happening - the abuse & psychological torture. *Debunk* the myth that *all* prisoners are bad, amoral & belong here. Show the outside your *humanity* and concern for others. Get active fighting the system! That is resistance.

Learn all the rules, state, federal laws governing your stay in prison & write about the injustice & the apathy. Challenge the rules when guards break them -they are not above the law. Don' t keep silent if you know of abuse. Someone' s life may be in your hands.

You *see, I believe in each one of you* who took the time to read my struggle - I believe in your ability to grow & thrive in this adverse environment. I believe in your ability to *rise above* the bullshit & lies DOC feeds you to keep you low. I believe in your ability to transcend the boundaries DOC has erected, so you may connect and touch another person' s life. I believe we all have inherent goodness, worth & dignity, that we are valuable yet fallible human beings.

We didn' t leave these traits on the county bus that brought us here. Even the small things mean a lot. Just reach out beyond yourself and connect. Study the principles of anarchism - you may see you already subscribe to the majority of those principles. Take this time and use it to your advantage & help others do the same. Resistance takes many forms··· You' ve already taken the first step by reading this··· Oh, excuse me, am I spreading resistance propaganda?

Also, I' d like to address individuality and

lesbianism. I don't think I made clear the truth that WE ultimately control ourselves. We need not answer to 74 society, strangers, government, even our own parents about the person we choose to love intimately & share our personal lives with. Yes - parents brought us into the world, but if we are to ever be genuinely happy, we must separate ourselves from their beliefs and *create our own* personalized belief system & values based on what *feels* right to *us*. We need to love ourselves first and to love ourselves means to hold tightly to *our* own ideals *regardless* of opposition!

This is where many women fail - scared of rejection from family, they suppress their true desires and needs. The end result will be bitterness for not living the life she could have / should have - would have had - if she clung tightly to the happiness of her own heart & spirit. I say stop living in fear & live in love. The women who are living their dreams of openly loving another woman, you can see & feel their happiness, just as you can see that in a hetero couple who are truly in love.

These women are living their lives to the fullest - which the *majority* of society *isn't*, because those in society believe the lies & have been programmed to concede their innermost selves to conformity. I believe that if a woman (or man) wants to break free & love who they choose - *do it!* There are communities of people willing to make you a part of their family. Oh, excuse me, am I spreading lesbian / gay propaganda? Oh.

I just know for myself I have chosen the right *paths* for my spirit & I can rest in the deep connections I have :o "free-thinking, all-loving" anarchist, radical lesbians. The most gratifying beautiful and honest elationships I have had are with women who aren't afraid .o "love differently," love deeply and who are willing .0 risk being caught in the undertow & carried to a place)nly the lesbians go···

Also, I' d like to take this time now to acknowledge the young man in my life I deeply love, my son, Adrian Alexander M. I didn' t include his story in the prior 75 pages only because then I surely would have turned this interview into a full length book. It is not for lack of wanting to write about him. It is because I can only say "too much."

My son is 18, practically a man, and still he is (and will forever be) my baby boy. It is my fondest desire to become stable after release from prison & reconnect with him. I want to restore what others had taken away through ignorance. So it is important to connect with outside support to locate housing & a job. I just want him back home with me. The years I' ve spent in prison have not dulled his memory - only sharpened the pain of separation.

This interview was for the struggle, for women who lived what I' ve lived. It' s to help them know it' s OK for them to be themselves - & they can heal and grow if they make the effort. *Also, this interview is for Adrian Alexander* (Alex) who never knew the truth of his mother' s life & all I endured. I love him that much to purge myself of the pain, so there is more room to *love*. I love him that much to reach out & expose the very personal private hell I survived.

I hope that somewhere amidst these pages someone will find the strength, encouragement, hope & love they may be lacking··· and the courage to take the next step. Trust me its there inside you too. You just have to search for it.

Finally, I want to say thank you to the people who have helped me find me & grow during this incarceration - Abigail D. of Burning River, Vikki Law of Tenacious, Naima Black, coordinator of STOPMAX (campaign to end solitary confinement & torture in US prisons) and lastly, the catalyst who made it possible by bringing them into my life - you, Brother Anthony. Much anarchist love & peace & solidarity to you all··· UP THE STRUGGLE!

THERE ARE NO BARS
STRONG ENOUGH,
NOR WALLS THICK
ENOUGH, TO CAGE



THE LOVE WE
CARRY IN OUR
HEARTS

South Chicago ABC
Zine Distro
Box 721/Homewood IL 60430