

TAKE ACTION

## Recommended Reading

There are many good books about aspects of mass incarceration, with more being written all the time. Here are a few suggestions to get you started.

### For a first dip into reading about mass incarceration:

- *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*, by Michelle Alexander. (2010) This is the book that led many of us to think deeply about mass incarceration and its entanglement with race for the first time.
- *Locked Down, Locked Out: Why Prison Doesn't Work and How We Can Do Better*, by Maya Schenwar. (2014) Schenwar uses the story of her sister's multiple incarcerations on drug-related charges as a lens through which to view the prison system and the restorative justice models that could transform it.
- *Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption*, by Bryan Stevenson. (2014) Stevenson's memoir of representing people on death row and providing other legal services for the poor is a gripping read and a view on race from a black lawyer who has seen its ravages firsthand.
- *Ghettoside: A True Story of Murder in America*, by Jill Leovy. (2015) This journalistic account of homicide in Los Angeles' black inner city reads like a murder mystery and draws attention to our country's skewed policing priorities.

### For a deeper dive:

- *A World Apart: Women, Prison, and Life Behind Bars*, by Cristina Rathbone. (2005) Rathbone takes the reader inside Massachusetts' women's prison.
- *Beyond Prisons: A New Interfaith Paradigm for Our Failed Prison System*, by Laura Magnani and Harmon L. Wray. (2006) This book, by the American Friends Service Committee (Quakers), takes a sweeping look at incarceration in America through its history and explores alternative models.
- *Building a Movement to End the New Jim Crow: An Organizing Guide*, by Daniel Hunter. (2015) A hands-on guide; available for purchase online at [www.newjimcroworganizing.org](http://www.newjimcroworganizing.org).
- *Caught: The Prison State and the Lockdown of American Politics*, by Marie Gottschalk. (2015) Dense with data and research, Gottschalk makes the case for ending mass incarceration.
- *Couldn't Keep It To Myself: Testimonies from Our Imprisoned Sisters*, edited by Wally Lamb. (2003) This is a collection of autobiographical essays by incarcerated women, written during writing classes taught by author Wally Lamb.
- *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Punishment*, by T. Richard Snyder. (2000) Snyder uses a theological and historical lens to explain why America thinks about prisons the way it does.
- *Tattoos on the Heart: The Power of Boundless Compassion*, by Gregory Boyle. (2010) Written by a priest who spent 25 years working with gang members in Los Angeles, this memoirsque book paints a moving portrait of returning citizens fighting a great uphill battle.

### For first-person testimony from solitary confinement, there is no book like SolitaryWatch's new collection:

- *Hell is a Very Small Place: Voices from Solitary Confinement*, edited by Jean Casella, James Ridgeway, and Sarah Shourd. (2016)