

**THE  
PRISON  
INDUSTRIAL  
COMPLEX  
IS...**

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**Illustrations by Billy Dee**

THE PRISON INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX\*

PRISON INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX (PIC) IS  
A TERM WE USE TO DESCRIBE THE  
OVERLAPPING INTERESTS OF  
GOVERNMENT AND INDUSTRY THAT USE  
SURVEILLANCE, POLICING, AND  
IMPRISONMENT AS SOLUTIONS TO  
ECONOMIC, SOCIAL,  
AND POLITICAL PROBLEMS.

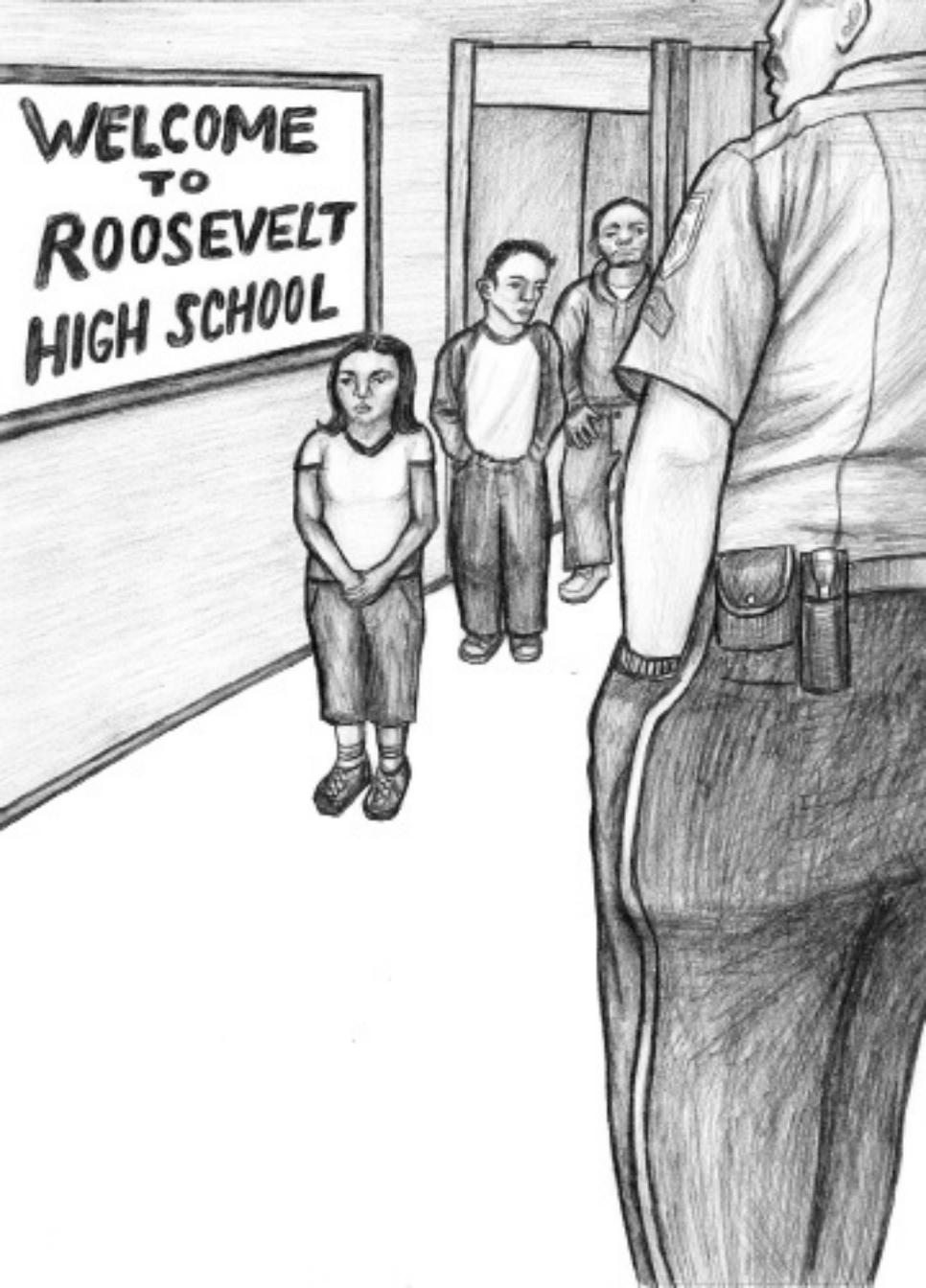
**\*Definition of the PIC created by  
CRITICAL RESISTANCE  
<http://www.criticalresistance.org>**



The Prison Industrial Complex  
is built on the belief that some lives  
are worth more than others.



The Prison Industrial Complex  
tears families apart.



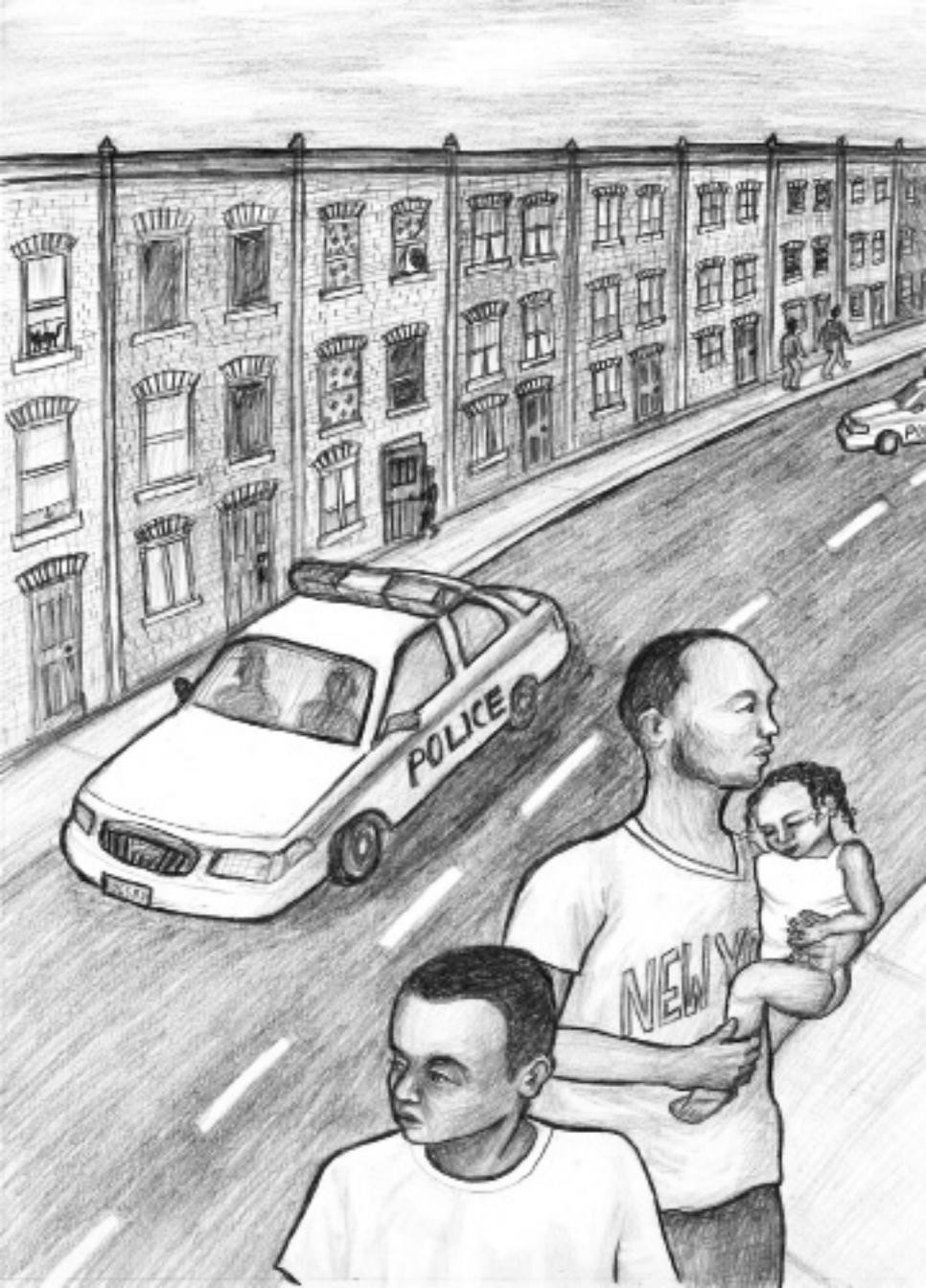
The Prison Industrial Complex  
takes a foothold in your  
underfunded public school when  
counselors are replaced with cops.



The Prison Industrial Complex  
is where you spend your “best years”  
just trying to survive.



The Prison Industrial Complex is the new industry in town when all the old factories close down.



The Prison Industrial Complex targets people from certain neighborhoods, especially poor people, people of color, young people, and lgbtq people.



The Prison Industrial Complex  
criminalizes immigrants.



The Prison Industrial Complex  
is where you are likely  
to end up when you  
outgrow the foster care system.

# APPLICATION FOR EMPLOYMENT

SOCIAL SECURITY #:		APPLICATION DATE:	
LAST NAME:	FIRST NAME:	PHONE INITIAL:	
STREET ADDRESS:		THRUWAY:	
CITY:	STATE:	ZIP CODE:	

POSITION APPLIED FOR:	<input type="checkbox"/> FULLTIME	<input type="checkbox"/> PART TIME
SALARY EXPECTED:	DATE AVAILABLE:	
ARE YOU AVAILABLE TO WORK WHATEVER SCHEDULE IS NECESSARY TO HELP US MEET OUR CORPORATE OBJECTIVES?		
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO		
IF NO, WHAT DAYS/DAYS ARE YOU AVAILABLE?		

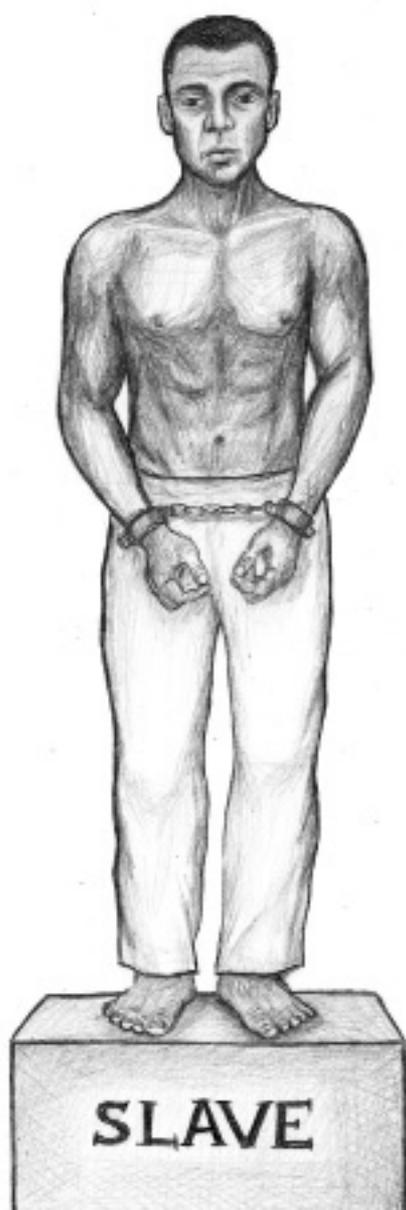
ARE YOU CURRENTLY EMPLOYED?	IF YES, MAY WE CONTACT YOUR PRESENT EMPLOYER?
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
DO YOU HAVE RELIABLE TRANSPORTATION TO GET TO WORK EACH DAY? IF NO, EXPLAIN.	
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	
DO YOU HAVE A HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA OR G.E.D.?	
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	
DID YOU EARN A DEGREE FROM COLLEGE?	
IF YES, YEAR AWARDED / DEGREE RECEIVED.	
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	

HAVE YOU EVER BEEN CONVICTED OF A CRIME?

YES  NO



The Prison Industrial Complex releases you without a decent education or training, and then calls you a failure when you can't find a job on the outside.



The Prison Industrial Complex imprisons more black men today than were slaves in 1850.



The Prison Industrial Complex  
locks up more women and mothers  
today than at any other point  
in U.S. history.



The Prison Industrial Complex means that it costs much more to imprison someone for a year than to educate them.



The Prison Industrial Complex  
criminalizes dissent.



The Prison Industrial Complex is the reason why nearly 1 in 10 African Americans cannot vote.



The Prison Industrial Complex warehouses hundreds of thousands of mentally ill people who have been denied appropriate health care on the outside.



The Prison Industrial Complex disproportionately incarcerates people for nonviolent offenses.



ANGOLA, LOUISIANA SLAVE PLANTATION 1844



ANGOLA, LOUISIANA STATE PENITENTIARY 2011

The Prison Industrial Complex  
is the modern day extension  
of slavery in the U.S.A.



The Prison Industrial Complex means that over 7 million people in the U.S. are in jail, in prison, on probation, or on parole. That is more than the populations of Detroit, Seattle, San Francisco, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Baltimore and New Orleans combined.



The Prison Industrial Complex  
is not about rehabilitation,  
it is about control.



The Prison Industrial Complex  
is inhumane.  
It is time for change.

# INDEX

There is no other society in the history of humanity that has imprisoned more people than the United States. With only five percent of the world's population, the United States houses over twenty percent of the world's prisoners.<sup>1</sup> This is a larger prison population than that of the top thirty-five European countries combined.<sup>2</sup> In proportion to its total population, the U.S. incarcerates five times more people than Britain, nine times more than Germany, and twelve times more than Japan.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, sixty percent of this correctional population comes from a racial or ethnic minority group.<sup>4</sup>

Our obsession with locking people up in the U.S. doesn't come cheap. States spend more than fifty billion dollars a year on their correctional systems.<sup>5</sup> This does not include the tens of billions of dollars spent by the federal government to police, prosecute, and imprison individuals. Last year, the Department of Justice's budget was nearly thirty billion dollars, with six billion dollars going to the Federal Bureau of Prisons. Our tax dollars support a vast network of prisons, jails, immigration detention centers, and associated personnel that maintain over seven million people under state and federal supervision.<sup>6</sup> By comparison, in 1965 there were 780,000 adults under correctional authority of any type.<sup>7</sup>

The so-called "War on Drugs" has been one of the largest forces behind the explosion of our prison population. This War has failed to curb the use of illegal drugs in our country. Instead, it has succeeded in creating a new racial caste system in the U.S. that legal scholar Michelle Alexander has termed "the New Jim Crow." Black people are arrested, prosecuted, charged, and imprisoned at higher rates than White people for drug offenses. In Los Angeles County, a region with nearly ten million residents, blacks are arrested at more than three times the rate of whites. Blacks make up less than ten percent of L.A. County's population, but they constitute thirty percent of those arrested for marijuana possession.<sup>8</sup> While representing only thirteen percent of the U.S. population, and only thirteen percent of drug users, Blacks constitute seventy-four percent of drug offenders sent to prison.<sup>9</sup>

Women are particularly ensnared by the so-called "War on Drugs." More women and mothers are behind bars today than at any other point in U.S. history. Since the mid-1980s, the number of women in prison has risen by four-hundred percent.<sup>10</sup> By 2008<sup>11</sup> there were 115,779 women incarcerated in both state and federal prisons. Overwhelmingly convicted of non-violent crimes<sup>12</sup>, women are the fastest growing group in prison. Incarceration of women is increasing at nearly double the rate of men. In addition, African American women are four times more likely than white women to be locked up.<sup>13</sup>

The United States manufactures criminals. Much of the multi-billion dollar budget that powers the Prison Industrial Complex is deployed in the service of racialized surveillance. For example, although Black and Latino males constitute less than forty-four percent of the total population of New York City, this group composed eighty-five percent of those chosen for stop-and-frisk searches in 2010. With NYPD officers detaining 601,055 people per year, men of color constitute approximately 511,000 of those detained (as a point of reference, the population of Wyoming is 544,000).<sup>14</sup> In addition, although approximately thirty percent of the U.S. population is made up of racial minorities, this group accounts for more than sixty percent of our nation's prisoners.<sup>15</sup>

It is also critical to link immigration and military practices to the carceral state. From Abu Ghraib to the Cook County Jail to the U.S.-Mexico border, immigration, military and prisons form an interlocking system which normalizes violence and punishment as a response to conflict. With the merger of the Immigration and Naturalization Services into the Department of Homeland Security in 2001, there was a corresponding shift in the treatment of immigrants. A network of more than four hundred private and public detention centers was established across the United States, making undocumented immigrants an integral and expanding component of the criminalized class. The Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency (the largest U.S. enforcement agency, which has a workforce of over seventeen thousand), operated with a budget of over five billion dollars

in 2008. The agency deported 977 non-citizens every day in 2008, a twenty-three and a half percent increase over 2007. As of June 2007, the agency acknowledged that sixty-two immigrants have died in administrative custody since 2004.<sup>16</sup> The Washington Post recently calculated that “with roughly 1.6 million immigrants in some stage of immigration proceedings, the government holds more detainees a night than Clarion Hotels have guests, operates nearly as many vehicles as Greyhound has buses, and flies more people each day than do many small U.S. airlines.”<sup>17</sup>

The impact of the Prison Industrial Complex extends beyond imprisonment. According to the Bureau of Justice, ninety-five percent of those incarcerated in state prisons - our brothers, sisters, lovers, parents, daughters, and neighbors - will be released, however, punishment does not stop when the time is done.<sup>18</sup> 5.3 million Americans (one in forty-one adults), have temporarily or permanently lost their voting rights as a result of a felony conviction.<sup>19</sup> In 1996, Congress passed the “welfare reform” act, and Section 115 of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA). These acts created a federal lifetime ban on access to entitlements for anyone convicted of a drug-related crime.<sup>20</sup> Many states have modified this restriction, however, as of 2010, thirty-eight states impose some restrictions on access to benefits for those convicted of a drug-related crime. In twenty-six states, according to the Legal Action Center, employers and occupational licensing agencies – from cosmetology to real estate - can deny applicants a job or professional licensure

because of their criminal record. In a whopping thirty-eight states, asking a job candidate about arrests that did *not* lead to conviction is also legal.<sup>21</sup>

Between 1984 and 2000, across all states and the District of Columbia, state spending on prisons increased six times faster than spending on higher education.<sup>23</sup> States build new prisons and detention centers while resources shrink for both public and post-secondary educational institutions. These budgetary priorities and corresponding public initiatives are not economically sound. Research suggests that just one more year of high school would significantly reduce incarceration (and crime) rates. Raising the male high school graduation rate simply by one percent would result in the nation saving, by one estimate, 1.4 billion dollars.<sup>24</sup>

In addition, disproportionately high levels of incarceration for people with mental health issues signal further fundamental problems with the Prison Industrial Complex. When jails in L.A., New York, and Chicago (L.A. County jails, Rikers Island County Jail, and Cook County Jail) serve as three of the largest institutions worldwide currently used to house people diagnosed with mental illness, our nation's mental health care system has more than failed.

The poverty-stricken, the homeless, the young, queer people, people of color, gender non-conforming people, the mentally ill, the undocumented, addicts, and increasingly women: these are the faces of our prison population. By creating laws that specifically target these groups, our government essentially establishes a carceral nation. Instead of spending money on drug treatment programs, meaningful employment initiatives, health care, affordable housing and public education, our tax dollars funnel the most vulnerable populations into the prison system so that they may languish with little-to-no access to needed resources. Despite repeated findings that there is no real correlation between incarceration and the country's crime rate, we insist on imprisonment as our first, and really our only, response to all kinds of harm.<sup>25</sup>

This is not justice.

This is not humane.

*This must change.*

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AND

"Since 1985, the number of women incarcerated in the U.S. has grown by 404%", <[http://www.sentencingproject.org/doc/publications/womenincj\\_total.pdf](http://www.sentencingproject.org/doc/publications/womenincj_total.pdf)>

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*Jane Addams*  
Hull-House Museum