



The Women of San Quentin - Soul Murder of Transgender Women in Male Prisons

Kristin Schreier Lyseggen

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True stories about nine transgender women in the male US prison system who grew up never feeling safe, who were surrounded by others telling them that they should be normal, and that their deepest sense of who they were was an error. As the number of transgender people coming out reaches levels we never before dreamed of, author Kristin Lyseggen hopes this book will shed some light on the needs of people locked up twice in their lives. She started writing this book as soon as she moved to California from Norway, just before we learned that Private Bradley Manning was Chelsea Manning and before we knew about the popular Netflix TV show Orange Is the New Black. In real life, most women with gender identity issues, when jailed, are put in male prisons with notorious predators. The only options for many of them in order to survive is to live isolated in cages, or become sex slaves for other inmates. For Kristin Lyseggen to understand the reality of their lives, she had to gain trust from people she had never met and never expected to meet. This book project led Kristin from the war zone in East Oakland, California, to the run-down, chaotic intensity of the Tenderloin district in San Francisco; she traveled from a boundary breaking Transgender Health Conference in Bangkok to a clandestine LGBTQI advocacy conference in Nairobi, Kenya; from an event to raise funds for incarcerated transgender women in Oakland where one speaker was (former FBI s Most Wanted) Angela Davis, a professor at University of California; to conservative Rome, Georgia and Montgomery, Alabama; to a maximum security prison in the Central Valley of California. Without exception the stories she encountered during this project were diverse and different from one another in ways that were surprising and often disturbing. Kristin was introduced to an almost inconceivable struggle heaped upon the usual stories of people incarcerated in US prisons. In spite of the conditions of their lives, they taught her that what landed them behind bars, and the contradictory feelings one has about their crimes, there could be the possibility of redemption.

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