

ORDER MY STEPS

A woman in blue scrubs and a police officer are walking away from the camera down a prison hallway. The hallway has grey brick walls with a yellow and blue stripe. The lighting is dim, with overhead fluorescent lights.

an incarcerated woman
reaches out to her daughter
after 20 years of silence...

A Letter from the Director

At the heart of 'Order My Steps' is the truth that incarceration shreds family bonds. Children are the "hidden victims" of our broken criminal justice system. They suffer lifelong consequences from the trauma of forced separation - often compounded by poverty, lack of adult support, or a dangerous living environment. A child's ache of abandonment can harden into a sense of betrayal by the person at the center of her life. Broken systems make child-parent reconciliation immensely difficult.

Everyone on our team, in one way or another, has interacted with these broken systems.

(continued)

The experience of our producer, Eva Minemar, whose father was in prison during much of her childhood, speaks to the core issues of 'Order My Steps.' Recalling prison visits with her father, Eva writes :

"I remember being told to smile but the best I could do was grit my teeth because I was holding on as tight as I could... The system was cold, rigid, mean, and treated the families of the incarcerated like the incarcerated themselves. This would not be my last memory of what it was like to love someone who is trapped on the inside. This would not be the last time my father was sent 'away'."



"Daddy's first day home from prison"
(Eva, age 6)



"The second, but not the last"
(Eva, age 13)

'Order My Steps' intimately dramatizes the stakes of long-term detention. It builds a story arc in which an incarcerated mother and her grown daughter reunite in defiance of the broken systems that have kept them apart.

Mirra Bank, Director

“I keep it with me, as I said.
Reminded me all these years
that my little girl was out there...
somewhere...”

Peg Rives





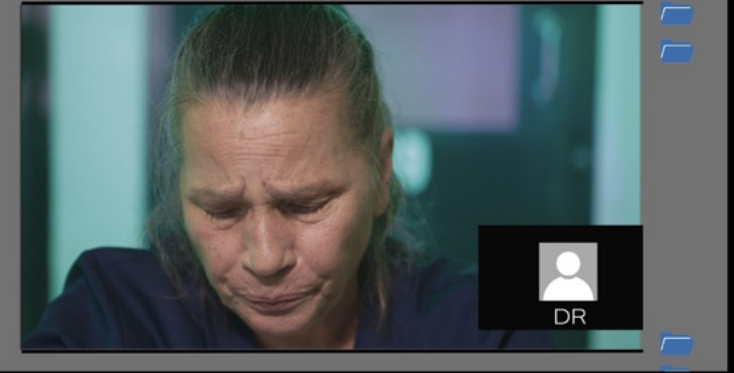
Peg Rives serves time for fatally stabbing a state senator in a drug-fueled fight. Peg has made strides in prison with the help of Marcus, an ex-addict and Sister Eva, a charismatic pastor. But in order to obtain an early release she must prove she has support on the outside.

Who can Peg call on? Her friends are dead or imprisoned. **She lost touch with her daughter, Dorian in the chaos of serial foster placements.** But when she sees a baby being torn from an incarcerated mother a deep yearning gnaws at her.



Now, as a parole hearing looms, Peg reaches out to find Dorian.

It begins online. But when Peg logs on for the first meeting, **Dorian refuses to turn on her camera or mic, only "chatting" to communicate.** Peg goes along. It's a start. But, the strained meeting blows up when Peg asks Dorian to write a letter supporting her release.



DR: Let's not get ahead of ourselves.

That meeting sets off an avalanche in both their worlds. Without the letter, Peg loses her parole appeal and her old patterns take hold. She tangles with old enemies, wields her kitchen knife, ditches her prayer meetings and hooks up with her old supplier.

Dorian assaults a student and gets hit with a suspension. At home, her use of alcohol and prescription drugs escalates. When she passes out by the pool and her son almost drowns, her husband, Xavier leaves with the children warning her...



"Like it or not you are becoming your mother."



Finally, Dorian heads to the prison to reckon with the woman responsible for this mess. **She and Peg have a gloves-off showdown.** Peg takes her daughter's blows as best she can...until she can't. When she lashes out, a guard pulls them apart.

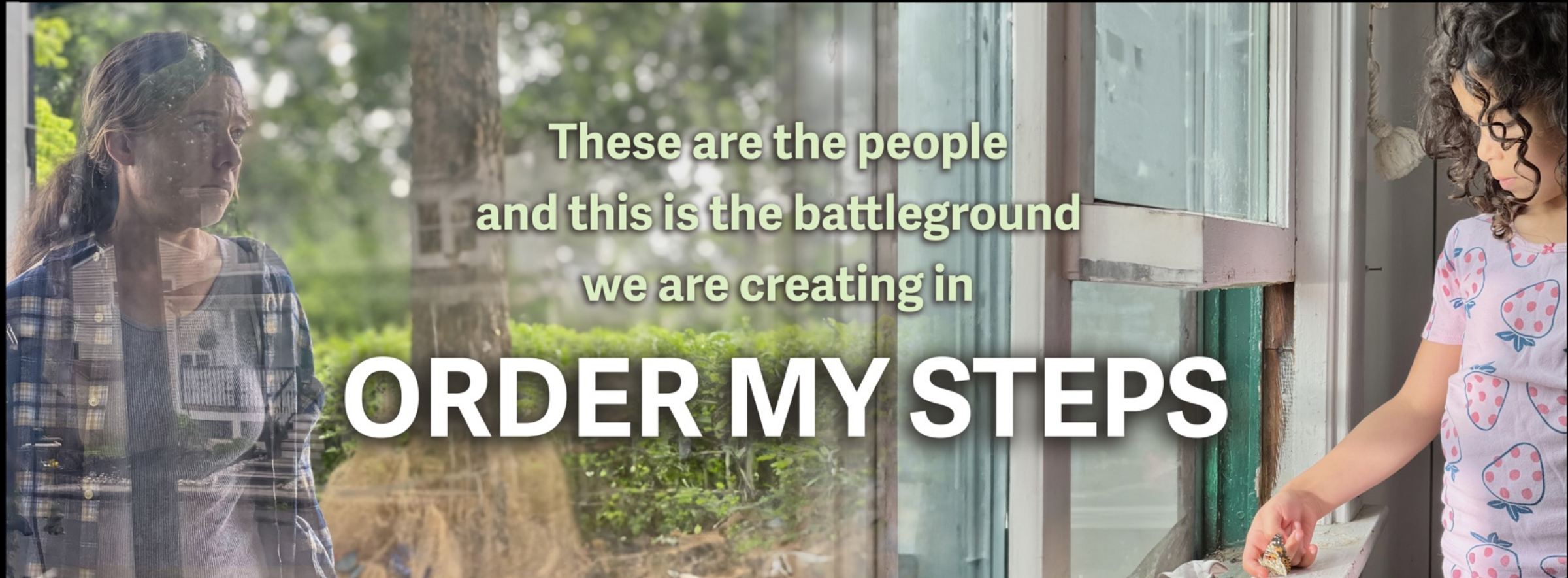
When she leaves the prison, **Dorian visits her childhood home in Divine.** She sees the staircase where she observed things no child should ever have to see.



She begins to piece together a memory of the night her mother killed the senator that is at odds with the case presented at trial.

Could it be that her mother was incarcerated all these years unjustly and did Dorian's silence enable this injustice?

This question opens Dorian's heart to her mother and the other people in her life who have been trying to love her. Finally, mother and daughter must join forces to undo what the broken systems of foster care and criminal justice wrought so many years ago.



**These are the people
and this is the battleground
we are creating in**

ORDER MY STEPS



Peg Rives

- 48-year-old, white female
- born in Divine, WV
- one daughter who grew up in foster care - estranged
- incarcerated 2003 for voluntary manslaughter
- given extra time for possession of an illegal drug and three separate incidents of assault while in prison
- achieved sobriety (2 yrs), HS equivalency and certificate in culinary arts

Casting



Jennifer Jason
Leigh



Patricia
Arquette



Melissa
Leo

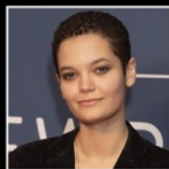




Dorian Rives

- 29-year-old mixed race female born in Divine, WV
- educated at the graduate level
- married with 2 children, 3 and 5 years of age
- teaches history at Staunton HS
- flagged for aggressive behaviors in the classroom

Casting



Ripley
Parker



Aubrey
Plaza



Zendaya





Marcus

- 34-year-old African-American male born in Youngstown, Ohio
- ex-addict in recovery for 7 years
- working as a social worker at Lakin Correctional Facility
- exemplary work record for all 3 years



Sister Eva

- 55-year-old African-American female
- convicted of several counts of first degree homicide-serving a life term for setting a blaze, intending to kill her husband and killing several in the building
- now an ordained minister in a Christian denomination

PRISON FACTS

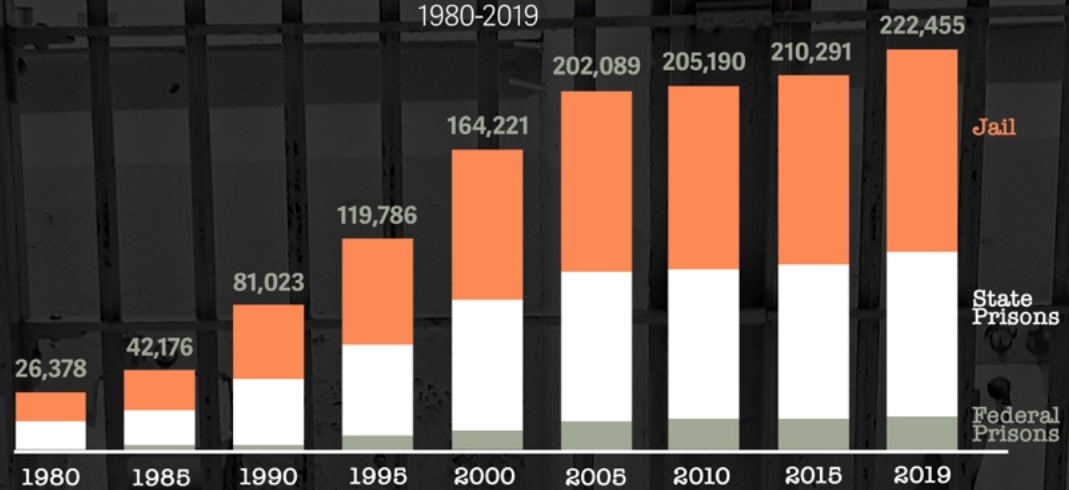


Only **1/3** of prisoner have regular visits.

Two American studies examining visitation patterns and misconduct found that consistent visitation was associated with less prisoner misconduct.

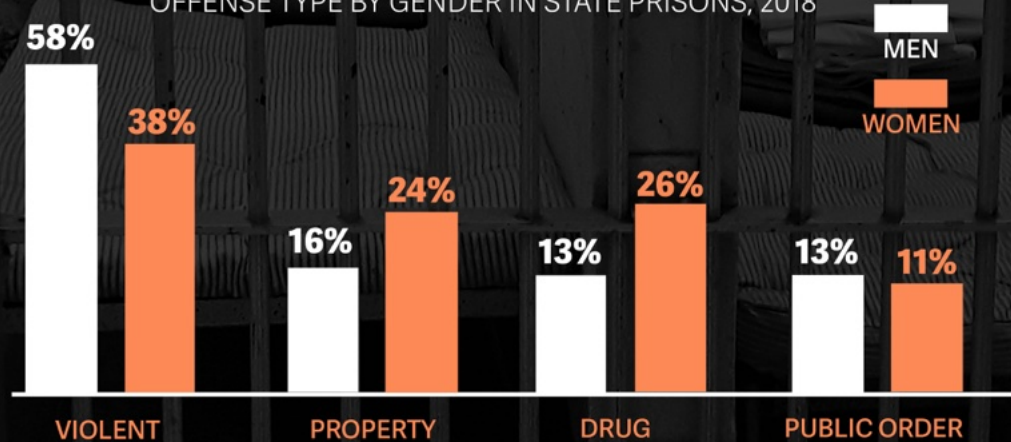
Another study found that experiencing visitation resulted in a **26%** decrease in recidivism.

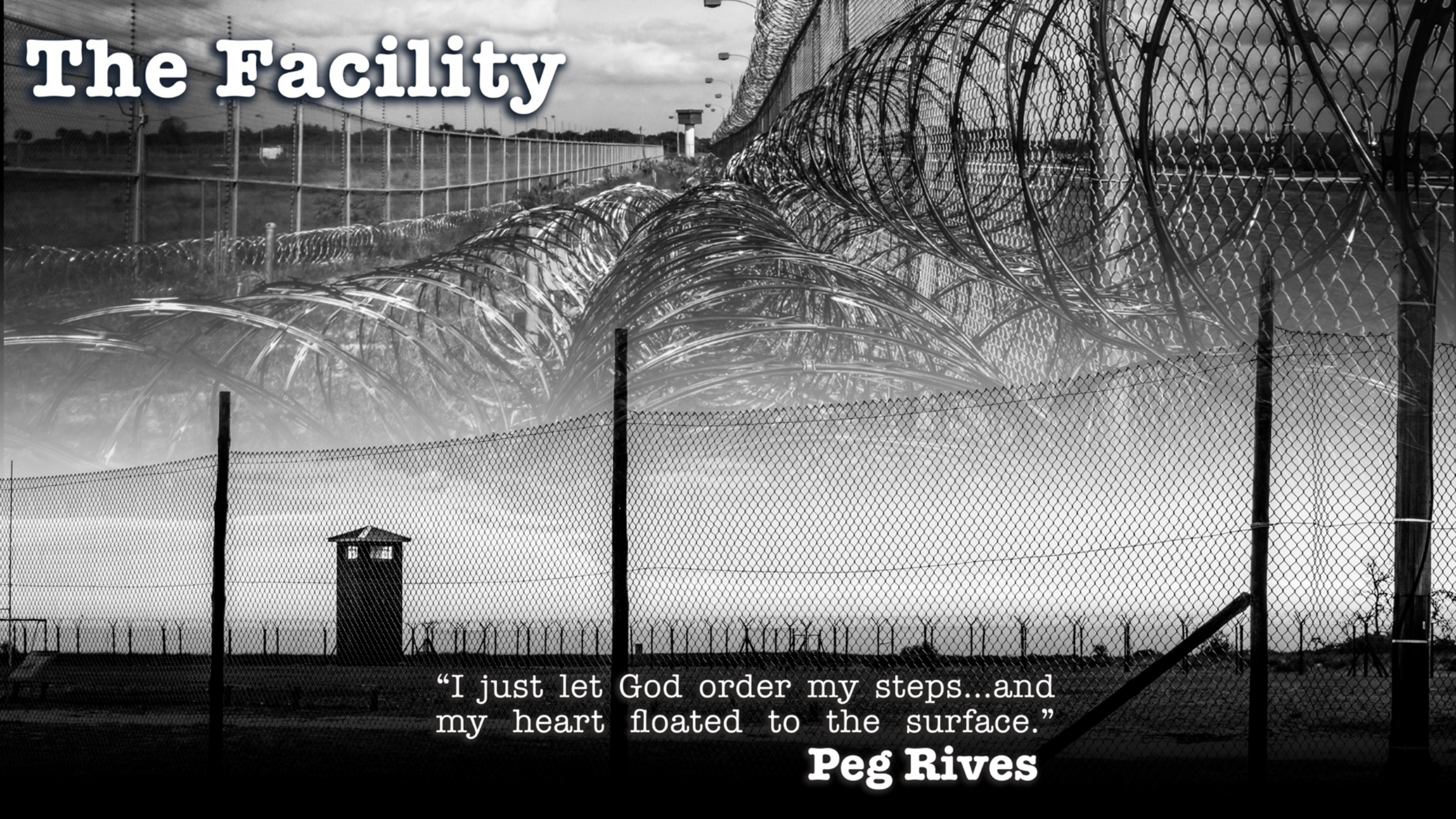
The Rise in Women's Incarceration



Incarcerated Women and Girls

OFFENSE TYPE BY GENDER IN STATE PRISONS, 2018





The Facility

“I just let God order my steps...and
my heart floated to the surface.”

Peg Rives

Divine, WV



DANGER
BLASTING
AREA
AHEAD

“I’m like the abandoned buildings in Divine, after the coal companies left, shot through with damage and rot.”

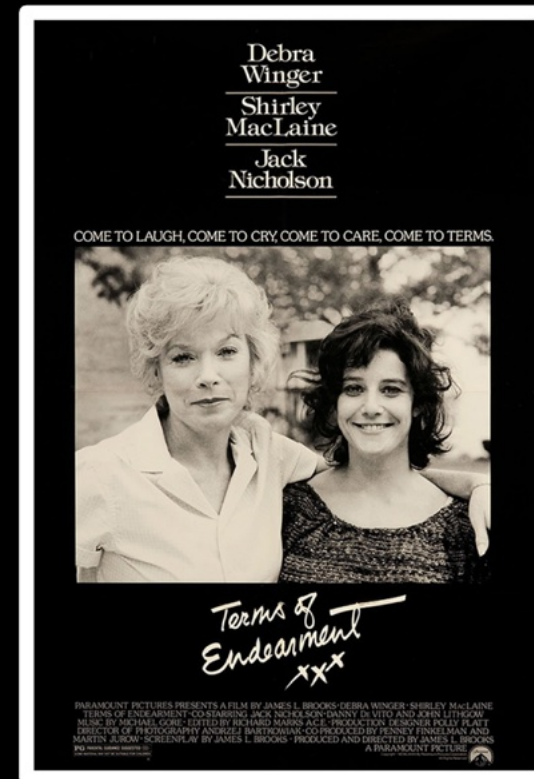
Peg Rives

Dorian's World



"I didn't say I was alright."
Dorian Rives

COMPARABLES



Mirra Bank

Director



Mirra Bank is an award-winning director, and member of AMPAS, whose work has international reach. She shot her anti-poaching documentary feature, NO FEAR NO FAVOR, in wilderness areas in sub-Saharan Africa. Bank's THE ONLY REAL GAME (Sedona Film Festival "Director's Choice" Award, with narration by Academy Award Winner, Melissa Leo) explores that healing passion for American baseball in strife-torn northeast India. In LAST DANCE, short-listed for an Academy Award, Bank followed a stormy collaboration between Pilobolus and the legendary author-illustrator Maurice Sendak as they created a Holocaust-themed dance work. Also with Pilobolus, Bank directed MONKEY & THE BONE DEMON a cyberPunk take on a Chinese fable created for the Wolfrap Foundation. Another collaboration, LUCID DREAMS, was a music/dance film performance that premiered at Carnegie Hall. Bank's PBS non-fiction feature, NOBODY'S GIRLS, illuminates the lives of Old West minority women, with notable leads from Esther Rolle, Tantoo Cardinal, and Cloris Leachman. Her film adaptation of three Grace Paley stories, ENORMOUS CHANGES AT THE LAST MINUTE (Sundance premiere), starred Ellen Barkin, David Strathairn, and Kevin Bacon, with a screenplay by John Sayles. Bank is an NEA, NEH, CPB, NYSCA, NYFA, and American Film Institute Award recipient; a MacDowell Fellow and film panelist; and a Smith College Medalist in Arts. Bank is a past president of New York Women in Film and Television and serves on the Board of Directors of the National Board of Review of Motion Pictures. She is a Lifetime Member of the Actors Studio as a Director, and has directed original plays on New York's Theater Row, in London, and in Italy.



Kathryn Grant

Writer/Producer

Kathryn is an award-winning writer whose full-length plays include *The Wound of Love*, *The Good Counselor*, *Handicapped People in Their Formal Attire*, *The Alabaster Virgin*, *The Khmer Shiva*, *Order My Steps*, and *Aliyah*. She has received the Berilla Kerr Award in playwriting, the Jerry Kaufman award in playwriting, The Premiere Stages Festival Award, and a citation from The Harold and Mimi Steinberg/ATCA New Play Award. Her plays have been presented at The Actors Studio, Penguin Repertory Theater, the John Houseman Studio Theater, Provincetown Repertory Theater, Premiere Stages in New Jersey, Theater Breaking Through Barriers, 1st stages in DC, Ensemble Theater's Octoberfest, and the American Renaissance Theater. Her work is published by Samuel French, Smith and Krause, and Applause Books. Her first series, adapted from her play, *The Good Counselor* is in development with Vicki McCarty of Covington, International. She lives in New York with her husband, actor, and director, Ed Setrakian.



Mulberry Queens Films

Producer

A unique boutique agency founded by female creative duo & close friends Eva Minemar and Dolores Diaz. Mulberry Queens Films provides production from concept to completion. Specializing in representing the unrepresented in TV & Film, MQ remains committed to supporting projects for women by women and equality both in front and behind the camera. MQ projects range from cutting-edge documentaries to feature film, TV, commercials, theatre, and music videos to film festival programming and event coordination. Current projects range from Sundance finalists, HBO, Oscar qualified films to award-winning cultural arts festivals worldwide.



CONTACT:

Mulberry Queens Films

917-513-8497

ordermystepsfilm@gmail.com

FOR PRESS INQUIRIES

CONTACT:

BetsyShermanPR

480-406-9556

betsyshermanaz@gmail.com