



Free Chrystul Kizer and
All Criminalized
Survivors:
A Curriculum

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Introduction

Thank you for supporting our efforts to [#FreeChrystul](#) and for using the Free Chrystul Kizer and All Criminalized Survivors: A Curriculum. This curriculum is an adapted version of the “Criminalizing Bresha Meadows: A Teach-In” written by Mariame Kaba of Survived and Punished in 2016 for the [#FreeBresha](#) campaign. Kaba wrote the “Defining Criminalization” and “Timeline Activity” and created the flow of the curriculum while organizers of the Hands of Chrystul Kizer campaign added information to highlight Chrystul Kizer and the criminalization of sex trafficking survivors. Our goal in adapting this curriculum is provide people a tool to inform their communities about the criminalization of sex trafficking survival and the specific factors that led to the criminalization of Chrystul Kizer. We are grateful to Bresha Meadows and her fight for freedom which made this curriculum possible. Thank to Mariame Kaba of Survived and Punished for allowing our campaign to adapt her curriculum. Thank you to all criminalized survivors who are teaching us how to fight for freedom!

[#FreeChrystul](#) [#FreeThemAll](#)

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#FreeChrystul Teach-In Outline

Learning Objectives for this Workshop:

1. To understand the connection between sex trafficking and the criminalization of youth survivors of this violence.
2. To understand the factors that led to Chrystul Kizer's criminalization.

Introductions (15 minutes)

Name, access needs (for example - would people be able to speak louder), gender pronouns if would like to, why you are here at this teach-in.

Facilitator Note: You will certainly have survivors of sexual violence and other forms of violence in the room. Make sure that you have a list of sexual violence and other resources with you so that you can share those with people who might need them as they leave. Also, make sure that you tell everyone at the start of the teach-in/workshop that if they find themselves feeling overwhelmed, it's OK to get up and take a break.

Defining Criminalization (15 minutes)

Facilitator Instructs: We are going to create a mindmap as a group to get a sense of how we collectively understand youth criminalization.

Facilitator writes YOUTH in a circle in the middle of flip chart paper or blackboard

Facilitator asks:

Who are the most important people in the lives of children and young people?

Facilitator Note: write the participants' answers outside of the circle that says youth - create a second circle around the answers.

"What are the key institutions that have an impact on young people's lives? Courts, DCFS, Schools, Families, Church, Police, Businesses, Media, Health Care, etc.

Facilitator Note: write the participants' answers outside of the circle about most important people - create a third circle around these answers - so your map should look like a set of concentric circles.

c. How do/can these institutions contribute to the criminalization of young people? For example, schools can excessively suspend and expel children and youth, pushing them to drop out which increases their likelihood of coming into contact with the criminal punishment system

d. Based on our mind map, what is criminalization?

Criminalization is “the process by which behaviors and individuals are transformed into crime and criminals.” Previously legal acts may be transformed into crimes by legislation or judicial decision.

“Criminalization is a process by which certain practices that had been legal are made illegal. By defining activities associated with certain groups as criminal, those groups themselves come to be seen and treated as dangerous, often justifying extreme and subtle violence against those people.”

The process does not happen in a vacuum, but rather is a strategy in the continued oppression of marginalized groups – including people of color, the poor, women, youth, LGBTQ, disabled people.

Criminalization is not simply the creation of new laws and punishments, but includes also socially defining certain practices (or ways of being) as criminal. We understand the criminalization of youth to be not only legislation to restrict the rights and activities of young people, but a web of cultural impressions, practices, and myths through which youth generally – and especially youth of color – come to be viewed as generally criminal by dominant culture.”

Source: Prison Activist Resource Center, Criminalization of Youth
Presenter’s Packet

Facilitator Background Information

This is information that you can use to supplement the discussion if you feel it is needed

According to sociologist Victor Rios, “criminalization was a central, pervasive and ubiquitous phenomenon that impacted the everyday lives of the young people [he]

stuided. He adds:

“By the time they formally entered the penal system, many of these young men were already caught up in a spiral of hypercriminalization and punishment. The cycle began before their first arrest — it began as they were harassed, profiled, watched, and disciplined at young ages, before they had committed any crimes. Eventually, that kind of attention led many of them to fulfill the destiny expected of them.”

Rios defines hypercriminalization as “the process by which an individual’s everyday behaviors and styles become ubiquitously treated as deviant, risky, threatening, or criminal, across social contexts.”

“This hypercriminalization, in turn, has a profound impact on young people’s perceptions, worldviews, and life outcomes. The youth control complex creates an overarching system of regulating the lives of marginalized young people, what I refer to as punitive social control.

Hypercriminalization involves constant punishment. Punishment, in this study, is understood as the process by which individuals come to feel stigmatized, outcast, shamed, defeated, or hopeless as a result of negative interactions and sanctions imposed by individuals who represent institutions of social control.”

Timeline Activity (20 to 40 minutes) Facilitator points (5 minutes)

This timeline (see p. 18) provides a look at the criminalization of surviving sex trafficking.

Remind participants that this is not an exhaustive review of every single issue related to the criminalization sex trafficking survival, but is only a sampling of select events. Tell them that they will be invited to add what they know and think is important to this history on the timeline.

Exercises like this are helpful because they show the historic and current ways that people and communities are impacted by government, political events, and cultural events.

Timelines are also a way to share our history of resistance, and tell the story of the ways people affected by these issues have fought back in small and big ways and have succeeded in creating social change.

There are at least two ways that you can structure this activity depending on group size, space, etc. If you have a lot of wall space and want to streamline the activity, you can set it up as a gallery walk. You can do small group discussion. Or you can make it a streamlined activity.

I. Gallery Walk Version (35 minutes total)

Preparation: Before your teach-in begins, post timeline cards on your walls in chronological order.

Facilitator Instructs: Find a partner, ideally someone who you don't know, and tour the timeline. Feel free to chat as you tour, once you're done take a seat. **(15 minutes)**

Debrief Timeline - 20 min (Large group or in pairs)

Once everyone is done touring, ask the following questions to help surface what participants saw and learned.

Flip chart the following questions, one per page. Write up people's answers as the discussion moves forward:

- What did you learn or what was surprising about the timeline?
- What's missing from the timeline? What would you add?

II. Streamlined Timeline Activity (limited time and space, 20 minutes)

There are some instances where facilitators might want to include some historical background but are pressed for time or perhaps have limited space. In that case, you can do a streamlined version of the timeline activity.

Give out 8 to 10 timeline cards to 8 to 10 different participants.

Facilitator Note: *make sure that you pre-select the events that you think will best illustrate how survivors of sex trafficking been criminalized throughout history.*

Review the timeline in chronological order by asking participants to come up and present/explain the event/historical moment they have and place it on the timeline (on a wall, blackboard, etc.).

At the end of the activity, facilitator says: "Now that we have filled out the timeline, what do you notice is a recurring theme?"

Facilitator notes that may be helpful to bring up:

- The state intervenes but does not offer any solutions other than criminalization. The legal changes made (such as criminalizing human trafficking) does not end human trafficking or provide healing for survivors.

- Anti-trafficking laws come into place but grassroots organizations and defense campaigns are the organizations that get people free and provide the healing services survivors need/want.
- Survivors are still being punished for living. Actions of self-defense and other means of survival are criminalized. For example, each survivor that was mentioned on this timeline was labeled as “criminal” by that state for taking resources from the violent scene they were escaping instead of being seen as gathering resources they needed to leave the violence (transportation, money).

Chrystul’s Story (30 minutes)

Facilitator Points: Use the Sex Trafficking Fact Sheet (see p. 12) to share key information and statistics with participants.

1. Handout copies of Washington Post Excerpt (see p. 13). Facilitator instructs participants to silently read the story.
2. When reading is done, ask the following questions:
 - a. What happened?
 - i. Helpful information to make note of:
 - i. Kenosha Police and the Kenosha County District Attorney were aware of the violence that Volar was engaging with black girls prior to Chrystul’s act of self-defense.
 - ii. Volar had been grooming Chrystul since 2016 to engage in sex trafficking. Volar built a rapport with Chrystul and then used this relationship to coerce her into being trafficked.
 - iii. Volar had been threatening Chrystul’s life for months prior to their last interaction.
 - iv. Chrystul was actively being attacked by Volar. In order to get away from him, she shot him.
 - b. What are the factors that led to Chrystul’s criminalization? Consider how the Kenosha Police Department and District Attorney of Kenosha County had been aware of Volar’s violence against black girls. How did anti-blackness function in the criminalization of Chrystul’s survival?
 - i. Helpful information to make note of:
 - i. Due to the United State’s history of racism against black women and femmes, Graveley and the Kenosha Police Department did not deem

Chrystul and the other black girls as trafficking victims.

- ii. Anti-black sexism shaped the way that the police and Graveley viewed Chrystul and the other black girls as adults - or people who knew and freely consented in what they were involved in.
- c. Were there any points where a positive intervention might have made a difference for her?
- I. Discussion note: What if Chrystul had been treated as a survivor from the beginning? What types of services, safety and healing plans could have been made if Chrystul's healing needs had been made a priority as soon as Volar had been outed as engaging in sex trafficking?

Conclusion

Facilitator States: Thank you for taking the time to learn about Chrystul Kizer and the criminalization of sex trafficking survival. Right now, Kenosha County District Attorney Michael Graveley has the power to drop all charges against Chrystul - allowing her to go home to heal with her family and community. Unfortunately, as you learned in this workshop, Graveley's punitive actions are aligned with the history of criminalizing the self-defense of black women, girls and femmes in the United States. What you have also learned is that as people are punished, criminalized survivors organize with other supporters to get free. Right now, Chrystul Kizer and the Hands Off Chrystul Kizer campaign are asking you to call, write, and email DA Michael Graveley to urge him to drop all charges against sex trafficking survivor Chrystul Kizer. You may also send letters of love and support to Chrystul. Thank you again for joining us!

Tell DA Michael Graveley to Drop the Charges!

Phone: (262)-653-2400; Email: Michael.Graveley@da.wi.gov

Mailing Address: Molinaro Building 912 56th Street Kenosha, WI 53140

Send Letters of Support to Chrystul

Chrystul Kizer (ID: 138378)
Kenosha County Pre Trial Facility
1000 55th St Kenosha, WI 53140

GUIDE TO WRITING LETTERS TO INCARCERATED SURVIVORS

From California Coalition of Women Prisoners - adapted by Survived & Punished

Goals of letter-writing to incarcerated survivors:

- Strengthen our connection to criminalized survivors and collectively resist their disappearance;
- Strengthen and guide the anti-violence movement by gathering and sharing information on how survival is criminalized;
- Respect and promote the leadership of incarcerated survivors by responding to requests for information and by asking for their input in all matters of their survival and release;
- Connect incarcerated survivors with information, resources and support;
- Monitor and resist abusive prison conditions;
- Inform us of upcoming release possibilities for incarcerated survivors, including parole hearings and commutation processes, so that we can advocate with survivors for their release;
- Resist the isolation that incarceration of all forms creates, paying particular attention to how incarcerated women and transgender people disproportionately suffer the loss of outside support systems;
- Express our solidarity with incarcerated survivors

Values that guide our communication with incarcerated survivors:

- Strengthen our connection to criminalized survivors and collectively resist their disappearance;
- Strengthen and guide the anti-violence movement by gathering and sharing information on how survival is criminalized;
- Respect and promote the leadership of incarcerated survivors by responding to requests for information and by asking for their input in all matters of their survival and release;
- Connect incarcerated survivors with information, resources and support;
- Monitor and resist abusive prison conditions;
- Inform us of upcoming release possibilities for incarcerated survivors, including parole hearings and commutation processes, so that we can advocate with survivors for their release;
- Resist the isolation that incarceration of all forms creates, paying particular attention to how incarcerated women and transgender people disproportionately suffer the loss of outside support systems;

- Express our solidarity with incarcerated survivors.

Other things to consider when writing to incarcerated survivors:

- Please be aware of the scarcity of resources for incarcerated survivors and the power differential that creates — do not make commitments or promises that you cannot keep.
- Please keep in mind the mixed literacy levels among incarcerated people and try to respond appropriately — ask questions to help assess what the survivor needs and what is the most accessible way for them to receive support.
- Remember that letters will be opened by prison staff — ask survivors to let you know what they are comfortable sharing and discussing by mail.
- Please be aware of prison rules for mail sent to incarcerated people.



Child Sex Trafficking Fact Sheet

- Over 293,000 American children are at risk of becoming child sex trafficking victims.
- While only 19% of victims are trafficked for sex, sexual exploitation earns 66% of the global profits of human trafficking. The average annual profits generated by each woman in forced sexual servitude (\$100,000) is estimated to be six times more than the average profits generated by each trafficking victim worldwide (\$21,800), according to the Organization for Security and Co operation in Europe (OSCE).
- Every year, 300,000 children are forced into prostitution and pornography.
- Child sex trafficking victims could be anyone regardless of social economic status, race, or gender.
- According to the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the average age of entry into sex trafficking for boys is between 11 and 13 years old. The average age of entry for girls is between 12 and 14 years old.
- Many victims of child sex trafficking are runaway children. According to the National Center of Missing and Exploited Children, one in five runaways were trafficked in 2015.
- There are many complex reasons behind childrens' decision to leave home. Some kids come from abusive backgrounds, while others are abandoned by their families. Impulse, angst, and rebellion can also push them out of the home, the FBI reports. Often, these kids enter the sex trafficking system to support themselves. Victims are often taken far away from the home, family and friends. Using false identification and paperwork, traffickers can transport kids across the country as a part of large-scale prostitution rings and crime networks. Traffickers use violence, drugs, emotional tactics and money to control children.
- Sex traffickers frequently subject their victims to debt-bondage, an illegal practice in which the traffickers tell their victims that they owe money (often relating to the victims' living expenses and transport into the country) and that they must pledge their personal services to repay the debt.
- Sex traffickers use a variety of methods to "condition" their victims including starvation, confinement, beatings, physical abuse, rape, gang rape, threats of violence to the victims and the victims' families, forced drug use and the threat of shaming their victims by revealing their activities to family and friends
- Traffickers spend a lot of time grooming the youth they are sex trafficking - often convincing them that they are the only ones that will truly care about and protect the youth they are trafficking. This level of manipulation distorts the youth's perception of victimization. It is easy for victims to bond to traffickers, as they often present themselves as loving adult figures. This trauma bonding prolongs the exploitation of trafficked youth, leaving many victims traumatized and in need of healing.
- Children do not normally self-identify as sex trafficking victims. Deception and manipulation leads many victims to believe their relationships are consensual and their lifestyles are normal.
- The U.S. Department of Education lists signs parents and community members can look out for if they believe a child is being trafficked. The child may have a change in material possessions or attire. They may have a "boyfriend" or "girlfriend" that is noticeably older. Also, the child may make sexual references not uncharacteristic of their age group.

If you or someone you know is a victim of trafficking, you can get help by contacting the National Human Trafficking hotline. Call 1-888-3737-888. Help #BRINGTHEMHOME.

Washington Post Article Excerpt: “He was sexually abusing under age girls. Then, police said, one of them killed him.”

by Jessica Contreras
December 17, 2019

When Chrystul was 16, she met a 33-year-old man named Randy Volar. Volar sexually abused Chrystul multiple times. He filmed it. She wasn't the only one — and in February 2018, police arrested Volar on charges including child sexual assault. But then, they released him without bail. Volar, a white man, remained free for three months, even after police discovered evidence that he was abusing about a dozen underage black girls. He remained free until Chrystul, then 17, went to his house one night in June and allegedly shot him in the head, twice. She lit his body on fire, police said, and fled in his car. A few days later, she confessed. District Attorney Michael Graveley, whose office knew about the evidence against Volar but waited to prosecute him, charged Chrystul with arson and first-degree intentional homicide, an offense that carries a mandatory life sentence in Wisconsin. Graveley says he believes Chrystul's crime was premeditated. The evidence, he argues, shows she planned to murder Volar so she could steal his BMW. Chrystul, now 19, maintains she was defending herself. Speaking publicly from jail for the first time, she said that when she told Volar she didn't want to have sex that night, he pinned her to the floor. “I didn't intentionally try to do this,” she said.

Prior to his death, Volar had been investigated by the Kenosha police for sexual misconduct

against children. But most of what detectives needed to know was already sitting in a police file. The “runaway” report mentioned by dispatchers was actually something much more serious: a sex crimes investigation that had been underway for months. It began with another 911 call, this one just before 1 a.m. on Feb. 12, 2018. According to police reports obtained by The Washington Post, a 15-year-old girl calling from Volar's house told dispatchers that a man had given her drugs, and now he was going to kill her. Then, she hung up. Officers found her wandering the streets, wearing only a bra under an unzipped jacket. Her pupils were dilated. She said she had taken LSD. The girl eventually told police she met Volar the year before when he responded to an ad on Backpage.com. The site was one of the country's largest prostitution marketplaces until it was shut down for involvement in human trafficking last year. The girl said Volar paid her \$250 for sex the first time they met — when she was 14 — then \$100 each time after that. She told police he knew how old she was, because when she suggested he find women his own age, he elaborated on why he preferred the bodies of young girls like her.

In December 2017, the girl ran away from home and moved in with Volar. He gave her

money, took her shopping and even took her out to dinner with his mother, she said. The girl showed signs of what sex crimes experts call “trauma bonding.” Volar was nice to her, she said, and she didn’t want to get him in trouble. She called him her “friend.” She said Volar was sexually abusing other underage girls, too — and filming it. She’d seen the videos. “Sometimes he goes to Milwaukee to find young girls,” the police report said. She told detectives the first names of at least three of them, including one named “Chrystal.”

On Feb. 22, police searched Volar’s house. They confiscated laptops, hard drives and memory cards, along with women’s pajamas, bikini bottoms and underwear. Volar was arrested. The charges: child enticement, using a computer to facilitate a child sex crime and second-degree sexual assault of a child, a felony punishable by up to 40 years in state prison.

Volar spent \$20,000 to hire a criminal defense attorney, but three months passed before police sent the case to the district attorney’s office. The file showed what was found in Volar’s house: “hundreds” of child pornography videos, featuring girls who appear to be as young as 12, and more than 20 “home videos” of Volar with underage black girls. Still, Volar was not taken into custody. No sex crimes case was entered into the Wisconsin court system. Twelve days later, Volar was dead. Although police hadn’t tracked down all the other girls in Volar’s videos, they did describe most of them in their reports as “mid teens” or “early teens.” Investigators wrote that one appeared to be 13 or 14. Another, they thought might be as young as 12. In the case against Volar, the lead investigator described the 15-year-old who ran from his house as “prostituting herself out” in his report.

The detective started flipping through the pictures, searching for one face in particular. And then, he found it. There was Chrystal Kizer, her arms wrapped around her body, smiling at the camera. Chrystal first said she met Volar at a bus stop. Later, she confessed she met him after he responded to an advertisement she had posted on Backpage.com. She needed money for snacks and school notebooks, she said, and a girl she knew showed her how to use the site. Volar was the first to respond. In the fall of 2016, Chrystal met Volar when she was 16 and he was 33 years old. “At first, I was nervous,” she said. “And then I told him okay.” Before long, she was seeing Volar every other week. She said he was always complimenting her brown eyes, her colorful wigs, her 104-pound body. He took her on dates and let her order steak. He bought her a heart-shaped locket, got her a phone and let her drive his cars. She didn’t need to post on Backpage.com again; he took her shopping and gave her cash she could share with her sisters, sometimes \$500 at a time. She made excuses to Nelson and her mom about where the gifts were coming from. She knew what Volar expected in return. But she didn’t think it was wrong. “He was the only friend that I actually had,” she said.

She is sure Volar knew her real age because in the summer of 2017, he invited her to his house to celebrate her 17th birthday. “He had bought me cupcakes,” Chrystal recalled. “And he had gave me this new drug I had never heard about called acid. It made me feel weird.” A few weeks later, Chrystal was arrested. Milwaukee police said she was driving a car that her brother had reportedly stolen when they tried to pull her over. According to police, she sped away, then ran. She was charged with fleeing an officer.

In Wisconsin, 17-year-olds are charged as adults. After 55 days in jail, her bond was reduced to \$400. Volar paid it. Chrystul said he made clear what specific sex acts he wanted in return. “I told him that I never wanted to do that,” Chrystul said. “He said that I had to owe him that.” She began to try to cut Volar out of her life. To her mother’s dismay, she moved in with her boyfriend. Chrystul said she told Volar she wanted to get serious with Nelson, so she couldn’t see him anymore. “He had started to talk violent and stuff,” she said. “I was going to stop talking to him, and he said if I did that he was going to kill me.” She never confided in anyone. She didn’t call the police. “They didn’t help my mom,” she explained.

Chrystul said she didn’t know about the other girls, Volar’s arrest or the videos confiscated by police. She said she didn’t know Volar filmed her. Eventually, those videos and the sex crimes file on Volar would be shared with Chrystul’s lawyer, who came to believe Volar’s involvement in sex trafficking went beyond just buying sex. Volar used cryptocurrency and anonymous browsers to access the dark web — tools popular with distributors of child pornography. In the videos Volar made, Chrystul’s lawyer told the judge, he describes himself as an “escort trainer.” He instructs one girl, the lawyer said, on “what she could do to keep body parts of hers in working order to be a better prostitute.” In another video, Volar tells a girl, “Do you want to post to Kenosha/Racine and see if anybody calls you and I’ll give you a ride.”

Only after multiple interviews with The Post did Chrystul describe, quietly, what that meant. Volar, she said, sold her through Backpage.com to other people. She said he would post ads, then drive her to hotels in Milwaukee, where men his age or older would spend 30 minutes with her. She gave Volar the money

she earned. Sometimes, she said, Volar would arrange for her to meet more than one man in a day.

“He told me to get the money first and then to text him once I was finished,” she said.

Once talkative and smiling during interviews, Chrystul grew more and more upset as she spoke. To most questions, she answered: “I don’t know.” She did not know the hotel names or how much the men paid. She did not know when it started or how many times it happened. She said she did not know how it made her feel. But she did know why she kept doing it. “Because he was a grown-up, and I wasn’t,” she said. “So I listened.”

In May 2018, Chrystul’s boyfriend started to grow suspicious. Nelson told Chrystul, and later the police, that he thought someone might be following her. He bought her a .380 pistol and taught her to shoot it in his backyard. He told her to carry it everywhere. On June 4, she appeared in Milwaukee court to plead guilty to the fleeing charge she had picked up nearly a year earlier. She said Nelson went with her, and by the afternoon, they were fighting. Worried he would hit her again, Chrystul said she texted Volar to ask whether she could come over. At 8:42 p.m., an Uber picked her up. The pistol, she said, was in her purse. “I had went into the house. ... He had ordered some pizza. We were smoking, and he asked me if I wanted to drink any liquor. And then he had gave me this drug. I don’t know what it’s called. And after that, we started to watch movies. ... And then, the drug, it made me feel weird or whatever.” She said Volar came to sit next to her. “He started to touch my leg and then like I had jumped and tell him that I didn’t want to do that.” “I just thought that I didn’t want to do that stuff anymore because I was trying to

change,” she said. Volar, Chrystul recalled, told her what she owed him. “I tried to get up, to get away from him but I had tripped, and I fell on the floor, and he had got on top of me,” she said. “And he was trying to like, rip my pants off, my jeans that I had on. ... I was, like, wiggling. Cause once me and [Nelson] had fought, he had tried to pin me down, but I’ll wiggle to get loose.” She doesn’t remember going to get the pistol. She does remember the sound it made. “Like a pop. A high pop,” she said. “I started to panic.”

Chrystul said she doesn’t remember the fire. She said Volar was planning to give her a laptop and a new car for her 18th birthday, and that’s why she took them. She said she lied to detectives at first because she was scared. But she knows a jury will examine those actions when they ask the central question about what happened between Chrystul and Volar: Who was the real victim? To Chrystul, the answer is clear. “Both of us,” she said. “Because of the stuff that he was doing to me. And, that he should have never died. ■

Questions About Chrystul's Story

What happened?

What factors led to Chrystul's criminalization?

Where were points a positive intervention might have made a difference?

What are alternative ways this incident could have been handled?



Racialized Gender-Based Violence & Criminalization: U.S.-Focused Historical Timeline

Pre-1492 Pre-European settler contact. The laws of many nations, including First Nations clan mother law, have community-based ways of dealing with rape and abuse, which are extremely rare. Marriage is not patriarchal; women have relationships as they like; relationships end when people want them to end; Two Spirit people are honored; many genders exist.

1492 European colonial invasion of North America begins (as colonization is also encroaching on Africa, Asia, Oceania, and Central and South America). White settlers employ enslavement of Black people.

1681 Beginning with Massachusetts's execution of Maria, a young enslaved woman, for arson-murder in September 1681, officials executed 58 enslaved women before 1790, and 126 enslaved women from 1790 to emancipation.

1855 On June 23, 1855, after enduring five years of sexual violence, Celia, a 19-year old Missouri enslaved woman killed her master, Robert Newsom. Her court-appointed defense lawyers suggested that a Missouri law permitting a woman to use deadly force to defend herself against sexual advances extended to enslaved as well as free women. Despite this vigorous defense, the court disagreed with the argument, and Celia was found guilty of murder and sentenced to death by hanging since she was deemed to be property and not person. After an appeal of the case failed, Celia was hanged on December 21, 1855.

1865 Thirteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution is passed and ratified, ending slavery (except for those convicted of a crime).

Black women kidnapped, robbed, and raped by Union soldiers during occupation of Richmond, Virginia.

1866 After the Memphis Riots of May 1866, Black women testify before Congress about their experiences of being gang-raped by mobs of white men. Frances Thompson, a formerly enslaved transgender person, and Lucy, a 17-year-old formerly enslaved girl testify before Congress about being assaulted, robbed, and raped in their home by

Compiled by Mariame Kaba & Ann Russo (with contributions from Alisa Bierria, Vikki Law, Chez Rumpf, Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha) - modified by curriculum authors

white men, including 2 police officers, during the Memphis Riots.

The “Black Codes” begin to be passed across the South – criminalizing vagrancy and creating new categories of crimes targeting Black people.

1873 The first prison completely devoted to women, the Indiana Reformatory Institution for Women and Girls, opens.



Women feeding chickens at the Indiana Women's Prison, early 20th century

1885 Congress passed the Major Crimes Act, destroying restorative justice approaches to dispute resolution among Native tribes and replacing them with a punitive model on Indian reservations. Lengthy labor and confinement in prison became punishment for Native youth (Bell & Ridolfi, 2008).

1888 In Wisconsin, after the governor assured the public that sex trafficking was not occurring despite rumors of trafficking being spread in the northern part of the state, the Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) conducted their own inquiry. Dr. Katherine Bushnell - physician, social activist and missionary - conducted the investigation. Bushnell spent four months visiting most cities of northern Wisconsin. After interviewing 600 'prostitutes' as well as many local physicians, attorneys, ministers and public offenders, Bushnell presented her findings in November of 1888 at a WCTU national meeting.

Bushnell contended that 'prostitution' and sex trafficking were rampant in northern Wisconsin. Not only were brothel keepers and traffickers illicitly profiting, she alleged, but so were businessmen, physicians, police officers and political officials. Many of the 'prostitutes' were being held against their will with threats of violence and legal action.

Bushnell and her report were subject to much hostility in the Wisconsin press. In spite of this criticism, Bushnell and the WCTU continued to pressure the state to do something about prostitution and sex trafficking. Despite their skepticism toward the charges made by Bushnell and others, the state legislature passed charges made by Bushnell and others, the state legislature passed several reforms addressing

prostitution and sex trafficking in 1889. The legislature enacted a separate statute with a lesser penalty making enticement of any woman for the purpose of prostitution illegal. The law also made it illegal to detain any woman at a brothel by force and against her will; imprisonment for convicted brothel keepers and owners was mandatory.

1910 Sarah Haley's research suggests that between 1910 and 1935, 40% of Black women in Georgia who applied for pardons after being convicted of murder claimed self-defense against partners/people who were sexual assaulting or using other types of physical violence against them.

1910 The Mann Act of 1910, as amended in 1978 and again in 1986, criminalizes the transportation of minors, and the coercion of adults to travel across state lines or to foreign countries, for the purpose of engaging in commercial sex. Both crimes are punishable with up to twenty years in prison, with enhanced punishment options for the transportation of a minor.

1930 The Tariff Act prohibits importing goods made with forced or indentured labor

1948 In 1948, Rosa Lee Ingram, a widowed mother of 12 children, was convicted and sentenced to death along with her two sons, Wallace and Sammie Lee, for killing a white man in self-defense. Ingram, lived on the same property as 64-year old John Stratford, both were sharecroppers. She had endured years of harassment by him. Supporters across the country organized protests. The widespread public pressure worked – in March 1948, Judge W.M. Harper set aside the death penalty and commuted the family's sentences to life in prison. Wallace was 16 years old, and his brother Sammie Lee was only 14.

1970 Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries (STAR) was founded as a gay, gender non-conforming, transgender street activist organization by Sylvia Rivera and Marsha P. Johnson. STAR was a radical political collective that also provided housing and support to homeless queer youth and sex workers in Lower Manhattan.

1972 Earliest rape crisis centers are established in major cities and politically active towns, such as Berkeley, Chicago, Boston, Philadelphia, and Washington, D.C. – focused on ending rape through changing society, supporting survivors, and political organizing.

1975 Joanne Little, a Black woman who was sexually assaulted by a white prison guard while in jail, is acquitted of murdering her offender. The case establishes a precedent for killing as self-defense against rape.

1980 - 2014 The population of women in prison increases by 700%, outpacing growth of the men's prison population by 50%.

1988 The ASHA Project began in Milwaukee, WI to help survivors empower themselves. They seek to provide culturally specific programming for the complex issues of domestic violence, sexual abuse and sex trafficking. This complexity is often compounded by problems along racial lines, historical trauma, discrimination, a lack of access to services in the community, and providers' inadequate cultural knowledge of daily issues for victims of abuse residing in the community.



1990 In the 1990s, District Attorneys' offices begin to adopt a "no-drop" policy, in which the prosecutor clarifies to the victim and the defendant that the prosecutor, not the victim, is in charge of the case, and that the victim is unable to get the charges dropped.

1990 Barbara Hernandez, 16, of Michigan is imprisoned for her involvement in a robbery that led to the death of 28-year old James Cotaling while she was in another room. Hernandez was being trafficked, and it was her alleged trafficker who killed Cotaling while she was in another room. But prosecutors argued that Hernandez brought the knife and led Cotaling to the attack. At a resentencing hearing in 2019, a judge ruled against Hernandez. If she does not win her appeals, she will remain behind bars for the rest of her life.

1994 Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) is passed by Congress, which intensifies federal penalties for rape and domestic violence, contains funding for rape crisis centers and domestic violence shelters, and increases the number of police and prosecutors focusing on violence against women. It also forms the Violence Against Women Office in the U.S. Department of Justice.

1994 Mark Berrios, 14, of Florida was found guilty of murder. Mark had run away from a juvenile detention program when he met Olen Lee Hepler, 47. Two weeks later, Mark shot him. He took his car and ATM card. Police had been investigating Helper for molestation of young boys, but hadn't yet taken him into custody. Prosecutors argued that Mark was trying to rob Hepler and imprisoned him for life. He was resentenced in 2013 to 30 years in prison. He is scheduled to be released in 2024.

1994 Michelle Benjamin, 16, of Louisiana is found guilty of murder. Michelle and a friend were approached on the streets of New Orleans by Martin Hecker, 25.

Because she had been raped when she was 11 years old, Michelle carried a gun to protect herself. She said Hecker followed her and tried to get her to go to a hotel for sex, and when he lunged for her, she shot him. Prosecutors argued that the teens killed Hecker to steal his wallet. After being resentenced in 2016, Michelle was freed in 2019, 25 years after going to prison.

1994 Sara Kruzan, 16, of California is found guilty of murder. Sara testified that George Gilbert Howard forced her into commercial sex at age 13. Three years later, she shot and killed him. She stole money from his wallet and kept the keys to his Jaguar. She served 19 years in prison before being resentenced and released in 2013. Today, she is the namesake to "Sara's Law," a bill in Congress that would allow federal judges reduce sentences for child sex-trafficking victims who commit crimes against their abusers.

1996 In Wisconsin, the age of "criminal responsibility" is lowered from 18 years to 17 years old. Seventeen-year-olds are now treated like adults in the legal system.

1998 Patrice Smith, 16, of New York was found guilty of murder. Patrice spent 21 years in prison for strangling Robert Robinson Jr., a 71 year old minister. Prosecutors argued that Patrice and her friend went to Robinson's house with a plan to steal money and his Cadillac. Patrice told the court that Robinson had been paying her for sex since she was 15 and that once he had raped her. She said that on the night of the murder, she was acting in self-defense because he had threatened to kill her. Two decades later, she is seeking clemency from the governor of New York.

2000 Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 was enacted. The TVPA provided increased protections for trafficking victims in the US in several ways:

- Making foreign victims eligible for federally funded or administered health and other benefits and services and by requiring federal agencies to expand the provision of such benefits and services to victims, regardless of immigration status;
- Creating immigration protections for foreign national victims of human trafficking, including protection from removal for victims of trafficking (the T visa) and victims of certain crimes (the U visa); and allowing certain nonimmigrant status holders the opportunity to adjust to permanent resident status.

2002 The Young Women's Empowerment Project (YWEP) is established as a member based social justice organizing project led by and for young people of color who have current or former experience in the sex trade and street economies. YWEP offered safe, respectful, free-of-judgment spaces for girls and young women in the sex trade

and street economies to recognize their goals, dreams and desires. Based in Chicago, YWEP was founded by a radical feminist, a harm reduction based collective of women and girls involved in the sex trade and street economy, and allies.

2003 Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2003 established a federal, civil right of action for trafficking victims to sue their traffickers. It also included additional provisions for protection of victims and their families from deportation, and a requirement that the Attorney General report to Congress annually on the activities of the U.S. government in the fight against trafficking.

2003 The Prosecutorial Remedies and Other Tools to End the Exploitation of Children Today (PROTECT) Act of 2003 established enhanced penalties for individuals engaging in sex tourism with children, both within the US and in other countries; Amber Alert System and other methods of alerting the public to missing, exploited, and abducted children; and grants for transitional housing for child victims of sexual assault.

2004 Cyntoia Brown-Long, 16, of Tennessee was sentenced to life in prison with possibility of parole after 51 years. Cyntoia had been forced into commercial sex by a man she believed to be her boyfriend. One night, her buyer was 43 year old Johnny Allen. Prosecutors argued she intended to rob him, but Cyntoia said she feared for her life and shot and killed Allen. In 2017, her story went viral, in part due to the attention of celebrities including Kim Kardashian and LeBron James. In 2019, Cyntoia was released from prison after having served 15 years. She published a memoir about her experiences called "Free Cyntoia".



Cyntoia Brown-Long holding her memoir



2004 Inspired by Sylvia Rivera and Marsha P. Johnson's work with STAR, The Broadway Youth Center is established in Chicago to provide young people experiencing homelessness with a safe space and resources.

2005 Audre Lorde Project's Safe Outside the System (SOS) begins as a project aimed at creating safety without police

for QTBIPOC in central Brooklyn, after several brutal killings of queer Black men. In 2007, SOS launches the Safer Neighborhoods Campaign, working with shop owners and street economy folks to create zones of refuge for QTBIPOC folks and create community safety teams at clubs and events.

2005 The Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2005 (TVPRA of 2005) included a pilot program for sheltering minors who are survivors of human trafficking, and grant programs to assist state and local law enforcement combat trafficking. It also expanded measures to combat trafficking internationally, including provisions to fight sex tourism, a \$5 million pilot program for treatment of trafficking victims abroad, and a strengthening of the regulation over government contracts to ensure they are not made with individuals or organizations that promote or engage in human trafficking.

2006 The 'me too' movement was founded in 2006 by Tarana Burke to help survivors of sexual violence, particularly Black women and girls, and other young women of color from low wealth communities, find pathways to healing. From the beginning, the 'me too' vision was to address both the dearth in resources for survivors of sexual violence and to build a community of advocates, driven by survivors, who will be at the forefront of creating solutions to interrupt sexual violence in their communities.



Tarana Burke

2008 Act 116 is published which grants human trafficking survivors the right to an affirmative defense. What is now Wisconsin State Statute 939.46 (1)(m) provides survivors of human trafficking or child trafficking with an affirmative defense for any offense committed as a direct result of the violation of human trafficking or child trafficking without regard to whether anyone was prosecuted or convicted for the violation of human trafficking or child trafficking.

2008 The Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2008 (TVPRA of 2008) included several new prevention strategies, including requirements that the government provide information about workers' rights to all people applying for work and education-based visas. It also put in place new systems to gather and report human trafficking data. In addition to the prevention strategies, the 2008 reauthorization expanded the protections available with the T visa, and required that all unaccompanied undocumented children be screened as potential victims of human trafficking.

2009 The Customs and Facilitations and Trade Enforcement Act amended the prohibition on importing goods made with slave or indentured labor to include goods made through the use of coercion or goods made by victims of human trafficking.

2010 New York became the first state to pass a law (New York State Statute 440.10) allowing survivors of trafficking to vacate their convictions for prostitution offenses. Since then, 23 states have followed suit by enacting similar laws allow trafficking survivors to vacate or expunge certain certain convictions.

2013 Florida enacts a law (2013 Florida State Statute 943.0583) which provides expungement of "any conviction for an offense committed while...a victim of human trafficking."

2013 In May 2013, Monica Jones is arrested and charged for "manifesting prostitution" after accepting a ride home to her neighborhood from men who turned out to be undercover cops. In April 2014, Jones was found guilty, and faces the possibility of serving time in a men's prison as a trans woman.

Women prisoners in California are illegally sterilized. Of the 144 inmates who underwent tubal ligations from fiscal years 2005-2006 to 2012-2013, auditors found nearly one-third were performed without lawful consent.

Women prisoners in California are illegally sterilized. Of the 144 inmates who underwent tubal ligations from fiscal years 2005-2006 to 2012-2013, auditors found nearly one-third were performed without lawful consent.

2013 Alexis Martin, 15, of Ohio is imprisoned. Alexis did not pull the trigger - she was in another room when her alleged sex trafficker, 36-old Angelo Kerney, was killed during an attempted robbery. Martin was tried as an adult. Judges acknowledged her status as a victim of human trafficking, but prosecutors say evidence shows Martin participated in the robbery plan. In 2018, the Ohio Supreme Court ruled that the juvenile court mishandled Martin's case, but upheld her conviction. She is seeking clemency from the governor of Ohio.



Alexis Martin

2014 New York creates Human Trafficking Intervention Courts as an alternative to jail for people facing prostitution charges. From Queens to Columbus, these courts share

a common presumption: that people engaged in sex work are, in the words of judges behind the bench, “victims, not criminals.”

2014 The Red Umbrella Project (RedUP), a peer-led organization of people engaged in the sex trades, released what was the first (and, for some years, the only) report evaluating the human trafficking courts in New York. They found that in Brooklyn and Queens, people funneled into the courts reflected the racial profiling police engage in with other arrests: 69% of defendants facing prostitution charges in Brooklyn were Black, and in Queens, 58% were East Asian. They also pointed out that the “services” offered by these intervention courts were inadequate to help someone who did want to leave sex work, while the arrests revictimized the same people the courts said they were saving.

Additionally, Yale’s Global Health Justice Partnership researchers concluded, “as long as over-policing of the poor along lines of race and gender, coupled with criminalization of buying and selling sex, are the context in which these courts operate, they cannot stop the revolving door of criminalization.”

2014 Priceless Incite is founded in Milwaukee, WI by Annika Leonard with the mission to uplift the experiences of Black women and girls (and youth) who are impacted by gender based violence through community based prevention, intervention and development.



2016 Fourteen-year-old Bresha Meadows of Ohio is incarcerated and faces a charge of aggravated murder for defending herself and her family against the unrelenting terror and abuse of her father. A defense campaign successfully organizes to keep her in the juvenile system, and she eventually took a plea deal that allowed her to be released from jail in February 2018.

2017 The Me Too movement revival creates openings and controversy, a broad platform for survivor issues, and many writings criticizing carceral approaches by transformative justice practitioners.

2018 Chrystul Kizer, 17, from Milwaukee, WI is incarcerated for killing Randy Volar, at his Kenosha, WI residence in an act of self defense. Volar, a 33-year old white man, had been trafficking Chrystul. Officials in Kenosha knew about Volar's history of sexually exploiting young black girls. In February 2018, Volar was arrested on multiple charges including child sexual assault and was released without bail. Police had collected evidence that shows Volar had been sexually abusing multiple black girls, including Chrystul. Yet, DA Michael Graveley charged Chrystul with first-degree intentional homicide, which carries a life sentence in Wisconsin; her bail is set at \$1 million.



Chrystul Kizer

Through 2020, a defense campaign continues to organize around the demand to drop all charges against Chrystul.

2019 A Safe Harbor bill is introduced in the Wisconsin State Senate. If passed, this law would stipulate that a person who is under the age of 18 may not be prosecuted for committing an act of prostitution. Democratic state senator, LaTonya Johnson, co-sponsored the bill before it became law. Speaking with Wisconsin Public Radio about the Safe Harbor Law, Johnson said, "There's no such thing as a child prostitute. These children are not capable of giving consent." Johnson said children facing charges of prostitution have been used by prosecutors to testify against pimps. Authorities sometimes send child victims of trafficking to juvenile detention facilities. "The Safe Harbor Law basically said you can no longer do that. You have to treat these child victims as victims...." Johnson explained. ■

Timeline References

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Page 26: Courtesy of Priceless Incite

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Page 27: Courtesy of the family of Chrystul Kizer