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:


- *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.


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