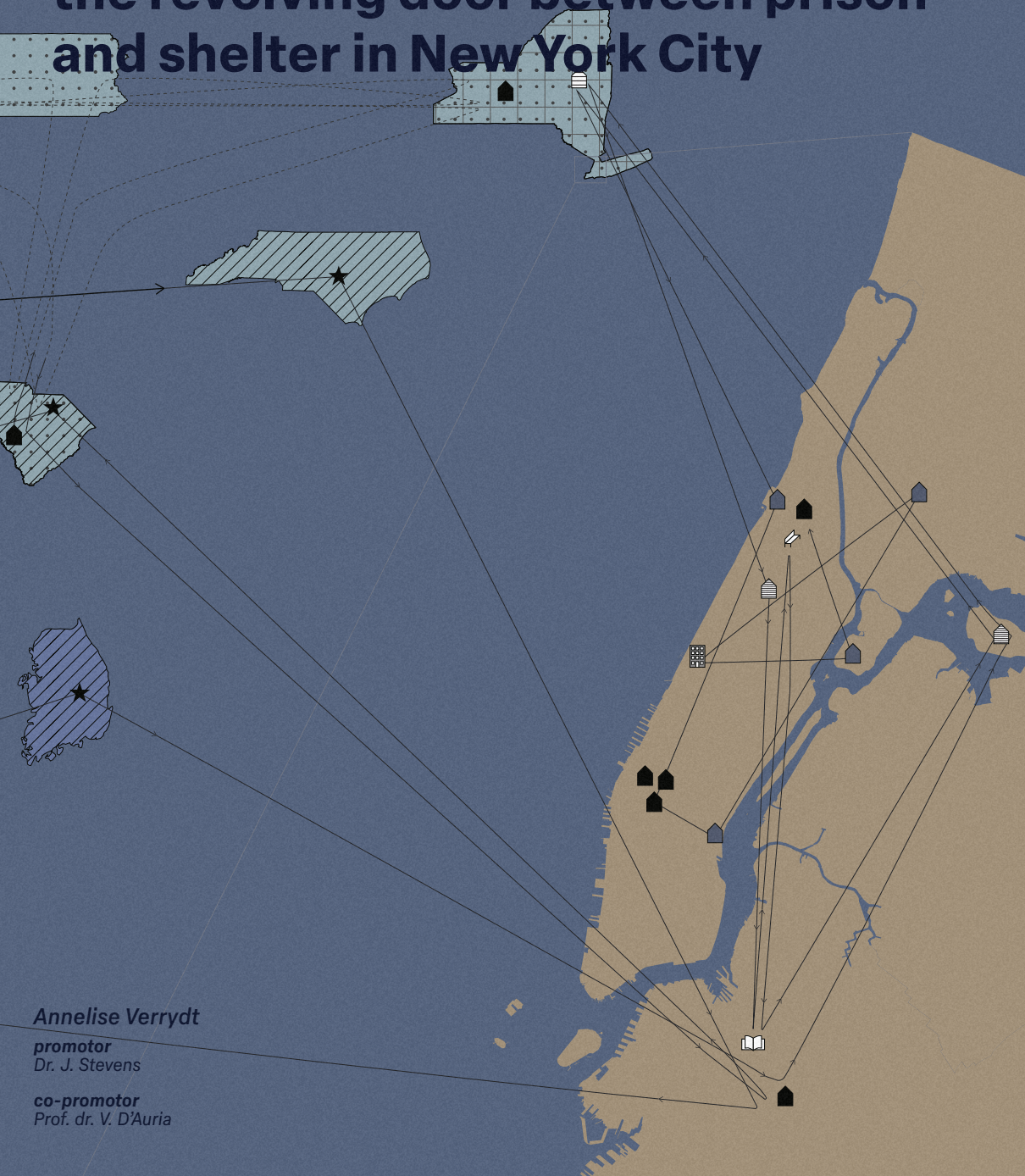
Stories from within:
the revolving door between prison and shelter in New York City



Annelise Verrydt

promotor
Dr. J. Stevens

co-promotor
Prof. dr. V. D'Auria

KU LEUVEN

FACULTEIT
INGENIEURSWETENSCHAPPEN

Stories from within: the revolving door between prison and shelter in New York City

Annelise Verrydt

Thesis submitted to
obtain the degree of Master
of Science in Architectural Engineering,
option urban project
Thesis supervisor:
Dr. J. Stevens
Assessor:
Prof. dr. V. D'Auria
Prof. dr. R. Plunz
Dr. S. Puddu

Academic year 2022-2023

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, my biggest gratitude goes to the five protagonists of this study, without whom this work would not exist. **Gregory, Alex, Douglass, Tony and Ibrahim,** thank you for giving me a glimpse into your lives. Your insights and stories inspired me deeply.

Likewise, I would like to thank my promotor **Jeroen Stevens**, for the framework he created regarding the study on homelessness and incarceration in New York City, within which I was allowed to fit my own study. Your guidance during my fieldwork and subsequent meetings inspired me to delve deeper into the research each week.

To my co-promotor **Viviana d'Auria**, thank you for shedding light on my research during presentations and meetings. Your feedback was always apt and motivating.

All five protagonists are members of many non-profit organizations, so a big thank you goes to them as well. Thank you for welcoming me, for taking me along on demonstrations, for providing insights, and for educating me.

- VOCAL-NY
  Leaders: **Mike, Jon,Andrew, Milton, Mr. Sudler, Al and Dwayne**
  Organizers: **Luis, Keli and Kris**

- Reentry Theater of Harlem: **Bruce and Kahlil**

- City Relief: **Corey, Edward, BJ and Matthew**

- Picture the Homeless: **Marcus**

- Youth Alliance 4 Housing: **Emma**

A warm thank you to **Frank Morales**, **Gabriela Rendon** and **Rob Robinson**, for taking time out of your day to share your knowledge on housing in New York City.

Thank you to my **assessors and readers**, for shedding light on this study and sharing your thoughts.

Lastly, a big thank you goes to my family and friends for their endless support. **My parents**, for giving me the opportunity to conduct my fieldwork in New York City, and for believing in me even when I lost confidence throughout the years. **My sisters**, for always cheering me on. **My grandfather** for his weekly emails with news articles regarding homelessness and incarceration, and his endless interest in the subject. **My dearest cluster 17 friends** who made the past years seem almost like a breeze. Not really though, as every deadline was a struggle, but struggling together creates a bond! I would not have been able to do this without you. A final shout out goes to **my CIT friends**, who have made the last few weeks a little less stressful. Our late night giggles, polaroid-posing and bike rides homes are ones to remember.

ABSTRACT

‘Stories from within’ examines the interconnections between the correctional and homeless system in New York City. The *“revolving door”* is a known concept where people who enter either of the systems, start bouncing back and forth between the two, often repeatedly. ‘Stories from within’ seeks answers on the questions *“who is affected by this revolving door?”*, *“What do the facilities of both systems in New York City look like for someone on the inside?”* and *“How does New York City as a case study compare to New York State and the US?”*

This study is mainly based on the life stories of five men in New York City: Gregory, Alex, Tony, Douglass and Ibrahim. All have spent time in the correctional system and the homeless infrastructure of New York City throughout their life. For this research, fieldwork was conducted in August and September of 2022, and info was gathered through interviews. Five separate interviews with a lot of similarities, but conflicting stories as well, form the base of this study.

Before conducting fieldwork, it was not set to stone that solely men would be interviewed, but because of a confluence of circumstances, the protagonists of this study turned out to be five men within the network of the revolving door. The protagonists were contacted through VOCAL-NY Union Meetings and through Alex, executive director of Reentry Theater of Harlem. Based on who was open to talk and availability, interviews were scheduled. In retrospect, as the sample of interviewed people is so small, trying to give both men and women the floor might have been more complicated as strict gender separation rules are applied in both correctional and shelter environments. It might have been harder to find similarities in the stories. However, a similar study could be conducted with all women.

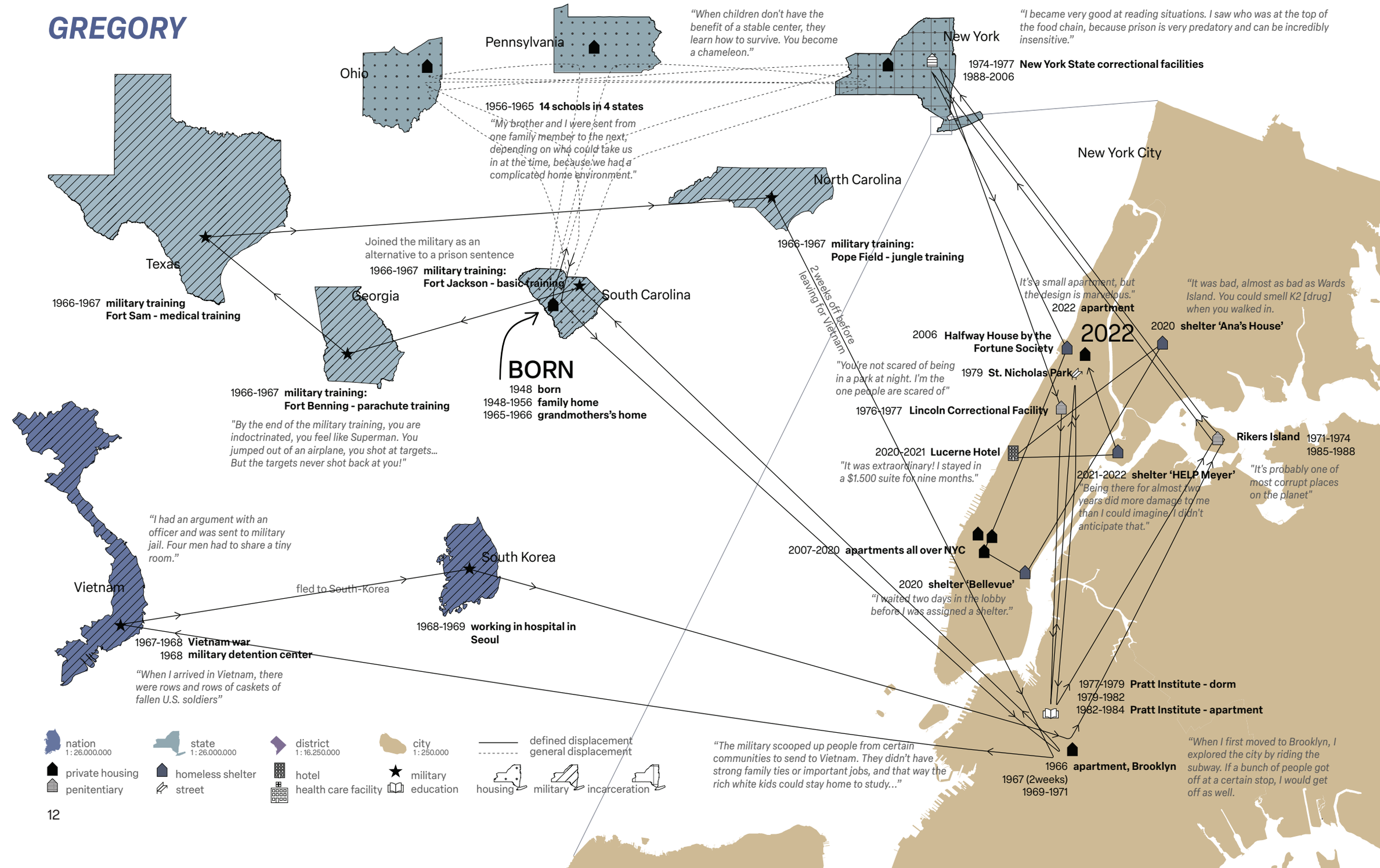
This study is developed as a fragmented story, where insights of the five protagonists are alternated with fieldwork experience, historical information and other related work. For the protagonists’ stories, Gregory, Alex, Tony, Douglass and Ibrahim take the floor, giving insights in the system as they have experienced it from within. This analysis does not seek to insinuate a generalization for the entire system however, but rather analyses how it affected these five individuals.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PROTAGONISTS IN A STORY OF STRUGGLE

Five protagonists in a tragedy of incarceration and homelessness

GREGORY


Pennsylvania
Ohio
"When children don't have the benefit of a stable center, they learn how to survive. You become a chameleon."
New York
"I became very good at reading situations. I saw who was at the top of the food chain, because prison is very predatory and can be incredibly insensitive."
1974-1977 New York State correctional facilities
1988-2006
1956-1965 14 schools in 4 states
"My brother and I were sent from one family member to the next, depending on who could take us in at the time, because we had a complicated home environment."
New York City
North Carolina
Texas
Joined the military as an alternative to a prison sentence
1966-1967 military training: Fort Jackson - basic training
1966-1967 military training: Pope Field - jungle training
1966-1967 military training Fort Sam - medical training
Georgia
South Carolina
2 weeks off before leaving for Vietnam
"It's a small apartment, but the design is marvelous."
2022 apartment
"It was bad, almost as bad as Wards Island. You could smell K2 [drug] when you walked in."
2020 shelter 'Ana's House'
2006 Halfway House by the Fortune Society
2022
BORN
1948 born
1948-1956 family home
1965-1966 grandmothers's home
"You're not scared of being in a park at night. I'm the one people are scared of"
1979 St. Nicholas Park
1976-1977 Lincoln Correctional Facility
1966-1967 military training: Fort Benning - parachute training
"By the end of the military training, you are indoctrinated, you feel like Superman. You jumped out of an airplane, you shot at targets... But the targets never shot back at you!"
Rikers Island 1971-1974 1985-1988
"It's probably one of most corrupt places on the planet"
2020-2021 Lucerne Hotel
"It was extraordinary! I stayed in a $1.500 suite for nine months."
2021-2022 shelter 'HELP Meyer'
"Being there for almost two years did more damage to me than I could imagine. I didn't anticipate that."
"I had an argument with an officer and was sent to military jail. Four men had to share a tiny room."
South Korea
2007-2020 apartments all over NYC
Vietnam
fled to South-Korea
2020 shelter 'Bellevue'
"I waited two days in the lobby before I was assigned a shelter."
1968-1969 working in hospital in Seoul
1967-1968 Vietnam war
1968 military detention center
"When I arrived in Vietnam, there were rows and rows of caskets of fallen U.S. soldiers"
1977-1979 Pratt Institute - dorm
1979-1982
1982-1984 Pratt Institute - apartment
"The military scooped up people from certain communities to send to Vietnam. They didn't have strong family ties or important jobs, and that way the rich white kids could stay home to study..."
1966 apartment, Brooklyn
1967 (2weeks)
1969-1971
"When I first moved to Brooklyn, I explored the city by riding the subway. If a bunch of people got off at a certain stop, I would get off as well.
nation 1 : 26.000.000
state 1 : 26.000.000
district 1 : 16.250.000
city 1 : 250.000
defined displacement
general displacement
private housing
penitentiary
homeless shelter
street
hotel
health care facility
military
education
housing
military
incarceration

GREGORY

Gregory is a musician, artist, medic and teacher with multiple university degrees. He was born in South Carolina in 1948, *"when racial segregation was in full swing. Water fountains, movie theaters... everything was segregated, and most facilities were for whites only. I didn't know any better; it was the norm."* When Gregory was eight years old, he and his younger brother were forced to move out of their childhood home because of the troubled and precarious housing situation and rampant parental conflict they faced 'at home'. From then on, they moved from one family member to another every year, sometimes several times a year. From 1956 to 1965, they attended fourteen different schools, spread across four different states: South Carolina, Pennsylvania, Ohio and New York.

When he turned eighteen in 1966, Gregory moved to Brooklyn on his own. He got a job and began exploring the city. *"I rode the subway until a bunch of people would get off, and I would get off as well, to explore. I discovered Times Square, Greenwhich Village, 125th Street... All the places I had read about as a kid!"* Along with exploring New York City, Gregory discovered New York nightlife. *"I began to learn street life. It's another language, another culture."*

Not much later, his life took turn when he was put on trial for smuggling marihuana. In the run-up years before the fully-fledged war on drugs that came to uproot Black communities, marihuana widely popularized during the 1960 across the US, as did the much more devastating spread of heroin and LSD. Gregory's lawyer told the judge that he was considering joining the military, allowing to avoid a prison sentence. This worked, but effectively also implied that he had to take up military training. From August 1966 to 1967, he completed basic training, parachute training, medical training and jungle training in respectively South Carolina, Georgia, Texas and again in South Carolina. *"By the end of military training, you are indoctrinated, you feel like superman. You jumped out of an airplane, you shot at targets... But the targets never shot back at you."*

After completing his military training, Gregory and his unit were given two weeks off before being sent to battle in the Vietnam war in 1967. *"The military scooped up people from certain communities to send to Vietnam. They didn't have strong family ties or important jobs, and that way the rich white kids could stay home to study..."* Upon arrival, it was 44°C and all he could see on the tarmac were rows and rows of coffins of fallen soldiers waiting to return to the US. He was active as a medic in the war for about a year, earning $114 a month.

In mid 1968, Gregory was sent to a US military jail in Vietnam, after an argument with an officer. *"One cell held four people, but no one was in there permanently. If you committed a serious crime, you were sent back to the US to face trial."* In December 1968, an enemy attack forced some of the US troops to flee to South Korea, freeing Gregory and taking him with them. In Seoul, Gregory got a job in a general hospital as a free man. He returned to Brooklyn in August of 1969.

In late 1971, he was arrested and crossed the bridge to jail on Rikers Island (pp. 72) for the first time. On Rikers Island, which would grow to become the largest jail complex of the world, he awaited trial for 3 years. He was sentenced to prison in 1974. The first prison he was sent to was Sing Sing Correctional Facility (pp. 94), a maximum security prison. After a few weeks, he was transferred to Auburn Correctional Facility, another maximum security prison, where he spent nearly two years. Auburn was followed by Wallkill, Taconic and Lincoln Correctional Facility before he was released in 1977.

Two years after his release, he began his studies at Pratt Institute in Brooklyn. During his three years of study, he lived in a dorm. however, the summer after his freshman year, he slept at St Nicholas Park in Harlem. In 1982, after earning his bachelor's degree, he got married and lived with his wife in an apartment behind Pratt, where he earned his master's degree in 1984.

A year later, in 1985, Gregory was arrested and taken back to Rikers Island. Another three years passed while he awaited trial, after which he was put on a transport bus that took him back again to Sing Sing Correctional Facility. This time, he wasn't transferred to another prison after a few weeks, but remained in Sing Sing for sixteen years, where he became a teacher (pp. 98) . Gregory is a musician, and he and his band members met in prison. *"My band, we've been together since 1990. We've all met in prison years ago and we stayed together after we came home. We played some pretty big venues: Carnegie Hall, Trump Place, Lincoln Center... I played everywhere some time or another."*

Prior to his release in 2006, Gregory was transferred from Sing Sing to Fishkill Correctional Facility. After his release, he went to a halfway house operated by The Fortune Society, a non-profit organization focused on reintegrating formerly incarcerated people (pp. 118) . He would reside in the halfway house for about a year. Afterwards, he lived in various apartments throughout New York City between 2007 and 2020. In the meantime, he earned degrees from several universities: Alliance College, where he earned a bachelor's degree in organizational management, New York Theological Seminary and Bronx Community College. *"I went to school mainly to keep myself busy."*

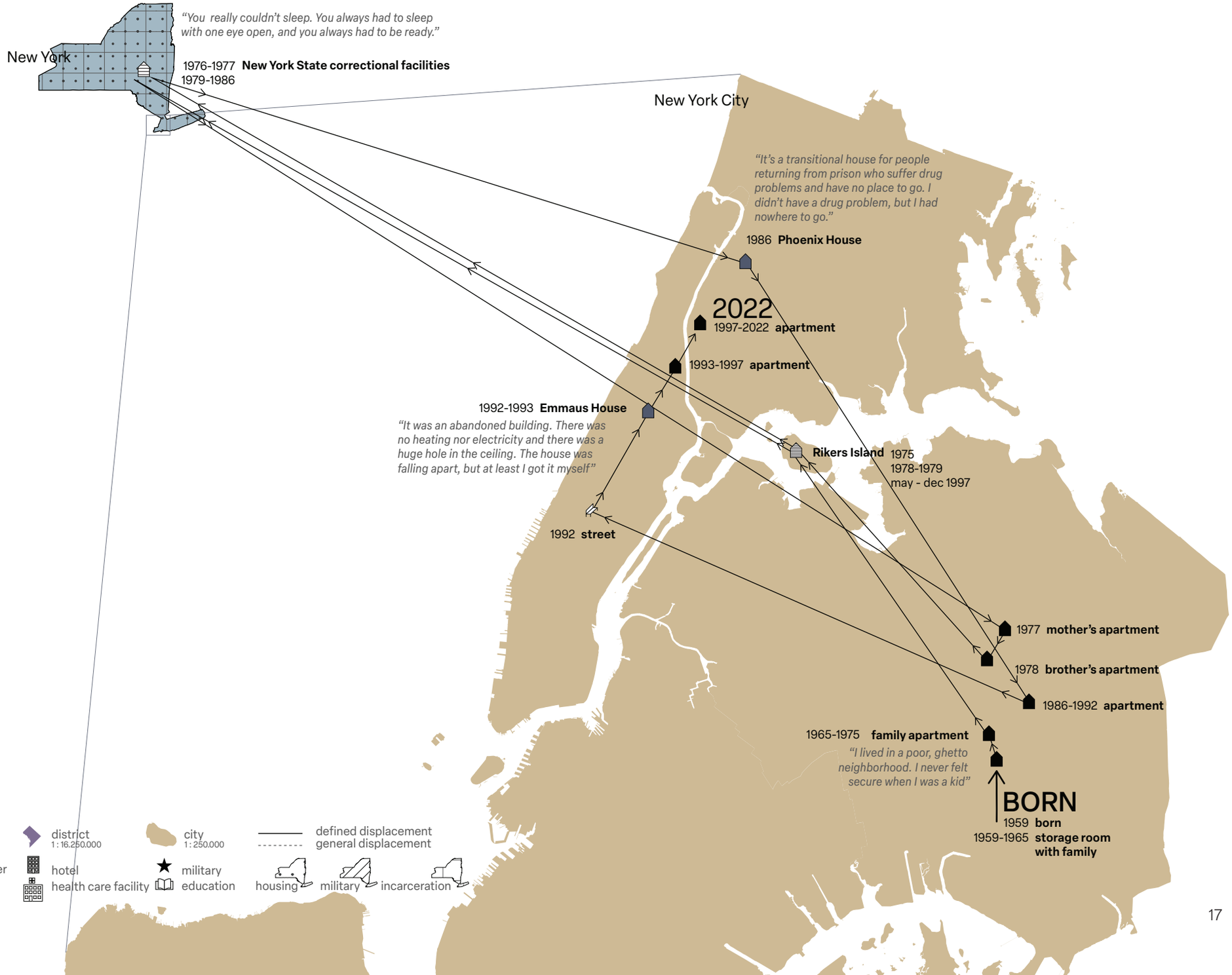
In March 2020, Gregory's precarious housing situation pushed him into homelessness. He went to the 30th Street Men's Intake Shelter known as 'Bellevue' (pp. 111) , from where male individuals experiencing homelessness can apply for public shelter. Two days later, he was assigned to the Ana's House shelter, where he slept in a dorm for five months. In August 2020, he was one of 280 homeless shelter residents who were moved to the four-star Lucerne Hotel (pp. 118) on the Upper West Side as the result of a COVID-19 measure installed to maintain social distancing rules in government-funded homeless shelters, where high-density dormitory settings and shared facilities were commonplace. *"It was extraordinary! I stayed in a $1.500-suite for nine months! The neighborhood was marvelous, and I played the flute all day on Broadway."*

In July 2021, the Lucerne Hotel was closed off for homeless' residents after a lawsuit enacted by a neighborhood committee specially erected for the occasion. Gregory was transferred to a mental health shelter on Wards Island, where he lived for about a year. *"The people there are legitimately ill. They get physical in a heartbeat. It's dangerous. That shelter did more damage to me than I could have imagined. I didn't anticipate that."* On the first of August 2022, Gregory finally moved into his own apartment. *"Compared to where I was last year, I'm in the Statler Hilton, a five-star hotel!"*

°1948, South Carolina interviewed on September 15 and 18, 2022

photographed by Jeroen Stevens

ALEX


New York
"You really couldn't sleep. You always had to sleep with one eye open, and you always had to be ready."
1976-1977 New York State correctional facilities
1979-1986
New York City
"It's a transitional house for people returning from prison who suffer drug problems and have no place to go. I didn't have a drug problem, but I had nowhere to go."
1986 Phoenix House
2022
1997-2022 apartment
1993-1997 apartment
1992-1993 Emmaus House
"It was an abandoned building. There was no heating nor electricity and there was a huge hole in the ceiling. The house was falling apart, but at least I got it myself"
Rikers Island 1975
1978-1979
may - dec 1997
1992 street
1977 mother's apartment
1978 brother's apartment
1986-1992 apartment
1965-1975 family apartment
"I lived in a poor, ghetto neighborhood. I never felt secure when I was a kid"
BORN
1959 born
1959-1965 storage room with family
nation 1 : 26.000.000
state 1 : 26.000.000
district 1 : 16.250.000
city 1 : 250.000
defined displacement
general displacement
private housing
penitentiary
homeless shelter
street
hotel
health care facility
military
education
housing
military
incarceration

ALEX

Alex is a social worker and executive director of Reentry Theater of Harlem. He was born in South Jamaica, Queens in 1959. His first apartment was a storage room he shared with his mother and five siblings. There were no separate bedrooms. Everyone slept in the living room on mattresses on the floor. When he was six, his family moved to a larger apartment just around the corner. *"Our living conditions improved a little bit, but the building was still run down. We lived in a poor, ghetto neighborhood with a lot of drugs and crime. I never felt secure when I was a kid. There were always drug addicts in the hallway of our building, and many fights on the streets. People called the bar across the street the 'bucket of blood' because there were always fights on Friday night."* He was part of a youth gang, because *"in my neighborhood, you couldn't do anything if you weren't part of a gang. The gang is what validated you."*

In 1975, Alex was arrested and sent to Rikers Island (pp. 72) for the first time, at the age of sixteen. He was sentenced to two years in prison, and was first sent to Camp Summit Shock and afterwards to Coxsackie Correctional Facility, two prisons where incarcerated individuals are required to do forced labor. *"For me, going to prison was like a badge of honor. All the men in my neighborhood went to prison. You went to prison as a kid and came back out as a man."*

After his release from Coxsackie in 1977, he lived a couple of months in his mother's apartment in Queens before moving in with his brother in Queens for half a year. In 1978, he was arrested again and bussed to Rikers Island. This time, after waiting 1,5 years for his trial, Alex was sent to Elmira Correctional Facility, where he stayed for three months during orientation. *"At Elmira, you couldn't sleep. You always had to sleep with one eye open, and you always had to be ready."* In 1979, he was transferred to Auburn Correctional Facility, where he earned his GED diploma and a bachelor's degree in social work. Six years later, in 1986, he was released. He went to Phoenix House (pp. 118) transitional house[1], *"a house for people returning from prison who suffer drug problems and have no place to go. I didn't have a drug problem, but I had nowhere to go."* Alex stayed at Phoenix House for about a month.

Alex left Phoenix House and got a one-bedroom apartment in Queens in 1986. *"I got it through a friend, but they wanted me to sell marijuana in return. By 1992, I decided I had enough of the criminal life I was living. However, this meant losing my apartment..."* He became homeless and sought shelter at Emmaus House, a private shelter in Harlem. *"It was an abandoned, run-down building, but at least I got it myself and not through a friend in the criminal milieu."*

Later, in 1993, Alex moved into an apartment in Harlem, where he lived until 1997. In May 1997, he was arrested for possession of marijuana and taken back to Rikers. This time, he was first sent to Orleans Correctional Facility, followed by Attica Correctional Facility, two maximum security facilities. This security level was disproportionate to the crime he committed, but he mentions *"No matter what crime I commit, I will always be assigned maximum security because of my criminal history."*

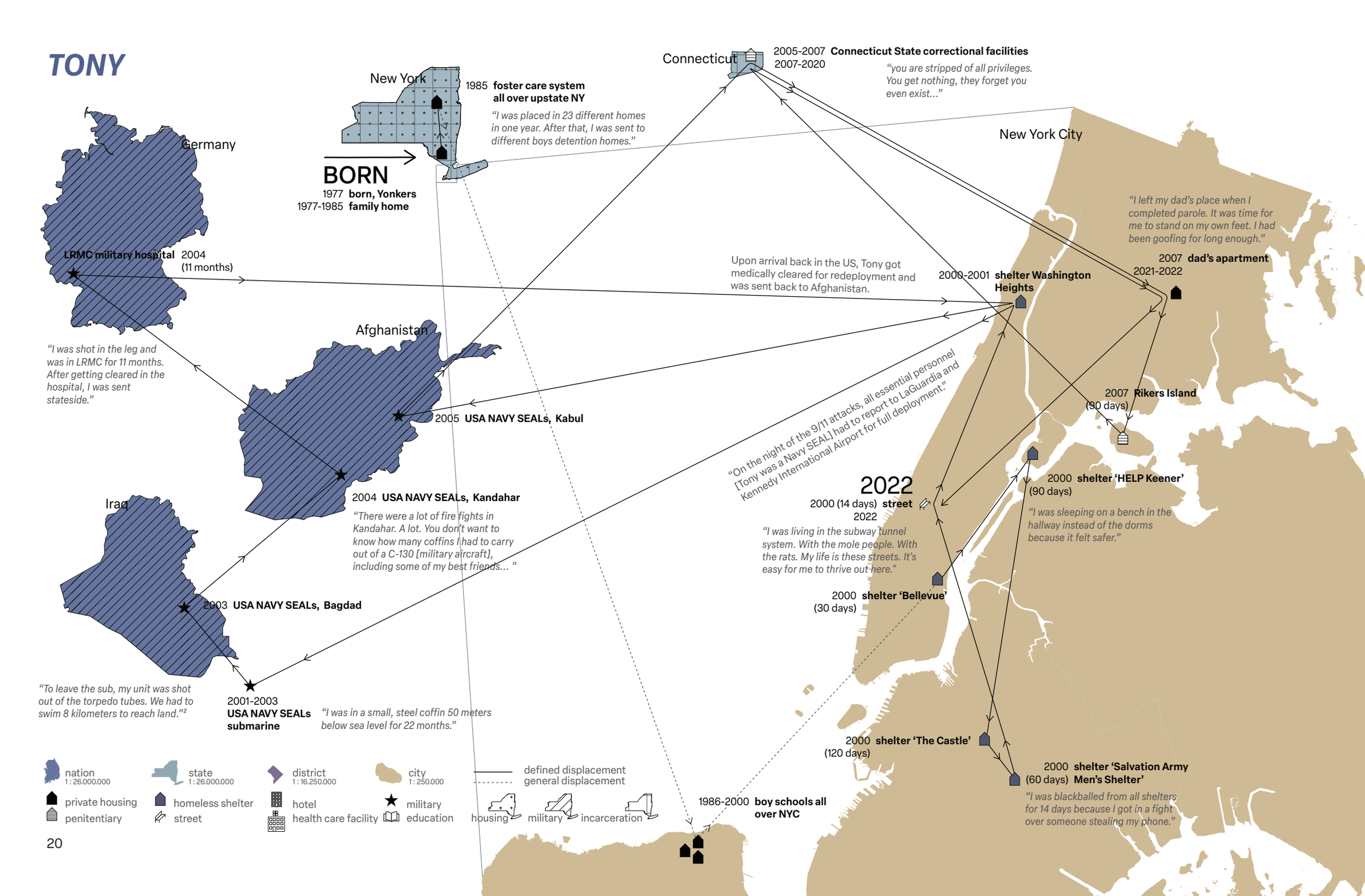
When he was released in 2002, he refused to enter the homeless shelter system, so he stayed at a family member's apartment for four years. Finally in 2006, he moved into his current apartment in the Bronx. In 2008, he earned his master's degree in social work, and he has worked as a social worker ever since, doing homeless outreach work, amongst others. He is a credible messenger: *"I try to help individuals who come out of prison and can't find their way. I guide them in becoming better people, and relating to other people."*

Today, Alex runs the Reentry Theater of Harlem, *"an independent nonprofit organization, developed by and for people who have lived experience in the US criminal legal system. Our mission is to empower and support people in safe and creative spaces as they make the difficult transition from prison back to society and become positive contributors to their families and communities."*[2] He joined the group as a participant in 2009, and stayed with them ever since.[3]

°1959, Queens
interviewed on September 29, 2022


photgraphed by Reentry Theater of Harlem

TONY


New York
1985 foster care system all over upstate NY
"I was placed in 23 different homes in one year. After that, I was sent to different boys detention homes."
BORN
1977 born, Yonkers
1977-1985 family home
Connecticut
2005-2007 Connecticut State correctional facilities
2007-2020
"you are stripped of all privileges. You get nothing, they forget you even exist..."
New York City
Germany
LRMC military hospital 2004
(11 months)
"I was shot in the leg and was in LRMC for 11 months. After getting cleared in the hospital, I was sent stateside."
Upon arrival back in the US, Tony got medically cleared for redeployment and was sent back to Afghanistan.
2000-2001 shelter Washington Heights
2007 dad's apartment
2021-2022
"I left my dad's place when I completed parole. It was time for me to stand on my own feet. I had been goofing for long enough."
Afghanistan
2005 USA NAVY SEALs, Kabul
2004 USA NAVY SEALs, Kandahar
"There were a lot of fire fights in Kandahar. A lot. You don't want to know how many coffins I had to carry out of a C-130 [military aircraft], including some of my best friends... "
"On the night of the 9/11 attacks, all essential personnel [Tony was a Navy SEAL] had to report to LaGuardia and Kennedy International Airport for full deployment."
2007 Rikers Island
(90 days)
Iraq
2003 USA NAVY SEALs, Bagdad
2022
2000 (14 days) street
2022
"I was living in the subway tunnel system. With the mole people. With the rats. My life is these streets. It's easy for me to thrive out here."
2000 shelter 'HELP Keener'
(90 days)
"I was sleeping on a bench in the hallway instead of the dorms because it felt safer."
2000 shelter 'Bellevue'
(30 days)
"To leave the sub, my unit was shot out of the torpedo tubes. We had to swim 8 kilometers to reach land."[2]
2001-2003
USA NAVY SEALs
submarine
"I was in a small, steel coffin 50 meters below sea level for 22 months."
2000 shelter 'The Castle'
(120 days)
2000 shelter 'Salvation Army
(60 days) Men's Shelter'
"I was blackballed from all shelters for 14 days because I got in a fight over someone stealing my phone."
1986-2000 boy schools all over NYC
nation 1 : 26.000.000
state 1 : 26.000.000
district 1 : 16.250.000
city 1 : 250.000
private housing
penitentiary
homeless shelter
street
hotel
health care facility
military
education
defined displacement
general displacement
housing
military
incarceration

TONY

Tony was a Navy SEAL and served in Iraq and Afghanistan. Sadly, a few months after sharing his story, Tony passed away in March 2023. His fiancé insists and urges for his story to be told, as his passing was the fatal outcome of his entanglement in the tentacles of the so-called 'justice' system and the systemic violation of the right to housing. Tony was born in 1977 in Yonkers, north of New York City, as the third oldest of 9 siblings. He lived with his siblings and mother until she passed away in 1985. He was eight years old. After his mother's passing, he was the only one of his siblings who was not adopted. He consequently shuffled through foster homes throughout all of New York. In one year, from age eight to nine, he was transferred 23 times. On average, he had to change homes every two weeks. In 1986, he was transferred to an all-boys detention center, the first of many. In the years that followed, Tony was moved from one boys home to the next, all over New York State and City. At Mount Loretto, Staten Island, he was sexually assaulted by a staff member at the age of sixteen. The facility was closed shortly thereafter.

In 1998, when he was 21 years old, Tony was court-ordered to the military as an alternative to an eight year prison sentence, just like Gregory. He was trained as a Navy SEAL, a member of the United States Navy Sea, Air and Land Teams, while living in various homeless shelters in New York City. He spent thirty days at Bellevue intake shelter (...) before being transferred to HELP Keener on Wards Island. He spent about ninety days on the island, where he slept on a bench in the main hallway. It felt safer than the dorms. Even so, one night he was stabbed in the chest with a screwdriver. After this incident, he was moved to another big shelter called the 23rd Regiment Armory, also known as the Castle because of its architecture. Four months later, he moved to the Salvation Army Men's Shelter, also in Brooklyn. He lived there for sixty days before being blackballed from all shelters for fourteen days, after a fight over someone tipping over his locker and stealing his cell phone. This temporary expulsion meant he had to live on the streets for two weeks. *"I slept on park benches and in abandoned buildings, and washed up in public bathrooms. I lived in the subway tunnel system. With the mole people.*[4] [5] *But my life is these streets, it's easy for me to thrive out there."* After two weeks, he entered a mental health shelter in Washington Heights.

He lived there for about a year, before the Twin Towers were attacked on 9/11. *"I was five blocks from the South Towers when it was hit. It took me three hours to walk back to my shelter. Upon arrival in the shelter, I received my deployment order. All essential personnel had to report to LaGuardia and Kennedy International Airport for full deployment. That night."*

Military aircrafts took him and other SEALs to Iraq, where he was deployed on a Virginia class military submarine. *"I was in a small steel coffin 50 meters below sea level. Along with 174 crew members, I lived in a 115 by 10 meter cylinder for 22 months."* When his unit was transferred to Iraqi mainland, they were shot out of the submarine's torpedo tubes. *"We had to gear up and sit in the torpedo room, where torpedoes are launched. The tube was sealed and filled with water, and we were shot out of the submarine without breathing apparatus. After reaching the water surface, we had to swim another eight kilometers to reach land."* After they finished their mission on Iraqi mainland, they were off duty for a few days until their senior chief told them they would be deported again. Then, in early 2004, they were sent to Kandahar, Afghanistan, a frontline war zone. *"There were a lot of firefights in Kandahar. A lot. You don't want to know how many coffins I had to carry out of a C-130, including some of my best friends..."*

Tony was shot in the leg during a firefight and was transferred to a military hospital in Germany. *"I was in the hospital for eleven months, and afterwards sent stateside. Back in the US, I had to get medically cleared in order to be redeployed."* He was then deployed to Kabul, Afghanistan in 2005. This would be his last deployment, as he received his discharge papers later that year. *"I was dishonorably discharged, which meant I didn't get any veteran benefits anymore."*

He was sent to Northern Correctional Institution in Connecticut, where he spent three years in solitary confinement. *"In solitary, you are stripped from all privileges. You get nothing, they forget you even exist."* After returning to general population in prison, he got a job and earned his GED diploma[6].

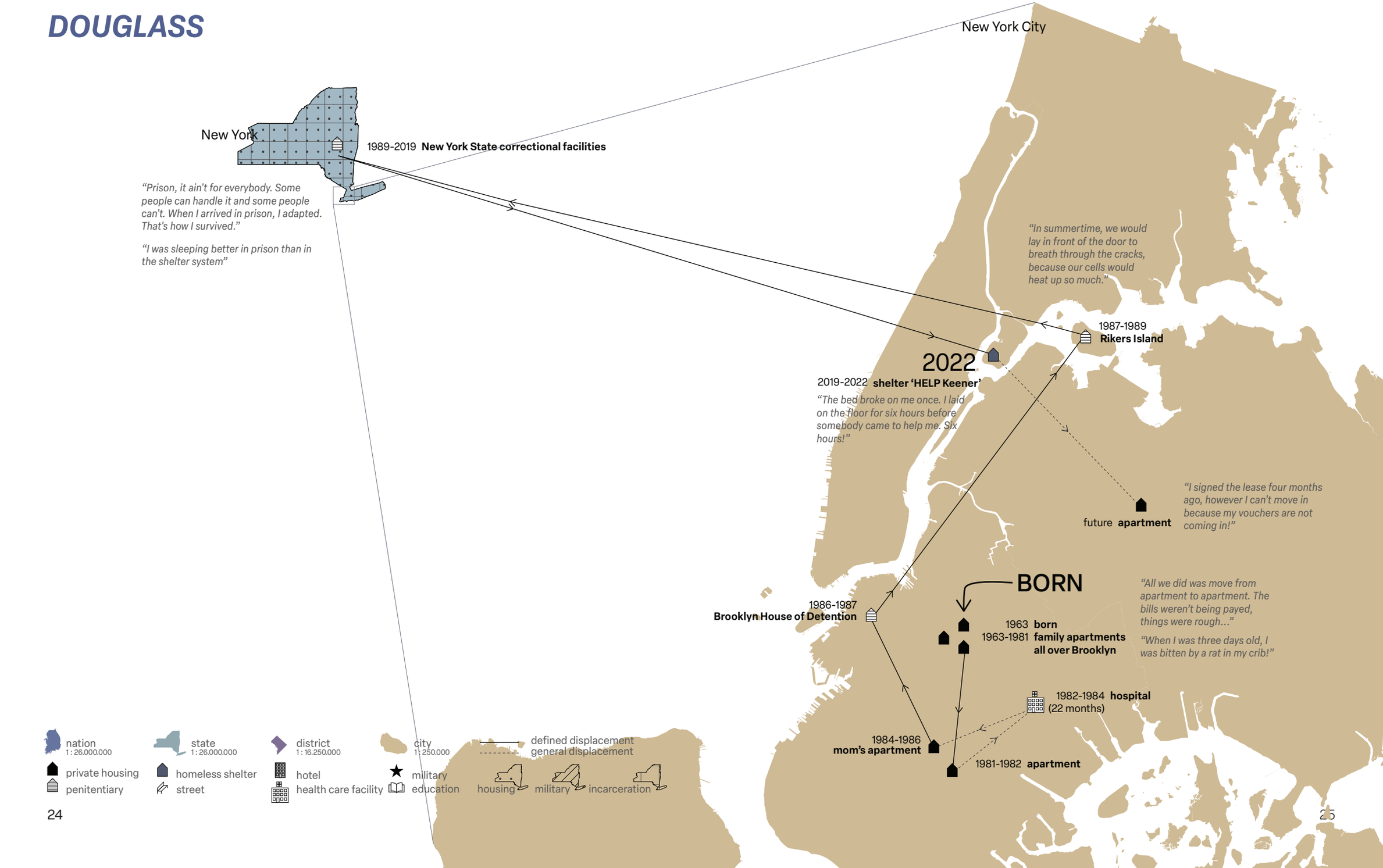
He was released in mid January 2007, and moved in with his father in the Bronx. Six months later however, he was arrested again and sent to Rikers Island (pp. 72). He spent ninety days there before being extradited to the Connecticut Department of Correction. After his transfer, he was first placed in Bridgeport County Correctional Center for eighteen months. From there, he was confined at MacDougall-Walker Correctional Institution for four months. *"After the MacDougall-Walker assessment prison, I bounced through the whole state of Connecticut. I didn't last long in any prison."*

After his release in February 2021, he moved back into his father's apartment in the Bronx until he completed his parole 1,5 years later, in the summer of 2022. *"It was time for me to stand on my own two feet. I had been goofing around long enough."* In the summer of 2022, he went back and forth between shelters, drop-in centers and the street, and became involved with VOCAL New York. Sadly, his fiancé reported his passing in March 2023.

1977, Yonkers - 2023, New York City
interviewed on September 24, 2022

photographed by author

DOUGLASS


New York City
New York
1989-2019 New York State correctional facilities
"Prison, it ain't for everybody. Some people can handle it and some people can't. When I arrived in prison, I adapted. That's how I survived."
"I was sleeping better in prison than in the shelter system"
"In summertime, we would lay in front of the door to breath through the cracks, because our cells would heat up so much."
1987-1989
Rikers Island
2022
2019-2022 shelter 'HELP Keener'
"The bed broke on me once. I laid on the floor for six hours before somebody came to help me. Six hours!"
future apartment
"I signed the lease four months ago, however I can't move in because my vouchers are not coming in!"
BORN
"All we did was move from apartment to apartment. The bills weren't being payed, things were rough..."
1986-1987
Brooklyn House of Detention
1963 born
1963-1981 family apartments all over Brooklyn
"When I was three days old, I was bitten by a rat in my crib!"
1982-1984 hospital
(22 months)
1984-1986
mom's apartment
1981-1982 apartment
nation
1 : 26.000.000
state
1 : 26.000.000
district
1 : 16.250.000
city
1 : 250.000
defined displacement
general displacement
private housing
penitentiary
homeless shelter
street
hotel
health care facility
military
education
housing
military
incarceration

DOUGLASS

Douglass is a dedicated VOCAL-NY Leader. VOCAL-NY, short for Voices Of Community Activists and Leaders, is *"a statewide grassroots membership organization that builds power among low-income people affected by HIV/AIDS, the drug war, mass incarceration, and homelessness in order to create healthy and just communities […] through community organizing, leadership development, advocacy, direct services, participatory research and direct action."* [7] VOCAL-NY thrives on grassroots leadership, taken up by people directly affected by one or more of the topics above. VOCAL-NY organizes four different chapter meetings, dedicated to the four topics: a Positive Leaders Union, a Users Union, a Civil Rights Union and a Homeless Union. Every union meets once a month, bringing together their Leaders and other people affected by a certain topic.[8]

Douglass was born in Brooklyn in 1963. *"When I was three days old, I was bitten by a rat in my crib. Our living conditions were harsh; we were living in a rodent infested house, the bills weren't being payed… Mainly because of the latter, we moved from apartment to apartment all over Brooklyn."* When he was eighteen, he moved out with his family and into a shared apartment in Flatbush, Brooklyn. A year later however, he was hospitalized after a hit-and-run accident. *"My leg was broken in three places and my arm was paralyzed. I had to stay in the hospital for 22 months."* After his hospitalization, he moved back in with his mother in Flatbush for two years.

In 1986, Douglass was arrested and sent to Brooklyn House of Detention for a year. Afterwards, he was transferred to Rikers island (pp. 72), where he was still awaiting trial. Eventually in 1989 he was sentenced to prison and sent to Downstate Correctional Facility. After a few weeks, he was transferred for the first time, and it wouldn't be the last: Sing Sing Correctional Facility (pp. 94), Clinton Correctional Facility, Greenhaven Correctional Facility, Otisville Correctional Facility, Franklin Correctional Facility, Bare Hill Correctional Facility, Sing Sing Correctional Facility, Upstate Correctional Facility, Cayuga Correctional Facility, Greene Correctional Facility and finally Fishkill Correctional Facility. After a thirty-year sentence he was released in 2019. He had spent more of his life inside the jail and prison complex as outside.

About his time in prison, he says: *"Prison, it ain't for everybody. Some people can handle it, some people can't. When I arrived in prison, I adapted. That's how I survived."* He spent a lot of time in solitary confinement, *"in total, I probably spent about ten years in solitary confinement. I've been in solitary in every prison I've been in."* During his incarceration, he completed various programs offered by the prisons. He earned a certificate in anger management group leadership, and aspires to organize his own group outside of prison, as he did while incarcerated.

After his release in 2019, he was told by officials that he was not allowed to move in with his family as planned, but would have to go to a shelter (pp. 110) . He was assigned a shelter on Wards Island (pp. 113) , where he has lived since. He's very unhappy with the shelter and its staff. "The bed broke on me once. I was on the floor for six hours before someone came to help me. Six hours!" In May 2022, he signed the lease of an apartment, but so far hasn't been able to move in. *"I can't move in because my vouchers[9] are not coming in. I'm not sure how much longer the landlord will hold the apartment for me…"*

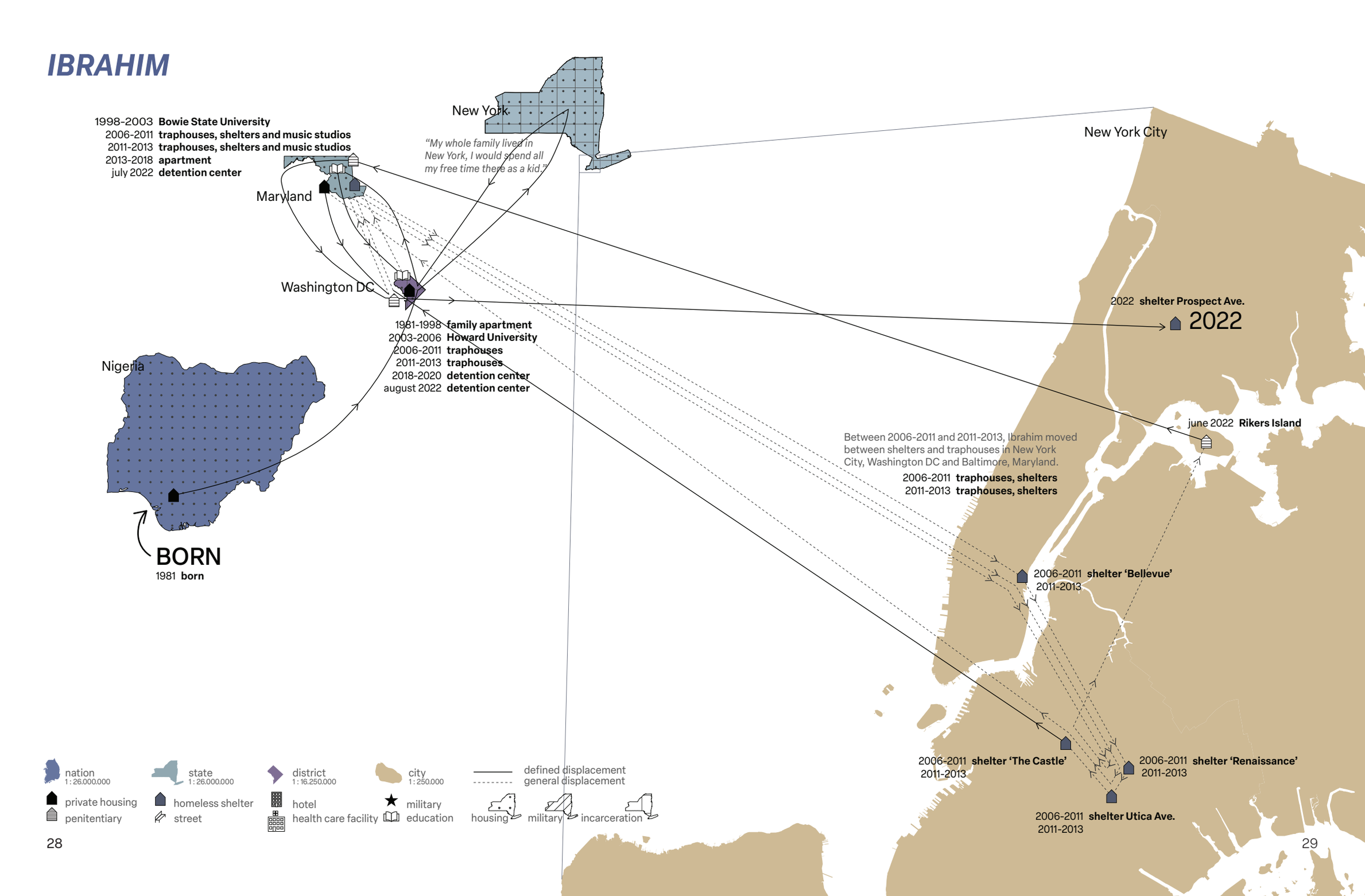
Douglass has been a dedicated VOCAL-NY Leader since his release. VOCAL organizes monthly meetings, called Unions, and Douglass is a faithful member that attends every Civil Rights and Homeless Union. At these meetings, VOCAL organizers - people who work for VOCAL-NY - present what has happened in the past month related to their Union's topic, and what they propose to raise awareness about. The Leaders may suggest additional issues they want to take action on, and then discuss hów they plan to take action to raise awareness.

Rallies and demonstrations are a big part of the actions of VOCAL-NY. In central places in the city, such as City Hall, the Governor's office… VOCAL takes its place to raise awareness. Banners, chants, public speakers… are used to get their message out to officials, the media, and the general public. Douglass is one of the Leaders who often takes the stage during these rallies, to share his personal story of incarceration and homelessness.

At New York City Council hearings, VOCAL gathers available members to attend and even take the floor to share their personal stories regarding the topic of the hearing. Douglass has spoken at several Council Meetings. In addition to rallies and Council hearings, VOCAL-NY is also committed to collective learning for its Leaders. They offer workshops and programs on self-development, healthcare and employment.

°1963, Brooklyn
interviewed on September 23, 2022

IBRAHIM


1998-2003 Bowie State University
2006-2011 traphouses, shelters and music studios
2011-2013 traphouses, shelters and music studios
2013-2018 apartment
july 2022 detention center
New York
"My whole family lived in New York, I would spend all my free time there as a kid."
Maryland
Washington DC
1981-1998 family apartment
2003-2006 Howard University
2006-2011 traphouses
2011-2013 traphouses
2018-2020 detention center
august 2022 detention center
Nigeria
BORN
1981 born
New York City
2022 shelter Prospect Ave.
2022
june 2022 Rikers Island
Between 2006-2011 and 2011-2013, Ibrahim moved between shelters and traphouses in New York City, Washington DC and Baltimore, Maryland.
2006-2011 traphouses, shelters
2011-2013 traphouses, shelters
2006-2011 shelter 'Bellevue'
2011-2013
2006-2011 shelter 'The Castle'
2011-2013
2006-2011 shelter 'Renaissance'
2011-2013
2006-2011 shelter Utica Ave.
2011-2013
nation 1 : 26.000.000
state 1 : 26.000.000
district 1 : 16.250.000
city 1 : 250.000
defined displacement
general displacement
private housing
homeless shelter
hotel
military
penitentiary
street
health care facility
education
housing
military
incarceration

IBRAHIM

Ibrahim is a musician and previously worked as a lawyer in New York City. He was born in Warri, Nigeria in 1981 and immediately moved to the United States. He lived with his mother in Washington DC, but spent all his free time in New York State because all his family members lived there. In 1998 he began his studies at Bowie State University in Maryland. Five years later, he graduated with a bachelor's degree in politics. During this time, he lived in a dorm on campus. Then, he moved to Washington DC, to begin law school. He lived in his own apartment and had a job alongside his education, but one day het was kicked out of his apartment because he could no longer pay his rent. A short time after, he graduated from Howard and earned his law degree. *"From then on, I have been homeless. I lived in traphouses in Baltimore, New York City and Washington DC. A traphouse*[10] *is a house used by drug dealers to sell drugs."* Ibrahim continues, *"I lived in all three traphouses at the same time. I constantly moved between them, I was in each city once a week, and had a bedroom in each house. Most of the time, however, I stayed with girlfriends. The traphouses were mainly for business purposes and to store my belongings."*

In between the traphouses, he stayed at several shelters in multiple states: New York, Maryland and Washington DC. In New York City, he lived in Bellevue, The Castle, and Renaissance shelter, among others. *"I was kicked out of all of them for fighting."* As a last resort, when neither shelter nor traphouse was available, he rented a music studio to sleep in for the night. *"I rented it from 12 a.m. to 4 a.m. in the morning. It was much cheaper than renting a hotel room for the night."*

From 2009 to 2014, Ibrahim had a law firm in New York City. *"I had 144 cases and did not lose a single one."* Unfortunately, his license was taken away from him when he was convicted of crimes. In 2011 he was arrested for the first time and sent to jail in Washington DC, where he spent 6 months. After that, he moved back into traphouses, this time mainly in Washington DC. He is one of many for who the entry into the prison complex automatically also implied a lifelong exit from decent working opportunities (pp. 34).

From 2013 to 2018, he lived with his then-wife in Prince George's County, Maryland. In 2018, he was arrested again and sent to state jail in Washington DC, where he spent two years. Lastly on June first, 2022, he was arrested and sent to Rikers Island. By the end of the month he was transferred already to a county jail in Maryland, and again in August, when he was moved to federal jail in Washington DC. He was released in September 2022 and moved into a shelter on Prospect Avenue in the Bronx. He's very pleased with the services at this shelter, *"dinner in the cafeteria is great, I have a room to myself, there is no curfew..."*

°1981, Warri Nigeria
interviewed on September 20, 2022

REVOLVING DOOR

Gregory, Alex, Tony, Douglass and Ibrahim have diverse dwelling trajectories and life stories. Yet one thing becomes very apparent. All of them have experienced seemingly chronic cycles of incarceration and homelessness, shuffling back and forth between jails, prisons, halfway houses and shelter facilities. At numerous moments in their life, it was their history in prison that brough them into homelessness, while their precarious housing condition triggered their return to penitentiaries. This 'revolving door' or 'pipeline' between prison and shelter is a very common phenomenon in which people seem to bounce back and forth between incarceration and homelessness, often repeatedly, in vicious circles of dispair. Metraux and Culhane published a study[11] in 2004 in which they studied the interrelationships between re-incarceration and shelter use among 48.424 individuals released from New York State prisons to New York City between 1995 and 1998. The results show that, within two years of release, 11.4% of the study group accessed a homeless shelter in New York City and 32.8% of this group was reincarcerated.[12] More recent figures show an even greater migration from prison to shelter. The New York Times reports that according to the New York Department of Corrections and Community Supervision, about 23% of those released in New York State in 2021, were referred directly to a shelter. Another 8% were classified as being 'undomiciled', or placed in halfway houses or hotels.[13] In 2021, 12.748 people were released from prison in New York State[14], which means 2.932 individuals were referred to a shelter facility immediately after, and 1.020 were classified as 'undomiciled' or sent to halfway houses or hotels. If this trend continued, of the 9.602 people released in New York in 2022, 2.209 individuals were diverted to a shelter. This means that about one-third of all people released from prison in New York each year, are assigned to insecure housing (pp. 121).

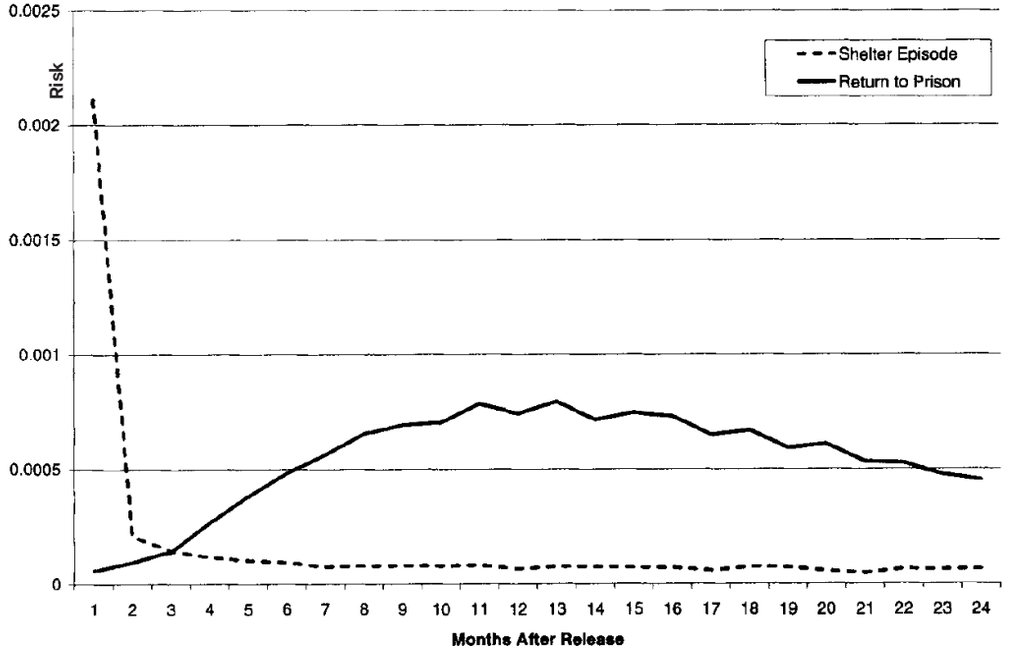


Figure 1: monthly hazard rates for experiencing homeless shelter use and returns to prison - Metraux and Culhane (2004)

Metraux and Culhane visualized the monthly hazard rates for experiencing homeless shelter use and returns to prison in two-year period after release from New York State prison (Figure 1). They noted *"The risk of shelter use is greatest upon community reentry and subsides substantially after the initial two months after release from prison. This is consistent with more general findings that the initial period after release from prison is critical for successful community reintegration (Nelson et al., 1999; Travis et al., 2001). In contrast, the number of reincarcerations was low at the beginning and increased steadily. As a result, the number of prison returns lagged behind the number of shelter stays until month 13, and it was not until month 17 that half of all prison returns had occurred."*[15]

A more recent study shows similar results. The Prison Policy Initiative published a report in 2018[16] on homelessness among formerly incarcerated people, the results of which are shown below. Figure 2 shows that formerly incarcerated people are nearly 10 times more likely to be homeless than the general public, with 203 out of every 10.000 formerly incarcerated people being homeless. In addition, individuals released from prison less than two years ago are more than twice as likely to be homeless than individuals released from prison four years ago or longer. Compared to the general public, the rate of homelessness is nearly seven times higher for individuals who have been incarcerated once. For individuals who have been incarcerated more than once, the rate is 13 times higher. Thus, the likelihood of becoming homeless doubles after being incarcerated again (Figure 3).[17]

It is, in this vein, no surprise that grassroots organizations such as the Reentry Theater of Harlem and Vocal New York act concurrently on mass-incarceration, mass-homelessness and the war on drugs, since many of their movement members are deeply strangled in a complex web where each of those challenges compound one another. Whether housed in

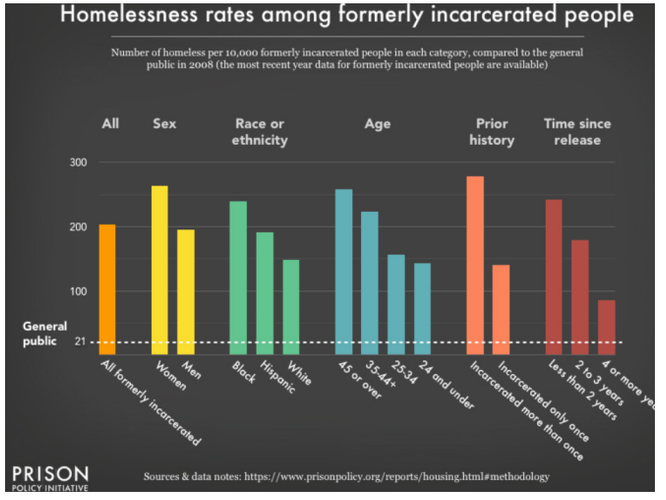


Figure 2 - Prison Policy Initiative (2018)

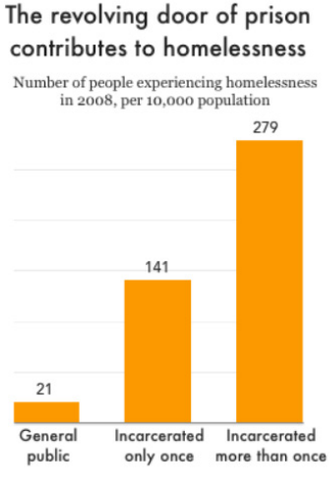


Figure 3 - Prison Policy Initiative (2018)

the prison-complex or housed in the homeless shelter complex, it is ironic that when the state assumes the role of custodian, chances to get back on one's own feet dwindle.

The 2022 Annual Homelessness Assessment Report[18] states that *"On a single night in 2022, roughly 582,500 people were experiencing homelessness in the United States. Sixty percent was staying in sheltered locations—emergency shelters, safe havens, or transitional housing programs—and forty percent was in unsheltered locations such as on the street, in abandoned buildings, or in other places not suitable for human habitation."*

Not only do previous incarcerations increase the risk of becoming homeless, homelessness also contributes to a higher risk of incarceration. Metraux and Culhane report that of the 6,5% of individuals who used shelter in the two years prior to incarceration that they studied, 45,1% subsequently used shelter and 42,0% were reincarcerated. They report the following, *"On the one hand, this suggests that the hiatus spent in prison fails to alleviate, and likely exacerbates, residential instability, and that those bearing the highest risk for homelessness upon release from prison had a history of residential instability prior to their incarceration. On the other hand, past shelter use, both before and after incarceration, is also associated with an increased risk of reincarceration. This suggests that the effects of homelessness manifest in the prison system as well."*[19] Nationally, research[20] reports that 15% of incarcerated individuals experienced homelessness in the year prior to their incarceration. The Prison Policy Initiative points out that a major reason why people who experience homelessness are likely to be arrested and incarcerated (again), is due to policies that criminalize homelessness (pp. 115).

The stigma of incarceration and homelessness ensures high levels of social and economic marginalization. The Prison Policy Initiative notes, *"The unemployment rate for formerly incarcerated people is nearly five times higher than the unemployment rate for the general population in the U.S.[21] Formerly incarcerated people face widespread discrimination in both unemployment and housing, making it extremely difficult to succeed post-release."*[22]

The Prison Policy Initiative report mentions that discrimination by public housing authorities and private property owners is very common, as they typically require criminal record excerpts and professional references. Combined with the lack of affordable housing, this creates a systemic barrier between the housing market and people who have been out of the community and out of the labor market for extended periods of time.[23]

Race, ethnicity and gender are important intersecting factors that seem to determine one's likelyness to become homeless after incarceration, and vice versa (Figure 4). Black and Hispanic men who were previously incarcerated are twice as likely to become homeless as white men after incarceration. Strikingly, the number of women is twice that of the men studied. Because the scope of this study is limited to five men in the prison and shelter system, this gender-divide is not discussed further here, but it is clear that women are excluded from the social resources necessary to succeed after incarceration, to an even greater extent than men.[24]

'fixable problem'

Metraux and Culhane continue, *"Given that released prisoners are most at risk for shelter use immediately after release, monitoring this migration across institutions can provide an early indicator on the success of reintegration more generally. Such monitoring can be done on a regular, systematic basis by crossing administrative records from state prison systems with those from an expanding set of jurisdictions that are able to track shelter utilization. On a more individual level, these results suggest that efforts to prevent homelessness among released prisoners should focus on the transitional period occurring right after prison and should focus on persons who demonstrate a history of unstable housing."* The Prison Policy Initiative report concurs, adding, *"Homelessness among recently released individuals is a fixable problem. States can - and should - develop more efficient interagency systems to help formerly incarcerated people find homes. But longer-term support is also needed: Our analysis found that even people who had spent several years in the community were four times more likely to be homeless than the general public."*[25]

Metraux and Culhane point out that their reported numbers of people affected by the revolving door are likely underestimated. People experiencing homelessness are only included in the study if they use(d) a New York City municipal shelter, and formerly incarcerated people are only included if they were incarcerated in the New York State prison system. Therefore, the actual numbers will be higher because not everyone experiencing homelessness uses public shelters, nor has everyone arriving in New York City after incarceration spent their time in New York State correctional facilities.[26]

In summary, the revolving door works in multiple directions: from prison to shelter, or from shelter to prison, and likewise from prison to prison or shelter to shelter. After spending time in either facility, the likelihood of ending up in the other is much higher. 'The revolving door' actually resembles a

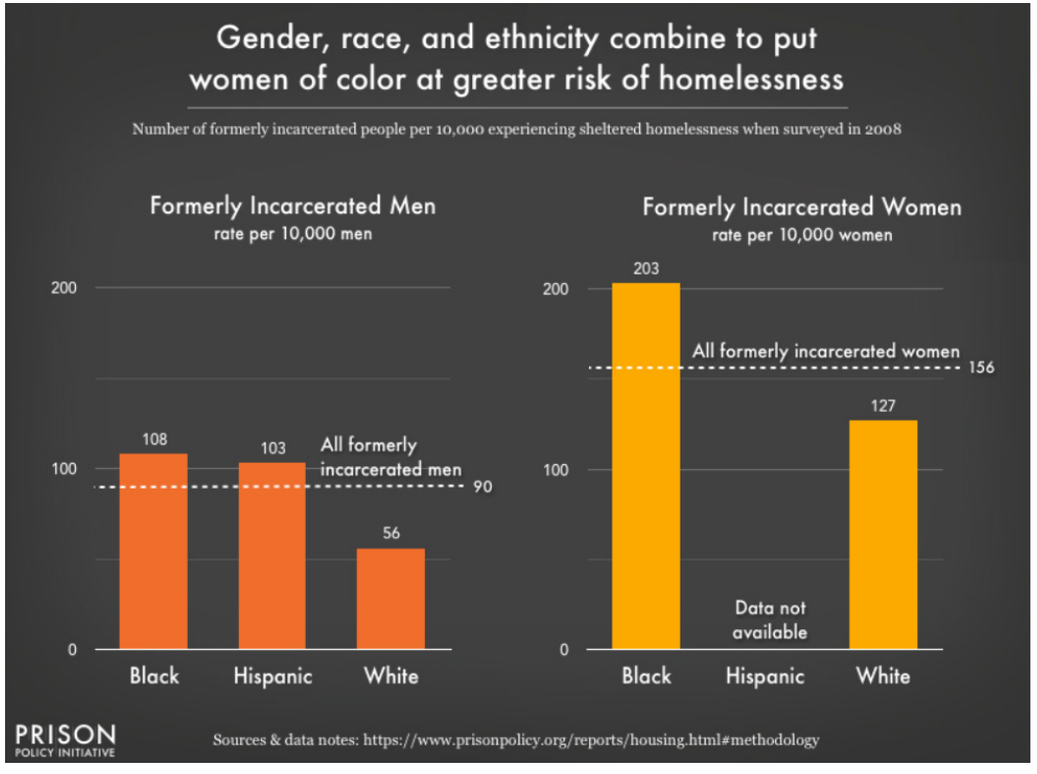
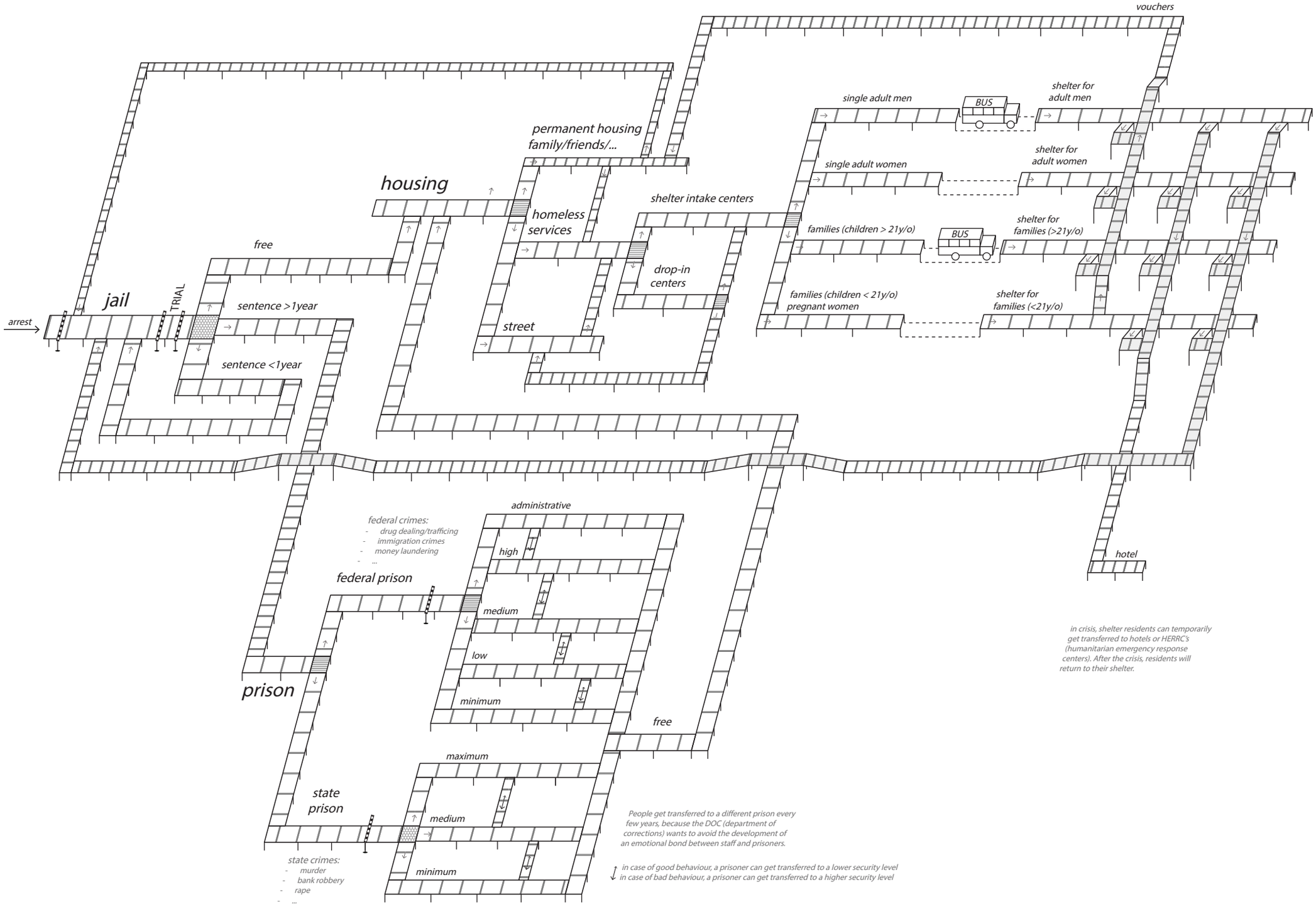


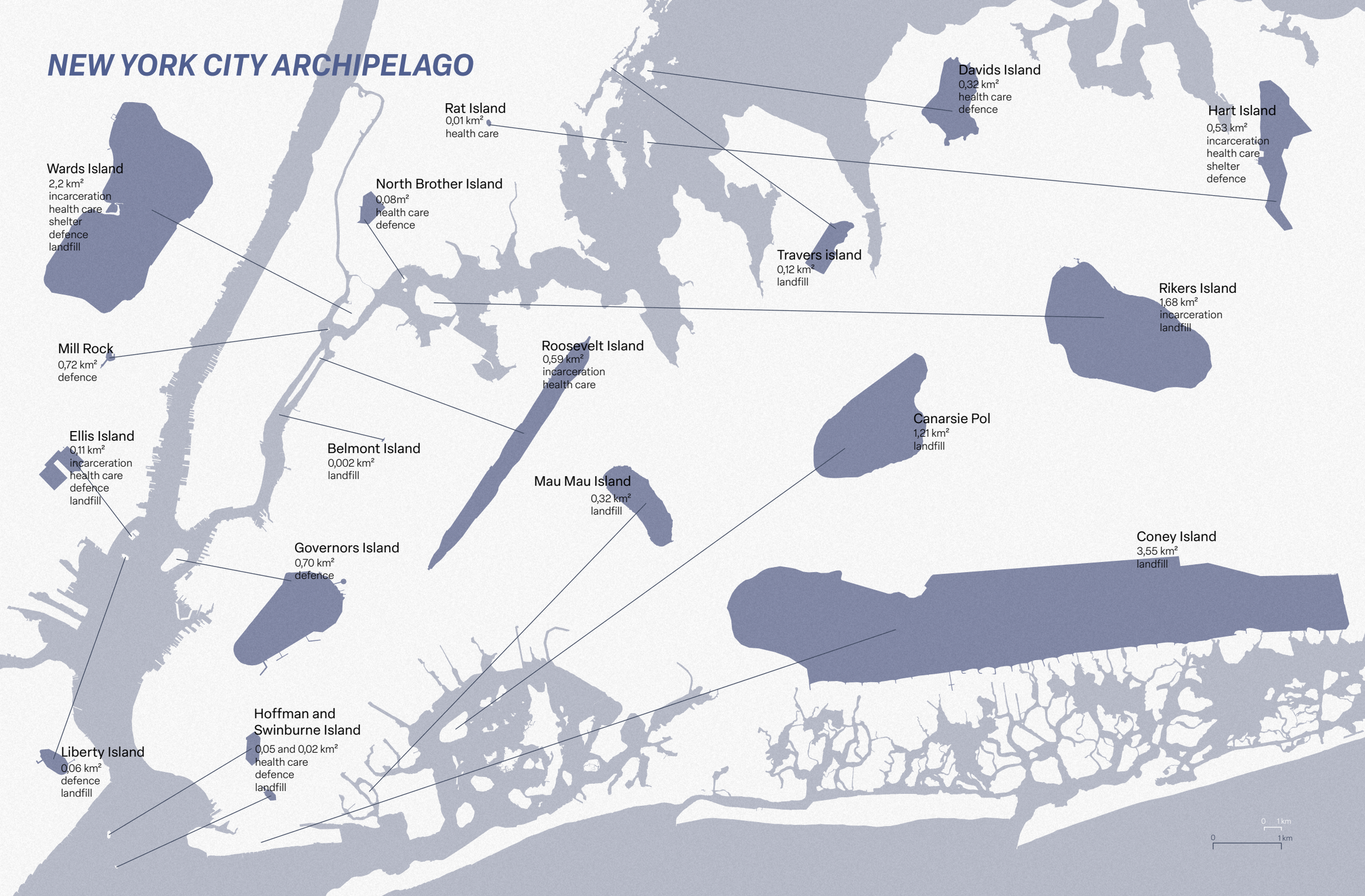
Figure 4 - Prison Policy Initiative (2018)

multitude of revolving doors that sustain the circular movements between jail, prison, shelter, transitional house, street and many other forms of insecure housing (pp. 121). *"The revolving door is part of a more general framework of community reintegration,"* Metraux and Culhane conclude.[27]

The five stories shared by Gregory, Alex, Tony, Douglas and Ibrahim in this study are unique, but indicative of structural linkages between prison and shelter. This research aims to inquire the particular architectural settings created by jails, prisons and shelter through their eyes and their lived experience. This way, it seeks to explore how distinct models of urban planning, urbanism and architecture have created a 'hidden' archipelago of constrained and controlled spaces where 'confinement' is not limited to a single momentary episode, but a state-led model of housing for a vast American and largely Black 'urban outcast', relocated to a Kafkaesque complex of jails, prisons, halfway houses and shelters. Architecture, urbanism and urban planning, in these stories, are not a neutral background against which these narratives unfold, but complicit agents that impact the lives of millions of American citizens.


vouchers
single adult men
BUS
shelter for adult men
permanent housing family/friends/...
single adult women
shelter for adult women
housing
shelter intake centers
homeless services
families (children > 21y/o)
BUS
shelter for families (>21y/o)
free
drop-in centers
jail
TRIAL
sentence >1year
arrest
families (children < 21y/o) pregnant women
shelter for families (<21y/o)
street
sentence <1year
hotel
administrative
federal crimes:
- drug dealing/trafficing
- immigration crimes
- money laundering
- ...
high
federal prison
medium
low
prison
minimum
free
maximum
state prison
medium
minimum
state crimes:
- murder
- bank robbery
- rape
- ...
in crisis, shelter residents can temporarily get transferred to hotels or HERRC's (humanitarian emergency response centers). After the crisis, residents will return to their shelter.
People get transferred to a different prison every few years, because the DOC (department of corrections) wants to avoid the development of an emotional bond between staff and prisoners.
in case of good behaviour, a prisoner can get transferred to a lower security level
in case of bad behaviour, a prisoner can get transferred to a higher security level

AN ARCHIPELAGO OF DISPOSAL AND WASTE


NEW YORK CITY ARCHIPELAGO
Davids Island
0,32 km²
health care
defence
Rat Island
0,01 km²
health care
Hart Island
0,53 km²
incarceration
health care
shelter
defence
Wards Island
2,2 km²
incarceration
health care
shelter
defence
landfill
North Brother Island
0,08m²
health care
defence
Travers island
0,12 km²
landfill
Rikers Island
1,68 km²
incarceration
landfill
Mill Rock
0,72 km²
defence
Roosevelt Island
0,59 km²
incarceration
health care
Canarsie Pol
1,21 km²
landfill
Ellis Island
0,11 km²
incarceration
health care
defence
landfill
Belmont Island
0,002 km²
landfill
Mau Mau Island
0,32 km²
landfill
Coney Island
3,55 km²
landfill
Governors Island
0,70 km²
defence
Hoffman and
Swinburne Island
0,05 and 0,02 km²
health care
defence
landfill
Liberty Island
0,06 km²
defence
landfill
0 1 km
0 1 km

INCARCERATION

ISOLATING DISSENT

Rikers Island

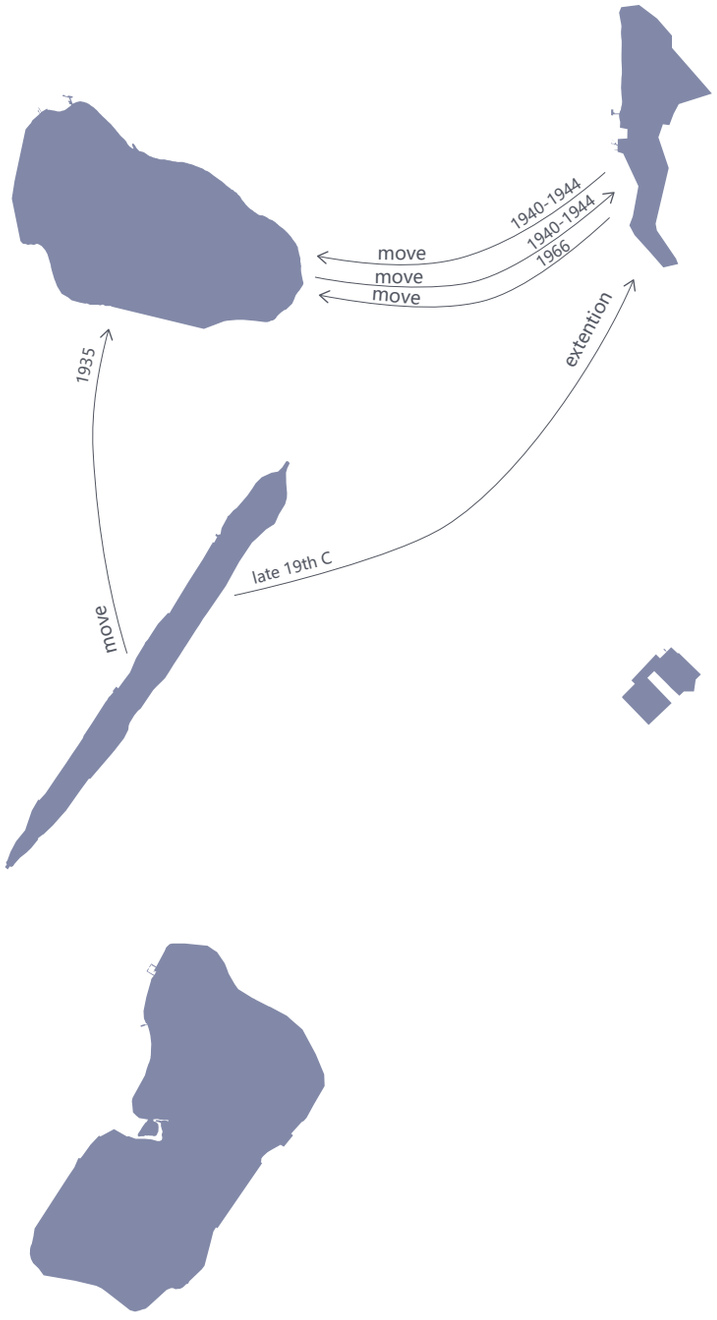
The first penitentiary building on Rikers Island opened in 1932, with a capacity of 1.200 beds. Within the next 60 years, nine other detention centers opened on the island, bringing the capacity to about 15.000 people in 1991.[28] Today, two facilities have closed, but Rikers Island remains one of the world's largest correctional institutions, as the capacity was only reduced to 13.000. Rikers has a daily average population of 5.559.[29] Jennifer Wynn of The Correctional Association of New York, an association designated by law to monitor and oversee state prisons in New York State, describes Rikers Island as *"the world's largest penal colony".*[30]

Roosevelt Island

On Roosevelt Island, formerly known as Blackwell's or Welfare Island[31], the first penitentiary opened in 1832. Twenty years later, in 1852, a workhouse with 220 cells opened.[32] The workhouse was intended for the employment of able-bodied people of the Almshouse on the island[33]. By imposing a 'labor' spirit, this was seen as a "last resort" for the desperately poor and sick[34] (pp. 49). However, after a while the facility became mainly used as a short-term detention center for minor offenders. The workhouse accommodated a shoemakers' workshop, a tailor's workshop, a sewing room... The period of detention was typically less than ten days, but could be up to six months.[35] The last detainees were moved from Roosevelt Island to Rikers Island in 1935, shortly after the first detention center on Rikers Island opened.[36]

Wards Island

Wards and Randalls Island, mostly referred to as just Wards Island, are two islands conjoined by landfill in the East River. Even before conjunction, both Islands served a similar purpose. In 1854, they both accommodated a reform school for juvenile delinquents and juvenile vagrants.[37]



Hart Island

Hart Island accommodated multiple penitentiaries throughout history. In 1865, a prisoner-of-war camp opened during the American Civil war. The camp had a capacity of 5.000 prisoners and it was operational for four months.[38] [39] In the late 19th century, three workhouses opened; Two for boys and one for men. These workhouses were an extension of those on Roosevelt Island, and served mainly as a penitentiary.[40] By the early 20th century, the island housed about 2.000 people.[41] During World War II, the prison population of Hart Island was moved to Rikers Island. Not long after however, Rikers Island got overcrowded, which resulted in the reopening of the penitentiaries on Hart Island.[42] [43] In 1955, a courthouse opened on Hart Island, which ruled whether or not people would end up in a penitentiary on the island.[44] Ten years later, in 1966, the penitentiaries on the island closed down due to changes in the penal code.[45]

Ellis Island

Ellis Island mainly served as an immigration station between 1892 and 1954, but was temporarily used by the military as a penitentiary during both World Wars. The facilities on the island were used as detention center for suspected enemy soldiers.[46]

HEALTH CARE

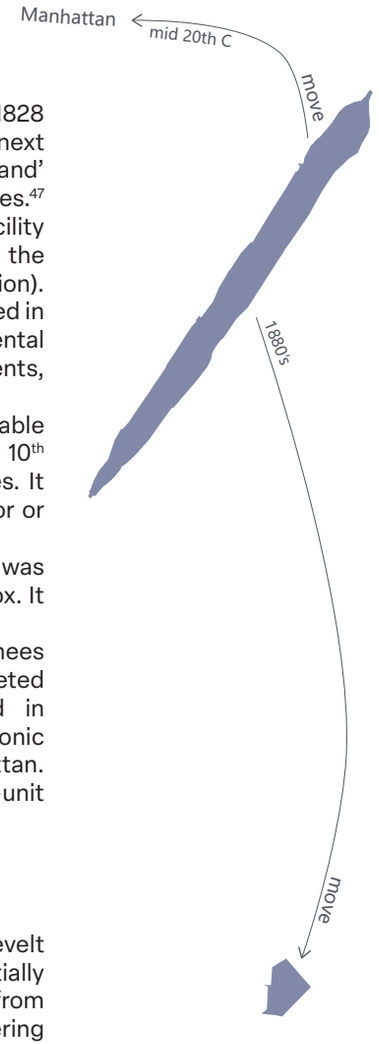
ISOLATING DISEASE

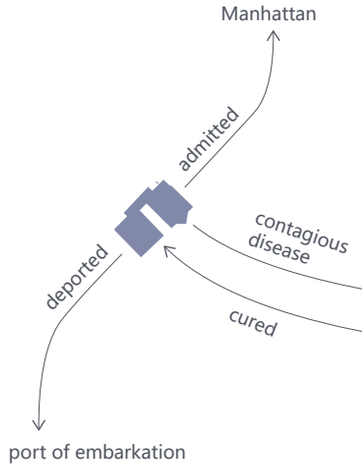
Roosevelt Island

The City of New York bought Roosevelt Island in 1828 as a site for social and corrective facilities. In the next century, the island was better known as 'Welfare Island' as it was primarily used to house health care facilities.[47]
The Penitentiary Hospital was the first health care facility on Roosevelt Island. It opened in 1832 and served the detainees on the island (see paragraph on incarceration). Not much later, in 1839, the second health facility opened in the island. The New York City Lunatic Asylum was a mental health hospital and at one point held about 1.700 patients, which was twice its designed capacity.[48]
An almshouse opened in 1848.[49] This concept of charitable housing was established in the United Kingdom in the 10th century, and was later introduced in The United States. It served as a last resort for elderly, those who were poor or disabled.[50]
In 1856, Riverside Hospital was founded on the island. It was a quarantine hospital for people suffering from smallpox. It moved to North Brother Island in the 1880's.[51]
Another hospital opened in 1861, serving both detainees and New York City's poor. The construction was completed by the detainees themselves, who already lived in workhouses on the island. Mid 20th century, two chronic care facilities opened and the Asylum moved to Manhattan. The abandoned buildings were converted into a 500-unit apartment complex.[52]

North Brother Island

In the 1880s, Riverside Hospital moved from Roosevelt Island to North Brother Island.[53] The hospital was initially intended to treat and isolate people suffering from smallpox, but throughout time it treated people suffering from other quarantinable diseases as well, like polio during the epidemic of 1916.[54]
During the 1930s, the need for quarantine hospitals in remote locations decreased, as the development of vaccines against different diseases led to a decline in contagious infections.[55] This resulted in an abandonment of the island until the 1950s.
In the 1950s, the abandoned hospital buildings were converted into a drug rehabilitation center for adolescents, which offered both treatment and education. People confined to the facility had to go cold turkey, as they were locked up in their room until they were clean. Many of them were held in the center against their will. Staff corruption eventually resulted in the closure of the facility in 1963.[56]





Ellis Island

Ellis Island served as an inspection station for immigrants entering the United States via New York City since 1892.[57]
The inspection included a medical examination, as well as a financial background check. Not every immigrant arriving in New York City had to undergo the thorough examination on Ellis Island however. First- and second-class passengers could enter the U.S. after only a brief inspection, whereas all lower-class steerage passengers were examined fully.[58]
If immigrants were diagnosed with contagious diseases during their inspection, they were send to the quarantine stations on Hoffman and Swinburne Islands. They were only allowed to return to Ellis Island to complete their inspection if they were completely cured.[59]
Ellis Island Museum mentions that only 2% of all arrivals were deported after inspection. They emphasize that even though this number might sound insignificant, it sometimes resulted in around a thousand exclusions a month. They therefore refer to Ellis Island as the Isle of Hope/Isle of Tears.[60]
During both World Wars, the inspection stations were temporarily closed and used as military base and hospital.[61]
Due of an adjustment in the legislation on immigration in 1921, the number of immigrants that received admission to the United States declined significantly.[62] As a result, Ellis island downgraded to an immigrant detention center from a primary inspection center it once was.[63] Thirty years later, in 1954, the detention center on Ellis Island closed with the departure of the last detainee.[64]
Ironically, the former migration inspection and detention center is now one of New York City's top-tourist attractions, while the US today maintains one of the world's largest immigrant prison systems.[65]

Hart Island

Like other remote islands, Hart Island accommodated several hospitals as well. In 1870, the island housed a quarantine station for yellow fever. During that time, a women's psychiatric hospital was built as well.[66] In 1885, a tubercularium opened.[67] Almost a century later, after the penitentiary on Hart Island closed (pp. 45) , drug rehabilitation center Phoenix House opened in 1967.[68] It grew into a facility with 350 residents, and provided programs for individuals, families and communities affected by substance abuse and addiction.[69] Phoenix House moved to Manhattan after the ferry service to Hart Island ended in 1976, leaving the island abandoned. In 1986, Alex lived in Phoenix House for a month after his incarceration. Today, only the Potter's Field remains, maintained by detainees.[70]

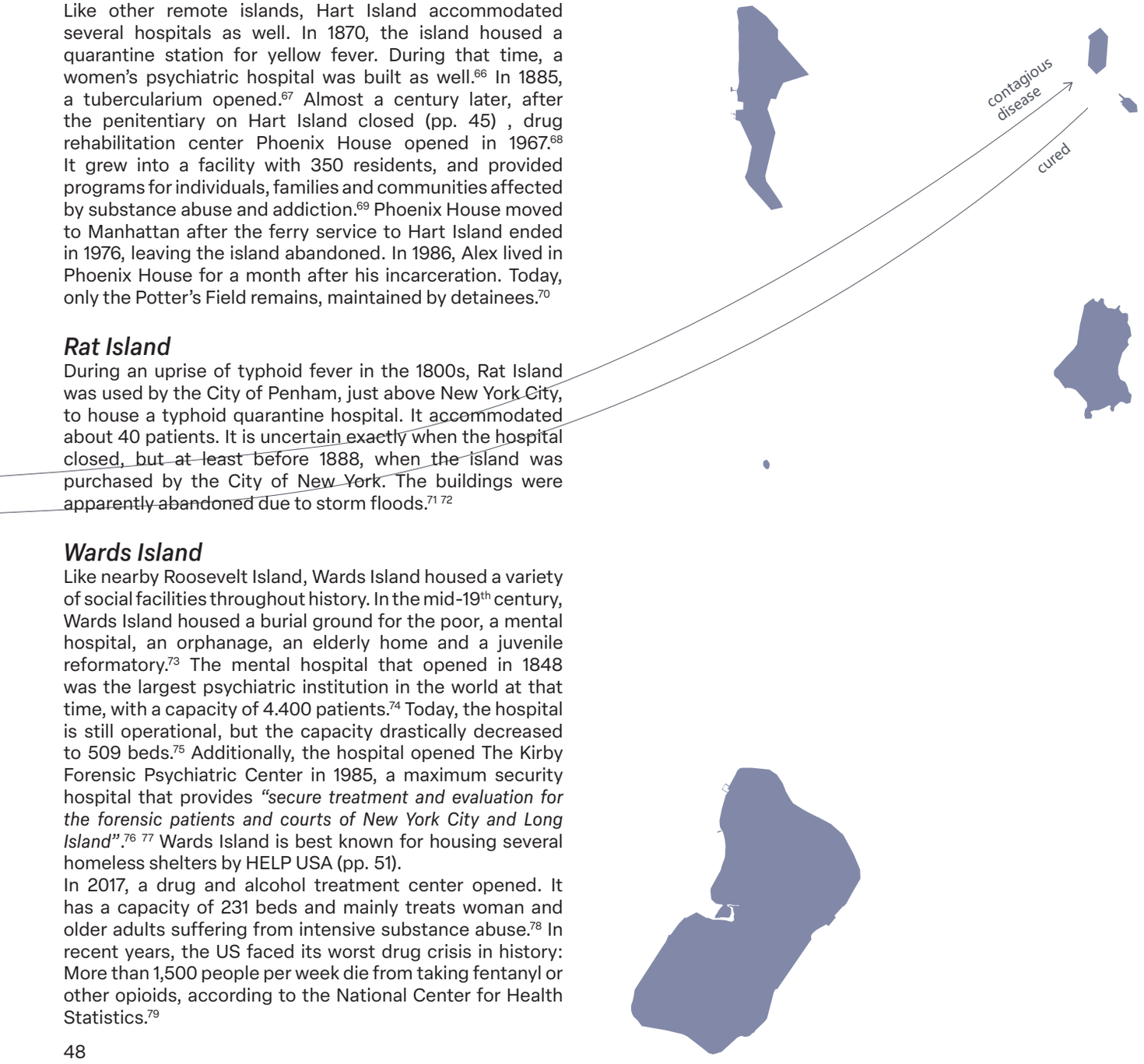
Rat Island

During an uprise of typhoid fever in the 1800s, Rat Island was used by the City of Penham, just above New York City, to house a typhoid quarantine hospital. It accommodated about 40 patients. It is uncertain exactly when the hospital closed, but at least before 1888, when the island was purchased by the City of New York. The buildings were apparently abandoned due to storm floods.[71] [72]

Wards Island

Like nearby Roosevelt Island, Wards Island housed a variety of social facilities throughout history. In the mid-19th century, Wards Island housed a burial ground for the poor, a mental hospital, an orphanage, an elderly home and a juvenile reformatory.[73] The mental hospital that opened in 1848 was the largest psychiatric institution in the world at that time, with a capacity of 4.400 patients.[74] Today, the hospital is still operational, but the capacity drastically decreased to 509 beds.[75] Additionally, the hospital opened The Kirby Forensic Psychiatric Center in 1985, a maximum security hospital that provides *"secure treatment and evaluation for the forensic patients and courts of New York City and Long Island"*.[76] [77] Wards Island is best known for housing several homeless shelters by HELP USA (pp. 51).

In 2017, a drug and alcohol treatment center opened. It has a capacity of 231 beds and mainly treats woman and older adults suffering from intensive substance abuse.[78] In recent years, the US faced its worst drug crisis in history: More than 1,500 people per week die from taking fentanyl or other opioids, according to the National Center for Health Statistics.[79]



Hoffman Island + Swinburne Island

Hoffman and Swinburne Island were two artificial islands constructed as quarantine stations. In the late 1800s and early 1900s, the islands housed immigrants who showed symptoms of contagious diseases during their medical inspection at Ellis Island. They were only allowed to reenter Ellis Island if they were completely cured of the disease at the quarantine hospital.[80]

Because of an adjustment in the legislation on immigration in 1923, the influx of immigrants arriving in New York City rapidly decreased. In combination with new methods to control contagious diseases, the quarantine stations on Hoffman and Swinburne Island were little used since then.[81]

Davids Island

Davids Island was privately owned in 1862 when it was subleased to the military to accommodate for a military hospital during the Civil War. The Hospital could house more than 2.000 wounded soldiers. It also confined prisoners, who were sent to prisoner of war camps after their recovery.[82]

POTTER'S FIELD

ISOLATING DEATH

Hart Island

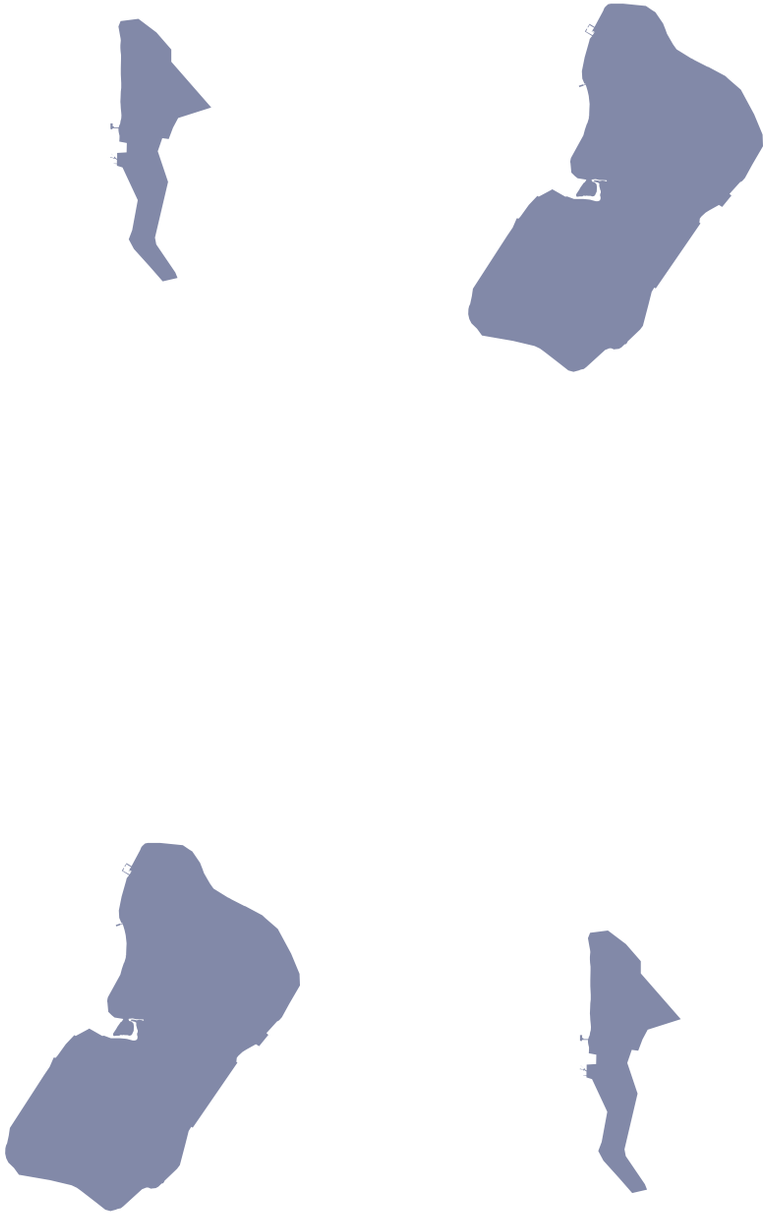
Hart Island is best known for its potter's field.[83] What started as a small-scale burial ground for 20 Union Army soldiers in 1865[84], grew into New York City's biggest public cemetery, the final resting place of over a million individuals.[85] A potter's field, or a paupers' grave, is a burial ground for unknown, unclaimed or indigent people.[86] Today, the city conducts about 1.100 burials a year.[87] Four days a week, DOC[88] staff members and incarcerated individuals travel by ferry to Hart Island to bury remains in pine boxes. The boxes are usually marked with just a number to identify the person, and are stacked three deep in a trench. One trench contains 150 to 162 adults and 1.000 infants.[89] As The New York Times already mentioned in 1980, *"This is where the rough pine boxes go that come from Blackwell's Island."*[90]

Recently in 2021, Hart Island was transferred to the city's Department of Parks & Recreation. Before, it was operated by the Department of Correction.[91] On their site, the city claims *"We are committed to ensuring that the public has access to the island and has several services available to help the individuals find and visit their loved ones on Hart Island."*[92]

The $70 million makeover will be finished later this year, opening the island to the public. From then on, guided tours and nature classes will be held on the island, led by park rangers. The city stresses however that the graves will remain undisturbed. They don't intend to turn the island into a recreational park with picnic tables and playgrounds. Burials will continue to be conducted.[93]

Wards Island

Wards Island used to facilitate a burial ground for the poor in the mid-19th century.



SHELTER

ISOLATING HOMELESSNESS

Wards Island

Wards Island is best known today as the island of homeless shelters, (mental) hospitals and sports fields. The first shelter opened in 1998, HELP SEC (Supportive Employment Shelter).[94] HELP SEC has room for 200 single adults who must be either employed or employable. The shelter supports their residents in finding housing and becoming economically self-sufficient by providing necessary resources.[95] The next shelter that opened on Wards Island was HELP Clarke Thomas in 2007,[96] a 234-bed facility.[97] A few years later, in 2015, HELP Keener opened.[98] This 300-bed facility consist solely of dorms.[99] HELP Meyer, the fourth shelter on the Island, opened in 2018[100] and was only operational until December 2022. Officials mentioned that the closure was *"due to concerns with the building infrastructure"*[101], but the problems went far beyond infrastructure failure. Lastly, the Schwartz Assessment Shelter provides shelter to 377 men.[102] Aside from these shelters (pp. 113) and health care facilities, there are a wide variety of sports fields on Wards island, but no residential or commercial facilities.

Recently Wards Island served as the site for an emergency center in response to the large influx of migrants arriving in the city since the summer of 2022. A structure of interconnected tents was put up on a parking lot on the island in October of 2022, which could provide temporary shelter to 500 single men arriving in the city. The emergency center was only operational for about a month, as the number of migrants arriving in New York City decreased greatly shortly after opening.[103]

Hart Island

In 1951, a homeless shelter with a capacity of 2.000 people was opened, under supervision of the New York City Department of Welfare.[104] It housed both people experiencing homeless and people suffering an addiction.[105] The shelter however closed three years later, in 1954, when the Department of Correction regained control of the Island.[106]

DEFENSE

ISOLATING COMBAT

North Brother Island

North Brother Island housed war veterans who were students and their families after World War II.[107]

Hart Island

Hart Island was first used as public site in 1864 as a training ground for the military. A year later, Hart Island accommodated a prisoner of war camp (see paragraph on incarceration).[108] During the Cold war, from 1953-1962, the island was used to station defense missiles.[109]

Davids Island

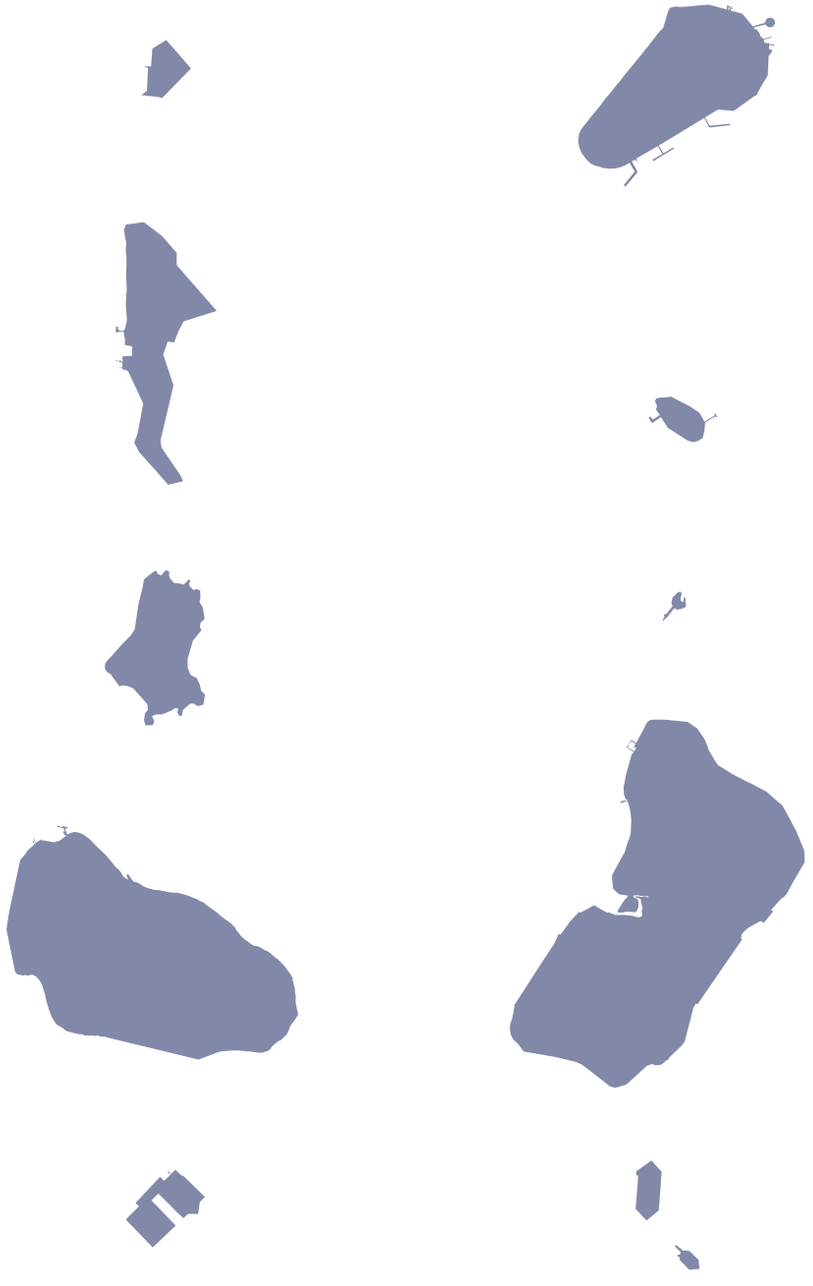
Just like Hart Island, David Island was used to station defense missiles during the Cold War, from 1953-1962.[110]

Rikers Island

Before Rikers Island became the large correctional institution that we know today, the island was first used as a military training ground during the Civil War, from 1861-1865.[111]

Ellis Island

Ellis Island used to be the site of Fort Gibson, a part of New York's harbor defense system during the War of 1812. It stationed defense missiles as well.[112] [113] During both world wars, Ellis Island was used as penitentiary to detain suspected enemy soldiers.[114]



Governors Island

Governors Island was used as military defense base during multiple wars throughout time. It was used by the military for the first time in 1776, when defensive works were raised during the American Revolutionary War. From 1783-1966, the island was used as a strategic defense point and as training ground. Until 1996, Governors Island served as an important base for the United States Coast Guard. After the decommissioning as a military base, it was redeveloped and opened to the public in 2005.[115]

Liberty Island

Just like on Ellis and Governors Island, a defensive fort was built on Liberty Island in the 19th century.[116] When the fort was obsolete in the 1880s, the 11-point shaped fort became the base of the Statue of Liberty.[117]

Mill Rock

A blockhouse, a small fortification, with two cannons was built on Mill Rock during the War of 1812. It was part of a blockhouse chain to defend New York's harbor, just like Fort Gibson on Ellis Island.[118]

Wards Island

During the Revolutionary War, from 1775 until 1783, the British used Wards Island as military post. They launched amphibious attacks on Manhattan from the island.[119] [120]

Hoffman + Swinburn Island

From 1938 until the end of World War II, the Islands were used as training station for the United States Merchant Marines. During the second World War, the islands served as anchorages for antisubmarine nets to protect New York Bay from enemy submarines.[121] [122]

LANDFILL

ISOLATING DISPOSAL

Rikers Island

Rikers Island was originally under 0,4km², but has grown to more than 1,7km² by landfill. The landfill started when the legislation on ocean dumping changed in 1922, which meant that the City of New York was no longer allowed to dump its garbage in the sea. As a result, the City decided to use Rikers Island as new dumping ground.[123] The labor was almost exclusively performed by prisoners.[124] The island grew for over two decades, and this massive expansion allowed for the jail complex on Rikers Island to expand as well (pp. 44).[125]

Mau Mau Island

Excavated sand from the construction of the Belt Parkway, a network of highways nearby Mau Mau Island, was added to the island in the 1930s. Patches of asphalt were added on top to protect the nearby Marine Park Golf Course from sand blowing on the golf courses.[126] In 2011, a $15 million restoration project began to restore the island and bird habitat. The restoration was completed in 2014.[127]

Ellis Island

Ellis Island was greatly expanded by landfill throughout history. Material excavated from multiple subway and railroad lines in New York City was used as fill, as well as ballast from ships.[128] The natural island is in the northern part of the island, and is part of New York. The artificial part of the island belongs to New Jersey. The island expanded from 0,02km² to 0,11km².[129]

Liberty Island

Liberty Island was used as a dumping ground for material excavated during the construction of two railroads in the vicinity of the island in the 1870s.[130] This landfill expanded the island from 0,04km² to 0,06km².[131]

Wards Island

Wards Island today consists of three formerly separate islands: Wards Island, Randalls Island and Sunken Meadow Island. There used to be a channel in between Randalls and Wards Islands, Little Hell Gate, which was filled in between 1930s and 1960s to connect and expand the parks on both islands.[132]

The infill project to connect Sunken Meadow Island, east of Randalls Island, with the other two islands began in 1955. During that time, the city allowed construction firms to dump debris between the two islands for free.[133]

Belmont Island

Belmont Island is a tiny artificial Island in the East River. During the construction of the Steinway Tunnel, a subway tunnel connecting Manhattan with Queens, excess landfill built up on top of the tunnel shaft, reaching above the water surface. This created a tiny Island.[134]

Hoffman + Swinburne Island

The Hoffman and Swinburne Island are two artificial islands built by the federal government as two quarantine stations. This was a necessary response to multiple cholera pandemics in the 19th century, caused by immigrants arriving by ship who carried infectious diseases. Infected passengers had to quarantine on these islands until they were completely cured (see paragraph on health care).[135]

Travers Island

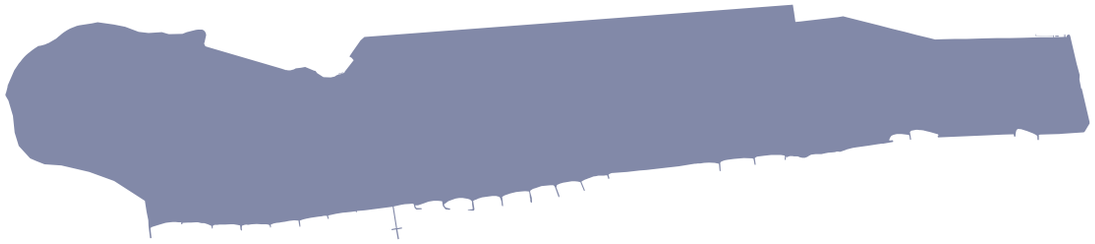
Travers Island was connected to mainland New Rochelle by landfill in 1929.[136]

Canarsie Pol

Soil and sand from nearby waterways was dumped on Canarsie Pol when they were dredged.[137]

Coney Island

Coney Island and Brooklyn used to be separated by Coney Island Creek. In the 1920s, a big part of the creek was filled.[138]



0 1 km

CONCLUSION

The parallel between the development of New York City and its archipelago is striking. Throughout history, numerous facilities that New York City wanted to hide from the public eye -but were found necessary to maintain the urban order on the main island-, were strategically located on islands. People relegated to the margins of society were therefore systematically banished to islands. Hereby, the City could fulfill its duty by providing all the necessary facilities for its citizens, without having to deal with them in their city center. This intricate and elaborate history of urban planning and architectural construction carefully isolated a large part of New York citizens under the guise of “correcting” and “curing” deviant and dependent behavior. People housed in these facilities were isolated from society, and many even from their families.

On many remote islands, numerous facilities sprouted: (mental) hospitals, prisons, reformatories, workhouses... All had significant capacities, some well over a thousand. Whenever a building would get overcrowded, an extension was built on another island and people would be transferred to the new building by boat. Even after their death on one of the islands, many would be moved to yet another island; Hart Island, their final resting place.

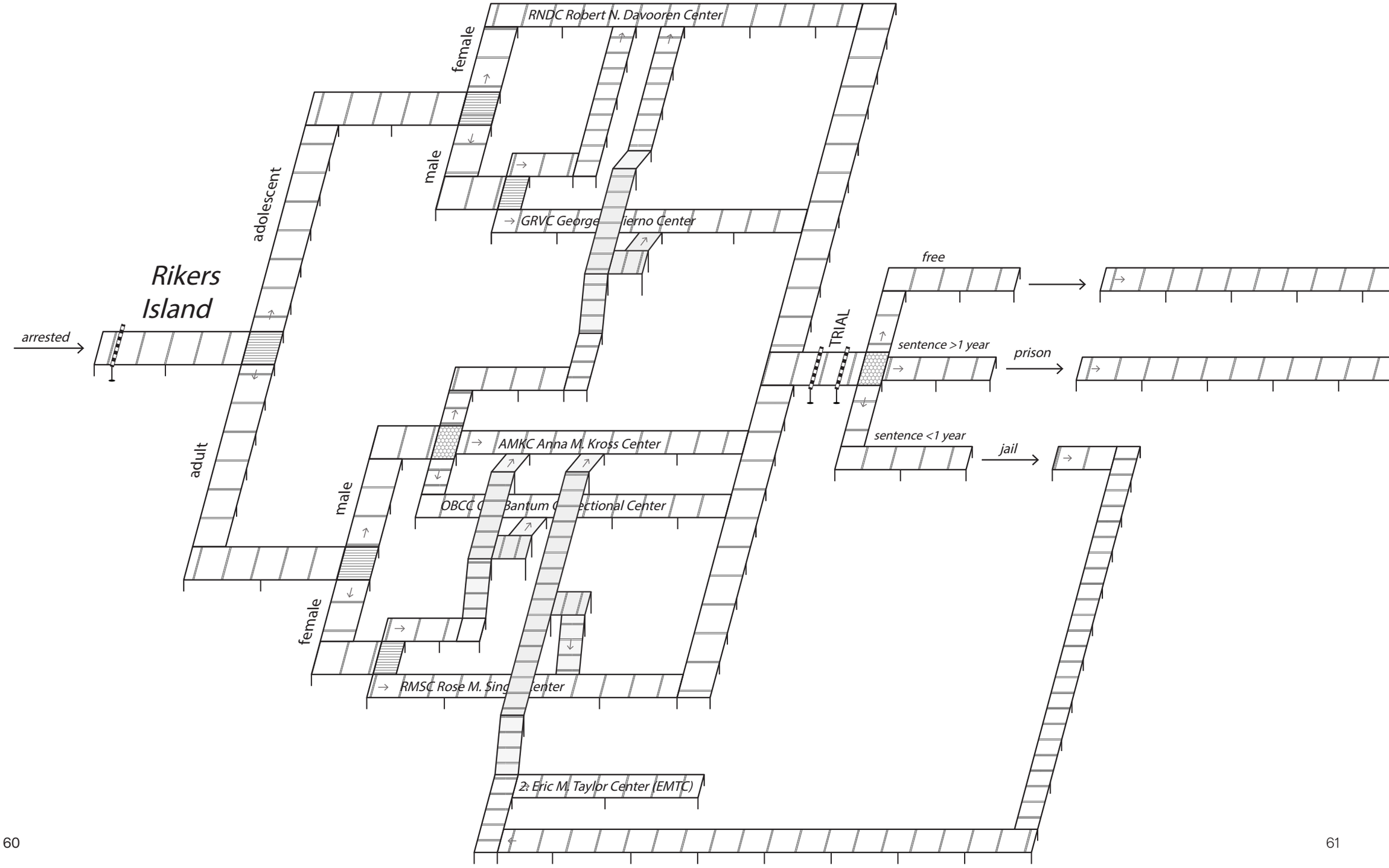
Some islands were used as dumping ground for landfill. Both excavated material from the construction of subway lines and waste were deposited on these islands. The parallel between the use of islands as dumping ground for waste and people pushed to the margins of society is unmistakable. Many of the operations mentioned above, such as the landfill operations and burials on Hart Island, were carried out by incarcerated individuals. Throughout the history of New York’s mass incarceration, many of the building complexes were also built through incarcerated forced labor.

Although many facilities have closed over the years, leaving their island abandoned, a few islands and their facilities are still operational: Rikers Island remains one of the largest correctional institutions worldwide to this day, and Wards Island is best known for housing several homeless shelters.

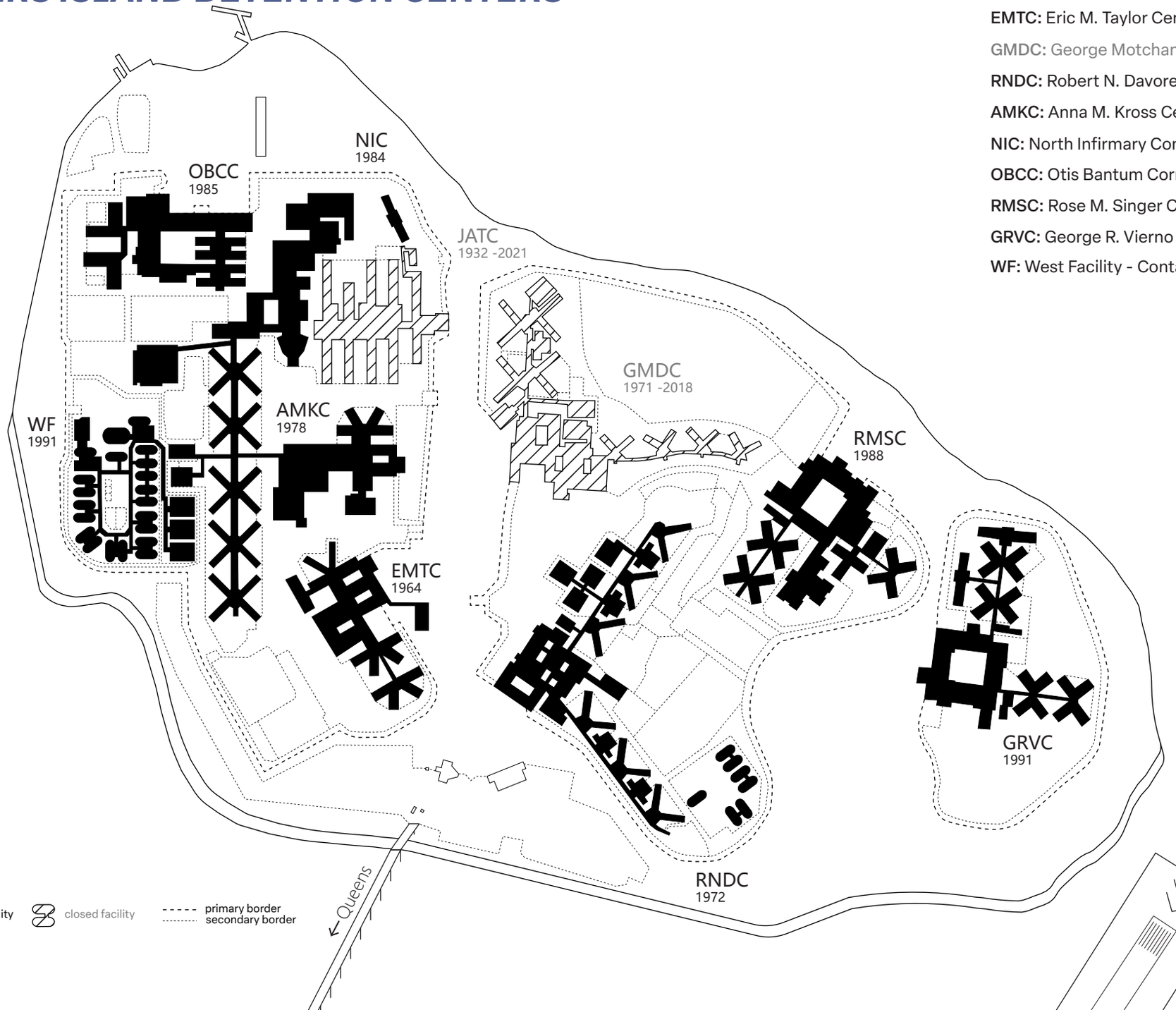
In many ways, prisons and shelters appear as islands of exclusion within the urban fabric. Isolated from society, the facilities are attached to the city without truly being part of it. People housed either in prison or in a homeless shelter are not only physically disconnected from society, but stigma and regulations such as the 10 p.m. curfew in shelters create an (irreversible) distance as well.

RIKERS ISLAND

eight detention islands on an island in the New York City archipelago


Rikers Island
arrested
adolescent
adult
female
male
male
female
RNDC Robert N. Davooren Center
GRVC George ierno Center
AMKC Anna M. Kross Center
OBCC C Bantum C ectional Center
RMSC Rose M. Sing enter
2: Eric M. Taylor Center (EMTC)
TRIAL
free
sentence >1 year
prison
sentence <1 year
jail

RIKERS ISLAND DETENTION CENTERS



JATC: James A. Thomas Center — 1932 - 2021

EMTC: Eric M. Taylor Center — 1964

GMDC: George Motchan Detention Center — 1971 - 2018

RNDC: Robert N. Davoren Center — 1972

AMKC: Anna M. Kross Center — 1978

NIC: North Infirmary Command — 1984

OBCC: Otis Bantum Correctional Center — 1985

RMSC: Rose M. Singer Center — 1988

GRVC: George R. Vierno Center — 1991

WF: West Facility - Contagious Disease Unit

FACILITIES

summary conducted based on recurring sources.[139]

Rikers Island holds eight detention centers. One for all women, two mixed centers and the remaining ones are all men.

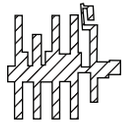
JATC James A. Thomas Center

1932 - 2021

1.200 beds
cells

Riker's Island first permanent jail for men, formerly known as 'the House of Detention for Men'. From 2003 until 2016, the facility was used as an ICE (Immigration and Customs holding facility).

JATC was closed in 2021 as a first step in closure of Rikers Island.



EMTC Eric M. Taylor Center

1964

2.250 beds
dorms
M adolescent and adult convicts

The EMTC closed in 2020, but almost immediately reopened for people on Rikers Island showing symptoms/ testing positive on COVID-19. Until now, the facility is still open.

Before the temporary closure, able-bodied people residing in EMTC were required to work and provide the island with facility maintenance and industrial labor force.

GMDC George Motchan Detention Center

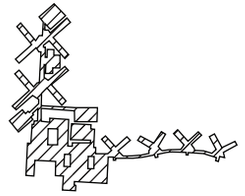
1971 – 2018

2.300 beds
cells and dorms

Formerly known as 'The Correctional Institution for Women', the facility was originally designed for 750 female detainees and convicts. The center however never reached full capacity, and was therefore made available to adolescent male inmates to relieve population pressures at other facilities on the island.

In 1985, the facility opened national's first jail-based baby nursery, and in 1988 it became an all-male detention center as all women were moved to the newly-opened all female Rose M. Singer Center. Soon after, GMDC expanded from 750 to 2.300 beds.

The facility closed in 2018, and is currently used as training academy and wellness center for DOC staff.



RNDC Robert N. Davoren Center
1972

2.238 beds
cells and dorms
M + F adolescent detainees and M adult detainees

This short-term jail was built in 1972 and later on expanded with sprung structures (Figure 6). These are rigid aluminum framed structures covered by a heavy-duty plastic fabric.

AMKC Anna M. Kross Center
1978

2.988 beds
cells
M + F detainees and convicts

The Anna M. Kross Center, or C-95 building, is the largest facility on Rikers Island. It was designed as a 2.388-bed detention center, and later expanded to a capacity of 2.988 beds. It includes a Methadone Detoxification Unit and DOC's Mental Health Center.

NIC North Infirmary Command
1984

475 beds
cells

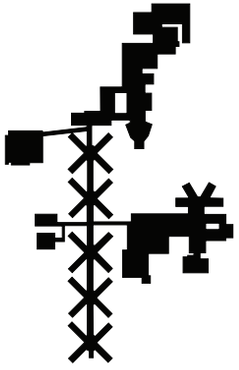
Formerly known as 'Rikers Island Infirmary', this facility houses detainees and convicts that require extreme protective custody, have special health needs or are undergoing drug detoxification. The Infirmary also houses people from other facilities if their population is at full capacity.

OBCC Otis Bantum Correctional Center
1985

1.647 beds
cells and dorms
M + F detainees

The Otis Bantum Correctional Center contains both general population as solitary confinement, the 'Central Punitive Segregation Unit', which accomodates 400 beds.

The facility used to have 2 annexes. Two former Staten Island ferries were put into service as jail barges in 1987. The A. Wildstein and Walter B. Keane both had a capacity of 162 beds, and were docked alongside each other. The barges were closed down in 2002, after a service of fifteen years, because of a diminishing jail population on Rikers Island. The former ferries were then sold for scrap metal.



RMSC Rose M. Singer Center
1988

800 beds
cells
F detainees and convicts

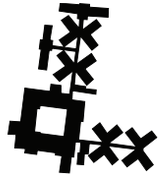
This facility was built in response to the mixed population in the George Motchan Detention Center. They moved all women as soon as RMSC opened.

The Rose M. Singer Center is the only all-women detention center on Rikers Island, and it contains a 25-bed baby nursery.

GRVC George R. Vierno Center
1991

1.350 beds
cells
M adolescent and adult detainees and convicts

The George R. Vierno Center was built in 1991 as a 800-bed facility. Two years later, in 1993, the building expanded and 500 beds were added. GRVC is another short-term jail, and contains a 'Central Punitive Segregation Unit', also known as a solitary confinement unit.



WF West Facility - Contagious Disease Unit
1991

940 beds
cells

The West Facility, which is a 940-bed all-cells facility, was partly converted into the Communicable Disease Unit (CDU). This contains 140 specially air-controlled housing units reserved for detainees and convicts with contagious diseases. Just like RNDC, this facility was built as a sprung structure as well.

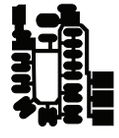


Figure 5: aerial photo Rikers Island - John Moore, Getty Images

Figure 6: aerial photo of sprung structure jail - Sprung Structures, a faster way to build

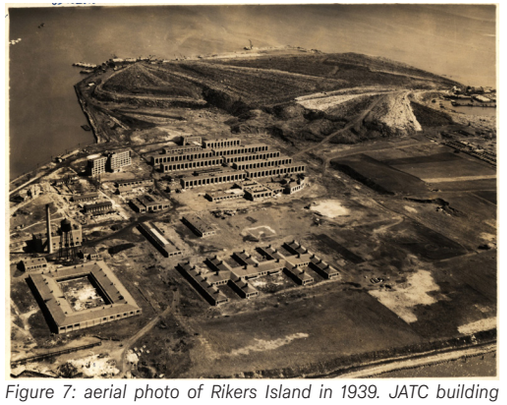


Figure 7: aerial photo of Rikers Island in 1939. JATC building in the back is finished - NYC Department of Records and Information Services.

Figure 8 and 9: former Staten Island Ferries docked at Rikers Island as annexes to OBCC Otis Bantum Correctional Center, from 1987 to 2002. Both barges had a capacity of 162 beds - Correction History

Figure 10: 1,3 km long Francis Buono bridge connecting Rikers Island and Queens - Stroyone.com

	mail	money transfer	visitation	phone calls
JATC (closed)	✓	✓	✓	✓
EMTC	✗	✗	✗	✓ unlimited
GMDC (closed)	✓	✓	✓	✓
RNDC	✗	✗	✗	✓ one free phone call
AMKC	✗	✗	✗	✓ one free phone call
NIC	✓	✓	✓	✓
OBCC	✓	✓	✓	✓ via calling account
RMSC	✓	✓	✓*	✓* 30 minutes
GRVC	✓	✓	✓*	✓* 10-30 minutes
WF	✗	✗	✗	✓

Figure 11: what is allowed in each Rikers Island facility

INSIDE RIKERS ISLAND

Rikers Island is New York City's main correctional institution. The island contains eight running detention centers and had a daily average population of 5.559 individuals in fiscal year 2022, out of a capacity of 13.000. There were 17.803 admissions on Rikers Island in 2022, and the average length of stay was 120 days (Figure 12) . Both the daily average population and length of stay is growing compared to the numbers in fiscal year 2021.[140] Especially the length of stay grew by a whole month. 85% of the detainees on Rikers island are awaiting trial after their arrest, the remaining 15% are convicted and serving short sentences (less than one year) or are temporarily placed there awaiting transfer to another facility.[141]

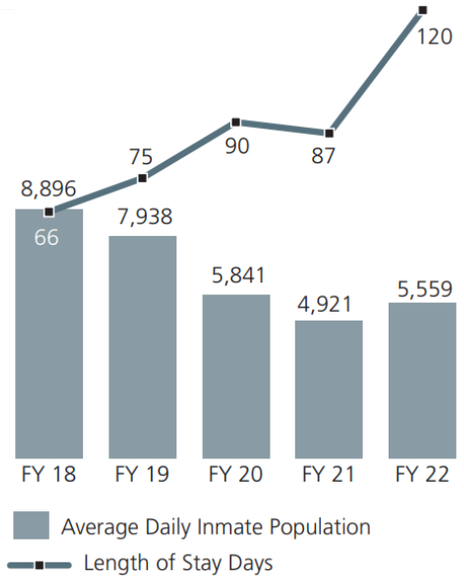


Figure 12: Mayor's Management Report - Fiscal 2022

Road to Rikers Island[142]

The only access to Rikers Island is via the Francis Buono Bridge, which is no less than 1,3 km long, and opened in 1966.[143] Before the bridge was constructed, the island was only accessible by ferry.[144] The closest outsiders can get to the Rikers Island is the beginning of the bridge. Some of the most striking impressions of the area are listed below.

The closest bus stop of the M60 bus from Harlem is located south of Astoria Heights, in Queens. The bridge to Rikers Island is located north of this neighborhood, and the walk to the bridge takes approximately 15 minutes. Astoria Heights is a self-proclaimed *"quiet middle class neighborhood of family homes"*[145] The buildings vary between bungalows, semi-detached villas and small apartment buildings that look like they belong on an American university campus. All have very well-maintained lawns, adjacent to neat sidewalks.

Only the rumbling from LaGuardia airport's runways resembled the contradictory atmosphere present in the neighborhood. There is a very stark contrast between the quiet, neat neighborhood and the numerous DOC[146] vans driving by to drop off yet another person on Rikers Island for an indefinite period of time. These vans are the only elements that give away the approach of the bridge to Rikers Island.

LaGuardia Airport is omnipresent in the vicinity of Rikers Island. The M60 bus is crowded with travelers and suitcases, and the rumbling and vibrations of the runways only gets louder and louder whilst walking towards the bridge. The contrast between the airport as a symbol of freedom, and the jails on Rikers Island, as the clearest symbol of captivity, is harrowing. With only 80 meters of sea in between, these conflicting facilities are located right next to each other.

"New York City Department of Correction: Rikers Island – New York City's Boldest", stated a huge sign that leads up to Hazen Street, in front of the bridge. At the end of the street, two guarded security posts check every vehicle crossing the bridge, entering and leaving the island (Figures 19-22).

Life on Rikers Island

All protagonists in this thesis have spent time on Rikers Island at some point in their life – some multiple times -, and all have very clear opinions about the place. Gregory describes Rikers Island as: *"probably one of the most corrupt places of the planet."*

He recalls the worst part of being in jail at Rikers Island is the high levels of frustration and fear among the detainees because of their approaching trials. The violence amongst guards and prisoners makes this place very unsafe for both detainees and convicts and staff.

On the other hand, because people have not been convicted yet, they should be treated as innocent, Gregory mentions. This means that people arriving on Rikers Island will not (yet) be divided into different security levels based on their crime. People get assigned to a certain detention center on Rikers Island based on whether or not they have a reported history with violence, whether they have been on Rikers Island before, etc.

cell

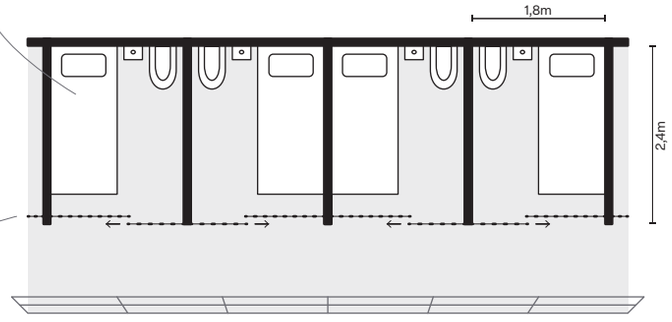
Douglass explains how detention centers on the island offer both cells and dorms. He spent time in both, and described his cell in great detail (Figure 13) . The first thing he mentioned was the size of the bed, or rather the lack in size: *"The bed was way too small: my legs were hanging out!"* The cell was around 4m² [dimensions of old American cells: 1.8 by 2.4 m] and fitted a locker, a sink, a toilet and one roll of toilet paper. The front wall of his cell was completely made out of bars, which made him visible to the detainees across the hallway. He regretted his lack of privacy, but nevertheless mainly saw the bars as an advantage for the safety of detainees and convicts. He mentioned the sudden loss of one of his friends just a week before our conversation. *"My friend died in a shelter last Friday. They [the staff] only found his body Sunday morning because they didn't do their rounds to check. If they had checked the rooms like they were supposed to, he might have had a chance of survival,"* Douglass says defeated.

This incident happened in a shelter and not in a detention center, but Douglass stresses that the two places are comparable. The bars of his cell ensure social control, and thus give him the feeling of safety. He emphasizes that detainees are looking out for each other, in case staff would mistreat them. *"It's the way the guards treat us. They don't treat us well. They want to beat us up, for no reason at all. In a cell with bars, at least I know that I can call somebody. I know I have neighbors who can hear me."*

Continuing about the fourth wall of his cell being bars, Douglass mentions: *"How am I supposed to breathe if it would be a brick wall? What kind of air would I be breathing?"* He remembers the time he spent in a cell with four walls. *"In summertime, we would lay on the floor in front of the door to breathe through the cracks. The cells would heat up to such extreme temperatures that the walls would get wet. There was nothing you could do to cool down, because no matter how much clothes you take off, you cannot take off your skin."* For him, the lack of privacy does not outweigh the social control and fresh air that cells with bars provide.

When Douglass needed privacy, he hung a sheet in front of the bars, and took it back down afterwards. *"Some guards allowed it and would tell you to take the sheet down afterwards,*

"The bed was way too small: My legs were hanging out!"

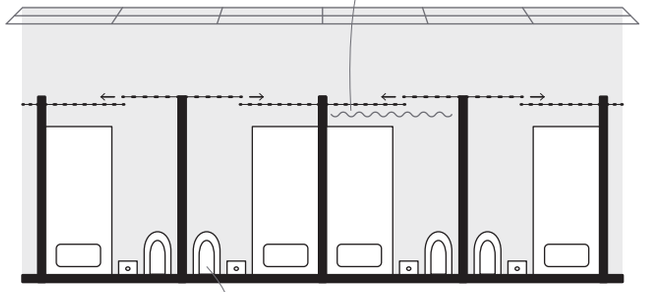


Bars do not provide privacy, but enhance social control

"It's about the way the guards treat us. They don't treat us well. They want to beat us up, for no reason at all. In a cell with bars, at least I know that I can call somebody. I know I have neighbors who can hear me"

Hanging sheet in front of bars for temporary privacy

"some guards allow it, others would snatch it down immediately"



"People would sometimes stuff their toilet bowl. This would cause all neighboring toilet bowls to overflow. Next thing you know, it's all over your room and they [the guards] wouldn't even give you a mop to clean it up!" Douglass says agitated.

Figure 13: Annotated drawing of Rikers Island cell based on Douglass' interview.

others would snatch it down immediately."

dorm

The protagonists had diverse opinions about the dorms on Rikers Island. Douglass has bad memories of the year he spent in his dorm. Around 60 people resided in one dorm room, and he did not feel comfortable around such a big crowd: *"There were just too many people!"* To escape the crowd, he would get up at 4:30 a.m. to shower before anyone else was awake, *"That way, I wouldn't be in anybody's way. That's the way I move: I move when nobody else is moving. "* To this day, he still wakes up this early to take a shower in the shelter he lives in.

showers

Douglass' dorm had access to two shower stalls. People had to queue to wait for their turn, but there was no imposed schedule. He mentioned that only half of the people living in his dorm regularly took showers, which meant that they had to share the two showers with around 30 people.

The way showers are organized differs between detention centers, and depends on whether you reside in a dorm or a cell. Ibrahim remembers his dorm on Rikers Island had one big shower room with multiple shower heads instead of separate cubicles, *"but we had a rule to go one at a time, to give everyone their privacy."* The shower time in Ibrahim's dorm was limited to rec time, which was one hour a day (see rec time) . Alex on the other hand resided in an individual cell and he was bound to scheduled showers once a week.

dorms cont.

In contrast to Douglass's aversion to dorms, Ibrahim preferred dorms over cells. *"I didn't feel like I was locked up, I felt like I was on a block."* He was an important part of the gang that ruled his dorm, which greatly influenced his experience. *"Even though there is room for 60 people, full capacity might not be reached when you're in a gang dorm."* The gang would decide how many people were allowed, *"because some people might need double beds like me. I have a bad back so I need at least two mattresses stacked on top of each other. One mattress is not comfortable enough."*

There were other perks to being the leader of the dorm gang. Not only was Ibrahim allowed to sleep on top of three matrasses, he could store his books and other belongings in a box next to his bed without having to worry about anything getting stolen. *"No one touched my stuff because everyone respected me."* Douglass on the other hand always safely stored his belongings in a locker in his dorm. Because Ibrahim was part of a gang, he was able to define his own rules. This appears to have made his experience in detention centers way less traumatizing than of other protagonists.

communal facilities

Other facilities in detention centers are cafeterias, gymnasiums, tv centers and outside courtyards; According to Gregory, every detention center on Rikers Island used to have one big cafeteria where everyone gathered three times a day. This approach was changed because of safety precautions, he notes. Now, food is prepared in a large kitchen and delivered to all galleries (pp. 96) of the center on food carts. All people from one gallery gather in their day room, and eat there. This way, people from different galleries are never crossing paths, and staff do not have to handle bigger crowds.

rec time

During rec[reation] time – which is one hour a day - detainees and convicts can use different facilities: The day room to make a phone call or play games, the TV room, the gymnasium, the court yard to play sports... . In some detention centers, people can only shower during rec time, others have accessible showers all day long. Ibrahim talks about the '23 + 1 hour a day'-rule. You have to be in your bedroom

23 hours a day, and the remaining 1 hour is rec time. This rule is applied in correctional facilities/prisons as well.

staff

The staff at Rikers Island is a much-criticized topic. *"They are poorly trained, most of them are corrupt, and there's lots of money involved,"* Gregory says agitated. *"It's probably one of the only places in the country where you can make $150.000 if you can't read. In addition, many work multiple shifts in a row to make even more money. They park their camper on the parking lot and stay on Rikers Island to work double shifts [16 hours], ten days in a row."* The lack of rest in between shifts causes the staff to be less patient and lose their temper more easily, adding to the frustration that already exists in detention centers.

covid-19

Gregory vividly recounts how that the situation of Rikers escalated during the pandemic. *"The guards did not want to set foot on the island because of the health risk. There was no medical presence at all on Rikers Island, and no measures were taken to prevent the spread of covid-19. Once staff entered the detention centers, they had to stay until new staff came. They ended up doing double or even triple shifts, because of this sudden staff shortage."* The frustration that was already present pre pandemic grew to new heights because of the lack of sleep by the staff. This made the atmosphere on Rikers Island even more grim than it was before.

pre-trial

Gregory, Alex, Douglass and Tony were only in jail awaiting trial. Upon receiving their sentence in court after several years in jail, they were transferred to prison. Only people who are sentenced to a short sentence (less than a year) in court, return to jail to complete their sentence there, like Ibrahim. However, 85% of the people on Rikers Island are pre-trial defendants, and although laws state that people are assumed as innocent until proven otherwise[147], anyone accused of a crime is isolated on the island in miserable conditions in the meantime. Even though their innocence might be proven in court a few months or years later.

court

The governing body that decides on one's fate in court, depends on the type of crime someone is on trial for. State Court has jurisdiction over crimes such as murder, rape and bank robbery, and Federal Court covers crimes including drug trafficking, immigration crimes and money laundering.[148] If someone is sentenced to a term of one year or longer, they are sent to a correctional facility, either Federal or State.

transition from jail to prison

The transition from Rikers Island to prison went smoothly for Gregory. *"It's almost a relief once you leave Rikers Island. You finally know where you are going [after trial], and there is so much more structure and predictability in the state system."* He talks about how he could finally leave the frustration behind of not knowing what his future would hold, because he had finally gotten his sentence. *"You're gonna go wherever you go, but you have a focus now. The population in prisons is more stable than those in detention centers, which ensures less violence. There's still plenty of it [violence], and if it's there, it's bad. But there is less of it because you all live in a radius of 500 yards from each other. You can't do something to somebody because you are going to see them again tomorrow and the next day."*

HISTORY

1664
Abraham Rycken took possession of the under 100acres that we now know as Rikers Island. During the Civil War, the island was used as a military training ground.[149]

1884
The Rycken family sold the island to New York City for $180.000, which would be well over 5 million dollars today. The city originally wanted to build a workhouse on the island.[150]

1922
Until now, the city of New York dumped its garbage in the ocean. When a bill was put in place to ban ocean dumping, the city decided Rikers Island would become their new dumping ground.[151] Since much of the garbage consisted of ash and coal, the island became visible from afar because of the emanating smoke.[152] It caused frequent spontaneous phosphorescent fires as well, even in the wintertime. The labor of the garbage landfill was almost exclusively performed by prisoners. First, these prisoners came from Roosevelt Island (pp. 44), and later from Rikers Island itself.[153]

1925
The city announced its plans to open up a jail on the island. Their original plan to build a workhouse was discarded. The idea to open up a men's jail was introduced to replace the overburdened and dilapidated jail on Roosevelt Island.[154]

1932
The first penitentiary building on Rikers Island opened. The building, formarly known as the House of Detention for Men (HDM) was later named the James A. Thomas Center. The building had 'Rikers Island Penitentiary'engraved in granite across its

Figure 14: landfill shipped to Rikers Island - NYC Department of Records and Information Services.


Figure 15: landfill dumped on Rikers Island, 1936-1938 - NYC Department of Records and Information Services.


Figure 16: construction of Rikers Island left, and LaGuardia Airport right - NYC Department of Records and Information Services.

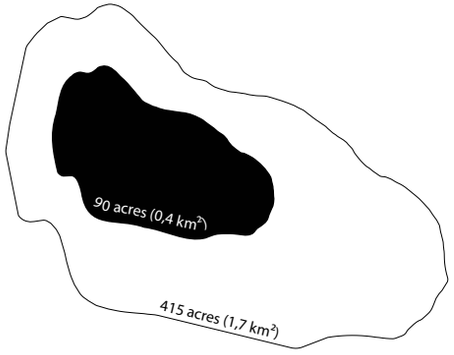


Figure 17: landfill in figures - author


Figure 18: Rikers Island expanding - NYC Department of Records and Information Services.


Figure 19: aerial photo of Rikers Island expanding, 1951 - NYC Department of Records and Information Services.

frontispiece, hence why people started using the name 'Rikers'. Garbage was still added as landfill during this time.

1939
Because of the evergrowing amounts of garbage on the island, it became infested with rats. The jail tried controlling the plague with poisoned bait, poison gas and ferocious dogs, but nothing seemed to work. A thorough remediation only happened in 1939, just before New York City would hold the World Fair. As the master builder for the Fair didn't want "their plans to be spoiled by the eyesore that was Rikers Island", he helped getting the garbage moved elsewhere. The garbage was sent to Staten Island.[155]

1943
The landfill on Rikers Island finally stopped. What started as an island of 0,4km², ended up as an island of about 1,7km² (Figure 17). In twenty years, the island quadrupled in size.[156] This immense expansion allowed for the jail complex to expand as well.

1964
EMTC Eric M. Taylor Center opened.

1971
GMDC George Motchan Detention Center opened.

1972
RNDC Robert N. Davooren Center opened.

1978
AMKC Anna M. Kross Center opened.

1984
NIC North Infirmary Command opened.

1985
OBCC Otis Bantum Correctional Center opened.

1988
RMSC Rose M. Singer Center opened.

1991
GRVC George R. Vierno Center opened.
WF West Facility opened.

1992
Vernon C. Bain Correctional Center opened, also known as'The Boat, a floating jail barge in front of the Bronx with a capacity of 800 people.

2014
The U.S. Justice Department released a report after an investigation of Rikers Island found "a pattern and practice of conduct at Rikers that violates the constitutional rights of adolescent inmates." The department learned there was a "deep-seated culture of violence" that was pervasive among adolescent youth and that staffers frequently used force "not as a last resort, but ... as a means to control."[157]

2015
Mayor de Blasio announces a 14-point plan for Rikers Island, to create a safe environment in the jail complex.[158]

2016
#CLOSErikers-campaign was founded by Glenn E. Martin, amongst others. They organized a march from Queens Plaza to the Rikers Island Bridge, demanding the jail complex be closed.[159]

2017
In March of 2017, de Blasio pledged to shut down Rikers Island within ten years in an announcement at City Hall. In June, a roadmap for the closure was released, including safety protocols, reduced capacity and isolation for detainees and convicts on the island.[160]

2018
Four borough-based jails were proposed as an alternative to Rikers Island's jail complex by de Blasio, introducing a "safer, fairer and smaller criminal justice system."[161] In the same year, GMDC closed.

2019
The City Council approved de Blasio's proposal of closing Rikers Island by 2026 and open four borough jails at a total cost of $8.7 billion.[162]

2020
The city delayed the plan to close Rikers Island and to built new jails until 2027.[163]

2021
JATC closed. Fifteen people died on Rikers Island in 2021. More than one death per month.[164]

2022
Hundreds of detainees and convicts staged a days-long hunger strike in protest of the horrifying conditions on Rikers Island. Nineteen people died on Rikers Island in 2022. Four more than the year before.[165]

Figures 19 - 22: Astoria Heights and beginning of Francis Buono bridge - pictures by the author

CONCLUSION

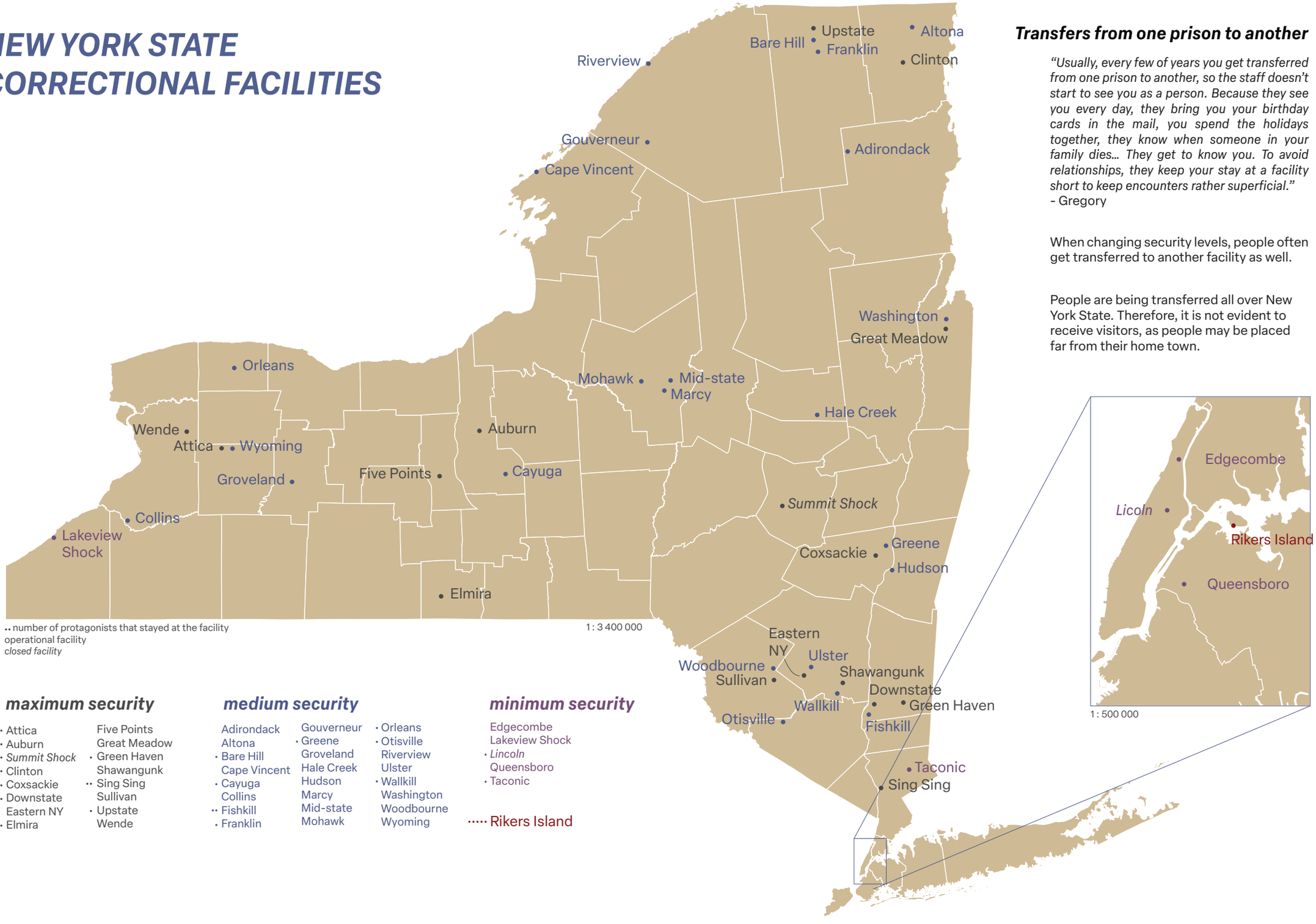
Rikers Island has been a controversial facility from the start. With a capacity of 15.000 people, it permanently housed an entire average Belgian village for decades. The population has declined in recent years as the Department of Correction prepares Rikers Island's closure, however there has been a significant increase in numbers compared to last year (Figure 12) . In fiscal year 2022, Rikers Island had an average daily population of 5.559, an increase from previous year's average of 4.921. The same goes for average length of stay: this year, people spent an average of 120 days on Rikers Island, compared to 87 days in fiscal year 2021. In one year, the average length of stay on Rikers has increased by a full month. As 85% of individuals on Rikers Island are still awaiting trial, and therefore assumed to be innocent[166], the length of stay before going to trial should be as short as possible. The Mayor's Management Report focusses on the five-year decline in population, but fails to mention the increase in average length of stay in the last five years, and this year's significant increase in both average daily population and length of stay.

Both the location, on a remote island, and the institution behind Rikers Island have been denounced by human rights organizations for years. The remote island symbolizes the exclusion from society that people experience when placed in jail. The physical crossing of the 1,3km long bridge resembles the transition from free to incarcerated individual. While awaiting trial, people are placed in detention centers that seem like separate islands on Rikers Island, not knowing what the outcome of their trial will be. It also raises questions that Rikers Island was originally used as a dumping ground, and that incarcerated individuals later had to build the facilities that would contain them. In addition, both Douglass and Gregory emphasize the corruption on the island. Douglass would even rather give up his privacy by sleeping in a cell with bars, than face the fear of being beaten up by guards behind closed doors in a cell with a full wall, and not being able to call for help.

It remains to be seen whether the borough jails, proposed by the city as an alternative to Rikers Island, are a step forward. If the same methods of containment are implemented and the corruption of Rikers Island is carried over to the new facilities, it could be the same old thing all over again.

SING SING
CORRECTIONAL FACILITY

NEW YORK STATE CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES



1 : 3 400 000

1 : 500 000

•• number of protagonists that stayed at the facility
operational facility
closed facility

maximum security

- Attica
- Auburn
- *Summit Shock*
- Clinton
- Coxsackie
- Downstate
- Eastern NY
- Elmira
- Five Points
- Great Meadow
- Green Haven
- Shawangunk
- Sing Sing
- Sullivan
- Upstate
- Wende

medium security

- Adirondack
- Altona
- Bare Hill
- Cape Vincent
- Cayuga
- Collins
- Fishkill
- Franklin
- Gouverneur
- Greene
- Groveland
- Hale Creek
- Hudson
- Marcy
- Mid-state
- Mohawk
- Orleans
- Otisville
- Riverview
- Ulster
- Wallkill
- Washington
- Woodbourne
- Wyoming

minimum security

- Edgecombe
- Lakeview Shock
- *Lincoln*
- Queensboro
- Taconic

····· Rikers Island

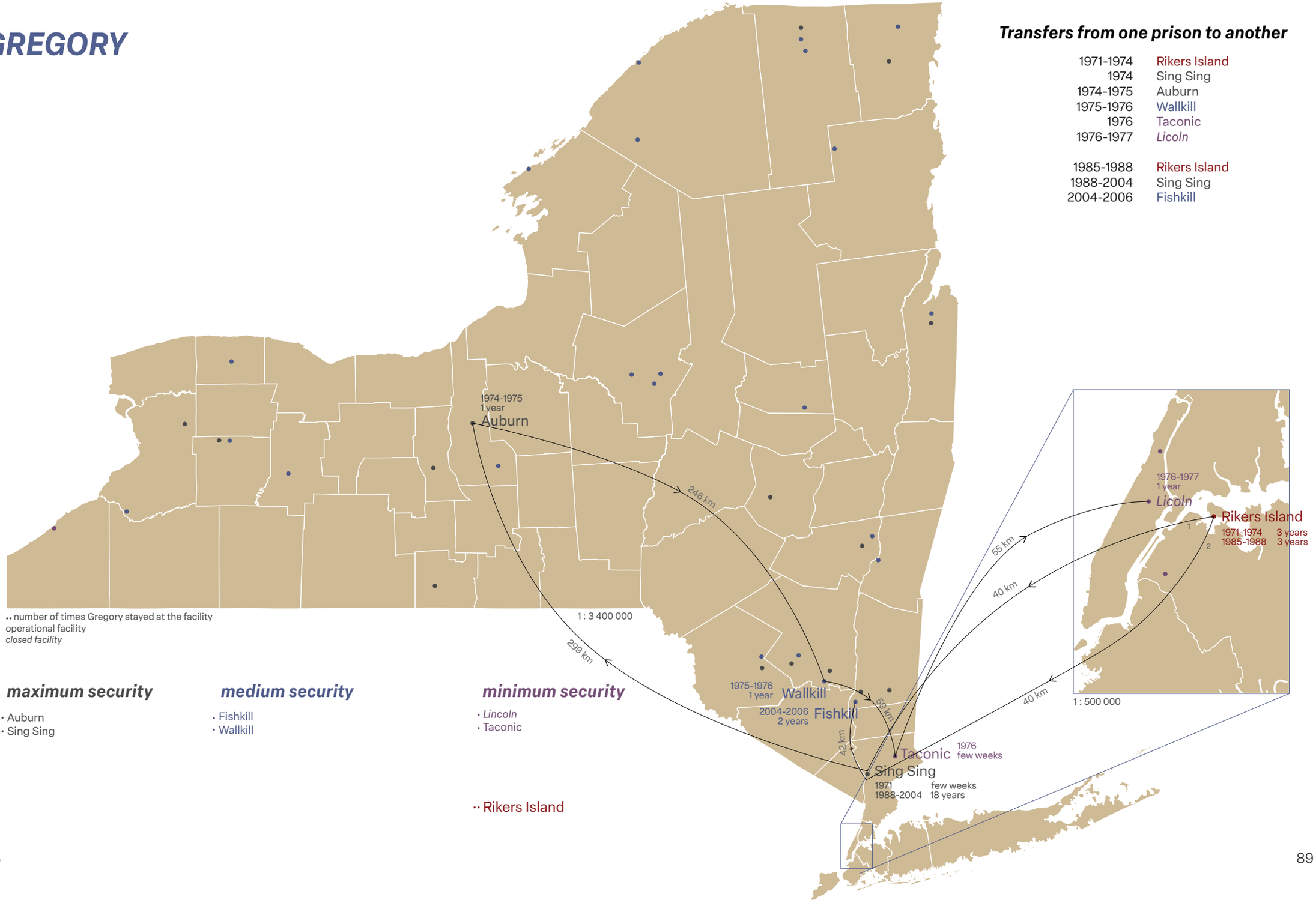
Transfers from one prison to another

"Usually, every few of years you get transferred from one prison to another, so the staff doesn't start to see you as a person. Because they see you every day, they bring you your birthday cards in the mail, you spend the holidays together, they know when someone in your family dies... They get to know you. To avoid relationships, they keep your stay at a facility short to keep encounters rather superficial."
- Gregory

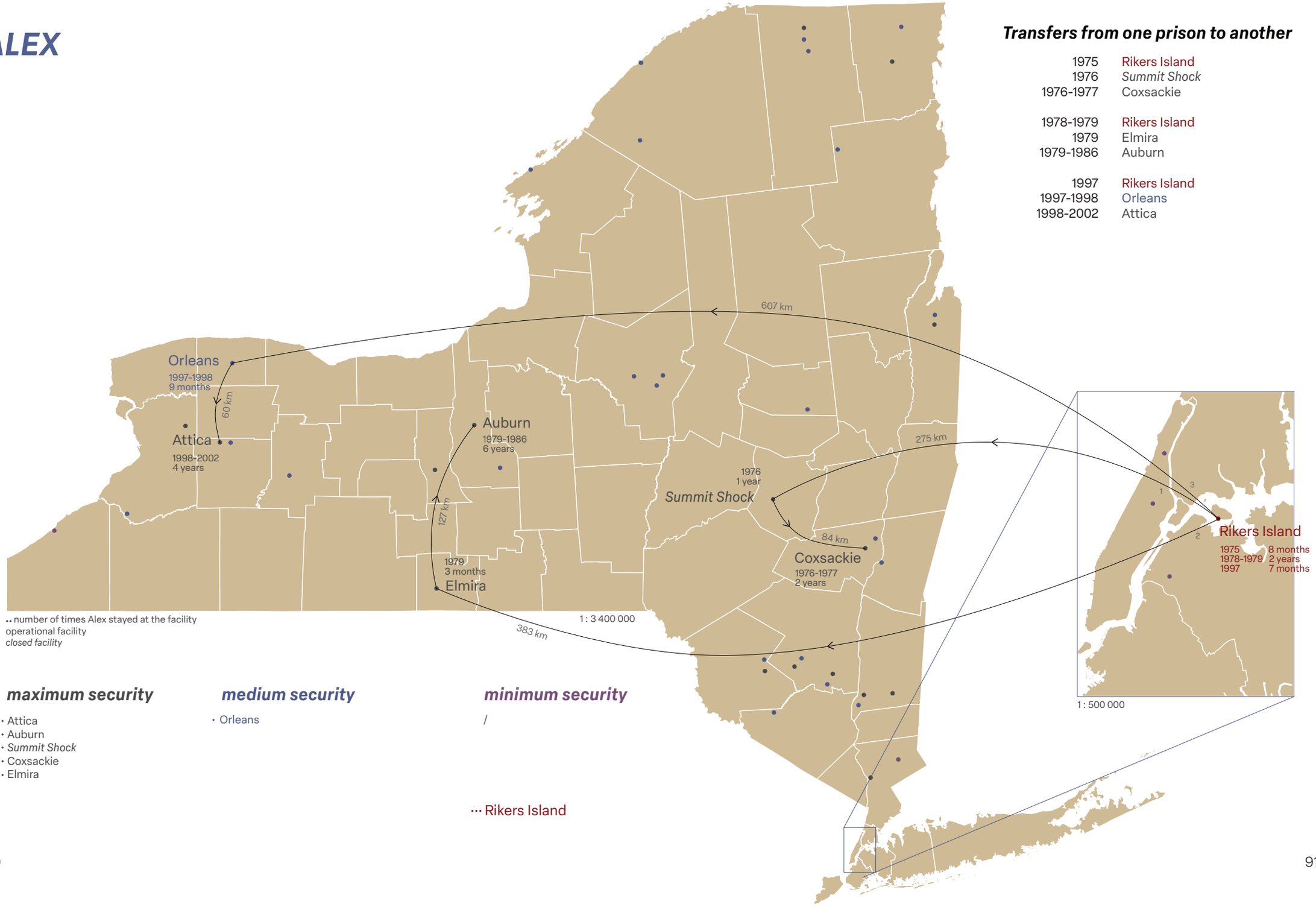
When changing security levels, people often get transferred to another facility as well.

People are being transferred all over New York State. Therefore, it is not evident to receive visitors, as people may be placed far from their home town.

GREGORY


Transfers from one prison to another
1971-1974 Rikers Island
1974 Sing Sing
1974-1975 Auburn
1975-1976 Wallkill
1976 Taconic
1976-1977 Licoln
1985-1988 Rikers Island
1988-2004 Sing Sing
2004-2006 Fishkill
1974-1975
1 year
Auburn
246 km
299 km
1975-1976
1 year
Wallkill
2004-2006
2 years
Fishkill
59 km
42 km
Taconic
1976
few weeks
Sing Sing
1971
few weeks
1988-2004
18 years
55 km
40 km
40 km
1976-1977
1 year
Licoln
Rikers Island
1971-1974 3 years
1985-1988 3 years
1 : 500 000
•• number of times Gregory stayed at the facility
operational facility
closed facility
1 : 3 400 000
maximum security
• Auburn
•• Sing Sing
medium security
• Fishkill
• Wallkill
minimum security
• Lincoln
• Taconic
•• Rikers Island

ALEX



Transfers from one prison to another

1975	Rikers Island
1976	*Summit Shock*
1976-1977	Coxsackie
1978-1979	Rikers Island
1979	Elmira
1979-1986	Auburn
1997	Rikers Island
1997-1998	Orleans
1998-2002	Attica

•• number of times Alex stayed at the facility
operational facility
closed facility

maximum security

- Attica
- Auburn
- *Summit Shock*
- Coxsackie
- Elmira

medium security

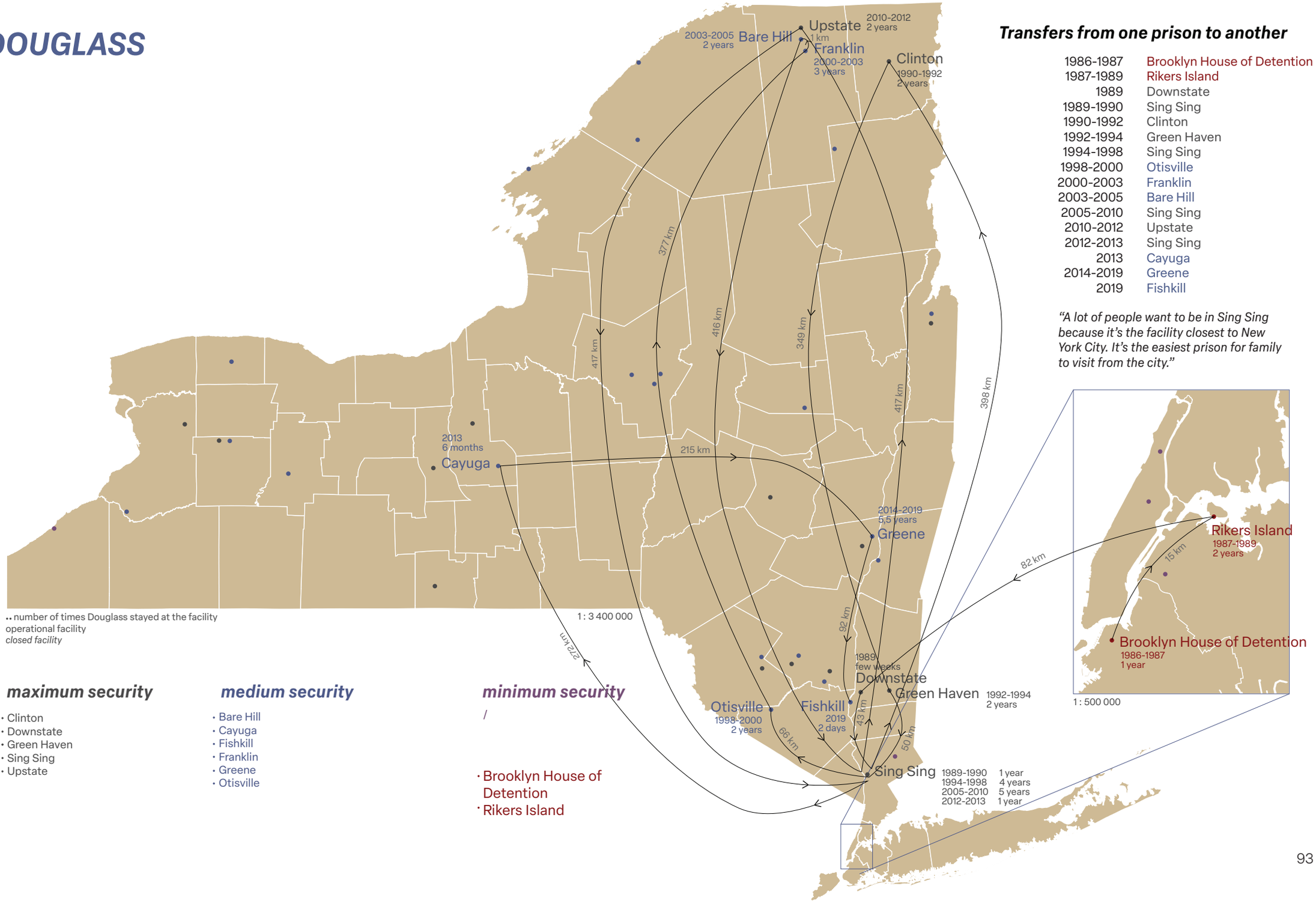
- Orleans

minimum security

/

··· Rikers Island

DOUGLASS



1 : 3 400 000

•• number of times Douglass stayed at the facility
operational facility
closed facility

maximum security

- Clinton
- •• Downstate
- •••• Green Haven
- Sing Sing
- Upstate

medium security

- Bare Hill
- Cayuga
- Fishkill
- Franklin
- Greene
- Otisville

minimum security

/

- Brooklyn House of Detention
- Rikers Island

Transfers from one prison to another

1986-1987	Brooklyn House of Detention
1987-1989	Rikers Island
1989	Downstate
1989-1990	Sing Sing
1990-1992	Clinton
1992-1994	Green Haven
1994-1998	Sing Sing
1998-2000	Otisville
2000-2003	Franklin
2003-2005	Bare Hill
2005-2010	Sing Sing
2010-2012	Upstate
2012-2013	Sing Sing
2013	Cayuga
2014-2019	Greene
2019	Fishkill

"A lot of people want to be in Sing Sing because it's the facility closest to New York City. It's the easiest prison for family to visit from the city."

INSIDE SING SING

Gregory, Douglass, Alex and Tony all have served time in prison, and they have very outspoken opinions about the prison system. As mentioned, the transition from jail to prison went smoothly for Gregory, *"it felt like a relief,"* he continued: *"By the time someone gets to prison, they've already been to jail for a while. He's already begun to adapt to get through the day."* Douglass agrees that adapting to his environment was crucial during his time in prison: *"Prison, it ain't for everybody. Some people can handle it and some people can't. When I arrived in prison, I adapted. That's how I survived."*

security levels

The court decides on the security level someone is sentenced to. There are five different security levels in federal prisons, ranging from lowest to highest security: minimum, low, medium, high and administrative. State prisons only has three levels of security; minimum, medium and maximum. Gregory, Douglass, Alex and Tony have all spent time in state correctional facilities, therefore the federal prison system is not included in the following analysis.

maximum security

Gregory described maximum security prisons in great detail. *"First of all, maximum security prisons have 2-5 meters thick walls with gun towers around them (Figure 23) . The thickness of the walls prevents tunneling. Officers with 15 caliber guns stand guard on the towers, protecting the prison from the outside and keeping an eye on what is happening inside. They are very intimidating, and they will kill you without hesitation if they deem necessary."* He continues, *"When transitioning from one part of a prison to another, people in maximum security must be shackled and handcuffed. Guarded gates separate different parts of the prison building, and everyone has to line up to get checked and patted down before walking through the gate."* Lastly he mentions that maximum security prisons only accommodate single cells, and no dormitories.

Sing Sing Correctional Facility

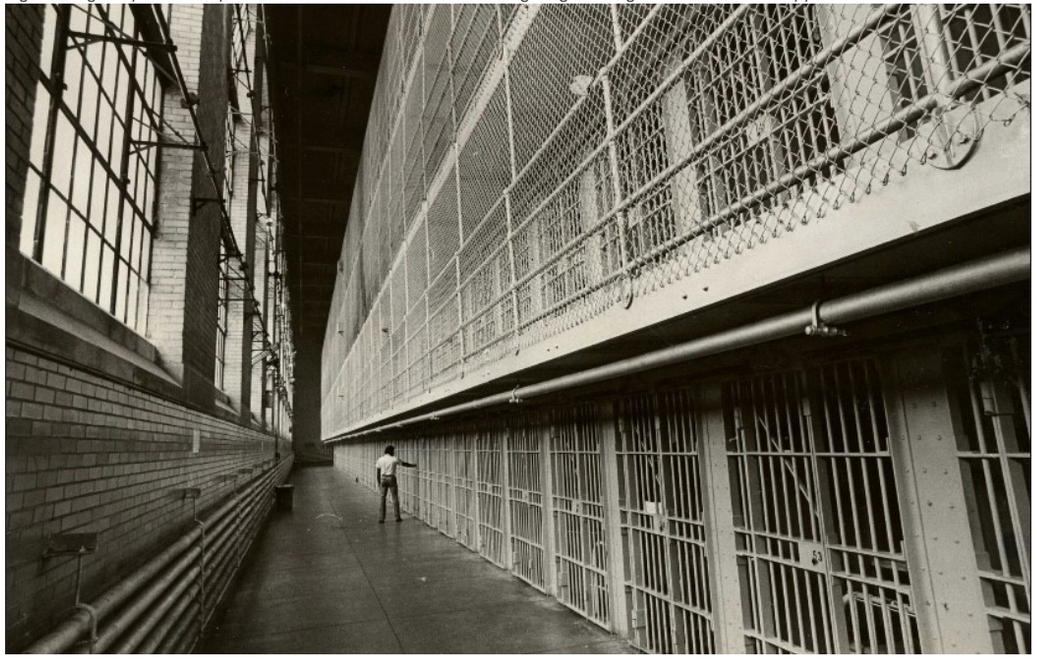
Sing Sing Correctional Facility, one of the oldest correctional facilities in New York State, is an admission station for the prison system of New York State for many incarcerated individuals. It is located 50 km north of New York City along the Hudson River, and both Gregory and Douglass spent time here. The facility has both maximum and medium security buildings, but the focus here will be on the maximum security, as that's where Gregory and Douglass spent their time. Gregory has been in Sing Sing twice, once in 1974 for a few weeks, and again from 1988-2004. Douglass was in Sing Sing four times: from 1989-1990, 1994-1998, 2005-2010 and 2012-2013. The first two times Douglass was in Sing Sing, he was in there together with Gregory. It is uncertain if they knew each other back then.

entrance to the prison system

Sing Sing has a capacity of 1,747 people. It opened in 1826 and has become one of America's most famous penal institutions.167 Douglass mentions that Sing Sing is a correctional facility where new admissions first arrive, like an entrance to the prison system. *"You stay in Sing Sing for one year as new admission, and afterwards you get shipped around the state."* In 1825, New York State pruchased a 130 acre site on the Hudson River. The warden and a hundred incarcerated men sailed from Auburn Correctional Facility to start building the new prison. Forced labor was applied during the construction of Sing Sing, where incarcerated individuals first had to build their own gallery of 60 cells, before finishing another 800 cells. Within the next 20 years, the capacity had grown over 1.200.[168]

Figure 23: Gun towers in Sing Sing - stone on stone app

Figure 24: gallery with multiple floors of 88 consecutive cells in Sing Sing building A - stone on stone app



After completion of the prison, it continued to operate as an industrial prison site. Incarnated people have to quarry limestone, also known as Sing Sing marble, that was first used in the construction of the prison, among other unpaid work tasks. The 'Stone on Stone'-app mentions: *"Stone cutting by incarcerated men was profitable; the proximity to New York markets, river transport, and free labor made sing sing an ideal industrial prison site."*[169]

cell

Gregory points out that maximum security prisons only house people in single cells. He recalls the cells in Sing Sing being small, measuring about 3x3.5 meters, and equipped with a bed, toilet and table, all attached to the wall. Douglass adds that people arriving in Sing Sing are first assigned to the reception building, which has cells with bars facing each other [just like the cell on Rikers Island, described by Douglass in Figure 13] . After a while, you get transferred to Building A, which has cells with bars on one side of the hallway and windows on the other: *"You're lucky if your cell is right in front of a window, but you ain't gonna see anything anyway."* There is no window in the cell itself.

Building A consists of 6 floors of cells, one floor being one gallery: *"A gallery is a long, long series of 88 tiny cells next to each other (Figure 24) . Below and above is another long, long series of those cells,"* Gregory mentioned. *"The galleries are divided into different sections, housing people who work in the same facility. There's a section for people working in the kitchen, in the library, people that are going to school... ."* He continues *"There is a mental health gallery as well, but unlike other galleries, it operates autonomously. You don't come into contact with them at all. Whenever you see them, they are accompanied by a group of guards. You're never able to interact with them."*

Douglass mentioned that he slept well in Sing Sing, and in prison in general. *" I was sleeping way better in prison than I do in the shelter system right now!"* This may say more about the shelter system than it does about prison sleeping conditions though... Alex had a different experience regarding sleeping conditions in prison. *"In Elmira Correctional Facility, a maximum security prison, correctional officers would enter young people's cells to rape them. They often did this early in the morning, when people were still asleep. I was 20 years old when I arrived in Elmira in 1979, so I always had to sleep with one eye open, ready to fight. They never did it to me, but my sleep pattern suffered deeply during my time in Elmira, and it has not recovered to this day. I still can not sleep through the night. When people talk about their time in prison, they often avoid talking about the torture they went through."*

With the Reentry Theater of Harlem, Alex now aids former convicts to talk about their traumas inherited during their time in prison. *"Through art, rituals and theatrical rites of passage, Reentry Theater of Harlem seeks to address and transform trauma, in order to overcome them, as well as the shame and stigma that comes with incarceration. Ultimately, participants devise and enact a threshold crossing to formally mark the transition from prison back into their communities and into a new stage of life."*[170] They organize three cohorts per year, one in spring, one in summer and one in fall. *"Each cohort is made up of new participants, but some people return."*

cafeteria

Gregory recalls that the cafeteria, or the mess hall[171] as it's called among incarcerated people, is located at one end of the gallery on the middle floor: *"When the bell rang, it was time for chow[172]. The three lower galleries came up to the cafeteria, and the three upper galleries came down. But not all galleries were in the mess hall at the same time though; at most there would be two galleries at the same time."*

bathhouse

Douglass and Gregory mention that the showers were located in the bathhouse, a separate building in the Sing Sing facility. Eight rows with eight shower cubicles per row, separated by low walls, were provided. Guards would walk around between the cubicles, but *"for two packs of cigarettes, they would take a long walk to give you some privacy,"* Gregory laughs. This is in stark contrast to Tony's experience. He mentioned that in Northern Correctional Institution, a maximum security facility in Connecticut, he had to shower in pairs because there were two showerheads in one shower. He had no privacy, *"and you are around som really sick, sorry individuals,"* he sighs.

In Sing Sing, Douglass recalls that the shower schedule for the bathhouse called for three days a week: Monday, Wednesday and Friday. However, he had a medical pass that allowed him to shower in the gallery. There were four showers in each gallery, two on either end, for people with medical passes and for the kitchen staff, who had to shower every day. In summer, they were allowed to shower in the courtyard. *"I loved showering outside at night before bed, so I didn't have to go to bed sticky."*

communal facilities

Gregory summarizes the various communal facilities available in Sing Sing: a gymnasium, a fully asphalted courtyard, TV rooms, a movie theater, a church, a barber shop... . *"To get to these facilities, you always have to be shackled and handcuffed. Before transitioning from one part of the building to another, you have to line up in front of a guarded gate, and officers will randomly select some people to pat down."* He mentions that these communal facilities can only be used during rec[reation] time; from 9-11 a.m., 1-4 p.m. and 6-9 p.m. *"The schedule is supposed to be that way, but you might not get out of your cell until 10 a.m.,"* Douglass shrugs.

"The end of each rec time is marked by a count," Gregory explains. *"The standing counts take place three times a day: at 11 a.m., 4 p.m. and 10 p.m. During these standing counts, officers must see you, and everyone is locked down until count is over. Officers also conduct additional counts every four hours, even during the night. A small part of your skin therefore must be visible at all times during the night, in order for the guards to do their counting."*

visiting room

The visiting room used to be organized differently in the past, Gregory mentions. *"There used to be a glass window in between the prisoner and its visitor. Now, people sit across from each other at a table, are allowed to hold hands and get a hug and kiss at the beginning and end of the visit. The tables are placed in several rows, and extra chairs are placed in a row two by two, like on a bus, because there is always a space problem. Guards walk up and down in between the tables and chairs, but that's just for show. It's way too easy to smuggle stuff in. In fact, there were so many drugs in Sing Sing that officers would come into prison to buy drugs because they were of such great quality, and they would sell it on the outside,"* Gregory chuckles. *"There's vending machines in the visiting room with donuts and stuff, and a children center to keep the kids busy. They have computers, toys... to entertain the kids for a couple of hours."*

Receiving visitors while incarcerated is not a reality for everyone. *"In a men's prison, partners come to visit very often. But that's not the case in a women's prison. Women in prison only get visits from their female entourage, their partners rarely visit."* Tony sighs at the thought of the visiting room during his time in prison, *"My family didn't come to see me. I only got one or two birthday cards. I did it all by myself."*

solitary confinement

Sing Sing Correctional Facility accommodates Special Housing. *"Special Housing is the official term for solitary confinement, and it is twofold,"* Douglass explains. *"You're either placed in a*

separate Special Housing Unit [SHU], or you can be put in solitary in your own cell. The latter means you are still housed in the gallery, but you are not allowed to get out of your cell. I was first in solitary in my own cell, and was later transferred to Sing Sing's Special Housing Unit. I have been in solitary in every prison I have been in, off and on I will have spent around 10 years in solitary..."

Tony explains that solitary confinement cells are not that different from general population cells, *"the only difference is whether you are allowed to leave your cell or not."* Alex was in solitary confinement in Orleans Correctional Facility for 9 months between 1997 and 1998. He recalls that his cell included a bed, a toilet, a sink, a door to an outside area and no window. *"The outside space is just an extension of your cell, you don't come in contact with other people. I used the space to do workouts, it is about 3x3 meters and only accessible during rec time, which is one hour per day in solitary. The door is controlled by a guard."*

Tony was placed in solitary confinement in the Northern Correctional Institution in 2005, and spent three years there. He had no outside space attached to his cell, so he spent his rec time either in the gymnasium or in a cage outside. *"Every time I had to leave my cell, I had to be in full irons. That meant I was handcuffed from behind - which is not allowed to begin with, they are supposed to cuff you in the front - and I had a spit bag over my head, before I would get transferred to another part of the building. Four fencing cages served as outside spaces during rec time, which meant that only four prisoners were allowed rec time at once. Once arrived in the outdoor cage, the spit bag was removed, but you remained in full restraints."* Tony goes on to say that he didn't have to leave his cell to go to a bathhouse, the officers simply rolled a mobile shower into his cell every few days. *"Again whilst taking a shower, I had to be in full restraints,"* he shrugs.

"When you are in solitary, you are stripped of all your privileges. You get nothing, they forget you even exist. Other than giving you your meal and your one hour rec, they don't give a fuck." Tony cusses. Douglass' story resonates with this. He adds, *"The staff would regularly beat me up in the Sing Sing Special Housing Unit, to the point where I was pissing blood! I was pissing blood! But I know very well how to adapt to things, I have a lot of patience. Days could go by where the staff would come by, and I would ask them for nothing!"* Douglass says agitated, thinking back on his time in solitary confinement.

Tony mentions that once you get back to general population after solitary confinement, you get a blue card. *"That means you are on full one-on-one observation. They [the guards] are allowed to search you anytime they feel like it, and you have to stay out of trouble for at least six months. If you are unable to do so or if they find contraband during one of their searches, you have to go back to solitary and restart the program. I had to restart the program six times."*

education

"Education is highly valued in prison," Gregory mentions. *"Today, your sentence is reduced by six months if you can get a degree while in prison. It wasn't like that yet when I was in prison, but I did start to consider (higher) education in prison, because I was around some marvelous people."* He took several educational courses during his first prison term, earned a bachelor's and master's degree at Pratt University in between his two prison sentences, and became a teacher in Sing Sing during his second term, starting in 1988. *"I taught several classes: parenting class, music class, art class, GED... By teaching I earned $15,55 every two weeks."*

As mentioned earlier, incarcerated individuals are transferred to a different prison every few years to avoid personal relationships between them and prison staff. However, this was not the case for Gregory during his second prison sentence, as he was a valued teacher in Sing Sing. *"I ended up staying in Sing Sing for 18 years. They did not want to transfer me. I was too valuable to the prison. 80% of my GED class graduated every year, compared to only 55% in the state!"* Gregory chuckled. He stayed in Sing Sing until 2004, and was transferred only once to a medium security facility before his release in 2006.

Alex and Tony both got their GED's in prison, Alex in Auburn Correctional Facility in 1981 and Tony in Northern Correctional Institution, it is uncertain in what year he graduated. Alex was challenged to get his degree by an older man in prison, *"He challenged me to pass my GED tests. He told me I would never be able to do it, so I decided to prove him wrong."* Tony tells a similar story, *"My mentor in prison, an older man who was serving a life sentence, told me "you can't be wilding like that, nephew. This is not Rikers Island. Officers will kill you. You have seen them do it and get away with it before."* I listened to him and started taking classes to get my GED instead of making trouble like I used to." After passing his GED tests, Alex continued his education and earned a bachelor's degree in social work while incarcerated. After his release, he earned his master's degree as a social worker in 2008. He has been working as a social worker ever since.

Aside from education, correctional facilities are very program oriented. Douglass mentioned, *"you had to enroll in a program. I completed an anger management program and an alcohol and substance abuse treatment program in Cayuga Correctional Facility in 2013. After I was transferred to the next prison, Greene Correctional Facility in 2014, I started my own anger management group. That's something I want to do outside of prison as well in the future."*

"All maximum security prisons are organized in a similar way. Some of them are looser, others are more tight, but it's the same thing in every prison. There were a lot of fights in Sing Sing, the staff wasn't really on them during fights like they were further up state. I could breath a little better upstate." Douglass concludes on maximum security correctional facilities.

prison farm

Alex was in a peculiar maximum security prison when he first entered the prison system at the age of 17 in 1976. He was sent to Coxsackie Correctional Facility, a prison farm. *"During the day, we had to work on the farm: milking cows, shoveling cow shit..."* He mentions his struggles with the strict regime that was enforced: *"You are locked in your cell, waiting for the guards to come get you when they call out "On to showers!"*, *"On to chow!"*, *"On to breakfast!"*... We were treated like animals. Like the cows I was taking care of all day!" Alex recalls agitated.

Alex was only 17 years old when he was first sentenced to prison. At the time, going to prison was an accomplishment for him. *"I came from a very harsh background. Who did I see when I went to prison? People from my neighborhood! I wasn't the first person to go to prison. Everyone that I knew went. It became a badge of honor: going to prison as a kid and coming back out as a man. Going to prison was an achievement to me. I was supposed to prove that I was just as tough as all the other men in my neighborhood. In retrospect, of course prison was bad for me. I was only 17 years old and I had dropped out of school..."*

medium security

"If you behave well in maximum security, you can get transferred to a medium security facility, which offers more privileges. You can cook, make more phone calls, leave prison during the day to work... You get a little more freedom," Douglass explains. *"I was transferred from Sing Sing to Otisville Correctional Facility and lived in a dorm with about 50 people, with 10 bunk beds each either side of the room. Everyone has their own locker at the end of the bed, and there's a shared bathroom. The bathroom includes one big shower room with 6 shower heads, and there is no imposed shower schedule. I showered when*

everyone else had already showered, to avoid crowds and discussions like "Stop splashing water on me!" "Your soap is getting all over me!"…"

Douglass lights up when he starts talking about his cooking skills, *"You can cook your own food in medium security, I rarely used the cafeteria. The kitchen was near the dorm, and my family sent me ingredients. I cooked for others as well, and their families would call me up to ask what ingredients they could send me as a thank you for taking care of their loved ones."* He continues, *"The kitchen was a small space, and only had two fridges. Two fridges for 50 people? A fridge ain't that big?!"* he says agitated. *"Aside from that, the kitchen was equipped with microwaves, stoves, a toaster and an oven, which was sufficient. People's food would occasionally get stolen, but not mine. Not everyone in the dorm used the kitchen, it only got crowded during the holidays."*

Gregory mentions that unlike maximum security prisons, medium security prisons do not have walls with gun towers around them. *"Auburn Correctional Facility was in the middle of farm land. Some individuals would get out of prison during the day to work on the farms all day."* It also varies from prison to prison how large dorms are. In Otisville, 50 people share a dorm, while there are only 7-8 people per dorm in Fishkill Correctional Facility, Gregory adds.

Some people move another security level down before they are released, like Gregory in 1976. *"I spend the last year of my first sentence in two minimum security prisons. Taconic Correctional Facility was one of them. It was an open system prison, and you could get out during the day on 'educational release'. A couple of guys and I had our own van that we drove to college every day, but after a while we would just sign in in the morning, and leave immediately afterwards. Subsequently we'd spend all day in the city selling drugs, robbing people…"* Gregory laughs, *"That system was full of holes."* A year later, he was released.

release

Douglass' release was quite a struggle. *"I was doing two years overtime!"* His parole eligibility date had already passed, and so far he had not been granted parole[173]. *"I was trying very hard to get out, but I could not get past the parole board[174]. They didn't want me to go home. Eventually I went to court, and the judge was stunned that I was still in prison, "You still here?"* I returned to prison and some time later, on Labor Day 2019, I woke up to a staff member kicking my bed;

"Pack up"
"Pack up?"
"yeah, you've got to pack up. We have to get you out of this place immediately. It's coming from high up"

I had to go into the ID room and they started taking pictures of me, which got me confused:

"Why are you taking pictures of me?"
"You're going home"
"What??"
"You're telling me you didn't know you were going home?"
"I passed the date I was supposed to go home a long time ago. I wasn't expecting to get out now"
"This came from up top"

After that, I had to go to my counsellor, who said:

"Listen, I don't know where it came from, but all I know is that we have got to get you out of this prison today by 3p.m. However, we can't send you home because it's a holiday."

They don't send anyone home on weekends and holidays, only on business days. Normally, if your date falls on a holiday, they usually release you the day before. But that didn't happen in my case because the paperwork hadn't been filled out yet. My counselor continued:

"We're sending you to another prison, Fishkill Correctional Facility, and you'll be out the next day."

The staff at the prison I was in, Greene Correctional Facility, had to prove that I was released that day, but in fact I was just transferred to yet another prison. I was sent to Fishkill and was only released two days later, on September 4, 2019. When you are released from prison, your paperwork usually says which prisons you were in. Mine says I was released from Greene, it does not mention Fishkill, which is a serious violation."

After his release, Douglass planned to move in with family, but he was not allowed by DOC staff. "When I was released, I was told I couldn't move in with my family, but they didn't even check the address [to see if his family lived there and if he could move in with them]. They sent me straight to a shelter on Wards Island (pp. 113). By doing that, they made me homeless. I had a place to go, but they refused to let me go there. "

Shortly after his release in 2006, a documentary film was made starring Gregory. 'Shadows of Guilt', a documentary by the New School, follows Gregory as he returns to New York City for the first time. In this documentary he reminisces about the day he left prison. *"When the day came for me to be released, I walked up to the door and all the brothers upstairs in the building were watching me and waving. That was deep."* He's silent for a few seconds before he starts chuckling, *"I got in a van and three minutes later I was sick as a dog. I hadn't been in a car in so long that I got car sick!"*

Gregory shared his struggles to reenter society after returning from prison. *"The first week I got out of prison, I went to buy shampoo. When you buy shampoo in prison at the commissary, you have two options: the red or the blue bottle, that's it. Now in the drugstore, there was a whole aisle of shampoos with screaming ads: "Buy me, I'll make you look like this!"*, *"Buy me, I'll get you the girl!"*, *"Buy me, you'll make more money!"* I got too overwhelmed. I couldn't make a decision. Similarly, when I went shoe shopping, I had to take my brother with me because I couldn't tell the salesperson that I didn't like the pair of shoes he brought and that I'd like to try on another pair. I gave up my authority for 27 years in prison, and it took me quite a while to regain it."

criticism by protagonists

About his time in prison, Gregory said, *"I went to prison and I had a great time. Great. I played ball, watched TV, smoked a lot of weed… and I was never terrified. I had already been in the streets. So, you know, I was used to these kind of environments. I became very good at reading situations. I saw who was at the top of the food chain, because prison is very predatory and can be incredibly insensitive."*

Everyone agrees that prison staff is causing a big part of the problem. *"The staff would beat me up for no reason, to the point where I was pissing blood!"* Says Douglass. Gregory adds, *"A lot of the officers and gangs come from the same neighborhoods. Some of them came from the same building. "My mom lives upstairs from your mom." "Your sister used to go with my brother." "You're a guard and I'm stuck here."* You know, those kinds of things. It's very personal relationships, and that can cause a lot of friction between the two."

Not only the conflicts between guards and incarcerated people determine the atmosphere in prisons; the people around you also set the tone. Tony recalls, *"You're around some real sick, sorry individuals. In prison, you become the one thing you're trying not to become: your environment. I started to enjoy it even, becoming that person. And that's scary. It*

showed me that my last little bit of humanity was about to leave and I was okay with it. Fortunately, my mentor brought me to my senses just in time. He got me to take GED classes, and that helped me get my life back on track, step by step."

Douglass has a critical remark about the education and programs correctional facilities provide. *"It's a good thing that they offer all these classes, but they don't teach you how to move when you get back out on the streets, which is bad. You shouldn't have to learn that on your own ."*

all-defining labels

"The thing is," Gregory starts, *"the prison system is part of a deep rooted 'us versus them' problem. 'Us' is the government and the people the government takes care of, and 'them' are the groups they marginalized centuries ago. It's the people of color, the homeless people, the folks with a criminal record... People might be defined by the worst three minutes of their lives, forever. These labels unwillingly become people's entire identity, because they determine such a large part of their lives in society. People who are defined by a label start to believe that they are merely their label, and nothing more. They will forget their successes, which is such a shame..."* Alex adds that this label doesn't fade with time: *"Whatever crime I commit in the future, I will always be assigned to maximum security because of my history. I will always be a 'violent felony offender', even though I didn't even commit the violent crime I was convicted of."* Alex sighs and becomes agitated, *"And this problem spills over into housing as well. I can't get an apartment because they do background checks, and that will make me look like a monster. That means I'll never get an apartment, I'll always be homeless... That used to drive me crazy, but over time I've come to accept it."*

Gregory concludes by saying, *"Prison is all about containment. It's not so much about change, or the opportunity to change, or society's responsibility to create the possibility to change, because that means we [society] now have to consider how you got to the point that made you end up in prison. And we don't want to talk about that,"* he says in a mocking tone.

FEDERAL SYSTEM

Today in New York State, 165.000 residents are in the criminal legal system, 59.000 of which are locked up in different facilities. 18% of the total amount of people in the system are in state prisons (Figure 25) .[175]

Across the United States, the prison system holds 1,9 million individuals, according to The Prison Policy Initiative 2023 report (Figure 26) .[176] These people are spread across 1,566 state prisons, 98 federal prisons, 3,116 local jails, 1,323 juvenile correctional facilities, 181 immigration detention facilities, and 80 Indian country jails, as well as in military prisons, civil commitment centers, state psychiatric hospitals, and prisons in the U.S. territories.[177]

New York's incarceration rates stand out internationally, which means it locks up a high percentage of its citizens compared to other democracies around the world, however it is only half of the incarceration rates of the United States as a whole (Figure 27) . This means other states in the US have much higher rates than New York. In fact, New York only has the 43rd highest incarceration rate of all states. Louisiana, Mississippi and Oklahoma have the highest rates in the US, as well as the world, with respectively 1.094, 1.031, and 993 incarcerated individuals per 100,000 people. The Prison Policy's Initiative reports, *"states like New York and Massachusetts appear progressive in their incarceration rates compared to states like Louisiana, but compared to the rest of the world, every U.S. state relies too heavily on prisons and jails to respond to crime."*[178]

The 1,9 million people currently incarcerated are not the only ones impacted by incarceration. In The Prison Policy's Initiative report, Figure 28 mentions that 113 million adults are affected by incarceration because they have a criminal record themselves, or because an immediate relative has ever spent time in the criminal legal system. As there are approximately 258.3 million adults living in the United States[179], this means that almost one in two United States residents are impacted by incarceration, because of the stigmatizing label a prison sentence holds. *"This label that comes with collateral consequences such as barriers to employment and housing,"* the Prison Policy's Initiatives report states.

There's no exact numbers available on how many people in the US have difficulties finding housing and employment because of this label, but The New York Times[180] reported in March 2023 that according to the New York Department of Corrections and Community Supervision, about 23% of people released in New York State in 2021 were diverted directly to a shelter. Another 8% were classified as being 'undomiciled', or went to halfway houses or hotels. In 2021, 12.748 people were released in New York[181], which means approximately 2.932 individuals were sent to a shelter upon release, and 1.019 were labeled as 'undomiciled' or headed to halfway houses or hotels. This means just under 4.000 people released from prison in 2021, suffered housing insecurity (pp. 121) in New York immediately after their release. These are the most recent figures available.

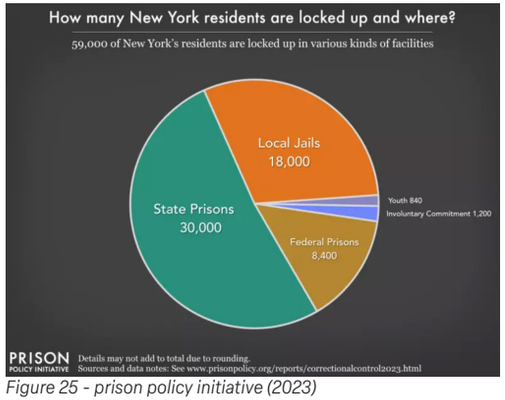


Figure 25 - prison policy initiative (2023)

Figure 26 - prison policy initiative (2023)

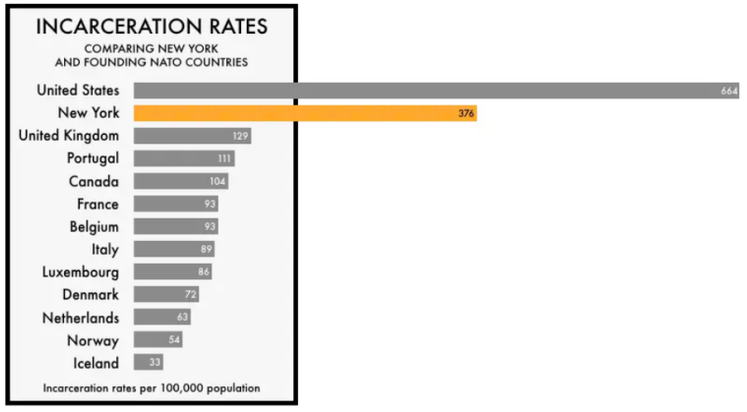


Figure 27 - prison policy initiative (2023)

Figure 28 - prison policy initiative (2023)

CONCLUSION

Just like Rikers Island, corruption and violence are commonspace in many correctional facilities in New York State. Douglass was assaulted by guards several times in Sing Sing's solitary confinement, and Alex's sleep patterns are still upset because staff would sexually assault people during the night in Elmira in 1979. He was only in the facility for three months and he didn't end up a victim, but the fear still wakes him up every night.

Incarcerated individuals are transferred every few years, *"so the staff do not start seeing you as a person,"* Gregory mentions. Because people are being transferred all over New York State, it's not always a given to receive visitors. Douglass spent about 10 years in facilities upstate, while his family lived in Brooklyn, about 470 km - a 6-hour drive - apart.

Sing Sing Correctional Facility, like other correctional facilities in the US, was built by incarcerated people. First, they had to build their own cells, *"60 cells about the size of a yoga mat,"*[182] before the entire prison complex of 800 cells was completed. Sing Sing officials saw incarcerated forced labor as an economical opportunity, and kept the labor going after construction was completed. This made Sing Sing an industrial prison site, because of its proximity to New York markets and the Hudson River, which provided easy transportation to nearby cities.

New York's incarceration rate is outstanding by international standards, but is still only half of the total incarceration rates in the United States. Compared to other states, New York appears quite progressive, but globally, *"every U.S. state relies too heavily on jails and prisons to respond to crime,"*[183] The Prison Policy Initiative concludes.

Alex and Gregory have mentioned it before, and the data do not lie: The stigma attached to incarceration is significant. Of the 12.748 people released from prison in New York in 2021, nearly 4.000 were living in housing insecurity (pp. 121) immediately after their release. How is it that people returning from prison have difficulty finding (stable) housing? According to The Prison Policy Initiative report of 2023[184], one in two US citizens is affected by this problem in one way or another.

THE STRUGGLE FOR HOUSING

HOUSING STORIES

Childhood

Gregory, Alex, Tony and Douglass all grew up under harsh conditions. As mentioned earlier, Gregory and his brother had to move from one relative to another because their parents were unable to provide a stable home environment. From the ages of eight to sixteen, they attended fourteen different schools in four different states: South Carolina, Pennsylvania, Ohio and New York. *"If kids don't have the benefit of a stable center, they learn how to survive. They become a chameleon, which is wonderful for their survival, but crushing because they can't form lasting relationships,"* Gregory says. From the age of sixteen to eighteen, he lived with his grandmother in South Carolina. In 1966, he moved to Brooklyn on his own.

Alex spent his childhood in a *"poor, ghetto neighborhood."* Initially, he lived in a storage room with his mother and five siblings. *"There were no separate bedrooms; everyone slept in the living room on mattresses on the floor. The only furniture in our apartment were the mattresses, a stove and a sink where we bathed, cooked, and washed dishes and clothes. There was only one window in the apartment."* When he was six years old, his family moved a couple blocks away to a larger apartment. *"Our conditions improved a little, but the building was still run down because the landlord didn't take care of it. We now had three separate bedrooms, one for my brothers, one for my sisters, and one for my mother and me. All bedrooms had a window."* It was a railroad-style apartment, a very common apartment layout for New York City tenements, where a series of rooms is connected to each other in a row.[185] *"I never felt safe as a kid,"* Alex continues, *"there were always drug addicts in the hallways of our building, and lots of fights on the street. People called the bar across the street the 'bucket of blood' because there were always fights on Friday nights."*

Like Gregory, Douglass had to move around a lot as a kid. *"All we did was move from apartment to apartment in Brooklyn, because we couldn't pay the bills, the apartment was infested with rodents... When I was three days old, I was bitten by a rat in my crib! Our living conditions were harsh..."* Douglass sighs.

Tony was placed in foster care at the age of eight when his mother passed away. For the first year, from age eight to nine, he was placed in different foster homes throughout New York State. During that year, he was transferred to a different home 23 times. In the years that followed, Tony was moved from one boys home to the next, all over New York State and City. *"The environment was traumatizing: I was sexually assaulted twice and was stabbed when I was fourteen."*

Homeless infrastructure

Recent figures show that 23% of people released in New York State in 2021 were diverted directly to a shelter.[186] In 2021, 12.748 people were released from Department of Correctional and Community Supervision (DOCCS) facilities[187], which means 2.932 people were referred directly to the shelter system. Douglass stresses that not all of the people included in those numbers went to a shelter because they had no other choice, but because, like him, they were forced to enter the shelter system. *"When I was released, I was told by DOC staff that I couldn't go live with my family like I planned to. They didn't even check the address [to see if his family lived there and if he could move in with them]. They sent me straight to the shelter. By doing that, they made me homeless. I had a place to go, but they refused to let me go there."* He was sent to a shelter on Wards Island (pp. 51), where he has lived since 2019. Alex was urged by the Department of Correction to enter the shelter system after his release in 2006 as well, but he refused and was able to move in with a family member.

"Stable housing is the foundation of successful reentry from prison. Unfortunately, many formerly incarcerated people struggle to find stable places to live," states the 2018 Prison Policy Initiative report on Homelessness among formerly incarcerated people. They mention that a major cause of the problem is discrimination by public housing authorities and private property owners, combined with the lack of affordable housing.[188] Alex already mentioned the all-determining label 'formerly incarcerated', but this report again mentions that society continues to punish people with criminal records, even after their sentences are over. It goes on to say that excluding formerly incarcerated people from stable housing has harmful side effects: Access to health care and educational programs is reduced, and it's more difficult to find a job. All of these factors have a major impact on the reintegration process.[189]

Bellevue

Most people who enter the shelter system, formerly incarcerated or not, first come into contact with an intake shelter. For single men in New York City, that intake shelter is the 30th Street Men's Intake Shelter, also known as Bellevue or HRA Men's Shelter, an impressive building at the corner of 30th Street and First Ave. When Gregory first arrived to apply for shelter in March 2020, he had to wait in the lobby for two days until his paperwork was filled out and he was assigned a shelter. He was sent to Ana's Place in the Bronx.

In front of Bellevue, a yellow school (Figure 29) bus waits to take people leaving Bellevue to their assigned shelter. Ever so often, someone accompanied by a social worker walks out of the Bellevue entrance. They walk up to the bus, the social worker hands them their paperwork and gives some final instructions. They get on the bus, ready to be taken to their assigned shelter. When the bus is about half full, the bus drives off to the shelters. A short time after, another bus arrives to pick others up.

Figure 29: bus waiting in front of Bellevue - picture by author

Figure 30: Long entryway to the intake shelter. On the left of the building, underneath scaffolding - picture by author

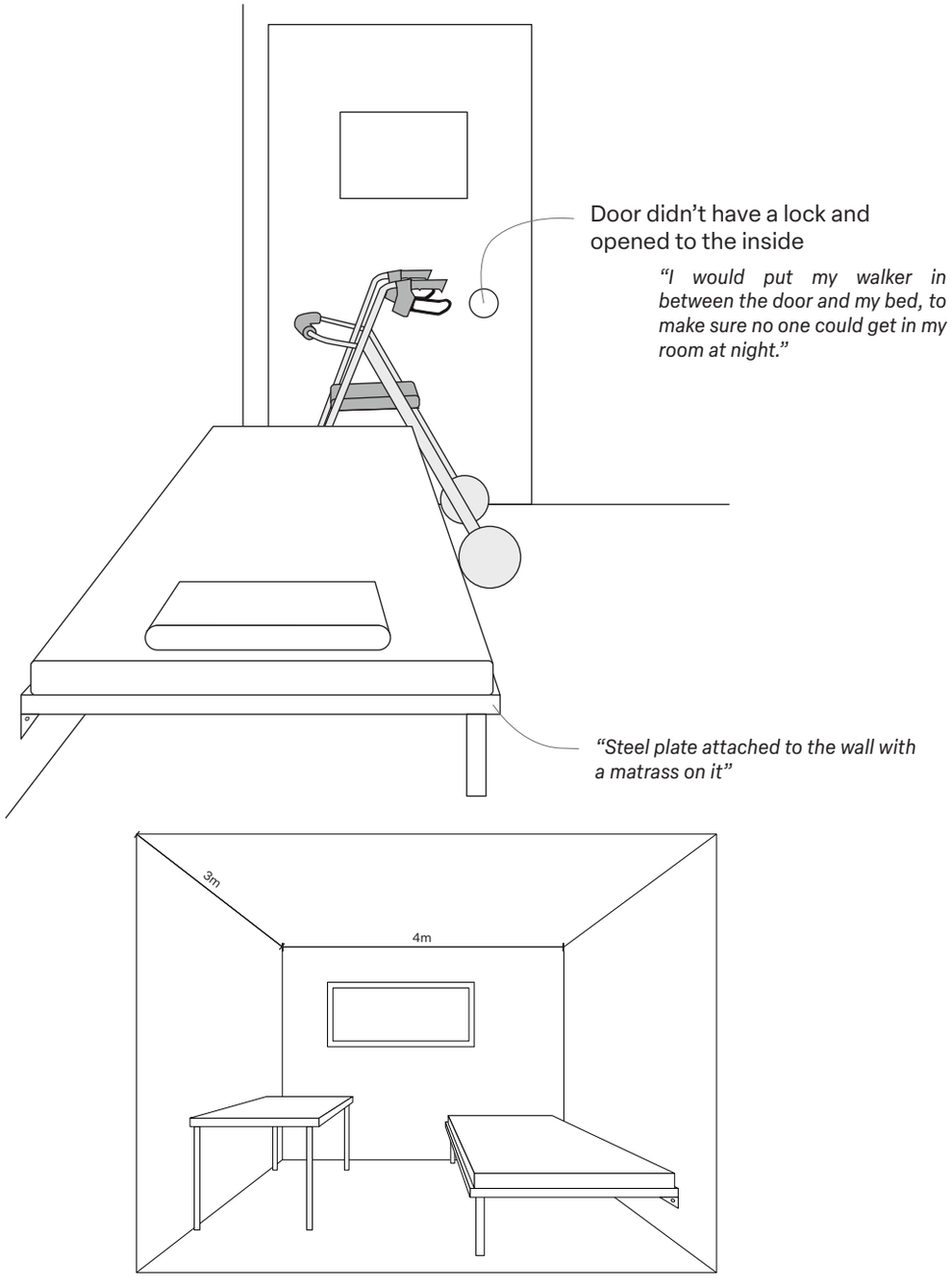


Figure 31: Annotated drawing of room in Wards Island shelter based on Gregory' interview.

Tony was in Bellevue twenty years earlier than Gregory, in 2000. He stayed for 30 days for assessment, and was then transferred to a shelter on Wards Island. *"Bellevue was similar to most shelters: large dorms for 50 to 200 people, a single bed, and high school locker to safely store your belongings. The showers were not scheduled, and were organized as big rooms with shower heads lined up, no cubicles."* He continues, *"The cafeteria was very bad. In some shelters you were allowed to bring food from outside, but not in Bellevue. There was a 10 p.m. curfew, just like in most shelters."*

HELP USA shelters Wards Island

In July 2021, Gregory moved into HELP Meyer shelter on Wards Island, a mental health shelter. *"That place is dangerous,"* he starts off, *""the people there are legitimately ill. They get physical in a heartbeat. I've seen people stab each other with can lids, and the staff can't do anything about it. The best they can do is use a taser, but the effect is unreliable as these people have been tased so many time in the past, that they have almost become immune."*

Gregory continues, *"I was in a room by myself (Figure 31) , upstairs were dorms. The room was about 3 by 4 meters and included a steel bed attached to the wall with a matrass on top, a small desk, and a window. The door was in front of my bed, would open to the inside and couldn't be locked, so I would put my walker in between the end of my bed and the door. That way, people were prevented from entering at night."*

HELP Meyer is located on Wards Island, a remote island connected to Manhattan by a pedestrian bridge and a traffic bridge (Figure 32) . Douglass mentions that most people in the Wards Island shelters, as there are multiple, take the M35 bus between the island and Manhattan, the only form of public transport available on the island. *"I hate that bus. The worst thing you could do to anybody is put them on that bus. It's a lot of trouble. There's a lot of mental patients hanging out at the bus stop in Harlem all day, and on the bus itself as well."* Gregory resonates with this story, saying, *"The bus stop is right at subway station 125th Street for lines 4, 5 and 6, and it's a zoo out there. Mental health patients are hanging out there all day, and I was an easy target for them as I use a walker; it made me vulnerable. But I wanted to get off the island during the day, I couldn't stay in the shelter. I would play music in the subway instead, which would make me $300 over the weekend. I just had to be back before curfew at 10 p.m."* About the curfew, Douglass said *"Curfew is at 10 p.m., but if you are black, you better start lining up at 6:30 p.m."*

"Wards Island did more damage to me than I could have imagined. I didn't anticipate that," Gregory continues, *"and the worst thing about it was the overwhelming lack of clinical supervision and training by the staff."* Douglass resonates with this story, "I lived in a room in a shelter on Wards Island and the bed broke on me once. I was on the floor for six hours before someone came to help me. Six hours! I suffered a heart attack from hypothermia, from being on the floor for so long.

Tony spent a short time in the HELP Keener shelter on Wards Island in 2000. He slept on a bench in the main hallway. It felt safer than the dorms. Even so, one night he was stabbed in the chest with a screwdriver. After this incident, Tony was moved to another shelter. A few months later, Tony got in a fight over someone stealing his cell phone in yet another shelter, the Salvation Army Men's shelter this time. *"As a result of the fight, I was blackballed from all shelter infrastructure for the next fourteen days, which meant that I had to live on the street."*

living conditions

After being assigned a shelter in Bellevue, Gregory was moved to Ana's House in the Bronx in 2020. *"You could smell the K2 [drug] when you walked in. Not because the people living in the shelter used it, no, it came from the*

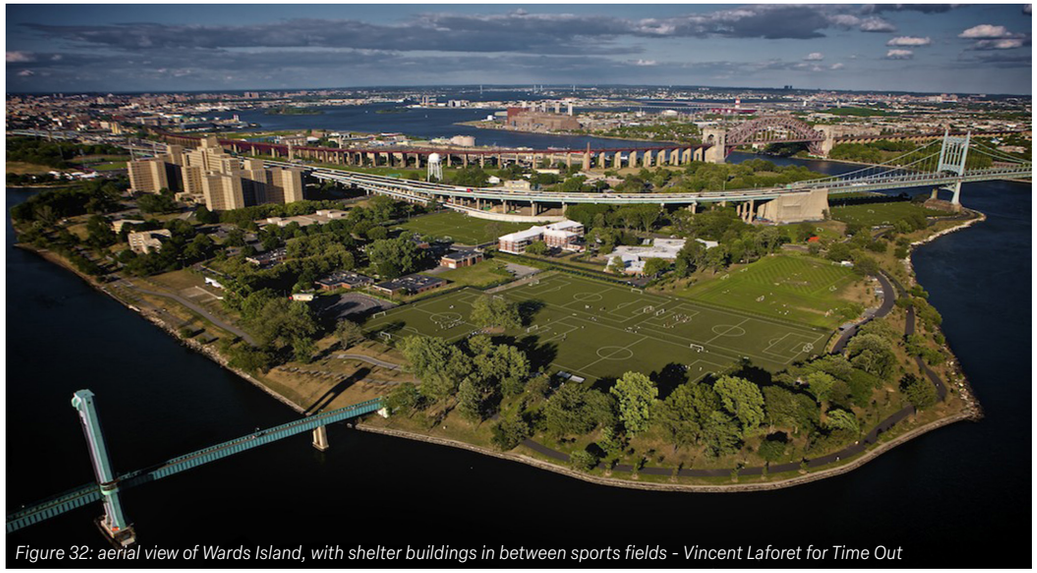


Figure 32: aerial view of Wards Island, with shelter buildings in between sports fields - Vincent Laforet for Time Out

staff!" Gregory continues, *"There were so many diseases going around that the staff would keep the heating down, as they believed it would hinder the bacteria. It was freezing cold in there..."* He lived in a dorm with about thirty other people, and had to be careful with his belongings, because stuff stored in the provided lockers would get stolen. *"I would keep my belongings in a porn shop: my saxophone, books, other instruments... It only cost $6 a month!"* Gregory laughs.

Whilst Gregory lived in Ana's House, covid-19 was omnipresent: *"There were no measures taken. The shelters were overwhelmed. All resources available in the city went to other instances, shelters and prisons were at the very bottom of the list..."*

cafeteria

"I don't eat at a shelter," Douglass states. *"I heard a cook on Wards Island say that he helped everyone die at the shelter. People in charge heard him, but he's still working here. How can I eat at a shelter when I heard a dude say that he hopes we all die? I don't know what he's doing to the food!"*. Another thing Douglass mentions is that the staff steals a lot of ingredients, *""all the fresh food is walking out the back door. They pull their car up to take all the fresh food that we are supposed to eat, and leave us with the old food that has been in the refridgerator for months. If you would take a look in their bags, they would be filled with the cabbage we're never going to get, the lettuce we're never going to get, the steaks we're never going to get... One time, there was an oxtail delivery and the kitchen called the whole staff, whom not long after walked away with boxes of oxtails. We got the rice, but not the oxtail..."* Douglass shares, agitated.

drop-in center

Since Tony's parole ended in the summer of 2022, he left his father's apartment. *"I'm just bouncing around with my fiancé right now. We tried to stay in a few shelters for extended periods of time a couple of times in the past, but because of the bad environment in a shelter... A lot of those places are very negative, and we are trying to stay away from that. Especially because it might trigger my PTSD or my substance addiction."* Tony continues, *"It's going to be cold tonight, so we're probably going to sign in at Mainchance drop-in center for the night. It's a drop-in center for couples."*

Drop-in centers provide people experiencing unsheltered homelessness with necessary services. They do not only provide people with a place to stay for the night, hot meals, clothing, showers and laundry facilities, but provide counseling and health care services as well. These centers are meant as a first step toward transitional and permanent housing, and will further refer people to shelter intake centers if they are looking for a permanent place to stay. However, shelter placement is not a requirement to be able to use the resources provided by drop-in centers.[190] [191] Figures 33 and 34 show two drop-in centers, one in the city center in Manhattan and one in Brooklyn.

Tony continues, "The women section of Mainchance is upstairs, with beds in a dorm. They will probably give me three chairs to sleep on in the main area. Yesterday, they had a bed for my fiancé, but there was no room for me. I tried to convince her to stay, because I'm used to sleeping in the street by myself, but she didn't want to get separated.

street

Before Tony's incarceration, he used to live in the streets for extended periods of time. *"My life is these streets. It's easy for me to thrive out here. I used to live in the subway tunnel system. With the mole people* [192] [193]*, sleeping on benches in subway stations or parks, and washing up in public bathrooms. Since I'm with my fiancé however, I haven't been roaming the streets any longer, because I'm worried about her."*

Gregory lived in the streets during the summer of 1980, after his Freshman's year at Pratt Institute, where he lived in a dorm during the academic year. *"I slept in St. Nicholas Park in Harlem all summer. If you take a right from the 135th Street entrance, there's clusters of trees where a lot of people sleep. During the day, you'll only see folded up cardboard boxes, plastic... because the people living there will only arrive in the park after sun down. The police won't bother them if they don't make themselves noticeable during the day. It's the same all over New York City. All parks have people living in them permanently."*

criminalizing homelessness

The revolving door ensures that people experiencing homelessness are more likely to become incarcerated, mainly because of policies that criminalize homelessness, The 2018 Prison Policy Initiative report points out. They cite a Yale Law School study on the criminalization of homelessness in Connecticut: *"Laws prohibit a person without a bed from sleeping on a park bench, ban someone without a place to be during the day from standing in a public plaza, and restrict the ability of a person without access to food to ask for money to buy something to eat."*[194] The Prison Policy Initiative continues, *"This puts people experiencing homelessness at high risk for arrest and incarceration, even though these "offenses"* pose no threat to public safety. It's both inhumane and counterproductive: Arresting and incarcerating people experiencing homelessness makes it harder for them to secure housing, jobs, and public assistance by saddling them with a criminal record and fines and fees that are impossible for them to pay. It only serves to fuel the revolving door between prisons and homeless shelters."[195]

private shelter

When Alex lost his apartment in 1992, he found shelter in private shelter Emmaus House, on 124th street in Harlem. *"It was an abandoned building with no heating nor electricity. My room had a hole in the ceiling. I tried to close it with tarp, but it still dripped. Aside, there was a bed and a desk with a word processor that I used for my school work. The circumstances were not great, but at least I got it myself."*

Before, Alex got his apartments through friends in the criminal milieu, but they always wanted something in return from him. This

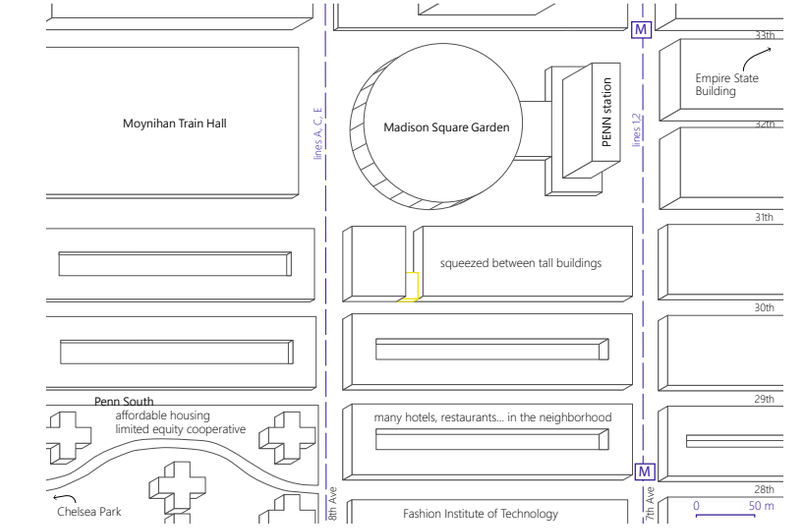
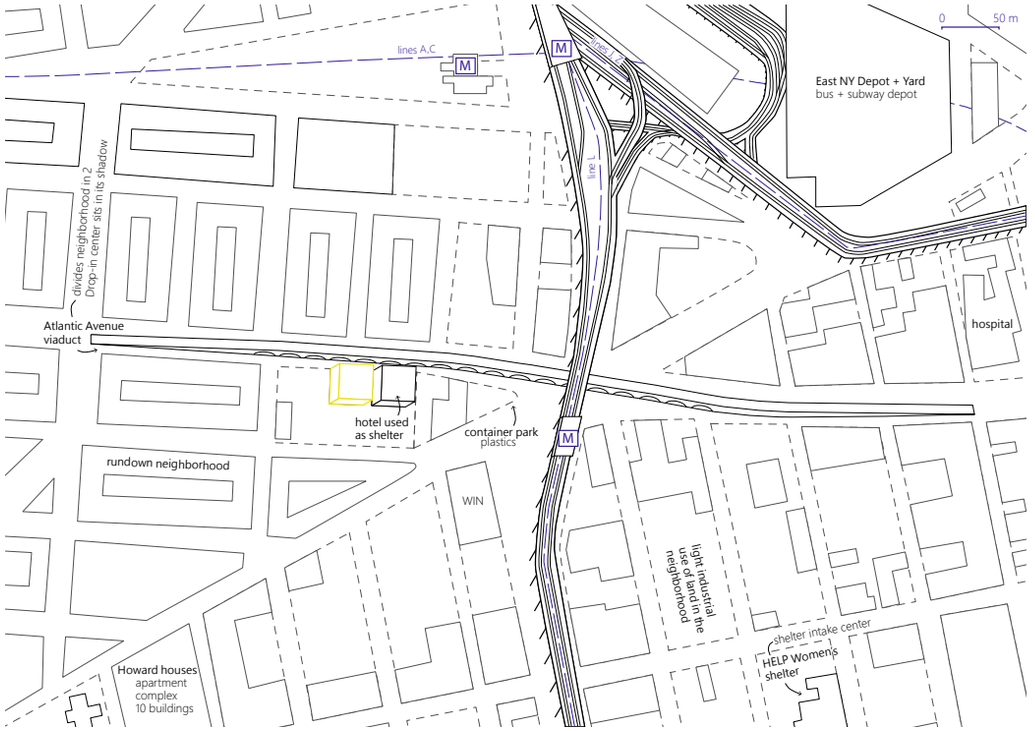


Figure 33: Annotated drawing of drop-in center Olivieri Center in Manhattan.



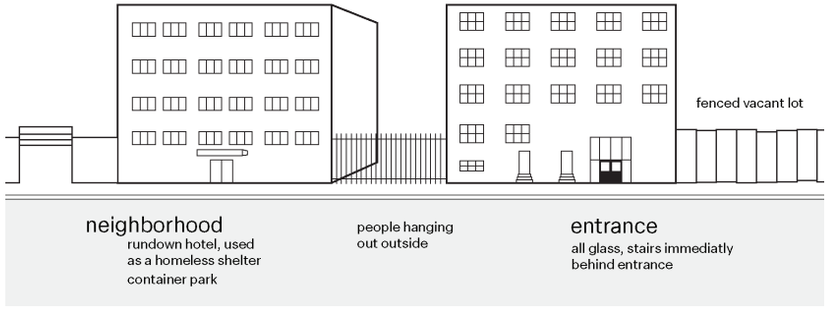


Figure 34: Annotated drawing of drop-in center The Gathering Place, Brooklyn.

was the first time he got himself housing after cutting ties with his criminal history. Eight months later, Alex found private housing in Harlem.

transitional house

Another facility provided for people reentering society is a transitional house. In 2006, Gregory spent a year in halfway house The Castle, operated by The Fortune Society, a non-profit organization focused on reintegrating formerly incarcerated people. *"I felt very welcome there, I had my own space and the staff was great. Most of them had been formerly incarcerated as well."*

Alex stayed in a transitional house as well when he was released for the second time in 1986. He went to Phoenix House, *"a transitional house for people returning from prison who suffer drug problems and have no place to go. I didn't have a drug problem, but I had nowhere to go."* Phoenix House was founded in 1967 on Hart Island (pp. 48) and moved to Manhattan in 1976. Ten years later, Alex stayed at Phoenix House for about a month.

hotel

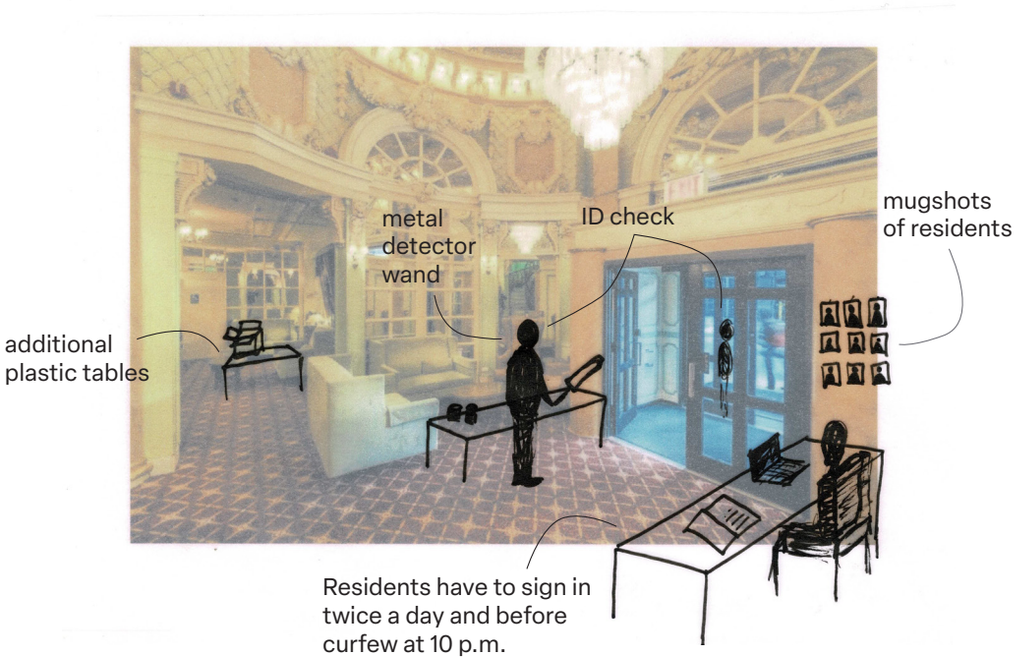
When the shelter system in New York City is in crisis, whether it is because of overflow or because of the covid-19 pandemic, the city tries to provide additional housing facilities. In the past this has been in the form of hotels, amongst others.

In the summer of 2020, New York City's Department of Homeless services moved 9.500 individuals from shelters into 63 hotels across the city, 32 of which are in Manhattan. This as part of an effort to curb the spread of the coronavirus in New York's homeless shelters, where high-density dormitory settings and shared facilities were commonplace.[196] Gregory was transferred from Ana's House shelter in the Bronx to four-star The Lucerne Hotel on the Upper Side of Manhattan, along with 280 others.[197] *"It was extraordinary! I stayed in a $1.500-suite for nine months! There was cable TV, a queen size bed, private bathroom, a key to my lock the door and laundry service. It felt like I was on vacation! The neighborhood was marvelous as well, I spent my days on Broadway playing the flute."*

The neighborhood itself however was not too keen on The Lucerne being used as temporary shelter. Shortly after the arrival of the shelter residents, some neighbors started a Facebook group to share stories and photos stating how life in the neighborhood deteriorated since they had arrived. More than 15.000 people joined the group.[198] The debate was not solely held online, demonstrators defending either party, the neighborhood or the hotel residents, gathered outside the Hotel frequently.[199] Due to a lawsuit enacted by a neighborhood committee, specially erected for the occasion, all residents were moved out of The Lucerne Hotel and back into shelters by June 28, 2021. Initially, the city wanted to move the residents to other hotels, but since there was a decline in covid-cases, the men were eventually moved back into shelter facilities from The Lucerne.[200]

Hotels were not only used during the pandemic to house shelter residents. In March 2020, non-profit organization Exodus Transitional Community was hired by the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice to place inmates released from Rikers Island and state prisons into hotels to help curb the spread of covid-19. The 'Emergency Reentry Hotels' program was originally launched under a $835.630 contract, but soon ballooned to $55.6 million. Within this program, Exodus opened four hotels.[201]

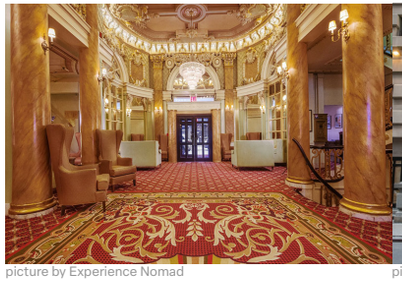
Even after the height of the pandemic, the facility continued to exist with additional funding by the city. In March 2022, two years after the start of the contract between the city and Exodus, the city however revealed that Exodus was hiring a security firm at

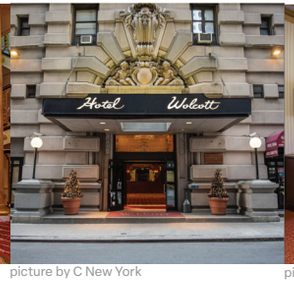


Very luxurious hotel lobby that appeared grim because of Exodus' additions and the controlling attitude of the staff.

Two consecutive double doors that were both closed, and security guards checking ID's before opening the door.

Hotel rooms as they used to be when the facility was still operational as a hotel. Uncertain what they look like now.


picture by Experience Nomad



picture by C New York


picture by The Wolcott Hotel

Figure 35: Annotated drawing of The Wolcott Hotel operated by Exodus based on visit.

The Wolcott Hotel that did not have the required watch, guard or patrol license. The city therefore asked the city Department of Investigation to look into the matter. A few months later, this resulted in Exodus publishing a letter, stating that *"Due to budgetary decisions unforeseen and beyond the scope of Exodus' control made by the City of New York, the Exodus hotel program will no longer be providing services at this hotel program location as of Oct. 1."*[202]

A week before the official closing date of The Wolcott Hotel, the facility was still operational (Figure 35).[203] The security of the building was very strict. The entrance has two consecutive doors, and behind ever door stood a security guard that checked ID's. The security guard behind the second door held a metal detector wand, and checked every resident upon arrival. The once luxurious hotel lobby appeared grim because of the additions Exodus made. Even though the interior remained the same, the careless atmosphere that a hotel normally radiates, was nowhere to be found. Mugshots of all residents stuck on the marble pillars that formed the entrance. Plastic tables and chairs were added for administration, as residents had to sign in with a social worker twice a day. All staff present in the lobby had a very controlling attitude. Even though residents have been released from incarceration, they are still closely monitored. A social worker mentioned that the capacity of the building was 160 residents, and that 130 remained in the run-up to the closure of the facility next week. *"The residents are angry with us because it's unclear where they will have to go after Wolcott's closure."*

search for permanent housing

Since Douglass resides in a shelter on Wards Island, he has been trying to find a place of his own. *"The shelter staff tells me that if I want my own apartment, I have to look for it myself. They don't offer any guidance."* However on the Department of Homeless Services website[204], under 'expectations for single adults in shelter' they write the following list:

- Cooperate in carrying out, developing, and completing their ILP [Independent Living Plan], which includes the steps toward obtaining permanent housing

- Applying for Public Assistance (PA) and completing all requirements necessary for establishing and maintaining eligibility for PA benefits

- If able to work, actively seeking employment and accepting a suitable job when it is offered

- **Working closely with their caseworker or housing specialist to locate and view available apartments**

- Actively seeking permanent housing by viewing available apartments several times per week

- Accepting a suitable apartment when it is offered

- Following shelter rules that prohibit behavior that places other clients and staff at risk

The fourth bullet point mentions close collaboration with a caseworker or housing specialist, but that doesn't resonate with Douglass' story.

voucher

In May of 2022, Douglass signed the lease of an apartment in Queens, but so far hasn't been able to move in. *"I was supposed to move in straight away, but I can't because my vouchers are not coming in. I'm not sure how much longer the landlord will hold the apartment for me..."* As long as New York City's Human Resources Administration doesn't provide Douglass with his voucher, he's unable to move.

This is a common problem with the current vouchers, also known as CityFHEPS. VOCAL-NY states, *"While CityFHEPS has the potential to be a critical tool in the campaign against homelessness, the program is plagued by needless bureaucratic delays, rampant discrimination against CityFHEPS voucher holders and limited eligibility for families facing homelessness. "*[205] In a VOCAL-NY homeless union meeting, VOCAL-NY organizer Luis Bolaños mentions *"The CityFHEPS voucher is not working: first of all, people are still homeless. Besides, bureaucratic delays ensure that landlords are paid late, which therefore ensure that a lot of landlords refuse to accept vouchers. And lastly, the quality of the apartments you can get via vouchers are unacceptable."*

On the first of August, 2022, Gregory was able to move into his new apartment from the HELP Meyer shelter on Wards Island. He was accepted in February, but was only able to move in August because the paperwork took so long. *"It's a complicated system where different agencies constantly overlap."* Gregory is very pleased with his apartment. *"Compared to where I was last year, I'm in the Statler Hilton, a five-star hotel! The building is beautiful, there's case managers and social workers available and they are marvelous as well."* Gregory continues, *"My brother recently laughed at me, saying I became reclusive. I used to be out and about in the city all day just to escape my place of residency. But I like staying home now."*

Alex found an apartment in 2006, and has rented it ever since. *"I love where I'm at now. I will probably never move again. If anything I will buy the apartment."*

Almost homeless

The 2018 Prison Policy Initiative report mentions the difference between homelessness and housing insecurity, because not all housing is stable housing (Figure 36). Housing insecurity includes people in marginal housing as well, alongside people who are homeless, and therefore provides a more realistic measurement of the number of formerly incarcerated people struggling in terms of housing. With 367 per 10.000 formerly incarcerated individuals living in marginal housing, the report concludes that a total of 570 out of every 10.000 are housing insecure, *"making housing insecurity nearly three times more common than homelessness alone."*[206]

The Prison Policy Initiative voices that the government and local reentry organizations have to adapt the 'Housing First' principle, where housing becomes a priority, and additional services are provided thereafter. *"It's critical that policymakers develop comprehensive responses to this problem, rather than continuing to punish those without homes."*[207]

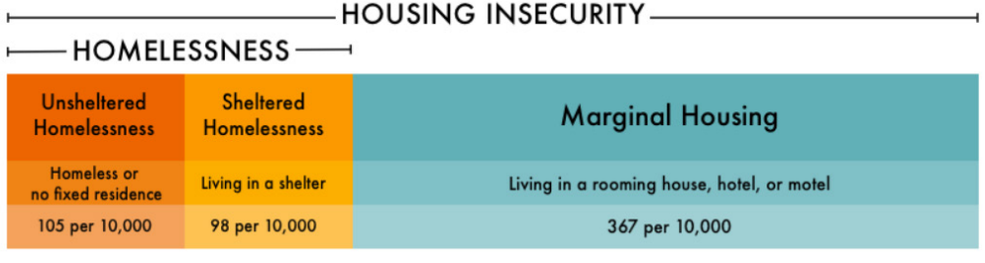


Figure 36: prison policy initiative (2018)

FEDERAL SYSTEM

In New York State, 74.178 people experienced homelessness on a single night in 2022, according to The Annual Homelessness Assessment Report (Figure 37).[208] As the total number of people experiencing homelessness in the United States on a single night in 2022 was roughly 582,500 people, New York's number makes up 13% of the total number in the US. This makes New York the state with the second highest number of people experiencing homelessness. California holds the first place, with 171,521 people, 30% of all people experiencing homelessness in the US.[209]

In the US, sixty percent of all people experiencing homelessness stayed at sheltered locations, like transitional housing, emergency shelters, drop-in centers... Forty percent lived in unsheltered locations, like abandoned buildings or the street. In New York, these numbers are quite different, as it is one of the three states that sheltered at least 95% of people experiencing homelessness in 2022. As a result, on a single night in 2022, 70.140 people were sheltered and 4.038 were unsheltered.

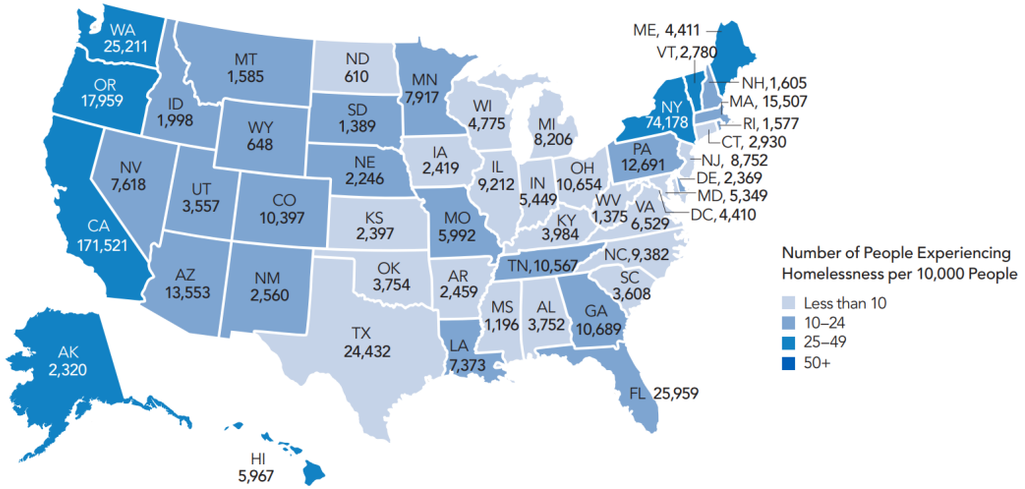


Figure 37: The Annual Homelessness Assessment Report (2022)

CONCLUSION

The childhoods of Gregory, Alex, Douglass and Tony greatly influenced the rest of their lives. They lived in poor, dangerous neighborhoods. *"I never felt safe as a kid,"* Alex said. He was a member of a youth gang, because *"in my neighborhood, you couldn't do anything unless you were part of a gang. The gang is what validated you."* That gang, however, was part of the reason he became familiar with the criminal milieu. Tony was repeatedly transferred from one foster home to another, which did not provide a stable environment for him to grow up in. Gregory concluded: *"When I kids don't have the benefit of a stable center, they learn how to survive. They become a chameleon, which is wonderful for their survival, but crushing because they can't form lasting relationships."*

The numbers on homelessness are hallucinatory. 23% of people released from prison in New York State in 2021 were diverted directly to a shelter.[210] In 2021, 12.748 people were released from Department of Correctional and Community Supervision (DOCCS) facilities[211], which means 2.932 people were referred directly to the shelter system. Not everyone out of those 23% enters a shelter because they have no other place to go, Douglass emphasizes. DOC staff would not allow him to move into his family's apartment. He was forced to enter the shelter system right away. This act only reinforces the circular motion of the revolving door. People who have been previously incarcerated, are ten times more likely to become homeless. Once homeless, they are more likely to be incarcerated again because homelessness is criminalized.

The counselling provided by shelters was below average in some of the stories above. Although the Department of Homeless Services states on its website[212] that one of the expectations they have for shelter residents, is that they must work closely with their caseworker or housing specialist to locate and view available apartments. However, in Douglass' case, no guidance was provided in his search for an apartment. In contrary however, Gregory was very pleased with his counselor, who got him his apartment.

The voucher system is hanging by a thread. What was supposed to be an aid, has become its own a stigma. Due to bureaucratic delays, many landlords refuse to rent to people with vouchers, because it is never certain when they will receive their money from the Human Resources Administration. Human rights organizations have tried to advocate for an alternative to FHEPS vouchers.

Permanent housing provides a stable foundation, which is especially important for people returning from prison. Aside that, the homeless infrastructure provided by the City of New York is sometimes outright disastrous. Gregory, Alex, Douglass and Tony spoke of shelters that were unsafe, unsanitary and desolate. Why do places like that continue to exist? Shelter staff, like guards on Rikers island and in prisons, are a much discussed issue as well. They steal fresh food that was meant for the shelter residents, they do not fulfill their counselling duties...

All these remarks lead to a 'fixable solution', as The Prison Policy Initiative notes: *"Governments should adapt the 'Housing First' principle, where housing becomes a priority, and additional services are provided thereafter. It's critical that policymakers develop comprehensive responses to this problem, rather than continuing to punish those without homes."*[213]

CONCLUSION

A parallel between the different systems becomes visible throughout this study. Jails, prisons and homeless infrastructures appear as islands of disposal within the urban fabric. The facilities are attached to the city, without being a part of it. Both stigmatization and physical displacement create a distance between the facilities' residents and society. The 19th century idea of "correcting deviance and dependency through isolation" is still visible in the history of New York City's archipelago, as well as in the correctional and shelter facilities. Although the "correction through isolation"- mindset is outdated, many of the facilities used today as jails, prisons and shelters were built for this purpose.

Another parallel is incarcerated individuals carrying out works like landfill, maintaining Potter's Field on Hart Island and even building their own correctional facility. Sing Sing was built by incarcerated people from Auburn Correctional Facility. This forced labor was frequently deployed by the city for urban expansion.

The revolving door ensures a tight loop between incarceration and homelessness. When released from prison, people are ten times more likely to become homeless than the general public. This is because of the stigma around former incarceration. People tend to struggle to find a landlord willing to rent to them after their prison sentence, and people also experience discrimination in the workspace. If they become homeless, the likelihood of getting incarcerated again increases, because of policies that criminalize homelessness. Sleeping on a park bench can be enough reason to be arrested (again).

Even though the Department of Homeless Services claims that public shelters provide guidance for its residents to find stable housing and to move out of the shelter as soon as possible, a few of the stories in this study show that its not always like that in reality. The vouchers provided by the city for housing can create even more stigma around poverty, because now landlords are turning down people because they are using vouchers, even though the voucher should in contrary ensure landlords that they will get payed. Because of bureaucratic delays however, landlords get payed late, causing them to exclude people using vouchers. The progragonists stories about permanent housing weren't all negative though, Gregory's story proves that sometimes people can get an apartment with a voucher through counselling. He signed the lease in Februari 2022 and moved in on August first, 2022. He has been living there since.

To conclude with The Prison Policy Initiative: *"Governments should adapt the 'Housing First' principle, where housing becomes a priority, and additional services are provided thereafter. It's critical that policymakers develop comprehensive responses to this problem, rather than continuing to punish those without homes."*214 Permanent housing provides a stable foundation, which is especially important for people returning from prison. The longer people are taken out of society and put in facilities like shelters, the harder it might be to return.

LEXICON

Incarceration

commissary: store in a correctional facility to purchase products as hygiene items, snacks, writing instruments...

convict: someone who is convicted (sentenced)

correctional facility: prison

detainee: someone who is awaiting trial

detention center: jail

DOC: New York City's Department of Correction

GED: GED classes prepare people for General Equivalency Development tests. If they pass these tests, they earn a diploma equivalent to a high school diploma.

guard/correctional officer/CO: a staff member working in a correctional facility or detention center.

ICE: Immigration and Customs holding facility

NYPD: New York City's Police Department

parole: when someone is paroled, they are released early and serve part of their sentence under the supervision of their community.

Parole Board: they decide whether prisoners who are serving certain types of sentences can be released.

Special housing unit (SHU)/solitary: confinement: separate unit from general population, where people are placed in isolation.

Workhouse: a place of residence seen as a "last resort" for the desperately poor and sick. By imposing a 'labor' spirit, the government hoped to "cure" these people.

Housing

DHS: Department of Homeless Services

drop-in center: short-term shelter, provides resources and serves as a place to stay overnight, but not meant for permanent shelter.

homeless shelter: 'emergency' housing for people experiencing homelessness, with resources provided and social workers available. Can be both municipal or private.

HRA: Human Resources Administration

intake shelter: the shelter people have to go through assessment if they want to enter the homeless shelter system.

Transitional house: transitional housing programs are designed to help people returning from prison prepare for independent living in a safe and supportive environment.

Traphouse: a place that acts as a medium for many drug dealers and or the partaking of said drugs, according to Urban Dictionary.

Voucher (CityFHEPS) : rental assistance supplement to help individuals and families find and keep housing. It is administered by the Department of Social Services (DSS), which includes both the DHS and the HRA.

ENDNOTES

1 transitional housing programs are designed to help people returning from prison prepare for independent living in a safe and supportive environment.
2 “Re-Entry Theater of Harlem,” Re-entry Theater of Harlem, accessed June 3, 2023, https://sites.google.com/view/re-entrytheaterofharlem/home.
3 “Re-Entry Theater of Harlem.”
4 Teun Voeten, Tunnel People, Rev. ed (Oakland: PM Press, 2010).
5 Jennifer Toth, The Mole People: Life in the Tunnels beneath New York City (Chicago, Ill: Chicago Review Press, 1993).
6 GED classes prepare people for General Equivalency Development tests. If they pass these tests, they earn a diploma equivalent to a high school diploma.
7 “VOCAL-NY: Who We Are,” VOCAL-NY (blog), April 4, 2022, https://www.vocal-ny.org/about-us/.
8 “New York City,” VOCAL-NY (blog), accessed June 6, 2023, https://www.vocal-ny.org/chapter/new-york-city/.
9 Vouchers, or CityFHEPS, are a rental assistance supplement provided by the city to help individuals and families find and keep housing. It is administered by the Department of Social Services (DSS), which includes both the Department of Homeless Services (DHS) and Human Resources Administration (HRA).
10 Urban dictionary defines a traphouse as “a place that acts as a medium for many drug dealers and or the partaking of said drugs.”
11 Stephen Metraux and Dennis P. Culhane, “HOMELESS SHELTER USE AND REINCARCERATION FOLLOWING PRISON RELEASE*,” Criminology & Public Policy 3, no. 2 (March 2004): 139–60, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1745-9133.2004.tb00031.x.
12 Metraux and Culhane.
13 John J. Lennon, “How Do People Released From Prison Find Housing?,” The New York Times, March 20, 2023, sec. Real Estate, https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/20/realestate/prison-parole-housing-shelters.html.
14 Anthony J. ANNUCCI, “ADMISSIONS AND RELEASES CALENDAR YEAR 2022,” 2023, https://doccs.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2023/03/admissions-releases-report-calendar-year-2022-.pdf.
15 Metraux and Culhane, “HOMELESS SHELTER USE AND REINCARCERATION FOLLOWING PRISON RELEASE*.”
16 Lucius Couloute, “Nowhere to Go: Homelessness among Formerly Incarcerated People,” Prison Policy Initiative, August 2018, https://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/housing.html.
17 Couloute.
18 Tanya de Sousa et al., “The 2022 Annual Homelessness Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress. PART 1: POINT-IN-TIME ESTIMATES OF HOMELESSNESS,” December 2022, https://www.huduser.gov/portal/sites/default/files/pdf/2022-AHAR-Part-1.pdf.
19 Metraux and Culhane, “HOMELESS SHELTER USE AND REINCARCERATION FOLLOWING PRISON RELEASE*.”
20 Greg A. Greenberg and Robert A. Rosenheck, “Jail Incarceration, Homelessness, and Mental Health: A National Study,” Psychiatric Services 59, no. 2 (February 2008): 170–77, https://doi.org/10.1176/ps.2008.59.2.170.
21 Lucius Couloute, “Out of Prison & Out of Work,” Prison Policy Initiative, July 2018, https://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/outofwork.html.
22 Alexi Jones, “New Data: The Revolving Door between Homeless Shelters and Prisons in Connecticut,” Prison Policy Initiative, accessed June 4, 2023, https://www.prisonpolicy.org/blog/2021/02/10/homelessness/.
23 Couloute, “Nowhere to Go.”
24 Couloute.
25 Couloute.

26 Metraux and Culhane, “HOMELESS SHELTER USE AND REINCARCERATION FOLLOWING PRISON RELEASE*.”
27 Metraux and Culhane.
28 “Facilities Overview,” Archives - Department of Correction, August 7, 2014, https://web.archive.org/web/20140807215419/http:/www.nyc.gov/html/doc/html/about/facilities-overview.shtml.
29 Eric L. Adams, “Mayor’s Management Report - Fiscal 2022” (The City of New York, September 2022), https://www.nyc.gov/assets/operations/downloads/pdf/mmr2022/2022_mmr.pdf.
30 Jennifer Wynn, Inside Rikers: Stories from the World’s Largest Penal Colony (St. Martin’s Press, 2001).
31 Michael Pollak, “Name That Island,” The New York Times, December 15, 2012, sec. New York, https://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/16/nyregion/before-it-was-called-roosevelt-island.html.
32 “Timeline of Roosevelt Island History,” Archives - Roosevelt Island, September 1, 2010, https://web.archive.org/web/20100901184604/http://nyc10044.com/timeln/timeline.html.
33 “Blackwell’s Island Workhouse, New York, USA,” accessed May 18, 2023, https://www.workhouses.org.uk/US-NY-Blackwell/.
34 “Almshouse,” in Wikipedia, February 3, 2023, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Almshouse&oldid=1137242938.
35 “Blackwell’s Island Workhouse, New York, USA.”
36 “Timeline of Roosevelt Island History.”
37 “Randalls and Wards Islands,” in Wikipedia, March 7, 2023, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Randalls_and_Wards_Islands&oldid=1143444166#cite_note-gnis-1.
38 Bill Twomey, “The Bronx, in Bits and Pieces,” in The Bronx, in Bits and Pieces (Rooftop Publishing, 2007), 74–79.
39 Alyssa Loorya and Eileen Kao, “Phase IA - Documentary Study and Archaeological Assessment for the Hart Island, Bronx (Bronx County), New York – Shoreline Stabilization Project” (New York City Government, September 2017), http://s-media.nyc.gov/agencies/lpc/arch_reports/1773.pdf.
40 Sharon Seitz and Stuart Miller, “The Other Islands of New York City: A History and Guide,” in The Other Islands of New York City: A History and Guide, third edition (The Countryman Press, 2011), 138–44.
41 “Likes Life in Workhouse. Inmate Writes of ‘Good Eats, No Work, and Bum Arguments.,’” The New York Times, October 3, 1915, https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1915/10/03/104655426.pdf.
42 Seitz and Miller, “The Other Islands of New York City: A History and Guide.”
43 “$800,000 PROJECT URGED; Planning Body Calls for Funds for Rikers Island Unit,” The New York Times, March 31, 1949, sec. Archives, https://www.nytimes.com/1949/03/31/archives/800000-project-urged-planning-body-calls-for-funds-for-rikers.html.
44 “NEW COURT TO AID DERELICTS OF CITY; Hart Island Set-Up to Relieve ‘Disgraceful’ Detention Pens After Sept. 5,” The New York Times, June 25, 1955, sec. Archives, https://www.nytimes.com/1955/06/25/archives/new-court-to-aid-derelicts-of-city-hart-island-setup-to-relieve.html.
45 Twomey, “The Bronx, in Bits and Pieces.”
46 Tracy Stakely, “Cultural Landscape Report for Ellis Island” (Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation, May 2003), https://www.nps.gov/parkhistory/online_books/elis/clr.pdf.
47 “Timeline of Roosevelt Island History.”
48 “Timeline of Roosevelt Island History.”
49 “Blackwell’s Island Workhouse, New York, USA.”
50 “Almshouse.”
51 Condé Nast, “See the Abandoned and Inaccessible Island Where Typhoid Mary Died,” Vanity Fair, June 6, 2015, https://www.vanityfair.com/culture/2015/06/north-brother-island-photos-typhoid-mary.
52 “Timeline of Roosevelt Island History.”
53 Nast, “See the Abandoned and Inaccessible Island Where Typhoid Mary Died.”
54 Seitz and Miller, “The Other Islands of New York City: A History and Guide.”
55 Rachel Nuwer, “Exploring New York City’s Abandoned Island, Where Nature Has Taken Over,” Smithsonian Magazine, accessed May 18, 2023, https://www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/explor-

ing-new-york-citys-abandoned-island-where-nature-has-taken-over-180951450/.
56 Jen Kirby, “Will New Yorkers Finally Get to Visit North Brother Island?,” New York Magazine - Intelligencer, October 27, 2016, https://nymag.com/intelligencer/2016/10/will-new-yorkers-finally-get-to-visit-north-brother-island.html.
57 “Overview and History | Ellis Island,” Statue of Liberty & Ellis Island, accessed May 18, 2023, https://www.statueofliberty.org/ellis-island/overview-history/.
58 Evan Andrews, “9 Things You May Not Know About Ellis Island,” HISTORY, February 7, 2019, https://www.history.com/news/9-things-you-may-not-know-about-ellis-island.
59 “Quarantine At New York,” Harper’s Weekly 23, no. 1184 (September 6, 1879), https://freepages.rootsweb.com/~quarantine/genealogy/history2.htm.
60 Wall Text, Isle of Hope/Isle of Tears, 2022, Ellis Island National Museum of Immigration, New York City, New York, 2022.
61 Stakely, “Cultural Landscape Report for Ellis Island.”
62 “Ellis Island: Records, Passengers & Immigration,” HISTORY, February 13, 2023, https://www.history.com/topics/immigration/ellis-island.
63 Beyer Blinder Belle and Anderson Notter Finegold, “Historic Structure Report: The Main Building, Ellis Island, Statue of Liberty National Monument” (U.S. Department of the Interior/ National Park Service, 1988), https://archive.org/details/historicstructur00beye/page/n1/mode/2up.
64 “ELLIS ISLAND ENDS ALIEN PROCESSING; Last Detained Person Leaves -- 20,000,000 Immigrants Cared For in 62 Years,” The New York Times, November 13, 1954, sec. Archives, https://www.nytimes.com/1954/11/13/archives/ellis-island-ends-alien-processing-last-detained-person-leaves.html.
65 César Cuauhtémoc García Hernández, Migrating to Prison: America’s Obsession with Locking up Immigrants (New York: The New Press, 2019).
66 “Hart Island,” in Wikipedia, April 9, 2023, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Hart_Island&oldid=1148972542.
67 “CRITICISES A CITY HOSPITAL.; Grand Jury Says Hart’s Island Tuberculosis Ward Is Unsuitable. - The New York Times,” November 10, 1917, sec. Archives.
68 Murray Schumach, “HART ISLAND SITE FOR ADDICTS’ HOME; Former Users Will Offer Only Help at Center City Will Operate It HART ISLAND SITE FOR ADDICT HOME,” The New York Times, February 16, 1967, sec. Archives, https://www.nytimes.com/1967/02/16/archives/hart-island-site-for-addicts-home-former-users-will-offer-only-help.html.
69 “Phoenix House,” in Wikipedia, February 4, 2023, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Phoenix_House&oldid=1137428558.
70 Seitz and Miller, “The Other Islands of New York City: A History and Guide.”
71 Federal Writers’ Publications, Inc., “New York City Guide,” in New York City Guide (Random House publishers, 1939), 551, https://books.google.be/books?id=SLdPtTqjPiMC&pg=PA551&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q&f=false.
72 “Rat Island (Bronx),” in Wikipedia, March 2, 2023, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Rat_Island_(Bronx)&oldid=1142395166#cite_note-NYCGuide-2.
73 “Randalls and Wards Islands.”
74 “Wards Island Park Highlights : NYC Parks,” accessed May 18, 2023, https://www.nycgovparks.org/parks/wards-island-park/history.
75 “Manhattan Psychiatric Center,” in Wikipedia, May 16, 2022, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Manhattan_Psychiatric_Center&oldid=1088120595.
76 “Kirby Forensic Psychiatric Center,” Office of Mental Health, accessed May 18, 2023, https://omh.ny.gov/omhweb/facilities/krpc/.
77 “Kirby Forensic Psychiatric Center,” Archive - Office of Mental Health, June 27, 2012, https://web.archive.org/web/20120627023821/http://omh.ny.gov/omhweb/facilities/krpc/facility.htm.
78 “The George Rosenfeld Center for Recovery,” Odyssey House, March 8, 2017, https://odysseyhousenyc.org/george-rosenfeld-center-for-recovery/.
79 Claire Klobucista and Alejandra Martinez, “Fentanyl and the U.S. Opioid Epidemic,” Council on Foreign Relations, April 19, 2023, https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/fentanyl-and-us-opioid-epidemic.
80 “Quarantine At New York.”

81 “Swinburne Island,” in Wikipedia, April 16, 2023, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Swinburne_Island&oldid=1150215938#cite_note-2.
82 “Davids Island (New York),” in Wikipedia, March 24, 2023, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Davids_Island_(New_York)&oldid=1146430970.
83 “IN THE POTTER’S FIELD.; BURYING THE CITY’S PAUPER DEAD. THE VOYAGE OF THE BODIES TO HART’S ISLAND ON THE DEAD-BOAT--FORTY THOUSAND COFFINS IN FOUR ACRES-- RATTLE HIS BONES.,” The New York Times, March 3, 1878, sec. Archives, https://www.nytimes.com/1878/03/03/archives/in-the-potters-field-burying-the-citys-pauper-dead-the-voyage-of.html.
84 “Purchase of Hart’s Island.,” The New York Times, February 27, 1869, sec. Archives, https://www.nytimes.com/1869/02/27/archives/purchase-of-harts-island.html.
85 Corey Kilgannon, “A Million Bodies Are Buried Here. Now It’s Becoming a Park.,” The New York Times, March 24, 2023, sec. New York, https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/24/nyregion/hart-island-cemetery-park.html.
86 “Potter’s Field,” in Wikipedia, May 9, 2023, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Potter%27s_field&oldid=1153901923.
87 Kilgannon, “A Million Bodies Are Buried Here. Now It’s Becoming a Park.”
88 New York City’s Department of Correction
89 “Hart Island,” New York City Council, accessed May 19, 2023, https://council.nyc.gov/data/hart-island/.
90 “ISLANDS ABOUT NEW-YORK; IN THE UPPER BAY AND IN THE EAST RIVER.,” The New York Times, November 21, 1880, sec. Archives, https://www.nytimes.com/1880/11/21/archives/islands-about-newyork-in-the-upper-bay-and-in-the-east-river.html.
91 Kilgannon, “A Million Bodies Are Buried Here. Now It’s Becoming a Park.”
92 “Hart Island,” Official New York City Website, accessed May 29, 2023, https://www.nyc.gov/site/hartisland/index.page.
93 Kilgannon, “A Million Bodies Are Buried Here. Now It’s Becoming a Park.”
94 Greg B. Smith, “Woes at Wards Island Homeless Shelters Overseen By Gov. Cuomo’s Sister,” The City, May 31, 2019, https://www.thecity.nyc/special-report/2019/5/31/21211051/woes-at-wards-island-homeless-shelters-overseen-by-gov-cuomo-s-sister.
95 “Help Usa - Help Supportive Employment Center At Wards Island, a Transitional Housing in New York NY | Shelters for Homeless,” accessed May 19, 2023, https://sheltersforhomeless.com/shelter-7332.html.
96 Smith, “Woes at Wards Island Homeless Shelters Overseen By Gov. Cuomo’s Sister.”
97 “Clarke Thomas Mens Shelter - New York, NY, 10035,” Free Clinics, accessed May 19, 2023, https://www.freeclinics.com/det/ny_Clarke_Thomas_Mens_Shelter.
98 Smith, “Woes at Wards Island Homeless Shelters Overseen By Gov. Cuomo’s Sister.”
99 “Procurement Summary - Keener Rapid Re-Housing Program” (Department of Homeless Services, n.d.), https://www.nyc.gov/html/hhsaccelerator/downloads/pdf/DHS%20Keener%20Rapid%20Re-housing%20Program_2.pdf.
100 Smith, “Woes at Wards Island Homeless Shelters Overseen By Gov. Cuomo’s Sister.”
101 Bahar Ostadan and David Brand, “Troubled Wards Island Homeless Shelter Tied to Ex-Gov. Cuomo’s Sister Quietly Closes,” Gothamist, February 17, 2023, https://gothamist.com/news/troubled-wards-island-homeless-shelter-tied-to-ex-gov-cuomos-sister-quietly-closes.
102 “Schwartz Assessment Shelter Achieves Perfect Score on Callahan Inspection | News Releases | Volunteers of America,” Volunteers of America: Greater New York, accessed May 19, 2023, https://www.voa-gny.org/news_releases/schwartz-callahan.
103 David Brand, “Mayor Adams to Shut Down Randall’s Island Tent Complex for Asylum-Seekers,” City Limits, November 10, 2022, https://citylimits.org/2022/11/10/mayor-adams-set-to-shut-down-randalls-island-tent-complex-for-asylum-seekers/.
104 Twomey, “The Bronx, in Bits and Pieces.”
105 John Webster, “Alcoholism a Disease Not a Crime,” New York Daily News, March 26, 1954.
106 Seitz and Miller, “The Other Islands of New York City: A History and Guide.”
107 “North and South Brother Islands (New York City),” in Wikipedia, May 19, 2023, https://en.wikipe-

dia.org/w/index.php?title=North_and_South_Brother_Islands_(New_York_City)&oldid=1155633269.
108 Twomey, “The Bronx, in Bits and Pieces.”
109 “Hart Island,” April 9, 2023.
110 “Pelham Islands,” in Wikipedia, November 29, 2022, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Pelham_Islands&oldid=1124655557#cite_note-3.
111 “Rikers Island,” in Wikipedia, May 13, 2023, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Rikers_Island&oldid=1154641812.
112 “Fort Wood (Liberty Island) and Fort Gibson (Ellis Island) (U.S. National Park Service),” National Park Service, accessed May 19, 2023, https://www.nps.gov/places/fort-wood-fort-gibson.htm.
113 “Ellis Island,” in Wikipedia, May 17, 2023, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Ellis_Island&oldid=1155375237.
114 Stakely, “Cultural Landscape Report for Ellis Island.”
115 “Governors Island,” in Wikipedia, May 7, 2023, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Governors_Island&oldid=1153636527.
116 “Fort Wood (Liberty Island) and Fort Gibson (Ellis Island) (U.S. National Park Service).”
117 “National Park Service Historical Handbook: Statue of Liberty,” Archives - National Park Service, June 28, 2010, https://web.archive.org/web/20100628162434/http://www.nps.gov/history/history/online_books/hh/11/hh11m.htm.
118 “Mill Rock Park Highlights : NYC Parks,” New York City Department of Parks & Recreation, accessed May 19, 2023, https://www.nycgovparks.org/parks/mill-rock-park/history.
119 “List of Revolutionary War Battles, Raids & Skirmishes for 1776,” American Revolutionary War (blog), November 7, 2017, https://revolutionarywar.us/year-1776/.
120 “Randalls and Wards Islands.”
121 Kenneth T. Jackson, “The Encyclopedia of New York City,” in The Encyclopedia of New York City, second edition (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 149.
122 “Hoffman Island,” in Wikipedia, March 21, 2023, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Hoffman_Island&oldid=1145804254#cite_note-Citycyclopedia-4.
123 Rochelle Heath-Harris, “Rikers Island: A Quick History,” CitySignal (blog), April 13, 2022, https://www.citysignal.com/rikers-island-history/.
124 Stephen Blank, “A COMPLEX HISTORY THAT REPLACED BLACKWELL’S ISLAND,” Roosevelt Island Historical Society (blog), accessed May 28, 2023, https://rihs.us/2022/05/30/monday-may-30-2022-a-complex-history-that-replaced-blackwells-island/.
125 Anne Austen, “The History of Rikers Island in New York City,” NYK Daily (blog), March 31, 2021, https://nykdaily.com/2021/03/the-history-of-rikers-island-in-new-york-city/.
126 Robert Sullivan, “The Concrete Jungle,” New York Magazine, September 10, 2010, https://nymag.com/news/features/68087/.
127 Bean Bensonhurst, “Photos: After $15 Million Restoration, Marine Park’s White Island Isn’t Just For The Birds,” Bklyner, July 22, 2014, https://bklyner.com/photos-15-million-restoration-marine-parks-white-island-isnt-just-birds-sheepshead-bay/.
128 “Fact Sheet: Ellis Island - Statue of Liberty NM - National Parks of New York Harbor (U.S. National Park Service),” National Park Service, accessed May 18, 2023, https://www.nps.gov/npnh/learn/news/fact-sheet-elis.htm.
129 Joan Bishupic, “N.J. Wins Claim to Most of Ellis Island,” Washington Post, May 27, 1998, https://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/national/longterm/supcourt/stories/wpellis052798.htm.
130 “Providing Better Terminal Facilities for New York” (Engineering News Record, July 31, 1880).
131 “Is Lady Liberty a Jersey Girl? - New Jersey Society of Professional Land Surveyors,” New Jersey Society of Professional Land Surveyors, accessed May 19, 2023, https://www.njspls.org/page/130.
132 “POSTINGS: Parks and Transportation Departments Debate Future of Former Link Between Randalls and Wards Islands; At City Agencies, Troubled Water Over Bridge,” The New York Times, April 16, 1995, sec. Real Estate, https://www.nytimes.com/1995/04/16/realestate/postings-parks-transportation-departments-debate-future-former-link-between.html.
133 Sergey Kadinsky, “Hidden Waters of New York City: A History and Guide to 101 Forgotten Lakes, Ponds, Creeks, and Streams in the Five Boroughs,” in Hidden Waters of New York City: A History and Guide to 101 Forgotten Lakes, Ponds, Creeks, and Streams in the Five Boroughs (The Countryman Press, 2016), 49.
134 “U Thant Island,” in Wikipedia, April 19, 2023, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=U_Thant_Island&oldid=1150749944.
135 “Quarantine At New York.”
136 Blake A. Bell, “Historic Pelham: The Beginnings of Today’s Shore Park in Pelham Manor,” Historic Pelham (blog), April 20, 2015, http://historicpelham.blogspot.com/2015/04/the-beginnings-of-todays-shore-park-in.html.
137 “Canarsie Pol - New York City, New York,” Wikimapia, accessed May 18, 2023, http://wikimapia.org/1448903/Canarsie-Pol.
138 Kadinsky, “Hidden Waters of New York City: A History and Guide to 101 Forgotten Lakes, Ponds, Creeks, and Streams in the Five Boroughs.”
139 following summary is conducted based on https://www.nyc.gov/site/doc/about/facilities.page, https://templeton1.org/, https://www.correctionhistory.org/, https://cellblock7.org/ and https://www.prisonpro.com/.
140 Adams, “Mayor’s Management Report - Fiscal 2022.”
141 “What Is Rikers Island?,” The New York Times, December 15, 2014, sec. New York, https://www.nytimes.com/2014/12/16/nyregion/what-is-happening-at-rikers-island.html.
142 visit to Francis Buono bridge on September 29, 2022.
143 John C. Devlin, “‘Bridge of Hope’ to Rikers Island Is Dedicated Here; Mayor Opens $9-Million Bridge To an Expanding Rikers Island,” The New York Times, November 23, 1966, sec. Archives, https://www.nytimes.com/1966/11/23/archives/bridge-of-hope-to-rikers-island-is-dedicated-here-mayor-opens.html.
144 “Rikers Island.”
145 “Astoria Heights Neighborhood,” Queens home team, accessed May 22, 2023, https://www.queenshometeam.com/neighborhoods/astoria-heights-queens-nyc/.
146 DOC = New York City’s Department of Correction
147 “Presumption of Innocence,” Cornell Law School, accessed June 8, 2023, https://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/presumption_of_innocence.
148 Neil Shouse, “Federal Prison vs State Prison – What’s the Difference?,” Shouse Law Group, March 11, 2022, https://www.shouselaw.com/ca/blog/federal-prison-vs-state-prison/.
149 Heath-Harris, “Rikers Island.”
150 Heath-Harris.
151 Heath-Harris.
152 Matilda Jaxon, “The History Of Rikers Island,” Classic New York History (blog), April 10, 2017, https://classicnewyorkhistory.com/the-history-of-rikers-island/.
153 Heath-Harris, “Rikers Island.”
154 Heath-Harris.
155 Heath-Harris.
156 Matthew Haag, “Available: A 415-Acre Island With Manhattan Views. What to Build?,” The New York Times, November 15, 2019, sec. New York, https://www.nytimes.com/2019/11/15/nyregion/rikers-island-closing-future.html.
157 Kimberly Gonzalez, Sara Dorn, and Sahalie Donaldson, “A Timeline on the Closure of Rikers Island,” City & State NY, May 31, 2023, https://www.cityandstateny.com/politics/2023/05/timeline-closure-rikers-island/376662/.
158 Gonzalez, Dorn, and Donaldson.
159 Gonzalez, Dorn, and Donaldson.
160 Gonzalez, Dorn, and Donaldson.
161 Gonzalez, Dorn, and Donaldson.
162 Gonzalez, Dorn, and Donaldson.
163 Gonzalez, Dorn, and Donaldson.
164 Bliss Broyard and Lisa Riordan Seville, “15 Rikers Inmates Died in 2021. These Are Their Stories.,” Intelligencer, December 27, 2021, https://nymag.com/intelligencer/article/rikers-inmates-died-2021.html.

165 Gonzalez, Dorn, and Donaldson, “A Timeline on the Closure of Rikers Island.”
166 “Presumption of Innocence.”
167 “Sing Sing,” in Wikipedia, accessed May 27, 2023, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Sing_Sing&oldid=1157272492.
168 Interface Media Group, Inc., “Stone on Stone - Sing Sing Building Stories App,” 2021, http://www.singsingprisonmuseum.org/stone-on-stone-app.html.
169 Interface Media Group, Inc.
170 “Re-Entry Theater of Harlem.”
171 mess hall = prison slang for cafeteria
172 chow = prison slang for food in the cafeteria. “On to chow” means going to the cafeteria to eat.
173 when someone is paroled, they are released early and serve part of their sentence under the supervision of their community.
174 The Parole Board decides whether prisoners who are serving certain types of sentences can be released.
175 “New York Profile,” Prison Policy Initiative, accessed June 8, 2023, https://www.prisonpolicy.org/profiles/NY.html.
176 Wendy Sawyer and Peter Wagner, “Mass Incarceration: The Whole Pie 2023,” Prison Policy Initiative, March 14, 2023, https://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/pie2023.html.
177 Sawyer and Wagner.
178 Emily Widra and Tiana Herring, “States of Incarceration: The Global Context 2021,” accessed June 8, 2023, https://www.prisonpolicy.org/global/2021.html.
179 Stella U. Ogunwole et al., “Population Under Age 18 Declined Last Decade,” Census.gov, accessed June 8, 2023, https://www.census.gov/library/stories/2021/08/united-states-adult-population-grew-faster-than-nations-total-population-from-2010-to-2020.html.
180 Lennon, “How Do People Released From Prison Find Housing?”
181 ANNUCCI, “ADMISSIONS AND RELEASES CALENDAR YEAR 2022.”
182 Interface Media Group, Inc., “Stone on Stone - Sing Sing Building Stories App.”
183 Widra and Herring, “States of Incarceration.”
184 Sawyer and Wagner, “Mass Incarceration.”
185 Richard Sennett, The Conscience of the Eye: The Design and Social Life of Cities, 1. paperback ed (New York, NY: Norton, 1992).
186 Lennon, “How Do People Released From Prison Find Housing?”
187 ANNUCCI, “ADMISSIONS AND RELEASES CALENDAR YEAR 2022.”
188 Couloute, “Nowhere to Go.”
189 Couloute.
190 “Homeless Drop-In Centers · NYC311,” Official New York City Website, accessed June 6, 2023, https://portal.311.nyc.gov/article/?kanumber=KA-02528.
191 “Drop-In Centers,” Coalition For The Homeless, accessed June 6, 2023, https://www.coalitionforthehomeless.org/get-help/i-need-shelter/drop-in-centers/.
192 Voeten, Tunnel People.
193 Toth, The Mole People.
194 Allard K. Lowenstein, “‘Forced into Breaking the Law’ The Criminalization of Homelessness in Connecticut” (Yale Law School, November 2016), https://law.yale.edu/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/news/criminalization_of_homelessness_report_for_web_full_report.pdf.
195 Jones, “New Data.”
196 Nikita Stewart, “N.Y. Will Move Homeless Men From Liberal Neighborhood After Backlash,” The New York Times, September 8, 2020, sec. New York, https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/08/nyregion/nyc-homeless-hotels-covid.html.
197 Carol Tannenhauser, “The Lucerne Saga Ends, as the Last Men Leave to Return to Traditional Shelters,” West Side Rag (blog), June 28, 2021, https://www.westsiderag.com/2021/06/28/the-lucerne-saga-ends-as-the-last-men-leave-to-return-to-traditional-shelters.
198 Tannenhauser.
199 “Protesters Say New York City Moving Homeless Out Of Lucerne Hotel Is Creating A Bigger Problem,” CBS News, September 13, 2020, https://www.cbsnews.com/newyork/news/homeless-new-york-city-homeless-hotels-lucerne-hotel-coronavirus-covid-19-gracie-mansion-carl-schurz-park/.
200 Tannenhauser, “The Lucerne Saga Ends, as the Last Men Leave to Return to Traditional Shelters.”
201 Greg B. Smith, “Troubled Contractor Abruptly Shutting Million-Dollar Halfway Hotels,” The City, August 25, 2022, sec. Criminal Justice, https://www.thecity.nyc/2022/8/25/23322399/troubled-contractor-abruptly-shutting-million-dollar-halfway-hotels.
202 Smith.
203 visit to The Wolcott Hotel on September 26, 2022.
204 “Single Adults: The Shelter System - DHS,” NYC Department of Homeless Services, accessed June 6, 2023, https://www.nyc.gov/site/dhs/shelter/singleadults/single-adults-shelter.page.
205 Janaki Chadha and Danielle Muoio Dunn, “Push for Voucher Reforms amid Ballooning Shelter Population,” POLITICO, September 12, 2022, https://www.politico.com/weekly-new-york-real-estate-infrastructure/2022/09/12/push-for-voucher-reforms-amid-ballooning-shelter-population-00056076.
206 Couloute, “Nowhere to Go.”
207 Couloute.
208 de Sousa et al., “The 2022 Annual Homelessness Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress. PART 1: POINT-IN-TIME ESTIMATES OF HOMELESSNESS.”
209 de Sousa et al.
210 Lennon, “How Do People Released From Prison Find Housing?”
211 ANNUCCI, “ADMISSIONS AND RELEASES CALENDAR YEAR 2022.”
212 “Single Adults: The Shelter System - DHS.”
213 Couloute, “Nowhere to Go.”
214 Couloute.