HELLO from PRISON WRITERS!

Who we are:

Prison Writers was started in 2014 by Loen Kelley, a veteran CNN and CBS News producer, after she heard firsthand from her contacts inside prisons about what was really going on behind bars. As anyone who lives inside a prison knows, what happens in prison usually stays in prison. Back then, there was almost nowhere for people in prison to get published. We started Prison Writers to give incarcerated people a voice, and to bridge the gap between people on the outside and those on the inside, because we believe both groups benefit from the connection. We believe most prisoners deserve a second chance, especially those who never had a first.

We've published more than 900 stories from hundreds of incarcerated writers across the country. We were one of the first programs in the country to pay incarcerated writers, and we pay for every story we publish.

Topics:

Stories can be about anything as long as it's ABOUT prison – and true. Ask yourself: "What's the one story I'll never forget about prison?" Other ideas (but feel free to think of your own!): The first time you realized you were really *inside.* A moment that scared you, changed you, or opened your eyes. How CO shortages or lockdowns shape the mood of a whole unit. The hustle: store, trades, favors, the economy no one talks about. Your best advice for someone walking in there tomorrow. Staying connected to family and friends on the outside, or losing them. A program or person who helped you in a real way (or didn't). Someone unforgettable, good or bad, who crossed your path. Something bizarre or funny people wouldn't believe. Your childhood. Your crime.

Writing tips:

- Write a catchy opening that hooks the reader and also hints at what the story is about.
- Include enough descriptive details so readers feel like they're almost *watching* it.
- **We don't accept poetry or fiction at this time. Please send a story written just for us, not something you wrote for a class or for another publication.**
- Stories should be no longer than about 1,200 words (one single-spaced typed page is about 500 words).
- Your writing can be serious, funny, straightforward — as long as it's true.

How to send your story:

- Please mail your first story to the address below, and tell us which prison email system you use. We have to invite you before you can write to us by prison email, so if we publish your story, we'll reach you there.
- Be sure to include your name, DOC # and prison emailing address with your entry. Include a two- or three-sentence bio. A photo is welcome but not necessary, and unfortunately, we aren't able to send them back.

Prison Writers – New Writer
PO Box 334
New York, NY 10002

What happens next: We read every story, but we can only write back if we're going to publish yours. If we do, we'll let you know within two months, and we'll pay you $20.

Thanks and we're looking forward to hearing from you!

Loen, Founder of Prison Writers