

Making this film was extremely hard. It took up huge amounts of my time. It taught me that actors intimidate me and I'd much rather be a director of photography than a director of actors. It reminded me that most other won't hate you for asking them to do things for you, that the crew are always going to finish the Nutella and croissants before even looking at the salad, and that if you put in good, hard work with a bunch of people you trust, you'll be able to make something you're proud of.

I wrote my thesis proposal back in May 2017, or about 400 years ago. I had two topics in mind. Option one: Make a documentary short about physical accessibility on the Tufts Medford/Somerville campus because I was dissatisfied with the short doc about artists with disabilities I made last year. Option two: adapt a novella I'd written when I was 14 into a short film. I'd had a frustrating experience on my last documentary, and almost all of last year's thesis projects were narrative shorts, so I found myself leaning towards narrative. I chose to adapt the novella, "2170," because it was a story I'd always meant to revisit. I wrote it during a period of my life where I was intensely interested in forensic psychology and planning to become an expert witness in criminal cases when I was an adult. But by the time I chose Tufts, I'd changed my mind. I was disillusioned with the criminal justice system and didn't feel I could make useful changes from the inside. I was also scared no one would hire me because they'd think juries wouldn't trust a visibly transgender person. I've since found I have the option not to be visible, but I'm still glad I didn't try to become an expert witness. I think I would have hated grad school and felt trapped by the injustices built into the American justice system. But I still wanted to come back to my interest in forensic psychology at the end of my undergrad years by adapting 2170.

Once I decided to adapt 2170, however, I immediately ran into problems. I was overthinking everything. I wanted this project to look and sound beautiful, be polished and well-written, be moving, and above all be ethical. I was reluctant to start on anything while simultaneously concerned that I would fall behind if I didn't start way, way ahead of time. Yet I didn't start writing as soon as I would have liked. My summer hours were busy with a documentary practice class, a news production internship, and on a film set. Being on this set wasn't always positive for me. I was frustrated by how the power structures were organized and uncomfortable because some members of the cast/crew did not feel safe to be around. Every weekend I spent hours aware that I was working alongside at least one person I knew had committed sexual misconduct and probably several others I didn't. I didn't want my set to be like that, so I started planning how I was going to make it as pleasant, organized, and safe as possible.

Eventually, I started reading for research and inspiration. The first book I read was "The Mask of Sanity," which I'd been meaning to read since I learned about it in a forensic psych class at Harvard Extension six years ago. Reading it made me realize just how much my interests had shifted from psychological reasons for crime to sociological ones. This changed the priorities of the story. 2170 had been mostly about Stark. It simultaneously reduced him to an interesting specimen while valorizing his intelligence, powers of manipulation, low empathy, and emotional coldness. In retrospect, I see now that the story was about someone I knew who was hurting me and that I wrote it to cope with and explain what was happening. I wasn't comfortable trying to tell that story again for my thesis project. I wanted my new story to be about someone who wasn't me, someone who more accurately represented the social context of the prison system instead of functioning as a metaphor for my personal suffering.

I made it through a few drafts of a new story with new characters, but every time I opened the document, I froze up. I couldn't figure out why. Then I read "Episode of Hands," a poem by Hart Crane about two men sharing a tender, intimate moment. I realized that I wanted that intimacy in my film. But writing about desire, especially same-gender desire, made me feel ashamed. I was writing garbage because all of the good material was romance between Big and Reed and I was embarrassed to write it. But I forced myself to write it anyway. The story changed from being about coping with trauma alone and instead became a story of choosing to be vulnerable and express queer desire despite fear and danger. I knew no one was going to beat me up for making my film, but I also knew that there were people out there who would dislike me for making it and find me and my work repulsive. Discomfort, disgust, hatred, and fear for my sexuality are part of my world, no matter where I am, and they are far more varied and harmful than the frat boy in my class saying something bad is "gay." I like to deny that, but after auditions the level of cognitive dissonance required to live in that denial was too great. I had to admit to myself that I was so anxious about the film because of the content I had put into it. On the flip side, this also meant that I could, and maybe needed to, admit to myself that writing a queer story was still important, and that stories like my film are not so commonplace that to make another one would be a pointless gesture. Someone somewhere might see my film and feel witnessed and understood. That, maybe, would make all the work and anxiety worth it.

During winter break, I began casting. I found most of the actors I needed except for one: the lead. It was almost as hard to find a black actor willing to play a gay man as it had been to find a trans actress to play the lead in my Film and Media Production 2 film. It felt like every film I'd tried to make exerted pressure on me to make less and less interesting films. It would have been

so much easier to make a boring, cruddy movie about about young, white, cis, straight, abled people having relationship drama in apartments and public parks. Those locations and the actors for those roles were readily available. But there are so many other stories besides that boring, cruddy movie. I wasn't about to give up.

A couple of days before the shoot, Khary pushed me to make sure I made time to be connected with the actors and the script, and to spend less time on the minutiae because they weren't as important to the story. This was true. Something pretty but empty won't have the emotional impact of something a little shoddy but really well-acted. But I knew I had no idea how to direct actors. I was scared I didn't know how to build trust and worried about leading the largest crew I'd ever been responsible for. One thing reassured me. While I was 'wintering' at WBUR, my host Ben had told me that he thought I was very easy to talk to. This was in the context of gaining access as a reporter/documentarian. But both documentary and narrative work require gaining trust and access, and knowing how to get people to do things for you, open up to you, and be there for you. I didn't think I was very easy to talk to, but if he did, I would take it.

During the stressful days right before production began, I was also reassured to have my UPM, Malaika, on board. She was more positive about the project than anyone else I'd talked to, she was super organized and competent, and it was a relief to delegate some work to her after working almost entirely alone for months. It also reassured me to see the actors interacting at our one rehearsal. I was late, and when I arrived all of them had already introduced each other and were chatting happily. Jim, playing Stark, intimidated me less than he had at the audition. Sara, playing Bryant, was incredibly charming, a great actor, and full of stories. Josh, who was playing Reed, was still a mystery to me at the end of the night. He was the quietest out of all of them. I

could only hope he'd open up more. I could tell that Bobby, who'd be playing Big, was trying to get Josh to be more responsive and open. At the end, I wasn't sure I'd gained everyone's trust, but I was sure they all liked each other, which was a start.

The next day, January 20th, we started shooting. Plenty of things went wrong, but somehow, the shoot went well. Not according to plan, necessarily, but well. We shot 5 pages in the basement of Barnum and finished on schedule. Even though the film was about a serious and kind of depressing topic, we had a lot of fun between takes. Up until shooting, almost everything to do with my thesis had made me feel sick. The prospect of making actors act out something I wrote and making people film the actors acting it out, etc, was horrifying to me. But once we got through the first take, it stopped being awkward. By the end of the day, it was exciting. And the footage looked good. It wasn't until our set photographer Evan dropped off at my apartment at the end of the day that my body returned to reality. I was so exhausted and spent that all I wanted to do was eat and sleep. I noticed that I had frequently apologized for asking for things, for taking up space, and even for needing to be physically near people for any reason, like for watching playback on the monitor. And I was always apologizing to Harry and Noah, our DP and 1AC, for asking them to execute camera movements I thought might be physically difficult. I kept forgetting that they, along with almost everyone else on set, were not disabled and wouldn't get hurt if they, say, squatted a bunch of times with a heavy camera rig.

The next weekend, we shot the remainder of the script. Saturday, the cell scenes in Barnum, also went well, but it was harder for me psychologically than the last day had been, since we were shooting the film's final scene. That scene had been the hardest to write, and was also the hardest to watch playing out in front of me. I was scared to be responsible for a piece of media that

talked about desire and publicly demonstrated me and my interests to be queer. The first few takes of the first shot were so intense that I began dreading having to run through the scene over and over. Fortunately, each take was a little easier than the last, and by the end I was almost fine. The last day was easy, with just Josh and a slightly smaller crew at Amaze Escape in Arlington. I was shocked that we were wrapped already. I'm used to Tufts productions dragging on and on and on, weekend after weekend. This was different. All my planning had paid off.

I let everything rest a while, then began logging and editing. I learned some new hotkeys, which sped everything up. I found that the less dialogue a scene had, the more comfortable I felt editing it. I did the no-dialogue scenes first, not just because they were less complicated to edit but also because they didn't make me nearly as uncomfortable as the other scenes. I could barely make myself look at footage for the end scene at all. I made it through several rough cuts of the film without really watching it. For a while, I lost track of where I was going. I was working on several other projects and dealing with some drama in my personal life and was too distracted to focus on anything. As a result, editing took far longer than I would have liked. But since we shot so early, I still had plenty of time. There were continuity problems, and acting problems (some of which were really directing problems), and establishing shots that were missing that I had to go out and shoot alone. But eventually, after months, I honed the footage down to a ten-minute cut. My sound design, Willow's music, and Khary and Jenn's feedback saved the film.

I don't consider the film a complete success. There are still technical issues I can't do much about, and I'm still too close to the material to know whether the narrative will be coherent to an audience. I can't tell, and am afraid to ask, whether I've made something that is both a well-made, engaging story and a piece of media that refuses to engage in bias and stereotype. But

whatever it is that I've made, it's done. I've worked a lot, and learned even more. I know it's still not my instinct to ask for help when I need it. I know I am going into a world where I will not usually get to vet the people I work with for safety and where I will have to hide aspects of my identity to get by some or even all of the time. I haven't gotten over my hang-ups about writing and talking about queerness. But I also know now that if I want to, I can do something like this again, because now I've done it once before.

## Bibliography

**1. Comfort, Megan. *Doing Time Together: Love and Family in the Shadow of the Prison*. University of Chicago Press, 2008.**

This book describes sociologist Megan Comfort's findings and experiences researching the wives and girlfriends of men imprisoned in San Quentin State Prison. This book was the first I read and introduced me to Donald Clemmer's concept of 'prisonization,' in which a person entering a prison environment adjusts to their new life circumstances and assimilates into the prison's culture. The primary topic of this book was not hugely relevant to me because none of the imprisoned characters in my story have a wife or girlfriend, but Comfort's descriptions of San Quentin, the liminal "Tube" through which prison visitors must enter, and the grueling process of visiting a loved one in prison helped me to form a better mental image of the environment about which I was writing and to think about the experience my characters' families might have when visiting them. Her notes on the role of letter-writing in maintaining relationships between someone "inside" and someone "outside" were useful, particularly her

description of “presence creation” and observations of how the lack of privacy in letters coming and going from prisons impacts the readers and writers of those letters.

**2. Shanahan, Jarrod, Maud Pryor, and Nate McDonough. *Visiting Day*. Grixly, 2017.**

In their zine (small independently produced magazine) “Visiting Day,” Shanahan, his partner Pryor, and their friend McDonough use a combination of ink drawings, hand-written text, and printed text to describe three perspectives on McDonough and Pryor’s visit to Shanahan during his stay at the Rikers Island jail complex. *Visiting Day* answered the question I had after reading *Doing Time Together*: what does it feel like to visit someone or be visited in jail or prison? Shanahan’s writing gives a deep sense of the frustration, exhaustion, and depersonalization he felt at Rikers and the pretense of being okay that he put on for Pryor and McDonough, while the details he describes (the black Velcro “Pataki” shoes and hugely oversized jumpsuit the jail provided him with, the “industrial group bathroom,” and inmates’ habit of wearing their ID badges backwards to regain a sliver of privacy and control, to name a few) gave an intimate impression of place.

I reached out to Shanahan for a PDF of *Visiting Day* after discovering that the web domain registration for *Hard Crackers*, the site hosting the zine, had expired. He mailed me a print copy of *Visiting Day* along with two related texts he had contributed to. I plan to send him a copy of my film in exchange when it’s finished.

**3. Hensley, Christopher. *Prison Sex: Practice and Policy*. Lynne Rienner, 2002.**

This one is a collection of academic writings, including quantitative research, about sex in prison. “Sex” in Hensley’s definition includes consensual sex, sexual assault, and masturbation, so all were included in the book. The essays illustrated the ways in which prison culture and prisonization, limited or nonexistent access to women and heterosexual sex, racial dynamics and other power dynamics like “wolf” vs. “punk,” lack of privacy, and underground economies affect individuals’ experiences of sex and sexuality while imprisoned.

This was a hard book to read. The essays spoke to undercurrents of fear, rape culture, homophobia, and toxic masculinity: slang terms inmates use to delineate sexual hierarchies, “problem areas” where C.O.s know sexual assault most frequently occurs, the practice of raping inmates who can’t pay their debts. Collectively, they painted a picture of a prisoner’s life as one of emotional repression, internal and external conflict, and internalization of their power role in relation to the community of inmates by which they are surrounded.

**4. Hassine, Victor, et al. *Life without Parole: Living and Dying in Prison Today*. Oxford University Press, 2011.**

This book is what could loosely be described as a memoir. In the first part, Hassine describes his experience as a post-secondary-educated Egyptian-American sentenced to life in prison for murder, conspiracy, and solicitation, from arrest through trial leading into a long existence in a series of prisons. The second part contains interviews with other prisoners and recounts stories from their lives. Op-eds by Hassine on topics from AIDS to prison architecture make up the last part.

This book was interesting to me in that it portrayed a very outsider view of “the inside;” that is, because Hassine attended college and law school, was upper class before his conviction, and is traditionally well-spoken, he describes prison almost anthropologically. A topic he returned to several times was idleness vs. activity and the need to find a way to cope with long, potentially ceaseless stints behind bars in order to avoid “going crazy.” His way of coping, I think, was to intellectualize and analyze the world around him, keeping himself at an observational distance in order to avoid engaging directly with the trauma and fear of life without parole. Although my main character is not nearly as well-educated as Hassine, he too is coping with his prison experience through writing, so I found Hassine’s book useful in that respect. Hassine’s detailed descriptions of his surroundings, including an hour-by-hour description of a typical day, were also instrumental in fleshing out my script and inspiring my production and sound design.

**5. Patterson, Elijah. *The Spirit Inside Vol. 2: Black and Pink Members on Religion and Sexuality Behind Bars*. Black and Pink, publication planned for 2018.**

This zine has yet to be published as of this writing; the reason I read it is because I volunteered to lay it out in InDesign for Black and Pink, an LGBTQ+ prison abolition organization whose main project is a pen-pal project connecting LGBTQ+ prisoners to sympathetic letter-writers outside of prison. This is Black and Pink’s second zine about religion and sexuality, created by collecting written and mailed submissions from prisoners across the United States.

A huge number of religions were represented in this issue of the zine, and each piece showed a unique perspective informed by the submitter's religious views and gender/sexuality. I was exposed to some points of view I'd never gotten to talk to someone about before, like what it's like to be a Wiccan and a gay man. I didn't learn much from this zine that helped with my project, but it was still a good read and I'm glad that I was able to give back in some way as I went about my research.

**6. Schaefer, David R., et al. "Friends in Locked Places: An Investigation of Prison Inmate Network Structure." *Social Networks*, vol. 51, 2017, pp. 88–103., doi:10.1016/j.socnet.2016.12.006.**

This article summarizes the researchers' findings from a survey called Prison Inmate Network Study performed in a "good behavior" group in a Philadelphia medium security men's prison. Some things they found were that 98% of inmates in the group "get along with" at least one other inmate and have an average of 3.9 alters (associates). Friendships crossed racial lines, but social subgroups/cliques tended to be racially segregated. The researchers noted that old heads, the individuals who had been incarcerated the longest, tended to have more people who said they got along with them and tended to bridge divides between racially segregated subgroups.

Because this article was about a good behavior group separated from the prison's general population, it was not as relevant to me as some of the other texts I read, but it had some useful insights about ways that friendships, acquaintances, and affiliations form despite the culture of repression and distrust that prison fosters.

**7. Sabo, Don, et al. *Prison Masculinities*. Temple University Press, 2001.**

This book is a collection of writings. about how masculinity is formed, exists, and is played out in prisons. It includes poems, personal accounts of working or living in prison, academic articles, and everything in between, written by everyone from people currently in prison to academics who had never been inside of one. Topics of discussion included emotions (primarily how Western masculinity encourages the suppression and hiding of emotions except when expressed through rage and violence), social-sexual hierarchies among prisoners and how the prison-industrial complex engages with and uses masculinity as a tool.

This book was very valuable to me both in terms of thinking about how to write and critique masculinity in my film and in terms of thinking about my own experience of gender, which is something I think about a lot anyway. An article that stayed with me was “Skin Blind” by Dan Pens, written inside, about the touch-starvation that a person experiences in prison. He said he and his cellmate had talked about the subject and agreed that they both missed touching other people. Neither of them mentioned it again, but Pens thought about the conversation and wished that they could help each other somehow, even if just by giving each other a hug every once in a while. “But the prison wraps itself around me and screams ‘NO WAY, DUDE!’ What if somebody saw us? What would they think? What if he thought I was crazy to suggest such a thing? Would he feel threatened? Homophobic? And so I do nothing. We go on living together in this tiny cage. And never do we touch. Not even accidentally. And that, my friend...*that* is prison” (152). Pens’ story struck home for me how prison exacerbates the damage masculinity

does to every man, to everyone, and how imprisonment is a torture even if (or because) no one lays a hand on you.

**8. Foucault, Michel. “Panopticism.” *Discipline and Punish: the Birth of the Prison*, Vintage, 1977, pp. 195–228.**

I originally heard about Foucault’s writings on the Panopticon in *Kafka and Film* in spring 2016. The Panopticon kept coming up in my other classes and in other readings I did for this bibliography. Finally, I was giving a friend a haircut and she mentioned it, at which point I decided I had heard about the Panopticon too many times not to read the original text. Foucault describes the Panopticon, a building that increases the imbalance in power relations between the observer and the observed by isolating the observed, making them unable to tell when they are being watched, and keeping them aware that they could be watched at any moment. The Panopticon models a surveillance-based society in which individuals discipline themselves because they feel a gaze upon them at all times.

I found “Panopticism” interesting in conversation with many of my thesis readings. Hassine talks about it in “Life Without Parole,” in the context of describing different prisons in which he has been housed; some were panoptic in nature, while others were like the dark dungeons Foucault described as the Panopticon’s precursor. Hassine describes the dungeon-like prisons as more dangerous, because there were many areas not in line-of-sight of guards and in which one was much more likely to be injured or raped. “Prison Sex” described similar “problem areas.” Clearly, prisons do not have the ultimate visual-disciplinary power that Foucault imagined. However, the culture of prison as described in almost all the sources I cite here,

particularly the culture of toughness I read about in “Prison Masculinities,” carries something of the Panopticon in it. Many of the authors writing from inside described fears related to the gaze, of C.O.s, other authority figures, and of fellow inmates. Internalizing this gaze, they are left with no other choice but to hide their feelings, avoid showing weakness at all costs, and live behind a mask of masculinity that harms them as much as it protects them.

**9. Mogul, Joey L., et al. “Caging Deviance.” *Queer (in)Justice: the Criminalization of LGBT People in the United States*, Beacon Press, 2011, pp. 93–117.**

“Queer (in)Justice” is a book about legal rights of LGBT+ people in the U.S., and its fifth chapter, “Caging Deviance,” is specifically about the legal rights of LGBT+ people in U.S. prisons. The authors describe prisons as queer spaces, with a dual meaning of “queer space” as in “site of same-gender desire and/or gender-nonconformity” and “place coded as perverse and full of criminal sexual deviance.” They recount stories of C.O.s and government authorities ignoring LGBT+ prisoners’ rights -- placing trans women in men’s prisons and trans men in women’s prisons, providing inadequate or nonexistent treatment for prisoners with HIV/AIDS, and ignoring LGBT+ prisoners’ increased vulnerability to sexual assault.

This essay looked at gender and sexuality in prison from a perspective that many of my other readings did not, but tried to cover so much ground that it had no space to go into any of the topics it addressed in any significant depth, especially with regard to the gender dynamic in men’s prisons. It also suffered the same problem that my other readings about gender and sexuality did, which was inconsistent terminology. Every author has their own personal

definition of “queer” and their own preferred term for same-gender sex(uality) in prison, and while I was hoping this reading would be a relief from that, it was not.

**10. Rolston, Simon. “White Boy: Prison Life Writing and White Male Victimhood in T. J. Parsell's *Fish* and Jack Henry Abbott's *In the Belly of the Beast*.” *American Studies*, vol. 56, no. 1, 2017, pp. 187–206., doi:10.1353/ams.2017.0008.**

In this article, American studies professor Simon Rolston looks at the way two white men’s prison memoirs, “Fish” and “In the Belly of the Beast,” use white victimhood to distance the authors from white privilege and complicity in white supremacy. Specifically, T.J. Parsell interprets his experience of sexual assault in prison through the lens of the “Southern rape complex,” a Reformation-era stereotype of black men as posing a sexual threat to white women, while Jack Henry Abbott continually positions himself as outside of whiteness / a noncomplicit witness to racism because he’s ‘not like *those* white people.’

I think it’s important that I, a white person, need to be conscious of and continually looking for my own blind spots with regards to race as I write and produce a film about prison, a site of and conduit for structural racism and in particular structural antiblackness; this article was helpful in pointing out modes of thinking to look for and avoid in my own writing.

**11. Barak, Adi, and Amy Stebbins. “Imaginary Dialogues: Witnessing in Prison-Based Creative Arts Therapies.” *The Arts in Psychotherapy*, vol. 56, 2017, pp. 53–60., doi:10.1016/j.aip.2017.07.003.**

The authors of this article interviewed 21 prisoners in a work-release program to find out how creative art therapy (CAT) and art-making in general affect prisoners. Their specific concern was “*witnessing*, that is, the empathic presence of an Other, who attends to the prisoner’s artistic testimony to affirm it as valid.” They defined three kinds of witnesses: 1) the witnessing crowd, either real or imaginary, who nonjudgmentally observe the prisoner’s art to learn about his life and understand him, 2) the witnessing self, the prisoner himself, who uses his art to express himself, to learn something about himself, and/or to comfort himself, and 3) the witnessing artist, again either real or imaginary, a person who sees the prisoner’s art and engages with him through their common interest in art rather than as an un-imprisoned person to an imprisoned one. The authors concluded that witnessing is integral to the power and healing ability of art-making in prison, and that CAT programs often put too much focus on the witnessing self, neglecting the witnessing crowd and artist and leaving the prisoner-artist in isolation. The art must create a “dialogue” between the prisoner-artist and an Other, rather than remaining a “monologue” where his art goes unwitnessed by anyone but him and perhaps his art therapist.

“Imaginary Dialogues” used qualitative research techniques to confirm what I already knew, namely that although making art alone can be helpful, having others witness it (and therefore you) gives your art an external meaning nothing else can.

**12. Abel, David. “An inside Look at Massachusetts Prison Life.” *The Boston Globe*, 14 Nov. 2011.**

David Abel, a Boston Globe reporter, wrote this feature article about Massachusetts prisons. He went on a three-day tour of various prisons, tried on a prison uniform and leg irons, compared maximum- to minimum-security, and gathered various impressions of the places he saw.

I found this article while looking for information about what prison uniforms look like in Massachusetts. Abel's descriptions of Massachusetts prisons was congruent with my other sources' descriptions of other prisons across the United States. To me, Abel's "objective," free-from-personal-impressions writing style clashed with the topic about which he was writing. He absolutely has to have had a visceral reaction to what he was learning and experiencing on his tour, but journalistic convention means the most we hear about that is that he could "muster only a few nibbles" of the food he tried in MCI-Cedar Junction.

**13. Jacobson, Kristi, director. *Solitary: Inside Red Onion State Prison*. HBO, 2017.**

This documentary is about Red Onion State Prison, a super-maximum-security prison in Virginia where the state sends prisoners it deems extremely dangerous. Kristi Jacobson, the director, managed to get access to a place that's typically very hard to film a documentary in because the prison was in the early stages of testing a step-down program to help some of its inmates return to lower-security prisons.

I thought this was an excellent documentary. It's beautifully shot, with the production quality I expect from HBO, but, more importantly, it clearly illustrates the experience of both the prisoners and staff at Red Onion and shows the prisoners as whole people. Most of the people Jacobson interviewed were surprisingly candid, which I think is both a testament to her ability to

build trust during interviews and to the extreme isolation the inmates of Red Onion are subject to. “Solitary” also gave me a lot of ideas for production design on my film -- the documentary has many of these long, still, empty or near-empty shots of the main cell area and grounds of the prison. Everything is painted white and at first it seems very quiet, almost peaceful, but as Jacobson gets deeper into the narrative, you realize just how much suffering is going on beneath the surface.

**14. Ficarra, Glenn and John Requa, directors. *I Love You Phillip Morris*. LD Entertainment, 2011.**

This narrative film is a gay rom-com that takes place partially in a prison. Jim Carrey plays Stephen Russell, a man who decides to come out after nearly dying in a car crash, begins living a lavish lifestyle with his new boyfriend, and winds up in prison after being caught committing fraud because “being gay is really expensive.” In prison, Russell meets Phillip Morris (Ewan McGregor), who is doing a stint there for returning a rental car late, and the two fall in love. They go in and out of prison several times as their sentences end and Stephen gets caught conning people again.

“I Love You Phillip Morris” has a radically different tone from my film, since it’s extremely silly and does not portray prison at all accurately, but because it’s about a gay couple in prison I figured I ought to watch it. It reassured me that I could dress the sets available to me to look like a prison or even build them if I needed to; for example, the infamous dance scene takes place on a set that’s just two walls and a door made of metal bars, a set that the production team absolutely built just for the film.

**15. Wener, Richard E. *The Environmental Psychology of Prisons and Jails: Creating Humane Spaces in Secure Settings*. Cambridge University Press, 2014.**

This book summarizes several decades' worth of environmental psychology research on prison and jail environments, focused on the ways that environments can increase or decrease violent behavior. The book covers every imaginable topic relating to prison and jail environments, from the history of imprisonment, to windows and noise levels, to the effects of crowding and isolation, and so on, with the ultimate goal of providing a guide to how to build the most humane, least violent prison. Wener is a proponent of direct supervision, a philosophy that includes smaller cell blocks, "soft architecture" (favoring less institutional materials like carpet, fabric, and ceramic, as well as using less reinforced fittings, which sets the expectation that the people in the space will not behave violently), and having corrections officers working directly in the same space as prisoners instead of separated by a booth. The book has a full chapter describing the flow of probabilistic factors that lead to violence, which demonstrated what should be obvious: that when people experience less stress, discomfort, and suffering, they are less likely to lash out at others.

I started this book full of suspicion, not expecting much empathy or acknowledgment of systemic issues, but I was pleasantly surprised. This book is definitely on the quantitative end of the academic spectrum, but Wener used his many citations to build a solid, evidence-based argument for direct supervision with the goal of reducing suffering in prison as much as possible. He acknowledges at the end of the book that building better prisons will not solve every problem

with them and that much larger social change needs to happen to really improve things, but that until that happens, making prisons less horrible is still worthwhile.

**16. Davis, Angela Y. *Are Prisons Obsolete?* Seven Stories Press, 2010.**

In this concise book, Angela Y. Davis explains reform vs. abolition, how American chattel slavery and economics led to the mass incarceration of black Americans, the role of gender in prison with a focus on women and women's rights, the prison-industrial complex, and finally what effective, just alternatives to prison could be. In short, she explains where the prison-industrial complex came from and what to do to move past it. The best solution, she says, is "demilitarization of schools, revitalization of education at all levels, a health system that provides free physical and mental health care to all, and a justice system based on reparation and reconciliation rather than retribution and vengeance."

This book was interesting to read right after "The Environmental Psychology of Prisons and Jails" because Davis discusses everything Wener was reticent to address. As always, her insight into systemic injustice is impeccable. Reading this book didn't necessarily teach me anything useful for writing my script or making my film, but it did help solidify my personal politics with the evidence and arguments she provided.

**17. Olumhense, Ese. "'I Have to Hold My Family Together': The Hidden Costs of Prison Visits." *Truthout*, 10 June 2017.**

This article from Truthout's series "Severed Ties: The Human Toll of Prisons" discusses what it's like to visit incarcerated loved ones. The article is primarily about how visitors to

prison (usually the wives and families of men in prison) get transportation to and from corrections facilities. Olumhense focuses on the lengths to which prisoners' wives will go to keep their families together while their husbands are imprisoned, from taking long rides on dangerous, opportunistic bus lines to enduring humiliating security procedures when they reach their destinations.

This article was a good complement to "Doing Time Together" because it used a different approach (journalistic rather than research-based) and covered a part of the visitation process, travel, that Comfort didn't have room to spend much time on.

**18. Turney, Kristin. "Incarceration and Social Inequality." *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, vol. 651, no. 1, 2013, pp. 97–101., doi:10.1177/0002716213501273.**

This article describes problems related to prison in sociological research, and suggests areas of that research to pursue further. One issue Kristin Turney points out is that population studies often sample households, which means that they *don't* sample people in prison. This means that measurements of groups who are overrepresented in prison populations skip over the members of those groups who are imprisoned, which skews research results significantly. Areas she suggests researchers spend more time on are social selection, null findings, and gathering more and better data.

This article was not useful to me because its intended audience is sociologists doing population research, a group I am not a part of. If I was planning a sociological research project, I would have found it more instructional.

**19. Lisitsina, Dasha. “Prison Guards Can Never Be Weak’: the Hidden PTSD Crisis in America's Jails.” *The Guardian*, 20 May 2015.**

This newspaper article is about the “hidden PTSD crisis in America’s jails” -- by which the author Dasha Lisitsina means a crisis of corrections officers, not of inmates. According to the article, 34% of corrections officers have PTSD, and their suicide rate is two times the public rate. The officers she interviewed describe trauma both from being attacked by inmates and from seeing inmates harm each other, experiencing hypervigilance and emotional numbness, and a culture of silence fueled by ideas about toughness and a perception of mental illness as infirm.

This article was pretty introductory, but seemed to confirm my expectations, which was that C.O. attitudes about PTSD and toughness would be similar to prisoner attitudes.

**20. Doane, Mary Anne. “Film and the Masquerade: Theorising the Female Spectator.” *Screen*, vol. 23, no. 3-4, Jan. 1982, pp. 74–88., doi:10.1093/screen/23.3-4.74.**

I read this essay for Prof. Lee Edelman’s course Psychoanalysis and Cinema for a discussion about *Silence of the Lambs* toward the end of the semester, but the timing (as I finished one of my later script drafts and began to think more seriously about production and cinematography) and content of the essay made it relevant to my thesis film as well. In the essay, Doane expands on previous theoretical work about the role of the spectator in cinema, particularly Metz and Mulvey, to conceptualize the position of the female spectator. According to Doane, female spectators must cycle between uncomfortable “transvestic” identification with male characters or with the male gaze (therefore narcissistically fetishizing her own body) or

masochistically over-identification with female characters. While I think Doane's theory of the female spectator works to describe a cisgender heterosexual woman watching a classical Hollywood movie with a male lead and female love interest, it falls apart outside of that.

I'm interested in media that provides space for gazes outside Mulvey's male gaze and Doane's female gaze, and hope that my film is part of that.

**21. Weston, Judith. *Directing Actors: Creating Memorable Performances for Film and Television*. M. Wiese Productions, 2014.**

Ben Hosking, who I consider an honorary Tufts FMS graduate even though he technically majored in history, lent me this book over winter break. Weston delivers a huge amount of information about directing in a book that's somehow readable over a three-hour period, with advice for every step of the directing process. My three biggest take-aways were that directors should aim to reduce pressure on actors to let them act more freely, that we should encourage actors to listen and really pay attention to their fellow actors as they work, and that repeated and analytic close-reading of the script is vital. This book intimidated me and reminded me how little I knew about directing, but it also answered a lot of the questions I had and raised new questions I didn't realize I needed to be asking.

**22. Riley, Christopher. *The Hollywood Standard: the Complete and Authoritative Guide to Script Format and Style*. 2nd ed., 2009.**

This book has thorough instructions for how to correctly format a script. I read it and discovered exactly how badly I had been mangling mine. Embarrassing.

**23. Åkerlund, Jonas, director. *Telephone*. Serial Pictures, 15 Mar. 2010.**

While procrastinating on extremely important pre-production work, I remembered that the first part of Lady Gaga's music video "Telephone" takes place in a county jail. I watched it to see if there were any production design elements or shots worth copying. There weren't.

The video covers a variety of themes so great I could probably write an entire thesis about them. It's a surprisingly complex video given that the lyrics of the song "Telephone" portray a woman at a club who keeps getting disruptive phone calls from a boyfriend or male admirer. The beginning of the video portrays a (homo)sexualized, racialized version of a women's jail/prison, focused less on realism and more on revealing clothing, titillating same-gender eroticism, and product placement. It's possible that Gaga was trying to send a political message about imprisonment, but it's lost within the style choices necessary to release a music video coherent to an audience expecting a pop music video and to satisfy Gaga's PR team. It was fun to watch, I didn't get too much inspiration for my film from it.