

OPENING STATEMENT

OF THOSE WHO ARE SUPPOSED TO REMAIN SILENT

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Who's ready for the fall? Not the season, the fall of capitalism! Just kidding. If only . . .

In a recent interview with *Justice Trends* magazine, MDOC Director Heidi Washington stated that new technologies might offer solutions to serious problems like staff shortages in Michigan's prison system: "When it comes to technology, there are countless solutions that help us perform our work more efficiently and effectively. This has become more important than ever . . . because we are all struggling with staffing shortages, no matter where you are. We are working to educate ourselves and explore new ways of doing things, whether it's AI [Artificial Intelligence] or other forms of technology that can create efficiencies and free up staff time."

What should we make of this comment? As readers know, we've been following the staffing situation for a while, and we know that MDOC has claimed to be addressing staff shortages primarily through new recruitment efforts. But these efforts are failing to bring in enough new recruits to replace the staff who keep leaving and those who already left. Plus many of the new recruits who make it through the training academy don't seem to stick around very long once they see what the job is like. Faced with these challenges, Heidi seems to be putting her faith in the promise of new technology, specifically "artificial intelligence" or AI. If MDOC can't hire more workers at the price they're willing to pay, maybe they can get a machine to do the work, or some of it at least, for free.

What might this look like in practice? Here's an example from a different state. A recent article from Oklahoma Watch, published on August 26, describes the AI-driven, carceral future envisioned by Steven Harpe, a former tech executive who was appointed in 2022 to lead the Oklahoma Department of Corrections:

The revolution Harpe envisions includes drones sweeping the perimeter of prison yards for contraband, artificial intelligence programs to monitor phone calls and other technology he said will eliminate mundane administrative work from staff responsibilities. . . . "What if I was able to take that labor [for prisoner counts] and instead of using people to do it, I was using facial recognition AI, not just one time,

but use it all the time," Harpe said during a July 11 Congressional briefing on AI in public safety. "I always know where they are. You get logistics of who's talking to who. Technology now exists where you can look at a body in real-time and tell if you're carrying something, if you have something stowed somewhere on you. It also lets us do really cool things like suicide prevention."

It's important to remember that this is largely a dream. Currently, AI is used by companies like Securus to monitor prison phone calls, but the automated drones and counts are not anywhere close to happening. Still, the dream must be persuasive for politicians who don't know anything about these technologies and are desperate to cut costs. In any case, Harpe's dream for Oklahoma prisons has a lot in common with Heidi Washington's vision for MDOC. In both cases, prison administrators' excitement about AI seems to be connected to their desire for total control and at the same time for achieving this control at a lower cost, by automating security work and reducing the need for staff. And these same features, control and cost-cutting, are a big part of what's driving the excitement about AI across the US and global economy.

We open this issue of *The Opening Statement*, which looks at "artificial intelligence," with Heidi Washington's statement in order to highlight the fact that AI is increasingly a problem on both sides of the prison walls. This issue includes two interviews about AI, addressing what it is, the problems it causes, and the ongoing resistance to it, from two different angles: one with technologist and AI critic Dwayne Monroe, who discusses what most people get wrong about AI, and the other with a group of activists who are part of a campaign to stop the construction of a new data center in southeast Michigan that will be used for AI-related research and development. This issue also includes the usual news roundup, a poem, and the call for the 7th round of the TOS book club.

As Dwayne explains in our interview, the term "artificial intelligence" was coined in the 1950s by a computer scientist named John McCarthy to refer to the process of reproducing human thought and cognition in a machine. Since then, the term "AI" has been applied to

fields of academic research, emerging sectors of the tech industry, and new military and surveillance tools. These days, when people talk about AI, they're often referring to "large language models" (LLMs), including programs like OpenAI's ChatGPT and Sora tools, Google's Gemini, Anthropic's Claude, and many others. In this issue, we're going to use the terms "artificial intelligence" and "AI" because they're so common, even though we know that these programs aren't actually "intelligent" and don't really know anything.

AI systems work by collecting truly massive datasets made up of existing books, newspaper and magazine articles, websites and message boards, videos, images, art, and so on. By processing such a vast amount of data, they are able to generate outputs or products on the basis of "prompts" or instructions. For example, AI tools called "chatbots" like ChatGPT allow you to text or type messages or instructions to the program, and it will spit out a response. The response may sound coherent, but it is not based on any actual knowledge about the question you've asked or the instructions you've given. Rather, the tool uses the massive quantity of text it has absorbed in order to figure out which words are most likely to appear, and in which order, given the instructions it has received. The same is true for image or video generating tools like Sora. Having scanned billions of images and videos, the program will try to figure out which set of pixels, and in which order, are most likely to appear in response to a certain prompt. Another way AI is used is to scan huge amounts of data in search of patterns, and make predictions on the basis of what it finds. The outputs of these AI tools have little to no basis in reality, since the machine knows nothing, and isn't even capable of knowing things. But because they seem plausible, it is easy to be tricked into believing them.

You may have heard that AI tools like ChatGPT "hallucinate," or present things that are completely made up as if they were true. AI tools attached to search engines like Google often provide inaccurate information, from medical misinformation to fake summaries of movie plots. You may have also heard that AI tools produce "slop," or videos and images of things that never happened, like fake surveillance camera footage of someone shoplifting or images of the Hollywood sign in Los Angeles burning down during the LA fires earlier this year. Other AI tools generate written text: Amazon and public libraries are filling up with AI-generated trash books, lawyers are fined for using ChatGPT to generate legal documents citing cases that don't exist, and politicians are forced to admit that they used ChatGPT to write their speeches.

Tools like chatbots can have disastrous effects on people's lives. In April 2025, for example, a teenager named Adam Raine died by suicide after months of chatting with OpenAI's ChatGPT tool. ChatGPT encouraged Adam to follow through on his wishes to leave this life, and also *discouraged* him from seeking help in friends, family, or community. Essentially, ChatGPT isolated Adam much like an abusive partner isolates their victim from community. ChatGPT is designed

to say "yes" and validate what its users say, in order to keep them using the platform and generate profits for the company. Similarly, Google's Gemini AI played a role in the disappearance of a man named Jon Ganz in April 2025. According to a recent investigation in *Rolling Stone*, Jon was a formerly incarcerated electrical worker who began to use Gemini as a substitute for therapy. He developed an emotional attachment to the "bot," which increasingly alienated him from his partner, extended family, and coworkers. One day, he disappeared without a trace. These are just two extreme examples of people "stolen" by AI. More and more people are joining support groups for AI addiction, and many report that family members and loved ones have become isolated due to their use of AI.

Yet AI also affects more than our interpersonal relationships and our knowledge of the world. Here are two recent examples of how these technologies have been used in support of state violence. First, in 2020, Detroit police arrested a man named Robert Williams after an AI-driven facial recognition program supposedly matched his face to security camera footage from the scene of a burglary. Williams was at work when the burglary took place, but police still held him in jail for 30 hours and collected his DNA before releasing him. He was charged with retail fraud and had to hire a lawyer to defend himself. According to a 2020 article in the *New York Times*, "Mr. Williams was the first person known to be wrongfully arrested based on faulty facial recognition. But he wasn't the last. The Detroit police arrested at least two other people as a result of facial recognition searches gone awry, including a woman who was charged with carjacking when she was eight months pregnant."

Second, an article published by *+972 Magazine* in 2024 revealed that the Israeli military was using AI to advance the genocide in Gaza. Based on data generated by Israel's mass surveillance of Gaza's over 2 million residents, they developed a program called Lavender that identified and approved Palestinian targets for assassination with essentially zero oversight. It generated extensive "kill lists" so quickly that the military was barely able to keep up with the bombings. The military also developed another AI program called "Where's Daddy?" to systematically track targeted individuals back to their private homes so they could bomb them there, "usually at night while their whole families were present." The result was that tens of thousands of Palestinians, including entire families, were completely wiped out. It's important to clarify that AI is not responsible for Israel's ongoing genocide in Palestine—*people* decided to develop and use these tools, and the Israeli military would have murdered Palestinians even if they hadn't had AI technology, just as they have done since 1948 when Israel was established. But AI tools seem to have accelerated the process.

And these examples too are just the tip of the iceberg. AI poses serious existential and material threats to all of us. From the burning of fossil fuels needed to power the data centers that make AI run, accelerating ongoing climate catastrophe, to the cancer-causing coolants

and “forever” chemicals these facilities dump in our drinking water and expel into the air, to the rapid inflation of electricity prices as AI absorbs more and more of the country’s electrical output, AI’s material impacts on our world and environment have accelerated the devastation of industrial capitalism. Moreover, AI has led to mass layoffs, wage cuts, and deskilling that bosses can’t wait to impose, while generating artificial profits and a financial “bubble” for the tech industry and the ruling class, further intensifying economic inequality and the power of the rich. Still other AI tools have been developed as part of experimental weapons systems designed to kill more and more people more and more quickly, while expanding surveillance systems across the US to ensnare more people into a trap of criminalization. Currently, AI is the leading edge of state and capitalist domination and is making the world worse every day.

The good news is that people are pushing back against AI and the infrastructures on which it depends. It seems like every week we hear about another data center project that has been blocked. In March 2025, Data Center Watch reported that data center projects worth \$64 billion had been either blocked or delayed by local organizing in states like Arizona, California, Indiana, Oregon, Texas, and Virginia. The report didn’t look at Michigan. Fortunately, in addition to our interview with Dwayne Monroe, this issue of *TOS* also includes an interview about a campaign to stop the construction of a massive new data center here in southeast Michigan. The interview shows that the fight against AI is happening in our own backyards. These struggles are an important reminder that AI isn’t inevitable and it’s not “here to stay.” It’s a site of struggle—and it’s a struggle we can win.

News Roundup. Starting with some MDOC news, in September, federal and state lawmakers met with prison officials at Women’s Huron Valley CF in relation to prisoners’ ongoing class-action lawsuit regarding the toxic black mold that is causing serious health problems. MDOC first tried to get the lawsuit dismissed by claiming that the plaintiffs hadn’t exhausted the grievance procedure. When that argument was thrown out, MDOC tried arguing that they had qualified immunity, and that prison officials had no legal duty regarding mold remediation. In July, a federal judge rejected that argument too. Now the case moves on to discovery, which should conclude by January. We will keep following this story and hope to include an update in the next issue of *TOS*. Meanwhile, we know there is black mold at other Michigan prisons as well. If you’ve experienced this and want to share a story with us, we’d be interested to hear it.

The delayed state budget finally passed at the beginning of October, and according to the Michigan Collaborative to End Mass Incarceration (MI-CEMI), it could have been worse for folks held captive by MDOC. There were no major cuts to prison food and healthcare, but also no reduction in healthcare co-pays. All funding for peer reentry navigators was cut, but the community reentry program retained most of its funding. The Michigan Sentencing Commission

(whose job is to research and reform sentences) received funding for staff, and MDOC was required to change its strip search policy.

In other Michigan news, we previously reported on the “Right 2 Hug” lawsuits in Genesee and St. Clair counties, which allege that county officials profited off of denying in-person jail visits and replacing them with expensive video visit and phone vendors. These lawsuits were initially dismissed but are being appealed. In the meantime, Genesee County has reversed course and decided to allow in-person visits again. But St. Clair County has not followed suit, and most Michigan counties still deprive family members of in-person visits and the physical contact that both kids and their imprisoned parents need.

Since the North Lake prison in Baldwin, MI, reopened in June as an ICE detention center, ICE’s kidnappings across the Midwest have filled it to the point that it now holds more detainees than all of the county-based detention centers in the state combined. As the number of detainees increases, loved ones and watchdog groups report worsening conditions at the prison, which is run by private, for-profit GEO Group. There is not enough food, emergency healthcare is denied, detainees are locked up for hours during count, and they are sometimes deprived of communication with their attorneys and loved ones. Detainees at North Lake include many residents of Michigan, as well as people from around the country who have been abducted by ICE. Two rallies over the summer have brought hundreds of protesters to Baldwin to demand the center be shut down. (Our last issue included an interview with a member of the No Detention Centers in Michigan coalition, which organized the protests.)

Meanwhile, the University of Michigan’s Carceral State Project published a history of the North Lake prison, which began as the Michigan Youth Correctional Facility, better known as “punk prison.” The investigative report exposes the youth prison as a political stunt by former Governor John Engler to get reelected in 1994 on a “tough on crime” platform, which included building the state’s first facility designated for children under 17 convicted in the adult criminal system. Engler cynically hyped racialized discourse about “punks” and “thugs” even though he knew that crime by youth was not rising—part of the national “superpredator” panic at the time that was endorsed by people across the political spectrum from Donald Trump to Hillary Clinton. How many children’s lives were harmed or destroyed by these power-hungry politicians? Were you one of those imprisoned in Baldwin? If so, and if you’d be willing to share it, we’d like to hear your story.

Last summer, we included in the news roundup a summary of an investigation by *Detroit Free Press* reporter Violet Ikononova, which found that one-third of the people nonfatally shot by Detroit police between 2015-2021 were never charged with or convicted of “the conduct officers said prompted them to open fire.” The article also reported that Detroit police had shot more than 125 people (fatally and nonfatally) between 2011-2024, an average of around nine people per year. Building on that reporting, Ikononova recently published a new

article on September 12, which found that at least one in five shootings by Detroit police in the last decade began with a nonviolent offense, such as standing in the street and curfew violation, and escalated to a foot chase. At least two of the victims were juveniles, and all of them were Black. “No Detroit officer has been criminally charged in a shooting since 2011,” writes Ikononova.

On August 25, Michigan Medicine (which is the University of Michigan’s health system) abruptly cancelled all gender-affirming care for patients 18 and under, despite this being discriminatory and a violation of their own ethics and policies. Experts warn that it will undoubtedly lead to serious mental health impacts on trans youth, including increased suicide. Despite being leaders in gender-affirming care prior to this, Michigan Medicine seems to have caved to perceived federal pressure.

Automated License Plate Readers (ALPRs) are popping up all over the country, including in Michigan. These AI-powered cameras capture, store, and analyze data from passing cars, without any warrant, probable cause, suspicion, or oversight. And the name is misleading, because they don’t only capture the time and location of a car, but also identifying features like dents and bumper stickers. ALPRs are a serious risk to civil liberties and privacy. “Eyes on Flock” is a community project that seeks to hold Flock (the largest ALPR company) to account. The Deflock.me website maps known ALPRs for public knowledge. Let your loved ones know about this growing violation of privacy!

In national news, since the beginning of the Trump administration, ICE agents have been terrorizing communities around the country, brutalizing, arresting, and disappearing individuals and groups they have racially profiled. Now, National Guard troops have been deployed to Los Angeles, Washington, DC, Memphis, and Chicago. Some additional National Guard deployments are being contested in court, though it is unclear how effective these legal maneuvers will be in the long term. For example, in response to attempts to deploy troops to Portland, OR, a district judge there granted a temporary restraining order. Apart from legal challenges, there have also been popular protests against these federal deployments. They include everything from a massive, “emergency” naked bike ride in Portland (despite rain and temperatures in the mid-50s!) to weekly demonstrations at the Broadview ICE detention center outside of Chicago. According to local organizers in DC:

The whole city is fighting back every day in every corner of the city. Youth organizers are showing up and demanding their schools and spaces be free of police and federal occupation. Mutual aid groups are supporting unhoused neighbors during and after evictions in an incredibly hostile landscape giving them no options for a safe place to sleep. Migrant support groups are running hotlines to report detentions and providing legal support for people as well as making sure impacted families are fed and emotionally supported. Folks are hop-

ping on bikes and patrolling the city to report checkpoints and other fed activity. People trying to enjoy some pizza on a restaurant patio are taking a quick second to yell at feds and national guard troops walking down the street. The occupying forces haven’t had a moment of peace and the city is working tirelessly to protect and support each other.

On September 16, a Black college student named Demartravion “Trey” Reed was found hanging from a tree on the campus of Delta State University in Mississippi. After the family was given false and conflicting information, they and much of the public suspect this was a lynching, while officials maintain it was “suicide.” Colin Kaepernick’s foundation announced that it would pay for a second, independent autopsy. As of October 15, there are conflicting reports about whether this autopsy has been completed. The *Mississippi Free Press* reports that the results of the second autopsy have not yet been released, while according to the *Chicago Crusader* an anonymous source told them that “the independent report showed Reed died of blunt force trauma to the back of his head.” We’ll follow this situation.

In September, the Federal Bureau of Prisons cancelled its union contract with staff and stripped them of union rights as part of a larger movement by the administration to gut federal worker protections. (Prison guard unions, like their police counterparts, don’t really count as unions, because the work they do serves to repress the working class rather than to advance its interests. Still, the cancellation reflects the Trump administration’s intensified war against labor.) This move comes amid multiple ongoing crises at federal prisons related to expansion of their scope to include holding thousands of immigrants at detention centers, staff shortages, widespread sexual misconduct, a \$3-billion repair backlog (in an annual budget of \$8.5 billion), and a backlog of 12,000 complaints against staff still pending investigation or discipline.

A recent study from Prison Policy Initiative found that since 25 years ago, youth imprisonment nationwide has declined dramatically, by over 70%. However, the US still imprisons children at a rate twice the global average. And racial disparities among those imprisoned have actually worsened over the same period, especially for Black and Indigenous youth. Among those youth remaining behind bars, a greater proportion are being held for longer periods, in more restrictive and more long-term facilities similar to adult prisons, and a greater proportion are stuck waiting on hearings and sentencing. While 85% of children behind bars are boys, girls make up a higher proportion at the youngest ages, below age 13. According to the report, racial disparities are likely due to problems like “adulthoodification” of Black and Indigenous youth (when children are perceived as older and more culpable than their peers), increased likelihood of white youth cases being handled informally rather than formally, and harsher charging and sentencing of Black and Brown youth.

Much like North Lake in Baldwin, MI, more and more prisons that have been closed are being reopened as ICE detention centers run by for-profit private companies like GEO Group. According to a recent analysis published by The Marshall Project, these so-called “zombie prisons” have popped up in at least 10 states to meet the administration’s demand for more beds to hold people abducted by ICE. ICE also reportedly holds immigrants at Angola prison, the maximum security prison in Louisiana, notorious for its human rights violations, in a solitary unit dubbed “the Dungeon.” The “zombie prison” phenomenon demonstrates that once prisons are built, it is hard to get rid of them—governments and private prison companies, often working together, are finding new ways to profit from them. It also shows how tightly the immigration and criminal legal systems are linked. These prisons are often located in vulnerable communities suffering from unemployment and economic decline, but the jobs they bring, like all correctional jobs, are not good jobs for the community.

You have probably heard that ICE officers are masking their faces and refusing to identify themselves, as they abduct people from their homes, schools, and communities. Now, investigations reveal that ICE is also using new technologies that target people attempting to hold them accountable. ICE has a contract with the company Paragon (originally Israeli) for “spyware” called Graphite that can hack mobile phones, including encrypted data. And the same agency spent \$4 million for facial recognition technology they intend to use in part to identify individuals who may have clashed with, protested, or merely observed ICE agents.

Finally, some good news for a change: on September 9, all of the trumped-up RICO charges were dropped against 61 defendants in relation to their alleged presence at protests or music festivals surrounding the Stop Cop City Movement in Atlanta. The movement seeks to stop the construction of a massive new police training facility in community forestland. The defendants mounted an organized, collective defense in which no one turned state witness. This strategy won the day, while the Georgia Attorney General wasted \$115 million on the prosecution. Unfortunately, five protesters still face other felony charges.

In global news, National Public Radio reports that Gen Z youth are rising up against corrupt governance across the African continent: from Togo in the west, to Morocco in the north, to Kenya in the east, and now to Madagascar in the southeast. Initially peaceful protests in Madagascar were met with police and military repression, only angering the youth more. One young person said, “In my house for instance we haven’t had running water for six years, and yet we’re still paying the bills.” As of October 15, there are reports that President Andry Rajoelina has fled the country in response to the protests. A major complication for the movement in Madagascar has emerged: some of the military forces that had violently repressed the protests later broke with the government and now these dissident military forces are attempting to seize power. More generally, analyst Mo-

hamed Keita said that sixty percent of Africa’s population is between 15 and 35 years old, and 123 million young people across the continent are unemployed. He added that while there have been uprisings before, “this generation is able to use technology and communication tools and platforms in a way that the previous generation didn’t have.”

Youth in Madagascar were inspired by a similar protest last month in Nepal where Gen Z youth toppled the corrupt government. They replaced the prime minister with one they selected collectively using the messaging platform Discord—better known as a platform for video gamers. There have also been youth uprisings reported in the Philippines, Indonesia, and Serbia, all linked to corrupt politicians, rising costs of living, and wealth disparity.

The big news from Gaza is the ceasefire between Israel and Hamas that recently went into effect. According to the terms of the agreement, on October 13, Hamas released the remaining 20 living Israeli hostages in exchange for the Israeli government releasing about 2,000 Palestinian prisoners, including about 1,700 from Gaza who had been held without charge, and 250 political prisoners serving either life sentences or long sentences. According to human rights groups, Palestinian prisoners are regularly subjected to torture, medical neglect, starvation, and rape in Israeli prisons. Seventy-seven Palestinian prisoners have died in Israeli custody since October 7, 2023. Over 9,000 Palestinians remain in Israeli prisons even after the ceasefire. Many questions remain about how effective the ceasefire will be, how long it will hold, and more generally how Palestinians in Gaza will live given Israel’s near total destruction of the conditions for life there. Gaza’s residents have begun to return to what’s left of their homes and to search for the bodies of their missing loved ones. The civil defense agency estimates that there are at least 10,000 bodies trapped under the rubble of bombed out buildings.

As part of the ceasefire, Israel was supposed to lift its blockade and allow humanitarian aid into Gaza, including food, medicine, and other necessary supplies. Nearly 450 Palestinians, including about 150 children, have starved to death in Gaza as a direct result of Israel’s blockade. UN agencies are mobilizing to distribute this aid, replacing the catastrophic and murderous Gaza Humanitarian Foundation, an organization sponsored by the US and Israel that started distributing aid last spring. In the process, GHF contractors killed more than 2,500 people seeking food, and injured thousands more. Good riddance. However, as of October 14, Israel has cut the amount of aid it had agreed to in the ceasefire in half, from 600 to 300 trucks per day. Even with the ceasefire, Israel still controls what comes in and leaves Gaza.

A few days after the ceasefire went into effect, the 28-year-old Palestinian journalist Saleh Aljafarawi was kidnapped, beaten, and killed by gangs in Gaza who had been paid off by Israel. Although Israel is technically not supposed to bomb Gaza, they continue to wage war on Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank through settler gangs and murder-for-hire.

In recent weeks, the UK, France, Portugal, Canada, and Australia all recognized Palestinian statehood for the first time. Critics accused these countries of attempting to wash the blood off their hands from two years of complicity in and support for Israel's genocide. Moreover, Israel's settler colonial occupation has made it difficult if not impossible for a Palestinian state to exist meaningfully alongside Israel. For example, there are hundreds of thousands of Israelis living in illegal settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, which are supposed to belong to a Palestinian state, and new settlements are being established all the time. Security walls and fortified roads divide Palestinian territory and military checkpoints monitor and restrict the movement of Palestinian residents. And Israel controls all border crossings, which means that Palestinians cannot export or import anything, or even leave the territory, without Israeli approval. Many Palestinians and other observers believe that the so-called "two-state solution" is dead in the water.

Egyptian-British political prisoner Alaa Abd El-Fattah, 43, was released from Egyptian prison after 12 years in and out of prison for his activism. Alaa is best known for his involvement in the 2011 Egyptian revolution that forced the country's military dictator Hosni Mubarak to resign. When *The Guardian* asked him what freedom felt like, he responded: "It is overwhelming. It is also comfortable and natural, and I am immediately fitting in with them, including witnessing three family fights in two days. The usual stuff. It is wonderful to be back, and going to visit other family houses. It is wonderful to be back in that. That is what I have missed the most. This connection with family, with children, catching up on who has had how many children. And my mum, I think, is happy to open my door and see that I am sleeping there, and am just there. I don't have to do anything."

Last but not least, with the rest of the world, we mourn the recent deaths of two revolutionaries. Assata Shakur passed away on September 25 in Havana, Cuba, at age 78. A former member of the Black Panthers and the Black Liberation Army, Shakur always maintained her innocence of the crimes she was imprisoned for. In 1998, she wrote to Pope John Paul II:

At this point, I think that it is important to make one thing very clear. I have advocated and I still advocate revolutionary changes in the structure and in the principles that govern the United States. I advocate self-determination for my people and for all oppressed inside the United States. I advocate an end to capitalist exploitation, the abolition of racist policies, the eradication of sexism, and the elimination of political repression. If that is a crime, then I am totally guilty.

Miss Major Griffin-Gracy passed away on October 14 in Arkansas at age 78. An activist for queer and trans liberation, who worked as a truck driver and sex worker, her work included organizing mobile needle exchange in San Francisco, fighting for the rights and and bodily autonomy for incarcerated Black trans women, and was also a

participant at the legendary Stonewall Uprising in 1969. Against a backdrop of ever-increasing legislative and vigilante attacks on trans and queer people across the US, Miss Major told other LGBTQ+ folks, "Keep on fighting. Do not give up. Don't relax in the fact that someone else is going to do it and you're going to be safe, no matter what it is. . . . Band together, keep a strong front. We can't afford to let it go because the moment we let it go, it's going to cover us up, so we must keep going. I didn't fight all those years ago in Stonewall just to turn around and let it go now."

Did You Know? This is an ongoing feature of *TOS* that we began at the suggestion of a reader where we share facts about history from below that have been silenced. Dreamers and revolutionaries from among the marginalized have embraced the radical potential of emergent technologies and also fought back against the way that poor communities are left with the devastating effects of technological "progress."

The Luddites were a group of 19th-century textile workers in England who saw new industrial weaving and spinning machines—an early form of automation—as a threat to their communities. Rising food prices, falling wages, and the physical danger to workers posed by these large machines made them a target for destruction by the workers they were displacing. The Luddites' organized machine-breaking as a form of collective bargaining—demanding an end to the mass unemployment sparked by this technological advance. The Luddites recognized that, under capitalism, technology only produced more profits for the bosses, rather than leisure time for the workers. Today, the term "luddite" is used in both lighthearted and derogatory ways to refer to someone who doesn't like or isn't good at using computer technology. It's also used to suggest that people who criticize the effects of new technology are naive and their ideas should be ignored, because it's impossible to stop "technological progress." These popular usages strip the term of its original radical meaning.

In the 1970s, the still-ongoing tension between the radical possibilities of computer technology and its roots in militarism emerged. ARPANET, the direct precursor to today's internet, was developed by the US Department of Defense and implemented in 1970. ARPANET was designed as a decentralized communications network, where, in theory, if the Soviet Union bombed one "node" in the network, communication could still flow because it was not centralized in a single location. The nodes were centered in university research labs and in corporate offices that all wanted to participate in this growing network. As the network grew, it also required an infrastructure of fiber-optic cables to function. These fiber-optic cables were laid down in the ground along the very same railroad tracks as the Transcontinental Railroad that was built by Chinese coolie labor in the 1850s, and international cables that crossed the Atlantic Ocean followed the same trajectories as slave ships a hundred years before. As AI-assisted drone strikes double-tap Palestinian hospitals and facial-recognition tech-

nology works overtime to enclose liberatory spaces and possibilities, the internet's roots in the military industrial complex and racial capitalism are important to keep in mind.

At the same time, in 1966, counterculture scientist Stewart Brand demanded that NASA release the first photo of the whole earth as seen from space. In 1968, he launched the Whole Earth Catalog, which helped people who distrusted state systems but were interested in ecology and Do-It-Yourself (DIY) culture access tools and information. The catalog promoted access to early self-built computers and synthesizers, and Brand was invested in the radical possibilities of computing tools and networked information in the hands of people outside of state and corporate power centers. Funds from Whole Earth Catalog subscriptions supported Black Panther "Survival

Pending Revolution" programs. Early radical computer builders saw technology as a tool for building community power and advancing ecological projects of self- and community-sufficiency. This early collaboration between environmentalist computing enthusiasts and the Panthers is an important precursor to the environmental justice movement that emerged in subsequent decades.

Environmental injustice is the way the state and corporate entities systematically oppress marginalized groups through environmental contamination and inequitable access to environmental benefits and resources. From the location of landfills, toxic waste dumps, petrochemical plants, and data centers in poor Black and Brown communities, to the planting of trees (which significantly reduces city temperatures and air pollution) only in affluent white neighborhoods, environmental injustice came to national attention in the 1970s when

the Governor of North Carolina selected rural, poor, and overwhelmingly Black Warren County, as the dumping site for soil laced with PCBs produced as insulating fluids in electrical equipment. After the courts failed to block the dump site from opening, community members blocked roadways, working together to try to physically prevent truckloads of cancer-causing waste from entering their community. The fight against environmental injustice is local and global: a 2022 study in Detroit found that historically redlined neighborhoods experience significantly higher environmental hazards, rates of cancer, and rates of respiratory illness. The "green new deal" promoted by democratic politicians depends on the colonial exploitation of child miners in the Congo—who are exposed to uranium, severe air pollution, and toxic runoff in their communities as they mine components for Tesla and smartphone batteries.

In every case, we see that technology is produced at the expense of marginalized communities around the world, even when it also possesses the radical possibilities recognized by early counter-culture computing advocates. The Luddites recognized that, under capitalism, the benefits of mechanization can never belong to the workers, and the residents of Warren County who lay their bodies on the line trying to prevent the toxic byproducts of technological advancement from entering their community saw that technology is not created out of thin air—everything from its raw materials to its waste products impacts the lives of the marginalized.

With respect and solidarity,

MAPS

LEGACY

BY **REGINALD DWAYNE BETTS**

AFTER GEORGE JACKSON

Because something else must belong to him,
More than these chains, these cuffs, these cells—
Something more than Hard Rock's hurt,
More than remembrances of where men
Go mad with craving—corpuscle, epidermis,
Flesh, men buried in the whale of it, all of it,
Because the so many of us mute ourselves,
Silent before the box, fascinated by the drama
Of confined bodies on prime-time television,
These prisons sanitized for entertainment &;
These indeterminate sentences hidden, because
We all lack this panther's rage, the gift

Of Soledad &; geographies adorned with state numbers
&; names of the dead &; dying etched on skin,
This suffering, wild loss, under mass cuffs,
Those buried hours must be about more
Than adding to this surfeit of pain as history
As bars that once held him embrace us.

REGINALD DWAYNE BETTS is the founder of *Freedom Reads*, a first-of-its-kind organization working to radically transform access to literature in prison. This poem was originally published in Bett's collection *Bastards of the Reagan Era* (2015), and republished on the website of the *Academy of American Poets* in 2018.

FROM AUTOMATION TO ‘AI’

AN INTERVIEW WITH DWAYNE MONROE

Dwayne Monroe is a technologist with decades of experience in the US and Europe. He intimately knows how technologies that the media describes as ethereal really work, where they come from, and how they are used in the multinational corporations and governments dominating our lives. He applies what he calls a Noir Marxist lens (stylistically informed by the work of Raymond Chandler, analytically informed by Marxian materialism) to dissecting the tech industry, with a special emphasis on Microsoft's plans and actions. We learned about his work from a couple of fantastic interviews he did on a podcast called "Millennials are Killing Capitalism." We appreciated not only his sharp critique of so-called "Artificial Intelligence" but also his clear breakdown of what AI really is, how it works, and how it's being used. In the interview, which has been lightly edited for clarity and to avoid censorship, Dwayne discusses what's wrong with the way mainstream journalists understand AI, how the tech industry and corporations aim to use and profit from it (and why they haven't profited as much as they hoped), how it is beginning to be used in prisons, and more. We conducted this interview by email in September-October 2025. Thanks to Dwayne for taking the time to answer our questions!

THE OPENING STATEMENT: It feels like everybody is talking about "Artificial Intelligence" these days, but can you talk a little about what AI actually is? What do mainstream accounts of AI get wrong about this technology? And why do you think there has been so much interest (and financial investment!) in AI over the last few years?

DWAYNE MONROE: The phrase, "artificial intelligence," should be understood as marketing. We do not yet understand how thinking works in humans or any of our fellow creatures (this is why cognitive science is a serious area of study).

Considering this lack of knowledge, it's absurd to say that tech companies have produced an artificial version of what is not understood. The term was coined by computer scientist John McCarthy at a workshop hosted by Dartmouth College in 1956. By this time, digital computers had reached a level of sophistication and usefulness (for example, in running mathematics programs that helped physicists perform the complex calculations for creating hydrogen bombs) that people began to wonder what could be done with this technology. McCarthy and his colleagues proposed that the field's long term goal is the creation of thinking machines. In the decades that followed, there were many twists and turns and a series of what were called "AI winters" during which enthusiasm died and investment dried up when promises did not match reality.

In the 2020s, using one method, large language models (the statistical manipulation of words as tokens that can be used to produce plausible seeming outputs), the tech industry has been able to sell us on the idea that "AI" has finally arrived. They hope to profit from this belief, which they encourage. Mainstream accounts of "AI" miss both the history and the nuts and bolts mechanics of this technology and help the tech industry sell a false story.

TOS: How does the tech industry profit from the belief that AI has arrived?

DM: Thus far, the tech industry has not profited as much as it hoped or needs to see a return on the investment in data centers

required to host so-called "AI" systems. To the extent it does profit, it is because the belief in systems replacing people attracts business customers who are eager to fire workers to reduce costs, adding, they think, to the bottom line.

[Editors' note: Here Dwayne referred us to a recent essay titled "The Case Against Generative AI" by the tech writer and critic Ed Zitron, who has done "detailed and invaluable work tracking the economics of the 'AI' segment of the tech industry." The essay is long and detailed, but we wanted to include a relevant passage here about belief in the power of AI and profitability:

"The only thing 'powerful' about generative AI is its mythology. The world's executives, entirely disconnected from labor and actual production, are doing the only thing they know how to—spend a bunch of money and say vague stuff about 'AI being the future.' There are people—journalists, investors, and analysts—that have built entire careers on filling in the gaps for the powerful as they splurge billions of dollars and repeat with increasing desperation that 'the future is here' as absolutely nothing happens....

Underpinning these stories about huge amounts of money and endless opportunity lies a dark secret—that none of this is working, and all of this money has been invested in a technology that doesn't make much revenue and loves to burn millions or billions or hundreds of billions of dollars.

Over half a trillion dollars has gone into an entire industry without a single profitable company developing models or products built on top of models. By my estimates, there is around \$44 billion of revenue in generative AI this year (when you add in Anthropic and OpenAI's revenues to the pot, along with the other stragglers) and most of that number has been gathered through reporting from outlets like The Information, because none of these companies share their revenues, all of them lose shit tons of money, and their actual revenues are really, really small."]

TOS: Speaking of data centers, in this issue we are also interviewing an organizer with a local campaign against the building of a new data center and research facility that would be a collaboration between the University of Michigan and Los Alamos National Labo-

ratory. One point that the campaign has emphasized in its materials are the environmental consequences of AI and the data centers on which it depends. Can you briefly explain what the relation is between AI and data centers? What are the environmental impacts of these technologies?

DM: Data centers are very large facilities where computers called servers and associated equipment (storage, networking, cooling, etc.) are assembled together to create platforms. Without data centers, there cannot be “AI” at the scale companies such as Microsoft, Google, and Amazon (not to mention OpenAI which depends on Microsoft for data center capacity) are pushing. As the tech industry tries to push “AI” into every nook and corner of our lives, they must build more data centers to support their efforts. This is why there is a direct link between environmental impact and data center usage and expansion. Servers need cooling because computers generate a lot of heat. Water is used for cooling (small tubes surrounding servers, drawing heat away from the equipment). This water is drawn from the same sources people need. Data centers draw significant amounts of electrical power which means an increased output of polluting and carbon producing power generation (Musk’s Grok platform, for example, is powered by a large array of diesel generators). The industry and its boosters present this technology as if it is weightless but it is an industrial process and dirty.

TOS: You’ve also written about AI as an attack on labor, as in efforts to replace truck drivers and delivery drivers with autonomous vehicles or to replace writers and artists with generative AI tools. How significant do you think the threat of AI is, and are certain kinds of jobs especially vulnerable?

DM: It is not “AI” that is a threat but the effort of companies to marginalize or replace labor using “AI” as an excuse that is the real danger for workers. Driving, for example, can be performed by computers within narrow and well-defined boundaries (Waymo’s driverless vehicles in San Francisco provide an example) but things fall apart when systems have to deal with what engineers call “edge cases.” By “edge cases” they mean things outside of what the systems have been programmed to do or can respond to. Unfortunately for their plans, the world is an endless series of edge cases. Even so, this does not stop companies from claiming that robotaxis are just around the corner. Using this excuse, owners can try to pressure workers to accept lower wages and worse working conditions because most people do not know the limitations of this technology and are intimidated. The most vulnerable work to-date are jobs involving the use of text because OpenAI, Microsoft, and other corporations are pushing large language model systems (ChatGPT, for example) as replacements for writers, customer service workers, and others who use text. Chatbots cannot do journalism, for example, but publications such as *Business Week* are more focused on

cutting costs for profit rather than the accuracy of what is presented to readers.

TOS: Prisons in Michigan and the US more generally used to function like factories, producing many different kinds of commodities. For example, in the early twentieth century, Jackson Prison in Michigan produced everything from binder twine to furniture to cement to canned vegetables for sale on the open market, and administrators claimed that the profits made the prison self-sustaining. That changed after World War II, and today the work that prisoners do inside is primarily “reproductive,” involving tasks like cooking, cleaning, and caring that keep prisons functioning. Given this, how might AI affect labor inside the prison, and the lives of prisoners more generally?

DM: Now we get to an old technology—automation—used for many decades in auto factories and other workflows that can be divided into specific tasks. Today, this is described as “AI” because, for marketing and sales reasons, everything involving computers is called “AI.” I think that we will see the tech industry try to sell the prison sector on systems that force people into speed-up scenarios. Surveillance and tracking (even more than what is currently used) is another impact as is the use of so-called “AI” systems to “decide” critical things like parole, food, medical access, etc. We are already seeing this in some jurisdictions and it will very likely spread.

TOS: Can you say a little more about what these “speed-up scenarios” might look like? Also, some might see algorithmic decisions about parole and medical access as less biased, because a computer makes the decision rather than a person. How might the use of an AI system be worse for folks inside than dealing directly with racist, misogynist, and reactionary people?

DM: Software has long been used to track our movements and enforce speed-up schemes. For example, the movements of Amazon delivery drivers and warehouse workers are tracked, recorded, and assessed using algorithmic systems that determine how often a worker spends “time on task.” This is inevitably applied to reduce the amount of time a worker has to rest.

Regarding bias... Software reflects the biases of the people and institutions creating and deploying the systems. This is why so-called generative “AI” platforms routinely spout racist and sexist images and text when used.

TOS: We are curious about similarities between prisons and data centers. One possible connection has to do with the abolitionist geographer Ruth Wilson Gilmore’s idea of the “prison fix.” Gilmore argues that the boom of prison construction in the 1980s and 90s was a response to the effects of the economic crisis of the 1970s. Building prisons helped to absorb “surplus” workers who had lost their jobs as factories closed down (by imprisoning them and removing them from the labor market); surplus agricultural land that had

been taken out of production as a result of debt (by converting it into prisons); and surplus finance capital that couldn't find a profitable site for investment (by encouraging investment in municipal bonds that were used to finance prison construction). Does this parallel what is going on with data centers today? Could we talk about a "data center fix"?

DM: This is a very interesting way of seeing things and a connection that, once I read it, made perfect sense to me. Data centers are indeed very much like prisons in the sense that, capital investment, hoarded, with state support, by the ownership class and scarcely used for things we need, is being poured into "AI," and therefore, data center expansion at a dizzying pace. The recently announced deal between OpenAI and Oracle (the database firm, founded, essentially, by the CIA in the 1970s) is an exchange of billions back and forth between them with no plan for profitability: a shell game to absorb surplus capital and a gift.

TOS: Finally, how might radicals and abolitionists challenge the rise of AI?

DM: Resistance starts by rejecting corporate propaganda. This means rejecting "AI" as a term that describes an actually existing technology (thinking machines) and learning how these systems really work. The industry, and its media mouthpieces want everyone to think it's like magic (which makes them the magicians we should worship) but it is software, running on servers, hosted in data centers

and all of it is based on the same sorts of exploitative flows of resources from global south locations and labor abuse that shapes the rest of our world.

That means, at the next stage of resistance, adopting a materialist mindset. By materialist, I mean seeking information about the real mechanisms of so-called "AI." Despite a lot of marketing hype, people who build systems need real information. You can use that to learn about what happens behind the curtain.

At the action stage of resistance, I suggest using this information and materialist perspective to guide counter-moves. For example, if you are pushing back against an "AI" initiative, being well equipped with knowledge and united as a group enables a powerful response. Finally, resist the urge to be impressed, as scientist Emily Bender advises.

[Editors' note: Bender is a computational linguist and critic of AI. She co-authored a book titled The AI Con: How to Fight Big Tech's Hype and Create the Future We Want. Here Dwayne is mentioning an article Bender wrote in 2022, where she argued that it was important to "resist the urge to be impressed" by AI, by remembering that: "1) Just because that text seems coherent doesn't mean the model behind it has understood anything or is trustworthy; 2) Just because that answer was correct doesn't mean the next one will be; and 3) When a computer seems to 'speak our language,' we're actually the ones doing all of the work.]" ■

'EVERYONE HATES DATA CENTERS'

INTERVIEW WITH STOP THE DATA CENTER

Data centers do the dirty work that's necessary for AI systems to run. This means they both enable AI systems and are also a real weakness of these systems—if you can stop a data center from being built, for example, you can make it harder for people to use AI to destroy the world. Of course, data centers also have harmful and more immediate impacts on the communities where they're located. In the introduction of this issue, we mentioned that local struggles against data center projects have taken off around the country and are having some success. One of these struggles is happening right here in southeast Michigan: the University of Michigan is collaborating with Los Alamos National Laboratory to build a \$1.2 billion data center and research facility in Ypsilanti. Fortunately, people have started to organize against it under the banner "Stop the Data Center." We conducted the following interview by email with a group of participants in September-October 2025. The interview has been edited for clarity and to avoid censorship. Thanks to the Stop the Data Center crew for answering our questions and for everything they're doing to build a network of resistance in southeast Michigan and stop this terrible project from moving forward!

THE OPENING STATEMENT: Who makes up Stop the Data Center?

STOP THE DATA CENTER: Stop the Data Center is the collective project of many folks in and around Ypsilanti. It's a multi-generational, multi-racial team, many of whom have been organizing in the area for the last ten years. We came together to stop the University of Michigan and Los Alamos Data Center, planned for Ypsilanti Township. Los Alamos is famous for creating the first atomic bomb and setting it off on American soil, in New Mexico, where people are still dealing with the fallout. They are calling this data center "the new Manhattan project," and are recruiting nuclear weapons engineers to work there. We hate the data center for a variety of reasons: anti-war, environmental, caring about our town and the good people all over the world who fear the US military.

TOS: Can you tell our readers broadly what a data center is and why do you and others oppose this one? And can you describe the shape and size, to date, of the grassroots campaign against it?

SDC: Everyone who doesn't directly profit from data centers hates data centers, from the right to the left. A data center is a huge factory with hardly any workers, mostly just stacks and stacks of computing equipment. So much electricity is needed to run all this equipment. This one will start off at 110 megawatts, which is enough to power 300,000 homes. The equipment also generates a lot of heat, so it needs to be cooled down with lots of water. Large data centers consume 5 million gallons per day, equivalent to the water use of a town populated by 10,000 to 50,000 people. Also, the way data centers use electricity is unique, and is not something our electrical grid is prepared for. What's known as "electricity harmonics" can shorten the lifespan of everyone's appliances that are within miles of the data center.

The campaign against the data center is vibrant and full of life. The first public meeting had 80 attendees, and 150 people showed up to the first township board meeting to oppose the data center. It's intergenerational, with meetings having an age spread of 3 years old to the early gos. It's a multi-racial crew at the helm making things happen. Many of the folks holding down different working groups have deep roots here, though we welcome transplants to bring their new ideas and energy.

TOS: What is the structure of the campaign in terms of decision making, and how did you arrive at this structure? How has the campaign handled the diversity of political backgrounds, priorities, and strategies within it?

SDC: The Stop the Data Center campaign has a spokescouncil structure. [Editor's Note: Wiktionary defines a spokescouncil as "An assembly of people, each representing a group of activists, who meet to discuss and coordinate their activities and make decisions by consensus." In the case of Stop the Data Center, each working group sends representatives to the spokescouncil meeting.] That means there is no one person or group of people making decisions for others about what should be done, and tactics are diversified across a wide spectrum, from social media campaigns to in-person lobbying. This structure has the benefit of being inclusive and non-coercive, allowing people from all walks of life to participate in the ways they see fit.

Additionally, Stop the Data Center organizers seek to offer food and child care at many events, further increasing reach and accessibility. Thus, there are many small groups within the overall movement that participants can plug themselves into. Here are some of the groups that currently exist: Flyering, Canvassing, Lobbying, Food team (brings food to all events), Child Care (provides childcare during meetings and child-centered activities and events so kids are part of the movement too!), U of M affiliates, Social Media, DTE pressure, Outreach, Poetry/Art, and Park Improvement/Eco Group.

TOS: After months of mobilizing against building the data center at the original proposed site in Ypsilanti Township right next to the Huron River, the U of M recently announced that they are

considering developing the data center at a different site, near the Willow Run airport. How does the campaign interpret this move, and how do you plan to respond to it?

SDC: Our campaign does not view the change in sites as an improvement and would oppose *any* proposed site for the center. Moving the site to Willow Run feels like pandering to a specific type of detractor who is concerned for the health of the Huron River but not necessarily that of the most vulnerable communities in Washtenaw County. However, this move has delayed the timeline for the project by a whole year, which gives us more time to mount a defense!

TOS: From door knocking in the neighborhoods around the proposed location for the data center, what have you learned about how Black, Brown, and working class people think about having a data center as a neighbor?

SDC: Our campaign is made up of mostly working class people, with folks who are doing core organizing being a pretty multi-racial group. Part of our strategy to build the movement has been canvassing direct neighbors of the proposed sites, which are vast majority Black working class people. This has been wildly successful, practically everyone who answers the door is glad to see us. Many folks who were canvassed have come out to meetings and gotten involved in organizing. We are going to need lots of help, in the form of boots on the ground work and also co-theorizing and strategizing, and we are not going to leave West Willow neighbors out.

TOS: Why should our readers in prison in Michigan and other states care about this data center? How do you think it would affect imprisoned people or their families?

SDC: This data center affects all of us through our collective dependence on the electrical grid and accelerated militarism and surveillance. This new era of hundreds of billions of dollars being spent to build data centers in every corner of our world is one that prisoners need to know about, as it will change the world we are all living in. The stress on the grid will cause black outs and brown outs in addition to increased rates. Right now, people who live nearby data centers pay on average 243% more for electricity, bailing out the corporations. However, the electricity they are paying more for is lower quality, having to do with the harmonics of the electrical grid being impacted by data centers. This causes small appliances to burn out earlier, and impacts overall grid health. The huge increase in power use also fuels global warming in a really significant way. This is a vicious combination of a weakened grid struggling to power indoor cooling efforts alongside higher temperatures and more intense and chaotic weather events.

The AI-powered "national security research" that will take place at this center will no doubt be put to efficient use scaling up surveillance and policing of domestic populations. Additionally, it is likely that actual policing in the communities around the data center would

change. High-security facilities such as this often demand that police presence be vamped up to protect the “assets” and sensitive information held at the center. Prisoners, despite being kept away from

us, are important parts of our communities, and we are going to need everyone in the fight to stop the data center. ■

T O S B O O K C L U B # 7

The Book Club is back with a new round of books! We select two books and our inside subscribers can get free copies if they wish. In the past, some folks wrote reviews or reflections about the books and we published them here in the newsletter. However, MDOC now censors Michigan prisoners by blocking *TOS* if it includes MDOC prisoner writings. But we’re still interested in what you have to say! If you’d like to share a response to either or both of the books, please send it our way and we can consider publishing it on our website or as a zine. The next set of readings will be:

Unbuild Walls: Why Immigrant Justice Needs Abolition (2024) by Silky Shah: Shah considers the relationship between immigration policy and policies surrounding incarceration in the US. This is a highly readable book that braids together historical and legal analysis, stories of individual organizers and activists, as well as Shah’s own personal experience as an organizer. What gave us the idea to include this book is that it came up in our interview with JR, a member of the No Detention Centers in Michigan coalition, which we published in the Summer 2025 issue of *TOS*.

The Dispossessed (1974) by Ursula K. Le Guin: Shah drew her title from this science fiction novel. (“Those who build walls are their own prisoners. I am going to go fulfill my proper function in the social organism. I’m going to go unbuild walls.”) The novel juxtaposes anarchist and capitalist cultures and thinks at length about imprisonment, making it an interesting companion to Shah’s text.

As you read, you might consider connections between the ways these two texts think about utopia, imprisonment, and social inequality. How does Ursula K. Le Guin’s representation of these concepts in 1974 compare to the way Shah is conceptualizing them fifty years later in 2024? How does Shah seem to feel about the possibility for a utopian reimagining of society in comparison to Le Guin? How does Le Guin represent walls, and what do walls represent in Shah’s thinking?

If you are interested in receiving free copies of these books, please write to us at the address below. ■

THE OPENING STATEMENT is an abolitionist newsletter driven by the voices and visions of Michigan prisoners, as well as those on the outside impacted by the prison system.

THE OPENING STATEMENT hopes to foster ongoing discussion against the violence of incarceration.

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