

## Editorial

Dear members, friends, colleagues,

As a new Board Member of the EFRJ, I am extremely pleased to write the Editorial of this special issue on 'Arts and Restorative Justice.' The focus on arts stemmed from my personal interest in the subject, from Communication & Events Officer Emanuela Biffi's long standing interest in arts initiatives and from the Editorial Committee's excitement and ideas on the subject, without mentioning all the extremely interesting projects and initiatives taking place within our membership that were asking to be portrayed.

The idea also sprang from the work undertaken by the EFRJ during RJ Week in the past few years, where the EFRJ witnesses a large creative potential around the employment of arts to spread awareness for restorative justice. Although we had to limit the articles and projects that could be presented for this special issue, the EFRJ is planning to make an extended version in an Arts and Restorative Justice booklet that will be put together during RJ Week this year; so we warmly welcome other contributions to the booklet. Please send them to [Emanuela Biffi](#).

The understanding of arts in this issue is quite broad, as it can refer to film, theatre, documentaries, painting, installations, music, etc. The ways arts can be used in relation to restorative justice can also be very diverse: among others for example arts can be used: as a mediating or enabling space for restorative dialogue; as a representational practice for restorative justice; as a means to promotion, provocation, awareness raising; or as a restorative practice itself.

In line with restorative philosophy, this edition starts with 'A Conversation.' Espen Marius Foss, Marc Cerón i Riera and Emanuela Biffi trace the history, the journey, and the ideas behind a travelling theatre play which will turn into a full-fledged film production. Their collaboration and enthusiasm is an inspiring example of how common and creative energies, ideas and resources can be channelled into developing long standing and sustainable cooperation that involve and create assets for the whole membership in ways that cross disciplinary, national and linguistic boundaries.

In the next article, we follow the amazing journey of Clair Aldington in becoming a restorative artist. Clair explores through her journey the power and the multiple uses of arts in relation to restorative justice, such as co-creation, cementing gift relations and rituals, en-

abling communication between parties, enabling communication in group work about difficult subjects and representing the restorative process. It is also with great pleasure that we read that Clair has been awarded funding to undertake a PhD in Northumbria University (Newcastle) during which she will explore further the relation between the process of art-making and restorative justice, a work we look forward to hearing about in the years to come.

Next, Keisha Martinez's account of her artistic and personal commitment towards using artistic expression such as music to create change is truly inspiring, especially for restorative practitioners who overly rely on the spoken word. As Keisha testifies, music can be used to restore relations between families and communities; to support people who have undergone significant trauma in their lives; to set the tone of restorative circles and lighten the mood; to encourage and elicit emotional expression and healing; and to enable communication where words fail.

We move to yet another account that is unique in its kind. Lies Kortleven brings together a series of interconnected events that testify how artists, offenders, victims, citizens, prisons, NGOs and municipalities can work together in creating spaces and opportunities for artistic encounters that not only reflect on the future, but create it. *Utopia* through the plurality of human stories becomes a dream shared, and art in different forms becomes its mediating tool.

Our new board member from Italy, Patrizia Patrizi, is not only a great colleague but always a source of inspiration for her combination of commitment, intelligence and creativity. Together with her husband, Antonio Turco, who founded the theatre company, they describe in the next article the prison-theatre experience of the oldest theatre company ([Teatro Stabile As-](#)

sai) in the Rebibbia prison in Rome, which is made up of prisoners, former prisoners, prison staff and professional musicians. Besides all the important features of this work which the authors themselves reflect on, in my opinion, the most impressive features of their work are the ways the theatre mediates between the prison system and the social community, the plural constitution of the theatre and the high level of artistic performance.

In the following article, we read about the first-hand experience of film maker Hubertus Siegert in making the ground-breaking film, *Beyond punishment*. Through his account we get an unique insight into questions such as what drives a director, who supports him, how does he select and relate to the main protagonists, how does he make difficult decisions, how does he respond to the rising challenges along the way, how does he negotiate his own position, how does he elaborate his own emotions and how does he give context to the human stories.

Similarly, the directors of the documentary, *Another justice*, Isabelle Vayron and Chloé Henry-Biabaud, share with us their experience of making this unique documentary, which gives a context to restorative trajectories undertaken in the aftermath of extremely difficult human stories and situations. Agnes, Leonard, Patricia, Christopher, Conor, Julie, Michael, Ann and her parents, Renée, Eric, Lisa, Meagan: you, your tragic life stories, but most of all your courage to continue, to dream about and simply to live another future are the reasons for restorative justice to exist and its only motivation to continue. And we can only be grateful to the directors for giving a forum to these powerful stories.

We hope you enjoy this special issue and find it as exciting and stimulating as we do. We welcome your

proposals for similar editions organised on focused subjects that relate to restorative justice; so please share your ideas with us.



*Brunilda Pali*

According to our tradition, one board member is always involved with the newsletter; so while this was my task, I'll be moving on with the organisation of our next conference taking place during 14–16 June 2018 in Tirana. So Lars Otto Justad will be the board member to be involved with the newsletters in the future. I have enjoyed being involved with the preparation of the newsletter, but mostly as a witness of the hard work and the enthusiasm put into this work by our Editorial Committee and dedicated staff member Emanuela Biffi.

With my warmest greetings from Leuven,

**Brunilda Pali**

Secretary of the EFRJ Board

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## **‘A Conversation:’ from theatre to film**

Two years ago, on the occasion of the RJ Week 2015, which coincided with the 15th anniversary of the EFRJ, we organised several activities in Leuven including the play of a theatre performance of RJ entitled ‘A Conversation.’ Two years after, we are happy to announce that this theatre play will turn into a film, which will be launched during RJ Week 2017 (19–26 November)!

The play is about the meeting between two families: the parents of a young woman who was raped and murdered and the family of the offender. The play was written by David Williamson (Australia), adapted to a European context and directed by Peter Harris (UK) and performed by the amateur theatre group No Theatre (Norway), a non-profit theatre group with actors from all over the world.

While you can find more information about the theatre play and ‘No Theatre’ on [the EFRJ website](#), we will devote this article to two big fans of the play. First, we will hear from our colleague Espen Marius Foss, associate professor at Østfold University College (Norway), who helped us discover this theatre piece some years ago and supported us when we considered showing the performance in Leuven. Then, we will hear

from Marc Cerón i Riera, Deputy Director General of Probation, Justice Department of Catalonia (Spain), one of the sponsors of the film project 'A Conversation.'

As a former national adviser in the Norwegian Red Cross, I have had the pleasure of collaborating with the theatre group No Theatre and their director Peter Harris on several occasions. The idea of adapting the play, 'A Conversation,' written by one of Australia's most respected contemporary playwrights, David Williamson, to a European context, first came over a beer with Geir Dale and Peter Harris in 2012.

Geir Dale, former leader of the Street Mediation project in the Norwegian Red Cross, has worked for many years in the field of restorative practices and had personally collaborated with John McDonald — the Australian RJ practitioner who developed conferencing as a method, inspired by the New Zealand Maori-model. Actually, the main character in 'A Conversation' — the conference facilitator, Jack — is modelled on John McDonald himself and his practice, as Williamson closely researched him in the process of writing the 'Jack Manning Trilogy,' of which 'A Conversation' is one of three plays on the topic of Restorative Justice.

Peter Harris is artistic director in the UK based Wolf + Water Arts Company and has for years been working in several countries with groups who are socially, mentally or physically challenged — using arts as a tool for personal and artistic development. Mr Harris had by the time also given many training workshops for the Red Cross and had his own amateur theatre group in Norway: No Theatre. Mr Harris was fascinated by the 'Jack Manning Trilogy' and took the initiative of directing 'A Conversation' towards a more European context together with No Theatre.

When I attended their first performance in 2012 I was deeply moved. Also, as practitioner and researcher in the field of restorative practices, I was struck by the power of theatre in communicating the emotional and transformative dimension of restorative processes. As adviser for Street Mediation in the Red Cross, I invited No Theatre in 2013 to perform at a conference for volunteers (adults) and youth Street Mediators. Due to the gravity of the play, the aftermath of a rape and murder incident, the

performance was followed by a workshop facilitated by Mr Harris himself, processing the participants' conceptions and feelings in relation to conflict and the topics of the play itself. However tough to digest, the audience was intrigued by the reality of the performance. The feedback was astonishing, as everyone felt that they had gained a valuable insight into a process which is hard to understand from the outside.



*Photo: Øystein Johansen*

Due to this positive experience the Norwegian Red Cross invited No Theatre to perform the play three more times for various audiences (volunteers, employees and their collaborators, including policy makers), the last one for a full house at The House of Literature in Oslo in 2014. Here, the play was followed by a panel debate with representatives from the police, the ministry of justice, the Norwegian Mediation service, the late criminologist and 'father' of the Norwegian Mediation Service, Nils Christie, along with a victim who had met his father's murderer in a restorative process. Also, this time the feedback was astounding, as the audience felt they had had a unique insight into a restorative process — an experience that not so many of us get at first hand.

No Theatre's last two live performances of 'A Conversation' were without the Red Cross, the first at the 15th Anniversary of the EFRJ in Leuven 2015 and the second for a public audience in Oslo, in collaboration with the Norwegian Mediation Service. Due to the very positive feedback on the performance and the fact that the members of No Theatre are now spread all over the world and can no longer continue working together on a regular basis, the group wanted to make a film of the play so that it could live on and be useful in the context

of social work and restorative practices (Espen Marius Foss).

On the occasion of the 15th anniversary of the EFRJ I was kindly invited to Leuven to attend, on behalf of the Confederation of the European Probation (CEP), the umbrella organisation for probation services in Europe, founded in 1984, some of the commemorative events organised to mark this commemoration.

I was really very excited when I started my travels to Leuven from Barcelona, the place where I live and work, as a director of the Probation Service of the Justice Department of the Autonomous Government of Catalonia, for two main reasons. I knew in advance that, in line with its traditions, the EFRJ would not prepare a very formal and classical programme, based on boring talks. Also, I was convinced that in addition I would share a good time with smart colleagues and that, for sure, I would learn more about restorative justice.

I gained a lot from the 24 hours that I was there. As expected, I found nice people, I learnt from different round tables, I shared a wonderful dinner, but over and above any other thing I was astonished by the theatre performance: 'A Conversation.'

The play is about the aftermath of a rape and murder and its impact in on all the parties involved in the situation. The play and the performance itself seem to me a strong example of the renewing power of dialogue and RJ.

The company who delivered the performance was formed of amateur actors, all of them living in Norway but coming from different origins. This mixture and the 'fresh air' that accompanies the use of amateurs, instead of being an obstacle, gave to the whole performance an added value of credibility and proximity. I was astonished, because I felt that I had experienced an exceptional way of understanding how a RJ process takes place and functions in reality.

From the very time I was there my brain started to think in two complementary directions: as a person I was sure that I would

never forget that experience; as a manager of a Probation service which includes a Restorative Justice Programme I committed myself to push as much as possible to transform this experience into one which others could share. My organisation is not rich but I came home with the idea of convincing my colleagues and others to find the way to make this a reality.

I had the view, from the very beginning, that the power coming from the performance needed to be transformed in a more permanent way, in order to show and share with all kinds of colleagues and the general public what RJ must do in order to let peace replace conflict — just using what is unique in our condition as human beings: the capacity to listen and to talk with others, even when they were responsible for producing deep pain in our lives (Marc Cerón i Riera).

For this filming project, the EFRJ received funding from the Ministry of Justice of Catalonia, the Ministry of Labour and Justice of the Basque Country and the European Commission through a grant to the EFRJ. In addition, the EFRJ is counting on the active participation of some of its members who will contribute with the creation and translation of the subtitles into different languages: English, Spanish, Albanian, Dutch, French, Italian, Portuguese, and Russian.<sup>1</sup> We are grateful to all these sponsors and their members who are supporting this filming project and we are particularly thankful to Siw Risøy, the coordinator of No Theatre, and Oddbjørn Austevik, the film editor, for their commitment and collaboration in these past months of hard work together.

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<sup>1</sup>Thanks to the Albanian Foundation for Conflict Resolution, Restorative Justice Nederland, Institut Français pour la Justice Restaurative, Mediante (Belgium), Foresee Research group (Hungary), Sassari University - Dipartimento di Scienze Umanistiche e Sociali (Sardinia), PsicoIus – Scuola romana di psicologia giuridica (Rome), Innovative Prison Systems (Portugal), and Scientific and Methodological Center for Mediation and Law, Moscow (Russia).

## **‘Art does not reproduce the visible; rather, it makes visible’ (Paul Klee) — the role of the arts and gifting in the restorative process**

Throughout history, the arts have been targeted by totalitarian regimes. The arts offer us an opportunity for escapism from the everyday but they also reflect life in all its confusion and pain. Artistic expression often acts as a commentary and reflection on life; it can ask difficult questions and provide a mechanism for people to express their innermost thoughts and feelings. This is perhaps why the arts are feared or underfunded by governments who do not wish to be questioned. A recent article in the [New York Times](#) (accessed 12.6.2017) explores this in more detail.

As an artist who has worked in community settings for over twenty years, I have observed this through my own experience as well as through leading workshops with others: the ability of the arts (whatever the art-form) to challenge, inspire and offer us an opportunity to explore issues in our lives and enable us to see a potential for change. When I am working with others, I often refer to the work of painter Howard Hodgkin, who says of his work, ‘I paint representational pictures of emotional situations.’<sup>2</sup> He has also said, ‘A lot of people ... are afraid of pictures which have visible emotions in them. They feel calmer in front of pictures which are placid.’<sup>3</sup> His abstract paintings with such names as ‘In Paris with you,’ ‘One damn thing after another’ or ‘Happy night’ capture the essence and emotion of an event or place — the emotion often being too great to be contained so that Hodgkin extends the painting outwards to include the frame.<sup>4</sup> Art can be a powerful tool, whether it be literature, music, performance, visual or design work.

When I was offered a sessional role with the Oxfordshire Youth Offending Service<sup>5</sup> (Oxford, England) in 2001, it seemed natural to me to use the arts as a way of working. Shortly afterwards my manager, Peter Wallis,<sup>6</sup> sent me on a week long restorative justice conference facilitator training course with Thames Valley Police. This proved to be a week that shaped the rest of my life.

My first case was working with a young person who had stolen from a large national store. It was her first offence; she was embarrassed and remorseful about what she had done and wanted to make amends. She had stolen the item as a birthday gift for her brother. The young person was interested in beauty and so we looked at the proportions of the face and the body, created a [mood board](#) and designed two masks which expressed how she felt about what she had done. Once they were complete, I was not sure what to do with them. Co-creating the artwork with her enabled conversations about the offence, but at the end of the process

I felt strongly that she should not keep the masks; our work together had been carried out as part of a court order which was aimed at enabling her to make reparation for the harm caused. I discussed it with a colleague and the most obvious course of action seemed to be to present it to the store (the people harmed — the victims) as a ‘reparative’ gift. At this stage, it never occurred to me that we were proposing anything unusual.



On contacting the company, I learned that the store security officer had been disturbed by the experience of arresting the young person as she had been so distressed. He and the store manager expressed a desire to meet with us as a way of working through the incident.

The young person felt unable to attend a joint meeting with the store but was happy for me and my manager, Pete Wallis, to present it to them on her behalf. The store manager and the security officer were delighted with the gift in terms of its ‘professional’ looking presentation and the sentiments it expressed. The framed masks were hung in the store’s staff room. As a result of the gifting, the young person’s nationwide ban from the store was lifted and they said they would be happy to meet with her anytime. I relayed this message to the young person and her mother who were relieved

<sup>2</sup><https://www.artsy.net/article/editorial-representational-pictures-of-emotional-situations-howard-hodgkins> (accessed 14.6.2017)

<sup>3</sup><https://howard-hodgkin.com/gallery> (accessed 14.6.2017)

<sup>4</sup><https://howard-hodgkin.com/artwork> (accessed 13.6.2017)

<sup>5</sup>See <https://www.gov.uk/youth-offending-team> for more information regarding youth offending services/ teams (accessed 14.6.2017)

<sup>6</sup>See <http://www.policyreview.tv/speaker/1307.html> for a brief biography of Pete Wallis (accessed 14.6.2017)





Figure 1: Handing over the gift of the 'masks' to the store

at the restorative outcome. This was the first time I had witnessed the power of a piece of artwork to act as a conduit for communication between two parties in a conflict even when one of them was not present. Jayne Wallace (2007), jeweller and researcher, explores this concept in some of her work.

For me another form of intimacy arises from the role often played by jewellery as a symbol of self, of identity and of interpersonal relationships. Functioning in this role the object becomes a conduit to transport us to other times, places and people and also a container for our feelings about that associated 'other' Jayne Wallace (accessed 14.6.2017).

This case became a model for the way I would work with youth offending service clients for the next six years and beyond, into my current restorative work. The model has changed, been adapted for different contexts and developed over the years, but has essentially remained the same.

From this first case, other gifts were created (including music, visual art, craft and writing) and sometimes given directly by the person responsible (the offender) to the person harmed (the victim) as part of a joint res-

torative meeting. The artwork on these occasions acted as a physical visualisation of the restorative process and as such became a tool for the meeting. One criticism of the restorative process, and particularly the joint meeting, is that it requires a level of emotional literacy and articulation from participants. In my experience, an artwork can act as a focal point and assist in verbal communication during joint meetings. This is particularly useful when one or more of the participants finds it difficult to communicate verbally. For example, in a recent case, a sculpture of a tree was created by the person responsible for the persons he had harmed. The making of the tree became the three stages of restorative work; the roots were the *facts* of his offending, the trunk the *consequences*, whilst the leaves represented what he felt he and the people harmed might need in the *future* in order to move on from the incident of harm. We also worked with the persons harmed and co-created a collage of a tree exploring the same three stages. This was presented in the joint meeting alongside the person responsible's tree. (This case took two years to culminate in a joint restorative meeting due to its sensitive and complex nature and the person responsible's intermittent stays in custody.)

I was trained to use the formal police restorative conferencing script<sup>7</sup> which still forms the basis of the way

<sup>7</sup><http://www.iirp.edu/eforum-archive/4434-restorative-conference-facilitator-script> (accessed 14.6.2017)

in which I work with clients. As I have become more experienced as a restorative practitioner, I have moved away from the rigidity of the script but kept the structure of the questions which reflect the three main stages of the restorative process.



### Facts

What happened?

### Consequences

How have you been affected? Who else has been affected? Who do you think has been most affected?

### Future

What do you think you need to do now? What do you need in order to move on from here in a safer way? What do you think the other people need to move on from the situation of harm?

The six years I spent working with the youth offending service as part of a restorative justice team were transformative for me and ones which I will never forget as they mark the beginning of my artistic restorative journey.

In 2007 I was offered a contract with an arts development agency and moved to the Shetland Islands in Scotland. Following my move, I met with the criminal justice social work team and Alyson Halcrow from the restorative justice project. Alyson invited me to give a presentation about my arts based restorative work. As a result, Alyson and I co-founded the *space2face* arts and restorative justice project, which was originally a partnership project between the two organisations that Alyson and I respectively worked for — the Community Mediation Team and Shetland Arts. Eight

years on, and after trying out a number of different structural models, *space2face* is now an independent charitable organisation with a board of three trustees. The project continues to be managed by Alyson and myself whilst also maintaining a small pool of restoratively trained freelance artists who we contract on a case by case basis. This is a model that has worked well and suits the way in which self-employed artists work locally.

The original *space2face* project was formed to work within the same model of reparative gift giving developed with the Oxfordshire Youth Offending Service. Through working with Alyson and the team in Shetland, the model has expanded to reflect working in a different context (rural and remote) and within an independent rather than a statutory context. Our work now includes creative restorative group working, such as a project we ran for two years with a group of teenage girls involved in cyber-bullying of one another. With this group, we used the arts and restorative circles as a means of talking about difficult issues. We also run training courses in using the arts as part of restorative processes and deliver training sessions in schools. Most recently, due to a number of self-referrals, we have started working with the person harmed first rather than the more usual restorative model of commencing work with the person responsible first.

Last year, Alyson and I visited (with prior consent) two people harmed who had received a reparative gift in a joint meeting from the person responsible for causing them harm. The gift was a garden bench which had been designed and made during the period of a year by the person responsible. We also met separately with the person responsible. The purpose of these meetings was to discover what meaning the gift had two years on. Whilst the gift had been received very positively and emotionally at the time, I wondered if the bench might be a constant negative reminder of the offence and so possibly be unhelpful in terms of recovery for the persons harmed.



I asked both the persons harmed and the person responsible the same questions and was surprised by some of their responses. There is not space here to detail all of their answers but here are a few.<sup>8</sup>

From the persons harmed (a couple);

A lot of stuff hangs around the bench. The bench is 'a landmark,' a beacon.

When we were told that S [person responsible] was making a bench, it was the last thing that P [person harmed] wanted in the garden as it was a reminder of what had happened. Now it's gone full circle and P looks after it and puts it away in the winter.

The money S took was never the issue, it was the violation. The bench addressed that violation and regrets and gave us ways of dealing with it. The process and our acceptance of what he did has given him some dignity.

The bench replaced the pain and harmed caused.

From the person responsible;

The bench was 'a stepping stone ... a step in the right direction.'

Asked how, if at all, the gift of the bench had been reparative or restorative, he said,

It has. I don't know, it was just the bench and everything [restorative process]. Having meetings.

Of the entire restorative process, he added,

Doing this [restorative justice] is far harder than going to prison.

Through our creative restorative journey with **space2face**, we have learned several key things that have become central tenets for our arts based restorative work.

- The unique value of the co-created artwork as a conduit for communication when it is inappropriate for the two parties to meet, or they choose not to.
- The importance of using artists who are working at a professional level and who are trained restoratively.
- It is vital that the artwork gift is of a high quality and finish.

- The power of presenting the artwork in a beautiful manner. For example, a painting professionally framed.
- The significance of giving away the finished artwork.

The last three points are significant in avoiding the potential for re-victimisation of the person harmed by presenting a poorly executed or finished gift of artwork, which might be viewed as disrespectful.

Earlier this year, I was awarded Arts and Humanities Research Council PhD funding to explore the potential of the co-created artefact to engender solidarity between participants in a restorative justice process. It will be a privilege to commence this in October 2017 at Northumbria University, Newcastle, England. Howard Zehr (2014a), a Professor of Restorative Justice and professional photographer, in 'The Art of Justice: A Reply to Brunilda Pali' considers the 'intersection between justice and the arts to be one of the most promising frontiers in the restorative justice field.' Through my doctoral studies, I am interested in moving beyond the 'intersection' and to investigate the possibilities for the making process to become the restorative process.

## Acknowledgements

I am indebted to the following people who have walked beside me in my restorative journey and from whom I have learned more than I can say. You have all been inspirational: Pete Wallis, Leeann McLellan, Alyson Halcrow and Marian Liebmann.

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<sup>8</sup>The quotes used with their permission.



## Music inspiring change in a violent place

### Murder and Mayhem!

#### 3 more murdered overnight

#### Girl, 5, father shot dead

#### Killers run rampant as six murdered

— all recent headlines in Trinidad and Tobago, a vibrant twin-island republic at the southernmost end of the Caribbean chain of islands, best known for being the birthplace of steelpan and calypso. Trinidad and Tobago has struggled for decades with escalating crime rates, poverty, and political corruption. In 2016 alone, the small nation of approximately 1.6 million recorded 463 murders, over 1000 domestic violence reports and 915 cases of child sexual abuse over a nine-month period (May 2015–February 2016). [Music Inspiring Change](#) was founded five years ago, in the context of this society.

I began my music therapy career with a passion for working with prison inmates, both adults and children. I felt that they had been neglected by the larger society, and that providing them with psychotherapeutic services would help them achieve the healing and restoration they would need to function after their incarceration. My practice has since expanded to children and teenagers from at-risk communities, or what our government labels as ‘hot-spots’ for crime and nefarious activities, children with HIV/AIDS and victims of violent crime. All of this work is geared toward creating an anti-violence movement that counters the violent, angry culture that has become the local norm.

Music therapy is the use of music and music-related activities by a qualified professional to address non-musical goals in the areas of communication, cognition, sensor-motor skills and socio-emotional behaviour. We can work in special education programmes, schools, prevention and wellness programmes, hospices and hospitals, criminal justice facilities, inpatient and outpatient psychiatric facilities, drug and alcohol treatment programs, nursing, day-care, residential homes, and private clinics. Music therapists often work with clients with developmental disabilities, such as autism and cerebral palsy, mental illnesses, such as schizophrenia and depression, physical rehabilitation needs, such as Parkinson’s disease or stroke survivors, emotional needs, such as trauma patients or sexual abuse survivors, and medical illnesses, such as cancer and liver diseases. We may also work with normally functioning people, for example, via stress management in workplace settings or in collaboration with fitness and yoga instructors.

#### Where does restorative justice come in?

I worked for three months with a group of prison inmates described by officers as ‘severely disturbed.’ Our main goals included

- helping them to identify and express their emotions in a healthy manner,
- presenting alternatives for anger management and
- reducing anxiety and depression.

During one music therapy session, I placed words describing feelings or emotions into a paddle drum and the group played a version of ‘hot potato.’ A lively song was played on a CD player, while inmates passed a ball around the circle. Every time the music was paused, the inmate who held the ball was required to pick out an emotion and answer questions about it. After the game, the group had a discussion of the importance of understanding our own emotions. During the discussion, the word ‘empathy’ came up. One 42-year-old inmate, who is particularly feared in the prison community, nicknamed ‘Animal,’<sup>9</sup> appeared confused.

But miss, why would I want to try to figure out how someone else was feeling? Wouldn’t that mean that I would be making them more important to me in my brain? That doesn’t make sense!

The concept of empathy for others was foreign and strange to the group. Throughout subsequent sessions, group activities were geared toward helping them understand the effects of their actions on others. After the three-month treatment period, inmates were ready to begin the process of engaging in restorative interventions with other professionals.

<sup>9</sup>Names have been changed to protect confidentiality.

With 'Animal,' I began to see the possible intersections between restorative practices and music therapy. Most obviously, the concept of circle facilitation and processes as a regular format stood out to me. In my first training in restorative practices, I was reminded of the drum circle, a frequent tool in music therapy, in which, just like restorative circles, everyone's contributions are valued and respected, everyone is equal, and the 'spiritual and emotional aspects of individual experience are welcomed' (Pranis, 2015). The music therapist is primarily concerned with the development of individuals within their communities and helping people to heal and restore themselves wherever possible. We tailor our activities to individual clients, using their preferred music to meet their needs, allowing their goals and needs to guide our process.

As my restorative journey continued, I began to look for ways to incorporate traditional restorative practices with my therapy practice. Male inmates at a local jail, selected because of issues with substance abuse and addiction, were working with us on their primary goal, which they identified themselves as 'healing so we can take care of our families as men.' After weeks of therapy, our topic became 'forgiveness' and in one session, we spent time discussing ways in which they could ask for and receive forgiveness from family members whom they had hurt. I used the 'fishbowl' or solution-focused circle format. Inmates would sit in the centre, tell their story and ask their peers for suggestions to heal their relationships. When the process was complete, inmates would commit to taking deliberate, immediate action toward this goal. The inmate in the centre would play a 'contract' beat on his drum, which served as a signal that he had made a contractual bond with his group of peers. His peers would repeat the beat on their instruments, as a signal that they supported his commitment, and would encourage him in his healing.

Sean felt that he had failed his four-year-old daughter, whom he loved dearly but had to leave because of repeated incarcerations for drug possession. During his time at the centre of the circle, Sean wept bitterly about his fears for his daughter growing up without him. His peers let him cry and then gave him suggestions for growing his relationship with her, such as writing letters to her, requesting special visits and colouring pictures of animals that she liked. Eventually, Sean committed to creating a CD in therapy that would include him reading bedtime stories and the group singing nursery rhymes to help her learn. By the end of the treatment process, Sean expressed hopefulness and excitement at the possibilities for fathering even throughout his continued incarceration.

## Further integration

In 2014, I married Cristiano Martinez, a former prison inmate that I had met many years ago while volunteering as a university student. He had been convicted of

manslaughter and attempted murder when he was 16 years old and spent nine years in jail before securing early release. His passion was youth development and mentoring. Together, we have created a unique programme that blends youth development, music therapy and restorative practices to help restore children and teenagers from difficult backgrounds. We use musical activities, such as musical improvisation, musical games, song writing, lyric analysis, music-assisted relaxation and group music performance, to help young people learn about themselves and find ways to express their emotions with the aim of processing traumatic experiences and gaining healing so that their development does not become stagnated.

## The impact of trauma

Natalie blurted out during one of our group sessions, 'my stepfather has raped me over and over, since I was small.' The group of incarcerated teenage girls had been talking about romantic relationships and Natalie had appeared emotional for several minutes. I quickly organised an individual session with her, the next day. The fourteen-year-old revealed that she had not spoken to her mother in months, because she had tried to tell her about the long-term sexual abuse by her boyfriend and her mother had not believed her. Natalie ran away from home shortly after her mother married him. In our sessions, she spoke often about her desire to be reconciled with her mother and her bitter disappointment at her father's absence in her life. We created a song together that she would eventually sing for her mother as they began to repair their relationship:

My daddy left me all alone in this world,  
Left me for all these girls.  
And I thought he'd be the one to fill the  
space,  
But he did nothing for me but take;  
He took my smile and my laugh and my joy,  
Treated me like nothing more than a toy.  
Mamma, I just want you to see me and love  
me —  
Believe me, it's not just a story —  
I miss you more than anything;  
I promise you, a princess is better than a  
king.

After working with Natalie and many others like her, I realised that many of the teenagers in our care had experienced brokenness in their family relationships, because of traumatic incidents. Creative and expressive art therapies are useful in these circumstances because of their well-documented benefits for trauma victims (Gunnell, 2006; Schrader and Wendland, 2012; Stolorow and Stolorow, 2013). For the restorative practitioner, understanding trauma treatment is essential as we often work with clients in the midst of recovery or suffering with post-traumatic symptoms.

All restorative practitioners can find ways to incorporate music and other arts, dance, drama, visual arts, etc., into their interventions. Music, for example, can serve as a tool to

- unify families and communities;
- cement identification of individuals and groups;
- help those involved to process their trauma;
- lighten the mood;
- set the tone of restorative conferences;
- encourage emotional expression; and
- communicate where words are difficult.

As the restorative community grows and evolves, my humble suggestion is that we find ways to connect with each other that are easily achievable through artistic expression. Music and art are healing, restorative, and tools that can be used in our journey towards becoming a restorative global society.

### Further Resources on Music Therapy

[American Music Therapy Association](#)  
[British Association for Music Therapy](#)

[Journal of Music Therapy](#)  
[Music Therapy Perspectives](#)

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## Utopia, between deed and dream

In both prisons of the city of Leuven, Leuven Central Prison and Leuven Auxiliary Prison, there has been a tradition of facilitating restorative justice through extensive communication and exchange between detainees and victims. Both groups were always in focus, and involved each other by means of indirect communication and exchange but in 2016 the time seemed right for a new, and maybe pioneering, approach. In this new way of facilitating restorative justice, both victims and detainees engaged in a creative process in which they could interact directly with each other. The [Leuven Citywide Festival: The future is More: 500 years after Utopia](#) provided the ideal vehicle for this purpose.

In Leuven in 2016 *Utopia*<sup>10</sup> was fully marked by the cultural city festival celebrating the 500th anniversary of Thomas More's book. The city festival had a very versatile program of exhibitions, street art, film, music, theatre, dance, literature and so on.

We brought together groups from the two Leuven prisons around one theme: 'How could the ideal world be for the victim and the perpetrator?' We translated this unique view on the world from both perspectives into various art forms that we shared with the world outside the walls. It became an incredibly fascinating journey, with different sections, tailored to each participant.

At the end of the project all the different parts of the project came together into an exhibition in [Opek, Leuven](#). 600 people visited this exhibition. It became an impressive collection of images, drawings, poems, recordings of music and theatrical performance, curated by the famous Belgian photographer Lieve Blancquaert.

### Victims

It all started with a group of twelve victims. They had responded to an open call launched by [Vormingplus Oost-Brabant](#). During the entire project, an employee

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<sup>10</sup> *Utopia, between deed and dream* is a project of [De Rode Antraciet vzw](#), [Vormingplus Oost-Brabant](#), [CAW Oost-Brabant](#) and both Leuven prisons, with the generous support of the Flemish Region, the Province of Flemish-Brabant and KunstLeuven vzw.

of [CAW Oost-Brabant](#) Victim Assistance was closely involved, mainly because of the vulnerability of some of the participants. This was an important condition to have a successful process.

One of the main goals for the participants in the project was that they could tell their story, that they would finally be heard. Stories are therefore central to all the different trajectories we carried out. The different trajectories consisted of a theatre performance, digital storytelling, a movie, individual expressions, a group trajectory and an exhibition.

## Theatre

Under the auspices of Danny Timmermans, an actor-director, both a group of victims and a group of detainees developed a theatre performance in Leuven Auxiliary Prison.

The two groups started their creative process separately. Only at the second stage of the process were the two groups brought together. As this was the very first time detainees could meet and interact with victims, for both groups this was an experience that brought along feelings of anxiety and excitement but also mutual understanding and openness.

The theatrical performance took place in a vacant section of the prison. We cleared out six unused cells. The audience was divided into six groups and got to see a story in each cell. After each story, they moved to the next cell. At the end of the performance, all actors came together for a finale. We played four performances for a total of 160 spectators. After each performance, the audience was given the opportunity to raise questions and discuss about what they had been watching. Given the touching nature of the stories told, the audience engaged very much in these discussions and confirmed the value of them.

Some comments from spectators:

Thank you very much for your courage to give us a glimpse of your life.  
It was clinging to me, what I heard and I saw.  
Respectful and full of humour.

Dear All

I can only admire each of you. To stand there, show yourselves. To make the complexity of pain so beautiful. Simple, from story to story, from door to door, but here and there connected. It touches me deeply, it rages, it's shocking and makes me think. You have given pain an extra dimension. And when I saw you there, my heart made a small jump. To me, that was a little *Utopia*, you together (perpetrators and victims) on stage. With a powerful piece, with content, with depth and with a lot of courage.

At the end of the project, one of the inmate participants wrote a letter to explain what the meaning of this project was to him (this is only a part of his letter):

And so I would like to thank you for dealing with me as a human being without prejudices. Thank you for not looking at me only as a criminal. Thank you for this unique experience, which in many ways was completely new to me. And thank you for possibly having even made sure that I still believe in the unconditional goodness of people.

I think by signing up for the theatre project, I unconsciously took one of the best decisions of the last months. I would not have had the honour of meeting you, and working together on something that touched me very much and provoked many emotions ... I'll never forget this. And I think I really needed such a thing. Because soon I'm going out of here without a doubt, and that's so important! Because if you are able to take a positive step out of this process and not have to deal with all the internal frustrations, it will be a lot easier to build up a life again. And maybe I'll come out of this prison a stronger man than I was before. I'm somewhat old-fashioned and still believe in things like true love, softness, compassion and fairness ... And I came close to losing those beliefs. So from the deepest of my heart and soul, thank you.

## Digital storytelling

Some of the most vulnerable participants were unable to enter a prison and meet the inmates. An alternative trajectory was sought and found in a digital storytelling process in collaboration with Mixtories vzw. Each individual worked on a digital story consisting of a recording of the participant telling his/her story. This story was illustrated with pictures. The result was three powerful testimonies.

## Individual trajectories

Along with the trajectories described above which were organised in groups, there were also individual trajectories in which victims were given the opportunity to express their creativity in writing, drawing, painting or any other art form available.

Some of the detainees could also engage in these individual trajectories. In Leuven Central there are traditionally many detainees who express themselves artistically. Ten of them went into drawing, painting, writing, making models or other visual work.



## Movie: *The making of justice*

Sarah Vanhee, a renowned international artist, presented her project *The making of justice*. Sarah wanted to produce a scenario for a crime movie, in a co-creation process with detainees. In the brainstorming sessions and discussions the themes of justice, victims, reintegration and restoration were important themes. These conversations are being filmed and resulted in an artistic product. The film *The making of justice* was shown daily at the exhibition. Even now, the film is regularly shown.

## Another trajectory

Along with *The making of justice*, we started another trajectory with the detainees of Leuven Central. After an information session, twelve inmates enrolled in the process. We met three times in a discussion group to further develop the issues of victims, *my Utopia* ... Then everyone started to work creatively. A rap song was written and recorded, a song made together with a singer-songwriter from outside prison, paintings were created, even a sonnet, ...

## Leuven Central Prison Choir

Also the Leuven Central Prison, under the direction of the [Muntschouwburg \(Theatre Royal\)](#), participated in the *Utopia* project. The detainees created music based on texts written by the victims. In addition, we organised a musical workshop where we invited choral

members of choirs from outside prison. This was also a fascinating experience.

## Utopia and beyond

Last but not least I would like to give voice to one of our courageous participants who summarised the project as follows:

Beyond the painful criminal acts appear the sadness, the anger and the fear that connect us. Beyond the details of the crimes emerge the powerlessness and the shame we recognise in the other.

Emotions put something in motion and are the glue between us, prisoners outside or inside the walls. Being heard without judgement and expressing what you think and feel is liberating. The power of meeting each other, prisoners inside and outside walls, brought my *Utopia* a little closer.

Finally, when closing the project, almost all participants expressed their intention and willingness to engage in further projects, trajectories or events. For the organisers as well, *Utopia* brought about so much enthusiasm, that a follow-up project has already been identified for the autumn of 2017.

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## Prison-theatre and restorative justice

In this project directed by Antonio Turco, we illustrate the restorative impact of an important prison-theatre experience. We are talking about theatre company [Teatro Stabile Assai](#) in the Rebibbia prison in Rome. The theatre company benefits from major collaborations with [Associazione italiana Cultura e Sport \(AiCS\)](#) (for the dissemination of its events), with the Chair of Social Psychology and Law of the University of Sassari and with [PsicoIus](#) (Roman School of Forensic Psychology — a non profit association), both of whom support the scientific and restorative values of the project.

The theatre company is an expression of ‘prison dramaturgy,’ which is a social theatre of testimonies where prisoners are given the opportunity to share their difficulties and exchange their life stories. Similar theatre tools are used in other fields of social work (for example, with young people, migrants, drug-dependents, mentally distressed people and victims of violence); in this case, the focus is the prison setting and the social inclusion of prisoners. An important aim of the theatre performances is to create a bridge to connect prisoners and with the outside community and to promote mutual understanding beyond stereotypes.

[Teatro Stabile Assai](#) is the oldest theatre group in an Italian prison (2017 is its 35th anniversary). Its distinctive features are:

- its composition (it is made up of prisoners, from semi-free detainees who enjoy special permits, as well as former prisoners, prison staff and professional musicians);
- performances throughout the national territory in the major Italian theatres, festivals and squares;
- its lyrics are completely new, dedicated to the

great themes of marginalisation: the inmates make up plots through which they revisit their stories and build a communication with the outside in a dramatic style.

Detained for mafia crimes, for example, they co-wrote and staged three shows about crimes in three Italian major cities: Rome, Naples, Palermo.

The prisoners rewrite their criminal actions focusing on the consequences for themselves, for the victim and for the community, making visible their own paths of change. We believe that constitutes a formidable tool for

- reconnecting the prison system with the external world;
- reactivating a dialogue that detention inevitably has interrupted by delegating to the prison and its protagonists a responsibility that instead belongs to the community;
- setting up the conditions for the prevention of crime by enacting promotional strategies that reduce the opportunities for deviance, marginalisation and social isolation.

Inmate-actors of the theatre company go into schools and talk with girls and boys on the risks of bullying, of deviant action and also of indifference to the hardship and the suffering of the most vulnerable people and conditions. People with a criminal past are warning against the risks of bravado; in speaking of the suffering of the victims, they will be credible because they put themselves in the action. They don't interpret the protagonists of classic theatre. They enact their lives — lives with other known and recognisable daily dramas and chances of succeeding, despite everything.

This applies to the narrator, but also to the audience who participate in the search for possible meanings through an interpretive cooperative work with those detained, prison representatives and experts with whom, as spectators, they may be amazed at the story told.

## Restorative aims

What are the restorative aims and effects of the activity? What connections can be identified with Restorative Justice?

The first point concerns the goal of letting the social community know the life paths and the changes of the offender after the crime and the conviction. Because the community needs to go beyond the negative emotions generated by the offence, it needs to know what are the subsequent paths in order to verify the commitment of author to change and their will to make symbolic restoration even through theatrical representations. For example, in the two shows dedicated to the tragic deaths of Judges Falcone and Borsellino, *Alle due i monaci tornano in convento* (At two the monks return

to the convent) (2012) and *Il corno di Olifante* (The horn of Olifante) (2017), the narration of the event intersects with micro-stories that underpin or feed the mafia.

Content is another relevant aspect. The texts of the shows express the values and principles of restorative justice: relationships, responsibility, respect, inclusion and solidarity. In some cases, they stage restorative justice practices, such as *e . . . (and . . .)* (2008) where a meeting between a murderer and the victim's father was presented. It was a very painful encounter for both. They needed to say, to know, to express anger, vengeance, rancour and guilt with an awareness of the difficulty of that encounter, of their individual paths and of needing to get past the event that caused the harm.

We also consider social skills that develop through theatrical activity: individual responsibility, respect for rules, sharing with the group and working for goals, all skills which prison processes undermine even though they are fundamental to active reintegration into the community.

But such skills are also developed through another aspect that performances facilitate/enable: the free encounter with wives, daughters, sons and other significant siblings. In the time of detention, such encounters are inevitably mediated by the prison, its rules and its barriers, not just the physical ones. During performances, relationships outside the role and circumstances of detention can be used and this supports the development of the skills that are the basis of those relationships and which we know are also crucial for relapse prevention through positive relational/social engagements.

Building a show also facilitates another network — the institutional one: the prison, the supervising court, local government and associations. All work together with respect to the same objective, which is not individual (the possible reintegration of a prisoner) but social: the approach of two social parties separated not only by the offence, but from the response to the offence: detention. It is an example, an exercise of collective self-efficacy, as Albert Bandura (1977) has taught us, of the belief that success in the goal and is the result of everyone's involvement.

And so, to conclude, crime prevention cannot be an individual goal; it cannot be the responsibility only of the system of justice. It is a collective goal that requires the responsibility of everyone and all in an ecological key, because responsibility consists of a function that circulates between subjects and systems,

responsibility does not have an ontological, but interactive, relational nature: it is not a content but a result of relationships (De Leo, 1996, p. 56 authors' translation).

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## Beyond punishment and restorative justice

With Law n°2014–896 of 15 August 2014 restorative justice became part of the body of French law at every stage in the procedure throughout the whole criminal justice process. The disposals available are more and more varied such that they allow victims and offenders the power to think about themselves putting forward a restorative justice disposal which best corresponds to the expectations they have.

I have seen a lot of prison films. Either the film focuses on the dark side of prisons — with no hope of making the offenders law-abiding in the future — or the prison is portrayed as a reformable ‘Rehabilitation Institution,’ that is, achieving new crime prevention via better therapies and better education or via stricter discipline. Modern, contemporary incarceration held an interest for me, however, for other reasons. I am interested in the emotional side — with the deep hidden pain and hatred, with all the sorrow that I sense underneath the surface and observe when I visit an inmate or read a verdict. I get similar feelings when I leave the confines of the prison and get in touch with the damaged and injured parties — the victims.

In [Beyond punishment](#), I was interested in all these feelings and needs that modern judicial machinery and imprisonment do not have sufficient space for. Without a doubt, the penal system has to end the conflict to protect the general public and also to prevent vigilantism. The court, however, is unfortunately restricted from fully dealing with the conflict. By 1977 the renowned Norwegian criminologist Nils Christie (1977) had already coined the term ‘Conflicts as property,’ that is, the conflict is shifted away from the parties directly involved and into the justice system.

In the long run, this ‘disownership’ creates challenging preconditions for survivors of violent crime to rebuild their equanimity. I sensed during my research that both sides are extremely well-defended and that there exists very little belief that destructive fantasies and negative feelings could be replaced by some form of accurate perception of those on the other side.

Those suffering on the victim side remain emotionally tied to the past, still considering themselves powerless victims of tragic events and feeling that the state and courts have at times left them terribly alone. The

other side stagnates as well. In the hermetic system of defence attorney, judge, public prosecutor, prison employees and forensic experts — in order to try to keep sentences as low as possible — offenders are frequently taught simultaneously to downplay their offence and yet also to appear remorseful.

In my opinion, in the majority of violent crimes, there is the possibility of having a helpful mutual victim/offender reconsideration of the fantasies, the emotions and the facts. I sought out such cases for [Beyond punishment](#).

### The stories — a short overview

The subject of criminality ranks high in the public’s attention. It is regularly featured in news stories, influences political events and plays a fundamental role in entertainment media. We are, nonetheless, abstractly discussing how to react to crime. We rarely see crime as it is experienced: as a deep injury of real people caused by real people.

#### USA

Leola and Lisa live in the Bronx near the supermarket where their sixteen year old son and brother was shot by a stranger. Mother and daughter have been waiting eleven years for Sean — twenty one at the time of the murder and sentenced to forty years in prison for that crime — to admit his involvement.

Trying to deal with the loss and to find answers for the seemingly inexpressible led them both to a prison in Wisconsin. By talking to others convicted of murder, they hope to make what happened more tangible and, by hearing the words and explanations of their unknown counterparts, to be able to learn to deal with the pain.



Figure 2: *Beyond punishment*

### Norway

A young love in Norway ends in a murder when Hans<sup>11</sup> kills his sixteen year old girlfriend out of jealousy. Her father can't stand the fact that Hans is already, after only a few years in prison, allowed to return to his hometown on leave. The father is scared that he may run into Hans.

When Erik and Hans encounter each other indirectly via video recordings, it seems they may be cautiously approaching each other. But will they ever have the chance to meet in person?

### Germany

Patrick's father, Gerold von Braunmühl, a senior official in the foreign ministry, was killed in 1986 by the militant Red Army Faction (RAF). Despite a letter claiming responsibility that was left near the crime scene, the names of the perpetrators remain unknown to this day. Patrick has thus been denied the possibility of engaging with his father's murderers.

Years ago, he had met with Birgit Hogeferd, a detained RAF member, at a prison. After her release, Patrick hopes for a new chance for a resolution through an encounter under better circumstances ... In the film, Patrick finds himself across from someone who has also killed in the name of the RAF: a man called Manfred.

In each of the three cases in the film, the people on both sides face a choice. Do they want to learn specifics about each other, possibly even personally meeting, in order to extricate themselves from the spiral of projections and assumptions about the other side?

Or do they prefer to stay as they are, suffering in their roles as 'victims' and 'perpetrators' but also enthralled by notions of revenge, punishment and forgetting? Is knowledge and experience of the other side's emotions actually a helpful tool?

### The search for protagonists

The search for the protagonists took a lot of time. The final line ups consisted of those who were willing to be filmed and to enter into a two-way exchange. As a film maker, of course, you intervene in the process but without outside support it's almost impossible to manage such conflicts. Also, on the whole, the possibility of interchanges for the protagonists became clearer as the film progressed; I didn't start with that. The path of seeking protagonists actually always went via the victim side. If you try to approach the victim side from the perpetrator side, it's usually too threatening for them. I've experienced that a few times and it quickly proved to be a mistake.

<sup>11</sup>Name changed to preserve anonymity.



In the film, none of the perpetrator families wanted to join in but that's a coincidence; otherwise, I probably would have also included them. It was already a big challenge to find people who were at all willing to get involved in such an encounter with 'their' other side — and a still greater challenge to convince them to be filmed. With that, the film really is entering unknown territory and the protagonists were very brave.

### Feelings and thoughts while filming

The encounters with the protagonists were very intense. So, I had to be careful to remain a documentary film maker and find a balance between proximity and the observer position. I had to operate on multiple levels: as a human counterpart and empathetic conflict companion as well as a goal-oriented film maker who was proceeding economically. I had already received support and guidance from non-violent communication experts and professional restorative justice mediators during the search for the protagonists and later in the attempt to invite them to participate. However, before the final configurations had been settled on, it was already difficult because I had first to learn not to allow myself to be discouraged by the search and also to develop 'persuasiveness through empathy.'

Also, during the subsequent shooting, I had experienced support that I could always call on. I also luckily had my small film crew, which established a considerable emotional security for everyone. I was accompanied occasionally in the work by a conflict supervisor. I always had someone I could talk to. Just as the participants couldn't do it alone, I also needed support. Naturally, it was unclear whether anything would come of the process because everything was voluntary and the result of this kind of process is always unknown. So, there was always the opportunity to drop out, even up until the very end. Furthermore, I had assured all the protagonists that they would get a copy of the film and have the right of veto. I'm in regular contact with all of them to this day, even if the support isn't as intense as during the shooting.

### Conditions for discussion circles within the locations

The type of discussion group that we found in the Wisconsin prison of Green Bay is not very widespread in the United States even though the Americans have a much more sophisticated system to look after the victims of violent crime. Unlike in Germany, where victim support has only arisen in the last few decades, every state in the USA has its own bureau in the department of justice which deals only with victims of violent crime. This focus, and a stronger tradition of publicly expressing oneself about personal issues in groups, makes the idea and practice of discussion circles more natural. I found the Wisconsin circle through the former judge of the Supreme Court, [Janine Geske](#), who is well known for her work in this field. The [Green Bay](#) Prison Program has existed since 1997 and is a psychosocial training program with the three-day restorative justice group as a highlight. Those affected by crimes and those responsible for crimes speak in a regulated process. Both sides are able to feel deep emotions and have profound experiences despite there being only representatives from 'the other side' there and not their respective actual perpetrators or victims. In fact, I know of only a very few such programs, which is a dilemma. If Mrs Geske and the other elderly ladies who look after such projects — and do not appear in the film — were to stop, it's not clear whether this type of mediation would continue. In Europe, there are such approaches as well, especially in Belgium. In Germany, however, they are few and far between and not in institutions.

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## Restorative Justice: Another Way

While working on Yann Arthus Bertrand's film [Human](#) (2015), we flew to Florida to film several interviews about justice and the death penalty. We spoke with dozens of victims and inmates. Among them were Agnes Furey and Leonard Scovens, whose story surprised us and moved us deeply. We decided to further document their journey, which is closely linked to restorative justice principles and practices. This prompted us to learn more about it; and so restorative justice became the focal point of our documentary. [Another justice](#), which we co-directed, was first broadcast on the French public channel LCP last December under the title [Une autre justice](#).

Leonard Scovens is serving life in a Florida prison for the 1998 murders of his ex-girlfriend, Patricia Reed, and her young son, Christopher. He strangled them out of rage during a severe crack cocaine withdrawal crisis. Several years after he was found guilty and convicted, Agnes Furey, the victims' mother and grandmother, realised she could no longer stay alone with her grief. She wanted to understand. So, looking to open up and start a dialogue, she reached out to Leonard, who responded positively. As time went on, they kept writing often and speaking on the 'phone and eventually enrolled together in a fight to promote restorative justice.

Agnes used to be a nurse and has worked with people suffering from drug addiction. She is also firmly anti-death penalty. Nowadays, she lives in Tallahassee, Florida. A poised but lively and charismatic lady, she drives her red van all over the Sunshine State to give conferences on restorative justice in schools and churches. She also conducted a special programme with inmates in prison, and gives public readings of *Wildflowers in the Median* (2012), a book she co-wrote with Leonard, which has won several literary prizes.

Behind bars, Leonard works to create discussion groups with other prisoners and victims of crimes. Coming himself from a very difficult background where drugs, physical violence and guns were commonplace, he knows first-hand that many offenders have grown up in a spiral of violence that can be hard to escape. However, Leonard believes that one can break free from this pattern by becoming conscious of it. This is the message he is trying to get across to other inmates. But he has been transferred from prison to prison seven times over six years, which probably has to do with his efforts to organise groups for convicts to learn about restorative justice.

As Florida law forbids a crime victim's family from visiting the guilty party in prison, Agnes and Leonard can only share their parallel journeys in letters and 'phone conversations. They haven't been able to meet yet, despite their many requests to the penitential administration. In Florida, where the justice system is especially conservative and punitive, restorative justice initiatives are less developed and more readily shut down than in other states.

The very first time we met Agnes, she was sweet, calm and open-minded; she stood out from the brutal judicial landscape that we were getting to know. The next day, we visited Leonard in prison and the power of their common initiative truly struck us. In a country where mass shootings and gun violence often make headlines, where frightened citizens respond by buying firearms and where incarceration rates are among the highest in the world, Agnes and Leonard's story hit us hard. We understood that beyond their personal story, their commitment had a universal resonance.

In order to know more, we started writing to them. A four-way conversation unfolded month after month. This is when Agnes told us about two other crim-

inal cases involving restorative justice, which had also happened in Tallahassee. These stories involved very different people and families, and both were astonishing in their own right. We quickly decided that we wanted to film these different ways of seeing justice — a justice that should aim to repair and rebuild rather than to punish.

Over the following year, we travelled to Florida several times to film Agnes, Leonard, and other protagonists of our film. Their respective journeys seemed organically connected. They echoed each other in ways that have allowed us to further examine the concepts and meaning of restorative justice.

Julie and Michael McBride's son, Conor, was a student when he shot and killed his girlfriend, Ann Grosmaire, during an argument. The McBrides were close to the Grosmaires; Conor and Ann were about to get married. The Grosmaires' first reaction was to tell the McBrides: 'We have all lost a child.' Both families started looking into alternative justice options, which is how they heard about restorative justice. With a lot of perseverance, they were able to organise a restorative dialogue. Ultimately, Conor was sentenced to 20 years in jail and 10 years of probation. Today, Conor is still in prison, but is active in bi-weekly sessions of the Con-Quest Program (a programme of discussion circles and classes for inmates, led by fellow prisoners and outside volunteers; Agnes used to participate). He leads some of the sessions himself, usually to talk to his peers about restorative justice. The Grosmaires keep visiting him very regularly and he has begun considering his future out of jail.

The third story we looked at is that of Renée Napier and Eric Smallridge. At 24, Eric crashed his car into another car while drunk, instantly killing Lisa and Meagan, both 20. He was sentenced to eleven years in prison. Meagan's mother Renée decided to give meaning to this tragedy. She created a foundation to raise awareness among young people about the dangers of drunk driving. Very early on, she asked Eric if he would like to speak about his experience, and then convinced the Department of Corrections to grant him some time out of prison to come and speak with her in schools about their experience. Eric is now free, rebuilding a life of his own, and keeps touring schools with Renée.

Although the film's main focus is on the characters and their personal stories, meeting with and interviewing specialists was of paramount importance in order to put these stories into perspective and convey their significance. Among them, Sujatha Baliga, who is the director of the Restorative Justice Project at [Impact Justice](#) in Oakland and also organised the restorative dialogue in the Grosmaires-McBrides case, was our main guide.

Leonard and Agnes still aren't able to meet and Leonard will never get out of jail. Conor is still in prison but regularly meets with Ann's parents and is building a future for himself. Eric is now free and remains close



Figure 3: Leonard Scovens

to Meagan's mother. All of them, at different stages of their unique stories, are building their trajectories.

We see *Another justice* as the continuation of our respective previous works, which showed and questioned the incredible human ability to recover in the wake of tragedy. More than anything, we want to give a platform for those who get the better of their scars in order to build a different future for themselves and for others.

**Isabelle Vayron and Chloé Henry-Biabaud**

Directors of the documentary *Another justice*

## References

Furey, A. and Scovens, L. (eds.) (2012). *Wildflowers in the Median: a restorative journey into healing, justice and joy*. Bloomington, IN: iUniverse.

## Calendar

**Criminal Justice Platform Europe** *International Criminal Justice Summer Courses 2017: Radicalisation — Desistance — Engaging offenders to change* 4–7 July 2017 at the Centre for Legal Studies and Specialised Training, Barcelona. Further information is available in the [programme](#); you can register with [CEP](#).

**Child Maltreatment and Well-being** *Child maltreatment and well-being: Contemporary issues, research and practice* 7–8 July 2017 Rijeka, Croatia Further details from [Child Maltreatment and Well-being](#).

**European Forum for Restorative Justice** *Summer School 2017* 24–28 July 2017 at the University of Insubria, Como, Italy. Further information and the [draft programme](#) from the [EFRJ](#).

**University of Leeds, School of Law** *New Advances in Restorative Justice Theory and Practice* 18–19 September 2017 Weetwood Hall, Leeds Further details from the [School of Law](#).

**IIRP 23rd World Conference** *Learning in the 21st Century: A Restorative Vision* 23–25 October 2017 Bethlehem, PA, US Further details from the [IIRP](#).

**Transforming Conflict** *Restorative Approaches in Youth Settings A constructive approach to conflict, bullying, disruption and challenging behaviour* 6–11 November 2017 Reading, Berkshire, UK Download the PDF from [Transforming Conflict](#).

**RJ Week 2017** International Restorative Justice Week 19–26 November 2017 Details of events will be available in due course from the [EFRJ](#).

**Eight annual conference of the Victimology Society of Serbia** *Victims between security, human rights and justice: Local and global context* 30 November – 1 December 2017 Belgrade Further details from the [Victimology Society of Serbia](#).

**Howard League** *Redesigning Justice: Promoting civil rights, trust and fairness* 21–22 March 2018 Keble College, Oxford Further details from the [Howard League](#)

**10th International EFRJ Conference** *Expanding the restorative imagination: Restorative justice between realities and visions in Europe and beyond* 14–16 June 2018 Tirana, Albania. Call for proposals open until 1 November 2017. More information from the [EFRJ](#).

## Arts and Restorative Justice Booklet

We welcome articles for the Arts and RJ Booklet which will be published on the occasion of RJ Week 2017. Deadline: 1 October 2017. Please send them to [Emanuela Biffi](#).

## Call for submissions

### Articles

Each edition we will feature a review of the field of restorative justice, reflections on policy developments and research findings/project outcomes. Please consider sharing your perspective with colleagues.

### Book reviews

We very much welcome reviews of books and articles from our membership. If you have published a book and would like to submit it for review, please send it to the [Secretariat](#).

## Events

Please let us know about upcoming restorative justice related conferences and events. We are happy to share this information via the Newsletter or Newsflash.

## Not an EFRJ member yet?

Join forces with other RJ professionals throughout Europe and beyond and sign up via our [our website](#). (If you are a member but have not yet renewed for 2017, you can use the same link.) The process only takes five minutes. You can also email the [Secretariat](#) or use the address below.

### As a member you will receive:

- three electronic newsletters a year
- regular electronic news with interesting information
- reduced conference fees and special book prices
- the opportunity to publicise your book in the monthly *Newsflash* — contact [Emanuela Biffi](#) with details of your book
- opportunities to learn from, meet and work with RJ colleagues
- reduced subscription fee to *Restorative Justice: An international journal*
- and much, much more ...

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