

2023 REPORT

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INITIATIVE

# Punitive by Design

THE FARM LINE AT THE  
LOUISIANA STATE PENITENTIARY





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*Portraits taken by Jackson Hill.*

**COVER: Angola Prison, No. 1114**  
(Jackson Hill, 1982)

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LOUISIANA STATE PENITENTIARY

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# Executive Summary

This report exposes the harsh conditions of forced agricultural labor at the Louisiana State Penitentiary in Tunica, Louisiana. Built on the grounds of former slave plantations, the prison was—and remains—called “Angola,” reportedly because the “best” enslaved people came from that African country. Today, Angola is an 18,000-acre penal plantation that continues to force people to work in unsafe conditions and without a fair wage.

Every day, the State forces incarcerated men to work plantation row crops at Angola. Overseen by armed guards on horseback, these men walk into the fields, carrying hoes and shovels, to dig ditches and harvest crops on the “Farm Line.” Some are paid two cents an hour for their labor. Many are paid nothing at all. All are forced to work in extreme heat and humidity, without essential safety gear or modern agricultural equipment, even though the State owns such equipment. These men face serious punishment if they refuse to work or if a guard is unsatisfied with their performance.

The combination of these intolerable and inherently dangerous conditions puts incarcerated people at substantial risk of severe psychological and physical harm, including life-threatening heat-related illnesses. These health risks are particularly

acute for individuals with disabilities, who should be exempted from fieldwork, but are not.

There is no justification for the Farm Line. It is not profitable. The agricultural techniques are inefficient and old-fashioned. It does not make Louisiana safer, since it does not contribute to a person’s rehabilitation or prepare him to return home from prison.

The true purpose of the Farm Line appears to be to punish, intimidate, and humiliate incarcerated men—particularly incarcerated Black men—by replicating patterns of enslavement.

Forced agricultural labor at Angola is best understood as “slavery by another name.” The Thirteenth Amendment, ratified in 1865, banned slavery and involuntary servitude, except “as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted.” The Louisiana Constitution also permits involuntary servitude as punishment for a crime.

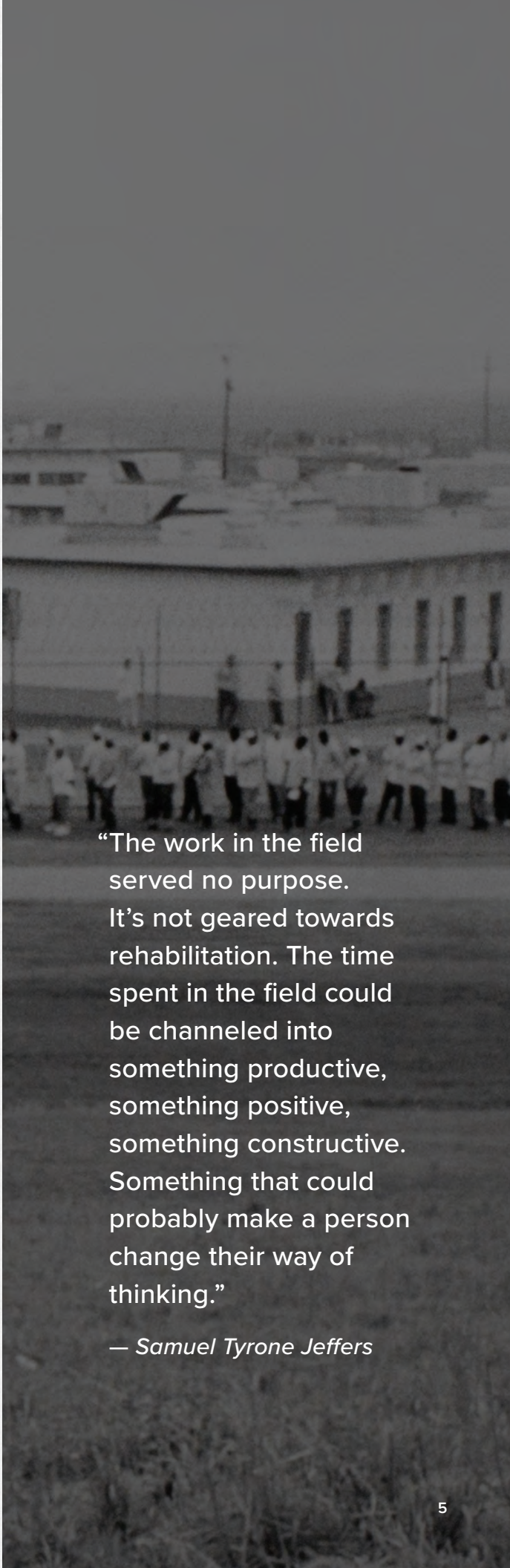
After the Civil War, the State used this “punishment exception” to build a penal system that re-enslaved freed Black people by convicting them of newly-created crimes and sentencing them to hard labor. The State and former slaveholders profited from

this system, known as convict leasing. As intended, these practices disproportionately harmed Black people.

Today, Black people are disproportionately incarcerated and forced to work the Farm Line.

**This offers a chilling lesson to the people of Louisiana: anyone can be made a slave or servant.**

In a state that values fairness and justice, all labor must be voluntary. If one chooses to work, that work must be safe, fairly compensated, and purposeful.



“The work in the field served no purpose. It’s not geared towards rehabilitation. The time spent in the field could be channeled into something productive, something positive, something constructive. Something that could probably make a person change their way of thinking.”

— *Samuel Tyrone Jeffers*

# Introduction

by Terrance Winn

When I was a teenager, the State sent me to Angola to serve a life sentence at hard labor. I spent decades working the crops there.

The work was degrading. It was brutal, especially in the summer. The officers—we called them “freemen”—would march us into the fields. They gave us hand tools, maybe some rubber boots. Never mind that Angola had farm machinery.

We picked corn and pulled cotton stalks with our hands. Sometimes, the freemen made us dig ditches in the rain or pull grass with our fingers. We would come in from the field blistered and soaked in sweat. Exhausted to the bone.

We had no meaningful choice but to comply. We were punished for advocating for safer working conditions. We were passed over for reassignment to better jobs. If we refused to work, we lost our good time. Sometimes, we were locked in the “dungeon,” or solitary confinement. I refused to pick cotton—I’m nobody’s slave—and was sent to the dungeon 13 times, including once for 13 months.

**What was the point of this system?  
To break us, physically and spiritually.  
To humiliate us into submission. To control  
our bodies. To own our bodies. To make  
money off our backs.**

Right now, thousands of men and women in Louisiana are forced to work against their will. They are embroidering sheriff’s uniforms, building office furniture, and harvesting crops. Some are suffering in the dungeon, like I did, because they refuse to participate in slavery.

We have a moral responsibility to end forced prison labor. Everyone, including those convicted of a crime, deserves to live and work with dignity.

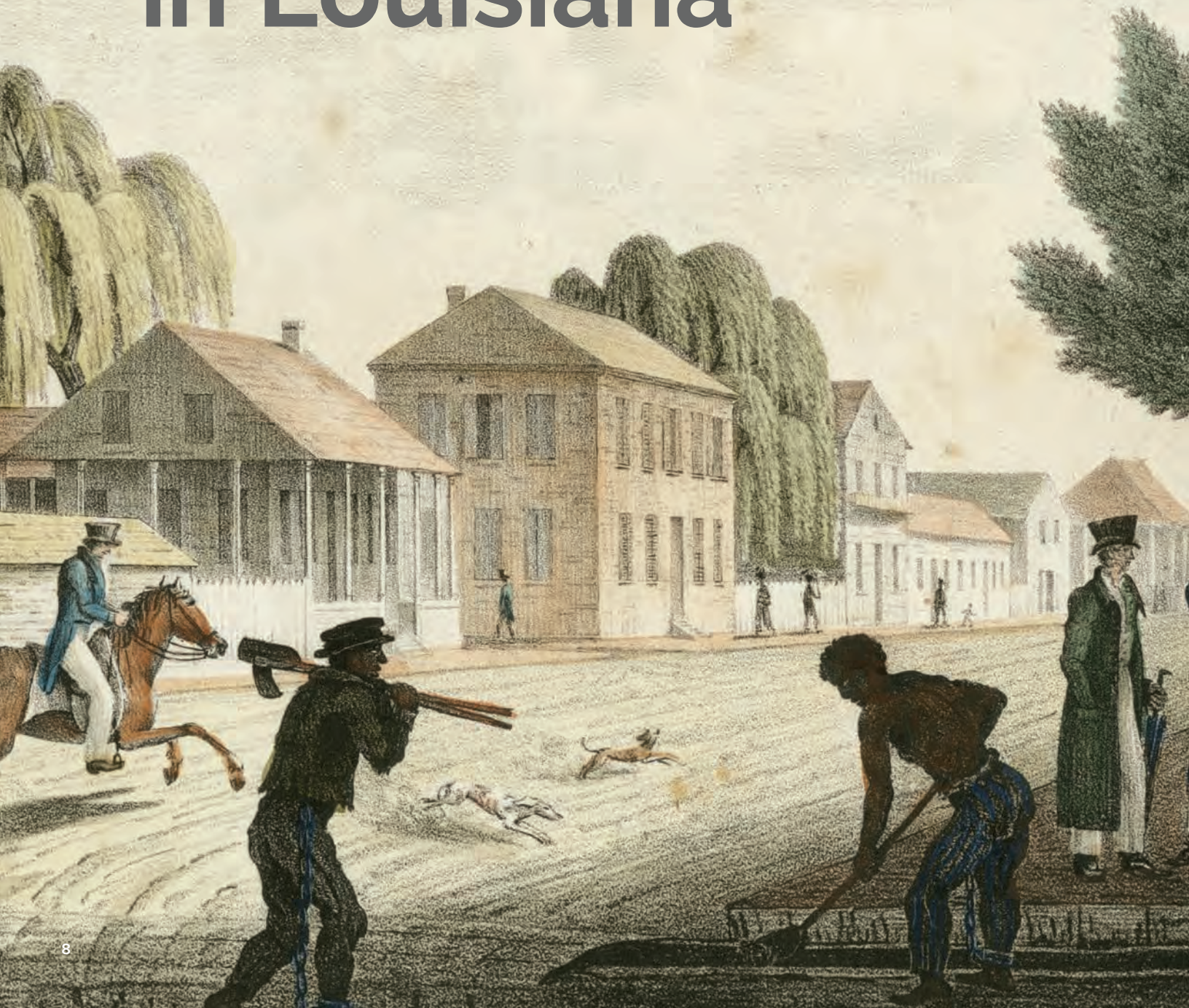
*Terrance Winn survived more than 30 years of hard labor at Angola. Now, he organizes and advocates against forced labor and solitary confinement in venues worldwide, including the United Nations. Mr. Winn is the executive director of Priority Intention Practical Exchange, an organization that advocates for formerly incarcerated people. He lives in Shreveport, Louisiana.*







# The Roots of Prison Labor in Louisiana







**Louisiana’s prison system is deeply rooted in principles of white supremacy, brutal discipline, and profit chasing. For generations, the State has disproportionately incarcerated Black people and then extracted their labor through force. This is not by chance. Instead, Louisiana’s prison labor system was designed to be an institution of racist social control.**

**LEFT: “Vue d’une Rue du Faubourg Ste. Marie, Nelle. Orléans. (Louisiane)”**  
Felix Achille Saint-Aulaire (1821)

This lithograph depicts a group of enslaved men and women digging and cleaning a street gutter in what is now the Central Business District of New Orleans.



## Forced Prison Labor, Pre-Civil War

The exploitation of incarcerated people predates the Civil War.<sup>1</sup> Louisiana built its first state prison in 1835 in Baton Rouge.<sup>2</sup> The State quickly realized that operating the prison was expensive, so to save money—and, later, to make money—the State began leasing the prison's operation to private contractors in 1844.<sup>3</sup>

Under this system, planters and industrialists would assume financial responsibility for the basic care of the convicted people, who became a valuable source of free labor.<sup>4</sup> Many of these contractors set up “factory-style” work within prison walls and extracted enormous wealth from the arrangement.<sup>5</sup>

During this time, most people subjected to forced penal servitude were white.<sup>6</sup> According to one indignant state legislator, conditions were so stark that these white prisoners were treated “like slaves.”<sup>7</sup>



## DAREN SHIVERS

*served more than 33 years at Angola*

### **They had machines in Angola,**

but they sent inmates out there to pick the cotton. Why have inmates pull cotton stalks out of the ground? It's easier to use a tractor. But no, they want you to pull it out of the field like you was a slave.

They'd make you scrape the ditches all the way to the dirt. Then, they'd want you to spread [the dirt] back out. That didn't make sense at all. I can't give a good reason why they made us do it. I guess because they wanted to feel in control.

They're trying to break you. Man, you can't break a human being. You can break animals. You can break horses. A lot of guys, they gave up. I saw guys lose their minds, their sanity. I couldn't let the officers break me.

**LEFT: Slavery is Dead (?)**  
Thomas Nash (1867)

This political cartoon was published in Harper's Weekly shortly after the Emancipation Proclamation, the ratification of the 13th Amendment, and the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1866. The image depicts the failure of each to fully protect African Americans. Two images, one depicting an African American being sold into slavery as punishment for a crime and a second depicting an African American being whipped as a punishment for a crime, draw attention to the ability of state governments to circumvent those three legal acts.



**Watch video testimonials featuring Daren and other directly impacted people at [labor.promiseofjustice.org](https://labor.promiseofjustice.org)**

# The Punishment Exceptions in the Louisiana and U.S. Constitutions

The demographics and size of Louisiana's prison population changed dramatically after the Civil War, when half the State's residents became citizens.<sup>8</sup> By that point, the economic, political, and social systems of the slaveholding states were "in shambles."<sup>9</sup> Without enslaved labor, plantation owners were upset.<sup>10</sup> Large areas of real estate had been destroyed, state governments were deeply in debt, and the loss of a formal racial hierarchy presented an "extraordinary dilemma for Southern white society."<sup>11</sup>

Ratified in 1865, the Thirteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution is widely recognized as the formal abolition of slavery in the United States. However, it only ended chattel slavery, in which an individual is considered the personal property of another.

Section I of the Thirteenth Amendment reads: **"Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction."**<sup>12</sup> Similarly, Louisiana's Constitution provides: "Slavery and involuntary servitude are prohibited, except in the latter case as punishment for crime."<sup>13</sup>

This loophole, known as the punishment exception, presented an opportunity: Southern white society, which had lost power and profit with the ending of chattel slavery, could keep its privilege through criminal law. In this way, the Thirteenth Amendment incentivized the arrest, incarceration, and subsequent re-enslavement of Black people.



# The Black Codes: “Getting Things Back as Near to Slavery as Possible”

To maintain the cheap labor force lost through Emancipation, the Louisiana legislature expanded discriminatory laws and enacted new ones.<sup>14</sup> Known as “Black Codes,” these laws subjected Black people to criminal prosecution for everyday behavior like “loitering, breaking curfew, vagrancy, having weapons, and not carrying proof of employment.”<sup>15</sup> According to one Louisiana legislator, the objective of the Black Codes was “getting things back as near to slavery as possible.”<sup>16</sup>

The Black Codes served their purpose: prison populations grew exponentially, providing the State—and in some cases, private corporations—with a captive workforce at low and sometimes no cost.<sup>17</sup> For the first time, the Louisiana prison system incarcerated more Black people than white.<sup>18</sup> By targeting newly freed Black people, the State preserved a system of subordination that persists today.<sup>19</sup>

Angola Prison, No. 1082  
(Jackson Hill, 1999)



## SAMUEL TYRONE JEFFERS

*served 31 years at hard labor,  
including 22 years at Angola*

### **I had heard stories about**

members of my family who were forced to pick cotton. So when I went [to Angola], it was a psychological thing. I felt like it would be disrespectful to my family to just go and pick it.

Once, I was going too slow. The officer rode down on a horse and told me pick up the pace. Instead, I just emptied the bags out. Cotton went everywhere and they locked me up. Never did it again. Every time we were going to pick cotton, I was going to lock down. Every time.

I didn't know how to pick vegetables, but I learned really quick. You had to. It hurt all over your body, hands, everywhere. The hardest vegetable was okra. I don't know if they sprayed something on the okra, but it grew so big and was so tough to cut.

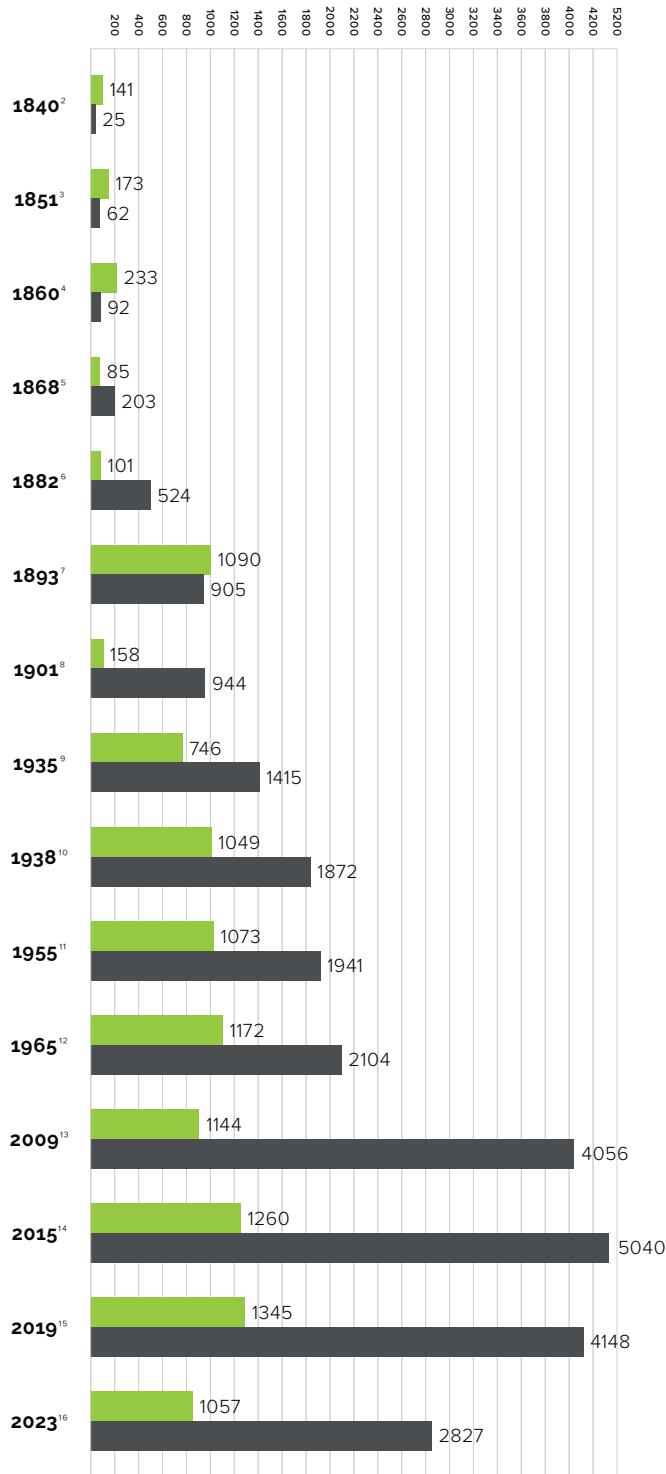
**I have seen horses pass out from the heat. You actually *wanted* the horses to pass out. If another inmate passed out, that didn't mean anything. They would continue to work you. But if their horse**



**passed out, they would say it's too hot for anybody to work. They didn't care if we lived or died.**

The work in the field served no purpose. It's not geared towards rehabilitation. For the younger guys, it zaps their energy so all they want to is sleep or rest, and so you have less trouble from them. The time spent in the field could be channeled into something productive, something positive, something constructive. Something that could probably make a person change their way of thinking.

POPULATION OF THE LOUISIANA STATE PENITENTIARY BY RACE<sup>1</sup>



White Men  
Black Men

<sup>1</sup> Note: data is unavailable for every year of the penitentiary's operation and extant lists contain some conflicting data.

<sup>2</sup> Jeff Forret, "Before Angola: Enslaved Prisoners in the Louisiana State Penitentiary," *LOUISIANA HISTORY: THE JOURNAL OF THE LOUISIANA HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION*, 54(2), 133-171, 149 (2013). <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24396520>.

<sup>3</sup> Connie H. Nobles, "Gazing Upon the Invisible: Women and Children at the Old Baton Rouge Penitentiary," *AMERICAN ANTIQUITY*, 65(1), 5-14, 6 (Jan. 2000). <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2694805>.

<sup>4</sup> *Id.*

<sup>5</sup> Mark T. Carleton, *POLITICS AND PUNISHMENT: THE HISTORY OF THE LOUISIANA STATE PENAL SYSTEM*, 15 (Louisiana State University Press, 1971).

<sup>6</sup> William P. Quigley, *Louisiana Angola Penitentiary: Past Time to Close*, 19 *LOY. J. PUB. INT. L.* 163, 182 (2018).

<sup>7</sup> Nathan Cardon, "'Less Than Mayhem': Louisiana's Convict Lease, 1865-1901," *Louisiana History* 58(4) 417-442, 421-22 (Fall 2017). <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26290931>.

<sup>8</sup> "A Glance into a Southern Penitentiary," *SOUTHWESTERN CHRISTIAN ADVOCATE* 37(24), New Orleans, June 19, 1902. <https://archive.org/details/southwesternchri1902sout/page/n389/mode/2up> [<https://perma.cc/MA7C-LHUD>].

<sup>9</sup> Joanne Ryan and Stephanie L. Perrault, *Angola: Plantation to Penitentiary*, U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS: PRESERVING LOUISIANA'S HERITAGE, 15 (2007). [https://www.crt.state.la.us/Assets/OCD/archaeology/discoverarchaeology/virtual-books/PDFs/Angola\\_Pop.pdf](https://www.crt.state.la.us/Assets/OCD/archaeology/discoverarchaeology/virtual-books/PDFs/Angola_Pop.pdf) [<https://perma.cc/TUH3-YMAE>].

<sup>10</sup> Dorn, Russell, "A Study of the Commitments to the Louisiana State Penitentiary During the Year April 1, 1938 through March 31, 1939" (1939). *LSU Historical Dissertations and Theses*. 8270. [https://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/gradschool\\_disstheses/8270](https://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/gradschool_disstheses/8270) [<https://perma.cc/F6K6-WC9F>].

<sup>11</sup> "Yessir Boss, Yessir Boss, Yessir!" *THE ANGOLITE*, Vol. 3, No. 30, July 9, 1955, at 12. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/community.33271472>.

<sup>12</sup> "Prison Count," *THE ANGOLITE*, Vol. 13, No. 18, Oct. 8, 1965, at 8.

<sup>13</sup> William Arp, III, "Race, Incarceration and HIV/AIDS in Louisiana," *RACE, GENDER & CLASS*, Vol. 16 No. 1/2 228-237 at 231 (2009).

<sup>14</sup> Jeffrey Goldberg, "The End of the Line: Rehabilitation and Reform in Angola Penitentiary," *THE ATLANTIC*, September 9, 2015. <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2015/09/a-look-inside-angola-prison/404377>.

<sup>15</sup> Demographic Dashboard, Louisiana Department of Public Safety & Corrections, last accessed Jun. 15, 2023. <https://doc.louisiana.gov/demographic-dashboard> [<https://perma.cc/F6K6-WC9F>].

<sup>16</sup> *Id.*





**Convict laborers building a levee, circa 1895**  
 (Andrew David Lytle Sr./State Library of Louisiana)

The State leased prison laborers to contractors, who would pay minimal rates for the workers and be responsible for their care. The contractors had only a small capital investment in prison workers and little incentive to treat them well. Prison laborers were often dismally treated, but the convict lease system was highly profitable for the State and the contractors.

**Picking cotton, Angola State Farm, circa 1900**  
 (Andrew David Lytle Sr./State Library of Louisiana)



"PICKING COTTON" Angola State Farm

*Lytle*



**Men digging a trench to install sewerage line on Main Street, circa 1900**  
 (Andrew David Lytle Sr./State Library of Louisiana)

# Convict Leasing and the Pursuit of Profit

In 1869, former Confederate Major Samuel James bought the lease to manage the state prison, known as “The Walls.”<sup>20</sup> Under a practice called “convict leasing,” James immediately began leasing incarcerated people to work on railroads, coal mines, and private plantations—including his own.<sup>21</sup> James amassed enormous wealth from convict leasing: when he died in 1894, he left behind a fortune of over \$2 million.<sup>22</sup>

In 1880, James bought the Angola plantation from the widow of a wealthy slave trader, who had forced hundreds of enslaved people to transform a cypress forest into a cotton plantation.<sup>23</sup> James moved the State’s prisoners into the plantation’s former slave quarters and settled his family into the Big House.<sup>24</sup> The plantation became known as the James Prison Camp.<sup>25</sup>

Racial and gender hierarchies determined the work assignments at the James Prison Camp. “White inmates, seen as more intellectual, were given clerk and craftsmanship work.”<sup>26</sup> In contrast, Black men were sent to build levees and railroads or to cultivate the fields.<sup>27</sup> Black women were forced to work as domestic servants and field hands.<sup>28</sup>

Like chattel slavery before it, convict leasing was brutal and inhumane.<sup>29</sup> But unlike enslaved people, who were considered an investment, Black prisoners were viewed as expendable. In 1883, one commentator explained:

Before the war we owned the negroes. If a man had a good negro, he could afford to take care of him: if he was sick, get a doctor. He might even get gold plugs in his teeth. But these convicts: we don’t own ’em. One dies, get another.<sup>30</sup>

Between 1870 and 1901, at least 3,000 incarcerated people died under the convict-leasing system operated by James.<sup>31</sup> An editorial in the *Daily Picayune* of New Orleans reportedly observed that **it would be more humane “to impose the death sentence immediately” upon anyone sentenced to more than six years, “because the average convict lived no longer than that, anyway.”**<sup>32</sup>



# The State Retakes the Prison for Profit

In 1901, after the expiration of the prison's private lease, Louisiana resumed control of the prison.<sup>33</sup> The State ostensibly sought to quell "continued criticism regarding cruel treatment, the high mortality rate among the prisoners, and difficulties with the lessees over the state's contract."<sup>34</sup> In fact, the State had found a better overseer of the plantation: itself.

Article 196 of the 1898 Louisiana Constitution prohibited leasing incarcerated people to private parties.<sup>35</sup> It also allowed the legislature to authorize the State to use forced labor on state-owned "convict farms," public roads or works, and in state-controlled or state-owned "manufactories."<sup>36</sup>

The State bought the Angola plantation from the James family and established the Louisiana State Penitentiary there.<sup>37</sup> Little changed for the incarcerated men and women, who still lived in old slave quarters and picked cotton in the now State-owned fields.<sup>38</sup> They also still labored on levees, plantations, and road crews outside the prison walls.<sup>39</sup>

The State divided incarcerated men into four classifications:

First class men are...sound in every respect and accustomed to manual work. These men are sent to the levee camps where the work is the most severe. Second-class men are...of moderate strength and capabilities, and are assigned to the sugar plantations...Third-class men are assigned to the cotton plantation [Angola], and fourth-class men are assigned to the hospital.<sup>40</sup>

These assignments were race-based. Black men received the more demanding jobs, while incarcerated white men reportedly received the easier ones.<sup>41</sup>

Women were also incarcerated at Angola: roughly 2,000 women served hard labor sentences there until 1961, when the State established the Louisiana Correctional Institute for Women.<sup>42</sup> Forced labor, often extracted through physical and sexual violence, was an essential feature of their incarceration.<sup>43</sup>



White women commonly worked as seamstresses and, later, secretaries and stenographers for prison officials.<sup>44</sup> Black women were forced to work in the fields alongside men, or in the prison tobacco factory and cannery.<sup>45</sup> **Black women also worked as servants for the white prison officials and their families, who lived on Angola's grounds.**<sup>46</sup>



**RIGHT: Angola Hoers**  
(Theodore Fonville Winans, 1938)

Women were incarcerated at Angola until 1961.

## “A Great Industrial and Business Enterprise”

Profit—not rehabilitation, retribution, or deterrence—remained the goal of Louisiana’s penal system. Given James’s massive profits during the convict leasing period, the State expected a windfall from resuming operational control of the prison.<sup>47</sup> Governor William Heard reportedly observed that the State was engaged not only in “the handling of a large prison as such, but in the establishment of a great industrial and business enterprise.”<sup>48</sup>

To that end, the State concentrated incarcerated labor on agricultural production.<sup>49</sup> By the mid-1920s, Angola was among the largest penal plantations in the United States.<sup>50</sup> The State’s agricultural operation there included 6,000 acres in pasture and 8,000 acres planted in sugar.<sup>51</sup> This focus was rewarded when, in 1935, Congress prohibited the interstate sale of prison-made goods, *except* for agricultural commodities.<sup>52</sup>

Meanwhile, the State continued to incarcerate Black people at disproportionate rates.<sup>53</sup> Jim Crow laws, rooted in Black Codes, ensured a ready supply of forced laborers.<sup>54</sup> In 1937, the federal government even recommended that the State build new dormitories at Angola to house “1,000 negroes” for farm labor.<sup>55</sup>

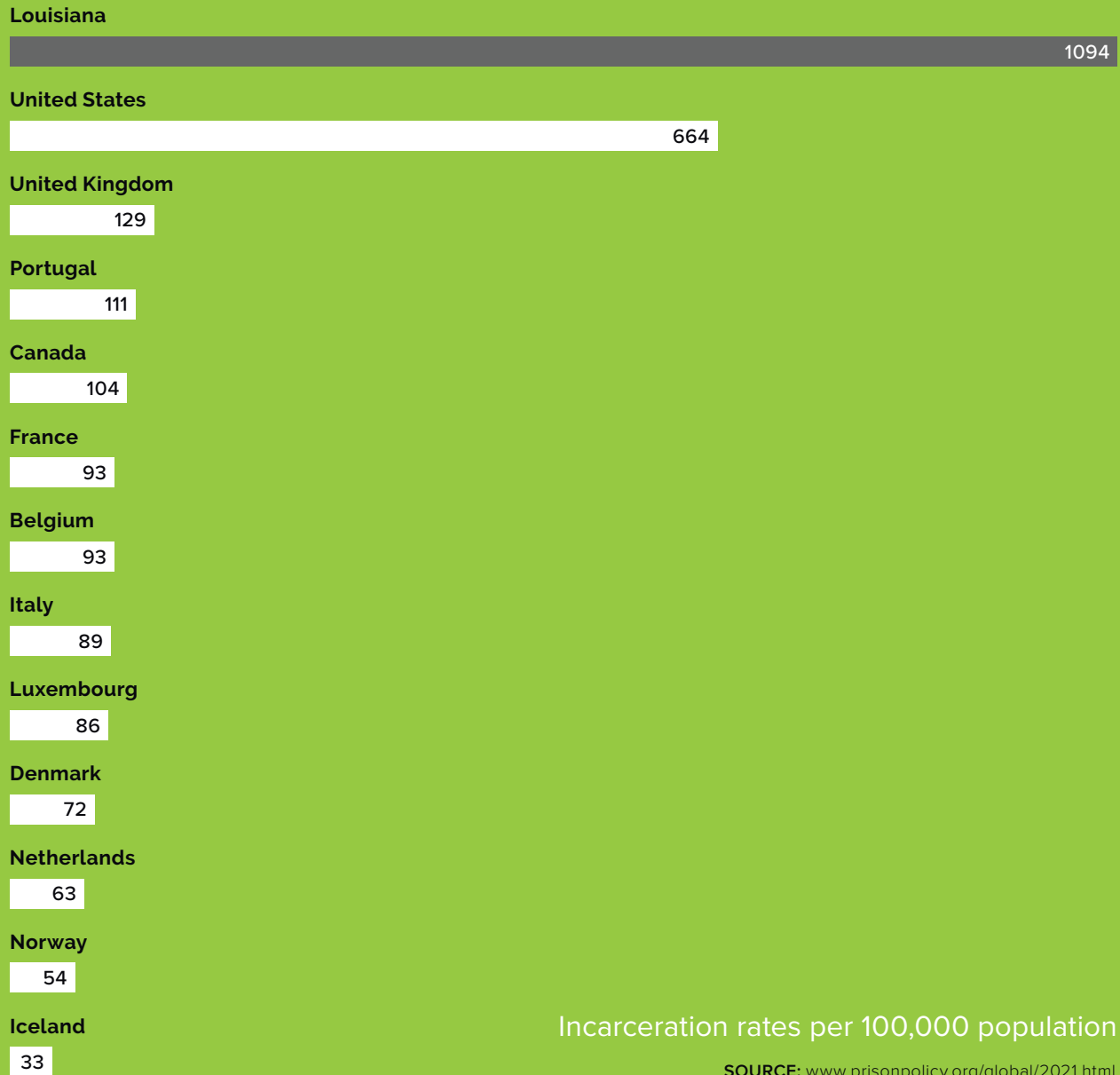
By 1940, people incarcerated at Angola produced agricultural products worth \$1.3 million (about \$28 million in today’s dollars).<sup>56</sup> The State developed other prison industries—including a sugar mill, cannery, and slaughterhouse—to support its lucrative agricultural operations.<sup>57</sup> Even as Louisiana became increasingly urban, its prison system remained focused on the cultivation and sale of agricultural commodities.<sup>58</sup>

As it had for generations, the State continued to force incarcerated Black people to work in brutal conditions in the pursuit of profit. As a warden explained in 1967:

During the sugar cane era, everything existed to get that crop in. Wardens came and went based on what kind of cane harvest they produced. Academic, vocational, and recreational programs were simply not important. The only thing that mattered was whether that sugar mill rolled, because if it didn’t, then the officials did—right out the front gate.<sup>59</sup>

# Incarceration Rates

*Comparing Louisiana and Founding NATO Countries*



Incarceration rates per 100,000 population

SOURCE: [www.prisonpolicy.org/global/2021.html](http://www.prisonpolicy.org/global/2021.html)



## America's Worst Prison

During the Great Depression, prison operations faded from public scrutiny and “became concealed in secrecy, corruption, and brutality.”<sup>60</sup> In 1951, dozens of incarcerated men slashed their own heel tendons to protest working conditions and prison mismanagement at Angola.<sup>61</sup> The following year, *Collier's* magazine named Angola “America’s worst prison.”<sup>62</sup> Despite this renewed attention, conditions were slow to improve: an inspection team from the American Bar Association described the prison in the 1970s as “medieval, squalid and horrifying.”<sup>63</sup>

During the 1970s and 1980s, the State contracted with a blood plasma company, Sara, Inc., to “bleed” incarcerated men on prison property. Sara paid \$7.75 per pint of plasma, of which the incarcerated donor received \$6.50 and State made \$1.25.<sup>64</sup> Angola’s award-winning newsmagazine, *The Angolite*, reported in 1979 that: “Sara bleeds 2200-2500 inmates per week, injecting some \$14,000 to \$16,000 weekly into the prisoner economy.”<sup>65</sup>

The same year, incarcerated men attempted to organize a strike of the plasma program, seeking a raise to \$10 per bleed.<sup>66</sup> Reporting on the ultimately unsuccessful boycott, *The Angolite* observed:

[Incarcerated people] can’t really demand raises and they don’t have any cost-of-living raises built into their controlled scheme of things. They get \$.02 an hour, their plasma money (if they can or do bleed), and a few dollars from home...The families of prisoners have too many survival priorities which exceed the prisoners’ stomach needs for tuna fish, sardines, and soft drinks. <sup>67</sup>

According to an associate warden, “[t]he plasma is the only income some of the men have in the prison.”<sup>68</sup>

The State also continued to grow traditional manufacturing operations. For example, Angola’s mattress factory “expanded from a 10-man crew grossing \$40,000 a year in 1969 to the 25-man crew which grossed nearly one half a million dollars [in 1981].”<sup>69</sup> These industries did not prioritize rehabilitation and reentry. In 1982, an editor’s note in *The Angolite* observed that “[w]hen private industry and the prison business join hands, an arrangement of profit and convenience develops—and the vested interest of profit will inevitably take unfair advantage of the inmates.”<sup>70</sup>



Louisiana remained committed to putting more and more people in prison. The legislature “increased penalties for crimes, reduced the amount of time off prisoners could earn for good behavior, and cut back on the number of people being paroled.”<sup>71</sup> By the early 1980s, Louisiana was a national leader in incarceration.<sup>72</sup> In 2023, it still is.<sup>73</sup>



**ABOVE: Angola Penitentiary: Who's That Man On That Horse? I Don't Know His Name but They Call Him Boss**  
(Keith Calhoun, 1981)

**Angola Prison, No. 1052**  
(Jackson Hill, 1982)





## History of the Louisiana State Penitentiary (Angola)

1835

The State establishes the Louisiana State Penitentiary in Baton Rouge.

1844

The State begins leasing prison operations to private contractors.

1865

Congress enacts the Thirteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, permitting the State to retain the institution of slavery under the guise of penal operations.

1869

Confederate Major Samuel James buys the lease to manage the penitentiary and leases incarcerated people to work on private plantations (including his own), railroads, and coal mines.

1880

James buys the Angola plantation from the widow of a wealthy slave trader and establishes the James Prison Camp there.

1901

The State buys the Angola plantation and resumes control of the penitentiary.

1920s

With nearly 6,000 acres in pasture and 8,000 acres planted in sugar, Angola becomes among the largest penal plantations in the nation.

1940

Men and women incarcerated at Angola produce agricultural products and commodities worth \$1.3 million.



1951

31 incarcerated men slice their Achilles tendons to protest brutal working conditions.

1952

*Collier's* magazine names Angola "America's worst prison."

1970s

American Bar Association describes Angola as "medieval, squalid and horrifying."

1980s

Louisiana becomes a national leader in incarceration.

2013

A federal judge finds that heat conditions on Angola's death row constitute cruel and unusual punishment in violation of the Eighth Amendment.

*Ball v. LeBlanc*, 988 F. Supp. 2d 639 (M.D. La. 2013).

2019

Nearly 30 percent of Prison Enterprises' incarcerated workforce labor in Angola's fields, even though the State projects agriculture to have a decrease in future employment.

2021

A federal judge finds that medical care at Angola violates the Eighth Amendment's prohibition of cruel and unusual punishment, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and the Rehabilitation Act.

*Lewis v. Cain*, No. 15-cv-318, 2021 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 63293 (M.D. La. Mar. 31, 2021).

2023

The State continues to run farm lines at Angola, whereby mostly Black men are forced to cultivate row crops using antiquated farming methods as a form of punishment.





# Forced Prison Labor Today





Today, Angola is a living monument to a criminal legal system that targets, prosecutes, and incarcerates Black men and women at among the highest rate in the United States.<sup>74</sup>

*As The Times-Picayune* has observed, the Louisiana “prison system that leased its convicts as plantation labor in the 1800s has come full circle and is again a nexus for profit.”<sup>75</sup> A system of institutionalized control over the bodies, autonomy, and finances of incarcerated people, prison labor is best understood as a continuation of slavery.



# Prison Enterprises and the State's Pursuit of Profit

Prison Enterprises is the for-profit business arm of the Department of Public Safety and Corrections (DOC). It directs agricultural and industrial programs at eight Louisiana prisons, including Angola, with the goal of making money from the labor of incarcerated people.<sup>76</sup>

Under threat of violence, punishment, and other serious harm, incarcerated men and women produce office furniture, institutional clothing, and janitorial products, which Prison Enterprises then sells to State, parish, and local governments and non-profit organizations.<sup>77</sup> Prison Enterprises also oversees incarcerated people working as janitors and ground maintenance crews in various state buildings.<sup>78</sup>

Prison Enterprises directs the Farm Line at Angola. As of 2019, nearly 30% of Prison Enterprises' incarcerated workforce were laboring in the fields.<sup>79</sup> This work is not calculated to lead to gainful future employment, as the State has projected agriculture "to have a decrease in future employment."<sup>80</sup> And because incarcerated people are not involved in crop planting decisions, they do not develop knowledge of farming operations that could support their re-entry.

In 2021 and 2022, men incarcerated at Angola planted, grew, and harvested nearly 3,000 acres of wheat, corn, soybeans, cotton, and grain sorghum.<sup>81</sup> Prison Enterprises used some of those crops to feed its livestock and flight birds, but most were sold for profit on the open market.<sup>82</sup>

It is generally illegal to sell prison-manufactured goods across state lines.<sup>83</sup> Agricultural goods, however, are exempt from that law.<sup>84</sup> This loophole has mushroomed into a multimillion-dollar industry that allows private corporations to exploit incarcerated workers. From 2017 to 2020, for instance, New York-based commodities trader Louis Dreyfus Commodities bought \$2.4 million of corn and soybeans produced by incarcerated workers at Angola.<sup>86</sup>

Even though the State aims to run Prison Enterprises like a business, it is not always profitable. From 2016 to 2018, Prison Enterprises lost \$4.7 million from its chair plant, silkscreen and print shops, and range herd, corn, cotton, orchard, and flight bird operations.<sup>87</sup> Between 1996 and 2018, Prison Enterprises spent more than it made in 11 of those 22 years.<sup>88</sup>

“In Angola, they cultivate every staple crop in the world. Angola prison has such fertile land that they believe that you can cut off a person’s finger and grow the person back.”

— *Curtis Davis*



Angola Prison, No. 1114  
(Jackson Hill, 1982)

According to the Legislative Auditor, Prison Enterprises loses money because of its inefficient and outdated work methods and reluctance to reclassify incarcerated people to jobs that offer more valuable work skills.<sup>89</sup> Those jobs would pay more than the prevailing field wage of \$.02 per hour.<sup>90</sup>

**This begs the question: if Prison Enterprises’ agricultural operations at Angola are unprofitable, inefficient, outdated, and disconnected from rehabilitation and re-entry, then why run the Farm Line at all?**

**Perhaps the true objective of the Farm Line is precisely what it seems: to punish, intimidate, and humiliate incarcerated men by replicating patterns of enslavement.**



## CEDRIC CENALES

*served 41 years at hard labor,  
including 27 years at Angola*

### **Even when it's different work,**

it's the same routine. You might be picking vegetables today. Tomorrow, you may be digging a ditch. When the cotton comes, you do that for two, three months straight. Corn the same way. Strawberries and cherries will break your back. Bending over, going down the row with buckets. Soon as you fill one bucket, you take it to the front and come back with an empty one. You do the same thing, over and over.

When you're pulling [cotton stalks], you mess with your back after so long and you got to go down a whole row. They got machines that could do that. They got tractors that could pick cotton. But they wanted us to do it. They want to make sure you never want to commit another crime in another hundred thousand years, if we could live that long.

Sun shining, they say it's 92 degrees but it feels like 102. You run out of water and got to wait on the man to come with some more. You're sweating like a dog. Taking cold water, putting it on your handkerchief, taking your hat off, putting your handkerchief over



your face and then put your hat back on. Sun killing you. You can't quit till the freeman says quit.

**You'd be hurting mentally, emotionally, and physically. Yeah, you'd be hurting. People would be breaking their hands to keep from going in the field on the weight pile. Breaking their feet. Eating their feet with acid. They did all kinds of stuff to get out of the field. All kinds of stuff.**

I knew I either had to do it, or I wasn't coming home. I had good time. Most people with good time would put up with it, because they don't want to lose their good time.

# The Farm Line: Punitive, Humiliating, and Degrading

One defining feature of prison labor is the intentional infliction of punishment, or the threat of punishment, to enforce it.<sup>91</sup> Incarcerated workers are subject to arbitrary, discriminatory, and punitive decisions by the prison administrators and guards who control their bodies, safety, and access to food, water, and communication with loved ones.

Incarcerated workers are also denied the rights and protections that define free-world labor: no minimum wage, no overtime, no unemployment, no workers' compensation, no social security, no occupational health and safety protections, and no right to form unions and collectively bargain.

The effect—and intent—of forced prison labor is the opposite of rehabilitation. In 2018, men incarcerated at Angola organized a work stoppage. They published a list of demands, including “classrooms for our education and rehabilitation, not slavery” and “a national conversation inquiring how state prison farms across the country came to hold hundreds of thousands of people of African descent against their will.”<sup>92</sup>

Instead of increasing a sense of belonging and community, forced prison labor increases distrust.<sup>93</sup> Instead of demonstrating the benefits of earned income, the low wages create incentives to find other types of income. And instead of providing increased privileges as a result of work, forced prison labor offers another mechanism for the State to police behavior and impose additional punishments.<sup>94</sup>

The Farm Line fits squarely into this framework. **It enforces the compliance, vulnerability, and insecurity of incarcerated people by subjecting them to humiliating and degrading punishment.** This is particularly true for the Black people who are forced to cultivate plantation crops in the same manner as their enslaved ancestors.

*“Angola was a mad place. A place of savagery.” — Darrell Johnson*



## Inherently and Obviously Dangerous

The Farm Line is notoriously hazardous. Like the enslaved people who worked the same land generations ago, incarcerated men are forced to hoe, dig, and weed for hours, sometimes without access to drinking water.<sup>95</sup> Breaks are uncommon. Shade and sanitary toilet facilities are nearly unheard of. Despite the availability of modern agricultural machinery, workers on the Farm Line are forced to pick plantation crops by hand or use outdated tools.

The Farm Line is particularly dangerous during the summer months, when the temperature in the Angola fields can exceed 95°F and the relative humidity regularly exceeds 92%.<sup>96</sup> By another measure, the heat index—i.e. the apparent temperature, which measures how hot it *feels*—regularly reaches into the “danger” and “extreme danger” zones.<sup>97</sup> According to the Louisiana Department of Health (LDH), “heat exposure is intensifying as the frequency, severity, and duration of extreme heat events increases due to climate change.”<sup>98</sup> These changes are particularly concerning in Louisiana, which experiences some of the highest average summer temperatures in the nation. As LDH warns, “[t]hese hot summers are compounded by high humidity which worsens the impact of heat by impairing the body’s ability to cool by evaporation.”<sup>100</sup> Working in these extreme conditions can lead to heat-related illnesses, which occur

when a person’s body temperature is overloaded.<sup>101</sup> Mild forms of heat-stress illness include heat rashes, cramps, and heat exhaustion.<sup>102</sup> Persistent heat stress can lead to heat stroke, a medical emergency in which the body’s internal temperature rapidly increases.<sup>103</sup> Heat stroke can cause organ damage, neurological damage, permanent disability, and death.<sup>104</sup>

LDH has reported that about ten people die yearly in Louisiana from heat, and thousands more are treated in emergency departments or hospitalized.<sup>105</sup>

People with preexisting health conditions like diabetes, obesity, hypertension, and cardiovascular disease are at greater risk of heat-related illnesses.<sup>106</sup> Certain medications, like psychotropic medications and beta blockers, can also make the body more vulnerable to heat.<sup>107</sup> At Angola, many individuals with disabilities are still forced to work in the fields, notwithstanding their increased risk of illness and injury.

**The State is well aware of the dangers of heat exposure at Angola.** In 2012, a federal judge found that heat conditions on Angola’s death row constituted cruel and unusual punishment in violation of the Eighth Amendment and ordered the State to lower temperatures to 88 degrees.<sup>108</sup> That awareness has not translated to concern about the dangers of heat in the fields.

## Punitive by Design

Assignment to the Farm Line is both punishing and punishment. By policy and practice, nearly every person incarcerated at Angola must work in the field at some point.<sup>109</sup> The “Offender Orientation Information/Manual,” which is issued to new arrivals, states:

All new intake offenders arriving at Louisiana State Penitentiary are required to work in the field/farm line (large vegetable gardens/field) for at least six months, subject to medical and mental health clearance. After working six months in the field and remaining disciplinary report free for a period of 90 days, offenders can request consideration for a job change through their unit Classification Officer.<sup>110</sup>

Currently and formerly-incarcerated people report that many people—mostly, Black people—who apply for new jobs are rejected, despite having perfect disciplinary records. Even after reassignment, an incarcerated person who gets a disciplinary write-up will likely be reassigned to the Farm Line as punishment.

The State also disciplines incarcerated people based on a guard’s perception of

their work performance. Many of these “disciplinary violations” are arbitrary and vague, making it difficult for an incarcerated person to anticipate when their job performance will result in additional punishment.<sup>111</sup>

For instance, failure to perform compulsory work with “reasonable speed and efficiency” could result in five days of “disciplinary detention,” forfeiture of 15 days of good time, two weeks of confinement, and/or failure to earn incentive wages for three months.<sup>112</sup> Punishments are even more severe for “aggravated” work offenses like refusing to work, asking to go to segregation rather than work, disobeying repeated instructions as to how to perform work assignments (even if the instruction makes a person unsafe), and “[f]alling far short of fulfilling reasonable work quotas.”<sup>113</sup>

The State has also imposed indefinite segregation in response to nonviolent and minor rule violations, including failure to complete a job assignment.<sup>114</sup> The risks of noncompliance include losing crucial connections with friends and family, losing access to essential food, privileges, recreation, and freedom of movement (however constrained), and, for some, losing the possibility of parole.<sup>115</sup>



## Humiliating and Degrading

At its core, forced prison plantation labor replicates conditions of Black enslavement, which remains a source of generational trauma.<sup>116</sup> Humiliation as an exercise of power involves “stripping of status; rejection or exclusion; unpredictability or arbitrariness; and a personal sense of injustice matched by the lack of any remedy for the injustice suffered.”<sup>117</sup> “Degradation” refers to “practices that systematically treat...people as deserving of little, if any, respect.”<sup>118</sup> Common in prisons, these practices are often unpredictable, arbitrary, and traumatic.<sup>119</sup>

The Farm Line is both humiliating and degrading. Many daily tasks assigned to incarcerated men are designed to enforce powerlessness. For instance, some men are forced to dig and refill holes. Others must “goose-pick,” or pull blades of grass by hand. This pointless labor—extracted under threat of punishment and harm—is damaging to an individual’s sense of identity. It also induces helplessness, particularly since an incarcerated person cannot act on their feelings generated by such treatment.<sup>120</sup>

“Working in the fields was hard. We used to work with our hands, pulling grass—straight up pulling grass with our hands—going down the row.”

— *Alvin Reliford*

## JOE PALMER

*served 47 years at hard labor,  
including 27 at Angola*

### **The okra sometimes would be**

taller than you. Those forward-looking things on that okra, that'd eat you up. Just itches your skin. I started putting my hood on, pulling it tight, putting something across my face. I used to order my gloves from the free world, from outside. Leather gloves didn't last more than two days. That okra will eat the gloves up, and I paid good money for them. Even today, anything you cook with okra, I don't want it.

You had to work calluses on your hands. You had to work them calluses on there, make them hard. Some dudes would pee on them to make them hard. It helped, making them hands hard, to keep them from blistering all the time.

Guys would get to singing old slave songs. The guards liked when they were singing and working at the same time, especially when they were picking cotton. Songs like, "You can come here jumping but you won't last long. You wish you was a baby on your mama's arms." Like old slaves singing in the field.



Some dudes cut themselves with a hoe, hit them on their ankles, to get a duty status. They wanted to come out of that field so bad that they would let dudes actually hurt them to get a duty status.

I knew I had to work to stay out of the hole. You either had to do it, or go to the dungeon.



# Financial Coercion of Incarcerated People and Their Families

## The Incentive Wage System

“Incentive pay” is “compensation paid to an offender in the physical custody of the department and who is eligible to receive incentive wages and who has performed satisfactory work in the compensation grade in which he has been classified.”<sup>121</sup>

Incarcerated people must work at least three years before even becoming eligible for incentive wages.<sup>122</sup> **Then, after three years of compulsory labor, they can be paid two cents an hour, no matter the position, for at least six months.**<sup>123</sup>

Louisiana has among the lowest incentive pay rates for incarcerated people working in correctional industries.<sup>124</sup> Those wages have not changed much over time: *The Angolite* reported in 1956 that a new incentive pay scale “will be in three categories with 5% of the population receiving 5¢ per hour; 10% will receive 3½¢ per hour; and 85% will receive 2¢ per hour.”<sup>125</sup>

Prison Enterprises pays all incentive wages in the State’s prisons.<sup>126</sup> Those wages generally range from \$0.02 to \$0.20 an hour, though Prison Enterprises could

pay higher rates if it chose to. The DOC Secretary could also set higher wages.<sup>128</sup>

Not every incarcerated worker receives incentive pay. Some can opt for “good time” credits to reduce the length of their sentences—two days for every day worked—while the prison keeps their incentive pay. Others work in exchange for basic necessities, like extra food.<sup>130</sup>

Even those eligible for wages do not necessarily get full access to their pay. Each incarcerated person has three bank accounts: savings, drawing, and reserve.<sup>131</sup> The savings account is used to pay for education courses, court-imposed costs, medical co-payments, and restitution costs.<sup>132</sup>

The DOC requires each person to maintain a \$250 minimum balance in his savings account at all times, and will garnish half of that person’s wages until that amount is met.<sup>133</sup> At \$0.02 an hour, it takes 25,000 hours of work on the Farm Line—roughly 13 years of full-time work— to reach \$250. If an incarcerated person needs medical care



but cannot afford the fee, which “is usually \$3.00 per visit,” he will fall into debt, further preventing him from reaching the \$250 savings amount.<sup>134</sup>

Once a person accrues \$250 in his savings account, his wages can be deposited into his drawing or reserve accounts.<sup>135</sup> Drawing account funds can be used for business or legal expenses; reserve account funds can be used to purchase items from the canteen.<sup>136</sup> Thus, an incarcerated person cannot spend his wages at the canteen until he first accrues and maintains \$250 in savings.

The system does, however, permit an incarcerated person to withdraw the balance of his savings upon release—minus a fee of \$12.50 which “shall be assessed for issuance of a release debit card to [incarcerated people] who have available funds.”<sup>137</sup>

Derrick Fruga worked for 19 years at Angola and left with \$57 in wages. Leonard Oliver left with \$65.20, his wages for 21 years of hard labor. Neither earned enough during their incarceration to support themselves immediately after release.

Considering this account structure, the incentive pay system seems to ensure that incarcerated people have just enough money for a bus ticket home if released, but not enough for food or housing as they rebuild law-abiding lives.





## Canteen

Incarcerated people are left with even less disposable income because the State charges exorbitant rates for necessities like food, hygiene products, warm clothing, medications, and medical care. Most cannot pay these costs from their meager wages and must rely on family and friends, placing tremendous financial strain on families and exposing the wider community to financial insecurity.

Angola's canteen is the only approved method for incarcerated people to purchase goods from the outside. The canteen's inventory ranges from toothpaste to instant soup to shoes. Prison Enterprises buys canteen items in bulk, marks those items up by approximately 20%, and then resells them to correctional facilities.<sup>138</sup> Then, the correctional facilities charge another 33.3% markup on those items.<sup>139</sup> As a result, both Prison Enterprises and the correctional facility make money by selling necessities to incarcerated people and their families.

From 2021 to 2022, Prison Enterprises conducted more than \$30.5 million in industry, agriculture, and retail sales combined.<sup>140</sup> Nearly 35% of that sum—more than \$10.5 million—was from sales to canteens that incarcerated people and their families depend on.<sup>141</sup>

“I was paid two cents an hour. I would buy soap, deodorant. That was all I could buy. I was barely making it with that. I would have loved to send my daughter some money for Christmas or holidays, but I just wasn't able to do it.”

— *Landon Marshall*

CANTEEN COSTS

Under the DOC's policies and practices, incarcerated people must work for years to afford basic necessities from canteen. This system also places tremendous financial strain on families and exposes the wider community to financial insecurity.

**Routine Sick Call**

**\$3.00**

=

**150 hours**

AT \$.02/HOUR

**Emergency Sick Call**

**\$6.00**

=

**300 hours**

AT \$.02/HOUR

**1 minute of Prepaid Phone Use**

**\$1.00**

=

**50 hours**

AT \$.02/HOUR

**Roll of Toilet Paper**

**\$1.13**

=

**56 hours**

AT \$.02/HOUR

**Toenail Clippers**

**\$0.92**

=

**46 hours**

AT \$.02/HOUR

**Sunscreen**

**\$11.78**

=

**589 hours**

AT \$.02/HOUR

**Asprin**

**\$4.74**

=

**237 hours**

AT \$.02/HOUR

**Refried Beans**

**\$1.88**

=

**94 hours**

AT \$.02/HOUR

Angola Prison, No. 2004  
(Jackson Hill, 1982)



# Conclusion and Action Items



Angola's Farm Line is only one example of slavery that exists today in Louisiana's prisons. Similar conditions exist across the State, from the garment factory at the Louisiana Correctional Institute for Women to the soap plant at the Elayn Hunt Correctional Center.<sup>142</sup> At each of these facilities, forced prison labor leads to insecurity and vulnerability, without the promised benefits of rehabilitation, re-entry support, or even profit.





**For far too long, prisons have been sites of bondage and exploitation. Forced prison labor undermines our state’s commitment to fairness and dignity for all. The following actions are essential steps in the process of affirming the human dignity of all people:**

- 1** Eliminate the exception for involuntary servitude as punishment for a crime in Art. 1, § 3 of Louisiana’s constitution.
- 2** Support striking the “punishment exception” from the Thirteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.
- 3** Ban hard labor as a legal form of punishment.
- 4** End the Farm Line at Angola.
- 5** Eliminate all policies and practices that punish incarcerated people unable or unwilling to work.
- 6** Extend regulatory labor protections to incarcerated people to ensure all prison labor is safe and fairly compensated.
- 7** Provide meaningful opportunities to learn marketable skills and trades.

**Visit [labor.promiseofjustice.org](https://labor.promiseofjustice.org) to view a map of forced labor in Louisiana, watch video testimonials, and learn how to take action.**



## Further Reading

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# Glossary

**Canteen:** A store within a correctional facility, from which incarcerated people and their families may purchase basic necessities like food, hygiene items, medicine, and clothing.

**Disciplinary Segregation:** Confinement of a person to an individual cell, separated from the general population, as punishment for a rule violation.

**Duty Status:** A restriction from certain work assignments because of a medical condition.

**Extra Duty:** Extra, uncompensated work imposed on an incarcerated person as a form of punishment.

**Farm Line:** Compulsory agricultural labor that includes planting and harvesting row crops by hand or using outdated tools, as a form of punishment.

**Freemen:** Slang for non-incarcerated people who work at Angola, like correctional officers and Prison Enterprises employees.

**Good Time:** Time deducted from an incarcerated person's sentence for good behavior.

**Goose Picking:** Picking grass by hand, as a form of punishment.

**Hard Labor:** Compulsory manual labor imposed as part of a sentence or as prison discipline.

**Incentive Pay:** Hourly wages paid to some incarcerated workers by Prison Enterprises.

**Involuntary Servitude:** A form of labor where an individual is under contract to work without a salary to repay an indenture or loan.

**Sick Call:** The process by which an incarcerated person requests medical care. The fee for a routine sick call is \$3.00. An emergency sick call costs \$6.00.

**Slavery:** The practice of forced labor and restricted liberty.

**Work Offense:** A disciplinary offense associated with refusing to work or failing to meet productivity quotas. Depending on the severity of the offense, punishments include disciplinary segregation, extra duty, forfeiture of good time, inability to earn incentive wages, and loss of yard or recreation activities.

**Write-up:** A disciplinary sanction that may result in loss of parole eligibility, loss of family visitation, extra duty, and/or disciplinary segregation.



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- <sup>2</sup> Mark T. Carleton, POLITICS AND PUNISHMENT: THE HISTORY OF THE LOUISIANA STATE PENAL SYSTEM 8 (1971).
- <sup>3</sup> *Id.* at 8-10.
- <sup>4</sup> Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Prison Labor in the United States, 1940*, 53 MONTHLY LABOR REVIEW 578, 581 (describing the lease system as: “[T]he prison enters into a contract with a lessee who agrees to receive, feed, clothe, house, and guard the prisoners, and to pay the State a stipulated amount per day per man.”).
- <sup>5</sup> See Ruth Delaney, Ram Subramanian, Alison Shames & Nicholas Turner, *Reimagining Prison*, VERA INSTITUTE OF JUSTICE (October 2018), 108 n.134, <https://www.vera.org/reimagining-prison-web-report> [<https://perma.cc/DHE3-27M3>].
- <sup>6</sup> Carleton at 10 n.17.
- <sup>7</sup> *Id.* at 10.
- <sup>8</sup> *Id.* at 13.
- <sup>9</sup> Michelle Alexander, THE NEW JIM CROW: MASS INCARCERATION IN THE AGE OF COLORBLINDNESS 27 (2010).
- <sup>10</sup> *Id.* at 28.
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- <sup>18</sup> See Carleton at 45 n.32.
- <sup>19</sup> See Roger Wallace Shugg, *Survival of the Plantation System in Louisiana*, 3 J. SOUTHERN HIST. 311, 324 (1937) (noting that “the subordination of freedmen to peonage” helped preserve the plantation system after the Civil War, entrapping the newly emancipated and freed Blacks into a slavery-like system).
- <sup>20</sup> Joanne Ryan and Stephanie L. Perrault, *Angola: Plantation to Penitentiary*, U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS: PRESERVING LOUISIANA’S HERITAGE, 7 (2007) [https://www.crt.state.la.us/Assets/OCD/archaeology/discoverarchaeology/virtual-books/PDFs/Angola\\_Pop.pdf](https://www.crt.state.la.us/Assets/OCD/archaeology/discoverarchaeology/virtual-books/PDFs/Angola_Pop.pdf) [<https://perma.cc/8RWA-JN9U>].
- <sup>21</sup> *Id.* at 7-8.
- <sup>22</sup> *Id.* at 8.
- <sup>23</sup> Nathalie Rech, *Black Women’s Domestic Labor at Angola (Louisiana State Penitentiary) during Jim Crow*, 101 INTERNATIONAL LABOR AND WORKING-CLASS HISTORY 47 (2022).
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- <sup>25</sup> *History of the State Penitentiary*, LOUISIANA PRISON MUSEUM & CULTURAL CENTER, <https://www.angolamuseum.org/history-of-angola/> [<https://perma.cc/DMX4-SUGZ>].
- <sup>26</sup> *Id.*
- <sup>27</sup> Rech at 47.
- <sup>28</sup> *Id.*
- <sup>29</sup> *Id.*
- <sup>30</sup> Carleton at 45.
- <sup>31</sup> Ryan at 8.
- <sup>32</sup> Carleton at 37.
- <sup>33</sup> *Id.* at n.16.
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- <sup>39</sup> *Id.* at 50.
- <sup>40</sup> *Id.* at 100.
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- <sup>46</sup> *Id.* at 50.
- <sup>47</sup> Carleton at 93.
- <sup>48</sup> *Id.* at 94.
- <sup>49</sup> Ryan at 12.
- <sup>50</sup> See Carleton at 92 n.15, 109.
- <sup>51</sup> Ryan at 12.
- <sup>52</sup> Ashurst–Sumners Act, Pub. L. No. 74-215, 49 Stat. 494 (1935), codified at 18 U.S.C. §§ 1761-62.
- <sup>53</sup> See Alexander at 32.
- <sup>54</sup> See *id.* at 28.
- <sup>55</sup> *State of Louisiana: Recommendations for Reorganization of the Penitentiary System*, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, BUREAU OF PRISONS & FEDERAL PRISON INDUSTRIES (1937).
- <sup>56</sup> Armstrong (2012) at 871-72; see also *Prison Labor in the United States*, 53 MONTHLY LAB. REV. 578, 588 (1941).
- <sup>57</sup> Carleton at 137.
- <sup>58</sup> Ed Clinton, *Angola: The Story of Louisiana State Penitentiary*, 22 AM. J. CORRECTION 6, 4 (1960).
- <sup>59</sup> Wilbert Rideau & Ron Wikberg, LIFE SENTENCES: RAGE AND SURVIVAL BEHIND BARS 181 (1992).
- <sup>60</sup> *History of the State Penitentiary.*
- <sup>61</sup> *Id.*
- <sup>62</sup> See John Lear & E.W. Stagg, *America's Worst Prison*, COLLIER'S, Nov. 22, 1952, at 13-16.
- <sup>63</sup> William P. Quigley, *Louisiana Angola Penitentiary: Past Time to Close*, 19 LOY. J. PUB. INT. L. 163, 166 (2018) (citing *Governor Writes Burger to Defend Prison System*, TIMES-PICAYUNE, APR. 6, 1971, at 1-13).
- <sup>64</sup> *Prisoners Strike! For the Price of Blood*, THE ANGOLITE, Sept. 1979, at 14.
- <https://jstor.org/stable/community.32658553>.
- <sup>65</sup> *Id.*
- <sup>66</sup> *Id.*
- <sup>67</sup> *Id.* at 21.
- <sup>68</sup> *Id.* at 16.
- <sup>69</sup> Ron Wikberg, *Inside Angola: The Mattress Factory*, THE ANGOLITE, Jul. 1982, at 11, <https://jstor.org/stable/community.32456657>.
- <sup>70</sup> Mike Thomas, *Exploiting Convict Labor*, THE ANGOLITE, Jul. 1982, at 3.
- <sup>71</sup> Quigley at 209; see Burk Foster, *Angola in the Seventies, reprinted in The Wall is Strong: Corrections in Louisiana* 45 (Burk Foster et al., Univ. of La. at Lafayette Press 4th ed. 2014).
- <sup>72</sup> Quigley at 209.
- <sup>73</sup> *Louisiana Profile*, PRISON POLICY INITIATIVE, <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/profiles/LA.html> [<https://perma.cc/GFB7-BXE9>].
- <sup>74</sup> See *id.*
- <sup>75</sup> Cindy Chang, *Louisiana Is the World's Prison Capital*, Times-Picayune (May 13, 2012), [https://www.nola.com/news/crime\\_police/louisiana-is-the-worlds-prison-capital/article\\_8feef59a-1196-5988-9128-1e8e7c9aefda.html](https://www.nola.com/news/crime_police/louisiana-is-the-worlds-prison-capital/article_8feef59a-1196-5988-9128-1e8e7c9aefda.html) [<https://perma.cc/NWM4-KDMF>].
- <sup>76</sup> Daryl G. Purpera, *Prison Enterprises - Evaluation of Operations*, Department of Public Safety and Corrections, Louisiana Legislative Auditor, Performance Audit Services, May 1, 2019 at A.1, <https://s3.documentcloud.org/documents/6430079/Louisiana-Legislative-Auditor-Prison-Enterprises.pdf> [<https://perma.cc/G28R-2SC3>] (hereinafter, *Legislative Audit*). Prison Enterprises employs “between 800 and 1,000 offenders working in various industrial, service and agricultural positions.” See *About Us*, PRISON ENTERPRISES, [www.prisonenterprises.org/about-us/](http://www.prisonenterprises.org/about-us/) [<https://perma.cc/8U7B-F66M>].
- <sup>77</sup> See L. R.S. § 51:692.3.
- <sup>78</sup> *Legislative Audit* at 5.
- <sup>79</sup> *Id.* at 3, 9.
- <sup>80</sup> *Id.*
- <sup>81</sup> Department of Public Safety and Corrections, *Prison Enterprises 2022 Annual Report* at 36 (2022), <https://www.flipbookpdf.net/web/site/651e1dcd64bdcdbd1b08bf96a3fb4c67920196228202302.pdf.html> [<https://>



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<sup>82</sup> *Our Crops*, PRISON ENTERPRISES, <http://www.prisonenterprises.org/agriculture/> [<https://perma.cc/MQ5K-FG7F>].

<sup>83</sup> 18 U.S.C. § 1761 (prohibiting any individual from “knowingly transport[ing] in interstate commerce... any goods, wares, or merchandise manufactured, produced, or mined, wholly or in part by convicts or prisoners”); see also La. R.S. § 51:692.1 (prohibiting the sale of prison-made products except for sales to public and non-profit organizations).

<sup>84</sup> 18 U.S.C. § 1761; see also La. R.S. § 15:1157(B) (allowing agricultural products to be sold to the public, in accordance with rules adopted by the DOC Secretary).

<sup>85</sup> *Convicted: How Corporations Exploit the Thirteenth Amendment’s Loophole for Profit*, CORPORATE ACCOUNTABILITY LAB (November 2022), <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5810dda3e3df28ce37b58357/t/6362ce034ff96629396013dd/1667419656303/CAL+Convicted+-+Report+02.11.22.pdf> [<https://perma.cc/G3H4-VSPT>].

<sup>86</sup> Michael Sainato, *Corporations Are Making Millions of Dollars from US Prison Labor*, THE REAL NEWS NETWORK (Jan. 5, 2022), <https://therealnews.com/corporations-are-making-millions-of-dollars-from-us-prison-labor> [<https://perma.cc/E5XE-BGXP>].

<sup>87</sup> *Legislative Audit* at 14.

<sup>88</sup> *Id.* at 12-13.

<sup>89</sup> *Id.* at 16.

<sup>90</sup> See La. R.S. § 15:873.

<sup>91</sup> Erin Hatton, *Forced Laborers*, INQUEST (May 9, 2023), <https://inquest.org/forced-laborers/> [<https://perma.cc/XX4V-TPU7>].

<sup>92</sup> Bryce Covert, *Louisiana Prisoners Demand an End to “Modern-Day Slavery,”* THE APPEAL (June 8, 2018), <https://theappeal.org/louisiana-prisoners-demand-an-end-to-modern-day-slavery/> [<https://perma.cc/VWG2-FD3U>].

<sup>93</sup> Ivan Kilgore, *Against “Work,”* INQUEST (May 11, 2023), <https://inquest.org/against-work/> [<https://perma.cc/RV44-FSDG>].

<sup>94</sup> See *id.*

<sup>95</sup> See Covert, “*Modern-Day Slavery.*”

<sup>96</sup> *Weather History Baton Rouge – January 2019*, U.S. CLIMATE DATA, <https://www.usclimatedata.com/climate/baton-rouge/louisiana/united-states/usla0033/2019/1> [<https://perma.cc/EK7B-JWCD>].

<sup>97</sup> *Heat Index*, NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION, NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE, [www.weather.gov/images/wrn/social\\_media/2017/heat\\_index.jpg](http://www.weather.gov/images/wrn/social_media/2017/heat_index.jpg) [<https://perma.cc/979A-ZQRX>].

<sup>98</sup> Louisiana Department of Health, *Heat-Related Illness in Louisiana: Review of Emergency Department and Hospitalization Data from 2010-2020*, 6 (March 2023) (hereinafter, *Heat-Related Illness in Louisiana*) [https://ldh.la.gov/assets/docs/lah/HRI\\_in\\_Louisiana\\_from\\_2010-2020.pdf](https://ldh.la.gov/assets/docs/lah/HRI_in_Louisiana_from_2010-2020.pdf) [<https://perma.cc/HQP8-UXPA>].

<sup>99</sup> *Id.*

<sup>100</sup> *Id.*

<sup>101</sup> Maurice Chammah. “*Cooking Them to Death: The Lethal Toll of Hot Prisons*,” The Marshall Project (Oct. 11, 2017), <https://www.themarshallproject.org/2017/10/11/cooking-them-to-death-the-lethal-toll-of-hot-prisons> [<https://perma.cc/3FQT-5CSS>].

<sup>102</sup> *Id.*

<sup>103</sup> *Id.*

<sup>104</sup> *Id.*

<sup>105</sup> *Heat-Related Illness in Louisiana* at 6.

<sup>106</sup> Chammah, “*Cooking Them to Death.*”

<sup>107</sup> *Id.*

<sup>108</sup> *Ball v. LeBlanc*, 792 F.3d 584, 598 (5th Cir. 2015).

<sup>109</sup> See *Armstrong* (2012), 874.

<sup>110</sup> Louisiana State Penitentiary Offender Orientation Information/Manual, Section III: Programming/Treatment (hereinafter, *LSP Orientation Manual*) at 19 (May 2020).

<sup>111</sup> See, e.g., La. Admin. Code tit. 22 § I-341: *Louisiana Department of Public Safety and Corrections Disciplinary Rules and Procedures for Adult Offenders* (hereinafter, *Disciplinary Rules*) (June 2023) at 73-79, <https://www.doa.la.gov/media/4eufbn5k/22v01-15.pdf> [<https://perma.cc/6ZGV-N4RG>].

<sup>112</sup> *Disciplinary Rules*. at 38, 72-75; La. Admin. Code tit. 22 § I-341.

<sup>113</sup> *Disciplinary Rules* at 39, 74-75.

<sup>114</sup> See David Cloud, et al., *The Safe Alternatives to Segregation Initiative: Findings and Recommendations*

for the Louisiana Department of Public Safety and Corrections, and Progress Toward Implementation, VERA INSTITUTE OF JUSTICE (May 2019), 7, <https://www.vera.org/downloads/publications/safe-alternatives-segregation-initiative-findings-recommendations-ldps.pdf> [<https://perma.cc/95MA-LT3X>]; see also Eli Cahan and Nick Chrastil, *Louisiana Policy Intended to Reform Solitary Confinement Still Leaves People in Indefinite Lockdown*, THE INTERCEPT (Dec. 15, 2021), <https://theintercept.com/2021/12/15/solitary-confinement-reform-louisiana-dpsc-vera> [<https://perma.cc/8QLT-6YRR>].

<sup>115</sup> See La. R.S. § 15:574.2(C)(2)(b); La. Admin. Code tit. 22 § I-341.

<sup>116</sup> See Halloran, M. J., *African American Health and Posttraumatic Slave Syndrome: A Terror Management Theory Account*, 50 JOURNAL OF BLACK STUDIES 1, 45-65 (2019); Joy DeGruy Leary, *Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome: America's Legacy of Enduring Injury and Healing* (2005).

<sup>117</sup> Leask P. Losing trust in the world: Humiliation and its consequences. *Psychodyn Pract.* 2013 May; 19(2):129-142.

<sup>118</sup> *Id.* at 4350.

<sup>119</sup> *Id.*

<sup>120</sup> See Baçoğlu, M., & Mineka, S., *The role of uncontrollable and unpredictable stress in post-traumatic stress responses in torture survivors* in M. Baçoğlu (Ed.), *Torture and its consequences: Current treatment approaches*, 182-225 (1992).

<sup>121</sup> La. Admin. Code tit. 22 § I-341.

<sup>122</sup> DOC Regulation No. B-09-001, *Offender Incentive Pay and Other Wage Compensation*; La. Admin. Code tit. 22 § I-331.

<sup>123</sup> La. Admin. Code tit. 22 § I-331; see also LA *Informational Handbook for Friends and Families of People in Prisons*, Louisiana Department of Corrections at 28, [https://s32082.pcdn.co/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/handbook4friends.familiesofinmates\\_9\\_11\\_19.pdf](https://s32082.pcdn.co/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/handbook4friends.familiesofinmates_9_11_19.pdf) [<https://perma.cc/KL82-NK89>].

<sup>124</sup> *Legislative Audit* at 5 n.8 (stating that according to the 2018 NCIA Directory, incarcerated people in Arkansas, Georgia, and Texas do not receive incentive

wages.).

<sup>125</sup> *Incentive Pay Outlined to Group*, THE ANGOLITE, Nov. 1956, at 48, <https://jstor.org/stable/community.33275082>.

<sup>126</sup> Prison Enterprises 2022 Report at 26 (stating that in 2021-2022, Prison Enterprises paid incarcerated workers in Louisiana a total of \$1,178,839.67 in wages).

<sup>127</sup> See La. R.S. § 15:873 (stating that incentive wages paid to individuals incarcerated in state correctional facilities “shall be no more than twenty cents per hour, except that inmates who are assigned to Prison Enterprises’ industrial, agricultural, service, or other programs may be compensated at a rate up to forty cents per hour and inmates who are Certified Academic Tutors and Certified Vocational Tutors may be compensated at a rate of up to one dollar per hour”).

<sup>128</sup> La. R.S. § 15:873.

<sup>129</sup> La. Admin. Code tit. 22 § I-331(D); see also La. R.S. § 51:571.3(B)(1)(a).

<sup>130</sup> See *Legislative Audit* at 17 (“By providing items for offenders, who have agreed to work extra hours, illustrates [sic] that we incentivize them in one of the only ways possible in an effort to resemble an environment to that of a private sector business.”).

<sup>131</sup> *LSP Orientation Manual*, Section IV, “Offender Banking” at 58-60.

<sup>132</sup> *Id.* at 58.

<sup>133</sup> *Id.*

<sup>134</sup> *Informational Handbook* at 26.

<sup>135</sup> *LSP Orientation Manual* at 58.

<sup>136</sup> *Id.* at 58-59.

<sup>137</sup> *Id.* at 60.

<sup>138</sup> *Legislative Audit* at 20-21, 21 n.35 (“As of fiscal year 2018, markup on canteen items is 20.5%, 19.0% on tobacco items, and varies for personal property items.”).

<sup>139</sup> *Id.* at 21.

<sup>140</sup> *Prison Enterprises 2022 Report* at 32.

<sup>141</sup> *Id.* at 33.

<sup>142</sup> See *Our Correctional Facilities*, PRISON ENTERPRISES, <http://www.prisonenterprises.org/correctional-facilities/> [<https://perma.cc/3LG5-NC4Z>].



Angola Prison, No. 1004  
(Jackson Hill, 1999)



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