



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: August 18, 2022

RELEASED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH: Disability Rights North Carolina (DRNC)
NC Cure | Muse | NC Justice Center | Emancipate NC | Triad Restorative Justice

Coming to Winston Salem, August 25-27 | An immersive play that brings audiences into the deep end of the U.S. prison system

Details on Local Performances in Winston-Salem

Thursday, August 25, 2022 | 6:30pm | The Ramkat | [Tickets](#)

Friday, August 26, 2022 | 6:30pm | The Ramkat | [Tickets](#)

Saturday, August 27, 2022 | 6:30pm | The Ramkat | [Tickets](#)

Formerly Incarcerated Playwright and Cast Members Will Cross the Country This Summer in a Converted School Bus, Visiting Impacted Communities with a Play Set in Solitary Confinement

As part of a ten-city national tour, the **End of Isolation Tour** will bring an immersive, transformative play, **The BOX**, to [The Ramkat](#), in partnership with [Disability Rights North Carolina \(DRNC\)](#).

Based on correspondence with incarcerated people and inspired by true events, The BOX underscores both the horror of solitary confinement and the humanity of people subjected to it. The play is set in the solitary unit of an unnamed prison, where men are confined 23 hours a day to 6x9 cells to remember (and often regret) the past, dream of the future, yearn for loved ones, and rage against the system that threatens their sanity and their souls.

By turns entertaining and unsettling, The BOX offers a rare glimpse into the deep end of our prison system, the intimate bonds forged between survivors of brutality and isolation, the ripple effects of systematic torture, and the common core that makes us human.

The BOX is written and directed by Sarah Shourd, who was held in solitary confinement for over 400 days as an American political prisoner in Iran. After discovering the prevalence of solitary confinement in her own country, she collaborated with other survivors to create this project. Several members of the nine-person cast and crew are formerly incarcerated.

The play, which premiered in 2016 and played to sold-out audiences in San Francisco, Marin County, and Alcatraz Island, has been reconceived as a traveling show for the age of COVID. The team will make its way from city to city in a converted school bus with a mural by DJ Agana ([instagram.com/dj_agana](#)). Filmmakers Bobby Field and Emile DeWeaver are creating an exclusive behind-the-scenes documentary series about the tour, which will provide intimate insight into what it takes to create transformative theater, as well as how individuals deal with the legacy of prison torture.

The End of Isolation Tour aims to enact political change and to promote healing through drama and artistic ritual. With the support of national partners the Pulitzer Center and Unlock the Box, it has teamed up with organizations and activists in each community that are working to shift perceptions and policies around solitary confinement in the United States, where an unparalleled 80,000 men, women, and children are held in isolation on any given day. A portion of tickets for each show are reserved for formerly incarcerated and other system-impacted people.

Quotes About The BOX and the End of Isolation Tour

“The message is clear: We need each other as much as we need fresh air, food, and water. We need each other if we are to prevent the greed, ignorance, and incompetence of a few from undermining the human spirit. We need each other to survive. I collected the stories you will witness from people trapped a decade ago in the hellish deep end of our country’s prisons. Now, in a cruel twist of history, there could not be a more powerful moment to bring their stories back.”

—Sarah Shourd, playwright, director, tour co-organizer and survivor of solitary confinement

"Solitary confinement goes by many different names, such as restrictive housing, the hole, the box, and administrative segregation, to name a few. However, despite the euphemism ascribed to the practice, it is state-sanctioned torture that often causes irreparable and debilitating psychological, physical, and social consequences. Therefore, we must continue the push to end Solitary confinement and demand humane treatment of all incarcerated people."

—Craig Waleed, Project Manager, Unlock The Box (UTB) Campaign, Disability Rights NC

“Before I met Sarah Shourd, and was hired as actor and chef for the End of Isolation Tour, most people in my life didn’t know about my incarceration. Acting in The BOX stripped me down, like the layers of an onion, revealing what was inside. This stripping down for me is freedom. Now, I want to take that freedom on the End of Isolation Tour for others.”

—Anthony Michael Jefferson (“AJ”), formerly incarcerated actor

“Ending isolation isn’t a painful longing for something that’s going to happen in the future; it’s what we are doing right now. We are ending isolation right now—on this stage.”

—Arnie Fischman, formerly incarcerated tour co-organizer

Synopsis of The Box

The BOX presents the story of three prisoners who have been held in long-term solitary confinement in a U.S. prison. They are caged in separate cells at the end of one wing of the Special Housing Unit - the hole. One is Black, one Latino, and one a white nationalist. The play depicts them forging interdependency and interacting with two guards, who themselves are bound together in complexity. The play also recounts the fraught relationship between one prisoner and his daughter. As the play unfolds, the audience is immersed in both survival and resistance inside the regime of solitary.

Presenting Sponsor: [The Pulitzer Center](#)

National Sponsor: [Unlock The Box](#)

Organizational Ally: [Solitary Watch](#)

Multimedia Materials and Links

View a video about The Box and the End of Isolation tour:

<https://vimeo.com/672483473>

View a set of publishable photos:

[Photos to share with press](#)

Learn more about the End of Isolation Tour: endofisolationtour.org.

Learn more about Sarah Shourd: sarahshourd.com.

Follow the End of Isolation Tour on Social Media:

[instagram.com/end_isolation](https://www.instagram.com/end_isolation)

[facebook.com/endisolationbegintransformation](https://www.facebook.com/endisolationbegintransformation)

twitter.com/@EndofIsolation

Learn About the End of Isolation Tour National Partners:

Presenting Sponsor: [The Pulitzer Center](#)

National Sponsor: [Unlock The Box](#)

Organizational Ally: [Solitary Watch](#)

Complete List of Tour Cities, Dates, Venues, and Community Partners

City / State	Dates	Venue Partner	Community Partner
Austin, Texas	Friday July 15, 2022 Saturday July 16, 2022 Sunday July 17, 2022	Holy Cross Catholic Church 1610 East 11th Street Austin, TX 78702	Texas After Violence Project
Fayetteville, Arkansas	Friday July 22, 2022 Saturday July 23, 2022 Sunday July 24, 2022	Arkansas Air and Military Museum 4290 S. School Ave. Fayetteville, AR 72701	Decarcerate Arkansas
St. Louis, Missouri	Wednesday July 27, 2022 Thursday July 28, 2022 Friday July 29, 2022	The Big Top 3401 Washington Ave. St. Louis, MO 63103	Arch City Defenders
Chicago, Illinois	Friday August 5, 2022	Haymarket House	Haymarket Books

	Saturday August 6, 2022 Sunday August 7, 2022	800 W Buena Ave. Chicago IL 60613	
Detroit, Michigan	Tuesday August 9, 2022 Wednesday August 10, 2022	The Jam Handy 2900 E Grand Blvd. Detroit, MI 48202	Open MI Door
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania	Friday August 12, 2022 Saturday August 13, 2022 Sunday August 14, 2022	Eastern State Penitentiary 2027 Fairmount Ave. Philadelphia, PA 19130	Abolitionist Law Center
Baltimore, Maryland	Wednesday August 17, 2022 Thursday August 18, 2022	Information Coming Soon	Interfaith Action for Human Rights
Washington, DC	Saturday August 20, 2022 Sunday August 21, 2022	The Anacostia Playhouse 22020 Shannon Place, SE Washington, DC 20020	DC Justice Lab
Winston-Salem, North Carolina	Thursday August 25, 2022 Friday August 26, 2022 Saturday August 27, 2022	The Ramkat 170 W. 9th St. Winston-Salem, NC 27101	Disability Rights NC
Atlanta, GA	Friday September 2, 2022 Saturday September 3, 2022 Sunday September 4, 2022	Georgia State University College of Law 85 Park Place NE Atlanta, GA 30303	Southern Center for Human Rights

Media contact for tickets to all performances: Seneca Beth, EITsocialmediaintern@gmail.com, (480) 262-1309

Credits and Biographies for The Box and the End of Isolation Tour

Sarah Shourd: Playwright; Director; Actor, “Officer Miller”; Tour Founder, Lead Organizer and Fundraiser

Sarah Shourd is an award-winning author, investigative journalist, and playwright based in Oakland, CA. In 2009, Shourd’s life took a dramatic turn when she was captured by Iranian border guards while hiking in Iraqi Kurdistan and imprisoned as a political hostage. She was tortured and held incommunicado in solitary confinement for 410 days. After her release in 2010, Shourd became an advocate against solitary confinement in U.S. prisons. After her 3 -year investigation, Shourd wrote and produced *The BOX*, which premiered in San Francisco in 2016. Her work has been published by *The Atlantic*, *The New York Times*, *Mother Jones*, *The Daily Beast*, *CNN*, *San Francisco Magazine*, *San Francisco Chronicle*, and *Reuters*.

Terrance Smith, Actor, “Rocky Ashburry”

Terrance Smith played Rocky Ashburry during the virtual premiere of “*The Box*” in 2020. He looks forward to bridging the gaps of empathy and understanding as we tour this remarkable work to each of our destinations.

Gabriel Montoya, Actor, “Victor Santiago”

Gabriel Montoya is a Mexican-American actor-director-writer-producer and teaching artist who loves to create work that reflects the issues of our times. Gabriel makes his home in Los Angeles.

Anthony Jefferson, Actor “Ray De Vault”

Anthony Michael Jefferson is a private chef in Southern California. He grew up in Hermosa Beach, surfing, diving, and fishing.

John Neblett, Actor, “Jake Juchau”

John Neblett, San Francisco State University B.A. Theater Arts 2018, began acting in 2006 with Marin Shakespeare as an inmate at San Quentin State Prison in California. He remembers his friends inside.

Jordan Maria Don, “Olivia Santiago”

Jordan Maria Don is drawn to processes grounded in ritual, ceremony and community. A proud Xicana from East Los Angeles, all her work is dedicated to her late brother, Christopher Paul Don, whose spirit guides her and inspires her every step of the way.

Robert Connell, Co-Founder, Co-Organizer, and Sound Person

Rob is a Bay Area and Toronto-based scholar-activist, educator, and organizer working at the intersections of environmental, economic, and racial justice. Rob aims to bring academic research into the service of marginalized communities, social movements, and the radical arts.

Zeph Fishlyn, Co-organizer, Stage and Road Manager

Zeph Fishlyn is an interdisciplinary artist, educator, and cultural organizer. Zeph’s participatory projects, drawings, objects, and interventions cultivate social and ideological mutations in urgent times

Arnie Fischman, Co-Organizer

Arnie Fischman is a formerly incarcerated Bay Area activist, teacher, and storyteller. He is dedicated to ending and healing the harms of confinement for those he left inside, and for everyone everywhere behind walls.