

Patrick Bates:

Hi, my name is Patrick Bates with the Documenting Conditions of Confinement for University of Michigan. I'm a research assistant. We are here at 2934 South Ethel, Detroit, Michigan, and the date is February 26, 2020. And I'm here with...

Megan Wilson:

Megan Wilson.

Artaysia Mallisham:

My name is [Artaysia Mallisham 00:00:22], formerly incarcerated. I am now a returning citizen.

Patrick Bates:

And now we'll begin our interview with Artaysia. So how are you doing today, Artaysia?

Artaysia Mallisham:

I'm doing fine.

Patrick Bates:

That's good. So I guess what I would like to start with is where were you born, pre-incarceration?

Artaysia Mallisham:

I was born and raised in Detroit, Michigan, all of my life. I've stayed all over Detroit in different areas, but mainly in Southwest Detroit.

Patrick Bates:

Okay. So when was your earliest memory? I know that's a broad question-

Artaysia Mallisham:

It is.

Patrick Bates:

... but just think back as far as you can and what would be the earliest memory you had, just of anything?

Artaysia Mallisham:

My earliest memory. That's kind of hard. There's so many different things popping in my mind. My earliest memory.

Patrick Bates:

What pops up?

Artaysia Mallisham:

A time where I went to the movies with my dad popped up. I was probably maybe five or six and Pocahontas came out. And I remember him coming to get me and wanting to take me to the movies. And I remember I didn't want to go because I felt like I didn't know him. He was a stranger to me because my dad was formerly incarcerated and he served almost 15 years. But in between that he came home around the time I was five years old. So I really didn't know him and he wanted to come take me to the movies. And I remember my mom saying, "You go, go to the movies with your dad, go to the movies with your dad." And I was just telling her I was scared, I didn't know him. So I said I would go if my sister could come with me. So he ended up taking me and and my sister to the movies.

Artaysia Mallisham:

And there's so many different memories popping up. My earliest memory though, would probably be, I remember we were at my mom... We stayed in Detroit, Southwest Detroit. We stayed by the RollerCade, which we go skating like every day after school. But prior to that, I remember we watched an old Superman movie and we all had our little blankets on the floor and everything. I remember my mom had cooked stuffed cabbage and we all sat on the floor and stuff and watched movies. But I remember it was an old Superman movie, one of the originals I believe.

Artaysia Mallisham:

But my earliest memory, I can't even think of what it could be. It's not popping up, my earliest memory.

Patrick Bates:

I think maybe those were your earliest memories.

Artaysia Mallisham:

Yeah.

Patrick Bates:

So you alluded to your father and family so, but outside of your family what does it look like where you were growing up? What'd the world outside your family look like when you was growing up?

Artaysia Mallisham:

I can basically say I grew up in the hood, if that makes sense to some people.

Patrick Bates:

Makes perfect sense.

Artaysia Mallisham:

I grew up in the hood, so it was a struggle. Everywhere I lived there was a struggle, but I guess we were still a close-knit family back then. Everybody was still close. I grew up with all my cousins and everybody was really close. I didn't really know too much about struggling when I was younger, until I was able to see everything for really what it was.

Artaysia Mallisham:

As a kid you really don't know that at a certain age because nothing matters but playing and toys. Nothing really matters at that point until you start seeing, when it really starts affecting you. Because at a young age I'm not affected by it, but my mom is probably affected by in it, our parents or probably our family. People that's grown is probably affected by stuff that's going on, but as a kid I really wasn't affected at that young, just yet, I should say.

Megan Wilson:

Sounds like your family was sort of protecting you from a lot of the outside world.

Artaysia Mallisham:

Yeah. I could-

Megan Wilson:

Can you talk more about your family?

Artaysia Mallisham:

Yeah. My mom have six kids. I'm the second oldest. I have a sister older than me. She's 30, I'm 29. I have a brother that's 27. I have a sister that's 25. I have another brother that is, I believe he's 22. I'm not quite sure. And I have a seven-year-old brother.

Artaysia Mallisham:

So my mom raised me up until I was eight years old. So at that point I really didn't know it was any issues in the house. I definitely didn't know. But I could say we moved around a lot. So that became an issue with school, going to different schools, or not going to school enough, or being late all the time. And I remember our house, I don't know exactly what happened, but our house got firebombed. We stayed on the west side of Detroit and our house got firebombed. And I remember we ended up moving with my sister's dad's mom. So it was all of my mom kids, except my younger brother, and my cousins. It was a lot of people in the household. And I can remember we would go to school, and then I remember a lot of days we didn't go to school.

Artaysia Mallisham:

At that point I really didn't care. I was a kid, I didn't care if I went to school or not. But it became an issue with the school to where I guess they called CPS. And CPS came out to the house and basically was like, "Well your kids not going to school. What's going on?" And I'm not really sure what she told them, but they came and they told my mom, "This is a warning. All of you all can't have all these kids living here. They don't have beds, the house is raggedy, it's too much going on. And the kids is missing school."

Artaysia Mallisham:

So I remembered that we left and we went to a shelter, which we didn't stay long. We probably was there about three days and we went back to the house. And we went back to the house, it was probably a couple of days in between or a week. It could've been two weeks. I'm not really quite sure about the timing, but I remember a couple of our friends were over, they were spending the night with us. And I remember we was up playing and next thing I know I heard my mom screaming. So I go to the top of the stairs trying to look downstairs and see what's going on. And my sister's dad was like, "Go back up the

stairs, go back up the stairs." And I'm like, "What's going on? What's going on? My mom is crying, she's screaming."

Artaysia Mallisham:

So when I went back up the stairs and I looked out the window, there was police in the backyard. So I was confused like, well dang, I don't know what's going on. So I'm telling my sister and everything and I hear my mom screaming, "Don't take my babies, don't take my babies. I'm going to die without my babies." And it still didn't ring a bell like what was going on because I was probably like seven, eight. I really still didn't understand what was going on until they came and shuffled us down the stairs, "Everybody get dressed and everything." My mom was sitting at the table. I think my sister's grandmother was there and a couple of other people who was living there.

Artaysia Mallisham:

It was a house full of people. It was other kids, not just including my mom's kids. At that time my mom had five kids. And I don't know, basically they loaded us in a van and we basically went to foster care. So I remember riding in the van and trying to figure out, to try to remember where they dropped everybody off at. Because I'm like, I got to try to remember where my brothers or my sisters at. And I was so little, but I knew... I didn't know no streets. I didn't know anything. And I just remember like, well how am I going to get here? I don't remember.

Artaysia Mallisham:

And I think they dropped my older sister off... No, they dropped my little sister off first because my brother that's under me, he wasn't there. He usually with his dad for the weekend or sometimes throughout the week. So he wasn't there. And I was there, my sister was there, my little sister, and my baby brother, he was there. And I remember they dropped my little sister off first and I remember trying to pay attention to all the streets. And I was like, well I knew they didn't drop us off to where our same hood because it seemed like we was driving forever.

Artaysia Mallisham:

And I remember they dropped me off on Littlefield, which I found out to be, it was the west side of Detroit. And I ended up staying with a lady, her daughter, her son, and it was just so foreign because I didn't know them. And I stayed with them for a minute, maybe a couple months or so, maybe about six months. And in the midst of that had family visits. To every Thursday we would meet up at the place called the Judson Center, where all the kids would meet up and my mom would come.

Artaysia Mallisham:

But in the midst of all of that, my mom is a alcoholic. So she's been an alcoholic. But growing up, before that, I didn't know she was a alcoholic. I knew she would drink, but she was never drunk or falling out on, or belligerent. She would just drink. She was never super drunk all the time. So I didn't know it was a problem. And then us being taken away just made it worse because she would come to the visits drunk. And we would know because the people pull her to the side and tell her she got to leave sometimes. Or my uncle would bring her and then I would smell it on her breath. And she never drunk liquor, but she drunk beer. And it's still the alcohol, it's still the same, still has the same effect, just slower.

Artaysia Mallisham:

And it got to a point where she wasn't allowed to come to the visits anymore. She was supposed to have been taking classes to get herself together, to fight to get us back. And it didn't happen. So I remember my dad's mom, because I'm my dad's only child, so my dad's mom ended up getting custody of me. And once she got custody me, I was still in foster care, but I was just with a family member at this time. And then I ended up moving back to the hood where I came from, Southwest Detroit. And I would see my mom because my mom stayed two blocks from me, like two streets over. So I would see her sometimes or my granny would take me to my cousin's house where my mom stayed and I would see her.

Artaysia Mallisham:

And by this time my mom was working and doing all of this. But I guess the process had took so long that they ended up letting my little brother get adopted with a family. And then my little sister, she got adopted. My older sister ended up going with her godmom. And my brother ended up staying with his aunt, his his dad's sister. So she never got us back, but I would see her every now and then. From that point on, I never seen my little brother again and I never seen my sister, my younger sister.

Artaysia Mallisham:

And years later, my mom met a guy. And well at that time I was still seeing her. I was seeing my older sister and I was seeing my brother right under me. We would see each other every now and then. Not every day, but every now and then because we all was in the same neighborhood. We would see each other sometimes. And my mom was, seemed like she was on the right track. She had a job, she was looking to get a place. It was a two family flat and my uncle and his girlfriend, his kid stayed upstairs, my mom was staying with them. But the downstairs flat was getting fixed up and she was saying like, "You know, I got a job. I'm about to get this place fixed up." And there really was a guy working on the place, cause I would go over there and stay for the weekend sometimes, but we would stay upstairs and she had took me downstairs like, "See this the man, he fixing the place up so I'll be getting you all soon."

Artaysia Mallisham:

So my mom ended up working at Domino's. So every year they have a thing called Rouge Days where, right on Jefferson, they bring a little carnival. So I worked a carnival stand with my mom one time at Domino's. I was so happy. I was excited I was with her, we were spending time with her. And then once she got off when somebody else took over the shift, we went and rode rides, we ate french fries with the vinegar on them, and fried pickles and mushrooms with the ranch, everything. It was cool.

Artaysia Mallisham:

So excuse me. So excuse me. So I'm thinking everything's all good. She about to get us back, at least the ones that didn't get adopted, which was me, my brother, and my older sister. And I guess my mom started dating a man. So in the midst of her dating him... He had a good job, he worked at Ford and he did construction, he worked on houses, he worked on cars, he did all this little side work, he was like a handyman. And somewhere along the line she stopped working. And I guess her focus changed. Her focus was just him and her. And he ended up moving in the house with her. He stopped fixing the house, and then she stopped fighting for custody for us.

Artaysia Mallisham:

And that was the end result. I ended up basically aging out eventually, out of the foster care, because I was never adopted. I was just still in the system. My granny had guardianship over me and that was that. So in the midst of that, she never stopped drinking. That was just her thing. She was a alcoholic.

She wasn't ready to stop. She didn't want to get help. I guess maybe, I don't know if she felt like she had under control or it wasn't that big of an issue, but it was because you lost your kids, you lost all of us. And my brother got adopted, my sister got adopted. We didn't see them for years.

Artaysia Mallisham:

And I remember at that time I was still living with my granny. But I can remember a time where my granny, I won't say she was in a cult, but she was following her best friend, which the lady, she was a false prophet. So she would tell my granny stuff like, "God said we got to come build a altar at my house." And at that time my uncle was living... My granny had three boys. My dad is the oldest. He was in prison. She had two other boys, my uncle Shaq and my other uncle [Delano 00:00:15:16]. So they were living there. They were going to high school. So my granny, I don't know, I guess she told them like, "I'm moving with Lola. You all got to figure out what you all going to do."

Artaysia Mallisham:

They moved with my aunt and we moved... My granny had a job at the library and everything. And she quit her job, she gave up her house and we moved with just a couple bags of clothes. I couldn't bring no toys, no nothing, not my video games. I couldn't bring nothing. We ended up moving with my granny's friend. So once we moved there, they built a altar downstairs. Everybody had to dress in all white. I wasn't allowed to watch TV or nothing. And they would pray in shifts. So they would all go take turns praying. And I would just sit in the room quiet just in my thoughts or I would just write or something and find something to do.

Artaysia Mallisham:

And eventually we ended up staying there. I ended up going to school around that neighborhood. And the lady got tired of us staying there. So she told my granny we had to move. We probably had been there maybe a year and a half or so. Maybe it could have been two years, but I think it was like a year or so. And my granny didn't want the lady to know we didn't have nowhere to go so we ended up going to the shelter. So we ended up staying at COTS Petersboro downtown, which it was horrible. It's crackheads everywhere, roaches, it's dirty, it's horrible.

Artaysia Mallisham:

We were sharing a room with another family, so it was two bunk beds in a room and then there was a bathroom. You couldn't bring your outside food in. We would have to sneak food in a purse or something, or just hide it in your clothes because you got to open your clothes, you got to open your purse, and just that's the type of situation it was. But by me still being basically custody of the state, they got wind that I was in a shelter with my grandmother, so my social worker came down to the to meet us at the shelter. And she said, "Well Ms. Smith, because Artaysia is in foster care already, she cannot stay in the shelter with you. So we're going to take her. And Heather," which is the lady who adopted my younger sister, "is willing to take Artaysia." So I was like, "Yeah, I want to go with my sister. Yeah, I'm excited. I haven't seen my sister in so many years." I was in tears I was so happy to go be with my little sister.

Artaysia Mallisham:

And when I tell you, my granny pinched me so hard to shut me up, you know what I'm saying? And I was like, I snatched, I was like, "Why you doing that? Why you doing that?" And the lady just looked. And my granny was like, "Well I have a meeting with the people at the shelter and they told me they was going

to put me in a transitional housing for women and children. It's a step up from a shelter so I don't want you guys to take her." So she was like, "Well by tomorrow if you're not moved or something then we will be to get her."

Artaysia Mallisham:

My granny went into the office, talked to the social worker or whatever for housing, the counselor or whatever. And they ended up moving us to a place called Peggy's Place, which is on Wyoming and 6 Mile. It's a [inaudible 00:18:12] for women and children so we ended up staying there. But to backtrack, we had stopped our family visits. I don't know how long it was supposed to last. I guess it's supposed to last until, while my mom get herself together. But in the midst of that she has stopped so our family visits were cut short.

Artaysia Mallisham:

But before that I remember we had a family visit around Christmas and our visit days are always on Thursday. And I remember that all the stuff that I had got for Christmas from the shelter... On Christmas they have all these little things set up so everybody, every kid get a bag. People come donate stuff. So we would go around the tables and people would just put stuff in our bag for the kids, for their moms who didn't have anything. And I thought that was nice. So I remember getting a whole bunch of little stuff. I had a big bag of stuff.

Artaysia Mallisham:

And I remember at this time I was in daycare. And I was probably like 10, 11. I was in daycare though. My granny had to work on Thursday. So I was at the daycare and I went to daycare, I had this big old black bag, garbage bag full of all my stuff. And I remember everybody was like, "Well Artaysia, what is all this stuff you got?" I'm like, "I got gifts, I got gifts, I got gifts." Because I knew I had a visit that day and I knew I was going to give all of my gifts to my brothers and sisters. I wanted them to have something from me.

Artaysia Mallisham:

And the social worker came and got me and took me to the Judson Center for the visit. Nobody showed up but my little sister. It was only her. I don't know where everybody else was at, this was before everybody got adopted. I don't know where everybody was at, but I remember giving her all of my stuff. And my little brother was there too. So he had to probably be like around two years old, two or three. And I remember giving him all of my stuff. And I had little Hot Wheels, I had all type of little stuff. It was just, it was stuff though. You know what I'm saying?

Artaysia Mallisham:

And I remember another time, I feel like this was our last visit. I didn't even know it was going to be our last visit. I had bought a mood ring out the ... You know, it's 50 cents, I don't know from some store. It was a dolphin on it and it was a mood ring. And I remember buying it because I had 50 cents. I don't remember what day I bought it, but I remember I had it. And the last visit was me and my little sister. And I remember I was hugging her and kissing her and I was telling her how much I love her or whatever and I was like, "I want to give you something, do you want it?" And she was like, "Yeah." And I gave her my mood ring and by being so cheap it got the ones to where you can squeeze it so it can fit or pull it apart.

Artaysia Mallisham:

And I remember giving it to her. And I told her, I was like, "Every time you think about me, you look at this mood ring you know I'm always with and I love you." And that was the last time I seen her for, what, I had to be like 10, and I seen her when I came home. So all those years, I was in prison almost 10 years. So tack on eight more years, you know? And that was that.

Artaysia Mallisham:

So we lived in a shelter, we ended up moving to Peggy's Place and then we basically bounced around from there on out. I was going to different schools, we was going to different areas. And then they ended up moving us from that place, with my granny found a house and it just went from there. And in the midst of that, I remember my granny's friend telling my grandmother that, "God told me that [Shawn's 00:21:23] going to get out of prison," and this and that. And I'm like, "Okay." Because at first I'm believing it. Like, "Okay, he going to get out of prison. I want my dad home," because I never had my dad. And he never got out of prison.

Artaysia Mallisham:

So I have experienced, before I went to prison, going to the prison. I was going, my granny started taking me to see my dad at the prison. But I felt like every time I went to the prison, he would be asking about my mom. I thought he would be trying to get to know me, like, "What are you like, what are you into," and just talking. But every time I would go to the prison, he was just like, "Well, what your mom doing? Oh, I heard your mom messing with this dude," or, "Where she stay at now," and this, this and that. And I was just like, in my mind, I'm like, "Ask about me, ask about me." You know? And it never really happened. Like for real.

Artaysia Mallisham:

He would write me letters and stuff. And I would write poems and stuff and send him stuff. But I still felt like even all those times I was going see him it wasn't about me and him. He was just always concerned about what's going on with my mom and what is she doing?

Artaysia Mallisham:

And I remember this one time, the first time I seen him, well the first time I was supposed to see him, he was in Muskegon and we drove so far. Oh my God, we drove so far. And when we got there they told us... My granny didn't have my birth certificate, so they told us that we won't be able to see him. And I cried, but my granny was holding me like, "It's going to be okay, it's going to be okay."

Artaysia Mallisham:

But I was crying because I was happy actually. Because I didn't want to see him. I didn't want to see my dad. I felt like I didn't know him. And I wanted to see my mom. Because at that point she had stopped letting me see my mom and I was just like, "You won't let me see my mom, but you will take me to the prison and see my dad." And I didn't think it was fair. And she had no reason not to let me see my mom. But she didn't like my mom and my dad didn't like my mom. Which was odd because you always asking about her. So it was something more to the story.

Artaysia Mallisham:

And after that, eventually I ended up seeing him and whatever, and it just went like that. Every time I did see him and sometimes he would ask about me or how's school going. And I remember he would tell me, and I was little, like, "You know not to have premarital sex, right?" And I was just like, "What? I'm not thinking about sex." But I know it's because I'm his only kid. He don't know nothing about kids. He don't know how to talk to kids. He never had a conversation really with kids. Like he didn't know what to do or what to say. And I think about that now, but back then I was just like, "Oh, he weird." You know, like, "What you mean?" I just thought it was weird.

Artaysia Mallisham:

So we didn't really have a relationship, but he ended up paroling home to me and my grandma's house. And once he paroled home, I was like 14. I just turned 14, was about to turn 14. And we bumped heads, he didn't know how to talk to me. He was really disrespectful. Like if I did something wrong, he would just be like, "Oh bitch, that ain't what you do," dah dah, dah. You know what I'm saying? He just, I don't know, he didn't know how to deal with me. And it just, I think about it now, like being in a men's prison, you got to be extra hard and super aggressive, and I feel like that played a part. I didn't understand it then, but I do now. And he ended up leaving and moving out. So we didn't really have a relationship after that.

Patrick Bates:

So you... That's a lot to take in. You alluded to a family, different people that raised you, and things of that, so what did you learn from them?

Artaysia Mallisham:

Well-

Patrick Bates:

Not necessarily family, anybody in family, anybody, brothers, sisters.

Artaysia Mallisham:

Well with my mom, just everything I can remember about her. And even up to now where me dealing with her now, I seen a lot of stuff growing up that made me not want to be like certain people. Most people have like, oh I want to grow up to be like this person. I see people that I know I don't want to be like. Like with the drinking. And occasionally I drink, but I'm not really big on smoking, I don't smoke weed, I rarely drink. I'm not really big on that. I can do without it. But I just see what it do to people and I never wanted to be that dependent on some type of drug or anything like that. I just know what I don't want to be.

Artaysia Mallisham:

Even when my granny, my granny is, she's not a bad person, she's a sweet person. But even with religious beliefs, I know, because I do believe in God, I don't have to have a relationship with God through somebody else. And that's more so what her relationship was. And it just wasn't genuine. Because a lot of stuff that was being said and going on, and it was like a circus act really with a lot of this stuff. And it's just not something that I agree with, or -- I seen a lot of stuff as a kid and I just didn't understand it. And now that I'm older, I understand more a lot like what really was going on. It was a lot of manipulating going on.

Artaysia Mallisham:

And that's about it really. I just learned how to be resilient and I learned how to be strong, you know? Because I really feel like when you don't really go through nothing it's hard to be strong. But it's like when you do go through stuff, your struggle becomes your strength. It gives you... You know? And that's really what I learned.

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Artaysia Mallisham:

... It gives you... you know? And that's really what I learned, it just, your struggle just makes you strong and you got to use that sometimes to get to where you're going to push yourself forward and you might not have nobody to push you. You got to use whatever. You got to pull something out of yourself and I feel like that's what I've been doing all this time and that's how I got through, that's how I'm in prison.

Patrick Bates:

So what about discipline? How was discipline handled by whoever raised you?

Artaysia Mallisham:

Oh, I could probably count on one hand how many times I got a whooping or something. I wasn't a bad kid.

Patrick Bates:

That's not necessarily a whooping.

Artaysia Mallisham:

So it's just like, I really wasn't a bad kid. So when it came to discipline, it really wasn't something that was needed. I wasn't a bad kid. I was always a quiet, sweet, timid kid. I didn't always go play with all the other kids. I would rather be up under my mom. It was a few times where I did, you know what I'm saying? But discipline, really, I didn't really, I can't really... Even punishments, I really, I rarely got on punishment. I didn't really, I can't really say. You would think, I hear a lot of times kids were bad or they got whooped all the time and this, this and that.

Artaysia Mallisham:

And that really wasn't the case. I can't really... But I knew right from wrong, it's all about knowing right from wrong. My granny was the type of woman that if I did something wrong, she would explain to me why it was wrong, she would give me a understanding. So and I appreciated that versus just, "Oh you're in trouble." You not telling the kid why they're in trouble. They going to do the same thing because they didn't understand it. I did, that she would definitely talk to me about, "Well this is wrong or this is right." Or, you know, so I would have a clear understanding. Just communication. People think that you shouldn't communicate with kids, but you should, you should explain what's going on and why.

Megan Wilson:

It sounds like your granny really helped educate you.

Artaysia Mallisham:

She definitely did. She definitely did.

Megan Wilson:

Can you tell us more about your education?

Artaysia Mallisham:

Yes. So when I missed the bouncing around to all the different schools, sometimes it'd be hard to catch up, because wherever they at, I was probably already past that or not up to that yet. So I'm jumping in sometimes in the middle of the school year, so I don't know what's going on. So it's kind of slow. But I remember first grade I got held back. I did first grade two times, but that was more so because of moving around and not going to school enough. So I didn't have anything for the school year, so I had to do it over. But I excelled in school. I did really well, always got good grades. I made it work and live with my grandmother. She kind of made sure that I wasn't failing and school was pretty easy to me anyway.

Artaysia Mallisham:

And I liked school because that's all I had. It was like my outlet, you know what I'm saying? I liked to write. I used to want to be a writer. So reading, I loved to read. I would read all day if I could, all type of books. So I didn't, I went to obviously I went to elementary, middle school, different schools. I went to a school called Hally Magnet Middle School, which I really liked that school. They had a thing called linguistics and I was part of linguistics and it was something that was with numbers. It was number games with the dice and words and different quotations and everything. I ended up being in that and we had tournaments, so where we would travel just to different cities and have tournaments and that was cool. So I ended up, and I took a photography class, too, which a lot of schools at that time didn't even offer it as far as I knew. It was a special school.

Artaysia Mallisham:

So after that, I ended up moving out. My granny put me out actually and I was in high school, I was going to McKinsey High School and I went to, and she ended up changing me to a different high school. Then I ended up, she put me out, and then I ended up out here and then my mom. I ended up staying with her, and she put me in Ecorse High School, which I probably did four or five, three or four months towards the end of the school year. And then after that, when school started back, I went to Southwestern Night School. But because of the situation, I dropped out of night school too. I didn't have a ride or, it just was a lot of stuff, my living situation and what I'm going to eat today?

Artaysia Mallisham:

That was my concern. I wasn't concerned about, "Oh, I got to go to school. No I got to figure out what I'm going to eat tonight. You know? Or how am I get to where I'm going," or, you know? That was my concern. So at that time, my survival weighed more than, weighed more to me than me going to school. So I ended up, once I was incarcerated, I ended up getting my GED and I took a few college classes. I enrolled for Jackson Community College and I took a few courses, four classes.

Patrick Bates:

So what about as far as school and education, what about relationships with teachers or staff members in the school, what was that like for you?

Artaysia Mallisham:

Well they was just like any other relationship. I didn't have any teachers really that I was really close to or knew anything about what was going on at home or my business or anything. It really was nonexistent besides, "Oh, how are you doing today?" Or, "Can I get some help with this?" Or it really was no special relationships or anything with any of my teachers.

Megan Wilson:

So what were your perceptions of authority?

Artaysia Mallisham:

My perception of authority?

Megan Wilson:

Or law enforcement or rules?

Artaysia Mallisham:

Law enforcement, when I was younger, I didn't really think anything about it. I didn't think nothing about it. But my perceptions of authority, I just felt like, I always knew as a kid, you respect the dogs, you don't talk back. Or if a dog tell you to do something, you have to do it or you know. But when it came to the law enforcement at a younger age, it didn't mean anything to me. But once I got older, I looked at it differently, because I would see a lot of situations like out here where people, we would be walking to the store, and not necessarily me, because they never did it to me.

Artaysia Mallisham:

But people I be with, dudes or whatever, they would jump out on the dudes, throw them on a car and check they pockets and just for walking. You know what I'm saying? We going to the store, nothing going on. So, but it's the neighborhood too. So I feel like it all played a part. You know why a lot of people feel the way they do it about the police and the law enforcement or anything. So I really wasn't affected by it, really.

Patrick Bates:

So when was your first contact with the so-called carceral system, authority system? I mean, whatever, however you want to phrase it.

Artaysia Mallisham:

Would this mean as far as like... Because I really haven't had any experience with the police besides when I would call them, when I would call. So, and I would call when... I ended up being in a relationship with a guy who ended up being my son's father. He was abusive and he would beat me up and when he would beat me up I would call the police. Sometimes when the police would come... Well first off, it would take them an hour, or two hours to finally do come. Let me say that. They don't come right away. It don't matter what you call and tell them, they not coming right away because I don't know if it's not important, they don't have enough police or, but a lot of times it's the neighborhood. They don't want to come out here.

Artaysia Mallisham:

They don't. So I would call and it would take a hour to come, or 35 minutes, or by that time he gone, y'all let him get away. If he was here killing me, I would be dead. You know what I'm saying? It just didn't make no sense and a few other times I would call, sometimes we would turn the lights off, act like we not there, because by that time he'd been done apologize, or, "I'm sorry I'm not going to do it again," or I would leave. So I'm no longer at the location. So I don't know if they came, or they didn't come. But I can assure you it wasn't between 30 and 45 minutes to a hour they didn't come. So, and sometimes they didn't come at all.

Patrick Bates:

What age were you?

Artaysia Mallisham:

When I got with him, I was 15.

Patrick Bates:

So that's when the contact with the police, as far as you calling them?

Artaysia Mallisham:

Yeah, they started when I was 15.

Patrick Bates:

Okay.

Megan Wilson:

Do you want to maybe pivot to talking about incarceration?

Patrick Bates:

Yes.

Megan Wilson:

So what was incarceration like for you? Start with the big question.

Artaysia Mallisham:

Right. So, I have never, before I was incarcerated, I had never even thought about a women's prison. It had never crossed my mind. I had never known any women that went to prison. It just was something that was foreign to me. So once I caught my case, and I was in the County, obviously I was facing prison because I was charged with first degree murder and I had never had a juvenile record. I never had been to the juvenile. I never had a parking ticket, never been pulled over, anything. So everything was foreign to me. So once I ended up in the County, I was fighting my case. I didn't think I was going to prison. I was like, "You know what? I did the right thing when everything happened. I called the police. I tried to get him help after everything that happened."

Artaysia Mallisham:

So I was just like, "I did the right thing and I'm going to go home." My whole family, we all were thinking, " [Poosha 00:37:27] going to get out of here, [Artaysia's 00:37:29] going to get out of here. It's going to work out. She don't have nothing to worry about. She's not a bad person." Everybody in the hood knew what was going on. It wasn't nobody out here that didn't know because he was a drug dealer. So he basically had business with a lot of people out here, so everybody knew. Everybody knew me, so I thought it'll all work out in my favor. His mom knew about what was going on and it just wasn't a secret. So once I was fighting my case or whatever, I remember when I first went to 36 district court before I got bonded over, it was open murder.

Artaysia Mallisham:

So in the midst of the hearing, I remember the guy, the judge, his name was Lipscomb. He was a light skinned black guy with green eyes, you know, and he was just so mean to me. You know, I'm a kid, I'm 18 at this point. I never been in trouble, all this was foreign to me. I was crying, everything. My family is crying. His family was there, and I remember this man looking at me and telling me, "You're going to prison for the rest of your life. Yeah, that little baby you got, you will never see your baby." I was just wondering, I was crying like, "Why would he say this to me? What do you really feel like happened to where you haven't even heard my side of the story for you to just say that?"

Artaysia Mallisham:

He bonded me over on first degree murder and that's when I ended up having to fight once I got over to felony court. So even in the County it's horrible. I will feel like it's kind of more open at first. But it's just the stresses of you going to court every day and seeing people coming back to knowing they about to go do this much time in prison and you comparing the situations like, "Is this what's about to happen to me?" You know what I'm saying? And it's scary. And then you getting up in the morning, going to court, being in a bullpen all day and, you just in your nerves, you in your feelings. And everybody else is going to court for different stuff, but in a way, it's all affecting you because that could be you. It's dope fiends in there all day, you know, trying to come off drugs and everybody just trying to use one phone and the showers being nasty and sometimes the water cold, and it's filthy, and it's just horrible.

Artaysia Mallisham:

But I will say, we would have visits on certain days, so I did have my family come to see me on my visiting days. They made sure they would come and that's really about it. So once I ended up getting sentenced, I rode out to prison the next day and I met a few people in the County who I ended up getting quite cool with. One of the ladies, she had been in prison before and she rode out with me. She was like, "You just a little baby and I'm going to take you under my wing, I'm going to make sure you okay." I was just like, "Okay." So we get to the prison and they basically have, you know how you strip down and take a shower, wash your hair and then when you come out of there it's bend over, squat, cough.

Artaysia Mallisham:

Even in the County they had us do that. Every time you went to court you had to do it. Sometimes they would come, 15 officers and raid the rock, which is, you know, the housing unit. They were raiding it. I remember they would line everybody up and make everybody get naked, like, butt naked, next to everybody. And even for some of the women who was on they period, you've got to sit there and hold your pad while you completely naked and they going person to person touching, "Lift your titties, bend

over, squat, cough." You know what I'm saying? Looking for nothing because most time, they didn't find anything besides ink pens, stuff we wasn't supposed to have.

Artaysia Mallisham:

So that's basically the same thing. When I went to prison, it was just you had no privacy. It was just embarrassing to have to go through that. I got to get naked and bend over and squat, cough and listen to you talk junk, you know what I'm saying? Or, oh I [inaudible 00:41:32] because they can see how much time you got. You know, "Oh, I wonder what you did," or, "Oh, yeah, time might be hard for you," and it's just like, "Ma'am, you don't even know me. You don't know what my story. You don't know what, why I'm here. You don't know anything besides what you see. But that's nothing, that's nothing. You seeing I got this amount of years, that's nothing. You don't know who I am as a person," or, you know what I'm saying?

Artaysia Mallisham:

It could easily be you, but they don't look at it like that. They look at it like you beneath them, it'll never be them. So, I ended up in prison and then because of my time, I had to go to level four, which is 23 hour lockdown. I ended up doing that. It's supposed to be for nine months and a day and they somehow left me in there for 10 months and two weeks. So I did over the amount of time I was supposed to before I was able to go to general population. But because I was under 21 and I didn't have a GED, or a high school diploma, they put me in school and because I was in school and I was under 21, I was able to be out for two hours at the school. So I would have to get escorted by a officer all the way to the East side to the school building.

Artaysia Mallisham:

Then I would have to wait once school got out to get escorted back because of my security level. But once I'm escorted back, here it is, I got to get shook down again to make sure I'm not bringing anything into level four. So that went on for a while and then once I turned 19... I'm sorry, once I turned 20, I was able to just one hour a day. So I was kind of mad about that because now I'm stuck and here it is. I'm only out a hour. So and then I end up being in level two and it was different because in level four, you locked in a room 23 hours a day with a bunkie, you don't have no privacy. We got the little metal toilet connected to the sink and you got to use the bathroom in front of somebody and it just was horrible because sometimes you get a bunkie and you're trying to use the bathroom.

Artaysia Mallisham:

They don't want roll over. They want to just sit and look at you. "This is the only privacy I got. Can you roll over?" You have some people who don't want to roll over who just, I don't know what they be thinking, but they don't want to roll over. So and then in level four, we used to go out to eat, we would walk to the chow hall. But it got so bad with them fighting. It was a upper level and a lower level. But the way we would go to chow, they would split us up. So lower level would go first and they would sit on one side of the chow hall, and once they're all the way seated, they would bring the other level. So they would be on the other side of the chow hall. But most people that's on level four, they there for behavior.

Artaysia Mallisham:

So sometimes they would fight or whatever. So it got to the point where we couldn't even come out to eat no more. They would bring our food in like a little, not a dolly, but it had wheels on it and they would

put the food in there, and they would just bring it to the unit. By that time, the food cold. So now we got to eat cold food and they don't even care. So that was that, and then how the showers was when I first went to level four, it was one big shower, but it had the plastic in between, you know what I'm saying? Then the long curtains. So the way that was it was just, I mean I guess you had privacy, it was cool. I mean, you know you had your little area, so that was okay.

Artaysia Mallisham:

But sometimes we weren't even able to take showers, depending on what was going on at level four. So, um, ended up in level two and level two was different because I ended up having, you know I still had a bunkie or whatever, but I had more freedom to come out. But it was just dealing with a lot of the officers, because a lot of officers come in there with a chip on they shoulder. It don't have nothing to do with you. I don't know really what's going on with them, but whatever it is, they come in, they have attitude, they talk to you when you any kind of way, call you, like, "prisoner." They make sure they "prisoner," "prisoner," you know what I'm saying? For no reason, it's always an issue. They write tickets sometimes they don't like you, for whatever reason, or they'll write you a ticket and it'll stick. Because a lot of times you going to have a hearing, they don't believe you because you a prisoner. You in prison, you can't be trusted. So we're going to ride with what our officer says, so...

Patrick Bates:

You talked about like different freedoms you had as far as going to school, how that was an experience in itself. Just you have that extra hour to be in school and then when you went to level two, you spoke on freedoms. So could you maybe tell us a little bit more about those freedoms, how those felt?

Artaysia Mallisham:

Yeah, it felt good because after being in 23 hour lockdown all of this time, it's just, and at the first I didn't have a TV or anything. Within that hour out, you either use the phone, take a shower, clean your room, try to do your hair, iron clothes, you do all this with an hour. But you competing with all these people to get to two phones, it's [inaudible 00:46:35] hours. You know what I'm saying? It's a line for this, a line for that, a line to use a microwave. It's always a line. So sometimes you don't have time to do anything, you know what I'm saying? You just got, oh got to wait till the next day and just be at your door waiting. See what time it is, "Oh, we come out at 8:30?" You better be the first one was standing at your door when they popped the door because the doors are locked.

Artaysia Mallisham:

You can't just come out when you want to. The doors are locked. So once I got to going to school, I was able to see the rest of the prison like, "Okay, oh this is level one. They level two, are they out? They on the yard." You know what I'm saying? They walking to the chow hall, they going to the library, they doing this, they doing that." Then once I got to level two, I was able to do all of those things, not knowing I had to sign up for it, had to sign up to go to the library and then can you only go one time a week on a certain day that whatever's on your call out, basically. Or to go to the law library, or to go to yard or... But yard was, they had yard, like, three times a day, in the morning, in the afternoon and sometime in the evening.

Artaysia Mallisham:

I was able to do all of that. As far as taking a shower when I wanted to, not so much when I wanted to, but long as it wasn't a time where we had to be in the room, like count time, I was able to take a

shower. I was able to use the phone, I was able to call my family and do all of those things and not have to sit in a room all day and I was able to walk to the chow hall. Or if I don't want to go to chow, I can just use the microwave and cook me something to eat, you know? So I definitely had those freedoms and it made everything a little better.

Patrick Bates:

What about, have you ever been, I mean, I don't know, this is a question you, feel free to answer or not. You know you don't have to answer any questions you don't feel the need to. Segregation, did you ever do any segregation time?

Artaysia Mallisham:

Yeah, I did segregation a couple of times.

Patrick Bates:

What was that like?

Artaysia Mallisham:

Segregation is like level four but you don't have a bunkie and it's hollering all day because that's all they have. You don't have a TV, you don't have access to nothing. You got your music, you don't have access to anything. But there's a cart that come around every now and then and you say, "Hey, can I get a book?" Whenever the officer felt like getting a cart and pushing it around, they stand at the door and let you look out the little cubby hole and, "Okay. Give me that book," they'll slide it through the slot. And showers only on Monday, Wednesdays and Fridays. So outside of that, you're not taking a shower unless you washing up in the bathroom in the sink. Even then, when you take a shower, the water cold. You are able, allowed, like, five minutes showers.

Artaysia Mallisham:

So you get dressed in your little orange jumpsuit. They come in hand cuff, put your hands through the slot, shackle you to walk to the shower. They put you in a shower, close the gate because it's a cage. You put your hands back out to get the cuffs off and you're standing there taking a shower. You don't have a curtain. So, when they bringing other people to the shower, they seeing you naked. So five minute shower, you get fed through the slot. But once you get your food from being on a cart it's been sitting there maybe an hour before they decide they want to pass you your food. So it's cold, but you have to eat it or you going to starve, you know? The only water you got is the sink. So it's from the toilets to the sink you holding a little button.

Artaysia Mallisham:

You got a window you could look out of, but you looking out probably... Sometimes depending on where you at, you just looking out into the backyard, which is nothing. Or, and instead you're not allowed to use the phone. You could write letters if you want. If you got envelope, you got stamps, you can write letters or, but that's about it and it's miserable. I will say it's miserable back there. It's lonely. I mean, unless you talking to somebody outside the door sitting on the floor, or you on the floor hollering, and then that's not even allowed. You might end up with a ticket, don't even know you got a ticket till the next day till they come read you the ticket. It's lonely back there, even though, yeah, you can talk to people, but you just lost in your thoughts and that's all you got to do is time.

Artaysia Mallisham:

You got time to think and then you got to wonder, "Okay, so they gave me this amount of time, or I'm waiting to see the hearing officer to decide on my ticket." Then you go see them and whatever they decide is your fate. They might say, "Oh, we found you guilty. You got 30 days detention," which means you stand back there and then when you get out, you still might have LOP, which is like sanction. So you have to be stuck in your room without your TV, without your music and you can't use the microwave. You can't use the phone for maybe 30 days. It's just basically like being in seg, except you in a housing unit. You able to just go to chow and take a shower, you know what I'm saying, at a certain time? Even in the morning, they come and they might come at 5:30 and be like, "Hey, you want breakfast?"

Artaysia Mallisham:

Hot or cold? What you want, oatmeal or you want cereal?" And they open a slot and even then, they come at 5:00 in the morning, actually you don't get your breakfast till 7:00. So they give you the breakfast and they come back and get it within, like, 15 minutes and that's it. It's horrible and then sometimes, depending on what's going on, you can't take a shower, or it was people killing themselves back there, hanging themselves.

Patrick Bates:

Wow.

Artaysia Mallisham:

You know what I'm saying? My son's dad, his cousin was in prison and she committed suicide. It's a lot of people I knew in prison that I talked to who committed suicide. It's messed up. Even with that situation, she told the officer she was going to kill herself and officer thought she was playing and went and sat down and she killed herself, and then they tried to get to her enough in time to cut her down.

Artaysia Mallisham:

Once they cut her down, she hit her head, but she died. There's a lot of stuff going on like that. There's a lot of stuff going on with the officers knowing about stuff and playing like they don't know, or just being careless to situations, or not caring. Or feeling like somebody is playing or they don't never know what people are going through. A lot of times officers play a lot of, they play a part in people getting trouble or writing false tickets because they got into it, or had words or...

Patrick Bates:

You talked about living conditions where you were at you was also housing and different levels and certain things and cells and segregation. So what did those things remind you of? Just anything specifically, what did those things?

Artaysia Mallisham:

So when I got to Huron Valley, they had just moved from Scott's. So whatever Huron Valley was before, the West side, the East side was already Huron Valley East. So it was two prisons open. The women was on one side and then it was a mental place for the men on the other side. So, and I ended up being over there but I didn't experience it. But they had told me when they came to Huron Valley, the women, the prisoners had to clean up. They had to get the prison ready for, they had to make it livable. They was

cleaning up everything. They said some of the units had been flooded and it was just disgusting. I can remember where we had sewage problems. When I got out of level four and I went to level two-

PART 2 OF 4 ENDS [00:54:04]

Artaysia Mallisham:

I got out of level four and I went to level two, general population, our showers and everything had flooded to where we would have to walk to another unit to take a shower. It's winter. We all got to put on all these clothes and get our shower bags to walk to the next unit just to stand over there and take showers, because of the living conditions, you know, or sometimes the heat.

Artaysia Mallisham:

I remember the heat had went out, the heat wasn't working. It was freezing. Or I remember one time it was a bed bug outbreak. Literally, it was a bed bug outbreak in a prison. And all we have is prison clothes and everything, to where they had stopped the visits, nobody could go on a visit or anything because they was trying to figure out where the bed bugs, I guess where the bed bugs was coming from.

Artaysia Mallisham:

Different people was going to the healthcare. They was throwing out mattresses, but the mattress is so old and beat up, this is where it's coming from. Recycling all these mattresses with holes in them. You will literally get a mattress with a hole in it or all type of stuff on it.

Artaysia Mallisham:

It was just filthy. They don't give you the right cleaning stuff to really disinfect anything. They're giving us stuff that's watered down to where you can't even smell it. It has no smell at all. It might have a little tint of a color but it's ... you know what I'm saying? It just was, it was filthy.

Patrick Bates:

Can you tell us about, because you talked about the yard a lot, a little bit of, some type of joy that you got out of that. What does the yard look like to you? It doesn't have to be specific to you, what is your vision of the yard?

Artaysia Mallisham:

For me, I guess it was just a place that... you know, we would meet up out there. We would meet up with people who we had met or people we was cool with it just to kick it or... Because it's different housing units. So, if I'm cool with somebody that don't live on my unit, the only time I can see them is on the yard or on a call out if we got the same callout.

Artaysia Mallisham:

And it's not a lot of times you might not have the same callout with this person. So you'll go out and meet them on the yard. And I felt like, in a way like the people I met in prison, like some of them became my family. You know, they was my community. You don't have your family, your real family, or you might not be able to talk to them all the time.

Artaysia Mallisham:

You might not be able to afford to put money on the phone, or they might not come visit or anything, so we kind of built our own families. I had a prison mom. I had prison, I had sisters, you know? And my prison mom was really like a mom to me. If I didn't have it, she made sure I had it. Christmas, she would get me gifts. For holidays, she cooked, because she could cook really good. If I don't live over in her unit, she would send it across the way to me.

Artaysia Mallisham:

She even made dressing out of stuff in prison. Corn chips, meat, we would just get the spices and stuff from the kitchen or whatever. She would really cook and like she really was a mom to me, and I loved this lady. Her name was Ramona Smith. I love her and I've talked to her since I've been home and everything, we had a few visits together. I met all her kids. I've talked to them, you know, so...

Artaysia Mallisham:

The people in the prison, they become our family, and it's just so crazy because they don't really want you to have relationships with these people or to be so close, but it happens. I would meet up with her on the yard or other people I was cool with. We would do stuff, some people like to work out, or exercise, or jog, or play basketball. We had a little tennis court out there. We had baseball and everything. We definitely had like little stuff to do.

Patrick Bates:

You lose the community a lot. So, it's basically you guys had a village inside is what it seems to me.

Artaysia Mallisham:

We definitely did.

Patrick Bates:

So what was survival like in prison? How did you personally survive in prison?

Artaysia Mallisham:

So when I first got to prison, I was wearing my hair in braids. I was real little. I was probably like 130, and I'm tall, I'm 5'8", that's real small for me. Because right now I'm like 196. So you've just got to think how small I was. And I was kind of standoffish because I really didn't know what it was going to be. I remember seeing how it was on TV, like on Oz and all of that.

Artaysia Mallisham:

It's definitely not like that, for the women's prison. I can't speak on the men's because it's different. It do look different on the men's, watching TV it's actually different. It's completely different from the women's. It definitely wasn't that though, but it was a lot of stuff going on, and I just think that, even with...

Artaysia Mallisham:

So I first got to prison, I remember I went to Level 4, so it was a lot of older people who had been doing a lot of time. People, lifers or whatever. I remember one of the ladies was telling me like, "Oh, you cute, but you would be cute as a little boy. They'll take care of you then, if you just be a little boy." And I was

like, "I'm somebody's mom. I don't know if you know this about me or not, but I'm not a boy. I'm a girl." You know what I'm saying?

Artaysia Mallisham:

It was that type of situation because a lot of women like this, in a prison say they not gay, but they say, like, they gay for the stay. So it's for the companionship. And at that time, you know, I have messed with women before, you know, I was bisexual, so it wasn't nothing new to me, but I wasn't going to change who I was, because I'm a girl. You know what I'm saying?

Artaysia Mallisham:

I don't want to be a stud, I'm not, you know what I'm saying? I was a new face and everybody was telling me, "Oh you're so pretty." You this and that. It was a lot of older women that liked me, and a lot of those women wanted to just have me under their wing or basically take care of me.

Artaysia Mallisham:

And a lot of them took care of me, to where in the beginning, my family took care of me, sent me money. But after the first couple of years, like two years, that's done, because people stop, they're living their life and paying their bills and they living like they got stuff going on too.

Artaysia Mallisham:

And it was a couple of women that I had dealt with, you know, and they took care of me. I didn't want for nothing. They cook, they bought my stores, they did this, they ordered me stuff, shoes, whatever I needed, or, you know. So I try to survive in that way. Not so much that I was using people, but it was like they liked me, and I liked them. And this is what they wanted to do, so I allowed them to do it. And then, or, you know, running stores or making cards. I made cards for a minute. People bought cards for a dollar or \$1.50 depending on what type of card it was.

Patrick Bates:

What's running a store?

Artaysia Mallisham:

Running a store is basically, you buy a whole bunch of stuff like cookies and stuff that you know people might need and then when you let people know, "Hey, I got a store." So it'd be like two for one. So if you come get a chili from me, when store come you got to give me two chilis back. Or you can do a three for one. So that was like a hustle, the way to maintain yourself and be able to have some stuff.

Artaysia Mallisham:

Sometimes people would come get \$30, \$40 worth of stuff, but you might know them so you know, yeah they got a couple of dollars. I ain't got to worry about if they going to pay me back. Or sometimes they might not want to send you back the store but they want to just drop double money in your account.

Artaysia Mallisham:

So either way you still winning. That's what running the store is. I did that a couple times, here and there, depending on what's going on. But sometimes you take a loss if you move to another side of the

prison. If I'm on the East side and I moved to the West side, you might have to take that loss because there's nothing you could do to get it. You know what I'm saying? Or if it's not big enough to where you feel like you want to go get it.

Patrick Bates:

Go get it, in what manner?

Artaysia Mallisham:

Go get it. Like, you going to run me my stuff or something going to happen. You know what I'm saying, like, that's all I got. A lot of times in there you can't let people get over on you because they'll try it. Or they might shoot something, we call it a dope fiend move. Get all this stuff from you, then go lock up.

Artaysia Mallisham:

And they end up on another side of the prison or something. It was that type of situation sometimes. I would do hair sometimes, because I could do a little bit of hair. If I braid hair for like \$3, like "Yeah, I'll braid your for \$3." Or "I'll curl your hair." Or do this or do that. Or people iron clothes.

Artaysia Mallisham:

Sometimes people sell phone calls, because you use the phone, you've got a pin code, you've got to say, "My voice is my password." So nobody else can get on your phone if they got your code and try to use it. They can't spend your money. So y'all might go to the small yard and say "Hey, can I pay you \$10, I really need to call somebody." I ain't going to turn the \$10 down because a phone call only like \$2.50, \$3.

Artaysia Mallisham:

Yeah, I say "Yeah, I'll take you, come on." Go outside, I put my voice as my password, they dial they number and they talk on the phone. I might go sit down and they talk on the phone because, once they hang up they can't call nobody else because I've got to do my voice as my password.

Artaysia Mallisham:

It was just like different hustles we had. Or tattoos, for a while, I did tattoos, and that was a risk in itself, it really wasn't worth it, because if I might charge \$3 a letter, somebody might get like a name with like four letters. That ain't really nothing. Knowing if I get caught, I'm going to seg for months, which I never got caught for it, but it was just something I had to do, if you don't have no soap, you got to do something. It'd be times like that, even with the jobs.

Artaysia Mallisham:

I was a Porter, so I was washing windows every day and I got \$17 at the end of the month. That ain't nothing. You got to buy, first off, soap, tampons cost \$5.66. That's, most, you know what I'm saying?, it really wasn't necessary. You buy your personals, your toothpaste, you know, everything that you need. So, it just, it, you couldn't really make that stretch for real. It was hard.

Artaysia Mallisham:

I did work in the kitchen, I ended up working in the kitchen and you get paid by the hour, but you get like 23 cents or it was 17 cents a hour. You've got to work long hours to really make it add up to something, so at the end of the month you probably got like 40 something dollars, 50 something dollars,

depending on how many hours you working. Sometimes, because they got different shifts, they might not let you work over, you know? So you can only do so much.

Patrick Bates:

So this is throughout your prison sentence. What about up towards the end, how did you leave prison? What was the parole process like? Just for the last however long when you was getting ready to transition home.

Artaysia Mallisham:

So, it was so stressful, my parole, because when you going up to see the parole board, you got to take full responsibility for what you went to prison for. Which, I didn't a problem with that, because I turned myself in. They didn't have to come look for me. Like, I called and said, "Hey, this is what happened. I'm going to come turn myself in."

Artaysia Mallisham:

So I didn't have a problem admitting to what I did. I learned that early on, going to court. Because when I took a plea, you know, the judge said, "I on this day did this, did that." I kept saying, "But, I did this, but it wasn't my intention to cause death or..." I said it so many times, and I was crying and my judge was saying, "Well, Ms. Mallisham, in order to take this plea, you cannot say but. You have to admit, I did this on this day knowing it would cause this or it could cause that."

Artaysia Mallisham:

And in the midst of me committing my crime, that wasn't my thought that he could die or it was just, I'm trying to defend and protect myself. So I learned that early on that I had to admit. Cause if you don't admit, you will not get out of prison, they will feel like you're not taking responsibility or you making excuses or anything.

Artaysia Mallisham:

So that really wasn't an issue with me, but I didn't know what the questions would be, because they can ask you anything and I feel like if you don't answer the right way, you not getting out of prison. And that was just so hard. It was just so stressful. I remember I couldn't eat two days before.

Artaysia Mallisham:

I was so sick to my stomach, I was so nervous. And you able to have a representative with you, somebody that's on your visiting list, like a family member or a friend. I didn't put a representative. So I went in by myself and the guy I seen, he was on the TV, I was just nervous going in and then he asked me my name and everything. He reading the PSI report, he reading the court documents basically. He reading what the investigation, the PSI report says or whatever. And he was a young guy, he really wasn't a old dude. He was a young guy and he was reading it or whatever and he seemed pretty cool or whatever. In the midst of him reading it, he was talking to himself and he was trying to play out what happened. He's like, Okay, this was right here and then you spinned around right here and this happened. And he was like, "Okay, because I'm just trying to make sense of what happened." He was like, "I'm just trying to see if it makes sense." You know?

Artaysia Mallisham:

And I was like, "Okay." I remember being real emotional, and he asked me, you know, he really didn't ask me, like, what happened? Because they want to know what, you can say whatever you want to say happened. But they going off what the reports say. So he just read the report and he asked, he's like, "Is that true?" And I was like, "Yes." And then he was like, "Well, is this true?" And I was like, "Yes." He says "Is that true?" I was like, "No." You know, it was real cut and dry, it seemed, which I didn't expect that to be that way.

Artaysia Mallisham:

And then he asked me about my conduct in prison, because I didn't have accumulated, I got maybe about 17, 18 tickets over that amount of time and not really serious tickets but you know like DDOs or something like, disobeying a direct order, you know, stuff like that. They tell you to do something and you don't want to do it.

Artaysia Mallisham:

Well I'm not going to do it, and they'll write you a ticket for it and you serve a sanction or a couple of days or whatever for it. That type of stuff. Or out of place. If I'm out on my bed at count time, if I've got my music on, I don't hear it's count time and if I'm on the toilet or something, it's count time, I'm going to get a ticket, out of place, for that.

Artaysia Mallisham:

Stuff like that. So, it was real cut and dry. And I just remember him asking me about the guy, he asked me about him. He asked me about his mom and everything. And it was like, then when he asked me, "Why should I give you a second chance? What have you shown me?" Or "What have you done or how much have you changed, to make me want to give you a second chance?"

Artaysia Mallisham:

It just broke me down because I was prepared for it, but I wasn't. Because it's always, I'm always thinking, what if I don't say the right thing? What if I don't say what he wants to hear, then I'm not going home. And that's really what I was thinking, but I couldn't do nothing but be honest. I told him, "I was a kid. I didn't know any better. I ignored all the warning signs, because of everything I went through, I didn't have my dad. You know what I'm saying? I didn't have nobody to tell me, this is how somebody's supposed to, I didn't have a man to tell me, "This is how somebody's supposed to treat you, or you don't tolerate this." Like, I didn't have that growing up. You know?

Artaysia Mallisham:

And I felt like it really played a part. My dad was incarcerated: had he not been incarcerated and been there for me, maybe I would've never even went to prison. Maybe I would've never accepted that, the things that I accepted from that relationship that led me to prison. But it was nothing. I didn't have that. So I just told him, "I have a son at home and I don't want this to be his reality. To have basically a dead parent and a parent that's away, that's in prison."

Artaysia Mallisham:

And he just basically was like, "Okay, all right." He was like, "Okay Ms. Mallisham, you'll be hearing from me." So I really didn't know what the outcome was, but I didn't really feel bad about it, because I didn't

get that feeling like, oh, you know? I didn't really feel bad about it, but I guess I didn't feel too good about it. Because it was emotional, but I didn't feel bad about it and I received my parole decision.

Artaysia Mallisham:

It'd be like five days later, I got a positive parole. So that meant a lot, like, I was crying. I was bawling because I just couldn't believe it, because I remember thinking, like, I'm going to spend the rest of my life in prison. You don't see tomorrow, you don't see, you can't see 10 years from today. I couldn't imagine it. I look back as a kid, I'm like, 10 years, pal, okay. It just seems like it's so long. And then to be in there away from your family, going through everything you're going through because it's so much stress in prison.

Artaysia Mallisham:

You literally, I'll just speak for me. I felt like even though I was around so many people every day, I was alone, I was so alone and miserable. I know it's hard for a lot of people to understand that. How are you alone? There's so many people, you got a bunkie, you got, no, like, you still alone. It just was horrible.

Artaysia Mallisham:

Even with the relationships, a lot of times, I was in a couple of relationships in prison, but it was more so for the companionship. Like yeah, some of them are sexual relationships, but it's companionship. It's to not feel alone, to feel like you got somebody. That's more so what it was over anything.

Artaysia Mallisham:

But I received that positive parole and I just was so happy and I had prayed for that day. And it finally had come, I was like, okay, it's over for me. I'm finally about to get out of here. But then, now I have a positive parole, you got to walk real light. Because there's people going home, there's people that's not going home, that's jealous or mad or want to take your date, and they'll threaten you with it. I was threatened by somebody I was in a relationship with because I was going home and we were in the same unit.

Artaysia Mallisham:

We were bunkies. She threatened to take my parole. She tried to fight me so many times and a couple of times she did hit me and I would get up to fight her back or to let her know, she would run in the hallway and say, "Officer, officer, I need a visual, I need a visual." Which basically means like keep your eyes on me just in case something happens to me or somebody do something to me.

Artaysia Mallisham:

She didn't want me to go home. She didn't want me to leave her. Even though she was getting out a couple of months after me. I was getting out in August, she was getting out in November. It was just like, did you forget I have a son at home? If you say you love me and care about me, you would want me to go home.

Artaysia Mallisham:

And a lot of times they don't want you to go home. They tell you when you first come to prison, well, RGC, which when you first get there, whatever like quarantine, you go through like a little class and they tell you, don't date in prison, it's not allowed first off. But if you decide to, don't date nobody with more

time than you, because a lot of times you get in there and let's say... Okay. Like me, I almost had 10 years. Don't date a lifer. Don't date somebody with 20 years, because they want you to stay in prison with them.

Artaysia Mallisham:

They not getting out, or they not getting out when you getting out, they want you to stay. And I've been asked by somebody I was dating, not her, somebody else to... She had 27 years. "Can you stay in prison with me for a couple more years?" We got to break up! You know what I'm saying? Like, no. And it scared me too, but I'm not scared to fight nobody, but it scared me like, well what are you going to try to do to me, to keep me in prison with you?

Artaysia Mallisham:

So you just got to, like, really separate yourself from people and do what's best for you and try to, you got to walk light once you get that parole. And that's what I did, I walked real light. I really wasn't even going outside no more, like, I might go to the yard every now and then, but no, because it'd be people mad at you, people you previously got into it with and might have words with, and I still had people that I had words with or had got into it with, who might stay on the West side or wherever.

Artaysia Mallisham:

But guess what? I'm not about to entertain it, because everybody know when you go to the parole board, because they put a list up in the housing units and your name is on there. It's highlighted by the date. You know what I'm saying? When you going up for the board, like it's not a secret but everybody know.

Megan Wilson:

So when did you get out and where did you go back to?

Artaysia Mallisham:

So I got out on August 22nd of 2018, which is two days before my 28th birthday. So that was the best birthday gift. So, I remember I got up that morning, I had got up at like five o'clock, 5:30, took my shower, you know, made my coffee. I had packed my stuff two days before. So, except for a couple of things, I had packed all of the little stuff that I was bringing, because obviously I gave a lot of my stuff away to people who wasn't going home, or my friends or whatever. Sold some stuff. And I got up that morning and I remember I got two braids put on my hair the day before. Because I'm like, when I get up, I don't want to have to worry about none of that.

Artaysia Mallisham:

I'm just ready to go. So you got to wait till the control center call for you. So I was up, I just couldn't be still, I was just moving around and I was, just had all this anxiety, but it was happy. I was happy, but I was so nervous at the same time. How was it going to be when I leave? But I'm like, you know what, I'm going to just cross that bridge when I get there. As long as I'm getting out of here.

Artaysia Mallisham:

So, and it's a lot, it was a lot of people going home that morning. So they call me or whatever. So I get all my little stuff and I'm pushing my cart. So I'm walking, I'm walking. You literally walking past everything

in the prison now because at this point I lived on the East side, so you've got to walk all the way to the West side control center.

Artaysia Mallisham:

So I'm just walking and people saying bye to me, you know what I'm saying, like "Bye!" But the whole time I'm so nervous, and I knew my granny and my dad and my son was coming to get me, but something went wrong. I end up staying like two hours. I was at the control center for two hours. So I kind of got scared, because the week before a lady who was in my unit, she had did 26 years. It was time for her to go home. She got up, got dressed, took all her stuff and she was at the control center for like two or three hours. We thought she was gone and she came back, and they told her that she had to wait until next week. So she ended up leaving like, two days, she left that Thursday before I left, so I was nervous like, everybody had left. I was the only one sitting there.

Artaysia Mallisham:

I was like, I don't know what's going on. And I can't call, I can't use the phone in the control center to call and see if my family coming or what's going on. But eventually they came and got me and I walked through the detectors and everything, and my dad, my son and my grandma was waiting on me. And I thought I would cry.

Artaysia Mallisham:

I thought when I walked out I was going to cry, and I didn't even cry cause it felt so unreal. I felt like it wasn't real. I waited for this day for so long and it was finally here and I was numb to it, and I cried like two days later. Once I finally realized like, you know what, I'm not going back to prison. I'm finally home.

Artaysia Mallisham:

So when I got out, I paroled to my older sister's house and I had so much anxiety. Like I went, I had to go see the parole, I had to go see my agent first. So I went there, seeing my agent or whatever, and then, I went to my sister's house, my sister was at work, but her girlfriend was there. So that was my first time really seeing her again.

Artaysia Mallisham:

Because I knew her when we were kids, but by this time her and my sister had got together years later. So I knew her, but I didn't know her. So I met her. And then my sister came and my sister, she ran in the house, well actually on the way from the prison, she called my dad's phone and I guess she was on Facebook Live. She called me, I didn't notice, I didn't know nothing about it, but she at work though, she worked at Tim Horton's, so she got her little headphones on and I'm on the phone.

Artaysia Mallisham:

I thought it was just like FaceTime, but it wasn't, it was Facebook Live. So we talk and she's like, "Yeah, my baby home and I'm so happy." This, this and that. So we talking about everything and now she's like, "I'm about to leave work right now." I said, "Okay, I got to go see my agent and I'm going your house."

Artaysia Mallisham:

So she was like, "Okay." So I got to her house first, and then once she got there she came in and she just jumped on me. And I just held her like this. She wrapped her legs around me and you know, she just was

crying and everything and it just was, I was just so happy to, you know?, because it had been almost eight years since I seen my sister, well maybe seven because she came to see me twice.

Artaysia Mallisham:

So it had been like seven years since I seen her. I hadn't seen nobody else in my family though. I seen my aunt, and my uncle and my cousin one time, when I first got locked up. And I was seeing my grandma, and my dad and my son every month. So that was constant. I was always seeing them. I hadn't seen my mom in almost 10 years, and I had just met, I was able to meet my little brother for the first time, he was six. I had seen my other brother, and when I came home though, my mom was fighting for her life, after 10 years of not seeing her. When I seen her, she was in the hospital with tubes down her throat. She was, her whole body was swollen up and she was --

PART 3 OF 4 ENDS [01:21:04]

Artaysia Mallisham:

She had a, trying to think what it's called, she was incubated, I think is what it's called.

Megan Wilson:

Intubated, yeah.

Artaysia Mallisham:

Intubated, yeah. And they had, like, I don't know if they had induced her into a coma and everything. They had, well, they had induced her into a coma, so she wasn't really responsive of anything. It was my first time seeing her and I remember talking to her, I was rubbing her, wiping her face and stuff. I was like, "Mama," I was like, "It's Poo Poo, it's Poo Poo." And the, I don't, tears was coming down her face though. So they was like, "Well she know you here, she know you here. She can't talk or anything but she know you here." You know? So, and I've been home ever since then and trying to get jobs or whatever. And I did have a job.

Artaysia Mallisham:

I worked at a place called Android, which we did, we made car parts for GM, and I got it through a temp agency, and they knew I was on parole. They knew I was a felon or whatever. And by me coming home with my case, I was high security. I had to report every two weeks on Thursdays, and I can't miss. So with my job, it was mandatory that I worked like 10 hours some days. So I would have to leave early every other Thursday, and I ended up getting points for it and I got fired. So it was hard to even keep a job at that point because here it is, if I ever missed one reporting, I'm going to get violated. I can go back to prison, or I can get my parole extended or anything, but that's it.

Artaysia Mallisham:

I'm just happy I'm home finally and I'm trying to find a career, something I can really do, something I'm passionate about, something that ... I definitely got to find a career I want to pursue because I actually tried to do phlebotomy and I was trying to take a class, and even with that, me being a felon, I wasn't able to do it. They said the qualifications was, long as you have a Bridge Card, receiving Bridge Card benefits from the state, you're able to take the phlebotomy course for free, it's, they would pay for it.

Artaysia Mallisham:

I tried to do that. I went to the orientation and everything, and once I filled out all the paperwork and I got my Bridge Card information, they tell me because I'm a felon, the state won't pay for it, even though I'm qualified. Even though I got the qualifications, which was only have a Bridge Card, I wasn't able to do it. I would have had to pay out of pocket, which was, like, between 850 and \$900, for a eight week course. So I wasn't able to do that.

Artaysia Mallisham:

So, and I actually, I have a job I supposed to be starting next week, but it's just temporary. A job that I work with is called Precision, but most of the jobs are out of town. It's industrial cleaning, so I'm not able to go out of town and do it. It's a job I work with with my sister, which they just got back yesterday from going to Atlanta doing cleaning. So they travel and clean or whatever, but I'm only able to do local jobs. So I have one coming up around next week. I'm able to do that, but it's not like a longterm job. It's just until the job is over. The job might last a week, four days, it might last two weeks, but really that's it. Then I'm looking for something else.

Patrick Bates:

Where did you live after your release?

Artaysia Mallisham:

I lived with my sister, but I tried living where my son was at, with my grandmother, because my grandmother has custody, the guardianship of my son. And I tried living there, but it's 35 minutes away from where I have to report. So it was a one incident where my granny was supposed to take me to report, but she decided at the last minute, she didn't feel like taking me. And I'm calling my agent, I said, "Hey, I don't have a ride. I don't know how I'm going to make it." And she said, "Don't call me with that bullshit. I don't want to hear it. If you're not here, I will issue a warrant." And I was crying and she didn't care.

Artaysia Mallisham:

I was trying to explain what's going on and she didn't care. So I ended up calling one of my homeboys and he came to come get me. It was last minute but I barely made it. And right when I was coming in, she was gathering her stuff to leave. She would have issued a warrant. I would have been violated. So I just basically decided, it was best for me to stay close to out here where I report at, because if push come to shove, I can't find a ride, I can walk there, I'd be able to report.

Megan Wilson:

Where else did you find support and community once you were out?

Artaysia Mallisham:

Once I was home, well I will say my sister, since I've been home has been like ... We always been close but we're definitely closer now, because she really, since I've been home, she really just had my back in. I came home and stayed with her, she didn't pressure me, "Oh you got to stay here, or you got to pay rent." A lot of people would be like that, even though you've just come home, they don't care, they rent still due. Life is still going on. It's still stuff going on. I never had to deal with that or anything. She was just, "Poo, just get yourself together and do what you got to do."

Artaysia Mallisham:

And my best friend, I met her in prison, I'm really close to her and she's always been like a good friend to me. She's really encouraging, she's always there. I've met some people, that had been good to me and made an impact on my life.

Patrick Bates:

So what other resources did you have or need?

Artaysia Mallisham:

So actually, I took a program in prison and they basically told me, "When you come home, or when you are released, they're going to help you with housing, help you get a job, help you get a car. You're not going to have to worry about anything. Your parole agent has all that information, she already has it." I come home, I talked to my agent and I asked her, I said, "They told me you got all this stuff for me. I need housing, I need this, I need that." She said, "Well I'm going to just be upfront with you. We don't have anything." She didn't even give me a bus ticket. Nothing. They didn't help me with anything.

Artaysia Mallisham:

So all that was just lies, like they said it, but I know other counties, it's more so Wayne County because I know other people in other counties like my friend she was in Grand Rapids. They helped with a lot of stuff. It's Wayne County, they don't care. They tell you they going to help you with all this stuff, when you get out here and you're on your own, they don't help you with anything. And just knowing, before prison, I never had a job. I've never worked a day in my life, I've never paid a bill. I had a house and everything. My son's father took care of us. He paid all the bills, I didn't do nothing. I probably paid a phone bill like twice in my life. I didn't have the responsibility of having to do anything besides, once I did have my son, take care of him for a couple of months, I was home before I was incarcerated.

Artaysia Mallisham:

I didn't have any bills or nothing to pay or ... So that was a responsibility I had to learn. How to pay bills or how to do this or how to do all those things, I've never had to do it. And not having a job, it was hard coming home, trying to get a job where, "Oh, where's your resume?" What can I put on a resume, besides prison jobs? Everything is MSI, MSI, Michigan State. You know what I'm saying? Like Michigan Department of correction, MDOC. Here it is, it show right in front and center on my resume, I've been in prison. I didn't have no real jobs to put on there. Nobody really want to hire you, for real, especially with lack of experience in anything.

Artaysia Mallisham:

I will say, I did, while I was incarcerated, I actually got certified doing LabTech which I learned that in prison on job training. So you know we made partials, bite guards, false dentures, radiation bite guards for all of the prisons in Michigan. So, and it was highest paying job in the prison. I ended up getting that the last year and a half before I was released.

Patrick Bates:

So when you came home, what did ... Nine years, that's a long time.

Artaysia Mallisham:

Yeah.

Patrick Bates:

Any time is a long time.

Artaysia Mallisham:

I served nine years and three months.

Patrick Bates:

When you came home, what did the world outside of prison look like?

Artaysia Mallisham:

It was so different, because I've grown, I've lived out here my whole life. I have lived in other neighborhoods, but I was always coming out here sometimes. Everything was different. So many people had passed, people I had grew up with. It was just so shocking to ride around and just see so many houses torn down and the parks looking way they do. All the schools, closed. The elementary school that I went to, closed. It's actually torn down. There's nothing there but a big field.

Artaysia Mallisham:

It was just so much had changed, like, it's a lot of places that's closed around here that I used to go to or that I've been before. It just changed so much, even the people. The people I grew up with, now a lot of them out here doing drugs and you can't even recognize they the same people, and I just know people go through so much stuff, you know what I'm saying? And you never know what they going through or why they are the way they are, but a lot of times it's because of what they went through growing up or not having family support or being out there on your own and trying to make it.

Patrick Bates:

How'd you cope with that, with seeing all those changes?

Artaysia Mallisham:

Well, it really wasn't nothing I could do about it, so I just dealt with it. I just knew, eventually this is not where I want to live. This is not where I want to raise a family. This is not where I want to raise my son. I definitely want to get out of the hood, I just want better, but I've always wanted that.

Megan Wilson:

Did it change your perspective?

Artaysia Mallisham:

It definitely did, to see a lot of the same people in the same position that they was in before. When I was 15 or 18, them same people in the same position, and I had been gone all these years. I come back, they're doing the same thing. So yeah, it changed my perspective a lot. All these years wasted, I know I wasted a lot of time in prison, away from my family, but it wasn't something I decided I wanted to do. It just was the law. I didn't choose to go to prison. It just was something that was happening, it happened, and I had to deal with it.

Megan Wilson:

Can you say a little bit more, maybe, about how your incarceration affected you?

Artaysia Mallisham:

Yes. [crosstalk 01:32:30] Yes. I definitely ... In a way I feel like self-control, I definitely have a lot of self control, which I never even thought about it before prison, but you have to have a lot of self control just to make it in prison, to make it out of prison, because there's a lot of things you might be wanting to do and you know you can't do it. There's so many consequences or repercussions like, "Oh, if you do this, you can go to seg or if you do this." Everything I thought about, or everything that was going on. I had to think like, "Oh, if I do this, this is going to keep me here. Or this might keep me here longer. I might not go home on my date," and that was my big thing.

Artaysia Mallisham:

I moved so cautious, well as cautious as I could. I should say that I moved as cautious as I could in there just to make it home, because it's people going there with a year and do six, seven years when they only supposed to do a year. So you just have to move cautious and that's what I did, just knowing how to have self control and controlling my emotions. And a lot of times it's hard to control your emotions because you keep them bottled in so much in prison because you don't want to look weak. People prey on that, you know what I'm saying? You show any type of weakness, you just become prey for people, and people manipulate you. It's a lot of people that do, you know what I'm saying, but it's survival for them too, manipulating people or having people do this or shoot moves for you and it's just a part of the prison life.

Artaysia Mallisham:

So I definitely feel like self-control played a big part of that, and just knowing what I could do and what I shouldn't do and just knowing what the repercussions would be. And a lot of times, they say prison is supposed to rehabilitate you, but I don't really feel like, in a way, it does. It kind of stagnates you in a way because you don't have time to really grow. I kind of feel like I went in at 18 and in a way, I still came out at 18. I definitely feel like that, yeah I learned a lot but I still came out at 18, because the world was going on still and I wasn't caught up to it.

Artaysia Mallisham:

When I came home I was still thinking like everything was still the same, because I hadn't been out here and I had just saying so much to anybody. It was hard to even grasp it or just ... It took me a minute to even understand like what was going on in the process of how this worked, you know what I'm saying? It was a lot to cope with.

Patrick Bates:

Could you tell us a little more about ideas or perceptions you may have about the carceral system, after your incarceration?

Artaysia Mallisham:

Yes. I definitely feel like ... Even when I said, when I went to court, how the man was like, "Oh, you're going to spend the rest of your life in prison. You're never going to see your baby again." You saying all this based on what my charges are, yet you don't even know what went on really. You haven't even

asked me what happened or seen my side or looked into the reports of all these police reports I had of what was going on. You didn't even bring up the fact that I was a kid.

Artaysia Mallisham:

Here it is, I was with a grown man at 15 who was taking advantage of me, who was beating on me and doing all this stuff. All that played a part, and as a kid, what type of, not so much sympathy or, but that didn't play a part? You didn't consider that? You know what I'm saying, what led up to me committing my crime? It was just like, I already felt like he already thought I was guilty, even though I didn't get found guilty on first degree murder. I pled out, but I was going to trial.

Artaysia Mallisham:

For his mom, my victim's mom, she got up and spoke on my behalf, and said, "I don't want her to go to prison. It's messed up what happened and he lost his life, and now my grandson has to grow up without his mom and his dad. And now she had to lose her life, and so much time in her life and go to prison." Because like I said, it was known. Everybody in the neighborhood knew what was going on. Everybody knew he was beating on me, and basically I was a battered woman.

Artaysia Mallisham:

It was a lot of things, like learned behavior I should say, that I learned that molded me to be the person I was in a relationship. You know what I'm saying? I had high self esteem when I met him and in the midst of that, he took all of that. I ended up having low self esteem and feeling like I got to look down when I talk to people, or feeling like, even with me, and like, "Oh I can't look at him," or look down. That's how he had basically molded me to be, and not really taken up for myself, just because I allowed him to do so much.

Artaysia Mallisham:

And going to prison, that's not the best attitude to have, going in to prison, because people, they see that, you know what I'm saying? They play on it. So that was a struggle too, trying to, not so much make a name for myself, but just try to, being strong, not being weak, and that played a part. But with the carceral system, I just feel like a lot of times, they don't really look at circumstance. They just look at the case and not look at what led up to that or how you got in that position. Like family, education, not having any type of support, because in the beginning I did have support but once my granny put me out, I didn't have nothing.

Artaysia Mallisham:

My mom wanted to support me, but she wasn't in her right mind. My mom was diagnosed as bipolar, paranoid schizophrenic, manic depressive and an alcoholic. She can not raise me and a lot of times I was her mom at 14. I was pushed out in the streets, trying to survive and trying to make it, and that's when I met him and he's seeing all that. I feel like he played on that. I feel like it all played a part in me getting locked up and just them not really rehabilitating me.

Megan Wilson:

I thought it was really powerful, how you phrased it as, when you got out, you felt like you were still 18 in some ways. What else do you want people to know about prison?

Artaysia Mallisham:

That it's definitely not what they tell you it is, just going into it. You have to be there to really feel it. It's not just a place, it's a feeling. It's like a black cloud over the prison. There are some, I won't say good days, but some days where you can cope because you have to, you don't have a choice. It's been a lot of days where I wanted to give up and I didn't want to be in prison, or days where I was depressed and I didn't eat for days or I stayed in the bed.

Artaysia Mallisham:

It's miserable and it's hard to ... I feel like rehabilitate somebody or say that's what you're trying to do when you're not really giving them the tools to do so. Yeah, you're saying, oh you're putting me in a class, or whatever, but what am I really, like, learning to get out because a lot of stuff they're teaching us that, a lot of classes I took, none of those classes helped me since I've been home. They haven't helped me do anything. I took those classes for what? It didn't change nothing. You all still didn't give me no support when I came home, nothing you all have done.

Artaysia Mallisham:

Besides, I will say the only class that affected me in the long run was domestic violence, because that was my situation. All those other classes I took, I had to take AA, NA. I'm not a drug addict. I've never done drugs, hard drugs, I didn't need that, but domestic violence is the only thing that really helped me, because that was my situation. Everybody case is different. In my case, my issue was domestic violence, so I took domestic violence one, I took domestic violence two, and they showed me about red flags, warning signs, and a lot of those warning signs I didn't know then. I was flattered, like, "Oh he want to know where I'm at all the times, or he this and he that, or..." You know what I'm saying?

Artaysia Mallisham:

That was just his way of keeping tabs on me, you know what I'm saying? And it just was another form of abuse, mental abuse, emotional abuse, physical abuse. It all played a part. I feel like the only thing that ever helped me in prison, the only class I took was domestic violence. But it's always a case by case basis, and that was my case, that was my situation. All those other programs didn't help me at all. And even then, like, getting out, even a class I took, Beyond Violence and all that, it was mandatory for me to take anyway, but I'm not a violent person. I don't have a violent history. I don't have a history of fighting or getting locked up as a kid and I don't have that. It was just mandatory for me to take, but I took because it was mandatory. I'm not a violent person at all.

Artaysia Mallisham:

Up until, me committing my crime, there was no record of me getting in fights, being violent, being ... any, aggressive, any of those things. I just definitely feel like there needs to be more chances for people, you know?, like, here it is, you see, yes my case was murder, but here it is you see, I have no past history of aggression or violence or anything. Obviously something happened. There should have been something else put in place for me to be home. It was something else they could have did for me. Why did you all have to send me to prison? I was a kid, had just had a baby and he had a history of abuse. I'm not the only person he's abused. He was a grown man abusing a kid.

Artaysia Mallisham:

Here it is, his mom said, she lost her leg to domestic violence. His dad shot her leg off. This was something he endured growing up, and he's seen, so maybe in a way he thought it was okay. That had nothing to do with me, the way he grew up. You know what I'm saying? So it's the way we grow up too, and I feel like it should have been something else that could have happened for me, instead of just prison for defending myself.

Patrick Bates:

So Artaysia, do you have any closing thoughts, remarks for us?

Artaysia Mallisham:

Well, I definitely appreciate being picked to do the interview and share my experiences in prison, my life, you everything that led up to me going to prison, and I definitely hope it helps somebody or whatever the study is, to change a few things in prison or to make some type of difference.

Patrick Bates:

Well, thank you very much Artaysia.

Megan Wilson:

Thank you.

Patrick Bates:

I think that concludes our interview.

Artaysia Mallisham:

You're welcome.

Megan Wilson:

If I just hit stop, is it going to not erase it?

Patrick Bates:

I doubt if it'll erase it.

Megan Wilson:

All right, I'm going to hit stop.

Artaysia Mallisham:

What did you do? Wait, what did you do before, to where you played it back?

Megan Wilson:

I think I just hit stop.

Patrick Bates:

I'm almost positive that's how it works.

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Megan Wilson:

All right.

PART 4 OF 4 ENDS [01:44:28]