

USA

Ear Hustle

Launched in 2017, Ear Hustle from PRX's Radiotopia was the first podcast created and produced in prison, featuring stories of the daily realities of life inside California's San Quentin State Prison, shared by those living it.

Ear Hustle was co-founded by Bay Area artist Nigel Poor alongside Earlonne Woods and Antwan Williams — who were incarcerated at the time — the podcast now tells stories from both inside prison and from the outside, post-incarceration.

In 2019, Rahsaan "New York" Thomas joined Ear Hustle as a co-host inside San Quentin. Episodes have been downloaded over 46 million times, and today, several prisons around the world are sharing Ear Hustle stories internally.



- Ear Hustle came to public media organization PRX and the Radiotopia podcast network in 2016 through an open call to creators around the world. The show emerged as the winner from more than 1,500 international entries.
- Ear Hustle challenges stereotypical narratives of the incarcerated and humanizes the effect of mass incarceration on individuals. With stories ranging from the mundane to the extraordinary: from cellmates, to food, to birthdays, to caring for pets, the episodes push audiences to re-think how to wrestle with judgment and empathy. By including perspectives from correctional officers, prison staff, and family members, the show adds depth, context, and texture missing from many commercial podcasts with more sensationalized crime stories.
- In November 2018, California Governor Jerry Brown commuted Earlonne's 31 years-to-life sentence after 21 years of incarceration. Gov. Brown cited Earlonne's work with Ear Hustle in the commutation.
- Ear Hustle has grown into a team of eight, including formerly incarcerated producers John "Yahya" Johnson, and Antwan Williams, who now contributes sound design and original music from the outside.
- Ear Hustle prioritizes engagement with the public, via social media and our monthly newsletter, The Lowdown, which is distributed to 20K+ people around the world.



- In 2019, Ear Hustle collaborated with The Metropolitan Museum of Art and New York City Ballet dancer and choreographer Silas Farley, on Songs From the Spirit -- a live performance which featured recordings of new spirituals and original music by musicians featured in the podcast.

- Ear Hustle enjoys a large and dedicated listener following outside of prison. But we're also dedicated to getting the show played inside as many prisons as possible. In 2018, after lengthy negotiations with administration, the show started airing in 35 California prisons operated by the California Department of Corrections.



- Ear Hustle has been acknowledged, recognized and the recipient of some of the most sought-after accolades in the industry, including recognition from the Peabody Awards, DuPont Awards, and being named a 2020 finalist for the inaugural Pulitzer Prize for audio reporting in 2020.

