

USA

KALW/Uncuffed

KALW, a public radio station in San Francisco, has led classes in San Quentin State Prison since 2012, and Solano State Prison since 2018. Participants learn how to make powerful audio stories. They record honest conversations about the struggles and triumphs of people behind prison walls. Then, they edit those interviews themselves, using industry-standard equipment and software. The finished product goes out on KALW's airwaves, kalw.org, prison TV systems, and the award-winning podcast *Uncuffed*.

The producers say: "*Uncuffed is vulnerable and personal. If you can see the humanity in us, you can see the humanity in everyone. We've got the mic, and we're telling our own stories.*"

Our goal is to transform the criminal justice system by elevating the voices of incarcerated people.

- In March 2020, the *Uncuffed* producers at Solano recorded a special episode about Covid-19, which had begun to spread in California. Their memories of previous disease outbreaks shed light on what a new lockdown would mean. The conversation was featured in *Reveal* and other national media. This was the last story we were able to record inside before the coronavirus lockdown.
- In July 2020, we released a special episode featuring people with loved ones in prison. They recorded heartfelt letters addressed to their sons, fathers, partners, and friends whom they hadn't been able to visit in months as the pandemic threatened their lives. Highlights appeared in the podcasts *Snap Judgment* and *The California Report*.



- Two *Uncuffed* producers were released from prison in July, after having contracted the coronavirus. They shared their experiences on the podcast, describing the horrors of the pandemic, and the struggles they faced returning to a closed-down world.
- In the past 12 months, the *Uncuffed* podcast has been downloaded 45,139 times by 26,874 listeners.
- We provided correspondence courses to old and new participants at San Quentin and Solano. The courses include listening assignments to KALW stories and other radio and podcast programs. We provide exclusive interviews with the producers of KALW stories, asking them about their process.
- We partnered with an institutional TV program to broadcast captioned *Uncuffed* stories throughout the California state prison system.
- We formed a Community Advisory Board of formerly incarcerated artists, writers, journalists, and advocates to guide our decision making.
- We were named finalists for the national Local That Works Award.



Greg - a case study

Greg Eskridge is an award-winning journalist and a founding member of San Quentin Radio, where he currently serves as a facilitator and mentor. His stories have aired on KALW's Crosscurrents, on Life of the Law, and on Crooked Media.

He co-produced Life of the Law's live storytelling event Stand Up San Quentin, which won a local Emmy with KQED. Greg is a member of the Northern California chapter of the Society for Professional Journalists.

He is also pursuing a college degree and is a facilitator of many self-help groups. As a journalist, his goal is to give incarcerated people a platform to express themselves as well as give the public an accurate account of prison life.

When he is not producing, Greg is living out his basketball dreams. Despite 26 years of incarceration and being 47 years old, Greg still has a little game left.