

These photographs process the deep-seated corruption within the United States prison system. Through extensive research, I covered many facets of this discussion, including: how private prisons profit off the labor and prolonged internment of prisoners; how systematic restraints virtually eliminate any chance of prisoner education or rehabilitation; LGBT discrimination and abuse; and how solitary confinement is a cruel and inhumane form of torture that has no place in modern society. There are many ways in which the government disregards the law, constitutional freedoms, and basic human rights by violating and incarcerating whomever they please, even if they have no basis for their accusations.

The text, “Wake up Sheeple,” is in reaction to the seeming freedom of information in America, and the need to scrutinize and critique the system. Too much of our country is shaped by blind conformity and mass ignorance, when in reality, a wariness of authority is one of the most common threads of human nature and must be employed. The “Justice is Paid” sign represents the arbitrary and fictitious laws, justice, and constitutional rights that are bent or eliminated to the whims of those in authority. The red and blue lights are reminiscent of police sirens, coming to inflict misplaced cruelty on those condemned by an intrinsically unethical system. The quiet social laceration of those caught in the web is reflected in the figure’s body language and expressions. There are also tones of sexual abuse, as 216,000 men are raped in prison every year. As Jesuit priest, anti-war activist, and poet Daniel Berrigan once said, “Writing about prisoners is a little like writing about the dead.”

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