



PRESS CONTACT

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In Its Fifth Year, the Bay Area Book Festival Takes on Mass Incarceration with Some of the Most Thoughtful Experts and Powerful Voices on the Topic

Join us on May 4 and 5, Downtown Berkeley.

Participating authors are available for interview.

Berkeley, CA, April 3, 2019— Celebrating its fifth anniversary, this year's Bay Area Book Festival—May 4th and 5th in downtown Berkeley—will present 250 notable authors in 100+ literary sessions and expects to attract audiences of 25,000 people. In keeping with its mission to address the most pressing issues of our time, the Festival will host conversations on the crisis of mass incarceration with some of the most insightful experts on the topic. They will discuss how mass incarceration links up to a long history of racial oppression, and envision alternatives to it.

One especially notable speaker is Albert Woodfox, one of the "Angola 3" who was imprisoned in solitary confinement for 43 years for a crime he didn't commit. He presents his memoir, "Solitary," and is interviewed by Shane Bauer, Mother Jones reporter and author of "American Prison."

"The Festival has always made it a priority to address the pressing social justice issues of our time. This year we are pleased to bring together an esteemed group of writers and scholars who are both documenting the crisis of mass incarceration and working to change it," says Claire Calderón, Program Manager for the Bay Area Book Festival.

Highlights include:

- **American Prison: Shane Bauer interviewed by John Diaz.** "Solitary in Iran nearly broke me. Then I went Inside America's prisons." That was the title of the award-winning 2012 Mother Jones story by reporter Shane Bauer, who, after being detained for two years in a notorious prison in Iran, returned to journalism and took on an astonishing assignment: to go undercover as a guard in a private prison in Louisiana. His book "American Prison: A Reporter's Undercover Journey into the Business of Punishment" is a riveting, blistering indictment of the private prison system—a relic of Southern slavery—and the powerful forces that drive it. One of President Obama's favorite books of 2018, it was named a New

York Times Top 10 Best Book of the year. Sponsored by Mother Jones Magazine.

Saturday, May 4, 12:15-1:15 PM

Chronicle Stage, Martin Luther King Jr. Civic Center Park

- **Beyond the Bars: Alternatives to Prison and Punishment with Lara Bazelon, Tony Platt, Albert Woodfox.** What could the world look like without prisons? What kinds of healing—what new definitions of justice—could take their place? Join University of San Francisco law professor Lara Bazelon ("Rectify"), activist Tony Platt ("Beyond These Walls"), and Albert Woodfox ("Solitary"), one of the Angola 3 who spent decades in solitary confinement for a crime he did not commit. They look at the violent history behind mass incarceration and imagine alternatives.

Saturday, May 4, 3:15-4:30 PM

Berkeley City College Theater

- **Tayari Jones interviewed by Brooke Warner.** Few writers have captured the spirit of the American South—its heart, its small-town intimacy, its scars from centuries of institutional racism—like Tayari Jones. Jones has the power to "touch us soul to soul with her words," said Oprah, who dubbed Jones' newest book, "An American Marriage," a Book Club Pick for 2019. In her novels, Jones takes these scars, including traumas around wrongful incarceration, and rubs them raw, creating masterful works of fiction with the power to transform a reader. She is interviewed by Brooke Warner of She Writes Press. Sponsored by She Writes Press.

Sunday, May 5, 1:30-2:45 PM

Freight & Salvage

- **The Unbreakable Human Spirit: Albert Woodfox on Survival in Solitary: Albert Woodfox interviewed by Shane Bauer.** One of the "Angola 3," Albert Woodfox endured four decades of solitary confinement for a crime he did not commit. While his story has been profiled by many publications, today we have an opportunity to hear from him directly. From the epilogue of his just-published memoir, "Solitary," come these powerful words: "To those of you who are just entering the world of social struggle, welcome. To those of you who have spent years struggling for human rights and social justice, don't give up. Look at me and see how the strength and determination of the human spirit defies all evil." In our closing keynote session, Woodfox will be interviewed by Mother Jones reporter Shane Bauer, author of "American Prison" and himself a survivor of solitary confinement when he was arrested in Iran and held for two years in the notorious Evin Prison.

Sunday, May 5, 5:00-6:15

Freight & Salvage

See all Festival events in our [general press release](#).

THE BAY AREA BOOK FESTIVAL

When

Saturday, May 4, 10 a.m.-9:30 p.m., and Sunday, May 5, 10 a.m. to 9:30 p.m.

Where

Downtown Berkeley, California

The Outdoor Fair is in Martin Luther King Jr. Civic Center Park

Indoor Festival events at various locations. See [Schedule](#) for more info.

Ticket Information

Outdoor venues, including the San Francisco Chronicle Stage, are free.

Guaranteed seating in indoor programs can be accessed through Priority Tickets at \$10/session. A General Admission Wristband allows space-available access to all sessions all weekend for only \$15. Go to www.baybookfest.org or find box offices on site. Youth under 18 can attend for free. A Friends program baybookfest.org/contribute-2/ allows attendees to receive wristbands and Priority Tickets while supporting the nonprofit festival.

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