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The Life of African Americans in Prison

In “*A Prison Film Made in Prison*,” Nick Paumgarten analyzes the life Theothus Carter, an African American prisoner who gets in many troubles and dramas in his youth. At age eleven, Theothus Carter first gets arrest for stealing a car with his friends. When he gets twelve, he involved in many fights in the neighborhood. His father was shot and killed by a family friend when he turns fourteen. His mother passed away in 2001 because of AIDS. The incidences lead Carter and two of his brother were sent to a juvenile home. At juvenile home, Carter starts dealing with drugs and involving in fights, eventually getting him arrest. By constantly involved in illegal activities, Carter was served a couple of years in Pendleton Correctional Facility, a prison near Indianapolis. In 2010, Carter was released, but he went back after robbing a house and shooting the inhabitants. Again, Carter served another sixty-five years at Pendleton. Carter has lived out most of his life in prison. While at Pendleton, Carter discovers his new talent is acting when he is cast to play a lead role in the O.G film by Madeleine Sackler. The film revolved the darkness of inmate’s life. For instance, Carters explains that he is being harassed by the guards and fighting with his roommate to survive. Similarly, in “*1.5 million black men missing from everyday life,*” Justin Wolfers addresses the enormous number of missing black men in America everyday life due to incorporate in murder and crime. At youth age, black American who doesn’t live in secure environment are often surround with drugs and commit crimes, like Theothus Carter. Different from Wolfers’s perspective, in “Disintegration” Eugene Robinson's perspective is not all black American are involved in social vices. Some of black American is the intellectual, even white folks have to genuflect. Moreover, Robinson emphasizes that black American is divided into four separate groups: abandoned poor, immigrants and people of mixed race, mainstream middle class, and transcendent elite. He analyses how each of the group is different and disconnects from the others. From Robinson’s perspective, Theothus Carter can be as part of the group of abandoned poor. However, Robinson mentions that there are some black American who hold high status in society, like the transcendent elite who are the wealth and power.

In “*Disintegration*” Robinson describes the disintegration of black American in recent news. He mentions the term of “black leader” as a metaphor to emphasize the state of black America. The period of black America is fighting against the discrimination of skin color. For example, Robinson says, “When a black man and a white woman walked down the street hand in hand. These are among the forces and trends that have had the unintended consequence of tearing black America to pieces.” The effect of seeing black and white American are boned make the racism end. Further, Robinson addresses Barack Obama’s, who is elected as first African American president. The change is a transformation for black American undergoes the process of disintegration. However, census data and economic report show that the disintegration of black American is still an issue. Black American is separated into four different groups. The mainstream middle-class are the group of educations people with a full ownership stake in American society. The abandoned is the group of who are hope of escaping the poverty. The transcendent elite is the group of the wealth. Lastly, the emergent is the group of black immigrants. Each of the group has different mind-sets, profiles, and hopes. The disintegration is an obstacle for black American to growth in community. For example, black American who has education started moving out of what had been the historic black community. The other is left behind remain poverty and uneducated. Similarly, Theodus Carter’s life in “*A Prison Film Made in Prison,*” he was born in a poor black neighborhood. Carter grows up seeing his father is a drug addicted. Carter’s neighborhood is surrounded by drugs and robbery, which makes Carter can’t get out of trouble. Later, his son has followed his path and killed at a young age. Like in “*1.5 million black men missing from everyday life,*” Wolfers emphasizes the issues of missing black men when he says, "African-American men have long been more likely to be locked up and more likely to die young." Black American who grow up in abandon neighborhood felt hard to escape from poverty and crime. Nonetheless, not all black American are prisoners. Some of black American is the wealth and power, like the transcendent elite.

In addition to the life of black American, Theodus Carter’s life in prison is like slavery when he talks about the food, the guards, and the roommates. For instance, Carters mentions the food here’s gross. However, Carters says these things are his daily routine. Until the film crew wants to make a film in prison. Carters’ life is completely changed when he finds his interest and talent in acting. Later, Carters gets invited to perform a min role in the O.G film. Even so, Carter wasn’t eligible to participate because he has disciplinary write-ups and been caught with a quarter pound of marijuana. Madeleine Sackler, a director of the O.G film, finds Carter has the talent to play the lead role. Therefore, Carter gets chance to be in the film. Carter’s skill of inhabiting two very different characters is tremendous. For example, Paumgarten says, “While remaining very much himself—to act without seeming to act—bowled over the filmmakers.” Carter has the talent because his prison life is full of acts. For instance, Paumgarten says, “We really been acting our whole life. We act every time we go into a courtroom to try to get out of this shit we put ourselves in.” Whether Carter is acting in front the court or in the film, he performs like a professional actor. The life in prison help Carter easily fits in the setting and plot of the film. Moreover, Carter scene partner, Jeffery Wright is a Hollywood professional actor compliment that he has never worked with an actor as intense as Carter. Although Carter is not a professional actor, his emotion in acting make him standout.

Although Madeleine Sackler sees Theodus Carter can succeed as acting assistants, Carter will be in prison for a long time. Carter can’t be like Wright, who has a bright future in Hollywood. The life of Carters turns out unpredictable. Carters can be lived today and died tomorrow. For example, Paumgarten says, “Let me tell you what if feels like when you’re in prison. It feels like you’re dead. ” Carter lives in anxiety and hope for a better tomorrow. Moreover, Carter sees his son, Theothus, Jr is going through his path. For instance, Paumgarten mentions, “Carter’s son, Theothus, Jr., who was sixteen, had apparently been getting into trouble in school.” Carter’s son is reflexed on Carter’s life. Theothus, Jr is doing all the same things that Carter had done in the past. Eventually, Carter heard that his son had been killed in Indianapolis by a gunman. Not only Carter’s is lost his son, but also he had two years of solitary confinement. Carter feels that his life is not worthy to live.

Both Robinson and Wolfers’s perspectives reflect on Carter in different ways of defining his abandoned life. In Robinson “Disintegration”, he addresses black American are split into four categories. They have different profiles and mind-sets. For example, Theodus Carter who grows up in a poor neighborhood and surrounds by crimes. He is described as abandoned poor. Different from Robinson’s article, Wolfers’s article emphasizes black men are being murdered and kill affect the majority are missing. The missing black men disrupt the ratio of the black child born without a father increase. Without the education of the parent, black children are involved in crime and murder. Like, in “A Prison Film Made in Prison” Paumgarten addresses Carter’s son is killed in Indianapolis by a gunman. The incident is caught on camera but not by police. Later, the case remains unsolved. Carter sees his son are like him, who gets in trouble and illegal activates. In “A Prison Film Made in Prison” Paumgarten is useful to emphasize the life of black inmate struggle in Pendleton.