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## How to Get a Conjugal Visit

By [Laura McClure](#) and [Michael Mechanic](#)

**NEWS:** Shackled births, prisoner experiments, and rampant TB? Just another day

**Photo:** Mark Allen Johnson/Zuma Press

[July/August 2008 Issue](#)



## The Mojo Prison

- [A Glossary of Prison](#)
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48 states allow the shackling of female

## THE SHOWER MYTH

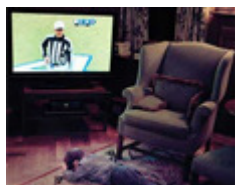
You go to prison, you get raped.



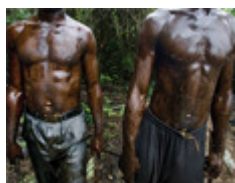
## PHOTO ESSAYS



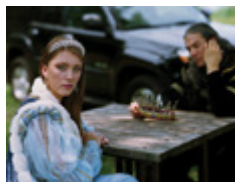
Right: Portraits from the Evangelical Ivy League



American Holidays



Curse of the Black Gold



Meadowlands



Bolivia's Cocaine  
Trade: A Bitter Leaf

inmates while they are giving birth. The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists says the practice puts "the health and lives of the women and unborn children at risk."

Less than 1% of prisons distribute condoms.

$\frac{2}{3}$  of gay, bisexual, and transgender inmates in California report being sexually assaulted.

Disease rates in US prisons compared to general population:

**HIV:** 490% higher

**AIDS:** 500% higher

**TUBERCULOSIS:** 400% higher

**HEPATITIS C:** 2,000% higher

US prisons and jails house 3 times as many people with serious mental illness as US mental hospitals do.

In June 2006, the Institute of Medicine recommended an increase in the use of prisoners as biomedical test subjects after laboratory scientists complained of a shortage of rhesus monkeys.

The South Carolina Senate has considered legislation that would take up to 180 days off prisoners' sentences if they donated an organ.

In their first two weeks out of lockup, ex-cons are 13 times more likely to die than the average person, according to a recent study in the *New England Journal of Medicine*.  
Leading cause: drug overdose.

Hollywood version, anyway. "It can be violent," says Nancy Wolff, a Rutgers professor who studies sexual assault. "It's a big of a problem as people think."

In a Bureau of Justice Statistics survey of 24,000 inmates from 146 state prisons, about 1 in 50 reported nonconsensual sex with a fellow inmate last year, with fewer than 10% reporting incidents involving violence. Roughly 10% reported staff sexual misconduct, and 10% reported sexual misconduct by other prisoners only." Wolff did a similar survey of prisoners in 2004. "Many of the inmates said, 'You've been watching too much TV.' " "They were actually angry with me for wasting their time, when they really care about issues that are much more personal to their lives. They argued to me that prison is more of a problem in the past, but now it's just too risky." When sexual assault occurs, Wolff says, the most likely offenders, snitches, transsexuals, and...inmates with gambling debts.  
*Mechanic*

## FAILURE TO CONJUGATE

State-sanctioned prison sex makes it hence the official term for Big House. Some "family visits" reward well-behaved inmates and their better halves with up to 30 minutes in a "bedroom-lounge" visiting hours, and last year California was first to allow overnight visits by dual-sex couples or gay or straight. (Although lifers can't visit.)

Outside of those states and three others—Washington, and New Mexico—prisons don't allow conjugal visits. Federal prisons don't allow conjugal visits either. Although the Washington state death row inmate reports that, in San Quentin's guards tended to let inmates have sex while they snuck a quickie in the commissary. But the spouses posting on sites like Prisoners' Wives want more regular hookups. Note from Ohio: "Women need more than a quickie hug every two weeks in three years."  
*McClure*



Phone Sex Operators



The Hidden Half



Aryan Outfitters

China: The Last Empire  
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The Curious Retention of Robert Gates

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**Media & Culture**

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Your Name:

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 All HTML formatting is removed from comments.  
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**Comments:**



my boy friend was just sentences to a year in delano state prsion we were g but he went to jail. we still want to get married, and have a jail wedding.hov jail wedding?

Posted by: **jasmine** November 18, 2008 10:57:50 AM [Respond ^](#)

## SPECIAL REPORTS

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The Price of Prisons

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Conspiracy Watch: Drill  
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## End the genocide in Da

Every day, Darfuris face rape,  
starvation. Be a Voice for Darf  
the suffering.

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The MoJo Interview:  
Bill Maher

How To Fix America  
Interviews

Mathew Honan: Why  
Barack Obama Is Still  
Your New Bicycle

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Angola 3

Helena Cobban: A  
Citizen's Guide To the  
Post-Bush Globe

The MoJo Interview:  
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Interrogating Errol

Morris  
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Yo La Tengo  
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Arthur Dong:  
Hollywood Chinese  
Lynn Hershman  
Leeson: Wag the Free  
Speech  
Malik Yusef: Word on  
the Street  
Nick Turse: The Real-  
Life Matrix  
Benjamin Skinner: The  
Apex of Slavery  
Lewis Black Is No  
Judge Judy  
The Real Adrian  
Tomine  
Stephin Merritt: The  
Silent Type  
Zarah Ghahramani:  
Thirty Days in Iran's  
Worst Prison  
William Poundstone:  
Our Voting System Is a  
Loser  
Marjane Satrapi: Never  
Mind the Mullahs  
Boots Riley: Dance  
Dance Revolution  
Trita Parsi: The NIE's  
Got Nothing on Him  
Serj Tankian:  
Alternative Rock's  
Political Poet  
Former U.S.  
Government Official in  
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50 Iraq Experts  
Ken Burns  
Matthew Israel  
Interviewed by Jennifer  
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Steve Buscemi  
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Bloggers, Politicos, and  
Netizens on Politics 2.0

Henry Louis Gates Jr.

Joseph Stiglitz

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## LETTERS

"In his pessimistic assessment of the Medicare prescription drug program, James Ridgeway questions whether enrollment in Part D is worthwhile. For most seniors the answer is a resounding "yes." Seniors are saving, on average, \$1,200 a year on their medicine, and Part D is costing considerably less than previously estimated due to effective competition. Most importantly, more than 39 million Medicare patients—90 percent of all potential beneficiaries—now have comprehensive drug coverage."

Readers respond.

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