

# The Vote, Caste, and the Carceral State

January 28–29, 2023

Virtual and In-person Experience:  
MIT Media Lab, Cambridge, MA

## 2023 Schedule At-a-Glance

Day One: Saturday, January 28, 2023

- 9:00 AM** Welcome Remarks by **Melissa Nobles**, Chancellor, MIT & Co-founder of The Civil Rights and Restorative Justice Program of Northeastern Law
- Remarks by **James Forman, Jr.** Author of *Locking up Our Own, The Legacy of the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960's and a personal lens on the Carceral State*
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- 9:15 AM** Lecturer **Khalil Gibran Muhammad** on *"The Condemnation of Blackness, the Criminalization of Blackness: Precursors to the Carceral state"*
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- 10:30 AM** Lecturer **Nicholas Lemann** on *"Reconstruction and The Battle for Citizenship and/or Voting, Violence and Reconstruction"*
- Since the Civil War, and the last pangs of Reconstruction, violence against Black people has been the tool to ensure white political power and the social control of Black people. The Voting Rights Act of 1965, a bulwark against state governments' strategies to deny Black people their right to vote, is on life support. Felon disenfranchisement has been a major means of diluting the Black vote. Understanding how we got here lays out a path of how we move forward.
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- 11:45 AM** Breakout Discussion Group #1:  
Discussion Expert: **Margaret Burnham**  
Author of the acclaimed *By Hands Now Known: Jim Crow's Legal Executioners*
- Breakout Discussion Group #2:  
Discussion Expert: **Desmond Meade**  
Topic: The group will examine the disenfranchisement of the formerly incarcerated and the reinstatement of poll taxes as effective mechanisms for diluting the Black vote.
- Breakout Discussion Group #3:  
Discussion Expert: **Vincent Warren**  
Topic: A loophole in the 13th Amendment permits involuntary servitude/slavery for those 'duly convicted of a crime'. Do incarcerated citizens exist out from under the umbrella of the privileges and immunities of the Constitution?
- Breakout Discussion Group #4:  
Discussion Expert: **Chesa Boudin, former San Francisco District Attorney**  
Topic: The Politics of Criminal Justice Reform and the Criminalization of Poverty
- 
- 1:45 PM** Lecturers **Dr. William Darity, Jr. and Kirsten Mullen** on *"The Social Ecology of a Disposable People"*
- Swept into prison as part of an orchestrated frenzy that made 'black' and 'criminal' synonymous in the mind of the public, this population of serfs comprises 60% of America's prison population and exists far beyond the barrier reefs of basic Constitutional protections. The legally sanctioned mechanisms of internal deportation crisscross the institutional and regulatory pillars of the state.

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Day One: Saturday, January 28, 2023

3:00 PM

Breakout Discussion Group #1:

Discussion Expert: **Douglas Blackmon**

Topic: *Slavery by Another Name – The Re-enslavement of People of African Descent, American Apartheid*

Breakout Discussion Group #2:

Discussion Expert: **Tasseli McKay**

Topic: *Stolen Wealth Hidden Power: Incarceration and Reparations. Social Exclusion and Economic Subjugation*

Breakout Discussion Group #3:

Discussion Expert: **Rasul Mowatt**

Topic: *The Geographies of Threat: A Pedagogy of the State*, Routledge Press, 2021.

*Policies and practices of dispossession and extraction are most evident in the geographical spaces created to contain those members of society who are deemed disposable. These physical spaces constitute a violent assault upon those who are constrained within.*

Breakout Discussion Group #4:

Discussion Expert: **Rahsaan Hall**

Topic: *Juvenile Injustice – Life After Prison: Surveilled and Trapped Up in the System: CORI's/ Rap Sheets, Stop and Frisk, Separation of Parents and Children, and Debunking the "SuperPredator" Mythology*

4:00 PM

Music of Liberation by **The Ron Savage Trio** and **Larry Watson**

Network Over Dinner, and see the **Kalief Browder Documentary** Preview Experience

*17 year old Kalief Browder spent three years in Rikers Island without trial for allegedly stealing a backpack. He spent 700 days in solitary confinement. Two years after his release in 2013, he committed suicide by hanging in his parent's home.*

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### Day Two: Sunday, January 29, 2023

11:00 AM

Lecturer **Goodwin Liu** on "Education, Equality, and the Constitution."

*A look at the 14th Amendment and the carceral state. Black people have always been heavily overrepresented in prisons, including as a post-emancipation forced labor source in the South.*

12:15 PM

Breakout Discussion Group #1:

Discussion Expert: **Nicholas Lemann**

Topic: *Ending Affirmative Action and Constitutionalizing a Caste System*

Breakout Discussion Group #2:

Discussion Expert: **Mark Rosenbaum**

Topic: *Detroit, School to Prison Pipeline: The Right to Literacies Required for the 21st Century, and Quality Education as a Constitutional Right*

Breakout Discussion Group #3:

Discussion Expert: **James Anderson**

Topic: *Direct Links Between Educational Progress, Securing the Power to Exercise the Right to Vote, and Political Power*

2:00 PM

**Moving Forward/Next Steps: Unraveling the Carceral state - America beyond Mass Incarceration**

*Contours of a Movement to end Mass Incarceration: This question underlies the reason for the conference: What is necessary to unravel rather than widen the net of social control through criminalization and incarceration?*

**Michelle Alexander**

**Kelly Lytle Hernandez**

**Khalil Gibran Muhammad**

**Tasseli McKay**

**William Darity, Jr.**

3:00 PM

Closing remarks:

**Janet Moses**

**Margaret Burnham**

**Danny Glover**

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