Alyce Woods: [00:00:00] Hi, I'm Alyce Woods, Earlonne's mom. The following episode of Ear Hustle contains language and content that may not be appropriate for all listeners. Discretion is advised.

[Bars slamming, rustling, voices slightly off mic]

Earlonne Woods: [00:00:19] So…

Nigel Poor: [00:00:20] Hey!

Earlonne Woods: [00:00:21] How you doin’?

Nigel Poor: [00:00:22] I’m good… I’m good now. We’re gonna get to sit next to each other in the car. [Car door shutting]

Earlonne Woods: [00:00:25] Indubitably.

Nigel Poor: [00:00:27] Yep. Are you hungry?
**Earlonne Woods:** [00:00:28] Am I hungry? I was, but I... Hold on, this is... this is what we don’t get to see. [Footsteps on gravel]

**Nigel Poor:** [00:00:32] Yeah.

**Earlonne Woods:** [00:00:38] Alright. Alright, it’s about time.

**Nigel Poor:** [00:00:43] You ready to see...

**Earlonne Woods:** [00:00:45] Yeah, I’m ready. [Distant] That’s a damn good view, though. This is interesting. [Car door open and closes]

**Nigel Poor:** [00:00:57] You have to put a seatbelt on too.

**Earlonne Woods:** [00:00:59] Okay. Alright. [Sound of seat belt being pulled] I gotta put the seatbelt on?

**Nigel Poor:** [00:01:01] Yeah. [Car door shuts, seatbelt clicks]

**Earlonne Woods:** [00:01:10] I said I was gonna watch the place get little, but I ain’t even turning around. [Laughs] My favorite word today? I think it’s always my favorite—"Interesting."

**Nigel Poor:** [00:01:19] Yeah, it’s interesting. Very interesting.

**Earlonne Woods:** [00:01:21] Very interesting.

**Nigel Poor:** [00:01:22] You know what’s interesting?

**Earlonne Woods:** [00:01:23] What?

**Nigel Poor:** [00:01:24] You look thinner already.

**Earlonne Woods:** [00:01:25] Do I?

**Nigel Poor:** [00:01:26] Yeah.

**Earlonne Woods:** [00:01:27] It’s the prison clothes!
Nigel Poor: [00:01:28] The prison clothes are really unflattering. You look so… anyway, you look great.

Earlonne Woods: [00:01:31] Well I’m still about two thirty. [Both laugh]

Nigel Poor: [00:01:35] A good two thirty!

Earlonne Woods: [00:01:37] Okay, first call to moms. Let’s see.

Nigel Poor: [00:01:39] [Mimicking dial noises] Just doot doot doot doot doot?

Earlonne Woods: [00:01:40] Yeah. 909…

Nigel Poor: [00:01:42] Oh nope, sorry, you gotta do 1 first.

Earlonne Woods: [00:01:43] Hey, what’s up mama? It’s your son.

Alyce Woods: [00:01:45] [Over the phone] Hi! Are you out?

Earlonne Woods: [00:01:46] I am rolling across the bridge right now. [Alyce screams] I think you just broke the phone. [Alyce laughs, then Earlonne laughs. Sound of car door opening, Earlonne laughs.] Oh man. What’s happening man?

Pat Mesiti-Miller: [00:02:02] [Laughing] How’s it feel to get out that car?

Earlonne Woods: [00:02:04] How long’s it been? How does it feel to go from being locked up to being out here? Man, it feels great, man. Of course it’s bittersweet, you know. Leaving bro behind, and a lotta good dudes that’s locked up that I think should be out. I mean I’m of course happy for myself, but… It’s bittersweet, man. It’s interesting. [Theme music starts]

Earlonne Woods: [00:02:36] You’re now tuned in to San Quentin’s Ear Hustle from PRX’s Radiotopia. I’m Earlonne Woods, a former resident at San Quentin State Prison in California.

Nigel Poor: [00:02:46] And I’m Nigel Poor, a visual artist, now podcaster. I’ve been working with the men at San Quentin for almost eight years now.
Earlonne Woods: [00:02:53] And together, we’re gonna take you… Hmmm, where we gonna take ‘em, Nige? [Nigel laughs]

Nigel Poor: [00:02:58] Outside, and then back in.

Earlonne Woods: [00:03:00] That’s what’s up. [Theme music continues] In this episode, we’re gonna hear about getting out and missing out.

Nigel Poor: [00:03:11] And there’s a lot there to talk about.

Earlonne Woods: [00:03:12] Indeed. [Theme music fades out, plunky synth music replaces it]

Nigel Poor: [00:03:23] Earlonne, we are recording together for the first time outside the wall of San Quentin.

Earlonne Woods: [00:03:28] Yes indeed. Back on the blacktop. [Nigel laughs]

Nigel Poor: [00:03:32] Where are we?

Earlonne Woods: [00:03:33] Currently, we’re in the Snap Judgment studio in Oakland, and it’s a little quieter than that media center in San Quentin that we used to record in.

Nigel Poor: [00:03:41] I know. It’s actually eerily quiet.

Earlonne Woods: [00:03:43] Crazy thing, you know what I’m gonna miss?

Nigel Poor: [00:03:44] What’s that?

Earlonne Woods: [00:03:46] Telling Lonnie to be quiet. [Nigel laughs]

Nigel Poor: [00:03:48] You mean you’re gonna miss being Lonnied?

Earlonne Woods: [00:03:50] I’m gonna straight up miss that shit.

Nigel Poor: [00:03:53] Yeah, I understand.

Earlonne Woods: [00:03:54] That was our interaction, you know?
**Nigel Poor:** [00:03:55] Absolutely.

**Earlonne Woods:** [00:03:56] “Lonny! Keep it down.” [Nigel laughs] “Oh, my bad bruh.”

**Nigel Poor:** [00:03:58] Oh, you sound just like him! [Earlonne laughs] Oh my god! Okay, it is true. We have very exciting news. After 21 years, you are no longer incarcerated.

**Earlonne Woods:** [00:04:08] Fuck no! [Nigel laughs]

**Nigel Poor:** [00:04:09] You’ve been decarcerated.

**Earlonne Woods:** [00:04:11] Indubitably.

**Nigel Poor:** [00:04:13] As many listeners may already know, your sentence was commuted by the honorable Governor Jerry Brown.

**Earlonne Woods:** [00:04:18] Good looking out, governor! [Nigel laughs] Yeah, about a year ago I submitted for a commutation of my sentence, and it took a while, but the governor signed off on it a few weeks ago and I’m free as a bird.

**Nigel Poor:** [00:04:29] [Singing] Free!

**Earlonne Woods:** [00:04:31] Free as a bird who’s got to check in with his parole officer from time to time, but hey. I’m cool with that.

**Nigel Poor:** [00:04:38] Yes. So. Tell people where you’re living.

**Earlonne Woods:** [00:04:40] I’m living in the Bay Area. And thanks to the good folks from Restored Justice, I’m in a nice transitional house.

**Nigel Poor:** [00:04:47] And what’s that like for you?

**Earlonne Woods:** [00:04:48] It’s love. It’s peaceful. It’s just sitting on the porch watching traffic go by.

**Nigel Poor:** [00:04:54] You know what’s so cool?

**Earlonne Woods:** [00:04:55] Huh?
Nigel Poor: [00:04:56] Driving up and parking in front of your house and walking up the stairs, and it’s like *knock knock knock knock knock*, and you’re like, “Hey, Nige!”

Earlonne Woods: [00:05:02] What up, Nige?

Nigel Poor: [00:05:04] That’s actually what you say.

Earlonne Woods: [00:05:06] That’s what’s up.

Nigel Poor: [00:05:07] Oh man, it’s such a huge change. And like, what are you thinking? What are you feeling? And most importantly, you know I have to know about what you’re eating. [Earlonne chuckles]

Earlonne Woods: [00:05:17] Well hey, you was at my first meal.

Nigel Poor: [00:05:19] [Laughs] That’s right. We stopped at a diner.

Earlonne Woods: [00:05:21] And I had to have what I’ve been thinking about for years.

Nigel Poor: [00:05:24] Ooh, a special order. [Sound of plates clinking]

Earlonne Woods: [00:05:27] Steak and eggs. Breakfast of the champions. [Ambient restaurant chatter]

Nigel Poor: [00:05:33] [Glasses clink] A toast.

Earlonne Woods: [00:05:35] With toast, with a lemon or an orange. Hey man, it tastes like someone sacrificed themselves for me. [Both laugh] Just for this day. No it’s cool man, it’s alright man. It’s good.

Nigel Poor: [00:05:52] Earlonne, you were in prison for a long time. And now you have the chance to do and experience and eat many of the things you’d been missing out on.

Earlonne Woods: [00:06:01] Yeah, I gotta a hella long list.

Nigel Poor: [00:06:03] Oh, I bet you do. [Laughs]


**Earlonne Woods:** [00:06:05] Like, there’s places I wanna go. Things I wanna see. Shit I wanna do. But I think one of the things I missed out on the most was the freedom of choice.

**Nigel Poor:** [00:06:15] What do you mean?

**Earlonne Woods:** [00:06:16] Well, like today for example. I had the freedom to make the choice to take a bath this morning.

**Nigel Poor:** [00:06:21] Ooh. The glorious bath.

**Earlonne Woods:** [00:06:23] Epsom salt and all.

**Nigel Poor:** [00:06:25] Oh wow! How long did you spend in there?

**Earlonne Woods:** [00:06:28] [Overlapping Nigel] Bubble bath. Straight up bubble bath. [Nigel laughs]

**Nigel Poor:** [00:06:30] Were you in there long enough that you had to add hot water?

**Earlonne Woods:** [00:06:33] I was in there long enough that I got out wrinkled. [Nigel laughs] That’s how long I was in there, I got out wrinkled.

**Nigel Poor:** [00:06:37] What a great feeling.

**Earlonne Woods:** [00:06:39] Beautiful feeling.

**Nigel Poor:** [00:06:40] Okay. So bubble baths were just one of those little things you were missing out on. But E, while you were getting ready to leave, we asked our colleague, Rasaahn Thomas…

**Earlonne Woods:** [00:06:49] AKA New York…

**Nigel Poor:** [00:06:51] Mhm. To find out what guys inside are actively misisng out on.

**Earlonne Woods:** [00:06:55] Interesting.

[Music]
Male Voice 1: [00:07:02] Playstation 2. A donut shop. That was when that Street Fighter arcade game was real popular, man, so we’d go there, and we’d get some donuts, we’d get some ice cream, and we’d play that Street Fighter game all day long. I really miss that.

Male Voice 2: [00:07:19] They got a dish called bánh xèo. It’s like a crepe, but like a Cambodian crepe kind of thing, where they put ground beef in there. Ground beef with some seasonings and bean sprouts. And she makes this peanut dip that just goes… it goes good together, and I miss that. That's my favorite meal.

Male Voice 3: [00:07:43] Just... if you just think about music. Stuff that I missed out on. Before I got locked up, Taylor Swift wasn’t even around, and just watching her go from a little kid to a huge star, all while I’ve been locked up. I mean that’s a concert I’d probably go to several times. And you can put this on record: Taylor Swift, she’s the greatest songwriter in the universe today.

Male Voice 4: [00:08:08] I had an ‘83 Cadillac Biarritz Eldorado. And it had a gang of bullet holes in there, but it was my favorite car.

Male Voice 5: [00:08:15] I really missed just waking up into my own bed. I miss the pillow. The sheets. You know, I miss the sound of kids running around and their feet tapping on the ground while I’m asleep. I just miss the opportunity to yell at somebody.

[Industrial sounds give way to soft music]

Nigel Poor: [00:08:45] So those are some of the little things. But the big thing—and Bonaruwas hinting at that when he talked about the noise of children—the big thing is family.


Nigel Poor: [00:08:56] What guys are mostly missing out on are their wives...

Earlonne Woods: [00:08:59] Their kids, their mom. Yeah, family.

Nigel Poor: [00:09:03] You got to see your mom recently in LA.

Earlonne Woods: [00:09:06] Yes, I did. I snuck up on her. [Both laugh]
Nigel Poor: [00:09:09] She must’ve yelped!

Earlonne Woods: [00:09:11] Oh man, you know? It was good seeing her. It was, like, real profound. Like I can’t even explain it. I can’t express it. Just seeing her face.

Nigel Poor: [00:09:21] Aw. It was really sweet that you got to spend time with your family. But there was someone who was missing.

Earlonne Woods: [00:09:26] Yeah, my big brother Trevor. He’s still inside. He had transferred into San Quentin about a year and a half ago, and we celled up together. I’m gonna miss him.

Nigel Poor: [00:09:37] Yeah. I got to talk to him right before you left. He said you were a great celly, gone a.m. to p.m. [Earlonne laughs] But he said it’s bittersweet that you were on your way out.

Trevor Woods: [00:09:48] I don’t have to worry about him now. Meaning, let’s just say if I got into something. He’s gone. You know, I don’t want to have my stumble or something to pull him into a situation. ‘Cause you know, anything can happen in this type of environment. So I’m glad that he’s gone and he don’t have to deal with that.

[Music starts]

Nigel Poor: [00:10:14] Your brother’s done 14 years of a 36 year sentence, so he’s been missing out on quite a bit over the years, and that’s what we’re gonna focus on now.

Earlonne Woods: [00:10:23] Yep, my brother has a difficult story to tell about missing out.

Nigel Poor: [00:10:27] It’s a story about his son Tyler.

Earlonne Woods: [00:10:30] My nephew, who was born in 1994. Now listen close, because we have a name soup here: Trevor is my brother. Tyler is his son.

Nigel Poor: [00:10:40] And don’t forget Tyra.

Earlonne Woods: [00:10:41] And Tyra, the mother of my nephew.
Tyra Woodson: [00:10:46] Oh wow. That’s the best part of my life, becoming a mom. ‘Cause he was just a dream come true. He was the most beautiful child you ever did see. When he was born, he was just staring, looking at me. He had eye contact the whole time. He knew exactly who I was.

Earlonne Woods: [00:11:07] When Tyler was born, Trevor was living a life of crime, but he was still very involved with Tyler, and with his kids from other relationships.

Trevor Woods: [00:11:15] I was a father. I was the father. [Clears throat]

Earlonne Woods: [00:11:21] Let me reframe that. How are you as a father?

Trevor Woods: [00:11:24] Well, I’m a great father. I was the type of father that my father wasn’t to me, how about that?

Earlonne Woods: [00:11:32] Tell me about that.

Trevor Woods: [00:11:34] I mean, I spent the majority of the time when I wasn’t in the streets with my kids. They were with me at all times pretty much. Took ’em to baseball games, basketball games, practices, banquets. I was a father. School. Clothed and fed ’em. Everything.

Nigel Poor: [00:11:57] As Tyler got older, his family life got more complicated. His parents separated and his father was wanted by law enforcement.

Trevor Woods: [00:12:05] I had the feds, the fugitive task force, the marshalls, the bail bonds service, the bail bonds insurance people—once the bail bonds can’t catch you now the insurance people gotta catch you—I had the sheriffs. Yeah, about five different agencies. It was serious. I played with it at first. I didn’t think it was that serious until they almost had me a couple times. They almost had me dropping Tyler off at school.

Earlonne Woods: [00:12:35] One morning, in front of Tyler’s school, Trevor saw a blue van parked in what looked like a stakeout.

Trevor Woods: [00:12:41] So I said, “Tyler, can you hop the gate?” “Yeah daddy, I can hop the gate.” [Laughs] So we bust a U and I said, “You know what, I’m not gonna let my baby hop over no gate.” So I bust a U, drove back by the van, pulled halfway into the front driveway, gave him a kiss. I said, “Look man, these people, they’re gonna come up here.” I said, “And you don’t tell ’em nothing. You call your grandma and you
call your granddaddy and this that and the other.” And he said, “Okay daddy,” and I said, “I love you.” Kissed him, he got out with his backpack. So I watched him walk into the school.

**Earlonne Woods:** [00:13:19] And when Trevor pulled away, the van was on him. [Creeping, uneasy music starts]

**Trevor Woods:** [00:13:22] They were coming hard. I said, “Here they come.” But they were some cars back trying to get to me. So when I pulled back and made that right, it was over. Done. I went all the way back to my friend’s house where I was staying, and no sooner had I dropped my car off than somebody came and picked me up. So I ran up in her house.

**Nigel Poor:** [00:13:48] While Trevor was on the run, he and Tyra were involved in a crime together. Trevor got away, but Tyra didn’t.

**Earlonne Woods:** [00:13:56] She was arrested for kidnap robbery and sentenced to 17 years.

**Nigel Poor:** [00:14:00] So with Tyra behind bars, Trevor was left to explain the situation to young Tyler, and you asked him about it, E.

**Earlonne Woods:** [00:14:07] Right. [To Trevor] How did you tell Tyler that his mom was in jail?

**Trevor Woods:** [00:14:14] Man, listen. That was one of the hardest things to do in my life, because he was an innocent child. I had to try to figure out how to give him this blow. I couldn’t just give him the blow at one time. I had to keep him, you know, thinking in a positive state. So I didn’t tell him right away. I just said this and said that. “She’ll be this,” “She’ll be that.” “Well what did she do, Dad?” And I’m like, “Man, I’m trying to make up stuff.” And he was with my older son, his mama at the time. And I eventually told little man, and let me tell you. [Pause] I told him his mother was in jail man, and that little boy broke down. We all broke down. Just looking at his hurt and his anguish, I cried, my older son cried, his mama cried. It was terrible man. It was terrible. It was terrible. He was, “What’d she do, Dad? What’d she…” It was… I don’t even like reliving it, man. Let’s just leave it.

**Tyra Woodson:** [00:15:41] Um. [Clears throat] The first visit, yeah, was through the glass. But they kept touching the glass.
Nigel Poor: [00:15:55] Tyra remembers the first time that Tyler came to visit her in jail. He was about eight years old.

Tyra Woodson: [00:16:07] And um… [Voice gets thick] It was just. I felt like my heart was separate from my body. [Voice breaks] I couldn’t hold him. And he just kept touching the glass and I put my hand to the glass. You see it on movies but you don’t really feel it until it happens to you, and it’s really hard.

Trevor Woods: [00:16:45] So eventually, I get arrested. Once again, I don’t wanna tell him. Fourth of July is coming up, we had a big Fourth of July event. So he talking about Fourth of July, man, I just hear it in his voice, and I’m like, “Man, how can I tell him?” You know, I was his last hope. I was his everything. So how can I tell him this? And I drug it out just like I did with his mama, until finally, I had to tell him. And once again he broke down. He said, “I feel like I’m out here by myself.” And that tore my soul. That uh… [Clears throat] Knocked me back, man.

Earlonne Woods: [00:17:40] So he’s 10 at this time.

Trevor Woods: [00:17:43] Probably so, yeah.

Earlonne Woods: [00:17:45] He’s 10. So he lost his mom and his dad.

Trevor Woods: [00:17:47] Yeah. We let him down, man.

Nigel Poor: [00:17:53] So Trevor and Tyra each began serving long prison terms.

Earlonne Woods: [00:17:57] And because of that, my nephew went to live with our extended family.

Nigel Poor: [00:18:03] We’re gonna hear more from Trevor and Tyra and their efforts to stay connected to their son. But let’s hear a different story now, about a guy who was also separated from his family due to prison.

[Sound of door opening and closing]

Lee Jaspar: [00:18:18] Out of nowhere, I get this mail, and I look at the return address, and it says “Monique” on it. I said, “Oh my God.” My daughter I haven’t heard from in 20 years.
**Earlonne Woods:** [00:18:40] Jaspar is a familiar voice on the podcast. He was in the bird baths in a lock box episode talking about his celly.

**Nigel Poor:** [00:18:46] And if you’ve heard some jazz guitar on the podcast, that was probably him.

**Lee Jaspar:** [00:18:52] First of all, I just took in her handwriting without ever opening this thing. I just sat there with the letter, and it was like I was sitting with her. I opened it up, I didn’t know what to expect, and this card was in it, and it says, “It’s a prince.” And this is a baby shower invitation. The due date is my birthday. And it’s got my granddaughter’s name on it, next to this boy named Anthony. [Laughs] Congratulations Anthony. Never met you.

**Nigel Poor:** [00:19:37] This is how Jaspar found out that his granddaughter was married and that he was about to become a great-grandfather.

**Lee Jaspar:** [00:19:44] Yeah, I called my brother and I said, “Did you know about this?” [Laughs] And of course everybody knows about everything before I do. I’m the last guy to find out. And I complained and I whined and I complained like I usually do about, “No one ever writes me and they go on with their lives.” And he reminded me that the world is not like that anymore. People don’t use mail anymore. It’s just that you have no presence, no... what do they call that? Digital footprint.

**Earlonne Woods:** [00:20:22] There was no way that Jaspar could go to the baby shower, but he had an idea of how he could be a part of it. Like he said, he hadn’t heard from his daughter in 20 years, and he didn’t want to miss out.

**Nigel Poor:** [00:20:32] He planned to call the day of the shower.

**Lee Jaspar:** [00:20:36] First thing I’m gonna say: “Hi, it’s your dad. Hi, it’s your grandpa.” “How, who is this?” I don’t know who would answer, you know.

**Nigel Poor:** [00:20:45] The day of the baby shower finally came, and that’s what he did. He called.

**Lee Jaspar:** [00:20:52] So I’ve got all these phone numbers. I called my brother, his phone didn’t answer. I went, “Okay.” So I tried his home, in case he was there. Didn’t get an answer there either. So I said, “Okay, here’s the big number. I’ll call Monique.”
And I called her number. And she didn’t answer either. I went, “Okay. Hmm.” I called about five different numbers and nobody answered their phones. I kept getting voicemail and stuff like that. I said, “Okay, let’s go back to the top and try this again.” So I did it again, I went through the list again, I called every number. No answer. So now I’ve already spent 10 minutes of my phone time calling numbers. So that was pretty much it. [Guitar music starts] I was kind of relieved that no one picked up the phone. I went, “Okay, that’s kind of better right now. I’ll try again later.”

Nigel Poor: [00:21:55] Can you talk about that a little bit more? Being relieved that nobody answered? ’Cause I’m hearing it and I’m, like, gutted that nobody answered. But you’re relieved.

Lee Jaspar: [00:22:04] For me, it’s like, I’m still nervous about making those phone calls. I’m still anticipating having the conversation with her that I haven’t had for 20 years. And I’ve never been an intrusive type of person. I support, but I’m not always pushing my way into their business, because that’s what prison creates is a situation where I’m here, they’re there, and I’m not part of their life physically.

Nigel Poor: [00:22:36] But it’s been 20 years since you spoke to your daughter. How many more years do you think it’ll be? [Jaspar laughs]

Lee Jaspar: [00:22:45] Well, you know, it’s… One of the phone numbers I don’t have is God’s. [Dial tone gives way to guitar music]

Nigel Poor: [00:22:58] It’s not like Jaspar doesn’t want to reconnect. Remember that baby shower invitation he got in the mail?

Lee Jaspar: [00:23:06] I have a special place where I keep stuff that is preserved in plastic and no one ever touches and I never take it out. And it just stays in there and I know it’s there, and it’s protected. And that’s where that envelope is. [Transitional music]

Earlonne Woods: [00:23:33] We’ll be back after the break.

Nigel Poor: [00:23:47] E, it’s really hard to maintain relationships in prison, isn’t it?

Earlonne Woods: [00:23:52] It is, and it’s deeply frustrating, especially for parents trying to be part of their kids’ lives.
Nigel Poor: [00:23:58] And that’s what Tyra and Trevor quickly discovered. Let’s get back to their story. They were both in prison, Trya is in a state facility, and Trevor’s doing federal time.

Earlonne Woods: [00:24:09] Meanwhile, their young son Tyler was being raised by relatives.

Tyra Woodson: [00:24:13] It was a lot of issues in prison, because trying to parent when you have other people raising your children—the way I do things is not the way they do things.

Trevor Woods: [00:24:24] You have an ego because you’re parents, so in your heart of hearts, that’s my child. I call the shots, I do this, blah blah blah. But when you come to jail, you still may not realize it, but all that shit is out the window. Because you are no longer the parent. You are the parent in words and in what it is, but somebody else is raising your child.

Tyra Woodson: [00:24:50] He’s been raised by his grandmother and what she said goes. And pretty much what I said was, “You can’t be outside after six o’clock.” “Well, my grandmother says I can.” It was an issue. It was hard, because I just believe that parents are supposed to be there all the time. When my son’s outside, I’m outside. He’s not around the corner where I can’t see him.

Trevor Woods: [00:25:16] You may not like it, you may not like what they’re saying, but they are the ones dealing with the child.

[Sound of keys rattling, heavy door shutting]

Earlonne Woods: [00:25:26] Do you recall the first time that you were able to hug him when you got to prison?

Tyra Woodson: [00:25:34] [Chuckles] Oh yeah, I do. I didn’t stop hugging him, and he just ran to me. As soon as he saw me com out, he was waiting. He just ran. He grabbed me and he just hugged me and we just hugged for what seemed like hours. It was the best and the worst time, because he wouldn’t leave, and then the guards were getting kinda snappy, and I got angry because he’s a baby. [Crying, takes a deep inhale] And I remember this so well because I was so angry at them, because my son had seen me. He wouldn’t let me go. He was the last one in the room, he kept running back, he said, “No mommy, please. I want to stay with you. Can I just come in here with you?” And I
said, “No, you can’t.” He said, “I just want to be in here with you. What can I do? I just want to be here. Please leave me here.”

**Trevor Woods: [00:26:32]** It’s literally impossible to be a parent while incarcerated, because all you can do is talk, and they know you can’t get at ‘em. So now they can say something fly. [Chuckles] You know, because I can’t do nothing. I’m hit. So what can I do? Okay chastise and then all I can do is… And my fear of words. I used to have fear in my kids. I never really whooped ‘em, anything like that, but I used to just talk tough. But my tough talk used to work! [Laughs] It used to work. As they got older, that fell by the side. That didn’t work anymore.

**Tyra Woodson: [00:27:11]** What did I miss out on as far as having to parent in prison? [Sniffles]

**Earlonne Woods: [00:27:15]** Yes.

**Tyra Woodson: [00:27:17]** Um… I missed out on so many things. I missed parent teacher conferences… [Voice breaks] I missed everything. There’s graduations and just talking to ‘em about girls and… just everything.

**Trevor Woods: [00:27:46]** It’s devastating, because now, Tyler had a vision of his parents. His vision of his father. He didn’t know nothing about the gang, he didn’t know nothing about what was going on, but he thought he did. So when you’re gone, they have to try to grow up on their own. And the mothers can’t do too much. My mother, his grandmother, she can’t do too much. So Tyler was trying to grow up on his own, trying to be something that he didn’t know nothing about.

**Tyra Woodson: [00:28:18]** And he began acting out. And… I’d just seen him slipping through my fingers. ’Cause I wasn’t there to snatch him up.

**Trevor Woods: [00:28:33]** You know, he was ripping and running with the gangs. He was… I’m talking to him all the time, so even though I’m hearing stuff and then I’m talking to him, he’s downplaying it. So I’m not thinking that it’s serious as much as I’m hearing. You know, “he running the streets,” “he running with this hard heads,” “they playing with guns” or whatever have you. And I’m like, I’m telling my son, “Son, whatever you do, don’t play with no guns. Don’t be out there doing no robberies, doing that stuff. That stuff carries 17 years.” I told him that constantly. “Oh daddy, I’m not playing with no guns, I’m not doing this, I’m not doing that, I’m not doing this. I’m not doing it.”

Trevor Woods: [00:29:18] November 19th. November 19th, 2013. In prison, we have phones, and we have emails.

Tyra Woodson: [00:29:27] I used to work for the captain at CRW in the program office. I was a clerk. And the captain comes in, he says, “I need to speak with you.”

Trevor Woods: [00:29:41] I received an email from one of my partners. And he said, “Tyler got killed by the police.”

Tyra Woodson: [00:29:50] They told me that my son was murdered, or killed, and I hit the floor.

Trevor Woods: [00:30:00] I sat there and I stared at it, and I’m like, “This can’t be.” I push my chair back from the— from the—I forget. I pushed my chair back from the… from the table. And I stared at it, all kind of thoughts, “This couldn’t be true. This got to be some bullshit.” And I stood up, and I just, I just got... I got... I got amped up. I got hyped. I start jumping around and I couldn't breathe, you know. I just...

Tyra Woodson: [00:30:41] I… I just lost it.

Trevor Woods: [00:30:48] I think I went to the counseling office… you know In the fence, you get 300 minutes to talk. I had already used up my phone time. Matter of fact, I used up my phone time talking to Tyler. And the cold part about that was, in our last conversation, time was running out, and he said, “Daddy, when are you gonna call me back?” That’s the last words I heard of him. “When are you gonna call me back?” So when I heard that he died, that’s all… those are the last words I heard him say. “Daddy, when are you gonna call me back?”

Nigel Poor: [00:31:31] Tyler was killed by police in Long Beach, California. It didn’t become a national story like Michael Brown or Laquan McDonald, but if you lived in southern California, you probably heard about it.

Earlonne Woods: [00:31:42] It’s a complicated story, and we’re not gonna get too deeply into it on the podcast, but here’s the basics. Tyler had jumped bail after being arrested. He and a girlfriend got pulled over by the police, and I’mma let my brother take it from here.
Trevor Woods: [00:31:56] They questioned everybody and they questioned Tyler. Talking about, “Where you from?” He said, “I’m not from nowhere.” So then they asked him to get out the car, he get out the car. He give them my oldest son’s name, his brother’s name. It didn’t match up, you know, he don’t want to go to jail. He take off running. He has no weapon, you know. He’s just, he’s running—

Earlonne Woods: [00:32:18] They searched him, didn’t they?

Trevor Woods: [00:32:20] Yeah, they searched him. They searched him on the spot. They did pat him down, he has no weapon. I think he had on some shorts or something. You know, you can’t have no weapon in no loose shorts. Anyway, so he’s running. They track him down, I hear. Corner him in some apartment. And they shoot at him. Several… 40-something times. 30, 40 times, they said. Hit him 19 times.

Earlonne Woods: [00:32:51] It’s a story we’ve been hearing a lot in recent years. None of the police officers who shot Tyler were charged.

Nigel Poor: [00:32:59] But there was a civil case, and a jury awarded a settlement for violating Tyler’s civil rights.

Earlonne Woods: [00:32:05] At the time, for Trevor and Tyra, it was a situation that happens often in prison. A family member dies, and that becomes yet another way you’re missing out.

Trevor Woods: [00:33:17] I couldn’t go to the funeral. I was in a mental health program for just sleeping issues. Do I have sleeping issues, you know, my mind roams sometimes. So I went down there a few times, and I just tried to… matter of fact, I told people to put me in the hole, ‘cause I didn’t want to be around or deal with nobody. So I said, “Y’all need to put me in the SHU.” And they was like, “Oh man, we can’t do that. You need to be around somebody.” You know what I mean? So this was their point of view. ‘Cause I just didn’t want to be around, you know. I wanted to sit and just try to process this the best way I could.

Tyra Woodson: [00:34:04] Everybody, it just seemed like everybody found out in the prison, people that didn’t even know me… [Voice breaks, through tears] And they came, and they brought me flowers. They brought me cards and letters and they just came from nowhere, I didn’t even know these people. And they just made sure that I was… I had to stay alive because I didn’t want to stay alive. I just told them, I kept going, I said,
“I can’t. I can’t guarantee you that you’re gonna see me tomorrow. I’m done. I can’t. It’s too hard.” And they said, “You have to.” I guess I had great staff that really really cared. They cared. And the people that I didn’t even know, they came and they helped me. The staff was great. All of them, through the whole prison. I can say that. They were great.

**Trevor Woods:** [00:35:19] I mean, what can you do but blame yourself? Yeah, fuck the police and all that shit, but I got to… I’m guilty. I let him down. I let him down in more than one way. And when you sit back and you think about what your child is going through mentally, through all this, it’s devastating. It’s devastating. ‘Cause I put him in that position. I put him in that predicament. I put him in that situation, to be grown before his time.

**Earlonne Woods:** [00:35:55] Was there any way to process that?

**Tyra Woodson:** [00:35:58] [Sniffs] No. Nope. Nope. Nope. That was it for me. That was when I really just tried to kill myself. Like, I don’t wanna be there no more, because all the nice staff, it was great, but I can’t see my son. And they told me my security level was high, all this, but I hadn’t had a write up in like 12 years. They wouldn’t let me see my son. [Through tears] I work for you, I do everything, I do everything I’m supposed to do, and you won’t let me see my son? I was angry.

**Earlonne Woods:** [00:36:45] Since the system didn’t allow you to do anything, how did you memorialize Tyler?

**Tyra Woodson:** [00:36:54] I didn’t. I couldn’t. I couldn’t do that.

**Earlonne Woods:** [00:37:02] Not yet?

**Tyra Woodson:** [00:37:04] No.

**Nigel Poor:** [00:37:10] We spoke with Tyra on November 19th, 2018, the five year anniversary of Tyler’s death, and Earlonne, it is clear, this is really painful for her.

**Earlonne Woods:** [00:37:21] Absolutely. My family has been stripped of Tyler’s love, and there’s nothing that can replace that. And as for things getting better, she’s dealing with them. [Sound of cell shutting]
Nigel Poor: [00:37:40] After serving more than 15 years, Tyra was released from prison in 2017. She’s now living in southern California, where we reached her by phone.

Tyra Woodson: [00:37:51] Nye, will you please come here? They wanna talk to you. [Laughs] Come here. Say hi to your grandfather and your uncle Earl.

Trevor Woods: [00:38:02] What’s up, Peanut Head?

Nye: [00:38:04] Hi Uncle Earl.

Earlonne Woods: [00:38:06] What’s up man? How you doin’?

Nye: [00:38:08] Good.

Trevor Woods: [00:38:09] What’s up, Peanut Head? What you doing over there?

Ni: [00:38:12] I’m about to go to the store.

Trevor Woods: [00:38:15] When you gonna come see me?

Tyra Woodson: [00:38:18] [Off mic] When you gonna go see him?

Nye: [00:38:20] Next weekend.

[Laughter]

Trevor Woods: [00:38:22] Wait a second. Next weekend? [More laughter] I’m gonna try to get you down here. We’ve gotta do some paperwork with your mom so we can get you down here to see your granddad.

Nye: [00:38:33] Okay.

Trevor Woods: [00:38:35] Okay?

Tyra Woodson: [00:38:35] Oh god, he looks just like Tyler. You’re gonna freak out when you see him, Trevor.

[Upbeat music starts]
Nigel Poor: [00:39:00] Earlonne, this has been such a personal episode for you. First about you getting out, and then the ordeal that your family went through.

Earlonne Woods: [00:39:07] Yeah, this was a big one. So I want to thank Tyra and my big brother Trevor for telling their stories and reliving that trauma that I know wasn’t easy to talk about. And I want y’all to know that I appreciate y’all.

[Guitar music]

Nigel Poor: [00:39:33] Thank you to Lee Jaspar for talking to us about becoming a great grandfather. Congratulations.

Earlonne Woods: [00:39:40] The Jaspar family expands.

Nigel Poor: [00:39:43] That’s nice. Hey E, people are wondering what’s gonna happen with Ear Hustle.

Earlonne Woods: [00:39:50] Well, I have to say, it’s great getting out of prison with a job. It takes away so much stress about, “How are you gonna make it on the outside?” That’s like the biggest problem with re-entry, and I’m delighted to say that I got a j-o-b.

Nigel Poor: [00:40:09] Yes, you are now a full-time Radiotopia PRX employee, working as a producer for Ear Hustle.

Earlonne Woods: [00:40:15] Yep, I’ll still be cohosting with you, Nige.

Nigel Poor: [00:40:18] Thank God!

Earlonne Woods: [00:40:29] But from the outside.

Nigel Poor: [00:40:20] Alright, fair enough.

Earlonne Woods: [00:40:22] Talking about stories of re-entry from people like me, the formerly-incarcerated.

Nigel Poor: [00:40:26] And on the inside…

Earlonne Woods: [00:40:28] Hoo boy! [Nigel laughs] Y’all are in for a ride. [Both laugh]
Nigel Poor: [00:40:32] Okay, but we do have a very special new host who listeners will meet in season four.

Earlonne Woods: [00:40:36] And you’re gonna love him.

Nigel Poor: [00:40:38] Also next season, our plan is to visit other prisons and hear what they have to say.

Earlonne Woods: [00:40:42] To give you a taste, here’s a little take from Pelican Bay in Northern California, where guys are talking about what they’ve been missing out on.

Male Voice 1: [00:40:50] I’ve been incarcerated since 1988.

Male Voice 2: [00:40:54] I’ve been here… I started my time here back in 1992.

Male Voice 3: [00:40:57] I’ve been down going on 8 years now, I’m serving 15 years, and one of the things that I miss out on the most is just hanging out with my family, man. Just being out there, being a normal human being.

Male Voice 1: [00:41:10] Sitting across from my wife and eating dinner and just talknig about anything.


Male Voice 2: [00:41:23] Especially with our kids, having them there with us, and walking that bike trail that’s from Twins Beach to Rodondo Beach.

Male Voice 3: Mom’s cooking. Just simlpe things that I took for granted when I was out there. That’s what I miss the most.

Nigel Poor: [00:41:41] You know what, E?

Earlonne Woods: [00:41:42] What’s up?

Nigel Poor: [00:41:43] It took a lot of people to make this conversation at Pelican Bay happen. So, we have a gang of names to mention. Thanks to Warden James Robinson, the Public Information Officer Lt. John Silveira, TV specialist Tommy Rico…
Earlonne Woods: [00:41:57] Community resource manager Robert Losacco and academic advisor Vice Principal Kari Telaro Rexford.

Nigel Poor: [00:42:05] Thanks for helping us build that bridge.

Earlonne Woods: [00:42:07] We shall continue the conversation.

Nigel Poor: [00:42:09] And thanks to all the guys who spoke to us…


Nigel Poor: [00:42:14] Thanks for breaking the ice.

Earlonne Woods: [00:42:16] Our team is growing inside and out. Watch the expansion.

Nigel Poor: [00:42:20] And you know what?

Earlonne Woods: [00:42:21] What’s that?

Nigel Poor: [00:42:21] You and me will always be partners. Partners from the start inside, and partners now outside.


Nigel Poor: [00:42:31] That’s nice.

Earlonne Woods: [00:42:33] Indeed.

Nigel Poor: [00:42:41] Ear Hustle is produced by myself, Nigel Poor.

Earlonne Woods: [00:42:44] And me, the free Earlonne Woods.

Nigel Poor: [00:42:47] With help from outside producer Pat Mesiti-Miller, who also works with our sound design team.

Earlonne Woods: [00:42:53] This episode includes music from David Jassy, Antwan Williams, E. Phil Phillips, Grant Sayers, Eric “Masterati E” Abercrombie, and Lee Jaspar.
**Nigel Poor:** [00:43:04] Curtis Fox is our story editor, Erin Wade's our digital producer, and Julie Shapiro is our executive producer for Radiotopia. We wanna thank Warden Ron Davis, and as you know, every episode has to be approved by this guy here.

**Lt. Sam Robinson:** [00:43:19] This is Lieutenant Sam Robinson at San Quentin State Prison, and it’s definitely another special time in that Ear Hustle gets to grow and go beyond the walls of San Quentin with Mr. Earlonne Woods, who is no longer incarcerated here at the prison. And so as we move on to new areas and new adventures and Ear Hustle, I get the opportunity to say it one last time this season. This is Lieutenant Sam Robinson at San Quentin State Prison, and I approve this story.

[Theme music starts]

**Earlonne Woods:** [00:43:52] Next time on Ear Hustle.

**Nigel Poor:** [00:43:54] Well, we don’t know exactly. We’re gonna be taking a little break while we figure out our next step.

**Earlonne Woods:** [00:43:59] But in the meantime, go to our website, earhustlesq.com, to sign up for our newsletter and stay in touch. We’ll also have some audio treats up there for you real soon.

**Nigel Poor:** [00:44:08] Yes. And don’t forget about Ear Hustle t-shirts and mugs.

**Earlonne Woods:** [00:44:13] Matter of fact, I stepped out the gates of San Quentin wearing my one-of-a-kind, all black Ear Hustle tee. Damn, it felt nice.

**Nigel Poor:** [00:44:22] And it looked good too. See pictures on our website, and be sure to follow us on Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook @EarHustleSQ. Ear Hustle is a proud member of Radiotopia from PRX, a collection of the best podcasts around. Hear more at radiotopia.fm.

**Earlonne Woods:** [00:44:43] This podcast was made possible with support from the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative, working to redesign the justice system by building power and opportunity for communities impacted by incarceration.

**Nigel Poor:** [00:44:53] Thanks to Snap Judgment for letting us record in their studio.
Earlonne Woods: [00:44:57] I’m Earlonne Woods, the free dude.

Nigel Poor: [00:44:59] And I’m Nigel Poor.

Both: [00:44:01] Thanks for listening. [Music ends]

Earlonne Woods: [00:45:07] I think I need a bigger fork. [Laughter]

END OF EPISODE.