Episode 25: Prime Real Estate
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Allyson West [00:00:00] This is Allyson West, the director of the California Re-entry program here at San Quentin. The following episode of Ear Hustle contains language and content that may not be appropriate for all listeners. Discretion is advised, especially for you singles out there.

[Slithering electronic music]

Nigel Poor: [00:00:18] We’re gonna have to you some pretty personal questions. Just think of us as doctors.

Earlonne Woods: [00:00:23] How old were you when you got arrested?

Charlie Srey: [00:00:25] I was 14 when I first got arrested.

Earlonne Woods: [00:00:27] What grade you was in?

Charlie Srey: [00:00:28] I believe I was still a sophomore at that time.

Earlonne Woods: [00:00:31] Sophomore?
Charlie Srey: [00:00:32] Yes sir.

Earlonne Woods: [00:00:33] Okay. So how many sexual encounters had you had at 14?

Charlie Srey: [00:00:41] So not when I was 14, this was when I was younger. I was 12, 13. It was about like… I don’t remember, because every time I had a girl at the house, we’d get drunk, but I remember we did some things.

Earlonne Woods: [00:00:54] So that sounds like zero.

[Theme music starts]

Earlonne Woods: [00:00:58] You’re now tuned into San Quentin’s Ear Hustle from PRX’s Radiotopia. I’m Earlonne Woods. I’ve been incarcerated for 21 years and I’m currently housed here at San Quentin State Prison in California.

Nigel Poor: [00:01:11] I’m Nigel Poor, a visual artist, now podcaster. I’ve been working with the guys here at San Quentin for about seven years.

Earlonne Woods: [00:01:19] And together, we’re gonna take you inside. On this episode: dating and romance from prison.

Nigel Poor: [00:01:29] Sweet.

Earlonne Woods: [00:01:30] Part two. The x-rated part.

Nigel Poor: [00:01:33] [Laughs] The dog part. [Earlonne barks, Nigel laughs again]

[Gentle, spacey music begins]

Nigel Poor: [00:01:47] Earlonne, when most people think about prison, they probably don’t think about guys in here dating and finding romance.

Earlonne Woods: [00:01:54] No. They probably think it’s part of the punishment that we can’t have those things. And for the most part, we can’t.
Nigel Poor: [00:02:02] Well, maybe if you’re gay. But that’s a whole complicated subject that we talked about in earlier episodes. But if you’re straight, you’re not going to meet a lot of eligible women here.

Earlonne Woods: [00:02:13] But you can meet women, and guys do. You can get letters, you can make phone calls, and there’s always the visiting room.

Nigel Poor: [00:02:19] The visiting room. So much happens in that visiting room.

Earlonne Woods: [00:02:22] Yes it does. A lot happens in that visiting room.

Nigel Poor: [00:02:25] [Laughing] Like what, E?

Earlonne Woods: [00:02:27] Oh, just like twiddling the thumbs.

Nigel Poor: [00:02:30] [Hard laugh] Oh, that’s what you call it? “Twiddling thumbs”? [Earlonne laughs] Is there a lot of flirting and meeting and comingling?

Earlonne Woods: [00:02:35] [Overlapping the end of Nigel’s question] Well, so, you are able to meet other women if you’re in the visiting room by just reaching out and talking to people. You could be at the vending machine and somebody’s sister might be like, “Hey, how you doing?”

Nigel Poor: [00:02:46] But what’s the etiquette? So if someone’s visiting with their family and there are some single women there, can you just go over and start talking to them?

Earlonne Woods: [00:02:52] Technically you’re not supposed to, because it’s just a respect thing. But sometimes situations happen. But remember, first and foremost, you’ve got to be in the visiting room for this to even go on.

Nigel Poor: [00:03:02] Right. That’s right.

Earlonne Woods: [00:03:03] Either you can get to the visiting room by hooking up with one of your friend’s girls, sisters, or friends, you know. It could just be a hook up like that.

Nigel Poor: [00:03:12] Basically networking like you do on the outside.

Nigel Poor: [00:03:14] So for this episode, we spoke with a lot of guys about their dating experiences, and also about romance in general from prison.

Earlonne Woods: [00:03:22] And some of them, Nige?

Nigel Poor: [00:03:25] Yes? [Earlonne barks, Nigel laughs] But some of them are good role models. Let’s start with Charlie. And he may or may not be exemplary, because the truth is he just hasn’t had a lot of experience with women.

Earlonne Woods: [00:03:35] As we heard at the top of the podcast, Charlie was 14 when he came to prison.

Nigel Poor: [00:03:40] I know.

Earlonne Woods: [00:03:41] He’s only 20 now. When the tape started rolling, I was curious: what does he say when guys around him start talking about women? Because that’s the subject of a lot of conversation.

Nigel Poor: [00:03:54] Oh, I bet it is.

Charlie Srey: [00:03:55] Well, you know, I engaged in conversation. But mostly, like, I try to ask questions because I don’t really know much about women like that. So when I do get into a conversation I won’t make the mistake of saying the wrong things.

Earlonne Woods: [00:04:12] So have you ever found yourself making up stories just to be in the conversation?


Earlonne Woods: [00:04:27] So you ain’t never lied on your dick.

Charlie Srey: [00:04:28] No.

Nigel Poor: [00:04:31] What did you say? [Laughter from all] I think I heard what you said. I've never heard that expression before. [To Charlie] Okay, so like… what do you think romance is?

Charlie Srey: [00:04:44] Well, I thought I knew what romance was at one point, but I don't know. I'm kinda confused. Is love and romance the same thing, or is it two different things? I remembered I was talking to somebody and they was like, “Do you love me or is it just lust? Like is it just something for the meantime?” But I cared for her a lot, so I'm pretty sure it wasn't just no lust.

Nigel Poor: [00:05:09] Wait, so it sounds like… are you… do you have dating experiences in prison?

Charlie Srey: [00:05:13] I actually have.

[Twinkling synths]

Nigel Poor: [00:05:19] Well, that was a surprise.

Earlonne Woods: [00:05:20] Eh, it wasn't a surprise to me.

Nigel Poor: [00:05:22] Really?

Earlonne Woods: [00:05:23] Nah, that's what we do! [Both laugh] We're going to hear more from Charlie in a bit, but first, we're going to hear from a guy with decades more experience with the ladies.

Sincere Carter: [00:05:39] Well you know what? She was a little chocolate morsel, man. I thought she was my little chocolate chip. She was cute, you know, and my gab is good, you know what I'm saying? I'm swoll with the girls. [Fades out underneath Nigel]

Nigel Poor: [00:05:48] That is Sincere Carter. He told us a story that only a guy inside can tell.

Earlonne Woods: [00:05:54] Sincere’s been locked up since 2013 for two attempted murders. Here’s what happened: he came home from work one day and he found his wife in bed with another man. He shot them both.
Nigel Poor: [00:06:05] Luckily, they survived. Sincere was eventually arrested and sent to county jail to await trial. And that’s where he saw a story about a woman that really caught his attention.

Sincere Carter: [00:06:17] She was really young and she was cool and I’d seen her picture in the newspaper, that she killed her boyfriend after a rage at a club. So I end up getting her information and I end up writing her. And I said, “Look, I’m sorry that you had a bad experience, but I’ve also had that experience with my baby mother,” and we’d kinda been writing back and forth.

Nigel Poor: [00:06:41] Okay, that is a lot to take in. So let’s just do a little recap here, E, because he is a fast talker. [Both laugh] Okay, Sincere tried to kill his wife and her lover.

Earlonne Woods: [00:06:52] Right.

Nigel Poor: [00:06:53] He’s interested in a woman who had succeeded in killing her boyfriend.

Earlonne Woods: [00:06:57] Right.

Nigel Poor: [00:06:58] And they started correspondence.

Earlonne Woods: [00:07:00] That’s pretty much it. She’s in jail for women and he’s in jail for men. They’re both waiting for trial, but still, they figured out a way to meet.

Sincere Carter: [00:07:08] She told me her date that she was going to court, and I was on the same bus that she was on.

Nigel Poor: [00:07:15] E, how could they be on the same bus? You’ve got to explain this.

Earlonne Woods: [00:07:18] Well, it all depends on what court you’re going to. Because sometimes they’ll put you on a big old Greyhound bus where the men and women are caged off from each other.

Nigel Poor: [00:07:26] Okay.

Earlonne Woods: [00:07:27] Other times, they’ll put you on a smaller bus or van, and on those, there’s no separation.
**Sincere Carter:** [00:07:32] Back to the story. I told her to sit close to the guys and I was gonna sit in the front row. I pushed everybody back, “Let me get in,” you know, “Yo, I want to meet my little lady up here.” And I pulled her. I know that when she seen me she was like, “God, you’re handsome, you like Denzel Washington,” I was like, “Yeah, I do it on ‘em baby,” you know. We got to kissing and hugging and touching and feeling with the shackles on, I’m trying to reach my arm over. “Hey, y’all, sit back there, sit down,” the officer said, but you know, I’m a Brooklyn boy, we’re gonna do our thing, man. We cocky with it.

**Earlonne Woods:** [00:08:04] Those Brooklyn boys. Better watch out.

**Nigel Poor:** [00:08:06] In their trip on the bus to and from court, they saw each other a few more times. But mostly, their relationship was in letters. Before they were shipped off to prison, they figured out how to meet one last time.

**Sincere Carter:** [00:08:20] She made sure that her lawyer got her the date on the same date I go to court, so we got sentences on the same day. And I promised that we were riding this thing together, all the way through prison as well. [Guitar music] After we got sentenced, after I kissed her goodbye, you know I slobbed her down for my homeboy here so we could let him know it wasn't nonchalant, but that was the last time I saw her. Briana. But I loved her, you know what I’m saying? I’m a good dude. I just got a good heart like that, and she appreciated that.

**Nigel Poor:** [00:09:03] Briana was sent to Central California Women’s Facility in Chowchilla.

**Earlonne Woods:** [00:09:07] And Sincere was shipped about 175 miles away to the California Men’s Colony in San Luis Obispo, and for a year and a half, they kept writing to each other.

**Sincere Carter:** [00:09:17] But here’s the million dollar flip right here. As we wrote and we got closer and closer, she ended up telling me, ‘cause she had three daughters, and she ended up telling me that one of her baby daddies, out there in the streets, decided to get back with her. So she was like, “Look baby, we had a good run, it was beautiful,” and she broke my heart. She did it in a really nice way, like, “Look. My kids was taken from me. He ended up with the children, and I have to do this to get my kids back. So you are willing to accept me leaving?” So I told her that I would do that. She said, “But listen, I got a roommate that’s been reading our letters, and she really loves you. Like
your style, your swag is awesome. And her name is Brandy and she digs, she wants you to do a correspondence for her because I'm finna transfer you from me to her.”

Earlonne Woods: [00:10:20] The transfer was successful. Brandy and Sincere are, to this day, in regular contact via the mail system.

Nigel Poor: [00:10:27] And I have a feeling there'll be a few more transfers in Sincere's future, especially when he gets out in a few years. [Earlonne laughs]

Earlonne Woods: [00:10:34] Indeed.

[Soft xylophone music]

Nigel Poor: [00:10:37] You know, E, as we were collecting stories for this episode, one thing became clear.

Earlonne Woods: [00:10:43] What's that?

Nigel Poor: [00:10:44] Even though everyone here is deprived of regular female company, they all have dreams of connecting with a partner, somehow, someday.

Earlonne Woods: [00:10:53] It's called hope. We're not quite human without it.

Nigel Poor: [00:10:56] That's right.

[Soft xylophone music]

Male Voice: [00:11:02] If I was looking for a lady, I'd describe myself, uh... I'm 85 years old. A good person. As far as being healthy, I'm very healthy, because I do exercise. I run the track and I do push ups.

Male Voice 2: [00:11:19] Tall, athletic, handsome, caring, and attentive.

Male Voice 4: [00:11:34] Well, I wanna say I’m six feet, but every time I go to the doctor appointment, they always make it clear that I’m 5 foot 11 and 3/4th inches. I’m Cambodian, which is also known as the darkest Asians, but we’re also the coolest.

Male Voice 5: [00:11:46] I would describe myself as a very enlightened and thoughtful person. Short black hair, brown eyes. As a Puerto Rican, we describe our complexion as “trieño,” which pretty much just means “a light-skinned black guy.” [He laughs]

Male Voice 6: [00:12:04] I’m not, uh… a handsome guy. Not really Valentino, you know? [Chuckles]

Male Voice 7: [00:12:12] Well I’m a likeable guy, handsome, funny.

Male Voice 8: [00:12:18] I’m a pretty outgoing individual. I am cool. I would say I’m fairly good-looking, not to be conceited or nothing. And that I can tell some jokes, but not a lot of ‘em.

Male Voice 9: [00:12:30] What I was is to go and live a good life. I have faith, good conscience, and I’m wiser now. All I want is to get out and go die in the streets. I don’t want to die in here.

[Industrial music, inaudible chatter]

Kevin Turner: [00:12:54] I’d been dating these two women. I’d been dating for one about a year, and the other one for about six months. One comes on Saturday. One comes on Sunday. Don’t ask me how I do it, but somehow I’m managing to date these two women. In the process of me getting to know these women, I take pictures with them. So I take pictures with this one on Saturday, I take pictures with this one on Sunday.

Nigel Poor: [00:13:18] That’s Kevin. He’s talking about meeting the two women he’s dating. E, can you explain what those pictures in the visiting room are?

Earlonne Woods: [00:13:26] Well, they’re the same like pictures in the club. [Nigel laughs] When you go to the club, you want to take pictures to remember the moment, and it’s the same thing.

Nigel Poor: [00:13:33] You mean there’s like a roaming photographer?
Earlonne Woods: [00:13:35] There’s actually a photographer, and it costs two dollars for each picture. You can either buy a canteen duckett, a picture duckett—it’s called a photo duckett—or your family member or your visitor can buy one up front.

Nigel Poor: [00:13:45] Oh, okay. And then they were actually walking around?

Earlonne Woods: [00:13:49] So it’s one spot. I think it’s like one designated spot, they’ve got a picture behind it, you can just stand in front of the picture, take a picture, then they print it out for you right there, and you’ve got a memorable moment.

Nigel Poor: [00:13:59] So Kevin gets pictures taken with these two women, and this is where trouble begins for him.

Kevin Turner: [00:14:06] The one that’s been here for a year, I like taking pictures with her, she gets a lot of attention. A lot of guys think she’s beautiful. The other one? She’s beautiful in her own way. God didn’t make no ugly women, they’re all beautiful in their own way. But… yeah. Looks-wise? No. So, you know, we kicking it and vibing it and um… I made two pretty cards for the holiday, I think it was “Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.” So I put a picture of me and this young lady here, I put another picture of me and another young lady in the other. And I’m thinking everything is smooth, you know? I’m getting ready for the Christmas holiday, I told the other one I need a package, and she’s going to send me the package. I told the other one I need some more astrology books, you know, so I’m doing it. I’m the man. So I just had a bad feeling. I don’t know what it was, I should’ve just followed my first mind, but I turned the mail in, and magically, they ended up at the same address. [Laughs] About three days later, I get a Dear John letter, “Fuck you, don’t call me no more, I hope you die.” Got the pictures of me—I mean, she had pictures of both females in there, she told me, “Don’t call my phone no more.” She told me she hoped I die and I’m not that handsome. [Laughs] It was everything, “You think you all that?” I guess I’m gonna sign up for a pimp house service or something because now I’m lonely. I don’t know what I’mma do, so I gotta find some more women.

[Bouncy music]

Nigel Poor: [00:15:37] You know what I learned from this dating story, E?

Earlonne Woods: [00:15:39] [Laughing] What’s that, Nige?
Nigel Poor: [00:15:41] Well God didn’t make any ugly women, but he sure as hell made some careless men.

Earlonne Woods: [00:15:47] You know what?

Nigel Poor: [00:15:48] What? [Quietly laughing]

Earlonne Woods: [00:15:49] I’mma think—I’mma process that one for a minute. [Nigel laughs harder]

Nigel Poor: [00:15:54] Okay, I’m gonna leave that alone for now. But pen pal services? That’s something a lot of people might not have heard of.

Earlonne Woods: [00:16:00] Well everybody here know about them.

Nigel Poor: [00:16:03] Right.

Earlonne Woods: [00:16:03] These services connect prisoners with people on the outside, and it’s not always for romance, but it is a good option for someone that’s looking for love.

Nigel Poor: [00:16:10] Nice.

Earlonne Woods: [00:16:11] They get correspondence going, they start talking on the phone, and pretty soon you might have a date in the visiting room holding the dancefloor.

Nigel Poor: [00:16:19] [Laughs] And sometimes, it works out.


Nigel Poor: [00:16:22] But it really does seem like guys meet a lot of women through friends.


Charlie Srey: [00:16:28] She was a real solid.

Earlonne Woods: [00:16:30] He surprised you, Nlge.
Nigel Poor: [00:16:32] I know. Earlier in the episode, when he said he’d been dating, I was shocked. [Talking to Charlie] So how’d you meet these other women?

Charlie Srey: [00:16:37] Well, the other women, I met them through the friend of a friend.

Nigel Poor: [00:16:40] Okay.

Charlie Srey: [00:16:41] So, we shot each other’s info, and we started talking, and you know, it was just real. Like we’d get into some good conversations. But the only thing was, like, I got too attached. I’d say, because I hadn’t been into that kind of relationship with anybody for so long, that I felt like I was still a beginner. It was all brand-new to me all over again because me just talking to her, we’d have all the mental things, but she wanted not just the mental but the physical, and I understood that, so…

Nigel Poor: [00:17:20] That is one of the hardest parts about dating from prison. Unless you’re married and you’re eligible for family visits, you’re not having sex.

Earlonne Woods: [00:17:27] And any romantic relationship without that is hard to maintain.

Nigel Poor: [00:17:33] Yep, and that proved to be fatal in Charlie’s case, as he learned one day on the phone.

Charlie Srey: [00:17:39] She was like, “I’ve got something to tell you.” She said, “It’s nothing bad,” but she was like, “I think it’s bad because I know how you feel.” And I was like, just give it to me. And she told me, she was like, “Well, I’m talking to somebody. I just wanted to tell you, because I think it’s not fair if you keep talking to me and I didn’t tell you.” I’m not gonna lie, I was heartbroken. It hurt. But I had to let it go, ‘cause at the same time I gotta focus on me and getting out. That’s a whole other story.

Earlonne Woods: [00:18:10] Hold on. How did you feel, really though? What was you feeling?

Charlie Srey: [00:18:16] So, I’m not gonna lie, I couldn’t sleep that whole night. I was just looking at the wall. I was staring at that wall just thinking, like, “Damn. I know if I was there… I know she always talk about us having the mental things, but she always
needing the physical things, so if I was there, I could give her the physical things. It’d be a whole other story.”

[Industrial music]

: [00:18:40] I feel like I’m prime real estate right now, let’s say this.

**Earlonne Woods:** [00:18:42] Okay, what you got to offer?

**Mo:** [00:18:44] Um, I think I’m good-looking. I’m working on my physical appearance. I’m working on…

**Earlonne Woods:** [00:18:50] [Cutting him off] Describe yourself.

**Mo:** [00:18:52] [Clears throat] I’m about 5’7”. Brown eyes. Caramel complexion. Dreads down my back. Glasses optional. I have tattoos all over my body. I have a slight gut, but I’m getting rid of it. I’m working on it. Prime real estate.

**Earlonne Woods:** [00:19:22] That piece of prime real estate didn’t want to use his name, so we’re calling him Mo.

**Nigel Poor:** [00:19:28] He says he’s in a committed relationship, but… mm… it’s complicated?

**Mo:** [00:19:35] See, I like my—I love my girl. I love my girl, but it’s like, my love is not “I’m in love with her.” It’s more like I love her for the friendship that we have, ‘cause we’ve been… [Fades underneath Earlonne]

**Earlonne Woods:** [00:19:49] He’s known this girl for a long time, but they’ve only been a couple for the past three years.

**Nigel Poor:** [00:19:54] Well, I don’t now about “a couple.” But he does call it a relationship.

**Earlonne Woods:** [00:19:59] Alright.

**Mo:** [00:20:00] Her conversation is not where my conversation is at now. She still want to be stuck in the hood, around there, who’s doing this, to where me, I’m more stimulated with talking politics or talking about how to restructure my life and build to
become better as a person and stuff like that. When that talk come up, to her, that’s like, irrelevant. And plus her physical appearance has kind of lost its touch [Laughs], so I’m like, “You know?”

**Earlonne Woods:** [00:20:32] Describe her.

**Mo:** [00:20:33] [Sighs] She’s got up to like 200-something pounds. She’s… she’s… a bubbly white chick.

**Earlonne Woods:** [00:20:45] Does she say “nigga”?

**Mo:** [00:20:46] No, don’t allow her to do that. But she is “the white black girl.” Just too hood, like “Yeah, yeah, what up,” ratchet. You know what I’m saying?

[Music starts]

**Nigel Poor:** [00:20:56] Oh God, E. I don’t know. [Earlonne laughs] This is pretty hard to hear. I always say working inside a prison has made me respect men more, but this is definitely putting it to the test.

**Earlonne Woods:** [00:21:11] So, of course we wanted to have him on, because there are guys like this in prison, just like there are guys and gals like this on the streets.

**Nigel Poor:** [00:21:21] Fair enough, fair enough.

**Earlonne Woods:** [00:21:23] So brace yourself. [Nigel laughs] Let’s hear a bit more from Mo.

**Mo:** [00:21:27] I will say that if she was to take my advice, and just do some of the things I ask her to do, I wouldn’t even be thinking about leaving her at all. Just to take care of her body physically. Yeah, I’m a looker. I like a beautiful woman. She’s got a beautiful heart, but she’s losing it, and actually I’m looking out for her health too at the same time, swear to God.

**Earlonne Woods:** [00:21:52] Don’t do it.

**Mo:** [00:21:53] Swear to God!

**Earlonne Woods:** [00:21:54] Don’t do it.
Mo: [00:21:55] Swear to God!

Earlonne Woods: [00:21:57] Do you think that she thinks she’s making an investment? It’s an investment for the both of y’all’s future together?

Mo: [00:22:05] I don’t think—believe—I gave her that reason to think like that.

Earlonne Woods: [00:22:12] You said when we first started this conversation that y’all got together. You was like, “Oh, you can be my girl.”

Mo: [00:22:21] In prison! Not from the street!

[Industrial music]

Earlonne Woods: [00:22:32] Okay, it’s time for a public service announcement from Allyson West. She did our listener alert at the top of the show, and as she said, she runs the California Re-Entry Program. She was on the last episode talking about what happens when volunteers fall in love with someone in prison.

Nigel Poor: [00:22:48] Okay, so maybe one last question… [Fades underneath Earlonne]

Earlonne Woods: [00:22:50] And Nige, that last question you asked her turned out to be oh-so-relevant to this episode.

Nigel Poor: [00:22:56] So we do get emails from people asking us about dating in prison, and they want to be a pen pal, and are they going to give somebody the wrong impression by being a pen pal. What advice would you have for somebody who has met… they’re not incarcerated and they’ve met somebody in prison. Do you have any advice for somebody who wants to start dating somebody in prison? What would you tell them?

Allyson West: [00:23:21] Probably the same dating advice I’d give anybody. Get to know them two years before you commit to anything. [Laughs] I mean really, I think it takes at least a year to scratch the surface of somebody, and in prison, I’d say two years, just because when you’re out, you can go on three dates a week if you want. You can talk on the phone. You can text, you can email, you can Facebook, you can Instagram, you can… all those other apps. There’s a million ways that you can be in
touch: you can meet his parents, he can meet your parents. And in prison, all of those things are impossible or extremely difficult, and so, if you’re going to date somebody in prison, you need to not be in a hurry. You need to be super super patient to get to know that person. And then the art of letter writing, that’s one thing that’s beautiful about prison is that the art of letter writing is very much alive. You can draw pictures, you can send photos, you can write poetry, you can write stories, you can write about your day. It’s just such a beautiful way of getting to know somebody.

[Sound of paper being handled, door shutting]

**Nigel Poor:** [00:24:39] Potentially you’re going to be in prison for a little while longer, right?

**Charlie Srey:** [00:24:41] I hope not. [Chuckles]

**Nigel Poor:** [00:24:43] Let’s hope not. But let’s say you can plan a date in prison in the visiting room. Tell me about a date you would plan in the visiting room.

**Charlie Srey:** [00:24:51] That’s kind of hard to think about that, but I’ve got a perfect scenario. So, my romantic would be if she comes to visit me like, yeah, we have our day, but I’d make a phone call to the streets, right? I got a lot of people that still support me and I’ll ask them for a few favors. I’ll ask them buy this and buy that. Say for instance, buy a box of chocolates, teddy bear or whatever. And I’ll send a card out, right? I personally wrote it myself or I bought it or something, right? And I’ll send it to my boy. And if I talk to her, I’ll keep trying to slip up and ask her for an address, and when she slips up, I’ll tell my boy like, “Look bro, this is what I want you to do. I want you to drop this off in front of her house at a certain time,” so when I call her on the payphone and we talk, I can be like, “You know what? What you doin’ right now?” And she’ll be like, “Oh, I’m laying down” or “I’m watching TV,” and I just wanna be like, “Would you just trust me?” And she’s gonna be like, “Trust you? Of course.” And I’ll be like, “Okay, well, go put your shoes and your sweater on real quick.” She’s gonna be like, “What? For what?” And I’ll be like, “Just trust me, just do it.” And when she does, she’s like, “Now what?” I’ll be like, “Open the front door.” And when she does, she sees that I just want to hear how she reacts. And that would be the romantic kind of thing for me, being in prison: even though I can’t be there, I could do something to act like I was there.

**Earlonne Woods:** [00:26:27] Have you been on a visit with a woman with that intention?
Charlie Srey: [00:26:30] No. No no no. Not ever since I’ve been down. The only people that have been visiting me is my mom and my aunt, close relatives.

Earlonne Woods: [00:26:41] So chances are you go out there with a woman, you gonna melt, huh?

Charlie Srey: [00:26:45] [Pause] We could say that. Like, yeah. I’m not gonna lie about it.

Earlonne Woods: [00:26:49] And I don’t want you to lie! I want you to be honest. I want to hear it. He just gonna… might even faint, huh?

Charlie Srey: [00:26:55] To be real with you, I’m kind of one of them dudes… I’m a sucker for love. I’ll go out of my way just to make her happy.

Nigel Poor: [00:27:03] Give us a personal ad. Imagine that you’re—do you know what a personal ad is? You write a profile on a dating site. So just imagine… give us your profile.

Charlie Srey: [00:27:16] To be honest, I’m 5’7”. I wouldn’t consider myself tall, but some people do. I’m not pretty big. I got high metabolism, I can't get big for nothing. I can get cut though, I can show you. I love going on. I love adventures. I love reading books, especially ones with love and romance, and that like, in the beginning they don’t like each other and they’re with somebody else, but then they find a way to get with each other just because of love. Like the love is stronger than… it conquers everything in the world. I just love those love stories. I could just read 600-700 pages in like two, three days, and just get stuck in it. I love a lot of fantasy things. And on top of thought, I’d like to try some too. Just throwing that out there.

Nigel Poor: [00:28:10] What do you mean?

Charlie Srey: [00:28:11] You know when you read stuff in the books, some fantasy things? Like what they do? And you’ll be like, “Damn, I want to try that too.” Or when you watch a movie and you see some things, you’re like, “Damn, that’s dope, I want to try that too.” How does it feel to be there in that situation, to whereas only seeing it, ‘cause I’m not gonna lie, when I’m watching love movies, I can feel it. I feel the love, I feel where the dude’s coming from, where the girl’s coming from, but I’m just like, “Damn. How would it be feel to be near it in person?”
**Nigel Poor:** [00:28:41] So you mean when you see, like, sexual things? Or romantic things?

**Charlie Srey:** [00:28:43] [Overlapping] No, no, no, just romantic things, like what he would do for her or what she would do for him. It’s just the little, the sweetest things. Things that they’d do, things that he’d say. Things that they plan out together and everything. The scenario. The things he’d do to surprise her, her reaction, or vice versa: his reaction to things she’d do for him. I want to try all that.

**Earlonne Woods:** [00:29:12] So you’re caught up in the romantic thing.

**Charlie Srey:** [00:29:15] Yeah, yeah. I get caught up a lot.

**Earlonne Woods:** [00:29:18] So it’s safe to say that most of your romantic exposure is basically in your mind.

**Charlie Srey:** [00:29:25] Yeah, you could say that.

**Nigel Poor:** [00:29:33] E? Personal question for you.

**Earlonne Woods:** [00:29:36] Alright.

**Nigel Poor:** [00:29:37] Listeners may want to know: are you dating anyone?

**Earlonne Woods:** [00:29:40] Crickets. [Both laugh]

**Nigel Poor:** [00:29:45] Hmmm, okay.

**Earlonne Woods:** [00:29:46] Pregnant pause!

**Nigel Poor:** [00:29:47] Pregnant pause. Interesting, because you’ve always told me that you have kind of mixed feelings about dating in prison.

**Earlonne Woods:** [00:29:55] I know where you’re going with this, I know where you’re going with this. So my philosophy has always been, “I’m the one that fucked up, made a bad decision in my life to end up in prison. So why should I incarcerate some other soul and stop them from living their life because of me?” To me, that would be selfish, so that’s always been my philosophy. But they got family visiting now. [Nigel laughs] Like we said at the top of the episode, it’s kind of hard to maintain without sex.
Nigel Poor: [00:30:30] Yeah, but to have a family visit, you have to be married. So, interesting. I guess we’ll see where this goes.


Nigel Poor: [00:30:41] Thanks to Charlie Srey, Sincere Carter, Kevin Turner, Mo, and Allyson West for talking to us for this episode.

Earlonne Woods: [00:30:47] And don’t forget about all the yard talk guys. Good looking out.

Nigel Poor: [00:30:52] They were great.

Earlonne Woods: [00:30:54] Especially that 85 year-old Joe. Hey, he be jogging, doing push ups, I want to be like that when I’m 85. [Nigel laughs]

Nigel Poor: [00:31:00] Me too. When we come back, we have account time. That’s when we play a little extra something: a song, a poem, just some interesting tape we want you to hear.

Earlonne Woods: [00:31:12] This time, we have a few jokes from our friend Jessie Ayers who performs stand-up here at San Quentin. We invited a small audience down to the media lab to hear him tell a dating story.

Nigel Poor: [00:31:22] We’ll be back with that after the break.

[String-heavy music]

Voice: [00:31:34] Hey! Account time! [Bell rings twice]

Jessie Ayers: [00:31:38] I know there ain’t no cell phones here at San Quentin, but when I was at this other prison, I had this homie, right? He used to let me use his. So when he would, I’d be up all night looking at Tinder, MocoSpace, and PlentyOfFish. My PoF profile said I was a student majoring in criminal justice and that I was working in a correctional facility.

Heckler: [00:31:59] Yeah, pushing a mop!
Jessie Ayers: [00:32:01] Hey, girls must like that, ‘cause I was getting hella hits off of that. I was going through hella profiles ‘till I saw Jenny. And let me tell you, the first time I saw Jenny, my heart skipped a beat. Hey, in just a few days, we were texting all the time. Things were going hella good until she set up a dinner date for that Friday night. I texted back, “Sounds great! See you then!” but I was thinking to myself, “Yeah, right. See you on Friday night in 2023.” [Big laugh] Hey, I fucked up, ‘cause I told the homie about Jenny and he was all, “Just don’t fall in love.” And I was like, shoot, you don’t know I’m a player fool! They must not have told you about me. [Laughs] Hey, I ain’t gonna lie. I was already picturing what me and Jenny’s kids were gonna look like.

Heckler: [00:32:42] Hopefully not like you.

Another Heckler: [00:32:44] I don’t know, we ain’t seen Jenny! [Laughs, agreement]

Jessie Ayers: [00:32:48] Hey, but you know how it is in here. Every fuckin’ day’s the same. Account time, lockdown. But none of that shit mattered to me when I saw that little phone light up. I was stuck. But hey, when that Friday night rolled around, the homie fucked up. He took the phone back. Man, I was up all night, tossing and turning.

Heckler: [00:33:10] No, she’s talking to the homie now! [Laughs]

Jessie Ayers: [00:33:16] [Laughs] Hey, the next day the homie yelled at me, he said, “You fucked up fool! How could you do that to Jenny? She was blowing up my phone all night.” He handed me the phone and the first thing I saw was a picture of Jenny in a red dress standing in front of the restaurant. After that, there was just a bunch of texts asking, “Where are you?”

Heckler: [00:33:30] H Unit! [Big laughs]

Jessie Ayers: [00:33:35] My heart sank in my chest and I felt sick to my stomach, so I was like “Fuck it, I’m calling her,” you know what I’m saying? So here’s what I did. I called her confessing everything, that I was in prison, why I’m here, and that no one else has ever made me feel the way she does. And then there was this real long silence on her end, and then she goes, [sniffles] “Why did you lie to me?” And I was like, “Look, I’m sorry! But I think we can make things work if you can give me chance.” She thought about it and she was like, [sniffle] “I need some time to think,” and hung up on me. Man, I waited a whole week to call her back, and when I did, my number was blocked. [Laughs, chatter] Hey, my heart was broke, right? But in the end, I guess we both got
hurt, you know? But I ain't gonna lie. It felt hella good to be in love, even if it was just for a few days on the phone.

Heckler: [00:34:19] Playa playa! [Laughs]

[Bell rings, distant voices, music]

Nigel Poor: [00:34:31] Thanks Jessie Ayers for coming down to the media lab and performing for us.

Earlonne Woods: [00:34:36] And to the guys in Jessie's audience, his own entourage. [Nigel laughs] It was a whole crowd.

Nigel Poor: [00:34:45] *Ear Hustle* is produced by myself, Nigel Poor.

Earlonne Woods: [00:34:38] And me, Earlonne Woods. With help from outside producer Pat Mesiti-Miller, who also comes in to work with our sound design team. This episode includes music from David Jassy, Antwan Williams, E. Phil Phillips, Eric “Maserati E” Abercrombie, and Lee Jasper.

Nigel Poor: [00:35:07] Curtis Fox is our story editor, Erin Wade’s our digital producer, and Julie Shapiro’s our executive producer for Radiotopia. We want to thank Warden Ron Davis, and as you know, every episode has to be approved by this guy here.

Lt. Sam Robinson: [00:35:22] This is Lieutenant Sam Robinson, the public information officer at San Quentin State Prison. You know, there are a number of people here at San Quentin State Prison, staff and inmate-wise, whose families and lives have been impacted by the disaster that’s taken place with the fires here in Northern California. And I think there should be a place that we allow some space for some thoughts and prayers and whatever engagement that people have in their hearts to look out for other people this season. So again, this is Lt. Robinson at San Quentin State Prison, and I approve this story.

[Theme music]

Earlonne Woods: [00:35:58] Next time on *Ear Hustle*…

Nigel Poor: [00:36:00] A very special friend comes to San Quentin.
Earlonne Woods: [00:36:05] Who happens to be flat.

Nigel Poor: [00:36:05] Well, that's because he's made out of paper.

Earlonne Woods: [00:36:07] And he's kin to Stanley.

Nigel Poor: [00:36:10] [Laughing] “Kin.”

Male Voice: [00:36:12] So little homie right here, before we first met he was a little shy, but then we kicked for like, what was it? Two weeks? Had burritos, worked out together, played soccer. We did all kinds of stuff together. He's my best friend now. He's my homie.

[Theme music]

Nigel Poor: [00:36:27] *Ear Hustle* is a proud member of Radiotopia from PRX, a collection of the best podcasts around. Hear more at radiotopia.fm.

Ali Tambora: [00:36:36] This is Ali Tambora, who used to be a resident here at San Quentin State Prison. I now work for the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative. 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.

Earlonne Woods: [00:36:55] I’m Earlonne Woods.

Nigel Poor: [00:36:56] And I'm Nigel Poor.

Both: [00:36:58] Thanks for listening.

Male Voice: [00:37:03] Oh, did I forget? I like to dance. [Laughs] Yeah, I like to dance, I like to have a good time, you know. I don't do the two step, I do a six to seven step, and she gonna like the footwork. [Big laugh] Woo! Hey! Look at that, look at that, look at that. See that there? [Snapping, grunting] You like that, huh? Yeah!! [Fades out]

END OF EPISODE.