

# JUST the Facts: Mass Incarceration Thrives in Broome County

By

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## **JUST Mission Statement**

Justice and Unity for the Southern Tier is a civil engagement organization dedicated to dismantling mass incarceration in the Southern Tier. The diverse social conditions and institutions contributing to mass incarceration demand a multifaceted effort to devise its end. Championing community mobilizations, offering supports and services to end poverty, eliminating racism, ending the criminalization of people with disabilities, and eliminating the school to prison pipeline are JUST's goals. We believe that education, rehabilitation, and persistent community engagement are the best ways to bring about true, socially just change. JUST advocates with and for individuals, families and loved ones of those currently or previously incarcerated, as well as educates community members, police, school officials, and other community service providers about the harms of mass incarceration. We welcome all who are interested in creating a JUST community in the Southern Tier.

*Email JUST to receive meeting time/location updates.*

### **Other publications by JUST (available on-line):**

“Less Death and More Health: An Action Plan for the Broome County Jail and Criminal Justice System” (supported by Broome/Tioga NAACP, Workers Center of the Southern Tier, The Family Enrichment Network, Southern Tier Independence Center (STIC), TruthPharm, The Black Student Union of Binghamton University, the Women's Student Union of Binghamton University, Occupational Health Clinical Center of the Southern Tier, Citizen Action of the Southern Tier, Trinity AME Zion Church, Anthropologist for Direct Action, Broome County Peace Action, Tabernacle United Methodist Church)

“Documenting Injustice in Broome County: The need for an investigation of the Abuses of Over-incarceration”

## **Voices from BC Jail:**

“I’ve been called Nxxxxx, monkey, and other degrading names... when we speak up we get punished by being put in the Box... animals get treated better than Broome County inmates.”

–Person incarcerated in BC jail

“The guards are going to kill me. You gotta get me outta here.”

–Salladin Barton, 2015; died shortly after

# From the Inside Out:

BC jail conditions in the words of incarcerated people.

“They don’t give drug court to blacks. A white person violates drug court, they get treatment. Where is the Justice in Broome County? Please help us, we are really doomed in Broome County.”

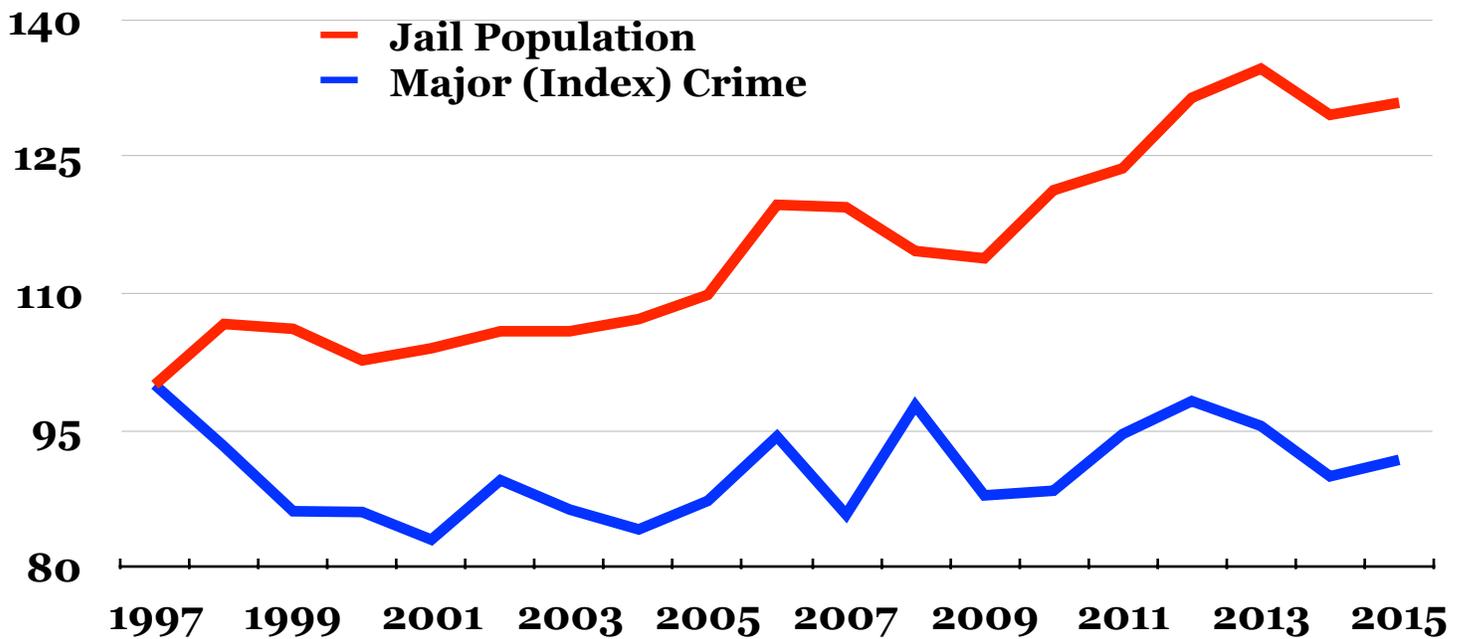
“Me and many others were put in the box [solidarity confinement] without cause or reason. They said we were under investigation without providing us any documentation or explanation. This is unacceptable.”

“The jail provides filthy clothes. The underwear is half clean, the T-shirts have large stains around the armpits because they clean everything in one big washer. It’s luck if you get something clean. People are catching infections do to the lack of fresh and clean clothes.”

# A Growing Jail Population:

The Broome County Jail population is 30% higher than 20 years ago, despite a steady crime rate and county population.

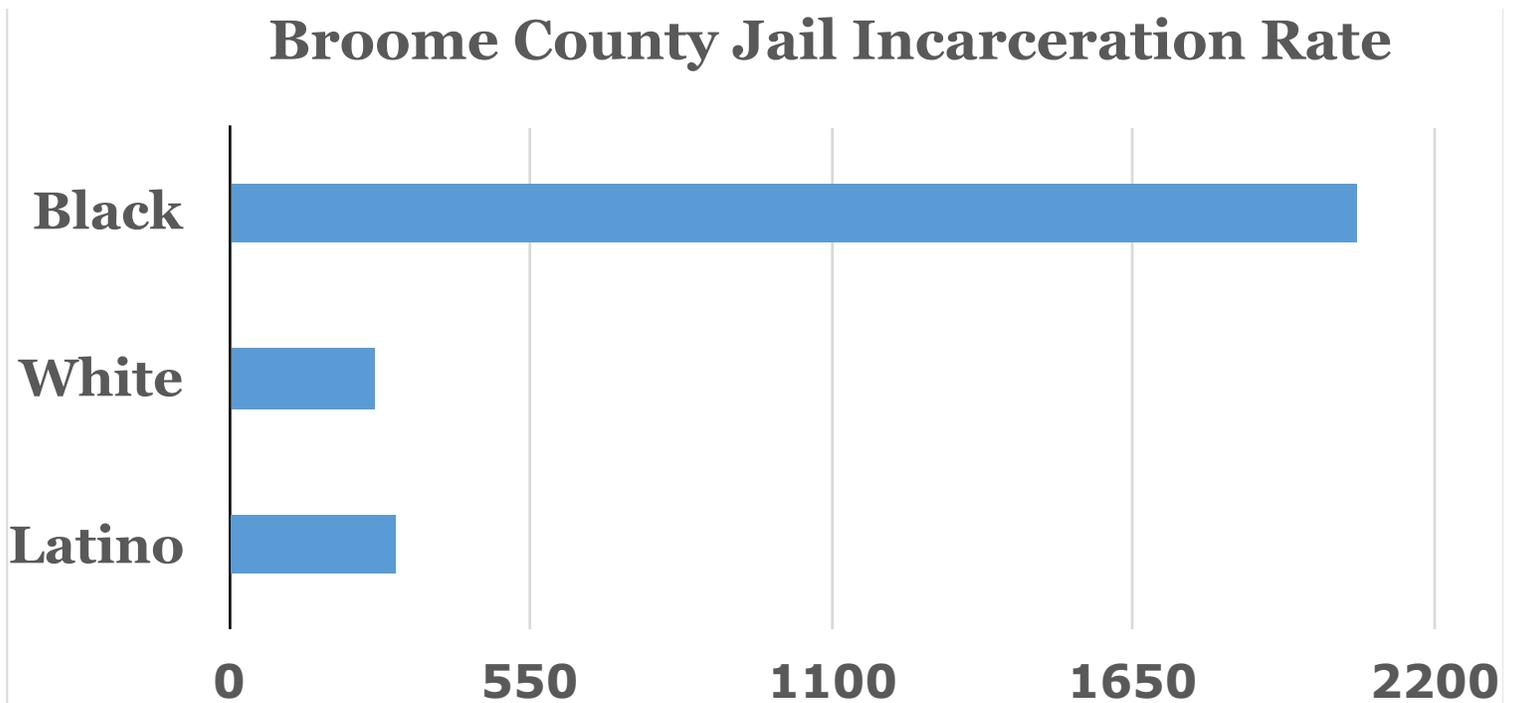
## Crime Falls, Jail Numbers Increase



Broome County Index Crime & Jail Census (1997=100)

# Racial disparity is deeply rooted in the Broome County criminal “justice” system:

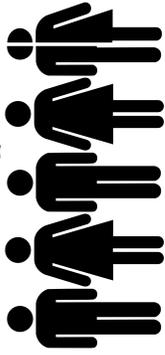
Black incarceration rates are 10 times higher than white and Latino rates.



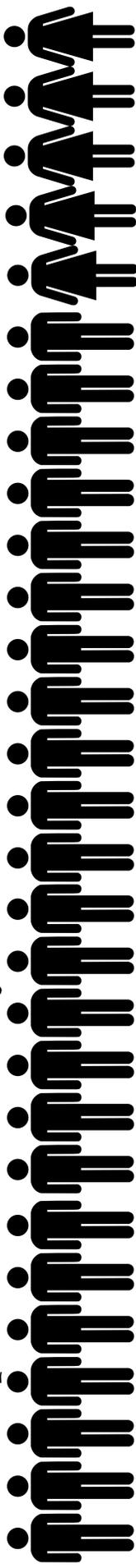
While 5% of Broome County’s population is black, black people make up 28% of all jail admittances.

# Racial Disparities in Broome County Jail Admissions

5% of People in Broome County are Black:



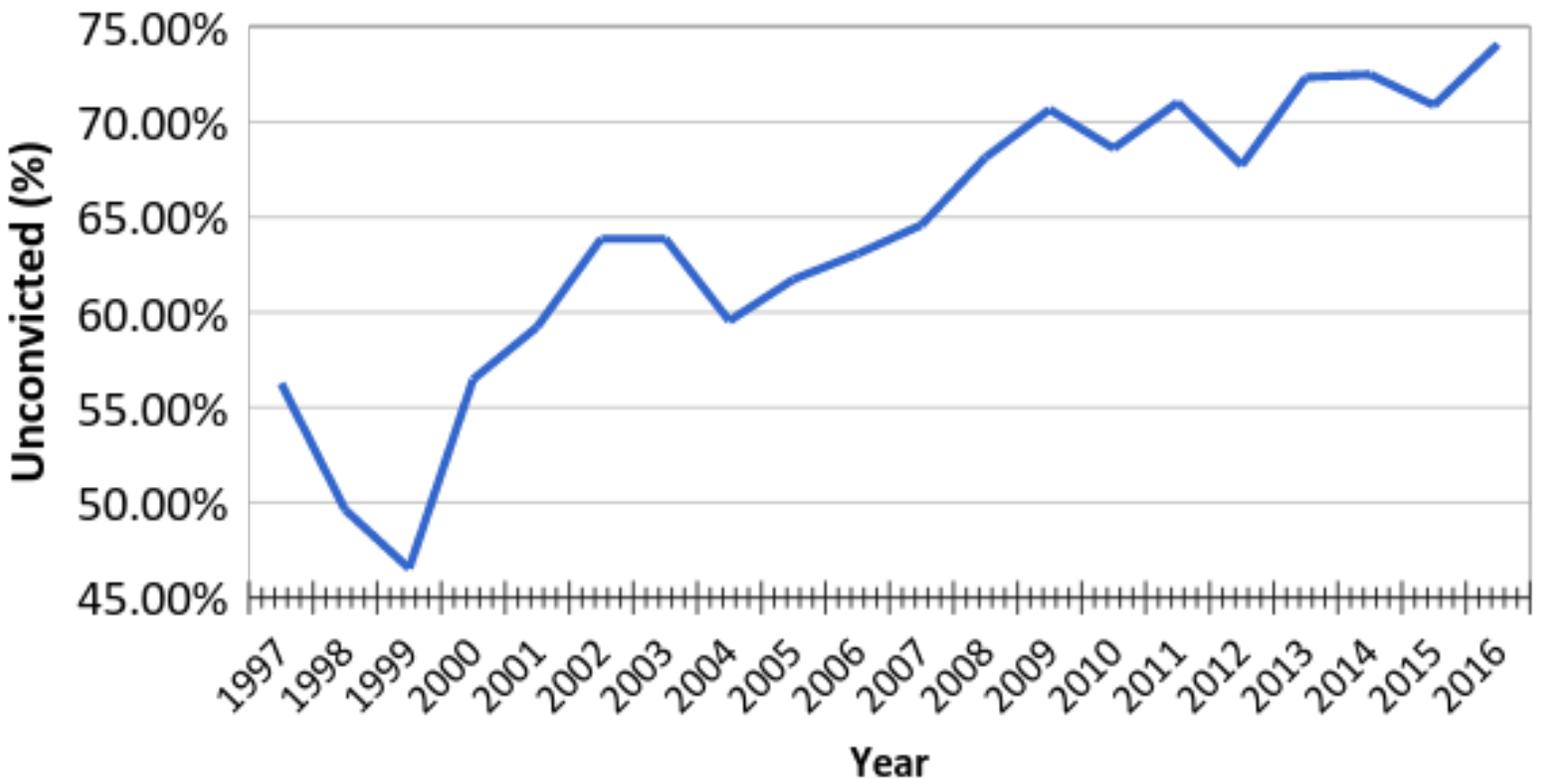
28% of People Admitted to BC Jail are Black (2016):



# Poor Peoples' Prison:

75% of the persons in the jail are unconvicted; many simply can't afford Broome County judge's high bail.

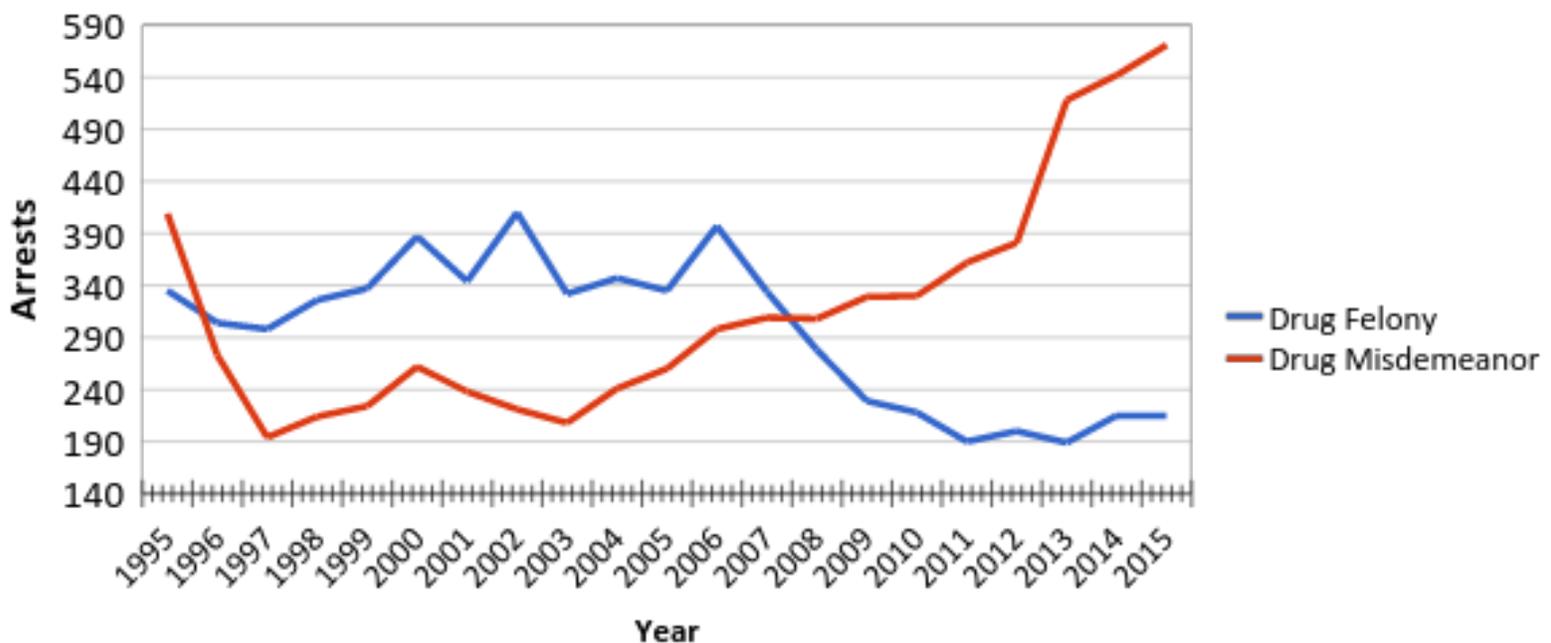
**Percent of Broome County Jail Population Unconvicted, 1997-2016**



# War on Substance Use Disorder (SUD):

The criminal “justice” system targets drug users. Politicians say that “we cannot arrest our way out of the opioid crisis,” yet they continue to arrest and incarcerate people for low level offenses. People need treatment, not jailing.

**Broome County Drug Felony and Misdemeanor Arrests, 1995-2015**



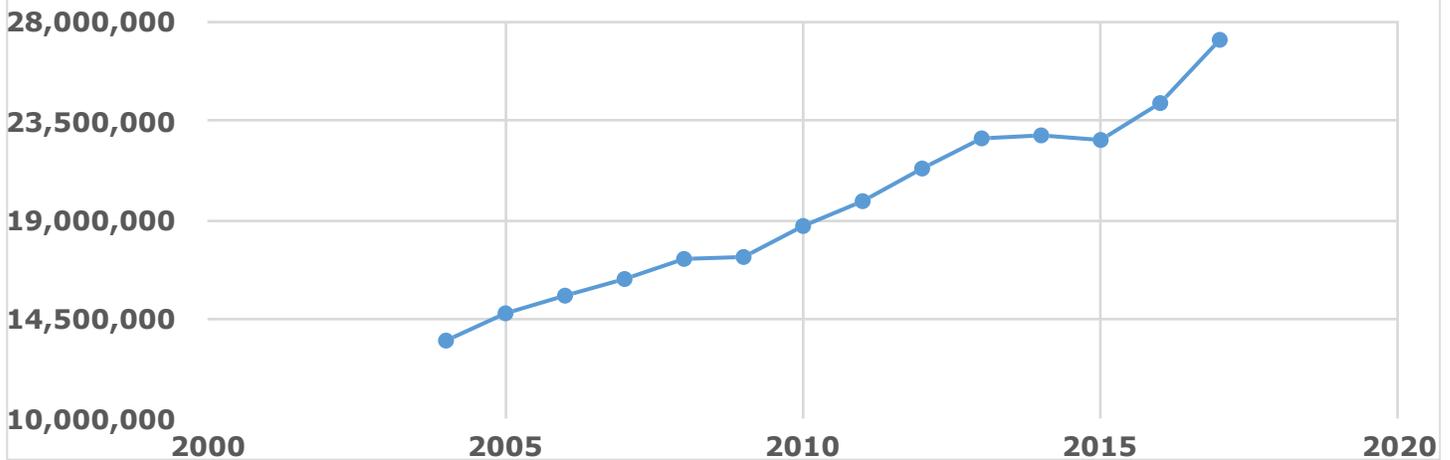
# Funding Jails, Cutting Back on Mental Health Services:

As BC's mental health budget was slashed by 66%, money for jailing doubled. Proper mental health services prevent incarceration. Cutbacks produce mental health crises and jail incarceration. Jails cannot be adequate mental health facilities.

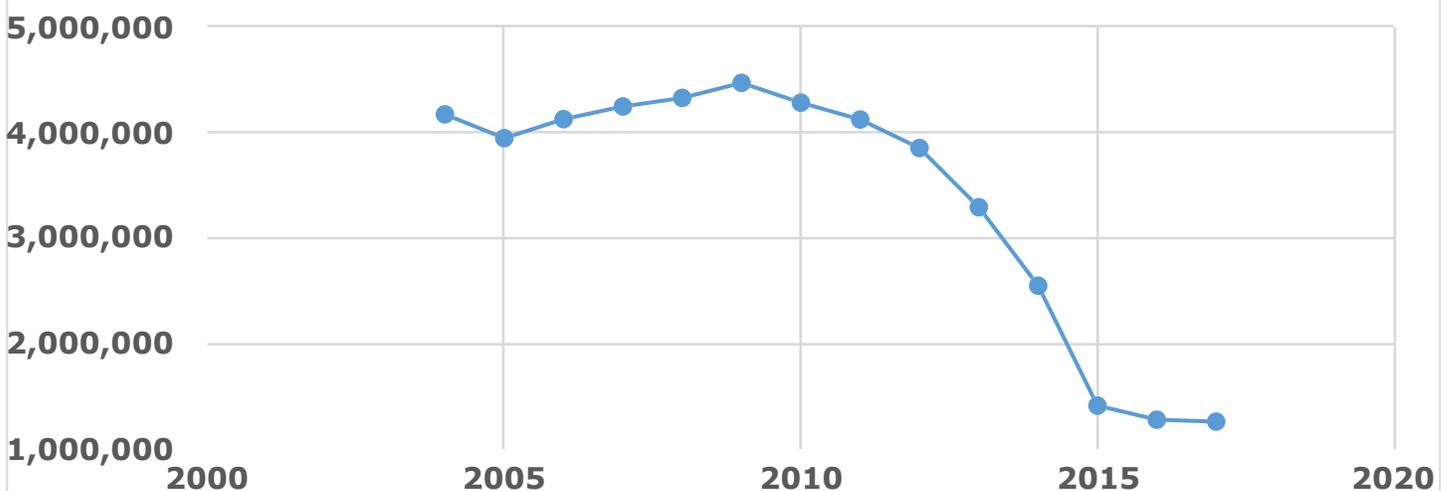
Timeline of fund transfers from mental health to jail:

- 2014: \$6 million jail expansion
- 2015: Closure of Broome County Mental Health Clinic
- 2016: Cuts to Willow Point vs. 13 new jail officers
- 2017: personnel lines moved from health department to fund new "welfare fraud" investigations

### Broome County Jail Funding \$



### Broome County Mental Health Expenditure \$



# A Jail Stay Should Not be a Death Sentence:

8 men, half people of color, have died in the Broome County Jail since 2011. 6 deaths happened in the last 4 years, 6 times higher than the average facility of its size.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Gender</u>	<u>Age at Death</u>	<u>Race/ Ethnicity</u>	<u>Days In Jail Before Death</u>	<u>Death Date</u>
Alvin Rios	Male	40	Hispanic	2 days	7/20/2011
John	Male	44	Black	N/A	6/27/2013
Douglas	Male	46	White	15 days	9/21/2013
Salladin Barton	Male	36	Black	588 days	1/14/2015
Vachon	Male	66	French-Canadian	200 days	11/1/2015
Richard	Male	29	White	1 day	10/22/2016
Kevin	Male	34	Black	289 days	9/30/2016

The immediate causes of jail death vary, but the root cause is the same: Imprisonment and an inhuman “justice” system. Had these men not been in jail, they would likely still be living. Some men were engaged for only a few days, some much longer. Most were awaiting trial and unable to afford bail. Any jail stint can be deadly.

# What do we need? JUST goals:

1. Less Jailing, more programming for mental health and Substance Use Disorder.
2. Public hearings on jail abuse and in-custody medical care.
3. Investment in neighborhoods, families, and kids.
4. A permanent, independent jail oversight committee composed of community members.

