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WRITING OUR WAY OUT

MEMOIRS FROM JAIL

Detailing the formative and transformative memories of ten men, *Writing Our Way Out* is the creative culmination of a writing class that began in the Richmond City Jail in Virginia, and grew into a journey to re-entry. Compiled in a narrative by their teacher, Dr. David Coogan, these stories explore the conditions, traps, and turning points on the path to imprisonment in modern America, as well as the redemptive and rehabilitative power of memoir.

"This is a work of creative non-fiction. It's my memoir of teaching a writing class to prisoners. And it's ten prisoners' memoirs, written with this hope in mind: that each man might understand the story of his life, and in so doing, change its course." – David Coogan, excerpt from the introduction

"Candid, illuminating, and free of artifice."

–Mark Salzman, bestselling author of *Iron and Silk* and author of *True Notebooks: A Writer's Year at Juvenile Hall*

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

DAVID COOGAN is an associate professor of English at Virginia Commonwealth University, where he teaches courses in writing and literature. He is the founder and co-director of Open Minds, www.openminds.vcu.edu, a program that enables college students to take courses in the arts and humanities with men and women incarcerated at the Richmond City Justice Center, formerly the Richmond City Jail.

Coogan is the co-author of *The Public Work of Rhetoric: Citizen-Scholars and Civic Engagement*. His essays on the teaching of writing have appeared in the journals *College Composition and Communication*, *College English*, *Community Literacy*, *Public: A Journal of Imagining America*, and in the books *Active Voices*, *Texts of Consequence*, and *Working for Justice*. He is currently working on a new book, *Memoirs of Mass Incarceration: The Rhetoric of Revolutionaries, Witnesses, and Survivors*.

To learn more about the writers in this book or to schedule a reading, please visit www.davidcoogan.com.

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