KNX Event Goes Behind the Scenes of Forgotten Prison Podcast

(Seattle-Tacoma, WA) KNX’s Forgotten Prison six-part podcast series delved into the history of the now-abandoned McNeil Island prison in South Puget Sound. Produced in partnership with the Washington State Historical Society, the series points to McNeil as “the Alcatraz you’ve never heard of”—a forgotten place that speaks to how and why we lock people up. The series is a companion piece to Washington State History Museum’s exhibit, Unlocking McNeil’s Past: The Prison, The Place, The People (on view now through May 26, 2019).

On April 11 from 7-8 p.m., KNX reporters Simone Alicea and Paula Wissel—hosts, writers and producers of the podcast series—will present “Forgotten Prison: Behind the Scenes” in the auditorium at Washington State History Museum in Tacoma. Through photos and audio recordings of people who lived both inside and outside of the prison walls, Alicea and Wissel will pull back the curtain on Forgotten Prison and also touch on stories they weren’t able to include in the series. The event is free and open to the public. Space is limited; RSVP at brownpapertickets.com.

Alicea and Wissel will talk about why they wanted to tell the story of McNeil Island and how their visit to the abandoned prison was a transformative experience. Photos will give attendees a real look at the island that couldn’t be conveyed through the podcasts. Audio will include the voices of some of the guards and people who were incarcerated at the prison. Alicea and Wissel will also highlight some of the myths surrounding McNeil.

Another topic is the Special Commitment Center for sexually violent predators who have completed their prison sentences. “Trying to fit the SCC into this podcast was really hard,” Alicea says. “In so many ways it exemplifies the debate we have over prisons, but it also derails it because it’s kind of a world apart. We mostly just want to make mention of this and cast the history of the island forward since the SCC is the only thing that’s still running on the island.”

Event attendees will have free access to the museum’s Unlocking McNeil’s Past exhibit from 5:30-7 p.m. and also from 8:00-9:00 p.m. directly following the presentation.
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