

WOMEN WOKE WITHIN

Where awakening becomes purpose and purpose creates change.

The Awakening

INAUGURAL ISSUE • 2026

BUSINESS OF FREEDOM™

COMMUNITY IMPACT
SPOTLIGHT

FROM PRISON TO PURPOSE

THE PROMISE THAT CHANGED
EVERYTHING

WHEN PROMISES AWAKEN PURPOSE

How SanMichelle Jones Turned One Interrupted Chapter into a Lifetime of Purpose

Featuring SanMichelle Jones — Founding Legacy Sherone™

"One Chapter Is Only One Part of the Book of Life.™"



FOUNDING LEGACY SHERONE™

SanMichelle Jones, M.S.



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WOMEN WOKE WITHIN

Where awakening becomes purpose and purpose creates change.

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“Where awakening becomes purpose and purpose creates change.”

What We Do

A digital magazine celebrating women who transformed adversity into leadership, entrepreneurship, and community impact.

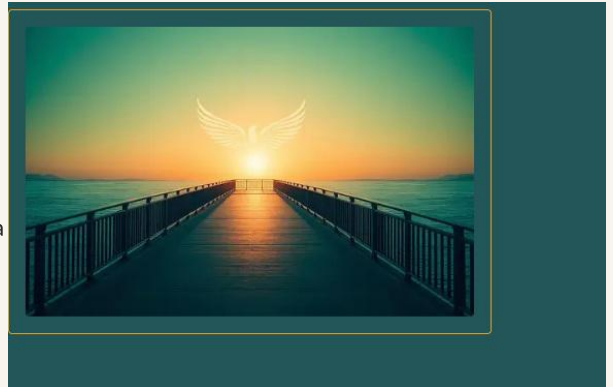
MISSION

Women Woke Within shines a light on extraordinary women who transformed adversity into purpose and emerged determined to create positive change. We celebrate their achievements, amplify their voices, and inspire others to believe that transformation, success, and freedom are possible, no matter where their journey began.

VISION

Women Exceeding Together (W.E.T.)

We envision formerly incarcerated women, united as Women Exceeding Together, building thriving businesses, supporting one another, and creating a culture of wholeness, wellness, empowerment, and lasting success within their communities.



WE STAND FOR

Transformation, Visibility, and Lasting Impact.

01

Awakening

Honoring the inner strength discovered in life's most challenging chapters.

02

Purpose

Championing entrepreneurship, leadership, and community-driven change.

03

Change

Amplifying voices that prove one chapter does not define the whole story.



Scan to Learn More

Discover more about Women Woke Within online.

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Where awakening becomes purpose and purpose creates change.



THE AWAKENING



SANMICHELLE JONES



STORIES UNPACKED™

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THE AWAKENING BEGINS

A Letter from the Executive Publisher



Renee Stone
EXECUTIVE PUBLISHER

Welcome to the inaugural issue of *Women Woke Within*. This publication was created for women who have chosen to believe that one difficult chapter does not determine the rest of their story.

Our first issue, *The Awakening*, celebrates women who have transformed adversity into leadership, entrepreneurship, advocacy, and community impact. These are not simply stories of survival—they are stories of purpose.

As a woman who has personally experienced incarceration and reentry, I understand the uncertainty that often accompanies a new beginning.

Questions arrive quickly: Will I find meaningful work? Will my family still believe in me? Can I rebuild my life? Could I own a business? Could I become someone others look to for hope?

Those questions are real. They are often the beginning of transformation.

When I returned home, I discovered that rebuilding a life requires more than finding employment. It requires rebuilding confidence, identity, relationships, and the belief that tomorrow can be different from yesterday.

That is why *Women Woke Within* exists. We celebrate women who launch businesses, lead organizations, strengthen communities, mentor others, and refuse to allow their past to silence their future.

Whether you are rebuilding your own life, supporting someone you love, or searching for inspiration, I hope these stories remind you that your greatest chapter may still be waiting to be written.

Hold your head high. Walk forward with courage. Believe in the possibilities before you. Because incarceration is not the end of your story. Sometimes it becomes the beginning of your awakening.

FROM THE LETTER

“Will I find meaningful work? Will my family still believe in me? Can I rebuild my life?”

— Renee Stone
EXECUTIVE PUBLISHER

LEGACY MOMENT

One difficult chapter does not determine the rest of a woman's story. It can become the sacred beginning of her awakening.

"These are not simply stories of survival—they are stories of purpose."

CARRY IT FORWARD™

LEGACY MOMENT

Rebuilding is more than returning home. It is reclaiming confidence, identity, relationships, and the belief that tomorrow can be different from yesterday.

"Sometimes it becomes the beginning of your awakening."

CARRY IT FORWARD™

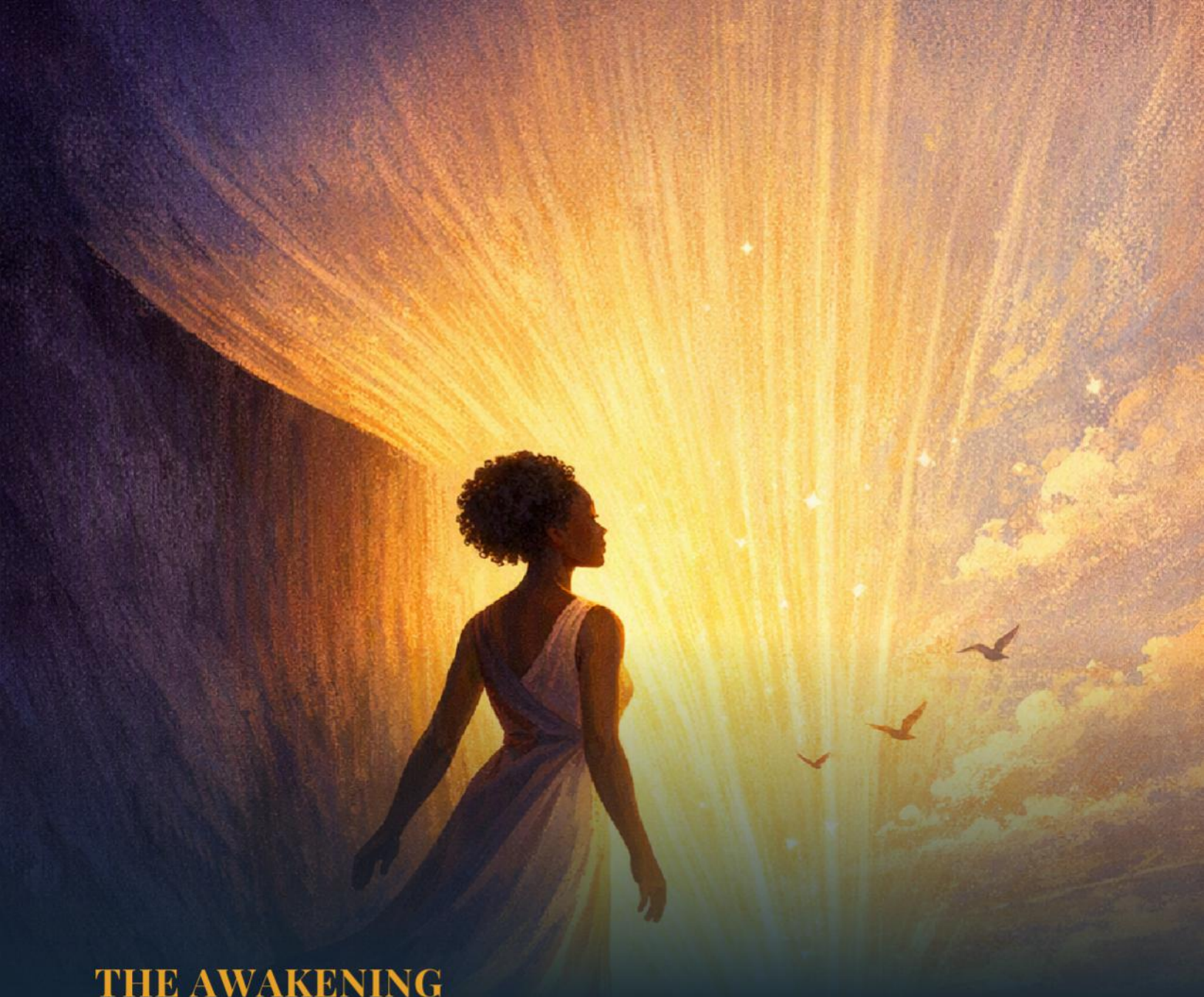
A LETTER OF BELIEF

This is why we tell these stories: to remind every woman that rebuilding is not only possible, but also powerful.

WE BELIEVE IN YOUR NEXT CHAPTER.

*“My sentence did not define me.
My purpose did.”*

Carry It Forward™



THE AWAKENING

Before the Story Begins...

There are moments in every life when everything changes.

Sometimes they arrive quietly. Sometimes they arrive through heartbreak. Sometimes they arrive through decisions we never imagined we would have to make.

Yet history has shown us something remarkable. The women who change the world are rarely the women whose lives unfolded exactly as they planned.

They are the women who chose to write another chapter.

Today, we invite you to meet one of them.



WOMEN WOKE WITHIN

A Legacy Sheroe™ Story

FOUNDING LEGACY SHEROE™ FEATURE

WHEN PROMISES AWAKEN PURPOSE

*How SanMichelle Jones Turned One Interrupted Chapter
into a Lifetime of Purpose*

SanMichelle Jones | Women Woke Within | The Awakening Issue

*Legacy Moment Opening — A visual invitation into a story of
courage, knowledge, freedom, and the chapters still being
written.*





PORTRAIT OF RESOLVE

SanMichelle Jones begins her Legacy Sheroe story with a question that becomes the foundation of her future: how does a woman reclaim purpose after life rewrites the plan?

“I refused to allow one chapter of my life to become the title of my story.”

— SANMICHELLE JONES | CARRY IT FORWARD™

Every Story Begins with a Decision

The prison law library was unlike any classroom SanMichelle Jones had ever entered. The shelves were lined with legal books worn from years of use. Court opinions, statutes, and case law filled every available space. Around her sat women searching for answers—some hoping to shorten their sentences, others simply trying to understand how their lives had arrived at this place.

She had no way of knowing that the room would become the birthplace of a new future.

Years later, people would know her as a transportation entrepreneur, legal advocate and coach, mentor, author, and future law student. They would recognize her as a woman committed to helping others understand their rights and navigate complex legal systems through knowledge rather than fear. As a result of her work in navigating the legal system, she founded the social media platform known as “Crimes Against Us,” which is attracting worldwide attention.

Most people would have seen rows of books.

SanMichelle saw a possibility.

But on that day, none of those accomplishments existed.

There was only one woman asking one question.

“

*If I do not understand the law that changed my life,
how can I ever change the course of my future?*

That question became the beginning of everything.

Five Promises

Sitting inside a Georgia prison, SanMichelle made herself five promises.

- 01** She would regain her freedom.
- 02** She would earn her Commercial Driver's License.
- 03** She would build a transportation company.
- 04** She would help others understand the law and fight for justice.
- 05** *And one day... she would become an attorney.*

Those promises were never intended for public applause.

They were deeply personal.

A quiet covenant she made with herself when life appeared to have rewritten every plan she had ever imagined.

Years later, she would realize that each promise represented another chapter in the life she was preparing to build.

Not one built upon regret.

But one built upon purpose.



A Leader Long Before Prison

Long before the courtroom...

Long before the law library...

Long before the trucking company...

There was a little girl who always chose to be the leader.

Growing up in a close-knit family, SanMichelle learned the value of hard work from two parents who believed that discipline and education were gifts no one could ever take away.

Her father served honorably in the United States Army before retiring. Her mother devoted years of service in facility maintenance before retiring as well.

Their expectations for their children were simple.

THEIR EXPECTATIONS WERE SIMPLE

- ♦ Work hard.
- ♦ Finish what you begin.
- ♦ Earn your education.
- ♦ Create opportunities where none exist.

Those lessons became part of SanMichelle long before she understood how valuable they would be one day.

As a child, she and her siblings often played pretend. When they imagined businesses... SanMichelle became the owner. When they imagined classrooms... she became the teacher.

Leadership was never assigned to her. It simply seemed to find her.

Life changed dramatically after the loss of her father. The family experienced the uncertainty and hardship that often follows profound loss. Everyone worked. Everyone contributed. Everyone learned that resilience is built one decision at a time.

Watching her mother's determination during those years taught SanMichelle something she would carry throughout her life.

Self-pity could never become a permanent address.

Her parents had dreamed that each of their children would earn a college education. SanMichelle refused to let that dream disappear. She earned her undergraduate degree in counseling, then continued until she completed her Master's degree. Education became more than academic achievement. It became preparation.

ROOTS OF RESILIENCE

Before the law library, entrepreneurship, and advocacy, SanMichelle's foundation was shaped by family, discipline, education, and the belief that hard work could open a way forward.

“Transformation doesn't happen all at once. It happens one decision... One lesson... One act of courage... At a time.”

— SANMICHELLE JONES

Carry It Forward™

Success Before the Storm

Like many graduates, SanMichelle expected education to open professional doors.

Instead, she discovered that advanced degrees did not always guarantee meaningful employment.

Rather than waiting for someone else to create an opportunity...

She created one herself.

She built a successful business that eventually generated a six-figure income.

Entrepreneurship confirmed something she had always believed.



*When one door remains closed... sometimes
you build another.*

Her future appeared bright. She had every reason to believe life would continue moving forward.

Then, in 2017, *everything changed*. SanMichelle received a fifteen-year prison sentence.

One chapter of her life closed with a force she never anticipated.

Many people might have allowed that chapter to define them. SanMichelle chose something different.

She decided that if life had changed the plot... she would eventually write a different ending.

That decision would lead her to a prison law library... and ultimately, to the purpose she lives today.

THE TURNING POINT

This moment marks the shift from unanswered questions to active pursuit, when SanMichelle stopped waiting for the law to be explained and began learning it for herself.

“Knowledge became one of the greatest forms of freedom I would ever experience.”

— SANMICHELLE JONES

Carry It Forward™

Searching for the Truth

When SanMichelle entered prison, she believed she understood what had happened.

Before sentencing, she believed she had accepted a plea agreement with the understanding that she would enter a drug treatment program rather than spend years incarcerated. According to SanMichelle, those discussions took place before sentencing, and her daughter even paid the required fees to reserve a place in the treatment program.

The placement never happened.

The unanswered questions remained.

SanMichelle had never considered herself someone who needed drug treatment. The more she reflected upon what had occurred, the more one question refused to leave her mind.



How could I have agreed to something I did not fully understand?

Seeking answers, she later consulted another attorney whose perspective challenged her understanding of the legal process that had led to her incarceration.

That conversation changed everything.

She stopped looking for someone else to explain the law.

She decided to learn it herself.

And with that decision... the awakening had begun.

LEGACY MOMENT

“

**Every woman deserves to be seen beyond her
hardest chapter.**

To Be Continued...

FOUNDING LEGACY SHEROE™ FEATURE

WHEN PROMISES AWAKEN PURPOSE

Continued

“Sometimes the greatest freedom begins long before the prison gates open.”

Finding Her Voice

THE CLASSROOM WITHOUT A PROFESSOR

Inside the law library, SanMichelle found more than books—she found discipline, language, and the beginning of a voice that would help others navigate their own legal journeys.

FOUNDING LEGACY SHEROE™ FEATURE

The Law Library

Whenever SanMichelle could get approval to visit the law library, she would walk in carrying more than legal books.

She carried within her mind questions.

QUESTIONS ABOUT

- *Justice.*
- *Decisions.*
- *The law that had forever altered the direction of her life.*

SHE BEGAN READING

- *Court opinions.*
- *Sentencing statutes.*
- *Case law.*
- *Appellate decisions.*
- *Legal dictionaries.*
- *Trial transcripts.*

Unlike the classrooms where she had once earned her undergraduate and master's degrees, this classroom offered no professors, no lectures, and very little guidance.

The responsibility to learn rested entirely upon her shoulders.

She quickly discovered that understanding the law required far more than simply reading isolated cases. Every answer seemed to produce another question.

Rather than becoming discouraged, she became more determined.

*Knowledge was no longer simply information.
It had become preparation.*

From Confusion to Purpose

As her understanding of legal research grew, SanMichelle realized she wanted more than scattered pieces of information.

She wanted to understand how the legal system worked.

NOT JUST THE WORDS

The principles behind them.

The history.

The procedures.

The reasoning.

While incarcerated, she enrolled in a paralegal correspondence course.

She studied legal writing. Court procedure. Research methodology. The structure of the American legal system.

Each completed lesson strengthened her confidence.

The correspondence course became the bridge between confusion and clarity.

What had begun as a search for answers slowly became preparation for a purpose she had not yet fully recognized.

One Question. One Warning. One Decision.

One afternoon, while conducting legal research, SanMichelle reached an obstacle.

She needed information that she could not locate.

The correctional employee supervising the law library did not know the answer.

Another incarcerated woman did.

Quietly, SanMichelle asked a simple question.

The response came immediately.

She was warned that communication with another incarcerated individual was prohibited and that she could lose her law library privileges if it happened again.

To someone else, it might have sounded like a routine warning.

To SanMichelle, it sounded like the possible loss of the one place where hope still lived.

Without the law library... there would be no legal research.

Without legal research... there would be no opportunity to continue pursuing answers.

For the first time since entering prison, she found herself confronting a different kind of decision.

*Remain silent...
Or stand up for herself.*

When Fear Lost Its Voice

That evening, SanMichelle wrestled with the decision.

She understood the risks.

She had witnessed women transferred to more difficult housing assignments.

Others received undesirable work details.

Many chose silence simply because challenging authority often carried consequences.

She understood why.

But she also understood something equally important.

Silence had never corrected injustice.

If she accepted losing access to the law library, she would surrender the very tool she believed could help change the direction of her life.

Fear asked her to remain quiet.

Purpose asked her to stand.

She chose purpose.

WHEN COURAGE BECAME ADVOCACY

SanMichelle's first legal victory began when she chose to protect her access to knowledge and discovered that her voice mattered.

“Move forward even if you are afraid. What is the worst that can happen?”

— SANMICHELLE JONES

Carry It Forward™

Her First Legal Victory

SanMichelle filed a formal grievance citing her First Amendment right to free speech.

She had no guarantee it would succeed.

No assurance anyone would listen.

Only the conviction that doing nothing guaranteed nothing would change.

Then something remarkable happened.

The grievance was resolved in her favor.

Looking back, SanMichelle often refers to that moment as her first legal victory.

It was not won before a judge.

It was not argued in a courtroom.

It was won because she discovered that her voice mattered.

That victory transformed more than her confidence. It transformed her identity. She was no longer simply learning the law. She was learning how to advocate.

Reaching Back

Word spread quietly through the prison.

Women began approaching SanMichelle with questions.

How do I read my case?

What does this order mean?

How do I begin?

Many had little understanding of the legal system.

Some had missed filing deadlines simply because they did not know they existed.

Others had accepted defeat because no one had ever explained their options.

SanMichelle recognized herself in every question.

She began sharing what she had learned.

Not because she considered herself an attorney, but a legal coach.

She realized that knowledge changes lives only when it is shared.

She helped women understand legal research. Grievance procedures. Documentation. The importance of preserving facts. The value of asking informed questions.

Years later, after her release, those lessons would continue. Today, she has assisted more than 100 incarcerated and formerly incarcerated individuals by coaching them on how to obtain knowledge of legal documents, research their cases, preserve issues for review, and navigate legal processes through education rather than fear.



SanMichelle Jones

Founding Legacy Sheroe™



The Philosophy That Never Left Her

When asked what advice she gives people facing uncertainty, SanMichelle rarely speaks about success first.

She speaks about courage.

Then she quietly smiles and says:

Those words became more than encouragement.

They became the philosophy that carried her from a prison law library to entrepreneurship, leadership, advocacy, and a future devoted to justice.

She had entered the law library searching for answers.

She left having discovered something much greater.

Her voice.

LEGACY MOMENT

“

We do not define women by the hardest chapter of their lives. We celebrate the chapters they choose to write next.

To Be Continued...

FOUNDING LEGACY SHEROE™ FEATURE

WHEN PROMISES AWAKEN PURPOSE

Continued

THE CHAPTERS SHE CHOSE TO WRITE NEXT

“Freedom was never the destination. It was the beginning.”

Walking Into Tomorrow

When the prison gates finally opened, SanMichelle Jones walked into a world that looked familiar—but felt entirely different.

Many people imagine release as the finish line.

For SanMichelle, it was the starting line.

She understood that freedom alone would not create the future she envisioned.

Preparation would.

Long before her release, she had already decided how she intended to rebuild her life. Every hour she had spent studying. Every page she had read. Every promise she had whispered to herself. Every grievance she had filed. Every lesson she had learned.

All of it had become preparation for the woman she intended to become.

She had left prison carrying something far more valuable than belongings. She carried purpose—and purpose led her forward.

FREEDOM AS A STARTING LINE

Release was not the end of SanMichelle's story; it was the beginning of the promises she had already prepared herself to fulfill.

“I didn’t simply build a transportation company. I built proof that my future was greater than my past.”

— SANMICHELLE JONES

Carry It Forward™

Building Opportunity

SanMichelle knew the reality awaiting many formerly incarcerated individuals.

Employment opportunities would be limited. Professional doors might remain closed. Some people would always judge her by one chapter of her life.

Rather than allowing those realities to define her future, she asked herself a different question.



Where can I build opportunity instead of waiting for someone else to give it to me?

The answer became the transportation industry.

She pursued her Commercial Driver's License with the same discipline she had devoted to legal research. She studied. She prepared. She practiced. She passed the examinations.

Then she entered an industry where determination, professionalism, and perseverance could create opportunities that others believed no longer existed.

Every mile she drove represented another promise fulfilled.

Seven Bits. One Vision.

Entrepreneurship had always been part of SanMichelle's identity. She simply needed a new chapter in which to express it.

That chapter became 7 Bits Logistics.

The name reflects far more than a business. It reflects a guiding philosophy. SanMichelle believes sustainable businesses should never depend upon a single source of income. She envisioned an organization built upon multiple areas of expertise working together with precision, planning, and coordination.

BUILT ON MULTIPLE AREAS OF EXPERTISE

Legal Coaching

Transportation

Compliance

Dispatch

Business Development

Today, her legal coaching clients continue to grow, along with the transportation company, as she demonstrates that entrepreneurship can be a powerful vehicle for rebuilding lives.

KNOWLEDGE CARRIED FORWARD

What SanMichelle learned in the law library became part of her service, her advocacy, and her commitment to help others ask informed questions.

“Success means very little if your journey doesn’t help someone else find theirs.”

— SANMICHELLE JONES

Carry It Forward™

Knowledge Learned for a Time Such as This

Although her business continued to grow, SanMichelle never forgot the women who remained behind prison walls.

Emails continued arriving. Letters followed. Questions never stopped.

Where do I begin?

How do I understand my case?

How do I protect my rights?

How do I preserve important issues for review?

She answered as many as she could.

Not because she believed she had all the answers. Because she remembered what it felt like to search for them.

Today, SanMichelle has coached and assisted more than 100 incarcerated and formerly incarcerated individuals with legal research, grievance writing, prison documentation, and post-conviction advocacy.

She encourages people to educate themselves, preserve the truth through documentation, and pursue lawful avenues for change.

Knowledge, she believes, becomes most powerful when it is shared.

Purpose Beyond the Road

Many people know SanMichelle as a transportation professional. Others know her as a legal advocate. Some know her as an entrepreneur.

Those who know her best understand that all of those roles are connected by a single purpose.

Helping people believe that tomorrow can be different.

She continues expanding 7 Bits Logistics. She continues mentoring others. She continues writing her forthcoming book. She continues preparing for law school.

Every new goal grows from the same promise she made years earlier inside a prison law library.

- 01 **Never stop learning.**
- 02 **Never stop building.**
- 03 **Never stop helping others move forward.**

Her Greatest Legacy

Near the end of our conversation, I asked SanMichelle a question she had never been asked before.

“When your life's work is complete, what do you hope people remember about you?”

She paused. Smiled quietly. Then answered with remarkable simplicity.

“I hope my success in business motivates others to believe they can succeed, and that, as an attorney, I help ensure justice is served equally for everyone.”

She never mentioned the sentence she served. She never mentioned the hardships she endured. She never mentioned obstacles.

She spoke only about the lives she hoped to improve.

Perhaps that is the truest measure of legacy.

***Not what happened to us.
But what we chose to do afterward.***

LEGACY MOMENT



**Legacy is not measured by where you
begin. It is measured by the lives you
inspire along the way.**



A final look at SanMichelle Jones anchors the legacy reflection: one chapter may shape a life, but it does not define the ending.

***“One Chapter Is Only One Part of the Book of Life.”
“The chapters you write next become your legacy.”***

— WOMEN WOKE WITHIN
Carry It Forward™

One Chapter

When people first meet SanMichelle Jones, they often see the entrepreneur. The transportation professional. The mentor. The future attorney.

Few immediately recognize the years of quiet preparation that made those achievements possible.

Yet perhaps that is exactly the lesson her story was meant to teach.

Transformation rarely happens all at once. It happens through thousands of ordinary decisions made with extraordinary consistency.

One book.

One lesson.

One promise.

One act of courage.

One step forward.

At a time.

Her journey reminds us that difficult chapters may interrupt our plans... but they never possess the authority to write our ending.

As our conversation drew to a close, SanMichelle left readers with one final thought — the same courageous invitation that had carried her forward. It is the philosophy by which she rebuilt her life. It is the invitation she now extends to every woman who believes her story may already have been written.

Because...

“Until we meet again... I believe in your next chapter.”

— SANMICHELLE JONES

Carry It Forward™

BUSINESS OF FREEDOM™

Where Purpose Becomes Enterprise

How One Woman Turned a Pandemic into Purpose

By Constant Lovelace

When I walked out of prison in 2020, the world shut down.

I had just turned forty years old.

I carried a felony conviction.

Businesses were closing. People were losing jobs. The country was facing a pandemic unlike anything most of us had ever experienced.

Like so many others, I found myself asking one question:

“What do I do now?”

I was blessed to have a family that welcomed me home, but I also understood that their generosity could only carry me so far. If I wanted to build a different future, I had to begin building it myself.

Fortunately, I had not spent my years of incarceration waiting for life to happen.

I had spent them preparing.

Investing in My Mind

During my ten years at the Central Mississippi Correctional Facility, I made a decision that changed my future.

I would invest in my mind.

I studied everything I could about entrepreneurship. I learned how to establish a business, obtain an Employer Identification Number (EIN), build business credit, register a company, purchase a domain name, and develop a business plan.

I believed that if I ever regained my freedom, I wanted to be prepared—not just to find a job, but to create one.

What I didn't know was that the world I would return to would look completely different.

Thinking Outside the Box

As I sat in my family's home watching the news and wondering what my next step should be, I overheard one of my older relatives talking about how difficult it had become to get groceries, bottled water, and everyday necessities.

Because of underlying health concerns, they were afraid to leave the house, even with a mask.

At that moment, something I had read while incarcerated came rushing back to me:

“Sometimes you must think outside the box.”

I smiled to myself.

I had just been released from one box. I refused to spend the rest of my life trapped inside another.

Using one of the simplest cell phones you could imagine, I began researching how people were obtaining essential items during the nationwide shutdown.

The answer was delivery services.

Suddenly, everything I had been preparing for began falling into place.

Preparation Meets Opportunity

Before signing up as an independent contractor with a national delivery platform, I worked through my plan one step at a time.

I obtained my driver's license.

I reviewed my credit.

I secured my Employer Identification Number.

I registered my business.

I purchased my domain name.

I obtained my local business license.

I completed a two-year business plan.

Then I created a list of every senior citizen I knew—and every senior my family knew—along with the items they were struggling to obtain during the pandemic.

Finally, I stocked my vehicle with gloves, masks, and the supplies I needed to safely serve my community.

When I applied to a national delivery platform, I was accepted immediately.

I was ready.

One Customer Became Many

A family member became my very first customer.

Soon, neighbors began calling. Then their friends. Then referrals multiplied.

Within six months, demand had grown beyond what I could manage alone.

Rather than turning away opportunities, I decided to create opportunities for others. I hired women who, like me, had recently been released and were looking for a chance to rebuild their lives.

What had started as a simple delivery service quickly became something much bigger.

It became a business.

It became employment.

It became hope.

More Than Deliveries

Today, I am proud to say that I have purchased my first home, expanded my company, invested in delivery vans, and created work opportunities for other independent delivery operators.

Many of the senior citizens who trusted me during the uncertainty of the pandemic remain loyal customers today. They continue recommending my services to friends, neighbors, and family members.

Their confidence in me reminds me that trust is earned one delivery at a time.

The Business of Freedom

People often ask me what prison taught me.

My answer surprises them.

It taught me the importance of investing in myself. It taught me that knowledge is something no one can take from you. It taught me that preparation often happens long before opportunity arrives.

Most importantly, it taught me that freedom is not simply walking through a prison gate.

Freedom is discovering the entrepreneurial power that has been inside you all along.

I can honestly say today that I don't just see success.

I can taste it.

Freedom Business Checklist™

Invest in your knowledge before you invest your money.

Obtain your driver's license and required identification.

Establish your business legally.

Develop a written business plan.

Identify a real problem people need solved.

Research existing business opportunities.

Build relationships before you need customers.

Start with excellence, even if you start small.

Remember that preparation creates opportunity.

CARRY IT FORWARD™

What skill are you investing in today that could become the business that changes your tomorrow?

WOMEN WOKE WITHIN

Where awakening becomes purpose and purpose creates change.

COMMUNITY & VOICES

COMMUNITY & VOICES

In the Spotlight: Community Impact

Your Work Matters. Let the Community See Its Impact.

Throughout our communities, businesses, nonprofits, ministries, organizations, and visionary leaders are doing meaningful work—creating opportunities, restoring hope, strengthening families, developing leaders, and helping communities move forward.

Women Woke Within created *In the Spotlight: Community Impact* to recognize and amplify purpose-driven work that deserves to be seen.

Whether an organization is empowering women, creating economic opportunity, advancing healing and restoration, strengthening families, developing future leaders, or building innovative solutions to community challenges, meaningful impact deserves meaningful recognition.

Let Us Spotlight Your Community Impact.

Organizations selected receive an editorial feature in a future issue of Women Woke Within.

THE SPOTLIGHT PROVIDES AN OPPORTUNITY TO:

- ♦ Share your mission.
- ♦ Introduce the people behind the work.
- ♦ Highlight the community you serve.
- ♦ Showcase meaningful accomplishments.
- ♦ Tell readers why the work you are building matters.

Recognition, Not Advertising

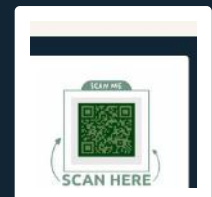
In the Spotlight: Community Impact is an editorial recognition selected by the Women Woke Within Editorial Team.

There is no charge to organizations selected for a Community Impact Spotlight.

Selections are based on demonstrated community impact, alignment with Women Woke Within values, and the strength of the story behind the work.

Know an Organization Making a Difference?

Nominate a business, nonprofit, ministry, organization, or community leader for a future Community Impact Spotlight. Scan the code below and visit our website to learn more.



Where awakening becomes purpose and purpose creates change.

Sheroes We Are Watching



Bridgette Simpson

Executive Director & Co-Founder, Barred Business

ORGANIZER • ACTIVIST • ADVOCATE • ENTREPRENEUR • CERTIFIED LIFE COACH

Turning lived experience into liberation, equity, and collective power

Barred Business • <https://barredbusiness.org>

Bridgette Simpson, is an organizer, activist, advocate, Executive Director and Co-Founder of Barred Business, 2025 Robertwood Johnson Foundation Black Women ED Fellow, 2025 Galaxy Gives Fellow, 2024 Canary Impact recipient, 2023 Soros Fellow (educate the public and create The Protected Class Network, seeking to make justice-impacted people a protected class), member of City of Atlanta's Human Relations Commission, entrepreneur, and certified life coach, drawing from her experiences as a formerly incarcerated survivor to inspire change. In Atlanta, Bridgette founded the S.T.A.B.L.E. program, a groundbreaking re-entry initiative for women, and successfully spearheaded the Google Career Skills for the justice-impacted program. As Barred Business' lead organizer, she played a pivotal role in the Protected campaign that helped classify formerly incarcerated people as a legally protected class in Atlanta. This initiative is now on the path to nationalization. Bridgette's reach extends far beyond her local community as she tirelessly works to build local and national coalitions advocating for the rights of justice-impacted individuals. Guided by a profound belief in liberation, equity, and the collective power of those impacted by the justice system, Bridgette consistently advances her mission of reform.

LEGACY MOMENT

Bridgette's work reminds us that awakening is not only personal—it is collective. When one woman rises with purpose, she can help clear the path for many others to rise with power.

WORDS OF WISDOM



Family On the Outside

Letting Go To Get Through

By Jean Mobley | At Large Contributor



Jean Mobley

When I got the news that my grandson had been arrested for the first time, my heart sank. I didn't sleep well that night. I may have gotten 3 hours of sleep. The next few days, I could not concentrate on anything, so I just sat and worried.

He contacted me and asked me to bail him out of jail. Reluctantly, I found out that once he was bailed out of that jail, another was waiting to pick him up and take him to the second jail. He begged me to bail him out of that jail, which I did. Same incident, another jail waiting. I had started this process and decided to continue until he was out of jail. All the while, I felt that I was enabling him.

A few months later, he was sentenced to 10 years. My heart sank. All I could think of was that I may never see him again. I was 67 years old, living in NC, and he was in GA. He insisted he was not going to serve that much time in jail and that he did not do what the courts said. For about 5 years prior, I told my grandson he needed to leave GA because that state, along with Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana, was not a favorable state to young black men or women.

So, for the next 4 years, I put money on his books and phone cards. We also conversed through email. Those were some of the darkest times of my life. I feared for his life every day. I couldn't sleep or eat normally over those years. I dreaded each time he called me because I did not want to talk to him while he was in jail, and I told him just that.

He was finally released from prison. My conversation with him was that if you go back to jail, I will not support you in any way, no money and no conversations. Well, less than a year later, he was back in jail. I kept my word, and asked him to stop calling me because of the old adage, "out of sight, out of mind". I felt like that was the best thing I could do for him at this point. Once I cut him off, I felt free of my sadness.

He is out again and calls me regularly to talk. I haven't seen him in person since 2016, and that's ok. He keeps insisting he is coming to visit. I told him that as long as he is safe and has changed his ways, I am good.

The only thing that got me through it all was prayer. I don't get on my knees often, but I did the whole time he was incarcerated. Let's pray that our loved ones learn from their experience in the penal system. I know that I have.

For every family loving from the outside in; sometimes peace begins when love learns to let go.

STORIES UNPACKED™

Through the Eyes of Victoria Vance

STORY CONTENT ANALYST

More Than a Story About Prison

At first glance, SanMichelle Jones' journey may appear to be the story of an intelligent woman who refused to let incarceration determine the rest of her life.

That observation is true.

But after reading her story carefully, I believe something far more profound was taking place.

This is not primarily a story about incarceration.

It is a story about authorship.

Throughout the feature, SanMichelle quietly refuses to allow circumstances to become the author of her future. Rather than surrendering to defeat, she reclaims the pen and continues writing her life forward.

That decision becomes the defining theme of her journey.

Intelligence Was Her Foundation...

NOT HER DESTINATION

One of the first qualities readers notice is SanMichelle's intelligence.

She possesses an analytical mind, a natural curiosity, and a disciplined approach to learning. Yet intelligence alone does not explain her transformation.

Many intelligent people remain trapped by difficult circumstances.

What distinguishes SanMichelle is that she paired knowledge with action.

When she encountered unanswered legal questions, she did not stop with frustration.

She began studying.

When she recognized gaps in her understanding, she enrolled in a paralegal correspondence course.

When she encountered barriers, she documented them.

Knowledge became preparation. Preparation became confidence. Confidence became purpose.

Family Built the Foundation

Another quiet theme woven throughout her story is the influence of family.

Long before prison, SanMichelle learned discipline, responsibility, education, and perseverance from parents who believed that hard work opened doors.

Those values became the invisible foundation beneath every later decision.

Although incarceration interrupted her life, it did not erase the principles that had already been planted within her.

In many ways, the woman readers meet in these pages was being prepared long before she ever entered a prison.

The Law Library Was Never About Law

The prison law library appears repeatedly throughout the story.

Yet I believe the law library represents something much larger.

It became the place where SanMichelle stopped waiting for someone else to explain her life.

Instead, she accepted responsibility for understanding it herself.

The law library symbolizes personal ownership.

It is the place where confusion became clarity. Fear became courage. Knowledge became freedom.

Entrepreneurship Was the Outcome

Many readers may assume this is ultimately a business success story.

I believe entrepreneurship was never the destination.

It was the evidence.

The transportation company, legal coaching, mentoring, and future plans to attend law school all emerged from something much deeper: they grew from a woman who had already decided her future would no longer be defined by her past.

Business became one expression of that decision.

Not the decision itself.

What We Can Learn

SanMichelle's story reminds us that transformation rarely happens through one extraordinary moment.

It happens through ordinary decisions repeated with extraordinary consistency.

One lesson. One promise. One question. One act of courage. One page studied. One voice discovered.

Eventually, those small decisions can lead to a completely different life.

Victoria's Reflection

After reading this feature, I do not see a woman who simply survived incarceration.

I see a woman who transformed adversity into preparation, preparation into purpose, and purpose into service.

That may be the greatest lesson hidden within these pages.

Our circumstances may interrupt our story.

They never possess the authority to finish it.

STORY CONTENT ANALYSIS™

Primary Theme: Reclaiming authorship of one's life

UNDERLYING THEMES

- Purpose through preparation
- Family as a foundation
- Knowledge as freedom
- Courage through action
- Entrepreneurship as evidence of transformation
- Legacy through service

CARRY IT FORWARD™

“As you reflect on SanMichelle's journey, ask yourself: what chapter of your life have you allowed circumstances to write? And more importantly... what chapter are you ready to begin writing yourself?”



d'Shift Television Network — The Full Story

d'Shift Network is rebranding its streaming television network platform. In the coming weeks, our programming will serve as a strategic storytelling platform for **“Shifting the Perspective”** across a range of meaningful topics. When you become a Women Woke Within subscriber, you will automatically receive updates on new show programming as story-led content continues to expand across the platform.



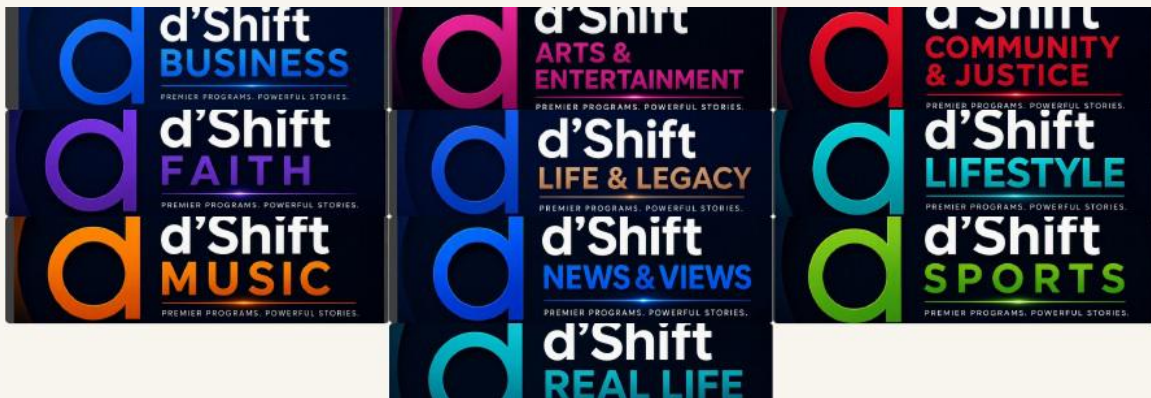
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Your Work Matters. Let the Community See Its Impact.

Digital Directory: A curated online space connecting purpose-led women-owned businesses with a community ready to discover, support, and celebrate them.

Welcome to the Women Woke Within Business Directory—a curated space that honors, uplifts, and connects women-owned businesses with a community that believes in purpose-driven impact. Rooted in transformation and legacy, this directory celebrates women entrepreneurs, including those who have rebuilt their lives through leadership, business ownership, and service.

Apply to Be Listed

If you own a woman-owned business, we invite you to complete a brief application. Once submitted, our team will review your information and follow up with next steps.

[APPLY TO BE LISTED](#)

Explore the Directory

Looking to shop, collaborate, or discover a new favorite brand? Browse the directory and support businesses built with vision, resilience, and purpose.

[EXPLORE THE DIRECTORY](#)

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Where Awakening becomes purpose and purpose creates change.

To our advertisers, sponsors, Legacy Alliance Partners, and growing Women Woke Within community: you are part of the heartbeat behind this awakening. Your continued support helps us create space for powerful stories, purposeful visibility, and transformational legacy work. With sincere gratitude, this acknowledgment is our way of honoring the people and partners who make this issue possible.

Carry It Forward™

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**Women Woke Within
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See Page 57

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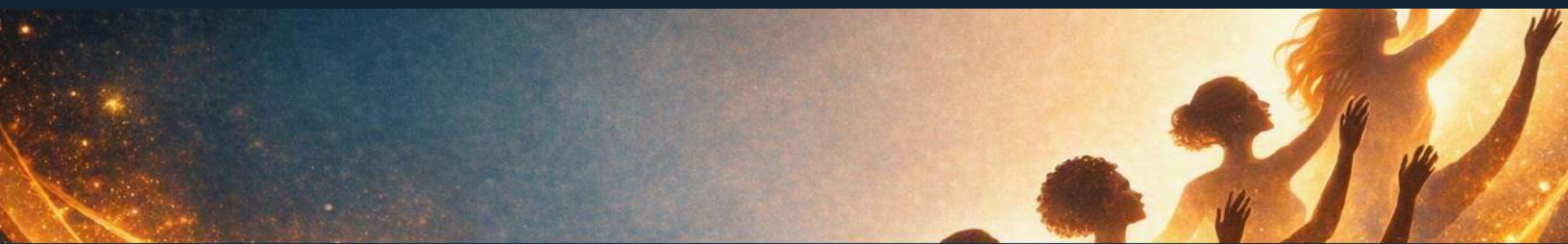
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Women Excelling Together (W.E.T.)

By Dr. Annalaa d' Diors

“We envision formerly incarcerated women, united as Women Excelling Together, building thriving businesses, supporting one another, and creating a culture of wholeness, wellness, empowerment, and lasting success within their communities.”

There is a familiar narrative that women do not support one another—that competition, jealousy, and division somehow define our relationships. Too often, that narrative is aimed especially at women of color. Women Woke Within rejects that story. We believe women can rise, lead, build, and excel—not as islands unto ourselves, but together.

The evidence of women's economic power is already compelling. Despite persistent disparities in access to capital, women-owned businesses in the United States generate more than \$2.8 trillion in revenue and represent more than 40 percent of businesses nationwide. These numbers reflect more than growth; they demonstrate resilience, innovation, and the extraordinary impact women create even when resources are not distributed equally.

Research has also shown the strength of investing in women. A Boston Consulting Group study found that startups founded or co-founded by women generated 10 percent more cumulative revenue over a five-year period than male-founded startups. Female-founded companies also produced substantially more revenue for every dollar invested—78 cents compared with 31 cents for male-founded companies.

And yet, women have achieved this progress while receiving only a small share of venture capital funding. That reality makes one truth especially clear: when women intentionally support women, we are not simply encouraging one another—we are helping create stronger businesses, stronger communities, and greater opportunities for the women who will come after us.

That is one reason Women Woke Within created a digital business directory dedicated to women-owned businesses: to make it easier for women to discover, support, recommend, and patronize one another. It is also why this magazine exists—to celebrate formerly incarcerated women who have transformed difficult chapters into stories of leadership, entrepreneurship, service, and community impact.

Women Excelling Together is more than a phrase. It invites us to replace an old narrative with a new practice. Regardless of creed, color, background, or circumstance, we can choose collaboration over competition, encouragement over comparison, and connection over division.

So, let's get W.E.T. together.

Let us refuse to buy another ticket to the tired show called “Women Don't Get Along.” Instead, let us write—and live—a better story: one in which women recognize one another's gifts, open doors, share resources, make introductions, speak one another's names in rooms of opportunity, and intentionally circulate support.

We Excel Together When We:

- ♦ Support and uplift one another.
- ♦ Practice reciprocal patronage by intentionally supporting women-owned businesses.
- ♦ Share knowledge, resources, referrals, and opportunities.
- ♦ Celebrate another woman's success without diminishing our own.
- ♦ Create space at the table—and when necessary, build a bigger table.
- ♦ Carry forward a culture in which the success of one woman becomes evidence of what is possible for many.

“When women choose to rise together, support becomes strength—and strength becomes legacy.”

Carry It Forward™

SOURCES

Forbes, “Women Now Own Over 40% of U.S. Businesses: Why Entrepreneurship Is Rising,” March 17, 2026.
Boston Consulting Group, “Why Women-Owned Startups Are a Better Bet,” 2018.

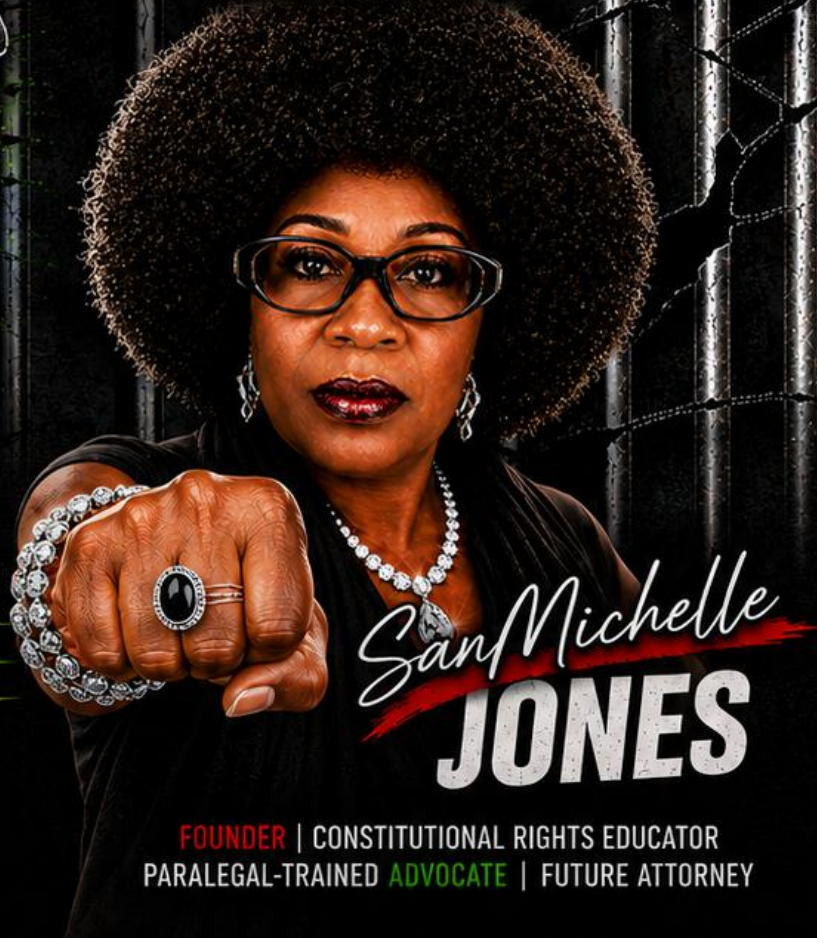


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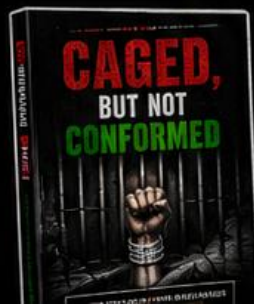
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