

# Michelle Alexander

## Quotes

*People, Men, War, Color, Opportunity, Race, Jobs, Black, Jail, Law, Meaningful, America, School, Thinking, Drug, Justice, Rights, Years, Kids, Children*

The nature of the criminal justice system has changed. It is no longer primarily concerned with the prevention and punishment of crime, but rather with the management and control of the dispossessed.

~Michelle Alexander

We have not ended racial caste in America, we have merely redesigned it.

~Michelle Alexander

Many offenders are tracked for prison at early ages, labeled as criminals in their teen years, and then shuttled from their decrepit, underfunded inner city schools to brand-new, high-tech prisons.

~Michelle Alexander

There are more African Americans under correctional control, in prison or jail, on probation or parole, than were enslaved in 1850 a decade before the civil war began.

~Michelle Alexander

The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness.

~Michelle Alexander

Nothing has contributed more to the systematic mass incarceration of people of color in the United States than the War on Drugs

~Michelle Alexander

Sociologists have frequently observed that governments use punishment primarily as a tool of social control, and thus the extent or severity of punishment is often unrelated to actual crime patterns.

~Michelle Alexander

Mass incarceration is the most pressing racial justice issue of our time.

~Michelle Alexander

Once you have been branded a criminal or felon, you are typically trapped for life.

~Michelle Alexander

The rules and reasons the political system employs to enforce status relations of any kind, including racial hierarchy, evolve and change as they are challenged.

~Michelle Alexander

My great crime wasn't refusing to represent an innocent man; my great crime was imagining that there was some path to racial justice that did not include those we view as 'guilty'.

~Michelle Alexander

What does this system seem designed to do? As I see it, it seems designed to send people right back to prison, which is what happens about 70% of the time.

~Michelle Alexander

People on probation and parole are typically denied the right to vote, and in eleven states people are denied the right to vote even after completion of their sentences.

~Michelle Alexander

One of those lies is that all we need to do is elect more Democrats. No. That actually isn't going to get us to the Promised Land.

~Michelle Alexander

Nationwide about 1 in 7 black men are temporarily or permanently disenfranchised due to felon disenfranchisement laws.

~Michelle Alexander

Prison guard unions have become the powerful political forces in some states, particularly California.

~Michelle Alexander

A massive new penal system has emerged in the past few decades - a penal system unprecedented in world history. It is a system driven almost entirely by race and class.

~Michelle Alexander

People charged with drug offenses, though, are typically poor people of color. They are routinely charged with felonies and sent to prison.

~Michelle Alexander

There can be many bars, wires that keep a person trapped. All of them don't have to have been created for the purpose of harming or caging the bird, but they still serve that function.

~Michelle Alexander

We are in a social and political context in which the norm is to punish poor folks of color rather than to educate and empower them with economic opportunity.

~Michelle Alexander

Most criminologists today will acknowledge that crime rates and incarceration rates in the United States have had relatively little to do with each other.

~Michelle Alexander

I say we haven't ended racial caste in America; we have merely redesigned it.

~Michelle Alexander

The mass criminalization of white men would disturb us to the core.

~Michelle Alexander

In my view, the critical questions in this era of mass incarceration are:

What disturbs us? What seems contrary to expectation? Who do we really care about?

~Michelle Alexander

Most people seem to assume that this dramatic surge in imprisonment was due to a corresponding surge in crime, particularly violent crime.

~Michelle Alexander

Our system of mass incarceration is better understood as a system of racial and social control than a system of crime prevention or control.

~Michelle Alexander

Nationwide, 1 in 3 black men can expect to serve time behind bars, but the rates are far higher in segregated and impoverished black communities.

~Michelle Alexander

I do believe that something akin to a racial caste system is alive and well in America.

~Michelle Alexander

Of course it would make far more sense to invest in education and job creation in poor communities of color, rather than spend billions of dollars caging them and monitoring them upon release.

~Michelle Alexander

We must muster the courage, we must find the will, we must do what is necessary to build a truly transformative movement that will end the history and cycle of caste in America.

~Michelle Alexander

Incarceration rates - especially black incarceration rates - have soared regardless of whether crime has been going up or down in any given community or the nation as a whole.

~Michelle Alexander

For many, whether they go to prison or not is far less about the choices they make and far more about what kind of cage they're born into.

~Michelle Alexander

Now that's hard for many people to believe, given that the media image of a drug dealer is a black kid standing on the street corner with his pants sagging down.

~Michelle Alexander

Our prison population quintupled in a thirty year period of time. Not doubled or tripled - quintupled. We went from a prison and jail population of about 300,000 to now more than 2 million.

~Michelle Alexander

Discrimination in public benefits is also perfectly legal. Under federal law, people convicted of drug felonies are deemed ineligible even for food stamps.

~Michelle Alexander

By waging the drug war and "getting tough" almost exclusively in the 'hood, we've managed to create a vast new racial undercaste in an astonishingly short period of time.

~Michelle Alexander

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