This list of fiction and nonfiction books, compiled by Susan Conlon of the Princeton Public Library, provides a range of perspectives on the issues raised by the POV documentary Out in the Night.

In a case that made headlines, African-American lesbians fought back against a threatening man and were charged with assault and attempted murder. Out in the Night delves below surface sensationalism to examine race, gender and sexuality in our justice system.

**ADULT NONFICTION**


Davis, Angela J. *Arbitrary Justice: The Power of the American Prosecutor.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2007. What happens when prosecutors, the most powerful officials in the criminal justice system, seek convictions instead of justice? Drawing on her dozen years of experience as a public defender, Davis demonstrates how the everyday, legal exercise of prosecutorial discretion is responsible for tremendous inequalities in criminal justice.

Law, Victoria. *Resistance Behind Bars: The Struggles of Incarcerated Women.* Oakland: PM Press, 2012. In 1974, women imprisoned at New York’s maximum-security prison at Bedford Hills staged what is known as the August Rebellion. Protesting the brutal beating of a fellow prisoner, the women fought off guards, holding seven of them hostage, and took over sections of the prison. Resistance seeks to spark further discussion and research into the lives of incarcerated women and galvanize support for their struggles.

Lorde, Audre. *Coal.* New York: W.W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1976. A rich gathering of love poems, elegies, and narratives, Lorde’s first work released by a major publisher explores the multifaceted-nature and intersectionality of identity. “Black, lesbian, mother, urban woman: none of Lorde’s selves has ever silenced the others; the counterpoint among them is often the material of her strongest poems.” writes fellow poet Marilyn Hacker.


Richie, Beth. *Arrested Justice: Black Women, Violence, and America’s Prison Nation.* New York: NYU Press, 2012. Black women in marginalized communities are uniquely at risk of battering, rape, sexual harassment, stalking and incest. Through the compelling stories of Black women who have been most affected by racism, persistent poverty, class inequality, limited access to support resources or...
Out in the Night
A film by Blair Dorosh-Walther

Institutions, Beth E. Richie shows that the threat of violence to Black women has never been more serious, demonstrating how conservative legal, social, political and economic policies have impacted activism in the US-based movement to end violence against women.

Peterson, Dana and Vanessa R. Panfil (eds). Handbook of LGBT Communities, Crime, and Justice. New York: Springer Publishing, 2014. Contemporary scholars have begun to explore non-normative sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression in a growing victimization literature, but very little research is focused on LGBTQ communities’ patterns of offending (beyond sex work) and their experiences with police, the courts, and correctional institutions. This Handbook, the first of its kind in Criminology and Criminal Justice, will break new ground by presenting a thorough treatment of all of these under-explored issues in one interdisciplinary volume that features current empirical work.

Talvi, Silja J.A. Women Behind Bars: The Crisis of Women in the U.S. Prison System. Emeryville, CA: Seal Press, 2007. More and more women are doing hard prison time all across the United States, Talvi travels across the country to weave together interviews with inmates, correctional officers, and administrators, providing readers with a glance at the impact this dramatic increase in incarceration has on our society.

Wallace, Michele. Queer Black Macho and the Myth of the Superwoman. New York: Verso Press, 1990. Originally published in 1978, this book caused a storm of controversy as Michele Wallace blasted the masculinist bias of the black politics that emerged from the sixties. She describes how women remained marginalized and the ways in which a genuine female subjectivity was blocked by the traditional myths of black womanhood. Black Macho raises issues and arguments that framed the terms of current feminist and black theory and continues to be relevant today.

Watterson, Kathryn. Women In Prison: Inside the Concrete Womb. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1996. Award-winning author, journalist, and teacher of writing at Princeton University draws on candid interviews with over 400 women inmates and prison officials. This work sheds a shocking light on our penal system as it affects women.

ADULT FICTION

Carbado, Devon W., Dwight A. McBride, and Donald Weise, eds. Black Like Us: A Century of Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual African American Fiction. Berkeley: Cleis Press, Inc., 2011. Including authors such as Langston Hughes, James Baldwin, Alice Walker, and Jacqueline Woodson, this collection offers a sweeping view of black sexuality in American literature. From the Harlem Renaissance to the Great Migration of the Depression era, from the postwar civil rights, feminist, and gay liberation movements, to the unabashedly complex sexual explorations of the present day, Black Like Us accomplishes a sweeping survey of 20th century literature.


NONFICTION FOR YOUNGER READERS


FICTION FOR YOUNGER READERS

Moskowitz, Hannah. Not Otherwise Specified. New York: Simon Pulse, 2015. Auditioning for a New York City performing arts high school could help Etta escape from her Nebraska all-girl school, where she is not gay enough for her former friends, not sick enough for her eating disorders group, and not thin enough for ballet, but it may also mean real friendships.

Woodson, Jacqueline. The House You Pass on the Way. New York: Penguin Group, 1997. When thirteen-year-old Staggerlee, the daughter of a racially mixed marriage, spends a summer with her cousin Trout, she begins to question her sexuality and catches a glimpse of her possible future self.

Woodson, Jacqueline. Visiting Day. New York: Scholastic, 2002. In Woodson’s poignant, award-winning picture book, a little girl eagerly awaits visiting day at her father’s prison. Joined by her grandmother and a community of families who take the long bus ride upstate to visit loved ones, Woodson paints a story of strong families who understand the meaning of unconditional love.