



24 min

RIPRODUCI ▶

Territorial – The Calling of the Spirits

[Busy Being Black](#)

Society & Culture

[Ascolta su Apple Podcasts ↗](#)



Content warning: This episode explores imprisonment, police brutality, homicide, sexual violence and mental illness. Please listen with care.

I believe in the abolition of prisons, and while I'm still learning about imagining and building societies that prioritise care, restorative justice, and people over profit-making, I know that we should not be locking people up in cages.

Michael Tenneson, Kevin Woodley, Dane "Zealot" Newton, Phillip "Archi" Archuleta, Gilbert "Lefty" Pacheco, Jose "8Bizz" Talamantes and Frankie Domenico are seven men imprisoned at Colorado Territorial Correctional Facility in Canon City, Colorado. They are the musicians, from completely different walks of life and serving differing sentences, who make up the band Territorial.

Their new album, TLAXIHUIQUI (Tla-She-Wiki), is the first recorded music to make it outside the forbidding walls of Colorado Territorial Correctional Facility into the free world since it was founded 150 years ago. TLAXIHUIQUI (which translates to "the calling of the spirits" in the Uto-Aztecan language of Nahuatl) takes listeners on a visceral journey through violence and heartache to catharsis and hope.

With these deeply personal songs, Territorial shines a light on the enduring human spirit in a divided country – and asks us all to consider whether or not we are prepared to heal the societies in which we so regularly put behind bars and walls those we are unprepared to properly care for.

For those who are at the start of their journey in understanding prison abolition, like myself, there are a number of places to start. There's a wonderful TedTalk by Deanna Van Buren called "What a world without prisons could look like". Ruth Wilson Gilmore, who has long served as a prison abolitionist, is the feature of a profile in the New York Times, "Is Prison Necessary? Ruth Wilson Gilmore Might Change Your Mind"; and Angela Davis' book *Are Prisons Obsolete?* is serving as a reference point and learning for my own understanding of abolition.

About Die Jim Crow Records

Die Jim Crow Records is the first record label in the United States for formerly and currently incarcerated musicians. Their mission is to provide artists with a high-quality platform for their voices to be heard. A special thank you to Royal Young for his help in making this special episode a reality.