

## **2022 Va. Festival of the Book adds Reuben Jonathan Miller as headliner for March**

February 10, 2022—Charlottesville, Va.—A program of Virginia Humanities, the **Virginia Festival of the Book** today announced that **Reuben Jonathan Miller, author of *Halfway Home: Race, Punishment, and the Afterlife of Mass Incarceration***, will be a headlining speaker in the 2022 Festival schedule, taking place March 16-20. Dr. Miller will be featured in an in-person event, **FREE to attend and open to the public:**

### ***Halfway Home: A Conversation with Reuben Jonathan Miller***

**Wednesday, March 16, 7:00 PM ET**

**Jefferson School African American Heritage Center, Charlottesville, VA**

Reuben Jonathan Miller (*Halfway Home*) will discuss his work studying mass incarceration, including life after incarceration, sharing the stories of the men, women, and communities fighting against a system that is designed for them to fail. His poignant and eye-opening call to arms reveals how laws, rules, and regulations extract a tangible cost not only from those working to rebuild their lives, but also our democracy. In conversation with **Yahusef Medina**. Book sales and signing will follow.

While in Charlottesville, Dr. Miller will also meet with community leaders for an invitation-only discussion of local, regional, and statewide work focused on incarceration and provide his input and expertise in helping share the future of related initiatives in the Commonwealth.

### **About the book:**

“Reminiscent of Bryan Stevenson’s *Just Mercy*, Miller’s well-argued book delivers a scarring account of law gone awry.”—*Kirkus Reviews*, starred review

Each year, more than half a million Americans are released from prison and join a population of twenty million people who live with a felony record.

Reuben Jonathan Miller, a chaplain at the Cook County Jail in Chicago and now a sociologist studying mass incarceration, spent years alongside prisoners, ex-prisoners, their friends, and their families to understand the lifelong burden that even a single arrest can entail. What his work revealed is a simple, if overlooked truth: life after incarceration is its own form of prison. The idea that one can serve their debt and return to life as a full-fledged member of society is one of America’s most nefarious myths. Recently released individuals are faced with jobs that are off-limits, apartments that cannot be occupied and votes that cannot be cast. *Halfway Home* shows that the American justice system was not created to rehabilitate. Parole is structured to keep classes of Americans impoverished, unstable, and disenfranchised long after they’ve paid their debt to society.

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Informed by Miller's experience as the son and brother of incarcerated men, captures the stories of the men, women, and communities fighting against a system that is designed for them to fail. It is a poignant and eye-opening call to arms that reveals how laws, rules, and regulations extract a tangible cost not only from those working to rebuild their lives, but also our democracy. As Miller searchingly explores, America must acknowledge and value the lives of its formerly imprisoned citizens.

“For incarcerated persons in the United States, release does not equal freedom. Miller’s first book is an important, harrowing ethnographic study that reads like a keenly observed memoir, which, in part, it is. His own father and brothers having been imprisoned, Miller, a chaplain at the Cook County Jail in Chicago, is candidly close to his research on mass incarceration and its after effects. This is essential reading for all who care about justice in contemporary America.”—*Library Journal*, starred review

“Striking a unique balance between memoir and sociological treatise, this bracing account makes clear just how high the deck is stacked against the formerly incarcerated.”—*Publishers Weekly*, starred review

Hi-res images are available here: <https://virginia.box.com/s/69s7rz34g83iorrz3jn2rw4bzhroahtr>

All media inquiries should be directed to Sarah Lawson at [books@virginiahumanities.org](mailto:books@virginiahumanities.org).

The full schedule of 2022 Virginia Festival of the Book events is available at [VaBook.org/schedule](https://va-book.org/schedule).

All virtual events and the majority of in-person events are free to attend and open to the public.

Festival COVID protocols for in-person events are available at [VaBook.org/policies](https://va-book.org/policies).

#### **About the Virginia Festival of the Book:**

A signature program of Virginia Humanities, the Virginia Festival of the Book brings readers and writers together for author readings, panel discussions, programs for children, and more. The 28th annual Virginia Festival of the Book will take place in Charlottesville and Albemarle County, Virginia, as well as virtually, March 16-20, 2022. To learn about Festival programming and sponsorship opportunities, visit [VaBook.org](https://va-book.org).

#### **About Virginia Humanities:**

Virginia Humanities is the state humanities council. We aim to share the stories of all Virginians—or, better yet, find ways for people to share their own stories. We want to connect Virginians with their history and culture and, in doing that, help us all get to know each other a little better. We are headquartered in Charlottesville at the University of Virginia but our work covers the Commonwealth. To learn more visit [VirginiaHumanities.org](https://virginiahumanities.org).

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