

# VoyageDenver

## ***Daily Inspiration: Meet Fury Young***



Today we'd like to introduce you to Fury Young. Them and their team share their story with us below:

First, it was a concept album.

Die Jim Crow Records began as an idea to basically make the greatest concept album of all time. In 2013, inspired by Michelle Alexander's landmark book *The New Jim Crow* and Pink Floyd's rock opera *The Wall*, artist/activist Fury Young embarked on the quixotic journey to make an epic double album about racial injustice in the U.S. prison system.

The initial idea was to work with formerly and currently incarcerated black musicians to form a collective narrative that spanned pre-prison, prison, and reentry. Though Young, who identifies as a “New York Jew,” had never been incarcerated or produced a single song before, his personal experiences with friends who had been to prison led to him pioneering the project with a ceaseless conviction.

For six years, while working full-time as a carpenter, Young pursued DJC as a passion project and had the diligence to gain access to prisons across the country for recordings. During this time, he built close relationships with several musicians and writers both in and once-in of the system.

Then, a record label.

In March 2019, after a trip down south in which Young and co-producer/engineer Dr. Israel recorded 25 new collaborators in three prisons, it became clear that Die Jim Crow was no longer an LP project but a record label. With dozens of unreleased recordings that would not fit on one album, and so many inspiring voices that demanded to be heard, Young approached the Die Jim Crow board of directors with the idea of this record label evolution. With unanimous consent, the focus of DJC shifted from concept album to record label.

In 2020 Die Jim Crow Records officially launched as the nation’s first non-profit record label for formerly and currently incarcerated musicians, with Young as Executive Director and label artist BL Shirelle as Deputy Director.

DJC’s first two full-length albums were released to critical acclaim with features in the Los Angeles Times, BBC, Pitchfork, Grammys, Washington Post, Colorado Public Radio, Westword, Philadelphia Inquirer, Oxygen, WNYC’s The Takeaway, Interview Magazine, Arte TV France, The Atlantic, SF Bay View and Passion of Weiss, among others.

Bridging the divide between incarcerated artists and artists in the free world, DJC Records works as a radical creative collective, agency for social change, and overall art powerhouse.

**Can you talk to us a bit about the challenges and lessons you've learned along the way? Looking back would you say it's been easy or smooth in retrospect?**

Getting people to see there is much more humanity, creativity, and hope than meets the eye behind a prison ID number.

**As you know, we're big fans of you and your work. For our readers who might not be as familiar what can you tell them about what you do?**

Die Jim Crow Records has released two full-length albums. BL Shirelle's ASSATA TROI is an album about owning our past pain and turning it into power. It is about family and love, addiction and triumph. A sonic exploration of Hip Hop, Rock, Blues, and R&B, with incredible lyricism coupled with complex instrumentation.

This is a timelessly iconic album for today's America.

In the words of Shirelle, "It's about the painful, yet beautiful journey from ignorance to enlightenment and the trauma you encounter trying to reach that destination. It exposes intimacies of relationships through sound. Relationships with lovers, friends, society, God and ultimately one's self." ASSATA TROI translated is, "she who struggles is a warrior."

Through her music and identity as a queer woman of color, BL Shirelle shares her youth and all the complicated life curves that led her to today, her experiences in prison, her musical journey, and her unstoppable social activism.

Our album TLAXIHUIQUI was recorded with seven incarcerated musicians at Territorial Correctional Facility in Cañon City, Colorado. Ranging from blues to hip hop to Native chant, the album is a powerful melding of diverse life experiences.

Including several lifers, Native American and Black artists, a queer Jewish man, and a white musician convicted for five counts of murder, these artists share their path from remorse to redemption.

In 150 years, this is the first recorded music to make it outside the forbidding stone walls of this prison into the free world.

In 2022, DJC Records will be releasing an array of groundbreaking albums ranging from a female rap artist named B. Alexis in South Carolina to a hip-hop collective called The Masses, among others.

**So, before we go, how can our readers or others connect or collaborate with you? How can they support you?**

You can find us on all the socials at diejimcrow or at [diejimcrow.com](https://www.diejimcrow.com). We're a non-profit and 50% of our staff are volunteers, so we very much appreciate donations and grant opportunities! You can find out more at [diejimcrow.com/donate](https://www.diejimcrow.com/donate) or email us directly at [info@diejimcrow.com](mailto:info@diejimcrow.com). Thank you!

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Other: <https://open.spotify.com/user/5mrldb8x37twmsg358h2j96da>









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