

off the fence.

Lifers: Behind Bars

2 x 60'

EPISODIC BREAKDOWN

1. Lifers

Episode 1 follows newly-convicted killers from sentencing at court through the system as they are helped to face up to years behind bars. As one officer explains, "They're gonna be here for a long time. A 17 year sentence isn't a big sentence here." Inside the general population of the prison, the film reveals the day-to-day reality for some of the five hundred men living there - who combined are serving well over four thousand years in custody. These 'lifers' speak candidly about their crimes, their struggles in prison and their remorse – or lack of it; "It's like being dead, but you are still alive", explains one Lifer. Part of the rehabilitation programme is to get these men to face up to taking someone's life; whilst some are prepared to admit their guilt – others refuse and maintain their claims of innocence. The film follows one prisoner hoping to be released after 34 years inside, spending time in more open conditions. For some prisoners, after decades of being locked up – adjusting to 2017 Britain can be the hardest part; for some, leaving is the last thing they want.

2. Violent Men

Episode two reveals the day-to-day reality for some of the five hundred men in HMP Shotts, Scotland's only prison exclusively for long-term offenders, who combined are serving well over four thousand years in custody. It explores how they live together and how the jail manages and contains so many violent men. As one prisoner says, "There's some really bad, bad people in here, really horrific crimes, you know. Horrific." Prisoners speak candidly about their offending, their struggles in prison and their remorse. Part of the rehabilitation programme is the difficult job of trying to prepare these men for life back in the community after their release, but often that is not as successful as they would like. We follow forty-one year old, James, as he is released after spending more than half his life inside for violent robberies, and 44 year old Jason whose history of assault and kidnap inside jail means he has served years on top of his original sentence.