



# The Emancipation of Cecily McMillan: An American Memoir

*Cecily McMillan*

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## **The Emancipation of Cecily McMillan: An American Memoir** Cecily McMillan

Cecily McMillan didn't come from much: she had a hardscrabble life bouncing between the members of a broken family scattered from Texas to Atlanta. Her relationship with her parents became increasingly strained, and at sixteen she was legally emancipated and taken in by a beloved teacher. She became politically active at a young age, leading walkouts against the Iraq War in high school and protesting against union busting in college. When she moved to New York for a masters degree at the New School, she found herself planning what would later become Occupy Wall Street.

On St. Patrick's Day, 2012, her life changed forever. Cecily swung by Zuccotti Park to pick up friends on her way to meet others at a nearby Irish pub—but she never made it out. The celebration was cut short by a police raid that cleared the square. In the melee, she was grabbed from behind by a police officer. Two years later she faced a Kafkaesque trial and was sentenced to three months at Rikers Island.

Inside Rikers, Cecily grew close to her fellow inmates, women with precarious lives who took her under their wings and taught her how to navigate life in prison. Through them, she remembered where she came from and who she was fighting for. And through them, she found her voice. *The Emancipation of Cecily McMillan* is an intimate, brave, bittersweet memoir of a remarkable young woman trying to make sense of her place in the world.

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