Dr. Renée M. Byrd is an activist scholar, educator, and community organizer committed to building countercarceral knowledges in pursuit of a world without prisons. Her academic research centers the intersection of race, gender, mass imprisonment, and prison abolitionist movement building. Her current book project is a critique of contemporary prison reforms that leave intact the logics of enslavement at the heart of the global prison industrial complex. Dr. Byrd is also currently working on an experimental film about transformative justice and methods for addressing violence without relying on policing and prisons.

Dr. Byrd received her PhD from the Department of Gender, Women & Sexuality Studies at the University of Washington. She is currently an Assistant Professor in the Department of Sociology at Humboldt State University. Outside of academia, Renée has worked as a legal advocate for women prisoners with Justice Now in Oakland, a family advocate for youth in the Juvenile Justice System, and on broader campaign work aimed at building genuine human security. In collaboration with the Ella Baker Center for Human Rights, Renée helped produce the human rights documentary System Failure: Violence, Abuse, and Neglect in the California Youth Authority, which is currently distributed by WitnessNYC. Central to her work is the goal of using research justice and filmmaking not just as methods, but also as tools for building community and social movements.