

Updates for March 4<sup>th</sup>

### **1 Feb - Defense moves for dismissal of first indictment**

*We really dropped the ball on this motion, which was filed over a month ago. On January 31st, Barrett Brown's defense moved to dismiss the first indictment.*

#### **MORE:**

This filing makes clear what we have known all along—that Brown's language in September 2012 is not actionable speech under the First Amendment or the statutes which the government refers to. Under closer examination, he expressly disavowed violence, while reserving the right to defend himself. Further, the government in their indictment included numerous statements by Brown that are irrelevant, prejudicial and immaterial to the charged offenses. This included a retweet of Fox News commentator Bob Beckel's threat to the life of Julian Assange, which was erroneously attributed to Barrett.

Beyond that, it's important to note that no one was ever physically harmed by Brown's politically-charged speech, the thing he is being punished for. His words were not only conditional, but they don't rise to a true threat of bodily harm.

His statements have been endlessly misconstrued, but they must be seen in the context of the FBI's own campaign of intimidation and harassment of a journalist (including their informants and various contractors). It was the DoJ itself who signed off on a plan in early 2011 to use illegal methods against journalists, supporters of WikiLeaks, and critics of the Chamber of Commerce. Brown referred to this lack of ethics on their part, and his frustration with how his rights had been violated.

When Brown proposed to investigate his investigator, his intent was only to publicize and expose what had been done to him and his family. The agents raiding his house in March 2012 were supposedly looking for evidence of "fraud", a ridiculous accusation for someone whose only income in the previous year was from his writing. They also sought records related to HBGary, Endgame Systems and Echelon2.org, inextricably tying this whole FBI investigation to Brown's journalism and work with Project PM.

His language was controversial and outlandish, to be sure, but Brown has a long history as a humorist and satirist, and as one who is prone to hyperbole. Few people have the audacity to openly challenge their oppressors as he did. And by any measure of justice he has already borne more than enough punishment: over 500 days in jail.

As we have seen, the government took full advantage of his emotions and state of mind, using it as an opportunity to invent enough charges to put a very effective dissident away forever.

Another point raised by the motion: Count Two alleges that Brown "conduct[ed] a search on the Internet for... restricted information." This is fatally flawed because we think most would agree that if it's on the Internet, then it's not restricted information—it's already public by definition. Merely using a search engine cannot amount to conspiracy or be done in furtherance of this specific charge.

We hope that the court will uphold freedom of speech. Barring that, we look forward to the day that a jury will see through the government's claims.

### **9 Feb – Casey Brezik on the Joker and Anarchy**

*We're including the latest by Casey Brezik below. A good way to start a correspondence with someone is by engaging their writing.*

**MORE:**

Though the Joker claims to not have a plan, he must. Otherwise, he'd not have any motivation to do as he does. Maybe I'm using the term plan synonymously with goal or aim, whereas he wasn't intending it that way, but I also realize from my studying Tao that nothing is ever pure, nor is it forever. So I draw that even in this archaic neatly ordered society of class, wealth and position there remains an anarchic element. One which cannot be suppressed, merely repressed and by doing so only makes things swell up until they explode demanding to be released. This "element" is the spontaneity of life and circumstances. Those things that either don't expect and hence can't predict, or we can expect yet can't predict. In a word, the "unpredictable." Those changes that are guaranteed whether expected or not and doesn't matter only that they require restructuring. They must be worked into the scheme somehow. Though they've managed to do so thus far without giving way to its natural need to be free they're only repressing the chaos slowly swelling in the skull they've placed it in waiting to explode. They're merely convincing themselves and unfortunately us in the process that everything is "under control" when it isn't. Only contained, but for how long?

Anarchy (chaos, disorder, lawlessness) is the natural counterbalance to mankind's pursuit of order, control, dominance (Archy). Currently there's an attempt to control everything, which they can't do. Though there is a good appearance of such. All it takes is for someone to find the needle in the haystack to pop the balloon swelling with tension and all their schemes are for naught. But just as everything changes, nothing is pure. I can't imagine there would be a means of doing such a thing without planning / organizing at least a little. Because although I've made a crafty metaphor about repression and anarchy and explosions, everything changes. Which means there's no guarantee the cycle will remain the same. If somehow they do manage to control everything, they could potentially set the course of history on a different track. Possibly a track where an explosion and a release are not in our future. So the question becomes whether we're content on waiting until and if the explosion happens risking that it might not come at all while we sat by and did nothing, or if we try to do something to free the chaos now, before it comes to that. I mean let's face it, the longer the tension is allowed to build (the freedom of chaos is repressed) the more violent the explosion will be. As it is, there's no guarantee we'll survive the fallout, but isn't it better on our terms than theirs? Well, to cut off the worst before it happens requires that we organize and coordinate with each other at least on some level. Even if it's just making sure everyone is on the same level psychologically or whatever. You know, assuming everyone can put things into the proper perspective (if there is such a thing). Meaning any one of us could be prepared to take the same level of action at any moment we see fit. Maybe then...

**10 Feb - After 38 Years, Time to Release Indigenous Leader Leonard Peltier**

*Amnesty International has launched a new campaign seeking freedom for Leonard Peltier.*

**MORE:**

It is time for the USA authorities to release Leonard Peltier, an Anishinabe-Lakota Native American and leading member of the American Indian Movement (AIM), who has been imprisoned for 38 years despite serious concerns about the fairness of proceedings leading to his conviction.

Leonard Peltier was arrested 38 years ago in connection with the murders of two FBI agents, Jack Coler and Ronald Williams, during a confrontation involving AIM members on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota in June 1975. While he admits to having been present during the incident, Leonard Peltier, who in 1977 was sentenced to two consecutive life sentences for the murders, has always denied killing the agents as alleged by the prosecution at his trial.

All legal appeals against Leonard Peltier's conviction have been exhausted; his most recent petition for release on parole was denied by the pardon board in 2009, and he will not be eligible for parole again until 2024, when he will be 79. Leonard Peltier is now 69 and after 38 years in prison he is in poor health.

Amnesty International recognizes the seriousness of the crime for which Leonard Peltier was convicted and has the deepest sympathy for the relatives of Jack Coler and Ronald Williams. However, having studied the case extensively over many years, Amnesty International remains seriously concerned about the fairness of

proceedings leading to his conviction, and believes that political factors at the time including in the context of tense relations between AIM and the FBI may have influenced the way in which the case was prosecuted.

Amnesty International's concerns regarding the legal case include:

- questions about evidence linking Leonard Peltier to the shootings.
- coercion of an alleged eye-witness who said she had seen Leonard Peltier shoot the two agents, but who later retracted her testimony, and who was not allowed to be called as a defence witness at Leonard Peltier's trial.
- the withholding of evidence by the prosecution at trial, including potentially key ballistics evidence, that might have assisted Leonard Peltier's defense.

Furthermore, over the years, disquiet about the case has been expressed by those involved in the legal proceedings, including:

- The US Court of Appeal for the Eighth Circuit, which, ruling against a motion for a new trial, said in 1986: "We recognize that there is some evidence in this record of improper conduct on the part of some FBI agents, but we are reluctant to impute even further improprieties on them."
- Gerald Heaney, the judge who presided over Leonard Peltier's appeal hearing in 1986, subsequently expressed his concerns about the case in a letter to Senator Daniel Inouye, Chair of the Senate Select Committee on Indian Affairs in 1991, expressing his belief that: "the FBI used improper tactics in securing Peltier's extradition from Canada [where Leonard Peltier fled following the shootings] and in otherwise investigating and trying the Peltier case." He added: "Although our Court decided that these actions were not grounds for reversal, they are, in my view, factors that merit consideration in any petition for leniency filed."

Given these ongoing unresolved concerns, that Leonard Peltier has spent 38 years in prison, and that all legal appeals against his conviction have been exhausted, Amnesty International is urging the US authorities to release Leonard Peltier from prison in the interests of justice and on humanitarian grounds.

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Leonard Peltier was a member of the American Indian Movement (AIM), an activist group involved in promoting the rights of "traditionalist" Native Americans during a period of intense conflict in the 1970s. In the two years prior to the confrontation in which the two FBI agents were killed, more than 60 Native Americans on the Pine Ridge reservation had been killed, allegedly by paramilitary squads connected to the tribal government, without anyone being brought to justice for the crimes. AIM members who had come to the reservation to assist "traditionalists" opposing the tribal government were also allegedly threatened. Relations between AIM and the FBI were also tense, with accusations that the authorities had not done enough to protect those at risk on the reservation.

The confrontation in which the two FBI agents were killed took place after the agents entered the reservation with an arrest warrant and started following a red pick-up truck. A fire-fight ensued. Evidence was presented at trial to show that the agents received multiple shots and were quickly disabled before being shot dead at point-blank range. Two other AIM leaders were initially charged with the agents' murders and were tried separately: no evidence was presented to link them to the point-blank shootings.

The jury acquitted them after hearing evidence about the atmosphere of violence and intimidation on the reservation and concluded that, arguably they might have been acting in self- defense when they were involved in the exchange of gunfire.

Following their acquittal, the FBI renewed its efforts to pursue Leonard Peltier, securing his extradition from Canada in 1976 where he had fled following the shootings. At his trial, the prosecution alleged that the rifle which killed the agents belonged to Leonard Peltier. During post-trial investigations, the defense team

discovered a telex message suggesting that the rifle in question contained a different firing pin from the one used to kill the agents; this was raised on appeal and an evidentiary hearing held at which the significance of the telex was contested by the government. On appeal, the government also argued that sufficient evidence had been presented to the jury at trial to show that Leonard Peltier had "aided and abetted" the killings even if he had not been the actual killer.

However, Amnesty International believes that the outcome may well have been different had Leonard Peltier been able to challenge the ballistics evidence linking him to the fatal shots effectively.

### **13 Feb – Miguel Balderos in need of postage stamps**

*We recently got word that Miguel Balderos is in need of postage stamps. If you are able, please help out as you can.*

#### **MORE:**

He needs postage stamps. If you have the bread to send some stamps to one of the few Black anarchist PPs/POWs, please send some:

**Miguel Balderos F81930**

**CSP Solano**

**Post Office Box 4000 14G5UP**

**Vacaville, California 95696**

### **17 Feb - Patterns of Oppression by Walter Bond**

*We're including an article Animal Liberation Front prisoner Walter Bond wrote for The Examiner.*

#### **MORE:**

Speciesism does not apply solely to human domination over non-human animals; it includes thought and actions of superiority over and among our own species, not just in the discriminatory sense, but also in the sense when we view others as superior. Now is a crucial time for every individual to become his and her own leader, develop your own unique and personal philosophy, share it, and live it. - Jeannette Louise Smith

Whenever we the human race set about oppressing another group from within or from outside our own species the justifications we use are not only similar in design, but often times exact verbatim. There is a fairly intricate pathology to how we determine the otherness of different groups. Unfortunately, it is far too complex for the scope of this slim writing. However, I would like to highlight a couple prime examples that I have come across in my years as an activist for the Liberation of Animals and the Earth, as well as my experience as a political prisoner because of that fight.

One major thing we do in order to feel comfortable oppressing a group is to infantilize them. We do this with Animals in a myriad of ways. We take a domesticated Animal and baby talk to them as if they were an 'itty bitty wittle bawby!' even though these creatures have, in certain arenas, aptitudes that are far beyond our own. Sure your dog or cat cannot read Shakespeare, but neither can you smell a footprint and tell the age of it's maker. Nor can we communicate under water from several miles away like many aquatics or see a field mouse in the grass from miles away as an eagle can.

Since Animals do not share our set of aptitudes we relegate them to the realm of 'stupid'. Take away the malevolence from this equation and you are left with infantilism. Not unlike how white slaveholders in the south used to refer to black men as 'boys' and would tell them to 'go fetch' pails of water. Not unlike how when many Americans, upon meeting someone that cannot speak English, begin talking to them in a tone that suggests they don't understand the concepts instead of the language (or perhaps we just raise our voices as if we were speaking to someone hard of hearing).

Nelson Mandela once wrote in his book Long Walk to Freedom that during his time as a political prisoner the first confrontation he faced with prison staff was with the way they forced prisoners to dress. They dressed prisoners in tight fitting, very short shorts, just like a Dutch schoolboy would wear. In the prison unit where I am

held a big spectacle is made out of giving a bunch of 40+ year old men ice cream/movie night (PG-13 only and usually 20 or so years out of date).

Infantilism paves the way for our inevitable use and abuse of others. Once we are comfortable viewing them as stupid we can then surmise that they are being put to their best use when we use them for what we deem a much higher purpose. Such as vivisection, which is the experimentation of so-called science by way of Animal dissection. The scientific community justifies the most ghastly tortures imaginable (and some simply unimaginable) to thousands and thousands of Animals annually for what amount to trivialities in medical research. Ending in results that can never be extrapolated to humans, but always ensure the animal researcher is able to justify their job for years to come via circular experiments that knowingly benefit no one.

Similarly, back in the days of black slavery in the U.S., the general consensus amongst the slaveholders was that blacks were given this wonderful opportunity (slavery) to take part in building a much higher civilization than they would ever experience in Africa. Any resisters to slavery were seen as ungrateful of this great opportunity to advance humanity, (the great opportunity of slavery). Just as many prisons now pay imprisoned industry workers up to one dollar and fifty cents a day to work industrial jobs 40 hours a week! Sure that's six times lower than minimum wage to do a difficult and dangerous job, but it's a 'great opportunity for rehabilitation'.

And the list goes on and on. We enslave Animals for our entertainment, for our food, for fashion and for our own petty enjoyments, so on and so forth. The nasty little fact that seems to be forgotten in all these patterns of oppression is that it is always very profitable or otherwise convenient to forsake or justify away the inherent right to life of others and this is the primary reason for objectification, not the projections we utilize to assuage our own guilt for taking advantage of those that cannot defend themselves.....Animal Liberation, Whatever It May Take!

## **17 Feb - New writings by Mumia Abu-Jamal**

*We're including transcripts of Mumia's latest commentaries.*

### **MORE:**

#### **February 17<sup>th</sup> - On Reconstruction**

Dear fellow students:

I thank you and your professor, Dr. Fernandez, for this brief opportunity to share some time with you, as you study what I think was a pivotal point in time for the United States:

Reconstruction.

Most of us spend little time and perhaps less thought on this period, for let's face it; it's ancient history, right?

I can hear the rolling of eyes, the sucking sounds of mouths, the closing of minds snapping shut – and the whispered thought; “what does this have to do with me? All this stuff from the 1870s and 1880s!”

But Reconstruction is more than a word historians attach to an era; it was, for the first time in American life, a real attempt to change America's trajectory from a slave nation to a truly free nation.

And that brave, noble attempt ended in failure and betrayal.

Reconstruction, formally, refers to the years 1866-1876 (other historians and authors differ on these dates). These dates are bookmarks in time, for when Congress began passing the Reconstruction Acts which became the 13th, 14th and 15th Amendments to the Constitution and supportive legislation; and the congressional-presidential deal that made Rutherford Hayes president, on the condition that the U.S. Army be removed from southern territory, exposing African – Americans to a deluge of white terrorism, most often organized by an army of the Democratic Party, known as the Ku Klux Klan.

Some will argue, in protest, that the South was defeated by the military power of the North, and while true, it doesn't tell all of the story. For, what the military wins in the field, politicians can deal away at the negotiating table.

That's what happened in the Hayes-Tilden compromise of 1876, when the Democratic candidate, Samuel Tilden seemed to land more votes than Hayes.

A congressional committee was established, and the Electoral College gave Hayes one more vote than Tilden. Hayes took the presidency and fulfilled a campaign promise to pull out the U.S. Army (actually tens of

thousands of Black troops), and Reconstruction came to a dirty, brutal end.

In the recent book, The Day Freedom Died: The Colfax Massacre, the Supreme Court and the Betrayal of Reconstruction, by Charles Lane, we see clearly how all levels of government turned their faces from African Americans, and left them to the cruel, tender mercies of their former tormentors and enslavers of the white South.

Lane writes:

Instead of a new Civil War, there had been a new compromise; a grand bargain, between the white Republicans of the North and the white Democrats of the South. The latter had traded the presidency to the former in return for control over their own states. And that meant control of their colored population –because the Supreme Court had decreed that the Negroes must look first to the states for protection against violence and fraud. They must look to the likes of Wade Hampton and Francis Nicholls. The Compromise of 1877 was less formal than the Missouri Compromise or the Compromise of 1850, but its basic logic was similar. The Union was to be preserved at the risk of the rights of four million Americans of African descent. “The Negro”, the Nation opined, “will disappear from the field of national politics. Henceforth, the nation, as a nation will have nothing more to do with him.”

Reconstruction was over (Lane 245).

Lane took the implications of what that meant further:

The South pushed on Republican fault lines until they cracked. The Confederate States of America lost the Civil War militarily and economically, but in the ways that mattered most to white Southerners-- socially, politically, and ideologically – the South itself did not. [U.S. President] Ulysses S. Grant died on July 23, 1885, having tried but failed to secure the new birth of freedom for which he had fought the Civil War. (254).

Because the U.S. government ceded the issue of states’ rights, or local power and control, for all intents and purposes, the South won the war to treat Black people as slaves in everything but the name.

When a Civil Rights bill was passed in 1875, it would take less than 10 years for the Supreme Court to strike it down.

Black people were free, according to the Constitution, but in reality, their lives were virtually indistinguishable from that of their captive ancestors.

They could not vote. They could not hold office. They could not take certain jobs and professions.

They were denied the right to travel from what used to be plantations. They were betrayed, and it would take a century to rebuild movements of the 1960s, for voting rights, for so-called ‘freedom.’

For the South had won the war politically, which they lost on the fields of Gettysburg.

### **February 20<sup>th</sup> - The Indispensable Nation**

There is not a politician in America who speaks of U.S. foreign affairs and policy without saying the words, “America is the indispensable nation” (including President Barack Obama).

Implicit within these words lies the notion that the world needs America; or even, ‘The world cannot do without the United States.’

This is not unique in world affairs.

Centuries ago, the elites of Rome supposed the same thing.

For, that’s how empires imagine they are seen.

But rarely is that how others view the empire.

As Rome was hated 2,000 years ago, so America is hated today. Not because, as former President George W. Bush once stated, “They hate us for our freedom(s).”

They hate us because of what the U.S. has done to their governments – all around the world.

They hate the leaders, generals, and propagandists supported by the U.S. that have waged wars against their own people; they hate the merciless wars that have raged across their histories.

They hate how the Americans lord it over nations of the world. Think Iraq...or Afghanistan.

Rome fell to its own invention; soldiers trained and armed by them, called the Goths. When Alaric attacked the Imperial city in 410 CE, his troops left after 6 days, for they came to loot, not to lead.

But they came, too, because Romans had humiliated the Huns for far too long.

No empire lasts forever.

One day, the Americans will learn that lesson.

### **February 21<sup>st</sup> - Black History 1**

Every year, Black History is celebrated, from coast-to-coast.

Great Black names are recalled, their exploits praised, and February, the shortest month, staggers to an end.

But what shall we say today?

A month may come and go, but for millions of young Black people, they'll know less and less, year by year.

That's because they have no idea about their history, for who will teach them?

School teachers? DJs? Preachers? Rappers? Barbers? Parents?

These questions aren't strictly rhetorical. For the answers to all of them are, "no."

About a year ago, a man came up to me, telling me of a discussion he had with a younger man.

The Younger had a question for the older: "Was Martin Luther King a rapper?"

Think about that. 'Was Martin Luther King a rapper?'

(As my mother would say, "Umph-umph-umph!")

Generations ago, leaders like the great DuBois, Paul Robeson, Malcolm X, Dr. Ben (Yosef Ben-Jochannon),

Dr. John Henrik Clarke- these learned men- were heroes of the Black World.

It's not like that now, for the waters of our culture, our music, has been polluted by the greed of the corporations – and their interest to bring harm to the Black community.

Today, ignorance is bliss.

History? 'We ain't into that!'

Woe to those who forget their history – for they know not from whence they came.

## **February 21<sup>st</sup> - Black History 2**

In our last article, I noted the dearth of knowledge about Black History, especially by the young.

For those who've lived through certain periods of Black life, they know what they know, even if only filtered through the lens of a media that is the handmaiden of white power.

A generation of so later, and these events fall down the rabbit hole of forgetfulness, and are soon gone.

It's not taught in school, so new generations grow into adulthood virtually ignorant of that past of conflict and struggle.

The original MOVE confrontation, which flared during 1977 and 1978 in Philadelphia, involving weapons fire, water cannons, wrecking cranes and vicious beatings, also resulted in the imprisonment of 9 men and women from MOVE, called the MOVE 9.

That was 36 years ago.

Jimmy Carter was president. Muhammad Ali had both lost (to Leon Spinks) and regained his heavyweight championship belt.

And the MOVE 9 were sentenced to 30-to-100 years for 3rd degree murder –exceeding every other such sentence in modern Pennsylvania history.

Most who have examined this case noted that although none of the women had weapons charges, all of them received the same sentence as the men.

But guess what? All of the men didn't receive weapons charges!

Like Eddie Africa.

Born and raised in West Philadelphia, he lived life like most young guys his age. He partied, and he got high.

But meeting MOVE changed all that. The message of MOVE entered him radicalized him and made him part of a movement greater than himself.

According to eyewitness accounts, a cop at the scene in '78 was killed by cop gunfire, but that didn't matter.

MOVE – loud, Black and strong – had to be stopped, and Judge Edwin Malmud was the mechanism used to do so.

So, Eddie Africa (still loud, Black and strong), was convicted of murder – even though never convicted of **having a gun**, and is now being refused parole despite being 6 years over his minimum.

He was 29 when he came to prison.

He's now 65.

Because he's a MOVE member, innocence is irrelevant.

(Nor is this relevant for the other 7 MOVE survivors.)

Neither he nor they are in prison because of either innocence or guilt: they are in prison because they believe in the Teachings of John Africa: they're MOVE members.

To the System: that is unforgivable.

### **February 21<sup>st</sup> - Black History 3**

In what must be the height of irony, the trial of a middle-aged man for the shooting and killing of a 17-year-old boy after hot words over so-called “thug music”, and his subsequent hung jury instead of a murder conviction, happening during Black History Month shows us that all is not well in America.

Black boys and men are held in the lowest regard in the U.S. That was so historically.

That is so now.

Partly because to the judiciary, to white America, (and far too often, to Black America as well), Black life is cheap.

Some will undoubtedly dispute this, but ponder an event where a Black adult, peeved at heavy metal played by a van-load of white teens, and rebuffed noisily and nastily when he tells the boys to turn their music down, unloads into a vehicle, killing one youth.

Is there any serious question but that he would soon be a denizen of Florida’s Death Row?

But the social fear of Black men by white men strengthened a defense that almost won an acquittal.

That is a commentary on the law, on the courts, and on society at large. It is also a dim reflection on how Black men are still perceived in America.

A truth: white men fear Black men. It may be deep and irrational, but that doesn’t make it any less real.

In fact, it makes it more so.

A century ago, during the teens of the 20th century, Blacks – men and women—just a generation out of slavery, experienced a brutal national wave of white racist mob violence.

Blacks were lynched by the thousands in what scholar/activist W.E.B DuBois called Red Summer.

This violence went on with the silent acquiescence of governments, state and federal. (In fact, in many cases, state officials assisted and cheered on these acts).

One of the triggers of the violence? White male fear and anxiety that Black men, newly freed, would seek white women as sexual partners.

That psychology of fear continues today, now shielded by the illusions of politics, law and entertainment.

A teenager mouths off to a middle aged man, and the white man doesn’t see a boy, a teenager – he sees a Black man, and fear floods his neurons.

That’s a snapshot of Black America 2014.

It ain’t pretty, but it is what it is.

### **February 28<sup>th</sup> - Dr. Anthony Monteiro: Reinstate a Great!**

Dr. Anthony Monteiro is a name known among scholars, among activists, among sociologists and among the people of Philadelphia.

A brilliant, incisive thinker and teacher, Dr. Monteiro is a scholar’s scholar. He holds a Ph.D. in sociology and an honorary doctorate from Lincoln University. His works are among the most cited in his department, the Dept. of African-American studies at Temple University.

He is well-known for his expertise in the life and scholarship of perhaps the finest Black scholar of both the 19th and 20th centuries: W.E.B. DuBois.

By any measure, Dr. Monteiro himself is a fine and admirable scholar. So why is he facing a date when he will be dismissed from Temple?

Good question.

For Dr. Monteiro himself didn’t know, other than what he read in the newspaper. Reading a local paper, he learned that the school dean, Dr. Teresa Soufas, terminated his contract because she wanted the department to “go another way.”

Dr. Monteiro doesn’t buy it. He thinks, with considerable reason that he’s been targeted for daring to demand that the dean appoint a distinguished African scholar to lead the dept., which resulted in protests leading to the seating of Dr. Molefe Kete Asante as chair.

(Dr. Asante founded the department years ago.)

Dr. Montero’s supporters (who are many), are demanding his reinstatement and grant of tenure.

He has served as associate professor since 2003 at AAS (he was previously a tenured professor in the sciences), when he was invited to join the department with promises of tenure.

He is a hard-working man, who teaches in an interdisciplinary fashion. His classes are popular, and students routinely give high evaluations.

He is loved by many of his students, and he teaches with reason, passion and precision.

He is principled, and dedicated to North Philadelphia, where he has spent most of his life.

(An aside: I've known Dr. Monteiro since I was a teenager, when he was Tony. We often argued and debated issues of the day, and although we may've disagreed more than we agreed, I never left an argument without thinking through his points. He had the ability to make you think, question and think again. Those skills were (and are!) precious tools for any teacher, for he forces one to go ~ hmmm. He is also a devoted jazz aficionado, and historian, who can tell you when and where every classical, bebop and avant-garde musician ever entered, or played in North Philadelphia!)

Join the struggle to reinstate Dr. Anthony Monteiro, by writing: Philadelphia Activists Initiative. Post Office Box 34249, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19101

### **17 Feb - Kevin Olliff's first statement from prison: Inaction, regret, and the time to act.**

*The following statement was sent by Kevin this week, after arriving at the Vandalia prison in Illinois.*

#### **MORE:**

Sometimes we think of the ones who got away.

Sometimes we think of the ones who did not.

I came across a skunk one time. "Farmers" who confine large numbers of animals often set traps to capture and kill local wildlife who come to eat the animal feed. This skunk was one of those, and now he was stuck in a tiny cage, waiting to die.

When he saw me, he started pushing back and forth against the trap door with his little head. Pushing out of frustration; pushing out of desperation; perhaps pushing out of hope. And I'm standing there watching this skunk, and I know I can free him. And everything in my heard — and in his heart — is screaming for me to set him free.

But I did not set him free, for a variety of reasons that I won't address here, reasons that seemed overwhelmingly valid in that moment.

In retrospect, reasons that, of course, were not valid. I left that skunk, terrified, pounding against a metal door, not even aware that the next day his worst nightmare would come true. My decision, my inaction, cost him his life.

I have seen more animals languishing in cages than I can remember. I am one of those who believe that emotion has no place in what we do. But for whatever reason, my memory of this skunk haunts me.

And as I sit right now, behind concrete and concertina wire, thousands of miles from my family and friends, I think of them often. But I also think often of that skunk, and all of those food, fur, and research animals trapped in hellholes more horrific than the worst prison I will ever see.

When you turn away from doing the right thing, you will always regret it. The commitment we have made is to the animals, and our responsibility in this moment is to them.

As I sit here with so much time to think and talk, it is now more clear to me that what matters in life is the time one has to do. So appreciate the time you have. Get out into the streets. Better yet, get out into the countryside. Do what you know in your heart is right. You won't regret it.

#### **March 1<sup>st</sup> - 27 Books for Kevin's 27th Birthday**

With nine more months in prison, Kevin is looking at serious unstructured free time. He wants more than anything to spend it being productive in some way, which means reading as much as he can. Kevin turns 27 on March 27<sup>th</sup>—exactly 27 days from the date of this posting. So let's send him 27 books in 27 days for his 27<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Below is a list of books Kevin would love to receive. Obviously, more than 27 are listed in order to give everyone some freedom to choose what fits their budget and what they'd like to send him. Please note that hardcover books are fine to send, and books can be sent from individuals (they do not need to come directly from Amazon or publishers). Once you've sent a book to the address below, email us so we can strike it from the list.

As always, thanks for supporting Kevin. Everything you do strengthens his resolve and strengthens the movement as a whole.

**Kevin Johnson M42382**

**Vandalia Correctional Center**  
**Post Office Box 500**  
**Vandalia, Illinois 62471**

### THE BOOK LIST

Two-Way Radios and Scanners for Dummies  
Wireless Reconnaissance in Penetration Testing  
Inside an Elusive Mind  
Wildlife Wars  
Crystalizing Public Opinion  
Confessions of an Advertising Man  
For Immediate Release: Shape Minds, Build Brands, and Deliver Results with Game-Changing Public Relations  
Land Navigation Handbook: The Sierra Club Guide to Map, Compass and GPS  
Penland Book of Glass  
Stained Glass for Dummies  
Security and Loss Prevention, 6th ed.  
Alarm Management Handbook  
Asking the Right Questions, 9th ed.  
Thinking, Fast and Slow  
How We Know What Isn't So  
Auto Repair for Dummies  
How Cars Work  
Pigeons: The Fascinating Saga of the World's Most Revered and Reviled Bird  
Red Fox: The Catlike Canine  
Confessions of an Eco-Warrior  
Handwriting Analysis: Putting It to Work for You  
Stage Makeup: The Actor's Complete Guide to Today's Techniques and Materials  
The Death of Cool  
Forensics for Dummies  
Forensic Psychology for Dummies  
Computer Forensics for Dummies  
Social Engineering: The Art of Human Hacking  
Unmasking the Social Engineer: The Human Element of Security  
Unauthorized Access  
Front Row: Anna Wintour  
Dressing the Man: Mastering the Art of Permanent Fashion  
More Than a Meal: The Turkey in History, Myth, Ritual, and Reality  
Mycelium Running: How Mushrooms Can Help Save the World  
Hope is a Thing with Feathers: A Personal Chronicle of Vanished Birds  
Red State Rebels: Tales of Grassroots Resistance in the Heartland  
The Best of 2600: A Hacker Odyssey  
Magazine subscription: 2600  
Magazine subscription: Vice  
Magazine subscription: Men's Health

### **18 Feb - Three Plowshares activists get between three and five years in US prison for nuclear break-in**

*Sister Megan Rice, an 84-year-old radical nun who broke into a nuclear weapons facility to protest the nation's nuclear arsenal, was sentenced Tuesday to 35 months in federal prison.*

#### **MORE:**

by Lisa De Bode (*Al Jazeera*)

Her two co-defendants, Michael Walli, 65, and Gregory Boertje-Obed, 58, were sentenced to 62 months on charges of interfering with national security and damaging property at the Y-12 National Security Complex in July 2012 — the facility that once provided the enriched uranium for the Hiroshima bomb.

Rice surprised many by asking the judge for more time behind bars. "Please have no leniency with me," Rice

told the judge and an audience of supporters who had traveled from across the U.S. "To remain in prison for the rest of my life would be the greatest gift you could give me."

A longer sentence would allow her "to serve the other women in prison," Paul Magno, Rice's friend and an anti-nuclear activist, told Al Jazeera.

In prison, Rice said she learned to see her fellow inmates not as perpetrators but as "victims" of a system that gave them few options.

Like Rice, Walli spends long hours talking to inmates to "instill the idea that human life is sacred," he told Al Jazeera in a December phone interview.

Rice told Al Jazeera in November, "They know that they are the human fallout and the victims of the profiteering by the elite and top leaders of the corporations that are contracted to make the nuclear weapons. It's (the money) denied to human services that should be the priority of any government."

Rice faced up to 30 years in prison. The judge said he considered Rice's age and her decades of good works and could not give her what could amount to a life sentence. He asked that Rice use her "brilliant mind" to press for change in Washington, D.C., and not use it to break laws in Tennessee.

But Magno doesn't see it that way. "Very frustrating was the fact that the prosecution and the judge worked very hard to avoid paying attention to the (nuclear) weapons factor, the cause of their activism," he said. "And unless our legal institutions will face that, peace activists will continue to take issue with it and invite the government to investigate the war industry."

The activists put up banners, splashed blood and beat hammers against the walls of the storage facility in a biblical reference to Isaiah 2:4, "They shall beat swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks."

The defense argued the trio acted in accordance with their religious beliefs and did not mean to cause any harm with their action, which follows a series of anti-nuclear protests organized by "Transform Now Plowshares," a collective of pacifist activists looking to draw attention to the nation's nuclear weapons arsenal.

In letters to Al Jazeera and a Nov. 29 interview at the detention center in Ocilla, Ga., Rice and Walli repeatedly condemned nuclear weapons as "immoral" and said they acted to bring awareness of weapons of mass destruction. They told the judge at their sentencing Tuesday that they would break into the Oak Ridge plant again.

"I feel deeply happy, truly gifted in making the choices in life as it called upon me and revealed itself to me at each stage," Rice wrote in a letter to Al Jazeera in December 2013.

But the prosecution argued the trio should be sentenced in accordance with the law regardless of what motivated the activists. In January, U.S. District Judge Amul Thapar in Knoxville ordered they pay \$52,953 in damages to the Y-12 National Security Complex at a sentencing hearing that was delayed by a snowstorm.

A wide network of supporters have worked tirelessly to support the activists and take turns visiting them in jail. Ralph Hutchison, coordinator of the Oak Ridge Environmental Peace Alliance and friend of the trio, told Al Jazeera they received hundreds of letters in jail from people voicing their admiration. He said they are doing well and are unconcerned about their prospects.

"They're not at all concerned about what the future holds. If he releases them they're fine, if they remain in prison that's fine too," he said earlier Tuesday, on his way to the courthouse. "I think they're (just) slightly impatient." Moving back-and-forth between cells in Ocilla, Ga. and Knoxville, Tenn., where trial hearings are held, interferes with their ability to receive letters in time, "if at all," Hutchison said, and continue their activism behind bars.

Around 75 supporters gathered at the courthouse in Knoxville, and the mood was positive. The feeling among those gathered is that these three were "brave and courageous" and that the judge should "thank them and let them go," Hutchison said.

But Hutchison said Rice's supporters felt disappointed with the outcome.

"Any government that would lock up Megan, Michael and Greg is desperate to hide the truth. By their actions, they have broken the silence; their sacrifice challenges each of us to speak up for a safer world," a network of supporters led by Magno and Hutchison wrote in a statement.

Despite the outpouring of support, including Japanese media which lauded her action, Rice's detention went largely unnoticed by the Catholic establishment. When a judge recommended she be jailed for at least six years last month, U.S. bishops remained silent.

"They're supposed to be leaders on something like this. There hasn't been any kind of statement from Catholic bishops on what Megan has done," retired Bishop Thomas Gumbleton, a noted peace activist, told Al Jazeera in an interview in December.

### **February 20<sup>th</sup> - What We Owe the Oak Ridge Three**

by Ralph Hutchison (*CounterPunch*)

We've heard it from the bench in Oak Ridge city courtrooms and from state judges in Clinton, Tennessee. And on February 18 we heard it from a federal judge—there are two variations. The first: There are plenty of ways for you to protest and deliver your message without breaking the law. The second: If you people would just put this time and energy into working for the change you want in the political system, you might get the change you seek.

Both sentiments are either disingenuous or naïve.

#### *I. There are plenty of ways for you to protest and deliver your message without breaking the law.*

As one who has spent hundreds of hours in nonviolent protests outside the gates of the Y12 nuclear weapons complex in Oak Ridge, Tennessee, where workers are, right now, making thermonuclear cores for W76 warheads, the judges who lecture us—and who have never so far as I know troubled themselves to protest in any way at all from the security of the bench—have no clue. Sure, you can go to Y12 and protest all day long to the wind. It's the preferred option of everyone who wants to maintain the status quo, second only to "Why don't you shut up and leave us alone to do our dirty business."

There is no sign at all that it is effective. We don't do it because we think President Obama will drive by one Sunday evening and notice us and say, "Wait a minute! Didn't I say something in a speech in 2009 about how we are committed to a world without nuclear weapons? Then why am I spending nineteen billion dollars on a new bomb plant? And we promised the world in 1968 that we would disarm? Gosh, these protesters are right!"

Not gonna happen, judge, and I suspect you know that. But we do those legal protests anyway.

We do it because it is important not to be silent whether anyone is listening or not. We do it because a commitment to nonviolent social change includes being present to say "No" when the government is preparing for crimes against humanity and crimes against creation. There is an old story activists tell of an old man who day after day goes out to the sidewalk with a protest sign to hold a lonely vigil. One day a young man stops. "Man, I've seen you out here for months. What in the world are you doing? You're never going to change the government this way." The old man smiles. "I'm not out here to change them. I'm out here to keep them from changing me."

I go out every Sunday to stand for peace because I have two daughters to answer to and "I was too busy to do

anything,” is not an acceptable excuse.

There have been times, at demonstrations I have attended, where hundreds of people came out to protest and the media ignored it. No TV cameras, no newspapers. The next day, it was as if nothing happened. But I have also been at demonstrations where people got arrested for acts of nonviolent civil disobedience. Guess what—front page of the paper. Lead story at 11:00. When the first goal is to raise awareness, to provide people with information the government would like to keep secret, media coverage is essential. And with only a few exceptions, most media require the drama of arrests before they will cover a story that includes criticisms of the region's largest economic powerhouse.

So to judges and prosecutors who say, “You can protest all you want as long as you keep it legal,” at least be honest enough with yourself and us to say, “even though—or especially though—it means no one will know you are there.”

Of course, that is one of the fundamental tenets of nonviolent direct action, a truth that was lost on the last judge who lectured us, in federal court. The judge said he was “obviously” a fan of Gandhi—but he’s like a fan that cheers for Derek Jeter but has no clue how hard it is to field a hard, low one-hop line drive just outside the baseline behind third base, turn, and deliver the ball on target to first base. The fan admires the pure beauty of it, knows it was hard as hell, knows he could never do it, but that’s as deep as the understanding goes.

Gandhi knew, and Martin Luther King, Jr. after him, that the point of nonviolent direct action is to confront injustice in a way that can not be ignored. When the powers and institutions that have a vested interest in maintaining the status quo react by punishing good people for their audacity—breaking a little law to expose a greater crime, or ignoring an unjust injunction—it is a question posed to the rest of society who, seeing good people being punished, is awakened to ask, “Wait—dogs and firehoses? On children?” or “What is going on here that these good people are going to prison?”

## II. *Channel this energy into working to change policy—make democracy work.*

The second suggestion, offered by Judge Amul Thapar from the bench in federal court in Knoxville, Tennessee, was even more tortured. He praised the defendants before him for their intellect and clarity of thought. He noted that they had legions of supporters because he had gotten hundreds of letters and thousands of signatures on a petition. “Channel this energy toward changing policy in Washington, DC,” he said, implying they could not help but be effective.

Only two problems with that, Judge. One: without the Transform Now Plowshares action, there wouldn’t be hundreds of letters and thousands of signatures. The action was the stimulus which created the response. That’s how nonviolence works—it’s a dynamic and unpredictable thing. “Extraordinary,” Gandhi said, “and then it becomes a miracle.”

Second problem: Really? Do you really think smart, articulate people have not written hundreds of letters to Congress, haven’t signed petitions, haven’t gone to the nation’s capital to press the case? I’ve met with three different Secretaries of Energy and dozens of other officials; I’ve done briefings on Capitol Hill with former Arms Control Ambassadors and the President of the Union of Concerned Scientists. I’ve served on state and federal advisory committees. I’ve spoken at scores of public hearings, written op-eds in the local newspaper, penned letters to the editor, been quoted in a dozen major national newspaper and magazines, been interviewed hundreds of times, done radio and TV for half a dozen international media outlets. And I’m here to tell you, judge, it doesn’t work that way.

Maybe you can ring up Mitch McConnell and get put through to the Senator, but I have to shame our local Senator into even sending a staff person to meet me outside—they refuse to allow more than three people to visit in their office at one time. I’ve gone to DC to meet with a Representative for an appointment and instead had a five minute meeting in the hallway with his aide who, for most of the time, found the woman down the hall behind me far more worthy of his attention. I’ve talked to dozens and dozens of Congressional staffers, most of

whom have this issue in their portfolio, and the level of ignorance is stunning. I don't blame them—they have a million things to keep track of. But when I take a Department of Energy document to them, open it and show them where it says the new bomb plant will cost 2,400 jobs, and they insist on denying it—well, it doesn't encourage me to put a lot of faith in your way.

I tell you what might work, though, Judge. If you called up the prosecutor and said, "Let's look into this business about the Nonproliferation Treaty and the Supremacy Clause of the Constitution. It might be nothing, but we did take an oath to uphold the Constitution, and these people are intelligent. And Ramsey Clark says there's something to it."

Or, another thing I am pretty sure would work, because I've studied a little on how things get done in Washington: How about if we just give some major campaign donations to our Senators—it would only take half a million dollars, I bet, to outbid Babcock & Wilcox, Lockheed Martin and Bechtel. Then my eight page letter to Lamar Alexander would probably warrant more than a form letter with a paragraph inserted about nuclear energy (though I wrote about nuclear weapons) and a machine signature. I'd go in the "first name file." They have those, you know. One summer, I helped a friend who was interning file the first name file letters for a Congressman from South Carolina. That's how democracy works, Judge, in case you don't know. The chance of Michael Walli getting an appointment with a Senator or Representative are zero or less (those DC people don't actually have a real one of either, you know).

What I'm equally sure won't work is 16,000 signatures on a petition. The White House requires 100,000 signatures before it will take a petition seriously enough to read it. Nuclear weapons are not a hot enough issue to inspire that many signatures—partly because they are so horrific people don't want to think about them and partly because they sound so technical people don't think they can do anything about them and partly because some people are afraid to say they might not be safe without them, but mostly because the fix is in—the money fix, the fear fix, and the politics fix. There is no conversation (without something like a Transform Now Plowshares action to create one) about nuclear weapons these days. About our nuclear weapons, I mean. Lots of talk about Iran's.

Don't take my word for it. Set aside this case you drew and ask yourself: how many times in the last year, two years, decade, have you given any serious thought or any thought at all to US nuclear weapons production? How many times have you wondered how many warheads and bombs we have? How many times has the nuclear nonproliferation treaty crossed your mind? Even when you heard a news story about North Korea or Iran's nuclear ambitions, how many times have you questioned our own nuclear practices? See what I mean?

Martin Luther King, Jr. said nonviolent direct action seeks to create a kind of crisis in a community, to make a space for a creative tension that challenges the status quo or even makes it untenable, and opens a space for a new reality. That's the point, Your Honors. The discomfort you feel, looking at these people in front of you who are among the best and brightest in your community, having to sentence them or fine them as though they are bad people or have done something wrong—that's the tension. That's one of the reasons we are there, in front of you.

Nonviolent direct action has as its fundamental goal shaking things up. It is an honorable tradition. In this country it goes back at least to the Boston Tea Party (though if you consider property sacred you might argue about the nonviolent part of that party). It's not your normal kind of crime, not committed by your typical criminal. The law can't take that into account very well, though. Because the law loves order and the beautiful clarity that it brings. The law doesn't so much like dynamic things like nonviolence when it is loosed in the world or the courtroom.

But when things are really messed up, really—like a nation that preaches nonproliferation to others but is busy building bombs and bomb plants—and no one in power wants to do anything about it, and most people in power actually have disincentives to do anything about it—what is a responsible citizen to do? If the mess up is obvious enough, and distant enough, and done by someone else—trains full of Jews heading for Dachau, for instance—we know what a responsible citizen is to do, and judges and prosecutors, too. We wrote the

Nuremberg Code, we the US. But God help the citizen in the United States who sees a terrible wrong being done by the government and tries to raise the alarm.

Some years ago, in the aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Union, when the country of Belarus voluntarily relinquished the nuclear weapons that ended up on its sovereign soil, the President of the United States, Bill Clinton, praised them and welcomed them into the community of nations. I remember thinking, “Really? That’s the entry card into the community of nations—renouncing nuclear weapons? So what is Clinton doing there? Is he the doorkeeper? Because if that’s the entry card, we sure aren’t in the community of nations.”

I could go on, but I think my point is clear. Nonviolent direct action is required of us because the government responds to nothing less. It is required of us because our consciences and our unborn grandchildren—and yours—insist we do all we can on behalf of the planet and the future. It is required of some because they feel a divine imperative; the God they follow requires them to beat swords to plowshares and blesses peacemakers. It doesn’t seek an end in itself—it seeks to open a conversation, to encourage jurists, prosecutors, defense attorneys, the public, to search themselves to see what they can do and what they should do.

Of course there is a price to be paid. That’s why Ramsey Clark said the main thing it took was courage—more than most of us have. But to those rare few who listen to voices; who don’t throw caution to the winds but carefully, thoughtfully, gently lay it down and then pick up a hammer; to those who find themselves surprised to be doing courageous things and go on and do them, we owe a debt of great gratitude. We may even owe them the future.

## **21 Feb - Maroon in General Population**

*Russell Maroon Shoatz released from solitary confinement – first time in general population in more than 22 years*

### **MORE:**

Russell Maroon Shoatz was released from solitary confinement into the general prison population at State Correctional Institution (SCI) Graterford this morning, ending more than 22 consecutive years in solitary confinement. The news was confirmed by Maroon during a legal call with an attorney from the Abolitionist Law Center.

Maroon’s son, Russell Shoatz III, said, “We are very excited that this day has finally come. My father being released from solitary confinement is proof of the power of people organizing against injustice, and the importance of building strong coalitions. I especially want to thank all of those who have supported the collective struggle to end my father’s solitary confinement, including my siblings and members of the Shoatz family, the Human Rights Coalition, Abolitionist Law Center, Scientific Soul Sessions, the entire legal team, UN Special Rapporteur Juan Mendez, the 5 Nobel Peace Laureates, the National Lawyers Guild, Center for Constitutional Rights, along with the dozens of other organizations and thousands of individuals who have participated in this effort.”

The move comes after Maroon, who turned 70-years-old in August 2013, was transferred to three different Pennsylvania prisons in the past nine months. It marks the first time that Shoatz has been in the general prison population in the state of Pennsylvania since 1983, when he was placed in solitary confinement due to his work with the Pennsylvania Association of Lifers to abolish life-without-parole sentences. For a 17-month period between 1989-1991, Maroon was held in the general prison population at the federal penitentiary at Leavenworth, Kansas.

Maroon brought suit in May 2013 on the grounds that he has been subjected to cruel and unusual punishment in violation of the Eighth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, and that prison officials have deprived him of his procedural and substantive due process rights for keeping him in solitary confinement without meaningful review and on insufficient grounds. He is represented by Reed Smith attorneys Rick Etter and Stefanie L. Burt; Bret Grote and Dustin McDaniel of the Abolitionist Law Center; Daniel Kovalik of the United Steelworkers; and retired Reed Smith partner, Hal Engel.

On Monday, January 27, United States District Magistrate for the Western District of Pennsylvania, Cynthia Reed Eddy, issued a decision denying defendants' motion to dismiss in the case of Shoatz v. Wetzel. The ruling allowed Russell Maroon Shoatz to move forward with the legal challenge to his more than 22 consecutive years in solitary confinement.

The campaign to release Shoatz from solitary confinement has also been gathering increasing international attention, including the support of five Nobel Peace Prize Laureates: Jose Ramos-Horta of East Timor, Mairead Corrigan Maguire of Northern Ireland, Archbishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa, Jody Williams from the United States, and Adolfo Perez Esquivel of Argentina. Several U.S. civil and human rights organizations endorsed his release from isolation, as well as growing number of clergy. In March 2013, United Nations Special Rapporteur on Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, and Degrading Treatment and Punishment, Juan Mendez, called on the government "to cease the prolonged isolation of Mr. Shoatz." (see Democracy Now! interview with Juan Mendez and Matt Meyer discussing Maroon at this link).

Abolitionist Law Center Executive Director, Bret Grote, said, "My talk with Maroon today was very moving. There are no words to adequately convey the significance of his release to the general population for him and his family. This is a significant victory for a growing people's movement against solitary confinement and the human rights violations inherent in mass incarceration. If we continue to work hard and support one another in this movement, these victories could very well become a habit."

The Abolitionist Law Center would also like to thank all our donors for your support, without which this victory would not be possible. The fight continues, both on behalf of Maroon and the many other prisoners being subjected to inhumane conditions. Please consider adding to your support by donating to our current fundraiser, so we can continue to press for justice in the Pennsylvania prison system.

### **24 Feb - New documents prove U.S. Army actively targeted leftist protesters, group says**

*New records obtained by the Defending Dissent Foundation prove that the United States Army used a multi-agency spy network to gather intelligence on nonviolent, antiwar protesters and to disseminate their findings to both the FBI and local police departments.*

#### **MORE:**

by Scott Kaufman (*Raw Story*)

Activists filed a lawsuit against Thomas Rudd and John Towery — Panagacos v. Towery — in 2007, alleging that the U.S. Army had directed operatives to infiltrate and collect information about the activist movement in the Washington area.

According to the newly released documents, the U.S. Army paid Towery, a Criminal Information and Systems Officer, to spy on the antiwar group Port Militarization Resistance (PMR), as well as the Students for a Democratic Society, the Industrial Workers of the World, and Iraq Veterans Against the War.

In an email from November 2007, Towery wrote to a number of people he had met at a Domestic Terrorism (DT) conference in Spokane, Washington that "it would be a good idea to develop a leftist/anarchist mini-group for intel sharing and distro."

Towery seemed very concerned that existence of this "mini-group" would become public knowledge. "[W]e will need to look at the third party rules and each individuals [sic] agency policy about email," he wrote, because "[e]ven open source information and files should not be distributed, because it might tip off groups that we are studying their techniques, tactics and procedures."

Larry Hildes, a National Lawyers Guild attorney who filed the Panagacos lawsuit in 2010, said that "[t]he latest revelations show how the Army not only engaged in illegal spying on political dissidents, it led the charge and tried to expand the counterintelligence network targeting leftists and anarchist."

In a 2009 sworn statement, Towery denied that the Army had any involvement in his activities. "I was concerned at the outset that what I was doing should be legal and that the Fusion Cell [of Army, FBI, and local police departments] should not get in trouble because of what I was doing," he said.

"Additionally I took steps to ensure that all of my activities would be conducted on my off-hours," he continued. "For example, I would occasionally be contacted by one of the protesters during office hours on my cell phone; but I would wait to return the call until I was on a break or at lunch."

The email obtained by the Defending Defense Foundation was sent from Towery's us.army.mil address, and was sent at 10:16 a.m.

## **25 Feb - Herman Bell Denied Parole**

*Due at least in part to an effective media campaign by the Fraternal Order of Police (FOP), our comrade Herman Bell was once again denied parole. To date, we've only seen corporate media reports on this and we've included one below. Read it critically.*

### **MORE:**

by Thomas Tracy (*The Daily News*)

The former Black Liberation Army member convicted of murdering two police officers at a Harlem housing project more than 30 years ago was denied his request for early release in a decision announced Tuesday.

"After a review of the record and interview, the panel has determined that, if released at this time, there is a reasonable probability that you would not live and remain at liberty without again violating the law," the state Parole Board wrote.

Bell, now 66, Anthony Bottom and Albert Washington ambushed police Officers Joseph Piagentini and Waverly Jones after luring them to the Colonial Park Houses (now the Rangel Houses) on W. 159th St. on a bogus 911 call back on May 21, 1971.

Jones was shot in the head and died instantly, but the three suspects took their time with Piagentini — shooting him 22 times. At one point, Bell shot the cop with the officer's own gun.

Bell was arrested about a year later. All three suspects were convicted of the two murders and sentenced to 25 years to life in 1979.

In 2009, Bell was implicated in the August 1971 murder of a police officer in San Francisco and convicted of voluntary manslaughter, officials said.

During his interview with the Parole Board, Bell put his grisly crimes into historical context, saying that he was a quarterback at a California college when the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. drew him to the Black Panthers and the Black Liberation Army.

"I'm not trying in any way justify what has happened, by no means," Bell said. "I'm young, I'm impressionable, and there's a lot that I do not understand and I'm influenced by the temper at the times, and all of those things came together and it just ... I made some terrible mistakes."

The New York City Patrolmen's Benevolent Association praised the parole board's decision.

Yet relatives of the slain cops were split on whether Bell should remain behind bars.

Piagentini's widow, Diane, demanded Bell remain incarcerated, especially since he admitted his role in the killings only last year.

"His sentence should start again upon his admission of guilt and continue on to the end of time," Piagentini said.

But Jones' son Waverly Jones Jr. felt Bell should be released.

"I'm a little disappointed (by the Parole Board's decision) but not shocked," he said. "Nothing that Bell does is going to move the Parole Board unless there is an overwhelming push by the public to free him."

"I was hoping that the Parole Board would look into it and realize that these men have indeed done their time and done everything the state sentenced them to do," he said.

Bell won't be up for parole again until February 2016. Bottom has a parole hearing in August. Washington died in prison.

## **26 Feb - Oscar López Rivera: There is no blood on my handz**

*Oscar López Rivera is the first to put two and two together about U.S. policy and recognize that the opportunity for president Barack Obama to grant him clemency may be tied to the electoral calendar of that country.*

### **MORE:**

by Mosi Ngozi

Under his current sentence, Oscar López Rivera must serve at least nine more years in prison before he is eligible for release.

In May, he will have served 33 years in federal prison, more than any other political prisoner in the history of Puerto Rico, which increases pressure from the Island and the diaspora for his release.

Talking about the clemency petition which is under consideration in the United States Department of Justice — although in theory president Obama could make a decision without waiting for that analysis — López Rivera keeps the flame of hope alive, but doesn't succumb to false hopes.

Taking into account the harsh criticism the Congress doled out to president Bill Clinton when in August of 1999 he decided to grant clemency to a dozen Puerto Rican political prisoners, including López Rivera, many think that it will be less complicated for president Obama to make a favorable decision following the November congressional elections, in which the Democrats will try to keep control of the Senate and hope to recuperate the majority in the House of Representatives.

In 1999, even the then first lady and U.S. Senate candidate for New York, Hillary Clinton, criticized her husband's decision.

López Rivera is serving a sentence of 70 years after being initially convicted of seditious conspiracy for his ties to the group Armed Forces of National Liberation (FALN), which waged a clandestine struggle for the independence of Puerto Rico and claimed responsibility for bombings in the United States.

Unless president Obama intervenes, he will have to serve at least another nine years in prison before he is eligible for release. At that time, he will be 80 years old and will have been in prison for 42 years, more than half his life.

López Rivera spoke by telephone on Wednesday with *El Nuevo Día*, after the Bureau of Prisons once again denied a request for an in-person interview at the prison in Terre Haute, Indiana. For this interview, the second this newspaper has done by telephone in eight months and the third in the past eight years, the Bureau of Prisons also wanted to prohibit the newspaper from recording the interview.

The Bureau of Prisons didn't give new reasons for denying the in-person interview, although in 2013 they said the decision was for "security" reasons.

Last June, the conversation centered in large measure on having been separated from his family for so many

years, his routine in prison, and how the discrimination and marginalization of minorities in Chicago (Illinois) raised his consciousness about the political and colonial situation of Puerto Rico.

This time, López Rivera talked about the political process that surrounds his application for clemency.

He also reexamines his personal decision to renounce armed struggle and the insistence of some sectors to try to connect him to the bombing of Fraunces Tavern, which took place on January 25, 1975, in New York, resulting in four deaths at a bar which used to be a meeting place for U.S. corporate executives.

He emphatically denies having blood on his hands.

He continues to draw and is now reading about Franz Kafka and the Vietnam war.

**Is there any sign of progress with your clemency petition?** It's hard to have a clear idea. In order for a decision to be made, certain conditions that favor the president as well as the Democratic Party need to take shape. We have to be conscious that when (Bill) Clinton made his decision in 1999, he was subject to fierce attack — 95 senators and 311 congressional representatives censured him. That has to be somewhat intimidating (for the White House), even more so given that Eric Holder (current Attorney General) participated in that process (as Deputy Attorney General).

**Did you think the decision would be made last Christmas?** No. I never fall prey to false optimism. I try to stay calm and think about what the most appropriate conditions would be. We have to remember that in 1999, Clinton had already been re-elected and had a special interest in his wife, and also that the Democratic Party was in a very strong position. That contributed a lot to his decision.

**Regardless, Hillary Clinton rejected the clemency.** I don't think she would have been elected if the attack had been directed toward her. That's how politics are.

**Do you think about whether the decision is close or far away?** The thing I emphasize most is that we need to strengthen the campaign to the maximum. That is what can have influence on politicians, who are "bean counters" who do what is convenient for themselves and their party.

**In Puerto Rico, however, there is a certain pessimism because in December they saw Obama pardon more people than he had previously pardoned.** He granted easy, acceptable pardons that aren't going to create any controversy like what Clinton faced with the clemencies he granted to fundraiser Marc Rich and to us.

**Do you see better possibilities for the clemency after the congressional elections in November or the presidential election in 2016?** Conditions will start improving after the 2014 elections, if the Clinton pattern continues. That's when it's the most favorable moment for a positive decision to be made.

**How do you avoid pessimism?** I struggle for my homeland. Strength is in struggle. I can't allow myself the luxury of falling into illusory optimism or despair. Struggles are waged out of love, and my heart is full of love for the homeland. Every day I can fill my heart with love and compassion. I don't allow hate or fear to darken my path.

**To clarify the record, there are still people who don't understand: why you didn't accept Clinton's clemency offer of 1999?** The first factor was the conditions president Clinton imposed on his offer to me, and the second was that he excluded two of my compañeros: Haydée Beltrán Torres and Carlos Alberto Torres (since released from prison). I would have to serve an additional ten years in prison, and from my own experience in these 'gulags,' I knew there was much opposition and they would have made it very difficult, if not impossible, for me to meet the conditions. They have done everything possible to try to ensure that I don't leave prison alive. I couldn't violate any prison rule, and the easiest thing for a jailer to do is to frame you. For example, when Carlos Alberto already had a date for his parole hearing, they put him in a cell where they found four knives in the area. The person who owned the knives took responsibility. Regardless, all those who were in the cell were

held responsible. They didn't absolve Carlos Alberto. He had to wait two or three months longer for his parole.

**In previous interviews, you have told me that you no longer see armed struggle as an option. Why?** The world evolves; it has changed a lot. Different things are done in a particular moment, but things aren't permanent. Puerto Rico has changed a lot, and the best example we've seen is the Vieques struggle, where no independentista committed any sort of violence, and the goal was achieved. We also have the example of many Latin American countries, like Uruguay, where the last two presidents have been men associated with the Tupamaros, which for the United States was a terrorist organization.

**You have said in one of your letters to your granddaughter that it was hard to learn about the death of Nelson Mandela.** A really painful moment. He is one of the most complete leaders the world has seen. An example of a man with a heart full of freedom and justice, a compassionate heart, with a wisdom and a practice worthy of emulating.

**To explain your case outside of the Island, you could be identified as the Puerto Rican Mandela. Do you accept the similarities?** Perhaps because we have been persecuted and because the governments use the same charge (of sedition). The best thing about him was that he never allowed hate to darken his path. He didn't negotiate until he was sure that the conditions were ripe. He treated his enemies with compassion, and his friends as true friends, as could be seen when he traveled to Cuba in 1991 to thank the Cuban people for all they had done for his cause.

**Mandela renounced armed struggle in the last stage of his imprisonment. Has prison in some way influenced you?** I think he saw changes (in his country) like I see them (in Puerto Rico). In 1983, he was offered a conditional release (such as renouncing armed struggle), which he rejected because the regime (apartheid) would continue in power without any change. When they made the offer the second time, the fascist South African Army had been defeated in Angola. Its prestige had fallen, scuttled by the Angolans and Cubans. The country was demoralized.

**Do you see this as a good moment to return to your country?** People change. You can tell with last year's activities (supporting his release), which brought together people from so many ideological, religious, generational, sexual and class differences. That is so very important. For example, doctor Miriam Ramírez de Ferrer, who condemned Clinton for his decision in 1999, but who has supported my release.

**At Mandela's funeral, president Obama said that "Mandela showed us the power of action, the importance of taking risks for our ideals." When people heard that in Puerto Rico, they questioned why he didn't release you already?** There is a great difference between what is said and what is done. Obama was (U.S.) senator (from 2005) and became president in 2008, when the State Department still had Mandela and the African National Congress on the terrorist list. The government of the United States never apologized to Mandela.

**In January, the Puerto Rican Melissa Mark Viverito was elected speaker of the New York City Council. Joseph Connor, the son of one of the victims of Fraunces Tavern, Frank Connor, immediately harshly criticized her for having supported in 2010 "my father's murderer." Is that insistence in wanting to connect you with that bombing an organized campaign against your release or just the feelings of a son who lost his father?** I have no doubt that they are the genuine feelings of a son who lost his father. But the interesting thing in all of this is that the FBI has investigated that case from top to bottom. They know well that I had nothing to do with the case. If they had the slightest evidence, they would have accused us of the bombing. I understand his pain. I believe in the sanctity of human life. For me it is something very serious. I was in Vietnam and I opposed the war exactly because wars are so awful. No one can say I have blood on my hands, absolutely no one, not the government of the United States, not this young man who lost his father. The evidence is abundant.

**López Rivera also revealed that when the bombing of Fraunces Tavern took place, he was in Puerto Rico, where he spent much of the month of January 1975.** I arrived in Puerto Rico around January 9 or 10, 1975,

for a conference of the Hispanic Commission of the Episcopal Church. The following day I was going to go to the activity to celebrate the birth of (Eugenio María de) Hostos, but I had to go pick up people at the airport, and couldn't make it to the activity. On the way came the news about the two compañeros who died (and a dozen injured, including a child) in the bombing of the plaza in Mayagüez. Nobody talks about that. The conference ended between January 26 and 27. I was in Puerto Rico during that entire time.

**You have expressed your admiration for the Nationalists who were in prison for at least a quarter century, above all Lolita Lebrón. You say that Juan Antonio Corretjer was the person who most influenced you, but you have a particular empathy for Oscar Collazo.** We did everything we could so that the Nationalists would be released. When they came out, I was in clandestinity and couldn't be near them. But when I got to prison at Leavenworth (Kansas), I began to appreciate the 29 years that Oscar Collazo was held, which is a Puerto Rican dedicating his life to a struggle which for us is just and noble. I had the opportunity to talk with him on the telephone on three occasions, for an hour or a little longer. The conversations were marvelous. He had a profound love for our Puerto Ricanness, but also for justice and freedom. The last time we talked was when don Juan Antonio Corretjer died, which for me was a really, really difficult day. He gave me advice.

**In January, two leaders of the Puerto Rican Independence Party visited you — senator María de Lourdes Santiago and secretary general Juan Dalmau.** A really good visit, very welcome. They have a lighter view of the conditions that exist today. The youth must take the reins, since they have the time and energy. They are the first of a series of visits being organized.

**How do you see the island?** Puerto Rico is living a crisis created by Wall Street and Washington. As a Puerto Rican I know we can transcend it, because it is a problem created by man, and all problems created by man can be solved.

**Has the colonial economic system hit bottom?** Definitely. Under the current structure, I don't think the problem can be solved. For there to be economic development, there must be an internal market, and as a colony, they will never permit us to have an internal market.

**Will the crisis be the detonator for a change of the status?** It gives us the opportunity to present alternatives that may be viable, but for that to happen, there must be a change within the progressive sectors. We need to transcend sectarianism and turf battles.

**In three months you will have served 33 years in prison. Did you think you would be in prison for such a long time?** I calculated that if the Nationalist heroes had been in prison between 25 and 29 years, that that's more or less how long it would be. My calculations haven't come out like I imagined.

## **26 Feb - New blog entries by Joel Bitar**

*Recently imprisoned comrade Joel Bitar has started blogging about his experiences in prison. We'll be printing them here.*

### **MORE:**

#### **January 26<sup>th</sup> - Portal into Another Dimension**

So, I'm finally through. My greatest fears have come to light. For the past four years I have been terrified of the prospect of being thrown in a cage. Bad dreams, constant anxiety, and a lurking fear in the back of my head have been my masters and it's great relief to finally begin my sentence. It was extremely empowering to politicize my case through my statement to the judge. The Canadian legal system has been trying to depoliticize the G20 cases by turning up the statistics. I feel as if I was able to resist their efforts, at least on a small level.

After my sentencing I was handcuffed and brought through the courthouse. The court officer arresting me took me to a door with a slit just for the eyes and then knocked, like a bouncer at a hip, exclusive club. We passed through a door which could well have been a membrane into another dimension. The walls suddenly became dirty, desks dilapidated and ceilings were falling apart. I was brought into a room, surrounded by three massive court officers where I stripped, squatted, spread my cheeks and coughed (humiliation and domination are the

foundation of the prison system).

The reaction to my case in the bullpen was interesting. People approached me to ask what I was in for. When I responded that I broke windows of police cars, I was treated to high-fives and even a hug. This was by far the best bullpen experience I had because I realized that – in this place – I was going to fit in. It was quite the opposite of the alienation I feel walking around the Upper East Side of Manhattan. We waited in the courthouse bullpen for about seven hours until we were brought to a paddy wagon and then transferred.

After processing I was brought to my range. On the ride over a few inmates struck a bit of fear into my heart by warning me that I might get picked on or have to fight someone. When I finally arrived in my cell, my cellmate, a forty-year-old Ukrainian father of two, showed me true kindness. He gave me extra sheets and blankets that he had collected and asked one of his friends for extra paper that I am now writing on. We spent the rest of the night discussing topics like Anarchism, the Russian revolution, the EU crisis, and the failure of the US war on drugs. It turns out he was a major student organizer for the movement for Ukrainian independence before the fall of the Soviet Union.

My first day could have been worse.

### **January 26<sup>th</sup> - Locked-in and Free as a Bird**

We are locked in today. Lock-ins are typically done randomly and arbitrarily. The justification is that the guards are understaffed. It's a nice break from the drama and tension of the range (all though my range is pretty calm and free of drama). I've been working out pretty hard since I've gotten here. I view self-care in here as a form of rebellion and resistance. This place is designed to destroy our bodies and minds via atrophy so anything you can do to stay physically and emotionally healthy is a counterattack. I've been preparing for this experience by learning bodyweight exercises, yoga, and meditation.

Since we were locked in, I invented a cardio-based routine to get the heart pumping. I literally ran in place for about an hour, mixing in jumping jacks, gate lunges, and a couple of other things. I then did 30 burpees and an ab-workout (nothing too crazy because this is a light day). I got satisfaction knowing I was more productive than all the guards in this place.

Later, before bed, I will do some yoga and meditation to relax my mind. I've also been acquiring threads from various places to floss since the jail has deemed it – floss – a banned item. Every tooth crevice I clean is a victory and every time the thread breaks, I curse under my breath.

Escapism is also a helpful tool in passing time. I've been reading magazines and watching some movies on the common TV. Yesterday, the entire range was watching "Blue Streak" where Martin Lawrence is a jewel thief who poses as a Los Angeles Police detective. A movie that makes nonstop fun of police is a pretty big deal in a place like this.

I'm expecting a visit from a wonderful friend on Tuesday so I'm excited about that. The food here at Toronto West Detention Center is excellent because there's a legitimate kitchen. I've gotten comfortable here, but I'll be moved soon. I'll definitely be writing about that experience when it happens.

### **27 Feb - Fernando González (Cuban 5) Released**

*A second member of the Cuban Five was released Thursday from a US prison after spending more than 15 years behind bars.*

#### **MORE:**

by *(The Guardian)*

The five men, who are hailed as heroes in Cuba, were convicted in 2001 in Miami on charges including conspiracy and failure to register as foreign agents in the US. They were known as part of the "Wasp Network" sent by Fidel Castro to spy in South Florida.

Fifty-year-old Fernando Gonzalez known to US authorities by his alias, Ruben Campa completed his sentence at 4am local time in a prison in Arizona, Bureau of Prisons spokesman Chris Burke said.

Gonzalez was turned over immediately to immigration officials. He will be deported to Cuba as soon as possible, said Michelle Alvarez, spokeswoman for the Miami US Attorney's Office. The timing of his departure wasn't immediately clear.

Trial testimony showed they sought to infiltrate military bases, including the headquarters of the US Southern Command and installations in the FloridaKeys. They also kept tabs on Cuban exiles opposed to the communist government in Havana and sought to place operatives inside campaigns of US politicians opposed to that government, prosecutors said.

Havana maintains that the agents posed no threat to US sovereignty and were only monitoring militant exiles to prevent terrorist attacks in Cuba, the best known of which was a series of bombings of Havana hotels that killed an Italian tourist in 1997. Cuban leaders regularly call for the men to be released.

Gonzalez was originally sentenced to 19 years but had his prison term reduced after the 11th US circuit court of appeals said he was wrongly labeled a supervisor of other spies for certain activities. Two others also had their prison sentences reduced by that same court order, including 55-year-old Antonio Guerrero, who is set for release in September 2017.

One of the five, Gerardo Hernandez, is serving a life prison sentence for murder conspiracy for his role in the 1996 killings of four "Brothers to the Rescue" pilots whose planes were shot down by Cuban fighter jets. The organization dropped pro-democracy leaflets over Cuba and assisted Cuban migrants trying to reach the US.

### **27 Feb - June 11 "Never Alone" Prisoner Support Exhibition Calling for Artists**

*If you or your comrades are both artistically talented and able to donate art, please head this call for submissions.*

#### **MORE:**

This year on June 11 – the International Day of Solidarity with Marie Mason, Eric McDavid & all Eco-prisoners – we will be running the 2nd annual Never Alone online exhibition. It will serve as an avenue not only for fundraising for these political prisoners, but as a way to reach out informatively to a broad audience on issues of earth & animal liberation and state captivity. We would love to invite you to contribute an artwork to this exhibition.

June 11 started back in 2004 as the International Day of Solidarity with Jeff 'Free' Luers, an eco-prisoner sentenced to 22+ years in prison in Oregon (U.S.) for an act of arson against 3 light trucks in an effort to highlight the threat of climate change. This threat is now widely recognised, as was the incredibly unjust sentence that Jeff received. An international campaign of support had a massive impact on the fact that Jeff's sentence was ultimately reduced to 10 years. By the time he was released in 2009 many other activists in the U.S. had been locked up in prison for standing up for a better world. Two of these prisoners – Eric McDavid and Marie Mason – had been sentenced to 20 and 22 years respectively. Both were sentenced severely for their willingness to fight for a world without oppression – be that of the earth, other animals, or our human communities.

Last year the Never Alone exhibition raised important funds for Marie and Eric's support campaigns. We want to build on all the amazing support shown by artists and art buyers, and make this year's exhibition an even bigger and more successful fundraiser.

Marie and Eric are contributing artworks for the exhibition, as well as a number of other amazing artists already on board. We are inviting a range of incredibly talented artists to contribute, whose art regularly touches on themes of liberation, wilderness and political action. We are very interested in contributions of original work, prints and small sculptures, and any other ideas that artists may have. Please feel free to get in touch and discuss

with us any ideas you might have.

The exhibition will be online at [www.neveraloneart.org](http://www.neveraloneart.org), from June 11-30. It will be promoted heavily through our support networks, social media, and through other June 11 events being organised around the world. Artists involved would need to be able to provide suitable images of their artwork/s, as well as details of the dimensions, medium/s and price (incl. cost of postage within the U.S).

We are hoping that any artists involved will be willing to contribute between 100-70% of the sale of any artworks at the exhibition, with funds raised going directly to the support funds of Marie Mason and Eric McDavid. We would also require artists to be responsible for posting any sold artworks to the purchaser, with those costs being reimbursed to you by our collective.

If you have any questions please don't hesitate to get in touch. Expressions of interest close on May 1st, 2014. We really hope to hear from you if you are interested in contributing, and look forward to working with you!

In solidarity,  
The Earth First! Prisoner Support Project team  
[neveraloneexhibit@gmail.com](mailto:neveraloneexhibit@gmail.com)

### **27 Feb - Lynne's February Blog**

*Lynne Stewart is still so overwhelmed by the love and joy of the Valentine of February 14 that she finds it difficult to write through tears of happiness.*

#### **MORE:**

Happens every time I sit down to write this or when I see the photos on the website. It was a great moment for me, my family but also, I hope for the movement. We needed a victory like this to carry us to new realizations of Unity and erase the fractiousness that has characterized us since the days of Co Intel Pro.

I am still working on finding my normal after the 4+years in federal prison. I am hampered by the probation condition that forbids my association with "felons"; making it impossible to communicate with my former sisters and constituency at Carswell. As many of you know, once the Prison was aware that Ralph was landing at Dallas/Ft Worth for our usual monthly visit and farewell, that afternoon they got me out of the Big House in a hurry. Unbelievable speed and efficiency for the Bureau of Prisons. The Judge in NY signed the order at 2:15 pm and I was waiting for Ralph in a parking lot outside the prison gates at 5:30. (They probably thought that either you all, or the media would be storming their citadel if I weren't released immediately !!) I was so glad to be free of their Arbitrary Authority but it also meant that many close friends Mara, Wanda, Kathy, Jenn, Rollow, Gwen, to name a few-I never got a chance to say goodbye to personally and now I can't. BUT, I haven't forgotten my promise to keep on working to bring about some merciful changes in the Prison System and I still think about them, often.

On another sombre note, little did I think that when I arrived in Brooklyn I would need to become locked in ferocious battle with the forces of Medicare and Medicaid. But that is what Ralph and I have been doing since January 2. Let me preface this by saying that my prognosis, of 12 months of life with this cancer, in 7/13 has not changed. First, Medicare told me that when I went to jail in November, 2009, they had continued to pay my Health Insurance provider until 2011. When they "notified" (?HOW?) me that I needed to enroll again in Medicare I did not respond. (of course not, being in Texas) Therefore, not having opted then to get this entitlement, I could not now get coverage until July 2014. They suggested that I sign up for Medicaid administered by the state of NY. After many trips and many documents Medicaid finally (2/22) declined to cover me, because Ralph and I have income (our social security payments) that exceeds their monthly limit. We are now hoping that we will be able to enter into a program whereby they will accept a different accounting, a pay in, and I will be covered through July. Sloan Kettering Hospital, my choice for treatment, has allowed me to pay with Medicaid. So, we are working on it and I want to say Loud and Clear that poverty is hard work. We still advocate for Single Payer !!! No-one should have to jump through these hoops to get treatment, especially when they are not feeling all that well or energetic.

And of course, and eternally, I have to say, I couldn't do it without my formidable and loyal and loving partner Ralph Poynter. We have to laugh sometimes as we compare our elderly selves to the passionate duo that met in their twenties on the '60's battle lines of political challenges. But, hey, we're still here and intend to remain loyal to all the causes that are necessary to fight in this rapacious capitalist world we live in. We must have victory. There must be a better world for us and for all the generations still out there.

Finally, I have to say that just as I finished writing this I received word of the passing of my brother at Law, friend and Comrade Chokwe Lumumba in Jackson, Mississippi. I will write at another time, about the six month trial and acquittal victory (1983) for Bilal Sunni Ali in the federal Brinks case, where we served as co-counsel. Chokwe, on summation played a record of Gil Scott Heron. We are all the heirs and heiresses of a rich heritage of resistance. We must fight on.

### **8 Mar - Release Aging People in Prison (RAPP) panel at Beyond the Bars**

**WHAT:** Our Elders Behind Bars, Our Families Divided

**WHEN:** 4:00-5:30pm, Saturday, March 8<sup>th</sup>

**WHERE:** Columbia University School of Social Work, 1255 Amsterdam Avenue, Manhattan (between 120<sup>th</sup> and 121<sup>st</sup> Streets)

**COST:** Free

#### **MORE:**

The number of incarcerated elders in New York and nationally continues to rise as people with long sentences age. Yet incarcerated elders pose the lowest risk to public safety and could contribute mightily to bettering our communities. How does continued incarceration and perpetual punishment affect elders, their families, friends and communities? AND: How can we win their release and heal our families and communities?

Speakers include: • Larry White, formerly incarcerated • Barbara Inniss, family member • Dequi Kioni-Sadiki, family member • Tyrrell Muhammad, formerly incarcerated • Ariane Davisson, Columbia grad student • Moderator: Laura Whitehorn, formerly incarcerated; RAPP organizer