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Updates for May 8th

23 Apr - Occupy The Justice Department Challenges Obama Administration Integrity on Prosecutor Misconduct Issue

One of the issues driving protesters participating in the April 24, 2012 Occupy The Justice Department demonstration was an issue that U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder knows well: prosecutorial misconduct. Following this article is a link to the Jericho Movement's website where you can find recorded statements made at Occupy the Justice Department by thirteen political prisoners.

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Holder knows this misconduct issue well because he has criticized it during congressional testimony, in fact as recently as March 2012 when he was commenting on a special prosecutor's report castigating the wrongdoing of federal prosecutors.

That wrongdoing, Holder acknowledged, unlawfully tainted the corruption investigation and 2008 trial of the late U.S. Senator Ted Stevens, who was convicted of corruption in his home state of Alaska.

Protesters, including fiery Philadelphia activist Pam Africa, want Holder to take action against the prosecutorial misconduct evident in scores of unjust convictions that have led to the wrongful imprisonment of political prisoners across America, most of them jailed for two or more decades.

Those political prisoners – ignored domestically while exalted abroad – include Native American activist Leonard Peltier, Puerto Rican Nationalist Oscar Lopez Rivera, the Cuban 5, author/activist Mumia Abu-Jamal and other former Black Panther Party members like the Omaha Two (Ed Poindexter and Mondo W. Langa).

Demands of the Occupy The Justice Department protesters include the immediate release of Mumia Abu-Jamal, the freeing all political prisoners, ending of the racist death penalty and the ending solitary confinement and torture.

Individuals and incidents underlying those demands are within the purview of USAG Holder to investigate and/or to act immediately to resolve.

April 24th is the birthday of Mumia Abu-Jamal, perhaps the most recognized U.S. political prisoner worldwide.

Abu-Jamal, for example, was the subject of two demonstrations held recently outside the U.S. Embassy in Berlin, Germany, one of which included extending a 2,200-foot banner around that embassy building.

Pam Africa is the head of International Concerned Friends and Family of Mumia Abu-Jamal, the Philadelphia-based organization at the center of the international movement seeking Abu-Jamal's release.

Africa is the dynamo who most Philadelphia police, prosecutors, politicians and many pastors love to hate because of her strident advocacy on behalf of both imprisoned journalist Mumia Abu-Jamal and the MOVE members sentenced for a fatal 1978 shootout.

The nearly three-decades long advocacy of Pam Africa on behalf of Mumia Abu-Jamal – helping construct support networks while confronting incessant opposition – contributed to the climate where U.S. federal courts late last year finally killed the death sentence Abu-Jamal received following his controversial 1982 conviction for killing a policeman.

Abu-Jamal is now fighting against a life-without-parole sentence, which was automatically imposed when the death sentence was invalidated.

That elimination of Abu-Jamal's government-sanctioned murder chagrined powerful figures across Pennsylvania and around America who had shamefully bent and broken laws (deliberately sabotaging court proceedings) in their various failed efforts to execute Abu-Jamal, known widely as the Voice-of-the-Voiceless.

While winning freedom for Abu-Jamal and the MOVE 9 is a prime focus of Pam Africa's advocacy work, she is frequently found on 'front-lines' nationwide fighting for and end to the mistreatment of people regardless of their color and creed.

"Pam Africa is in each and every struggle for social justice in Philadelphia, the U.S. and abroad. It's not just Mumia," said Latino activist/writer Berta Joubert-Ceci, who recently chaired a program featuring former U.S. Congresswoman Cynthia McKinney in West Philadelphia.

Dr. Claude Guillaumaud, a professor in France who has known Africa for 20-years, said she's "had time to appreciate her warm personality and total commitment to the cause of Mumia and the fight against racial discrimination and the barbaric death penalty."

Temple University African-American history professor Dr. Tony Monterio first met Pam Africa during an ugly June 1979 incident in South Philadelphia where local police beat Africa. Philadelphia police pummeled her with nightsticks with one stick-strike knocking out some of her teeth.

The scholar in Dr. Monterio sees Pam Africa as a unique figure whose contributions locally, nationally and internationally merit both examination and recognition. He has initiated a process for what he envisions as a formalized study of Africa's life works.

Prosecutorial misconduct is a core element in the Abu-Jamal case. This festering injustice has been repeatedly dismissed by state and federal courts that have refused to grant legal relief to Abu-Jamal despite granting new trials to others where the evidence of prosecutorial misconduct was far less grievous than that evident in the Abu-Jamal case.

One example of prosecutorial misconduct in the Abu-Jamal case occurred during his 1982 murder trial, when the prosecutor perverted a comment Abu-Jamal made over a decade earlier when responding to a reporter's question about the December 1969 murder by Chicago Police of Chicago Black Panther Party leader Fred Hampton.

The police assassination of Hampton, later linked to the FBI's infamous COINTELPRO campaign, outraged many at the time, including leaders as diverse as the then head of the NAACP, Roy Wilkins and former U.S. United Nations Ambassador and Supreme Court Justice Arthur Goldberg.

Hampton's assassination, later documented by congressional and other investigations, was a part of a joint police-FBI campaign to slay BPP members which led to 28 BPP deaths between January 1968 and December 1969.

As a teenaged BPP member, Abu-Jamal told that reporter that Hampton's murder proved that "power" comes from the barrel of a gun.

But the 1982 trial prosecutor shifted the context of Abu-Jamal's comment from applying it to the police killing Black Panthers to a supposed proclamation of Abu-Jamal's intent to kill police. It was one of many factual mischaracterizations that millions worldwide constantly cite when charging Abu-Jamal received an unfair trial.

That improper perversion of Abu-Jamal's 12-year-old comment made when he was just 15 helped sway jurors to send an award-winning journalist with no criminal record to death row. That same prosecutor had improperly excluded blacks from Abu-Jamal's trial jury despite their having declared their willingness to impose a death penalty if warranted by the arguments at trial.

Not only was prosecutor Joseph McGill's twisting of Abu-Jamal's comment an improper tactic -- it violated associational rights granted under the First Amendment.

The U.S. Supreme Court gave new hearings in the early 1990s to two convicted murderers -- a white racist prisoner gang member in Delaware and a white devil worshipper in Nevada -- while denying comparable relief to former BPP member Abu-Jamal three times on the exact same issue of prosecutors improperly inflaming through use of constitutionally protected associations.

USAG Eric Holder, shortly after taking office in January 2009, went to court successfully to request dismissal of Sen. Stevens' conviction, after finding that the federal prosecutor in that case withheld evidence of innocence from Stevens' defense team and also tampered with witnesses and documents.

That recently released special prosecutor's report in the Stevens case confirmed prosecutorial misconduct and wrongdoing.

The type of misconduct now confirmed in the Stevens case is rife in the cases U.S. political prisoners. Lawyers and supporters of Native American activist Leonard Peltier, for example, have documented federal authorities withholding evidence, presenting false evidence at trial although with intimidating witnesses into committing perjury.

The Occupy The Justice Department demonstrators are raising the issue of Holder's credibility and of the ethical integrity of the Obama Administration in acting to dismiss the wrongful conviction of ex-Senator Stevens while ignoring the continued imprisonment of U.S. political prisoners who were also victims of misconduct by police and prosecutors.

On December 9, 2011 -- one day before the U.N. annual Human Rights Day -- Noble Peace Prize Laureate and noted anti-apartheid activist Archbishop Desmond Tutu asked America to "rise to the challenge of reconciliation, human rights and justice" in calling for the "immediate release" of Abu-Jamal.

Political Prisoner/POW Statements for April 24, 2012 Occupy the Justice Department

<http://www.jerichony.org/A24PPStatements.html>

24 Apr - Bradley Manning: a show trial of state secrecy

The US government's suppression of all accountability and transparency in prosecuting the WikiLeaks suspect is totalitarian, as argued in this Guardian UK article.

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On 24 April, a hearing in one of the most important court martial cases in decades will take place in Fort Meade, Maryland. The accused faces life in prison for the 22 charges against him, which include "aiding the enemy" and "transmitting defense information". His status as an alleged high-profile [whistleblower](#) and the importance of the issues his case raises should all but guarantee the proceedings a prominent spot in major media, as well as in public debate.

Yet, in spite of the grave implications, not to mention the press and public's first amendment right of full and open access to criminal trials, [no outside parties will have access to the evidence, the court documents, court orders or off-the-record arguments](#) that will ultimately decide his fate. Under these circumstances, whatever the outcome of the case, the loser will be the transparency necessary for democratic government, accountable courts and faith in our justice system.

In the two years since his arrest for allegedly leaking the confidential files that exposed grand-scale military misconduct, potential [war crimes](#) and questionable diplomatic tactics, [army private Bradley Manning](#) has been subjected to an extremely secretive criminal procedure. It is a sad irony that the government's heavy-handed approach to this case only serves to underscore the motivations -- some would say, the necessity -- for whistleblowing like Manning's in the first place.

The most well-known of the leaked files, a 39-minute video entitled "[Collateral Murder](#)", depicts three brutal attacks on civilians by US soldiers during the course of just one day of the Iraq war. The footage, recorded from the cockpit of a US Apache helicopter involved in the attacks, shows the killing of several individuals, including two Reuters journalists, as well as the serious injury of two children. Beyond the chilling images of US soldiers eagerly pleading for chances to shoot, the release of this footage placed a spotlight on the military's blatant mischaracterization of the events, in which a spokesman claimed that there was "no question" that the incident involved engagement with "a hostile force", and underscores the vital role that public scrutiny plays in government accountability.

As an attorney with the [Center for Constitutional Rights \(CCR\)](#) and a legal adviser to [WikiLeaks](#) and [Julian Assange](#), I continue to attend Manning's hearings and can only describe them as a theater of the absurd: the trial involves numerous and lengthy off-the-record conferences, out of sight and hearing of the press and public, after which the judge provides an in-court summary that hardly satisfies standards of "open and public". Perhaps more remarkable is the refusal even to provide the press and public with a pre-trial publicity order, which was signed by the judge – an order that details what lawyers can and cannot reveal about the case. Yes, even the degree to which proceedings should be kept in secret *is a secret*, leaving the public and media chained in a [Plato's Cave](#), able only to glimpse the shadows of reality.

The press and advocacy groups, however, have not been quiet about the trampling of their rights. [The Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press](#), on behalf of 46 news organizations, urged the Department of Defense to take measures that would allow the news media to view documents prior to court arguments. The committee pointed out that the trial for the "alleged leak of the largest amount of classified information in US history" is of "intense public interest, particularly where, as here, that person's liberty is at stake". The Center for Constitutional Rights, too, has requested access in the interest of an "open and public" trial, but neither appeal has been answered.

This is a clear violation of the law, but it will likely take burdensome litigation to rectify this lack of transparency. The [US supreme court](#) has insisted that criminal trials must be public, and the fourth circuit, where this court martial is occurring, has ruled that the first amendment right of access to criminal trials includes the right to the documents in such trials.

The greater issue at hand is why this process should be necessary at all. As circuit judge Damon Keith famously wrote in [Detroit Free Press v Ashcroft](#), "Democracies die behind closed doors." Yet it is evident from the many layers of secrecy around Manning's arrest, imprisonment and prosecution that the government shows no sign of relinquishing its claimed powers to obscure rightfully transparent judicial proceedings. The doors appear to be tightly shut.

Unless we challenge the growing culture of secrecy within our government, and counter the ever-increasing, reflexive claims of "national security" by claiming our own constitutional rights, we risk finding those doors shut indefinitely.

24 Apr - It's Coming Through the Air; Writings from Prison #1 / Jordan Halliday

The website "Because We Must" has a new series of writings from prisoners. The first is by grand jury resister Jordan Halliday.

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To All My Friends,

First, I just want to say thank you for all the support. Even a simple post card that says "Thinking of you" can brighten an inmates day. I look forward to making many more friends and also having much correspondence with all of you. I would love to promise a response to all of you. However, I'm only allowed 100 contacts and I am not able to respond to anyone residing outside of the United States. Luckily, I've been able to respond to all non-international letters so far and I want you all to know I will absolutely read every piece of mail that is sent

and isn't denied and I will try my hardest to respond. If I am ever unable to respond please don't think I am ungrateful or ignoring you.

I was asked by Because We Must to write a bit about [grand juries](#). As I've mentioned countless times in the past, I just want to reiterate the need to read up on the grand jury system. I know it may seem overwhelming and like a lot of information at first, but the best way to protect yourself is to learn. Knowledge is power. I think Crescenzo Vellucci said it best.

“To understand the threat and power of grand juries is to empower yourself. And if you can become empowered, you will not feel fear. And without fear, the state and the abusive grand jury system cannot do anything to you.”

I was recently reading about the anti-war group the “[Lexington Six](#)” who were jailed for their refusal to collaborate with a grand jury almost half a century ago, yet what they said still holds true today. “People must MOBILIZE AROUND THESE ISSUES. To do this, people must first become familiar with the grand jury and its abuses, PUBLICIZING THE FACTS AND EDUCATING OTHERS AS TO THEIR RIGHTS. Secondly it is important to engender in others a commitment to the resistance of these abuses including, but not limited to ones refusal to testify before the grand jury. Thirdly, it is necessary to keep in mind that while court battles can be fought and sometimes won, these abuses of the law are not abnormalities in a basically good system. They rather illustrate the true intentions of a BAD system more openly and graphically than other insidious practices (and) THIS SHOULD DOMINATE OUR THINKING AS WE ORGANIZE.

The grand jury systems goal aside from harassing and intimidating activists is to gather information on them, their friends, their family, and the community. So, as a community, we should have a similar goal to gather information on the grand jury process. So we will all be prepared to resist its abuse [when an agent comes knocking](#). Another thing we should do is inform our “non-activist” friends, family, and co-workers. Help them learn their rights. Ask them not to cooperate and to let you know if they are ever approached or contacted. For in the end, they are just as much a part of the community as we are.

As was the case with some members in my own community, I was asked “What's the harm of testifying if you know nothing?” An old lawyers joke use to say “a grand jury could indict a sandwich if it wanted.” Because in a grand jury there is no defense attorney and people can be indicted from mere rumors, innuendo and hearsay. And to choose to just testify and get it over with enables you to be put on a list of people they “know will talk” and your chances of being subpoenaed again and harassed in the future are increased significantly. But even more important is the fact that grand juries are a violation of our basic civil and political rights. And its abuse needs to be addressed and protested. Trust me, I had no desire to go to prison for refusing to testify about something of which I had no knowledge. But, some issues are more important than saving my own skin. And this is one of them.

For the Earth, For the Animals, For Ourselves,

-Jordan Halliday

25 Apr – Mumia on Democracy Now!

In a Democracy Now! exclusive, Mumia Abu-Jamal phones in from the SCI Mahanoy prison in Frackville, Pennsylvania, where he is being held in general population after nearly 30 years on death row.

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Although he now lives in a bigger cell than what he calls the "small dog cage" of the last three decades, Mumia says his life sentence is akin to "a slow death row. It's bigger in terms of the time differential, but it's slow death row, to be sure." After having his death sentence overturned in late 2011, Abu-Jamal says he is determined to win his release from prison over allegations of racial bias and judicial misconduct in his conviction. "We want freedom," he says of the movement calling for his release. Supporters have long argued racism by the trial judge and prosecutors led to Abu-Jamal's conviction. He notes that during his trial a court reporter overheard the judge

in his case, Judge Albert F. Sabo, say in his chambers, "I'm going to help them fry the nigger." "This was heard by a court reporter, a member of the court staff, a court employee, and a person that is perhaps the best listener you could ever have for any conversation, because that's her job," Abu-Jamal says. "We didn't know about it until years later, but when we put this into our papers, our filings, it has been essentially ignored by every court it's come in front of. How is that possible? And so, I mean, that's certainly one indication, as you can see, one example of an unfair system."

AMY GOODMAN: We're going to interrupt the broadcast, because right now we have just gotten a call from Mumia Abu-Jamal from prison in Pennsylvania. Mumia Abu-Jamal is speaking to us for the first time no longer on death row.

Mumia Abu-Jamal, can you tell us where you are? Welcome to Democracy Now!

MUMIA ABU-JAMAL: Good morning, Amy. And good morning to Democracy Now! I am in the open room, the block out area of SCI Mahanoy, a prison in Schuylkill County in northeastern Pennsylvania.

NERMEEN SHAIKH: Mumia Abu-Jamal, can you say how the conditions there are different from the prison from which you were moved?

MUMIA ABU-JAMAL: Well, in many ways, they're similar. But in only in kind of dimension are they different. That is to say, everything is bigger. For nearly three decades, I was in what could be called a dog run or a small dog cage with one other fellow from death row. The difference between that and going to a cage, a yard that is about a mile wide with about 400 or 500 other men, is pretty profound.

AMY GOODMAN: Mumia Abu-Jamal, can you talk about what your reaction is to be taken off of death row, to no longer have death hanging over you, but to be in jail for a life sentence without parole?

MUMIA ABU-JAMAL: Well, you've kind of answered the question with your question. That is to say—

OPERATOR: This call is from the State Correctional Institution at Mahanoy and is subject to monitoring and recording.

MUMIA ABU-JAMAL: You've probably heard me refer to life as "slow death row." It sounds a little dramatic, but it is really more truth to it than hyperbole. And that's because, you know, in Pennsylvania, it has the highest population, or one of the highest populations, in the state, of lifers—in fact, juveniles with life sentences. And in Pennsylvania, there's no gradation: you know, all lifers are lifers, and that's for their whole life. So, and I guess, in that sense, too, it's bigger. I mean, it's bigger in terms of the time differential, but it's slow death row, to be sure.

And when you see, as I've seen, going to chow or going to a meal and seeing what I call the "million man wheelchair march," it makes an impact on you. You know, you look up in the morning, and there are 30 or 40 guys going through the handicap line, and they're in wheelchairs. And although some are young, most are quite old. And so, you know, life means life in Pennsylvania.

AMY GOODMAN: Mumia Abu-Jamal, there was a protest at the Justice Department yesterday, Occupy the DOJ, A24, for your birthday, April 24th, as people there called for—called for the Department of Justice, the attorney general, to open a probe into your case. What do you want to happen in your case?

MUMIA ABU-JAMAL: Well, as I said to our people there in Washington the other day, yesterday, frankly, we want freedom. I mean, I was thinking this morning, as I was being told that, you know, we could possibly talk to you, about a case that's in the federal law books called U.S. v. Brown. The person is perhaps known better as Rap Brown or Gerold Brown. Imam Jamil is his name today. This is an old case, I think from the '70s, perhaps. But in this case, a federal case, the judge referred to Brother Jamil, at a golf course with other people around, as: "I'm going to help get rid of this nigger."

Think about that in the context of Judge Albert F. Sabo of the Court of Common Pleas of Philadelphia, not saying it on a golf course among friends, but saying this in his chambers in the courthouse during a trial. "I'm going to help them fry the nigger." This was heard by a court reporter, a member of the court staff, a court employee, and a person that is perhaps the best listener you could ever have for any conversation, because that's her job. She takes notes during trials for a living. Now, we didn't know about it until years later, but when we put this into our papers, our filings, it has been essentially ignored by every court it's come in front of. How is that possible? And so, I mean, that's certainly one indication, as you can see, one example of an unfair system.

AMY GOODMAN: Mumia Abu-Jamal, Danny Glover is here also to talk about your case.

DANNY GLOVER: Hello, Mumia.

MUMIA ABU-JAMAL: Yes, Brother Danny. How are you?

DANNY GLOVER: How are you doing, brother?

MUMIA ABU-JAMAL: Good, good, good, good. Good to hear your voice.

DANNY GLOVER: It's good to hear you, as always. And I certainly would be—feel a lot better, be a lot better, if you were out of jail, not simply just off of death row.

MUMIA ABU-JAMAL: Me and you both.

DANNY GLOVER: But certainly, I just want to tell you that—and I'm really emotional because I didn't expect to hear your voice this morning—that we continue to struggle and will continue to struggle to fight for your release. We sent a letter to the attorney general, Holder, that we convene a meeting and the federal government use its own authority to investigate your case. And certainly, we—people are out here, and we love you, brother.

MUMIA ABU-JAMAL: Thank you so much. I assure you I did not expect to hear your voice, either, and I'm pretty emotional about that. You are a hero, for the acting community and the arts community and the drama community and, of course, the black community, and, beyond that, the international community, for the work you've done in the arts. And I am as pleased as punch and thrilled to hear you there. Thank you. Thank you very much.

DANNY GLOVER: Thank you.

AMY GOODMAN: Mumia, I think it's interesting that you are talking to Danny Glover, who is currently playing Thurgood Marshall—that's going to be coming out in an HBO series on Muhammad Ali—the Supreme Court justice.

MUMIA ABU-JAMAL: I think—I think Thurgood himself would get a real chuckle out of that. That's wonderful. I mean, so—

DANNY GLOVER: Good, good.

MUMIA ABU-JAMAL: This is—you know, you're—

DANNY GLOVER: Well, I'm looking forward to seeing you soon. All right, brother?

MUMIA ABU-JAMAL: We shall make that happen.

DANNY GLOVER: We will make that happen, OK. All right.

AMY GOODMAN: Mumia Abu-Jamal, your access, outside of death row right now, to people, to the media, to the phone? You have had so much trouble reaching out over the years, though you have managed.

MUMIA ABU-JAMAL: Well, if you recall, it's been—it's maybe 15 years, I think, since I last called your show. I was in conversation with you, perhaps 1996 or thereabouts, and the phone went dead. And I looked out of my cell, and I saw a guard come up and literally pull the wire out of the wall that connected the phone. And I remember saying, "Hello? Hello? Hello? Hello?" And it was dead because there was no wire to connect us. So, as you can see, the wires are a little tighter now. But—

AMY GOODMAN: Well, you sued—you sued the Pennsylvania prison authorities over them pulling out the phone from the wall when we were speaking on Democracy Now!

MUMIA ABU-JAMAL: Indeed, I did. And thanks to the efforts of some really brave and conscientious lawyers and judges, I won—at least most of the issues in that suit. Abu-Jamal v. Price I think was the name of the case.

OPERATOR: This call is from the State Correctional Institution at Mahanoy and is subject to monitoring and recording.

MUMIA ABU-JAMAL: And thanks to that case, I was able to write and continue to, you know, be in contact with our people. So, I'm real glad he pulled that wire out the wall. That was very helpful.

AMY GOODMAN: Danny Glover, what do you think Thurgood Marshall would do in the case of Mumia Abu-Jamal?

DANNY GLOVER: Well, surprisingly—no, not surprisingly, I think Thurgood Marshall would have been one of the few justices who would perhaps hear the case, would argue to hear the case, even though there were moments during the civil rights movement that Thurgood Marshall had even trouble with Martin Luther King and disagreed a great deal. But I think—I feel that he would be one who would want to hear the case. Thurgood Marshall—for nothing else, during those dark years in the '30s and '40s, Thurgood Marshall was there, before *Brown v. Board of Education*, fighting cases all the time of men who on death row who were about to have—for murder or for rape, all over the South, you know. We often know Thurgood Marshall from his work on *Brown v. Board of Education*, but clearly his work around inmates, around prisoners, around those who have been accused, accused falsely, and fighting for them was something he did all over the country.

AMY GOODMAN: I'm afraid we're going to lose Mumia Abu-Jamal in a moment. Mumia Abu-Jamal, your

thoughts on what Danny Glover just said about the Supreme Court justice, Thurgood Marshall, and also if you could comment on the Trayvon Martin case and the Occupy movement?

MUMIA ABU-JAMAL: Well, I would concur largely with, not surprisingly, Danny Glover's remarks, because, you know, from what I've read and what I've heard, Justice Thurgood Marshall was not just a brilliant legal mind and not just a brilliant judge or jurist, he was an incredible lawyer who fought for people who were poor, who were dispossessed, who were powerless, in the apartheid South. And also because he was a black lawyer, his experiences in the South were such that not only were his clients endangered, but he himself was endangered. And many times he would be told that he had to leave town before nightfall, or he would face death. I mean, this was the American South in the middle 20th century.

The good thing about that, if there can be a good thing about such an experience, is that when he came to the Supreme Court, those experiences of being a defense lawyer of the poor and the dispossessed and those facing death, he was able to share with his fellow justices, because these were people, largely, who, let's say, came from a completely different background. And I don't mean racially; I mean class, and I also mean that many of them—most of them were not defense lawyers. They were either lower court judges, or some were legislators, and, you know, mostly they were prosecutors and so forth. So, he was able to expand their perspective of what the law really meant in the real world and—through his own life experiences. Now, I think he had a profound impact, if you really check it, on the former Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor. If you look at her early jurisprudence and then look at her later jurisprudence, I think it's a direct effect of the influence of Thurgood Marshall.

As for Trayvon, the little boy who could have been the son of the President of the United States, when we look at what happened in that case, and in my—my real view is that, in a matter of weeks or months, or months, we may see an immunity hearing that will wipe out the charges completely, and Mr. Zimmerman will never see the inside of a prison.

As for the Occupy movement, I think it's one of the greatest advances in the democracy movement in our modern period. And it's pushed because of the economic crisis—

OPERATOR: You have 60 seconds remaining.

MUMIA ABU-JAMAL: It's pushed because of the economic crisis that's facing the United States and especially young people who have come out of college and have no hope for a job, have no hope for a future, have no hope for a life without terrifying, crippling loans over their heads. I think they did something wonderful, but it's a first step. They have something else to do, something more important to do, and that's to connect with other people's movements around the country and—

OPERATOR: You have 30 seconds remaining.

MUMIA ABU-JAMAL: —and build a kind of resistance that can transform this country. I thank you all for these brief moments. I really do. Thank you very much.

AMY GOODMAN: Mumia Abu-Jamal, happy birthday. Happy 58th birthday.

MUMIA ABU-JAMAL: Oh, thank you. Thank you, Amy.

DANNY GLOVER: Happy birthday, Mumia.

MUMIA ABU-JAMAL: Thank you, Danny.

DANNY GLOVER: OK.

MUMIA ABU-JAMAL: All the best. On a move.

DANNY GLOVER: See you soon.

MUMIA ABU-JAMAL: All right, brother.

DANNY GLOVER: All right.

AMY GOODMAN: Mumia Abu-Jamal, speaking to us from SCI Mahanoy, the prison in Pennsylvania where he is no longer on death row. Are you still there, Mumia? His phone has been cut off at this point. Danny Glover, your thoughts right now as you sit down and hear Mumia Abu-Jamal speaking to you, no longer from death row?

DANNY GLOVER: Well, it's a beginning, as he says. As he mentioned in terms of the Occupy movement, it's a beginning. We have to find, by—as someone would say, by any means necessary, legally, to free—and collectively, as a community, not only in this country, but around the world, to free and to bring him home.

NERMEEN SHAIKH: Danny Glover, your thoughts on Trayvon Martin and Mumia Abu-Jamal? We've just spoken to. Is the criminal justice system very different now than it was when Mumia Abu-Jamal was convicted?

DANNY GLOVER: Certainly, it's framed now in a different way. It is simply still the place. I know those places, and I visit those places Mumia talks about, where there is a wheelchair caravan of men who are serving life sentences. You take, for instance, Soledad State Prison in California. Forty percent of the prisoners there are on death—excuse me, on life sentences. And you take Vacaville, two places that I visited last year. Also 40 percent of the prisoners are life—lifers, as they've been calling them, lifers. So, the reality is that that has not changed. The course, from prisons to—from high school to communities to prison, is still the same course that has happened.

What is essentially—and we must be reminded that at the point that Mumia was charged with this crime—and certainly, there were a number of activities, the COINTEL program and other programs, to incite and not only to dismantle those movements and to dissuade young people from becoming progressive and radicalized in different ways within the community. So, here's a journalist. And that's what Mumia is first—

AMY GOODMAN: We have five seconds.

DANNY GLOVER: —is a journalist.

AMY GOODMAN: And then we'll continue off air.

DANNY GLOVER: He's the person who is attacked—a journalist now, first—who's attacked in here because of what he has to say.

AMY GOODMAN: Danny Glover, we want to thank you very much for being with us. We're going to continue this conversation and post it online in a web exclusive at democracynow.org.

26 Apr - Bond Denied for Norberto Gonzalez Claudio

A federal judge denied a bond request Thursday from Norberto Gonzalez Claudio, charged in one of the largest cash robberies in U.S. history, saying he lived as a fugitive for more than 25 years and cannot be trusted to appear for trial.

MORE:

Norberto Gonzalez Claudio, who was captured by the FBI in Puerto Rico in May, asked to be released from a Rhode Island detention center so that he could consult associates more easily as he considers his legal options in the case of the 1983 Connecticut robbery.

Several family members and supporters offered to put up \$400,000 in real estate to secure his bond, and Gonzalez gave assurances he would not jeopardize their finances by fleeing.

But Magistrate Judge Thomas Smith said in his ruling that the risk of flight was too great to release Gonzalez.

"Mr. Gonzalez-Claudio's ties to his family were not powerful enough to keep him from living as a fugitive for over 25 years and, hence, the court cannot place much credence in his promise," Smith wrote.

Gonzalez, who is in his mid-60s, is accused of aiding the 1983 robbery of \$7 million from a Wells Fargo armored car depot in West Hartford, Conn. The heist, the largest cash robbery in U.S. history at the time, was orchestrated by Los Macheteros, a militant wing of the broader movement for Puerto Rican independence.

Gonzalez has pleaded not guilty to federal charges including bank robbery, conspiracy and transportation of stolen money.

In his ruling, Smith noted that the agents who arrested Gonzalez in a town in central Puerto Rico also found in his possession bomb-making manuals and an unregistered, loaded machine gun at his bedside. He said that in addition to any prison time imposed in Connecticut, Gonzalez faces potential imprisonment in Puerto Rico for having the weapon.

27 Apr - party on the inside, party on the outside by Mandy Hiscocks

We're including the latest blog entries by 2010 Toronto G20 prisoner Mandy Hiscocks.

MORE:

it's been quite the celebratory month here on Unit 2F at Vanier Institute for Women.

first was easter, which we observed by eating huge hot breakfasts on friday and sunday. some guards were perhaps a little too into in: i counted three of them wearing pink bunny ears. that's right, bunny ears. this got mixed reviews from the inmates but my favourite comment came from a woman sitting at my table who said "they'd better be shitting out chocolate eggs or they can take those fucking things off." indeed.

on april 13th i marked the passing of my third month in this place. at lunch i handed out jellybeans to all the tables, and i drank hot chocolate instead of tea (wild, i know. . .but we have limited options in here) at dinner my table split a caramilk bar and in the evening i ate a bag of lays barbeque chips. as you can see, my celebrations are all about food.

april 16 was my 38th birthday. in the morning i came out of my cell to find a card signed by most of the people on the range. two people offered to clean my cell for me so i could sit and relax after breakfast and throughout the day i was given all kinds of things: 5 rice cakes, a muffin, a vitamin e capsule, another card, 4 sticky buns, a cookie, two US and two international stamped envelopes, and a monopoly game of sketchbag origins – no joke! at lunch i had hot chocolate instead of tea again, and i switched to the new pair of shoes i had been saving to mark the occasion. simple pleasures, you know? i didn't do any work all day. when i came out from post lunch lock-up some folks were singing happy birthday and there was a jail cake on my table. it was made of two sticky buns, one on top of the other with jam in-between, covered in a melted arrow bar, crushed oreo cookies, nibs and licorice all-sorts. it was delicious. at dinner i had a coffee (i never do that) and that evening i FINALLY won at scrabble. all in all it was a really great day and as always i found myself surrounded by some pretty fantastic people on my birthday :)

the next day as i was working out at some horribly early hour a guard doing rounds tapped on my cell door window and wished me a happy birthday. later that day my cellie was taken to Unit 4 and i got a new one who had come over from 2A (Leah's range). she told me there had been people outside the jail making noise the night before – and true enough, i later confirmed that there was a noise demo/birthday party complete with happy birthday banner. so although i didn't know it at the time it turns out i was celebrating with outside friends after all. party on the inside, party on the outside!

thank you so much to everyone who sent birthday wishes, had a drink for me, and helped organize or came out to the outside party. and to the folks in here who managed to pull off a celebration even in a place like this. i'm feeling the love!

In fact, i'm, apparently so special that even the Ontario Corrections Intelligence Unit came to say hello. On april 18th i was called off the range in the morning, which is unusual for me and made me immediately suspicious. "is it the cops?" i asked the guard, who replied "no, it's an internal guy." i'm brought into a professional visits room and proceed to check out the id card hanging around the guys neck: OCIU.

-do you remember me? we spoke awhile back. my name is John.

-why are you people all called John?

he had no response to this. he wants to ask me about the noise demo. apparently he heard that i told staff that 30 or so of my friends would be coming by. . .um, yes, my staff buddies and i were at the bar, shooting the shit, and i thought i'd give a heads up. . .that can't possibly be what he said. why would he make up such a ridiculous lie? maybe he said he heard from staff that i'd been telling other inmates that 30 or so of my friends would be coming by - still a lie, but at least slightly more plausible – that is if i'd know about the demo before april 17.

-um, no. i didn't even know it was happening.

-well don't worry, it didn't get written down on paper or anything.

(no doubt.)

-okay well that's all.

that encounter was only slightly less weird than my first one with OCIU John, on jan. 16th, which went like this:

-i want to speak to you because of your recent media notoriety. we spoke to alex when he was here last. you've been quite outspoken. how do you think it will effect your stay here?

-um, i'm assuming not at all.

-no trouble with the other inmates?

-no, people are very nice. . . who are you with?

-the Ontario Corrections Intelligence Unit

-hmmm.

at this point he went into a long spiel about noise demos and how they can endanger the staff and the inmates – for example, a roman candle could hit the roof and the place could light on fire. ummm, not bloody likely, pal. his main concern seemed to be for my safety (how very sweet):

-these demonstrations interfere with prisoner's visits. people will know they are associated with you.

(yes, because no demo ever happened before i showed up)

your safety could be in jeopardy.

-mmm-hmmm.

we looked at each other awkwardly, until he finally spoke:

-that's all.

-right.

i thought a lot about that visit since that day. As i see it, he came because:

a) he was concerned for my safety. i find this highly unlikely, especially since he never mentioned it on his second visit after a noise demo actually happened;

b) vanier really wants to keep me on maximum security but they have no real reason to so they thought they'd put a bogus safety concern on the record;

c) i am an executive/ringleader of the anarchists, with my very own minions and foot soldiers (it's true! just ask Crown Attorney Jason Miller) and therefore can stop these noise demos from happening if only i could be made to believe that they pose some sort of threat to me.

although b is plausible, i am inclined to believe the answer is c. the state hates any show of solidarity with prisoners, and the idea that it puts anyone in danger is horsehit. i'm reminded of a chat with a friend and co-"guilty" who spent time in Central North Correctional Centre in Penetanguishene when a noise demo came his range got locked down "shit," i said, "that sucks." but "no, it was awesome," he replied. "the guys were banging on the windows, they loved it, and afterwards we had a great conversation about why anarchists support prisoners." i had a chat with an inmate on my range awhile ago who had done some time at Grand Valley Institute, the federal penitentiary in Kitchener. when a noise demo arrived there a bunch of the inmates were out in the yard and could see it through the fence, until the guards freaked out and called a lock down. i asked her if people were mad. "no, of course not. we just went inside and opened up our windows and we could still hear them. it was great – why would we be mad? they were out there for us." my new cellie told me the same thing last week: "that was so nice of people to come here and do that for us." so the inmates love noise demos and the jails hate them. . .keep up the excellent work, folks!

okay – that was a big digression from celebrations. but there are a few more. on april 20 my friend Claire was released after spending just over a year here. she walked off the range amidst hugs and cheers, and while we were glad to see her go we miss her. when someone gets out, i inevitably think "once day that will be me." and that day is getting closer! i've already passed the 100 day mark. and on april 29th i'll have completed a third of

my time. two more of those and it will be december 3 and i'll be the one saying my goodbyes. i can't deny that it seems really far away sometimes. . .but it's really not. i'm already planning the party.

Happy May Day!

i've been excited for [may day](#) for weeks now, which is funny because i won't be able to go to any marches or actions or events this year. still, just knowing that around the world friends, allies, people i love, people i respect and a whole lot of people i don't know will be standing up against capitalism and austerity measures, for workers and migrants and the poor. . .it all makes me so happy. and i feel like because you're all hitting the streets i am too, even though i'm in jail. it's hard to explain this amazing feeling, and these words certainly aren't doing it justice. maybe this is what being "there in spirit" really means. all i can say is that lately it's been seeming like the world and fences and locked doors that separate us don't mean much of anything. so happy may day! the state has failed once again :)

the first time i was arrested for a political action was on may day. it was the late nineties, the mike harris years (remember those? shudder). it was a classic non-violent civil disobedience action called "may day on bay", calling attention to poverty and homelessness amidst the wealth and greed of toronto's financial district. we blocked the intersection of king and bay – right in the belly of the beast – until the cops hauled us off and charged us with mischief. it was a relaxed and very polite protest, but i remember that it was still a bit scary to get arrested knowingly like that. i also remember how supported i felt by the older and more experienced organizers. i reflect a lot on how much my ability and desire to stand up to the state now owes to the people who were there at the beginning when i had very little confidence and no experience. so if you were part of the action that day, thank you. maybe we could all find some time, on this busy day of anarchism and organizing, to appreciate the anarchists and organizers who came before us. let's commit to learning from their struggles and experiences, and let's take a moment to assess what we are contributing to the experiences of those whose struggles are just beginning. we need the enthusiasm and the fearlessness of youth, but we also need the perspective of those who have been around for awhile. we won't get far if we don't work together.

may day is about community and continuity, after all. before it became the day of massive protest that we're familiar with it was a community celebration of [spring](#)– of hope, and life and renewal. it was about our connection to the land – and which, because we lost it, is at the core of all of our protests against capitalism although we don't always know it. there is a beautiful piece of writing called [The Witch's Child](#) that merges these two aspects of may day – i hope you can take some time to read it.

above all else, perhaps, mayday is about freedom. freedom from hunger and exploitation, freedom to associate and to actually live life. so i'd like to end this post with a shout-out to a friend whose freedom has been severely restricted for almost two years and is now in the hands of the sketchy and somewhat arbitrary "justice" system. Kelly Pflug-Back was arrested in relation to the toronto g20 protest in 2010 and has spent a lot of her time since then on very isolated house arrest and strict bail conditions. i don't know much about her situation because despite the fact that we weren't co-accused, she was forced to sign non-association conditions with all of the alleged g20 "co-conspirators" in order to make bail. again, we witnessed the paranoia of the state. what i do know is that she will be sentenced sometime in may, and that people out in the world with internet access know when and where. so please spread the word if you know and find out if you don't, then head to the courthouse and show your support for kelly. despite being uprooted from her community, vilified in the media and treated harshly by the police and the court, she has kept her head up - as i knew she would. the Kelly i know is a thoughtful and caring person who, if the world made any sense, would be thanked and celebrated for the amazing work she does. if you don't know her, check out this [interview](#) from last march to see what those in power are so afraid of. stay strong, Kelly, and remember the words of [Marilyn Buck](#): "they call me an enemy of the state, so i know i must be doing something right".

27 Apr - Occupy Oakland Protester Convicted on Felony Count of Deterring Officer

The trial of an Occupy Oakland protester concluded on April 27th with a jury convicting Cameron Rose of a felony count of deterring an officer during the performance of his duties but deadlocking on another charge and

finding him guilty of a misdemeanor on a third count.

MORE:

The Alameda County District Attorney's Office prosecuted 47-year-old Cameron Rose for allegedly striking Oakland police Officer Patrick Gerrans with a folding chair at a protest at Frank Ogawa Plaza on Dec. 30 and for allegedly resisting arrest on Jan. 22 when authorities tried to arrest him on a warrant for the Dec. 30 incident.

The most serious charge against Rose, who's been in jail in lieu of \$130,000 bail since he was arrested on Jan. 22, was a felony count of assault with a deadly weapon on a peace officer with force likely to produce great bodily injury.

But jurors today only convicted him of the lesser included offense of simple misdemeanor assault. Jurors also deadlocked on the misdemeanor resisting arrest charge for the Jan. 22 incident.

Jurors announced their guilty verdict on the deterring an officer felony count on Tuesday. They deliberated for a total of four days.

In his closing argument in Rose's trial last week, prosecutor Tim Wagstaffe said Rose struck Oakland police Officer Patrick Gerrans with a metal chair on Dec. 30 while Gerrans was "defenseless" because his head was turned in the opposite direction as he was helping other officers detain another protester, Carly Bate, who had refused an order to remove her property from the plaza.

Wagstaffe said Gerrans "is lucky he was wearing a protective vest" but still felt a sharp pain in his back and neck.

But Rose's lawyer, Alameda County Associate Public Defender Kathleen Guneratne, told jurors that Rose should be found not guilty of all the charges against him because the prosecution failed to prove its case against him beyond a reasonable doubt.

Guneratne said Gerrans was not acting lawfully during the Dec. 30 protest because he should have known that his fellow officers didn't have probable cause to arrest Bate.

She said, "Police have to follow the rules" and alleged that Oakland officers had no authority to arrest Bate because she and other Occupy Oakland protesters had a permit to be at Frank Ogawa Plaza.

Wagstaffe said today that he is "pleased" that Rose was convicted of deterring an officer because it means that the jury believes police were acting lawfully during the protest on Dec. 30.

He said, "The jury did the right thing because I think Mr. Rose is a rogue individual who was acting outside the goals of the occupy movement."

Guneratne said she is "grateful" that jurors didn't convict Rose of a felony count of assault on a peace officer.

Wagstaffe said Rose could face up to three years in prison when Alameda County Superior Court Judge Thomas Reardon sentences him on May 24 but he also could be placed on probation.

27 Apr - Update on CeCe McDonald Hearing

We're including the updates and latest on CeCe McDonald to give an accurate timeline for folks unable to keep up with developments in her case over the past couple of weeks.

MORE:

On Friday, April 27th, CeCe McDonald appeared in court for her final pre-trial hearing. Both the defense and the prosecution argued motions on which evidence could be admitted or not, whether or not to allow expert witnesses, and whether or not supporters can wear Free CeCe gear in court.

The prosecution motioned to prevent people in the courtroom from wearing any t-shirts, buttons or anything that shows support for CeCe in any way. The motion was granted. (This means that we cannot wear support wear during CeCe's trial.)

The defense motioned to admit evidence that the deceased, Dean Schmitz, had a swastika tattoo on his chest and prior convictions for domestic assault. The prior convictions cannot be brought up in court and the judge will rule on the swastika tattoo by Monday morning.

The defense motioned to admit the criminal theft record of witnesses against CeCe. These motions were denied. Another motion to admit the convictions of one witness against CeCe for providing false information to the police and using a false name was granted. Notably, however, the prosecution motioned to admit into evidence that CeCe was convicted of writing a bad check to speak to her dishonesty as a witness. This motion was granted.

The defense motioned for the inclusion of an expert witness to speak to the deceased's toxicology report to explain the potential effects of chemicals such as cocaine, methamphetamine, and alcohol in his system. The judge will allow the expert to testify about these chemicals and their effects in general.

The defense motioned for the inclusion of an expert witness on transgender issues to speak to the climate of violence perpetrated on the trans community and to educate jurors on trans issues. A full decision on this motion will happen on Monday, April 30th. These rulings are helping determine how CeCe's trial will play out, so keep your eye on these announcements for the latest updates. Trial proceedings are still scheduled to begin on Monday, April 30th at 9am, although things won't really be underway until Tuesday.

4/30 at the CeCe McDonald Trial...

The first day of CeCe McDonald's trial had national support from Mara Keisling, founding executive director of the National Center of Transgender Equality, and Leslie Feinberg, renowned author of *Stone Butch Blues*, both of whom flew out to Minneapolis to attend today's proceedings.

In court, the judge ruled on several remaining motions. The defense moved to exclude a photo of the t-shirt Dean Schmitz, the deceased, was wearing June 5th on the grounds that it could unfairly prejudice the jury. This motion was denied.

In the discussion of this motion, the prosecution stated no weapon had been recovered from the scene. They also acknowledged it remains unclear what the weapon which caused Schmitz's wound was.

The defense continued with a motion to sequester, or isolate from the proceedings, two Hennepin County Witness Coordinators during the examination of the witnesses they had interviewed because they were also potential witnesses. This motion was granted.

The defense moved to allow other expert witness testimony on transgender issues. The judge will make a final decision about allowing expert witness testimony after further deliberation.

The defense moved to allow CeCe more than the one change of clothes generally permitted. This motion was granted. (Today she wore black skinny slacks with a magenta button-down, black and grey paisley sweater and absolutely superb grey pumps.)

We are not aware of a decision that has been made regarding whether Dean Schmitz's swastika tattoo will be admitted as evidence during the trial.

Jury selection will begin Tuesday, May 1st.

5/1 Trial Update

The whole day in court was spent on the jury selection process. Literally the WHOLE DAY, nothing else happened. Court will resume at 9:00 a.m. tomorrow, and jury selection is expected to conclude in the morning. Opening arguments will likely occur in the afternoon.

5/2 CeCe Accepts Plea Agreement to Reduced Manslaughter Charge

Earlier today, Ms. Chrishaun “CeCe” McDonald accepted a plea agreement to a reduced charge of manslaughter in the second degree in the criminal case resulting from the racist, transphobic assault she survived last June that left one of her attackers dead. The prosecution had originally charged her with felony murder in the second degree. However, after entering into plea negotiations this morning, the defense and the prosecution settled on the reduced charge. McDonald will be sentenced on June 4th at 1:30pm under Hennepin County Judge Daniel Moreno to 41 months in prison. The executed sentence will be reduced by one third, for “good time” and credit for the time McDonald has served pending this resolution.

The plea agreement comes nearly a year after McDonald was arrested, interrogated, denied adequate medical care for a laceration she suffered during the attack and held in solitary confinement for a month for being a transgender person. During the pre-trial proceedings, supporters raised world-wide support for the charges against McDonald to be dropped. Last month, supporters delivered to Hennepin County Attorney Michael Freeman a petition for dropping the charges with over 15,000 signatures and dozens of letters of support for McDonald from organizations and prominent individuals from around the globe.

Freeman consistently failed to exercise his professional discretion and take a stand against racism and transphobia by dropping the charges.

“Freeman’s aggressive prosecution of CeCe was a continuation of the racist, transphobic assault that led to her being charged and resulted in the tragic death of one of the assailants,” said Kris Gebhard of the CeCe McDonald Support Committee. “We’ve been proud to stand with CeCe as she fought this unjust prosecution and will continue to stand with her as she fights for justice as a trans woman of color within the prison system.”

In a press conference after the plea agreement was accepted in court, Katie Burgess of the Trans Youth Support Network addressed the crowd of supporters filling the steps outside the Hennepin County Courthouse. Burgess said:

“Over the past 10 months I have witnessed the legal system isolating and attacking another young trans woman of color in our community, CeCe McDonald. And over the past 10 months, I have also witnessed our community say very clearly, ‘You are not alone, CeCe! And we have had enough!’

“With the whole world watching, Freeman’s office consistently chose not to take the opportunity to stand up against racism and transphobia. Freeman himself said, and I quote, ‘The criminal justice system is not built for, nor is it necessarily good at, solving a lot of society’s problems.’

“We know that this system is not designed to deliver justice to young trans women of color. We are going to continue to support CeCe as she goes through this process and continue to stand for justice for all trans people and people of color so that this is the last time a young trans woman of color has to go through this.”

Supporters will pack the courtroom for the sentencing on June 4th and continue to rally support for McDonald and to demand justice for all trans people and people of color.

5/4 What CeCe Pled To

Hey folks- Because some misinformation has been spread through the media, we wanted to share details of what CeCe actually testified to when she pled guilty in court on May 2. Several members of the support committee took detailed notes during CeCe’s plea hearing, and the information below is based on those notes. We believe this is an accurate and complete account of the factual basis laid out for her plea, but we do not have the actual court transcript to draw from at this point:

Statement of facts

- McDonald was with friends, all of whom were black, at her apartment the night of June 5th, 2011.
- McDonald is a transgender person transitioning from male to female.

- Around midnight, McDonald and her friends decided to leave her apartment to walk to the Cub Grocery Store to purchase food.
- On the way to the Cub, they passed the Schooner Tavern.
- Outside the bar were four white individuals, including Dean Schmitz and Molly Flaherty.
- Schmitz and Flaherty and maybe other individuals made racist and transphobic remarks to McDonald and her friends.
- McDonald elected to walk away but could not because Flaherty smashed a glass across McDonald's face, cutting through her cheek and lacerating her salivary gland.
- McDonald later received treatment for her laceration at the hospital.
- McDonald ended up in a fight with Flaherty and had to defend herself.
- Schmitz entered the fight and McDonald also had to defend herself against him.
- McDonald tried to leave the scene to get help for her laceration and made it to the intersection.
- Schmitz ran after McDonald, who turned around to face him.
- McDonald was afraid when she saw Schmitz and pulled scissors out of her purse to defend herself.
- McDonald handled the scissors in a way that created an unreasonable risk to Schmitz. She understands that she introduced a weapon into the fight and that doing so always has the potential of causing a death. She further understands that she has the legal duty to handle a weapon in a way that no one is harmed.
- Schmitz pulled McDonald towards her and ended up with the scissors in his chest.
- McDonald understood that submitting this plea means that she was giving up her claim to legally acting in self-defense and was not saying that someone else did it.
- McDonald agreed that Schmitz died as a result of the stab wound he suffered.
- McDonald stated that she had never met any of the attackers before that night.

CeCe McDonald Deserves Our Support, “Innocent” or Not by Kenyon Farrow

This week CeCe McDonald, the young black transgender woman on trial for murdering a white man who'd attacked her and a group of friends, shocked many of her supporters. Many thought she'd plead innocent to the second-degree murder charges, since the weapon was never found, and the case against her is largely circumstantial. But instead of pleading her innocence at the beginning of her trial, McDonald accepted a deal and pled guilty to a lesser charge of second-degree manslaughter.

This case, more than any other of the numerous cases of black LGBT people accused of crimes after getting the better of an attacker, seemed to galvanize not only the transgender community and allies, but the attention of national press outlets, including MSNBC, [Democracy Now!](#), [The Advocate](#), [Huffington Post](#), [Daily Kos](#), and many others. While many of us were hoping to see McDonald fight the charges and hopefully win an acquittal, I certainly hope that the transgender activists, the LGBT community and other allies don't abandon McDonald, as is so often the case when the question of being “innocent” becomes the framework for the investment of sympathizers.

It is true that McDonald was not out looking for a fight. On the night of June 5, 2011, McDonald walked past a bar with four other black friends in Minneapolis. She and her friends were attacked by two white women and a white man, first with words, “niggers,” “faggots,” and “chicks with dicks.”

But the words, while enough to incite a response, were not the end of it. McDonald was struck in the face with a cocktail glass by one of the women, slicing all the way through her cheek. A fight ensued as more people joined in to attack the group of black folks, and eventually Dean Schmitz, the white man who was among the first to start harassing them, was stabbed and died later in the hospital.

Even if there is not physical evidence in place to secure the conviction the prosecutor originally sought, it doesn't really matter. A black person who fights with white people, even when self-defense is clear, is going to likely be arrested. This is often true also in transphobic and homophobic contexts, even when the violence is between people of the same race. The burden to prove one didn't deserve to die or be brutalized often falls on black, queer and/or trans bodies. In fact, McDonald's judge [ruled that the swastika tattooed on Schmitz's body was inadmissible](#) by her defense as evidence of his racist assault.

If McDonald in fact did respond to the verbal or physical assault, I certainly could not blame her, but too often this becomes the fault line that's drawn for victims of racialized and/or gender-based violence. When a straight black man in New York City was wounded after assaulting seven young black lesbians one night in 2006, even the white gay newspaper the now-defunct New York Blade [offered an editorial](#), calling the women a "gang" and questioning their right to defend themselves. I often wonder if Matthew Shepherd had gotten the better of his attackers, would the New York Blade and others have opined on the question of violence in the case of self-defense.

Last summer, when black queer punk performance artist (and a close friend) Brontez Purnell and bandmate Adal Kahlo were assaulted by some black Caribbean men in Oakland, a [few people questioned](#) whether Purnell had properly conducted himself in the moment.

In Indiana just yesterday, a black gay high school student is facing [expulsion](#) because he brought a stun gun to school to protect himself from bullies. People will undoubtedly argue that his actions were "improper," even though his mother reportedly gave him the weapon to protect himself. I am more twice his age, and my mother, often worried about my safety as a black gay man (and one of her best Black gay friends was murdered in 1986) has done the same.

But it's not just black queers who have to deal with the question of innocence, or what is the so-called "proper" way for Black people to respond to incessant threats. In the case of Trayvon Martin, in all of the media that came in the wake of his murder, very little was discussed about the constant levels at which black people, particularly black young people, feel unsafe in the world, despite the fact that they are always portrayed as the thing creating the possibility of violence for others.

For example, it was reportedly said to McDonald that she was dressed in women's clothing to "rape" Schmitz that night. But I would imagine McDonald, like many trans and cis-gendered women, live with the fear — and too often the painful memories — of sexual violence. As a gay man who has been threatened with abduction by men of varying races on the street or in passing vehicles, I wonder if that was one of the fears Trayvon Martin felt, when he first heard the heavy footsteps of Zimmerman treading behind him in cagey pursuit.

The black person's fear of our own safety from violence (and certainly black mens' fear of sexual assault as one potential kind of violent encounter by police or someone else, as in the case of [Abner Louima](#), a black immigrant who was sexually assaulted with a broomstick by NYPD officers in a local precinct bathroom) is just not what Americans care to imagine. It's as if all the work done to re-frame racialized notions of public safety and self-defense by Malcolm X and the Black Panther Party have been lost to history.

But the need for that framework is as necessary now as ever, considering the dozens (if not hundreds) of murders by police and white citizens of black people in recent years. McDonald may claim self-defense in the case of her manslaughter trial, but the legal strategy is not what interests me. She may have many reasons for pleading to the manslaughter charge, one of which, may be to just get this behind her, or feeling the inevitability of a "guilty of anything we choose" verdict. But what I hope is that whatever the reasons, and whatever her sentence will be, that LGBTQ activists and allies do not back away from supporting her over the question of innocence. She has the right to be free from violence, she has a right to defend herself, and we should continue to defend her too.

28 Apr - UC Davis Students and Faculty Face Prison Time for Peaceful Protest Against Bank

The pepper spraying of UC Davis students shocked the nation, but the persecution that the Davis Dozen protesters face is far worse.

MORE:

The pepper-spraying of University of California Davis protesters on November 18, 2011 promised to be a galvanizing moment for the student movement after University Police Lieutenant John Pike used military grade pepper spray at point blank range on seated protesters who had peacefully assembled to demonstrate against tuition hikes at UC Davis. The world took notice. Not only did the Lieutenant Pike pepper-spray “meme” spread like wildfire on Facebook and Twitter, major news outlets gave the event coverage, to varying degrees of depth and understanding.

But it seems that the University administration has successfully evaded scrutiny of the role it played in a series of events that began in January at UC Davis when 12 protesters, some of whom had been pepper-sprayed in November, staged another peaceful sit-in at the campus branch of US Bank. The sit-in was an important political action in defense of public funding of the University and against the replacement of that funding by private contracts with corporations. The protestors won an enormous victory when US Bank closed its University branch on February 28, possibly breaking its agreement with UC Davis.

Banks have no place on University campuses for many reasons. Part of the function of the contract UC Davis had with US Bank allowed the administration’s continued shift of funding of the University from public to private sources. This is particularly problematic when the private source of funding is a corporate bank, because banks make money from rising tuition costs, in the form of interest from student loans. In other words: university contracts with banks encourage tuition hikes, because banks stand to profit directly from rising tuition, while the administration comes to rely on funding from bank contracts.

This is a part of a vicious cycle that is destroying the public character of the UC system — and costing thousands of dollars to students in increased tuition and long-term debt every year. Just six years ago, tuition at the University of California was \$5,357. Tuition is currently \$12,192. According to current proposals, it will be \$22,068 by 2015-2016, amounting to a 312% increase in just 10 years. These tuition hikes increasingly force more and more students out of higher education altogether and put untenable financial burdens on those who must take out crippling loans and work extra jobs for an education that is now public in name only.

The protestors’ success in this fight against the privatization agenda of the University should be cause for celebration; however, on March 29, nearly a month after the bank pulled out of UC Davis, the 11 students and 1 professor involved in the sit-in received orders to appear at Yolo County Superior Court. At the request of the UC Davis administration, District Attorney Jeff Reisig is charging the so-called Davis Dozen with 20 counts each of obstructing movement in a public place, and one count of conspiracy. If convicted, the protesters could each face up to 11 years each in prison, and \$1 million in damages. The UC Davis administration is sending a clear message to protesters: dissent will not be tolerated. And those who do protest will face a violence much more pernicious than pepper-spraying at the hands of Lieutenant Pike.

Unfortunately, this time around there is no graphic youtube video that could potentially go viral and capture the psychological and financial stress the protesters are under as they face the possibility of having to leave school and, even worse, say goodbye to friends, family, partners and children as they go off to serve time in the California penal system. There is no video to elicit gasps of horror at the threat of a lifetime of financial ruin that the protesters face. There is no video to show the unremitting repression of their democratic right to freedom of assembly and political protest.

There is no video to capture the machinations of the UC Davis administration, under the direction of Chancellor Linda Katehi, who appears to be seeking retribution for the pending ACLU lawsuit against the university for the pepper spray incident. Whereas no charges were filed against the protestors after the pepper spray incident, the

District Attorney is now quite willing to prosecute the 12 demonstrators charged with “obstructing movement in a public place”.

Obstructing movement in a public place? That sounds a whole lot like an ad hoc law designed to silence dissent. And what better time for the UC Davis Administration to subject protesters to an absurd version of the law than when nobody is watching? If the world were watching, surely we would ask why these peaceful protesters could be sentenced to 11 years in prison, which, for the sake of comparison, is the maximum penalty for voluntary manslaughter in the state of California. It bears repeating: students and faculty who put their educations, careers, families as well as their own bodies on the line to defend the accessibility of public education for all, now stand to serve the same sentence as a felon who has killed another human being.

The pepper spraying of UC Davis students shocked the nation, but the persecution that the Davis Dozen protesters face is far worse. It is life-altering for them. We cannot allow the story of the Davis Dozen to fall through the cracks, even though it might not strike a chord as immediately visceral as the now infamous video of Lieutenant Pike attacking students with a chemical agent. Let us reflect on the tragic irony that the state funding that should be allocated to aiding the intellectual growth and development of the 11 students involved in the sit-in might be funneled towards their incarceration. The modest salary that is paid to a professor, committed enough to advocate for public education might be replaced by state money to keep this highly gifted professional locked up.

And indeed, if we look at where the state money paid by the people of California for services to foster the common good, we can plainly see that this scenario is a sinister microcosm. In 2011, the UC and CSU systems account for \$5.6 billion of state funding, while the prisons are receiving \$9.6 billion dollars from the state. The state spends about \$50,000 per inmate each year. We cannot look the other way and allow the boot of the penal system to fall on these protesters, while corrupt University administrators secure the way to enrich the 1% on California’s dime with impunity and at the expense of public education. We must immediately demand that all charges be dropped against the Davis Dozen.

28 Apr - Eugene Po-Po Pick On Little Kids, Then Mace Moms

While Cascadia Forest Defense is out in the woods occupying the Goose timber sale, their friends in town are busy Occupying trees as well. It seems like the local media mostly hasn’t noticed, so Eugene Occupy the Trees had a small march. Some called it a “kids’ march,” and it was indeed a family friendly event before some police decided to mess with the kids...

MORE:

[Occupier] Lotus says officers were trying to hand out stickers to some children, and that’s when the problems escalated.

“She said, ‘Don’t take that. Don’t give that to my son, and I don’t want you to have that. You’re not welcome here.’ And then he reached out to give him another sticker, and then she reached out and slap her son’s hand away and made contact with cop and so she hit his hand,” Lotus said.

...

The officer didn’t arrest the woman because of the large crowd, but then approached her a short time later to make an arrest.

“Another person interfered with that arrest and both were subsequently arrested. There was some physical resistance, and that’s when pepper spray was used,” cops said.

“They took her and literally threw her on to the ground. Her girlfriend was pepper sprayed, and it was just a really overblown police response. The entire area was full of vehicles and the kids were there screaming,” Lotus said.

Seriously? Eugene Po-Po giving unwanted objects to kids and then macing their Moms in broad daylight. Why? Because they can get away with it in today’s Eugene, as well as widespread treatment of Occupiers like scum.

It's notable that the Eugene Police have long been under the impression that street kids (or those who look like street kids) are not actually people.

30 Apr - Pre-May Day Police Raids in New York City and May Day News Roundup

The cops got a jump on harassing folks in NYC by having the warrant squad show up to at least five houses to question them about their May Day plans. We've pasted information on that, as well as a roundup of May Day arrests, below.

MORE:

This morning around 6:30am at least five houses were raided by NYPD detectives. In these cases, the cops used the pretext of spurious arrest warrants to gain access to apartments of local anarchists. The warrants were for individuals unconnected to those homes, but allowed cops access to one and apparently justified them forcibly breaking into another.

After entering the apartments the police searched them, intimidated the residents, and ran their identification. In one of the instances, an anarchist organizer was taken into a separate room and interrogated by detectives about past actions and upcoming plans for May Day.

It waits to be seen if more houses were subject to raids this morning. Regardless, this 'preemptive strike' by the NYPD was clearly a coordinated effort to intimidate local organizers and fish for information.

This news comes on top of reports that over the past weeks hundreds of cops have been drilling on Randall's Island in anticipation of May Day. Those in the NYC area should be aware of these cop tactics and take any necessary precautions in the hours leading up to tomorrow's activities.

If there was any doubt how seriously the cops are taking our efforts then those doubts can be put to bed. But if they think that intimidation and harassment can stop us, they have another thing coming.

Tomorrow they won't be raiding innocent individuals in their beds, they will be up against tens of thousands of angry New Yorkers who have had enough of their bullshit.

May Day, 2012, by Lynne Stewart

May Day, a celebration of the Worker and May Day, a commemoration of the Immigrant migration has now become a single holiday---and how appropriate that is !! The massive immigrant influx of the late 19 century was primarily a new supply of workers for the unending appetite of capitalism. Cheap Labor. Europe had become a dead end -- wars, a class and land system that allowed no upward mobility and less and less opportunity for their children to learn or be somebody. My own Swedish great grandparents came over as indentured workers--having to pay for their passage by the sweat of their (yes, women too) brows doing farm labor for two years. This is a story that had been repeated through all the waves of immigrants--Italian, Greek, Slavic, Eastern European, Asian (Chinese, Filipino), Caribbean and now Latin American and African. What has shifted is the structure that now has the United States as the Great Imperialist, first ravaging their homes militarily and economically and then casting large numbers of newly created displaced people adrift on the economic seas. As one Jamaican friend and immigrant once said to me "Why shouldn't we come here? You have everything stolen from us !!"

Before I go further, I have a word for two special groups of workers and their paths and current status in America. Blacks were kidnapped and brought here 400 years ago because it was "difficult "to enslave native Americans on their own lands. Africans were readily identifiable--and thus if you were Black you were a Slave. That has not changed much in 400 years. Just Ask Travon Martin and the other "targets". Through all the years and all the continued resistance and struggle, that simple fact has always been determinative. Today, it is also being used as a wedge to separate natural allies into enemies. In the days preceding the Civil War, Workers and Abolitionists fought side by side to achieve equality for both. And that of course continues to be the goal--to demonstrate convincingly that all the media and all the tricks cannot divide the 99%. Black people can rightfully claim their fair share of all the wealth, they slaved for no pay, but that does not mean that others are

not entitled as well. Mexicans, whose land was stolen from them, the other special group that must be mentioned, have this year almost stopped coming to the US. Does that mean more jobs for those already here?--NO NO NO that is a cruel and cheap hoax. Mexican immigrants do not take jobs that Blacks and other Americans want. Like all newcomers they do the grunt and dirty work -- no-one in New York City could have a meal in a restaurant if it were not for the immigrants--mostly Latino, who provide the infrastructure. This is not a competition for jobs except so far as those who control the dollars make it so.

Two warnings to all from my own experience. First, as immigrants anxious to be part of the American dream DO NOT join the part of it that says I can get past on skin color and I can advance myself by being racist and exploiting "those" people just as every preceding immigrant group has done. My other alert is to People of Color---Do not blame the immigrants for your plight in white America, they came to work and made themselves indispensable. It is the same old white power structure that exploits both labor and race and racial differences for their own advancement that is responsible. Don't adopt convenient scapegoats when the battle is there to be fought with the courage to do so against the true enemy.

The only PROGRESS to be sought on May DAY 2012 by all of us is a unity of purpose, by truly believing that an injury to one is an injury to all and acting in self defense against the powerful, unscrupulous forces who seek to destroy our movement. This year we are once again confronted with a Presidential Election that for many is choosing the "lesser of two evils". Let me remind you that as James Baldwin, the Black author, once said--evil is always evil and the politicians including Mr. Obama have demonstrated their total untrustworthiness over and over and over. Promises?-- a hollow joke; and Programs?-- on paper or words of the air -- never put into practice. This is not to be Tolerated!!!

May Day is for the beginning of new offensives and we certainly have a vast choice -- there is so much wrong, so much that needs fixing. We must band together until they are more afraid of OUR power than their greedy fear of losing their vast fortunes. This we Must do -- our children and grandchildren assure us there is no choice, if there is to be a world for them to live and work and raise the next generations in.

Seattle Report (corporate account)

Tuesday's violent May Day protests resulted in eight arrests and damage to downtown buildings that will cost tens of thousands of dollars, authorities said.

Some businesses were forced to close early and commuters were delayed for hours as the annual day of protest got out of hand.

Seattle police were already reviewing video Tuesday night, trying to identify anarchists clad in black who shattered windows and threw paint bombs.

At least one officer was hit by a bottle of urine, a baggie of feces was found left among the protests and other items confiscated by police included a pry bar, hammer, rocks and more than a dozen lighters taped together.

Eight people were arrested Tuesday, including a man who shattered a glass jar on the face shield of an officer.

The protests turned violent early, and city leaders responded with emergency action, and a more forceful police presence curbed violence during evening demonstrations. Many of the evening protestors were peaceful, but it was a core group that Mayor Mike McGinn called the "black bloc" who ruined the long-planned protest for immigrant and workers rights.

And when a heavy downpour came just before 7 p.m., hundreds began leaving the rally.

"This is a city that believes that believes in peaceful protests," Police Chief John Diaz said. "It's extremely unfortunate that we have small groups of people wanting to hijack these events."

Police were not especially close as protestors shattered windows at a downtown Seattle Wells Fargo shortly after noon Tuesday, nor were they close to anarchist protestors who threw rocks through windows, shattered glass door panels and set off a smoke bomb at the old federal courthouse near Sixth Avenue and Spring Street.

The violent demonstrators calling for the end of capitalism and school were mostly teens and adults in their early 20s. Mostly young men used wooden sticks to shatter the former courthouse windows while several young women threw projectiles into federal building windows.

Diaz had briefed McGinn on the potential for violence two weeks ago, and though police expected a major disturbance, both acknowledged there was little that could be done to stop angry mobs intent on causing havoc. Police used undercover officers and had officers in riot gear near Westlake Center and at other locations.

Protestors threw paint bombs of florescent green and blood red, damaging businesses and sidewalks near the downtown library. Anarchists turned on photographers, and KING/5 photojournalist Richard Departee was struck in the face with a wood pole. He kept rolling with blood dripping down the left side of his neck. Another reporter, KOMO/4's Joel Moreno, was doused with red paint near Westlake Park Tuesday evening.

After anarchists left the former federal courthouse, they turned to windows at Niketown, the Taphouse Grill, American Apparel and other locations – and police moved in faster. The Homestreet Bank in the 1300 block of Sixth Avenue had a large window shattered and a Bank of America in the 500 block of Olive Street had windows shattered during the afternoon rally.

But it was primarily the anarchist damage at the old federal courthouse and the Wells Fargo location that moved city leaders to take further action.

At 3:02 p.m., Mayor Mike McGinn signed a proclamation of civil emergency after discussions with other city leaders giving police “the authority to confiscate any weapon or implement reasonably perceived or believed to be capable of being used as a weapon.”

The eight arrests were made by 6:30 p.m., and those included a 19-year-old man arrested for carrying a fixed-blade knife in the 400 block of Pike Street and a 23-year-old man was arrested for vandalism in the 1300 block of Sixth Avenue.

“Some of these people think it’s fun and games out there. It isn’t,” said Seattle Police Chief John Diaz. He said officers were searching for several more suspects and that he will seek the toughest charges possible against them.

By 4:30 p.m., some downtown Seattle businesses began covering their windows with plywood to avoid potential damage. Earlier at the downtown American Eagle, customers were briefly locked inside to keep safe as black-clad anarchists vandalized property outside.

About 4:45 p.m., demonstrators were going east on Pike Street and traffic on First and Second avenues was blocked. Dozens of Seattle bike officers followed on the sides of protestors, and at least a half-dozen sticks were confiscated as potential threats.

At about 5:30 p.m., lines of police cleared the area around Fourth Avenue and Pine Street, and most angry demonstrators had only continual verbal jabs. A leader of the Occupy event at Westlake Park told marchers not to move when police tried to relocate them.

“Same struggle same fight, Occupy and immigrant rights,” protestors chanted as they marched south on Third Avenue to University Street.

The march for immigrant and workers’ rights went Tuesday evening from Judkins Park and met the Occupy group to a roar of cheers about 6:15 p.m. near Fourth Avenue and Columbia Street. That May Day march from

Judkins had been planned for week and McGinn said that demonstration of the First Amendment was different from the violence seen earlier.

That rally lasted for about another hour with no arrests and no instances of the violence seen earlier. The majority of demonstrators were peaceful at that and on earlier marches, but it was the crowd of nearly 100 black-clad anarchists that created problems.

“We’re sorry this had to happen in this beautiful city,” said McGinn, who stressed the long-organized May Day protests often occur without violent infiltrators.

- Wells Fargo: smashed (Seattle Times originally reported 5 smashed—all downtown branches. In reality, other branches closed after this one was smashed.)
- Taphouse Grill: smashed
- Federal Court House: smashed, smokebombed, small fire set
- Multiple Starbucks: smashed and painted
- American Apparel at 6 and Pike, windows smashed and slogan written: “Death to capitalism,” small fire set
- Bank of America at 500 Olive: smashed
- Homestreet Bank at 1300 block of 6th Ave: windows smashed
- NikeTown at 6th and Pike: windows smashed, smokebombed, paintbombed
- Multiple vehicles in 500 block of Seneca, and in 1500 block of 6th Ave: windows smashed, tires slashed, spray painted
- Barney’s New York- slogan painted: “proletarianism”
- Verizon shop: smashed
- Nordstrom corporate office: smashed
- HSBC bank: smashed

1 May - Five accused of conspiring to blow up Cleveland-area bridge

We’re including a corporate news item as well as a more critical response to news of five men who were arrested on May Day. This already wreaks of entrapment and we expect to be reporting on this case for the foreseeable future.

MORE:

A mohawk-wearing anarchist nicknamed "Cyco" was among five men arrested after allegedly conspiring to blow up a bridge about 15 miles south of Cleveland, according to court documents released Tuesday.

Douglas L. Wright, 26, joined alleged co-conspirators Brandon L. Baxter, 20, a.k.a. "Skabby," and Anthony Hayne, 37, a.k.a. "Tony" and "Billy," in a plot authorities say homed in on the Brecksville-Northfield High Level Bridge, which spans the Cuyahoga Valley National Park and carries a four-lane highway.

The men were arrested Monday evening in an FBI sting, but posed no real danger to the public because the explosives they had were inert and were controlled by an undercover FBI employee, the bureau said in a news release.

The men have been charged with conspiracy and attempted use of explosive materials to damage physical property affecting interstate commerce.

Connor C. Stevens, 20, and Joshua S. Stafford, 23, also were arrested, though their charges remain pending.

Authorities say at least three of the men are self-proclaimed anarchists who had considered "a series of evolving plots over several months."

"The defendants stand charged based not upon any words or beliefs they might espouse, but based upon their own plans and actions," U.S. Attorney Steven Dettelbach said in a statement.

They allegedly conspired to acquire plastic explosives (C-4) and build two bombs, affixing them to the bridge's support columns to be remotely detonated on Monday.

Wright, Baxter and a man referred to as C.S. allegedly agreed to pay \$900 for the devices, as well as separate riot gear, according to a criminal complaint filed Tuesday in U.S. District Court.

At first, they'd considered using smoke grenades to distract local law enforcement in an effort to "topple financial institution signs atop high rise buildings," the complaint says.

Wright allegedly was interested in "The Anarchist Cookbook," which describes the construction and use of explosives. "We can make smoke bombs, we can make plastic explosives. ... It teaches you how to pick locks. It does everything," he is alleged to have said.

According to the complaint, authorities were first alerted to the beginnings of the alleged scheme last year when an undercover FBI employee attended a protest group's event.

The employee was deployed, the complaint said, because of "an initial report of potential criminal activity and threats involving anarchists who would be attending."

During the event on October 21, 2011, an undercover FBI employee observed "four suspicious males with walkie-talkie radios around their necks," the complaint says. Some of the men also donned black masks while carrying anarchist flags and "acted differently than the other people in attendance."

The men were "constantly moving through the crowd expressing displeasure at the crowd's unwillingness to act violently," it says.

"During a briefing between protesters and organizers, the organizers explained who would be arrested, emphasizing that they wanted everyone to conduct peaceful civil disobedience," the complaint adds. "One of the original four men turned away and said 'f--- that' before the group of men walked away."

During the course of the alleged plot, however, Baxter later expressed reservations, saying that blowing up a bridge "would not stop money flowing to the 'one percent,'" the complaint says.

The reference is catch-all phrase commonly employed by the Occupy movement in describing America's wealthy, particularly those atop the financial services industry, suggesting they hold disproportionate influence over the rest of the country.

"Occupy Cleveland," a local branch of the loosely organized protest that began last year in New York's Zuccotti Park, tweeted on Tuesday that it was "shocked by these allegations."

"We continue to be committed to creating social change through non-violence," the group said.

Federal authorities say the year-long operation focused on the five suspects and had not targeted the broader Occupy movement.

"The FBI and the Department of Justice are not and do not investigate movements," Dettelbach told reporters Tuesday. "We investigate crimes."

CNN National Security contributor Fran Townsend said she would expect no others to be named in the case. "Typically in the course of an investigation, you let that investigation run until you identify all those you believe pose a threat and then you wrap them all up at the same time," she said.

The men, whose attorneys could not be immediately reached for comment, were slated to appear before a federal magistrate in U.S. District court later Tuesday.

FBI Supplied the Anarchist "Terrorists" Arrested in May Day Plot

As the Occupy movement carries out massive May Day protests around the country, the FBI Joint Terrorism Task force is trumpeting the arrest of "self-proclaimed anarchists" and "terrorists" who allegedly conspired to destroy a bridge in Ohio. Integral to the development and advancement of this plot, however, were FBI agents themselves and an informant with a drug and robbery record.

Douglas L. Wright, 26; Brandon L. Baxter, 20; and Anthony Hayne, 35, Connor C. Stevens, 20, and Joshua S. Stafford, 23, were arrested by the FBI on April 30, just in time to make the announcement as the nation turns its attention to May Day protests.

The affidavit reveals a plot by the FBI that continues a pattern of behavior in "terrorism" investigations against political activists. Most importantly, undercover FBI agents helped shape the "plot," offered advice on how and where to use explosives, and allegedly sold explosives to the activists.

Pervasive Use of Informants and Undercover FBI

The informant in the case has been working with the FBI since July 20, 2011, and has a criminal record including possession of cocaine, conviction for robbery, and four convictions for passing bad checks. (The FBI's proclivity for using down-and-out criminals was a key issue in the "Operation Backfire" Earth Liberation Front cases. The lead arsonist and informant, Jacob Ferguson, had a heroin addiction, and is now [back in prison on drug charges](#)).

The informant and the others haphazardly talked about various plans, starting with the use of smoke grenades and destroying bank signs off the top of large buildings.

For instance, on April 10, 2012: "...BAXTER explained that he does not know what to do with the explosives and he has never considered blowing anything up before."

Conversation shifted to other outrageous plans. According to the affidavit, "WRIGHT joked that he would wear a suicide vest and walk in and blow himself up, but advised he would have to be very drunk."

"The CHS [the informant] asked the others what it is they wanted to do... BAXTER said that they had never decided on the bridge, they were just throwing out options and they had never decided on anything."

FBI Guidance

The defendants flitted between hyperbolic conversations — some about destroying bank signs, some about destroying a boat, some about a bridge — and various spy tactics such as secret email accounts, wiping computer drives, and disrupting surveillance. At every step of the way, the informant (who was paid nearly \$6,000, plus expenses) and undercover FBI agents were there to correct course.

At one point Wright asked the undercover FBI agent "if there was any work he could do... to pay for the items he was going to purchase" from the agent. Later, Connor Stevens told Wright that he no longer wanted to be part of the plan, but wanted to know if the informant might hire him to do some work on his house.

At another point, Wright told the informant that he and others thought one of the individuals involved was an undercover cop (which he was). To allay his fears, the informant said he would help provide the explosives.

Clamoring to Thwart “Terrorist Plots”

U.S. Attorney Dettelbach called this a violent terrorist plot, and said: “The defendants stand charged based not upon any words or beliefs they might espouse, but based upon their own plans and actions.”

What’s troubling is that the government has had a heavy hand in creating the very plot it thwarted.

And on top of that, the defendants, by the admission of the FBI, said repeatedly that they had no intention of harming anyone. At one point Baxter and Wright “stated they don’t want people to think they are terrorists.”

This isn’t an isolated instance.

The criminal complaint reads like the spitting image of the case of [Eric McDavid](#), who was coaxed by an undercover FBI operative named “Anna.” In that case, like this one, the FBI supplied bomb making recipes, bomb making materials, and attempts to distill activist boasting and hyperbole into a coherent plan.

McDavid did nothing, and was arrested on conspiracy charges, like these defendants have been. As readers of this site know, conspiracy charges are the fall-back for the government when there is not enough evidence to get anything else to “stick.”

Demonization of Anarchism

In addition to a continuation of undercover informants and FBI-manufactured plots, this case also reflects on on-going focus on demonizing anarchists.

The government’s [press release](#) proclaims that the defendants are “self-proclaimed anarchists.” The affidavit notes that they attended anarchist protests and carried anarchist flags.

The affidavit also says that the defendants talked about anarchists “rioting and destroying each city” that holds May Day protests, and that it will be “off the hook.”

Demonizing anarchists has gone one for over a century, of course, but in recent years the rhetoric has dovetailed with “War on Terrorism” hysteria.

For example, in [Scott Demuth’s case](#), the government argued that: “Defendant’s writings, literature, and conduct suggest that he is an anarchist and associated with the ALF movement. Therefore, he is a domestic terrorist.”

In another case, the government sought a [high cash bond against environmentalist Hugh Farrell](#) because “the defendant has been observed advocating literature and materials which advocate anarchy.”

It should come as no surprise, then, that the announcement of these arrests was carefully unveiled yesterday, so that the top news story this May Day would not be about how [anarchists are preventing home foreclosures, starting community gardens](#), teaching collective organizing skills, and re-framing class consciousness, but about how they were part of an FBI-guided “terrorist plot.”

1 May – Opening of Jalil Muntaqim’s Summer Parole Campaign

The Jericho Movement received a copy of a letter from Jalil asking that we open a Parole Campaign for his late summer hearing. We’ve included below necessary information. He would like folks to start writing now so that the letters will be there by early July.

MORE:

Letters to the parole board supporting his request (Re: Parole application of Anthony Jalil Bottom #77-A-4283). Please address the letter to:

Ms. Andrea W. Evans
Board of Parole Chairwoman
New York State Division of Parole
97 Central Avenue, 4th floor
Albany, New York 12206

And also send a copy to:
NYC Jericho
Post Office Box 1272
New York, New York 10013

The more personal and individual your letter is, the better. You can write about visiting or communicating with Jalil, or if you haven't been in direct touch with him, you can write about the articles you've read by him or any other knowledge you have of his activities while in prison. Please say that you are aware of the case for which he is serving his sentence. You can also talk about your own perspective - for example, if you are a teacher, you know how valuable it is that Jalil has counseled young prisoners. Any particular slant you can give to your assertion that he will be an excellent candidate for release can give the letter more force.

Some of Jalil's achievements while incarcerated:

In 1986, Mr. Bottom drafted a legislative bill for New York State prisoners to obtain good time off their sentence. The bill was submitted and introduced into the New York State Assembly - Committee on Corrections by former Assemblyman Arthur O. Eve.

In 1994, while incarcerated at Shawangunk Correctional Facility, Mr. Bottom established the first Men's Council in the United States prison. His efforts were featured on television in Japan and written about in the NY Times. During this period, he also graduated from SUNY New Paltz with a B.S. in Psychology and a B.A. in Sociology. Instead of resting on his success, he taught African Studies to a group of prisoners.

On two occasions, he received commendations from prison officials for quelling potential prison riots, one in the mess hall at Great Meadow Correctional Facility and another time in the auditorium at Greenhaven Correctional Facility.

From 1996 to 1999, Mr. Bottom was the office manager of the prison computer lab at Eastern Correctional Facility. His duties consisted of teaching prisoners keyboarding skills and how to use computer software programs. Despite his busy schedule, he found the time to raise money from inmate accounts to support the charitable Children's Funds.

In 1999, in Auburn Correctional Facility, Mr. Bottom established sociology, poetry, and legal research and discussion classes under the auspices of the Lifer's Committee that he chaired.

Mr. Bottom co-sponsored the Victory Gardens Project, a program in which farmers in Maine grew tons of fresh produce for distribution to poor urban communities in New York, New Jersey and Boston, Massachusetts. In the four years of its existence, the Project distributed nearly 10,000 pounds of fresh produce in urban centers.

In response to the tragedy of September 11, 2001, while in Auburn Correctional Facility, Mr. Bottom proposed raising funds from inmates to donate to the American Red Cross. Former Deputy Superintendent of Programs R. Nelson acknowledged Anthony's efforts in a memorandum.

While in Auburn Correctional Facility he worked as a Pre-GED Teacher's Assistant and earned a vocational certificate for Architectural Drafting. Mr. Bottom has proposed and gained the approval for a Life Skills Program for inmates.

Mr. Bottom is a published poet and essayist; his writings are found in several University sponsored books of

compilations of prison writers. He has also written an unpublished novel and teleplay.

Parole Release Plans

In the event that Anthony Bottom's Application for Parole is approved, he would live in either Syracuse, New York or Austell, Georgia. In Syracuse, he would apply for the Master's program at Maxwell School Syracuse University, to obtain a degree in Public Administration and a certificate in Health Services Management. In Austell, Georgia, he has an offer of employment in the construction field and a home that is to be provided by his mother.

Anthony Bottom has a 39-year-old daughter, two grandchildren and one great grandchild. Over the decades of imprisonment, he has maintained a strong family relationship, although they reside in California and Georgia. Throughout his years of imprisonment, there have been continuous family visits when they were able, including family trailer visits. As an example, in the November 2000, issue of *Essence Magazine*, Anthony Bottom, his daughter and granddaughter were featured in an article titled "Daddy Says," discussing father and daughter relationships. Mr. Bottom will continue to be involved in community service, particularly in regards to AIDS education. He once initiated a campaign to provide school supplies to AIDS orphans in Africa.

1 May - America's political prisoners exposed

The Final Call recently published a fairly comprehensive article on political prisoners and prisoners of war in the United States. We've included it below.

MORE:

(This is the first in a series of articles examining the plight and problem of political prisoners inside the United States.)

Campaigns to free aging revolutionaries and activists have highlighted the reality that political prisoners exist in the United States.

Advocates insist political, law enforcement and corrections officials want to mask decades of parole denials, years of inhumane solitary confinement and episodes of domestic torture inflicted on Blacks and others for challenging racism and oppression.

"The main thing we need to understand is the fact that these soldiers—and they are soldiers—are not in prison because they're criminals. They're in prison for daring to stand up to this rotten, no good system that we live under," said Ramona Africa, minister of information for the MOVE Organization, the Philadelphia-based group founded by John Africa.

Ms. Africa is a former political prisoner, who survived the May 1985 bombing of her family by the Philadelphia police. In 1985, a battle ensued after police tried to arrest MOVE members on charges related to the 1978 death of a police officer. Five children and six adults died in the bombing. Nine members of MOVE were imprisoned. Ramona Africa was jailed for seven years. Debbie Africa died in prison. The remaining members have been in prison for nearly 30 years. MOVE members take the surname "Africa" as part of their beliefs.

Although MOVE members have served the minimum sentence, they are continuously denied parole because they won't lie and say they're guilty, Ramona Africa said.

Similar parole denials are occurring across the U.S. The denials are based on politics, not lack of prison time, threats to society or troublemaking inside penal institutions, according to advocates. Officials want to contain and punish these highly politicized inmates, most of whom are in their 50s and 60s, advocates add.

"When (political prisoners) go to parole board hearings, prosecutors aren't launching legal appeals, but emotional appeals by bringing out police, firemen, family members, all saying he or she should stay in," said Francisco Torres, a onetime Black Panther. Last year the courts finally dropped accusations that he murdered a police officer in 1971.

But not only have political prisoners done their time, their behavior in prison has been exemplary, say advocates.

Many have quelled prison riots and in some instances, wardens have commended them.

“They’ve gotten certificates and diplomas in prison so when it’s time for them to get out, they’re told they’re being held in there because of their politics basically, their beliefs and their thoughts,” Mr. Torres said.

Veronza Bowers, Jr., who served his entire sentence, was labeled a threat to society and denied release under the George W. Bush-era Patriot Act, which expanded police powers. The former Black Panther Party member was convicted of killing a park ranger on the testimony of two informants and has been incarcerated for 37 years now in Atlanta.

Criminals or prisoners of war?

There’s no debate, said Ramona Africa, about the guilt or innocence of freedom fighters like American Indian Movement leader Leonard Peltier, who was at Pine Ridge, S.D., when government officials attacked, she said. Two federal agents died in a shootout at the reservation, and Mr. Peltier was labeled a terrorist, said Ms. Africa. He has been imprisoned since 1976 and is serving time in a federal prison in Florida

“This is getting more and more outrageous because we the people have not stood up like we should, uncompromisingly, and refused to accept it,” Ms. Africa charged.

“I mean, my family was bombed! A bomb was dropped on our home. Babies were burned alive and I know a lot of people are outraged. They were and still are but it’s not enough to just have those feelings. We have to act on those feelings,” Ms. Africa said.

Some say it’s hard to keep track of 1960s and 1970s freedom fighters with people facing bleak economic times and struggling day-to-day to survive. “MOVE understands that but all we’re saying is that we have to put a priority on our freedom and our lives. If we don’t do that, how are we going to expect our enemy to do that, have any kind of value for our lives, our freedom, if we don’t?” Ms. Africa said.

The war on Black liberation

Most political prisoners in the United States stem from repressive and oppressive policies largely ushered in during 1960s and 1970s government targeting, surveillance, infiltration, harassment and destruction of Black Liberation and progressive organizations.

The case of late Black Panther leader Geronimo Pratt is a textbook example of political targeting, say advocates. Mr. Pratt, or Geronimo ji-Jaga, served 27 years in prison for a murder he did not commit. The relentless effort of the late attorney Johnnie Cochran and a tenacious campaign to free him succeeded in 1997 when his conviction was vacated.

A former FBI agent said federal wiretaps placed Mr. Pratt hundreds of miles away from the place where the murders occurred. In 1970, the FBI office in Los Angeles targeted Mr. Pratt, a decorated Vietnam veteran and local Panther minister of defense, seeking to neutralize him. Within months he was facing murder charges. His supporters say ex-Panther Julius Butler, who testified for the prosecution that Mr. Pratt told him about the shooting of a White couple on a tennis court, was an FBI informant. Mr. Pratt died in Tanzania last summer.

Attorney James Simmons, of Los Angeles-based Human Rights Advocacy, is also the legal representative for political prisoners Dr. Mutulu Shakur, in California, and Sundiata Acoli in Maryland.

Dr. Shakur, who has been in prison since 1986, and 10 others were charged in 1982 under U.S. conspiracy laws with participating in armored car and bank robberies with a Black paramilitary group. Mr. Acoli was convicted by an all- White jury in 1977 on charges of murdering a police officer.

Mr. Acoli, 79, has served 39 years in prison and is up for parole, his attorney said. Dr. Shakur, 61, has an upcoming parole hearing as well. Dr. Shakur is the stepfather of the late rapper Tupac Shakur and became involved with the Republic of New Afrika and the liberation struggle as a teenager.

From prison, he has advocated a South African-style truth and reconciliation commission to reveal the targeting of Black groups, highlight resistance efforts, and as a way to free U.S. political prisoners. "Our movement must accept our sojourn of struggle consisted of both legal and 'illegal' tactics (but legitimate under international law). The context of the U.S. legal system is designed to ignore on the one hand the oppression and on the other the right of those to resist that oppression," he wrote in an online paper.

Though a congressional committee documented the illegal and repressive acts of the FBI and government agencies and law enforcement's subversive and [constitution-shredding Cointelpro](#), which aimed to destroy Black and other groups pressing for major changes in the Black Power-era, there is nothing to address "the freedom of our PP's or POW or that memorializes the history that provides a relief for the victims of the quasi-apartheid system in the U.S.," observed Mr. Shakur.

Elaine Brown, former Black Panther Party chairman, talked about two kinds of political prisoners. One might have done something actively or consciously that caused them to be put into prison or are doing something in prison that has caused them to suffer extraordinary punishment by the prison system. Others are prisoners at war, jailed because of their revolutionary work and because they choose to fight back, such as Imam Jamil Al Amin, formerly known as Black Panther leader H. Rap Brown, who fits all these categories, she said.

"Because of the work he was doing, organizing the community in Atlanta, the district attorney actually said after he was wrongfully convicted of killing an Atlanta sheriff, 'We finally got him after 24 years.' Well, when you hear that kind of statement you know this wasn't really about the murder of a deputy sheriff because that killing did not take place 24 years before," Ms. Brown said.

Imam Al-Amin was convicted in the 2000 shooting of two Fulton County deputies, one died, in Atlanta. The deputies were serving summons for a speeding ticket and another minor charge. He is serving life in prison in Colorado and is among nearly 70 political prisoners documented by the Jericho Movement and other national and international human rights groups.

"He is being held in the Supermax prison, 1,400 miles away, which makes traveling very costly. It essentially takes a full day to travel there and another day to return home. It's really been a struggle, and we haven't been able to visit as often as we'd like. Florence is seen by many as a concentration camp for Muslim inmates. Imam Jamil is handcuffed at the waist behind a glass when we see him in one of the legal rooms," said his wife Karima El-Amin, in a 2010 media interview. The imam is in a high security federal prison though he was convicted on state charges.

"On the days we are with him, we are able to visit for approximately six hours. If he receives food during the visit, he has to hold his hands chained in front of him in order to eat. It is a very difficult position, and his wrists begin to swell," said his wife, who is also an attorney.

Supporters of the imam are still fighting for his release and fighting to have him brought to an institution closer to home.

Meanwhile, activists say far too many men and women are still incarcerated, such as Hugo Dahariki Pinell and Russell Maroon Shoatz, both locked in solitary confinement for 35-40 years now.

On May 5, artists, farmers, and New York-based organizers will launch a campaign to free Mr. Shoatz, now 70. Campaign organizers want him immediately released from solitary confinement, as well as other prisoners in solitary who have been in prison for 25 years, and who are 50-plus years old.

"Humanity's in question here and it's about what are we going to do. Are we going to help them?" said Jihad Abdulmumit, co-chair of the Jericho Movement, which works on behalf of political prisoners.

“Somebody is being snatched up right now. Just like that! You or I could be charged for something we don’t know anything about with no opportunity to gain access to information,” he added. Mr. Abdulmumit was talking about changes in civil liberties laws, court rules, use of secret evidence and other erosion of personal and legal rights connected with the war on terror.

“It’s very oppressive and going on among the Black Panthers, the Native American Movement, Puerto Rican nationalists, White comrades, Students for the Democratic Society,” all on the front lines dealing with White racism, he said.

From the more popularly-known, such as journalist Mumia Abu Jamal and Mr. Peltier, to many lesser known-known political prisoners, such as Wopashitwe Mondo Eyen We Langa or Mondo, formerly known as David Rice and Ed Poindexter, known as the Omaha Two, the fight is also for better medical care, support for their families and money to survive.

The first focus is always legal, finding out who is due for state or federal pardons or clemency, and the second is to educate communities on the reality of political prisoners. The government and media have convinced people U.S. political prisoners don’t exist, Mr. Abdulmumit said.

“If somebody was able to capture people’s attention without distraction for 15 minutes, I think there’ll be millions of people demanding these people’s release,” Mr. Abdulmumit said.

Worldwide and national attention helped to free Robert King and get all charges dismissed against the San Francisco 8, Francisco Torres was the last SF8 defendant.

Mr. King served 31 years in Angola State Prison in Louisiana and was freed in 2001 after an overturned conviction. Amnesty International recently delivered a 65,000-signature petition to Louisiana Gov. Bobby Jindal for the release of Albert Woodfox and Herman Wallace. They have been jailed 40 years in solitary confinement at Angola Prison on charges they and Mr. King, known as the Angola 3, murdered a prison guard.

Human rights groups say truth is the men were targeted because they dared form a Black Panther Party chapter to organize Black men within the notorious prison. When a guard died in a prison riot, the three men were falsely tied to the crime, say supporters.

Solitary confinement and other pressures

Solitary confinement must be abolished and its impact on prisoners can be physically and psychologically devastating, said advocates. “It was legal to own slaves. It wasn’t until people saw it as reprehensible that slavery ended,” observed Mr. King.

“We want to raise the bar for everyone. Herman and Albert are not just victims of being held in solitary confinement unjustly for that period of time ... They’re in prison unjustly,” Mr. King continued.

He expects that at a May 29 federal hearing, the judge will reverse Mr. Woodfox’ conviction and grant bond as has been done before, but State Attorney General James “Buddy” Caldwell will try to intercede again, but will be unsuccessful.

Mr. King also feels since the Angola 3 cases are being viewed as one, Mr. Wallace’s may be reversed as well. That means the men may not just be released from solitary confinement, but released from prison altogether.

“Political prisoners should be released from prison altogether because they’re there unjustly ... ending solitary confinement is just one step,” said Mr. King.

Victory for the San Francisco 8 came August 18, 2011, when a judge dismissed the last charges against Mr. Torres. In January 2007, Mr. Torres, and fellow Black Panther Party members were arrested on murder charges for killing a police officer in 1971.

The men, who beat the charge in the 1970s, were targeted under new anti-terror laws and with promises of new evidence from prosecutors. The men were rounded up from across the country, some living as respected solid citizens and others working as community activists.

The case initially had been thrown out because nothing connected any of the SF8 to the killing except confessions derived from torturing three of them and testimony from a Panther who they suspected was a government informant.

“Police tortured people in the most horrific fashion, comparable to tortures inflicted at Abu Ghraib and other places,” said Attorney Simmons. In the 1970s, these men were water boarded, had scouring water poured over towels placed on their bodies, were suffocated, beaten, and had cattle prods poked into their genitals, necks and under arms, among other things, he continued.

The torture back then implicated not just the New Orleans Police Department, which held the men, but the interrogation was overseen by the Los Angeles, San Francisco and New York Police Departments and the FBI, he added.

But when the case was brought back 36 years later, no new evidence ever surfaced, according to Atty. Simmons. There was little publicity when the final charges were dropped, though there had been a barrage of news coverage when the case was brought back.

“We knew they were not going to grant us complete victory in the courtroom because they didn’t want us to cheer,” said Mr. Torres, who learned about the decision in a phone call from his lawyer. “There were highs and lows in the case and when you deal with these people, you never know the end until you can really see the end because they’re always coming back at you in some other way and form,” Mr. Torres told *The Final Call*.

He is working now to get other comrades out of prison, particularly because the majority have satisfied requirements for parole and jumped through all the legal hoops.

2 May – Camille Marino is in Jail

Animal rights activist Camille Marino was arrested after chaining herself to Wayne State University’s undergraduate library in protest of her ban from campus.

MORE:

Marino, of Wildwood, Fla., was banned from campus last fall after writing graphic blog posts about WSU medical school professor and researcher Donal O’Leary and his research on dogs.

O’Leary received a personal protection order from Wayne County courts ordering Marino to take down his home address and phone number from her blog posts.

Marino was due in court today to challenge the order, but that hearing was delayed while she switched attorneys. She has been arguing her posts are protected speech.

Marino and a handful of activists had scheduled a protest for 1 p.m. at WSU, but she arrived early, around noon, and chained herself to the library’s front door with a bicycle lock. She placed a gag across her mouth in protest.

Campus police responded quickly, cut her lock with bolt cutters and arrested her, said WSU spokesman Matt Lockwood.

An arraignment date has not yet been set.

“Wayne State is dedicated to protecting its faculty and has barred Ms. Marino from its campus,” Lockwood said in a statement. “Ms. Marino openly flouted the personal protection order and ignored an order to appear on contempt of court charges.

“Professor O’Leary is engaged in important research attempting to determine the causes of certain cardiac distress.”

Marino knew she was likely to be arrested today when she showed up on campus, said Agatha Maksymiak, of London, Ontario, Marino’s friend and fellow activist.

“She came to campus because she does not believe unjust laws should silence her,” Maksymiak said. “Donal’ O’Leary is paid by WSU with taxpayer dollars to torture shelter dogs.”

Marino is accused of writing graphic posts on her web site, which include a litany of abuses she claims O’Leary committed against dogs, along with suggestions of what she wants to happen to O’Leary in return.

Marino’s first blog post about O’Leary was Oct. 22. Titled, “Donal O’Leary: Federally-Funded Sadist Tortures Shelter Dogs to Death at Wayne State,” it included his home address and phone number, along with his WSU e-mail address, phone number and address.

The same day, she sent O’Leary an e-mail at his WSU address that included a link to her blog, court records show.

“I hope you never have another peaceful night’s sleep. ... I hope you wake up in a cold sweat every time you hear a creek in your blood-money mansion,” the e-mail said. “Mostly, I hope you die a slow painful death comparable to those you forced your victims to endure. Please don’t interpret this as a threat. It’s merely my most fond wishes for you.”

O’Leary filed a request for a personal protection order, which the court granted Oct. 31. The order bars Marino from posting O’Leary’s home information and was served on her in Florida on Nov. 3.

Hours after being served, Marino republished O’Leary’s home information, records show.

“You are a war criminal,” that post said. “Laws that protect you at the expense of the innocent are unjust and are, therefore, null and void.”

2 May - Indictment Returned Against Jeremy Hammond

The name of a Chicago man already charged in a computer hacking case aimed at taking out key players in the worldwide group Anonymous was added to an indictment Wednesday, boosting the accusations against him by including him in much of the wider conspiracy to hack into corporations and government agencies worldwide.

MORE:

Jeremy Hammond, 27, joined four other defendants named in the indictment in federal court in Manhattan in a prosecution revealed in March. Hammond is being held at a lower Manhattan lockup after initially appearing in a Chicago court.

Authorities said the prosecution marks the first time core members of the loosely organized worldwide hacking group Anonymous have been identified and charged in the U.S.

Prosecutors said the defendants and others hacked into companies and government agencies worldwide, including the U.S. Senate. They say they also stole confidential information, defaced websites and temporarily put some victims out of business. Authorities say their crimes affected more than 1 million people.

A message left with Hammond's lawyer for comment was not immediately returned. It was not clear when Hammond would appear at an arraignment to enter a plea to the indictment.

Hammond is the only defendant in Manhattan, except for Hector Xavier Monsegur, a 28-year-old self-taught, unemployed computer programmer who was living on welfare in public housing in New York when he joined other elite hackers in various schemes.

A legendary hacker known as Sabu, Monsegur pleaded guilty and cooperated for most of the last year with the FBI, which built the case against Hammond and four others, who were arrested in Scotland, England and Ireland. None of the others have come to the U.S. to face the charges. Extraditions were being sought.

Hammond is charged in the indictment with conspiracy to commit computer hacking, computer hacking, conspiracy to commit access device fraud and aggravated identity theft.

The indictment adds allegations that the conspiracy included a hack of the Arizona Department of Public Safety, a state law enforcement agency in Arizona.

3 May – Oso Blanco Action Alert

PLEASE call USP Lewisburg today and EVERY DAY (570.523.1251), ask for Bobbie-Joe Hamilton and Officer Adami and ask that Byron Shane Chubbuck (07909-051) be transferred back to Z-Block... Please spread the word to other PP / POW supporters, and share this widely!

MORE:

In C-Block, he is kept in a tiny cell, around belligerent and dangerous guards as well as his incarcerated enemies. We need to get him to a safer spot (he knows the folk in Z-Block), until we can get him transferred to another FCI or, better yet, HOME to the Cherokee nation...

3 May - Police raid Portland squat and arrest anarchist on 72 felony charges

Thursday May 3, 2012, the Portland Police Bureau arrested 25-year-old Byran Michael Wiedeman, better known as Pax, on seventy-two counts of criminal mischief related to an investigation into multiple bank and ATM vandalisms in Portland. Most of the charges were quickly dropped and we're pasting in what we have been able to compile below.

MORE:

Officers served a search warrant today at 6104 North Mississippi Avenue, where Wiedeman and 4 others were squatting. Wiedeman was arrested while 4 others at the residence were detained and released at the scene.

This investigation stretches nearly two years and involves vandalisms at the Hollywood Key Bank branch and the U.S. Bank branch in Southeast Portland on February 29, 2012; as well as vandalism at the Portland Community College Cascade Campus in July 2010.

The investigation at this point is continuing and detectives will continue to analyze computers and phone seized during the search warrant as well as bank surveillance video collected during this investigation. Additional arrests are possible as the investigation continues.

Wiedeman was charged with thirty-six counts of Conspiracy to Commit Criminal Mischief in the First Degree and thirty-six counts of Criminal Mischief in the First Degree.

Bail is set at \$360,000. A Multnomah County Grand Jury will hear the charges against Wiedeman in the next week.

UPDATE: A brief statement from a comrade:

[The PPD] broke down our door and stormed our house, detained and interrogated us, and tore our house apart under writ of a warrant. This warrant was issued to collect evidence to indict my roommate Pax for 72 FELONY CHARGES of property destruction and criminal mischief, as well as determine other members of his/our immediate community who could also face prosecution for these charges. They took our phones and computers.

They threatened and intimidated us. They destroyed our home. They ignored one person's medical condition that was aggravated by the stress of detainment. They made me sit in cuffs with nothing but my underwear on. They denied our demands to speak with legal counsel. Worst of all, they took our friend and are actively trying to pin an incomprehensible amount of charges on him."

5/6 – Pax is Free

Byran Michael Wiedeman, aka PAX, is soon to be out on bond according to the Free Pax Facebook page <http://www.facebook.com/FreePaxana>

"We've paid Pax's \$4k bond! He'll be out either very late tonight or very early tomorrow morning. More updates when we know more. (Bail was originally set at \$360k, but reduced when 64 of the charges were abandoned.)"

Hopefully it stays that way and he stays out of the hands of the enemy.

11 May - An Evening with AIM Member Lenny Foster

WHAT: An evening with Lenny Foster

WHEN: 6:00-10:00pm, Friday, May 11th

WHERE: Casa de las Américas - 182 East 111th Street (between Lexington and 3rd Avenues)

MORE:

Lenny Foster of the Diné Nation is the Director of the Navajo Nation Corrections Project and the Spiritual Advisor for 1,500 Indian inmates in many state and federal prisons in the Western U.S. He has co-authored legislation in New Mexico, Arizona and Colorado that allows Native American spiritual and religious practice in prison and results in significant reductions in prison returns.

He is a board member of the International Indian Treaty Council, a sun dancer and member of the Native American Church. He has been with the American Indian Movement since 1969 and has participated in actions including Alcatraz, Black Mesa, the Trail of Broken Treaties, Wounded Knee 1973, the Menominee Monastery Occupation, Shiprock Fairchild Occupation, the Longest Walk and the Big Mountain land struggle. He was a 1993 recipient of the City of Phoenix Dr. Martin Luther King Human Rights Award.

Lenny will speak on five Native American issues: the illegal imprisonment of Leonard Peltier, land and resources taken from Native peoples by the U.S. government, stripmining, uranium mining and the pollution of the land, air and water, Native American freedom of religion and the demand to honor Native treaty rights.

12 May - Mothers Day Eve Noise Demo

WHAT: Noise Demo

WHEN: 8:00pm, Saturday, May 12th

WHERE: Bayview Correctional Facility – West 20th Street and 11th Avenue New York, New York

COST: Free

MORE:

As the Global Class War continues to heat up, the state continues its ongoing use of force, surveillance, and threat of incarceration against anyone who defies its laws. From Cece McDonald who got sentenced to 3 years for fighting back against a fucking Nazi, to Patreese Johnson who is still locked up for defending herself and her friends from being gay-bashed, to Revered Joy-Powell who is serving a life sentence for agitating against police violence, to the MOVE 9 women who had their house bombed and children killed because of their political beliefs, there is a clear pattern and history of the state using prison's to criminalize our resistance and self defense.

In solidarity with May Day calls for a world without borders and bosses, we call for a world without cages for all, on the eve of Mother's Day. We call for it during this time, because 2/3 of all women in prison are mothers and we recognize the forced separation of a child from their caregiver by the state as an act of violence aimed at

destroying families and social relationships. Furthermore, as an extension of that, when police continue killing people indiscriminately on the outside, they leave grieving families and loved ones with a loss that the justice system could never truly vindicate. For our communities, our loved ones, and liberation of all.

29 May – Vigil for Puerto Rican Political Prisoner Oscar Lopez Rivera

WHAT: Vigil in commemoration of the 31st anniversary of the arrest of Oscar Lopez Rivera

WHEN: 6:30-8:00pm, Tuesday, May 29th

WHERE: Puerto Rican Political Prisoner Mural – East 107th Street, between Lexington and Third Avenues

COST: Free

22 Jun – Sekou Odinga Birthday Celebration

WHAT: Birthday party and fund raiser for Sekou Odinga

WHEN: 6:00-11:00pm, Friday, June 22nd

WHERE: Maysles Cinema – 345 Malcolm X Boulevard Harlem, New York

COST: \$15 at the door

MORE:

We celebrate Sekou Odinga’s commitment to Afrikan people’s right to self-determination, justice, and liberation and work towards his FREEDOM by partyin’ and raising money in his honor.