



POST OFFICE BOX 110034 BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11211

Updates for July 31st

12 Jul – Tinley Park Five Update

While we are writing to the Five tonight, we're also including the latest on their case below, including two court appearances and coverage by local media.

MORE:

'Ashford House 5' Plead Not Guilty to 185 Charges

Five men accused of being among a group of about 18 who authorities say attacked diners at the Ashford House in May were arraigned Thursday, when they appeared before three different judges. Later in July, attorneys will ask a judge to reduce their bail.

After appearing before three different judges in Cook County Court Thursday, [five Indiana men](#) each pleaded not guilty to 37 counts related to mob action, armed violence, aggravated battery and criminal damage to property.

Cody Sutherlin, 23; Dylan Sutherlin, 20; Alex Stuck, 22; John Tucker, 26; and Jason Sutherlin, 33; all stood before judges; hands behind their backs and free of handcuffs. They'd all had their faces shaved and hair shorn leaving them looking markedly different from mug shots taken the day of their arrests.

The backs of their tan jumpsuits were each stamped in black with "D.O.C.," standing for "Department of Corrections," as all remained in jail on bails ranging from \$175,000 to \$250,000.

The men, three of whom are brothers, are accused of being among a group of about 18 who police say stormed a family-owned Tinley Park restaurant on May 19, violently unleashing on a group of diners who reportedly affiliate with white supremacist movements.

Defendants are said to be members of the Anti-Racist Action (ARA), a network of militant left-wing groups which took credit for the incident that included attackers wielding table legs, hammers, batons and nunchucks. "There's nothing more to be said other than that they pleaded not guilty and we intend to prove that," said defense attorney Aaron Goldstein, who is representing Jason Sutherlin.

The first court appearance Thursday was before Associate Judge John J. Hynes. He addressed five petitions filed by the defendants' private attorneys asking for a substitution of judges. The petitions specified different Cook County judges whom attorneys said they believed should not hear the cases for various reasons they declined to specify.

"Each defendant has the right of one substitution," said defense attorney Brian Barrido, who is representing Dylan Sutherlin. "We were able to name five judges that we felt would not be fair and impartial in this case, under these circumstances."

He noted that all involved defense lawyers are "seasoned," having no less than a decade of experience working within the county.

After a brief appearance before Presiding Judge Raymond L. Jagielski, the petitions were officially granted and the case was passed to Associate Judge Carmen K. Aguilar, who will be handling it going forward.

All five defendants waived readings of the charges during their arraignment and entered "not guilty" pleas.

Assistant State's Attorney Debbie Lawler then presented attorneys with a preliminary stack of evidence, which included a DVD, and let them know "more will be coming."

As they did at a June 12 court appearance, prosecutors again asked for permission to collect DNA samples from each of the defendants and test it against some of the evidence police collected from the Ashford House restaurant where the attack occurred. They include gloves and hats, shirts, spring-loaded weapons, pieces of broken wood and stains on the sidewalk.

The process of comparing DNA is also known as "consumption" because samples can only be tested once before being destroyed. Some attorneys argue that consumption violates the Constitutional right of due process. Aguilar didn't grant the state's motion. She wanted to give defense attorneys time to file any formal objections to the process, she said.

Goldstein said they must consider objecting if they intend to represent the five men well.

"(Prosecutors) believe they have evidence that contains DNA," he said. "When you use it all, that prevents us, the defense, from testing DNA ourselves ... that could potentially exonerate our clients. ... Whether we continue with our objection or not, I don't know."

Following their appearances Thursday, Barrido described the defendants as being "in good spirits."

"They're still unified in terms of their defense and they're all adamantly pleading their innocence," he said, adding that his client, Dylan Sutherlin, is the youngest and smallest in stature of the five. "He's doing just fine. The other inmates are treating him well. They're not concerned for their safety at all."

Defense attorneys will file motions for bond reductions at the Five's next court appearance, which is scheduled for July 11 at 10:30 a.m.

"They cannot make bond and it's not easy being in jail," Goldstein said, citing challenges lawyers have faced meeting with defendants. "They're presumed innocent but they're stuck in jail. It makes things difficult."

A group of about 10 showed in court to support defendants. Some had shaggy hair or facial piercings. One wore a pair of black cut-off shorts with the word "violence" stitched in white to a back pocket. Another dressed in a T-shirt paired with a sport coat.

All shook their heads "no" when asked for their reaction to the day's proceedings.

Judge refuses to reduce bail for five charged in attack in Tinley

A Cook County judge on Wednesday refused to reduce the bails for five Indiana men accused of attacking an alleged white supremacist group in a Tinley Park restaurant in May.

Judge Carmen Aguilar rejected the claims that the five men had deep ties to their communities and were not a threat to the public or flight risks.

Attorneys for brothers Jason Sutherlin, 33, Cody Sutherlin, 23, and Dylan Sutherlin, 20, and for Alex Struck, 22, and John Tucker, 26, previously entered innocent pleas on behalf of the men charged in the May 19 attack at The Ashford House restaurant, 7959 W. 159th St. Each faces 37 counts, including armed violence, mob action and aggravated battery.

While arguing to reduce their bonds, their attorneys portrayed them as hardworking men with jobs and other duties. Aaron Goldstein, representing Jason Sutherlin, described him as his caretaker of his wheelchair-bound father. He also has a job working at a tavern, a 20-month-old son to care for, and he is related to a longtime

Indiana commissioner.

Attorneys representing the other men echoed similar sentiments.

In arguing not to allow bail reductions, assistant state's attorney Karin Swanson said. "This is a serious offense with serious injuries. The video shows the terror they brought on the patrons and employees of the restaurant." Swanson played up the criminal histories of the men involved. She said that Dylan Sutherlin was convicted of driving under the influence in 2007; Cody Sutherlin was convicted of misdemeanor endangering a person in 2010; and Jason Sutherlin was convicted of a 1998 burglary.

"There's no change of circumstances, nothing about the defendants' backgrounds has changed," Swanson said. Police have called the five "anti-racists," saying they wielded bats and wore masks when they targeted a group calling themselves the Illinois European Heritage Association.

Swanson said that with the help of about 12 other people, the men smashed dishes and overturned tables doing about \$15,000 worth of damage to the restaurant. She also claimed that a GPS was found in a car the men rode in that traced their route from Bloomington, Ind., to the restaurant.

Jim Fennerty, the attorney for Cody Sutherlin, said he was disappointed that Aguilar didn't reduce the bail amounts.

"The bond is extremely high for Cody," Fennerty said. "They've been in jail for several months, and so far from what I've seen, there's nothing alleged that he's done to keep the bail so high."

16 Jul - Complaint to UN Special Rapporteur regarding Russell Maroon Shoats

The campaign to free Russell Maroon Shoatz has filed a formal complaint with the United Nations and we have pasted it below.

MORE:

Factual Summary

Russell Maroon Shoats (Maroon), a 68-year old political prisoner, has spent the last twenty-one years in solitary confinement within the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections (DOC). During this time he has not violated prison rules, and has not been issued any misconducts in more than two decades. Despite his impeccable record, prison authorities continue to hold him in 23-24 hour lockdown at the State Correctional Institution (SCI) Greene based on acts that occurred more than thirty years ago.

Background

During the 1960s and early 1970s, Maroon had been a dedicated human rights activist and community organizer in Philadelphia with the Black Unity Council and the Black Panther Party. In 1970, Maroon and five others were accused of an attack on a police station that resulted in the death of a police officer. The attack was carried out in response to the well-documented, pervasive assaults, beatings, and killings perpetrated against the black community in Philadelphia by police forces. Maroon was captured in 1972 and subsequently convicted to serve multiple sentenced of life without the possibility of parole.

Maroon managed to liberate himself from prison on two occasions, once in 1977 for a period of twenty-seven days, and a second time in 1980 that lasted three days before he was recaptured.

During the seventies and eighties, Maroon was frequently placed in solitary confinement in order to repress his organizing ability, as he was and still remains an influential figure both inside and

outside of prison. Maroon was placed in solitary after being elected as president of the DOC-approved lifers organization in 1982. In 1989, after a prisoner uprising at SCI Camp Hill in central Pennsylvania, Maroon was temporarily transferred to the federal penitentiary in Leavenworth, Kansas, although he was not confined at SCI Camp Hill during the uprising and played no role in it. During his eighteen months in federal custody, Maroon was held in the prison's general population without incident. Upon his return to Pennsylvania, he was immediately placed in solitary confinement, where he has remained to this moment in violation of his right to be free from torture and other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment.

Conditions in the restricted housing unit

Prisoners in the PA DOC's typical solitary units, known as Restricted Housing Units (RHUs), are held in tiny, windowless concrete cells that are approximately 64 square feet. The cells contain a concrete slab for a bed, and a thin foam mattress is provided to sleep on. The cells also come equipped with a sink and toilet. The cell remains constantly illuminated, twenty-four hours per day.

Prisoners in the RHU are deprived all meaningful social interaction, deprived of environmental stimulation, and severely restricted in the forms of intellectual activity that they can engage in. There is no educational, vocational, therapeutic or other programming in the unit. Reading material is often censored in order to control the ideas a prisoner has access to. Prisoners in solitary confinement have substantial limits on the amount of property they are allowed to possess. All visitations are non-contact, conducted through a thick pane of glass, during which the prisoner is handcuffed. Prisoners are served meals three times a day in their cell by guards who deliver the food through a tray slot that is present in the middle of the solid steel door of the cell. The door has two thin glass slits for windows, providing limited ability to see outside of the cell. Exercise is permitted for one hour five days per week in a caged area not much larger than the solitary confinement cell itself. There is no exercise equipment or recreational items available to RHU prisoners. Showers occur three times per week. During escort to showers and yard, a prisoner may be subject to a visual strip search, and will be handcuffed prior to leaving the cell. Often, prisoners are placed in leg shackles as well.

Solitary confinement units throughout the PA DOC, including those Maroon has been confined in, are often populated with mentally disturbed and sometimes psychotic individuals whose incessant screaming, talking, ranting, crying, banging on walls and furniture, and so on make it difficult to concentrate, sleep, and hold onto one's own sanity.

In addition to these general conditions of confinement, the solitary units in the PA DOC are rife with human rights violations, including physical and psychological abuse, racial discrimination, deprivation of food, yard, showers, routine retaliation, sexual harassment on the part of staff, refusal to provide competent and prompt—or even any—physical and mental health care, and more. Over his twenty years of solitary confinement, Maroon has experienced or witnessed others who have been subject to these further human rights violations.

During his time in solitary confinement, Russell Shoats has experienced several serious health problems that have been exacerbated by the intense stress of the RHU, and the inadequate health care provided to prisoners in solitary units in Pennsylvania. These conditions have included hypertension, prostrate infection, damage to his muscles based on his being provided inappropriate medication, and development of cataracts in both eyes. Although he received surgery for one of his cataracts, he is currently in need of surgery to remove the other.

The imposition of such conditions of confinement for more than twenty years constitutes a flagrant violation of Russell Shoats' right to be free from torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment.

Rationale for continued placement in solitary confinement

There are two classifications for prisoners placed in the RHU in the PA DOC, disciplinary or administrative custody. Disciplinary custody is for those found guilty of violating prison rules. Administrative custody is a catch-all that has broad criteria capable of justifying virtually any decision to hold a person in solitary confinement. In Maroon's case, he has been kept on administrative custody status for more than twenty years under the pretext that he poses an escape risk if removed from the RHU. This rationale overlooks the reality that Pennsylvania prisons are far more fortified than when Maroon last escaped more than thirty years ago along with the fact that Maroon is nearly 70-years-old and less capable of posing a threat. Preventing escape, however, does not explain the extreme sterility, isolation, and deprivation of his current confinement, which is instead punitive in design and function. Maroon and his supporters are also aware of instances of other prisoners who have escaped or attempted to escape who have since been released into general population. Finally, this rationale overlooks the fact that Maroon has been released into the general prison population by the PA DOC and the federal prison authorities since his 1980 escape without incident.

The PA DOC has placed Maroon on something it refers to as the Restricted Release List (RRL), which is a list of approximately 85 prisoners (as of August 2010) who may not be placed into general population at any prison without the express authorization of the Secretary of the PA DOC, John Wetzel. In order to be removed from solitary confinement, Maroon must first be granted authorization by the prison at which he is held, in this case SCI Greene, then by the Regional Deputy Secretary, and the Secretary. His classification status is nominally reviewed every 90 days, although he is always given the same rationale (escape risk) and never told what is necessary to be released.

Further, during a visit with SCI Greene's warden, Louis Folino, a visitor was informed that Maroon is being kept in solitary confinement due to an alleged plot to take over a prison in the 1980s and his role as an organizer. A mental health staff person asked Maroon about this alleged plot during a psychological evaluation a little more than a year ago. Maroon has no knowledge of any such plot, and if there is information regarding such in his file it is a fabrication. To the extent that Maroon is being held in permanent, life-long solitary confinement on the basis of secret and fabricated evidence his rights to due process are being violated.

Request for assistance

I am asking that the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment immediately initiate a prompt and comprehensive investigation into the facts surrounding Russell Shoats' more than two decades of solitary confinement in the PA DOC. It is clear to all who learn of his circumstances that he has been tortured, persecuted for being a political dissident and human rights defender inside and outside the prison. This conscience-shocking maltreatment constitutes an urgent human rights crisis and is emblematic of the lawlessness that exists inside Pennsylvania and United States prisons.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

16 Jul - "Prison Room Mail Worker Blues" by Connor Stevens

Cleveland Four defendant has written a poem that we've pasted below.

MORE:

every day of my life (sometimes even Sundays)

“the children can’t wait to hear from you. I’ll be waiting every day for your call”

“we both know you’re innocent – just hold in there, God will straighten this out”

“the bills keep stacking up & I don’t know how much longer I can go on Feeding the kids. Don’t mean to make it worse.”

“hey sweet thing, hopefully you’ll get transferred to somewhere we can get closer at...”

“you fucked up your life for 8 years but that wasn’t enough – now you’re dragging me & the kids into this?!”

“don’t blame me, and don’t expect to receive another letter. Don’t bother calling”

“I wish I could talk to you right now and be with you”

“do you know what time it is?”

“if you are the dreamer, I am what you dream”

“You’re easily one of the best dudes I’ve ever known. And I mean that. I really do.”

“I hope you know you are not alone. I have heard from people all over the country who know for a fact you are all innocent and were framed by the FBI... Dare to struggle.”

“I only know you by the way you prayed in the Lodge. I know of your desire for a better world... your heart is good...you have suffered the pain from our collective world...choose that love & courage... make room...”

“The sun just slipped behind a cloud & it makes me wonder if you even have a window...”

“There is a crescent moon that’s almost blood red”

“make them fear the beard”

“Every moment of every day we, everyone, are talking, crying, and thinking of you boys.”

“political prisoners in a country that doesn’t recognize political prisoners... and yet that is exactly what you are.”

“letter from a private prison lead to a Green Revolution, From a Man Who Can’t Stop Laughing”

“...the ‘A’ word is evolving...”

“I never got back to you...you were asking for help, asking for a way out. I could have helped you.”

“you are truly my motivation for getting out of bed...your strength is carrying me...”

“he understands that the men in the shadows are manipulative & power hungry, without any good intentions”

“I believe we have the ability to transcend. By the Grace of God!”

“he ‘cried like a baby for a long time’”

“(your niece) said to tell you “I love you with all my heart just like grandma does”

“he’s smart enough to know what’s going on in this world & it hurts him deeply”

“I hope you get this ASAP and it makes you laugh that goofy little laugh we all love.”

“writing may turn out to be your thin thread through the labyrinth to freedom”

“as you fell through the stone to the Earth itself, there will be an expansive warmth you will sense”

“last time I ran into you were handing out meals to needy people”

“you made me a card... written in your own blood”

“you seemed so sad...agitated...down...”

“your mind is free, your heart is free, your soul is free...what else matters”

“a billion stars go spinning through the night”

“blazing high above your head”

“But in you in the presence that will be when all the stars are dead”

and we will never meet, you in Solitary confinement,

me, confined to the solitude of the mail room-

but once, in passing, you looked into my eyes... You, shackled...

what did you see? I dare not ask, even if I were free

to. I’ve stopped caring. I know what you say, but

don’t I have to feed my children? Don’t I have to provide for

my house? That those who follow me may be free? ...Free?...

So my eyes are cold, they no longer sparkle, that certain twinkle

In the eyes are cold, they no longer sparkle, that certain twinkle

In the eyes of every little girl, and so I haven't wept in fifteen
Years- in twenty my family has not gone to bed hungry!
The money for their college fund is quickly looking like more than I ever had
They get straight As in grade school and their father hasn't run out on my
And I only have a few glasses of wine in the evenings
(and even then I don't come close to tears – sand cannot produce water)
but what more can one expect of me, in the toil of this world?
And who are you to judge me anyway? You're probably a murderer
Or was found molesting innocent little girls, or some smack dealer
I never made those mistakes, committed those sins, and yet I
still have to work in this miserable job with low pay and no job security,
barely any benefits, because there can only be one used car salesman
between my husband and I, and the schools in Youngstown are closing
as quickly as the prisons are opening, and the prisons are filled
as quickly as they're opened – and my little girls, and my
little Joseph aren't growing up like this, in what this town's
become since the drug dealers took over and the blacks shoot each –
other in the streets like animals, along with the spics (they're even worse!) –
they should all be locked-up, then maybe there's be some more decent jobs
for us decent folks and no one will have to cry again...
So maybe I don't communicate with people on the level, to the depth,
Of all these in-and-out correspondences I read every day, but my
Husband knows where I stand, and our kids will understand
And I remember a certain rabbit saying something his brother taught him...
You can't go about blaming "the world" for your problems
The auto industry left - so does that mean morality too?
See, ya'll simply cannot function like the rest of is
Who follow the rules, and do our jobs, and hold back our tears
Until there are no more to hide
And nothing to say
And there won't be a college
I'll settle for a grave

16 Jul - No Books for Prisoners Part 2 by Alex Hundert

Here's another couple blog entry from 2010 Toronto G20 prisoner Alex Hundert.

MORE:

July 18 update:

A security manager at CNCC who took my call today has now had a conversation with Alex in which they've worked out a plan for books sent to actually be delivered to him (provided they fit within the institution's parameters of what is considered suitable). There's even a possibility Alex may be allowed to pass the books on to other inmates when he's done with them and possibly even to donate them to the prison library if senders have no objection. This would deal with the prison's concern about accumulation of property in individual cells and maximize the reach of each book.

Alex's Mom

Sometimes life presents wonderful moments of synchronicity. The first time since getting locked up that I have been able to see a copy of the Toronto Star there was an article titled [Inmates Denied Access to Books](#). When one week earlier, the same day that I sent a letter to the superintendent of the Metro West Detention Center trying to get something done about the absence of books available for prisoners to read in the jail known as the

West, an article appeared in the July 4 Globe and Mail titled [Prisoners Read Their Way to Freedom](#). That article, however, was about the prison system in Brazil not Canada.

In Ontario the so-called Corrections System has passed off the responsibility of ensuring access to reading material and literacy skills onto volunteers. The provincial government's response to the Toronto Star article, where prison staff defended the lack of library access by claiming that "recruiting volunteers for prisons [is] not easy," was to claim that they were going to work with the John Howard Society to get books to prisoners. But such compromises and reliance on outside agencies should not have to be made; running the library should be part of what the institution does [instead of relying on volunteers](#). Ensuring prisoners' rights, including the right to read, should be the responsibility of the institution and the state that has chosen to lock up so many people.

Even a conservative notion of 'corrections' or 'rehabilitation' requires programming in the jails; literacy and libraries should be a primary strategy not an afterthought. That such things are neglected illuminates ours as a 'punitive' system rather than one that seeks to 'rehabilitate' or 'reduce recidivism' let alone one that seeks to help people break free from cycles of imprisonment. Meanwhile in Brazil, the federal prisons have instituted a new program called Redemption through Reading. For this program, prisoners can actually reduce their sentences by reading books and submitting book reports. The program is designed with "hopes of reducing recidivism and to give convicts a different view of the outside world."

While at the West I was privileged enough to get a single novel to read, though it was a struggle. When I first tried to find out if it was still possible to receive outside material – to have books sent direct from the publisher or distributor, as I understand to be the official policy at all provincial detention and correctional centers – while several staff indicated that such a thing was still possible, when I actually had a book sent in the mail clerk informed me that the policy no longer existed and indeed the book had been returned to sender. It seemed the rules had changed.

I was explaining to the mail clerk that I considered it to be "cruel and unusual" of the institution to have cancelled the policy of allowing in books from the outside given that the internal library program has also been essentially cancelled.

One of the guards overheard this conversation and unaware of the lack of books for prisoners seemed genuinely concerned and suggested that I write a letter to the superintendent. So in addition to formal "requests" to a) have access to the library or book cart, b) permission to receive outside reading material, and c) to get clarification of the official rules regarding receiving books, I also sent a letter to the superintendent requesting a meeting to discuss the fact that the Metro West Detention Center functionally has a 'no books for prisoners' rule. That was on Friday July 6th and on the following Monday I was transferred out of the West to Penetang. When I was transferred I had received no response to either my letter or any of my numerous requests.

For clarification sake, "request forms", other than talking directly to guards which is highly frowned upon, are the only and technically proper way to get things done in here.

In theory it is a bureaucratic system whereby filling out the proper paperwork enables communication with authoritative institutional decision-makers and access to things or rights to which we are supposed to be entitled. At the West however, in practice, request forms are often ignored or tossed away outright by the guards and the range is typically collectively punished when any inmate tries to assert their rights. I have heard that doesn't happen here in Penetang. We'll see.

At the West I persistently inquired with various captains and had someone from the outside call the jail to ask about the rules for receiving books. We were both eventually told that such a thing is still possible at all provincial institutions, at least according to policy.

After non-responses to any of the requests I had submitted to the volunteer coordinator, the operational manager and the deputy superintendent in charge of programs, amongst others, I eventually did what people with privilege have always done to help circumvent institutional discretion: I had one of my parents call the person

in-charge. My mother called the superintendent's office and was told that, in fact, prisoners are supposed to be allowed to receive books direct from the publisher or distributor provided the pass security screening. I have already been told by Penetang's correctional intelligence officer that this applies here. A good friend had the same confirmed by a call to the superintendent's office.

Within hours of my mother's call to the West, I had a book to read. The same one that the mail clerk had told me was being returned to sender. When the clerk brought it to me, they said it was security who denied me permission to receive the book.

The last request I submitted before getting transferred from the West was to the head of security to find out why they had deemed Patrick DeWitt's multiple award-winning novel *The Sister's Brother* – a book about cowboys – to be considered a security risk. Of course, I never got a response to that question either.

In Brazil the Redemption through Reading program has been created with the intention that prisoners will not only improve their literacy skills but so that "a person can leave prison more enlightened and with an enlarged vision of the world". Even at Penetang we don't have access to the kind of literature that is likely to achieve those goals.

Here there seems to be a fairly decent education program. Inmates are able to receive actually high school credits through a well-developed program run by the Simcoe Country Board of Education. I have to admit that it seems to be a fairly impressive program. However, the fact that the School Board also runs the library is deeply problematic.

Because the library is not run by prison staff, inmates are not allowed to "work" in the library which means there is but a single individual running the whole "program". Further, only inmates enrolled in classes, who have been moved to the Education Range, are allowed to access the actual library and only on the rarest of occasions. The rest of the prisoners here have to wait for the library cart to be brought around. While I haven't seen the cart yet, I have heard that it tends to come at least twice a month, which seems quite reasonable.

The biggest problem has to do with the books themselves. From what I have seen on the range, what is available is predominantly pulpy crime and mystery novels. Hardly the type of books that will "enlighten a person" or give them an "enlarged sense of the world."

And unfortunately it gets worse from there. An inmate I trust passed on a story that was told to him by the librarian. She told him that while donations are often made to the library – meaning in theory people can send quality books in that would be available to prisoners – security never lets these books through. What happens to them I am not sure, but no prisoner ever gets to read the books that are donated to the Central North Correctional Center.

This would appear to be the same thing that happens to books sent directly to prisoners through publishers or distributors: they don't get read because security won't let the books into the hands of prisoners. So while a Corrections Intelligence Officer assured me that the prison's policy is that provided there are no obvious security concerns regarding a book's content, the policy of the institution is that books can be received by prisoners. In reality, security apparently has a no books for prisoners rule, though I can't for the life of me imagine any reason why other than as part of the punishment of being in jail. So much for rehabilitation.

The Globe and Mail article about books for prisoners finishes by reminding its readers that "in Canada two out of three convicts have low literacy skills and nearly a third have failed to finish elementary school." Given this reality, it seems to me that encouraging literacy in jail would be a primary strategy of the so-called correctional system and a core part of what the jails do to combat recidivism (as well as violence in jails – an intellectually stimulated prisoner is much less likely to lash out at guards or other inmates).

Unfortunately in provincial jails, literacy seems to be at best an afterthought and there is even evidence of actual intent to deny books to prisoners, apparently for "security" reasons. However, even without interference from Corrections security, the attitude displayed by the Ontario Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional

Services as reported in the Toronto Star is utterly shameful.

The suggestion that what should be a core program of any prison system – the library and literacy – should be a purview of outside agencies or volunteers, and only available if it can be provided “for free”, is reflective of a sad state of affairs in our society. However it is becoming increasingly common in the age of austerity that many services that people used to understand as part of what the state and its institutions are supposed to be providing, are being replaced by the need for volunteerism and being passed off onto the community – especially when those services are needed by vulnerable and targeted people like prisoners or migrants or the poor.

Ironically, it was organizing protests against the austerity agenda that got me thrown in jail in the first place.

18 Jul - Tucson Anarchist Dane Rossman Sentenced to Three Years Probation

After one and a half years, Tucson anarchist Dane Rossman's charges from the anti-National Socialist Movement action in Phoenix, November 2010, are finally more or less resolved.

MORE:

Last May, the prosecution offered their first plea bargain - one count of Disorderly Conduct, a Class 6 Felony. This was a tremendous reduction from the original seven felony counts, which included class 3 and 4 charges of assaulting an officer. Not taking this plea would have meant that the prosecutor would reclassify all seven original charges as "dangerous offenses" which then carry mandatory minimum sentences. The potential total would have been over 20 years in prison, mandatory.

Dane took the plea, which required supervised probation and left any jail time up to the judge. The charge carried a maximum of one year in jail.

Last week, on July 10th, Dane had his sentencing hearing. Before a courtroom full of supporters from throughout Arizona, Dane was sentenced to three years of supervised probation with no initial jail sentence. Dane has also not had to pay any restitution to Phoenix Police Department, though the option has been left open should PPD pursue it before Dane's probation is done.

18 Jul – Update on Doug Wright (Cleveland Five) hunger strike

On July 11th the support group received a message from Doug stating that he began a hunger strike on Saturday, July 7th. Here's the latest update.

MORE:

I just wanted to give a quick update on one of the Cleveland 5 prisoner's (Douglas L. Wright) and a sincere thank you for everyone's concerns, well wishes, and actions regarding Doug being thrown into solitary and subsequent hunger strike. Douglas is now out of solitary and has ended his hunger strike. This latest bit of bullshit that was hurled his way is over largely due to the simple fact that Doug was finally able to just simply explain what happened to the assistant warden.

This incident was started when a certain inmate was put in Doug's pod whose sole purpose it seemed was to try and start fights with Doug and the other inmates. Doug, staying true to his anarchist principles of not being an oppressor and refusing to be oppressed, knew action had to be taken. After failed attempts to explain the situation to the c.o.'s, Doug had an important decision to make. To get the provocateur out of the pod does he go the way of violence and give a righteous pounding to this piece of shit bully or does he stay nonviolent and stretch the truth a bit? Well, long story short, Doug took a stand, stayed nonviolent, stretched the truth a bit, got caught truth stretching, and had his ass tossed in solitary.

Good for you, Doug. Good for you that on behalf of yourself and your fellow inmates you took a stand against aggression and bullying. And this aggression and bullying from certain inmates and especially the c.o.'s will continue and intensify the closer you get to your court date in September. They are trying to get you to lash out violently so as to parade you in front of the jury as some crazed, violent, terrorist. But you're not a terrorist. You're a good person and I'm proud as hell to call you comrade. I can only imagine the hell you're going through. Doug, just know you're constantly in our thoughts and actions. Keep being true to your anarchist

principles and don't let those bastards get you down.

19 Jul - Manning denied ability to use lack of harm as defense

Establishing yet another obstacle for P.F.C. Bradley Manning's legal defense, military judge Denise Lind ruled that his defense will be substantially hindered from showing how WikiLeaks' releases didn't bring damage to U.S. national security.

MORE:

In largely granting a government motion to preclude discussion of actual damage, Lind said that harm or lack thereof is irrelevant to Manning's guilt or innocence.

"Bradley should be able to argue that he had a reasonable belief that no harm would come from his alleged actions by showing that no harm actually occurred," explained Jeff Paterson of the Bradley Manning Support Network. "This is another attempt to silence Bradley's lawyers from depicting the Nobel Peace Prize nominee as a whistle-blower."

The prosecution continues to argue that the releases "could" cause harm at some point in the future. Coombs says that after two years without damage, that theory "rings hollow." Coombs previously requested damage assessments from 63 government agencies, and the 28 who replied thus far have described little or no damage.

Manning's next hearing at Fort Meade, Maryland, August 27-31, will highlight the illegal and torturous treatment the military subjected Manning to at the Quantico Marine Base, Virginia. Coombs is expected to argue for dismissal of all charges based on the military's flagrant violation of Article 13 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice that prohibits all pre-trial punishment "any more rigorous" than required to ensure the accused appears at court hearings.

Judge Lind today ruled that she would not allow United Nations torture rapporteur Juan Mendez to testify about Manning's unlawful confinement conditions, declaring his testimony irrelevant, even though the torture chief called Manning's treatment "cruel, inhuman, and degrading" after a 14-month investigation. Officials at Quantico refused to allow Mendez unmonitored access to Manning. "Military Judge Lind's ruling in effect rewards the military for stonewalling the U.N.," declared Paterson.

A Quantico staff member is expected to testify to the illegal treatment that Manning endured at the upcoming hearing in late August. In his brief filed with the court, Coombs states that the truth will "shock the conscience of the court." Supporters will underscore the cruelty of Manning's conditions by holding a rally at the Fort Meade Main Gate on August 27. Attorney David Coombs is expected to appear at an August 26 public event in Washington, DC, (details to be announced soon) organized by the Bradley Manning Support Network.

19 Jul - Kelly Plug-Back sentenced to 15 months for Black Bloc attacks in Toronto

Ontario based anarchist Kelly Rose Plug-Back appeared in court July 19 to receive sentencing. She previously accepted a non-cooperation plea, pleading guilty to six counts of mischief and one of wearing a disguise with criminal intent. Kelly was sentenced to 15 months in prison. We've also included a piece she recently wrote as well as information on a book of her poetry just published as a fundraiser.

MORE:

Her sentence is reduced by 4 months to a total of 11 months in prison do to time served. Following her prison time she will be on probation for 3 years. This is after already being on house arrest and strict conditions for nearly a year preceding her trials completion.

To place this in context, the man who was convicted for murdering her friend, Victoria street kid Ariana Simpson (Harley) by pushing her under a bus was only given a one year sentence with 250 hrs of community service.

Kelly is a long time community organizer, activist, published writer, poet, artist and musician. Kelly works as an editor with various anarchist publications including The Fifth Estate, and Iconoclast Magazine based out of Ontario. A collection of Kelly's poetry titled These Burning Streets is being published by Strangers In A Tangled Wilderness to support her.

Previous to her involvement in the Toronto G20 Black Bloc, Kelly was a long time activist, involved with groups such as Food Not Bombs and Camas Books collective in Victoria, and doing harm reduction work with SOS in Ontario, as well as hosting workshops and doing outreach for queer youth, and doing Indigenous solidarity work.

At the time of her sentencing Kelly was a full time student working towards finishing her degree. Kelly also eats a vegan diet which is very difficult to maintain in the Canadian prison system.

Most mainstream media has depicted Kelly as a violent vandal who has no remorse for terrorizing 'innocent shoppers,' as well as calling her cowardly for wearing a mask while taking on fully armed and armored riot police in the midst of one of the largest surveillance cultures in the world. Media has routinely referred to the breaking of windows by black bloc members as violent and occasionally even referring to it as terrorism. Meanwhile predictably downplaying the police violence and misconduct even though there was numerous cases of police sexually assaulting or threatening to rape female bodied persons during the 11 hundred person arrests. In one well known case related to the G20 in TO, police tore the prosthetic leg off a disabled man, as well as a deaf man who was violently taken down and arrested. These were the largest arrests in the history of this nation state, nearly doubling the 700 people arrested during the implementation of the War Measures Act under Trudeau in response to the FLQ kidnappings that took place in 1970 in Quebec.

The courts have clearly stated that they intend to send a message with this sentencing. We need to send a message back by increasing resistance, and supporting our imprisoned comrades so that they come out strong with a fighting spirit! Currently prisons in this nation state are being double bunked, while the Harper government is busy constructing 10 new ones and passing new legislation that includes mandatory minimum sentencing as well as cutting most programs and funding to help reduce prison recidivism. While Kelly, Mandy, and the others involved in resisting the G20 and global capitalism sit in prison cells, the men who are responsible for the policies that kill millions from poverty each year live in luxury and will likely never see the inside of a prison cell.

Please write to Kelly: she loves letters, and poetry. Writing to prisoners is one way to ensure they know they have not been forgotten.

Kelly will most likely be held in Vanier Prison. To send letters or post cards please address them to:

Kelly Pflug-Back
Vanier Centre for Women
Post Office Box 1040
655 Martin Street
Milton, Ontario
L9T 5E6
Canada

Every Prisoner is a Political Prisoner: A Memoir

June 27, 2010, was uncharacteristically overcast for mid-summer Toronto. My head pounded from the humidity as I walked alone down Queen Street, through a cityscape teeming with riot police, and still dusted with shards of broken glass from [the day before](#). Construction crews had already set to work repairing the trail of wreckage, attempting to get everything back to normal before anyone noticed.

When I reached Jimmie Simpson Park, where people were meeting for the day's scheduled prison solidarity rally, I saw only a small crowd of friends standing under the drooping honey locust trees: some debriefing or consoling one another, others speaking with the reporters who swarmed like gnats around the gathering. This sparse group of about thirty was all that remained after the preemptive kidnappings and mass arrests. I can't remember if I felt any particular sense of foreboding—any eerie apprehension of why I too hadn't been taken away.

As our diminished group walked from the park to the detention center where our friends were being held, I hoped to be able to find some news of what had happened to my partner, or to anyone for that matter.

The gray sky sprinkled rain upon us, but we were happy and smiling. We chanted, sang, played instruments and shared whatever food we'd brought. Cops surrounded us, jostling the crowd to step farther away from the chain link fence surrounding the prison. I'd been there about half an hour when the unmarked van drove into the crowd. A group of men jumped out and forced their way toward me, yelling for people to move out of the way. One of them said my name, and within seconds they had dragged me into the van.

I can't say I felt anything when my face hit the floor, but later in my cell I noticed a deep throbbing in my teeth and gums. The front ones were loose. My mouth tasted like blood.

One of the cops who'd pulled me into the van asked me if I was on welfare. He leered at my bare legs and told me I needed a razor. Another tied my wrists with zip ties and proceeded to rifle through my purse.

Inside, the building was a massive warehouse filled with wire cages, like some industrial chicken farm. The noise of other prisoners screaming protest songs and rattling the doors of their cages echoed off the concrete walls, making our numbers seem greater even than the 992 people occupying cells. They put me in a cage and locked the door. On the wall to my left I saw a guard scribble my name on a white board alongside the words "do not release." I sat down on the concrete and anticipated the worst.

The following day I was hospitalized after losing consciousness from low blood sugar. All we were given to eat was a cheese sandwich every 12 to 24 hours with no alternatives for those who were vegan or had an allergy. I was unable to walk to the medical trailer; the guards informed me that this constituted refusing medical attention. Another prisoner who overheard this screamed at a guard who was busy amusing himself doing tricks in an unused wheelchair, and they brought it to my cell shortly after.

A female guard snarled at me to "close my fucking legs" while I sat sprawled inside the medical trailer with an intravenous glucose drip in my arm. I'd been arrested in a short skirt and tank top, and they had refused me, numerous times, pants or a blanket. It was freezing inside the detention center. There was no way to get off the bare concrete. My teeth chattered constantly, and I never stopped shaking. It was too cold to sleep.

After they took me back to my cell, I could hear a man nearby screaming that he needed his medication. He screamed for hours before stopping abruptly; I pressed my face to the cage door and I could see him convulsing on the floor of his cell with his tongue hanging out of his mouth. "Get up," the guards told him, repeatedly, before finally acknowledging his unconsciousness. Then they dragged him away.

Countless people were processed and released, many of them with bruises, cuts and abrasions on their arms and faces from being slammed into the concrete. A number of the guards passed the time by spewing racist, homophobic, classist, and sexist harassment at prisoners, or threatening them with further brutalization. A number of women were threatened with rape.

Hours and hours passed, and it became increasingly clear that I would not be allowed to call my lawyer or let my family know where I was. As a matter of fact, I hadn't yet been informed of my charges. I spent over two days in my cell, curled in a ball on the concrete or pacing the small vicinity of my cage, sometimes yelling to other prisoners or joining them in hysterical, sleep-deprived bouts of laughter.

I was unsurprised to see a few old friends from Toronto's street community pass through the detention center. Were it not for the unfortunate situation, it would have been a welcome reunion. When an acquaintance of mine ended up in the cell beside me, we started talking about the circumstances that had brought us there. Only seventeen, he had spent the majority of his life being transferred from group home to group home. Since he had finally been appointed as his own legal guardian, his life had been plagued by poverty, class profiling, and prejudice in the court system. Although he didn't consider himself an "activist," he was obviously more steeped in the realities of social struggle than a large portion of the other detainees. We talked about our mutual experiences with police, shelters, group homes, and homelessness. We talked about how these experiences had politicized us, and how a person doesn't need to understand party politics to be political. Every poor person is political, we agreed, just by nature of their experiences.

I realized at that point that I probably had more in common with him than I did with most of the other protesters. Unfortunate as it was, life had already acclimatized us to be treated like shit by the authorities. None of this surprised us. We were used to being beaten, having our rights stripped away.

After most of the detention center had been emptied, I was transferred to the general population at the women's prison in Milton. While we waited to be processed in the holding cells, the other women and I laughed and joked, trading stories about how we'd ended up where we were. A lot of them were arrested and presumed guilty for unequivocal bullshit; for being homeless, poor, non-white, using drugs, working in the sex trade, or any combination of these factors. Others were arrested for crimes of necessity: for stealing food because they were hungry, or robbing a store to feed their young kids, for needing a way to pay rent. A few had been charged with assault after having fought back against abusive spouses. I told them my charges, and got a lot of hugs, high-fives, and congratulations. "Fucking right," people said, slapping me on the back. "Fuck the rich bastards! Fuck the G20!"

Some people had been unclear as to what the summit had been all about, and we got into a long conversation about it. We all laughed, ranted, waited, and laughed some more. If these were the women with whom I'd be surrounded, I thought to myself, maybe prison won't be all that bad.

My first days inside were largely spent adjusting to the prison environment, and as time went on, my new setting reminded me increasingly of the years I spent living on the street when I was a teenager.

On the streets, as in prison, you never get a decent night's sleep or a meal that resembles real food. There are always a few arrogant people who think they run everything because they've been there the longest, and people in uniforms can do whatever they want to you and get away with it. In both situations, your status as a human being is revoked. Humanity is a privilege awarded to those who help perpetuate capitalism, and once you cease to do that, you're a burden. You're expected to express gratitude to the system that ghettoizes you, doling out a few table scraps and a thin blanket.

The first range I was sent to was renowned for being the least hospitable. We were locked in our cells for most of the day. Each had one bed, though the high volume of prisoners meant that two people usually shared a cell. The only windows were thin slats of frosted glass too opaque to see through, and we were allowed outside only once a week. "Outside" was a small walled concrete enclosure with metal grating for a ceiling. Through a small crack underneath the heavy steel door, I could see grass. It depressed me to look at it. I tried not to.

This was the range to which people were sent as punishment, for getting into fights, mouthing off to guards, being caught with contraband or generally failing to comply with prison regulations. If you were "good" you qualified for transfer to a medium-security unit, where you could go to a real outdoor exercise yard, have your own cell, and see visitors without a thick pane of Plexiglas separating you.

A lot of the women on maximum security had been on the same range for over a year. I met one woman who had been there for almost two; she'd never had a misconduct, but there was a note in her file stating that she would have to serve her entire sentence on maximum security. She came from a mafia family, she explained.

Putting her on a medium security unit would have been an open invitation for any of her high-up friends to come break her out.

After visiting the classification office, I learned of a similar note in my file. “Apparently I’m a terrorist,” I shrugged, when people asked why I hadn’t been transferred yet.

I won’t say that I instantly got along with everyone on my range, or that I was the most popular prisoner. I didn’t pay attention to the hierarchies that existed between other prisoners, and some people had a problem with that. I wouldn’t join in when others ridiculed or ganged up on the less popular women. It was a total pecking order, and it reminded me too much of a schoolyard.

I became close friends with a woman named Rachel* whom I met in the common area during breakfast on a rare day when we weren’t on 24-hour lock down. She was violently ill from drug withdrawal, and the nurse hadn’t filled her methadone prescription. Apparently, her cellmate was a complete asshole, so we snuck her into my cell after the doors were buzzed open. The next guard that came by on her rounds started yelling at us, but we assured her that the other staff had transferred Rachel and forgotten to do the paperwork. I don’t think the guard believed us, but she didn’t seem to care enough to do anything about it.

When Rachel wasn’t too sick to make conversation, we passed the long hours of our confinement playing cards, singing tuneless renditions of R&B hits, washing our dirty uniforms in the sink and talking about life in general. She lived near Niagara with her partner, their four-year-old son, and their newborn daughter. She struggled with addiction, but still managed to keep her life together and be there for her kids. Her dad had been in and out of prison most of her life, and her mom had been drunk all the time. She’d spent her early teenage years working as a prostitute, and the crown attorney at her bail hearing had used this to argue that she was unfit to reenter society. It seems that when 13-year-old girls end up hooking on the streets it’s because they possess some moral defect, and not because life has given them no other choices.

Our cells looked out onto the common area, an oval-shaped concrete room. It contained five bolted-down tables, four showers at one end, a shelf with a few bad paperback romance novels, and three phones, only two of which functioned. When allowed into the common area, I went straight to waiting in line for the phones. Some women didn’t have anybody to call or only had relatives outside of the country; the phones only transmitted collect calls within North America. Other women gripped the phone receivers with white knuckles, trying to explain to their young children why mommy wasn’t coming home. Rachel said she had told her partner not to bring the kids when coming to visit her. “They’re just too young. They would only be confused by the Plexiglas in the visitor’s cubicle. Being able to see their mother, but not reach out and touch her.”

I thought of an article I’d read once about animal testing laboratories. One method the lab technicians used to create symptoms of stress and depression in mammals involved removing newborn babies from their mother, then placing the mother in isolation. I looked up at the florescent ceiling lights within their shatterproof wire cages. Soon, the nurse came and people lined up to receive their daily doses of sedatives and anti-psychotics—a precautionary measure, prescribed to virtually everyone, like cutting off the beaks of factory-farmed chickens to prevent them from pecking themselves, or each other, to death from the stress of confinement and isolation.

My views of the prison system solidified: prisons are little more than warehouses for concentrating the poor. Rather than being populated by the people most harmful to society, they are crowded with those who have been the most harmed *by* society. Rather than being “correctional” facilities, they are a method of ridding the streets of those who act as living reminders of the crisis of poverty, the widening income gap, the future of hardship which may very well await many more in the coming years if something does not change. Prisons are a way of sweeping people under the rug. They are a way of pretending that nothing is wrong.

Very few of the women on my range had been imprisoned for any kind of violent crime, and most of those who did have violent charges had been defending themselves against abusive partners or assailants. Most of these women’s attackers had walked away without charges, free to roam the streets at their leisure.

The small portion of women facing violent charges not involving self-defense were often the survivors of past traumas; a history rarely taken into consideration by the courts that sentenced them. Much like the homeless community, a large portion of the women with whom I spoke were survivors of the lifelong onslaught of abuse perpetrated against poor and disenfranchised women by our society, particularly women of color. Many had been arrested for not having full citizenship, while others had been in the process of applying for refugee status. A disturbingly high number also lived with (dis)abilities like Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, Fetal Narcotic Syndrome, Schizophrenia, and ADD/ADHD.

These are women who have been bounced between abusive foster homes and youth detention facilities, graduating at 16 as wards of the Children's Aid Society only to become wards of the State, criminalized for doing what it takes to survive the minefield of poverty.

As the days turned into weeks, I began to erase from my mind the hope of being released. The health problems with which I've been living the last few years became increasingly severe, and I often found it difficult to stand up or walk around without fainting. My ribs stuck out. My stomach became concave. I became depressed.

Was it stress, overly-processed food, or a general lack of fresh air and exercise that made me unhealthy? Probably some combination of all these things. Without even examining me, the doctor put me on a liquid diet, which in jail consists largely of juice crystals, water, and MSG-filled soup powder. When I was finally sent to the examination room I was told that nothing seemed to be wrong with me, regardless of the fact that I'd lost close to 20 pounds, felt tired constantly, and was in serious pain and discomfort.

I talked to my partner on the phone, but his voice sounded distant and crackly through the receiver. He came to visit me, and we pressed our hands to the inch-thick Plexiglas between us. It was almost harder than not seeing him. My mom sounded stressed whenever I called her, and I could hear my dog howling in the background at the sound of my voice through the receiver.

I needed to talk to somebody, but the prospect of being force-fed Thorazine dissuaded me from applying to see the psychiatrist. So I went to the prison Chaplain, for the sheer novelty. He was a square-jawed man in a gray suit, with the bearing of a Televangelist. He told me I was in prison because I had sinned, and that I had to repent for these sins. I was in my current situation because the Devil had led me astray.

"But Jesus was a political prisoner!" I said. "The Devil didn't tell me to do anything; I'm a political prisoner like Jesus!" He thought I was crazy.

I was released after about a month on conditions of strict house arrest and non-association with some of my closest friends. All I felt was numb. I walked into the parking lot with my family and my partner, squinting under the bright sunlight. We drove back to the house where I lived as a kid and I slept for days. At first I felt fine. I could leave the house, if I was with my parents, to take the dogs for walks in the last of summer's warm weather. I drank coffee, read a lot. People I'd never met sent me stickers and zines and nice letters in the mail.

Two months later I started having panic attacks, insomnia, and nervous breakdowns on an almost daily basis. When I did sleep, I had awful nightmares. It seemed as though every past instance of trauma and violence I'd seen or experienced had been consolidated into a heavy, poisonous lump, slowly turning my insides black and rotten. I felt like the world was just too ugly to live in. I was suffocating under the weight of clear-cut forests and floundering, tar-drowned shore birds. When I closed my eyes all I could see was torture and war, droughts and chemical spills, napalm.

All I wanted was to move past the negative experiences I'd had and work towards piecing my life back together. But I realized that the pain I felt was trying to tell me something: I would not be able to forget and move on as though none of this had happened. In a way, I think the disgust and pain we feel when we see or experience something horrific can be the greatest catalyst for creating positive change. When we experience something firsthand we are better equipped to understand it—and with that understanding we can educate others and give

real support to those who are also experiencing it. We can see its flaws and weak points, and we can use this knowledge to criticize, discredit, and eventually destroy it.

Although I never heard this said firsthand, others told me they overheard quite a few young people say they'd never go to another protest again after their experiences at the detention center. I felt not only disappointed that everyone hadn't been able to see the ways to reclaim these experiences and use them as further motivation, but profoundly confused by this perspective. What we went through during the mass arrests at the G20 was only a small window into the everyday experiences of countless minorities in this country who suffer police profiling, brutality, and prejudice within the legal system on a horrifyingly regular basis. As hard as I try, I simply can't understand the notion that anyone could propose to be an ally of any marginalized group, then give up and turn away when faced with a tiny microcosm of what that group puts up with everyday.

My experience in prison and the women with whom I shared it have reminded me of the reasons I became politically active in the first place. They've reminded me of the sorrow, the desperation, the heartbreak, the trauma, the unlivable realities of poverty that first spurred me to get my life together and dedicate myself to helping others rather than accepting the conditions in which I lived. Being in prison reminded me of the core of my politics. At the bottom of it, we were all inside that prison for the exact same reason. We were dangerous only in the sense that our existence discredited Canada's status as a place of liberty and equality. We were a glaring reminder that this country doesn't offer equal status and opportunity to everyone.

Some political prisoners are arrested for staging public demonstrations that address poverty, and some are arrested for living in poverty. Some actively protest social inequality, while others turn to drugs or alcohol because they can no longer bear the brunt of this inequality. Some choose to publicly draw attention to injustice by their words and actions, while others are swept off the streets because their very presence is a public exposure of this injustice. Now is the time for everyone in our community to think about what it really means to say that every prisoner is a political prisoner. The next time we're shocked and outraged by an experience of being targeted, harassed, or otherwise mistreated by law enforcement or society in general, we should stop to recognize how much respect we owe to the people all around us who face much more than that every day of their lives. *Every prisoner is a political prisoner.*

*All names have been changed to protect the identities of those mentioned.

These Burning Streets Book Release

The name of this collection of poetry is no mere hyperbole. When the G-20 met in Toronto, Canada in 2010 behind armed thugs and fortress walls to discuss the fate of the world, Kelly Pflug-Back was among those who took to the streets to counter it with the militancy that the situation demanded. The cops dragged her off and tormented her in jail for a month while the government attempted to frame her as the leader of the infamously leaderless Black Bloc. Many of her charges were dropped, but she pleaded guilty to the destruction of several police cars and corporate storefronts. She was sentenced to fifteen months behind bars for daring to be free, for writing her poetry with action and words alike. Every dollar received by the publisher from the sale of this volume will go to aid her in her struggle against the state.

We have just gone to print with this now (7/20/12) after having heard Kelly's sentence. We are taking orders and the book will be mailed out as soon as we get it, probably by early to mid-august.

All profits received by Combustion Books will be passed along to Kelly Rose Pflug-Back until she is free.

Also available as a zine for free download for both web viewing and printing half-letter.

20 Jul - Jordan Halliday Released

On July 20th, Jordan Halliday was released from prison after serving 10 months for refusing to cooperate with a grand jury that was fishing for information about the animal rights scene in Salt Lake City, Utah. He still faces three years of supervised release, but we are happy to have him back in the world.

MORE:

After refusing to cooperate with a grand jury in 2009, Halliday was jailed for 4 months banking on the hope that the sentence would make him talk. Halliday still resisted the grand jury. He was released and then swiftly indicted with *criminal contempt of court* for refusing to testify the same grand jury. On July 27, 2010, Jordan pled guilty to the charge of *criminal contempt of court*.

Although he was sentenced to serve 10 months on November 3, 2010, Jordan's defense team filed an appeal which bought him some more time. The appeal was denied by the court and Jordan was arrested to start his sentence on January 9, 2012. Jordan's courage to resist the grand jury has been an inspirational act to us all, especially for the grand jury resisters to come.

We are so happy that Jordan is now in the loving arms of friends and family outside of prison walls. It is vital to remember that prisoner support does not end with prisoner release. Prison is a fucked up and lonely place, right now Jordan needs our support more than ever. If you are on twitter, please show Jordan some love. If you are on facebook, tell him how happy you are that he's out!

23 Jul - New Jersey 4 prisoner Patreese Johnson transferred

New Jersey 4 self-defense prisoner Patreese Johnson was recently transferred. She also recently had a birthday. While this puts her about half an hour farther away, she was transferred to a minimum security prison. Please help her settle in to her new place by writing a letter or belated birthday card.

MORE:

Patreese Johnson 07-G-0635

Beacon Correctional Facility

50 Camp Beacon Road

Post Office Box 780

Beacon, New York 12508-0780

23 July 2012 - Statement from Jeremy Hammond, alleged Anonymous hacker

Jeremy Hammond had a court appearance on July 23rd. Beforehand, there was a rally and the week prior a noise demo outside the prison in which he's held. We've included the solidarity statement he wrote and a report back from the rally below.

MORE:

Thanks for everybody coming out in support! It is so good to know folks on the street got my back. Special thanks to those who have been sending books and letters, and to my amazing lawyers.

I remember maybe a few months before I was locked up I went to a few noise demonstrations at the federal jail MCC Chicago in support of all those locked up there. Prisoners moved in front of the windows, turned the lights on and off, and dropped playing cards through the cracks in the windows. I had no idea I would soon be in that same jail facing multiple trumped up computer hacking "conspiracies."

Now at New York MCC, the other day I was playing chess when another prisoner excitedly came up as was like, "Yo, there are like 50 people outside the window and they are carrying banners with your name!" Sure enough, there you all were with lights, banners, and bucket drums just below our 11th floor window. Though you may not have been able to hear us or see us, over one hundred of us in this unit saw you all and wanted to know who those people were, what they were about, rejuvenated knowing people on the outside got their back.

As prisoners in this police state – over 2.5 million of us – we are silenced, marginalized, exploited, forgotten, and dehumanized. First we are judged and sentenced by the "justice" system, then treated as second class citizens by mainstream society. But even the warden of MCC New York has in surprising honesty admitted that "the only difference between us officers here and you prisoners is we just haven't been caught."

They call us robbers and fraudsters when the big banks get billion dollar bailouts and kick us out of our homes.

They call us gun runners and drug dealers when pharmaceutical corporations and defense contractors profit from trafficking armaments and drugs on a far greater scale.

They call us “terrorists” when NATO and the US military murder millions of innocents around the world and employ drones and torture tactics.

And they call us cyber criminals when they themselves develop viruses to spy on and wage war against infrastructure and populations in other countries.

Yes, I am one of several dozen around the world accused of Anonymous-affiliated computer hacking charges.

One of many here at MCC New York facing trumped up “conspiracy” charges based on the cooperation of government informants who will say anything and sell out anyone to save themselves.

And this jail is one of several thousand other jails, prisons, and immigrant detention centers – lockups which one day will be reduced to rubble and grass will grow between the cracks of the concrete.

So don’t let fear of imprisonment deter you from speaking up and fighting back. Silencing our movement is exactly what they hope to accomplish with these targeted, politically motivated prosecutions. They can try to stop a few of us but they can never stop us all.

Thanks again for coming out.

Keep bringing the ruckus!

Reportback from Solidarity Rally at Jeremy's Court Date 7/23/12 - NYC

by Dom

Disclaimer: this is based on my observations and reflect only my own personal views. Unless otherwise stated none of this should be taken to reflect the opinions of Jeremy, his legal team, or even those of the Jeremy Hammond Support Network as a whole. Any errors of fact are solely mine.

[those interested only in the details of the court session can skip to the end]

We spent Monday morning talking about Jeremy's case and informing people in the area about the rally. I think because Anonymous has a much more visible presence on the ground there, great interest was shown by tourists from Europe. One from France even said, “I love Anonymous!” and expressed his support for Jeremy. We told him about the great work being done by the French Anons to support Jeremy and others accused of Anonymous activities and said he should get in contact with Anons there. We also asked him to give them our thanks and love from the U.S., if he did. Another great conversation was had with two fellows from the Netherlands who were very interested in the case due to the alleged Wikileaks connection. They promised to continue following Jeremy's case.

The Free Hammond shirts attracted much attention. The stares were non-stop as people read the domain name on the shirt, and many asked questions. Even quite a few of those who didn't ask questions directly, were seen to have pulled the freehammond.org page up on their laptops and devices. Each person that asked us about the shirts got a flyer, invited to the rally, and whatever questions they had answered. If you want to support Jeremy, I think the shirts are a valuable tool in increasing public awareness if you can deal with the stares. Make your own or get one from Anonymous, either way, it's a good look.

Thanks to AnonGroup and FreeAnons we had livestreaming from Foley Square, where we met Jeremy's brother Jason and friends from Chicago.

Due to NYPD and Federal regulations a number of our planned activities had to be modified. Jason had brought a powered PA system for the rally which we were prohibited from using, and the sms-irc link from the court had to be abandoned due to rules forbidding the possession of cell phones inside the courthouse (unless you are a law enforcement officer, attorney, or media, apparently, since I saw them inside the courthouse).

Once in the courtroom, the difference between a Federal courtroom and a State or local one is astounding. Great high cathedral ceilings with fancy lightning, Fed agents and US Marshalls with the old fashioned ear pieces everyone knows from the movies, are all there to remind you: Fed court is serious business. It was great to see this high brow courtroom of the 1% filled with such a broad spectrum of people who came out to support Jeremy: punks and moms, university students and squatters, and just about everyone in between. The contrast made the ostentatious display of “power” by the government seem more like a feeble attempt to convince themselves of their continued relevance.

Jeremy himself appeared in good spirits, as his face lit up when he saw the support in the courtroom. Before he sat down he said, “Power to the people!”. There was a bit of wait before the court session started, which was filled with humor. As he'd been exercising as well as reading and writing letters and such, Jeremy made motions as if lifting weights to show off his new muscles, and supporters teased him about his hair growing out into a mullet.

The court session itself was brief and somewhat anticlimactic. Only about 50% of the discovery has been produced by the prosecution, most, if not all, of which deals exclusively with the Stratfor hack. The other 50% of the discovery relates to the Arizona police hack (possibly others, though this was the only one stated explicitly) and remaining charges. Total discovery is estimated to be in the area of a terabyte of data. The defense intends to submit a bail package for Jeremy on the grounds that they need his assistance to make sense of the vast amount of data. The next big court date is scheduled for 24 September 2012.

On behalf of the Jeremy Hammond Support Network, his friends and family, and I'm sure Jeremy himself, I'd like to thank everyone for their continued support.

25 Jul - the justice system is only too happy to help you believe you are a piece of shit by Mandy Hiscocks

We recently received another blog entry from 2010 Toronto G20 prisoner Mandy Hiscocks and have pasted it below.

MORE:

this week i'm handing my blog over to another inmate who recently went home after spending almost two and a half months here. this post started off as a written interview, but the questions ended up just being guidelines so we removed them from the text. i think it took a great deal of courage, and i'm grateful and very happy to be able to bring her story to you all.

thank you to the author. wherever you are i hope you're doing well and enjoying your freedom!

The justice system is only too happy to help you believe that you are a piece of shit

My charges were theft under \$5000 and breach of probation. Although I was arrested December 24th, the next time i went to court (besides the bail hearings) was January 11th. Disclosure was partially done and at that point they offered me 71 days on a guilty plea. When I went for sentencing on January 31st the Crown read out a 90 day sentence (31 days was not mentioned), but my release date is March 4th which is in fact 71 days served out of 90 – that's more than the 2/3 required. I'm not sure why that is, I was not given the opportunity to inquire in court that day.

On my third attempt at a bail hearing I consented to my detention. I knew jail was going to be asked, so I just wanted to get started.

I have a criminal record of only thefts and breaches of probation – no outstanding charges or charges of any other kind. At my sentencing, the judge called me a “menace to shopkeepers.” This time, I was arrested by a security guard at a mall after being seen by a sales woman allegedly taking an item. I was long out of the store and knew she had suspected foul play due to the fact that she ran yelling to the back of the shop for another employee.

Why did i do this? Well, interesting question. This act of stealing started at age 8. Home life was very cold, lonely and abusive. Stealing is a self-punishing act – I do it mostly to get caught, to punish myself for drilled in beliefs that I'm a bad person, not good for anyone or anything. It on the one hand gave me a sense of power but much more than that it solidified all the negative messages I was fed from very little until well into my early 30s: I'm no good, I'm stupid, ugly, nobody will ever want or truly love me and I certainly won't amount to anything. These messages became very real when anyone around me was faltering in any way, in my mind it was due to my own shortcomings. And the justice system is only too happy to help you believe that you are in fact a piece of shit. The police are all about shame, the crowns make it out to be a personal act done against them, and judges sit and scowl at you. The whole process is demeaning and makes you full of shame which is the result I was aiming for.

Some people turn to drugs and alcohol to numb themselves or give themselves false control but you can't hide those. Stealing I could keep to myself – sure, it involved keeping secrets from family but I could keep it private, a personal punishment. Becoming a drug addict or alcoholic would have put my children at risk, which would've made me a bad mom, and I was determined NOT TO BE anything at all resembling my mother.

Not that she drank or did drugs. She was cold, distant, mean, unloving and abusive. I was a burden, not the joy a child should be.

At this point in my life I understand myself a little more than when I started the act of stealing. I've always been looking for “help” of some kind, for some understanding from someone, anyone. However the legal system only deals with the act itself and not the underlying issues.

It's only been the last year, and I'm now 47, that the courts have begun to see that in fact there are underlying issues here. Once jail became the solution to my offence I forced myself to delve into my past and explore it in trauma counselling. It's amazing what you can bury deep inside. My biggest challenges have been to face my past – my mother and my first intimate partners who were made from the same cloth as her in many ways. You tend to stick with what you know even if it's not the best for you. . .it somehow seems comfortable or familiar, or deserved. Lump in no self-worth or self-respect and you settle pretty easily.

I've done this act of stealing when the shit is hitting the fan, so to speak, with a family member and I can't fix it or meet their needs. I also sabotage myself when things are too good. You see I'm not allowed to be happy or content either (I don't deserve it) so I sabotage under those circumstance as well.

Now I've been happily married for 17 years to a man who has no criminal record who is kind, gentle, loving, smart as a whip and treats me great. I adore him. So why do I still do this act of sabotage, you ask? Because it's a habit, a reflex. At the first sign of trouble or complete bliss I act out. 17 years hasn't erased 30 years of trauma, but I'm working on it with much more understanding and strength than ever before thanks to a Canadian Mental Health Worker (CMHW) and a trauma centre called SAVIS. Psychiatrists and medications have only helped me stuff my problems, you need to bring them to the surface and deal with them. Forgive people (not forget) so you can move forward and not hit a plateau or slide backwards as I have for years and years. The people who hurt me have been long gone for over a decade but I've kept them present in my mind and allowed their words and actions towards me to shape my thinking to this very day. I'm a work in progress.

Being arrested three times in less than two years, going to jail all three times, has been extremely hard on my husband. In the last three years our family has suffered a financial loss: my husband's job that he worked at for approximately 15 years basically deteriorated due to bad management. He was locked out and lost his job, and it left him devastated. He has since suffered such overwhelming anxiety that he simply can't cope. Day to day is a struggle and at times can I slip back into thoughts such as “Oh his life would have turned out different if he wasn't with me” or “This is my fault and why can't I make him better?” So what do I do? Complicate our lives and go to jail trying to escape. ESCAPE WHAT?

This place is no escape or holiday, it can suck you even lower if you let it. However reality doesn't set in until that hand is placed on your shoulder and you hear the words "Come with me." Even then, if I'm really distraught it takes until the actual police come and take me away for reality to hit and hit hard. It's been a terrible roller-coaster of regrets but as some of you know, even if it's a bad choice it's a familiar one. Change can be very scary, depression can keep you stagnant.

Me coming to jail has impacted my husband the most. He really needs me and feels I leave him with little regard. This may be true in some small way but I'm really running from myself – which is really impossible to do. My youngest son, who is 25 and still at home, gets exposed for all his shortcomings when I came here. He's been coddled and spoiled by me because he has special needs. Also because I was all he had – no extended family for the two of us. He suffers from depression which leads to being unmotivated and lazy if you don't keep after him. Like myself he has low self-esteem and ADHD which over time has made him angry with frustration. He's a handsome young man and is very kind, loving and a loyal friend. He's also very creative, but he's very hard on himself. He struggled with learning all through school and would act out (be a behavioural problem) rather than be exposed to his peers for not learning at their pace. It was very hard for me to watch and the schools weren't interested in my two cents. I was told "He's a boy, they learn slower, he'll catch up." Well that never happened and my son has paid for it. Consequently I have done and still do a lot for my son. He's been through more jobs than I can count but is slowly finding his way. When I come to jail he comes to a standstill which frustrates my husband. Even though he can empathize, he only wants better for him – not to settle but to strive and work harder. Depression can really hamper that if you allow it to.

As for me, until last time coming to jail wasn't helpful at all because I was too busy feeling sorry for myself, and mad at the legal system that couldn't or refused to accept that my stealing was the result of underlying issues. I myself didn't understand enough to articulate this either – I went along with "I'm just bad and dumb, and deserve on some level to be punished."

The crown and judge said I'd become a menace and they need to protect businesses. Since I wasn't learning my lesson from their many other punishments (fines, community service, conditional sentences) jail was their only recourse. Well, did I learn things here? Not anything that would help me be a better upstanding citizen.

The first long stay here (almost six months) was all spent in minimum security. It was basically motel living – I had my own room with a double mattress, a window that opened, a heater in my room, a door that didn't get locked and a light that got turned off at night. A library I could visit twice weekly, puzzles and board games (Yahtzee, Bingo, Battleship, Scrabble, Monopoly), Scrabble tournaments with prizes (chocolate, conditioner, ice cream etc.), new release movies shown in the basement each weekend, yoga classes, exercise classes, crafts, a bath tub. Then there are all kinds of groups and classes three times a week, 45 minutes each, in which you can learn new coping techniques and strategies for various areas such as job, relationships, anger, self-esteem and so on. That's if you go to these to learn and not to socialize like most. However most of the time you're stuck listening to inmates' loud foul bullshit talk. I now have knowledge of crack, never even heard the word before I came here – as naive as that may sound it's true. Then there's heroin: how to smoke it, shoot it. . . and so much more that I didn't need or want knowledge of. And there's the people who would love to teach me how to be a much better thief – problem is I do it mostly to get caught, I don't want to be good at it.

When I was sentenced that first time I moved from Unit 4 (described above) to Unit 3, the minimum security "work range." This was like a higher class motel where you get all the amenities of Unit 4 but now there's a real gym to go play in and do aerobics two or three times a day, a nail salon free of charge where you can also get your hair cut and coloured for \$10.00. And you can work for extra food: slave labour. In fact you must work unless you have real good health reasons not to. There's grounds (cut grass, pull weeds, plant flowers or shovel snow and spread slat at different jails in the area, Monday-Friday 7am-4pm), Cookchill (preparing food trays, Friday-Sunday 7am-4pm), or Maintenance (general cleanup off the range, Monday-Friday 10-11am, 2-3pm, 5-6pm). All of this is paid with food – extra meals, chips, chocolate bars, pop, sticky buns and coffee. It's slave labour indeed – why pay people when you can force inmates to do it for food? They just pay guards to supervise. Thanks but no thanks, I personally would avoid being sentenced early in my stay here in order to avoid Unit 3.

My stay was four months long – somebody's starting to get the hint that I must have some mental issues because sentences are going down. That time I spent it all on minimum security on Unit 4 until I could get a sentence of

time served. I was given a Canadian Mental Health Worker to work with while here and was introduced to SAVIS trauma counselling – I had never heard of or been offered these services before. I saw them both once every three weeks and continue to work with them, everything takes time but they are helping. So I decided to take as much positive as I could from here and to try to try to make all the drug talk and inmate talk just white noise. I took every 45 minute day course. They're very general but even if I got a little something from each it's better time spent than sitting around listening to the insanity of others. I also spent lots of time in my room reading and writing, and sitting at my desk staring out my window. The view was an open field and the men's jail (Maplehurst). I could see the delivery trucks come and go and the Cookchill Unit 3 workers come and go in their little white trucks, and watch the Grounds workers cut the grass on their Ridem lawn mowers. I also had a groundhog visit under my window daily and a family of skunks (mama and three babies) and lots of Canada geese. All of these little guys can squeeze between the fences or fly over them, lucky little bums. I eventually left here but like those furry little friends I too came back. . . a glutton for punishment I suppose.

Yes you lose your freedom but the people we leave on the outside, that's who really gets punished. So what can I do differently this time? Because my husband of 17 years is at his wits' end, he can't handle the disappearing acts any more and if he didn't love me so much he'd leave.

This time my sentence dropped only because I was working my butt off with my CMHW, attending SAVIS trauma counselling, and was on a waiting list for a psychiatrist (not that I think that will be much help, a psychologist would be more beneficial to me but it's all done in channels). I had just started new anxiety meds, and was on a waiting list at Probation to see a worker for anti-theft counselling. So the courts felt I was being very pro-active in my recovery but just not enough time had passed – four months actually, I was released in late August and back here on the 25th of December, yup, MERRY CHRISTMAS. This is my second X-mas here, I have great anxiety and stress like a lot of people over the holidays for many reasons. Our house was ready, presents bought, turkey on the thaw. Everything on the outside looked perfect but inside my head I was freaking out – too happy, not allowed, must sabotage myself, create chaos. My poor family, man did I ever throw them a curve ball arrested on the 24th. I had called home when I arrived. My husband was cold. I can't blame him – how much is one person supposed to take? They had X-mas without me, they cooked the turkey but it was a sad and lonely day for them all.

So as I lay in bed I'm thinking this has got to be the last time I come here. I've got to make this a different experience. The next couple of days are holidays with fewer staff so I'm kept on Unit 2. Double cells, two people, toilet in your cell at the foot of one of the beds. No window, NO HEAT, it's freezing here. This might actually be jail, it's maximum security. As days pass into a regular work week again I see the classification lady who sends you to Unit 3 or 4. I tell her I want to stay on Unit 2 and she says “WHY? You have no reason to stay here. It's so much better on Unit 4.” I say “That's the problem I need to learn a lesson to make this stick.” So here I've stayed, in the dirty freezer zone, damn it's cold here. Cold air blowing on us all day every day with always a shortage of clothes. No windows, no grass yard, no gym, no games, no extra nothing. Just a lot of suck it up buttercup. We're locked out of our cells half the day and locked in the other half. It's so loud all the time out on the range and we're full most of the time, people coming and going. Thank the lord I've managed to have a great celly. We get along great, we talk a little but read and write more. She's clean, I'm clean. Thank god for quiet times: 12-2pm, 5-6pm and bed at 7:30 – love it.

I truly hate this place. Nothing is bad enough to bring me back. This time here I've just lived in my head, in my mind, more than anywhere else. If your head's in a good place then it doesn't really matter where the rest of you is at least for the interim. Time doesn't have to feel like a stone I've got to drag from one end of the day to the other. The days pass fairly quickly on Unit 2 on the average but it still really sucks. I'm determined not to allow myself to get to the point that I shut down at home and don't communicate with my husband. We're a team and I shouldn't be leaving him out in left field. My thoughts, feelings and emotions are not burdens to him, however leaving him in order to escape myself and ending up here is most definitely a burden and hurts him terribly.

I'd like to touch on my experience with the legal system. In the past of course I've dealt with some harsh judges and crowns but that's exactly what I expected. I was looking to be punished and demeaned so what can I say? However at some point I did expect them to be smarter or more intuitive than myself, and be able to read between the lines and see something more than just the shoplifting. Life has been a struggle but I've maintained a fairly good paying job and I don't drink or do drugs. Not having a substance abuse issue actually made it worse

for me in court – I had “no excuses”. I know I'd have been dealt with more sympathetically if I had a drug or alcohol problem, at least that's been my experience watching others come and go for the same charges. There's also the fact that I live in Halton Region – cities with money. I've been made an example of because the upper classes don't tolerate crime.

Courts in different cities treat people differently. Someone living in Toronto, Hamilton or Brampton could potentially receive 7-30 days in jail for a theft and breach of probation even if it's their 20th or 30th conviction. This occurs especially if they have a substance abuse problem or are working girls with an addiction to feed. These situations can and do get them less sentencing time – they can come and go from here four, five, six or more times a year. Milton court, where I was sentenced, seems to be one of the harsher courts due to it serving cities with lots of money and low crime rates. Mental health problems and substance abuse are perhaps acknowledged but not really taken into consideration when it comes to sentencing – they're just frowned upon. I've been able to receive Legal Aid – very helpful – and I've had fine lawyers for the most part. The wonderful woman who has been with me for three years now is a fine human being, an above average hard worker who goes the extra mile. She believed in me and saw who I really am. She also managed to make the courts see that there's so much more than the stealing.

The police I've had dealings with for the most part have been fairly decent, just the actual arresting officers have not been so nice, you know, take a hard stand making me feel very shameful. Court officers are always polite and friendly but then I'm polite and respectful as well. Court is a very anxiety-ridden time for me and at times I think it would be easier if they didn't treat me so kindly because I'm so busy beating myself up, telling myself I don't deserve niceness.

I've spent most of my life feeling bad about myself, allowing that negative tape from the past to lead me through life. It's loudest when I'm in turmoil. Life sure does throw us pretty hard fast curve balls. What I do know about myself is that I am kind and loving, hard working and a great care-giver (although I don't take good care of myself). I have a special place in my heart for animals and elderly people. However I can slip pretty quickly into the bad messages I was fed for three quarters of my life. I've just learning now how to let other people's garbage go, to give back what does not and has not ever belonged to me. It takes very little to make me feel inferior and unsure, to doubt myself, or to blame myself for others' shortcomings and life circumstances (family and loved ones most of all). No one can control or fix everything. However I'm hoping, and will constantly be working on that stuff being the old me. I have people who love me to lean on, I'm not alone. I don't have to struggle alone thinking I don't want to burden them any more than they already are. I thank my husband for standing by me in sickness and health, the good times and the very bad times. I also thank my lawyer – she is a wonderful, hard-working, dedicated lawyer and friend. Thank you to the Canadian Mental Health Workers and SAVIS who will continue to help me succeed in the future and leave the past where it belongs – IN THE PAST.

Finally my last piece for this blog: I was asked if I think most of the people here belong in jail. That's a question full of grey areas. It seems to me that this is where everyone comes before their real issues get dealt with. There is little if any deterrent or rehabilitation here. It's a place for girls to rest up, fatten up, learn how to do their crime even better and then hit the streets to re-offend again. Now in saying that, there are wonderful volunteers that come here to educate us about drugs, sexually transmitted diseases and so on. To help show you how to bone up on some life skills. But most people here need a larger intervention, they are going back out to wherever they come from. This place is not going to fix them or take away their demons.

If this place only held serious perpetrators such as murderers, rapists, child molesters, kidnappers and other serious criminals lots of people in this institution would be jobless. Our government needs to take a hard look at our criminal code and put our tax dollars into more rehabs, supervised facilities for substance users, and mental health workers. More probation officers with a greater access to public facilities to shape new paths for low level crime offenders. How about stop allowing the rich to get richer and use the money to help the less fortunate change their lives? This building is only the answer for a very few. For most it's either a delay in the inevitable or a big step backwards for them and their families. With all the resources and money and highly intelligent people I have to believe that there's a much better solution for so many that continue to come and go from here.

I don't pretend to have all the answers but I have been here long enough to see that with all the volunteers that struggle to come here to help, there is only so much they can do. I applaud them and their efforts but they need far more power and resources. The court systems need to change, laws need to be altered. And many more programs, with educated people with resources in every city, need to be developed. Building more jails is a quick fix but certainly not the answer.

25 Jul - FBI and JTTF Raid Multiple Homes, Grand Jury Subpoenas in Portland, Olympia, Seattle

Friends and comrades in the northwest were raided and issued grand jury subpoenas on July 25th. We're including as much information as we currently have below.

MORE:

From *Green is the New Red*

As I've been reporting on [Twitter](#), there have been multiple homes raided and grand jury subpoenas issued in Portland, Olympia, and Seattle.

Three homes were raided in Portland, by approximately 60-80 police including FBI and Joint Terrorism Task Force. Individuals at the homes say police used flash grenades during the raid.

Grand jury subpoenas have been served to individuals in all three cities: 2 in Olympia, 1 in Seattle, and 2 in Portland. The grand jury is scheduled to convene on August 2nd at the federal courthouse in Seattle.

No arrests have been made. Electronics were confiscated along with additional personal items.

All legal documents related to the searches and grand jury are sealed, and the FBI will only say it is related to an "ongoing violent crime" investigation. But based on interviews with residents, and what police told them at the scene, this is clearly related to the ongoing demonization of anarchists and the Occupy movement.

I'll continue updating as this develops; please [follow me on Twitter](#) (@will_potter) for the latest.

UPDATE: Here's [local press from the Oregonian](#).

UPDATE: Reports of FBI and police lingering around after the raids, trying to get people to voluntarily talk. Know your rights, never talk to police without an attorney.

UPDATE: KGW news has photos of a raid. FBI agents dressed paramilitary.

Solidarity statement against the raids and grand jury subpoenas

On Wednesday July 25th, the FBI conducted a series of coordinated raids against activists in Portland, Olympia, and Seattle. They subpoenaed several people to a special federal grand jury, and seized computers, black clothing and anarchist literature. This comes after similar raids in Seattle in July and earlier raids of squats in Portland.

Though the FBI has said that the raids are part of a violent crime investigation, the truth is that the federal authorities are conducting a political witch-hunt against anarchists and others working toward a more just, free, and equal society. The warrants served specifically listed anarchist literature as evidence to be seized, pointing to the fact that the FBI and police are targeting this group of people because of their political ideas. Pure and simple, these raids and the grand jury hearings are being used to intimidate people whose politics oppose the state's agenda. During a time of growing economic and ecological crises that are broadly affecting people across the world, it is an attempt to push back any movement towards creating a world that is humane, one that meets every person's needs rather than serving only the interests of the rich.

This attack does not occur in a vacuum. Around the country and around the world, people have been rising up and resisting an economic system that puts the endless pursuit of profit ahead of the basic needs of humanity and the Earth. From the Arab Spring to the Occupy movement to now Anaheim, people are taking to the streets. In each of these cases, the state has responded with brutal political repression. This is not a coincidence. It is a

long-term strategy by state agencies to stop legitimate political challenges to a status quo that exploits most of the world's people.

We, the undersigned, condemn this and all other political repression. While we may have differences in ideology or chose to use different tactics, we understand that we are in a shared struggle to create a just, free, and liberated world, and that we can only do this if we stand together. We will not let scare tactics or smear campaigns divide us, intimidate us, or stop us from organizing and working for a better world.

No more witch-hunts! An injury to one is an injury to all.

Note: *As of today, there are over 160 organizations signed on to this statement.*

Interview and Documents from FBI Raid Show Feds are Targeting Anarchists

The first interview with any of the Portlanders who were [served grand jury subpoenas as FBI agents searched their homes](#) on Wednesday, July 25, shines some light on what authorities may be hoping to achieve with the raids.

Dennison Williams was in bed at his house on NE 8th Avenue on Wednesday morning when he heard a bang and someone shout, "FBI!" Then came a loud crash, which turned out to be agents breaking down his front door, and Williams heard a bang and a saw a flash of light—the agents throwing flash grenades. Williams started yelling from his bed that he was upstairs and unarmed.

"I was scared," he said. "The police in this town have a history of shooting people, I was worried they would accidentally shoot me."

According to Williams, FBI officers entered his room with assault rifles and kept them aimed at him while they handcuffed him. They put him in a chair for about 30 minutes while they searched his house. Williams says there were about 15 FBI officers in the house, plus one Portland police officer on the street outside. According to the property receipt Williams received from the officers, the feds seized several items, including his computer, phone, hard-drive, two thumb drives, and various clothes (including black jeans, black t-shirt, and a black bandana). They then served him a subpoena to appear at a grand jury in Seattle next Thursday, August 2nd.

Williams is not sure exactly what the grand jury is meeting about, but that likely they want to ask him about other people. The FBI has said only that the raids are part of an ongoing "violent crime" investigation.

"It's related to political opposition, it's related to political dissent," says Williams. "They're trying to create a wedge within people who are resisters... They're specifically pursuing anarchists."

The FBI search warrant states that they are looking to seize items which may be evidence regarding the crimes of **conspiracy to destroy government property, interstate travel with intent to riot**, and conspiracy to travel interstate with intent to riot. Those items include: Clothing and related items work during commission of offenses; paint; sticks and flags similar to those used or carried during the commission of the offenses, and material for making flags; anti-government or anarchist literature, documentation or communications related to the offenses, flares, computers or electronic storage media of any kind.

On July 10th, Seattle police officers staged a similar raid on the house of [some Occupy Mayday protesters in Seattle](#). On the day Williams' house and two other houses in Portland were searched, the FBI served grand jury subpoenas to people in Olympia and Seattle, as well. Williams was not sure how many people were served subpoenas, but thinks it is somewhere around seven people, and says he "will not cooperate" with the grand jury. Anyone who refuses to testify when subpoenaed can potentially face jail time.

Political supporters calling themselves the "Committee Against Political Repression" have already set up a website to post information about the case and take donations to the legal fund: [NoPoliticalRepression.wordpress.com](#). There, they've posted a "solidarity statement" from numerous activist groups condemning the "series of coordinated raids."

FBI Agents Raid Homes in Search of “Anarchist Literature”

When FBI and Joint Terrorism Task Force agents raided multiple activist homes in the Northwest last week, they were in search of “anti-government or anarchist literature.”

The [raids were part of a multi-state operation](#) that targeted activists in Portland, Olympia, and Seattle. At least three people were served subpoenas to appear before a federal grand jury on August 2nd in Seattle.

In addition to anarchist literature, the warrants also authorize agents to seize flags, flag-making material, cell phones, hard drives, address books, and black clothing.

The listing of black clothing and flags, along with comments made by police, indicates that the FBI may ostensibly be investigating “black bloc” tactics used during May Day protests in Seattle, which [destroyed corporate property](#).

If that is true, how are books and literature evidence of criminal activity?

To answer that, we need to look at the increasing harassment, surveillance, and prosecution of anarchists and political activists associated with the Occupy Movement.

In some cases, such as the [May Day arrests in Cleveland](#), the FBI has been so desperate to arrest “anarchist terrorists” that it supplied them with bomb-making materials and used an informant to entrap them. The same thing [happened in Chicago](#).

The motivation for these operations, and the instruction that “anarchist” means “terrorist,” is coming straight from the top levels of the federal government. As I recently wrote, new documents show that the FBI is conducting [“domestic terrorism” training presentations about anarchists](#).

The FBI presentation described anarchists as “criminals seeking an ideology to justify their activities.”

This is the guilt-by-association mentality that is guiding FBI and JTTF assaults on political activists; if agents find “anarchist literature” in a raid, it is evidence of criminal activity because anarchism, in and of itself, is criminal activity.

The Seattle grand jury may or may not be investigating May Day protests. What’s clear, though, is that the grand jury is being used as a tool in this criminalization of those suspected as “anarchists.” Grand juries are secretive processes that are frequently used against political activists in order to acquire information. They are fishing expeditions. If activists refuse to testify about their personal beliefs and political associations, they can be imprisoned. [Jordan Halliday, for example, was recently released](#) after serving more than six months in prison (and being imprisoned once already for four months) for asserting his First Amendment and Fifth Amendment rights and refusing to provide information about the animal rights movement.

[As one organizer with Occupy Seattle said](#) after the raid: “...we are not being raided for connection to any crime, but to some political ideology that the police think we have.

“I was just doing research on the old Pinkerton strikebreaking paramilitaries, so it’s kind of funny, you know, to have that old Red Scare history burst through my front door at six AM.”

25 Jul – Update on Cleveland Five, now Four

Well, bad news regarding the Cleveland Five, recent focus of one of these letter-writing dinners. At their last court appearance, one of the five flipped and will testify against the others. We’ve included a corporate news article and a statement from the support crew.

MORE:

Anthony Hayne, Bomb Plot Suspect, Pleads Guilty In Cuyahoga Valley National Park Bridge Case

One of five men charged with plotting to bomb an Ohio highway bridge pleaded guilty Wednesday and agreed to testify against his co-defendants.

Anthony Hayne, 35, of Cleveland, who has a criminal record for theft and breaking and entering, pleaded to all three counts against him in U.S. District Court. His attorney, Michael O'Shea, said Hayne hopes to get leniency in return for his testimony.

Under the terms of the surprise plea deal, Hayne will have the chance to avoid a life prison term. With the plea and offer of testimony for the prosecution, he could face 15 years to nearly 20 years in prison.

"I don't think any of these guys intended harm to human beings," O'Shea said. "I think they just thought this was a way of making some sort of political statement. But I'm relatively confident none of these people had any desires to actually hurt anybody."

O'Shea said Hayne was a latecomer to the alleged plot and, as such, had the least standing to argue that he had been manipulated by an FBI informant as other defendants have contended.

Authorities have called the men anarchists, and investigators say the group planted what turned out to be a dud bomb provided by an FBI undercover informant on a bridge south of Cleveland and then tried to detonate it.

The defendants could face life in prison if convicted.

U.S. Attorney Steven M. Dettelbach said the government would now turn its attention to proving the case against the other four men. "We are pleased with today's guilty plea and are prepared to prove the allegations against the remaining defendants," he said in an emailed comment.

The five were charged with plotting to bomb a bridge linking two wealthy Cleveland suburbs by placing what they thought were real explosives at the site and repeatedly trying to detonate them using text messages from cellphones, according to the FBI affidavit.

The FBI said the suspects bought the explosives – actually fake – from an undercover employee and put them at the base of a highway bridge over the Cuyahoga Valley National Park, about 15 miles south of downtown Cleveland.

After leaving the park, they tried to initiate the explosives using a text-message detonation code, and they called the person who provided the bombs to check the code when it failed, according to the FBI affidavit.

The men also discussed other potential targets, including a law enforcement center, oil wells, a cargo ship or the opening of a new downtown casino, according to a prosecution affidavit.

The five had been associated with Occupy Cleveland, but organizers of the movement have tried to distance the group from the men. They say the five didn't represent it or its nonviolent philosophy.

Statement by the Cleveland Five, now Four, support crew

On Wednesday, the 25th of July, a pre-trial hearing was held on motions put forward by the defense. However, at 9:00 am, the starting time of the hearing, it was clear that something was not right. All of the defendant's were present except for Anthony Hayne and his lawyer, Michael O'Shea.

Around 9:10 all of the lawyers went out into the hallway for a meeting with O'Shea. Meanwhile, the other four defendants were taken out to the courtroom. Soon after, all of the lawyers again entered the room and Anthony Hayne was brought into the court room wearing street clothes instead of the usual prison orange. Emotions were running high as what many of the supporters and loved ones feared the most unfolded before our eyes. Around 9:30 AM Anthony Hayne formally entered into a cooperating plea agreement with the government on the basis that he was found guilty on all three charges. The judge seemed hesitant about Hayne's move, as it included a mandatory minimum sentence of roughly 16-20 years in prison (188-235 months served). The exact amount of

time served would be dependent on the level of cooperation with the government. Formal sentencing will not occur until the trial is concluded.

As the Cleveland 5 support group, as friends and loved ones of all of them, we are shocked by his decision. Particularly by his decision to enter into a plea that would, by its nature, require the exchange of information that would implicate and/or potentially make worse the case of his other co-defendants. As this is and will remain a political case, we can no longer express support and advocacy on the behalf of Anthony. As was explained to and agreed upon by the co-defendants, our support only exists as long as they stay strictly non-cooperative with the government. Anthony is no longer at CCA and we do not have information about where he was transferred to, and where he will spend the time of his incarceration. We are deeply saddened by his decision and hope that, in the end, it does not hurt the other four, who continue to struggle for the justice they deserve.

Though this certainly feels like a huge blow to the support work, our struggle is far from over. The defense formally put forward in court that they would pursue an entrapment defense, and is continuing to prepare for trial. We hope that you continue to support Connor, Doug, Brandon and Joshua, who remain non-cooperative and are fighting for their lives every day. Court dates are set on the 6th and 7th of August to rule on whether the defendants' post-arrest statements will be admissible in court. There will be four hearings, as each defendant's statements will be considered separately. We will post the exact times closer to the hearing. All hearings will occur at the federal court in Akron, Ohio. Thank you for your continued support. It is needed more than ever.

In Solidarity,
The Cleveland 4 Support Group

25 Jul - Judge rejects bid for FBI documents in 1975 slayings of two agents

A federal judge has rejected Leonard Peltier's request for FBI documents about the man he was with when he was arrested in the killing of two agents in South Dakota in 1975.

MORE:

After examining the documents, U.S. Magistrate Judge Jeremiah J. McCarthy ruled that they do not fall within the guidelines of what Peltier's lawyer had asked for as part of his lawsuit against the government.

Michael Kuzma, a Buffalo lawyer and member of Peltier's legal defense team, was seeking 900-plus pages of documents, once kept in Buffalo, related to a man Peltier was with at the time of his arrest.

"We're still going to press and push for the release of all documents related to the shadowy figure who used the name Frank Blackhorse," Kuzma said this week.

When Peltier was arrested in connection with the killing of FBI agents Jack R. Coler and Ronald A. Williams, Blackhorse was with him, but Blackhorse, whose real name was Frank DeLuca, was never charged and decades later remains a free man.

Peltier wants to know why.

"He's a mystery man," Peter A. Reese, a lawyer who is representing Kuzma in his efforts to get the Buffalo-related documents, said of Blackhorse. "It's pretty obvious this guy was an employee or informant of the FBI."

Kuzma said he has already filed new Freedom of Information requests about Blackhorse and Curtis A. Fitzgerald, the former FBI agent Blackhorse was accused of shooting at Wounded Knee, S.D., two years earlier.

Now 67, Peltier, an American Indian Movement leader in the 1970s, has maintained his innocence, and supporters have tried to get his 1977 murder conviction overturned.

As part of that effort, Kuzma asked McCarthy to release FBI documents he believes may help vindicate Peltier.

Even now, nearly 40 years later, the killings of Coler and Williams are a source of great passion among current and former agents. When Peltier came up for parole in 2009, the FBI was among those who pushed hard to keep him in prison. He is serving two life terms at the federal penitentiary in Coleman, Fla.

The FBI declined to comment on the judge's ruling.

26 Jul - Counter-Terrorism Unit Keeps Files on Journalists

It's been a busy week over at greenisthenewred.com, with journalist Will Potter reporting on raids and grand jury subpoenas, while also finding new information regarding how the federal government monitors him and other journalists.

MORE:

New documents reveal that the federal Counter-Terrorism Unit is creating reports and maintaining files about the writing, interviews, and lectures of journalists who are critical of the government's repression of political activists.

The documents, obtained through a Freedom of Information Act request in coordination with the Center for Constitutional Rights, raise a wide range of civil rights concerns, but for this article I am only at liberty to comment on the files that pertain to my work. These documents show that the unit, which operates through the federal Bureau of Prisons, regularly maintains files on explicitly First Amendment activity.

Counter-Terrorism Unit Monitors Critical Journalism

Multiple articles that I have written critical of counter-terrorism policies are cited, summarized, and quoted. For instance, one document includes a lengthy excerpt from my March 7, 2011 article, [“Supreme Court Will Not Hear SHAC 7 Case.”](#)

The government is especially interested in a quote I included from Lauren Gazzola, one of the SHAC 7 prisoners, saying:

“I spent three-and-a-half-years of my life trying to put HLS out of business and three-and-a-half-years in prison for it. Every single day was worth it and I'd do it again. Today, I'd simply like to repeat this: I'd do it again. It was all worth it.”

In another file, the government describes an article I wrote called [“Making an Animal Rights Terrorists,”](#) about the case of Fran Trutt in 1988. Trutt was the target of an entrapment plot coordinated by a private firm hired by the animal testing corporation that she was protesting. This little-known case was a historic point in the campaign by corporations to demonize animal rights activists as domestic terrorists.

I'm not the only reporter included in these files. In another document, Daniel McGowan wrote to a journalist, whose name is redacted, and said thank you for writing about his case and about his imprisonment as a “terrorist” in a Communications Management Unit. Only the thank you note is legible; the rest of the document is redacted.

Intelligence Files on Public Lectures

I have written previously about [Counter-Terrorism Unit files on my public lectures at public conferences](#). Unfortunately, these new documents reveal more of the same.

One of the lectures was hosted by the Center for Constitutional Rights: [“Red to Green: Political Panic from McCarthyism to ‘Eco-Terrorism.’”](#) It featured Robert Meeropol, son of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg and Executive Director of the Rosenberg Fund for Children, speaking about the Red Scare and anti-communist hysteria. I spoke about how “terrorists” have become the new enemy of the hour and a rhetorical tool to excuse all manner of harassment, intimidation, and surveillance.

Counter-Terrorism Files on My Book

The government is also quite interested in my book.

“Potter recently authored a book titled, ‘[Green Is the New Red: An Insider’s Account of a Social Movement Under Siege](#),’ one report says. “The book centers around the underground world of radical environmental and animal rights activism, and Potter’s views regarding [using] anti-terrorism resources to target environmentalists.”

It goes on to quote a letter written by Daniel McGowan to me in which he says: “O.K., seriously- the book is stellar – really really well done and the way you tell the story is excellent.”

In a different document, the Counter-Terrorism Unit reports:

“[Name redacted] described Will Potter’s new book, *Green Is the New Red*, as a compelling and well written focus on many cases across the country involving animal and environmental” movements.

If the Counter-Terrorism Unit finds my book so interesting that they include pages of summaries and positive reviews, perhaps you’ll enjoy it as well! You can [order a copy here](#) or on [Amazon](#).

Jokes aside, I don’t mean to make light of this situation. When the Counter-Terrorism Unit creates files like this, it sends a chilling message to all journalists.

Surveilling Journalists Is an Attack on Freedom of the Press

Remember: These documents are circulated to FBI, prison officials, and other law enforcement advising them on the activities of “terrorists,” with the ostensible purpose of using this intelligence to prevent terrorist attacks.

Seeing one’s work repeatedly listed in this context is unsettling, to put it mildly. This is lawful, public, First Amendment activity. So why is it being monitored and circulated in this way? What does this say about our government and our culture’s understanding of “terrorism threats” that these dossiers include articles, speeches, and books?

On a personal level, I am always hesitant to write about things like this. I was going to publish this article yesterday, and then learned that the FBI was [raiding activist homes and serving grand jury subpoenas](#), and then learned that one of the [Cleveland 5 has agreed to cooperate](#) against his co-defendants. Seeing my work in terrorism files is disturbing, but it has few immediate personal ramifications. It’s nowhere on par with what folks around the country are experiencing.

It is, however, part of the same systemic crackdown on dissent. We need to understand these files in the bigger context that I have documented on this website and (as the Counter-Terrorism Unit notes) in my book. It’s yet another step in the steady, incremental expansion of the “War on Terrorism” not only to include non-violent saboteurs, not only to include the civil disobedience of [Tim DeChristopher](#) and the [undercover investigations](#) of the Humane Society, but to go even further, and wrap up those attempting to document that any of this is happening.

26 Jul – Japan seeking extradition and arrest of fugitive environmentalist Paul Watson

Japan asked Germany to arrest Paul Watson, the founder of environmental group Sea Shepherd, days before he skipped bail and apparently fled the country.

MORE:

The Japanese embassy in Berlin confirmed in a statement to The Associated Press on Thursday that it submitted its request to German authorities July 19.

Three days later Watson — who was on €250,000 (\$320,000) bail in Germany pending a separate extradition request from Costa Rica — last reported to authorities.

Watson and his group have repeatedly clashed with fishing fleets they accuse of illegally hunting whales, sharks and other endangered sea animals.

Sea Shepherd said Thursday that the 61-year-old Canadian had left Germany and was now “in an undisclosed location.”

Sven Matthiessen, a spokesman for the group in Germany, said he didn't himself know Watson current whereabouts.

But he said the group had been aware of Japan's attempts to extradite Watson.

"There is some sort of connection between the requests made by Japan and Costa Rica," Matthiessen told the AP.

A spokeswoman for Germany's Foreign Ministry, where the Japanese request was filed, couldn't immediately comment on the case.

Watson was first arrested May 13 at Frankfurt Airport on a warrant from Costa Rica, which claimed he had endangered the crew of a fishing vessel a decade ago.

Sea Shepherd says Watson was filming a documentary at the time of the alleged incident, which took place in Guatemalan waters in 2002. The U.S.-based group said it encountered an illegal shark finning operation run by a Costa Rican ship, the Varadero, and told the crew to stop and head to port to be prosecuted. The crew accused Sea Shepherd of trying to kill them by ramming their ship.

Watson has a history of confrontations with whalers and fishermen.

He left Greenpeace in 1977 to set up the more action-oriented Sea Shepherd. The group has waged aggressive campaigns to protect whales, dolphins and other marine animals, prompting Japanese officials to label its member terrorists.

From Earth First! News

Yesterday we posted news of [Captain Paul Watson bail-skipping out of Germany](#) and into free water. Today his attorney reveals knowledge of an additional extradition request from the Japanese Embassy, submitted July 19th to the German Foreign Office.

Germany had been proceeding with Watson's extradition to Costa Rica. The Sea Shepherd Conservation Society had concerns that Watson's life would be in danger or he would be extradited to Japan. Today, those suspicions were confirmed by Watson's attorney.

"I received confirmation today from Germany's General Public Prosecutor that Japan filed an extradition request against Paul Watson on July 19th," said Oliver Wallasch, lead German Counsel for Captain Paul Watson. "Germany was proceeding with Captain Watson's extradition to Costa Rica and, once there, there is no doubt he would have been delivered into Japanese custody," said Susan Hartland, Administrative Director for Sea Shepherd. "Upon being extradited to Japan, he would not have received a fair trial and would never have seen the outside of a prison again," she added.

Even with a rumored bounty of at least \$25K on his head by shark-fanners in Costa Rica, Watson was prepared to go to Costa Rica of his own volition (not via extradition) and answer to charges of a violation of ship traffic involving water cannon usage back in 2002. However, he then learned his arrest had caught Japan's attention and they contacted the German Ministry of Justice to strike a deal with them. This deal would involve Germany not objecting to a request made by Japan to Costa Rica to turn Watson over to Japan.

Japan has in the past attempted to have Captain Watson arrested through an Interpol 'red notice,' but they have not been granted that 'red notice' because Interpol has not seen any validity in the request. In fact, Interpol held the same position with the Costa Rican warrant; it was dismissed. Yet Germany arrested Captain Watson on May 13th despite the politically motivated warrant and decided to entertain the request by Costa Rica on a bilateral basis — on behalf of both Costa Rica and Japan.

"Japan's attempts to broker backroom deals with Germany and Costa Rica along with bringing litigation against Sea Shepherd in the U.S. are desperate attempts to stop Captain Watson and will never thwart Sea Shepherd's continued work to protect our oceans," said Hartland. "We operate under the United Nations World Charter for Nature to uphold international conservation laws and directly intervene against illegal activities on the high seas.

Japan is under the false impression that if they jail Captain Watson, they will halt our campaigns to protect ocean wildlife. It's time Japan realizes nothing they do will stop us from protecting whales and other marine wildlife for future generations everywhere," she added.

Captain Watson had been detained in Germany for 70 days despite thousands of letters of support sent to the German Ministry of Justice from the public, celebrities, politicians and other luminaries arguing for his release of these politically motivated warrant. He was arrested in Frankfurt on May 13th on a 10-year-old warrant from Costa Rica while en route to Cannes, France. He was being detained in Germany for extradition to Costa Rica for an alleged "violation of ships' traffic," which occurred during the 2002 filming of the award-winning documentary, *Sharkwater*. The specific incident took place on the high seas in Guatemalan waters, when Sea Shepherd encountered an illegal shark-finning operation run by Costa Rican vessel, the *Varadero*. On order of Guatemalan authorities, Sea Shepherd instructed the crew of the *Varadero* to cease their shark-finning activities and head back to port to be prosecuted. While escorting the *Varadero* back to port, the tables were turned and a Guatemalan gunboat was dispatched to intercept the Sea Shepherd crew. To avoid the Guatemalan gunboat, Sea Shepherd then set sail for Costa Rica, where the crew uncovered even more illegal shark-finning activities in the form of dried shark fins by the thousands on the roofs of industrial buildings.

26 Jul – CMU Live Animal Rescue by Abdul Haqq

We haven't heard from animal liberation prisoner Abdul Haqq for a while. Below, he relay the story about prisoners working together to save a young bird that fell from its nest.

MORE:

On July, 13th of 2012 a baby bird fell down the fence posting of CMU Marion's recreation cage. The post in which she fell was approx. 20 feet tall and hollow at the top just like the posts on a standard yard fence. For baby birds, of which there are a surprising amount here. It can be a treacherous world in which to learn to fly. They sometimes get caught in the razor wire which is everywhere, or as in this unfortunate young ones experience trying to perch but slipping and falling 20 feet to the bottom of a stanchion. The second part to this unfortunate scenario was that the bottom of the fence post ended on a concrete curb so try as we did to help her the rest of the way out to freedom the way out was impossible to maneuver. So there was this baby bird with a quarter inch of clearance between a pipe and a curb, crying out for help to her family which stood vigil 20 feet up at the posts opening and on the ground crying out to us the unfortunate victims of Americas bogus war on terrorism.

Her little beak would poke out and when you laid on the ground you could see her little head, beak and the yellow corners of her mouth. For 5 days she was stuck. Her plight in the post spread quickly through the Muslim community and was a cause of distress to us all. we all took turns hand feeding her pieces of bread and spoon feeding her water.

One day five of her predicament, a plan was devised. A piece of yarn was slowly maneuvered up the post. It had a small rock attached to the other end so that it would fall down the pipes length, but not heavy enough to injure the baby bird. Once this was accomplished the yarn was pulled out of the bottom of the tube. Then a pre-made crocheted basket that looked like a miniature basket you might see on a hot air balloon was tied to the string. One of the Political Prisoners here in the CMU began pulling the string as he did it folded into the bottom of the pipe easily enveloping the baby bird and ascending here up the pipe on what was essentially a pint sized elevator made just for her out of yarn.

As we watched from the ground she got to the top and clumsily but promptly flew out of the fence post. She came to rest on the ground in the cage with us in the recreation yard! Her family began chirping frantically and happily and also came down to see that she was alright, while the 5 human captives were shouting Allahu Akbar (God is the Greatest)! Literally jumping up and down with joy, myself included! Miraculously she was fine not even a scratch. Soon all the brothers were out in the recreation yard to come see the bird freed. We fed her bread and watched her family take over from there.

I was asked "is she alright Abdul Haqq" and "you gotta tell everyone about this"! I responded "she is going to be just fine and of course I will be proud to report this!" On a personal note it reminded me that no matter who we are or where we may find ourselves we can help and save an Animals Life, if we choose to. You don't have

to be in ideal circumstances or the perfect politically correct Vegan to do so. All you need to be is caring, compassionate and willing to take action with your brain and body. Animal Liberation, Whatever It May Take!

27 Jul – A Tribute to Lonesome George by Marie Mason

The last of the Galapagos Tortoises, named Lonesome George, recently died. Marie Mason wrote a memorial to him that we've included below.

MORE:

Good-bye Lonesome George
Born when the Titanic
Sank beneath the icy waves,
Witness to a hundred years of loss.
Born to be a storied creature of
Galapagos,
And sadly, sought by sailors for the soup,
They only passing by endlessly marauding
through their thoughtless days.
When did they find you, old soul,
Wandering the rocky crags of home,
Picked clean by invading ungulates and bipeds, yourself
Starving and alone?
Perhaps you were a frisky teen of 50
When they packed you off the island in a hurry,
to exhibit in a Quito zoo.
And what should have been a troubling issue of our collective shame, became
A curiosity for tourists.
And all the exotic ladies that they brought
From strange and varied tribes,
Were not enough to lure you from your grief.
What use to romance the moon
In the end of days?
And so you took a pass
On the second century that your kind are heir to -
And slipped beneath the waves of time.
Goodnight and good luck,
Sweet Lonesome George,
Good-bye.
I will dream you back to Paradise,
Or at least, try.

28 Jul - Please Help Jalil Muntaqim's Mother Visit Her Son

We just got word from NYC Jericho Movement folks that Jalil Muntaqim's mother, who lives outside Atlanta, Georgia, is trying to visit her son here in New York. In order for that to happen, she needs travel funds. We've included information on how to help Jalil receive this important visit from his mother.

MORE:

If you can send any donations for Jalil's mom, please make checks out to IFCO/NYC Jericho and send to: NYC Jericho c/o Lamb, Post Office Box 574, New York, New York 10018

Thank you for your help.

30 Jul - What You Can Do This Week to Support Grand Jury Resistance

The grand jury that folks in the northwest were subpoenaed to is scheduled to begin this week. Here are a few things YOU can do to support grand jury resistance.

MORE:

We have a long and rough journey ahead of us, but we are inspired by the outpouring of support that we have already received. Many people have asked what else they can do to contribute to this struggle so we have come up with a short list of options. Those resisting the grand jury will be making a statement later this week.

Call In Day- Wednesday, August 1st. We are asking for people to call the US Attorney for Washington, Jenny A Durkan on Wednesday, August 1st to demand an end to political persecution and that the grand jury and investigation be stopped. When you call the U.S Attorney's office, please let them know that you are speaking for yourself and not the individuals resisting the grand jury subpoenas. Be aware of how the things you say will impact the people you are trying to help. Feel free to use our example to help you figure out what to say. If you make a call, please email us (nopoliticalrepression@gmail.com) and let us know how what kind of response you got from the Attorney's office.

An example of what you might say:

“Hi. I am Doug Brown. I am calling about the grand jury being impaneled in Seattle, Washington this Thursday, August 2nd. I am disgusted that the FBI and government are persecuting political dissent in our country. This group of people is being harassed and intimidated for their political beliefs. I demand that the grand jury and investigation be ended immediately and that the governments repression of social movements stop. Thank you for taking my comments.”

Telephone: (206) 553-7970 or toll free at: (800) 797-6722

Fax Line : (206) 553-0882

ISDN: (206) 264-2765

Thursday, August 2. Come to Seattle to stand against the Grand Jury witch hunt! There will be a demonstration in solidarity with those affected by the raids and subpoenas starting at 7:30am and throughout the day. The demonstration will be at the federal court house, 700 Stewart St., in Seattle.

Can't make it to Seattle? Plan another event or demonstration in solidarity! Please email us at nopoliticalrepression@gmail.com to tell us about your event.

Please donate! There is a “Donate” tab on our website We are trying to raise legal fees for all of those affected. We also are trying to provide material support for those that are resisting the grand jury.

Please spread this information far and wide!

If you have questions, email us at nopoliticalrepression@gmail.com. We are still taking signatures from organizations so email us if your organization would like to sign on. Keep checking this website for updates in the coming days.

30 Jul – Peoples Survival Program weekly cultural/political education film group: August Calendar

NYC ABC will be partnering with Harlem's Peoples Survival Program in this year's Running Down the Walls benefit run in Prospect Park. One of the PSP's projects is a weekly film/study group and we're including their calendar of events below.

MORE:

August 6th – “Black August:” The George Jackson Story

August 13th – The Attack on MOVE: The Story of the MOVE Organization

August 20th – The Marcus Garvey Story

August 27th – The Idi Amin Dada Story

All classes are held at 7:00pm on Mondays, including films, written materials, discussion, and guest speakers.
The Guillermo Morales-Assata Shakur Community & Student Center
Room 3-201 (NAC) Building
City College of New York Harlem Campus
West 138th Street/Amsterdam Avenue entrance

For more information, contact Shaka Shakur at 917.420.8662 or Shakashakur777@aol.com

23 Aug – Black August solidarity fundraiser for Sekou Odinga

WHAT: Live jazz and poetry benefit for Sekou Odinga

WHERE: The Amarachi Lounge – 325 Franklin Avenue, Brooklyn, New York

WHEN: 6:00pm-11:00pm, Thursday, August 23rd

COST: \$15

MORE:

The Sekou Odinga Defense Committee hosts a Black August solidarity fundraiser for the legal defense fund of our freedom fighter, Sekou Odinga. Let's dance, listen to some live music, enjoy some poetry, and raise some money! There will be light refreshments and a cash bar.

Live performances by legendary saxophonist Bilal Sunni Ali and Last Poet Abiodun

For more information, visit sekouodinga.com, call 718.512.5008 or e-mail sekouodingadefensecommittee@gmail.com.