



POST OFFICE BOX 110034 BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11211

Updates for October 23rd

8 Oct - 14 Years of Injustice: Time to Free the Cuban Five

Saul Landau has a new piece on the Cuban Five, who we wrote at our last letter-writing dinner, that he wrote for Counterpunch. We've included it below.

MORE:

Five Cubans fighting terrorism in south Florida have served 14 years of prison, more than enough time for the US public to learn from its media about the horrific injustice done by the US government to these Cuban men. But the media has barely touched the grotesque frame up of Gerardo Hernandez, Antonio Guerrero, Fernando Gonzalez, Ramon Labaniño and Rene Gonzalez, the Cuban Five as they are called. These Cuban intelligence agents volunteered in the 1990s to infiltrate violent groups of Miami-based Cuban exiles who had orchestrated bombings in Cuba of tourist spots — hotels, restaurants, clubs and bars and even the Havana airport where vacationers from Canada and Europe arrive. By scaring foreigners with violence they hoped to intimidate tourists from visiting Cuba, and thus hurt Cuba's economy.

Cuban intelligence chiefs sent agents into south Florida because the FBI had done nothing to stop the bombing plots or indeed discourage the exile plotters from continuing their terrorist war against Cuba; so the agents' job was to discover the plots, and alert Havana so the local police could thwart the violence. Havana then recycled the agents' information to the FBI. On some occasions, thanks to these men's information the Bureau did intercept caches of explosives and weapons destined to do harm inside Cuba. But the Bureau did not bother the terrorists. Instead, in September 1998, FBI agents busted the Cuban agents, and the Justice Department charged them with conspiracy to commit espionage and one of them with murder. The later charge referred to a prosecution-concocted story that Gerardo Hernandez, the controller of the web of agents, had advised Havana of the date and time of Jose Basulto and his Brothers to the Rescue's planned flight time on February 24 1996, and that he might possibly drop weapons into Cuba. Cuban aviation authorities warned the three small planes not to enter Cuban air space, but the pilots ignored the warning, and Cuban MIGs shot down two of the planes, killing both pilots and co-pilots. The craft carrying Basulto returned unscathed to Miami.

The US government claimed the MIGs fired their rockets over international, not Cuban air space. Cuba maintained the shoot downs occurred in its air space. The NSA refused to deliver its vectors to the court, alleging "national security" reasons. The jury never dealt with such issues of fact, nor did it apply logic and reason.

The charge of murder against Gerardo Hernandez had no factual foundation, since Basulto himself had announced in public his plan to fly on that day, and a White House official had told several people, including journalists, of the Basulto plan as well. An intimidated Miami jury convicted the Cuban agents in record time.

The Miami jury members, whose identity had become known to the extremist exile community, understood that an acquittal verdict could entail serious consequences for them. The intimidation tactics used by right wing exile thugs (most people have watched *The Sopranos* and understand) had become legendary. The judge faced the same community ambience, with hundreds of thousands of exiles still furious with US government for having returned 6 year old Elian Gonzalez, in accordance with all known law, to his father instead of keeping the boy in Miami with his great uncle and cousins. His mother and her boyfriend had both drowned when their boat heading for Miami sank. The boy in an inner tube was rescued. Legally, the legally fit father had an air-tight case for claiming his son, but a substantial sector Miami's exile community viewed the return of the boy as a "sell out" to Castro.

The five's trial took place shortly after the Elian Gonzalez affair. The trial judge, Joan Lenard, sided almost always with prosecution's motions and limited the scope of the defense. After the guilty verdict for espionage

and murder, she handed down draconian prison sentences, including two consecutive life sentences plus fifteen years for Gerardo Hernandez.

Fourteen years have passed since the arrest of the five who have served hard years in federal prisons for helping to fight terrorism in south Florida.

In addition to the Kangaroo trial staged in Miami, the US government has treated the five Cuban agents with cruelty by denying visas to two of their wives and routinely sending the men into solitary confinement despite their having behaved as model inmates.

Ramon Labaniño, in a Georgia prison, receives only yearly visits (US-imposed limits) from his wife, Elizabeth Palmeiro. Ramon got re-sentenced to a shorter term, but when his wife learned the FBI had busted him in 1998, his family's life fell apart as it did for the families of the other four.

The media has ignored this injustice for more than a decade. They have ignored even the human story about the US refusing to grant visas so that two of the five's wives can visit their husbands.

The Five's lawyers have filed a new writ offering new evidence showing the US government paid members of the media to produce negative stories on Cuba and the defendants before and during their trial, to create an anti-Cuba atmosphere that jury members would absorb. That alone should merit an overturning of the guilty verdict.

Amnesty International made several major points about the case of the Five.

The jury foreman said the jury believed US rather than Cuban evidence over the place of the shoot down. That should not have been an issue. Because Gerardo could not have known what would have happened, even if he had given Cuba the data on the February 24 flights. How would a mid-level intelligence agent know that Cuba's leaders had decided to shoot down the planes?

Ramon, Antonio and Gerardo were convicted of conspiracy to commit espionage, but the government conceded to the jury they had no evidence, that the defendants made no effort to obtain material related to an espionage charge. For a Miami jury the fact that Cuban agents were in Miami was sufficient for them to hand down a guilty verdict.

Amnesty also condemned the trial results because the US government has material related to Cuban espionage and the US government knew the five were not engaged, and refused to turn over to the defense that information so the jury could not know about that.

Finally, a perfect storm of prejudice existed in Miami. The jury understood they had good reason to feel frightened should they vote for acquittal.

The media needs to report this horrific injustice. Readers should write President Obama with the clear message: FREE THE FIVE NOW.

8 Oct - From Marissa to Everyone

Marissa Alexander has written a public letter expressing thanks for the support she has received and we've pasted it below.

MORE:

Hello Everyone,

I want to thank each and every one of you for writing me, praying for me or even thinking of me in your heart and are continuing to do so. For the most part, I'm hanging in there, as well as one could in this environment. Prison is definitely NOT what's happening. It's dreadful here, but hey, it's suppose to be, it is after all captivity. My good days out weigh my bad days only because God is my source of strength. Please know that you all inspire me thru your communication and please know that the prayers that you offer up on my behalf are being answered. I'm so very blessed to have some of the most extraordinary people and organizations who are committed to supporting and encouraging me in every way.

I will continue to believe in our justice system. I choose to do so because I have complete trust in God, and we are still a nation that has this fundamental belief embedded in our core, displayed in our courtrooms and written on our money, and more hopefully in our hearts.

Truly I couldn't begin to express to you how much I appreciate your wonderful letters of encouragement. Please know that I do not take your time and kindness for granted. Your heart-felt concern I am most grateful for.

8 Oct - Update on Chris Lagergren

Here's a legal update on Chris Lagergren, who has another pre-trial hearing scheduled for November 5th.

MORE:

On today's date, lead counsel for Chris' legal team appeared in court to request a continuance on several grounds, one of which was the need to deposition (interview) the remaining witness in this matter. The continuance was granted. This is good news for the defense, as it gives our side more time to prepare for trial, file motions, etc. Most importantly, it allows us more time to focus on local initiatives that will raise greater awareness of the case, and help expose the absolute mala fide charges against Chris.

The PRE-TRIAL STATUS HEARING is now scheduled for NOVEMBER 5TH at 9:00a.m. in Key Largo, FL. Jury selection and trial are scheduled for NOVEMBER 26TH at 8:30 a.m.

9 Oct – New writings by Mandy Hiscocks

Mandy Hiscocks, in prison for protesting the 2010 Toronto gathering of the G20, prolifically writes for a popular blog. We've included her two most recent pieces.

MORE:

the wheels of "justice," grinding on

it's october. the leaves are turning, the nights are getting clod and i have only 8 weeks left in this sentence.

the organizing against the 2010 G20 summit has been part of my life in some form or other since the fall of 2008. it's hard to believe this part of my life is coming to a close, and at the same time it's hard to believe it's taken so long - it's been almost 2.5 years since my arrest. oh, the wheels of "justice", grinding on.

and i'm one of the lucky ones!

as i start to wrap up my life as a prisoner and turn my mind to life on the outside i'm thinking a lot about other folks who still find themselves in the grip of the state.

for over two years now people arrested for their (alleged) participation in the protests against the G20 have had to put their lives on hold while people in suits and odd-looking pretentious robes discuss their fate. this limbo has been different for different people but has generally meant some combination of detention, house arrest, restrictive bail conditions including separation from their community due to forced relocation and/or non-association, loss of employment, interruption of schooling, massive expense and strain on relationships.

some people's charges have been dealt with. many of the "guilty" are still serving sentences in jail or conditional sentences in the community, or are on probation (which can be very restrictive and can last for years). the "innocent" are picking up the pieces with no help, or apology, or compensation from the system that wrongly accused them. the "presumed innocent" - and what a joke that is - continue to wait.

one of these is a woman from vancouver known to me only as **activist x**. it's very difficult to be facing charges that are so far away, and the incredibly broad and isolating non-association conditions she's been living under have made things even harder for her. please take a moment to see if there is anything you can do to help - she urgently needs our support. information is on <http://web.resist.ca/~vancouverg20support> and on facebook - vancouver g20 support.

there are also a couple of **people from montreal** awaiting trial but i have no information about them. if anyone does, could you send it my way?

last month i wrote about the upcoming trials (and tribulations?) of **Julian Ichim** and **Dan Keller**. julian had his preliminary inquiry on september 18th, which resulted in indictment, so he will be proceeding to trial (as far as i know the date is yet to be announced).

George Horton was sentenced in september and is currently imprisoned at the don jail in toronto. information about him and his case can be found at abcptbo.noblogs.org and on facebook at [abc peterborough](https://www.facebook.com/abc.peterborough). i hear he will be putting out a statement soon. if you'd like to write him the address is: george john horton, toronto jail, 550 gerrard st e, toronto ontario, 4M 1X6.

Alex Hundert's statement to the court is now posted, and he continues to [blog](#) from central north correctional centre. you can write to him at: alexander hundert, central north correctional centre. 1501 fuller ave., penetanguishene, on. L9M 2H4.

finally, please check out this recent update on the situation of **Kelly Pflug-Beck**, (update on health), who is in prison here at vanier. we've been kept apart since she arrived due to extreme paranoia in the upper echelons of this institution, so i only know what i hear from the outside. at this time you shouldn't expect to get a response from Kelly (in fact it's probably best never to just assume that someone in jail will write you back) but if you'd like to drop her a line she can be reached at: Kelly Pflug-Beck, **vanier centre for women, 655 martin street, box 1040, milton, on, L9T 5E6**.

from the very beginning it's been extremely difficult to find out about all the different people dealing with G20 related charges. despite what the crown and the cops dearly love to believe, we're actually not all part of some nefarious, centralized, quasi-terrorist organization. shocker, i know. so if you have any information about other people who are trying to raise awareness about their case, please do pass it on.

as always, i thank you for your support and hope that you'll extend it to these folks and other prisoners as well.

random musings – September

laundry day!

on this unit we're issued clothes, bedding and towels on arrival and they're ours to keep for the duration of our stay. twice a week we have the opportunity to wash them – everything except the blankets, which are exchanged once a month. laundry days for my wing (C) are tuesdays and saturdays, and this is how it works: we line up our laundry bags along a wall in the common room, and shortly after breakfast a guard calls “LAUNDRY!” over the loudspeaker. there are four washers and four driers so we work through the line four at a time, with switchovers happening every 45 minutes or so. the laundry room is in the basement. a guard at the desk keeps track of who comes down, and two laundry workers (inmates) supervise the process. this is to make sure people aren't washing blankets or pillows, or using cold water or short cycles or half-load settings (as always, Vanier doesn't care about conserving water or energy), or using shampoo. Tide is available off canteen, and Bounce sheets, but jail issue detergent is available for those who need it.

this is all very different from Unit 2. on maximum security dirty clothes, towels and bedding are replaced with clean ones on a not-always-regular schedule. “clothing exchange” happens twice a week (well it's supposed to but doesn't always, due to delays, shortages or the guards not feeling like monitoring it) during one of the daily lockups. the guard opens the hatch in your cell door, you throw out your dirty items, one range worker picks them up while another takes your order and then brings you back clean stuff. (you have to hope they've got what you need because otherwise you end up with nothing or stuff that doesn't fit – unlike Unit 4 with its well-stocked room down in the basement, Unit 2 often runs out). the only thing you don't throw out the hatch is underwear – that gets washed in the sink along with socks. there are never enough socks for a clean pair every day unless you hand wash them. if it'd been a while since the last clothing exchange i'd wash my t-shirts in the sink, too. it's not ideal because there's nowhere in the cell to hang them properly and not all guards let you dry them over the upper tier railing. as well when i left Unit 2 Tide was no longer available off canteen for inmates there – why?

nobody knows – so we were all forced to use shampoo or soap or body wash. apparently there used to be laundry facilities on maximum security until a piece of metal went missing from one of the machines. there used to be access to bathtubs, too, until one inmate tried to drown another (so the story goes, anyway). so no more bathtubs on Unit 2, and the dirty laundry all gets tossed into a cart and wheeled over to Maplehurst, where it's washed by the guys. suckers.

september 10, 2012

i just came back from a “professional visit” with a lawyer. because these visits are in a room with no glass divider separating us and the lawyer's allowed to bring stuff in, there's always a strip-search afterwards. this time i got the cranky guard. i was being friendly – i'm in a particularly good mood these days, i guess i still high thanks to my newfound freedoms and privileges – so her snarky, disdainful manner and her unprovoked rudeness really offended me. now why is that? i've grown a pretty thick skin in here, it's been awhile since i've cared about being treated like dirt for no reason – i adjusted to that pretty quickly, actually – so why do i feel so unfairly disrespected now? Unit 4 must be getting to me. . .

i always used to wonder why people from Unit 3 and 4 would chat with guards and each other on our way down the hall to a visit, while those of us from maximum security were completely silent and stared straight ahead. now i'm starting to understand. i'm getting used to the guards being around (not behind glass) and while it was weird and uncomfortable at first, i'm getting used to them making conversation. they talk to us more because we're in the same space. when they come onto the wing they don't have to have a guard on backup, radio at the ready, eyes locked on them at all times. they don't pat us down before we go to yard. generally speaking, the procedures here don't make it seem like we're always being suspected of something, like we're always on the verge of violence.

i didn't really notice how the atmosphere on Unit 2 was affecting me until i came here, like a weight that i couldn't really feel until it was lifted.

even now i find that i can't really put my finger on what exactly makes this unit so different. the interactions with the guards are part of it – but that can't be all. when i try to explain it to people on the outside the differences sound small and a bit silly: the window opens! we're allowed to have tape! i can stay up until 9pm! even though i never watch them, there are movies in the basement! they don't lock the cleaning solution away! see what i mean? but put them all together and they do make a difference in how i feel: i feel more like a person. more like a person and less like an annoyance, or worse, a potential threat that has to be kept in check at all times. i've always wondered why prisoners fight so hard, to the point of hunger striking and rioting at huge risk to themselves, for things that seem insignificant in the context of the huge injustice that is incarceration. now i think i get it: the little things affect how we see ourselves. every right, every small freedom that's taken away, strips us of a little more of our dignity; every one that's granted or restored brings a little of it back.

september 11, 2012

today we had a moment of silence for 9/11. i was trapped in the common room when they called it over the loudspeaker so i just had to stand there fuming. when it was over, i crankily said “so we'll be having another one now, for all the people the Americans kill?” - that was met by confused stares all around. <sigh> i wish i'd had this [poem](#) handy.

someone just came walking around the unit with a couple of guards – i think it was a health and safety inspection. i looked up at the ceiling where they were pointing as one of them said “yeah, that's bad.” black mold – lots of it! NICE.

september 12, 2012

i used the *Access: Defence* phone today. *Access: Defence* is a teleconferencing system that allows lawyers (and only lawyers) to call us here at the jail. they book a time slot of either 15 or 35 minutes, a guard informs us by giving us a Teleconference Appointment Sheet, and at the scheduled time we go to the *Access: Defence* phone, pick up the receiver and dial in our code. it's a good system. the regular phones on the unit are often in high demand and there's no guarantee you'll be able to make a legal call at a pre-determined time. there's also the complication of all outgoing calls being collect and only working if you're calling a landline. it can be really difficult to catch lawyers at the office! finally, there's a "secure" option that makes the call confidential (not sure if i 100% believe that, but that's what they say) whereas the regular phones are tapped.

i've been wondering lately what those phone taps involve, exactly. how many, if any, of our conversations are actually listened to? there are a lot of phones here and they are in use for a large part of the day - i can't imagine they're all being monitored. so i'm guessing they're being recorded and played back selectively. which begs the question, who else is given access to them? and how long are they kept? hmm... sketchy. i should look into this.

september 15, 2012

i realize that i still haven't described my new surrounding to you. i'll try to do that now.

you enter Unit 4 from the hallway that leads to Unit 2 and 3, the visiting area, and Admissions and Discharge (A +D), you can either go upstairs or downstairs, Unit 4 is not wheelchair accessible. let's go upstairs first, since it's where i spend most of my time.

on your left, right inside the door, is the nurse's station. at the top of the stairs in the rotunda, and as you enter it you're looking at a team of guards sitting at a desk at the opposite wall. to your left along the wall there are four phones and four stools, to your right as well. upon arrival we were told that the rotunda is the guards space - we are not to enter it without permission. this means that every time we want to use the phone we have to get a guard's attention and ask (this is a bit of a pain in the ass, but it does prevent the line jumping and bullying that happens on Unit 2 where the guards don't give a shit who is or isn't getting a turn). behind the guard desk is the bubble, in which yet another guard works the door, announces things over the loudspeaker, and - i assume - watches what the cameras are picking up.

so that's the rotunda. it's where we get personal and cleaning supplies, hand in request forms, ask questions.

okay. so now walk past the row of phones on your left, and on to C-D side. had you gone to the right you'd be entering A-B side. but don't bother, the layout is exactly the same. Vanier likes symmetry.

now you are in C-D common space. there's a mailbox, a sink, a tv, movable tables and chairs, a box of board games, and two bulletin boards covered with colouring book pictures from inmates long gone.

if you walk straight ahead you'll pass C-wing's washroom (toilets, showers, a tub, shitty mirrors, and way too many sinks) on your way to the wing itself. C-wing is a long hallway with 13 single rooms on either side. it sticks out from the common area, heading north. had you turned left at the entrance to C-side/D-side, you would have passed by an identical washroom and a cleaning closet before entering D-wing's identical hallway, which jets out to the west. across the rotunda on A-B side the wings point south and east, so that they all branch out at 90 degrees from each other. it's all quite orderly.

the capacity is 104 inmates, but i've never seen that many people. i don't think my wing has ever been more than three quarters full which is good, because it can get pretty loud in here at times. one last thing: the wings are actually referred to as alpha, bravo, charlie and delta. i'm not kidding.

so that's the upstairs. now let's go to the basement! go out the rotunda, down the steps, past the nurses station and the main door and the door to the yard, down some more steps. a guard sitting at the basement desk will direct you to where you need to go. off of the main area there is an office for people to meet one on one (for example with a social worker, or a rep from Elizabeth Fry, or a treatment centre, and so on). there's also the library, the laundry room, storage rooms, inmate and staff washrooms, and some staff offices. the main area has some tables, and some stools bolted to the floor. but most of it is empty space that can be used for fitness classes or weekend movie screenings. two hallways stretch out from this area, they have larger rooms that are used for programs or yoga or to store extra library books in.

there. that's the grand tour. I hope you feel a bit more oriented in my little world now. :)

september 27, 2012

i was just informed that some incoming mail has been sent to security, "just to make sure it's okay for you to have it." intriguing! apparently it was from somebody doing research into prison-related issues who wants to speak with me about Vanier. yes, i can see how that is a security concern.

last week it was a copy of the *Certain Days Freedom for Political Prisoners* calendar that was deemed inappropriate and withheld.

the whole situation with the mail is outrageous, when you think about it. a stranger opens it, reads it, then decides whether or not to interfere with the delivery of all or part of it. on the road that's a criminal offence! there are real problems with this system – other than the obvious ones, i mean. sometimes letters that are sent to security don't make it back for quite some time, for one thing. more importantly, although the policy states that if mail is withheld the inmate has to be notified, their idea of “notification” is usually completely uninformative: “withheld: letter. Date: 27 Sep/2012.” great, no name, no address, no reason. . .thanks. sometimes we aren't notified at all – i have a feeling that happens quite a lot. i'm a bit excited, and a bit scared, to think of all the stuff i don't know about accumulating in my property bag.

the other really bothersome thing is that jail keeps a log of the names and addresses of everyone who writes to me and everyone i write to. does that creep you out? it should.

september 28, 2012

this is my new favourite jail snack: eat two servings of canned pineapples but save the juice. separate the tops and bottoms of two raisin bran muffins. crumble the bottoms into the juice and let them soak while you eat the tops. eat the mush slowly with a spoon.

i actually get quite excited when i can make this.

i need to get out more.

october 6, 2012

i have a lot to be thankful for.

i thank the Earth, who continues to feed, clothe and shelter us – even though we treat her terribly and don't deserve it.

i thank all the Indigenous People of Turtle Island, whose land has been and continues to be taken by force, coercion and deceit; but who are still willing to discuss how we can share and live well together. i thank them for believing, against all evidence, that the rest of us are capable of it.

i thank the rebels, the radicals and the revolutionaries past, present and future for fighting for justice and freedom and for giving me hope and inspiration.

i thank those who have struggled and continue to struggle against prisons and for the rights of prisoners, from inside and outside the walls. without them our daily lives in here would be much, much worse.

and i thank my family and my community, my friends and my allies, for teaching me about love and courage and solidarity, and for all their support.

9 Oct - George Horton Transferred

George Horton, another of the 2010 Toronto G20 protestors, has been transferred. Write to him at:

**George J. Horton
Central North Correctional Centre
1501 Fuller Avenue
Penetanguishene, Ontario
L9M 2H4
Canada**

10 Oct – PNW Grand Jury Resistance Mega-update

There is a lot of news, on a daily basis, around and about the folks resisting a federal grand jury in the Pacific Northwest. Most important in our mind is that Leah-Lynn Plante was imprisoned and released within the last two weeks and Matt Duran and Katherine “KTeeO” Olejnik are still being held in SeaTac. We've compiled statements and news articles about the case below.

MORE:

October 10th - We are made of st(a)r stuff-- statement by Leah-Lynn Plante

On the morning of July 25th, 2012, my life was turned upside down in a matter of hours. FBI agents from around

Washington and Oregon and Joint Terrorism Task Force agents from Washington busted down the front door of my house with a battering ram, handcuffed my house mates and me at gunpoint, and held us hostage in our backyard while they read us a search warrant and ransacked our home. They said it was in connection to May Day vandalism that occurred in Seattle, Washington earlier this year. However, we suspected that this was not really about broken windows. As if they had taken pointers from Orwell's 1984, they took books, artwork and other various literature as "evidence" as well as many other personal belongings even though they seemed to know that nobody there was even in Seattle on May Day. While we know that knowledge is powerful, we suspected that nobody used rolled up copies of the Stumptown Wobbly to commit property damage. We saw this for what it was. They are trying to investigate anarchists and persecute them for their beliefs. This is a fishing expedition. This is a witch hunt. Since then, thanks to a Freedom of Information Act request, we have learned that this Grand jury was convened on March 2nd, 2012, two months before the May Day vandalism even took place.

I was served a subpoena to testify before a Grand Jury on August 2nd, a week later. I hastily packed my life up into boxes, got rid of almost all of my personal belongings in preparation of incarceration. I was dismissed that day after refusing to testify and re-subpoenaed for August 30th, which was pushed back to September 13th. In that time I did a lot of self care, got my affairs in order and got advice from other people who have either resisted Grand Juries, gone to prison or both. I returned to the Grand Jury on September 13th where I was granted immunity. When you are granted immunity, you lose your right to remain silent and can be thrown into prison for civil contempt. Between consulting with my attorney and an hour long recess, I narrowly avoided a contempt hearing simply because they ran out of time. I was dismissed and was told I would receive my 4th subpoena. I walked out of the courthouse just in time to witness Matthew Kyle Duran, my fellow resister, being taken away to prison in a police van. It broke my heart to watch them kidnap an amazing and strong person and take him away from his friends and loved ones. Katherine "Kteeo" Olejnik has met a similar fate for refusing to testify on September 27th. Right now, Matt and Kteeo are both sitting in prison cells for doing nothing but remaining silent. I have nothing but love and admiration for them both and I know that thousands of others feel the same. On the drive home that night my brain felt like it was short circuiting. A few days later, I received notice that my next subpoena was for October 10th. They also notified my lawyer that they were preparing for a contempt hearing.

Court dates aside, my life has been a roller coaster. Thanks to unrelated events, I have suffered with severe depression and PTSD for many years. These are now much worse and new things trigger me. For a while after the raid, I was in a constant state of panic and I could barely eat. Every time someone knocked on the door, every time I heard any sort of loud sound in my house, my heart sank and I thought "they've come for me." To the day of this writing, I haven't slept a full night since that cold July morning thanks to nausea inducing anxiety that wakes me up between 4:00 and 7:00 every single morning. After a couple months, the initial panic has faded into grim acceptance. Despite my mental health issues, I never once considered co-operation and never would. It is against everything I believe in. On my right arm I have a tattoo reading "strive to survive causing least suffering possible." This is something I live by every single day and will continue to live by whether I am in a cage or not.

I cannot express in words how grateful I am to all those who have shown us support and solidarity, especially our friends, partners and loved ones. We will all get through this together. I know I am a broken record with the following sentiment, but I feel like it's worth repeating. They want us to feel isolated, alone and scared. I know that even though Kteeo has been held in what is essentially solitary confinement, she does not feel alone. I know that Matt does not feel alone. I know that I will not feel alone. When they try to mercilessly gut communities, we do not scatter, we grow stronger, we thrive. I view this State repression like this: The State thinks it is a black hole that can destroy whatever it wants. In reality, it is much more like a stellar nursery, wherein it unintentionally creates new, strong anarchist stars.

I do not look forward to what inevitably awaits me today, but I accept it. I ask that people continue to support us throughout this process by writing us letters, sending us books, donating and spreading awareness.

My convictions are unwavering and will not be shaken by their harassment. Today is October 10th, 2012 and I am ready to go to prison.

Love and solidarity to all those who resist,
Forever in silence.

October 10th - The Grey Clouds Come Rolling In: Words from a Grand Jury Resister

Today was the first day where it actually felt like the rainy season I've grown to know over the past five years. Today was also the day that the third grand jury resister, Leah Lynn-Plante was taken into federal custody. Most of the time when thinking of this situation words fail me. I can speak at length about the things that are physical happening, who had their contempt hearing, who was taken into custody, these are all pieces of information that are easy enough to pass on. They are facts, they are static, they are a person being transported from point A to point B. But broken hearts are not static, and being ripped from your life, your friends and loved ones is something that words can rarely describe. For some, they may see a light at the end of the tunnel, this can be wonderful. But for others the overcast skies and ever-looming fog of the northwest render visibility nearly impossible.

In silence, we roar. In solidarity, we attack. But in despair, we cry. We break down because our friends and loved ones have been torn from our lives and because the threat of more being caged is rather imminent. But we also hate, we despise the cops, the judges, the politicians, the journalists. And all of this becomes really complicated. A flurry of emotions comes over us all at once, and in any given moment we sometimes impose contradictions. To feel weak or strong? Emboldened or defeated? Whether we are more inspired by our love or hatred of this world? I don't really think these questions always have answers, but that doesn't make their effect on our lives any less real.

I stood on a balcony today, 26 stories high I watched as the clouds swept in and covered the water. I tried to take it all in, for Kteeo, for Matt, and preemptively for Leah. I know the only difference between our outcomes was as simple as an address change, but I also know that there's no way I can understand what's going on for my three comrades. I thought about how inspiring their acts of resistance are, I thought about the chance that if I was in their situation I wouldn't be going down alone. I would be going down with three other beautiful fighters.

To be honest, I've never really been a fan of per-zines or anything like that, but I think that being so close to this situation has made me want people outside of the northwest to get a small glimpse of the personal aspect of what's occurring around this grand jury investigation. A side where while we appear strong, emboldened, and uncompromising, we also appear as devastated, terrified, and sometimes, alone.

For now, I guess the Grand Jury has already seen all of the people it's served subpoenas to. It's no use in speculating on whether or not there will be more. It's far from over, and we don't know the future holds. But as of yet, despite their attempts the state has failed. It has failed to break our spirits and it has failed to break our bonds. May we rejoice in all the future failures it will have, and may we do our best to avenge its victories.

Don't stop loving. Don't stop fighting. And fuck it, don't stop crying.

A Fellow Resister.

October 11th - 3 People Now in Jail for Refusing to Talk About Other Anarchists (Green is the New Red)

Leah Plante appeared before a federal grand jury for the third time yesterday, and for the third time she refused to talk about her politics and other anarchists. She was taken into custody on civil contempt, and is now imprisoned at SEA-TAC in Seattle, Washington.

Plante joins two other anarchists, Matt Duran and Katherine "KteeO" Olejnik, who have chosen to make the same principled stand.

The three were subpoenaed to this grand jury following FBI and Joint Terrorism Task Force raids in multiple cities in the Northwest. The search warrants identified "anti-government or anarchist literature." At the time, because of statements from police and because the warrants listed that the items were connected to "conspiracy to destroy government property" and "interstate travel with intent to riot," it appeared that the raids and grand jury were connected to broken windows and other vandalism at a Seattle May Day protest.

Grand jury proceedings are secret, but Lauren Regan, an attorney with the Civil Liberties Defense Center, learned that the grand jury was empaneled March 2, 2012 — before the May Day protests even took place. It's possible that prosecutors spent months anticipating and investigating May Day protests, but a more likely explanation is that this grand jury is not about broken windows.

It's a fishing expedition targeting those who identify as anarchists or associate with anarchists. Grand juries have historically been used against radical social movements as a tool to intimidate and to gather information. When activists enter a grand jury proceeding, they check their rights at the door. They are asked about what they believe, what their friends believe, who they associate with, what kinds of activism they support. If they choose to assert their First Amendment and Fifth Amendment rights by refusing to speak about their political beliefs and political associations, they can be imprisoned.

Jordan Halliday, an animal rights activist, was charged with both civil and criminal contempt for his non-cooperation. Not long ago, Carrie Feldman was imprisoned for her refusal as well. The same tactics were recently used against antiwar and international solidarity activists in the midwest.

Here are 3 reasons you should support these grand jury resisters:

1) They have not committed any crime. Plante, Duran, and Olejnik were not subpoenaed to the grand jury because *they* are being tied to a crime, they were subpoenaed with the hopes that they could be intimidated into providing information on *others*. I've seen some people say things like, "if they didn't have information about a crime, they wouldn't have been subpoenaed." That's simply untrue. In the past, activists have been subpoenaed to grand juries because they are friends with a "target," or have dated someone under investigation, or just had their name appear in an address book or email list.

2) This is part of the on-going demonization of anarchists, and dissent. From the FBI [entrapment plot targeting Occupy Cleveland](#) to FBI training materials describing anarchists as "[criminal seeking an ideology](#)," this is a crackdown not on specific criminal activity but on an entire belief system.

3) Today's response will shape what happens tomorrow. I mean this in two ways. First, the resistance of these grand jurors, and the support of their communities, may affect how long they are imprisoned and whether others are subpoenaed. Grand jury resisters are technically only allowed to be imprisoned if the jail time will be an incentive for them to cooperate. If it's clear that they will not cooperate, under any circumstances, it puts their attorneys in a much better position to fight for their release. And it also sends a clear message to prosecutors that further attempts to intimidate activists will also fail.

Second, and more importantly, our response to what is happening today will have a direct impact on how these tactics are used tomorrow, against other social movements. For years I have been reporting about the [backlash against animal rights and environmental activists](#) as "terrorists." We are seeing the exact same rhetoric, and same tactics, being used against anarchists. They won't be the last. Whether it is animal rights activists, environmentalists, anarchists, Occupy Wall Street, or whatever new movement is rising in the distance, if these grand jury witch hunts are not resisted they will be used against others.

Talk to each other. The fact that yesterday's article was shared more than 12,000 times on Facebook alone, and has received more than 100,000 views in less than 24 hours, indicates to me that a wide range of people had no idea this was going on. And when they learned about it, they were shocked and outraged and shared it with other like-minded people. I see inspiration in that, and I see huge opportunities for outreach and community building. Leah Plante said in her statement yesterday, "They want us to feel isolated, alone and scared." Confronting those feelings openly, honestly, and with one another is the best way to strip the power away from tactics based on fear.

October 14th – Letter from KTeeO

Hi there everyone!! I'm doing really good- thanks in large to all of ya'll. The letters bring me hope-I am working on replying to all of them, but it might take me a while, so for now let me say thank you. Thank you for the letters, the books, the kind words, and the good wishes. Thank you, I love you and would love to keep hearing from ya'll.

Thank you to all who are supporting Matt and Leah, and myself. A big huge thank you to our support teams- you are the best of us, and I am not sure I could do this without you. Thank you to my family and friends for your unwavering support- even through the fear that you feel for me.

Being in here; meeting, getting to know, and hearing the stories of the incredible women I am sharing this space with has only strengthened my resolve.

Keep smiling-keep struggling.

October 16th – No Right to Remain Silent (The Stranger)

Last week, Portland resident Leah-Lynn Plante spent the first of what could be more than 500 nights in prison for refusing to testify before a federal grand jury about people she *might* know who *might* have been involved with the political vandalism in Seattle on May Day.

That's a lot of nights for a couple of mights.

Plante has not been charged with a crime. In fact, the court granted her immunity, meaning she could not invoke her Fifth Amendment right against self-incrimination. Lawyers for two other grand-jury resisters—Matt Duran and Katherine Olejnik—have argued that the jury's questions about their acquaintances and housemates violate the First and Fourth Amendments. The court has decided that their silence is not protected by the First, Fourth, or Fifth Amendments.

But if Plante, Duran, and Olejnik continue to remain silent, they could be imprisoned until the expiration of this grand jury. Grand jury hearings are secret, but during Plante's open contempt-of-court hearing, Judge Richard A. Jones said they could be incarcerated until March of 2014.

At Plante's hearing, around 40 supporters and activists—mostly dressed in black—sat in the federal courtroom while extra security, from the US Marshals and the Department of Homeland Security, stood by. As federal marshals prepared to take her away, Judge Jones reminded Plante that "you hold the keys to your freedom" and that she could be released at any time if she chose to "exercise your right to provide testimony."

It was an odd turn of phrase—the same judge who, that morning, legally blocked her from exercising her right to remain silent was sending her to federal detention for not exercising a "right." The 40 or so supporters in the courtroom stood solemnly as she was led away. "I love you," Plante said to the crowd as marshals escorted her through a back door. "We love you!" some people in the crowd said. The lawmen looked tense for a moment, their eyes bright and their jaws clenched, ready for action. Then everyone walked out quietly, without incident.

The only federal defendant to be sentenced for a May Day-related crime so far—damaging a door of a federal courthouse during the smashup—was arrested in early May and sentenced, in mid-June, to time served.

Which brings up a pointed question: Why was the only federally identified May Day vandal sentenced to time served (about a month), while people granted immunity from prosecution—Plante says government attorneys don't dispute that she wasn't even in Seattle on May Day—are looking down the barrel of 18 months in federal custody? Why is a person who *might* know something about a crime, but who steadfastly insists she has her right to remain silent, facing more severe punishment (about 18 times more severe) than the person who was sentenced for actually committing that crime?

Minutes before Plante's hearing, her attorney, Peter Mair sat, brow furrowed, in the courthouse lobby. Mair worked for years as a federal prosecutor—he's indicted the Speaker of the House of Representatives, has prosecuted mobsters, and is familiar with how grand juries work.

But given the way government attorneys are using grand juries now, he said, "you could indict a ham sandwich. Defense attorneys are not allowed in, other witnesses are not allowed in... They're going to send this poor girl off to prison for a year and a half. And the great irony is that the one guy who pleaded guilty to the crime served—what? Forty days?"

He reiterated what many other lawyers in the course of this story have argued—that the grand jury system was originally included in the Bill of Rights to avoid frivolous government indictments. But, he said, federal prosecutors have been using that system as a tool for investigation and intimidation since the Nixon administration: "They used it to chase dissidents."

Jenn Kaplan, an attorney who represented Olejnik, also showed up at Plante's hearing because she was "curious" to see how it would pan out. "Theoretically, the grand jury serves an important function as a jury of peers to find probable cause," she said, "instead of the US Attorney using it to indict anyone at will without having to publicly demonstrate why to anybody."

The system has become, she said, "a constitutional bypass around the Fourth and Fifth Amendments, allowing the government access to evidence they wouldn't otherwise have." It is also a useful tool to intimidate people, she said, creating a chilling effect on political activism. If simply knowing someone who might be suspected of political vandalism puts you at risk of a subpoena and 18 months in jail, it gives you a strong disincentive to associate with such people. She also cited an article in a Northwestern University law journal about the history of grand juries that states:

The fundamental principles of free association and political freedom under the First Amendment, coupled with the historic right against self-incrimination codified in the Fifth Amendment, establish a "political right of silence." This right should bar the government from compelling cooperation with the grand jury under threat of imprisonment in an investigation involving political beliefs, activities, and associations.

In the end, Kaplan said, it is "far too drastic to bring someone before a grand jury" just because that someone might know someone who might have committed an act of vandalism.

Once Plante had been led away, her supporters walked out of the courtroom. A few looked a little teary. Then they milled around the elevators and on the front lawn of the courthouse, talking about going somewhere to get some food and maybe a drink. One mentioned an FBI special agent who, before the final hearing started, had spoken with her and some of her friends while they waited in the antechamber. I saw him at the end of their conversation, crouching on the carpet while the rest sat on a bench. As I approached, she was quietly asking him: "How do you feel about the way the warrants were executed? People hog-tied in their underwear?" Perhaps sensing new ears listening to the conversation, the agent stood up, walked away, and leaned against a wall until the courtroom opened.

In the end, the quietly tense saga between activists, lawyers, judges, and cops was a symphony of incongruity. Nearly everyone involved seemed to believe they were doing the right thing and executing their duty to their larger community. It was a collision course of ideals: Nobody was there for fun, or for greed, or for anything so simple as selfishness.

The guards at the security check to the courthouse—which activists and I shuffled through several times, emptying our pockets, taking off our shoes, putting our bags through the scanner—said that day didn't seem particularly busy. "You should see Thursdays," one said. "Bankruptcy hearings." Those days, he said, were jammed with people.

"How long have those bankruptcy days been so busy?" I asked.

"Oh, you know," he said. "For three or four years—since the big crash. Lot of people hurting from that. Lot of people hurting."

The day after Plante was sent to prison, activists in Portland organized a "grand jury resisters solidarity march," during which they smashed out the windows of four banks: Chase, Umpqua, US Bank, and Wells Fargo.

October 17th - Statement Concerning Leah-Lynn Plante's Release

First and foremost, do not panic.

Leah wanted for us to express these points to you with this news:

She is extremely traumatized and experienced a lot of very, very bad things, but she is alive. The state of her mental health is also very bad.

She asks that people do not jump to wild conclusions about her release because they do not apply.

She spent her whole time in SHU / Administrative Detention (solitary confinement) and was told that that is where she would stay for the duration of her incarceration, up to 18 months. She was classified as “different” from Matt and Kteeo.

She received probably near 200 pieces of mail, books, postcards in 4 days (mail was not delivered to her every day) and was glad for it, and knows probably a similar amount is being returned to sender right now. She urges people to step up support for Matt and Kteeo on all fronts. Books that didn’t get to her probably go into the prison library, which is still a good thing because from what we heard their selection is limited to romance novels and religious literature.

More information is going to be released. At this time, Leah needs space from media. She is overwhelmed by all the publicity. Regardless of who you are, if you have her personal information, PLEASE do not call her, email her, or try to locate her in order to question her. Give her space until she asks otherwise.

She was released the night of 10/17. She did not make it public immediately because she did not want the “media shitstorm” to jump down her throat yet.

She is very moved by the amount of support and solidarity there has been for her, she expressed concern that Matt and Kteeo were not getting as much publicity. Please write them, support them, send them books.

Again, to reiterate, more information is going to be released in a few days.

Thank you all for keeping an ear to the ground and for supporting these people.

October 18th - Agent: FBI tailed Portland anarchists headed to May Day riot (Seattle Post-Intelligencer)

As the investigation into the May Day riot continues, recently unsealed court documents show the FBI’s interest in several suspects predated the political vandalism that swept downtown Seattle.

Asking for permission to search electronics seized at several Portland “squats,” an FBI special agent outlined the allegations against six Portland anarchists suspected of traveling to Seattle for the May 1 demonstration.

Investigators contend the Portland residents were among the 50 or so black-clad protesters who smashed windows, clashed with police and attacked members of the media around downtown Seattle during the demonstration. An FBI surveillance team apparently followed the group north from Portland; investigators claim to have recovered text messages tying them to the violence.

According to the special agent’s statement, which was filed in U.S. District Court at Seattle and unsealed Thursday, five of the six protestors are suspected of damaging the William Kenzo Nakamura Courthouse during the May Day demonstrations. They were joined in the vandalism by seven other anarchists and several unaffiliated demonstrators.

Writing the court, the FBI agent suggested the protesters came to Seattle to destroy property.

“Although many anarchists are law-abiding, there is a history in the Pacific Northwest of some anarchists participating in property destruction and other criminal activity in support of their political philosophy,” said the agent, who is assigned to the FBI Seattle office’s terrorism task force.

The agent went on to name six Oregon residents suspected in the vandalism. All are anarchists known to Portland-area law enforcement; the FBI agent contends text messages and surveillance show they traveled to Seattle for the protest, and, in one case, described the day as “awesome.”

None of the suspects identified in the recently unsealed search warrant have been charged publicly in the May Day vandalism. Seattlepi.com does not generally name suspects prior to charges being filed.

Well-publicized inquiries are currently before grand juries in Seattle and Portland, but no indictments against these suspects have been made public as yet.

Writing the court, the FBI agent contended Portland police have recovered clothing seen during the protests during the search of a residence associated with several of the suspects.

An FBI surveillance team followed five of the suspects north from Portland when they drove to Olympia the day before the May 1 riots, the FBI agent told the court. The surveillance team broke off after the group arrived in Olympia but text messages recovered by the FBI and rental car receipts indicate they arrived in Seattle the morning of May 1.

Requesting a warrant to examine 25 devices seized by investigators, the special agent asserted several vandals are suspected of destroying government property, crossing state lines to riot and conspiring to commit the same crimes.

Aware that some anarchists were preparing for "direct actions," police and federal officers prepared for vandalism around downtown Seattle, the agent told the court. In the riot that followed, a group of about 50 protesters dressed in black damaged banks, retail outlets and the Nakamura Courthouse, while also attacking police and members of the media.

Investigators contend 12 people dressed in black – what investigators describe as "black bloc" uniform – vandalized the courthouse, causing tens of thousands of dollars in damage. According to the FBI report, a vandal threw an incendiary device similar to a road flare at the courthouse.

Describing the vandals as "clearly coordinated," the agent told the court a wave of black-clad rioters would attack the building, then retreat to make way for another wave. While they were doing so, two other protesters unaffiliated with the anarchist group joined the destruction.

Having identified the Oregon suspects, investigators in Portland searched a Mississippi Avenue "squat" where several were believed to be living. The search was conducted as part of an investigation into vandalism of a Portland Key Bank in which one of the men is accused.

Text messages recovered in that search purportedly show the group planned to participate in a riot. They also show the protesters working out some basic logistics.

"I only cut the shirt in half because its not big enough," one suspect wrote. "If you can figure out two slightly small bandanas out of it, thatd be great."

In subsequent searches, investigators recovered other clothing they contend links the suspects to the vandalism. Investigators also seized 14 pieces of electronics and 11 CDs, which they've now thoroughly searched.

The search warrant was issued Oct. 3 by U.S. Magistrate Judge Mary Alice Theiler. The affidavit and warrant were unsealed Thursday.

October 19th – America's Pussy Riot (Al Jazeera)

We are quick to loathe Putin's demand to control freedom of speech, but turn a blind eye to Obama's "act of repression."

In July, I reported on a [violent "thought crime" raid](#) in Seattle, Washington, at the home of Occupy-affiliated activists. As I wrote then, "Most of America was not awake [when a SWAT team burst in the front doors of an apartment in Seattle on the morning of July 10, 2012](#). Four local activists struggled to dress; but, they say, after the agents stormed in, they grabbed them physically. The activists reported that these agents tied their hands at the wrists, while holding automatic rifles poised against them."

Vandalism had occurred in a protest in May; but the sight of several black-clad individuals engaging in vandalism against property hardly justified, many would say, the severe repression that followed.

Many scoffed at that time at the notion of a "thought crime" arrest in the US and insisted that the victims of the militarised SWAT team must have done something to deserve the response. But the early reports turn out to be no

exaggeration. Those peaceful activists, including 24-year-old Leah-Lynn Plante, are now being held in Federal prison for refusing to testify about other protesters to a Federal Grand Jury.

The warrants issued for the original raid specifically targeted these activists for the colours they chose to wear - the original raid identified their black sweatshirts as one of the reasons for them to be subjected to arrest.

The raid also targeted the literature which they chose to read in their homes (anarchist literature). Their home and lives were invaded, in violation of First and Fourth Amendment protections; and they are now being judged by a government which has recently defined even peaceful anarchists, in a newly released FBI presentation, as "[Criminals seeking an ideology to justify their activities](#)".

Unconstitutional weapon

After the raids, the activists received subpoenas to face a Federal Grand Jury. Because one cannot retain the right to remain silent - that is, the right not to be forced to incriminate others - a Grand Jury proceeding can be used as one of the most draconian and unconstitutional weapons in the Department of Justice's arsenal against peaceful activists.

In other words, if you choose to remain silent in a Grand Jury, you may face 18 months in jail. As Natasha Lennard, a long-time Occupy reporter, [notes in her excellent continuing coverage of the case](#):

"The closed-door procedures are rare instances in which an individual loses the right to remain silent. As was the case with the Northwest grand juries resisters, the grand jury can grant a subpoenaed individual personal immunity; Fifth Amendment rights against self-incrimination are therefore protected, but silence is not. In these instances, refusal to speak can be considered civil contempt. Non-co-operators can be jailed for the 18-month length of the grand jury."

Since the Seattle raid, the globe has been swept with outrage when the Russian activists Pussy Riot were jailed for similar expressions of their freedom of speech. Especially here in America, observers found the punitive role of Putin and the corruption of the Russian justice system to be intolerable. Many notables, from human rights groups to the rock star Madonna, stood up for the punk band with the rallying cry "Free Pussy Riot!"

But in contrast, what is happening in our own back yard in Seattle has received almost no reporting, and no protest, not any similar outrage. They may not have ad ready symbols, like colourful masks and punk music, but the three activists now in prison are our very own Pussy Riot - America.

While Pussy Riot faced years in jail for patently absurd charges, the Seattle Three are facing up to 18 months in jail without any charges whatsoever. Lennard writes:

"The two Portland-based activists, Leah-Lynn Plante and Dennison Williams, publicly announced late last month that they had been subpoenaed to appear in front of a federal grand jury in Seattle and that they would refuse to co-operate. During a grand jury hearing on August 2, Plante did just this - offering her name and birthdate only - and has been summoned to return for another hearing on August 30, where she again intends to say nothing. Meanwhile, it is believed a handful of other activists are fighting to quash subpoenas served to them with the shared intention of non-co-operation."

System of inequality

Leah-Lynn Plante knew she would go to jail for doing the right thing - resisting a Grand Jury - as did her other friends from the raid. She created a video to let the world know what was happening to free speech in America.

[Her inspiring statement](#) is exemplary of what it means to be an American, to be courageously dedicated to [freedom](#): "No, I will not answer their questions," she remarks. "I believe that these hearings are politically motivated. The government wants to use them to collect information that it can use in a campaign of repression. I refuse to have any part of it."

We need a single standard for championing those arrested for free speech "violations". How can we cry out for Pussy Riot's freedom in Moscow - and ignore the injustice unfolding in Seattle? Why are we so quick to loathe Putin's demand to control freedom of speech, but we turn a blind eye to President Obama's same act of repression?

There is no moral justification.

This campaign of fear, the chilling effect of such raids, is intended [shamelessly to intimidate](#) those who would protest the increasingly entrenched system of inequality in America. This campaign seeks to equate [protest with anarchism](#), and in turn to equate peaceful anarchism - "anarchism" which can mean something as simple and non-threatening as a belief in grassroots-level social organisation - with [terrorism](#).

In Seattle as in Moscow: if you aren't free to think, to read, to communicate; then does it really matter that you are physically free?

October 19th - Anarchist probe: Jailed activists say they won't talk to feds (LA Times)

The federal detention center near Seattle-Tacoma International Airport is usually home to suspected bank robbers and drug dealers awaiting trial, or perhaps illegal immigrants fighting deportation. These days, though, it's taken on an air of political intrigue, as three activists who've refused to testify before a federal grand jury engage in an extended war of nerves with authorities.

The federal probe, detailed in an [examination of the case](#) in the [Los Angeles Times](#), is looking at the activities of anarchists in the Pacific Northwest and damage to a federal appeals courthouse during [May Day](#) protests in Seattle on May 1.

It has apparently become a hot topic of discussion at the detention center, where Matthew Duran, 24, a computer technician and self-described anarchist from Olympia, Wash., has been jailed since a federal judge found him in contempt for refusing to answer questions posed to him by a federal prosecutor.

"They took me down to...my unit, which is the general population area," Duran recalled in a recent interview at the detention center. "I get in there and people ran up to me and they're like, 'What's your race? Who do you roll with?' And I'm like, 'I'm not in a gang. I'm Chicano.' 'What are you here for?' 'I'm here for not snitching on people.' They're like, 'That's ... awesome.'

"In like five minutes they came back with this grocery bag full of food and toiletries, and they're like, 'Here, we take care of our own.'"

Duran, who grew up in Southern California, was an activist on migrant workers rights issues before moving to Olympia a few years ago. He said inmates watched the first presidential debate together. They then fell into conversation about why Duran considered himself an anarchist — what was an anarchist, they wanted to know? — and why he had elected to defy a federal judge's order to tell a grand jury what he knew?

"They asked me, 'Where do you stand on the spectrum?' I said, 'Very far left, without capitalism, without state or federal government. I think people ought to be able to organize on their own and still be accountable to their community, and to their society,'" Duran said.

"Well, there's not a lot of cool politics up there," he said, referring to his jail unit. "It definitely got people riled up. The guy I was talking to was a libertarian who believes the fundamentals of capitalism are absolutely necessary to keep society going. Well, to maintain the status quo, I said, I guess that is technically true."

Duran and one of his fellow activist inmates, Olympia bartender Katherine Olejnik, wore jailhouse khakis and spoke separately in a small attorney interview room as a guard waited outside.

They seemed relaxed and cheerful, mindful that they had become celebrities in activist circles that have spread their photos across the Internet. Supporters have characterized the probe as a witch hunt aimed at quashing the radical fringes of the Occupy movement.

“I do want to protect my friends and comrades from whatever I may or may not know,” Duran said. “But this is a tool from the McCarthy era, like the House Un-American Activities Committee. ‘Are you or are you not an anarchist, did you ever subscribe to this publication, have you ever been to a political meeting?’ That type of thing. It seems like it was taken right out of the ‘50s or ‘60s. But I guess it’s more along the lines of, it never went away.”

Duran’s attorney, Kimberly Gordon, said a federal appeals court on Friday rejected her motion appealing Duran’s detention, though she has argued that it amounts to an unconstitutional fishing expedition through citizens’ political activities under the guise of probing crimes of vandalism.

Duran, Olejnik and Leah-Lynn Plante all have been offered immunity from prosecution — meaning they could not assert their Fifth Amendment right against self-incrimination in refusing to testify. Federal authorities have made it clear that no one has the right to hide evidence of a crime — and damage to the federal courthouse that day and to surrounding businesses such as Niketown ran into the tens of thousands of dollars, at least.

“Matt really had no idea what they were going to ask him when he walked in there, but he was pretty resolved at that point that he did not want to be used by the government as a tool to prosecute or punish other people without his permission,” Gordon said. “He was more interested in making sure he was not used in that way than he was in keeping himself out of custody.”

Olejnik, 23, Duran’s roommate in Olympia, is studying for the law school admission test while waiting out her own indefinite period in custody. She said she is determined not to offer information about fellow activists and her own political associations, even if she has to sit at SeaTac through the end of the current grand jury’s 18-month term.

“I think it’s going to be fine,” she said. “Me and Matt are probably going to have to give up our house. But our friends are amazing. They’re going to pack up our house for us, people are raising money for a storage unit for us, they’re taking care of our cat, calling our parents, calling our employers, making sure we get mail and books.”

Duran is hoping his job at the computer company in Olympia will be waiting for him whenever he is released.

“I talked to my boss, the CEO, and they’re like, ‘Wow, we never had a case like this. But you’re a good kid, you’re smart, we invested like a year’s training and we want you back, as long as you don’t get criminal charges or anything.’”

So the wait goes on.

“I really don’t see it ending any other way,” Duran said. “I know I’m not going to talk.”

October 21st - FBI Affidavit Demonstrates Political Nature of FBI Investigation

On October 18, SeattlePI.com ran an important article, “Agent: FBI tailed Portland anarchists headed to May Day riot.” While the piece describes previously unavailable details of the FBI’s investigation into the May Day actions, the most important fact is contained in the first sentence:

“the FBI’s interest in several suspects predated the political vandalism that swept downtown Seattle.” Though the May 1 protest and the attack on the Federal Court House in particular, has been cited as the cause of the current FBI/Grand Jury investigation, the article clearly shows that the FBI was already keeping a close watch on Portland-area anarchists — following their vehicles and monitoring their text messages, at the least.

CAPR has consistently argued that the extensive surveillance, swat raids, and grand jury subpoenas were not simply a response to a few broken windows but demonstrate an effort to criminalize the political philosophy of anarchism.

The FBI’s treatment of anarchism as evidence of criminality in the affidavit quoted in the P-I supports the conclusion that the ongoing investigation is more about politics than law. The political nature of this

investigation is also demonstrated by the scale of the state's attack and the seizure of "anarchist literature" in armed raids. The fact that the investigation actually preceded any unlawful act only proves the point.

11 Oct - Robert King Receives Honorary Doctor of Laws Degree

On October 9, the Angola 3's own Robert King received an honorary law degree from Anglia Ruskin University in Cambridge, England.

MORE:

Mr King, a former Black Panthers member, was recognised for his campaigning since being released from 29 years' solitary confinement in an American prison known as "Angola".

Along with two fellow activists, they became known as the "Angola 3".

Scientists and sportsmen were also honoured at the ceremony.

The artist and social critic Mr Perry, who won the Turner Prize in 2003, attended the ceremony as his alter-ego, Claire.

He received an Honorary Doctor of Arts "in recognition of his thought-provoking and uncompromising artistic works".

'Making ripples'

Mr King was given an Honorary Doctor of Laws degree in recognition of his campaign to free fellow inmates - Herman Wallace and Albert Woodfox - who were incarcerated with him in Louisiana State Penitentiary, a university spokesman said.

The largest in the US, the jail is nicknamed Angola after a plantation that once stood on its site.

All three men maintain they were imprisoned for crimes they did not commit.

Mr King's own conviction was overturned and he was released in 2001.

He said: "As the only freed member of the Angola 3, I am honoured and humbled to be accepting this honorary Doctor of Laws degree.

"Many people have been involved in my evolution and for this I am grateful.

"So I will accept this award also in recognition of them, especially to my comrades Albert Woodfox and Herman Wallace who are still fighting for freedom after 40 years in solitary confinement, to all political prisoners and to all those who fight for justice."

A university spokesman added: "Robert often says that he is just a ripple in the water, but if everyone he meets can make a ripple then the ripples become waves which can make a real difference."

Mr King will also attend a screening of a documentary about the Angola 3 - [In the Land of the Free](#) - narrated by Samuel L Jackson.

The Black Panthers were a black nationalist movement which flourished in the United States in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

12 Oct - Ramsey Clark calls for release of Omaha Two

Former United States Attorney General Ramsey Clark called for the immediate release of the Omaha Two on Thursday, Oct 11, in a phone interview with the Omaha World-Herald.

MORE:

The Omaha Two, Ed Poindexter and Mondo we Langa (formerly David Rice), are ex-leaders of Nebraska's

affiliate chapter of the Black Panther Party called the National Committee to Combat Fascism. The Omaha Two are serving life sentences for the bombing murder of an Omaha policeman.

Ed Poindexter and Mondo we Langa were convicted for the August 17, 1970 bombing murder of Larry Minard, Sr. Minard and seven other police officers responded to a bogus 911 call about a woman screaming in a vacant house but instead walked into a deadly ambush.

Ramsey Clark will meet today with the two prisoners at the Nebraska State Penitentiary in Lincoln and give a lecture in Omaha at the Malcolm X Center at 3 p.m. on Saturday.

The Omaha Two were convicted after a controversial trial in 1971 that was manipulated by J. Edgar Hoover, the long-time director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Hoover had secretly ordered the FBI crime laboratory to withhold a report on the identity of the 911 caller that lured Larry Minard to his death in the bombing.

J. Edgar Hoover had an obsession against political activists he considered a threat to domestic tranquility and from 1956 to 1971 directed a nation-wide clandestine counterintelligence operation code-named COINTELPRO. Although thousands of individuals and groups were targets of COINTELPRO dirty tricks, Hoover's chief target was the Black Panthers.

Paul Young was the Special Agent-in-Charge of the FBI in Omaha and was under pressure from Hoover to get the Omaha Two off the streets. The murder of Larry Minard presented the local FBI office with the opportunity to satisfy Hoover's incessant demands. Although 15 year-old Duane Peak confessed to planting the bomb and was pressured to implicate Ed Poindexter and Mondo we Langa, the 911 recording contained the voice of Peak's accomplice and was an impediment to convicting the Omaha Two.

Paul Young arranged with Deputy Chief of Police Glen Gates to have the crucial evidence sent to Washington, D.C. for analysis. Hoover then ordered Ivan Willard Conrad, director of the FBI crime lab, to withhold a lab report on the 911 recording and the jury that convicted the Omaha Two never got to hear the voice of the man who lured Larry Minard to his death.

Ramsey Clark, an internationally recognized human rights advocate, said, "You can't be in my business without having followed their case for years."

Duane Peak got off on a juvenile delinquency charge, the 911 caller was never identified and got away with murder, Paul Young got promoted to the Kansas City FBI office, while Ed Poindexter and Mondo we Langa continue to serve life sentences for a crime they say they did not commit. The Omaha Two have repeatedly been denied a new trial despite the revelations, made years later, about the COINTELPRO-tainted manipulation of evidence.

12-19 Nov - International Solidarity with Grand Jury Resisters!

Beyond the articles and updates relating to the current grand jury resisters, there are also calls for solidarity demonstrations.

MORE:

Against the State, the repression of anarchists, and against all prisons!

Solidarity with all those who resist!

Free Kteeo, Matt & Leah! Free all prisoners!

Since July 25th 2012, there have been multiple house raids and the imprisonment of 3 anarchists in the Northwest (U.S.A.) in relation to an "ongoing violent crime investigation". The State has referenced the Seattle May Day disruptions, vandalism, and demonstrations as a cause, particularly the heavy vandalism of a Federal

Courthouse. However, it has since been discovered that the Grand Jury, which was called to question those named as potential witnesses, was actually convened in March 2012-two months prior to May Day.

At least three people received subpoenas to testify before the Grand Jury in what became August, September, and October. Three people refused to testify and were sent to prison, where they remain today. They can be held till at least March 2014. Three other people were somehow made aware of their subpoenas but were never physically served and therefore did not have to attend their hearings and have since avoided being served. Although it is unknown what has become of those three people it is easy to assume that their lives are also stressful and that they may not be able to live the way they had or where they had prior to July 25th. For that reason, this solidarity call is for everyone affected by the Grand Jury.

If you live outside of the United States, consider visiting a U.S. Embassy or Consulate in your city. If you don't have one, consider visiting an American company, or really anything that capitalism and the State manifest themselves into.

Spread the news of the repression and the rebellion of the comrades who resist it.

14 Oct - New Visits by Agents in Southern California

The North American Animal Liberation Press Office received word last week that local activists are still being visited by federal agents in the greater Los Angeles and Orange County Area inquiring about "illegal activity" and underground actions in Southern California. Agents are even resorting to desperate measures and visiting activists' parents.

MORE:

If you or your friends are an activist in the Southern California area, be prepared and expect a similar visit. Alert your family and friends; let them know they are not obligated to speak with authorities or answer any of their questions and most importantly, that the Feds are not their friends. Anything they say other than "Please Leave" will likely result in more visits. For more information of how to prepare you and your family for such a visit please read NAALPO's informative essay "Nobody Talks, Everybody Walks:"

<http://animalliberationpressoffice.org/NAALPO/2010/07/01/nobody-talks-everybody-walks>

16 Oct – Nate Buckley Update

Our comrade from Buffalo is still getting jerked around by the courts up there, after an April 2011 arrest at an anti-war demonstration.

MORE:

Just a quick note to give you the latest update on my case. The judge heard oral argument on the motion to dismiss in the furtherance of justice. This court proceeding went well, my lawyers did a great job of spelling out why the case should be dismissed. The judge reserved decision, but he did send my attorneys a letter out a few days afterwards. A copy of this letter is attached for your information. Judge Fiorella indicated that he would be out of town and did not have enough time to produce the written decision before his departure. He went on to state that based on his tentative decision there would be no need for a trial. It's clear that Judge Fiorella was planning to dismiss the case against me on October 16, 2012. We were instructed that he would issue a written decision and order on the morning of October 16, 2012.

Yesterday October 16th, the Judge responded to a motion put in by the DA, to reconsider his decision of dismissal in light of a recent bogus arrest made on myself, and new pending charges. The judge reserved decision again and has given my lawyers time to respond to this motion, and gave time for the DA to respond to our response of their original motion to not dismiss these charges. To note, if you have time to read the DA's motion to see it's desperate attempt to paint me as a criminal and to pretend to have the public's interest in mind, while the whole time guzzling up tax payer money on a politically motivated prosecution. Also to note in both alleged crimes, there was no one harmed besides myself, no property, no person, nothing, not even threatened, only the police were ones to use force and violence, and they of course to date have not been held accountable,

and the original charges stem from over a Year and half ago! The next court date the judge will most likely give his decision based on the new developments. Both the new arrest and the old case are scheduled for November 15th, in City Court 50 Delaware at 9:30 in part 11, and at 2pm in part 6. Below is an explanation of the newest charges. Thank you to all the supporters, friends and family!

Thursday, October 4, 2012, I was planning on participating in a soccer game at 7:30pm after having worked at the bookstore. I never made it to that soccer game thanks to the Buffalo Police Department. I rushed out of the bookstore to go home to grab my equipment and a sandwich. I parked right in front of my house, on the right side of the street but in the wrong direction. I have done this for years without a problem. I am regularly unloading my vehicle or running into my house to grab something then running off again. (Don't worry I won't be anymore!) When I came back out there were no police officers, but there was a box in the passenger side seat that I had to move to have enough room for my friend who was going to the soccer game with me. I ran the box inside into the house and less than a half minute later when I returned to my vehicle there were two officers. Attached is a statement prepared by the officers, which is *not* an accurate description of events. Since the DA reads and tries to use everything I write or speak on in the court against me, I will let just make use of the officer's statement. I was charged with OGA obstruction of governmental administration. In addition, after being placed under arrest the police found a pocket knife in my jacket pocket. I am now facing a felony charge of criminal possession of a weapon because I have a prior misdemeanor conviction. The police booked and processed and I was required to spend a night in jail before I was arraigned before City Court Judge Craig Hannah the following morning. My truck was impounded, even though my father was there with keys to move it. The DA asked for \$15,000 dollars bail for me, which my attorney, Daire Brian Irwin, vigorously argued against. Fortunately, I was released without bail and placed under supervision- probation every two weeks, I cannot leave Erie County without a permit. At a court appearance on October 10, 2012, we had on the new charges, the DA asked for a month to investigate this new "crime." My lawyer says such a move is seldomly asked for and it has these new charges looming over head for the judge's decision in my other case! At this case the DA offered my lawyer to bargain, to take combined plea deal for both cases. No thank you, both are garbage, and I will fight both. After that deal didn't work the DA filed a request of the court asking Judge Fiorella to reconsider his decision to dismiss the charges because I parked the wrong way and I am such a bad guy.

The entire amount of time from when I first talked with the police to being arrested and being put in the back of the car was brief. We did not get that on video, **a very important tip, whenever you are in contact with the police begin taping immediately** Here I have a video of friends and neighbors watching my truck be towed and me being taken away and them trying to get some explanations as to why this is happening, how this is protecting and serving the community? Just keep in mind I was already arrested and in cuff's in the back of this car when this video was taken.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R_tVD92GFqU&sns=em

Things I will say:

- This pocket knife I had was a wedding present, which I received as being a groomsman in the wedding of a childhood friend this past summer. My name was actually engraved on the side of it.
- I was respectful and cooperative during the entire incident and did not do anything improper.
- I was in front of my own home. The police knew this after I told them and this fact was confirmed when I provided them with my driver's license.
- The knife is sold in New York State freely and legally.
- Though they searched for drugs and nothing was found. It should be noted that I don't drink or use drugs.
- That this was an unjustified arrest and stop and frisk that is getting way out of control all over the USA.
- Why is the DA so hell-bent on trying my case, and now using this incident which is ridiculous that should have no bearing of what happened in a case that took place over a year and half ago?

I ask every one who can please come out next month Thursday, November 15th at 9:30 a.m. Part 11 with Judge Hannah, and the same date to part 6 at 2pm with Judge Fiorella, Buffalo City Court, 50 Delaware Avenue, to

await a decision on my motion for dismissal in the original case, where I was brutalized a year and a half ago simply for exercising rights guaranteed by the First Amendment and Article One, Section Eight of the New York State Constitution.

If you are interested in more info about the first trial and political nature of the prosecution the following story will be helpful, and to stay up with updates the following will also be helpful:
<http://natebuckleydefense.wordpress.com>

16 Oct - Update from the Tejas Tar Sands Blockade

As the Texas tar sands tree-sit enters its fourth week, activists re-enter the tree village to supply and defend members of the Tar Sands Blockade. The arrests continue.

MORE:

More than 50 blockaders tried to re-enter the site of what has become a historic standoff Monday, to expand and support the ongoing Tar Sands Blockade tree village in east Texas.

Several managed to break through police lines to attempt to re-supply activists who have been occupying trees in the pathway of the Keystone XL pipeline since September 24. The rest of the blockaders rallied nearby, blocked by police and TransCanada's hired security, who have formed a human barrier around the pipeline easement.

Two blockaders have locked themselves to construction equipment, and six blockaders have been arrested so far today.

Blockaders have been trying to negotiate with security hired by TransCanada to get food and water to activists occupying the trees in the path of the Keystone XL pipeline, to no avail. Now they are taking a stand together to get supplies to the activists occupying the tree-sit so they may maintain their standoff.

The activists were gathered at the location in Winnsboro after spending the weekend at a direct-action camp hosted by Tar Sands Blockade. Activists traveled from across the country and were trained in climbing, media relations, organizing and body blockade techniques.

"Coming out here had been one of the more inspiring things that I have done in years now," says Toby Potter, a member of the environmental organization, Earth First!

Potter helped lead workshops over the weekend for camp participants in lockdowns and body blockades. "It gives me a lot of hope, seeing all this resistance from the area ... and from around the country, and knowing that there's [sic] other fights against tar sands at the same time."

Potter helped camp participants erect a 30-foot wooden tripod used by activists who sit at the top of it during a blockade action. Many of the weekend's campers participated in Monday's blockade in Winnsboro to defend the tree village.

TransCanada filed a Strategic Lawsuit Against Public Participation (SLAPP) last week, naming 19 individual defendants, three organizations, and another six unidentified tree-sitters. The broad civil action seeks an injunction, declaratory relief and damages.

Most of the defendants have been arrested in previous Tar Sands Blockade actions. Ron Seifert, the Blockade's media spokesman, was also named, although he has not yet been arrested in connection with the ongoing protest. Actor Daryl Hannah, who was arrested while defending Area Landowner Eleanor Fairchild's home, is not named in the SLAPP suit. Fairchild, however, is named in the suit.

Another activist, going by the name Kevin Redding due to security concerns, recently escaped arrest at a secondary tree-sit the Blockade launched last week at West End Nature Preserve outside Mt. Vernon, Texas, where TransCanada had announced plans to cut trees.

“I’ve lived in Texas my whole life, and when I heard about TransCanada putting the pipeline through, I didn’t like the idea of any part of Texas having a tar sands pipeline going through it,” Redding told Truthout. “I’ve been here for a long time, and I don’t plan on going anywhere.”

Redding said local police tried to intimidate him, as he sat in a tree, with threats that he would be charged with terrorism. When company representatives said they would under-bore through the preserve, rather than cut trees in the ecologically sensitive area, the activist left the site, unobserved.

Monday’s action comes on the heels of an ongoing police crackdown not only on the tree-sitters, but also on journalists trying to tell their story. Two New York Times reporters were detained Oct. 10 while covering the tree-sit. They were released after identifying themselves as media.

Two independent live streamers, Elizabeth Arce and Lorenzo Serna, embedded on a timber wall, also were arrested while covering the blockade in Winnsboro. Another videographer (full disclosure, my partner) was also arrested while filming a lockdown action at a pipe yard in Livingston, Texas.

Serna was detained while livestreaming during Monday’s action.

“Right now, in the blockade, the press can’t go onto the wall. They can’t talk to those people, so there has to be someone willing to take that risk on,” Serna says.

Arce and Serna remained on the wall for nearly a week until they were forced to come down. Trespassing charges against the two livestreamers have been dropped. Currently members of the media cannot approach within 60 feet of the pipeline easement at the site of the tree-sit.

“I think we’ve done a good job building a reputation for respecting people’s desires to be filmed or not to be filmed, and building a culture of consent when filming,” Arce says. “We really care about the people, and are not afraid to connect to it in an emotional way and care about the story.”

According to TransCanada, the livestreamers are not real journalists, but activists claiming to be journalists in order to demonstrate.

The New York Times reporter, Dan Frosch, did not mention the fact that he was detained in his coverage of the ongoing tree-sit.

“They’ve created this way of somehow controlling the story, controlling the message about what’s occurring through a legal framework, and it’s just being allowed,” Serna says. “It’s controlling the press’ ability to engage things. It’s controlling our ability to understand what’s going on in this country, and I think that some people have to be willing to breach that.”

Solidarity rallies were held Monday in support of the Tar Sands Blockade’s ongoing action in New York, Washington, D.C., San Francisco, Austin and Denton, Texas.

16 Oct - Rue-ing The Day

Another Paris suburb has named a street after Mumia Abu-Jamal. This adds to a list of cities worldwide that have taken similar actions to show solidarity with him.

MORE:

Some Philadelphians hate to hear this, but people around the world love Mumia Abu-Jamal.

Yeah, that one - the convicted cop killer who spent three decades on death row before his flawed sentence was converted to life in prison last December.

When the Paris suburb of Bobigny named a street in honor of Abu-Jamal on Saturday, among the 100-plus attending the rain-splattered ceremony were people from both sides of the Atlantic Ocean. Attendees included

Myriam Malsa, from the Caribbean Island of Martinique, and Lanquira Painemal, from the South American country of Chile.

Malsa, an environmental activist, is from Sainte-Anne, Martinique, a city that named Abu-Jamal an honorary citizen a dozen years ago.

Bobigny and Paris are among the cities worldwide that have extended honorary-citizen status to Abu-Jamal, imprisoned since his Dec. 9, 1981, arrest.

Painemal, a Mapuche Indian activist in Chile, said that many in her country consider Abu-Jamal a freedom fighter.

This is a designation some Philadelphians find insulting. Others find it appropriate due largely to their having read something many Philadelphians have not: Abu-Jamal's perceptive social and political commentaries penned regularly from prison.

Noted Paris playwright Alain Fox incorporated passages from Abu-Jamal's writings into his latest work, which Fox said received "great reaction" when performed at France's largest theater festival this summer.

The politicized, polarizing Abu-Jamal case is cast in Philadelphia as a "whodunit," with some seeing it as guilty as charged, case closed.

But others from Philadelphia to Paris and beyond see the "who" of Abu-Jamal: his intellect, and he as a symbol of injustice in America.

Unbroken by death-row deprivations like isolation, Abu-Jamal has written acclaimed books and delivered recorded speeches from prison. This continues the legacy he began as a journalist before his arrest: as the "Voice of the Voiceless" - ironically, a mandate for all American journalists contained in the ethics code of the Society of Professional Journalists.

Prosecutors, police and politicians in Philadelphia dismiss Abu-Jamal supporters as uninformed or dupes.

But those questioning the propriety of Abu-Jamal's conviction know the profound problems with America's justice system.

In 1981, Philadelphia police and prosecutors charged five people with high-profile murders, proclaiming each guilty.

However, evidence later proved the innocence of four of those five - including releasing one from death row, leaving only Abu-Jamal imprisoned despite comparable evidence that courts have continually rejected.

Bobigny Mayor Catherine Peyge said that the street-naming is part of her city's fight for "respect and justice" for Abu-Jamal and others.

That Bobigny street-naming, the second in a Paris suburb, resulted from 10 years of effort, including the construction of a new street.

Rue Mumia Abu-Jamal intersects a major artery in Bobigny named after French author/journalist Paul Vaillant-Couturier.

Abu-Jamal's son, Jamal, who attended the ceremony, said that his father ultimately will walk on "this street of liberation."

16 Oct - Getting out of prison in the age of austerity by Alex Hundert

Alex Hundert, another of the 2010 Toronto G20 "Main Conspiracy" prisoners has been writing from prison and we've included his latest.

MORE:

As another round of protests and riots inflamed the streets of Europe in response to ongoing austerity measures there, in this country the Conservative government is preparing to pass yet another secretive and heartless omnibus budget bill. And as provincial austerity measures too are increased, inevitably communities already targeted by an exploitative and exclusionary capitalist system will disproportionately bear the brunt of the impact. For no one is this more true than for those and the communities of those already in prison.

Austerity, by cutting public spending, makes more people poor and makes life harder for those already impoverished. In order to maintain control over an increasingly impoverished and alienated population, along with austerity inherently comes increased criminalization of the poor accompanied by increased militarization of the state's security system. Hence in this country for example, along with omnibus austerity budgets we get omnibus crime bills which together drastically reshape the state for the age of austerity.

For those who already find themselves criminalized and incarcerated, one of the most severe impacts of austerity will be that when prison sentences end it's going to be much harder to stay out. Amongst the prison population, due to systemic and structural realities recidivism is an epidemic. Most people serving sentences are not here for the first time and most of us know we will be back. This is already the case. But contemporary austerity measures (like the elimination of Ontario's Community Start-up fund for people on social assistance, for example) are quickly making this reality ever more inevitable.

In prisons, so called rehabilitative programming is already experiencing the detriment of funding cuts that reduce these places ever more to high security warehouses for targeted populations. But most of the damage is on the outside where cuts to welfare, community services, drug treatment, healthcare, childcare, education etc. will make it increasingly less likely that people saddled with the stigmas of criminalization, in need of healing from experiences of incarceration, returning to targeted neighbourhoods and criminalized communities, will be able to stay out of the clutches of police and prisons.

Last month I found out that a former cell-mate of mine is also being held here at the CNCC on a different unit. Two years ago I spent 3 months at the Toronto West Detention Centre where he and I shared a cell for much of that time. While we were there together we talked extensively about the myriad ways that the so-called prison justice system targets certain neighbourhoods and particular demographics. We talked a lot about what kinds of support he would need to stay out of prison. I was released while he was still in there. He has been in and out since and is apparently back in yet again. He has spent much of his life in jail.

Unfortunately we haven't spoken in over a year and I'm not sure how he would feel (at present) about being named in this piece so I've left his name out of it. My old cell-mate does identify as being part of several demographics that are overly targeted for incarceration, which obviously overlaps with being disproportionately impacted by austerity measures. An indigenous man, he is a long-time resident of the St. Jamestown neighbourhood in Toronto's downtown east side. He has AIDS, he is semi-homeless, and he is a drug addict. Needless to say he could use some support.

One of the problems that he has identified is that whatever minimal and poorly integrated support there exists in jail – drug treatment, “native programming” – it all seems to dissipate or become much less accessible the moment he gets out. He has told me about how the most accessible support out there for him is too dependant on old relationships in familiar places. One of the things he told me was that he strongly felt that the most effective support he could receive would be simply having first and last month's rent and a place arranged for him in a neighbourhood other than the one in which he has been re-arrested over and over again throughout his entire life.

While locked up together we put together a plan whereby when I got out (on bail) I was going to fundraise the money and arrange a place for him in conjunction with advocating broadly for community based structural support for people getting out of prison. However, the Crown attorney's office and the OPP made it very clear that (at the time in my case) any fundraising or public advocacy would be deemed a breach of my bail conditions

“not to participate in or assist in the planning for any public demonstrations.” As ridiculous as that may be, for that reason the project was shelved.

My old cell mate and I lost touch. I’m sad to say I’ve heard that he is quite disappointed and angry with me feeling that I abandoned him. Maybe he is right to feel this way. If he reads this or if he doesn’t I want for him to know that I’m sorry and that I haven’t forgotten about him – for what it’s worth.

There are 2 primary reasons why I think structural community-based post-release support is so imperative. Theoretically, building within communities structural supports for people getting out of prison is a pre-figurative strategy for change based on mutual-aid, and challenging existing models of “justice” as well as some of the systemic barriers of classism, disableism, racism, and other oppressions. It also transcends difficult debates between advocating for prison abolition and working for prison reform.

Secondly, in the age of austerity, existing support for people who are getting out of prison are being cut at every level of government. This is unacceptable. If we are failing to stop them from making the cuts, we have to replace the supports.

As the Conservative government is planning to keep secret many of the details about where cuts will be made in their upcoming second omnibus budget bill, the effects of their last round of austerity cuts are still being recognized and realized. For all the damage done by Bill C-38, the next round of austerity measures will inevitably make things worse.

Considering the impacts of austerity on the over-incarcerated, we must remember that these are being experienced in tandem with the conservative “tough on crime” agenda embodied by another piece of omnibus legislation, Bill C-10. So while funding for people living with drug addictions is being cut, the punishment and policing for “drug crime” are being increased, as just one example. For another, we can look at the way funding for youth programming is being cut at the same time that conditional sentences are gradually being removed and mandatory minimums added, especially for ‘Young Offenders’.

Meanwhile Provincial and Municipal austerity measures cut services depended on by poor families and will impoverish many more with cuts to public sector pay and other public spending that working people depend on. The cumulative impacts of austerity will only contribute to it being increasingly difficult for people from targeted communities to stay out of the sights of the prison justice system.

My old-cell mate simultaneously falls into multiple demographic categorizations that are targeted by both austerity and criminalization. Supports depended on by people living with HIV/AIDS are being cut (to varying degrees) at all levels – from access to counselling to new research spending. Similarly there has been a wave of funding cuts for community agencies that support people living with illnesses, with addiction, with mental-health conditions, and living on the streets or in shelters. Further, as an urban indigenous person, given the ongoing realities of colonialism in this country, he is going to disproportionately experience the impacts of both austerity and criminalization.

Perhaps the most detrimental cuts for him, and for very many other people who will be getting out of jail in the coming year (and in the indefinite future), are the cuts by the McGuinty Government to the Provincial welfare system- Ontario Works –and specifically the elimination of benefits such as the Special Diet Allowance in 2010, and the most recent cut to the Community Start-up and Maintenance Benefit which will come into effect this coming January.

The Community Start-up and Maintenance Benefit is a meagre payment that people on social assistance (OW and ODSP) can apply for every 2 years and is essentially the only way people can get the money for first and last months rent, to put a deposit on utility and hydro bills and to get the basics for a home such as a bed. The CSUMB is a vital benefit for people who are homeless and trying to get housed, for people getting out of jail, for women and children fleeing a violent situation, and for people getting evicted. The elimination of this fund – a heartless austerity cut – will see more people trapped in abusive and violent households, more people stuck in

situations of abject poverty, fewer young people able to afford an education, more people remaining homeless, and more people forced into shelters or onto the streets when they get out of jail. (See OCAP's info on CSUMB and the fight against the cut here: www.ocap.ca).

Amongst allies who undertake anti-prison and prisoner support work there often exists a dichotomous framing of abolition and reform. A refreshing aspect of the type of support envisioned by my former cell-mate is that it escapes the confines of the box created by that theoretical juxtaposition.

What is sought is a post-prison support to empower people to avoid returning. What is sought is the initiative to build community-based structures that can work to share with people the skills to circumnavigate the systemic impediments to staying out of prisons and work with communities to develop the tools to deconstruct that system. What is sought is the capacity to help people stay out of jail.

It is important not to forget that the expansion of the prison system in recent years was predicated on overcrowding within the jails. Advocating against prison expansion is not what keeps people out of jails. Supporting targeted communities does, as would stopping the laws that are amongst the weapons of criminalization. Having failed to stop Bill C-10, and already initiated austerity cuts, we cannot fail to support those who will be most impacted by them. And perhaps if we can keep enough people out of jail, without prisoners, the prison justice system may just begin to starve.

Given the current realities of the system we are living under, some people and some communities are going to be targeted no matter what immediate grassroots strategies and community based structures we begin to implement. Something truly revolutionary at deeper structural and cultural levels is required to change that. But I can't accept that someone like my old cell-mate might be doomed to be caught up in the traps of this most unjust system until the end of his days.

Even given all the current socio-political realities, resources and tools to fight back against systemic targeting can be shared with everybody. We can work together to defend ourselves. We can work together to defend each other. We can make it easier for people to stay out of the prison system's sight. Even in the age of austerity we can work to keep people out of prison.

Postscript: I thought it might be helpful to name some of the structural community-based initiatives that I believe could help people stay out of jail once they are released. By structural, I mean that to be most effective, the provision of these supports needs to become part of the infrastructure of our communities. In some cases, these potential projects replace services that are being or have been cut by the State; in others, it requires reclaiming things that the State currently runs through oppressive means or for oppressive ends. In some cases it is doing more of things already being done but adapting our work, and our outreach, to people getting out of jail. Further, I want to say that none of this is meant to negate more revolutionary or ideological initiatives. It is merely meant to address immediate needs of people getting out of jail in the age of austerity.

A quick list of ideas: Safe injection sites and other (broadly defined) harm reduction initiatives, community shelters and safe houses, skill-sharing, community and youth programming and activities, adult education, opportunities to engage in community organizing and activism, counselling, conflict resolution and mediation, alternative justice initiatives, emergency financial assistance, free food, cop watch programs, legal clinics, advocacy...

16 Oct - New letter from Mario "Tripa" López

Last week, we hosted a great presentation by the Mexico City Anarchist Black Cross. Among the cases they discussed was Tripa's and we're including his latest letter.

MORE:

And if I call myself an individualist anarchist, an iconoclast and a nihilist, it is precisely because I believe that in these adjectives there is the highest and most complete expression of my willful and reckless individuality that, like an overflowing river, wants to expand, impetuously sweeping away dikes and hedges, until it crashes into a granite boulder, shattering and breaking up in its turn. I do not renounce life. I exalt and sing it.

(...)

Anyone who renounces life because he feels that it is nothing but pain and sorrow and doesn't find in himself the heroic courage to kill himself

(...)

Life — for me — is neither good nor bad, neither a theory nor an idea. Life is a reality, and the reality of life is war.

Renzo Novatore

I Am Also a Nihilist

There is a line from a poem-made-song that says that “life is like a sheet of paper, at any moment it could break”... Even with the nostalgia that intones, one finally realizes that it is so, simply and coldly. There is a fragile and light line between living and dying and, even though in certain moments it can depend on a decision that we make—consciously or unconsciously—it is concretely something unexpected that ends up taking us by surprise, since as they say: “When it’s your turn, even if you complain and when it’s not your turn, even if you put yourself out there.”

The anarchists of praxis, those who fight against Power, the social rebels, in short, anyone who decides to direct his or her life in a relentless struggle against the State, always find themselves on that line, light and fragile, which is not a suicidal decision—as many declare—it is simply a consequence, often unexpected. On the other hand, in many cases, being conscious of these consequences—death, prison, torture—the need for freedom is greater than any feeling of fear and terror, and they throw themselves into the battle, with absolute confidence, with fear, it’s true, but also with an implacable determination that emanates only from those who at all costs seek anarchy, or “absolute freedom, the greatest of all.”

Once again I assert: we must seek and find felicity through our actions.

1. What has happened to me—I say this because I know the arguments of those who criticize us—will be taken by a wide sector of anarchism in Mexico as starting point to discredit before society (?) our struggle, my individual project, and an informal project that at a local and global level maintains a direct struggle for the destruction of the State-capital. I know that what happened to me will be used by some as a form of “intimidation” in order to make fewer comrades take the path of action and to amuse themselves in positions of comfort and eternal waiting.

For me, what happened to me was only an accident, which rather than weakening me morally, makes me stronger without inflating my ego. No! It inflates my convictions and my anarchist condition.

If something comes out of this situation, I hope it is the intensification of debate, of struggle, of critique—clear, direct and objective. The intensification of the struggle against the penitentiary system and the prison. The intensification and increase of the direct and unmediated struggle against the State-capital.

2. In spite of these negative questions, which occupy the least of my attention, there have arisen positive things. And even in spite of the low interest—of those who say they are “in the struggle”—in participating or attending the recent anti-prison events, the comrades outside stay firm. It has made me very happy that there has emerged another insurrectional anarchist publication, accompanying my beloved *Conspiración Ácrata*, which is responsible for spreading the insurrectional space and anarchism of action. More publications, more debate, more diffusion and diversity. Even though, as the *Conspiración Ácrata* editorial says, my present situation in prison will largely make it impossible for me to continue actively contributing with that publication, I will do it as far as I am able. With this and any other medium that opens space for me, since in the struggle that we carry, the participation of prisoners of war is of high importance.

3. From my person, I absolutely reject and do not claim the motives that the State and the mass media grant me. My project, our project, is not an “arson” project. A struggle focused on the destruction of a society ruled by technological capitalism cannot be reduced and “infantilized” to a simple arson project. I am not an arsonist, a pyromaniac or a terrorist, I am an anarchist, an enemy of the State-capital. My positions are rooted in a serious posture replete with critique, self-critique, analysis and theory, but also with practice and action. Solidarity, mutual aid, self-management, autonomy and self-responsibility are anarchist values and practices that, like

permanent conflictuality (an attitude toward life), we place as counter-values to those that the system inculcates in us from our birth. These values are put into practice in the present, in our persons and our environment.

In my consideration the exploitation, oppression and domination of the State-capital-technology is not only exercised against humans, but also mostly against nature and animals, all for the progress of a society that doesn't care at all about the destruction of the natural environment, on which it also "depends," for the comfort of a society of capital that destroys alike nature, ancestral cultures, originary peoples, and people who oppose and resist that system and its mode of life full of sell-consume, consume-sell, destroys their natural identity and turns them into another product of the market and even of "revolutionary tourism."

That exploitation, oppression, domination is not only played out in work, but also in school, in feelings, in love, in sexuality. An example is Pussy Riot, who find themselves repressed by the Russian State and the church, put on trial much like centuries ago many people of the female sex were murdered under absurd "crimes" of witchcraft, adultery, dishonor, etc.

It is due to fighting objectively against the system of domination that there are many imprisoned eco-anarchist comrades, like the case of the brother Braulio Durán or the "Operación Mangiafuoco," comrades of the ALF/ELF who remain prisoners. It is because anarchism is a danger for the State that the police changed their attitude at the moment when Giannis Dimitrakis declared being an anarchist, after the expropriation of a bank in Greece.

And against all this is where we should focus our struggle, attacking objectively the roots of the problem: the existence of the State/capital. Against all this and with all possible means at our reach we should focus the struggle toward achieving total and absolute liberation. With objectivity and projectuality.

My project, our project of total liberation, our insurrectional projectuality, does not come from the logic of "burn for the sake of burning," it comes from a solid basis, of some principles and from the idea of destruction of the established, but at the same time it is based in the construction of spaces, realities, moments and relations that are outside of capitalist statutes and not by any possible means "assimilatable" and therefore "destructible" by the system.

Long live anarchy!!

In the mornings when I wake up, look around at my surroundings and see the bars of these cells, my body shudders and my eyes crystallize. My mind travels for a moment and enters every cell where there is an imprisoned *compañerx*. It does not instill in me sadness or fear, or anguish; it gives me ferocity and courage to not be able to act in solidarity with you, with those who I have shared critiques, reflections, discussions and opinions, those from whom I have learned much and felt mutual support for my projects, for my life. You warriors for freedom, we may never see each other face to face, but I always maintain with you an affection, a feeling of siblinghood, affinity and complicity, a mutual learning. Now I go back to reading you, two, three, behind the bars in the dungeons of the State-capital. Not sad, not weak, not absent, on the contrary, always convincing... that is how I feel you!

Never defeated, never repentant!

With furious affection for the comrades Stefano Gabriele Fosco and Gabriel Pombo da Silva

The Culmine of our struggle and the Conspiración Ácrata of our life remain alive.*

Solidarity with comrade Marco Camenisch's hunger strike, with the eco-anarchist comrade Braulio Durán, with the anarchist and libertarian prisoners of the whole world.

Solidarity with Felicity Ryder in her escape, in her flight of freedom.
Remember sister: ¡We stand, when other fail!**

* Culmine means summit and Conspiración Ácrata means anarchic conspiracy; Mario is referencing the anarchist projects in Italy and

Mexico, respectively – transl.

** English in original (sic) – transl.

17 Oct - Petition to stop the Terrorism Enhancement Act for the Cleveland 4

WE know how easy it is to be cynical, jaded, and pessimistic when it comes to petitions. In this case, we ask folks to override those feelings and do what you can to get your friends and comrades to sign the petition to keep the Cleveland 4 from having terrorism enhancement guidelines applied to their sentences. The application of a terrorism enhancement can add up to 20 years to their prison sentences.

MORE:

The solidarity group of the Cleveland 4 ask that people take the time to support the framed anarchists by signing their petition to stop the **Terrorism Enhancement Act** being applied to this case of FBI fabrication.

These imprisoned anarchists need as many signatures as possible.

You can find it at cleveland4solidarity.org

19 Oct - Mi Nombre Es Lobo Solitario by Abdul Haqq

Here's the latest by Animal Liberation Front political prisoner Abdul Haqq...

MORE:

Recently I read the book 'Long Walk To Freedom' by Nelson Mandela. It was one of the most powerful books I have read. In it Mr. Mandela said 'A freedom fighter should always remember his roots'. I have recently had chance to reflect and remember my roots when my father sent me a newspaper cut out of local news from the late 70's. It was about a shack that I lived in as a young child with my family. I was told we lived in a trailer before this place but I do not remember that. I do have many fond and bitter memories of what my father deemed 'The Cottage'. I remember climbing the wood pile and breaking my nose when the logs broke and rolled. I remember that this cottage marked the beginning of the state woods that I used to play in and explore. I remember that I used to eat wild berries and rhubarb. I remember swimming in the lake directly behind our shack. I also remember the racism and classism of the area as well.

We were the notoriously poor family of Tanglefoot Iowa. Apparently, so poor that the newspaper ran that article about us, trying to frame us as some family of wannabe little house on the prairians. Many parents didn't let their kids come down and play because we were poor.

As if it was a disease that might rub off. I remember two brothers, the Henningsons, asking me why my mother was caramel colored. I said because she is from Puerto Rico. The next day they told me that they found out that a Puerto Rican is 'half nigger and half spic'. I had no idea what either of those words meant. I remember coming home and proudly telling my mother, 'you're a spic!' I learned very quickly that this was a very terrible epithet. I also learned that playing with the Animals around our shack was far more interesting and rewarding than the snobby brats down the road.

I also recently reread my final statement to the court in Salt lake City, Utah. It's been a year since I looked at that statement and it reminded me of the difference a year can make. At the time of my sentencing in Utah I had been in county jails and federal detention centers 'in transit' all across America for the preceding year and a half. I had gone through a whole other federal court case for my arson of the sheepskin factory in Colorado. The powers that be in Utah were determined to punish me to the fullest and even filed motions to the judge begging him to throw out the federal sentencing guidelines and give me more prison time than what was allowable by the US supreme court! I was really beginning to feel the stress add up. I had resolved myself from the beginning to never equivocate to the courts or to the media no matter what the cost to me personally.

A year after that verdict that left me with a little over 12 years in prison. I now sit for an indefinite period of time in the CMU political prison unit of Marion. The federal prisons first and notorious supermax penitentiary, on a control unit that is the equivalent of a hamster house for 40 men. I have nothing but time to reflect and

think/over think everything within my memory. I have evaluated my crimes of arson in the name of Animal Liberation, time and time again. Was it worth my current incarceration? Will there ever be a time for the rest of my life that I will not be harassed by the FBI? How many Animals could I be saving or helping right now legally had I not taken this path? All very valid questions. Having found some serenity in spirituality I often see things in a much different way than I did before this epiphany.

But the inescapable truth is that the loving precept of peace only exists under the ready arm of justice. The truth is that Animals have faced the worst atrocities at the hands of humanity for the machinations of technologically advanced civilization. They still face these horrors in unimaginable numbers. As far as I am concerned The ALF are the angels of deliverance for the lives of Animals and the Earth, and I am proud to have served. I will always mark those times as the pinnacle of my life, and as the true resistance that must be undertaken a million times more if this earth is even to have a fight chance at survival!

The Governments of the world are a Babylon system that use racism, classism, war, death, murder and religion. to rape, destroy, violate and oppress all innocent life. I'm afraid that as long as these satanic systems of abuse define and manipulate all of us. Then I will have no choice but to remain defiant in the face of adversity and an advocate of direct activism, and let the record stand.

Animal Liberation, Whatever It May Take!

22 Oct – 19th Century Law That Bans Masks In Public To Be Challenged

In NYC, three women who were arrested for demonstrating and wearing balaclavas outside the Russian Consulate this summer will challenge a law dating back to 1845 that prohibits masks at public gatherings.

MORE:

"We believe this law is overly broad," Norman Siegel, the attorney for the women, [told the Times](#). "Political protest is a quintessential freedom of expression."

The women [were arrested during a demonstration](#) in solidarity with the Russian punk band Pussy Riot, and were charged with disorderly conduct and violating [N.Y. Penal Law § 240.35\(4\)](#), which prohibits "being masked or in any manner disguised" and congregating with others who are also masked. Naturally, the law has an exception for masquerade parties "or like entertainment" (read: Halloween).

The law, which is a subsection of New York's loitering statute, was initially adopted in 1845 during the [Anti-Rent War](#) in response to tenants who sought to prevent "distress sales" of their property by dressing up as Native Americans and attacking their landlords.

[In 1999, the KKK petitioned](#) to wear their masks during demonstrations in the city, and sued when they were prohibited from doing so. While the United States District Court for the Southern District of New York sided with the KKK, the 2nd Circuit Court of Appeals (which then included current Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor) ruled that because the Klan members were already wearing a hood and a robe, the mask would be "redundant."

Another challenge to the law in 2000 failed to prove that the black bandanas worn by anarchists arrested on May Day in Union Square were necessary to prevent harassment by law enforcement. Most recently, [the law was used to arrest Occupy Wall Street protesters](#).

Siegel tells the Times that his legal approach will be different from prior strategies in that he will attempt to prove that the mask itself was integral to the women's expression ([members of Pussy Riot also donned balaclavas](#) when they gave an illicit performance in a Russian Orthodox Church). Previous arguments have relied on the mask being necessary to protect the identity of its wearer because the ideas being advanced may be controversial.

"It's not just what you're saying but how you're saying it that should be protected from interference by the government," said Rachel Weldon, one of the three protesters going to trial.

22 Oct – Russell Means has Joined the Ancestors

Russell Means, a co-founder of the American Indian Movement and former political prisoner, died on October 22nd. We've included an obituary from the New York Times.

MORE:

Russell C. Means, the charismatic Oglala Sioux who helped revive the warrior image of the American Indian in the 1970s with guerrilla-tactic protests that called attention to the nation's history of injustices against its indigenous peoples, died on Monday at his ranch in Porcupine, S.D., on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. He was 72.

The cause was esophageal cancer, which had spread recently to his tongue, lymph nodes and lungs, said Glenn Morris, Mr. Means's legal representative. Told in the summer of 2011 that the cancer was inoperable, Mr. Means had already resolved to shun mainstream medical treatments in favor of herbal and other native remedies.

Strapping, and ruggedly handsome in buckskins, with a scarred face, piercing dark eyes and raven braids that dangled to the waist, Mr. Means was, by his own account, a magnet for trouble — addicted to drugs and alcohol in his early years and later arrested repeatedly in violent clashes with rivals and the law. He was tried for abetting a murder, shot several times, stabbed once and imprisoned for a year for rioting.

He styled himself a throwback to ancestors who resisted the westward expansion of the American frontier. With theatrical protests that brought national attention to poverty and discrimination suffered by his people, he became arguably the nation's best-known Indian since Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse.

But critics, including many Indians, called him a tireless self-promoter who capitalized on his angry-rebel notoriety by running quixotic races for the presidency and the governorship of New Mexico, by acting in dozens of movies — notably in a principal role in [“The Last of the Mohicans”](#) (1992) — and by writing and recording music commercially with Indian warrior and heritage themes.

He rose to national attention as a leader of the [American Indian Movement](#) in 1970 by directing a band of Indian protesters who seized the Mayflower II ship replica at Plymouth, Mass., on Thanksgiving Day. The boisterous confrontation between Indians and costumed “Pilgrims” attracted network television coverage and made Mr. Means an overnight hero to dissident Indians and sympathetic whites.

Later, he orchestrated an Indian prayer vigil atop the federal monument of sculptured presidential heads at Mount Rushmore, S.D., to dramatize Lakota claims to Black Hills land. In 1972, he organized cross-country caravans converging on Washington to protest a century of broken treaties, and led an occupation of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. He also attacked the “Chief Wahoo” mascot of the Cleveland Indians baseball team, a toothy Indian caricature that he called racist and demeaning. It is still used.

And in a 1973 protest covered by the national news media for months, he led hundreds of Indians and white sympathizers in an occupation of Wounded Knee, S.D., site of the 1890 massacre of some 350 Lakota men, women and children in the last major conflict of the American Indian wars. The protesters demanded strict federal adherence to old Indian treaties, and an end to what they called corrupt tribal governments.

In the ensuing 71-day standoff with federal agents, thousands of shots were fired, two Indians were killed and an agent was paralyzed. Mr. Means and his fellow protest leader [Dennis Banks](#) were charged with assault, larceny and conspiracy. But after a long federal trial in Minnesota in 1974, with the defense raising current and historic Indian grievances, the case was dismissed by a judge for prosecutorial misconduct.

Mr. Means later faced other legal battles. In 1976, he was acquitted in a jury trial in Rapid City, S.D., of abetting a murder in a barroom brawl. Wanted on six warrants in two states, he was convicted of involvement in a 1974 riot during a clash between the police and Indian activists outside a Sioux Falls, S.D., courthouse. He served a year in a state prison, where he was stabbed by another inmate.

Mr. Means also survived several gunshots — one in the abdomen fired during a scuffle with an Indian Affairs police officer in North Dakota in 1975, one that grazed his forehead in what he called a drive-by assassination attempt on the Rosebud Indian Reservation in South Dakota in 1975, and one in the chest fired by another would-be assassin on another South Dakota reservation in 1976.

Undeterred, he led a caravan of Sioux and Cheyenne into a gathering of 500 people commemorating the centennial of Gen. George Armstrong Custer's last stand at Little Big Horn in Montana in 1876, the nation's most famous defeat of the Indian wars. To pounding drums, Mr. Means and his followers mounted a speaker's platform, joined hands and did a victory dance, sung in Sioux Lakota, titled "Custer Died for Your Sins."

Russell Charles Means was born on the Pine Ridge reservation on Nov. 10, 1939, the oldest of four sons of Harold and Theodora Feather Means. The Anglo-Saxon surname was that of a great-grandfather. When he was 3, the family moved to the San Francisco Bay area, where his father, a welder and auto mechanic, worked in wartime shipyards.

Russell attended public schools in Vallejo and San Leandro High School, where he faced racial taunts, had poor grades and barely graduated in 1958. He drifted into delinquency, drugs, alcoholism and street fights. He also attended four colleges, including Arizona State at Tempe, but did not earn a degree. For much of the 1960s he rambled about the West, working as a janitor, printer, cowboy and dance instructor.

In 1969, he took a job with the Rosebud Sioux tribal council in South Dakota. Within months he moved to Cleveland and became founding director of a government-financed center helping Indians adapt to urban life. He also met Mr. Banks, who had recently co-founded the American Indian Movement. In 1970, Mr. Means became the movement's national director, and over the next decade his actions made him a household name.

In 1985 and 1986, he went to Nicaragua to support indigenous Miskito Indians whose autonomy was threatened by the leftist Sandinista government. He reported Sandinista atrocities against the Indians and urged the Reagan administration to aid the victims. Millions in aid went to some anti-Sandinista groups, but a leader of the Miskito Indian rebels, Brooklyn Rivera, said his followers had not received any of that aid.

In 1987, Mr. Means ran for president. He sought the Libertarian Party nomination but lost to Ron Paul, a former and future congressman from Texas. In 2002, Mr. Means campaigned independently for the New Mexico governorship but was barred procedurally from the ballot.

Mr. Means retired from the American Indian Movement in 1988, but its leaders, with whom he had feuded for years, scoffed, saying he had "retired" six times previously. They generally disowned him and his work, calling him an opportunist out for political and financial gain. In 1989, he told Congress that there was "rampant graft and corruption" in tribal governments and federal programs assisting American Indians.

Mr. Means began his acting career in 1992 with "The Last of the Mohicans," Michael Mann's adaptation of the James Fenimore Cooper novel, in which he played Chingachgook opposite Daniel Day-Lewis and Madeleine Stowe. Over two decades he appeared in more than 30 films and television productions, including "Natural Born Killers" (1994) and "Pathfinder" (2007). He also recorded CDs, including "Electric Warrior: The Sound of Indian America" (1993), and wrote a memoir, "[Where White Men Fear to Tread](#)" (1995, with Marvin J. Wolf).

He was married and divorced four times and had nine children. He also adopted many others following Lakota tradition. His fifth marriage, to Pearl Daniels, was in 1999, and she survives him.

Mr. Means cut off his braids a few months before receiving his cancer diagnosis. It was, he said in an interview last October, a gesture of mourning for his people. In Lakota lore, he explained, the hair holds memories, and mourners often cut it to release those memories, and the people in them, to the spirit world.

23 Oct – Stone by Kelly Rose Pflug-Back

Canadian political prisoner Kelly Rose Pflug-Back has a poem published in the Autumn edition of Goblin Fruit, a quarterly poetry journal.

MORE:

Something has left you, *cabrón*.
Your most indefinable piece.

It has braced itself at your parted lips
and pulled itself free while you slept

waltzing, deaf
through the dark of subway tunnels,
curled on its haunches in the bowl of a starving man's hips.

It pales a woman's last breath, like smoke
pushed forever from her chest's closed bellows.

It flies in short gusts from the unknowable dark
of chimney pipes, of overturned top hats,
to coast on sooty coat-tail wings
passing sometimes while you sleep

so close that it grazes the hairs on your chest
and wakes you, seconds too late.

There is violence
in the slow wilt of these stems;

in the warp and seethe of the skyline
and in the ragged gait of wire-thin animals
that meet your eyes in the city at night.

Your reason dances on the head of a pin,
squirming on the tip of sleep's hollow needle.

It curls itself in the small of your back
drawn through the dark by your body's warmth.

Forget time's currents and the channels they have wrought;
the twisted faces of these carousel horses
and the slow lull of their rocking.

Every night you lift sorrow's knees around your waist,
drawing your own long shadow into the daylight
where its motions no longer mirror your own.

One day, *cabrón*
our human skins will grow too tired and worn
to be convincing anymore

and people will look at us both like they did
before we ever learned to pretend.

Just tatter-cloaked shadows hidden among the crows
that gather every day on the tiered pagoda roofs

of phone booths

and wait for the Chinatown market to close,
necks jerking at avocado rinds
and crusts of bread

trying to break the spine of the small animal
that instinct still tells them they hold.

25 Oct - Anti-repression/FTP march in solidarity with grand jury resisters and #OO

WHAT: Street Demonstration

WHERE: 91st Street and 3rd Avenue, Manhattan

WHEN: 7:00pm, Thursday, October 25th

COST: FREE

MORE:

In solidarity with the ongoing tensions in Oakland, the continued resistance to grand juries in the Pacific Northwest, and against the persistent police terror here in NYC, join us for a unpermitted street march.

11 Nov - Body Work Benefit for Dr. Mutulu Shakur

WHAT: health care to support Dr. Mutulu Shakur

WHEN: 12:00-7:00pm, Sunday, November 11th

WHERE: Brooklyn Open Acupuncture – 388 Atlantic Avenue (between Hoyt and bond Streets), 3rd Floor

COST: \$15-\$60*, sliding scale

MORE:

For everyone fighting the good fight: treat yourself to holistic health care to benefit Dr. Mutulu Shakur!

Choose from acupuncture, herbal and flower essence consultations, massage, private yoga lessons, & reiki, or book a treatment as a gift for someone who deserves it.

*Donations are tax-deductible and go to support Dr. Shakur's legal defense, commissary essentials, and projects promoting justice for the Black community.

The Brooklyn Open Acupuncture Clinic where this event will be held is located near the following subways and buses:

A/C/G at Hoyt-Schermerhorn | 2/3/4/5 at Nevins Street and Atlantic Avenue | B/Q/D/N/R and LIRR at Atlantic Avenue/Pacific Street | F at Bergen Street | B65 | B63

14 Nov – Protest the Sentencing of Norberto Gonzalez Claudio

WHAT: Picket and rally in support of Puerto Rican political prisoner/Machetero Norberto Gonzalez Claudio

WHEN: 5:00pm, Wednesday, November 14th

WHERE: 26 Federal Plaza, New York City (Directions below)

COST: FREE

MORE:

After a year of physical and psychological abuse, Norberto will be sentenced on Wednesday, November 14th in Connecticut. As part of an international display of solidarity, there will be protests throughout the United States and Puerto Rico on this day.

Norberto's arrest and mistreatment is part of the U.S. government's continued harassment and repression of the Puerto Rican independence Movement. Our political prisoners are not terrorists, they are freedom fighters! The

U.S. government is the real terrorist for colonizing Puerto Rico for 114 years!

Directions:

Take the 4-5-6 to Brooklyn Bridge-City Hall. Walk 2 blocks west on Chambers Street (across City Hall Park) to Broadway. Or, walk 2 blocks west on Reade Street (in the same direction as traffic) to Broadway. Turn right, and walk 3 or 4 blocks north on Broadway to Worth Street.

Sponsored by: The ProLibertad Freedom Campaign, The Ricanstruction Action Party, El Partido Independentista Puertorriqueña-Nueva York, El Movimiento Socialista de Trabajadores-NYC, IFCO/Pastors for Peace