



POST OFFICE BOX 110034 BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11211

Updates for October 9th

22 Oct - Kevin Olliff Arrested

Kevin Olliff is currently in jail and needs your support. He is being charged with "commercial burglary," which something as innocuous as dumpster-diving could be construed as.

MORE:

On Monday, Kevin Olliff was visited in jail by two FBI agents looking for information on other activists. His bail was also raised from \$20,000 to \$500,000 as per the FBI's request (the reason being that he is on the terrorist watchlist).

Although his charges are non-political, he would not be in jail with a \$500,000 bail were it not for his previous activism-related convictions.

UPDATE: On October 30th, Kevin had a bail reduction hearing at which his bail was reduced from \$500,000 to \$100,000. His next hearing will be on November 8th. In the meantime, he needs letters and books and money for his commissary. He currently has no phone access, but would love letters! Please send mail to:

Kevin Johnson [his legal name] 3341098

Post Office Box 86164

Terminal Annex

Los Angeles, California 90086

23 Oct - Jeremy Hammond benefit CD released

The Jeremy Hammond Support Network and Freeanon is proud to announce the online release of HEAR US NOW! compilation disc. It features 27 tracks from 21 different artists in many different genres.

MORE:

It includes bands such as Welkin Dusk, Dirty Surgeon Insurgency (Jeremy's own band!), Ryan Harvey, Tell All Your Friends, ReDeMer, and many more. The proceeds from the disc is a split benefit for Jeremy Hammond and Freeanon. We grow stronger when we work to support each other in our struggle to exist against the guns of the state. Soon, there will be hard copies available for purchase online, which will feature artwork from comrades incarcerated along with Jeremy. Please support Jeremy and other imprisoned anons by buying the cd! <http://freehammond.bandcamp.com/album/hear-us-now>

Also, Jeremy's next court appearance is the 7th of November, time TBA.

23 Oct – Update on the Holy Land Five

We're including a couple of recent articles on the Holy Land Five, written just before and just following a recent decision by the U.S supreme court regarding their case.

MORE:

'Let us not be brought down' : Last legal recourse for Holy Land Five (Electronic Intifada)

This Friday, the US Supreme Court will likely decide on whether to hear the Holy Land Foundation case in which my father is a defendant. The decision will come after 11 tumultuous years of raids, arrests, trials and appeals. This will be the last legal recourse for the Holy Land Five charity leaders, who are now serving sentences ranging from 15 to 65 years.

During this uncertain time, all I have are my father's words. I grasp them with my heart.

“May God bring showers of mercy and comfort onto you,” he writes with his customary cursive, “and spread carpets of patience and perseverance upon you so you may find it easy to reach your hopes in life.”

I want to tell him my hope is to see him out of that prison uniform. My hope is to phone him whenever I want instead of waiting for him to call. My hope is to wrap my arms around him, allowing my shoulders to embrace his, which I have not been able to do in more than three years.

Perhaps that day will come soon. Or not. We’ll know more as the next few days unfold.

Still in shock

My father, Ghassan Elashi, has told me that when he co-founded the Holy Land Foundation in 1989, he knew it would be challenging because American foreign policy has been in favor of Israel, and thus, Palestinian sovereignty has not been a main concern.

Although the Holy Land Foundation’s funds were distributed across the world, a large percentage of their donations went to Palestine. So as the HLF blossomed, becoming the largest American Muslim charity, it came as no surprise that a campaign was launched against it in the 1990s, a campaign led by pro-Israeli politicians and lobby groups that repeatedly attempted to make connections between the HLF and Hamas. But authorities found no reason to close the charity.

That is, until three months after 11 September 2001, when the Bush administration — motivated by the politics of our time — used an executive order to shut down the Holy Land Foundation.

I am still in shock that the case has gone as far as it has because in its essence, the HLF case is about a bold humanitarian endeavor that was put to an end.

Nonetheless, the story has carried on, year after year. Prosecutors used the Material Support Statute, enhanced by the Patriot Act, to charge my father in 2004.

The vague nature of the law made it easy for prosecutors to claim that the Holy Land Five gave “material support” in the form of charity (food, blankets, medicine, etc.) to Palestinian zakat (charity-giving) committees that were allegedly “controlled by or worked on behalf of” Hamas and thereby helped Hamas win the “hearts and minds” of Palestinians.

The jury from the first trial was not convinced of the prosecution’s perplexing narrative, especially because none of the zakat committees are listed as designated terrorists by the Department of Treasury. In fact, these zakat committees, or distribution centers, listed on the Holy Land Foundation’s indictment also received funds from American government agencies, most notably USAID, the United States Agency for International Development.

Although the first jury deadlocked on most counts, the jury from the second trial returned all guilty verdicts. My father received a sentence of 65 years and was moved away from my family in Dallas to a Communications Management Unit in rural Illinois. The CMU, located in the city of Marion, mostly holds Muslim men charged after 11 September 2001. The purpose of this secluded prison, opened during the Bush administration, is to restrict the amount of phone calls and visitations the inmates get, all while monitoring their every move.

For the past couple of years, my father’s lawyers have continued to appeal the case, but the convictions have been reaffirmed at every level, which brings us to now.

Anonymous witness’ testimony violates rights

In their 26 October conference, the Supreme Court is expected to review our petition for writ of certiorari. In this petition, the defense team states that the HLF case “presents the perfect opportunity for the court to determine whether or under what circumstances the prosecution can present anonymous witnesses.”

They are referring to the prosecution’s star witness, an Israeli intelligence officer who testified under the false name of “Avi,” making it the first time in American history that an expert witness was allowed to testify using a pseudonym.

Defense lawyers state that Avi’s testimony violated my father’s sixth amendment right to confront his accuser.

In fact, “To forbid this most rudimentary inquiry at the threshold is effectively to emasculate the right of cross-

examination itself,” they argue, quoting the Court’s established opinion on the matter.

In the petition, defense lawyers also argue that prosecutors presented hearsay evidence, documents that predated the 1995 designation of Hamas, documents with unknown authors and documents seized from co-conspirators who were not defendants in the HLF case.

Moving onward

As I revisit my father’s words, I realize I’ve already seen them come to life. I was beneath the “showers of comfort” when the judge declared a mistrial following a hung jury precisely five years ago on 22 October 2007. I walked down the “carpet of perseverance” when I heard jurors announce the guilty verdicts nearly four years ago, just weeks after the US presidential elections.

And now, with the upcoming elections less than two weeks away and as the highest court of the land decides on the fate of the Holy Land Five, I want to say to my father: no matter what happens in the next few days, let us not be brought down. Let us hold on to that patience and mercy as we keep moving onward. Remember, baba, we are approaching not the end, but the beginning. And you will remain in the consciousness of many until the day you are exonerated.

SCOTUS to consider fate of jailed Muslim charity leaders (Salon)

On Friday the U.S. Supreme Court will decide whether to hear the case of the Holy Land Five — a group of Muslim charity leaders who face jail sentences of up to 65 years. On Thursday afternoon, activists, attorneys and family members of the prisoners have planned to rally in New York in advance of the SCOTUS conference.

The Holy Land Foundation (HLF) was the largest Muslim charity in the United States until three months after 9/11, when the Bush administration shut it down following reports that the group had donated a portion of their foundation funds to schools and hospitals in Gaza through a “Zakat” (charity-giving) Committee that allegedly had connections to Hamas. After subsequent raids on the charity leaders’ homes and offices, arrests, and two trials (the first in 2007 ending in a hung jury), the Holy Land Five were convicted of conspiracy under the Material Support to Terrorists statute and received sentences ranging from 15 to 65 years in federal prison.

A release announcing Thursday’s rally from the Sparrow Media Project noted that when the case was heard in 2007, Edward Abington, a diplomat who served as U.S. consul-general in Jerusalem during the 1990s, testified on behalf of HLF. He testified that the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) had given \$47,000 to the same charitable committee alleged in the HLF indictment to have ties to Hamas. “Moreover, USAID has periodically contributed to the same Zakat Committee named in the indictments, from before the time of the HLF indictment until today,” the release noted, adding, “This double standard is circuitous because it implies that either USAID is using taxpayer money to ‘finance Hamas’ or that the allegations made against the HLF were baseless from the beginning.”

The ACLU in 2009 spoke out against the treatment of the Holy Land Five, noting that their treatment by the U.S. government “violated the fundamental rights of American Muslim Charities.” On October 26, the Supreme Court is expected to review the case against HLF, which defense attorneys say was problematically based on anonymous witness testimony. In a petition to the court, the defense challenges the prosecution’s reliance on hearsay and the testimony of an Israeli intelligence official who gave evidence under the fake pseudonym “Avi” — the first time in U.S. history that an expert witness was allowed to testify using a fake name.

Noor Elashi, the daughter of HLF co-founder Ghassan Elashi who is serving a 65-year-sentence in an isolated federal prison unit, will speak at Thursday’s rally. “I am heartened by the solidarity of those who are standing by my father during this critical time. I hope to see this momentum keep building until the Holy Land Five are exonerated,” she said in a statement. In a recent article for Electronic Intifada, Elashi wrote at greater length about her father’s case. “I am still in shock that the case has gone as far as it has because in its essence, the HLF case is about a bold humanitarian endeavor that was put to an end,” she wrote.

Representatives from the Center for Constitutional Rights and the National Lawyers Guild will also join Elashi at Thursday’s rally in advance of Friday’s Supreme Court conference, which will determine the fate of the Holy Land Five. “This will be the last legal remedy for the defendants outside of a Presidential pardon,” the Sparrow Media Project noted.

“Justice has fled the country”: US Supreme Court won’t hear Holy Land Five case (Electronic Intifada)

The US Supreme Court announced today that it had decided not to hear the appeal of the Holy Land Five, despite the obvious violations of the Sixth Amendment of the Constitution that led to the convictions of the five men who headed the HLF and provided humanitarian aid to Palestinians.

“Their decision marks the end of the judicial process and the beginning of a massive effort to free the Holy Land Five,” stated a post on the Holy Land Five solidarity website on Monday morning.

The Holy Land Foundation was once the largest Islamic charity organization in the US. The HLF provided disaster relief aid across the US in addition to providing essential humanitarian aid to Palestinians under Israel’s military occupation. In 2001, under the emboldened Patriot Act, the Bush administration shut down the Holy Land Foundation and charged its founders with working through charity, or *zakat*, committees “on behalf of Hamas.” The prosecution’s witness was an anonymous Israeli intelligence officer who was allowed to testify under a pseudonym — the first time in US history that a court allowed this, in a clear violation of the Sixth Amendment which allows the accused to confront their accuser.

In a press release from the Muslim Legal Fund of America, representatives of the organization stated that they were “deeply troubled” at the Supreme Court’s dismissal of the importance of the case. “Attorneys for the five defendants and representatives from MLFA are evaluating all remaining options and will announce a decision on how they will proceed soon,” the press release added.

Khalil Meek, executive director of the MLFA, stated in the press release:

It is a dark day for America when our nation’s highest court refuses to hear a case that is affecting everyone’s ability to get a fair trial in America ... If judges are allowed to prevent defenders from challenging the credibility of expert witnesses, then our Sixth Amendment loses its teeth and our civil liberties suffer further erosion.

Last week, Michael Ratner, a leading civil rights attorney and president emeritus of the Center for Constitutional Rights in New York City, and Noor Elashi, the daughter of Ghassan Elashi, co-founder of the Holy Land Foundation who was sentenced to 65 years in prison, held a press conference together on the national day of action for the Holy Land Five.

Earlier today, I interviewed Michael Ratner by phone.

Nora Barrows-Friedman: Tell us your reaction to the decision that the Supreme Court announced this morning.

Michael Ratner: This morning, they made it public that they had decided not to hear the case of the Holy Land Five. And look, it’s not that we were optimistic — because any case involving Muslims and Palestinians, and Muslim charities, certainly since 9/11, but in terms of this particular Holy Land Foundation, before 9/11 — you don’t have the highest expectations of justice in the courts, but because the conviction is so outrageous, and so outside the law, that even I harbored some hope that they would say, “hey, what are we doing here?”

Because in this case you’ve got Ghassan Elashi, who’s head of the Foundation, getting a 65-year sentence, and you understand what it’s for — it’s for giving charity to *zakat* committees, which are not even designated as terrorist, in the theory that they’re somehow controlled by Hamas. And of course if they are, then they would designate them as terrorist — but they didn’t do that. USAID has given money to these committees. So you would think that a guy getting 65 years for that, they would at least say, “maybe we should wake up and look at this case.”

And maybe some of them did, but you need four out of the nine [judges] to say we’ll hear the case, and we didn’t get that. And of course the case had a huge, very important legal issue just from my point of view and a justice point of view, which is — there are two trials here — the first trial they tried the Five, for materially aiding terrorism, and there was a hung jury. And the hung jury was because I think the jury didn’t believe that the *zakat* committees were controlled by Hamas, or if there was any way that they were, that no one in the Holy Land Foundation had any idea that that was the case. Particularly as US agencies gave to those committees. And

these are committees that provide humanitarian aid in the occupied territories.

So you get the first hung jury, and in the second [trial] they [the US government] bring in an Israeli intelligence official as a key witness on the nature of *zakat* committees and the illusion that they're controlled by Hamas. And that was probably the key testimony on that issue, and he does so anonymously, as an expert witness on *zakat* committees, a guy working for Israeli intelligence.

There are a few issues here. One, you have a guy working for Israeli intelligence, giving the key evidence in a case against someone giving humanitarian aid to Palestinians, and secondly, you have his identity kept secret, which means you can't learn anything about him, what his job was, really, what he did or who he is, how truthful he can be so you can effectively cross-examine him once you know his name. So you can't really cross-examine him — your constitutional right under the Sixth Amendment is a nullity. So the trial had that core violation of law in it, apart from the political nature of the case.

Disappointing would be a very mild word compared to the devastation that I think we should all feel about the Holy Land Foundation being shut down, and then its five leaders being convicted and given very long sentences. And then of course understanding that in the case of Ghassan Elashi, he's in Marion, Illinois, in a Communications Management Unit which is a prison essentially set up for Muslims.

NBF: Michael, what does this say about the nature of where this country is in terms of the ongoing attacks against Muslims and Arabs and anyone who has to do with helping Palestinians live these days?

MR: I think that we have to look at particularly this case as ... pre- 9/11, they [the US government] were already going after the Holy Land Foundation, the biggest Muslim charity in the US, the biggest humanitarian donor to Palestinians. As much as Zionists and others were trying to shut it down, there wasn't the *milieu* to shut it down. After 9/11, they then had two facts — HLF was aiding Palestinians, and then it's a Muslim foundation. After 9/11, they shut down six of the main Muslim foundations, by December 2001. The president signed an executive order without due process.

That tells you a lot — that we were starting to attack Muslims not just in Bush's crusade speech on September 18th, 2001, but shutting down charities, rounding up young men between certain ages, registration, and of course Guantanamo by January 2002.

So what we see is a broad-spectrum attack on Muslims after 9/11. I know from a legal point of view, from surveillance here in New York of every mosque, of every eatery, of the gushing over a film like *The Third Jihad*, I know it in Los Angeles, from the invasion by informants of mosques, we know it from entrapment, we know it from Guantanamo, from drones, from shutting down Muslim charities. It's really a broad-spectrum attack of which the legal attack is certainly a key element.

And when I talk about it, I talk about it as we're in the midst of a plague against Muslims, and we're only in the midst of it. We're not necessarily winning, and it's really serious. People just have to understand that, and have to stand up. We're not coming out of it yet. The Holy Land Five case just shows how deeply into a plague against Muslims we are ... it really is a plague of Islamophobia, and it is sweeping the country.

That's only the legal aspects, that's not all the discrimination, from being kicked off an airplane, from being yelled at in the street, from being physically attacked, all the non-legal ways in which Muslims are discriminated against. And of course it's very hard for Muslims — it's hard for them to stand up for cases like the Holy Land Five, or Guantanamo people, without themselves being labeled in society, or watched or surveilled.

I consider this to be a very serious moment, and this case of the Holy Land Five is to me one of the most incredible outrages. [There is] not only my disappointment, but my anger and my feeling that justice has just fled this country when it comes to Muslims.

NBF: What's the next step? This was the last legal recourse, so what can be done if anything can be done at this point?

MR: One of the leaders of the Holy Land Five case has been Noor Elashi, who was 16 at the time he was first prosecuted for the Holy Land Five. She's 27 now. And of course, the choices are stark, but the choice you know is that you have to keep fighting. In her case, for her father's release and exoneration ... but in all our cases.

Because Muslim charity has essentially been cut off at the knees by this case and others.

You give money as a Muslim to a foreign entity of any sort, even to total humanitarian aid, and this government is going to look at you. There's been a huge chilling effect, I think on both the First Amendment rights of Muslims in this country, on their right to give charity, and of course, on any relationship to Palestine or Palestinian rights. Because that was the heart of the Holy Land Foundation — giving humanitarian aid to poor and needy Palestinians.

It just says how much Muslims have been cut down, how much Palestine has ... and how in these recent presidential debates, in this upcoming election, it's as if they're ostriches with their heads in the ground. Not a word about Guantanamo, a lot of people piling on about how wonderful drones are, and of course nothing about how we're continuing a "war on terror" — which is really a war on Muslims and a particular sub-group of that, Muslims and Christians and others who are involved in Palestine.

24 Oct - What's In A Name? by Walter Bond

Animal Liberation Front prisoner Walter Bond explains his reasoning for reclaiming his birthname.

MORE:

I have decided to drop the name 'Abdul Haqq' for the following reasons:

First, religion is not the defining aspect of my struggle, Animal Liberation is. While my spirituality is an important aspect of my personal life it has nothing to do with the fight for the total freedom of the oppressed. Religion has a terrible track record of persecution of just about every social group one could possibly imagine and I am not here to play apologist to tyranny, in the name of God, or politricks, or consumerism, or any of the other stupid ass reasons people find to justify their bloodlust! . Furthermore, the more my own spirituality in mysticism has progressed the more I realize that the institution of religion is poison to my spiritual path. Sufis of the past often had to speak and write their esoteric wisdom in parables and riddles to avoid being murdered by the orthodox regimes of their times, I don't. And I find the whole business of labeling, and packaging my beliefs and faith under the auspices of this or that religion to be narrowing in and of itself.

Second, I live in a prison unit where all I hear about 24 hours a day is religion and politics. I am simply burnt out! In my humble opinion one must have some sort of pathology to literally have no other thought in their head besides these two topics, 24 hours a day, for life! The men here are no better or worse than any other group of people I have been around. But don't believe the hype, not everyone in the CMU is some stand up freedom fighter. We have our fair share of jail house rats and federal informants that are simply kept here for their own safety.

Third, A name is an identity, which I already have. I am Walter Bond, the ALF Lone Wolf. My orthodoxy in this world is called Vegan Straight Edge. I am a prisoner of war for Mother Earth and the Animal Nations. And I don't judge others by their beliefs or disbeliefs. I hold abusers accountable for their actions.

And Lastly, 'Abdul Haqq' means 'Slave To The Truth' 'Walter' means 'Powerful Warrior' I like Walter better.

24 Oct - 5 Charged with Felonies in Michigan Fracking Protest

Activists protesting a mineral rights auction, that would set the stage for horizontal hydrolic fracturing (fracking), were recently arrested in Michigan. Thanks to quick organizing, their charges were reduced to misdemeanors and we've included coverage below.

MORE:

Today, October 24, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) in Michigan held another Mineral Rights Auction. The DNR is currently auctioning off 196,000 acres of land in Michigan. This auction is one of the first steps toward Horizontal Hydrolic Fracturing in Michigan.

Similar to the last DNR auction in May of this year, today's event was filled with protests and disruptions. More photos and stories will be coming out, but for now, here is a quick run-down of some of today's anti-fracking

activities:

8:20am- Activists from around the state gather outside the Lansing Center to show their opposition to Horizontal Hydraulic Fracturing in Michigan.

8:40am- Just 20 minutes before the auction was set to begin, activists entered the Lansing Center with 2 large paper banners tied to dozens of balloons. In the middle of the main hallway, where the ceilings are 40+ feet, the banners were released to float up. One read “If You Frack, We’ll Be Back, Earth First!”, the other “Deep Water Earth First!” with a large fist drawn on.

8:42am- Just after the deployment of the Balloon Banners, another balloon was released. This time it was carrying a “personal alarm” (a small device that lets out a continuous shrill noise for 1 hour). Auction attendees and Lansing Center employees were heard expressing a great deal of confusion about the source of the noise.

8:45am- Chanting starts in the auction room. “No Fracking, No Way! Not Ever, Not Today!”.

8:50am- Another “personal alarm” goes off, this time in the auction room itself. During the confusion, activists attempted to lockdown in front of the podium. Unfortunately, police intercepted them, and they are now incarcerated and charged with one felony (Resisting and Obstructing an Officer), and one misdemeanor (Disrupting a Public Event) each.

Most people that were out of their seats at the time of the lockdown attempt were removed from the room, and protests continued outside the building.

10:30am- 2 people randomly snatched by police. One is being held on the same charges as above, the other just the misdemeanor and has been released.

3:00pm- One videographer taping the auction while it was happening was removed from the room and arrested. Currently it is not understood why he was singled out so late in the day.

The protest out front, and inside the room continued throughout the entire auction. In all 3 dozen people were removed from the room for causing disruptions.

The prosecutor is refusing to hold bail hearings until Thursday morning, meaning that anyone charged with a felony will be spending at least tonight in jail.

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Prosecutor caves to pressure and drops the felony charges. Everyone is now out without bail!

15 people left the Mineral Rights Auction protest at the Lansing Center yesterday and headed to the office of Stuart Dunnings, the Ingham County prosecutor. Although he refused to process our friends yesterday because they were being held on felony charges, at today’s arraignment no felony was brought up. All are being charged with a misdemeanor- Disrupting a Public Meeting. National Lawyers Guild lawyers have stepped up to represent everyone arrested.

The felony that 5 people were threatened with is a frequently used Michigan statute called “Resisting and Obstructing” (R&O). While we are all happy that our friends are out and not being charged with this 2 year felony, it’s important to remember how many others are still locked up with this charge. The law defines obstructing as “knowing failure to comply with a lawful command.” So, even if a person is stopped for nothing (other than racial profiling for instance), and does anything the cop doesn’t like or is the least bit different from what the cop says, they can be charged with this felony. In one Michigan county up to 25% of people in the local jail are there for R&O and no other charge. For us in Michigan we feel that we have to make prison abolition a part of our struggles, and this has been a good reminder of that.

24 Oct – Petition to Help Jamil Al-Amin Get Transferred

As we mentioned last time, 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 get Imam Jamil Al-Amin (formerly known as H. Rap Brown) transferred back into the Georgia prison system, closer to his community.

MORE:

Mr. Amin, now 69, was falsely accused and is incarcerated based upon the continuous efforts of the FBI stemming from the COINTELPRO era. Mr. Amin was transferred into the super max facility at Florence, Colorado, even though he was not nor has he been convicted of any federal crime. We ask that he be transferred back into the Georgia state prison system so that he may continue his efforts to exonerate himself and obtain his freedom.

<https://www.change.org/petitions/imam-jamil-al-amin-transfer-mr-amin-back-to-the-georgia-prison-system>

24 Oct - How The Pursuit Of Animal Liberation Activists Became Among The FBI's 'Highest Domestic Terrorism Priorities'
Here's an article from Huffington Post that explains the historical shift in the U.S. government's approach to animal liberationists, told via the story of former ALF prisoner Jonathan Paul.

MORE:

On January 16, 2006, two federal agents pulled off of Oregon's Route 66 and onto a dirt road in the Southern Cascades, about nineteen miles northeast of downtown Ashland. They didn't get far. There was a blizzard, and the road was buried in snow. The agents were forced to stop just a couple miles short of their destination.

On most winter mornings, the road that forced the agents' retreat was plowed by Jonathan Paul, a tall, broad-shouldered, 39 year-old volunteer firefighter with a shaved head and a soul patch. Paul had gotten off to a late start that day; it was nearly time for lunch. While the FBI agents sat in their stalled vehicle, Paul climbed into his snow plow, which he kept parked beside his fire truck in the garage next to the solar-powered house where he lived with his wife and three dogs. At the intersection with Route 66, the agents watched as Paul pulled up the road and drove past them. They turned their car around and followed him onto the mountain highway.

Five minutes later, Paul pulled into the parking lot of the Green Springs Inn to order one of the few vegan items on the menu of the only restaurant in the area. The FBI vehicle pulled in behind him, and the agents followed Paul inside. One of them flashed his badge, and Paul knew at once that a nearly nine year-old crime had finally and inevitably caught up to him.

On July 21, 1997, the Cavel West Horse Rendering Plant, in Redmond, Oregon, was burned to the ground. It was never rebuilt. While in operation, the Belgian-owned slaughterhouse killed and dismembered as many as 500 horses per week, according to Paul, many of them formerly wild animals rounded up by the Bureau of Land Management and adopted out to private individuals who then sold them to the plant to be butchered. The meat was packaged and shipped to Europe and Japan for human consumption.

For over a decade, neighbors had petitioned and protested in a seemingly endless campaign to shut the plant down. In addition to the ethical concerns, Redmond locals complained about the stench, the constant screams of the horses, and the blood overflowing the local sewage system, backing up into neighbors' bathtubs and knocking out the city's water treatment plant.

An incendiary device consisting of a mixture of glycerin soap and diesel fuel nicknamed "vegan jello" accomplished what a decade of legal means had failed to achieve. Paul, along with an activist he had recruited named Jennifer Kolar, had mixed the fuel. The other three participants in the arson were Kevin Tubbs, a Nebraskan transplant who had moved to Eugene to work for the [Earth First! Journal](#), Joseph Dibee, a software engineer at Microsoft, and Jacob Ferguson, who later turned into an FBI informant. Tubbs served as driver and lookout. Ferguson carried the fuel, and Dibee planted the devices. After the ignition timers were set, the perpetrators fled the scene in Tubbs' van. They stopped at a pre-determined location to dispose of their clothes, gloves and masks and destroy them with muriatic acid. A few days later, the "Animal Liberation Front - Equine and Zebra Liberation Network" faxed a communiqué to Craig Rosebraugh, ALF spokesperson, detailing the steps taken in the action and claiming responsibility for it.

Paul was prepared for his arrest; he had been expecting it. Over the last four years, the government had conducted a multi-agency, multi-jurisdictional investigation into a string of arsons and other property crimes by radical animal rights and environmental activists with the Animal Liberation Front and its sister organization, the

Earth Liberation Front. The investigation was called "Operation Backfire." The month before, based on information provided by Ferguson, who had worn a wire and recorded conversations with his former colleagues, the FBI had arrested Tubbs, along with six other underground activists (Ferguson had once tried to record Paul implicating himself as well, but Paul had refused to discuss his past with him). Paul had known and worked alongside some of the arrestees; others were strangers.

Paul could not have known it, but his fellow activists' long-standing pledges to refuse to assist prosecutors in the event of arrest broke down almost immediately. All of the defendants except for two -- William Rodgers and Daniel McGowan -- had hastily signed plea bargains and agreed to cooperate with the investigation (McGowan's case was the subject of the Oscar-nominated documentary, "If a Tree Falls"). Rodgers was so shaken by the government's success in turning his co-defendants that he committed suicide in his cell.

Information provided by the cooperating defendants led to the arrests of Paul and six other activists. Three of them chose to cooperate with the FBI, while four, including Paul, refused. (Three more suspects remain fugitives, Dibbee among them.)

Four days after his arrest, the Department of Justice issued a press release referring to Paul and the other defendants as terrorists. At a press conference announcing the activists' indictment, FBI Director Robert Mueller, standing alongside Attorney General Alberto Gonzales, cited the pursuit of environmental and animal rights-related criminal perpetrators as among the agency's "highest domestic terrorism priorities."

Of the twenty criminal events investigated under Operation Backfire, none had targeted human beings or resulted in the death or injury of a single person. No action by the ELF or the ALF in the United States has, in fact, ever killed or injured anyone. Both groups' crimes are, by design, restricted to property.

The same cannot be said of anti-abortion extremists, white supremacists and right-wing militias, none of which have been subject to special federal legislation singling them out as terrorists as ALF and ELF activists have. Indeed, when the Department of Homeland Security issued a mundane intelligence assessment in 2009 outlining the threat of terrorism from right wing extremists, conservative outrage forced Secretary Napolitano to withdraw it (just three months earlier, DHS's release of a similar report detailing cyberterrorism threats from animal rights and environmental activists and anarchists went more or less unnoticed by the media).

Though what the FBI now calls "eco-terrorism" predates September 11, 2001 by at least two decades, since the events of that date, both the laws on the books pertaining to political activism and the implementation of those laws by police and federal investigators have shifted dramatically in the direction of repression. In a time of perpetual national emergency, freewheeling use of the "terrorist" label enabled Congress to pass the Animal Enterprise Terrorism Act in 2006, a law that substantially broadened the powers of the Justice Department to pursue animal rights activists -- including those who engage strictly in First Amendment activities -- as terrorists. Likewise, this year, the label helped two state legislatures pass "Ag Gag" laws that criminalize undercover video investigations of animal abuses in the agriculture industry.

On the enforcement side, police and federal investigators have pursued perpetrators of arson, vandalism and even highly charged political speech as terrorists, and applied investigative techniques commensurate to the threat of Al Qaeda sleeper cells to disrupt their networks, including surveillance, infiltration, raids on homes and offices, and the use of grand juries to force innocent people to inform on their friends and colleagues. Currently, two self-described anarchists are in jail in Seattle merely for refusing to provide information on other activists in a grand jury proceeding. Neither is regarded as a suspect in the vandalism under investigation or have been charged with any other crime.

Describing the charges brought against the defendants in Operation Backfire, David Iglesias, the former federal prosecutor for New Mexico who was terminated by Attorney General Gonzales in the 2006 U.S. Attorney firing scandal, told the Eugene Weekly in 2007, "It seems to me what happened here should not fit my traditional definition of what terrorism is." Iglesias described the terrorism label as "political" and "overreaching."

In environmental circles, the terrorism charges brought against the Operation Backfire defendants marked the culmination of what became known as "the Green Scare": the post-9/11 period in which widespread anxiety about a very real threat to American security was marshaled by federal law enforcement and then redirected to

discredit a movement. While the legal targets of the dragnet were underground activists who engaged in illicit activity, the political targets, many activists believe, were lawful, mainstream environmental and animal rights groups and the causes they stood for.

The FBI denies this. In a statement provided for this article, a spokesperson wrote, "The FBI does not investigate individuals based on their beliefs or other first amendment protected activity like free speech. It is when the individual exhibits intent to or crosses the line to commit a crime that we have an obligation to act. Working within our legal authorities, the prevention and detection of these criminal acts prior to their fruition is our objective." (The spokesperson went on to note that domestic terrorism is the agency's "top investigative priority," and pointed to "evidence of an ongoing conspiracy by members of the ELF and ALF" that caused "over \$40 million in economic damages.")

Activists who have been in the FBI's sights tend to disagree. "The FBI's pursuit of the Earth Liberation Front and Animal Liberation Front, including Jonathan Paul, was the largest domestic terrorism investigation in history," says Will Potter, author of *Green Is The New Red: An Insider's Account of a Social Movement Under Siege*. Potter, who has himself been questioned by the FBI in the past for legal protest activity, discerns in the terrorism label a campaign of pressure by law enforcement agencies, at the behest of animal enterprise and resource extraction industries, upon licit groups to curtail their Constitutionally protected advocacy activity. Potter sees a continuity of this pressure campaign in both the government's recent aggressive prosecution of climate activist Tim DeChristopher and in the passage of laws this year in Utah and Iowa criminalizing undercover investigations of animal abuse on factory farms. "Now, the same corporate and political interests who were calling for a crackdown on the ELF are calling for a crackdown on undercover investigators and on people like Tim DeChristopher who is in prison for non-violent civil disobedience," Potter continues. "This is how political repression operates. It always begins on the fringes and, if allowed, creeps steadily towards all forms of dissent."

Cavel West was Paul's last arson, but it was neither his first nor his last act of physical intervention in defense of animals. Paul undertook his first animal liberation action when he was eight years old. Paul's father, a manager at Morgan Stanley, took his son to Africa, where for the first time in his life, Paul viewed cheetahs in the wild. When he returned home to Western Massachusetts, he visited the zoo and was traumatized by the sight of cheetahs in captivity, pacing around in their cages. When he got to school, he went around and set off as many mousetraps as he could find.

Despite his childhood ethical revelation, until his early adolescence, Paul continued to hunt for sport. One day, when he was a freshman in high school, Paul and his friends were out shooting birds. Paul hit one in the wing, and it fell to the ground on its back. It was suffering, and Paul was able to connect to that suffering in a way that was new to him. It was something of an epiphany. He picked up a rock and smashed the injured bird, putting it out of its misery. He never hunted again.

Paul soon gave up eating meat, then all animal products. In his early twenties, he moved to California. "A lot of the people that I was hanging around with were very smart people who were very educated," Paul says. "And I listened and learned from them, and I started understanding what was really going on, and understanding more about ecosystems and how important things were, and this and that. And as I started to understand that, I started putting it all together like a puzzle. I was able to complete the puzzle and I saw this very dark world that to me was very disturbing."

He undertook his first major animal liberation action in 1986 at the University of Oregon, where, according to Paul, researchers were conducting experiments on perception that included taking pregnant cats, opening them up, extracting their fetuses, sewing the eyes of the fetuses shut, and putting them back into their mothers so they would be born blind. Then lab technicians would conduct tests on the blind kittens. After months of reconnaissance, Paul and some fellow activists broke into the lab, destroyed computers and equipment and released close to 300 animals, including cats, mice and rabbits. They were unable to get the monkeys out because they had not secured new homes for them; all they could do was give them bananas and take a sledgehammer to the device used for their vivisection.

Following the University of Oregon raid, Paul's life became animal liberation. He got a rush out of the action. He quickly became one of the most prolific underground animal rights activists alive. In 1987, he participated in the

first ALF arson in the United States, at an animal research laboratory under construction at the University of California at Davis. The next month, he cut a section of a wooden fence at a wild horse corral run by the Bureau of Land Management in California, freeing the captured horses. That same year, he broke into a research facility at Loma Linda University in Southern California, removing dogs and research documents. In 1989, Paul and another activist executed the largest raid in the ALF's history at the University of Arizona at Tucson, freeing and re-housing about 1,200 animals. In the '90s, he helped shoot undercover video footage of the brutal killing of minks on fur farms, and derailed shark hunts off the coast of Santa Cruz. The project he made the most enduring commitment to was founding the American version of the Hunt Saboteurs, an organization that had been physically disrupting fox and deer hunts in England since the '60s and which was a precursor to the original Animal Liberation Front in the United Kingdom. In the U.S., Paul and other activists focused on Big Horn Sheep hunts in the Mojave Desert. They would follow hunters for miles, blaring noisemakers to keep their prey moving and putting out false scents to throw off the dogs. If necessary, they would put their bodies between the rifles and their intended targets. (Forty-four states now have "hunter harassment laws" that criminalize this kind of activity.)

"There's a despair that we all hold in us," says Paul. "I think that for myself I can say that somewhere I tend to channel the suffering and the pain and the destruction in me, and it's a pretty intense experience to always have that in you. I will say that in a lot of ways I prefer to [be] aware and be in touch with my despair [rather] than to be unaware and not in touch with what's going on. I don't want to live in bliss, I want to live in reality. And a lot of times the reality of what's going on is very disturbing and scary. And so the only way I could channel that is to do something about it."

The type of direct action-style activism that Paul practiced was extraordinary, but in the 1990s it was hardly unique. Throughout the '80s, Animal Liberation Front cells and other animal rights groups had racked up scores of successful lab break-ins, arsons and rescues, some of them accompanied by major public relations victories. In 1984, ALF activists broke into the University of Pennsylvania's Head Trauma Research Center, where scientists were conducting experiments on live baboons funded by the National Institutes of Health. The activists stole sixty hours worth of audio and videotapes shot by the vivisectors themselves that showed them laughing and joking as they inflicted brain damage on inadequately anesthetized baboons with a hydraulic device that simulated whiplash, and posing the severely injured primates in front of the camera, Abu Ghraib-style, for fun. People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals released a 26-minute edited film from the footage that received media attention all over the world. The following year, NIH cut off funding for the center and the lab was closed. Soon after, Congress passed new legislation improving standards of oversight and care of laboratory animals.

In the environmental movement, radical activists were adopting equally confrontational tactics in the '80s and '90s, most famously under the banner of Earth First!. Begun out of a conscious and explicit rejection of the inevitable compromises of mainstream environmental groups, Earth First! championed the use of direct action and sabotage (nicknamed "monkey wrenching") to halt environmental destruction at its source. Earth First! activists destroyed logging equipment, established blockades of logging roads into old growth forests, and in 1985, developed the tactic of climbing and physically occupying trees for days, weeks or months on end to protect them from loggers' chainsaws.

Soon after founding the Hunt Sabs, Paul and other animal liberationists found themselves accompanied on their expeditions by Earth First! activists. Earth First!ers were not all animal rights devotees, and at that time, their political persuasion was, collectively, as libertarian as it was anarchist. The original founders of Earth First! proudly embraced a redneck cultural sensibility, fusing it with a back-to-the-Earth, Mother Gaia spirituality. Many Earth First! 'eco-warriors' ate meat, wore leather, and even hunted. But they all opposed big game trophy hunting as a crime against conservation if not against the animals themselves.

Surrounded by environmental radicals, Paul's perspective on his own activism began to expand, incorporating elements of Earth First!'s biocentric 'Deep Ecology' philosophy, which emphasizes the innate interconnectedness of life, into his perspectives on animal exploitation. "There's always a bigger picture involved with the whole thing," says Paul. "I always feel that if you're a person that is going to have the heart to go out and defend an individual animal how can you not have the heart to see the whole picture of what's really going on in this world? We're in the sixth mass extinction right now. We've got ecosystems collapsing everywhere, species dying

out. And animal liberation is tied to that, directly." As the radical environmental worldview shaped the ideology of Paul and his colleagues, the animal rights crowd began to participate in Earth First! forest defense actions. The two movements were merging.

Like many social movements before it, Earth First!'s uncompromising tactics had earned it a place on the FBI's list of public enemies. At 5 a.m. on May 30, 1989, following three years of infiltration, armed federal agents stormed the Tucson home of one of Earth First!'s founders, Dave Foreman, and arrested him (seven years later, the FBI's case against Foreman resulted in a \$250 fine). Then, almost exactly a year later, Earth First! organizer (and friend of Paul's) Judi Bari was crippled for life and nearly killed in a car bomb explosion. Within hours of the blast, the FBI accused Bari and the other passenger, Earth First! activist Darryl Cherney, of harboring the bomb themselves, claiming it was set off accidentally. Agents were at Jonathan Paul's home in Santa Cruz almost immediately, asking questions. Seven weeks later, the Oakland District Attorney announced that he had insufficient evidence to charge the pair with any crime. Many believe that the bomb was in fact planted by the FBI and the Oakland Police.

The animal rights movement was likewise commanding increased attention from federal investigators. While Paul was busy leading the Hunt Sabs, his friend and former Santa Cruz housemate, Rod Coronado, carried out a string of high-profile ALF arsons, which he dubbed "Operation Biteback," that targeted the physical infrastructure of the fur industry. Paul didn't participate in the campaign and wasn't a suspect in the investigation into it, but in 1993, federal prosecutors hauled him in front of a grand jury in Spokane to compel testimony that might lead to the perpetrator's capture. Paul refused to cooperate, and was locked up for five months. At the time, it was the longest jail term ever meted out for animal rights activism.

It was around this time that Paul first started hearing the term "eco-terrorism." Paul attributes its genesis to the Wise Use movement, an anti-environmental grassroots coalition and corporate public relations campaign founded by Ron Arnold, who claims credit for the word's coinage. The neologism had already gained currency in Washington, D.C. Following the 1987 arson at the University of California at Davis in which Paul acted as driver, for the first time, the FBI labeled a crime carried out by animal rights activists as "domestic terrorism." The following year, referring to Earth First! activities, Idaho's Republican Senator James McClure introduced that phrase's specific sub-variant, "eco-terrorism," into the Congressional record.

Then, in 1992, in response to the Operation Biteback arsons, Congress took another step in transforming such activists into terrorists by quietly passing the "Animal Enterprise Protection Act." A gift to the pharmaceutical lobby (principally the National Association for Biomedical Research), the new law carved out special protections for animal-based industries by creating a brand new category of criminal activity, called "animal enterprise terrorism," with special sentencing enhancements specifically aimed at underground animal rights groups. From now on, rescuing or assisting in the rescue of animals from death or torture at the hands of a profit-seeking venture, or assisting in the destruction of the equipment used to inflict pain or death on those animals, were not merely felonies to federal prosecutors, they were acts in the same legal class as the crimes perpetrated by Timothy McVeigh, Ted Kaczynski or Osama bin Laden.

It wasn't until 1998, however, that the "eco-terrorism" term really gained traction. In October of that year, one year and three months after Paul had helped burn down the Cavel West plant, a massive fire at the Vail ski resort in Colorado resulted in \$12 million in damages and prime time news coverage across the country. The arson, whose stated purpose was to halt the resort's planned expansion into delicate lynx habitat, was carried out in the name of the Earth Liberation Front, an offspring of the Animal Liberation Front that had started in the United Kingdom and had been active in the U.S. for several years. (Years later, the FBI arrested William Rodgers, also known as "Avalon," for the crime.)

Until Vail, crimes carried out by radical environmental and animal rights groups were a persistent but secondary issue for the FBI. With the Vail fire on the front page of newspapers coast to coast, the FBI's priorities changed overnight. FBI Director Louis Freeh, who had told a group of animal and resource extraction industry representatives in Europe less than a year earlier that ALF, ELF and Earth First! activities were not even on the agency's 'radar screen,' told the Senate Appropriations Committee in February 1999 that animal rights and environmental activists were now among "the most recognizable single issue terrorists at the present time."

The FBI's about-face was a coup for the animal enterprise and resource extraction industries, whose lobbyists had already been pressuring politicians to put Earth First!, ALF and ELF into the same threat category as assassins, airline hijackers, and international mass murderers. Bragging about Freeh's change of perspective, the Fur Commission USA wrote in its March 1999 newsletter: "Over the last year, the people of the fur trade have been key players with other animal and resource based industries in a concerted effort to push eco and animal rights terrorism up the government's priority pole. These efforts have resulted in a strong statement of commitment from the FBI." The government had not yet gone far enough, the newsletter cautioned, "But what a difference a few months can make!"

An even bigger sea change came on September 11, 2001. It took only a few hours after planes struck the World Trade Center and the Pentagon before the animal enterprise and resource extraction industries and their allies in Congress sought to capitalize on the opportunity to shine the spotlight on "eco-terrorists." On the day of the attacks, Alaska Congressman Don Young speculated that the act of mass murder could be the work of environmental extremists. One day later, Oregon Congressman Greg Walden declared "eco-terrorists" to be a threat "no less heinous than what we saw occur yesterday here in Washington and in New York."

The gambit failed in the short run. During the months and years that followed 9/11, the Bush administration was too preoccupied with the real threat of the moment, Al Qaeda, to make a top priority of a loose network of arsonists, saboteurs and civil disobeyers focused on the destruction of property and not on the taking of human life. Moreover, in the wake of the attacks, ALF and ELF activity abruptly dwindled to almost nothing, as did most other political protest and dissent in the United States at that time. Out of the twenty separate criminal acts committed by the activists rounded up in Operation Backfire, only one of them took place after 9/11 -- an arson at the Bureau of Land Management Wild Horse Corrals in Litchfield, California, one month and four days after the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. According to the ALF Press Office, crimes by ALF and ELF activists declined by nearly half following September 11th.

Nevertheless, the watchword of the decade was now "terrorism." The Justice Department had been granted unprecedented new powers by Congress through the passage of the PATRIOT Act. Careers could now be made in federal law enforcement by breaking a case that could credibly be labeled as terrorism while resources for other priorities dried up. In the private sector, demand spiked for executive and director level security personnel to protect companies from shadowy terrorist threats; more than 200 colleges and universities created new homeland security-related degree and certificate programs to fill the new slots. Many more of these newly minted corporate security officers were worried about their domestic political opposition than about Al Qaeda.

With the criminal histories of the ALF and ELF now comfortably ensconced within the rubric of "terrorism" by the Animal Enterprise Protection Act and the declarations of the FBI, the social, legal and political framework for a major government counteroffensive against animal rights and environmental activists was never stronger.

During that time, Paul was in Washington State, working alongside Paul Watson, the founder of the Sea Shepard Conservation Society (and star of "Whale Wars" on Animal Planet), which Watson has described as "the navy of Earth First!". He helped found Ocean Defense International, an organization dedicated to derailing whale hunts conducted by an indigenous tribe that enjoyed sovereign whaling rights. ODI used the same straightforward approach Paul had employed with the Hunt Sabs on land and that Watson had been perfecting on the water for years: they would pursue the whaling vessels with small coastal boats, and, as the Makah hunters closed in on their prey, they would steer their boats between the whales and the hunters' high-powered rifles.

It was while working for ODI that Paul met his wife, Tami Drake. On a Saturday in May of 1999, the Coast Guard confiscated ODI's boats. On Monday morning, the Makah harpooned a grey whale. There was nobody there to disrupt the slaughter. It took 17 minutes for the whale to die, and Drake, a paralegal at the time, watched it happen on the local news. She called in to work and said she wasn't coming in that day. She tracked down Paul and the ODI crew and volunteered to help with the legal work to get their boats back. Paul was especially persistent in seeking her aid. "Every day he was calling me," she says. "'Have you gotten my boat back?' Maybe he had a premonition that he'd need legal help in the future. But six months later, we were together."

Drake and Paul became partners in activism as well as in life. They bought a bus, turned it into a mobile whale education center, and drove up and down the West Coast, educating children about marine mammals. They

purchased their home together in the Siskiyou. Drake knew the depth of her partner's commitment to animal rights, and she suspected that he may have engaged in some illegal animal liberations, perhaps breaking into a laboratory or two. Beyond that, Paul did not speak of his underground history, and she tried not to ask.

In 2004, seven separate investigations into an assortment of underground actions by multiple federal, state and local law enforcement agencies were merged into Operation Backfire. The investigation got its major break when a roommate of Jacob Ferguson filed charges with the Eugene Police, accusing him of stealing her truck. She later found the truck parked down the street, but by then, investigators were linking Ferguson to an SUV arson. Ferguson had become addicted to heroin and had a young son. The FBI soon ensnared him, and played on his fears of being locked up and separated from his son just as he had been separated from his imprisoned father. Ferguson agreed to wear a wire, then systematically sought out his accomplices and attempted to record each of them admitting their roles in crimes past.

The FBI came to Paul's home with a Grand Jury subpoena on December 7, 2005. Drake took her husband out into the woods and grabbed him by the collar. She asked him if she needed to be afraid that the FBI was going to return, kick in their door and shoot their dogs. He told her no, they were just harassing him. A few weeks later, Drake flew to Seattle to visit her daughter. While she was there, she received a phone call and learned that her husband had been arrested. "I dropped to my knees," Drake says. "I thought, whatever he's arrested for, he didn't do it. We got him bonded out in nine days. I asked him quietly, 'Did you do this?' And he got this sheepish grin on his face and he said, 'Do you really want to know?'"

As with the other defendants, prosecutors tried to turn Paul immediately. He didn't even entertain the idea, and nor did those closest to him. Drake told him she would stand by him throughout, as long as he didn't snitch. His mother told him the same thing.

Federal prosecutors tried Paul on charges of arson and conspiracy, and sought sentencing enhancements for terrorism. Paul lucked out. In the midst of the Bush administration's warrantless wiretapping scandal, the prosecutors were on shifting and precarious political ground. Attorneys for the defendants submitted a discovery motion demanding that the government turn over any and all evidence collected through warrantless wiretaps. The government responded by agreeing to a plea bargain with a non-cooperation clause in exchange for the defense's dropping the discovery request; a rare event in any trial, and an about-face for the government.

Paul was imprisoned in Phoenix, Arizona. He was out on bail prior to his incarceration, so he walked himself into the facility. As soon as he entered the system, he was thrown into solitary confinement for a week, then transferred to a unit. "Prison is so race-based," he says, "The first thing is all these white guys give you your shower shoes, soap, give you what you need until you can get to the store. So you get settled up, and then have to figure your way around things. You have to be careful who you deal with. But it was not that bad of a place compared to other places." Like other prisoners, Paul read, and he exercised. He ran his first marathon by running hundreds of laps around the prison track. He served three years, and then another six months in a halfway house.

Today, Paul lives with his wife again in his home in the Siskiyou Mountains. He gets up at 5 every morning and goes to work doing forest restoration. He has legally converted the property around his house into a wildlife sanctuary. In the summer, animals are everywhere.

Since his arrest, laws targeting activists for terrorism prosecution have become significantly more draconian. In 2006, Congress passed the Animal Enterprise Terrorism Act, a bill conceived of and advanced by the American Legislative Exchange Council, a corporate-sponsored conservative think tank and lobbying group that champions pro-"free market" legislation. The new law criminalizes actions aimed at "damaging or interfering with the operations of an animal enterprise," including First Amendment activity such as pickets and boycotts. The legislation was crafted explicitly to empower law enforcement to squelch hitherto legal, above-ground animal rights advocacy, after a group of activists called Stop Huntingdon Animal Cruelty nearly shut down an infamous multinational animal testing corporation through purely legal means. Activists charge SHAC's target, Huntingdon Life Sciences, with killing hundreds of animals a day through their toxicity testing business, which involves practices such as injecting puppies with pesticides. Undercover footage has shown Huntingdon technicians punching beagle puppies in the face and dissecting a live, conscious monkey. Under the AETA's

predecessor, the Animal Enterprise Protection Act, six SHAC activists were convicted as terrorists for posting publicly available information on a website. They were sentenced to a combined 23 years in prison. The new law was created because the animal enterprise lobbies felt that those penalties did not go far enough.

This year, laws were passed in Iowa and Utah that make it a crime to take a job at a factory farm for the purpose of shooting clandestine video footage of animal abuse. As with the AETA, these laws were a direct response to the success of an animal advocacy group using legal means to expose industrial cruelty -- in this case an undercover video by Mercy For Animals. The FBI has already recommended prosecuting undercover investigators under the AETA as terrorists.

Both the legal and the procedural underpinnings of this enforcement regime are in dispute. The constitutionality of the AETA has been challenged in court, and a recent Congressional report raised questions about the FBI's habit of pinning the terrorist label on political activists who have never physically harmed a single person. Over the last decade, the government has assumed an aggressive and highly selective posture against radical animal rights and environmental activists that rests on precarious legal and philosophical footing. Its ability to sustain that approach is uncertain.

"The FBI's obsession with animal rights and environmental activists is not only misguided, it's flat-out dangerous," says Will Potter. "The government is spending time and money on political activists, who have never harmed a human being, when violence by right-wing extremists continues to escalate. The Justice Department's own Inspector General has warned the FBI about this, and so have members of Congress. Yet the FBI continues to focus on environmentalists who are trying to protect life, while downplaying the actions of right-wing groups seeking to take it."

Paul is not optimistic about the future for animals, the environment and humanity. He sees himself as a realist, and he doesn't see much reason for hope. He suspects that the world is more likely headed toward environmental collapse than renewal. He's glad he has lived a life of activism, but he doesn't believe it's enough in the end.

At the moment, there's nothing he can do about it in any case. The terms of Paul's probation bar him from any form of advocacy work. He has tried to focus on his personal life, his finances, and building a home for himself and the animals around him that reflects his values. But insulating himself from the world is not in his nature, and the ban on activism is a significant frustration.

"There were times in my life that I felt like I needed to take some time off for myself to actually be selfish for once in my life, not as selfless as I have been," he says. "And I did that, but it didn't take long before I realized I had to get back into being an activist, because I just felt like I had to keep doing things. And that's part of being an activist, is not stopping."

25 Oct – Update on Pacific Northwest Grand Jury Resistance

Another person has been subpoenaed, and support has been suspended for Leah-Lynn Plante. All that and more in this edition of the PNW grand jury update...

MORE:

The Committee Against Political Repression will be suspending support for Leah-Lynn Plante.

Leah was released from prison on October 17 after appearing before the grand jury investigating anarchists. We do not know what was said at that hearing. In the time since her release, Leah has not offered details regarding the subjects of the hearing, her response, or about her release. CAPR is withdrawing support for Leah until we get information regarding her grand jury hearing.

Meanwhile, Matt Duran and Kteo Olejnik remain in prison, steadfast in their refusal to aid the government in its persecution of anarchists. CAPR will continue to do everything we can to support them, and we urge everyone who wants a more free, equal, humane society to do the same.

1) Write to them or send them books

Katherine Olejnik #42592-086

FDC SeaTac

**Post Office Box 13900
Seattle, Washington 98198**

**Matthew Duran #42565-086
FDC SeaTac
Post Office Box 13900
Seattle, Washington 98198**

October 25 – Maddy Pfeiffer Subpoenaed for Grand Jury

On October 25, 2012 a fifth subpoena was served to Matthew “Maddy” Pfeiffer to appear before the federal grand jury on November 7, 2012.

Pfeiffer’s statement:

On October 25th, the day before my 23rd birthday, two FBI agents wearing ill-fitting khakis and too much gel in their hair, served me a subpoena for 9am on November 7th. I knew my fate right away: 18 months in SeaTac Federal Detention Center. Matt, Kteeo and Leah have all been imprisoned for their refusal and I will be the next. Despite the urgings of lawyers, agents and judges, I only have one option: non-cooperation. Any other option is unthinkable.

I am being asked to testify before a Grand Jury on November 7th and will likely be detained on that date for refusing to cooperate. The vultures of the state will try to imprison my comrades and me until we give in. We will never give in.

From so many different perspectives, for so many reasons, snitching is never an option. I will never betray the people I care about, the ideas which I hold dear, or the commitments I have made. I will never give any information about crimes, should I have any knowledge of them, nor will I give information about my personal relationships. I will never cooperate with this or any attempt to stop struggle. I will never cooperate with the systems of control which I loathe. If the federal government chooses to imprison me for my refusal, then so be it. I expect no less from them.

The official reason the state gives for imprisoning those who refuse to cooperate is to coerce testimony. If they know anything about me or my friends, they know that this will never work. Some have said that this Grand Jury is about trying to repress people’s political opinions and free speech. No doubt this is true. My subpoena states that I am being asked to testify about events that took place on May 1st. The state is trying to use broken windows as a reason to ruin people’s lives. This is absurd, and I will oppose it to the fullest. This life-ruining system which they call “justice” is organized to defend property and capitalism. This system is against everything I believe in.

My imminent imprisonment is an attempt to disrupt struggle against domination in all its forms. What the vultures cannot understand is that attempts to repress this struggle will only embolden it, whether we are inside the walls of the Federal Detention Center or in the streets. The growing list of solidarity actions, from St. Louis to France, demonstrate an inspiring continuity in this regard.

In silence, we roar!
Matthew “Maddy” Pfeiffer

Two letters from KTeo

I want to take this opportunity to thank everyone for the incredible and constant support that I have been receiving since being locked up at the FDC over a month ago.

I want to thank my family for their unwavering support, pride, and love—throughout this situation and throughout my life.

I want to thank my closest friends for supporting me out of love, regardless of political beliefs; for your constant letters, for keeping my life on the outs in order, for spreading the word of my incarceration, and for reminding me daily that I am never alone.

I want to thank all the incredible support team for getting the word out there; through the internet, through word

of mouth, radical media, anarchist media, lefty media, and mainstream media. I want to thank you all for all the fundraising you have been doing; and for your constant reminder of solidarity and friendship.

I want to thank my wonderful attorney; you are such a badass!

I want to thank all of my old friends from across the States and the world who are spreading the word to their friends and networks both through the use of technology and face to face communication (which I have to say is pretty rad).

To all of the rad people organizing on our behalf, I thank you for dedicating your precious time, energy, and love to our release and well-being.

I want to thank all of my new friends who have heard about our case from mutual friends, the internet, political groups; any number of forms of media; ya'll have been consistently writing letters and spreading the word since day one. THANK YOU THANK YOU THANK YOU!!!

To a whole lot of anarchists who have written me every day, thank you!

To a whole lot of people who are not anarchists, who have written to me every day, thank you!

To those who have made it their life's work to write prisoners, thank you!

To those who are writing me because they have experienced the red scare, and said never again, thank you!

To all of you who have inquired about donating (I hope I gave you the info), those who donated, and those who are planning benefits, thank you!

To my community of downtowners, thank you for having my back. Thank you for not forgetting me, thank you for loving me, thank you for proving that communities can be strong regardless of political beliefs, and for proving that all of this is about so much more than political affiliations.

So, to all of you; I know I did not do anyone any favors by staying out of the public eye until my incarceration, but every single one of you has done so much to bring light to what is going on.

Every single one of you has done so much to bring light to what is going on. Every single one of you helps me to grow stronger every day.

To all of those who have written me; I have received about 100 letters every week since I have been in here (over 400 letters so far), and I am so sorry to all of those I have not written back yet. All of your words, artwork, and photos have inspired me and I can not thank you enough. Again, I'm really very sorry if I have not written you back yet; postage is a bit of an issue. Also to all of you who have sent me books, most of them have not contained return addresses, but I still want to let ya'll know that they are loved by myself and my new friends on the inside. To the friend that sent me Soledad Brother and the beautiful letter within days of being here, I do not have an address for you, but I love you and your words have helped to strengthen my resolve.

Anywho...to all of you again, THANK YOU THANK YOU THANK YOU THANK YOU!!!!

Keep smiling, keep struggling; in solidarity, gratitude, and love,

Kteeo

PS:to another old friend, I got your postcard. Live to eat.

Hello Everyone!

I want to start as always by saying thank you for your support. What I want to talk about today is something that I have touched on before in previous statements, but wish to expand on. That is the problem many of my new friends face as mothers in prison. So many of these women work incredibly hard to keep custody of their children, and to be good mothers regardless of their situation. This is not an easy task.

At the Federal Detention Center, in my unit, inmates can make sixteen dollars a month for their labor. That means that while incarcerated these mothers are unable to contribute to many issues of motherhood from prison. The financial side of aiding a child with incarcerated parent(s) falls [...] on other family members. Add to this the

incredible cost of visits and phone calls (\$16 a month only buys so much phone time...). Many women have told me they have had to choose between giving money to their children and hiring a lawyer, and this is only when money is not an issue[?] How many people do we all know for whom money is not an issue? The financial aspect of this all is huge.

In addition to the cost of visits, many inmates have trouble getting family members approved to bring children, which can mean months before children can come to visit. Even if everything is in order and money is not an issue, there are still only 300minutes of telephone time a month, and several hours of face to face time each week to connect with one's children, aid in emotional growth and help with physical/emotional problems. Is that enough?

I don't know, there are just some thoughts that I have been wanting to share on the topic of "prison doesn't just effect those incarcerated, but the whole family".

So, I hope you all are well. I'm doing ok, all things considered, I'm gonna go play volleyball now.
Keep Smiling, Keep Struggling,

In solidarity and love,
Kteeo

October 26 - Compilation Album Created in Support of Grand Jury Resisters

Musical Impressions has created a compilation album called "Black Clothing, Anarchist Literature, Flags, Flag-Making Materials, Cell Phones, Address Books, & Hard Drives" in support of the Grand Jury Resisters.

You can buy it at <http://musicalimpressions.bandcamp.com/album/black-clothing-anarchist-literature-flags-flag-making-materials-cell-phones-address-books-hard-drives>. Proceeds go to support the legal and material needs of those resisting the FBI investigations of anarchists in the Pacific Northwest.

October 30 - Another Anarchist Subpoenaed to Grand Jury, as Leah Lynn Plante Denied Support (Green is the New Red)

Another anarchist has been subpoenaed to a federal grand jury in Seattle investigating political activists in the Pacific Northwest, while a support group for grand jury resisters has decided to withdraw support from Leah Lynn Plante until she provides information about her terms of release from jail.

On October 25, 2012, two FBI agents served Matthew "Maddy" Pfeiffer with a subpoena in Olympia, Washington. Pfeiffer is scheduled to appear before the grand jury in Seattle on November 7. [Three others have already been imprisoned](#) for refusal to cooperate in any way, and Pfeiffer expects to be the fourth. [In a statement Pfeiffer said:](#)

I will never betray the people I care about, the ideas which I hold dear, or the commitments I have made. I will never give any information about crimes, should I have any knowledge of them, nor will I give information about my personal relationships. I will never cooperate with this or any attempt to stop struggle. I will never cooperate with the systems of control which I loathe. If the federal government chooses to imprison me for my refusal, then so be it. I expect no less from them...

Meanwhile, the Committee Against Political Repression, which is one of the support groups for grand jury resisters, has announced that it will no longer be supporting Leah Lynn Plante. Plante was imprisoned for her refusal to testify about her political beliefs and political associations, and due to [a massive amount of publicity](#) she became a public face associated with the grand jury resistance.

After a week imprisoned, Plante was released on October 17th. That news wasn't shared with the public until several days later. I was in the Northwest for speaking events in Eugene and Portland on the 17th and 18th, and spoke at length about her case and called for people to make donations and write her; no one knew she was actually out of jail, not even those who self-identified as her friends and supporters at the events.

A few days later [Plante released a cryptic statement](#) that began "do not panic." It also said she was traumatized

that she could have been imprisoned for the 18-month grand jury term. Since then she has made other statements about [internet commenters remarking about her appearance](#), and her supporters have [posted cat photos](#), but no one will say anything about the grand jury.

The Committee Against Political Repression [said it has withdrawn support](#) until Plante provides information about the terms of her release: “We do not know what was said at that hearing. In the time since her release, Leah has not offered details regarding the subjects of the hearing, her response, or about her release. CAPR is withdrawing support for Leah until we get information regarding her grand jury hearing.”

I delayed commenting about any of this because it is such a sensitive situation. Grand juries are secretive by nature, so it is impossible to know what was said during a hearing. It’s impossible to know if someone cooperated, and it’s impossible to know if they *refused* but were released in order to foster distrust and skepticism amongst their supporters. However, in light of Plante’s refusal to communicate what actually happened two weeks ago, and in light of a new subpoena, CAPR’s response seems appropriately cautious.

November 3 - Stand with Maddy Pfeiffer! – A Statement of Solidarity from SDS

Just a few days ago on October 25th, an Olympia activist named Maddy Pfeiffer received a subpoena to appear before the special federal grand jury impaneled currently in Seattle. Maddy, who goes by they/them pronouns, is an Evergreen student, a brilliant and skilled organizer, and a good friend to many of us. They are also a former coordinator of Students for a Democratic Society here at Evergreen. — Maddy has been called to appear at the grand jury chamber in Seattle at 9:00am on November 7th—a date that is rapidly approaching. They have bravely declared their absolute refusal to cooperate with the federal grand jury witch hunt against anarchists—even though it is very likely they will be imprisoned after they refuse to testify on November 7th, despite being charged with no crime.

Maddy is not the first in our community to be subpoenaed by this grand jury. If Maddy is imprisoned, they will also not be the first. Two other Olympia activists, Matt Duran and KteeO Olejnik—a former Evergreen student and SDS member—are already sitting in the federal detention center at SeaTac for staying silent. But the FBI’s subpoena of Maddy, a current student and very recent SDS coordinator who is still an important presence in the Evergreen radical community, has struck SDS and the Evergreen campus very close to its heart.

We will follow Maddy’s brave example and stand strong.

For Maddy, silence is a roar of defiance; for us, silence is resignation and defeat. We will never cooperate with federal investigations of our communities and we will use our energy, our voices, and our actions to support those who refuse to snitch on their friends. The government has turned its most terrifying weapons on the radical community in Olympia and is zeroing in on Evergreen. It is an attack on every value that Evergreen students hold dear: community, solidarity, and free political thought. The Students for a Democratic Society will meet this attack on our community with a wall of defiance and solidarity.

We call on all students and community members to join us in our refusal to cooperate with the FBI’s attempts to disrupt our communities, force us to betray our friends, and lock us in prisons. We urge all not to underestimate the significance of these recent events; we are under attack, and to ignore this fact is to surrender to the forces attacking us. We would like to remind all that everyone at Evergreen knows radicals, activists, and anarchists, and so anyone could be chosen for the next subpoena, even if they do not consider themselves of interest to the FBI. We would also like to stress this point: the grand jury, the FBI repression, the witch-hunt are not going away—they will not pass like a bad dream. We cannot lie low, keep quiet, be good, and hope to be overlooked. Resistance is the only option.

For more information about this grand jury, to read Maddy’s statement, and for information about a bus or carpool to Seattle to support Maddy on November 7th, visit nopoliticalrepression.wordpress.com. For ideas about how to act in solidarity with Maddy and resist the grand jury witch-hunt, visit pugetsoundanarchists.org, or come to SDS meetings at 4pm every Wednesday in A2105.

We will not sit quietly while the state kidnaps our comrades and close friends and locks them in cages. Now is not the time for silence and isolation. Solidarity means Attack!

In solidarity,
The Students for a Democratic Society at The Evergreen State College

26 Oct - The Politics of Style by Mumia Abu-Jamal

Mumia Abu-Jamal continues to write columns and we've included his latest below.

MORE:

It is a bit of a struggle to look at debates these days.

I've seen plenty of 'em over the years.

So many that they seem to run together. Promises. More promises. Lies.

When all is said and done, debates are exercises in PR (public relations), and mass manipulation.

They are tools of politicians used to create images of themselves.

For the politician isn't really the ruling class; to the rich and super rich, they are servants.

There was a time when the American middle class was a protected class, kept out of the raging storms of capital abroad.

We don't live in that world anymore, thanks to the globalization system.

The U.S. middle class, with their wage and pension advantages, is now superfluous.

For the global class no longer needs a middle class; they need nothing to interfere with their profits.

That's where we are.

And no answer in any debate will change that, especially if NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement) isn't even mentioned.

26 Oct – New writing 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 most recent piece.

MORE:

random musings - october

today i started training as a laundry worker. how did this happen? and am i going to regret it?

about a week ago one of the two laundry workers, who is being sentenced to pen time soon, told me that she'd overheard guards saying i might be a good person to take her place. strange that for seven and a half months i was considered too much of a security risk to even let off of maximum, and suddenly i'm considered a good candidate for a jail job. but there it is: Vanier logic.

so...would i be interested?

i told her i'd think about it. i weighed the pros and cons.

cons

-i'm pretty busy already;

-i'm politically opposed to doing free labour for an institution i think should be abolished (this is a BIG con).

pro

-i've been wanting to write about prison labour since before my sentencing, and the best way to learn about it is to do it;

-"payment" is junk food (chocolate bar, chips and pop) and extra meal trays - which means more fruit and vegetables and the occasional cookie or muffin - which i would certainly enjoy;

-in about two months i'll be back at a full-time job. although it's a great job that i love, it's bound to entail me having to do some things i don't want to do and working on someone else's schedule. it's been awhile since i've had to deal with all that, so a jail job will help me get back into the swing of things.

i deliberated, and decided in the end that if nobody else wanted to job i'd take it. my understanding of the process was that the position would be announced, interested people would fill out an application form, and the guards would choose. that was the way it worked back on Unit 2.

apparently that's not the way it works here. as soon as the guard found out that i'd be willing to do it it wasn't even offered to anyone else. i hope nobody wanted it because just like that, within minutes, the job was mine. and within a few more minutes i was feeling distinctly uncomfortable about having agreed to it. i think i must have weighed my pros and cons on a faulty scale this time :(

people often try to justify the existence of jail jobs by saying that they give inmates something to do, that they teach a skill or offer experience that will make us more employable upon release, or that they help with life skills like punctuality, teamwork, etc. etc. maybe that's true in some cases, but it seems disingenuous to suggest that that's why prisoners are asked/forced to work. the real goal is quite simply to get work done without having to pay for it (yet another thing for the "Where Else But Jail Could You Get Away With This?" file). in this particular case the goal was obviously to find a good worker who wouldn't fuck around - not to give a deserving inmate an opportunity she could benefit from. for instance, i was told they look for a certain type of person for the laundry job: one who will do a good job, doesn't fight, and won't allow herself to be bullied. questions like "are you bored?", "would you benefit from some time away from other inmates?", "do you lack work experience?", "are you seeking parole?" don't even come into it.

anyway, for better or worse, i have a job now and today was my first training day. this is what i thought the job involved:

- go downstairs every 45 minutes or so to monitor laundry switchovers;
- wash house laundry (mop heads, blankets, clothes and bedding of people who've been released);
- fold, sort and put away clean laundry;
- exchange clothes and shoes upon request.

this is what the job really is:

- all of the above;
- sweep and mop entire basement (common areas plus hallways);
- all downstairs garbage;
- clean downstairs staff and inmate washrooms;
- sweep and mop stairs;
- wipe tables;
- set up chairs for weekend movie screenings.

oh. i see. so by "laundry worker" you meant "laundry worker, janitor, doer of random tasks." it seems i can expect to work every weekday morning for about an hour and a half, plus laundry switchovers every 45 minutes for most of the afternoon and on weekends. that seems like an awful lot of work but at least i'll get chocolate bars. . .

or will i?

as we were folding laundry one of my co-workers said "so i talked to the white shirt because Unit 4 laundry workers are the only ones who don't get paid and that's not fair." wow. this job's just looking better and better! but i plan to stick with it, to see what life as a worker is like. i'll stick with it despite the fact that it's much more

work than i thought for even less "pay" than i thought. and despite the fact that i dread telling people what i've done, how i feel dirty, that the knot in my gut is screaming SELLOUT.

october 3, 2013

the rec staff run a weight program here. every few weeks we're called to the basement one wing at a time to step on a scale that measures weight, % body fat and % hydration. if we want we can have the numbers recorded and kept on file so we can keep track of changes. it's optional, and the staff are non-judgemental, but i still feel somewhat conflicted about the whole thing.

i've never been around people who talk so much about their bodies. a lot of discussion is about getting fat, about what people are going to cut out of their diets, about how much exercise they do or should do. there's a lot of talk about how many pounds people put on in how many days when they first got to jail, or the last time they were here. trying to stay fit in the face of Vanier's Big Carb diet is a widely acknowledged challenge so on the one hand i guess it's good to keep an eye on things. but it starts to sound like something other than a healthy interest when people say things like "as soon as i know my release date i'll start starving myself." i think a lot of good could come from some changes to the menu and a portion size appropriate for women instead of men. it would reduce stress levels in here somewhat and maybe we could talk about other things once in a while.

but since i'm on the topic of food, let me tell you about the new extravagant dessert i made for a friend's last day in jail yesterday: All Bran bars (which are like big square cookies) covered with peanut butter or jam, or both, with melted Aero bar drizzled on top and sprinkled with Rice Krispies. yum.

october 4, 2012

today as i was putting my hair in a ponytail i got called to the basement. as i walked past the guards i realized i still had an elastic band dangling from my mouth and i tensed up and wondered if i'd get in shit.

please take a moment to fully appreciate how absolutely ridiculous my life is.

freedom's going to be so weird.

october 6, 2012

Thanksgiving weekend.

a poster in the rotunda invites us to a celebration to be held today or tomorrow. there will be BINGO! but remember, in order to play you must first stand up in front of everyone and give thanks. it can be a statement, a poem or a song and it must be at least 15 words.

i've been thinking about my statement ever since the poster went up about a week ago. what i know is that i have a lot to be thankful for. i'm grateful for the reminder.

october 7, 2012

it's so cold in here that one of the guards is wearing a jacket. and that's in the rotunda, which is centrally located and has no windows and hence no drafts. in our rooms, which are on either side of a long hallway that juts straight out from the building into the big, empty, windy grounds of the jail, it's freezing. sadly, we can't even get warmed up in the shower - the water's not hot. everyone is getting sick.

the constant cold, especially before bed and in the morning, provides me with more things to add to the "how Vanier is like camping" list:

- 1) really weird food combinations make sense;
- 2) i have one plastic mug. it gets used for coffee and tea, water, saved food for snacking (veggies, canned fruit, salads of all kinds), and things that need to be taken to the garbage like peanut butter containers and banana peels;
- 3) i use one piece of cutlery: a spoon. once my spoon got "lost" so i used my fingers and a toothpaste tube;
- 4) there's no dish soap, so i wash my cup and spoon with shampoo or hand soap;
- 5) reading before bed involves much shifting around to get the book in the path of the light;
- 6) i dress in layers, tucking shirt into pants and pyjama pants (long johns!) into socks;
- 7) i wear socks and sweaters to bed.

complaining to the guards about the cold is useless because they have no say in when the heat gets turned on (surely that's a workplace health and safety issue! come on OPSEU, take care of your members. . .) which apparently is on the same day every year regardless of the weather. one inmate suggested we all call the Ombuds, which made me laugh out loud. in fact i think i might have snorted, because let me tell you about the Ombuds.

there's a sign posted beside every single phone that says, in English and French:

Ombudsman Ontario

Ontario's Watchdog

The Ombudsman can help

If you have a problem with a correctional facility, the Ministry or the Ontario government AND you have been unable to resolve your problem through any other complaint avenue OR your problem is urgent and seriously affecting your health or well-being.

Contact us: call 0-800-263-1830

Monday - Friday, 9:00am to 4:30pm

Fill out an Ombudsman Inmate Complaint Form (blue letter)

visit www.ombudsman.on.ca or email info@ombudsman.on.ca

the complaint process at Vanier is basically: fill out a request form addressed to the superintendent. if you don't like the answer you get, send a letter to the Regional Director. request forms take a while to come back if they come back at all, and i wrote to the Regional Director once and got no reply. the "process" is a farce.

maybe that's why guards often suggest to us that we complain directly to the Ombuds about some of the bullshit that goes on here. i've heard them say things like the admin "needs to hear from the Ombuds or nothing with ever get done", "these are your rights, you have a right to this, you should demand it" and so on.

i've heard this kind of talk mostly in the context of yard, back on Unit 2. once on day four of not being let outside i ranted at a guard who told me "we have to let you out every day" and urged me to fill out a blue letter, i decided to call instead, assuming that that's what the toll-free number on the poster was for and that whoever picked up would give a shit.

not so.

she took down my name and institution and asked me what my complaint was. i explained the situation. she sounded annoyed.

-have you made a complaint?

-the guards told me to talk to you.

-well they should know better. that's not how it works.

-okay. . .so what are you here for?

-we only deal with problems that are an immediate threat to your health and safety.

in other words, fuck you.

needless to say, i don't have much faith in Ontario's Watchdog. as far as i'm concerned it's one more person in a position of power who couldn't care less. the less time spent dealing with any of them the better.

october 8, 2012

jackets were available for the first time this fall on the way out to yard today. it made me wonder about footwear. unlike on Unit 2, our yard is grass and there's no overhang to keep rain or snow off any part of it. i asked another inmate if they ever provide boots and was told that they only do that on Unit 3 (the medium security sentenced range).

-so our feet get soaked and we wear wet shoes all day?

(we have to wear shoes at all time when not in our rooms. no flip flops, except at night or in the shower, and no

bare feet or socks.)

-yep. or you just don't go outside.

i'm glad i won't be here over the winter.

@ @ @

i just saw my first squirrel in almost nine months!

@ @ @

they gave us a special Thanksgiving dinner. the meat-eaters got turkey ("real meat!") i got veggie patties, and we all got potatoes, stuffing and cranberry sauce. it was a huge meal, and delicious. we even got a pear! it made a nice change from apples, oranges and friday bananas. i got an extra cold tray (even though i don't officially start as a laundry worker until october 11) so i got an extra cranberry sauce which, in a stroke of genius, i added to my apple sauce. i've never seen so many people enjoy a meal here. we got a hot breakfast instead of cereal this morning, too - they really went all out. i wonder what they do for Christmas?

i should tell you about meal times because it's different here. the biggest change is that we eat in our rooms instead of around tables in the common space like on Unit 2. it works like this: some time around 11:15 and 4:15 we're sent to our rooms for the count. this is when guards go around and count the inmates on all units then report the numbers to central command. this is to make sure nobody has escaped or is lying unconscious somewhere, or whatever. once that's done we're called out of our rooms, diets first then one wing at a time. we grab our cups, head to the food trolley which is just inside the main door, take our tray from the servers (worker inmates), fill our cups with hot water from the jugs set up in the rotunda, go back to our rooms and start trading. after we've eaten we scrape out the leftovers into the garbage, place the trays outside the doors of our rooms, and wait for the loudspeaker to inform us it's pickup time. at which point we all go to our doors, pick up our trays and wait for the guard to count us and let us return them to our rooms, and wait for the loudspeaker to inform us it's pickup time. at which point we all go to our doors, pick up our trays and wait for the guard to count us and let us return them to the trolley. it's the most robotic, orchestrated thing we do here. i look down the hallway and watch everyone in identical green sweats holding identical trays fall into line on command and leave the wing in single file - i feel like i'm in an uptight boarding school or an orphanage in the 1800s or something. it's hard to explain. . .think of some of the ridiculous ways your movement was controlled in grade school. it's like that.

@ @ @

it's 7:45 pm now and C-wing is grounded.

one of the first things a guard said during our orientation to Unit 4 was "the main thing that people have trouble with up here and the number one reason people get bounced back to Unit 2 is not being able to stay in their rooms during quiet time." in fact I've never seen anyone get bounced for that, but it does seem to be a problem. the doors do lock but guards aren't allowed to lock us in because there are no toilets in the rooms. so people often leave their doors open (the doors closed rule is only enforced by certain guards) and then can't resist hanging out in the doorways and chatting. . .and then they get in shit. sometimes, like tonight, we all get in shit. you thought collective punishment was a no-no these days? Vanier didn't get the memo.

the whole quiet-time-stay-in-your-room thing is a huge source of stress for some guards. it's so silly, really. . .who cares if someone pokes their head out the door to chat? i mean really. at the same time, why's it so hard for people to go to their room and close the door? it's kind of an unspoken, perhaps not even fully conscious power struggle that often ends in the guard completely losing their composure and screaming and yelling down the hallway and imposing some overblown punishment. everyone involved ends up looking completely immature and the whole thing is far more of a disruption to the quiet than the original transgression.

still, immature or not, the guards have all the power. so i'm banished to my cell along with the rest of my wing. i'm taking the opportunity to read over my Thanksgiving statement. i didn't get a chance to share it with the folks here because i got an awesome surprise visit yesterday and missed BINGO. so i thought i'd share it with you all instead.

@ @ @

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 those with the courage and compassion to defend the land against those who would cut it down, dig it up, poison it and pave it over.

i thank 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 of their support.

26 Oct – Two books reviewed by Lynne Stewart

Two books—very different and yet with a common thread of courage. If the names do not immediately resonate with you, it is only because time and political circumstances are always changing.

MORE:

The John Carlos Story, with Dave Zirin, Haymarket Books, 2011

Veronica & the Case of Mumia Abu-Jamal as told to Valerie Jones, Xlibris, 2012

John Carlos is the man and track star who electrified us when he and Tommie Smith and Peter Norman registered their protest to the USA's denial of Black equality from the winners' podium at the 1968 Olympics in Mexico City. Veronica Jones (now deceased) is the witness to the shooting that Mumia Abu Jamal was convicted of, who came forward after lying at his trial, to clear her conscience and the record in 1995. I was struck by the fact that the two subjects, both African Americans, of these books were so different in outlook and upbringing but who in the crunch elected to stand up. Both suffered afterward for their acts of courage and that is an important part of these stories as well.

Veronica was raised by her mother and ended up in Camden, New Jersey, a dying industrial town across the river from Philadelphia. The mother of three daughters by the time she was 18, she found herself hanging out in the seamy side of Central City Philly with a group of women who earned money by turning tricks. She also became part of the "life" and so found herself on December 9, 1981, in proximity to the spot where Officer Faulkner was murdered. Interviewed by Police subsequently, she said that what she saw were two black men, that she thought she recognized as "vendors" (street sellers) jogging away from the scene after she had heard three shots at the location.

I know from my professional experience, as a defense lawyer who has handled a goodly number of such cases, that cop shootings are "different". This is especially true if it is a white cop and it is a Black/Revolutionary person who has been chosen to take the rap. The rabid intensity of the police and prosecutorial investigators to "get" the person who they have agreed upon as the "Perp" is unparalleled. Like sharks at a feeding frenzy, they descend upon the potential witnesses and twist and tailor their testimony to fit their official version. They make untoward promises and if that doesn't work, they resort to intimidation. The "Blue Line" of silence of the fraternity of police is invoked.

Veronica tells us first how her first interview conformed with what she saw that December night. Thereafter, while arrested on what was undoubtedly a weak if not non-existent case of accessory to Armed Robbery, she is visited by detectives at the jail who threaten her with double digit jail terms and worse—separation from her

children. When she, without any preparation by either defense or district attorney is brought directly from her cell in jail clothes to the court—she believes she is going for her own case. When she gets there, easily intimidated, this 20 year old testified that she had not seen two black men running away from the scene. She admirably, would not finger Mumia as even being there. We will never know the impact of her lack of testimony on the jury but we know the result of that trial—Mumia was convicted and he has been fighting back ever since.

Veronica's charges were subsequently dismissed and she wasted no time disappearing. Only through the untiring efforts of Rachel Wolkenstein, a lawyer on Mumia's defense team and her investigators was she discovered in time for the 1996 PCRA hearing. By this time, she had made up her mind to clear the record of her previous lack of truth and she did so only to have an old warrant enable the District Attorney to have her arrested by New Jersey State Troopers while she was still on the witness stand.

Her outrage and pain at this, reflected in her book, is indicative of a fundamental difference between her and John Carlos. While both were born into and raised in the Black community, Veronica Jones never “got it”, the fundamental understanding that in this United States there was and is an enemy and that enemy, white police and their Black toadies is unrelenting. They must always be viewed as totally without scruple where Black people are concerned, and even more so when a white cop was alleged to have been killed by a Black revolutionary like Mumia. Her book made me sympathize with this street-smart but hopelessly naive girl/woman who ultimately found the strength to tell the truth and then become a supporter of Mumia and MOVE.

John Carlos was a man of the same color but who had race consciousness stamped into his genes. Growing up in Harlem of the '50s and '60s his book tells the story of a young resister who from his exploits as a would-be Robin Hood taking cartons off the freight trains in the Bronx and distributing them to the people back home in Harlem, his devoted attachment to Malcolm X, his political confrontations with the power structure over minor but telling obstacles (bugs in the trees, food served in his cafeteria) he was always AWARE. Marrying while still in high school, he went to Texas on a track scholarship and learns the bitterness of living in a southern (Texas) society where racial inferiority is a given and permeates even the utopia of competitive athletes.

It was at that time that there began the rumblings of an Olympic Boycott by Black athletes of the 1968 Games in Mexico City. In the organizing for that, John met with the later, and more militant metamorphosis of Martin Luther King who was willing to support the boycott and coined for him the idea that we go out to fight not only for ourselves but for the people who can't fight and those who won't fight. John Carlos also accurately portrays the racist control by Avery Brundage, the Chairman of the US Olympic committee and the threat that was implicit for any athlete that might dare to participate. Ultimately the boycott was abandoned but when so confronted, (as have been so many of us activists by thwarted plans,) John Carlos KNEW he had to do something and enlisting his teammate Tommie Smith, they knew after finishing first and second in the popular 200 meter run, that they would have the victors' podium to showcase their resistance to the treatment of Black people in the United States. They appeared barefoot to symbolize the poverty and with beads around their necks to echo the African ancestry. They donned the black gloves and raised their fists and bowed their heads during the Anthem. It was a moment of history! It electrified all of us back in the day when struggle was an everyday, recurring dedication and confrontation.

27 Oct – 4strugglemag Issue 21 is online

At long last, issue 21 of 4strugglemag is online! Read the introduction from editor Jaan Laaman below, and check out the rest of the articles at 4strugglemag.org

MORE:

Welcome to 4sm, issue 21. We are very glad to finally get this issue out, in Fall 2012. I know a lot of readers, friends and activists have been wondering what happened to 4strugglemag? This is the first issue we are putting out in 2012. It is a combined Summer and Fall issue. Normally 4sm comes out three times a year (March, July/August, November). This is the first time we have had to combine two issues into one.

Some people may have been wondering about my ability to continue working on 4sm, after the death of my son

last October. Without any doubt, the death of Rick was and continues to be the hardest reality in my life. This was not the reason for the delay in issue 21. We have had medical and personal problems with key outside people. A valued precious sister (Sara), who does so much to make 4sm a reality, seriously broke her arm in a bicycle accident earlier this year.

Some material in this issue covers events from earlier in the year, but all of it remains important and pertinent. Regular readers know that 4sm always runs a section on Black August in our summer issue. Because 21 is coming out so late this summer, there is no usual Black August section. We are running some significant insight and analysis, by Mumia Abu Jamal, George Jackson and his nephew Jonathan Jackson Jr., about the events of August 7, 1970 (the Marin Courthouse Raid and the deaths of Jonathan Jackson and others on that day).

Also, because of the late arrival of this issue, we are not helping to announce and organize this year's Running Down the Walls, which takes place on September 2. We do want people who participated in RDTW, both inside prisons and out in cities across the country, to send us words and photos of your run. We will use some of this material in the next issue.

There are many other important and informative articles in this issue. Definitely check out the reports on Occupy. Also check out the lengthy section on prisons. Finally take time to read David Gilbert's letter, calling for discussion and action around the issue of sexist and male chauvinist attitudes and behavior in activist and radical communities. This is a serious and ongoing problem and 4sm hopes many readers will respond and begin a discussion on this.

We welcome our readers' thoughts and responses to everything in 4sm. Send us your thoughts and best writing. Issue 22 will be out in the winter. And yes, there is another election coming up in the United States in November. The Republicans seem to be more reactionary and backwards than ever. Certainly Mitt Romney is a shameless member and advocate for the corporate imperialist 1% elite. He also would be a horror for prisoners. I was in Walpole state prison in Massachusetts when he was Governor, and I can tell you from personal experience, the Mass DOC got even worse under his rule. As for Obama and the Democrats, more war, more secrecy, more drone attacks and little real help for all the rest of us – unemployed, underemployed, still losing homes, mounting college loans and other bills, and well over 2 million people in prison. One thing is for sure, no Washington politician will secure a better future for the vast majority of the people. Both imperialist parties – Republicans and Democrats – have no plan or intention to change the inherently unequal, unjust, racist and warlike USA capitalist imperialist system. It is time for more activism on all levels – more unity and more direct action and participation of the people. Some time tested slogans seem appropriate and called for now:

Black and white, unite and fight...Less talk, more action...

All Power to the People!

On that thought, we'll see you in issue 22.

Jaan Laaman, editor

27 Oct – Omaha 2 Update and Action for Mondo We Langa

As we mentioned last time, former United States Attorney General Ramsey Clark called for the immediate release of the Omaha Two on Thursday, October 11th, in a phone interview with the Omaha World-Herald. Since then he has visited the two and again called for their release. Also, one of the Two, Mondo We Langa, needs calls to be made in order for him to get adequate medical care for a breathing condition called COPD. Information on who to call is below as well.

MORE:

Former Attorney General Ramsey Clark recently visited the [Omaha Two](#), [Ed Poindexter](#) and [Mondo we Langa](#) (formerly David Rice) at the Nebraska State Penitentiary in Lincoln before speaking about their cases in Omaha the next day. The [Omaha Reader](#) covered the event which was ignored by the other Omaha news media.

The Omaha Two were convicted in 1971 for the bombing murder of an Omaha policeman but continue to maintain their innocence. Both men were leaders of the Black Panther affiliate National Committee to Combat

Fascism in Omaha and targets of J. Edgar Hoover's clandestine counterintelligence program code-named [COINTELPRO](#).

[J. Edgar Hoover](#) operated a secret nation-wide program from 1956 until 1971 directed at groups and individuals Hoover considered subversive. COINTELPRO dirty tricks were directed at political activists by a cadre of FBI Special Agents. The Black Panther Party was Hoover's number one target with lethal ferocity.

In the Omaha Two case, J. Edgar Hoover ordered the FBI Crime Laboratory director, Ivan Willard Conrad, to withhold information about the identity of the 911 caller who lured Patrolman Larry D. Minard, Sr. to his death in a vacant house. Omaha police had sent a recording of the 911 caller who falsely reported a woman screaming to the FBI for identification analysis. Hoover ordered Conrad to not prepare a formal report, which could be used as evidence, and instead telephone the results to Paul Young the Special Agent-in-Charge of the Omaha FBI office.

Hoover's plan worked and the jury that convicted Ed Poindexter and Mondo we Langa never got to hear the voice of the deadly caller.

"I think these two men are certainly innocent of the acts for which they've been accused and by our system convicted," Clark told a crowd at the Malcolm X Center in Omaha. "Police investigation is always important for the public to survey carefully. Its' where our human rights are protected or violated."

Clark went on to praise both men for their intellectual accomplishments and ability to stay strong under the circumstances. "If you could see them, you would be inspired....They are our hope." Clark called the men, "uncrushable" and "valuable citizens."

Ramsey Clark was Attorney General during J. Edgar Hoover's long tenure as director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and unwittingly launched the Ghetto Informant Program on September 14, 1967 by telling Hoover to improve his intelligence about the rioting in major cities. Hoover kept COINTELPRO's misdeeds from all the Attorney Generals he served under, including Clark. As a result, Clark has followed the Omaha Two case over the years although this was his first trip to the Nebraska State Penitentiary.

Call the Warden for Mondo We Langa

Some of you know that the Nebraska State Penn has been on lock down for a few months, and that Mondo told the Nebraska Jericho office that he felt the lock down was undermining the health of the older inmates. For the first time in 30 years he mentioned to me that he had been repeatedly going to the infirmary.

I arrived in Nebraska last evening only to learn that Mondo is in the prison hospital unable to breathe with a breathing disorder called copd. They say he hasn't slept in days. Only one person from the outside has seen him since he has been in the prison hospital. She is Mary Dickenson, a member of the local defense committee. She said a prison guard stood too close by for him to speak freely. I spoke to his attorney Tim Ashford late this afternoon, who will demand to see him on Monday.

Please call the warden and demand Mondo's transfer to a regular hospital outside of the prison (the prison is notorious for horrible care).

Warden is: Diane Sabatka-rine 402.471.3161 or 402.479.3216. Diane.sabatka-rine@nebraska.gov

29 Oct - A Conversation about Entitlements and Agitations in a Provincial Prison 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:

Recently while we were enduring yet another lock-down at the Central North Correctional Centre (CNCC), one of the most decent guards here came to the door of my cell. "Let's go for a walk," they said. I was taken to a room with all three of the guards that were on duty. "Don't worry," one of them reassured me, "we are not here to gang up on you," they claimed.

Based on the conversation I had with them it seems that the guards don't appreciate it when they receive messages to the staff who are screening my mail, in the margins of the letters written to me, even when those messages are no more than requests for information about the mail policies here. I told them that while I do understand the need for security protocols, most people will not like knowing their personal correspondence is being read by security. It is just a little too Orwellian for some.

It would seem that the guards don't like the pen-pal project that we have been working to establish between prisons at the CNCC and the Vanier Centre for Women. Apparently, they tell me, some of the prisoners here are "pretty bad guys" (and therefore must not receive any mail one must suppose).

And it seems the guards do not appreciate when I try to bring arguments about policy directly to prison management; for example when I ask to talk to managers about the "arbitrary application of rules here."

And it seems they also don't like it when people call into the facility to ask questions about policy and practices; like why are we locked out of our own cells all day now, or questions about mail delivery, or about books. As one of them explained, as far as they are concerned with regards to what happens inside this place "frankly it's none of the public's business." They may even believe that. However it is indeed the "public's business" because "the public" is in fact complicit in everything that happens here. But while the guards may not like it when prisoners and the public create pressure for more dignified and less indecent treatment in these places, whether they like it or not, it seems to work. I guess that's why they decided it was time for a conversation – in an attempt to make it stop.

—

Since the beginning of my prison sentence I have been working to secure access to books for prisoners locked away in these warehouses. And since I started taking this on there has been some change (in large part I think because of pressure implemented by friends and family, from community agencies and through media). While the situation has improved – it is still far from good enough – there are actually more severe problems here. There is a gradual erosion of living standards for imprisoned people, which will only continue to decline as austerity measures cut per-prisoner spending (which includes even more chronic understaffing). There is also the more fundamental problem that such institutions exist in the first place.

I was going to write a fourth instalment of [No Books for Prisoners](#) detailing the success and ongoing struggles to regularize access to books here and at other provincial prisons and I will include some updates on that. But I feel that talking about attempts to silence dissent and halt organizing are both more subversive to, and a better window on, the oppressive nature that operates in these places.

Now most of the "agitation" I have undertaken while I have been in prison fits into a box appropriately labeled "reformist." It has been fighting for access – predominantly a 'rights' and 'entitlement' discourse. While it may intuitively seem to the contrary, there is very little opportunity for insurrectionary action that is in any way sustainable or radical organizing that is in any way structural. The options one might find in longer term incarceratory facilities simply do not exist here. I have been doing what I can based on the duration I expect to be here and given what can plausibly be accomplished. But I want to recognize and name theoretical caveats.

First I want to name that the notion of "entitlement" is a corner stone of privilege and not something I would want to ideologically reinforce. Second, the notion of "rights", I find inherently implies a central authority that must grant or recognize individual or collective "rights."

In theory I prefer moving from a concept of rights to one of responsibilities. One thing this concept does is to frame the egregiousness of imprisonment less as an infringement of our state-sanctioned rights and more as a denial of our ability to fulfill our responsibilities to our communities. But while it is a form of a resistance in here for us to find ways to continue to fulfill human responsibilities, because of the nature of these institutions, one of those responsibilities is to fight for the recognition of "rights for prisoners", and this is the primary means by which one can improve the material conditions for others in these places.

—

It would seem that some of the low level agitation I have been engaging in has been somewhat effective. The

fact that they want it all to stop attests to that.

I was told by the guards that it is not actually in prisoners' best interests to have practices implemented in accordance with policy here. For example, it turns out we are only "entitled" to 20 minutes of yard-time a day as opposed to the 45 – 60 we are typically afforded. We are also not "entitled" to put pictures up in our cells or to make weights (for exercising) from stacks of old magazines or use pop bottles (ordered from canteen) to drink water out of. They suggested that if I continue agitating, all this will be taken away from everyone and inmates would know that I was to blame – the guards knowing and acknowledging that would put my health and safety in jeopardy.

Now I've never been one to worry much about my own personal safety, however, the reason I am telling this story instead of advocating or agitating further against the "arbitrary application of rules," or for things that we are or should be "entitled to," is because it is clear to me that there is not a sentiment amongst inmates that we are willing to risk "privileges" (weight bags and yard time) in a fight for "rights" and "entitlements" (let alone over library access and mail policy). Writing this piece seems like an appropriate compromise for now.

For the first three months I was locked up on this sentence, I did not see a library cart come to any range on any unit in either of the prisons in which I was held. This has now changed. Here at the CNCC, on Unit 5 the book cart has now come around 3 times in the past 6 weeks. Additionally, I have become able to receive books sent in from the outside delivered to me with almost no delay now. This is not insignificant. That said, I cannot also say that the same rights have been extended to other prisoners here. Similarly, I have heard that other units do not enjoy the same access to library books that we have achieved.

Last month several guys were transferred to our range from the Toronto West Detention Center (TWDC) in Rexdale, where I was held when I wrote the initial instalment of [No Books for Prisoners](#). They tell me that almost immediately after I was shipped out – which (perhaps coincidentally) happened just after I wrote my piece, as well as a letter to the superintendent there – the library cart at the West finally started moving again. Now at the TWDC books come to the ranges regularly and the jail no longer prevents prisoners from receiving books sent from the outside.

Despite the fact that, as I reported in [No Books for Prisoners – Part 3](#), the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services refused to fund a paid part-time librarian there. The jail has since brought on a volunteer to fill that role.

Here not only is there access to a library – at the West it is just a closet with books in it or so I have heard – but I have actually been there too (once) and found myself pleasantly surprised by both the quantity and quality of books (in contrast to what I have been led to expect by some other people imprisoned here). I came back with books by Rohinton Mistry, Isabel Allende and Jean-Paul Sartre.

Despite all this though, what really stands out as exceptional, is the fact that only prisoners enrolled in the education program here – run by the Simcoe county board of education, not the prison – are allowed to go to the library ever. I would have thought that (from any political prospective) people not taking classes would be those that a so-called correctional center would be most interested in encouraging to read.

There is allegedly a literacy program here too, supposedly run by volunteers, however neither I nor anyone else I have spoken to have ever seen any sign of this program ever running.

In my recent conversation with the guards one of them mentioned that from their vantage point I've "won" the fight for access to books. But while the cart is moving well again on our unit, and I am able to get books sent in, and I've been "hired" as the unit librarian, there is nothing to say that other prisoners or other units have the same access. There is nothing to say that any of this change has been regularized by the prison (and I should note that would be something out of the hands of the guards on our unit anyway).

At first when I was writing the piece that was to be called No Books for Prisoners – Part 4, I was going to encourage people to call the prison en-masse to put pressure on the institution to regularize access to books for

all people imprisoned here. But after the threat was made to take away things that prisoners care more about than books, I have decided not to publicize the phone number.

That conversation with the guards was not as mean-spirited as I may have made it sound. Actually, it was quite cordial. There were even points of agreement. I want to suggest that the guards are not the problem. A couple of them are quite nice and friendly to me, and most of them are fair and relatively respectful and professional. The problem – what is undignified, indecent and oppressive – is the system, the structure, and the role in which they are employed. I do not have a personal grudge against any of the guards who partook in this conversation. But I cannot allow that to be a reason not to speak about it.

One thing the guards were correct about is that what we are technically “entitled to” according to the Ministry of Correctional Services Act in many cases is even less than that which we are afforded in practice. One thing on which we were in agreement is that the “rights” of provincial prisoners are minimal when compared to those of federal inmates. It is as if we have an entirely different and sub-standard set of “human rights” here.

After that conversation I decided that instead of encouraging people to call this facility (in case the guards were not bluffing) I would instead encourage people to direct inquiries and complaints to the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services, [Madeleine Meilleur](#), or to their local MPP (at least for people who believe in doing such things – others, as always, I’d encourage to do as they see fit). I was going to suggest that people ask why it is that provincial prisoners are not “entitled” to the same basic “rights” as federal inmates. However now that provincial parliament has been prorogued, I’m not certain there will be anyone in MPP administrative offices to talk to. So much for democracy.

—

For my part my next post is going to be based on a roundtable I’m conducting with several convicts who have much more experience in the incarceration system than I have. It will be about differences between conditions in federal and provincial prisons. Maybe by then I’ll even have been able to get access to the Ministry of Correctional Services Act – the legislation that governs this place – so I can compare it to the Canada Correction Act, which governs federal Institutions. Over a month ago I made a formal request to see it, but of course to no avail. After all, this place is just a warehouse, why should I be “entitled” to see the rules?

Now all this talk of entitlement, rights and rules is, as I have suggested, somewhat antithetical to much of what I believe about (anti) prison politics and political resistance in general. I have a tremendous amount of respect for abolitionist perspectives and those who advocate the destruction of the prison system. However I firmly insist that we have a superseding responsibility to support and to struggle for better material conditions for those ensnared by a system that we have thus far not abolished or fundamentally and radically altered. Sometimes that means engaging with the system, compromising and fighting for reforms, which does not negate revolutionary struggle for more radical goals.

POSTSCRIPT: The pen-pal project we have been working on is something that already exists as a program run by the institutions in the federal system. I’d like to suggest that while the mentality fostered amongst the staff here tells them that the people imprisoned in this place do not deserve mail – that mentality being one of the fundamental problematics of the provincial system – what is in fact at the root of it, is that they do not want us to self-determine the terms of, and organize for, our own needs. This system does not want us to recreate a service that we might otherwise depend on them for. They need us to be dependent because that is a big factor in how they control us. And this is a microcosm of State and otherwise centralized power and authority more generally too.

But we can provide for ourselves, even in here, we can still find ways to be independent of their system, and to self-determine the terms for provision of our own needs. After they do not grant me parole, I will seek more opportunities for this kind of radical organizing inside this prison warehouse system.

30 Oct - Tim DeChristopher Released to a Halfway House

Tim DeChristopher has safely arrived at a halfway house in Salt Lake City, UT where he will serve out the remainder of his two year sentence.

MORE:

Contrary to recent media reports, DeChristopher has not been “released” and remains an inmate of the Bureau of Prisons (BOP) until April 21, 2013.

As a federal inmate, DeChristopher cannot speak to media, and is not allowed visitors or media on the property of the halfway house without permission from the BOP. We ask that media and supporters of DeChristopher respect these guidelines and contact Dylan Rose Schneider to submit media or visitation requests.

1 Nov - Two Charged with Felonies for Disrupting Keystone XL Pipeline Construction from Trees

Two young women from New England who attempted to start a second tree blockade to stop TransCanada’s construction of the Keystone XL pipeline were arrested on November 1st and have been charged with felonies.

MORE:

As this blog [reported](#) yesterday, in Sacul, Texas, Pika of Vermont and Lauren of New Hampshire climbed up onto platforms in trees to halt construction near a highway crossing. Tar Sands Blockade media spokesperson Ron Seifert told *Firedoglake* heavy machinery was in the area to destroy the forest and cut a path for the pipeline. The Blockade tied ropes to the heavy machinery. The ropes went up into the trees and over big tree branches. Hanging from the ropes were platforms for Pika and Lauren. That was how they would disrupt construction.

Six sheriffs immediately showed up to the newly launched tree blockade. The Tar Sands Blockade reported they were there “inspecting” the “rigging of tree sits, taking pictures, and making phone calls.” Then, the situation calmed in the afternoon, as police and all but one worker left only to return in the evening with cherry pickers to cut Pika and Lauren down from the trees.

Lauren was removed about an hour later. She was booked and charged with “Fourth Degree (State) Felony Criminal Mischief, Class A Misdemeanor Resisting Arrest, and Class B Misdemeanor Criminal Trespass.” Pika, however, escaped the cherry pickers for the moment by climbing higher in the tree.

Police responded by cutting her platform and climb line. She was left alone with a rope on a limb seventy feet in the air and her experience as a climber.

Law enforcement did not leave. They turned on “noisy generator-powered flood lights” that the Blockade said were for “sleep deprivation. While this happened, a few supporters of Pika stood by.

Pika amazingly climbed up in her tree higher than the cherry picker could reach. In response, police cut her platform and climb line from her tree and retreated the cherry picker, leaving her in the tree with just the rope she has on her person and her resourcefulness. She’s currently on a limb about 70 feet in the air, chillin.

Law enforcement hasn’t left the scene, and they are there with noisy, generator-powered flood lights to induce sleep deprivation. Pika’s supporters haven’t left the scene entirely, either. Four Tar Sands Blockade supporters will be holding vigil for her through the night.

From her perch at 10:30 pm, she sent this message, which the Blockade posted:

I’m sitting in this pine tree under flood lights and the watchful eyes of cops, just thinking about all the implications of this pipeline and that the destruction I see 70 feet below me is just one tiny part. I feel grief, but I also feel strong!

I don’t have any food or water. I couldn’t get it high enough quickly enough, so the cops cut it down.

It’s starting to get a little chilly.

Thanks so much for all the amazing support!!

A couple hours later, she came down because she had no food, water or warm clothing. She was arrested immediately and charged with “Fourth Degree (State) Felony Criminal Mischief and Class B Misdemeanor Criminal Trespass minus the Class A Misdemeanor Resisting Arrest charge.”

The both appeared in court today. Pika's bail was set at \$11,500 while Lauren's was set at \$14,000. (The Blockade has put up a page to collect donations for [their bail](#).)

TransCanada has abused eminent domain to coerce and intimidate land owners into signing contracts to hand over their property for this pipeline. Some property owners were told if they did not sign and take some money for their property TransCanada would still take their property and they would simply get zero dollars for their property.

One land owner, Susan Scott, described on "Democracy Now!" how she was threatened with an eminent domain lawsuit and [forced into signing away](#) property to TransCanada:

...I didn't want my pristine forest messed up, screwed up, whatever you want to call it. Didn't want it—didn't want it touched. And so, I held them off for two years. And then he told me that they had eminent domain. And now, then, it's become an unselfish thing, when I really found out what they was fixing to put through there. It's going to ruin our water system. It's going to take away everything that we've worked for. And from the very beginning, they never told me the truth. And I just watched a thing on TV about *Geraldo at Large* the other night, and he was talking about it, and it was pretty bad.

And I feel like that our constitutional rights have been just wiped completely away, that we don't have any more. I feel like that the government has bailed on us, and I told that openly. And I wrote the president and all the commissioners and whoever else, and their response was to pass the buck to somebody else. And I don't know what else I can say other than that. I've always said I didn't want them. And, yes, I did take the money, because they said they were taking my land anyway...

This [excellent post](#) by a former tree sitter on the police TransCanada are paying to protect their project from activists shows they are there to arbitrarily enforce the law in ways intended to suppress assembly and speech:

As a telling example, when I was immediately handcuffed after descending from my tree last week, **the arresting officer was unable to tell me what I was being arrested for because apparently he had "not been told yet."** Why then, you may ask, was I arrested by default? If an actual crime had been committed perhaps it would not be necessary to wait for an order to manufacture one. I spent the next 20 minutes listening to armed, camo-clad officers attempting to contact TC higher-ups and ask for further orders. At first my handcuffs were removed and I was told by the county sheriff that I would be able to leave the site without arrest if I promised not to return, but this changed quickly after phone contact with TransCanada was made. **They insisted that the police re-arrest and charge me for "criminal trespassing" and they obliged without hesitation.**

After I criticized their cozy relationship with the Canadian corporation destroying their own community, **they responded by saying that they could just as easily give me a felony "Possession of a Criminal Instrument" charge (for "possessing" a tree sit apparently) and that I should feel lucky and keep my mouth shut.** The subjective and arbitrary application of the law that was tailored to fit the interests of this industry sickened me. The arresting officer then forced me to give my full name and address to him which was then written on a business card and handed to two men in TC helmets who had been collecting names and video and of us for the ongoing SLAPP lawsuit; **my private information was collected on their behalf by armed officers so that this corporation could sue me for protecting land they wish to destroy.** [emphasis added]

As young men and women continue to boldly confront TransCanada, the reality is there is no accountability for punishment for the multinational corporation that is trampling over the rights of citizens and improperly seizing up property for their toxic oil pipeline project. On the other hand, those climb into trees are risking the possibility of being charged felonies, something intended to have a chilling effect on those who would consider challenging TransCanada.

UPDATE – 6:22 PM EST Lauren released. Waiting on Pika to be released.

UPDATE 2 – 6:50 PM EST KXL Blockade Twitter account now reporting "Pika just walked barefoot out of jail! The police kept her shoes (& the rest of her and Lauren's stuff)."

4 Nov - Resister Turns Cooperating Witness in Grand Jury Investigation of 2008 UCSC Firebombings
According to IndyBay.org, the government has secured the cooperation of a reluctant witness in a grand jury investigation of two 2008 arsons targeting faculty members at UC Santa Cruz.

MORE:

The witness had earlier invoked her Fifth Amendment rights, but agreed to testify after being threatened with contempt charges, according to the report.

Early in the morning of August 2, 2008, a firebomb exploded on the front porch of the home of UC Santa Cruz molecular biologist David Feldheim, forcing his family to escape by ladder out of a second story window. Around the same time, a Volvo station wagon belonging to another UCSC scientist was firebombed on a campus driveway.

Federal investigators and university administrators immediately pointed to animal rights activists as suspects in the crimes. Feldheim conducted experiments on live mice as part of his research on brain development, and was one of 13 vivisectionists whose pictures, names and addresses appeared in a leaflet created by a local animal rights group shortly before the attacks, accompanied by a message that read, “Animal abusers everywhere beware; we know where you live; we know where you work; we will never back down until you end your abuse.” The leaflet was posted on the bulletin board of a local café.

But neither the Animal Liberation Front nor any other animal rights group issued a communiqué claiming responsibility for the arsons, as is their usual method.

The ALF engages in illegal property destruction to protest animal abuse and to rescue animals from vivisection, slaughter, fur farming and other forms of industrial animal exploitation. However, [historically](#) ALF activists in the United States have followed [guidelines](#) requiring them “to take all necessary precautions against harming any animal, human and non-human,” and no ALF member has ever been prosecuted in the U.S. for attacking a human being.

The owner of the bombed vehicle was not among the 13 vivisectionists that appeared on the leaflet, and may not have even been an animal researcher, according to an [ALF news site](#), further complicating the FBI’s theory of a connection between the arsons and the animal rights movement.

Having failed to identify and arrest any direct participant in the crimes, federal prosecutors brought indictments in 2009 against four local animal rights activists for violating the [Animal Enterprise Terrorism Act](#), which classifies hitherto constitutionally-protected speech activities as “terrorism” when used in campaigns against animal exploitation-based industries (the constitutionality of the law is currently being challenged in court). The four indictees were charged as terrorists for [engaging](#) in First Amendment activities such as chanting, marching, chalking sidewalks, and creating and distributing the leaflet with Feldheim’s personal information on it.

In 2010, the indictments were [thrown out](#) by a district court judge for their lack of specificity.

The government is apparently enjoying some measure of success this time around by leveraging the grand jury system, which is routinely used by prosecutors and investigators to extract incriminating testimony from activists who have not been charged with any crime. Under the grand jury system, individuals can be subpoenaed as witnesses and forced to testify against their friends and fellow activists under threat of imprisonment.

[Recently](#), a Seattle court jailed three anarchists in order to coerce testimony in a grand jury investigation (or, as likely, a fishing expedition) into vandalism at a May Day protest. One of the three prisoners, Leah-Lynn Plante, was released less than a week later, after reportedly [cooperating](#) with the investigation.

5 Nov - Would-be bridge-bomber testifies against three former co-defendants

One of the Cleveland 5 turned on his former co-defendants Monday, accusing them of plotting to obtain explosives months before they teamed up with a confidential FBI informant.

MORE:

Anthony Hayne, 35, of Cleveland recalled that one of the would-be bombers, Douglas Wright, had talked about blowing up buildings with plastic explosives more than a year ago. Hayne also said he discussed bombs with Wright and two of the other men last November — but not with the confidential informant.

Hayne’s brief testimony came during a five-hour hearing in U.S. District Court and conflicted with the assertions

of defense lawyers that the other would-be bombers had been seduced by the paid FBI informant.

"Clearly, there was only one leader in this group," defense lawyer Anthony Vegh said, referring to the confidential informant, whose identity has not yet been made public.

Vegh and others contend the informant plied the other men with money, jobs, food, free housing and drugs, and prodded them to blow up the Ohio 82 bridge against their better judgment.

Defense attorneys asked U.S. District Judge David Dowd Jr. on Monday to have mercy when he sentences the self-proclaimed anarchists: Brandon Baxter, 20, of Lakewood, Connor Stevens, 20, of Berea, and Wright, 26, of Indianapolis.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Duncan Brown asked Hayne what the men hoped to accomplish by blowing up the bridge that spans the Cuyahoga Valley National Park, linking Brecksville and Sagamore Hills Township.

"To stop the transportation of the 1 percent," Hayne responded, referring to the richest and most powerful corporate titans in the United States, and the focus of the Occupy Cleveland movement where the suspects met.

Federal prosecutors have described the men as domestic terrorists. All have pleaded guilty to conspiring to use a weapon of mass destruction in an attempt to destroy a bridge carrying interstate commerce.

They could face prison terms of up to 20 years. Dowd has scheduled sentencing for Nov. 19.

A fifth defendant, Joshua Stafford, 23, of Cleveland, is being screened to determine his mental competency.

FBI agents reported that they foiled the bombing plot in April with the help of an informant, who secretly recorded conversations with the five men, and by using an undercover agent to supply the would-be bridge-bombers with fake plastic explosives. Agents arrested the five men on April 30 as they tried to detonate the phony explosives with a cell phone.

Defense attorneys for Wright, Stevens and Baxter argued that their clients originally plotted harmless pranks, such as lighting smoke bombs and toppling bank signs from atop downtown Cleveland buildings, to deliver their anti-corporate message.

They all blamed the confidential FBI informant for taking advantage of the naive idealists, and of urging them to use explosives.

"These were just a bunch of kids who were easily manipulated and vulnerable," said Terry Gilbert, who is defending Stevens.

But prosecutors challenged that claim with Stevens' own words, captured by a wiretap as they fled the national park April 30.

"We just committed the biggest act of terrorism in Cleveland since (the race riots) in the '60s," Stevens said.

Wright was recorded acknowledging the potential dangers the five faced.

"If we get caught we're going to Guantanamo Bay," Wright said, referring to the U.S. prison for terrorists in Cuba. "We're going away forever."

6 Nov – Support Jordan Halliday

Some folks from Utah are selling t-shirts to help benefit local former political prisoner Jordan Halliday. We're really excited to see prisoner support extend beyond when a comrade is released. Too often, when someone gets out, it's presumed that they don't need further support. Rarely is that the case. We hope the folks in Salt Lake City help usher in a new trend in support work.

MORE:

There is an etsy account set up with all the proceeds going to help pay off remaining legal fees and just help him out in general. The shirts are only \$12 and have a variety of political messages and designs. Please visit the site and pass the word on. <http://www.etsy.com/shop/resistancearmy#>

6 Nov - Portland police arrest suspect in incendiary attack on police cruiser

A comrade in Portland, Oregon has been arrested for allegedly throwing a molotov cocktail at a cop car. We've included a corporate news story as well as how to help and the support site for Sergey.

MORE:

WePay set up for legal support at <https://www.wepay.com/donations/free-sergey>
New support blog at freesergey.blogspot.com

Portland Police have a suspect in custody they said threw a molotov cocktail at a police car early Monday morning as he rode past a precinct parking lot on a bicycle.

Sergey Yefimovich Turzhanskiy, 24, was arrested just after 1:30 a.m. after police said he threw a fire bomb at an unoccupied police cruiser parked in the North Precinct parking lot in the 400 block of NE Emerson Street.

Sgt. Andrew Edgecomb with Portland Police said several officers were coming into the precinct at the end of their shift when they heard a noise and a neighbor called out that someone was trying to firebomb one of the cars.

Turzhanskiy was apprehended a few blocks away by officers who chased him, Edgecomb said, and fire crews quickly put out the flames.

There was "minimal" damage to a police car, he said.

Police said Turzhanskiy is charged with attempted arson, possession of a destructive device, attempt to elude, criminal mischief, disorderly conduct and obstructing governmental administration.

Arson investigators with Portland Fire and Rescue are also looking into the incident. Turzhanskiy is due in court on Tuesday, according to police.

Edgecomb said so far he has no idea what the motive was behind the incident.

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

15 Nov - Free Russell Maroon Shoatz Benefit with Fred Ho

WHAT: Jazz and Poetry benefit for Maroon Shoatz

WHEN: 7:00-9:00pm, Thursday, November 15th

WHERE: St. Mary's Church - 521 West 126th Street (between Old Broadway & Amsterdam Avenue)

COST: Bring your wallet!

MORE:

Dear Friends:

As 2012 nears its completion, I continue to wage war against stage 4b metastatic cancer. There have been many physical losses and tolls, but I continue to work on my mission: To do the politics and music/art that no one else can or will do! In that mission, I am inviting you to do events in which I am performing (I have severely cut back on my public engagements):

November 15 Benefit and Program to Free the Political Prisoner Russell Maroon Shoatz, in my opinion, one of the most innovative revolutionary thinkers and committed liberation leader. He has been incarcerated for more than 30 years, the majority of which he has been tortured and kept in solitary confinement for his leadership in organizing prisoners and for his steadfastness.

He has been an inspiration and a friend to me. I am performing with a fabulous group of saxophonists: James Carter, Bhinda Keidel and Darius Jones. Amiri Baraka is also an invited special guest poet.

At this event as well as the following evening, Friday, November 16, I'll be premiering a new work for baritone sax (me) and cellist Seth Woods, entitled BURNING SISTER! THE FIRE THIS TIME, PREPARE FOR THE MATRIARCHAL REVOLUTION!

Please come out!

Love, Fred Ho