



POST OFFICE BOX 110034 BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11211

Updates for June 25th

11 Jun – Compassion Co. to donate profits to NYC ABC

Compassion Company, a vegan owned and operated t-shirt vendor, donates five percent of its profits to organizations it likes on a three month rotating basis. From June through August, they've decided to give that money to NYC ABC. Needless to say, we appreciate this gesture...

MORE:

June 11th is the international day of solidarity with Marie Mason, Eric McDavid and other long term anarchist prisoners. We are happy to announce to that 5% of each sale from June 1st to August 31st will be donated to the NYC Anarchist Black Cross, a collective focused on supporting US-held political prisoners and prisoners of war and opposing state repression against revolutionary social justice movements. <http://compassionco.com>

11 Jun - New writing by and update on Mumia Abu-Jamal

Below, we've pasted the transcripts of Mumia's latest audio commentaries, mostly centered on government surveillance. We're also including information on oral arguments that were scheduled to start today (June 25th) in regards to Mumia's appeal of his re-sentencing without notice.

MORE:

June 11th – Big Brother?

News Item: According to London's The Guardian, U.S. Intelligence agencies have reviewed telephone records of some 121 million Americans.

Imagine if such news emerged during the height of the Bush presidency?

The outcry would've been stupendous.

Newspaper headlines, 10 points high, would blare about how "outrageous!" was such a program.

But that was then; this is now.

Government agencies crawl through phone lines, and state surveillance has become the norm.

Bush must be seething.

There are no real protests. The coverage is, if anything, modest and restrained.

Americans seem tame about this latest government intrusion into a citizen's privacy.

Bush caused revulsion; Obama causes acquiescence. Indeed, acceptance.

When Bush left the presidency, he did so armed with the greatest arsenal of presidential power in American history. That vast array of power was transmitted into the hands of his successor, where it has only grown. Under Barack Obama, the national security state has only broadened its reach, in ways Bush/Cheney could only have dreamed.

We learn, then, that it matters little which party wins the White House; their essential elements are the same: amass more and more power to the President.

And whittle away the ‘rights’ of The People.

June 17th - State Secrets & Civil Liberties

As the revelations of government surveillance seem to grow by the day, so too do the defenders of this policy.

In past years, under the administration of George W. Bush, the Total Information Awareness Program evoked sharp and critical opposition, especially by elites.

The contrast between that period, when the program was contemplated and discussed, and the present, when it is a fait accompli (or a done deal) is striking.

Both criticism and protest are muted, perhaps because President Barack Obama seems intrinsically more trustworthy, while Bush was largely perceived as incompetent – especially after the widespread destruction of Hurricane Katrina.

But the present mass surveillance programs, touching over 100 million Americans, and billions of internet exchanges, seem perfectly Nixonian in their reach and scope.

Vast clusters of Americans, taped, tapped, put on lists and surveilled by government is not just an invasion of privacy; it is government intrusion and government attack.

It is Big Brother, but on a scale that even George Orwell couldn’t conceive. For Orwell’s work was a slap at totalitarian regimes. He could hardly foresee today’s corporate – national security – complex, where virtually every human communication is catalogued, stored –forever.

Under the rubric of fear of terrorism, the government, under the aegis of the so-called ‘Patriot Act,’ has waged war against its own citizenry; for surveillance is but step one.

‘Fear’ – the most powerful weapon in the arsenal of any State, breeds acquiescence, docility and obedience.

It leads, inevitably, to disaster.

June 19th - ‘Don’t Worry’, ‘Be Happy!’

In the wake of the revelations of intelligence contractor, Edward Snowden, that the U.S. government reaped billions of Americans’ records and noted tens of millions of American cell phone records, apologists for the Patriot Act’s draconian snooping programs rushed to defend this governmental intrusion by citing court and congressional approval and oversight.

It sounds good. But what does it really mean?

The court isn’t really a court, in the traditional sense. It’s not in any courtroom, open to the public.

In the book, *The Shadow Factory* by James Bamford, we find judges on the secret tribunal referring to the FISA (Foreign Intelligence Security Act) court as a “Potemkin court” – or a fake court that looks like a court, but is really something else. (p.270)

As for Congress, it may do some things well, but oversight ain’t one of them. L. Fletcher Prouty, an Air force officer who worked with the Joint Chiefs of Staff on various CIA missions (during the Vietnam era), tells of meeting with a Senator to brief him on undercover operations.

According to Prouty, the Senator told him before the ‘briefing’ began, “Keep it short. What I don’t know about it won’t hurt me.”

In other words –“Don’t tell me.”

Congress, ignoring the 4th Amendment governing search and seizure, and terrified of new attacks after 9/11, surrendered the keys to the candy store to intelligence agencies.

To add insult to injury, they called it ‘Patriot Act.’

Hardly that.

They made crimes legal, and made snooping routine.

The government says, ‘It’s OK.’

“Don’t worry, Be happy”

News Advisory for Appeal Challenge

On Tuesday, June 25, 2013 at 11:30AM supporters of Mumia Abu-Jamal will gather outside the Superior Court of Pennsylvania, 530 Walnut Street (17th Floor), Philadelphia, to call for the release of the world renowned imprisoned journalist.

At 1:15PM that day, the Court will hear oral arguments on an appeal filed by Abu-Jamal challenging his resentencing from death to life in prison without parole. At issue is a motion filed by the President of the Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas, Judge Pamela Dembe, that failed to notify the defendant or his attorneys of his resentencing. In so doing, Judge Dembe violated Abu-Jamal’s rights to notice of sentencing, to be present and make a statement, and to be apprised of his right to appeal the sentence. These rights are guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution and by the laws of the state of Pennsylvania. Had Abu-Jamal not discovered and filed a timely appeal to Judge Dembe’s motion, his right to file future appeals would have been irreparably compromised.

The unconstitutionality of Judge Dembe’s undisclosed filing echoes the history of due process violations in the Abu-Jamal case, which spans more than three decades. In the original trial the judge, prosecutor, and police conspired to suppress evidence of innocence and to obtain a conviction. The prosecution’s case was built on the specious premise that only three people were present at the time of the shooting, but a fourth person – the probable perpetrator – was seen fleeing the scene after Officer Daniel Faulkner was fatally shot. The police, prosecutor Joe McGill, and presiding judge Albert Sabo suppressed this from both the defense and jury. In addition, the bullet that killed Officer Faulkner was never matched to Abu-Jamal’s gun, and police failed to perform routine tests on Abu-Jamal’s hands, which would have determined that he had not shot a gun that night.

Judicial bias, impropriety and contempt for the defendant also figure prominently in this history. At the original trial, Judge Sabo twice refused to recuse himself: when his impartiality as a former Under Sheriff of Philadelphia County was questioned; and again, when he came out of retirement to hear Mumia’s 1995 Post Conviction Relief Act Hearing—the most important appeals hearing in the case--on the judicial and prosecutorial violations of the very case over which he presided 15 years earlier.

Similarly, in 1998, Judge Ron Castille of the Pennsylvania State Supreme Court was asked to recuse himself from the case; in his previous role as Philadelphia DA he presided over numerous challenges to Abu-Jamal’s appeals, including the claim of racial discrimination in jury selection. Castille’s unethical conduct was later exposed because his name and the seal of his office were stamped on the so-called McMahon tapes, discovered in 1997. The tapes were instructional lectures to new prosecutors on how to eliminate jurors unlikely to convict. In violation of *Batson v. Kentucky*, some instructions suggested elimination on the basis of race, one of Abu-Jamal’s strongest claims for a new trial. Abu-Jamal’s attorneys called for Judge Castille’s recusal in hearing Abu-Jamal’s appeal and petition for a new trial because the judge had received financial contributions and support from the Fraternal Order of Police (FOP). In a written defense refusing to do so, he explained that four

other judges out of the seven-judge panel received FOP funding.

In 2008, acknowledging the unequal application of the law in the case of Abu-Jamal, Judge Thomas Ambro of the Third Circuit Court wrote that the decision to deny Abu-Jamal the so-called Batson claim of discrimination in jury selection “goes against the grain of our prior actions.” In previous cases with exactly the same claims, the court had granted new trial relief to the defendants, but this time it ruled against Mumia in a two to one decision that overturned the court’s own precedents.

In 2011, Abu-Jamal’s death sentence was confirmed unconstitutional when a Supreme Court motion allowed to stand the past rulings of four federal judges who had as early as 2001 set aside the death penalty in this case. In late 2011, Archbishop Desmond Tutu called for Abu-Jamal’s release -- "Now that it is clear that Mumia should never have been on death row in the first place, justice will not be served by relegating him to prison for the rest of his life....Based on even a minimal following of international human rights standards, Mumia must now be released....District Attorney Seth Williams [should] rise to the challenge of reconciliation, human rights, and justice: drop this case now, and allow Mumia Abu-Jamal to be immediately released."

Because for more than 28 years Abu-Jamal was wrongly subjected to inhumane conditions on death row, because he is innocent, because he has been consistently denied his Fifth Amendment right to a fair trial, and because of the uninterrupted history of judicial and prosecutorial corruption and police conspiracy in this case, his supporters call for Mumia Abu-Jamal’s immediate release.

11 Jun - Lynne Stewart update

We're including a roundup of the latest news and information about Lynne Stewart as her supporters move forward in securing compassionate release for her.

MORE:

June 11th - Interview with Ralph Poynter, husband of jailed people’s lawyer Lynn Stewart

FB!: At the Left Forum, you organized a panel on political prisoners. How does Lynne's story relate to the general problem of political repression today?

Ralph Poynter: Lynne’s story is the same as all other political prisoners. Those who want to work toward a more decent society - no matter what way they work on it, by telling the truth, or acting on the truth - have become the automatic enemies of a destructive, corrupt state, and they act in that manner.

So Lynne is a political prisoner who defended those who were not supposed to get a defense. That is, the poor, the people of color and those involved in acts that did not harm anyone else, but the prohibition acts of certain drugs - and they left out alcohol and cigarettes, which are responsible for more deaths than all the others put together. And so Lynne defended these people, and she is paying the price.

FB!: What is going on with Lynne's case today?

Poynter: Her legal case, we’re putting it before the Supreme Court, they call it certiorari. We’ve sent papers to see if the court is going accept the case. No one has challenged the Patriot Act through the Supreme Court on First Amendment rights, et cetera. This is one of the things that Lynne is doing legally.

And we’re asking for compassionate release because she is dying in prison. We want to get her out and get her to a facility in New York City. In Lynne’s own words, “If you are white, have a reasonable amount of economic support and certain notoriety, medical care is available to you in New York City.” We can have her survive long enough to carry her case to the Supreme Court, if she gets out of prison now, so she can access this medical care that is available to her in New York City.

Now, it is a race, no matter where she is. It’s a race for her life, and every day she’s in jail, it cuts down on her possibility of winning it.

FB!: A lot of people know about Lynne’s case and there has been an outpouring of support for her, and for her compassionate release. What has been the impact of that support?

Poynter: We are hoping – today is Sunday – we are hoping that Monday we have a response from the government. We are hoping, but we are also planning Tuesday to have meetings to see our next step. We know the government knows about it. She has passed all of the legalities of compassionate release; she qualifies as the bill was written. But we also know that when Lynne went to prison, she was scheduled for an operation, and it was 18 months before they scheduled the operation in Fort Worth, Texas. So, they are in no hurry, and as I say, they are looking to kill her. And as the attending physician said, it was the worst case she’d ever seen, due to the delay. So this is nothing new.

We say we want treatment for her cancer. They’re delaying. We said we wanted treatment for her other physical problems, they delayed. This is death by lack of medical treatment in prison. But that makes Lynne no different than all the other political prisoners who are in jail. They suffer the lack of physical medical treatment.

FB!: You’ve said people should keep making calls for Lynne. Tell us about those calls, and what else our readers can do to help Lynne now.

Poynter: The calls are going to the Office of the President, the Office of Eric Holder and the head of the prisons, Samuels. But the interesting thing is, she’s already qualified. Samuels said yes, the prison warden in Fort Worth said yes - that’s all that’s required by the statute of compassionate release and yet Lynne is still in jail.

And so we say, 'hey, it’s someplace. They just forgot about it, or they set it aside, or they’re waiting for her to die.'

So keep on calling. Keep on signing that petition – change.org

Keep on signing and calling until we change strategy, because we are running out of possibilities. Or we have to create some new possibilities, new actions, to make this government move. We have people fasting. Maybe we have to boycott something, maybe we have to pick a strategic place, maybe we have to block highways. Who knows what we will have to do? But the government will decide how far we have to go, because we’re running out of time very quickly.

June 18th - Vigil at BOP to demand compassionate release of Lynne Stewart

Dick Gregory and Louis Wolf join imprisoned attorney Lynne Stewart’s husband Ralph Poynter and supporters for a historic vigil at the Federal Bureau of Prisons Headquarters in Washington, DC. Seven weeks have elapsed since Warden Jody Upton of FMC Carswell approved Compassionate Release for 73-year-old Lynne Stewart based upon medical findings of Stage 4 cancer that had spread to Stewart’s scapula, lymph nodes and lungs.

The Warden’s recommendation and documentation have been fully vetted at the Federal Bureau of Prisons in Washington, DC. Filing the motion for Compassionate Release with Judge John Koetl, the sentencing judge, awaits solely the ratifying signature of Director Charles E. Samuels, Jr.

“Every minute’s delay compromises Lynne Stewart’s life and her access to the comprehensive treatment plan prepared for her at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center in New York,” Poynter declared, adding that “Her weakened condition and the ominous drop in her white blood cell count required the prison to place Lynne in isolation, as she faces the risk of generalized infection.”

Over twenty thousand people of conscience in the United States and internationally — including former Attorney General Ramsey Clark, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Father Miguel D’Escoto Brockmann, Pete Seeger, Alice Walker, Ed Asner, Cornell West, Daniel Ellsberg, Daniel Berrigan, Richard Falk and Bianca Jagger — have been mobilized by the prospect that Lynne Stewart will perish in prison, or so shortly after release that she would

be on the verge of death, denied the comfort and joy of being with those closest to her: her husband Ralph Poynter, many children, grandchildren, a great grandchild and lifelong friends. They have sent email messages, individual letters and made telephone calls to the FMC Warden and the Bureau of Prisons Director in support of Lynne Stewart's application for Compassionate Release.

Dick Gregory, whose concern for Lynne Stewart led him to fast since April 4, the anniversary of the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., declared:

"I cannot stand by as this legendary lawyer is forced to walk with 10 pounds of shackles on her wrists and ankles, with connecting chains, and is shackled wrist and ankle to the bed whenever she receives medical treatment. I am determined to refuse all solid food until Lynne Stewart is freed and receives medical treatment in the care of her family and with physicians of her choice without which she will die."

"Justice delayed is justice denied," explains Lynne Stewart's husband Ralph Poynter. "Lynne dies a little more each day." Poynter has come to Washington, DC from New York City to organize vigils in support of Compassionate Release for Lynne Stewart at the White House and the Bureau of Prisons. "I am prepared to stay," Poynter remarked, "until Director Samuels puts pen to paper and the Compassionate Release application moves forward."

July 1st - Pink Ribbon for Lynne Stewart

The DC Lynne Stewart committee is asking that you purchase a piece of PINK ribbon and put Lynne Stewart's name on it, decorated in your own style, and wear it until Lynne is free! We are starting the campaign on July 1st. So get your ribbon ready and take a picture and send it to us so that it can be posted to her facebook and web site. Also we will be producing a FREE LYNNE STEWART NOW sticker, on a bright PINK background that will be available shortly. So keep in touch and if you have friends in the DC area please encourage them to join Ralph and other supporters from 9 to 5, 7 days a week in front of the white house to bring awareness that will bring Lynne Home Now!

July 1st - NYC Vigil and March for Lynne Stewart

WHAT: Protest Vigil

WHEN: 4:30-6:00pm, Monday, July 1st

WHERE: Foley Square, marching to 500 Pearl Street and MCC New York City, returning to Foley Square

12 Jun - Cop Cell Phones Lost or Destroyed, New Motions to Dismiss Charges

Chicago cops in the NATO 3 case have seemingly failed to preserve their cell phones and text messages from the investigation, which appear to be significant pieces of evidence in the State's politically motivated prosecution. The Three had another court appearance today (June 25th). We're also including information for a book drive being organized for the NATO 5.

MORE:

Brent Betterly, Brian Jacob Church, and Jared Chase (known together as the NATO 3) were brought in front of Judge Thaddeus Wilson on Tuesday, June 11th for another status hearing. They were accompanied by multiple sheriffs deputies and a court full of supporters watching closely over the proceedings. The proceedings provided more information on the Chicago cops failing to preserve their cell phones and text messages from the investigation, which appear to be significant pieces of evidence in the State's politically motivated prosecution. The defense also introduced a couple more motions to dismiss charges.

Assistant States Attorney Matthew Thrun submitted the prosecution's response to multiple ongoing discovery issues still standing from the court's ruling four weeks ago. This response was accompanied by hundreds of photographs stemming from the pre-NATO Summit surveillance program spying on activist groups in Chicago planning protests last spring.

Contained within the prosecution's answer to discovery was the revelation that officers involved in field

intelligence team 7150 (the unit in charge of all pre-NATO surveillance and infiltration) destroyed or disappeared personal cell phones used during the investigation. It seems that multiple officers in the unit used their personal cell phones to exchange information between themselves and different officers as well as their supervisors in the course of the operation. According to the material offered up to the court today by prosecutors, the private cell phone service providers used by the officers did not store their text message data and the officers mysteriously (and conveniently for them) no longer have those phones in their possession. Thus, these crucial pieces of evidence will not be available to the defense.

Additionally, the prosecution failed to hand over the First Amendment worksheet and subsequent re-applications for this worksheet. The court had ruled four weeks ago that these internal police department documents were to be handed over to the defense, and on this issue Judge Wilson was clearly frustrated with the clear stalling tactics. Wilson instructed the prosecution to tell high-level police officials that “this court has a schedule and I intend to stick to it,” adding that he would issue a ruling to show cause if the documents had not been handed over to the defense before the next court date. He went on to say that “the federal court would be appalled to learn that [...these files...] are not in order to be presented.”

Defense attorney Michael Deutsch also noted that the State’s discovery submissions have been coming on the dates of court hearings (rather than before a scheduled hearing to give the defense time to review the info in advance). The State agreed to submit the info on Thursday, June 20th, five days before the next hearing. The judge said that, if the State plans to submit Brian’s post-arrest statement at trial, then they are to submit a list of the police officers who will testify no later than Wednesday, June 12th.

Finally, the defense issued another round of pretrial motions to strike down the ludicrous charges targeting these three activists. Attorneys for Brian Church issued a motion to dismiss counts 7, 8, and 9, all of which are arson charges. This motion challenges statements made by Brian immediately after being arrested and seeks to make them inadmissible, thus eliminating the arson charges. Attorneys for Brent filed their own motion to declare all his charges unconstitutional due to a violation of due process from the grand jury testimony being used against him.

On June 25th, the court will reconvene for further status updates and an evidentiary hearing regarding Brian’s latest motion. That means that officers involved in the field intelligence team will be called to the stand. Let’s pack the courtroom on June 25th and stand in solidarity with the NATO 3!

You can also show your solidarity by donating to the support fund. Online donations can be made at <https://www.wepay.com/donations/nato-5-defense> and tax-deductible donations can be made by sending checks or money orders to with “8th Day Center/Nato 5 Defense Fund” in the memo line to:

8th Day Center for Justice
205 West Monroe Street, Suite 500
Chicago, Illinois 60606

To keep up-to-date, sign up for our announcements listserv by emailing nato-5-announce-subscribe@lists.riseup.net, find us on Facebook at Free the NATO 5! <<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Free-the-Nato5/172345546229824>>, and follow us on Twitter @FreeNATO5 <<https://twitter.com/FreeNATO5>>

June 20th - Urgent Book Drive for the NATO 5 Starting Today!

Recently, the protective custody unit where Brent Betterly, Brian Jacob Church, and Jared Chase (the NATO 3) are being held in 22-hour lockdown was raided by the guards. Many of their personal possessions—including most of their books—were taken from them. They’ve been stuck in their cells for most of each day since then with precious few reading materials. They’re quickly going through the books they’ve received since then and have been sharing them with other prisoners, but they could use a flood of books from supporters to help them pass the time in lockdown. Additionally, Mark Neiweem is far from home as he serves his sentence after taking a

non-cooperating plea agreement and could use more letters and books. (Note: Sebastian Senakiewicz is finishing his boot-camp term and cannot receive books or mail while there.)

We're calling on all comrades, supporters, and friends to send them books starting today! Brent, Brian, and Jared can each receive 3 paperback books, magazines, or zines per envelope (no newspapers, though). Mark can receive both paperbacks and hardcovers, with no limit on the number of books per package. For all the prisoners, you can mail books to them yourself or have them mailed directly from a publisher or bookstore. If you can't send books now, you can Donate <<http://nato5support.wordpress.com/donate>> to our support fund so we can get books and mailing supplies.

Not sure what to send them? Brent likes history, science, politically sharp philosophy, sci-fi, fantasy, and horror. Brian is in to fantasy, Star Wars, anything to do with video games, and stuff about the Dark Ages. Jared likes anything to do with technology, sci-fi, fantasy, and history. And Mark likes history, biography, historical fiction, and fiction.

We have also created wishlists for them to help you select titles to send (Mark's list is still being created):

Brent's list: <http://amzn.com/w/OM0CON1M3JP8>

Brian's list: <http://amzn.com/w/1CZ84W5M1RCB5>

Jared's list: <http://amzn.com/w/32QR3TML7LLT>

These lists are only meant to be helpful guides to selecting books for the defendants. You can purchase the books from local/independent bookstores if you prefer instead of buying them from Amazon. Please email us at [nato5solidarity\(A\)gmail.com](mailto:nato5solidarity(A)gmail.com) to let us know which ones you're sending which prisoner, though, so we can update their wishlists and avoid duplication. If you order from Amazon or another online retailer, make sure you send the books via USPS since FedEx and UPS may not deliver to the jail.

You can also order books for prisoners at a significant discount (40-50%) from radical publishers AK Press and PM Press. If you ship the books directly to the prisoners, these publishers will apply the discount to the amount they charge on your credit card when they process your order.

The books you send will benefit the NATO 5 and the other prisoners in their units, so please send what you can today and keep sending books, magazines, and zines as you are able!

14 Jun - Dane Rossman has been extradicted

Dane Rossman, one of the Americans recently indicted in Canadian court for alleged property destruction during the 2010 G20 summit in Toronto, has been extradited. We're including his address below and encourage folks to write him.

MORE:

**Dane Rossman
Toronto West Detention Centre
111 Disco Road
Rexdale, Ontario M9W 5L6**

15 Jun – Joshus Stafford (Cleveland 4) Found Guilty At Trial

Josh "Skelly" Stafford of the Cleveland 4 was found guilty on all charges at trial. He is accused of taking part in a plot to blow up a bridge in Cleveland on May Day 2012 – a plot that was actually planned by an infiltrator paid by the FBI to target Occupy Cleveland activists.

MORE:

After a 5th defendant turned on the group, the others accepted non-cooperating plea deals and are serving sentences of up to 11 years in federal prison.

Josh adamantly refused to admit guilt to a crime he had not committed. He represented himself at trial against an aggressive prosecution and, unfortunately, lost the case. You can read detailed court notes here.

He will be sentenced in about 90 days, with a possibility of life in prison.

He needs our love and support now more than ever. Please send him a card or letter to let him know we admire his courage in standing up to a corrupt "justice" system and that we will not abandon him. We do not forgive injustice, we do not forget our comrades, and the Federal Bureau of Prisons should expect mail.

Joshua Stafford #57976-060
2240 Hubbard Road
Youngstown, Ohio 44505

Many thanks to the tireless Cleveland 4 support team, who have worked so diligently to get the word out about this case. We stand in solidarity with you and the incarcerated.

June 23rd - Letters to the Judge for Joshua Stafford

Please send letters of support for Joshua Stafford of the Cleveland4 to Josh's lawyer, Venessa. Every letter of support helps. We need these by his sentencing date in September, so please have them mailed about by Sept 1st!

Idea's and How-to:

<http://www.prisontalk.com/forums/showthread.php?t=25833>

<http://www.wikihow.com/Write-a-Letter-to-a-Judge>

Send letters to:

Vanessa Malone, Esq.
Research & Writing/Appellate Counsel
Federal Public Defender, Northern District of Ohio
1660 West Second Street, Suite 750
Cleveland, Ohio 44113

16 Jun - Days Gone Bi by Walter Bond

Animal Liberation Front prisoner Walter bond has a new piece titled "Days Gone Bi" that we've included below.

MORE:

Homophobia, transphobia, gender discrimination and sexism have no place in the movements for anarchism, Animal and Earth liberation or any other liberation struggle. They are a form of bigotry, prejudice and close-mindedness every bit as shameful and degrading as nationalism and racism. The various justifications that get used in the name of heteronormativity, be they nature, morality, or religion are fronts for simpletons and bigots to attempt to feebly justify their own insecurity and inhibitions as pertains to human sexuality. Deep Green wannabe mountain men included!

And so in the interest of engaging in discussion and sharing my experiences with homophobia I offer this personal reflection of my growth, tribulations and finally acceptance of my bisexuality.

I am as 'in the middle' as a bisexual can get. This has made many of my relationships difficult and I have experienced homophobia from many in straight society and at times quite a bit of cattiness from gay men in the queer community. I came out in the spring of 1990 when I was 14 years of age. At that time the punk music scene which I was a part of in Denver Colorado was infested with Nazi skinheads of a particularly violent type. They were known as the 'Denver Skins' or 'D.S.' for short. Before their reign of terror ended in the streets of Denver they were responsible for beating minorities to death at bus stops, for ruining every punk and metal concert that came through town and finally starting one of the worst riots in Denver city history when the Klan

came to town to spew their hate speech on Martin Luther King Day.

The D.S. caught up with me a few months after I had come out of the closet. My first ever boyfriend and I used to spend much of our time at an apartment complex in the eastern plains of Colorado. This was the home of a trans woman that was in her early 20's. This apartment in Fort Morgan became a sanctuary of sorts for wayward, queer teenage punks. It was the first openly queer space I had experienced and I was happy to be there. I was also fearful to be in the city because I knew that the D.S. were searching for me. I was somewhat well known in the local punk scene and news travelled fast that not only was I a fag but that I had a black boyfriend, double whammy!

At a Social Distortion concert in Boulder my worst fears were realized. I went outside in-between sets to get some air and got jumped by four D.S.. I was punched and kicked unconscious. When I awoke I was in shock with my shirt congealing to my chest with my own blood. Apparently some kids chased these assholes off before they could curb stomp my face into the sidewalk. I stumbled to a pay phone and called my mom to come pick me up. A few weeks later I broke up with my boyfriend, under the guise that I had cheated on him (which I had not). I couldn't admit to him that I was afraid, confused and hurt, so back into the closet I went. (Years later I began infiltrating organized white power groups in Illinois, Colorado and Wyoming for the anarchistic group 'Anti Racist Action', but that is a different story altogether).

My mother and I moved from the northern suburbs to the Southside of Denver where I got bussed for an hour into the rich kids school of cherry creek. I told my school counselor about my bisexuality and the hardships it had wrought at which he exclaimed "You should keep this to yourself, because the same thing will probably happen here if you don't." I began to ditch class constantly and turned to drugs to cope with anxiety, confusion and frustration.

All through my teen years and much of my 20's I went in and out of the closet. I had internalized much of the homophobic attitude of my family and society around me. I truly felt deep down that I was perverted and 'sexually schizophrenic' as one of my first girlfriends had told me when I came out to her. I would ditch school and when the urge became too much, I would seek out risky sex in cruisy areas of the city. Afterwards I would feel disappointed with myself and ashamed. Every time I had a male to male sexual encounter I would have an internal dialogue with myself that went something like this: 'Your not a fag, you just needed to get off and this was a convenient way to do it, so to prove your straight this is the last time you will ever do this shit again'. A couple weeks later..... I was doing that shit again.

Eventually I came to terms with my sexuality after living openly bisexual in a healthy and open relationship after which there really was no return to the closet. But first I was to experience the other side of biphobia, this time from the gay community.

While my experience within the gay community is one of infinitely more compassion and acceptance than what I found from most of my friends and family at the time, it is not without its prejudices and certain parallel intolerances to straight society. Just as many women enjoy the company of gay men but find the sex lives of their gay friends grotesque, so do many gay men find the idea of their partner having sexual relations with a woman to be an absolute transgression. More than once I have been told by people in the LGBTQ community that bisexuality is nothing more than a phase that all gays go through as they come to acceptance with their homosexuality. A sly way of saying that my sexuality is not valid? That it is a mirage that will evaporate? That it is not orthodox gay? Others had told me that bisexuality doesn't exist it's just an excuse to be promiscuous with everyone! So in an attempt to fit I assimilated to a completely gay lifestyle, waiting as my friends said, for the bisexual clouds to pass. Of course they never did, I am just as 'in the middle' today as I was when I came out as a teenager.

If there was one event that I could point to as my beginning to real acceptance of my sexuality both internal and external it was a conversation I had with a drag queen right after my 30th birthday. I was working for a gay owned and operated sex shop, one of the most well known local drag performers was a customer and good

friend. One day we started talking about variations in sexuality. It all came out of me, my bisexuality, the difficulties, everyone wanting my to pick a side, wishing I was one way or the other. A lifetime of angst emotionally vomited into a huge black drag queens lap!

She told me “you really fell for the idea of it all being this way are that, didn’t you”? She grabbed a pen and paper off the glass dildo display case and drew a makeshift chart and told me “sexuality has many variations, some people are all the way to one side or all the way to the other but most of us fall into various places along this line.” and “The good news is there is no right or wrong — just different places along the chart, hell your place on the chart might change with the day, time or year, who cares! You don’t even have to think of yourself as straight, gay or bi, you just be you.” And she walked out the door.

With more practical logic and mystical wisdom than a million Buddhist monks this drag queen put a perspective on sexuality that was altogether obvious but missing in my personality. Definitions can sometimes separate and confine us. Not just from others but often from ourselves. These days I am proud to profess that I am a bi guy.

As long as everyone plays it safe and no one gets exploited than all the different variations in gender and sexuality are natural and beautiful and should be celebrated. And no one in any society and especially any liberation struggle should shame or ridicule based on a person’s sexual tastes, predilections or preferences.

17 Jun - An Insider's View

We've included a piece written by a guest writer for Herman Bell's blog, freehermanbell.org, below.

MORE:

He plays the flute. I have neither seen nor heard him play, but I know because he's mentioned it. In his cell, when the noise of prison has died down and he can hear himself think, Herman Bell plays the flute. I imagine there are people for whom that image is simply too dissonant to believe. But that's only because they don't know him like I do. A couple of years ago, shortly after arriving in this prison, Herman was called to an office in which I worked - something about an error made in his program assignment. After he left, my boss - a competent, compassionate senior administrator - said, "Notice how he carries himself? That's a gentleman." My boss went on to say that he'd have offered him a job in the office, but security staff would be apoplectic, on account of Herman's past. So it goes with the System: we are only as good as the worst lines on our rap sheet. Shortly after that exchange in the office, Herman moved to the same block as me, honor block, a place offering slightly more freedom of movement to those who have shown they can stay out of trouble. In our recreation area - a hectic place resembling, say, the tables and locker area of a public pool or skating rink constructed in the eighties - I would often notice Herman sitting next to a chess game in progress, waiting his turn to play. A quiet presence amidst our bustling and hustling peers, he sat, a hand supporting his chin, contemplating the skillfulness of moves made by the chess players. He was treated with deference, and addressed as "Mr. Bell" - a rare honorific from men who normally hail their compatriots with a "Hey" or "Wassup." I knew next to nothing about him, but, in here, smart and reserved is hard to come by, so I reached out as a complete stranger, and asked his opinion on using a pseudonym for an essay I'd hoped to have published. (I'll confess: having already established my pseudonymity in print, the question was a pretext meant only to get my foot in the doorway of a man who chooses his friends carefully, and keeps a tight circle.) Herman listened to me talk, offered advice I lack the courage to take, then politely asked to read some of my work. And so began a most rewarding relationship. Given the circumscribed nature of prison, the opportunities for connection with a fellow traveler are limited by the System's uncaring clockwork, and the mundane demands of peers who operate as if they were spoiled children. This to say, over the course of a year, he and I have been able to carve out maybe half an hour each week in which to discuss a book, news item, or an idea one of us has been chewing on. One of the first things I learned about him, something that I'm repeatedly struck by, is his skill as a conversationalist. As opposed to the competing monologues that pass for conversation in here, Herman and I enjoy true dialogue. Alone in my cell later, I will replay the discourse, revisiting and perhaps reshaping my position, marveling at how gently he guided the dynamic without ever exerting over control; Zen parables inevitably come to mind: a harmonious garden, meandering stream, or falling leaf. Haiku, that's something I bet he'd also be good at. I know broad strokes about his past. On the surface, our differences are stark: when he went away, I wasn't even born; I

grew up a white child of privilege on the opposite coast; my dai is his Che, and were he to say, "Jiap," I'd ask if he meant, "The Gap." But when we end a discussion and he earnestly says, "Right on," or "My man," and gives me a dap, I feel that he is my brother. And that clarifies for me the problem he faces when outsiders look in. Their precis of Herman comes courtesy of a rap sheet or Google results pointing to old newspaper articles. In our crime-obsessed culture, the sound-bite is stand-in for the sound. Though it's likely small comfort to him, I'm thankful for the unfettered access - rather than merely seeing a name attached to a political crime that took place forty years ago, I know Herman in the here and now, a thoughtful, family-focused man with admirable wit, a splendid sense of humor, and a keen eye for detail. Some months ago, as winter drew to a close, Herman said to me, apropos of nothing, that when he looks out the window near his cell, the light gray prison wall is all he sees. Because the wall so closely resembles a gray winter sky, he can't tell if it's raining, and if he needs to wear a raincoat when he goes out to the yard. But more than that, it's disheartening to have that view, as if the cell bars weren't constraining enough. On that day, for whatever reason, he felt it more acutely. The sentiment gradually lessened for him, but I was left thinking how, of all the friends I've had who shared that same view, it was only he who registered the lack of sunlight enough to mention it. I think that's because people like Herman grow towards the sun. It is my sincere hope that the System soon realizes it has gotten its pound of flesh from Herman, and releases him back into the arms of his loved ones. In the meantime, despite the crummy view - or perhaps because of it - he continues to play the flute. A humble man, he dismisses his efforts with the wave of a hand, but I bet he's halfway decent, and able to create a beautiful melody.

18 Jun - Angola 3's Herman Wallace, Gravely III, Still Held in Isolation

Herman Wallace, 71, has been diagnosed with liver cancer. We're including an article from Solitary Watch about his condition.

MORE:

By James Ridgeway and Jean Casella

He is being held in a locked prison hospital room at the Elayn Hunt Correctional Center at St. Gabriel, Louisiana. The prognosis is grave, according to persons with direct knowledge of the situation. Wallace is one of the two members of the Angola 3 who, along with Albert Woodfox, is still being held in solitary after more than 41 years.

Tessa Murphy, U.S. Campaigner for Amnesty International, which has taken up the case, said in an email, "The tens of thousands of Amnesty International supporters worldwide who have campaigned over the years for justice in Herman and Albert's case will be devastated by this sad news. Herman and Albert have been held in cruel conditions of confinement for over 40 years without meaningful review; neither of the men have disciplinary record to indicate that they are a threat to themselves, fellow prisoners or staff, and the Louisiana prison authorities have since 1996 broken their own policy to justify the men's continued detention under these conditions."

Wallace and Woodfox were placed in solitary confinement at the Louisiana State Penitentiary at Angola in 1972, following the murder of prison guard Brent Miller. The men believe they were originally targeted for the murder, and have been held in isolation ever since, because of their association with the Black Panther Party. (The third member of the Angola 3, Robert King, was freed in 2001 when his conviction for the murder of a fellow prisoner was overturned; he had spent 29 years in solitary.) Several years ago, the two men were transferred out of Angola and sent to separate, distant prisons, where they have remained in solitary.

Angola Warden Burl Cain has stated in a deposition that "Albert Woodfox and Herman Wallace is locked in time with that Black Panther revolutionary actions they were doing way back when." For this reason, he says, they must remain in solitary, because if he released them to the general population "I would have me all kinds of problems, more than I could stand, and I would have the blacks chasing after them." Louisiana Attorney General James "Buddy" Caldwell has likewise promised to keep Wallace and Woodfox behind bars. (Caldwell also claims they "have never been held in solitary confinement.")

Both men have been fighting to have their convictions overturned by the federal courts, claiming they are based

on highly questionable evidence. Woodfox's conviction was overturned for the third time earlier this year, but he remains in prison while the state appeals. Wallace lost his latest challenge, but continues to fight in the courts. At the same time, a civil case has been filed challenging the men's four decades of solitary confinement on First, Eighth, and Fourteenth Amendment grounds.

For 41 years, Wallace and Woodfox have spent at least 23 hours a day in cells measuring 6 feet by 9 feet. They are sometimes allowed out one hour a day to take a shower or a walk along the cellblock. Three days a week, they may use that hour to exercise alone in a fenced yard. In their civil suit, their lawyers argue that both have endured physical injury and "severe mental anguish and other psychological damage" from living most of their adult lives in lockdown. According to medical reports submitted to the court, the men suffer from arthritis, hypertension, and kidney failure, as well as memory impairment, insomnia, claustrophobia, anxiety, and depression. Even the psychologist brought in by the state confirmed these findings.

"The injustice of being held under such harsh, restrictive and inhumane conditions for over four decades is compounded by the serious legal concerns that have emerged in their cases over the years of litigation, Amnesty's Murphy said. "Amnesty International will continue its fight for justice for Herman and Albert; with the terrible news of Herman's health, this fight becomes more important than ever."

Two months ago Wallace had complained of feeling ill. Prison doctors diagnosed his condition as a stomach fungus and put him on antibiotics. By last week, he had lost 45 pounds, and was sent to a local hospital, where he received the news that he has liver cancer. He was returned to prison after a few days.

A team of lawyers, an outside doctor who has taken care of Wallace for years, and a psychologist briefly visited Wallace last week in a prison hospital room. Wallace was not manacled or shackled. The door was locked. There is no television and little contact with the outside world. Telephone privileges which were made available in the beginning have been revoked by the prison. According to one source, a warden ordered visitors out after ten minutes. "The level of inhumanity I am not used to," said Nick Trenticosta, one of Wallace's attorneys in Louisiana. "I am used to bloodthirsty prosecutors who want to kill people, but not this sort of thing."

For Albert Woodfox, 66, who lived in solitary nearby Wallace at Angola and still keeps in touch by letter, the news was shocking. According to his brother Michael Mable, who saw Albert over last weekend, his brother is depressed and "afraid of dying in this prison." Mable was only able to see Woodfox through a glass partition, and Woodfox sat with his hands manacled and feet shackled while a captain and a lieutenant stood behind him, Mable said. Woodfox was strip searched, even though the interview was just a short ways from his cell. He is allowed one visit a month. Woodfox suffers from diabetes, high blood pressure, and hepatitis.

It is not yet clear what the next steps will be for Herman Wallace in terms of medical care. Because the prison medical record appears scant, doctors are anxious for Wallace to see an oncologist at an outside hospital. He may go there some time this week.

Asked whether the state would consider compassionate release or hospice care for Wallace, Pam Laborde, Communications Director for the Louisiana Department of Public Safety and Corrections, said, "As you hopefully understand, I am not in a position to discuss an offender's medical condition due to privacy concerns."

In a 2006 letter to Jackie Sumell, an artist with whom he is collaborating on a project called The House That Herman Built (now the subject of a documentary film), Herman Wallace wrote: "I'm often asked what did I come to prison for; and now that I think about it Jackie, it doesn't matter. It doesn't matter what I came here for, what matters now is what I leave with. And I can assure you, however I leave, I won't leave nothing behind."

19 Jun - Report back: June call in action for Oso Blanco

The call-in days for Oso Blanco, that we announced at the last letter-writing night, went well. He still has yet to receive an actual ultrasound, and still needs one, but has gotten something smaller and similar. Which he is very happy about and excited to see progress being made for the first time since he arrived at Florence on January

9th 2013.

MORE:

“I want to thank you all for calling Florence USP, in Colorado. This unity has motivated Ms McDermott to relent and give me medical attention” -Oso Blanco

Greeting friends, comrades, and supporters,

Oso Blanco says we all did an awesome job and he would like to thank everyone for their support. On June 12th, USP Florence-High was slammed with in-coming calls from all over the country! The phones started ringing first thing in the morning, and by afternoon the staff members were exhausted. Other’s who weren’t present on this day, returned to find their message boxes flooded.

Early the next morning, our comrade was taken from his cell and given another blood test, and round 2 of calls and emails rolled in. USP Florence-High with it’s already existing reputation of medical neglect, experienced, the strength of our solidarity. They can no longer brush off Oso Blanco’s request for medical attention. Staff members confirmed to some callers that all our information is accurate, so whether intentional or not, they can no longer deny that he needs the care requested. So great job everyone!

19 Jun – Jerry Koch update and Noise Demo announcement

Last week, the FBI and NYPD put out a joint press release about renewed interest in the 2008 "bicycle bomber" case-- for which we presume grand jury resister Jerry Koch was subpoenaed and subsequently imprisoned for civil contempt. We'll not be passing on the State's propaganda, but rather a breif response by Jerry's support committee. We're also including information for a noise demonstration outside the prison at which Jerry is being held.

MORE:

On Tuesday, June 18, the FBI and NYPD put out a press release offering a \$65,000 reward for any information leading to the arrest and conviction of the 2008 Times Square bicycle bomber.

The press release demonstrates the great progress the JTTF (Joint Terrorism Task Force), NYPD, FBI, and US Attorney’s Office have made thus far:

"The suspect on the bicycle was last seen wearing a gray sweatshirt and pants of an unknown color. The height, weight, age, sex, and race of the suspect are unknown."

The reward for the identification, arrest, and conviction of the “person(s) responsible for the 2008 bombing of the U.S. Armed Forces Recruiting Station” has been raised from \$12,000 to \$65,000.

If the FBI is now offering a reward for any information—we assume including the color of pants worn by the suspect—why is Jerry still sitting in prison? It sure seems like the feds are conceding that they’re not going to get any information from Jerry, which would mean that his incarceration is not coercive, but punitive.

After five years of flailing around and once unsuccessful grand jury, the feds are asking the public to do their jobs for them. They’ve put our friend in prison for staying silent, and now they’re asking us to be cops for them. It brings to mind the late George Carlin...

Noise Demo for Jerry Friday 6/28

WHAT: NOISE DEMO

WHEN: 8:00pm, Friday, June 28th

WHERE: Metropolitan Correctional Center – Pearl Street, between Cardinal Hayes Place and Park Row

Bring noisemakers, whistles, drums, pots, pans...anything you have that makes noise!

Let's get fucking loud and show Jerry how much we love him!
Solidarity, inside and out.
We'll see you there!

24 Jun - Tom Manning to get Shoulder Operation Thanks to Supporters

We recently got word from comrades with the Jericho Movement that the call-in and days of action seem to have been effective. We've including a short note from Tom below.

MORE:

Greetings and thanks for all your support and help in putting pressure on the Butner administration to get me my shoulder operation. I just heard from the warden who stopped by my cell to let me know that I should have the rotator cuff operation within 2 weeks, no exact day due to security issues. So thank you again for your support.

6 Jul - Day of Solidarity with Maroon

Calling all maroons, revolutionaries, prisoner supporters, and all who oppose solitary confinement and torture in the u.s. and abroad! Come what may, make July 6 a day of solidarity, celebration, and resistance with Russell Maroon Shoatz! Organize an event in your city or locality!

MORE:

Political Prisoner Russell Maroon Shoatz has spent over thirty years in solitary confinement as a result of his history of resistance to white supremacy and mass incarceration. The Pennsylvania Department of Corrections has told Maroon supporters repeatedly that they transferred him to SCI Mahanoy for the purpose of releasing him into general population and that it will take up to 90 days.

If his captors keep their word, won by the pressure of his family and his allies like you, he will soon be released from solitary and July 6th will be a great victory celebration.

If his captors break their word and continue to keep our movement elder in solitary confinement and sensory deprivation, your July 6th gathering will be an opportunity for everyone to write hundreds of letters of protest to flood Secretary Wetzel's office.

We strongly advise all participating autonomous groups to be fully prepared for either eventuality! That means envelopes, postage, paper, pens, copies of the relevant information, food, drinks, music, camera phones, internet! Every local group should create the July 6th event appropriate and most effective for their own community-- even if it is you and two comrades or you by yourself!

Together we will be celebrating victory or pushing for immediate action. Either way there is a long struggle ahead and unity is key.

Free Maroon! Free all political prisoners! End solitary confinement and mass incarceration! ...because when we resist solitary confinement, political imprisonment and mass incarceration together, no one is alone! Not Maroon and not you!

Send your event announcement to freemaroonshoatz@gmail.com so we can post on russellmaroonshoatz.wordpress.com.

And, if Maroon is still in solitary on July 6, send your letters demanding his release to:

PA DOC Secretary John Wetzel
1920 Technology Parkway
Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania 17050
Phone number: 717-728-4109 Fax number: 717-728-4109

Send copies to freemaroonshoatz@gmail.com. Share what you are doing! #FreeMaroon #EndSolitary