



POST OFFICE BOX 110034 BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11211

Updates for August 6<sup>th</sup>

### **18 Jul - Pfc. Manning Update**

*A lot has happened in the last two weeks. Pfc. Manning was acquitted of "aiding the enemy" after a judge otherwise refused to drop the charge. While this is good news, Manning was convicted of other crimes and faces a maximum 136 years in prison. We've included a roundup of the articles we found relevant below.*

#### **MORE:**

#### **July 24<sup>th</sup> - Bradley Manning on Trial**

Joanne McNeil (*Jacobin*)

If Manning is ever released, he will re-enter a world ready to embrace him, advanced with the understanding to recognize his greatness. Zoom in on an aerial image of the Fort Meade military base and you will see miles of sprawling green fields and parking lots separating homes and administrative buildings. From that vantage point the magistrate court looks about the size of a Mack Truck. History is being made in that little building, the court martial of Pfc. Bradley Manning is being held there.

Two weeks ago, in the swampy heat, I stood outside that single-floor courthouse. A crowd of about twenty-five of us were gathered in a narrow paved area between trailers for restrooms, crowd overflow, and the security check-in. There was a man near the entrance that had to be in his eighties. I overheard him interrupt a conversation to ask, "What's an e-reader?" A white haired woman told him it is a thin device that holds loads of books as digital files. He paused, perhaps to consider how the contents of his personal library might be encoded to fit inside something not much bigger than a calculator. I looked around again. Maybe a third of the people attending the trial as spectators could remember the bombing of Pearl Harbor as clearly as 9-11. And quite a number more looked like retired boomers. Has AARP thrown its weight behind hacktivist causes? Were they cypherpunks in elaborate disguise?

I started talking with a retired woman who drove down from Pennsylvania. I asked how she felt about the prosecution's depiction of WikiLeaks as a terrorist abettor. "Well, I'm not as concerned with that," she said. "I'm here because they were torturing that kid."

I was there because they were torturing that kid.

Last winter, I read a tweet from the Guardian's Ed Pilkington quoting Manning's testimony in the pre-trial hearing. I shut my phone off and stared out the window — a tiny privilege that Manning had for so long been denied:

"BRADLEY MANNING: 'You could see the reflection of the reflection of the skylight if you angled your face on the cell door' – Quantico" — @Edpilkington

From then on, I found myself often thinking about Manning straining to see a "reflection of the reflection" while locked away at the brig. And for what? For exposing criminality and corruption on a worldwide structural level when no one else dared. But in the courtroom, Manning looks so earnest. He appears confident, not frail. You can see in him a glimmer of the "bradass87" that once wrote to a friend that he would like to be like his idols, "richard feynman, carl sagan, harvey milk, etc."

The enormity of his actions sits in contrast with the work-a-day procedure of the court martial. But that is Washington for you, a city where you might meet diplomats with sweat stains under the arms of their dress shirts and stateswomen in fraying stockings. Power appears unexpectedly accessible and deceptively provincial. The

prosecutors — representing the US government — seem guided less by iron fist than egregious technical illiteracy. The people who tortured Bradley Manning do not have horns. And that makes it all much worse.

Earlier that day, I left my phone in a friend's glove compartment and handed my umbrella to a soldier as another searched my bag in the security trailer. Anyone can walk in and observe the proceedings. It is a short train ride from Union Station and the Bradley Manning Support Network arranges pickups, but too few people are taking advantage of this opportunity. On a panel at Left Forum, Jessalyn Radack, the attorney who represented NSA whistleblower Thomas Drake, said that some days there were only six spectators. Nearing a verdict now, the courtroom is typically full, but the overflow trailer still has plenty of room. It makes a difference. They announce court attendance every morning.

How many people even know the trial is happening? Manning was held for three years without a trial. That is plenty of time for the public to mistakenly assume there was already a court decision and sentencing. And why did they try this case at all? Manning already pled guilty to 10 charges and faces up to 20 years. The remaining charges are bizarrely exaggerated. Using flimsy circumstantial evidence, the government is trying to argue that publishing documents on the internet assists terrorists. And for that they could lock him away for life.

The prosecution insists they would have pressed the same charges if Manning had gone to the New York Times instead of WikiLeaks. Daniel Ellsberg did go to the New York Times, which published excerpts of the Pentagon Papers in 1971. Before his case was thrown out as a mistrial, he faced a sentence of up to 115 years under the Espionage Act of 1917. "Everything that Richard Nixon did to me, for which he faced impeachment and prosecution, which led to his resignation, is now legal under the Patriot Act, the FISA [Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act] amendment act, the National Defense Authorization Act," Ellsberg told Chris Hedges in an interview. Now Manning is accused not only of espionage, but "aiding the enemy," essentially because some WikiLeaks files were on Osama bin Laden's computer.

The prosecutors are in their early 30s — nominally "digital natives" — and should know better. "Do you know what Wget is?" they interrogate a witness, as if it is malicious spyware and not an everyday command line program. The government is capitalizing on asymmetric tech literacy and the failure of language when old laws are applied to the internet. At the peak of this absurdity: WikiLeaks cables are still formally classified, so despite being readily available to anyone with internet, closed sessions are required to discuss them.

Perhaps you heard the audio of Bradley Manning's court statement earlier this year. That was leaked. No other recordings or visuals have come out of the trial, with the exception of courtroom sketches. Now imagine if there were a livestream. And imagine if everyone had tuned in to watch Yochai Benkler's gripping expert witness testimony on July 10th. He argued on behalf of the decentralization of media in the digital age, the blurred lines between activist and journalist, and that WikiLeaks was "providing a discrete but critical component of what in the past was always integrated in a single organization." He explained in clear language what everyone of a certain generation knows intuitively about the internet. Afterward, in the restroom, I overheard two old ladies say they plan to read his book, *The Wealth of Networks*.

Why did the prosecution ramp up charges against Manning? "Aiding the enemy" might have resulted in the death penalty. The answer came from Benkler under cross-examination. Summarizing an article he wrote, he explained in court, "it's very hard to suppress information once it's on WikiLeaks and that the core target needs to be on trust as the center of gravity. In other words, to undermine the concept that WikiLeaks is a place where a leaker can go and trust that they won't be revealed. So in order to prevent this distributed leaking, it's necessary to increase the fear, as it were, or the constraint on potential leakers."

In Ellsberg's time, the labor involved was its own risk and deterrent. Over the course of a year, he went out with a suitcase to Xerox page after page of the Pentagon Papers (with a piece of cardboard pressed against the glass to edit out the "Top Secret" stamps.) Manning's cover was a rewritable CD marked "Lady Gaga." He downloaded the files while listening to "Telephone." He was tortured and he risks life imprisonment, because leaking is now so easy.

If you grow up knowing an entire library can fit inside a device in the palm of your hand, those 250,000 diplomatic cables and 500,000 army reports do not seem like an enormous bounty. What looks like “harvesting” to one generation, might seem like the obvious way to gather data to the next.

The witness for the defense who has stayed in my mind is Lauren McNamara. She read from a series of AOL chats with Manning in 2009. She was called in to defend his character and demonstrate he was in good spirits in the months leading up to the cable leaks. McNamara — who goes by Zinnia Jones in online videos and blogs — is transgender. It is possible some people in the courtroom had never met someone who is trans\* — or think they haven’t. McNamara would smash any retrograde assumptions. She’s confident and witty. There is nothing strange about her gender identity. She is a woman. Manning might be too. McNamara wrote for the Huffington Post, “when I talked with people who are in close contact with Manning, they all told me he currently identifies as male.” Coombes and the Bradley Manning Support Network also say he prefers to be addressed as Bradley. Manning might be female presenting as male, Manning might be non-binary; that’s for Manning to say.

Manning was tortured in part because he signed a few letters from the brig as “Breanna Elizabeth.” Marine Corps Master Sgt. Craig Blenis defended his cruelty in a December pre-trial hearing. Coombs asked why the marine thought Manning’s gender dysphoria should factor into his “prevention of Injury” status. Blenis answered because “that’s not normal, sir.”

But it is normal. Manning’s gender identity is as normal as his computer use. Using Wget, believing WikiLeaks to be a reputable news source in 2010, listening to Lady Gaga, identifying as a gender different from your assigned sex— this is all normal. It just might take another generation to see this. What is out of the ordinary about Pfc Bradley Manning is his extraordinary courage. If Manning is ever released, he will re-enter a world ready to embrace him, advanced with the understanding to recognize his greatness.

### **July 30<sup>th</sup> - Bradley Manning Found Guilty of Espionage and Theft**

Charlie Savage (*New York Times*)

A military judge on Tuesday found Pfc. Bradley Manning not guilty of “aiding the enemy” for his release of hundreds of thousands of military and diplomatic documents to WikiLeaks for publication on the Internet, rejecting the government’s unprecedented effort to bring such a charge in a leak case.

But the judge in the court-martial, Col. Denise R. Lind, convicted Private Manning of six counts of violating the Espionage Act of 1917 and most of the other crimes he was charged with. He faces a theoretical maximum sentence of 136 years in prison, although legal experts said the actual term was likely to be much shorter.

While advocates of open government celebrated his acquittal on the most serious charge, the case still appears destined to stand as a fierce warning to any government employee who is tempted to make public vast numbers of secret documents. Private Manning’s actions lifted a veil on American military and diplomatic activities around the world, and engendered a broad debate over what information should become public, how the government treats leakers, and what happens to those who see themselves as whistle-blowers.

“We always hate to see a government employee who was trying to publicize wrongdoing convicted of a crime, but this case was unusual from the start because of the scope of his release,” said Gregg Leslie of the Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press, adding, “Whistle-blowers always know they are taking risks, and the more they reveal the bigger the threat is against them.”

Colonel Lind said she would issue findings later that would explain her ruling on each of the charges. But she appeared to reject the government’s theory that an employee who gives information about national security matters to an organization that publishes it online for the world to see is guilty of aiding the enemy.

The premise of that theory is that the world includes not just ordinary people who might engage in socially valuable debate, but also enemies like Al Qaeda. Critics have said that it is not clear how giving information to

WikiLeaks is different for legal purposes from giving it to traditional news organizations that publish online.

Yochai Benkler, a Harvard law professor who testified in Private Manning's defense, praised the judge for making an "extremely important decision" that he portrayed as denying "the prosecution's effort to launch the most dangerous assault on investigative journalism and the free press in the area of national security that we have seen in decades."

But, he said, the decades of imprisonment that Private Manning could face "is still too high a price for any democracy to demand of its whistle-blowers."

The sentencing phase will begin on Wednesday, with more than 20 witnesses scheduled to appear for both the prosecution and the defense. It could last for weeks; there are no sentencing guidelines or minimum sentences in the military justice system. Private Manning's appeals could go on for years, legal experts said.

Eugene R. Fidell, who teaches military law at Yale Law School, said Private Manning would not be sentenced to anywhere near the 136-year maximum because Colonel Lind was likely to collapse some charges so he did not "get punished twice for the same underlying conduct."

The case has arisen amid a crackdown by the Obama administration on leaks and a debate about government secrecy. Private Manning is one of seven people to be charged in connection with leaking to the news media during the Obama administration; during all previous administrations, there were three.

The Justice Department recently won an appeals court ruling forcing James Risen, a reporter for The New York Times and an author, to testify in the criminal trial of a former intelligence official accused of being his source. And it has used aggressive tactics in secretly subpoenaing communications records of reporters for Fox News and The Associated Press.

Most reporters watched the proceedings from a closed-circuit feed in a filing center. One who was inside the small courtroom said that Private Manning, 25, appeared relaxed when he entered the room. But as the hour drew near he grew more stoic, and he showed no emotion as he stood while Colonel Lind marched through the litany of charges.

The "aiding the enemy" charge was the first in the list, and she said "not guilty." But she quickly moved into a long list of guilty findings for the bulk of the remaining charges, including six counts of violating the Espionage Act, five of stealing government property, and one violation of the Computer Fraud and Abuse Act. Each carries up to a 10-year sentence.

Colonel Lind accepted Private Manning's guilty pleas on two lesser counts, one of which involved leaking a video of an American helicopter attack in Baghdad. She also found him not guilty of leaking in 2009 a video of an airstrike in Afghanistan; he had admitted leaking it, but said he did so later than the time in the charge.

Steven Aftergood, the director of the project on government secrecy for the Federation of American Scientists, called Private Manning's many other convictions "a weighty verdict that the prosecution would count as a win," but he argued that the "larger significance of the case" for open government may be limited, since most leakers do not disclose entire databases.

Months before the trial, Private Manning confessed to being WikiLeaks' source for videos of airstrikes in which civilians were killed; incident reports from the Afghanistan and Iraq wars; dossiers on detainees at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba; and about 250,000 diplomatic cables.

Private Manning also pleaded guilty to a lesser version of the charges against him, although that was not part of any bargain with prosecutors. The move was unusual, and it appeared aimed at trying to persuade the judge to view Private Manning as having taken responsibility for his actions, while recasting the trial as a test of whether

the government had brought excessive charges in the case.

The government elected to press forward with trying to convict Private Manning of the more serious charges. Prosecutors portrayed him as an “anarchist” and a “traitor” who recklessly endangered lives out of a desire to “make a splash.” The defense portrayed him as a young, naïve, but good-intentioned humanist who wanted to prompt debate and change.

Hours before the verdict, about two dozen supporters of Private Manning gathered at the main gate to Fort Meade displaying signs with messages like “whistle-blowers keep us honest.” After the verdict, his supporters announced a protest rally Tuesday in front of the White House.

But Representatives Mike Rogers of Michigan and C. A. Dutch Ruppersberger of Maryland, the top Republican and Democrat on the House Intelligence Committee, praised the verdict.

“Justice has been served today,” they said in a statement. “Pfc. Manning harmed our national security, violated the public’s trust, and now stands convicted of multiple serious crimes.”

### **July 31<sup>st</sup> - The banality of injustice for Bradley Manning**

Ingrid Burrington (*Waging Nonviolence*)

“Apoplectic with hope” — this was how I described my state of mind as I read Alexa O’Brien’s tweets out of Fort Meade announcing the verdict in *United States vs. Bradley Manning*. In that first “not guilty” verdict there was an adrenaline-filled moment when I thought perhaps this story would not end as I’d resigned myself to it ending. But as details came back in rapid-fire bursts, so too did the guilty verdicts, and the instantaneous analyses thereof, and the “breaking news” alerts on my phone, and the story of Bradley Manning’s trial resumed its sadly familiar narrative.

The moment of a judicial verdict is, in a news cycle, a climax in the narrative. For a little while, in its aftermath, it’s unpacked in a number of ways: the ruling itself is unpacked by legal experts, the press coverage is unpacked by media experts. Sometimes, the resonance of a ruling is unpacked in the streets by the public, in elation or outrage.

Courtrooms are not spaces for outrage or elation. In a court of law, political issues and emotionally charged stories are stripped of their rancor and turned into syntax. Outrage becomes something forensic, clinical, drawn out over an interminable period of time. On the occasions I’ve been in a courtroom I sometimes wonder if this is actually what people mean when they cry out on the streets that what they want is “justice” and that they want it now. Perhaps they meant they wanted a highly technical reinterpretation of events and that they wanted it to be rescheduled, repeatedly.

I’d only been able to attend one day of Manning’s trial. The disparity between the issues within the documents Manning released (such as government accountability and due process for detainees) and those at hand in court (definitions of command-line tools, whether or not Bradley Manning may have read questionable tweets by WikiLeaks) was stark. I walked away from it with the belief that the fact Manning was being tried in a military court at all meant in one way that he’d already lost. The release of classified material by Manning was a challenge to the legitimacy of institutions all over the world that maintain power by brute force and secrecy. And yet the very institution at the heart of this critique, the one with everything to lose, is the one that gets to decide if his trial is fair and impartial. Then again, who could possibly provide a fair and impartial analysis of Manning’s actions, given the vastness of the data released and its international reach?

We accept the idea of the judicial process — of government processes in general — as tedious and forensic as a necessary inevitability. If the process is dispassionate, then, the theory goes, it is fair. But within that tedium, within semantics and syntax, lies more insidious logic that allows abuse of power to go unchecked. For instance, it’s this procedural logic that allows Internet access for the press at Fort Meade to be severely limited — it’s not a Horrible Government Conspiracy, it’s the furloughed Comcast contractors (by the same system that also

furloughs FOIA officers, which prevents release of documents in the public interest). There's no one person to blame for this, per se, but the government certainly benefits if the trial remains difficult to access because of information logjams. The familiar media narrative around a court case rarely bothers to ask whether the court or the government itself is part of the problem — it may critique a judge, it may critique a decision, but rarely is the foundation brought into question.

Despite my lack of faith in the Uniform Code of Military Justice, in the days following attending the trial I desperately wanted to be back at Fort Meade. I wanted to be among the people who have given not just this past summer but entire years of their lives to Manning's case. I wanted to drive Fort Meade's bizarre suburban landscape, home to the NSA and more seemingly benign things like a movie theater showing *The Internship*. I wanted to have my bag searched by bored-looking young men in an air-conditioned trailer. I wanted to cross paths in the base PX with contractors and soldiers who couldn't care less about the court martial. I wanted to face Hannah Arendt's banality of evil straight in the eye and tell its story, join the chorus of people who have been telling its story again and again until maybe the story took hold, and as a public we'd realize what was happening and we'd stop it.

Col. Denise Lind had prohibited both prosecution and defense from submitting evidence about the actual harm or impact of Manning's leaks and from considering his motives during the trial. It's now, during the sentencing phase, that motives and impact will be considered in court. Perhaps now the image of impartiality can be pierced. Perhaps I'll be as surprised as I was upon seeing the first "not guilty" verdict, and the court will acknowledge that the world has changed since WikiLeaks published Manning's documents, and that the government and military must change accordingly.

In all likelihood, *United States vs. Bradley Manning* will continue to serve as a smokescreen for justice and, worse, establish greater precedent for practices that have stifled and will continue to harm journalists, whistleblowers, activists and the American public. Because meanwhile, Fort Meade will continue to function. The construction at Fort Meade of new NSA buildings will be finished, and while congressional hearings about the NSA's actions continue so too will its expansion. The Comcast contractors and the FOIA officers will continue to be furloughed, and tedium will continue to be the preferred tactic of the U.S. government for publicly cracking down on dissent.

And I will keep trying to tell this story until it takes. I went to Fort Meade to bear witness and because I felt a responsibility to Manning for being someone who had taken a risk greater than I could ever imagine. After the experience I feel an even greater responsibility to support others taking such risks (many of whom acted after, and were inspired by, Manning), and to take risks myself. In the face of procedural banality from a state desperately trying to maintain a legitimacy it lost a long time ago I am, and continue to be, apoplectic with hope.

### **July 31<sup>st</sup> - Next phase of Manning trial: What's at stake in sentencing**

Natasha Lennard (*Salon*)

Whistle-blower could face 136 years in jail. Even with no "aiding the enemy" charge, a worrying precedent is set

Based on the verdict ruled in the military court-martial of Pfc. Bradley Manning Tuesday, the whistle-blower could face 136 years in jail. He was cleared of the troubling (and most grave) "aiding the enemy" charge, but military Judge Col. Denise Lind found the defendant guilty of six counts of violating the Espionage Act for handing a vast trove of classified U.S. military documents to WikiLeaks.

As Manning's ordeal moves from verdict to sentencing (a portion of the trial that is expected to last some weeks), a different set of fulcrums surrounding the whistle-blower case deserves attention.

Above all, the issue of legal precedents set by the judge's verdicts must be considered alongside the ideological precedents set by the specifics of the punishment that have been and will be exacted against Manning. What is already clear, evidenced by Manning's lengthy and often torturous military pretrial detention, is that the U.S. government is willing (to chilling effect) to strip individuals like Manning — who expose the darkest sides of

U.S. military operations — of most every right afforded its citizens. What has happened to Manning's body — the Army private's very personhood — sends a chilling message to those who would follow in his footsteps.

Kevin Gosztola, who has reported in depth on every twist and turn of the Manning case, outlined the shape that the sentencing arguments will take:

Military prosecutors will call witnesses first. Two witnesses will be called today – one will testify in an open session and the other will testify in a closed session.

The defense will put on its sentencing case and call witnesses after the government, and each side has more than twenty witnesses on their lists.

Unlike civilian courts, sentencing begins immediately after the verdict. Evidence that will be heard by the judge will include the impact of the crime on victims or the unit's morale, Manning's history as a trained intelligence analyst and any other extenuating or mitigating circumstances that might be relevant to the offenses he was convicted of committing.

There will be a presentation of sentencing instructions by the government and the defense, urging military judge, Army Col. Denise Lind, on how to ultimately determine the length of his sentence.

Free speech advocates and press freedom groups breathed a collective sigh of relief at the decision not to convict on the “aiding the enemy” charge, since a ruling against Manning on this charge would have set troubling precedent for journalists, publishers and online denizens publishing any material critical of the U.S. government that may fall into enemy hands (an easy situation to imagine in this digital age). It is troubling enough that the government prosecutors argued for such a charge, and were permitted to bring it in the first place (especially in this era of ill-defined national security enemies and fast-paced information sharing). With her “not guilty” verdict in this instance, we are saved the establishment of one such worrying legal precedent — a “tiny sliver of justice” as Glenn Greenwald put it.

But as Bradley Manning Support Network member Nathan Fuller noted on Twitter, with the sentencing portion of the trial, “no minimum [sentences are] required and new evidence [is] allowed. This fight is far from over.” If verdicts are based in the logic of what is or is not legal, then sentencing is based in the far murkier juridical landscape of punishment, deserts and example-making. The punitive aspect of any justice system is at base (and historically) about setting examples by exacting punishment on the site of the body — the guilty body is imprisoned and denied the freedoms afforded the innocent. Before even deemed guilty, Manning's body was denied sunlight, isolated, stripped naked and regularly and aggressively manhandled. The soldier is expected by legal experts to spend decades in prison. As in a case like Manning's, the mistreatment and removal from society of his person, and the way in which the whistle-blower has and has not been put in public view, is all important (and will become increasingly so) during the sentencing phase of the trial.

Manning spoke once, eruditely and at length, during a pretrial hearing to offer a statement of motives. Since motives are considered admissible in the sentencing portion of the trial, Manning may again be called to the stand by the defense team. This will likely be one of the last times the whistle-blower will have a chance to speak outside of a jail in many years.

The chant “I am Bradley Manning,” popular around support rallies that have dotted the nation and beyond throughout his detention, carries a lie and a truth at the same time. We are not Bradley Manning: We are not the 25-year-old military analyst, facing a possible 136-year sentence, having been held in conditions in military briggs that a U.N. torture expert deemed “cruel and unusual,” for doing what we thought was right when faced with horrifying truths. We are not, in that sense, Bradley Manning at all. But insofar as Bradley Manning has become both a symbol and an example, we could indeed be Bradley Manning. The U.S. government has turned the soldier into an example and that very point is made: Anyone who speaks out against the actions of the U.S. government or military like Manning did could be treated like Manning. It's a truth Ed Snowden knows and fears all too well. Crucially, insofar as Manning has been denied the basic rights purportedly afforded citizens during

his detention so far, we are not Bradley Manning, but anyone who so dares could be.

Indeed, it stands out as deeply relevant that Manning's gender identity remains, in the view of the public, ambiguous. Chat logs with Adrian Lamo (who eventually sold out the whistle-blower) suggest that Manning may self-identify as female and prefer to go by "Brianna." But such has been the whistle-blower's punishment that even the ability to gender self-determine has been removed, as the soldier was held in a state of exception. Bradley Manning is an example, exempted from a world in which people have voices with which to speak about their gender and their desires — such conventions of personhood are denied the prisoner. Herein lies the crux: Even Manning (the individual) cannot be Bradley Manning, a figure that can only, under the weight of fierce state persecution, exist as an example until he (or she) is free and that promises to be many years from now.

### **21 Jul - Happy Birthday Assata! by Sundiata Acoli**

*We're including both Sundiata Acoli's birthday wishes to Assata Shakur as well as his plea to get folks, both in out of prison, to sign on to a National Conference of Black Lawyers (NCBL) petition calling to have Assata removed from the "Most Wanted Terrorists" list.*

#### **MORE:**

May you have many many more – and may the support of people everywhere be strong enough to ensure that you have many more despite the declaration of war on you, the Black masses and other oppressed people by the sitting u.s. President.

It is well known that u.s. Presidents carry out both public and private agendas on behalf of their voting-constituencies as well as their rich powerful private benefactors.

Much of Richard M. Nixon's Welfare Reform policies and "War of Drugs" campaigns were simply covers for his private low-intensity "War on the Black masses" and other people of color as portrayed in notes by his White House Chief of Staff in The Haldeman Diaries:

"Monday, April 28, 1969 – [Nixon] emphasized that you have to face the fact that the whole problem is really the Blacks. The key is to devise a system that recognizes this while not appearing to. Problem with the overall welfare plan is that it forces poor Whites into the same position as Blacks. Feels we have to get rid o the veil of hypocrisy and guilt and face reality.

Pointed out that there has never in history been an adequate Black Nation, and they are the only race of which this is true. Says Africa is hopeless, the worst is Liberia, which we built." p. 53

Bill Clinton used the slogan, "To change welfare as we know it," as his cover for continuing the "War on Blacks" and other oppressed masses. By the time he left office, Clinton had kicked more Black women off welfare and put more Black men in prison than any other u.s. President, before or since. Also by then, the terms "crime," "drugs" and Ronald Reagan's "Welfare Queen" had long been crystalized in the Amerikan psyche as code words for "Black."

The War in Iraq represented George "W." Bush's overt War on Terror and his treatment of the New Orleans' flood victims adequately represented his covert "War on Blacks."

Barack Obama took office, ended the War in Iraq and shifted the focus to the War in Afghanistan and the Pakistani Border Regions – on Al-Queda and the Taliban – and on the Islamist in the Mideast and Afrika. He now proclaims an end to the Global War on Terrorism by bringing the troops home from Afghanistan (actually a retreat from the Mideast) to "pivot toward Asia" while fomenting fratricidal wars throughout Afrika and shifting focus again, this time, to the War on Domestic Terrorism with special emphasis that it will be "a return to the status of the '70s." But in the '70s the word "terrorist" was also just another code word for "Black."

The problem today is that most perpetrators of u.s. domestic terrorism – lethal public bombings, mass-murder shootings in schools, colleges, religious sites, theaters, military bases, etc – are White or of Mideastern extraction. Still, less than 3 weeks after 2 young White men bombed the Boston Marathon, Obama put Assata Shakur, a 66 year old Black woman in Cuba 29 years, on the Most Wanted Terrorist list, the same list from which he selects his drone-kill targets. So for all who have been debating, waiting and wondering when and

what, if anything, Obama will do for the poor neglected and needy Black masses, he has just given his answer! Obama's War on Domestic Terrorism, like previous Presidents' Reform of the Welfare system and their War on Drugs, War on Crime, War on Terror campaigns etc., will be nothing less than the resurrection of an amped-up COINTELPRO and the continuation of a stepped up covert War on the Black masses, others of color, the poor and oppressed in attempt to keep us suppressed, impoverished, mass imprisoned and in a permanent state of dependency and second class status.

#### WHEN YOU TOUCH A WOMAN, YOU STRIKE A ROCK

The "up" side is that Obama's's declaration acted as a wake-up call to masses of Black and other oppressed. People of all nationalities and walks of life, both hi and low, are holding teach-ins on Assata's life and her case and signing up petitions calling for the "Most Wanted Terrorist" designation and the \$2 million "Dead or Alive" bounty to be rescinded. The organizers of such events are asked to send in signed petitions and info.

#### **August 2nd - Prisoners urged to sign NCBL petition: Assata is not a terrorist!**

On July 16, 2013, Assata Shakur's birthday, prisoners in FCI (Federal Correctional Institution) Cumberland spontaneously showed their strong support for her and the National Conference of Black Lawyers (NCBL), whose online petition calls for Assata's removal from the government's "Most Wanted Terrorists" list and revocation of the \$2 million bounty on her.

The prisoners signed petitions similar to NCBL's petition for Assata and forwarded the lists of signatures to NCBL's New York City office. We ask and strongly urge other prisoners to support NCBL's online petition (printed below) by collecting their own list of prisoners signatures' calling for Assata Shakur's removal from the "Most Wanted Terrorists" list and revocation of the \$2 million bounty on her – and sending the list of signatures to the National Conference of Black Lawyers, P.O. Box 240583, Borough Hall, New York NY 11424.

Contact political prisoner by writing: Sundiata Acoli (Squire), 39794-066, FCI Cumberland, P.O. Box 1000, Cumberland MD 21501.

NCBL Petition on Assata Shakur

President Barack Obama  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama:

We write to urge you to overrule the FBI's decision to put Assata Shakur, aka Joanne Chesimard, on the "Most Wanted Terrorists" list, with \$1 Million FBI Reward Offered for Information Leading to Her Capture and Return," as phrased by the FBI's May 2, 2013, announcement.

This \$1 million combines with the \$1 million bounty already offered by New Jersey. We know of no support for the claims by the FBI in making the announcement that Ms. Shakur has used her asylum in Cuba to "promote" "terrorist ideology" and espouse "terrorism." We ask that the FBI be directed to publicly produce documentation to support these claims and that until and unless this is done, its officials be directed to withdraw these assertions.

The FBI's accompanying actions should also be immediately withdrawn for the following additional reasons:

President Obama, commenting on the Boston Marathon bombings last month, you declared, "Anytime bombs are used to target innocent civilians, it is an act of terror."

This is consistent with the generally accepted view of terrorism as "the calculated use of violence or threat of violence against civilians for the purpose of intimidation or coercion or changing government policy."

There is no evidence that Ms. Shakur has taken part in any violence or threats of violence against civilians to intimidate or coerce changes in government policies.

Going back 40 years, the May 1973 incident which led to her only criminal convictions was initiated by the New Jersey State Police. They pulled the vehicle she was in off the highway based on an allegedly defective tail light.

This type of police action was consistent with tactics used to harass Black people generally, particularly Black males, and sometimes provoke incidents, particularly against members of Black militant organizations during that period.

The loss of life on both sides ensuing from that stop was clearly regrettable; and, we do not intend to retry here her controversial trial and conviction before an all-white jury.

We know that there were serious questions of fairness sufficient to draw international attention and for Ms. Shakur to be granted political asylum in Cuba nearly 30 years ago, even though Cuba has returned others wanted by U.S. authorities.

We believe putting Ms. Shakur's name on the FBI's "Most Wanted Terrorists" list and increasing the \$1 million bounty to a total of \$2 million, 40 years after the fact, only makes sense in light of recent press reports regarding your administration's consideration to take Cuba off the U.S. list of nations that allegedly sponsor terrorism, a designation which is so unfounded that it has become an embarrassment to our country. Opponents of steps towards normalization with Cuba have seized on this aged and disputed case in what we view as a transparent attempt to recast this history into today's fears, using Assata Shakur as a pawn in their political maneuvering.

The FBI's participation in this political maneuvering by joining with New Jersey to offer a \$2 million bounty is a dangerous act, encouraging someone to try to kidnap her, breaking Cuban law as well as being in violation of international law. Should the offer be taken seriously by someone, the foreseeable result would be bloodshed, if not also a major international incident.

The FBI's stated rationale for these actions is also regrettable and dangerous because it equates radical beliefs favoring fundamental social and economic change with "terrorism." This serves to intimidate and chill others who dare to speak out against United States' domestic and international policies. In this regard, these actions directly undermine the protections given all citizens under the First Amendment to the United States Constitution.

Finally, this decision continues to racialize the United States' criminal punishment system, a system that since the enslavement of African peoples has targeted Africans and African Americans for harsher punishments than those given particularly to similarly situated whites.

The accusation of terrorism has fallen prey to this continuing travesty of making the color of "crime" – now the color of "terrorism" – Black. One needs only recall the early reports of who was suspected of the Boston Marathon bombing to support this conclusion: The first reports were of a darker-skinned male, possibly African-American. This message scrolled continuously on CNN for a number of hours and then "African-American male" was deleted, leaving darker-skinned male. But the alleged perpetrators were far from "darker skinned."

In conclusion, we ask that you stand behind the statements made by Attorney General Holder when he took office in 2009, addressing assistant U.S. attorneys, and make those statements applicable to the FBI:

"Your job is in every case, every decision you make, to do the right thing. Anybody who asks you to do something other than that is to be ignored." The FBI's recent actions are far from the "right thing" for this country and we urge you to reverse them.

The NCBL petition is available online at <http://www.change.org/petitions/president-barack-obama-remove-assata-shakur-from-the-fbi-s-most-wanted-terrorists-list>.

### **24 Jul - Judge Denies Motion to Dismiss Arson Charges and Moves Trial to January 2014**

*The NATO 3 have had their trial postponed. That means they will remain imprisoned in the Cook County Jail until then. It also means they really need both correspondence and books. Unlike many prisoners, they can receive books sent directly. More information on the book drive is at <https://nato5support.wordpress.com/book-drive>*

#### **MORE:**

In addition to denying the motion to dismiss the arson charges, the judge discussed the defense's request for the state to produce documentation regarding three separate First Amendment investigation applications and worksheets. The judge had conducted an in camera review of the documentation to determine whether they were relevant to the case and had probative value. The judge said that the prosecution had already been ordered to turn over the NATO investigation documentation but that the other documentation was not relevant to or probative about the charges facing the defendants because none of them was listed as a target or intended subject of the investigations.

The next issue discussed was the defense's motion to compel discovery about the searches of neighboring apartments to the one that two of the defendants were arrested in. The defense argued that they had produced evidence of these searches by submitting a motion with a copy of a newspaper article quoting residents of those apartments talking about their experiences being raided, handcuffed, and interrogated and harassed by the officers. The prosecutors argued that nothing in the newspaper article showed that the residents of other apartments were questioned about the defendants or about anything concerning the investigation into these alleged crimes, so no documentation of those searches, if any existed, is relevant to this case. The judge ordered the State to check with the police about documentation of those other searches and to provide them to the defense if they exist and to submit an affidavit saying they don't exist if this is the case.

Concerning the trial date, the judge thought that pushing it out till next March was too long. After much back-and-forth about schedules and the time needed to prepare the defense, the judge suggested January 2nd and 3rd for jury selection, with the trial itself starting on January 7th or 8th. He expected to use one jury (i.e., for a joint trial for all three defendants) and for the trial to take two or three weeks. The defense and prosecution must work out their schedules to make these dates work and send him a notice of this scheduling agreement when they have it. The judge will also check his trial calendar and they will set the dates for certain at the next hearing. The defense then asked for a larger courtroom for trial and the judge said he would look into it, but they should expect to have trial there.

### **24 Jul - On questions of status: Puerto Rico's relation to the US and the fate of Oscar López Rivera**

*We're including a recent article that appeared in the Huffington Post about Puerto Rican independence and Oscar López Rivera.*

#### **MORE:**

The next couple of weeks will mark two important milestones for the history of the Puerto Rican people. On August 1, the US Senate's Energy and Natural Resources Committee will hold hearings about the island's status, responding to a recent non-binding plebiscite in which the majority of voters expressed their disagreement with the current status. These hearings will take place exactly one week to the day of the 115th anniversary of the event that paved the way to this status, the US invasion of Puerto Rico on July 25, 1898. Many look at the hearings full of expectations, hoping that they might allow the island to once and for all clarify its relation to the United States. Others are more cautious, assuming that this is just one of many other futile attempts to clarify a relationship that has been very complex from its origin and a catalyst for passions of different persuasions.

Much will be written about the hearings and their results. Today I'd like to address another aspect of the passions

surrounding the relationship between the United States and Puerto Rico that has been steadily gaining the attention not only of Puerto Ricans, but of the international community as a whole: the fate of Oscar López Rivera, who has already served 32 years in prison for the charge of "seditious conspiracy," a statute enacted on July 1861 to detain and punish Confederate rebels.

A Bronze Star decorated Vietnam veteran, he was arrested in 1981 for his association with the Fuerzas Armadas de Liberación Nacional (FALN), a pro-independence organization responsible for a series of bombings between 1974 and 1983. López Rivera was convicted on conspiracy charges and was not linked to any deaths or injuries related to the bombings, circumstances that led President Clinton to pardon him along with 16 other FALN members in 1999. At the time López Rivera refused the pardon, as two of his comrades were not included in it. Ironically, these two, Marie Haydée Beltrán Torres and Carlos Alberto Torres, were released in 2009 and 2010 while Oscar López Rivera remains imprisoned.

President Obama's recent visit to Africa at a time close to the 32nd anniversary of López Rivera's imprisonment led many to make comparisons between him and Nelson Mandela. Mandela, after all, was a leader of an armed movement dedicated to the independence of his people, who, like López Rivera, refused on several occasions conditional releases which would break his principles. In an eloquent editorial, Manuel de J González wondered whether Barack Obama talked to his daughters about Mandela's armed struggle as they visited his cell in Robben Island, and whether he could link this Nobel Peace Laureate's trajectory to that of the Puerto Rican.

At around the same time Democracy Now! aired a 15-minute segment dedicated to his case. In it, another Nobel Peace Laureate, Archbishop Desmond Tutu called for his "immediate and unconditional release" in the spirit of "reconciliation and peace."

Archbishop Tutu is not the only Nobel Peace Laureate to call for Oscar López Rivera's release. He has been joined by Northern Ireland's Mairead Corrigan Maguire.

And by East Timor's former president José Ramos-Horta.

In a recent editorial, Mayra Montero wondered why many are unaware of Oscar López Rivera's case. In order to remember him, I must close with his own words, an open letter published on January 14, 2013, commemorating his seventieth birthday and, within the confines of his prison in Leavenworth, expressing gratitude for his life.

## **24 Jul - Four protesters arrested at Enbridge pipeline construction site charged with felony**

*Four people arrested July 22nd at the site of a pipeline protest northwest of Stockbridge, Michigan have been charged with a felonious resisting or obstructing police and trespassing.*

### **MORE:**

Vickie Rose Hamlin, 59, of Michigan City; Lisa Michelle Leggio, 35, of Holland; Barbara Ellen Carter, 22, of Detroit; and William Michael Lawrence, 22, of East Lansing are charged with resisting or obstructing police, a felony, and trespassing, a misdemeanor, according to a statement from the Ingham County Sheriff's Office.

Seven others were arrested, charged with trespassing and released on bond. Their names have not been released because they were yet to be arraigned.

Carter, Lawrence and Hamlin were given \$2,500 bonds. Leggio, who has a felony history, has a \$5,000 bond, according to the sheriff's office statement.

There were 20 to 30 demonstrators gathered early Monday, July 22, at the site of an Enbridge gas pipeline construction project in the area of Grimes Road and Dexter Trail roads, the sheriff's office reported.

The individuals are part of the Michigan Coalition Against Tar Sands and were working to halt the efforts of

Enbridge, which is replacing and increasing the capacity of its crude oil and petroleum pipeline through 10 Michigan counties.

“Enbridge itself has consistently demonstrated that their sole priority is their own bottom line, not the health and safety of the people of Michigan, our ecosystem and even their own workers,” the group said in a statement.

By trespassing on the construction site and “illegally gaining access to the equipment,” the protesters put their own safety and the safety of emergency responders and pipeline workers at risk, according to an emailed statement from an Enbridge representative.

## **25 Jul – New Writings and Interview with Mumia Abu-Jamal**

*We're including a great interview with Mumia on the topic of Black music as well as transcripts of his latest commentaries.*

### **MORE:**

#### **July 25<sup>th</sup> - Henri Alleg: 1921 -2013**

Henri Alleg was a journalist's journalist.

Of French-Algerian ancestry, he witnessed the horrors and brutalities of the Algerian War personally.

What distinguished him from his colleagues was his willingness to speak out against the State, which was waging an anti-colonial war based in large part on state terror and torture.

Alleg defied the state by writing accounts of such French torture, and incurred the wrath of the authorities.

They placed his name on their round-up list, and when they finally found him at the home of a friend (mathematician Maurice Audin) they took him to a suburb of Algiers called El Blar, where they repeatedly utilized torture to force him to name the names of his sources and contacts.

In his *La Question*, his memoirs from the times of torture Alleg recounts the State's use of electro-shock, sodium pentothal (truth serum), and yes –water boarding to break him.

And yet, incredibly – incredibly! – He did not break. No name of a source or of a colleague, slipped through his lips.

Henri made up his mind. Not only would he endure, he would die, rather than betray others.

When his torturers saw that, they recognized it. They knew that they could kill him, but they also knew that they couldn't break him.

Transferred to Lodi prison camp, Henri Alleg made notes of his torture, and found innovative ways to smuggle them out of this den of darkness.

Those smuggled notes and scraps of paper became his memoir, published in 1958 – *La Question*.

It electrified France, for it exposed the secret torture system that permeated the colony of Algeria, it was a sensation.

Henri Alleg did not break in El Blar. He did not die. He did not tell. He did not betray. He wrote.

And the world was better for it.

Henri Alleg: (Born) July, 1921 – (Died) July 2013, with a lot of living in between.

Henri Alleg, gentle, small in stature, but a giant in his heart, remembered.

**July 25<sup>th</sup> - BEYOND TRAYVON: When the Personal Ain't Political**

The Trayvon Martin case is rightly the straw that broke the camel's back, for it shows, with unusual clarity, how Black life is so easily trivialized.

But it is not alone in this endeavor.

How the corporate media has responded to this tragedy is its own form of trivialization; a feeding frenzy of sheer spectacle, the exploitation of emotion, and endless, directionless discussion, leading less to light than to commercials.

For the media explores the episodic, while it ignores the systematic.

Thus, Trayvon's case attracts the lights and videos, but the many, many others who fall, especially to police violence, draws little interest.

Absent from most discussions is the targeting of a system that cages more people than any in history. Lost from the orgy of spectacle is the hidden faces of mass incarceration, that impacts millions.

For, attention to the episodic elicits tears, while contemplation on the systematic brings the challenge of change..

If "Stand Your Ground" gets repealed, it does not change the system that treats many, many youths as expendable.

Several months ago, by just one vote the Supreme Court condemned the practice of sending juveniles to life terms in prison without possibility of parole.

Of all the jurisdictions in America – indeed, in the whole, wide world – Pennsylvania ranked first in juvenile life incarcerations. First.

But juveniles aren't only the targets of the prison industry, they face shuttered schools, rampant joblessness, and the fear and loathing of their elders.

They face tomorrows of emptiness.

They face the faceless fury of a system that damns them to half-lives at their birth.

Trayvon is one; they are many.

**August 3<sup>rd</sup> - Mumia interviewed on Black Music by Michael Coard**

**MICHAEL COARD:** This is the Radio Prison Show, which is a segment of Radio Courtroom, here at 900 AM WURD, featuring Mumia Abu-Jamal. As you recall, last month we has Mumia on for the premiere of our Radio Prison Show. And we're gonna talk with Mumia about a number of issues, but for those who might not know the name Mumia Abu-Jamal, I guess if you've been in a cage somewhere for the last couple of decades, let me tell you who is: He's a father, He's a husband, he's an author, and he's a temporary prison inmate but a permanent revolutionary.

Without further ado, Mumia Abu-Jamal. How are you today?

**MUMIA ABU-JAMAL:** Fair-to-middlin', Michael. It's a good day. A good day to be alive. And a good day to be talkin' to you.

**MICHAEL:** Well said. I gotta tell you, Mumia, last month when we did our premier show, or our debut show, it was standing room only, if you can have standing room only for a radio show. Folks were really, really blown away. I offered them to e-mail some questions so that we could raise those questions with you, but I told them that for the first few shows, we wanna kinda hear your voice and what you have to say. We're now in the month of July and we're gonna have you on the first Wednesday of every month. But one of the things we didn't get a chance to talk about last time, Mumia, is music. You amaze me every time I hear about you. And what I mean by that is this. I know of your work as an advocate for the dispossessed, the underdog, your fight as a revolutionary, but that's not the only thing that Mumia Abu-Jamal is. In fact from talkin' to other folks, I found out that you know much more about music than the so-called music professionals. And in connection with that, someone said, "Hey Mike, who don't you talk to Mumia about last month, about Black Music Month and what it means to him, what it means to our people and what it means to revolutionaries, because a lot of people think that if you're out there on the front lines fighting for the people, then you can't appreciate music." Talk a little bit about all of that, beginning with the importance of music, if it is important, and Black music in particular.

**MUMIA:** Well, I think Black music is vitally important. When you think back to our ancestors who came here from various parts of mostly West Africa, the one thing that carried us through the dark night of slavery was our music. Why would it be criminal to play the drums? What smart observers of African people learned was that in Africa and in other parts of the Americas, people could carry messages over stretches of space through using drums. The communicated. So they made that illegal. What we did is what we always do. We used what we had to succeed and prevail. Brothers and sisters in chains would dance, their bare feet against the Earth. They would clap. They would sing. And we sang. . . Let me give you an example.

**MICHAEL:** Yes, yes.

**MUMIA:** I read many years ago one of the greatest books written by one of the greatest Black people in America called The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, first published in 1845. I'm gonna give you a brief quote from him.

**MICHAEL:** Please.

**MUMIA:** It's on the power of Black spirituals so you can see what I'm talking about: "I did not, when a slave, understand the deep meaning of those rude and apparently incoherent songs. I was myself within the circle, so that I neither saw nor heard as those without might see and hear. They told a tale of woe which was then altogether beyond my feeble comprehension. There were tones loud, long and deep. They breathed the prayer and complaint of souls boiling over with the bitterest anguish. Every tone was a testimony against slavery, and a prayer to God for deliverance from chains. The hearing of those wild notes always depressed my spirit, and filled me with ineffable sadness. I have frequently found myself in tears while hearing them. The mere recurrence of those songs, even now, afflicts me. And while I am writing these lines, an expression of feeling has already found its way down my cheek. To those songs I trace my first glimmering perception of the dehumanizing character of slavery. I can never get rid of that conception. Those songs still follow me to deepen my hatred of slavery and quicken my sympathies for my brethren in bonds."

That's Frederick Douglass. who gives us some sense of the power that our people were able to communicate, the deep feeling they were able to communicate in our spirituals --our first form of music in the Americas. And, you know, because that was the one place we could express ourselves, you saw an explosion, generation after generation, of Black people expressing themselves through music. And this was the place where we said: We're human, we demand freedom, and this is what we feel. So it was a way to communicate not just with each other, but with the whole world. And now what is black music, but a world music? They listen to rap every place on the planet. So music is a revolutionary tool if used correctly.

**MICHAEL:** Well said, Mumia, and I'm so glad that at the beginning of your comments you made it clear that you were quoting the Narrative of Frederick Douglass from 1845. If you had not made that clear, I would have thought that meant John Coltrane from 1965. Because it. . .

**MUMIA:** (laughs) Sounds like it, doesn't it?

**MICHAEL:** Absolutely. I mean it's just so powerful. Before we run out of time, Mumia, I wanna hear your

views on rap, about hip hop. I've read your writings on many of the artists. What's your comment on it? it seems to me --I teach a hip hop course—and it seems to me that many folks, say over the age of 40, frown upon it. They say it's destructive, they say it's negative, they say it's nothing like the good old days of the golden era of hip hop. What's your response to all that?

**MUMIA:** If I may, I have two answers. And once again I use a quote, one from memory and one from a note I wrote to myself in anticipation of these moments.

When Miles, the great Miles Davis was alive and playing all kinds of music, people criticized him for his changes, his adaptations, his creations. And Miles, being Miles, said: "There's only two kinds of music —good music and bad music." Well, there are different kinds of rap —good rap and bad rap. What turns you on is obviously good. What doesn't reach you is obviously bad for you. But I understand that for guys your age and my age, it wasn't written for us. It is made for a younger generation, as you know as a teacher.

**MICHAEL:** Yes, yes.

**MUMIA:** I have another quote, and this is from Jay-Z's recent book *Decoded*. This is the quote that really struck me because there's a lot in it: "I feel like we as rappers, DJs, and producers, were able to smuggle some of the magic of that dying civilization out in our music and use it to build a new world. We were kids without fathers. So we found our fathers on wax and on the streets and in history. In a way, that was a gift. We got to pick and choose the ancestors who had inspired the world that we were going to make for ourselves. That was part of the ethos of that time and place, and it got built into the culture we created. Our fathers were gone. Usually, because they just bounced. But we took their old records and used them to build something fresh "

That's powerful on a lot of levels..

**MICHAEL:** Yes, it is. I never thought the day would come where I would be quoting Mumia and Jay-Z in the same sentence, but that's exactly what I'm going to do. Mumia, you mentioned that just like everything else, there's good and bad. There's good rap and bad rap. What's your position on the so-called vulgarity, the profanity even from the so-called enlightened or progressive rappers. Do you see that as a turn-off, as something negative?

**MUMIA:** Well I'm not doctrinaire on that because, you know, being around MOVE people for wo many years, I used to hear them use what's called "profanity." But this is how they define it. They say there's nothing more profane than a bomb. There's nothing more profane than an A-bomb or a hydrogen bomb. And people build them and use them but you don't think of that as profanity. On the other hand, if you hear a word, it will freak you out. So they were trying to say that, you know words have their power, certainly, but also governments and states have another kind of their power, and they use their law, their government, their armies, their cops, all of that, to inflict a kind of obscenity on people every day, but you don't think of it in those terms. I don't get freaked out by words because, hey, we all use them. It's what we use them for.

**MICHAEL:** Speaking of words, I understand that you use a lot of them to talk some of the great musicians you've interviewed, not the least of which, I just found out today you interviewed Bob Marley. Talk a little bit about that.

**MUMIA:** Wow! Uh, what was the year? I think it was 1980. He had come to Philadelphia and was at a hotel downtown. I called his agent and arranged an interview. I went down to the hotel and me and several members of my family sat down and we just, well, we imbibed in the holy sacrament.

**MICHAEL:** (Laughs) Well said, well said. Communion, yes.

**MUMIA:** But it was huge and powerful. (Laughs) Bob Marley really was a beautiful soul. A loving Black soul. A loving world soul. We did perhaps a twenty-minute interview.

**MICHAEL:** We're still here, Mumia. We can hear you. Yes.

**MUMIA:** He was just speaking about how he would love to see Black people in this country get turned on to Rasta and listen to reggae music, wear their hair long in dreads and think about Africa and stuff like that. I think it hurt him that so few black people in this country either came to his concerts or listened to his music or to other

reggae artists. And that was true then. I don't think it's true now. But it hurt him. And we really had a wonderful, wonderful interview. It was a highlight in my life, certainly, to meet one of my musical heroes, Bob Marley.

**MICHAEL:** And speaking of wonderful interviews, this wonderful one is about to come to an end. Let me put you on the spot, Mumia. Tell us in the last forty seconds, who some of your favorite MCs and hip hop artists are. Surely Public Enemy, Dead Prez, the Coup, Immortal Technique.

**MUMIA:** I just like brothers who bring truth and who bring and bring a lot of soul and spirit to their music. KRS, of course, is a legendary figure. There are a lot of good, talented brothers out there, and sisters, too.

**MICHAEL:** Immortal Technique. What's your view?

**MUMIA:** Immortal Tech is a monster.

### **25 Jul - A Message From Lynne Stewart**

Lynne Stewart's attorneys filed an emergency Motion (2255) with Judge Koetl seeking Lynne's "immediate conditional release" pending consideration of the legal issues presented in their brief. The next hearing is on Thursday, August 8th, and there is a call for public support on That day. We've included details on the August 8th rally, as well as an update and message from Lynne.

#### **MORE:**

By Now we will have filed papers which take us back into Federal Court in New York City to request that Judge Koetl overturn the barbaric decision by the Bureau of Prisons and allow me to leave this empty loveless Prison and go home to People and Places familiar and beloved. I certainly am sick enough—even my oncologist revised her prognosis down to 18 months now. However, my spirit remains undaunted and when I compare myself to other far worse off than I am—the Guantanamo and Pelican Bay prisoners, Marie Mason, Afra Siddiqui, Hugo Yogi Pinell, those under death Penalty like Kevin Cooper, the remaining Angola 2, Ruchel Magee and my fellow New Yorkers Jalil, Sekou, Herman, Seth, David, Abdul—let me stop before I choke up here... I know we MUST win my fight and the struggle for all other political prisoners to be freed. And then we must struggle for all to be free in this country.

How much can we, the People, take? Their austerity is barbaric cruelty with food stamps gone and public housing unavailable, permanently. How long can the 1% continue to rule and the corporations call the shots? There is so much wrong but we are not allowed to despair since we have been given sight in this land of the blind and hopeless and heartless, So, that said, let's once again get out there as often as needs be—for all the causes, for all the humanity. for the future. Forward, ever Forward!

### **July 31<sup>st</sup> - Update on Lynne Stewart's court hearing**

Ten minutes ago the hearing today before Judge John Koetl concluded. The following is a synopsis of what transpired as reported in a telephone call with Ralph Poynter:

Lynne Stewart's attorneys filed an emergency Motion (2255) with Judge Koetl seeking Lynne's "immediate conditional release" pending consideration of the legal issues presented in their brief.

The judge asked why they chose to exhaust their one time right to an emergency motion. The Defense response was that Lynne Stewart is terminally ill. The luxury of time is not available to her or her counsel. An expeditious response from the Court is imperative in the face of her medical condition and in the light of the Bureau of Prisons' unwarranted denial of her application for compassionate release and protracted delays that could be expected if she submitted another application.

The Prosecution, acting for the Justice Department of Barack Obama, asserted that the Judge has no

standing because there is no motion for Compassionate Release before him from Federal Bureau of Prisons Director Charles E. Samuels, Jr. as specified in the 1984 Sentencing Act.

The Defense presented a Brief which documents that the Federal Bureau of Prisons had violated separation of powers as the 1984 Congressional Statute assigns to the Court the right to modify a prison sentence in light of facts not available at the time of trial, notably those pertaining to terminal illness. "The BOP has implemented its own interpretation and refused to notify the sentencing judge of objectively 'extraordinary and compelling circumstances,' including but not limited to imminent death, unless, in its own judgment, a motion should be granted. Between 2000 and 2008, on average, 21.3 motions were filed each year. In about 24% of those motions, the prisoner died before the district court ever had a chance to rule on the motion."

"Lynne Stewart is dying," wrote her attorneys. She does not want to die in prison or become another statistic of someone who dies while the Bureau of Prisons delays its reconsideration of another application for compassionate release that she plans to file soon.

Judge Koetl gave a directive to the Federal Attorney to set out its case by next Tuesday and also to explain why the Bureau of Prisons has refused to disclose or release the records that provide the basis for its denial of Lynne Stewart's recent application for compassionate release.

Lynne Stewart's defense attorneys will have one day to answer before the next hearing scheduled for Thursday, August 8 at 2 p.m.

Judge Koetl has the authority to mandate immediate conditional release to Lynne Stewart.

### **August 8<sup>th</sup> - Rally for Lynne**

**WHAT:** Rally for Lynne Stewart

**WHEN:** 12:00pm-2:00pm, Thursday, August 8th

**WHERE:** Foley Square Park, Lower Manhattan

### **26 Jul - Tom Manning Thank You and Solidarity with Those in Solitary**

*Via the Jericho Movement, we received the following message from Tom Manning, the focus of our last political prisoner letter-writing dinner.*

#### **MORE:**

Greetings from this federal medical prison in Butner, N.C.

At this time last week i was released from solitary confinement, and am now in a cell block that is integrated into the physical therapy department.

Just as they gave no reason why they locked me down 2and a half years ago, they gave no reason now why they released me to general population.

Just as they decided to re-approve it was because of all of the support that came from all of you good sisters and brothers out there, who took the time to direct some of your work a day energy this way. And for that i thank you all, but you all know that.

I got to tell you, the ability to move about some, enjoy actual daylight, talk at length with others in here, not having to shout from bean hole to bean hole, or through the air vents iS a layer of oppression removed like a heavy blanket.

And now i join you in my own limited way to send my energies in support of those in solitary confinement in Pelican Bay Ca, in occupied Palestine , ADX Colo. and Angola La.

A nation that finds it necessary to keep 80,000 + of its people in solitary confinement, as well as more people imprisoned, per capita, by far, than any other nation, is a power without legitimacy. Ruling by threat, force and imprisonment.

It is vitally important we keep own voices loud, fist raised high, so we may reach the ears, eyes and hearts of own neighbors in every community, who are still deceived by the image they see in the white house, and begin to see what is really practiced there, day in, day out, and help them understand what it's all about.

And help them understand it not the color of a president's skin, but the content of his character that we must trust him by, that he must be judged by.

History in being written. Let us write it the way we want our children to read it.

### **30 Jul - Court Hears Tarek Mehanna Sentence Appeal**

*Relatives, supporters, and attorneys for Tarek Mehanna were both hopeful and skeptical on July 30th as a federal appeals court was urged to overturn his 2011 convictions for conspiring to kill American soldiers in Iraq and supporting Al Qaeda.*

#### **MORE:**

Alyssa A. Botelho (*Boston Globe*)

Attorney Sabin Willett asked a three-judge panel of the US Court of Appeals for the First Circuit to throw out the convictions. He said Mehanna had only expressed his views, which he had a right to do, and there was insufficient evidence to show his client was linked to the Al Qaeda terror group.

“Our view is that if the government cannot tie the knot between Mehanna and Al Qaeda, this is simply speech, just protected opinion,” Willett said after the oral argument at the Moakley courthouse in South Boston. “We think this is a powerful argument. ... All he has done is talk a lot, and talk loudly.”

After a closely watched trial, Mehanna was sentenced to 17½ years in federal prison following his convictions on seven counts of conspiring to provide material support to terrorists, conspiring to kill in a foreign country, and of lying to authorities in a terrorism investigation.

Mehanna, a pharmacy college graduate student from Subdury, was convicted of providing material support to the terror group Al Qaeda for seeking out paramilitary training in Yemen so he could carry out jihad, or holy war, against US soldiers in Iraq. He was also convicted of using his knowledge of Arabic to translate and distribute documents promoting Al Qaeda’s ideology, in an effort to inspire others to violent jihad.

More than 50 family members and supporters attended the hearing today, including Kate Bonner-Jackson, 30, of Jamaica Plain, an organizer for the Tarek Mehanna Support Committee

“To me, it’s a case about Islamophobia and our dominance over other countries,” said Bonner-Jackson. “Tarek was vocal about people’s right to self-defense, especially in countries that the US invades.”

As was true when Mehanna was tried in the same courthouse in 2011 and then sentenced to prison in early 2012, Mehanna’s parents, Ahmed and Souad, and his younger brother, Tamer, were at the courthouse today.

“It was hard for me to come back to this [court] room again and see their [the prosecutors’] faces,” said Souad Mehanna. “My son is innocent and they’re still locking him away from me.”

After the oral argument, where the judges grilled federal prosecutors about the legal underpinnings and evidence in the case, Souad Mehanna was slightly hopeful.

“We can’t wait for him to come out and live his life, for all of us to live our lives,” she said, then added, “if we don’t win this time, we will keep fighting.”

But US Attorney Carmen Ortiz’s office urged the three-judge panel to leave Mehanna’s convictions intact. Assistant US Attorney Elizabeth Collery said the jury that convicted him heard “what his beliefs originally were, how he talked about them with other people, and [tried to] recruit others to his cause.”

During his trial, FBI agents testified about videos of suicide bombings and of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks that were found on Mehanna’s computer, following a secret search of his Sudbury home in 2006. Mehanna also possessed videos and documents produced by Al Qaeda, and prosecutors said he used his knowledge of Arabic to translate them, following the terror group’s call for followers to spread its message in the West.

Prosecutors say the information showed Mehanna’s state of mind in 2004, when he traveled to Yemen with a friend, Ahmad Abousamra. A third man, Kareem Abuzahra, joined them but returned halfway through the trip after his father had reportedly gotten ill.

Abuzahra was also investigated, but he cooperated with authorities and testified under immunity that the three of them discussed going to Yemen to seek paramilitary training, so they could fight in Iraq.

Abuzahra testified that Mehanna had told him once he returned to the United States that he failed to find a terrorist camp, and he said they agreed to tell investigators a cover story that they went to Yemen in search of further schooling in their Muslim faith.

Defense attorneys sought to impeach the testimony of Abuzahra, who was seen as the government’s key witness. The lawyers got him to acknowledge that he was the one among his friends who inquired about obtaining weapons and who discussed the possibility of a domestic terror attack at an Air Force base or shopping mall.

### **1 Aug - Black August message from Political Prisoner Jaan Laaman**

*Jaan Laaman, to whom we sent letters at our last letter-writing dinner, has written a Black August message that we're passing along.*

#### **MORE:**

Warm - positive and Red Revolutionary Greetings, here on August 1st -- Black August, from the Spirit and Acts of Nat Turner (and so many more) to Jonathan and George Jackson (and so many more, including our Brothers Sundiata, Mutulu, and of course Assata and on and on). So just wanted to send that spirit and thought to all of you -- and hey Snowden is out of the airport and doing not too bad as well! Dynamic Peace and Justice - jaan

### **1 Aug - Charged With the Crime of Filming a Slaughterhouse**

*So-called "Ag-Gag" laws reveal the lengths to which the agriculture industry will go to keep their business practices secret.*

On February 8, a 25-year-old animal rescue worker named Amy Meyer and a colleague pulled into a parking lot across the street from the Dale T. Smith and Sons Meat Packing Company in Draper, Utah, a suburb south of Salt Lake City. They crossed the street and stepped onto a strip of public land on the roadside, stopping short of a barbed wire fence that demarcated the boundary of the property of the slaughterhouse.

Across a small field, the building housing the killing floor stood in plain sight. Through two large open doors facing the road they stood on, they could see cows being led onto the plant's disassembly line. Outside the building, a forklift was pushing a live cow—possibly a sick, “downer” cow, which are illegal to slaughter. Despite the fact that she stood firmly on public property and was not an employee of the slaughterhouse, when Meyer took out her camera and began to film, she set herself up to become the agricultural industry's first-ever “Ag Gag” criminal.

"Ag Gag" laws are a species of state-level legislation that has been vigorously pushed by lobbyists over the last several years to criminalize and suppress the exposure of inhumane practices in animal agricultural operations. In essence, the laws protect the industry by making whistleblowers into outlaws.

Ag Gag laws take aim at camera-wielding undercover whistleblowers, whose videos have provided some of the few unvarnished glimpses the public has seen of where their food comes from—and it's not a pretty sight. Over the last half century, intensive, mechanized, indoor factory-style animal feeding operations have almost entirely supplanted the grazing pastures of traditional livestock farms. In processing plants, ever-increasing disassembly line speeds have increased the risks of injury to knife-wielding slaughterhouse workers, who tend to be poor, often undocumented migrants from Mexico and Central America, while compounding the risk of some animals being skinned and dismembered while still alive.

Undercover videos have exposed the ugly realities concealed behind the walls and locked gates of animal agriculture facilities and put them on the evening news. The footage is graphic; the impressions they leave are haunting and indelible. Images from past undercover investigations include unwanted male chicks on an egg farm being casually tossed into a grinder alive, workers swinging sick or runty piglets by their legs and smashing their heads on concrete, and cows and calves being beaten in the head with crowbars (the first two abuses are standard industry practice). "Once you see them, you can't unsee them," says Matt Rice, Director of Investigations for Mercy For Animals, who traces his own conversion to animal advocacy to undercover videos he watched over a decade ago.

Their impact on a political level can be just as powerful as on a personal one: in the last decade, videos shot by undercover investigators and broadcast on national TV news stations have contributed to the phasing-out of the use of immobilizing “gestation crates” for pregnant sows in the supply chains of several major restaurants and retailers and their outright ban in nine states; the passage of a ballot initiative outlawing the use of highly constrictive battery cages for egg-laying hens in California; the passage of a separate California law banning the force-feeding of ducks to produce foie gras; a ban on veal crates in Arizona and moves toward their elimination in Ohio; and the exposure of the routine slaughter and processing of sick cows for beef, which led to the largest meat recall in US history.

The agricultural industry's response to this intractable public relations threat couldn't be more

straightforward: make it illegal.

The first generation of what would later be known as Ag Gag laws emerged in the early 1990s in response to a much different threat posed by underground activists with the Animal Liberation Front movement. In Kansas, Montana and North Dakota, state legislators made it a crime to take pictures or shoot video in an animal facility without the consent of the facility's owner.

In 2002, the American Legislative Exchange Council—the conservative law-drafting organization behind Florida's "Stand Your Ground" law and Arizona's anti-immigrant SB1070—took the approach one step further. ALEC drafted a piece of "model legislation" for distribution to lobbyists and state lawmakers across the country in an effort to make Ag Gag into a national phenomenon. The model bill, called The Animal and Ecological Terrorism Act, proposed prohibiting activists from, among other things, "entering an animal or research facility to take pictures by photograph, video camera, or other means with the intent to commit criminal activities or defame the facility or its owner." It also proposed the creation of a "terrorist registry" that would contain the names, addresses and photographs of those convicted under the proposed law.

In the last year and a half, at the behest of animal agriculture interests, ALEC's model bill—minus the registry—has been taken up as a template and passed in various iterations in Iowa, Utah, Missouri, Arkansas and South Carolina.

"The animal agriculture industry has nothing to hide," says Emily Meredith, Communications Director for the Animal Agriculture Alliance, an industry group that refers to organizations like the Humane Society as "extreme animal rights organizations." "But there's a difference between having nothing to hide and allowing activists—with a blatant agenda to put an end to the consumption of meat, milk and eggs—to gain access to family farms in illicit and fraudulent ways, take video, and then cut and run to later release that video under a big donate now button."

Some versions of ALEC's bill criminalize documenting abuses outright. Some make it a crime to lie about one's associations with animal advocacy groups on job applications for farm employment. Others require those who document abuses to turn any evidence over to law enforcement within 24-48 hours of recording it—a clever way of preventing activists from engaging in the weeks- or months-long investigations required to demonstrate systemic abuses.

Though the rules target animal advocates, the potential ramifications for civil liberties are broader. Ag Gag rules can as easily be used to inhibit agricultural employees from exposing unsafe or illegal working conditions as it can to silence animal advocates. And other industries are likely to lobby for similar protections against their own whistleblowers-in-the-making. Already, North Carolina's bill makes the falsification of employment application information for the purposes of whistle blowing a crime in any industry.

"Union members know firsthand how important it is for these workers to be able to document unsafe working conditions and other threats to workplace and food safety," says Mark Lauritsen, International Vice President and Director of the Packing Division for the United Food and Commercial Workers union, which represents many slaughterhouse employees. "We are opposed to any government intervention that seeks to intimidate workers and investigators from shining a spotlight on the true conditions of America's food manufacturing facilities."

"The laws are clearly directed at animal rights activists who threaten the profitability of factory farms

and slaughterhouses, but their reach doesn't stop there," says Rachel Meeropol, Senior Staff Attorney for the Center for Constitutional Rights. For example, the North Carolina bill, she notes, "would criminalize not only animal rights investigations, but also an undercover journalist who applies for a job at a suspect plant in order to expose human trafficking or work safety violations."

As its public profile has increased, public opposition to Ag Gag legislation has grown, and the agricultural industry's path to enacting Ag Gag rules throughout the country has become more daunting. A February 2012 national poll commissioned by the ASPCA showed public opposition to the criminalization of animal abuse whistleblowers standing at almost two in three Americans. Ag Gag bills have been rejected or failed to gain traction in a raft of states in every region of the country from California to Wyoming to Tennessee. The term "overreach" comes to mind.

Amy Meyer's experience has become something of a symbol of that overreach, and an indicator of the limits of the agricultural industry's ability to suppress free speech. A few minutes after Meyer hit "record" on her camera, a truck pulled up in front of her. Meyer's colleague hastily departed. Bret Smith, the facility's operator and brother of Darrell Smith, the slaughterhouse owner who is also Draper's mayor, leaned over from the driver's seat, filming her with a phone camera as she filmed him back. At first, he accused Meyer of trespassing, though she was plainly standing on the outside of the plant's fence. Then he shifted tactics. "You cannot videotape my property from public property," he said (this is in fact not what the law says). "If you read the rights here and the laws of Utah, you can't film an agricultural property without my consent," he continued. Smith called the police.

Within just a few minutes, seven squad cars pulled up. "The officers would all go to Brett Smith first and shake his hand," Meyer recounts. "And then they would come over to me and treat me like a criminal."

An officer questioned Meyer about her identity and what she was doing there, even after affirming that she was not being detained and after she told him she did not wish to answer his questions. After some arguing over the legal basis for his questioning, according to Meyer, the officer claimed that a worker at the slaughterhouse had reported witnessing her and her colleague crossing over the fence, trespassing onto private property—a description at odds with the footage she shot that day. The officer told her she was free to leave, but that he would "screen charges of criminal trespass" on her.

Eleven days later, prosecutors filed charges against her for "agricultural operation interference," a Class B misdemeanor that carries a maximum six-month jail term.

At the end of April, Will Potter, a journalist who tracks government suppression of environmental and animal rights activists, broke the story of "the first prosecution in the country" under an Ag Gag law. The story was picked up by local and national media outlets, bringing just the kind of public attention to the agricultural industry that ALEC's model legislation was designed to prevent. Within 24 hours, the charges were dropped.

Without the media attention the story garnered, Meyer may have been forced to defend herself in court. Had prosecutors pressed the case, the video footage, which is clearly shot from outside of the property line, may well have exonerated her. But future cases may have different, less favorable conditions.

On July 22, Meyer, Potter and several other groups and individuals filed a lawsuit challenging the constitutionality of Utah's Ag Gag law, which Meyer calls "a blatant violation of free speech and freedom of the press."

In implementing Ag Gag laws, the agricultural industry has set a highly restrictive example that other industries may soon follow. With the precedent already set, lawmakers will see little reason to extend favorable treatment to one sector and not to every other. By then, prosecuting whistleblowers on behalf of corporations will be business as usual.

#### **4 Aug - Injury and Insult: Trayvon Martin, racism in the system, and a revolution amongst us by CeCe McDonald**

*CeCe McDonald has written about her thoughts on the George Zimmerman acquittal in the context of institutional white supremacy.*

#### **MORE:**

As I sit and watch Michelle Alexander and Chris Hayes have a conversation about race, as well as all of the nation in light of the George Zimmerman acquittal, it can't be any clearer that the injustice system has failed us once again. So with that it's obvious to know how I feel at this time. Not just for myself but for all the "minorities" who have been affected by this faulty judicial system that treat us as second class citizens, even less than that. To be looked down upon and to add injury to insult, laugh in our faces, throw salt on our wounds, and even piss on our graves. Rapper Lil' Wayne said it best, and I quote, "God bless Amerika, this ol' godless Amerika... sweet land of kill 'em all and let 'em die."

Highlighting on the injury to insult, many right-winged conservative foot-mouthed assholes, which include Zimmerman's defense team, Sean Hannity, Rush Limbaugh, and Bill O'Reilly, who have tried to justify Trayvon Martin's killing by demonizing Trayvon by saying "he was wearing what most criminals wear," referring to his hoodie or that his toxicology report came back with positive test results of marijuana so "he was up to 'no good'." So I guess that means that wearing hoodies and smoking pot, going to the store and walking home talking to a friend on the phone is deemed "suspicious" and therefore someone can follow you and kill you and because you seemed suspicious, your death will be overlooked. But we all know that this was more than hoodies and marijuana—it was about racial profiling and the (implicit) racism that still exist in what's supposed to be a post-racial "color-blind" society.

I'm watching a news show when they did a segment on Rush Limbaugh doing his "angry white man" rant where he went on record to say that white people don't have to feel guilty about slavery, that in fact they should be the last people to feel guilty about it, that a white man (referring to Abraham Lincoln) saved blacks from slavery and how the nation went to war just for that. But here's a fact: Lincoln said that if he could save the union without ending slavery he would. So that goes to show that he didn't care for blacks, or for that much wasn't racist.

With that he continues to make ignorant and offensive comments about blacks, and then he says that Pres. Obama was "selfish" and "inconsiderate" for a comment the Pres. made at a press conference calling for mature conversations and discussions about race after the Zimmerman verdict where he said that "Trayvon Martin could have been him 35 years ago." Tell me, how can a white man make any comment about a situation or an experience that he would have never dealt with (racism or discrimination) in his life, EVER? And how can someone be so oblivious and ignorant about race relations in this country? And why isn't he, and others like him, being called out on their disconnect from reality with ignorance and deliberate disregard to the sensitive issues surrounding race and the inequality for minorities in this country.

Then there is Bill O'Reilly, who made the most outlandish comments about African Americans starting

with something he said about black people who were dining at Sylvia's—a soul food restaurant where he too was dining. He said that “there wasn't one person yelling “I need more iced tea, m-f'ers.” It was like being in an Italian restaurant in a white suburban area. The tone of his voice made me think that he was sincerely surprised that he didn't walk into some stereotypical idea of an African American establishment and of African Americans as people. As if he were going to come upon a group of uncouth Neanderthals who have yet to discover how to use eating utensils and speak with proper grammar. But that was only one of the many insults aimed at the African American community. This very same man said that “to take on black crime, black culture needs to change,” the root of black crime is because of the disintegration of black families, and that “young black women need to be stopped from having babies out of wedlock.”... Really? See, it's that kind of ignorant thinking that halts the progression of equality and perpetuates stereotypical ideas and racial profiling that stigmatizes the minorities who are nothing like the ideas others associate with our cultural backgrounds. These men, and many other people like them, are the pioneers of prejudice, and as long as they're not being called out on their bullshit, they're going to continue,

After the Zimmerman trial, many activists and organizations rallied and demonstrated for Florida's Governor Rick Scott to call for a special session to reform or reject the “Stand Your Ground” law.” As of late Phillip Agnew with the Dream Defenders have been occupying the capitol building there in Florida until FL Gov. Rick Scott calls that special session. He stands with the SYG law, and feels that it needs no reform. Now... this law that has let a man get away with murder, has caused a Florida woman to spend 20 years in prison! Marissa Alexander, a 30-year-old African American mother, was sentenced to 20 years behind bars after she was charged for firing a gun as a warning shot at her then-abusive husband who admitted to the allegations. She never shot anyone, in fact no one was even injured—well, except her at the hands of her husband, and a man who shot a teenage boy in claims of self-defense. In the case of Marissa, she was denied the right to use SYG—not killing anyone—and sentenced to two decades in prison. Can someone please explain to me how an injustice such as this not make one question the biased laws and the discrimination that still exist in the “justice system.” And people wonder why the prison percentages between whites and non-whites are so disproportionate. More importantly when are people going to ACT on these injustices and fight for the equality of each person in this country, both free and in the “system?”

It's hard for me having to watch the trial and seeing everything unfold. Where all of us speculating knowing that this whole situation, from the incident itself to the trial, is all based on race—racial profiling and racism spewing from it all, regardless of what anyone say or think. I know that people have been comparing my case to Zimmerman's, and yes it's obvious that laws are biased. But even I can say I came out blessed knowing that (a) the system was against me to begin with, and that (b) looking at other cases similar to mines, I didn't have to spent extensive time—even decades—in prison. People don't understand that I actually feel guilt for that. I know that nothing beyond the incident and getting arrested was in my control, as it is for anyone who is a victim of the system. But for me it hurts—a lot. My heart aches for the Patreese Johnsons, the Marissa Alexanders, and the Chrisaun McDonalds. But no pain can bring back the Trayvon Martins, the Oscar Grants, the Matthew Shepards, the James Birds, the Gwen Araujos, and all of our brothers and sisters who were victims of hate in this world. I can say that survivor's guilt is real. That I'm still, to this day, dealing with the fear and sadness of my experience with hate and discrimination. How blessed am I to have so much love and support from my family, and I say family which extends to all my friends and supporters around the world.

My love and support is with Sybrina Fulton and Tracy Martin as they go through this journey of leaving a positive legacy for Trayvon. I couldn't help but to cry after hearing Sybrina tell an audience at the National Urban League to “wrap their minds around that there is no prom for Trayvon. There is

not high school graduation for Trayvon. There is no college for Trayvon. There aren't any grandchildren from Trayvon" all because of George Zimmerman. When I went through my own incident, that was something that harbored on my mind constantly—how would my death have affected my family and friends, and how different would things have been if it were the other way around? That question was rhetorical. We know what the outcome would have been, just like we know what the outcome would've been if Zimmerman was black and Trayvon Martin was white. Or even if Zimmerman was black and it was just a black-on-black crime. Sybrina Fulton and Tracy Martin are catalyst for not just their own son's death, but for all those who have been victims of hate and violence. They are heroes in my eyes. Strong and brave, creating a voice that has been long overdue to be heard, and they deserve the acknowledgment and respect that some, not all, have given them. I love them as if they were my own mom and dad, and we should understand that their struggle is our struggle.

Aside from the attention surrounding the Zimmerman trial, issues of racism and discrimination extend beyond that. The debates about immigration reform and the Voting Rights Act have pulled back the veil of intolerance of equality and acceptance in this country. The insults aimed at the African-American and Latino communities are disrespectful, dehumanizing, ignorant, unintelligent, and very hurtful nonetheless. Indeed it's a blessing that the SCOTUS recognize the rights for gays and lesbians to get married legally in and have the same federal rights as hetero-marriages, but I don't want people to lose sight of the other issues that will affect us all in the long run. Their deliberate efforts to minimize the minority by restricting voters rights is a slap in the face of the civil rights movements of the past and present that fought so hard for the rights of minorities to vote. And the idea that sending all the immigrants back and building large fences will solve all of America's issues. But it seems that this policy only apply to black and brown people, and knowing all of this is the attempt of Republicans and right-wing conservatives to win elections that they're obviously losing. So I'm guessing that insulting and stereotyping us will bring them those votes they need? These people need to get a serious grasp of reality, like really soon.... Not that I care for them to ever take office. Actually, I just don't care for them at all, but I do believe we all deserve respect as humans, regardless of our race, gender, or social status.

I really want people to start thinking on how we can help minorities and the poor to help us all grow as a community and united front. Can we challenge ourselves to unite all races of this nation by taking an initiative to end our own preconceptions of each other? I know that I was extremely upset after having a visit from a close friend, and he told me that people have been criticizing him and my other non-Black friends for being in pictures that they post online. That divisive attitude is why I ask for a mend in race relations. Have these people ever thought how it feels for them, and me, to have to deal with me being in prison. It's always easy for someone to conjure up negative thoughts and reactions to my "white" friends who've gained popularity from their "black" friend in prison. First of let me say that there is nothing glamorous or "popular" about being in prison. And why can't there be support for those who have gone through this struggle with me instead of backlash. I love these people. They have been here for me since day one, and regardless of what others say, they will be my support and my family and at this point you're either with us or against us and none of us have time for hate or divisive attitudes or ideas, especially at critical times like now. And that's not just directed at those who are commenting about me, my case, and my fam—but for all people across the nation and around the world.

I feel a revolution is amongst us, and I know that there is no better time than now. I wish that I could march with the many of people who will be marching across Washington this August (8/25-26) in honor of the 50th year anniversary for the Civil Rights March on Washington with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and other prominent figures of the Civil Rights Movement of that era. I encourage everyone to join the march and the experience of unity amongst all people—races, genders, sexualities, social

statuses, and cultural backgrounds. Even if you can't make it to the march still get active and get involved however that may be.

Before I go, I just want to say that I love you all more than ever now. I couldn't be more conscious of the love and support you all give me—my family, and that's kin and chosen, and of course I have chosen all of you. You're all my family and I will love and cherish and appreciate you all until there's no more of me. We are the future, we are the revolution!

The quote of the month is given to us by author Ashley Smith:

“Life is full of beauty. Notice it. Notice the bumblebee, the small child, and the smiling faces. Smell the rain, and feel the wind. Live your life to the fullest potential, and fight for your dreams.”

Until next time my loves keep fighting, stay strong, and live out loud. Do you, cause no one can do it better!

### **6 Aug - NYC Black August Film Festival**

*This year's Black August Film Festival is being held at the Brecht Forum. We've included the films, dates, and times below. More information at [brechtforum.org](http://brechtforum.org)*

#### **MORE:**

August 6<sup>th</sup> : 7:00pm, *Free At Last 1979-1990*

August 13<sup>th</sup>: 7:00pm, Black Radical Imagination Showcase (A night of short films)

August 20<sup>th</sup>: 7:00pm, *Brother Outsider: The Life of Bayard Rustin*

August 27<sup>th</sup>: 6:00pm, *Broken On All Sides: Race, Mass Incarceration, & New Visions for Criminal Justice in the U.S.*

### **9 Aug - Prisoner letter-writing at bluestockings**

**WHAT:** Prisoner Letter Writing Group

**WHEN:** 5:00pm, Friday, August 9<sup>th</sup>

**WHERE:** Bluestockings - 172 Allen Street (between Stanton and Rivington) New York, New York

#### **MORE:**

“The communication between two humans concerning their hopes, ideas and their plights is what allows them to bond in resistance against a system that affects everyone in many different ways,” says Colorado prisoner Rachel Galindo (in a letter published in *Resistance Behind Bars*). Join a new Bluestockings-based group committed to communication and resistance by writing to prisoners. We'll be focusing on folks who tend to receive less attention and mail, including LGBTQI-identified prisoners, women, and youth. Pens, paper, writing guidelines and encouragement will all be provided!

### **9 Aug - Oscar Lopez Rivera art exhibition**

**WHAT:** "Un Ser Humano Un Artista: A Human Being, An Artist"

**WHEN:** Opening Reception: 6:00pm-9:00pm, Friday August 9<sup>th</sup>; Viewing Schedule: Fridays from 4:00pm-9:00pm, Saturdays and Sundays from 2:00pm-8:00pm through September 8<sup>th</sup>.

**WHERE:** Casa Las Americas - 182 East 111th Street (between Lexington and Third Avenues) El Barrio, Manhattan

**COST:** FREE

**MORE:**

An Art Exhibition with paintings by Puerto Rican Political Oscar Lopez Rivera  
Sponsored by Casa Las Americas and Boricua Human Rights Network.  
For more information, contact: [gracianomatos@earthlink.net](mailto:gracianomatos@earthlink.net)

**11-14 Aug - Insurgent Theater Tour (NYC)**

*The Insurgent Theater is on tour, spending four days in NYC. They will be presenting a live piece called "Know Your Enemy" and a film titled "The Shadow of Lucasville." Dates and venues are below.*

**August 11<sup>th</sup> - "Know Your Enemy"**

**WHERE:** CAGE - 83A Hester Street New York New York 10002

**WHEN:** 7:00pm

**COST:** \$5-20 suggested donation

**August 12<sup>th</sup> - "The Shadow of Lucasville"**

**WHERE:** Interference Archive - 131 8th Street Brooklyn, New York 11215

**WHEN:** 7:00pm

**COST:** \$5-20 suggested donation

**August 13<sup>th</sup> - "The Shadow of Lucasville"**

**WHERE:** 16 Beaver Group - 16 Beaver Street New York, New York 10004

**WHEN:** 7:00pm

**COST:** \$5-20 suggested donation

**August 14<sup>th</sup> - "Know Your Enemy"**

**WHERE:** Interference Archive - 131 8th Street Brooklyn, New York 11215

**WHEN:** 7:00pm

**COST:** \$5-20 suggested donation

**MORE:**

About "Know Your Enemy"

What does it mean to be a compassionate, dedicated, humane police officer in the country with the world's highest incarceration rate and a continuing tradition of racial injustice? Know Your Enemy examines the role of police using stripped down interactive theatre, critical understanding of history and the power of silent refusal. Know your history. Know your rights. Know your enemy.

About "The Shadow of Lucasville"

The Shadow of Lucasville revisits the 1993 uprising at the Southern Ohio Correctional Facility, one of the longest in U.S. history, while exploring the fight for human rights and media exposure through inmate uprisings in response to mass incarceration and dehumanization supported by the prison industrial complex. The film will be followed by conversation with death-sentenced survivors of the uprising, who will be calling in from Ohio's super-max prison.

For more information, visit [insurgenttheatre.org](http://insurgenttheatre.org)

**1 Sept - Running Down the Walls 2013**

**WHAT:** Running Down the Walls - 5k Run/Walk/Jog/Bike

**WHEN:** 2:00-7:00pm, Sunday, September 1<sup>st</sup>

**WHERE:** Prospect Park-- Lincoln Road/East Lake Drive, east of the Terrace Bridge (see the below map for exact location)

**COST:** \$10 registration (includes food and drinks afterwards)

**MORE:**



Every year, prisoners and supporters of political prisoners organize solidarity events with Running Down the Walls. Last year, we had runs in Albuquerque (NM), Arcata (CA), Ashland (OR), Bellefonte (PA), Boston (MA), Denver (CO), Elmore (AL), Inez (KY), Los Angeles (CA), Marion (IL), New York (NY), USP Navosta (TX), Pelican Bay (CA), Phoenix (AZ), Tucson (AZ), and Toronto, Ontario. This year we hope to expand the amount of runs in prisons and other cities, as well as increase the amount of funds raised for community projects. NYC ABC's goal with this year's run is \$2,000.

This year's run will take place on Sunday, September 1st at 2:00pm in solidarity and conjunction with runs that will take place in cities and prison yards across the country at the same time.

**REGISTER AS, OR SPONSOR, A PARTICIPANT**

To raise our goal of \$2,000, we need your support.

\* Run/walk/bike/roll in the 5k – We need participants who can run/walk/bike/roll the 5k and are able to collect financial pledges to offer as donations to the run. Download the brochure, complete with registration and sponsor form at [http://nycabc.files.wordpress.com/2013/07/running-down-the-walls-2013-participant\\_sponsor-brochure.pdf](http://nycabc.files.wordpress.com/2013/07/running-down-the-walls-2013-participant_sponsor-brochure.pdf)

\* Volunteer for the run – We need folks who are willing to staff a registration/literature table, hand out water, bike the route as street medics, and help chalk the route beforehand.

\* Donate to the run/sponsor a participant – If you are not able to attend, but want to support this fundraising effort, please mail donations to:

**NYC ABC**  
**Post Office Box 110034**  
**Brooklyn, New York 11211**

Your donation of \$10 or more entitles you to the celebratory picnic after the event.

Each year, we split proceeds between the Anarchist Black Cross Federation's Warchest Program and a local organization. This year's partner group will be The Base.

**The Warchest Program:**

The Anarchist Black Cross Federation (ABCF) has initiated a program designed to send monthly checks to those Political Prisoners and Prisoners of War who have been receiving insufficient, little, or no financial support during their imprisonment. The Warchest program was initiated in November 1994. It's purpose is to collect monthly funds from groups and individual supporters, and send that money to Political Prisoners and Prisoners of War (PP/POW) via monthly checks. For more information, visit: <http://www.abcf.net/abcf.asp?page=warchest>

**The Base:**

The Base is a new sociopolitical space in Bushwick, Brooklyn, committed to the dissemination of radical-left ideas and organizing. The mission of the space is to spread ideas and practices to the broader populace and provide a place where individuals can learn, grow, and organize outside of traditional activist and educational institutions. For more information, visit: [thebasebk.org](http://thebasebk.org)

**Directions:**

From the B or Q train, get off at the Prospect Park stop. Walk to Lincoln Road and turn right into the park. We'll be about 700 feet away.