



POST OFFICE BOX 110034 BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11211

Updates for December 10<sup>th</sup>

### **26 Nov - Chelsea Manning on What She's Thankful for This Thanksgiving**

*Chelsea Manning, who was given a thirty-five year sentence in August for offenses committed when she released United States government documents to WikiLeaks, will be celebrating Thanksgiving in prison at Fort Leavenworth.*

#### **MORE:**

by Kevin Gosztola (*The Dissenter*)

It is the fourth Thanksgiving since she was first arrested in May 2010, and she is one of the “public figures” TIME magazine asked to share what she was thankful for this Thanksgiving.

For anyone who read statements she made during her court martial, the answer is the kind of unabashed honest answer one has come to expect from Manning. It also is the answer one would give if one of their favorite books is *The People's History of the United States* by Howard Zinn.

I'm usually hesitant to celebrate Thanksgiving Day. After all, the Puritans of the Massachusetts Bay Colony systematically terrorized and slaughtered the very same Pequot tribe that assisted the first English refugees to arrive at Plymouth Rock. So, perhaps ironically, I'm thankful that I know that, and I'm also thankful that there are people who seek out, and usually find, such truths. I'm thankful for people who, even surrounded by millions of Americans eating turkey during regularly scheduled commercial breaks in the Green Bay and Detroit football game; who, despite having been taught, often as early as five and six years old, that the “helpful natives” selflessly assisted the “poor helpless Pilgrims” and lived happily ever after, dare to ask probing, even dangerous, questions.

She celebrates the common people—carpenters, welders, retail clerks, bank managers, artists, lawyers and anyone else who asks “tough questions” and seeks out “the truth, even when the answers they find might not easy to live with.”

All of which might be a good enough answer from a classic whistleblower doing time in military prison this holiday, however, she does not stop there:

I'm also grateful for having social and human justice pioneers who lead through action, and by example, as opposed to directing or commanding other people to take action. Often, the achievements of such people transcend political, cultural, and generational boundaries. Unfortunately, such remarkable people often risk their reputations, their livelihood, and, all too often, even their lives.

Again, this is a person who requested a copy of Zinn's *People's History* while imprisoned in conditions that amounted to solitary confinement at Marine Corps Base Quantico.

Despite everything she's been through, it is messages like these that make it clear she will not be losing her dignity or incredible spirit as she serves her sentence, even though her government sought to break her down and make an example out of her.

### **27 Nov - “This Draconian System of Punishment and Abuse”: An Interview with Former Political Prisoner Ray Luc Levasseur**

*The following is a partial transcript of an interview with Ray Luc Levasseur, a former political prisoner who spent over fifteen years in solitary confinement, primarily at USP Marion and ADX Florence.*

**MORE:**

Levasseur was raised in Maine, born to a working-class family of Quebecois origin. He became politically radicalized about race and class at a young age, first after serving a term of duty in Vietnam, and again after he spent two years in a Tennessee prison. After his release in 1971, Levasseur worked with Vietnam Veterans Against the War (VVAW), as well as a prisoners’ rights group Statewide Correctional Alliance for Reform (SCAR). In 1975, Levasseur and several others founded the United Freedom Front (UFF), a revolutionary Marxist organization aimed at challenging racism, imperialism and corporate greed, primarily by targeting institutions complicit in South African Apartheid and regime brutality in Central America. Levasseur and his comrades conducted a series of robberies and bombings against military facilities, military contractors and corporations, always forewarning the selected sites in an effort to avoid casualties. UFF members lived underground for nearly a decade before eventually facing arrest.

After his 1986 conviction for the bombing offenses, Levasseur was sent into solitary at the Control Unit at USP Marion. In 1994 he was transferred to the newly built ADX Florence, most likely for refusing to work for the Federal Prison Industries (UNICOR) since it produced military equipment for the Department of Defense. Levasseur was released from prison in 2004 and now lives in Maine. He continues to organize against solitary confinement and support political prisoners on the inside.

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**AS:** First, I’d like to hear a little bit about the work SCAR did, because I found it really fascinating and inspiring. Maybe for people who don’t know as much about working from a prisoner abolitionist or a prison justice perspective, could we here a little more about the political perspective you worked from in SCAR?

**RL:** This was back in the early 1970s, where there was a surge of anti-prison activism in the US at the time, because this was still in the years of the Attica Rebellion, and George Jackson, there was a lot of revolts and rebellions throughout the US prison system, culminating in the massacre of prisoners in Attica. But this set the stage for people being more interested in alternatives to this draconian system of punishment and abuse. And there was more about it in the media – there was an opportunity there to do community organizing that had some roots in prison work, jail work, working with former prisoners, and generally criminal justice issues.

And our program with SCAR was based on the early Black Panther Party programs, what they called “survival programs”. So that instead of just going into a neighbourhood or a community and spouting a bunch of radical rhetoric – or rhetoric of any kind – it was like we felt we had to have some programs that addressed some needs in the community.

For example... there was a problem in poor communities. They have a bail program in the United States, where if you were accused of an offense, there was supposed to be a monetary bail placed on you, so that can be secured and you can be released before your trial. A lot of youngsters were being held in jail because they couldn’t afford the bail money. If bail is 50 or 100 dollars and you don’t have it, it might as well be 100,000 dollars, so we started a community bail fund, and we would screen people that were arrested and put into country jail to try to get them out through this bail fund, and then work to see that they had proper legal representation and get them employment if they needed it, or other basic needs, and try to work it from that angle, in terms of keeping them from falling any deeper into the system.

**AS:** Something that really struck me while I was reading your trial statement from ’89, where you talked about being inside and fighting the KKK and the prison administration, and not even being able to tell the difference between the two at times. I wondering if you could speak about how your time in prison shaped you as an anti-racist activist.

**RL:** ...[T]here’s a convergence of class and race in the American prison and it was extraordinarily clear to me when I was in this Southern prison that first of all – almost everyone that’s in there is from a working class background, and second, there’s a large disproportionate number of Black prisoners in there. And to see the

abuses and the awful conditions under which we were kept... Prisons in this country are like concentration camps for the poor. We are the surplus value of the capitalist system. They don't have any need for us. We're expendable. You spent too much time hanging on street corners, and they think you're potentially a threat to them. They need the prisons, and the prison gulag in this country has exploded in population since the prison experience you were referring to back in 1971.

Concurrently, with this direct experience inside, I was doing a tremendous amount of reading on my own, and talking to other prisoners. So my political ideas were being further formulated, based on that experience. And the reading and studying that I was doing – I read Marx, I read Lenin, I read Ho Chi Minh, I read Che Guevara, I read anthologies of labour history, feminist history. And I was trying to come up with an alternative vision of society based on historically what had happened after that point, and this was in the wake of major anti-colonial struggle around the world.

You don't see this a lot today. I find that in a lot of activists there's a lack of vision of what's possible. But back then, a lot more seemed possible to more people...

**AS:** I wanted to talk to you a bit about your time in prison in the 80s and the 90s. First, could you talk a bit about your time in Marion – your most vivid memories, or anything else you'd like to share?

**RL:** Well, I was in Marion almost five years, and at the time that I was there, it was the government's most extremely punitive prison that kept you in your cell 22 ½ hour a day, basically solitary confinement. Marion was never designed with that in mind, but that's ultimately what it was used for. The physical structure – it was not initially built for extreme isolation.

So after I'd been in there for almost five years, they built a new scheme, the federal government. They build a new prison from the ground up that, from the time the first brick was put down, it was physically designed for extreme isolation. That was ADX, that's what they're using as supermax today. And so when ADX was completed, those of us in Marion were the very first prisoners sent to ADX.

**AS:** And what were your first impressions of Florence were when you were transferred there, after being at Marion?

**RL:** Would you like me to read you something I just wrote? I'll just read an excerpt — as part of my writing a section on Marion and ADX, and I just finished, this is my second draft....

So the section I'm going to read to you starts up from the day I arrived at ADX...[Levasseur's description of life inside ADX Florence has been posted separately as a Voices from Solitary, and is available here.]

**AS:** And when you were in Marion or ADX, around all of that, what tactics did you use to stay as safe or as sane as you could?

**RL:** First of all, solitary confinement does not respect any ideology, or any idealism, religion. It doesn't respect any of that because it doesn't respect a person's basic humanity. It's designed to basically erode a person's sense of worth as a human being. And to be a healthy functioning human being. So whoever's in that situation, there is no immunity. It's going to affect different people in different ways. My position is that nobody should be subjected to long-term solitary confinement – its anti-human. But, there are certain people that are more vulnerable than others to its effects....

...The first thing [that helped me stay sane] is knowing why I was in prison. I think if I had gone to prison for stealing or slinging drugs, I think it would have had even more of negative impact on me. If I had been in that situation for doing something strictly for my own benefit or profit. But I had come off a commitment and a sacrifice where I was part of a group that was challenging, trying to expose the criminal activity of the United States government, and to bring that to the public's attention, and to try to be part of a larger movement to bring

an end to these crimes...

I always kept in mind why I was there, I felt like people had questioned my tactics, but they can't question our hearts, that we felt we were on the right side of history, no matter if we lost this battle, we were fighting for the people that mattered most...

... So, I think that was a big factor right there. When I got to Marion a good friend of mine wrote to me and he said, "alright, now you no longer have access to all the militant tools in your political toolkit you have to write". I did a lot of writing when I was on the inside. I stayed as politically engaged as I could.

I think that my political identity and my political life – that was a big part. It's a political identity, not a criminal identity. And the more I wrote, the more I got published, mainly essays and some collections, the more those circulated, the more people wrote to me, the more they wrote to me the more correspondence I had, I was dialoguing with activists all over the country, essentially. They couldn't visit me, but at least I could write...

**AS:** When you heard the ECHR [European Court of Human Rights] ruling about Florence [ADX], tell me how you felt about the ruling itself. Whether you were surprised, and also in the judgement, how they talked about the "step-down" program meaning that isolation wasn't indefinite, or that isolation wasn't complete because prisoners were able to shout through the rafters, all of that.

**RL:** ADX opened in 1984 and there were people there like me, who arrived at the beginning of it. Those people are still there. Not all of them, no, but I know individuals who have never gotten out of it, from the time it opened up. '94 is... 18 years ago. And they did the same thing at Marion. The program in terms of how you can get out of there is so arbitrarily instituted that for any and no reason they can just keep you there...

And as far as the ruling goes, was I surprised? I wasn't surprised by the ruling. I mean, it's the Europeans. They're not noted for their humanity. Obviously the prison policies in a number of European states are much better than in the American prison system, there's no doubt about that. But it didn't surprise me because I think the US, the power of the United States government reaches into every other country on this globe, and extrapolate that into their institutions, their influence is tremendous...

What I took away from [the ruling] was essentially that the European Court [the ECHR] took every affidavit submitted by the Federal Bureau of Prisons in this country saying, "there's nothing wrong with ADX or the way we implement long-term solitary confinement". They took every one of those affidavits and credited them, completely, without question... Which is what you see the courts in this country do. And [the ECHR] discredited, basically, anything that came from a prisoner or a critic or a human rights organization about the policies and practices at ADX.

**AS:** You were transferred out of ADX into the general population in a prison in Georgia. What was it like to go into general population?

**RL:** It was challenging for a couple of reasons. One that was when I got there, to Atlanta Georgia, which is a maximum security prison, but it's what you call "open population", people have jobs, recreation yard, some educational activities, you go to a mess hall to eat, but it's still maximum security.

The first was that they wouldn't let me into [general] population, they kept me in solitary, what you call the hole, sometimes they're called special management units – segregation units, essentially....[But] after months of pressuring and lobbying from people outside, they finally relented and let me into the regular part of the prison.

And it was clear, right away, even from the other prisoners, one look at me and they know that I came from ADX, because I was totally wired. I was hard wired for – I wasn't used to being around all these other men. I wasn't used to being around everybody moving at one time to go to the mess hall, and I'd get into the mess hall and the noise level... in a place like ADX your senses start to constrict, because that's the purpose of a boxcar

cell and the whole isolation regime, is to reduce your senses to the absolute lowest common denominator, and between the pressure of isolation and your own withdrawing senses... then you get into a regular prison, and all those things – sight, smell, sound, movement... it all grates at you. You're not prepared for it. It's like, my head was on a swivel...

**AS:** And did that just take time to adjust to?

**RL:** Yeah, that takes time. All you're doing is adjusting to a maximum security prison! But when I got out, mind you later, I had to make significantly more adjustments, because behind of that I had years of being in Marion and ADX and various segregation units. The residue of that never completely leaves you, it never does, and it never will.

I would defy anybody who spent years in supermax cell to say that it had absolutely no effect on them. Everyone comes out scarred or burned to some degree – it's a question of degrees and how that meshes with the individual, and how that individual carries it to the outside world.

**AS:** My last question – I read in Becky Thompson's book that the first time you got out of prison, you really saw the importance of having prisoners be key leaders in social movements, and the importance of engaging in solidarity with prisoners. I was hoping you could just talk a little bit about your experiences of solidarity – your perspective as someone who's engaged in work both from the outside and from the inside....

**RL:** When I first got out of prison in was in the early 1970s, and it was a much different political climate then. I'm a believer in self-determination – that communities of people that are oppressed, that are being exploited, the leadership and direction for that [these political struggles] – change – should come from those people.

..And that's why I think with Muslim prisoners it's necessary that people from the Muslim community get more directly involved in supporting these prisoners and around issues related to the whole spectre of federal agents and others saturating Muslim communities and infiltrating and spying and all of this. Like I said the leadership and direction has to come out of those communities.

As far as supporting people on the inside, there's a lot of things to do... One of the ways I survived was all that people that wrote to me – sent me cards, sent me books, sent me photographs, stayed in consistent contact with me through letters. And I did a speaking gig in some college in Boston about a month ago and I mentioned that when I was at ADX, I had received a letter out of nowhere from a Vietnam vet I didn't know. He was in Canada at the time and he had put a maple leaf that was changing colour into the letter. Now they don't allow things like that at ADX, they don't allow – you don't see a blade of grass in ADX. I got a letter with a leaf in there, they'll call it a "nuisance item", they'll remove it as contraband but somehow, some way the mail room missed this leaf, and I got it in my cell and it was red and orange and yellow, it was changing colours. And the fact that I can talk about it twenty years later – that's something that no matter how lonely I got, I know that I'm not alone. Because there's people like that that remember you. They found that in a cell search a few days later, they found that leaf – I couldn't hide it well enough, and they took it. But that was an important strand in the web of humanity that reached out to me and that I reached out to, that enabled me to get through those days and weeks and months and years in there.

So I don't think anything should be thought of as too trivial or too small. That kind of human contact is essential to get yourself through a dehumanizing situation. Not just to survive it, but to survive it with your own humanity intact...

## **27 Nov - Judge Halts Sentencing After Feds Admit They Failed To Reveal Use Of NSA Data**

*from the this-is-why-you-reveal-this-stuff-up-front dept*

**MORE:**

by Mike Masnick (*techdirt*)

We've been following the crazy story of the Solicitor General of the US, Donald Verrilli, making blatantly false statements to the Supreme Court concerning how the feds would have to reveal to defendants that some of the evidence used against them came from secretive NSA data collection methods. In Verrilli's defense, it is now apparent that lawyers for the intelligence community flat out lied to him, and he is reasonably angry about that -- leading to the DOJ to officially change its policy to now be consistent with what Verrilli told the Court: that if NSA data is used against someone, that fact will come out during the process, and the defendant can challenge it. Along with this, the feds have started selectively alerting some lawyers that some NSA data was used on their clients.

In one such case, of "would-be bomber" Mohamed Osman Mohamud, who was accused of wanting to bomb a Portland Christmas tree lighting ceremony, this news has put his sentencing on hold. The details of Mohamud's case suggest it was yet another case of the FBI stopping a plot of their own making, as the entire "plot" was created with undercover FBI agents. But there are also some questions about how the FBI first targeted Mohamud. Now, it appears that it may have been due to NSA activities. Mohamud had been found guilty earlier this year, and was scheduled to be sentenced in just a few weeks, but the judge -- realizing that the NSA revelations throw a big wrench into all of this -- has agreed to postpone indefinitely the sentencing. I imagine there will be a flurry of legal documents as his lawyers use this to try to dump the original trial results.

Either way, expect a lot more like this to happen as the DOJ finally starts to come clean.

## **27 Nov - Oscar Lopez Rivera and the Struggle for Puerto Rican Independence**

*This past Saturday, thousands of people marched from San Juan to Brooklyn demanding the release of Oscar López Rivera.*

MORE:

By Carlos Borrero (*CounterPunch*)

Oscar López Rivera has served 32 years in the dungeons of imperialism for the crime of fighting for the independence of Puerto Rico as a member of the Armed Forces for National Liberation (FALN). At 70 years of age, López Rivera is recognized as one of the longest held political prisoners in the world.

Contrary to the false image of passive acceptance of colonial rule promoted by imperialism, the struggle for Puerto Rican independence has continued for more than 115 years. At times openly combative while at others primarily in more muted forms, the struggle for independence in the colonial world is a peculiar expression of class struggle. As such, it is important to view the campaign for the release of López Rivera, an important symbol of that struggle in Puerto Rico, from that perspective.

In recent years there has been increased awareness and activism around the case of Oscar. However, it is impossible to truly understand the growing support for Oscar without putting the campaign for his release in the current social and economic context of Puerto Rican society. That is to say, the renewed popular support of a militant jailed for waging armed struggle against imperialism coincides with and reflects a general disgust with a colonial system in irreversible decline. Massive, structural unemployment, as well as unprecedented levels of public and private debt have come to characterize Puerto Rican society just as the rest of the capitalist world. A decaying infrastructure, inadequate public services in the areas of public health and education, and endemic violence complete the picture of a territory once hailed by US imperialism as the "showcase of the Caribbean" during the cold war era. The result has been a constant stream of people forced to abandon the country in an attempt to secure a better life for themselves and their families. As a direct colony of the United States, the responsibility for what happens in Puerto Rico falls directly on the US ruling class and its political representatives, notwithstanding the incompetence and corruption of the colonial lackeys that administer the daily operations of the colonial-state apparatus.

It is certainly true that the expansion of the campaign to release Lopez Rivera, which includes a significant number of people that do not identify as independentistas or progressives, and much less socialists or

communists, has been accompanied by a growing tendency to separate the man from the cause for which he is imprisoned. This is a deliberate strategy often used by the ruling classes to dull the militant edge of popular manifestations with the potential to radicalize consciousness. Among the 35 thousand that marched in San Juan on November 23rd, the media, as is custom, highlighted the appearance and statements of a few opportunist politicians and “celebrities” to reinforce this tendency.

Notwithstanding, the fact that the bulk of those that marched consisted of labor, both organized and non-organized members, unemployed, students, etc. proves the growing connection between the daily concerns of working people and questions of justice and the right to political independence in the collective consciousness. Over the past couple of years, Puerto Rico has been the scene of violent protests of university students that resulted in the occupation of the campus of the University of Puerto Rico, massive mobilizations against the efforts of capital to loot public pension funds, and a recent march demanding the creation of a jobs program. Although these struggles are by no means evidence of a widespread revolutionary consciousness capable of radically transforming society in the near term, they do highlight the will to fight back, to resist, to not passively accept the conditions imposed by capital in one of the oldest colonies in the world. They are the germs without which higher forms of consciousness are impossible.

The continued militancy of Oscar López Rivera, after more than three decades of imprisonment, is a living testimony of the indomitable will to resist all attempts to break the combative spirit of a man, who has become a symbol of his people, yearning for freedom.

### **28 Nov - New Writings by Mumia Abu-Jamal**

*We're including transcripts of Mumia's latest commentaries.*

#### **MORE:**

#### **November 28<sup>th</sup> - NO THANKS - FOR THANKSGIVING**

Every November, when Thanksgiving is scheduled, I think of the People of the First Nations (so-called Native Americans), and wonder about their mixed feelings for a holiday that celebrates their enormous generosity as well as their near-total destruction.

What do they have to be thankful of?

U.S. President Abraham Lincoln declared the first such holiday in 1863, and American popular culture has tied it to a meal between Aboriginal people and Europeans upon their arrival on this continent.

In fact, when the Spanish reached South America, and the English reached North America, they soon embarked on dual extermination campaigns, which led to holocausts of Indian nations, both north and south.

Their arrivals spelled the doom of hundreds of millions of people, hunted, starved, diseased and enslaved.

To them, hell had a white face.

They made treaty after treaty with the Indians, but the palefaces broke every one.

For the Conquistadors, Native peoples served as enslaved workers who worked themselves to death to mine silver and gold. To the Anglos, they were superfluous – it was Indian land they hungered for – and they got it – by hook or crook.

Caught between these two great, ravenous forces, there was little they could do but fight, but Europe flooded the Americas with immigrants, and sheer numbers told the tale of woe.

When first they arrived, European settlements were places of disease, hunger and pitiless death. First Nations folk fed them, taught them planting and healed them, with herbal treatments. The colonists repaid them with

unremitting war, smallpox used as biological weapons, land theft and slaughter.

Thanksgiving may be a holiday, but it ain't a holy day.

It should be a day to be remembered, in remembrance of the First Nations that peopled this land, for tens of thousands of years.

### **December 3<sup>rd</sup> - Kennedy and Kings**

In the ancient Roman Empire, millions lived under the illusion that the Emperor was all powerful, and that his will alone ran, regulated and controlled the Empire.

In truth, the Praetorian Guard, an elite unit of the army sworn to defend his royal person, were in control, for Roman Imperial history is rich with instances of them killing the emperor, to make way for a politician they preferred –and, on occasion, for one of their fellow soldiers.

Why is this applicable to late president, John F. Kennedy?

Because the government – media- academic complex has pushed the lie of a lone gunman, Lee Harvey Oswald, and closed the door to the very idea of a conspiracy, or tried to blame foreign elements (hint-hint: Cuba). Instead of government agencies bent on stopping Kennedy from cutting their power and privileges.

In Ted Sorenson's book, *Kennedy*, he recounts the President's determination to control both the CIA and the military establishment. He quotes Kennedy telling an "intimate acquaintance", "When I am reelected I am going to break that agency (CIA) into a thousand pieces..."

Do you think the CIA, which had considerable experience in coups, in killing leaders of governments, in sparking wars, would blink at getting rid of such a threat as Kennedy?

Notably, scholar/activist Noam Chomsky, in his 1993 book *Rethinking Camelot* (South End Press), dispenses with this notion, by pointing out that Kennedy and the cabal surrounding him were pro-war hawks, who were addicted to the CIA's methods of global counter-insurgency.

Further, Chomsky argues, liberal media erected a mythical aura of Camelot that masked Kennedy's real imperial record abroad of assassinations, and malicious foreign interventions. Many such elites, instead of pointing inside, have targeted outsiders (such as Cubans) as the assassins of Kennedy.

But in Clara Nieto's fine work, *Masters of War*, she recounts the time that a French journalist, Jean Daniel of *L'Express* newspaper (of Paris), interviewed Kennedy and took a secret message from Kennedy to Cuba's Fidel Castro. The message was a few words of praise for Castro, and an admission of years of U.S. errors in supporting dictator, Fulgencia Batista.

Daniel wrote that Kennedy's words intrigued the Cuban leader, and he admired Kennedy so much that he considered him (potentially) the greatest U.S. president since Lincoln for his proposal of peaceful co-existence between the two nations.

Three days later, when meeting with Daniel, the two men learned of Kennedy's assassination in Dallas. Castro was shocked, saying it affected millions around the world, including Cuba.

It was, he said, the end of this peace mission.

The Praetorian Guard, his alleged defenders, had slain the Emperor – again.

They slew him in order for the Masters of War, the defense industries, the intelligence networks, and the

paranoid, right-wing, anti-communist community, to survive.

They slew him to demonstrate, to all his successors to come, who really was in control of the Empire.

### **December 9<sup>th</sup> - Too Soon?**

On TV, every talking head waxes eloquent to all but predict, 3 years ahead, who will be not only the party nominee, but who will be the next president of the United States.

The problem here is that no one knows, for it is obviously too soon.

Three years before the 2008 presidential election, few polls gave Sen. Barack Obama much traction, and the conventional wisdom all but crowned Hillary Clinton the victor.

Yet, the horse race, races on, undoubtedly because the media industry must sell product. It must name names to stimulate sales.

When we look back to races past, the silliness seems now quite apparent: Herman Cain, Rick Santorum, Michelle Bachmann, Dennis Kucinich and the like.

And the corporate media likes to promote such figures for the same reason that they love the horse races: it sells papers.

They promote names, only to denounce them later if they don't possess, or can't raise, sufficient funds. And for what are the funds raised? Media, of course.

More and more media.

Thus, all presidential election campaigns are biased towards the wealthy and well-connected.

Worse, we are approaching the era of dynasties: Bush, Clinton, Bush again, Clinton again?

Seriously?

Three hundred and twenty million people – and we must do re-runs?

Have the past presidents really been so great that you want seconds?

Seriously?

Horse races should be for horses – not presidents.

### **28 Dec - Press statement: MARISSA ALEXANDER HOME FOR THANKSGIVING**

*Marissa Alexander has been released on bond until a verdict is reached in her new trial that begins March 31, 2014.*

#### **MORE:**

We hope the decision means that the Florida justice system has relented in its vindictive, hostile and racist legal assault on this African American mother of three. Ms. Alexander has been victimized twice -- once by her abusive ex-husband and again by the state of Florida, which has stolen nearly three years from her life for an act of self-defense that injured no one.

We are thrilled that Ms. Alexander will be able to prepare for her new trial amid the support and love of her children and family from whom she has been separated far too long.

But the battle is not over. It is well documented that black women and other marginalized people are likely to be criminalized, prosecuted, and incarcerated while trying to navigate and survive the conditions of violence in their lives. This is especially true for black women who are subjected to racist stereotypes that paint them as overly aggressive and unworthy. The Free Marissa Now Mobilization Campaign will keep organizing, educating and keeping the pressure on to make sure that Marissa's new trial is fair, sensitive to her situation as a black woman experiencing domestic abuse, and successful!

The Free Marissa Now Mobilization Campaign is more determined than ever to win complete exoneration for Marissa Alexander. We have launched the Marissa Alexander Freedom Fund campaign to raise \$20,000 by the end of the year to help pay for legal costs of the new trial. Donors can give at [tiny.cc/freedomfundraiser](http://tiny.cc/freedomfundraiser).

### **3 Dec - Join Us for Albert Woodfox's Fifth Circuit Court Hearing in New Orleans on Tuesday, January 7<sup>th</sup>**

*Over the holiday, we learned that 2014 will begin with the final courtroom chapter of Albert Woodfox's current struggle to finalize Judge Brady's 2013 ruling which overturned his conviction for a third time based on a finding of racial discrimination in the selection of the grand jury foreperson.*

#### **MORE:**

On Tuesday morning, January 7th, 2014, a yet unnamed three judge panel of the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals in New Orleans will hear oral arguments from the State of Louisiana about why they believe Albert's conviction should be reinstated. Albert's team will of course argue that Judge Brady's ruling should stand.

The hearing is scheduled for Tuesday's morning session beginning at 9am in the En Banc Courtroom (room 209 of the 5th Circuit at 600 Camp Street in New Orleans) and is open to the public.

The oral argument itself is a very short and formal process. Each side will make a short 20 min presentation and then the judges will ask questions for no more than a few hours.

Although last time we waited more than 15 months, decisions are usually issued in less than half that time, and we are hopeful that Albert will know his fate sooner than later this time around.

For those of you who were with us in March of 2009 when Albert's second overturned conviction appeal was heard, you may remember that the US Court of Appeals has very strict rules. Here is a reminder of what to expect if you do plan on attending:

1. The courtroom only holds 50 people on a first come, first serve basis, so although the argument may not start right at 9am, it's a good idea to get there early in the morning to make sure you get a seat.
2. No buttons, T-shirts or signs of any kind are allowed inside the courthouse.
3. Dress formally and expect to be searched. No cellphones or electronic devices of any kind are allowed.
4. Finally, Federal Marshals are allowed to remove spectators for even the most minor of perceived slights or disruptions. So please be extra careful to not talk, whisper, or communicate with each other once you step foot in the courtroom.

### **3 Dec - Parole board eases restrictions for Roger Clement**

*Former political prisoner Roger Clement, a retired public servant who firebombed an Ottawa bank in 2010 can again associate with anarchists after the parole board loosened his release conditions to protect his rights to free speech and association.*

#### **MORE:**

By Gary Dimmock (*Ottawa Citizen*)

Roger Clement, 61, was released from prison in March after serving two years and three months of a three-and-a-half year sentence for firebombing the RBC branch in the Glebe.

The Correctional Service of Canada wanted the parole board to ban him from associating with other self-described anarchists or marching in protests, but the parole board refused, saying the recommendation was not precisely defined and could infringe his rights as a Canadian citizen.

However, the Nov. 26 parole board ruling bans him from associating with his accomplices in the firebombing.

Clement was denied parole in 2012 after he refused to reveal the identities of his masked accomplices in the “domestic terrorism” attack that they filmed and posted online in a catch-me-if-you-can style video that went viral.

Clement’s code-of-silence loyalty was seen by the parole board as a demonstration of “ingrained criminal values.”

Some parole board members thought Clement should have turned state’s evidence on his accomplices, but he wouldn’t.

Instead, he pleaded guilty and took the fall alone, sparing two masked accomplices seen in the online video of the firebombing. Clement stood his ground and told the parole board that identifying and testifying against his accomplices went against his principles.

The alleged accomplices were charged with arson the same day as Clement, but their charges were dropped because there wasn’t a reasonable prospect of conviction.

His prison file reveals that police have flagged him as an “anarchist” in an Ottawa-based “radical organization ... suspected of domestic terrorism.”

Prime Minister Stephen Harper was briefed about the arson in 2010 because Clement and his accomplices said in an online video that they firebombed the branch because of RBC’s connections to the Alberta oilsands and Vancouver Olympics.

According to Clement’s prison file, he met with two accomplices up to three times a week in Ottawa for two months leading up to the firebombing.

Much of the planning appeared to be discussions on how best to gain media attention.

The police at the time said they were grateful nobody died in the massive explosion in the bank machine lobby that caused \$1.6 million in damage.

### **3 Dec - U.S. appeals court affirms contempt judgment for anarchist Jerry Koch**

*A federal appeals court has upheld a contempt judgment against grand jury resister Jerry Koch, who refused to testify before a grand jury thought to be investigating a 2008 bomb explosion in New York's Times Square.*

#### **MORE:**

By Dena Aubin (*Reuters*)

Gerald Koch, 24, of Brooklyn was sent to jail in May after being found in civil contempt for refusing to testify, citing his rights under the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.

He was ordered held in federal custody for no longer than 18 months or the remaining life of the grand jury.

Koch's lawyer, Susan Tipograph, could not immediately be reached for comment. In May, she told Reuters that she believed the grand jury was probing a small bomb detonation outside a U.S. armed forces recruiting station in March 2008.

Koch was not a target of the grand jury, she said.

The explosion caused no injuries but did damage the recruiting station.

In an order on Monday, the appeals court discounted Koch's First Amendment claims, saying the grand jury was investigating a serious crime and the government "has made a convincing showing of its need to ask the questions at issue."

The government has demonstrated that it has credible evidence that Koch may have information about the crime, the three-judge panel of the 2nd Circuit Court of Appeals wrote.

Koch was associated with the Occupy Wall Street movement and his contempt proceedings in May drew large crowds of young people in a Manhattan federal court.

The case is ABC v. Gerald Koch, U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit, No 13-2271.

### **5 Dec - Oso Blanco needs support**

*Byron Chubbuck (aka Oso Blanco) recently called a close friend and supporter, very upset and asking for help. Oso said a staff person was checking his cell for "extra clothing" and grabbed a sheet of paper laying out in the open. The simple drawing was an attempt to establish where various Cherokee memorials/battlefields/landmarks/burial mounds are in relation to his current location – Lee USP. The drawing is of a fenced in burial mound he thought he saw upon his arrival, yet staff are claiming it is a tool for escape.*

#### **MORE:**

Oso and his cellmate were thrown into the "secure housing unit" (SHU) (solitary confinement) for possessing an "escape tool". Oso says it's an insane charge.

Oso is worried that any day now a DHO (disciplinary judge) will come and rule with bias on this bogus "escape tool" charge. Oso has been in the Special Management Unit (SMU), an extremely restrictive program, for years and was just recently released to USP Lee, a much more agreeable situation as far as prisons go. He is worried they will place him back in the SMU program.

Please take a second to call or email on behalf of Byron Chubbuck #07909051:

**Phone:** 276.546.0150

**Fax:** 276.546.9115

**E-mail address:** LEE/EXECASSISTANT@BOP.GOV

Please be polite and just let them know you are concerned about Byron Chubbuck #07909051, and that you think he may be in SHU over a drawing that if looked at, has nothing to do with any escape plans or any conspiracy with any cell mate. No need to mention SMU, case history, or politics in my opinion.

Since we don't know the name of the officers/staff involved just ask to speak with someone concerning him or ask to speak to the warden.

### **5 Dec - After the Gold Rush... by Rod Coronado**

*Former political prisoner Rod Coronado is finally free from supervised release, able to write whatever he wants without fear of being violated. This is his first new writing.*

#### **MORE:**

We did what we had to do. We had to stand up and say we weren't going to watch what we love be destroyed anymore, not without a fight. We did what we believed was right, not legal. Ancient forests, the whales, salmon, all being destroyed to make a buck, an era of biological diversity coming to an end, all slowly driven into the meat grinder of humankind. It wasn't just about the trees and fish, it was about us too. Our home as well. We recognized that there was a moral obligation as responsible planetary citizens in such dark times. An obligation to maintain allegiance, not to one government, but to our one planet. A different set of laws, laws that say if you destroy your home, you will have no place else to live.

So I can't say I regret, nor condemn my own actions, when you take into account the extenuating circumstances. Not at this time, in this era of western civilization when so much continues to be lost. Do I feel bad about what I've done? Of course, some of it, because I am just one person trying to make a positive difference and I make mistakes. But what has happened to our planet is not a mistake. Humankind's greatest environmental catastrophes were the consequence of conscious decisions and economic strategies that continue to guide our daily lives today. There's always been a huge profit margin when it comes to the liquidation of natural resources for the shit we think we need.

The decision was long ago made to profit from the violence our lifestyles create and do what is wrong by the laws of nature, but right by the laws of man. We were born losers. Born into a time when all but a few of the pagans and earth-worshippers were wiped out or broken. Still, it was the spirit of the land and animals that awakened us and the knowledge that ours was the continuation of an active resistance, not simply the ideology of "ancient people." That's when we knew we wouldn't be satisfied with petitions and protests. As good as these things are, neither is going to preserve biodiversity from an economic model that sees it only as a untapped resource waiting to be exploited.

Its been nine years since I was indicted for what they have come to call "eco-terrorism." The first time was twenty years ago and ended with four of my years being spent in federal prison. No I was not a victim of injustice, I was at war and waged many successful raids for which I accepted responsibility and did the time for. The second time only cost me 8 months in prison, but the third and last time (I hope) was in 2006 for talking about what I had done before.

By that time our resistance had grown into a legitimate threat. No, we weren't on the verge of stopping any of the violence, but we sure as hell weren't making it any easier. Our ragtag assembly of skinny vegans and anarchists were accomplishing something that society could not control and that was a good thing for the earth and her animals. The thing is, it wasn't just talking we were doing, I advocated for more resistance. I participated in it, and wanted more people too as well. I faced 18 years in prison for continuing the struggle, so I again took a deal, this time for only one year in prison.

But taking a deal cost me my voice. While the surrender I made to the federal government in 2007 had my sentencing judge encouraging me to remain a part of our movement's non-violent voice, in Michigan it meant total isolation and prohibition against associating with anyone involved with environmental or animal groups. I had returned to the home of Michigan State University and General George Armstrong Custer, two of the targets of my attacks, and the Feds didn't like it. So when I did communicate with an old Earth First! ally, it cost me four more months in prison.

So now that I am "free" to write and say what I like, to whoever I want, this is what I have to say. We need to, if not stop the destruction, than at least try to slow it down. Any and every way that does not harm life. We need to protect our children's home. If not for ourselves, or the salmon, than for them. We have to be brave enough as planetary citizen's to say, "We are not going to stand by and watch you destroy the land that we love and our survival depends on. We are going to try and stop you." We need to be very brave at a time when our government is primed and ready to neutralize any individual who steps over the line in defense of Mother Earth.

I'm not saying others should do what I have done. The actions of such groups as the Animal Liberation Front and Earth Liberation Front are part of the historic record now. But they are not necessarily a model for future

strategies, those were just the ways I personally attempted to slow the destruction. Now we've got to encompass our beliefs not only against the systems we oppose, but towards a creative force of change.

We have to change the way we live, and show to others brave enough to look, that there is another less violent way. A way to live that does not require extreme violence and abuse. The way we've been forced to live (and I say forced because our chance to live more harmonically with the land is still largely illegal or impossible to any who do not believe in the value of money or private property.) takes us further and further away from a sustainable strategy of survival.

Is it still necessary to burn things down and rescue some of the prisoners of the war on nature? Of course it is. I could never say that actions that result in no harm or loss of life, but that harm the profits of companies engaged in the destruction of Earth is ever a bad thing to do. Only it is simply no longer a sustainable or practical way to resist. We are too few, and there are too many laws designed specifically to destroy us.

The laws of our present society treat our crimes the same way the laws of South Africa and Great Britain treated the crimes of the outlawed African National Congress and Irish Republican Army. "Eco-terror" laws have sent to prison some of our bravest planetary citizens for as many years as the ANC's Nelson Mandela spent in prison before society was ready to recognize his struggle as legitimate.

We need to explore other ways of fighting...and living. Ways that do not give our opponents the satisfaction of criminalizing and destroying us. Because even if we destroy a building or rescue some prisoners, the consequences of doing so are likely to send us to prison for the rest of our practical lives.

Because the people who believe its OK to tirelessly abuse animals and destroy the Earth are also in charge of the courts. And once you are in the Bureau of Prisons inventory it will be as easy as pie to return.

Take it from me, in 2004, when I was "trespassing" in the public's national forest and springing a snare set for a mountain lion, I never thought I'd be entering into a nine-year period of federal incarceration, pre-trial and post-trial supervision. Over those nine years I had to focus on fighting for my own freedom and not that of others. Because choosing to do something illegal means being responsible for the consequences, however unjust we might know they are. That is the consequence for being that kind of warrior. However noble you might think it is, it is not very practical at a time when we need everyone we can get.

I don't know how great is your level of distraction, or even if you've been paying attention, but things aren't looking too good for our planet. And guess who is responsible? Us. Our own species is threatening to wipe out all of the others due to our insatiable consumptive deathstyle. Yes, we should be pointing fingers and outing the guilty, but at the heart of the problem is our own very selfish way of living. An economic model that pro-offers a level of consumer consumption that is rapidly turning the world into our own refrigerator. So here we are, recognizing that by our own choice, we are our own worst enemy and by virtue of belonging to consumer culture we are both its perpetrator and victim.

After all these years of resisting I still don't have the answers, but I do know the questions and at the top is our need to live a different way. A way that allows for the nurturing of life, not its neglect, a way that reminds us all that there is an alternative that can bring us back into harmony with the rest of the non-human world that is still waiting for us to join the circle of life, not death.

All I can say is that I love life. After my near incarceration for the rest of my healthy existence, I know the value of living and loving and practicing a way that makes me feel less a part of the problem, and more a part of the solution. And if we loose, and it all goes to hell, then at least I will know that I stood with the ancient forests and whales. I choose to remain free, to remain loyal to my family I share this Earth with, all of them, my kids and the finned and furred too. And I will never shy away from expressing my pride at having been an Eco-warrior in these difficult times. I stand with dignity in the company of my ancestors and all those people who have given their lives because they knew the laws of their society were wrong.

I stand with the wolves of Northern Michigan who will die this month. I stand with our nearest non-human relatives, the primates still languishing in laboratories. I stand with the Earth herself who we continue to inject with toxic chemicals. I stand with my children who will have to live in the world we leave them. And I stand with you, my fellow human relations who I implore to join in this struggle that is no where near over. I know that together we can destroy the world. But I also know we don't have to.

Just don't be afraid to believe what is in your heart. Don't be afraid to stand up when others won't. Because once you allow yourself to remain silent to injustice, it will only become easier. Because there will always be people to keep you company in denial. History reserves judgment not for those who stand up against injustice, but for those who remain obedient to it. Know that as far away as we all have gone from the ways of Earth, she will always be waiting for us to come home. Do not be afraid to love, and to cry at what is happening to all we love. Feel. That is the first step. The rest will come naturally.

### **5 Dec - Retired detective contradicts his own trial testimony in Omaha Two case**

*Retired police sergeant Robert Pfeffer contradicted his own court testimony in the prosecution of the Omaha Two, Edward Poindexter and Mondo we Langa (formerly David Rice), for the murder of policeman Larry Minard, Sr. On Dec. 5, Nebraskans for Justice released a previously unpublished confidential interview that was conducted over ten years ago with the former detective.*

#### **MORE:**

By Michael Richardson (*Examiner*)

Pfeffer has now given four accounts of his role in the purported discovery of dynamite in the basement of Mondo we Langa's home. Mondo and Poindexter were officers in Omaha's affiliate chapter of the Black Panthers and were convicted for the 1970 bombing murder of Minard. The 1971 trial, where Pfeffer's first version of events was aired, was tainted by the withholding of exculpatory evidence from the FBI crime laboratory under orders of J. Edgar Hoover.

Hoover directed an illegal clandestine counterintelligence operation codenamed COINTELPRO against domestic political activists. As leaders of the local Black Panthers, the Omaha Two, as the men are now known, were targets of Paul Young, the Special Agent-in-Charge of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, acting under orders from Hoover to get the pair off the streets.

Officer Minard had been lured to his death by an anonymous call about a woman screaming in a vacant house. Instead, only a suitcase bomb filled with dynamite waited for the eight responding patrolmen. The FBI role in the case under COINTELPRO operations was to withhold a written report on the identity of the anonymous caller recorded by the 911 system and have the FBI crime laboratory guide the Omaha investigation.

At the 1971 trial, Robert Pfeffer testified he never went into the basement and first saw dynamite as fellow detective Jack Swanson was carrying it up the stairs. Swanson said he found the explosives in a cubbyhole in an old coal bin.

Swanson was the Omaha police liaison with the FBI and also maintained his own cache of dynamite at a quarry in rural Council Bluffs, Iowa. Swanson took custody of the dynamite after seven boxes of explosives were seized from three men in July 1970.

The dynamite allegedly found in Mondo's basement was never photographed in place by the crime scene technicians. The first crime scene photos of the dynamite were on a conference table on the fourth floor of the police headquarters.

The second time Pfeffer testified about the case was in U.S. District Court before Judge Warren Urbom, who ruled that Pfeffer and Swanson's search of Mondo we Langa's house was illegal. Once again the basement dynamite was discussed although the location shifted from the coal bin to near the furnace. Judge Urbom did not

comment on the credibility of Pfeffer but he did make it clear he did not believe the testimony of Pfeffer's supervisor, Lt. James Perry.

The third version of events under oath by Pfeffer was in 2009, in post-trial proceedings in Omaha. Pfeffer, who was denied his request to use notes, testified contrary to his trial testimony that he was the first one down in the basement and that he found the dynamite, not Swanson. Neither the judge, who ruled against Ed Poindexter's bid for a new trial, nor the Douglas County Attorney has ever taken any action over Pfeffer's contradictory sworn testimony.

Robert Pfeffer's fourth account of his role in the case was in a recorded telephone interview on Sept. 5, 2002, with private detective Thomas Gorgen of Silverhawk Investigations.

Pfeffer claimed, "I found it down the basement against the furnace behind a door that was leaning up against it and you could just look down and you could see it underneath there."

At trial, Pfeffer testified he saw Jack Swanson carrying the dynamite up the basement stairs. However, the story Pfeffer told the private detective was just the opposite.

"Yeah he was just coming down the steps and I told him to turn around and get your ass out of here because we didn't know, I didn't even want to move the door because we didn't know if it was booby trapped or not," said Pfeffer.

"It was a wooden door kitchen door outside door I don't know it was wood. And all you had to do with my flashlight was look down and I could see a box there that was dynamite I can't remember what the hell was the brand of it I can't I don't remember the brand."

Pfeffer continued, "I told Swanson I says he was just coming down the steps I said Jack there's some dynamite here let's get the hell out of here I said I'm not going touch."

"Yeah so we called ATF in and they come and we um they helped us and they moved the dynamite and then we found the suitcases that had all the wires in them and I think there were either 3 or 5 I can't recall now," explained Pfeffer describing the search. However, the wire-rigged suitcases were never mentioned at trial nor included in an inventory of the search or in Pfeffer's own report

Pfeffer, apparently unaware of Deputy Chief of Police Glen Gates arrangement with Paul Young to get the 911 recording to the FBI laboratory, Swanson's close contact with the FBI, and the arrival of a FBI crime lab representative to Omaha. Instead, Pfeffer claimed there was no cooperation between the FBI and the Omaha police.

"And you know what we never worked with the FBI at all on this case," said Pfeffer. "And so anyway the FBI didn't have nothing to do with that. I laugh like hell when I hear them say that."

Pfeffer said the FBI had bad information because they paid Donald Peak, the older brother of the confessed bomber Duane Peak, to be an informant.

"Peak was to try to throw us off track." Pfeffer said, "The only thing they did was offer rewards and Peak was making money off of them hand and fist."

Pfeffer returned to the topic of dynamite, "I found it and no one and the FBI they didn't have nothing to do with that case believe me we never called them in they were working on their own."

Private detective Gorgen asked Pfeffer, "Do you think Swanson or any OPD person would have planted the dynamite?"

Pfeffer answered, "No I was with Swanson."

Jack Swanson, who is now deceased, was promoted after the trial and eventually became Omaha Police Chief. Robert Pfeffer retired without a promotion and still lives in Omaha.

Duane Peak, the confessed killer, made a deal with prosecutors and served less than three years as a juvenile delinquent before he was granted his freedom for implicating the Omaha Two. The identity of the anonymous caller remains unknown.

Mondo we Langa and Ed Poindexter are serving life sentences at the maximum-security Nebraska State Penitentiary where both men continue to deny any involvement in the crime.

### **5 Dec - Urgent Health Campaign for Political Prisoner Robert Seth Hayes**

*Over the past few months, Robert Seth Hayes has lost about 40 pounds. Such rapid weight loss is cause for alarm and we urge you to help however you can in the campaign to insure Seth gets the medical attention he needs.*

#### **MORE:**

Robert Seth Hayes was arrested in 1973, after police opened fire on his apartment while he was home with his wife and children. This occurred as a result of the U.S. government's illegal Counterintelligence Program (COINTELPRO), in a climate dominated by portrayals of black militants as murderers and cop-killers. Seth, a former member of the Black Panther Party, was convicted for the death of a NYC transit cop and for the attempted murder of the cops who stormed his apartment. He received a sentence of 25 years to life, and is being held at the Wende Correctional Facility in Alden, NY.

In 1998, Seth was diagnosed with diabetes, and has been struggling with prison administrators to get decent healthcare for his disease. Seth became eligible for parole in 1998, but despite an excellent prison record, Seth's sixth bid for parole was denied in 2008.

-

Robert Seth Hayes is currently 65 years old. We are requesting an appropriate medical work-up in an outside facility for abnormal weight loss, because Mr. Hayes has lost 40 pounds in the last 3 months and currently weighs only 140 pounds max. 40 lbs of weight loss in a few months is very concerning for cancer and cancer needs to be ruled out. This is most urgently needed for Seth's health right now. This weight loss is acute and clearly urgent.

Mr. Hayes was first diagnosed with Type II diabetes in the year 2000. In the 13 years since then, DOCCS (Department of Corrections and Community Supervision) has been completely unable to control his blood sugar levels. At the time he was diagnosed, Mr. Hayes was at Clinton. He was transferred to Wende in 2003 and then to Sullivan in 2010. Throughout this time, Mr. Hayes' sugar levels have either soared to the 300 to 400 levels or been extremely low, in the 50 to 70 levels, both life-threatening. Mr. Hayes also has Hepatitis C, for which he is currently not receiving any treatment. Diabetes is an insidious disease, and the constant sugar fluctuations can lead to renal failure, coma or stroke.

NYS DOCCS states on its website that denial of adequate medical care is a violation of a person's eighth amendment constitutional rights, as this would be cruel and unusual punishment. Of course, adequate medical care would include a diabetic diet, which is absolutely not provided by NYS DOCCS. Additionally, they refuse to allow food package items such as diabetic cookies and candies.

Since NYS DOCCS has been completely unable to control Mr. Hayes' sugar levels during the past 13 years, the community requests that he be taken to an outside medical facility for a complete diagnosis and adequate care. Of course, if Robert Seth Hayes had been released on parole instead of having 15 years added to his sentence by the NYS DOCCS Parole Board, he would be a free man today and would have better access to adequate medical

care than he currently does.

Please write, call, fax and email the following people and insist that Robert Seth Hayes, DIN No. 74-A-2280, be taken to an outside medical facility as soon as possible. If you are a doctor, nurse, or any other kind of medical personnel, please use your letterhead. Please email [nycjericho@gmail.com](mailto:nycjericho@gmail.com) and let us know what response you receive. Also, if you are able to find out any additional phone or fax numbers, we will be grateful for the information.

Acting Commissioner Anthony J. Annucci  
NYS Department of Corrections and Community Supervision  
Harriman State Campus, Building 2  
1220 Washington Avenue  
Albany, New York 12226-2050  
Phone: 518.457.8126

Carl J. Koenigsmann M.D.  
Deputy Commissioner/Chief Medical Officer  
NYS DOCCS Division of Health Services  
Harriman State Campus, Building #2  
1220 Washington Avenue  
Albany, New York 12226-2050  
Phone: 518.457.7073  
Fax: 518.457.2115

Elizabeth Ritter  
Assistant Commissioner for Health Services  
NYS DOCCS Division of Health Services  
Harriman State Campus, Building #2  
1220 Washington Avenue  
Albany, New York 12226-2050  
[Elizabeth.Ritter@doccs.ny.gov](mailto:Elizabeth.Ritter@doccs.ny.gov)

Division of Health Services  
Nancy A. Lyng, MS, Director of Health Services  
Operations and Management  
Harriman State Campus, Building #2  
1220 Washington Avenue  
Albany, New York 12226-2050  
518.457.7072

Sullivan Correctional Facility  
Fallsburg, New York 12733-0116  
845.434.2080  
Patrick Griffin, Superintendent

### **6 Dec - Statements by political prisoners on the death of Nelson Mandela**

*As corporate media and politicians try to whitewash and defang the revolutionary Nelson Mandela, political prisoners in the United States have started to release statements.*

#### **MORE:**

Jaan Laaman

Comrades - family -- Here on this thursday afternoon - dec. 5th, I just heard the sad news of the death of Nelson Mandela. Along with all of you, I raise my fist high in salute and respect for this true Guerrilla, true leader and

Human Being. It has been our fortune to be here on this earth in this time, to have seen the work and struggle of this good and strong man, and to have done what we could to support that struggle. AMANDLA! jaan

Tom Manning

Mandela. He gave his life and we except his gift with sadness and determination to stay focused on the principles and promise of a world worthy of Amandla! Power of the people! It has been, and continues to be a long walk to freedom. The struggle continues! With love and rage, Tom Manning Ohio 7/United Freedom Front 12/5/2013

Leonard Peltier

Greetings my relatives, friends, and supporters:

It saddens me to hear that a great man like Nelson Mandela has departed from this lifetime. He was a man who was truly inspirational and showed us the possibilities of how a continued struggle by indigenous people could manifest itself in levels of freedom that have been marred by centuries of oppression.

Our Native people suffered the same types of oppression many times. It is not as overt and as easily distinguished as in some places; however, if you are dead because a policeman shot you, or dead because you could not stand the racial and cultural genocide, so you committed suicide-- you are just as dead either way. Nelson Mandela is known for leading the struggle against apartheid in South Africa. America talked about ending apartheid and put sanctions on South Africa. Not being all that adept at the English language, it is my understanding that (apartheid) means to keep someone apart from something; my people have been kept apart purposely from the sacred Black Hills of South Dakota. There was, and still are, measures that keep us apart from our true history, perpetrated by an education system that limits the truth of our being. Right now, here in America, right now in Canada, right now in South America, there is apartheid that seeks to separate us from our sacred places, our lands, and our resources. Right now in Canada Native people are struggling to protect their aboriginal lands from fracking which destroys the water tables and disturbs the natural balance of the Earth. Right now with an apartheid mentality, they seek to build pipelines across Native lands that have the potential of great ecological destruction. Right now there is an apartheid that seeks to separate us from the protection of the constitution of the United States which says treaty law is the supreme law of the land; which also says you have a right to an unbiased fair trial; which also says you have a right to a jury of your peers. Right now our young Native people are tried as adults THREE times more than other groups and kept apartheid from their families and kept apartheid from competent legal representation.

I could go on and on, but you can see where I am heading with this. The struggle against apartheid, I am sure, is not over in South Africa, nor is the struggle against apartheid and slavery over in America. We must all consider Nelson Mandela an inspiration, but I am also inspired by the least of our people who stand up for what is right, like the young man or young woman who peacefully mans a roadblock against developers or fracking companies or some factory that hurts our air. While I am at it, in all this chaos, I also want to remember a brother by the name of Wanbli Tate who tirelessly championed the rights of indigenous people through radio programs, writings, and the internet, to bring attention to the wrongdoers represented in government and corporations.

We have lost a lot of our people in their last years, and again I remember my brother Russell Means who was also tireless in his efforts in trying to bring about an end to this American version of apartheid that faces Native people. In the spirit of all those who have gone before us in this struggle, I would like to say stay strong and NEVER, NEVER give up.

Your friend always,  
In the spirit of Crazy Horse

### **6 Dec - Update from visit with Kevin Olliff**

*Kevin's doing well. And it's a feat given he's already been at Woodford County for nearly four months now and is still uncertain how this sham of a prosecution will dictate his fate. In the meantime, there's*

*a new judge in his case. Read more below.*

**MORE:**

He's hardly been sleeping, but only because he's absorbed in good books (currently Jewish History & Jewish Memory, sent by his mom). Yes, he's been getting your letters—and here's his apology for being bad at replying. It's nothing personal; sometimes he doesn't know what to say back, sometimes he's just too engrossed in reading, and sometimes he's just being lazy (feel free to hassle him a little for this). That said, he will be issuing regular updates and statements himself in the coming weeks. The first will be released soon—stay tuned.

In other news, Kevin innocuously put up strings pulled from a laundry bag in order to hang his towel for drying in his cell. While stringing laundry lines, hanging pictures on walls, etc. happens often in jails, it's almost always overlooked—and has been with other inmates at WCJ. However, in keeping with their precedented bias against our friend, jail officials decided to charge Kevin with "Destruction of State Property" and have revoked his commissary funds for two weeks. (So if you're putting money directly onto Kevin's books, stop for right now.) There's not much that can be done about this, but it's always worthwhile to call out Woodford County Jail for what it is: a place that would be laughable for its inconsistency if the people who run it weren't simply prejudiced and ignorant. The moment Kevin is out of there cannot come soon enough—for many reasons.

At any rate, know that he's not taking this event badly (not much use in getting angry when there's no productive outlet for it), and he's doing all right on the whole. Even during the rare moments he's down, he maintains his sense of humor and stoicism. Given the amount of time Kevin has spent behind bars for activism already in his young life, it's kind of a marvel that he's not become disaffected or distant. Must be a testament both to his own strength of mind and spirit, and to the strength of the dedicated community of friends and activists around him.

So here's another thank you for everything everyone is doing to keep him going. They can't suppress us so long as we always rally to each other's sides this way.

Finally, for anyone who missed it yesterday, here's the most recent site update about Kevin's new judge and the Wednesday pretrial...

Yesterday, Kevin appeared in court with a new attorney brought on to help with the case. As can happen in a place as small as Woodford County, Kevin's new lawyer has a conflict of interest with the judge (the judge is his landlord). This issue was raised in court yesterday, and the judge was compelled to recuse himself from the case.

In short: Kevin has a new judge. This is an extremely positive development.

In the county where he was arrested, Kevin is in an uphill battle with a lot working against him. It is a conservative, rural area. There are attempts to politicize his case in ways completely unrelated to his alleged "crime." And Woodford County is considered by both lawyers and "defendants" to be the worst county in the state in terms of harsh sentences. As one lawyer stated:

"You chose the single worst county in the state to be arrested in."

Part of that was having a judge who seemed hostile to Kevin's case. This was evident by his setting bail beyond what even the prosecution requested, and rejecting a plea deal agreed upon by both Kevin

and the prosecutor.

Obtaining a new judge in criminal cases can be extremely difficult, and we're considering this a hugely positive step forward in achieving a favorable outcome for this farcical prosecution.

Kevin's next court date is Christmas Eve.

We still need to raise funds to cover the attorney that resulted in this new judge, so please organize a benefit or donate if you can.

**December 9<sup>th</sup> - Read confidential "security alert" about Kevin & Tyler**

In September, the Fur Commission USA, a trade group representing fur farmers, sent out this bulletin (posted below) on the arrest of Kevin and Tyler.

This leaked security alert (originally posted on Animal Liberation Frontline), attempts to draw connections between their arrest and the recent wave of mink farm raids – nearly all of which occurred while they were in jail.

It is another example of people with social or political interests attempting to exploit prisoners (unable to speak out and defend themselves) for their own ends.

We've seen this recently with the the powers-that-be in Woodford County attempting to exaggerate the significance of Kevin & Tyler's case presumably to obtain some sort of law enforcement "cred."

We've seen certain movements attempt to claim past prisoners as "one of their own," movements with agendas those prisoners don't even support. And we see that here, with the fur industry attempting to celebrate Kevin & Tyler's arrest as some sort of victory, when their arrest has nothing to do with fur farms.

Read the alert below. A note about this alert: These "security alerts" are sent to fur farmers via email and fax every time there is a "security" related issue affecting US fur farms. This was intended to be read by fur farmers only, and was not intended to be read by the general public.

"Fur Commission USA  
Security Alert – Arrests made in IL  
September 3, 2013

Two California-based animal rights extremists were arrested in rural Roanoke Illinois on August 14, the same night of the mink farm attack in Morris IL.

Kevin Olliff and Taylor Lang were pulled over on a traffic violation late on the night of the 14th, and after a search, bolt-cutters, wire-cutters, ski masks, cammo clothing and muriatic acid were found in the vehicle. Mr. Olliff served 18 months in prison in 2009 on felony animal rights charges (stalking).

Presently they are being charged with "Possession of Burglary Tools" but bail has been set significantly higher than warranted for this crime, leading us to believe there are more serious charges pending. A preliminary hearing is set for September 9.

Fur Commission will keep the farm community up-to-date as more information becomes available.

Distributed by,  
Michael Whelan  
Fur Commission USA  
541-595-8568"

### **8 Dec - National Campaign Launched to bring Mumia home**

*At noon, on Monday, December 9, 2013, on the 32nd year of Mumia Abu-Jamal's wrongful incarceration, his supporters held a press conference in front of the District Attorney's Office at 3 South Penn Square to outline the case for Abu-Jamal's innocence, call for his immediate release, and announce the launch of the Campaign to Bring Mumia Home which includes an Indiegogo crowd funding campaign, 60 for 60.*

#### **MORE:**

The December 9th press conference and organizing meeting are the culmination of a weekend of events in Philadelphia and New York. On Saturday, December 7 in Philadelphia, Youth on the Move, a youth-led forum on the intersection between the Abu-Jamal case, mass incarceration, and the school to prison pipeline, will be held at the Asian Arts Initiative from 11 AM-2PM. In New York, the We Want Freedom Forum and Scholarship Launch, will feature a conversation with local artists on art and social change, held at Hostos Community College in the Bronx, Room B-501 from 1-4PM [on Sat., Dec. 7]. On Sunday, December 8th the Free Your Mind, Free Mumia, Free Them All yoga fundraiser will be held at the Black Eye Soup Factory in the Germantown section of Philadelphia from 10am-12pm.

For the last 32 years, the Philadelphia courts, government officials, and local journalists have succumbed to the pressures of the Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) and abandoned the pursuit of truth in the case of this world-renowned journalist who was racially profiled and targeted for his political affiliations by a Philadelphia police department with a long history of brutality and corruption.

On Thursday December 5, Mumia supporters "delivered a package to the Philadelphia DA's office and to Philadelphia's major newspapers on the same day of the passing of Nelson Mandela outlining "crimes against justice by the judge, the prosecutor and the police in the case of Mumia Abu-Jamal," said Pam Africa of the International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal.

According to Dr. Johanna Fernandez, Professor of History at Baruch College, "those whose careers would be destroyed if the truth surfaced in this case argue that the failure of the appellate process to grant Abu-Jamal relief on his conviction is proof of his guilt. However, as was recently demonstrated in the case of Herman Wallace of the Angola 3 case, the appellate system in the United States very often fails the defendants." "The problem with the appellate process," adds Dr. Mark Taylor, Professor of Theology at Princeton Theological Seminary, "is that following a series of regressive, states rights laws passed in the 1990s, such as the Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty act of 1996, appellate judges are forced to accept as 'fact' tampered evidence collected by the police and established by lower courts."

"Anyone who examines the case will find irrefutable evidence of framing on the part of the police, and a strong indication that an innocent man has been imprisoned for 32 years," say crime investigations reporter Patrick O'Conner, author of *The Framing of Mumia Abu Jamal*.

"We urge people of conscience in Philadelphia to call on the Philadelphia DA and the Governor of Pennsylvania to release Mumia Abu-Jamal, and bring Philadelphia's native son home," says Dr. Fernandez.

### **9 Dec - URGENT: Funds Needed For Migs' (NATO 5) Early Prison Release**

*This weekend we received word that Mark Neiweem (aka Migs) of the NATO 5 has had 30 days good time restored and will be released from prison this week, instead of mid-January. While this is welcome and exciting news, it also means his support team has only a few days to prepare for his return home instead of several*

weeks.

**MORE:**

Funds are urgently needed to buy clothing, shoes, hygiene products, food, and other basic necessities for Migs upon his release. Donations are being accepted here: <https://www.wepay.com/donations/migs-prison-release-fund>

**BACKGROUND:**

Migs is one of the NATO 5, a group of Occupy activists arrested in the days leading up to the May 2012 NATO summit protests in Chicago as the result of undercover law enforcement infiltration. Migs was arrested in a spectacular snatch-and-grab as he was leaving a restaurant. He was charged with attempted possession and solicitation of an incendiary device and was facing up to 30 years in prison as well as a consecutive sentence for a probation violation charge. The state alleged that he attempted to get undercover Chicago police officer “Mo” to buy materials for him for constructing a PVC pipe bomb.

On April 11, 2013, Migs accepted a non-cooperating plea deal to the probation violation charge and to solicitation and attempted possession of an explosive or incendiary device. (You can read about his decision to accept the plea agreement here.) He was sentenced to a 3 years in a state prison and received credit for time served and other reductions in the duration of his incarceration for good behavior, ultimately reducing his sentence to 18 months with 11 months served.

Migs is no stranger to the Chicago cops, as he has been prominent in the Chicago-area anarchist community for some years now. In addition to being targeted for preemptive arrest, he was initially denied vital medical treatment after being arrested and, later was forced to choose between going to the hospital and talking with his attorney. During his time in Cook County Jail, he was singled out by the guards and beaten severely, requiring hospitalization. Early on in his incarceration, he was cornered in his cell by guards who took pictures of his anarchist tattoos and tried to force him to sign an admission of being part of the “black bloc anarchists” gang. He steadfastly refused to sign. Migs’ attorney complained about the ongoing harassment and targeting of him in open court, but the harassment continued.

Migs has continued to experience harassment and abuse because of his politics while at Pontiac Correctional Center, where he has served the remainder of his sentence. Prison officials wrote him up for disciplinary infractions for possessing literature with anarchist information and symbols. They subsequently revoked several months of his “good time” (time credited to his sentence for good behavior) and have held him in solitary confinement since July 13, 2013.

Activists, supporters, and other concerned community members joined together this summer to put pressure on the state to release Migs on time and not penalize him for reading and writing about a political ideology. The campaigns on his behalf, paired with legal appeals, have now resulted in Migs being released only one month later than originally expected. The final victory this past week means Migs will serve only 19 months total, instead of the full three years prison officials had threatened him with.

Migs has been steadfast in his convictions throughout this ordeal, and we have been steadfast in our support. Help us bring him home on wonderfully short notice: <https://www.wepay.com/donations/migs-prison-release-fund>

**9 Dec - Bring Lynne Stewart Home this Holiday! MAKE 3 CALLS FOR COMPASSION.**

*For the second time the warden of Carswell FCI agreed to forward the compassionate release petition to the DOJ. For the second time, Obama Holder are stalling. The time to increase the heat is now.*

**MORE:**

Dear Friends,

On DECEMBER 10th, 11th, the 12th, make 3 calls for for Compassion!!!  
President Obama: 202.456.1111  
Attorney General Holder: 202.353.1555  
Bureau Of Prisons Director Samuels: 202.307.3250/3062

“...Finally and not to burden your time schedules, I need to once again ask for your assistance in forcing the Bureau of Prisons to grant my Compassionate Release. They have been stonewalling now since August and my life expectancy, as per my cancer Doctor, is down to 12 months. They know I am fully qualified and that there are 40,000+ people who have signed on to force them to do the right thing which is to let me go home to my family and receive the advanced care in New York City, my home. Yet they refuse to act. I must say it is entirely within the range of their politics and their cruelty to hold the political prisoners until we have days to live before releasing us — Witness Herman Wallace of Angola and Marilyn Buck. We are fighting not to permit this and are actually calling for a BIG push—email, mail, telephone, to Obama(the gutless wonder) Attorney General Holder (Big Speech No Action) and the BOP on December, 10, 11 and 12. Bring Lynne Home by the Holidays. We are Many ! They are few!!

And lastly , as you discuss political prisoners, remember that I am a virtual newcomer having just finished 4 years inside. Not far from here in Coleman,Fla., at the Federal Prison there, is the heroic defender of his people, Leonard Peltier. He is as far from his nation, the Turtle Mountain Band in North Dakota as it is possible to be.

EVERYBODY HOME !! FREE LEONARD !! FREE SEKOU !! FREE MUMIA !! FREE ALL POLITICAL PRISONERS !!.....”

Lynne Stewart, FMC

### **12 Dec - La Haine: Film Screening for Jerry Koch**

**WHAT:** Film Screening/Fund Raiser

**WHERE:** The Base - 1302 Myrtle Avenue, Brooklyn, New York 11221

**WHEN:** 7:00pm

**COST:** Donations at the door

#### **MORE:**

We present this film with special audio introduction by anarchist Jerry Koch, currently imprisoned for refusing to cooperate with an ongoing federal grand jury investigation. We will have supplies on hand in case you would like to write to Jerry afterwards. All proceeds go to his legal support.

#### *About La Haine:*

Mathieu Kassovitz took the film world by storm with *La haine*, a gritty, unsettling, and visually explosive look at the racial and cultural volatility in modern-day France, specifically the low-income banlieue districts on Paris’s outskirts. Aimlessly passing their days in the concrete environs of their dead-end suburbia, Vinz (Vincent Cassel), Hubert (Hubert Koundé), and Saïd (Saïd Taghmaoui)—a Jew, an African, and an Arab—give human faces to France’s immigrant populations, their bristling resentment at their marginalization slowly simmering until it reaches a climactic boiling point. A work of tough beauty, *La haine* is a landmark of contemporary French cinema and a gripping reflection of its country’s ongoing identity crisis.

### **13 Dec - Bluestockings Prisoner Letter Writing Group**

**WHAT:** Prisoner Letter Writing Group

**WHEN:** 5:00pm, Friday, December 13th

**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!

### **14 Dec - Benefit for 2010 Toronto G20 extraditee Kevin Chianella**

**WHAT:** Benefit show to cover legal fees

**WHEN:** 8:00pm, Saturday, December 14th

**WHERE:** Fitness - 1196 Myrtle Avenue, Brooklyn, New York 11221

**COST:** Donation at the door

#### **MORE:**

As some of you may know, our good friend Kevin is being prosecuted for his involvement in the G20 protests in Toronto, Spring of 2010.

It has been a long and draining process, and the devastating amount of retainer fees that are owed to his lawyers is overwhelming.

We are setting up this show/benefit with hopes that we can achieve some sort of financial goal to help Kevin pay off his debt.

Please come show some love and support to the cause! Tell your friends! Tell everyone!

There will be a small entrance fee. Any other donations would be greatly appreciated!

### **15 Dec - Fundraiser for Marissa Alexander**

**WHAT:** Benefit

**WHEN:** 4:30-8:00pm, Sunday, December 15th

**WHERE:** Billie's Black Bar & Lounge - 271 West 119th Street, New York, New York 10026

**COST:** Sliding scale, \$10-\$50 per ticket

#### **MORE:**

Featuring live music from Daro Behroozi & friends, with special guest speaker Vikki Law

Buy tickets now for the Free Marissa Alexander Fundraising Party: <http://freemarissafundraisernyc.bpt.me/>

Marissa Alexander, an African American mother of three from Florida, was sentenced to 20 years in prison for firing a warning shot, which caused no injury, to halt an attack by her abusive husband.

The growing national Free Marissa Now campaign is raising funds for her retrial, currently scheduled for March. Although Marissa's legal team is working pro bono, there are significant additional costs in running an effective defense. The campaign is more than halfway to its initial goal of raising \$20,000 by December 31, and now is a crucial time for everyone to who wants to see Marissa Alexander free to contribute.

**ON DECEMBER 15, COME LIFT UP MARISSA ALEXANDER'S NAME AND RAISE MUCH-NEEDED FUNDS TO HELP BRING MARISSA HOME.**

Although Marissa had no prior arrests, was licensed to carry a gun, and had a restraining order against her husband – and although Florida's now-infamous self-defense law includes the right to "stand your ground" – Marissa was charged with aggravated assault. Racist and sexist stereotypes that paint African American women as aggressors and deny sympathy to women who stand up to their abusers meant that Marissa Alexander was presumed guilty until proven innocent. This erasure of domestic violence is doubly institutionalized in Florida's draconian and racist system of mandatory minimum sentencing laws.

(Adapted from resources on the Free Marissa Now website.)

In September 2013, Marissa won her appeal. Now more than ever, her legal team must have the resources to defend this survivor. Please buy your tickets today and help spread the word about her case!

\*Tickets are limited: reserve admission through Brown Paper Tickets at <http://freemarissafundraisernyc.bpt.me/>

\*Can't join us but want to contribute? Donate to the Free Marissa Now Indiegogo campaign: <http://www.indiegogo.com/projects/justice-for-marissa-a-fundraiser-for-freedom>

\*Spread the word! Grassroots support is key to the event's success. You can also find the main event webpage on Tumblr: <http://freemarissafundraisernyc.tumblr.com/>

This event is an ad-hoc effort by concerned individuals responding to the call from the Free Marissa Now campaign for people of conscience to undertake grassroots fundraising actions. For information on the national campaign, including resources on mandatory minimums and the criminalization of abuse survivors, please visit <http://freemarissanow.tumblr.com/>.

Host committee: Jill Williams, Simran Noor, Julia Beatty, Pamela and Christopher Brown, Tracy McNeil, gabriel sayegh, Thanu Yakupitiyage, W Mae Singerman, Zenzile Greene, Matthew Guldin, Allison Brown, Nancy Kricorian and James Schamus, Andrew Kadi, Una Osato, Alexis Stern, Ali Issa.

Buy tickets now for the Free Marissa Alexander Fundraising Party: <http://freemarissafundraisernyc.bpt.me/>

Please note that tickets are not tax deductible. All funds raised will go to the Marissa Alexander Legal Defense Fund, which is administered by Marissa's family on her behalf. For more about fundraising efforts, please visit the family's website: <http://justiceformarissa.blogspot.com/>

Billie's Black is generously making its space available to support the Free Marissa fundraiser. We highly encourage you to spend at least \$10 on food and drinks – you won't regret it!

Event contact: [freemarissafundraisernyc@gmail.com](mailto:freemarissafundraisernyc@gmail.com)

## **31 Dec - Noise Demo Against the Prison Industrial Complex, In Solidarity with PPs and POWs**

**WHAT:** Noise Demo Against the PIC, for the Liberation of PPs + POWs

**WHEN:** 9:00pm, Tuesday, December 31st

**WHERE:** Metropolitan Correction Center (MCC, the federal prison in downtown Manhattan); Pearl Street, between Cardinal Hayes Place and Park Row (J to Chambers Street or 4/5/6/ to City Hall)

**BRING:** Noisemakers, air horns, drums, anything that is loud!

### **MORE:**

On the noisiest night of the year in New York City, come help us remind folks locked up that they are not alone. NYC Anarchist Black Cross, in response to an international call for noise demonstrations outside of prisons, is asking folks to join us outside of the Metropolitan Correctional Center (MCC) in lower Manhattan. Come, not to appeal to authority, speak truth to power, or any other contrivance, but rather to stand arm in arm with comrades and show direct solidarity to those on the other side of the wall.

The state, writ large, is targeting anarchists all across the United States and abroad. This will be both protest and celebration. Let's make it another night in which we show them we're never scared.