



Updates for April 15th

29 Mar - Spring Statement from Leonard Peltier

In case you've forgotten the power of American Indian Movement prisoner Leonard Peltier's words, simply read the following statement.

MORE:

Greetings my friends, relatives, supporters, and all those who support the cause of freedom, not only for Native Americans, but for all people.

I know it's sometimes not easy being involved and staying involved, so for all of you that have done just that, I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart to the top of my soul. We need more people all over the world who not only care about the freedom of others, but who care about our future generations and what kind of Earth we leave behind.

I know there are prophecies and predictions and beliefs that predict the end times of life as we know it, and I want to say to you that all of these things that have been said are said for our benefit so that we may choose a different path. All over the world there are people who seek to serve God or the Creator or the Great Spirit or whatever name you call that greater power that gives us life, and I want to say to you at this point in time, that our greatest enemy isn't some supernatural being with horns and a long tail or some other ghoulish spirit; our greatest enemy throughout the world is **gluttony**, people wanting and taking more than they need. That, is the cause of all the wars, the invasions and the dictatorships and the pollutions that face mankind.

It is the way of our Native people that we should not take more than we need. It is in the teachings of the Christians, it is in the teaching of the Muslims, and of the Buddhists. It is a basic, fundamental teaching of all the major approaches to spirituality throughout the world that we do not take more than we need. It is also a teaching of my people that when you take from the Earth you must give back something back in return. Mankind has built up a great debt to the Earth, and a great debt to Nature and whether we like it or not or recognize it or not, that debt will be repaid one way or another.

When people set off explosions underneath the Earth, this Earth we call our Mother, when they make poisons and radiation and other deadly things and put them within our mother, then they cause birth defects for all of nature, including man. This may not sound very scientific and quite simplistic, but it is a truth and that truth is being born out in obvious ways throughout all mankind. We see it in birth defects in animals and fish of the ocean, birds of the sky and the reptile. We see it in our waters and in our air. We must find a way to stop these corporations whose CEOs live in air-conditioned penthouses and chalets inside an artificial environment that only they can afford.

We must convince them, in whatever way we can, to respect our Earth and to respect **us**, and not allow them to destroy our Mother the Earth with fracking and oil-filled pipelines crossing the land, and steel platforms in the ocean that spill oil, or pesticides that kill the bees and destroy the food chain of the birds. Our Mother the Earth is a living creation, and we are all part of that life cycle, all dependent on one another. Every time I turn on the television in the day room or pick up an international magazine of some sort, I read about and see the evidence of this destruction.

I know sometimes we feel that there is nothing we can do; but there is, if each one of us does something then together we can and will make a change. It might be doing a demonstration and carrying a sign or it may be writing your Senator or Congressmen or it may be voting for a person who supports natural, renewable energy from the wind and the sun or other sources.

Whatever it is you choose to do, choose something, make a difference, make your life count for something. Right now in various part of the United States and Canada there are people of all ages and all races trying to stop these oil pipelines that will carry sludge, and this fracking that sets off explosions under the Earth which also causes earth tremors and quakes. This is an immediate danger; it is very real, and you can do something about it.

I want to remind you that if it wasn't for people like yourselves that have taken a stand for something, we wouldn't have the national forests, the redwoods, there wouldn't be animals and various other forms of life, there would be no Yellowstone Park, and there would be a lot more species totally extinct than there are now.

So taking a stand DOES make a difference. How we pray to the Creator for help and how we thank the Creator for what we have is important, but what is truly more important, is that you **demonstrate** your faith and your belief. You **demonstrate** it by protecting and respecting this very nature and Earth that we have been given to live upon. Who you are is not defined by what you do when everything is in balance, who you are is defined by what you do when you are faced with imbalance when you are faced with a challenge that requires a sacrifice or some sort of intestinal fortitude, which we call courage. THAT defines you.

I am not in this prison for anything that I did wrong. I am in this prison because I was a part of a people that tried to right a wrong. I am in this prison as a statement by the corporation controlled government forces that want to say, "Give up your resources, give up your freedom, don't stand against us" That, is their message in keeping me in here.

I want to tell you sincerely, this is not an easy place to be. It is a terrible place to be, but when I chose to answer the call along with other Native people, many of us took a vow to stand up even unto death if necessary. Some were shot and killed and their lives were taken immediately. My life has been taken one day at a time. But if I had it all to do over again I would still choose to stand up for my people and your people and our future generations to protect our freedoms and our Mother Earth, and in doing that I am honored that you remember me. I want to thank you for that remembrance and of all those before me, and the ones now that do the same and know that there will be others in the future.

I can't tell you that these choices will always make you feel good, I can't tell you that these choices won't hurt or cause moments of depression or sorrow, but I can tell you that there is a closeness with the Creator that is unlike any good feeling you could ever know anywhere else, a closeness with the Creator that no one can take away, and makes it all worth it. I am saying these things at this time because I get a lot of letters and communications now, from groups around the country that are facing crisis within their organizations in trying to stop these pollutions and destructions. As I have in the past, I want to encourage you to do your best to do what is right and right what is wrong and protect what we have and regain what we have lost.

I want to thank you for your support and I want you to know that as long as I walk this earth and have some say, myself and this committee will do the best we possibly can to always do what is right.

31 Mar - Portland anarchist who lobbed Molotov cocktail at police car sentenced to two-and-a-half years in prison

Sergey "Kiki" Turzhanskiy was recently sentenced to 2 1/2 years in prison for a molotov cocktail attack on a police car. Below is a corporate media article about his sentencing.

MORE:

by Helen Chung (*The Oregonian*)

Wearing a dark blazer and tie and with his hair cut short, Sergey Yefimovich Turzhanskiy did not dress the part of an anarchist.

Instead, the 26-year-old Southeast Portland man's voice quavered at times as he apologized to a federal judge on Monday for throwing a Molotov cocktail at a Portland police car in November 2012. The device, made out of a Pabst Blue Ribbon bottle, damaged the unoccupied 2011 Ford Crown Victoria, which was parked at the

Northeast Portland precinct.

“Beyond being completely ineffective towards making a positive change ... I think it had the opposite effect,” Turzhanskiy said to U.S. District Judge Marco Hernandez. “It’s the greatest mistake I ever made in my life.”

Hernandez sentenced Turzhanskiy to two-and-a-half years in federal prison for possession of an unregistered destructive device. The judge, who heard statements from three of Turzhanskiy’s supporters, said he was taking into account his remorse and the progress he has made since the incident.

The sentence matched the recommendation made by the U.S. Attorney’s Office and Turzhanskiy’s lawyer as part of a plea agreement that also called for dismissal of the more serious offense of attempted arson.

Turzhanskiy, who sought to make a political statement through his actions, twice threw the device at the car before it shattered and caused a fire about 1:30 a.m. on Nov. 5, 2012, according to a sentencing memorandum by Assistant U.S. Attorney Stephen Peifer. The incident occurred while officers were in the parking lot during a shift change, he wrote, and police quickly arrested him.

Initially, his arrest sparked support from local and national anarchist groups, the memorandum states. Turzhanskiy himself put up postings calling on supporters to “Free Sergey Turzhanskiy” and to donate to a legal defense fund, his court-appointed lawyer, Patrick Ehlers, said Monday. But that was short-lived as Ehlers told him to take them down and Turzhanskiy recognized it was a “stupid action,” Ehlers said.

In his statement to Hernandez, Turzhanskiy said that after spending time in jail, he developed a better appreciation for the work of law enforcement and the stresses officers face. He also said he and his wife hope to build a photography business – the “first time I had something” to work toward.

He added that he does not want to be known for his actions. “I’m trying to make sure people realize it’s not something to be admired. It’s not something for justice,” he said, adding that any efforts he undertakes for social justice will “come in the form of lifting people up.”

He has already paid \$1,314.12 in restitution to police for the damage to the car.

Hernandez ordered him to report for the start of his prison sentence May 30. He is also to serve three years of supervised release after he completes his prison term and he is not to have any contact or communication with anarchist groups.

1 Apr - New writings by Mumia Abu-Jamal

We’re including transcripts of Mumia’s latest commentaries.

MORE:

April 1st - March Media Madness

The mystery of Malaysia’s flight 370 has become the latest tool of corporate-media manipulation and oversaturation.

Instead of reporting on facts and investigations, we get a plethora of speculation -- rumor and frankly, fear-mongering.

Why?

The answer is obvious: ratings.

Most cable news networks have received a doubling of their regular ratings.

In the old days, newscasts reported on what happened and occasionally why.

Today, they are so hungry for ratings that they project pre-news -theories, rumors, fears and maybes -all to use emotions to stick eyeballs to their channel -for days.

What we learn is that -they know nothing - and neither do their so-called 'experts'!

If they know nothing, they should say nothing.

But no, we get "Breaking News", all day long, that isn't breaking into anything - certainly not news.

So frantic families tune in, hours at a stretch -for nothing substantive or truly meaningful.

We'd do better tuning into static.

But the Beast must be fed. The Beast must eat.

So it dines on hope, emotions, fear and loss, camouflaged as news.

News means new information.

Of that, they have precious little to give.

April 9th - Death Row Record

In a trial that may be unprecedented anywhere in the world, an Egyptian court recently returned 528 death sentences to many supporters of the Muslim Brotherhood.

In what is seen as the latest attempt to destroy the group, the military government held the mass trial over two days in the city of Minya.

Amnesty International's Mid-East and North Africa Deputy Director, Hassiba Hadj Sahraoui, in a report issued earlier in the week, called it "the largest single batch of simultaneous death sentences" seen in recent years.

Sahraoui said the Egyptian death sentences issued in one day surpassed what some countries have rendered in a year.

The military government's war against the Brotherhood, which began with the removal, arrest and prosecution of President Mohamed Morsi, has now reached down into its membership.

The group, once led by Morsi, has deep roots in Egyptian society. It was founded in 1928 by an elementary school teacher, Hasan al-Banna (1906-49) who called for a non-political, religious organization to cleanse Egyptian society, by a return to Islamic principles. The group opposed the introduction of foreign, European influences in the country.*

The Brotherhood may have begun as a non-political group, but it has faced decades of political repression from various governments, from Anwar Sadat to Hosni Mubarak. In the vacuum left after the mass protests forced Mubarak from power, the MB saw a rare opportunity to take power. They did so, but they underestimated the rightwing military, which resolved to remove them from the political realm.

Today, under the military government, we see a quasi-military operation against them - using the judiciary as a tool -- or, better - a weapon - to destroy them.

Mubarak may no longer be in power -- but his anti-Brotherhood program continues.

Hundreds of death sentences - and a complete ban against a group that has existed longer than Egypt's

government has been independent.

It seems to me, the war (not to mention, the revolution!) ain't over.

1 Apr - The Barrett Brown Review of Arts and Letters and Jail: Mutilated Animal Farm

We're including the latest writing by and update about Barrett Brown.

MORE:

Back in the late '90s, the Secker & Warburg publishing house released an 11-volume edition of George Orwell's correspondence, newspaper and magazine articles, and literary notes, all of this being presumably intended for those among the book-buying public who just really, really love George Orwell and want to have all of his intellectual honest babies. Apparently I'm among these people, as after receiving one of the volumes a couple of months ago from a kind supporter and finding it rather fascinating, I've since obtained and compulsively re-read five more of them.

One of these, covering the bulk of 1947 and 1948, includes Orwell's "domestic diary" in which he records his experiences at a small Scottish farm he'd purchased of late and where he spent a good portion of this period, his time split between doing chores and composing the draft of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. One might expect this to make for some pretty dull reading, but one would be wrong.

One would be dead wrong.

Things begin prosaically enough, with Orwell jotting down repairs he intends to make and noting the state of the produce since his last visit. "Onions etc. that I sowed & which were well up in January have practically all disappeared in the frost." Well, farming entails certain mishaps here and there. "Went over to Ardlussa with the idea of bringing the boat back, but the sea seemed too rough." One can hardly expect the elements to be entirely cooperative at all times, after all. Still, on the whole, it seems like a reasonably pleasant little farm.

And then the birds arrive.

"The chaffinches have pulled up, I think, all the lettuce seedlings."

But this does not satisfy their rapaciousness. If anything, it merely spurs them on to even greater acts of banditry the following week:

"The chaffinches have evidently destroyed all the turnips."

A few days later:

"Chaffinches still going for the turnip seed."

Notice how Orwell has now dispensed with all the charming little qualifiers ("I think," "evidently") by which well-bred Englishmen like him normally evoke nonchalance in the face of disaster. One senses a weariness, a diminishing of vitality. It is as if Orwell is beginning to have an inkling of what we are soon to discover in horrifying fullness — that this farm is a farm of evil, its only crop despair.

But Orwell, though so widely hailed as the man who fearlessly spoke out against his fellow socialists when the Soviet Union merited criticism, who risked arrest in the Spanish Civil War by Franco's fascists on the one hand and the Stalinist militias on the other, in this case simply refuses to face this particular truth, even as he himself compiles the grim evidence:

"A few parsnips showing, but not very good."

"Violent gale last night & still more so his morning, at times so strong that one could hardly stay on one's feet."

“No eggs.”

“Impossible to sow seeds.”

“Spread lime (not very well-slaked).”

“No eggs.”

“Think hens have lice, applied DDT.”

“Most of the strawberries seem to have survived, but they are very tiny.”

“Still no eggs.”

And then, perhaps most ominously of all:

“Lobster box is unsatisfactory.”

Then events begin to take such a turn that they can no longer be written off as the result of poor soil or insufficient DDT use and instead become explainable only as the unhinged manifestations of some demonic local deity, perhaps rendered insane by its own immortality — and presently it becomes clear that we are no longer dealing with the mundane results of cause and effect, but with actual omens:

“Slugs are eating marigolds.”

“A small patch of the garden appears to have been struck by lightning in the storm on Monday.”

“A dead deer down by the bay. Rather unpleasant as it is too heavy to drag away.”

Indeed, there are few places in the world where it is worse to be an animal than on George Orwell’s nightmare farm:

“Cow bogged last night. When dragged out, she was too weak to stand, and had to be given gruel.”

Incidentally I have no idea what it means to be “bogged,” although I gather that it is something terrible that happens to you in Scotland and which can only be cured by having George Orwell feed you gruel, no doubt laced with DDT. Things are even worse for the sheep:

“They are lambing in such a state of weakness that they have no milk, sometimes actually refuse to take their lambs and even now that the grass is coming on, some of them are too weak to graze.” Allow me to just cut in here and ensure that we’re all clear on the fact that **THE SHEEP ARE TOO WEAK TO LOWER THEIR HEADS AND EAT GRASS**. And that’s not even the kicker: “[The neighbors] say the gulls and hoodies attack weak sheep and yesterday took the eye out of one of them.” Well, why not? This is Scotland, after all.

But Orwell remains unaware that anything is amiss, perhaps because he himself has now succumbed to the evil spirits that roam the Scottish countryside:

“While digging the ploughed patch, dug up nest of three young rabbits — about ten days old, I should say. One appeared to be dead already, the other two I killed.”

Orwell’s rabbit purge goes on for days. He proves to be altogether chaffinch-like in the extent of his rapacity, indeed of his contempt for life itself:

“Last night shot a very young rabbit in the garden. Threw the corpse into the trench.”

Nor is his revolutionary justice meted out only to the petit bourgeois rabbits:

“Killed a mouse in the larder. [Orwell's sister Avril] came out to tell me there was one there behaving in a very bold way. Went in and found it eating something on the floor and paying no attention to either of us.” And so Orwell and his no doubt evil sister find the reactionary mouse guilty of undue boldness — a very serious thought-crime, mind you — and, satisfied with the results of their hastily arranged show trial, this so-called anti-Stalinist pronounces the sentence, to which there can be no appeal. “Hit it with a barrel stave and killed it.”

Of course, the wildlife manages to give as good as it gets here in the Dark Realm of Scotland:

“I hear that recently two children at [a neighboring village] were bitten by rats (in the face, as usual).”

At least these sorts of incidents are not so common as to go unremarked upon. I suppose a child in Scotland can go weeks and weeks without getting his face eaten off by rats.

One day, having exhausted the various sorts of supernatural malevolence to be encountered in the countryside, Orwell takes his guests on a motorboat trip across what I assume to be the sea of human blood that surrounds the Scottish mainland. And what do you suppose happens on this little sea jaunt? I hesitate to even report it lest the reader suspect that I'm now just making things up in support of my mounting case against Scotland, Most Beloved of Satan. But this is actually what happens:

“On return journey today ran into the whirlpool and were all nearly drowned. Engine sucked off by the sea and went to the bottom.”

Getting sucked into a whirlpool is literally something that only happens to you in (a) old cartoons and (b) Scotland. I didn't even realize that a whirlpool was a real thing until I read this passage. What other menacing Scottish legends are going to turn out to really exist, I wonder? The three witches from Macbeth? Hume?

Arriving back at the farm, Orwell quickly gets back into the swing of things:

“Slowly disemboweled myself with a straight razor today and then licked the blade clean. No eggs.”

Well, that one I actually did make up. But notice how terrible it had to be to surpass all the slightly less terrible things that have already happened. Plus the part about the eggs is true.

At some point Orwell tries to trick his girlfriend Sonia Brownell into leaving the relative safety of London and joining him in The Shadow Lands That Lie to the North. The directions are suitably foreboding, comprised as they are of a Byzantine jumble of post-war train schedules that are clearly more theoretical than otherwise, and then a couple of ferry rides that no doubt expose the traveler to a charming array of whirlpools and sea monsters. Alternatively, he writes, she can take a plane; I do not care to even guess at what such an undertaking would entail. What's really striking about all of this is that Scotland can apparently be reached by conventional means, whereas I would have more readily believed such a journey to involve passing through a swirling, blood-red portal, or perhaps stepping into the gaping jaws of an immense and lascivious cacodemon. And so you, too, can venture into this black magical world of violent gales, milkless mammals, bird attacks, rotting deer, and poisoned, lice-ridden hens, where the great secular saint of the 20th century stalks the landscape in search of bunnies to execute and where the very seas conspire to drown those who manage to survive the boggings — this bone-sceptered isle, this eggless land of unsatisfactory lobster boxes and very tiny strawberries, this Scotland.

Incidentally, I hear that the Scots are seeking their independence, presumably because British law currently prevents them from conducting human sacrifices to The Elder Gods and employing their children in the rat mines. I predict that upon achieving sovereignty, the nation will promptly seal its borders and change its name to something vaguely distressing, like the Concordate of Gargoyles; every now and then we will manage to take a

satellite image indicating the construction of obsidian ziggurats, there will be garbled reports of some new priestly caste, and that will be the last we hear from the Scotsmen.

... at least, until The Reckoning.

For the record, I feel terrible about most of the things I just wrote.

April 3rd - Barrett Brown Signs Plea Deal

After a year and ½ in jail awaiting trial, the writer/journalist Barrett Brown, best known for his previous association with Anonymous, through his defense team has reportedly reached an agreement with the government to plea guilty to some modified counts. Full details are not available since the documents are sealed.

This marks a big step towards resolution of a tangled and complex case, implicating the First Amendment in numerous ways, which originally began when the FBI executed search warrants at his and his mother's homes in March 2012.

Since he was arrested, Brown has maintained his innocence, and originally pleaded not guilty to all of the counts against him.

The director of his legal defense fund, Kevin Gallagher, said: "The Barrett Brown who I know and call my friend has never been one to compromise with the government. But in this instance, I think he recognizes that taking this case before a jury in conservative Texas is a needless roll of the dice. In fact, I think this whole thing would have been settled long ago, if not for the fact that the government had filed excessive and meritless charges which they later dropped. I'm pleased that the parties were able to reach this agreement. Although in principle he shouldn't have to plea to anything, this spares everyone the spectacle of a costly trial, and the bottom line is that Barrett will be coming home soon – as he's already served 19 months unnecessarily."

In motions filed with the Court, Brown's defense made a very strong case for dismissal, which combined with negative publicity surrounding the prosecution of a non-violent writer/journalist who caused no actual harm, perhaps influenced the government to seek to settle.

WIRED is reporting that the maximum statutory sentence he could face between both of his cases "would likely be five years".

2 Apr - Statement and Update from Recently Released ELF Prisoner Steve Murphy

Steve Murphy, finally free from the halfway house, has written his first public statement since his release.

MORE:

I am home now. Thank you all for the years of love and support.

Fracking is still poisoning our ground and water. Even the "liberal" media still won't talk about the spills—another one just happened. They won't talk about the spills because both sides, Corporate News Network, messnbc, Fox all have too much to lose by calling out their investors—BP! The recent mudslide in Washington happened as a direct result of the vast deforestation still going on after the slide in the tops of those mountains. The CEOs and shareholders don't give a fuck.

I was playing the role of mainstream blah at one point in my life many, many years ago—in a galaxy far, far away—and my studies at university taught me that SEC and GAAP law make a public corporations first responsibility their own bottomline to their investors.

We have to keep telling the truth because they won't.

Love and Solidarity!

3 Apr - Still in Attica After 40 Years

Jalil Muntaqim, a former member of the Black Panther Party and Black Liberation Army, has spent more than 40 years behind bars after receiving a sentence of 25 years to life in 1971. Mara Ahmed, an activist, artist, documentary filmmaker and blogger based in Rochester, New York, recently visited Muntaqim at the Attica Correctional Facility in upstate New York.

MORE:

ON FEBRUARY 18, I went to Attica, along with other activists, to visit Jalil Muntaqim (prisoner no. 77A4283, whose birth name was Anthony L. Bottom). This was my first time at a maximum-security prison. With its impossibly high walls and multiple turrets, it looked like a castle, albeit an ugly gray one, and I half expected to be intercepted by a moat.

The inside of the prison is coldly institutional, regulated, bland. The visiting room is large, furnished with tables and chairs, and there's an entire wall of vending machines. The walls are painted with dolphins and miscellaneous underwater scenes. I soon understood why. Many families visit with young children in tow, and soon, their noisy chatter began to reverberate throughout the carefully reinforced and supervised space we were in.

Jalil joined us after 15 or 20 minutes. Tall, affable, with a warm smile on his face and a taqiyah (Muslim skullcap) on his head, it was easy to fall into conversation with him. Jalil is interested in everything. He asked Diane about her work as a Rochester city high school teacher and discussed my films with me, including issues related to Islam and feminism and the Partition of India.

His charm and lively intelligence make it hard to imagine that he's spent more than 40 years of his life in prison. He was a young Black Panther when he was arrested in 1971. Since COINTELPRO--a secret FBI program aimed at sabotaging dissent and disrupting movements for self-determination within the U.S. from the 1950s to the 1970s--has now been exposed for its illegal activities, it's incredible that political prisoners like Jalil continue to be locked up.

Here is a summary of the case against Jalil in the words of Danish activist and writer Kit Aastrup:

[Muntaqim] was only 19 years old and a member of the Black Panther Party when he was sent to prison in 1971 on conspiracy charges following the killing of a police officer, allegedly in retaliation for the murder of Black political prisoner George Jackson.

Muntaqim was targeted by COINTELPRO, an unconstitutional and clandestine FBI operation that was set up to destroy political organizations, especially those from the oppressed communities. In 1975, Muntaqim was wrongly convicted of killing two police officers in New York City, although there was no physical evidence against him and two juries failed to convict him before the State found one that did.

Muntaqim, who received a sentence of 25 years to life, has always maintained his innocence...In 2007 Muntaqim was charged in a cold case from 1971 known as the San Francisco 8 (SF8) case, and he was transferred from Auburn Correctional Facility in New York to San Francisco County Jail. This case was originally dropped in 1975 because it was based on confessions extracted by torture. At the end of July, two of the SF8, Herman Bell and Muntaqim, were sentenced to probation and time served, after Bell agreed to plead to voluntary manslaughter and Muntaqim reluctantly pleaded no contest to conspiracy to voluntary manslaughter.

Charges have been dropped against most of the SF8 on the basis of insufficient evidence. However, Herman Bell and Jalil Muntaqim remain in prison.

Jalil is no run-of-the-mill human being. He acquired a college education while incarcerated; in 1976, he initiated the National Prisoners Campaign to Petition the United Nations to recognize the existence of political prisoners

in the U.S.; in 1997, he launched the Jericho Movement to demand amnesty for American political prisoners on the basis of international law; he has written books and maintains a blog; and he's quelled prison riots.

He's also involved in literacy programs and has wonderful ideas about vocational training in prison running parallel to community programs outside so that released prisoners can transition effortlessly into them and chances of relapse are minimized. For all these efforts at organizing, Jalil is transferred relentlessly from one correctional facility to another.

Jalil understands that we have reached a racial crossroads in America. Black kids are being murdered for the clothes they wear or the music they listen to, stop-and-frisk and racial profiling have become institutionalized, books like Michelle Alexander's *The New Jim Crow* explain how a caste system rooted in mass incarceration has replaced segregation and slavery, anti-Vietnam War protesters and activists have revealed how they stole COINTELPRO files, and books like Betty Medsger's *The Burglary: The Discovery of J. Edgar Hoover's Secret* FBI delineate the disturbing history, machinations and criminality of the FBI.

Jalil's concern is that this "spark" might ignite people's anger rather than become the impetus for constructive organizing. He hopes for liberal movements to unite and coalesce as they did during the civil rights era. He wants to hearken back to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s Poor People's Campaign and forge links between the struggles against racism and economic inequity, between Trayvon Martin and Occupy Wall Street.

He envisions an alternative, internal judicial system capable of resolving disputes and interdicting where necessary, based on African American needs and realities. It would work in unison with the American judicial system, the way Jewish, Christian or Amish religious laws do right now.

This reminded me of something August Wilson said in an interview with Bill Moyers in 1988. He talked about African Americans being a "visible" minority and the offensive idea that they must integrate into white, European (in other words, mainstream) society and distance themselves from their own values, aesthetics and worldview in order to be successful.

He gave the example of Asian Americans, whose culture is not only accepted but admired. He mentioned Passover and how it reminds Jews of their history of slavery. There is a need for a Black Passover and for a celebration of the Emancipation Proclamation. By revisiting and keeping alive their common past, African Americans can build a common future.

Jalil has been up for parole countless times. He is always refused. He is no threat to society. On the contrary, he would be a valuable leader and mentor for the community at large. He believes in parole reform and is campaigning to focus on "risk to society" rather than "nature of crime" (which is a static and therefore useless consideration). The composition of the parole board needs to change as well. It should represent a spectrum of communities in which prisoners have their roots, not just law enforcement.

Jalil believes in rehabilitation and redemption, not retribution and punishment. He describes himself as a hopeless optimist, and in the presence of this charismatic man, one of the longest held political prisoners in the world, it's impossible to be otherwise.

His parole hearing is coming up again in June 2014. It's time to end this horrendous injustice and free Jalil Muntaqim. It's heartening that ex-Black Panther Marshall "Eddie" Conway was released from prison this month, after almost 44 years behind bars. He too was accused of killing a police officer under COINTELPRO. It's imperative to keep the pressure on and free all American political prisoners.

For more information about Jalil, including his blog, go to www.FreeJalil.com.
Sign the petition for parole: <https://www.change.org/petitions/tina-m-stanford-free-jalil>

3 Apr - Animal Rights Activist Sentenced to 30 Months in Jail for Having Bolt Cutters in His Car

An animal rights activist with a long history of activism—and an equally long rap sheet—was sentenced to 30 months in jail for having bolt cutters in the back of his Prius.

MORE:

by Will Potter (*VICE*)

Kevin Olliff and Tyler Lang were driving through rural Illinois on August 15, 2013, at about 1 AM when they were pulled over by police. The cops say they stopped them because the brand-new green Prius had only temporary dealer plates. But rather than let them off with a warning, police asked to search the car.

Olliff and Lang refused to consent to the search and quickly realized that this wouldn't be a normal traffic stop. After police separated them into two squad cars, Lang heard one officer on the police radio say of Olliff, "He's on the terrorist watch list."

Police brought out drug-sniffing dogs, and not surprisingly, they say the dogs smelled something (Lang says "the hardest drug in the car was caffeine"). When police searched the car, they found, among other items, bolt cutters and wire cutters. The two were charged with "possession of burglary tools," a felony.

The items in Olliff's car certainly sound sketchy when police list them out: bolt cutters and wire cutters; duffel bags full of sweatpants, sweatshirts, gloves, and ski masks; spray paint; concrete stain; laptop computers; bear spray; head lamps; latex gloves; walkie-talkies; rags; bleach. Most of us can have those things in our cars and not worry about being charged with a felony. According to the FBI, Olliff and Lang are not most people, though: They're animal rights activists.

FBI agents made their presence known at the bail hearing, telling prosecutors that there have been unsolved fur-farm raids in the region and other farms may be targeted. They specifically mentioned the Aeschleman fox farm in Roanoke, one of the largest in the country and the site of the historic PETA investigation in the 1990s, which revealed sick and neglected animals pacing in their cages and being anally electrocuted.

Bail was set at \$100,000 for Lang and \$200,000 for Olliff, or more than ten times the typical amount.

They were not charged with any fur-farm raid, or any other illegal activity. But the FBI and prosecutors hung the threat of additional charges over their heads, and they eventually accepted plea agreements. Lang, who accepted a plea deal for time served and was released in November, will only say that the items in the car were an "inconvenient circumstance," and that they had no choice but to take a deal. Olliff was sentenced to 30 months in jail and is currently imprisoned in Vandalia, Illinois.

Lang says that although he received a much lighter sentence than Olliff, the FBI is clearly trying to send him a message. When he flew home from jail, he saw that he had four S's on his boarding pass; he was singled out for additional security checks. Now, every time he travels he is searched by TSA and Homeland Security. Meanwhile, both his mother and step-mother have been visited by the FBI. Both refused to talk to the agents and have been supportive throughout the ordeal.

"The day after I got home [from jail], I went to a protest," Lang says. "It was liberating for me, because I really did not want to let this make me afraid."

Olliff continues to deny his involvement in the Animal Liberation Front, but is outspoken in his support for illegal direct action. In a statement from prison, he told supporters: "Get out into the streets. Better yet, get out into the countryside. Do what you know in your heart is right. You won't regret it."

His book list is like a giant middle finger to police, with *Wireless Reconnaissance in Penetration Testing* alongside *Dressing the Man: Mastering the Art of Permanent Fashion*. He also asked for a subscription to *VICE*.

His father, Stacey Olliff, says he's frustrated with his son's vocal support of direct action, and the fact that he has been in and out of jail for protesting and shoplifting throughout his 20s. But police are "taking things that otherwise wouldn't be illegal and criminalizing them," he says, "in order to turn the screws and send a message."

"It's frustrating to see this kind of repressive response from authorities," he says. "But their goal is shutting down this activity, and when they happen to catch somebody they know, they want to make an example of them."

April 6th - Talkers, dividers, & doing the FBI's work

In prison, you want to know that others are taking up where you left off. So when people ask me what they should do to support prisoners, I tell them to send movement news. Even in the grayest correctional bubble, word of critters scurrying from concentration camps is enough to bring a sense of freedom flooding back into any activist's veins.

But these days, when I hear the latest, it often has the opposite effect.

So much of the news seems to be drama, divisiveness, and internet declarations. I will avoid specifics, but suffice it to say that none of it contributes to achieving our objectives – and none matters to animals on the verge of death in their cages.

I am lucky that I will never know a fraction of those animals' hardships, but I do know that one of the hardest aspects of life in a human prison is the constant feeling of others looking over my shoulder. Guards look over my shoulder for adherence to prison regulations, inmates look over my shoulder for conformity to their culture, feds look over my shoulder to catch me slipping on recorded phone calls and visits. There is no escape.

And yet, regrettably, this problem will not end with my incarceration. That is because the talkers and dividers in my own movement love looking over the shoulders of others. I prefer my animal rights with only four guidelines, but these people have more rules than a parole officer. They insert themselves into activist's private lives without a warrant or probable cause. And they insist on ideological rigors unrivaled by the FBI. When it comes to taking the focus off the animals, they are better cops than the cops.

Perhaps my ego isn't big enough, but I have never been under the impression that my own ideas somehow represent the absolute key to right and wrong in the universe. So when I became involved in a modern international social movement, I suspected that I might meet an individual or two who didn't act or believe exactly the same as me. Troubling as that may be for some, involving yourself in activism means involving yourself with a diverse bunch of people. Some of us are lawyers, some of us are felons. Some of us go running, some of us eat dessert. Some of us have photo projects of vegan runners or vegan desserts. Some of us are promiscuous, some married, some neither – and some both. I'm not defending or deriding any of these choices. To be honest, I don't really care. Neither should you.

If you dislike someone or their opinion, feel free to simply not talk to them. It does not help to gossip, quibble, or drag the whole movement into it. The same goes for who-said-what on the internet about which ideological (read: irrelevant) position, or the inclusiveness of the editorial decision-making process for your local group's last Facebook post. Time to spare on these trifles is a human privilege.

To me, that such things are even noticed is puzzling. But that they impact our activism is tragic. It breaks my heart that this nonsense becomes a top concern for the miniscule segment of humanity on whom the animals have to rely. And as much as it may weight upon me, for them it is a death sentence.

When your passion burns, you often light those around you with the same fire. This is what makes dramatic people so dangerous – their bitterness tends to catch on. But this is also a source of strength for the sane: Every truly dedicated activist – who holds this struggle in their heart, who refuses to be sidetracked by negativity and cliquishness – is in turn shining a light for others. Young people getting involved deserve to find out now that what really matters isn't your politics, your popularity, or how many times you can use the word "organizer" in reference to yourself. All that counts in the end are your tangible achievement for animals.

3 Apr - State witness in COINTELPRO case was confessed bomber Duane Peak

We're including the two most recent articles by Michael Richardson for The Examiner.

MORE:

Duane Peak, the confessed bomber in the 1970 death of an Omaha policeman, was the star witness against the Omaha Two, Ed Poindexter and Mondo we Langa (formerly David Rice). The Omaha Two were the leaders of the local Black Panther affiliate National Committee to Combat Fascism and targets of J. Edgar Hoover. The director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation oversaw a vast, illegal counterintelligence operation codenamed COINTELPRO directed at the Black Panthers and other groups. Hoover gave orders to withhold a report on the identify of an anonymous 911 caller in this case.

The Omaha Two were convicted largely on the testimony of Duane Peak, the fifteen year-old killer who said the two men directed the bombing ambush. However, young Peak gave authorities six different versions of the crime and a FBI Laboratory report had to be withheld to buttress Peak's story of luring police to a vacant house where a bomb waited in the darkness.

Sitting alone in his cell at the Dodge County Jail in Fremont, Nebraska, the teen wrote an eight-page letter laden with conflicts and confusion to his grandmother, Hazel Godlett. The letter, a seventh version of Peak's story, was both a denial and a confession, deceptive and candid, containing self-pity and shame. Peak's letter was read and photocopied by his jailors before being mailed. Excerpts reveal Peak's anger and grandiosity.

Peak blamed his problems on the death of his mother: "I had always thought that when Moms died everything about being good went with her, so I turned to hate. I thought the Lord was evil for taking her away." I wanted to get back at him for it so I started attacking everything that was good. I was so absorbed in hate I could barely see."

"So to quench my thirst for anger and revenge, I would beat people....After I got kicked out of school it got larger."

Peak rambled a bit then returned to his theme of hurting others. "I thrived off watching them go wild with anger. It was like a trip on dope. I had to have it"

"Then I heard about the trouble the Panthers were causing. There was so much hatred there I had to adjust myself to hate more. Then after encountering my newly found hatred I decided to turn against everyone in my complete family because I had lost the ability to feel, the ability to love, the ability to have emotions for someone, the ability be friendly. I was worse than the devil himself," wrote Peak.

Peak claims he became afraid of the Panthers and tried to quit. Peak also sought to keep his older brother Donald out of trouble. "Then came the time when Donnie joined. He was even staying at H.Q. I wouldn't stay there anymore because I was afraid I'd get killed, so I told them I was staying at home when actually I was sleeping in jitney stands."

"They had made me officer of the day and Education Cadre. I would be teaching Political Education classes, and the Liberation School, and I would also have charge of the office while everyone else was working. So whenever Donnie would come in tired from selling papers I'd make him take some more out. I knew Donnie wasn't the type to be pushed so I made it hard on him hoping he'd quit before it was too late," claimed the youthful prisoner. "Whenever he'd do the smallest thing wrong, I'd put in a request for his expulsion because he was a security risk. Finally I got him expelled."

Duane Peak wrote: "there is one thing I will tell you. when I put that suitcase in that house, I unlocked it so that when the Police found it, they could take it and open it without anyone getting harmed. Why it blew up is what the Police are trying to find out now, and I promise to the best of my ability to help find out."

Peak's "best of my ability" turned out to be making a deal to trade his murder charge to a finding of juvenile delinquency and escaping prison. Meanwhile, Ed Poindexter and Mondo we Langa remain in the maximum-security Nebraska State Penitentiary serving life sentences despite their repeated requests for a new trial.

April 14th - Twenty-two Black Panthers targeted in ATF bomb conspiracy case

Twenty-two Black Panthers in three Midwestern states, Nebraska, Iowa, and Missouri, were the targets of the Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms Division for an alleged 1970 bombing conspiracy. The conspiracy investigation of the so-called Midwest 22, previously unreported, has been a carefully kept secret until the disclosure of an ATF case progress closure report to Examiner.com on April 14, 2014. The ATF report was provided by a court researcher who discovered the progress record buried in a file. The document comes from ATF case Nebr-955(T-II) and was copied to the Justice Department in Washington, D.C.

ATF was in competition with the Federal Bureau of Investigation for control of bombing cases in the summer of 1970. The rival federal agencies were embroiled in an ultimately longstanding turf fight for jurisdiction over bombing cases. The Midwest had been hit with a series of unsolved bombings in several states in the summer and ATF agents in Omaha, Nebraska blamed the Black Panthers for the explosions.

Black Panthers in Omaha, Des Moines, and Kansas City, were ATF targets for prosecution. Nine of the Panthers were from Omaha; Elmer Robert Cecil, Melvin Collins, Calvin Drake, Raleigh B. House, Duane Peak, Frank Peak, Jr., William L. Peak, Edward A. Poindexter, and Mondo we Langa (then David Rice).

Ed Poindexter was Chairman of the Omaha affiliate chapter. Mondo we Langa was the Minister of Information. Raleigh House was the Minister of Finance, and Frank Peak, Jr. was Minister of Defense.

Kansas City Black Panther members under investigation were Phillip Crayton, Phillip Deffenbaugh, Felix O'Neal, Phillip Ortega, and Thomas Robinson. The Kansas City Black Panthers were a supervisory chapter to the Omaha Panthers.

Charles Knox and Archie Simmons were from the Des Moines Black Panther chapter as were Edward C. Smith, Mary Ann Smith and Steve A. Green. Charles Knox was Minister of Education and Edward Smith was Minister of Defense. Green was responsible for distribution of The Black Panther newspaper.

Gary Hogan and Michael Smith were juveniles and their location is uncertain. The role of the two juveniles in the purported Black Panther conspiracy is unknown.

One other ATF target of unknown location was Antone Jenkins. Sources familiar with Black Panthers in Omaha, Des Moines, and Kansas City do not recognize the name.

The most infamous name on the list is Duane C. Peak, a fifteen year-old killer from Omaha. Peak planted a bomb that killed Omaha policeman Larry Minard, Sr. on August 17, 1970. Peak managed to escape not only the ATF conspiracy charge but also the Nebraska murder charge by making a deal to be declared a juvenile delinquent and avoid a prison sentence. Peak got his deal by implicating two others on the ATF list, Edward Poindexter and Mondo we Langa, in the killing.

Mondo and Poindexter, now called the Omaha Two, were the leaders of Omaha's Black Panther affiliate National Committee to Combat Fascism and targets themselves of COINTELPRO. J. Edgar Hoover at the FBI directed a massive clandestine counterintelligence operation codenamed COINTELPRO. Hoover had ordered Omaha Special Agent-in-Charge Paul Young to get the pair off the streets.

When Larry Minard was killed Paul Young set about making a case against the NCCF leaders. Hoover ordered the withholding of a FBI Laboratory report on the identity of the anonymous 911 caller who lured Minard to his death in order to place the blame on the Omaha Two who were convicted of the crime.

In the ATF case progress record the bomb conspiracy investigation was closed January 26, 1972. U.S. Attorney,

Richard Dier, declined to prosecute the alleged conspirators. Dier explained a “trend in the judiciary is away from major complex conspiracies.”

The Midwest 22 prosecution would have been the largest case against the Black Panthers ever brought. The Panther 21 trial in New York that ended in acquittal holds the record as the most number of defendants in a single case during the COINTELPRO era.

4 Apr - Jailed Mi'kmaq Warriors Support Funds

These funds are managed by the family and loved ones of Germaine Jr Breau & Aaron Francis, who are facing trial as we speak (April 2014) for the events of the Oct 17th 2013 raid, wherein Aaron & Jr were performing tasks with the Mi'kmaq Warrior Society - protecting their unceded territories against ecoterrorists and enemies of water, known as SWN (a fracking company).

MORE:

Donations can be made online at <http://www.gofundme.com/jailedwarriors> Monies will go to canteen and other associated costs of being in prison. This will also include funds for gas money for visits (driving from Elsipogtog to Shediac Correctional is far), as well as phone calls which are not only collect but long distance. If you can not support financially please, Write a Warrior:

Aaron Francis | Germain “Junior” Breau

S.R.C.C

435 Lino Road

Shediac, New Brunswick

E4P 0H6

Canada

Please help out with some funds for these imprisoned native land defenders. They have been behind bars for almost 6 months, and need assistance with everything from court clothes to commissary funds.

4 Apr - NYPD officer embroiled in assault trial sued by another Occupy campaigner

We're including the latest in the case of Cecily McMillan, on trial as of this writing.

MORE:

WHAT: Court Support

WHEN: Starting 9:30am, Monday, April 14th, expected to last two weeks.

WHERE: Manhattan Supreme Court: 100 Centre Street, 11th Floor, Room 1116 (Part 41)

by Jon Swaine (*The Guardian*)

A New York police officer whose allegation of assault against an Occupy Wall Street activist could send her to prison for seven years is being sued by another Occupy campaigner, who alleges that the officer injured him on the same day.

Officer Grantley Bovell alleges that Cecily McMillan intentionally elbowed him in the face as he was arresting one of the dozens of protesters from the anti-capitalist movement who were seized at Zuccotti Park in lower Manhattan on 17 March 2012.

McMillan, 25, claims she swung her arm only after Bovell grabbed one of her breasts from behind. She denies a charge of felony assault. Her much-delayed trial, the last in a series of Occupy prosecutions, is due to begin at the state supreme courthouse in Manhattan on Monday.

Bovell, who has faced several previous allegations of wrongdoing, has now been accused in a lawsuit of injuring a protester while removing him from the 17 March demonstration, which marked six months since the start of the Occupy protests. Although McMillan was active in Occupy Wall Street, she says she was only in the park briefly that day, to meet a friend.

The protester, Austin Guest, alleges that Bovell dragged him down the aisle of a bus while “intentionally banging his head on each seat”. His attorneys said in an updated complaint filed to federal court in Manhattan last week that as a result he “suffered physical, psychological and emotional injuries, mental anguish, suffering, humiliation, embarrassment, and other damages”.

They allege that after being put face-down on the ground and tightly handcuffed, Guest, a 33-year-old graduate of Harvard University, was “dragged up the stairs and thrown head-first into the bus”, which was to take him and other protesters to a courthouse for processing.

“He was carried like a battering ram so that his head struck each seat as they took him to the back of the bus,” said Rebecca Heinegg, an attorney for Guest. “They were clearly aware that this was happening.”

Guest and eight other protesters, none of whom was charged with a crime, are suing Bovell, several of his colleagues, the NYPD and city authorities for allegedly violating their constitutional rights by arresting them. They are seeking unspecified compensation, damages and legal fees.

In a response filed before Bovell was named as one of the officers involved, lawyers for the city denied all the protesters’ allegations. They also requested on various legal grounds that the lawsuit be dismissed in its entirety.

“At all times relevant to the acts alleged in the complaint, defendant City, its agents and officials, acted reasonably, properly, lawfully and in good faith in the exercise of their discretion,” the response said. A spokeswoman for the city’s law department declined on Thursday to comment on the record about the update naming Bovell.

McMillan’s attorney, Martin Stolar, said he intended during her trial to question Bovell about his alleged injury of Guest.

“This suggests a police officer who is not afraid of using force when it is not required,” Stolar told the Guardian. “It certainly adds to Cecily’s case.”

Stolar last month had a motion requesting access to Bovell’s NYPD personnel file rejected by Judge Ronald A Zweibel, who said the attorney had “failed to even establish that ‘prior misconduct’ of any sort has been found, or documented, by the NYPD against Officer Bovell”.

The response filed by the NYPD to Stolar’s motion did, however, confirm that Bovell had been subject to at least two inquiries by the force’s internal affairs bureau. It said that he received a “command discipline” for failing to radio that he and his partner were pursuing a 17-year-old boy who was riding a dirt bike in the Bronx in March 2010.

The boy, Reginald Wakefield, later sued Bovell and several colleagues, claiming he was intentionally run down and sent flying head-first into a street lamp. He said he was left with broken teeth and a wound requiring stitches in his head. The NYPD said Reginald “refused to stop and ended up hitting a parked department vehicle”. The lawsuit was dismissed last year.

Stolar also alleged in his motion that Bovell had been filmed on video surveillance kicking a man on the floor while arresting him in a Bronx bodega in 2009. The NYPD said in its response that officers had struggled with a suspect who had a knife, and that an inquiry by internal affairs concluded that an allegation that Bovell injured him in custody was “unsubstantiated”.

McMillan’s attorney also said that he had seen documents showing Bovell was involved in the 2011 Bronx ticketing scandal, in which officers were charged with covering up hundreds of traffic offences as favours for relatives and friends.

The NYPD said in its response that “an allegation of ticket fixing is immaterial as to either Officer Bovell’s

alleged propensity to physically abuse or sexually assault a prisoner held in police department custody”.

April 7th - Occupy activist assaulted by cop, faces seven years in prison

by Natasha Lennard (*Salon*)

I didn't know Cecily McMillan two years ago, when I glimpsed her convulsing on the street, obscured from view by a cluster of NYPD officers and a confusion of Occupy protesters. Word spread swiftly through the downtown Manhattan intersection: the young woman had been assaulted by the cops; her body went into seizure, her brain unconscious, her ribs cracked.

That was March 17th, 2012. Protesters were marking six months since Occupy Wall Street first inserted itself into an unremarkable concrete park in the financial district, breathing a gust of ephemeral insurrectionary momentum into Manhattan's grid and beyond. The six month anniversary was marked by raucous street marches and multiple arrests. It culminated in McMillan, a student at the New School, lying on the street by Zuccotti Park surrounded by police as onlookers shrieked for an ambulance to be called.

Two years later, the commercial flows of downtown Manhattan glide untouched by the enraged encampment and attendant marches that once had defiantly but fleetingly claimed that space. Many if not most occupiers returned to schools and jobs and semblances of normalcy under the vagaries of late capitalism. The system did not crumble. Occupy's lasting imprint at times feels too faint to trace. But a return to normalcy was not available for McMillan.

I met McMillan numerous times during and since Occupy's heyday. We agreed on very little. We disagreed on how a brief occupation of New School student center should play out, we disagreed on whether Occupy should crystallize into a formal political movement with elected representatives (McMillan even worked on the well-meaning congressional campaign of "Occupy Candidate" George Martinez, while I condemned such mainstreaming); where she wanted organization and party-building, I wanted some more chaotic not-this. Our dissensus was representative of the multitudinous constellation that constituted Occupy; we didn't all just get along.

Along with every sometime occupier I know, though, I believe that McMillan's current predicament is a vile indictment (or a sad example) of the criminal justice system at work. While the NYPD's predilection for mass arrests during Occupy's height clogged up the district courts with hundreds of misdemeanour and infraction cases, McMillan's assault heaped a far more terrifying and arduous fate on the 25-year-old. Monday marks the beginning of a trial in which she faces felony charges for second degree assault on officer Grantley Bovell, who had grabbed the activist's chest from behind and prompted her seizure. McMillan's breast was visibly bruised, as photographs evidenced; she had instinctively swung backwards having been grabbed from behind by the plainclothes cop. Accidentally knocking Bovell's temple as he dragged her backwards, McMillan earned herself charges that carry up to a seven year prison sentence.

For the first time in some time, I saw McMillan last month. The weight of a potential prison sentence and exhaustion from two years of trial delays weighed heavily on the 25-year-old. Her eyes were quick to well up; "It's been hell," she intimated. As writer and artist Molly Crabapple observed listening to McMillan address supporters after a pretrial hearing, "Cecily tried to hide the tremor in her voice."

It was during that same hearing that McMillan learned that officer Bovell's fecund history of misconduct — particularly against protesters — would not be considered admissible in her case. Bovell had been subject to at least two inquiries by the police force's internal affairs bureau. Bovell also currently faces assault charges brought by another March 17th Occupy participant, Austin Guest, who alleges that following his arrest, Bovell dragged him down the aisle of a police bus while "intentionally banging his head on each seat". Earlier accusations levied against Bovell include an incident in which a young boy on a bike was run down by an unmarked cop car, left with broken teeth and in need of stitches. Bovell had also been caught on a surveillance camera kicking a man on the floor while arresting him in a Bronx bodega in 2009. It is McMillan, however, who faces censure by the criminal justice system.

There are weeks of hearings ahead for McMillan. Even if she is found innocent — a basic but necessary deliverance of justice — she has already suffered too much. Speaking briefly in front of the state supreme court in downtown Manhattan Monday, McMillan, demurely clad in a pink shirt and beige blazer, briefly addressed supporters. “Thank you for being here today,” she said.

Her lawyer, the National Lawyers Guild’s Martin Stolar, reiterated to reporters and supporters present that McMillan had a “reputation [as] somebody who promotes non-violence as the preferred method of achieving political ends.” (Indeed, views on revolutionary violence are among McMillan and my political differences). “An innocent woman is being accused of something that could send her to prison for seven years,” Stolar said “She was leaving the park pursuant to the police department’s orders when she was brutally assaulted by a police officer and subsequently accused of assaulting that police officer.”

McMillan’s case is among the very last Occupy legal challenges on the New York court house docket. It’s a sad but appropriate final testament to a brief moment in New York history when the sprouts of a new and radical politics emerged and seemed to birth new possibilities. McMillan’s ongoing ordeal — synechdochal of a criminal justice system which stifles dissent while upholding and rewarding brutal impunity — is a reminder that the anger that drove thousands of us into the streets for Occupy should continue to drive us; bold and radical dissent is as necessary as ever.

April 11th - Occupy Wall Street Trial Begins in Manhattan

by Nick Pinto (*Wall Street Journal*)

A Manhattan jury heard opening arguments on Friday in one of the final criminal cases stemming from past Occupy Wall Street demonstrations.

Cecily McMillan, a 25-year-old graduate student and union employee, was charged with second-degree assault on a police officer.

The charge stems from an incident on March 17, 2012, when demonstrators tried to return to Zuccotti Park in lower Manhattan after being evicted from an encampment there six months earlier. As New York Police Department officers were making arrests, prosecutors said, when Ms. McMillan elbowed Officer Grantley Bovell, injuring his eye.

Ms. McMillan "thought she could get away with assaulting a police officer while shielding herself in a protest," said Assistant District Attorney Erin Choi.

Defense lawyers said Ms. McMillan reacted instinctively to having her right breast grabbed from behind by Officer Bovell, and said they intend to introduce a photograph, taken days after the incident, showing a handprint-shaped bruise on that part of her body.

She "reacted with surprise," said defense lawyer Rebecca Heinegg. "She did not even know that the person behind her was a police officer."

Lawyers have spent much of the past week in pretrial arguments concerning how extensively Ms. McMillan's lawyers can reference Officer Bovell's personnel record. Judge Ronald Zweibel has ruled that the defense may point out Officer Bovell's admitted participation in a Bronx ticket-fixing scandal, but may not refer to documents related to other lawsuits and Internal Affairs Bureau investigations concerning allegations of excessive force by Officer Bovell.

If convicted of the charge, a Class-B felony, McMillan could face as much as seven years in prison. She declined an offer from prosecutors to plead guilty to the felony in exchange for a recommendation that she not serve prison time.

Prosecutors fielded 2,644 cases related to Occupy Wall Street, of which 2,071 were either dismissed, dropped, or adjourned in contemplation of dismissal, the Manhattan district attorney's office said. McMillan's charge is

among the most serious faced by Occupy Wall Street defendants, but isn't unique—seven other people were indicted on second-degree assault charges, securing guilty pleas to those charges in two instances.

McMillan's trial is expected to continue for the next two or three weeks.

6 Apr - April Update on Russell Maroon Shoatz

As the title reads, here is the latest up date on Maroon Shoatz.

MORE:

Thank you again for your steadfast support to the international movement to free Russell Maroon Shoatz. His transfer from 22 years of solitary confinement into general population was the result of a coordinated strategy by Scientific Soul Sessions (SSS) and the Campaign to Free Russell Maroon Shoatz on artistic/cultural, political, and legal fronts that were championed by the power of the people. It is a historic people's victory. This is especially significant since the U.S. government is determined to break the spirit of political prisoners through confinement, silencing, and torture.

Here is an update on Maroon's transition into general population at SCI Graterford, Pennsylvania's largest maximum-security prison:

It has been five weeks since his transfer. Every week he gains his humanity back, as he learns how to live without shackles on his hands and feet, breathe fresh air for the first time in months, and carefully re-teach himself how to redistribute his weight in order to walk up and down stairs again. He is acclimating to his new surroundings and becoming familiar with how prison authorities regulate his life in general population.

Upon his transfer, Maroon was introduced to a new set of rules and regulations, some of which were specific to him. Without a doubt, the prison authorities are keeping a very sharp eye on him, his movement, and his communications.

SCI Graterford confines up to 3,500 prisoners. They are holding Maroon in the newest wing where prisoners are completely broken. They have lost all self-respect and dignity. They have been broken by the prison system and living out of fear and desperation. Upon entering his new cell, fellow prisoners surrounded and begged Maroon for food. This is unimaginable to Maroon since any sign of weakness makes you vulnerable to manipulation by both prison authorities and prisoners.

Along with the breaking of prisoners' spirit, this is also a result of the privatization of prisons as they cut corners to make profit. The prisoners are not getting fed enough during mealtimes so they are desperate for food. Most don't have the outside support and cannot afford to buy food and drink from the commissary. As a result, the spirit of the prisoners is so low and defeated that Maroon spends most of his time alone in his cell reading, writing, and studying.

Maroon is gaining clarity on the trauma caused by long-term solitary confinement. He understands more concretely how prolonged solitary confinement has been specifically designed and used to target and destroy prisoners who display political leadership or abilities to organize prisoners (i.e. political and politicized prisoners). He is barely beginning to recognize all the psychological and bodily harm it has done to him over the past decades. Despite the fact that Maroon is one of the stronger prisoners, it is clear that 22 years of solitary confinement has done severe damage to him. One can only fathom how much of a toll solitary confinement takes on prisoners that are not as strong-willed as Maroon.

Overall, Maroon is in a better situation than he has been in over 22 years. However, we have serious concerns for his safety. Anyone of those broken prisoners could be manipulated to cause him bodily harm. Likewise, prison authorities could find arbitrary reasons to throw Maroon back into solitary confinement. Our work to protect him is just beginning.

We will keep you – his ardent supporters – regularly updated on Maroon's progress and with his campaign as we

transition into a new phase demanding a full release from prison.

Russell Maroon Shoatz is an innocent man who has suffered tremendously under the duress of state torture. He needs the kind of rehabilitation that prison may have once promised, but clearly can't and won't give him. His cruel punishment - 22 years of continuous solitary confinement and torture - has well exceeded his original sentence.

6 Apr - On Patriarchy and Homophobia by Joel Bitar

Recently imprisoned comrade Joel Bitar has started blogging about his experiences in prison. We'll be printing them here.

MORE:

A few things have been bothering me about jail life. I found myself getting along with other prisoners but some things annoy me; namely, the copious amounts of sexism, misogyny, and homophobia on display here. I'm not in a position to confront people on these issues so I've resorted to writing to vent my frustration. First, on the issue of misogyny, in here it is common to hear women described as things, "bitches", and "sluts". It's also common to hear guys brag about the sexual things they would do to a woman if given the opportunity. These things are often very derogatory.

This is done to demonstrate masculinity and affirm heterosexuality in a place that is overtly homophobic. Much of this behavior is, without a doubt, rooted in insecurity and an overwhelming desire to fit in with the pack. Regarding homosexuality, there seems to be an accepted consensus that being gay is bad. I've had a few disagreements with other inmates regarding gay marriage or any reforms that would progress gay rights. The folks I spend time with outside jail are mostly all progressive on social issues so I'm having difficulty gauging whether jail culture is objectively more misogynistic and homophobic than mainstream culture. My theory is that these behaviors are just more condensed and highlighted in here.

I also have a theory that homophobia in jail is a response to mainstream stereotypes around sexual assaults behind bars. Most people, when you tell them you've been to jail, will wonder – if not ask directly – whether you've encountered rape and violence during your incarceration. It appears that the homophobia here might be a way to discourage and neutralize sexual assaults before it happens. Sexual assault within the Canadian provincial jail system is essentially nonexistent and that is mainly because inmate culture has zero tolerance for it. Perhaps this intense homophobia is a crude reaction to the fear of sexual assault. Asserting one's masculinity through sexism might be another reaction to such a fear. That wouldn't make these behaviors justifiable but it would help explain them.

What is most peculiar is the existence of anti-authoritarian ideas and anti-gay/anti-woman ideas among inmates. I'm opposed to all oppressive systems that are designed to empower one group of people over another. This goes for economic as well as social systems. These are ideas I've spent quite a bit of time refining and thinking about. I'm just not on the same page as my fellow prisoners on these matters. Unfortunately, I'm not in a great position to agitate for change in here. All I can do thus far is disassociate myself from the situations that make me uncomfortable.

10 Apr - Move Political Prisoner Debbie Africa's Upcoming Parole Hearing

We just wanted to inform people that sometime in May Debbie (Sims) Africa will be going before The Pennsylvania Parole Board for what will be her now 7th parole hearing since 2008.

MORE:

We are putting together a parole sample sheet and are asking that people sign it or write their own letter of parole in support of Debbie for her upcoming hearing. People can mail their letters of support for Debbie's parole to

The Move Organization

Post Office Box 19709

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19143

Time is short so we need as many letters as possible. Please make sure your letter arrives by May 1st.

Sample letter:

Board of Probation and Parole
Attn: Inmate Inquiry
1001 South Front Street, Suite 5300
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17104

Regarding Parole Hearing for: Debbie Sims OO-6307

Debbie Sims has her next parole hearing scheduled for May of 2014. As a concerned citizen interested in helping Debbie successfully transition into life outside prison, I am writing to ask that you please parole her at this hearing. She has served over 35 years of a 30-100 year sentence for third-degree murder, even though the average sentence for that charge is 10-15 years. She is still in prison years after her minimum sentence, despite having no major disciplinary problems in the last three decades.

The document provided to Ms. Sims for her last parole denial in June 2013 lists the reasons for the denial as:

“Your minimization/denial of the nature and circumstances of the offense(s) committed,” and
“The negative recommendation made by the prosecuting attorney.”

I am concerned that Ms. Sims maintaining her innocence is seen as an attempt to minimize or deny the nature and circumstances of the offense(s), even while there is evidence that corroborates that the shot was fired from a location where it is well known she was nowhere near. This phenomenon is referred to as “the innocent prisoner’s dilemma” by law professor Daniel Medwed who asserts that it is unfair and unethical to require a prisoner who may have been wrongly convicted to provide false admission of guilt or remorse.

In regards to the negative recommendation made by the prosecuting attorney, I believe this is outweighed by the fact that the officials at SCI Cambridge Springs, where Ms. Sims is held, have recommended her for parole. These are the prison guards and personnel that she has contact with on a day-to-day basis as opposed to the prosecuting attorney who has had no contact with her at all in decades.

Debbie Sims has now spent most of her life in prison, and the recidivism rate for people released at her age is very low. Please grant parole and allow her to be a part of, and contribute to, society as free citizen, a loving mother and grandmother.

13 Apr - Grand Jury Resister Steve Returns Home!

When many anarchists were being subpoenaed in the Pacific Northwest, most resisted. One form of resistance included leaving town. Now that the grand jury has expired, one comrade who took this approach has returned and written a public statement.

MORE:

Hi, my name is Steven Jablonski. I am anarchist and Grand Jury Resister. After living in exile in Canada for about a year and a half, I returned to United States about a month ago. My return was not meant to be secretive but I felt the need to take some time for myself to collect my thoughts and decompress before releasing an official statement. I now feel ready to break the silence and clarify some of the confusion around me being subpoenaed for the Seattle Grand Jury investigating May Day 2012 in Seattle.

In July of 2012 several people in the northwest received subpoenas to testify for a Grand Jury investigating anarchist activity and property destruction that occurred at the 2012 Seattle May Day Anti-Capitalist Demo. In late July I received a phone call from someone claiming they were an FBI agent who stated that I had been subpoenaed to testify in front of a Grand Jury and how they could deliver that subpoena to me. A subpoena only goes into effect once it is “served” to a person, which means the physical subpoena must be hand delivered to the

person. I made the decision to resist the grand jury by leaving the country rather than risk being served and testifying in front of the Grand Jury.

I was and still continue to be firm in my belief of noncooperation with the State. I was fairly certain that if I refused to answer the Grand Jury's questions that I would be held in civil contempt and placed in prison. Without passing any judgment on the decisions other Grand Jury Resisters have made, I did not feel comfortable presenting myself to the State for a prison sentence. I understand that jail and prison are a fact of life for many people in this world and I also understand that by engaging in anarchist activity one can also risk imprisonment. I want do everything possible to resist cooperation with the state and I also refuse to willingly walk into my own prison cell.

I arrived in Canada on August 4th, 2012. By November I had started living in Montreal, Quebec. Throughout my time spent in Montreal I was fucked with by both CSIS (Canadian Security Intelligence Service) and the SPVM (Montreal City Police). Over the course of my time in Canada I was routinely followed and approached by name on the street and outside of my house. During these interactions I was told to go back to my home country and that they were just waiting to deport me. I was placed in a SPVM car multiples times including been picked up by cop car a block away from my house at 2 in the morning and driven to the outskirts of the city where they took my phone, cash, shoes and jacket. A couple months later I was suspiciously jumped by two unknown people 2 blocks from my house that made no effort to take any of my belongings, but kept calling me an "American Faggot". In each of these interactions it has been clear that these people knew of my legal situation.

Despite all of the harassment I was also able to have the love and friendship of great people in Montreal. I essentially showed up in Montreal not knowing anybody and people made sure that I had everything that I needed. Quickly through both highs and the lows these relationships transformed into bonds that I am sure will be long lasting.

Clearly the State is not happy with my and others decisions to not cooperate with this investigation. Despite this, all except one of the people involved in the investigation have maintained strict noncooperation with the investigation. But the investigation is now coming to a close. The past year and a half has most certainly been the most interesting and difficult year of my life. With the help of both old friends and new friends, anarchists both near and far, and the inspiration I have felt from my fellow Grand Jury Resisters and comrades, some things are finally coming to a close.

My exile has also turned out to be rather expensive but due to the financial support I received from a whole lot of people I was taken care of very well. I want to specifically thank the Committee Against Political Repression and comrades in Vancouver BC and Guelph ON and friends in both the Bay Area and New York. I also want to thank my friends in the Puget Sound, the closest friends I have in the world. Their support and encouragement has been insurmountable in my resistance, mental health and emotional health. I also want to speak about how inspired I have been by the countless solidarity actions that took place all over the world, as well as anyone else who has offered any gesture of support.

I also want to be clear that I stand in full solidarity with those anonymous vandals who attacked the William Kenzo Nakamura Courthouse in Seattle on May 1st 2012. There are few things I desire more than to see institutions of power targeted and attacked. I strongly identify with the insurrectionary anarchist tendency and believe that those acts of crime and rebellion that occurred on that day in Seattle serve as a small example of how people can physically attack institutions of Capital in their never-ending quest for liberation.

As excited as I am to be home, like most things in life the experience is bitter-sweet. I have had some wonderful experiences over the past year and a half and returning home has not been an easy thing to do. As frustrating as the past nineteen months have been, I know I am coming out of this experience as a stronger person with stronger bonds, and clearer idea on what affinity, friendship, and anarchy actually mean to me. But ultimately, I'm just glad to finally be home.

Solidarity with all other Grand Jury Resisters and those in Exile!