

Updates for June 24th

9 Jun - Midwest 22 conspiracy targets may have included government informer in ATF case

Omaha, Nebraska proved to be a battleground between the ATF and FBI against the Black Panthers. One man, Raleigh House, at the center of the action may have been a government informant. Despite being named at trial as the supplier of dynamite that killed Patrolman Larry Minard, Sr. the mysterious Raleigh House only spent one night in jail.

MORE:

by Michael Richardson (*Examiner*)

The planned prosecution of twenty-two Black Panthers and activists by the Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms Division included one man with a mystery role, Raleigh House. The planned prosecution of the Midwest 22 was revealed April 7, 2014, by the disclosure of an old ATF case progress note to the Justice Department closing the conspiracy case after United States Attorney Richard Dier refused to prosecute. This previously unknown ATF investigation came to light when a court researcher found the case note buried in a file.

Raleigh House was the treasurer of the National Committee to Combat Fascism in Omaha during August 1970 and could often be seen toting a camera to events and meetings. House is also the supplier of the dynamite that killed Patrolman Larry Minard, Sr. that month, according to another Midwest 22 conspiracy suspect, teen bomber Duane Peak. Peak accused House, Ed Poindexter, and Mondo we Langa (then David Rice) of participation in the bomb plot.

Duane Peak testified twice, at his preliminary hearing and at trial, that Raleigh House supplied the dynamite for the bomb. However, House only spent one night in jail on a suspicion charge before he was released on his own signature bond. House was never charged for possession or delivery of the explosives.

Peak said a week prior to the bombing, he and Ed Poindexter got into Raleigh House's automobile and Raleigh drove them to Mondo we Langa's residence. Poindexter allegedly exited the vehicle while Peak continued on with House to pick up the dynamite. Peak said he waited in the car while House went inside.

Peak said, "Rollie came from behind the house with a suitcase. He brought it out to the car and put it in the back seat." The two allegedly then drove back to Mondo's home with the suitcase full of dynamite. "Rollie instructed me to take the suitcase over to the back door of David's house." Once inside the suitcase was opened revealing the dynamite testified Peak.

Peak gave a slightly different version earlier in September 1970 when he said that House came out of the residence rather than from behind the home. In his first sworn statement, at a deposition in August 1970, Peak did not mention House at all.

Retired ATF agent James Moore offered yet another version of the dynamite delivery in his book *Very Special Agents*. However, Moore's version is suspect as he falsely states Duane Peak was eighteen instead of fifteen and also claims the bomb was made of eight sticks of dynamite rather than three as Peak testified.

Moore wrote: "Panthers Ed Poindexter, Raleigh House and Duane Peak carried a Samsonite suitcase into David Rice's home....Four nights later, the same four men sat drinking beer at the Legion Club." Moore's account of House being at the Legion Club conflicts with trial testimony as does the assertion that Mondo we Langa (David Rice) was present. Moore claimed in his book he got his information from ATF case files and talking to ATF agents Tom Sledge and Dwight Thomas.

Raleigh House testified at the trial of the Omaha Two, Poindexter and Mondo, who were convicted of Larry Minard's murder. House was a witness for the defense and only was asked one indirect question about the dynamite.

Defense attorney Tom Kenny asked House, "Do you recall any time in the month of August of last year taking Duane Peak up to your house, picking up a suitcase and delivering the suitcase and Duane Peak to David Rice's house?"

Raleigh House answered, "No." That would turn out to be the only question House ever had to answer about Duane Peak's allegations that House supplied the dynamite for the bomb.

Ed Poindexter denies he received any dynamite from Raleigh House at any time. Nonetheless, the question is glaring. Why did the prosecution believe Duane Peak about Ed Poindexter and Mondo we Langa and not about Raleigh House? Could the awful truth be that an informant, possibly a paid informant, supplied the dynamite that killed Larry Minard?

House testified that upon his arrest on suspicion charges, he was fingerprinted but not tested with hand swabs or fingernail scrapings. On cross-examination, prosecutor Arthur O'Leary gave House kid glove treatment and did not ask again about the dynamite allegations instead focusing on House's knowledge of the group newsletter.

A retired Omaha police lieutenant, James Perry, also named Raleigh House as someone who should have been prosecuted. On September 5, 2002, Perry granted an interview with private detective Thomas Gorgen. Perry told Gorgen that several others were involved and he sought their prosecution.

Perry said: "You know there's a lot of guys, the Raleigh House and Ernie Chambers and oh what is that other guy's name, a couple other guys all friends and some white gal and that whole bunch of them....And I talked to Sam Cooper, I wanted him to charge them all."

Perry's targeting of Nebraska State Senator Ernie Chambers casts doubt on the veracity of his statement. When U. S. District Judge Warren Urbom questioned Perry at an appeal hearing, Judge Urbom concluded that Perry's testimony was not credible.

Raleigh House got around and was centerpiece in one dramatic front-page Omaha World-Herald photo coming out of the old Omaha police station, camera around neck, amidst several shotgun toting Black Panthers waiting outside the door.

Raleigh House's name came up in at a hearing of the House Committee on Internal Security in October 1970 in Washington, D.C., where Captain Murdock Platner of the Omaha police acknowledged being aware of House's activities.

The Omaha Police Department, ATF, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation had informants inside the Black Panthers and NCCF. The FBI counterintelligence reports under COINTELPRO suggest at least one informant was well placed in the group. Raleigh House's get-out-of-jail card gives rise to suspicion that House was somebody's informant.

During his single night in jail before being released by Deputy County Attorney Arthur O'Leary, House got his one phone call. According to a police report, House called his wife and instructed her to call Black Panther headquarters in Oakland, California.

Raleigh House never did have to account for the dynamite Duane Peak said was used to kill a policeman. Douglas County Attorney Donald Knowles never sought charges against House. When United States Attorney Richard Dier decided not to prosecute the Midwest 22, House was free once again without having to answer for the dynamite he was said to have delivered.

9 Jun - 'Inventing Terrorists' Study Offers Critical Examination of Government's Use of Preemptive Prosecutions

Nearly ninety-five percent of individuals on a Justice Department list of "terrorism and terrorism-related convictions" from 2001-2010 included some elements of preemptive prosecution, according to a study by attorneys which they say is the first to "directly examine and critique preemptive prosecution and its abuses."

MORE:

by Kevin Gosztola (*The Dissenter*)

The study is called "Inventing Terrorists: The Lawfare of Preemptive Prosecution" [PDF]. It was released by Project SALAM, which stands for Support and Legal Advocacy for Muslims, and the National Coalition to Protect Civil Freedoms (NCPFCF), a coalition of groups that "oppose profiling, preemptive prosecution and prisoner abuse."

While Mother Jones has already published extensive work on the entrapment and prosecution of "terrorists" since the 9/11 attacks examining the Justice Department's list, this study is noteworthy because it advances the journalism to outline how the government has perverted the criminal justice system through practices that have become popular especially against Muslims.

Stephen Downs and Kathy Manley, authors of the study, were defense attorneys for Yassin Aref, an imam of a mosque in Albany, New York, who was targeted for his "ideology." The government deployed an agent provocateur, Shahed Hussain, to entrap the imam by accepting a "loan" that Hussain claimed consisted of funds from the sale of a missile to terrorists. So the authors produced the study with the experience of having defended someone who was a victim of this kind of prosecution.

The concept of preemptive prosecution is defined as "a law enforcement strategy, adopted after 9/11, to target and prosecute individuals or organizations whose beliefs, ideology, or religious affiliations raise security concerns for the government." (However, the authors do acknowledge that the practices bear resemblance to tactics used by the FBI as part of COINTELPRO.)

Criminal charges are pretext. For example, someone charged with "material support for terrorism" may be charged with that to criminalize "free speech, free association, charity, peace-making and social hospitality." Someone may be charged with "conspiracy" for having friendships or simply being part of an organization the government doesn't like.

Agents provocateurs may be sent in to entrap a target into participating in a plot manufactured and controlled by the government every step of the way. The government may also choose to use "minor 'technical' crimes," such as errors on immigration forms, an alleged false statement to a government official, gun possession, tax or financial issues, etc., to go after someone for their "ideology."

The study broke down each case into three separate categories: preemptive prosecution; "elements of preemptive prosecution," meaning the defendants' may have committed non-terrorism-related crimes that the government "inflated" into a terrorism charge; and terrorism-related charges that were legitimate and not the result of preemptive prosecution.

The Justice Department's list only contained 399 cases. The study concluded "the number of preemptive prosecution cases is 289 out of 399, or 72.4%. The number of elements of preemptive prosecution cases is 87 out of 399, or 21.8%."

"Combining preemptive prosecution cases and elements of preemptive prosecution cases, the total number of such cases on the DOJ list is 376, or 94.2%," according to the study.

Nearly twenty-five percent of the cases contained material support charges. Nearly thirty percent were cases with conspiracy charges. Over seventeen percent of cases involved sting operations. More than sixteen percent of

cases included false statement or perjury charges, and around six percent of cases involved immigration-related charges.

The study also concluded that there were only eleven cases where threats had been “potentially significant” to the United States. “Only three were successful (the Tsarnaev brothers and Major Nidal Hasan), accounting for seventeen deaths and several hundred injuries.”

Out of hundreds of cases, the authors were only able to come up with twenty-three individuals who they believed ever posed a threat and were not preemptively prosecuted. But, as is noted in the study, nine of these people were inexplicably listed even though they committed non-terrorism related crimes.

Thus, the study clearly demonstrates how resources for fighting terrorism have mostly been used to target individuals who are suspicious and easier to prosecute because they practice a certain religion or have an “ideology” the general public will resent. And if most of these people were not people of color with Arabic-sounding names that could be used to promote a fear of foreigners in the criminal justice process, their crimes would be given the same light treatment other members of the general public typically receive.

Through preemptive prosecution the government can discourage Muslim Americans from supporting charities abroad, even when those charities have no nexus at all with groups committing violence. For example, Dr. Rafil Dhafir, an oncologist who was born in Iraq and later became a US citizen, founded the Help the Needy Charity in 1990 and for thirteen years fought to raise money for Iraqis most affected by the Gulf War and UN sanctions. He donated \$1.4 million “of his own money,” according to the US government. He was particularly concerned about the effects of depleted uranium on Iraqis. But his charity was criminalized and he was arrested just weeks before the invasion of Iraq in 2003.

Preemptive prosecution may lead to a “terrorism enhancement” being applied during sentencing, which opens one up to being placed in a Communications Management Unit (CMU), as the government did to Aref. CMUs are solitary confinement units and involve a set of highly restrictive detention conditions that limit contact with family and the outside world.

There are also several prosecutions where the government criminalizes the advocacy of what the study calls “non-specific violence.” While it may seem controversial, this speech is protected under the Constitution.

“Free speech includes the right to use violent and hate speech, and it is not charged as a crime when right-wing terrorists or domestic hate groups engage in it. Charging only Muslims or other targeted groups is discriminatory and preemptive,” the study contends. (The case of Tarek Mehanna is one clear example.)

“Simply being a member of a group, or being associated with certain individuals, should not be a crime unless there is evidence of specific intent to become involved in a given criminal action or conspiracy,” the study argues. However, the study adds, “A number of material support and conspiracy cases included individuals who were friends of others who were charged, and this association was the main evidence against them, with little or no additional evidence.” (For example, the case of the Fort Dix Five.)

Additionally, the study takes the even more bold position of defending those who go to “foreign lands” to defend Muslim communities and prevent them from attack.

...All prosecutions of defendants who expressed a desire to go to a training camp, or who unsuccessfully tried to find one, or who attended one and failed to act on the training, are considered preemptive prosecutions unless the circumstances indicated that the defendant actually intended to engage in violence against civilians or the United States. Many defendants were drawn to attend training camps out of a desire to defend Muslim communities in Bosnia, Kashmir, Chechnya, Sudan, or other countries where there was/is conflict. However, cases in which the defendants actually intended to commit acts of violence against American soldiers or against civilians are not included as preemptive prosecutions...

While the study does not draw any conclusions, hypotheses are put forward on why there are so many more

preemptive prosecutions of Muslims for terrorism or terrorism-related offenses.

The first hypothesis is that the FBI truly believed there was a domestic network of “ideological” Muslims to dismantle. Another hypothesis is that preemptive prosecutions are designed to scare Muslims from criticizing US foreign policy abroad. And yet another is that this is how the government must go about prosecuting these individuals because, if they did it any other way, they would be running up against constitutional prohibitions.

In other words, preemptive prosecutions represent the government’s best efforts to take advantage of all the loopholes in the criminal justice system and neutralize the ability of those prosecuted to put on a defense allowing the law to be used by prosecutors to control a population.

9 Jun - New writings by Mumia Abu-Jamal

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

MORE:

June 9th - YURI KOCHIYAMA: A Life in Struggle

Her name was Yuri, a Japanese woman born in the United States. I hesitate to call her a Japanese-American, for to do so suggests she was a citizen.

In light of how she, her family and her community were treated during World War II, especially after the bombing of Pearl Harbor in 1941, to call any of them citizens would be an exaggeration.

Yuri was barely 20 when she, her parents, her brothers and the Japanese living on the West Coast – some 110,000 children, women and men – were forced to leave their homes, their schools, their jobs and businesses, and were transported to concentration camps in the nation’s interior.

Two-thirds of these people (like Yuri) were born in the United States, and thus American citizens according to the Constitution.

This meant nothing. They were Japanese – that was enough.

She remembered her experiences in those camps as a naïve banana (yellow on the outside, white on the inside). She recounted to oral historians:

I was red, white, and blue when I was growing up. I taught Sunday school, and was very, very American. But I was also provincial. We were just kids rooting for our high school.....

Everything changed for me on the day Pearl Harbor was bombed. On that very day –December 7th, the FBI came and took my father. He had just come home from the hospital the day before. For several days we didn’t know where they had taken him. Then we found out that he was taken to the Federal prison at Terminal Island. Overnight, things changed for us. *

In December, 1944, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that “military necessity” was the basis of the mass evacuation and detention of tens of thousands of in the Korematsu case.

Yuri would later become a strong supporter of Malcolm X, and the Black Freedom Movement. She joined and worked in various liberation organizations and grew to become an icon of the Black Freedom and Asian-American rights movements.

Born Yuri Nakahara on May 19, 1921 (4 years to the date before Malcolm was born), she married Bill Kochiyama. The Kochiyamas moved to Harlem in 1960, where they worked for the civil rights movement, in education and fair housing practices.

Yuri Kochiyama, freedom fighter, after 93 summers, has become an ancestor.

June 17th - Bird-dogging Bergdahl

For the American captive of the Taliban, U.S. Army Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl, the homecoming he has long dreamed of may be more bitter than sweet.

For, on the day of the announcement of his release from his Afghanistan captors, before a full swell of celebration could grow, came claims of his desertion - and even calls for his imprisonment in an American military jail.

From hero to heel under the pressure of the 24-hour news cycle, Bergdahl, who has spent five years in Taliban custody, may, if he's aware of this cacophony, opt for a return flight to Kabul.

Unfortunately, this has more to do with President Barack Obama than Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl. For the politics of the present demands all-attack all-the-time on Obama's efforts. He must be denied even the illusion of success.

Hence the noise on the right.

But of Bergdahl, a then 20- year old U.S. soldier, it is reported that he was sickened by the carnage unleashed by U.S. forces against the Afghan people.

Because his human instincts were awakened, he is now called "deserter", "betrayor", and "coward".

But is it cowardly to face one's enemies unarmed?

Is it cowardly to see the violence unleashed on an oppressed people, and feel their pain?

People the world over have looked at the mass death visited upon Afghanistan - and were sickened by it.

Perhaps Bergdahl felt it too.

Now, he is on the brink of joining the nation he has longed for.

Perhaps this too, will sicken him.

June 17th - IRAQ: Recipe for Disaster

As these words are being formed, Iraq is a site of disaster.

The northern city of Mosul is falling to armed Islamic militants. Bombings are increasing with frequency and ferocity, claiming more and more lives.

And Iraq's military are so uneven to the task that they are dropping weapons, ditching their uniforms - and fleeing!

Nearly \$800 billion dollars have been spent, some 4,500 U.S. casualties have accrued, over a decade of war and occupation, and Iraq is on the brink of unraveling - further.

All that time. All those lives. All that money. Wasted on a mad pipe-dream of Iraqi democracy -- or even the illusion of it.

The next time a war hawk squawks about the need for American military action to solve some global problem -- think about Iraq.

The next time some hyped up politician calls for your son or daughter to sacrifice -- think about Iraq.

The next time a neighborhood school is shuttered because of no money to support it -- think about Iraq.

Wars for lies: think about it.

Think about Iraq.

June 20th - Cantor's Fall

Congressman Eric Cantor, Republican Majority Leader of the U.S. House of Representatives, has been knocked off his perch and out of his seat in a surprise primary result borne by a virtually unknown challenger, and economics professor, Dave Brat.

Cantor, the heir-apparent to become the next House Speaker, never saw it coming, especially after 7 successful elections.

Professor Brat beat the incumbent handily, by over 10 points, and only spent some \$300,000 to Cantor's millions.

Such a stunning political development comes, in part, due to Cantor's inattention to his home district, seemingly relying on TV ads to sell his campaign.

But it's also true that years of gerrymandering have resulted in increasingly politically consolidated districts. This consolidation may've resulted in a district more conservative than their incumbent -Eric Cantor.

The total vote count was under 100,000 for both candidates.

In 2010, Cantor won over 138,000 votes. But that was the general election. This was the primary, which usually attracts the most fervent of all voters.

Cantor, it seems, forgot a lesson made famous by another House Speaker, Thomas "Tip" O'Neill of Boston: "All politics are local."

June 20th - The Divine Ruby Dee

Her name was Ruby Dee ('D') - for Davis), and though she made her transition into the realm of the ancestors, she is available for all to see in all her beauty, dignity, charm and poise, for a long and distinguished career on stage, screen and television.

Despite such a long and legendary career as an actress, one would be hard-pressed to find a role where she portrayed anything less than the best of Black people.

Her best self shone, no matter the role, no matter the script.

Like her late husband, the Master actor, Ossie Davis, their work was a theater of Black dignity, Black family and Black Love.

My wife, Wadiya Jamal, loved them both. When I asked her why, she said, "I love how they love."

They found ways to practice their chosen craft, but never sold their souls to the cameraman or the director.

Ruby Dee was also a lifelong activist, who supported Malcolm X, the Black Freedom Movement and - yes - yours truly.

She was a published poet, and her 1999 [orig. 1987] book, *My One Good Nerve*, was insightful, deep, funny and witty.

In her poem on Black youth, “The Mighty Gents”, she wrote:

Fulfillment dreams, Spawned by unintelligible economies,
By the gangster class, by the religious hems and haws
By the respectable corrupt, by ineffectual classroom rituals, by sick and tired middle class
By daddies who didn’t know and, by names couldn’t stop them
Dreams that guarantee only early Rigor mortis
Clang spastically in heads, Messed up, too, by ladyfingers
Cowboy flicks with gunslingers, Taming frontiers, slaves, Indians
God, anything [pp.55-56]

Ruby Dee, poet; human rights activist, civil rights activist; Black freedom activist, award-winning actress.

My favorite film of her: I loved them all - from “St. Louis Blues” to “The Stand”; from when she was a fresh faced church girl, to the wizened, God-filled mother figure in Stephen King’s science fiction epic, she radiated intelligence, passion, and unique style.

Ruby Dee, at 91 summers sweetened by her presence.

10 Jun - Running from the Devil: An Interview

In 2012, Steve Jablonski was subpoenaed to testify before a grand jury and chose instead to leave the United States. In this interview, he describes his interactions with law enforcement and his time on the run.

MORE:

by Doug Gilbert (*Crimethinc.*)

If you were contacted by the FBI, what would you do? Do you know who you would call? Would you be able to find a lawyer? Would you quit your job? Would you talk to your partner, your comrades, your parents? More importantly, would you talk to the government? If the FBI informed you that you were being made to stand before a grand jury, at which you could not have a lawyer present and you might face jail time if you did not answer questions—what would you do?

In 2012, several anarchists in the Pacific Northwest had to answer these questions. They were brought before the court to determine if they knew anything or anyone that was connected to a riot that broke out on May Day of that year. Three people kept their mouths shut and did several months in jail. One other person talked and was released, and quickly vanished without telling her former friends what she had done.

What follows is the experience of another person, Steve Jablonski, who took another route. While standing in solidarity with other people in the Pacific Northwest who resisted the grand jury, Steve instead decided to leave the country in order to avoid spending time in jail. Steve, like his comrades, kept his mouth shut in the face of government repression, but also faced other obstacles. He had to contend with the police forces of another country, and continues to face the realities of political repression now that he has returned.

There are many ways to defy the powers that be. Sometimes, you keep your mouth shut and do a few months; other times, you flee the country. We leave it up to you, dear reader, to choose what is right for you.

“Wherever you find injustice, the proper form of politeness is attack.”

–T-Bone Slim

Doug Gilbert: Can you tell us a little about yourself? How did you arrive in the Pacific Northwest and become an anarchist?

Steve Jablonski: I grew up in New Jersey, about 45 minutes outside of New York City. I lived out there till I was eighteen, when I moved out to Olympia, Washington to start going to college. I started getting interested in anarchist ideas when I was around thirteen or fourteen. I was introduced to them through the punk and hardcore music I was listening to at the time. But up until I moved to Olympia, anarchism was always just words and

ideas in my head; I was not involved with any anarchist projects.

Once I moved to Olympia, I started being a part of the anarchist movement. I came across my first black bloc about a month after I moved out to Washington, at the Seattle Anti-War demo that happened in October 2007. But shortly after that, all of the port militarization resistance stuff was happening in Olympia [physical blockades of military equipment being used in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan]. This was the first time I witnessed street fighting with the cops, property destruction as a political (or “anti-political”) tactic, building barricades in the street, etc. The resistance obviously was not explicitly anarchist, but there were lots of different anarchists involved in the various organizing meetings and street confrontations. So basically, since 2007 I have been living in the Puget Sound area, aside from the time I spent in Montreal. I have maintained being heavily involved in anarchist projects since arriving in Olympia.

DG: Why did the FBI target you after the May Day riot on 2012?

SJ: Well, the story of the FBI targeting me actually started about a year or so before the 2012 May Day riot in Seattle. In early 2011, there were a lot of anti-police demos in Seattle around the murder of John T. Williams. He was an indigenous man who was known in the city for being a prolific wood carver. He was shot dead at point blank range by Seattle pig Ian Burke. Burke was acquitted of all charges and this triggered several confrontational demos in Seattle. Along with these demonstrations, there were various acts of anonymous property destruction around the Puget Sound area, mainly in Seattle, Tacoma, and Olympia. The two biggest actions were the attempted arsons of the police substations in both Seattle and Olympia. A few days after the attempted arson on the cop-shop in Olympia, I was approached by FBI agents when I was taking a jog around my neighborhood. They rolled up on me in an unmarked car and started talking a bunch of shit to me. They said things about how me and my friends were going to go to prison for a long time and they knew that we were the ones who burnt down the substation, that it was just a matter of time before they would come and arrest us. They also referenced me as “Mr. Sabot Infoshoppe,” because that was the name of the anarchist student group in Olympia that I was the coordinator for.

A few months after that, the FBI went and talked to both my mom and my aunt on the same day, both of whom live in New York. They told them how I was an anarchist terrorist and how I was going to end up in prison if I don’t change the direction of my life. A few months later I got detained by the TSA/FBI when I was flying down to the Bay Area. They told me they knew I was an anarchist and, once again, that I was going to end up in prison for a long time for the things my friends and I had done.

Several months after the May Day riot on May 1st, I received a phone call from someone saying he was an FBI agent. He referred to himself as “Special Agent McNeil” and said he had a subpoena that he needed to deliver to me. Obviously, at that moment it was a huge shock to receive such a phone call, but at the same time, the FBI had already harassed me multiple times before, so it was not entirely out of the blue.

DG: How did you come to a decision to leave the country?

SJ: After sitting down with a couple of friends and talking over all the options I had available, I decided that I did not want to walk into my own prison cell. If you refuse to testify before a grand jury, you are likely to end up serving a prison sentence for civil contempt. I knew that under no circumstance would I testify at the grand jury and therefore that I would be going to prison for up to eighteen months. But I had a very unique circumstance; a subpoena is only valid if it is delivered to you in person. Because the FBI had the wrong address, they were not able to locate me. I definitely don’t think they expected me to just take off like I did. In reality if they had never called me and had just tracked me down, my options would have been entirely different.

After I’d sat down with friends, the choice became pretty clear. I totally understand that prison is a reality of life for many people in this world and that by my involvement in anarchist activities I certainly risk ending up spending some time there. But something about presenting myself to the state for a prison sentence did not sit well with me.

DG: Was it difficult for you to get into Canada?

SJ: Actually no, it was surprisingly easy. I mean, the emotional and mental aspect of leaving my friends and not

knowing where I was going and what I was doing was extremely terrifying, but the actual border process was simple. At that point, I don't think the FBI knew that I was going to leave the country. I think they underestimated just how committed all the grand jury resisters were.

I took a bus from Bellingham, which is only about thirty minutes south of the US/Canada border. I told the border agent I was going to Vancouver for a few days to look at grad schools and within three or four minutes I had entered into Canada. It was one of the most surreal things I have ever experienced.

DG: Were the authorities aware of you living in Canada?

SJ: For sure. Within a few months of my arrival in Montreal, I was stopped by CSIS (Canadian Security Intelligence Service)—which is like the Canadian equivalent of the FBI, but they do not have arresting powers. I had also gotten voicemails to my old US phone from “Special Agent McNeil,” about how I was not going to win this battle and I would regret my decisions. It was also pretty obvious that my new phone was tapped and that some of the emails from my yahoo account were being read by the FBI.

DG: What was the emotional toll while living in this situation?

SJ: The emotional toll was really, really heavy. Being away from my friends, who I'm closer to than my family, was definitely hard. Also, none of us knew that I was going to be gone for twenty months. The Grand Jury ended up getting a six-month extension, which caused another delay in my return.

The hardest part was that my older brother died in December of 2012, when I was still in exile. Because of my legal situation, I was not able to attend the funeral or spend any time with my family. If nothing else in the world has solidified my utter hatred for the Capitalism and the State, then being torn away from attending the funeral of my brother certainly has. It's something I have lost a lot of sleep over and still have only begun to address.

Luckily, I was able to have a wonderful group of people in Montreal who offered more support than I have ever received in my life. I don't know what I would have done without the anarchists I met in Montréal.

DG: In what ways did the authorities fuck with you while you were there?

SJ: Oh man, in lots of ways. I got harassed by CSIS on multiple occasions. Throughout the year and half I was there, I would say that I was harassed about ten times. The most intense harassment came from the Montréal city police (SPVM). One night I was walking to the store a block away from my apartment and they stopped me and threw me in the squad car. They drove me about forty minutes outside the city and left me in a random industrial parking lot. They took my phone, keys, wallet, jacket, and shoes. Luckily, it was September so it wasn't too cold, but I had to walk about a half mile just to figure out where I was and get ahold of my roommates.

Also, during my last two months there I was definitely under something like 24-hour surveillance. The cops were stopping me almost every day for a straight week and posting outside my new apartment for hours on end. It was a pretty surreal experience, but my friends in Montréal definitely did everything they could to help me get through it.

DG: Have you been harassed since coming back to the US?

SJ: Yes. I was in the Bay Area a few weeks ago and two FBI agents approached me as I was leaving the BART station. It was a really short interaction and they basically just said they were here to welcome me back. Creepy.

But another close friend of mine was also stopped by the FBI a few weeks ago when he returning from Europe. They interrogated him for an hour or so but he refused to answer any questions. So the FBI hating on all our lives is still very much a real thing. But at this point, it is something that I am trying to get used to rather than just eliminate, because I don't think it's very realistic the Feds will be going away anytime soon.

DG: Looking back, did you feel like you were supported?

SJ: Overall, I would say yes. I felt much supported by US anarchists as a whole. I think the response people had to the Grand Jury was really inspiring in a lot of ways. I think some of my individual friends could have done a better job at being there for me and given that, I have definitely been reevaluating a lot of my relationships. But

at the same time, I feel like many of relationships have been strengthened from this experience, and I have built more trust, affinity, and love with some of the people in my life. I kind of feel like, if my friendships can make it through an experience this intense and straining, they should be able to make it through anything. And that is a pretty great feeling to have.

I will say that I was extremely inspired by all of the solidarity actions that happened all over the world. Just off the top of my head I can think of actions that happened in Australia, Greece, France, and definitely everywhere across the US and Canada.

Somebody burned down an “Eco-Condo” in Seattle and claimed solidarity with the grand jury resisters and that was something that really excited me. It was really nice to see that in such an intense time of repression someone(s) were willing to throw down like that. I was really happy to see people continuing the anarchist struggle in solidarity with all the resisters who couldn’t participate due to the repression we were facing.

DG: It appears that grand juries are not going away any time soon. What advice would you give people facing a similar situation?

SJ: I would just want to let people know that there are lots of different ways to resist grand juries. For some people I think it makes a lot of sense to appear in front of the judge and then do their time for contempt, but for others fleeing a subpoena is a much more appealing option. It’s kind of like, nothing in life happens in a vacuum, and each person needs to decide on their own what way they want to resist. I think talking it over with friends is a pretty essential thing to do. I know when I first got subpoenaed I was really freaking out and it pretty much felt like my life was falling apart, but I had good friends around me who were able to keep me in check, and let me know that I wouldn’t be going through this thing alone.

But I will say that I think the “legal” strategy is a strategy that one can use, but certainly not a strategy that one has to use. Sometimes it makes sense to use this strategy, but I feel like portraying oneself as a victim is almost essential to having a successful legal strategy. In a way, it is true: when the State fucks with you, technically, you are a victim. But I try to understand that the state is fucking with me and my friends because they don’t like us, and myself and my friends in turn hate the State. For me, it is important to say that I don’t give a fuck about rights. I’m not interested in portraying myself as a victim because I view the State as my enemy. I seek no sort of resolution between myself and domination; I want it to be completely destroyed. The courts, the prisons, hetero-supremacy, white supremacy—I want to work on consistently attacking the manifestations of these forms of domination.

Clearly these are ideas that don’t fit into any sort of legal strategy, but I’m not concerned with a legal strategy. No disrespect to any anarchists who are focused on their legal strategy, but I feel really glad to be able to use this opportunity to let people know there is more than one way to successfully resist a grand jury.

Long Live Anarchy!

10 Jun - Robert Seth Hayes to Postpone Parole Hearing

A comrade from Jericho NY recently spoke with Robert Seth Hayes. Seth says that he will be postponed his parole hearing, scheduled for Tuesday, June 10, 2014, for 90 days. This means the hearing will take place in September of 2014.

11 Jun - An ex-banker and Occupier walk into a jail. Guess which one's serving time?

Cecily McMillan is behind bars, unlike any of the architects of the financial crisis. In an exclusive conversation with the Guardian, she explains why her sentence serves a purpose.

MORE:

by Chris Arnade (*The Guardian*)

A former banker visits the only member of Occupy Wall Street to receive a prison sentence: it sounds like the set-up of a joke or a parable of the modern age. Instead, it was a real scene last Thursday, when I went to see jailed OWS activist Cecily McMillan at Rikers Island.

That the opposite would never have happened was not lost on Cecily or me: bankers don't get sent to jail, and, when they rarely do, they certainly don't get sent to Rikers.

Rikers is New York City's largest jail, housing a population that is overwhelmingly poor – mostly people who can't post bail, which in some cases is as low as \$50. It has become a short-term holding facility for those who can't muster \$2,000 in a pinch, or who don't have the 10% of bail to lose to a bondsman.

Since her 19 May sentencing for an assault on an officer, Cecily McMillan has lived in a barracks-like room with close to a hundred other women. Cecily herself is a banker-like rarity in Rikers: she has resources, both from the media obsession with her case and the OWS movement that she has come to partly symbolize.

My visit with Cecily, to which I was accompanied by an organizer working as part of her support team, wasn't my first visit to Rikers – so, unlike a lot of people, I was prepared for what followed. Visiting anyone in Rikers requires a level of preparation and logistics that exceeds flying to another country: having the correct info, having the correct papers, having the correct date, wearing the correct clothes, standing in the correct lines, and having patience.

A one-hour visit requires hours of humiliating lines; scans, pat-downs and three separate body searches; emptying pockets of everything and then storing your wallet, your keys, your pills and your jewelry in tiny, coin-operated lockers. One half of an older couple, at Rikers to visit their daughter, encapsulated everyone's feelings: I ain't doing this again. I mean I love her, but this is just too much.

After four hours of waiting and screening, we got that hour with Cecily in a small room that resembles a kindergarten classroom – tiny tables, each with a large number in the center, are arrayed before a lifeguard's chair from which a corrections officer overlooks the room. If a visitor gets too close to an inmate, the officer shouts at them: 18, NO TOUCHING. You touch again and your visit is over.

Children visiting their mothers and boyfriends visiting their girlfriends occupied the other tables while we were there. The frustration of the four hours all melted away in hugs – but each pairing was allowed only one hug, at the risk of a booming admonition: 19. I TOLD YOU. NO TOUCHING.

Cecily was exhausted and anxious, clad in the inmates' standard-issue gray jumpsuit, hers a size too large. She remains aware of her unique situation in the cut-off world of Rikers, and so she has spent much of the last month cataloging the stories of injustice she sees daily.

I wanted to catalogue her experiences, too, but visitors aren't allowed to bring recording devices. I wanted to write down her exact words, but visitors aren't even allowed paper or pencils. So I came in my capacity as a former banker who has spent the last three years focusing on the injustices I have seen in my work with addiction. I came partially because I wanted to further understand the injustices that I, as a banker, might have helped create.

Cecily has spent most of the last month focused on trying to find a way to use her story to broaden her social activism, and to refocus the attention on her sentence to help people understand that incarceration is commonplace for many communities.

I had two years to prepare for this, she explained. Most everyone else in here had no time to prepare – but a lifetime of realizing it will happen to them at some point. Jail, and negative confrontations with the police, is for many a reality.

Being jailed has forced Cecily to rethink her prior approach toward activism, Activism, and activists, she explained, need to move into the communities they are working for. We have to get out from behind our books, our hand-painted signs, and really put ourselves at risk, she insisted.

She doesn't regret being the one who did end up in jail, she told me: It was going to happen to someone in the movement, the police were going to find someone to make an example of. And it just happened to be her.

But if a jail sentence is supposed to reform those unlucky or ill-fated enough to receive one, then the people who prosecuted Cecily aren't going to get their money's worth. I am far more committed to the movement, to social work, to exposing the power structures, than I was before, she explained.

In our hour, we didn't talk much about why more Occupy Wall Streeters faced criminal charges than the Wall Streeters they were protesting, or why, among her fellow inmates, she's more likely to meet someone victimized by a banker's malfeasance than an actual banker.

Why are no bankers in jail?

It is a question that I, as an ex-trader for Citigroup, still can't really answer (without sounding conspiratorial).

It is a question Cecily, as an activist behind bars, can't fully answer herself (without sounding too conspiratorial).

It's a question to which our own government hasn't provided us a satisfactory answer – and maybe never will.

It is a question that has certainly forced me to believe that the system is so rigged, maybe working within the system to change things is not the right approach.

The last three years, since leaving my job to document people living with addiction in the Bronx, since visiting more and more friends at Rikers, I have been made aware of the wide gulf that separates New Yorkers, and of a system that is so stacked against those with so much less. At every juncture, the criminal justice system seems to be kicking the poor in the teeth: they are the focus of more police activity, and their transgressions are magnified by rules that evolved to favor those with resources. The less money you have, the less power you have, and the greater chance your mistakes will be punished.

As Cecily said to me, and as I have said myself many times: Many people live with the knowledge that an involuntary trip to Rikers is a matter of when, not if.

Cecily is a reminder that the injustices run even deeper, and that they aren't just confined to the poor. If you fight to expose injustice, then you might also face a system stacked against you.

12 Jun - Poem by Mondo we Langa

The Native Resistance Network recently received a poem from Mondo we Langa. They shared it with us and we've included it below.

MORE:

Signs of the Tribes

smiling injun showing pearlie whites
looking shifty in wide-eyed caricature
with a single feather sticking up
from the back of his head
a band holding it in place
he's stuck to the plastic cap
of a boy of summer playing hit the ball
and run the bases
before a sea of mostly pale faces
and arms moving up and down in
a tomahawk-choppy motion
to the helter-skelter rhythm of balls and strikes
runs, out, and errors
but an error is a mistake
the Trail of Tears and Wounded Knee
were not events

that the children of Plymouth Rock and Valley Forge
did not mean to do
they meant it and weren't sorry for even as long
as it takes to blink an eye
or steal first, second or third
they stole home
called this "pilgrims' progress"
"pioneer spirit"
"taming the frontier"
and other turns of phrases
to cover the trail of murders and thefts they lay
on the road to today
where the logos and mascots of their fun and games
mock the people they considered fair prey
o'er the land of the free
and atlanta's the home of the braves
but they
and cleveland injuns and washington redskins
cannot speak for themselves
because decals and mascots can't talk
and Leonard Peltier, like me, can't run free
but must walk, pacing back and forth in a cage of history
repeating itself
and i
being foreign to this place
could ignore these signs of the tribes
but for the thought in my head
that little black sambo's turned red.

14 Jun - In Support of #PayPal14 Fundraising Drive by Jeremy Hammond

When the banks, credit card corporations and PayPal imposed a financial blockade on WikiLeaks, Anonymous fought back with the largest coordinated electronic civil disobedience sit-in in history, inspiring others to take up the banner of hacktivism.

MORE:

Outgunned and humiliated on the internet, PayPal went to their allies in law enforcement who arrested over a dozen suspected Anonymous members now known as the PayPal 14. Despite never having "exceeded authorized access," the PayPal 14 were charged under the draconian Computer Fraud and Abuse Act (CFAA) for what would typically result in misdemeanor trespassing or a disorderly conduct charge for the real world protest equivalent.

In addition to the second-class citizen status of a felony conviction, PayPal demanded an artificially inflated amount owed to them in restitution, totaling approximately \$80,000. To complete the dog-and-pony show, should the fourteen meet the terms of their plea agreement, the felony will transfer to a misdemeanor on their record, while still showing, for statistical purposes, a CFAA felony win for the FBI. It is an unjust public shaming ritual that has adversely affected the lives of these 14 brave individuals. The PayPal 14 alone should not have to pay a multi-billion dollar corporation for an action in which tens of thousands of us participated in, which caused no actual loss or damage.

It is unfortunate (but not surprising) that wealthy social engineers such as Pierre Omidyar pay lip service to our cause but only after plea deals have been hammered out and outrageous restitutions imposed. This allows him to gain sympathy from the public while still advancing his own financial interests – his companies can still reap the benefit of the status quo, while crushing the free speech of ordinary working people and independent publishers.

Fortunately, the PayPal 14 are not alone. Our movement is only as strong as our ability to support those who get scapegoated. The PayPal 14 should not have to take all the weight of the restitution by themselves. It could have been any one of us, and so it is on us to help raise some funds.

Please donate to the PayPal 14 to help defray the costs of the restitution!
Visit the PayPal14 website to learn more about how you can donate to their restitution fund—
<http://www.thepaypal14.com>

15 Jun - Ongoing Urgent Campaign to Release PP Abdullah Majid from SHU

We received word on Friday, June 13, 2014 from Ms. LaBorde, Abdullah's Mom, that he has been transferred to Five Points Correctional Facility. He is still in solitary and still needs your help.

MORE:

This is exactly the pattern that Majid was speaking about when we visited him in the SHU at Elmira. Whenever anyone in the Muslim community at Elmira criticizes Mr. Afify, he has them thrown into the SHU on bogus charges and then transferred out to another prison.

We need to call and write to DOCCS Commissioner Anthony Annucci and Five Points Superintendent Michael Sheahan to demand that Abdullah Majid #83-A-0483 be removed from SHU and returned to general population.

Commissioner Anthony J. Annucci
NYS Department of Corrections
and Community Supervision
Building 2
1220 Washington Ave
Albany, New York 12226-2050
518.457.8126

Superintendent Michael Sheahan
Five Points Correctional Facility
607.869.5111

15 Jun - Chelsea Manning Update

Chelsea Manning just had an op-ed piece published in the New York Times. We're including that as well as a couple of updates below.

MORE:

June 15th - Chelsea Manning's appellate counsel: We'll leave no stone unturned in our quest for justice

We are honored, humbled and excited to be Chelsea Manning's appellate lawyers. We have had the opportunity to meet Chelsea in-person at the Fort Leavenworth, Kansas facility where she is currently serving her sentence, and we are confident that we will work well together. We are planning to spend a great deal more time working closely with her as we prepare her appeal

This appeal is far from a mere formality. We have agreed to devote the significant time and energy that will be necessary for this case only because we believe that we have a real chance to reverse her conviction. Appeals are never easy but even at this early stage we know we have many valid issues to work with and we know that if justice prevails, we will win.

The Espionage Act—always a poorly written and often-abused law—has now become little more than a trap to ensnare those who embarrass the government. Chelsea's espionage conviction alone requires that she appeal her case, not only for her sake but for the sake of all Americans. The way the court interpreted the espionage charges in Chelsea's case completely fails to distinguish between providing information to harm the United States and sharing information in the public interest. Unless we act to reverse the misuse of this statute in Chelsea's case, the stage has been set to incriminate any American whistleblower who reveals wrongdoing to the media.

We also know Chelsea's sentence is far, far too long. We know her constitutional rights were violated by her year of torturous and shameful pretrial solitary confinement and the government's failure to provide her the speedy trial to which she was entitled.

We know the military court prevented her from bringing to trial the witnesses she needed; she was denied access to crucial evidence and even the President of the United States declared her guilty before the first day of trial. All of these issues are grounds for overturning charges during appeals.

We expect to discover even more grounds for appeals as we finish examining the trial record, which is the longest in military legal history.

There's no denying that this be a long road; we have much work ahead of us. But we pledge to turn every page, research every issue and leave no stone unturned in our quest to right the injustice of Chelsea's conviction and sentence. What the military has done to Chelsea is wrong and it is unconstitutional. Her conviction, as it stands, is nothing short of dangerous to a free society. We hope that you will support our fight to overturn this conviction through appeals, and thus prevent a deeply undemocratic and flawed precedent being set for our country's future.

June 15th - Help us fund Chelsea's legal appeals and build a movement for government transparency!

The Chelsea Manning Support Network (formerly Bradley Manning Support Network) was founded early in 2010 by individuals who realized that government secrecy has reached dangerous levels, and that military whistleblowers deserve the strongest public defense we can give them. Since the early days of Chelsea Manning's arrest, our Network has relied on grassroots support to raise 100% of the cost for a comprehensive legal defense and public education efforts. Thanks to the generosity of thousands of donors and volunteers around the world, we built a political movement, and are gearing up to begin one of the fiercest appeals efforts the world has ever seen.

However, in order for Chelsea Manning to finally receive justice, we must raise \$300,000 to sustain a rigorous appeals process that will leave no stone unturned. Chelsea has chosen well-known civil rights attorney Nancy Hollander and her law partner Vincent Ward to lead these efforts, and they are eager to begin.

The Chelsea Manning Support Network also needs your help to continue our public education and political support efforts.

Our staff are in direct contact with Chelsea Manning. We are working to make sure that her prisoner rights are respected, and to give her a voice in the public arena. We want to ensure she is still able to advocate for government transparency and reform despite the heavy restrictions the Army has placed on her contact with the news media. Thanks to our press liaison efforts, the New York Times today published Chelsea's powerful thoughts on a new proposed Iraq intervention.

Finally, we must continue organizing public pressure for President Obama to pardon Chelsea. Obama's actions toward whistleblowers has been criticized often, and for good reason. However, his last year of office is when it will be most politically feasible for him to make a better move. Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, the American Civil Liberties Union and the New York Times Editorial Board have all called Chelsea's sentence "excessive." With your help we can build a coalition and mobilize an effort too powerful to ignore, creating the national situation needed for Obama to pardon Manning, Snowden, and other whistleblowers who his administration has wronged.

To provide support to Chelsea in prison, maximize her voice in the media, continue public education and build a powerful movement for presidential pardon we must raise another \$120,000 this year.

Please help us fight the legal and political battle to free Chelsea, not only for her sake, but for all those she's helped, and all whistleblowers endangered by her unjust conviction.

Please donate today at <https://co.clickandpledge.com/sp/d1/default.aspx?wid=38591>

15 Jun - “The Fog Machine of War:” Chelsea Manning on the U.S. Military and Media Freedom

When I chose to disclose classified information in 2010, I did so out of a love for my country and a sense of duty to others. I’m now serving a sentence of 35 years in prison for these unauthorized disclosures. I understand that my actions violated the law.

However, the concerns that motivated me have not been resolved. As Iraq erupts in civil war and America again contemplates intervention, that unfinished business should give new urgency to the question of how the United States military controlled the media coverage of its long involvement there and in Afghanistan. I believe that the current limits on press freedom and excessive government secrecy make it impossible for Americans to grasp fully what is happening in the wars we finance.

If you were following the news during the March 2010 elections in Iraq, you might remember that the American press was flooded with stories declaring the elections a success, complete with upbeat anecdotes and photographs of Iraqi women proudly displaying their ink-stained fingers. The subtext was that United States military operations had succeeded in creating a stable and democratic Iraq.

Those of us stationed there were acutely aware of a more complicated reality.

Military and diplomatic reports coming across my desk detailed a brutal crackdown against political dissidents by the Iraqi Ministry of Interior and federal police, on behalf of Prime Minister Nuri Kamal al-Maliki. Detainees were often tortured, or even killed.

Early that year, I received orders to investigate 15 individuals whom the federal police had arrested on suspicion of printing “anti-Iraqi literature.” I learned that these individuals had absolutely no ties to terrorism; they were publishing a scholarly critique of Mr. Maliki’s administration. I forwarded this finding to the officer in command in eastern Baghdad. He responded that he didn’t need this information; instead, I should assist the federal police in locating more “anti-Iraqi” print shops.

I was shocked by our military’s complicity in the corruption of that election. Yet these deeply troubling details flew under the American media’s radar.

It was not the first (or the last) time I felt compelled to question the way we conducted our mission in Iraq. We intelligence analysts, and the officers to whom we reported, had access to a comprehensive overview of the war that few others had. How could top-level decision makers say that the American public, or even Congress, supported the conflict when they didn’t have half the story?

Among the many daily reports I received via email while working in Iraq in 2009 and 2010 was an internal public affairs briefing that listed recently published news articles about the American mission in Iraq. One of my regular tasks was to provide, for the public affairs summary read by the command in eastern Baghdad, a single-sentence description of each issue covered, complementing our analysis with local intelligence.

The more I made these daily comparisons between the news back in the States and the military and diplomatic reports available to me as an analyst, the more aware I became of the disparity. In contrast to the solid, nuanced briefings we created on the ground, the news available to the public was flooded with foggy speculation and simplifications.

One clue to this disjunction lay in the public affairs reports. Near the top of each briefing was the number of embedded journalists attached to American military units in a combat zone. Throughout my deployment, I never saw that tally go above 12. In other words, in all of Iraq, which contained 31 million people and 117,000 United States troops, no more than a dozen American journalists were covering military operations.

The process of limiting press access to a conflict begins when a reporter applies for embed status. All reporters are carefully vetted by military public affairs officials. This system is far from unbiased. Unsurprisingly,

reporters who have established relationships with the military are more likely to be granted access.

Less well known is that journalists whom military contractors rate as likely to produce “favorable” coverage, based on their past reporting, also get preference. This outsourced “favorability” rating assigned to each applicant is used to screen out those judged likely to produce critical coverage.

Reporters who succeeded in obtaining embed status in Iraq were then required to sign a media “ground rules” agreement. Army public affairs officials said this was to protect operational security, but it also allowed them to terminate a reporter’s embed without appeal.

There have been numerous cases of reporters’ having their access terminated following controversial reporting. In 2010, the late Rolling Stone reporter Michael Hastings had his access pulled after reporting criticism of the Obama administration by Gen. Stanley A. McChrystal and his staff in Afghanistan. A Pentagon spokesman said, “Embeds are a privilege, not a right.”

If a reporter’s embed status is terminated, typically she or he is blacklisted. This program of limiting press access was challenged in court in 2013 by a freelance reporter, Wayne Anderson, who claimed to have followed his agreement but to have been terminated after publishing adverse reports about the conflict in Afghanistan. The ruling on his case upheld the military’s position that there was no constitutionally protected right to be an embedded journalist.

The embedded reporter program, which continues in Afghanistan and wherever the United States sends troops, is deeply informed by the military’s experience of how media coverage shifted public opinion during the Vietnam War. The gatekeepers in public affairs have too much power: Reporters naturally fear having their access terminated, so they tend to avoid controversial reporting that could raise red flags.

The existing program forces journalists to compete against one another for “special access” to vital matters of foreign and domestic policy. Too often, this creates reporting that flatters senior decision makers. A result is that the American public’s access to the facts is gutted, which leaves them with no way to evaluate the conduct of American officials.

Journalists have an important role to play in calling for reforms to the embedding system. The favorability of a journalist’s previous reporting should not be a factor. Transparency, guaranteed by a body not under the control of public affairs officials, should govern the credentialing process. An independent board made up of military staff members, veterans, Pentagon civilians and journalists could balance the public’s need for information with the military’s need for operational security.

Reporters should have timely access to information. The military could do far more to enable the rapid declassification of information that does not jeopardize military missions. The military’s Significant Activity Reports, for example, provide quick overviews of events like attacks and casualties. Often classified by default, these could help journalists report the facts accurately.

Opinion polls indicate that Americans’ confidence in their elected representatives is at a record low. Improving media access to this crucial aspect of our national life — where America has committed the men and women of its armed services — would be a powerful step toward re-establishing trust between voters and officials.

17 Jun - Defend and Free Political Prisoners in North America

People engaged in support work for political prisoners/prisoners of war from across North America will be gathering together this September to create new strategies for freeing our imprisoned comrades and to figure out ways to strengthen existing efforts. We need help from everyone who wants to see our comrades walk free to make this crucial yearly gathering happen this fall!

MORE:

We need \$7000 to pull off this year's conference! Donate at <http://j.mp/NAABC2014>

If you prefer to send a check or money order, please contact us at naabcconference@riseup.net for details on how to do so.

What will your money pay for? The conference facility, food for participants, airfare and other travel expenses for those who otherwise couldn't attend, and other conference expenses. We need approximately \$2000 for the space, \$1500 for food, and \$3500 for travel.

Who will your money benefit? Although the conference is being organized by Denver Anarchist Black Cross and other activists within the North American ABC network, it is not just about supporting anarchists. The prisoners that folks in this network support come from a broad spectrum of movements and struggles: Black/New Afrikan liberation, eco/animal rights, anti-repression, anti-imperialist, anti-war, Puerto Rican independence, Indigenous prisoners, etc. We recognize that prisoner support is an important fight within the broader war against the prison-industrial complex and the state, and we work to free all political prisoners and prisoners of war.

Why is this conference important? We have held this conference annually for the past three years. Each year, we leave with stronger connections, a deeper commitment to liberating our captured comrades, and stronger campaigns for supporting and freeing them. Some of the projects that have come from these conferences include:

- new ABC Chapters
- ABC Medical Justice Group
- Free in 2016 Amnesty Group
- Emergency Response Network
- Packaging/distributing 4Struggle Mag
- Post-release funds for the Tinley Park 5 and Coyote Sheff
- Private database of PPs/POWs to help coordinate their defense/support needs
- The Tilted Scales Collective (producing a set of guides for political defendants and their lawyers)
- VCAP (Visitor's Connection to Anarchist Prisoners) (setting up a fund for visiting anarchist prisoners)

Please donate today and help us strategize ways to fight for—and win—our comrades' freedom.
<http://j.mp/NAABC2014>

18 Jun - Angola 3 Update

All eyes are on the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals as we move into summer.

MORE:

Most urgently of course, we wake up every day hopeful that the court will choose to affirm Judge Brady's ruling that overturned Albert's conviction for a third time. Although there is no way to know when they will rule, the average decision wait time is 10 months, so we expect word soon, and certainly by early fall.

Meanwhile, the landmark A3 civil case seeking to define long term solitary confinement as cruel and unusual punishment carries on through Robert and Albert since Herman's passing. Final preparation and definite trial dates for the civil case remain frozen pending resolution of two appeals the State has filed with the 5th Circuit contesting two of Judge Brady's recent decisions in A3's favor.

The first appeal seeks to reverse Federal District Court Judge Brady's ruling that prison officials are not eligible for "qualified immunity," a status which would shield them from having to pay damages if they lose the case. The second appeal seeks to reinstitute the invasive, inhumane strip searches Albert endured until Judge Brady ruled them unconstitutional and unnecessary this past January.

Once both appeal rulings are decided, the dates for the trial will be set, taking into consideration how much preparation time each side still needs (at least a few more months), and when the court is able to reschedule. We will keep everyone updated on all fronts as things develop.

18 Jun - Update: Imam Jamil Al-Amin Health Crisis

We have been informed that as of 12 June 2014, ADMAX USP has finally conducted the necessary diagnostic blood tests for Imam Jamil, and that other diagnostic tests were conducted on Friday (June 13) and Saturday (June 14).

MORE:

It is your advocacy that made this movement on healthcare for Imam Jamil possible. We thank you and ask that God bless and reward each of you for your efforts on behalf of Imam Jamil. Please follow-up!

Imam Jamil has received treatment for the long-standing oral and dental infections which have triggered his condition, he has also received antibiotics following dental treatment.

However, Imam Jamil is still suffering from the effects of his long untreated condition:

- 1- He has lost 25 lbs. during the past two weeks because of a difficulty in swallowing and ingesting food due to abscesses and drainage in his mouth
- 2- His breathing has still not returned to normal
- 3- His feet remain tremendously swollen

Imam Jamil is in need of a doctor's care and he still has not been seen by a physician. The only medical treatment he has received has been from a dentist.

We call on Federal Bureau of Prisons to transfer Imam Jamil from the ADMAX facility, where he is now held, to Butner Medical Center in Butner, North Carolina; given: (1) the inability of ADMAX USP to give Imam Jamil the adequate and timely medical attention he needs, (2) Imam Jamil's age, and (3) his current and anticipated future medical needs.

NOTE: It is our plan to continue this advocacy for Imam Jamil's medical care, until his family is satisfied that his needs are being fully and adequately met.

PLEASE CALL: 719-784-9464 NOW

You may be told that information can only be given to family members. WE ARE NOT ASKING FOR INFORMATION. We are simply expressing concern regarding the health care status of Mr. Jamil Al-Amin (#99974-555). And in light of the apparent inability of the ADMAX facility to respond adequately and timely to Mr. Al-Amin's current and anticipated medical needs, we are requesting that he be moved to Butner Medical Center, in Butner, NC; a facility that can provide the medical care he needs and that is his right to receive.

****PLEASE LEAVE A MESSAGE.** If you are unable to speak in person, please leave a message expressing your concerns that includes Imam Jamil's name and ID number.

NOTE: Our calls are not meant to harass--we simply want the BOP to know that the public is concerned, is aware of, and will continue to monitor their treatment of Imam Jamil.

Please be persistent--you may have to send more than once before it goes through.

FAX: 719-784-5290

Again, please be persistent.

ADDITIONAL EMAIL:

GO TO: <http://www.bop.gov/inmates/concerns.jsp>

SELECT LOCATION: Florence ADMAX USP

ENTER INMATE: Jamil Al-Amin #99974-555

YOUR CONCERNS:

In your own words express concern that: (1) Mr. Al-Amin is suffering after-effects of delayed dental care (weight loss, unable to eat, swollen feet, respiratory problems); (2) he has not been receiving adequate and timely medical care as is absolutely necessary given his physical condition and as is his right, and (3) you are requesting that Mr. Al-Amin be transferred to Butner Medical Center in Butner, NC; a facility that has the resources to meet his current, and given his age, anticipated future medical needs.

18 Jun - Sekou Kambui Paroled

On the morning of June 18th, after forty years in the hands of the State, New Afrikan political prisoner Sekou Kambui was granted parole! Given the provision that Sekou finds an approved halfway house and transition program, he will be released from Bibb County Correctional in a few weeks.

22 Jun - Real, Real Comrades: What 43+ Years of Prison Mean to Eddie Conway and Paul Coates

Marshall Eddie Conway and Paul Coates talk about how they met in Baltimore's Black Panther Party and maintained solidarity and friendship for 43 years after Conway was framed, convicted and jailed for murder.

MORE:

by Susie Day (*Truthout*)

Marshall Eddie Conway was born in 1946, grew up in the low-income racial segregation of West Baltimore, and joined the US Army at 18. Paul Coates, "a little bit older," grew up in a similar neighborhood in West Philadelphia, also enlisting in the Army as a youth. Sometime in the late 1960s, they met in the Baltimore chapter of the Black Panther Party. Although both men yearned for racial justice, neither could have known at the time the dimensions of injustice they were to face.

It's well known that J. Edgar Hoover directed his FBI to "disrupt, misdirect, discredit and otherwise neutralize" African-American organizations and leaders in general. But the FBI unleashed its worst on the Black Panther Party, which, from its 1966 start in Oakland, California, Hoover saw as "the single greatest threat to the internal security of the country." [1] By 1968, when activists in Baltimore began to form a Panther chapter, there wasn't much that the feds didn't know about them or couldn't "neutralize." The FBI often worked with the local police force to do it.

So in 1970, when a Baltimore police officer was killed, it was important to indict a Panther, preferably a highly able, well-liked one. The state charged Eddie Conway - who unceasingly maintained his innocence - and, in 1971, convicted him of murder. Thus began over 43 years of work by activists, attorneys, family and friends to return Eddie Conway to the community he loves. This is where Paul Coates comes in.

For over four decades, Paul - founder of the Black Classic Press - never stopped working on Eddie's case, never stopped being Eddie's friend. On March 4, 2014, when Eddie Conway finally walked out of prison, Paul was there. Today, they still work together. In fact, for two men who've worried and suffered over so many years, they sure do laugh a lot. I know because I interviewed them recently at Paul's office in Baltimore. I started by asking them how they met.

Eddie Conway: Paul, you'll have to do this; you're mentally sharper than I am.

Paul Coates: That may be true, but I really don't remember. It would have been at Panther headquarters.

EC: What we probably started doing together was going out to the airport and picking up Panther Party newspapers. Because there was a delivery problem; the newspapers were getting lost and misplaced.

PC: The government was losing and misplacing them.

EC: It wasn't accidental. We were trying to resolve those kinds of problems so we could get the newspapers on the streets every week.

Susie Day for Truthout: Did you see a friendship forming at that point?

PC: Since I'm so magnetic, he may have seen a friendship forming. You can tell how rough this guy is

(laughter).

I came to the party, must've been the fall of '69. I would do breakfast programs and stuff, but we really did not have many interactions, as I recall. Eddie was much more experienced in the party. He was a Panther; I was at best a community worker, so he was Big Stuff, you know?

SD: You were already deputy minister of defense, Eddie?

EC: There was no such thing. Probably at the time, I was lieutenant of security. But people confuse those titles over the years, and just make up all kinds of stuff. Most states did not have a deputy minister of defense.

PC: People came and went so much; the titles were kind of meaningless. After Eddie went to jail, we had functionary titles, but only about two or three of those.

EC: Like, you're the lieutenant of communications because that's what you already do. You make the phone calls, you write the articles or deal with the PR, and that makes you a "lieutenant" in that area.

SD: But you were Big Stuff in the Party?

EC: I don't think I was Big Stuff. Unlike Paul, I was kind of quiet. Seriously, I did a little traveling, but basically I was just a low-level organizer, is how I see it. I went places and interacted with people.

PC: But you'd been in the Panther Party for a while. I mean Big Stuff in that sense. He wasn't one of the ones that came and went. I recognized him as a Panther.

SD: Did you finally join the Panthers formally, Paul?

PC: Not really. When I came, the Panther Party was closed (chuckling). Even though those idiots gave me an application to fill out. I filled it out, but the ranks of the Panther Party had been closed in what, '68?

EC: Yeah, because they didn't want any more people saying they were Panthers in the midst of a flood of government attacks.

PC: However, people became Panthers largely through their practice. George Jackson said in *Blood in My Eye* [2]: "You Don't Join Us; We Join You." So if people were acceptable, they were pulled in. But technically, from Oakland, they closed that stuff down.

This is actually how I became a Panther. It was after John Clark, who was in charge of the Baltimore chapter, was arrested, and Eddie and them all were in jail. I was still a community worker. I went to New York to report to the leadership there, and they basically said, "OK, John is gone. That means you're in charge."

I said, "I can't be in charge, I'm not a Panther." And they said, "Well, you're a Panther now." That was it. It wasn't a case of joining.

Locked into a Cage

SD: Eddie, how did your case change you?

EC: I had already spent a lot of time taking people in the community down to the Eastern District Court in Baltimore. We would set in the back and watch the proceedings during the course of a day. So I knew the criminal justice system wasn't working for us – was working, in fact, against us. By the time of my arrest, I understood that there was no justice in the system. Once I got locked into a cage, I had more time to study and analyze, but I don't think the case changed me that much. What changed was my ability to move around.

SD: How did Eddie's case affect you, Paul?

PC: His case affected me immediately. There was the shooting that went down [3]. The two folks arrested were Jackie Powell and Jack Johnson. (To Eddie) Were you arrested the next night?

EC: Yeah, when I was at work.

PC: The next morning at 6 o'clock, I get a call from the defense captain. He said, "Eddie's been arrested; get your ass down here. We got TE to move."

EC: (Laughing) That's technical equipment. Which stands for weapons.

PC: Yeah. Now, this defense captain, I have to tell you, was certifiably crazy. I mean he said this over the phone.

I'm the only one with a car, so I picked him up and a couple of other folks, and we went over to the house where the guns are.

There are no cops, no traffic - nothing around. We had to kick in the cellar window to get in the house, 'cause they hadn't brought the key. So we kick in the window, and we start taking guns out. On the third load of guns, the police are there. We're arrested. I get 15 attempted murder charges. I don't know if you know that -

EC: No, I did not know that.

PC: Yeah, 15 attempted murder charges. Because I was the last person out of the house

EC: With an armful of guns -

PC: No, I had one rifle. I come out and I'm surrounded by police shotguns. This was 1970, after Fred [Hampton] and them got killed [4]. So I'm scared shitless. I'm thinking, "They're going to take me out." They probably would have, but they had me surrounded. If they'd started shooting, they would have shot each other, too. So that's why I got 15 attempted murder charges, cause of all the cops.

At that time, I worked for United Airlines. That job was gone after I got arrested. So Eddie's arrest immediately changed my life. I went from a nice, middle-class, union man raising a family - to jail. That accelerated my politicization.

SD: Did you get out on bail?

PC: Yeah. Then we did a demonstration of support around the jail, and we were arrested again.

SD: How did your case resolve, Paul? Were you convicted of anything?

PC: No. They dropped all those charges. None of those guys that had the guns were convicted - the police just kept the guns. That was a classic case of draining the Panther bail fund. Classic case. No charges came out of that for anybody.

Half the Damn Time Making It Up

SD: When did you and Eddie start working together politically?

PC: I think Eddie and I really began working together after that crazy defense captain was kidnapped.

EC: Yeah, bounty hunters kidnapped the defense captain and snatched him away to California.

PC: And the Baltimore police actually assisted them. They put a wall of police officers around him, and the bail bondsman steps in and says, "You're under arrest. I'm taking you back to California."

It's total bullshit. And the defense captain says, "Oh, they got me." (Big laughter from Eddie and Paul)

SD: What was his California case?

EC: I have no idea, but he had jumped bail on it, and they used that to bust up the Panthers.

PC: Once they kidnapped the defense captain, I became the person in charge of Baltimore. At that point, we had to work together and depend on each other.

SD: You became the point person for Eddie's case?

PC: Yeah. Eddie and I had to trust each other. I mean I'm communicating instructions half the time from California. The other half of the damn time, him and I are making it up. Because California was, for the largest part, nonresponsive. Just nonresponsive.

EC: I think they were overwhelmed.

PC: He's being kind.

EC: I might be. But there was stuff in New Haven going on at the time [5]. There was the Panther 21 case in New York [6]; stuff down in New Orleans [7]; Geronimo was being run to ground [8]; Huey was hiding up in the penthouse [9]. It was really a system overload. And when Des Moines blew up, it was just too much [10].

SD: Was your object getting Eddie out, or did you see the trial as part of the revolution?

PC: We wanted Eddie out, but our thing at the time was pointing out contradictions in the system. We saw him coming out; the people rising up - there'd be revolution, you know what I mean?

Initially, there was a lawyer on the case, Nelson Kandel, who felt that Eddie could beat the criminal charges. But our instructions from California were that this is a political case, so they were going to send a political lawyer to try it. That's the shit we went for.

SD: You were both behind that?

EC: Yeah. For one thing, it was clear that it was a political case. It was a frame-up. If we played by the regular rules, we were going to end up hanging - I mean literally, they were attempting to kill me. So we thought, "If we have to fight, at least let's fight with people whose political perspective we trust."

Go with the Political

PC: That's pretty much how we approached it. When Kandel wanted to deal with it as a criminal case, it was me that communicated with these Panthers in California, and it was me who brought back, "No, we're not going with Kandel. We're going to wait for political lawyers."

The Oakland Panthers called me to California. So I went, thinking that we were going to discuss the political prisoners. But they didn't give a shit about these guys in jail. In fact, they wouldn't even discuss it. That's the saddest - it's hard to say this. When I got to California, what I encountered - from the same person who put me in charge of the Baltimore chapter - was, "Coates, now we got your ass here, we're going to break you."

That's the kind of time they were on; they were focused on breaking my attachment to Baltimore, which was the people in jail. We still had at least three people inside, and we must have had about 15 people still under charges at that time. And nary a conversation. I reached a point where I said, "I don't know what's going to happen, but I got to go."

SD: When did you two realize that you had a committed friendship?

PC: Probably after I got back from California - because they had expelled me from the party. When you're expelled, you can't have any contact with party people. So for Eddie to have contact with me would mean that he risked expulsion, you see? That was a choice he had to make. So I went to see him and I said that I was out of the party.

My commitment was to come back to Baltimore - because I clearly wasn't leaving him. I wasn't leaving any of them in jail. I think Eddie's and my long-term commitment began with deciding that we were cool - and basically fuck what they say. We began working immediately. Immediately.

SD: Did the Oakland Panthers want you to enact some program?

PC: What Huey had come up with was this plan to politically take over Oakland. Bobby was going to run for mayor. It made no sense to me, and many other people, that you would close down the Panther Party and move the Panthers to Oakland. But it made sense to them because they were California-centric.

EC: And Chinese-centric. Where that came from is Mao, the Long March. Back to a liberated base area, you gain control of that area and then move back out strategically to the next area and the next. That was part of the Red Book and Huey's trip to China. Like, "We're under attack all over, let's do the Long March!" And the Long March was taking Paul and those people to California, taking other chapters back to California.

Life and 30

SD: What was your sentence, Eddie?

EC: It was life and 30 years

SD: Were you outraged? Depressed?

EC: I had already decided I wasn't going to get a fair trial, that I was going to be convicted and executed. So I basically did not participate in the trial. When the verdict came back with life and 30, and not the execution part, I was relieved. But I had already given up on the criminal justice system; I'd been there and beyond.

PC: We never thought Eddie was going to be convicted.

SD: That was a surprise?

PC: Oh, yeah. Total surprise. Especially because Kandel felt it was a weak case and the information was shaky. The prosecution had a forced testimony [11] they weren't even sure they were going to use, and we felt that we could demolish that. They had this guy, a jail cell informant, [12] who was their strongest evidence - who's going to believe that shit? I knew there was a possibility of him getting convicted, but I thought the case was good. I still feel that way.

SD: I remember, Paul, your son Ta-Nehisi wrote in his memoir, *The Beautiful Struggle*, [13] that you felt responsible in some way?

PC: I've always carried guilt. Because I'm the person who carried the message from Central that this was a political case. It was like I was one of those plastic tubes that conveys poison to the person laying on the gurney. I wanted to say, "I don't want to be used for this."

So I was naïve. And the guilt is based in that. If he had asked me in that moment - which he probably did - what he should do, I would have said, "Go with the political."

SD: Did you blame Paul, Eddie?

EC: No, because we made that mistake based on our ideology, our belief that we would fight to the death. I was as supportive of a political trial as California was. But perhaps the entire movement of that period made a critical error in thinking this was our time. We'd fight and die if we needed to, but - bring it - you know?

SD: You were all so young. Where were the elders to go to about this?

PC: I don't know that we would have listened.

EC: Yeah, unfortunately, we had written the elders off. Either they were from the civil rights movement, or the more radical communist movement. But they were over 30. Their advice wouldn't have resonated with us.

PC: But inside of that guilt thing, I am not guilty. There's no way I could have known at the time.

Sucked In from Day One

SD: Eddie, how did you face the next four-plus decades in prison?

EC: My initial reaction was, "I'm not getting caught up in prison politics and prison organizing." I needed to focus on how to get back outside, because I felt separated from the community. But when I got into the prison system, there were a hundred potential revolutionaries there, all of them clamoring, "Help, help, we've been waiting. Why did it take you so long to get here?"

At first, I resisted. But some of them were so sincere that it made me say, "OK, I have some ideas, some skills; let me help." So I got sucked into the prison movement pretty much from Day One. Before I know it, we were working to make changes. And it turned out I never was separated from the community because the work we did in the prison system kept us attached to the community. We brought the community, the support base, into the prison environment.

SD: What did you see there that needed to be done?

EC: God. The first thing when I walked in the place was birds flying overhead inside the building. We're ducking bird crap; the windows are broke out; there's draconian behavior with the guards. They'd just snatch somebody and start beating them and drag them through the whole shop, take them out front and dump them in the parking lot. Then they'd look back at us and say, "Yeah. So what?" That hit my nerves. Right away I said, "OK we're going to change that."

SD: Did you form a Panther group inside?

EC: We couldn't because the Panther leadership had banned new chapters. So we started something called the Maryland Penitentiary Inter-Communal Survival Collective [14]. Initially, we organized and forced them to put in plastic windows - we couldn't do anything about the birds until the windows got in. Then we got the place de-

birded, for want of a better word. Sanitized, you know?

The overall thing was, "We need black guards in here. Because y'all can't communicate. This is part of what the frustration and the violence is about." We also started pushing for creature comforts. Like we realized we did not have a library, so we pushed for that. There was like two TVs for 400 people. That was the source of all kinds of violence, because you've got a hundred people sitting there watching something, and Joe might come up with 10 people and say, "We want to watch the fight," or "We want to watch Judy shake her booty." So we needed to get peoples their own TVs.

Then we created a survival program for people on lockup (solitary). In fact, Rap Brown [15] took advantage of that when he got locked up there. We developed the ability to look out for people that got snatched up arbitrarily and didn't have anything, no soap, no toothpaste, that kind of stuff.

Finally we produced a newspaper, which was our newsletter inside. Matter of fact, that was one of the things the prison reacted to. They ended up starting an official newspaper to stop us from publishing ours.

On Revolutionary Time

SD: How did you survive, psychologically?

EC: I think my world shrunk down to the prison system. I used to see myself as national and international - all of a sudden, I become "Prisoner." So prison became my whole world. And living in that world probably allowed me to survive, but it cut me off from family and relations. I had to shut all that stuff down to stay alive in that box.

SD: Did you get mad at people on the outside for not understanding what you were going through?

EC: I never got mad with people. There was times when maybe people didn't step up the way I felt they should, but almost anybody was willing to help, however they could. In some cases, maybe it was hot air, or they failed to reach their commitments. But there was always that support from a wide range of people. But I do realize that I tend to ignore negativity. So I focused on the people that wanted to help. I tried to dismiss the people who I felt had let me down.

For instance, I worked with one particular guy in prison for six or seven years. He was George Jackson, reincarnated: Black belt; martial artist; jungle fatigues - in fact, he was our karate instructor. Read all the books, you know; knife in his mouth, the whole nine yards. Then he gets released.

They opened the door - this actually happened - he walked out, took off his jungle fatigues; threw the Red Book on the penitentiary steps. The next time we seen him, two weeks later, he had a Jheri curl, a maxi leather coat, two sex workers and a pimpmobile.

Him and I had been in the trenches - in real life and death situations. And in the space of a door, he just changed. That was devastating. So I said, "OK, I can't be attached to people." Because there'll be some who are going to fail, and if I get caught up like that, I'm going to fail. My life had been in his hands, and his life was in my hands for years. And there he is, pimping.

SD: Did you and Paul ever feel divided through all this?

EC: Paul and I, we just always understood each other. I don't know if he knew what I was going through, but he was always there. He's like the brother I didn't have. But in my romantic relationships, I was standoffish and shut down and -

SD: Repressed?

EC: Probably I was. Because we were on Revolutionary Time. I know this is corny; it's Che Guevara's thing: "Revolutionaries are guided by true feelings of love for the people."

SD: At the risk of sounding ridiculous?

EC: Yeah. And the deal was, nothing else was important. I could overlook people's faults. I was so in love with

the people that I didn't really have any love for the individual.

SD: You think that was a mistake?

EC: I don't know that it was a mistake, but it certainly stole something from me. At the time, I think it was probably what motivated all of us, the entire movement, to make change for the future.

SD: You were soldiers for the revolution. You didn't have a right to a personal life?

EC: But every generation produces that; every generation needs to produce that. We would still be enslaved if there weren't those people saying, "No, we're going to change this, whatever the cost."

No More Going Down to Jessup

SD: How is it, now - being able to work together in the same room, as opposed to prison phone calls and visits?

PC: It's overpowering, sometimes. I'll see Eddie and and I get present to, "There's NO more going down to Jessup Prison."

EC: Yeah.

PC: There's no more driving by that road and saying, "Eddie's down there; shouldn't I stop?" You know, I talked about Eddie to someone on the phone last night. I said, "This man's been in jail for 43, almost 44 years." When I really got present to that, I started crying. Because I realized: All those years - we're done with that, you know? That stuff is gone. But to live with that for four decades . . .

EC: For me, it's a night and day difference. For instance, I catch myself now timing my phone calls to 30 minutes. I was talking to my friend Dominique, and I was watching the watch, because that's what you do when you're on a prison call. So around 29 minutes, I said, "OK, time's almost up."

And she said, "What are you talking about?"

It's like: OK, I am not in jail. I don't have a timer on this phone. So it's getting used to that stuff. For me, this is like a second life.

SD: Do you feel grief about leaving people back in prison?

EC: I have left so many people inside that I can't afford to grieve about them. But every time I get to speak, or get to direct support toward them, I do that. There's too many for me to go back and get. So if I can send help back, I do. And because I do that, each and every time for every audience, I don't have any grief.

SD: Eddie, what did you think in the 1970s when Paul started the Black Classic Press?

EC: We needed books in prison - in fact, that's where the Press comes from.

PC: At first it was the George Jackson Prison Movement. [16]

EC: We had no library, you know? So Paul started a bookstore and filtered books in to us, so we'd have a library. We actually took over two people's cells.

You got to appreciate this - we made bookshelves. We actually had a librarian who would come and check out the books. But the basis of it was Paul's bookstore. That was our first real collaboration beyond the Party structure.

SD: Do you like where Black Classic Press has gone, Eddie?

EC: I'm impressed and proud. It's a tremendous feat in terms of marketing positive black ideas. It's like the work I did with young people over the years, where we touched so many lives. Paul did that same kind of work through the books. From that first little pack of books he sent in, to a major business - that's the work that everybody should have done. Paul and I spent 40 years reaching people. I think that's part of the bond we have. So I really feel good about that.

PC: He and I argue sometimes. Like about organizing events: Whether there should be a fried chicken dinner, or whether the coffee is being brewed correctly. (Laughter)

We bump heads, because we're both strong personalities. It doesn't matter; Eddie's just crazy. But we're brothers

in the sense that you can have an argument, and your brother's still your brother. In our case, comrades. Real, real comrades.

Notes:

1. FBI's program against black groups, specifically Panthers:
". . . disrupt, misdirect, discredit and otherwise neutralize"
". . . the single greatest threat to the internal security of the country."
2. George Jackson (1941 - 1971). Sentenced at age 18 to one-year-to-life for stealing \$70 from a gas station, Jackson became a revolutionary activist and author inside San Quentin Prison. Blood in My Eye is his second book, completed only days before Jackson was killed by corrections officers during an alleged escape attempt. Originally published by Random House, 1972, republished by Black Classic Press, 1990.
3. On April 24, 1970, two Baltimore City police officers, Donald Sager and Stanley Sierakowski were called to the scene of a domestic disturbance. Returning to their cars, they encountered gunfire that killed Officer Sager and wounded Sierakowski. Jack Ivory Johnson and Jackie Powell were arrested near the scene about an hour later. Later that night, two officers spotted a man who, when asked to stop, allegedly fled and fired back at them. Although it was dark, these officers identified the man as Marshall Eddie Conway. Concluding that the Black Panther Party, led by Conway, had set up the attack, police arrested Conway at work one day later.
4. Fred Hampton, beloved Chicago community activist and Panther leader, was shot to death, along with party member Mark Clark, during a police raid shortly before 5 AM, December 4, 1969. Although the press initially described the incident as a "shootout," it was later learned that the Panthers had fired only one shot, while the police fired at least 82, and that Hampton had been drugged by a government informant who had infiltrated the BPP.
5. Panther leaders Bobby Seale and Ericka Huggins were accused of orchestrating the killing of alleged informant Alex Rackley. After over a year of a "media circus" and trial, Seale and Huggins were released when the jury failed to reach a verdict.
6. In April 1969, 21 members of the New York City Black Panther Party were indicted on outlandish charges of conspiring to bomb five department stores, a police station, railroad tracks and the Bronx Botanical Gardens. Held for two years without bail, they were acquitted, after 45 minutes of jury deliberation.
7. In November 1970, 250 fifty police officers attempted to evict Panther members from an apartment in the Desire public housing project, where the party had established tutoring and children's food programs. Twelve Panther members were later acquitted of attempted murder charges incurred while resisting eviction.
8. Geronimo Ji Jaga Pratt, Los Angeles Panther leader, was framed by the FBI for the murder of Caroline Olsen, an elementary school teacher. After 27 years in prison, Pratt's conviction was vacated after evidence emerged showing that the FBI, through its wiretaps, knew Pratt was in another city at the time of the murder. He died of a heart attack in Tanzania in 2011.
9. Huey Newton (with Bobby Seale and David Hilliard) in Oakland, Calif., was recognized as the founder of the Black Panther Party. He spent time in prison for voluntary manslaughter in the 1967 killing of a police officer. However, the conviction was later reversed following appeal. After two subsequent mistrials, the state declined to pursue the case.
10. In April 1969, the Black Panther Party headquarters in Des Moines, Iowa, was bombed. Police arrived on the scene about 30 seconds later and began confiscating documents.
11. Jack Ivory Johnson, claimed his testimony against Conway was coerced.
12. Charles Reynolds, a known informant, was put in a cell with Eddie Conway after his arrest. He testified that Conway confessed to him about the killing.
13. Ta-Nehisi Coates, *The Beautiful Struggle: A Father, Two Sons, and an Unlikely Road to Manhood*, (Spiegel & Grau, New York, 2009).
14. Maryland Penitentiary Inter-Communal Survival Collective:
"All of my organizing in the early years was in league with MPISC members . . ." Marshall Eddie Conway, *The Life & Times of a Baltimore Black Panther*, (Oakland, CA, AK Press, 2011):
15. H. Rap Brown, chair of the Student Nonviolent Organizing Committee and later Panther Party Minister of Justice. He converted to Islam in prison during the 1970s, and became Jamil Abdullah Al-Amin. He is serving a life sentence in the Florence, CO, ADX prison for the killing of two police officers in 2000, although another man later confessed to the killings.
16. Black Classic Press, started as the George Jackson Prison Movement to get books into Eddie Conway's prison, but soon started publishing obscure literary treasures written by and about African Americans over their centuries in North America. BCP has since included such authors as Walter Mosley and Amiri Baraka.

23 Jun - UPDATED Post-Release Campaign for Dylan Sutherlin (Tinley Park Five)

This week only— any donation of over \$30 entitles the donor to their choice of Tinley Park Five t-shirts. Indicate design and size and we will send it out as soon as possible. Please include alternates, as the number of shirts on

hand is running low.

MORE:

Shipping in the continental United States is included and we'll figure out shipping abroad as necessary.

More information at <http://j.mp/DylanSutherlin>

29 Jun - Anarchist Reading Group

WHAT: Towards Collective Liberation: Anti-Racist Organizing, Feminist Praxis, and Movement Building Strategy by Chris Crass

WHEN: 12:30pm, Sunday, June 29th

WHERE: Bluestockings - 172 Allen Street New York, NY 10002

COST: FREE

MORE:

The Anarchist Reading Group discusses historical and contemporary texts to promote the study of self-organization and mutual aid in order to help realize a society free of all forms of social domination. This group is a project of Practical Anarchy, which believes that – in the struggle to create a liberatory society from below – everybody is capable of taking direct action to help shape their lives and their communities. This month's book is Towards Collective Liberation: Anti-Racist Organizing, Feminist Praxis, and Movement Building Strategy by Chris Crass.

2 Jul - In The Land Of The Free (Angola 3 Film)

WHAT: Film Screening

WHEN: 6:30pm Wednesday July 2nd

WHERE: Anthology Film Archives 2nd Avenue & 2nd Street - Manhattan

COST: \$6

MORE:

This 2010 documentary (narrated by Samuel L. Jackson) is about the Angola 3, three prisoners who while serving their time in Angola State Prison (the United States' most notorious penal colony) joined the BPP and participated in non-violent resistance campaigns protesting the terrible conditions, prisoner abuse and sexual slavery rampant inside the prison. As a result they were falsely accused of murder while in prison and have all been, with the exception of Robert King who was released in 2001, serving the last 38 years in solitary confinement.