



Updates for August 5th

21 Jul - Kevin Olliff In SHU Following Federal AETA Indictment

For the initial days following the July 10th AETA indictment, Kevin was still being held in general population at Vandalia Correctional Center. As of July 17th, however, he was moved into segregational custody at the prison.

MORE:

Since then, he's had almost no contact with the outside world, aside from one letter he was able to send and phone calls with attorneys.

Between information gathered from talking to prison officials and Kevin's lawyers, and the letter he sent on July 17th (which was received today), we know this:

- He has no phone or visitation privileges.
- He has no commissary privileges.
- He is being denied writing materials.
- He is being denied showers.

The Feds have pulled him from the college program he was enrolled in, making him ineligible for early release (the classes he's been taking for the last four months count towards nothing).

All of his belongings were sent to the warden's office for disposition. The reason stated was that he had "excess property" (37 books, 14 bags of instant coffee, and 110 stamped envelopes).

On July 23rd, he will be transported to Stateville to await arraignment on July 29th. After that, he will likely be held in the custody of IDOC, meaning he'll return to Stateville until they move him into a new Illinois prison (probably a medium security facility, although which one remains to be seen) where he'll finish out his state sentence.

A bail hearing should be scheduled soon, but we still don't know the date. If Kevin can bail (or bond) out, he'll serve the rest of his sentence in Illinois and be released in November, free at least while the federal case is being worked.

Despite all this, Kevin made it a point in his letter to say he wants everyone to know he's keeping strong. He says there's a window across the hall from his cell...and that he's watching the birds.

July 25th - And in a twist of events, Kevin's been moved to Danville

Earlier this week, we posted an update on Kevin's status and what we all expected to be the next steps of his ongoing incarceration in light of the recent AETA indictment. Some things have changed...

The Good News

Kevin got back his property, so he has his books, coffee, and some commissary items leftover from Vandalia. He has some sporadic phone access. His spirits, as always, are relatively good. He expects to be getting vegan meals at the beginning of August. And he can receive mail starting immediately (new address posted below).

The Bad News

Danville is a tightly-controlled medium security facility that has Kevin in a cell 21 hours of the day. He's only

given access to commissary every three to four weeks. The college courses he was enrolled in at Vandalia won't count towards an early release, putting his anticipated release date at October 22nd. Danville is where Kevin will serve out the rest of his state sentence, and it's located in west-central Illinois, around three hours away from anyone he knows in St. Louis or Chicago.

What Else?

Kevin and Tyler's arraignment is still set for Tuesday, July 29th in Chicago. He'll likely be transported there for the court date the night before or day-of, and then sent back to Danville immediately afterwards.

What's Needed Right Now?

More than anything, **DONATIONS**. Bail for Kevin, attorneys for Tyler and Kevin, and a reserve of support funds for both of them are critical. We want to thank everyone for the money that's already come in—every time we check the PayPal account, it's another testament to how well this movement can put aside differences and really galvanize.

One more note on the donations: Remember, if you can't contribute yourself, please share the updates, hold a fundraiser, and put the **SupportKevinAndTyler.com** URL everywhere.

July 29th - Lawyer plans constitutional challenge in mink farm sabotage case

by Jason Meisner (*Chicago Tribune*)

The lawyer for one of two California animal activists accused of sabotaging an Illinois mink farm and releasing about 2,000 animals into the wild last year said today he plans to challenge the constitutionality of the federal "animal enterprise terrorism" charges the men are facing.

Tyler Lang, 25, and Kevin Johnson, 27, each pleaded not guilty today at the Dirksen U.S. Courthouse in Chicago. They were indicted this month on charges of conspiracy and interstate travel to damage and interfere with the operations of an animal enterprise.

Johnson's attorney, Michael Deutsch, told U.S. District Judge Milton Shadur he plans to file a motion challenging the constitutionality of the Animal Enterprise Terrorism Act, the federal statute under which the charges fall.

Outside court, Deutsch told reporters that among the issues with the law -- passed by Congress in 2006 -- are that it is overbroad and potentially criminalizes free speech rights protected by the First Amendment. He also said the act unfairly brands activism as terrorism.

"Freeing animals -- does that sound like terrorism?" asked Deutsch, who recently defended one of three protesters charges with terrorism-related counts during the 2012 NATO summit in Chicago.

Both longtime animal activists, Lang and Johnson were accused in the indictment of driving through Iowa, Wisconsin and Illinois in August with plans to damage animal farms. On Aug. 14, they stopped at a mink farm in Morris, Ill., that "was in the business of breeding, raising and selling mink to fur manufacturers," released about 2,000 mink from their cages, and spray-painted "LIBERATION IS LOVE" in big red letters on the side of a barn.

Neighbors told the Tribune this month that many of the animals were killed by traffic on the farm road leading into town, while others were found splashing in yard sprinklers and running through gardens. Dozens of the animals did survive, however, and were rounded up into cages and brought back to the farm, neighbors said. The family that runs the farm declined to comment.

The day after the mink farm incident, Lang and Johnson were arrested by sheriff's police near a fox farm outside Roanoke, about an hour south of Morris, after a search of their car turned up ski masks, camouflage jackets, bolt

and wire cutters, muriatic acid, and reading materials on fox and mink, according to charges filed in Woodford County last year.

Both men eventually pleaded guilty to the state charges. Lang was given 30 months of probation, while Johnson is currently serving a 30-month sentence in state prison in Danville, records show.

If convicted of the federal charges, they each face a maximum of 10 years in prison, prosecutors said.

On a website supporting their cause, both Lang and Johnson -- who also goes by Kevin Olliff -- posted statements decrying the charges against them.

“This is not an indictment against two activists. It’s an attempt to indict an entire movement in the eyes of the public,” Johnson wrote on the site supportkevinandtyler.com. “The fur industry confines and kills millions of animals every year for fashion -- but the American government points the finger and calls animal advocates violent. I certainly believe people are savvy enough to see the truth.”

Lang, meanwhile, called the charges “egregious.”

“When we think of terrorism, we think of violence being committed against individuals,” Lang wrote. “The government’s ‘terrorist’ targeting of two friends with a history of speaking out against injustice is an affront to the meaning of what violence really is, and a slap in the face to a public that sadly knows what terrorism actually looks like.”

Johnson, who will remain in prison until at least mid-October, appeared in court in blue prison garb and did not speak during the hearing. Lang, dressed in a black sweater was freed on bail today after he agreed to not participate in any illegal animal rights activism while the charges were pending.

July 29th - Is Freeing Minks Terrorism? Questions We Should Be Asking Ourselves

by Lauren Gazzola (*Truthout*)

Though it received scant attention at the time, with a grand total of one Congressperson opposing and one witness testifying against it, condemnation of the federal Animal Enterprise Terrorism Act (AETA) has steadily increased since the law was enacted in 2006. Together with state-level efforts to enact so-called "ag-gag" legislation, which punishes undercover investigations and whistleblowing in animal agricultural facilities, and the extension of terrorism charges and rhetoric to cover acts as whimsical as (unintentionally) sprinkling glitter inside an office building, there is a growing sense that these laws are not about animal rights, nor are they limited to animal rights activists - rather, they affect everyone's civil liberties. Now, though, a new indictment has brought "animal enterprise terrorism" back to its roots. It is an opportunity to reflect on what the AETA shows us about ourselves and our world.

Criticism leveled against the AETA, including a lawsuit filed by the Center for Constitutional Rights (CCR), has largely focused on the law's unconstitutional criminalization of speech protected by the First Amendment, which turns a peaceful picket or a boycott into a crime. All along, the government has insisted the law is not aimed at speech and only punishes illegal activity (which, of course, is already punishable by existing law).

And, in the case of Tyler Lang and Kevin Olliff, who were arraigned on AETA charges in Chicago today, the indictment does allege the kind of activity the government claims the law targets: Lang and Olliff are accused of freeing 2,000 mink and foxes from Midwestern fur farms last August.

Most readers will easily see the absurdity in saying that freeing animals from fur farms is "terrorism." But it is important to realize that neither the AETA nor the fur industry is an aberration. While critics, myself included, have pointed to heavy lobbying by animal use industries as evidence that the AETA was a gift to corporate interests, we should remember that the overwhelming majority of our society supports these industries, which encompass not only the Fur Commission USA, but also United Egg Producers, the National Milk Producers Federation and the American Meat Institute. Lang and Olliff could easily have faced the same charges if they

were alleged to have freed chickens from an egg factory, cows from a slaughter plant, or animals slated to become leather shoes rather than fur coats. These two men could have been charged with "animal enterprise terrorism" whether they were alleged to have freed animals from a factory farm or a small-scale, "humane" farm, rather than a fur farm.

A society's strongest condemnation tends to be deployed not solely against those who commit the most heinous acts, but also against those who most forcefully oppose social norms. Sometimes - say, in the case of murder - the worst acts and our social values coincide. But when the state's most powerful condemnation in the form of criminal law is brought to bear against those with unpopular political views, we should not only consider the excessiveness of the punishment, but also stop to examine those views themselves.

When it is perfectly legal, and often immensely profitable, to use and kill animals by the billions for almost any purpose, it should come as no surprise that laws would harshly punish even nonviolent actions that disrupt or prevent that use. The AETA defends not only corporations - it also defends a way of life, protecting our meat, dairy, and leather, our Sea Worlds and our animal circuses from those who wish to abolish that way of life. This is the inescapable context in which saving the lives of minks and foxes becomes a crime.

One thing has become exceedingly clear through the debate over ag-gag laws: animal agriculture is unbelievably violent. Every time the legislation is debated, the undercover footage it aims to squelch is aired. With more than 80 investigations inside animal agriculture facilities in the past decade, and notwithstanding the industry's attempt to cast particular acts as extraordinary, it is clear that this violence is not limited to particular workers or an individual facility or a specific industry. Rather, violence is the very nature of raising animals for the purpose of killing and eating them - or wearing them, or testing on them.

Some of what we now view as the most abhorrent practices in our history were once widely socially acceptable - not only protected by law, but seen as unproblematic and even socially valuable - by vast segments of society. Those who first spoke out against various injustices, including those who broke laws protecting those injustices, were not only punished by the state; often, they were also ridiculed and dismissed by a society blinded by the commonality, the pervasiveness, the sheer ordinariness of profound wrongs. Looking back, it is easy to identify with the rebels, to see ourselves in those who first espoused - and acted on - beliefs that have come to be accepted as norms. Yet social sanctioning necessarily means that most people ignore, acquiesce, or remain silent on a subject.

Last August, someone risked their own freedom to free individuals they would never know and who would never come to thank them, and for glory they would only ever see if it came in the backhanded form of prosecution (though the seven subsequent fur farm raids that occurred in the United States while Tyler Lang and Kevin Olliff sat in jail awaiting bail suggest at least reasonable doubt as to whether they were the liberators).

If Tyler Lang and Kevin Olliff trade their freedom for that of the animals who were freed, let it not be in vain. Let us take a good long look at ourselves and ask what kind of society allows a fur farm to exist anyway. We don't all need to be animal rights activists to condemn the terrorism prosecution against Kevin Olliff and Tyler Lang. But maybe we should be.

August 1st - Media: Arraignment, terrorism rhetoric, & societal values

On Tuesday (July 29, 2014), Kevin and Tyler were arraigned in the Northern District of Illinois on two counts of violating the Animal Enterprise Terrorism Act. Media on the event that day came most notably from Jason Meisner's coverage in The Chicago Tribune, and from a post at TruthOut.org written by Lauren Gazzola—longtime activist, defendant in the well-known SHAC 7 case, and plaintiff in the Center for Constitutional Rights' case challenging the AETA. *[Both articles printed in full above.]*

22 Jul - New Report Highlights Extreme Isolation Endured by Terrorism Suspects

On July 21st, Human Rights Watch (HRW) in association with Columbia Law School released a 214-page reported entitled Illusion of Justice: Human Rights Abuses in US Terrorism Prosecutions. While the report and accompanying video document a wide range of human and civil rights abuses faced by alleged and convicted

terrorists, nearly all of whom are Muslims, a significant portion of the text focuses on the restrictive and arguably torturous conditions of confinement they endure both before and after trial.

MORE:

Extensively detailed in the report are the conditions endured by those placed in Florence ADX federal supermax prison and in the federal Bureau of Prisons' two Communication Management Units (CMUs), located at Marion, Illinois and Terre Haute, Indiana. Describing life at ADX, one individual interviewed for the report commented, "There's a lot of times the walls are caving in. It's – you can't talk to nobody... It's like staying alone in a bathroom for three days."

In the two CMUs – nicknamed "Little Guantanamos" — "inmates are constantly surveilled and their communication with the outside world is heavily restricted," including with their families. The Center for Constitutional Rights has previously described the CMUs as an "experiment in social isolation."

Also featured in the report is an analysis of the use and misuse of Special Administrative Measures (SAMs), restrictions placed on inmates, attorneys and even their families purportedly to protect national security or prevent the disclosure of classified material. As authors note, "SAMs often require the imposition of extreme physical and social isolation. In the order we obtained through a FOIA regarding 20 to 22 prisoners, SAMs banned at least 20 prisoners from 'making statements audible to other prisoners or sending notes' and required them to be housed in single cells 'separated as much as possible in cellblock area from other inmates.'"

SAMs also enhance isolation by preventing prisoners from communicating with the outside world – for example, letters to family are limited to "3 pieces of paper, once per week, single recipient" and visits "require 14 days' notice and can include only one adults at a time." Severe restrictions are also placed on material coming to the inside; one prisoner was even initially denied access to both of President Obama's books.

The report also specifically addresses how the imposition of SAMs and the use of solitary confinement pre-trial may affect the fairness and constitutionality of the courts:

Prolonged pretrial solitary confinement not only raises concerns of cruel and inhumane treatment of punishment, but it also has an impact on defendants' ability to assist in their own defense, and may compel them to waive their trial rights and accept plea deals.

According to the report, 30 out of the 52 individuals currently facing federal terrorism charges are being held in Special Housing Units (SHUs). The conditions at the Metropolitan Correctional Center (MCC) 10-South unit – where many terrorism defendants have been held pre-trial – are described at length in the text. In a letter to his sister, an individual who spent 33 months in solitary confinement at MCC described "a bright light on for twenty-four hours" and cells "extremely cold throughout the year."

MCC is the prison where the No Separate Justice Campaign has been holding its monthly vigils, in hopes of shining a light on the exact kind of injustices detailed in HRW's report. It is also where Mahdi Hashi, the Briton stripped of his citizenship and rendered to the United States last year, is being held in 24-hour isolation. In an April 2014 article published on Vice, Mohammad Hashi explained how being held under SAMs and in solitary confinement was impacting his son: "It's like they want to demoralize him... If you're left locked in a room, 23 hours a day, knowing nothing about what's going on, obviously you will give up, life will have no meaning to you."

22 Jul - Updates on the Cleveland 4

Josh says he's in SHU (Segregation) The C.O.s took a bunch of his property from his locker when he got put in SHU and said it was unlocked. The same thing has also happened to Doug not too long ago.

MORE:

We also heard that Doug woke up in a holding cell, and is having some medical issues at this time. His blood sugar was at 20, and instead of rushing him to a hospital they put him in a cell, so please please write him!

Brandon is currently doing OK, and doesn't want books at this time. He says sorry he isn't writing much lately, but he's just been focusing on helping himself at this time.

Connor is around the same as Brandon at this time, though he would like books. We just updated his wish list!

All of the Cleveland 4 book wish-lists are linked on their bio's, you can find those by clicking on their names on the bar to the right of <http://cleveland4solidarity.org>

We're trying to gather donations so the Cleveland 4 will be set for awhile.

Thanks for your continued support of the Cleveland 4 and fighting entrapment, we couldn't do it without you!

24 Jul - Update On Imam Jamil al-Amin

We are pleased to share this update with the many individuals who supported our effort to campaign for Imam Jamil to receive medical attention and to be transferred to a federal medical center.

MORE:

I have heard from Imam Jamil who has reported that he indeed was transferred on Tuesday, July 15, 2014, from the Florence, Colorado ADX to Butner FMC, in North Carolina. He would like to express his deep appreciation for the support he has received from individuals who made calls, signed petitions, attended meetings, wrote letters, offered public comments, and galvanized others to take action.

Within this past week, the Imam has had extensive examinations, from "head to toe." Additionally, this morning--July 23, 2014--he had the bone marrow biopsy. Although we will not receive the results for another two weeks, we are encouraging people at this point to continue sending letters and cards to the Imam, while he waits to receive the medical results.

I do intend to send personal letters of appreciation to individuals in the hope that I will not miss thanking those who made a difference in this campaign. Together we demonstrated that there are those who will see an injustice and act to expose and correct the wrong.

I also wanted to share that Imam Jamil has been able to keep his fast during Ramadan, which is yet another example of his strength and faith. May Allah continue to guide him and strengthen him.

24 Jul - New writings by Mumia Abu-Jamal

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

MORE:

July 24th - When Children are the "Enemy"

I've been watching for days now, as media reports display the growing hatreds at the arrival of Central American children across the Mexican-U.S. border.

American voices crackle with bile as they begin the drumbeat for their immediate deportation.

Vile names are called against them, and they are described as "invaders", "sick", and "dirty".

In truth, they are refugees from want and war, almost all the result of U.S. interventions in Central America, in support of murderous military governments and the mindless drug war.

These are the grandchildren of NAFTA, the economic policy which leached wealth from Mexico and its neighbors, for U.S. corporate greed.

That said, this antipathy shown toward children is deeply disturbing.

It reminds me of the era of World War II, when a bill was submitted in Congress to allow the entry of thousands of German-Jewish children. The Wagner-Rogers bill would've saved 20,000 kids living in Germany, but President Franklin Delano Roosevelt opposed it - and the bill quickly died.

Actually, many American elites opposed it, including Roosevelt's cousin, Laura Delano Houghtelling, and wife of the U.S. Immigration commission, who argued: "...20,000 charming children would all too soon grow into 20,000 ugly adults."

Such crude racism portrays the ugliness of Americans, and the day will come when we will look back at how these children are treated today - and we will not feel pride.

This frenzy, this political and social fear whipped up by petty, ambitious politicians will yet pass.

But left behind will be our shame, at how a nation that claims so much greatness, can be both so small - and so cruel.

July 29th - California's Death Row

'Everything new', it used to be said, 'comes from California.'

Perhaps not everything, but a Federal District Court there has just ruled that the death penalty, as practiced in the Golden State, is unconstitutional, in light of the long dreadful waits between sentencing and executions.

Judges have hinted around this theme for years, but this is the first time I've heard an American judge actually grant such a claim.

In the legal literature this is known as 'the death penalty phenomenon', or how extended stays on death row can cause severe mental illness, debilitating physical impairments, and, for some, the desire to commit suicide to end such conditions. There are some 700 men and women on California's Death Row.

Certainly, under international law, this symptom is recognized, and has for decades been the basis of relief and the removal of the death sentence.

Capital cases from both Jamaica and Zimbabwe came to similar conclusions in the 1990s.

Now, an American judge has decided that such extended delays on Death Row constitute a violation of the 8th Amendment, forbidding cruel and unusual punishments.

Soon, it will make its way to the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals - and thereafter?

We shall see what we shall see.

July 31st - Malaysia Air & 'Mistakes'

The airwaves are thick with talk of 'war crimes', how Russia should be sanctioned, and even how the Russian President, Vladimir Putin, according to one congressional war-hawk, "has blood on his hands."

This is not to downplay the very real losses sustained in the destruction of Malaysia Air 17, but a look at how easily the imperial media slips into war-talk, and assigning blame. In this environment, military brass are as thick as thieves on corporate media, usually counseling war.

Who remembers Iran Air Airbus A300, which was blown to smithereens on July 3, 1988?

Over 280 souls were killed during this act of destruction, because of a missile fired by the U.S. Navy warship Vincennes over the Persian Gulf.

Question: Was there any talk of U.S. war crimes?

Was any American president held to account?

And remember, this wasn't the act of a non-state, unofficial, badly trained militia.

This was the U.S. Navy.

The officers aboard the Vincennes reportedly 'misidentified' the Iranian ship - a civilian craft - as a military flight.

Sorry. Oops!

'My bad.'

290 Iranian men, women and children blown into bits -- while flying over their own national territory.

A war crime?

Or a mistake?

27 Jul - Sekou Kambui In Hospital

Sekou Kambui, freed after 40 years in prison at the end of June, sends his Thanks, Love, and Appreciation to all his supporters. Unfortunately, he is currently in the hospital.

MORE:

A tumor was found that was partially obstructing his intestines and digestive process. He is undergoing further tests. Sekou will have surgery to remove the tumor next week. He says that he's being treated well in the hospital, and looks forward to full recovery and a return to A-1 health.

If you want to send any cards of support, please send them to:

William Turk / Sekou Kambui
Southeast Alabama Medical Center
1108 Ross Clark Circle, Room 297
Dothan, Alabama 36303

28 Jul - Two Years On, the Crime Remains the Same

As the two year anniversary of the Transform Now Plowshares action at Oak Ridge, Tennessee, approaches, and with Megan, Greg, and Michael (MGM!) seeming to be stable at their prison assignments for now, it is a good time to review the action, the trial and sentencing, and the subsequent responsibility of all of us to support and move forward their work.

MORE:

These hot, humid days of deep summer certainly bring back memories of being in hot, humid eastern Tennessee two years ago and beginning to travel Oak Ridge and Knoxville area roads which later became very familiar after so many visits for hearings, trial, and sentencing. When I took Megan's first call from jail and heard her elation that they had gotten to exactly where they wanted and done all they had planned, it was clear the blessings of God or the universe had again supported the work of disarmament, as so often has happened with plowshares actions.

This was evident too in the fact that they were found by a long-employed guard with prior experience with peace activists at Rocky Flats, so he knew that he faced no physical threat and did not use violence. The video of that meeting we later saw in court was touching; MGM bowing and holding out their hands in friendship, offering

bread and flowers, and the guard's calm demeanor in response. What a shame that plant management fired him for doing his job so well. His union continues to support his claim of wrongful dismissal, as well they should.

So then the media frenzy began. I did my best to convey to cameras and scribbling pencils that Plowshares is a movement, not an organization, and that the whole point of 3 less-than-youthful people hiking steep ridges in the dark and cutting and crawling through four fences to risk their bodies to tag and dent the storehouse of tons of highly enriched uranium which has only one genocidal use, was to try again, as have over 100 prior plowshares actions since 1980, to wake humanity up to the horrendous maintenance and further development of mass killing machines, and the knowledge that officials cannot end the arms race, so citizens must.

Long months of legal maneuvering ensued. The prosecutor sought approval from above for the harsh sabotage charge only ever used for Plowshares actions. Defense tried and failed to get first-hand testimony admitted as evidence from former Attorney General Ramsey Clark about personally helping write the nuclear weapons Non-Proliferation Treaty, and therefore knowing exactly what they meant when they said the nuclear nations must totally disarm at an early date.

A terrific legal team of national and local attorneys formed and wrangled about the best courtroom strategies. Out awaiting trial, MGM spoke and wrote and attended Congressional hearings where the meaning of their action was distorted with the government's focus on the shocking security breach that MGM were able to penetrate the "Ft Knox" of highly enriched uranium, instead of the total breach of all human security which weapons of mass destruction are at every step of their existence, from the mine to the missile silo or submarine to the cooling pools in lieu of permanent "disposal", sucking up so much money so critical to meeting human needs.

Media attention continued, and as a military veteran myself and ambivalent about the inordinate notice peace veterans can gather as compared to other run of the mill peaceniks, I was interested to find out how strongly an old nun trumps 2 veterans! To listen to many outlets you would almost think Sister Megan acted alone. Excellent and very accurate work also came when reporters could spend the time to get to know and understand, especially the long article run in the Washington Post by Dan Zak with excellent photos by Linda Davidson, drawings by Jeffrey Smith. Exciting news has come that Mr. Zak has a publisher for the book-length examination of the plowshares movement he is on sabbatical to write.

Gratifying support from activists and concerned people all over the world generated speaking opportunities for MGM, donations for legal and travel expenses, and hundreds of signatures on a petition to the Attorney General seeking to prevent the sabotage charge, and later thousands of postcards to Judge Thapar urging that he recognize that MGM are not terrorists but responsible citizens pointing out their government's crime, and to depart downward from the 30-year possible sabotage sentences.

However, since sentencing, much generous concern has centered on the relatively mild and expected 3 and 5 year terms, instead of the ongoing government crime of not only NOT disarming, but modernizing and reconfiguring nuclear weapons for future missions. It has been cringe-inducing to see much activist time devoted to calling for reduced sentences or pardons for MGM, instead of pushing for abolition of all nukes now.

To quote one supporter who does get it:
Misterbadexample

"Beyond what you think about civil disobedience and symbolic disarmament, the US has some 1,950 strategic weapons ready to fire at a moment's notice; the Russians have 1,800. It wouldn't take much in the way of misunderstandings for those missiles to fly and start splitting atoms. But instead of whittling down those numbers, the US is embarking on a modernization program that will cost us over \$1 trillion over the next few decades. This despite the fact that in 1996 the ICJ declared virtually all use of nuclear weapons contrary to international law.

Meanwhile, there are petition drives to get Sister Megan (and now Father Carl) out of prison. I agree they should

be released, but I don't think that serves them. What they want is for the rest of us to get off our couches and do something about the weapons. We owe it to them to take a stand."

PLEASE dear friends, keep pushing to abolish weapons. Sign the petition at nuclearzero.org supporting the brave Marshall Islanders in their lawsuits against the 9 nuke nations for not disarming, and learn more and find activist ideas at wagingpeace.org/nuclearzero, help organize and speak out on the upcoming Hiroshima and Nagasaki days, support strengthening the recent bills in the US Congress to reduce weapons budgets. Write MGM to tell them what you are doing. That is what they want us to do.

July 28th - Second Anniversary Statement From Megan, Michael & Greg

Open Letter From the Brooklyn Metropolitan Detention Center from Sr. Megan Rice, on behalf of the Transform Now Plowshares

Our Dear Sisters and Brothers,

We send warm greetings and many thanks to all who actively engage in the transformation of weapons of mass destruction to sustainable life-giving alternatives. Gregory Boertje-Obed (U.S. Penitentiary, Leavenworth, Kansas) Michael Walli (Federal Correctional Institution McKean, Bradford, Pennsylvania) and I are sending you some of our observations and concerns on the 2nd anniversary of our Transform Now Plowshares action.

On July 28, 2012, after thorough study of nuclear issues, and because of our deepening commitment to nonviolence, we engaged in direct action by cutting through four fences at the Y-12 National Security Complex in Oak Ridge, Tennessee, where the U.S. continues to overhaul and upgrade thermonuclear warheads.

On that day, two years ago, when we reached the building where all U.S. highly-enriched (bomb-grade) uranium is stored, we prayed and also wrote messages on the wall, such as "The Fruit of Justice is Peace". (Realistically, the higher and stronger fences built as a result of our nonviolent incursion can never keep humans safe from inherently dangerous materials and weapons.) We acted humbly as "creative extremists for love", to cite one of our most important and revered leaders, Martin Luther King, Jr.

There are a number of reasons for what we did. We three were acutely mindful of the widespread loss to humanity that nuclear systems have already caused, and we realize that all life on Earth could be exterminated through intentional, accidental, or technical error.

Our action at the Y-12 site in Oak Ridge exposed the storage of weapons-making materials deliberately hidden from the general public. The production, refurbishment, threat, or use of these weapons of mass destruction violate the fundamental rules and principles by which we all try to live amicably as human beings. The United States Constitution and the Laws of War are intended to ensure the survival of humanity with dignity. However, it is abundantly clear that harmony and cooperation among nations can never be achieved with nuclear weapons. (These arguments, we assume, will be made on our behalf during the eventual appeal of our convictions that accused us of sabotage, though it was never our intention to harm our country.)

Our "crime" was to draw attention to the criminality of the 70-year-old nuclear industry itself and to the unconscionable fact that the United States spends more on nuclear weapons than on education, health, transportation, and disaster relief combined.

We three Transform Now Plowshares consider it our duty, right, and privilege to heighten tension in the ongoing debate of Disarmament vs. Deterrence because history has repeatedly taught us that the policy of deterrence doesn't lead to security, but rather to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. During our trial, the U.S. prosecutors and the U.S. courts accused the wrong people when they claimed that we violated the law, because what we did was to make America's citizens aware of egregious preparations for mass murder.

We took action because we were acutely aware that our government has failed to keep its long-standing promise to pursue nuclear disarmament. (As Ramsey Clark testified during one of our pre-trial hearings, the U.S. entered

into the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty in the 1960's because our country was finally facing up to the severe human and environmental consequences of the U.S. atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, as well as to the hideous results of countless nuclear tests conducted by the U.S. government within and beyond our own borders.)

One of our pressing concerns is that U.S. prosecutors and the courts adhere to an obsolete view of security with no cognizance – or consciousness – of the horrific effects caused by nuclear weapons. Greg, Mike, and I believe that, undeniably, the U.S. is in a state of denial. It's what Hannah Arendt called not evil, but the banality of evil. "There's nothing deep about it. It's nothing demonic! There's simply the reluctance ever to imagine what the other person is experiencing, right?" (Hannah Arendt, "Eichmann was Outrageously Stupid" in *The Last Interview and Other Conversations*, Melville House, Brooklyn 2013, p. 48).

We citizens cannot permit ourselves to be rendered passive and mute by the banality of evil! Only complete nuclear disarmament can save humanity. At stake is the honor and dignity of the Hibakusha, along with the physical, environmental, emotional, and psychological trauma long suffered by victims of the nuclear system, from uranium miners to down-winders. (From 1946 to 1958, Marshall Islanders were bombarded with 67 atomic and thermonuclear tests that were carried out by the United States.)

Michael Walli, Greg Boertje-Obed and I are in U.S. prisons because, ironically, our action at Oak Ridge was based on the common sense reality that we human beings have endured more than enough destruction and exploitation. We believe that we citizens can exercise our collective power to consciously transform our nation's priorities. We all need to actively insist on more humane uses for the billions of dollars now budgeted for the nuclear weapons/industrial complex.

Two years ago, as we neared the building in Oak Ridge, we were extremely surprised by the ineffectiveness of the system that supposedly guarded our nation's most important National Security Complex. We believed that we were about to expose the source of unfettered violence that has led to the chronic spiritual and economic decline in the U.S. As it turned out, it was the laxity of the security system at Y-12 that caught the attention of the courts and the mainstream media. Security weakness became the big story. There was no mainstream acknowledgement that the national security complex is rotting from its own irrelevance.

Most surprisingly, our July 2012 action and our court cases have revealed that it is not the U.S. government that is in control of the nuclear weapons complex, but in reality it is the corporations that are in control through their solicitation and manipulation of endless funding for the refurbishment of unlawful thermonuclear warheads. We three are incarcerated because we stood up to a nuclear weapons industry that is kept thriving by the interlocking and obsolete institutions that subscribe to the long-discredited notion that law and security can be enforced by ever-greater force.

Regarding the 22.8 billion dollar contract recently awarded for the operation of the Y-12 site in Oak Ridge and the Pantex site in Texas for the refurbishment of thermonuclear warheads and a new Uranium Processing Facility (UPF), the relevant corporations don't actually operate under the long-discredited myth of "nuclear deterrence". Rather, corporations such as Babcock and Wilcox, Lockheed, and Bechtel operate under limited liability subsidiaries, joint ventures, consortiums, and partnerships for the main purpose of making profits by engaging in huge nuclear weapons production/refurbishment contracts. By this time, Congress certainly is aware that valid contracts can be issued only for the dismantlement of all nuclear weapons and for the environmentally-sound treatment and disposition of all nuclear materials.

In order for the U.S. to negotiate for nuclear disarmament in good faith, we say it is essential to peaceably transform these very corporations so that they are no longer able to violate the most basic moral and legal principles of civilized society by deliberately precipitating planetary self-destruction.

We thank you for your letters and your concerns. We ask you to support the Republic of the Marshall Islands in their current legal actions against the United States in U.S. federal court and against the U.S. and all the other nuclear weapons states in the International Court of Justice, for failure to eliminate their respective nuclear

arsenals. You can learn more and add your support by signing the petition at <http://www.nuclearzero.org>.

30 Jul - Amnesty Renews Call On US Government To Free Chelsea Manning

One year after Chelsea Manning's conviction, Amnesty International is still calling on the US government to grant her clemency.

MORE:

Exactly one year after Chelsea Manning was convicted of leaking classified government material, Amnesty International is renewing its call on the US authorities to grant her clemency, release her immediately, and to urgently investigate the potential human rights violations exposed by the leaks.

Chelsea Manning has spent the last year as a convicted criminal after exposing information which included evidence of potential human rights violations and breaches of international law. By disseminating classified information via Wikileaks she revealed to the world abuses perpetrated by the US army, military contractors and Iraqi and Afghan troops operating alongside US forces.

“It is an absolute outrage that Chelsea Manning is currently languishing behind bars whilst those she helped to expose, who are potentially guilty of human rights violations, enjoy impunity,” said Erika Guevara Rosas, Americas Director Amnesty International.

“The US government must grant Chelsea Manning clemency, order her immediate release, and implement a thorough and impartial investigation into the crimes she uncovered.”

After being convicted of 20 separate charges Chelsea Manning was sentenced to 35 years in prison, much longer than other members of the military convicted of charges such as murder, rape and war crimes.

Before her conviction, Chelsea Manning had already been held for three years in pre-trial detention, including 11 months in conditions which the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture described as cruel and inhumane.

Chelsea Manning has always maintained that her motivation for releasing the documents to Wikileaks was out of concern for the public and to foster a meaningful debate on the costs of war and the conduct of the US military in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Notable amongst the information revealed by Private Manning was previously unseen footage of journalists and other civilians being killed in US helicopter attacks.

Chelsea Manning is now actively engaged with her lawyers in fighting her conviction.

“The US government appears to have its priorities warped. It is sending a worrying message through its harsh punishment of Chelsea Manning that whistleblowers will not be tolerated. On the other hand, its failure to investigate allegations that arose from Chelsea Manning's disclosures means that those potentially responsible for crimes under international law, including torture and enforced disappearances, may get away scot-free,” said Erika Guevara.

“One year after the conviction of Chelsea Manning we are still calling on the US government to grant her clemency in recognition of her motives for acting as she did, and the time she has already served in prison.”

Amnesty International has previously expressed concern that a sentence of 35 years in jail was excessive and should have been commuted to time served. The organization believes that Chelsea Manning was overcharged using antiquated legislation aimed at dealing with treason, and denied the opportunity to use a public interest defense at her trial.

In addition, there is little protection in US law for genuine whistleblowers, and this case underlines the need for the US to strengthen protections for those who reveal information that the public has the right to know.

It is crucial that the US government stops using the Espionage Act to prosecute whistleblowers like Chelsea Manning.

9 Aug - Know Your Rights Training in Flatbush

WHAT: Know Your Rights

WHEN: 2:00-4:00pm, Saturday, August 9th

WHERE: Brooklyn Public Library (Flatbush Branch) - 22 Linden Boulevard between Flatbush & Bedford Avenues.

COST: FREE

MORE:

Flatbush & East Flatbush, it's time to KNOW YOUR RIGHTS & WATCH THE COPS! Come to a FREE series of hands-on trainings to Learn Your Rights, Educate Your Community, Conduct Cop Watch, & Deter Police Abuse!

Who should attend:

- Folks who are tired of police violence & misconduct in their neighborhoods & schools
- Folks who want to talk with their communities about issues they face
- Folks who want to join the Bushwick Cop Watch team, &/or get involved with Peoples' Justice
- Groups of 3-5 who want to start Cop Watch teams in their own neighborhoods

Free Refreshments

Please RSVP to: [aidge AT peoplesjustice.org](mailto:aidge@peoplesjustice.org)

For more info: www.peoplesjustice.org

or call: 212.614.5343

9 Aug - Anarchist Picnic NYC

WHAT: Anarchist Picnic

WHEN: 11:00am, Saturday, August 9th

WHERE: Central Park Conservancy

COST: FREE

MORE:

Participants are asked to bring food, drink, and of course literature to share, as well as anything appropriate to trade/barter/give away. Flags and banners encouraged. Open poetry reading and drum circles. Limited Emma Goldman pins given out while supplies last. Bracelets and balloons given out as well. ALL INVITED.

More details at <https://www.facebook.com/events/895304763816649>

15 Aug - Welcome Panther ex-prisoner Marshall "Eddie" Conway to NYC

WHAT: New York City Welcomes Home Marshall "Eddie" Conway

WHEN: 6:00pm to 10:00pm, Friday, August 15th

WHERE: National Black Theater - 2031 5th Avenue (between 125th & 126th Streets)

COST: FREE!

MORE:

Eddie Conway was the longest held Black Panther Political Prisoner on the East Coast. We invite to join us in welcoming to NYC.

16 Aug - Copwatch Training in Flatbush

WHAT: Cop Watch Training

WHEN: 2:00-4:00pm, Saturday, August 16th

WHERE: Brooklyn Public Library (Flatbush Branch) - 22 Linden Boulevard between Flatbush & Bedford Avenues.

COST: FREE

MORE:

Part two of the know your rights and watch the cops trainings. See above for more information.

21 Aug - Direct Action Everywhere

WHAT: Social Movement Talk and Workshop

WHEN: 7:00pm, Thursday, August 21st

WHERE: The Base – 1302 Myrtle Avenue Brooklyn, New York 11221 (directions below)

COST: Free, but donations are appreciated.

MORE:

What if everything we think we know about social change... is wrong?

The growth of the Arab Spring, global LGBTQ rights, and the animal rights movement in notable countries around the world (which have, in some cases, seen up to 15% vegetarian surges in a single year) are powerful examples of sudden and systemic change. Can we achieve the same incredible mobilizations for progressive causes in the US?

Direct Action Everywhere (DxE) co-founders Wayne Hsiung (former behavioral law and economics scholar and long-time social justice activist) and Ronnie Rose (cinema expert and student of critical theory) are taking to the East Coast to answer that question.

Based on the pioneering work of the greatest thinkers in sociology, political science, economics, and psychology, their talk has already triggered incredible buzz out West, including at the national animal rights conference in LA. It just might upend your views on social change. Topics include:

- the essential elements of successful social movements;
- how the conventional wisdom in environmentalism, animal advocacy, and other progressive causes has fallen short (e.g. focus on individuals over systems, neglect of ideas, and fear of being unpopular);
- what Justin Bieber can teach us about social change (seriously); and
- what DxE has learned from successful movements to create empowered activist networks... and push toward real and permanent change

Whether you are a leafleter, an admirer of the ELF, or both, there will be much to learn and discuss. Moreover, there will be insights useful for both seasoned activists and newcomers. Please join us in thinking hard about how to make a better world!

Directions:

Getting to The Base is simple:

From the M Train:

Central Avenue Stop: Walk east on Myrtle Avenue (away from Hart Street, toward Cedar Street). We're about two blocks down on the south side of the street.

Knickerbocker Avenue Stop: Walk west on Myrtle Avenue (away from Harman Street, toward Himrod Street). We're about three blocks down on the south side of the street.

From the L Train:

DeKalb Avenue Stop: Walk south on Stockholm Street (away from Wyckoff Avenue, toward Irving Avenue). We're about four blocks down, at the intersection of Stockholm Street and Myrtle Avenue.

From the J Train:

Myrtle Avenue Stop: Transfer to the M train and follow the above directions.