



Updates for October 28th

13 Oct - Marius Mason's statement to the 2014 ABC Conference

Marius Mason has asked that the statement he wrote for the 2014 North American Anarchist Black Cross (ABC) conference be published on his website. We're including it below.

MORE:

Hello Comrades, Family and Friends at ABC

Thank you so much for the work you do in supporting prisoners and in educating the public about the reality of incarceration and its effects on the "free" community. Your words have an effect that reached far beyond even the broad radical circles that are part of the ABC network.

Just last week in the New York Times, a columnist who was attempting to answer the talk-show rhetoric that has been going around (that white folks don't get the reason for the riots in Ferguson) – stated that it was in fact a natural outcome of the economic inequalities and police brutality that many folks encountered, not just in Ferguson but all over the country. As part of this discussion, the columnist also noted the disproportionate numbers of people of color in prison, as well as the growing economic disparity between races.

Clearly we have much work to do as a society on the issue of race, but at least the problem is being discussed publicly and honestly. ABC has contributed to this debate with integrity.

Prison seems to me to be a microcosm of the outside world and many of the social ills are magnified in this tense environment. Basic economic inequalities are exaggerated and systems of privilege are extended here in marked ways. Often what could be an opportunity for mutual aid and the achievement of basic human and labor rights becomes instead a confrontation along racial lines. But I find great inspiration and guidance in the words of bell hooks, Assata Shakur and Mumia Abu-Jamal and have been very grateful to ABC for making those words available to me and to others on the inside.

Your news letter is also often the only news source that I have to keep up with the stories of those environmental and animal defenders caught up in the legal system. I have been so encouraged by the creativity, integrity, strength, and intelligent confrontation to injustice that these defenders have shown. La Lucha Continua!

Finally, I have been so deeply touched by the solidarity and support that I have received from activists in the ABC network after my coming out publicly as trans. Thank you so much for this! This support has been an essential part of my transition, as I'd been very concerned that this aspect of my identity might overshadow my work as an environmentalist, or even diminish the credibility of the important campaigns that I have tried to contribute to in my life. I am so grateful that, with your support, this is not so.

All struggles are related, and we are all responsible to each other as allies.

Until All Are Free, with love and respect

October 18th - Why I Can't be Introduced in Texas (or Say My Name)

It is illegal for those who are incarcerated in Texas prisons to change their name. This law denies those imprisoned one of the most fundamental aspects of a person. Marius' legal team will be fighting this in court. We'll keep you posted on this struggle.

In response to the news, Marius composed this poem.

Why I Can't be Introduced in Texas (or Say My Name)

Say my name, say my name,
Your laws they just confound me,
Like brick walls they surround me
Say my name, say my name,
I know that you can't see me,
Make it so hard to be me
But what's in a name?
A rose by any other name would smell as sweet,
But I am not a rose, I am a man.
Yes, I'm a man, yes I am, and I can't help but
Tell you so.
Though you'd say no.
How can I perform my gender,
An actor stripped of his lines,
How can this scene be "blocked"
When I am perpetually "clocked"
As what I am
Not.
The invisible man,
Without my name wrapped around me,
Giving me shape and substance
Like a bandage, holding this wound
Together.
Texas, you vigilante,
Riding rough-shod over the smallest liberty,
My name my only sovereignty
I am invaded by your assumptions
A nation under siege.
But my flag still waves,
And through the rockets' red glare,
I'm still there.
Say
My
Name.

October 18th - Anarchist Political Prisoner begins Gender Transition

by Moira Meltzer-Cohen (*Fifth Estate*)

As part of a gender transitioning process, environmental and anarchist prisoner, Marius Jacob Mason, announced recently that he will no longer use the name, Marie, and will utilize male pronouns as self-descriptions for himself. Mason was arrested in 2008 by federal authorities under his previous name after being snitched out by her then ex-husband for two acts of property destruction that occurred in 1999 and 2000. No one was injured in either action. He accepted a plea bargain and was sentenced to almost 22 years in prison, the longest given any Green Scare prisoner.

Support for Marius is critical during this transition period, which will be extra challenging within the prison system.

Below is a statement read by Moira Meltzer-Cohen, one of Marius' legal representatives, at a solidarity event organized by New York City ABC on June 11 as part of the International Day of Solidarity with Marius Mason, Eric McDavid & All Long-term Anarchist Prisoners.

I'm an attorney working with a person of immense courage and integrity, someone who struggles for liberation and self-determination on behalf of other people, non-human animals, and life on Earth itself. This is someone whose courage and integrity are made even more salient by the fact that their own liberation and their own autonomy have long been severely circumscribed.

Even more than most people in prison, my client and those in their unit face rigid, arbitrary constraints on communication and expression that impact every part of their lives. But even more, imagine how difficult it would be if all your struggles toward liberation and autonomy were taking place not only in a prison, but in a world that always targets trans people for further violence, confinement, and abuse.

I am proud to be working with Marius Jacob Mason to change their name to the one that reflects his masculine gender identity.

This announcement does not serve as any kind of excuse for argument or debate. It should be self-evident that trans-exclusion is indefensible in any movement claiming to move us toward collective liberation.

If we are serious about liberation and autonomy, it is incumbent upon us to take seriously that all our various struggles are mutually implicated, that earth liberation and trans liberation are not simply mutually compatible, but that achievement of each is a necessary condition for the satisfaction of the other.

I call on anarchists, allies, environmental justice advocates: let us acknowledge Marius' gender now, not only for Marius' sake, but for the sake of our collective liberation. This transition not only does not undermine the importance of Marius' environmental and other social commitments, it is further evidence of his commitment to justice, and bravery in the face of repressive and destructive systems. It has not been and will not be easy for Marius to transition while in custody of the most heinous part of the U.S. prison system.

But we can make this process a little easier by supporting his gender identity, by using the appropriate masculine pronouns and his correct name, writing to him and other incarcerated trans people, providing meaningful social support, and funding legal battles and medical needs both in and out of prison.

We have an opportunity as a community to demonstrate conclusively that we are strong, that we understand the mutual implications of all forms of oppression, and that we can reject the subordination of any cause to another.

Until his name is legally changed, mail sent to Marius in prison should still be addressed to Marie Mason on the envelope, but a greeting to Marius is OK. Donations should still be made to **Support Marie Mason, Post Office Box 2016, Ferndale Michigan 48220**.

October 18th - Marius and Fellow Inmates Complete Guitar Class

Marius, along with several inmates at FMC Carswell, completed a guitar class. As a group, they performed Candy by Paolo Nutini and Broken by Tracy Chapman. For his solo performance, Marius chose Gavotte by the Spanish classical guitarist Francisco Tárrega.

14 Oct - New writings by Mumia Abu-Jamal

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

MORE:

October 14th - Memories of Goddard

Goddard College, which began as a seminary, has stood in the shadows of Vermont's mountains for the better part of a century.

Its bucolic surroundings lend it the air of serenity, the cool quiet of its rural, northern cities.

It was the beginning of the 1970s when I first arrived there, a young man in his latter teens, and I was stunned by the sheer beauty of the place, and its epic surroundings.

Students truly came from all walks of life, the cultural, political and social streams of movements for a multitude for social change: from civil rights to black liberation; from women's rights to gay rights; from Africa, Asia, the Caribbean; to cities across America, they came to dwell, and to learn in a place quite unlike any other place; Goddard College - in Plainfield, Vermont.

When I first came I was part of the Third World Studies program, where students came from across the Black World: Africa, the West Indies, South America, Boston, Harlem, Baltimore and Philadelphia.

Our head of the program, the late Professor Calvin Hicks, was (although we didn't know it at the time) a serious activist himself, who, with the late Maya Angelou and others, held a protest at the heart of the UN, to demonstrate against the U.S. - assisted imperial killing of Congo's first post-colonial African President, Patrice Lumumba.

At Goddard, he settled into the quiet, intense role of academic and administrator, with pipe in hand.

To meet people, literally from around the world, was a rich and rewarding experience.

Many years later, I dream of its verdant hills, its fresh green life, its sounds and its open, welcoming campus.

I thank Goddard for allowing me to attend, and many years later, to graduate.

I thank them too, for their recent invitation, to speak before their latest graduating class.

October 16th - A Tale of Two Oppressed Communities

At first glance, the communities of Ferguson, in Missouri, and of Gaza, in the Israeli Occupied Territories, share virtually nothing in common.

One is situated in the richest country on earth. The other sits on ancient lands, lands that are constantly shrinking under the Occupation.

One is predominantly African-American; the other is populated by Palestinian Arabs. One is ostensibly free; the other is largely under the military control of a foreign power.

What unites these two communities is the commonality of oppression, for both experience the ubiquitous presence of armed outsiders, whose job, it seems, is to make their lives miserable.

Ferguson, Missouri, where the overwhelming majority of the population is Black, lives under a predominantly white administration that cares little for that community. It is a living snapshot of an affront to democracy.

Gaza, where the majority of the population is Muslim and Christian Arabs, lives under the constant threat of military occupation, and control of every aspect of Gazan life.

Oh-- and yes; oppression kills.

In both societies, racism against the inhabitants takes on stark and undeniable violence against the people. There, special repression is reserved for the young.

We saw that in Palestine, where children were targeted by Israeli police for horrific violence, beatings and even killings.

Ferguson burst on the media scene after the ugly shooting of a teenager - named Mike Brown.

As for Palestine, generations have lived shattered lives, especially since 1948, when the League of Nations (later

to become the UN) ceded Palestinian lands to the newly-constituted State: Israel.

Through land-theft, guerilla raids, and terrorist attacks, the Palestinians have been whittled down to its miserable present: modern-day Bantustans where they are living on the shredded margins of their ancestral lands. Like the Indians of U.S. memory, they live in the equivalent of reservations; the worst land theft.

As the recent Gaza-Israeli war showed us, the Zionists place no value on Arab lives.

The Zionist state was built on Europe's bad will, for although under the trusteeship of Britain, they offered other people's lands - not an acre of their own.

That bad seed has sprouted into the horror of today.

Two communities; one oppression.

October 21st - Ebola and the Real Health Crisis in America

With the death of Mr. Thomas Eric Duncan shortly after his arrival from Liberia, West Africa, the Ebola crisis has burst onto millions of news screens, generating deep levels of fear and xenophobia.

To be sure, Ebola is a serious health concern, for it has a 70% mortality rate (the African term, 'Ebola', named for a river in Congo after the first known outbreak in 1976, evokes the fear and anxiety of the foreign, but it is a tropical disease best known as hemorrhagic fever, where internal organs and systems break down, leading to massive bleeding).

But, to beat back the fear, public officials have been playing down the threats posed by the virus, often armed with little more than hope and false confidence.

For politics, often more imagery than reality, is a poor barrier against the seriousness of viruses, disease and death.

This isn't about the Ebola crisis, it's about the American health care crisis, made possible by a flawed business model that prioritizes profit above all other things: even life itself.

Consider this: when Mr. Duncan first entered Texas Presbyterian Hospital, he was interviewed by a screener, prescribed antibiotics, and sent home. That person, (the screener) was, more likely than not, not a medically-trained health care professional, but a receptionist, perhaps armed with a checklist to cover. Chances are, she was perhaps the lowest-paid staff, until one considers the janitorial workers.

This business model, one followed by most institutions in America, is now exposed as ineffective, dangerous and the least health-conscious.

That was a business decision, driven by the bottom line, of money - not life.

Similarly, the recent crisis has exposed how vulnerable nurses are in this system, for the business perceives them as less valuable than doctors. Hence, they are paid less, trained less, protected less - and worked more.

Who spends more time with ailing patients; doctors or nurses? Who has the closest physical contact with patients?

But according to published accounts, nurses had their necks exposed, and when they complained, were told to use tape to cover up.

This is a system that protects profits - and prestige - not people!

For doctors get the most protection - nurses, the least.

When this latest Ebola outbreak first struck West Africa, the U.S. mobilized soldiers to go there.

Cuba, which has advanced bio-technical medical experience with tropical diseases, sent over 1,000 doctors, to help heal people.

Cuba, little, socialist Cuba, has sent over 135,000 health care professionals to 154 countries, more than the UN's World Health Organization (WHO).

Their Latin American Medical School in Havana trains thousands of poor medical students, from all over the world - for free.

Not much of a business model.
But one hell of a human model.

October 23rd - A Nation in Fear

Look at the United States.

Really. Look at it.

From North to South; East to West; from 'sea to shining sea', and you'll see the frenzy of fear.

Fear of Ebola. Fear of ISIS. Fear of 'crime'.

Fear of -- fear.

The reason?

Well, fear sells. It sells papers, attracts viewers, and pulls listeners.

The national media is a virtual fear industry.

There used to be an old adage in TV news: 'If it bleeds, it leads'.

There is so much fear in this country that it can barely breathe.

And for politicians, that's fine; for they know that fear is fuel -- a power unto itself that can be ridden, like a maddened steed, to power.

Two nurses catch the Ebola virus (and this only because they weren't properly protected), and schools are closed, quarantine orders are issued, and sheer, unadulterated hysteria, hyped by ratings-hungry media, travels the land like a flood.

Much of American history may be seen as frenzies of fear, which, once unleashed, drove social policies that often did more harm than that which was first feared.

The fears of Salem ignited wars against witches and monstrous tortures of women.

The fears of Black slave rebellions led to waves of repression and racist violence.

The fear of the ability of drugs to expand minds led to the so called 'War on Drugs', which fed a prison industrial complex that swept millions into the biggest prison boom in history, with little, if any, effect on drug usage.

Fear. Frenzy.

Fuels for media and politicians.

And disaster.

October 23rd - CCNY Center Shuttered: War Against '60s

We have learned, recently, of the closing of the Morales-Shakur Student Center at the City College of New York. (CCNY)

What does this mean? Why now?

What we are seeing is the war against the '60s - a war against the Movements of that era - and a war against history itself.

For the present era of leaders want to white-wash and erase the history of the '60s - so that the names of Guillermo Morales and Assata Shakur are forgotten.

They are Freedom Fighters, representatives of the Puerto Rican nationalist movement and the Black liberation movement. And although these movements are over a hundred years old, they want you to forget them.

This isn't just their history - it is yours as well!

We urge you not to forget them!

Study them - and build new movements for freedom!

October 23rd - The Troy Davis Tragedy

The name of Troy Davis is known to most of us, largely because of media coverage.

But the details of his epic struggle, and the denial of the courts (state and federal) to seriously hear his claims are a lot lesser known.

Now, a recent book on the case, entitled, "I Am Troy Davis", focuses on the Davis family, and reveals how the denial of justice tore the family apart.

It is a tale of misplaced vengeance, of political opportunism, judicial cowardice, and relentless struggle. It is the tale of courage against great adversity, tragedy and political betrayals (like the black DA elected by Savannah, who echoed his white predecessors).

When Troy Davis was arrested on August 23, 1989, it was because he turned himself in (after being told about the case by his sister), certain that he would be cleared of the murder of a Savannah, Georgia cop.

But the City, using threats and fear, assembled an ignoble chorus of night people to sell their version of the events, and he was speedily convicted and sent to Georgia's Death Row.

His sister, Martina Davis-Correla fought, virtually alone, to bring light to her younger brother's innocence, and to find qualified lawyers to take the case, for long hard years.

When a team of lawyers took the case, it was in shambles, and it took digging to find the truth: that Troy Davis was indeed innocent, and police had forced people to testify falsely, or they would face charges of accomplices to the killing.

Nonetheless, almost all the witnesses recanted, casting serious doubt on the conviction, telling of the threats they

received at the station.

A turning point came on Aug. 17, 2009, when the U.S. Supreme Court, in a rare ruling, sent the case back to Georgia's federal court for an evidentiary hearing. At last, the evidence came in: mass recantations, including new witnesses attesting to Davis's innocence.

Alas, it was not enough, for a Georgia federal judge, William Moore, tossed out most of the evidence, finding recanted testimony 'unworthy of belief'.

The ups and downs of judicial fortune raised the hopes of his mother, Virginia, a deeply spiritual, prayerful woman, his sister, Martina, and the rest of the family, only to dash them against the rocks of despair.

On April 12, 2011, Virginia Davis passed away.

On Sept. 21, 2011, Troy Anthony Davis was killed by the State of Georgia.

On Dec. 1, 2011, Martina Davis-Correla died after a decade-long fight against cancer.

Virginia and Martina died of broken hearts.

Troy Davis died from a broken judicial system.

Read "I Am Troy Davis", by Jen Marlow, Martina Davis-Correla and Troy Anthony Davis; from Haymarket Books.

October 24th - Justice Suspended

The headline "Justice Suspended" in the middle right hand column of a northeast Pennsylvania newspaper caught my eye. And for the briefest of moments I pondered its possible meanings.

Had justice indeed been suspended in Pennsylvania? I thought of the hundreds of men, over 600 at last count, who were juveniles when they were sent to prison for life in Pennsylvania.

In 2013, the U.S. Supreme Court in its Miller vs. Alabama decision, outlawed this practice. But this is Pennsylvania.

For these men, the Pennsylvania Supreme court ruled recently that Miller wasn't retroactive. So it didn't apply to them. For them, these 600, was justice suspended?

As I said, this was the briefest of moments.

The headline referred to a judge on the Pennsylvania Supreme court called justice" in this state, who was suspended from his office for his role in a still-unfolding sex email scandal. He was among other high-ranking officials from the Attorney General's office to the Parole Board, accused of swapping hundreds of sexually explicit and racist emails. According to published accounts Justice Seamus McCaffery, a former Philadelphia cop, threatened another justice who he wanted to help him, saying ominously, "I'm not going down alone."

These words sounded like a discussion between Mafiosi, not the highest judges in the state.

Is justice suspended? Perhaps it has been for years.

October 24th - Another Mumia Rule

Anyone even remotely familiar with my case knows about the "Mumia Rule." That is when the court or agency changes its rule or precedent to go against me. When Amnesty International wrote about my case, that was its essential focus: that laws and precedents that applied to other cases would be changed when it came to me.

In fact when my Habeas Corpus case went before the Third Circuit Court of Appeals, one judge, in dissent, Judge Ambrose said, essentially, "I know of no reason why we don't apply our precedents to Abu-Jamal." There was one reason: the "Mumia Rule."

Now the "Mumia rule" has been enacted into law; the so-called "Victim Re-victimization" Act, signed into law by Unconstitutional Tom, Pennsylvania's governor, Tom Corbett. What makes this remarkable is that Corbett, a former Attorney General, knows perfectly well that this is an unconstitutional law, in violation of the first amendment to the constitution. He knows this, for he is a lawyer. And he also knows that an unconstitutional law is no law at all. Interestingly, he is so much a politician that he was busy running for governor when under his very nose, children were being raped and abused in the Penn State scandal.

As Attorney General he was on Penn State's Board of Trustees at the time these rapes and molestations were happening and did next to nothing until the scandal broke. Oh—he reportedly received generous campaign contributions from the Chairman and members of the Board of the foundation run by Jerry Sandusky, the central figure in the Penn State scandal. Nice job, Tom. Too busy picking up campaign contributions to protect the kids?

Every politician and every lawyer who supported this so-called law did so by knowingly violating their oath of office to protect and defend the Pennsylvania Constitution, Article 1 Section 7, and the First Amendment to the U. S. Constitution. They took an oath to honor the Constitution, not their campaign contributors. They took an oath to protect the Constitutional rights of all Pennsylvanians, not just their funders, the FOP, the Fraternal Order of Pigs. By violating their oath they bring disrepute on their oath, and their office. By signing a law they knew to be unconstitutional they departed from the role of lawmakers and became legislative outlaws. They passed the Mumia-rule, yes. But the damage they have done is greater to themselves than to me.

15 Oct - Press Release for Norberto González Claudio

On October 15th, A representative group of various political, social, religious and community sectors expressed their support for the immediate release of Puerto Rican political prisoner Norberto González Claudio and alerted the country for any eventuality that may delay his release from prison.

MORE:

Mrs. Elda Santiago, wife of political prisoner and Support Committee spokesman said this Norberto Gonzalez Claudio is in good spirits and with a clear awareness of their political commitment as revolutionary and fighter for Puerto Rican independence. Norberto reiterated its commitment to the freedom of his country, and reaffirmed that all political actions are framed in this context. He is doing his patriotic duty and that jails do not enclose their thinking, neither will limit their ability to fight and commitment to their Boricua Nation," said Santiago.

Norberto Gonzalez Claudio, was summoned to a hearing before the Parole Board on 9 October 2014 This view was not performed but was told his wife, Elda James, the release date is January 15, 2015. The Lcda Jan Susler received the document with the specified date. We expect that compliance with existing laws by the Federal Bureau of Prisons and the agreements between the federal prosecutor, and the judge Norberto this case. As did other Puerto Rican political prisoners in the past, Norberto reached an agreement with federal prosecutors so must comply with the ruling by linking them to the expropriation of \$ 7 million to Wells Fargo, which occurred in Hartford, Connecticut , in 1983, an act that was claimed by the Macheteros to finance the revolutionary-independence struggle in Puerto Rico. Fact that the agreement signed by the Puerto Rican political prisoner, the government of the United States recognizes as a political action that had no purpose of personal gain.

Norberto has not been treated as a common criminal. It is discriminating against him because he is a Puerto Rican patriot. They have cited the JLBP 2 views, first told that his departure would be in 2016 and the second was not performed and had the date set for 2015 Le have refused to pastoral visit by Father Roberto Morales. Denied medical services such as dental, etc. as has been reported previously.

The support and solidarity to Norberto González Claudio was evident from the first moment of his capture, after spending 26 (twenty-six years) and 8 months underground, the product of political persecution against him, due to its nature of revolutionary leader . It has received support from various sectors of politicians among them the the American National Hostos Independence Movement, La Coordinadora Caribbean and Puerto Rico, Puerto Rican Independence Party, NIN Negrón Movement, the Puerto Rican Nationalist Party-ML, the Revolutionary Party Puerto Rican workers, the Committee of Solidarity with Cuba, the Socialist Front and other groups

defending human and civil rights as Human Rights Committee for Puerto Rico, Felipe Lozada Reverend, Bishop of the Lutheran Church in Puerto Rico and Vice President of the Council of Churches of Puerto Rico, among many others.

The United Nations, the Social Forum of Sao Paulo, CELAC have recognized Norberto González Claudio as a political prisoner and anti-colonial fighter. The government of the United States knows that Norberto enjoys the affection and respect of his people and that is a unifying figure of libertarian political forces, which is why you might try to delay his release from prison, under color of any banal excuse.

16 Oct - Letter-writing: Time served for Barrett Brown

We're making an appeal to Judge Lindsay to apply leniency and sentence Barrett Brown to time served, and we could use your help.

MORE:

Brown is a talented journalist who accepts responsibility for his charged conduct. He was originally charged with sharing a hyperlink to stolen information, and when that was dropped, he pled guilty to hiding his laptops, transmitting a threat, and accessory after the fact to an unauthorized access to a protected computer. He is now facing 8.5 years maximum in prison. When he is sentenced on November 24th, he will have already spent over two years in jail. Given the nature of his crimes and the lack of tangible harm resulting from them, we feel that it's time to let him go.

Barrett regrets his words and behavior of September 2012 and has had ample time to reflect and learn his lesson. More than that, he is a brilliant writer: witty, insightful and hilarious and still has a great deal to contribute to his community as a citizen and progressive activist. He wants to get back out into the world and move on with his life. We believe the court should give him the opportunity to re-integrate himself into society immediately. As some of you may know, he's been writing a column regularly at D Magazine, which has become quite popular. For more information about Barrett, see his biographies at Project PM or Wikipedia.

I. Addressing and Sending the Letter

Your letter SHOULD NOT be sent to the judge!

The letter (but not the envelope) should be addressed to:

**The Honorable Sam A. Lindsay
United States District Judge
1100 Commerce Street
Dallas, Texas 75242**

I will be collecting letters to provide to Barrett's defense lawyers who will be preparing a sentencing submission for the judge. The letter **MUST** be signed. E-mail a scanned copy to admin@freebarrettbrown.org or send it to me through the postal mail. Sign, scan and e-mail the letter, and then mail me the original — it is preferable to have both. If you have access to a fax machine, you may fax the letter to the office of Brown's local defense counsel (ATTN: Marlo Cadeddu) at 214.744.3015. My address is as follows:

**Free Barrett Brown
Post Office Box 2658
Amherst, Massachusetts 01004**

If you have ANY questions about this process, please don't hesitate to call Barrett's local counsel Marlo Cadeddu at 214.220.9000.

II. Content of the Letter

The purpose of these support letters is to help Judge Lindsay understand the value of Barrett's contributions to

society and culture as a writer, investigative journalist, researcher, political satirist and humorist.

A. *What to say*

The letters should be as specific as possible. It also would be helpful if the letters include anecdotes that illustrate the author's relationship with or perception of Barrett, one's estimation of his work, or his positive character traits. Your letter should (generally) include the following subject matter:

- A brief description of who you are, including your name, occupation, and any other relevant biographical facts.
- If applicable, the nature of your relationship with the defendant (professional, social, familial, etc.), how long you have known him and the frequency of your contacts with him.
- The defendant's good qualities or positive traits. Please be as specific and detailed as possible.
- Examples of the defendant's good works for you or others.
- What you admire about Barrett's personality or talents and why you think he should be freed. It is important that you speak from what you know factually about Barrett. It is equally important that you write the letter genuinely in your own voice.

B. *What to avoid saying*

Your letter should not be about Barrett's case. Thus, you should not discuss the facts or merits of the case. Nor should the letter assert the defendants' innocence. Finally, it would not be useful to minimize Barrett's conduct or blame someone else for his predicament or to express resentment about his treatment by the government; there is always a risk that such sentiments will be attributed to the defendant and held against him. It is fine to ask the judge for leniency in sentencing.

III. *Appropriate Length and Formatting*

The letters should be one to two pages long, unless there are extraordinary circumstances that need elaboration. But the circumstances should be truly extraordinary for the letter to exceed two pages. You **MUST** sign the letter. You should also include your name, address and telephone number either in the upper right hand corner of the first page or after your signature.

IV. *Samples*

Here are some websites that include guidance on writing sentencing letters and provide samples of letters from other cases:

https://www.ehow.com/how_4683439_write-letter-judge-before-sentencing.html

<http://www.brodenmickelsen.com/mb10.html>

<https://web.archive.org/web/20131107155602/http://freejeremy.net/updates/letters-ugently-needed-join-us-in-asking-for-leniency-in-jeremys-sentencing/2>

Again, all letters should be addressed to the Judge, but SENT TO Kevin Gallagher (aka Free Barrett Brown) or Marlo Cadeddu, NOT THE JUDGE

October 20th - Free Barrett Brown: Supporters Seek Prison Release with Letter-Writing Campaign

by Matthew Keys (*The Blot*)

Supporters of a jailed Texas journalist have launched a letter-writing campaign seeking the early release of the man whom the media deemed to be the unofficial mouthpiece of a prominent hacker community.

Barrett L. Brown, 33, was arrested in September 2012 for threatening a federal law enforcement agent in a video posted online. The video came six months after the FBI executed a search warrant on Brown's apartment and the home of his mother in search of material related to the hacktivist community Anonymous and a splinter hacking group called LulzSec.

Authorities seized a computer, but did not charge Brown with a crime. Six months later, Brown uploaded a series of videos to YouTube in which he ordered the FBI to apologize to him for the raid and return the confiscated laptop. In one video, Brown threatened to “ruin” the life of FBI agent Robert Smith and “look into his fucking kids” if his property was not returned.

Shortly after the video was posted, Brown was arrested for threatening retaliation on a federal law enforcement official and “conspiracy to make publicly available restricted personal information of a government employee.” Two months later, a federal grand jury handed down a separate indictment charging Brown with a dozen counts related to the hack of an intelligence think-tank called Stratfor.

Though Brown was not accused of hacking Stratfor, he was accused of being an accessory for sharing a hyperlink in a chatroom that resolved to a database containing thousands of e-mail addresses and credit card numbers of Stratfor clients that had been published by someone else. Prosecutors alleged the sharing of a hyperlink in a chatroom full of hackers amounted to distributing stolen material, fraud and identity theft. For this, Brown faced 100 years in prison.

Activists and journalists had been closely watching Brown’s case, concerned that the outcome could set a legal precedent in which linking to certain material online would be a crime. In a court motion filed earlier this year, Brown’s attorneys said their client could not have committed a crime by linking to a database that had been published by someone else online.

One day after the filing, federal prosecutors moved to dismiss most of the charges against Brown related to the Stratfor hack. Later that month, a superseded indictment brought two new charges against Brown — one for being an accessory after the Stratfor hack, and another for attempting to obstruct justice during the FBI raid on his mother’s home (the charge against Brown related to the YouTube threat remained).

Brown signed a plea agreement to the new charges on March 31. In doing so, his potential sentence was reduced from 100 years to just more than eight. He is scheduled to be sentenced on Nov. 24.

For two years, Brown and his attorneys have been unable to speak on the case due to a court-imposed gag order. The gag order gave way to a grassroots movement called Free Barrett Brown, an online group that has received support from prominent journalists, politicians and organizations. Last week, Free Barrett Brown organizers started encouraging supporters to write letters seeking leniency for the jailed journalist ahead of his sentencing in November.

(Disclosure: The author of this post was contacted about writing a letter in support of Brown).

“Barrett regrets his words and behavior of September 2012 and has had ample time to reflect and learn his lesson,” the organization said in a note posted online. “We believe the court should give him the opportunity to re-integrate himself into society immediately.”

In an e-mail distributed to supporters, organizers speculated that federal prosecutors would ask for the maximum 8.5-year sentence against Brown. “It would be horrible if that were to happen!” the e-mail said. “We need to bring him home — it’s already been 764 days.”

Organizers are asking supporters to pen a one- to two-page letter focusing less on Brown’s case and more on his work as a freelance journalist. “The purpose of these support letters is to help Judge Lindsay understand the value of Barrett’s contributions to society and culture as a writer, investigative journalist, researcher, political satirist and humorist,” organizers wrote. “Your letter should not be about Barrett’s case ... nor should the letter assert the defendants’ innocence.”

Several journalists have already written letters in support of Brown, including *Global Post* reporter Jeb Boone and former *Guardian* correspondent Glenn Greenwald (now at *The Intercept*). In his letter, Greenwald wrote that Brown was “an outstanding journalist” whose work materially contributed to several stories published by

Greenwald.

“He understands and embodies the purest journalist ethos as envisioned by the country’s founders: To hold the most-powerful factions accountable by scrutinizing their claims, investigating their actions and imposing transparency,” Greenwald wrote.

Organizers are requesting people address the letters to the judge presiding over Brown’s sentencing, but not to mail them to the judge directly. Instead, organizers are collecting the letters themselves and will submit them to Brown’s defense attorney as part of an forthcoming sentencing submission. More details of the letter-writing campaign can be found on the website FreeBarrettBrown.org.

18 Oct - Letter from Jalil Muntaqim to Progressive Movement

The following is a response to a widely publicized criticism of one of Jalil’s supporters by a participant at the 2014 North American ABC Conference. The letters Jalil asks folks to disseminate are the result of FOIL requests in regards to the Police Benevolent Association’s coordinated attempt to block parole for Jalil and include vile and vulgar racist language.

MORE:

TO: The National Progressive Movement

FR: Jalil A. Muntaqim

RE: Support for Parole Initiatives in Opposition to the PBA Campaign Against My Release on Parole.

Dear Sisters and Brothers:

I have asked [a comrade] to release the letters on my behalf on the Internet. Yes, I read the criticism by Lorenzo, and found it regrettably inappropriate to the issue. I do not deny the possibility of some Black activists being upset by a white person reading an obnoxious racist letter written by a white person, on behalf of a New Afrikan political prisoner. However, I find their sensitivity misplaced, especially when the intent is to educate and raise consciousness on the extent of the PBA’s campaign, and how it elicits racist support. Unfortunately, the focus has been misdirected, and I would therefore urge all activists, including Black activists, to join in the struggle opposing the PBA’s campaign, not only against me— but all COINTELPRO victims.

We have recently learned of Sundiata Acoli’s having his parole denial reversed by the Court, and the virulent law enforcement opposition to the rule of law that granted Sundiata’s reversal. These letters speak loudly to the culture of opposition, even if an objective perspective is the PBA is not racist, the subjective reality is their campaign creates a venue for spewing of racist garbage under the color of their fraternity.

It is extremely important the progressive community knows and understands what our challenges are when the fraternity of law enforcement seeks to pressure a culture of vindictiveness and retribution, beyond the rule of law as established by the judicial process. I ask all activists, Black and Euro-American, etc., to post these letters in condemnation of the PBA and its racist supporters and urge all of you to encourage activists across the country to support the release of U.S. political prisoners, especially COINTELPRO victims who have languished in prison 30-40 years.

Thank you for getting this out to folks, and I would like to offer my apology to Lorenzo and others for your sensitivity about the language of these vile letters. But I do not have the luxury to wait for Lorenzo or other Black activists to decide when they are prepared to come and support my fight for liberation. Let us together combat racism in all forms and practices.

Yours in fierce struggle.

October 20th - Luke O’Donovan can now receive books!

If you’d like to send Luke books, you can do so from his Amazon wish list here:
<http://www.amazon.com/gp/registry/wishlist/YD6DN5G4TKFD>

MORE:**VERY IMPORTANT INFO:**

- Please add the book(s) to your cart from Luke's wish list page. This will automatically supply you with his address and will remove the book(s) from the list after your purchase. This will prevent multiples of the same book from being sent.
- YOU CANNOT PERSONALLY SEND BOOKS TO LUKE. They must be sent from an authorized source, such as a publisher or Amazon.
- Luke can only receive NEW books in PAPERBACK. It's probably best just to purchase the one directly from amazon rather than from the "Used & New" list.

If you would like to send Luke a book that is not on his Amazon wishlist, please send us an email at letlukego@gmail.com and we will help you. (Luke has to submit a request for authorization for each book title before he can receive it, and the ones on his list are already good to go.)

21 Oct - Jeremy Hammond Update

Jeremy Hammond was placed in solitary confinement on 10 October, which we believe is a retaliatory measure against Jeremy for filing a complaint with the prison for withholding his mail.

MORE:

We received word last night that Jeremy had been placed in the Segregated Housing Unit (SHU), also known as solitary confinement. He had previously been placed in solitary confinement during pretrial detention. Details are spotty, but this is what we know so far:

- He was placed in the SHU on 10 October.
- The prison, FCI Manchester, claims that Jeremy stole clothing, but we don't know whether they allege that he stole from a guard or another inmate. Jeremy denies this accusation unequivocally, and it goes against his character.
- We have been in contact with Jeremy's lawyers, who are in contact with the prison to see if anything can be done to appeal his placement in the SHU.

Make no mistake: We firmly believe Jeremy has been placed in solitary confinement as retaliatory punishment for filing complaints against the prison for withholding his mail. The prison had begun rejecting books and even legal material related to Jeremy's own case. Jeremy had written that he was willing to take his grievances to the highest possible level in order to see them resolved.

Solitary confinement is often described as psychological and physical torture. It's often used to break down a prisoner's will and spirit. As the CCR writes,

"The devastating psychological and physical effects of prolonged solitary confinement are well documented by social scientists: prolonged solitary confinement causes prisoners significant mental harm and places them at grave risk of even more devastating future psychological harm."

Right now, the best thing everyone can do is write a note of encouragement, buy Jeremy a book, or donate to his commissary. All relevant information is here. If a book is rejected, Jeremy is notified and the book is returned to the distributor. Please contact us if this happens to you.

October 23rd - Jeremy out of solitary, thanks supporters

Jeremy Hammond was placed in solitary confinement, termed the Segregated Housing Unit by the prison, on 10 October, for what we believe were retaliatory reasons.

Many supporters donated to Jeremy's commissary and bought items from his Amazon Wishlist.

We are very happy to report today that we have spoken to Jeremy and he is now out of solitary. He is doing well and thanks his supporters for their help.

22 Oct - Kevin Olliff Transferred to Federal Custody

After being denied release on bail last week, Kevin is transferred to a jail south of Chicago.

MORE:

Yesterday, the US Marshalls picked Kevin up from the prison where he had just completed his state sentence, and took him to Kankakee County Jail, outside Chicago, where he is expected to remain until the resolution of his federal case. This can take anywhere from six months to more than two years.

There is still hope: Kevin's attorneys will be filing a motion for his release pending trial in another week. We will post the judge's decision on this motion when it comes in.

As for receiving vegan food, Kevin has placed a request with the jail and is awaiting a response.

One note: As Kevin was leaving Danville, he was called into the office to speak with the heads of Danville's in-house security team to be given a parting threat: They told Kevin he was fortunate to be in jail, because where they are from (also rural Illinois), if Kevin had been caught releasing animals they would have dealt with Kevin in a more direct, vigilante fashion.

Two important things:

1. Kevin has a new address. Send him a letter:

Kevin Johnson #469551
(Johnson is Kevin's legal last name)
Jerome Combs Detention Center
3050 South Justice Way
Kankakee, Illinois 60901

2. Kevin wants books. New rules at this jail: Softcovers only, and books must be mailed directly from a book store, Amazon, or Barnes and Noble(.com). The full list of mail rules are as follows:

- Magazines, hard cover books, calendars or newspapers are not allowed in the facility and will not be accepted through the mail.
- Books may be shipped into the facility only through a bookstore, warehouse or publisher. You may send books to an inmate through Barnes and Noble, Amazon.com or a similar retailer.
- Internet printouts are allowed.
- All incoming mail must have a return address that includes both a name and an address.
- No blank stationery, blank envelopes, stamps or blank stamped envelopes will be accepted. These items must be purchased off of commissary.
- If an inmate has left the facility or has been transferred to another facility their mail will only be held for thirty days.
- No newspaper or magazine clippings will be accepted.
- Pictures are allowed. However, no pictures over the standard 4 x 6 size will be accepted.
- Pictures may not contain any nudity, gang symbols or activity, use of drugs or alcohol or any representation of illegal activity.

Kevin's full book wish list will be posted in the next 24 hours. In the meantime, here are a few you can send him right away:

Busted by the Feds: A Manual for Defendants Facing Federal Prosecution
Wildlife Wars: My Fight to Save Africa's Natural Treasures
The True Believer: Thoughts on the Nature of Mass Movements

Postville: A Clash of Cultures in Heartland America
The Wisdom of Psychopaths
Blood and Belief: The PKK and the Kurdish Fight for Independence
The Terror Factory: Inside the FBI's Manufactured War on Terrorism
The War of Art: Break Through the Blocks and Win Your Inner Creative Battles
Flawless: Inside the Largest Diamond Heist in History
The Black Swan: Second Edition: The Impact of the Highly Improbable
Trust Me, I'm Lying: Confessions of a Media Manipulator

Please email the support site when you send a book so it can be removed from the list.

Remember to only order books that are either:

- New, directly from Amazon.
- “Prime Eligible / Fulfilled by Amazon” offers from any seller in any condition on Amazon.

22 oct - Chelsea Manning receives Courageous Peacemaking Award

The Center for Conscience in Action honored Oklahoma peacemakers in a program on Sunday, October 26 in Oklahoma City. The 2014 awardees include Chelsea Manning, a native of Crescent, Oklahoma, who is serving a 35-year sentence at Ft. Leavenworth for exposing war crimes.

MORE:

“Chelsea Manning has sacrificed her freedom so that the world could know the realities of US war making”, said Rena Guay, CCA’s Executive Director.

This is the fourth year that CCA (formerly the Oklahoma Center for Conscience and Peace Research) has recognized Oklahomans who have contributed to a culture of peace by courageous individual action, but this year, rather than a single award, several will be presented.

“We are very excited to expand our annual recognitions this year, and especially with the particular individuals and groups we have selected,” said Guay.

24 Oct - Brent Betterly Transferred

Brent Betterly, of the NATO 3, was released on 10/24/14 (Detainer Filed by Other Jurisdiction) to face charges in Florida.

MORE:

After facing charges in Florida, Brent will be transferred back to Illinois to serve the remainder of his sentence.

24 Oct - Eric King has embraced the struggle against speciesism and is now vegan

Also, in addition Eric is now vegan for nonhuman animal liberation and the fight against speciesism.

MORE:

We are hoping to receive a more in-depth letter about this which we will post (with his consent of course) the next time he sends us a letter back. For now, keep the letters coming and as he has said before, the funds and support are all deeply appreciated!

After hosting a letter writing and fund raising party for Eric, comrades in the midwest received letters back from him. Eric is VERY appreciative for all the love and support he has received from comrades, not too happy about “not receiving even one letter of support from friends and family back at home”...

26 Oct - Albert Woodfox's Courtroom Battles Continue

On the morning of Wednesday, October 29th, at the US Court of Appeals for the 5th Circuit in New Orleans oral

arguments about whether or not to uphold Judge Brady's January 2014 ruling that put an end to the invasive, dehumanizing strip and cavity searches Albert had been tortured by since May of 2013 will continue.

MORE:

As you may remember, this is the second of two outstanding appeals of rulings in A3's favor that have frozen progress towards the final trial prep stages of the decade long A3 civil case, which seeks to establish long term solitary as the unconstitutionally cruel and unusual punishment the A3 know it to be.

The cruel and rather perplexing irony of this corner of the civil case is that it was a lawsuit that Albert himself filed and won in 1978 that put an end to the demeaning practice for decades, until two months after his conviction was overturned for a 3rd time. It was then that prison officials at David Wade Correctional Center, where he is currently being held, inexplicably began to again routinely strip and cavity search Albert every time he left or entered his cell, even if he was shackled and had no contact with anyone besides prison officials.

In his ruling, Judge Brady found that these frequent, routine searches were not shown to be "necessary" or "justified" for security as is required constitutionally of such policies, and therefore "Woodfox's human dignity [as] protected by his Fourth Amendment rights" outweighed any "legitimate penological interest." The State disagrees and is fighting to reinstate the searches.

If you are in town and able to attend, the proceedings are open to the public. Doors open at 8am and court convenes at 9am in the West Courtroom, room 265. Although listed second on the schedule for the morning, there is no telling the exact time our case will begin, so it is better to arrive early, but be prepared to potentially stay all morning. Arguments themselves are expected to be very short--30 minutes or less per side. Seating is limited, and formal dress and conduct are both required and strictly enforced by Federal Marshals.

For those unable to attend, the hearing will be recorded by the Court and we will circulate a link to the proceedings as it becomes available.

13 Days in the Dungeon - Albert's New Civil Suit

Last week Albert filed another civil action, separate from the larger A3 civil suit, seeking to hold the Louisiana DOC and prison officials at Elayn Hunt Correctional Center (which you may remember as the prison where Herman spent his last years) to account for the 13 harrowing days he spent in the dungeon there before, during, and after his May 2012 habeas hearing in Baton Rouge.

Officials ignored all transfer, classification, and disciplinary procedures required to justify such a harsh placement, and put Albert in the dungeon shortly after he arrived for the 3 day hearing that months later would result in his conviction being overturned for a 3rd time. When Albert objected to the punitive placement without due process or review, he was told: "this decision comes from higher up."

Albert's complaint details multiple egregious violations of his 1st, 8th, and 14th Amendment during his stay at Hunt. In addition to denying him access to yard time, TV, phone, visits, canteen, and confiscating the basic clothes and hygiene products he was allowed to bring with him; Albert was served inedible food, including at least one meal served still frozen in a block of ice, and forced to wear leg shackles without socks which caused severe cuts and bruises on his ankles that took months to heal. Most importantly the harsh conditions, extreme heat, and continuous screaming and moaning from other inmates tortured by their punishment in dungeon cells nearby, prevented Albert from participating fully in the hearing that would determine his freedom, resulting in significant mental and emotional anguish on top of the very real physical suffering he endured.

We will keep you updated as this important new challenge moves along through the courts.

30 Oct - The Pontiac Brothers and the Rise of New Organizing in Prison

WHAT: Slide Show and Talk

WHEN: 7:00pm, Thursday, October 30th

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

COST: FREE, but donations appreciated

MORE:

Michael Deutsch, one of the lawyers for both the Pontiac Brothers and the Attica defendants, discusses the role of the Pontiac and Stateville prison revolts in conceptualizing and orienting organizing inside and outside prisons up to today. His talk will be accompanied by a 35mm slide show originally created as an organizing tool around the Pontiac Brothers in the late 1970s.

1 Nov - 6th Annual FREEDOM DANCE

WHAT: Dance and fundraiser

WHEN: 8:00pm - midnight

WHERE: National Black Theater - 2031 Fifth Avenue (between 125th and 126th Streets)

COST: \$20

MORE:

Celebrate Assata Shakur, raise support for still-incarcerated political prisoners such as Sundiata Acoli, Sekou Odinga....and too many others.

3 Nov - No Separate Justice Vigil: Interfaith Prayer

WHAT: Vigil

WHEN: 6:00pm, Monday, November 3rd

WHERE: Metropolitan Correctional Center - Pearl Street at Park Row

COST: FREE!

MORE:

We're pleased to be able to announce that our November vigil is being co-sponsored by the National Religious Campaign Against Torture and T'ruah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights and has been shaped to run as an interfaith prayer vigil. The vigil will take place at our usual site, outside the doors of the Metropolitan Correctional Center (MCC) in lower Manhattan, a federal prison where people accused of terrorism-related offenses have been held in solitary confinement for years, even before they have been tried. Both faith leaders and family members of incarcerated men will lead us in prayer and together we will demand action.

Many believe that if the Guantanamo detainees could be transferred to American soil, to be held and tried as civilians, the abuses would end and justice would be done. Yet many of the same abuses can be found in the hundreds of "war on terror" cases that have been processed through courtrooms and federal prisons across the United States since 9/11. These abuses—which include inhumane conditions of confinement both pre- and post-trial; secret evidence; intrusive surveillance; vague material support charges; FBI-created plots brought into communities through paid informants; and the criminalization of Islamic speech and association—remain largely invisible. But if we speak up, they will not be any longer.

Please join us on November 3 as we continue to build a growing voice of people of conscience and shine a light together to expose the human rights abuses happening across our country in these cases. We have plenty of signs to share.

Directions to Vigil: The closest subway to MCC is the 4,5, or 6 train to Brooklyn Bridge - walk up Centre Street to Foley Square and look for Pearl Street which is in between the two huge federal courthouses on Foley Square. Walk down Pearl Street one block to where it dead ends on Park Row - the vigil takes place there on the corner across from the entrance to MCC.

9 Nov - First Meeting of Mutual Aid NYC

WHAT: Anarchist Potluck

WHEN: 5:00pm, Sunday, November 9th

WHERE: Project Reach NYC - 39 Eldridge Street, New York, New York 10002

COST: FREE

MORE:

Let's meet up and discuss what each of us would like to get out of this group. Since we will have access to the space's kitchen, I thought we'd begin the meeting with our first mutual aid project: making a big pot of "stone soup." Vegetable broth will be provided, and we can each contribute an ingredient--a vegetable, beans, pasta, seasoning, etc.--and see what we come up with. (Let's keep it vegetarian so everyone can share.) While enjoying what we've created, we can all share our ideas on how we can learn together, support each other in being more resilient to the economic and ecological challenges we face, and help make New York City more resilient as well. Please RSVP if you plan to come, and maybe post what you'd like to bring. In lieu of a contribution to the soup, a donation of a couple of bucks toward the cost of the space would be appreciated as well. Hope to see you there, and feel free to share the event with anyone else who might be interested.