

Updates for November 25th

8 Nov - Chelsea Manning Super Post

A lot has been happening in the last couple of weeks in regards to Chelsea Manning and we've compiled it below.

MORE:

November 8th - Private Manning's Missing Medical Care

by the *New York Times* Editorial Board

As a matter of constitutional rights and basic decency, prisoners — including military prisoners — are entitled to proper care for their serious medical conditions. Yet, Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel and other officials continue to deny medically necessary care to Chelsea Manning, the military prisoner formerly known as Pfc. Bradley Manning, who was convicted in August 2013 of leaking a vast cache of classified government documents.

Her ill-treatment is no minor lapse. On the day after her sentencing to a 35-year prison term, Private Manning publicly declared herself a transgender woman, along with her wish to begin hormone therapy “as soon as possible.” Clinical evaluations since have confirmed the need for care that includes hormone treatment, psychotherapy with someone qualified to treat gender dysphoria, and access to grooming standards for female prisoners — allowing her to grow longer hair, for example, to express her gender identity. A failure to follow this standard protocol for people with Private Manning's medical condition can have a dire impact — creating a growing risk of serious depression, self-mutilation and suicide.

The military's backward policy against providing hormone therapy or sexual reassignment surgery has left Private Manning, who is incarcerated at the military prison in Fort Leavenworth, Kan., without essential treatment for well over a year now. Repeated requests for treatment have been denied or totally ignored.

In September, Private Manning filed a federal lawsuit seeking to compel the missing medical treatment. The complaint filed on her behalf by lawyers with the American Civil Liberties Union and her court-martial attorney, David Coombs, asserted that the withheld medical care amounts to a violation of her constitutionally protected rights.

The government's reply brief is not due until Nov. 20 and a spokesman for the Justice Department, which is representing the Defense Department in the case, would not say whether the government will fight the suit or finally arrange to provide the withheld treatment. Continuing to deny it would be legally and morally wrong, and several federal appellate courts have found failures by states to meet the specialized needs of transgender prisoners to violate the Eighth Amendment's prohibition against cruel and unusual punishment.

Transgender inmates are especially vulnerable to sexual assaults and special care must be taken to ensure their safety with accommodations like private showering, but without imposing an excessively isolated prison environment. Anger over Private Manning's offense may add to safety worries. And it may be that the all-male prison at Fort Leavenworth is not the right institution for her. Civilian jails and prisons around the country are figuring out ways to meet the particular needs of transgender inmates. Surely, Mr. Hagel, who oversees the far more complicated logistics of war, can figure it out, too.

November 10th - 50+ celebrities support Chelsea, whistleblowers in statement

In a statement released on Monday, November 10th 2014, 50+ celebrities and public icons have come forward in support of Chelsea Manning, Wikileaks, Snowden, and whistleblowers. The statement reads:

We stand in support of those fearless whistleblowers and publishers who risk their lives and careers to stand

up for truth and justice. Thanks to the courage of sources like Daniel Ellsberg, Chelsea Manning, Jeremy Hammond, and Edward Snowden, the public can finally see for themselves the war crimes, corruption, mass surveillance, and abuses of power of the U.S. government and other governments around the world. WikiLeaks is essential for its fearless dedication in defending these sources and publishing their truths. These bold and courageous acts spark accountability, can transform governments, and ultimately make the world a better place.

The statement has been signed by artists such as Susan Sarandon, MIA, Vivienne Westwood, Peter Sarsgaard, Russell Brand, Tom Morello and Viggo Mortensen.

Tom Morello on his support of whistleblowers:

Those courageous enough to expose the crimes of government and unmask corruption embody the spirit of democracy and justice. Rather than being celebrated as the truth-tellers and champions of accountability that they are, they are persecuted and find themselves the target of a draconian legal system that punishes them for the act of exposing crimes.

Viggo Mortenson:

As Albert Camus once put it, governments, by definition, do not have consciences; they have policies and nothing more. Therefore, it is up to all of us as free-thinking citizens to demand truly transparent democracy and high, unbiased moral standards from those who govern us.

The statement was released by the Courage Foundation, who run and accept donations for the official defense fund for Edward Snowden.

November 13th - “The Source”: Chelsea Manning opera

Chelsea Manning and Wikileaks were the subject of “The Source”, an opera composed by Ted Hearne that ran in October at the Brooklyn Academy of Music in New York. The opera featured auto-tuned portions of the leaked Iraq and Afghanistan war logs, Manning’s chat logs with hacker Adrian Lomo, along with reaction footage of individuals as they watch the leaked ‘Collateral Muder’ video.

From the *New York Times* Music section on ‘The Source’:

Its patchwork libretto is drawn from the documents disclosed by Ms. Manning as well as instant messages and bits of interviews. Fragmented, layered and obsessively repeated, these texts are sung by four performers whose voices are heavily processed in real time, giving them an eerily anonymous, half-mechanical sound.

Seven instrumentalists play a score with the propulsion of rock and the sensitivity of chamber music. Sung excerpts from the leaked war logs take on the unnervingly lulling rhythms of the Evangelist’s recitatives in Bach’s Passions, while passages from Ms. Manning’s Internet chats elicit warmer, more human vocalism.

Surrounding the audience are projected faces: eyes scrolling, lips pursing, tears occasionally falling, reflections of screens and video faintly visible in eyeglasses. We are looking at people looking at something — but what? It is only at the end, as we see some of the much debated, so-called “Collateral Murder” footage of a 2007 American attack that killed civilians in Baghdad, that we understand the projected faces were filmed watching that footage.

November 18th - Amnesty International interviews Chelsea

An interview with Chelsea Manning is the cover story of leading human rights organization Amnesty International’s Nov/Dec magazine, *WIRE*. The interview, titled, “Why Speaking Out Is Worth the Risk“, touches on why exposing the truth can be worth the often harsh consequences that whistle-blowers face. For Wikileaks whistle-blower Chelsea Manning, she thought “do [I] really want to find [my]self asking whether [I] could have done more 10-20 years later?”. Read the full interview below, or click here.

“Why Speaking Out is Worth the Risk”
WIRE, Amnesty International, Nov-Dec 2014

Why did you decide to leak documents about the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan?

These documents were important because they relate to two connected counter-insurgency conflicts in real-time from the ground. Humanity has never had a record this complete and detailed of what modern warfare actually looks like. Once you realize that the co-ordinates represent a real place where people live; that the dates happened in our recent history; that the numbers are actually human lives- with all the love, hope, dreams, hatred, fear and nightmares that come with them- then it's difficult to ever forget how important these documents are.

What did you think the consequences might be for you personally?

In 2010, I was a lot younger. The consequences felt very vague, I expected the worst possible outcome, but I didn't have a strong sense of what that might entail. But I expected to be demonized and have every moment of my life examined and analyzed for every single possible screw-up that I've ever made- every flaw and blemish- and to have them used against me in the court of public opinion, I was especially afraid that my gender identity would be used against me.

What was it like to feel the full force of the US justice system and be presented as a traitor?

It was particularly interesting to see the logistics involved in the prosecution: the stacks of money spent; the gallons of fuel burned; the reams of paper printed; the lengthy rolls of security personnel, lawyers and experts- it felt silly at times. It felt especially silly being presented as a traitor by the officers who prosecuted my case. I say them out of court at least 100 days before and during the trial and developed a very good sense of who they were as people. I'm fairly certain that they got a good sense of who I am as a person too. I remain convinced that even the advocates that presented the treason arguments did not believe their own words as they spoke them.

Many people think of you as a whistleblower. Why are whistleblowers important?

In an ideal world, governments, corporations, and other large institutions would be transparent by default. Unfortunately, the world is not ideal. Many institutions begin a slow creep toward being opaque and we need people who recognize that. I think the term "whistleblower" has an overwhelmingly negative connotation in government and business, akin to "tattle-tale" or "snitch". This needs to be addressed somehow. Very often policies that supposedly protect such people are actually used to discredit them.

What would you say to somebody who is afraid to speak out against injustice?

First, I would point out that life is precious. In Iraq in 2009-10, life felt cheap. It became overwhelming to see the sheer number of people suffering and dying, and the learned indifference to it by everybody around me, including the Iraqis themselves. That really changed my perspective on my life, and made me realize that speaking out about injustices is worth the risk. Second, in your life, you are rarely given the chance to make a difference. Every now and then you do come across a significant choice. Do you really want to find yourself asking whether you could have done more, 10-20 years later? These are the kind of questions I didn't want to haunt me.

Why did you choose this particular artwork to represent you?

It's the closest representation of what I might look like if I was allowed to present and express myself the way I see fit. Even after I came out as a trans woman in 2013, I have not been able to express myself as a woman in public. So I worked with Alicia Neal, an artist in California, to sketch a realistic portrait that more accurately represents who I am. Unfortunately, with the current rules at military confinement facilities, it is very unlikely that I will have any photos taken until I am released- which, parole and clemency notwithstanding, might not be for another two decades.

November 24th - New Action- write letters to DoD officials requesting clemency for Chelsea!

Secretary of the Army John McHugh

In addition to President Obama, Department of Defense authorities have the ability to grant Chelsea Manning's plea for clemency. An outpouring of public support is the best way to get a response, and to give her a real chance of being released.

Take action today by writing letters supporting Chelsea's request for clemency to the following Department of Defense authorities:

Secretary of the Army John McHugh
101 Army Pentagon
Washington, DC 20310-0101

The Judge Advocate General
2200 Army Pentagon
Washington, DC 20310-2200

Army Clemency and Parole Board
251 18th St, Suite 385
Arlington, VA 22202-3532

Directorate of Inmate Administration
Attn: Boards Branch
U.S. Disciplinary Barracks
1301 N. Warehouse Road
Fort Leavenworth, KS 66027-2304

Suggestions for letters send to DoD officials:

The letter should focus on your support for Chelsea Manning, and especially why you believe justice will be served if Chelsea Manning's sentence is reduced. The letter should NOT be anti-military as this will be unlikely to help

A suggested message: "Chelsea Manning has been punished enough for violating military regulations in the course of being true to her conscience. I urge you to use your authority as Convening Authority to reduce Pvt. Manning's sentence to time served." Beyond that general message, feel free to personalize the details as to why you believe Chelsea deserves clemency.

Consider composing your letter on personalized letterhead -you can create this yourself (here are templates and some tips for doing that).

Chelsea Manning is unjustly imprisoned because the things she witnessed in the Iraq War compelled her to follow her conscience. Now, through creating compelling and personal letters, it is time to call upon DoD authorities to honor their conscience in turn.

10 Nov - Palestinian Organizer Rasmia Odeh Jailed Hours After Being Convicted by Jury of Immigration Fraud

Rasmia Odeh, a Palestinian American organizer who immigrated to the United States twenty years ago, was convicted of immigration fraud by a jury in Detroit.

MORE:

by Kevin Gosztola (*The Dissenter*)

The judge held an afternoon hearing and decided to revoke her bond. She was taken into custody and will be in jail until her sentencing hearing on March 10.

Odeh could potentially serve up to ten years in prison before she is deported from the US.

Supporters of Rasmia Odeh put out a statement after the verdict calling the result a "travesty of justice," and adding, "Although there is real anger and disappointment in the jury's verdict, it was known as early as October 27th that she would not get a full and fair trial."

According to journalist Charlotte Silver, who covered the trial for The Electronic Intifada, Judge Gershwin Drain took the unusual step of “endorsing” the jury verdict.

“I don’t normally comment on verdicts, but in this case I will: I think it’s a fair and reasonable one based on the evidence that came in.”

One of Odeh’s attorneys, Michael Deutsch, reacted, “That’s not his job,” to say whether he approves of the verdict or not. In his career, he had never heard a judge do that before.

Her defense attorneys announced immediately after the verdict that they were planning on appealing the case after she is sentenced. They also were upset that the jurors were willing to meet with government attorneys “for a half-hour after the verdict” but were not interested in meeting with defense attorneys.

Odeh is a 67-year-old associate director of the Arab American Action Network (AAAN) in Chicago. She has a reputation as an award-winning advocate for women’s rights.

Forty-five years ago, she was arrested and subjected to torture by Israeli security forces. Odeh was brought before an Israeli military tribunal and accused of being involved in terrorism attacks. She maintained her innocence, but Israel convicted her and she was sentenced to prison.

In 1994, Odeh immigrated to the US and was allowed into the country without any problem. Her defense asserts that the State Department knew about Odeh’s background when she applied for citizenship.

Plus, when she was arrested in 1969, her father, a US citizen, along with her two sisters, were arrested at the same time. Her father was released after 20 days, according to Deutsch.

Odeh’s father was released because the State Department intervened. He then testified to the State Department and before a United Nations commission, which was investigating Israeli practices toward Palestinians.

“What we’re saying is that they knew all along based on what he told the State Department in the State Department’s own records that who she was and what her background was. When they gave her a green card and let her in the country in the 1994, they knew she had been arrested, tortured and been inside an Israeli prison,” Deutsch further explained in an interview for Firedoglake.

In 1979, Odeh testified about her torture at the United Nations. “It was well known that she was convicted, and traded [in a prisoner exchange]. The US Embassy knew it, the State Department knew it, and Immigration should have known it,” Deutsch added.

Despite the State Department’s role in Odeh’s immigration and knowledge of her past, on October 22, 2013, the Department of Homeland Security arrested Odeh. She was accused of lying on her naturalization forms by not disclosing that she had been convicted of terrorism-related offenses by an Israeli military tribunal.

“An individual convicted of a terrorist bombing would not be admitted to the United States if that information was known at the time of arrival,” US Attorney Barbara McQuade said after her arrest. McQuade indicated upon discovery that “someone convicted of a terrorist attack” is in the US “illegally” the US would use the “criminal justice system to remove that individual.”

William Hayes, acting special agent in charge for Homeland Security Investigations, also declared, “The United States will never be a safe haven for individuals seeking to distance themselves from their pasts.”

“When individuals lie on immigration documents, the system is severely undermined and the security of our nation is put at risk.”

Prosecutors during the trial cast Odeh as “a terrorist who used deception to enter the US.” A guilty verdict would

“send a message that terrorists can’t seek to hide in the US,” the Detroit Free Press reported.

Yet, if Odeh is truly a terrorist who hid in the US, the prosecutors should be clamoring for answers from the State Department on why she was allowed in twenty years ago and whether they were involved in a coverup to allow her to remain in the country?

Odeh insisted that when she filled out the questions she thought the questions about whether she committed a crime applied to whether she committed crimes inside the US.

The Associated Press reported Odeh testified “she would have disclosed the information if she understood the questions and sought legal help to deal with any fallout while seeking citizenship.”

This was not the defense Odeh initially planned. The defense had a doctor lined up to testify about how Odeh suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) stemming from being tortured and that had an effect on how she filled out the forms because she blocked out her past. However, Drain ruled Odeh could not argue she suffered from PTSD and other inhumane treatment she experienced when she filled out the forms.

Drain also accepted the government’s argument that the validity of her Israeli conviction was not an issue that should be brought up during trial. It was, however, acceptable for the government to talk about the crime Israel convicted her of committing after coercing a confession from her through sexual abuse and torture.

As Deutsch declared on WBEZ radio before the trial, “Our defense has been cut out at the knees basically and gutted if you will.” Her state of mind at the time she filled out the forms is the key issue in the case. “But the judge told us she can’t talk about what happened to her in Israel. She can’t say she’s innocent. So she’s going to be very hamstrung in terms of being able to put on her own testimony in her own behalf.”

Hundreds of supporters from Chicago had traveled up to witness the trial. They held demonstrations outside the courthouse before and after proceedings each day. They urged the Justice Department to drop the charges and government attorneys even accused the supporters of being a protesting mob that was seeking to engage in jury tampering.

That wild accusation fueled the government’s request to partially sequester the jury and transport them to the courthouse from an off-site location in a bus with tinted windows each day, which Drain granted. But the judge denied a request for an anonymous jury, where the identities of the jurors would be given extra protection.

The government was able to fuel a climate of fear during the trial by seating a number of US Marshals and DHS agents nearby friends and family of Odeh. So, while she was not accused of terrorism, it was clear that the prosecutors wanted the jury to consider this charge like another crime committed by a terrorist.

But how did the government even discover that her application had been filled out incorrectly?

The FBI opened an investigation in 2010 into the activism of AAAN’s Executive Director Hatem Abudayyeh and others in his social circle back in 2010.

As Michael Deutsch, one of her attorneys, has recounted, the US Attorney in Chicago made a request through Washington about her and asked the Israelis to produce any documents they had on her. It took “several years to produce them.” Eventually, the Israelis produced documents from “their military occupation legal system, which showed that she had been arrested and imprisoned and convicted by the Israelis.” Yet, instead of proceeding with this case in Chicago, where an investigation into Palestinian activists was ongoing, the case was passed off to Detroit and the US Attorney’s Office in the Eastern District of Michigan indicted her there.

Ever since she was charged, it has had all the markings of a political prosecution. Odeh’s supporters argue she “came under attack by the US government because she is Palestinian, and because for decades, she has organized for Palestinian liberation and self-determination, the right of return, and an end to US funding of Israeli

occupation.”

The government has now effectively accomplished its goal of incarcerating a prominent Palestinian American activist, who was once tortured by Israeli authorities.

10 Nov - First Amendment Lawsuit "Abu-Jamal v. Kane" filed in Federal Court

The Abolitionist Law Center, Amistad Law Project, and the Roderick & Solange MacArthur Justice Center filed a historic lawsuit in Federal Court on behalf of Prison Radio, Mumia Abu-Jamal, Educators for Mumia, and other plaintiffs. They seek to overturn a new Pennsylvania Law designed to allow the state to silence targeted prisoners by preventing their speech.

MORE:

What is at stake is your right to hear Mumia and other prisoners, journalists right to record, and prisoners right to speak. As a puppet for the agenda of the Fraternal Order of Police, and to add to his poll numbers, Pennsylvania Governor Tom Corbett signed SB508 into law on 10/21, (effective immediately), and specifically targeting Mumia Abu-Jamal's right to free speech.

The law puts Prison Radio, our correspondents, and our listeners in jeopardy. So in response we have filed a federal civil rights lawsuit in the middle district of Pennsylvania (Harrisburg).

We will win this lawsuit.

We will continue to record Mumia.

We can uphold all prisoners' rights to speak their truth.

But we need your help to do it.

We can not do it alone, but with your help we will do it together.

You can also send a check to Prison Radio/Redwood Justice Fund, give to Prison Radio via Network for Good <<https://donatenow.networkforgood.org/PrisonRadio>>, or to Prison Radio via PayPal <<http://www.prisonradio.org/donate>>. Call us and we can make arrangements: 415.706.5222. Prison Radio is a project of the Redwood Justice Fund, a 501(c3) non profit organization: EIN 68-0334309.

Thank you for all you do.

11 Nov - New writings by Mumia Abu-Jamal

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

MORE:

November 11th - The Dallas 6 Go To Court

They are called the Dallas 6 - and we ain't talking about Texas.

Dallas, in Pennsylvania, is one of nearly 30 prisons in the state, located in its rural outback. The 6 are young Black men who, in 2010, tried to stage a peaceful protest in the prison's "hole", or its solitary confinement unit.

They were moved to such protest after witnessing another prisoner, Isaac Sanchez, being strapped into a torture chair (prison officials call it a 'restraint chair') for hours - even overnight. When guards threatened to do the same to them, the men tried to cover their cell doors with their bedding - and refused to leave their cell, in an effort to protect themselves.

The guards armed themselves with batons and electrified equipment, and they stormed the 6 cells, leaving the men beaten, bloody, naked, eyes burning, their flesh seared with pepper spray.

All of the guards later admitted they suffered no injuries. How could they? They wore black body armor and helmets - what prisoners call 'star wars' garb.

After some of the men filed grievances and civil suits, the DA replied with criminal charges, and on November 10, 2014, the men will be marched into Luzerne County Courthouse, in Wilkes-Barre, PA, to face 'riot' charges.

They were gassed, they were beaten, they were tasered and zapped with electro-shields - and they face riot charges!

It should be noted that this is the same county where judges took money to send kids to jail; where no one reported their monstrous actions - not even the DA! - for nearly a decade!

The Dallas 6: Andre Jacobs, Anthony Kelley, Carrington Keys, Anthony Locke, Dwayne Peters and Derrick Stanley - are potentially facing more prison time - for refusing to submit to torture, for men have died, in America, while strapped into the torture chair.

Should they have meekly submitted to torture - like sheep to the slaughter?

For more information on the Dallas 6, go to: scidallas6.blogspot.com.

Help the Dallas 6 stand for justice and human rights!

November 11th - Who Wins? Who Loses?

Elections are underway, and thanks to the U.S. Supreme Court's Citizens United ruling, billions of dollars are flooding previously small and uninteresting elections, in states, governorships and Congress.

Pundits are in heaven, predicting which way the polls will go - but in truth, no one knows for sure.

Perhaps the Republicans will win; perhaps the Dems.

The question is, will you?

The answer is, at best, doubtful. For both parties are corporate-owned - and they serve those who can afford their services - and that ain't regular people.

In a classic study of political timidity, most democrats are in full flight in running from Barack Obama, given his polling in the low 40s.

If they'll betray the man who gave them 2 overwhelming presidential victories, what makes you think they won't betray you?

But guess who they won't betray? Big corporate funders. Big business!

Speaking of big business, there is one big winner in this election: the corporate media.

For them, its Christmas time, New Years and Rosh Hashanah - rolled into one!

But for you - for average people - have you really won?

November 11th - Pennsylvania & The Constitution

Recently, there's been much comment about the Constitution.

What are we talking about?

Well, not only is there a U.S. Constitution that allegedly covers the nation, but every state has a constitution as well.

Article VI establishes what's called the Supremacy Clause, where every state is bound by the U.S. Constitution, usually as decided by the U.S. Supreme Court.

Pennsylvania's Constitution, Art. I; Sect. 7 addresses Free Speech.

A part of it reads thus:

The free communication of thoughts and opinions is one of the invaluable rights of man, and every citizen may freely speak, write and print on any subject....

Under the Freedom of Speech clause of the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, the 6th Article of the U.S. Constitution, how can the state's legislators pass, and politicians sign, the recent law described as the "Muzzle Mumia" act?

Answer: They can't - at least not constitutionally.

In order to do so, they had to knowingly and willingly violate both the U.S. and PA Constitutions, and their very oaths of office.

This they did.

If you've looked down on your politicians before, this will only increase your disgust and contempt.

Clearly, the political class are but whores, who sell their tongues to the highest bidder, and their oaths are as empty as dry, withered husks.

They don't really believe in their own constitution.

Why, pray tell, should you?

November 11th - Mid-Terms in America

The elections are over, but the results have just begun.

The mid-terms, and the source of much of the vote, puts one in mind of Charles Dickens (1812-1870), the great British novelist, among whose works is A Tale of Two Cities, which is, in fact, a tale of two classes in one city; late 19th century and industrial London; the very rich and the very poor.

The mid-term reflected a tale of two nations: the young and the old; the wealthy and the working class; and yes, the whites and the non-whites.

Moreover, the election reflected how important lessons are forgotten, the most important of which is loyalty.

The lesson of the 2000 elections, when Al Gore lost, by a stolen hair's breadth to George W. Bush, was caused in part by his refusal to use the presence of former president, Bill Clinton, an able and popular politician.

In this year's cycle, Republicans ran on their hatred and fear of Barack Obama, buttressed by ridiculous claims that he brought Ebola here, made a deal with ISIS, and was a secret, closet Muslim.

Democrats couldn't run away from him fast enough, and by so doing, communicated to their constituencies the nature of their disloyalty.

Disloyalty has a smell, a scent, the aroma of fear.

And Democrats proved, once again, that unless your name is Muhammad Ali, you can't punch when you're back-peddling.

Some Dems may point to Obama's poll ratings in the low 40s, and there's some truth to that.

But polls, like minds, are malleable; they can be changed.

Obama has faced a hostile right-wing press and virulent talk radio since the day he took the oath of office. After years of such sonic sludge, there's little wonder that polls have tanked.

But if you don't fight, how can you win?

November 20th - The Not-So-Grand Jury

In Ferguson, tensions are tighter than a drum, in morbid anticipation of the decision of the grand jury in the fatal police shooting of Mike Brown, an unarmed local Black teenager.

We have said 'decision of the grand jury', but in truth, it isn't the grand jury which really decides anything - it's the prosecutor.

As the old saying goes, 'a prosecutor can use a grand jury to indict a ham sandwich' -if he wants to.

Unless I miss my guess, he doesn't want to.

It goes against too much grain.

Most people never see a grand jury. They are traditionally done in secret -although the Ferguson grand jury has more holes than tennis net.

It has leaked lakes of information, seemingly to set the stage for a vote of no indictment: no true bill.

Years ago, in Philadelphia, a grand jury was selected to decide whether cops who dropped a bomb on a house, kill 11 men, women, and children (the MOVE house); burning several city blocks down to the ground, should be charged with anything.

Months and months passed, and one day, the announcement came: no true bill.

No charges.

The DA who ran the show would, years later become the Chief Justice of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court, retiring judge, Ronald Castille.

Because a grand jury can indict a ham sandwich--if it wants to.

12 Nov - The Carceral State

California gets called "progressive" despite operating one of the world's largest prison systems.

MORE:

by Kameelah Janan Rasheed (*The New Inquiry*)

"Abolition is not simply a reaction to the [prison-industrial complex] but a political commitment that makes the PIC impossible" writes Eric A. Stanley in the introduction to *Captive Genders: Trans Embodiment and the Prison Industrial Complex*. Nourishing these possibilities to create a future in which incarceration and policing

are not normalized features of our society has been at the core of Stanley's academic writing and activist work. A president postdoctoral fellow in the departments of communication and critical gender studies at the University of California, San Diego, Stanley works at the intersections of radical trans/queer politics and prison abolition. Stanley has directed the films *Homotopia* (2006) and *Criminal Queers* (2013) along with Chris Vargas. Stanley talks to the *New Inquiry* about California's incarceration culture and those who resist it, how language shapes our imagining of a post-incarceration world and the importance of queering our conversations around the prison industrial complex.

New Inquiry (NI): What is unique about the Californian narrative of incarceration and policing? How has the history of California been shaped by the prison-industrial complex?

Eric Stanley (ES): California is in many ways emblematic of our current moment of U.S. empire. Our stage of late liberalism allows California to proclaim itself both the most "progressive" state while simultaneously producing among the most brutal carceral practices. We can look to California and the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) as a cautionary tale of how even well-meaning prison reform almost always produces more violence, rather than stopping it.

To understand how "progressive California" became the way we talk about the operators of one of the largest prison systems in the world, we could look to the recent Proposition 47, the "Safe Neighborhoods and Schools Act," for an example. It is championed by many state prison-reform groups because it claims it will help pull some people out of prisons and jails through resentencing of what the legislation calls "nonserious nonviolent" inmates.

And it might! At first glance, this seems like something that all of us fighting against the prison-industrial complex (PIC) could support. We know that decarceration is one strategy in the long vision that is abolition. However, written into the proposition is a provision that would mandate all the "savings" from releasing people be placed into a fund that would increase police presence in schools and mandate harsher truancy discipline. What looks like a victory in our struggle would actually build up rather than dismantle the PIC.

As a response to the infamous overcrowding of California's prisons, this is something we know would re-imprison 10,000 people, even if 10,000 people are released. Overcrowding is not a malfunction of the prison-industrial complex, it's how it's designed.

For a more exacting account of California's carceral topography, I would defer to Ruthie Gilmore's amazing book, *Golden Gulag: Prisons, Surplus, Crisis, and Opposition in Globalizing California*. There, Ruthie helps us understand how labor and land are central to California's prison growth but often overlooked. While it seems obvious that capitalism is a big part of the story of imprisonment, *Golden Gulag* helps push against the understanding that it is only important at the level of a defendant's ability to fight charges. Identifying a structuring logic of the prison-industrial complex, Ruthie suggests her book is about "class war," and it is.

NI: I am interested in "exacting accounts." I think about the prison-industrial complex especially in considering who collects and distributes information about it, and the specificity required in describing what it is. How does this enumeration, calculation, and collecting further serve the prison-industrial complex?

ES: As example we might look at the National Crime Victim Survey, a database funneled through the Bureau of Justice, is currently the only space where national "biased" violence is aggregated. While having some important information, the database is little more than a misrecognition of the forms of structural abandonment and direct attack many people face everyday. Some have argued that if the reporting or vectors could be corrected we would have a more accurate representation of who is targeted for these kinds of harm.

But I want us to undo the argument that more information or research necessarily produces more liberation. We have elaborate data on incarceration rates for black people in the U.S., and we know that this research has done nothing to curtail the reality that the prison-industrial complex functions as antiblackness. Even if statistics show how the prison-industrial complex is constitutively anti-trans and anti-black, they don't halt it.

I think you're right. We've always known this information, but that information by itself is not liberatory. Beyond

the information we have about the functioning of the PIC, I am also interested in the information we have about movements challenging the PIC. I think it is easy to conflate the myriad of struggles against the PIC and this conflation can obscure the work of distinct activist organizations.

NI: I spent a little over a year with Critical Resistance, where I learned about the distinction between a prison-reform movement and a prison-abolition movement. For those who conceptualize prison reform in terms of more rehabilitation programs or the ending of mandatory minimums, how does your work for prison abolition differ from prison reform? What's the difference between asserting that the prison system is broken versus the assertion that it is working as it is designed to function?

ES: While usually suspicious of the work of binary oppositions, I think the distinction between reform and abolition is vital. When they become confused, we end up with people arguing that Prop 47 is going to "solve the problem of mass incarceration." If we say that the prison system is working as designed, that is, as a set of antiblack, ableist, and gender-normative practices used to constrict, and at times liquidate, people and communities under the empty signifiers of "justice" and "safety," then we can more adequately assess what something like Prop 47 will actually do: Trade a few of the prison system's current hostages for an expansion into schools.

We often arrive at the idea that the system is "broken" not because we have such a strong attachment to the state, but because we have a scarcity of language around the intensity of its violence. One of the ways its common sense remains entrenched is in our collective inability to articulate the enormity of our current conditions. Instead we---myself included---most often use language that is readily available, helping sabotage our own chances of living otherwise.

NI: In concrete terms, what does it mean to continue believing that the prison system is "broken"?

ES: If we believe that the prison system is broken, then we must also believe in its ability to be fixed. Here we can see how the PIC keeps functioning through the rehearsal of the "broken system" narrative. As Angela Davis and many others have argued, it is precisely through reform that the prison-industrial complex expands. We can see the materiality of this expansion through the mandatory increase in police in schools through Proposition 47.

NI: I was born and raised in California and I know this proposition would affect my old students and family members so let's talk about Prop 47. It is on the November 4 ballot. If it is approved by the state's voters, it would reduce the classification of most "nonserious and nonviolent property and drug crimes" from a felony to a misdemeanor. How do you respond to people who say this reform, however small, is better than nothing at all?

ES: In abolitionist work we sometimes talk about nonreformist reforms to think about the distance between people getting their immediate needs met, or their conditions made less unlivable, and the political worlds we want. Under our regime of racial capitalism, perhaps all we can inhabit is a set of shifting contradictions. Given this, one of the questions we try to continually ask is, "Will this reform be something we have to fight against in five years?" For me, this is how I determine if the compromise is too dangerous. In the case of California's Proposition 47, I'm not convinced it will actually lead to the release of people and will instead further involve schools as punitive practices.

Focusing our efforts only on, and in the name of "nonviolent and nonserious" incarcerated people can also work to reaffirm the assumed serious and inescapable violence of those still inside. Are we willing to always allow the state to decide what constitutes the limits of "violence"? Under Proposition 47, someone who defrauds an entire community out of their homes may be considered "nonviolent," while someone who blocks their own home from being foreclosed could remain imprisoned as a violent offender.

NI: I want to talk more about the abolitionist vision and the construction of the "violent" and "nonviolent" offenders, as well as accountability.

ES: A tiring critique of prison abolition that can make even a self-identified radical sound like a mouthpiece for the right is that if we abolish the PIC, we will all be subject to greater risks of harm. In response to this assertion, it is important to note at least two related points.

First, the most dangerous, violent people in our society are not in prison, but are running our military,

government, prisons, and banks. Secondly, what we have now, even for people who have caused harm, is a form of nonaccountability where the survivors of a violation are often harmed again through the desires of a district attorney whose only interest is conviction rates. Anyone who has been deposed or been through a trial can attest to this. Abolition is not simply about letting everyone out of prison, as our critics like to suggest, although that would be an important component. It is forged in the work of daring to ask what true accountability, justice, and safety might look and feel like and what are the ways we might build our world now so violence in all its forms is decreased, rather than something that we only attend to post-infraction.

NI: I am interested in how we move toward abolition. Who are the people challenging the normalization of incarceration? Can you talk to us about local movements around prison abolition? And beyond California, what work is being done?

ES: I have to first give a shout-out to the Transgender, Gender Variant Intersex Justice Project based here in San Francisco. TGIJP is an organization by and for formerly incarcerated trans women of color, held down by Miss Major, Janetta Johnson, and others. I think what is unique about TGIJP is that unlike some antiprison organizations that tokenize currently or formerly incarcerated people, they center them in every aspect of their work. TGIJP is also working hard on re-entry for trans women as abolitionist work. When people are released, especially those with felonies, the issues that found them in the prison industrial complex are dramatically compounded. With almost no resources, people get released into situations that are hyper-policed, and more often than not people get swept back up in the system.

I would also point people toward Californians for a Responsible Budget (CURP), a statewide coalition of people and organizations fighting jail and prison expansion all over the state. As you know, there are also chapters of Critical Resistance in Los Angeles and Oakland that continue to push toward abolition in a culture where compromise is often the most we can expect.

I'm also excited by all the work being done in less formal ways, by collectives of people like Black and Pink-San Diego, a prison letter-writing group, and Gay Shame, which I have organized with for the past 12 years. With Gay Shame, we keep trying to show the ways the prison industrial complex is ever-expanding and how LGBT people are at times complicit in its proliferation. As the banner at our last action read, we are pro-sex, anti-prison, queers for abolition.

NI: In *Captive Genders*, you write that this prison abolition work and trans/queer liberation must be grown together. How are these movements mutually dependent?

ES: In the past few decades, we have seen the mainstream LGBT movement fight hard to become part of the same systems of domination that have already destroyed so much. Most visibly, this fight toward inclusion resides in the legalization of gay marriage, military service, and the expansion of hate crimes legislation on both the state and federal level. When I was writing the introduction to *Captive Genders*, I wanted to help (with many others) redirect resources and organizing toward abolitionist work, and also remember the histories of trans and queer people, particularly low-income and/or of color, who have always fought against policing and incarceration. In other words, I wanted to mark both the unique moment of the organizing and analysis that *Captive Genders* gathers up, and also the ways we are in a genealogy of struggle that will continue beyond us.

I have also been involved in various abolitionist projects over the past decade that did not necessarily foreground trans/queer politics. I think in similar ways I wanted to push trans/queer organizing to center abolition, I wanted to push antiprison organizing to include a trans/queer analysis that understood the specific ways trans/queer people of color have been and continue to be targets of the prison industrial complex.

Both Nat [Smith] and I began the project knowing that we wanted it to be an explicitly abolitionist text. As it was the first book that centered the ways trans/queer people experience the PIC, we wanted to foreground a radical analysis. We also had a commitment to making space for currently and formerly incarcerated people while not wanting to rehearse the somewhat false division between theory and practice.

NI: In the introduction to *Captive Genders*, you write that "among the most volatile points of contact between state violence and one's body is the domain of gender." You've also written about how prisons are gendering

institutions as well as queer spaces. How does this happen simultaneously? What are some examples of this resistance to gender normativity within prisons?

ES: Binary genders (male/female) are not something that pre-exist any institution (like prisons) but are produced and reproduced in their moment of interaction. In other words, the imagined stability of only two genders is part of the work of prisons. Not only are prisons gender segregated, but quotidian practice inside mandates the group fantasy of gender normativity. This is a bit of a different argument than suggesting that we only pay attention to the ways prisons treat trans/queer and gender nonconforming people, although we also need to do that. Yet even against the relentless force of punitive gender normativity, people still find ways to resist and embody, although perhaps protracted, gender self-determination in these spaces of suspended death.

These usually take the form of what might look like small moments of resistance, but are the daily material that allow some people to survive the unsurvivable. For example, I have a friend who was inside a "women's prison" and she sewed boxer shorts out of sheets for her butch and trans masculine friends because they could not legally obtain them as they were not regulated in "women's prisons." People also find ways to do their hair, get or make cosmetics and other things that help them express whatever gender they are feeling. Resistance also comes in the ways people inside are in leadership positions of many "outside" organizations, like Sylvia Rivera Law Project and Justice Now and California Coalition for Women Prisoners (CCWP).

NI: We know the prison-industrial complex exists along a continuum, from the ways that people are policed and criminalized, to the point of trial and incarceration, to the moment of reentry. How does the prison industrial complex affect the lives of queer/trans folks living outside the physical site of the prison?

ES: When people first started using the term "prison industrial complex" it was an attempt to think about all the ways the prison as a force exists far beyond its walls. While we want to be vigilant in our attention to the condition of those inside, we always want to be aware of the various ways people are policed, criminalized and constricted that may seem less obvious. Through this expanded understanding of the PIC we must look at psychiatric imprisonment, public housing, shelters, Native boarding schools, drug treatment and diversion programs, juvenile facilities, ICE detention centers (and more) as all central to our work as abolitionists.

NI: In an essay called "Near Life, Queer Death," you address the privatizing of violence. In thinking about the landscape of Californian incarceration, in ways does the "privatization [of] the enormity of anti-queer violence" collude with the privatization of the enormity of mass incarceration and policing in California?

ES: I would perhaps think about the different ways privatization is working in each of these scenes. Much antiprison organizing for the past 15 to 20 years has centered around critiquing the ways private prisons produce wealth through the business of captivity. I remember organizing in the 1990s at Cabrillo Community College in Santa Cruz where I was a student because our cafeteria contracted with Sodexo Marriott, which then had stakes in CCA, a private prison firm. That work was and continues to be necessary, but only as a way to open up conversations beyond the private-prisons argument. If we end there, it can seem as if we think prisons run by the state are "better" and that prisons are only troublesome if they produce surplus value. Again, this is where an abolitionist analysis becomes necessary to push us through the private prisons argument and toward a more general critique.

In "Near Life, Queer Death," I was trying to think about how structural violence (like racist and anti-trans violence) is rewritten as individual acts against specific people. The legal system is one of the primary ways the systemic is transformed into the discrete or personal. This happens, in part, through the substitution of the idea that justice has been done with a conviction by the state.

We might look at the recent attack against Sasha, an agender youth who was riding a bus in Alameda when their skirt was lit on fire by another 16-year-old. Sasha sustained second and third degree burns in yet another attack against a gender-nonconforming person. Seeking an easy conviction, the district attorney decided to charge the defendant as an adult and forced them to take a plea deal, which could now place them in prison for seven years. Sasha and their family asked the DA to not charge the person as an adult and also asked for restorative justice for the defendant and not prison time. Against the desires of the survivor, the DA refused and sought the conviction by way of a plea. The histories and futures of anti-trans violence become substituted with the "justice" of another conviction, while all those involved are left as collateral damage.

15 Nov - Current status of Puerto Rican Political Prisoner Norberto Gonzalez Claudio

Norberto Gonzalez Claudio continues to be in solitary confinement and can't contact family and lawyers in the federal prison in Coleman, Florida.

MORE:

On Monday November 10th, Norberto's attorney, Jan Susler, got a phone call from him; he said he didn't know how long he'd be in solitary confinement. Usually, when an inmate first enters solitary he or she is told how long they will be held.

Prison staff are supposed to send Jan documents explaining why he's been placed in solitary, but to date she has not received this information. Jan says the accusation against Norberto is a simple matter (allegedly, he raised his voice to a prison guard) and therefore it's not justifiable "punishment" to transfer him to a higher security prison and to place him in solitary confinement, which he's been in for the past 23 days (since October 21st).

The ProLibertad Freedom Campaign denounces this horrible mistreatment of Norberto Gonzalez Claudio! Norberto has been exposed to new prison inmates and jailers unknown to him; he has no contact with family and barely any contact with his lawyer; and he has been SEGREGATED without any human contact, which is a form of psychological torture.

We must be vigilant because this inexplicable punishment could be used against Norberto to delay his release on January 15, 2015.

ProLibertad is asking our allies to call FCI Coleman Medium and demand that Norberto be released from solitary and returned to FCI Coleman Low. Call FCI Coleman Medium at 352.689.5000

Sample Message:

Puerto Rican Political Prisoner, Norberto Gonzalez Claudio (prison number #09864-000), has been held in solitary confinement since October 21st for no justifiable reason. This prolonged period of confinement is a violation of his human rights and is considered a form of torture! We demand that he be returned to the general population of FCI Coleman Low.

17 Nov - Jeremy Hammond Update

Jeremy Hammond has been in confinement since his arrest in Chicago by the FBI on 5 March 2012. Like others imprisoned for crimes of bringing truths to light, Jeremy has been further retaliated against while in prison, as the government works to deter others from following in his footsteps.

MORE:

November 17th - Jeremy In Prison

Before trial

Jeremy was first held in Metropolitan Correctional Center in New York City, until he was sentenced, and he was transferred to several prisons before ending up where he is now, the Federal Correctional Institution in Manchester, Kentucky.

Accused of various infractions of prison rules, Jeremy was held in punitive segregation (solitary confinement) at MCC on a number of occasions. Solitary confinement has been described by many psychologists, human rights activists, and scholars as psychological torture. Isolation is extremely harmful. As the CCR notes,

Researchers have demonstrated that prolonged solitary confinement causes a persistent and heightened state of anxiety and nervousness, headaches, insomnia, lethargy or chronic tiredness, nightmares, heart palpitations, and fear of impending nervous breakdowns.

After 21 months of pretrial detention and threatened with multiple trials in many jurisdictions, Jeremy agreed to plead guilty to a lesser charge in a noncooperation deal. In May 2013 he received the maximum sentence of ten

years in prison.

Jeremy was denied bail and thus prevented from fully participating in his defense preparation. In denying bail, Judge Preska claimed that there was no way to prevent him from using the Internet. She determined that she couldn't otherwise prevent him from "stopping at an Internet cafe and performing the Stratfor hack all over again," even though Jeremy and his lawyers said that they would accept house arrest.

Making case preparation even more difficult, Jeremy was also permitted only limited access to his discovery documents by the prison, logging only 11 hours of access to the laptop which contained the necessary files between 13 February 2013 and 10 April 2013.

After sentencing

After he was sentenced to a decade in prison, Jeremy was transferred to the medium-security federal prison in Manchester, Kentucky. Jeremy has called his sentence a "vengeful, spiteful act," and it appears the government intends to continue retaliating against him while he's in jail.

Despite good behavior and maintaining a laundry job, Jeremy has had visitor and communication issues with the administration at the Manchester prison. Close friend and longtime manager of FreeJeremy.net, Grace North explained:

Jeremy has stated that his mail – both paper and electronic – comes in bursts. He will get nothing for an extended period of time, and then he will get bundles of mail. This is consistent with him being placed under investigation by "SIS" or "Special Investigative Services." SIS functions as a sort of internal prison police unit, and Jeremy is likely being targeted for continuing to speak out from behind prison walls. More recently, letters, articles, books, and even court documents related to Jeremy's own case have been rejected by the prison, all for nonsensical reasons, making it even more clear that Jeremy is likely being punished for what should be Constitutionally protected free speech.

Most recently, Jeremy was placed in solitary confinement for two weeks in the middle of October 2014, when the prison claimed he stole clothing from his laundry job. In solitary confinement, he is afforded no possessions and is allowed just one book at a time.

If Jeremy is not denied good-time credits, he could be released on Christmas Day, 2020. Federal law does not include provision for parole.

November 20th - Jeremy on his motives: "I had a sense of duty to take action"

Jeremy Hammond spoke to the Associated Press about his motives in breaching the website of private intelligence firm Stratfor, in a piece that subtly makes clear how egregious his sentence was in several ways. Imprisoned in Manchester Federal Prison in Kentucky, his fellow inmates are "cocaine dealers, bank robbers and carjackers" ... "and then there is Jeremy Hammond."

The AP discusses Hammond's upbringing, leading up to 9/11, some of the United States' reactions to which he considered to be "police state measures."

In response, "I had a sense of duty to take action," Hammond said. He "considered hacking a means of social justice," as the AP puts it.

The AP recounts some of his pre-Stratfor activity:

A hack into the website of a group that was harassing Iraq War opponents got Hammond sentenced, in 2008, to 20 months in federal prison. Once out, he got involved in local activist movements, then public protests and then more hacking.

The piece also illuminates the contrast between the rhetoric the government used against Jeremy and the reality of the actual dangers posed. At the time of his capture, the FBI called Hammond their “most wanted” cyber target, but as he says, “I didn’t kill anybody.”

19 Nov - Understanding Barrett Brown’s charges and conduct

As news comes in that his sentencing date has been moved, AGAIN, Barrett Brown’s support crew have released a breakdown of the charges and potential sentences for each.

MORE:

18 U.S.C. § 875(c) — Transmitting a Threat in Interstate Commerce — Count One (felony)

Maximum sentence: 60 months

18 U.S.C. § 3 (§§ 1030(a)(5)(B) and 1030(c)(4)(A)(i)(I)) — Accessory After the Fact in the Unauthorized Access to a Protected Computer — Count Two (felony)

Maximum sentence: 30 months

18 U.S.C. §§ 1501 & 2 — Interference with the Execution of a Search Warrant and Aid and Abet — Count Three (misdemeanor)

Maximum sentence: 12 months

Total maximum statutory sentence: 8.5 years

Why did Brown flip out in the YouTube videos?

Several factors play into Brown’s decision to make the videos, the third of which contained the unfortunate threat against FBI Special Agent Robert Smith which he regrets. Of note when considering his state of mind in those videos is that he’d started weaning himself off of Suboxone, prescribed for opioid maintenance, and had abruptly stopped taking Paxil, which commonly precipitates a manic episode.

His goal had been to bring attention to the FBI’s investigation of him as well as the case against his mother. He was troubled by the fact that the original applications for a search warrant executed at his house on March 6, 2012 were heavily dependent on the false statements of two HBGary executives, with whom he had spoken on the phone during Anonymous’s hack of HBGary a year earlier. During the spring of 2012, the online accounts of an FBI informant named Jennifer Emick were compromised by UGNazi, and messages which were leaked showed that she was in communication with Greg Hoglund, CEO of HBGary, about trying to find ways to get Barrett Brown picked up by law enforcement. Emick’s conversations with HBGary’s former CSO Jim Butterworth likewise revolved around gathering information that would be useful to arrest activists and members of Anonymous.

During an Anonymous operation against the Zeta Mexican drug cartel, Tom Ryan, CEO of Provide Security, a friend of HBGary Federal ex-CEO Aaron Barr, posted pictures on Twitter of what he believed to be Brown’s home. Later, a man named Alan Everett (ex-military, also a friend of Aaron Barr) found and posted Brown’s actual address. Subsequently, Brown went on the run for several weeks, believing he was in danger from the Zetas. During the same month of November 2011, the Zetas had murdered several bloggers in Mexico. When the FBI eventually came to his mom’s house, Brown was told that the search warrant and affidavits were not made public due to the threat to him from the Zetas.

HBGary was noted for its role in the Team Themis affair, which was a plot to set up journalists and activists, supporters of WikiLeaks and critics of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. The fact that it involved the DOJ – via the law firm Hunton and Williams – led to calls for a congressional investigation which never materialized. Brown concluded that HBGary executives and those associated with them, including an array of informants and security contractors, were endangering his life, trying to have him arrested on false charges, and that the FBI would do nothing to protect him or at least tacitly approved. Brown believed up until that time that he’d done nothing criminal to warrant the conspiracy against him.

Jennifer Emick, who claims to have helped spark my #FBI raid, previously harassed my then-gf and her daughter. <http://t.co/X7XbJZzu>

Meanwhile, the Project PM wiki was under heavy DDoS; and Brown's iPhone was being attacked. The online harassment that Brown regularly received had ramped up. Threats of prosecution had been issued against his mother, which was incredibly stressful for him. And the FBI's intentions towards him were unclear; they had held onto his property for over six months at the point. He needed to get the word out. His vow to investigate S.A. Smith was merely under the principle of equal justice – that he could legally do what HBGary, and by extension the FBI, had been doing to him.

Why did Brown refuse to hand over his laptops, and hide them?

Quite simply, this was about protecting sources. Having been involved in Anonymous actions during the Arab Spring, and in communication with people in countries like Tunisia and Bahrain, Brown's computers contained information on individuals living in dictatorships supported by the U.S., who would be at risk of arrest and torture if their identities were provided to those dictatorships. He was greatly worried about the fate of those colleagues should their information become known to the U.S. government, which maintains security arrangements with various countries in the Middle East. This was a serious concern, as an acquaintance named Slim Amanou had previously been tortured before becoming a minister in the new Tunisian government. His computers also contained material that he needed for his work, including notes for a book that had been sold to Amazon and was due in two months.

What about the CFAA charge, “accessory after the fact in the unauthorized access to a protected computer”?

This refers to assistance that Brown rendered to Jeremy Hammond, the imprisoned hacktivist who accomplished the hack of Stratfor at the urging of Sabu, who was under FBI supervision. Brown had a source relationship with Hammond, who usually offered to share any interesting documents obtained from his hacks to be analyzed through Project PM. After the Stratfor hack, Brown sought to minimize the damage to vulnerable parties. He never agreed with the release of innocent persons' credit card information, and was consistently critical of Anonymous in such instances. Brown crossed the line into criminal conduct when he offered to act as a negotiator with Stratfor concerning potential redactions to emails they had obtained, while concealing Hammond's identity from them. Although he was their “top cybercriminal target”, the FBI had not yet identified Hammond – so Brown's assistance to him and protection of his identity constitutes the essence of the crime.

What kind of sentence is the government asking for and how have they overreached?

The government wants Brown to serve the maximum sentence possible under his plea agreement, which is a full 8 ½ years. See the factual resumé for specific details of the conduct constituting the offenses. They are seeking to punish him for the criminal activity of all of Anonymous, who they say are a criminal organization. They are even using the fact that he linked to information hacked from Stratfor – charges which were dropped in March 2014 – as relevant conduct that he should serve more time for.

Incredibly, the prosecutors absurdly maintain that Brown is not an actual journalist, despite the fact that he's worked solely as a writer and began receiving payment starting in his teenage years for a wide variety of journalistic assignments, having more recently contributed to the Guardian, Huffington Post, Vanity Fair and others, has authored two books, appeared in the media as a commentator, currently publishes a column with D Magazine, and has received support from Reporters Without Borders, the Committee to Protect Journalists, Free Press, Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press, Freedom of the Press Foundation, among others.

Prosecutors and/or the FBI have also:

- written that Brown, along with Anonymous, sought to overthrow the U.S. government
- tried to seize funds that were raised for his legal defense
- obtained a gag order against the defendant and his lawyers restricting what they could say about the case for several months
- sought to identify contributors to a website where Brown and others dissected leaks and researched links between intelligence contractors and governments

- pursued a case against Brown's mother, who was forced to plead guilty to a misdemeanor for obstruction, resulting in six months probation and a \$1,000 fine
- argued that he should not be allowed to criticize the government, his First Amendment right
- federal agents seized the Declaration of Independence from his apartment as evidence against him
- used a retweet of a quote from Fox News commentator Bob Beckel threatening Julian Assange – “a dead man can't leak stuff” – and attributed it to Brown within his indictment as threatening

20 Nov - Albert Woodfox's Overturned Conviction Upheld in Unanimous Decision

We are thrilled and honored to announce that the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals upheld Judge Brady's 2013 ruling overturning Albert's conviction for a third time in a 3-0, unanimous decision.

MORE:

Though the courts have finally ruled in the interest of justice, it may still be months or years before this innocent man is released from his solitary cell.

This is THE moment those of us whose lives have been touched by these men and this case over the years have been waiting for. This is the time when we must call upon the whole of our connections, creativity, and courage to call with one voice for the immediate, unequivocal release of Albert Woodfox from prison once and for all without delay.

Even with a unanimous decision in Albert's favor, firmly planted in a mountain of innocence evidence, the State can still tie up his release in a number of appeals and even choose to re-indict and attempt to retry him.

Lest we lose Albert to delayed justice, as we did Herman, we must all come together to demand that this nightmare finally come to an end.

Today the legal team is visiting with Albert to celebrate and strategize next steps, and all of us who are personally and professionally tied up with the Angola 3's story must take a moment to rejoice in this glorious hard won victory.

But tomorrow...well...

Tomorrow we must all do whatever we can to make the final, critical push necessary to finally free Albert Woodfox--and with him the whole of the Angola 3--from prison and from solitary once and for all.

We owe it to Herman, Robert, Albert, and the scores of others who sit wrongfully convicted behind bars, or languish in long term solitary without meaningful review. Justice will not be realized, here or ever, without our most determined and resourceful selves pushing it forward.

We will update you in coming days as things develop. Stand today with Albert, for freedom, and justice will surely follow.

21 Nov - Update on Mohaman Koti

Unfortunately, it appears that the federal authorities are going to pick up recently paroled, 87 year old Mohaman Koti up on the detainer they have on him (he was in federal custody at a halfway house when he got arrested in 1978).

MORE:

It's rather outrageous but hopefully, we can resolve it quickly once they have him.

While he is still at Mohawk, he can be visited. The only issue is we will not know in advance when the federal authorities will pick him up. It would likely not be on a weekend, however.

Take the time to write to Mr. Koti or send him a card.

23 Nov - Seven Activists Arrested on Way to Document Hendry County Breeding Facility

Today, a group of activists assembled with Smash HLS rented a van and set out on a tour to explore and document the monkey facilities. All that is known at this moment is that on the third stop of this expedition, 7 of those activists were arrested on what are said to be bogus trespassing charges, undoubtedly set up and designed to insulate the traders from prying eyes. UPDATE: All activists have been released with charges pending.

MORE:

Activists are mobilizing and are on high alert. As Negotiation is Over has been reporting for weeks, Mazor Farms is in the process of relocating to Florida; it is believed the site of their new concentration camp is the Primera project under construction in Hendry County in Southwest Florida. It is planned to be able to house up to 3,200 hundred primates that will be bred to be tortured in vivisection.

Donations to this new legal fund may be made through Paypal to Mtruji9235@aol.com.

24 Nov - Upon News of Plea Deal, Activists Vow to Organize Until Marissa Alexander is Free

Today, Marissa Alexander has chosen to accept a plea deal with the State of Florida. The plea deal includes time served (1,030 days), an additional 65 days in Duval County Jail which will begin today, and two years of probation while wearing a surveillance monitor.

MORE:

Marissa Alexander is a black mother of three from Jacksonville, Florida who, nine days after prematurely giving birth, was forced to defend her life from a brutal life-threatening attack by her estranged husband, and subsequently prosecuted by State Prosecutor Angela Corey. Alexander, her legal team, and thousands of supporters were preparing for a likely difficult trial to begin this December. If found guilty, she would have faced a mandatory 60 year sentence.

The Free Marissa Now Mobilization Campaign supports Marissa Alexander's self-determination to make the best choices she can while navigating the violent and impossible circumstances created by her abusive husband, Angela Corey, and Florida's judicial system. "The plea deal is a relief in some ways, but this is far from a victory," said Alisa Bierria, from the Free Marissa Now Mobilization Campaign. "The deal will help Marissa and her family avoid yet another very expensive and emotionally exhausting trial that could have led to the devastating ruling of spending the rest of her life in prison. Marissa's children, family, and community need her to be free as soon as possible. However, the absurdity in Marissa's case was always the fact that the courts punished and criminalized her for surviving domestic violence, for saving her own life. The mandatory minimum sentences of 20 years, and then 60 years, just made the state's prosecution increasingly shocking. But we have always believed that forcing Marissa to serve even one day in prison represents a profound and systemic attack on black women's right to exist and all women's right to self-defense."

In 2010, Alexander fired a single warning shot that caused no injuries while defending herself from an attack by her abusive husband who strangled her and threatened to kill her. In 2012, she attempted to invoke Florida's Stand Your Ground immunity, but was denied and sent to trial where she was found guilty and sentenced to a mandatory minimum sentence of 20 years in prison. Supported by an international grassroots movement, Alexander successfully appealed the verdict in September 2013, but Corey filed charges again, this time announcing that she would pursue a mandatory 60 year sentence for Alexander. On November 27, 2013, almost exactly a year ago and after serving nearly three years in prison, Alexander was released and put under very strict house detention while she prepared for her retrial.

The campaign vows to keep organizing for Alexander's freedom and raising awareness about the issues surrounding her case. "It is critical that we keep the momentum of our support and love going until Marissa is restored to her family and community," said Sumayya Coleman, a Free Marissa Now lead organizer. "In light of Marissa's decision to not go to trial, we continue to stand in solidarity with her and her family. Marissa has been

consistent in her self-advocacy, including defending her life when attacked by her husband, rejecting a punishing three year plea deal offered to her in 2012, and taking the plea offered to her today. As difficult as it is to see Marissa unjustly sent back to jail today, her supporters around the world stand by her. We are standing our ground that women have the right to defend themselves from violence, and that black women's lives matter."

Alexander's case has unfolded in the context of the larger crisis of mass incarceration that disproportionately impacts black women and survivors of domestic and sexual violence. The ACLU estimates that 85-90% of people in women's prisons have been victims of domestic violence or sexual abuse. For the next 65 days, the campaign urges Alexander's supporters all over the world to organize rallies and forums that raise awareness about Alexander's case and the cases of other incarcerated women who face similar circumstances, such as Charmaine Pfender.

"We will not stop organizing until Marissa Alexander is free!" said Aleta Alston Toure, a Free Marissa Now lead organizer based in Jacksonville. "During the next 65 days, we must continue to use the attention we've brought to Marissa's case to highlight the broader ongoing crisis of mass incarceration, police violence, and prosecutorial abuse. There are thousands of Marissa Alexanders still behind bars, still facing devastating prison sentences, and still being threatened in their own homes. We must stay the course, spread the word, and change the system until all of our sisters are free."

Free Marissa Now will keep Marissa Alexander's supporters updated about the new address where she can receive mail and next steps for the Marissa Alexander Freedom Fundraiser.

24 Nov - Book Wish Lists

NYC ABC has been compiling the book wish lists of prisoners we support and have consolidated them on this page: <http://nycabc.wordpress.com/book-wish-lists>

MORE:

We recently sent out a letter to several prisoners, asking if they wanted us to create wish lists for them. We quickly received replies from a few and today, we've added lists for:

Gregory Boertje-Obed

<https://www.amazon.com/gp/registry/wishlist/3199NUZLW8FWD>

Tom Manning

<http://www.amazon.com/gp/registry/wishlist/3ICDC4M4JXGC0>

Michael Walli

<http://www.amazon.com/gp/registry/wishlist/3UYQ5I6DF3C11>

We also added the book wish list for recently-arrested, pre-trial jailed anarchist **Eric King**

<http://kansascityabc.wordpress.com/2014/11/20/book-wish-list-for-insurrectionary-anarchist-eric-king>

Please help us promote these lists and get books from their lists bought and sent inside. Also, we are able to set up wish lists for other political prisoners, so please send them to **NYC ABC** at our post office box.

29 Nov - Poets for Oscar Lopez Rivera Event

WHAT: Poets Organized for Oscar Lopez Rivera's Release

WHEN: 3:00pm, Saturday, November 29th

WHERE: La Marqueta in El Barrio East 116th Street and Park Avenue

COST: Free, but donations appreciated

MORE:

"While there exist challenges, there is life, and as a consequence, we can be creative even in the urns of hell!" — Oscar Lopez Rivera, Puerto Rican Political Prisoner

Join us for an afternoon of Poetry, Hip Hop, and Spoken Word for Puerto Rican Political Prisoner Oscar Lopez Rivera!

33 years is too long! It's time Oscar came home! Help us denounce his unjust incarceration!

Performers/Speakers:

Rafael Landron

Non4Prophet

Ben Ramos

The Bread is Rising Poetry Collective
and other invited guests...

Poets Organized for the release of Oscar Lopez Rivera and The ProLibertad Freedom Campaign