



POST OFFICE BOX 110034 BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11211

Updates for December 23rd

5 Dec - "Hands Up, Don't Shoot" by Jalil Muntaqim

Read the latest from Jalil Muntaqim, his critique of passive protest in the face of systemic, white supremacist police brutality.

MORE:

Contrary to the refrain from the tragic Ferguson, Missouri shooting of Michael Brown, we know that keeping your hands up does not mean you will not be shot. Assata Shakur had her hands up when she was shot on the New Jersey turnpike by a State Trooper, Oscar Grant was laying face down on a subway platform when he was shot in the back by a Bay Area Transit cop, Sean Bell was executed in a hail of bullets by a half dozen New York city cops while sitting in a car, and Trayvon Martin fought to defend himself when he was murdered by a wannabe cop just yards from his home. Obviously, I find this plea for mercy sorely insufficient, in fact, indefensible when a trained killer has a weapon pointed at you under the guise of Blue authority. Needless to say, this passive posture generally supports the inferior and superior paradigm, creating a social environment in which Black lives do not matter. Brooke Reynolds, in an essay titled "Policing Race," informed:

"This "order" was created and protected by US law. From slavery to today's militarized ghettos, it is clear that racial violence has almost always occurred explicitly or implicitly in cooperation with the law. William and Murphy trace the relationship between the law and social order: "The fact that the legal order not only countenanced but sustained slavery, segregation, and discrimination for most of our nation's history and the fact that the police were bound to uphold that order sets patterns for police behavior and attitudes toward minority communities that has persisted until the present day." (Parenti). In terms of the relationship to the police themselves, "Government-sponsored racial discrimination and segregation have deeply affected the organizing ethos and practices of US policing." (Parenti)—thus, it becomes clear that "... relationship between police violence and social institution of policing is structural, rather than incidental or contingent." (Martinot, Sexton). Wielding an arsenal of moralist rhetoric and trained over hundreds of years of historical practice, the police work in conjunction with white society and its government to keep white lawlessness understood as nothing other than "public order," enforcing "the law of white supremacist attack" with determination and fervor."

In response to this reality, Robert Williams wrote the book "Negroes With Guns," reflecting on the institutionalization of State violence and the inherent human rights of Black people to defend themselves, that was also practiced by the Deacons for Defense opposing Ku Klux Klan violence.

Reynolds continues:

"By confronting the perpetration of police racial violence with the maintenance of social order, it is rendered unidentifiable, ignorable, and inarticulable. Having been so deeply written into our very conception of social organization and policing, police brutality and racism becomes invisible to white society (who also has an investment in denying the reality of racial violence). Shocked by stories of police violence and unmoved by the dehumanization of racial profiling, white people simultaneously reveal their ignorance of and investment in the violent inherent in the protection of white supremacy."

Furthermore, Reynolds states:

"The ignorability and inarticulability of racist police violence to white society is directly related to its historical and current impunity. Authorized by the government and white society as a whole, the police are given the freedoms necessary in order to guarantee the stability of white supremacy and to continue constructing racialized identities. Within this system, injustices done to people of color are not classified as injustices, if they are recognized at all. Police murders, abuses, and terrorization of people of color, no matter how gratuitous, are more often than not met with legal indifference, public support, and are virtually bereft of consequences. Martinot

notes the relationship between modern-day police impunity, slave patrols, and white supremacist law: “Both the police and the impunity of slave masters belong to the same paradigm of dual systems of law, sanctioned by the law, in producing the subjection of people of color. What contemporary juridical procedure has done, by valorizing police impunity, is regenerated the doubled system of law of the slave system... Thus, both manifest the component elements of white racialized identity paranoia..., violence..., and white solidarity...” (Martinot).

“The racist police violence which pervades the landscape of US society today is not incidental, nor [is it] the work of ‘rogue cops,’ [It is] an essential part of the larger campaign of social re-racialization” (Martinot). Historically rooted in a very real desire to subjugate and control people of color in America, and operating in a way which inscribes and deepens whiteness as an identity and a value, today’s police forces operate along the same paradigm as their predecessors.” (Reynolds)

These lengthy quotes from Reynolds “Policing Race” establish the lens in which we are to view the recent rash of police killings of unarmed Black people. It is extremely important that conversations and national debate about the relationship between the police and the Black community is not the same as the relationship between the police and the white community. The historical ramifications of this dynamic relationship today are subject to the reality of the racist culture in law enforcement. Law enforcement *modus operandi*, for all intents and purposes, are based on outside armed forces, albeit white people, patrolling communities of color, with all of its inherent racial implications.

Over forty years ago, the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense raised the very same issues, establishing their patrols to ensure police officers conducted their business in accord with the law. For their actions and concerns for the welfare of the Black community, the BPP became the number one target for extermination by law enforcement across the country. The primary reason is because the BPP did not believe or practice passive resistance, they were not in the streets chanting “Hands Up Don’t Shoot.”

Such passive pleas would be considered a misguided belief protesters would be safe challenging a system of armed forces with innate disdain for the well being of Black people’s lives. Rather, such *modus operandi* parallels the racial attitudes of the slave patrols out of which the police system evolved. (See, Hadden, Sally E., *Slave Patrols*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001) (Reynolds, pg. 3-8).

The task of young people today is to increase pressure and define the national debate on the relationship between the Black community and police. De-Militarization and De-Centralization must become the primary demand. The call for community control of the police was what the BPP fought to achieve, and that objective is what needs to be demanded now.

The police need to live in the community, not come from outside the community. There must be more diversity in the command and structure of the police, reflecting the composition of the community they patrol.

It is time to reverse the chant ‘No Justice No Peace’ to “No Peace Without Justice,” it is time to ensure Black lives matter as much as white lives, and that all people’s lives are as sacred as police lives.

The First Line of Defense IS power to the People!

Remember: We Are Our Own Liberators

9 Dec - The Nature of Police, the Role of the Left

A young Black person was killed, many people brave enough to take to the streets in the aftermath were injured and arrested, and the only real consequences the police will face will be changes designed to increase their efficiency at spinning the news or handling the crowds, the next time they kill someone.

MORE:

by Peter Gelderloos (*CounterPunch*)

Because amidst all the inane controversies, that is one fact that no one can dispute: the police will kill again, and again, and again. A disproportionate number of their targets will be young people of color and transgender people, but they have also killed older people, like John T. Williams, Bernard Monroe, and John Adams, and white people too. The Right has seized on a couple cases of white youth being killed by cops, like Dillon Taylor or Joseph Jennings, throwing questions of proportion out the window in a crass attempt to claim the police are not racist.

Essentially, the point being made by right-wing pundits is that the cops are killing everybody, so it's not a problem. The fact that they can make this argument and still retain credibility with a large sector of the population shows how normalized the role of the police is in our society. The true meaning of the evidence used manipulatively by the Right is that the police are a danger to anyone not wearing a business suit.

In a serious debate, however, it would be hard to deny that the police are a racist institution par excellence. They kill young black, latino, and Native people at a disproportionately higher rate than white youth, and the institution itself descended from the patrols created to capture fugitive slaves in the South and police urban immigrants in the North, as masterfully documented in Kristian Williams' landmark book, *Our Enemies in Blue*. What's more, the criminal justice system that the police play an integral role in, both feeding and defending the prison-industrial complex, grew directly out of the 13th Amendment's approval of slavery in the case of imprisonment, illuminating the path by which the United States' advancing economy could leave plantation slavery behind, first with the pairing of sharecropping and chain gangs, and more recently with the pairing of a precarious labor market on the outside and booming prison industries on the inside.

However, though the police do not affect everyone equally, they do affect all of us. Everyone who is not wealthy can be a target for police violence, and anyone who fights for a freer, fairer world puts themselves directly into the cops' crosshairs. During the Oscar Grant riots in Oakland or the John T. Williams protests in Seattle, many journalists, closely echoed by progressive spokespersons, denounced the white people who took to the streets angered by police killings. With an underhanded racism, they cast "white anarchists" as the ringleaders of the mayhem, silencing the anarchists of color as well as the many young people of color without any visible ideology who were often the most active at taking over the streets or fighting back against the police. If they really cared about racism and police violence, wouldn't they have portrayed the young people of color as protagonists, rather than mindless stooges of "white anarchists," or simply erasing their participation entirely? Instead of discrediting the relatively few white people who did take to the streets, shouldn't the criticisms have been directed at all the white people who stayed home?

However, with the protests after the non-indictment of Darren Wilson, certain entrenched dynamics have started to change. True, the response to the killing of Oscar Grant did spread to other parts of the West Coast, and it was not successfully spun as an issue only affecting black people; but to a far greater degree, the response to the official announcement that the government approved of Michael Brown's murder spread across the country and included people of all races.

This is a good thing: more people are taking the problem of the police seriously, realizing they need to react, and exploring actions that they can take that will make a difference. The circumstances that forced this necessary step forward are tragic, but they are hardly a surprise to anyone with the slightest sense of history. Police killings and unwavering government support for the cops are an integral part of our society. They are not going away any time soon.

Logically, people would debate: what is to be done? However, this is a debate that mainstream journalists, progressive journalists, protest organizations, and left-wing figureheads have all studiously avoided, maintaining not so much a conspiracy of silence as one of vitriol and marginalization against anyone who challenges their unspoken tenets.

Those tenets are simple: all responses must be peaceful; and the only conceivable goal is piecemeal reform. Within this artificially fixed arena, we are allowed to squabble over all the details we want, from cop-cameras to citizen review boards, but we are never allowed to entertain opinions that transgress those limits. Those who use

a wider lens to understand where police violence comes from and what role it plays in our society are ignored. If they are employed as journalists or academics, they have just made a poor career move, and they will quickly be drowned out by the ladder-climbing, cynical hacks who cover up this ongoing tragedy with banal and myopic observations. Those who actually attempt to explore other paths of action and change will be denounced as “thugs,” “criminals,” and “agitators,” FOX and NPR will speak about them in the same terms, police and protest leaders will unite to suppress them.

That is how free speech works in a democracy. Fix the terms of the debate, distract the masses with fierce polemics between two acceptable “opposites” that are so close they are almost touching, encourage them to take part, and either ignore or criminalize anyone who stakes an independent position, especially one that throws into question the fundamental tenets that are naturalized and reinforced by both sides in the official debate. Noam Chomsky was one of several dissidents to reveal this dynamic during the Vietnam War and demonstrate the unanimity of hawk and dove positions in media debates. The media follow the same rules today. In that earlier crisis, the fundamental tenet was that the US government has the right to project its power, militarily or otherwise, across the entire planet. In the current crisis, the unquestionable dogma is that the police have a right to exist, that the police as an institution are an apt instrument to protect us and serve us, and therefore they are a legitimate presence on our streets and in our neighborhoods.

In this debate, the Right claim that the police are working just fine, while the Left claim that changes are needed to get them working better. Both of them are united in preserving the role of police and keeping real people—neighborhoods, communities, and all the individuals affected by police—from becoming the protagonists in the conflicts that affect us. Similarly, we frequently hear leftists claim that “the prisons aren’t working,” exhibiting a willful ignorance as to the actual purpose of prisons. Sadly, for all their distortions and manipulations, the Right is being more honest. The police and the prisons both are working just fine. As per their design, they are working against us.

On the Left, we find a tragic mixture of the unconscionably cynical with the hopelessly naïve. No serious person can claim that any of their proposed reforms will make a real difference; and in fact most have already been tried. Racial sensitivity training only makes the cops better at hiding their racism. It certainly doesn’t touch the underlying hierarchies that police serve to protect. Civilian oversight, at the very best, can lead to a few “bad apples” being forced to resign, and they have rarely even reached that level of potency. No matter; bureaucracies have always know how to make individual personnel expendable so as to protect the greater power structure, and no government in the world has given oversight boards more power than the institutions they are supposed to monitor, not when those institutions are vital to the smooth functioning of authority.

As for cameras, they would only increase the power of police by augmenting the intrusion of government surveillance into our lives. The murders of Eric Garner and Oscar Grant were caught on tape, and nothing changed. The fact of the matter is, the vast majority of murders carried out by cops are perfectly legal. How can this come as a surprise? The same people who benefit from police violence are the ones writing the laws or getting the lawmakers elected. The only real victim of cop-cameras would be people who choose to defend themselves against cops, an action that, no matter how justified, is never legal. If the cops wore cameras, anyone who raised their hand against them would be caught on tape. But the reformers aren’t thinking about self-defense, are they?

And this is the crux of the issue. The question of self-defense against the police is one that we are not allowed to consider, yet it is the only one that makes sense. The police do not exist to protect society from generalized cannibalism and mayhem, as in some paranoid Batman fantasy. They exist to protect the haves from the have-nots, to maintain the State’s monopoly on violence, and to make up for our atrophied capacity for conflict resolution, another of the many prerogatives the State has stolen from us (whether it’s a lack of the ability to knock on our neighbor’s door when they play their music too loud or to draw on a wider network of family and community ties to deal with an abusive relationship).

We can ignore the antagonistic relationship that the police have with anyone who is not trying or not able to make it to the highest tiers of society, but what we cannot do is reform that relationship away. This is why it is

necessary to talk about self-defense against the police.

But we are not dealing with a open debate between two equal positions, reform or fight back. First of all, this is because the reformers consistently join in with all the dominant institutions, including the bloody-handed cops they claim to oppose, to silence, marginalize, criminalize, or demonize anyone who chooses to fight back against the police. They do not engage in debate because they could only lose; instead they make use of all the lies, distortions, and the generalized amnesia perpetuated by the media specifically to avoid a debate.

Secondly, the reformers are parasites. They would not exist without those who fight back. No one outside their respective communities would ever have heard about Oscar Grant or Michael Brown were it not for the rioters. The recent nationwide protests were only possible because folks in Ferguson were setting fires, looting, throwing rocks and molotovs, and shooting at cops for ten days in August.

If the reformers were sincere, they would thank those who took to the streets for bringing the problem to the country's attention, then respectfully differ on the chosen tactics and goals, laying out a historical case for why peaceful tactics and reformist goals are better suited for achieving a real change. But this couldn't be further from their actual M.O. From parasitic celebrities like Jesse Jackson to an alphabet soup of NGOs, the leftists fly in, put themselves at the head of something they did not start, and work hand in hand with the police to try and calm things down. These professional activists don't have a program of their own; they are just professional fire extinguishers. And in the case of Ferguson, they are the government's most valuable tool. Because it wasn't the police or even the National Guard who succeeded in putting an end to the rioting, but these professional activists.

Their cynicism goes beyond the parasitical, backstabbing relationship they have with those who actually risk themselves fighting to eject police from their neighborhoods, and beyond their racist portrayal of local people of color who are at the frontlines of the fight as either "thugs" or the unwitting pawns of outside agitators. They will even go so far as to use the families of those murdered by police; in fact at this point it seems to be part of their playbook.

If the family calls for peaceful protest, as did the families of John T. Williams or Michael Brown, they lay it down like the law, and marginalize anyone who tries to respond in a more combative manner, maligning them as being disrespectful to the victim, heartless agitators who are taking advantage of tragedy in order to sow chaos. Yet families are not the only ones with a right to respond to police murders. How many of us would want our parents to write our epitaph? How many of us would trust our friends more than our families to know what we would have wanted, if we were killed? Though friendship is not a relationship recognized by law, the friends of a victim have also been directly affected, and they should have a say in what's the appropriate response. In fact, friends and peers have played an important role in many of the anti-police riots in the last few years, though their participation has been largely hidden by the media and the pacifists alike.

It doesn't end there. Neighbors and witnesses are also traumatized by a police murder; they also have an undeniable need to respond to outrage and reassert control over their environment, a control that walking in a peaceful protest flanked by cops cannot give. And if we are not dealing with an isolated murder but a systematic problem, as is the case with police killings, then everyone is affected and everyone has a need to respond.

It shouldn't be necessary to point out that this affects all of us. But the pacifying, paralyzing discourse of the reformers specifically breaks down solidarity. Instead of encouraging us all to feel harm done to another as harm done to ourselves, we are all supposed to take a backseat to "what the family wants." The level of hypocrisy is infuriating when you realize that the peace-preaching professional activists don't give a shit for the family of Michael Brown or anyone else murdered by the cops. Family members are just pawns in their agendas.

When Durham teenager, Jesus "Chuy" Huerta was shot to death in the back of a police car one year ago, his family rebuffed the police department's hollow gestures of reconciliation, and they did not denounce the people who fought with cops in anger over the killing. It's not a coincidence that local leftists were suddenly silent about what the family wanted. And after the non-indictment, when Michael Brown's stepfather Louis Head urged a crowd to "burn this motherfucker down!", how many reformers decided to actually follow his lead?

Instead, they have all scrambled over themselves to prove he did not mean it, broadcasting an apology he issued about a week later, a reconciliation that might have been aided by the fact that Head was facing a criminal investigation and had already been demonized in the media for a reaction that, in Ferguson at least, was common sense for thousands of people.

This is a fine example of opinions we are not allowed to hold, and how the legal system, the media, and the Left all work together to punish and erase such opinions. It was a triumph for this triumvirate of social control that most of the protests around the country were tame, legal affairs that successfully quenched people's anger, but fires, riots, and highway blockades from Oakland to Boston indicate that that control is finally starting to slip. For it to fully fall away, we need to understand the true role of the legal system and the media, and realize the full hypocrisy of the Left.

It is an alarming but historical moment when the Right speaks more truthfully than the Left. While the reformers were talking about bad apples and sensitivity training, cops in Missouri hit the nail on the head when they began distributing and wearing bracelets that said, "We Are All Darren Wilson."

Even leftists who did not openly condemn the rioting fell into a tried and true holding pattern. The only way they could make the rioting palatable was to talk about police brutality against protesters. In fact, for much of the riots, police in Ferguson were remarkably restrained. It became commonplace for protesters to shoot at police with handguns, and in November, assault rifles even made an appearance, yet the cops did not shoot back.

This is an important step forward. In the face of a police institution that has carte blanche to kill, people are beginning to value their own lives over the laws of the elite. Yet for the reformers who cannot conceive of fully opposing any of the existing institutions, this narrative makes no sense. Normal people can only be victims, never protagonists. And criticizing the police means not talking about those moments when cops are actually scared for their lives and do not act with total impunity. The lack of strategic thinking is startling.

As far as governments go, the US is infamous for being particularly heavy handed and unrestrained in obliterating resistance. It militarizes its cops, it metes out sentences far longer than what would be considered just in most other countries, and it does not deign to engage in the balances of compromise and social peace like the social democracies do. To surpass the brutality with which the US government liquidated the black and Native liberation movements in the '60s and '70s, you'd have to look to Iran or China. Yet now, in Ferguson, and in many other cities this past November, the cops and their masters were scared enough that when people began rioting, looting, taking guns to protests, and shutting down highways, the authorities did not respond with a police riot or a military clampdown. To a great extent, their hands were tied.

Why? What were they afraid of?

It certainly wasn't a peaceful protest or a little bad media coverage.

Answering this question more fully, and putting the answers into practice, is the second step towards ending police violence once and for all.

9 Dec - Give Albert Woodfox a Hug for the Holidays; Please Take Action!

In Homer Louisiana, Albert Woodfox remains in his cell - 42 years in solitary and held under increasingly severe restrictions. From the unnecessary and extensive use of the black-box during transport, to the 'catch-22' system making it impossible for Albert to have contact visits, it appears that the response to his most recent court victory is to continue turning the screws ever tighter.

MORE:

Not surprisingly, the Louisiana Attorney General has filed an appeal with the Fifth Circuit Court asking them to review their recent ruling that upheld a lower court's 2013 overturning of Albert's conviction. We anticipate a response from the Fifth Circuit in the coming weeks.

Meanwhile, want to register our concern with the Louisiana Department of Corrections about the recent denial of contact visits to Albert, as explained further in the section below. We hope you'll join us in contacting the Department of Corrections to request that they apply their visitation policy fairly.

Louisiana DOC Violates Own Policy to Wrongfully Deny Albert Contact Visits

Albert Woodfox, the last of the Angola 3 behind bars, has now been denied contact visits for almost two consecutive years. During the latter part of his nearly 40 years at Angola, and for the first few at David Wade Correctional Center in Northern Louisiana where he has been held since 2010, Albert was allowed contact visits on occasion with people on his approved visiting list, as well as less frequent ones with "special visitors" pre-approved in advance on an individual one time basis.

Only months after Albert's conviction was overturned a third time, Wade officials cut off all contact visits without explanation. After pressure from Albert to reinstate the visits, the South Compound Supervisor Colonel Lonnie Nail, who oversees visiting at the prison, has agreed to allow the visits again, but only if Albert and others in CCR comply with the irregular and essentially impossible task of providing a list of who is coming for a contact visit on a particular day so that the Colonel can personally re-screen and re-approve the visitors, a process that is not only onerous but in violation of the Louisiana DOC's own Visitation policy.

In the past, at times when contact visits were more generally allowed, Albert was allowed 2 full days per month for contact visits with anyone on his permanent visiting list (up to 5 at one time), without having to supply the exact date of future visits and certainly without additional screening of pre-approved visitors.

Visiting is not a right for prisoners, especially those in CCR. In Louisiana, some of the details of visiting are left to the discretion of each institution, but statewide there is a detailed visitation policy which among other rights, allows all inmates to put up to 10 people on a "permanent" visiting list. In order to receive a permanent slot, visitors must first pass extensive screening and background checks conducted by both the Louisiana Department of Corrections and the institution where the inmate is housed, as well as followup checks every two years.

As long as inmates have not had their privileges revoked for a specific institution-wide security concern, the pre-approved visitors on each inmate's list can then arrive on any visiting day and have a contact visit with the prisoner.

Albert has repeatedly told Colonel Nail that it is impossible for him to know who is coming to visit him on any given visiting day given his lack of real time contact with the outside world, and he strongly believes that people on his permanent visiting list should not have to be re-subjected to an additional round of screening before each visit after already having been extensively vetted. The DOC's own visitation policy backs him up.

Based upon his own experience of spending 29 years in solitary confinement, Robert explains that the significance for Albert and all prisoners of having access to contact visits cannot be overstated. "I know how important they were for me. I went for a while without contact visits, but as I began receiving letters from supporters and eventually began to have contact visits, it was really uplifting for me and it freed my humanity. Contact visits were therapeutic and helped to combat the overwhelming sense of isolation. It means so much when you can embrace someone you love and have been separated from."

TAKE ACTION - Operation "Give Albert a Hug for the Holidays"

Please take a moment today to remind the State that they can't just continue to torture Albert and violate their own policies on our watch.

9 Dec - Barrett Brown statement on Rolling Stone; Sentencing Update

In advance of his sentencing, Barrett Brown sets to correcting at least some of the inaccuracies in a piece written about him in Rolling Stone.

MORE:

After receiving a tip I'd sent to them through a colleague, the Washington Post today ran an online piece regarding an article about my case that appeared last year in Rolling Stone. As the Post noted, the author began and ended that piece with a scene in which my lawyer meets with me at the Mansfield Law Enforcement Center where I was being held at the time- a scene in which I hand him a handwritten copy of my latest article with instructions to send it to the Guardian, where I've been a contributor for several years. The Post correctly notes that the author was not actually present at the scene, but instead had my lawyer describe it to him afterwards. The Post also quotes the author to the effect that the scene nonetheless happened as he described it, that the quotes he uses are all real, and that the manner in which all of this was executed in print was done with my understanding and permission. Unfortunately, this is entirely false.

I did not hand my lawyer any articles at that meeting, or any other meeting; at the time, I always sent my handwritten work to my mother to be typed up and then e-mailed to my lawyers for approval before publication. Obviously, then, I did not say "Penned it out" to my lawyer while "triumphantly" handing him the article, since, again, there was no article to hand to him. And thus it is likewise impossible that, as claimed in the end of the Rolling Stone article, I pointed to my handwritten column and declared that "This is what's important" or whatever I am supposed to have said. Likewise, I was not wearing a jumpsuit to the meeting; as anyone may confirm with a quick phone call, inmates at the federal detention facility in Mansfield do not wear jumpsuits. And I'm assuming the author has me "shuffle" in to the room based on a description he read in an earlier article describing a hearing in which I walked in to the court room- wearing leg irons.

These are minor details in the grand scheme of things, especially when put up against the crucial issues of press freedom and the accuracy of public information that form the background to my case, my work, and my life thus far. It's a shame, then, that the editors of Rolling Stone were clearly more concerned with being able to work in these kinds of details, even if false, than they were about the accuracy of the article as a whole, which includes several fundamental errors of fact that could have easily been caught via better journalism or even basic fact-checking. For instance, it is claimed, falsely, that I was the one who discovered the Team Themis conspiracy against Wikileaks and various journalists and activist groups, which in fact was dug up more or less simultaneously by several parties in the press and the Anonymous collective. It also claimed, just as falsely, that I discovered the Trapwire capability, which I supposedly thought to be the most important revelation to be found among the millions of e-mails taken from the corrupt intelligence contracting firm Stratfor. Actually, Trapwire was discovered by Wikileaks, and the author entirely misrepresents my take on what Trapwire was and to what extent it should have been a source of concern.

As I'm to be sentenced next Tuesday on charges related to these matters, I can't go into further detail yet about everything the author of this piece and his editors got wrong despite having had nearly unlimited access to my lawyers and colleagues. Next week, though, a long piece by the journalist Jan Ludwig will be appearing in the German press that will address this matter further, in addition to revealing other rather extraordinary aspects of this case. I imagine that translations will be forthcoming immediately afterwards. In the meantime, though, I hope this clears things up.

December 12th - In advance of Barrett Brown's sentencing, government blocks the public's right to know

Ahead of the sentencing of Barrett Brown, which is due to happen next Tuesday, December 16th, the DOJ is opposing the public's right to know about a case with extraordinary implications for the public and for the practice of journalists.

On November 19th, Brown's defense attorneys filed their final sentencing memorandum, which is a thorough legal argument in favor of time served for the defendant, including many letters submitted by friends, family and supporters on his behalf. Because the government's pleadings arguing for a 8 ½ year sentence were made under seal, the defense's filing in response was also sealed, like much of the case. Arbitrary and inexplicable secrecy, including protective orders and gag orders have abounded in *USA v. Barrett Lancaster Brown* from the very start.

On Thursday, the defense filed a motion to unseal the sentencing memorandum and attendant exhibits in support

of the public's right of access. Incredibly, the government is opposing the release of the sentencing memo.

It seems clear that the government doesn't want journalists to attend the upcoming hearing with an understanding of what issues are at stake, and they don't want further attention to a case that has already proven to be an embarrassment.

Brown has spent 27 months in jail, and now scrutiny of his final hearing and access to the arguments being made by each side is being blocked.

This morning, the court ordered that the government respond to the motion by the end of today. In the afternoon, the US attorneys office requested and received an extension until Monday.

Free Barrett Brown calls upon the judge to rule in favor of the public's right to know, and we ask the press not only to follow Brown's sentencing, but to inquire of these government prosecutors about what compels them to prevent observers from learning what's at stake.

December 16th - Government's Final Onslaught Delays Barrett Brown's Sentencing

by Douglas Lucas (*WhoWhatWhy*)

Even with a conviction secured by a plea deal, prosecutors doubled down against a brash journalist who dared to expose the national security machinery and threaten an FBI agent.

Hactivist writer Barrett Brown's sentencing in Dallas on Dec. 16 was supposed to be a one-day affair, ending with the handing down of a prison term of not more than eight-and-a-half years.

But prosecutors surprised the court and Brown's defense team with hundreds of pages of evidence and exhibits to push for the longest prison term possible.

The sudden onslaught and ensuing testimony prompted Judge Sam A. Lindsay to order Brown to return on Jan. 22 to find out his fate.

Brown, 33, a feisty, confrontational figure, published incendiary findings about what private intelligence contractors were doing. His work, still largely ignored by the mainstream media, came before NSA whistleblower Edward Snowden's revelations made government surveillance a household topic.

His reports based on hacked e-mails were nothing short of astonishing. Working through his virtual research syndicate Project PM, Brown described:

- The mass monitoring of social media networks
- A "cyber-intelligence complex" of breathtaking expanse
- Disinformation operations against Wikileaks and its supporters on behalf of Bank of America
- How analysts can control multiple fake online identities

As he continued to dig, Brown brought the hacktivist collective Anonymous to widespread attention by demonstrating what hacktivists and journalists could accomplish together. But Brown's arrest in September 2012, after he made a series of hyperbolic rants against FBI Agent Robert Smith on YouTube, muted the fireworks.

An Easy Target

Brown's instinctive defiance of authority and swaggering proclamations made him an easy target. The prosecution initially had alleged that he and Anonymous "secretly plotted the overthrow of the government."

Prosecutor Candina Heath took full advantage of Brown's bombast when questioning Smith, the FBI agent, on Tuesday. At one point, she asked Smith to read a statement from Brown in which he had said, in part, "my anarchism is my own."

Originally facing 105 years in prison, and as a welter of public criticism grew over the government's conduct in the case, Brown on April 29 took a dramatically lowered plea deal that allowed for a maximum sentence of eight-and-a-half-years.

By then, prosecutors had already dropped the most severe charges Brown faced: those relating to his sharing of an Internet link containing stolen credit-card data, which the hackers of Stratfor had already posted publicly.

That accusation in particular brought sharp criticism from the Committee to Protect Journalists, Reporters Without Borders, the Electronic Frontier Foundation and others. Those groups and others submitted a friend-of-the-court brief challenging the government's charges as a violation of the First Amendment.

Chilling 21st Century Journalism

And nothing in the case is more important, in terms of what's at stake for journalists or anyone interested in reading hacked information in the digital age.

The government argued that the information was stolen property, and that Brown acted as a sort of digital "fence" by giving it to others. Heath told the court that "once credit card data is stolen, it remains a stolen item ... (Brown) took data he knew to be stolen and purposefully trafficked it."

The defense likened the credit-card data to a car that was stolen by someone else and left in a parking lot. All Brown did was say "go to the lot and look at the car. Mr. Brown didn't get in the car and drive the car around," defense lawyer Marlo Cadeddu told the court.

No matter what interpretation the judge makes, there is little doubt that Brown's prosecution has had an immediate impact on journalism.

Quinn Norton, a journalist who covers the Anonymous movement, told the court: "The concept you could be held responsible for a link is absolutely chilling for what I do. It's absolutely chilling to what 21st Century journalism will be."

9 Dec - Abdullah Majid Parole Campaign Help Needed

A comrade recently received a letter from Abdullah Majid asking for help around his parole board visit in late January, 2015. Please help as you can.

MORE:

Abdullah Majid has been in prison for 33 years for a crime he denies committing. After three (3) trials over four (4) years he and Bashir Hameed (now deceased) were convicted for the murder and attempted murder of two NYPD officers in the county of Queens, New York. Mr. Majid is finally scheduled to make his first parole appearance January 2015, and he is asking for your support with letters to the parole board for his release. Mr. Majid is aware he will be faced with an uphill fight for his freedom due to the NYPD's unparalleled influence over the parole board. Nonetheless, he has always been a fighter and is not discouraged in spite of the formidable forces he is up against.

Letters to the parole board should be sent to:

**New York State Board of Parole
c/o Moira Meltzer-Cohen, Esq.
11 Park Place, Suite 914
New York, New York 10007**

With your support and help we are looking forward to having Abdullah back on the outside after 33 years with his family, comrades and friends.

You can write Abdullah at :

Abdullah Majid #83-A-0483
Five Points Correctional Facility
State Route 96
Post Office Box 119
Romulus, New York 14541

11 Dec - Merry XVX!!! by Abdul Haqq

We're including the latest from Abdul Haqq, after a brief hiatus from writing for the public.

MORE:

Happy Holidays everybody! Sorry if I haven't been very responsive as of late. I have just been consumed with my language studies (Spanish/Arabic) and my exercise routine. As a prisoner in a counter-terrorism prison unit; with a few years of time under my belt now. I am becoming a bit reclusive as a matter of mental well being. While I yearn for my return to society that date is still years away and constantly having my mind on the outside while my body is incarcerated is frustrating and slightly schizophrenic.

My heart goes out to all the freedom fighters for the Earth and Animals as well as the struggles for human rights and the fight against racism. In these caustic times we must struggle to keep ourselves optimal and our intentions pure. Too much of what passes as revolution, activism and "the movement" is just empty slogans, activist reenactments of the 1960's, and the picket era.

Political jargon, be it socialist, anarchist or right-wing all seek to frame very real and drastic problems, problems of life and death as 'issues' that cowards, armchair generals and fakes use as a platform for their ridiculous and often irrelevant beliefs and pretentious rhetoric.

While the world burns and swelters with the heat of racism, police brutality, Animal use and abuse, environmental degradation, disease, famine, pestilence, war, filth, perversion and neurosis. We chant, we hold sings, we take to the internet and voice our opinions, in a sea of opinions. we play on our fiddles while the Earth dies. Technology amplifies the decay and wickedness, magnifying it, prolonging it, exploiting it, thousands of times beyond the pale of reason!

Most of this year I have taken off writing my usual articles and essays. Mainly, I stopped for two reasons: First, I live in a CMU prison unit, (If you don't know what that is, find out!). And as such, I am under constant censorship. I would rather not say anything than be censored in part. And secondly, I feel that my writings have become more fodder for philosophers and do-nothings to debate about or raise an eyebrow too.

I have always been outspoken WHEN it effects a change. I have also been an anonymous freedom fighter behind the mask which was much more effective and gratifying than being an interesting read for college kids or an imprisoned martyr for Animals.

Still, given the vantage point of a prison cell, time to think, time to read, and time to grow. I look back at my own feeble attempts at resistance and see them for what they were, a stepping stone. Animals, the Earth and Humans will never be free until we are rid of technologically advanced civilization. What is vivisection, factory farming, genetic engineering, surveillance society, or any institution of oppression besides a technological institution of innovation? The Animals won't be free of the laboratory as long as there are laboratories. The Earth will not be free from industry until there are no industries. Behind every single facet of worldwide destruction you will find technology, and only technology has exacerbated and accelerated our own greed to the point in which it is threatening all life.

It's not about diets, or politics (left or right). It's not about morality, or the lack thereof. people have always done what people do, and we will continue with our machinations until the end. It's about balance. It's about autonomy and the type of freedom that truly matters. Not the freedom to be politically correct or the freedom of hedonism. But the freedom to live, love, struggle and die along with every creature on the planet.

11 Dec - Palestinian American Activist Rasmea Odeh Bonds Out of Jail After Government Fails to Block Release

Palestinian American organizer Rasmea Odeh, who was convicted of immigration fraud by a jury in Detroit in November, was released from a county jail on \$50,000 bond on December 10th after the United States Justice Department failed to block her release by trying to challenge the source of the bond money. She returned to her home in Chicago.

MORE:

by Kevin Gosztola (*The Dissenter*)

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. And, forty-five years ago, she was arrested and subjected to rape and torture by Israeli security forces.

When the Justice Department found out that the Rasmea Defense Committee was using social media to raise funds so she would have the \$50,000 to bond out of jail, the prosecutors saw an opportunity to keep her in prison until her sentencing on March 10.

Prosecutors argued in a motion to determine the source of bond money, "Defendant is not planning to pledge her own property as collateral but rather is seeking to raise money from contributors for her release."

"It is difficult to see why money raised from large numbers of people creates any incentive for Defendant Odeh to appear," the motion added. "It is likely that she would suffer no personal loss by virtue of its forfeiture, and if money is raised from a large enough number of people, none of them would suffer a significant loss either. It's defendant's burden to establish by clear and convincing evidence that she is not a risk of flight. Clear and convincing in this context means that it is 'highly probable' that she would not be a risk of flight."

This was a "totally ridiculous move to try and keep her jail," Michael Deutsch, one of Odeh's attorneys, told Firedoglake.

The government asked for a hearing, but the government soon discovered that the \$50,000 was coming from one person, not the horde of activists and supporters the Justice Department has been demonizing whenever they have had the opportunity.

"We made him available for a deposition because he was a close friend of Rasmea, and he was a working guy and he put up most of his retirement money," Deutsch said.

During the deposition, according to Deutsch, the government asked the friend of Rasmea about his political beliefs and "what he believed about the Israeli courts and about the military court." Odeh's attorneys objected.

The deposition went on for about an hour and, as it wrapped, the government recognized they were not going to win this challenge and withdrew their objection to the bond money being put up for her release.

Part of what precipitated this development was the fact that she had been put in solitary confinement at the county jail in Port Huron, Michigan, where the US Marshal's Service was holding her until sentencing.

Deutsch explained that first a guard claimed she had been "disrespectful" and so she was given "six days in isolation." It basically was a result of a "difference of opinion." The guard "took offense and wrote her up."

When it was time for her to be released from solitary confinement, the jail extended her time for three more days with no explanation. Those days elapsed, and the jail extended her time in isolation again.

Eventually, the jail informed her that because of her "notoriety" and the fact that her case was in "social media" she had to be locked up in solitary confinement "for her own protection," according to Deutsch. "Therefore, she was going to be kept isolated without any contact with any of the other prisoners" and only "let out for 20

minutes at midnight.”

Her defense was outraged and Deutsch emailed the judge demanding an emergency hearing because “this was outrageous.” He at least wanted her to be sent to a federal prison near Chicago. But Judge Gershwin Drain granted her bail.

“The idea that you could just say because you have notoriety we’re going to lock you up in isolation indefinitely—I don’t believe they could get away with that if she went to court and challenged it,” Deutsch declared.

It was Deutsch’s belief that US Attorney Barbara McQuade was aware that she was being kept in isolation and that her office likely approved or had no issue with what the jail was doing to Odeh.

“There’s a political agenda going on here. In my view, it’s obvious,” Deutsch added.

Barbara Harvey, an attorney with the National Lawyers Guild (NLG) who has been working on NLG filings in Odeh’s case, commented on this episode.

“It’s a sad commentary on our federal justice system that it has so aggressively pursued the criminal prosecution of a woman who is in this country because she fled wrongful imprisonment in Israel, based on a confession coerced from her by a sustained pattern of rape and other brutal torture; who for all of her 20 years here has lived an exemplary life as a model citizen; who has dedicated her past 10 years in Chicago to public service [by] helping other Arab women immigrants assimilate successfully into a very different society than the one they have all left behind.”

“We are very relieved that she has now been rescued from a county jail, where she was kept for half of the past month — arbitrarily and vindictively — in solitary confinement,” Harvey stated.

Odeh spent about a month in prison because Drain revoked her bond after a jury issued a verdict, which he took the unusual and probably unethical step of openly endorsing in court.

The Rasmia Defense Committee reported in a press release that Odeh looked “strong” and “excited to see more of her friends, family and supporters soon.”

“The defense committee wants to again thank everyone for their phone calls, letters, rallies, protests, and all the other activism that helped us get Rasmia released. She sends her love and appreciation to all, and graciously asks us to be ready for the next stage—winning the appeal and exonerating her fully.”

In Chicago, she will be working on her sentencing case while also returning to her work with the Arab American Action Network and its Arab Women’s Committee until March 10.

12 Dec - A Word From Eric G. King

Eric King just released another statement while awaiting trial for allegedly attacking a politician's office. Eric is still pre-trial and could use more support. Please remember not to write about his case, as what you write can be used against him at trial.

MORE:

“I endure my sorrows with my convictions which are stronger than all of this human vileness.” That quote by revolutionary Spaniard Durruti sums up my current existence. Prison is a disgusting place meant to destroy hope and facilitate despair. Thankfully I find myself comforted knowing that to be a fighter is to suffer the consequences of revolutionary action, and to cower as soon as things begin to suffer is to lose track of what matters most. There is no shame in being locked down for my alleged crimes. The state at every level has been complicit to the destruction of the poor working class both at home and abroad. American workers have forgotten that their time is precious, their labour glorious. So long have wages and benefits been cut, so long have the lower class been villainized that many forget that they are not “soon to be millionaires” but rather

horribly exploited. Classism in the states is manifested by the rich and drilled into all of our brains until instead of disgust against a society that allows its brothers and sisters to toil for 7 an hour, we have disgust for the people doing those jobs! How backwards.

My life goal even back to the early priestly days has been to fight for the poor and exploited: both by fighting against classism, racism, sexism and all oppression. I have witnessed the state at the highest federal level down to the lowest meaningless commission act in compliance with corporate desires against humans, nonhuman animals and the environment. To ignore these actions is to put your own boot on the throat of the oppressed. So I await my trial for allegedly fighting against that which has always and will always use its tools to silence dissent and manipulate the masses. To fight against this government is to do the most honorable thing a human can do, to sacrifice what you can, when you can.

I stand behind the comrades in Ferguson, that they may accomplish the great deed of social revolution over a system of decades old institutionalized bigotry, and with the anti-government protesters in Mexico, standing up against the US backed government ran on violence and corruption. My only regret is that I am not able to join in those battles. For me my fight is on the inside now. Overcoming torturous solitary conditions and stimulation isolation. I take great solidarity from those who have come before me in this struggle and those who continue to show me love and remind me what this fight is for.

Please continue to support the causes that fight for dignity and empowerment of the oppressed and exploited over profit. Please support those who saw injustice and could no longer continue to struggle in a non-confrontational form, whose hearts had seen enough suffering to have to defend and lash out in the only ways they knew how. Thank you to everyone who has sent a letter, funds, books, posted on a website or shown support in anyway. Times like these you find out who your real friends are and what love really means. My spirit wont weaken, 20 years or 1 year, I will continue to give all I have for the liberation movement I cherish more than life. No gods, no masters, no justice, no peace!

12 Dec - New writings by Mumia Abu-Jamal

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

MORE:

December 12th - DEATH, For a Cigarette!

The name Eric Garner is now enshrined in the grim annals of history.

It joins Mike Brown, Rahmarley Graham, Alan Blueford, Dontre Hamilton, Tamir Rice, and thousands of others, who were murdered by those their taxes have helped pay: cops.

In many ways, Garner's case is even more egregious than Brown's, for it was videotaped, and one sees his takedown, his incessant choking, his unconsciousness - and shortly thereafter - his death.

Now, the words "I can't breath" have become joined with the cry "Hands Up!"- reminders of the Garner and Brown killings at the hands of police.

Both cases are also noted for the behavior of grand juries, which now appear reckless beyond belief, in their inability to return indictments against cops.

The grand jury emigrated here from England, where, as it was then called, 'grand assizes', a body of about a dozen knights, under the direction of a baron (or some other noble), would investigate cases and charge people.

Later, they became tools of the king.

Today, they are instruments of the prosecutors, and used, just as under kings, to target whom they wish - and to clear whom they wish.

Outrage stems from the long history of its use to protect cops -yes-even killer cops.

This, while the nation is awash in mass incarceration, the majority of whom have never had a grand jury indictment, unlike the average cop.

The System is constructed to protect their minions (the cops), no matter how outrageous their behavior. That's just a fact.

And as the nation now celebrates historic events from the civil rights movement of a half-century ago, the grim and ugly present of Black life-and Black Death-in America, makes that glowing history feel hollow indeed.

December 12th - Beyond "Rotten Apples" and "Broken Windows"

The massive demonstrations rocking U.S. cities from coast to coast are loud and visible reflections of the deep anger and antipathy rising up against the long and bloody train of police terrorism.

If you have read my writings or listened to my commentaries, you know that I describe the police violence as what it is: terrorism, not 'brutality'.

For the aim of all police violence is to instill terror in Black populations, just as was the aim of white terrorists of the past, like the Ku Klux Klan, which lynched Black men, women and yes- children.

And although these protests by young people across the country are remarkable, we must remember that cop violence against African American communities ain't a new thing.

It was December 4, 1969 – 45 years ago, when cops raided the Monroe Street apartment building of young Black Panthers, including Deputy Chairman Fred Hampton, of Chicago. There, police, armed with submachine guns, shot Capt. Mark Clark, of Peoria, Illinois, and Deputy Chairman Fred Hampton, as he slept in his bed, next to his pregnant wife. Both Mark and Fred were killed; at least 7 other Panthers were wounded by police gunfire – as they lay in their beds.

Not a single cop was ever charged with these murders or these attempted murders and aggravated assaults on members of the Illinois Black Panther Party.

Next spring marks the 30th anniversary of the MOVE Bombing – where cops dropped bombs from a helicopter, and killed 11 men, women and children – members and relatives of the Black Naturalist group, MOVE.

Eleven people burned and/or shot to death – and 2 city blocks in Philadelphia turned to glowing red bricks and ashes. And again, not a single cop ever even charged with anything. Only MOVE survivor, Ramona Africa would ever get to prison – for Riot! 7 years.

The movement protesting police terrorism is a remarkable thing; but it didn't begin yesterday.

Police terrorism is decades long, and it ain't about 'rotten apples' nor 'broken windows'. It's about blocking a popular freedom movement, and protecting a system of repression.

12 Dec - Help Re-launch Fire to the Prisons!

Help get a new issue of Fire to the Prisons into the hands of anyone that wants it by going to and promoting the fundraiser at <https://www.indiegogo.com/projects/fire-to-the-prisons-relaunch>

MORE:

The last *Fire to the Prisons* magazine came out in the Spring of 2011 as the Arab Spring was unfolding. Since then, we saw the rise and fall of Occupy, the unfolding anti-police rebellion in Ferguson, Missouri, as well as riots, strikes, and occupations from Hong Kong to Mexico, Brazil to Canada, France to Chile, Spain to Syria.

Our publication was born in a sea of insurrectionary possibility when many of us broke out of activism and sought to push the ideas of social war towards a physical reality. Now, we can feel something in the air. Across the globe, riots are continuing to break out in the wake of police murders. Prisoners are linking up together across racial lines and going on strike. Native communities block fracking pipelines and burn police cars. Strikers become uncontrollable to union leaders and occupy buildings and attack the police. People take over land and defend it against the construction of everything from airports to condos. They take up arms and fight ISIS. Rebels burn down the Presidential palace against State sanctioned murder. Rioters tell Jesse Jackson to get the fuck out of town. There is a feeling of possibility in the air again; against a set of apparatuses that seek to dominate and control all aspects of life.

At the same time, there is a grave feeling of what is coming. Civilization is breaking down. Some places are now without water and some are already *under water*. Meanwhile, governments across the world gear up for war and expand the surveillance State into every aspect of our lives. The Left rallies to manage the disaster. The Right attempts to shift the blame on everything from immigrants to infidels, while preparing the ground for fascism.

But we need to wage a struggle not just on the ground - but in terms of *ideas*.

Our project is still the same. We seek to get organized and expand, popularize, and spread subversive and insurrectionary ideas across the social terrain, between struggles, and across territories. We seek to build bonds and strengthen affinities and get news and analysis of revolt to those outside of the radical ghetto. Ours truly is a *borderless affinity*.

Now is the Time to ReLaunch This Publication

There is no better time than now to re-launch this publication. All around us, new struggles break out and there is growing interest in radical ideas against domination. We seek to produce our own publication that we can get into the hands of thousands of people throughout the world. Our new issue will feature original content on ongoing struggles and revolts, interviews, and all the prison news, political prisoner updates, and resistance reports you have come to love and depend on.

But we need you to make this project happen.

By reaching our goal of \$1,400, we will cover our printing costs for this issue. By reaching \$2,000, we will make copies of this publication available to the wider public completely free through our friends at Little Black Cart (LBC) in Berkeley, California. Once we reach this goal, anyone will be able to order a bundle of this publication to distribute through LBC to give out.

We want to put a weapon into the hands of anyone who is interested. This will go into every corner and liquor store and break room and infoshop; every anarchist distro; and every affinity group at every demonstration and riot.

If you ever picked up a free copy of *Fire to the Prisons* in the past, got a stack and tabled with them, or just enjoyed the magazine existing, linking people, ideas, struggles, and those behind bars together; if you supported us fundraising thousands of dollars for those locked up and sending hundreds of copies into prisons - please donate now. Help us continue this project.

13 Dec - Business owner imprisoned for aiding family in Iraq moved to Columbia halfway house

Shakir Hamoodi, imprisoned for sending money to his family in Iraq in violation of U.S. sanctions, was released December 9 from the United States Penitentiary at Leavenworth, Kansas to serve the remainder of his sentence in a halfway house and on home arrest. NOTE: The following is a corporate news piece.

MORE:

by Rudi Keller (*Columbia Daily Tribune*)

Hamoodi, a nuclear scientist once employed by the University of Missouri and owner of World Harvest Foods, was sentenced in 2012 to three years in federal prison for sending more than \$200,000 to family, friends and charities from 1991 to 2003. Investigators found no evidence he was aiding the Iraqi government of Saddam Hussein through his contributions, which he told the court were to provide for basic needs of family members.

“My uncle was a surgeon who made \$2 a month and could not even buy a box of eggs,” said Owais Abdul-Kafi, Hamoodi’s son, in an interview Friday. “They were suffering and starving.”

Hamoodi, 62, is at Reality House in Columbia and has a final release date of April 7, 2015. Federal release rules require him to seek work until his final release but he is not allowed to work at his business, Abdul-Kafi said. Since his father’s imprisonment, Abdul-Kafi has managed the business while pursuing medical studies at the University of Missouri.

Prior to his sentencing, friends and supporters urged that Hamoodi be put on probation. Since his incarceration, petitions seeking a commutation have been presented to the U.S. Department of Justice and the White House with no results.

“We are very thankful for the community of Columbia,” Abdul-Kafi wrote. “They have stood with our family through this whole process.”

Hamoodi’s troubles began in 2006 when his home was searched as part of a federal investigation of Life for Relief and Development, a Michigan-based Islamic charity that employed Hamoodi as a speaker to aid fundraising efforts. He pleaded guilty to federal charges in December 2009.

“It is an outrageous travesty to think that what this guy did deserves incarceration,” Columbia attorney Craig Van Matre, who has represented Hamoodi’s business interests and helped organize the petition effort.

Support for Hamoodi has not been limited to his friends in Central Missouri. Chinese artist Ai Weiwei, imprisoned by his government for 81 days in 2011, included Hamoodi twice in an exhibition on display at the historic on Alcatraz prison in San Francisco Bay.

His image appears in “Trace,” a segment that features 176 Lego portraits of figures that include Americans Martin Luther King Jr., Edward Snowden and Chelsea Manning as well as Nelson Mandela and other past and present prisoners from around the world.

“He is a classic good man,” Van Matre said. “He is compassionate. He is intelligent. He is caring. He’s a leader of the Muslim community and he is charitable to the extreme. He is an adherent to the best aspects of the Muslim religion and he just didn’t deserve this.”

Many of the family members Hamoodi tried to help live in Anbar Province of Iraq, the site of renewed fighting in the past year between ISIS and the pro-U.S. government in Baghdad. “It is a very troubled situation,” Abdul-Kafi said. “It goes from one military or militia group to another. We don’t know what will happen.”

Hamoodi is closer to home and family members will be able to visit more, but they are waiting for his release to celebrate, he said. “He’s in a halfway house right now. That is what it is.”

15 Dec - Illustrated Guide Version 9.8 Now Uploaded!

We’ve finished the latest version of the NYC ABC “Illustrated Guide to Political Prisoners and Prisoners of War” and it’s available for viewing (and download) by heading to <http://nycabc.wordpress.com/guide>

This update includes updated mini-bios, photos, and address changes for several prisoners as well as removing Brian Church (TIME SERVED!) and Sekou Odinga (PAROLED!).

17 Dec - Cuban Five Freed!

C'mon, Bam, now's the time to free 'em all!

MORE:

from *Democracy Now!*

In a reported prisoner exchange, Cuba has released Alan Gross, a subcontractor for U.S. Agency for International Development, after five years in prison, while the United States is freeing the three remaining members of the Cuban Five — Gerardo Hernandez, Antonio Guerrero and Ramon Labañino.

According to news reports, the United States will open talks with Cuba aimed at restoring full diplomatic relations for the first time in more than a half century. In a statement released by the White House, the Obama administration admits U.S. policy on Cuba has "failed."

Alan Gross was arrested in 2009 on suspicion of being a U.S. spy after handing out equipment to Cuban opposition groups. The Cuban Five were arrested in the United States in 1998 and convicted of conspiracy to commit espionage. The Cuban intelligence officers say they were not spying on the United States, but rather trying to monitor violent right-wing Cuban exile groups responsible for attacks inside Cuba. Both President Obama and Cuban President Raúl Castro are scheduled to make statements today on U.S.-Cuban relations.

17 Dec - RIP Samiya "Goldi" Davis Abdullah

We are saddened to share the news that Samiya "Goldi" Davis Abdullah, daughter of Wadiya Jamal and Mumia Abu-Jamal, passed away after a long fight with breast cancer.

MORE:

The inhumanity of being separated from your family weighs heavily on every prisoner. For Mumia, held in solitary, with non-contact visits for 30 years, it was and is heart wrenching. Born in 1978, she was just 36 years old. She had just finished a Master's Degree in Social Work at the University of Pennsylvania and is survived by two young daughters. In one of the most moving and personal pieces that he has written Mumia describes her visit to him when he was in solitary confinement on death row at SCI Greene. "The Visit" is in his first book *Live From Death Row* and was recreated in movie "Mumia: Long Distance Revolutionary."

Known as "Goldi", her stage name, Samiya was a rapper of lyrical grace and sharp, pointed consciousness, one who used her spoken word skills to highlight issues of racial inequality, criminal (in)justice, and always to promote Black liberation. From a daughter's perspective, she was a dynamic spokesperson, speaking stirringly of the impact incarceration has on children and families. She was also a staunch advocate on behalf of her father's innocence. The irregularities of his trial and sentencing were also subjects she rapped on. She raps on this track "Mumia 911" produced by Frank Sosa. Artists involved included Public Enemy's Chuck D., Rage Against the Machine front man Zack de la Rocha, Dead Prez, and Pharoahe Monch.

18 Dec - "I'm an Anonymous hacker in prison, and I am not a crook. I'm an activist" by Jeremy Hammond

Anonymous may have hacked Sony back in the day, but Jeremy Hammond is still a social justice activist. From economic inequality to police brutality, he believes hacktivism is still the future.

MORE:

by Jeremy Hammond (*The Guardian*)

Here in prison, I am asked a lot about hacking and especially about Anonymous, because of course there is interest in new technologies like Bitcoin for money or darknets for fraud. After all, convicts – like hackers – develop their own codes and ethics, and they are constantly finding ways to scam and exploit cracks in the system.

The anti-government message of Anonymous rings true among prisoners who have been railroaded, condemned and warehoused. So when they hear about hacked government websites and cops getting doxed, my fellow inmates often tell me things like, "It's good to see people finally doing something about it." That rejection of established, reformist avenues for achieving social change is why Anonymous continues as a force to be

reckoned with, made all the more obvious by the presence of Guy Fawkes masks at the protests in Ferguson, Missouri – and beyond.

Hackers are a controversial, chaotic and commonly misunderstood bunch. Many of us have been arrested, from Mercedes Haefer and Andrew Auernheimer to Mustafa Al-Bassam and more, and few outside observers get that Anonymous is not a monolithic entity but a wide spectrum of backgrounds, politics and tactics. The journalist Barrett Brown gets it, but he continues to await his sentencing for merely linking to hacked material. And so I've been sharing a new book with my fellow inmates by the anthropologist and author Gabriella Coleman called *Hacker, Hoaxer, Whistleblower, Spy: The Many Faces of Anonymous*.

The book chronicles the development of Anonymous from its trickster troll days to its involvement in Occupy Wall Street and the Arab Spring, to the LulzSec and AntiSec hacking sprees and all the word done by the group since Stratfor, the intelligence firm I hacked in 2012. But it is more than a timeline written by an outsider: Coleman spent years in dozens of chatrooms and travelled the world to meet hackers. Some, like my LulzSec codefendants in the UK, I have not heard from since our collaboration on various hacks and subsequent arrests, so I was especially happy to hear how they have been keeping the spirit alive.

I was especially struck by Coleman's interactions with Hector Monsegur – aka Sabu, the hacker-turned-FBI-informant who is responsible for many of our arrests and who was released this spring after his "extraordinary cooperation" with the FBI. One of the few people to ever meet him face-to-face until he gave an interview to Charlie Rose this month, Coleman had feelings that parallel my own: Sabu betrayed me.

Like everybody else, Coleman was convinced of Sabu's street credibility because he talked tough and boasted about his access to ongoing hacking operations. Yes, I'm a natural-born leader, he would say. I can lead this entire movement on my own if I wanted to live like a dictator. What the fuck is up with all the snitches? Reading those and hundreds of other infuriating quotes in retrospect begs the question: How could we have been so foolish?

Sabu wasn't doing much hacking himself, but he was in every chatroom. He was keeping tabs on upcoming hacks. He was running his mouth on Twitter to establish his self-appointed gatekeeper status. Coleman argues that this "hacker vanguardism" – relying on a select few to do all the attacks or act as spokesperson – detracted from the populist meritocracy of Anonymous and left us more vulnerable to infiltration and arrest.

Despite the "Sabutage", the 2011 AntiSec phase of Anonymous – when a small but effective group of us took on everyone from Sony to Fox News – may have been the movement's most active and effective period. At the height of Occupy Wall Street, Anons were gaining street protest experience and political maturity. The hacks were escalating in number and gravity, targeting symbols of economic inequality and police brutality, and in many ways Anonymous was becoming more decentralized, more open-source and tactically diverse enough to represent the future of hacktivism – and maybe even part of the future of activism.

Coleman's book is not an unquestioned endorsement: we weren't always legal, and we were often random, incoherent and politically incorrect. Still, most people who cover Anonymous get it wrong, and so they get trolled or hacked in the process. People like Sabu don't get it, and anti-hacking prosecutors certainly don't either.

We are condemned as criminals without consciences, dismissed as anti-social teens without a cause, or hyped as cyber-terrorists to justify the expanding surveillance state. But hacktivism exists within the history of social justice movements. Hacktivism is still the future, and it's good to see people still doing something about it.

20 Dec - George Horton released from jail!

We are excited to report that one of the few remaining 2010 Toronto G20 protest prisoners has been released. With only days until 2014 ends, 20 political prisoners have been released this year. Welcome home, George!

22 Dec - Those Asking For Protests to Stop After NYPD Killings Are Standing on The

Wrong Side of History

The current wave of mass protests in the US is about more than police brutality and impunity. The demonstrations are a struggle to assert that black lives matter in the United States, and thus take aim at the institutions that repeatedly dismiss and denigrate black life.

MORE:

by Natasha Lennard (*VICE*)

The anti-racist struggle has historically catalyzed around police brutality, from Birmingham in 1963, to Los Angeles in 1992, to Ferguson in 2014. The issue of counter-violence against police has also been contentious in civil rights history. Martin Luther King Jr. famously said that "We can never be satisfied as long as the Negro is the victim of the unspeakable horrors of police brutality." Meanwhile, the Black Panther Party's embrace of armed conflict with police left 15 officers dead, as well as 34 radicals, and earned the group a fraught place in civil rights history — both maligned and martyred.

But even the most critical view of Panther activity must look back on history's passage and be thankful that anguish over the death of police officers did derail anti-racist activism altogether. If we view the protests of 2014 as more than knee-jerk reactions to specific impune police killings, and rather as a continuation of the civil rights struggle, then protests cannot be shut down because of the ambush killings of two NYPD officers Saturday in Brooklyn.

When President Barack Obama said Monday in response to the officers' deaths that "it is a time to put aside political debates, to put aside protest," the first black president of the United States positioned himself on the wrong side of history. It is of no disrespect to the lost lives of officers Wenjian Liu and Rafael Ramos to continue to forcefully assert — as thousands of protesters have long been doing — that Black Lives Matter. To call for an end or even a pause in protests, as Mayor de Blasio has done, perniciously suggests that the actions of one Baltimore man, hellbent on revenge, delegitimize anger at patterns of police racism, killing, and impunity.

Patrick Lynch, president of the Patrolman's Benevolent Association of New York, did little short of delivering a threat when he said that there is "blood on the hands" of demonstrators. The threat is that anyone who speaks out against systematic injustices plaguing US policing will be considered guilty any time police blood is spilled. If we cannot name and decry injustice without being accused of inciting murder, then injustice will remain shrouded in silence. But the deaths of Mike Brown, Eric Garner, Akai Gurley, Ramarley Graham, Ezell Ford, Kimani Gray, Oscar Grant, just to name a few, should not be passed over in silence. In 2014, owing largely to tireless activism in Ferguson, a glaring spotlight was shone on police mistreatment of black youth, and the justice system's mishandling of police. The protests have been righteous and righteously angry. To recognize this is not to justify the killing of cops.

A petty circle of blame has formed around the NYPD officer's deaths. Police and pundits are slamming both New York Mayor Bill de Blasio and protesters for enabling and stoking anti-police sentiment. It would be a reactionary move for the emerging protest movement to deny that a strain of fierce anti-police sentiment runs through its decentralized ranks. The Garner and Brown cases have, it can't be denied, fueled an attitude toward US policing that goes further than merely critical, it is enraged. But Ismaaiyl Brinsley, the gunman who killed the NYPD officers and then himself, was not just enraged, he was murderous. We are not all Ismaaiyl Brinsley.

"We are all Ismaaiyl Brinsley" is not a protest chant I've heard. I have in recent weeks, however, heard groups gather in New York streets, many of them young and black, to chant "We are all Mike Brown" and "We are all Eric Garner." Now, as police union comments make clear, anybody standing up in solidarity against this racist pattern in policing will be considered a murderous threat too.

If this historic moment of anti-racist protest, this continuation of the civil rights movement, is silenced for fear of being called a criminal threat by police merely for expressing anger, then we are in a worse scenario than we perhaps even knew. In response to the NYPD killings, a familiar and problematic narrative is playing out in which police assert themselves as unassailable while black Americans and their allies are called criminal and

silenced. To see this motif reappear, so readily available to police representatives, is reason to continue — not end — this moment of resistance.

28 Dec - 33 Mujeres NYC x Oscar to Rally in Bushwick, Brooklyn

WHAT: Rally for Oscar López Rivera

WHEN: 4:00-4:33 pm, Sunday, December 28th

WHERE: In front of the Knickerbocker M Train Station, Bushwick, Brooklyn

COST: FREE

MORE:

This month, 33 Mujeres NYC x Oscar will rally in Bushwick, Brooklyn in front of the Knickerbocker Avenue subway station. Please join us at 4:00 pm sharp in a 33-minute action to create awareness among our communities here and help build a movement for the release of Puerto Rican political prisoner Oscar López Rivera.

33 Mujeres NYC x Oscar is a group of women from New York City committed to securing Oscar López Rivera's freedom. We hold monthly rallies for 33 minutes on the last Sunday of every month from 4:00 – 4:33pm to signify the 33 years that Oscar has been imprisoned in federal penitentiaries, and will continue to hold monthly rallies until he is released. Our rallies coincide with actions occurring at the same date and time in San Juan, Puerto Rico that were initiated by 32 women in 2013 to mark Oscar's 32nd year of imprisonment.

29 Dec - Holiday Party with a Purpose

WHAT: Free Mumia Coalition Party

WHEN: 6:30-9:00pm, Monday, December 29th

WHERE: Riverside Church - 91 Claremont Avenue (between West 120th and 122nd Streets), Room 20T

COST: Free, but donations appreciated

MORE:

The Free Mumia Abu-Jamal Coalition traditionally invites our friends to join us for a holiday gathering at this time of year so that we can informally celebrate our year's work and get to talk with each other in a relaxed and warm setting. This year, however, with a national outpouring of people in the streets, inspired by the amazing resistance of the young people of Ferguson, we are planning a somewhat different party. There will be food, of course, and music, as well as warmth and comradeship. But we will also have the following:

- Continue the fight against police abuse which Mumia and our movement have been leaders in confronting. In particular, help us overturn the new law, instigated by the Fraternal Order of Police, which aims to silence Mumia (and all the other prisoners in Pennsylvania). This is the same battle against racist police power which is happening in the streets across this country. Mumia's case is a personification of police conspiracy, violence, attempted murder, and incredibly fascistic power. As many of you know by now, Pennsylvania recently passed a law to muzzle Mumia. This law, SB508, entitles the victims of crimes for which prisoners have been convicted to file a suit against Mumia (and other Pennsylvania prisoners), as well as those who help Mumia get his message out, if the victim claims to have been caused "mental anguish" by the prisoner's speech. Monetary damages can also be claimed. This is an outrageous violation of the First Amendment and has been widely denounced by lawyers and activists. But Mumia, Prison Radio, the Human Rights Coalition, several other Pennsylvania prisoners, and now joined by Educators for Mumia, have brought a preemptive suit against the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania before it even attempts to implement this new law. **THERE WILL BE AN OPPORTUNITY TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE LEGAL SUIT AT THE PARTY** (by credit card online or by check, if you prefer). Noelle Hanrahan, Executive Director of Prison Radio, will facilitate this part of the program, as well as give us an update on the legal suit to fight the FOP!
- The unveiling of a magnificent 6' x 6' painting of Mumia, in the German Expressionist tradition, just sent to us by the French artist, Andréa Reboul. It has never been displayed publicly before. We hope to find a permanent home for it where many people can appreciate and admire it. But you will be among the very first to see it at this party!
- A performance and talk by Sister Paris Alexandra, a student leader in organizing Mumia Abu-Jamal's

recent address to the Goddard College graduation ceremony. It was this event which precipitated the Fraternal Order of Police ranting and raving about the hurt done to the widow of the police officer killed at the scene in 1981 where Mumia was framed, and demanding that a law be passed to prevent Mumia from speaking publicly again. (You can hear that brief speech at the party.)

- Ramona Africa presenting plans for the May 13, 2015 events in Philadelphia commemorating the 30th anniversary of the bombing of the MOVE headquarters killing 11 MOVE members and destroying a block and a half of the neighborhood's houses. NEVER FORGET! FREE THE MOVE 9!
- Finally, we expect Mumia to call in!

For additional information, call 917.584.2135

JOIN US AT THIS MEANINGFUL CELEBRATION! YOU HAVE BEEN PART OF KEEPING MUMIA ALIVE AND MAINTAINING HIS ABILITY TO CONTINUE TO WORK AS A LEADING VOICE IN OUR MOVEMENT! LET US ALSO CELEBRATE OUR COLLECTIVE VICTORY IN THE RELEASE OF LYNNE STEWART, MARSHALL EDDIE CONWAY, BROTHER SEKOU ODINGA, AND, THE CUBAN FIVE!!! FREE 'EM ALL!

31 Dec - Noise Demo Against the Prison Industrial Complex, In Solidarity with PPs and POWs

WHAT: Noise Demo Against the PIC, for the Liberation of PPs + POWs

WHEN: 9:00pm, Wednesday, December 31st

WHERE: Metropolitan Correction Center (MCC, the federal prison in downtown Manhattan); Pearl Street, between Cardinal Hayes Place and Park Row (J to Chambers Street or 4/5/6/ to City Hall)

BRING: Noisemakers, air horns, drums, anything that is loud!

MORE:

On the noisiest night of the year in New York City, come help us remind folks locked up that they are not alone. NYC Anarchist Black Cross, in response to an international call for noise demonstrations outside of prisons, is asking folks to join us outside of the Metropolitan Correctional Center (MCC) in lower Manhattan. Come, not to appeal to authority, speak truth to power, or any other contrivance, but rather to stand arm in arm with comrades and show direct solidarity to those on the other side of the wall.

The state, writ large, is targeting anarchists all across the United States and abroad. This will be both protest and celebration. Let's make it another night in which we show them we're never scared.

5 Jan - An Evening with Susie Day and Dan Berger

WHAT: Author's Talk

WHEN: 7:00pm, Monday, January 5th

WHERE: Interference Archive - 131 8th Street Brooklyn, New York 11215

COST: Free

MORE:

Susie Day, author of "Snidelines: Talking Trash to Power," and Dan Berger, author of "Captive Nation: Black Organizing in the Civil Rights Era" and "The Struggle Within: Prisons, Political Prisoners, and Mass Movements in the United States," invite their friends, comrades and (fr)enemies to an informal discussion - including a theatrical performance of sorts - on topics including prisons, political prisoners, justice, injustice, and how to achieve world peace. Laugh, cry, clap, throw things—the choice is yours.