

Updates for February 17th

2 Feb - FBI put Jeremy Hammond on a secret terrorist watchlist

The Daily Dot reports on newly leaked sensitive documents revealing that the FBI placed Anonymous political prisoner Jeremy Hammond on a secret terrorist watch list.

MORE:

by Dell Cameron (*The Daily Dot*)

The Federal Bureau of Investigation put Anonymous hacker Jeremy Hammond on a secret terrorist watchlist, according to confidential records obtained by the *Daily Dot*.

The records further reveal how the FBI treats cybercrimes and shines a rare light on the expanding definitions of terrorism used by U.S. law enforcement agencies.

A leaked document originating from the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) reveals that Hammond was considered a "possible terrorist organization member," and indicates that he was placed on the multi-agency Terrorist Screening Database (TSDB), alongside individuals suspected of ties to Al Qaeda, Somalia-based extremists al-Shabaab, and Colombia's leftist FARC guerilla movement.

Arrested in March 2012, Hammond is currently serving the remainder of a 10-year prison sentence for his involvement in a series of high-profile cyberattacks targeting federal agencies, private government contractors, and police departments.

In December 2011, Hammond stole roughly 5 million confidential emails and thousands of credit card numbers from Austin-based intelligence publisher Stratfor, a devastating hack that was later revealed to have been orchestrated by an FBI informant. The emails were later published by WikiLeaks.

Journalist Barrett Brown, likewise noted for his involvement with Anonymous, was sentenced to 63 months in prison last month in part for his association with Hammond.

Addressed to the Manhattan U.S. Attorney's office and labelled "destroy after use," a print-out of Hammond's criminal history reveals instructions intended for law enforcement during an encounter. "Do not advise this individual that they are on a terrorist watchlist," it says.

Had police ran Hammond's ID, they would have been advised to immediately contact the Terrorist Screening Center (TSC), a division of the FBI established by President George W. Bush in the wake of 9/11 and the central hub of U.S. terrorist watchlist compilation. Officers are further instructed to not "extend the scope or duration of the encounter," or to make an arrest "unless there is evidence of a violation of federal, state, or local statute(s)."

"Information that this individual may be on a terrorist watch list is the property of the TSC and is a federal record provided to your agency only for intelligence and lead purposes," the document says. "This record, and any information contained within it, may not be disclosed or used in any proceeding without the advanced authorization of the TSC."

The United States has no single definition for "terrorism." The law, Title 18 of the U.S. Code (Section 2331), describes it as an act "dangerous to human life." That definition, however, was not "directly applicable" to the approach of the TSC, according to a leaked document published last year by the Intercept. Instead, the TSC redefined terrorism by combining "elements from various federal definitions." Unlike U.S. law, the TSC's definition excludes a threat to human life as a prerequisite for terrorist activity.

According to the definition issued by the National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC) in March 2013, in addition to threatening human life, an individual may be nominated to the TSDB watchlist for suspected "acts dangerous to ... property, or infrastructure" that appear intended to "intimidate or coerce a civilian population," or "influence the policy of a government." Individuals seen as facilitating or supporting "terrorist activity," violent or not, may also be added to the TSDB watchlist.

Carey Shenkman, a constitutional lawyer in New York City, said the TSC's definition appears "strikingly overbroad."

"Nonviolent political speech, or even just supporting that speech, can land someone on a watchlist," Shenkman said. "The problem is even worse in the digital realm, where 'property' can mean any bit of information. Harm to property could mean virtually anything."

"If we want to use the terrorism database to protect human life, it's only effective if it is narrowly focused on people who actually pose a threat to human life," former FBI agent Michael German, now a fellow at the Brennan Center for Justice, told the *Daily Dot*.

"The FBI has long used terms like cyberterrorism that create more ambiguity than they do clarity," German said. "They're really just trying to make those types of investigations go up the level of priority—which may or may not be justified—but whether it actually serves as an effective security measure is another question."

The Intercept previously reported that as of November 2013, as many as 700,000 people were on the TSDB watchlist, according to a U.S. counterterrorism official familiar with the data.

The FBI did not respond to the *Daily Dot's* request for comment in time for publication.

3 Feb - Albert Woodfox Update

Good news for Albert Woodfox of the Angola 3 as the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals rejects attorney general Buddy Caldwell's request for En Banc Hearing.

MORE:

Today the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals sided with the unanimous decision of their own three judge panel and denied Attorney General Buddy Caldwell's request for an "en banc" rehearing of Albert's case. This was the State's last shot to reinstate Albert's third overturned conviction through the US Court of Appeals.

Though we expect they may continue to delay justice with a vain attempt to convince the US Supreme Court to undo decades of solidly established Constitutional law, Judge Brady's original February 2013 decision throwing out Albert's murder conviction stands stronger than ever before and it is now only a matter of time until the State is forced to either release or retry him.

In just over two weeks, on Thursday, February 19th, Albert will turn 68 years old. Though there are still weeks and months yet to go before he is released, he has never been closer to freedom.

February 6th - Albert Woodfox - Freedom Is Just Around the Corner

This afternoon Albert's legal team submitted an application to US District Court Judge James A. Brady for release on bail with expedited review.

This month marks 2 years since Albert's conviction was overturned for a third time based on a finding of racial discrimination in the selection of his grand jury foreperson, a decision now firmly upheld by a unanimous panel of the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals.

Though the Attorney General may continue to stand in the way of justice and appeal yet again to the US Supreme Court and/or attempt to retry him, Albert's attorneys argue that there is no legal or moral justification to

hold him in prison any longer, nor any reason to believe the State of Louisiana could succeed in reconvicting him in a fair proceeding.

In a moving petition, they detail not just the legal underpinnings of freeing those wrongfully convicted, but also the deeply flawed legal processes that have resulted in this innocent man spending an unconscionable 4 decades in a solitary cell. As they point out, "the State has now had not just one but two chances to convict Mr. Woodfox at a trial that passes constitutional muster, and failed."

The application reminds the Court that the State itself during the appeals process admitted that if Albert were to prevail "re-trying him for a crime that occurred more than 40 years ago...may render retrial difficult, even impossible."

But regardless of whether the State elects to retry Albert or not, as another federal district court concluded, "[T]he liberty interest of an improperly convicted prisoner is stronger than any injury that may be caused to the [State] in releasing petitioner from custody pending retrial."). Indeed, a prisoner, "suffers irreparable harm each day that he is imprisoned in violation of the United States Constitution."

Certainly the reality of Albert's grossly inhumane conditions of confinement only make this harm more egregious and the urgency for release more compelling.

An expedited hearing date of Monday, February 23rd has been requested. We will let you know as soon as we hear anything from the Court.

February 12th - Angola 3 Member Albert Woodfox Indicted For 3rd Time In 1972 Murder Of Prison Guard

by Emily Lane (*The Times-Picayune*)

Albert Woodfox has been in solitary confinement for more than 40 years for the murder of a prison guard he maintains he did not commit. A federal appeals court on Thursday, Nov. 20, 2014, upheld a lower court's ruling that overturned Woodfox's conviction. A grand jury re-indicted him on the murder charge Thursday, Feb. 12, 2015.

Albert Woodfox, the only member of the Angola 3 still behind bars, was indicted Thursday for the third time in the murder of a Louisiana State Penitentiary prison guard that occurred at the prison more than four decades ago.

Woodfox has been held in solitary confinement for more than 40 years as a result of his former convictions in the 1972 slaying of 23-year-old guard, Brent Miller. Now 67, Woodfox continues to maintain his innocence in the fatal stabbing and has a wide-reaching network of supporters advocating for his release. The indictment comes after a federal appeals court, in a ruling issued Nov. 20, agreed with a lower court that his conviction for Miller's murder should be vacated.

Woodfox's legal team earlier this week sought his release from prison on bail in anticipation that the state would try to re-indict him or appeal to the court's latest decision to the U.S. Supreme Court. Louisiana Attorney Buddy Caldwell announced in a press release Thursday a grand jury from West Feliciana Parish, where the prison at Angola is located, re-indicted Woodfox on the murder charge earlier that day.

"The facts of the case remain solid," Caldwell said in the statement. "Despite Woodfox's last-ditch efforts to obtain a 'get out of jail free' pass on grand jury selection issues, the proof of his guilt in committing the murder is undeniable."

A three-judge panel from the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals, in its November ruling, unanimously upheld a lower court's ruling that overturned Woodfox's conviction. The court agreed with U.S. District Judge James Brady that Woodfox's 1998 retrial was constitutionally mired by discrimination in the selection of the grand jury foreperson.

Amnesty International, a major human rights organization, has called for Woodfox's release and has decried

conditions of his solitary confinement, which a November editorial in The New York Times called "barbaric beyond measure." Amnesty International started a petition this week asking Gov. Bobby Jindal not to oppose bail for Woodfox if it's granted.

Steven Hawkins, the executive director of Amnesty International USA, said in a statement that Caldwell is "hell-bent" on keeping Woodfox behind bars.

"He should stop pursuing a campaign of vengeance by trying to re-indict a man who has already spent more than four decades in cruel confinement, after a legal process tainted with flaws," the statement says.

Woodfox's attorney George Kendall released the following statement in response to the indictment:

"We are extremely disappointed in today's indictment of Albert Woodfox who has maintained his innocence since he was charged 42 years ago. This case has already spanned four decades and cost Louisiana millions of dollars, while Mr. Woodfox has been unjustly held in solitary confinement."

Woodfox's designation as a member of the Angola 3 stems from what the group's supporters believe are wrongful convictions for prison murders in which Woodfox and two other prisoners were implicated for the purpose of silencing their activism. The International Coalition to Free the Angola 3 believes the men essentially became political prisoners for organizing an official Black Panther Party chapter inside the prison, which led hunger strikes and other demonstrations opposing inhumane prison conditions. Those conditions, in the early 1970s, included continued segregation, corruption and "systematic prison rape," Pegram has said.

Taking the 42-year-old case to trial presents obvious challenges to all parties, but Pegram said Woodfox's legal team is "not at all scared" of arguing the case in court and feels confident he will prevail.

An affidavit says the murder occurred as Miller was talking with fellow inmate Hezekiah Brown on Brown's bed when Woodfox and two others pounced on him, leaving Miller with 32 stab wounds.

A year after Brown testified to help secure the convictions, Louisiana State Penitentiary Warden C. Murray Henderson wrote a letter seeking a pardon for Brown, who had served less than eight years of a life sentence, after Brown testified he was not promised favors for his testimony. An NPR report on the case links to the letter [here](#). One of the main witnesses in the case, Brown was eventually pardoned by Gov. Edwin Edwards in 1986 and died in 1996.

Pegram said there was no physical evidence linking Woodfox to the murder, and all of the witnesses either later recanted or were promised favors such as pardons. Many of the witnesses, too, are dead. A bloody fingerprint taken from the crime scene did not match Woodfox or his co-defendants, she said. That DNA evidence, which could potentially incriminate another suspect, has since been lost.

"If the state really wants to go down this road, they will be reminded there is no physical evidence that links him to the crime, and witnesses have all been impeached or recanted," Pegram said. "We are happy to say he will have the opportunity to demonstrate to the world that (Woodfox) did not commit this crime."

Caldwell noted in his statement two juries have already convicted Woodfox in the murder, and now three grand juries have indicted him. The indictment does not preclude the attorney general from seeking relief from U.S. Supreme Court to get the conviction upheld, Attorney General spokesman Steven Hartman said.

The slain prison guard's widow, Teenie Rogers, attended a rally in October 2013 with Angola 3 supporters demanding the state halt its attempts to keep Woodfox incarcerated for her late husband's murder. She has said she believes Woodfox and his codefendant, the late Herman Wallace, were not involved in her husband's death and has previously called for their release. In 2008, she told The Los Angeles Times, under the last name from a previous marriage: "If I were on that jury, I don't think I would have convicted them."

Caldwell's release also levied a number criminal allegations against Woodfox unrelated to Miller's murder, which a Feb. 10 affidavit says occurred in the late 1960s in New Orleans.

"Prior to arriving at Angola, Albert Woodfox began committing a series of crimes with escalated from minor

offenses to violent crimes, including seven armed robberies and five aggravated rapes," the attorney general's statement says.

The release also says he faced five life sentences for the rape charges, however an attached affidavit suggests Woodfox was never convicted on any rape charges.

Moreover, in a 2008 court order from Judge Brady, the judge says, "given how long ago these arrests occurred as well as the fact that Mr. Woodfox was never convicted of these crimes... those allegations were irrelevant to Woodfox's petition for release."

The affidavit paints a similar picture of Woodfox as a danger to the public that the state used in 2008 to prevent Woodfox from being granted bail while the appeals process played out. "We will continue to fight to ensure that this dangerous man is held fully accountable for his actions," Caldwell said Thursday.

Hawkins' statement criticized Caldwell's recent accusations against Woodfox regarding the rapes.

"(Caldwell's) public accusations that Albert is a 'serial rapist' not only cross ethical boundaries, but inflame the public against a man who has suffered unspeakable cruelty at the hands of the Louisiana authorities," Hawkins said.

Wallace, a fellow Angola 3 member, was released in October of 2013, two days before his death from complications of liver cancer.

Robert King, the third member of the Angola 3 who was convicted of killing a fellow inmate, was exonerated and released from prison in 2001 after 29 years in solitary. King remains active in the campaign to release Woodfox from prison and end the practice of solitary confinement.

Woodfox's 1974 murder conviction was first overturned in 1992 by a state court due to "systematic discrimination." He was then re-indicted in 1993 by a new grand jury and reconvicted five years later.

But District Judge Brady overturned this second conviction in 2008, stating Woodfox's defense counsel was ineffective. The state appealed, and the case made its way for the first time to the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals. Once there, the court reversed Brady's ruling and determined that while his trial "was not perfect," Woodfox couldn't prove there would have been a different outcome with different counsel.

Woodfox's attorneys then focused in on the discrimination issue, arguing there were also issues with the 1993 indictment because black grand jury foreman were woefully underrepresented in West Feliciana Parish in the previous 13 years.

Brady again agreed, overturning Woodfox's conviction a second time in May 2012. The case was kicked up to the Fifth Circuit after the state appealed. The Fifth Circuit agreed, in the Nov. 20 ruling, that conviction should be overturned. The same court then denied, in a Feb. 3 ruling, the state's request for a review of its decision by the Fifth Circuit's full panel of judges.

Woodfox, of New Orleans, was originally sentenced to prison at Angola on charges of armed robbery. That sentence would have expired decades ago, coalition manager Tory Pegram said. Woodfox was at Angola only a few years before he was implicated, along with Wallace, in Miller's murder. He's currently housed at David Wade Correctional Center in Homer.

February 13th - Amnesty International Responds to Re-Indictment of Albert Woodfox

In response to today's announcement of the indictment of Albert Woodfox, Amnesty International USA Executive Director Steven W. Hawkins issued the following statement:

"Attorney General Caldwell has made it clear that he is hell-bent on keeping Albert Woodfox behind bars—

despite the fact that his conviction has been overturned three times, and an appeals court has affirmed that decision. He should stop pursuing a campaign of vengeance by trying to re-indict a man who has already spent more than four decades in cruel confinement, after a legal process tainted with flaws.

"His public accusations that Albert is a 'serial rapist' not only cross ethical boundaries, but inflame the public against a man who has suffered unspeakable cruelty at the hands of the Louisiana authorities. Albert Woodfox has never been tried or convicted of rape, and the accusations are entirely absent from 4 decades of trial transcripts.

"A week before his birthday, Albert should be looking forward to a bail hearing; not facing another legal hurdle in a life that has been more than half-spent in solitary.

"Attorney General Caldwell took the same action against Herman Wallace after his release: re-indicting him while he was on his deathbed, suffering from liver cancer. It is time for him to stop standing in the way of justice."

3 Feb - Jason Hammond has online donation website

Having just been transferred to a long-term prison, Jason Hammond's support crew have set up an online donation page.

MORE:

Donate to Jason's legal fund at <https://fundrazr.com/campaigns/0w0Ma/ab/92vT4c> and stay up to date on his case at <http://freejasonhammond.blogspot.com>

February 3rd - Americans have nothing to learn from Nazis

by Malcolm Harris (*Al Jazeera*)

On Jan. 22, Jason Hammond accepted a noncooperating plea deal from prosecutors in Cook County, Illinois: He will serve 41 months for his role in an organized assault on a casual dining establishment in the Chicago suburb of Tinley Park. On May 19, 2012, Hammond and 17 others stormed the Ashford House restaurant with bats and hammers, interrupting lunch and leaving 10 people injured. But instead of years in jail, America should perhaps consider sending Hammond a thank-you card.

He is not to be confused with his twin brother, Jeremy Hammond, who is serving a 10-year sentence in federal prison for hacking the security firm Stratfor. Jason Hammond is a member of the Hoosier Anti-Racist Movement (HARM), an affiliation of Indiana militant anti-fascists. That day in May, the Ashford House was playing host to a meeting of the Illinois European Heritage Association, a not-so-subtle white nationalist group. Anti-fascist (antifa for short) groups like HARM are committed to disrupting neo-Nazis and organized white supremacists by any means necessary.

White supremacists have found a comfy home on Stormfront and other Internet forums, but a real movement requires in-person meetings. The Jason Hammonds of the world have made this very difficult for them. Whenever "race realists" plan to gather in public, the standard antifa operating procedure is to call the venues, inform them that the "heritage" groups they're planning to host are actually bunches of neo-Nazis and give them the chance to cancel. Larger companies usually do; the 2010 American Renaissance national conference, for example, was forced out of the Sheraton and into a strip mall Bertucci's. When venues agree to host despite the warning, antifascists find other ways to put a halt to white supremacist organizing.

Because of their militant tactics, antifa associations also end up doing a lot of prisoner support. Five other participants in the Tinley Park action agreed to similar pleas in January 2013, and all are now out on parole. When push comes to shove, the police are always willing to defend neo-Nazis in suits from anarchists in hoodies. You can host a fascist meet-up, but God forbid you try to stop it by breaking a window.

American liberalism prides itself on making space available for all, including white supremacists, as in the 1969 Supreme Court decision *Brandenburg v. Ohio*, which affirmed the Klan's right to rally on public streets. But

when liberalism protects white nationalists against those who seek to disrupt their vile, anti-liberal activities, what does our system hope to gain?

The ostensible reason for this free speech for extremism is to keep the marketplace of ideas open. Any restrictions on the peaceful exchange of words leads to a chilling effect, and when we're afraid to say what we think, the best ideas might die on cold tongues. Recent American history — especially the parts we're proud of — is filled with unpopular ideas whose advocates struggled their way into the status quo. As prominent civil libertarian Cass Sunstein writes of free speech in his book "Why Societies Need Dissent," "Better outcomes can be expected from any system that creates incentives for individuals to reveal information to the group."

But liberals are making a category error: White supremacy isn't a source of information; it's among the most dangerous lies ever conceived. White nationalism has no kernel of truth for us to unearth through discussion and debate. In the marketplace of ideas, it's strawberry-flavored rat poison. Fascism has nothing to offer, and we have zilch to gain from hearing out fascists. We may, however, have a lot to lose.

There's no such thing as nonviolent Nazis. Their only role in a free society is planning to overthrow it. Liberalism asks that we treat speech the way the government does, remaining agnostic with regard to its content as long as it doesn't incite imminent lawless action. The liberal argument goes that the answer to bad speech isn't censorship or force but better speech. No matter that white nationalists are using the Constitution as cover to organize against the document's declared values; the rules still protect them. There's a lot of self-satisfaction in this pose, but it's staggeringly vulnerable. Neo-Nazis pursuing an entryist strategy join the military and other state institutions, gaining access to training and recruitment opportunities and biding their time. In the event of social upheaval, white nationalists plan to be prepared.

Americans have no reason to be coy when it comes to white pride, yet we do act this way, as when 700 cops chaperoned 45 National Socialists on a 2005 walk through black neighborhoods in Toledo, Ohio. Is it too much to ask that our police — who aren't given to such fits of liberalism when it comes to black people, Muslims and environmental activists — let the Nazis fight their own battles? If the famed slippery slope argument ends with the government monitoring everyone's communication for hints of extremism, then we're already at the bottom of the hill. There's no liberty to be gained by dancing the public-sphere polka with white nationalists, whether they're wearing loafers or jackboots. Anti-fascists like Jason Hammond don't blind themselves to history or bind their hands with liberal tolerance. They know that now, as before, the swastika belongs under a hammer. As fascist elements organize, the violence required to confront and marginalize them only increases. As the antifa group One People's Project puts it, "Hate has consequences." Better to fight now.

So far, despite the heavy consequences for activists, the effort to isolate white nationalists is going well. As respectable European fascists wedge their way into the popular conversation (and occasionally *The New York Times*) their American comrades are floundering. Unable to hold their Bertucci's territory, the 2015 American Renaissance conference will be in the middle of the Tennessee woods, at the only venue willing to host them: a state park.

3 Feb - New writings by Mumia Abu-Jamal

We're including the transcript of Mumia's latest commentary.

MORE:

February 3rd - Bullies Abroad & Bullies At Home

It irks me to no end to hear politicians and pundits claim that soldiers in war are 'defending freedom' - or worse, 'fighting for democracy'

Nothing could be farther from the truth.

If these wars have revealed anything, it's that imperial wars, from Rome to the present, are exercises in power, not morality.

Consider the heralded opening of the war in Iraq - "Shock and Awe" - according to former president George W. Bush, for a campaign of bombings over Baghdad.

To "Shock and Awe" a civilian population - isn't that terrorism by another name?

Weren't the civilians of that ancient city terrorized out of their minds?

But when a state does this, it's military policy. When a non-state actor does so, its terrorism, right?

The wars have spread non-state terrorism across the region, like a virus, and they have destabilized countries throughout the Middle East.

Every such state, big or small, has been shaken by the U.S invasion and occupation, and their hold on power has become far more precarious. For might doesn't make right; it makes enemies.

It gives birth to more terrorists - and more terrorism.

The U.S., drunk on the wine of hubris, embarked on a war against a nation that never attacked it, and set in motion forces it cannot control.

It set a blaze that still burns today.

And in Baghdad, as in Kabul, well-armed imperial armies brought chaos and mass destruction to thousands and thousands of innocents, based largely on profound ignorance of the histories, languages and cultures of the people.

As it failed in Vietnam half a century ago, it failed in Iraq and Afghanistan, which still simmers in a stew of inchoate rage.

U.S. bullies burst into two countries, to destroy a tactic that has existed since (at least) 1795.

It has met nothing but epic failure.

This sharp imbalance between state power and personal power has provoked protests in dozens of U.S. cities, against bullies in blue, who kill, harass, humiliate and beat people with complete impunity.

I always wonder when I see an anti-bullying program being promoted.

Why? Because when a child sees such a thing, don't you think they look at the behavior of soldiers and cops, and also wonder?

4 Feb - Post Release fund for Eric McDavid

Our comrade Eric McDavid was recently released after serving nine years in prison. Please help Eric get back on his feet by contributing to this post-release fund.

MORE:

<http://www.youcaring.com/other/post-release-fund-for-eric-mcdavid/301722>

Eric McDavid is an anarchist and environmental activist who was entrapped by an FBI informant and charged with a single count of "conspiracy to use fire or explosives to damage corporate and government property". In May of 2008 Eric was sentenced to an outrageous 19 years and 7 months in prison.

On January 8th, 2015, after serving 9 years in prison his judgment and sentencing were vacated when it became known that the FBI had failed to disclose potentially exculpatory evidence to the defense. Eric plead guilty to a

lesser charge that carried a 5 year maximum sentence and was released almost immediately.

This incredible victory occurred because we all refused to give up the struggle to set him free. Thank you to all of you who have supported Eric during these last 9 years. Despite the heavy-handed repression of the state, Eric refused to compromise his politics or his integrity, just as all of us who supported him refused to abandon the struggle to see him free. But the struggle is not over. Though Eric is no longer held in a prison cell he is faced with the difficult task of rebuilding his life after a lengthy period of incarceration. We are hoping to aid him by raising money so that he can go to school, get a job and begin the process of physical and emotional healing from his time in prison. Below is a list of Eric's estimated expenses for the next 6 months. Your donations are critical to helping Eric get back on his feet. Thank you for your continued solidarity with Eric in his struggle to survive and thrive in the face of injustice.

Yoga Teacher training - \$2100

An hour of therapy or groceries for one week – \$75

Books for class for one semester at the college he is already enrolled in - \$100

Car insurance for a month - \$40

Computer - \$250

Cell phone bill for one month - \$40

For more information on Eric McDavid and the case itself, go to supporteric.org

If you are a pen pal of Eric's or would like to send him a note of encouragement you can now reach him at the Post Office Box below.

**To: Eric McDavid
c/o Sacramento Prisoner Support
Post Office Box 163126
Sacramento, California 95816**

5 Feb - NJ Supreme Court Halts Parole for Sundiata Acoli

Below is a corporate news article about the New Jersey Supreme Court's decision to (temporarily) keep Sundiata Acoli imprisoned.

MORE:

By Brent Johnson (nj.com)

The state Supreme Court has halted the parole of a man convicted with Joanne Chesimard — one of the FBI's most wanted fugitives — in the infamous killing of a New Jersey state trooper 42 years ago.

The state's highest court today granted the state Attorney General's request that Sundiata Acoli not be released until the court decides whether to hear arguments in the case against his parole.

Acoli, then known as Clark Edward Squire, was found guilty of murder in the 1973 shooting death of trooper Werner Foerster during a traffic stop on the New Jersey Turnpike. He was sentenced to life in prison.

Also convicted in the case was Chesimard, who escaped from a New Jersey prison in 1979 and allegedly now lives under the name Assata Shakur in Cuba, which granted her asylum. She is the first woman on the FBI's most wanted terrorists list.

Last September, a three-judge state appeals panel reversed the most recent decision by the state Parole Board to deny Acoli parole and ordered that he be released.

The Attorney General appealed to the Supreme Court to reverse that decision, arguing that the panel erred by not sending Acoli's case back to the Parole Board for another hearing, as required by the state Legislature.

"The Legislature has determined that he may only be released by a majority vote of the full state Parole Board," the Attorney General's office wrote in its brief.

Spokesman Leland Moore said the office expects Acoli, now 77, to remain in federal prison until there is an outcome in the case.

The Parole Board also asked the the appellate panel last October to reconsider its decision, saying it ignored laws governing the release of inmates.

Interest in the decades-old case was recently reignited by President Obama's decision to ease relations with Cuba. Gov. Chris Christie, the New Jersey State Police and state and federal lawmakers have asked Obama to demand Chesimard's extradition. In 2013, the reward for information leading to her capture was increased to \$2 million.

At the time of the murder, Acoli and Chesimard were Black Panthers and members of the Black Liberation Army, a militant organization whose members were accused of attacking and sometimes killing police officers in the 1970s.

Just after midnight on May 2, 1973, trooper James Harper pulled over Acoli and Chesimard's car for a broken tail light on the Turnpike in East Brunswick, according to court papers. Harper called Foerster for backup, and Foerster discovered a gun on Acoli, the papers say.

Soon, a firefight broke out. Chesimard shot and wounded Harper, and Foerster was shot when Acoli's gun went off during a struggle with Acoli on the other side of the car, the documents say.

The state argued that Chesimard then took Foerster's gun and shot the trooper twice in the head with it while he laid on the ground. But Chesimard's attorneys claimed she could not have pulled the trigger because she had also been shot and was too badly injured.

Acoli claimed he was hit by a bullet and blacked out, saying he couldn't remember exactly what happened.

A third man in the car, James Costen, was also shot in the scuffle and died from injuries not far from the scene.

Acoli was sentenced to life in prison plus 24 to 30 years in 1974. He was denied parole in 1993 and 2004.

The appellate panel wrote last fall it was "completely appalled by Acoli's senseless crimes."

"But Acoli has paid the penalty under the laws of this State for his crimes," the panel added.

Acoli was captured while trying to escape prison in 1982. He also received 27 disciplinary citations in prison before 1997, according to court papers.

But the panel wrote that the parole board ignored a report by a prison psychologist that said Acoli "expressed regret and remorse" about the killing and had changed over the years, as well as the fact that he has not received a disciplinary citation since 1996.

The judges also said the board focused too much on Acoli's past criminal record and a probation violation that happened decades ago.

"The evidence before the board failed to demonstrate that Acoli was substantially likely to commit another offense if released," the panel wrote.

Bruce Afran, Acoli's attorney, could not be reached for comment today.

5 Feb - Visions, not blueprints: an open letter from an anarchist prisoner

We're including the latest writings from Connor Stevens of the Cleveland 4 below.

MORE:

"We are an image from the future." -- graffiti in greece, 2008

Rebellion has ruptured the placid suffering of yesterday.

Those of us who have acknowledged the ongoing class war in this society, siding with the oppressed, have seen these moments before. Moments where the police are turned back, overran; where anything becomes possible after they have been routed. But always these moments were brief glimpses of what we are capable of -- always control reestablishes itself and snuffs out the many worlds we are creating.

Never before in my lifetime has rebellion been so far-spread, capable of sustaining itself for so long.

Through the flames and the clamor of streetfighting we embody our collective strength, sustaining our visions of those worlds we carry in our hearts. Control was shattered, and the enemy took too long to regroup. Now youths from Brooklyn to the Bay Area have glimpsed the overwhelming possibilities of revolt.

Spontaneity ruptures all attempts at control.

The oppressed have burned the illusions of helplessness.

History has returned, and we, the masses, are giving birth to the future.

But birth is not simply a matter of blood and pain.

We must create communities of resistance, the fertile soil for the worlds we desire. We must strive for complete autonomy -- by means of growing our own food, being able to heal one another, organizing community defense groups, establishing our capacities to harness energy, to educate our people, to carve out territories where we can regroup, learn, grow, and intensify the struggle.

This is the infrastructure of resistance necessary to transform rebellion into sustained insurrection.

The streets of the united states have recently resembled the streets of greece or argentina, or any of dozens of other countries in which the oppressed, the poor, fight back. The wave of unrest embodied in the Occupy movement reached its high-water mark in late 2011. The current wave is far more intense, as people in this country are learning, almost from scratch, how to fight back.

We are quickly arriving at that crucial chasm between riot and insurrection. We must not repeat our mistakes. We must prepare for the intensification of struggle.

"We are not in the least afraid of ruins." -- Durrutti

The path forward must be made by walking.

All the theory, the critique, the commentary and analysis imaginable will not keep the fires burning, neither in our hearts nor in the streets.

That being said, theory has its place, as does memory, and storytelling.

"As there are many demons with men's faces It is wrong to join hands with everyone." -- Rumi

In October 2011 we watched the events in Oakland and elsewhere unfold on laptop screens at Occupy Cleveland.

Some were shocked and horrified in the face of such overwhelming violence. i was anxious and hopeful. The police forces were cracking down on Occupy encampments across the country, and the violence in Oakland and the Bay Area more broadly had captivated many. Few in this country had ever experienced anything like that -- hence the shock and horror.

But i had already come to terms with the inevitability of this struggle.

i anticipated a spiraling confrontation with the state and corporate powers due to the global manufactured economic crisis and the resistance to it. At that moment it seemed the spiral was moving from shouting and marching to property destruction and unleashing spontaneous collective power, overwhelming buildings, bridges and highways with our bodies, among other tactics. Perhaps i was a few years too early, but i may have been correct about the Occupy experiences being a process of maturation for many people.

Alas, the barricades did not last and the wave was broken.

For many more, the incessant violence of the paramilitary forces against them and their relations has made it abundantly clear that murder will continue to be the daily status quo, largely with impunity -- except for the consequences we inflict.

The police gun people down every day. The real question is how has it taken this long for resistance to echo the gunshots and fight back against the police.

Anyone with a decent grasp of the situation overall could easily predict such forms of rebellion. i believe various state forces anticipated this, as evinced by the response of the national guard and higher-ranking forces.

One does not have to be possessed to genius to see the stormclouds.

We do not say we welcome the flood, but we are not afraid of ruins.

What we must consider is our overwhelming lack of organizational capacity to commit to intensified levels of struggle, logistically, in terms of experience, or in terms of preparedness overall. In point of fact, we cannot even give a rough estimate of our numbers.

So we must use this to our advantage. We must do without far-flung organizations and focus on our strengths, in mass revolt and spontaneity. But these do not fuel themselves, being only a point of contact in the broader struggle.

A movement with teeth will still starve if it cannot feed itself.

We must learn to take this rage in our chests and transform it also into life, into gardens and dwellings and forms of energy that flow with nature, with all our relations. i am not advocating so-called "green" technologies as a solution in themselves, but rather for our capacity to exist on our own terms, to live without being dependent on the system in any way. And it is what allows us to do this that must be protected with our strengths. If the flames of revolt lack the fuel of autonomy, they will fizzle out and leave us as though castrated. And if the our fuel, our soil, our capacity to exist on our own terms, lacks flame and the capacity to harness fire, then anything we create will be easy to kill, as we constantly bear witness to.

Our greatest teachers are among the indigenous of the earth -- those who live with the rest of life and not against it. They are engaged in life-or-death struggles, refusing the quiet death of assimilation of the agonizing death of starvation.

We must follow their examples, creating our own ways of being that can co-exist, and defending them with our lives.

In my life i have tasted,however sparingly, the immense beauty of simply living with the flow of life, "living off the land." If we live in harmony with the intimate web of life we develop deep, powerful bonds -- a deep-rootedness vital to struggles against overwhelming odds.

And we must acknowledge that we are engaged in a life-or-death struggle.

We have what it takes to finish this dying way of life and replace it with 10,000 blooming worlds.

Neither fear nor coercion will paralyze us.

We refuse to forget, to die quietly.

In these passionate nights we brush against the future.

With a gentle strength from a hard place,
for the next seven generations

February 10th - The Fine Art of Floor-Gazing

To counter the wretched are of silent weeping i have stumbled upon the fine art of floor-gazing. While there is great depth to this art, the essential elements can be mapped quite readily.

To stare towards the center of the floor, for me, to gazing upon the vast and tranquil waters of Lake Erie. But there is little refuge in all that vastness -- and that seems to be the greatest use: losing everything out there, even your self. Such extremities are not for chronic practice.

We turn our gaze instead to that place where what we see is a wall -- hardly any ceiling or floor. And now the reverse occurs: a sense of suffocation, as if being trapped in one's own skull, no eyes, internal or otherwise. What i have found here is a profound lesson: with only our own minds to know it by, how can we ever really know our mind?

The nature of our so-called "three-dimensional" existence inherently possesses three possibilities: we search for this knowing to the side, where the walls meet; we search for this knowing up, where the wall meets the ceiling; or, we search for this meaning down, where the wall meets the floor.

Where the two walls meet we find a peculiar stasis where, in turns, it may seem we are moving forward to a final point -- Progress embodied -- or at other times we are moving back and away, receding. We are, of course, doing neither, and therefore we are at a peculiar state of stasis, virtually hallucinating. While there must certainly be lessons in this, i do not care to dwell in this stasis, perhaps the hallmark of the times.

Where the wall and the ceiling meet, there is a place of great anxiety. This seems to be a place of the wrathful god, hurtling boulders down upon mortals.

Where the two walls and the ceiling meet -- there dwells Yaldabaoth, or rather, the Great Spider, which uses on it's victims (upon being cocooned) a poison which not only liquifies the innards but also induces a hellish hallucinatory state, which to the victim seems to last an eternity. For truly Blake was right -- eternity can fit within a grain of sand, or in this case, in the moments between being stung and being ingested.

Where the wall and the floor meet -- there, at last, seems to be a place of comfort. The impression is that of a toiling laborer, headed down into the place of rest. But, maintaining our gaze, upon slipping into that sleep a world, or more, opens up, unfolding in much the same way as our dream worlds.

Where the two walls meet the floor, there is the Great Womb, to which so many of us seek repose. And while her comforts are much enjoyed, we needn't be trapped there, as in the Great Spider's web: we are but passing through, forever children.

But it is better to rid ourselves of all of this, and step outside these four walls.

February 10th - A collection of poetry

I.

The flames enveloping
the corpse of the slave
are lapping at the feet of the master.

II.

fleeing from the unsayable
warm glow of memory
and ash
i am running sideways through things.

III.

the violence inherent
in the flesh
beneath
his eyes

Petulance

(September, 2014)

The feeling of pages in my hands.
This has become my primary reality.
That, and the superior transient joys.

The ants crawling across my body.
Each one a lesson in patience,
in compassion.
The sun summons a flame
that rises through my flesh
surfacing in blissful
golden-brown.

Our bodies dance 'round
and come together
intertwining all our contradictions.
Words
like lust lose
their burden.
Loosen yourself
inside of my,
a rapturous surrender.
Tower over me,
a monument of muscle.

Condemnation

(October, 2014)

Condemnation
pours forth

like magma
Affirmation
it seems
cannot be found
amidst all the bickering
in cinder blocks
held by pliers
spat upon
by fiends
imitating men.

The most wretched
shadows can imitate men.
It is nothing special.
But they are, finally, phantasms
and incapable of this
realness glimpses in dreams and sex and prayer

The spit evaporates into nothingness
but here we feel the heat of affirmation
in the breath of a lover
the exchange with a distant being in a close dream
being cradled by the ancestors 'round that ancient flame

And words do not mean much
approaching these lightning bolts
burning with realness
and temporality.

i am suffocating because my breath cannot touch your neck.

Mother

(9.22.12)

Mother i
have chosen the path of life
Mother
i swear to you in this wretched ink
that must be waded through like a black swamp
That you will not have to bury me.

The gray skies pull the sorrow
so gracefully condensed into such a short time
to the surface of my face,
and in the cold i cough alone
Mother i have forsaken you.

Now i will not shed tears
which never comforted me
But where can i go for warmth
only found in Mothers?

In this time of sowing
cut off from the womb
of Mother-earth

i exist on a desolate plain
with no fire, no warm embraces

Did we ever know
a time of reaping
amid all the laughter and
lightheartedness of foregone days?
Only by persevering through this
darkness can we come to love
the flame.

dead time

suicide
is on the minds
of so many so young
beautiful souls and wretched
shells
of former warmth
desolate, to the touch

What kind of space are
we passing through?

Were it not
for the brevity
already ordained
in creation's process
i too would have slipped
to such a jagged passing

It's easy
to be pulled in so
many frivolous directions
And yet
i lose track of my
innumerable blessing

What have i done
to deserve this?

Why have we come
to pass through this space?

January 17, 2015

It would be so much better
to crawl into that summer
what seems like a lifetime ago

There was the rattle and the thunder
the sweat and the tears
the hunger and the innocence
The warmth of his companionship,
the most intimate i have ever known.

Sitting knee-to-knee
eating our soup
after soccer, or exercise,
the orange glow of the setting sun
spilling through the bars
We talked about everything
with our mouths and our hearts and our eyes
We entered into an intimate vulnerability
and his beauty overwhelmed me.
i still love him,
and am learning to love him more

He walked with me, sat with me,
shielded me and set an example for me
and we passed the time together.

What can be said about the love?
It was the greatest i have ever known
and i shiver at the slightest thought
of those passionate nights amidst that vast silence.

Social Justice in the Year 2032

The crowd surged in the direction of Downtown, the city center.

There were thousands of them, many delusional from hunger, drugs and sleep deprivation. It was difficult to determine just how many there were.

As they came to the bridge that separated their neighborhoods from the city center several black helicopters, monstrous insects, formed a line some five hundred feet in the air above the bridge. Loudspeakers boomed: "Return to your homes. Do not attempt to cross this bridge, or we will take action."

Some towards the front of the mob attempted to stop, to turn around. But there were too many forcing their way forward.

After the mob made it about one hundred feet onto the bridge it began to stop, as people began stumbling and collapsing in the street. Some were vomiting. This was due to the audio frequencies being emitted from the helicopters. No human with functioning ears could withstand it. But some had learned to adapt, blocking their ears adequately enough to continue forward. As this more experience crowd came within two hundred yards of the middle of the bridge (above which the helicopters hovered), lasers began dancing among them. Some fell to their knees, hands clasped to their faces. The disorienting lasers were overcome by most of these experienced rioters through the use of specially-developed sunglasses.

However, after this core group of rioters came another seventy-five feet or so further, the helicopters began unleashing a different kind of laser. One that boils flesh. In an instant dozens of rioters began howling in extreme torment as their flesh heated and popped and oozed beneath their homemade armor. Still some 200 people persisted along the bridge, and the helicopters unleashed their .50 caliber machine guns, quickly reducing the rioters to a heap of corpses.

And the loudspeakers boomed: "Terrorist aggression will not be tolerated."

A rock, from a slingshot no doubt, pinged off the bullet-proof glass of the cockpit. The rattling of the machine guns came to a stop, and all that could be heard in the crisp night was the moans of the dying.

February 10th - Prison Existence

Writhing between cinder block, with nowhere to run but into self.

What is it like, being in prison?

No alcohol or drugs (for me -- others enjoy them copiously); excuses quickly exhaust themselves; tv and worthless entertainment cannot answer the hunger of my soul. In the street, i could flee -- or pretend. Now there is no more denial. Nowhere to run. i must change my life.

Pain. This is the medium through which i move, the incessant call to action, the catalyst to transformation. Here, i do not attempt to dull it. My flight is limited to forcing memories -- of the past as well as the future -- from mind, and burying myself in 10,000 intellectual pursuits and sexual fantasies.

What do we gain by making it all work, if we lack purpose, and the knowledge of purpose?

Take your already outdated toys and your space colonies -- they mean nothing by themselves. You will be just as miserable on Mars as you will be in Maryland.

What was it those unwitting accomplices uttered?

"Marvelous desolation."

You are the marvel, you are the desolation.

First we must drink pain, and move through it like a child through water. Learn our lessons in suffering. All of civilization has been a great denial. There is no easy way, no painless panacea. Honor this overflowing pain.

The present changes the past. All my memories have been recast. Even the best of them -- especially the best of them! -- illicit pain. But slowly i learn not to flee. A child, at last, soaking his toes in the frigid waters.

What was once a dull uncertainty, roaming the borderlands of the subconscious, becomes illuminated by these flames -- from where do these flames spring? They no longer flow from my head, and the once all-consuming fire in my chest has, for now, been reduced to smoldering embers. It is my flesh that is on fire! Or, rather, the flesh i have already shed -- all those foregone yesterdays i cannot help but be held captive by, all the way to the womb...

For instance, i have many memories, as a child, of riding through Ohio country. Now i become consciously aware of these being some of my first lessons in the ubiquitous tendency of humanity to squander its potential.

We cannot, it seems, learn from the experiences of others.

But allow me to share the pain of death.

A person can get drunk on death. In truth, it seems there is little else worth doing with death. Hence the immense celebrations in so many cultures when faced with death. To be swept up in ecstatic bliss, in this wretched, sacred dance, hurling through some sublime abyss. This seems to be the most sensible, and sensuous, alternative to all that weeping and gnashing of the teeth.

But here in prison i no longer embody ecstasy (there was a time, likely never to return), and i am reduced to weeping only. A solitary, silent weeping. And a total condemnation of this reality we have been born into.

i often pull away from touch -- human touch is no longer sacred or even necessary to me, unless it's sexual. Ah, but i still enjoy embraces...

Who can i mourn this, in the maddening absence of ecstasy?

And so my slow death progresses -- perhaps the only progress i truly know.

Take your gadgets, your stars, your suffocation and your arrogance. All this talk of cradle-to-the-grave -- well i was designed in such a way. And it is along that arc that i now progress. But there are many deaths before the end.

Nothing i write can tell what i know. You cannot know what it has been like, unless you have passed this way before. i will not let this stop me, for now i am compelled to write. The dead circle 'round me, refusing to quite depart, and in my humble efforts i will flood these pages with this black blood, borne through suffering, a total rejection. What else could really issue forth but blood and flames and misery? i learn to eat it.

Everything happens to me now. i am powerless against the world. Yes, i weep, i run, i sweat, i love, i orgasm, i disintegrate. But it is all as though it is happening to another. And it is.

Suddenly i realize -- or remember -- that i am not only writing for the dead, but also for the dying. They envelope me. i hate them and i love them and i wish more than anything to seek repose in the mountains.

Why... No, never mind the why. (i am already blind enough)

For what purpose... Same question, i suppose...

For what purpose am i held here, under such massive pincers, in a cinderblock, squirming to be anywhere but here...

To transform my self. But this furnace necessarily produces mutilated men. It is not that i fear i am too weak (frail, obscure, dwarfed, yes). Rather, i am no longer so naive. i have only seen the servants of evil, never the master, if such a master exists. But i have been placed in a furnace which warps souls and mass produces mutilated shadows. i have seen men be destroyed. i have felt my own sanity slip -- although i cannot be sure what is slipping, or if i was ever really "sane."

So enough of the foolishness. The reformers, the technofetishists, the futurists, the leftists, the commentators, the eulogizers, the nostalgists, the luddites and the noble scientists forever at the disposal of the defense industry...

i am tired of all this.

5 Feb - Message & Reflections from Political Prisoner Jaan Laaman

Some reflections on comrades, the spirit of resistance, struggle, and death by political prisoner and 4StruggleMag editor Jaan Laaman.

MORE:

2015 is almost a month old and my overall outlook has been optimistic and energized. With a months long new movement in the streets, fighting against government repression and police killings of unarmed men, boys and women too, mostly of color, for me it has been a time of gathering information and supporting and contributing to this new movement.

It is within this context, that I just received somber and hard information about two comrades of mine, two very good human beings, steadfast brothers and courageous fighters in the Freedom Struggle. I am talking about two friends of mine, both long held political prisoners -- Phil Africa and Bill Dunne.

William Phillips Africa died on January 10, 2015, in the Pennsylvania state prison system, at SCI Dallas.

Phil Africa was one of the Move 9, all of whom have been in captivity since August 8, 1978. On that day, the

Philadelphia police and other government forces launched an unprovoked assault on the Move home. The Move 9 are completely innocent women and men who were thrown into prison for 30 to 100 year sentences. They are all still in prison, except for Merle Africa who died in 1998, and now Phil.

Phil Africa never stopped struggling for justice and freedom, not only for the Move Family and his co-defendants, but for poor and oppressed people of all colors, across this country and around the world. Phil was a good man, intelligent and brave, thoughtful and caring. He could make you laugh and he was self disciplined and worked to stay in shape. He was a father figure, as well as a boxing teacher and sports coach to many younger men. Phil's death in the Pennsylvania state correctional institution at Dallas, came under very questionable and suspicious circumstances. See a more detailed posting on Phil's death at <http://www.4strugglemag.org>.

My political prisoner brother and friend, Phil Africa, died in that Pennsylvania prison cell in his 37th year of captivity. Phil's hardships and deprivations are now over. Phil was never a man who bemoaned the harsh, inhumane and unjust realities he and other prisoners were forced to endure. Dying in prison is always a sad reality. Phil's hardships are now over and that is a good thing, even while we mourn his passing. We should also question the circumstances surrounding his death and demand answers from Pennsylvania prison officials.

Continuing in this journey of hard news and harsh realities, let me share some information on another friend and fellow political prisoner, Bill Dunne. Bill is alive and I'm pretty sure in decent health. Like other political prisoners, Bill stays fit, in fighting shape, because it doesn't matter how old you are or how many decades you have been imprisoned, the government and its agents never cease in their efforts to defeat you, break you and stop you in your/our struggle for justice, freedom and a revolutionary future of peace, equality and protection of our planet. So Bill, like all political prisoners, tries to keep the Spirit of Resistance firm and his body and mind fit.

Bill has been in captivity since 1979, that is for 36 years. He has been held in maximum security penitentiaries and special lock-down control units for all these years. In 2000, when he already had spent 21 years in prison, the United States parole board gave Bill a 15 year hit! That is, he was ordered to spend 15 more years in prison. Two months ago, Bill again appeared before the parole board and in a vicious act of inhumanity and hatred for the Freedom Struggle and Freedom Fighters, the U.S. parole board hit Bill with another 15 year set off! He is not eligible to see the parole board again until 2029. See <http://www.4strugglemag.org>, for a more detailed report on Bill Dunne's parole hearing.

The ugly reality is that there are political prisoners, courageous and noble leaders like Sundiata Acoli and Leonard Peltier, who have been locked up even longer; Sundiata has been in captivity for 43 years, Leonard for 39 years, and there are others like them.

The parole board's primary questions, as well as its 'justifications' for ordering Bill to, quite likely, spend the rest of his life in prison, was his "continuing association and affiliation with anarchist organizations", which was, "evidence you still harbor anti-authoritarian views..." The U.S. government, through its parole board, made very clear that Bill's real offense, like the so called crimes of all U.S. held political prisoners, was his political beliefs and associations. The activities Bill and other political prisoners may have taken in support of liberation and justice based political views is not the main "crime" in the eyes of the United States government. The ultimate "crime" is Freedom and Justice based revolutionary thinking and beliefs. Anarchist; socialist; communist, National Liberation for Puerto Rico, the Black Nation in the usa, the Native/Indigenous Nations; the Green ecological ideology of protecting our Earth and all its life against imperialist plunder, these are the "crimes" of political prisoners.

I am certain Bill Dunne will challenge and litigate this unprecedented second 15 year hit. I am also sure Bill will continue to work with the ABC collectives and other outside groups the parole board listed; the groups they so hated and feared.

I wanted to express my complete solidarity and support for Bill in his harsh ongoing struggle for justice, life and freedom. And I wanted to convey my heartfelt solidarity and revolutionary love to all the Move Family and Phil

Africa's closest people. We will always remember and be inspired by Phil Africa.

Sharing this information and reflecting on the types of realities that all political prisoners confront and have to deal with, I hope, gives you people outside, a little more understanding of revolutionary struggle and life behind prison walls. I do have some concern that perhaps some of you activists and people of conscience, may be overly intimidated by these realities of prison life. Engaging in the Freedom Struggle always has the potential of confrontation with the state and its abusive police power. This can include being thrown into prison. People should be clear about this. You should also be clear though, that even in extreme examples, like the heroic lives and struggle of Phil Africa and Bill Dunne, imprisoned Freedom Fighters can and do maintain their principles, their dignity and their will and ability to struggle. The more that people and the media, including the non-corporate media, are aware of and supportive of political prisoners and prison struggle generally, the more protection this provides us.

In the Spirit of Phil Africa-- let us remember,
Freedom Is A Constant Struggle!

6 Feb - Introducing Maya Chase, formerly Jared Chase of the NATO 3

The prisoner we have been supporting as Jared Chase is ready to let her supporters and comrades know that she is a trans woman who prefers to be called Maya and uses she/her/hers pronouns. She also wants to go vegan, although she is currently not able to receive adequate nutrition in general, much less according to her ethical decisions.

MORE:

Maya recently wrote:

"I am writing to tell you all and the world that I am a TransGender woman. All of my life I have always identified as a woman. After 30 years I am finally done hiding, pretending to be something I'm not."

Communicating with Maya has been difficult, in large part due to repression she is suffering on the inside. As such, we do not have an up-to-date report on her well-being at this time. We will keep you updated about how she is doing and about any opportunities to advocate for her as we learn more.

She will need even more support than before as she tries to get her needs met as a transgender, vegan political prisoner with serious medical needs.

Donations to support Maya and Brent Betterly, the other defendant still imprisoned, can be made at <http://www.payitsquare.com/collect-page/29941>

Jacob Church was released to a half-way house last November and continues to search for housing and employment while facing harassment from the probation system. Donations for his support can be made at <https://www.youcaring.com/JacobChurch>. If you have any insight into jobs or housing opportunities in the Chicago area, please contact us at free.the.nato3@gmail.com

9 Feb - "This is your republic." Pre-sentencing statement by Barrett Brown

On January 22nd, Barrett Brown appeared before a federal judge to be sentenced. Naturally the prosecution was seeking the statutory maximum of 8 and a half years in prison. Barrett's defense asked that he be released immediately with "time served" so that he could enter a drug program in Dallas and then get on with his life. Here's what he wrote prior to sentencing.

MORE:

For much of the time I've been imprisoned, I've had the novel experience of never being quite certain that I wouldn't spend the rest of my life in prison on the fabricated credit card fraud charges the government made up to get me out of the way, and which they finally dropped last year in the wake of an international outcry from human rights and journalism advocacy groups - and just two days after we filed an airtight Motion to Dismiss that spelled out how I'd violated neither the spirit nor the letter of the laws in question. I've also had to watch as

my mom was prosecuted for helping me to hide laptops in her kitchen. I'd say that I and my family have been sufficiently punished for the relatively minor crimes to which I eventually plead.

As I'll explain when I take the stand, I sincerely regret some of my words and behavior over the course of my life. I've been an alcoholic and drug addict since early adolescence and spent much of my late '20s as an outright heroin addict. And some of the things that I've done wrong, or failed to do, cannot even be attributed to drugs, but are instead due to personal flaws of my character that are as much a part of me as any virtues I could claim.

But it would be dishonest of me, and contrary to my principles, to pretend that I do not deeply resent the reckless and even surreal manner in which the government has pursued me since early 2011, when the FBI sought and obtained search warrants for my files after my colleagues and I first began exposing the illegal activities of firms tied to the DOJ, the Pentagon, and the intelligence community. Even beyond the widespread concerns regarding state retaliation against effective journalism that have been expressed in regards to my case by outlets like *The New York Times* and *The Nation*, there are two other aspects of all of this that go well beyond me, and which merit further attention by press and public alike. The details will remain sealed until the Monday hearing, when they will be fought over by the attorneys for each side, but it's important that I provide advance notice of two issues in particular for those reporters who plan to cover the sentencing, or who just want to know about the new risks to which they are now being subjected:

1. Despite having dropped the controversial "linking" charges that would have made criminals of many working journalists, the government is still seeking to make the mere act of linking dangerous for all Americans. They have simply applied the same incident to the "Relevant Conduct" section of my Pre-Sentence Report, declaring that the holders of the 5,000 instances of credit card account information that I and other journalists unwittingly linked to are my "victims," and that my punishment should thereby be increased accordingly under a certain federal guideline. I probably don't need to explain how, by proceeding in this fashion, the DOJ has also thereby endangered all media professionals as well as everyday internet users; this has already been spelled out in detail by the EFF, Reporters Without Borders, and other organizations as well as countless journalists and even former prosecutors.

2. Incredibly, the government is now arguing that I am not actually a journalist after all, despite the fact that I have been employed as such since I was 17 and have contributed to dozens of news and opinion outlets including *Vanity Fair*, *The Guardian*, *Huffington Post*, *Skeptic*, *Skeptical Inquirer*, *New York Press*, *VICE*, and *al-Jazeera*, and have published two critically-acclaimed books of investigative and expository non-fiction, and despite my work having been widely cited by journalists as useful in their own investigations. Apparently, though, on one of the many occasions in which I tried to explain in an interview with a reporter why my investigative process is different, I rejected the label of "journalist." And so, according to the state's latest claims, I am indeed not a journalist despite elsewhere having described myself as a journalist hundreds of times over the course of my adult life. What's amusing about this is that the government also continues to maintain that I am some sort of official spokesperson for Anonymous - despite the fact that I have denied this literally hundreds of times, both privately and in public. That many reporters continue to claim that I am a spokesperson or even, amusingly, the "self-proclaimed" spokesperson for Anonymous does not change the fact that I do not want to be any such thing and, again, have denied it for three years. But there were a couple of occasions after much of the press had proclaimed me to be this non-existent role that I contacted executives of the state-linked firms we were investigating and pretended that I was, in fact, a spokesperson for Anonymous, something I did in order to trick them into talking to me (and it worked; as was discovered early on in the case of disgraced HBGary Federal CEO Aaron Barr, and as I've shown in recordings of phone calls I've made public, these shadowy private intelligence types believe themselves to be very clever and will actually engage in conversation with someone such as myself if he thinks he's talking to a real "leader" of Anonymous; several other people have had similarly good results, as will become public later). I've explained this many, many times, and also clarified that the media relations work I was sometimes asked to do on behalf of small groups of Anons working on certain projects I believed in did not make me an actual spokesman for a movement that has no leaders, especially since I've repeatedly criticized some aspects of that movement and many within the movement have criticized me as well. Of course, the FBI knows this perfectly well, and even themselves admitted in a sealed filing two years ago that I deny having any formal role within Anonymous; presumably they have forgotten about this, or hope that it will

be lost amidst the many other strange and shaky lies we've had to refute in our own filings this week. Anywho, there you have it: call yourself a journalist hundreds of times and the FBI will still deny that you're a journalist; deny that you're spokesman for Anonymous hundreds of times and the FBI will still insist you are a spokesman for Anonymous. This is the agency that will now be deciding who is and isn't engaged in Constitutionally-protected information gathering activities. This is your republic.

February 12th - The Barrett Brown Review of Arts and Letters and Prison: I Tried To Eat a Mouse But It Didn't Work

Three weeks ago, I was sentenced to prison, which in some ways was a great relief, as federal prison is said to be much nicer than the jail holding units and temporary detention centers where I have spent the last two and a half years of my life. And, really, I feel like I've done the whole "jail thing" by this point and can thus sort of cross that off my list. Now I'm jotting down all the touristy activities I hope to accomplish during my "real" prison sentence:

BEFRIEND A MOUSE: I actually refrained from going to see *The Green Mile*, as I believe that too much power is already concentrated in the hands of Tom Hanks as it is, but I am well aware from my past habit of reading the plots of films off of their Wikipedia pages that one of the prisoner characters is a large magical black man who had made a pet of a little mouse that comes into his cell and which he called Mr. Bojangles. I actually already had my obligatory mouse encounter back at the Seagoville jail unit, which had a considerable mouse infestation. At the time, I was still cellmates with Tom, who, as noted in a previous column, has the words "Game Over" tattooed on his knuckles and doesn't like it when I read out loud from Henry Kissinger's memoirs in a fake German accent — a pretty uptight fellow, you understand.

One morning, he remarked that he'd been kept awake all night by a mouse that had made it into our cell despite the rolled-up newspaper he'd used to block the gap under the door, and which had proceeded to get into his locker and rummage through his commissary snacks, forcing Tom to stay up and try to get rid of him. So I gave Tom a lecture to the effect that he, like most people, is a fucking nut job, and that his inability to deal emotionally with the fact that a mouse had entered his locker and is maybe going to eat one of his special little crackers or whatever really indicates the larger problem. As for me, I explained, I had slept like a Taoist baby the previous night, even though I, too, had heard the mouse and even though I, too, had a bunch of snacks and candy and bullshit in my locker that — oh noes — the fucking mouse might have gotten into. What if the mouse got one of my crackers, Tom? What if he got two crackers? How am I going to pick up the pieces and move on with my life knowing that I have two fewer Brand X Ritz-style crackers today than I had yesterday? These are some of the questions that did not pass through my mind last night, because last night I was asleep like a reasonable person, dreaming that I was an adviser to Charlemagne. But not you, Tom; you were up all night on mouse patrol, defending your snack crack Lebensraum from the Bolshevik unter mice or whatever the fuck it was you think you were doing. You're a Nazi, Tom. You're a sick Nazi war criminal.

Anyway, that's how I explained it to Tom, and then, when my mention of Nazis prompted him to note that he actually had never been clear on what World War II was all about, I gave him another lecture on his duty as a citizen of a republic to familiarize himself with modern history. Then I regaled him with a summary of World War II, although much of what I told him was lies.

A week or so later, I opened my locker to get some more paper so that I could finish writing out a list of reasons why Thomas Friedman should be thrown out of the country, and there before me on the top shelf was the mouse, rustling through my package of peanut-butter crackers. He immediately froze in place — and so did I, because I didn't know what else to do, not having ever before encountered a mouse and having read very little on the subject. I needed to buy some time and run through my options.

First, I thought, "Should I ... eat him?" Then it struck me that this was kind of a bizarre thing to come up with right off the bat, and so I put it out of my mind. Then it occurred to me that this mouse actually thought I couldn't see it just because it was standing perfectly still. What a fool this mouse must be, I thought. Then I wondered whether the mouse might not be thinking the same about me — that it was I who wrongly believed myself to be invisible by virtue of my own stillness. In fact, I was only being still because my opponent had

started being still first, which is just basic game theory. Surely the mouse knew this perfectly well but was nonetheless choosing to pretend otherwise in order to discredit me. Having come to this conclusion — which now that I write it out in plain English doesn't seem to make any sense — I resolved to eat this disingenuous little mouse after all. But I was still held back by that last barricade of doubt: might not the eating of this mouse violate some sort of unspoken jailhouse convention about not eating live mice? Come to think of it, hadn't this been a social convention for tens of thousands of years? Maybe not, maybe so; without internet access, it's hard to determine these things on short notice. But had not society cast me away? Was it not society that had placed me in chains? A pox on society, then! And so I reached out to grab the mouse that I might feast upon it to the greater glory of my vague anarchistic sentiments, but it hopped down to the floor and scurried out of the cell.

“Guards! Seize him!” I called out through the doorway, to no visible effect. Then I grabbed the stack of paper out of my locker and spent a pleasant afternoon writing down a few more of my grievances against Thomas Friedman, including his failed prediction from 15 years ago that China would soon become a net importer of wheat, whereas in fact just the opposite happened, or his turn-of-the-century proclamation that people's refrigerators would be ordering fresh milk over the internet by 2005, or for all of his nonsense about how Putin would restore democracy and the rule of law to Russia. Frankly, I wouldn't mind being locked up at all if only Thomas Friedman were locked up, too.

COMPOSE RADICAL POLITICAL TREATISE ON PARCHMENT MADE FROM TORN-UP SHEETS WITH INK COMPRISED OF SOOT MIXED WITH THE WINE WE PRISONERS RECEIVE ON SUNDAYS AND A STYLUS I CARVED FROM A FISH BONE: The revolutionary priest from The Count of Monte Cristo does this, and I've always wanted to do something similar. As I recall, though, the treatise he wrote was on the viability of a unified Italy. With the advantage of hindsight, we now know that the unification of Italy was a terrible mistake, as modern Italians are ungovernable in large numbers. I suppose I could write a treatise on how Italy may be reduced back into a peninsula of warring city-states and ever-tottering proxy kingdoms. (Spoiler Alert: my plan consists of sitting back and letting nature take its course.) Also, we are not allowed to have fish bones in Texas jails because they can be made into shanks.

ENGAGE IN A FIGHT TO THE DEATH WITH A FELLOW PRISONER KNOWN ONLY AS “THE SANDMAN”: Does anyone remember what this movie was called? I know it came out in the '80s, and I am about 30 percent sure that it starred Sylvester Stallone.

SECRETLY DIG AN ESCAPE TUNNEL OVER THE COURSE OF 10 YEARS USING A ROCK HAMMER I BOUGHT FROM MORGAN FREEMAN WHILE IN THE MEANTIME TAKING ADVANTAGE OF MY POSITION AS THE PRISON'S ACCOUNTANT TO COMPILE EVIDENCE OF CORRUPT PRACTICES ON THE PART OF THE WARDEN THAT I'LL PLACE IN THE OUTGOING MAIL ADDRESSED TO A LOCAL NEWSPAPER RIGHT BEFORE I FLEE TO ZIHUATANEJO WITH MY BEST FRIEND, MORGAN FREEMAN: Well, this actually sounds like a lot of work. It's also predicated on the assumption that major press outlets are necessarily capable of understanding and reporting on evidence of government wrongdoing even when it's compiled and handed to them on a silver platter. This has not always been my experience.

11 Feb - Chelsea Manning Update

There is exciting news regarding Chelsea Manning. In the past several days she has both been brought on as a contributing opinion write for The Guardian and has been approved to receive hormone treatment as she continues her transition.

MORE:

February 11th - Chelsea joins Guardian as contributing opinion writer

Wikileaks whistleblower Chelsea Manning will be joining *The Guardian* as a contributing opinion writer for the site's US website. Chelsea will be writing from prison in Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, and will focus on topics related to war, gender, and freedom of information. Her articles will not be scheduled at regular intervals, but rather will appear infrequently. She will not be paid for her work.

The Guardian's editor-in-chief, Katherine Viner, made the announcement yesterday, February 10, over Twitter: "Delighted to announce: Chelsea Manning joins @GuardianUS as a contributing opinion writer, writing on war, gender, freedom of information"

Chelsea has published three other op-eds since her imprisonment in Fort Leavenworth:

New York Times, "The Fog Machine of Far"

The Guardian, "How to Make ISIS Fall on its Own Sword"

The Guardian, "I am a Transgender Woman and the Government is Denying my Civil Rights"

February 13th - Chelsea to begin gender-related medical care

After fighting for years to receive necessary gender-related medical care from prison in Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, Wikileaks whistleblower Chelsea Manning will finally begin hormone therapy. The Department of Defense's approval of Manning's care comes after Chelsea's initial request for treatment in August of 2013 and a subsequent Sept 2014 lawsuit filed in conjunction with the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) after her medical needs continued to be ignored.

Manning's treatment will mark the first time the military has administered such care, as transgender individuals are currently not allowed to serve. Since Chelsea cannot be discharged until her 35-year prison sentence is complete, it is up to the Army to see to her medical well-being while imprisoned.

Hormone therapy, "is an important first step in Chelsea's treatment regimen and one that is in line with the recommendations of all of her doctors and the basic requirements of the Eighth Amendment," confirms Chase Strangio, attorney with the ACLU. "We are thrilled for Chelsea that the government has finally agreed to initiate hormone therapy as part of her treatment plan."

However, Stangrio notes, "The military continues to refuse to let Chelsea grow her hair like other female prisoners, a critical part of her treatment plan that has been recognized by her doctors. The resistance to meeting Chelsea's full treatment needs is a reflection of the deeply entrenched stigma associated with transgender health care... we will keep fighting for Chelsea's health needs until she is treated fully and adequately."

Chase Strangio, attorney with the ACLU:

"Chelsea has waited years to receive basic medical care that she needs to treat her gender dysphoria. Since she arrived at the United States Disciplinary Barracks at Fort Leavenworth in August of 2013, advocating for her medically necessary health care has been Chelsea's priority. She has fought her whole life, and particularly over the course of the past few years, to be seen and affirmed as who she is—as Chelsea. We are thrilled for Chelsea that the government has finally agreed to initiate hormone therapy as part of her treatment plan. This is an important first step in Chelsea's treatment regimen and one that is in line with the recommendations of all of her doctors and the basic requirements of the Eighth Amendment. But the delay in treatment came with a significant cost to Chelsea and her mental health and we are hopeful that the government continues to meet Chelsea's medical needs as is its obligation under the Constitution so that those harms may be mitigated.

Meanwhile the fight continues. The military continues to refuse to let Chelsea grow her hair like other female prisoners, a critical part of her treatment plan that has been recognized by her doctors. The resistance to meeting Chelsea's full treatment needs is a reflection of the deeply entrenched stigma associated with transgender health care. There is no transgender exception to the requirements of the Eighth Amendment and we will keep fighting for Chelsea's health needs until she is treated fully and adequately. It is additionally concerning that private medical information about Chelsea's care was again leaked by government officials despite clear protections in federal law and the existence of a protective order."

12 Feb - Russell Maroon Shoatz Update

Human Rights Coalition sent out an action alert on the morning of February 10th regarding Russell Maroon Shoatz, the former Black Panther and political prisoner. Maroon had been informed that he has prostate cancer on December 9th, 2014, and treatment has not yet begun.

MORE:

The Pennsylvania Department of Corrections (PADOC) medical contacted the Shoatz family on the morning of February 12th and informed them of the course and schedule of the treatments that Maroon is going to be receiving for his prostate cancer. The treatment is set to begin this week. The quick response by PADOC is due to the overwhelming number of phone calls they received from YOU.

THANK YOU to all who answered the call and advocated for Maroon. At this time we are asking supporters to hold off on further phone calls and letters. Maroon's family and legal counsel will be in communication with him to ensure that he begins receiving the treatment without any further delay.

We cannot thank everybody enough. Hold off for now on further advocacy, but remain vigilant in the event that further action is required in the future.

13 Feb - Call Out to Participate in International Day of Action Against Police Brutality

The Portland ABC would like to encourage any and all ABC chapters, and like minded crews and individuals throughout North America to participate in this year's International Day Against Police Brutality happening this March 15th.

MORE:

Noise demos outside of detention centers, marches and any other kind of creative event or shenanigans is encouraged. Now is a better time than ever to bring the international day of action to to the United States, as the street momentum has been dying off from the most recent wave of popular outrage around the brutal realities of the fascist police state in which we live. Many are likely feeling lost now that the complete failures of liberal reformism once again didn't save the day. Well folks, it's our job to step up to the plate and offer the only option that makes sense— to abolish the state and prisons through social revolution! Let's take to the streets across the country and send a message that we'll keep fighting so long as the police exist and continue doing their miserable jobs for the bureaucratic hell-cape that is the state!

14 Feb - The Latest Statement From Leonard Peltier

We're including the latest from American Indian Movement prisoner Leonard Peltier.

MORE:

Greetings My Friends, Relatives and Supporters:

I know that many of you have concerns about the status of my situation and have been wanting an update about what is going on. A lot has been happening in the last few months and I am sorry I have not written in a while. The deaths over this last year have been hard to accept, including the recent loss of my Sister Vivian. I want to deeply thank everyone for your loving words, prayers and also for helping my son Chauncey pay for her funeral expenses, I am humbled beyond what my words can express.

We are coming up on 40 years of my being in prisons. Sometimes, I honestly cannot believe it, sometimes I just don't want to believe it. You have been here with me through many dark times. It is not possible for me to respond to each of you personally, I sure wish I could.

The reality is that I am not getting any younger, I feel my body every day. My hip hurts, I cannot see very well, my body aches and my diabetes makes me feel uneasy a lot of the time. I do not say these things so you'll feel sorry for me, I just want to share because I would like for you to understand where I am at in my life. When I put the losses of my friends and family together in my mind with the way my body feels, I feel a hunger to go home like I have never felt in all these long years.

It is time.

If only for a while, to feel the grass under my feet, to paint with the wind on my face while I listen to the

laughter of my grandchildren in the yard, to smell some apple pie cooking in the air. Some simple things is all I need.

I hear there are many of my Native Brothers and Sisters who are much younger than I who are doing some great work and it gives me great peace to know that the struggles our people face will always be addressed with honor and spirit. I know about the problems we are all facing, and I want to encourage you to never give up on the things you know are right.

I am not giving up either.

Being in prison is a lot like being given a terminal diagnosis, and with that in mind, I am pleased to announce that I have retained a new legal team to represent my needs and best interests. Together we have developed a careful "treatment plan" to hopefully gain the freedom and balance we have all been working for.

I do not know what the future will hold, but you should know that I am confident I have the best team I could have ever asked for. I want to say that I am finding hope and slowly letting it find me. Take it from this old dude, life is different at 70.

I have been strongly advised, and I agree, that in order for this process to have a chance to work, the details and inner working of our plans must remain confidential. I am placing my very life in the hands of my legal team. We cannot have any entity or person outside of my legal team speaking for me, acting on my behalf, or representing me. I am asking all of you to honor and respect this decision. Much like a surgeon who performs a lifesaving operation, it is critical to my freedom that they be allowed to do what they are highly skilled at, without any outside interference.

You will still hear from me, as we all know, I am not going anywhere yet.

I want you to continue to support what you know is right. Be active, take an active role in our world and support the things you know need to be supported. Stand up for those that need to be stood up for, teach and take care of our children and our Mother Earth. Help one another to be strong and honorable, keep and carry on the traditions, languages and culture of our people. Be kind and caring toward each other.

I will continue to need your support, prayers, your love, and your understanding as I walk on this final path toward my freedom.

We will share as much information as we can as the process moves forward. In the meanwhile, if you have any questions or concerns, please direct your inquiries to the website as that is the only official point of contact for myself and my team.

In the Spirit of Crazy Horse

15 Feb - Book Wish Lists

As many of you may know, NYC ABC has been compiling all known book wish lists for the imprisoned comrades we support. The list is viewable at <https://nycabc.wordpress.com/book-wish-lists>

MORE:

We've also taken on writing letters to many of the folks who do not have existing wish lists to offer to set up a list for each of them. We've had success in getting both replies and books purchased. We just received requests from Jamil Al-Amin, Veronza Bowers, Casey Brezik, Mondo we Langa, and Russell Maroon Shoatz.

Jamil's wish list is at

<https://www.amazon.com/gp/registry/wishlist/17UR1J25KRCME>

Veronza's wish list is at

<http://www.amazon.com/gp/registry/wishlist/2GL3DVEXWSVC3>

Casey's wish list is at

<https://www.amazon.com/gp/registry/wishlist/2FI6HU6IR6WJK>

Mondo we Langa's wish list is at

<http://www.amazon.com/gp/registry/wishlist/3VZSCSWFK5TK4>

Maroon's wish list is at

<http://www.amazon.com/gp/registry/wishlist/2U76DRNIFTP9F>

Please help us promote these wish lists and get books into our comrades.

20 Feb - A Valentine from Lynne Stewart to all Political Prisoners

WHAT: Political Prisoner Fund Raiser

WHEN: 5:30-10:00pm, Friday, February 20th

WHERE: St. Peters Church - 54th Street and Lexington Avenue, New York City, New York

COST: \$10, no one turned away due to lack of funds

MORE:

A Valentine from Lynne Stewart to all Political Prisoners — In and Out, celebrating and sending Mad Love to all who still remain behind the walls and to those who have been forced to be guests of the State and who are now released. This is meant to be as inclusive as the Lynne Stewart Organization has always been.

We will have entertainment— musical, comedic. There will be (short) speeches with Glenn Ford as a featured keynoter. We are hoping to duplicate the wonderful outpouring of a year ago that welcomed Lynne home.

There will be refreshments.

We are dedicated to bring home all political prisoners and prisoners of war and conscience from all progressive struggles!