



Updates for April 28th

15 Apr - Mumia Abu-Jamal Update

Mumia is currently back in general population and that has his closest supporters very concerned. We're including updates below.

MORE:

April 15th - Update From the Free Mumia Abu-Jamal Coalition (NYC)

Sisters and brothers, all of you who have shown such concern and love for Mumia:

I saw Mumia yesterday in the visiting room at Mahanoy for a little over an hour. He wheeled himself in in a manually controlled wheel chair. This was not easy for him. I then wheeled him to the front desk and where we sat. He looked better than he did in those widely disseminated photos taken a week ago and, similarly, seemed a little better than Wadiya's description when she saw him on Thursday. As I noted in an intro to Wadiya's report, the different descriptions may reflect some differences in the eyes of the beholders, but mostly I think reflect the fluctuations in the diabetic condition he is suffering from.

To clarify some differences in reports. Mumia repeated that he had lost over 80 pounds. This enormous weight loss in such a short period of time causes him pain when he sits, apparently especially in the wheel chair. I suggested a pillow, which obviously should have been provided with the wheel chair, and he said he would get one. His skin continued to look motley, multi-colored, and very flaky. It felt dry. He said it did not hurt but itched badly, and he has to cover his body with the anti-itching cream he uses repeatedly, as he did before coming out for his visit. He is still shaking. Perhaps one of the doctors we are consulting can explain what the shaking is from. His speech was clear and not at all slurred. He says he does not have pneumonia, one of the conditions that has been referred to several times, and that his lungs are clear. The confusion was that one technician confused the scar from his gunshot wound obtained at the time of his original arrest and incarceration in 1981 with possible lung damage from pneumonia. His diet has changed significantly: he is getting a lot of fruit and vegetables and his calorie intake is being monitored. It was just increased to 2500 calories a day. This diet improvement was certainly one of the victories of our campaign, as we expressed outrage at the diet he was being given (pasta for dinner and cake along with oatmeal for breakfast) following a blood sugar level that was so dangerously close to diabetic coma. The authorities must have been embarrassed by being caught in their wanton neglect of Mumia's needs, whether coming from malpractice or malevolence.

Mumia was very alert and deep, as usual filled with extensive historical knowledge, as we discussed some of the same kinds of political issues we generally discuss when I visit. He was occasionally even humorous. His spirit and intellect remain unquestionably Mumia. But he is concerned about some loss in his ability to retrieve words, aphasia like symptoms, and he sometimes experiences fugue states. He apparently did not experience any of these symptoms while I was there. Very notable to me was the trauma all this has imposed on Mumia, major, major, major physical and emotional trauma. He feels the steroids given him for his initial skin problem brought on the diabetes, and now the life threatening diabetic picture, not to mention the pain, the itching, the shaking, and the memory issues he described. ALL DONE TO HIM, IMPOSED ON HIM.

Mumia is deeply grateful to the movement for its love and has great faith in its power. When I asked if he had any suggestions for what we should be doing, he said "Keep doing what you're doing." So let's keep those calls, emails, faxes and educational meetings going.

Below is Noelle Hanrahan's summary of what the doctors in the case say they will need. Please request these when you write or call the individuals listed at the end.

1) Mumia's chosen private physician has immediate regular phone access to Mumia in the infirmary. Phone access is limited in the infirmary, and Mumia and his physician need to be in conversation throughout each week.

2) His doctor be allowed to communicate freely and regularly with the prison infirmary physicians who are currently overseeing Mumia's care.

3) The Pennsylvania Department of Corrections (DOC) allow Mumia's doctor to schedule an immediate Independent Medical Examination in an examination room with a table and medical instruments.

4) The Pennsylvania DOC develop a diagnostic and treatment plan adequate to understand any underlying conditions that have contributed to his current ongoing crisis, and that consultation with appropriate specialists be arranged in a timely fashion and be used to assist in this effort.

We need a mass mobilization of calls and letters to:

Tom Wolf, Governor
717.787.2500
governor@PA.gov
508 Main Capitol Building, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17120

John Wetzel, Pennsylvania Department of Corrections
717.728.4109
1920 Technology Parkway, Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania 17050

John Kerestes, Superintendent- SCI Mahanoy
570.773.2158 x8102
Fax: 570.783.2008

April 21st - Prison refuses Mumia Medical Care

Mumia is still in medical danger. He is weak, in the infirmary, and still needs a wheelchair to come out to visits. In a phone call on Monday his voice was hesitant and lacked its usual vibrancy.

Yesterday, the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections notified Mumia's Attorney Bret Grote (of the Abolitionist Law Center) that it would:

1. Not allow Mumia to be examined by his own doctor;
2. Not allow Mumia to be examined by an endocrinologist (diabetes specialist);
3. And they denied access for the doctor to communicate with prison medical staff to assist or direct Mumia's care; and the Prison has refused to provide for regular phone calls between Mumia and his doctor. Currently, Mumia can only use the phone every other day for only 15 minutes, as the infirmary does not have phone access.

Mumia is being held in the very infirmary that caused his chronic conditions of eczema and late-onset diabetes to become life-threatening. The medical personnel on site were prevented from ordering tests when he was ill in mid-March, and are under the same prison/corporate restrictions today. One positive note, at this time Mumia is being allowed to monitor his own blood sugar multiple times a day, and he is receiving insulin. Since Mumia was hospitalized in ICU on March 30th with life threatening complications from chronic conditions we have been advocating for his treatment. We have to step up our efforts. Take Action Now! Demand that the Department of Corrections permit Mumia to have an examination by his doctor!

April 24th - Condition Critical: Friday Report From Prison Mumia Gravely III

Mumia Abu-Jamal was seen today by his wife and his condition has worsened. He is gravely ill. We are asking everyone to call the prison. Right now. It may be late, but call whenever you get this.

Mumia needs 24 hour care and supervision. He can not be in this condition in general population. In this state he may not be able ask for help, he may lose consciousness. He is too weak. (He was released from the infirmary two days ago).

His condition: He is extremely swollen in his neck, chest, legs, and his skin is worse than ever, with open sores. He was not in a wheelchair, but can only take baby steps. He is very weak. He was nodding off during the visit. He was not able to eat- he was fed with a spoon. These are symptoms that could be associated with hyper glucose levels, diabetic shock, diabetic coma, and with kidney stress and failure.

Please call these numbers, and any other numbers you have for the Prison and the Governor.

Demand that Mumia Abu-Jamal see a doctor ASAP. Right Now!

Demand that the prison officials call his wife Wadiya Jamal and his lawyer Bret Grote immediately.

Demand that he be seen immediately, and the not be left to go into a diabetic coma.

1. John Kerestes, Superintendent SCI Mahanoy: 570.773.2158 x8102 | 570.783.2008 Fax | 301 Morea Road, Frackville, Pennsylvania 17932

2. Tom Wolf: 717.787.2500 | governor@PA.gov | 508 Main Capitol Building, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17120

3. John Wetzel, Pennsylvania DOC: 717.728.4109 | 717.728.4178 Fax | ra-contactdoc@poc.gov | 1920 Technology Parkway, Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania 17050

4. Susan McNaughton, DOC Press secretary 717.728.4025. Pennsylvania DOC smcnaughton@pa.gov

We need your help right now. Please forward this far and wide.

We need more phone numbers to call inside SCI Mahanoy. If you have one send them to us info@prisonradio.org (mailto:info@prisonradio.org) .

Every call matters. Every action matters. We need to be in the streets. Call your friends, your neighbors. Take action.

15 Apr - Poems by and Update On Eric King

Eric King is awaiting trial on charges of allegedly trying to firebomb a politician's office. Below, we're including an update as well as his latest writing.

MORE:

April 15th - The View Outside

Blueberry colored lights, sky descending
tilting my head up, the universe presents itself
one more graceful night, dreams of worlds beyond
Did I see a shooting star, outside my wall?
No, it was a search-light echoing the violence
reflective glares blind so harmoniously
off the razor wire, gently withing my reach
steel asserts its might as it resurrects from hell
to gain an air of freedom, to stand coffin deep
doors shriek in tune, to keep me in, or keep "them out"?
All my dreams of peace have deceived me
Recreation in a cage, I have become a beast

10,00 volts is so cooley welcoming
the sparks they purr at me
Like a high I've never known, one touch & you're hooked
stars run away, lest they be captured & sentenced
Prisoners in a war, did I ever enlist in?
Shine mimics beauty & holds a cold stare
shine entombs deadly, should you forget
uniforms may change but society will ensure
That you will never, be free from this burden

April 16th - On Introspection

(A)

If this is my home, it feels broken into
where's my warm welcome?
the family before was beaten and evicted
hard to settle in, hard to get cozy
if this is my home, who's misplaced my dishes
the silverware is tarnished and rusted
shelves sit empty, books besieged
why are there bars on the windows
and empty bottles in the bin
this isn't mind
tear this house down

Its getting harder to recognize myself, and it isn't only because of the unkempt facial hair mess or the longer-than-comfortable-but-fuck-it mop on top. Every day I evaluate than re-evaluate my stances, beliefs and passions. Nothing else to do in here really. Sometimes I get so bored with myself that I force my brain to shut off, other times my views are so splendidly revolutionary that I swear I will remember them so no need to write them down. Fool. I'm no longer the bubbly jokester or even the positive morale booster, it hasn't even been a year yet. Or maybe I am and just don't have anyone to joke with. I steadily keep turning further and further inward, caring less and less about the outside world, minus a select few people and places. Thus I can see how the outside world views prison/prisoners. Not even out of sight out of mind, more; never in sight blinded to sight. All the more miraculous that there is still some who actually do give more than just predisposed mime concerns towards the plight of prisoners. The amount of true despair, pain, disillusionment, confusion & rage behind these walls is earth shaking, and this is just a federal holding facility! The horrors that await inside county, state & federal prisons is a nightmare that society denies its having, a monster it continually sweeps under the bed hoping the kids never hide under there. It's a pirate's treasure chest filled with forgotten and abandoned souls who have been shown no other way to survive than through violence. We tell kids to listen to the police, the good guys. So when our kids pull guns and fire hopeless and senselessly into another, should we not award them with badges and promotions, like they've seen their role models receive? How can we expect to stop things like rape when we teach boys that they're strong and in control and that girls exist just for sex, then use the media to instill that same worthlessness into young girls so much that they're brainwashed to believe it? I don't recognize myself anymore because I used to love calling girls babe & bitch because "It's a term of endearment" I would lie to myself. I had no problem telling someone to "quit being a fag" using the Eminem definition of detachment. I used to buy Nike shoes buy plain black tees, buy fucking everything to form an identity, never made anything though, especially an impact. Consumer tool, like everyone else. "I'm different" I would say to myself, railing molly off the bathroom counter at a hipster bar "I talk politics while fucked up, I see this is wrong I am just doing it ironically." moronically more like. Everyone loves being a weekend warrior, showing up for the rally or protest, fuck up some nazis or a brick through a window or two. Then race home to brag about it on tablets and social media. The reason I don't recognize myself much these years is because back then I didn't have a personality of my own. Like many I just reflected back on what I thought about being morally, socially & class conscious meant "am I doing it right?" When you look in the mirror and the thing opposite you is ashamed to

look back, or too high, it's time to re-evaluate yourself and do it quick. I am proud of who I was before my arrest and now after. The mental, social and physical changes I began making years ago were beginning to manifest. Was I still a tad too emotional? Probably. Was I still a hypocrite? It's a human paradox. But my everyday life had evolved, my relationship with oppressive personality traits have matured, the way I was living was my views actualized, put into action. That felt good, real good. Everyone can benefit from some hard evolution. Calling yourself out is hard, yet rewarding, like most difficult things. Nothing feels better though than knowing you were living life the way YOU wanted instead of living the way you thought you should. Lots of improving. Having people around who share ideas, visions of the future, and affinity in reality and not just the obscure ideas, helps make me more honest, more introspective and more happy.

April 20th - Eric's Health Status and General Wellbeing

Played the song "Harsh Realms" for Eric yesterday, it has been on his mind a lot lately. He has been in good spirits despite not feeling healthy. Eric has been experiencing more and more very serious symptoms everyday that could be a deficiency like anemia or vitamin b-12 deficiency. Eric has been a vegan for 10 years and while he has been in CCA Leavenworth he has not been receiving adequate nutrition. For Eric it is a good week if he gets a serving of veggies and grain each day and a fruit twice a week. Because he has to pick through the tray of food for vegan food he can eat he is living primarily on processed food from commissary. For this Eric needs both money on his account and for them to allow him to use his money to purchase items from commissary. There have been weeks that Eric has even been denied commissary with no reason given to him.

Eric's youcaring fundraiser has been taken down without notice or reason given. We are currently in the process of trying to get it reinstated. Even though the funds that were on the account are a small amount to most, they can mean the difference to Eric between having food for the week or not. We are hoping that youcaring will allow us to recover the funds that were donated. We have included on the donate page instructions that will allow folks to donate directly to Eric's commissary for the time being.

Eric appreciates every bit of solidarity and energy sent his way, it is indeed carrying him through this trying time. Eric has a request for articles related to space and science! He is feeling increasingly disconnected from the world and would love any and all printed articles.

April 23rd - Fundraiser is Live!!

Second time is a charm right? Let's hope so because our fundraiser is live! Eric is feeling pretty blown away by the support he is receiving. We have been reading him the messages that are being posted to the fundraiser page and they are really inspiring an overwhelming feeling of gratitude for him. Thank you to folks who have contributed, to the folks sharing the blog and fundraiser page and thank you to folks who are reaching out to Eric through letters and notes showing solidarity. No form of solidarity is more valued. To know that he has folks who are behind him and supporting him is more than he could have ever hoped for.

<https://fundrazr.com/campaigns/0yoZc/ab/a4jVK6>

April 25th - HUGE victories with the demand for a vegan diet!

Withholding food from my brain
they attempt to starve
revolutionary minds
I will eat
fueling on solidarity
surviving on truth
the words they oppress
desserts of abuse
which they indulge
will make their stomachs
a larger target
steal my food

you will not steal my cause

This is a poem Eric wrote last week during his struggle for a vegan diet. We are ECSTATIC to report that yesterday Eric won his battle and has a vegan tray!! Eric thanks everyone for the solidarity that gave him strength to fight. He said without folks standing behind him he wouldn't have been able to be in a place to fight for himself! When they handed him his tray they said to him "I guess your comrades got you a vegan tray" Thank you so much everyone!

Eric is still very sick. He requested medical care last week and has yet to hear back if he is going to receive it. He is extremely fatigued and to stay awake he has to force himself to get up every half an hour or so and do jumping jacks or some sort of vigorous exercise. After everything he eats he is experiencing extreme stomach pain. Eric is also experiencing loss of vision and extreme vertigo, memory loss among other symptoms. These symptoms are extremely serious and could indicate a deficiency in vitamin B-12 which can happen to vegan folks. The long term effects of this deficiency can be devastating. Eric needs to be seen by a doctor.

16 Apr - Dante's Inferno or: The Twisted Saga of Dante Cano vs. Phil Tagami

On February 13th, 2015, Dante Cano was arrested in front of the Rotunda Building in Downtown Oakland during a protest against police violence.

MORE:

by EastWest (*Fireworks*)

He was mobbed by several OPD officers, tackled to the ground, and then hauled off to Santa Rita Jail. In a statement posted online while he was in jail, Cano wrote: "I was violently attacked for supposedly breaking a Men's Warehouse window. I was tackled and beaten by OPD, then put in a van and taken four to five blocks away. I was then asked if a bat and a black bag was mine. I said, "Fuck no." Police beat me once more in the van and then took me to jail." Currently, Dante has plead "not guilty" to the charge of felony vandalism and is fighting in court to clear his name.

Cano is accused of breaking not just any windows, but busting out two \$5,000 windows of the Rotunda Building, owned by a developer named Phil Tagami. Dante Cano, who stated in court that he worked as a dish washer, has hardly any money to his name. Phil Tagami is a multi-millionaire, and his investment company, California Capital and Investment Group, CCIG, owns countless buildings around the Bay Area. Tagami spearheaded the gentrification and development of Downtown Oakland and Uptown and now has pushed through the West Oakland Specific Plan (WOSP), which will further accelerate the gentrification of West Oakland. And, for some reason, Phil Tagami has taken a personal interest in Dante Cano.

On his personal Facebook account, Phil Tagami wrote the following: "The man arrested for breaking the windows at the Rotunda last week was Dante Cano of San Francisco. He is 21 years old... Well what can we do to address the cost recovery, fair restitution for his act of property destruction? What is the responsible course of action to be taken? Should we 1) let it slide, 2) work out a payment or work arrangement, or 3. press the DA to make an example of him? please advise ...I have an open mind that is closing fast...read the thread below this is not his first rodeo and he is a repeat mind you repeat offender [sic]."

After making this request of his Facebook network, a whole range of folks, from the District Attorney, local developers, pro-gentrification 'activists,' and Oakland well-to-dos began to chime in. District Attorney Nancy O'Malley herself commented on the Facebook thread to update Phil Tagami on Dante's progress through the judicial system. It seems that a few broken windows is enough to merit the attention of the head of the District Attorney's office. Alongside her comments were dozens of others that encouraged Phil Tagami to "throw the book at 'em." Some even had the nerve to call Dante Cano a "trust-fund baby."

Dante Cano is the son of Duran Ruiz, a longtime sex-worker activist from San Francisco who died in 2007. In her own words, "I have accumulated 14 years total in prison and I'm only 38. I don't do bad things. I've never stolen. I'm a prostitute because it's honest and I'm honest." She was in prison while she was pregnant with Dante

in 1994. After giving birth, her son was taken away and put up for adoption. His foster father, a well-known gay-rights activist, placed him inside a group home in San Francisco at the age of 7. Inside various group homes, Dante was often forcibly administered psychiatric drugs and physically restrained for his acts of rebellion. Dante often attempted to escape and fight the guards in these institutions until his escape from a San Diego group home at the age of 16.

By 2011, Dante had learned to live on the streets of San Diego before eventually finding Occupy. In this popular movement, Dante was able to meet hundreds of people energized at the prospect of over-throwing the reign of the bankers and real-estate speculators. A large caravan from Occupy San Diego left for Oakland in an attempt to occupy the empty Henry J. Kaiser convention center on January 28th, 2012. The riot police prevented this from occurring by firing tear gas and rubber bullets at the crowd, and Dante was arrested with over 400 people later that night. After his arrest, Dante remained in his birthplace, the Bay Area.

Phil Tagami, on the other hand, patrolled the Rotunda building with his shotgun during Occupy demonstrations. Since those auspicious circumstances, Tagami has pressed onward with his scheme to revamp the Oakland Army Base logistics center. Approved by the City Council in 2012, Tagami's plans to redevelop the old West Oakland army base include dozens of warehouses and new train yards to handle cargo to and from the Port of Oakland. Construction officially began on November 1st, 2013 and currently the old army base is demolished, the site leveled, and the first structures will soon begin to rise. This new logistics site will allow for more capital to enter the port and be shipped quicker than ever before, cutting out truckers and instead opting for rail transportation. Oakland will become even more important to the global capitalist economy. Riding high off the success of his new project, Tagami still has time to scheme about putting Dante in jail.

Dante is yet to be convicted of the crime of smashing the Rotunda windows, but if he is, Tagami has a direct line to Nancy O'Malley and can recommend punishment. Many of his peers have publicly encouraged Tagami to make an example out of Dante. It makes sense why these scumbag developers would feel so threatened by a poor rebel like Dante. Dante has no interest in allowing them to carry out their development plots without resistance. Dante only wants to help the poor people around him who are exploited, jailed, and killed by the reigning economic system. He cares nothing for the lines, numbers, and sums of the developers. In 2014, Dante Cano made headlines by jumping on the dais of Oakland City Council during a meeting on the West Oakland Specific Plan, scaring Noel Gallo out of his seat. His rebellious spirit comes for a genuine place and Dante has little stomach for the injustices and deceptions of the reigning capitalist nightmare.

It is no surprise that Phil Tagami was one of the main backers of the West Oakland Specific Plan (WOSP), which was denounced by many as a way to further gentrify West Oakland and the surrounding area. As an article on indybay.org by Lynda Carlson stated: "Millionaire Phillip Tagami, and wealthy Wall Street investors Hamid Moghadam, Douglas D. Abbey, and T. Robert Burke have teamed up together for the massive gentrification projects. These are the wealthy investors who are the movers and shakers in the combined redevelopment schemes to gentrify...West Oakland. Once WOSP becomes the law of the land, the plan is to target the Opportunity Sites for redevelopment and maximum exploitation by wealthy developers. WOSP will be used as a marketing tool to attract developers to the Opportunity Sites. Low-income people need not apply, and have been abandoned to fend for themselves once this gentrification scheme gains traction."

Tagami makes tens of millions of dollars by displacing communities of color and the poor and working class more broadly. Tagami lives in a mansion in the Oakland Hills that overlooks Lake Merritt and is right next to Governor Jerry Brown's house. From atop his tower of wealth and power, Tagami gazes down at the city he is helping to rapidly change. His vision of development ends with a city drastically divided along lines of race and class. People like Dante aren't the enemy; they're heroes that stand up against the rich and powerful.

Dante's next court date is on Friday, June 5th, 2015, Department 6, at 9AM in Rene C. Davidson Courthouse, located at 1225 Fallon Street. Come show support for one of the Bay Area's young rebels the capitalist overlords are poised to make an example of.

17 Apr - The Waiting Game: 43 Years of Innocence; Still Incarcerated; Still Isolated

April 17th marks 43 years since Albert Woodfox and Herman Wallace were first placed in solitary confinement for a crime they didn't commit. We now await a decision from Federal Judge James Brady regarding Albert's request for bail, expected any week.

MORE:

Featured below are messages from both Albert and Robert King.

Greetings. I'd imagine that friends and supporters are concerned with what is happening to me since being transferred from the Louisiana Department of Corrections to West Feliciana Parish custody. I'm ok--still in isolation as we come upon the 43rd anniversary of my first days in solitary confinement. I remain strong and dedicated to the people's struggle.

Stay Strong,
Albert

Albert sits in a cell in a parish detention center in West St. Francisville Parish, where he is "still waiting." He waits for the State of Louisiana's next move in their game of infinitely obstructing justice. We, all of Albert's supporters, wait with him.

No evidence connects Albert to the murder. The case is rife with prosecutorial misconduct as well as manufactured and purchased testimony. Yet, 43 years later, despite a third overturned conviction, the State continues hell-bent in its determination to not just incarcerate Albert, but to also keep him isolated in solitary confinement.

Waiting for justice is a tortuously slow process in this "land of the free."

Robert King

18 Apr - Brent Betterly is out of prison. Release fund almost there!

Brent Betterly of the NATO 3 was paroled according to the Illinois DOC. Please take a minute to donate at <http://www.youcaring.com/help-a-neighbor/prison-release-fund-for-brent-betterly/308054> to his post release fund. The \$1500 goal is almost met!

MORE:

On May 16th, 2012, just prior to the NATO summit in Chicago, three Occupy activists were arrested and eventually charged with 11 felony counts, including four under the never-before-used Illinois terrorism statute. Brian "Jacob" Church, Brent Betterly, and Maya Chase (formerly Jared Chase) came to be known as the NATO 3. The case went to trial in January of 2014, and the NATO 3 were acquitted of all of the terrorism charges. Unfortunately, the jury found them guilty of two felonies each—possession of an incendiary device with the intent to commit arson and possession of an incendiary device with the knowledge that another intended to commit arson. They were given sentences ranging from 5 to 8 years.

Brent Betterly is the second of the three to be released. He is scheduled to rejoin us on April 16th. Please donate to his release fund to help ease the transition after 3 years behind bars. Donations are needed to help pay for Brent's living expenses while he works to get back on his feet during the immediate aftermath of his incarceration. Brent is also the father of a small child who lives several states away and needs funds to help remain in contact with him.

23 Apr - The Barrett Brown Review of Arts and Letters and Jail: A Sign of Things to Come

Barrett Brown writes a regular column for D Magazine and we've included his latest below.

MORE:

At the end of February, I arrived at the Fort Worth Federal Correctional Institution, where I'll be serving the remainder of my five-year sentence, unless something unforeseen happens, like, say, the American people overthrow the federal government, release me from my cell, and declare me Dictator For Life of the Amalgamated Union of North American States. I'm not saying they should do that, mind you. It's not for me to tell the American people what to do.

In some ways, this place promises to be far more exciting than the various jail units I've been calling home for the last couple of years. For instance, I'd been here a little over a month before certain elements within the prison administration began explicitly violating their own stated policies as well as U.S. law in an effort to disrupt my attempts to bring to public attention other instances of wrongdoing within the Bureau of Prisons in an incident that's already made headlines and which now appears likely to end up in the courts later this year. So, that's certainly exciting.

Before going into all that, I should probably explain something about the BOP as a whole. It is more likely than not that, in the history of mankind, there has never been an organization other than the Bureau of Prisons in which the high and noble ideals of technocratic reformers who decide on policy from afar are so often trampled underfoot by the low and beastly foot soldiers who are actually charged with carrying out these policies, with the obvious exception of the Democratic Party. This is not to say that the guards and mid-level administrators are all fascists or anything like that; I would put the figure at around 30 percent, which is not too far off from that of the adult population of the United States as a whole. But, as with the Republican Party, it is the fascists that so often end up setting the pace. (And on an unrelated subject, I can't express how distressed I am, as a newly convicted felon, to have lost my right to vote.)

The above is an over-simplification, but, in my benevolence, I shall clarify a bit, as the nature of the BOP is such that it defies easy evaluation. One does not simply describe it all in one go; rather, one must circle around it a bit, taking little snapshots here and there until one can present it in all of its splendid angles. She is a coquette, but of no easy virtue. Contrary to what I put forth just a paragraph ago, for instance, it is often the bright-eyed policy wonks themselves who turn out to be misguiding and overbearing, and the guards who serve as our protectors, shielding us from many of the burdensome and unnecessary little rules that officially govern our lives. In a typical BOP jail unit, each cell is afflicted with a vent that shoots out a never-ending stream of frigid air, thereby forcing inmates even in places like Texas to don heavy jackets in the middle of summer, at great cost to the taxpayer. Jail inmates are officially forbidden from covering up those vents, but if you ever happen to take a stroll through a jail unit, you'll find every single vent is, in fact, blocked with some sort of makeshift cover. You won't see this if you're a prison administrator of the sort that makes monthly inspections of jail units, though, because just as prisoners conduct a collective and perpetual conspiracy by which to hide certain matters from the average guard, there are always a handful of matters that prisoners and guards conspire together to hide from the average administrator. And so in the hour before a scheduled inspection, the vent coverings come down, the fruit and milk that are not supposed to be in the cells are removed from the 90 percent of cells in which illicit fruit and unauthorized milk are kept, and the Potemkin jail unit is otherwise made ready for the useless and naïve administrators, who are quite correctly held in great contempt by inmates and officers alike.

Still, it is the sporadic and ever-shifting enforcement of petty regulations by the guards themselves that is most extraordinary. Back in the Seagoville Federal Detention Center, some officers had us return to our cells for 10 minutes after meals while the orderlies cleaned the floor around the tables; others merely relegated us to the top floor for the duration, while still others let us hang out wherever we liked during cleanup since we are sentient creatures who are plainly capable of keeping out of the way while someone sweeps the fucking floor.

There was similar diversity in schools of thought as to how long we should be confined to our cells before meals, and in what manner and grouping we should be let out to get our trays and eat. Some guards firmly believed that it was necessary for all 100 inmates to return to their cells, and for the guard to then lock each individual cell door behind us and then, five minutes later, to start unlocking those same doors one by one. (At this point there is

additional variation, as some guards expect you to go eat as soon as your door is unlocked, while others expect you to remain confined in your now-unlocked cell until they call, “Chow!”) Likewise, some unlock only the bottom-floor cells and allow the inhabitants to eat while their top-floor counterparts remain confined, after which those who have eaten return to their cells to be locked back in before the top-tier cells are unlocked, and then, hey, why not have them return to their cells and lock them back in for another 20 or 30 minutes for good measure? One especially heroic specimen of an officer would let us out by the half-floor, thereby managing to double the time spent on all this. And then there was another fellow who didn’t have us go back to our cells before meals at all, but instead just yelled, “Chow!” and left us alone to eat like a reasonable human being. As such, the process of feeding inmates and cleaning up afterwards could take anywhere from 20 minutes to two hours, with there being a clear correlation between the duration and the extent to which the guard on duty was a toy fascist douchebag.

Indeed, a given federal detention facility is less a function of some universal array of procedures thought up by philosopher-bureaucrats in D.C. and more a sort of time-share fiefdom ruled over in turn by a succession of guards with a wide-ranging array of temperaments and psychological issues, which helps to keep things interesting. Again, using the Seagoville jail unit as an example, one officer forbade us from wearing our wool caps indoors, playing poker, or keeping items on our windowsills, regulations which were ignored by every other guard. Another wouldn’t let us stop and chat on the second-floor walkway. Still another forbade us to touch the second-floor handrail; yet another disallowed us from walking on the top floor for recreational purposes during such time as outside recreation was in effect, for reasons that I can only assume to be metaphysical in nature. Another guy rarely enforced any rules at all but would angrily tear down the strings we were in the habit of tying to the light switches outside our cell doors so as to be able to pull on the other end from inside our cells and thereby turn off our lights after being locked in for the night. A couple of others forbade us from removing our shirts on the rec yard. Some didn’t let us take leftover food back to our cells. One actually had us line up and give her our names and registration numbers so that she could check each of us off a list before allowing us to eat. Another forbade us to trot up and down the stairs for exercise; another didn’t allow us to do chin-ups on an exposed water pipe; one didn’t allow me to walk around the rec yard barefoot and evidently lacked the good breeding to at least make a show of pretending to believe my confused and half-mumbled explanation that I was only doing so for religious reasons; and another required us to walk clockwise to the stairway when he let us out for meals. As may be seen, we were not so much oppressed as harassed. And at any rate, many of these are indeed actual regulations that the guards are technically duty-bound to enforce rather than simply visible manifestations of their various emotional disorders (with the exception of the string-hating guard, whom I suspect to have been molested as a child by some unsavory heir to one of the nation’s twine fortunes).

But some of these are clearly not rules at all. What’s most striking is the selective enforcement by which the rules effectively change twice a day as the shifts change and in which the only element that remains consistent is that most rules are ignored altogether by staff and inmates alike; clearly there is an implicit agreement among these otherwise antagonistic groups that much of what the administrators come up with is unnecessary to the running of a safe and orderly prison. It also makes for a handy lesson as to how the rule of law upon which rests the lawful authority of state institutions is actually a fiction even aside from being counterproductive — as if any more such lessons were needed in a republic wherein the citizenry has gradually made criminals of about a quarter of its own adult population via drug, prostitution, and gambling statutes, and in which our continued survival above the level of a continent-wide gulag is thus entirely dependent on the state’s inability to enforce its own laws. But then, it’s certainly not my intention to criticize the noble American people, who will find themselves well-rewarded should they indeed decide to overthrow the current regime and make me their humble Dictator For Life. Not that I am putting myself forward as a candidate at this time. I just want the American people to be aware of their options. The office seeks the man.

And what of these administrators themselves? As with the guards and other government employees the world over, many are largely decent people trying to draw forth positive outcomes from what they recognize to be a deeply flawed system, whereas some are fools and others are knaves, and of course these three categories are not without some overlap. The mindset of the typical BOP administrator may perhaps be best illustrated by a review of the signs that befoul our prison walls. This is just as well; like the 17th-century Japanese nobleman who was

delighted to find a broken leaf hanging at such an angle as to evoke some exquisite reflection, I am never really happy unless I am mulling over the sort of demented and quasi-literate nonsense that the typical 21st-century mid-level state functionary puts out when called upon to try to write something, which is why I was so thrilled by the NSA document leaks. Here at FCI Fort Worth, I have got my work cut out for me. Some examples follow. I'll provide commentary where appropriate, but keep your eye out for such characteristic features as unwarranted belligerence, vague thrusts in the direction of accepted English grammar, and the use of overly hyphenated formal terminology in the midst of sentences that are themselves broken beyond reasonable hope of repair.

"Beds are to be made military style, blankets tight on top with a 6" collar. A photo of a properly made bed is posted on the bulletin board. Classes will be given by the unit counselor on an as-needed basis one pillow per bed."

Even setting aside the idea so inherently totalitarian as to actually be kind of charming, that anyone ought to be required to fold one's bed sheets within an inch-based margin of error, as if one were building the Ark of the Covenant and not simply arranging linen, and that this rule is so utterly necessary that a course of instruction should actually be made available to ensure compliance, and also setting aside the question of where the prison keeps the cryogenically frozen Nazi storm trooper who is presumably thawed out now and again to help the unit counselor teach such a class, I really like how the author of this deranged micro-treatise believes that, if a somewhat related sentence fragment happens to pop into his fevered little head, such as something to do with federal pillow quotas, it would be entirely appropriate to just throw it in at the end of whatever sentence he happens to be writing at the moment.

Here's another one that begins reasonably enough by noting that one may check out clothing irons and related accessories by exchanging one's ID card for them at an officer's station, and then promptly descends into poorly phrased madness:

"Any of the above-noted items that are found in possession of an inmate without an ID card checked out, will be confiscated and subject to disciplinary procedures."

As an actual American citizen who has spent a total of two months in the hole, I hate to see how the BOP goes about punishing a mere iron. Note also the flailing attempt to express the really very simple concept of "items that have not been properly checked out with one's ID card."

"Prior to releasing, turn your chair into staff."

Well, I'm not much of a craftsman, but I'll give it a go.

"There are no unauthorized hooks behind the door or on the walls and they must be removed immediately."

The English language provides for countless ways by which one might properly convey the intended idea here, yet this sub-human somehow manages to choose one that fails on its own terms.

"ONE FAN, ONE PICTURE, AND ONE BOOK MAY BE PLACED ON YOUR TABLE, ALL OTHER ITEMS NEED TO BE PLACED IN YOUR LOCKER."

This is actually relatively cogent, aside from the inevitable deployment of a comma where he might have prayed in vain for a period or a semicolon, and is only included here due to the amusingly unfortunate superficial resemblance of the initial clause to the old National Socialist tag "EIN REICH, EIN VOLK, EIN FUHRER!" At any rate, I'm not one of those lucky-duddy inmates who has their own "table," by which this "person" seems to have been trying to convey "desk," since that's what some of us actually have, so I'm not confronted each day with the quandary regarding which picture to place on my desk for authorized picture-viewing sessions during federally sanctioned picture-viewing time or whatever the fuck was going through this war criminal's diseased

mind when he typed out this terrible nonsense.

“Two sets of clothes ironed and ONE coat is permitted to be neatly hung on hangers on your locker only.”

Four words into his latest masterwork, this guy apparently decides that English is, in fact, a romance language in which adjectives follow their subjects and at least refrains from taking this to its logical conclusion in ascribing gender to inanimate objects like in: “Zee coat, she must be well-pressed or you go to zee hole, yes?” Which I find kind of disappointing for some reason.

“Rooms will be of white paint only; no limes or other schematics. No arranging the rooms, all room must be uniformed.”

I stop by and read this sign at least five or six times a day, and it always make me smile. It’s not quite as good as the one about how we must remove the hooks from the walls that aren’t on the walls, but it has a certain subtlety all its own.

Anyway, that’s the mid-level BOP administrators for you. As for the upper-level honchos such as the wardens and D.C. appointees, we’ll have a chance to learn how they operate soon enough; on March 31, right after I used the inmate email system to get a journalist in touch with another prisoner who has information about BOP wrongdoing, my email access was taken away for a year without the written explanation that we’re supposed to receive in such an event. An internal security official who I asked about this claimed that I “wasn’t supposed to have it in the first place” and that a review of my recent messages showed that, by using it to talk to the press, I’d been “using it for the wrong thing.” A few days later, the prisoner I’d mentioned in the email had the typewriter he’d been permitted to keep in his cell taken away. As there are a half-dozen ways in which all of this violates both the BOP’s own policy and federal law, I have begun what’s known as the Administrative Remedy process, each documented step of which I will publish, along with the responses I receive as each step takes me up the chain of command to D.C. Naturally, I will provide additional commentary on their responses as needed, sort of like I’ve done with these signs.

27 Apr - Call and Fax for Seth Hayes

Robert Seth Hayes is one of the longest held political prisoners in the United States. He is 66 years old and suffers from multiple chronic and concerning medical problems. As you may know, the Medical Justice Project for Prisoners of War and Political Prisoners waged a medical campaign for Seth a few months ago regarding rapid and concerning weight loss as well as poorly controlled diabetes. Neither of these concerns have been addressed to date.

MORE:

The New York State Department of Corrections and Community Supervision (NYS DOCCS) states on its website that denial of adequate medical care is a violation of a person’s eighth amendment constitutional rights, so please help demand that Seth be provided with proper care.

Please join the phone and fax campaign!
Talking points and sample letter below.

THINGS YOU CAN DO:

1) On Monday, 4/27 and Tuesday, 4/28 please call:

Acting Commissioner Anthony J. Annucci, NYS Department of Corrections at 518.457.8134
Dr. Carl J. Koenigsmann, Chief Medical Officer, DOCCS Division of Health Services at 518.457.7073
Nancy A. Lyng, MS, Director of Health Services, at 518.445.6176

2) On Wednesday, 4/29 and Thursday 4/30, please fax (you can use a free online fax service like faxzero.com if needed):

Acting Commissioner Anthony J. Annucci at Fax: 518.457.0076
Dr. Carl J. Koenigsmann M.D. at Fax: 518.457.2115
Nancy A. Lyng, MS at Fax: 518.445.6157

Suggested talking points:

State who you are calling about and include his prisoner number: Robert Seth Hayes, #74-A- 2280 at Sullivan Correctional Facility;

Say that you are requesting:

- 1) an assessment and modification of his insulin treatment,
- 2) that he is given a full work-up to have potential malignancies been ruled out considering his weight loss, and,
- 3) that he is finally prescribed a diabetic diet.

Please email nycjericho@gmail.com and let them know what response you receive.

Sample letter for faxing or mailing:

Carl J. Koenigsmann M.D.
Deputy Commissioner/Chief Medical Officer
NYS DOCCS Division of Health Services
Harriman State Campus, Building #2
1220 Washington Avenue
Albany, New York 12226-2050
Fax: 518.457.2115

Dear Dr. Koenigsmann,

I am writing on behalf of Robert Seth Hayes, #74-A-2280, DOB 10-15-48, who is currently a prisoner at Sullivan Correctional Facility in Fallsburg, New York.

Mr. Hayes suffers from poorly controlled diabetes mellitus with frequent bouts of hypoglycemia, as well as weight loss of 40 pounds (22% of his original body weight) in a short time. These health concerns have not been addressed by medical staff at Sullivan Correctional Institution despite numerous requests by the patient, family, concerned medical providers, and the general public. He has not even been prescribed a diabetic diet.

I am writing to register my grave concern about the health of Mr. Hayes and to request that he receive appropriate follow-up and treatment immediately for:

- 1) poorly controlled diabetes with multiple episodes of hypoglycemia and lack of access to the DOCC diabetic diet; and
- 2) significant and alarming weight loss, the etiology of which is currently unknown and should be assessed for potential malignancies

I thank you for your prompt attention to these medical matters.
Sincerely,

cc: Anthony J. Annucci, Acting Commissioner at Fax: 518.457.0076, Nancy A. Lyng, MS, Director of Health Services at Fax: 518.445.6157

30 Apr - CUNY and the Prison Industrial Complex

WHAT: an interactive workshop around the prison industrial complex.

WHEN: 5:00-7:00pm, Thursday, April 30th

WHERE: Room TH 111, Hunter College - 695 Park Avenue New York, New York 10065

COST: FREE

MORE:

What is the prison industrial complex?

How does it affect us as students?

How is CUNY being complicit in the prison industrial complex?

Come through and share your thoughts with us!

Learn how to plug into the CUNY Prison Divest campaign!

This is part of a series of workshops being held at different CUNY campuses.

1 May - May Day: Disarm the NYPD

WHAT: May Day Celebration/Protest of NYPD

WHEN: 2:00pm, Friday May 1st

WHERE: Union Square Park (Look for the banners and placards)

COST: FREE

MORE:

May Day has been a day of celebration, a day of protest, and a day for all laborers and members of the underclass.

For all the gains workers have made: the eight hour work day, unions, and the end of child labor in the United States, it's impossible to ignore the day's bloody origins. When strikers demonstrated at Haymarket Square in Chicago, they were shot at by police, a bomb was thrown, and a court ordered the execution of its organizers. Perhaps the most appropriate meaning of May Day is that it is a day of commemoration for these demonstrators.

This is also the most timely reading of May Day. This last fall, public outrage over the police killings of Mike Brown, Akai Gurley, Eric Garner and the almost countless other black people murdered by police erupted in massive demonstrations and riots across the country. They demanded an end to assassinations by police.

Now, as then, the state blames the people police have killed for their own deaths. Eric Garner's health killed him, not the stranglehold; Michael Brown was violent. Then, as now, officers who kill face no repercussions for their actions; they tell us the demonstrators are to blame. From the original May in 1886 until May 2015, we have every indication that police departments, judicial systems, and oversight boards insist that police continue killing unfettered.

As a population tired of being under the threat of execution, protesters have demonstrated, petitioned, spoken out, occupied, marched for eight hours straight, and blocked bridges, highways and tunnels. Yet no material change resulted from these activities.

In the case of Michael Brown, police execution was justified by a claim that the teenager fought back. Similarly, protesters were vilified for using force, 'resisting arrest', and rioting. Routinely, fighting back, asserting one's desire to survive, and any hint of 'violence' has been deemed unacceptable by the police and the state that shields them. They would like a completely docile population, ready to accept death, or at least a jail sentence, for slightly undermining their authority.

That's not what they are going to get.

For all those accustomed to living under the boot of the police, for all those who understand that survival is at

stake, and because there is no other option, it is time to go on the offense.

This May Day, we look at the historic events that brought us here and we see that we are still faced with the same enemy. We can't appeal to the humanity of the court system; we fear for our lives in the street. We must take away the one implement that allows them kill with such impunity, with such rapidity, and such callousness: their guns.

This May Day we call for the unconditional surrender of arms by the NYPD and police departments nationwide.

We call for every active group, every union, every concerned individual to take up this campaign and finally end this hundred-year-old brutality.

Disarm the Police!
Disarm the NYPD!

2 May - Victory Bus Project Rides

Victory Bus Project is a project of the Freedom Food Alliance and the VROOM Bus Cooperative. The name comes from Herman Bell's Victory Garden's Project, where farmers in Maine grew organic vegetables to be distributed for FREE in the Bronx, Brooklyn and parts of New Jersey. Herman Bell continues to inspire the work we do from inside the prison walls.

MORE:

The goal of this project is to provide affordable transportation for families in urban areas going to visit their loved ones in rural prisons for a box of fresh fruits and vegetables, making farm produce accessible. During the rides we engage families on how we collectively address the prison industrial complex and food sovereignty. Pushing folks to demand FARMS NOT PRISONS.

Pick ups are available in the Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan and Westchester. Servicing 15 prisons in the Hudson Valley.

NEXT SCHEDULED TRIPS;

Saturday May 2nd and Sunday May 3rd trips to Green Haven, Fishkill, Downstate, Wallkill, Shawangunk.
(Switched to the First Weekend because of Mother's Day)

Saturday May 9th and Sunday May 10th, MOTHER'S DAY trips to Bedford, Taconic and Sing Sing.

4 May - No Separate Justice Vigil

WHAT: Vigil

WHEN: 6:00-7:00pm, Monday, May 4th

WHERE: Metropolitan Correctional Center (MCC) | 150 Park Row, New York, New York

COST: FREE

MORE:

Vigils are held on the first Monday of every month at 6:00 pm at MCC. All are welcome. We have plenty of signs to share. Please bring flashlights or candles. For more information: noseparatejustice@gmail.com

13 May - Buses to MOVE Anniversary

WHAT: 30th Anniversary of MOVE bombing

WHEN: 8:30am, Wednesday, May 13th

WHERE: Riverside Church (120th Street and Claremont Avenue) and SEIU 1199 (West 43rd Street, between 8th and 9th Avenues)

COST: Bus tickets for May 13 for the full day of activities in Philadelphia can be obtained by contacting the hotline at 212.330.8029 (leave a message with your name, phone number, and mention your interest in a bus

ticket).

MORE:

May 13, 2015, is the 30th anniversary of the horrific fire bombing of the MOVE family home, along with 65 nearby houses, by the City of Philadelphia with the collaboration of the FBI. The bombing resulted in the murder of 11 members of the MOVE family, 5 children and 6 adults.

We urge everyone who can to come to Philadelphia on that day to express our continued outrage at the genocidal strategy represented by that event. While the lives of those lost cannot be brought back, this is an opportunity to demand the release of the MOVE 9, now unjustly incarcerated for 37 years as a result of a police assault on MOVE only a few years earlier. In that earlier 1978 confrontation, where the Philadelphia police and the FBI attacked the MOVE home with deadly weapons, a police officer, James J. Ramp, was killed, shot in the back at an angle that was impossible for the bullet to have come from MOVE members who were barricaded, in self-defense against the assault, in their basement. All indications are that the killing of the police officer came from friendly fire, the side of the street where the police were positioned. Even the judge in the case admitted, after the trial, that he had no idea who killed the policeman. Yet the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania refuses to allow the MOVE 9 to go home. Two of those MOVE members have now died under rather suspicious circumstances, with no rational explanation and very sudden deaths, causing even greater alarm about their continued incarceration. Merle Africa died on March 13, 1998, and Phil Africa on January 10 of this year. Is there a plan to gradually kill them all while in prison?