



POST OFFICE BOX 110034 BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11211

Updates for July 21st

1 Jul - A message and painting from Marius commemorating World Oceans Day

Somehow we missed this in the last packet of updates— it's from Marius Mason and accompanies a painting that was made with deodorant to pull color from a magazine advertisement (as Marius has been placed in the SHU and has no access to art supplies.)

MORE:

We've celebrated Earth Day every year since 1970. But this day committed to being mindful of the importance of the oceans has only been happening since 2008. With the recent oil spill in the Santa Barbara coast and with the now melted polar seas open for both navigation and oil exploration – it is fitting that we take time as citizens of the world to reflect upon the fact that the oceans and the life they sustain are the underpinnings of the health of the planet as a whole.

From the smallest lifeforms, the plankton community, comes the replenishment of our atmosphere. We are as dependent upon the tiny plant and animals that make up the plankton; as the fish, mantas and whales who feed upon them directly. The oceans touch every continent and any damage to them is felt throughout the ecosphere. They regulate temperature and help absorb some of the heat produced by human activities. – thus slowing the process of global warming from what it would otherwise become, moderating climate. The oceans supply half our oxygen and absorb CO2 releasing into the atmosphere – but the oceans capacity to cleanse and support our world is quickly becoming overwhelmed, what we decide to do now to protect our oceans is one of the most important questions facing humanity and will save our future or seal our doom.

Remember Deepwater Horizon, the Exxon disaster and the Santa Barbara spill – and stop Shell from defiling the Arctic, Act to defend the seas...

July 15th - Trophallaxis

We have fed you all for a thousand years
And you hail us still unfed...” these
Start words of the old Wobbly song
Still time enough now, a hundred years on.
But more so, for millennia more (now)
The tiny, winged workers diligently toil in field
And orchards, bring our good to fruit, fill tables
With all good things that grow, they serve
Like saints, suffer like martyrs and
Share like good anarchists do, or could,
This bond of food, of plenty, forges
Our connection across species and makes the
Gathering of tribes a glad thing.
Leave it to the Greeks! Those feisty defiers
Of Capital's call to fall in line,
To debt and submission – not they!
But, they have named the bond of bees, who
Share knowledge and community with food,
Trophallaxis, from mouth to mouth, a kiss.
So we can also feed each other, as gardens
Grow, we will grow again,

Together.

5 Jul - July update on Seth Hayes: Call for support

As previously noted, Seth Hayes finally began to receive medical intervention for both his Hepatitis C and poorly-managed diabetes roughly a month ago. This development is no doubt thanks to many people who made calls on his behalf.

MORE:

Unfortunately, Seth is still suffering from undiagnosed and untreated chronic bleeding and abdominal growths. Many calls have been made to Health Services in regards to these conditions that warrant urgent assessment, and there has been no response. Please join in calling and faxing Health Services this week, stating that you are calling about Robert Seth Hayes, #74-A-2280, at Sullivan Correctional Facility, and requesting:

— For coughing up blood, that he be given the results of the chest Xray he was given in May, as well as a PPD (TB skin test), and (if chest Xray was unrevealing) a chest Cat scan. Additionally, if there is any concern about heart failure from the chest Xray, that he be given an ECHO.

— For the lump on his abdomen, an abdominal ultrasound or Cat scan. For the ones on his chest wall, a Dermatology consult where they do a biopsy if it is appropriate next step or advise Seth as to what the lesions are.

On Monday 7/27, Tuesday 7/28 and Wednesday 7/29 please call:

Dr. Carl J. Koenigsmann, Chief Medical Officer, DOCCS Division of Health Services at 518.457.7073
Holly, Health Services Supervisor, at 518.445.6176

On Thursday 7/30 and Friday 7/31, please fax (you can use a free online fax service like faxzero.com if needed):

Dr. Carl J. Koenigsmann M.D. at Fax: 518.445.7553
Holly at Fax: 518.445.6157

To contribute to ongoing efforts supporting Robert Seth Hayes, please donate online at:

<https://fundrazr.com/campaigns/810a58>

7 Jul - Radical Time Capsule: The FBI Finally Returns Items Seized from ELF Press Office 14 Years Ago

The FBI returns old materials to former Earth Liberation Press officer Leslie James Pickering, while still withholding details of his surveillance by them.

MORE:

by Michael I. Niman (*The Public*)

A long time ago I gifted a worn and rather worthless car to a friend. Though he intended to nurse my old hootie back to life, he wound up abandoning it. Years later I stumbled upon the car, embalmed in bird droppings and wrapped in vines, tucked away in another friend's backyard. Finding it was like finding a time capsule, ripe with artifacts from my prior life, reemerging like a ghost after two decades.

My reunion with my old car offers, at best, a poor analogy for what Buffalo bookstore owner Leslie James Pickering must be experiencing right now. But luckily for me, it's the best one I can come up with. When I try to empathize with Pickering, this is all I have to work with.

Pickering just received a shipment from his prior life, by way of the FBI. A decade and a half ago, Pickering lived in Portland, Oregon. He, along with his friend, Craig Rosebraugh, operated from their house what can best be described as a not-for-profit public relations agency. Their outfit operated much like

many large multinational corporate PR agencies, offering press releases and data in support of their clients' positions and actions. The biggest difference, beyond scale and their lack of a profit motive, was in the clients they represented.

Whereas the corporate outfits regularly represent ecocidal companies or warring governments whose actions sometimes result in thousands of human deaths, Pickering and Rosebraugh's primary client was the Earth Liberation Front (ELF).

The ELF was not an organization but an ideological movement, ostensibly inspired by the Deep Ecology movement personified by Earth First! in the 1980s and 1990s. Earth First!'s mischievous tactics of direct action included "monkeywrenching" the machinery of environmental destruction, through actions such as disabling bulldozers and degrading the economic value of old growth trees by hammering large spikes into them, making it too risky and not economically viable to cut them down. The ELF, however, took these tactics to another level, exponentially raising the ante of what they termed "direct action." People claiming the ELF banner, for example, torched a ski resort, McMansions, a condo development, and university laboratories where they believed GMO research was being conducted.

While Pickering and Rosebraugh claim to have never participated in planning or carrying out an ELF action, they were both publicly sympathetic to the movement. Their PR operation, which operated from 1997 to 2002, became known as the "ELF Press Office," maintaining a public address where they received anonymous communiques from the arsonists and vandals behind many ELF-type actions. Pushing free speech to its legal limits, they processed this information for press dissemination, often appearing publicly to contextualize and answer questions about ELF actions, much like corporate PR people do for their clients.

During this period, as the ELF gained notoriety destroying property, the FBI declared them as the nation's top "domestic terror" threat. They issued this designation despite fact that nobody was ever hurt in any ELF action and that more dangerous movements such as the anti-abortion and white supremacist movements were specifically targeting and killing people at that time—albeit while posing much less of a threat to corporate and development interests.

Running the press office made both Rosebraugh and Pickering prime targets for the FBI to investigate. Yet, to date, FBI investigations initiated more than 15 years ago have failed to turn up any criminal connection between Pickering and Rosebraugh and the arsonists and vandals behind the ELF actions.

In January 2000 and again in April 2001, FBI agents raided Rosebraugh and Pickering's home, which also served as the press office. The second raid came shortly after the pair issued press releases in connection with an arson attack that burned 35 SUVs in a nearby dealership. Both times, the FBI agents seized computer equipment, journals, typewriters, photo albums, personal papers, and other assorted items. According to Pickering, the FBI provided no inventory for the 2000 seizure and only a partial inventory for the 2001 seizure. A few months later, a representative from the agency contacted Pickering and Rosebraugh, offering to return their seized property. When the pair turned up to retrieve their belongings, however, agents only offered to return a recycling bucket and its contents.

ELF actions were controversial among environmentalists who questioned the efficacy of their tactics, feared that somebody could get hurt or killed in one of their actions, and argued that these actions could be used by the government to justify further repression of non-violent direct action environmental and anti-corporate movements. While Pickering hasn't waived in his support of ELF tactics, he left the press office and stopped doing PR for the ELF 14 years ago, roughly one year after the second raid on his home. In 2011, he was interviewed for the Academy Award nominated documentary *If a Tree Falls*, which told the story of the ELF. He is still an activist today, often lecturing on environmental issues. His bookstore, Burning Books, often hosts activist speakers and films. Pickering has reinvented himself over the past 14 years as a soft-spoken family man and a business owner—whose quiet voice still speaks of revolution.

And the FBI still keeps an eye on Pickering. In the summer of 2012, the Buffalo office of the FBI allegedly started asking questions about him. In April of this year, the Eugene office of the FBI contacted Rosebraugh, telling him they were ready to return what they seized from his and Pickering's Portland home 14 years ago. Or at least they were ready to return the portion of the seized property that they actually inventoried, which, according to Pickering, amounts to about one SUV of material, from a seizure that filled at least three government SUVs.

The email from the FBI listed an inventory of the property they were returning: Mac, Dell, "Mini-Tower" [sic.] and "Domino tower" [sic.] computers, a computer mouse, a monitor, a keyboard, a Canon printer, a Brother fax/scanner, a Umax scanner, a cell phone, and IBM, Royal, and "Underwood Five" typewriters, which Pickering claims he was using as part of a book arts project. An FBI forensic examination of these artifacts provided what the agency terms "no useful info."

Michael Kuzma, who currently serves as Pickering's attorney, suspects the equipment was seized "by design to cripple the press office and crush the First Amendment rights of these activists," adding that, "The FBI is no fan of free speech." Kuzma suspects that his client's property was not actually being studied as evidence for the past 14 years but was "collecting dust." The seizure, he argues, "fits in with the purpose of the FBI—historically to monitor and disrupt political organizations they deem to be subversive." It's being returned now, Kuzma suspects, because "Leslie's public speaking activities, such as his recent European speaking tour, has embarrassed the FBI—an embarrassment because during his PowerPoint presentation he shows images of the agents actually seizing the equipment 14 years ago."

Pickering argues that the FBI "seems to be this uncertain mix of extreme bureaucracy and extreme incompetency." Hence, he explains, "I'm not really even asking myself why they would suddenly release this junk after 14 years," adding that he's not "tormenting" himself by "searching for any more unanswerable questions." He does point out, however, that his property was ostensibly confiscated as part of the SUV arson investigation, yet that crime was solved almost a decade ago.

Unlike my car, which sat and rotted under birds and vegetation, we don't quite know where these artifacts traveled over the past 14 years, who they touched, and what they had to say. What did forensic investigators think of the zeros and ones that populated the seized hard drives and painted pictures of the lives of Pickering, Rosebraugh, and their roommates? What did they learn from the computer mouse? Whose DNA coated it? What sort of detritus was left on the printer? What resins clung to the monitor?

These 14 years have not been kind to Rosebraugh and Pickering's property, rendering all but the typewriters, which were already obsolete, as antiques. On the other hand, you could say these items have instead aged like fine wine, starting their incarceration as worn equipment but aging into historic artifacts. Put together into a collection, as the FBI agents unwittingly curated them, we can see something more than obsolete junk. Together, this curated collection gives us a tactile reminder of a political time, place, and tactic, representing both the revolutionary fervor of the ELF and the reactionary abuses of the FBI.

7 Jul - Barrett Brown Update

Despite the prosecution's failure to prove any damage caused, Barrett Brown owes nearly a million dollars to private intelligence firm Stratfor. Information for fundraising as well as his latest writing are below.

MORE:

July 7th - Restitution fund drive! Help Barrett Brown pay off his debts

While Barrett Brown's 63 month prison sentence was widely reported and rightly condemned as the culmination of an unfair persecution of an effective investigative journalist, another element of his sentence was more quietly announced and yet it's potentially more insidious: Barrett owes more than \$800,000 (and he owes more than \$890,000 in total, including other fines) to his "victim", Stratfor.

In Barrett's words,

I will spend the rest of my life in a strange state of post-cyberpunk indentured servitude to an amoral private intelligence firm that's perhaps best known for having spied on Bhopal activists on behalf of Dow Chemical. That the prosecution did not quite manage to articulate how I did any damage to this particular company did not seem to dissuade U.S. District Judge Sam A. Lindsay in this matter.

In fact, Barrett went out of his way to prevent excessive damage, by contacting Stratfor ahead of time, offering to redact sensitive material — an offer that Stratfor declined.

Barrett currently pays \$200 per month, at which rate he will be paying Stratfor for the rest of his life. Let's help free Barrett from this indentured servitude by collectively paying off his restitution. With little contributions at a time, we can chip away at the enormous, unjustified total.

If we can raise \$5,000 for Barrett, we'll cover two full years of his payments, with a little extra to spare for his commissary, with which he can purchase basic items in prison.

Donate to Barrett's fund today: <https://freebarrettbrown.org/donate>

July 8th - Announcement: Barrett Brown is Courage's fifth beneficiary

Imprisoned journalist Barrett Brown is Courage's fifth beneficiary

*Courage is raising funds for Brown's commissary, restitution and legal costs
Brown continues to write from prison, for D Magazine and soon for The Intercept
Currently in solitary confinement, Brown needs continued support and assistance*

US journalist and satirist Barrett Brown, author of *Flock of Dodos* and *Keep Rootin' For Putin*, is the Courage Foundation's fifth beneficiary. Brown is currently serving a 63 month sentence after being persecuted for his work. In 2012, the FBI raided his house, and later that year Barrett was indicted on 12 federal charges relating to the 2011 Stratfor hack. The most controversial charge, linking to the hacked documents, was dropped, but in 2015 Brown was still sentenced to prison.

Courage will collect funds for Brown, who owes more than \$890,000 in restitution and who needs money for commissary in prison and for lingering legal costs. Our first campaign is a \$5,000 fund drive, which would cover two years of his restitution payments.

Additionally, Courage will update the public on Brown's condition — he is currently in solitary confinement for an indeterminate length of time but continues to write his column and will soon report for *The Intercept*.

Brown is the founder of Project PM, a crowd-sourced investigation of the private intelligence industry. In 2011, Project PM released its research of Romas/COIN, "a secretive and immensely sophisticated campaign of mass surveillance and data mining against the Arab world, allowing the intelligence community to monitor the habits, conversations, and activity of millions of individuals at once."

Courage's Acting Director Sarah Harrison said,

Barrett Brown's sentence is a scar on a country that likes to pride itself on a free press. Brown is an excellent journalist who has exposed corrupt and illegal practices. He should be rewarded, not punished. I am pleased to be able to support someone whose work for the public record I admire so much.

Courage Trustee Julian Assange said,

Barrett Brown's 5 year prison sentence for exposing Bank of America's corporate espionage campaign against WikiLeaks is the most odious domestic example of Obama's war on journalism. But far from letting this imprisonment grind him down, every day is making Barrett's pen sharper. Slowly but surely, and entirely against its will, the Obama

administration's profound injustice is producing America's greatest living satirist. Anyone who cares about justice and sharp writing is obliged to support Barrett Brown.

Kevin Gallagher, who worked with Barrett on Project PM and who has run his support network for 2 & 1/2 years, said,

While Barrett serves the remainder of his sentence and continues to produce brilliant and hilarious dispatches from his prison cell, I am very grateful to be working with the Courage Foundation on finding new ways to support him. Courage has recognized that Brown's work on crowd-sourcing the investigation of leaks and his related activism was pioneering and important, and represents the true reason for his imprisonment.

Courage has launched a new website for Barrett, which features his journalism, how to support him, and his ongoing columns from prison, for *D Magazine* and soon with *The Intercept*.

July 16th - Barrett Brown's column moves to *The Intercept*

Barrett Brown has been writing the 'Barrett Brown Review of Arts and Letters and Jail', a hilarious and often acerbic account of various prison events: what he's reading, his trips to solitary, prison corruption and bad grammar. He's been writing for the Dallas-based *D Magazine*, but today Brown has moved the column to First Look Media's *The Intercept*.

July 16th - The Barrett Brown Review of Arts and Letters and Prison: A Visit to the Sweat Lodge

by Barrett Brown (*The Intercept*)

Back in the go-go days of 2011 I got into some sort of post-modern running conflict with a certain declining superpower that shall remain nameless, and shortly afterwards found myself in jail awaiting trial on 17 federal criminal counts carrying a combined maximum sentence of 105 years in prison. Luckily I got off with just 63 months, which here in the Republic of Crazyland is actually not too bad of an outcome.

The surreal details of the case itself may be found in any number of mainstream and not-so-mainstream news articles, from which you will learn that I was the official spokesman for Anonymous, or perhaps the unofficial spokesman for Anonymous, or maybe simply the self-proclaimed spokesman for Anonymous, or alternatively the guy who denied being the spokesman for Anonymous over and over again, sometimes on national television to no apparent effect. You'll also find that I was either a conventional journalist, an unconventional journalist, a satirist who despised all journalists, an activist, a whistleblower, a nihilistic and self-absorbed cyberpunk adventurer out to make a name for himself, or "an underground commander in a new kind of war," as NBC's Brian Williams put it, no doubt exaggerating.

According to the few FBI files that the bureau has thus far made public, I'm a militant anarchist revolutionary who once teamed up with Anonymous in an attempt to "overthrow the U.S. government," and on another, presumably separate occasion, I plotted unspecified "attacks" on the government of Bahrain, which, if true, would really seem to be between me and the king of Bahrain, would it not? There's also a book out there that claims I'm from Houston, whereas in fact I spit on Houston. As to the truth on these and other matters, I'm going to play coy for now, as whatever else I may be, I'm definitely something of a coquette. All you really need to know for the purposes of this column is that I'm some sort of eccentric writer who lives in a prison, and I may or may not have it out for the king of Bahrain.

Over the last couple of years of incarceration, I've had ever so many exciting adventures, some of which I've detailed in the prior incarnation of this column, "The Barrett Brown Review of Arts and Letters and Jail." I've watched two inmates get into a blood-spattered fight over the right to sell homemade pies from a particular table. I have participated in an unauthorized demonstration against an abusive guard and been thrown into the hole as a suspected instigator. I've shouted out comical revolutionary slogans while my Muslim cellmate flooded our tiny punishment cell in order to get back at the officers who'd taken his Ramadan meal during a search. I've found myself with nothing better to read than an autobiography by Wendy's Old-Fashioned Hamburgers founder Dave Thomas, and read it, and found it wanting.

I've stalked a fellow inmate who talks nonsense to himself all day due to having never come down after a PCP trip, suspecting that he might say something really weird that I could compare and contrast with the strange William Blake poems I'd been reading and thought this might be a funny idea for an article, and I was right, so do not ask me to apologize for this, for I shall not. I've been extracted from my cell by a dozen guards and shipped to another jail 30 miles away after the administration decided I was too much trouble. I've spent one whole year receiving sandwiches for dinner each night, but the joke's on them because I love sandwiches.

I've read through an entire 16th-century volume on alchemy out of pure spite. I've added the word "Story" to the end of every instance of prison graffiti reading "West Side" that I've come across thus far. I've conceived the idea of writing a sequel to the Ramayana but abandoned the project after determining that the world is not prepared for such a thing. I've been subjected to a gag order at the request of the prosecution on the grounds that the latest *Guardian* article I'd written from jail had been "critical of the government." I've learned all sorts of neat convict tricks like making dice out of toilet paper, popping locks on old cell doors, and appreciating mediocre rap. I've managed to refrain from getting any ironic prison tattoos and feel about 65 percent certain that I'll be able to hold out for the two years left in my sentence. And I've read Robert Caro's four-volume biography of Lyndon Johnson over the course of a month, in the process becoming something of a minor god, beyond good and evil, unfazed by man's wickedness.

After being sentenced last January I released a statement reading:

"Good News! — The U.S. government decided today that because I did such a good job investigating the cyber-industrial complex, they're now going to send me to investigate the prison-industrial complex. For the next 35 months, I'll be provided with free food, clothes, and housing as I seek to expose wrongdoing by Bureau of Prisons officials and staff and otherwise report on news and culture in the world's greatest prison system. I want to thank the Department of Justice for having put so much time and energy into advocating on my behalf; rather than holding a grudge against me for the two years of work I put into in bringing attention to a DOJ-linked campaign to harass and discredit journalists like Glenn Greenwald, the agency instead labored tirelessly to ensure that I received this very prestigious assignment. Wish me luck!"

In fact I had no intention of doing anything of the kind; it was merely the same manner of idle bluster that I've been putting out to the press for years now because I'm a braggart. Actually I was hoping to just sort of relax and maybe catch up on my plotting. But a month later, when I arrived at the Fort Worth Correctional Institution to serve the remainder of my sentence, the place turned out to be an unspoiled journalistic paradise of poorly concealed government corruption and ham-fisted cover-ups. Even so, I was still reluctant to grab at even this low-hanging fruit. I'd spent the 18 months prior to my arrest overseeing a crowd-sourced investigation into that aforementioned "cyber-industrial complex," a subject which, although important, I also happen to find personally distasteful; the research end involved going through tens of thousands of emails stolen by Anonymous from the toy-fascist government desk-spies and jumped-up quasi-literate corporate technicians to whom the American "citizenry" have accidentally granted *jus primae noctis* over several Constitutional amendments. I hate all this computer shit and was actually a little relieved when the FBI finally took me down, thereby sparing me from the obligation to read another million words of e-Morlock jibber-jabber about Romas/COIN and Odyssey and persona management and whatever else the public is just going to end up ignoring until it's too late anyway.

So I was disinclined to sully the rest of my incarceration vacation by having to memorize a book of Bureau of Prisons policies and court rulings on due process rights for inmates to see which ones are being routinely violated by the prison administration, and then run around secretly interviewing inmates and getting copies of receipts and making Freedom of Information requests and all that. After all, there already exists here a clandestine network of inmates who do all of this and more, and who routinely make significant discoveries ranging from procedural violations to outright criminal conduct by staff and administrators — and, naturally, all of these documented revelations are generally ignored by the incompetent regional reporters to whom the inmates occasionally send such materials. As I happen to know some of the 3 or 4 percent of U.S. journalists and editors who are capable of doing their jobs, I figured I'd just hook one of them up with

the prisoner in question, hope that some instance of wrongdoing gets exposed in print, take more than my share of the credit, put out a victory statement reading, “No one imprisons Barrett Brown and gets away with it! Mwah ha ha!!” or something to that effect, and then spend the rest of my sentence doing whatever it is that I do for recreation.

In late March I put my awesome plan in motion, using the inmate email system to follow up with a journalist I’d provided with contact info for one of the inmate researchers and reiterating that the fellow had documented evidence of corruption within the Bureau of Prisons. Then, an hour later, my email was cut off. After a couple of days of inquiry I was pulled aside by the resident head of security, a D.C. liaison by the name of Terence Moore, who told me he’d been the one to cut off my email access, as I’d been “using it for the wrong thing,” which he clarified to mean talking to the press. When I sought to challenge this plainly illegal move by turning in the BP-9 form to begin the Administrative Remedy process that inmates are required to exhaust before suing the federal official who’s violated their right to due process under what’s known as a Bivens claim, the prison’s Administrative Remedy coordinator simply failed to log it into the system for over a month, finally doing so only after the matter had been brought to the attention of the press; finally on June 4 he deigned to register receipt of the BP-9, thereby belatedly starting the clock on the 20 days the prison is allotted in which to address one’s grievance — and then he failed to respond even by that illicitly extended deadline.

I’ve since learned that this sort of thing is common here, and that in fact I was lucky to get my grievance officially acknowledged as received at all; I’ve seen copies of forms that have yet to be logged five months after being turned in to the unit staff. That would be problematic enough anywhere, as it constitutes denial of access to the courts. But it’s especially despicable at an institution like this, which includes a medical unit for inmates who require ongoing treatment — because to the extent that they don’t actually receive that treatment, the only recourse is to pursue the Remedy process so that their complaints won’t simply be tossed out of court on the grounds that they’ve “failed to exhaust” that process before going to the judge. I’ve included copies of the relevant documents in prior columns and will continue to provide updates as I take my case to the regional office, the national office, and finally to the courts, as of course it will be interesting to see whether or not the BOP takes due process seriously or, barring that, is at least willing to buy me off with a carton of Marlboros.

In the meantime, I continue to have neat adventures. Last month one of the American Indian inmates invited me to attend their weekly sweat lodge ceremony, which is held in a fenced-off area that each federal prison is required to provide for ritual use by the Natives. The next morning I showed up at the appointed time and, having determined that it wasn’t an ambush, I began helping the 20 or so resident Indians break up tree branches for fire kindling, something I did very much with the air of a five-year-old who believes himself to be “helping Daddy.” Next we built a large bonfire (I assisted by staying out the way and being good) by which to heat up several dozen large rocks that would be used for “the sweat.” The fire-making process was expedited by strategically placed crumpled-up sheets of the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, which I gather is not a strictly traditional aspect of most shamanistic ceremonies. As if to acknowledge this, one of the Indians declared, “The one good thing the white man ever did was invent paper.” Naturally all eyes were on me, and I knew that this might be my only chance to win them over. “We didn’t invent it,” I blurted out. “We just stole it from the Chinese.” This produced appreciative chuckles all around. “I got a laugh out of the Indians!” I thought exultantly, my triumph so complete that I was unbothered by the fact that what I’d said wasn’t really true.

By and by we crawled into the lodge, a wood-and-canvas structure with a dirt floor, in the middle of which had been dug a pit to hold the heated rocks that would be providing the extraordinary heat we would need to sweat out our sins. The flap was then closed from the outside, leaving us in perfect darkness, and thereafter began the first of the 15-minute “rounds” of the sweat ceremony, which consisted of all manner of tribal songs, entreaties to the spirits, and sometimes just discussions and announcements. At one point my sponsor, a Lakota, declared that although superficially white, I might nonetheless have an “Indian spirit.” It was one of the nicest things anyone had ever said about me, this polite supposition that I might not really be descended from the fair-skinned race of marauding, treaty-breaking slavers whose *Novus*

Ordo Seclorum had been built on a foundation of genocide. But inasmuch as I'd spent the bulk of the ceremony not in prayer, but rather in a state of neurotic concern over whether or not my self-deprecating comment from an hour earlier about whites stealing paper could have perhaps been a bit more crisply phrased, I'm afraid my spirit would seem to be Anglo-Saxon after all.

Although undeniably majestic, the ceremony was also something of a disappointment. I had gone into the thing hoping that I might mysteriously know exactly what to do — how to pass the peace pipe and all that — and maybe even start singing old Cherokee songs that the eldest of those present would barely recall having heard from their own grandfathers. Stunned, the Indians would collectively intone, “He shall know your ways as if born to them,” this being the ancient prophecy I had thereby fulfilled, and then I would unite the tribes under my banner and lead the foremost of their warriors on a jihad against our shared enemies, as Paul Muad'Dib did. Instead, the Indians had to remind me several times not to just stand up and start walking around during the ceremony.

I'm currently in the midst of another adventure, having been placed back in the hole two weeks ago after a suspicious incident in which staff singled me out for a search of my locker and found a cup of homemade alcohol, or “hooch.” Next time, then, we'll take a look at life here in the Special Housing Unit, or SHU, as the hole is more formally known, and where I expect to spend some 45 days. And when I get back, there better not be any more Republican presidential primary contenders. You don't need three dozen slightly different variations on right-Hegelian nationalist populism from which to choose. That's just excessive.

8 Jul - Why Dylann Roof's Racism Will Only be Nurtured in Prison

An author and former prisoner reflects on the white supremacist's potential fate.

MORE:

by James Kilgore (*The Marshall Project*)

Prison yards have produced white supremacists like Dylann Roof for decades. High-quality ink permeates these yards: swastikas on foreheads and knuckles, the word “skinhead” neatly scrolled across chests, “Thank God I'm White” etched on the back of sunburnt necks. From 2006 to 2009, I was incarcerated in the heart of this old, Jim Crow world — the medium- and high-security prison yards of the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation.

The yards are violent; killings took place at double the national average from 2001 to 2012. Part of the reason was that the CDCR facilities have been breeding grounds for racial division and hatred. As a white elder, an O.G. (“original gangster” in prison parlance), and a lifetime anti-racist, I had to find a way to live with the power of white supremacy, with youngsters like Dylann Roof who had found it their mission to perpetuate hate.

Ever since I first saw Dylann Roof's picture after the Charleston massacre, in which he killed nine people in a church shooting, I have been imagining what would have happened if he had landed in a California prison. He would certainly find instant camaraderie with the Peckerwoods, the Skinheads, the Dirty White Boys, the Nazi Low Riders. His admirers, men with handles like Bullet, Beast, Pitbull, and Ghost, would vow to live up to Roof's example, either by wreaking havoc when they hit the streets or maybe even the very next day in the yard.

Roof's newfound fan club would be ready to provide him with prison perks — extra Top Ramen, jars of coffee, a bar of Irish Spring. The guards, many with their own Roofish sympathies, would cut him some slack — an extra roll of toilet paper here, a few illicit minutes on the telephone there. If Roof were so inclined, the guards might turn a blind eye to his indulgence in illegal substances, from tobacco to papers of heroin to the carceral Mad Dog 20/20 known as “pruno.”

If Roof played by the convict code, he might quickly rise in the ranks of the white-power structure in the prison yard. Maybe after a few years, he would earn the status of “shot caller,” the highest rank within the

racial groups. Then he could order hits on young white boys who defiled the race by playing a game of chess with a black man or offering a Latino a sip of his soda. Like all his white comrades, Roof would use the white showers, the white phones, the white pull-up bars. The yard might spark visions of a segregated utopia for Dylann, a wonderland where everyone was in their right place — separate and unequal.

But white supremacists in prison also live in a world of racial enemies. Fueled by paranoia and buttressed by complicit guards and administrators, Roof would be the target of personalized vengeance attacks. Just like on the streets, he would be constantly looking over his shoulder to fend off real and imagined enemies. In particular, he would realize that in a prison yard, there are plenty of black lifers who have nothing to lose and the muscle power to break him in half, like a dry stick. A warrior who took down Roof would get a hero's welcome in the torturous isolation blocks at Pelican Bay or Corcoran. All this tension would no doubt make Roof a little uneasy, perhaps force him to remain "suited and booted," armed with a razor blade in his mouth or a sharpened shank up his rectum.

But even with danger all around him, Roof might find solace in the fact that the prison authorities would not assign any whites and blacks to share a cell and would enable the segregation of day rooms and exercise spaces. This would be a refreshing change of pace for Roof.

Like the other white supremacists, he could carry on without ever confronting the notion that there is strength in racial unity. He could choose to ignore the commonality among the men on the yard. He could put out of his mind the fact that everyone has to inhabit the same concrete and steel cages, wear the same clothes, eat the same prison gruel, get locked in at the same time every night and get locked down when something "jumps off" — a fist fight, a stabbing, or a guard who has lost his coffee cup. Like everyone else on his side of the wall, Roof would have to submit to a strip search and hear the command, "Lift your nutsack," before he could enter a visiting room to see his mother.

But of course, I'm hypothesizing about "ancient" history — an apartheid I left behind back in 2009 when I walked out of prison. My life is very different now. I can share my food with my black family and friends, and sit at any table I like without fear of recriminations. In the meantime, some gentle winds of change have blown over CDCR. Very gentle winds. The Dylan Roofs can still find comfort there, but the hunger strikes of 2011-13 introduced a measure of interracial solidarity. During that extraordinary time, when up to 30,000 people in California prisons refused food in protest of extended solitary confinement and a host of other issues, there was a call to renunciate racial hostilities from the highest echelons of the white supremacist hierarchy. The leadership of the Aryan Brotherhood joined their black and brown brothers in declaring it was time to end the stabbings and race-based melees.

At that time, Todd Ashker, an Aryan Brotherhood leader who had spent a quarter century in solitary confinement at Pelican Bay, helped lead the charge for regime change. As part of the multi-racial Short Corridor Collective of men held in solitary, Ashker proclaimed the need for "similarly situated people.... to collectively unite to fight for the common good of all." He went on to announce to anyone who would listen that he had been inspired by the works of Che Guevara, Howard Zinn, Naomi Wolf, Thomas Paine, and "other activists and revolutionaries." He declared that he had become conscious "of the prisoner class as a microcosm of the working-class poor in this country" and "it was time to come together and utilize peaceful civil disobedience-type actions, in tandem with litigation, to try to force the changes that were long overdue." Ashker's transformation, born out of deprivation, shows that there is hope.

But the question remains, as it does in South Carolina today, how much more violence and suffering must there be? Mass incarceration has many moving parts: the War on Drugs, mandatory minimums, ruthless profiteering. But prisons and jails are also sites where values and ideas are born, bred, and circulated. If we want to stem the production of more Dylann Roofs, both in prison yards and on the streets of our communities, it is time to talk about white supremacy in prisons and call politicians and corrections authorities to account for their complicity in reproducing hatred and division.

9 Jul - Update on Kevin Olliff and Tyler Lang

Recent news articles about Kevin's change of plea hearing in the Chicago Sun-Times and Chicago Tribune contained inaccurate information. Also, Tyler Lang has a change of plea hearing very soon and could use court support.

MORE:

Here are some corrections:

Kevin is facing a maximum of three years in prison.

Kevin is actually facing five years in prison. The U.S. Attorney's Office would not offer a binding plea and expressly reserved the right to (and intends to) enhance Kevin's current three-year sentencing guidelines.

Kevin has felony burglary convictions in his criminal background, including burglarizing a pharmacy.

Kevin actually only has misdemeanor theft convictions for shoplifting, including from the non-pharmacy area of a CVS.

Kevin has been convicted of threatening to harm researchers and executives or their families.

Kevin's "stalking" conviction actually stems from protests that were deemed threatening to property only.

Mink on fur farms are "hand-reared" (Sun-Times) and cannot survive in the wild.

Fur farmers do not actually "hand-rear" animals. Rather, they drive around in carts fitted to mechanically dump food into the minks' cages. Mink on fur farms are not domesticated, and they retain their natural instincts and for the most part wild genetics. Multiple academic and ecological studies have shown that they can survive in the wild.

July 18th - Court Support for Tyler's Change of Plea Hearing

On July 22, Tyler Lang has a change of plea hearing scheduled in regard to his charges under the AETA for allegedly releasing animals from a fur farm. If you can be in Chicago, please attend the hearing to show love and support for Tyler.

What: USA v. Lang, Change of Plea Hearing

When: Wednesday, July 22, 9:15am

Where: Courtroom 1241, Judge Amy St. Eve
U.S. District Court, Northern District of IL
Everett McKinley Dirksen U.S. Courthouse
219 South Dearborn Street
Chicago, Illinois 60604

To attend, please wear court-appropriate attire and behave respectfully. Please also be aware that you will likely have to show ID and be subject to search to enter the courthouse. Arrive early as the courthouse may be busy.

10 Jul - Howl To Action

Former political prisoner Rod Coronado and other members of Wolf Patrol are potentially facing a charge of "Hunter Harassment" (yes, that's one for the law books).

MORE:

Today as directed by our questioning Sheriff's deputy, we reported to the Clerk of the Court in Polk County, only to be told that no charges had been filed, so I called the deputy directly, and he told me the bear hunter (pictured here) went to the District Attorney, and was told we would be charged with hunter harassment, and if we had any questions to call him directly, which I then did, and was told it would take a week to review the deputies report to determine whether charges would be filed.

Sooooo, if you'd like to call the District Attorney and RESPECTFULLY request that charges NOT be filed, us three accused would appreciate it. Whatever happens, Wolf Patrol will not cease its operations in Wisconsin, and myself, Benjamin and Stef are unceasing in our belief that we have broken no laws and that citizen monitoring of public hunting practices on public lands must continue. Remind DA Steffen that traveling public roads and photographing others on public lands is not illegal. Hound hunters operate with impunity in Polk County, and if anyone deserves a citation for harassment, its the hound hunters themselves who run dogs across our public lands chasing and harassing public trust wildlife.

Daniel P. Steffen – Polk County District Attorney
Phone: 715.485.9231

13 Jul - Charles Brennan supervised COINTELPRO against the Omaha Two

Meet Charles Brennan, the supervisor of COINTELPRO against the Black Panthers and the Omaha Two.

MORE:

by Michael Richardson (*The Examiner*)

Charles Brennan supervised COINTELPRO operations as Assistant Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Brennan was a protege of William Sullivan, the architect of COINTELPRO under FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover. COINTELPRO was a massive, clandestine counterintelligence program targeted against political activists with its most lethal secret operations directed against the Black Panther Party.

The Omaha Two, Edward Poindexter and Mondo we Langa (formerly David Rice), were leaders of a Black Panther affiliate chapter, the National Committee to Combat Fascism when an Omaha police officer was killed by a booby-trap bomb. Hoover wanted the two men convicted for the murder and a plan was hatched the day of the bombing, August 17, 1970, to withhold a FBI Laboratory report on the identity of the anonymous 911 caller that lured Patrolman Larry Minard, Sr. to his death.

A dictabelt copy of the 911 recording was sent to J. Edgar Hoover to forward to the FBI Laboratory by Omaha Special Agent in-Charge Paul Young, however, a formal laboratory report was not requested. A memorandum prepared by the Administrative Division that supervised the FBI Laboratory outlined the crime and scheme to withhold a lab report. Fifteen year-old Duane Peak, who confessed to planting the bomb, claimed he made the phone call upon instructions from Ed Poindexter.

The reason the FBI wanted no report issued was that the 911 caller had a deep, gravelly voice while Peak had a soft, higher-pitched voice. Peak's credibility was at issue and according to an October 1970 memorandum to Hoover from Omaha, the tape would be “prejudicial” to the prosecution of Poindexter and Mondo.

Charles Brennan was in command of the Domestic Intelligence Division and oversaw all COINTELPRO actions. Brennan was on the distribution list of the memorandum to Laboratory Director Ivan Willard Conrad and initialed the memo beside his name indicating he read and approved the document. Brennan had earned a reputation as an aggressive administrator and had received commendation letters from Hoover for number of counterintelligence operations.

Brennan, one of Hoover's most dedicated henchmen, was demoted to the field after Hoover's death, and had been the Special Agent in-Charge of the Alexandria, Virginia FBI office five weeks when a local policeman was killed in a bank robbery. Brennan jumped on the October 25, 1972 murder of Patrolman Israel Gonzalez and worked the case closely, a sharp contrast to the flawed investigation and withheld information of Patroman Larry Minard's murder.

An Internal FBI memorandum described the case: “Investigation from inception and throughout was conducted jointly by the FBI and ACPD. Information obtained throughout was exchanged freely and fully on a daily basis.”

Brennan was disciplined with a letter of censure by Acting FBI Director Mark Felt, an old foe, for the release of an investigative report to an Alexandria County detective. “Bureau instructions are explicit regarding such matters and you are hereby censured for failing to adhere to prescribed procedures in this instance. I will expect you to be more alert to your responsibilities in discharging your future functions so that there will be no repetition of a dereliction of this nature.”

A memo outlined the rationale for punishment of Brennan: “We should not permit the action by the SAC, Alexandria to go unchallenged, for to do so, would give tacit approval to field offices to disseminate FBI reports to their local departments. The potential scope of such dissemination is beyond estimation, since in nearly all of our criminal investigations, local agencies have concurrent interests. If FBI reports were indiscriminately furnished to police departments, they could very possibly become parts of police records which are made available to members of the press, and there is no end to speculation as to what use could be made of information from such reports. It is also pointed out that FBI reports, if allowed to be given to police agencies, would be available to local prosecutors, many of whom are politically oriented and would be very happy to quote FBI information for whatever purpose best suited them.”

Charles Brennan got transferred to the Salt Lake City FBI office in Utah where he served several months before resigning with one week notice. The glory days were over for the man who once ran counterintelligence operations.

In April 1975, Charles Brennan was interviewed by staff of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, the Church Committee, about COINTELPRO. Brennan did not have much to say. A FBI report on the interview summarized the exchange.

“Relative to the COINTELPRO, Brennan advised the Staff Members he couldn't be very specific regarding COINTELPRO inasmuch as he did not pay too much attention to it. They questioned him about this statement and Brennan stated that when you would compare COINTELPRO to such activities as the Bay of Pigs and the Glomar Explorer, COINTELPRO was “peanuts.” Brennan was asked why he didn't recommend COINTELPRO be discontinued to which he replied “If City Hall wants it, you give them what they want.”

Ed Poindexter and Mondo we Langa were convicted in April 1971 in a controversial trial. The jury never heard the 911 tape of a killer's voice and never learned that Duane Peak had made a deal with prosecutors in exchange for his testimony. Peak was found guilty of juvenile delinquency and walked free when he became an adult. The Omaha Two remain incarcerated at the maximum-security Nebraska State Penitentiary where they continue to proclaim their innocence.

12 Jul - Help Open New Radical Social Space in South Bronx

Having organized in the South Bronx since 2011 for community control of their hoods, Take Back The Bronx (TBBx) have finally decided to lay down some roots and open a radical community space—the first of its kind in the South Bronx.

MORE:

<http://www.youcaring.com/take-back-the-bronx-377689>

Besides a very spacious indoor area, there is also a backyard which features a beautiful mural, picnic tables and raised garden beds.

Our space will be community-run and will feature different classes (yoga, ESL, art and crafts, media), host reading groups, serve as a meeting space (for organizing around police brutality, tenant issues, et cetera) and a people's library. We also want to take advantage of the spacious outdoor area and build a sustainable garden to grow vegetables.

To get ready for our grand opening in a few weeks, we need building materials and equipment to renovate the space. This also includes furniture for the indoor space and equipment for the backyard area.

We are asking you to help build the first radical community space in the South Bronx. No donation is too small. Thank you for standing with us. Solidarity!

To stay up to date with our progress, please visit us at: Bronx Social Center
<<http://www.bronxsocialcenter.org>>

TBBx is a non-funded grassroots organization that has been working in the Bronx since 2011. We organize against police brutality, community violence, slum housing and exploitation, and for community power and control.

<http://www.youcaring.com/take-back-the-bronx-377689>

13 Jul - Chelsea Manning Update

Now that Chelsea's legal appeals are finally underway, your support is needed more than ever.

MORE:

Our legal team of Nancy Hollander and Vincent Ward are preparing to argue numerous issues before the military courts of appeal—issues that we fully expect can significantly reduce Manning's 35 year prison sentence. However, it's more challenging than ever to raise those needed funds without the high-profile media coverage of an upcoming trial. As of May 1, 2015, we owe nearly \$82,000 to the legal defense team preparing Chelsea's appeals.

We have also published a summary of the pre-trial and trial history of our efforts, covering 2010-2013. Over 25,000 individuals donated \$1.5 million in order to give Chelsea (formerly Bradley) Manning a fighting change for justice during her 2013 trial. We are confident that her sentence will be greatly reduced during the appeal process, but we need your help.

Chelsea Manning Defense Fund (tax-deductible donations)

The Chelsea (formerly Bradley) Manning defense fund is hosted by Courage to Resist in collaboration with the Chelsea Manning Support Network. Funding Chelsea Manning's chosen legal defense team has always been our top priority. In the wake of the outrageous 35 year prison sentence decreed by military judge Colonel Denise Lind, we believe that the final outcome will depend on not only on legal arguments, but on public opinion as we enter into pardon and clemency petitions, as well as the appeals process.

Donate online

(<https://co.clickandpledge.com/sp/d1/default.aspx?wid=38591>)

Or, send checks payable "Courage to Resist" to:

Courage to Resist

484 Lake Park Avenue #41

Oakland, California 94610

Please note "Manning defense" on the check's memo line.

Chelsea Manning IOLTA legal trust account (NOT tax-deductible)

The Chelsea Manning legal trust account is managed by her appeals attorney Nancy Hollander under regulation of the Interest on Lawyers Trust Accounts (IOLTA) Program and the American Bar Association. All proceeds offset Pvt. Manning's ongoing legal expenses. Any funds remaining at the end of Manning's legal jeopardy will become hers with interest.

Send checks payable “IOLTA / Manning” to:

Courage to Resist
484 Lake Park Avenue #41
Oakland, California 94610

Checks received will be deposited into Manning’s IOLTA account at Dubuque Bank & Trust, Dubuque, Iowa. Due to the way processing fees would interact with the legal trust, online donations to the legal trust are not possible. However, we can provide wire transfer information upon request.

PayPal

(https://www.paypal.com/cgi-bin/webscr?cmd=_s-xclick&hosted_button_id=VDTDZV62A23KW)

These PayPal transactions are not tax-deductible.

Our relationship with PayPal has been “complicated” to put it mildly. On January 29, 2011, PayPal restricted access to our account based on the “need for additional information.” After a month of trying to find a possible resolution with senior PayPal staff, we issued a statement on February 24, 2011, regarding the situation. After thousands of supporters signed a petition and contacted PayPal in protest, our account was restored without explanation. Since then, so far, so good.

July 15th - New Campaign by First Look Media Will Help Ensure Chelsea Manning Has Funds for Legal Appeals

by Kevin Gosztola (*The Dissenter*)

First Look Media and the Freedom of the Press Foundation have launched a matching fund campaign to support United States military whistleblower Chelsea Manning, as she appeals her conviction and challenges how the military prosecuted her.

The media organization’s Press Freedom Litigation Fund will match \$50,000 in donations. Journalist Glenn Greenwald will match \$10,000 in donations. The Freedom of the Press Foundation will manage the fundraising campaign. [As of 11 am ET on July 16, over \$28,000 had already been matched.]

All funds raised will ensure that Manning will be able to mount a strong appeal, which is expected to be filed before the year is over. It will also reduce the stress and anxiety Manning experiences as she worries about whether she can afford an appeal.

“Being in prison while trying to figure out how I will pay for my legal appeal has been a great source of stress and anxiety,” Manning stated. “I’m so honored that a new campaign is supporting me in my effort to vindicate my legal rights, and I am truly grateful to anyone who is helping.”

Nancy Hollander, lead counsel for Manning, shared, “My law partner, Vince Ward, Chelsea’s detailed appellate counsel, Cpt David Hammond, and I are working our way through the longest written record in military history and take on this fight willingly.”

“Chelsea has the right to have someone stand between her and the awesome power of her own government when all that power is directed at her. Vince and my work for Chelsea is sustained by thousands of her supporters, who stand with her to challenge our justice system to honor the rights of all people who put themselves at grave personal risk to protect and defend others,” Hollander added.

Hollander noted that it was nearly two years since Manning was sentenced to 35 years in prison for the “heroic act of truth-telling to protect innocent civilians.”

As extensively covered by this journalist here at *Firedoglake*, the sentencing verdict was issued on August 21, 2013. Manning received far greater punishment than individuals in the military, who have committed

war crimes by killing innocent civilians in Iraq or Afghanistan. She also received greater punishment than soldiers or officers responsible for torture.

From the video of a 2007 Apache helicopter attack, which showed soldiers gunning down innocent civilians and two *Reuters* journalists, to military incident reports in Afghanistan, which revealed the operations of an assassination squad known as Task Force 373, to military incident reports in Iraq, which included details of an order instructing US and UK forces to look the other way if Iraqi forces engaged in torture, Manning had classic whistleblower intentions when she chose to provide this information to *WikiLeaks*.

Yet, the US military prosecuted Manning as if she was a spy who “aided the enemy,” specifically al Qaeda terrorists. She was convicted of several violations of the Espionage Act.

Hollander suggested, “If this case stands—along with other recent cases—anyone who ever leaks a single page of classified information runs the risk of prosecution under the Espionage Act. That Act was meant to punish spies and saboteurs, people who act against the United States. It was never meant to prosecute whistleblowers and this case presents a disastrous precedent that needs to be overturned.”

There also is the issue of how Manning was treated during confinement at the Marine brig in Quantico, Virginia. UN Special Rapporteur on Torture Juan Mendez concluded Manning had endured “cruel and inhuman” punishment, which included being subject to conditions of solitary confinement.

Manning also was “denied her constitutional right to a speedy trial and experienced a wholesale lack of due process,” Hollander claimed.

Although Manning’s court martial had dragged on for longer than 1,000 days, Judge Denise Lind ruled that her Sixth Amendment rights had not been violated. There were six days, where she found no evidence that it met the “good cause requirement” for being excluded from the speedy trial clock. But all the gratuitous delays for reviews of classified information were acceptable to the judge.

In a post at *The Intercept*, Greenwald argued it is in everyone’s interest to ensure that Manning does not “face limits” to her “ability to pursue her legal rights with full zeal. It’s in our collective interest to ensure that whistleblowers are able to receive a full, vigorous defense of their rights, and that the government’s pernicious anti-transparency theories be contested.”

First Look easily could have raised large amounts of money for Manning and donated the funds without involving the public. Greenwald explained why that approach was not pursued.

“We want to maximize the amount she receives by encouraging people everywhere to donate to the fund, knowing their donation will be instantly doubled,” Greenwald shared. “There is great public value in having as many people as possible express support for Manning’s whistleblower rights and actions by donating, rather than having us do it alone.”

“Seeing that so many people support her will be of great value to Manning personally as she serves out her prison term.”

What First Look is doing is using its stature to revolutionize how media organizations can show solidarity with whistleblowers, who are some of the most valuable sources a reporter can have. The campaign also urges members of the press to see Manning’s case as a case with huge implications for press freedom, which the vast majority of US media have refused to acknowledge.

Firedoglake has previously engaged in this kind of initiative by raising money to support Manning and CIA whistleblower John Kiriakou but not on this scale.

This campaign definitely has the potential to decisively influence how aggressive and thorough Manning is able to be in her legal appeals.

14 Jul - Mumia Abu-Jamal: Flags and Rags

We've included the latest writing by Mumia below.

MORE:

The current controversy over the Confederate Battle Flag fluttering over the Capitol building in Columbia, South Carolina, is a testament to many things, the least of which is whether it is a symbol of racism.

It is a measure of how backward and repressive some areas of the country are, caught in the fractured memory of the past, a past that was, for millions, far more horrific than it was glorious.

Anyone who studies American history learns that South Carolina constantly threatened to secede from the Union. Indeed, in the classic work of French political scientist, Alexi de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, written several generations before the firing on Fort Sumter, South Carolina threatens to split from the union.

That contrariness -- that sense of false bruised pride, that deep paranoia bred into the bone because of the knowledge of centuries of crimes and cruelties waged against Africans lies in the heart of the state, like a stone.

Of all the slave-built colonies of the South, none exceeded South Carolina for its huge, teeming Black population, who lived in terror.

That is the heritage of the Confederate Battle Flag, one of terror and violence in support of a system of organized theft of Black labor - in the name of white supremacy and Black subjugation.

Dylan ("Dumb & Dumber") Roof knew - instinctively what the flag stood for, as well as the flags of Apartheid South Africa, and the former Rhodesia.

He knew what he was wearing and waving.

History has consigned the Apartheid flags and Rhodesia's banners to the annals of a history that is past.

But, in parts of the U.S., it flaps in the breeze as if it was still 1860 - a symbol of a war against freedom.

For far too many people, the war -- the Civil War -- still ain't over.

14 Jul - Update On Eric King's Solitary Confinement

Supporters were able to visit pre-trial prisoner Eric King last week.

MORE:

Eric is still working through some medical things but is feeling strong and in good spirits! This month marks 6 months being held in solitary confinement. He had a reclassification hearing to determine if he could leave the hole but it was decided that he will remain on "life" status which means he will remain there for the duration of his time at CCA Leavenworth. The support he receives from comrades has been irreplaceable in keeping him strong! Eric wants to express his gratitude for all the amazing letters and books that folks have sent him.

14 Jul - Prison Ecology Project

The Human Rights Defense Center's Prison Ecology Project is creating tools to dismantle toxic prisons.

MORE:

<https://www.indiegogo.com/projects/prison-ecology-project>

We are the only group focused on the intersection of environment and mass incarceration. Your contributions will provide needed start-up funds for on-the-ground work to bridge the gap between criminal justice reform and environmental movements.

The prison industry has a long history of ecological violence. Rikers Island prison in New York City was literally built on a trash heap, and evidence suggests a high incidence of cancer among guards and prisoners. In California and Texas prisoners have little recourse but to drink arsenic-laced water. In Alabama, an overpopulated prison habitually dumps sewage into a river where people fish and swim. In Kentucky, construction of a new prison is poised to clear 700 acres of endangered species habitat. Stories like these are too common. The issues impact millions of people in and around prisons across the US but are largely ignored.

Prison Ecology Project is uncovering these abuses and building a clearinghouse of data you can use to fight toxic prisons in your community.

What We Need & What You Get

We are raising \$15,000 to boost our research and data analysis work in this chronically understudied area, and to keep pressure on an industry notorious for its lack of transparency.

If we meet our stretch goal of \$25,000, your donations will also fund our organizing work to halt the construction of new prisons. Our first target? A federal prison planned for Letcher County, Kentucky whose construction would demolish 700 acres of endangered species habitat in Appalachia while imprisoning people hundreds of miles from their families. If we raise these funds, we will plan an organizing tour across the southeast to mobilize against the permitting of this prison.

We are offering special gifts to our backers! Check out our list of perks available as thanks for your contributions. You can find out more about the perks in our gallery.

The Impact

Prison Ecology Project is building a database of the five thousand prisons and jails around the country, finding the weak points in the environmental realm, and providing tools to organize locally.

Incarcerated people are one of the most vulnerable and uniquely over-burdened demographics in our nation. Prisons have become a big business. One fourth of the world's prisoners are locked up in the US, where the number of prisons has shot up by 500% in the last thirty years. Almost all of the prison population is low-income, and people of color are disproportionately represented by wide margins in every state.

Most people whose lives have been impacted by the criminal justice system have not engaged with the environmental movement up to the present time. The Prison Ecology Project creates an entryway for them, as we are able to illustrate that the environmental toll of building and operating prisons indicates yet another reason to massively reduce the nation's prison populations and send people back to their families. Thus, an additional result of the project: the growth of the environmental movement.

Risks & Challenges

The prison industry is entrenched in US government and society, but is not untouchable. The Human Rights Defense Center (HRDC) already succeeded in wielding large scale influence in the regulatory arena through the Prison Phone Justice Campaign, which zeroed in on price gouging by telecom companies in collusion with prisons and jails. Its data collection and analysis were central to getting the FCC to reduce inflated prison phone rates and safeguard the lifeline between the incarcerated and their loved ones. HRDC

is also the publisher of Prison Legal News, which has exposed environmental problems and covered stories of whistleblower litigation in prisons for well over two decades. The Prison Ecology Project aims to build on this kind of success.

Other Ways You Can Help

Please spread the word! A crowdfunding campaign is as good as the crowd behind it. Use the Indiegogo social media tools. Tell your friends. Talk to your family. Share our campaign with your networks! Your efforts are key to our success.

<https://www.indiegogo.com/projects/prison-ecology-project>

24 Jul - Free Leonard Peltier in Lights

WHAT: Clemency Campaign

WHEN: Around dark, most Friday nights

WHERE: Union Square (the eastern triangle section) Manhattan

COST: FREE

MORE:

Stop by and sign a letter to President Obama asking for Executive Clemency for Leonard.

All this courtesy of the Occupy Kitchen.

25 Jul - International Day of Solidarity with Antifa Prisoners

WHAT: Cinema, Snacks, and Solidarity

WHEN: 7:00-11:00pm, Saturday, July 25th

WHERE: The Base – 1302 Myrtle Avenue Brooklyn

COST: FREE, but donations to cover postage costs are appreciated

MORE:

Antifascists fight against those who—in the government or in the streets—dream of imposing their fascist and other Far Right nationalist nightmares on the rest of us. Throughout the world, Islamophobic, anti-Semitic, anti-immigrant, and racist bigotries are on the rise. Antifas are on the frontline in confronting these reactionary politics, and we will not forget our comrades imprisoned in the course of this struggle.

The July 25 International Day of Solidarity with Antifascist Prisoners originated in 2014 as a Day of Solidarity with Jock Palfreeman, an Australian who is imprisoned in Bulgaria for defending two Romani men from an attack by fascist football hooligans. Groups around the world took action: holding demonstrations, benefits supporting the Bulgarian Prisoners Association, writing to Jock, and talking about the plight of the Romani and Sinti people in general.

In 2015 we would like to expand this day of solidarity to all antifascist prisoners around the world. We encourage groups to take the day to plan an event of their choice—whether it is a letter writing, demonstration, benefit, or other action—and to focus on the prisoners and related issues that are of most importance to them locally.

In NYC, we'll show support with the following:

Cinema (Watch Nazis get what's coming to them!)

Snacks (Delicious & Vegan!)

Speakers (Short & Sweet! Learn about anti-fascist movements from around the world and the comrades in jail for fighting the good fight!)

Solidarity (Sign cards that we will send to all antifa prisoners!)

No Pasaran!
Until All Are Free!

For a list of prisoners, endorsing groups, and updates, please check <https://nycantifa.wordpress.com>

Send prisoner updates, announcements for local events, and additional group endorsements to nycantifascistaction@gmail.com.

26 Jul - Resistance in Brooklyn annual ANTI-JULY 4th BBQ (better late than never!)

WHAT: CELEBRATE SEKOU ODINGA & the Sekou Odinga Defense Committee

WHEN: 4:00pm, Sunday, July 26th

WHERE: 724 Empire Boulevard Brooklyn, New York

COST: FREE (but donations accepted and appreciated)

MORE:

This year held in partnership with A New Black Arts Movement and Spiritchild.