



POST OFFICE BOX 110034 BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11211

Updates for August 2<sup>nd</sup>

## **20 Jul - The 13th Amendment – prison slavery and mass incarceration**

*Since the publication of Michelle Alexander's excellent "The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness," the issue of prison and parole reform has been raised as far as Obama's White House.*

### **MORE:**

by Jalil Muntaqim (*SF BayView*)

In the national debate ensuing from Michelle Alexander's book, some have not given credit to Angela Davis forging national interest in prison abolition with her organizing Critical Resistance campaigns across the country. With the nominal success of the Pelican Bay prisoners' hunger strike in California, we recognize that when we organize a national determination, we can collectively force institutional change.

With the advent of the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement, there is a new generation of activists who have included a challenge to mass incarceration as part of their national debate and agenda for institutional change. However, it is extremely important that BLM and other prison and parole reform advocates have a profound historical foundation in their understanding of the prison industrial complex. In my recent book, "Escaping the Prism: Fade to Black," I included an essay, "The 13th Amendment – Prison Slavery and Mass Incarceration," hoping to offer more insight on how to formulate talking points to persuade others, particularly faith-based communities, to join and advocate for change.

This struggle is not new to me; in fact, my frustration is that it is often necessary to repeat and reiterate the need for a national determination that actually challenges the very foundation of the institution of prison slavery. In this regard, I am offering a legal argument that two other former prisoners and I prepared and fought in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York (up to the U.S. Supreme Court and including petitioning the United Nations), stating the "exception clause" in the 13th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution is in violation of international law and U.S. treaties with the United Nations and the international community.

On Nov. 19, 1979, I and two other former prisoners filed a civil rights complaint in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York alleging that the 13th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution is in violation of international law and general principles of human rights. The complaint was docketed as 79 CIV 6228 and sent to federal Judge Pierce for consideration. Copies of the complaint were sent to various legal groups and organizations, such as the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, American Civil Liberties Union etc., in an effort to win their support for the petition.

Unfortunately, they declined to respond to our overtures to support this case by providing legal representation. As novice pro se litigants, we pursued the complaint to the best of our abilities, ultimately being denied certiorari by the U.S. Supreme Court. We then sought to win the attention of United Nations subcommittees, to no avail.

It was obvious to us then, as it should be to activists today that, without a serious national organizational determination, it was improbable for us to win. However, we were adherent to the principle of Frederick Douglass that "power concedes nothing without a demand; it never has and it never will," and our audacious attitude was what we needed to challenge the system of prison slavery, no matter how implausible the possibility of success.

In 2016, it is believed that the potential exists to build the kind of national and international campaign to demand the 13th Amendment be amended to excise and omit the clause that permits involuntary servitude

and slavery of prisoners. Therefore, I am posting the Memorandum of Law that we prepared in 1979, as I believe it provides today's activists and advocates of prison and parole reform both a historical and legal foundation to build a substantial movement to once and for all end all forms of involuntary servitude and slavery in the United States.

To download the Memorandum of Law, click here. (For those without internet access, the Bay View will print and mail the 30-page memorandum to you on request.)

It is my sincere hope this document will be widely read and studied, especially by law students, professors and legal groups involved and associated with prison and parole reform advocacy. My aspiration is to offer the overall movement broader talking points to persuade and evolve an informed national campaign capable of organizing a durable prison slavery abolition movement.

Certainly, the Black Lives Matter movement, Critical Resistance, Jericho Amnesty Movement etc., can achieve more in the educational agit-propaganda determinations with this information as part of their pamphlets, brochures and other outreach materials, including social media posting.

I firmly believe there cannot be any significant discussion about prison and parole reform absent a challenge to the very foundation of the prison slave system. The economic and racial implications of prison involuntary servitude and slavery are based on the historical reality of African chattel slavery. Who can deny that the slavery abolition battles that resulted in the Emancipation Proclamation and the 13th Amendment were incomplete and are unfinished business?

Remember: We are our own liberators!

### **July 30<sup>th</sup> - Full Transcript of Jalil Muntaqim's 2016 Parole Hearing**

I firmly believe folk reading this transcript will have a complete understanding of how the Commissioners' questioning was biased, and simply sought to support a decision for denial.

Unfortunately, the stenographer made typos in transcribing the hearing. For example, on page 9, line 6 it reads "exporting" and it should read "expropriating"; on page 10, line 6 it says "just" and it should read "Judge"; and on page 13, line 5, it says "120 pounds" and it should read "20 pounds".

In hindsight reading this, I found a couple of opportunities to expand on my answers to give in depth understanding. For instance, on page 9 when the Commissioner alleged the bank robbery was not a political act, I should have further informed them of the FBI COINTELPRO operation to arrest Panthers on trumped-up charges to exhaust our funding, hindering the Party's capacity to attend to our social programs, like the breakfast program, free health clinics, etc.

Starting on page 17, Commissioner Coppola questioned whether there were any supporters who did not know me personally. I should have answered that there is a distinction between those who support the PBA and my supporters; my supporters believe in rehabilitation and redemption, while the PBA's believe in vengeance and revenge. A couple of missed opportunities!

The entire transcript can be viewed at:

[http://www.freejalil.com/images3/2016\\_Jalil\\_Parole\\_Hearing\\_Transcript.pdf](http://www.freejalil.com/images3/2016_Jalil_Parole_Hearing_Transcript.pdf)

### **23 Jul - Strike Against White Supremacy: Mobilize for the September 9th Prisoner General Strike**

*Across the country freeways are blocked, people take the streets, law enforcement officers are confronted and their buildings are occupied, and more and more people are questioning the institutions of policing and incarceration.*

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In the past month, nearly every major city and many smaller ones have seen some sort of protest, demonstration, or disruption in the wake of ongoing police murders that have recently included two African-American men, Alton Sterling and Philando Castile. Helping set the context for this rebellion has been growing anger at both Trump and Clinton and ongoing resistance to white nationalist and fascist organizing which becomes more and more confrontational. At the same time, talk of abolishing the police and the prison system is no longer a fringe idea, as these positions are being discussed more and more broadly by wide segments of popular social movements.

But while much of the news, either mainstream or radical, has been dominated by riots outside of Trump rallies, massive revolts in Ferguson, Baltimore, and Oakland, and the evolving Black Lives Matter movement and growing far-Right white reaction to it, at the same time a radical, broad based, and ever growing multi-racial prison labor movement has been carrying out strike after strike, action after action, and expanding in size, every day.

### **Strike Against Prison Slavery, Strike Against White Supremacy**

On Friday, September 9<sup>th</sup>, on the 45<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Attica Uprising in New York, prisoners are calling for a general strike across all prisons in the United States against prison slavery. As the initial call out for the strike stated:

*Slavery is alive and well in the prison system, but by the end of this year, it won't be anymore. This is a call to end slavery in America. This call goes directly to the slaves themselves. We are not making demands or requests of our captors, we are calling ourselves to action. To every prisoner in every state and federal institution across this land, we call on you to stop being a slave, to let the crops rot in the plantation fields, to go on strike and cease reproducing the institutions of your confinement.*

*This is a call for a nation-wide prisoner work stoppage to end prison slavery, starting on September 9<sup>th</sup>, 2016. They cannot run these facilities without us.*

This is not only a strike against bad conditions, for the changing of rules around things like parole, and to actually be paid for their labor which makes billions for multi-national corporations, but against white supremacy itself. When the 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment was passed in 1865, it in theory banned slavery, except in the form of imprisonment. While many former slaves simply became indentured share croppers, over the decades following the civil war corporations and governments continued to look towards prisons as a major source for free and cheap labor.

But how to get people there and put them to work? In the wake of massive urban riots and the unfolding black liberation struggle in the 60s and 70s, the war on drugs was manufactured as a way of repression and containment against potential insurrection. Mass incarceration and militarized policing, or “the new Jim Crow,” has led to more African Americans being imprisoned or on probation or parole than the amount of people enslaved during the time of racial slavery. But this system hasn't only meant social control, it's also led to huge profits. As the Free Alabama Movement, one of the groups that have pushed hardest within the growing prison labor movement, wrote:

*Under the 13th Amendment, the criminal justice system and the courtroom would become the auction block. “Neither slavery or involuntary servitude, except as punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted. . . .” Since that time, it has been the jails and prison systems that have served the functions of running the enterprise and institution of slavery in America. And, the complexity of the slave has not change: Black, Brown, and poor. The practice has not changed: free labor that exploits the oppressed and enriches the rulers of the system.*

Simply stated, it is legal to work someone for free or next to free as long as they are imprisoned. In some cases, such as the prison of Angola, the facility is even built upon an old slave plantation and prisoners are forced to work in the fields just as slaves did before them. As the Free Alabama Movement wrote in Let the Crops Rot in the Field:

*After a period of over 40 years of an accelerated rate of incarceration, the issue of Mass Incarceration and Prison Slavery have now reached its crescendo.*

*Spurred on by factors that included racism, capitalism, free labor, and a politically motivated desire to provide jobs to a valued voting block of rural, conservative white citizens by building prisons in rural and agricultural areas that had been decimated by the Industrial Revolution and the outsourcing of jobs to China, India, Indonesia, etc.*

*Then, once the prisons were built, the government manufactured a “war on drugs” designed to fill those newly built prisons with black, brown and poor whites who had been rendered unemployable by corporate downsizing and outsourcing in the early 70’s, and who were considered a strain on social programs, unwanted competitors for limited jobs, and ideal candidates for corporations that needed a large labor pool for forced slave labor.*

*Mass incarceration has now culminated in a for-profit Prison Industrialized Complex that now holds over 2.5 million men, women and children hostage for the sole and exclusive purpose of exploitation and free labor.*

*Today, January 2015, the people in America’s prisons, mostly black, brown (and white), and all poor, now make up a free (or penny wages) labor force for a 500 billion dollar per-year industry that is producing a range of products and providing services so broad and extensive that it touches every area of the U.S. economy.*

They go on to write:

*Just like the Institution of Chattel Slavery, Mass Incarceration is in essence an Economic System which uses human beings as its nuts and bolts. Therefore, our new approach must be Economically based, and must be focused on the factors of production- the people being forced into this slave labor.*

### **Our Three-Part Strategy**

- 1) Organize prison shutdowns at prisons with major economic industries...
- 2) Call for a nationwide...protests...[at companies that profit from prison labor]...
- 3) Having...supporters...hold...protests at the prisons where the people are mass incarcerated and oppressed.

In short, prisoners are thinking about where they can be most disruptive in order to fight against, and ultimately destroy, prison slavery. Members of the Free Alabama Movement write that while hunger strikes, protests and marches at state capitols, and also call and write in campaigns can bring attention, they don’t show the full disruptive power of prisoners, who’s labor is needed to keep entire prisons running in the same way that labor strikes can. They write:

*The [hunger strikes]...showed us all that with leadership and unity, we can defeat mass incarceration with the right strategy. But, we also learned that, while we did see progress in some areas, it has a minimal impact on the system of mass incarceration.*

*We have to strategize with the understanding that we are dealing with modern day slave profiteers. These businessmen will gladly let us die from starvation so long as their assembly lines keep moving.*

*We have to ask ourselves: If we are protesting against mass incarceration and prison slavery, then why aren’t we doing it at the prisons where our economic strength can be felt?*

This disruptive power is a force that has been growing in the last several years and months, as prisoners in a variety of facilities have carried out actions and launched a variety of revolts. From the riots that have raged at Holman Prison in Alabama, ongoing hunger and work strikes that have taken place from Texas to Wisconsin to Nevada, to the support and noise made in solidarity with prison May Day strike actions, all of this activity has been building towards September 9<sup>th</sup>.

### **Revolt on the Inside, Revolt on the Outside**

Over the last several years, the Free Alabama Movement has grown into a mass movement that involves prisoners across every state in the US. There are currently Free Movements in Ohio, Mississippi, Virginia, Texas, and many more. Working closely with FAM has been outside organizations such as MAF, or Mothers and Families of FAM, and the Incarcerated Workers Organizing Committee (IWOC), which is a committee within the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), a revolutionary anti-capitalist labor union founded in 1905.

Currently, the Incarcerated Workers Organizing Committee has signed up close to 1,000 prisoners to become members of the IWW and along with Anarchist Black Cross (ABC) chapters and a variety of prisoner support groups, have helped to offer support to the growing prison labor movement. This organizing and support from a variety of groups, crews, coalitions, and individuals has been crucial. But our work is only just beginning.

We need to push, plan, organize, and build capacity for the upcoming strike on September 9th and the days that come after, as repression and lock-downs are sure to follow, and in some cases, have already begun. September 9<sup>th</sup> is an opportunity for us to act in solidarity with comrades we have already been building with; both on the inside and on the outside. At the same time, it is a moment where we can take part in a historical struggle and bring people into the real nitty-gritty work of attacking a pillar of white supremacy and racial apartheid.

To be sure, it does not appear that people in the US are going to be leaving the streets anytime soon. Even if things cool down in the next 7 weeks, September 9<sup>th</sup> is something that we can build around and that will also help push us into the future. Now is the time to use this strike as a way to build capacity and bring new people into the organizing. The strike is also an opportunity to make real connections with communities most affected by the prison industrial complex and connect them to revolutionary grassroots movements across the country. Let us use this momentum and action as a way of generalizing a radical critique of white supremacy and the established order, and the need for people to take sides and organize themselves in their neighborhoods, workplaces, and schools. But above all, it is an opportunity to stand in solidarity with prison rebels who have been taking risks and putting their lives on the line to strike a blow against prison slavery and the world that it maintains.

### **Building for September 9<sup>th</sup>**

There's a lot we can do not only in taking action on September 9th and the days following (some people are planning actions on Saturday September 10th, so as to not conflict with work schedules) but also in the critical build up for it. To be clear, the work and organizing that we do before the strike is just as important, if not more so, in creating a material force that can act within the moment. Organizing and building before hand helps us to create a base of support and brings new people into the organizing; this activity creates a movement. Towards this end, we've created a list of ideas about how people can take part in the action, wherever they live.

### **Outreach and Build Up**

Flyering, wheatpasting, stickers and general outreach. Print out flyers (some are linked below) and begin to put them up around where you live, where you work, and where you go to school. Make stickers from cheap sticker paper at the copy store and place them up in the same way. Host a fundraiser or party and save up to get nicer vinyl ones. Get a team together (or go by yourself) and put up posters using wheatepaste. Building a buzz around the strike is crucial. Focus on areas with a high traffic of people and within communities that would be sympathetic to the strike.

Write graffiti and drop banners. Write anti-prison and pro-strike slogans in your area. Make banners out of bed-sheets or find ones (like those found outside of fast food restaurants) to place up around your area. Freeways are good spots, as are heavy foot trafficked areas. Use plastic zip ties to place the banners up and paint or spray paint to write the messages. Take pictures of such activity and send a report to [itsgoingdown.org](http://itsgoingdown.org).

Set up an info-table or organize a "Coffee Not Cops" outside of a jail or courthouse. Placing a table with flyers and info outside of a local Wal-Mart, flea market, grocery or dollar store, or food stamps office is a quick way to talk to a lot of people. It's also a smart thing to do if you want to connect with people outside of political or activist circles. You can also organize a Coffee Not Cops event outside of the courthouse or local jail. Coffee Not Cops is just like Food Not Bombs, but instead of serving a large meal people just give

out coffee and sometimes donuts or pastries. Along with the hot beverages and treats, be sure to give out flyers and info on the upcoming strike and ways that people can plug in. We encourage people to set up tables outside of courthouses before people go into court (usually around 8 AM). This is an audience we want to connect with and often one that would welcome a hot cup of coffee and something to read. Bring a banner, a table, some chairs, and your materials.

Hold an informational event. Organize an educational event in which you can tell members of the public and other organizers about the upcoming strike. To get in contact with a speaker that could either Skype in (talk via the internet on video) to the event or get you in contact with a local presenter, hit up iwoc [at] riseup.net. There are also several youtube videos which can serve as a good introduction to the strike, check them out below.

Host a public BBQ. Once you have a general plan about what you will do on September 9th (or on Saturday the 10<sup>th</sup> or the days following), consider hosting a public BBQ (if the information is something you want to share with other people) in which plans for the strike are announced and informational and outreach materials are handed out to those that come. The more ways that people have to connect into the organizing, the better.

Link up with people on the inside. Find out if there is a prisoner support group in your area. Find ways to make connections with people on the inside and get information on the strike to them. Contact a local Anarchist Black Cross or Prison Books group for more information on how to get started.

Fundraise. Throw a benefit show, host a dance party with a bar, do whatever it is you do best and raise some money! Either put it towards your own plans for September 9<sup>th</sup> or donate it to the groups that are doing much of the national coordination.

Get linked in on social media. Follow IWOC on twitter here and on Facebook here. Use the hashtags #PrisonStrike and #StrikeAgainstPrisonSlavery on social media.

### **Planing and Organizing Actions**

Hold a noise demo outside a prison or jail. Make some noise for prisoners on the inside on the day of the strike or in the days after. Bring banners, music, and noise makers. If you can take and hold the streets, try and do so. If you can't, stay on the sidewalk and be a presence there. Be sure to have outreach materials to give out to people walking by and be loud enough to people on the inside can hear you. Take pictures and send a report in to itsgoingdown.org.

Protest and demonstrate outside of a business that makes money from prison labor. Find a business in your area that makes money off of prison slavery. Protest, demonstrate, shut them down. Have banners and flyers ready. If there are several businesses in your area, hold a march to the different establishments if you can. Draw connections between prison slavery and the wage slavery of capitalism. Link up with Fight for \$15 groups if possible. Outreach and talk to workers on the day of as well as the people at the business. Let them know why you are doing this and give them information on the fight against prison slavery. Regular working-class and poor people are not our enemies, they are our potential allies. Take pictures and send a report in to itsgoingdown.org. Some of these companies include McDonald's, Victoria's Secret, Wal-Mart, Wendy's, AT&T, and the US Military. Many other corporations are implicated. Note: Whole Foods has ceased using prison labor.

Get creative! What actions can be taken to aid in the struggle of prisoners against prison slavery?

### **After the Actions**

Get ready for repression. Those that are taking part in the strike are expecting repression. Set aside time to host call-in events where you put pressure on the prison to release prisoners. Also, organize events where

you write into prisoners that are active in the resistance movement. Build relationships and stay in contact. This isn't the last time we will have to do this, so let's start talking to each other.

Pull new people into the organizing. Many people are out on the streets for the first time right now. Against Neo-Nazis, the KKK, and other white nationalists, against Trump, and against the police. Pull them into the organizing and keep them there. Let the strike on September 9th be something that builds our movements.

Have a debrief and report back event on the strike actions. Once the strike actions have been carried out, report back to the wider community about what happened. What went well? What didn't go well? How can we do better next time? How can people feed into and support ongoing prisoner organizing and rebellion? Again, discuss how this activity will push us into the future, not be a one off thing that simply ends.

Even if you are living in a small town, reading *It's Going Down* by yourself on a break at work, or you are part of a crew or organization, we all can help push the strike and make it a success. Whether together or alone, either in a group of 5 or 500, we are part of a worldwide movement and we can show our strength when we are organized and committed to do so.

### **24 Jul - One Year Later**

*July 24<sup>th</sup> marked one year since Nicole and Joseph were indicted and arrested under the AETA.*

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It has been a year of many difficult and trying moments, but also of beautiful solidarity in the face of State power. Thank you to everyone who has shown support for Nicole and Joseph, and please also do so into this next year as they continue to deal with the impact of their case. Nicole now awaits trial, and Joseph is in federal prison — and both still need community support. Take a moment to write to them, send Joseph a book, or make a donation to the support fund.

### **25 Jul - Political Prisoners 101: The "Mu" Brothers**

*How is it that Jose Mujica, an ex-guerrilla, can become president of a country while Mutulu Shakur continues to rot behind U.S. penitentiary walls?*

#### **MORE:**

by Julian Cola (*Tele Sur TV*)

In 1982 Dr. Mutulu Shakur went underground. His primary concern — COINTELPRO. Having participated in — per the words of author Ishmael Reed — the slave revolts of the 1960s and 70s, Dr. Shakur, having renounced his U.S. citizenship in the late 60s to become a citizen of the Republic of New Afrika, was aware that he was a target of the U.S. government. Prior to his capture by authorities in Los Angeles in February 1986, he'd been listed on the FBI's Most Wanted list.

When the gavel slammed against the judge's courtroom table, Dr. Shakur, a founder of the Black Acupuncture Advisory Association of North America renowned for his groundbreaking acupuncture techniques in treating drug addiction, had been sentenced to 60 years in prison without recommendation for parole. No fingerprints or eyewitnesses linked him to the 1981 Brinks armored truck robbery for which he was convicted. He was also sentenced for operating a criminal enterprise and aiding in the liberation of his sister, Assata Shakur, from prison. Only a single piece of evidence, the testimony of an informant, was used to convict him.

Indelible marks surround Dr. Shakur's case compared to other political prisoners and freedom fighters. Slain rap-activist, Tupac Shakur, was/is his stepson. Assata Shakur continues to live in political exile in Cuba, earning a master's degree from the University of Havana and becoming a Cuban citizen. To this day, her liberation from the Clinton Correctional Facility for Women evokes outrage from U.S. politricksters who want her extradited and returned to prison. But, like all political prisoners in the United States ignored by the mainstream corporate media, from Mumia Abu Jamal to Oscar Lopez, Marilyn Buck to Kuwasi

Balagoon, the MOVE 9 to Leonard Peltier – and the list goes on – Mutulu Shakur has never received a just trial for the crimes of which he was convicted. So how does the situation of political prisoners in the US compare to other political prisoners who were once deemed terrorists by U.S. authorities?

A militant Black Nationalist and anti-imperialist-capitalist offshoot of the Black Panther Party, the Black Liberation Army (BLA), emerged in 1971. The year marked the height of the Tupamaros, another anti-imperialist-capitalist urban guerrilla group that engaged in armed struggle in Uruguay. José Mujica, the austere lifestyle president who governed Uruguay from 2010 to 2015, is the most recognized ex-member of the Tupamaros. President Mujica, affectionately known as Pepe, racked up enough revolutionary street cred to have been recruited by the Black Liberation Army. In March 1970, he was involved in a police shootout that left him shot six times and two policemen injured. The Tupamaros would eventually gain extensive press coverage in the United States after kidnapping and executing Dan Mitrone, a CIA agent who trained Uruguayan police forces in torture techniques. Unlike those who resisted U.S. tyranny and, for doing so, remain incarcerated or exiled, every single Tupamaro member was granted political amnesty and released from prison when the Uruguayan military dictatorship ended in 1985.

How is it that José Mujica, an ex-Tupamaro, can become president of a country and advocate a third-way, socialist program, while so many political prisoners continue to rot behind U.S. penitentiary walls for decades? An answer to this question lies in a recent study conducted by Princeton researcher Martin Giles and Northwestern researcher Benjamin I. Page. After analyzing data from roughly 1,800 policy initiatives from 1981 to 2002, they concluded that America's rhetorical mainstay, democracy, couldn't be farther from reality. Gilson and Page wrote, "the preferences of the average American appear to have only a miniscule, near-zero, statistically non-significant impact upon public policy." And as Tom McKay stated at Policy Mic:

Big corporations, the ultra-wealthy and special interests with a lot of money and power essentially make all of the decisions. Citizens wield little to no political power. America, the findings indicate, tends towards either of these much more than anything close to what we call "democracy" — systems such as majoritarian electoral democracy or majoritarian pluralism, under which the policy choices pursued by the government would reflect the opinions of the governed.

If the average American lives in a country uprooted by oligarchs, it would be almost impossible to fathom the plight of African-descendants who struggle for freedom and justice. They must've been tossed into the very pit of pits of inequity and injustice?

Not even a truth and reconciliation moratorium, at this late stage, extracting best practices from the Nuremberg Trials and South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission can help to purge America's tumultuous past, and present, from its pervasive forms of institutionalized racism, neoliberal capitalism, and other forms of legalized oppression. That said, where is the revolutionary fervor of the 21st century, so desperately needed to provide girth and substance to the words of Sekou Odinga, ex-Black Panther and Black Liberation Army member, released from prison in November 2014, "free them all."

## **25 Jul - New Interview with Abdul Haqq**

*It has been a while since we've seen new writings by or interviews with Abdul Haqq, but now that's changed.*

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**Anthony Nocella (AN):** Hello Abdul Haqq it is great talking to you and getting to know your life story and complex politics beyond Animal Rights and Environmentalism. It's a breath of fresh air when someone that is Vegan and involved in Animal Rights does not need to talk about those issues 24/7, but can speak to other injustices as well. what would you say are some of the other issues that you are deeply concerned and care about and why?

**Abdul Haqq (AH):** More and more, I find the problems of technologically advanced civilization to be at the root of most of the injustices and oppressions we face today, including those against Animals and the Earth. It's not something that most people currently recognize because we are so saturated with it's effects that it has become completely ambient in our culture. But the fact is that whether we are looking at the prison industrial complex, Animal farming, oil and coal production or police brutality etc. we are talking about oppressions that are only as methodically capable as technology can provide. Prison for example employs the latest in surveillance, confinement architecture and design, depravation and punishment, it really would not be feasible to keep millions of people incarcerated otherwise. Just as the slaughterhouse industry and so-called Animal research industry employs everything from genetic engineering to the thumbscrew and rack.

Technology creates a capacity, and without absolving those capacities they will always become used. just like a canal. you can stop the water flow making the canal of no effect, and it sits there doing nothing, however it's capacity is not diminished, once water is applied it is directed in exactly the same way.

The same can be said for all technology. Every new innovation opens up a Pandora's' box of unforeseeable capacities, some good and some bad, but most wholly unforeseeable and seemingly unstoppable once employed. today everyone is wrapped up in combating or protesting the effects but not the cause. not the capacity. And it's not a political problem, that is to say that politics won't solve it, only the collapse of industrial civilization will restore the balance. not capitalism, socialism, anarchism or any other futile, jargon laden, political ideology invented by a bunch of dead white guys with overheated brains.

A much more personal injustice that I am attached to outside of Animal rights is the struggles against racism and for the restoration of people of color. as well as those below the poverty line.

**AN:** When did you become involved in these issues and why?

**AH:** When it comes to my views against technology I really have only had chance to sit back and think these things through since my incarceration in 2010. I have read extensively on the subject. I like much of what John Zerzan has to say on the subject, and in the few conversations I had with him he was a very nice man besides. But I think hands down that Ted Kaczynski's book "Technological Slavery" is by far the best writing on the subject that one will find. And I think his definition and stance against the left and leftist types is spot on.

When it comes to The fight against racism, well, I have been dealing with that my whole life. I'm Puerto Rican, I spent my teenage years in the inner city of Denver, below the poverty line in a duplex with 12 relatives. I dealt with all the horrors that people of color are privy too. Racist cops, soup kitchens, drug abuse, sexual abuse, violence and of course prison. I have now spent 10 years total behind bars (one quarter of my life). When I joined the Straight Edge movement in the 1990's there was alot of nazi skinheads in Denver. They were older, tougher and organized. so we became tougher and smarter and at times more violent than them to combat the plague of racism in our scene. For me it was never about ideologies or principles as it was about fighting against real serious and acute racism in our neighborhoods and against the substance abuse that plagued my family.

**AN:** Has your political analysis and activism changed over the last twenty some years, and if so how?

**AH:** Yeah Definitely. I'm 40 years old now and I definitely see things differently than when I was 20. Back then I held most of the same ideals and beliefs but I saw things in a narrow and two dimensional way. Everything was either this or that, black or white. I didn't like to look at the fact that things have complexities, people have complexities and not all things can be easily explained away or dealt with. As far as activism that changed too. When I was 20 I was really more interested in venting my anger at injustice and it was very important for my to identify deeply with a cause. Like most people my activism was more about me than I cared to admit. whereas today I don't consider myself an "activist" at all. I just consider myself a man with deep convictions and a desire to help the world be a more just place.

As far as political analysis that has definitely changed as well. in short I really despise it. I used to identify as some sort of anarchism but in a true evaluation of my beliefs I found them to be in conflict. I believe in right and wrong, good and evil and not in a subjective and secular way . And I don't seem to have all the politically correct hang ups and taboos the plague anarchists. It seems to me that anarchism is just an extremist form of leftism that cannot divorce itself from leeching off of other peoples struggles and activism.

**AN:** One issue that is very important to me and to ICAS, which we have been working on for the last 15 years is total liberation. I am sure you have heard the term, which is about a broader global social movement for all to be liberated and emancipated. how do you define the term and how do you work toward total liberation from behind bars?

**AH:** Yes of course I am familiar with the term, And I definitely support people being as free and emancipated as is possible in a sane and just society but I often wonder how exactly everybody can do that without trampling on the rights of others. For example, lots of people like to do drugs and party, often times this leads to addiction which leads to faulty decision making and a whole host of social ills. Does a persons desire to feed an addiction supersede societies right to be free from it's devastating effects?

In this day and age people mistake sexual promiscuity and perversion for some sort of liberation but these exact behaviors lead to social ills like pornography, STD's, unwanted pregnancy, broken homes and the sexualization of youth. So it seems to me that total liberation is a point of view which leaves broad definitions wide open and is a matter of philosophical and political viewpoints.

In reality your rights end where another's begins and any action that crosses the rights of another is not a right per se but only an ability. Ironically, if we strictly observe the rights of all, which I highly recommend, then society actually becomes fairly conservative and ethical, and of course since many people don't care whatsoever for observing others' rights by restricting their own behavior somebody will have to enforce something akin to laws. And we are right back to those with a hedonist or degenerate bent complaining about their rights to carnality, addiction and senselessness.

Of course many people I talk with that identify with total lib feel like once everyone raises their political consciousness enough everyone will be on the same page. But that's the same thing that republicans, communists and nearly all ideologues say as well. Of course if everyone cared about the same set of values we could all live in harmony. But we don't and it doesn't look like we will.

**AN:** ICAS does alot of work with and in support of the Black Lives Matter movement over the last two years. After the many shootings in 2015 with Mike Brown, Eric Gardner, and Freddie Gray to name a few and now in the last few weeks with Alton Sterling murdered by police in Baton Rouge and Philando Castile murdered by police in Saint Paul what are your thoughts on what we can do and what are black prisoners saying about this issue where you are at?

**AH:** I am glad to see the awareness being raised about police brutality and these violent murders of black and brown people. I guess now that white people can see it first hand from cellular video accounts it has gotten more air play. It's and interesting symptom of white society in america that once they figure out that this is real and not simply urban myth that now it's a huge shock. Of course any black or brown person from the hood knows dam well that the cops are dangerous and will potentially kill you. I think we've all known that for centuries now. And true to the nature of the white power structure since they have begun to figure it out they now seek to instruct the rest of us how to deal with it and stand against it.

That's why I think it is important that people of color stand against these injustices on our own terms and not the terms of the system, and definitely not on the terms of white activists seeking to assuage their white guilt.

As far as what black prisoners that I know say about it they think it is sick and wrong, they are angry when they see they death of their people on TV. and then all stare at each other and wish they had the power to stop it. The interesting thing is that everybody seems to think it's terrible except the white inmates. most of them are very racist and all tattooed with swastikas. but in this instance they seem to sometimes be conflicted over who they hate more the blacks or the cops.

**AN:** With so many activists saying that prisons are a very punitive, violent, oppressive, and repressive place do you or prisoners you know have alternatives for prisons and if so, what are they?

**AH:** Well yes all prisoners have different ideas about prison reform but they are largely immaterial because we are on the lowest rung of this society. Our voices are largely censored and unheard and the authorities have a vested interested in keeping us that way. this is the systems business, prison is a huge source of revenue. they are not going to let us go home and downsize their own business. And prison is a very punitive, violent and oppressive place. Actually it's worse than that. it crushes men's souls turns then into obsessive, compulsive and frustrated dependents. It's an artificially controlled environment designed to belittle you and destroy your pride. It's a place that seeks to sever your independence and replace it with sugar, television and fist fights.

And yet there is another sad truth. Many of the men I am locked up with, I am glad they are here with me and not with you. Because how do you reform in any meaningful way a serial rapist, a child molester or a pathologically violent man that can bench press nearly 500 pounds? Society is warped and twisted and it is breeding a population that is warped and twisted and I, and my fellow inmates are surrounded by the products of that system, and unfortunately we oftentimes become products of that system.

**AN:** When it comes to support what can people do for you?

**AH:** Money isn't everything..... But then again it's not nothing either.

Thanks so much Anthony for the questions I really enjoyed the opportunity to speak with you. Take care and I'll do the same.

### **25 Jul - New Poetry and Updates From Eric King**

*Eric King was recently moved from a CCA private prison and is currently in a county jail in Oklahoma. We'll update folks with his transfer as we know more.*

#### **MORE:**

"Feeling forgotten feels worst than dying" a poem by Eric King in solidarity with Chelsea Manning

They take away your voice  
you loose touch with yourself.

If you aren't moving forward  
do we even exist?

Instagram, tinder, never made a hashtag.

Everyone is street walking  
playing Pokemon Go

I don't even have a phone.

It's so easy to feel alone

Feeling Forgotten Feels worse  
than dying.

They turned your story into a crime

tortured you for daring to exist

must have hurt those fuckers

to know so many people listen.

Flowers can grow in concrete,

can we grow in cells?  
The easiest thing in the world  
is to feel you've lost touch,  
and it hurts so much,  
Solidarity Chelsea

### **July 31<sup>st</sup> - A message from Eric to his supporters and info on his recent transfer**

On Friday morning Eric boarded a plane, leaving C.C.A. Leavenworth behind for good. He was transferred to the Grady County Jail in Chickasha, Oklahoma, which is the facility the Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) uses to house prisoners during transfer when the Federal Transfer Center in Oklahoma City is full.

He will stay at the jail while the BOP prepares to transfer him to his designated facility. Prisoners typically stay at these transitional facilities for 1-4 weeks or even longer before being transferred, but we don't know how long he will actually be there or where his designated facility will be.

As of right now, Eric is not receiving vegan food. Hopefully this will change quickly. We will be monitoring the situation and will ask for help putting pressure on the jail if his dietary needs are not met.

Please take a moment to send Eric a card or a letter of encouragement and solidarity during this stressful moment. Please note that his number has temporarily changed while he's in this county jail, but he will get his old number back when he's transferred to a federal facility. For now, please write to him at:

**Eric King #114522306**  
**Grady County Jail**  
**215 North 3<sup>rd</sup> Street**  
**Chickasha, Oklahoma 73018**

Also, Eric now has email access. If you would like to communicate with Eric via email while he is in Grady County, go to Smart Jail Mail, make an account, select "Grady County, Oklahoma" and enter Eric's name. The system will send a "request" to Eric to confirm that he wants to get emails from you. It costs \$0.50 per email. You add credit to your account via credit card and you pay for both the emails you send to Eric as well as the ones he sends back to you.

### **26 Jul - Some Thoughts on Recent Police Killings by Herman Bell, Black Panther Party/BLA Political Prisoner**

*Please read the latest by New York state political prisoner Herman Bell.*

#### **MORE:**

You may wonder what my take is of the (most recent) police killings in Minnesota and Baton Rouge and of the five police that were killed and six wounded in Dallas. These events, at least the killing of unarmed civilians, are such common occurrences nowadays til talk about them seem unending. What I find most striking about this is that the authorities, i.e., the police, are so condemnatory of violent acts in our society and yet they commit the most violence. They beat, shoot and kill citizens with impunity. To become a policeman imagine having to take a vow to never commit any act of physical violence on citizens. In truth, they have the power and resources if necessary to restrain or subdue somebody. Their "perks" would be gone: no guns, no intimidation, no beating, no shooting and killing of civilians. Therein would lie their worthiness, test of courage, willingness to serve and show genuine respect to the citizenry.

In Dallas, they used a robot (probably military surplus) with a bomb to kill the alleged shooter. And why a bomb? Why should civilian police have use of bombs? Bombs are military ordinance! There was no pressing need to rush the alleged shooter. He was cornered and could go nowhere. Eventually, he would have surrendered or taken his own life. So they killed the guy with a bomb – judge, jury, and executioner. These very people sworn to uphold the law, so condemnatory of violence – are so very violent themselves.

I heard no voice criticizing what they did. Nor did I hear any empathetic words for the young man that they killed. Empathy for the fact that he felt so distraught hurt and outraged by the continued police killings of Black people that he was confused and could find no means other than with a gun to express his grievance towards the police and our society. Yet, he did not kill civilian protesters.

Surely, everybody deserves the right to return home to his or her family. And I have boundless sympathy for the families whose loved ones did not make it home this time. Though I wonder, do the same sentiments commonly apply to the two Black men slain by the police in Minnesota and Baton Rouge? So, just a few thoughts that came to mind as these sad commentaries keep repeating themselves. For we know that, inevitably, more of the same will occur again.

### **27 Jul - Mumia Abu-Jamal Calls from Prison to Comment on DNC, Black Lives Matter and Mass Incarceration**

*For decades, Abu-Jamal has argued racism by the trial judge and prosecutors led to his conviction for the killing of Philadelphia police officer Daniel Faulkner. He is an award-winning journalist who chronicles the human condition.*

#### **MORE:**

As the Democratic National Convention enters its third day here in Philadelphia, one of the city's most famous native sons is observing and covering the proceedings from inside a state prison facility. Former Black Panther Mumia Abu-Jamal is a well-known prisoner and also an award-winning journalist whose writing from his prison cell has reached a worldwide audience through his Prison Radio commentaries and many books. Abu-Jamal was convicted of the 1981 murder of Philadelphia police officer Daniel Faulkner, but has always maintained his innocence. Amnesty International has found he was deprived of a fair trial. Mumia Abu-Jamal joins us on the phone from the SCI Mahanoy state prison in Frackville, Pennsylvania, along with two of his supporters, actor Danny Glover and Larry Hamm, chair of the People's Organization for Progress.

**AMY GOODMAN (AG):** This is Democracy Now!, [democracynow.org](http://democracynow.org). We are "Breaking with Convention: War, Peace and the Presidency." I'm Amy Goodman, with Juan González. We're broadcasting from the Democratic National Convention in Philadelphia, broadcasting outside that convention, so people who aren't credentialed can also join us on the set. We are broadcasting from PhillyCAM, from Philadelphia's public access TV station. Still with us, Larry Hamm, chair of the People's Organization for Progress, and actor, activist, director Danny Glover, as we turn now to a surprise guest who has just called in to Democracy Now! Juan?

**JUAN GONZÁLEZ (JG):** Well, we are joined by radio from inside a state prison in Pennsylvania by Mumia Abu-Jamal, a former colleague of mine here in Philadelphia. We were both journalists together here in the 1970s, perhaps the most well-known political prisoner in the United States, an award-winning journalist, whose writing from his prison cell has reached a worldwide audience through his prison radio commentaries and many books. Abu-Jamal was convicted of the 1981 murder of Philadelphia police officer Daniel Faulkner, but has always maintained his innocence. Amnesty International has found he was deprived of a fair trial. Mumia Abu-Jamal joins us now on the phone from SCI Mahanoy state prison in Frackville, Pennsylvania.

Welcome to *Democracy Now!*, Mumia.

**MUMIA ABU-JAMAL (MAJ):** Hola, hola, Juan, everyone, Larry, everyone. On a move.

**LARRY HAMM (LH):** Hey, Mumia. On a move.

**MAJ:** How you all doing?

**DANNY GLOVER (DG):** All right, brother.

**JG:** Mumia, we're interested in your thoughts on the convention occurring right here in your hometown.

**MAJ:** It's a hell of a show. But it is a show. And, you know, I mean, it has writers and directors and stage managers. And it's a hell of a show. But never forget: It's just a show.

**AG:** What do you think of not only what's happening on the inside—I mean, we just broadcast today—

**OPERATOR:** This is a call from Pennsylvania State Correctional Institution Mahanoy. This call is subject to recording and monitoring.

**AG:** That's the recording that comes on over the call. So, very quickly, Mumia, there's not only action on the floor of the Democratic convention, but thousands of people have been marching in the streets.

**MAJ:** I think that's extraordinary. And I think that's where the real action is. While I said the convention is a show—and who can doubt that?—what's happening in the streets of Philadelphia, that's where the real story is, because those are the voices you won't hear throughout these four days of gala, extravaganza, lies and illusion, because you're hearing the pain of the people, the real concerns of the people, and, really, the desperation of the people to be heard by the rich and the powerful. You look inside, you'll see the powerful. You'll see millionaires, right? We have an incredible system right now—millionaires running against billionaires. Well, who's not in that picture? And that's the 99 percent, the rest of us, you know.

**JG:** Mumia, I'm sure you also monitored the Republican convention that occurred last week and Donald Trump emphasizing that he is the law and order candidate. And I'm—

**OPERATOR:** This is a call from Pennsylvania State Correctional Institution Mahanoy. This call is subject to recording and monitoring.

**MAJ:** Go ahead.

**JG:** And I'm sure that it reminded you of a person that we were familiar with right here in Philadelphia, the mayor of Philadelphia, Frank Rizzo, who was the ultimate law and order candidate. For those of the younger generation who are not familiar with Rizzo, any similarities between some of the stuff that you remember from him and Donald Trump?

**MAJ:** I mean, Frank Rizzo was authentically working-class. You know, he rose from the bottom of the police department to become its commissioner and then was elected mayor. And, you know, I thought about Frank Rizzo when I first heard that Donald Trump was running, and I had the same reaction when I heard that Frank Rizzo was running for mayor: I laughed. I'm like, here was a guy, high school dropout—nothing personal, but it's true—and here's a guy who is like dumb as rocks about everything other than making money—or taking money, I should say. But, you know, I stopped laughing. You know, I thought about when Ronald Reagan ran for president, this grade-B actor. I laughed. I stopped laughing. And when you look at this guy, he's like Frank Rizzo with billions and billions of dollars in his pocket. But if you kind of turned off the screen and listened to the words, it's the same message: fear, fear, fear, fear of the other, fear of blacks. "And only I can save you." It's kind of a mixture of Frank Rizzo, Goldwater, Spiro Agnew, Dick Cheney, you know, and Hitler.

**AG:** Mumia, you recently did a commentary on the killings of police officers in Baton Rouge and Dallas. Share your thoughts on this.

**MAJ:** Well, I think one of the lines I used in that commentary is: Why should any of us be surprised? Whenever that happens, what you'll hear, especially among elite opinion on TV, is that this was a madman, this was a crazy person. If he was mad, how did he get accepted into the Army? How did he serve tours in Afghanistan or Iraq? Both of these men displayed military training that they acquired from the U.S. government and as they became killers in the Third World. When they came back to the United States and they saw their reality, do you think that drove them crazy? And, you know, something like 22 veterans commit suicide every day in America. And that's because of the horrible things they've been asked to do by empire abroad. And, you know, when you look at the condition of black people in America—mass incarceration gone crazy, ghettos being policed as if it is Fallujah or a foreign nation—why would you be surprised? They were trained by the state to do exactly what they did. And they did it.

**AG:** Mumia, we are speaking to you from Mahanoy state prison. You used to be on death row for two decades. I think, ultimately, perhaps, though it was the judicial system, it was enormous international pressure that led to you being taken off of death row. How is your health now? For a period of time, we didn't know what was happening—diabetes, eczema. How are you being dealt with? How is healthcare there? What are you asking for?

**MAJ:** Well, for a while there, I didn't know what was happening. I had diabetes. I had extreme high blood pressure. My skin was falling to my feet. I was itching in an insane degree. What we learned through this litigation is that I had hepatitis C, that to this date has not been treated. I've probably been given more

treatment for my symptoms—right?—than perhaps any other prisoner in Pennsylvania. That's true. But I've yet to be treated for that disease.

And the state, in their latest brief to the court, said if the plaintiff prevails, it will cost the DOC over \$600 million. I can't make this up. It's probably online. That's only because they claim there are some 6,000 men, and probably women, in the Pennsylvania system who have hepatitis C, and very few of them are treated, though, understand, we asked them—the head of the DOC's medical division, Dr. Peter Noel, "How many people are being treated with these new antiviral medications?" And he said, "I don't know." We said, "Well, can you give us your best guess?" He said, "Hmm, five or six." Five or six out of 6,000.

What we also learned is they have a protocol. It was a secret protocol that we learned about at that hearing, that men and women who have hepatitis C must wait until something called esophageal varices are detected. That's when you're bleeding from your esophagus out of your mouth, which means, of course, that your liver is, for all intents and purposes, dead. That's why you're bleeding out of your mouth, because you can't process—your liver can't process your blood. It's rejecting it. That's when you'll be considered to be put on a list for treatment. That's stage 4 liver disease.

**AG:** Danny, any comments you want to share with Mumia Abu-Jamal?

**DG:** Well, first of all, I was just thinking about his health. And essentially—and I think, for us to be practical, they're trying to kill him, right there, before our eyes. Certainly, his analysis on what has happened and what is happening here is right on point.

I was at an event at a church on Broad Street, where men and women were there. Particularly women were there. And certainly, it was for them and the voices of women. One of the women who was there, her father had been a political prisoner for 42 years. So, that's the place where everything is happening. CodePink had a sign saying "feminism, not militarism." They were promoting that. That's where the real convention is. They were the people who are still fighting, who want their voices to be heard. And our responsibility, the work that Larry does and the work that we have to do as progressives, is about that.

I was just thinking also about what W. E. B. Du Bois wrote in his 1953 reissue of *The Souls of Black Folk*, after 50 years, when he talked about how his thinking at that time was that the question of the century was race. The question of the century, he said, is still race. But what he didn't know then is that how people would be able to manage to live and to go on with their lives, go on with their lives in the midst of all of the pain, in the midst of all—in the midst of all the wars. That's the thing that we have to consume ourselves with, in terms of whether it's the war in our cities or the war abroad or the destabilization of governments, etc., etc.

**AG:** Mumia Abu-Jamal, I know we just have 15 seconds. Do you believe the issue of the 21st century, the problem of the 21st century, is still the color line?

**MAJ:** I think it's the color line, but it's also the class line. We've just experienced a black president. But black Americans, in the words of Young Jeezy, for the most part, are still living in hell.

**OPERATOR:** You have one minute left.

**AG:** Well, we want to thank you for joining us, Mumia Abu-Jamal. Your last 20 seconds that we have for this broadcast?

**MAJ:** I would urge anyone who has a computer or a way to acquire *The Nation* of February 10th, 2016, the article by Michelle Alexander entitled "Why Hillary Clinton Doesn't Deserve the Black Vote." It is incredible. I thank you all. I love you all. Larry, a pleasure hearing you again, brother.

**LH:** It's good to hear you, Mumia.

**MAJ:** Everybody, I love you. Thank you for this time with you. On a move.

**AG:** Thank you very much. Imprisoned former Black Panther Mumia Abu-Jamal, speaking to us from prison in Frackville, Pennsylvania. I'm Amy Goodman, with Juan González. Special thanks to Danny Glover and Larry Hamm and all the team that made this broadcast possible.

## **28 Jul - Chelsea Manning Could Face Additional Punishment for Her Suicide Attempt**

*U.S. Army whistleblower Chelsea Manning tried to kill herself on July 5 in her cell at Fort Leavenworth military prison. Now, military officials are considering filing charges in connection to the suicide attempt that could make the terms of her imprisonment much more punitive — including indefinite solitary confinement — while possibly denying her any chance of receiving parole.*

### **MORE:**

by Murtaza Hussain (*The Intercept*)

According to a charge sheet posted by the American Civil Liberties Union, Manning was informed by military officials on Thursday that she is under investigation for “resisting the force cell move team,” “prohibited property,” and “conduct which threatens.” In the weeks following her suicide attempt, she has been active on social media, thanking her followers for their moral support.

Manning’s treatment in prison since her 2010 arrest has repeatedly generated outrage among civil liberties advocates. The punitive tactics that have been employed against her include stripping her naked in her cell on a nightly basis, extended solitary confinement, and denial of medical necessities like eyeglasses. In 2011, then-State Department spokesperson P.J. Crowley publicly described Manning’s treatment in prison as “ridiculous, counterproductive, and stupid.”

Following a 14-month investigation into Manning’s treatment by the United Nations special rapporteur on torture, the U.N. accused the U.S. government of holding Manning in conditions that constituted “cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment,” particularly with regard to the extended use of pretrial solitary confinement. The harsh measures the military has employed during Manning’s detention have led to suspicions that the government is attempting to make an example of her over her whistleblowing activities.

The latest threat to charge Manning with offenses related to her own attempted suicide seems to be proceeding in the same spirit of abusive treatment.

“The government has long been aware of Chelsea’s distress associated with the denial of medical care related to her gender transition and yet delayed and denied the treatment recognized as necessary,” ACLU attorney Chase Strangio said in a statement. “Now, while Chelsea is suffering the darkest depression she has experienced since her arrest, the government is taking actions to punish her for that pain. It is unconscionable and we hope that the investigation is immediately ended and that she is given the health care that she needs to recover.”

In a statement released by Manning after her 2013 guilty plea on espionage charges, she asked for a pardon and said that she had been motivated by moral outrage over details of U.S. military killings and torture of civilians in Iraq. “In our zeal to kill the enemy, we internally debated the definition of torture,” she said. “If you deny my request for a pardon, I will serve my time knowing that sometimes you have to pay a heavy price to live in a free society.”

Manning is currently six years into serving a 35-year sentence.

## **August 1<sup>st</sup> - Chelsea Manning, on facing life in solitary after attempting suicide**

by Cory Doctorow (*BoingBoing*)

Last week, the ACLU announced that Chelsea Manning had been charged with a series of bizarre sounding “administrative offenses” involving her recent attempt to take her own life.

These latest examples of abuse and neglect are, frankly, just what Chelsea has come to expect, as she has been systematically mistreated by the U.S. government ever since she was first taken into custody in 2010, including long stretches of solitary confinement, which the UN considers to be a form of torture.

Fight for the Future, a non-profit that advocates for civil liberties and free speech, has created a petition at FreeChelsea.com to pressure the Secretary of the Army to dismiss these absurd charges.

I spoke to staff in contact with Chelsea at the Chelsea Manning Support Network to attempt to understand the details surrounding these charges, and Chelsea's situation in general.

When Chelsea woke up on the morning of July 5<sup>th</sup>, after her failed suicide attempt, she was surprised, and relieved, to be alive. She was moved by all the messages from people who want to help and are concerned about her, especially since she's been struggling with painful feelings that her situation may be hopeless.

However, although the Army has placed Chelsea on "mental health observation" since her return to Leavenworth, they've ironically continued to deny her access to the very psychological counseling her mental health would require.

On the morning of Saturday, July 23, Chelsea called a Support Network volunteer. She was not doing well. It turns out, Chelsea had not been able to see her psychologist for over a week. With no treatment for an entire week, her condition had worsened.

Apparently, when her regular psychologist is not available, there is effectively no other properly trained alternative. On weekends, her facility doesn't even have psychologists on-site. This is significant because it was during a weekend, with no psychologist on-site, when Chelsea became depressed and attempted suicide.

Although she received counseling daily for two weeks after her suicide attempt, her psychologist then disappeared for an entire week and has maintained irregular, unpredictable hours since.

As Chelsea explains, "I need help, and I'm not getting it."

Of further concern, first thing in the morning on July 28<sup>th</sup>, Chelsea was abruptly woken up and handed a charge sheet, right there in her mental health observation room. The document stated Chelsea was under investigation for three listed charges, without any explanation.

Chelsea has been concerned for weeks that she would be charged for the attempt, as the prison staff had warned her about it, but no one expected this to happen so soon, while Chelsea was in such a fragile state.

In addition to being given this stressful news, Chelsea has just been told that her psychologist is going to be off-site again for at least another week. And now, Chelsea is yet again being left alone to navigate emotionally demanding circumstances without the counseling she so desperately needs.

Chelsea is unable to mail a copy of the charge sheet at this time, so she dictated the contents of the document over the phone to a volunteer at her Support Network.

The charges:

On Friday morning, Chelsea recalled that that the Department of the Army's Policy Letter #16 lists the descriptions of the prison rules that Chelsea is being charged with violating.

Upon looking at the Policy Letter, it's clear that "Category III, IV and V offenses" are considered "serious infractions." Things like "Arson," "Assault" and "Escape." These offenses get you into big trouble: thrown into "maximum security" (solitary) with no chance of parole. Chelsea can potentially get in as much trouble for having the "force cell team" called as if she had started a fire somewhere. This is ridiculous.

To make matters worse, the rules Chelsea is accused of breaking are so broadly drafted that the prison can selectively enforce them against virtually any inmate it chooses to.

Let's take a closer look at these charges, one by one:

### 1) RESISTING THE FORCE CELL MOVE TEAM CAT IV OR V

For the "force cell team to be called to the cell" [Section "oo"]

Complete text of description from the prison rules:

Section oo. Resisting Forced Cell Moves (Category IV or V offense). Any action taken to impede, resist, or interfere with the actions of forced cell move teams, including, but not limited to, trying to keep the cell door closed, throwing objects at the Force Cell Move Team (FCMT) or attempting to grab team members while in the performance of their duties. Any action taken that causes the FCMT to be activated, even if it is not used is a category IV offense.

This is especially absurd because Chelsea was unconscious when the force cell move team arrived — she couldn't have "resisted" anything. Chelsea is basically just being punished for the team being called at all — a perfect example of the prison making the rules apply whenever they see fit.

### 2) PROHIBITED PROPERTY III

Prohibited use of property [Section "ii"]

Complete text of description from the prison rules:

Section ii. Prohibited Property (Category III offense). Anything not specifically authorized by proper authority to be in a prisoner's possession is prohibited. Prisoners must obtain and keep written permission from the Facility Commander, or authorized representative, to possess any item not authorized by facility policy or staff. Any item not specifically authorized and found in a prisoner's possession will be considered prohibited property. Possession of property obtained from trash receptacles, or that which was discarded in any other way by other prisoners or staff is prohibited. Property that has been altered from its original form without facility authorization will be considered prohibited property.

Here she is being charged with misusing the things she tried to kill herself with— she is literally being charged for her suicide attempt.

### 3) CONDUCT WHICH THREATENS IV

This accuses her of conduct which threatens [Section "m"]

Complete text of description from the prison rules:

Section m. Conduct Which Threatens (Category IV offense). Any conduct which interferes with the orderly running, safety, good order and discipline, or security the facility.

Somehow she is being charged with threatening the "safety" of the facility. As if her actions, alone in her cell to herself, could put the prison facility at risk.

It should be noted that bringing public attention to these issues might cause the prison to retaliate by restricting Chelsea's phone call — the critical way Chelsea is able to connect to the outside world. (In fact, the prison has the power to do this at any time, for one of any myriad of reasons.) If Chelsea's calls are taken away, she is cut off from everyone except for her attorneys, and even they have to schedule calls several days ahead of time. This could leave Chelsea without someone to talk to for days. Despite this risk,

Chelsea feels the situation is dire enough to get the word out about these issues, and we are grateful that Chelsea is now allowing us to speak out on her behalf.

Like Daniel Ellsberg, Chelsea decided to release documents to the public because she felt that the military national security apparatus was being misused by the government. Like Ellsberg, she did what she did knowing that she would probably be going to prison for it.

What she didn't see coming was excessively cruel pre-trial solitary confinement — including two months in Kuwait, in a cage (with no light being let in), in a tent, in over 105 degree temperatures — and then 7 months in Quantico, where she wasn't allowed to lean back or lay down, and was required sit and look directly forward, staring at the wall all day. Again, this was all before she had been tried and convicted of anything.

Chelsea's recent appeal challenges the constitutionality of the Espionage Act and the vague definition of "unauthorized access" of the Computer Fraud and Abuse Act — but before Chelsea has a chance to challenge anything, she's going to have to survive prison, or have her sentence "commuted" based on her time in solitary, more than three and a half years time served, and extreme over-sentencing to begin with.

Even if you are someone who believes that Chelsea did something wrong and should be punished, ask yourself: "Isn't 9 months of solitary, 3 years of imprisonment before even receiving a trial, and three and a half years as a female in an all-male maximum security prison punishment enough?"

Please sign the Petition to the Secretary Army to drop these charges against Chelsea: [FreeChelsea.com](http://FreeChelsea.com)

### **29 Jul - Make Marius' music your own + share**

*Supporters have taken the time to print and upload the tabs to a couple of Marius' songs.*

#### **MORE:**

Download full tabs to 2 songs at <https://supportmarie.files.wordpress.com/2016/07/mariusmusic1.pdf>. Marius wants to share his music in the old folk tradition. Use these lyrics and tabs, change them around and make them yours, and share on our upcoming Marius SoundCloud site. Help Marius know he is loved and his music is still able to contribute to the movement even when he can't play it to us himself.

### **30 Jul - A timeline of BOP malfeasance**

*Over the recent months of his sentence, Barrett Brown has had to deal with a frustrating level of obfuscation, arbitrary punishment, and outright non-compliance with the Bureau of Prisons' own stated policies on the part of prison officials at FCI Three Rivers and elsewhere.*

#### **MORE:**

The documentary filmmaker Alex Winter has had his persistent requests to interview Brown ignored, and Brown has repeatedly been thrown into solitary confinement, often with no legitimate explanation, as has been documented at length in his column for The Intercept. Here, Barrett Brown provides a helpful timeline and documentation of what's been happening to him:

*October – January:* Alex Winter sends two letters, one of them certified, to the warden's executive assistant, Thomas, applying for a media interview with me for a proposed documentary. He receives no reply. I send several staff messages to Thomas and forward them to Yates, the assistant warden for operations. I receive no reply.

*January 26:* Another inmate asks me if I can get him in touch with the media regarding a problem he's having; his brother, a veteran, has a voice box issued by the VA which the prison won't allow in during regular visiting hours despite the security people having no problem with it. I call Kevin Gallagher and ask him to see if a regional newspaper might be interested in the story.

*January 27:* Assistant Warden Yates calls the inmate to his office, explains that he'd listened in on his call to his mother regarding the attempt to contact the media, and tells him he's "disappointed" in him for approaching the press about the issue. That evening I do a recorded interview with syndicated radio talk show host Kenny Webster, radio interviews being something I've done from prison several times before and which are not against the rules. Half an hour later, I'm taken to the SHU for "investigation." I don't receive my medication until three days later (I noted this in a statement I released afterwards; it's since been confirmed by the last couple of pages of the BOP documents The Intercept ran a few months back, one of which is an intake sheet indicating my request for my prescribed medication, and the following one being an admission sheet in which the acting lieutenant writes that I don't take medication). Six days later, I'm released. Over the next few days I'm told by staff close to the situation that this had been ordered by Thomas.

*February 25:* I'm called to the mail room to accept a legal letter. Yates' secretary comes in and tells the mail room staff that Yates wants to see me. We explain to her that I'm in the middle of accepting legal mail, a process which isn't supposed to be interrupted since I have to be there for its unsealing, and will be there in a moment. She leaves and returns a minute later saying I need to come now. I go over there and Yates asks me, "Did you not see the yellow line on the sidewalk over there?" (I had walked along the second sidewalk, which we're not supposed to do during hourly moves but which we're actually supposed to do between moves or whenever we're going to administration buildings for drug tests, visits, etc). I explain to him that inmates do indeed cross that magical yellow line during non-movement periods. He replies, "No, never." I explain to him that his own staff can explain to him otherwise and that if he has a problem with that he needs to address it to them, since in fact the last time I walked all away around on the way to meet with staff the staff member asked me why I'd done that and told me to just cross the yellow line next time. Then I asked him if he'd not received the four e-mails I'd sent him about Alex Winter. He told me to talk to Thomas about that at mainline (lunch period during which administration stand around cafeteria to answer questions). I did so, and Thomas said, "Oh, did you want to do the interview?" I explained that, yes, I clearly did. He told me he'd need to get the warden's approval and that then he'd send me a consent form which I'd get from my unit staff. I walked over to the warden and explained to him the problem. He replied, "I'm not going to approve it orally." I told him he didn't need to, that he simply needed to get his executive assistant, Thomas, to follow procedure. Thomas told him he was on it. Later I sent a follow-up staff message to the executive assistant and Yates thanking them for their assistance and otherwise documenting that this conversation had occurred.

*June 30:* Another four months having passed without progress on the Alex Winter front, I confront Yates with a stack of print-outs of messages I'd sent him without having received replies; he tells me he'd forwarded them to Thomas and told him to "get on it" but that he doesn't reply to messages that don't involve him, and that media isn't his area (actually, he tends not to reply to messages that are directly under his area of responsibility, as I can show via other inmates). I ask him why he'd summoned that inmate to his office to berate him about getting in touch with the media about his brother if media wasn't his area; he replies that that wasn't a media issue. That afternoon I file a BP-8 Administrative Remedy complaint on Thomas and Yates for their ongoing failure to respond in writing to several months of my messages regarding Winter's interview requests.

*July 11:* At 12:00, as I'm walking to the phone to do my weekly recorded call with Winter, the officer on duty, Gonzalez, tells me that I'm wanted at Yates' office. I tell him I'll go after my scheduled phone interview. He goes to relay that to Yates via his own office phone. I call Winter and begin the interview. A few minutes later Gonzalez comes up to me and tells me that they want me to go now. I respond that the request is inappropriate since I have an ongoing administrative remedy case with Yates. Gonzalez says, "Actually, it's Thomas that's over there." I respond that I also have an ongoing case with Thomas, that neither of them are in a position to make any demands since they've both violated policy repeatedly and that the proposed meeting thus pertains to their wrongdoing, not mine, and that I'm actually on the phone right now with the person whom they've both wronged by ignoring his media applications and that I'm thus disinclined to interrupt the interview at their whim. Gonzalez goes back to the phone to report this. A few

minutes later, I'm approached by two officers, one of whom tells me, "Hang up the phone." This happens to be the same officer who falsely recorded that I don't need medication on my last visit to the SHU, as shown by the admission sheet. I tell Alex that I've got to go as I apparently can no longer talk to the press, and then hang up. I'm taken to the hole.

*July 12:* My counselor, Musquiz, brings me the infraction sheet for "Refusing an Order." As he and my case manager know the charge to be without merit, they've given me a suspended sentence of 15 days loss of commissary and visitation. Musquiz tells me they should let me out but that Yates is apparently trying to keep me there. Later another officer tells me I should be getting out later that day. At around 2:00, he returns to tell me that Yates has told the SHU lieutenant to hold me until next week. I write a cop-out to the SHU Lt. asking for a BP-8 form and a written explanation as to why I'm being held in the SHU, but receive no reply. SHU staffers express their concerns about the situation as they know this to be illegal.

*July 14:* Several administration members do their weekly SHU rounds; I catch Thomas and tell him that I know that it was him who ordered my "investigation" last time and that I'm going to pursue legal action against him. He mumbles some sort of response and quickly walks away.

*July 18:* I catch the SHU Lt., who'd been avoiding our corridor for some reason, and ask him if I'm getting out today. He says I'm being held for another week. I ask him on what grounds he's holding me. He tells me that "the powers that be" are ordering it. I ask him to cite the program statement upon which he's relying to hold me. He says I'm under investigation. I tell him I know that I'm not, as, for one thing, inmates under investigation are given a form signed by a security officer telling them they're under investigation, and for another, he himself just told me that I'm being held by "the powers that be." He leaves. I write a letter to my mom telling her to have the lawyers contact the Office of the Inspector General and to additionally file a Bevins Civil Rights/retaliation claim in the courts if she doesn't get a call from me by the 26th.

*July 21:* Administration members do their weekly SHU rounds again. I tell Yates, "If you can get me out of here by the 26th, I think we can put this behind us." He responds, "I don't think so." I tell him, "The 26th is Tuesday." He responds, "Then no." I tell him, "Well, nevermind then," and he walks off. I catch the warden and explain to him what's going on and note that I've yet to receive a lawyer call. He explains that Molina, the unit manager, is too busy to give me a lawyer call. I explain to him that lawyer calls aren't some optional favor he's allowed to grant inmates but an actual legal right provided for in the program statements under which the prison operates. I also note that I'm being held in the SHU contrary to the law. He says, "You know what the key to this is? You failed to follow an order." I reply that I did no such thing and that there's a recording backing up my account, and that at any rate the request was inappropriate since I'd written up both of the individuals involved, and that finally my sentence for the refusing an order shot was suspended and didn't call for me to be held indefinitely in the SHU, and that thus my continued confinement was illegal. He says, "Well, that's where we disagree. You'll get your lawyer call." (I don't get a lawyer call until I get out of the SHU)

*July 25:* I'm released from the SHU without explanation. Back in the unit, I learn that Yates and possibly other members of the administration were actually pushing for me to be held in the SHU until my release, which is to say somewhere between four and ten months from now, and that this was common knowledge among ranking staff; for instance, one of the counselors came out into the housing unit on July 21st and told several inmates about this, and on another occasion, a member of SIS spoke to an inmate about it. I have both staff and inmates willing to testify to this and other matters if necessary; details will be provided in a legal letter, which will also include other related incidents that I can't go into over the e-mail yet.

*July 26:* I send a staff message to the warden asking that he direct Yates to refrain from requesting that I meet with him and instead have him and Thomas reply to the complaint in writing. I file a BP-9, following up on the original BP-8 regarding Alex Winter's interview request.

### **31 Jul - Luke Is Free!**

*"We did it! We did it!" screamed Luke O'Donovan as he rejoined dozens of his friends shortly after being released from a two-year stint at Washington State Prison the morning of Monday, July 25.*

#### **MORE:**

From prison, he and a busload of us headed to a park in his childhood neighborhood to be reunited with his family, run a 5K (you'll notice Luke's first-place medal in the photo) and eat a ton of food.

Luke had only two days to spend in Atlanta, but when we said goodbye this time it was without the frustration of walking away from his structured visitations, and without the tears we remember with such bitterness from two years ago.

An enormous weight has been lifted, and our friend is back in our arms. We did it. With Luke's strength as our example, we did it.

Now Luke, still banished from his home-state, is headed toward a new life, sure to make new friends and connections, but no less in need of all of the love that helped carry him (and us) through the ordeal of his prison sentence. Join us in celebration! Email [letlukego@gmail.com](mailto:letlukego@gmail.com), and check out the previous blog post to find out how to continue to support our friend, Luke.

### **6 Aug - Rapid Responder Training Series**

**WHAT:** Preparedness Training

**WHEN:** Multiple dates (see below)

**WHERE:** The Base - 1302 Myrtle Avenue, Bushwick, Brooklyn

**COST:** FREE

#### **MORE:**

From ICE raids across the country to the normalization of police killings to the recent resurgence of Nazi activity and far right militias, the onus is on us to keep each other alive and safe. We need to unite the resources that we already have and build skills together. We have collaborated with medics, self-defense trainers, Copwatch Bushwick/Bed Stuy, the Brooklyn Defense Committee, and seasoned street teams to create trainings and skill shares this summer, so we can be best prepared to respond when crises surface in our neighborhoods.

Paired with these trainings, we are developing a Rapid Responders hotline which will be a centralized number anyone can call when faced by state repression (police, ICE) or when they are attacked and can't/don't want to call the cops. We will not replicate the measures of statist responses which include trapping survivors in bureaucracies, mass incarceration, deportations, and assassinations. Instead, when someone in a dire situation calls the hotline, they will be connected to neighbors and individuals who are trained to take immediate action, arriving at the scene as first responders, accompanying people in risky situations, or providing resources to create long-term solutions.

We invite you to join this network of First Responders! These trainings will prepare you for situations you may encounter, and introduce you to a network of people taking a stand for the most dire needs of our neighbors.

#### *8/6 - 3pm - Rapid Responders Hotline: Police Violence Training*

This training will cover the history and functionality of the police in the US and look at specific issues you may encounter in Bushwick/Bedstuy.

Presented by Copwatch Bushwick/Bed Stuy

#### *8/7 - 3pm - Medic Training*

This training will cover how to administer basic first aid and supplies list for first aid kits.

Presented by an EMT-trained comrade

*8/13 - 3pm - Resisting ICE Training*

This training will cover the ins and outs of ICE raids and give you the information necessary for helping people facing ICE harassment and deportation.

Presented by Brooklyn Defense Committee

*8/14 - 3pm - Resisting Hate Attacks*

This training will cover the kinds of hate attacks locals face and provide you with the know how to deal with these kinds of hostile situations.

Presented by a street team

*8/20 - 3pm - Mental Health Crisis Training*

This training will train you in how to de-escalate a situation when a person is having a mental health crisis.

Presented by Aftershock Alliance

*Every Thursday and Sunday at 7pm: Fight Training*

Sign up to attend this training series at <http://bit.ly/29Ejbt5>

**8 Aug - Book Party with Robert King and Albert Woodfox**

**WHAT:** Book Party

**WHEN:** 6:00-9:00pm, Monday, August 8

**WHERE:** Martin Luther King Jr. Labor Center - 310 West 43rd Street NYC

**COST:** FREE

**MORE:**

44 years ago, deep in rural Louisiana, three young black men were silenced for trying to expose continued segregation, systematic corruption, and horrific abuse in the biggest prison in the US, an 18,000 acre former slave plantation called Angola. Peaceful, non-violent protest in the form of hunger and work strikes organized by inmates caught the attention of Louisiana's elected leaders and local media in the early 1970s. They soon called for investigations into a host of unconstitutional and extraordinarily inhumane practices commonplace in what was then the "bloodiest prison in the South." Eager to put an end to outside scrutiny, prison officials began punishing inmates they saw as troublemakers. At the height of this unprecedented institutional chaos, Albert Woodfox, Herman Wallace, and Robert King were charged with murders they did not commit and thrown into 6x9 foot solitary cells, where they remained for decades. Their struggle for justice continued until Robert was released in 2001, Herman in 2013, and Albert in 2016.

**13 Aug - Over Ten Years to Talk About: Eric McDavid Speaking Tour**

**WHAT:** Speaking Tour

**WHEN:** 7pm Saturday, August 13<sup>th</sup>, 2016

**WHERE:** The Base – 1302 Myrtle Avenue Brooklyn, New York 11221 (directions below)

**NOTE:** The Base is on the ground floor, is wheelchair accessible, and has a gender neutral toilet.

**COST:** FREE

**MORE:**

Eric McDavid, a former anarchist prisoner, will be talking about ten plus years of experiences including federal prison time, the post release period, and moving forward. Eric will discuss the importance of supporting political prisoners along with so much more. If you are in the area, please come, check it out and tell a friend!

In the six month span between when his first and second co-defendants took deals to cooperate with federal authorities and testify against Eric, he started down a long road as an anarchist prisoner. If being charged

with “conspiracy to damage and destroy property by fire and explosive” and utilizing an entrapment defense, it doesn’t make things any easier if one’s co-defendants agree to make up testimony, simultaneously betraying larger struggles to avoid any discomfort.

After twenty-eight months in “total separation,” a form of isolation at the Sacramento County Jail, Eric was convicted at trial. Subsequently, Eric was sentenced to an outrageous 19 years and 7 months due to a terrorism enhancement, and shortly after taken into the custody of the Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP). Eric was then transferred to a medium security federal prison– FCI Victorville, where he ended up spending the majority of the sentence before being moved to a low security prison in San Pedro, California.

While Eric was imprisoned, he and his support crew laid the groundwork for an appeal. At the same time, a new federal prosecutor was assigned to the district in which Eric was initially tried. When, through multiple Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests, Sacramento Prisoner Support found there was sufficient documentation of withholding evidence at trial, and after a habeas petition was filed, the new prosecutor made an offer to Eric’s attorneys that would eventually bring him home. If he would agree to a single felony charge of general conspiracy, which carried a maximum sentence of five years, and if the district judge would sign off on it, Eric would be released with time served plus a maximum of two years supervised release.

It has been over a year and a half from the day of his release and Eric has a lot to share– the nine years he endured from arrest through supervised release as well as all he has experienced since. There’s more, much more, but we’ll wait for him to tell you about that.

To learn more about Eric’s case, please visit: [supporteric.org](http://supporteric.org)